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RE-THINKING TEMPELHOF: AN OASIS FOR A FREED HUMANITY.

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A

Abstract A.

In 2007, the percentage of the world population living in urban areas has overtaken the percentage of people that live in rural. Projections show that this trend is expected to grow in the future. This information should not surprise, as the society in which we currently live is permeated by a neoliberalist ideology, affecting an economy aimed at the unlimited growth of production of goods.

The expansion of cities and urban areas, seen in this scenario as places (or *non-places*) that contain aggregates of commercial relations and services, plays a key role in the further expansion of capitalist system. In fact, it has an extreme need to centralize the power according to purely technical and profit-based planning.

This ideology, besides limiting democracy and creating iniquity all over the world, is the main cause of all the crises that currently afflict the planet: economical, migratory, social, and, above all, ecological crisis, that will soon affect indistinctly the whole humanity on a planetary level.

In this context, architects or urban designers should not be acritical towards the system in which they operate, adopting a pure *solutionist* appro-

ach or, even worse, mere professionalism. More than ever before, it is crucial to identify which problems are to face and how, starting to ask right questions and avoiding superficial solutions. In order to look at a wider horizon, a position that is first of all ethical, and only consequently political, has to be taken. In other terms, quoting Pier Vittorio Aureli, they should operate "within and against" the system.

Hence, this thesis has followed a deductive process. It started from general considerations supported by empirical analysis, and it has concluded with a proposal that not only observes the latters, but, above all, those concerning the specific place. The choice of Berlin, and particularly the ex-airport of Tempelhof, has not been taken arbitrarily. Both have witnessed several events that have marked the history and have been invested by a wide variety of meanings over time. Moreover, in both places we are witnessing the pervasive pressure that growth-oriented economy is trying to impose on them; nevertheless, it is possible to perceive a force that is opposing this trend, the germ of a possible re-discovered form of freedom.

. > Abstract

In 2010, the airport was opened and converted into a public park of 300 hectares; in 2014, the administration called a referendum to evaluate the possibility of converting about one-fifth of the park to housing. Citytzens, afraid of another speculation, voted against any hypotesis of construction on the airfield, to constrast a growing gentrification process that had already interested other districts. The project proposes to conduct an urban experiment, creating an indipendent tiny-houses community within the airfield, in total observance of the Tempelhof's Conservation Act. It could become a potential mediatic case, a replicable example not only for other cities, but also within a wider project of spatial decentralization of power, re-evaluating the neglected countryside and all the non-places created by an economical planning of the territory. Focusing on the 98% of Earth's surface that is not occupied by cities, there would be space for the rise of a confederation of libertarian and autonomous communities, aimed to contrast the growth-oriented economy and to reduce all the crises that, in case of worsening, will lead us to the extintion of human beings.

Introduction

Ever since he started farming, Homo Sapiens has always modified the surrounding landscape to take advantage of it. Nowadays, the extent of our actions is as great as our awareness of the impacts they are causing to our planet.

Indeed, we are witnessing an epochal transition. According to an international panel of scientists there would be all the elements to believe that we have entered in a new geological era: the so called **Anthropocene**¹.

As the term suggests, in this current geological era, the **Earth's environment**, in all its physical, chemical and biological characteristics, **is strongly conditioned** on both a local and global scale **by the effects of human action**, with particular reference to the increase in concentrations of CO2 and CH4 in the atmosphere.

A study published in *Science*² distinguishes the era in which we live from the Holocene, which began 11,700 years ago with the end of the last Ice Age. Even if the debate on when it began is still open, whether from the 1800 Industrial Revolution or the "Great Acceleration" of population growth and industrialization in the mid-twentieth century, the-

re is certainly evidence of the impacts on rocks and sediments on Earth that will remain visible for millions of years.

Starting from the **radioactive footprint** due to the explosions of nuclear weapons and large amount of traces of **aluminium**, **cement and plastic**, the materials most widely used in human society, to the massive **use of fertilizers**, due to our attempt to feed a growing population (with needs that are not in line with the natural yield of the land), that has caused phosphorus and nitrogen levels in the soil to double compared to the last century.

Mining, drilling, deforestation, urbanization, coastal erosion and extensive agricultural activities are inexorably changing the earth's geology, affecting the way rock sediment stratification occurs. So far we have modified 50% of the earth's surface for our needs.

Mass extinctions caused by violent environmental changes characterize the beginning and the end of every studied geological era, and Anthropocene is no exception.

According to some theories we are we are witnessing the **sixth mass extinction**, with three quar-

> Introduction

ters of the terrestrial species destined to disappear in the next centuries.

From 1850 to the present day, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has risen to an alarming record of 400 parts per million. Global CO2 emissions are the highest in 65 million years, and will leave traces in Antarctic ice but also in plants, sandstone sediments, fossil bones and shells.

Finally, one of the most visible evidence of actions of humans all over the world is demostrated by the most urgent issue that mankind is now trying to face: **global warming**. In the last century the Earth's temperature has increased by 0,6 - 0,9 °C, much more than the natural variability recorded for the Holocene, while the sea level has reached its highest level in 115,000 years.

Aware of that we are living in this new geological era, it seems obvious to think that **Climate Change** has now became not only a problem to be tackled, but **the primary problem** to be solved for the survival not only of our ecosystem, but of the whole of humanity.

Nevertheless, numerous obstacles are yet to over-

come in order to achieve tangible results concerning this problem. However, all these obstacles seem to converge in a single systematic problem, from which all others arise: **Neoliberalism**, or the system in which we are living, affecting our ways of life, with his myth of progress linked to an infinite growth and his utilitaristic concept of freedom, has become the dominant ideology of our times. Neoliberalism is a political ideology and an economic theory born in the 1980s, which defined and still defines the development of capitalism. It is a sneaky and pervasive ideology, because it manages to present itself as anti-ideological, and it not only conditions the market trend, but also invades our private lives, influencing our way of thinking, working, living.

The historical *caesura* marked by the **fall of the Berlin Wall has established that neoliberalism is** the most efficient way of managing industrial production, i.e. **the most appropriate way to increase the production of goods**³.

It was conceived by Friedrich Von Hayek, Nobel Prize winner for economics in 1974 and author, among others, of the essay *The Free Society* (1960).

According to Von Hayek, society is based solely and exclusively on individual action. In fact, each person acts in pursuit of his own goal and any attempt to direct or limit his actions, as the planned

The society is held together for a sort of synthesis of purposes, according to an order which, in Von Hayek's opinion, is not the result of a human plan, but spontaneously generates itself.

economy claims to do, is destined to failure.

Obviously this is not anarchy: this order is in fact regulated by **private property** which, in addition to being the foundation of civilization, is also **a sort of moral barrier**, "the only solution so far discovered by men to solve the problem of reconciling individual freedom with the absence of conflict"⁴, writes Von Hayek.

It consists in privatisation, deregulation and cuts in public investment on the economic side, conservatism on the political side. Such a doctrine is based on private initiative and the progressive reduction of state control.

As George Monbiot wrote in The Guardian, "Neoliberalism considers competition the distinctive feature of human relations. It redefines citizens as consumers, whose democratic choices are made through buying and selling, a process that recognizes merit and punishes inefficiency. It supports the idea that market brings benefits that could never be achieved through planning"⁵.

> Introduction

Margaret Thatcher said that "there is no society. There are only individuals", becoming a famous and somewhat prophetic slogan. Today, collective dimension has disappeared, projecting us into an apparent dimension of self-sufficiency that prevents us not only from creating solidarity with others, but even from feeling the need of it. We feel more and more alone, and we are. And the paradox is that the stress on individual fulfillment that the neoliberal ideology claims has not transformed us, as promised, into free and successful beings, but has led us to the illusion that one day we will be, if we work hard enough. The narrative of positivity, happiness at any cost and meritocracy are functional to this system, which has created a more sophisticated form of alienation, which has transformed us from subjects of obedience to subjects of performance.

In this process, the role of urbanization was not

> Introduction

secondary: urban centres embodied the industrial and commercial development that capitalist domination required. Expanding these centers have eventually destroyed the surrounding nature more and more incisively.

The growth in the production of goods requires an increase in the number of producers and consumers of goods, which can only be achieved by strong population relocation from the countryside to the cities, from the subsistence economy to the economy mercified as salaried workers. This has led to the generation of large migratory flows. With passage of time, the domination has modelled its seductive techniques, leading social life to the standardization of the current phase.

All the ongoing crises, the ecological and climate crisis, the economic and occupational crisis, the crisis in international relations and the rise of wars, humanitarian crises, mass migration, the spread of poverty, inequities and violence, are strectly interconnected, mutually reinforcing and have a single cause in the finality of the economy to the growth of production and consumption of goods. If we continue to believe that this is the purpose of

the economy and the restricted élite that governs the world will continue to use all its power in an attempt to restore it, all the factors of crisis are expected to worsen, as has been happening in the past few decades, and this historical era will end with a collapse, with dramatic consequences.

> Notes I.

¹ The term *Anthropocene* was coined as early as 2000 by the Nobel prize-winning Dutch chemist Paul Crutzen, while the symbolic date of 16 July 1945 is the result of research carried out by an international group of scholars belonging to the *Anthropocene Working Group* (Awg);

² Colin N. Waters (et al.), *The Anthropocene is functionally and stratigraphically distinct from the Holocene,* «Science», Vol. 351 (2016), n. 6269, p. 134-136, https://science.sciencemag.org/content/351/6269/aad2622, DOI: 10.1126/science.aad2622;

³ Maurizio Pallante, Alessandro Pertosa, *Solo una decrescita felice (selettiva e governata) può salvarci,* Lindau, 2017;

⁴ Friedrich Von Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, University of Chicago Press, 1960;

⁵ George Monbiot, *Neoliberalism, the ideology at the root of all our problems,* «The Guardian», 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot;



Urbanisation D.1

> Data

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The rapid and substantial increase in world population, which began in 19th century and is still ongoing, has been accompanied by a phenomenon of population concentration in cities. **Until the second half of the 19th century, the majority of population in** all countries of the world was rural, scattered in smaller settlements and **small communities spread over large areas**, while the urban phenomenon was very limited and the large cities were an exception.

In the last two centuries, with the development of industry and services, the process of urbanisation of the population has intensified. According to United Nations calculations, in 1950, for every 100 inhabitants of the planet only 29 lived in urban areas. By 1990, this figure had risen to 45% and the urban population had more than tripled to 2,4 billion. In 2007, the world's urban population exceeded the rural population. Today, about 3,5 billion people live in urban areas.

Until around the middle of the last century, the strong growth of cities characterized mainly the economically more developed countries, while in the less developed ones the population was still predominantly rural. Today, on the other hand, while urbanization is slowing down in the old industrialized countries of Europe and North America, it is growing strongly in the South. We are therefore entering a phase in which the rural population will remain almost stationary in the developed countries, while it will continue to decline in the less developed countries. This will mean that the **urban population will continue to grow strongly on a global scale**. Indeed, over the next 30 years, 83% of world population growth is expected to take place in urban areas in southern countries. In the northern countries of the world, where the modernisation of agriculture is older, mass immigration to the city has now ceased.

In recent decades, however, we are witnessing the reverse movement, a progressive urban redistribution in the rural surroundings of cities, which takes the name of periurbanisation and gives rise to what is known as the "urban sprawl". More than cities, today we are talking about urban and metropolitan areas, urban regions, city-regions. As there is a demographic transition of the population there is also an urban demographic transition,

which begins with a first wave of concentration in European and North American countries affected by Industrial Revolution during 21th century and continues in the first half of the following century with the great "Fordist" industrial agglomerations. Thus, around 1960, there was the phase of maximum urban concentration in the industrialized countries. In the second half of the last century deindustrialisation is accompanied in these countries by a phase of regression and then of dimensional stagnation of the agglomerations; at the same time the opposite trend is affirmed in the less developed countries, where greater opportunities (real or presumed) offered by cities attract crowds of immigrants from the poor countryside, giving rise to the proliferation of mega-cities.

In the coming decades it is expected that urban hyperconcentration in today's less developed countries will slow down, while in the older developed countries some large cities and metropolitan areas will start to grow again, also thanks to the expansion of peri-urban crowns.

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D.1 > Urbanisation > Data

> Present

Today, more than half of the world's population lives in urban areas, increasingly in hingly-dense cities. However, it is a relatively recent phenomenon in human history. In particular, in the last two centuries, and even more significantly in the last two decades, there has been mass migration of populations from rural to urban areas.

This transition has changed the way we live, work, travel and build networks.

Graph (1) shows the estimates of the UN *World Urbanization Prospects* concerning the number of people living in urban and rural areas worldwide. We see that in 2017 more than half of the world's population, namely 4,1 billion people, or 55% of the total, live in urban areas. The UN estimates that the number of people in urban areas exceeded that of rural areas in 2007, marking an important historical event.

In 1960 the number of people living in rural areas (2 billion) was twice as high as in urban areas (1 billion). In 2007, urban and rural populations were almost exactly equal at 3,33 billion each.

In 2016, urban populations increased to 4 billion, while the world's rural population increased only marginally to 3.4 billion.

There is a disagreement about the exact number of the urban population, and this stems from differences in definition and boundaries in what makes an *urban* population. There is currently **no universal definition of what an** *urban area* **means.**

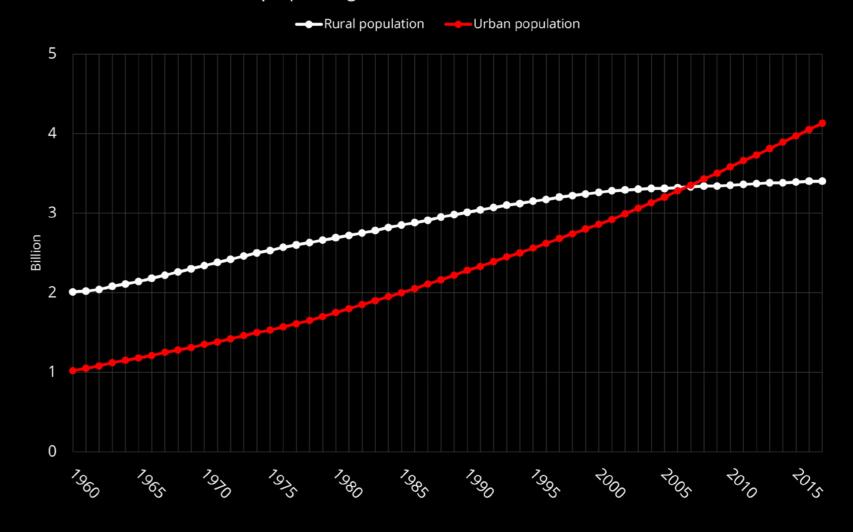
The United Nations reports figures based on nationally defined urban quotas. The problem is that the definitions of an urban settlement vary considerably from one country to another, both in terms of the metrics used and in terms of threshold levels.

Although UN data are the most reliable on global urbanization, some researchers think that **far more people live in urban areas than these figures suggest**.

Critics dispute that these different definitions of *urban* lead to a significant underestimation of the world's urban population. For example, European Commission researchers report that 85% of people live in urban areas, as graph (2) shows.

Map (3) shows us how the percentage of people

Number of people living in urban and rural areas, World, 1960 to 2017

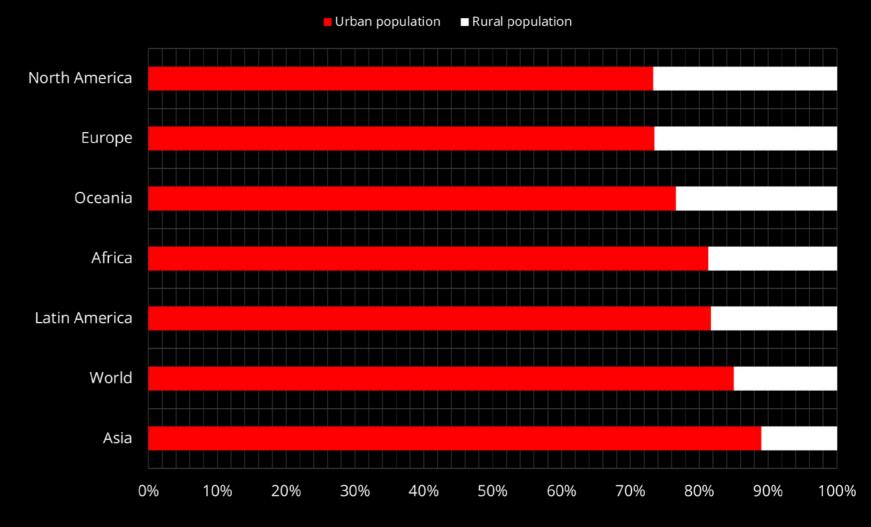


> Graph (1) Source: UN World Urbanization Prospects (2018).

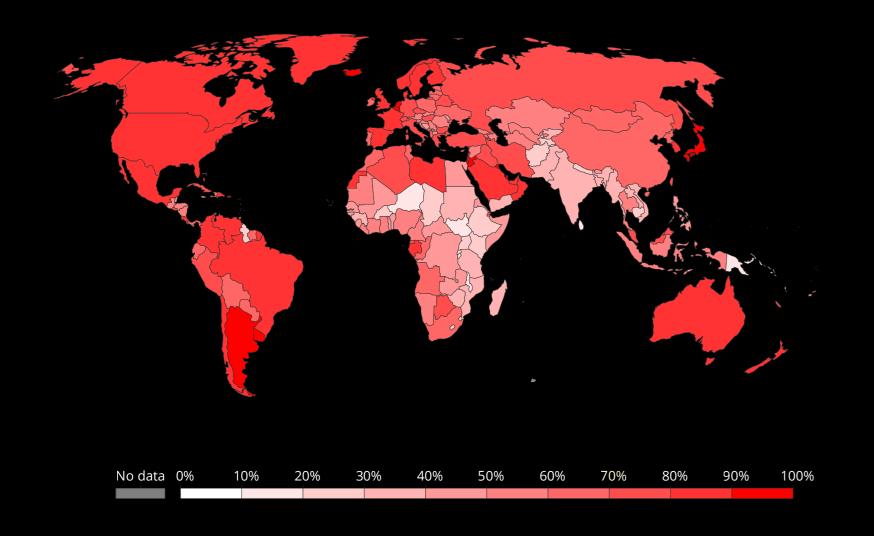
living in urban areas varies from one country to another. In most high-income countries, in Western Europe, Americas, Australia, Japan and the Middle East, more than 80% of the population lives in urban centres. In most upper middle-income countries, in Eastern Europe, Eastern Asia, North and Southern Africa and South America, between 50% and 80% of the population. In many lower middle-income countries, most still live in rural areas. But the situation is now changing. Urbanization rates have increased rapidly in all regions (in 1800, less than 10% of people in all regions lived in urban areas), and urbanization is expected to continue to increase as incomes rise and employment in agriculture is abandoned.

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Share of the population living in urban areas, estimated by the European Commission

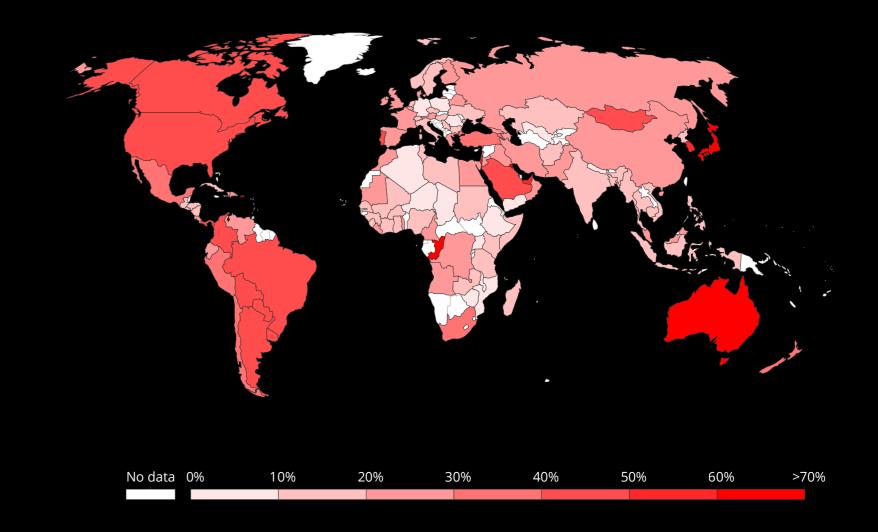


Share of the population living in urban areas, 2019



> Graph (3)

Share of people living in urban agglomerations of more than 1 million, 2017



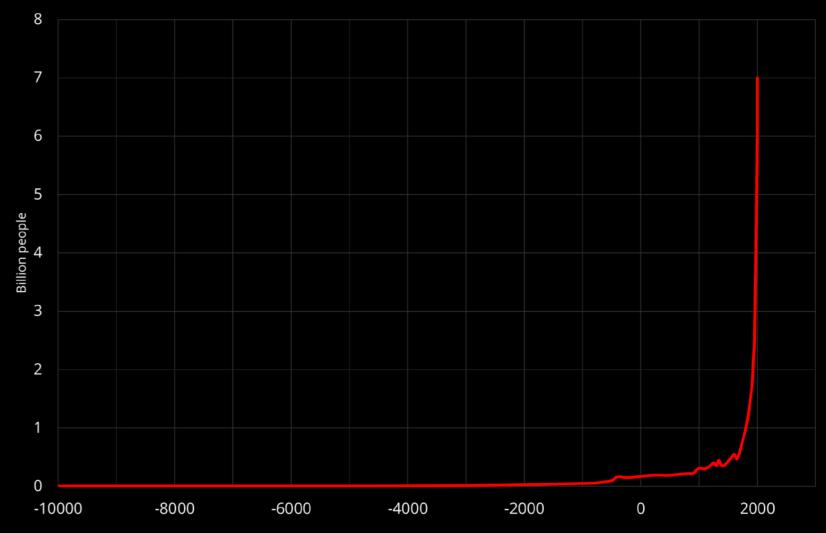
> Past

Migration to cities is a very recent phenomenon, mostly limited to the last 200 years, and it is strictly linked to the explosion of population growth. In graph (6) we can see how the share of population living in urban areas has changed over the last five centuries.

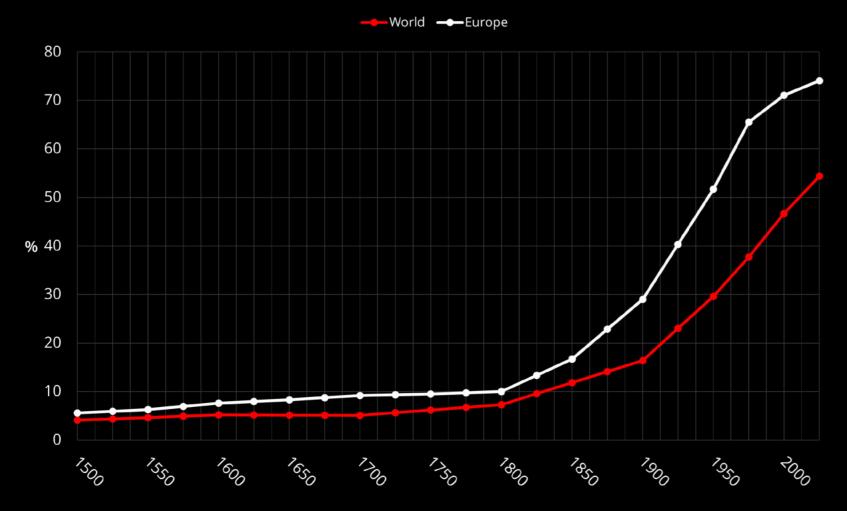
The relative novelty of the phenomenon becomes even more marked when we look at the development of urbanization based on even longer timescales, as in the last 10,000 years, displayed by graph (7).

For most of our history man has lived in low-density rural environments. Before 1600, it is estimated that the share of the world's population living in urban settings did not reach 5%. By 1800, this share had reached 7%; by 1900 it had risen to 16%.

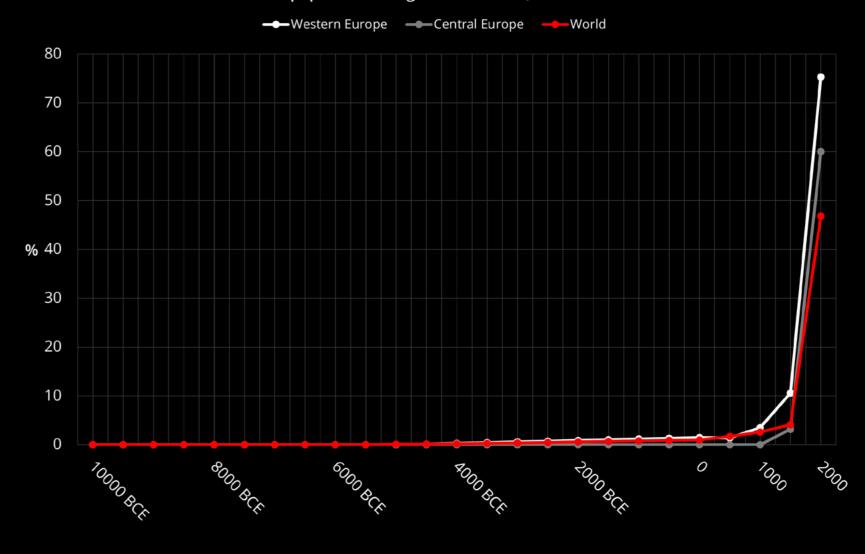
World population growth from 10,000 BCE to 2000



Share of the population living in urban areas over the past 500 years



Share of the population living in urban areas, 10000 BCE to 2000



D.1 Urbanisation > Data

> Future

According to the new UN World Population Prospects, the world population is expected to reach 11 billion people by 2100 (Figure 8). This figure, if it follows the trend described above, would mean a further increase in the urbanization of the world. The last 50 years have seen a rapid increase in urbanisation rates worldwide, which suggests that these trends are likely to continue in the future.

It is estimated that by 2050 more than two thirds of the world's population, and precisely 68% of the world's entire population, will live in urban areas, with a figure of around 7 billion people.

In graph (9) we see estimates of urban and rural populations in absolute terms, projected up to 2050. By 2018 we see that there are about 7.6 billion people in the world, of which 4.2 billion in urban areas and 3.4 billion in rural areas.

By 2050 the world population is expected to increase to around 9.8 billion people. It is estimated that more than twice as many people in the world will live in urban areas (6.7 billion) as in rural areas

(3.1 billion).

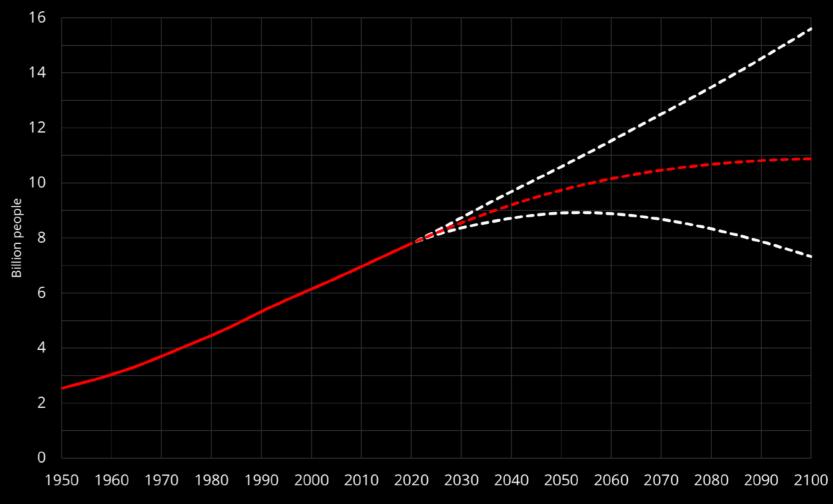
The projected population growth is based on the UN's medium fertility scenario.

The UN World Urbanization Prospects also provide estimates of each country's urbanization quotas up to 2050. These projections are visible in the graph (10).

In all the nations, it is forecast that **urban quotas will increase in the next decades, even if at different rhythms**. In fact, by 2050, there will be very few countries in which it is estimated that the quotas of rural population will be higher than the urban ones. Among them there are several in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Pacific island states and Guyana in Latin America.

Although most countries are expected to be predominantly urban, the global total is just over two-thirds higher because many of the world's most populous countries still have relatively low urban shares, just over half or less. For example, India, which is expected to be the most populous country in the world, is estimated to have an urban share of just 53% in 2050, while the rate for countries like Germany would be around 84%.

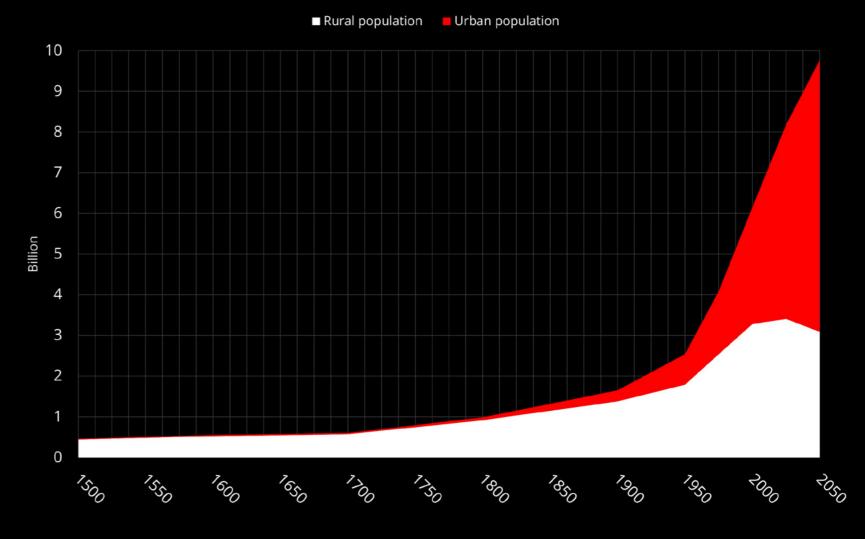
World population prospects, 2019, 1950-2100



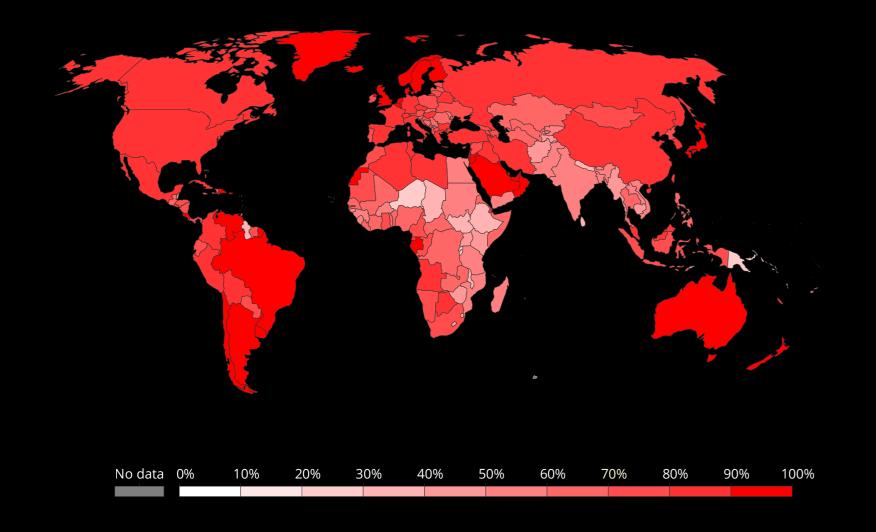
> Graph (8) Source: UN World Urbanization Prospects (2019).

In 1950 it was mainly the high-income countries in Europe, the Americas, Australia, Asia and Japan that were predominantly urban. A century later, in 2050, most countries are expected to have more people living in urban areas (Figure 11).

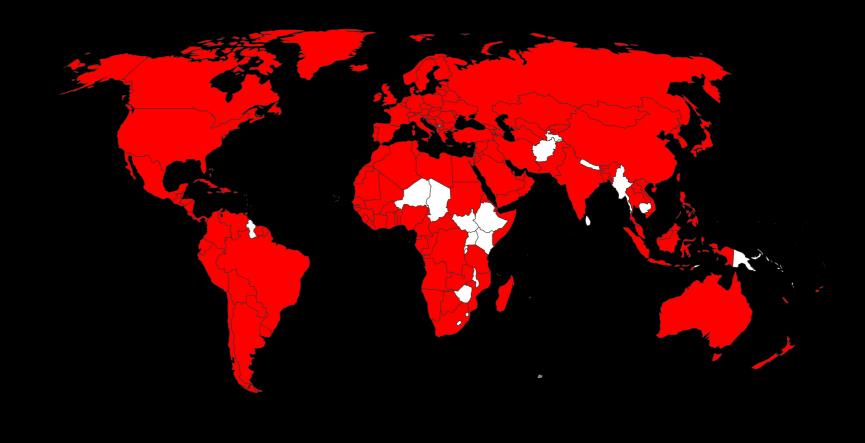
Urban and rural population projected to 2050, World



Share of the population living in urban areas, 2050



Share of population which live in urban/rural areas, 2050



No data Majority rural (>50%) Majority urban (>50%)

> Urbanization & Wealth

Graph (12) shows on the y-axis the ratio between the share of population living in urban areas and on the x-axis the average income (gross domestic product per capita). Here we see a strong relationship between urbanization and income: as countries become richer, they tend to become more urbanized.

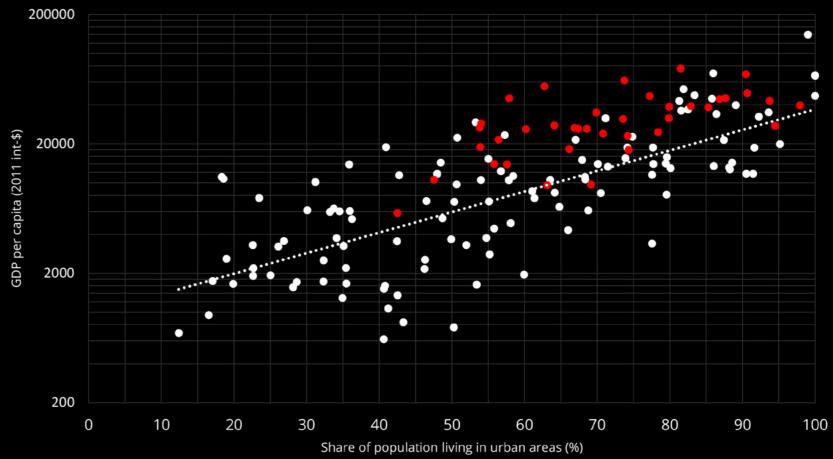
The link between urbanization and economic growth has been well documented.

Urbanization is a complex phenomenon, but there are many facts that can be found in urban contexts, including high density of economic activity, increased trade links, use of human capital, shared infrastructure and division of labour.

However, evaluations suggest that countries with a higher initial share of urban population do not achieve faster or slower economic growth than countries with a low initial share of urban population.

Urban population and GDP per capita, 2016

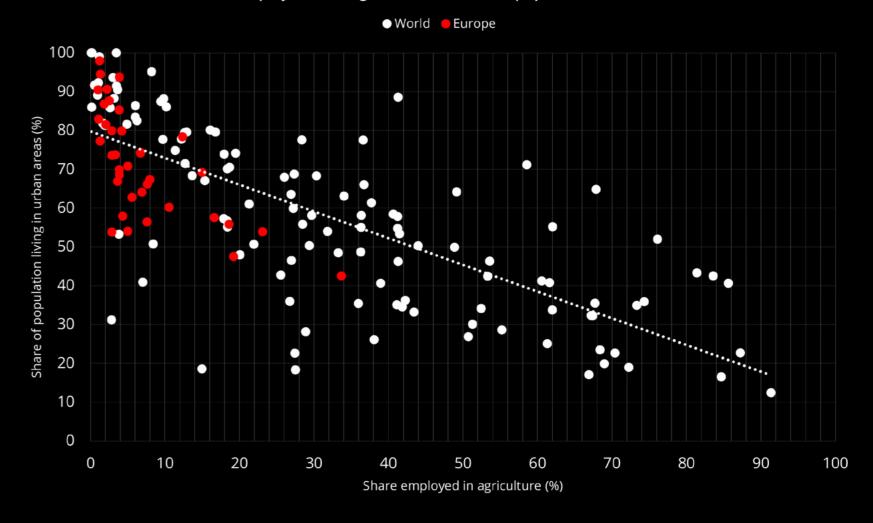




> Urbanization & Agricultural employment

The change in the place of residence of the population has an impact on the type of employment. Migration from rural to urban areas is empirically linked to the process of employment transformation: as urban population shares increase, employment tends to shift towards the industry or services sector, causing a fall in agricultural employment. In graph (13) we see the share of people employed in agriculture (y-axis) compared to the share of the population living in urban areas (x-axis). In general, it can be seen that agricultural employment tends to decrease with urbanization.

Employment in agriculture and urban population, 2016



Climate Change

D.2

50

> Data

The Earth's climate has always changed throughout history. According to scientific studies, over the last 650,000 years there have been seven cycles of glacier advance and retreat, with the abrupt end of the last Ice Age some 11,700 years ago, which marked the beginning of the modern climate era and human civilization

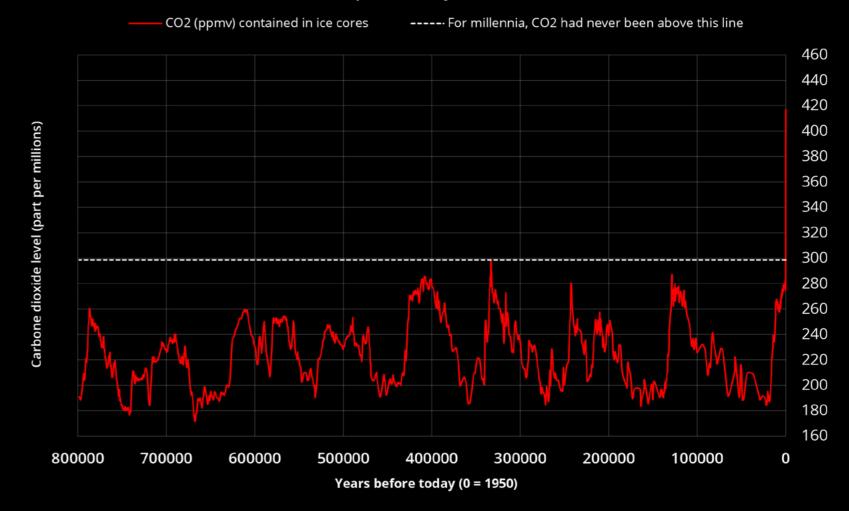
Current warming trend is particularly remarkable because it is now evident that most of it is the result of human activity. The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC), a group of 1300 independent scientific experts from different countries around the world, has concluded that **there is a 95% probability that human activity** over the last 50 years, with the production of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, **is the cause of the current warming of our planet**, and that it is proceeding at a rate unprecedented for thousands of years.

Technological advances have allowed scientists to see the big picture, gathering a variety of information about our planet and climate. This set of data, collected over many years, reveals that it is changing. The natural process of heat capture by greenhouse gases was widely demonstrated. There is therefore no doubt that rising levels of **greenhouse** gases are causing the Earth to warm up as a result.

The data collected clearly indicate that the **atmosphere** and the ocean have warmed up, the amount of snow and ice has decreased, and sea levels have risen. Various scientific evidence reveals that current warming is occurring about ten times faster than the average Ice Age recovery rate.

The average surface temperature of the planet has increased by about 0,9°C since the end of the 21th century, a change largely due to increased carbon dioxide and other man-made emissions into the atmosphere. Most of the warming has occurred in the last 35 years, with the five hottest years since 2010. Not only did 2016 set the record for the hottest year, but 8 of the 12 months were the hottest months ever.

Composite 800 kyr CO2 record



> Graph (14)

D.2 > Climate Change > Data

> Evidences

Graph (15) shows the change in global surface temperature compared to the average temperatures from 1951 to 1980. **Eighteen of the 19 hottest years have all occurred since 2001**, with the exception of 1998.

The oceans have absorbed much of this increase in heat, with the 700 metres of ocean surface marking a warming of over 0,2°C since 1969.

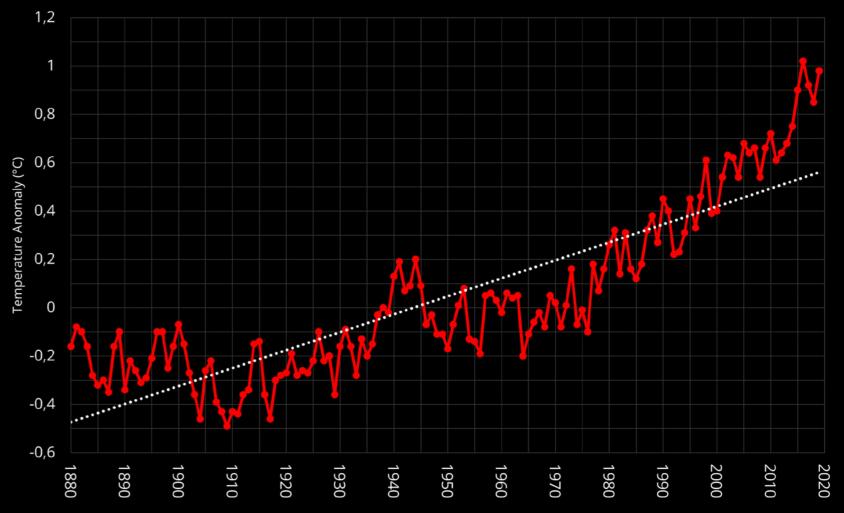
The ice caps of Greenland and Antarctica have decreased in mass. Data from NASA satellites, shown in graphs (16) and (17), indicate that Greenland lost an average of 286 billion tonnes of ice annually between 1993 and 2016, while Antarctica lost about 127 billion tonnes of ice annually over the same period. The Antarctic ice mass loss rate has tripled in the last decade and since 2009 there has been an acceleration of this loss in both ice caps. Glaciers are retreating almost everywhere in the world, and this can be observed in the Alps, Himalayas, Andes, Rocky Mountains, Alaska and Africa.

The global sea level has increased by about 20

centimeters in the last century. The rate in the last two decades, however, is almost doubled since the last century and is accelerating every year. Graph (18) shows how much the sea level has changed from 1870 to 2015.

Arctic Sea ice, which reaches its minimum every September, is currently falling at a rate of 12.85% for each decade, considering the average for the period between 1981 and 2010. Graph (19) shows the average monthly Arctic Sea Ice extent of each September since 1979, through satellite observations. The sea ice extent in 2012 is the lowest ever recorded.

Global Land-Ocean Temperature Index

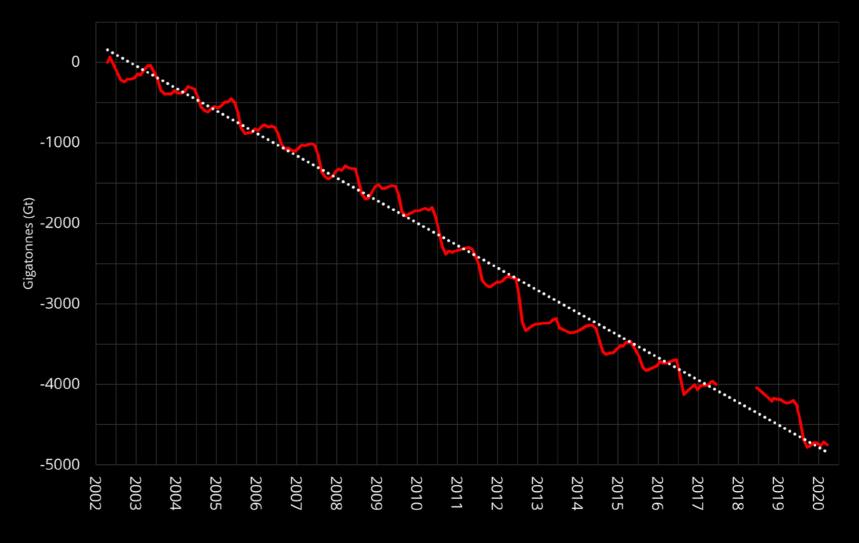


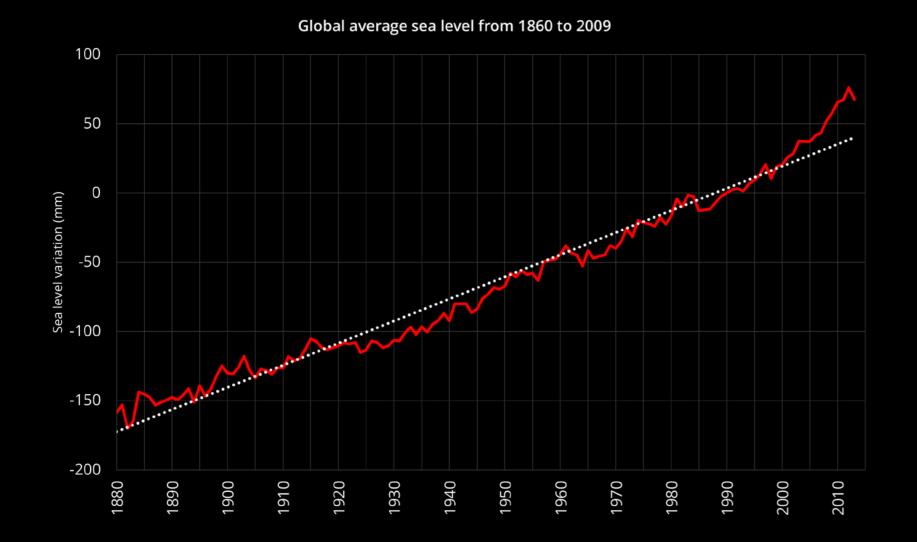
52 > Graph (15)

Antarctica mass variation since 2002

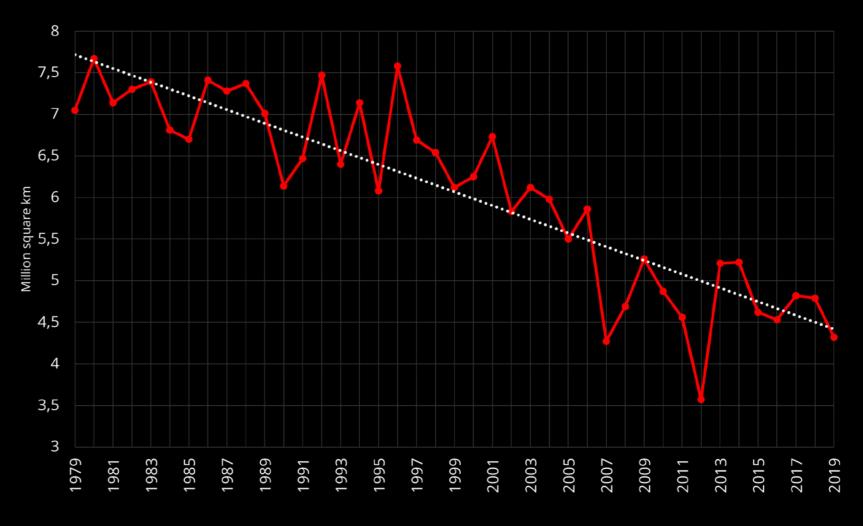


Greenland mass variation since 2002





Arctic Sea Ice, Average September extent



D.2 > Climate Change > Data

> Causes

It would be legit to think that changes in the Sun's energy production can change the climate. After all, scientific studies show that solar variability has played an important role in climate change in the past.

However, clear evidence shows that **current global warming cannot be explained by changes in the Sun's energy**: as we can see from the graph (20), the average amount of energy from the Sun has remained constant or increased slightly since 1750.

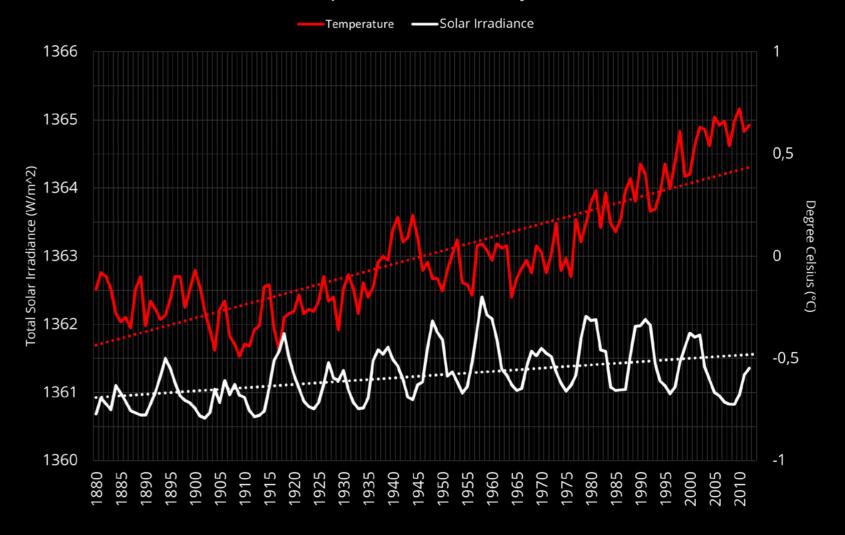
If warming were caused by a more active Sun, scientists would expect to see warmer temperatures in all layers of the atmosphere. Instead, they have observed cooling in the upper part of the atmosphere, and heating only in the middle and lower parts of the atmosphere. This is because greenhouse gases are trapping heat in the lower atmosphere. Climate models that follow changes in solar radiation cannot reproduce the temperature trend observed in the last century without including an increase in greenhouse gases.

Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, largely due to economic and population growth. Emissions of these gases from 2000 to 2010 were the highest in history. They created atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide at unprecedented levels over the last 800,000 years (Figure 14), leading to energy absorption by the climate system, altering it. In fact, these gases present in the atmosphere block the leakage of heat.

Human beings have increased the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere by more than a third since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Between 1750 and 2011 about half of the anthropogenic CO2 emissions have accumulated over the last 40 years, and this is the most attributable cause of climate change.

Carbon dioxide, produced largely by the industrial activities on which our civilization depends and which is increasingly exceeding the capabilities of the Earth's ecosystem to metabolize it with natural processes of chlorophyll photosynthesis, is accumulating in an rising quantity in the atmo-

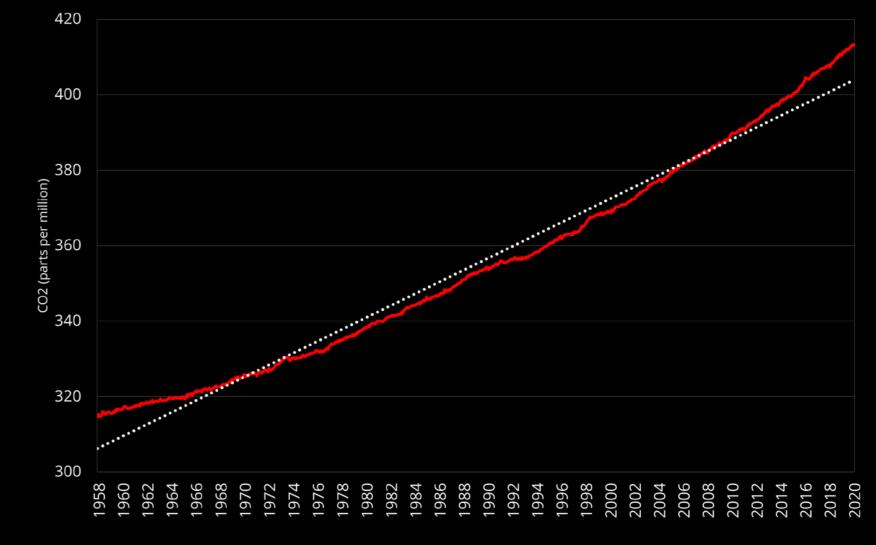
Temperature and Solar Activity



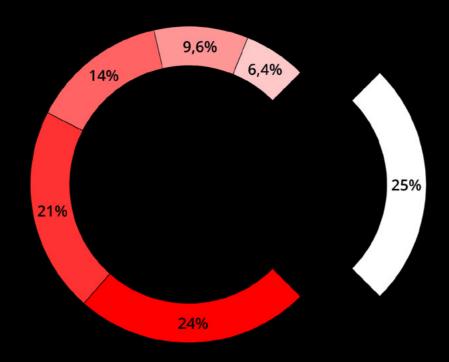
> Graph (20) Source: GISTEMP 3.1 / SATIRE-T2, PMOD.

sphere: there have been 280 parts per million in the last 8000 centuries, while in 2013 they have reached the value of 400, in just 150 years. As we can see from the graph (22), in 2010 35% of greenhouse gas emissions were released by the energy sector, 24% by the so-called AFOLU (agriculture, forestry and other land use), 21% by industry, 14% by transport and 6.4% by buildings. When emissions from electricity and heat production are attributed to sectors using final energy (i.e. indirect emissions), the overall shares from industry and buildings increase to 31% and 19% respectively.

Carbon dioxide level in the air, direct monthly measurement



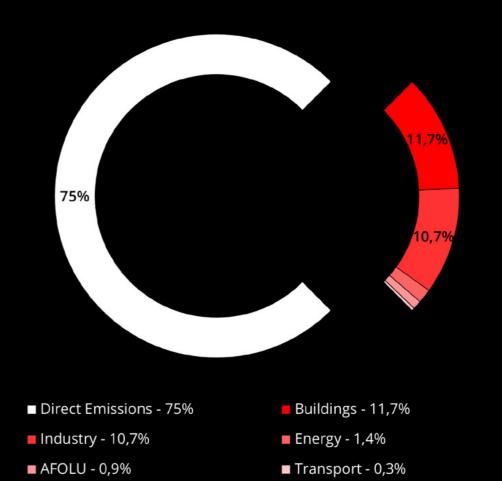
Greenhouse Gas Emission by Sector



- Electricity & Heat production (Indirect) 25%
- Industry 21%
- Other energy 9,6%

- AFOLU (Agricolture, forestry & other land use) 24%
- Transport 14%
- Buildings 6,4%

Indirect Greenhouse Gas Emission (Electricity & Heat production)



> Graph (23)

> Actual impacts

In recent decades climate change has had an impact on natural and human systems across the planet, indicating the Earth's sensitivity to this alteration.

The impacts on civilization are often geographically heterogeneous because they depend not only on changes in climate variables but also on social and economic factors. As a result, changes are more easily observable locally, while the location of the causes remains more difficult to detect.

According to the IPCC, the impacts currently found are:

- In many regions, changes in precipitation or melting snow and ice are altering hydrological systems, affecting water resources in terms of both quantity and quality.
- Many terrestrial, freshwater and marine species have shifted their peculiar geographical locations, seasonal activities, migration patterns, numbers and interactions between species.
- Several evaluations covering a large number of regions and cultivations show that the **impacts of**

climate change on their yields have been more frequently negative than positive.

- Currently, the rate of human disease caused by climate change worldwide is relatively low and not well quantified. However, there has been an increase in heat-related mortality, and rainfall has altered the proliferation of some waterborne diseases and other disease vectors.
- The number of cold days and nights has decreased and the number of hot days and nights has increased on a global scale. Human influence has more than doubled the probability of heat waves occurring in certain areas of the planet. In addition, abnormal droughts have occurred in many regions.
- The recent detection of increasing trends in extreme rainfall in some river basins means that there is an increased **risk of flooding on a regional scale**.
- Direct losses due to meteorological disasters have increased substantially in recent decades, both globally and regionally.

OBSERVED IMPACTS ATTRIBUTED TO CLIMATE CHANGE FOR

PHYSICAL SYSTEMS: **BIOLOGICAL SYSTEM: HUMAN SYSTEMS:** Glacier, snow, ice Terrestrial ecosystems Food production and/or permafrost Rivers, lakes, floods Livelihoods, health Wildfire and/or drought and/or economics Coastal erosion

Marine ecosystems

and/or sea level

effects

> Climate Change

> Future impacts and risks

D.2

Continued greenhouse gas emissions will cause further warming and lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of serious and irreversible impacts on people and ecosystems. Indeed, the risks of such impacts will increase as the scale of warming increases. Limiting climate change would require substantial and lasting reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. However, warming caused by **CO2** emissions is irreversible, and many aspects of climate change and its impacts will continue for centuries, even if human emissions of these gases cease. Future projections of greenhouse gas emissions vary across a broad spectrum, depending both on socio-economic development and climate policy in different locations around the planet. However, surface temperature is projected to

However, surface temperature is projected to increase during the 21th century in all scenarios assessed by the IPCC. Precisely, the most likely predicted global change in surface temperature is optimistically between 1,5°C and 2°C by 2100, almost three times last century. This estimate was

made on the assumption of a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide contribution by 2020. However, the most pessimistic estimates reach an increase of 5,5°C by 2100, with devastating and apocalyptic effects for the planet beyond the 3°C threshold. If humanity continues to act as it does today, it will lead to an increase in the global average temperature of at least 4°C within the end of this century.

The consequences of the change in this natural process are difficult to predict, but some effects seem highly likely.

Reporting possible future impacts according to the IPCC:

- It is very likely that heat waves will occur more often and last longer, and that extreme precipitation events will become more intense and frequent in many regions, although not uniform. Ocean will continue to heat and acidify, and global average sea level will rise.
- It is virtually certain that the extremes of hot and cold temperatures will become more frequent in most areas of the territory, as the global average temperature of the earth's surface increases.

- Climate change will amplify existing risks and create new risks, which will be unevenly distributed and will generally be greater for disadvantaged people and communities in all countries, regardless of development levels.

- Persistent high emissions would lead to mostly **negative impacts on biodiversity**, the ecosystem as a whole and economic development, and would amplify the risks to livelihoods and food and human security.

The risks of harmful impacts on ecosystems and human systems increase with the rate and scale of warming, ocean acidification, sea level rise and other dimensions of climate change. They will vary over time depending on the vulnerability and exposure of human and natural systems, and their adaption capability. According to the IPCC, the likely risks could be the following:

- A large proportion of terrestrial, freshwater and marine species are at risk of extinction due to climate change during and beyond the 21st century.
- The global redistribution of marine species and the reduction of marine biodiversity in sensitive

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regions as a result of climate change will challenge the productivity of fisheries and other ecosystem services, especially at low latitudes.

> Data

- Marine ecosystems, in particular coral reefs and polar ecosystems, are at risk of extinction due to ocean acidification.
- Coastal systems and low-lying areas will increasingly suffer submersion, flooding and erosion throughout the 21th century and beyond due to rising sea levels.
- It is expected that the fractions of the global population that will suffer from **water scarcity** and will be affected by **large river floods will increa**se
- Climate change is expected to reduce renewable surface water and groundwater resources in most arid subtropical regions, increasing competition for water between sectors.
- All aspects of food security are potentially affected, including production, access, use and food price stability.
- Climate change is expected to lead to increased health problems in many regions and especially in low-income developing countries.

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> Climate Change

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- In urban areas, climate change is expected to increase risks to people, goods, economies and ecosystems, including risks from heat stress, storms and extreme rainfall, inland and coastal floods, landslides, air pollution, droughts, water scarcity, sea level rise and storm waves.

D.2

- Rural areas are expected to have a major impact on water availability and supply, food security, infrastructure and farm incomes, including changes in food and non-food crop production areas around the world.
- Aggregate economic losses accelerate as temperatures rise, but the global economic impacts of climate change are currently difficult to estimate.
- From a poverty perspective, the impact of **climate change is expected to slow economic growth**, make poverty reduction more difficult, further erode food security, prolong existing poverty traps and create new ones, especially in urban areas.
- Climate change is expected to increase displacement of people, producing the so called climate migration.

Global warming brings not only climatic **but also**

social consequences. The *World Social Report* 2020 showed that the proportion of the incomes of 10% of the richest and 10% of the poorest people in this world is 25% higher than it would be in a world without global warming.

Concerning security, on the other hand, the prestigious scientific journal *Nature* has predicted an increase in armed conflict of up to 26% if the global temperature continues to rise.

> Worse than expected

There are some estimates that are much worse than those shown by the IPCC. In fact, an alarming analysis leaded by researchers of Australia's National Center for Climate Restoration outlines a scenario in which by 2050 global warming will exceed 3°C, triggering fatal changes in the global ecosystem and colossal migrations by at least one billion people. This scenario is described in the well-documented scientific study entitled *Existential climate-related security risk*.

In this scenario, the year 2050 would represent the beginning of the end. A large part of terre-

strial ecosystems collapse, from the Arctic to the Amazon to the Coral Reef. 35% of the Earth's surface, where 55% of the world's population lives, is hit by lethal heat waves for at least 20 days a year. 30% of the Earth's surface becomes arid: the Mediterranean, Western Asia, the Middle East, Middle and Southwest Australia and the United States become uninhabitable. A colossal water crisis affects about two billion people, while global agriculture implodes, with crops plummeting by 20% and prices skyrocketing, leading to at least one billion climate refugees. Wars and famine lead to a probable end to human civility as we understand it today.

The hypothesis of the study is that there are risks of global warming not calculated by the Paris Accords and capable of posing "existential risks" to human civilization. The climate change hypotheses outlined in 2015 by the Paris Accords, equal to an increase of 3°C by 2100, do not take into account the mechanism of *long term carbon feedback* with which planet tends to amplify climate change in a negative sense, thus leading to a further increase in temperature.

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If carbon feedback is also taken into account, according to several sources including different scientists, there is a real risk that there will be a 3°C of warming up already by 2050, and a 5°C increase by 2100. Human civilization would not be able to see them in time, since most scientists believe that an increase of 4°C would destroy the world's ecosystem and lead to the end of civilization as we know it today. A dangerous scenario in which, as Hans Joachim Schellnhuber of the Potsdam Institute notes, "the human species will probably somehow survive, but we will destroy everything we have built up over the last two thousand years". The real problem underlined by the Australian study, is represented by some climatic "thresholds of no return" such as the destruction of the polar caps and the consequent rise in sea level. Points of no return which, once exceeded, would transform the climate change into a non-linear event that is difficult to predict with the tools available to science today. After the overcoming of those points, global warming would self-feed itself even without human action, making any late attempt to eliminate emissions useless.

> Data

Inequality D.3 > Data

Inequality has been on the rise across the globe for several decades. Some countries have reduced the numbers of people living in extreme poverty. But economic gaps have continued to grow as the very richest amass unprecedented levels of wealth.

The 70% of the world's population lives in countries, rich and poor, where inequality has increased in the past three decades.

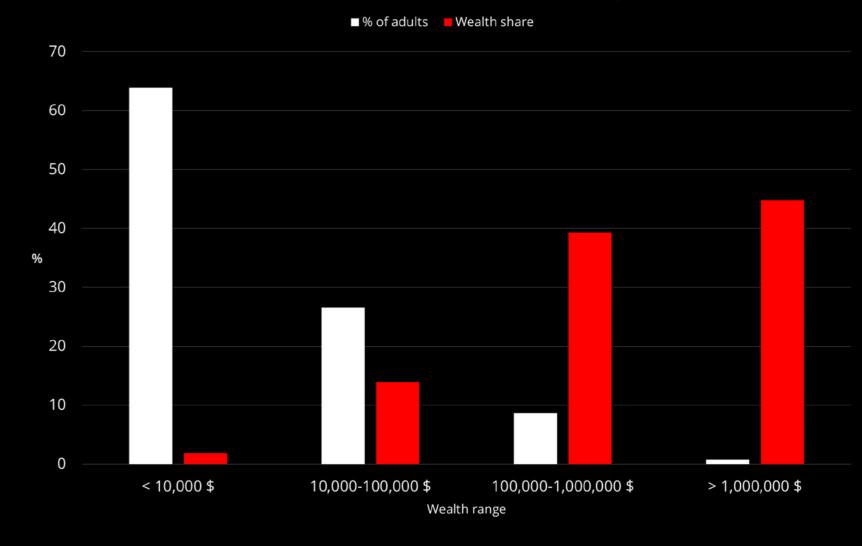
According to the new *Oxfam report* 2019, the gap between rich and poor in the world is widening. In 2018, **26 billionaires possessed the same weal-th as the poorest half of the planet**.

In 2018, the assets of the "super-rich" increased by 12%, at a rate of \$2,5 billion a day. During the same period, the poorest half of humanity, about 3,8 billion people, saw their wealth decrease by 11%. In the middle of last year, the richest 1% held just under half (47,2%) of the aggregate net wealth, compared with the 0,4% allocated to the poorest half of the world's population. While the share of global wealth in the hands of the richest 1% has been growing since 2011, the reduction in extreme poverty is on the opposite trend. The annual

rate of extreme poverty reduction has fallen by 40%. The increase in extreme poverty, according to Oxfam, would primarily affect the most vulnerable parts of our planet, one out of all sub-Saharan Africa.

The Oxfam report also highlights a tax system that ends up weighing more heavily on the poorer sections of society by taxing income from labour and consumption. Taxes on assets, such as real estate, land or inheritance taxes, have been reduced, or eliminated altogether, in many rich countries and are barely made available in developing countries. Taxation of higher income earners and large companies has been significantly reduced in recent decades. In rich countries, for example, on average, the maximum rate of personal income tax has risen from 62% in 1970 to 38% in 2013. In developing countries it has stabilised at an average of 28%. For 90 large corporations, the effective corporate income tax rate rose from 34% to 24% between 2000 and 2016. Taking both direct and indirect taxes into account, in countries like Brazil or the UK, 10% of the poorest pay more taxes in proportion to income than the richest

Global adult population and share of total wealth by wealth groups, 2018



> Graph (24) Source: Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, 2019.

D.3 Inequality > Data

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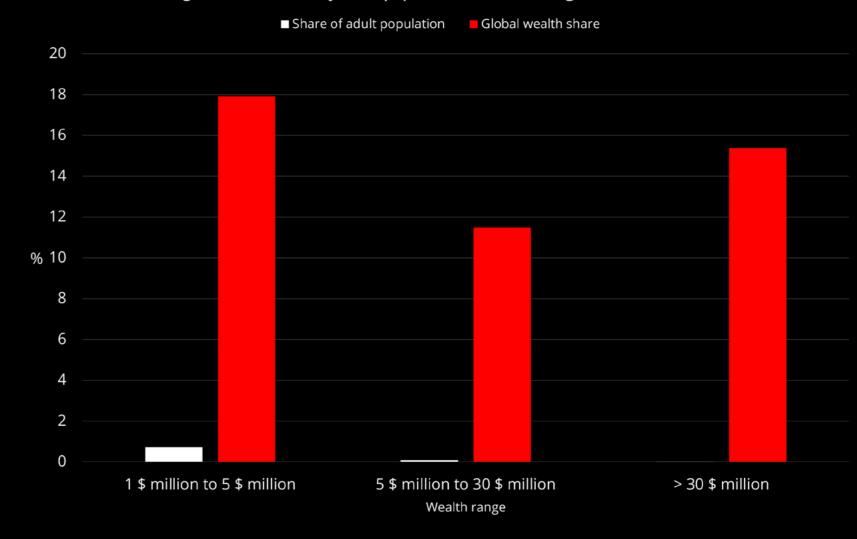
10%. According to Oxfam's calculations, if the 1% richest paid just 0,5% more in taxes on their wealth, there would be sufficient resources to send 262 million children to school and save the lives of 100 million people over the next decade.

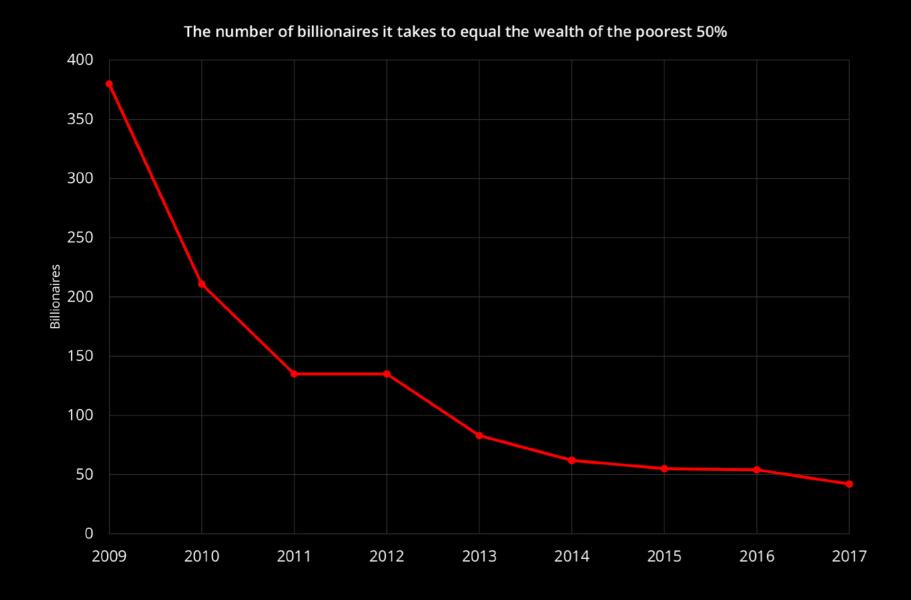
The report also shows a strong correlation between economic inequality and gender inequality. In fact, on a global level, men own 50% more of women's net wealth and control over 86% of companies. The gender pay gap is 23% in favour of men. In addition, this figure does not take into account the free contribution of women to care work. Oxfam estimates that if all the unpaid care work done by women in the world, which to date is not accounted for in official statistics, was contracted out to a single company, it would achieve a turnover of \$10 trillion a year.

Oxfam also puts the spotlight on the conditions of public services at global level, which are systematically underfunded or outsourced to private actors. The consequence is that the poorest people are often at risk of being excluded. In many countries, it highlights organization, quality education and health care have become a luxury that only

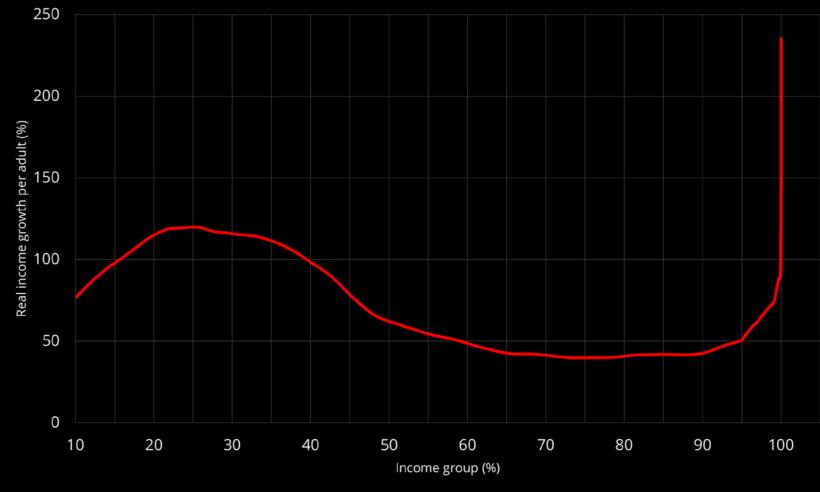
the richest can afford. Every day 10,000 people in the world die because they cannot afford medical care. People live longer in more equitable countries. In developing countries, a child from a poor family has twice the chance of dying by the age of 5 compared to a wealthy peer. In fact, more unequal nations have higher infant mortality. It's interesting to see that according to a research of University of Oxford, "extreme inequality appears to affect how people perceive their wel-**Iness**; in nations where the top 1% hold a greater share of national income, people tend to have a lower sense of personal well-being." This trend is shown in chart (6). Moreover, researchers found links between inequality and mental health. In fact, "countries with larger rich-poor gaps have a higher risk of schizophrenia incidences." They believe that higher inequality decreases social cohesion and increases chronic stress.

High-wealth owners by adult population and share of global wealth, 2018

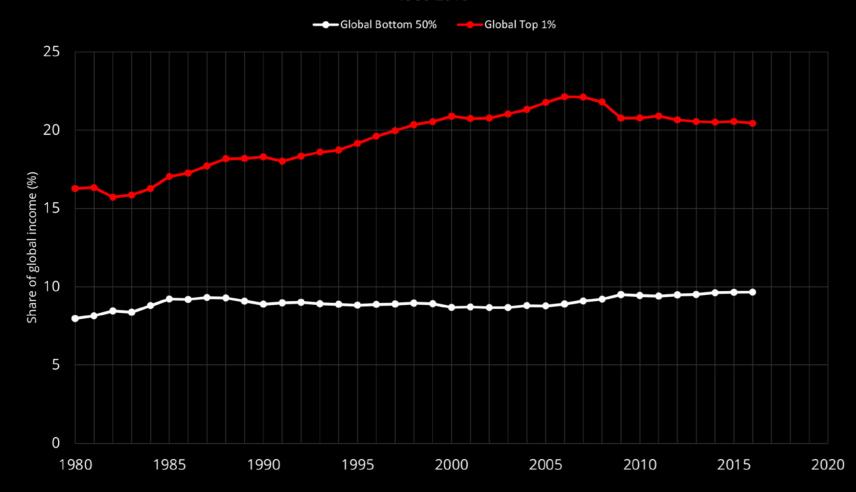




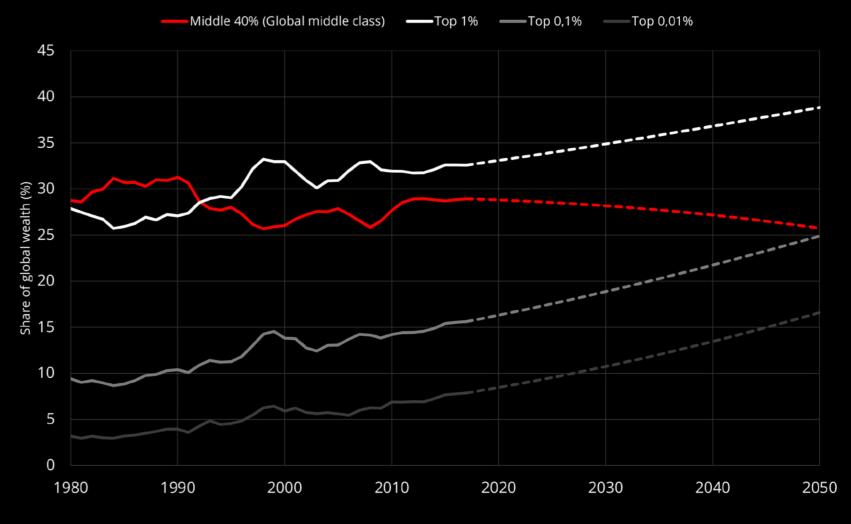
Total income growth by percentile across all world regions, 1980-2016: scaled by population



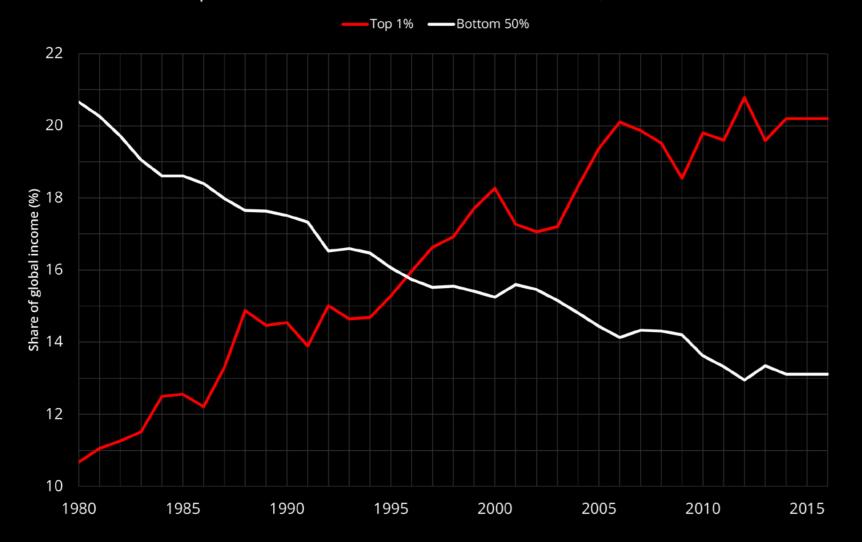
The rise of the global top 1% versus the stagnation of the global bottom 50%, 1980-2016



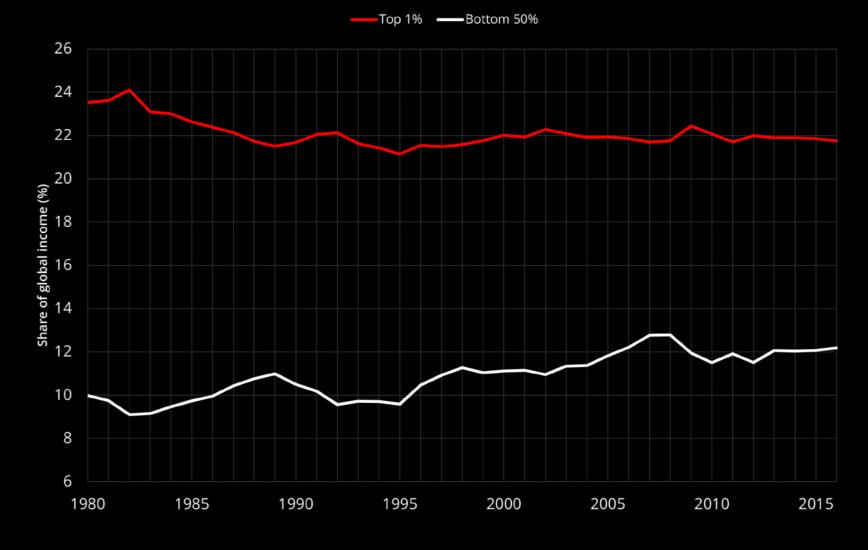
The squeezed global wealth middle class, assuming "business as usual", 1980–2050



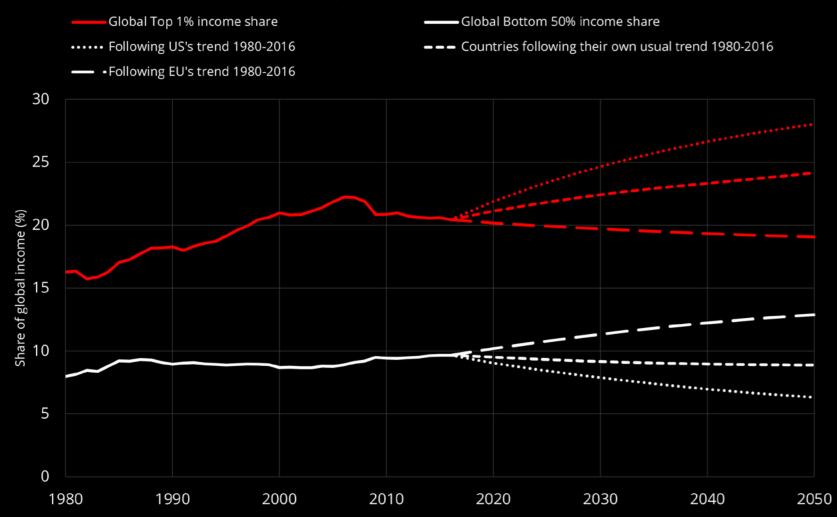
Top 1% vs. Bottom 50% national income shares in the US, 1980–2016



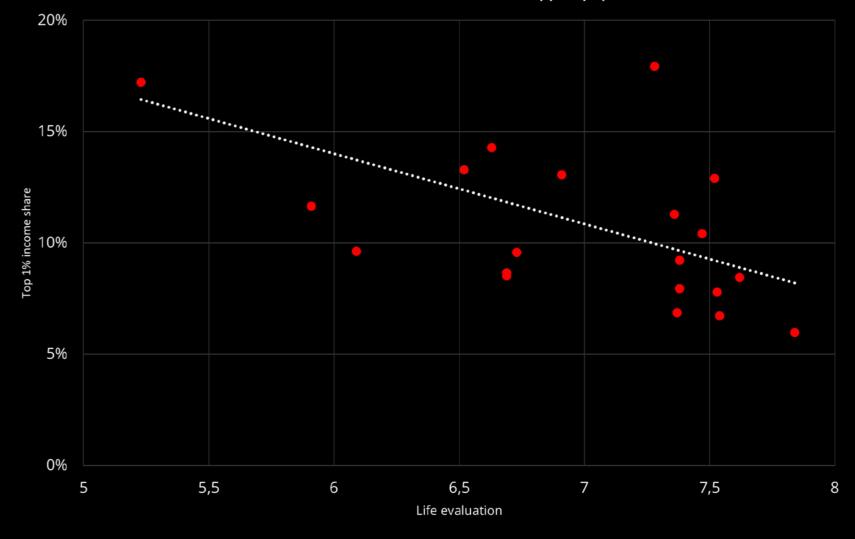
Top 1% vs. Bottom 50% national income shares in Western Europe, 1980–2016



Prospects for global income inequality in the future



Nations with less income concentration have happier populations



> Graph (33)

> Graph (32) Source: World Inequality Lab, World Inequality Report, 2018.

Source: Saïd Business School, University of Oxford.

> Sources D.

> D.1

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> D.2

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> D.3

https://inequality.org/facts/global-inequality/;

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https://wir2018.wid.world/files/download/wir2018-full-report-english.pdf>.

Utopia?

During the International Climate Conference held in Paris in 2015, 195 countries discussed a new agreement to reduce emissions in order to slow down global warming, .

The Paris Accord states that increase in temperature should be kept below 2 degrees Celsius, trying to stop at 1,5°C. To meet the target, emissions must start to fall from 2020. The whole world joined in, including the four biggest polluters: in addition to Europe, China, India and the United States have also committed to cutting emissions. The text provides for a review of the targets to take place every five years. The first five-yearly review will then take place in 2023.

Te countries of old industrialization will provide one hundred billion per year (from 2020) to spread green technologies worldwide and decarbonize the economy. A new financial target will be set in 2025 at the latest. Funds and private investors will also be able to contribute. Nevertheless, some critics emerged from the scientists.

Many critics say that it is risky to set the first revision of national emission targets in 2018-2023. If the world continues to pollute as usual for

another three years, it will then be impossible to reach the Paris Accord targets.

Moreover, no date for zero emissions was set: the demand of environmentalists was to achieve a 70% reduction from current levels around 2050, and to achieve zero emissions in the following decade. Oil and gas producers, both companies and countries, opposed this and obtained **no date for the decarbonisation of the economy**.

The controls will be self-certified: the most industrialized countries wanted international corporates to check whether each country was complying with its emission quotas; the emerging countries (especially China) asked and obtained instead that each state verify its own. Finally, there would be no action on planes and ships: the emissions of a flight between Beijing and Rome, for example, are by definition international and no country wants to count them among its own.

However, in addiction to these critics, President of USA Donald Trump has criticized the Paris Accord since the 2016 election campaign and after taking office in the White House, he cancelled many of the environmental laws promoted by the Obama

Administration, claiming they were penalizing US companies. The actual withdrawal from the agreement will be official in 2020.

Then, after another failure of the 25th Climate Conference of Madrid in 2019, IPCC has sounded the alarm, affirming that "global efforts must multiply if we want to avoid an increase in the Earth's average temperature of more than 1,5°C compared to the pre-industrial temperature, the threshold beyond which extreme events on Earth could prove catastrophic. With the current plans, instead, it would easily reach the 3,2°C increase by the end of the century".

The problem of global warming is so big and complex that it probably cannot enter the cognitive space of political decision-makers. None of them, moreover, have enough specific expertise to be able to fully understand the urgency of the data. Moreover, it is an uncomfortable and highly anxiogenic subject, which goes against the strong rhetoric and the sense of omnipotence of many heads of government.

Being a complex problem, it calls for highly complex solutions, the results of which will only be

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seen in the medium to long term. Exactly the opposite of what politicians want: easy solutions, with certain achievements, that gain immediate consensus and work in the short term. Moreover, it is the worst problem to propose to leaders who, by role and position, tend to think primarily of themselves and their fortunes: nothing else but worrying about humanity as a whole, and about future generations.

It is difficult for anyone to imagine the future. It is especially difficult for those who are totally immersed in the power games of the present. And it's terrible to say: we can only imagine the future from our memory of the past. But in our memory there is not yet, evidently, a sufficient number of climatic catastrophes to terrify us enough.

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> Utopia?

The EU is the only major economy in the world to have established a legislative framework in all sectors of the economy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in line with the Paris agreement of

U.2

Green Deal, big deal?

2015.

The purpose of the *Green New Deal* is precisely to respond to the emergency of climate change. For the first time, a law that is mandatory for all EU countries has established **the achievement of emission neutrality by 2050**. All EU countries will receive a financial aid package to effectively start the transition.

Total investment will be **1000 billion of euros over 10 years**. Several funds will be activated, necessary for the various European regions to start the economic, productive and labour market conversion.

The legislative project aims to promote a fair and equitable transition to a sustainable economy with zero environmental impact in all member countries. Specifically, the law aims to **decarbonise the energy sector**, which accounts for 75% of greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, the transformation will affect the who-

le industrial production system. Innovating the entire sector and becoming a world leader in the green economy is the ambitious goal of the law. Mobility will also have to be rethought in terms of sustainability. Transport is responsible for 25% of the continent's pollutant emissions. It will be essential to rethink the means of transport in EU countries in order to minimize their impact on the environment. Finally, the project will also involve construction, encouraging the production of new residential buildings and the maintenance of existing ones with a perspective of energy saving.

These are all desiderable goals, but they are insufficient since they still are embedded in the economical framework permeated in **the myth of**"green growth", which it turns to be a form of greenwashing that will lead us to ecological collapse.

Greenwashing is a neologism indicating the communication strategy of certain companies, organizations or political institutions aimed at building a deceptively positive self-image in terms of environmental impact, in order to divert public attention from the negative environmental effects of their activities or products.



Over the last twenty years we have believed that we can increase GDP by reducing emissions. This has not happened and is unlikely to happen in the future, as the latest report by the European Enivronmental Bureau shows.

That infinite growth in a finite biosphere is a non-sense, we have known since 1972, when a group of young scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published the report *The Limits of Development*, opening up a worldwide debate on the environment. In the same years, a new indicator called **Earth Overshoot Day** was born. Provided by the Global Footprint Network, an international non-profit organization, it shows the day of the year when we finish consuming completely planetary resources that should be sufficient for the whole year. In 2019 it was July 29, ten days earlier than 2018. It means that already by now we would need one Earth and three quarters to meet the global need for resources.

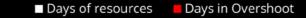
It was enough to pretend to accept their observations by creating the concepts of "sustainable development" and "green growth" to stop the radical transformation of that alarm. The institutions

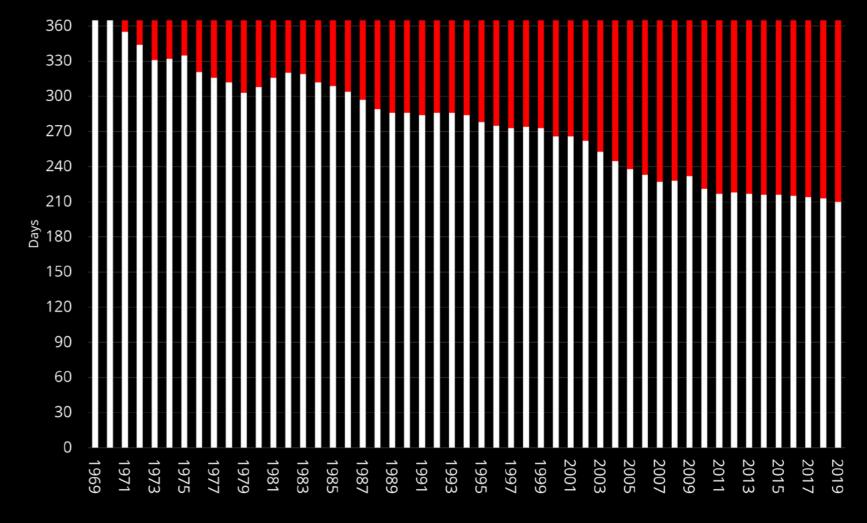
recognised the environmental risks of growth at all costs, but allowed the economic system not to change its logic. The narrative has spread that, by investing in efficiency, GDP could continue to rise, while the climate and environmental impact of production would fall.

This has never happened and the latest report by the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), a network of over 143 organisations based in more than 30 countries, shows that in the future there are no signs of a decoupling of economic growth and environmental impact. The international team of researchers who have worked for the EEB believe that the priority is no longer to increase, but to reduce the production of goods and services, especially in rich countries. **Efficiency is important, but more important must be sufficiency**. In simple terms, we must regain a sense of individual and collective limits.

The dossier opens a crack in the granitic narrative about "green growth" by dismantling the decoupling pillar that supports it. To understand how radical the introduction of the concept of sufficiency as a landmark of policymaking would be, it is

Earth Overshoot Days from 1969 to 2019





enough to think that, if the EEB experts are right, all environmental and climate policies should be rethought, as well as economic policies at all levels. International institutions and governments should drive the economy on ecological agendas, reducing the scale of production, trade and consumption. Practically a U-turn from globalisation as we know it. This is extremely difficult, since the idea of "green growth" and its ability to decouple economic progress from environmental degradation has been a feature of all the vision documents of the world's major institutions over the last twenty years.

It all started in 2001, when the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) embraced **the objective of** *decoupling*, which then became a cornerstone of its strategy towards "sustainable growth".

In 2012, World Bank participate in a unanimous chorus that included *decoupling* among the specific targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, the UN's "Bible" for the future of humanity on the planet. From here on, it was a proliferation of research and studies that confirmed how the

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economy in some sectors and in some countries was progressively getting rid of the stigma of emissions.

According to researchers at the European Environmental Bureau, who conducted the first analysis of all the empirical and theoretical literature on the subject, "not only is there no empirical evidence to support the existence of a decoupling of economic growth from environmental pressures to an extent even close to what would be needed to deal with environmental collapse, but, perhaps more importantly, it seems unlikely that such a decoupling will occur in the future". The report achieves these strong conclusions on the basis of one assumption: the validity of the "green growth" discourse implies a global, absolute and permanent, large and quite rapid decoupling of economic growth from all negative impacts on the environment. In all cases considered (raw materials, energy, water, greenhouse gases, land, water pollutants and biodiversity loss) decoupling is only relative, temporary or localised.

The report shows that the enthusiasm of "green growth" supporters is the result of "substantial"

statistical fiction", and gives at least seven reasons to be sceptical about the possibility of absolute and sufficient decoupling in the future.

The report shows that the enthusiasm of "green growth" supporters is the result of "substantial statistical fiction", and gives at least seven reasons to be sceptical about the possibility of absolute and sufficient decoupling in the future. The first is that we are facing an increase in energy costs: extracting resources usually becomes more expensive as stocks are exhausted, resulting in increased pressure on the environment (EROEI index). Then there are the **rebound effects**: efficiency improvements are often compensated, wholly or in part, by using savings to increase consumption in the same or other sectors. It is not unusual, for example, for a low-consumption car to be used more often, or for the money saved at the petrol station to be spent on an air flight that otherwise could not be afforded. Nor should shifting of problems **be underestimated**: technological solutions to an environmental problem can create new ones or exacerbate others. The production of electricity for private mobility, for example, puts pressure on

lithium, copper and cobalt reserves, while biofuels take land away from food production.

The fourth reason to be wary is the **underestima-ted impact of services**, which are based on a real economy: their ecological footprint adds to material production, not replaces it.

It is also necessary to be honest about the limited potential for recycling. Today little is recycled, rates are growing slowly and the sector has a limited capacity to support a growing material economy. Insufficient and inappropriate technological changes are also the basis of a wrong direction of technical progress, too little interest in the factors that matter for ecological sustainability, not enough disruptive and not fast enough.

Finally, the most optimistic analyses do not take into account *cost shifting*, i.e. the externalisation of environmental impact to other countries, favoured by the rules of international trade. It is wrong to observe a decoupling in one area of the planet without calculating the weight of relocations.

In front of these results, and with just ten years to reverse global warming trends, the report of the

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European Environmental Bureau poses a question that can no longer be postponed: **to go beyond growth in policy writing**. Twenty years of "green growth" strategies by all major international institutions have not led to the expected results: "Decoupling", the researchers write in their conclusions, "has failed to achieve the ecological sustainability it promised. It is not that efficiency gains are not necessary, but it is unrealistic to expect them to be able to disconnect a constantly growing economic metabolism from its biophysical base in an absolute, global and permanent way". To use this alone to solve environmental problems "seems to be extremely risky and irresponsible".

The choice of organizing around the **concept of sufficiency is not a choice of sacrifice**, unemployment, growing inequality, poverty and the reduction of the welfare state. Rather, **it is the choice of an equitable economy** that remains within the resilience of the biosphere.



How to degrowth? U.3

At present, different currents of thought coexist concerning the meaning given to the concept of sufficiency and degrowth.

Although they all agree in certain points, the first of which is to leave the consumerist society as it is now conceived, there are still some contrasting shades. For example, the differences between one of the most famous spokesmen of the degrowth movement, Serge Latouche, and the Italian school of this movement, supported by Maurizio Pallante and Alessandro Pertosa, are visible.

For the latter, the degrowth movement, in order to be feasible, must be implemented through the concept of a "happy degrowth".

The "happy degrowth" underlines in the introduction the difference between the concepts of goods and commodities, which the finalization of the economy to the growth of goods production tends to confuse. Goods are objects or services that correspond to a need or satisfy a desire; commodities are objects and services that you buy. But some commodities do not respond to any need and do not satisfy any desire: such as waste. And not all goods must necessarily be bou-

ght; that is: **not all goods are classifiable as commodities**, some can be **self-produced or exchanged** in the form of a gift in community relations.

The parameter used to calculate economic growth, GDP, measures the monetary value of goods and services for final use produced and sold over a given period of time, so it includes *commodities* that are not *goods* (waste) and excludes *goods* that do not pass through a purchase or sale (*goods* that are not *commodities*). Therefore, in order to be *happy*, degrowth can be achieved both by **reducing purchases of** *commodities* that are not *goods*, because this reduction does not involve deprivation of any kind, on the contrary it contributes to reduce the environmental impact, and by **increasing self-production of** *goods* and exchanges based on gift and reciprocity, because in this way dependence on the market is reduced.

Happy degrowth is not considered the economic or political goal of a society, nor a model applicable in the same way in any situation, but it is a **non-violent revolutionary path**, which everyone must follow if they want to escape the ideological domination imposed by capitalism and the tech-

nical society. Compared to other decreasing theories, this libertarian opposition does not prefigure a model of society alternative to that based on the growth of the production of goods, but qualifies itself as a value horizon towards which to move, each according to his or her own capacities and sensibilities. p.40

At the same time, it is also a libertarian proposal for economic and industrial policy that requires the development of a more evolved technology, but differently oriented with respect to the current function of domination of the human species over nature, according to the anthropocentric philosophical approach, aimed at reducing waste and inefficiency in the use of the Earth's resources.

Degrowth is not an goal, but an instrument of liberation from domination.

Serge Latouche, on the other hand, considers it more as a purpose rather than a means, a model rather than a libertarian practice, a proposal that leads to the society of degrowth that risks falling back into ideology, forcing thought within a pre-constituted scheme that replicates the domain from which it was intended to be freed. As if

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degrowth, and not equity between human beings and nature, was the real aim of community action. P.41 Ideology is a scheme that forces reality to enter into its interior, bending it to its needs, to its preconditions. Because social, economic and political practice, if it is aimed at the realization of the society of degrowth, at a model to be proposed everywhere, eventually results in being dystopic and undesirable.

On the other hand, it is necessary a multi-versalist degrowth, which aims to replace universalist sign, now blurred by totalitarian tendencies, with the essential recognition of diversity. A proposal of freedom has to be relative and singular. Latouche thinks he can speak indiscriminately of project, purpose, horizon, omitting to say, however, that degrowth, if it wants to preserve itself from ideological risk, must show itself as a modus operandi, personal and communitarian at the same time, or a way out of the domino that everyone, on their own initiative, in relation to the environmental context in which they find themselves, embodies in the ways and forms they consider most appropriate.

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Are we ready? U.4 > Utopia?

We are witnessing the sixth mass extinction. Scientists warn that a million species are at risk of extinction in a few decades; populations of wild animals have more than halved since 1970, while the human population has doubled. The devastation of ecosystems is deep and no country is maintaining the Paris Accords. Current policies will take us to an average global temperature of 3 to 5°C higher than in the pre-industrial era, with devastating effects. We are already at +1°C of average global warming. Serious research has shown that for every further degree of warming one billion more human beings will live in inhospitable areas for agricultural life and production.

The society we know today will change drastically: even if we reset all emissions to zero today, we would still exceed 2°C of warming by inertia of the system. The models do not take sufficient account of *feedback cycles*, which are self-powered and can lead us to a point of no return. The inaction of governments in the face of this emergency is intolerable; it is necessary a declaration of emergency and immediate concrete action.

In a systemic vision of the world, environmental

sustainability is closely linked to social justice and human rights.

The planet risks a *climatic apartheid* in which the rich have the means to escape hunger and conflict "while the rest of the world suffers". This is the alarm raised by Philip Alston, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty, in the report published on 25 June 2019. According to Alston, climate change will mainly affect the poorest, but it also threats democracy and human rights. It also risks cancelling 50 years of progress and "could lead to 120 million more people falling into poverty by 2030".

In fact, vast areas of the planet could reach temperatures at levels barely acceptable for human survival, and with no chance of returning. An unlivable heat for a third of humans, and it could happen within 50 years.

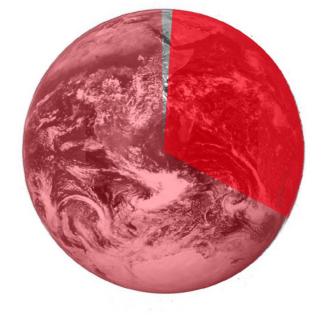
The alarm is raised by the study Future of the Human Climate Niche, just published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, carried out by a team of scientists from China, the United States and Europe and according to which, if emissions continue to increase, the average tem-

Weight of vertebrate land animals

Today







1% humans

99% wild animals

32% humans

1% wild animals

67% livestock



perature perceived by humans will rise by 7.5°C by 2070. An increase greater than that expected for the average temperature of the planet, i.e. a little more than 3°C and which is equivalent to an unprecedented crisis.

If greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase, the study reports, the areas of the planet that are home to one third of human beings will become, within 50 years, as hot as the hottest parts of the Sahara desert. This would mean that **3,5 billion people would eventually live outside the** *climate niche* in which humans have prospered for 6,000 years.

Human populations are largely concentrated in a restricted climate range, particularly in places where the average annual temperature is around 11-15°C while a small number of people live in places where the average temperature is around 20-25°C. A constant climatic niche in the history of mankind that has found there the optimal conditions to allow the species to survive and prosper. But the rapid increase in temperature would lead about 30% of the world's population to live in places with an average temperature above 29°C

within 50 years, climatic conditions that are currently experienced only on 0,8% of the surface of the emerged lands, mainly in the warmer parts of the Sahara. But by 2070, the study denounces the study, they could affect 19% of the surface of the emerged lands.

Three and a half billion people, those exposed to extreme heat, could decide to migrate. Extreme heat means difficulty in obtaining water and food, famines, migration, and a thousand other disorders. As already seen, calculations show that every degree above current levels corresponds to approximately one billion people who will end up outside the climate niche that could decide to migrate.

Archaeology gives us many examples of how climate change has increased migration flows.

Environmental migrants are people or groups of people who, for imperative reasons of sudden or progressive changes to the environment that negatively affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their usual homes or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move both within their country and beyond.

The issues that arise are linked to the need to deal with these migrations: currently the cities and **urban areas** in which climate migrants are established (assumed 70% by 2050: the World Bank director, Kristalina Georgieva, called it "population shock"), **are not able to manage issues such as social services, housing or work**. Therefore, it is necessary to think about the inevitable human costs that this type of migration also brings with it, starting to forecast **an increase in the number of inhabitants in slums** (40% in 2050), without adequate hygienic-sanitary conditions and in extreme poverty.

In order to face this problem, it is not just about policymaking, but even personal choices affect climate change. As British naturalist David Attenborough affirmed, "all of our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder, and ultimately impossible, to solve with ever more people."

In fact, United Nations estimates that **by 2050 there will be at least 10 billion human beings on Earth**. A little too many, it seems, at least from the point of view of sustainable development. It is a

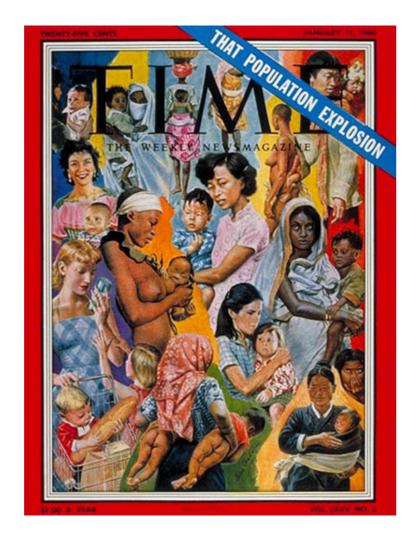
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logical reasoning, all things considered: the more people there are, the greater will be the *carbon footprint*, that is, the environmental impact. And so, according to a scientific study by the Swedish University of Lund, which have investigated and listed 39 environmental studies and reports, **we need to reduce the size of families**.

It doesn't end there: those who really want to help the Farth will also have to follow a much more sober, sustainable and pollution-conscious lifestyle. In particular, they will have to do at least three other decisive actions: give up meat, give up their own car and, above all, give up travelling by plane. It is urgent and necessary to look at the food we put on the plate also from this point of view: choose whether to eat polluting or respecting the planet. A beef burger has an average water footprint of 2350 liters: it's the water a human being drinks in three years. A soy burger, on the other hand, has a water footprint of only 7% of its meat equivalent. Between pastures and land used for animal feed, 77% of the world's farmland is exploited, but only 17% of global calorie needs and 33% of global protein needs are produced. A great waste, consi-

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dering that one in nine people in the world suffer from hunger and one in three has a form of malnutrition. Meat production alone accounts for 15% of greenhouse gas emissions, more than the transport sector. The problem is worse when it is considered that the livestock sector emits 65% of global nitrous oxide and 50% of methane: these gases are 298 and 25 times more polluting than carbon dioxide respectively (IPCC). According to environmental scientists, it is eight times better to adopt a vegetarian diet rather than energy-saving light bulbs and four times better than recycling. And if instead of having two children you only have one, it's 60 times better for the environment than being a vegetarian.





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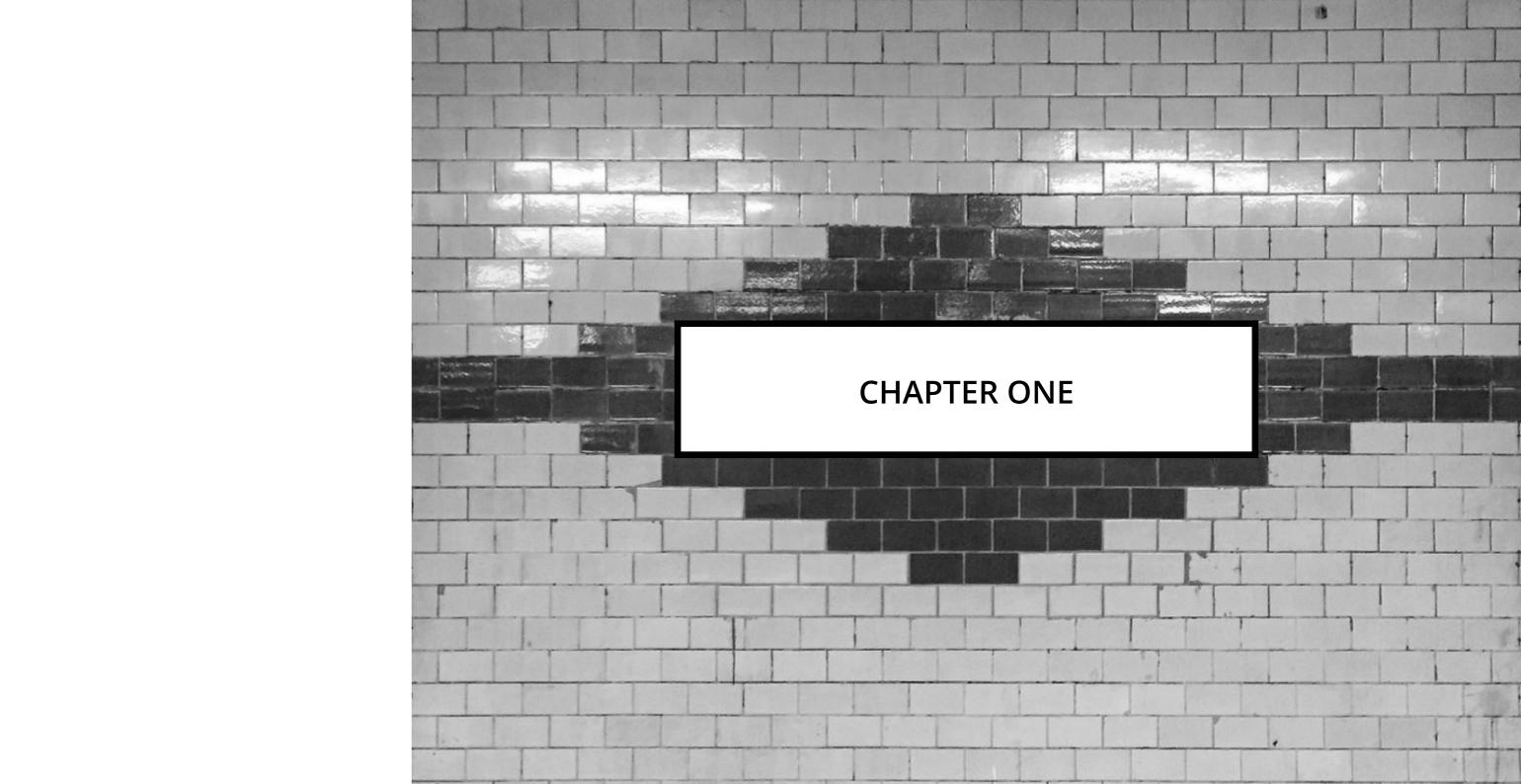
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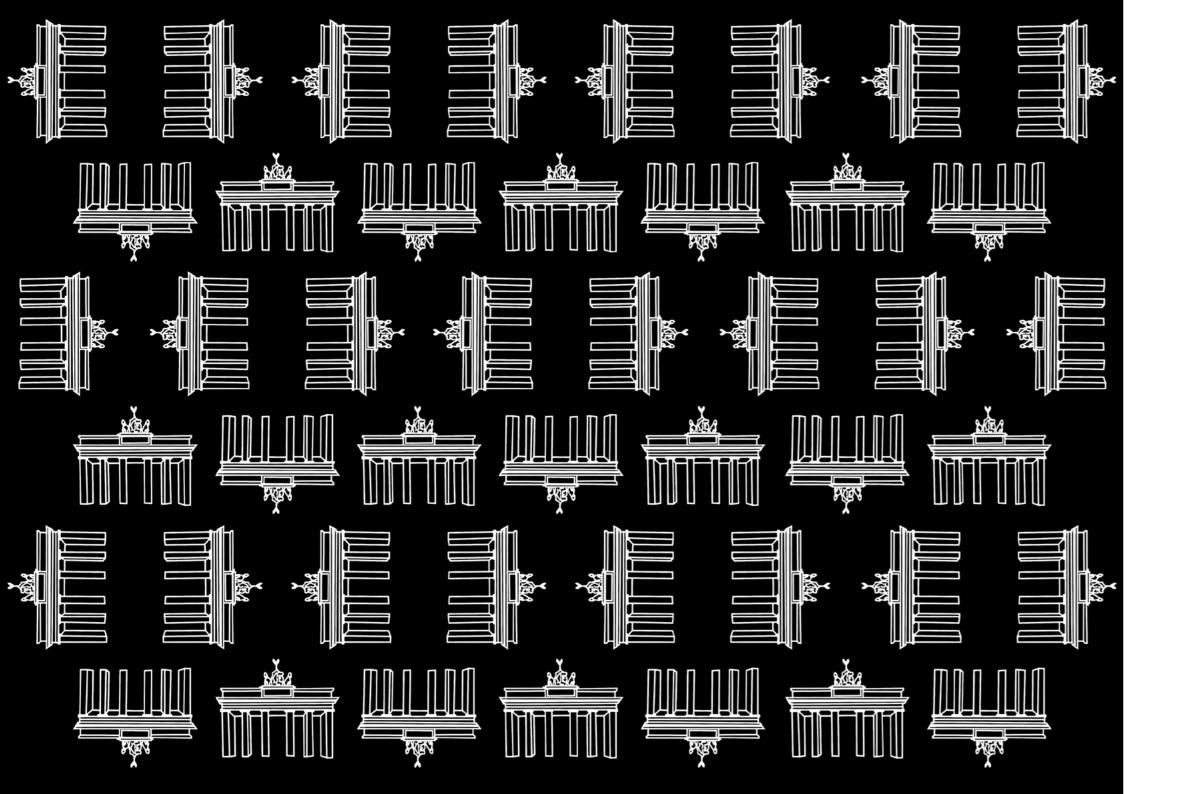
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The city (or the art of *feeling*)

To Feel (/fiːl/)

- a. an intuitive awareness.
- b. experience an emotion or sensation.

"In a city you don't enjoy the seven or seventy-seven wonders, but the answer to one of your questions".

Italo Calvino, The Invisible Cities.

Berlin 1.1 > The city

The phenomenon of urban growth described on global level can also be observed for the city of Berlin. This is especially visible after the fall of the wall that divided the city from 1961 to 1989. Several historical events that happened over time have clearly altered the statistics, and this made the city an exception in the general trend for the period before 1990. In fact, the data shown below relate to the last thirty years.

According to the *Atlas for Urban Expansion*¹, Berlin's urban extent in 1990 measured 44.886 hectares; in 2000, growing at an average annual rate of 5%, it consisted of 74.137 hectares; finally, growing at an average annual rate of 2.9% since then, in 2013 it was 109.026 hectares.

The population of Berlin in 2013 was 3.860.243 inhabitants, increasing at an average annual rate of 0.7% since 2000. Population in 2000 was 3,510,570 inhabitants, increasing at an average annual rate of 0.8% since 1990, when its population was 3,248.604 inhabitants.

The population of Berlin is now increasing with an average rate of 1% every year. In fact, it has increased by 31.300 inhabitants from 2017

to 2018. The Berlin Senate believes that the city will grow at an even faster rate, with a rythm of 40 thousand people every year, reaching **four million inhabitants in 2025**.

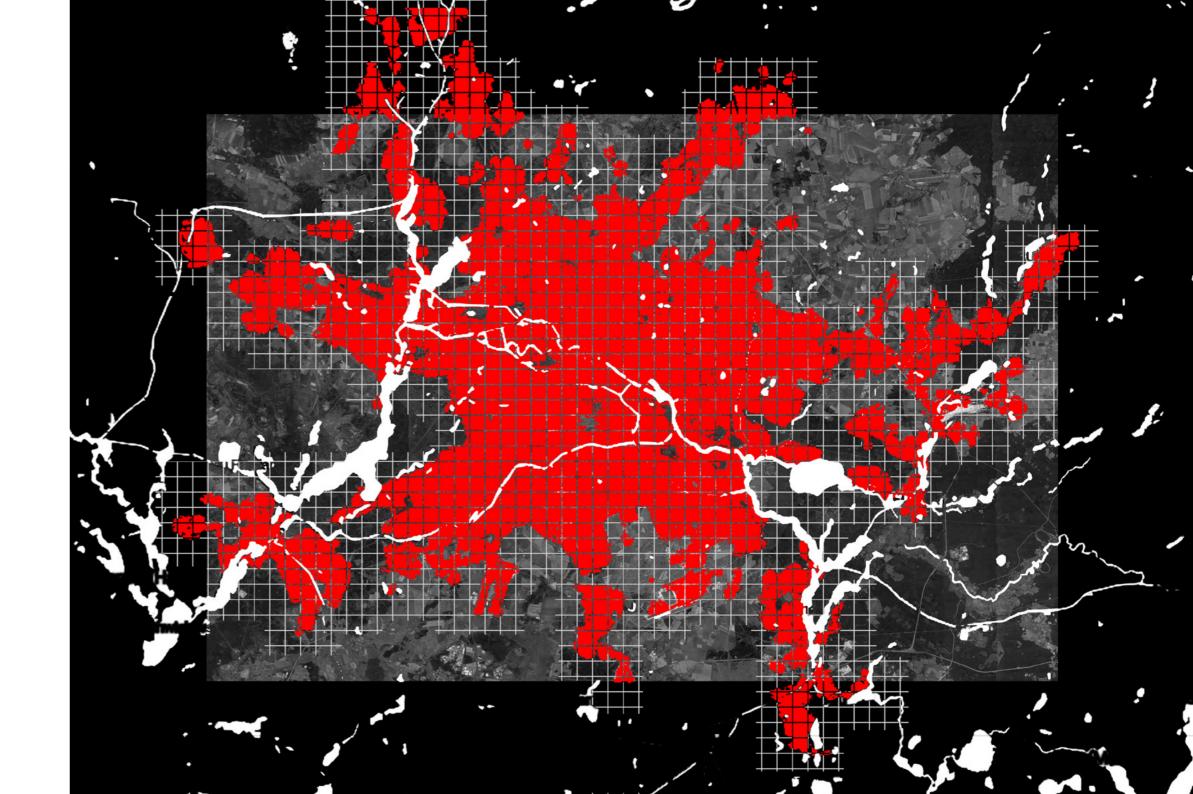
Considering the metropolitan area, Berlin currently has a total area of 285.100 hectares and a population of 5.103.778 inhabitants.

> A meaning place

Berlin seems likely to become the cradle of epochal change. It is the result of a unique history, its continuous and sudden transformations during the last century have caused the seeds for a rising opposition to the growing globalizing tendencies of the metropolis.

On closer inspection, the forerunners and symptoms are visible to everyone. What characterizes this city more than the other Western capitals is the fact that in only one hundred years all three totalitarian regimes in their different political meanings have existed.

The Social Democratic-Nazi regime, has led to the destruction of almost half the city. The Stalinist



> Berlin

communist regime brought the division into two parts for almost thirty years by building the "wall of death".

1.1

Finally, with the fall of the wall in 1989, it was expected that the great liberation would be accomplished, with the promises of wealth and opulence coming from the West. Unfortunately, liberation that was considered achieved soon became disillusionment.

Reality did not take long to give the real name to things: reunification was a real annexation by West Germany; restored capitalism meant industrial desertification with the closure of factories that were acquired by the new owners of the Federal Republic. Full employment turned into mass unemployment: since the fall of the wall, unemployment in the East has remained on average twice as high as in the West. The last regime, in which we are now living, is the most difficult to recognize and to contrast, because it is invisible to everyone and it is painted as "natural". It is a regime masked as democracy. Neoliberalism, the symbol of new freedom, immediately gave the signals of a new enemy to face:

the capital.

The notorious *outpost of freedom*², on the contrary, turned out to be a trap. A trap into which by now almost the entire Western world had fallen. This is the perfect dictatorship. As Aldous Huxley wrote in his distopian book, "the perfect dictatorship would have the appearance of a democracy, but would basically be a prison without walls in which the prisoners would not even dream of escaping. It would essentially be a system of slavery where, through consumption and entertainment, the slaves would love their servitudes"3.

Nevertheless, Berliners have an advantage over citizens of other metropolises, since they are now able to recognize what a totalitarian regime can bring. The legacy of history is still visible in the city, making it clear what the real aim of a regime is: power, which in this historical period means capital and profit, although not as tangible as in the

Moreover, they lived in a particular city from a legislative point of view, which allowed some internal manoeuvres.

In fact, besides being a municipality, Berlin consti-

tuted one of the Land, i.e. one of the federal states of Germany⁴, and was therefore configured as a city-state, clearly sanctioned by the first article of its constitution. After reunification, it was given maximum power over how to administer the city, and as a result, the organs that manage it have double power. Berlin has the power to equip itself with its own form of government, with its own parliament and a system that also allows extensive district autonomy.

In addition, the participation of citizens in the political life of civil society was reinforced by democratic instruments such as public initiatives, referendums and petitions.

Within the city there were two different and parallel forms of urban development, diametrically opposed to each other: one, operated mainly by investors and speculators, according to a top-down mode, and the other, through organizations of various natures made up of citizens, according to a bottom-up modality.

If the first is usually implemented for large and permanent transformations, supported by investments of large, mostly international companies,

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the second one is applied for temporary uses by cityzens through land concessions limited in time, to avoid losing the possibility of future public or private investments by the municipal administration.

> The city

This phenomenon clearly showed the **two faces** of the city. On the one hand the willingness of the citizens to claim the right to use the space, committing themselves to making it a collective and self-managed space, and on the other hand the big speculators who found in Berlin a fertile ground for their profits, exploiting the myth of a city that is poor but sexy5, thus implementing gentrification processes that affected several urban districts.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the city centre (the old western part of East Berlin) was occupied by many houses that were partially destroyed during World War II and never rebuilt again. These have become a fervent terrain for various types of counterculture and underground culture, as well as many nightclubs, including Berghain6, one of the most important techno music clubs in the world. Berlin has a rich art scene, but is now under

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> Berlin > The city

increasing financial pressure as rents have risen since the German government returned to Berlin as its home. The increase in rents has been and is still contributed by the **purchase of apartments or entire properties** by people and companies not resident in Germany, exclusively **for investment purposes**; the properties purchased are mostly kept empty or rented to tourists, and the consequent decrease in supply **causes a sharp increase in rent costs for residents** during the last decade. In a city where the 80% of population lives by renting houses, it turns to be a huge social problem to face.

1.1

Building speculation has not only exploited the empty spaces left by the former borders between the two cities before 1989 (East Berlin and West Berlin), but has affected the central core of the urban texture of the city. The process of gentrification has led many local inhabitants to move to the suburbs. However, critics point out that building speculation has not only seized the opportunity to monetize a fashionable city, but has also stimulated the development of the "myth" of Berlin. Today, fashion conformism, massification and con-

sumerism have replaced the counterculture of the 1990s: the large influx of European foreigners and the consequent population increase have created a florid market for investors, which has necessarily determined the transformation of the local underground culture of 20 years ago into today's "commercial product" to be sold to potential new residents.

If Focault affirmed that space is a metaphor for "a place or a container of power that usually limits but sometimes frees the processes of *becoming*", **Berlin could offer space**, and Berliners could obtain it, if they want, trying to give it back to the people through an urban experimentation, in order to reflect an example **for a possible new freed humanity**, outside the tyranny of the capital.

> Notes 1.1

- 1 http://www.atlasofurbanexpansion.org/cities/view/Berlin;
- ² His best known and most incisive expression are the words spoken by John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, in his speech on 26th June 1963: *Ich bin ein Berliner* ("I am a Berliner");
- ³ Aldous Huxley, *Brave new world*, 1932;
- ⁴ The federal states of Germany constitute the first-level administrative subdivision of the country and are in total 16; Each state is represented at national level in the *Bundesrat*, the Federal Council;
- ⁵ In 2003, Berlin Mayor Klaus Wowereit notoriously called the city *poor but sexy*, establishing its reputation as the *place-to-be* for a new generation of artists from all around the world;
- ⁶ Located near the Ostbahnhof station, it is hosted inside an old East Berlin electric power station; the Influent British techno journal *Dj Magazine* elected *Berghain* as the best club in the world in 2009:

⁷ David Harvey, *La crisi della modernità*, Milano, Net, 2002, p.

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Capital, power & logos 1.2

As we walk around contemporary cities, one feature that all major metropolises have in common are the several logos that we may meet when we walk around the streets, especially when the light goes out. The postmodern era, especially in the **age** of the image, gives more attention to form and symbolism. From this derives the urgent need on the part of companies to signify through a recognizable symbol, with the phenomenon of branding, or recognition.

The power of capital can appear in different ways in the *glass* or *securital city*, but it finds fewer restrictions regarding the space it can obtain. The struggle for logos space reflect a political battle within the city.

> The city





> Capital, power & logos > The city















> Capital, power & logos > The city



> Capital, power & logos > The city













> The city





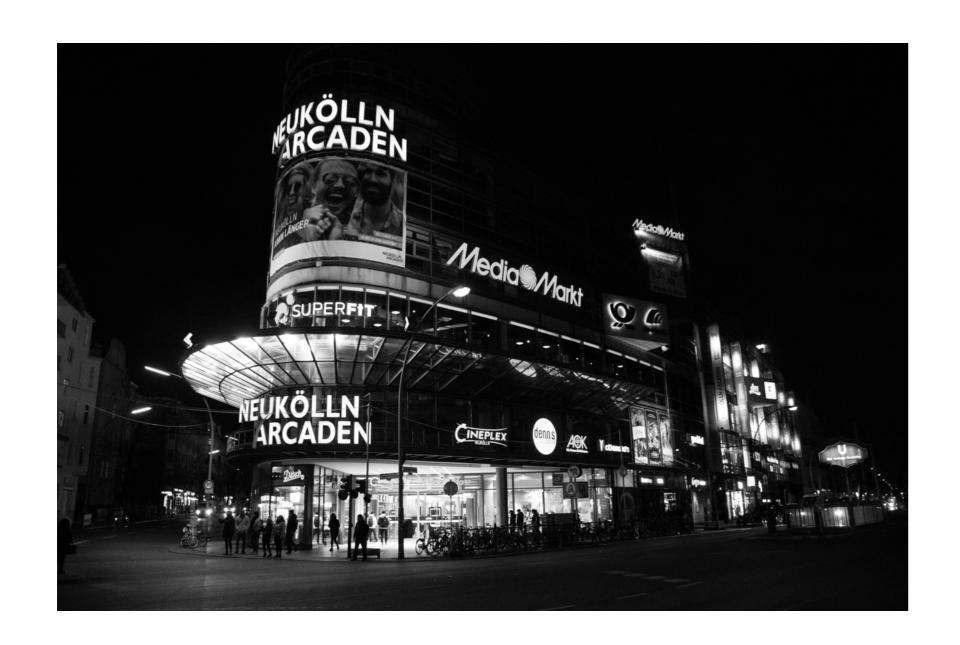








> The city





> The city

> Capital, power & logos





> Capital, power & logos





> Capital, power & logos

Berliners as *multitude*

Postmodern capitalism affirms itself as a totalizing, supranational, imperial entity, where there is no longer an outside.

1.3

At the same time, the power of this empire is challenged by a new political subject, the *multitude*.

Postmodern descendant of workers' movement, the *multitude* is represented as the sign of civil disorder, human nature not framed within the social contract of the state¹.

The subjectivity of the multitude is formed through the conflictual relationship with the organization of "immaterial" production: services, information and knowledge.

Life itself, intended as the sum of physical and intellectual capacities, becomes a source of value and therefore a fertile ground for exploitation, but also the "possibility of political surplus within and against capital"².

The setting of this new workforce is no longer the factory, but the city in all its extension.

This means that also the resistance to exploitation moves on a new ground that no longer has the features of the old industrial world of the factory: "multitude is to the city as working class was

to the factory"³. The city is therefore the place of exploitation, but also the place where the new antagonistic subject emerges.

> The city



¹ Negri and Hardt. They overturn the negative sign of the multitude by identifying in it a new constituent subject;

² Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, p. 21;

³ Ivi, p. 22.

























Bottom-up projects 1.4

As Pier Vittorio Aureli has pointed out¹, the political field in which the autonomy of a constituent subject emerges is never a free field, an outside, but it is always an occupied field that must be conquered by transforming hostile conditions into favourable conditions.

In this sense, the city, as theorized by Aldo Rossi, is made of places, of facts individually identified within the continuous plan of urbanization.

The class alternative to the city-territory can only be a use of part of the city and therefore a development not of urban plans, but of partial typological solutions. The social integration of the city, implicit in the concept of city-territory, was opposed to the idea of a city made up of politically determined places, i.e. a city for defined parts, as opposed to the city of the plan².

Considered in opposition to the theories of city-territory, the concept of place thus became a political concept, precisely because it would have reintroduced within a theory of the city the possibility of difference, not so much as a visible fact, but as a structural fact of the city and its development.



> The city

¹ Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008, p. 18;

² Ivi, p. 105.

1.4 > Bottom-up projects > The city

































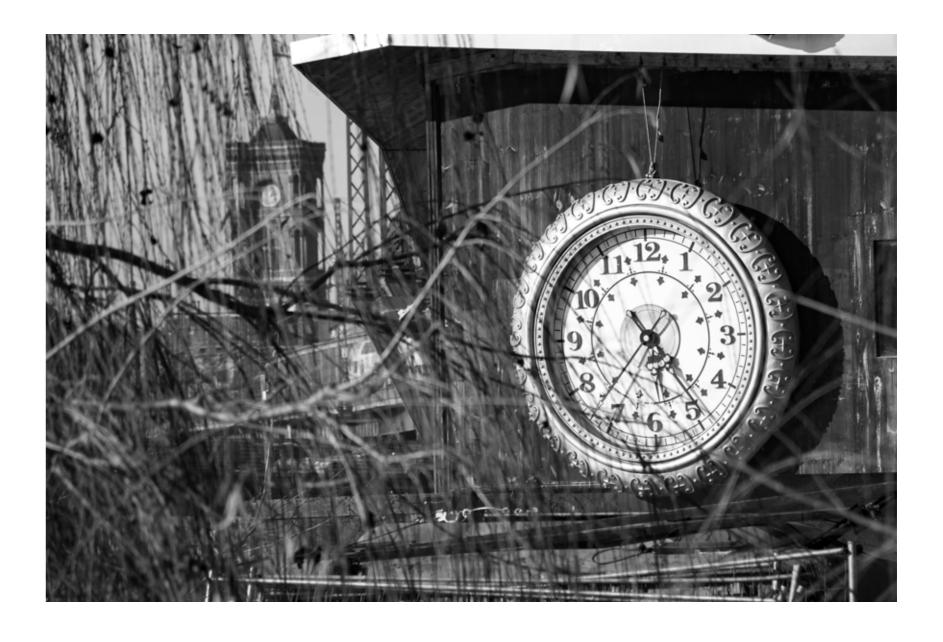














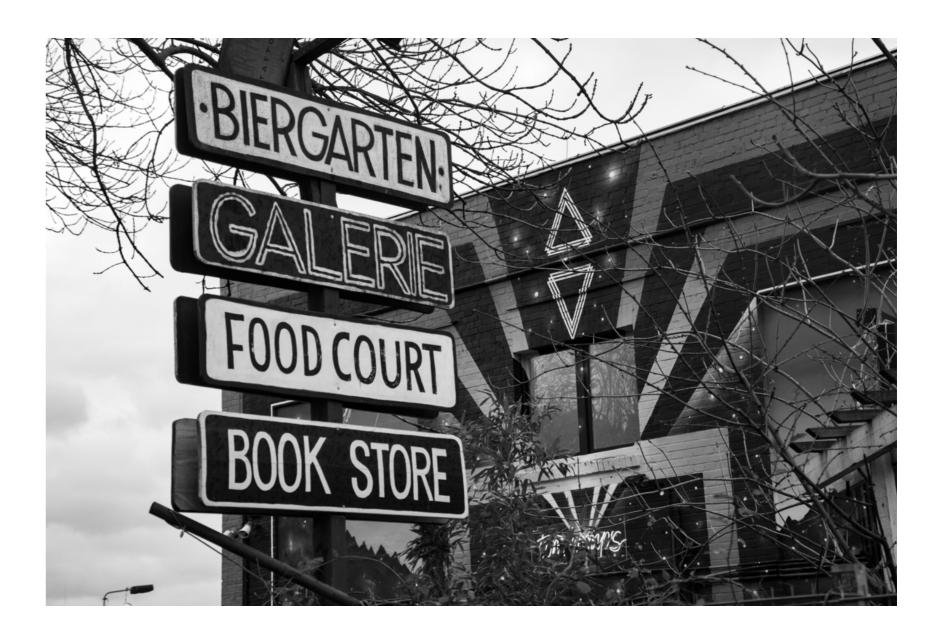




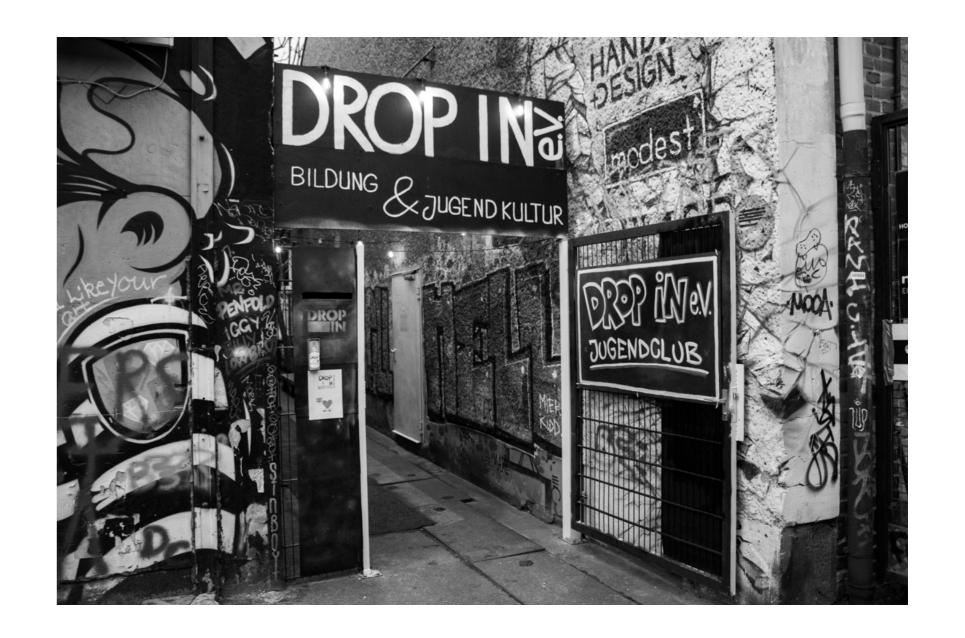
1.4 > Bottom-up projects > The city







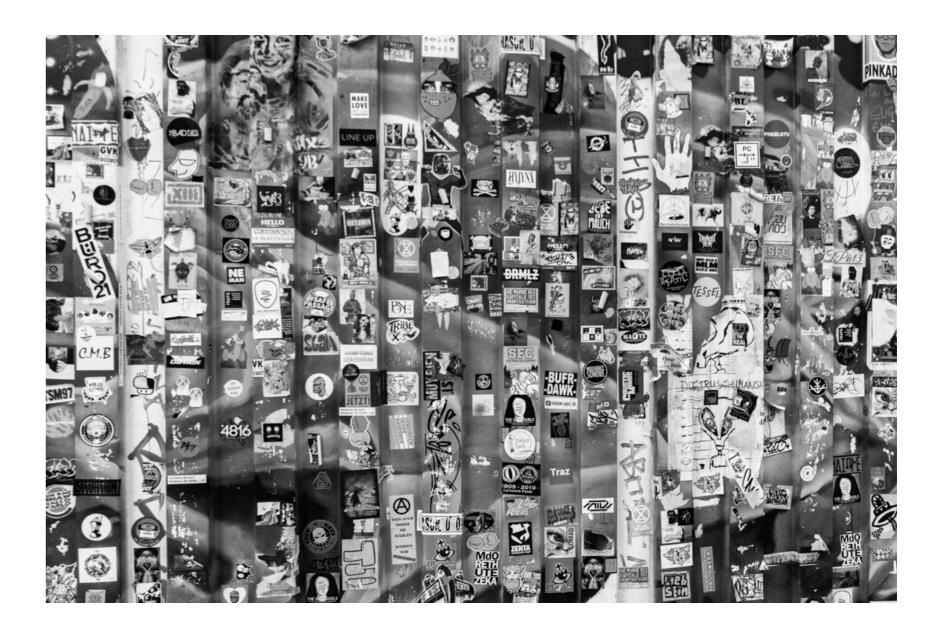
























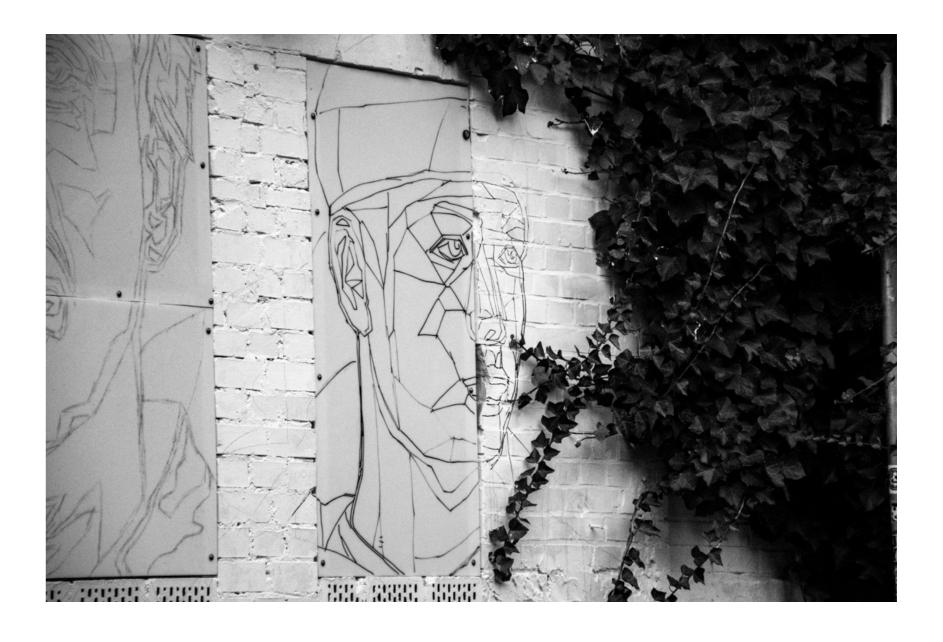




























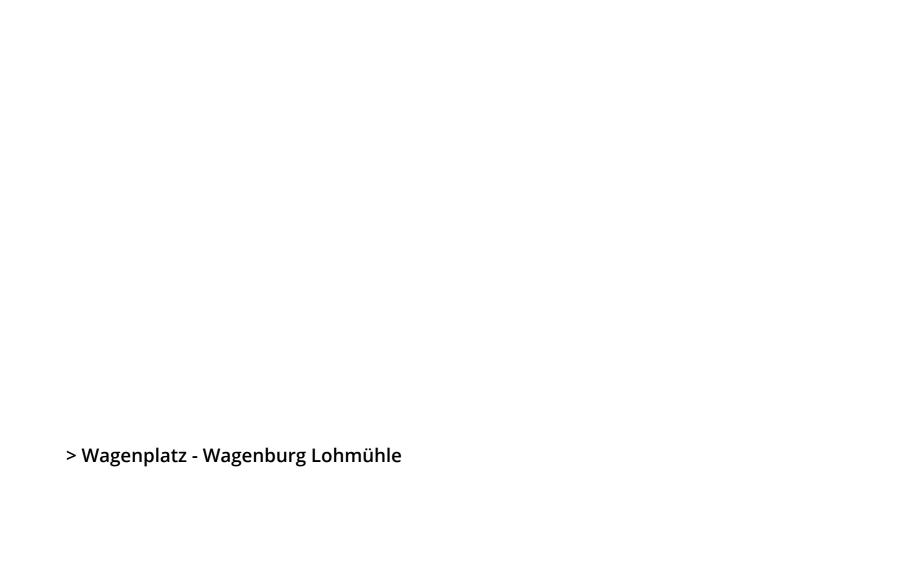








1.4 > Bottom-up projects > The city









































Tempelhof 1.5 > The city

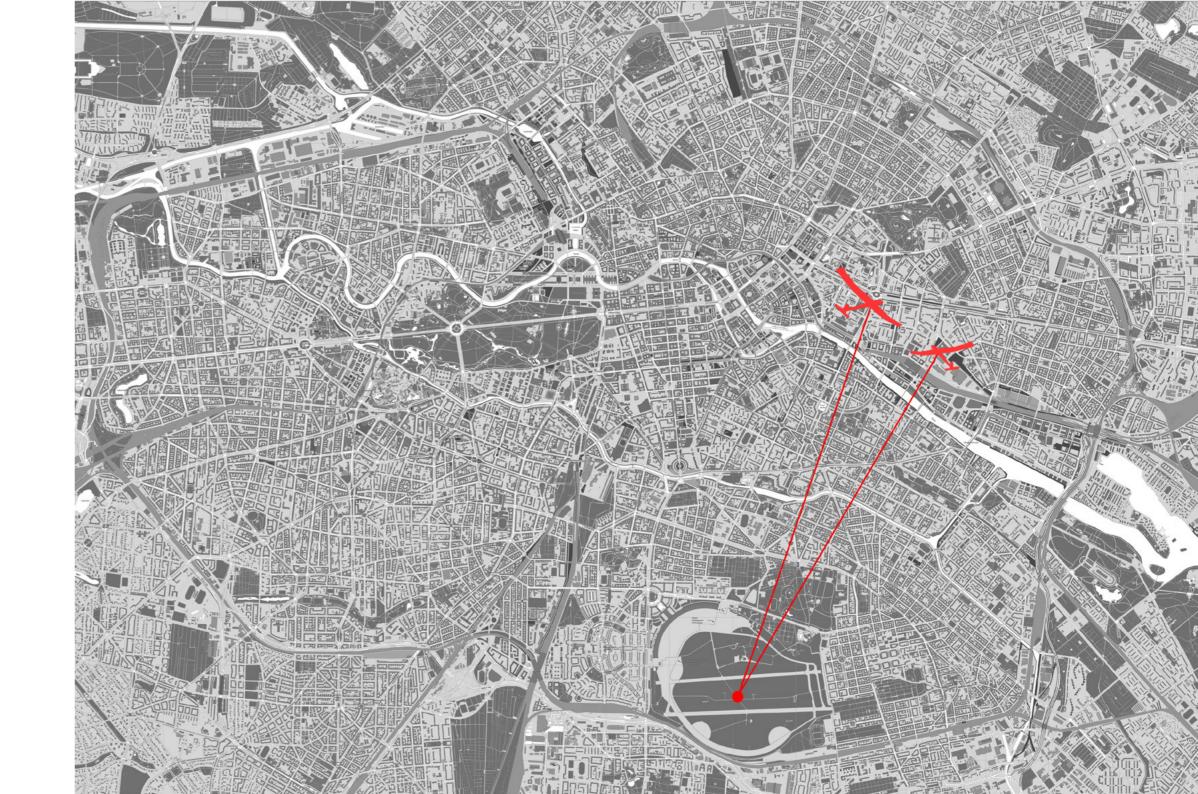
Located in the south-west of Berlin, between the districts of Neukölln and Schöneberg, the *Tempelhofer Feld* covers 386 hectares and has been the largest public park in Berlin since 2010.

The stratification of historical events that have affected this area has undoubtedly given it a considerable symbolic value. The peculiarity that this place shares with other areas and with many manufactures in Berlin, is the aspect that most affects ideas, proposals and transformation projects. Various and often antithetical functions were identified, and with them the role that the area has played over time.

Born as the airport of an ever-expanding "Greater Berlin", which became **a simulacrum of Nazi power**, within an idea of a monumental city that saw it as the *Welthauptstadt*, the Tempelhof area experienced the transformation from a prison centre and concentration camp, **to a symbol of hope and freedom**, in contrast to the block imposed by the Soviet regime. It finally represented a showcase for a metropolitan, open and international lifestyle, embodying the hopes and aspirations

of the population in search of a renewed identity. All this condensed in just 80 years of history. The history of this place begins many centuries ago, when, at the beginning of the 13th century, well before the founding of Berlin (1237), Knights of the Order of the Templars established a commandery, which later gave the region its name. It was in 1922 that the history of Tempelhof as an airport began: on the initiative of the city's Urban Planning Commissioner, Leonhard Adler, two wooden buildings of about 1,000 square metres were built, financed by the Junkers and Aero Lloyd Society. The designated site had a historical tradition consistent with this choice: the Tempelhofer Feld, was not only the privileged set for military parades of the Berlin guard between 1700 and 1800, but also the first airfield of the Prussian Empire in the late 1800s. It was also here that prototypes of airships and aircraft of the most famous pioneers (Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, Orville Wright) demonstrated their potential for the first time between 1900 and 1910.

In 1923 the *Zentralflughafen* was inaugurated and was provisionally designated as an airport on 8



1.5 > Tempelhof > The city

October by the Ministry of Transport. The first real terminal was built only in the period 1927-30, and became **one of the busiest airports in Europe** when it reached its capacity limit.

The years of the Nazi period are those of the great project of reconstruction of Berlin *Welthauptstadt* ("World Capital"), the ambitious plan conceived by Albert Speer, first architect of the Third Reich, consistent with the vision of the nation propagated by the National Socialist regime. Berlin, the capital of Germany, had to be superior to other world capitals, such as London, Paris and Rome, in particular. Only a small part of the interventions planned for the city was carried out between the years 1937-1945. The first, and perhaps the most important, was the Olimpiastadion which hosted the Olympic Games in 1936: a majestic architectural demonstration of the power of the regime both for the city and the world.

In order to demostrate the power of regime, Speer imagined the **new Tempelhof airport as** the gateway and **symbol of the "German capital of the world"** so much so that in 1934 he commissioned the architect Ernst Sagebiel to design a

monumental building, but at the same time very modern and technically advanced, to replace the old terminal. The building complex had to look like an eagle in flight thanks to the semicircular shape of the hangars, representing the wings of the bird. The roof of the building, almost a mile long, would have been provided with steps to form a stadium for hundreds of spectators. The building, which was expected to flow about six million passengers a year, was not only thought of as a civil airport but also as a large structure for events, such as aircraft shows and exhibitions, military parades, and could have taken the function of a military airport.

Although the initial project was not completed, due to World War II between 1936 and 1941, what was described by the English architect Sir Norman Foster as "the mother of all airports" was built: with an area of 307,000 square meters and about 1,2 km long, it is known as the 3rd largest building in the world, after the Pentagon in Washington and the Parliament Building in Bucharest. From the late 1800s to the late 1920s, *Columbia-Haus* based in Tempelhofer Feld was one of

From the late 1800s to the late 1920s, *Columbia-Haus*, based in Tempelhofer Feld, was one of Berlin's military prisons, transformed by the Nazis into a prison for political opponents in 1933. Alrea-



250 Image: Markus Schreiber / AP (edited by Daniele Ferrari).

Even after the beginning of the war, in 1939, **Tempelhof still had to function as a prison camp**. In fact, the need to expand the production of combat aircraft had emerged and the airport had all the characteristics to be one of the locations for assembly and testing operations thanks to the extensive space available and the possibility of using the airstrips directly. Barracks were set up for more than 2000 prisoners and volunteers from many of the occupied Eastern European countries, tricked under the illusion of honest working conditions but subjected to forced labour for Weserflug company and Lufthansa since 1940.

On 27th April Tempelhof fell under Soviet control and Berlin capitulates in few days: it was the 30th

April 1945.

A few months later, on 2 July 1945, air traffic was reopened under the control of the American Allies and their US Army Air Forces, while the following year the first strip was paved to allow the landing and take-off of heavier aircraft in the new Tempelhof Central Airport - TCA.

A few years later, between 1948 and 1949, **Tempelhof airport allowed to resist the Soviet block** imposed on West Berlin. Its presence not only represented the material salvation of West Germany, cut off from the electricity and gas networks, without road connections, etc., but was the symbol of its independence, which was opposed to the coercive logic of the East: **Tempelhof represented** the determination of the allies to defend **ideals of freedom and democracy**.

The so-called "airlift" lasted 462 days, during which hundreds of airplanes, affectionately called by the local population *Rosinenbomber* ("raisin bombers") or with the English term *Candy bomber*, carried a huge variety of supplies, from entire containers full of food, coal and medicines to packets of candy and chocolate, launched over the city with small

parachutes, and the seriously ill and children were evacuated from the city by the same planes. A total of 278,228 flights (1,398 every 24 hours) were carried out, 2,326,406 tons of food and other supplies (12,940 tons every 24 hours), including 1,500,000 tons of coal for heating and power generation, and **the largest humanitarian transport in history**. It was precisely this airlift that radically changed the perception of Germany. Suddenly Berlin was transformed from a symbol of the Prussian Empire and National Socialism to a symbol of threatened freedom.

Tempelhof was a bridge to freedom also in the forty years of the administrative and political division, from 49 to 89, when it provided the only chance for hundreds of thousands of refugees to enter West Berlin without running the risk of losing their lives.

Civil air traffic was reopened after the airlift on 9 July 1951, and Tempelhof quickly became the busiest airport in Germany and reached third place for passenger numbers in Europe after only London and Paris.

In the media of that period, people referred to

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Tempelhof airport as "*The Gateway to the world*", talking about the air lift, but also about its dual role: on the one hand it represented the only direct and unobstructed connection to the "outside world". given the insular situation in which the western sector was located; on the other hand it was also a privileged showcase of a modern and metropolitan lifestyle, through the presentation of international films, fashion shows and social events. The first of all is the Berlinale International Film Festival, which since 1951 has been bringing Hollywood's most famous actors to the German capital under the motto "The showcase of the free world". No better place than the "gateway to the world" could serve as a stage for the spectacular landings of the stars, received by the delirious crowds, attracted by ostentation of a merely illusory opening to the world.

The fall of the wall represented for the world, but even for Berlin, a crucial turning point: urban planning policies had to be confronted with the sudden necessity to question hierarchies, places, existing orders, since the primary need had become the physical and identity reunification of two parts

> Tempelhof

of the same city that had until then lived in competition.

In 1996 the Senate, with the favour of the Minister of Transport, the Prime Minister of the Federal State of Brandenburg and the Mayor of Berlin, announced the future closure of the three increasingly congested airports (Tegel, Schönefeld and Tempelhof) and the construction of a single major international hub, the Berlin Brandenburg Airport (BER).

Since then the need for the re-functionalisation of the Tempelhof field has become one of the primary strategic objectives for the city government. On 31 October 2008 Tempelhof definitively ce-

ased its airport activities. The actual closure of the airport was the result of a difficult decisional process. Strong and extensive was the protest against the decision of the administrative court, which led, with the support of the citizens, to the collection of more than 200,000 signatures.

However, the almost 600 thousand people who took part in the vote were not enough to reach the quorum, and the airport was closed despite the fact that 60.2% of the voters expressed a positive

opinion regarding the preservation of the airport's activities. After the result of the referendum, an immediate programme of re-functionalisation of the area was inevitably expected.

The participation component was an important part of the Tempelhofer Feld regeneration process. At each stage, in fact, the public administration has given ample space to the consultation of citizens through the most diverse and innovative tools. As a final result of the participatory planning process, 3 winners were nominated for the *Tempelhof ideas competition*, which took place in the first half of 2009. In particular, the "Chora Architecture & Urbanism" group, in partnership with Buro Happold and Gross Max, stood out for being particularly in line with the strategies planned by the Senate for urban development.

The same strategies were the reason for the strong popular opposition that was ended on 20 June 2009 with the action called *Squat Tempelhof*, literally "Occupation of Tempelhof", because one year after the closure of the airport the large open space was still lying unused and access to it was banned through a perimeter fence and strict

surveillance. The association that was the first to promote abusive actions made strong accusations against the public administration: according to their manifesto, plans provided for the construction of luxury homes and equipment for the "creative industry" which, based on previous experiences both locally and internationally, would only lead to an increase in rents and the deprivation of spaces of public interest to the resident population. The revolt was forcibly suppressed by the anti-riot corps but showed the administration and the city a strong willingness to re-appropriate public space, not unusual for Berlin.

A big step in this direction was taken in May of the following year when the *Tempelhofer Freiheit*, a new urban park, was opened to the public with a grand opening ceremony. The opening of the Tempelhof park to the public in May 2010 marked the turning point for the start of a new planning phase. The Senate's urban development and environment department mobilised the resources needed to create a regeneration project in several stages: in June 2010, **an international landscape design**

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competition involving 78 candidates **was laun-ched** and a jury selected 6 winners. The institutional players began a nine-month negotiation with the teams of the six winners: it was only in April 2011 that the contract was signed with the British landscape architects team "GROSS.MAX and Sutherland Hussey Architects".

Although the final project for the re-functionalisation of Tempelhofer Feld was the result of a long and complex process of consultation with the population, this did not prevent the creation of a popular association strongly critical of the strategic choices underlying the master plan. The same motto chosen by the association, 100% Tempelhofer Feld, immediately clarifies its intentions regarding the fate of the area: the large open space must not be affected either by regeneration interventions or by new areas of building development. The association gathered its first adhesions around the middle of 2012, when the masterplan was still being defined, following the debate that took place during the two sessions of presentation and public discussion organized by the administration between 2010 and 2011.

The association defined the choices made by the administration as fraudulent, in order to keep its members on the alert: despite the Senate saying the opposite, housing provided by masterplan would not be affordable, housing market would not be reduced and public participation would not be as large as promised. It is pointed out that the prices of the apartments cannot be low, considering that construction costs are very high, due to the lack of any urbanisation in the area (sewers, access roads, lighting, bridges, public transport, etc.) and that the administration has in any case not provided any insurance about this.

Much of the **criticism** made of the proposal for the regeneration of the former airport is focused **on ecological impacts of the project**: it calls for a decrease in soil impermeability, which is linked to the theme of building restoration, the protection of the habitats of animal and plant species present in the area, in particular the protected lark, and the valorisation of the role of the large green space for climate mitigation in the urban area. In fact, from an ecological point of view, **Tempelhof is an area rich in biodiversity** and naturalistic value.

Despite the intense anthropic use and the consequent high compression rate of the soil, in 2010 329 plant species were recorded, mainly in the areas surrounding the tracks, thanks to the presence of fine sands rich in humus. Environmental monitoring carried out in 2012 also revealed a large number of protected animal species.

A part of the citizens, represented by the association 100% Tempelhofer Feld, contested and opposed the Senate's plans, indicting a referendum that blocked the planned development, based on the request to protect this large open space from speculation and keep it unaltered.

In 2014 Berliners decided in a referendum not to allow construction on the edge of the airfield and to largely keep Tempelhofer Feld as it was. The *Tempelhof Conservation Act* prohibits construction anywhere on the former airfield and ensures only limited development.

In September 2015 it was announced that some airport hangars would become an "emergency refugee shelter", hosting 1,200 refugees.

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http://www.thf100.de/start.html;
http://www.tempelhofer-park.de/;
https://tempelhofer-feld.berlin.de/;
http://www.tempelhoferfeld.info/;
http://www.dw.com/en/berlin-voters-claim-tempelhof/a-17663944;

park>.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin Tempelhof Airport;

https://gruen-berlin.de/en/tempelhofer-feld/about-the-

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> Flight demonstration by Orville Wright, September 1909.

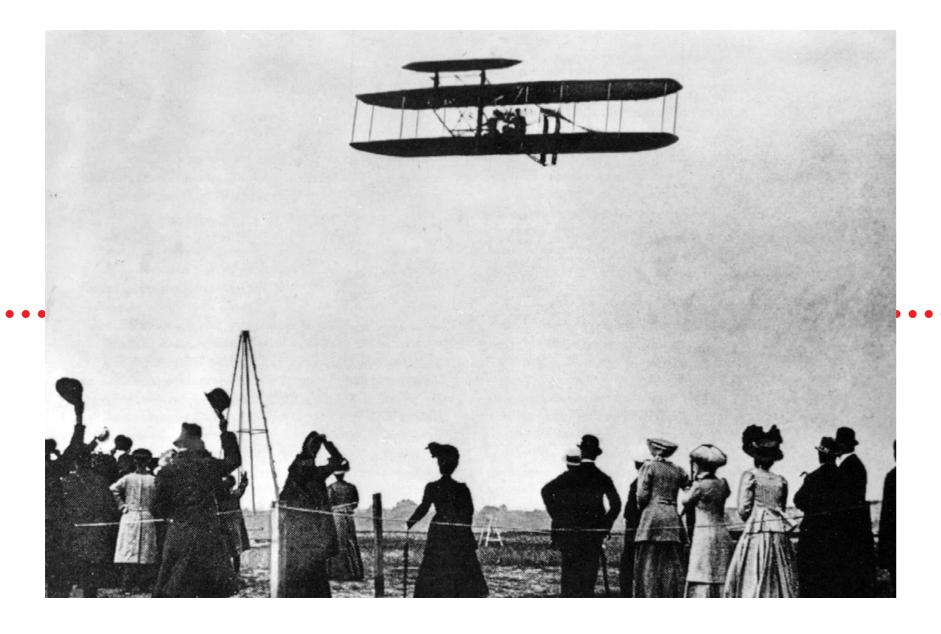




Image: Berlin Airports/Archive, *unknown author*.

> Crowds gather at Templehof to greet the Graf Zeppelin, July 1931.



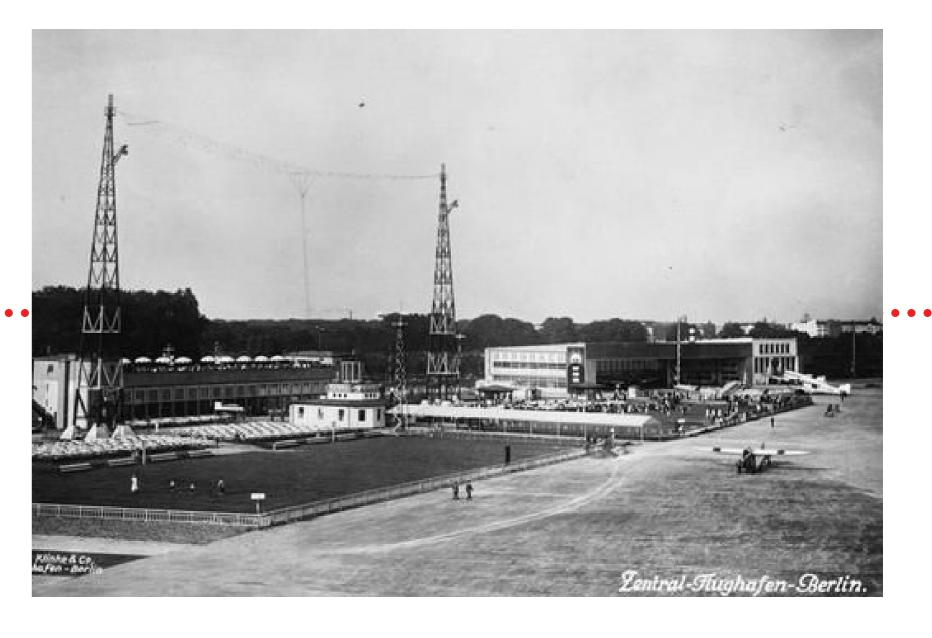


Image: Bundesarchiv, *unknown author*.



> More than a million people gather at Tempelhof to hear Hitler speak on 10 May 1933.

> Hermann Göring and architect Ernst Sagebiel examine a model of Tempelhof airport, 1937.



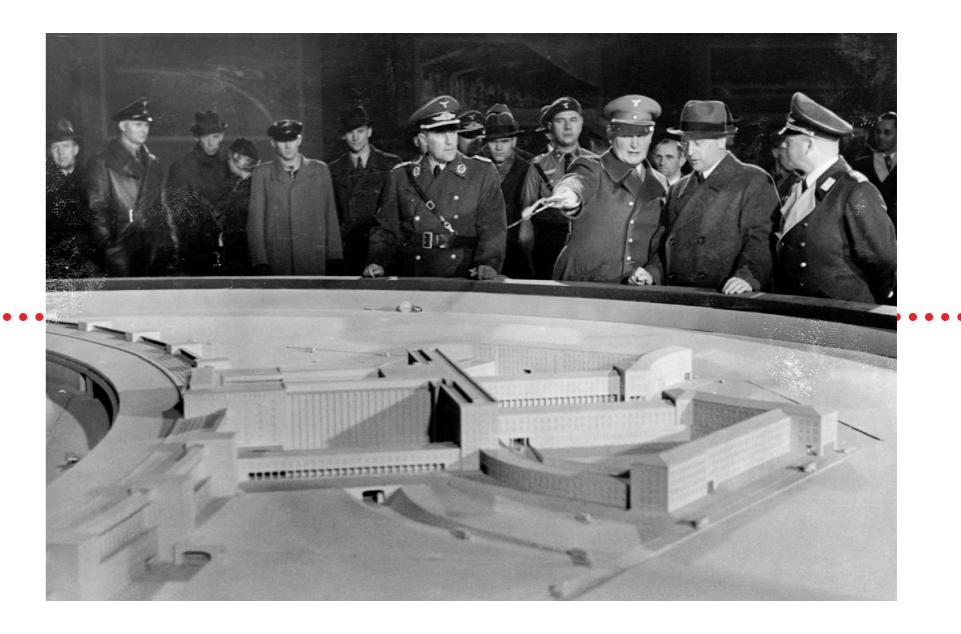
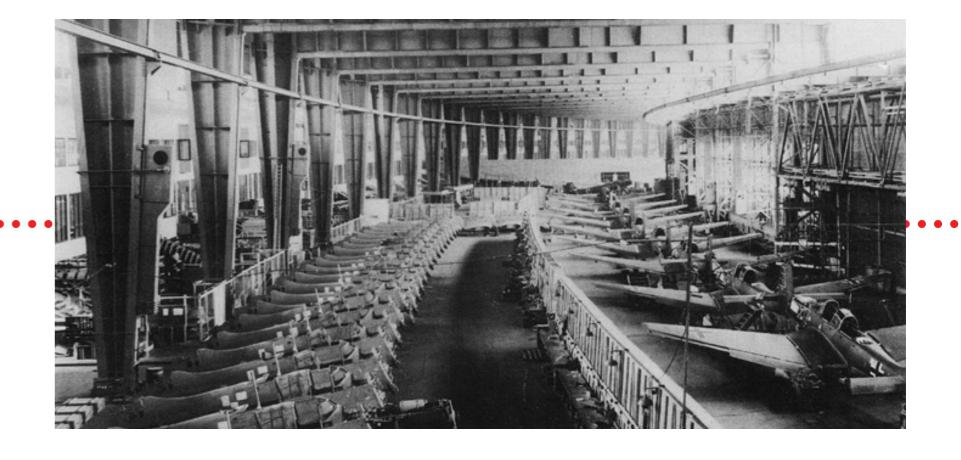


Image: Associated Press, unknown author.

> Columbiadamm, Tempelhof's concentration camp during Second World War, 1942.







• Cold War • • • •





Image: U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation.

> Candy bomber in action during the airlift, 1948-1949.





Image: U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy National Museum of Naval Aviation.

> People waiting for supplies during the airlift in Tempelhof, 1948-1949.





Image: Zbarchiv / DPA / AFP.

Image: Associated Press, unknown author.

> After the Wall fall, Tempelhof continues to be one of the busiest airport of Europe.







> In 2010, Tempelhofer Freiheit, the first urban garden in Tempelhof airfield, was opened to public.

> In 2011, GROSS.MAX signed a contract for Tempelhof regenaration, stopped in 2014 by a referendum.





Image: KD Grote (edited by Daniele Ferrari).

> In 2015 it was announced that airport hangars would become an "emergency refugee shelter".

> Some hangars were open to host at least 1,200 refugees.





Image: Gordon Welters (edited by Daniele Ferrari).

> The DMY International Design Festival takes over the Tempelhof hangars in June 2013.



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Image: Timur Emek / Getty Images (edited by Daniele Ferrari).

































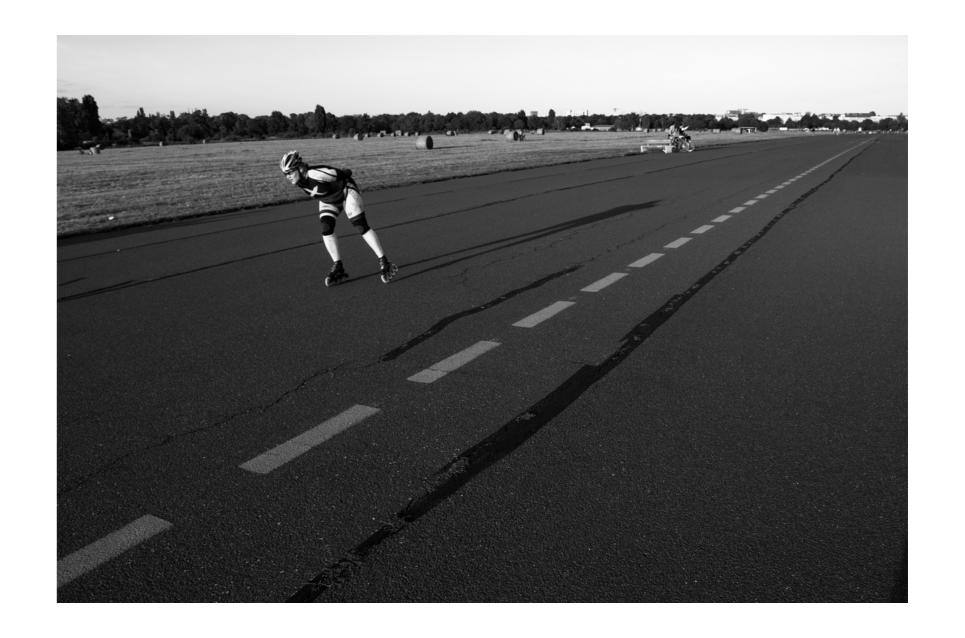


































> Tempelhof > The city





















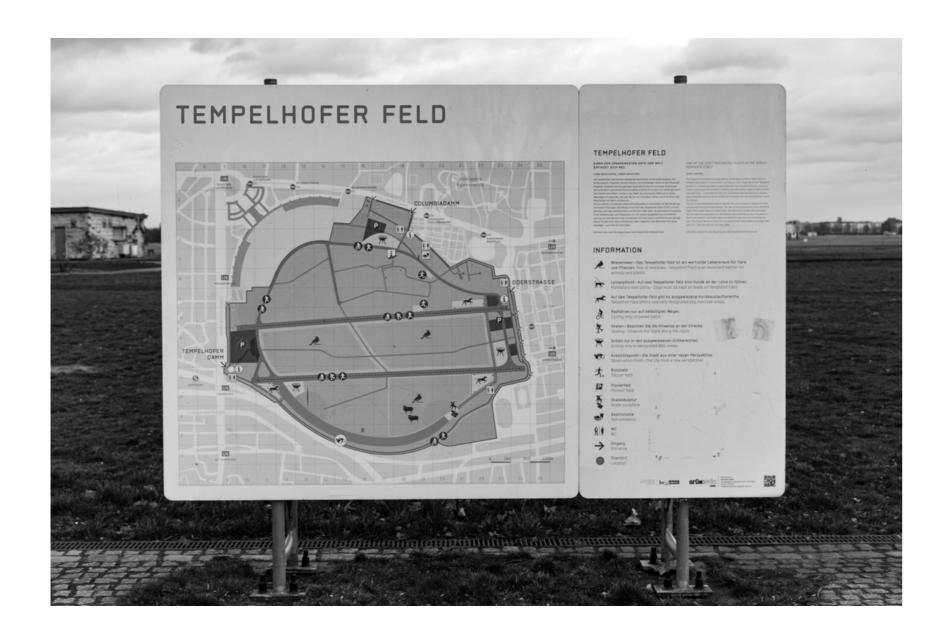








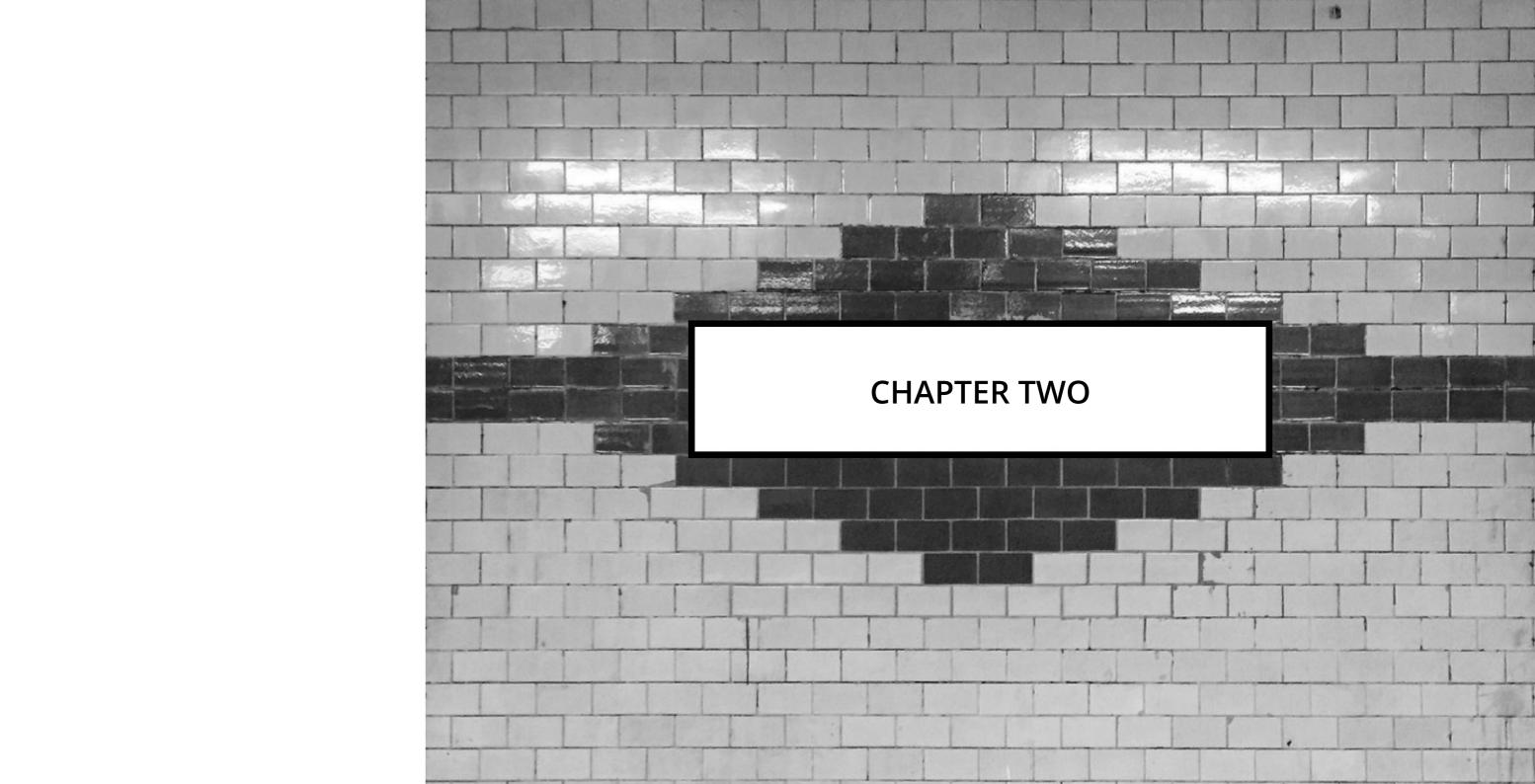
> The city

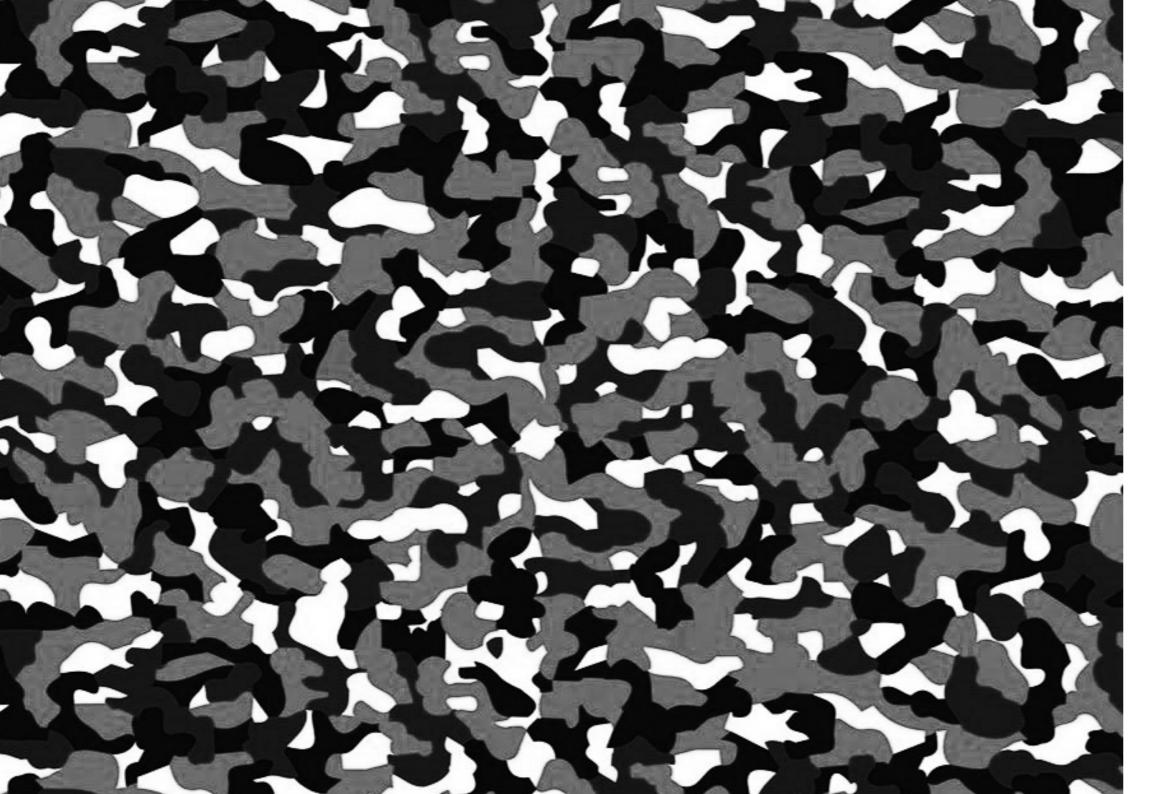






> Tempelhof > The city





THE GATHERING

(or the art of **sharing**)

To Share (/ʃeər/)

a. to tell someone else about your thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.

b. to have in common with others.

"Sharing is sometimes more demanding than giving".

Mary Catherine Bateson, Composing a Life.



Involve & Communicate 2.1

Back in 1958, Frank Capra's educational science film, *The Unchained Goddess*¹, openly acknowledged the possibility of man-made climate change.

The documentary stated that "it's been calculated a few degrees rise in the Earth's temperature would melt the polar ice caps, And if this happens, an inland sea would fill a good portion of the Mississippi valley. [...] For in weather, we're not only dealing with forces of a far greater variety than even the atomic physicist encounters, but with life itself."

If the problem was already recognized sixty years ago, why are we still so far from stopping it? Sixth mass extinction, ecological catastrophe and the collapse of civilization are scenarios that still seem far from us. They are risks that we do not perceive as imminent, which is why we do not realize the gravity of the situation.

We can only imagine the future from our memories. But in our memory there is still, of course, not enough climate catastrophes to terrify us yet. Governments do not have the courage to take radical solutions as they fear that they will be punished by the elections.

As a complex problem, it requires highly complex solutions, the results of which can only be seen in the long term.

Exactly the opposite of what politicians wish: easy solutions, with certain effects, that gain immediate consensus and that work in the short term. As conseguence, scientific opinions are much more alarming than the information spread by the media. Newspapers and TV often show partial reports, as if there were some uncertainty in the scientific world.

Admitting the problem of climate change would mean admitting all the causes from which it comes, starting with its main origin: the neo-liberal system and its consequent consumistic culture.

As we have already seen, the practise of *greenwa-shing* is used as a communication strategy by certain companies, organizations or political institutions aimed at drawing a false positive self-image in terms of environmental impact, in order to shift public attention away from the negative effects of their activities or products on the environment. But a good marketing it's not the only way istitu-

tions used to persuade people from major human issues.

> Propaganda

We consume because it is the culture that defines our needs. Just as it creates needs, culture also offers standardized solutions to satisfy them. Thus, alongside the classic definition of consumption, anthropologists have proposed another one: consumption would be the use of goods and services to communicate particular values. In this sense, the poverty/wealth dichotomy and culturally attributed meanings are also redefined. Anthropologists have adopted the concept of hegemony proposed by Antonio Gramsci² as it focuses on the role of **symbols and beliefs** within the political organization (but also in social and economic ones).

If domination is government through coercive force, hegemony is government through persuasion. In fact, while in totalitarian regimes consensus is achieved through violence, in democratic countries it is acquired through **propaganda**. As Noam

Chomsky stated in his book about media and power: "Propaganda is for democracy what the baton is for the totalitarian state"³.

Over the past 50 years, rapid scientific progress has created a growing gap between people's awareness and knowledge of the dominant elites. Thanks to biology, neurology and applied psychology, the "system" has been able to benefit from advanced understanding of the human being, both physically and psychologically. This means that, in most cases, the system exercises **greater control** and power over people, far greater than people exercise over themselves.

The aim is to ensure that the disoriented crowd continues to orient itself, reinforcing fundamental social values, including the supreme virtue of avidity and personal profit.

For the population, the only reality allowed is the one shown by the media: to wish or believe that something different exists is simply foolish.

The main media are large companies, owned by and closely linked to even larger companies. And like other companies, they sell their product, the audience, to the advertising market.

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> Involve & Communicate

2.1

> The gathering

But the mass media are only one part of the wider doctrinal system: opinion papers, schools, academic studies, are also part of it.

With the term *reproduction*, the ethnographers of education put the role of the school at the centre of preservation of the general consensus towards the social, political, economic order. For these researchers, the classroom is the place where class relationships are perpetuated and schooling is a learning process of the dominant ideology, representing the present social order as natural and contributing to its reproduction.

> The language of consensus

The essence of effective propaganda is the indirect question: creating a **slogan**⁴ that no one disagrees with in order to get everyone's consent. Its essential value is to shift attention from issues which are crucial.

As the ideology is a worldview that justifies the social order, the *slogan*, instead, is the preferred instrument of ideology.

Alessandro Pertosa, a fervent italian supporter of

the theory of degrowth, tried to reflect on the central issue of the linguistic tendency of this time⁵.

Through words, power controls the bodies, needs and relationships of human beings, who are progressively becoming less speaking.

Whoever has an interest in moving the attention of the masses to an object or a minor fact, uses the slogan technique as a weapon of collective distraction. The "advertising word" needs to communicate messages and symbols in a quick, attractive and easily understandable way.

In the society of the image, the *slogan* is capable of directing the aesthetic sense and the needs of the masses.

Those who impoverish language through the systematic use of slogans also transform the context in which they live, making it increasingly homogenous and uniformed.

Linguistic simplification is also radically transforming human beings and their relationships with their surroundings. The cultural horizon has suffered a uniform compression from a political point of view.

This attempt at linguistic and cultural simplifica-

tion is aimed at **uniforming tastes and orientations**, in order to achieve greater optimisation of the production system.

In a world where information is overabundant, it is necessary to quickly get to the point, and to do so we need to reduce vocabulary to the only terms that impress.

On the other hand, according to Alessandro Pertosa, "the patient logos opens the door to a convivial and fraternal relationality of a more horizontal type, in which everyone recognizes each other as speakers, using syntactic forms which are capable of taking time. The convivial discourse slowly gives birth to things and orders them in an experiential space".

> How to change the world?

In the essay Why civil resistance works⁶, two researchers has analyzed protest movements around the world between 1900 and 2006. The two authors surveyed 323 of them, focusing not primarily on the reasons of the protests, but rather on the form and, above all, on the final result.

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The conclusions are very interesting.

First of all, **non-violent movements are twice more effective** in achieving their goals than violent movements or campaigns. Non-violence has led to a political change in 53% of cases, compared to 26% of violence.

It is a question about size: peaceful movements tend to involve more people.

Ordinary citizens are more likely to join protests in which violence is not used. And the more attractive a protest is, the greater its ability to put pressure on the authorities. Moreover, no one is surprised when law enforcement authorities suppress a violent protest, while suppressing a peaceful protest can have serious collateral effects.

The peaceful protesters acknowledge the legitimacy of the existing rules and institutions, but deliberately violate certain laws to question their motivations.

The authorities can respond in two ways to civil disobedience actions: they can choose not to react, with the risk that participation will increase, or they can choose to repress protests, but in that case it would increase visibility and solidarity towards

the movement. In the end the authorities will feel constricted to deal with protesters.

The second discovery, however, is perhaps more surprising than the first: when a non-violent movement actively involves **3.5% of the population**, success is guaranteed and inevitable. This percentage is equivalent, for example, to 2,9 million people in Germany and barely 132,000 inhabitant in Berlin. **No movement has ever failed after reaching that percentage of involvement**, so much that authors called it "the 3.5 rule".

In other terms, the process and the idea of liberation is contagious.

> A human level

Discrimination between ingroup and outgroup is the problem to be overcome in this highly globalized world. The other main goal is to underline the universality of the problem, transcending ethnocentrism.

In 1966, the psychologist Muzafer Sherif⁷ noticed that hostility between groups arises from competition for a desiderable but scarce material resour-

ces (real or perceived). But while competitive goals lead to intergroup conflicts, **over-ordered goals** lead to cooperation between groups.

For this reason, admitting a **common destiny** or **common purpose** is the path to take to avoid intergroup conflict and work collaboratively. It implies to move from a social identity to human identity level.

By the way, it is a problem that requires shared solutions: it is more than the range of intervention of each individual state.

It needs a wide selection of solutions that are best suited to any different cultural contexts in which they are implemented. That's why ecological and social problems have to faced as a unified subject, but in a **decentralized way**.

> A new language

How to involve so many people in such an over-informed and confusing time, in which the tendency is to focus on the form and the superficiality of things?

It seems that **emotions** have become not the

main, but even the only instrument available to persuade disoriented audiences, capturing their attention, and, consequently, their consensus. Definitively overwhelmed by an excess of stimulation, problems and complexity, they are unstable and vulnerable publics, because they often consists of a sum of solitudes.

It is certainly not new that in order to propose any idea, to encourage people to make any decision, and even to sell anything, is not only appropriate, but even essential to act on the emotional leverage. Moreover, as long as a couple of millennia before commercial and political marketing were invented. Cicero said that in order to orient and persuade the audience, a good speaker should be able not only to explain, but also to entertain and engage emotionally. Even earlier, Aristotle said that persuasion comes from ethos, or the credibility of the speaker, logos, or the clarity and verisimilitude of the speech, and pathos: the ability to generate emotions. But it seems that today causing emotions has evolved from an indispensable means as it was, to the ultimate goal and content of persuasive

communication.

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Continuing with strictly rational discourses is not enough to reverse this trend or to attract those audiences. The technocratic approach is unsuccessful because it is not empathic, it ignores people's experience, it ignores their fragilities and painful points. And therefore it is not credible.

There is another element: rational discourses are realized through articulated and slow conversations that require long-lasting attention, and whose visual component is limited.

It's something that is badly promoted on social media, which requires fast messages that can be understood immediately, with an intuitive and impactful visual component.

A logical solution would seem to be the addition of a dose of emotion to rational calls, with the imperative to communicate in a way that is not only more empathic, but also simple and clear.

It is not an impossible mission, but almost. If the game is to those who are most emotional, any invocation that keeps a rational component can only be loser compared to one that is only emotional. Another solution is to try to change the rules of

the game, playing with audiences and languages. This means firstly to **segregate a new, different audience**, reconsidering the idea of the meeting, giving back to the "sum of solitudes" a **sense of community**, of closeness and sharing. With these, a little warmth and relief.

2.1

Secondly, it means introducing, even before different dialogues, alternative, gentler and **more pleasant languages**. And, finally, moving the place where discussion comes from the hysterical and immaterial context of social media to the **real context** of streets, squares and cities.

It is not a political project. It is a linguistic, emotional and behavioral project. It is about, even before the content, the ways in which that content is expressed. Precisely for this reason it could be potentially disruptive.

Only after having changed language, after having found different audiences and contexts, and therefore after having removed space for rhetoric based exclusively on strong emotions, could it be possible to introduce *logos* and *ethos* again into the persuasive discourse, to quote Aristotle. Or a rational, factual, projectual component. But first it

is essential to find, proposing **different emotions**, **new people** and **new language**.

> A new meaning

As already introduced in Chapter 1, in this period a new political subject arose: **the multitude**. Postmodern descendant of the labour movement, "the multitude represented the sign of civil disorder, human nature not defined within the social contract of the state"⁸.

The setting for this new labour force is no longer the factory, but the city in all its extension.

For these reasons, **Tempelhof** might be the best place as a concentric point for the new audience, the real context that could represent the first ring in a chain of a simbolic liberation. If symbols and meanings are so important for the ideology of neoliberalism, it should be more fundamental for the liberation from it.

A self-sufficient community have to be built to show that **another way of life** is possible, the only one that could make us survive and avoid a crisis from which there is no turning back. This community would respect the ordinance obtained by the will of the citizens in response to the turbo-gentrification that has been taking place in Berlin over the last decade.

In this context, Tempelhof would costitute a mediatic case, a new **symbol of human freedom**. It could represents an operation within and against the system, not only on a political level, but most

Creating a new sense of community is necessary to share different opinions and culturally enrich people.

of all in the cultural one.

It is not even possible to imagine a **change of cultural paradigm** without the contribution of intellectuals, professionals, artists, entrepreneurs, workers willing to collaborate convivially and with a sense of human sharing, spreading the meanings of a higher level of consciousness with a new language. The aim is to give a new meaning to a place which is already rich in terms of historical stratifications and level of people's care.

> Notes 2.1

- ¹ The Unchained Goddess, in The Bell System Science Series, dir. Frank Capra, 1958, film, 57min;
- ² Conrad P. Kottak, Laura Bonato (ed.), *Antropologia culturale*, McGraw-Hill Education, 3° ediction, 2020;
- ³ Noam Chomsky, *Media e potere*, Bepress, 2014, p. 44;
- ⁴ The word *slogan* is derived from *slogorn*, which was an anglicisation of the Scottish Gaelic and Irish *sluagh-ghairm* (*sluagh* "army" + *ghairm* "shout", "battle cry");
- ⁵ Maurizio Pallante, Alessandro Pertosa, *Solo una decrescita felice (selettiva e governata) può salvarci,* Lindau, 2017;
- ⁶ Erica Chenoweth, Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,* Columbia University Press, 2012;
- ⁷ The Sherifs' study was conducted over three weeks in a 200-acre summer camp in Robbers Cave State Park, Oklahoma, in 1954. Realistic conflict theory (initialized RCT), also known as realistic group conflict theory (initialized RGCT), is a social psychological model of intergroup conflict.

⁸ Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism,* Princeton Architectural Print, 2012.

Involve & Communicate

Propaganda > Slogan

A new language > Emotional

A new audience > Community

A real context > Tempelhof

Human & Nature

Man's relationship with nature has always changed over time and across different cultures. However, it has traditionally played a fundamental role within societies. In particular, considerations of man's position in relation to nature have characterised many aspects of the organisation of social life and interpersonal relations between individuals. Nature has been seen in different contexts and periods as a benevolent or hostile force towards humanity, and depending on a positive or negative view of it, man has begun to shape a concept of himself that has led him to act in consequence. In other terms, the look we take to the natural world deeply affects the image we develop of social worlds.

The intensive agriculture, the food system based on industrialization and computerization, is a system that has strongly alienated man from the surrounding environment, but in the last 50 years has become the prevailing system playing a controlling role over other systems.

Historically, people started to talking about relationship with nature in moral terms. Not only the ecologist and spiritual groups, but even in literatu-

re. As Milan Kundera underined in his book: "The true goodness of man can be revealed in all purity and freedom only to those who represent no force. The true moral examination of humanity, the fundamental examination (placed so deeply that it escapes our view) is its relationship with those at its mercy: animals. And here lies the fundamental failure of man, so fundamental that all others derive from it".

> Destructive nature

Man's domination over man emerges from the need to "dominate nature".

Nature is seen as a plague that must be defeated with technology and methods that justify human domination in the name of "human freedom". This radical image of a nature that must be domesticated by rational humanity has produced tyrannical forces of thought, science and technology, a fragmentation of humanity into hierarchies, classes, state institutions, ethnic and sexual divisions. It has promoted nationalist hatreds, imperialist adventures, and a philosophy of norm that

identifies order with domination and submission. Occidental man has decided that social development can only take place at the expense of nature, forgetting the importance of its protection. This choice, not without consequences, is reflected against man and produces his constant and growing discontent. As the American social theorist Murray Bookchin, "the dissociation that we have operated between society and nature, with its dramatic repercussions in the sphere of our psyche, depends on the reification of the whole living world"².

Today the human species is strongly threatened by this cultural approach which pervades us with ever greater intensity. But an inversion of direction due to fear of the destruction of nature and not a complete rejection of its exploitation would represent a limited and useless attempt destined to fail over time.

"To return to natural evolution only to save our skin from ecological catastrophe would change little, if nothing, in our sensitivity and in our institutions. Nature would continue to be an object (but, this time, feared rather than revered) and human

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beings would continue to be objects with an instrumentalistic orientation towards the world (but, this time, frightened rather than arrogant). The "green" would remain a disguise, only of a darker shade. Nature would remain unnatural, in our eyes, and humanity dehumanized"³.

An economy aimed at increasing the production of goods implies an ever-increasing exploitation of natural resources and, therefore, an extension of the exploitation of the human species on earth as a living organism and on all other living species, which inevitably results in an increase in injustices and inequalities between human beings. The most serious consequences of the ecological crisis and the economic crisis are being paid for and will be paid for increasingly by the poorest of human beings. Only greater equity between the human species and other living species will increase equity among human beings. Greater equality between human beings can only be achieved by abandoning the anthropocentrism that characterises Western worldview and developing a biocentric worldview. At the extreme point we have reached we can see the need for a complete

return to the earth, to the intimacy of all the senses with nature.

> The olistic perspective

Contrary to anthropocentrism, the olistic point of view redifines the role of human in nature as part of it

Nature is an environment from which we cannot prescind, and not just because it exists before us in time, but because it is an organic part of the human being.

The multiplicity of life forms and organic interrelationships in a biotic community allows a greater variety of interactions, variations, evolutionary and growth capacity and is therefore crucial not only for the stability of the community, but also for its ability to innovate the natural history of life.

In these terms, an analogy between ecosystem diversity and social diversity based on decentralised communities on a human scale should be outlined. One of the most stimulating elements of continuity between nature and society is **the non-hierarchical relationship that exists in an**

ecosystem.

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As the green anarchist Murray Bookchin underlines: "There is no king of animals and no humble servant. These terms are projections of the natural world of our social relationships. [...] In ecosystems ants are just as important as lions"³.

The social hierarchy is an institutional phenomenon, not biological.

Until we can get rid of this conception, especially in young people, and replace it with an ecological sensitivity of the "other" in terms of **complementarity rather than rivalry**, we will never achieve human emancipation.

A quotation from Charles Darwin supports crystal clear this idea: "In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

Never as today, there is an urgent need to rethink the concept of nature as creative, cooperative, fertile and characterized by complementarity, and, therefore, not mute or blind, cruel, or deterministic. It could bring to a new sensibility towards the others, which is fundamental in order to create a non-hierarchical society, based on complementarity rather than rivalry, and on new communities on a human scale, aware of the ecosystem in which they are located.

This sensibility could finally lead to a new, decentralized, selfsustainable public world, creating a space-time for new forms of autonomy, direct democracy and social planning.

> Organic societies

In recent years, academic ideas about life outside civilization have undergone a radical transformation. The idea that before civilization there was a short, horrible and bloody life is falling apart with increasing intensity and research in numerous fields is highlighting its unfounded nature. Primitive societies embody the fears of civilization and what power fears most: biophilia.

Among hunter-gatherers, societies were practically egalitarian, crime was almost unknown, while interpersonal solidarity was extremely developed, in an ethical context of deep respect and union with nature.

The model of life of organic societies has been the exclusive model of the human condition **for about 99% of its existence**⁴.

These organic societies were characterized by their strong relationships of internal solidarity and with the natural world. There is plenty of evidence to support these classless communities characterized by a vision of life that represents people, animals, plants and relationships in terms of uniqueness rather than on the basis of their functionalism for productivism. For these communities, individuals and nature reflected the richness of difference above all.

The world was perceived as a whole composed of many different parts, each of which was indispensable to its unity and harmony. Individuality, until it came into conflict with the community interest on which the survival of all depended, was seen more in terms of interdependence than independence. **Diversity** within the wider community network was seen **as a fundamental character of social unity**.

Among these societies, many researches outlined an absolute respect for all forms of life in which

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nature was made.

From this deep unity that connects people with the environment there is an extended connection even among the people themselves. People not only want to be close to the forces of nature, but they also want to feel immerged in it, as part of nature's balance.

Thus, prelettered cultures would express a cosmological uniqueness where life is constantly honored and recompensed. Nature is the principal expression of existence and supports its union with humanity by providing it with everything it needs. In this vision, nature is not an external habitat to be controlled and subjected to its own power, but an element of solidarity that protects and feeds.

At the beginning of society, therefore, a society-village emerged in which life was based on a deep socialization, on a strong relationship with the natural world and on a harmony between people and the surrounding nature. Non-authoritarian relationships are found in organic societies that still survive.

Sociality is not only a part of human nature but

represents its main component since it is based on the same associative and cooperative tendencies present in the Earth. No matter how much man tries to deny it, nature will always re-emerge because it is always present in man himself. Without cooperation and without harmonious relationships, without a restoration of the primitivism present under the curtain of civilization that guides our lives, the personalities are suffocated and begin to disintegrate, as the modern crisis of the "I" dramatically indicates. Society is shaping reality by privileging the fears of individualism and denying the need to be part of the group, to practice cooperation and love. A society in harmony with nature, and therefore before that, in harmony with man, is the "ecological society"⁵.

The hierarchy should be replaced by interdependence, freedom should not be opposed to nature and the individual to society. What is meant to be freedom is in many cases pure prevarication, such as the freedom to pollute, the freedom of exploitation and so on. On the contrary, the "ecological society" is based on a precise and strongly respect for values.

According to Bookchin, "an ecological society would fully recognise that the human animal is biologically structured to live with its peers, to care for them and to love them within a widely and freely defined social group".

These primitive societies strongly immersed in the harmony of nature have demonstrated the possibility of living with things rather than possessing them. The deep connection with nature produces a collective "I" characterized by cooperative spirit and respect for nature. On the contrary, the modern emphasis on the "independent ego" does not express the virtues of autonomy but rather the brutal ideology of pervasive selfishness, the effects of which are easily visible. This is in complete contrast to the very origins of human cooperation and dissolves the sense of solidarity. Thus we have the emergence of domination and power as needs and social imperatives.

> Notes 2.2

- ¹ Milan Kundera, *L'insostenibile leggerezza dell'essere*, Adelphi, 1985;
- ² Murray Bookchin, *L'ecologia della libertà: Emergenza e disso-luzione della gerarchia*, Elèuthera, 2010, p.462;
- ³ *ivi*, p.30;
- ⁴ John Zerzan, *Apocalittici o liberati? Che cos'è il primitivismo*, Millelire Stampalternativa, 2004, p.5;
- ⁵ Murray Bookchin, *Ecologismo libertario*, Bepress, 2013;
- ⁶ Murray Bookchin, *L'ecologia della libertà: Emergenza e dissoluzione della gerarchia*, Elèuthera, 2010, p.466.

Human & Nature

Anthropocentrism > Hierarchical

Biocentrism > non-Hierarchical

Ecosystem > Complementary

Diversity > Unity

Work & Well-being

Work & Well-being 2.3

The modern age of Western society has been characterized and strongly influenced by neoclassical economic theory, whose fundamental concept was the vision of man as *homo oeconomicus*¹. The neoclassical theory has developed from the 18th century onwards because of the obvious historical contingencies of Western society: the birth of the subdivision of labour, specialization, exchange of goods and services regulated in a market logic. In the simplification of the reality that has involved the neoclassical economic theory, the homo would be an *economic being* as driven by exclusively economic motivations, linked to the maximization of wealth. In his choices man would be rational and such behaviour would be universal.

But since it is a matter of mere abstraction, things are not always like that.

First of all, the market is not a natural condition of man but conforms within a social process strongly conditioned by the historical-cultural changes of the Western world as a direct consequence of the birth of capitalism. Not always, then, does homo distinguish himself for being a self-affirming individual, aimed at pursuing his own selfi-

sh purpose.

However, philosophical doctrines such as **utilita- rianism** are at the basis of classical economics, founded by Adam Smith² in the 18th century. For the latter, the free market is the place within which individuals are free to promote their interests. For Smith, every man would know perfectly how to recognize his own interest, as perfectly rational, and therefore should be allowed to satisfy it according to his own inclinations, those guided by selfishness.

Selfishness would not be negative because, by pursuing personal self-interest, man would also, indirectly, pursue the interests of all. Selfish behavior would be that which would maximize the well-being of the entire society thanks to that "invisible hand" which would transform vices into public virtues.

Alongside the utilitarianist paradigm (also called methodological individualism), which sees man's egoistic characteristic as preceding the will of the individual himself, sociologists have opposed the collectivist (or holistic) paradigm, wich is represented by the concept of *homo donator*.

> GPD: Well-being or well-having?

The words growth and degrowth have no connotation of value. They indicate an increase and a decrease in quantity respectively. However, if they refer to phenomena that positively or negatively affect individual life or social dynamics, they acquire a qualitative value, assuming meanings of improvement or worsening. In relation to phenomena with positive effects, growth indicates an improvement and growth a worsening. Growth in the number of people who can regularly feed themselves in a balanced way is an improvement, but growth in the number of road accidents is a worsening. The decrease in agricultural production due to drought is an improvement, but the decrease in carbon dioxide emissions is an improvement. In the collective imaginary of industrial societies

In the collective imaginary of industrial societies the word "growth" is automatically linked to a positive connotation and the word "degrowth" to a negative one. These unjustified identifications derive from the fact that in these societies the economy has been aimed at the growth of the production of goods and, consequently, the **Gross Domestic**

Product (GDP) has been used **as an indicator of well-being**, considering the economic value of goods and services produced in the economy. But GDP says nothing about the distribution of income between rich and poor, the environmental costs of production and consumption, and says little about the ability to improve our well-being in the long term.

Maurizio Pallante underlines the distinction between the concept of *commodity* and *good* to explain why GDP cannot be the right indicator of happiness³.

In fact, GDP can only be considered a valid indicator of well-being if in the collective imagination the concept of *commodities*, i.e. object or service bought, is identified with the concept of *goods*, i.e. object or service that responds to a need or satisfies a desire.

The concept of *commodities* is often confused with the concept of *goods*.

In reality, **not everything you buy responds to a need or satisfies a desire**. Therefore, not all commodities are goods.

For example, the food you throw away is a com-

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modity because you pay for it, but it is not a good. In general, waste is a commodity because you pay for it, but not only is it not a commodity, but it always causes environmental damage.

On the other hand, **not everything that responds to a need or satisfies a desire can only be bought**. Therefore, not all goods are commodities. Some can be self-produced, or exchanged reciprocally in the form of a gift within relationships based on solidarity.

For example, fruit and vegetables grown in a family garden for self-consumption are a good, but not a commodity.

Therefore, GDP does not coincide with the growth in the production of goods, i.e. objects or services that respond to a need or satisfy a desire.

However, a commodity that has no utility does not improve well-being, even if it makes GDP grow, while a good that is self-produced or exchanged in the form of a gift, which does not make it grow, improves it. Since it accounts for the monetary value of goods for final use even if they are not goods and excludes goods that are not purchased, **Gross Domestic Product cannot be considered**

an indicator of well-being. Its growth does not automatically correspond to an improvement in well-being. Its decrease does not automatically correspond to a worsening of well-being. GDP is not only an insufficient parameter, but a wrong parameter to measure well-being. GDP not only cannot measure well-being, but neither can it measure the usefulness of material goods. It only measures the monetary value of trade.

It increases if traffic accidents, illnesses and medicine consumption increase. It decreases if there is an increase in the consumption of vegetables grown for self-consumption in family gardens, it decreases if there is a decrease in the consumption of medicines because people get less sick, it decreases if there is a strengthening of solidarity among neighbours.

GDP is not a measure of well-being, but the as-much-having⁴ and an economy aimed at the as-much-having can only generate a sense of suffering, because it must induce people to want more and more, to never be satisfied with what they have, to envy those who have more, otherwise the growing quantities of end-use goods that are

produced would not find sufficient demand. **GDP** does not measure well-being, but well-having. In fact, in having, only quantitative connotations can be attributed: much and little, more and less. The qualitative connotations of good and bad, better and worse can only be attributed to states of being.

In a famous speech at the University of Kansas, Robert F. Kennedy said that GDP "measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile"⁴. He referred to creativity and human relationships, family relationships in particular, which represent the hard core of community relations, undermined but not completely dismantled by commercialization.

An economic system aimed at the growth of goods production that identifies wealth with GDP growth, promotes competition between individuals, destroys communities and families, uses school, advertising and mass media to persuade that the best way to have a good is to buy it, identifies wealth with the possession of things and innovation with improvement, commercializes common goods.

Is someone who works all day long to have an income that allows him to buy more goods to throw away faster and faster, or someone who works less and spends more time with the people he loves, because he only buys the goods he needs and can live on a lower income, happier? Which one gives up something?

For those who know how to self-produce a part of the goods they need and can count on a network of solidarity, money is not the measure of wealth, but the means to be able to buy those goods that can only had in the form of commodities. Those who do not know how to self-produce anything and cannot count on a network of solidarity depend totally on the market for the satisfaction of their needs. Those who know how to produce themselves and are part of a network of solidarity are more autonomous.

In societies that finalize the economy to the growth of goods production, human beings have to buy the increasing quantities of goods that are produced, otherwise they could not continue to produce them, so **they have to identify welfare with consumism**. Consumism must become

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the keystone of the value system. And those who have more become the model of those who have less. Consumerism has operated an anthropological mutation, flattening human beings on the materialistic dimension and removing spirituality from their mental horizon. The recovery of the spiritual dimension is essential to perceive the network of relationships that connect all living species with each other and with the places on earth where they live, as the science of ecology teaches. Spirituality is not faith. Spirituality is a constitutive element of human nature.

In societies that have aimed the economy at the growth of the production of goods and flattened human beings to the materialistic dimension, the valorisation of the spiritual dimension is an act of civil disobedience that makes it possible to recover the dimension of solidarity not only among human beings, but among all living beings, and to give the drive for equality a connotation that is not only political, but existential. The revaluation of the capacity of self-production of goods to reduce dependence on the market and rebuild social bonds destroyed by omnimercification, is an act

of rebellion against the reduction of human beings to pathetic puppets who can do nothing, know nothing, and are only capable of buying, throwing away and buying again.

> Psychological implications

Having has become the fundamental condition for being, for defining his own identity and seeing his own social status recognised, his own value as an individual in the society.

Our society is dominated by a compulsive need to consume. "Work and consume" is the imperative of today's generations, but in order to understand the phenomenon of consumerism it is necessary to analyze the existential needs that it tries (unnecessarily) to satisfy and the social assumptions that support it. The purchase generates a vague **feeling of euphoria in the consumer**. On a purely physiological level in our brain, **dopamine**⁵, the neurotransmitter that modulates the mechanism of satisfaction and pleasure, increases. And if there is nothing extraordinary in this primitive mechanis (man, after all, tends to realize the prin-

ciple of pleasure) the enjoyment that comes from it is only ephemeral, of limited duration.

Capitalism needs an unconscious mass of people willing to go into debt to buy objects they do not really need. It is an economy that needs the continuous repetition of the **cycle of desire-purchase-momentary gratification** of desire, an infinite cycle, where the consumer believes he can satisfy his inner needs with the compulsive purchase of objects.

"A satisfied consumer would be a catastrophe for consumer society" says Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish sociologist and philosopher who, more than anyone else, was able to predict the disastrous effects of consumerism on the social order.

A market that plays by these rules is not interested neither in the useful, nor in the necessary, nor in the happiness of its consumer, but in everything that is new and surprising, in what is able to stimulate our imagination, to generate in us a persistent desire. The purchase, however, does not qualify only as possession of the desired object, but is a pass-through, the conditio sine qua non without which a person cannot obtain **recognition of his**

or her social status. The object is not desired in itself, but for its symbolic value. It is the symbolic object that determines our identity and confirms our role in society, a role that acquires a value, from a modern point of view, only if it is confirmed by the other.

What can be deduced is that purchase generates a sense of belonging. Feeling part of something is a substantial need of the human being, an even more pressing need in modern society, a society that is both interconnected and deconstructed. The principle of the **liquid society**⁶, Bauman explains to us, is its absence of certainties: the ideological emptying of parties, the death of God, the collapse of religions and the disappearance of metaphysics have put all human certainties in crisis. Man is now struggling in search of a pole of aggregation, he is in search of that *thing* that makes him feel part of something again.

The individual alone is without purpose; it is in his relationship with others, in being part of a larger group that the life of the individual acquires meaning. Life in ever more dispersive and alienating big metropolitan cities may have had the benefit

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of creating more jobs, of making more resources available to citizens, but it has also had the consequence of loosening relationships between **people**. In the age of globalization it is the sharing of a lifestyle, which rotates around purchase and possession, that generates a sense of belonging. The absence of certainties, the liquidity of an ever more unstable and fragile society accentuate man's need to feel part of something again, and the response that consumerism offers is simple, direct, immediate; it does not involve a great social effort, a significant intellectual investment, an active participation on the part of the citizen; on the contrary, the individual is only required to be available to invest his own economic resources to conform to a shared model of life.

"What philosophers once called life has been reduced to the sphere of the private and then of pure and simple consumption", German philosopher Theodore W. Adorno already noticed in 1951.

Nevertheless, social problems not only derive from the consumist aspect of life.

The development of industrial and technological society imposes that everything must respond to

the so-called *performance principle*, for which the community is organized and stratified according to the economic performance of its members. The instrument that determines the progress is precisely work, but from this point of view it is a natural consequence that it becomes only a struggle, an alienating effort, deprived of any human essence, but at the same time necessary for daily needs. In this insane game, the **individual is a meaningless puppet**, the small gear that must make the enormous production machine work.

Our connotative elements have become work and income. Monetary income is the foundation of people's autonomy in societies that commercialize everything.

But for personal well-being, relational goods, creativity and spirituality are much more important than increased income, which, as has been shown by numerous empirical studies, does not significantly affect happiness and well-being. In 1974 the economist Richard Easterlin, documented that as income increases, human happiness increases to a certain extent; then begins to decrease, following an inverted U-curve. The result of this re-

search contradicted the fundamental assumption of the value system that identifies well-being with GDP growth, so that it was called **the paradox of happiness**⁸.

Economic systems focused on GDP growth do not simply ignore the essential contribution made to human well-being by relationships of love, solidarity and empathy towards others. They are actively committed to reducing them, because they believe that they can be a distraction from the total dedication that individuals in the productive age group must devote to the production of goods. Not for cynicism, but because they lead people to believe that this is the parameter of well-being.

We need to rediscover that human beings are not only producers and consumers of goods, but have a spiritual dimension that cannot be subordinated and sacrified to work. They cannot be reduced to the means of a system finalized to the growth of the production of goods, but the production of goods must go back to being one of the means they use to reduce their dependence on necessity, improve their quality of life, realize their cognitive, creative, relational needs.

Those who are dominated by the context, who do not follow their vocation or who do not pursue it, finish to operate an ontological split in themselves, which soon becomes reflected in a fragmentation, from which psychological, social and political fragilities arise inevitably. It is no coincidence that in the so-called "advanced" societies, increasing percentages of people use psychotropic drugs everyday, to alleviate the discomfort of existence; discomfort due to the despotic pressure imposed by technical-industrial rationality on individuals: no more people, but simple purchasers, who, in order to continue to be such, must throw themselves into work, any job, in order to obtain the salary with which they can buy the goods they "believe" they need.

Statistical projections indicate that in 2020, the second most widespread disabling disease in the world will be the major depression on the planet⁹.

To pursue the call of being, to live fully the vocation to which one is destined, does not, however, mean to work solely in the sphere of contemplation; even actions, though fatiguing, can assume profoundly

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vocational characteristics, and for this reason they are not exhausting; consider the craftsmen who, though tired in their bodies, conceive their activity as a joyful destiny; and on the other hand, there are workers suffering mental exhaustion for a simple work of employment, which does not stress them for fatigue, but consumes them in spirit. Therefore, when we leave the madness of growth and move forward from the need to produce more and more, we will be able to look at work as a means towards something greater: life. A means useful to produce those goods that one has material need of, but which add nothing to the spiritual and cultural completion of existence.

> A rediscovery of *welfare*

The most important concept of the whole logic of capitalism is pheraps the mercification, and in particular the **mercification of labour**. In a mercified world, the vast majority of the population depends on the sale of the labour force, in the form of wages or salaries, for its economic subsistence. In other words, to survive, people have to sell their ability

to work in the same market where other goods are traded. As Adam Smith observed, the demand for human beings is like that of any other resource. The reduction of human beings to commodities has two negative consequences. First, when people become commodities they are subject to ruthless market forces beyond their control. They face a world characterized by chronic insecurity, because the market on which their work is sold, like any other market, is subject to uncontrollable fluctuations. They are therefore dependent on forces that are indifferent to the needs of the individual. To survive and try to establish themselves, people adopt the values and norms of this prison: individualism, competition, selfishness, maximum attention to short-term material profits. In practice, these values are an obstacle to a fulfilling life. The other destructive aspect of mercification is that people reduced to commodities lose the ability to make moral claims to society. There is no moral responsibility towards a worker conceived as a commodity, just as there is no moral responsibility towards a bag of grain or a plot of mobile phones. A commodity has no right to work and therefore

no right to illness and paid holidays, pension and health care, protection against unfair dismissal without just cause, let alone severance pay or other unnecessary benefits. Instead of being treated with dignity and respect, like a respected person in a community who contributes with his work to the good of all, the worker reduced to a commodity becomes one of the many factors of production, not deserving more consideration than the machines he manipulates.

Nevertheless, in last decades innovative companies have become aware about many psychological aspects that would improve their employees' productivity at work. In fact, welfare of their workforce has turned as a fundamental prerogative to achieve more creativity and productivity. Nevertheless, these two factors continue to be used and exploited for the logic of profit, and the creatives and workers are attracted to large companies for their attention to the personal welfare. This waste of creativity is put at the mercy of companies that only appear to be green and sustainable. They could be used for nobler purposes, but they are immersed within a system that is

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profoundly wrong, that follow the myth of infinite growth, but innovative companies had understood how to capture the best resources in the market. The large use of **biophilia** in architecture and offices emerges from the benefits that contact with nature gives to people working. The reduction of working hours is due to many experiments that showed how this choice could be more effective in terms of productivity. The appearance of gyms located directly inside offices has the aim to have healthy workers; idea that is largely supported by the scientific knowledge and by well-known said "mens sana in corpore sano". Even from a psychological point of view, smart companies offer motivational support, life coaching, and technics of team building to improve coesion and group productivity at work, as well as the organization of several corporate events. The promotion of smart working produces a sense of more freedom in workers, while the transdisciplinarity in collaborative brainstorming debates, and the higher level (real or fictional) of horizontality in companies' hierarchies, with a new concept of leader that replace the classical chief, indicates that

all the topics that we have talked about individual well-being until here are deeply true and clear to everyone, especially to the sphere of employers. But if the means are the right ones, it turns to be the wrong purpose. In fact, all these techniques are used for strengthen the wellness of their workforces, who, feeling freer, satisfied, motivated, lose awareness of the real company policies that, although apparently aimed at improving the human condition and sustainable objectives, must still be configured as machines turned to surplus value and profit, in order to be competitive in the eternal conflict within the free market logic. Owning more available information, it is natural that smart companies implement these techniques hiding in effect the alienation of the resulting product, which is necesserily the profit, beyond any regulamentation and any regards toward ecosy-

But the use of biophilia demostrates the intrinsecal need of human to not feel alienated and the crucial **need to feel in contact with nature**, that is the opposite of what a city can offer; the reduction of working hours is the sacred right of humans to **enjoy life in terms of cultivation of tight relationships** between peers; the success of gyms is due to our necessity to move as an animal, to workout, and not to be a vegetable who avoid all kind of fatigue in name of laziness or "progress"; the use of team building is due to the **fundamental role of human as a social being**, essentially in conflict with the neoliberalist ideology; and finally, the renewed horizontality within the company, underline the importance of the **abolition of the anti-naturalistic concept of hierarchies** for collective interests, that mean the return towards the ancient harmony of organic societies.

¹ Conrad P. Kottak, Laura Bonato (ed.), *Antropologia culturale*, McGraw-Hill Education, 3° ediction, 2020;

² Adam Smith (1723-1790), Scottish philosopher and economist, unanimously considered to be the first of the classical economists, estabilished the foundations of classical political economy illustrated in his most famous book *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776);

³ Maurizio Pallante, Alessandro Pertosa, *Solo una decrescita felice (selettiva e governata) può salvarci,* Lindau, 2017;

⁴ ivi, p.

⁵ Dopamine works as a neurotransmitter. With the release of dopamine, the transmission of pleasure increases. The treatment of depression is based on this principle, which consists in releasing as much dopamine as possible, in order to raise the mood in a pharmacological way;

⁶ Bauman intended to explain postmodernity using the metaphors of liquid and solid modernity. In his books he argues that the uncertainty that afflicts modern society derives from the transformation from producers to consumers. In parti-

cular, he links concepts such as consumerism and the creation of human waste, the dismantling of security and a liquid frenetic life, forced to adapt to the attitudes of the group in order not to feel excluded. Concepts that have been explored in books such as *Liquid love: on the frailty of human bonds* (2003) or *Liquid life* (2005);

⁷ Theodore W. Adorno, *Minima moralia: Meditazioni della vita offesa*, Einaudi, 1994, p. 24;

⁸ The concept expressed by the sentence "wealth does not produce happiness" has been debated since ancient times. Already in Aristotle "it's clear that wealth is not the good we seek: it is only valuable as useful, that is, in function of something else." One of the macroconclusions of this paradox seems to be that wealth (or utility) and happiness (or social well-being) are not the same thing, because in order to be happier it is not enough to try to increase utility (products, goods, services), but, at least mostly, it is necessary to enter into the sphere of the relationship between people;

⁹ Murray C.J., Lopez A.D., Alternative Projections of Mortality and Disability by Cause 1990-2020: Global Burden of Disease Study. The Lancet, 1997, 349, 1498-1504.

Homo oeconomicus > Selfishness

GDP indicator > as-much-having (≠ well-being)

Work & Well-being

Consumerism > Loss of spirituality

Homo donator > Solidarity

Technology & Progress

Technology & Progress 2.4

As the history demostrate, human life has always been linked to scientific discoveries: from the invention of the wheel to industrial revolutions, until the present time. Today, however, the question is whether it is still legitimate to continue to evolve or whether we are facing a moral regression.

The problem become evident when most of people think uncritically that innovation and new technologies are always neutral and they mean automatically a progress for humanity, even if it means just a minor improvement in terms of comfort in daily life.

The point is that **technology is not neutral**, it is not a tool that is somehow separate from its collocation within society.

Western civilization is now living immersed in a **te-chnological-idillic representation** of technology, riding a positivist idea of science and progress.

The novelty, the new, in a world inhabited by those who believe they are walking in the path of continuous and unlimited innovation, is always better than the old.

Nevertheless, beyond this superficial idea of progress, there are many aspects to consider in order

to understand if we're witnessing a real progress or something we just think it is, and, most of all, we have to be aware about which implications it involves.

Firstly, we can notice how pervasive the conception of technology has become, so comprehensive that even in order to explain human relationships, words belonging to its field, such as *feedback*, *input*, *output*, are often used. The result of this process is **a constant alienation**. As evidence of this, many young people are escaping into technology in an all-absorbing way, seeing this as the only fulfilling prospect for their lives.

The green anarchist John Zerzan has rightly pointed that "**if machines can be human, men can be machines**. The really scary thing is that the distance between the two extremes is getting thinner"¹.

> Lost perceptions

The problem with modern technology is that it has eventually absorbed the social dimension. As a result, there is an incapacity to distinguish between the technical and social levels and the consequent difficulty in defining which of the two should be functional to the other. In fact, it is forgotten that society must use technology for its own emancipatory purposes. As Murray Bookchin claimed, "we lack the sense of the social matrix in which each technique should be included, we lack the social meaning of technology"².

For the american philosopher, we are dealing with a caricature of the hellenic vision of *téchne*³, no longer based on the **sense of the limit**.

Moreover, in the new technology the person is absent. In the works of the craftsmen the personality of the human beings who modelled them was perceived, and they were always in profound harmony with the materials and tools used.

An important feature of technology in a pre-industrial society is the fact that, according to Bookchin, it is generally more "adaptive" than "innovative": in the presence of a cooperative and inclusive culture the technical system tends to model itself on these needs instead of developing in a unidirectional way. Contrary to what happens today, primitive societies tended to elaborate the technique with

great measure and with an acute **sensitivity for its possible integration** into existing institutions. The change made by the technique to the existing social structure was perceived and was to remain the exception. It would therefore be the predominance of technology in social organization that would distort the original community relations and not simply the discoveries of a mere technical instrumental character.

The difference between a libertarian and an authoritarian technique must be seen in the emergence of a **"technical-institutional" system**.

Mumford perfectly pointed out that one of the first machines that appeared in history was formed by **human beings gathered together** and not by an inanimate set of technical components⁴.

These institutional technologies produced a reification of work and especially of workers; machines also made men who used them machines.

For Bookchin, political structures are part of technology and it is necessary to remodel them. The impressive development of centralized states

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was supported by an institutional technology of domination made up of armies, burocrats, magi-

strates etc. and a system of beliefs based on sacrifice, first of all solidarity and harmony with nature. Without the development of this "political technology", it would have been inconceivable to develop the key aspects of societies based on exploitation: the mobilization of labour, the accumulation of material surpluses and the use of an instrumental technique for monumental works.

Bookchin sees three essential purposes in this institutional technology: to **intensify the working process**, to **abstract it** and to **objectify it**. This tripartition was made possible by the development of the **hierarchy and administrative technique**, which would later assume a definitely industrial character, with its full manifestation in the modern factory system. The first forms of factories did not introduce radical technical inventions except abstraction, rationalization and standardization of work and of the people who embodied it.

The tendency of people to be treated like the machines in the production system reinforced the perception of being reified. This created a lower class that was excluded from the life of the community and strongly fragmented. The factory, ac-

cording to Bookchin, not only introduced a widespread use of machines, engines and devices but also proclaimed the superiority of an organizational system embodied by the organizers-controllers

This disintegration of community relations helped to separate the technique from any other precept other than private **selfishness**, **profit and accumulation**. While in the past there were limits that had kept the technique in a social matrix it disappeared at this time, so that it was free to develop autonomously without other purposes or limits than those imposed by the market.

"Technical imagination must see nature not as an inert substance in random motion, but as a constantly evolving active substance that acts and interacts to produce complex, varied, "sensitive" forms. [...] Until then, even the best projects of solar collectors, windmills, and water mills, vegetable gardens, greenhouses, "biological" machines, "solar villages", will be just a minor project, and not new meanings, no matter how well-intentioned their designers are"⁵.

> Innovation and capital

There is undoubtedly a direct correlation between technology and capital. Considering computers as the neutral result of a social organization means not considering which organization is capable of designing and producing them. It is not the harmonious communities of hunter-growers who have designed the sophisticated technological machines of the present, but the powers of an increasingly totalizing system. And it is for this reason that their use is firstly functional to them, to the expansion and control of their own domain. As Raniero Panzieri observed in his essays about neocapitalism, the whole process of industrialization is represented as dominated by the "technological" fatality that leads to the liberation "of man from the limitations imposed by the environment and physical possibilities [...] Today's "capitalist use" of machines and organization (administrative rationalization), are completely ignored in favour of a technological-idillic representation"6.

Within the organization of capital, the technolo-

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gical process, as an integral part of capital itself, marks the transition from coercion to persuasion of workers, subjecting the latter through more diversified and specialized forms of work.

For Panzieri, "capitalist accumulation is identified with this unprecedented proliferation of technical means of man's dominion over nature. But in the process of capitalist accumulation the pressure for innovation is always closely linked to the formation of surplus value"⁷.

It is the extortion of surplus value that leads to innovation. Innovation becomes profit when machines not only decrease the workforce, but through their technical evolution they make any social perspective impossible outside the development of the means of production. This creates a situation of competition that pushes technological innovation to paroxysm, that explains **the exponential innovation revolution** of the last 30 years.

Multinational companies that produce energy to sale and make a profit from it have no problem in getting into the alternative fuels industry, as long as they do not decrease their consumption, because they would decrease their profits.

In industrial companies, which have aimed the economy at growth, it is **not utility, but profit**, the main purpose of the production of goods.

However, in order to deal with the environmental and economic problems that have emerged in recent years, it is necessary to **restore utility** to its role as the fundamental motivation for the production of goods.

A new declination of equality, which allows to overcome these problems, requires the development of technologies that **reduce the consumption of resources per unit of product**, i.e. a selective and guided decrease in waste, creating useful employment. And **not increasing productivity per unit of time**, with technologies that reduce the impact of human labour on added value.

In particular, technologies become sustainable by preventing programmed obsolescence, by designing objects that last longer and can be made more efficient by replacing only those components that increase their efficiency, producing repairable objects, and designing objects that at the end of their useful life can be disassembled in order to divide the materials of which they are

composed into homogeneous types, so they can be reused to build other objects, thus **reducing waste and consumption of raw materials**.

> Is this progress?

Growth-oriented economies cannot induce to replace self-produced goods with commercial products and non-commercial trade with commercial one.

In fact, **self-made goods** and goods traded in the form of a **reciprocal gift** over time not only **do not increase GDP**, but they reduce it because they decrease demand for the corresponding goods. Although these substitutions remain within free choices, they have been made almost inevitable through two types of intervention. In the first instance, those knowledge that for millennia have allowed human beings to self-produce many goods essential for daily survival have been removed from the legacy of shared knowledge: horticulture and farming for self-consumption, the controlled use of fermentations to produce food and drink, techniques for the preservation of food, mainte-

nance and minor repairs, basic sewing techniques, etc. In the space of two generations, human beings have become part of economic systems aimed at increasing the production of goods and have been deprived of these skills and have become totally dependent on the market for the satisfaction of the most basic needs.

In this passage the disadvantages have been greater than the advantages, because self-produced goods cost less and are mostly qualitatively better than the goods that replaced them, but especially because the distinctive characteristic of the human species has disappeared in relation to all other living species: the ability to do useful things that do not exist in nature by using the hands under the guidance of design intelligence, and the ability to do them always better by re-elaborating the information that the hands offer to intelligence through the two functions of touch and grip. A systematic work of **mass persuasion** has led to the belief that this process of objective **cultural impoverishment would represent progress**.

The second way in which the dependence of individuals on the purchase of goods has increa-

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sed was the loss of the safety nets offered by community-based relations founded on the gift of time and reciprocity. Even this process, which has isolated individuals by forcing them to purchase in the form of commodities many services that were previously exchanged reciprocally without the intermediation of money, has been depicted and perceived by the masses as a process of emancipation from the social control exercised by community relations, while in reality it placed a further, even stronger limit on the autonomy of individuals, increasing their dependence on the market and transforming all relations into commercial, competitive, and no longer collaborative, relations.

Theory of degrowth implies a series of methods that encourage the **exodus from the tyranny of the market**⁸. From this point of view, one of the tools that allow to escape as much as possible from this despotic rationality is to self-produce goods or manage services instead of buying them in the form of commodities whenever it is possible and convenient to do so. This obviously does not mean that it is possible, nor even desirable,

to go beyond the mercantile dimension totally: for example, some highly technological goods need large structures and investments, and will thus necessarily be produced in the industrial sphere.

Therefore, it is not a question of overwhelming the mercantile space on the homemade, but of operating in view of **a functional relationship between the two fields**, which are integrated without confusing each other⁹. The functional balance between the two areas resists until the economic space breaks the boundaries and goes beyond its limits, invading the homemade space.

The hyper-production of cars, instead of speeding up movements, paralyzes traffic; the exorbitant amount of notions made available on the web, instead of increasing the average cultural level, eventually confuses the user, who, overwhelmed by the most disparate information, is unable to filter the collected information; the automatic word corrector, now present in any writing program, instead of helping to improve the text, reducing errors, contributes to make the writer less and less able to control his vocabulary and spelling correctness. It is now evident that the massive use of technolo-

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gical instrumentalization is destroying the human capacity to think, calculate, memorize and analyze facts, notions, words, numbers.

In this system of things, the use of ever more highly technological objects and the hyper-specialisation of experts have reduced human beings to mere nullity and addicted to comfort¹⁰.

We live a life ever more immersed in abstraction and distance from ourselves where even the most basic needs become difficult to realize without technological means.

"Technology claims to extend our senses; the result of this extension, however, seems rather to be the weakening and atrophication of the senses themselves. What technology wants to make us forget, however, is that, in almost all cases, it is itself that creates the problem it would like to solve"11.

In this context, progress, once the most extreme manifestation of radical optimism and the promise of lasting happiness, has moved to the other end of the axis of expectations, marked by dystopia and fatalism.

> The *vernacular* dimension

*Vernacular*¹² is intended what is made, manufactured, cultivated, produced at home, and which is in no way intended for the market, but only for domestic convivial use or exchange.

The object produced in the *vernacular* field was therefore not intended for the market, could not be bought with money, but fulfilled a family or community need.

And it is precisely this personal and community dimension that the consumer society has lost.

Reconsidering the conviviality and social relations of the past therefore becomes fundamental for rethinking society from its foundations.

The disappearance of the *vernacular* sector therefore turned out to be a decisive condition for the rise of capitalism, increasingly linked to industrially produced goods.

Every development of the economic space implies a regression of the *vernacular* sphere, with the consequent deconstruction of its values. The *vernacular* space has its own originality, linked to a historical, social and comunitary context. It is ne-

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cessarily **singular**, **characteristic**, **territorial**.

On the other hand, the advanced economy has an extreme need to standardize tastes, to optimize the production of goods and reduce costs. The cultural horizon of reference has suffered a uniform compression from a biopolitical point of view, visible even in the field of architecture.

It is not just a problem of quality, sustainability and stardandization, but even a moral problem emerge.

Ivan Illich, a philosopher considered one of the precursors of the theory of degrowth, affirmed that "moving from productivity to conviviality means replacing **an ethical value with a technical value**"¹³.

For him, the dignity of man is only possible in a self-sufficient society, and the same dignity declines as industrialization grows.

The ethical value is remarkable even according the methods to achieve knowledge and its purpose. There is a big difference between the concept of acquisition *of* something or acquisition *from* something. The first one looks for the *control* of the outside world, whilst the second looks for the *un*-

derstanding of the world.

Knowledge aimed at undestanding does not modify the object of science, it knows it by taking it intact, it produces authentic knowledge and induces change. Knowledge aimed at control instrumentalizes the object, it does not want to know it, but to use it and dominate it. It produces neither positive changes nor learning.

Reality shows us that nowadays the latter method is the most popular, and it is more and more clearly that the depersonalisation linked to the increase in technology is leading to the victory of the same undisputed process of depersonalisation. The existence of machines capable of thinking, as well as the constant increase of alienation processes, is leading us towards a post-human future where the distance between man and machine is getting shorter and shorter. The appearance of new technical tools based on artificial intelligence sadly shows a small part of the future we are approaching.

But, as Illich try to reply to this, "the advent of techno-bureaucratic fascism is not written in the stars. There is another possibility: a political process

that allows the population to establish the maximum that everyone can demand, in a world with manifestly limited resources; a process that leads to agree on the limits within which the growth of the instruments must be kept; [...] Such a program may still appear utopian at the point where we are: if we allow the crisis to worsen, we will soon find extreme realism"¹⁴.

> Innovation and inequality

Economists often argue that changes in technologies production increase inequality. The intuition behind this statement is that technical change facilitates the most qualified workers, replacing tasks previously performed by the unskilled.

In 2015, Anthony Atkinson provided a simple discussion of economic theory to support this hypothesis.

The view that **technologies production increase inequality** is supported by descriptive evidence from recent decades, when high-income countries have witnessed both major technological changes, including the rapid spread of computers in the

workplace, and a sharp increase in wage inequality.

Disequality is linked to the spread of technologies even in the sphere of production and raw material supplies all over the world. Globalization has settled a system of power that divide nations in three hierarchical positions: the central, the peripherical and the semiperipherical.¹⁶

Central nations, with sophisticated technologies and mechanized means of production, provide highly technological and high capital-intensive goods, most of which are destined for other central nations, although some of these also reach the peripheral and semi-peripheral ones.

Central nations monopolize the most profitable activities, especially the control of world finance. Nations of the semi-periphery and periphery have less power, wealth and influence. The semi-periphery is a middle way between the centre and the periphery, and the nations that currently belong to this group are industrialised. Like the central nations, they export both industrial products and raw materials, but they do not have the same power and economic dominance. The economic

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activities of the periphery are less mechanized than those of the semi-periphery: the periphery produces raw materials, agricultural supplies and, to an ever increasing extent, provides human labour for export to the centre and to the semi-periphery. Today, although the peripheral nations are benefiting from a certain level of industrialization, the relations between the centre and the periphery remain essentially exploitative.

> Notes 2.4

- ¹ John Zerzan, *Senza via di scampo? Riflessioni sulla fine del mondo.* Arcana. 2007:
- ² Murray Bookchin, *L'ecologia della libertà: Emergenza e dissoluzione della gerarchia*, Elèuthera, 2010, p. 357;
- ³ While *téchne* maintains a relationship with nature's ability to manifest itself, *technik* causes nature to renounce its latent power. According to Heidegger, *technik* refuses "to let earth be an earth" (Aron Vinegar, Amanda Boetzkes, *Heidegger and the Work of Art History*, Ashgate Publishing, 2014, p. 143);
- ⁴ Lewis Mumford, *The myth of the Machine,* Harcourt, Brace and World, New York, 1966, p. 59;
- ⁵ Murray Bookchin, *L'ecologia della libertà: Emergenza e disso-luzione della gerarchia*, Elèuthera, 2010, p. 393;
- ⁶ Renato Panzieri, *Sull'uso capitalistico delle macchine nel neo-capitalismo*, in *Quaderni Rossi*, Anno I, n° 1, 1961, p.59;
- ⁷ ibidem;
- ⁸ Maurizio Pallante, Alessandro Pertosa, *Solo una decrescita*

felice (selettiva e governata) può salvarci, Lindau, 2017;

⁹ In the pre-industrial model of production, work is oriented to produce goods to satisfy needs, both when they are produced for self-consumption (farmer agriculture) and when they are produced to be sold to customers who require them (artisanal products and agricultural surpluses exceeding). Therefore money is a means of exchange, according to a commodity-money-commodity chain. In the industrial production mode the work is aimed at producing commodities, i.e. objects and services to be sold, in order to obtain more money than has been invested in producing them. Therefore money becomes the aim of production and the measure of wealth, according to a money-commodity-money chain. The indicator with which the well-being of a nation is measured becomes the GDP, that is the monetary value of the goods for final use produced and bought in a determined period of time.

In pre-industrial societies, where goods are produced and exchanged for their value in use, trade exchanges do not replace, but integrate the self-production of goods and exchanges based on gift and reciprocity. The scope of trade is limited to the purchase and sale of goods that one is not able to self-produce, it is not convenient to self-produce, and

cannot be obtained in the context of non-commercial trade.

¹⁰ The comfort/innovation trap is to create fictitious needs on which people depend. For an insight about control and comfort, read the article: Mandredo Nicolis Di Robilant, *Controlling Comfort*, in *CCA-Canadian Centre for Architecture*, 2012. https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/issues/16/the-rest-of-your-senses/1528/controlling-comfort;

- ¹¹ Enrico Manicardi, *L'ultima era*, Mimesis, 2012;
- ¹² From latin *vernacŭlus*, adj. "domestic, familiar", typical of the vernacular, made at home. It is meant like something that is produced homemade, not commercialized;
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- ¹⁴ Ivan Illich, *Nello specchio del passato*, Boroli, 2005, p. 130;
- ¹⁵ Anthony Atkinson heads the "Commission on Global Poverty" established in 2015 by the World Bank.
 The aim of the Commission was to gather a series of recommendations to improve the World Bank's role in monitoring and measuring extreme poverty;

¹⁶ The concept of world-system of the American sociologist, historian and economist Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. His most important work, *The Modern World-System*, has appeared in four volumes since 1974.

Innovation > Profit

Real innovation > Utility

More "progess" > Less skills (autonomy)

Technology & Progress

Technologies production > Inequalities

Globalization & Identities

Globalization & Identities 2.5

The postmodernity age represents today's ever-changing world and people in motion who have learned to manage different identities according to place and context.

Since its origin, postmodernity describes a world in which standards, contrasts, groups, boundaries and traditional identities open, extend and crash.

Globalization promotes intercultural communication which, also thanks to travel and migration, brings people from different societies into close contact. If, however, the world is more integrated than ever before, disintegration is all around us.

Everyone knows we live on the same planet. In a point of view, the disparity we encounter comes from the fact that **in many aspects we are planetary**, in terms of technology, the market, etc., **but in others we are not**. And there are large gaps between national, regional, individual sensitivities and the planetary movement, which manifest themselves in various forms, including violence. Globalisation is a fact. You cannot be in favour or against totally.

As Noam Chomsky affirmed in a recent interview: "there's nothing wrong with globalization itself. The question is, what form of globalization?"

The one that has developed has been **under the sign of neoliberalism**. It has enriched the richest people and put enormous power in the hands of corporations and monopolies.

Furthermore, we often use the word *global* to talk about *universal*, but they are two quite different things. The word *global* is based on a growing diversification of social classes, while from a *universal* point of view we might think that the promotion of the individual should lead us towards equality of rights among human beings¹.

In fact, current globalisation plays a key role in the spread of inequality all over the world.

It can have significant implications for income distribution, because **it often creates "winners"** and "losers".

The hypothesis that supports the negative effect of globalization on income inequality can be easily explained in terms of wage differences between highly skilled and low-skilled individuals: if globalization implies that a country can import basic ma-

nufactured goods at lower prices, paid by exporting more valuable high-tech services, then the wages of highly skilled workers are likely to increase compared to unskilled wages in that country. According to this logic, it could be argued that globalization increases inequalities in rich countries because the "losers" are more likely to be primarily those with low incomes.

As we have already seen in the previous chapter, globalization has settled a system of power that divide nations in three hierarchical positions: **the central**, **the peripherical and the semiperipherical**².

Central nations, with sophisticated technologies and mechanized means of production, and monopolize the most profitable activities, especially the control of world finance.

Nations of the semi-periphery and periphery have less power, wealth and influence. The semi-periphery is a middle way between the centre and the periphery. The economic activities of the periphery are less mechanized than those of the semi-periphery: the periphery produces raw materials, agricultural supplies and, to an ever increasing extent,

provides human labour for export to the centre and to the semi-periphery. Today, although the peripheral nations are benefiting from a certain level of industrialization, the relations between the centre and the periphery remain essentially exploitative.

For this reason, the need to relocate production activities that have been relocated from the oldest industrialised countries to countries that are now undergoing a rapid process of industrialisation is becoming urgent to face global environmental problems and social issues at local level.

> Globalization and economy

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Globalization is the last stage of a trend implicit in the finalization of the economy aimed at the growth of the production of goods.

The extension of the industrial model of production to the whole world is indispensable for the profits of the power block represented by multinational companies and international finance, which operate on a global level. All the most serious problems afflicting humanity are caused by

this process: mass migration, unemployment, the extension of poverty and the impoverishment of the middle classes of industrialized countries, the climate crisis, the proliferation of local wars as a whole constitute, to quote a concept expressed by Pope Francis in 2014, **a fragmented third world war**³.

Globalization is the result of a precisely process of expansion occurred in the history of capitalism. In order to increase the production of goods, it is necessary to progressively increase the number of workers who produce them and the number of consumers who buy them, which are two aspects of the same social figure, because workers who produce goods receive a salary in exchange for their work which enables them to buy all the goods they need in the form of commodities. In order to increase their number, industrial societies have encouraged and/or forced an increasing number of people who self-produced most of the goods needed to live (farmers), or produced values for use (craftsmen), to move from the countryside and towns to cities, from subsistence farming and handicrafts to agricultural production for the

market, industry and services. Since the beginning, the history of industrialization has been characterized by migration flows that have grown in proportion to the growth of industrial production. This process began in England in the 18th century with the laws on the enclosure and the privatisation of common land⁴, which prevented farmers from continuing to practice a subsistence economy and forced them to become factory workers. Nowadays this tendency has evolved through the mass media, spreading the desire to imitate the consumerist and uninhibited lifestyles of industrial societies. Their capacity for persuasion was later reinforced by the use of internet and smartphones. In fact, in contemporary age, anything that happens on the other side of the world has an immediate repercussion, as if it happened near us. In particular, the historical break-up marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall has established that capitalism is the most efficient way of managing industrial production, i.e. the most appropriate way to increase the production of goods⁵. And as already seen in the previous chapter, in

industrial companies which have aimed the eco-

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nomy at growth, it is not utility, but profit, the main motivation for the production of goods.

In order to contrast this trend, it is necessary to avoid oligopolies and monopolies, to increase the real competition between a wide plurality of subjects, constituted by **small or medium companies in the territorial areas**, which **respond to real needs**.

Multinational companies that produce energy to sell and make a profit from it have no problem in entering the alternative sources sector, as long as they do not decrease their consumption, because they would decrease their profits. On the other hand, those who produce their own energy from renewable sources, or microgeneration, and have to sell the surplus of hours in which they produce more than they consume, have an interest in using it with maximum efficiency, because the less they waste, the more they can sell. And they can also sell their surpluses at a competitive price, because what they earn is a profit in addition to what they already get from self-production.

Only if the State proposes the objective of preventing the market from becoming an oligopoly, **pro**-

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tecting small producers from attempts to push them out by multinationals, or prevent their entry, it will be possible to develop technologies aimed at reducing waste and discards. At the same time, it will allow small and medium-sized companies that produce and install these technologies to work, create jobs and make profits.

The globalization of markets requires the progressive elimination of national environmental and trade unions legislation that can contrast, or simply slow down, the movement of goods between different countries.

What is essential for contrast this, in order to become **a political objective**, is to indicate the areas in which it can be achieved and the social groups that can be involved in this process.

Among the sectors in which the local dimension is even more advantageous than the globalized economically and ecologically, two have a strategic importance for the autonomy of peoples and democracy: **food self-sufficiency** and **energy autonomy**.

In both sectors, multinational companies operate with the aim of increasing the supply of goods (wi-

thout any regard for the environmental impact of the technologies they use) and consumer dependence on the world market, while local companies able to satisfy the demand expressed by the people living in their territory, **not only improve their autonomy** and self-sufficiency, but also offer products and services in which **quality prevails over quantity** and **profit is a consequence of the usefulness** of what they sell.

Only the market is able to generate the professional energy necessary to offer, with the best price-quality ratio, goods that meet the needs of buyers and not the need of producers to earn more money than they spent to produce them. Certainly not the oligopoly or monopoly. Only entrepreneurs, artisans and professionals rooted in the territories in which they operate can apply their professional skills to the desire to make their lands healthier and more pleasant with their work. They can consider their work as the ideal continuity with that carried out by previous generations, combining the right need to make a profit with the usefulness of what they do. Certainly not the managers of multinational companies who live el-

sewhere and respond to investors who only want to make a profit. Only a government that seeks food self-sufficiency and energy self-sufficiency with the aim of giving security to its people can commit itself in this direction.

The economical market is the denial of the market. It systematically contradicts the free development of the dynamics between supply and demand, which are its constitutive characteristics. It reduces the number of producers and makes the market evolve towards oligopoly and monopoly. The companies that prevail in this ruthless selection process are getting ever larger, and in order to be able to invest their profits they must progressively expand their range of action. They need globalisation and claim, in the name of the free market, not to encounter legislative obstacles that would undermine their need to displace local producers. Their financial power enables them to influence political choices, elections, nominations of ministers and heads of government in various forms. Their power also progressively increases in relation to buyers, who they transform into consumers, that is, people who are no longer able to

produce anything for themselves or to relate to others except in competitive terms, so that they can only buy in the form of commodities all the goods they need to live with. The market is not just the place where goods are bought and sold. It is the institution that allows human beings to have a much more varied quantity of goods than they would be able to produce themselves individually. It is an institution that has always played an irreplaceable role in improving their quality of life. To enable them to restore this value, it is necessary first of all to re-evaluate the importance of the self-production of goods and of exchanges based on gift and reciprocity. Not only because in relation to certain goods they are economically advantageous and qualitatively better, but above all because they reduce the dependence of buyers to buy everything and, therefore, release them from the subordinate position towards sellers in which they are placed by not being able to satisfy any of their vital needs independently.

The revaluation of the vernacular economy is a liberating factor, which re-dimension the market and, precisely for this reason, allows it to recover

its irreplaceable positive function. In order to allow the market to return to its function of multiplier of goods in relation to those that can be produced personally, it is necessary that the number of producers is high to allow a wide range of choices, and that they are rooted in the territory to know its needs better, to respond to demand and not to condition it in order to be able to sell what is produced instead of producing what is needed, to share the consequences of their work, positive if it is good, negative if it is not.

> Mobility: a human feature?

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If the hypothesis that the population of the planet was generated from Africa is true, this would mean that **the essence of humanity is movement**, but in our time it follows another rhythm. We can already forecast a single planetary society that will have internal problems. Migrations in our age are rather a **new form of urbanization**, intended as an original process that implies that **the city as it was previously conceived is disappearing** or at least evolving.

Urbanization, globalization, migration are almost identical notions, because we are witnessing a movement that is not limited to those who go from South to North. **The world has become a sort of immense city**, to the extent that Paul Virilio talks about a "virtual metacity".

It is true that in many aspects, we all live in the same city, but in others we see that the great metropolises reflect all the differences of the world. In other words, a double movement of internal diversity and apparent homogeneity exists on a planetary scale.

However, there are huge differences among the causes that make people move though different nations: the spreading of tourism and travelling, as a consequence of a rise in low-cost transports; élite movements, that is to say a new professional cosmopolism; and an imposed mobility, due to citizenship crisis (war, economical, environmental migration).

If economical or war crisis ever existed in the history as causes of people's migration, environmental migration is something that is quite a novelty, which, however, may become one of the main in

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the very near future, as it is already occurring consistently in our days.

In fact, according to the World Bank, **by 2050**, up to **143 million people** currently living in sub-Saharan Africa (86 million), South Asia (40 million) and Latin America (17 million) **could be forced to move**. Since 2008, 25 million people are already forced to leave their homes every year⁷.

Environmental migrants are people or groups of people who, for imperative reasons of sudden or progressive changes to the environment that negatively affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their usual homes or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move both within their country and beyond.

The issues that arise are linked to the need to deal with these migrations: currently the cities and **urban areas** in which climate migrants are established⁸ (assumed 70% by 2050: the World Bank director, Kristalina Georgieva, called it "population shock"), **are not able to manage issues such as social services, housing or work**. Therefore, it is necessary to think about the inevitable human costs that this type of migration also brings with it,

starting to forecast an increase in the number of inhabitants in slums (40% in 2050), without adequate hygienic-sanitary conditions and in extreme poverty.

Particulary interesting was the solution to the housing problem due to the economical crisis strating from 2008 adopted by many american cytizens who could not effort a mortgage.

In fact, tiny houses became an affordable option for individuals that lost their homes. With their low cost and relative ease of construction, tiny houses are being adopted as shelters for the homeless in several cities all around United States.

> Boundaries and identities

"Men are as equal as they are unequal. They are equal in certain aspects, unequal for others. [...] They are equal if they are considered as *genus* and compared as *genus* to a different *genus* like that of the other animals [...] they are unequal among them, if they are considered as *uti singuli*, that is taking them one by one"9.

In the past, the expansion of Western culture all

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around the world has been dictated by a cultural imposition characterized by an **ethnocentric mentality**. Nowadays, this way of thinking has been regarded as a cultural imperialism from anthropologists, which in many cases is still present nowadays.

In fact, according to neoliberalism, the advanced economy has an extreme need to standardize tastes (and therefore cultures), to optimize the production of goods and reduce costs.

In order to contrast this form of forced-homologation, it is crucial to re-elaborate a new concept of diversity.

Difference not to claim their own superiority, but because societies organise themselves in different ways in relation to the different characteristics of the territories in which they live. And these differences must be respected because they have a meaning, since they enhance the cultural identities of each people.

Supporting this idea, **relativism consists in a strong recognition of cultural multiplicity**, which inevitably translates into an equally strong recognition of the incidence of customs (or culture) in

the organization of human life and society. At the basis of relativism there is a deep mistrust of the universality of psychic or mental structures of natural order, which would unify all men. Relativism does not deny the existence of such structures; it believes, however, that they represent a minority component in human organization: more important, however, is the cultural dimension, with its inevitable variability, so that what distinguishes man in his true essence would be precisely this variability, rather than the uniformity of laws or natural structures.

People embrace "cultural" norms or laws, which they receive from their traditions and which they ultimately fabricate with their culture; but in order to give them consistency and a sort of indisputability, they transform them ideologically into "general and natural" laws, as if, instead of coming from culture, they came from nature.

Relativism would take the form of an intellectual strategy that acts **against the processes of naturalisation**, **sacrisation or absolutisation**, revealing the cultural character of what is passed as "natural", the human and constructed character of

what is elevated to a level of sacred, the relative and historically (or ethnographically) contingent character of what is considered absolute. Cultural relativism could therefore be considered as part of a program of demystification, as a critical distance from the myths cultivated by various societies (including Western civilization), with an undoubted illuministic flavour.

Nevertheless, the debate on relativism has always been a guite intense and animated topic. To reduce the issue to the essential, we could argue that the debate has always been about "the relationship between uniformity (U) and difference (D) in human reality (U/D): it is one thing to side with those for whom the "uniformity" dimension prevails over the "difference" dimension (U > D), for whom man is substantially uniform, despite all the undeniable differences of culture, place and time; it is another thing to side with those for whom man is above all different, for whom the "difference" dimension prevails over the "uniformity" dimension in the organization of human beings $(D > U)^{"10}$. For this second side, the admission of multiplicity and the recognition of differences imply, at least in principle, an openness towards the most diverse forms that humanity can assume, not perceiving this as a danger, but rather as an enrichment: not admitting multiplicity and indeed discrediting it appears as a closure.

For the anti-relativists, the thesis of multiplicity, on the other hand, is a threat to the same unity of human beings: if human beings were so culturally different and if cultural diversity were such as to affect human beings so deeply, would not the very possibility of understanding and dialogue between individuals, groups, societies be questioned? While it is true that relativism can be identified with the formula D > U, which, as we have argued, programmatically gives space to cultural diversity and plurality, it is equally true that a further and decisive problem is the way in which relations between diversities, between the cultural worlds in which humanity is structured, **are conceived**. If within each of the individual forms humanity is contained in different and peculiar ways, it is logical to expect at least an affirmation of identity that is also an affirmation of its "own" humanity.

One identity exists in contrast to other iden-

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tities, it's always negotiating with other alterities. The french ethnologist and philosopher Marc Augé, affirmed that the idea of border itself is not a bad idea, because a boundary is not a barrier. According to him, a boundary is a symbolic negotiation to move from one point to another: "if we talk about linguistic frontier, we should be in favour of diversity and mutual enrichment when we cross the frontier and recognise what one language has in common with another. On the other hand, if we say that there are no borders and we only speak English, for example, we lose at the same time this language, because we speak another English, and all the other languages too"11.

If we think that the border is not a barrier, but only a transit zone, we save the symbolic meaning, which is the recognition of space and time. On the other hand, today we are in the world of instantaneousness and ubiquity thanks to technologies, which are powerful and fascinating, but which ignore the spatio-temporal dimension. It is dangerous, from an individual and collective point of view, to live in a world we imagine without borders, because this generates more complex

> Notes

2.5

realities, such as nonsenses or non-places.

In fact, "what is the sense of being in communication with the whole world if I have nothing to say?"¹²

Without any boundaries, identities would disappear soon or after.

In conclusion, the homologation and cultural flattening of neoliberalism could be considered as an undesirable uniformity, but an homologation of purposes in defining ourselves as a human unity for the preservation of the species, is instead highly desirable.

Differentiation and defence of identities as enrichment and therefore as potentiality in creative evolution is desirable, while differentiation as defence of barriers and ethnocentrism (and therefore absolutism) is not desirable at all.

There would need different solutions in responding to social, environmental and economical problems locally, but with the unified purpose to face the superordinate problems of environmental battle and the global processes that allow the prolification of iniquieties all over the world.

¹ Marc Augé, *Migrazioni: dialogo con Anna Mateu e Domingo Pujante Gonzàlez,* Castelvecchi, 2018, p. 15;

² The concept of world-system of the American sociologist, historian and economist Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. His most important work, *The Modern World-System*, has appeared in four volumes since 1974;

- ³ 18th August 2014, Pope Francis: "We are facing a new global conflict, but in pieces";
- ⁴ Between 1700 and 1810, the English Parliament issued a series of *Enclosures Acts* (laws on fences), which imposed an obligation to fence land, in particular open fields and common wastes:
- ⁵ Maurizio Pallante, Alessandro Pertosa, *Solo una decrescita felice (selettiva e governata) può salvarci,* Lindau, 2017;
- ⁶ Marc Augé, *Tra i confini. Città, luoghi, interazioni,* Mondadori, 2007, p.12;

⁸ Urban areas identified by the Groundswell report: preparing for internal climate migration of the World Bank;

⁹ Norberto Bobbio, *Destra e sinistra*, Donzelli, Roma, 1994, p.74;

¹⁰ definition of relativism in Treccani vocabulary: http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/relativismo/

¹¹ Marc Augé, *Migrazioni: dialogo con Anna Mateu e Domingo Pujante Gonzàlez*, Castelvecchi, 2018, p. 25;

¹² *Ivi*, p.26

⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC);

Globalization (neoliberalism) > Inequality

Globalization & Boundaries

Self-production > Autonomy

Crisis > Mobility

Boundary (≠ barrier) > Identity

Space & Time

"There is a secret link between slowness and memory, between speed and oblivion. [...] In existential mathematics [...] the degree of slowness is directly proportional to the intensity of memory; the degree of speed is directly proportional to the intensity of oblivion. [...] From this equation several corollaries can be deduced, for example the following: our age surrenders itself to the demon of speed, and that is why it so easily forgets itself. But I prefer to overturn this statement: our age is obsessed with the desire to forget, and it is in order to realize this desire that it surrenders itself to the demon of speed; if it accelerates the speed, it is because it wants us to understand that it no longer aspires to be remembered; that it is bored of itself, disgusted with itself; that it wants to extinguish the trembling flame of memory"1.

> Space-time compression

The space-time compression, according to which "space seems to shrink to become a global village [...] while the temporal horizons shorten to the point where the present is all that there is"², has

transformed our sensitivity and our representation of the world and is one of the elements characterizing our contemporaneity.

At its base there are certainly **transport and tele- communications technologies, which have eli- minated distances** thanks to the reduction of travel times, but post-Fordist theories also underline
the **acceleration of economic processes**, first of
all consumption, which have transformed our daily
habitat, cancelling any stability, and therefore any
permanence, and transforming our perception of
time

In response to the saturation of the basic market between the 1960s and 1970s, the replacement of goods has accelerated, the average product life, contrary to the rhythm of technological innovation, has been greatly reduced, and this meant **a** rapid production of fashions and symbolic needs that drive consumption.

All this has produced an accentuation of the caducity of fashions, an acceleration of technological innovation that facilitates the obsolescence of products, as well as of production techniques and processes (and knowledge related to them) and

has induced a **constant renewal of both investment and consumer goods**.

According to Bordieau, "the reason why submission to collective rhythms is so rigorously required is that temporal forms or spatial structures shape not only the representations of the group's world, but the group itself, which is ordered according to this representation". The common notion that "there is a time and place for everything" is carried into a series of prescriptions that replicate the social order by attributing **social meanings to spaces and times**³. What we call time, far from being a natural fact, is the product of a man-made synthesis of the different needs of the society of which it is part.

The perception of space is time dependent, and all distances are defined in terms of the time required to cross it. Therefore, if the time needed to perform a specific function in a given space is reduced, the corresponding space is perceived to have reduced as well. As a result, this compression has abolished traditional space borders. Consequently, as we have already seen in the pre-

vious chapter, it is dangerous, from an individual

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and collective point of view, to live in a world we imagine without borders, because this generates more complex realities, such as *nonsenses* or *non-places*⁴. In fact, thinking a border as a transit zone, would save his symbolic meaning, which is the recognition of space and time.

On the other hand, today we are in the world of instantaneousness and ubiquity thanks to technologies, which are powerful and fascinating, but which ignore the spatio-temporal dimension.

Space and identity has been cancelled through the acceleration of time. The spatial involucre, in its growing abstractness, increases the meaning of the value that man, with his sensitivity, attributes to the content: the place. On the political-economic side, cities compete with each other, creating an image that enhances the internal characteristics, in order to attract capital; the consequence is the achievement of a perfect balance, from the point of view of the quality of the places, so that the known models are repeated, creating a homogeneity: the particular place dies. In the same way, every cultural peculiarity, including the temporal experience, is annulled because it brea-

> Space & Time

ks the boundaries with the other peculiarities and identifies with them, homogenizing itself. It is a whole culture of being that disappears, giving place to a culture of dynamism, of becoming, that breaks with the identity connected to staticity. The becoming is preponderant in our century of technological acceleration; the introjection of this type of speed tends to cancel the perception of forms: the environment surrounding the city, in this sense, disappears.

2.6

If nothing intervenes to control the planetarization of the urban, during the next millennium the **urban will extend over the whole of space**. This worldwide extension contains the great risk of the **homogenization of space and the disappearance of differences**. But homogenization is accompanied by fragmentation. Space is divided into buyable and soldable particles whose price depends on a hierarchy. This is how social space, homogenizing itself, fragments into spaces of work, pleasure, material production, and different services. While this differentiation is affirmed, another paradox emerges: **the social classes are hierarchized by inserting themselves into space**.

Hence the importance of the ecological issue: it is in fact correct to say that the context of life and the quality of the environment today rise to the rank of real urgency and political issues. If we accept this analysis, the prospects and action change profoundly. It is necessary to give back centrality to forms that we know well, but that are somewhat neglected, such as **associative life or self-administration**, which assume new content when applied to the urban.

> Decentrate, decelerate

The only way to invert this trend, redefining the concept of time and space, is to exit from the grow-oriented economy, that has been the main cause of its acceleration.

It is **not only necessary to decelerate, but also to decentrate**, in order to reconvert those *non-places* in places full of identity and meanings. For example, that traveller's space that may be the archetype of *non-place*⁵.

It is time reject the pervasive urbanization as a model, and we have to start to **valorise** the neglect

countryside, that is to say the 98% of the Earth's surface that is not occupied by cities.

Nowadays, countryside consists of landscapes of production inexorably linked to the cities.

For this reason, at the end of 60s and the beginning of 70s, Henri Lefebvre theorized the "complete urbanization" of society, Andrea Branzi and Archizoom introduced the concept of *No-Stop-City*, while Superstudio's *Continuous Monument* presented a visual dystopical expression to the concept of urban infrastructure in constant expansion⁶.

In order to express human creativity and freedom as much as possible, **territorialism should be abolished**. Territorialism is the claim, based on force, deception or manipulation, that a certain territory, usually extremely vast, is under the exclusive and legitimate sovereignty of a certain power. In our times this power is, almost all the time, the state.

If classical liberalism, marxian socialism and anarchy promoted the idea of overcoming all monopolies, **territorialism is the worst of monopolies**. In this way, with the elimination of property, whether private or communal, it is possible to

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return to the concept of *usufruct*⁷ which existed within primitive organic communities and which guaranteed that sense of belonging to a cosmic and natural unity formed by the various different individuals, unified by the purpose of a more sustinable self-production.

> The gathering

Building this typology of communities can manage to **invert the perception of time, by slowing it down** and by following more natural rythms.

It might help to redescover the sense of idylly we have lost experiencing the space-time compression. As Milan Kundera has written in his book *Slowness*: "we who were bred in Old Testament mythology, we could say that the idyll is an image left in us as a reminder of Paradise: life in Paradise did not seem like a race in a straight line leading us into the unknown, it was not an adventure. It moved in a circle between familiar things. Its monotony was not boredom but happiness. As long as man lived in the countryside, in the midst of nature, surrounded by domestic animals, in the embrace of the seasons and the changing seasons, at least a reflection of that idyllic paradise still remained in him"8.

> Notes 2.6

- ¹ Milan Kundera, *La lentezza*, Adelphi, 1995, p. 45;
- ² David Harvey, *La crisi della modernità*, Milano, Net, 2002, p. 106;
- ³ *Ivi*, p. 110;
- ⁴ All those spaces that have the prerogative of not being identity, relational and historical;
- ⁵ Marc Augé, *Non-places: an introduction to Supermodernity*, Verso Books, 2009;
- ⁶ Aureli P.V., *The Project of Autonomy. Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism*, New York, Princeton Architectural Press, 2008;
- ⁷ Organic societies develop cooperative work and the sharing of resources takes place according to a criterion that could only partly be defined as communist because the practice of usufruct plays a predominant role, i.e. the freedom to appropriate resources on the basis of the desire to use them. The function given to things thus replaces the

western concept of ownership, as predominance attributed to use. The need pervades the activities so much that property is subordinate to satisfaction. What drives the work is above all the collective need, since the supremacy of usufruct over property determines a stronger social cohesion. It will later be common property, once property has become a category recognised by the context, that will mark the first step towards private property;

⁸ Milan Kundera, *L'insostenibile leggerezza dell'essere*, Adelphi, 1985, p. 317.

Space-time compression > Loss of boundaries (identities)

Space & Time

Acceleration of time > Loss of space (nonplaces)

Speed > Oblivion

Slowness > Memory

Community & Freedom

Community & Freedom 2.7

No man is an island, wrote the London poet John Donne back in the 17th century¹. The individual alone is without purpose; it is in his relationship with others, in being part of a larger group that the life of the individual acquires meaning. But John Donne did not live in the 21st century, where man is floating in a society that is fragile in terms of ties and relationships. Life in increasingly dispersive and alienating big metropoles may have had the benefit of creating more jobs, of making more resources available to citizens, but it has also had the consequence of **loosening connections** between people. We no longer share ideas, cultural attitudes, blood relations, ideologies, beliefs. In the age of globalisation, it is the sharing of a lifestyle, which rotates around purchase and possession, that generates a sense of belonging.

Liberalism is based on a false idea of freedom and a false conception of human nature.

It is not possible to rationally believe in the **liberal freedom** project, which is **reduced to the limit-less pursuit of own desires**, for two very simple reasons. First, man is insatiable. Second, the world is limited. It implies that we cannot be free in the

liberal sense of the term.

More credible, in comparison, is the conception that the ancients had of **freedom**, **closely linked to the pursuit of virtue**. From a pre-liberal point of view, the true tyranny with which man must live is that of his own desires, which are never completely satisfied and satisfying. Being free therefore means learning to set limits and to dominate his own instincts, starting from the most basic, most dangerous and potentially destructive ones, both for oneself and for the community.

In fact, the harmony existing between the *polis* and the individuals who composed it was compared to that existing in nature between the whole and its individual parts. By this correspondence, the Greek man was led to feel organically included in his community. Everyone found **his own realization by participating in collective life** and building the collective good.

Hence the need for a socio-political order, built above all on shared and unwritten behavioral norms, which encourages the pursuit of the virtues, which allows man to learn to be free.

Not this way according to liberal thought which,

proposes to put man in the condition of satisfying his appetites undisturbed, freeing him from the limits set by nature, tradition, and all relationships not strictly chosen.

The road to post-liberalism does not pass from a new, roaring political project, but from local communities that live and value what liberal thinking misses: lasting family and social ties, love for tradition and culture, stable settlement in a specific geographical location.

Every advance of the economic space implies a retreat of the community sphere, with the consequent destructuralisation of its values.

If the vernacular space has its own originality, linked to a historical, social and community context, the advanced economy has an extreme need to standardize tastes, to optimize the production of goods and reduce costs.

Reconsidering the conviviality and social relations of the past has become fundamental for rethinking society from its foundations.

That's why "moving from productivity to conviviality means replacing an ethical value with a technical value"².

It seems a paradox, but after the globalization people resulted more fragmented, even if more interconnected; while operating a fragmentetion into small communities, it is possible to find that lost humanity values, and therefore the true cohesion, hospitlity and freedom.

This is clear also because **if there is no equality, there is no community**. As Socrates already noticed in ancient times, "in a community (whether small or large) there can be no injustice, that is, the pursuit by its members of their own exclusive interest, or otherwise the unity itself will be broken". For Socrates, injustice is what breaks and disrupts that unity which was supposed to be achieved by coming together in a state.

> What is a community?

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In his most relevant work *Community and Society*, published in 1887, Ferdinand Tönnies explores the romantic theories on the concept of community, focusing on the **separation between community** (*gemeinschaft*) **and society** (*gesellschaft*). Community and society would be two ideal types

of association between men: the first would focus on an immediate and *organic* relationship, while the second would be based on an *artificial* or *mechanical* relationship.

The community represented a totality, since the men who were part of it were permanently united by communal and sharing factors that made them similar to each other: there would be no segmentation of relationships or specialized roles. In society, on the other hand, Tönnies saw an artificial construction in it, a product of modernity, where individuals were fragmented despite the factors that could unite them (and that could have allowed them to live together peacefully); relationships (both informal and institutional) were based on the model of market exchange relations and on the contractual form, with the consequent loss of "authentic values" of solidarity that found, on the contrary, an effective realization within the community.

However, solidarity was not entirely absent in society but, instead of being felt as natural and spontaneous, it was realized only through contracts, rotating exclusively around the exchange of goods

and services.

Max Weber revisited the advanced separation between society and community in *Economics and Society* (1922), affirming that the community, called "commune" (*vergemeinschaftung*), was given by the social action of individuals based on mutual sense of belonging felt by the members, while in society, called "association" (*vergesellschaftung*) the action was mainly due to interests of individuals.

We can also find an opposition between community and society in the distinction between "urban societies" and "rural societies" theorized during the 1920's in Chicago, which focused on the analysis of the city starting from the massive immigration that experienced in the early 1900's, trying to study the factors of disintegration among the inhabitants and those of aggregation and adaptation of immigrants to American habits.

But it is in particular Robert Redfield who, in *The Little Community* (1955) and *Peasant Society and Culture* (1956), merged into a single volume in 1960, identified the community as the object of study and the epistemological framework for anthropological studies because, according to the anthro-

pologist, besides being the prevailing form of organization in the history of mankind, it could still be found in many parts of the globe.

Redfield's theoretical and methodological approach, which influenced anthropological research for many decades, was based on the observation that the community could be identified by: definability, limitation, homogeneity, self-sufficiency. A community therefore had to be easily delimitable, both territorially and socially, providing for its own sustenance autonomously and there should be no generational discontinuity in it. Redfield's intention was to distinguish clearly the urban environment, based on discontinuity, mechanical solidarity and disorganization, from folk, the countryside, which on the contrary fully reflected the community model.

Despite the revision that the concept has had since the 1960s, the shared physical space has continued to be the distinguishing element for its definition. However, following the world changes that have occurred in history, first and foremost the acceleration of the phenomena of globalization and their simultaneity, an important change

of opinion has emerged.

The community began to take on increasingly abstract characteristics, Clifford Geertz who in 1964 highlighted its "ideological" character, but **physical space was still felt as necessary for its birth**, which could only exist between people living in the same geographical place.

It was with Anthony Cohen, twenty years later, that reflections on the concept of community had a profound rethink. These in fact began to move away from the connection with the territory, which until then had characterized the concept. The work *The symbolic construction of community*, written in 1985, marked a clear break with the theories that had accumulated in previous decades and represented one of the most important contributions on this subject.

According to Cohen, a defined territory is absolutely not essential to the development of a community, as it is created symbolically and not geographically, as a system of values, norms and moral codes that provide a sense of identity in an entire group of individuals.

The English anthropologist resumed the thought

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of Friedrik Barth³, according to whom **boundaries are fundamental for the existence of a community**, to contain within them its identity and to allow it to distinguish itself from those present outside. Boundaries can be of different types, there are, for example, administrative, physical, linguistic and religious boundaries, but not all of them are visible, as **they can be simply thought of and exist only in the minds of the members of a community**, who perceive themselves to be different from those outside⁴.

Being symbolic and not real boundaries, they cannot be the same for all those who are part of a community, but they can be perceived differently not only by people who see the community from the outside but also by those who are inside it, based on the different experiences that each member has had. The community would therefore be the expression of these boundaries, the meaning of which varies from person to person; consequently the concrete existence of the community would depend solely on the symbolic construction that the members make.

Moreover, according to Cohen, the physical boun-

daries of the community would be less and less definable, since greater influences would come from outside, due to the processes of industrialization and urbanization, the centralization of markets, the spread of mass media and the increase in mobility. For this reason, family structures, economic and political institutions, religious and recreational practices are increasingly independent of geographical location. With Cohen the concept of community is definitively separated from the idea of a community confined within a territory in order to be adapted even to more abstract contexts, including the virtual world. If we accept Cohen's thesis, even virtual communities can be defined as actual communities, even though they do not have a precise geographical territory of reference and, on the contrary, are made up of people who can live anywhere in the world.

The virtual community, contrary to what is usually thought, is not just any group of people who meet on the Internet to chat, forum or newsgroups, but a group of people who share interests, passions and values and therefore have elements in common. These create a sense of belonging, group

behaviour and meaningful relations that make it possible to experience, even if only virtually, a sense of community⁵.

Virtual communities are therefore communities. but they do not follow the same patterns of communication and interaction as real ones. They are based on weaker bonds that are nevertheless able to generate support and reciprocity through the lasting interaction of the members. If it is true that communities gather members who share the same interests, it follows that it is more difficult to find individuals with different ideas: the need to engage in dialogue, evaluate their reasons and confront those who have different points of view is almost eliminated. Hence, in this particular time, the exit from the still prevailing model of a consumerist and competitive society is a very strong argument, which needs to be realized with concrete examples of community.

> A political project

To those who claimed that the state was the prototype of civilized social power, based on the philo-

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sophy of Hobbes⁶ (1588-1679) for which, without it, there would be anarchy and disorder, anthropology, since its beginnings, had shown how stateless societies still had institutions based on relatives aimed at organizing social life and how it divided power among its members and how processes that are entirely political could be established.

Far from that war of all against all, **people collabo**rate even beyond the existence of a state that monopolizes physical force and punishes the disobedient.

The state exercises power through physical coercion: the assumption on which it is based is that cooperation is not proper to the human being because his "natural" behavior is the pursuit of his own selfish purpose (as we have already undestrood through the concept of *homo oeconomicus*). Cooperation would therefore arise only from the fear of being punished by some subject or entity. However, this is not entirely true.

Individuals may submit to institutionalized power because they feel constrained and afraid of it, but more often power is part of their own interpretation of the world, so **the existing political structu-**

res in their society are considered legitimate.

It is therefore accepted as legitimate the coercion imposed by others.

Technological change has allowed the integration of very different markets around the world, and companies which partecipate in these globalised markets prefer homogeneous governance. Historically, this desire for homogeneity has moved regulatory and governance powers from the community to the regional and then to the national level. Powers tend to pass through supernational governments (such as European Union) and treaties on the international scene. Ordinary people feel increasingly distant from the place where decisions are made and feel they have little control.

The community keeps the individual anchored in a series of real human networks and gives him a sense of identity: this allows him to respond better to crises and local problems.

Politically, a suitable form of government for communities might be a libertarian municipalism or rather a confederation of municipalities that govern themselves with **decision-making processes ba-**

sed on direct democracy.

As Bookchin affirmed, "politics is actually a government of the state. It is professionalism, not popular control; monopoly of power by a few, not power by many; delegation of an "elected" group, not a direct democratic process that includes the people as a whole; representation, not participation"⁶. Politicians see people as a simple tool with which to obtain first of all their power and only to a residual extent to achieve always pre-established goals. **True democracy is one based on direct participation**.

This should be based on the debates held in the respective assemblies where delegates (always removable) are elected who will discuss with delegates from other territories at further assemblies. "We have lost the sense of what political subject means by assigning political functions and prerogatives to the so-called *politicians*, i.e. to a selected, often elitist group of people who practice a form of institutional manipulation called *stautual government* [...]. We also risk losing the sense of what it means to be citizens, a status increasingly confused with being mere voters and

contributors, transformed into passive receivers of goods and services provided by an omnipotent state and our elected representatives". Every community should exist without the State, which reduces the spaces of freedom. Furthermore, its capacity of domination is expressed not only by brutal force but also by widespread depersonalizing processes.

In modern societies we are witnessing a policy where the role of the electorate becomes increasingly marginal: the constant conditioning and unidirectionality of the productivist process leave no space for actualization.

Precisely by considering these aspects, it is necessary to **decentralize in order to recover the spirit of community** and an emancipatory process of the individual.

"Only if the entire pyramidal structure is disintegrated, if the vertical hierarchy is replaced by the horizontal eco-community, will the principle of domination be eclipsed, replaced by the principle of complementarity and participation"⁸.

The restoration of the idea of **participatory democracy** is focused on the rebirth of city assemblies, both at municipal level in small towns, and at district and neighbourhood level in larger cities. In fact, whenever historically there have been real social revolutions, people have always adopted the assembly form to make the desire for participation explicit: this is the most agile tool available in civilized contexts.

In fact, democracy exists only if it is directly and collectively. The very concept of representative democracy would express a contradiction in terms: where there is a delegation of power there can be no democracy.

The municipality is the only geographical area within which intellectual and emotional debate can take place. This is far from the referendum, which is opposed to the municipality in many ways. The formation of a personality and responsibility in a communitarian sense cannot be constituted in the privacy of a polling box: in order to achieve them, it is necessary the existence of individuals who think and express themselves together, who seek confrontation and defend the values of solidarity in which they believe.

Although self-organized gathering is a central ele-

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ment of any serious social change, it is not enough if it is not combined with **a strong awareness** capable of imprinting content and direction.

An extremely conscious libertarian movement, well organized and with **a clear program** has to be created through the actions of people.

As already presented by French philosopher and utopian socialist Charles Fourier, with his attempts at reconstructing society through a network of self-sufficient micro cities in the countryside called *Phalantseries*⁹, the second aspect of libertarian municipalism consists in the need for communication between assemblies. The urge to create paranational entities is necessary at a time when the centralized state threats to become an overwhelming force even in local matters. It was precisely the resistance of the municipalities that limited the oppression of the states. Fortunately, history teaches us that local, confederal and community movements have the task of opposing the State and establishing a parallel power to replace it. Connection between different assemblies is also important because they face the risk of becoming populist.

As a matter of fact, "although any attempt to delineate an ecological society starting from a free, autonomous and organic community, organic both in respecting flora and fauna and in encouraging human solidarity and mutual aid, always runs the risk of becoming a popular and even fascist community in its definition, it still remains the most fertile ground for the development of highly conscious and highly creative personalities" 10.

The policy adopted in the territories will have to

focus on the needs of local specificities (such as respecting the Tempelhof Conservation Act).

From an economical point of view, there is a profound difference between the municipal economy and the capitalist economy. The peasants lived the exchange of their products, comparing and exchanging opinions, while the capitalist multinationals act according to cold financial calculations. With the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, wealth affirms itself as a virtue: "from an ethical association of mutual aid, the community is transformed into an entrepreneurial fabric aimed at competition and manipulation, a profound reversal of the true meaning of association and solidarity. [...]

The new merchant, and especially the industrialist who comes after him, begins instead to consider his own community as a territory of conquest, often plundering it without any restraint"11.

In this process, the role of urbanization was not secondary: **urban centres embodied the industrial and commercial development that capitalist domination required**. As they expanded, these centres eventually led to the destruction of the surrounding nature in an increasingly aggressive manner. With the passing of time, the domination has shaped its seductive techniques and has thus arrived at the standardization of social life in the current phase.

To stop this trend, libertarian municipalism proposes a fragmentation of the economic order that differs both from an economic centralization on the model of nationalized companies and from forms of collectivist capitalism controlled by workers. The proposal of the municipal economy should focus on the management of small businesses by people gathered in free assemblies. More technical aspects, such as what tools to use, how to plan the work, how many goods to distri-

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bute are all issues that should be solved in practice. Libertarian municipalism wants to **connect the economy to the civic sphere** and to do this there should be no specific tasks.

Everyone should feel part of a life of solidarity based on cooperation. What Western societies identify as **leadership** in organic societies turns out to be leadership without the exercise of command. It is not a real political power but rather a functional role. For example, leaders are not invested with authority in a coercive sense: they are advisors, appreciated for their wisdom and experience. In the circumstances in which they have a sort of power, it is limited to strongly delimited functions and they dissolve once the task has been fulfilled: since it is not institutionalized. it is not very extensive and it is not long-lasting. The need to rediscover this neglected way of life is crucial, because "the growth or death imperative of capitalism is in radical contradiction with the ecological imperatives of interdependence and limitation. [...] We shall either establish an ecological society, or society will collapse for all, independently of its own social status"12.

> Notes 2.7

¹ John Donne, in *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions, Meditation XVII*, 1624;

² Ivan Illich, *La convivialità*, Boroli, 2005, p. 29

³ Friedrik Barth, *Ethnic groups and boundaries. The social organization of culture difference*, 1969, Oslo, Universitetsforlaget;

- ⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Refection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, New York-London, Verso, 1991;
- ⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Voglia di comunità*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2001;
- ⁶ Hobbes' description of human nature as essentially competitive and selfish, exemplified by the phrases *Bellum omnium contra omnes* ("the war of all against all" in the state of nature) and *Homo homini lupus* ("every man is a wolf to the other man"), has found application in the field of political anthropology;
- ⁷ Murray Bookchin, *Democrazia diretta*, Elèuthera, Milano, 1993, p. 11;

⁸ *Ivi*, p. 25;

⁹ Ivi, p. 60;

¹⁰ A *phalanstère* (or *phalanstery*) was a type of building designed for a self-contained utopian community, ideally consisting of 500–2000 people working together for mutual benefit; Fourier conceived the phalanstère as an organized building designed to integrate urban and rural features;

¹¹ Murray Bookchin, *Democrazia diretta*, Elèuthera, Milano, 1993, p. 57;

¹² *Ivi*, p. 77;

¹³ *Ivi*, p. 84.

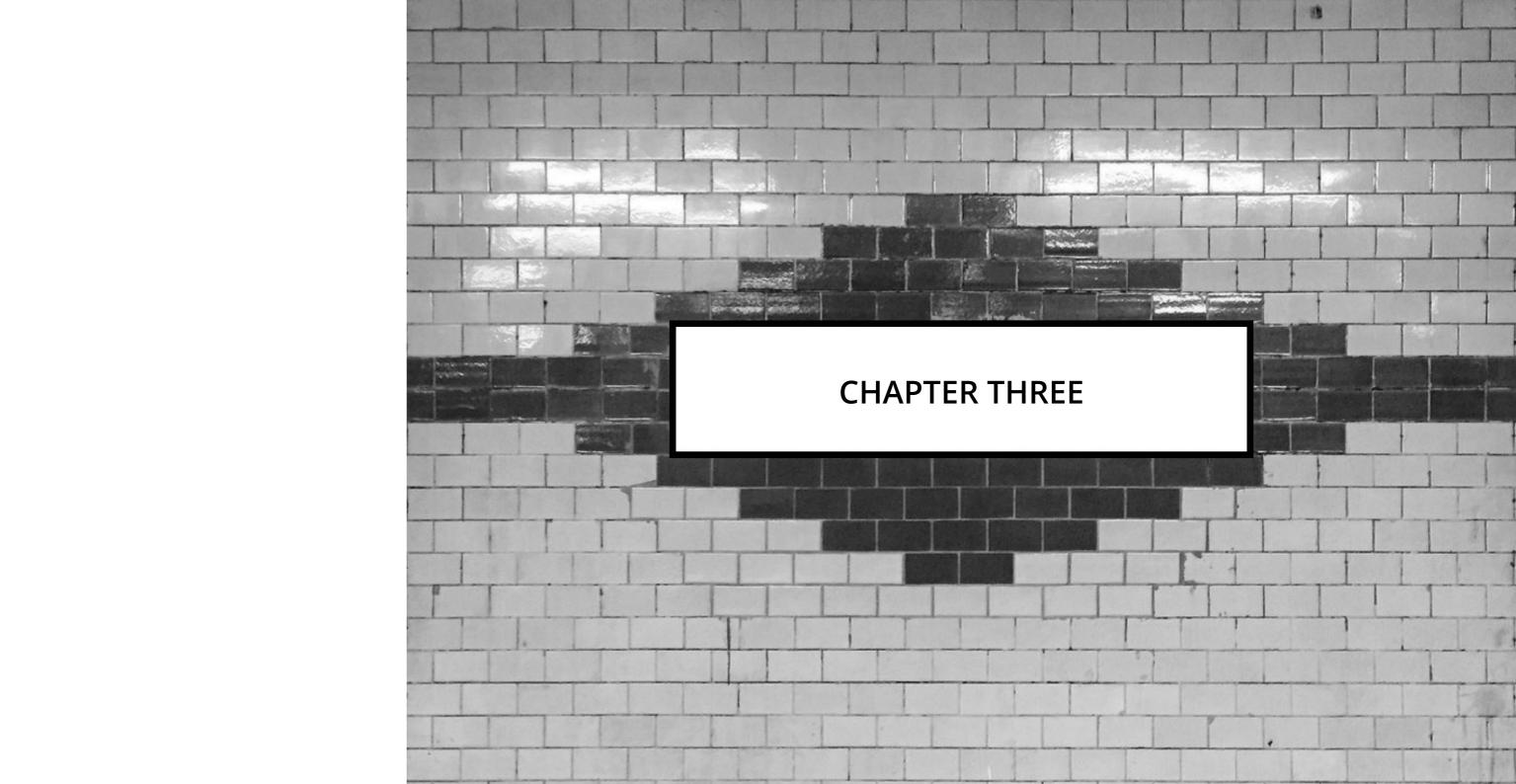
Community & Freedom

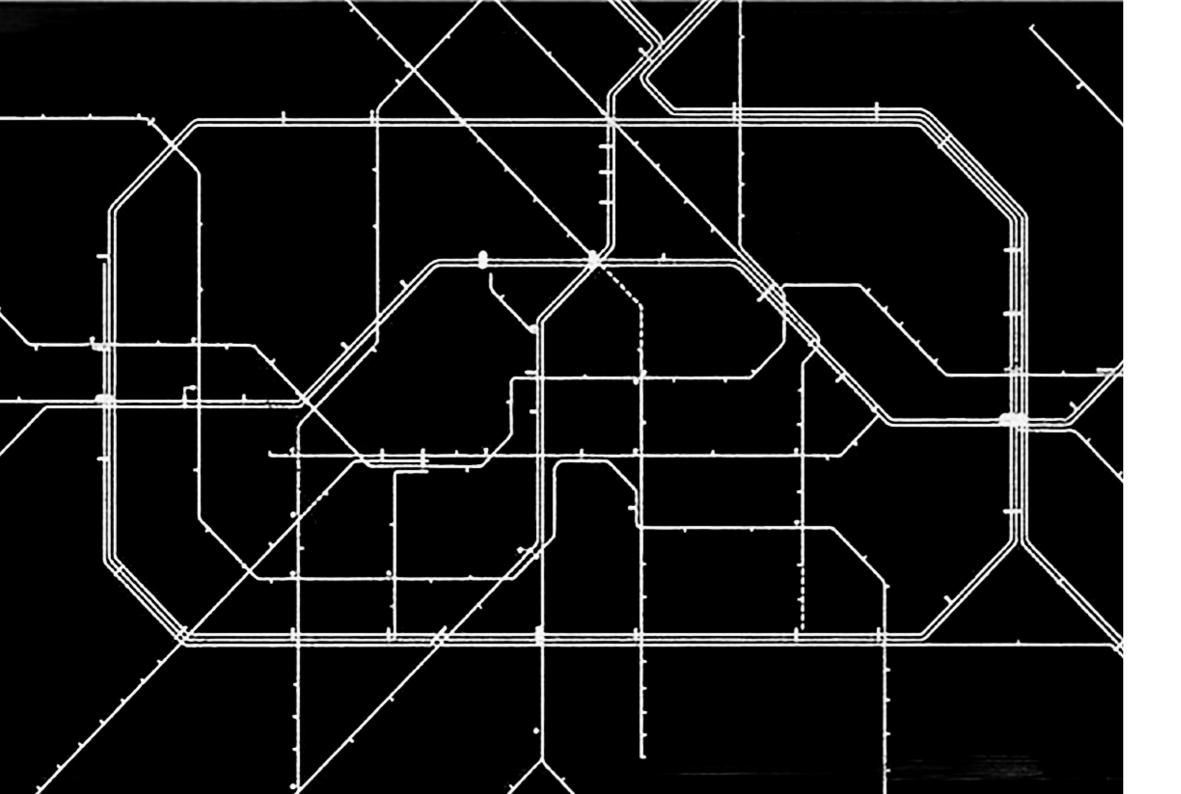
Liberal freedom > Satisfy own desires

Original freedom > Pursuit of virtue

True democracy > Direct partecipation

Confederation > Decentralization





The community (or the art of *living*)

To Live (/lɪv/)

a. to spend your life in a particular way.

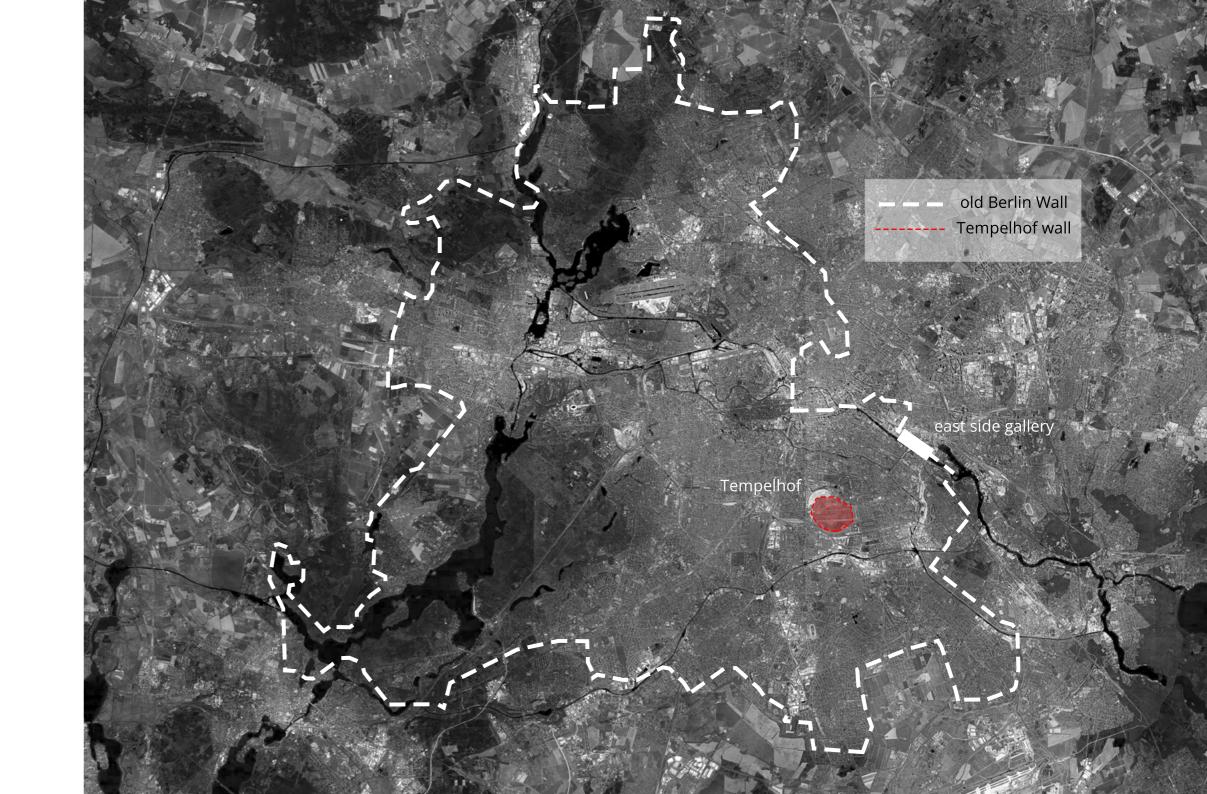
b. to have a fulfilling life.

"To many millions of humans, I would disclose a region where they could live dangerously, but in free activity..."

Goethe, Faust.

Project

(a proposal of)



> Partecipative project

There is never a single solution to a given project. The community is thus described as one of the possibilities within a range of a plurality of solutions. Since an open and inclusive planning method was implemented, according to a *bottom-up* approach, before the conscious decision of which solutions and operations have to be taken, several public assemblies have to be held to discuss which decisions would best meet the needs and values of the people who would live in that particular place.

As a matter of fact, Tempelhof Conservation Act suggests that everything that concern the airfield has to be **flexible**, **non-permanent**, **completely reversable**. In this context, the creation of an urban experimentation could be suitable and feasible. An autonomous tiny houses community could provide a real and concrete example that a new kind of self-organization can not only works perfecly, but it can be the starting point for a new confederation of **low-impact ecological communities**. The rediscovery of practise of self-production and the values that are undoubtely linked to it, the strong ability of adaptation of humankind will de-

mostrates that **is not impossible live without institutions**, in a direct democracy that will lead us to be more responsible towards all the crisis that are still ongoing over the world.

But a space to experience this kind of practise is essential. **Tempelhof could be that place**.

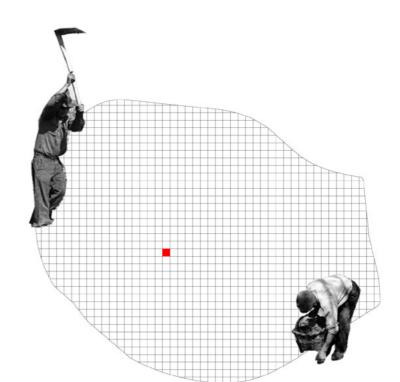


Legend

- > entrances
- a. labyrinth
- **b.** community lab clusters
- **c.** leisure area
- d. shaders
- e. tiny houses East side
- f. Tempelhof park East side
- g. outdoor vegetable garden
- h. indoor vegetable garden
- i. tiny houses West side
- j. Tempelhof park West side
- k. airborne agorà

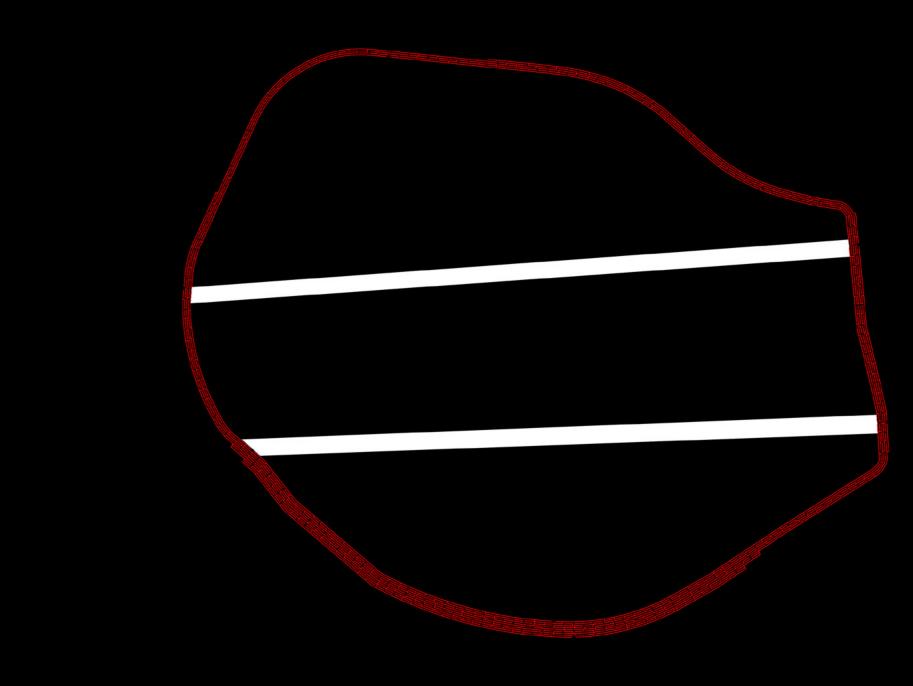


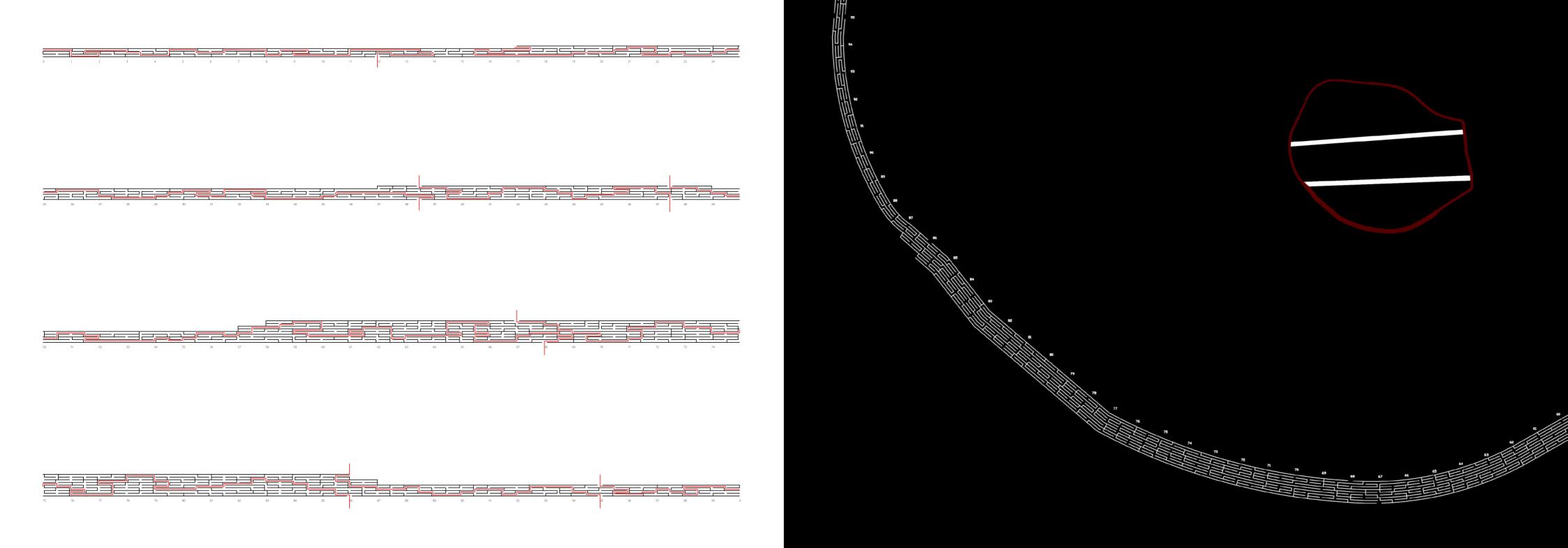


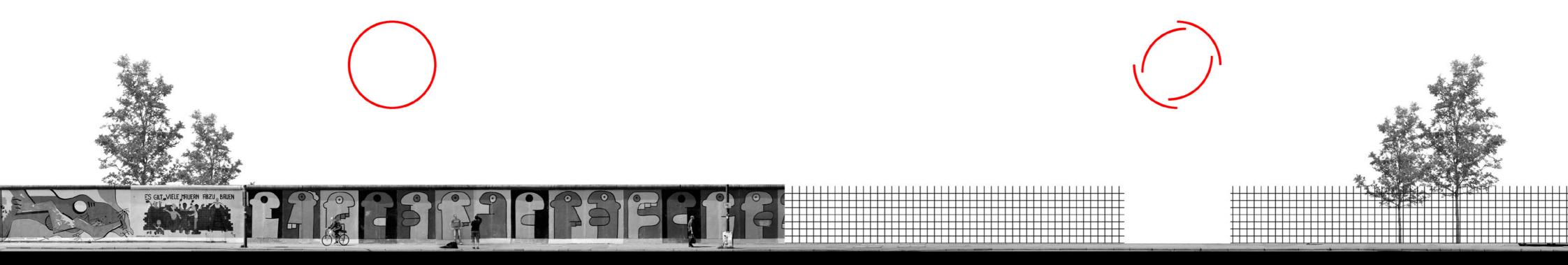


^{*} According a vegan diet: Giordano Stella (et al.), Towards a National Food Sovereignty Plan: Application of a new Decision Support System for food planning and governance, in "Land Use Policy", Elsevier, 2019.

> The labyrinth







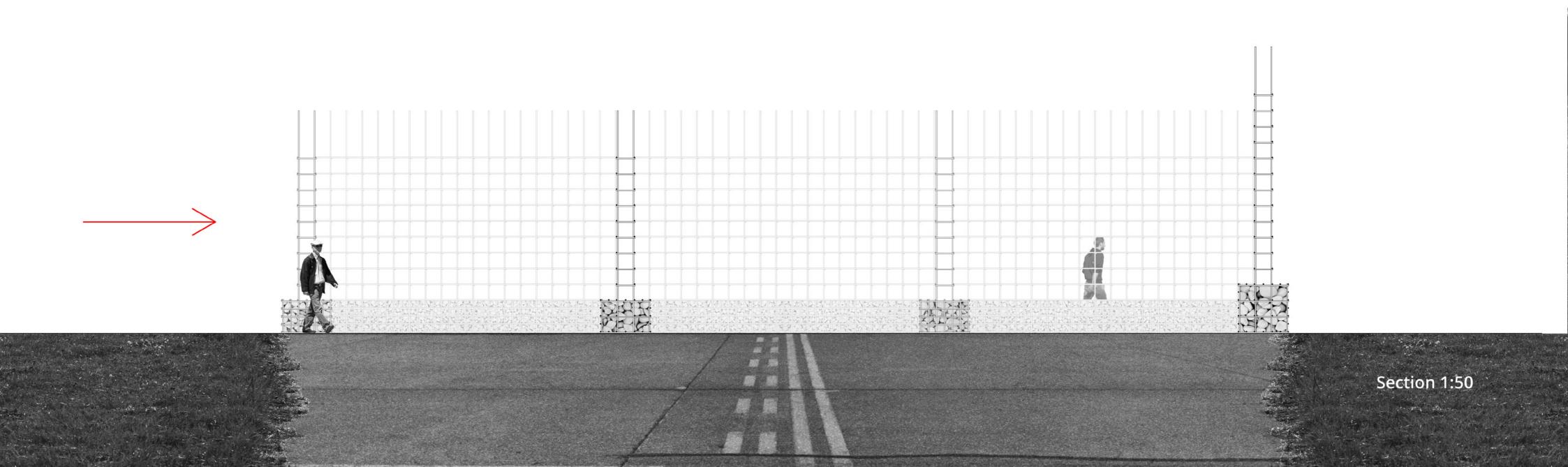
Berlin wall

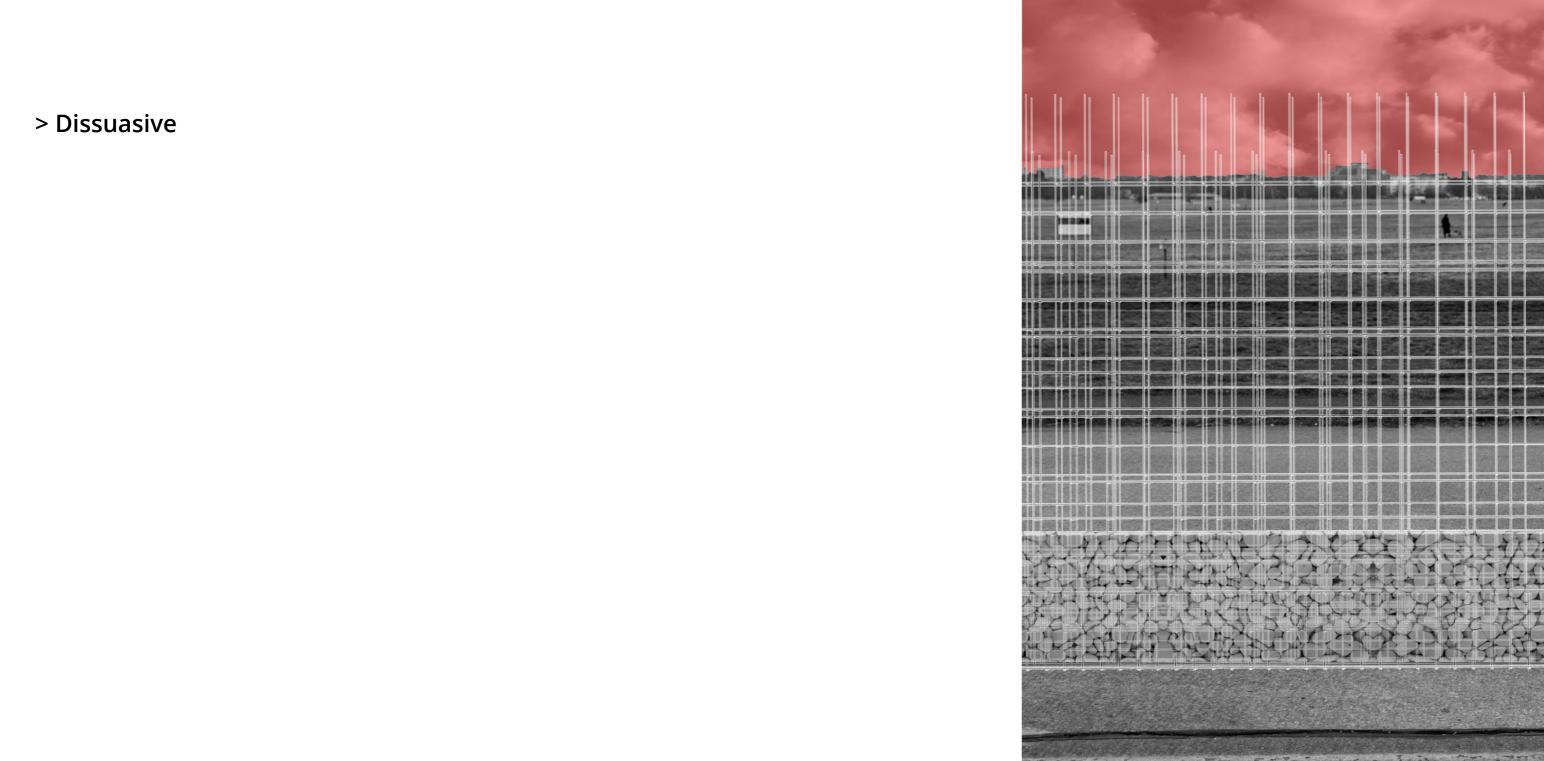
> divide

- closed
- weighty
- opaque

low down <

- opened -
- light-weight -
- transparent -





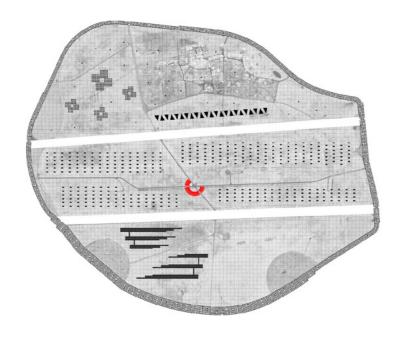


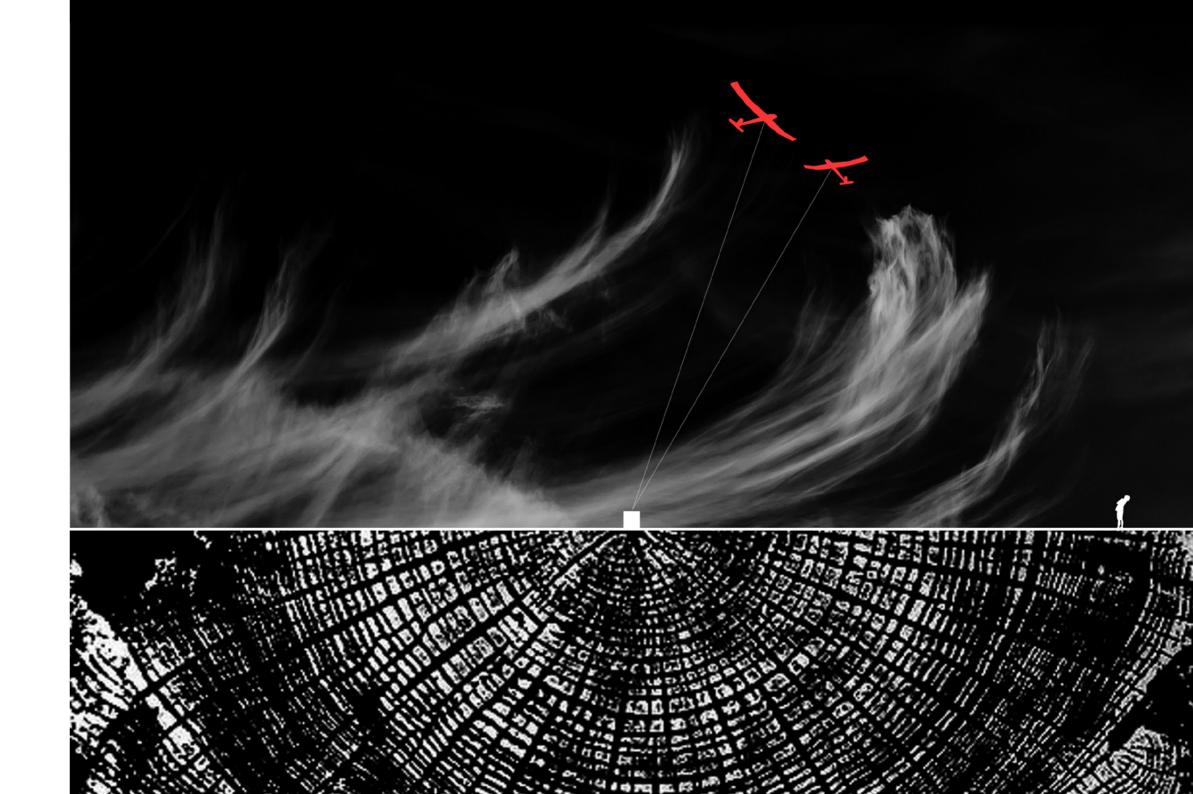
> Flexible use

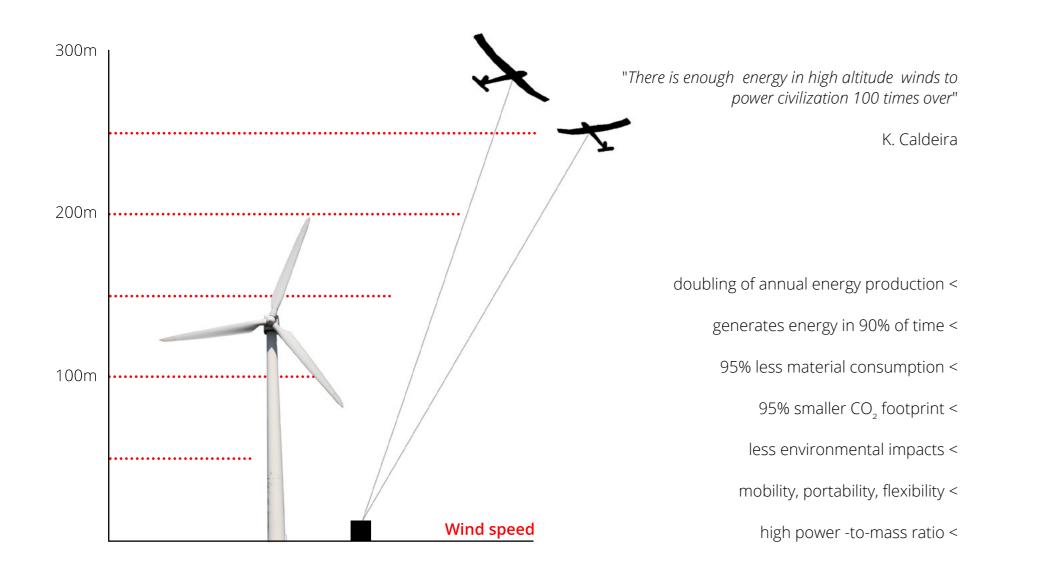


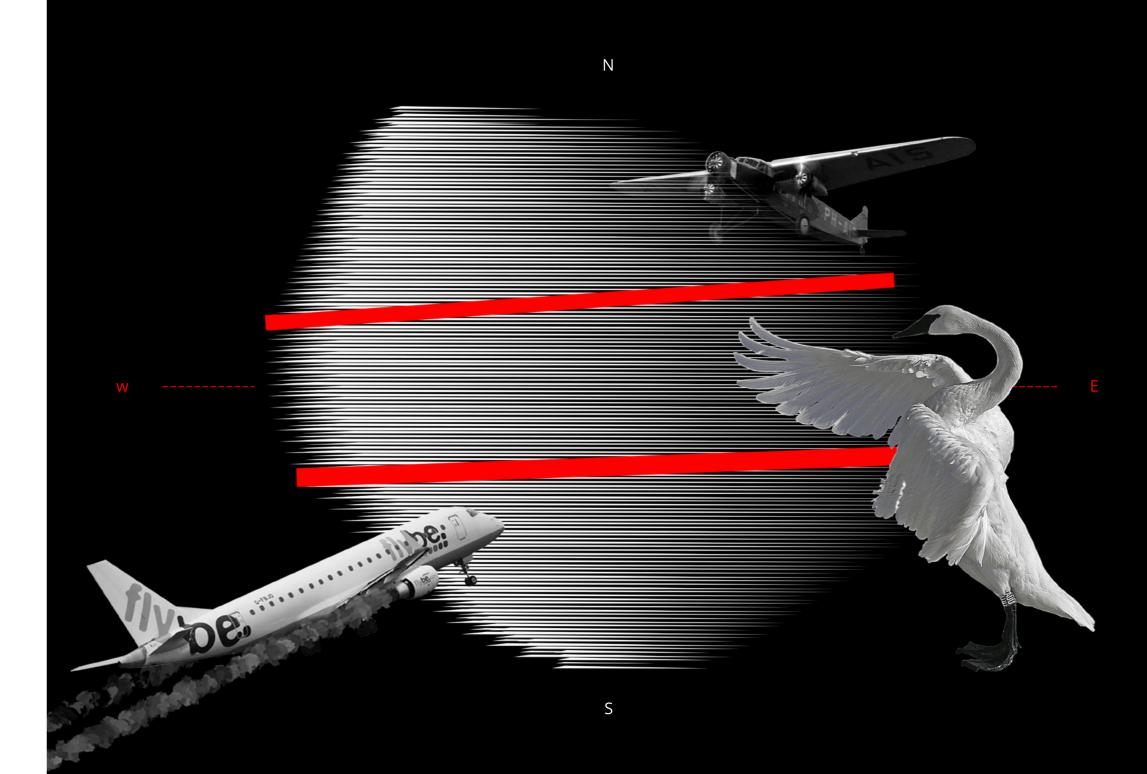


Airbornes

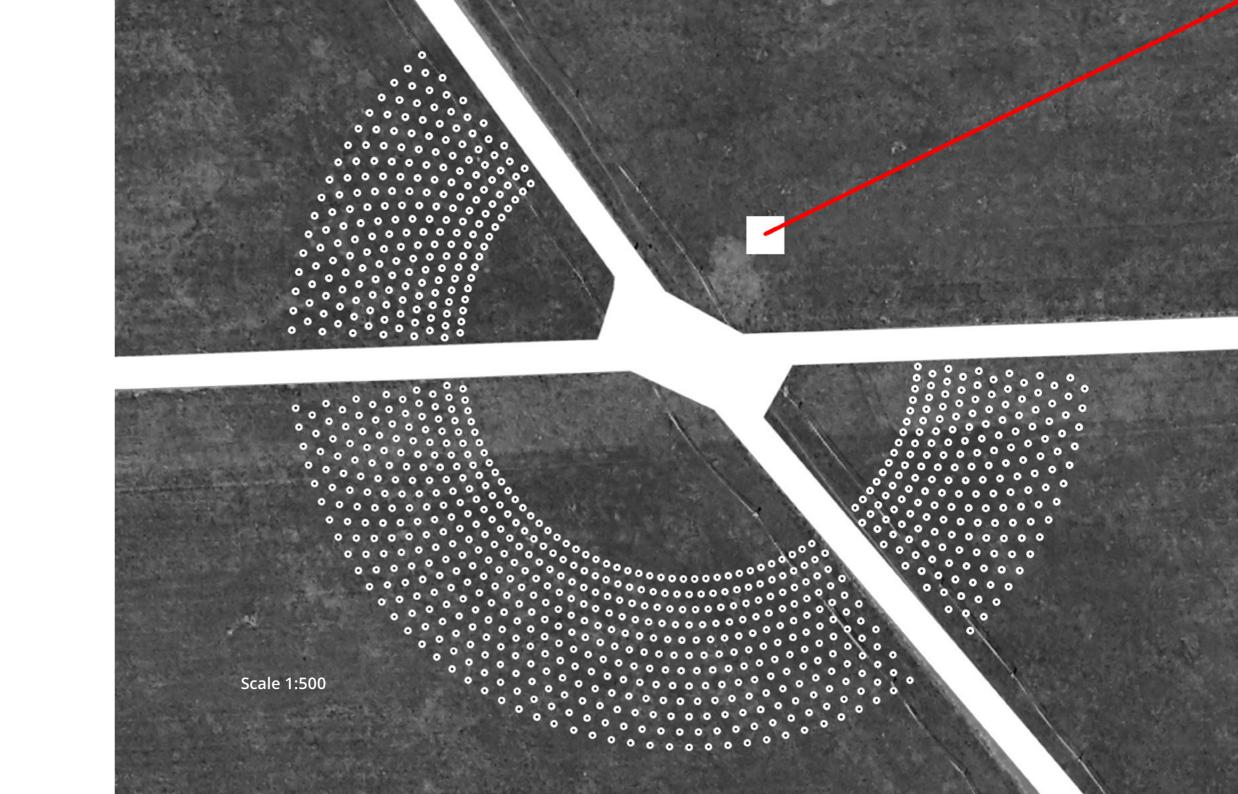








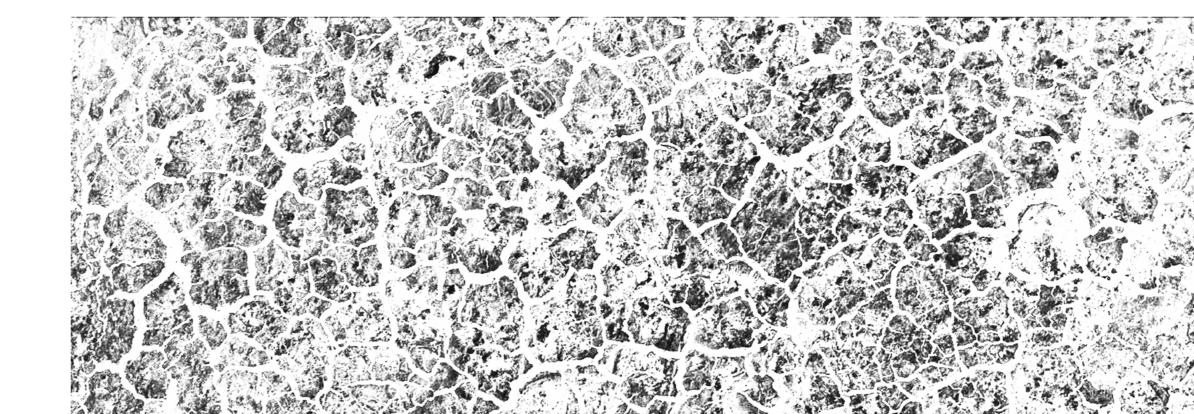
> Airborne as totem



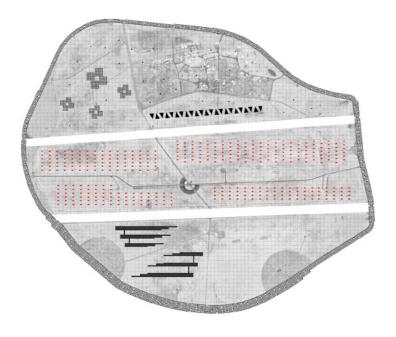


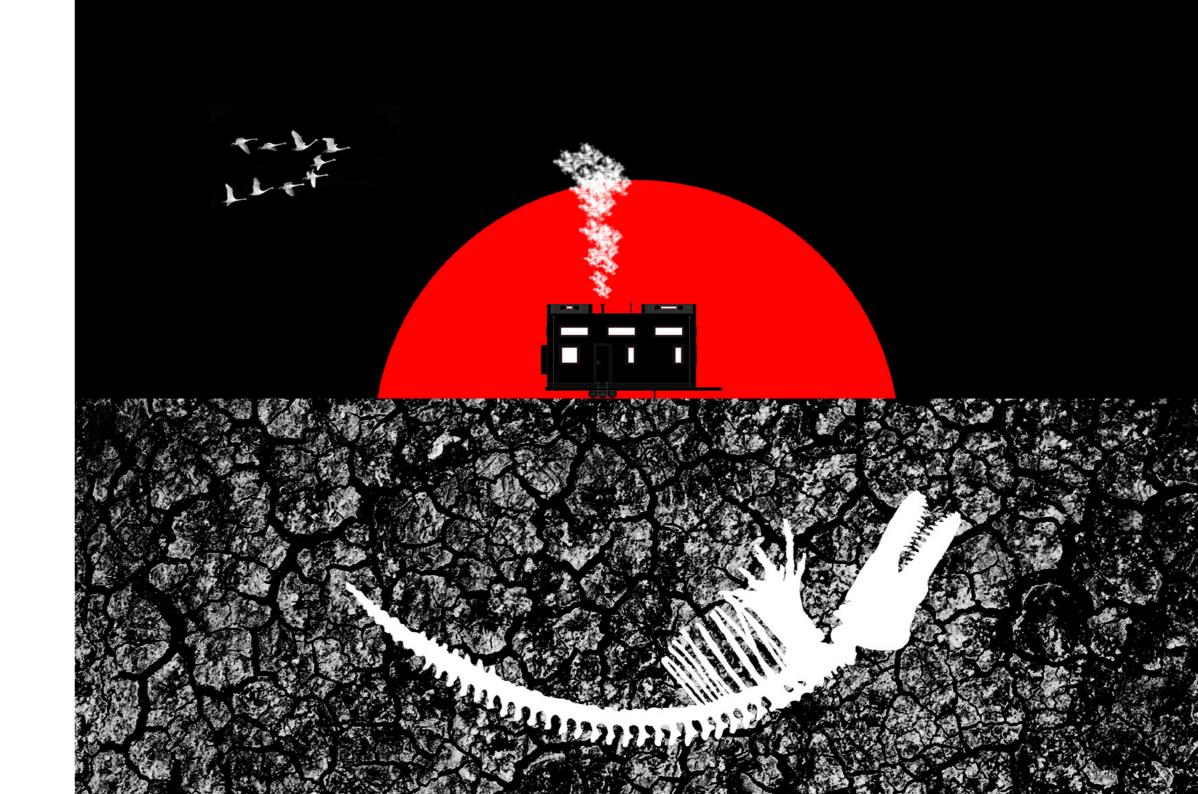
> Agorà

> Earth

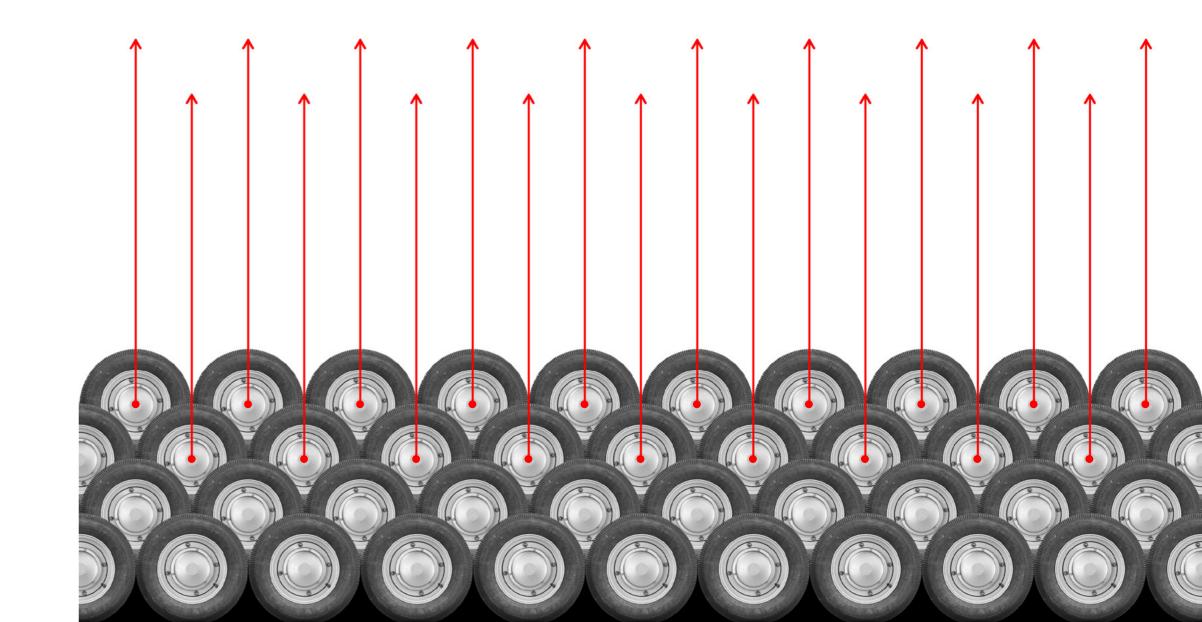


Tiny houses





> Living tiny on wheels



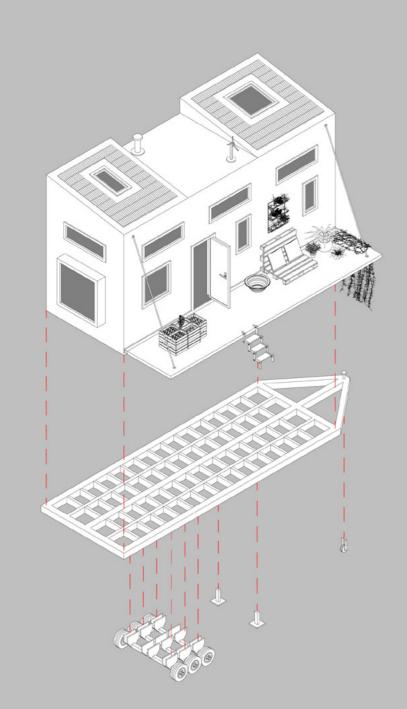


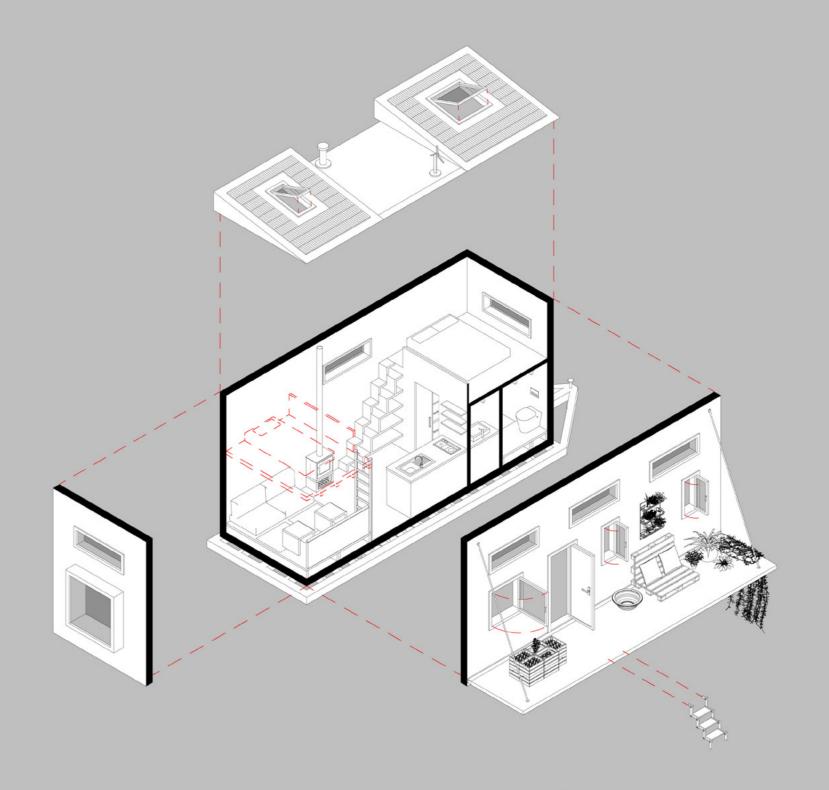


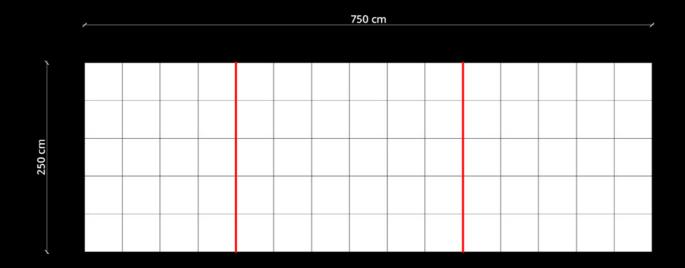


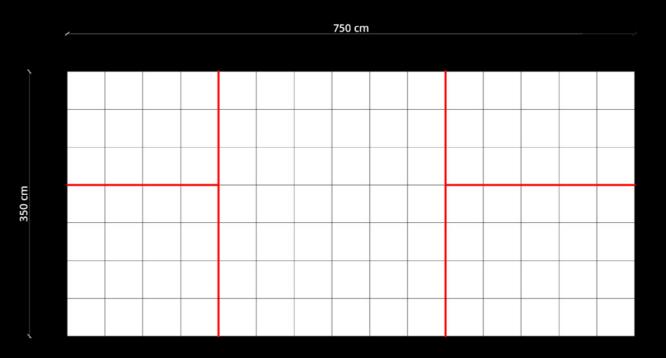






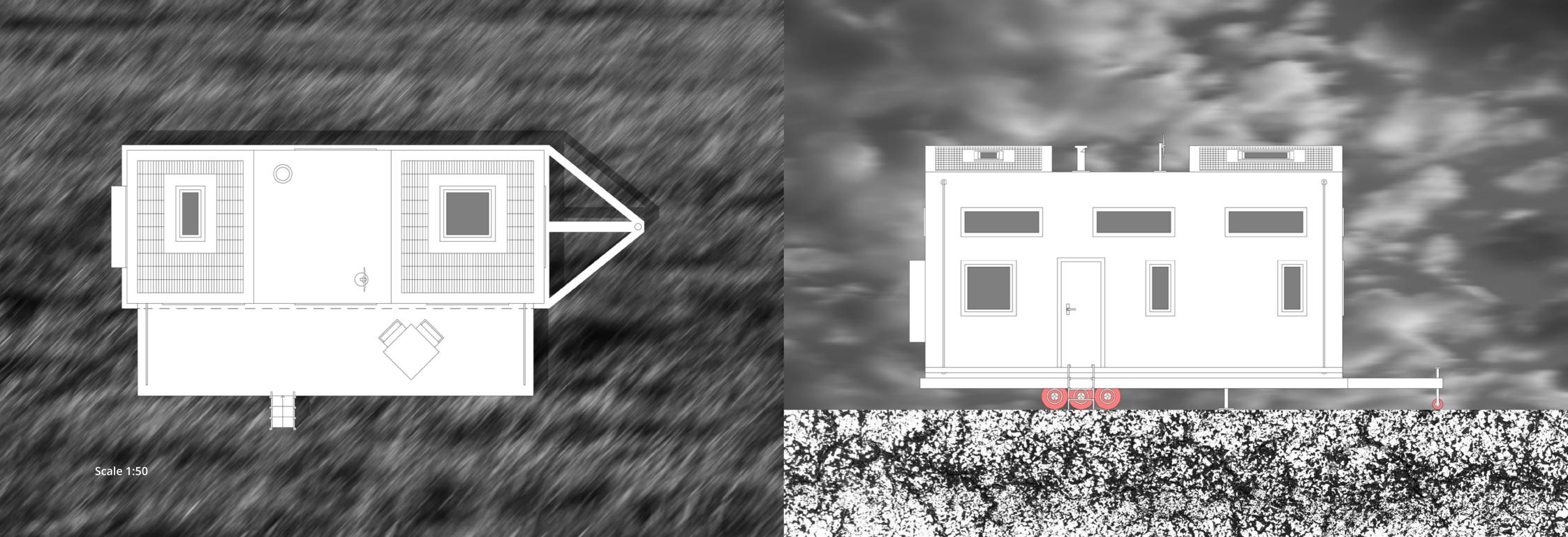




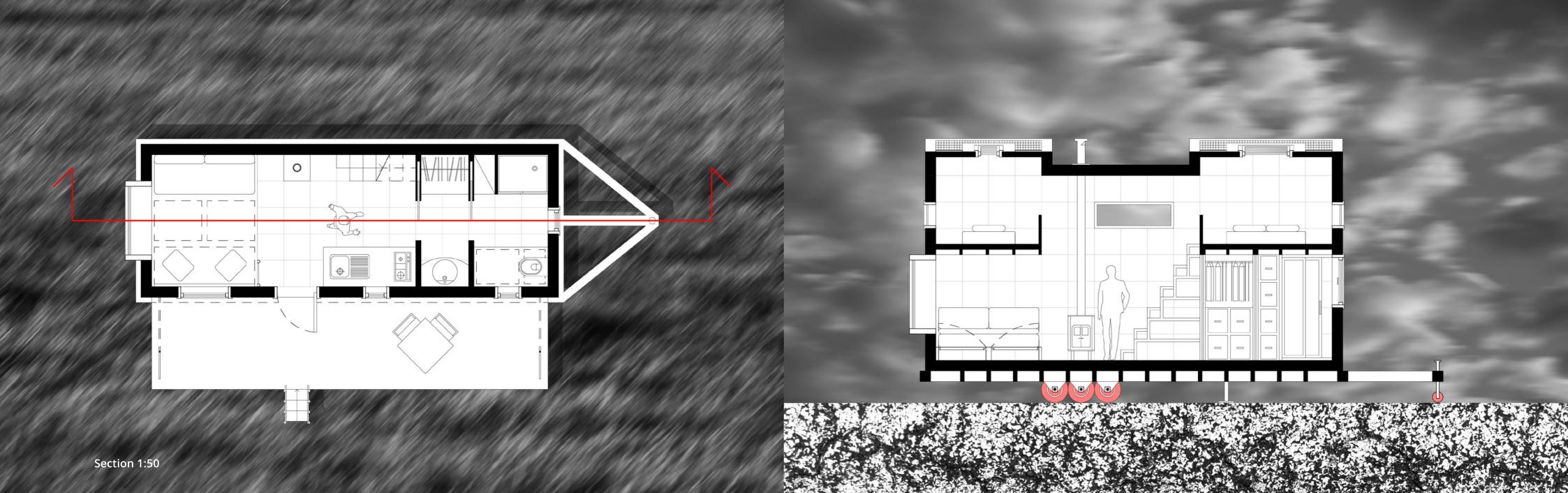


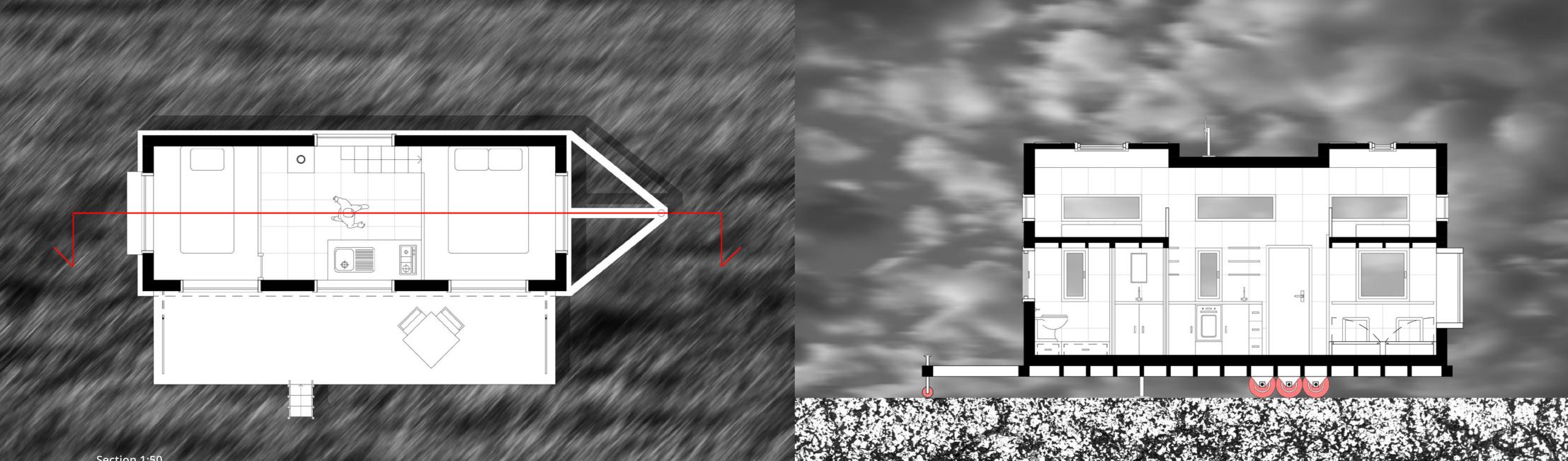
Plan

Section



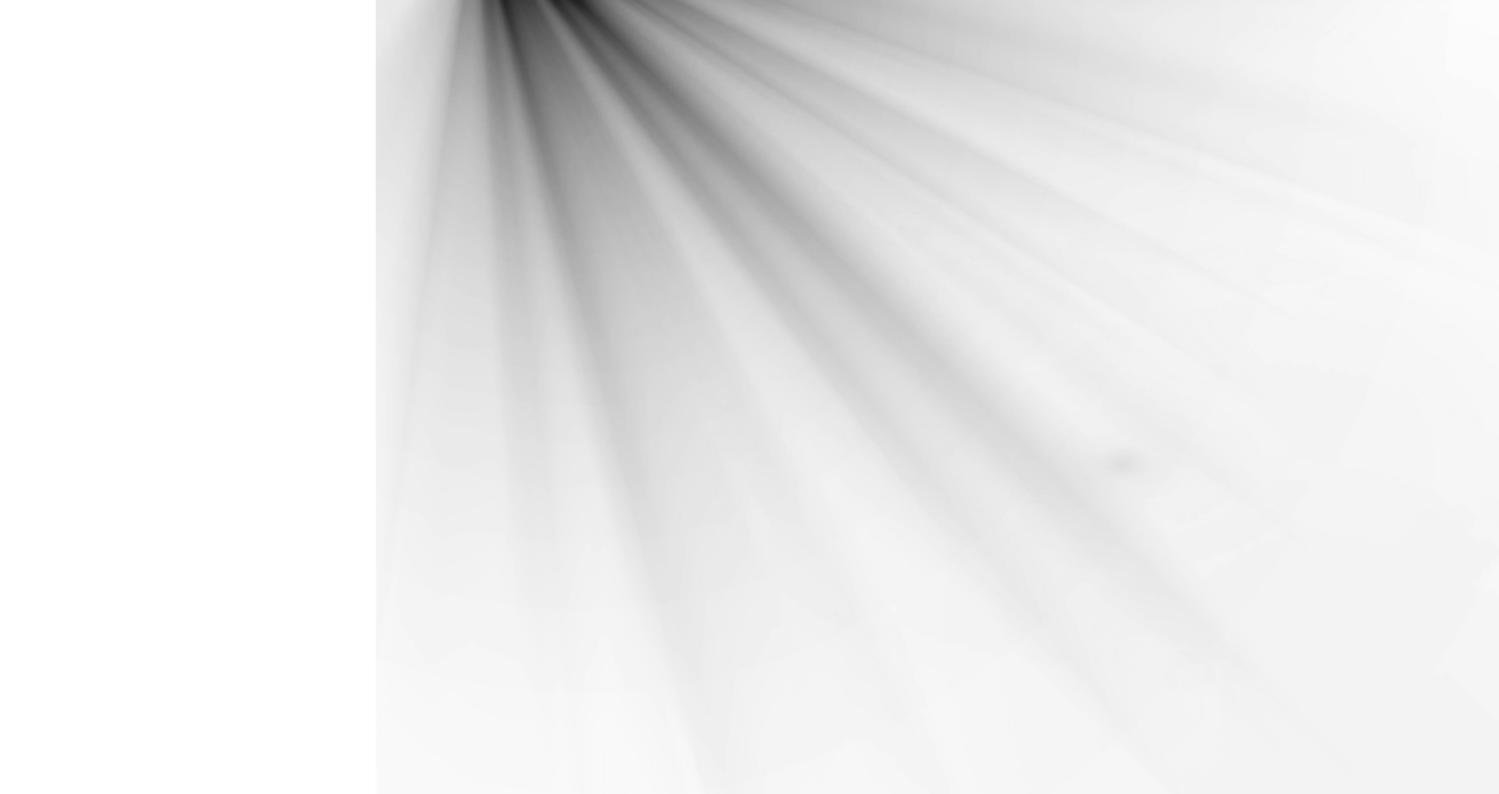






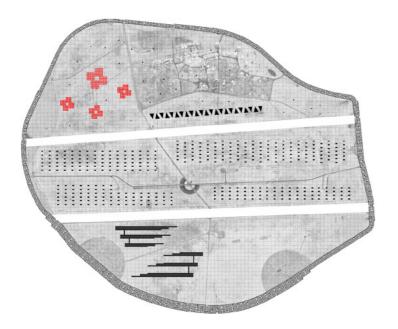
Section 1:50

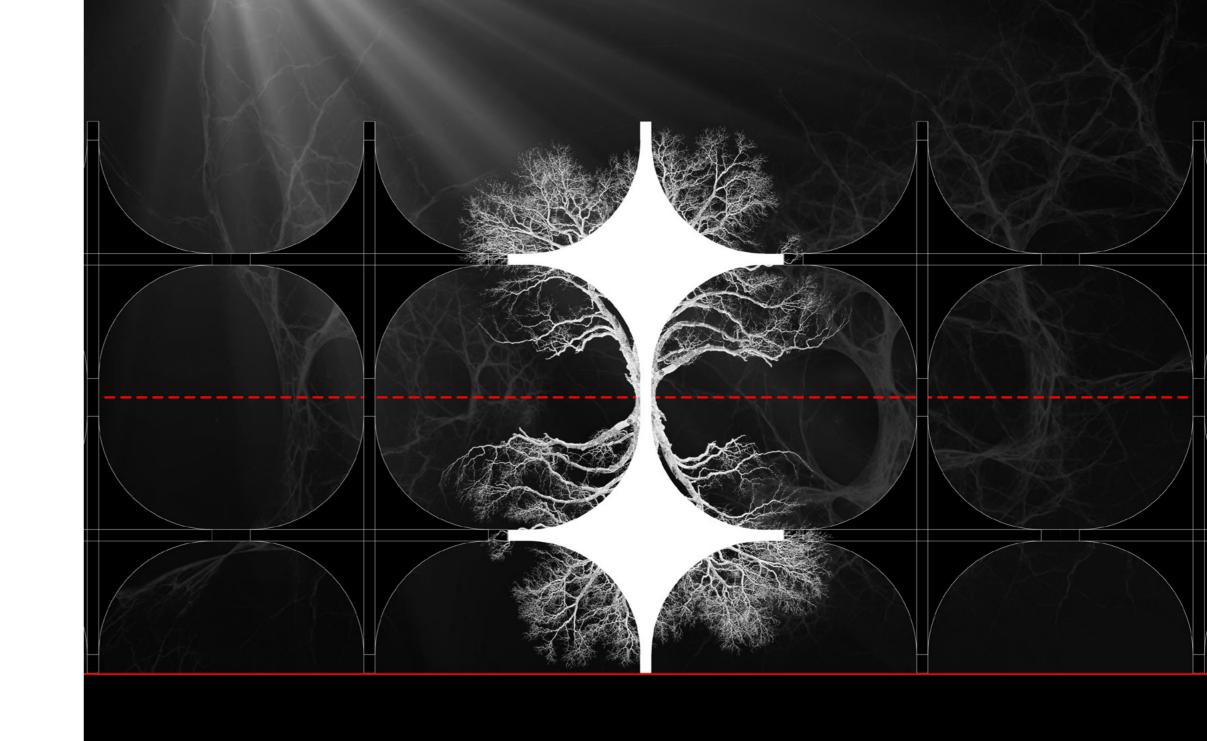




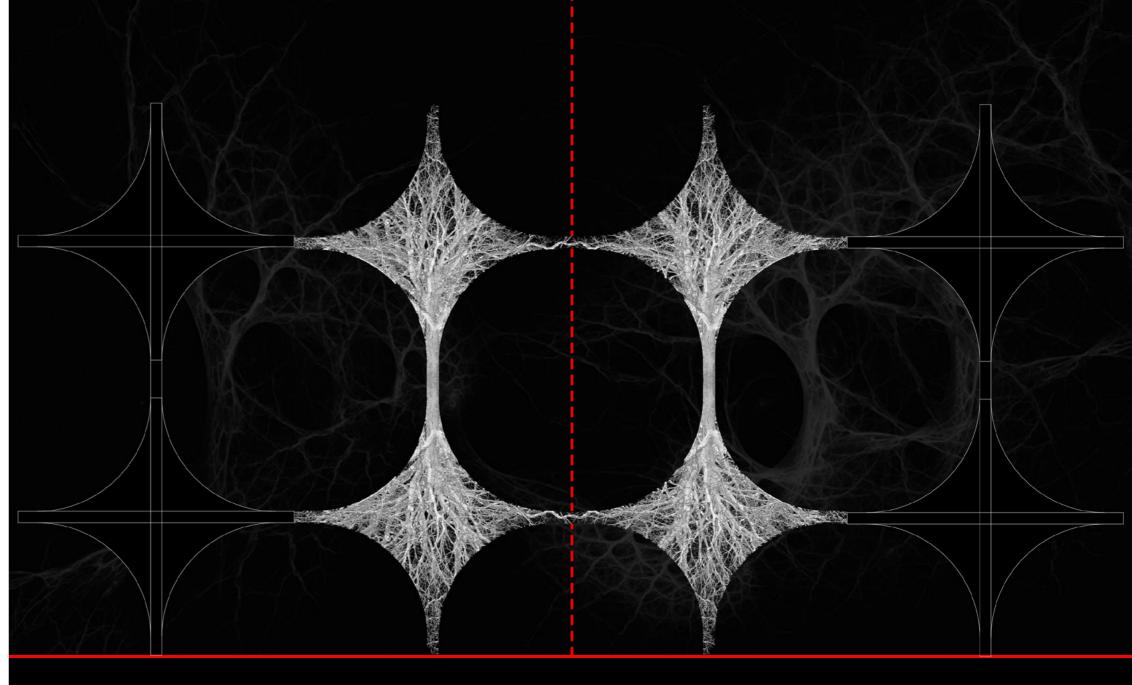
> Light

Community lab - clusters

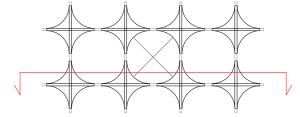


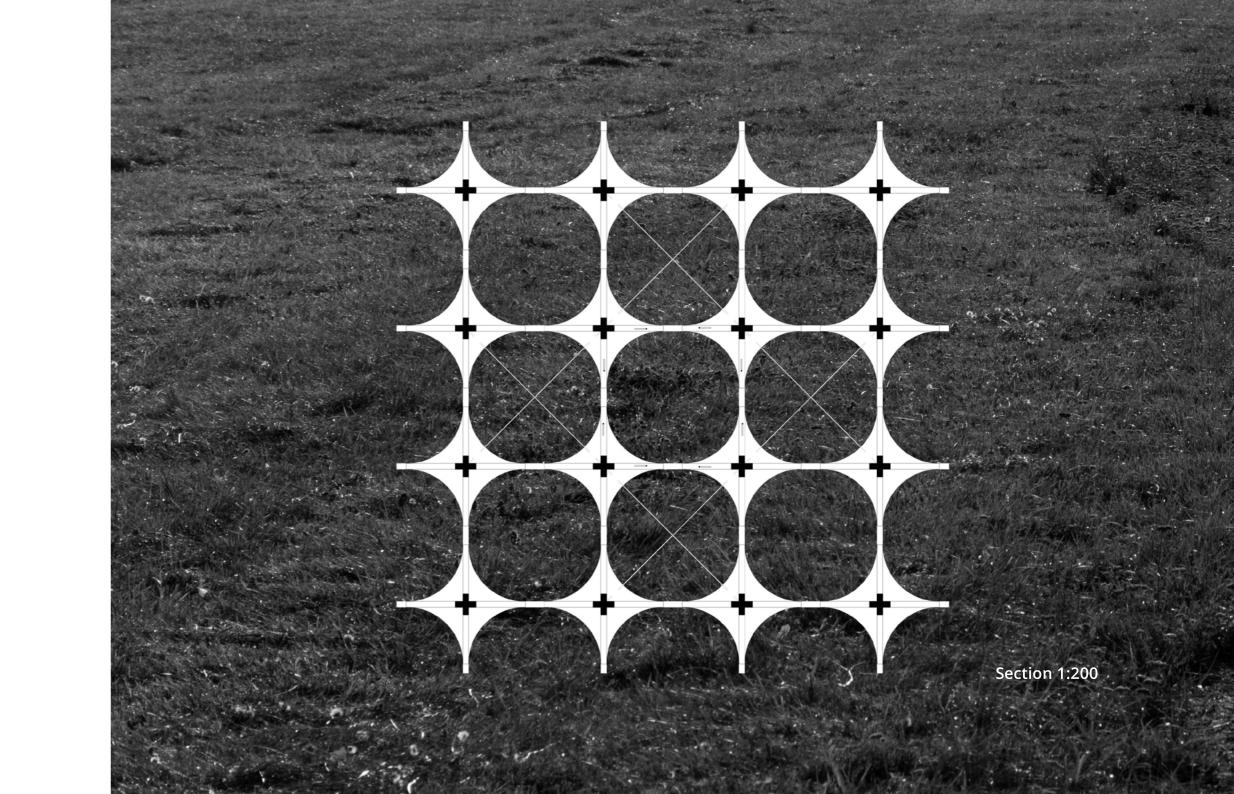


> Vegetal anatomy

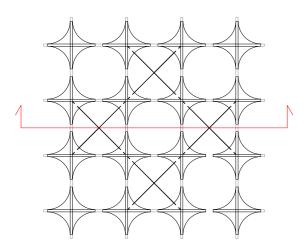


> Structure & bracing

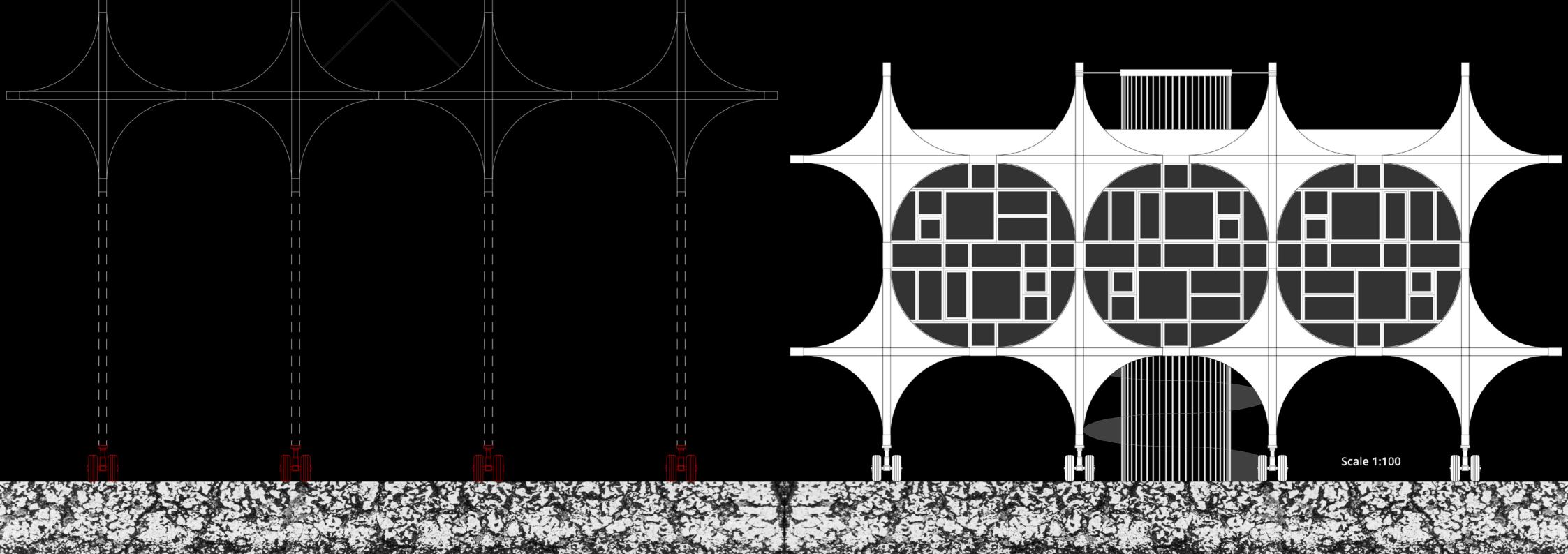


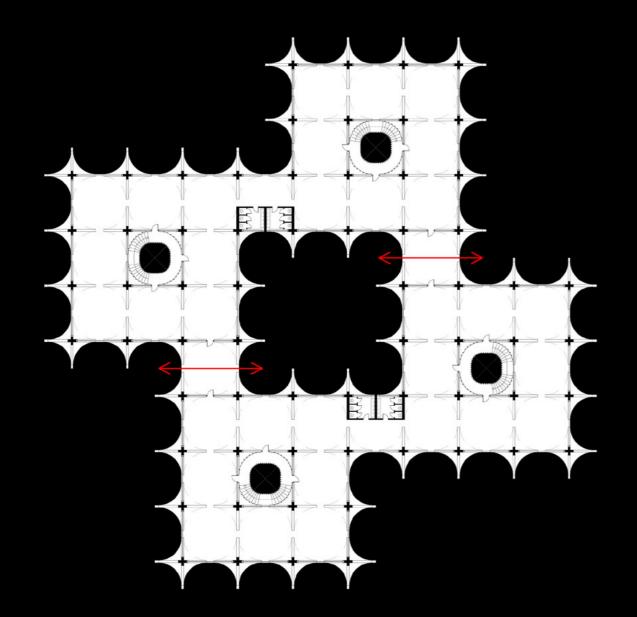


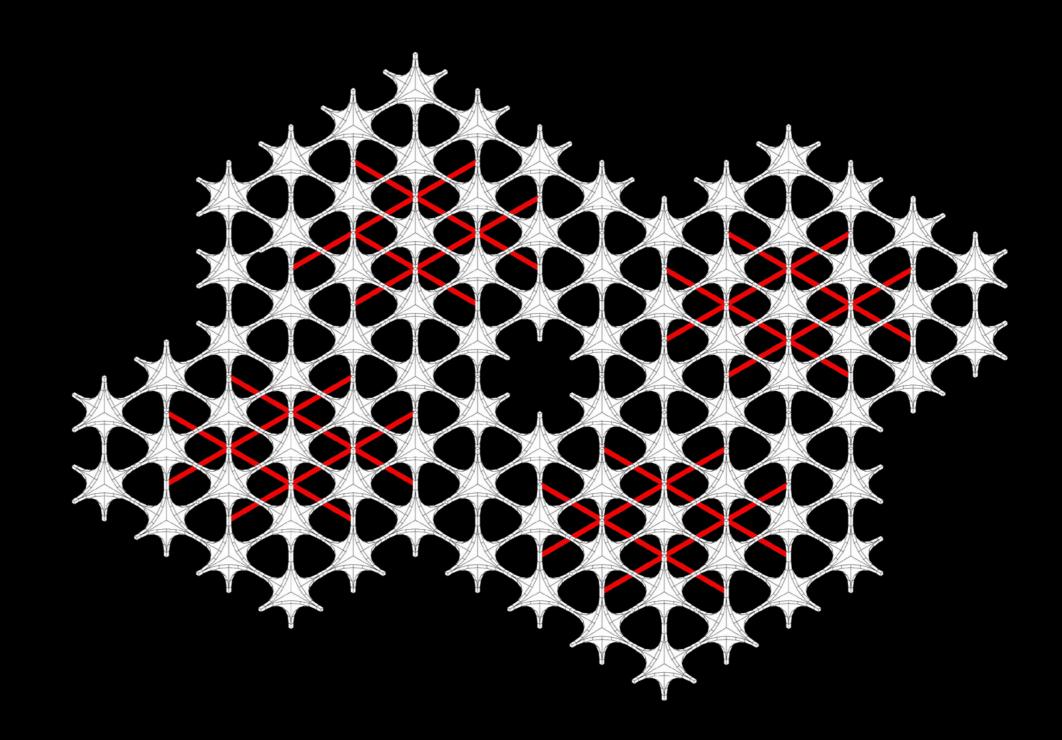
> Structure & bracing



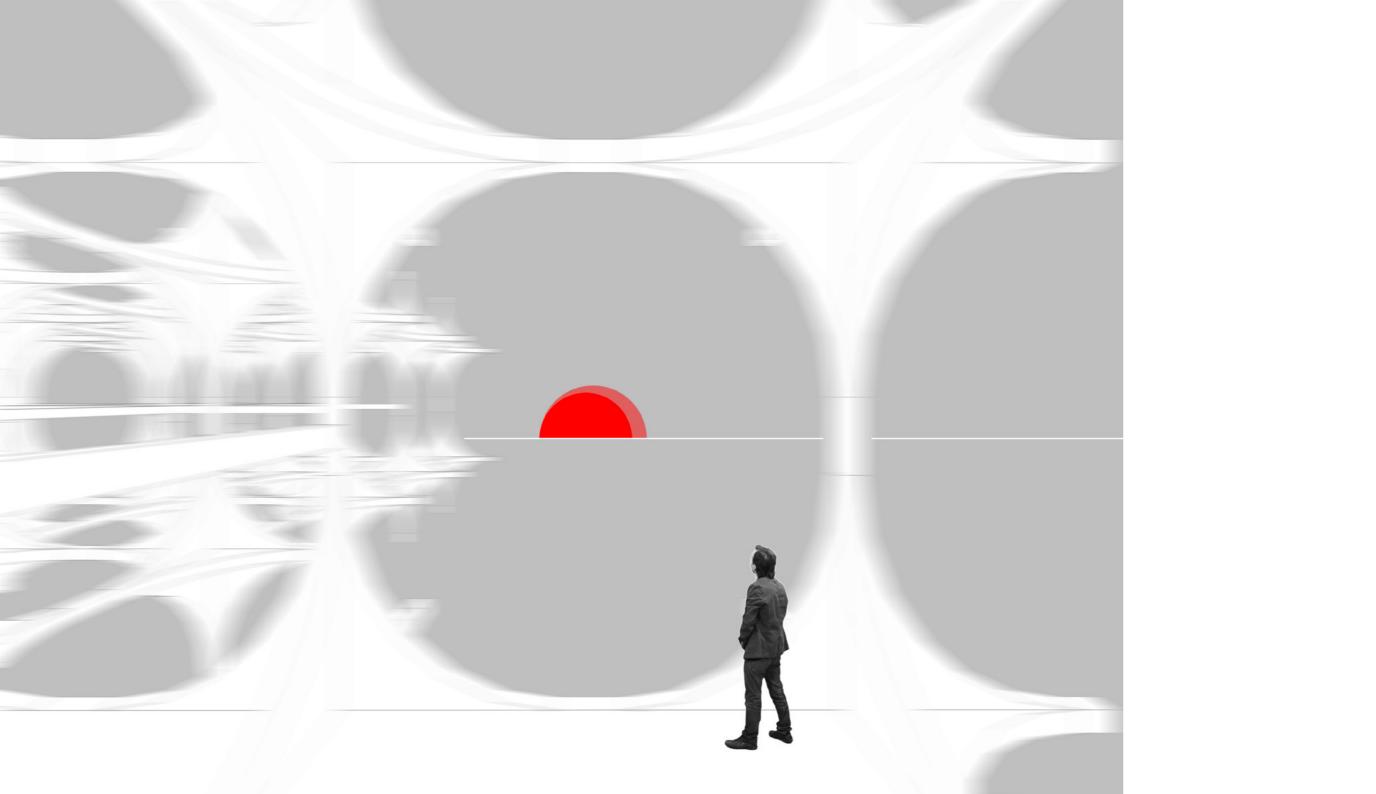


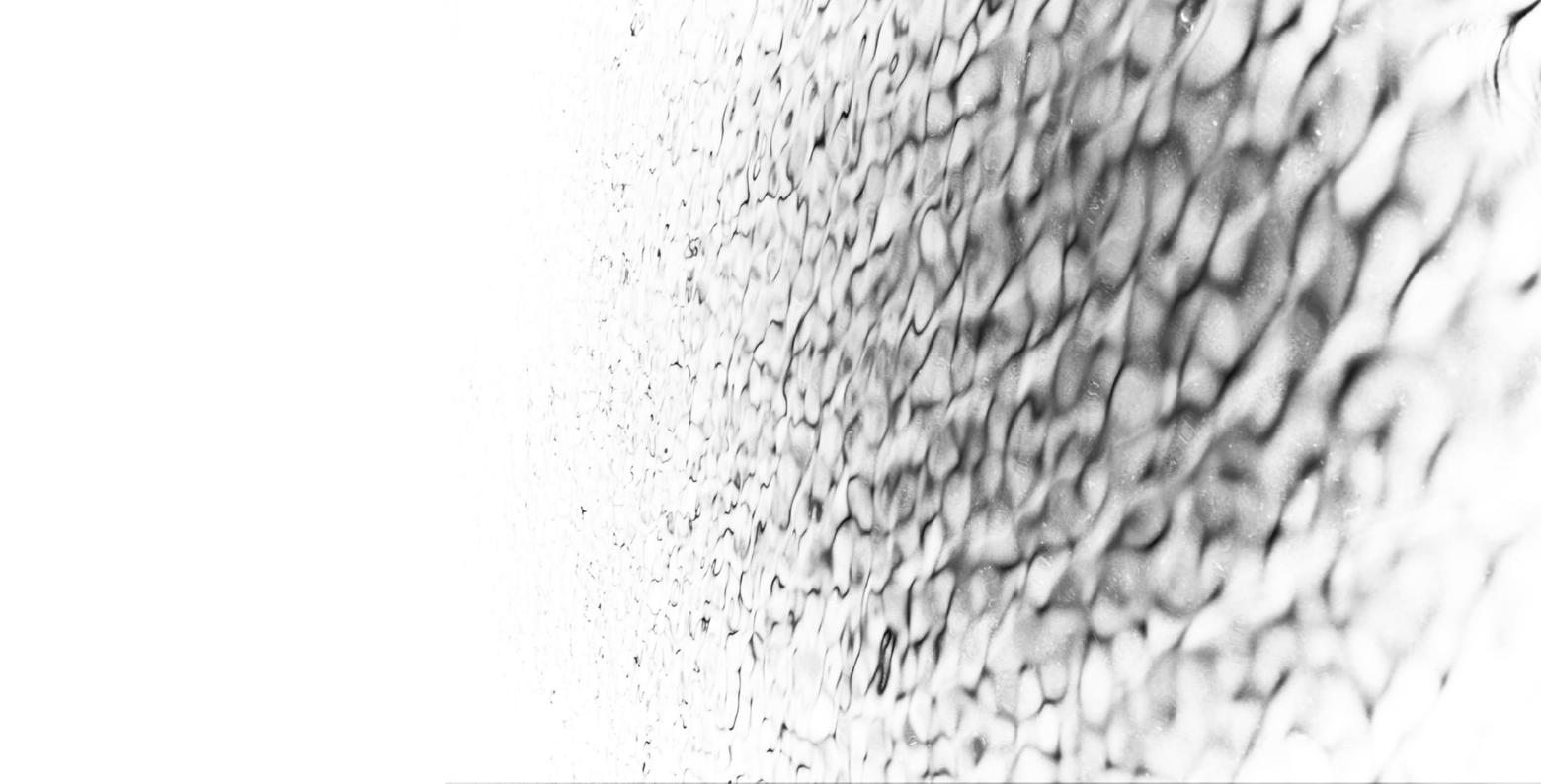






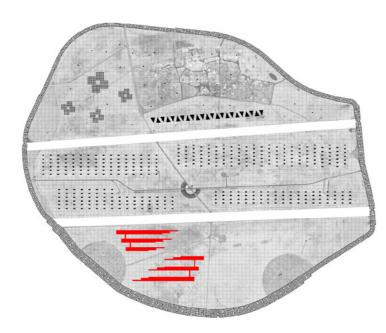
Scale 1:500

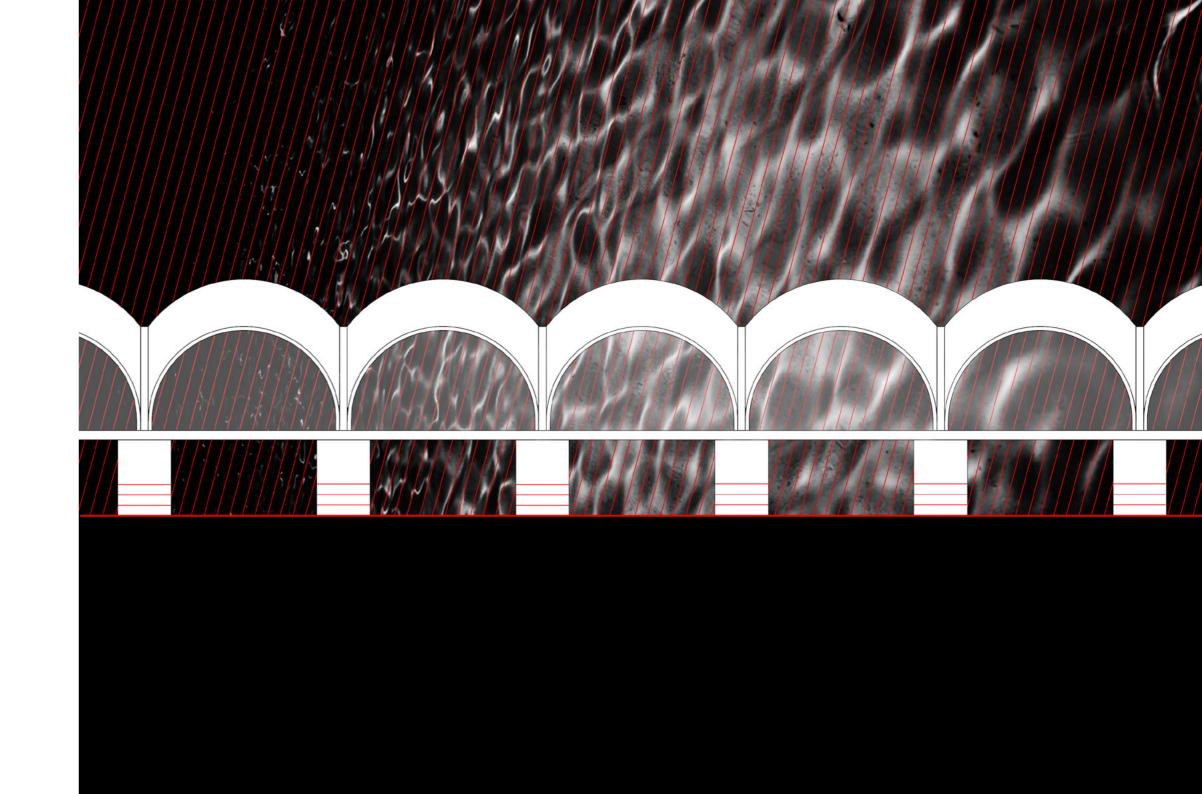


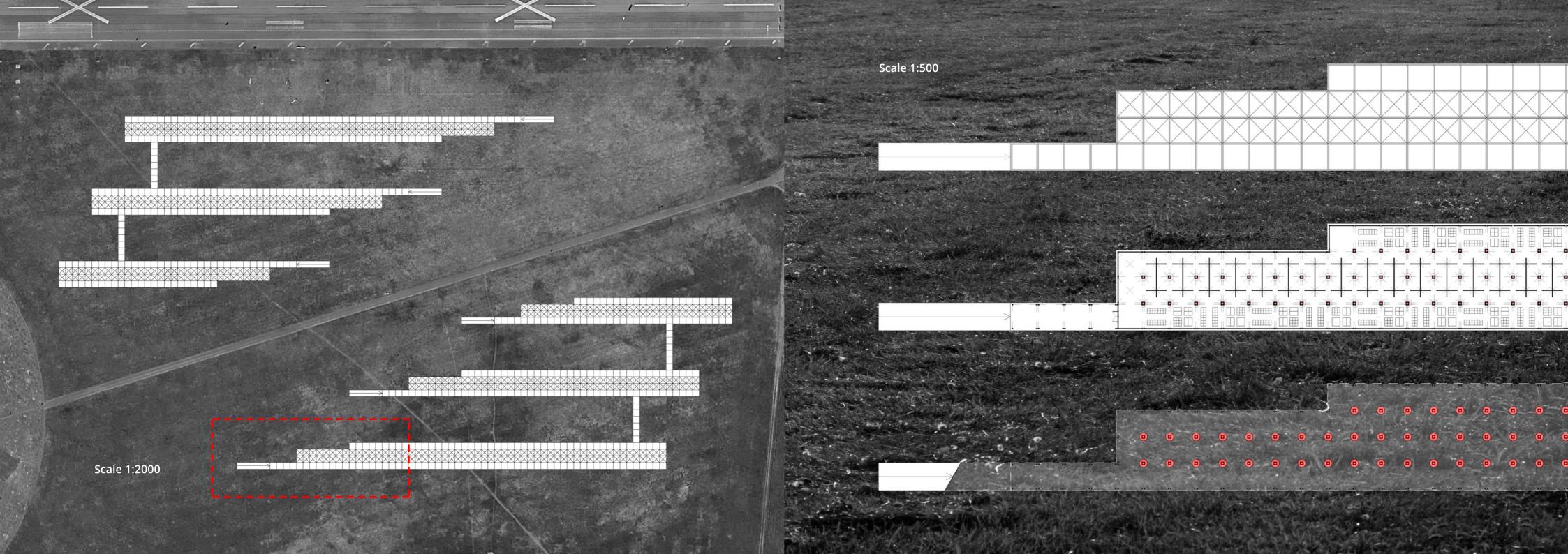


> Water

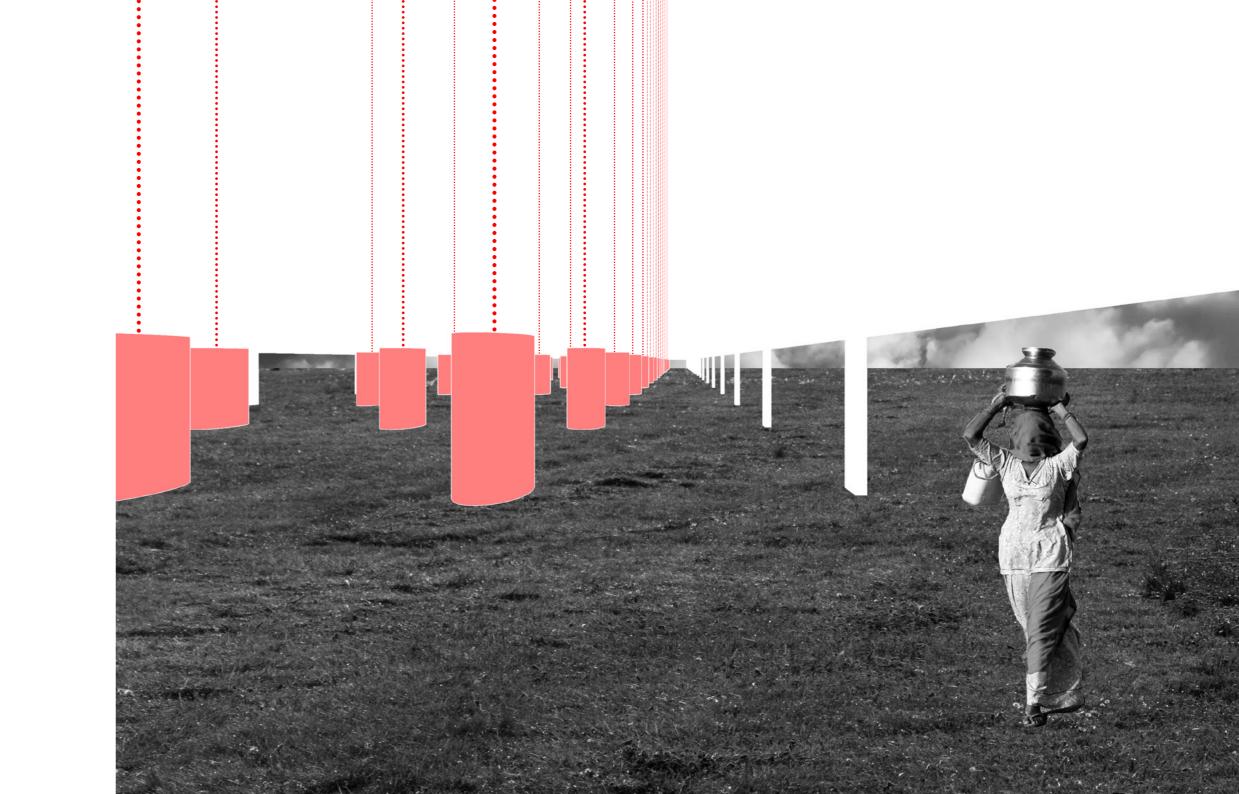
Indoor vegetable gardens





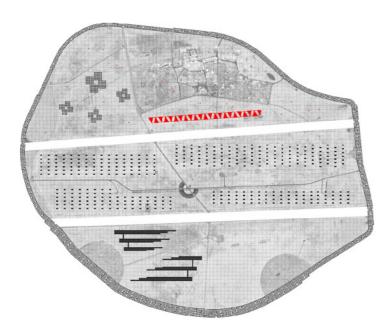


> Collecting water



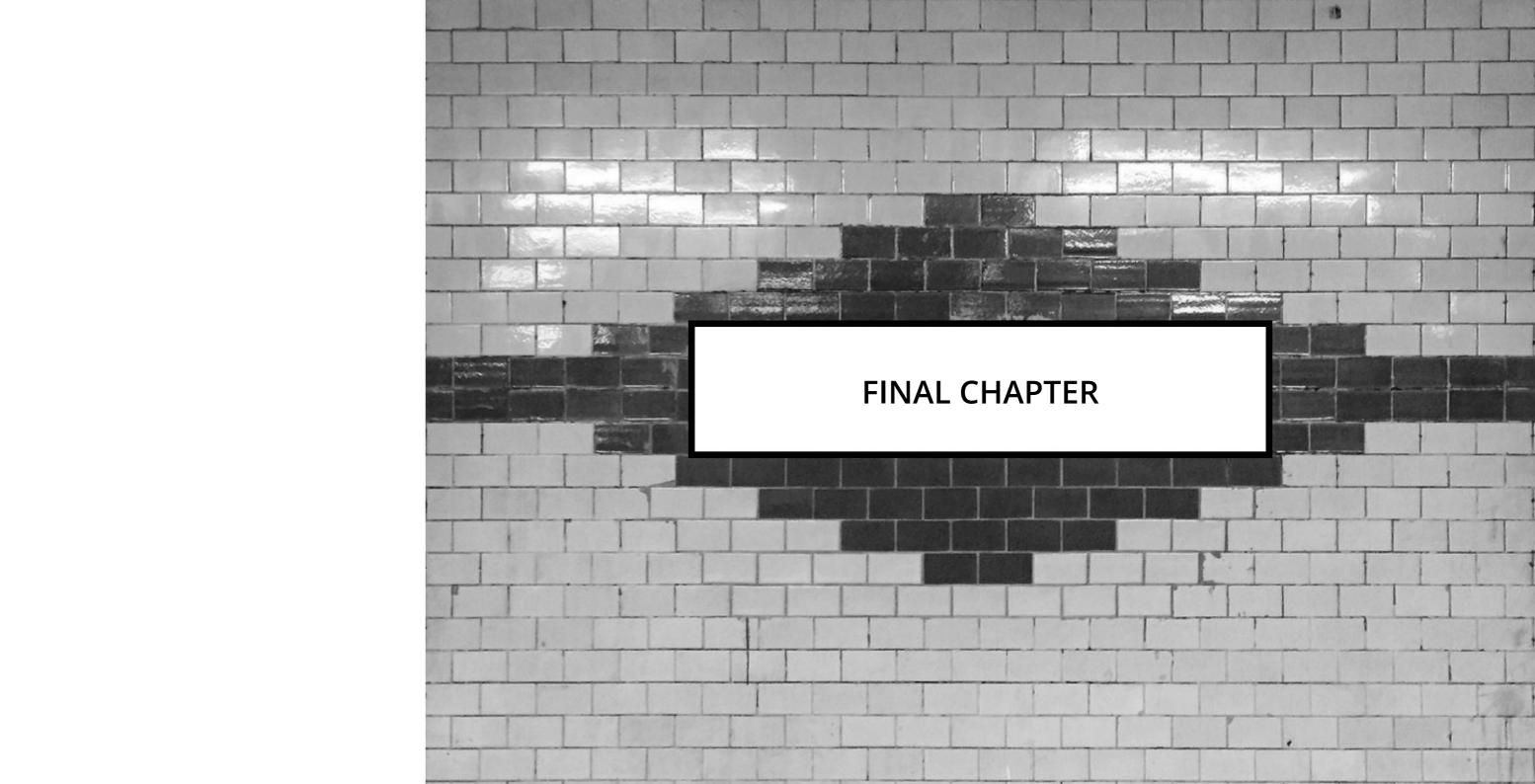
> Fire

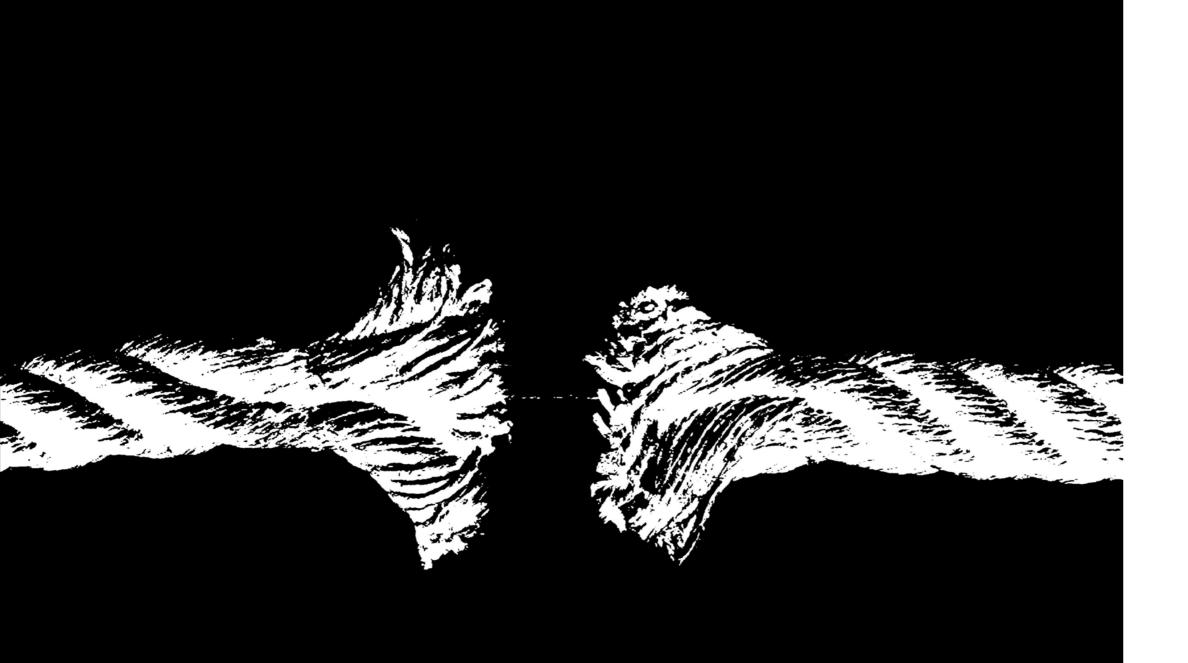
Fireplaces











The *snatch*



Is this the end?

Humans realized that we all have to get along, stick together. Cold, hunger and terror of death unifies the survivors. Hunger has made men respectful.

There's nothing like hunger to make people better. But it must be collective, planetary.

As long as it affects only a part of the population, man does not get better. It's enough that one individual has one more piece of bread than the other and the imbalance is back.

We must all be equal.

Everywhere the air of equality circulates and the world shines clean and bright, surrounded by silence and essential things.

Skies have become clear, the air is as pure as water. Atmosphere is purifying, the tons of poisons pumped by man are shaking off.

With the fear of death, plagued by extreme necessity, the survivors have learned to do it themselves, without asking. They have learned not to give orders, not to command, to get along. Without being aware of it, they are creating a perfect society, in which there are no hierarchies or subordinates. Where there are no people who rule and obey. At most they give advice, but very gently.

The *great crisis* has changed mankind in better.

Now that survivors have started from zero, they have rediscovered values forgotten for years, such as manual labor, leisure time, simplicity, movement. They have learned to live in peace, to collaborate, to stay together, to not need chiefs.

Despite efforts, difficulties, limitations, shortages of everything, the men who survived enjoy a peace and serenity never had before. Never dreamed of. And never existed. Men have finally returned to live in harmony with themselves and with nature. The world had never had such harmony, for the

simple reason that a planetary tragedy affilicting all humanity had never occurred.

It is necessary to get scared all together in order to get along and not start fights, controversy, protests. We all need to be hungry in the same way to collaborate in producing food without stealing it from each other. Without personal ambitions, greed, selfishness. **Terror fixes everything**.

We have given excessive value to things, pursuing goals that stole free time and precluded people from sitting, watching and enjoying life. Unfortunately, wanting to advance is in man's nature: to



seek, to have more, to cover himself with stuff without realizing that it only creates problems. In fact, **more you have, more you have to protect**, manage, control and maintain.

The so much desired stuff creates anxiety and a sense of malaise. The only thing that would have been wise to accumulate were the solutions to defeat disease, hunger, misery. And, not least, manual exercise. Everyone, no one excluded, would have had to acquire knowledge of the land, of animals, of learning to lead the forces of nature in favour of man. Instead, everyone invested in technology, industry, foreign markets, to produce every kind of stuff, cars, machinery and a thousand devilries, throwing themselves into the mad conquest of the useless.

It is land that feeds man, not industry.

During the time of wealth and opulence, that was the mistake: the advanced nations invested everything in industry at the expense of agriculture. The school should also have taken care of agriculture, educating people to use their hands and brains, instead it ignored it completely.

It continued to teach all kinds of technology, the

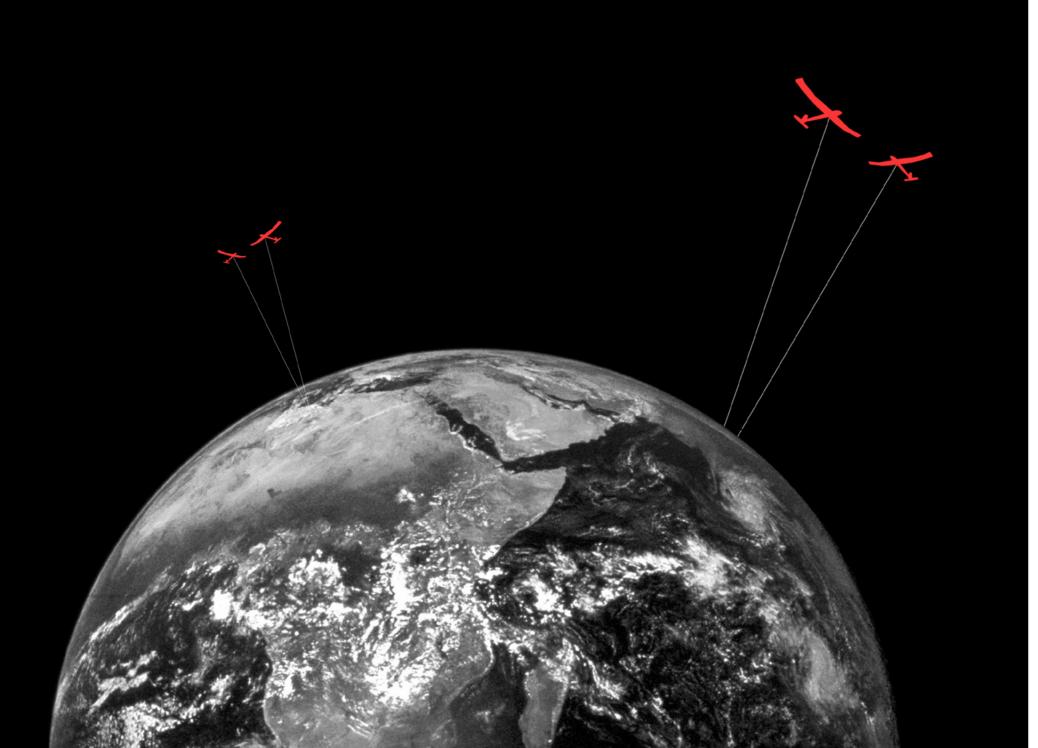
use of computers and other devices. The earth demanded attention, it warned the man that he was walking on the wrong path. And dangerous. But he didn't listen, he continued to produce junk, much of it completely superfluous.

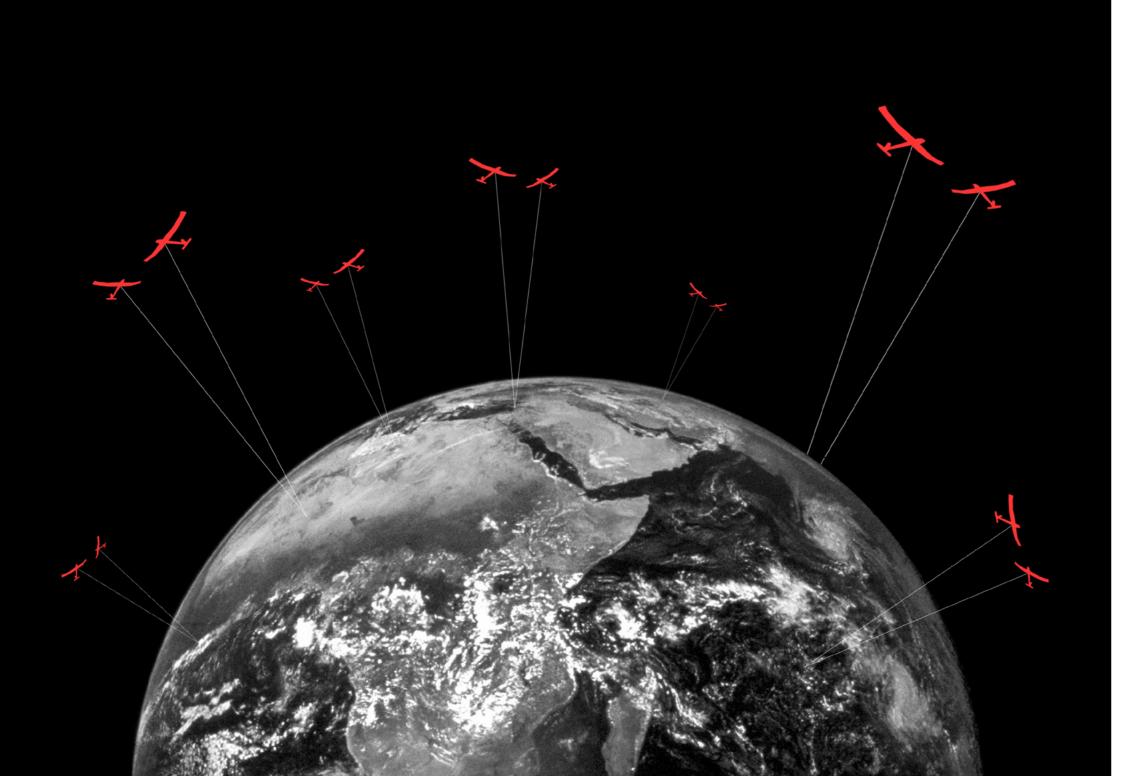
He kept advancing towards the abyss until he reached it.

People got fat, because all designing in the world was aimed at eliminating fatigue. Houses were invaded by hundreds of electrical objects that could erase all human effort. They didn't even walk three meters. Everything became oversized.

Hence, only those who had learned to self-produce the essentials for living were able to survive and help other people, even those who did not deserve it. Those who could move around with their homes on wheels, avoiding the worst sufferings settled in particular places, had a great advantage: mobility. They could find more prolific lands and raw materials, where they were left. Those who had always been dependent on the market learned at his own expense what he had considered irrelevant during all his life. And they repented it







> Is this the end?

What seemed to belong to the past suddenly became not only crucial for the present, but also a basis for future survival.

Perhaps, even for a possible prosperity, hoping that the past will not be forgotten. But it is known, as we've already seen it many times, that man has a very short memory and when people have a full stomach, they find time to start prevailing again.

So, is this the end, or it is just **a new beginning?**



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