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PROCEEDINGS

ON REPRODUCTION

RE-IMAGINING THE POLITICAL ECOLOGY OF URBANISM

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Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Ghent

After successful editions in Leuven, Venice, Barcelona, Paris, Delft, Lausanne, the next edition of the PhD seminars in urbanism and urbanization will be hosted in Ghent, Belgium. Like previous editions, the seminar seeks to bring together students writing their PhD thesis in urbanism, working within very different disciplinary traditions, combining historical research, design research and different forms of urban research.

The community supporting this seminar series over the years shares an interest in work that tries to speak across the divide between urban studies and the city-making disciplines, seeking to combine the interpretation of the process of urbanization with the commitment and care for the urban condition in all its manifold manifestations, and bring together urban theory and the theoretical grounding of urbanism.

The seminar welcomes all PhD students working in this mixed field. The call for papers of each edition foregrounds a set of themes that will be given special attention. We invite students to respond to these thematic lines, however, papers addressing other themes and concerns will also be taken into consideration.

On Reproduction[1] : Re-Imagining the Political Ecology of Urbanism

Each period of urbanization comes with its urbanisms. At times these are clearly defined and constitute distinct paradigms that fill handbooks, structure curricula and form schools. At other times they are contested and subject of vigorous debate. Today, urbanism is a field in flux, forced to engage in new urban questions and address pressing social and ecological concerns. As a direct result the contemporary list of epithets qualifying the notion urbanism has become virtually endless.

In this edition of the urbanism and urbanization seminar we want to think the urban question as a matter of political ecology, joining the transdisciplinary efforts to think nature inside the political economy of urbanization and to develop a perspective on urbanism that unites ecological and social justice concerns. In order to do so, we proceed from a notion which has defined urbanism within poltical economy, namely the question of 'social reproduction'.

Reproduction is a term rooted in Marxist vocabulary that provides an analytic lens to think the ways in which the logics of capitalist production have been socially embedded. Urban questions can be understood as questions of social reproduction, in which typically three concerns intersect: (1) the reproduction of life itself pointing to the bio-political core of urbanism; (2) the reproduction of value, thinking the division of labor, the role of paid and non-paid labor, the split between use and exchange value, internal and external economies, positive and negative externalities, etc.; (3) the reproduction of the institutional and infrastructural arrangements put in place to enable production processes, interrogating the fixed capital and infrastructure cities are made of. Urbanisms are specific propositions regarding the collective arrangements needed in order to address and organize questions of social reproduction in an urbanizing society.

Within the historical Marxist perspective 'social reproduction' has typically served as a critical lens to expose urbanism as an ideological project that provides the social support for capitalist production and uneven capital accumulation (Harvey, Castells, Préteceille, …). Beyond the ideological critique, starting from questions of social reproduction is also an invitation to think alternative urbanisms and imaginaries to this dominant story of uneven development, dispossession, gentrification and environmental injustice. Can we imagine urbanisms that do not treat social reproduction as an afterthought of production, as a necessary form of compensation. What do such reproductive urbanisms that renders the lives of people living in cities more just, more meaningful and more inclusive look like?

Revisiting the question of 'social reproduction', we find ourselves in the midst of discussions that are both new and old at the same time, discussions regarding the metabolic basis of our cities, the ways cities care for their citizens, keep them healthy or make them sick; the ways we share and distribute resources, both physical resources as well as social opportunities; the ways we feed our cities and fail to give citizens control over what they eat; the ways we make citizens mobile or not, car-dependent or blessed with multiple mobilities. The vigorous yet contested quest for alternative urbanisms makes us aware of the rather limited terms through which the field of urbanism has traditionally addressed questions of social reproduction, placing the emphasis on the reproduction of labor and the concomitant concern for housing and infrastructure. Thinking urbanism in the reproductive nexus is an invitation to think the biopolitical basis of urbanism in its full breath, reaching out to the key discussions that shape the urban agenda in the Anthropocene (or should we say 'capitalocene').

Alternative questions

Track #1

The return to questions such as water, energy, food, the circular use of resources brings back to the field of urbanism subjects that have been rendered absent by dominant urbanist discourse. The political ecology literature foregrounds the various ways in which processes of urbanization are deeply implicated in socio-natural processes. Urbanists are expanding their scope beyond the hard-wired questions of housing, producing an expanded understanding of the urban question. At the same time,

the operational translations that are made today of this new urban question herald a rather troubling reduction of the urban agenda within a functionalist framework. Today the discourse of urbanism is rapidly being taken over by the new-speak of the circular economy, smart use of resources, the shortening of supply chains, the reduction of carbon emissions, the balancing of ecosystem services, etc. Urbanists are making an effort to think the process of urbanization within the food, water, energy nexus, thinking urban services as eco-systems services, meeting the challenges of urbanization by nature-based solutions. These debates bring biopolitical questions back central stage, yet tend to produce a framing of these debates in a rather functionalist, technical and managerial manner.

We invite papers that reconstruct the intellectual itineraries urbanism has walked in addressing the seemingly new metabolic questions. How do we think key questions of social and environmental reproduction without falling back into a vulgar functionalist reduction of the city and urbanism?

Alternative movements

Track #2

The politics of the urban are defined by groups that join forces in addressing the specific conditions that the process of urbanization subjects them to. The process of urbanization literally moves and manoeuvers people into new positions, subjecting them to new predicaments that move them in turn. Urbanisms are defined by the intellectual mobilities and mental capacities that move people to not simply be subjected to the process of urbanization but rather to become the subject of their shared history. The reproduction of urbanisms is contingent upon the production of concrete experiences that make urban development part and parcel of a divided social consciousness and collective imaginary. This is true for the dominant urbanisms through which the urban condition is shaped, but also holds true for any effort to shape an alternative.

We invite papers that seek to think processes of urban formation and urban change in relationship to the urban movements from which they emerged and which defined their original motivations. When were urbanisms part of food movements, housing movements, environmental movements, mobility movements, etc.? Which citizen groups, which political constellations, which communities of practice, which schools of thought, which disciplinary formations shape the urban project today?

Aternative sites

Track #3

Specific urbanisms typically define the dividing lines between what is internalized and externalized in the process of urbanization, between what is placed in the centre and what is rendered absent. Urban political ecology questions the social implications of the socio-political consequences of specific ecological choices and thereby forces us to rethink the specific positionalities and geographies that have undergirded the history of urbanism. Questions of social reproduction, questions regarding cooking, food growing, child rearing, education, maintenance and repair have, more often than not, been rendered absent, repressed and treated as secondary. The history of urbanism tends to reproduce the dominant geographies and territorialities of centre and periphery, here and overseas, production and consumption. Taking political ecology seriously requires us to write the history of urbanism from elsewhere. New food geographies invite us to think the urban food metabolism beyond the town-country divide. The metabolic perspective produces new geographies of waste but also new riches and resources previously neglected and undervalued.

We invite papers that move the history of urbanism to neglected historical sites. We welcome papers that actively seek to decolonize the field of urbanism and dismantle the core-periphery relationships, the geographies of uneven development reproduced by the urbanism.

Alternative economies

Track #4

The 2008 sub-prime mortgage crisis might be understood as a crisis of social reproduction, the crisis of the excesses to produce hou-

sing in the commodity form, packaged and repackaged as a financial product. The crisis produces at the same time a heightened awareness of the need to think the economies of cities beyond the market and imagine alternative economies that may save our cities from financial speculation, recover urban value as use value, re-localize the circulation of capital and that undergird the governance of the urban commons. Thinking alternative urbanism requires the construction of an alternative theory of value. The question of social reproduction is the obvious subject to think the transition from efficiency to sufficiency, to think urban development beyond growth.

We invite papers that reflect on the way in which urbanisms have served as the experimental growth for alternative reflections on the economies of cities, from the historical reflections of authors such as Henri Lefebvre, over Jean Remy, André Gorz, Jane Jacobs, Ivan Illich and others to contemporary efforts to think the economy of the commons, the role of community currencies, the sharing economy, the decommodification of housing, the pooling of resources. We invite people to think the role of design in defining the pertinent scales at which these new economies can be articulated, defining the collective units of interventions that articulate virtuous cycles of social reproduction and within the contours of which the balance between the quest for autonomy and the recognition of open logics of exchange can be articulated.

[1] The thematic focus of the 9th edition of the U&U seminars draws upon the collective work of Michiel Dehaene and Chiara Tornaghi and their joint efforts to mount the *International Forum for an Agroecological Urbanism* to be launched at the meeting of the AESOP sustainable food planning group in Coventry, UK,14-15 November 2017 (https://aesopsfp.wordpress.com/call-for-papers/). See also: Tornaghi & Dehaene, Food as an urban question, and the foundations for a reproductive, agroecological, urbanism. (forthcoming). Dehaene, M., Tornaghi, C.., and Sage, C. (2016) '5.2 Mending the metabolic rift – placing the 'urban' in Urban Agriculture'. In Urban Agriculture Europe. Ed. by Lohrberg, F., Scazzosi, L. Licka, L., and Timpe, A. Berlin: Jovis.

Table of Contents

Ethnographies of design practices

Urbanism of temporality. Tracing the impact of food and shelter rehabilitation networks on the production and reproduction of urban realities in Marka camp, Jordan 13
Dina Dahood

A critical look at regional planning: Jean Rémy and the concept of urban externalities 21
Martin Dumont

Unveiling Latin American territories; The Travesías of the Valparaíso School as a critical practice of the planetary urbanization 29
Alvaro Mercado Jara

Live to understand: reflection on an ethnography of a high rise social housing estate in Brussels 35
Jeanne Mosseray

Sites & Strategies

41

Re-imagining the collective space
Valentin Bourdon

Spontaneity in everyday space: Linking Social and Spatial through an Urban Design Perspective 47
Duygu Cihanger

Governing the air: knowledge, infrastructures, contestation 57
Nicola da Schio

Construction and its contrary. The role of demolition in the project of the city 63
Anna Livia Friel

Territorial Systems

Limits and inevitabilities of dams in the North American machine-territory 67
Luca Iuorio

The Italy of the factories. Narrations, representations, images 77
Luis Antonio Martin Sanchez

The Northbothnian technological megasystem: Urbanization, territorial metabolism and political ecologies 87
Berta Morata

The strategies of territorial development in the test of coastal dynamics. From the mobility of the coastline to the spatio-temporal depth of the coastal area 103
Thomas Beillouin

Land for food. The Interaction of Urban Planning and Regional Food Planning 113
Ivonne Weichold

Metabolism

Waste space and recycling practices: the case of the Abattoirs in Brussels 117
Andrea Bortolotti

Energy transition in the nebular city: a socio-spatial perspective on the case of heat in Roeselare 127
Griet Juwet

Reinterpreting the territory's resourcefulness 141
Julie Marin

From Pipeline to Landscape: a Landscape-Driven Design for Stormwater Management 157
Elisabeth Sjodahl

Brussels. (De)construction of a productive narrative 167
Marine Declève

Production

The Post-Growth City: Towards an Urban Research Agenda for the Post-Growth Society 179
Giorgos Koukoufikis

Re-emerging landscapes: militarised territories from the Cold War period 181
Mladen Stilinovic

The industrialization and the construction of the Alpine city-territory 191
Roberto Sega

The Congenital Defective Impetuses and Postnatal Distorted Development. Research on the Impetuses and Problems in the New Towns' Development of China 203
Cai Xiaoxiao

Waterscapes in transformation in the 'Uitkerkse Polder'. Water as a protagonist for changing accessibility in landscapes challenged by infrastructures for climate resilience 213
Sis Pillen

Reviewing post-mining procedures in view of the potential incursion of landscape urbanism in resource extraction 227
Margarita Macera

Movements (part I)

Suburban place-making: 'place distinctiveness' as manifestation of political-economic coalitions : Antwerp, c.1860-c.1940 239
Laura May

Spatial fragmentation and self-organisation: a negative relation in Brazilian metropolises 249
Igor Moreno Pessoa

(E)valuating the production of social space: A critical atlas of a residential subdivision in Zolder 259
Barbara Roosen

Urban(ism) Movements: Occupying Central São Paulo 269
Jeroen Stevens

Another Geography of the Belgian Dispersed Settlements 277
Guillaume Vanneste

Commons / Alternative economies

Neighbourhood as a socio-spatial common. A neo-Nolli map of Wrangelkiez, Berlin-Kreuzberg 289
Dagmar Pelger

The garden cities of the 21st century 299
Anna Ternon

Slow builders in accelerating urbanity. The underwhelming radicality of La Poudrière, Brussels 309
Philippe De Clerck

Thermae as commons. Guide lines for the project of thermal landscapes 323
Eleonora Fiorentino

Socio-ecological systems

Re-designing the incremental city in times of climate change: design investigations into the consolidated riverbank settlements of Guayaquil, Ecuador 331
Olga Peek

Historicizing Ecological Urbanism: Paul Duvigneaud, the Brussels Agglomeration and the influence of ecology on urbanism (1970-2016) 343
Koenraad Danneels

The place given to and the place taken by Tionghoa in the postcolonial Indonesia. A case study on Semarang 357
Kezia Dewi

Movements (part II)

From dissensus to modernist consensus. On the irruption and reproduction of spatial orders in 20th century Guadalajara. 369
Luis Angel Flores Hernandez

De-hierarchizing Belo Horizonte's foundational plan, building theory from off the map 381
Patricia Capanema Alvares Fernandes

Death and life of citizen initiatives through participatory public policies in Madrid: towards an open source urbanism or towards the end of it? 395
Cristina Braschi

Challenging the capitalist cityscape? The inclusion of citizens in vacant space reuses in Barcelona and Budapest 401
Luca Sara Brody

Unveiling Latin American territories; The *Travesías* of the Valparaíso School as a critical practice of the planetary urbanization

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The contemporary planetary urbanization is a phenomenon predicted by Henri Lefebvre, in *La Révolution urbaine* of 1970, which is a major contribution to the radical critique of the postwar urbanization emerged during the 60's. Nowadays, through this theoretical approach, geographer, and landscape-architects have developed new critical description of the urbanization beyond the traditional city. Together, providing new approaches about landscape and territory, allowing us to pay special attention to the production of leftover territories result of this extended urbanization.
Against this background, in Latin America, the theoretical discussion and design approaches are still emerging. Nonetheless, this research aims to state that, parallel to the development of the critical theory from the sixties and until today, The Valparaíso School of Chile through the critical practice of The *Travesías* has treated the problem of unveiling the Latin American territories surpassing the cities, centered specifically on the leftovers lands produced by the historical and planetary urbanization.

Keywords: planetary urbanization, leftover territories, critical practice, *Travesías*

The leftover-territories of the planetary urbanization

The contemporary 'planetary urbanization' is a phenomenon predicted by Henri Lefebvre in his book *La Revolution Urbaine* published in 1970, which is a major contribution to the *radical critique* of the postwar urbanization, emerged during the 60's mainly in Paris and later in North America. Nowadays, through this theoretical approach geographers (Soja, 1989; Harvey, 2012; Brenner, 2014), and landscape-architects (Waldheim, 2006, 2016; Berger, 2007; Corner, 2014) have been developing new critical descriptions about the current urbanization; as something that goes beyond the traditional city, affirming the ubiquity of the phenomenon, bringing down de bynomio countryside-city, the negative effects of the surplus value of lands and the accumulated capital of the laissez-faire (Brenner, 2014; Waldheim, 2016). Together, these insights provide renewed ideas of the concept of landscape and territory, allowing us to pay special attention to the paradox between the production of urban landscape-territories, and the 'leftover territories', as the result of exchanges between urban landscape, operational landscape (Brenner, 2016) logistic landscape (Waldheim and Berger, 2008) and natural ones, which implies the interaction between lands beyond political and regional borders. Therefore, the common objective has been to return to the territory, developing new methods as mapping to describe the performances between local and global scales. Milton Santos call it the relationship between contiguous and networked places (Santos, 2017).

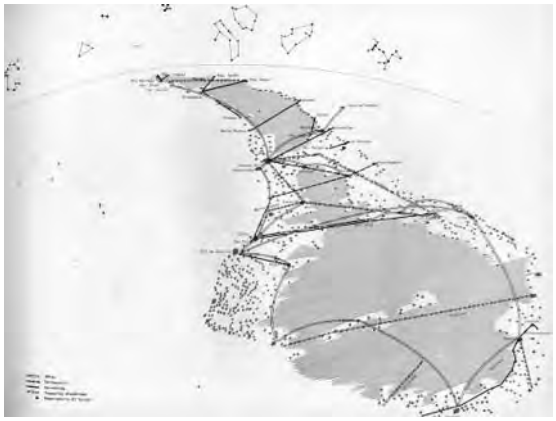
Henri Lefebvre in *The Urban Revolution*, suggested two concepts approaching these leftover territories of urbanization: the 'blind fields', as the physical and mental field located between the industrialization and urbanization actions; and the idea of 'residue', described as the undiscoverable, fugitive and devastated nature that can be found everywhere (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]). Following the idea of leftover waste landscape production, the landscape architect Alan Berger coined the concept of Drosscape; "affirming that the dross into the landscape emerge of two primary processes: first, as consequence of current rapid horizontal urbanization and second, as the leftover of previous economic and production regimes, which are both catalyzed by the drastic decrease in transportation costs over the last century" (Berger, 2007, p. 12). Likewise, the concept of wasteland is related to derelict sites due to industrial changes, and brownfields to abandon sites contaminated by offensive industries. All these concepts describe accurately the North America, and perhaps European relationship with the land.

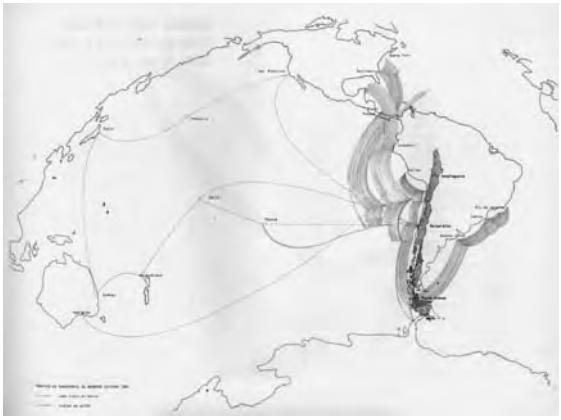
In this sense, the idea of extended urbanization and its leftover terrains –produced by the operationalization of places, territories and landscapes, often located far beyond the dense population centers, composed by large infrastructures across territories and enclosed lands of privatization and exploitation (Brenner and Schmid, 2015)– seems to open the notion of wastelands, regarding these territories which are environmentally and socially vulnerable, as in Latin America, where the urbanization has been expanding most intensely as a result of the commodity boom and that supply by an extraordinary expansion of the resource extraction frontier (Arboleda, 2016, p. 234). Therefore, in this context the concept of planetary urbanization has strong

implications on new notions of distance and boundaries, as well as of urban-flows that nowadays affect the natural and cultural reproduction within the territory.

Against this background, in Latin America, the theoretical discussion is limited and its perspectives for design-fields are still emerging (Sordi, 2015; Correa, 2016). Nonetheless, this research aims to state that, parallel to the development of the critical theory from the sixties until today, and with another narrative, The Valparaíso School of Chile (Perez de Arce and Perez Oyarzún, 2003) through the critical practice of The *Travesías* has treated the problem of unveiling the Latin American territories, specifically the leftovers lands produced by the historical (colonial) and planetary urbanization.

The *Travesía* is a pedagogical experience carried out year after year since 1984 by all the members of the School. Described as 'voyages of unveiling', its purpose has been to develop a specific point of view on the architecture and urbanization of Latin America, addressed through the experiences of voyage and ephemeral constructions one by one in places surpassing the cities, in the leftover territories that they have called poetically the American 'Interior Sea' [Fig.1,2]. This concept avoids the political frontiers, and also the negative connotation in terms as waste landscapes, in this sense, is closer to the idea of *terrain-vague* as greater and perhaps less precisely defined territories, connected with physical idea of a portion of lands in its potentially exploitable state but already possessing some definition to which we are external (De Solà-Morales, 1995).





[Fig.1] Mapping the 'Interior Sea' (blue), the transoceanic route systems (black) and cities (red) across the Latin American Continent. From 'Para una Situación de América Latina en el Pacífico', in *Fundamentos de la Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso*, p. 30.
[Fig.2] Mapping the main air and nautical routes of the Pacific coast. From 'Para una Situación de América Latina en el Pacífico', in *Fundamentos de la Escuela de Arquitectura, Universidad Católica de Valparaíso*, p. 20.

Travesías **to unveil the Latin-American territories, three phases of this critical practice.**

The narrative behind the *Travesías* is mainly described in the book Amereida I, II, III (Various Authors, 1967, 1986, 1991) and the essays The Thesis of the 'Interior Sea' and The Thesis of the Own North (Cruz *et al.*, 1971) written by the School, works that "that permit re-view our American reality starting from an individual point of view, and look into the world from there, theses which open and which are fertile to think an urbanism which is not only the simple optimal election of possibilities according to criteria based on the mere productivity of a region, a country and a continent." (Cruz *et al.*, 1971, p. 4). However, to understand this voyages as a critical practice and its relation to the Paris scene is necessary to introduce three phases in the constitution of the radical pedagogy (Colomina *et al.*, 2015) synthesized in the union of "poetry and crafts" (architecture, design and other arts), and "live experience" practice as methods to address creatively the architecture and urbanism.

First phase: The School re-foundation, the city as laboratory

In 1952, a group of young Chilean architects headed by Alberto Cruz and Godofredo Iommi, moved from the capital city, Santiago, to Viña del Mar and began their work in the Valparaíso School. The principles upon which they were led, radically reformed the established methods of teaching architecture to derive in the communion of crafts and performative poetry. Likewise, expanding this boundless agenda into the school´s

curriculum led to students being directed to explore outside the classroom. The transposition made it possible for Cruz to combine a former interest in plastic explorations with a preoccupation with the "lived" experience of the city (Cruz, 1959), that is, comprehending the city as a laboratory (Pendleton-Jullian, 1996) [Fig.3]. Thus, the architects, students and teachers, have developed unfolding a practice that aims to "read the place" from a particular given moment, this method has taken different names: phenomenology, postmodernism, deconstruction (Mihalache, 2006). They named it "architectural observation" with the city of Valparaíso as the place of study.

[Fig.3] The architectural observation in the hills of Valparaíso, 1956. From The Historical Archives ©J.V.A. of The Valparaíso School.

Second phase: The Manifesto of 1967, The First Travesía and The Ciudad Abierta of Amereida

In 1965, Cruz and Iommi organized and carried out a journey from Punta Arenas, Chile – the extreme south of the continent – to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, declared the *"capital poética"* of America. The *Travesía* inspired the participants to collectively write Amereida I: an epic poem that blends the Aeneid, conquest-era chronicles, and abstract drawings of the South American continent and its 'Interior Sea'. This voyage of 42 days was the first opportunity to test their radical philosophy: originating poetry as the source of the creative process. During the time they met with locals, installed small-scale *Obras* (Works), and elaborated performances, the poetic word was always present [Fig.4,5].

[Fig.4] Performance in the Pampa of Argentina, First Travesía 1965. From The Historical Archives ©J.V.A. of The Valparaíso School.
[Fig.5] Mapping of the route, First Travesía of Amereida 1965. From Book Amereida, p.186.

Simultaneously to the publication of the first printed edition of Amereida in 1967, the Universitarian Revolution was initiated in Valparaíso, in which the Valparaíso School took the leading role, claiming that "the Latin American universities were not capable of distinguishing or answering to the legitimate and urgent necessities of our countries, and even less, were not able to open a field situated beyond all investigations, we refer to the free and uninterested contemplation of that which may constitute our own reality, finally becoming imperative here and now, without possible dilatations, the radical undelayable change of the

principles that our universities maintain" (Iommi, 1971b). According to this text, it is possible to state that the Manifesto was nourished by the revealing experience of the *Travesía* of Amereida.

These two phases of the Valparaíso School were related to the radical scenario of Paris (Pendleton-Jullian, 1996; Bravo, 2015), especially with the insights developed by the International Situationists described in essays as "The Unitary Urbanism" and "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography" (Debord, 1955, 1956) and practiced in the experiences of psychogeography around Europe, as well linked to the *radical critique* (Lefebvre, 2003 [1970]) developed by Lefebvre in the late sixties. Both scenes will locate the "living experience" -*praxis*- as the major way to reveal and transform the urban reality and beyond it -*poiesis*-, an ideal nourished first by the modern poetry of Paris and then by the sociopolitical revolution of May 68 (Merrifield, 2006). However, moving away from political ideals, the leaders of the architecture school will reject the political ambitions of the 1968 movements. In fact, professors from Valparaíso will express repeatedly, instead of aspiring to change the world, they will be guided by the desire for a "change of life" (González, 2015).

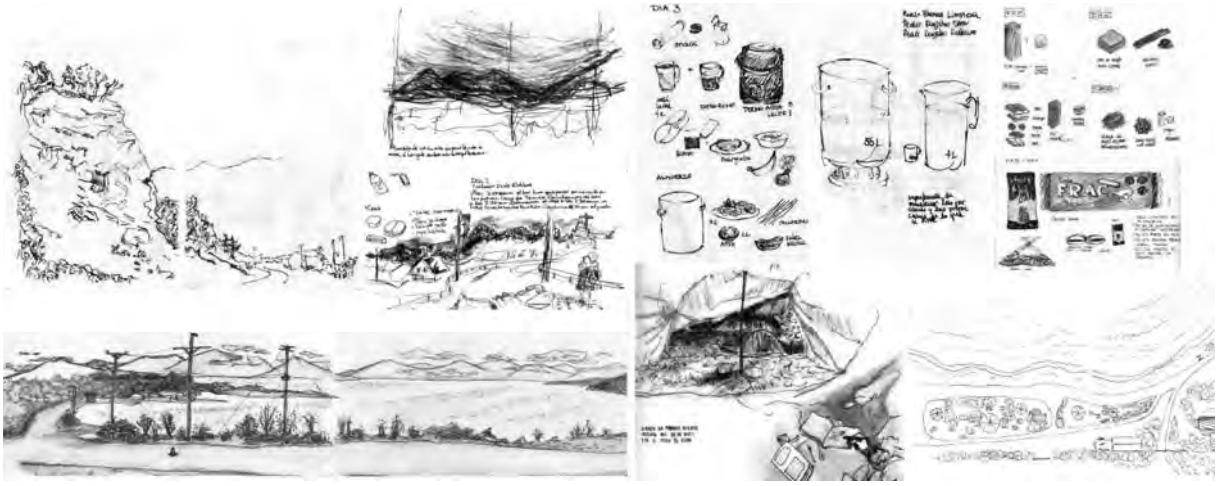
In 1970, the professors of the Valparaíso School founded the *Ciudad Abierta de Amereida* (Open City), a territory of 270 hectares located in Ritoque, on the coastline close to the cities of Viña del Mar and Valparaíso, which constitutes a real manifestation for a "change of life". It is a territory founded under the poetic of the American 'Interior Sea' (Iommi, 1971a) expressed since then, as a territory slightly intervened in front of the Pacific Ocean. This place is conceived, still today, as a space of collective life and work which would bring together the disciplines cultivated by the School, and where the collective corpus (conformed by professor, students and guests) addresses architectural knowledge through the *praxis* of the *Obras*.

Third phase: The Travesías as a pedagogical practice

Since 1984 the *Travesías* has been part of the Curriculum of the Valparaíso School, using the voyage as a research process which is part of every studio. In contrast to the typical, one-off trip abroad undertaken by most of schools, the Valparaíso group has made their trips an annual journey into their backyard: the wildernesses of South America. The aim is a building whose poetics emerges from an engagement with the landscape of America as ground and place of residence, not a resource to be exploited through its colonization (Steane, Luza and Jolly, 2016), but they remain as an open way to unveil the 'Interior Sea' of Latin America, where each experience constitute a different approach to the territory. Today, these experiences surpass 250 voyages performed.

The *Travesías* is a live project that requires students to be closely involved between themselves and with the inhabitants of the places for a period of two to three weeks in actual building processes. The projects have two basic dimensions: Firstly "Work and Place" [Fig.6,7], the development of a logistics of life and work that enables projects to be constructed even in the most remote locations, and secondly "Voyage and Draws" [Fig.8], a teaching approach that makes mapping and annotated on-site sketches the point of departure for design in which issues of inhabitation are the major focus, where the crossing of the continent reveal some axels of the final place of project. This study is thus an opportunity to examine an apparent paradox: that the creativity of wandering must be allied to a strictly orchestrated plan of campaign (Steane, Luza and Jolly, 2016).

[Fig.6] *Travesía Curimahuida* 1986, a refuge for shepherds in the Andes Mountain, Chile. From The Historical Archives ©J.V.A. of The Valparaíso School.
[Fig.7] *Travesía Paildad* 2014, new dock and decks in the fjord Paildad, Chile. Elaborated by the author.



[Fig.8] *Travesía Vodudahue* 2015, exhibition of sketchbooks about territory and everyday life during the voyage, Patagonia, Chile. Elaborated by the author.

The *Travesía* as a critical practice of the planetary urbanization

The path built by the Valparaíso School through the *Travesías* acquire the connotation of critical-practice because they remain in the effort of creating, year by year, a new pedagogic approach to address questions about architecture and urbanism beyond the cities. Although these practice is not explicit to the discourse surrounding the planetary urbanization, they have been related to it, precisely, through questions about the leftover places and territories produced by the contemporary urbanization. In this way, there are motives to perform the *Travesía,* for example: the *Travesía Curimahuida* in 1986, related to the territories of indigenous occupation and mining exploitation of The Andes Mountains*;* or the *Travesía of Paildad* in 2014, related to the rural life within the Patagonian fjords and the impact of transnational aquifer exploitation.

From this first theoretical approach, this investigation suggest that the critical narrative related to the planetary urbanization seems to be constituted by three main elements: theory, description and critical practice. Naturally, they are incomplete if the phenomenon is observed from a unique perspective, however, the three elements seem to be determined in re-observe the territories through new focus length and methods, placing them in an open field of discussion for multidisciplinary feedback. In this sense, The *Travesías* and its methods could be a contribution to link, for example, the macro scale mapping with human scale projects, assisting the abstract mapping, today criticized in project of landscape-architects (Thompson). On the other hand, considering the design of *wastelands,* this practice could contribute to the research of new methods for exploring the landscape through unfamiliar ways, as a kind of radical, cultural and political *praxis* (Gandy, 2013).

Finally, the narrative of the *Travesías* and its potential scopes on planetary urbanization is unknown, probably because is limited by the lack of information presented in a unified theoretical corpus. Nevertheless, further research might investigate the dispersed material in different private archives and in the archive of the School, and the implementation of key interviews following methodological criteria. This would help to establish a better understanding of the methods of this group, contributing to the interdisciplinary discussion of architecture and territory.

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