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IT ONLY EXISTS BECAUSE IT BURNS.

Architecture and Liveability in Ageing Portugal

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Enoncé théorique MA SAR EPFL - 2018

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What I propose is thus very simple:
Nothing more than to think
what we are doing.

- Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 1958

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0. INTRODUCTION

A. Foreword

Before delving into the content of this *énoncé*, I would like to discuss the choice of the title and emphasise the importance of the two next subchapters, which should help you in your further reading. The main title of this *énoncé* stems directly from a Portuguese newspaper called *Público*. It refers to the forest fires of the Interior regions which happen because of the abandonment of the land. These fires end up being the only few moments when the country remembers its Interior. The title reflects also on a general level the status quo, where issues only appear in the public conscience after the occurrence of a tragedy. With the rise of the depopulation in the Interior, its last inhabitants are consequently ageing, asking the question of the equilibrium and sustainability of Portugal as a whole. However, does sustainability bring more quality of life in old age?

The Glossary points out several keywords that will be found in bold font throughout the text. It is not exhaustive as it only introduces the words that carry a lot of meaning. “Sustainability versus Liveability?” constitutes the starting point of this work. It elaborates on the difference between the two, through the lens of the ageing of the population. This *énoncé* is a reflection on the recent changes of the later life phase, from a global perspective to the specific case of Portugal. It is hoped that this will give insight into different ways of living and thinking an architecture of liveability.

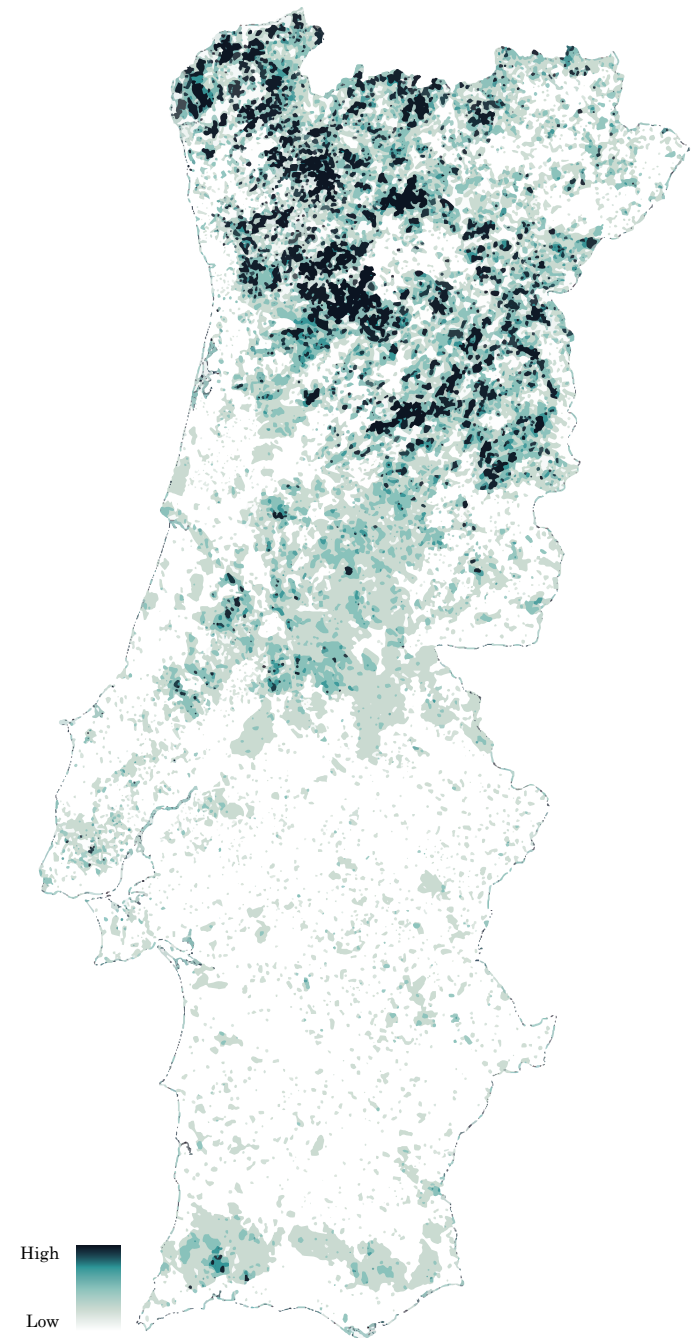


Fig. 0. Fire recurrence rate, from 1990 to 2016

B. Glossary

Activity¹

noun

1. The condition in which things are happening or being done.
 - 1.1. Busy or vigorous action or movement.
2. (usually **activities**) A thing that a person or group does or has done.
 - 2.1. A recreational pursuit or pastime.
- X. (a definition of Hannah Arendt's *vita activa*) The promotion of political action over labour and work, the three fundamental human activities.

Age

noun

1. The length of time that a person has lived or a thing has existed.
 - 1.1. A particular stage in someone's life.
 - 1.2. The state of being old.

Care

noun

1. The provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something.
2. Serious attention or consideration applied to doing something correctly or to avoid damage or risk.
 - 2.1. An object of concern or attention.
 - 2.2. A feeling of or occasion for anxiety.

verb

[no object]

1. (often with negative) Feel concern or interest; attach importance to something.
 - 1.1 Feel affection or liking.
 - 1.2 (care for/to do something) Like or be willing to do or have something.
2. (Care for) Look after and provide for the needs of.

Competence

Noun

1. The ability to do something successfully or efficiently.

Cure

verb

[with object]

1. Relieve (a person or animal) of the symptoms of a disease or condition.
 - 1.1. Eliminate (a disease or condition) with medical treatment.
 - 1.2. Solve (a problem)

Depoliticisation

noun

[with object]

The act of removing from political activity or influence.

Deruralisation²

Noun

(In demography) Desertification of rural areas, gradual disappearance of farmers in a region

Disengagement

Noun

1. The action or process of withdrawing from involvement in an activity, situation, or group.
2. Emotional detachment; objectivity.

Dignity

Noun

1. The state or quality of being worthy of honour or respect.

Experimentation

Noun

1. The process of performing a scientific procedure, especially in a laboratory, to determine something.
 - 1.1. The action or process of trying out new ideas, methods, or activities.

Familiarity

Noun

1. Close acquaintance with or knowledge of something.
 - 1.1. The quality of being well known from long or close association.
2. Relaxed friendliness or intimacy between people.

Feminise

verb

[with object]

1. Make (something) more characteristic of or associated with women.

Institutionalised

Adjective

1. Established in practice or custom.
2. Established as part of an official organization.
3. (of a person) apathetic and dependent after a long period in an institution.

Littoralisation³

Noun

The tendency for economic development, urbanisation etc. to cluster along a coastline

1. Each definition of these words comes from this present reference except for the ones specifically referring to another dictionary: OED Online. June 2017. Oxford University Press.

2. 'Définition de Déruralisation', *Encyclopædia Universalis*, 2017

3. 'Littoralization', *Wikitionary*, 2017

Liveability

adjective

1. Worth living.
- 1.1. (also liveable in), (of an environment or climate) fit to live in.
- X. (Personal definition) The overall elements contributing to the well-being, dignity and autonomy of a person; quality of life over minimal bearable life.

Patrimonialisation⁴

noun

Socio-cultural, legal or political process whereby a space, property, species or practice is transformed into an object of natural, cultural or religious heritage worthy of conservation and restoration.

Sustainability

Noun

1. The ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level.
- 1.1 Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.

Urbanisation⁵

Noun

The process by which more and more people leave the countryside to live in cities.

Vernacular⁶

Noun

1. Using a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured, or foreign language.
2. Applied to a plant or animal in the common native speech as distinguished from the Latin nomenclature of scientific classification.
3. of, relating to, or characteristic of a period, place, or group; *especially*: of, relating to, or being the common building style of a period or place.

Welfare

Noun

1. The health, happiness, and fortunes of a person or group.
2. Statutory procedure or social effort designed to promote the basic physical and material well-being of people in need.

4. 'Patrimonialisation', *Wikipédia*, 21 February 2017.

5. 'Urbanization Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary', 2017.

6. 'Definition of Vernacular', *Merriam-Webster*, 2017.

C. Sustainability versus Liveability?

Once we have understood what the state of the aged really is, we cannot satisfy ourselves with calling for a more generous “old-age policy”, higher pensions, decent housing and organized leisure. It is the whole system that is at issue and our claim cannot be otherwise than radical — change life itself.

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age*, 1970

The goal of this work is to study and rethink architectural forms of life in the context of the current demographic changes related to the ageing of the population, considered to be “one of the most significant social transformations of the twenty-first century”⁷ in Europe.⁸ Ageing is a social phenomenon that is now influencing every space of society, be it private or public. Understanding its facts and myths can help us speculate on the architectural and environmental implications that this phenomenon has on the territory, such as land abandonment, urban isolation, and architectural typologies of community.

Different aspects of this work have made me realise how the idea of “sustainability”, in many ways, is contrary to a sense of “quality of life” in old age. Sustainability tends to cast ageing negatively, as a sort of deviation, because of the way it regards the process of bodily degradation (sustainability

7. ‘World Population Ageing 2015’, 2015, 1.

8. Although virtually every country in the world is experiencing growth in older persons in its population and this same growth is slowing in Europe, it is nevertheless in the Western developed countries that problems are arising. The generalisation of these problems to the whole globe should be carefully avoided.

strives for longevity, the postponement of this process). Because of this, the concept of retirement, which had previously meant disengagement from active life, is now being reconceptualised with the goal of keeping aged bodies busy all the time, a mode of sustainability known as “active ageing”.

In Portugal the ageing regions of the Interior have fallen into oblivion, gradually abandoned through decades of migration and political neglect from the littoral economic centres. Their territories have become fictionalised, built from and by the exterior, following a model of economic sustainability that is based almost exclusively on patrimonialisation and tourism. As will become apparent in the course of this work, the phenomenon of ageing is facing a “crisis of **precedent**”⁹, while the Portuguese region of Beira Interior is experiencing a “crisis of **meaning**”¹⁰. Both crises — the ageing population as a whole and the ageing land of Beira Interior — share common aspects and tendencies. They are both targets of a certain oversimplification and homogenisation, due to our tendency to frame complicated problems with dichotomies that do little more than create a distance from reality. Both phenomena suffer the downsides of an approach that focuses more on the need to *cure* (sustainability) than on the need to *care* (liveability). Because of their material decay, the human body and the Interior land are pathologised and denied their own agency. This work asks, therefore, how to focus on human quality of life, from a point of view that goes beyond the traditional dualisms of young-old, natural-artificial, virtual-real, male-female, littoral-interior? How to reframe the discourse regarding the lives and environments of ageing people, still treated like minorities despite no longer fitting the numerical characteristics of one? How to desegregate our notions of ageing, a process that happens indiscriminately to every human being?

The hypothesis of this *énoncé* is to question the possibility of an architecture of **liveability**, with a vision of **activity** that is less focused on productivity, less focused on a reductionist notion of efficiency and sustainability, more interested in the possibility and the right to a life with

9. Deane Simpson, *Young-Old: Urban Utopias of an Aging Society* (Zürich: Lars Müller, 2015), 14.

10. Álvaro Domingues, *Vida No Campo*, 1a. ed, Equações de Arquitectura 45 (Porto: Dafne Editora, 2011)

dignity. Liveability advocates for quality of life over quantitative methods linked to sustainability. *Live life rather than sustain life.* This *énoncé* will look into these issues with the goal of producing a method for an architecture of liveability that will feed the project design of the next semester. Its ethical stance is to seek a field of experimentation in typologies and architectural models of old life, rather than pursuing the more common goal of “extinction”¹¹ of ageing — by turning it into longevity, or, in parallel, the “extinction” of Beira Interior by condemning it to neglect and abandonment. In order to **contextualise** the more abstract aspects of this subject, the *énoncé théorique* will focus on the territory of Portugal, with an emphasis on the region of Beira Interior and, more specifically, the village of Monsanto. The method for an architecture of liveability will be delineated in the final chapter of this work, structured in three subchapters, each of them briefly mentioning the village of Monsanto. The first, “Slow Systems: Space, Time, Scale” will focus on territorial and urban planning, through a criticism of a general logic of **acceleration**. The second, “Environmental Familiarity” will talk about the evolution of the dwelling unit in light of ageing and its relation to **dependency**. “Forms of Life: Labour, Work, Action” will deal with the rethinking of dwelling typologies and the relation they establish between domesticity and **productivity** seen through the lens of the concept of the *vita activa* by Hannah Arendt.

11. Manuel Bivar, “Laboratório de Extinção”, Piseagrama, 2015

1.

HISTORY OF RETIREMENT



Hans Baldung, *The Ages and Death*,
circa 1540

1.1. What is Old?

Also I myself will die — like I was once born, developed into adulthood and got old. But the question is, what this means.

- Edmond Husserl, quoted by Sara Heinämaa, *Transformations of Old Age: Selfhood, Normativity, and Time*, 2014, 167.

What do you do in life? Confidently one could answer “I age”. Being “old” is a significant part of life, it is the end of a cycle. Life has been **culturally** segmented through arbitrary processes of stages of ages such as life periods (childhood, adolescence, etc.) or legal systems (majority age, driving age, retirement age, coming of age, etc). “Ageing” is the **process** of becoming older but it is hard to understand and generalise it, as nobody ages like anybody else. Old age can refer to the use of euphemisms such as: *Old People* (worldwide usage); *Seniors* (American usage); *Senior Citizens* (British and American usage); *Older Adults* (in the social sciences); *The Elderly and Elders* (in many cultures, including the cultures of aboriginal people).¹²

“Old” thus doesn’t define just a **biological** stage of life but is deeply linked to cultural and historical factors. Surveys tend to show that people “feel” younger as they get older. How old is older then? It cannot be exactly universally determined by what has just been explained above, but here is a reference of what is understood numerically by “old” for two major global institutions: The Policy Framework of the World Health Organization defines

12. American Psychological Association, ed., *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010).

old at 60 years old. For the OECD, the threshold is 65. According to the latter, ageing is a great matter of interest:

Elderly people tend to be **concentrated** in few areas within each country, which means that a small number of regions will have to face a number of specific social and economic challenges due to population ageing. These demographic trends have a number of implications for government and private spending on pensions, health care, and education and, more generally, for economic growth and welfare.¹³



Emanuel Grosser , *Otto Von Bismarck On His Deathbed*, 1898

13. OECD (2018), Elderly population (indicator). doi: 10.1787/8d805ea1-en

1.2. Demographics

Social scientists have long known that world population aging would culminate in the twenty-first century, but few anticipated until relatively recently that some nations with the oldest populations could face the prospect of a 'demographic winter'. This would entail severe population decline and excessive aging, rather than a more hospitable 'demographic autumn' of population stability where the numbers of children and the elderly become nearly equal and constant.

- Donald T. Rowland, *Population Aging: The Transformation of Societies*, 2012, 3.

Population ageing is first of all a success story. It is a result of increased **longevity**, reduced child mortality and a reduced birth rate. Three criteria influence demography: fertility, mortality and migration. Migration has less of an impact as, for most countries, it only has small effects on the pace of population ageing and can at best only slow its growth, because ageing is the result of a very long historical process.¹⁴

The first stage of the demographic transition towards population ageing has dominated most of human history. It is historically set to pre-industrial times, a period of pestilence and famine with a high-mortality rate, high child and maternal mortality, and poor medical knowledge. However, a high birth rate is supported through religious and social expectations of large families, along with an economic demand for children to assist in farm work and the general absence of family planning.

14. 'World Population Ageing 2015', 41.

The second stage corresponds to the onset of industrialisation in Western countries, around the 19th century, a period that saw a decrease in mortality, diseases and birth rates through improved medical care, water and food supply. This stage shows a big turn in terms of urban public health and sanitation development. It is also the start of the shaping into a demographic young age structure (see Fig. I.). With industrialisation and **urbanisation**, old age loses its social position as a "role model" in the life course. Youth becomes the principle way of life for all ages, standing for growth and **progress**, for innovation, for dynamism and strength, for the future and new perspectives.

The third stage corresponds to the post-war period (from the late 1940's and onwards). It sees a decrease of birth rates due to the increasing cost of raising children with compulsory education and their reduced capacity as workers, along with the entrance of women into workforce and advances in contraception. The population continues to grow and the age structure evens out. Most deaths are caused by "old age" diseases.

The fourth stage, our contemporary fully industrialised society, sees low birth and mortality rates and a low-growth population. The abrupt changes that took place between the 1980's and 1990's in human life expectancy show a **secular shift in ageing**, an irreversible and long-term transformation caused by the improvements mentioned above. Literally, a doubling of life expectancy in approximately 100 years has happened.¹⁵ The growth rate of the post-war baby boom population aged over 60 has peaked in 2010-2015.¹⁶

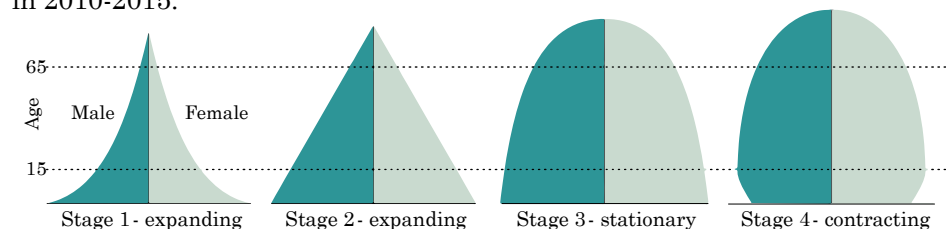


Fig. I. Scheme for the four stages of the demographic evolution

15. Simpson, *Young-Old*, 22.

16. 'World Population Ageing 2015', 2015, 4.

1.3. Welfare and Pensions

For the first time, the social contract offered a continuous and collective safeguard for the existence in old age for all. The pension-secured retirement was experienced ambivalently: as a promise to participate in prosperity - freedom from work, participation in consumption and leisure, but also as a break and loss of social status and social recognition. Aging changed, but the perceptions and pictures of the age were repeated.

- Elisabeth Kremer et al., *Geropolis*, Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau, 2005

The history of retirement is relatively recent and it is an important pillar of the concept of the welfare state. It was first implemented by the Islamic Caliphate during the 7th Century, then in close connection with the idea of **charity**. Since then, the first nation to introduce a state wide pension was the German Empire under Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, in 1889, aimed at people aged over 70 at first, later extended to 65-years-olds, which hence became the international standard. It was one of the early cornerstones of the German welfare state,¹⁷ and, as it spread to other states, social perceptions changed towards further **acceptability** and desirability of retirement, especially since life expectancy in the 18th century was between 26 and 40 years old and aged people were relying strictly on **family** for social support or charity structures.¹⁸

17. Ibid., 27.

18. Oded Galor and Omer Moav, 'The Neolithic Origins of Contemporary Variations in Life Expectancy', 2007.

Retirement grew increasingly popular with a new conception of old age being now tied to leisure and free time. After 1950, the emergence of a *disengagement theory* in reaction to an established *activity theory* paradigm contributed to define retirement as “a permission to **disengage**”¹⁹, which allowed old people not to feel shamed or dehumanised in reducing their activity and having diminishing faculties. This shift brought a decline in men of 65 and older in labour forces.²⁰ This trend was partially reversed in the 1990's in some Western countries such as the USA or Portugal²¹, as a means of improving the sustainability of the pensions system (see Fig. II. p.27). This was a first sign of the current trend towards discouraging early retirement within the tightening economic logic of austerity. Economic precariousness is increasingly pushing for leisure-based retirement to be seen as politically incorrect, shifting the general consensus towards a logic of “**productive ageing**”, widely encouraged by the UN and the WHO.²² It is now the person's responsibility to remain active and use one's experience in ways that remain ever profitable to society.

Two important theories developed in 1974 by Peter Laslett and in 1987 by Bernice Neugarten started to break down the homogeneous age group of the “old” into more nuanced interpretations. They shifted the traditional view of life into three phases towards four phases (see Fig. III. p.27), revealing the emergence of two historical revolutions — an extended **longevity** of populations (which will be described in the next chapter) and the development of retirement, with the generalisation of assisted care institutions in developed countries. Some have described this new fourth life-phase (the “Young-Olds”, emerging after 1950) as the society of the future, where people don't go to school or work but base their life on permanent **leisure**²³. Professor at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, the architect Deane Simpson elaborates on the productive

19. Simpson, *Young-Old*, 30.

20. Ibid, 30, quoting Dora L. Costa, *The Evolution of Retirement: An American Economic History, 1880-1990* (University of Chicago Press, 2000), 133.

21. Ibid, 31

22. Ibid, 32.

23. Ibid., 12.

ageing idea, combined with the promotion of the leisure lifestyle for the old person, which becomes an attractive market consumer:

For Katz and Marshall, an extensive literature and set of segmentation companies and instruments ‘transfigures the life-course into knowable, codable, and legible market trends, segments, and consumer profiles. As a result, aging as a diverse chronological process and age-related problems based on class, race, gender, and locality are obscured or disappear into coterminous market niches based on the vagaries of ‘mature’ consumer behaviour’. . . [As quoted by Höpflinger,] social activities that were previously considered the preserve of young adults – sports, education, sexuality, etc. – are increasingly defined as central prerequisites of growing old successfully.²⁴

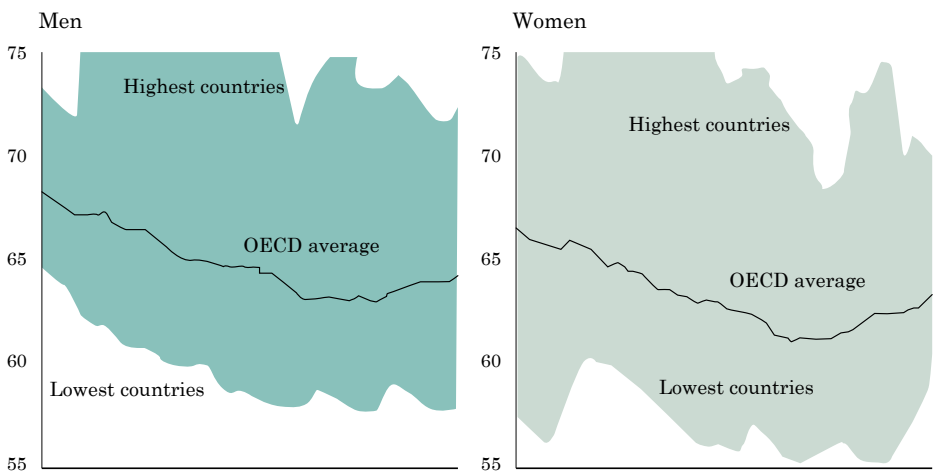


Fig. II. Labour market exit age in OECD countries, 1970-2012

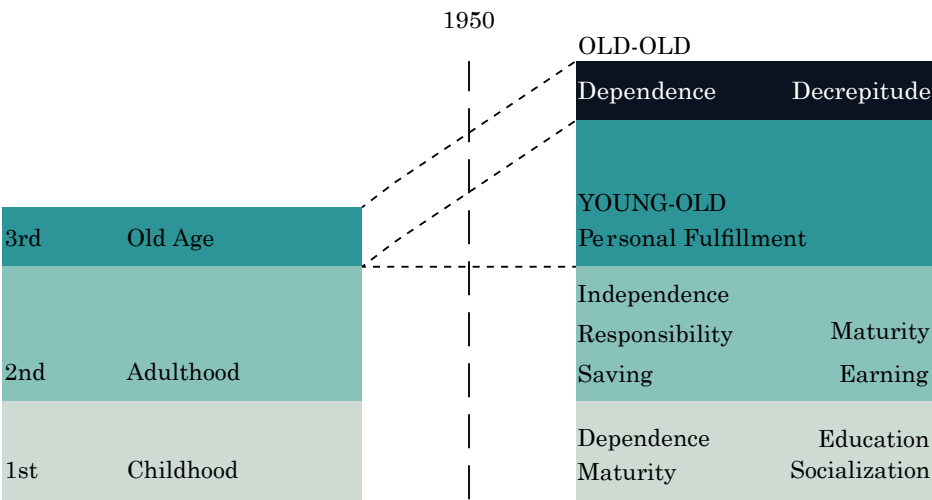


Fig. III. From a three-phase to a four-phase life course

24. Ibid., 40-41.

2.

TODAY'S ANXIETIES



Álvaro Domnigues, *O Envelhecimento*, in
Vida no Campo, 2011

2.1. Sustainability?

And yet as headline statements ‘key facts’ can be a highly effective medium. They address what would otherwise be left unspoken . . . They can be a way into addressing urban myths (around safety and security – and perceptions of relative risk within a risk-averse culture). Or they might serve, simply, as a pretext for further enquiry: working out exactly what might be behind a general mood of alienation and disconnect from your surroundings.

- Sophie Handler, *An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook* 2014, 46–47

Although ageing is a “success story” in demographics, future outcomes have been put under a rather pessimistic light due to anxieties related to the sustainability of social welfare systems. It is not unusual to hear in our **language**, today, terms such as “grey wave”, “senior epidemic” or “demographic time bomb”. A **crisis of precedent** is developing because of several “first” occurrences that cast this evolution as a danger, and cause anxiety. New forms of collectivity, subjectivity, architecture and urbanism are expected, as well as new family structures and roles, labour and migration patterns.²⁵ For the first time in human history, by 2050 there will be more people aged over 60 than children aged below 14.²⁶ Today, global population aged 60 or over is growing faster than all younger groups. It corresponds to 962 million people, 13% of the world population (2% of which are aged over 80), 25% of the European population. By 2050 the world-wide number of older people is expected to double and to represent one person out of five (one

²⁵ Simpson, *Young-Old*.

²⁶ *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2007), 3.

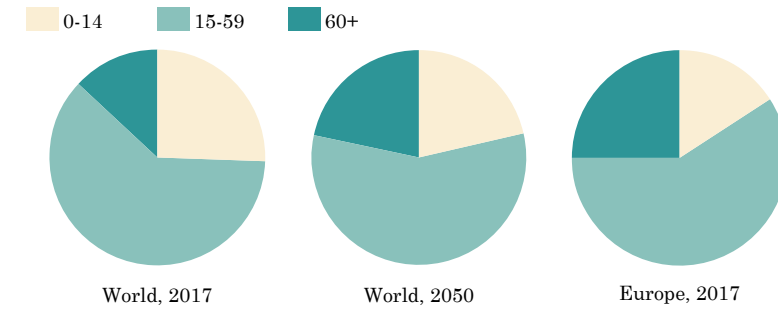


Fig. IV. Population by age group

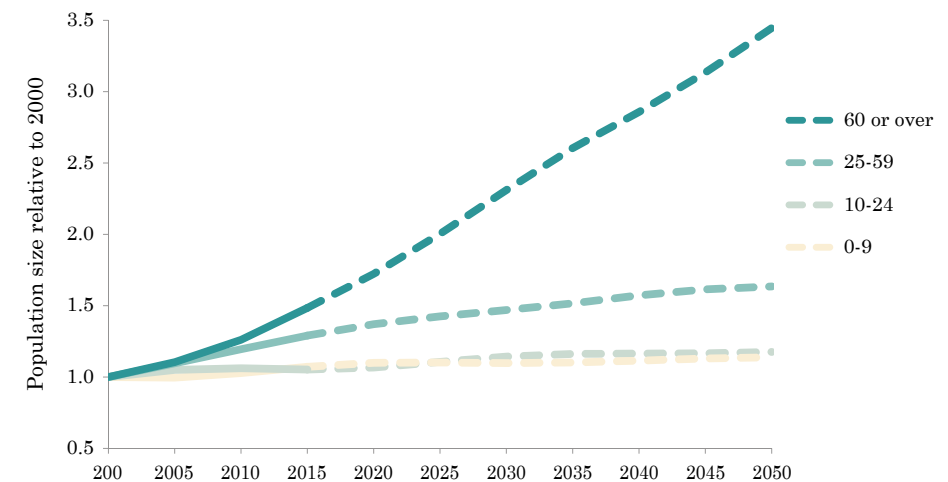


Fig. V. Increase in world population relative to 2000, by age group

out of three in developed regions). In 2015, about 58% of the people aged 60 years and over resided in urban areas. The **dependency ratio**, which had fallen to a historical minimum in 2015 due to the decrease in global child birth, is now continuously increasing with the population ageing. This ratio can be defined as follows:

. . . the number of children and young people under age 20 plus the number of persons aged 65 or over, to the number of persons aged 20 to 64 . . . It is based on the notion of childhood and old age as periods of **dependency** during which persons tend to rely upon the working-age population for financial support, which may be provided directly through family transfers, or indirectly through public transfer programmes.²⁷

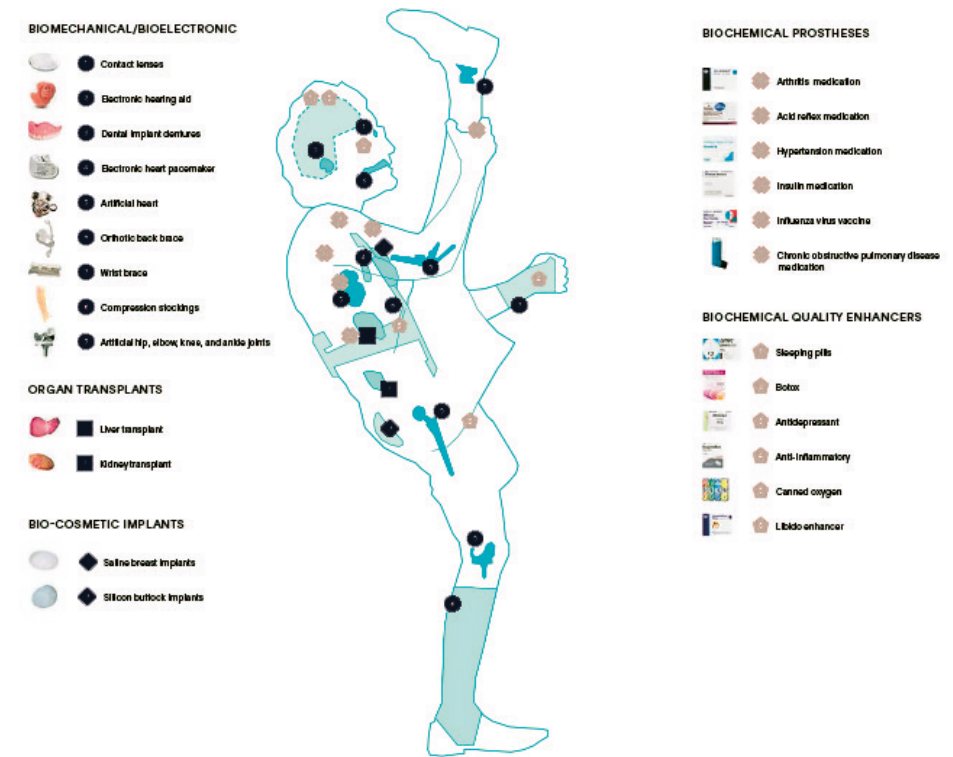
Another helpful measurement tool is the economic **support ratio**. It “takes into account the age patterns of production and consumption to describe the number of effective workers in a population relative to the number of effective consumers.”²⁸ This definition renders explicit the correlation between the level of **consumption** and populations’ **need**. This support ratio affects directly public systems, pensions but also health care and social protections, which are showing the welfare model progressively weakening. Retirement is a portion of the national wealth, which shows increasing economic **inequalities**. People are expected to supplement public pensions with private ones or other income.²⁹ Retirement, which was once considered a **labour** right is gradually becoming a privilege. This shows how the elderlies of today are not the same as the elderly of bygone times, and the concept of ageing is one that has shifted throughout history and will continue to do so in the future.

The human body has achieved several transformations that have extended its **longevity**. Technologies have tried to fight the “senescence” process or the genetically determined degradation of cells, as well as the **fear** that lies behind it. Again, Deane Simpson provides us with a good description

27. ‘World Population Ageing 2015’, 34.

28. Ibid., 36.

29. Simpson, *Young-Old*.



Dean Simpson, *Biotechnical Maintenance of the Young-Old*, in *Young-Old: Urban Utopias of an Aging Society*, 2015

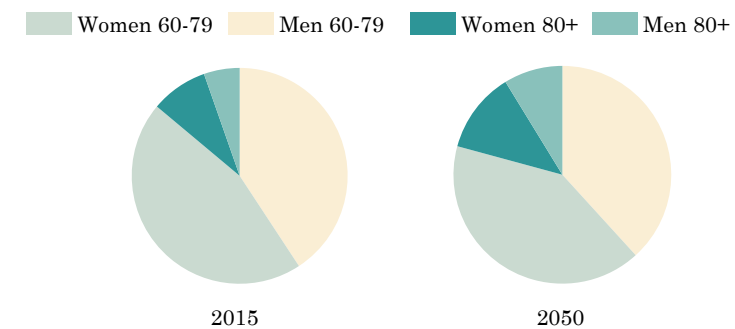


Fig. VI. Global older population by age group and sex

of the changes in our relationship with longevity and our **bodies**:

In the traditional conception of the cyborg, the body is augmented through protective layers and systems located mostly outside of the body. The contemporary model of the older individual is constructed by interventions largely within and upon the body exterior surface, extending the temporal limits of human longevity. The former is young and male, the latter old and statistically female.³⁰

The phenomenon of **feminisation** in the ageing process is also new. Because of longer life expectancy and the tendency of men to marry younger women, female widows dramatically outnumber male widowers and tend to represent ultimately the majority of older people living alone.³¹ All of these physical transformations also change social values, which means that ageing is not only a physical change but a social one:

The body is an essential element in the social definition of age, with the physical signs of ageing having become negatively important in the process of industrialisation. It turns out that a society that favours youth, an economic system geared towards smooth functioning, processes of increasing rationalisation, economisation, technology and acceleration can only make embodied age appear as a failure.³²

In *Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture*, the authors take the example of the MIT based AgeLab working on a dispositive that simulates the motor, visual and muscular skills of a 70 years old person in order to better understand the challenges of the body affected by ageing, such as hearing or visual impairment and reduced mobility. The book warns against the tendency there is to focus too much on reducing “efforts and **frictions** between our body and the environment” because of technology. They criticize a certain “medicalisation” of architecture and urbanism, turning our **context** – dwelling – and urban artefacts – into assisting objects. This is symptomatic of a society obsessed with optimising body **performances**, curing infertility,

30. Ibid., 39.

31. World Health Organization, ‘Active Ageing: A Policy Framework’ 5, no. 1 (2002): 1–37.

32. Hannelore Schaffer: *Zeitwende Im Alter*, Frankfurt a. M. 1993, in Elisabeth Kremer et al., ‘Geropolis’, *Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau*, 2005, 8.

delaying ageing and ultimately cancelling death.³³ The gerontology field has called this phenomenon the “compression of morbidity”.³⁴



MIT AgeLab, *AGNES (Age Gain Now Empathy System) suit*, 2005

33. Mirko Zardini et al., *Imperfect Health: The Medicalization of Architecture* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture : Lars Müller Publishers, 2012), 33.

34. Annette Becker et al., eds., *Netzwerk Wohnen: Architektur für Generationen = Network living: architecture for all generations* (Munich ; London ; New York: Prestel, 2013), 16. For more anxieties about longevity and the disappearance of death, please refer to *San Rocco* magazine next issue and their acid call for paper. See ‘San Rocco Magazine | MUERTE | Call For Paper’, 2017, <http://www.sanrocco.info/callforpaper/muerte>.

2.2. Ageism and Stereotypes

Old age exposes the failure of our entire civilization. It is the whole man that must be re-made, it is the whole relationship between man and man that must be recast if we wish the old person's state to be acceptable.

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age*, 1970

Ageism is a word that summarises the panoply of condescending stereotypes that our (Western) society holds about old people, such as a generally perceived uselessness, lack of intelligence, and a sense of burdening. In order to avoid the pitfalls of ageism, architecture needs to let go of the **traditional** view that associates old age to retirement, **dependence** and illness, the mode under which most institutions tend to operate. It must also abandon the perspective according to which old people are seen as a threat to the **sustainability** of health and social security systems. For example, studies have shown that “shifts in population age structure cause far less increases in health care expenditures as technology-related changes in health care, growth in personal incomes and cultural norms around end-of-life care.”³⁵ Old age in itself, is thus not associated with increased medical spending but is, nevertheless, related to disability and poor health, an association that comes from stereotypical processes.³⁶ Our society still glorifies youth and the active working population. The organization of our European societies was thought, and still functions for a population profile that is much younger

35. 'World Population Ageing 2015', 7.

36. World Health Organization, 'Active Ageing', 17.

than the one we know. Ignorance about old age is one motive for ageist behaviours. Architecture and urbanism should address this perceptive shift in order to avoid processes of **marginalisation** with other age groups. In this context, certain programmes, like maternities and schools, might call for a reconceptualisation. One example that tackles the stereotypes linked to old age is the *Band on the Wall* nightclub of Manchester, which organizes venues for people 50-year-old and older. Here “perceptions that certain kinds of spaces might be age-specific . . . [are] playfully subverting the generational dynamics of Manchester's urban night-time economy and the narrative self-image of the city as youthful by association.”³⁷

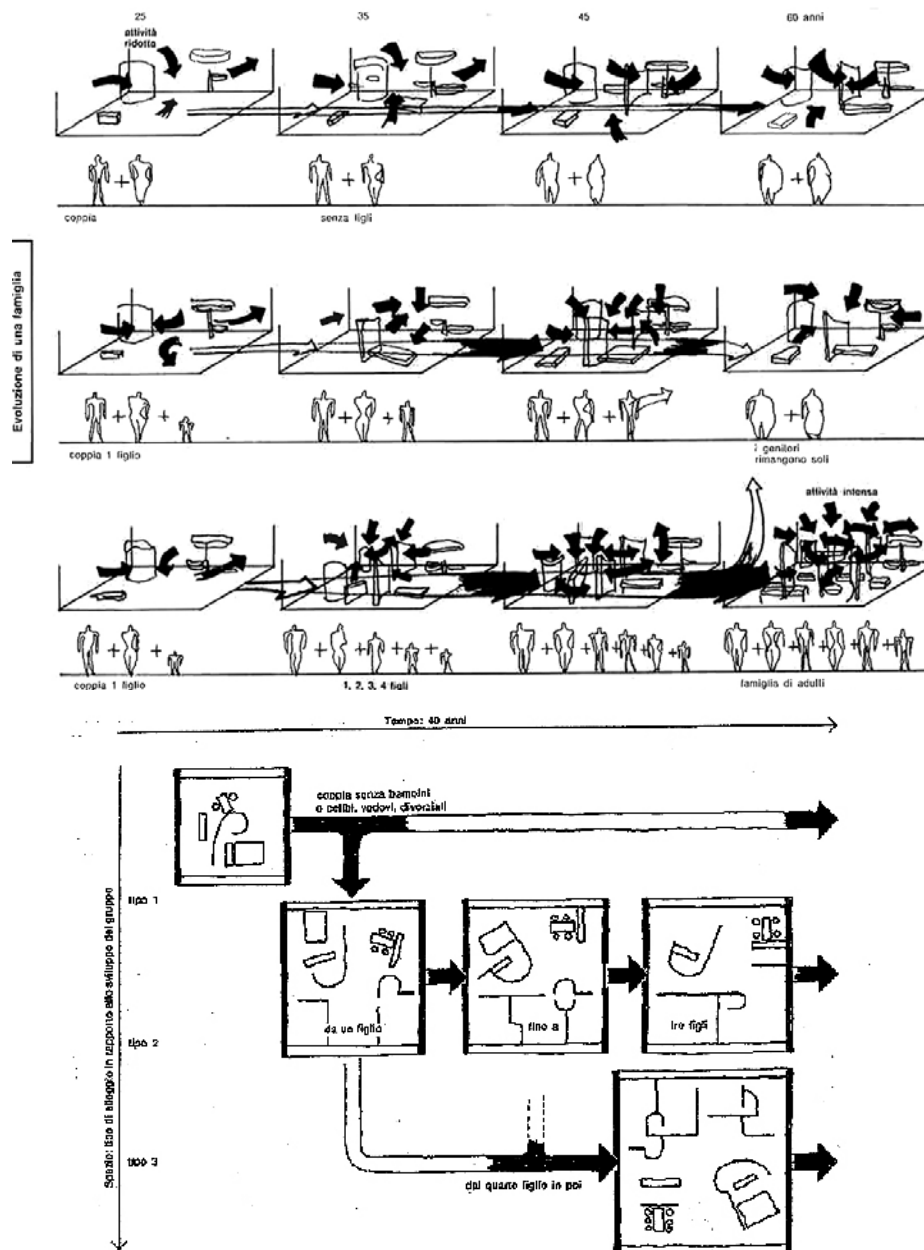
The current **social organisation** in three periods — formation / work / retirement — should evolve as a life model, since ageing is not a linear process but changes with **context**. Today, older people retire at different ages and lead lives outside preconceptions. In older age, there is often a set of exacerbated pre-existing **inequalities** based on race, ethnicity and gender, which are translated into exclusion and impoverishment.³⁸ For example women who had to give up employment to be a family caregiver, following traditional gender roles, will have greater poverty risks as they age. Taking a life-course perspective is important to recognize older people as something other than a homogeneous group that is segregated from other life phases. Daniel Chenut writes in *Ipotesi Per Un Habitat Contemporaneo* about a project where dwellings **adapt** to changes occurring in a whole family composition, rhythmmed by typical life moments like birth, marriage or death, thus exploring ways to live from birth to death in the same place.³⁹

In the language we use, stereotypes are naturalised into our concepts of life period status (“my old man”, “the old hag”) and living arrangements, which, in the case of the old, are almost exclusively focused on providing services or care in some version of the “sheltered, integrated or supervised housing, housing with services, serviced housing or senior

37. Sophie Handler, 'An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook' (University of Manchester Library, 2014), 67.

38. World Health Organization, 'Active Ageing', 40.

39. Zardini et al., *Imperfect Health*, 338.



Daniel Chenut, typology study, *Ipotesi per un habitat contemporaneo*, 1959
 Below: Vertical axis - type of dwelling depending on the development of the family
 Horizontal axis - timeline of 40 years

citizens' residences".⁴⁰ Words participate in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes. In literature and theatre, old people are commonly depicted as slow, repetitive, weak and obsessed with the past. Old age is **ambiguous**, it is "wisdom" but also "infirmity", it is "experience" but also "decrepitude".⁴¹ There are no old people in Thomas More's *Utopia* or in Aldous Huxley's dystopia *Brave New World*, a fact that has a significant moral, political and emotional value. This **absence** asks for a new **visibility** of the old age. Cultural representations play a role in understanding values surrounding the ageing process and the image of old age differs in every culture. It establishes:

... a reality that indicates the understanding of age that is characteristic of a particular society – at what age and in what kind of situation is a person "old", and what does "old" mean in individual cases ... Images of age have a lasting effect on the self-image, the use that is made of potential and competences, on the way individuals plan their lives, and on the efforts they make to shape their own ageing process.⁴²

Ageing is often looked upon with a sense of discrepancy or incongruity of the world, maybe because old age is traditionally put in a dualistic opposition to young age, or because of the feelings related to it, such as mourning, fear, quietness. Or maybe it is also due to the difficulty in operating outside of a mode of a "positive" stereotyping, blinded by empathy, where old age is too idealised. In some of the selected illustrations following, physical marks of old age are made very visible and there is a marked **heterogeneity** in social and spatial structures, in their subjects' environment. Sometimes, old age associated to other things, such as ruins, death or children. Most of them are portraits of "being old" rather than of specific "old people". Some might be more stereotypical than others such as Leonardo da Vinci's *Caricatures*, but all in all, old people are in fact just people who happen to be old.

40. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 57.

41. Maren Linett, "No Country for Old Men": Huxley's *Brave New World* and the Value of Old Age', *Journal of Medical Humanities*, 17 August 2017, 1–21.

42. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 56.



Ghirlandaio, *An Old Man and his Grandson*, ca. 1490



Leonardo da Vinci, *Five Caricature Heads*, ca. 1490



Giorgione, *Vecchia*, ca. 1506



Rembrandt, *Self-portrait*, 1660



Nicolaes Maes, *Old Woman Dozing*, 1656



Joseph Wright of Derby, *The Old Man and Death*, 1773



Francis Bacon, *Study For Selfportrait*, Triptych, 1985-86



Pedro Almodóvar, *Volver*, 2006



David Hockney, *Mum*, 1988-89



Le Corbusier, portrait of his mother.
Text : "at 91 years old, Marie Charlotte Amélie Jeanneret-Perret rules over the sun, moon, hills, lake and the home surrounded by the affectionate admiration of her children, 10th september 1951".



Bogdan Gîrbovan, *Chambre d'Amis*, 2010

2.3. Successful Ageing

Because Man is by hypothesis autonomous, he must become one.

- Paul Ricoeur, *Autonomie et Vulnérabilité*

There are three major psycho-social theories describing ways of ageing successfully: “activity theory”, “continuity theory” and “disengagement theory”. Activity theory defends that in the course of ageing, people stay active and maintain **social interactions** well into old age. It appeared for the first time in the 1960’s as a reaction to its predecessor, the theory of disengagement. Its basic ambition to promote activity as a response to ageist stereotype of decline and **dependence** had been present already since the Enlightenment, inside treatises on **longevity**.⁴³ Basically, activity theory associates life satisfaction with being **active**. It has been criticised for privileging individualistic approaches over more systemic ones, thus overlooking recurrent problems of inequality in health and wealth in the elderly, which are better understood in their complex societal context. For that, it is often compared to functionalism, in the way that it sees society evolving as an organism towards stability:

The equilibrium that an individual develops in middle age should be maintained in later years. The theory predicts that older adults that face role loss will substitute former roles with other alternatives.⁴⁴

43. Stephen Katz, ‘Busy Bodies: Activity, Aging, and the Management of Everyday Life’, *Journal of Aging Studies*, 14/2 (2000), 1.

44. Richard Schulz, ed., *Encyclopedia of Aging: A Comprehensive Resource in Gerontology and Geriatrics* (New York, NY: Springer, 2006).

Continuity theory is an extension of the activity theory, stating that older adults will strive to maintain the **activities**, behaviours, beliefs, traditions and relationships they maintained during their whole life course. Unlike the latter, it doesn’t focus exclusively on a specific phase of life,⁴⁵ but rather looks at ageing from a global perspective. Both theories can be seen as problematic, as they tend to show a denial of old age as a natural life phase, focusing instead on its protraction. Contrarily, the disengagement theory admits that ageing people will naturally withdraw from social interactions and that it is acceptable for them to do so. It relates, among other things, to an acceptance of death as everyone’s fate, or to the abandonment of norms as they appear between people having social interactions.⁴⁶ Impeding a total separation from social interactions and activities is of course an ineluctable goal to uphold. But what is intended by disengagement is the potential for **freedom** after leaving the workforce, and the possibility to build **strategies** that can respond ahead of the “risk of disengagement” — like the death of a spouse. In the residential building De Drie Hoven by architect Herman Hertzberger, in Amsterdam, a mix of different health conditions is designed to coalesce along squares for public events. The loggias, terraces, balconies and even doors, are thought of as interstitial spaces, thresholds between public and private, that favour **interactions** between diverse users.⁴⁷ The French notion of disengagement theory, and its evolution from the 1980’s onwards, *la déprise*, achieves an interesting compromise between activity and disengagement:

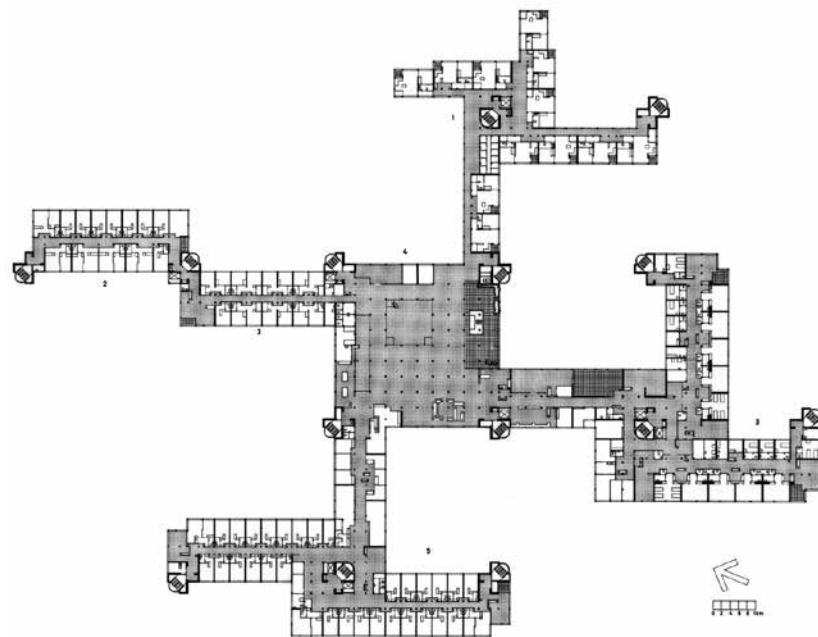
The notion of a *déprise* is both in continuity and rupture with the theory of disengagement: [it holds the idea of a possible distance from the world in the course of ageing but considers that this is only a “release” which is] not total, neither linear, nor homogeneous, and commits to a reorganization, a redevelopment of activities and lifestyles.⁴⁸

45. Robert C. Atchley, ‘A Continuity Theory of Normal Aging’, *The Gerontologist* 29, no. 2 (1 April 1989): 183–90.

46. W. Andrew Achenbaum, *Crossing Frontiers: Gerontology Emerges as a Science* (Cambridge ; New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

47. Zardini et al., *Imperfect Health*, 330.

48. Vincent Caradec, *Vieillir après la retraite: approche sociologique du vieillissement* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2004) and Monique Membrado, Jean Mantovani, and Serge Clément, ‘Vivre la ville à la vieillesse : se ménager et se risquer’, *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* 73, no. 1 (1996): 90–98.



Herman Hertzberger, Residential building *De Drie Hoven*, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1964-1974

In 2002, the World Health Organization of the United Nations organised, in Madrid, the Second World Assembly on Ageing, which contributed to establishing global policy framework. Trying to project what could be a positive experience of ageing, they developed a vision in the late 1990's called **active ageing**, defined as the "process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age."⁴⁹ The aim was to intersect socioeconomic, psychologic and environmental aspects of life. Promoting participation, **dignity, care**, self-fulfilment, self-efficacy, while fighting social isolation, loneliness, physical mental and economic **dependence**, stigmatization, abuse and violence. The valuable point of this theory was the idea the shift from a —needs-based— approach to a —rights-based— approach. The following four concepts are used as criteria "to measure the degree of difficulty an older person has in performing activities related to **daily** living":

Autonomy: the perceived ability to control, cope with and make personal decisions about how one lives on a day-to-day basis, according to one's own rules and preferences.

Independence: "the ability to perform functions related to daily living and in the community with no and/or little help from others.

Quality of life: an individual's perception of his or her position in life in the context of the culture and value system where they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns."

Healthy life expectancy: a measure of how long people can expect to live without disabilities.⁵⁰

As stated above, the active ageing discourse is, nevertheless, not unanimously welcome as an absolute solution because of the role it can play in the "**normalisation** of old age through activity regimes"⁵¹. It is criticised as being part of a particular kind of discourse on "the declining welfare state that has encouraged neoliberal policies and market-driven programmes to empower older individuals to be active [in order] to avoid the stigma and

49. World Health Organization, 'Active Ageing', 12-13.

50. Ibid., 13.

51. Katz, 'Busy Bodies', 136.

risks of **dependence**".⁵² It narrowly focuses on individual **adaptation** and satisfaction, while neglecting larger issues, such as social **inequality** in housing, healthcare and social security. It also places the blame for ageist discrimination on the inevitably aged person, rather than on prejudice itself and on those who perpetuate it. "The right" to be, for example autonomous, is not just "given" but supposes that people have the **capacity** of doing so, through their agency. As gerontologist Stephen Katz writes:

Elements of everyday existence are being converted into activities . . . the older social tension between productivity and unproductivity is being replaced with a spectrum of values that spans activity and inactivity."⁵³

Activities, such as work, recreation, socialising with friends, family association membership, church and so forth, serve as a measure of behaviour and determines one's autonomy, independence, quality of life and good health. More than being rights for the individual, they transform these active ageing tools into **competences**.

The experience of ageing has been evolving through generations. In **institutionalised living** arrangements, it is common to find stereotypical perceptions of old age and age segregation. Institutions have been differentiated in categories such as nursing homes, long-term care, residential living apartments, congregate housing, hospitals or hospices. These are predominantly directed towards the "Fourth Age" (see fig. III. in chapter 1.3) and correspond to a narrow category of special needs.⁵⁴ In early hospitals and nursing homes, in America, emphasis was placed on **curing** through the design of efficient and clean environments. Eventually, these places came to be associated with "waiting to die" rather than with "being cured", which cast these institutions under a bad light. For example, when Foucault described his idea of heterotopia, he saw the retirement home as

52. Ibid.

53. Ibid., 140,147.

54. Simpson, *Young-Old*.



Unused postcard - W H Hooke, *Almshouses and Church*, Abingdon



Jan Gudmand-Høyer architect, *Skråplanet Complex*, Jonstrup, Denmark, 1968. Gudmand-Høyer was greatly responsible for the spreading of co-housing in Denmark and abroad.

an example because of its sense of exclusion from society.⁵⁵ During the last few decades, changes have appeared in the conception of ageing spaces, from an idea of giving **charity**, as in early ideas of welfare and pensions that revolved around a church or a patron (such as the Christ's Hospital Almshouses in Abingdon, England, opened in 1482 for the "old and infirm") to programmes emphasizing **independence**,⁵⁶ and letting go of the image of the "institution". This is often translated in the replacement of the institution model with the household.

Since the late 19th century **non-institutionalised** living arrangements started to shift from the multi-generational family "towards smaller, single-generational housing units consisting of either married couples or persons living alone".⁵⁷ Old people, who were cared for by their children and who, in turn, cared for their grandchildren are not necessarily the rule anymore.⁵⁸ There are various explanations for that, such as the rise of **individualism** and self-reliance, or the rejection of the elderly from society in general. One popular theory is that the increase of **income** throughout the 20th century has gradually made the family-centred household units no longer an economic necessity. Retirement, or the welfare state, has globally helped obfuscate the relationship between family and the state. The movement of political democracy made the individual the **social unit** through the reduction of the family functions and their transferral to more inclusive **social institutions**, such as schools, shops, churches, hospitals, etc.⁵⁹ This has also been a factor behind age segregation and elderly isolation. As a result, there has been renewed interest for informal cooperative housing, or co-housing, where people who live in the same building can engage in common activities and offer each other mutual care and services. The concept of co-housing appeared for the first time at the end of the 1970's in Denmark, under the name *bofællesskaber* meaning "life in community", intergenerationally. All residents participated

55. Michel Foucault, Dits et écrits 1984, *Des Espaces Autres*, conférence au Cercle d'études architecturales, 1967

56. M. Scott Ball, *Livable Communities for an Aging Population: Urban Design Solutions for Longevity* (Hoboken, N.J: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2012), 129.

57. Simpson, *Young-Old*, 41.

58. Simpson, *Young-Old*

59. Ibid.

in its planning and maintenance. In 1987, the first senior co-housing was built, also in Denmark, "re-establishing the advantages of traditional life, [in an] almost rural [way]".⁶⁰ However, this model targeted mostly active-ageing people, with a high-income level and an ease to detach themselves of their home, a cultural factor that is more frequent in North European countries.⁶¹ Most older people prefer to stay in the same home or place in which they grew old. Economically, there are advantages in maintaining one's dwelling, but as most apartments were built around the idea of family, there needs to be a typological **adaptation**. As Dean Simpson puts it:

The deconstruction of family, high living cost, adverse climate, insecurity and fear of crime, the death of a spouse or the inadequacy of existing homes and neighbourhoods far from healthcare and services can render ageing in place difficult.⁶²

To provide geographical **context** around which life experience can be organized, tied to societal recognition of ownership and **familiarity**, as an adaptive feature of ageing. To assume an **intergenerational** approach that recognizes the importance of relationships doesn't mean necessarily to privilege the family. For these reasons, long-term accommodation in institutionalised living arrangements "should not become the norm"⁶³, new **forms of life** should be developed.

In so doing, do we respond equally to the needs of all able and disabled bodies — the so-called "barrier-free" buildings and "inclusive design" — or do we opt for special arrangements? There is a risk, otherwise, to fall into **standardisation** and uniformise the other parts of the population, consequently having to use these universal infrastructures. However, it is important to look at the whole population and its different generations, the potential of inclusive design is maybe not to fit a certain group, but rather to accommodate different uses. New strategies have tried to profit from our

60. Ana Bordalo, 'Estruturas De Habitação, De Vida Em Comunidade, Vocacionadas Para As Necessidades Da Pessoa Idosa' (Universidade de Lisboa, 2013).

61. Ibid.

62. Simpson, *Young-Old*, 42–43.

63. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 16.

adaptive bodies to optimise existing urban infrastructures, such as Sophie Handler's project in London, pictured here. It selects materials and elements with dimensions and locations useful to serve as seats, a design concept that was then translated into the fabrication of small portable cushions by the artist Verity-Jane Keefe, whereby the prototype was adapted to the typical poles surrounding the studied neighbourhood.⁶⁴ Another example is Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins' projects dedicated to the construction of architecture that extends the human lifespan, in their *Reversible Destiny Foundation*. They see ageing as an **entropic force** against which architecture should resist. The *Reversible Destiny Lofts* (2005) in Tokyo have colours, floors and walls made so that they don't respond to standard able-bodied persons:

Despite the evocative name chosen by Arakawa and Gins for their foundation, we do not have to perceive this phenomenon necessarily as a reversion of the ageing process, but rather as a telling example of the normative straightjacket that the standard built environment surrounds us with.⁶⁵

While there is a positive discourse on individual **dignity** to be found in these theories, we should go a step beyond, towards "a dimension unlocked by the cultural transformation in which demographic change is embedded: a change from 'being able' to just 'being'".⁶⁶ Well-being does not need to be measured by relative material goods, consumptions and productivity but in rather more qualitative terms. The énoncé will now change its focus and expand on the case of Portugal, which will be mentioning from time to time subjects on ageing, which have been described above.

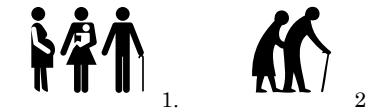
64. Zardini et al., *Imperfect Health*, 336.

65. Léopold Lambert, 'Who Wants to Live Forever? An Architecture Battle with Entropy - Arakawa and Gins' *Reversible Destiny Lofts*, *Uncube*, n.d.

66. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 17.



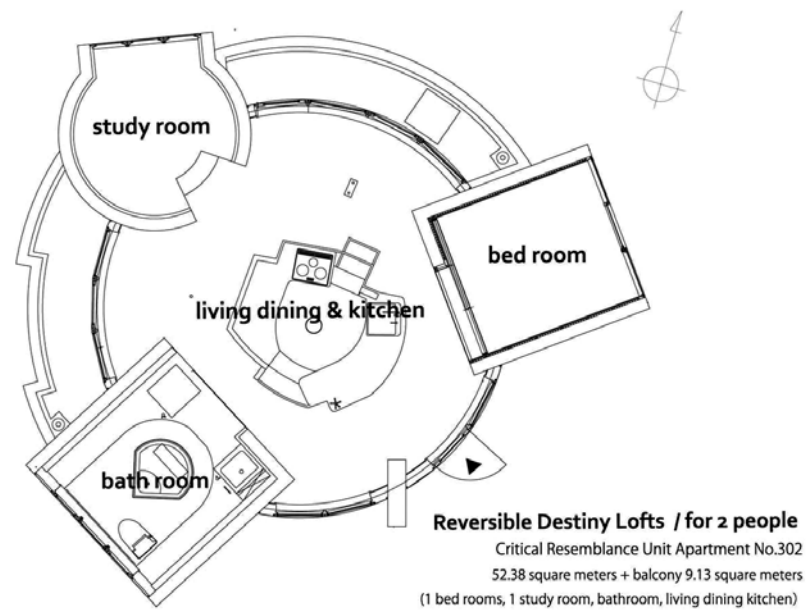
A "dropped curb" or "pram ramp". Standardised urban feature created by Selwyn Goldwin, author of *Universal Design: A Manual of Practical Guidance for Architects*, 2000



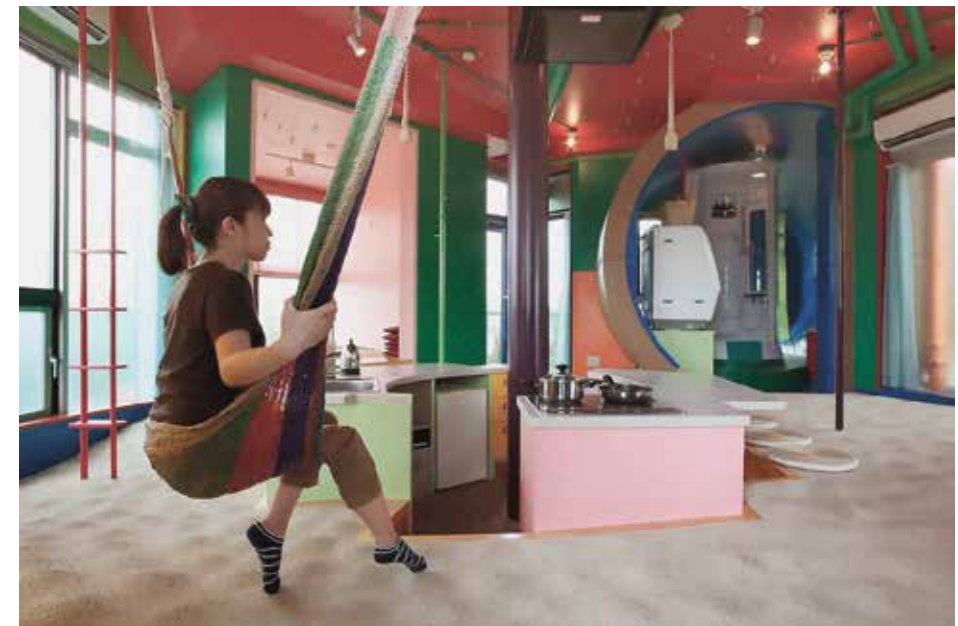
1. The "silver seats" logo for priority seat, introduced during the Aged Day 15th September 1973 in Japan public transportation system.
2. Crossing road sign for older people, introduced in the United Kindom in 1981. A mention "elderly people" was removed in 2003 because of ageism. Sill, it is used interchangeably for frail, disbaled or blind people



Sophie Handler and Verity-Jane Keefe, a cushion, from *Resistant Sitting: The pensioner Alternative Street Furniture Guide*, London, 2008



Below and Right: Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, *Reversible Destiny Lofts*, Mitaka, Tokyo, 2005. This "procedural architecture" as they call, aims at stimulating senses and offers environments that may adapt at different times more to a child or an elderly person.



3.

AGEING PORTUGAL



3.1. Why Portugal?

In 2017 Portugal is one of the oldest countries of the world, with 28% of its population aged over 60 (equal to Bulgaria, Finland and Germany, with 29% for Italy and 33% for Japan). It also has one of the world's lowest fertility rates.⁶⁷ The number of the population over 80 years old in Portugal is 632'921 (2016); of which two thirds are women, 46.1% are illiterates and one third live alone.⁶⁸ Almost 90% of old people between 80 and 90 years old continue to live at home, rendering crucial the importance of **the dwelling** and of infrastructures.⁶⁹ These statistics are provided by the GNR, the National Republican Guard, which has been carrying out a "Senior Census" since 2011, in order to identify people in a situation of **isolation**, a condition that is rising.⁷⁰ This already reflects global issues discussed previously, such as the feminisation of ageing. However, the prevalence of poverty is lower for older persons than for the rest of the population, compared to other European countries, thanks to good contributions to private or public social security systems.⁷¹

To understand the Portuguese **context** of ageing and dwelling, an introduction to its historical background is needed. In the 1960's, Portugal went through a wave of public interventions centred on the production of

67. 'World Population Ageing 2015', 29.

68. Alexandra Campos, 'Idosos. População Muito Idosa Duplicou Em Duas Décadas', *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

69. Ibid.

70. Agência Lusa and Agência Lusa, 'GNR Sinalizou Mais Idosos a Viver Sozinhos Ou Isolados', *Observador*, 2017.

71. "World Population Ageing 2015", 71.

Rank	2000		2015		2030	
	Country or area	Percentage aged 60 years or over	Country or area	Percentage aged 60 years or over	Country or area	Percentage aged 60 years or over
1	Italy	24.1	Japan	33.1	Martinique	38.5
2	Japan	23.3	Italy	28.6	Japan	37.3
3	Germany	23.1	Germany	27.6	Italy	36.6
4	Greece	22.8	Finland	27.2	Germany	36.1
5	Sweden	22.2	Portugal	27.1	Portugal	34.7
6	Bulgaria	22.2	Greece	27.0	China, Hong Kong SAR	33.6
7	Belgium	22.0	Bulgaria	26.9	Spain	33.5
8	Croatia	21.8	Martinique	26.2	Greece	33.2
9	Portugal	21.7	Croatia	25.9	Slovenia	32.7
10	Spain	21.4	Latvia	25.7	Austria	32.4

Fig. VII. First ten countries or areas with the most aged populations

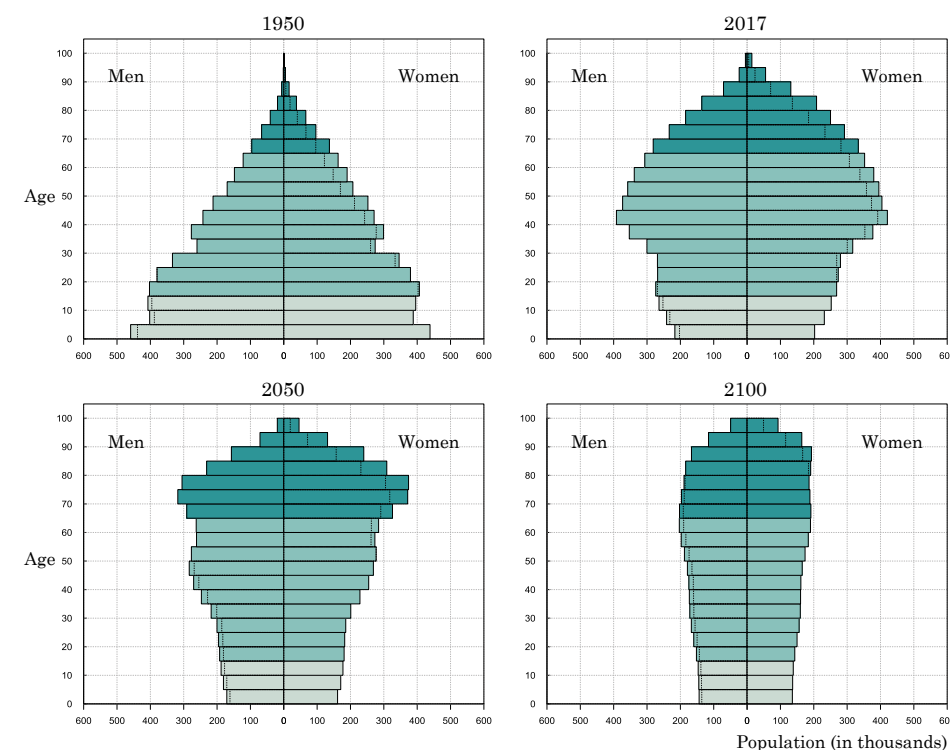


Fig. VIII. Portugal Population by age groups and sex (absolute numbers)

dwelling. Following the end of the dictatorship in 1974, the SAAL Process or *Serviço Ambulatório de Apoio Local* (Local Ambulatory Support Service) arose as a participatory state-led project with promise of state-wide territorial transformations. Portugal's population was changing enormously, producing large migrations from the interior to the coast with people finding no accommodation there. This phenomenon created a great suburbanisation which was answered, as its worst, with chaotic urban sprawl and illegal construction, and at its best, with social housing projects belonging to the SAAL. In Porto, the *ilhas* (islands) were degraded working-class neighbourhoods, whose population was consequently relocated. In Lisbon, the sprawling around the city centre was fought with big housing-block typologies as a way to control unstructured territories and maintain high population density. In this historical background Portugal has a rich history in architecture's fundamental role in the aspiration to dignity and a good life for all, protected from real estate speculation and segregation. The SAAL process is an interesting source for new forms of urbanism, architectural typologies and forms of political participation, even though it didn't always satisfy all of the existing needs.⁷² Today similar issues are still present:

In fact, although technically speaking the housing deficit should have already ended due to the construction in the last twenty years of about a half million new homes, there are still problems related to the degradation of the housing stock in old urban centres, the mobility of families and to housing costs, which remain high, particularly those related to renting . . . However, housing facilities have also acquired a special public relevance over the years due mainly to the link between the right to adequate housing and the basic right to **human dignity**.⁷³

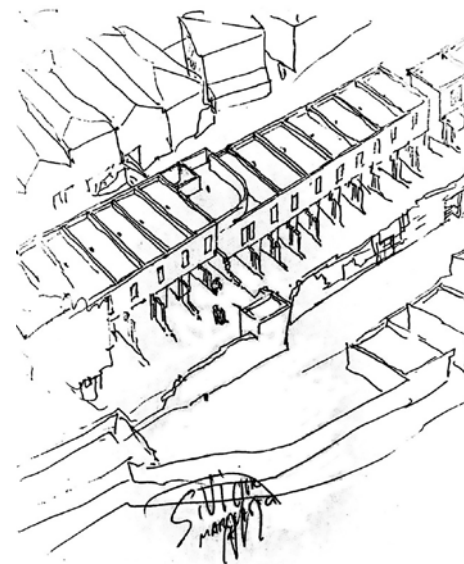
Until the end of the 20th century there were only two forms of dwelling in Portugal for older people, the home or the institution. Then, progressively, assisted living arrangements appeared in relation to large financial groups

72. Delfim Sardo, Maria Burmester, and Alexandre Alves Costa, eds., *The SAAL Process: Architecture and Participation, 1974 - 1976* (Porto: Fundação de Serralves, 2014).

73. Dulce Lopes, 'Empty Homes and Needy People: Time for a New Housing Policy in Portugal and Elsewhere?', 2015, 1.



Above and left below: Álvaro Siza Vieira, São Victor Neighbourhood construction phase, Porto, 1975. Project team: Adalberto Dias, Domingos Tavares, Eduardo Souto de Moura, Francisco Guedes, Graça Nieto, Manuel Borges, Manuela Sambade, Paula Cabral



Right: Demonstration of local residents connected to SAAL/North on the occasion of the visit of the Secretary of State for Housing and Urban Planning in Porto, 25 January 1975

and sometimes integrated with private health systems. Some examples are the *Domus Vida* of the José de Mello Group and the *Montepio Residence* of the Montepio Group.⁷⁴

People and the state have realized that the ageing process could not be reversed, as statistics insisted that the high rate of Portuguese migration, if it was to return to a positive sold, would not make a big difference in the present population's age distribution.⁷⁵ Portugal has answered to this demographic change, aware of the challenges incoming with ageing, with a national plan called *Estratégia Nacional para o Envelhecimento Activo e Saudável 2017-2025* (National Strategy for Active and Healthy Ageing 2017-2025). Lisbon recently hosted the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing from 21 to 22 September 2017, which led to the Declaration of Lisbon, leading discussion on the aforementioned active ageing. New initiatives are in consequence arising to imagine a country composed of many older people on the long-term. Some examples are attempts to break the **traditional** formation / work / retirement scheme by inserting the idea of a 3-days week of work (giving more time for family is an attempt to promote natality, sometimes with the help of advertisement billboards)⁷⁶, special social policies for children in specific regions (the Interior in particular), compulsory health check-ups from 65 years old, screening systems in emergency hospital services, Erasmus programmes for seniors, the promotion of a progressive entrance into retirement age, as well as the timing of traffic lights adapted to the elderly.⁷⁷

74. Ana Bordalo and Madalena Cunha Matos, 'Home-Villages In Portugal: Perspectives Of Architectural Design Concept And As A Strategy In Planning And Revitalization Of The Territory', 2012, 3.

75. Joana Gorjão Henriques, 'Demografia. Portugal Precisa de Mais Imigrantes Para Não Encolher', *PÚBLICO*.

76. Natália Faria, 'Demografia. Trabalhar Menos Dias Por Semana e Durante Mais Tempo é Solução Para Um País de Velhos?.'

77. Natália Faria, 'Idosos. Governo Acolhe Estratégia Para Tornar Portugal Um País "Amigo Dos Idosos"', *PÚBLICO*, 2017.



Room of Carlos Faro in the *Domus Vida* Residence, in Parede. A room is min. 1990 euros/month.



Billboard with the quote "To love the future - birth incentive programme and family support", Gouveia, Beira Interior

3.2. Littoralisation: Emigration, Isolation, Tourism

*A vida que tudo arrasta os amores também
uns dão à costa, exaustos, outros vão mais além
navegadores só solitários dois a dois
heróis sem nome e até por isso heróis*

*The life that drags everything, the loves too
some go to the shore, exhausted, others go further
such lonely navigators two by two
heroes without name and even so heroes*

- Sérgio Godinho, *Aos Amores*, 1989

There are geographic **asymmetries** in half of the OECD countries, a phenomenon that intensified after the 2008 crisis.⁷⁸ In Portugal, this phenomenon is more precisely called **littoralisation** and has led to the abandonment of the Interior. It started during the *Reconquista* Period (1st half of 8th century until 1492), when an “atlantisation of the settlements” occurred because of the presence of fertile soils and of the possibility of a maritime life on the coast. The exploration of other lands led to a time of “splendour”, while the wealth coming from it was essentially held by a dominant social class and used for instance in the construction of monumental buildings in urban areas. The People gradually looked more towards these faraway lands than the Portuguese land, until they started emigrating. After the Second

78. Ana Luísa Neves dos Santos, ‘Um País de Assimetrias’, 2014.

World War and during the dictatorship, the country started relatively late in comparison to other European countries to modernise its economy and industry, with the effect of seeing the population working in the agriculture decreasing. Investment in the **industrialisation** were directed mostly along the coast and towards the cities of Lisbon and Porto. As it failed to include agriculture, this sector hasn’t been modernized, which intensified the territorial **disequilibrium** and encouraged emigration to the littoral or abroad.⁷⁹

As population diminished, the Interior was thrown into a vicious circle of abandonment and disappearance of schools, medical outposts, until the living conditions of the last residents worsened. After the Revolution of 1974, the dictatorship was ended but a period of strong instability followed with a fast urban growth on the coast. While this depopulation occurred in other countries, it proceeded in Portugal ensuing the big investments in **infrastructures** of the past two decades with the European help.⁸⁰ The expansion of the road network was seen as a way to **decentralise** geographically the country. However, it did the contrary because it was extended towards the central regions⁸¹ and most of the constructions were done with little experience of regulator plans.⁸² This littoralisation created a kind of bipolar country, “obsessed by its glorious past and its uncertain future”.⁸³

The consequences of the rural migration, centralised political governance and services from Lisbon, and of a development of the country directed towards tourism, have led the Interior to a **slow oblivion**, with a socio-territorial fracture. This region — which currently register the biggest

79. Teresa Barata Salgueiro, *A Cidade Em Portugal: Uma Geografia Urbana*, Cidade Em Questão 8 (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1992), 56, 57.

80. Andrei Khalip, ‘Bled by Emigration, Abandoned Portuguese Villages Lose Hope of Surviving’, *Reuters*, 29 April 2016.

81. Patrícia Melo, ‘Opinião. Que Estrada Leva a Um Desenvolvimento Regional Mais Equilibrado?’, *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

82. Álvaro Domingues et al., eds., *Cidade e democracia: 30 anos de transformação urbana em Portugal = Ciudad y democracia: 30 años de transformación urbana en Portugal*, 1a. ed (Lisboa: Argumentum, 2006), 358.

83. Bivar, ‘Laboratório de Extinção’.

number of old people — is stereotyped as some **decaying land**. It suffers from climatic alterations, agricultural monocultures (like pinewoods and eucalyptus) and from the demographic alterations that are of present interest.⁸⁴ One of the challenge in these regions is the yearly occurrence of fires. Today this region seems to have little political **visibility** — as the newspapers quote it, “*só existem por que ardem*”, it only exists because it burns.⁸⁵ Non-indigenous trees were grown following the campaigns of the *Estado Novo* in the 1940’s, with shrub species and bushes proliferating around them, constituting the best combustible for fires. Specialists are talking of fighting it with pastures, small hills, chestnut trees, or having more dense forests preventing the growth of small bushes, thus encouraging forest planning. This would imply acting on “the concept of property” to enact it,⁸⁶ as most of these lands’ owners are not living there.⁸⁷

Portugal lives in a series of **dichotomies**, rural-urban, young-old, past-future. To work on the Interior does not only benefit its region and the ageing inhabitants but the country as a whole. Pedro Miguel Cardoso framed in an article a few good reasons as to why it is important to focus (as a priority) on the Interior problematic, insisting on the positive effect it could have on the whole country:

- 1) Environmental risks on the coast, such as rising sea level and coastal erosion or large-scale earthquakes and tsunamis;
- 2) The promotion of quality of life both on the Coast and in the Interior;
- 3) The preservation and utilization of heritage that has been built over decades and centuries;
- 4) The planning and protection of the territory;
- 5) The preparation of the country for adverse scenarios, such as possible breaks in global markets, ensuring productive autonomy and protection of vital resources (i.e. water).⁸⁸

84. Covas, “Opinião. Os Incêndios Do Interior e o Interior Dos Incêndios”.

85. António Covas, “Opinião. Os Incêndios Do Interior e o Interior Dos Incêndios”, *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

86. Camilo Soldado, ‘Incêndios Florestais. Vão Ser Precisas Pessoas Para Implementar as Reformas Num Interior Desertificado’, *PÚBLICO*.

87. João Confraria, ‘Opinião. Autarquias e Valorização Da Terra’, *PÚBLICO*, 2017. “Fun fact”, the abandonment of agriculture and the land has re-established the natural habitat of some species that were at the verge of extinction and which are reappearing, see Bivar, ‘Laboratório de Extinção’.

88. Pedro Miguel Cardoso, ‘Portugal e Interior: Vida Ou Morte’, *Esquerda*, 2017, <http://www.esquerda.net/opinio/portugal-e-interior-vida-ou-morte/52429>.

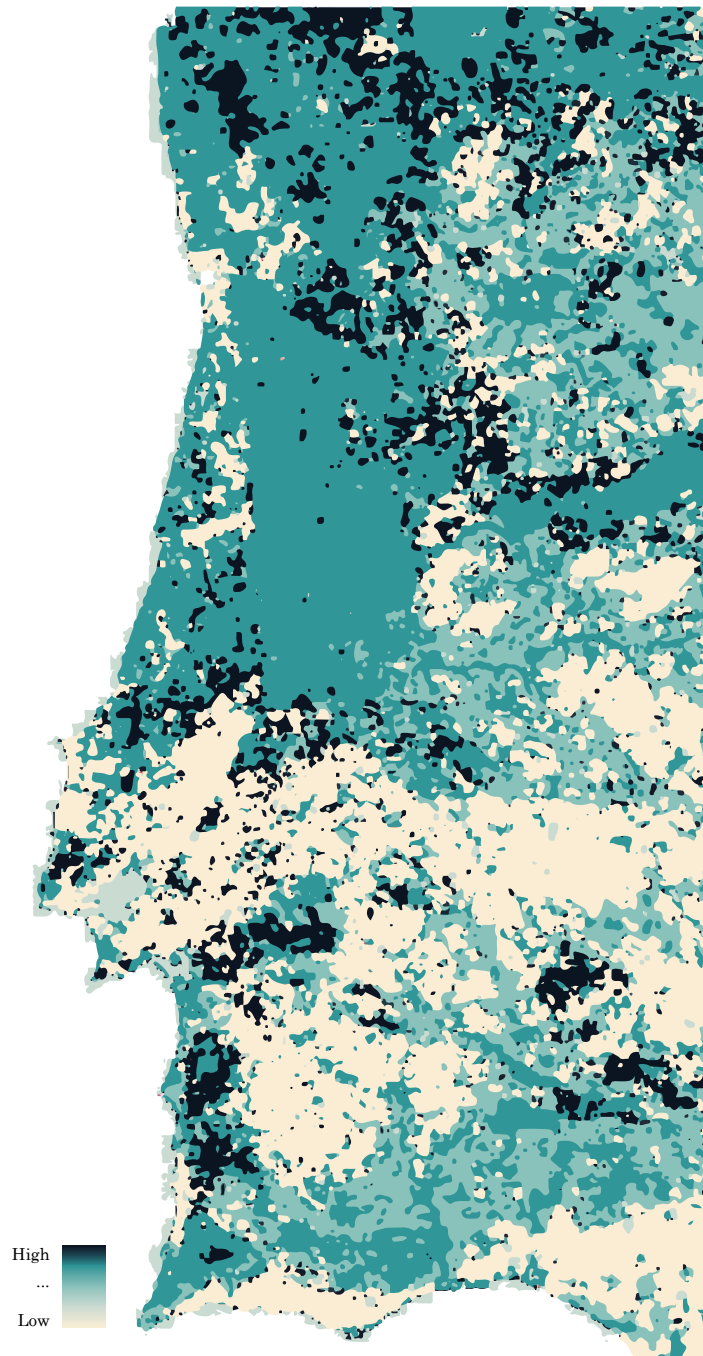
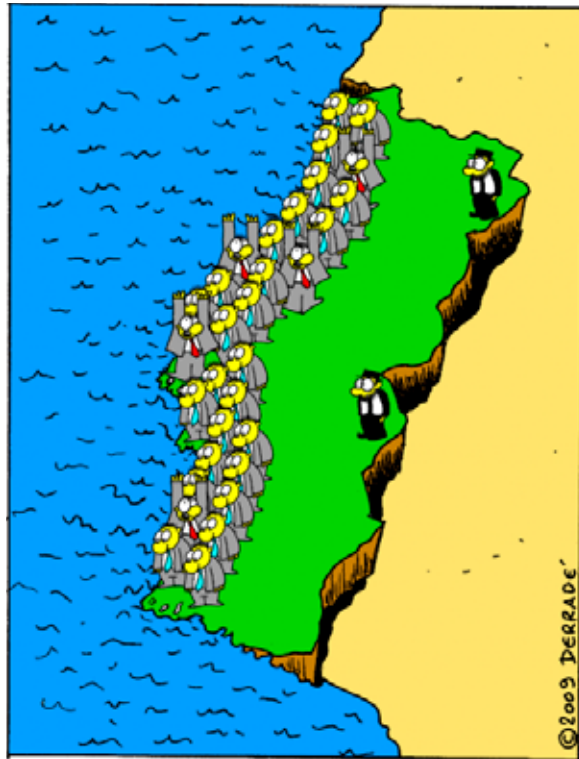


Fig. IX. Forest density

What follows are descriptions of three phenomena encapsulating ageing in Portugal, which could help shed light on the deep littoralisation touching the country and its ageing population, particularly the way the rural is seen as a place for tourism and leisure.



Map of Portugal illustrating the littoralisation, by cartoonist Derradé, 2009

- Rural Emigration - *Interior Esquecido e Ostracizado*:

The “forgotten and ostracised Interior” as titled is a common expression used in Portuguese media to talk about the territory left by the rural emigration. Portugal is going through a **depopulation** of its interior territories led by the abroad and domestic **immigration** of its young residents, increased by the 2008 crisis. Portugal population is expected to decrease significantly, from 10’330’000 to 8’995’000 in 2050 and 6’604’000 in 2100. Following the *Instituto Nacional da Estatística* (National Institute for Statistics, 2017) and their current most pessimistic previsions, Portugal population could even fall to 7.5 million inhabitants by 2080 and have 317 elderlies for 100 young people.⁸⁹ 80% of the population is said to live on the coastal regions (2011).⁹⁰ This has consequently led to the ageing of the population in these areas and their **isolation**, with villages dying out with them on a strip from north to south. Demographic studies suggest a disappearance of 75% of the actual population there by 2100⁹¹ and its territory as known with it. The most prevalent source of income is still agriculture and livestock, with some families living a traditional life where children help at work but consequently fall out of school and are led to analphabetism.⁹²

The mountain villages, the Atlantic Islands of the Açores and Madeira, as well as the Alentejo are the most affected regions. The mountain villages in particular are seen as an **heritage** to preserve and pass down. One example is the parish of Macieira de Alcoba inhabited by 84 people, whose 65% are over 65 years old (2011). The local economy is poor and must rely on the exterior, such as on the grocery and fish vans that come every week. Although a return of emigrants reaching the retirement age has been recently noticed due to good economical prospects, this tendency has stayed nevertheless low in the Interior due to the need of **infrastructures** offering health care or

89. Faria, ‘Demografia. Trabalhar Menos Dias Por Semana e Durante Mais Tempo é Solução Para Um País de Velhos?’

90. Joana Dias, ‘Desertificação Populacional: Um Problema de Regionalização e de Investimento’, 2011.

91. Bivar, ‘Laboratório de Extinção’.

92. Dias, ‘Desertificação Populacional’.

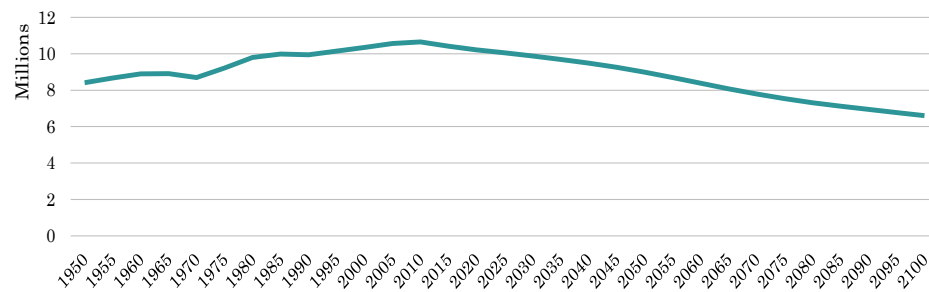


Fig. X. Portugal projected depopulation

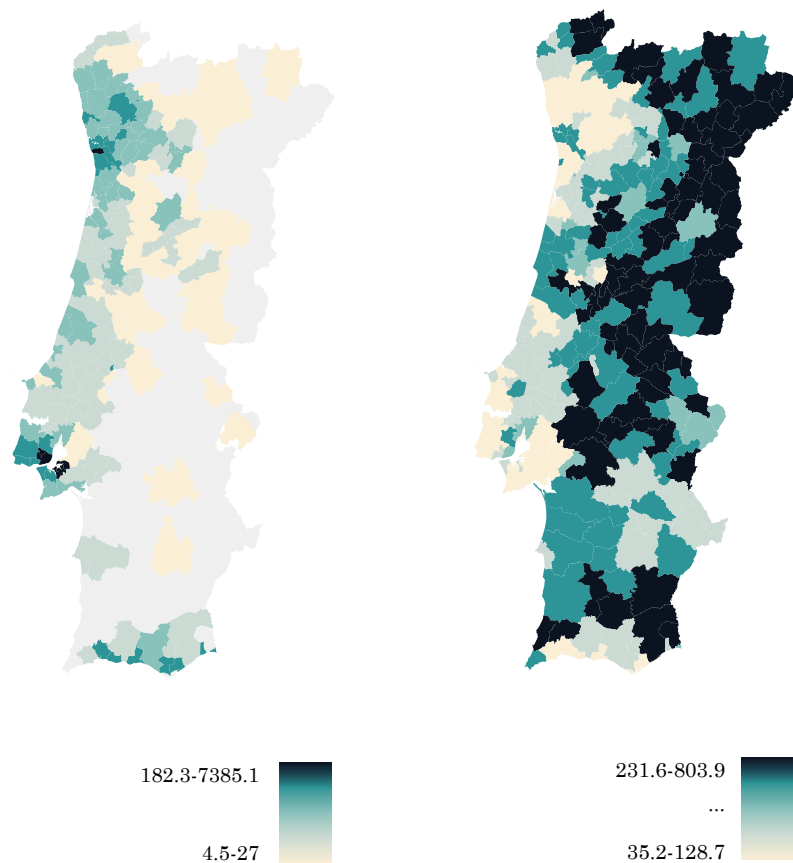


Fig. XI. Population density, inhabitant/km², 2014

Fig. XII. Elderly per 100 young people, 2014

mobility. Some return during holidays and weekends, also because of the influence of **tourism** increasing through the promotion of the local quality: quietness, gastronomy, or the beauty of the landscape.⁹³ Tourism is seen as the solution to bring back or create new local developments, especially since the depopulation is followed with the disappearance of infrastructures, maternity, schools and other public buildings. In order to stabilise, villages are trying to introduce some sort of competing economic functions with a revival of crafts, “living” Portuguese traditions and historical heritage. However, it should be more than just in the name of a “preservation of their collective memory”⁹⁴ if it is to become a pastiche of previous life activities.



The rests of an abandoned hous in Póvoa de Agrações, Trás-os-Montes. Described as living a "slow agony of abandonment" by the inhabitant.

93. Paula Remoaldo et al., *The Overarching Issues of the European Space - The Territorial Diversity of Opportunities in a Scenario of Crisis*, 2014, 26–37.

94. Ibid.



Above and below: Póvoa de Agrações. Mariana Teixeira is moving wood.

Macieira de Alcoba and its rural tourism.

- Urban Isolation - Historical City Centres:

Portuguese population is principally concentrated on the coast and its two metropolitan areas, namely Porto and Lisbon, the latter being the most aged city of the European Union.⁹⁵ Between 1979 and 1981 the district of Lisbon registered the highest rate of **immigrants** inside the 60 years-old and over population⁹⁶. Social neighbourhoods and clandestine shacks appeared in the periphery, which was a preoccupation of the previously mentioned SAAL process. Cities were not ready and the employment offered for the active populations was insufficient, which created poverty, marginalisation, pollution, further immigration abroad, and an overall diminution of life quality.⁹⁷ Today Lisbon and Porto are now also losing their **young population** because of expensive housing rents.⁹⁸ Proposals for child care, kindergarten, community centres, schools or dwellings with affordable costs are considered to keep the younger population in Lisbon.⁹⁹

Inside the city, concentrations of age phases are found in very precise neighbourhoods. As we said in the second chapter, ageing is followed with a **feminisation** of the population which becomes more evident in Portuguese cities who were an important source of employment for women in the tertiary sector. A study of the parishes of Lisbon showed that the more they possess an aged population, the more the disequilibrium between men and women is high, particularly present in the historical centre.¹⁰⁰ Between the 1950's and the 1970's the tendency was to build and prefer "modern" dwellings with good quality, on top of cheap terrains possessing lots of space outside of the city centres. In consequence the buildings of the centre cities were abandoned and not maintained. Another reason is the housing legislation that gave the responsibility of the buildings restoration to the owners, which

95. Cristiana Faria Moreira, 'Lisboa. Em Lisboa, Há Um Festival Para Pensar a Velhice Desde Tenra Idade', *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

96. Barata Salgueiro, *A Cidade Em Portugal*, 347.

97. Marisa Rodrigues, 'O Fenómeno Da Litoralização e o Crescente Abandono Das Área Rurais Em Portugal: Causas e Consequências', 2010.

98. Rita Marques Costa, 'Lisboa. Envelhecimento e Rendias Altas Roubam Jovens Adultos a Lisboa', *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

99. Costa, 'Lisboa. Envelhecimento e Rendias Altas Roubam Jovens Adultos a Lisboa'.

100. Barata Salgueiro, *A Cidade Em Portugal*, 348, 349.

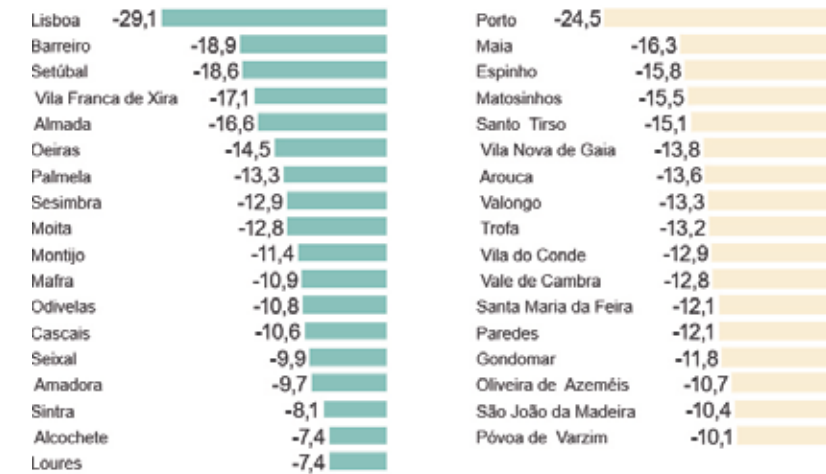


Fig.XIII. Young adults percentage loss between 2011 and 2016 for the Metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto

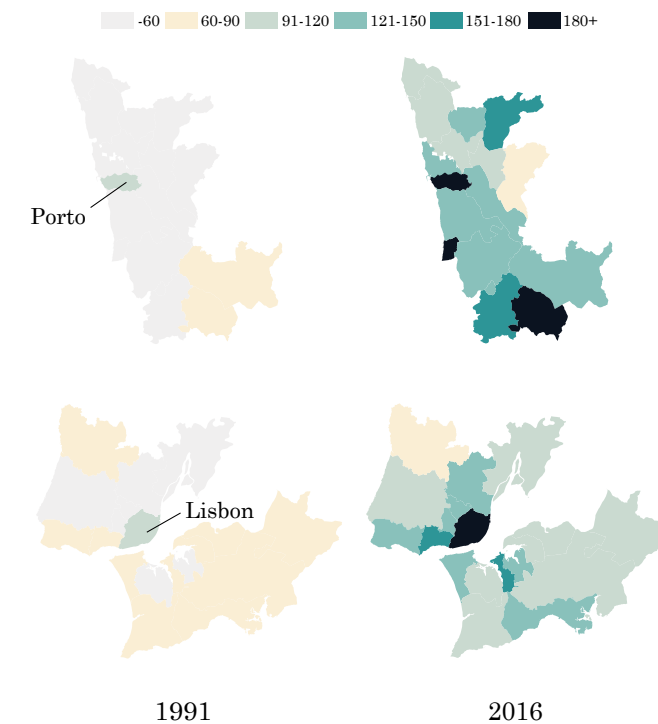


Fig. XIV. Number of inhabitants of 65 years old or more to 100 inhabitants of 0-14 years old in each parishes

did not always have the means and would prefer renting their apartments with low prices to long-term tenants. Ageing thus characterises not only the population but the buildings. The frequency of programmes targeting old age group (nursing homes, medical centres...) grew in these central parishes,¹⁰¹ while services for family such as kindergarten or schools decreased. The centre is being transformed in small aged and isolated islands surrounded by **tourism**.¹⁰² Nowadays reflections on intergenerational activities have started, such as the *A Avó Veio Trabalhar* (Grandmother Went to Work), a kind of civic participation of predominantly older **women** mixing with younger people to share crafting and design techniques, but also to fight the isolation of the age-segregated parishes.¹⁰³



A Avó Veio Trabalhar project, Lisbon

101. Ibid., 387.

102. Diogo Queiroz De Andrade, 'Editorial. Cidades-Fantasma', *PÚBLICO*.

103. Mauro Gonçalves and Mauro Gonçalves, 'A Avó Veio Trabalhar. Os 70 Podem Mesmo Ser Os Novos 20', *Observador*, 2017.



- Senior Tourism - The “Florida” of Europe:

In 1955 emerged in the United States the first age-segregated urban forms specialised in satisfying the old age as a **consumer**. The first one was Youngtown in Arizona.¹⁰⁴ From then on, other models appeared such as in Spain on the Costa del Sol between the 1970's and 1980's, where retirement would imply **immigration** and sunny climates.¹⁰⁵ In Portugal, the southern region of Algarve followed a similar development as the Spanish coast mentioned before, starting during the dictatorship. It was designed for an urbanisation with a “luxury” image.¹⁰⁶ In 2017, the website *Live and Invest Overseas* published in its Overseas Retirement Index the best destinations regarding **retirement**. Algarve has been now the favourite region for these prospects four years in a row.¹⁰⁷ A few reasons are a lower density than in the Costa del Sol and less meteorological problems than in some Villages located in the USA. Also, thirty-five golf courses alone can be found on this coastal strip.¹⁰⁸ The *Aldeias-lares* (home-villages) are the matching local models of the American age-segregated urbanisation forms. Two examples are Monte da Palhageira in Faro and São José de Alcalar in Portimão.¹⁰⁹ Mass **tourism** experienced on a short-term basis there is shifting to long or **permanent** term. Specific commodities are sought after in these environments: security, comfort and appropriateness, even if the range of **choices** is reduced due to the very specific age-segregated location of these places.

Portugal gradually got the nickname of “Florida of Europe” in relation to the wave of international **retired immigrants** arriving, thanks to a 10-year tax exemption on pensions and the popular “Golden Visa” that gives the right to circulate in Europe if one invests a certain sum of money

104. Simpson, Young-Old, 115.

105. Simpson, Young-Old.

106. Domingues et al., *Cidade e democracia*, 363.

107. ‘The World’s Best Places To Retire In 2017’, *Live and Invest Overseas* (blog), 2017.

108. Nacima Baron-Yellès, ‘De la fréquentation touristique de masse aux flux résidentiels : le cas de l’Algarve (Portugal), Abstract’, *Flux*, no. 65 (1 January 2008): 63–74.

109. Ana Bordalo and Madalena Cunha Matos, ‘Home-Villages In Portugal: Perspectives Of Architectural Design Concept And As A Strategy In Planning And Revitalization Of The Territory’, 2012. Based on the authors’ phd thesis, this article sees the home-villages model as a concept similar to co-housing. Its structure is imagined as a strategy of planning for the revitalisation process of the desertified Interior, and as a potential for senior tourism in Portugal.

in the chosen country. The tempered climate and a relative security explains this booming in real estate selling. Furthermore, with the 2008 crisis and the indebted population, lots of houses got empty, making the market very attractive particularly in Algarve with its touristic situation and numerous people speaking English.¹¹⁰ It has registered the biggest **urban growth** of the whole country in the last decades.¹¹¹

The Algarve, Portugal Takes Top Honors for the 4th Year In A Row...

Portugal’s Algarve remains the best place in the world today to retire overseas.



From health care to beaches, the Algarve has something for everyone in Portugal

The Algarve has got everything the would-be retiree could want—great weather and lots of sunshine year-round; an established and welcoming expat community; top-notch medical facilities and health care; an affordable (that is, downright cheap) cost of living, especially when you consider the quality of life on offer; undervalued and

bargain-priced property buys, including right on the ocean; endless opportunities for fun, adventure, and enjoying rich, full, varied days out-of-doors; a great deal of English spoken thanks to the longstanding British presence; First World infrastructure; a new retiree residency program that rolls out the welcome mat for foreign pensioners; and easy access both from the United States and to and from all Europe.

The soaring greenback helps. At the current rate of exchange between the euro and the U.S. dollar, our figures show that a retired couple could live comfortably on the Algarve coast on as little as US\$1,700 per month, give or take.

You could rent a two-bedroom apartment in this region for as little as US\$720 per month. Or, if you were so inclined, buy an Algarve pied-à-terre of your own today for US\$150,000 or even less. Portugal’s property market remains nicely undervalued, and, again, if you’re shopping with dollars, you’ve got super-charged buying power right now.

Screenshot of the *Live and Invest Overseas* website, 2017

110. Lusa, ‘Portugal Pode Tornar-Se Numa “Florida Da Europa”’, *Diário de Notícias*, 2013.

111. ‘Habitat III – National Report Portugal’, 2016, www.dgterritorio.pt.



Above: Monte Da Palhagueira, Algarve. Nursing home, church, swimming pools and greens of golf like a permanent holidays resort. Below: São José de Alcalar, Algarve. Built in 1989, this home-village gets closer to the co-housing concept for senior with its 52 appartments.



Vale do Lobo luxury resort, golf course, Algarve.

3.3. Ageing Beira Interior

The landscape is the record of a society that changes and, if the change is so deep, so profound and accelerated, there will be signs of this, beyond little time and too much space to comprehend or digest the marks and shapes as they go over each other, now relics, now debris . . . The degree of stability of a place can only be guaranteed by the degree of stability of a society and what remains in it.

- Álvaro Domingues, *Vida No Campo*, 1a. ed, Equações de Arquitectura 45 (Porto: Dafne Editora, 2011), 15.

The municipalities registering in 2013 the greatest number of old people are precisely in the Beira Baixa and Beira Litoral regions, which form together the region of Beira Interior. Inside it, the district of Castelo Branco has aged the most.¹¹² Monsanto da Beira, located in that same district, was declared the “most Portuguese village of Portugal” in 1939 under the dictatorship¹¹³. It is part of a group of twelve villages classified under a 1991 government programme called the Historic Villages Programme (*Aldeias Históricas*). Monsanto is an example that embodies the global and local situation. As the mountain villages mentioned in chapter 3.2., Monsanto promotes the quality of the rural tourism, which in the end only shows an attachment to the rural without rurality as it is undergoing a process of **deruralisation**:

112. Rita Cipriano Cappelletti Milton and Rita Cipriano Cappelletti Milton, ‘Quem São e Como Vivem Os Idosos Em Portugal’, *Observador*, 2014.

113. Álvaro Domingues, *Volta a Portugal*, Contraponto (Lisboa, 2017), 51.



Castelo Branco, *Beira Baixa*



Idanha-a-Velha with Monsanto behind, *Beira Baixa*

The mirage of the bucolic and of lost paradises is more of who is exterior (of the interior) and thinks that the rural and Nature are places to pass vacations.¹¹⁴

Schools, hospitals and other services are disappearing, **accelerating** the depopulation. Here, not only the movement of littoralisation is interesting, but also this loss of a former purpose:

When the abandonment of the fields and of agriculture doesn't mean the abandonment of people, a rurality transforms itself from the inside or is absorbed by what is called **urbanisation**.¹¹⁵

The land underwent from 1935 an operation of modernisation with the industrialisation of agriculture (as mentioned in chapter 3.1). This was a “reconstruction of the landscape through technology, surpassing thereby the old dichotomy, nature-technology, natural-cultural-artificial landscape”¹¹⁶, urban-rural. As these dichotomies are entering a crisis due to their incapacity to describe the rural or the city, both disappearing, “everything is attributed to a process of ‘degeneration’ and, as a consequence of this, everything becomes ‘ugly’”.¹¹⁷ The urban models that were put in place in Algarve and the expansion of the Metropolitan areas from the 1960-1970's reappeared in the cities of medium-size such as Castelo Branco two decades later, with sprawling extensions.¹¹⁸ This process accelerated the time of a traditionally slow agriculture. The territory lost consequently its **friction**:

Given the **velocity** and the unpredictability of change, past is taken as a reference and fixed point, even if this past so typical was of misery and deprivation for the locals.¹¹⁹

As this land is being mystified and idealised with different myths,

114. Álvaro Domingues, *Vida No Campo*, 1a. ed, Equações de Arquitectura 45 (Porto: Dafne Editora, 2011), 23.

115. Ibid., 38.

116. Ibid., 44.

117. Álvaro Domingues, 'Paisagens Transgênicas', *ZARCH: Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 1 (2013): 24.

118. Domingues et al., *Cidade e democracia*, 367.

119. Domingues, *Vida No Campo*, 239.



This territorial subdivision of Portugal was done in 1936 during the *Estado Novo* through a geographical regionalisation. It participated in building the rural myths of the propaganda. Although it is not officially in use anymore, the names are still used today by people.

it becomes difficult to perceive what is effectively disappearing. Ruins and other abandoned environments are seen simultaneously as an absence and a presence, a resistance of the rural landscape as something from the past, which hides the fact of not producing or maintaining what its image promises. The price of these ruins, owned by far away owners is rising because of the tourism prospects.¹²⁰ The **vernacular** architecture, much present in the Interior, is linked to its inhabitants as “to no constraints the regional architecture is more strongly subject than to the shortage of the people and to the building materials.”¹²¹ This architecture reflects not just a certain use of local material, dependent of the presence or absence of it, but the “current cultural conditions of a region” which contributes to the feeling of homeness, of **familiarity**. Again, their relation to the rural is not the same anymore:

However if vernacular constructions were used for the agriculture, they progressively lost their **function**, absorbed in mass culture and consequently lost their identity. Or rather, as they became ruins they bore at the same time a statue of presence and absence, an excess of misery and of identity.¹²²

Different processes can dissolve the vernacular, but it seems that the only thing not varying in its definition is that it belongs to a place: “The **localism** particular to the vernacular is the best antidote against the tendency for homogenisation.”¹²³ What to do then with the vernacular? What is most frequently done is to **patrimonialise** it, a process strongly linked to tourism, which on the one hand removes the major part of its meanings and original functions, and on the other guarantee it another life, a resurrection.¹²⁴ With the deruralisation process, there is not only a diminishing of the agricultural activity but also a transformation of the **traditional** rural society, what is referred to as the *Camponese* (peasant) society. *O lar do velho povo* (the home of the old people)¹²⁵, was an expression used in the 1940’s and onwards

120. Ana Cristina Pereira Maia Adriano Miranda, Ana Marques, ‘Retalhos Da Vida de Uma Aldeia Deste e de Outros Tempos’, *PÚBLICO*, 2017.

121. Domingues, *Vida No Campo*, 198.

122. *Ibid.*, 211.

123. *Ibid.*, 236.

124. *Ibid.*, 245.

125. *Ibid.*, 19.

during the dictatorship as an image linking happiness with the rural, a base for the *Lusitania* identity and its propaganda. The “peasant” family and the agriculture were fundamentals of it and its virtues. The word “rural” has been reduced to a **simplified** definition, of the place from where departed the rural exodus in direction of the urbanisation. From there, a hierarchy was put in place, with cities as the centre from where decisions are made, and the countryside as a big extended territory where “the vulgar, the plebe, the rustic... or the idiot” live.¹²⁶ The emigration to the cities created thus a duality in the *Camponese*, a peasant without education and not appreciated, as well as the “hero of the diaspora”. After the “rural”, the social structures also underwent a **simplification**, as well as cultural practices and their representations.¹²⁷ The word “popular” characterises the people, by opposition to the “scholar”, again in a dichotomisation. With time, the popular *Camponese* also got alphabetised, urbanised, industrialised, to the point that the romantic view of this people was lost.¹²⁸ The “popular culture” is faced with an abundance of symbolism and references, due to its perception by mass media, oscillating between glorification and compassion. The popular, similarly to folklore, is an invention of the dominant scholar culture, to create distance and subalternity, to “organise the world”, to paternalise.¹²⁹ This is very similar to the way the ageing population is being treated, cured until it enters a crisis of **meaning**:

In synthesis, Portugal didn’t escape the relentless march of the modern industrial civilisation who seeks to reduce the enormous diversity of human **forms of life** into one sad and monotonous uniformity.¹³⁰

The following pictures were taken in Monsanto, on December 2017, and aims at illustrating the present chapter.

126. *Ibid.*, 71.

127. *Ibid.*, 127.

128. *Ibid.*, 255.

129. *Ibid.*, 266.

130. *Ibid.*, 306.



Of Granite and Men



Castle Defender



Work in Progress



The Summit Series



Two Old Women Talking About the Weather



The House of an Absent Landlord



On the Wall: "TO SELL"



Plants Invasion



Metamorphosis



Back to the Future



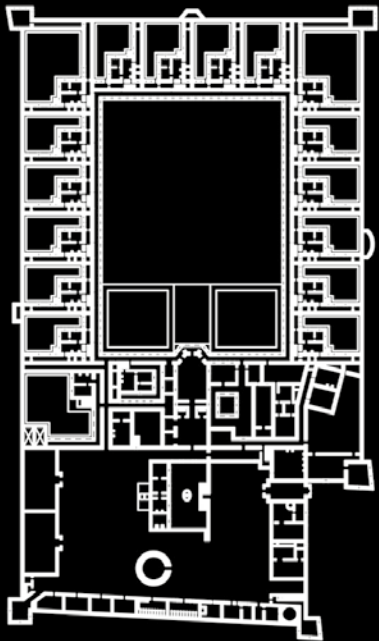
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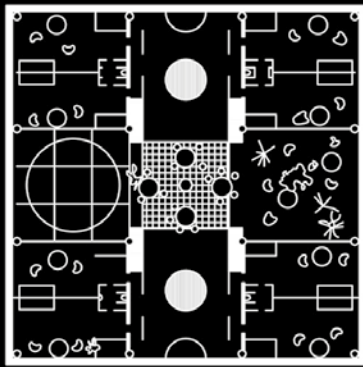
The Lusitanian Silver Rooster



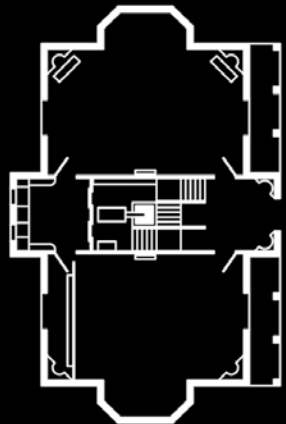
4. LIVEABILITY: A METHOD



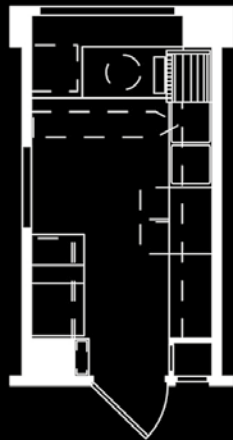
The Carthusian Monastery



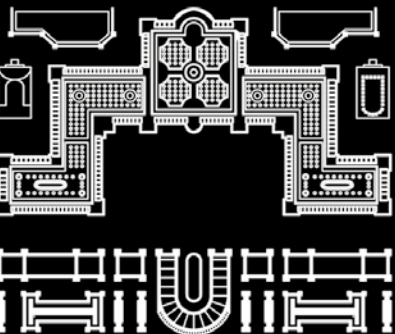
*Ivan Leonidov's proposal for a
Gardern City at Magnitogorsk
(1930)*



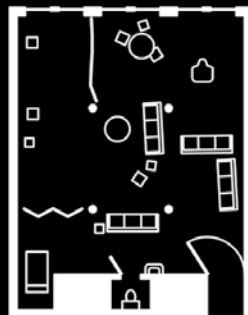
*Catherine and Harriet Beecher's
proposal for the American Woman's
Home (1869)*



*Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky's
design of the Frankfurt kitchen
(1926)*



*Charles Fourier's Phalanstery
(1829)*



*Andy Warhol's Silver Factory
(1963-1968)*

*Dogma, Living And
Working: How To Live
Together, 2015*

4.1. Slow Systems: Space, Time, Scale

*A society is modern when it is in a dynamic mode of stabilization, i.e. when it is in systematic demand for growth, innovation and acceleration – in other words: the perpetual mobilization of the social, intellectual and material universes – for its structural reproduction.*¹³¹

- Rosa Hartmut, *La Logique d'Escalade de la Modernité*, in *Libération*, 2014

In *La Logique d'Escalade de la Modernité*, Rosa Hartmut explains how systems where the fastest press systematically on the slowest create desynchronization, because of a search for ameliorations that has to do with the **acceleration** of the human body and mind (longevity is an example of this). Stabilization, growth and **reproduction** are all elements linked to strategies of **sustainability**. Territorial and urban strategies translate these visions onto the city, a process that, today, can be questioned in terms of ageing by addressing their strict focus on **productivity**. **Speed** has become the norm of urban design and neoliberalism, a principle that generates vast inequalities.¹³² The territory is a resource that renders into physical space the forms of life made possible by a society. In a system that promotes dependency, inequality and isolation for those outside of the profit production machine — such as the elderly — how can we design spaces that foster **autonomy**? One proposal is to *slow down* the system, to

131. Rosa Hartmut, 'La Logique d'escalade de La Modernité', *Libération.Fr*, 20 November 2014.

132. Claudine Burton-Jeangros, Cornelia Hummel, and Loïc Riom, 'Vieillesse et Espaces Urbains', 2017.

have “a space-time proximity”¹³³ in which old people (and everybody else for that matter) can not only fulfil their agency (i.e. the capacity of acting in a given environment) but also have the **choice** to act in accordance to their capacity (a critique present in chapter 2.3). How can we maintain a spatial and temporal balance where the times and places of individual lifestyles can cohabit and thus generate places for social cohesion? ¹³⁴ Generations could be thought of as different “speed systems” in a layered juxtaposition of velocities and connections:

Once we begin to attend to the parent-child bond, or more generally to the relation between generations, we have begun to think not just of life but of a ‘**complete life**’—a life marked in some way by stages and movement, a life that has shape and not just duration, a life whose moments are not identical but take their specific character from their place in the whole.¹³⁵

In the case of Portugal, its centralisation on Porto and Lisbon has been criticised, for leaving the Interior **spatially** and **temporally** extraneous of networks of power and decision, under a logic of symbolic and actual domination of the “provinces” through the privatisation of their capital and its concentration in the urban, littoral centres.¹³⁶ Road systems, in particular, have been given too much credit as a means to solve the asymmetry of the country:

The road system ensures a time measure-unit that establishes compatibilities with the other measures of a city without limits. Even today, especially today, the road determines the change of the forms of localization, almost always without having these effects on the territory been programmed.¹³⁷

Acceleration occurs along the highways linking fragmented

133. Dietrich Henckel, Elke Pahl-Weber, and Benjamin Herkommer, eds., *Time, Space, Places* (Frankfurt am Main ; New York: Lang, 2007), 71.

134. Ibid., 55.

135. Linett, “No Country for Old Men”.

136. Álvaro Domingues, *Volta a Portugal*, 2017, 51

137. Raffaele Menella, *Infrastrutture e Paesaggio*. Tradizione, Modernità e Luoghi Comuni (Roma, 2003), 67, quoted in Domingues et al., *Cidade e Democracia*, 25.

forms of **urbanisation**, with ruptures in space, time and scale. How can we provide space for social constructions and infrastructures in ways that add meaning to local interactions and local places? Interesting proposals have been made, such as **restoring** public services, investing in education, **rehabilitating** urban and historical architecture, **decentralising** skills by working on a **regionalisation** process that is able to give more democratic decision-making power to the Interior, and supporting innovative projects that propose alternatives to dominant forms of life.¹³⁸ In order to work with the ageing population of Beira Interior, a new **visibility** should be given to its land and people, not only by creating better connections with the rest of the country, but also by thinking places and scales, overlapping them as with time, to bring **friction** (“friction” goes beyond “connection” because it suggests movement as well as interactions). The production of space is linked to the production of scale as a social construction, but also as a **political** process, dominated today by ideas of **production, reproduction, consumption** and **institutions** (from the territory to the house scale).¹³⁹ To think of scale can help us see how geographical difference is linked to the **identity** of a place, especially in an era of globalisation characterised by the “implosion of center and periphery, as distinctions between rural and urban as well as South and North disintegrate”.¹⁴⁰ Sallie A. Marston, professor of Geography at the University of Arizona in the USA, writes in reference to Neil Smith’s work:

Rather than yield to difference as an individual-level construction, Smith insists upon materially anchoring **difference** and the subject through a theory of scale where positionality is the product of contest and negotiation around socially demarcated boundaries.¹⁴¹

Monsanto, and the other Historic Villages, currently suffer from various levels of **homogenisation** and loss of **identity** due to

138. Cardoso, ‘Portugal e Interior’.

139. Sallie A. Marston, ‘The Social Construction of Scale’, *Progress in Human Geography* 24, no. 2 (1 June 2000): 219–42.

140. Anna Tsing, ‘The Global Situation’, *Cultural Anthropology* 15, no. 3 (2000): 343.

141. Sallie A. Marston, ‘The Social Construction of Scale’, 232.

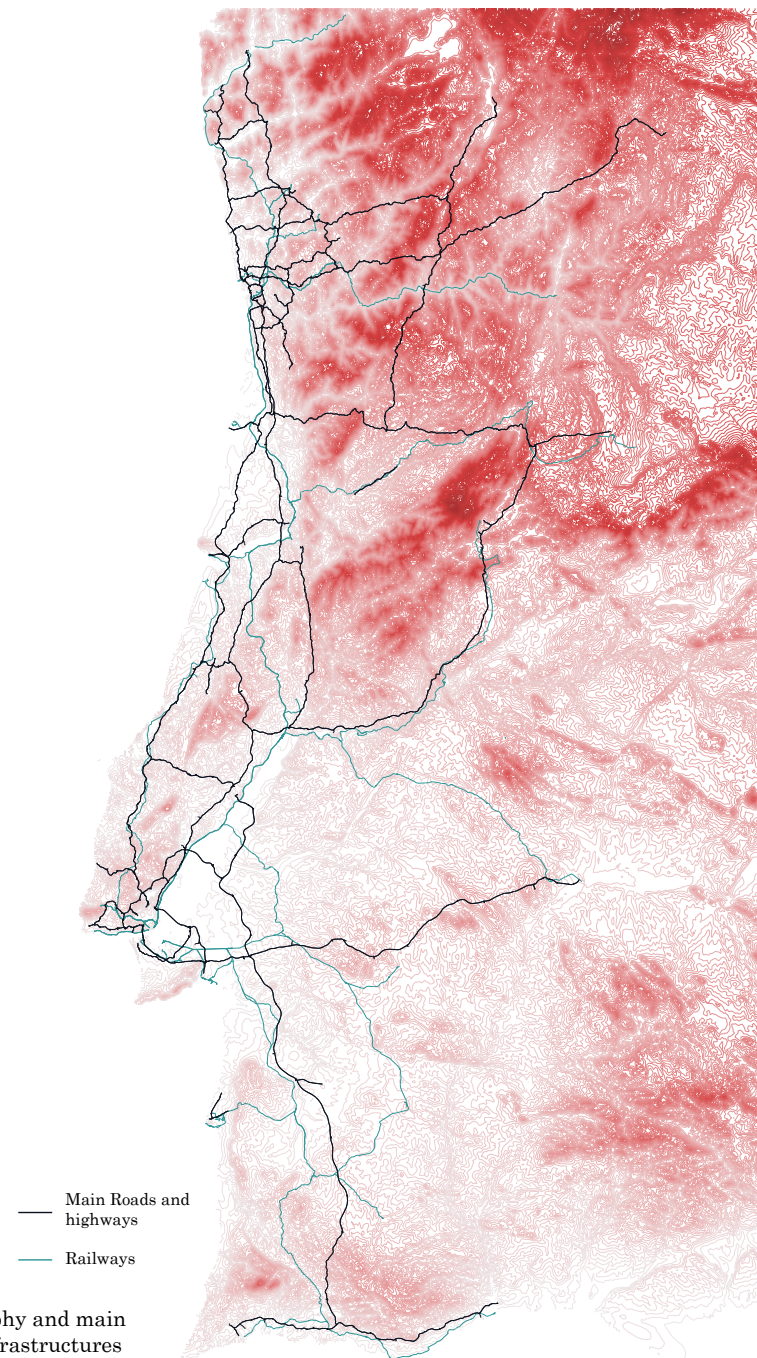


Fig. XV. Topography and main transportation infrastructures

patrimonialisation. To work with Monsanto's difference is to recover a more horizontal relationship with the other historical villages, and even with farther away cities like government-centralised Lisbon. Tourism as a solution for everything has grown like a scalable element. Scalability represses local changes in order to focus on functionality and the ability for a kind of expansion that is equated with growth (i.e. tourism). It is a process that is oblivious to **context** and that, as it spreads, piles up ruins in its wake.¹⁴²

Progress itself has often been defined by its ability to make projects expand without changing their framing assumptions. This quality is "scalability." ... [It] is the ability of a project to change scales smoothly without any change in project frames. A scalable business, for example, does not change its organization as it expands. This is possible only if business relations are not transformative, changing the business as new relations are added. Similarly, a scalable research project admits only data that already fit the research frame. Scalability requires that project elements be oblivious to indeterminacies of encounter; that's how they allow smooth expansion. Thus, too, scalability banishes meaningful diversity, that is, diversity that might change things.¹⁴³

Monsanto has been renovated with little regards to its livelihood and needs. To accept its difference with its own population, places, times and scales should help fight its **fetishization** (or stereotyping) due to the replacement of concrete meaning with symbolisms or statuses like the "interior land" or "land of the old". To cure oblivion by implementing road systems or romanticising pre-conceptualised aesthetics of the territory doesn't work well. To slow down systems means also to absorb **context** while changes occur, it creates spaces close to an idea of what Mary Louise Pratt, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures at the New York University, calls the "contact zones". These zones describe the threshold where asymmetrical relations of power meet and emphasise their relation to each other. In the contact zone, an asymmetrical relationship of power

can be productive and mutually beneficial for different parties.¹⁴⁴ Donna J. Haraway, American professor at the University of Santa Cruz in the USA, further explains in her book *When Species Meet*, how contact zones alter each parties with **reciprocity** and how it can become a method to be impacted by the otherness:

Contact zones are where the **action** is, and current interactions change [the] interactions [which will] follow [...] Contact zones change the subject — all subjects — in surprising ways . . . Encounters do not produce harmonious wholes, and smoothly preconstituted entities do not ever meet in the first place . . . Once 'we' have met, we can never be 'the same' again.¹⁴⁵

142. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom At The End Of The World: On The Possibility Of Life In Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015)

143. Ibid, 38.

144. Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the Contact Zone', *Profession*, 1991, 33–40.

145. Donna Jeanne Haraway, *When Species Meet*, Posthumanities 3 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 219, 287

4.2. Environmental Familiarity

Human exceptionalism blinds us. Science has inherited stories about human mastery from the great monotheistic religions. These stories fuel assumption about human autonomy, and they direct questions to the human control of nature, on the one hand, or human impact on nature, on the other . . . One of the many limitations of this heritage is that it has directed us to imagine human species being, that is, the practices of being a species, as autonomously self-maintaining – and therefore constant across culture and history.

- Anna Tsing, *Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species*, 2012, 144.

Why has the **family** unit been the base for the way we build apartments or houses? As explained earlier, the idea of family was supported by culture and religion, and it was itself a support for retirement. The house is the place where relations of **dependency** are the strongest, it is the core of production through reproduction and maintenance of life, what Marx called the “reproduction of our labour power”.¹⁴⁶ However as explained in chapter 2.3, with the advent of the welfare state, the individual became the new social unit, responsible for his/her own **autonomy**, and the household unit became increasingly less bound to the family structure. But as the welfare state faces the current threats of collapse, the idea of retirement is distancing itself from that of disengagement and dissolving into alternative modes of productivity in old age. If labour is the fundamental asset of society through its institutions (housing, hospitals, schools...) whose goal is to maintain labour power, can it pursue a **form of retirement** or will it just normalise

146. Patrick Hayden and Paul Voice, *Hannah Arendt: Key Concepts* (Routledge, 2014), chap. 2.

activities of the productive regime? Researches have shown how **house-centred** the individual becomes with ageing, by reducing its perimeter of movement or activities. The neighbourhood and the home appear as places granting protection, almost in opposition to the city and its public spaces. The condition for a successful “way of life” is linked to the idea of being attached to one’s home.¹⁴⁷ Chapter 2.3. showed how most elderly people prefer to stay where they live, a fact that can be explained by the attachment one builds over the years to a given place. In order to fulfil the possibility to age in place (and because a return to the family oriented typology for the household doesn’t seem like the next paradigm), the living space should try to extend beyond the house, and find its place within the **public realm**.¹⁴⁸ This would avoid a risk of segregation, lack of visibility and **depoliticisation**.

Therefore, let’s define a new frame that will be called *environmental familiarity* as a condition for better liveability. **Familiarity** engenders forms of identification with the environment and helps people relate to it, foster identity and find autonomy thanks to a relationship of interdependence. It helps create a “contrast to hyper-domestication [of] private property as we know it”.¹⁴⁹ **Familiarity** contributes to the feeling of safeness because it is linked to the trust one has in another individual or a system.¹⁵⁰ In *Penser l’Habiter, Estimer l’Habitabilité*, Marco Breviglieri explains how dwelling is an act of engaging oneself in a familiar space and how **familiarity** is reinforced by the notion of **caring**.¹⁵¹ One’s environment in return is influenced by the built environment and design. In her handbook about age-friendly environment, Sophie Handler talks about how “supportive environments involve more than a singular focus on function and utility”.¹⁵² Environmental familiarity is not generic but adaptive, it fosters relationships of **reciprocity** that actualise themselves:

147. Burton-Jeangros, Hummel, and Riom, ‘Vieillesse et Espaces Urbains’.

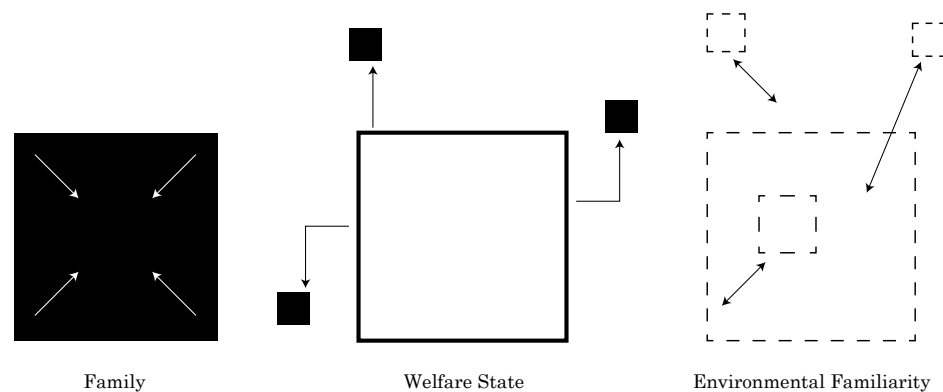
148. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 18.

149. Anna Tsing, ‘Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species’, *Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2012): 142.

150. Burton-Jeangros, Hummel, and Riom, ‘Vieillesse et Espaces Urbains’.

151. Marc Breviglieri, ‘Penser l’habiter, Estimer l’habitabilité’, *Tracés*, 2006.

152. Handler, ‘An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook’, 57.



An evolution of the house unit.
First as a “foyer” containing all the rooms for the reproduction of labour, it then pulverises in a network of institutions of the welfare state that organises and maintains the biogocial reproduction as well as the social relations of production and domination. The latter looks for a system of interdependences rather than of dependence.

The environments we live in are structured by our own actions and the spaces where we work generate representations of action for the agent. This dynamic vision of the environment as a space that gradually changes by fragmenting itself implies that the objects move according to their relationship to the action that takes place . . . These actions can turn into routine tactics, real shortcuts to go faster by exploiting mutual **interdependencies** between **familiar** objects depending on how they are grouped in a common region . . .¹⁵³

Environmental familiarity is an attempt to see the nuanced ways in which relationships and activities are taking place around dwelling, with functions of mediating space between the inside and the outside, between public and private. Environmental familiarity is an act of visual exposure - from the hidden and unfamiliar - towards **visibility**. This is what is wanted for the Beira Interior and for Monsanto, to foreground the **context** and make visible the local and **heterogeneity** of its landscape and people. It asks for a work with its vernacular architecture, its granite, and its rurality without the rural.¹⁵⁴

153. Bernard Conein, 'Cognition distribuée, groupe social et technologie cognitive', *Réseaux* no 124, no. 2 (2004): 64.

154. The misappropriation of preexisting aesthetic elements such as the patrimonialised form of the vernacular is one strategy used by the Situationist idea of *détournement*, to form a superior construction of a milieu/environment. This kind of appropriation gives an example of what to “inhabit” with visibility a place could mean, beyond social family conventions and ageist clichés. See <http://www.cdde.vt.edu/sionline///si/definitions.html>

4.3. Forms of Life: Labour, Work, Action

Perhaps the clearest indication that society constitutes the public organisation of the life process itself may be found in the fact that in a relatively short time the new social realm transformed all modern communities into societies of labourers and jobholders. . .

- Hannah Arendt, *Condition de l'Homme Moderne* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2014), 85.

Hannah Arendt's book of the *Human Condition* has been a great inspiration for this last chapter. To talk about the human condition is to talk about the life process and ageing. Old age, which was for a short time granted the disengagement from productive life is now in a state of redefinition. The goal, here, is not to say **disengagement** should be a rule — but perhaps — to defend it as a right, and point out the dangers of “active life” or “active ageing”, which hinders **freedom** by focusing on **productivity**. To understand the critique, Hannah Arendt's definition of the *vita activa* is helpful, as it helps to transform **activities** into spatial archetypes and shape an architecture of **liveability**. *Vita activa* is a reaction against *vita contemplativa*, a traditional political thinking that privileges contemplation and theoretical knowledge over political action, following a modernist tradition that values labour and work over political action. The *vita activa* Hannah Arendt defines is precisely constituted by three activities (which are not exhaustive but central): labour, work and action. From there, the *vita activa* advocates for the recovering of an alternative tradition of action, not without labour and work, but with the “particular hierarchical ordering of its elements, privileging **political**

action over work and labour.”¹⁵⁵

Why is the political aspect important? Because political communities over history have defined the place of **activities**, and whether they should be public or private.¹⁵⁶ Let's clarify the three activities in light of public-private characteristics. The purpose of labour is to maintain and **reproduce** life, it is a solitary act much like sleeping or digesting food. Classical liberal tradition promoted it until this very society became dedicated to **consumption**, concerned by the fulfilment of individual desires rather than the creation of space for political action.¹⁵⁷ As labour is a repetitive and processual activity, because it fuels the life cycle, it is traditionally happening in the private realm. Domestic activities, “traditionally concealed as they were ‘unproductive’ and ‘servile’, have become forms of **exploitation**”¹⁵⁸. Reinforced by the notion of private property, this has led to the impoverishment of the home as the ultimate private shelter from world. On the other hand, and almost in opposition, work is static and linear in time. It is an activity with a dual form, one whose aim is to make useful objects with given ends, another whose aim is to create useless works of art. It is public because it **produces** things that remain out in the world not immediately consumed, which sometimes even persist beyond the life of its maker. The third mode of activity, action, is what establishes humans as individual subjects, more than an animal species group. Action is an act of self-disclosure through what one says or does; it requires a context where it is revealed and witnessed by someone. This means that there can be no private actions, it could even be said that the aim of action is the creation and expansion of public space,¹⁵⁹ of **visibility**. “To act” is understood as “to be free” and “to be human” because “action, in Arendt's view, escapes both the necessitations of labour as well as the necessitations of means-end thinking that constitutes the instrumentality of work.”¹⁶⁰ On that note Kenneth Frampton, greatly influenced by Arendt,

155. Hayden and Voice, *Hannah Arendt*, chap. 2.

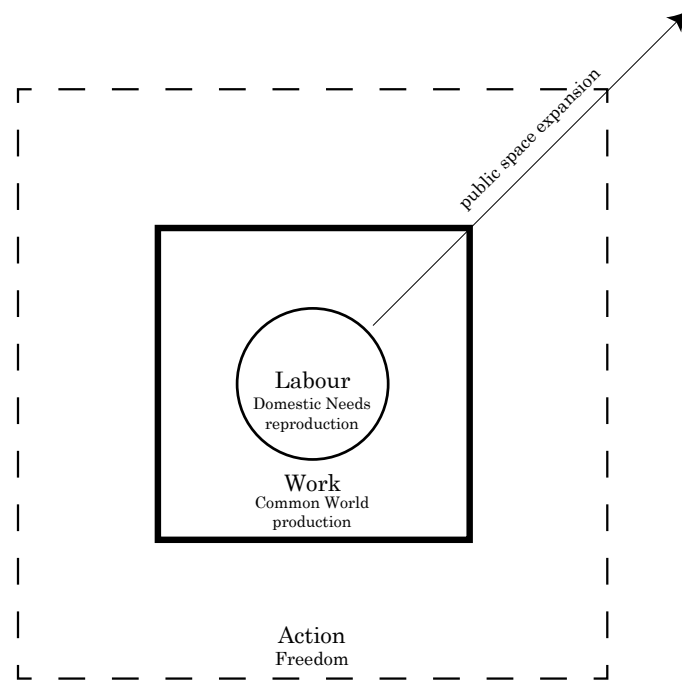
156. Hannah Arendt, *Condition de l'Homme Moderne* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2014), 120.

157. Hayden and Voice, *Hannah Arendt*, chap. 2.

158. Dogma, ‘Living and Working: How To Live Together’, 2015.

159. Hayden and Voice, *Hannah Arendt*, chap. 2.

160. Ibid.



Spatial hierarchy of the *vita activa*.

It conveys a physical form of what “political visibility” means. Having an architecture unfolding and containing all three activities in the same place makes the specificity of each of them recognisable. Having the labour space at the centre minimises its impact and burden.

makes an interesting comment on public space, which recalls elements of the previous chapter on environmental familiarity:

Where in the nineteenth century the public institution was exploited as an occasion on which to reify the permanent values of the society, the disintegration of such values in the twentieth century has had the effect of atomizing the public building into a network of abstract institutions. This dissipation of the agora reflects that mass society whose alienating forces stems not from the number of people but from ‘the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them’.¹⁵³

Reintroducing action into our conceptions of public space could lead to the creation of alternative age-inclusive forms of life. It should be made clear that Hannah Arendt’s work doesn’t say that action can exist without labour and work. Yet, Frampton states that labour and work have become both destructive activities of consumption,¹⁶¹ in an era where the cult of **productivity** is an end in itself that makes efficiency and repression converge. If a way out of this regime seems utopian in the very least, it can nevertheless be argued for, in line with Frampton, who offers a nice perspective where architecture permits **reciprocity** between “the status of men and the status of his objects”.¹⁶² Much more concerned by the binary opposition existing between labour and work, he summarises the mediating role of architecture in his writings on “critical regionalism”:

I wish to employ the term [of critical regionalism] to allude to a hypothetical and real condition in which a local culture or architecture is consciously evolved in express opposition to the domination of hegemonic power. In my view, this is a theory of building which, while accepting the potentially liberative role of modernization, resists being totally absorbed by forms of optimized production and consumption.¹⁶³

161. Kenneth Frampton, *Labour, Work and Architecture: Collected Essays on Architecture and Design* (London ; New York: Phaidon Press, 2002), 39.

162. Ibid., 42.

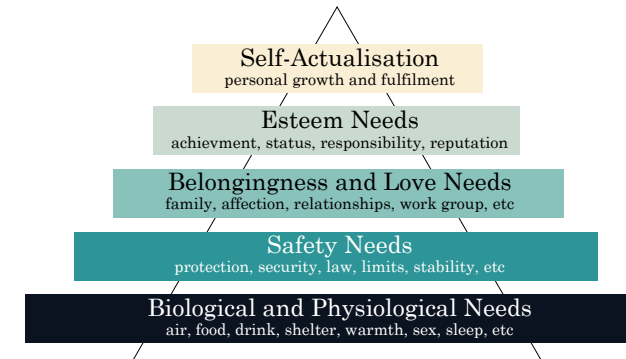
163. Kenneth Frampton, *Place-Form and Cultural Identity*, in *Design after Modernism*, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 59, quoted in K. Michael Hays, ed., *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1998), 359.

Labour prevails over work and action, both because it is responsible for the reproduction of labour power in the household, and for the simple fact that it cannot totally cease to exist as an activity assisting biological processes. In this context, is it possible to rethink housing typologies in ways that foreground action in a more balanced way? As Pier Vittorio Aureli put it, also in reference to Arendt, is it possible “to define domestic space as a space of **reciprocity** and emancipation rather than of exploitation”?¹⁶⁴ In the case of ageing, we need to focus on imagining a “spatial practice that operates beyond a focus on primary physical needs (baseline questions around mobility and access, for instance), and developing other forms of practice – and representation.”¹⁶⁵

To start a reflection on forms of life and their representation in light of the present demographic changes, it is helpful to establish some basic correlations between spatial archetypes and the three modes of activity: labour, work and action. Labour — could be seen to correspond to institutionalised living arrangements for old people, like nursing homes or hospices, the bathroom, or schools since the institutions’ goal is also to maintain labour power. Work — could generally be associated with monuments, factories, farms, a table, or an atelier. Action — could be reflected in the agora, or in any spaces for collective rituals like mourning. The goal of this work is to rethink dwelling and domesticity in architectural typologies in ways that foster “*vita activa*” but not “active ageing”. For example, in the case of labour, some of these archetypes are helpful in “assisting” or “maintaining” the life functions of the elderly. For work, on the other hand, retrieves an aspect of “making” whereby people can express their subjectivity, thus becoming closer to the idea of action. If the three actions are combined, they achieve *vita activa* and can thus generate prototypes for living that go beyond the family. In the case of many typologies of communal dwelling, domestic space is often combined with workspace, an aspect that Pier Vittorio Aureli defends today, as contemporary life increasingly merges work and life (he develops this idea together with Martino Tattara, in an essay called *Living*

164. Dogma, ‘Living and Working: How To Live Together’.

165. Sophie Handler, ‘An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook’ (2014), 29.

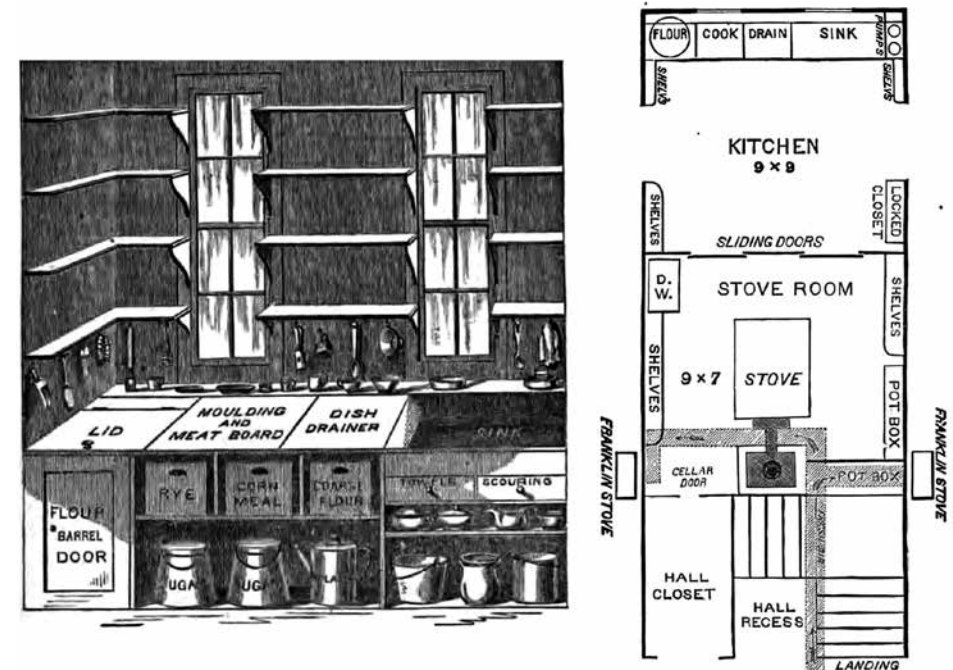


Above: Maslow's hierarchy of needs, 1943

Below: Same but inverted, to think beyond physical needs:

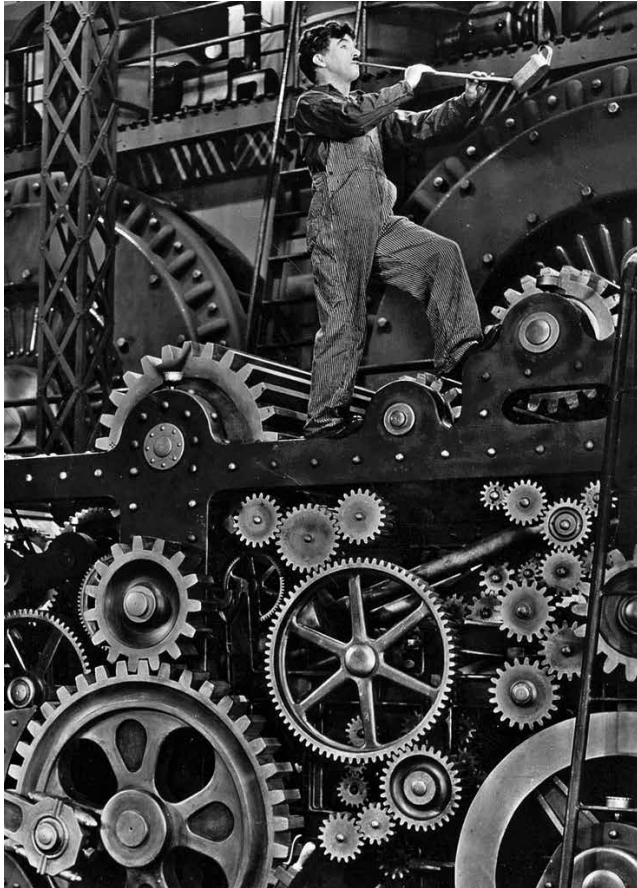
“Actions and interventions engage as much with older people’s social, emotional and political relationships to [the built] environment — as much as the ground-level physical features of a place.” From Sophie Handler, *An Alternative Age-Friendly Handbook*, 2014, 29

And Working: How To Live Together). In the case of ageing, what is observed most often is a blending of domesticity and **care**. Care appears as “part of normal housing environment [a]nd vice versa: the care concepts employed in the design of residential homes increasingly resemble normal, everyday living accommodation.”¹⁶⁶ This emphasis on care creates an imbalance in the triad of *vita activa*, whereby labour becomes almost exclusively dominant, and work or action are nearly absent. Active ageing responds to this issue with a focus on productive work. This project will try to opt for a third way, by foregrounding non-productive work and action. This project’s case study of Monsanto is like a found object, carved forever inside and on top of granite stones. Can it avoid the current transformation process into a productive historical theme park for tourism? Ultimately, if it wants to survive and stay liveable it will need its last inhabitants. Ruins, a castle (an agora?), renovated roads, temporary inhabitants (tourists or the sons and daughters of the elderly left there), and vernacular houses will be some of the ingredients available to work out the thresholds between forms of life and imagine an architecture of liveability.

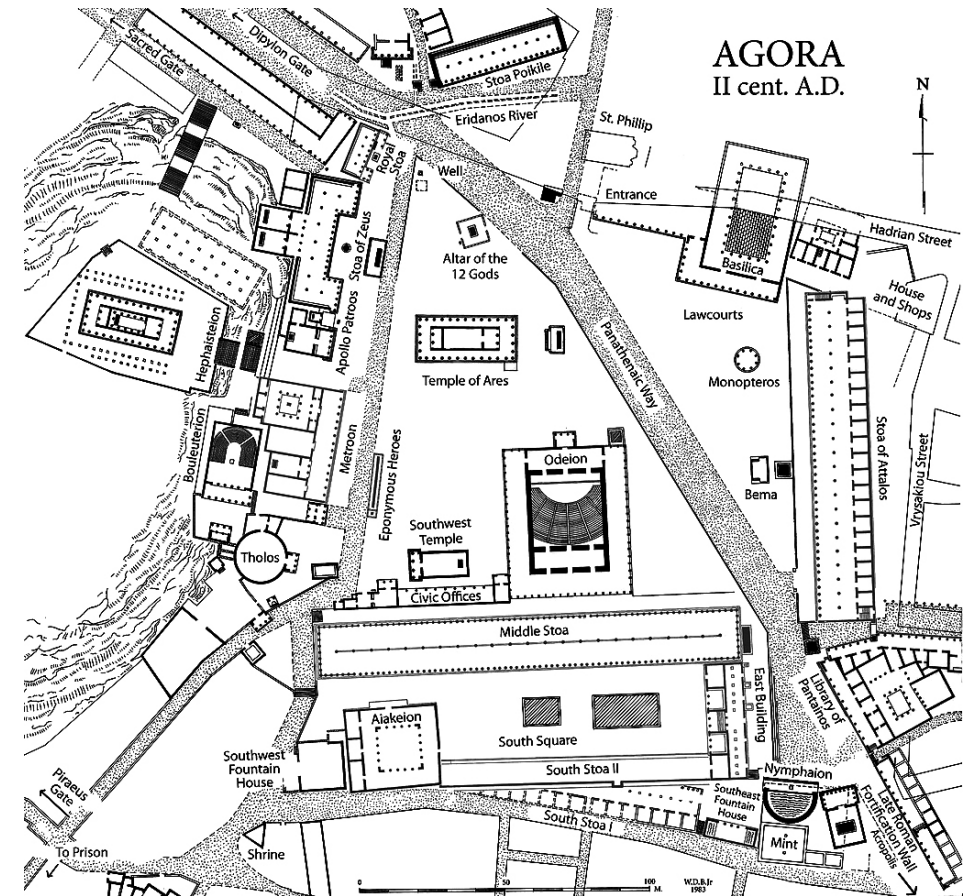


- LABOUR: Advice on the arrangement of the 1860s American kitchen from Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, in *The American Woman's Home: Or, Principles of Domestic Science*

166. Becker et al., *Netzwerk Wohnen*, 58.



- WORK: Charlie Chaplin, in *Modern Times*, 1936



- ACTION: Plan of the Agora at the height of its development in ca. 150 CE

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DK = Ensemble de Skråplanet,
Jonstrup, DK = Skråplanet
complex, Jonstrup, Denmark, in
*Bauen + Wohnen = Construction
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