

Regionales Bauen und Siedlungsplanung  
Faculty of Architecture and Landscape Sciences  
Leibniz Universität Hannover

Dipartimento di Architettura,  
Università degli Studi di Palermo

DAAD Hochschuldialog Südeuropa  
financed by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# DYNAMICS OF PERIPHERY

READER

International conference 20.05.2017  
Research colloquium 19.05.2017



DAAD Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa 2017-18  
Stipendien für DAAD-Praxisstudien, Austausch und Besuche  
Finanziert aus Mitteln des Auswärtigen Amtes DAAD



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Luciana Macaluso  
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### The Power of the Young Town. An Itinerary for Palermo

*«How beautiful nature in Michelangelo neighbourhood there was. [...] We cooked and ate in what would become our dining room. And also the children were bustled, we were the sons of the founding fathers of Michelangelo. We built huts [...] with those things that the workers left unused [...]. In the back of the construction site, behind the Islamic garden, there was an abandoned house that belonged to a duke, a count, a prince or maybe, why not, an emir». Nino Vetri, *Il Michelangelo*, Sellerio editore, Palermo 2015, p.10 and fol.*

In Italy, after the Second World War, according to Fanfani and Tupini's laws (1949), INA-casa and its procuring entities' ventures made a motor of urban renewal from the enthusiasm and the commitment of many entrepreneurs and public administrators. In Palermo, the agricultural lands began to include new neighbourhoods that quickly merged with the historic and nineteenth-twentieth century centre. In the fifties, between the town and its geographic limits (the mountains of the Corona dei Colli) a beltway has been hypothesized. It was a founding board (Culotta, 2005). In the sixties, it was the spine of an expanding urban fabric that absorbed citrus groves, vineyards, olive groves, field of flowers, gardens, rural buildings, warehouses, villas, and historical villages. This continuous town is about fifty years old: it is very young, considering the ancient core was founded in VI century B.C.. "Young" is intended as especially dynamic, heterogeneous, creative and, potentially, ecological, like the compact city is not. Its inertia against physical changes is slighter, indeed human action is very powerful, consequently also possibly dangerous. The risk is a cancellation of identities and human traces: sometimes those are weak or hidden, in Palermo always present. In the Sixties and Seventies abstract plans often prevailed on the rural heritage, however a cultural change, in which the progressive awareness of environmental pre-existences (Rogers 1958) had an important role, made architects and planners more and more sensitive about the marks of the territories. Two previous researches - MIUR PRIN 2007 "Design and Updating of Public Housing in southern and central Italy" (national coordinator B. Todaro) and the exhibition in Rome "Looking for a normal town. The role of the public housing in the growth of the Italian towns in the last 50 years" (15th April - 15th June, State Archive, Rome) - are the scientific base to deepen analogies and differences between three neighbourhoods of Palermo: ZEN, Borgo Ulivia and Public Housing of Villabate. The aim is a focus on the spaces between and around the buildings (on their identities, scales, sizes, geography, social practices) to explain their potential in terms of innovation and interconnection between anisotropic parts. Text and drawings will "tell a story" (B. Secchi 1992) about possible positive futures of these neighbourhoods. While in the cases of Borgo Ulivia and Villabate, general visions almost in a territorial scale will be presented, for the example of ZEN also a zoom will be shown. It is an architectural proposal about an urban completion and a new infrastructural connection useful to argue a strongly inter-scalar approach.

Luciana Macaluso (1981) Architect and PhD in Architectural Design. She works at the Department of Architecture of Palermo, taught at the University of Palermo and at the University of Parma. Among her publications: *The Main Church of Gibellina* (Roma, 2013) and *Rural-urban Intersections* (Parma, 2016).

## IMPRINT

DYNAMICS OF PERIPHERY READER  
International conference 20.-21.05.2017  
Research Colloquium 19.05.2017

Edited by Jörg Schröder, Maurizio Carta, Maddalena Ferretti, Barbara Lino

Organised by the Institute of Urban Design and Planning, Leibniz Universität Hannover  
in cooperation with the Department of Architecture, Università degli Studi di Palermo.

Gefördert im Programm Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa des DAAD,  
finanziert mit Mitteln des Auswärtigen Amtes

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Design and editing: Jörg Schröder, Maddalena Ferretti, Julia Hermanns

Cover image: Jessica Smeralda Oliva

ISBN 978-3-946296-17-1

Regionales Bauen und Siedlungsplanung  
Leibniz Universität Hannover  
Herrenhäuser Str. 8, D-30419 Hannover  
www.staedtebau.uni-hannover.de

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**DAAD** Hochschuldialog mit Südeuropa 2017-18  
Gefördert durch DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst,  
finanziert aus Mitteln des Auswärtigen Amtes (AA).