

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE COMMONS THROUGH THE TRIAD OF DWELLING, SOCIALISATION AND PRODUCTION

A methodology applied to the area of influence of the *Llobregat* River  
(Catalonia).

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### Abstract:

The *Llobregat* River crosses the Province of Barcelona (in the north-east of the Iberian Peninsula) shaping an important territorial axis. It has always been a **common resource** of great relevance that ensured the subsistence of several communities that inhabited its area of influence.

The river also played a key role in the industrialisation of Catalonia, which paradoxically caused the **enclosure of part of its course** (or at least its uses). Especially since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, private rights to use the river have prevailed over several of the traditional common uses. The old communal mills were disentrained or sold at low cost to become factories. Water became the main source of energy to feed the industries (mainly textiles) settled along the course of the river. Despite the enclosures, the process created a sequence of industrial complexes, which broadened the common heritage legacy.

When the crisis of the industrial model hit Catalonia (at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), neither the owners of the factories, nor the public administration were able to find a solution to stop the social and heritage decline. Nevertheless, when new commons started to rise globally, this industrial heritage began to be **vindicated by grassroots as a common landscape**.

This historical *round-trip back to commons* transformed the territory and the architecture around the *Llobregat* River. This article analyses this spatial evolution, emphasising the relationship of the commons and three fundamental needs of humankind: dwelling, socialisation and production. Finally, the investigation draws some conclusions about the **relation between changes in cooperation and the functions of space**.

**Keywords:** *Llobregat* River (Catalonia), functions of space, commons, cooperation

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## INTRODUCTION

“Biopolitical production is an orchestra keeping the beat without a conductor, and it would fall silent if anyone were to step onto the podium.” (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p. 173)

There are plenty of studies that address the evolution of the common (goods)<sup>5</sup> from a global perspective<sup>6</sup>, defending that they have *always* existed in many cultures around the world. There has also been research that complements the previous studies, approaching this phenomenon from a local perspective<sup>7</sup>, by analysing cases related to a specific geographic and cultural area that allow to verify the main general theories in specific contexts<sup>8</sup>. Both approaches point out that **the commons have experimented a historical round-trip back**: commons, which have been of paramount importance to the survival of rural communities since ancient times and during the Middle Ages, were heavily damaged by the enclosures<sup>9</sup> (that made industrialisation possible) and began a come-back from the 1980s to present day<sup>10</sup>. Another consensus amongst scholars that study the commons is their identification with **community self-management and horizontal cooperation practices**<sup>11</sup>. This does not mean that their management lacks rules or laws that regulate their accessibility and use, but rather that such rules are often set by their users in progressive adjustment and negotiation processes that can last decades or even centuries (Ostrom, 1990). Therefore, **the history of the commons is also a story that describes the evolution of cooperative processes**.

Although these studies usually come from social sciences or philosophy, this article addresses a **complementary approach to the phenomenon from the point of view of architecture and urbanism**, disciplines that have great potential to reconstruct at least part of the story of the commons. The purpose of this paper is not to theorise about their global history nor to do a legal or economic analysis of the phenomenon, but rather to **inquire into some of the spatial**

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<sup>5</sup> “[Commons are] a **social system for managing shared wealth**, usually with an emphasis on fairness, transparency and sustainability. So it is the resource, the community and the systems they devised: the traditions, the rituals, the ways of managing it effectively.” (David Bollier and Holland Cooke, 2016)

<sup>6</sup> In this area, the work of Petter Linebaugh stands out (2008), in which he connects the Zapatista uprising of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation in 1994, in Chiapas, Mexico, with the Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest signed by King John of England in Runnymede in 1215; as does the work of Elinor Ostrom (1990), who analyses several case studies from around the world.

<sup>7</sup> Some examples in this line are the work of Álvaro Sevilla Buitrago, in which, by studying the British enclosures prior to industrialisation, he reinterprets the origins of urban planning as a facilitating instrument for the economic transformations that gave rise to capitalism (Sevilla Buitrago, 2010). In the Catalan context, on which this paper focuses, we would highlight the work of David Algarra (2015) on the *Catalan comú*, in which he reviews the history of popular self-organisation practices, dismantling the belief – supported by many historians – that the history of Catalonia evolved with no influence for common goods and community self-management.

<sup>8</sup> This approach could be linked to the historiographic line of *Annales* (Annales, no date), inaugurated in the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, or with the studies of the *cultural history* (Burke, 2014) that emerged from the 1970s.

<sup>9</sup> Marx defines the concept of “enclosures” in the chapter called “The Secret of Primitive Accumulation” of *Capital. Volume I*. In it, he describes the process of closing and privatisation of English common lands in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in favour of landlords (Marx, 1976b).

<sup>10</sup> However, it is true that the chronology of these cycles varies depending on the case studied.

<sup>11</sup> “The concept of the common is as powerfully suggestive as it is ambiguous. Evidence of this is the growing interest that it has experienced in the past years and that it covers areas and aspirations that are so diverse that they are sometimes opposing, but they share a transformative vision of cities and society that is based on cooperation.” (Cámara Menoyo *et al.*, 2018)

**manifestations of the common in the Barcelona’s context**, as a follow-up account to the studies mentioned above.

To do so, we take a panoramic approach to the evolution of the commons in the area of influence of the *Llobregat* River, a **common resource of great historical relevance in the territorial articulation of various cooperative processes**. In this context, the goal is to prove the hypothesis that, at least in the cases analysed, **the way in which a community cooperates has a spatial manifestation in the habitats that it builds**. To verify to what extent this is true, we **compare** a selection of case studies related to the *Llobregat* that illustrate the local story of the *round-trip back of commons*. We pay special attention to the relationship that is established in each period between three vital functions<sup>12</sup> of human habitats: dwelling, socialisation and production, as we feel that they play a key role in characterising the cooperation<sup>13</sup> spaces.

The article is structured in three parts, this introduction aside. In the first one, we justify the importance of undertaking analysis that focusses on **three essential needs of humankind**. In the next section, we reconstruct a **panoramic outlook on the story of the round-trip back of the commons in the area of influence of the Llobregat River, summarising the three cycles of its evolution** (mainly in cooperative and spatial terms). We illustrate the process with a selection of some **case studies that are representative of each period**. In each of them, we see the tendency of the three functions mentioned in the previous section to converge or to segregate. The article closes with some conclusions about this evolution and with a series of questions that suggest some following work lines.

## **1. DWELLING, SOCIALISATION AND PRODUCTION: THREE ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF HUMANKIND AND THREE FUNDAMENTAL FUNCTIONS OF SPACE**

In every geographic and cultural context, the need that sedentary human beings have always had to settle or **dwell** in one place and protect themselves from inclement conditions is translated into unique architectures and cultural landscapes. It would be difficult for these forms to emerge without the need for **socialisation**, another characteristic that defines human essence. Similarly, to complement this adaptation process, humankind also needs to **produce** food, tools, goods or knowledge. A diffuse cloud of related activities is formed around the three main needs of humankind. For example: the need for a place to live responds not only to the desire to settle somewhere and seek shelter from the hostile environment, but also to the will to generate the optimum conditions to rest, bathe and feed in; activities like education, exchange or celebration revolve around socialisation; while activities such as manufacturing, cultivating or trade coexist around production.

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<sup>12</sup> We refer here to “the essence of the concept of function – the active relationship of parts and the whole.” (Poerschke, 2016, p. 208)

<sup>13</sup> Here we use a broad definition of the concept of cooperation: “To collaborate with another person or with others in order to achieve a common purpose.” (Real Academia Española dictionary, 2018). This approach includes models such as horizontal cooperation, which tends to be linked to the commons, but also hierarchical cooperation models that Marx referred to in his definition of capitalist production (Marx, 1976a, pp. 17–34).



FIG.01 Dwelling-socialisation-production and cloud of associated activities. Prepared by the authors

Although certain similarities could be established between these three needs and the four functions – *dwelling, work, recreation and transport* – defined by the architects of the CIAM (the International Congress of Modern Architecture<sup>14</sup>), in this article we use broader categories that allow us to compare historical periods in which the spheres of life and space are not as segregated as in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Before industrialisation, *wage work* was much less widespread than nowadays. In regard to *recreation*, there was no specific time for it and it was often linked to productive activities. While it is true that there have always been movements, *transport* has never played as important a role as in modern cities (after the development of private vehicles and other means of communication). Like in preindustrial times, it is now becoming increasingly difficult to identify the limits between the four functions established in the Athens Charter.

It is important to point out that we refer to this triad of human needs as a **tool for analysis** that will allow us **to compare**, in the following paragraphs, the functions of the spaces in different historical periods. In no way do we intend to reopen the debate – possibly already rendered obsolete – on the zoning of these functions through architectural and urban design.

## 2. THE ROUND-TRIP BACK TO COMMONS IN THE AREA OF INFLUENCE OF THE LLOBEGRAT RIVER

In this section, we approach briefly some local manifestations of *the round-trip back to the commons*<sup>15</sup> mentioned above. We are particularly interested in the spatial expressions of this secular evolution of cooperation. Therefore, we focus on how some communities in this area have shaped the architecture and territory throughout history. In order to be able to compare the evolution of the spaces built, we looked at the relationship of the triad described in the previous section during each period.

<sup>14</sup> As Poerschke states (2016), the definition of these four functions, described in *The Athens Charter* (Le Corbusier, 1943), was not exempt of debate.

<sup>15</sup> See further: (Rocamonde and Alvaredo, 2018).

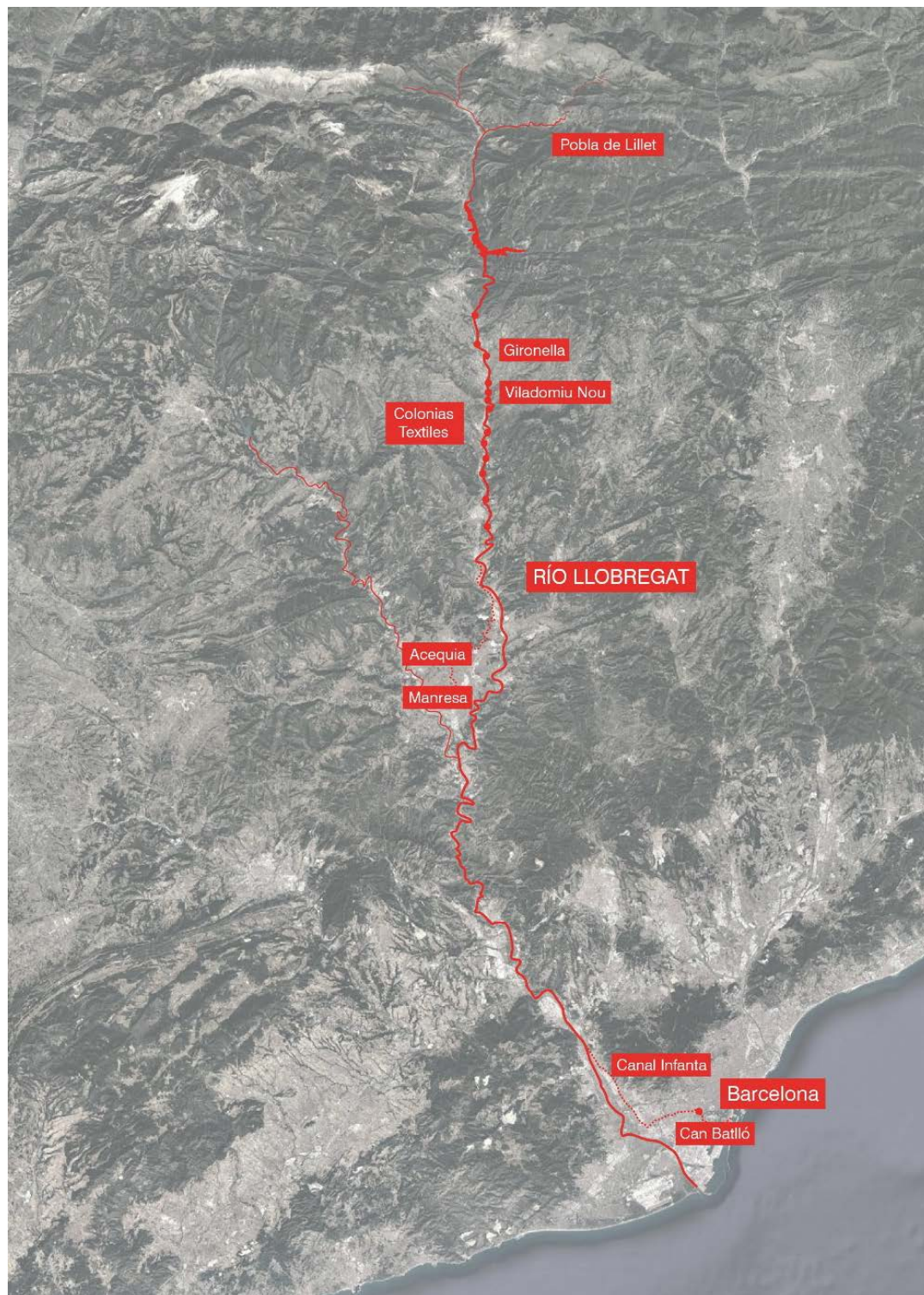


FIG. 02 The *Llobregat* River. Source: GoogleEarth. (Annotations on the original)

**The importance of the commons over more than 1000 years of rural self-management**

The *Llobregat* River is a common resource that crosses the Province of Barcelona, from the Pyrenees to the Mediterranean Sea, establishing an axis of great historical relevance in the territorial articulation of Catalonia (Sabaté Bel *et al.*, 2001). Since ancient times, communities cooperate in its area of influence to survive in the best possible way in the face of the challenges posed by the physical and social environment. The canals and irrigation ditches that carry water

to the main towns and water the croplands (some examples are the Manresa irrigation ditch, *Rec Vell* or the *Infanta Canal*), or carry water to the mills that use its hydraulic energy to grind the grain or work the iron, are only some examples of the heritage that reflects the community cooperation processes catalysed by the river.

As illustrated by David Algarra (2015), in Catalonia, at least since the fall of the Roman Empire<sup>16</sup> until the triumph of the liberal revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, **common goods that were self-managed by the peasants** (through the local general meetings, referred to as *Universitas*, *open councils* or *commons*<sup>17</sup>) are of paramount importance in rural life. In addition to forests, meadows, crop fields or irrigation ditches, communal property includes structures like furnaces (usually integrated in a group of houses<sup>18</sup>), forges or mills (Algarra Bascón, 2015, p. 77,78). The latter also accustomed to complement productive spaces (workrooms) with quarters for the miller and other annexed spaces that are characteristic of rural houses, such as stables or coops (Bolòs and Nuet, 1983, p. 23,24). Apart from **production** and **dwelling**, mills also play a key role in **socialisation**, combining traditional rites and celebrations. One example of this is *Els Molliners* (*the millers*), an old celebration at Pobla de Lillet, which, until 1924, took place on the Fat Tuesday in front of the local mill, the *Molí de la Vila*<sup>19</sup> (Fàbregas, 2000).

The flour mill in *Gironella*, built before 1328<sup>20</sup>, illustrates perfectly the importance of common goods for rural subsistence. Even though, since the Middle Ages, mills were feudal possessions<sup>21</sup>, in 1643, the *Gironella* Common signed an agreement with the baron in order to use the mill in exchange for an annual census. Since then and until the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was managed by locals, becoming **a communal infrastructure and an essential source of income**<sup>22</sup> for the common (Busquets, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> “During the High Middle Ages, the rural communities organised themselves following their own habits and customs. It is difficult to know what was discussed in the collective meetings before the year 1000, as they were not put in writing, but we know how they organised themselves thanks to later documents, in which the potentates, who tried to win people over, endorsed something that had already been that way for a while, usually through the city charters.” (Algarra Bascón, 2015, p. 53)

<sup>17</sup> “The *Universitas* or the Common (*Comú*) was not an abstract entity, but the whole community.” (Algarra Bascón, 2015, pp. 55–56). Originally, these *Universitas*, also called open or general councils, were general meetings that included all of the families. Subsequently, they progressively turned into closed councils (with elected representatives) and, after the triumph of the liberal state, they were replaced by constitutional city councils, the representative body we know today (Algarra Bascón, 2015).

<sup>18</sup> The Jussà furnace (one of the two communal furnaces in Cardona) was located on the southern side of what today is the Santa Eulàlia square, and is part of the set of houses that made up, between the 11<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the public space named square of Cardona. It had a colonnade where commercial activities took place, which during the Late Middle Ages became the centre of the town's life and the prime living location for the wealthiest villagers, together with the Market square.” (Ajuntament de Cardona Unitat d’Urbanisme i Obres, 2015)

<sup>19</sup> In other areas of the Iberian Peninsula, this link is even more evident, as proven by the Galician folk songs that associate the mill with a certain sassiness – they were seen as places of celebration, where men courted the women that were there grinding. Examples: “Unha noite no muiño, unha noite non é nada. Unha semana enteira, eso si que é muiñada”. “O muiño non é Muiño, que é a capela dos ratos, donde se daban os bicos e mail-os moitos abrazos”. More evidence of the importance of mills in socialisation in Galicia is their link to folk dance, which is called *muiñeira* (López Témez, no date).

<sup>20</sup> Although its construction date is unknown, the oldest document about this mill is from 1328 (Busquets, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> As David Algarra states: “Property in the Middle Ages was not as we understand it today, but joint or community ownership, also referred to as co-ownership, a type of legal relationship in which multiple subjects shared the ownership of a thing.” (Algarra Bascón, 2015, p. 88). Translation of the text in Catalan. Manors were subject to a series of commitments with the community, based on ancient practices and customs. Although it was not always necessary, since these rights were often exercised without royal authorisation, sometimes the lords recognised them legally through charters of settlement or other concessions (Algarra Bascón, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> “...the revenues of the flour mill, managed by Josep Rosa, were 3,145.16 *reales* (...) and represented more than half of the municipal revenues, which added up to a total of 6,019 *reales* and 16 *marevadies*.” (Busquets, 2000, p. 22)

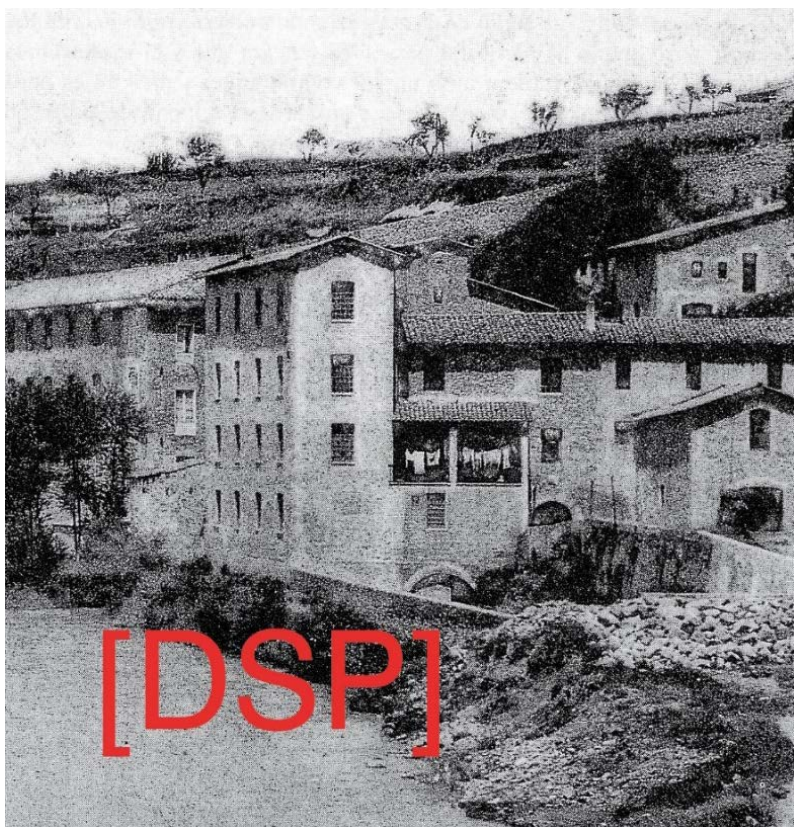


FIG. 03 At Gironella Communal Mill converge [D]welling, [S]ocialisation and [P]roduction. Source: (Busquets *et al.*, 1999) (Annotations on the original)

As the country houses (*masías*) and manors (*casas pairales*) prove, before industrialisation, the overlap of functions in the same building was not exclusive to the architectures of the common. An example of this is the *Teixidor Bassacs* manor (located in the *Plaça de la Vila* of Gironella), where, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a textile production system<sup>23</sup> similar to the English *putting-out* is managed. In it, the traditional peasant family complements the limited resources obtained from agriculture<sup>24</sup> – mainly from the wine sector, under *rabassa morta*<sup>25</sup> agreement – with the production for artisans, with domestic looms or spinning machines. This house and workshop, built before the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>26</sup>, consists of a lower floor, two additional floors and an mezzanine. The textile workshop was on the ground floor. In 1861, it had ten manual looms, a plotter and a machine to wind bobbins (Serra Rotés, 2013). The first floor was where the service and the children of the family lived. *Raimunda Bassacs* (1818-1883) and *Joan Teixidor* (1809<sup>27</sup>-1891) had separate bedrooms on the second floor, where there was an additional bedroom that was probably used by their firstborn<sup>28</sup>. The building clearly illustrates some characteristics of a

<sup>23</sup> "the urban area was the organising centre and the surrounding country houses worked for it: some carded the wool, others spun and others wove." (Correa Lloreda, 2003, p. 25)

<sup>24</sup> "The agricultural yields are not enough to guarantee the reproduction of the family unit. The woman works for a wool carder and complements the man's agricultural income." translation of (Vall i Casas, 1999, p. 14)

<sup>25</sup> "The contract requires the plantation of vines and the payment of a quarter of its fruits. The contract is valid as long as the vines live. This means that small-scale farmers have access to partial ownership of land, which stimulates labour investment." (Vall i Casas, 1999, p. 14)

<sup>26</sup> Although the exact date it was built is unknown, its location in the historic centre indicates that it is one of the oldest buildings in the area. It is known that it was restored in 1800 and, since then, it maintains the same overall structure, although after that it underwent at least two important renovations.

<sup>27</sup> Depending on the source consulted, Joan Teixidor was born in 1807 or 1809.

<sup>28</sup> According to the testimony collected by Joan Ramón Ruiz (current owner of the house) from one of the house's servants, at least *Dolors Teixidor Bassacs* left this room when she married and abandoned the family house.

**society that started to lay the foundations for industrialisation.** As J.M. Montaner states when he analyses the artisan housing in Barcelona's Gothic quarter: "The artisan family or family of craftsmen was also a production unit, a vocational training centre, a tax unit and a care centre." (Montaner, 1985, p. 2) Just like that case, **the Gironella home and workshop is a reflection of the artisan families of the time and integrates all the activities of their daily lives, combining dwelling, socialisation and production.**

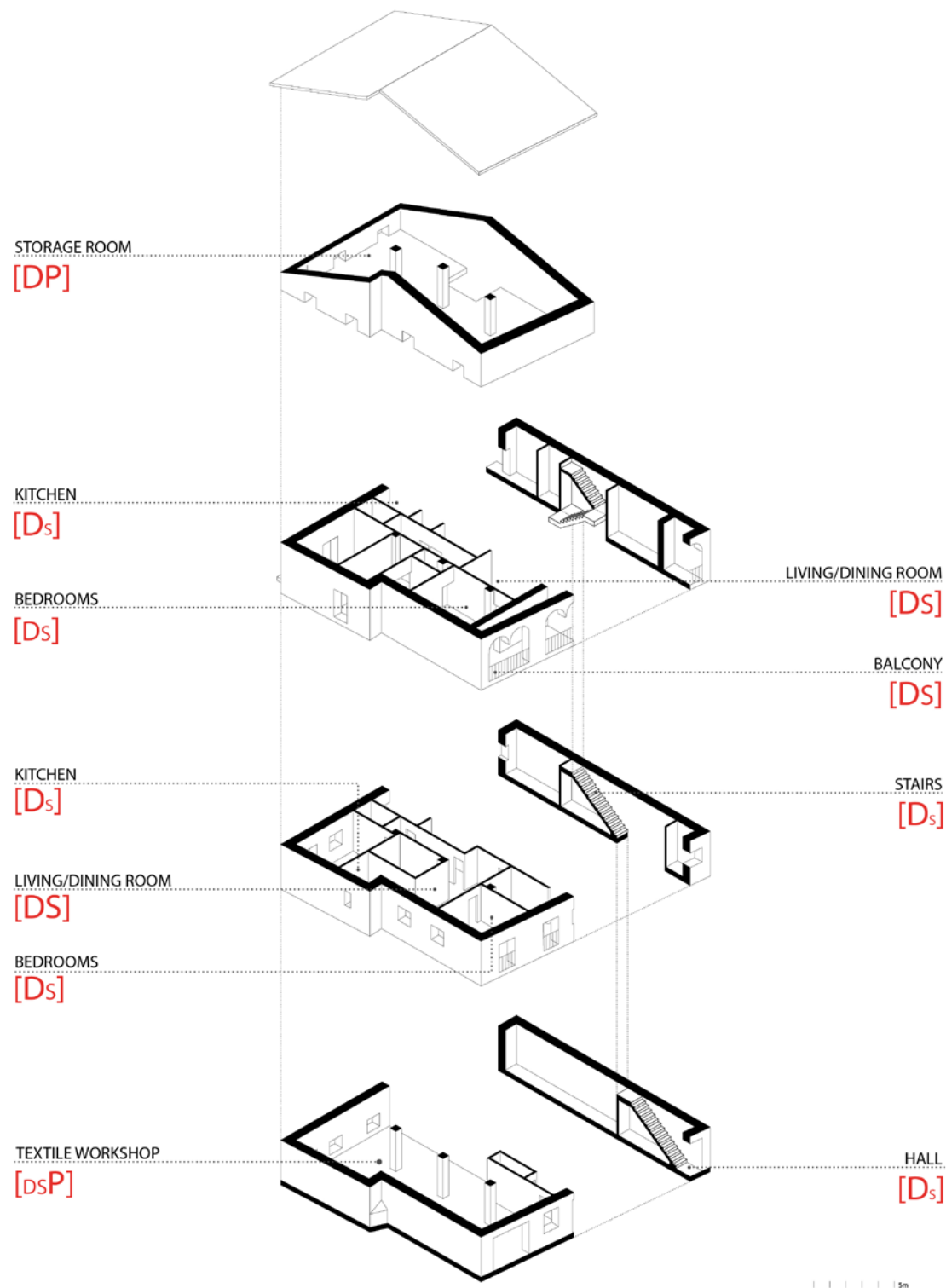


FIG. 04 [D]welling, [S]ocialisation and [P]roduction at Manor *Teixidor-Bassacs*. Prepared by the authors

### ***The enclosure of the Llobregat and the rise of individualistic paternalism***

As Marx remarked when he described the enclosures in England (Marx, 1976b), in Catalonia there are many documented conflicts (in and outside the courts) over the communal control that confronted the peasants with the royalty, nobility and clergy (Algarra Bascón, 2015). This secular dispute comes to an end in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, leading to the disappearance of self-managed commons in Catalonia<sup>29</sup>. An example of this happens when Gironella's communal mill was disentailed in 1860 to open a textile factory (Busquets, 2000). And this practice became quite common in that time<sup>30</sup>.

From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some artisan families (such as the *Teixidor-Bassacs*) began to establish the textile colonies of the *Baix Berguedà*: a system of 15 industrial complexes along 20 kilometres of the *Llobregat River* (between *Plá del Bages* and the Pre-Pyrenees). Apart from a factory, the colonies included the homes and all the services necessary to become self-contained population centres. However, as we will proof in this article, specialised architectural types emerge for each function.

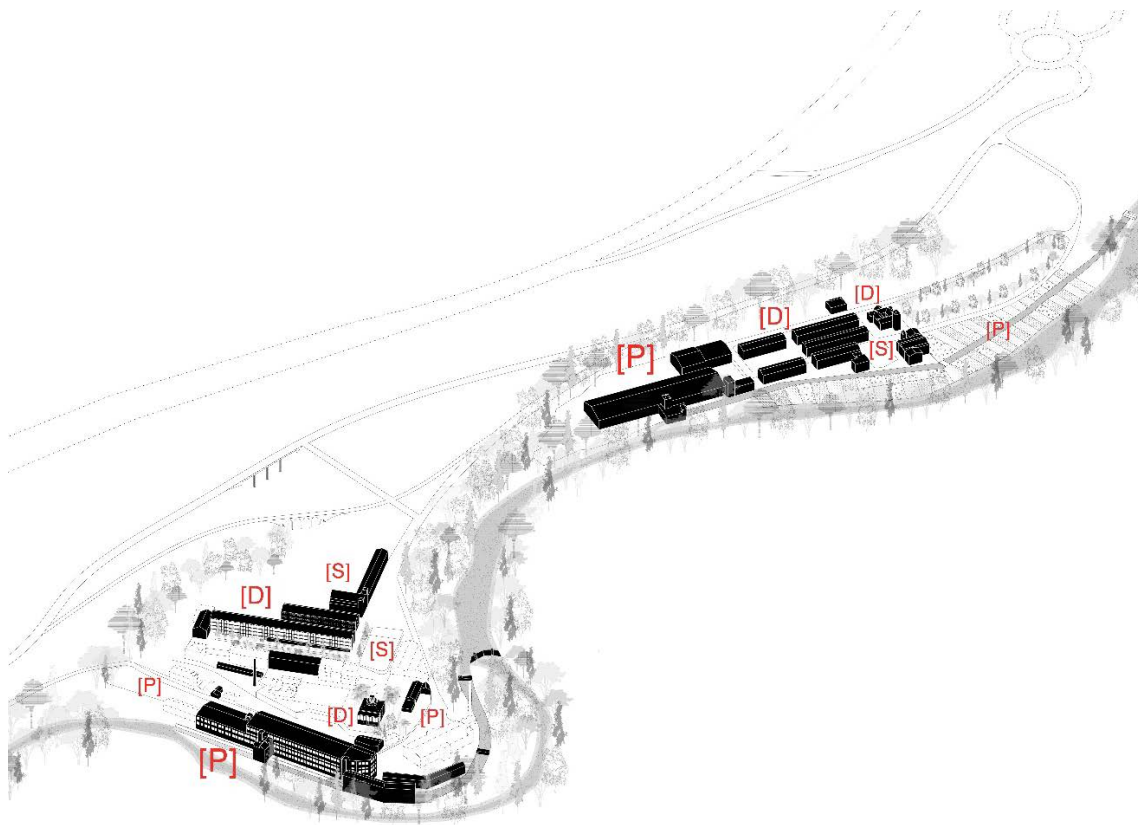


FIG. 05 Zoning of [D]welling, [S]ocialisation and [P]roduction in *Viladomiu Nou* and *Vell*. Prepared by the authors.

Apart from perfecting the traditional craft of textile workers (like the *Teixidor-Bassacs*) and taking advantage of the availability of labour willing to accept harsh working conditions, a fundamental political factor also lied behind the surge of these colonies. Since the second third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the middle of the rise of the liberal ideology, the Government created a

<sup>29</sup> “In Catalonia, the common as such, self-managed by the local community without state interference, ended in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after the third Carlist war (Algarra Bascón, 2015, p. 257).” Translation of the text in Catalan.

<sup>30</sup> “A lot 18<sup>th</sup>-century mills, established during the commercial expansion of cereal farming, use the location and often even the buildings of medieval mills. The economic ruin of the farmers that own these mills in periods of poor harvest allows the industrial sector to buy their assets at a low cost.” (Vall Casas and Sabaté Bel, 1997)

very favourable legal framework<sup>31</sup> to enable the private sector to colonise and modernise the territory. For the industrial entrepreneurs that founded the colonies, this implied tax benefits (they were often exempt from paying taxes in the municipalities where they were placed), political power (in the colonies their authority was almost absolute, and, with the success of the industry, they soon became very relevant figures abroad as well) and a free energy source (they were allowed to use and make profit off of river water without paying anything back to the community).

The colony masters also rely on the principles of the *Rerum Novarum* promoted by parish priests to impose a "paternalistic social project" (Enrech, 2005) – a type of relationship that closely monitors every aspect of the working and domestic life of labourer families. Unlike the rural self-management that we mentioned in the previous section, a **hierarchical model of cooperation** was introduced in the colonies, in which the master enforced the rules that the workers should follow, always with the objective of increasing the efficiency of textile production.

In terms of space, this new cooperation method leads to the emergence of new types of buildings and urban structures. **If, previously, dwelling, socialisation and production came together in the same building** (country houses, mills, furnaces or manor houses), **there was now a specific place to dwell** (the housing blocks for workers were separated from the masters' towers), other places to **produce** (the factories and warehouses) **and others to socialise** (the public spaces, the theatre, the café...).

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<sup>31</sup> The main objective during the creation of the Spanish liberal State from 1833 to 1868 is the modernisation of the countryside. To do so, a series of pieces of legislation are passed, such as disentail laws (Mendizábal, 1836 and Madoz, 1855), or the colonies laws of 1866 (to promote rural communities; completed with the Water Law) and of 1868 (which sets the foundations for the real development of industrial colonies) (Serra Rotés, 2010, p. 242).

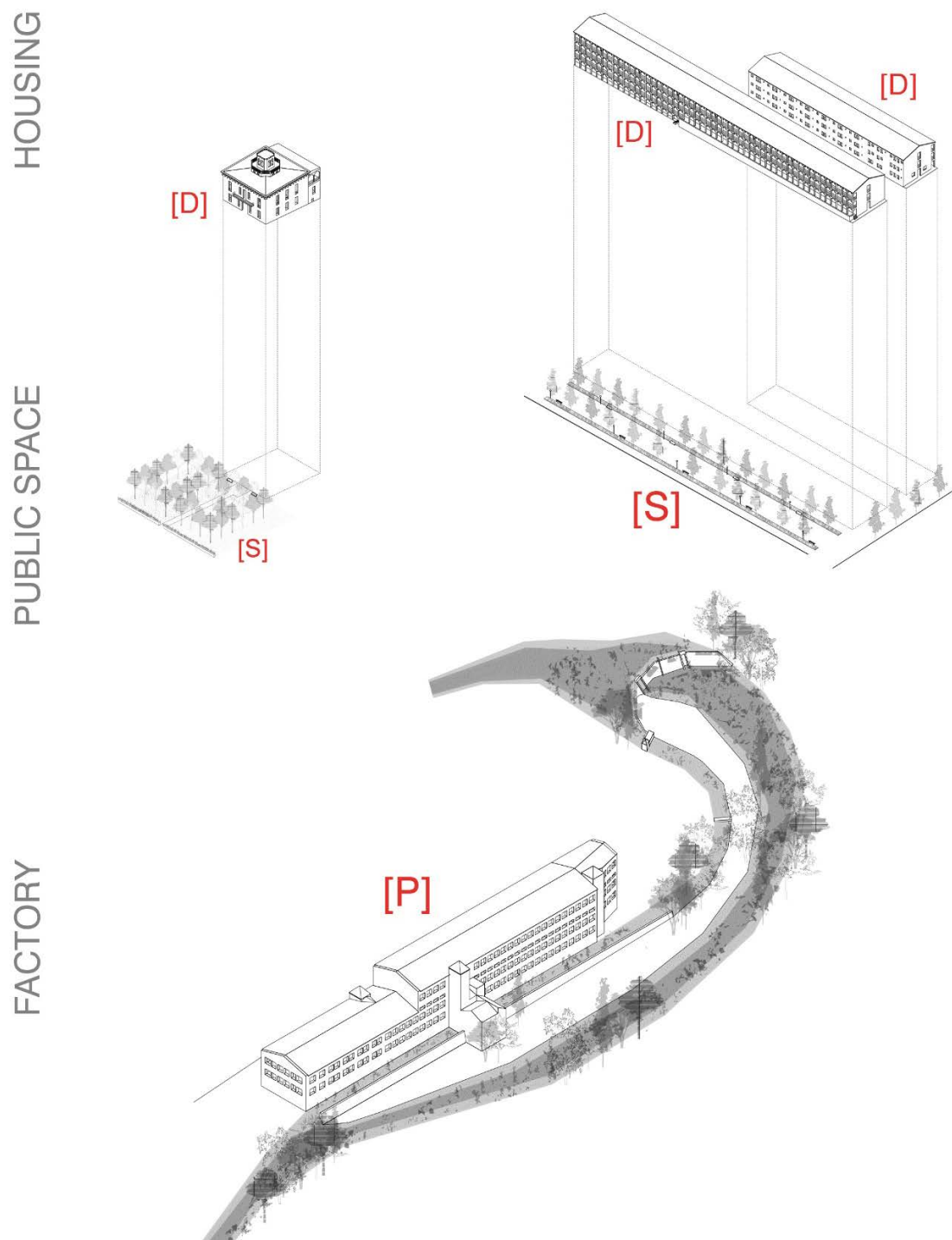


FIG.06 Monofunctional Industrial Spaces: masters' towers and housing blocks for workers (Dwelling), Public Space (Socialisation) and factory (Production). Prepared by the authors.

Another case study, connected to the *Llobregat* through the *Infanta Canal*<sup>32</sup>, is the *Can Batlló* industrial complex, which became operational in 1880 in what today is the neighbourhood of *La*

<sup>32</sup> The Infanta Canal, built from 1817 to 1820 in Lower *Llobregat* along the left bank of the river, is another example of how local communities cooperate to broaden the area of influence of the river to water their crops (Alba Molina and Aso Pérez, 2008a, 2008b; Castillo Caso, 2014). Although *Can Batlló* did not use water from the Infanta Canal to move the looms, the main requirements that its promoter had to establish the new industry there are the availability

*Bordeta*, in Barcelona. The factory was built in a former farm called *Can Mangala* (La Col, 2013, p. 45). Unlike the textile colonies in *Baix Berguedà*, the fact that the workers were closer to the factories and that the immediate surroundings could be urbanised<sup>33</sup> made it unnecessary to build large residential blocks within the premises, so most of the space was dedicated to productive activities. As we will see in the next section, this case study is a paradigmatic example to illustrate the changes in the ways of cooperation after the crisis of the industrial model.

### ***The return of commons and the rise of a new self-management system***

The hierarchical cooperation that had allowed industrialisation to take place became a burden in the post-industrial era, when the collective and intangible production methods proliferate, when surplus value emerges in everyday encounters, connecting work, leisure and culture (Hardt and Negri, 2009). The rigidity of the hierarchical model prevents the management of these industries from adapting to the new production methods of the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

“With reference to large-scale industry, Marx recognizes that the essential role of the capitalist in the production process, which is clearly linked to the mechanism of exploitation, is to provide cooperation, that is, bring workers together in the factory, given them the tools to work together, furnish a plan to cooperate, and enforce their cooperation. The capitalist ensures cooperation (...) In biopolitical production, however, capital does not determine the cooperative arrangement, or at least not to the same extent. Cognitive labour and affective labour generally produce cooperation autonomously from capitalist command...” (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p. 140)

The crisis of the textile industry at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century hits Catalonia and the textile colonies go into irreversible decline. The crisis quickly spreads to other industrial sectors. The factories that could be found throughout Catalonia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century no longer have a place in a global context in which the widespread availability of electricity and the possibility to transport commodities easily and affordably leads to the relocation of production with cheaper labour.

Having lost their productive vocation, many manufacturing plants are abandoned. The situation of the *Berguedà* colonies is especially difficult, as a lot of former employees still have their homes there. However, the city of Barcelona is not immune to this reality, and many of its factories are also progressively abandoned. Neither the private nor the public sectors are able to find a solution to the deterioration of this rich industrial heritage that is left on standby, waiting for property development to be profitable again.

In the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, the civil society takes control over the situation after decades of empowerment<sup>34</sup> and starts reclaiming some of these industrial complexes. In some cases, the inhabitants of the industrial plants are who step up and place value on their homes. Such is the case of the textile colonies where, with the support of a large group of experts (VV.AA., 2005; Sabaté Bel *et al.*, 2007), the cohesive local community appropriates<sup>35</sup> them. In other cases, even if they do not live on the plants themselves, the residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods

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of water from the Infanta Canal and the possibility to let the factory's waste water flow through the adjacent properties (La Col, 2013, p. 36).

<sup>33</sup> Given the socioeconomic importance of *Can Batlló's* textile activity, the urban and demographic growth of La Bordeta was closely linked to the evolution of the factory.

<sup>34</sup> It is important to highlight the long tradition of community movements in Catalonia: popular, republican and libertarian ateneos; anarchist collectivisation during the civil war; neighbourhood associations and district assemblies; self-managed squatted social centres, which proliferate in the city in the 80s, 90s and until the early 2000s.

<sup>35</sup> Here, the term is used metaphorically, but also literally, as a lot of neighbours purchase the properties that used to belong to the owners of the colonies. In many cases, the town halls also buy them and take charge of these public spaces.

reclaim the factories. A successful example is *Can Batlló*, squatted<sup>36</sup> in 2011 by neighbours from *La Bordeta* and other neighbourhoods of Barcelona, where **they collectively create a self-managed social infrastructure** that includes a library, a meeting space, a centre to document social movements, a climbing wall, several workshops, a co-housing and a social economy cooperative incubator, amongst other initiatives (Can Batlló, 2019).

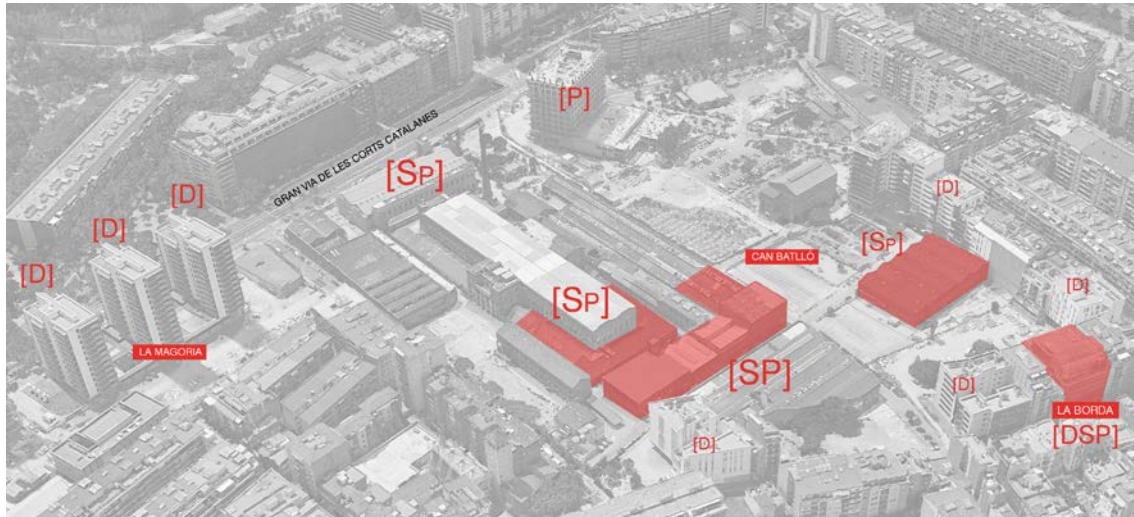


FIG.07 Convergence of [P]roduction, [S]ocialisation and [D]welling in *Can Batlló* and *La Borda*. Source: GoogleEarth. (Annotations on the original)

The process of community self-management that revitalised *Can Batlló* also catalysed the last case study of this paper: *La Borda*, a housing cooperative under the transfer-of-use scheme. This collective housing block is a **promotion that has been self-managed since 2012 by its residents**, with the objective of generating a non-speculative alternative that encourages the strengthening of community ties. As stated in the description<sup>37</sup> written by the team of architects that are leading the project in cooperation with the residents, **in this building, dwelling, socialisation and production converge once again.**

<sup>36</sup> The assembly of self-organised neighbours that launched the project threatened to squat the complex if the promised renovations were not done. However, before this happened, the owners (with the mediation of the city council) reached an agreement with the neighbours to give up one of the warehouses of the complex.

<sup>37</sup> "The project envisages 28 homes (40, 55 and 70m2) and different common areas, which should enhance community life through transitions between the private and the public spaces, to promote community life. These spaces are: kitchen-dining, a shared work space, a laundry room, a multi-purpose space, space for guests, a health and treatment space, a unit for plants and outside and semi-outside areas, such as the courtyard and the rooftops; They all revolve around a central courtyard, a large social interaction space that reminds of the *corralas*, a social and popular type of housing." (La Col, 2019). Translated from the text in Catalan.



FIG.08 Multifunctional space at co-housing *La Borda*. Source: La Col (Annotations on the original)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

After this panoramic overview, we can conclude that, at least in the studied cases, **when the common is weakened, the spaces of dwelling, socialisation and production are physically distanced**. For the sake of efficiency, the hierarchical cooperation models that are characteristic of industrial production require the hierarchisation and specialisation of space, compartmentalising all spheres of life.

Conversely, **in the recent context of a strengthening of the common, we see a tendency for the three functions to converge at the same spaces**. At a time when **socialisation** takes a key role in **production** (Hardt and Negri, 2009), **dwelling** has great potential to become a space that allows for spontaneous encounters between the two.

One could wonder whether the evolution observed in these case studies is an isolated phenomenon or if these trends are confirmed in a more extensive and heterogeneous sample. It would also be interesting to do an in-depth analysis of the causes of these changes. Perhaps the recent emergence of new cooperation and production methods, which overlap with everyday aspects of life, are dissolving the previous hierarchies, moving towards models in which the agents interact more freely, without clear leadership. In other words: **the cooperation methods that are emerging would require common spaces of friction that allow for spontaneous encounters between individuals, fostering the exchange of ideas and resources**. One could assume that these changes in the cooperation methods make the multifunctional, ambiguous and complex spaces that were common before industrialisation relevant again. Perhaps contemporary architecture is responding to these demands and giving the common the opportunity to improvise freely, following *the rhythm without a conductor* that Hard and Negri

talk about in the quote that opens this paper. Proving these intuitions will be one of the objectives of the future analysis of this research<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> This paper is part of an ongoing PhD thesis, called "The Khôra of the Commons. An analysis of the cooperation spaces in the area of influence of the *Llobregat* River", which continues some of inquiry begun in (Rocamonde, Sabaté and Orduña, 2017).

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