In his book “la città dei ricchi e la città dei poveri”, Bernardo Secchi makes one notices that every time the structure of economy and society abruptly changes the urban issue immediately comes to the fore. The city, according to him, overcame these critical moments by changing its spatial structure, its way of functioning, its relation between rich and poor and its image. The Addis Ababa’s case doesn’t make an exception. After the end of the communist regime in 1991 and specifically after 2000, Addis Ababa underwent to an impressive economical and demographical growth. The new urbanization imposes on the space and time of the old city an order more and more based on the relationship between urban space and land value (1° device of exclusion). This market-driven approach to the city has been brought forward by the development of big infrastructure, mass housing and large real estate projects (2°-3°-4° devices of exclusion). The spatial outcome of this process is a change in the grain of the city and in the scale of the urban tissue. If on one hand these attempt of modernization have the credit to accommodate the growing population and to bring infrastructure in a city characterized by deep lack of them, on the other they failed to appropriate the city more productive aspects such as porosity coexistence and individual initiative. Within the informal settlement the slum dweller have the agency to quickly respond to the ever-changing economic demands: converting the
(unfair) Relocation

Informal settlements vs. condominiums: city center inhabitants are evicted and relocated in big mass housing development located at the edge of the city.

a. Boundary of the old city area (city extension in 1975) 70% of the informal settlements are located here
b. Renewal Area place in which the most part of the demolitions occurs
c. Area of intervention
space at their disposal into improvised income generating activities. These qualities are not present in the new housing scheme in which people are relocated and it is very harmful especially for the poorest. E. Soja elaborated a fruitful reflection on the notion of exclusivity by giving the definition of urban poor, which helped me to understand the social ambition of a housing project in this scenario. He says: “Poor is that person who hasn’t at his disposal an adequate spatial capital and lives in those part of the city whose conditions do not facilitate his/her integration into
social, cultural and professional life.” So my question is “Is it possible to give to these people (the urban poor) an adequate spatial capital taking into account the massive urbanization, which the city is going through?” In lights of these words and keeping into consideration the impact that the housing issue has in Addis the main goal of my design is to provide a spatial device that is simultaneously capable of accommodating a larger program with the ambition of creating a system of spaces in which form economy and dwelling converge. The urban
a. Structural system
b. Generic unit 1. support space which hosts the structure and infrastructures 2. actual space space necessary for the activity to be performed 3. mobility space which hosts staircase for vertical densification and a horizontal walkway
c. Components from top to bottom: 1. concrete panels wall (piping) 2. concrete blocks wall (external partitions) 3. hollow core slab 4. prefab concrete beam 5. prefab concrete wall 6. prefab concrete foundation
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Repetition of the unit
settings which I am relating to are the one of the new masterplan that has been design for the city center. All these speculation have been translated into the elaboration of a generic unit that could host not only dwelling but also income generating activities. In order to conjugate the economic interest and the social aspiration of the project I decided to use a limited range of prefab elements that have the twofold credit of guaranteeing the easy repetition of the cell and limiting the construction costs. The ground floor of the blocks is characterized by buffer zones that can be appropriated by the users and organized according to their

appropriation of the built environment
a. income generating spaces [1] smallest unit to be built from scratch [2] workshop space with expansion space in front b. internal gallery: an opportunity to expand the house

previous page
view of the public space
appropriation of the built environment
a. [1] smallest unit to be built from scratch 
b. [2] workshop space with expansion space in front
   c. [3] office space - two housing units can be converted into office space

following page
d. longitudinal section
   in red: income generating activities
e. typical plan
particular necessities, in this way they can personalize the space at their disposal and expand over time. On a urban scale the benefit of using the unit repetition is the one of securing a rhythm that is based on human activities which can grow and evolve over time individually and characterize the public space collectively.

To conclude the project present a viable solution to the city centre renovation that on one hand is respectful of the upgrading process and the new scale the city and on the other of all those activities that are now endangered by the radical transformation of the cityscape.
Galleries and circulation system
a. gallery as semi-private space
b. gallery as expansion space does not interfere with the vertical circulation
View of the central public space