

Reflection on graduation project
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The relationship between my graduation topic and my master track (architecture) is mainly about recognizing the importance of private developments with a strong disconnect to its surroundings and what consequences this can have on a larger scale. Partly due to the many parties involved in the redevelopment of Bunker Hill, in which the emphasis was more on maximizing the profitability from the perspective of the investors, it resulted in a collection of individual projects that provided public spaces purely for financial gain.

From a personal perspective, having lived in Los Angeles provided me a clear insight into how the importance of public space is dealt with and how differently we use our public spaces from a European standpoint. Los Angeles is a car-centric city, known for its US urban grid, and many public spaces tend to become destination public spaces due to the city's immense urban sprawl. There is also a strong disconnect between the urban blocks, due to the private developments that take place on a small scale, resulting in individual projects that have no mutual connection or that make no positive contribution to the use of public streets. It is important to emphasize that this problem can hardly be solved on a large scale, partly due to the large financial costs and the feasibility of this idea, whereas the opportunities lie in creating more walkable areas and looking for solutions on a smaller scale. In addition, there is a lot of potential in Bunker Hill, due to its high density, which is also the reason for looking into this specific area within the context of Los Angeles.

An important note is that in previous studies on the private redevelopment in Downtown Los Angeles, there has never been established a visual relationship with the underlying social issues and how this is represented on a map. Rather, this leads to a generalization of the social issue and the inability to link the overall problem to a specific site or place. Therefore, it's important to collect information specific to a particular location or site—in this case Bunker Hill—in order to visualize this on a map. As a result, a conclusion can be drawn or opportunities for improvement can be found, resulting in the design proposal. Therefore, the spatial analysis will lay the foundation for future analysis on the area of interest.

The sense of spatial injustice was strongly related to the exclusionary design elements that were implemented by private developers to exclude, among street vendors, certain groups from access to these privately owned public spaces. Therefore, the design brief would include providing a privately owned public space that would be more accessible to the general public and provides a solution of how other privately owned public spaces in Bunker Hill could potentially be revised, for it to become more 'public'. The design assignment resulted in introducing the concept of a Hawker Center in Bunker Hill, which would contain public spaces for mobile street vendors to conduct business. The idea of designing a Food Court/Hawker Center resulted out of literature studies on the history of street vending and how other countries, particularly in Asia, tried to solve similar issues. In hindsight, the research conducted up until the P2 was essential to provide a design brief to find a solution of the overall social issue in Bunker Hill regarding spatial injustice.

In order to get a deeper understanding of the overall social issues, many literature studies have been conducted, in which the origin of the target group, the history of the city and how the redevelopment resulted in the sense of spatial injustice came to question. A chronological order of events resulted in the social issue regarding the sense of spatial injustice, and it was crucial to understand how all these aspects, such as the reasoning for the redevelopment plans, the shift of ownership of land etc., ultimately led to the privatization of public space. This overview laid the foundation for understanding the overall social issues and it provided me a clear structure on how to find solutions to this problem.

The research part of my graduation project has a strong societal value, regarding the sense of spatial injustice. It's important to emphasize on questioning the 'publicness' of privately owned public spaces in Downtown Los Angeles and how they were designed to exclude certain people from access by means of exclusionary design elements. The City of Los Angeles tried to provide public spaces for the overall public by providing leniencies to private developers to implement public spaces into their developments. Eventhough the initial plan of the City of Los Angeles was to indirectly provide some public spaces into the newly redeveloped Bunker Hill, the outcome resulted in developers providing public spaces, but they were designed for personal interest due to the shift of ownership. The lack of ownership of land is one of the major issues the City of Los Angeles has to be able to provide publicly owned public spaces. In recent years, plans have been made to redevelop S. Grand Avenue, located south of my site of interest, to design a pedestrian-friendly promenade in-between several privately owned public space. This questions how these private developments will adapt to this matter, and if the initiative from the City of Los Angeles could become the first proposal for revising Bunker Hill into a more 'public' and pedestrian friendly part of Downtown Los Angeles. As part of the design brief, I revised an existing development, and how it adapts to this publicly owned promenade.

From a personal standpoint, I believe that the project results reflect the initial design brief in finding solutions to reintegrate street vending into privately owned establishments and how this could be integrated into privately owned public spaces as well as by means of collaborative use of space. There's a strong connection between the literature studies, which resulted in an overview of the social issues from a street vendors' perspective, and how this could have been solved as a proposition to private developers to revise their public spaces for them to become more public. Even from a financial standpoint, mobile street vendors contribute to increasing profitability of other private establishments in proximity of street vendors. Therefore, not only from a social standpoint, in which the importance of complete accessible public spaces to the general public is a must, it could even be economically beneficial for private businesses that are located on or in proximity of these privately owned public spaces.

2 reflection questions relating to the content of my work:

- In terms of scale, should there be a limit or certain parameters in order to assess whether a design brief can become too large?

From personal experiences I've struggled throughout the design phase, as well as the research phase, with the overall scale of the project. I've started working on the base of the socio-spatial analysis on the 20th of October, retracing the roads (including the road lines and basic outlines of the urban blocks etc.) and over the span of 3,5 months I was able to finish the map before the P2 presentation. In terms of scale, it resulted in a map of 4,6 x 3,5 meter, an urban map on an architectural scale (including the pavement designs/landscaping/escalators etc. of every single development within my scope of interest). As an estimate, I've worked 15 weeks on this map, excluding the weekends (in which I've worked on the map too) based on an 8/9-hour workday at the faculty, it would result into roughly 600 hours of work on one map. This consists of looking into the databases to require all the building permits of every development within my scope, archiving every address and rescaling the drawings into the preferred scale of the drawing, retracing the plans (while using different plans for different parts of the privately owned public spaces, and lastly, to include the sociological analysis. Without the perseverance to finish this socio-spatial analysis, it would have almost been impossible.

As far as the design brief, revising the bottom floors of two skyscrapers, designing a new structure in between these towers, a privately owned public plaza and a 'skypark', would be achievable over the span of several months for the design, depending on the level of detailing. However, it raises the question on how much of the design should be developed for the Building Technology part, and if

there should be a limit for the number of details too. Because of the number of interventions throughout the site, it could easily result into a list of 20/30 details, ranging from highly important to less. Compared to other students who, based on their own research and design brief, will result into a much smaller project, resulting into a smaller list of technical drawings. Even in term of scale, my 1:100 sections ended up 2.1 meter long, floor plans 1:500 would just fit on an A3. This obviously results into a slower workflow because of the scale of the project and leads to be able to show less work during tutoring sessions. One section, while being aware of the overall construction and having the floor plans, would still take 2 full workdays to finish, considering the different layers, adding materialization, shadows etc.

- Would the overall end results of the graduation project be more successful if there's a separate submission for the design that takes place a couple of weeks before the P4 presentation, in order for the students to be able to get more into depth on the BT part of the design and aspects such as climate?

From personal belief, it would be rather useful to have several weeks to focus on the overall construction and really get a deeper understanding of the technical aspects regarding the design. While the design and construction are strongly related to each other, it would be, from personal believe, very beneficial to be able to spend several weeks on the technical aspect of the design. During the last couple of weeks, I've been working on the overall designing, in order words making small adjustments throughout the weeks, but because of the scale of my project I couldn't fully commit to the BT aspects of my design. While designing the façade e.g., you automatically look into how it could technically be installed or constructed, but to be able to finish the overall design several weeks before the final deadlines, provides enough time to properly look into all aspects regarding BT and climate. In my case, the alterations of the design felt more of an obstacle in terms of time, which resulted in less time for BT. Eventhough I still managed to spend a lot of time on the overall construction, by means of working more hours per day, and getting a deeper understanding of how my architectural plans would translate to technical drawings, I would have been able to learn more on the technical aspects if I had time to fully commit to this particular aspect of the design brief.