

Reflection Paper

Methods and Analysis

Graduation Studio 2018-19

Positions in Practice: Constructing the Commons in the Latin American Metropolis

Bogota, Colombia

Ilianna Logotheti

4618483

Project Title: Transpassing Through Urban Voids

The graduation project consists of an urban framework of a passage which provides commercial space, room for workshops and several activities which enhance interactions within the public space of Bogota, Colombia. During the study trip several locations and urban conditions were evaluated, with special emphasis on the residual urban voids. The latter formulated the research question How do you devise innovative ways to unearth the potential of urban voids to contribute to public realm of the city and as a result, improve the quality of life in the city? The brief was derived and developed under one of the thematic of the Methods and Analysis studio which deals with Gradients of property and the re-appropriation of private, public and communal space.

The project seeks to use the potentials of the urban voids and transform them into functional spaces that can serve for the city and its society. The regeneration of neglected spaces by responding interventions could change the perception of urban voids. In fact, these areas have a great potential, which, in the contemporary times of development intensification, can be used as urban public spaces that can initiate community involvement and strengthen the public sphere. Urban voids can be seen as absences, but also as promises, encounters and spaces of great expectations. Due to the phenomenon of the continuing densification of the city, urban voids can act as a mediator between what exists and what is not yet established. Empty, open spaces are therefore an opportunity for the development of the city. From a broader perspective, the act of transformation of these types of areas could expand to the emergence of a design tool palette which can be used globally to similar cases that are dealing with the phenomenon of urban voids.

The site is located in the south part of Teusaquillo, a location quite isolated from the social/collective life. The dominant focus of the project has been on how to reactivate the left over space of the urban blocks into a lively/public/collective passage and what design strategies should be deployed in order to accomplish it.

These strategies derived from the methodological research framework which was based on a thorough analysis on the principles of the passages. The result of the research was to break down several case studies passages into their tectonic and programmatic elements. This process added a challenging and experimental layer to the project which dealt on how to transpose the principles of the passage into the existing urban block and what would be the consequences and the benefits to the quality of life of the residents and passers-by.

Through this process of 'Learning from the passages', the project started to evolve while the main architectural focus became the redesign of the existing building layout in order to give room for a new program which will create quality spaces within the block. This new program is seeking to create spaces that manifest the ephemeral / the event, but also to passively stage the everyday life of the residents, creating a symbiotic relationship between the users of the block and the passers-by.

Special attend was given to the redesign and the reconfiguration of the ground floor in order to create commercial and public space. Through the extensive use of glazing the ground floor opens up to the public, and the enclosed piazza becomes part of the street, a planning technique found in numerous passages. Moreover, the occupation of the front area of the shops gives an analogous domestic character as the corridor of the case passage Du Caire and the passage Galerie Vivienne. Finally, the new scheme introduces vertical gardens inbetween of some of the buildings, filling the voids with green areas, adding to the lively atmosphere of the urban passage

In conclusion the project aims through the program to create possibilities of interaction, collaboration and socialization. The methodology of 'Learning from the passages' and the transposal of the concept to an existing urban block, offered the opportunity to understand how materiality, form and program can be readopted to orchestrate the circulation and create the desired architectural qualities. Finally, as the residual voids are innumerous within the area of Teusaquillo, the new urban block proposal can act as a paradigm for feature innovation.