Reflection:
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Introduction

The studio's aim has been to take us students through the process of identifying underlying problems in the city of Chicago, developing an urban strategy that deals with these problems, the next step to develop a masterplan and finally a building. Creating a consistent narrative all the way through the scales, hopefully in the end dealing with the problems identified at the start.

The research phase started with creating separate research groups, focusing on different aspects of the Chicago area.

The relationship between research and design

The research that was done in the first phase of the project resulted in the research question: "How can we develop a model for the creation of healthy, robust industrial zones". This question has been leading throughout the year, and throughout the different design scales. In the design of the urban intervention we developed a model that could be applied to the many industrial zones of Chicago, creating a symbioses between the neighborhoods and the industry, enforcing, rather than competing with each other. This urban intervention mainly focused on improving the infrastructure and developing a buffer area between the industry and the neighborhoods encapsulating the industry and therefore creating the most ideal situation for both. From our research we realized that if we really wanted to improve the competitiveness of the city, and keep it competitive for the coming years we needed, besides well functioning corridors, a good educational infrastructure together with industrial buildings that would embrace the current technical developments of robotics and cloud informatics. The next phase, the masterplan, was a direct result of this. The masterplan consisted out of a campus which contained an innovation institute, a educational facility and a high-tech showcase factory. In the final phase, the architecture, we divided the buildings between the three of us.

When developing the architectural project several topics have been researched in the search for the right solution. This research consisted out of studying literature, reference projects and testing several design options throughout the design process.

The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

The Complex Projects design studio takes in place in the city of Chicago. The core of this studio is embracing the complexity of a city's context, not only taking into account the projects physical context, but also creating an awareness of the non-physical, social/ economical and historical powers that effect the context. The focus of my project started out from a social/ economical point of view, with the question how we could create a situation where there would be less poverty and unemployment. Our conclusion was that the key could lie in the industrial corridors of the city that had been providing blue collar jobs for decades, but had seen an incredible decline the last ten years. But the recent rise in minimal wages in China have resulted in a situation where reshoring of American companies to the US seem more likely every day. This, together with new technological developments in the manufacturing sector makes us believe that if Chicago would embrace its manufacture, this could result in a steady flow of jobs that would suit the city's unemployed working class.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework
The studio's focus is one that is very much analytical. So for instance, if you want to design a roof, you test ten different options, argue which is the best one, and pick that one. Personally my own process differs from this. I believe that if you want to design a truly coherent design it is sometimes important to trust on your intuition, rather than on an analytical arguments that seem without prejudice, but are in reality very much influenced by preconceived notions of the world. Sometimes this has lead to misunderstandings between the tutors and myself. Another thing is the believe that during the process every step should be logical, or easy to explain. Although in my own opinion in a creative process something are simply the right/ the wrong solution although its not always easy to determine why that is.