**Magnetic HUB - P4 Reflection**

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13/05/2016

**Project Description**  
The project is located in the twin cities El Paso and Cd Juarez within the border area of United Stated and Mexico. During the field trip, we were about to find out the existing problems on site and try to put forward feasible architectural solutions. After the research and on site visit, it is easily found that Cd Juarez is suffering from the imbalance economic development resulted from the strict border control of Americans. It is mostly shown in the following aspect:

Socio-economic twin city economic structure is shifting from dual industry of tourism and manufacture to the single maquiladoras industry, that the single economic composition is not healthy for economic development.

To pursuit for the opportunities on jobs and crossing border, migrants from the south is gathering in Juarez without merging into the local culture. Which means segregation is happening in the city.

Urban decentralization: the city is expanding rapidly and suffering from decentralization because of the crime threats in downtown and job opportunities moving to suburban area. The poor infrastructure results in extending the commuting time on people’s daily life and border crossing.

Therefore, the aim of my project would be using the complex building as the activators for the cities to improve the situation. What kind of architectural intervention would be helpful for binding the two cities together? Can it play the crucial role as social cohesion in border cities’ urban context?
The relationship between research and design

To solve the problems above, I suggest to use the rapid transport system as the infrastructure to reactivate the tourism industry in Cd. Juarez. In this background, I need to look into the behavior of border crossing tourists, and also look for program that could be attractive to the tourists. Therefore, the market would be really crucial to my project, as it is the most standing out cultural experience which is totally different from the American side. Reflecting onto my design, I managed to build up a hybrid building including market, terminal and recreational programs which is also really closed to the historical area (that full of monuments). Which I believe this program composition could work to re-introducing the tourism industry back to Juarez.

Zoom in to a smaller scale, I did some research about how the market works in the Mexican context. I proposed to build up a platform for flexible program changing, which allow people to occupy their own spaces. For this part it came up with couples of cases study about combining parking and commercial function. And inspiring from that, I did found out that the basic unit of parking and market stalls do sharing the similar module, and in my design I have tried to mixing up this driving experience with pedestrian activities.

As the public space, providing a comfortable environment would be really crucial especially in the desert area. Therefore, I have looked into cases from Latin America, South Asian and Spain (which has strong influence on Mexico since colonial period). From these research, I design my building in a low and flat shape which could provide lots of shading area for public activities, while I also try to achieve the capacity of natural ventilation from the site.
The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

For the complex studio, we mainly focus on the border issue in different scale, not only considering about the physical border between United States and Mexico, but we could also focus onto the invisible border in people’s lives. Therefore, the case study I have chosen are mainly focus onto have the blurring border works in our daily life, which would bring up the interesting topic about flexible programs that people could occupy the space they needed. This is also one of the active factor in developing countries. The most important point is to provide a platform for people exchange living material and information. To sum up a bit from this, study from the border conditions does help to know more about the beauty of blurring borders.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation lab and the method chosen by the student in this framework

In the complex building studio, we need to work on different scale and analysis the different issue, for example from the political, economical to the behaviors of people from the site. After that, we could come up with the architectural idea from different topic and scale.

For my design process, I followed the method of research from large scale to smaller scale. The thesis will be based on a theoretical framework and will be gained through literature study, case study, mapping and site analysis. And I have produced the urban strategy for connecting the twin city, to considering about the program position that could fitting into the urban context, and at the end to consider the proper façade material dealing with the climate issues.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context

In my project, I suggest to create the platform and basic framework to encourage people to occupy the public space. I think this idea is working pretty well from the context of developing counties. This great flexibility in building can fit in the different time period of development, which could decrease the waste of energy and resources. Besides, a new typology for the intervention in existing border city can reflect the crucial debate on the topic of infrastructure in urban context. The infrastructure in the city could become the social generator in the city while the flexible program could benefit the city for a long term.
Conclusion
Looking back to my design process, I did manage to follow the research and analysis method from large scale to small scale, and the research did playing the supporting part of my design in programs, forms, spatial quality and technical parts. And I think my design could mostly response to the urban context around it. But due to the time management I could not go further to achieve my design to a more specific and operable concept to wider social context. Therefore, it will be good if I can develop more and crystalize my design as a prototype for similar context in other places.