08 Reflection

Conclusion-Answer of sub-research questions

1. How to conceptualize public spaces in Mostar for this project?

As explained in the theoritical background part, the public space in this project refers to the places where people can spontaneously come and experience public and individual activities in their daily life, including open spaces in a board sense and also semi-public places under roof like coffee seats along the street. Specially in this site, the Neretva River and bridges are also seen as public spaces as they are also public gathering spots.

2.How to understand the mental division through public space analysis?

The mental division is presented in the ethnic distribution and public service system distribution. Bosnians and Croatians are distributed in the east and west banks and have respective public service institutions. But the mental division can also shown in the use of public spaces. Compared with the past, people are less actively gather on the boulevrd, which was the front line during the civil war. It is on one hand due to the poor quality ruined abandoned areas on the boulevard, on the other hand due to the ruined images that evoke the war-related memories.

3. How to make use of the remaining historic heritage elements to bring history and memory to the public space?

Public buildings and public infrastrucutres are of considerable historical value. Firstly, the images of themselves are symbolic languages reflecting corresponding history, like the temmporary bridges are related to war period and the old station is related to prosperous period in begining of last century. Emphasising these images aims at recalling knowledge and memory of the history. Secondly, native materials and heritage elements are used to reuild the environment reflecting the scenes in the past. When people get into the spaces, outer environment would stimulate the memory people having between themselves and the heritages and spaces.

4.How could the designed public space contribute to a more cohesive society? How can it contribute to tackle the existing mental divisions in the city?

According to the strategies, the objective is acheived by three aspects.

From physical aspect, transport network and public space network in the city are improved and more continuous public spaces would guide the people flow to meet. This is also the most basic aspect of this project.

From use aspect, the cleaning and redesign of the ruined area make people reduce the fear memory arising from the ruined ground scenery but regard the ruins and heritages as new active public spaces.

From mental aspect, recalling city hstory and collective memory can tie the public again with their city and futher bring them some thoughts about the current division situation and probable future.

Reflection

1. The relationship betwenn research and design; Whether the design answer the research question?

Based on "Research by design" process, the research and design parts do not always have clear hierarchy but support of and get feedback from each other. Generally, there are two parts of research in this project. The first part of research, consisting of methodology framework and theoritical framework, works as the theoritical foundation of the design part. The methodology framework clarify the supportative relationship between research and design during the whole process. The theory background indicates relative directions to focus based on existing theories under the same post-conflict background. The second part of research includes site relative division problem analysis, history analysis and current condition analysis. This part helps to have a better and deeper unstanding of the challenge and working objects, exploring a promising working area and also strategies. All the potentials coming from conclusions and the strategies work as the toolbox to guide and support the follow design part.

The main research question is: How can the historical and social value of public spaces in Mostar be enhanced by landscape interventions to mitigate the mental division between people?
In this project, public spaces in working area are tackled from three aspects (the strategy): 1) history and memory (historical aspect); 2) activity (social aspect); 3) network continuity (physical aspect). In the physical aspect intervention, an improving pedestrian network is developed to connect the east and west bank, beside which public spaces are distributed. This pedestrian network would guide people to gather and put the Neretva River and its river bank back to their important status as the central bond of this network. This part of intervention works as the basic foundation and structure of the design for enhancing the physical connection.
The historical and social aspects intervention mainly focus on valuale historical remains and maximize their historical and social value through 1) emphasising their historical image and function to evoke collective memory; 2) inviting people to interact with ruins and develop new public spaces. This part of intervention would bring people together by collective history background and activities.

2. Whether the design share the big goal of the graduation lab?

As described in the lab guide:
The lab focuses on the river in relation to the city starting from the war because the war was violent and extraordinary spatial condition that significantly changed Neretva, Mostar, human existence and overall narrative about the city. In the research and design process, the lab will observe Neretva as the living archive of Mostar that can be used as a counter project to the processes of official creation of monuments and spatial narratives that are relating prewar, war and post-war Mostar, and as an entry into a design assignment that in itself will add to the living archive.

This project share the perspective that regarding Neretva as a living archive, and extent the target area from river to a boder area include boulevard. In this project, places, activities and remaining ruined constructions are seen as the carriers of memory,. With the appearance and disappearance of these carriers in the city, the city itself is an archive collect not only objects but also layers of stories and collective memories attached to the environment along the long history. The design intervention would make this living archive more active to the public and invite people keeping adding their contributions to the archive.

3. Whether the design is practical and reliable? Problems encountered during the design process?

1) The biggest intervention is the transform of pedestrian boulevard, thus bring challange to the existing transport system. After transforming a main road with great traffic flow into a pedestrian boulevard with single line public transport, traffic pressure would be shared by other roads beside and should work together with traffic department. While looking towards the traffic network in the future, this intervention has a pilot significance for the public transport network construction.

2) As for the memory planting, it is still controversial to be a practical proposal due to maintainess and florescence. The original idea is to invite people to plant specific flower species along the boulevard to represent their personal memories, and the blossom scene would show a collective memory landscape.
Finally due to different challanges, this memory landscape would be narrowed in a reconstructed building at a most popular site on the boulevard. Different native flower species are choosen by their therapeutic value in dealing with different emotions. The prospect to show the colletive memory when flowers bloom would not be shown in a best way because of different florescence, but as a way to create new public space and invite people to interact with the new landscape, this small memory planting landscape can play the role as memory monument to gather people.

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