

THE IN-BETWEENS

THE POWERFUL YET MARGINALISED
ARCHITECTURAL CREATORS

RESEARCH PLAN

alternative titles:

The in-between spaces as elements of and design factors influencing a
neighbourhood's identity

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Introduction, questions

One of the first words an architectural novice learns when starting higher education is 'context':

'the situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it'
~ Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press 2022

'the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs'
~ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

A project is never an alienated entity, it is placed within an existing historical, contemporary, physical and metaphysical (e.g. societal, semiotical) environment, and as such, it should exhibit a relation to it, and thus complete or extend it. Throughout our architectural education we tend to focus on the project alone, treating the context merely as a topic in the preliminary project analysis. It is the complexity of the context though - the architectural in-betweens, the thresholds and urban connectors - that majorly form the character and ambience of a neighbourhood; what is in between the buildings and urban entities? How can we get into a building? How does that look? Is it visible or hidden, clear or transparent, welcoming or off-putting, easy to reach or separated? Is it used? Why is it, or why is it not? If it is, how is it used? Who uses it? How and in what way does it form the character of the neighbourhood? Is it 'good' to be in?

These types of questions appeared in my mind while visiting Budapest and analysing two different neighbourhoods: Újlipótváros and south Vízafogó. I came to that city with the presumption that the 10-floor-tall blocks from the 1980s communist times in Vízafogó were constituting a rather lower-quality, unwelcoming and deteriorated neighbourhood. Whereas that statement was rather accurate two/three decades ago, it is not now. After meeting the city and district architects, I have learned that there were many efforts and means put into these type of neighbourhoods over the years, and I have to admit that they are much more liveable, lively and welcoming than many other, more affluent and modern places.

My question arose; why is that? What are the factors that make a place more liveable and more welcoming? **Can these factors help us to make an agenda for revitalisation of deteriorated or even abandoned places?** Can the care for, renovated in-between of places incite rehabilitation of the places? How and to what extent does the in-between influence the urban objects and the character of a neighbourhood? Does the morphology of urban blocks influence the residents of a neighbourhood?

Theoretical framework

Definitions

Context

'the situation within which something exists or happens, and that can help explain it'

~ Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press 2022

'the interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs'

~ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2022 Merriam-Webster, Incorporated

Identity

'such that do not change'

'the fact of being, or feeling that you are, a particular type of person, organization, etc.; the qualities that make a person, organization, etc. different from others'

~ Cambridge Dictionary, Cambridge University Press 2022

'the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is'

~ Oxford Languages, Oxford University Press 2022

word origin:

From Latin *idem* (neuter) 'the same' → Medieval Latin *identitatem* (nominative *identitas*) 'sameness' → English 'identity' c. 1600, 'sameness, oneness, state of being the same'

~ Online Etymology Dictionary, 2001-2022 Douglas Harper

Architectural Identity

'represented as a timeless and historically stable entity'

~ Jennifer Tran, '*Static Illusions: Architectural Identity, Meaning and History*', Curtin University

Theoretical framework

Concepts

The majority of both empirical and scientific analysis of the neighbourhoods of Vizafogó (and Lőportárdőőő) aimed at discovering the characteristics of and factors defining the character of the in-betweens will be based on George C. Galster's classification of causal pathways between neighborhood context and individual behavioral and health outcomes, organised under four broad rubrics: social-interactive, environmental, geographical and institutional.

~ George C. Galster, *'Mechanism(s) of Neighborhood Effects. Theory, Evidence, and Policy Implications'*, Wayne State University 2010.

The patterns of public and private life spheres, the influence of public space organisation on behaviour of individuals and groups, the 'social rituals of the everyday life' as portrayed by Rob Krier.

~ Rob Krier, *'Typological and Morphological Elements of the Concept of Urban Space'*

Methodology

Analysis of the elements consisting a neighbourhood on the basis of George C. Galster's classification:

- main block typology, morphology (creating corners and enclosures rather than vast walls)
- variety of green spaces
- quality green (+ 'blue') spaces
- schools and kindergartens (proximity to, diversity of)
- the ratios between the height of the block and the street width
- thresholds' design
- cultural expressions in architectural context
- appropriation and reusage of old/historical buildings

CASE STUDIES:

- 1970s & 1980s blocks in Vizafogó
- south Újlipótváros interwar blocks
- Vizafogó park
- Kilenchaz, Huba Street
- old freight station, Prointerier Kft., Esztergomi út 48

Relevance

Raising awareness of the importance of the state and potentials of urban context, possible applications for urban and architectural regeneration, revitalisations, historical preservations, preservations of identities.

Research Plan Diagram

