

Project Abstract

Research Plan AR3A010 - Week 1.10

In this project I want to address the gap in scales between private space and the urban surroundings and how public buildings might fill in that gap. In big cities the contrast between the peaceful ambiance in one's home and the overwhelming urban setting enclosing these personal spaces are hard to miss.

High buildings in city centers generally create more impersonal relationships. When looking at such buildings you need to stand back at such a distance that small details disappear and you lose part of the connection with the building and the functions inside (Gehl et al., 2006).

“The development of society and the attendant development of architectural ideals have created an urban architecture where meaningful close encounters between city and buildings and between people inside and out have disappeared almost automatically.” (Gehl et al., 2006)

If there is little to no connection between the inside and outside of buildings, people are less likely to visit that building. And because the urban setting is so impersonal, people are less likely to interact with each other in public spaces as well. This is corroborated by a study done by Glaeser and Sacerdote (2000) where it was found that large apartment buildings might bring neighbors closer to each other but it furthers the distance between people's homes and the urban surroundings.

This means there is a lack of social interaction in cities with high buildings, which is important since social interaction is vital for creating positive effects on both your mental health as well as your physical health (Antonovsky, 1987).

The step in scale between private and public spaces is currently too big to facilitate these social interactions. To fill this gap between scales and boost social encounters an in-between space is necessary. A place where there it is easy to connect to from both the small private scale and the big urban scale.

“The intermediate-size building is marked by a gradual transition from the private to the public domain, while maintaining its autonomy through a balanced relationship between the whole and its parts.” (Bijlsma & Schreurs, 2019)

In this project I want to explore that gradual transition between the private and public domain and explore what role a public building can play in this transition. The research will be done through a research by design case study in Berlin. The design will be a prototype for a public condenser located in the city part of Friedrichshain. The public condenser will explore this transition by implementing the programmatic elements in a gradience of scale based on different themes. It will go on by exploring the placement of these elements in relation to each other and the urban surroundings to create a public interior. This public interior will, as Pimlott (2018) describes, be a space that reflects values of society and relations between citizens themselves and the city. In this way, the prototype will be a way to lower social thresholds and bring the private and the urban closer to each other.

Bibliography

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