The conducted research before p2 consists mainly of two parts: one part which is group work and another part which is research conducted by my own. This combined gave me enough information to give a solid base for the design part of the project after p2.

The research enclosed in the research booklet contains several topics such as mapping on different scales, case study research and soft data like the local culture, habits, etc.

The hard data provides information on different scales. The scales that can be identified are: Border region (L), urban scale (M) and site/architecture (S). Due to this multi-level research, I got a grip on the local situation and it raised awareness of what kind of building is required on which place.

When looking back at the process that lead to the design of my building, I can conclude that some aspects were more successful than others. Successful aspects where among others:

1. Research on different scale levels, hard and soft data, made me realize that the chosen subject (a research and memorial center) was lacking in this region. It made me realize that this was a binational problem, exceeding further than the USA - MEX border. The obtained soft data was especially important because things like culture, history and local habits proved to be very important when designing a memorial.

2. Due to the available data on the city scale, I was able to determine the best possible place for the research/memorial building. This results in a building which can easily be used by both nations and will reconnect the two cities/countries.

On the other hand, shortcomings in the research part became evident later in the design process. When looking back, I can conclude that some research was unnecessarily and other research didn’t connected sufficiently to the design process. What I found out and what can be improved is as follows:

1. I decided too early that the future building should be an embassy. This was based on the assumption that this is a truly binational building which intentions at one time used to be to connect two nations. Therefore I’ve done case studies and research on embassies while I later found out that a building like this was not really needed in El Paso - Juarez. I have learned that I should decide later what I will design and I need to base this on more data rather than a ‘gut feeling’

2. Planning the group trip consumed much of my time. During this time, I was not able to conduct as much research as my fellow group-mates did.

3. Due to the requirement of showing floor-plans and sections at the p2, I started too early with designing while the research was not finished. This resulted in weak designs which I later cancelled.
Specifically the border studio El Paso - Ciudad Juárez focuses on the relation between the USA and Mexico in this region. In what way does the border have an impact on the lives of the citizens on both sides? This question was the main topic of my chosen subject: the violent past and future of the twin city El Paso - Ciudad Juárez.

The main topic of my building - commemorate & research of the violent past, is a direct consequence of a situation caused by the border and the binational relation. Resulting in anxiety and an ever wider psychological gap between the two nations and cities. While other projects mostly focus on the physical aspects of the border and try to reduce the alienation between the two sides by building a physical bridge, my building is intended to heal both the invisible scars as well as the physical limitations of the border. By embracing the problems of the past and dealing with it, the proposed building will act as a catalyser for the reconnection of the cities. The total proposal will also give way for the further development of the direct surroundings due to the new international connection.
Relationship between proposed methodical line of approach of the studio and chosen by the student in this framework

The graduation studio Complex Projects aims to design a building that intervenes on all scales and can be placed in a broader context, while on the other hand also meets the demand of the users on the smaller scales. In order to substantiate a building in this context, a combination between group and personal research relating to the chosen thesis topic was required. When looking back at the used methodical line of approaching the research and design part, I can conclude the following:

The proposed methodical approach of the Complex Projects borders studio was very relevant and useful in order to provide a solid base for the project. Generated data by other groups enabled me to base my ideas on much more data and information than I could ever produce just by myself. The aim to work on different scale levels provided all the information needed.

On the other hand, working on different aspects and scales made the research a bit fragmentized. Also the group work was fragmentized due to different approaches, styles and the wide range of information.

Personally, My design booklet is an assemblage of everything I did before p2. Due to the significant amount of information and wide range of research topics, it was hard to make it consistent. In the future, I would focus more on making the work comparable so it would be easier to conclude something from it. My approach was a bit too chaotic.

Another thing I would like to point out about my personal methodical way of doing is that I started too late with my personal research due to trip planning. In addition, I started too early with design proposals and stopped too early with the research, which needed to completed later.

Furthermore, I have been confronted by the fact that many architects and other students design their building by solidifying their ideas in models and convey their ideas and goals for a building in strong concepts where the whole design is based on. I am aware that this could have been done better in my design process. With better and stronger concepts my insecurity about my building would be less. By trying out many varieties with conceptual models, a broader range of possibilities could be tested.
Relationship between the project and a wider social context

With my proposed design of a research & memorial center for the violence victims of the border region and especially Ciudad Juárez, I consider my building as successful on the different scales. First of all, the proposed project will offer a memorial for violence victims which is currently absent in this region. This building will not only act as a representation of the missing solidation of mourning, but also gives way to convict criminals responsible for the violence and dead’s. Research that is needed to convict those criminals can be done in the building. This affects the whole region and also involves the United States by the process whereas the USA was mainly absence and defensive during the Mexican drug war.

The location of the building also plays an important role due to its reconnecting ability and location of the border. The huge gap between the two cities is being reduced by placing the building exactly in the middle of the hostile border condition. A friendly border crossing for pedestrians is being created to tear down the barriers and prejudices that prevent people from crossing the border.