

P4 PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. The relationship between research and design

The definition of the Master Thesis: “Bogotá / The movement in movement. Renegotiating the strategic role of mobility as field of action to enable the redefinition of the values for a cohesive and responsive Historic City Center” was based on my personal drive for encountering a logic response for the urban decay, political-polarization and socio-economic segregation that my hometown Bogotá has been facing along the past decades due to the definition of the urban transport project. Recognizing the improvements achieved by the new means of public transport in terms of functionality and accessibility, this project focuses on the analogous socio-spatial disparity that the urban mobility model has and keeps disseminating of a historically segregated and spatially fragmented conurbation. The characterization of these transport-oriented development is carrying from a societal and spatial perspective, more problems than solutions to an already fragile territory. And now, with high impact projects such as Bogotá’s first Metro Line in the proximity the question is until what extent can these systems nourish the values of identity and functionality for the diverse systems at the local level? And how could these systems in return, promote a clear vision for a robust and progressive emerging metropolis?

These set of questions demarcated the key concepts from an analytical point of view with the intent of providing a more coherent research framework to the multiple interpretations which came with the definition of the project methodology. Based on threefold approach: theoretical, analytical and practical, these spheres became the basis of a personal reflection, allowing me to formulate research questions and hypothesis based on the observations and my own beliefs. By elaborating a preliminary study under a metropolitan perspective the findings yielded that the current situation has been promoted by wider historical phenomenon at the metropolitan scale, which have nurtured the state-of-the-art of the capital district and principally of its historic center.

Taking that into consideration, the project deeply delved on the physical and social trends through a preliminary analysis in order to recapitulate on the principal elements that have shaped the current condition from a societal and urbanistic point of view. Through in-situ observations, interviews with experts and conversations with local actors the fieldwork served as a bald statement for validating the dual relation between urban transport and urban structure models. This gave rise to the definition of the theoretical framework which enabled the common ground for a parallel approach between research and design, setting multiple inputs to redefine the scope of a socially segregated and spatially fragmented conurbation. In a sustainable manner, being able to reflect on the deep relation between the global phenomenon and the local daily dynamics from a theoretical and analytical perspective, provided the sufficient clarity to establish analytical guidelines that later enlightened the principles to design approach.

As a conclusion research and design were and should be concatenated in order to reassert the importance of both: scientific and creative domains during the cognitive processes with the aim of simplifying the complex and validating the unreasonable. Along this graduation project the analytical, theoretical and practical approaches became equally important formulas for a multilevel design by research method which aroused a new worldview for a specific urban paradigm.

2. The relationship between the theme of the graduation lab and the subject/case study chosen by the student within this framework (location/object)

By understanding how the socio-spatial development of our cities and communities has been restricted by market forces or global phenomenon, principally in emerging metropolises of the “miscalled” developing countries, my particular objective along the graduation approach has been broadening up my personal spectrum in order to reach a better understanding of how to provoke actions and reactions that could lean forward the balance between the exclusive and the inclusive, especially in terms of economic opportunities and social justice. Under this perspective being part of the Complex Cities Studio allowed to reach a better understanding between the practical and theoretical, enabling me to recognize the virtues and problematique that an urban regeneration process could bring in the historical center of Bogotá.

The current socio-spatial condition of Bogotá’s historic center is the legacy of an inherited territory that has been built upon the shoulders of a civil armed conflict and a strongly polarized political nation. The urban fabric is a vivid statement of a society in transition which express the need for a responsive and more cohesive metropolitan structure. The challenges and opportunities of a city in constant transformation should be sustained by a holistic vision-strategy able to intermingle the values of the local traditional identity with a wider robust and innovative socio-economic environment. In this specific case the mobility (corridors, stations, flows and means) understood as time and space components, became the key element able to on the one hand breakdown the tendencies of decay and on the other, translate the strategic vision into an operative revitalization plan at the local level.

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

From the very start a preliminary analytical and theoretical perspective allowed me to establish a progressive methodology and methods, that on return constituted the guidelines, principles and concepts of the design line. Shifting from the mere single layer method to the multi-level approach sustained at the final stage the formulation of a strategic urban vision proposed by the project, which ex post materialized on local strategic plans.

In order to achieve this, my systemic framework was conducted based upon the criteria and recommendations provided by my mentors and by the graduation lab itself. As the theoretical findings were reaching a higher level of definition the analytical instruments became the most relevant means for bridging the gap between the realities and the expectations. This first glimpse of a possible outcome enhanced my personal drive for establishing a lively debate around the topic of urbanism in relation to mobility. However, putting into the same perspective the different approaches from a practical and theoretical foundation was not always easy. Ultimately it aroused a challenging opportunity for reevaluating the role of strategic planning and design in the definition of the emerging metropolitan model, reaffirming the importance between research and design, both in the academy and professional life.

4. The relationship between the project and the wider social context

As it was mentioned above ‘Bogotá / The movement in movement. Renegotiating the strategic role of mobility as field of action to enable the redefinition of the values for a cohesive and responsive Historic City Center’ was based on my personal drive for encountering a logic response for the urban decay, political- polarization and socio-economic segregation that my hometown Bogotá has been facing along the past decades due to the definition of the urban transport project.

The implementation of this general metropolitan vision, under miss-leaded governance practices, policy planning processes and urban renewal models, could jeopardize the sustainability and stability of the territory strengthening existing undesirable socio, economic and spatial phenomenon principally at the local. For this reason, the objective of this Thesis is to analyze and metabolize the impact that a Transit Oriented Development could have in Bogotá's urban patterns in order to formulate a socio-spatial regeneration process, articulated under the principles of a strategic planning and design framework. This will provide a platform for envisioning Bogotá D.C. in the close future as a competitive, sustainable and socially-fair emerging city model.

The visions, plans and designs aroused will serve as a scaffold to extend the range of socio-economic opportunities for the diverse set of actors by recognizing their necessities and aspirations. The implementation is aimed to encourage higher levels of spatial cohesiveness, socio-economic diversity and sustainable mobility. As a final outcome, the regeneration model of Bogotá's City Center will become the stepping stone of a bigger image which is not emphasized on the importance of mobility as a mean of transport but rather as a progressive transformation instrument imprinted in the collective memory of a distinctive city and society.