Midwest Peripheral Collaboration Complex

Providing opportunities in an area inhibited by mono-centricity.

P2 REFLECTION

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Argumentation of Choice of the Studio

There are two main reasons why I chose Complex Projects as the studio to do my thesis projects. First, I’m interested in the way the studio approaches design through a framework of research which includes social and economical aspects. Second, I have worked in projects in Bolivia, countries in Europe, and in India, being able to work in the USA was something I was very much interested in doing.

The Posed Problem

The area surrounding Midway Airport in the city of Chicago represents a local problem which mirrors similar problems occurring in other major US cities. The site also mirrors many problems occurring at a global scale. An area in which its main features are a contemporary parallel existence of suburban housing and industry is faced with the problem of poor urban quality and services. Criminality and education standards among non-central neighborhoods are high and the broad differences in quality of life between Chicago’s cultural, economic, centre in the loop seems to be expanding with the years.

Chicago is experiencing population loss. Much to its population is leaving as mostly white collar jobs are the only ones available and a large part of the population is forced to leave due to the fact that Chicago nowadays mostly has jobs in the service sector.

Thanks to globalization and a cheap labour force existing in Asian countries the US has been able to bipartite their production processes. Design is carried on in the US and manufacture is carried out elsewhere. The current US administration has shown interests in bringing back production to the US as this would create a large number of jobs and help cities like Chicago or Detroit. In the case of Chicago there are areas which represent enormous importance to industry. These industrial corridors are located along various parts of the city but a large amount of them are located in proximity of Midway airport.

Although a great demand exists for manufacturing and industrial jobs and facilities, a great demand exists by entrepreneurs and small companies which can’t afford the high prices of services and rents in the Loop. Premium office spaces are located in the Loop but at very high prices. The same happens with retail facilities. In the Loop, large companies are in control of the items consumed.

Transportation is another major problem which the city deals daily. The problem is not evident in the Loop but is very evident in peripheral neighborhoods. Long commuting distances and poor connections allow poor travel options for commuters. On a larger mobility scale, Midway Airport, is functioning in a way in which its potential is not being used to the extent it could be. Services in proximity to the airport
don’t exist. A part from a few hotels, no office spaces or convention centers are available in an area that would benefit of providing such services.

Research Question

In what way can Midway Airport’s potential be obtained in order to catalyze gentrification in its surrounding area and at the same time provide an advantageous environment for entrepreneurs, small companies, and the surrounding industrial sector?

Design Assignment in which these result

The result of the research is evidenced in a masterplan located next to the airport in which a large array of programs are utilized in order to concretize Midway Airport’s potentials as a multifunctional hub.

Project’s Relevance

The project’s main relevance lies in the fact that in its location, program, and underlying research, is a response to the common problems many cities have. A problem in which a central business district, due to its high prices in different fields, become adversaries of opportunities searched by entrepreneurs and startups.