

THE INVISIBLE CITY: RECLAIMING the post COVID MEDITERRANIC CITY

Principal Investigator / PI

Pedro Belo Ravara, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon

Integrated Researchers of CIAUD

Jorge Fava Spencer, Associate Professor
Paulo Garcia Pereira, Assistant Professor
Maria Teresa Salgueiro Vasconcelos e Sá, Assistant Professor
Pedro Lima Gaspar, Assistant Professor

Collaborating Researchers of CIAUD

Rui Pedro Morais Justo, PhD student

External Researchers

Roberto Goycoolea Prado, Associate Professor

Paz Nuñez, Assistant Professor

Keywords

URBAN REHAB
PRIVATE/PUBLIC CONTINUITY (COMMONS)
POCKET SPACES

Partner Institutions

Faculty of Architecture, University of Alcalá, Madrid

MUNICIPALITY OF LAGOS

Expected Future Partner Institutions

STILL TO BE FIND

ABSTRACT + IMAGES

The urban structure of the Mediterranean city, in Iberian Peninsula, has a compactness and a sinuosity that always guarantees the possibility of unexpected connections, continuities and many "invisible spaces". Its structure develops from a series of spaces in sequence, misaligned and with various connections, denying the topological logic of a linear structure, as argued by Christopher Alexander in his book *A City is not a Tree*.

This research project is based on a selection of small and medium-sized towns or neighbourhoods on the Iberian Peninsula, recognised for their southern and/or meridional character. "Mediterranean cities" implies a cultural and civilizational meaning, which Orlando Ribeiro recognized and characterized in his book *Geography and Civilisation*. However, this understanding can be completed and extended to several cities in Spain, namely the ones located in the so-called *De La Frontera* area in Andalusia, and also to the *planalto central*, such as Toledo, Alcalá de Henares, along with our cities south of the border of the Reconquista, during the reigns of Alfonso II and Alfonso III, and which would correspond to an imaginary line later defined to the west by the line of Torres (*linhas de Torres*) and another one extending northeastwards from *Turres Novas* (today *Torres Novas*) to *Castelo Branco*.

This project gives continuity to previous work developed offered in courses that explored the urban/spatial characteristics of these cities (elective course *IN SITU*), which approaches this theme from the architectural object scale and also by the organization of study field trips organized to the Islamic/Mediterranean architectures in the southern peninsula. These past experiences gave light to a publication, second on the line of the *IN SITU* editions, *Viagem de Estudo: Arquitectura Mediterrânica na Andalusia*, which had the institutional and financial support of the CIAUD.

The grounding of this research project, rests in the production of drawings of selected buildings footprints that ultimately represent the commons in continuity, in order to (re)integrate "open" spaces, of conditioned access and/or semi-public, that by being "invisible" to the pedestrian on a first glance, can turn to be a structuring part of the commons networking. In other words, spaces, in various forms or types, from the patio to the inner quarter garden, through the simple back yard, lobby, open inner block yards made inaccessible by various circumstances, but also vacant or ruined buildings, surplus/residual land, or others that are under the public domain. These "invisible" spaces, the space on the ground floor of the adjoining buildings and the structure of the commons, may constitute new possibilities for the inscription of "pockets" of diverse use in the city, specifically public use in continuity, (re)qualifying and (re)designing the network of the commons.

This strategy allows for an approach to the problem of rehabilitation of urban centers. Not being the final object an architecture project, it will be, however, a basis of analysis and work that will allow the placement of possibilities in the identification of housing uses or small public facilities, rehabilitating edifices or proposing new buildings integrated in the urban mesh, through a careful integrated plan of (re)functionalization, which also contributes to mitigate the possible gentrification phenomenon.

The object of these studies will be linked to the course of Project Laboratory VI (1st semester of the 5th year of the Integrated Master's Degree in Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon), making it possible for the Master's Final Project works to constitute direct applications in this investigational field through the development, by the students, of the possibilities of the project in architecture, in its various uses, on the conditions that make in this way "visible" the academic proposals.

OBJECTIVES

The rediscovery of spaces to the pedestrian of the city, currently "invisible" due to their illegal occupation, "forgotten" for their abandonment or for other reasons that make these spaces inaccessible pockets, at the margin of the urban space in continuum;

The possibility of (re)interpreting the spatial qualities and its functional uses in small and medium-sized Mediterranean cities in the Iberian Peninsula, with the aim of taking in consideration these new aspects in the Municipal Plans for Urban and building Rehab;

Strengthening FAUL's vocation as a "consulting" entity in matters of Urban and Architectural Design for the Municipalities to be involved, namely by signing Protocols with this specific goal;

The effective, permanent and dynamic involvement of final-year students, with the elaboration of their Final Master's Degree Projects as case studies of direct application of the conclusive subjects of the various fields of research. Creation and systematisation of an intervention methodology, adaptable to different places and contexts.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

Gehl, Jan, "Life Between buildings. Using public space". Ed. The Danish Architectural Press, 2006. (1ª ed.1971)

KOMOSSA, Susanne - The Dutch urban block and the public realm: Models, rules, ideals. Rotterdam: Vantilt, 2010.

MONTEYS, Xavier – Las plantas bajas [4]. In Monteys, X (coord.). Rehabitar en nueve episodios. Madrid: Lampreave, 2012.

MAAK, Niklas, LIVING COMPLEX: From Zombie City to the New Communal, Hirmer Verlag GmbH, Munich, 2015

ROWE, Colin and Fred Koetter, COLLAGE CITY, The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 1978

LAGOS - FASE 2 | ANÁLISE DO CRESCIMENTO URBANO



TURMA MARIQ 882 | ANO LETIVO 2020/21 | ANTÓNIO SIMÕES CORREIA, BEATRIZ GUERRERO, DAVID ESPIG, DUARTE CATALÃO, EDNEI PEREIRA, FRANCISCO CALHA, HENRIQUE GONÇALVES, JANA HOLZMANN, JOANA ALEGRE, LAURA POTT, MADALENA MONTEIRO, SÉRGIO SANTOS, SAMUEL AFONSO | DOCENTE PEDRO RAVARA



PLANTAS DA EVOLUÇÃO HISTÓRICA DA CIDADE DE LAGOS, TRABALHOS SOBRE A MAQUETA DESENVOLVIDA NO LABORATÓRIO DE PROJETO NO 1º SEMESTRE DO ANO DE 2020-2021. VISTA AÉREA DA CIDADE DE LAGOS

SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE FOR THE DISCIPLINE

This research project intends to offer a contribution to the discipline of Architecture namely through the assumption of the practice of the Project as a research tool. Not being exactly considered research, the project is, in this case, understood as a tool to test hypothesis putted forward by the academic research. The "reading" of the city through schematic drawings crosses present realities and launches possibilities of future occupations and uses, constituting a specific field of work. This work has the same importance and gives us the updating information and inspiring trail, than the physical site itself, eventually, we would dare to say, even more information and inspiration. This representational mode of the city (whether they are drawings, models, photographs or other graphic modes of schematic record of ideas and spatial qualities) creates in itself a new place, (re)signifying it and testing it with new design possibilities. This new place shall then reveal aspects that were previously invisible to us in the physical site.

EXPECTED ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Contributing to a better understanding of the development and (re)qualification of an urban centre is in itself of relevance for any municipality, especially at a time when planning for the future is much more uncertain than it was until March 2020. Therefore, we may consider that the present project proposes to list mitigation measures for the inevitability of the emergence of new viruses. Measures that could help avoiding the serious impacts of new pandemics. The former may then be adopted by the Urban Rehabilitation Offices of those municipalities.

On the other hand, a socially sustained reflection and careful (re)functionalization will not only allow a requalification of the architectural and urban spaces, but also will contribute to mitigate the gentrification phenomenon that may eventually arise in these centres.

As a starting project site at beginning of the next academic year, the city to be studied in mainland Portugal will be Lagos, and in Spain the above mentioned district of Madrid. It should be noted that, although Madrid is a large city and not small or medium-sized, it was not possible with this advance notice to lay the foundations for other options than this. However the selected neighbourhood, as mentioned above, offers the conditions to be taken by a small city. We point out that there has already been previous work with Lagos and there is even a Protocol signed with FAUL and the municipality for the studying of its urban and architectural heritage.

RESEARCH PLAN AND TASKS

The research shall be carried out in the studio environment, with the active participation of students, namely through the analysis of documents, plans, photographs, diverse bibliography and visits to the study sites. It will result in an analysis centered in a compact urban area with the production of analysis drawings that shall represent a "new look" at a reality that at first glance could be seen fully grasped. This work will be done in groups of students, three to four, with the monitoring and supervision of the faculty body responsible for this research project, at least one of them being the studio's tutor. This first phase of the work will take place in the first semester of each academic year, between September and December, with a conclusion and presentation in January. In parallel, the associated team from the University of Alcalá will apply the same theoretical approach and methodology in a neighborhood undergoing rehabilitation in Madrid. More specifically, it will act in a vulnerable urban area with several degraded or abandoned public and private spaces that can be used to regenerate commons and increase opportunities for social participation. The next step will be to hold a seminar between the teams from both universities in order to share the results obtained and make any adjustments to the objectives and procedures deemed appropriate. For the proposal as a whole, the participation of the Spanish team - with which, by the way, there is a long history of collaboration in various research projects and academic activities - will allow us to incorporate into our work their experience in cataloguing, analyzing and proposing intervention in vulnerable urban areas. We believe that this is essential for public space intervention policies to become participatory processes of social construction of the habitat. As we know, if this does not happen - that is, if there is no interaction between political proposals, technical solutions and the will of the citizens - it will be very difficult to successfully conclude any initiative, no matter how well thought out it may seem.

From year to year, these analyses will be added to each other, constituting for each city center a patchwork that will consolidate and become coherent. In the context of these studies, the city is considered and accepted as a continuum of fragments in balance and sometimes partially unbalanced, and it is up to us, the designers, to correct these imbalances.

In the second semester, between February and July, students will develop designed proposals that solve specific situations identified as solutions to the questions raised in the previous phase. Although this could be an individual work, when corresponds to their Final Masters' Design Project, it's scope and focus should be strongly guided by the research team vision, hence assuring a global coherence towards the territory that will be subject to the global intervention. In this phase, common conditions for several architectural typologies will also be elaborated, to respond to a post-pandemic condition. The future prevention of conditions requiring extended confinements whose spatial solutions and relationship with commons, may reveal previously invisible areas, obtaining, at the same time, semi-private pockets spaces that raise the opportunity of appropriation by the neighborhoods.

Between the first and the second phase, a seminar shall be promoted to present and discuss the results obtained in the first phase. This meeting may be held at the Faculty of Architecture of Lisbon or at the School of Architecture of the University of Alcalá and will also include guests from outside the two institutions and will be open to the academic community as well as to representatives of the communities and municipalities involved. It is necessary to reinforce the need to draw up protocols that speed up and make effective the collaboration between FAUL and the various municipalities to be involved. For the pilot project, there is already a protocol signed and with some work done, with Lagos City Council, which will be the basis of the embryo project for the first two years.

It is expected that with the submission of a more ambitious project to the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), we can significantly extend this range of actions to other cities, constituting for such a wider research project and with definite collaborating researchers allocated to project.

It is also foreseen the preparation of an exhibition and a further publication of the IN SITU editions, which will take the form of a consultative report for the Municipalities. This report, prepared as a corollary of the embryo project, produced by the various team members from their multi-disciplinary visions, should reveal the intervention methodology followed, thus constituting a document with practical application for society in general.

It is expected to have between 14 and 20 Master Final Design Projects being developed within the next 10 months, under this research project. At the present time there are already four ongoing Master design projects, taking the city of Lagos as the place of study that shall be integrated into this project.

EXPECTED SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

Two possible areas are considered in obtaining scientific results: (1) the first, more theoretical and academic, which questions the shape of the city and its commons, launching therefore hypotheses; (2) and the second through the speculative response to those hypotheses, through the design practice carried out by the students, for specific sites or new "pockets" opened in the apparent "invisibilities" of the compacted city.

Regarding the more academic and theoretical one:

- Obtaining a list of a series of accessibility conditions at the public space level with the buildings to be rehabilitated or proposed;
- Obtaining terms of reference to the various possible housing uses from family housing, in its various forms, including the various possible models of temporary housing;
- Other particular conditions, applicable in the light of the new post-COVID reality, which put into perspective a critical revision of the urbanistic codes applicable in these contexts.
- The production of a synthesis document by the research team.

The applied research work (developed by the students in the Design Studio) is essentially seen as demonstrations (or case studies) of the raised hypothesis.

BUDGET: € 7.500,00

First semester:

4/5 field visits (2 to 3 days each) to Lagos, 2/3 persons	0.700,00 euros
one junior researcher partial time 30%	1.800,00 euros
conference/seminar to take place between December and February:	
Logistics	0.200,00 euros
guests (lodging and board)	0.800,00 euros

second semester:

4/5 field visits (2 to 3 days each) to Lagos, 2/3 persons	0.700,00 euros
one junior researcher partial time 30%	1.800,00 euros
IN SITU editions publication	1.500,00 euros

Any other expenses are to be supported by the project's responsible and integrated researchers.