

# DISPELLING THE G A P

An urban focus

for the integration of North Petare



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## ABSTRACT

Petare is known to be one of the biggest slums in Latin America, a massive spontaneous settlement where more than 200.000 people often live under harsh conditions, lacking basic needs, in precarious environments. Most of the problems of this slum are related to the pronounced segregation that isolates it from the rest of the city. In order to deal with this situation, the existing projects for an intermodal station, located in a large underused plot between the slum and the highway, are seen as an opportunity for integration. The strategy proposed consist of the development of an urban focus as integrator mediator, in an endeavor to dissolve the gap that separates poor and middle classes.

Located at the east entrance of Caracas, Petare is enclosed by the highway that provides access to the city, but at the same time creates a barrier that highlights the disparities between the two sides: the planned and the spontaneous. These disparities are both cause and consequence of the segregation towards the slum, generating a strong social and urban gap that represents not only a physical limit, but also a limitation for the progress of this community and therefore, the city itself. Consequently, the purpose of the study is to integrate North Petare to its immediate context as well as with the rest of the city, in order to improve the life quality and opportunities of its inhabitants, promoting interaction and access to urban advantages.

Taking the intermodal station as starting point, the intervention seeks to break the boundary by inhabiting the gap, replacing the barrier with an urban focus. An active node for citizen encounter, that responds to the local needs providing the urban elements that self-construction cannot achieve, a new pole of attraction that activates the economy of the area and places importance on Petare. An urban project whose dimensions correspond to the dimensions of the problem, since an issue of this magnitude cannot be solve by erecting a single building or small precise interventions, but rather by a master plan involving different scales of interventions from the metropolitan to the local scale in order to create in-depth integration. The possibility of this type of intervention is viable in Caracas due to the existence of large unused or residual spaces and in order to succeed it must be developed in phases by a joint work between the community, professionals, the private sector and the State, political will is fundamental.

This urban focus is comprised of three systems according to the most problematic situations of the area. The system of mobility and accessibility connects from the inside of the slum towards the rest of the city creating clear, continuous pathways that prioritizes the pedestrian. The public space and interaction system provides several types and hierarchies of open spaces for different activities and encounters. Finally the system of equipment and civility incorporates the main services needed in the area, highlighting culture and sports as important elements for development. The design of the proposal responds to the conditions of the place, the logic of the slum, the topography and the advantageous aspects of a tropical climate. It answers to the problems and needs of the people and the place by creating quality spaces that promote integration, in order to improve the life conditions of its inhabitants and the well-functioning of the city as a whole, aiming for a unified and fair city.

# INTRODUCTION

There is an evident gap that separates Petare, a massive slum, from the rest of the city, Caracas, generating harmful consequences in the development of the people and the entire city. This situation is recurrent in Caracas, a city of contrasts where there are clear disparities between the two parts: the planned and the spontaneous, commonly known as barrios in Venezuela.

“Because of the conditions in which these areas without planning were developed, the way they were occupied and the very topography of the land where they are located, which in most cases are steep slopes or occupy the edge of stream, no spaces were foreseen for the equipment, services, etc. In many cases, not even for the necessary roads to access, much less to designate an area as public space. The occupation in most cases was quite anarchic, and over the years it was spreading and densifying through the construction of more levels in the houses.

The entire situation described above has generated a large gap in terms of the availability of public space between the formal sectors of the city and the informal sectors, increasing much more the segregation and exclusion of large areas of the city, making them more inaccessible, unsafe, with deficiencies in all public services such as drinking water, sewers, waste collection, urban cleaning in general, transportation, health, education, etc. and promoting inequality of opportunities. “ (Silva et al., 2013a: 35)

A gap is a space where something is lacking, an opening between two things, a large difference separating people, or their opinions, something missing from a system that prevents it from being complete or perfect. In this case, integration is missing, there is a large difference separating communities that prevents the city from being complete. There is not only a physical gap, but also a social one that obstructs interaction and development provoking an urban fracture and harsh living conditions. This situation is a worldwide problem, since nowadays a billion people live in slums and by 2030 it will reach 3 billion (United Nations), because the process of spontaneous occupation is the dominant form of urbanization and it cannot be stopped. For many years they have been ignored or denied, proposing even the demolition of the homes of thousands of people, but time showed that these solutions do not work, the slums continued to exist and consolidate more and more. Learning from this lesson, it is now time to accept the existence of spontaneous settlements, understanding them as a very important part of the city where a large part of the population lives. Its inhabitants have the same right to the city, to live in quality environments, in appropriate and pleasant places, they have the right to public space, to streets in good condition, to comfortable pedestrian systems, to access to all necessary services. Architecture should not be exclusive for specific areas of the city, everyone should have the right to live in dignified places. The issue of slums was not addressed on time and now it is out of control, the city must act upon them as soon as possible in order to improve the life quality of its inhabitants and the well-functioning of the city as a whole.



Understanding the relevance of the unfavorable implications brought by segregation, the aim of the study is to dispel the gap, integrating Petare to the rest of the city, while responding to the needs of the place facing the three main issues: bad mobility, lack of public spaces and scarce equipment. The term dispel refers to drive away or make disappear fears, falls ideas, doubts by proving the wrong. In this sense, “Dispelling the gap” suggests the act of vanishing the segregation between the planned and the spontaneous, removing the mistaken negative conception given to slums in the past, looking for the interaction among the parts as an unified and complete city.

Looking for a better comprehension of the issue and the place, several interviews were held with experienced professionals and people from the community. This interviews provided crucial information for the development of the proposal as well as the opportunity of the Guaraira Repano intermodal station as starting point for the integration.

The contribution of this study consists in the proposal of an strategy to face the issue of the gap: A Urban focus. A node for citizen encounter that integrates Petare, developed by answering to fundamental questions: how to deeply integrate barrios with the rest of the city? How to promote interaction between the parts? How to create a more unified and just city?

An aerial photograph of Petare, a large informal settlement in Caracas, Venezuela. The image shows a vast, dense area of low-rise buildings and shacks built on steep, hilly terrain. In the background, the city of Caracas is visible, including several tall apartment buildings and a highway. The Andes mountains are visible in the far distance under a clear sky.

1

The theme

# PETARE, A COMPLEX REALITY





## 1.1

# From historic center to massive slum

When talking about slums in Caracas, Petare is the first one to come to mind, since it is one of the biggest slums in Latin America, both because of its extension and because of its density. Located at the east entrance of the city, the massive tissue covers the hills that rise to the east of the valley of the city.

This spontaneous settlement, built through self-construction, without an urban plan, presents several problems, affecting the life of many. These problems are a direct consequence of the conditions of the place, including its location segregated from the city, the abrupt topography and the history behind it. *“Three major problems are imposed: connectivity, both within the communities and with the rest of the city; the lack of equipment, especially schools and sports centers; and, finally, the risk posed by its infrastructures.” Méndez Alzolar, G. (2019).* Another mayor problem is related to the levels of density presented in the area, the tight urban tissue leaves scarce open space, that must fulfill multiple purposes in order to respond to the different needs. Among other complications it is important to mention the garbage accumulation, the unsanitary conditions, a bad public transportation system, the violence, the lack of job opportunities.

Despite the harsh living conditions generated by these problems, it is important to understand the relevance of this slum, as the result of enormous effort invested throughout around a century, generation to generation, growing according to the possibilities of its people. It provides housing for a considerable amount of people, that otherwise would not have a place to live.



*“An iconic Caracas border is the eastern edge of Petare. This is a double border marked by the Francisco Fajardo Highway and the gigantic barrio of Petare. It seems here that the city ends in La Urbina but further east there is still much disintegrated and disconnected territory. Disintegrated, since it lacks a structure of collective spaces and facilities, and disconnected due to an evident lack of accessibility to roads, pedestrians and public service networks.” (Valle et al., 2012)*

As a matter of fact, Petare is not precisely a slum, but a town founded in 1621 in the countryside just outside the city of Caracas. Nowadays, it is the largest and most known parish of the Sucre Municipality. However, the name is popularly given to the ensemble of slums that starts at the edge of the city, after the main highway, and grows over the mountains, generating a continuous dense spontaneous tissue in constant dedevelopment, that contrast drastically with the planned city, right next to it.





## THE ORIGIN OF THE SPONTANEOUS

The origins of Petare go back to 1621, when the Spanish conquerors founded the village “*Dulce Nombre de Jesús de Petare*”. Arranged in an orthogonal grid following the colonial urban tissue, called “*damero de indias*”, placing the main square at the center, surrounded by the church, the main public buildings, the market and the houses that belonged to the nobles. Located over a small hill in an strategic location, close to Caracas and surrounded by the fertile lands suitable for cultivation and advantageous hydrographic condition, to the south with the Guaire River, to the east with the El Oro gorge and to the west with the Caurimare River, reason why it was given its name:

*“The word “petare” has its origin in the words “pet” and “are”, both belonging to the Caribbean language spoken by the Mariche Indians, pre-Columbian inhabitants of the current area east of Caracas. These two words mean “face” and “river” respectively, which allows us to conclude that Petare means “in front of the river”, in clear allusion to the geographical location of the founding nucleus, located on the banks of the Guaire River (main body of water in the Caracas valley) and the Caurimare stream.” (Padronel, 2019: 6)*

The village became a dynamic point of exchange agricultural products and merchandise since it was intersected by an important system of roads, the Royal Roads, turning it into a busy stop for travelers and merchants, promoting the local economy.

It was originally an independent community, but due to its closeness with the city, “the urban expansion of Caracas saw in the Sucre District a growth path, in such a way that the construction industry, commerce and industrial activities began to occupy the land for agricultural use.” (Padronel, 2019: 26) For this reason, it was recognized as part of the Caracas Metropolitan Area in the middle of the 20th century.



During this century modernity arrived, and with it many relevant changes in the city, the appearance of slums among them. The car became a priority, Caracas put it at the center, constructing an impressive system of highways that gave origin to the massive slum Petare is today. As clearly explained by Urban Think Tank:



*“The story of Petare is one of explosive urban expansion during the 1970s oil boom, which fueled the construction of new highways and, in turn, lured thousands of migrants to Caracas. Ironically, such public works, intended to modernize and improve living conditions and integrate communities, have resulted in even greater segregation, raising nearly insurmountable barriers. The barrio of Petare is a 50-year old settlement on the eastern hills of the city. There is no consensus on the number of residents, because density and insecurity make census taking virtually impossible. Compared with any housing development, Petare is extremely dense, largely because buildings lack setbacks and because the interstices between structures are narrow pedestrian walkways, rather than wide vehicular roads.*

*The settlement emerged from a chain of real estate transactions with dramatic effects. In the 1970s. plans were formalized to build the Autopista del Este, a six-lane highway connecting Caracas with satellite cities to the east. The land expropriated for that purpose effectively divides flat farmland on one side and hills on the other, giving each an area of approximately two square kilometers. The construction of the highway took a decade, during which time the foothills were occupied by barracks for workers, creating a prime site for squatters. In this sense, Petare is probably one of the most innovative examples of dealing with property rights. It is a pedestrian city for almost one million inhabitants. with an unmatched density of 768 inhabitants per hectare compared to 515 in Manhattan, which at the same time produces less waste, and uses less energy. Petare is best compared to a giant, adaptable mega building - a structure like a large bed sheet thrown over the mountains and valleys of Caracas. Rhizome-like, it connects to all other cities. Porous like a sponge, it is open to modifications. The regime of uniformity and formal role is suspended. Clashing ideas and surprising juxtapositions exist.” (Lepik, 2015: 44)*



*"... I hope they continue building spaces like this because this is our garden, those of us who do not have our own garden."* (Silva et al., 2013: 72)

## ESPACIOS SUCRE

The village, *"Dulce Nombre de Jesús de Petare"*, as it grew and merged with Caracas, gave origin to Sucre municipality. For this reason it is the most important parish and even for some Caracas citizens, Sucre is Petare. This parish has a population of around one million people, where two thirds live in informal settlements, distributed in two differentiated urban tissues, the planned area to the west, with 51 neighborhoods, and the self-constructed area, that includes more than 1900 slums. (espacios sucre) The differences between these two forms of urbanization is very contrasting and it causes several complications, including segregation, bad connectivity and accessibility, lack of public spaces and services, health issues, social problems. An important issue is the levels of violence of the area, *"In this regard, the municipality became the most violent in Latin America in terms of deaths per 100,000 inhabitants."* (Silva et al., 2013: 37)

*"It is for all this that the current administration decided to undertake a coordinated effort to recover public spaces to increase the supply throughout the municipality and reduce the gap between the formal and informal sectors of the city. The idea being to offer equal opportunities for all, the intervention criteria of these spaces do not discriminate, being the same standards both in urbanizations and in popular communities."* (Silva et al., 2013: 35)

An so *"Espacios Sucre"* (Sucre Spaces) was conceived, an important project regarding the transformation of the urban space in spontaneous settlements in the municipality. It consisted in a series of interventions of the public space of small and medium scale that aimed to satisfy the needs of the communities, offering areas for encounter, recreation and rest. *"It is a constructed definition of the public space from the formal and aesthetic that adds to the constructed fabric a new dimension of dignity and we could even say of beauty."* (Silva et al., 2013: 17) An interdisciplinary and participatory project that involved the Municipality, the academy, cultural institutions and non-profit foundations. The selection of the areas responded to those that could impact more people and where the construction would be less conflictive. In this way, 29 public spaces were built.





Structures number by year:

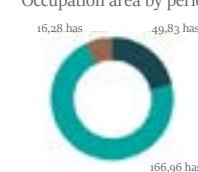


Neighborhood legend:  
 1. UDU4.1-Antonio José de Sucre 2. UDU4.2-Agricultura 3. UDU4.3-José Félix Ribas 4. UDU4.4-Julian Blanco

Unit Table:

	year-on-year growth**									
Years	1966	1984	1990*	2000	2014	66-84	84-00	00-14	66-14	
Interannual period						18	16	14	48	
Occupation area (has)	49,83	209,22	215,19	225,51	225,51	8,41	0,42	0,00	3,32	
Structures area (has)	31,29	119,83	122,46	127,05	127,05	7,75	0,37	0,00	2,96	
% location	62,80%	57,27%		56,34%	56,34%					
Structures number	3,818	16,346	16,764	17,484	17,484	8,41	0,42	0,00	3,22	
Population	19,245	82,392	84,498	88,128	88,128	8,41	0,42	0,00	3,22	

Occupation area by periods:



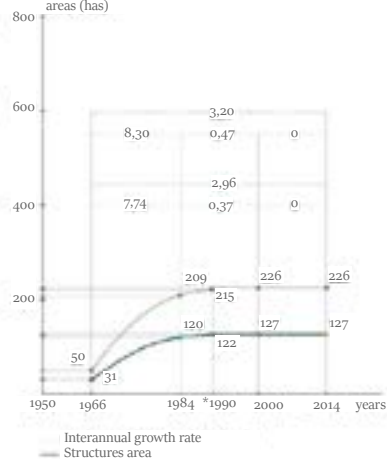
Density Table:

Years	1966	1984	1990*	2000	2014
Inhabitant by occupation area (hab/has)	384,55	393,80	392,7	390,80	390,80
Inhabitant by structures area (hab/has)	614,97	687,59	689,86	693,67	693,67
Inhabitant by structure (hab/str)	5,04	5,04	5,04	5,04	5,04

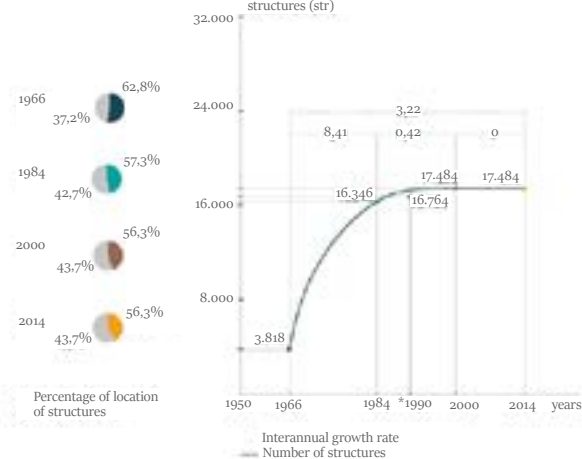
\* The 1990 data used for the population were obtained from the investigation *Un Plan para Los Barrios de Caracas* from Baldó, J and Villanueva, F. The population before and after 1990 is calculated based on the number of inhabitants by structure. For years 2000 and 2014 it's a minimum population estimate and for 1966 and 1984 corresponds to a maximum population.

\*\* Growth rate may be affected by lack of data

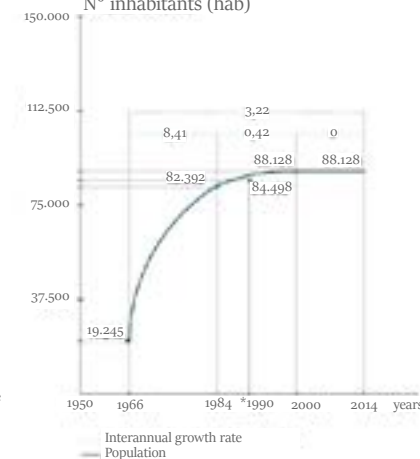
Occupation area and strutures area  
 areas (has)



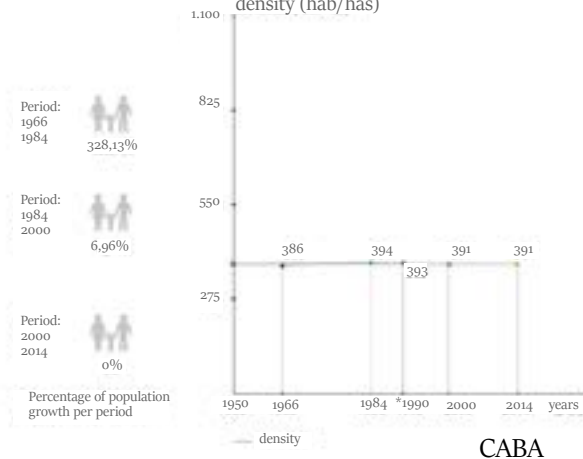
Number of structures  
 structures (str)



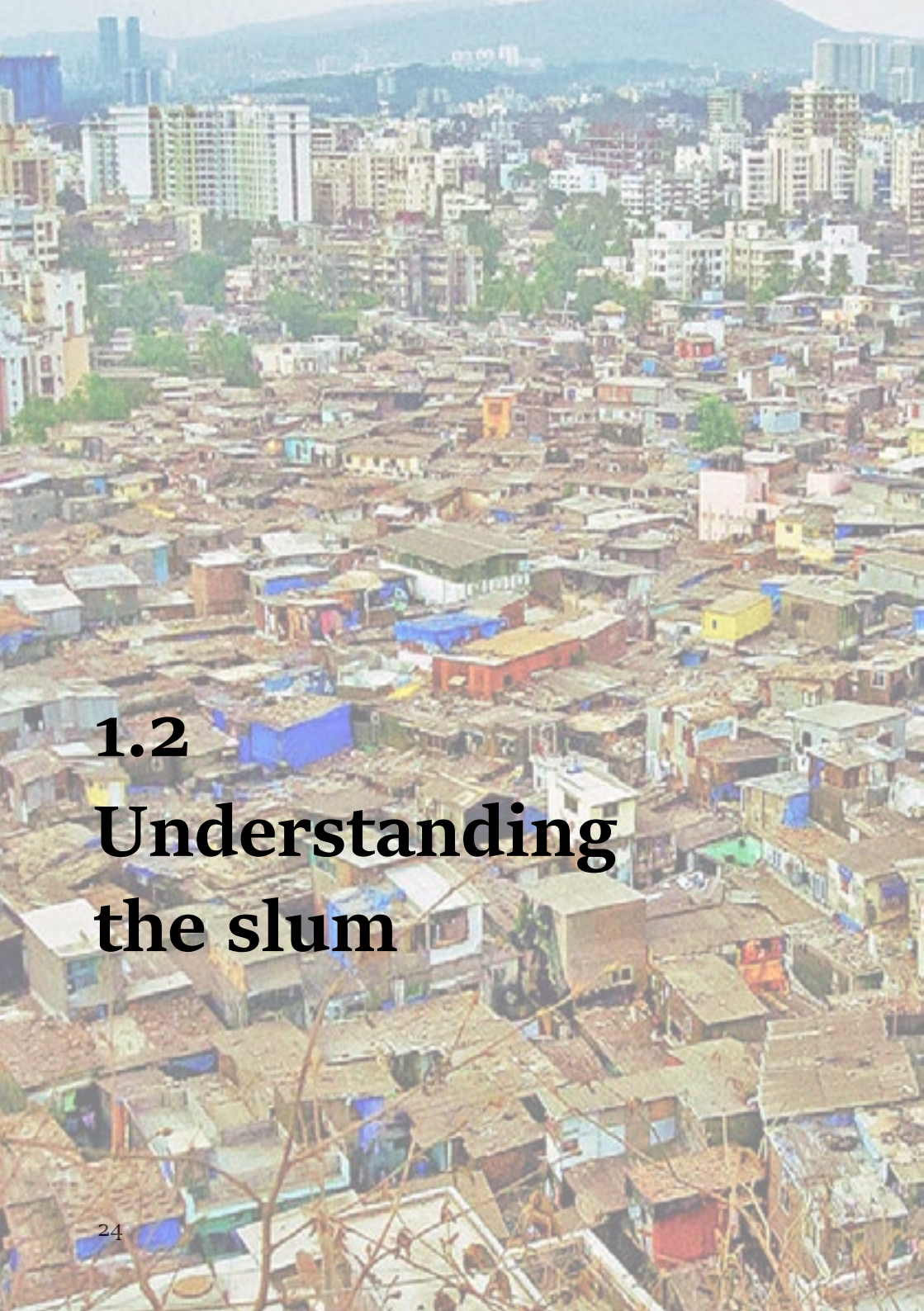
Population  
 N° inhabitants (hab)



Density per total area  
 density (hab/has)







## 1.2 Understanding the slum

### **DOMINANT FORM OF URBANIZATION THROUGH DENSE AND ORGANIC URBAN FABRIC**

Slums are an essential part of the city that evidence the urban growth process. Contiguous settlements with a progressive and spontaneous development sprawling at the edge of cities. Their organic form and compactness derive from the adaptation to the topographic conditions and their autonomy, product of the absence of an urban project and the lack of control. A compact and hazardous urban tissue that has consolidated over time creating its own order and beauty. They are overcrowded because their densification cannot be stopped, reaching the maximum densities within their possibilities. This density is not only urban, but also demographic, with high occupancy rates shown by the cohabitation of numerous people in small areas that serve for multiple uses. The constant growth of these settlements increases inequality and decreases the city performance. Despite the adversity, they are the most important and dynamic territorial occupation.

*“The barrios prove that there are myriad small overlapping cities inside a bigger city. The urban configuration of the informal city is beyond the mere physical definition of space. The strategy of construction involves a complex intertwining between forms of urbanity and processes that create this urbanity. One could even say the barrios are a kind of grassroots movement without a manifesto, but with necessity in mind. The casual urbanizations are not a memory-freezing urban system, but with their high degree of improvisation, flexibility, and inventiveness produced by anonymous builders, a product of tactical urbanism. The barrio is of grand scale, but represents the antithesis of a master plan or an authoritarian paradigm of the academic world.” (Lepik, 2015: 28)*



## SELF CONSTRUCTED RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENTS

Without the economic possibilities to acquire a place to live, low-income urban population manage to come up with a solution for their dwelling by building their own houses. Slums are the result of the sum of houses built instinctively by its owners through invasion or occupation of empty spaces of the cities. These self-managed constructions and reconstructions are built with no regulation or planification, generating inadequate and provisional building structures that tend to remain over time resulting in poor and precarious housing conditions. They provide low-cost housing and low-cost services for the expanding urban population. Dormitory cities for urban workers of all kinds who work double shift, *“As the social psychologist Andrés Antillano points out, people worked during the day in the construction of the other people’s city, and at night and on weekends, in their own city.”* (Carvajal, 2018b)

It is important to highlight the enormous effort implied in self-construction. People facing economic difficulties, with very low incomes and with no possibility to access financing for housing, not only have to build their dwellings, but in addition to that they must assume responsibility for the construction of the surrounding, since there is no urban planification from public sector. For this reason, slums are in constant evolution, consolidating over time according to the capacities of the inhabitants.

*“Informality is not a lack of form or order (that would be non-formality), but rather the state of being in formation. It is the constant introspection of forms through trial and error, the refinement of forms through spontaneous experimentation rather than static acceptance of tradition. And above all, informality is perhaps the process of getting past modernity’s fetish with form itself by denying form static supremacy.”* (Lepik, 2015: 114)





23 de Enero, CABA

*“At the same time, the most immediate and visible evidence of asymmetrical urbanization has been the growth of informal settlements. They are the result and the eventual casualty of the same urbanization processes in a city with nearly 1,500 favelas holding a population of over three million people, these areas are acutely familiar yet remain out of bounds - marginal in their physical locations and marginal in their socio-economic exclusions. Despite a dynamic cultural and social environment within their limits, they are fundamentally disconnected from the city physically, socially, and economically. Informal settlements account for the fastest growth rates in the city, yet they lack even basic social equipment and provisions for education, health, employment, and leisure. This sets the groundwork to expand the definition of sustainability beyond environmental responsibility to include both social and economic imperatives.” (Lepik, 2015: 110)*

## URBAN, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Even if they perform an important role for the functioning and growth of the city, slums are excluded from urban life. Society and planning pushed them away from the planned city. Leaving no choice but to occupy areas that the city did not cover, because they were unsafe and vulnerable sites unfit for urbanization. Peripheral and high-risk locations unsuitable for housing purposes with the possibility of flooding or landslides: *“In addition to the human dangers of informal settlements, each year numerous informal residents perish, or lose their dwellings and properties, because settlements are sometimes built on areas prone to natural disasters, such as landslides, flooding, or earthquakes, or that are affected by explosions of buried gas lines or gas emissions of former garbage dumps. This often happens because settlers selected sites unaware of the risks or simply because they had no other choice.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 27)*

They occupy abrupt topographies geographically isolated, obstructing its connection with the rest of the city, hindering accessibility and mobility. *“Poor accessibility and mobility can make travel time consuming and very dangerous; Caracas, for example, has the second highest crime rate of any city in the Americas, with the majority of violence found in virtually inaccessible informal settlements that are located on the steep peripheral terrain of the metropolis. Exposed to constant perils, a dweller of the steep informal area in Caracas may have to walk up more than 250 vertical meters, the equivalent of an 80-story building, carrying goods or construction materials from the nearest public transportation stop.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 27)*

This segregation of disadvantage groups of the urban society limits the access to economic and social networks. Due to acute economic constraints, they have restricted opportunities to obtain a formal job, resulting in unemployment and informal economies; becoming for this reason economically dependent on the formal city. All these factors contribute to social inequality, stigmatization and discrimination of vulnerable groups of population, creating barriers for human and social development.





## **LACK OF SERVICES PROVOKE HARSH LIVING CONDITIONS AND VULNERABILITY**

The absence of basic advantages of urban living is a severe problem that affects life quality in a daily basis. In slums, one of the main issues is the lack of infrastructure and urban services, dealing with bad access to basic services like clean water, electricity, street lightning, surfaced roads, sidewalks, rainwater drainage. The waste collection system does not exist, producing garbage accumulation. These troubles cause environmental problems and create unsanitary conditions, exposing people to serious health risks. The absence of organization of the environment has been demonstrated to be related to violence, insecurity, vulnerability. Furthermore, because of the absence of planification, these settlements lack fundamental aspects of urban living such as public spaces, amenities, green areas; in addition to that, they face scarce job opportunities, education and culture, resulting in a habitat that is not appropriate for people to evolve. This situation is constantly aggravating with a continuous increase of the population and no increase of services.

## **REMAINING VOID BECOMES PUBLIC SPACE**

The street is not only used for mobility, it is the main space for interaction. The conception of the public space is very different in the spontaneous settlements. People live the available space left between the houses in the hazardous tissue and use it for many purposes. The stairs become streets, the sports courts become multifunctional areas used as public squares, as theater, as conference hall. People get the most out of each single vacant area assigning them diverse functions. Since the space inside the dwellings is commonly very compact, most of the life happens outside, stimulating the value of the openness, where people are not absorbed in private spaces and the doors are open to the street. The slum belongs to the pedestrian.





## **STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

In slums people develop strong identity and social ties. There are two main reasons that explain this fact. First, the conception of collective use and openness to the street, that allows them to be in constant contact and interaction, establishing solid social bonds. And secondly, the need to create a network of social support essential for their survival and evolution. Having to face multiple and persistent difficulties, people help each other to overcome adversities, solidarity is fundamental. Nevertheless, this strong sense of community produces sectorization, every community is very defined and controlled by a different band: *“In many Latin American and some African nations, criminal syndicates, particularly in areas where accessibility is limited, control informal communities. These groups impose their own laws in exchange for “protecting the neighborhoods.”* DG. Causing segregation and obstructed mobility within the slum. They develop an own way of inhabiting, an own world of relationships, an own appropriation of the space.

## CONTRAST OF PROS AND CONS

### Positive aspects:

- Compactness
- Dynamism
- Low energy consumption
- Productivity
- Strong identity and social ties
- Appropriation of the space
- Street as main space
- Belongs to the pedestrian
- Adaptability

### Negative aspects:

- Peripheral and high-risk locations
- Difficult accessibility and mobility
- Scarce infrastructure, services and open spaces
- Unhealthy sanitary conditions
- Environmental problems
- No regulations
- No properties document
- Segregation
- Weak political representation
- Violence
- Precariousness
- Deterioration
- Exclusion
- Poverty

## NON-RECOGNITION LEADING TO ILLEGALITY AND INFORMALITY

The lack of recognition of slums as an equal part of the city is a crucial problem that makes impossible their progress. They are neglected parts of the city, forgotten, unknown, not considered, with weak political representation. The term “informal” assign to these spontaneous settlements is a demonstration of the lack of acceptance that removes the obligation of the government to develop a place that legally does not exist. As stated by a slum dweller: *“In the barrios you can do anything, because definitely the municipal ordinances do not apply. You can put the ladder outside, play the music at full volume. What ordinance can apply if the municipalities say they are “informal sectors”, or “sectors of uncontrolled development”? Maintaining that state of illegality was a way of maneuvering and controlling the people, and it is due to that act of irresponsibility and betrayal of the political parties.”* (Carvajal, 2018b) Habitants have an insecure residential status since they do not possess any formal property document. The illegality is a manifestation of the lack of will or incapacity of the authorities to act upon these territories. Ignoring them has only cause more problems. It must be accepted and understood: Slum is city.

### *“No Code As Code: White zones*

*Existing zoning codes have no jurisdiction on building sites that are without title. The squatter cities are producing their own conditions, which follow unwritten rules of self-organization in an environment of institutional abandonment - an illegal city built inside the legal city. These settlements house 42 percent of Caracas’ population, and the lack of housing provided by the city government has led to this massive unregulated invasion of available land. Until recently, official maps used in public offices indicated the barrios as white zones inside the city. This selective mapping process illustrates the degree of ignorance that confronts the inhabitants of the barrios. Physically, the barrios of Caracas present the most powerful built image, and the largest collectively built form the city has to offer. The building process without architects leads to a total homogenization of form, and an absolute variety of solutions.”* (Lepik, 2015: 28)

# 1.3

## Approaching slums

### EMERGENCE AS CONSEQUENCE OF FAILED HOUSING PROVISION

Slums arise as the result of the combination of unresponsive systems, disadvantaged socio-economic conditions and exclusion. *“Informal settlements should not be seen as a problem but rather a consequence of historic and structural deficiencies of developing societies that are experiencing exponential rates of urban population growth.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 24) This accelerated growth, mostly due to immigration, was managed with insufficient and inappropriate policies. The lack of political will to act upon the situation brought inadequate regulations, bad governance, deficient housing provision systems, failure of national and urban policies, corruption, dysfunctional land markets. All these negative conditions affected the population that due to poverty and lack of economic income, could not enter the established system of the city. Struggling to solve with the few resources they have, they are forced to seek affordable accommodation, occupying peripheral inadequate sites. These circumstances were both cause and consequence of spatial segregation and social exclusion, increasing inequality in urban areas.





## RADICAL CHANGE OF PERCEPTION

In the last three decades there has been an evolution towards acceptance and action regarding the approach of slums. For a long time, spontaneous settlements were ignored, seen as something marginal that had to be eradicated, set aside or replaced. Until they expanded into a dominant form of urbanization, becoming an important factor that directly affects the functioning of large cities. It was then when the approach towards them began to change little by little, particularly in Latin America and some African countries. Urban planning and design saw the need to give attention to the issue and take action to improve the conditions of these settlements. Progressively, the legal aspects have also been modified, seeking the recognition of slums, obligating the public sector to act upon them. *“In recent years, the visibility, if not yet the circumstances, of the barrio dwellers has begun to change. Following the uprisings of 1989, constitutional reform produced a new legal structure enabling them to participate actively in the public sector, and to influence formal government and its public policies.”* (Lepik, 2015: 59) These changes have been shown to have positive effects, with several examples of successful projects that have upgraded urban conditions of existing slums. Although there has been an improvement towards acceptance, there is still resistance from the majority in all areas: political, urban, economic and social.

*“Such acceptance became evident in the case of Caracas, Venezuela. Until the 1990s, the National Government and municipal authorities, mainly during pre-election periods, would carry out only minor interventions in the informal settlements, known as barrios, which were typically located on steep topography. These would be limited to paving pedestrian paths and stairways, channeling rainwater runoff or covering polluted streams, introducing simple forms of street lighting, and applying paint to unfinished brick building facades. In some cases, local health, educational, and sports facilities were also introduced. None of these interventions made significant changes to the quality of life within such poor communities; rather they would continue to be physically and functionally segregated from the formal city.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 6)





*“The changing attitude towards informality varies from country to country but tends to travel a similar path. It is preceded by an initial period in which institutions and formal dwellers begin to understand that a new modality of informal occupation is beginning to occur, at which point they may ignore it or attempt to stop it through use of force or through developing formal housing provisions. While some nations today deal with informal growth in a proactive and creative way, others believe that they can control it and eradicate it.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 5)*

1. “During the 60s and 70s, these processes took place through policies of eradication of informal neighborhoods that were carried out in several cities in the region. Under the guise of “city beautification”, to prevent crime and health problems, or to implement redevelopment programs, governments of Third World countries implemented large-scale demolition programs in disorganized and unplanned communities. Instead of improving or creating welfare policies, governments eliminated slums and illegal settlements from central areas, transferring the problem of poverty and irregularity to the peripheries of cities.” (Caf., 2019: 15)

2. “Under the strictest of definitions, “Sites and Services” refers to a World Bank initiative pioneered in the early 1970s for housing and urban renewal. However, similar programs existed in practice as early as the 1950s at a regional and local level, such as those in Botswana and Malawi.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, certain core concepts underwriting the Sites and Services ethos, such as the focus on amenities, lot division, and infrastructure rather than built architectural form, are seen in the experiments of some architects and urban designers as early as the 1940s.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 18)

## APPROACH THROUGH TIME

Since the appearance of the slums, the approach towards them has been gradually shifting in a positive direction:

1. **Push aside:** with the rapid growth population, urban design and regulations did not take into account poor population leaving them out of the system of the city.
2. **Invisibility:** the settlements started to consolidate but they were completely ignored by authorities, who did not consider them as part of the city.
3. **Eradication<sup>1</sup>:** the first attempt to face the situation was by trying to eliminate them through eviction, because they were seen as something wrong, as something that should not exist.
4. **Social housing:** due to the harsh living conditions, many programs for social housing were developed, but the supply never meet the demand and the problems of bad life quality persisted.
5. **Site and services<sup>2</sup>:** using people’s energy, landscape was provided for self-constructed housing. This strategy works at a neighborhood scale.
6. **Punctual interventions:** because of the large dimension of the settlements and the problems, several small-scale projects were implemented to address specific issues in determined areas.
7. **Rehabilitation of existing informal settlements:** a strategy that consists of the design of a masterplan that aims to intervene slums responding to the needs and problems regarding the urban, economic, political and social aspect. It is a corrective urban surgery that includes public spaces, services, relocation of people, communal participation.

## FACING A CHALLENGING FUTURE

The process of spontaneous occupation cannot be stopped. According to the United Nations a total of a billion people lives in slums, one eighth of the world's population. This number will continue to increase tripling over the next two decades reaching 3 billion by 2030. They can no longer be considered as a negligible temporary condition since they have an important influence in populated cities in developing countries and they will continue to grow over time. The management of slums is an important challenge that has massive repercussions for humanity at a socio-economic, political and environmental level. Understanding the issue, there is plenty of work regarding the approach that should be given to slums in order to improve the existing situation. Some important aspects must be considered to achieve a more inclusive and egalitarian approach:

- **Acceptance:** There is a social, political, academic and professional prejudice against them that must be erased. Slums exist and should be addressed as an egalitarian part of the city, and no more with avoidance and exclusion.
- **Right to the city:** recognize the willingness of people to live in the city and be take part in the urban life, shown by the great effort and sacrifices that self-construction implies. They deserve equal rights and urban living conditions as the rest of the citizens.
- **Take action:** the dimension of the issue makes evident the need to act upon slums. Inaction will just enhance urban disparities, aggravate inequalities and harm the performance of the city.
- **Understanding:** it is essential to understand their logic, their way of living, their needs, in order improve the performance and conditions of these communities. Recognizing and valuing what already exist, the new typological spaces found in these settlements.

- **No more “informality”:** this term only segregates slums and eliminates the responsibility of the public sector towards them. The terminology must change for these settlements to be considered as equal in the social, economic and urban life.
- **Tax payment:** it is necessary to start charging for urban services, to obtain money that will be invested in the community and to generate the obligation from the state to provide good quality services.
- **Global solutions:** one isolated operation cannot solve all the problems. There is a need for a masterplan that guides all the interventions to work together in the same direction.
- **Deep transformation:** the response can no longer be sporadic or temporary. It must be systematic, organic, interdisciplinary to achieve a real improvement.
- **Urban planning:** developing countries apply planning methods that contributed to social exclusion and urban fragmentation, like zoning, regulatory codes and real state. It is essential to incorporate slums in urban planning with the objective of urbanizing them and sewing the spontaneous into the planned tissue.
- **Innovative approach:** this recent and massive scale of urbanization requires a new approach, new tools to respond to the problem and narrow down disparities.

*“In facing the challenge of slums, urban development policies should more vigorously address the issue of livelihoods of slum dwellers and urban poverty in general, thus going beyond traditional approaches that have tended to concentrate on improvement of housing, infrastructure and physical environmental conditions” (UN Habitat, 2003: 28)*



## 1.4 Latin American context

Latin America “currently has an urbanization rate of almost 80%, the highest on the planet, practically double that of Asia and Africa and higher than that of the group of more developed countries. A characteristic of the phenomenon in the region is that the rural-urban shift took place in less than 40 years (1950-1990), with such an accelerated rate that it has been described as an ‘urban explosion’ ”(UN-Habitat, 2012: 18). This rapid growth of the populations in the cities brought as consequence the development of slums, since the planned city did not welcome the poor immigrants. Nowadays 50% of the Latin American population lives in slums (García de Hernández, 2006: 25), a significant number that cannot be ignored.

There is a tendency in Latin American cities to present a clear divergence between the planned areas and the spontaneous areas. A concerning segregation directly related to the existing social inequalities that fragments the cities. However this persistent tension between the formal and the informal dimension that characterizes Latin American cities is not recent, it did not start with industrialization as one might think, but instead it tracks back many centuries ago to the colonization period, becoming more and more evident ever since. There are two historical moments where imposition of power and urban logics propelled discordance between these two parts: the foundation of the colonial cities and the industrialization period during twentieth century. (Hernández et al., 2009: 2)

During the colonization period, the foundation of cities was a fundamental part of the strategy. New settlements were founded throughout the continent, substituting the preexisting indigenous settlements with an orthogonal plan brought from Europe. The indigenous people were pushed away to the periphery since they were not allowed inside the formal city. This situation led to segregation, social stratification and inequalities, initiating in this way the contrast between the ordered tissue and the “informal” periphery that remains to this day. “*The discrimination and oppression present in those hierarchical societies are the main inheritance of the former colonies and are a persistent tragedy, being part of the unsolved questions of the recent past.*” (Gouverneur, 2015: 3)





The second historical moment that exacerbated the conflict is related to the industrialization period at the beginning of the twentieth century, when an accelerated migration from the countryside to the city provoke the development of several spontaneous settlements in the periphery of the modern cities. *“The desire for modernization and progress brought economic growth, but also that of urban poverty. The inability of local governments to absorb and assist the new urban population contributed to the establishment of numerous illegal settlements and the consequent informal activities in the cities.”* (Caf., 2019: 15) Spreading through time, these settlements have become important parts of the Latin American cities since they represent a significant proportion of the urban area, influencing the functioning and development of cities.

*“In both cases an ‘ideal’ social order was imposed through rigid planning which made tangible in built form and space the power and value system of those in authority. In the colonial city there was no place for the indigenes; in Brasilia there was no place for the manual workers who had literally built the city. In both cases these people had to make their own cities beyond the boundaries (physical as well as social) of the formal cities which were intended only for the affluent and powerful.”* (Hernández et al., 2009: 6)

As explained in the previous section, the approach towards slums have shifted throughout the years from a denial perspective to an attitude of acceptance: *“Although at the beginning the State policies maintained programs that supported the eradication and prohibition of said settlements, today the position of adaptation of these settlements to higher standards in terms of quality of life and their integration into contemporary society is widely accepted.”* (Silva, 2013b: 10) Since slums became the dominant form of urbanization, the approach towards them changed, proceeding in a more comprehensive and respectful way. Latin America was at the vanguard of these trends, proposing laborious interventions with successful outcomes, becoming a reference for many developing countries.



## VENEZUELA

The case of Venezuela has a particular aspect that directly influenced in the urbanization process, and thus in the formation of spontaneous settlement: oil. It not only has oil, but it is the country with the biggest reserves in the world, characteristic that defined the course of the country during the twentieth century. Even if there are traces of the existence of slums since the end of the XIX century, their truth development took place from the second half of the XX, once the country was consolidated as an important oil producer promoting the development of the urban areas.

With the beginning of the intensive oil exploitation in 1917, it initiates as well a particular process of occupation. Since there were no urban settlement around the production area, oil industries built “temporary camps” to host the workers, becoming later small communities. Eventually the rural population was attracted by the desire of progress and opportunities, occupying the areas around these camps through spontaneous occupation and precarious urbanism, giving birth to the formation of slums that subsequently extended to non-oil cities. In this way started the population flux from rural to urban, transforming the territorial structure and distribution. *“It went from marginally productive agricultural production to a consumption-oriented model, financed by the oil economy. The growth of employment in the city motivated a strong urban migration. Already in 1950, more than 50% of the Venezuelan population lived in cities, half a century before the world reached the same mark”* (Silva, 2016). Following this high densification process, rather greater than non-oil dependent countries, nowadays Venezuela is one of the most urbanized countries in the world with a 89% of the population living in the cities. (Silva, 2016)

The accelerated urbanization has brought with it the development of a great amount of slums all around the country. Cities were not prepared for the rapid growth, the dwelling offer could not satisfy the demand, and therefore self-constructed settlements around the planned city was the solution for low income immigrants. *“The origin of this lack of supply of urbanized land and housing, we consider that it is in the absence of urban planning, the absence of future*





*projections of the city, the lack of response in time that resulted in this phenomenon of spontaneous occupation and finally the need to act after the occupation.” (Cabaccs, 2016)*

The barrios constitute a significant part of the Venezuelan cities, but they have not been given the value that they represent. *“One notes, very clearly, that in Venezuela the barrios were not only invisible, that they were not considered in the urban planning plans, the government, etc. Rather, these people are being excluded more and more, anger is developed towards them, it is as if they want to erase it. Because it is said that all the bad things, for example the thugs, the violence, where it comes from is from those areas of the city.” (Irenees, 2013)*

In addition to the preexisting segregation *“this government has greatly encouraged division, the division between social groups, between different sectors of society, and this leads to more and more people in the city feeling fear of what may be happening in the barrios... The current government has encouraged hatred among Venezuelans, specifically between two social groups, the residents of the city and the residents of the neighborhoods.” (Irenees, 2013)*

In a country where disparities and segregation are evidently pronounced, it is necessary to act upon it. *“Immediate action on the physical environment of existing barrios is truly essential, allowing its inhabitants to achieve a quality of life comparable to that of other residents of the city.” (Villanueva et al., 1995: 15)*



An aerial photograph of a city, likely in South Africa, showing a stark contrast between a developed urban area on the left and a vast, dense informal settlement on the right. A multi-lane highway or railway corridor runs vertically through the center, separating the two areas. The informal settlement is characterized by a tightly packed, irregular pattern of small, low-rise buildings with various roof colors. The developed area on the left features larger, more organized buildings and green spaces.

# 2 The problem

## THE GAP PHE- NOMENON





## 2.1 Caracas, city of contrasts

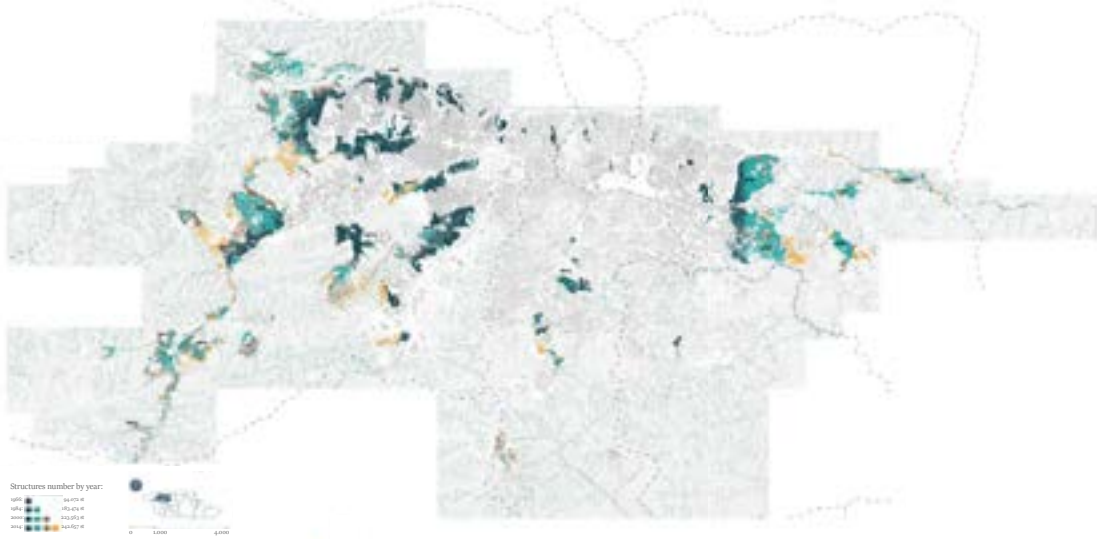
The valley of Caracas is composed by two contrasting forms of urbanization, evidently differentiated but dependent on each other. The first one, the planned city, built by two urban tissues: the colonial tissue, called “damero de indias”, brought by the Spanish conquerors, the traditional orthogonal tissue with continuous wall and well-defined voids; and the modern tissue, from 1936, when the car appears and the orthogonal blocks are broken, producing an organic tissue. On the other hand, There is the spontaneous city, built by a self-constructed tissue that occupies marginal areas of the valley. (Carvajal, 2018a) Despite the geographical proximity, these two parts of the city are separated and the contrast between them is a concerning issue that causes mayor problems for the citizens, and also to the functioning of the city. Slum dwellers feel the city very distant, Caracas is a place to work, where they do not feel they belong.

Throughout the years, there have been many efforts to face this issue, but the problem still persists:

*“You talk about equating egregious differences. There have always been, at different times and governments, investments for the consolidation of the neighborhood, as in the case of the Emergency Plan of 1958. Retaining walls, stairways, schools, ambulatory clinics have been built. That made people live better, but always under the logic of “they there, we here”. Do you think that at this moment there is a vision, from urban planning, that really assumes that the space inhabited by the people of the neighborhoods should be a space for the entire city?*

*There is great difficulty in understanding the diverse and mixed city as a good thing, there is always this class differentiation that seems to me to be our great obstacle, which is not racial. Our problem is social and economic.... Meeting places have not been created for everyone, but local ones.” (Carvajal, 2018a)*



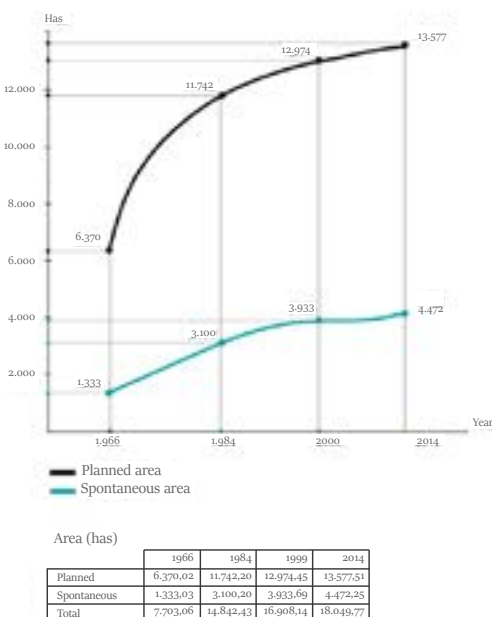


## SLUMS DEVELOPMENT

*“In its eagerness to be modern, Caracas did not know how to welcome hundreds of thousands of people who came to it, called precisely by the promise of modernity. The barrios did know how to receive them. Moreover, the barrios were built by themselves and today they represent the home of half of Caracas.” (EnlaceArquitectura, 2020)*

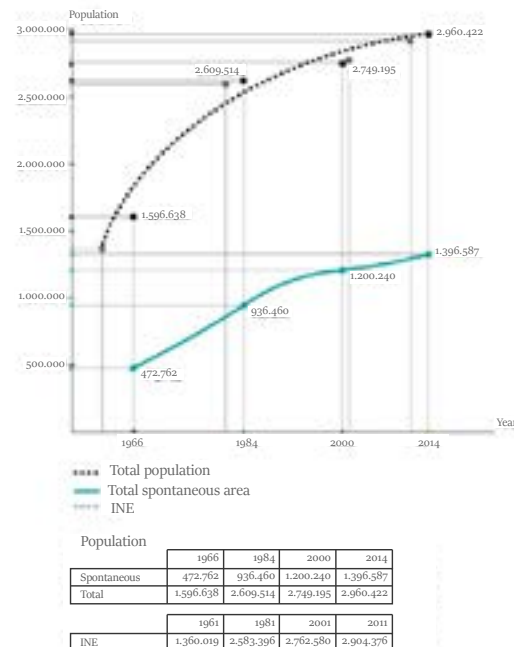
From 1940 waves of poor immigrants started to move to Caracas from the countryside looking for better life conditions that the city could offer. Being Venezuela a centralized country, it concentrates the power and main activities in its capital, Caracas, offering many services and job opportunities, it became an attractive destiny for these immigrants. This situation produced an accelerated growth of the city, but the city planning was not prepared to this growth. *“The best explanation we have for what happened in the last 48 years is that in the absence of sufficient housing supply, as a consequence of a lack of urbanized land supply and with the population migration to the city, the new inhabitants sought their own solutions, through their spontaneous occupation.” (Cabaccs, 2016)* The arriving low-income population had nowhere to live, so they had no other option than to build their own houses on the unurbanized areas. Slums started to develop and quickly evolved, by 1949 they had cover 750 hectares.<sup>1</sup> (García de Hernández, 2006: 18).

In order to face the situation, the National Government decided to build massive construction of large-scale housing projects to provide affordable housing. Even though much effort and heavy national funding was invested, the problem was not solve and slums continued to emerge. An important example, and the first of these social housing project was “23 de Enero”, design based on the model of “Cité Radieuse” by Le Corbusier. It aimed to replace informal settlements, but, *“While prolific in the amount of units built, every year the number of residents in informal areas surpassed those that were accommodated by formal housing.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 15)*



Official data from the INE were used for the data corresponding to the date of 1961, 1981 and 2001  
Unofficial data from the INE were used for the date corresponding to 2011

Growth of the occupation area in planned and spontaneous sectors

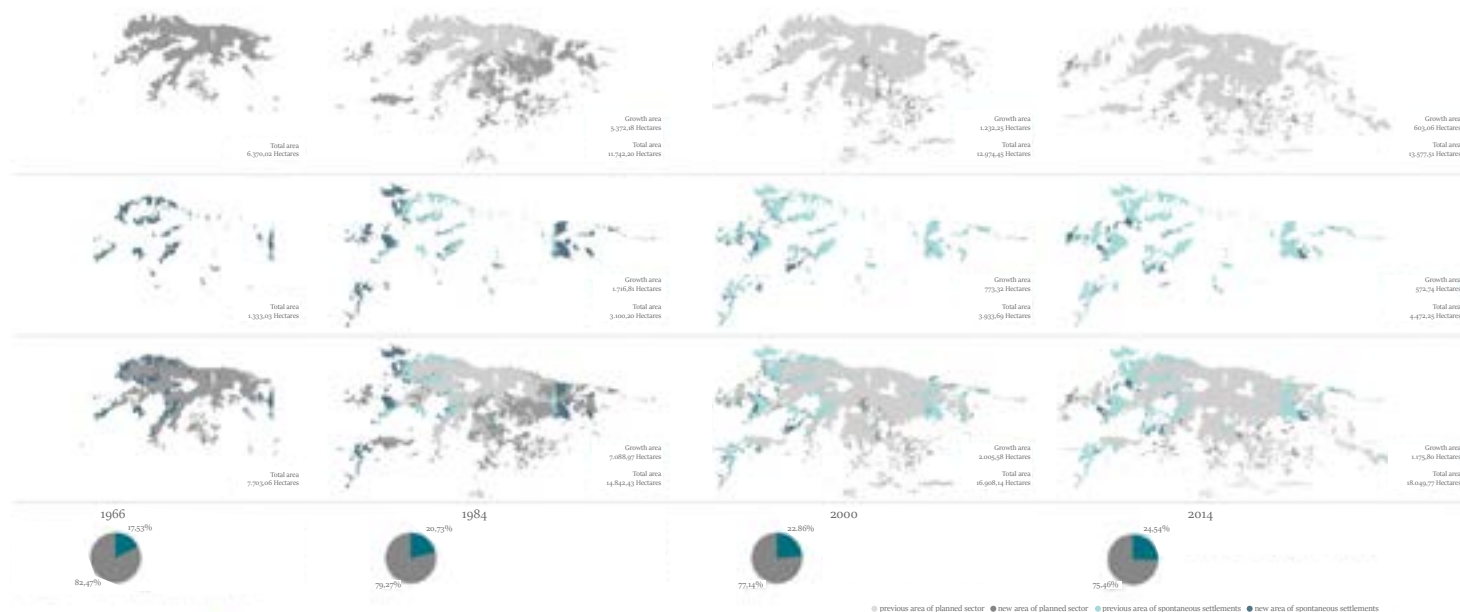


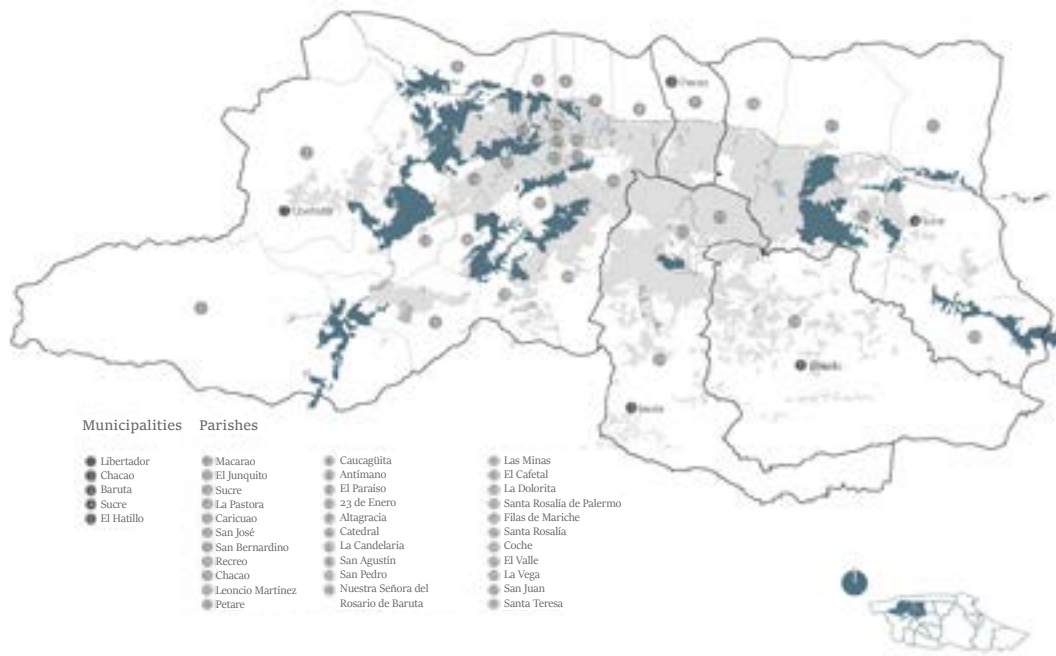
Population growth in planned and spontaneous sectors

The growth of these settlements was evident. By 1966 they occupied 1,333.03 hectares (Silva et al., 2015: 181), and already at the beginning of the 1980's half of the city's population lived in spontaneous settlements (Gouverneur, 2015: 45). Accessibility became more difficult as they expanded, occupying further and steeper lands.

Despite their size and relevance, slums were completely out of the legal framework. Until the planning Law of 1987 (LOOU) gave legal status to the informal settlements and defined guidelines to improve them. This law was one of the first instruments in Latin America to do so. *“Among specific programs formulated after the enactment of the LOOU were: the Organization and Incorporation for the Strengthening Communities Barrios Program (OICCB), initiated in 1992, the National Program for the Enhancement of the Barrios in 1994, and, emerging from the agreement between the Venezuelan Government and the World Bank in 1997, the Urban Improvement Program in the barrios of Caracas, headed by an organization known as Promueba.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 49)

*“The process of population flux to the capital will continue to exist, regardless of what we do, and that should be considered as something positive, basically because it is a natural aspiration of any rural citizen, to seek better living conditions in the city and more in a country where we have had few massive advances in the industrialization of the countryside and many resources for the port.”* (CABA)





1 “The barrio is like the alter ego of the urbanization, of the industrial zone, of the commercial center. Where do the people who built the Helicoide live? In the surrounding neighborhoods. La Vega grows around what was once the Cementos La Vega plant, where there was an important development, there a barrio flourished, which appears first labeled as “marginal area”, forming part of the so-called “belt of misery”. This is then referred to as “informal settlement”, which contrasts with the term “formal urbanism”, an unsympathetic way of talking about something that is considered a city and something that is not given that recognition. It is becoming increasingly clear, in Caracas, that urbanization would not exist without the barrio.” (Carvajal, 2018b)

## SCATTERED AROUND THE CITY

Slums in Caracas are everywhere throughout the city. It is interesting to understand the reasons behind this particular situation since it does not follow the typical slum location found in Latin-American countries, where “In all the cities there was an axis where one could locate the middle and upper classes, and in another the poor” (Carvajal, 2018e). In Caracas, these classist urbanization does not exist. But this does not mean that slums are not separated from the planned city, they are isolated but distributed all around.

There are four main locations for slums development:

### 1. Unfavorable lands:

As the city occupies a valley, it was built on the flat inner area, leaving empty the surrounding mountains as they were unfit for urbanization. Looking for available space for construction, slums were built on steep hills and high-risk locations.

### 2. Along the creeks:

City planning from the 40’s respected an area around creeks, where construction was not allowed because of flood risk. These zones were left as green areas. Finding this empty space, poor people took them to build their houses. There are 23 creeks coming down from the Ávila mountain, 17 are occupied by barrios.

### 3. Periphery:

Aiming to live as close as possible to the city, people occupied the edges of Caracas, where the planned city ended.

### 4. Around developments:

the workforce of large developments was located around them, in zones labeled as “marginal areas”. Even if the situation was supposed to be temporary while they were working, in order to be close to their work, they remained after the construction was finished. Growing little by little, becoming slums over time.<sup>1</sup>





## **AMHABITAT METHODOLOGY FOR THE PHYSICAL QUALIFICATION OF SLUMS**

This methodology represents an important contribution for the integration of the slums into the urban fabric. It was developed when the Andean Development Corporation (CAF: Corporación Andina de Fomento) commissioned Friends of Habitat Association (AMHABITAT) with the preparation of a document that would describe the methodology used by this association for the physical qualification of slums.

CAF, an institution that finances programs with the aim of supporting integral human development, was studying how to face the precarious urban conditions through innovative approaches and the diffusion of successful experiences. On the other hand, AMHABITAT had become an international reference regarding spontaneous settlements, since they had developed numerous plans for the incorporation of slums into the urban structure. Therefore, the corporation decided to diffuse the methodology used by this association in Venezuela, so it could inspire similar solutions in other countries.

The physical qualification of slums is the process of planning, projecting and implementing urbanization works that allow an adequate insertion of slums in the built environment, as well as attending the local needs regarding urbanization.<sup>1</sup> (baldo web). It involves two inseparable actios:

1. Equate the slum to the city: upgrade the life quality of the population by projects related to the design and urban engineer of infrastructure and community equipment.
2. Community Participation: aiming to empower the community by the appropriation of the transformation work.

According to Federico Villanueva, the center of the physical qualification of slums is the public space. Composed by three essential elements: the streets, the stairs and the condominium block.<sup>1</sup> (Baldó, 2012)





*"In summary, the AMHABITAT methodology, the foundations of which we have briefly explained, entails a vision of barrios areas as a fundamental part of the city and seeks to solve problems in an integral urban manner, through which the built and the social are articulated in a only way of doing things." (Baldó, 2010)*

The methodology consists of an ensemble of methodologic prescriptions for the process of physical qualification of spontaneous residential settlements. This prescriptions must be adapted to each specific case according to the local conditions in order to complete their growth and fully develop the urbanization phase.

The methodologic orientations can be resume into four essential considerations:

1. *"True physical qualification is a deep and structural intervention to overcome the precarious conditions of all settlements.*
2. *It can only be carried out within the framework of a determined and continuous National State Policy, during the time required for its completion.*
3. *The Habilitation can be carried out by broad Self-Managed Community Organizations, acting as private administrators of public resources.*
4. *They must be made available to those who can advance it with the greatest number of advanced technical resources available to society.*
5. *The greatest number of advanced technical resources must be made available to those who can make it progress."* (Baldó, 2010)

An important phase in the development of the methodology refers to the conception of several pilot cases for the slums of Caracas. An important one, the barrio Catuche project, explained on this chapter, served as experience for the conception of many others.

From 1999 the physical qualification of slums became a State policy, legitimized by constitutional means and was incorporated into the content of the Housing and Housing Policy Law. The Program was implemented massively and successfully, reaching 247 barrios and 1,976,000 inhabitants. Unfortunately, nowadays the program is almost completely paralyzed.

## THE CARACAS MANIFESTO

In 1991, was held in Caracas the *“Encuentro Internacional por la Rehabilitación de los Barrios del Tercer Mundo”* (International Summit for the Rehabilitation of Third World Neighborhoods). A meeting of professionals from fifty different countries regarding the issue of spontaneous settlements. It resulted in a document that presented the most innovative ideas, instruments and initiatives in the world: the *“Declaración de Caracas”* (Caracas Manifesto). This manifesto proposed considerations respecting how to improve plans:

1. *“Relocating dwellings from inadequate areas that are prone to flooding, landslides, located under power lines, or over gas lines;*
2. *Introducing new roads, paths, and urban parks, to improve connections with other informal and formal settlements;*
3. *Avoiding the social disruption that would occur if the residents were displaced during relocations (temporarily or permanently) by building new housing within or adjacent to the same districts;*
4. *Introducing infrastructure, services, and facilities, particularly related to education, health, sports, culture, recreation, manufacturing incubators, and markets;*
5. *Increasing socialization by creating provisions for a system of public spaces, which would favor a strong a sense of place and introduce a diversification of uses and activities.”* (Gouverneur, 2015, 41).

## CARACAS BARRIO PLAN

The “Plan for the inclusion of the Barrios of the Metropolitan Area of Caracas and of the Capital Region” also called the *Caracas Barrio Plan*; was a comprehensive planning instrument for the improvement of very large scale informal agglomerations in the country. Commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Development to AMHABITAT, it allowed to define and quantify the projects, both metropolitan and local, needed for the equalization of Caracas slums, to the rest of the city, improving the life quality of more than 1.3 million dwellers. <sup>1</sup> (Gouverneur, 2015: 52). According to this plan, *“upgrading projects imply not only better integration of barrio zones into the metropolitan system, but also social recognition of an important segment of the urban population which is almost equivalent in size to that of what is known the as the formal city”* (Ayala, 2012: 72). It was developed under the coordination of Baldó and Villanueva, with the collaboration of experts in different fields.

*“Although the Plan proposed some of the most relevant, innovative, and nuanced mechanisms for dealing with informal urbanism, the discussions at the Consejo de Ministros proved to be fruitless in a period of rising social tensions. There was no political commitment from the Presidency, or the different federal agencies, to assign financial and human resources to support the Plan. The government did not even coordinate efforts to define courses of action. The administration had completed 75% of its mandate and there were clear political indicators that major political changes were ahead. A few months later, the Ministry published the Caracas Barrio Plan but it did not receive presidential approval, which was a basic condition for it to receive legal status, federal funding, and institutional support.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 57)





## URBAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATUCHE RIVER VALLEY

The Catuche Project (1993-1998) is a model of Local Urban Development Organization for Community Self-Promotion based on the AMHABITAT methodology for the physical qualification of slums, mentioned previously. It is one of the most emblematic projects of qualifications of slums in the country, *“internationally awarded by the United Nations as one of the best 100 global practices of the last 20 years in the field of human settlements.”* (Baldó, 2010).

The project aims to achieve the urban and environmental requalification of the barrios area, as well as their urban integration into the city, by proposing not only the constructions that had to be done, but also an efficient way to do so by incorporating the community as an important participant during the process. It addressed the following topics:

1. Sanitation of the stream by building lateral collectors
2. Consolidation of vehicular accesses.
3. Incorporation of a network of infrastructure and public services.
4. Consolidation of horizontal condominiums and replacement homes.
5. Design and construction of collective facilities. (Cardona, 2014)

*“In other words, this means equalizing the quality of life of the communities of the illegal settlements to those of the legal settlements of the city.”* (Biblioteca CF+S, 1996)





The impact of this project was much greater than the physical construction. Other than the important benefits from the urban and environmental point of view, the project provided several advantages:

- The creation of new judicial procedures: such as the transfer of land ownership
- The stabilization of the condominium
- The first possibility of the community to have laws and urban codes, defining the limits and characteristics of the construction in the illegal settlements
- Creation of local companies
- The administration of all funds with transparency, open to all residents interested in them.
- Provision of employment

Regarding the economical aspect, *“the total investment contemplated in the projects and in the construction of Catuche is US \$ 12,870,000; \$ 1,730 per person; \$ 7,660 per family and \$ 545,990 per hectare.”* (Biblioteca CF+S, 1996).

A project of this kind contributes in the construction of the city, and also in the citizens' personal development. It can be reproduced and applied universally, since it is a combination of technique and urban management, that responds to the needs and criteria of the specific community, it will answer to each specific context, adapting every time to the local conditions.





*“We were surprised by the fact that 30 billion dollars would cost the physical qualification of all the barrios of Venezuela according to the CAMEBA project. An amount that sounds large but is tiny compared to the resources that the Venezuelan state has managed in the last decade. So there is also a distance between the problems of those who live in barrios and the capacity and / or real desire of public managers to solve these difficulties...”*

*Because we are convinced that the physical qualification of Venezuelan barrios is more than possible, but it would only be achieved with the bond and coupling of different views. It is about placing the barrio in the center, understanding it, to attack it from various points of view.” (Cardona, 2014)*

## CAMEBA

The CAMEBA project was a pilot project that aimed to solve the urban problems in order to upgrade the living conditions by integrating the spontaneous tissue into the planned city. *“Driven by the motto of “change the physical space in order to change the social space”* (tesis urban upgrading), the project included the design of upgrading plans, water supply system networks, electric and public lighting, pedestrian and vehicular access, environmental upgrading, construction of community centers, relocation of houses under risk. It was developed in two main slums in Caracas: Petare Norte and La Vega. Following the objective of upgrading the slums, the project was categorized into three components: institutional development, housing unit upgrading and urban upgrading, including infrastructure provision and community participation.

The project was financed by the national government of Venezuela (60%) and by the World bank (40%). *“With an outlay of about US\$ 47 million, it was one of the largest barrio upgrading projects ever undertaken in Caracas and the largest project financed by the World Bank in the entire Latin American region.” (Ayala, 2012: 83).*

For the development of this project, there was a deep understanding of the context. In order to study the existing situation and needs of the community, several plans were produced showing different important aspects, such as the land use, the geographical conditions, the connectivity systems, among others. Since one of the intervention areas of the project was North Petare, same slum as the present investigation, these plans were very helpful for the understanding of the existing conditions, reason why some of this information taken from CAMEBA project is shown in section 5.2 Study of the area.

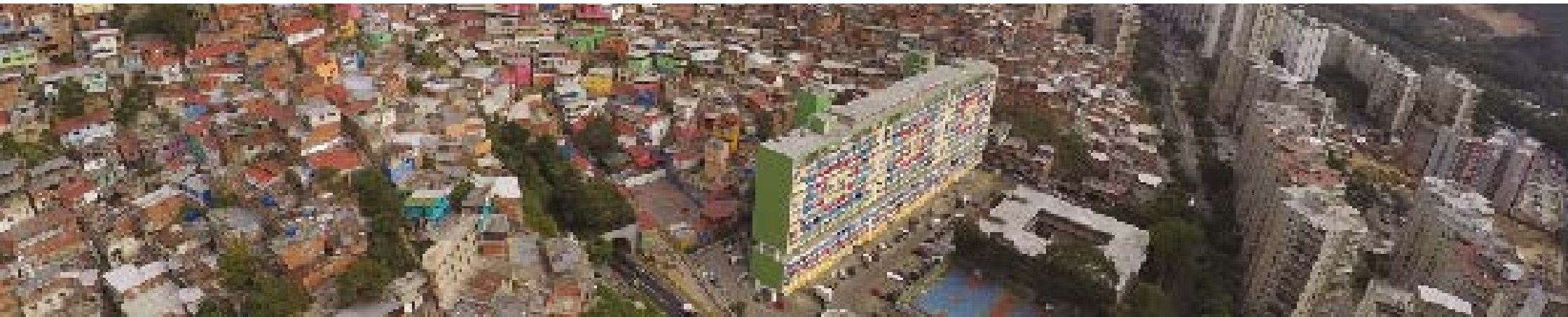
## CABA CONCLUSIONS

The book “CABA: *Cartografía de los barrios de Caracas*”, an important source of information for this investigation, illustrates a deep analysis and understanding of the barrios of the city. The conclusions derived from this research can be summarized as the following:

1. Growth of spontaneous areas will continue to occur
2. The inhabitants will settle regardless of what is decided in urban matters.
3. Minimizing spontaneous occupation implies estimating and anticipating the growth of the city, identifying available lands for urbanization, studying and promoting zoning changes. It involves thinking about the city and its future.
4. Involve the workforce and use for the solution of the growth problem.
5. Generate favorable conditions for planned development.
6. Establish incentives and financing facilities for urban planning and construction.
7. Establish long-term financing facilities for buyers.

On the other hand some revealing data was also taken from the book:

1. 50% of the population lives in barrios.
2. 242 M spontaneous structures have been built.
3.  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the urban footprint of the city is occupied by barrios.
4. The urbanization process of the slum is two times greater than the one of formal urban areas.
5. The housing density is four times higher than the housing density of the planned areas and the density recommended by UN HABITAT for compact cities.
6. The land occupation by the dwelling in the planned areas is maximum 17%, in the barrios it occupies 60%, leaving little space for everything else.





## AIMING TOWARD THE INTEGRATION OF CARACAS

*“The city has its frontiers, its borders. Caracas is a city of borders: El Ávila, the Guaire River, the highways that divide the city, the ravines, the neighborhood rings. There are borders that integrate and others that separate. In Caracas, the borders are separators from the urban fabric, they delimit and distance. The great work in Caracas is to recompose the edges so that they are elements of integration and transition, actors that link the fabrics, allow accessibility, and branch out public spaces.” (Valle et al., 2012)*

The preoccupation regarding segregation in the city is not recent, the intention of integrating Caracas is an important duty that, despite the efforts involved in the past, has not yet been achieved. The contrast of the city must be dispelled as long as they cause negative impact in the development the people and the city. As shown on this chapter, there have been several projects and important progress on the complicated process of the integration of slums to the rest of the city and equalizing the life quality and city rights. Due to different reasons, most of the projects have not been concluded.

The “*Avances del Plan estratégico Caracas Metropolitana 2020*” (Progres Of The Metropolitan Caracas Strategic Plan 2020) written in 2012 is an example that shows the government intention of upgrading slums and integrating them to the rest of the city. Among several points, the document talks about creating an inclusive city, guaranteeing services for everyone, with no distinctions, it proposes to “*increase the provision of public spaces and facilities in barrios areas, from the recovery of remaining and / or interstitial spaces in popular slums and their transformation into places for meeting and recreation.*” (plan estrategico Caracas 2020). It also offers the “*construction of multifunctional service centers in the slums, such as large facilities with activities for culture, recreation, sports, education and entrepreneurship (CRECE), strategically located within the large barrio sectors.*” (Alcaldía Metropolitana de Caracas, 2012: 159) These integral equipments CRECE were explained as:

*“Strategic metropolitan projects that will generate new opportunities for human and economic development for populations located in the popular sectors of the city, serving as support and guidance spaces in various areas. The essential objective of these facilities is to constitute a metropolitan network of CRECE facilities, of a structuring nature and of great physical, social and urban impact, serving as a space for the confluence of culture, recreation, education, growth, development and entrepreneurship through various activities that foster rapprochement between the population that inhabits these sectors and the mentioned development areas. To do this, these physical works of high engineering and architectural quality must be conceived as projects, which implies complying with a series of key aspects to guarantee the success of the intervention.” (Alcaldía Metropolitana de Caracas, 2012: 173)*

These projects have many aspects in common with the Urban Focus strategy proposed in this thesis (deeply explained in chapter 4). They share characteristics as the objectives, the location, the programmatic use, the scale of intervention<sup>1</sup>. The similarities between them show the viability of the present project, since there is an intention from the government to invest on this kind of project, understanding the urgency of the issue that must be faced as soon as possible.

1: The specifications about the CRECE project can be found in the “*Avances del Plan estratégico Caracas Metropolitana 2020*”.

## 2.2

# Disparity is evident

Even though they belong to the same city, the contrast between the planned and the spontaneous urban fabric is clear. *“Despite the economic and functional relations between the two worlds, there is still an acute physical segregation, as both informal and formal modes of urbanization have distinct spatial locations, and morphological and performative capacities. The informal component usually remains in a subordinate state of dependency. This creates disparities, which are a source of conflict, discrimination, and resentment that ultimately translates into different degrees of violence. Over time both components tend to grow apart, and the disparities increase, as do the tensions.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 43)

Cities are composed by diverse urban fabrics with particular characteristics. The aim of this comparison is to determine the main differences in order to identify the positive and negative aspects, as well as the points of divergence.

*“The disparities and segregation that separate the formal and the informal, as well as environmental and social problems within informal settlements, are exacerbated as informal settlements expand into ostensibly homogeneous, seamless large areas”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 28)



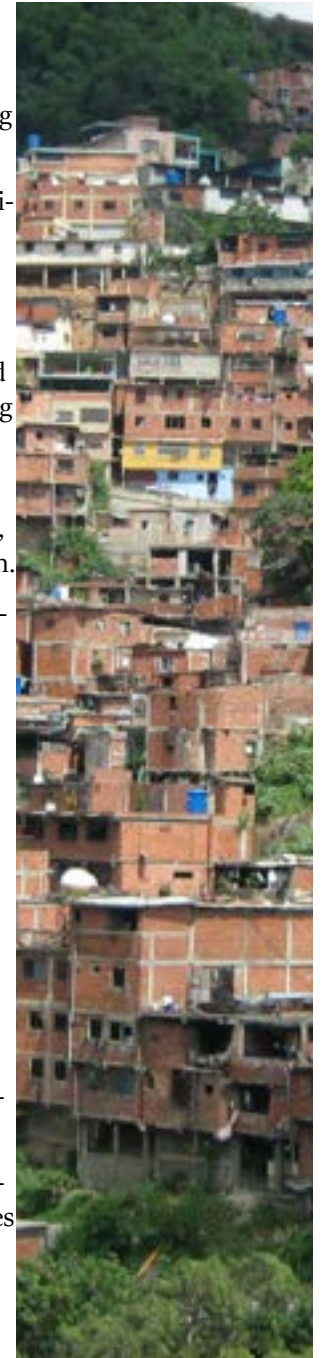


## PLANNED SETTLEMENT

- **Urban plan:** The construction of the city follows a planification that guides its evolution based on a deep analysis.
- **Provided urbanism:** The State oversees the construction and development of the urbanism.
- **Regulations:** There is a set of regulation to guarantee a healthy and respectful coexistence.
- **Acquired dwelling:** People acquire their houses through the real estate market and obtain a property title that certifies their tenure.
- **Belongs to the car:** Urban planning has privileged the vehicle for many years, adapting cities to prioritize them, leaving the pedestrian aside.
- **Public space: diverse typologies.** There is a variety of spaces of different hierarchies for recreation and social life that people can enjoy.
- **Taxes payment:** Produces resources for investment on the city, enabling improvements and progress.
- **Sites suitable for urbanization:** There is a study of the land that assures the safety of the construction.
- **Balanced urban tissue:** Composed by a hierarchization between build and void.
- **Adequate living conditions:** It provides with the advantages of urban life, promoting opportunities for development.
- **Mix uses:** Zoning distributes different uses along the city to facilitate accessibility.

## SPONTANEOUS SETTLEMENT

- **No urban plan:** It grows instinctively according to the possibilities of the people without following an established plan or regulation.
- **Self-constructed urbanism:** People are responsible for the construction of their city.
- **No regulations:** There is no control, no legal authority, anything can be done.
- **Self-constructed dwelling:** Great effort invested to gradually build their houses. Without obtaining any kind of property title to ensure their tenure.
- **Belongs to the pedestrian:** Economic and topographic conditions limit the presence of cars, leaving most space and mobility to the pedestrian.
- **Public space: the street.** The lack of public spaces transforms the street into a multi-use space where the social life happens.
- **No taxes payment:** The scarce services available are not paid, so there are no resources upgrade or even maintain the system.
- **Sites non-suitable for urbanization:** Due to the cost of the safe land, they occupy peripheral, unsafe locations.
- **Compact urban tissue:** High densification leaving few open spaces with minor dimensions.
- **Difficult living conditions:** People struggle to overcome the adversities of living in slums, limiting the possibilities to progress.
- **Mainly residential use:** Lack multiple uses. People must walk long distances to find most services and amenities.





*“Stark disparities mark the widening gap between the developed and developing worlds. Staggering figures indicate a great demand for innovative approaches to help diminish unequal living conditions between affluent nations and impoverished states and between the wealthy formal districts and poor self-constructed neighborhoods that comprise most cities of the developing world.” (Gouverneur, 2015: xxiii)*

Even though there are negative repercussions as consequence of the inequalities listed above, there are several positive aspects from both sides. There is a tendency to only see the harmful characteristics of spontaneous settlements. But they present important favorable conditions that many cities are aiming to achieve: compactness, sense of community, pedestrianization.

*“Despite their inherent social Problems,’ the barrios can serve as a positive example. The metabolism of the informal city is impressive. Less trash is produced than in any other area of town. The dense low buildings offer an alternative to high-rise developments, which are promoted aggressively by formal builders. The selection and use of building materials is a response to the tropical climate and has a low environmental impact. Equally low are the investment costs. which are unmatched by public projects. The mass of the barrio structure follows the concept of the ‘growing house ‘. The growing house is typically made of a concrete frame, filled with the cheapest local block or brick available. Antenna-like concrete supports rising out of the columns of the top floor are left as provision for a future that will bring materials for expansion.” (Lepik, 2015: 28)*

The concerning issue in the comparison of these two types of settlements is the notorious disparity that influences the life quality of their citizens. According to the Cambridge dictionary, disparity is *“the lack of equality or similarity, specially in a way that is not fair”*. It is not fair because they do not offer the same rights or possibilities. Belonging to one part or the other defines the life chances and the opportunities to progress.

This disparity is both cause and consequence of the segregation towards slums. The problem does not rely in the differences between them, but rather in the distance that this divergence has made, pushing them away from each other and generating a social and urban gap. The purpose should be to use these differences in the favor of the city bringing it together as a unity, by complementing each other and enhancing their positive qualities.



## 2.3

# The gap means a limit

The existing disparities are traduced into social and urban fragmentation, creating boundaries that are not only a physical limit, but also a clear limitation for the progress of people and, as consequences, of the city. This limit is a net mark that differentiates between the inside and the outside, an anticipation of distinction that acquires objective consequences according to the meaning that it is given. The important matter is not the boundary itself, but the signification provided by society and the effect that this signification is capable of producing. The considerable distance between the slum and the rest of the city only cultivates negative effects: rejection, isolation, exclusion, separation, discrimination. This distance appears in both physical and social dimension.

### **SOCIAL GAP**

Social inequalities impose boundaries that inhibit interactions. Differences within society can produce tensions, mostly when they are related with economic, political and social disadvantage. The fear of the different, of the unknown, of who is on the other side of a border, drives people away from each other so contact take place within homogeneous groups. The wealthy class has a will of separation that creates a distance, so they almost do not meet at any time even when living in the same city. Opposite to the important value of the urban life, that promotes the construction of social ties by providing an environment for encounter. Human is a social being that needs to create connections and cooperate with one another to evolve and succeed. Social networks are fundamental since they have a great impact in the delineation of life chances.

The gap has a meaningful role in the development of social network, life chances, identity and lifestyle. The boundary makes evident the opposition between the two sides, becoming a symbol of identity: *“Borders take on a decisive role in the symbolic construction of the community, but not because they directly express meaning, but because they provide individuals the ability to offer meaning and this role is crucial for both individual and collective identity.”* (Valagussa et al., 2017: 28)



## PHYSICAL GAP

Urban borders are limits that divide the city, defining a clear differentiation of what is on one side and the other. A break in continuity that limits the flow of people within the city, impeding a good connectivity.

These barriers are manifested in diverse appearances, some more visible than others, that determine the degree of impermeability. The border can be natural, as a geographic condition that probably existed prior to the city, like a river or deep slope, but is now immersed in the city due to urban expansion, becoming a boundary. It can also be a human construction, a planned built element, like a wall or a highway, that may or may not be built with the purpose of separation; or simply a rupture in the continuity of the urban tissue generated unintentionally along the evolution of the city, like an interstitial or abandoned space.

*“Solid walls are replaced in the modern city by spaces, by voids, which tend much more to the boundary condition. Motorways cutting through cities are obvious examples: crossing through six or eight lanes of traffic is perilous; the sides of motorways in cities tend to become withered spaces; these invisible walls infamously have been used to mark off territories separating the rich from the poor, or race from race. Porosity is lacking” ((Valagussa et al., 2017: 59)*

*“The border indicates a common limitation, a separation between adjacent spaces; it is also a way to establish peacefully the property rights of everyone in a disputed territory. The border represents the end of the earth, the ultimate limit beyond which venture meant going beyond the superstition against the will of the gods, as well as the right and allowed, to the unknowable that would trigger envy. To cross the border means reaching inside a territory of rugged land, hard, difficult, inhabited by dangerous monsters against which to fight. It means get out of a familiar space, known, reassuring and enter that of uncertainty. This step, cross the border, also changes the character of an individual: beyond it will become foreigners, immigrants, different not only for other but also for themselves.” (Valagussa et al., 2017: 20)*

Whether they are visible or invisible, intentional or unintentional, physical boundaries fragmentize the urban fabric, affecting directly the connectivity and the accessibility of the city. They are meaningful obstacles interrupting interactions, isolating and sectorizing communities, producing a strong impact on the social space of the city.



In this sense, it is relevant to mention the categorization of border conditions of Caracas' slums presented in the book CABA1:



**Hydrographic border:** the rivers are a precise limit that can represent a flood risk for the settlements.



**Topographic border:** steep slopes Topographic border: extremely steep slope and unstable lands become hard to occupy, defining an structural limit.



**Road border:** some spontaneous settlements are built along the roads were they can take advantage of the connectivity.

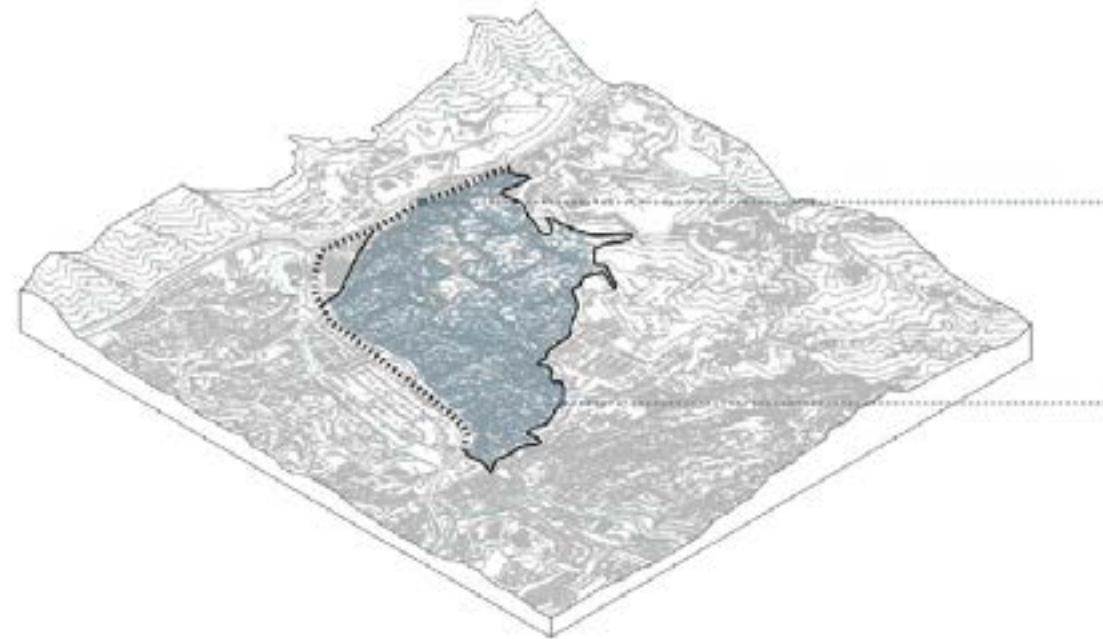


**Planned sector border:** it appears when the slums are originated in remanent areas of the planned city.



**Protected area or particular use border:** including parks, universities, military areas.

In the case of North Petare, the area related to the present project, there are two types of borders:



**Road border:** the north and west of the slum are surrounded by the main highway of the city, a strong limit that obstructs the connection to the other side.

**Planned sector border:** the edge of the slum to the south and to the east is marked by residential and industrial areas. This border has limited the growth of the area, which has not increase since the year 2000.



*“In some cases, formal and informal areas grew in close proximity, but were segregated spatially, functionally, and socially. An impressive system of urban highways would be built over a period of 40 years in the valley, often located between the formal city on lower elevations and the informal settlements on the steep hills, physically marking and accentuating this segregation.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 45)*

## THE HIGHWAY CUT

It is important to mention the relevance of the highway system and the consequences it has produced in the functioning of the city since it creates a sharp division in the urban tissue. Being Venezuela the country largest oil reserve in the world, the car is a priority. Urban planning put the car in the center of the equation, developing big avenues and systems of highways.<sup>1</sup> As Urban Think Tank remarks: *“The extensive highway system constructed in the 1960s and 70s is impressive, and gives Caracas a look that is in many ways more ‘LA ‘ than Los Angeles. The different highway distributors carry nicknames like ‘Spider ‘ or ‘Octopus’, and are emblematic postcard motifs that symbolize the pride Caraqueños feel for these enormous inner-city monuments.”* (Lepik, 2015: 36)

The highway connecting the country passes through the middle of Caracas, an 8 lines high speed infrastructure that separates the north from the south. The points of connection between the two parts are few, and most of them are only for vehicles.

*“Today, Caracas’ freeway system has come to resemble that of Los Angeles in its effect: the arbitrary and irreversible separation of entire communities from one another. It is possible to visit Caracas - indeed, to spend considerable time there - and remain unaware of the barrios. They are, to adapt an expression of the architect Peter Eisenman, present in their absence from the daily life of the formal city. They are also absent from any presence on Caracas city maps.”* (Lepik, 2015: Pg 59)





*“Yet, true social development will not occur unless concrete measures are taken to remove other barriers, including spatial segregation of the poorest households and ethnic or cultural discrimination. Social inclusion and economic development are equally important in reducing violence and other antisocial behaviors. In summary, a more inclusive city is a more productive city, encouraging growing markets for local products and services, thus contributing to the acceleration of economic growth.”(Sabatini, 2013: 1)*

Spatial Segregation is directly related with social exclusion, since the location within a city affects the location within society, and thus the composition of personal networks. Neighborhoods are segregated according to the socioeconomic conditions. It is a loop, where the economic possibilities and social class determine where people live, but at the same time the location and the environment define the socioeconomic conditions. Human relationships are spatially structured, the physical characteristics of a neighborhood impact the social outcomes of its inhabitants, because the degree of connectivity can enhance or constrain interaction and thus the formation of relationships.

The argument of spatial segregation is not recent, historically it has been an urban reality. As Plato said *“Any city however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich. These are at war with one another”*. Even if the confrontation is not voluntary, the urban and social gap develop the conditions for segregation, producing physical and psychological consequences.

*“In Asia, Africa, and Latin America almost a billion people—one sixth of the world population and one third of urban dwellers—live in informal settlements, unplanned environments constructed by their own residents. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Program, it is expected that by 2030 this number will double. These staggering figures demand innovative approaches for dealing with this new scale of territorial occupation if we want to narrow down the disparities and therefore ameliorate social tension, resentment and violence, in a globalized world.” (Landscape Architecture Foundation, 2018)*

## Joining the fragments to dispel inequality

Distances must be shortened to narrow down disparities and diminish segregation. The negative implications of urban fragmentation separate a large group of population from the city, isolate opposing realities and harm the progression of the entire city. To handle the severe problem of disadvantaged and harsh living conditions in slums, it is necessary to break the boundaries and seek for a unified city. Bringing closer the parts by finding points of connection and creating communication to promote social inclusion, so that every part is considered and treated on equal terms, both as important parts of the city. Reducing the distance is an act of democratization that improves the functioning of the city and ameliorates social tension, resentment and violence.

In the pursuit of upgrading the living conditions in slums there has been much emphasis on social housing projects that seek to provide quality of the dwellings and provide them with the necessary services. *“Many past responses to the problem of urban slums have been based on the erroneous belief that provision of improved housing and related services (through slum upgrading) and physical eradication of slums will, on their own, solve the slum problem. Solutions based on this premise have failed to address the main underlying causes of slums, of which poverty is the most significant.”* (Pg 7 the challenge of slums) These projects tend to focus on dwellings, leaving behind many fundamental problems that must be solved in order to truly afford urban life advantages. Even though people are given a home with better conditions, they remain disconnected from the rest of the city, excluded, without employment and without accessibility to most services.

*“Great efforts must be made to improve the connectivity between the formal and the informal cities, consciously and spatially. For true interconnectedness, and, ultimately, vibrancy, residents on both sides have to overcome mistrust and increase the level of tolerance. Compelling planning and design moves can make a significant difference.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 63)

Architecture and urban design play a primary role in segregation, since they have the power of determining the spatial conditions of the social interactions. *“Buildings could be analyzed as mediators, as active forms, which do not simply host, accommodate or contain, but rather transform and fabricate new capacities in those who pass through them.”* (Pg 31 Five Ways to Make Architecture Political) They are capable to erase the sharp and rigid borders, dilute them to create a transition between the parts, designing spaces for coexistence that promote the establishment of new social ties and that have the potential to cut the physical barriers that separate slums from the rest of the city. *“Architecture is expected to play a role in the cementing of norms of civility and difference and in the spatial disciplining of citizenship.”* (pg 16 Five Ways to Make Architecture Political). It has the influence to transform a border from a place of exclusion and distinction to a place of relation and encounter between diverse identities. This will to approach and merge the parts of the city has been called by the architectural field as porosity. A term lately used that promote the liberation of the hard limits through contact and permeability, establishing links between different realities.

The right to the city requires connections that promote access to the advantages of urban life. As long as there is a distance there will be barrier, and thus segregation will persist. The gap is a crucial problem that degrades the city, integration is needed.

*“Then, we must conceive of the city as an integral whole, as a system, made up of two different realities, as two different forms of production that reflect within it a cluster of inequalities. In short, we must think of a city without distinctions, with a diversity of territory.”* (García de Hernández, 2006: 26)



## 2.4

# Lessons from Medellin

When talking about interventions of slums aiming for integration and unified cities it is important to mention the transformation of the city of Medellin, which has become an international reference because of the significant improvement of the difficult situation related to violence and segregation. It is a valuable example of the positive impact that public space interventions in the most needed areas can attain, when planned strategically, with the highest quality standards and accompanied by political will. *“The municipal development plan gave the public space and the public building the most relevant value to build the place for the citizen encounter.”* (Bustamante et al., 2012: 19)

Furthermore, it is pertinent to mention the case of Medellin because of the similarity of the city with the one just studied, Caracas. They share many characteristic as the architect David Gouverneur explains:

*“Both regions share similar climates and vegetation, with the same sized population and a similar urban configuration. In both, the formal mixed-use areas occupied the lower elevations of the valleys, some wealthy neighborhoods comprising high-rise buildings were located high on the hills, and a high percentage of the informal settlements were located on very steep slopes at the outer fringe. The higher the informal settlements were located, the more difficult accessibility became. Likewise, infrastructure, public spaces, and services were more precarious, and of course the level of poverty and violence increased.”* (Gouverneur, 2015: 86)

The plan for the transformation can be summarized as the following:

- The problem: violence and social inequalities
- The objective: generate opportunities, inclusion, equity, finding the balance for a life in society
- The strategy: promote education and culture, key tools in the development of the city and society, as elements of inclusion and equity, and through social urbanism as a process of transformation and urban recovery of a city.

The process of transformation started in 2004, when Sergio Fajardo was elected Mayor of Medellín presenting “a simple but powerful strategic plan for the city that encompassed the following five aspects:

1. Replacing improvisation with planning, along with providing an immediate response
2. Strategically located park-libraries and an ambitious program of educational facilities
3. Planes Urbanos Integrales contra la exclusión social (PUIS) or holistic urban plans that prevented social exclusion
4. Social housing programs
5. Promenades, urban links, and special nodes” (Gouverneur, 2015: 89)

## SOCIAL URBANISM

The strategy for the actions taken in Medellín has as central axis the Social Urbanism, a different way to approach interventions, specially in slums. “*Social Urbanism is an instrument of spatial inclusion and construction of equity in access to possibilities, it seeks to make interventions in the marginal areas of the city in a comprehensive way with a strong social component and citizen participation.*” (Caf., 2013: 37). The concept is based on the actions integrity, the interdisciplinarity of technical teams and the physical and social transformation of the areas of greater urban marginality.

The urbanism is a discipline with profound social implications, since it is in change of the configuration of the city, however the social interest is not always the central element when taking decisions about the city. “*The appellation “social” wants to introduce the return of urbanism to its essence: urbanism as an instrument of spatial inclusion and construction of equity in access to the possibilities that the city offers for human development.*” (Caf., 2013: 45)

The basis of the Social Urbanism were inspired in mainly in the Favela Program, Bairro Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Bogota experience from the 90's, Colombia, the intervention of slums in Barcelona, Spain, and the Integral Program for the Improvement of Subnormal Slums of Medellín.

It focuses on promoting the integral human development, by impacting in problems as poverty, exclusion, violence and inequality through urban interventions that includes all the urban dimensions: mobility and transportation, public space, housing, public equipment to dignify slums, environment and relocation of communities in risk areas.

Understanding the relevance of bringing back the social aspect to the center of urbanism, all these important urban areas were considered in the development of the Urban Focus strategy proposed in this thesis. They were studied and implemented on the project responding to the local conditions.



## PUI: HOLISTIC URBAN PLAN

The *Planes Urbanos Integrales* (PUI) or holistic urban plans are “an intervention strategy that applies the Social Urbanism model following the philosophy of Integral Human Development, the objective is to achieve a physical, social and institutional impact by creating programs and projects with the community to generate employment and strengthen existing economic activities in the area.” (Caf., 2013: 52) It follows a methodology that was built over the years with the different experiences of each intervention, adapting to every context, community and territory to respond accordingly.

PUI is a is an unprecedented model of intervention in urban transformation processes that have become the banner of urban integration in Medellín. This systematization of comprehensive urban projects is constituted by three components:

- **The physical component:** urban interventions with community participation “taking into account the context conditions that even transcend the existence of territorial or social limits.” (Caf., 2013: 57). It includes interventions in the public space, new collective equipment, the continuity of the pedestrian mobility and the diminution of the environmental impact.
- **The social component:** a methodological strategy that aims to recover the social fabric and the participation of the community, through the strengthening community organization and promotion of leadership.
- **The interinstitutional component:** articulates and coordinates the adequate interventions of the Government.

The interaction the these components is very important in order for the PUI to achieve:

- “Community participation
- Identification of new opportunity areas and their problematics
- The recovery of the sense of belonging of the inhabitants of the intervention areas with the corresponding project.
- The coordinated presence of the municipal administration.
- Public spaces for the meeting and coexistence of the inhabitants.
- A transparent management that leads to the recovery of trust in these areas and in the city.
- Strengthening citizen commitment to the development of their community.” ((Caf., 2013: 57).

The methodological process for the development of the PUI involves 4 phases:

1. **Planning:** the analysis of the city to define the area of intervention and the actions required
2. **Diagnosis:** the identification of the positive and negative situations of the area, their causes, opportunities and potentialities.
3. **Formulation:** the definition of a master plan for the area and the specific objectives.
4. **Development:** the consolidation of the urban and architectural design.

One of the most relevant accomplishments of these projects have been the valorization of the identity along with the sense of belonging, as response to a urban design that gives the importance to the slum that always should have had.

## PARK-LIBRARIES

The development plan for the city of Medellín values the education as a primary tool for the transformation of the city. In this sense, in order to promote education, was conceived the Municipal Plan Parks Library, creating spaces to for study, and understanding the libraries as another dimension of the public space. The aim is giving to the community not only the benefits of a public library, but to provide spaces for encounter involving diverse activities.

These park libraries, located in the poorest slums of the city, are part of the public equipment to dignify slums, an important element of the Social Urbanism, along with schools and educational institutions. The strategic location response to the following criteria:

1. *“Accessibility through public transport from all over the city to guarantee the principle of democracy*
2. *The recovery and strengthening of slums to dignify their inhabitants*
3. *The undertaking of urban renewal actions*
4. *Environmental and urban restoration of these areas of the city*
5. *Search for areas of good size to accompany the buildings of open public spaces that facilitate meeting spaces”* (Bustamante et al., 2012: 31)

Due to the positive outcome of park libraries, this localization criteria had a direct impact in the selection of the site for the Urban Focus, deeply explain in chapter 5.

## AN ACHIEVABLE GOAL

It could to seem utopic, or even impossible, to upgrade and integrate spontaneous settlements into the urban tissue, improving the life of thousands of people, to develop a deep articulated plan that does not remains on paper, but is implemented until is finished, to change the image of the city associated with violence and narcotraffic, into an image associated with transformation, optimism, modernization, coexistence and culture. But the transformation of the city of Medellín has proven this to be possible and has created a replicable strategic methodology, becoming an international example.

Understanding the positive outcome of the Medellín experience, and the similarities of the city with Caracas, it is possible to conclude that the diminution of segregation into an integrated equitable city is an achievable goal. As the architect Alejandro Echeverri say *“Good cities are built when they can clearly identify their structural problems and start the path to solving them”* (Caf., 2013: 13)

*“How to justify the need to undertake a public spaces project? It is enough to know the experience of Medellín to have faith in the importance of having ample access to well-equipped public spaces as an important contributor to the quality of life of citizens.”* (Silva et al, 2013a: 21).

# 3 The opportunity

## INHABITING THE GAP

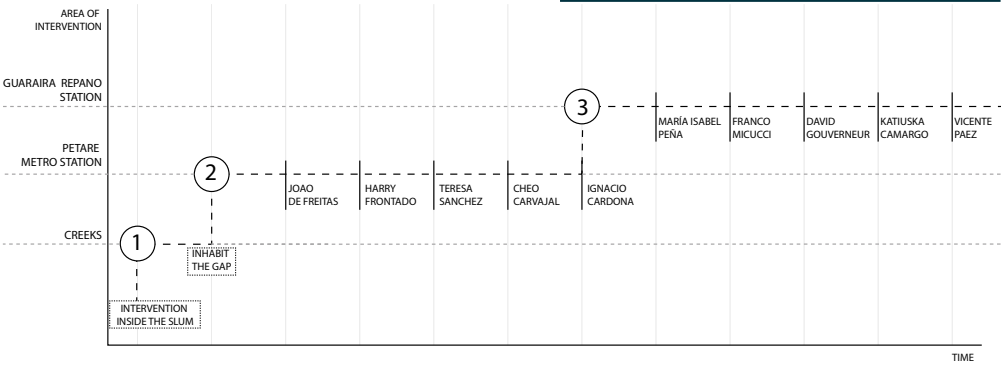


# 3.1

## The research behind the site

Looking for a better understanding of the existing situation in Petare, as well as the approach that should be given and the diverse strategies that have been taking place, several people with experience about to the place and the issue were contacted and interviewed. The conversations held were very significant since the provided meaningful information that not only shaped the strategy proposed in this study, but also had a direct influence in the selection of the site for intervention. These interviews took place from the distance through the Zoom platform, where they were recorded to be later traduced and transcribed into this document.

The process for the selection of the site considered three different places as shown in the following scheme:



## INTERVIEW TO JOAO DE FREITAS



vArchitect, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Central University of Venezuela in 1984. Winner of prizes in the three national competitions for the physical qualification of neighborhoods in 1999 and 2000 with proposals for the neighborhoods “Los paraparos de la Vega” in Caracas, “La recta de Apolonio” in Yaracuy and “12 de Octubre” in Guárico. Winner, together with the architect Roberto Castillo, of the contest for the residential, cultural and recreational complex of IPASME on Victoria Avenue in Caracas in 2004 and the headquarters of the “Francisco Miranda Documentation Center”.

Residential, recreational and cultural complex of IPASME on Victoria Avenue, Punta de Mulatos Market in La Guaira. Parque La Convivencia in Los palos Grandes Chacao, the headquarters building for the headquarters of the Department of Public Works, mayor of Chacao, urbanization La Floresta, as well as several single-family housing projects located in Caracas.

Lecturer at José María Vargas University between 1991 and 1993 in the subject workshop of design and theory of architecture.

Professor since 1995 of the subject Design Workshop at the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism “Carlos Raúl Villanueva” of the UCV, teaching unit 09, with assistant level on the university ladder since 2005.

### INTERVIEW:

1. What are the main reasons why the planned part and the spontaneous part of cities should be integrated?

From the point of view of human development mean a single society that occupies the same space of production and coexistence, it is unfair that large sectors of our cities remain without policies or plans for their urban development and investment on the part of the state, this situation maintains enormous inequality in terms of the access of all what the right to the city means; the approval

of the informal sector will undoubtedly result in a fairer society with greater possibilities for social development; The formal division reflected in our cities is the product of a historical social division that we should overcome in the future, it is part of our responsibility as professionals from the role we play from urban planning, architectural research and teaching, in this we have a great responsibility and we must assume the commitment in the future.

2. What does the neighborhood bring to the rest of the city and vice versa?

The neighborhood areas of our cities provide citizens who act as workers in all areas of society, mostly the working class that keeps the productive system of our cities functioning, are the working neighborhoods of Latin American cities, also these inhabitants bring values experiences that have allowed to build an urban culture of their own.

The formal city brings to the neighborhood everything that allows them to enjoy an urban life: sources of work, education, health, consumption and recreation, this is all that is absent in the neighborhood since its large extension are dormitory cities without more complement of life than the coexistence and neighborhood solidarity itself

3. What are the actors involved in big projects in the neighborhoods? Where can you get the capital to make a project of this magnitude?

In principle the actors should be the state and citizens of the neighborhood, then other actors can be incorporated into these processes: NGOs, private companies, multilateral agencies, etc. In principle the inhabitants of the neighborhoods have the same citizens' rights as the rest of the inhabitants of the city, they are mostly workers who contribute taxes to the state and pay their services, they have built their homes and their infrastructure saving the mucho state money for years of disinvestment, the state has a historical debt to these sectors, it is not a gift or political offer is a right, the state has funds such as the Housing Policy that these citizens cannot access even though most quote and contribute to these funds, for example.

4. What are Petare's real priorities, major problems and needs? What are the urban equipment you need? What are the positives and opportunities that exist in Petare?

I know very little petare as a professional, but I understand that they are the same problems of the rest of the neighborhoods: lack of services, accessibility equipment, etc. The petare neighborhood area is one of the largest in Caracas, which makes any macro or large-scale intervention difficult, has a strategic location and great environmental value given its views over the city; always the positive aspect of these areas of neighborhoods is their people and their ability to resist and consolidate a way of living their own over many years.

5. How can the marked gap between the neighborhood and the planned city through architecture be dispelled?

Overcoming the gap means homologation of both forms of city, we must test on these fabrics through new forms of communication, pedestrian accessibility, construction of equipment buildings, public spaces, modes of public transport, as well as everything possible to achieve improvements in relation to existing homes, in this respect architecture has much to contribute, I believe that the parameters for the development of these ideas is the sincere exploration of a new architecture far from fashion and egocentrism, develop an accessible and real technology that can be executed within this

context, maintain sustainability parameters on the use of drinking water, sewage and solid waste management, there may be interesting explorations that serve as a model for the rest of the city

6. What do you imagine can happen in that place? What kind of program? Should the global project have a specific approach? Based on the main need of the place.

I believe that here you should first define the place and scope of the study, avoid addressing everything petare due to its complexity and extension, concentrate on a defined topic or hypothesis, the definition of place always however limited should involve the recognition of the whole city, the key to the construction of a city is the ability to connect and interact with its inhabitants and in this the definition of architecture has an important role.

## INTERVIEW TO HARRY FRONTADO



### PERSONAL DATA

Date of Birth: September 30, 1949. Place of Birth: Caracas, Venezuela. Professional Associations: College of Engineers of Venezuela CIV 11816. Cav College of Architects 1111.

### EDUCATION.

1972. Bachelor of Architecture, North Carolina State University, USA. 1973. Re-validated Architect. FAU, Central University of Venezuela. 1976. Planning Industrial Zones. University of Warwick, UK.

### CONCEPTUAL, BASIC AND DETAIL ENGINEERING TASKS.

1970-to date, Urbanism and Housing, Public Works, Industrial, Corporate, Neighborhood Enabling, and Urban and Regional Planning.

### POSITIONS HELD.

2015-to date, Maintenance Manager Torre Barcelona, Barcelona, Edo. Anz. 2001-2002. Project Manager Ameriven-Barcelona Edo Offices. Anz. 1996-1999. Operations Manager Tronco Companies-Geneva, Switzerland. 1982-1983. Development Manager Centro Nautico-Paparo Estado Miranda. 1972-1975. Assistant Architect I.M.Zubizarreta & Asociados-Caracas.

### ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES.

1974-1978-1982, to date. Hired Teacher, Instructor, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, Central University of Venezuela. 1994- to 2007. Construction of community buildings for Public Institutions School of Architecture Central University of Venezuela.



1999, 2000, 2003. Lecturer Chair Habitat and Cooperation, Polytechnic School of Barcelona, Spain. 2005. Workshop Director at 7th. Montevideo Seminar, Uruguay, Urban Project Workshops.

INTERVIEW:

HF:

To work on Petare, Teresa Sánchez, is a very important source of information. She was not only the manager of the project hired by Metro de Caracas, but also, hired for the consulting firm. We did everything.

The most serious design problem at that station was how to retain the informal trade (buhoneros) at the station area and all that, in the late 1970s. In addition to the fact that there was the Materno Infantil Hospital built next door.

VS:

That's a very complicated place, isn't it, Harry? Because that place is a node in every sense of the word.

HF:

I knew the area very well, because I had already worked in the North Urbina and in the urbanization Terrazas del Avila. That was a big plus. Those were the ideal places for subway stations.

The design of what they call by subway, is the alignment of the train, is the most important thing. The leveling has to be perfect by the machines, all those mechanical considerations of the transport system, it was already given. So, the problem was that in order to pass over the broken Caurimare River and everything there was, we had to make it superficial, in such a committed social place, we were in the middle of the storm, keep on the edge of the station, the public and the activities that are there.

The second project had a very nice structure. It was a tube that went from the station to the Bolivar Square, upstairs in Petare. We conceived it as the structure of an airplane. The advisors were the company Mott Hay & Anderson, one of the oldest companies in the world in Metro design.

The second version of the project, which I called Mrs. Pompidou. Building that we did, that connected everything and that converted at the top of the station, one floor above the ground floor 6m, in one in a huge art space for the entire Petare Community they lacked.

VS:

That may be part of Anastasia's Project, where she rescues that and well, makes her proposal, to rescue that idea.

HF:

Well, that would be great.

AC:

Do you think I can see those plans? Where did you tell me to pick them up?

HF:

And I recommend you to talk to Teresa, she was a prominent person in that company.

This time was a great one for Venezuela, I took a trip to Paris. And we came back and a lot of things were done, for example, a semicircular vault that joined all that thing, in the 40 meters of light there, this there was the art gallery, the art gallery on the deck of the main avenue of the Urbina.

The structure was very, very original because you walked in a giant truss. That was one of the prettiest things.

So, on the sides of the stairs, vaulted ceilings. That structure served as a roof and took away one of the first problems: defending the exterior.

So that generated 2 squares: The East Square: At the end of the station in the east. There is an arch from colonial times that was the site where one entered Caracas to the east, it was an arch that we had to keep it. And then in that space that was left there, between the building to the south and the station, I made a structure that was like a volume, a plate on top and a huge light. I wanted to light up the whole Oscar D León amphitheatre. That's where we put the substa-

tion in. It was a series of design opportunities. That fortunately we picked them up very well and they were part of the whole project.

VS:

And the amphitheatre, was where the current buhoneros market is?

HF:

Oh yes, I think that's all that. At the end of the station. To the south southeast of the south side of the station.

VS: What program did you have there?

HF: It was an integration to the urban part and a contribution, if you could. That's why the subway had so much quality at the time.

Working on the Metro is a very complicated exercise, because you have to design both the surface and the underground. And sometimes you get some very complicated challenges.

If you touch sometimes sites like Petare, that's why it's an excellent design exercise. It has a very, very serious commitment to everything to the west, which were two squares. Over there, a lot of people passed by, It was the first square with splashes of water, to prevent buhoneros settlement. I made a square with a sunken surface. A splash of water, so that the surface was not smooth, flat or rectangular.

Then the funds finally ran out and they had to go back to the two structures. That's what you see these days.

I think that you could unite both, that the station would be helped with some recreational and art, since there is the an absolute lack of space for art and that kind of recreation.

VS:

Of course, that example is Atocha Station.

HF:

Another problem we had to face was security. In cases of protest events. Then we invented some planters. To increase the distance from the walls of the station below. And projected to the ground floor, so that, when throwing objects, it would be safe. It was staggered, which is currently at the station. Where were the great planters that finished marking the distance.

AC:

And was there some kind of connection to it with the old town? I don't know if something had been raised about that in the project?

HF:

The famous bridge had 60 m of light, I remember. The pedestrian bridge that joined Petare Station with the historic center. In fact, on the landing of the upper ending of the tube, because it reached up on the hill, as far as the square is. And from there to the station. This project was phenomenal, structure, everything. It had its own tower which was always the connection with the station. It was a part of that great platform that we had made of the project, raised in the air with that 40 m clearance, it passed even above the Miranda, at the level of that great Mezzanine of art, from there to climb Petare, to the mayor's court, there were about 12 meters. I was very committed to the station on that,

VS:

Harry, and that tube you say connected there, was it big?

HF:

Well, it had a section of about four meters. It fitted 3 people coming down, and 3 going up; it was just like a plane. It was designed in England, where they discovered that if I thought about flat things we wouldn't make.....

The subject wouldn't be the tube. I would make a building as a multi-story bridge, where there is a larger structure where the mayor of Sucre would be.

And you can get down in the middle of the building. Imagine a bridge building. But only, instead of being a flat, it's several floors, that when seen from the Mi-

randa is like a giant wall raised in the sky.

That way I think that, if the investment would be justified, because everyone would come, connect the historical and you would be close to the station, which makes it much easier for anyone.

AC:

And the right now that we are talking about, like the connections of this metro station with all its surroundings, had some kind of connection with the Petare roundabout, which is also another point.

HF:

No, we couldn't get there, it would be a huge structure, which covers 60 m. But the structure is justified because it has cargo inside. References: Berlin Main Train Station: Hauptbahnhof.

Line 2, which we contested, but not with designs, but with price in the Wuaraira Repano. So we sent an offer already with Max retired but associated with Teresa and me. A terrace station in the Avila. (Today, where there is some healing) There it would be the point of the station by station is buried. That session is called Waraira Repano. We were never approved, and then we realized that they had copied everything, and changed the figure and presented it to the famous Brazilian company, and only changed the figures, 5 times its cost. But it was a copy of our proposal.

AC:

Well, with regard to the second project that was not carried out, as was the access to that building and also to the bridge that connected to the hull, because it is always an issue, is to get people to want to go up instead of crossing the street?

HF:

In order to support the structure, it was glued into an independent structure, own stairs and all his things. There was another structure that was like a volume, it was a parallelepiped, in which there were sensors and all your climbs with the elevator comfortably.

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But I repeat, I believe that the solution of one connect has to be with a volume that justifies, a volume of many people.

AC:

And the project that was built, what is it right now, just the roof with the square, without any building?

HF:

They are two separate decks without any union elements due a cost problem.

AC:

Well, thank you so much for all the information, for all your time. Very grateful.

HF:

Well, good luck!



## INTERVIEW TO TERESA SANCHEZ

Architect – U.C.V. 1974



Graduated from Architect in July 1974 from the Central University of Venezuela, she began working at the service of the company Ocoidesa C.A. as Assistant to the Project Manager in different areas of Consultation and Planning Engineering, including the Program of Equipment and Consolidation of Small Populated Centers for the populations of Píritu, Puerto Píritu and Clarines in the Anzoátegui State, Feasibility Study and Preliminary Schemes of the Industrial Zone of Barcelona, Anzoátegui State, Pilot Plan for Development of José Antonio Anzoátegui International Airport, Barcelona, Anzoátegui State, Planning and Design of camp Pie de Salto, Salto Pará, Río Caura and Assistant to the Project Manager of the Stations of the SC-001, La Hoyada – College of Engineers of the Metro of Caracas, Tramo CP-003 and CP-004, Chacaíto Petare, Metro de Caracas Line 1. Project Coordinator of El Tambor Station, Las Adjuntas Line – Los Teques, Caracas Metro.

From 1979 to date, in free exercise of the profession, she participates as Coordinator in the following Projects: Ante Proyecto Estación Gato Negro, Ferrocarril, Proyecto Estación El Tambor, Línea Las Adjuntas – Los Teques, Metro Los Teques, Project of the Edelca Transmission Center in Puerto Ordaz, in partnership with the Arq. Harry Frontado S., Caracas, and then on his own Remodeling, Conditioning and Adequacy Project, Building Headquarters of the Liberator's File, corner of Traposos, Caracas. Remodeling and Conditioning Project Administrative Areas, Directorate General, Occupational Therapy, X-ray, Electro-Encephalography, General Deposit, File and Emergency Area of the Jesús Mata de Gregorio Psychiatric Hospital, Sebecán Caracas. Project Centro Bahía de Pozuelos, Puerto La Cruz, Commercial Building Project and Parking annexed to the Transport Terminal of El Tambor Station, Metro Los Teques in collaboration with the Arq. Max Pedemonte. Project of the Temporary Headquarters Building of PDVSA Gas in Cumana, Sucre State, Leader of Architecture in Project of the Tocoma Dam, Caroni Engineering Consortium, among others.

INTERVIEW:

T S:

To see where the so-called line 1 was going to end, Petare was the last line and above, on a piece of land, which was then intended to be given to the mayoral, there was going to be a commuter coming and coming from the Tuy Valleys and connecting to metro line 1. When the projects began, Petare had a large volume, but had larger volumes around it. Then, the Metro de Caracas, contracted some transport studies, to define where it should end.

The branch that gave the greatest number of users was the branch that deviated towards the boulevard of the Cafetal. However, that branch was discarded by a very particular criterion that I will explain to you, the subway was made for a specific audience that was a low audience, what they called scenario 1 and 2, and the boulevard of the coffee was stage 5 and 6.

Therefore, it was decided that the line was to be extended towards Palo Verde Petare, we also designed the Palo Verde station, with the aggravating that line 1, everything came as a tunnel feature, which were swamp tunnels and, between Petare and Palo Verde, a tunnel had to be made by mining. The José Félix Ribas neighborhood was one of the most important neighborhoods. Not counting on Mesuca, et cetera and then continued to grow towards Mariche and a number more places. Then the Board of Directors of the Caracas metro decided, as its objective was, the town that had no vehicle, because it was a massive rapid transport solution, was extended towards Palo Verde. At 35 m deep, in a mining tunnel, which ventilated it, it was a tragedy.

The realization of this section was extremely difficult because it adjoined the viaduct that connected the Francisco Fajardo highway with Cota Mil.. At that time we were allowed to be a designer and as builders we were not allowed to alter vehicle traffic. Don't even interrupt a track.

We were advised by the London Transport, which advised directly on the subway, in all these surface road studies and we were advised by Mott Hay & Anderson, which is now called Mott MacDonald, who were the ones who made the tunnel between Duitama and Cali. And we had as a designer, we had a person named the overall man, who was a person who dominated the whole environment. And we had a lot of structural engineers, because that stretch was

extremely complex, and it was a mining tunnel and you couldn't use the trout.

On top of that, there was a condition, a very important requirement, and it was that the mountain behind the station that has a part of the heart of Petare, had to be preserved as such.

Then the design of the station had to be shallow. For reasons of the environmental study of the tunnels. And there was as a determinant, that the surrounding audience was a very aggressive and very invasive audience.

I'm going to tell you one thing that's off the record and you can't use it, but they're true....

.... Harry is noted in the Pompidou's design, and wants to make a ferrominera, with a perfect excuse that is accepted by the Metro Board of Directors; because the subway had 2 very important conditions, solve the problem of the mass rapid transport system. We brought in a gentleman who at the time was called Sir Collin Buchanan, who was the transport consultant, we put him on a helicopter and he barely got off, he told us: this is a disaster, you need a meter. Although it is not numerically justified by the population number, but by idiosyncrasy, by disorder, by the mess that exists as an urban, and from the point of view of road.

But the subway had the goal that it had to solve the problem of displacement, but it had to induce a process of urban renewal, and at the same time had to integrate the arts. That is, after the University City of Caracas, the Caracas metro is the only one that integrates the arts, which integrates everything that uses a displacement problem, urban transport problems, uses it to integrate the arts and all have sculptures, architecture, etc.

Harry designed the Pompidou. The station had to be semi buried, but the population was very aggressive, with the danger that they would throw stones and sticks at everything and with the risk of invasions, then it became a station that was surrounded by volutes. I made him like a kind of bags on the walls, so that whoever threw a stone fell into these bags, which was a mother, and they didn't hit a stone that was standing on the platform, that is, at that level of detail we arrived.

The square, a number of different levels were made, it was made as a species as an amphitheatre, but all taking care of with mothers so that the people did not get in, it was done preventively. Harry wanted to integrate the area of old Petare

with the station, but she is uneven about the other, he made a tower, which he called the Vigo Lighthouse. He intended that you could go up there, connect with the old town, why it was intended to revitalize the old town of Petare, he made a whole scenery, a few pedestrian walks, they put on some cobblestones, the balcony of the mayor was made, etc., the folk museum of Petare was made, the museum was very good. I know Petare up, down, I walked it by subway I walked them on horseback, I toured it by motorbike, I traveled it by helicopter, touring them all kinds of transport system. What I can tell you right now, the buffooners have invaded that a lot.

We put the police under the side of the square, we revitalized it, so that they could feel the surveillance of the Metropolitan Police, we made it the most important center.

And the building that Harry designed a concept, a justification, for the Board of Directors to approve it, where he wanted to do an experiment as in Europe, to put a service building where you could take off your driver's license card, pay for the light, the water, the phone and that it was basically a service center. And, where also when they saw they housed some offices of the subway because it was a terminal station, the substation, etc.

The subway really got totally divorced from the environment.

There were many features, because it was done while the mining tunnel was being made, it has a part per excavation, it was done in the open air, they put a high, I do not know if you remember this country, that here the storms become permanent, the elevated, it is there, it is elevated, it is there, but under the elevated happens in any kind of terrible things, terrible ones you can imagine.

AC:

That's the elevated one that goes to Palo Verde, isn't it? Well, I didn't know it was going to be temporary.

TS:

If that's it. You feel like you're going into model jail, because they're starting to appear behind bars. It's starting to look like something that tells you that you're in an inappropriate place and that you're in significant danger. Palo Verde was a version of first step towards the civilization Palo Verde, it was a very cheap urbanization that today is quite chaotic.

What is important at the moment is vital that there is a process of urban renewal, that I would have to do everything in Caracas because the urban profile has already changed it in such an absurd way; which is a disaster, where they put houses where administrative buildings went, where even the headquarters of the Museum of Architecture is confused with a ranch, buildings, made in such a pirate way that they hung all the facilities on the outside, the blackwater ones, remained on the road and had to expand the sidewalks so that when the pipes broke, which happens quite often, do not fall on the carts.

However, that area to do an urban renewal project for me is ideal, because the hills start, because there is a very nice little town upstairs, which should not be touched. It's that magical surrealism that accompanies us. In this country, in these conditions as we are. But it's a very beautiful subject.

By Palo Verde, on the right there is a population, Mesuca. There is about one population of 800,000 or more there. But Palo Verde station was designed for 480000 passengers in rush hour, with eviction times of 5 to 10 minutes.

But there's a mall that's in the middle, which is a horror too.

These areas currently represent an area of absolute danger.

We also did one thing that I think is very important and had a lot of influence.

Waraira Repano station, it's a station that was going to have a cable meter, you know it?

AC:

Yes, yes, I've only seen it there, which starts right. Where is Petare Metro Station located? It was going like the whole edge of the highway and this one, but it wasn't built. I think there's nothing more like two stations.

TS:

on the other side there is a metro cable, If there is another meter cable that cost more than the cable meter of the Corcovado in Brazil, of the amount of thefts they had with this project.

Waraira Repano station was going to be where Macro is right now. That station

wanted to connect it underground part and after superficially with the terminal of Oriente, which is where it ends, the stack built, but that is not in operation and then, in that station Waraira Repano that the worst point, because there are like 7 underground breaks, intended to make a commuter that was for the subway, to start the subway cable, which will connect to the Oriente terminal and it and the Tuy Valleys terminal and join and postpone Petare's tail. Of course, this project stopped because it was given to Odebrecht.

We made all the proposals and started working on project stopped, that's stopped, but this is a super important area, because in addition to that you go parallel to the highway and access to Caracas and there is a distributor there that is called the bicentennial distributor.

What happens an extended area, I don't know, how far is your project going to go?

AC:

If I was actually focusing, you're still doing the whole analysis part to see specifically where, but I think it's more on the part where the subway is like this whole block.

TS:

Remember, here's Petare Station and next door is the Metropolitan Police.

AC:

If, that is, the two apples would be like the intervention of that whole area.

TS:

The 2 roofs.

TS:

Ok remember that the Building on the side is the Sambil of the poor .

and what has to be an interesting proposal is a proposal where you can



channel because the snatks, the blows, the robberies and everything when you go through there pedestrianally terrible.

Then I worked on a part of the Petare and Palo Verde inspection, because we were the designers.

I had projected the building as such, Harry made a number of proposals and Max never wanted to open it to the public. I would have opened it to the public and instead of doing the Vigo Lighthouse to connect you with the unevenness and what I know I would have tried to connect him through the Building and this one to the hull of Petare, but as I tell you, Max later realized how important that proposal was and what was then started to change it because it was originally a single roof. You were passing underneath.

But it is a very interesting area and a nerve area that has a great activity. Everyone who comes from this part of Macanao, Macarao from all over that area, gathers in what is the Petare redoma, or to see how it moves. I know a lot of people who even pedestrianally move from Palo Verde.

AC:

And why and why do they do it pedestrianally?

TS:

Why? Because it was super congested.

We, for example, made the height of the tourniquets in such a way as to force the Venezuelan not to jump the tourniquet.

Now the tourniquets are free or the assailant and nobody tells them anything. When the subway opened almost everyone kept order, for example, within the subway commitments was that they had to do the treatment of sidewalks around what was their surroundings. It had to dominate at least 1 km in diameter on each of its sides, they had to put pedestrian crossings, ramp access for wheelchairs, etc. and all that was done at the time. What's more, in fact, line one in the only one that is preserved in good condition and line 2 because already on line and line 2, but already line 3, which was the one that ended this Government, changed the finishes. For example, the stations have the walls of 3 to 1 hole of 10 cm, they put a wall and so that if water enters the station the finishes

are not affected in the stations that are on the lines of the Center That if in the municipal and all that are turned a disaster.

AC:

And, what is the relationship that exists of the project that is realized because I understand that it was 2 projects, but that the second could not be realized, that it was that of the Pompidou and all this for economic issues.

TS:

We were approved, a first project that was much more sensible and I don't know if we used so much aluminum or used so many things and Max bounced it out of us. Then the Pompidou was made and Harry was very clear that this was not going to be built, I too was very clear that they would not accept it.

And, as much as we say that the Pompidou was something real, that suddenly it was a square that was a much more sensible amount of things, Max was the one who approved and started putting butts and approved nothing. The project is then deleted without the ferrominere. The project is completed much earlier.

AC:

As is the issue of accessibility in the area is super complicated, for example, in relation to the neighborhood in relation to Urbina, with the north.? How is the relationship of this square with its surroundings, why did you also design the whole square and its surroundings, not just the station.

TS:

We also designed the Plaza because that is part of the Building and, which was the implementation of the station on a surface level, because the semi-buried one also designed it, but that has changed it many times. That was the part that said it was very important. That we had designed it, so that, the one who entered on the right side looking at the road in front, did not have to cross the street to enter the station, if he did not come down, and the one who came from the Pérez de León, walk further down this. Because we had to evenly distribute a flow that we were talking about 700000 people inside this station that was going to be much more populated than the other. Likewise we had to design the station, which obeys something that had to do with the environmental part,

in the sense that the stations, when the train enters to do something called the piston effect, which pushes the air inside the station, then the station has one of the areas where it opens so that the pressure is lowered and not between the hot air, but there are the ventilation chimneys. Then the piston effect goes up these chimneys to try to maintain the degree of comfort of the station. Then we, with the station was semi-buried, We had to generate one ventilation flow that compensated, that that station had no air conditioning.

AC:

Everything that is built in this square is later, in addition to the metro station and the police headquarters, that is, some buildings that are on the corner and other buildings? In the west corner?

TS:

The problem is that the station only has its area of influence, the land on the side where the Sambilito is of the Belloso and they appropriated it, they sued the subway and had to give it to them.

Okay, so the subway couldn't do a big expropriation, because it was extremely complicated. What's more, we didn't have to grab the people of the Metropolitan Police because the police didn't want to give in a single Micra and I wanted to put 500 or cars in the parking lot and that was like a disturbance zone, especially that we put the entrance to the side of the viaduct that goes up to the highway so that they had an exit to the highway.

A pretty complicated problem.

If I were to work there, I would tell you what I would do, I would take the station and try to make a proposal based on the flows of the station and as I tell you, trying to make a proposal made with a landscape game. We had just returned from London, we had made a square with splashes to lower the noise level and reduce the pollution a little. We had made it a space that was a little more useful for children, because suddenly all your exits from the seasons came out little. People waiting with children because there's a bus terminal there.

Then I would concentrate on putting my eye on this area because it has an important flow of people.

AC:

There's a theme of all these bus stations, I think they're pretty messy right now. That that area is very collapsed.

TS:

Look, that's scary, those busettes and we offered him because there are a lot of uphill terrain that's empty and there's even the grounds of the famous mayor's office that have never used it because the mayor's office stays at the Giorgio Center. We proposed to them that an order should be made. right, at the dealer they made to leave for Domingo Luciani Hospital, which is the plant where you get your driver's license. On a leftover piece of land over there, they put a truck terminal in. That can be taken out.

We what we had raised, because it has an access to the Francisco de Miranda and you can mount the highway, put the bus transport terminal.

I mean, that station has no life because it's surrounded by buses, busetas, subway buses, police, that's what a real pandemonium is.

Then, I would take as decisive the ordered pedestrian flows to the accesses of the station. I'd order the police side, order the staircase to get to the old part of Petare and order, defining as far as the highway bridge that follows to the East Highway so the station could have the traction electric substation there. So that allows you to provide a pedestrian path to the Pérez de León hospital, which is one of the flagships there and I would also try to see how I make a connection with the Maternal Child.

Yes, but I tell you what is really a terrible center of conflict, because there is a lot of money there; that one sells eggs, the other sells I don't know what, and within this maelstrom the buhoneros are the ones who steal things from you. What the outbursts give you are the ones that push you, that is, you can't walk there pedestrianally.

TS:

And besides, I'm going to tell you one thing about there's a problem with the raving?

Because the raveb continues to Macanao and the rave continues to the side of the station.

AC:

The ravine coming from the Urbina? Or the one coming from Petare Hill?

TS:

Both, and there's one that comes from Campo Rico, from one of the neighborhoods.

AC:

Okay, but that's all underground under the station? How was that handled?

TS:

We channel the raveb and get it pregnant

AC:

And one question, is there any chance of getting the plans for the building that was built from the station, all that deck and all that?

TS:

Well, I can talk to Max Pedemonte, All those plans I made, I signed them. That is, along with each of the projects, because I was the assistant project manager who was Gustavo Rada, who later minister of transport.

I have the Waraira Repano, we had the proposal, I studied a lot of a station left in Germany, which has more or less this issue, but here what made it very complicated was the raves.

AC:

Well, if you had that information too, it would be very interesting to see. What happens is that there, is that it is very difficult to get all the documentation and that it does not serve even Google Maps, because my plans were to go to Venezuela for at least 2 months to be able to take out the project, but well, with this

theme the coronavirus.

I would be interested to know your opinion, because I see that you know the whole subject very well, because the theme of the thesis is to integrate Petare with the rest of the city. But at the same time to make at least some necessary basic equipment that obviously the neighborhood does not have and that also does not have the space available to generate those equipment.

Then, the idea was a little to generate in the surroundings of the station the necessary vacuum, but at the same time some equipment that will serve you throughout the neighborhood.

TS:

Petare right now, and from its conception, is an Urban Center for mass rapid transport distribution, but right now the subway is so bad, people prefer to use trucking, but now trucking put it up to 30,000 bolivars. Now everyone will ride the subway because the subway put it to 1000 bolivars at 30000 against 1000. But since that's a center that moves volumes, right now, they were moving 1,000,000 passengers. Anyway, I'm going to find out that figure more accurately. They're moving 1,000,000 passengers that's a monumental volume where people move quickly

In Petare's case, I would try to give him public spaces, for people to come, you have to humanize the city, politics invades it, it has to be a place that is pleasant and liveable.

Notice, they're doing one thing, they did before this socialism came, which is one thing pocket parks are, I have a father who made a library in a neighborhood called San Jose. He made a library and has a training center for young people. He made in very small space, put up bars to exercise.

I would make a commitment where I would integrate with vegetation, especially since this area is very hostile.

And I would try so to make a place that was that it was super nice, as they have done in the today, for people and plays and there is a musician. A Book Fair that you can do, some theaters, but considering that it has to be something that is



adorning it so as not to interrupt what is a flow of people going out to work.

AC:

Sure, a point like that to get to their homes or go all to their jobs.

TS:

Search for photos of the place for you to locate.

AC:

If I asked my parents to make a video of the area, they did.

TS:

I've got all the subway plans, if you need them. I can also send you everything I have from Waraira Repano station.

.....

But look at you, for example, within the urban activities, I would centralize the buhoneros, which I did not leave the Caracas metro, I wanted to make it as a, as a kind of small town.

Of course it is impossible to think that they can be removed, it is a matter of organizing and structuring them well, but it is impossible to think that one can remove the buhoneros. From there they will always come back because it is a very good transit point, very good for people.

Well, let them let these vendors do their job, but force them within one of standards. I'm doing a little town like that in Rio Chico.

TS:

Well, Anastasia, I have to go to a meeting, that and the order for whatever you need.

AC:

Perfect. thank you very much for real.

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## INTERVIEW TO CHEO CARVAJAL

Es periodista (Universidad Central de Venezuela), con maestría en Diseño y Espacio Público (Elisava Escuela de Diseño, Barcelona); activista e investigador de la movilidad peatonal (@caracasapie); director de la Asociación Civil Ciudad Laboratorio (@CiudLab), plataforma de investigación y acción urbana; profesor del diplomado Diseño e Innovación Social (Universidad Católica Andrés Bello - Prodiseno Escuela de Comunicación Visual y Diseño).

Actualmente desde Ciudad Laboratorio lidera el Observatorio de la Noche, que incluye una plataforma de observación colaborativa (#100MiradasSobreLaNoche) y la construcción colectiva de experiencias de activación nocturna en algunas zonas de la ciudad. Desde esta organización también dirige un observatorio de Movilidad y Transporte Público.

Actualmente es co-organizador del proyecto Integración en proceso Caracas en el barrio La Palomera, liderado por la oficina Enlace Arquitectura.

Es creador y coordinador de El Calvario Puertas Abiertas, experiencia colaborativa de mediación artística e integración urbana que en 2020 arribó a su 6ta edición, y del proyecto MAPEA, con la artista Natalya Critchley. Entre 2017-2018 dirigió el estudio de campo Caracterización de los espacios públicos de Caracas desde la perspectiva del peatón, auspiciado por CAF, Banco de Desarrollo de América Latina. Ha participado en múltiples encuentros, foros y talleres vinculados al tema urbano y la movilidad, dentro y fuera de Venezuela. Tiene amplia experiencia como editor de publicaciones sobre la ciudad de Caracas.

INTERVIEW:

AC:

... and as I mentioned in the mail, the thesis that I am doing the main objective is the topic of integration, trying to dissolve a little the edges of Petare, and the

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idea would be...

CC:

That Petare edge, what do you mean?

AC:

Well, specifically the edges, say, a very broad term of the word, is not necessarily physical, but social.... It's in the broadest term you can have, and well, also the idea was to do a project that was also inside the neighborhood ... on the subject of talking about spaces with export value from the neighborhood to the city ...

CC:

First of all, a very important small correction, in language, not from the neighborhood to the city, but from the neighborhood to other spaces of the city of the neighborhood.

AC:

Yes, it's true.

CC:

Because the neighborhood is considered a city by us ... public space is not everything that we architects and urban planners design, but normally have as very clear typologies in the square, a garden, but rather open our gaze within the neighborhood of public space... a staircase, because the neighborhood is full of stairs and, above all there is time on the stairs, when they clearly become distributors of the routes, it is not a ladder only going and well I was there. It is also a space where people gather depending on what kind of situation occurs, especially in the accesses of houses, of the houses. They are always generated as a little corner, where people gather, and converse, where the stairs converge and are created as crossroads. These crossroads could be considered perfectly public pass... the confluence of stairs, the confluence of alleys, are usually spaces where people gather, meet. We can sit here, the others can sit there, you can talk, things can happen around or they are spaces where children can play, the idea of a park is not necessarily the park, the swing, the wheel, the slide, the

place where children can move, and play, and they can hide. So, in the neighborhood there are lots of situations where chamos can climb, where chamos can hide, where chamos can jump and change levels, there are certainly many spaces in the neighborhood.

Knowing architecture and Urbanism, I can understand that this is the case and that you have to incorporate them like that and if you incorporate them, then expand the register of your catalog possible.

AC:

Of course, and I also think it was related to the issue of public space as a generation of integration processes, and not as a repetition of formulas. How could the characteristics of a public space look like? Integration in a certain way is also like the appropriation of that space of all the people who transit it, not only of the communities that are close to the area, but as a scale, a little larger, since the all the people who pass through it, it is not only the people who live around, very close, but rather people from all over the neighborhood and all the nearby areas.

CC:

it is difficult to say what those characteristics are, I think they would be those that allow integration, that when designing the public space you must respect the keys of the context... and you have a border situation between the neighborhood and another area of the city... you want to generate integration processes, or what I would mean that everyone in the neighborhood, like those who are not in the neighborhood, can use that space equally and can be found in that space.

I don't think there's a formula, I think it's that beyond the physical characteristics or infrastructure of a space, it's more what you want to do with that space. If you want there to be integration, you have to think that it is a space that attracts everyone equally, that it is attractive to everyone alike and has no keys typical of a place and that you say I will do then the square at the entrance of Petare that looks absolutely like everything that is in Petare ... it attracts attention a very unique thing that is at the entrance of the neighborhoods, it is the arches. How one does if such objects end up appearing in urban space and have one function, but actually end up staining another, which is to separate, or mark the

separation. So how we work the transition spaces to make them the best of the 2 worlds.

How would we work that? So that there is public space for everyone, so that I can go or anyone can go shopping in Petare, which is an area where the Petare redoma, which is what defines a little the boundary between the neighborhoods of Petare and the urbanized area, the area that is planned, there is a very clear area of the market. And what does it tend to do? well one to disappear the market, get out of here all because you are annoyed, instead suddenly order that street market, and say hear there in Petare in the redoma there is a wonderful market where you get things that I don't get anywhere else, even there are some that are very cheap, and I'm from the California I'm going to grab the subway , I'm going to go out at Petare Station and I'm going to go shopping there, because that's part of the city, the resources offered by the city, and the one that lives in the neighborhoods of Petare, of course, it's also going to say, well, I'm going to go to town and buy, then you start to give a clearer integration situation.

For now, a lot of people are saying no, you're crazy, you're going to Petare to buy, there's a lot of people who don't go, because They're afraid of Petare.

I think the key here is how you erase the territories, the idea of territory is precisely what opposes the idea of public space, why? Let's say, that the territory assumes that there

is a community or a group of human beings that establish the codes and keys of use of that space, what can, and that you can't, who comes in and who doesn't come in, just like when I say the territory I'm referring to a neighborhood, but there's an organization that has garitas, and has blocked access , that's very territorial.

We, the neighbors' association, decided that only those who live here come in here, and period, no matter if there is an empty park that is not used by anyone, that was built by the municipality, we close, this is ours.

How do we erase that notion of territory in the city? that allows us to connect and let there be a free flow of people from all over and that all the spaces of the city have a metropolitan sense, even though they are very local spaces, very local communities, but I live in a neighborhood, but here can happen whoever you want, here can enter whoever you want.

AC:

That was one of the points because the project hypothesis was to raise a kind of urban core at this point, that is of a more metropolitan scale, and that is like the new main access to Petare, that someone who does not know Petare or who is not from there. One leaves the metro at Petare station, and it is like that there is no clear pedestrian road, nothing is defined, that would be clear this new core, that first the services that would be needed to Petare, previously because of the very closed plot of the neighborhood, because there is very little free space, can not be built within the neighborhood and at the same time would also serve the whole rest of the city , which also attracts people from elsewhere.

CC:

We worked doing a pedestrian study, pedestrian flows, because we were asked by the people of the Bigott Foundation, who are based in the hull. And well, that's where some sidewalks were widened, and they intended to. If space were released in principle, clearly for people to flow, that would already help a lot. If I go out, I go to Petare and go out there, I don't understand where I have to go, that is, where I'm going to move, and how I'm going to move, nothing more the simple sorting of the plot to walk from the spaces to walk, that besides the flows are brutal, because the vast majority of people who live in Petare have no vehicle , then it moves is on foot, that would already be a great urban contribution, which is the one that you walk, you feel like you arrive, and even that you could say, so as a challenge, well I move through the Francisco de Miranda through all that is the space that borders the helmet, to reach the Plaza del Cristo, and I connect without any problem , walking along Rio de Janeiro Avenue, and you turn it into a circuit. but that walking, I arrive in Petare, I arrive a large public space that clearly connects me with different areas of Petare, I can go towards José Félix Ribas towards Palo verde, towards the area of Petare north, or I can go to the other sides, to the sides of Baloa, that is, it should be the duty to be, not this kind of juxtaposition of obstacles and objects , of urban artifacts, all, almost always to try to solve vehicle mobility, not a

high that passes throughout the middle from the redoma, and which then reaches the other that is a very complex distributor.

AC:



there is another point, which is a bit delicate, especially with intervention in the wards, which is the issue of community participation. I am in this dilemma of how to understand, what would be the needs of communities? Overall around, because, it's a project that has to do with many communities.

CC:

It's not easy to lift information. As for imagining what I want, that everyone needs, in a place that is too diverse, cannot be tempted not to raise information. Without that information the project is doomed to failure, because you're going to have a lot of opposition, you're going to have a lot of people saying, but because it occurred to these people to do this, who said we need this thing here.

CC:

it wouldn't be bad, as a way to poll, what do you think of yourself, if you do this kind of thing? At least put some people under scrutiny, what you're thinking, to know if people think so, and that's fine or not.

AC:

Well, the last point, which I wanted to touch was with respect to the type of activities that could happen in that place, what other type of program, or equipment, or activities, can happen based on the needs of the area.

CC:

I wouldn't know what to tell you, there can be in general how many you imagine, I guess, I wouldn't say any. I would tell you that you have to understand that anything that is done in Petare, if you want to manage to integrate, one cannot leave aside the idea of the connection with the helmet. This connection has to be expressed as an integration of the historical, which is the helmet, which is also a space basically used by people of Petare. if you achieve the connection between those 3 elements, such as the element of the neighborhood as spatiality, element of the helmet as a story as a memory, also as an active helmet, like a helmet that stayed there and transformed into something else into a great shopping center. So that you can connect this as spatiality, as a historical and as memory of the city, that you can connect the neighborhood, and that you can connect the other nearby areas, the nearby urbanizations, in a large pole of attraction, that would be, say, the great project of Caracas and as a space that allows you to generate

bridges between north and south, for greater connections, especially pedestrian , I would tell you that that has to have a commercial program, with a great commercial vocation, and not only commercial in the sense of what is in the built space, to order a trade for public space, where the seller, feels comfortable, and is part of a

system and the one who walks feels that he has enough space to walk , and has an interesting trading offer.

AC:

Yes, the idea in principle is a little larger scale, but let's see in the end, as we can because I don't have specifically yet, I'm still in the research phase, and a little analysis, I haven't entered the project phase yet.

CC:

At any other time you can contact me, and if you have any ideas that you would like how to check me with pleasure, I give you my opinion.

AC:

I wanted to ask you about the analysis you told me you did about Petare's flows.

CC:

It's a study we did, because this story was that mayoralty was with some companies in the area, and made an agreement to finance this public space project in the Petare redoma, it was like a way to have faster fast-acting funds coming out of the typical bureaucracy from the municipalities. What they were doing was exempting taxes on these companies, in this case tobacco companies, so that Bigott, that money they were exonerating him, would use him to finance such projects, research, or project.

AC:

Well, I think that's it. I don't take any more of your time. Thank you very much for this interview, really, super useful for my research.

## INTERVIEW TO IGNACIO CARDONA



Architect. Professor of Design Unit, Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism Universidad Simón Bolívar, Caracas, Venezuela

“Ignacio Cardona focuses his studies on creative methodologies of design research to weave together fragmented urban fabric in the cities of the Global South in order to promote social equity, particularly in areas often characterized by being highly conflictive and violent. The work intends to address issues of fragmentation, connectivity and social equity in urban environments that although very dense are nevertheless highly malleable and hold potential for effective intervention.

Ignacio is Doctoral Student (DDes) at Harvard Graduate School of Design. He is Architect (Universidad Simón Bolívar/1998) and cum-laude Magister of Urban Design (Universidad Metropolitana/2003). He is also and Founder and CEO of AREPA: ARQUITECTURA ECOLOGÍA Y PAISAJE (Architecture, Ecology and Landscape)” an important Venezuelan think tank that has become a reference on urban phenomena in Latin-America, that has developed several projects with the philosophy to articulate the technical knowledge of design with felt needs of communities.

Before starting the Doctor of Design at the Harvard GSD, he developed a career as professor in the Universidad Simón Bolívar (Caracas, Venezuela) for ten years In Studios about architecture and urban design, and as advisor of more than 50 thesis of undergraduate and graduate students. Ignacio also has been Visiting Professor in the Magister of Urban Design at Universidad Metropolitana (Caracas, Venezuela), and in the Bachelor of Science in Architecture at Wentworth Institute of Technology (Boston, USA). Due to his extensive academic and professional experience, his teaching capacity includes courses such as Design Studios as well as theoretical ones. Currently, he is part of the Teaching Staff at Harvard Graduate School of Design in theoretical courses on constructive technologies.” (<https://www.arepa.info/bio/>)

## INTERVIEW:

“If you had asked me a year ago, I would have told you that the only reason for integrating the slum with the rest city is to connect the two sectors, for reasons of mutual dependence”

“There is a book called *The Myth of Marginality*, 1972 by Janice Perman. Even then, she had already shown that there’s no such a thing as marginal sectors, actually there are simply sectors that have asymmetries in service supplements “

“What happens in Petare is that it is exclusive and practically residential. It is a big mono-functional mass. That is why people walk a long way, 20 floors a day, to get to work”

“Petare has only a few outward connection points, one of those is the Petare Redoma which is one of the busiest places in Latin America, 20,000 man per hour”

“By the way, you have a lot of projects in Petare working on how to activate space, that’s not the problem, Petare is already way too active. Instead, the idea should be on how you organize things in place, seek to give readability to that place... You must make everything have its own place”

“And it is true, on the one hand, that there is a sense of intense participation. But in the other hand it is true that we, as architects, experts in reading space, should say what we think that space needs and what the space can become. They appreciate that one, as an architect, comes with a position and a proposal. It is a very particular context that also deserves our competence, they also deserve a professional technical look at the space, which is your specialty. And of course, at the time of building there will be a query. At the end, the slum’s situation is not as different as one might think”

“The issue of the physical integration of two territories is already quite complex, and the issue of citizen participation would already be another topic to work on that would complicate things even more. Remember that this is an experiment, it is a thesis, it is not a project “

“The program proposals for the Petare Metro area that I would suggest are: sports program, commercial program, and multipurpose spaces... Sport is very latent and active in Petare... Commerce is very powerful because it is the last point people go through before reaching their homes “

“Speaking of commerce there is a book called *Delirios New York*, by Ren Koolhaas, which is about vertical proposals, based on the skyscrapers of NY. Where the idea is to have a different ambience on each floor... So, one of the things that we considered was the so-called *Delirios Petare*, making the proposal of a vertical stage, which allowed us to make a vertical passage and pedestrian connector that allowed us to have shops”

“In my experience the best solution is the creation of multipurpose spaces... Generic spaces with clear circulation systems and services, where different activities can be carried out depending on the time of day and needs... The multiplicity of uses in the spaces in the slums is very natural. Not only due to the lack of equipment that they use them for many things, but also because there is a lot of sense of community... The sports project of the baseball field in La Dolorita Petare made a survey and the results were that for every child who went to the field to play baseball, there were three more children who were going to do other things “

“That is why I recommend that your spaces be places of multiple uses, because if not, the people of the slums will use it like that anyway, for many things... Seek to solve more needs in the same place in terms of equipment “

“The strategies that you should take into account for the project would be facilitate connectivity, make it very clear and legible, and highlight the symbolic value of architecture... Places like Petare call desperate to have symbolic pieces that generate an identity towards the place “

“The Mesuca project, in which I worked, was a request from the organized community... There were 4 private investors there, but the mayor’s office was the one that gave the largest amount of money “

“In most of the projects there are 4 main actors, the first two put the capital and the last two put the knowledge. The first are: the private company, which works very little in Venezuela, and the Government, which does work because of the rentier tradition of ‘Padre Estado, who pays for everything’... And then there are the other two actors: communities and the academy, which is where architects come in “

“The idea would be to make the project pay for itself”

“The entire Petare metro area is naturally an intermodal transport system,  
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where many things converge: buses, metro, cable metro, cable train, jeeps... That is why I suggest you think about it vertically... It is an area that involves public space and commerce... You must do a project that manages and organizes the flows that are happening there... That includes an access street to the historic center from the subway with a system of ramps and stairs”

“It is an area that lacks verticality, that is an infrastructure problem. Everything happens on the ground plan”

“In the end, your project must be an urban condenser, that’s what the Spanish call a site that condenses many things at once. Petare is already a naturally urban Condesador, everything happens here, legally and illegally “

“My proposal would be to build a building on top of the station. Where the market located in the north square moves, leaving the public space free. Maybe with a green rooftop. On the upper floor of this building connects with the level where the old Petare road is, creating a new access to the slum”

“To get from the old Petare road to the metro you must travel an awfully long section, even though they are very close. There is a big difference in height and there is no accessibility “

“The cable train project is a disaster, it does not connect to anything because the other metro station was never built”

“Petare means facing the river in the indigenous Caribe language. Because many years ago, when the city was being formed, there was a fork in the roads called *Los dos caminos*: one that went towards the Oriente highway and one that went towards Petare, to go down to the river “

“Petare grew up on the Urbina farm, which was very productive. There is a whole issue with the water infrastructure, due to the Guaire River and the Caupimare River”

“The Petare metro area is very congested because the north station was never built, which would be a great escape route from the city... Considering that other station would greatly decongest Petare station... Remember that problems in a place are not always solved there. The solution for the Petare station lies in the construction of the north station “



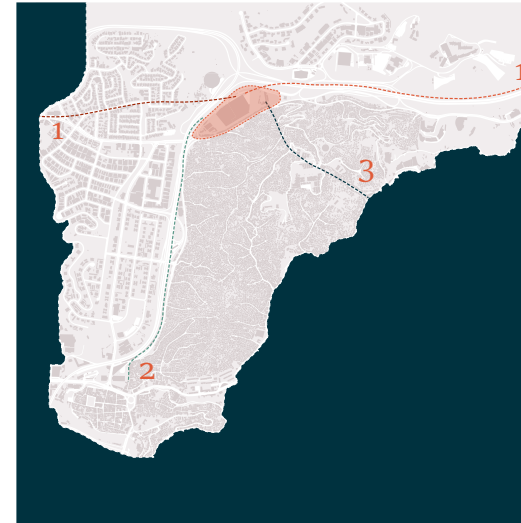
“A project that you could include to yours is the project for the urban integration of the Simón Díaz center, which is a proposal for the physical rehabilitation of slums in the area and a cable train that connects with the plot where Macro is located “

“In the end your project will have the scale of an urban plan... Where the main solution focuses on the completion of the Waraira Repano station, in order to decongest the Petare metro station “

“It will be an urban condenser with the structure of a vertical, intermodal center, that should include: metro transport system, buses to Oriente, buses to Caracas, Metrocable to the Simón Díaz Center, connection with the park, connection with El Ávila, connection with La Urbina and connection with Terrazas del Ávila... “

“Your project will be an urban condenser in which all environments can be multipurpose spaces”

**INTERMODAL STATION:**  
**Starting point for intervention**



1. Train and metro station
2. Cable Train Station
3. Metro Cable station



## INTERVIEW TO MARÍA ISABEL PEÑA



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### INTERVENTIONS:

#### MIP:

First of all, understand what the different urban elements in the city mean, we are in a Valley, that this Valley is the same length as Manhattan, from Petare to Caricuao is 27 km., density that the city can no longer densify, if they had the services and if they had the infrastructure, we could probably densify as Manhattan did, which has so much more population.

It can build the void and it is a traditional way where the urban walls are continuous, so the vacuum is very readable and very easy, but it is that we had the oil, since 1936, there is a great transfer of people from the interior to the of the country, to the city and also within the city, that colonial core begins to expand and there is a moment of modernity. At the time of modernity, the traditional blocks are broken, the car appears and the city already extends, and extends along a few small valleys that are between fords and there are the developments that all developed from the Guaire river to the north and that almost all have in some way a grid. However, those to the south are rather organic and are even more modern not and harder to build as a pedestrian continuum.

Then there remains all the third element that we have within the city, which is the one that self-built and that self-built does all those people, who can not access the real estate market.

Then they are at the extremes, which make them the very derogatory nomenclature that is called marginal, that being on the margin. Within Latin America is considered the fourth largest place of self-construction. Then there is at the west Catia, and to the east Petare.

Now, there is a division that is like a groove and quite difficult to put together, the highway, the Urbina and another what self-built, which are the neighborhoods, which especially the neighborhood of Petare.

Which means paralegality, that while the whole city has regulations and regulations within the neighborhoods, there are other rules somehow what the functioning of the slums is like the public space of Petare is tiny, Bolívar squares that are 80 m by 80 m, then, 2 urban elements that there are always a street and a court.

The court is also a little ill-sighted, especially by mothers, because they feel that there is a lot of propensity for drugs or weapons, malandrería, but there are also exceptions, for example, in North Petare there was a gentleman named Jairo Rosal, who feeds 106 children, trains them in boxing and gives them directed tasks and well, he wants to save them from evil, save him from danger.

Middle-class people don't usually move to the slums, however, there are intermediate spaces and the clear way to deal between one urban element and another is through emptiness, which audiences are public spaces or use.

There's a bridge between the Urbina and Petare. That bridge serves as a market, that bridge serves as a mediator of passage. People who go to work on the formal part and who live in the informal part and there are also people from the formal part that approaches the market, then there is a point, and there is a meeting that is given and that works.

There's another point that is also there, near that bridge, which is a sports space. That's a point that is also a point visited by the people of the formal part there. We could think of this as instead of being a bridge, maybe a building, a building that has other services.

For your project, the subway is a meeting place.

A place of Culture where you could see at best a music center, a dance center.

But, knowing that you are in Italy, and knowing that there is a very good and widely used example by them on highways, they are the buildings that do as rest and put restaurants on top of the highway.

The Puente building might have a good chance of giving things, to create land where there is no possibility of having land spaces of 80 by 80 it is impossible to get a space of that dimension within the neighborhood. So, if you think of a building that is a bridge building, which also has the roof as a possibility to use it to have recreation spaces to have gardens, you are somehow making a plot of land.

I think another of the strengths that there are in our country music. And I think it could also be thought of as a music center, thinking that it can be a place where the two converge, the people of the urbanization and the people of the neighborhood are thinking not only of the market. The market if already proved its use. Green spaces that are not possible to have inside the neighborhood. That would be my advice, that's my first approximation.

AC:

Okay, great. So, in your view, would we have more benefits in the Makro area, than the area where the Petare Metro is, as an intervention area?

MIP:

Don't understand me, that's where the bridge is where the bridge is, that is to convert, is to make that bridge a building bridge, so the bridge, it blows up a connector, that is, they become a road, but it becomes a building that can be school, but they become a roof that can be garden, bone, and can be a place of convergence both of the people of the formal city who can go to the market there or that can go to music classes because there is a youth orchestra, or you can go for boxing school or there are some gardens upstairs, not like a park, a big park, then a big public park.

That people have no chance of going to the East Park because they first have a lot of kids, but what it costs them to get out of the neighborhood and go back up and get to the East Park, for example, they can't afford it.

So, if you pose a whole long park and there you can make similarities, for example, with New York Parks, a long park called Riverside Drive, then you just have highways on one level, parks on other levels, terraces where there are restaurants and just place belvederes or dog spots, if you think that can be a big surface above to create a park on a level and to create schools, targeted tasks. This place for the Symphony, for boxing. It begins to be a place that can be a place of convergence.

Instead, I go to Makro means to go by car.

On the other hand, in this place there is already a habit, already people were going by foot.

The one who dares to go there, of course, dares not cross, but they are using the bridge. So, what we can see how to strengthen something that exists, but turn it into a building.

With the bridge, he rode me on top, I put it next to it, I put 2 buildings next to it, left life in the middle, that is, you have so many nice design things to do that well, I think there is quite, quite material.

AC:

That sounds super interesting, that idea.

MIP:



Well also on the subject of Italy, I would say: this would be great because italians would be very excited. To see that it is not the typical, a building in the Estrada car. A much more creative building, with more wealth, than the ceiling, can also be used that is created as a community space, not just a space to observe.

AC:

We must say in a groso way what would be the main characteristics of such a project or at the level as a strategy. Well, how could it be described?

In general not a specific project, but.

Could this overall strategy be that they are trying to unite this integration with this connection?

MIP:

Well, see if it was just tactical urbanism. It would be a very small level in which you intervene first on that bridge and do activities perennially whether you do market, it does theater that carries some musicians, you plant some plants. Improving the situation would be the lowest level

If it were urban design, well, you can also say this could have 2 edges, 2 buildings or one on top or let's leave a square.

And after this urban design, you would have to climb to another step, where it says, well, at the level of everything that is the Petare region, we understand that this point is a key point to be able to make a connection not only physical, but also social activities, because they are going to mix one like another and have a lot of , it has many, many probabilities and besides that bridge is very close to the Monorail that is there, which connects with all the tracks, then you could be an excuse for, the one in the formal part to go to this, then that could be a project that, say, is called a special plan sound.

And, above that there may be a much bigger plan, which is a PDUL that is a local urban development plan wherever you say, this is a key point. But actually the scale of that would be a special plan that calls: PEZ special zonal plan. Where you define everything absolutely this is like the size of a neighborhood and really look, it's been a local park that you're going to do, if you see the extent of what it is. For example, what's on one side is the Urbina and what's left on the

other side that is Petare.

There is a whole job, besides this make as vital all those edges that right now are a little left, poorly solved along with the edge of the other side, which is also like just a green that has almost no function.

So, well, you have as it goes several layers to solve, you would have the whole layer of public space and green space that interconnect and functions you would have the activity layer that is another level and you would have the layer of circulation and connectivity that is another, then it can be a special plan geared with a larger plan that is a local urban plan.

AC:

Great.

What about capital feasibility?

And from good almost will, I think more capital in the case of our will programs, but well, what would it be? Because here too in Italy are very realistic in terms ok, I will do this project as what could investors be? What would the actors be as real good? Actually, that's enough.

At least the projects with which I do what I have done and instructors are quite concrete. In this sense, it is sought by feasible projects.

MIP:

There is an amount of money that has been poorly raised that is in the United States or is in Switzerland or is in many parts.

Bankers have the theory, they're convinced that all that money is going to have to go back to Venezuela.

And that in fact we as NGOs have been asked to make a bank of ideas and projects ready to be implemented. Then one of the projects ready and I encourage you to see it because it also has a chance to go on the highway. It is the winning project the Park La Carlota. So look at one of the proposals that makes profitable that proposal, made by Manuel Delgado, is that he gets on top of the highway and makes buildings that have some economic weight and with that economic

weight is sold and if there is a return.

It's like saying this building that you're setting up this building bridge, if you take it to an investor it says good, but I'd have to put, for example, hotel or an office building or a factory of something, in addition to all the public things, because that's the one that's going to be profitable and possible. Of that investment, that is also the vision of urban designers.

That there is not only to raise something nice and you stay only like the garden, but who pays?, why not then he who pays for this, I would see it more like private investments that are in search of land that do not exist and that are also conducive to unification or as the rescue of the country, I do not see it in the short term, short term, I would say that we should do rather what is called.: Tactical urbanism that is, many activities between one side and the other and urban activations that were understanding that it is a natural channel that there is and that the

best that can be done is to consolidate it with more buildings, and more buildings that give value and strength to that connection between one side and the other.

AC:

Of course, of course it doesn't make all the sense in the world.

MIP:

So good is other visions, they are not the vision of the Government, notice that it would be logical and that it would be even beautiful.

If it really were a socialist thought that is thinking about the benefit of the one who has less and understanding that life is mixed, that cities are diverse and that it is a quality.

Well, they wouldn't think twice, I'd say, we're going to benefit this community and for the benefit of approaching each other, let's not do this because it would also be something that could be done with public and private investments and have a return. The magic word is to have a return. I mean, we can't think today that it's all a lost investment, but that there should be a return, of course to see return, it's an absolutely capitalist approach.

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But at the same time it is an investment where you think and that there is room for everyone. And I'm sure the benefit of someone else can also benefit the one with the least. In fact, that's what regulations are for, too,

That's typical of urban design. I give you all these urban public spaces and these services in exchange for you letting me set up a skyscraper

You let me set up a mall on top of me. So you say good I somehow have a return, I have a hotel, I have offices and I have a shopping center and I do everything else for free, for free it is a saying, but at the same time it is what you pay, instead of buying a land, the land does not exist.

The good designer's vision is not as good as a business vision.

No, where the idea is to win, win for everyone, whether the one with the least on the basis of the one who has more than then wins. Well, pay for the one with the least, but he's going to benefit too.

AC:

Well, I think we've already covered all the points a little bit.

MIP:

Perfect, did you get David Gouverneur's numbers?

AC:

if I've already written to him and wrote him an email.

Yes, yes, yes and cheo I talked to him, with which good, in the absence of because in theory I was going to go to Venezuela for about 2 months to be able to visit the site, etc., that did not get complicated. I'm all trying to collect the information as the instance, with the tools I can have from here.

MIP:

Sure, sure, well from Petare, there's a lot. I think you can get a lot, even Proda-vinci has Petare stuff you can see them.

AC:

I was reading a lot, he's got a lot of articles and stuff.

MIP:

All the luck, to order.

AC:

Thank you very much for all your time and for all this information that was super interesting. Thank you.

## **INTERVIEW TO FRANCO MICUCCI**



Architect

He is an architect graduated from the Simón Bolívar University of Caracas in 1989 and the Master of Architecture in Urban Design from the Harvard University of Cambridge in 1992. He is Head of the Department of Design, Architecture and Plastic Arts of the Simón Bolívar University of which He has been an associate professor since 1993 and was Academic Coordinator of the Architecture Degree between 2009 and 2012, He has been a professor in the Master in Urban Design of the Metropolitan University since 1995, and a contracted professor of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the Central University of Venezuela. He has been a visiting professor internationally at the University of Miami, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, among others. He is a founding and active member of Fundación Espacio since 2007 and his professional practice in Venezuela has been developed through the firm MA + (Micucci + Arquitectos Asociados), of which he is director and with which he has developed architecture and urban design projects for national and international level.

INTERVIEW:

FM:

I think the issue is certainly very important, I believe that in the end the issue of integrating the neighborhood into the immediate context of what is the whole of the city, I think it is the big topic pending in Caracas, not because the issues linked to the interior of the neighborhood have been resolved, but because I believe that if you do not start with that integration, it's harder to get internal spaces to improve progressively, that is, I think what's key to what you're looking for is trying to dilute that border between that planned city and that neighborhood sector. Because also, in any case, it is also that sometimes the neighborhood begins to absorb some tissues of the planned or formal city, and they begin to affect them, that is, there are times when the neighborhood ex-

tends without you nodes, and there begins to be either a process of degradation of public spaces, or the issue of public transport linked to the accessibility of the neighborhood begins to absorb new spaces... ... The neighborhood originates in relation to a sector that offers it either conditions of employment, or accessibility, or service, for example, water, broken water, families who went to work wanted to live as close to their work as possible, are natural things, or even many cases, the origin of those neighborhoods has to do even with the construction processes, or housing polygons, or formal areas of the city ...

... the neighborhood is not an anomaly, or a strange thing that happened, but is part of a natural process of expansion and consolidation of the city.

In the case of Petare, the Metro certainly put it on the map because obviously, until the 70s the neighborhoods were like a hidden space. ... the popular sectors, Catia, Petare, anyway, all, is the Metro the first to put on the map those sectors, which until then were like invisible, that is, they were known to exist, but the city did not even look at them ... the point is that the Metro is somehow a trigger for this very important sector ... what you raise can be an interesting topic, which is perhaps more than choosing one sector or another, doing a study a little multiscalar, starting a little from that strip that is between the Urbina and Petare ... to which it must be integrated, if it did not actually raise it under the perspective that there are two sectors of the city, each with its strengths and weaknesses, is not that one is well, and the other is wrong, both have problems and opportunities, but above all it is that integration between the two is that you manage to solve the problems of one, or the needs of the other, so it is actually from integration, that you solve, because it is like working as a team, it is not to assume that I am the rich, that I am perfect, and you are the poor, and I will help you so that you are well, I believe that that vision, assistanceist is wrong ... it must be based on the idea of integrating to recognize the fragility of that border, while the risks that this entails, because in the end one wants to coexist

in depth, let us say correctly, because in the end it is the policy of the good neighbor that he must deprive. In that sense, in the study of the strip, I think everything that is the theme of the Metro comes in, with the possible new station, but also enter the new figures as the train cable that goes from the north to the south, but that was never finished, that was going to reach that station.

The new station that is planned where Makro is, is also a super complex terrain, almost the same size as the Petare redoma, with a large amount of parking,

there is an important ambulatory, and there are some sports areas. It is two interesting terrains, at least to analyze, what I would say to you is before you can choose one, try to analyze that territory at the urban level, understand the condition of the strip, the division that occurs at the territorial level and the condition of that edge that is greatly affected by the presence of infrastructure in operation.

The same Petare Metro station is a station monster, which is only a roof for a Metro exit, when that could be a market, in fact, Ignacio and I did a project at some point where we proposed to fill with commercial premises, on a second floor of the station, to relocate the people who sell in the environment, and really make the station, a kind of public market that allows to integrate transport with informal trade or exchange, because in the end it is the optimal point where people arriving will change trucks, buy something, solve a stagecoach, recharge the cell phone. These are everyday things that are normal. In Venezuela, unlike Milan or any Spanish city, it is that the vertical transfer problems were not solved, where you have the train, the commuter train, the Metro and the buses, that happens vertically, so that the public space is clean upstairs, here that happens horizontally, therefore, you get off the Metro to the van, or you go through informal trade, you walk at that point. Therefore, all public space ends up contaminated...

I believe that the issues end up being the same throughout that edge, you have an environmental issue in many cases, because there is a green strip also very abandoned, sectors that one could define public space because they are green, but it is a lie that they are public spaces because they are no man's land... public space has to do with the way individuals use it, places and frequency of use... the problem is certainly management, but there are also major urban design issues ... my recommendation on places is that you study that territory a little more generally. to what extent the relocation of informal traders works, we start from the premise that it can work, as long as you ensure that the transport variable is associated with relocation ... I think in the end if you analyze what we are talking about you will conclude that the problems are basically the same, mobility and transport, public space, issues related to the environment, in general terms, green areas, breaks, water systems ...

making projects a more comprehensively sustainable solution, as well as on the subject of activity, I think it is also important that it be included as transport-related opportunities, so that public transport transfer terminals are strong urban



centralities, where people find not only shops, but public services, urban facilities that allow to consolidate places that are associated with the idea of city ...

... I think they are projects as very interesting, because they seek to develop an architecture not only interesting because of its formal appearance, but because from an urban point of view they try to solve the problem of transport accessibility, generate public space in the city, generate commercial dynamics, which not only represent a service, but represent an opportunity to make sustainable projects, where the state does not have to take all the money to be able to build anything , but you can actually incorporate private investment from the beginning, for Metro station projects ...

The state has a role that is to plan, project and define the criteria for others to participate, but you don't have to leave it out because otherwise they are unsustainable, not only from an environmental point of view, but then they are unsustainable from an economic and even social point of view ...

AC:

What kind of activities should happen there? What kind of programme, such as what would be the main needs of the areas I should respond to?

FM:

I believe that there is a key that you should not forget, that it is important the effect of that doubt of yours, to privileged the open space to put an urban equipment, which is the possibility of both things happening simultaneously, thanks to a very important variable of Caracas and Petare, which is the topography...

AC:

... how the issue of community participation is handled in such projects as perhaps handled in that project, and how it could be handled in general.

FM:

In the case of the market, a job of more than a year from the time it began, a work was done to conceptualize, identify possible places, understanding that solving the Petare redoma involved an urban approach in general that by the issues of time itself, municipal management and resources, had to be resolved

by parties , then it was necessary to do a fundamental inventory job, of who were the vendors who make life in the environment of the redoma, how many positions they had, whether it was the mother, daughter, or grandmother, or was a single person. What kind of products did they sell, how could they be relocated? equal to the issue of transport concessionaires, what were the lines that worked in that sector, and that could be located at the same point, that is, if there is a strong job ... the south area is very served thanks to the Metro, while the northern area costs you much more and that is why it motivates the theme of cabletren ... there are studies at the urban level of those sectors, which determine a little the general needs in terms of equipment, deficit of public space, deficit of educational, cultural, recreational areas that I think those are topics that you could use under your argument, that since you can not necessarily make so many interventions within the fabric of the neighborhood community, I can try to compensate for that , let's say overdoing that edge to be able to cover all the needs of those spaces ... the relationship with the urbanization Terrazas del Avila, which is in the northern part, on the other side of the highway, linking with the Metropolitan University, because somehow there is a system of green spaces on the edge as neighborhood parks, even with the same University, that the University has interesting policies, integration with Petare, social level, as an institutional policy where sports courts are sometimes used by petare sports teams. it also has to do with the environmental issue that I was telling you at the beginning, and the opportunity to balance the quality of life by making use of those environmentally protected spaces, but very sub-used, National Parks, the green areas of the immediate environment, even those courts that the University has the willingness to share, I share it but well, it does very badly because obviously you do not have the mechanisms to establish direct relationships between them.

AC:

And the last one would be with regard to what would be the architectural characteristics for this to work?, because it struck me a lot that, talking about when the Petare Metro station was built, was more like a strategy at the time, 50 years ago to create barriers that people were there as little as possible from , let's say, eliminate the buhoneros, rather scare people away, because it was as seen as something dangerous, etcetera, because how could be the characteristics of a project that rather generates the opposite, rather for people to appropriate it, which I think is a super important issue, the issue of appropriation of spaces, that is like an appropriation of both parties , other than one side that appropri-

ates.

FM:

Of course, I think the vision of the 70s was perhaps a rather prophylactic vision, that is, architecture comes to cure the anomalies of the place. The neighborhood was a threat, it was a problem, it had to be solved, it had to be contained, it is certainly full of problems, how they are full, any of the other sectors of the city, but then stopped seeing it as an anomaly, but as a problem of a natural space, which has its needs that can be ordered ...

FM:

The elevator was not temporary, that was specifically even, and it was designed to stay, in fact, there are people who propose to knock it down, there are people who propose to take advantage of those spaces below and assume that it is no longer so much a high per se, it is like requalifying the public space to order it, so that there is room for sidewalks, step for the trader, space for vegetation, space even for housing, so that there are mourners in the surroundings of that space, it is not that in all parts of the city there may or should be housing, but there do have to be eyes on the public space that take care of it and that they keep an eye on it, so that it is more effective, so I think rather the policy what it has done is eradicate residential uses and strengthen the hyper-commercial vision in the urban environment, and therefore lets you see that sense of belonging a little land of all and no man's land, what we define a no place, which can be an airport or a train station, that everyone goes through there, but nobody hurts because it's like it's nobody's, it doesn't have a direct mourner, and I think that's something that has to be solved trying to raise, as is the direct integration of homes from the hull to the redoma, The theme of the metro cable above, that whole area that is very residential of the neighborhood and part of Petare. How did you get down there? There is a gigantic wall that prevents you from getting down, that is, I think that is finally part of the subject, and the linkage of public space will allow the house to have a greater presence of space, and one can understand it as a metropolitan square, but also on a neighborhood scale, where there may be a playground, that is, that it can be used as a multi-character square and is not only a metropolitan space.

AC:

Well perfect, I think we already cover all the points, thank you very much



## INTERVIEW TO DAVID GOUVERNEUR

He is an Architect graduated from the Simón Bolívar University of Caracas, Venezuela, with a Master's degree in Urban Design from Harvard University. 40 years of teaching and professional experience in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and urban planning. He has been Coordinator of the Architecture Career at the Simón Bolívar University, Co-founder and Coordinator of the Master of Design of the Metropolitan University of Caracas, where he also directed the Institute of Urban Design for Mayors. He was National Director of Urban Planning of Venezuela. He is currently Associate Professor/Professional Practitioner in the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Its main areas of research, teaching and professional exercise focus on sustainable planning of the informal city, new centralities, improvement of historic centers and rehabilitation of areas affected by natural phenomena. His latest book, published by Routledge in Oxford, United Kingdom, is entitled "Planning and Design of New Informal Settlements: Shaping the Self-Constructed City", and its updated and expanded version in Spanish: Design of New Informal Settlements, published by the University of La Salle in Bogota/EAFIT University of Medellin, Colombia.

DG:

Comparing Medellin's experience, which has been so successful and world-leading, with Caracas, they had as many problems of violence as ours, with a morphology very similar to Caracas; equally questioned, of urban disconnection.

Medellin transformed the neighborhoods, without distorting the neighborhood, displacing a lot of people, without radically altering what it is, but always helping and integrating it.

It was not done abruptly, but you always had an overview. Initial pilot operations were always selected, starting the transformation and very clearly study-

ing how changes are being geared.

The transformations could be seen for up to 10 years, but the first operation that was done was feasible and achieved credibility. The community realized that the initiative was good, well-founded, there was honesty, trust was gained between the operation and the people and then people joined in, the neighborhood was consolidating.

But to start generating a vision, you need to start extending those relationships, you need connectivity between the edge and the interior, without fear. Analyze how much neighborhood should be affected with relocation operations. And this relocation has to happen right there, they have to happen in the neighborhood.

The seasons in Caracas are even prettier, simpler. But there is no impact on the neighborhood, where the stations are poorly located, the stations are out of demand, they have no connectivity. Where the relationships between the station and the rest of the structure do not exist. And now, moreover, they began to build new homes by destroying houses that need not be destroyed.

DG:

It's good to read you my book: planning and Design for New settlements. Because that's where those two chapters are described. The chapter of Medellin, Caracas, which compares what was done in Caracas, what was done in Medellin and why Medellin was successful. The method of pilot operations, all actions are concatenated to have greater impact.

The difference between the Medellin project and your project is that in Medellin they sought to work only inside, but instead you, by intervening the edge is positively affecting not only the edge but also the interior... The best example of this is the Moravian neighborhood, which does work the union between the two, you should use it as a reference because it is the Transfer between the two great areas of formal and informal Urbanism.

In that neighborhood they put a very beautiful Cultural Center, a walk around the ravine, decontaminated the landfill, relocated people because there were people living on the filling itself.

Then he did not mix the formal and the informal, he would spread and get into

the neighborhood. They're thinking systemically, and it took time. Look at the first operation where they integrated the Explora Center to the subway to the Botanical Garden and the planetarium was done about 10 years ago. A few years later the Moravian Cultural Center was made. But the decontamination of the dump was completed just three years ago. That is now being implemented, that is, it means that this whole systemic issue has been in place for approximately 12 years.

So that's my message, obviously, on the nodes you have, whether it's Petare's, or the other are very complicated in itself, but I think you should have a systemic vision. Systemic in that it is seen beyond the node, systemic in terms of the different systems of mobility of macroeconomics, environmental issues, water sanitation or socialization. One is sowing a support system that has the ability to create initial conditions, but that that support system is transformed, it is dynamic, even the same people are transforming them, that you do not design everything. So those are the keys I could give you.

Now between one node and the other, the node where there is a train cable station and where the Urbina is linked to the neighborhood the first thing I would try is to see the systemic vision of this entire Petare relationship, how it is linked to the Urbina and the 2 nodes and the Set. Thinking that this is a thing that is growing, that it is transforming, that has an impact.

AC:

What I think, as we say as a hypothesis, is this that I called urban core, because it is a point of influx of very important people in the city, not only for the people of the area, but at the metropolitan level, which is a point of influx that will not only give you all the services of the neighborhood, but at the same time create as a new value of the place, both for themselves and at the city level. So it was by connecting all this this urban core,

DG:

how much is local and that is both systemic, sites that are more nodes, which are points of centrality, which are points where of great dynamics, are points of confluence, of great tension and, almost as points nodal points, where urban forces converge, ok, where roses occur, where exchange occurs, that have the greatest chance of having an impact in terms of the interconnection between

the formal and the informal?

In being mechanisms of socialization of the group that are not usually touched, that is, they do not interact, where there is the possibility of making transfers, for example, economic and creating economic values. And obviously what you're trying to improve the living conditions and dignity and identity of the whole Sector, and then act on them. If you present it that way, the idea of the node takes effect, but those points that have the potential to be triggers and achieve those goals, those points have the possibility of influencing greater territory

AC:

With regard to level of architectural strategy or project design, but what macro we will say. Do they have some characteristics such as punctuality to generate this as integration or influx of people, what would be like the architectural characteristics to the architectural strategies of these places? Generally speaking.

DG:

I think the first thing you need is the value of public space, the design of public space. It is the quality of that public space that allows flow, interconnections, and especially in a territory that you do not have public space.

This public space, can be designed very elastic that allows the uses to be very varied, according to the time, according to the week, according to the day, of the night, that people can modify

it. So these are elements that you have to evaluate. And then there are certain uses that are tricks, for example: If you have a public space that is at the Gateway to the stations.

Obviously there is nothing more to help socialize, mix groups, different groups, social background, than transport; because everybody wants to get on the subway.

A market that allows you to access products, those above and below that is a sign of connectivity, of socialization.

Petare station is another intermediate node of the subway, that's working on the

edge, and by the way, all this cable subway that was made there, without any vision of public space

Those poor people in the neighborhood, after the cable subway comes out, it's time to get on like a goat to the tip of this hill.

Look, this is an ideal place, if it's not for a new cable meter, it's an ideal place for a escalator system, as was done in Medellin, with the outside stairs. They were placed where things were not in order, then the sewers were fixed, flooding was avoided and the stair system was built and that built the neighborhood. Now, it is the most visited site of tourists, that is, it is the most visited neighborhood of tourists all over the world.

AC:

Ideally, the 3-point intervention would be possible, but the project is super extensive. And a question regarding the program of such places that, for example, in Medellin was given as a fairly specific approach to culture, education, the theme of libraries and all this. Would it be more favourable if it were as a focal theme that was maximized or perhaps rather, to meet different needs of different kinds in general?

DG:

Again, the activity depends on the local metropolitan impact you want. and the scale again in that central node and that is then linked to the neighborhood, or if you are working on some equipment, where you are working at the level of amphitheater market, the Cultural Center, sports areas, that you can start to imbricate one thing with the other.

AC: Perfect and there is another topic that is a little, complicated from here and that is quite important that is the issue of citizen participation in this type of projects because of the obviously subject of appropriation, acceptance.

DG:

Analyze these elements:

What does the community need?



What are those elements that the community values?

Is it the economy, is it the sport? Is it religion?

## **INTERVIEW TO KATIUSKA CAMARGO**



is a community activist born in Petare, in San Blas neighborhood. She is the creator of the Uniting wills movement dedicated to the dignity and recovery of spaces. She is also part of the Venezuela Democracy, Society and Development movement since May 2017. Since then, she has been connecting with various organization of social action, always seeking to transform spaces with the participation of people.

“In our neighborhood we have been doing a work to dignify public spaces. Looking precisely for that integration of the neighborhood into the city because we are part of the city, but we are always segregated. Because we marginalize ourselves or the society that lives in urbanization marginalizes us, because they see us as chaos. There is an incredibly strong stigma with the neighborhood issue”

“In our neighborhood we don’t really have many recreational areas. For example, I am from the San Blas de Petare neighborhood and there we only have a field that is quite large, but it is in structural abandonment”

“I think that the best reference of what a public space is, is Parque del Este, which has no stigmatization, there are no rights reserved for the people, everyone can go in there. There you can go for a run, exercise, have a picnic, take the children. It is an integration park, because people from the neighborhood and people from the urbanization converge there”

“Our most important public space is the San Blas field -La Cancha de San Blas-, better known as the Matapalo field -La cancha de Matapalo-. Located on the main street, it is the epicenter of activities in my neighborhood, because it is the only place that belongs to the entire community... There we carry out activities such as: Church events, grape harvest, sports, a soccer school, concerts with

neighborhood artists, dance”

“There was a concert that we organized called El barrio de ciudad and it was an exceptionally beautiful thing because for the first time the community felt part of something. Something that was not a political or religious event, it was a cultural event. Everyone was invited, there was no exclusion”

“You have to prepare the community so that they are the ones who take care of the effort that is put into improving the neighborhood’s infrastructure... You must work as a team because the community is for everyone... Because that is the problem: If there are no rules of use in a public space, it becomes chaos... If you do not leave a guarantor of the community to protect the space it will be lost”

“That is why I created my project, called Uniendo Voluntades, to develop a collaborative work to recover spaces that were taken from us by anarchy”

“We did a job of encouraging young people to empower themselves on the court and that’s how they began to understand the importance of the only public space we have... That is why since this dynamic began, where young people and children started to rebuild that environment, all this began to give a different meaning to the space, the community began to realize that they should join the movement and that is why they have improved their behavior within the space, even at the drug matter...”

“...In sense of crime, in my neighborhood it dropped by 80% since there is a movement to rebuild the neighborhood, since the kids are doing activities, since the children participate in cultural events... This dynamic has made young people in the neighborhood see the opportunity to do something other than commit a crime or take drugs or drink alcohol...”

“...We have super interesting stories, as you can find in the Stories that beat portal, for example the story of Kadosiz. A young man who was on the way of becoming a criminal, who carried weapons and took drugs. And it turns out that he is a tremendous freestyle singer. He is one of our greatest achievements, because he is even motivating other young men who were in his gang to get out of that crazy world and join the community activities. And it’s nice because when they join, they feel important... This movement manages to spread positivity”

“The concept of fear of the neighborhood, at least in mine, has dropped a lot, almost every week we have guests to the neighborhood: national and international journalists, photographers... In addition, there is a nice art route, which we have developed with artists such as Dago, Hugo Carrasco, Jesús Briseño, Diego Cárdenas... Many artists who have done their work voluntarily, without charging for their work. Simply because they want to support what we are doing”

“What is overwhelming the most right now is the health, food and obviously education issue. We need study centers, places with internet where children can study”

“We do not have green spaces, the infrastructure of the ranches is terrible, there are houses that are in total chaos, which put people’s lives at risk... And as for the roads we are also in need, there is no pedestrian line, we do not have traffic regulations, there are no traffic lights, there is no signaling, there is no sidewalk”

“We have four hospitals in the center of Petare. But the hospital structural situation is profoundly serious, nothing works there nor water, nor electricity, nor medical supplies”

“There is also disinformation situation in which we live. Because since there is no information within the neighborhood, people do not really know what is happening in the country... Here you no longer read the newspaper, you no longer have information on television about anything objective, it is pure news of political partisanship”

“The neighborhood is very chaotic, but the one thing that I say is incredibly positive is the human capital, there is a lot of talent in the neighborhood. Everything positive in the neighborhood resides in the human quality, the human warmth, the solidarity in the neighborhood is impressive, everyone wants to help. While in the city every person is locked in their little glass box and no one knows other people’s problems... What I would take from the neighborhood to the city is that humanity, we are all aware of what happens to our neighbor. Unlike urbanizations where often people do not even know who their neighbors are, they do not know each other”

“The Petare station was obviously built according to the population density of

that time. Population growth was not anticipated... So these stations became insufficient, people have to wait up to 1 hour to get into one of the metro booths. The Petare metro station is too small for the amount of people...”

“The Petare station is a mess, but it is still the best alternative to move around”

“I always tell people, if we all take a little piece of Venezuela, because I know that I cannot change Venezuela all by my own. But if we all take a little piece of Venezuela and help transform it and we spread positivity; Venezuela would come out of this chaos very qu

## **INTERVIEW TO VICENTE PAEZ**



Community leader

Coordinator of social programs in Petare social

Political leader

Change agent.

He runs three dining places where 300 children are served daily in Petare communities.

Coordinator of a social action program called “Solidarity with you” that brings nutritional and educational care to senior citizens in popular areas of Petare

AC:

The first question is regarding public space, and what do you consider to be the main types of public spaces that exist in Petare, or even specify what their characteristics are? How is it used, at what time is it used, who uses it?

VP:

In Petare, a fairly large population, is a parish of the municipality Sucre, where specifically in the parish Petare there are more than 1500 neighborhoods, and more than 40 urbanizations; as for the public spaces that are in Petare, which are very few, by the way, we only have in the center of Petare, some squares, approximately one in the petare redoma, which is a newly recovered public space, then we have one in the colonial center of Petare, in the colonial area, which is a fairly wide square, those are the 2 public spaces in the center of Petare , but if we go to what is the central area of Petare, we have a sports center in the sector of Mesuca, which is carried by the mayor of the municipality Sucre, which is completely neglected, in that sports center in other years an artificial grass stadium was created for football fields, and also basketball courts, were also made there

, in that public space, 2 pools behind the station, which are completely abandoned. We also have a vertical gymnasium, which was built in the management passed by Mayor Carlos Ozcariz, where that vertical gym has approximately 4 floors to do sport, then we go to the area of La Urbina, in the area of La Urbina in Petare, we have 2 public parks, those public parks that are carried by the community, by the communal councils of the sector; the neighbors are the ones who practically do self-management to maintain these 2 public parks that are in this Community of La Urbina, if we go to the popular areas, towards the neighborhoods, in the neighborhoods there are many sports courts, but these sports courts are maintenance-free, hardly athletes who practice basketball, who practice Volleyball, and who practice futsal, they can maintain these facilities, since many times what fences, archeries and basketball hoops are, are often damaged and there are no one, or public institution that can repair them. As public spaces we have these sports courts, and there is also a kind of boulevard where people go to meet or people too, many times on these boulevards you can perform some board game, such as chess or dominoes.

AC:

Okay, great. Perfect thank you very much

Now, on the subject of equipment.

What do you think are the most necessary equipment?

Throughout the area I know that there are 4 hospitals, for example, but consider, that more hospitals, or more schools, or buildings of a cultural nature in general, would need the equipment that a city has. Which ones are most needed in the area?

VP:

Yes, in the area, specifically in Petare, more Lyceums are needed than they can receive from the boys who are going to study basic and diversified. Specifically, many people in popular areas have nowhere to go to study, because schools are the few public schools that are municipal and stately, and national, do not have the ability to be discharged by student population, and it is an infrastructure that is very necessary for boys to finish their final year of high school. In another area it also takes a lot of cultural space, since there is only one theater in the colonial zone, and that theater only houses 200 people, that theater is called

César Rengifo, in the Municipal Theater that is located in the colonial area of Petare, and more spaces like this would be needed throughout the parish Petare, so that the cultural groups, which are many, the dance group, the folklore group, theatrical groups, groups of singers, rapper movement, but also dance and dance academies, could perform their artistic areas. And, not only could we reduce it to a construction of theaters, but also to the adequacy of spaces on the street, on boulevards, in squares, where there may be as a kind of amphitheatre where you can perform cultural street activities or street theaters, that is one of the priorities, which is what we need in Petare.

In another area, it would be the remodeling of the courts, recovery of sports courts, I am one of those who thinks that the courts can be maintained by self-management, if sports teams are organized through civil associations, creating self-financing from the street, that the same athletes are the first mourners and the first caregivers of those spaces.

AC:

Sure, Perfect.

What do you think are the main problems that Petare currently has, and what do you think are the most positive aspect? On the one hand, the most positive thing. On the other hand, the most negative thing, inside Petare.

VP:

Petare's main positive strength is its people. Here we have many entrepreneurial people, many fighting people who are willing to continue working, it is the first thing we have in our parish Petare, which next year will turn 400 years of Foundation; in Petare also good the climate, its geography, that we have a city where all the parishes, or all the neighborhoods converge as a meeting point, to be able to reach a neighborhood or to be able to reach an urbanization, for example, to reach Palo Verde, you have to go through Petare, to be able to go to Barrio Unión, to be able to go also to what is José Félix Ribas, or to go to the northern neighborhoods, you have to pass first through Petare, then Petare is a center where many people converge, it is a meeting point in itself.

From the negative aspects that I can highlight in Petare, firstly the lack of public policies that lead to having a more human Petare in the aspect of transport



stops, where people can arrive and climb worthily, or wait worthily for a transport unit, which is often traumatic because there are no adequate transport units, the stops are like invisible, the stop is the people in your mind, because there is no roof stop, with perhaps seats for pedestrians to wait for the vehicle, forget about transportation while another arrives. Another negative aspect that you see in Petare, is the lack of white water, or drinking water by pipe, which makes us have a completely dry city and, above all, the most popular areas, are affected by the issue of water. If we are in the pandemic now you can not play sports, but the sports courts of our neighborhoods do not have space where athletes, since they finish their sports days, can be cleaned or can, for example, wash their hands, and the washers do not work, this is lack of the sports space. But this is also joined by the lack of drinking water in meals. In another area that I place as a negative aspect in Petare, there is also the problem of crime. Crime causes many young people to stay away from the squares, for many young people to walk away from the courts. Because they can no longer play sports for gang encounters, or because many times some young people while in some square, are assaulted, or take away their mortars, their bulk, and are one way or another affected by the crime situation in Petare.

AC:

Perfect, then with regard to the Petare Metro station, I would like to know what you would consider to be, that is, how the operation is, according to your opinion of those people, that is, does it work well? with regard to people flows, urban design to the surrounding area, the architectural design of the station, specifically, what would perhaps be the aspects that could be improved in such a Metro station?

VP:

Yes, the Petare Metro station is not the same Petare Metro station of the 1980s, nor the 1970s, nor in the early 2000s. About 10 years ago came a deterioration of the Metro station. The first thing that one finds when he arrives at the Metro station, not only petare, but Palo Verde, the Two Roads, Los Cortijos and La California, which are the Metro stations of our municipality, it is possible that the escalators, either uphill, or downhill, do not work, this mainly affects the elderly, the elderly, this affects people who are disabled, if there is a person who goes alone or in a wheelchair, he has to wait for someone, to lower it with the goodwill of the pedestrian or the neighbor, who is on the street, or if not, has to

wait by signaling in the entrance chamber for some Metro operator to change course to escalators.

That happens very little now, because most escalators at the Metro station, although about a year ago an investment was made, are not working, which affects the elderly, the disabled and also children, because it affects this situation. Another situation that we get at the Petare Metro station, is that there is no longer an internal surveillance as there was before, and many times they have happened in their stairs or in their corridors, thefts, so all people who ride at a Metro station, or who ride in a wagon, have to be aware of their belongings, pending the people next to you, it's not going to be that they're going to take your phone, or wallet, out of your purse or pocket. Also the corridors of the Metro stations, are not illuminated enough for pedestrians to make their way, especially the elderly, are the ones who suffer the most from this situation because they suffer from eye problems, and this makes people have difficulty, because they already have visual problems, and not only the most adult people, but also young people who have some visual pathology that suffer some problems also from sight.

AC:

Ok perfect, with respect also to the issue of mobility. I would also like to know your opinion on the subject of cabletren, how do the stations work, how does this means of transport work? The theme of accessibility, towards the station, connectivity with all communities, which are all along the cabletren path.

VP:

Yes, well, we have 2 stations, there is the cable and there is the cable subway, the train cable is the one that goes to the neighborhoods of Petare north, makes a link with what are the neighborhoods of homeland dates: October 12, April 19, first of November, also Vista Alegre, Sucre and July 5, the people of the train cable make this link, however, to get up from the Metro station to the cable station, there is a fairly long route, which in its beginnings was done either in an elevator, or in escalators, which are not working. This cable systemtron if it is truly illuminated because it is a newer system, but climbing escalators that are strong to climb, and to reach the platform of the cabletren, is not working, like the elevators, you can imagine that a disabled person, in wheelchair or a person on crutches, cannot climb to this station.

AC:

Of course, it's complicated, Ok the last question you mentioned before, was regarding sports equipment, that there are some equipment that, as you said, are in bad shape. But what would be the kind of equipment that is most needed? If, for example, there aren't as many baseball courts, or maybe basketball, or more pools, what would be the most urgent to build? The ones you need most would do?

VP:

Yes, right now it would be necessary to remodel several sports courts, those multiple courts where basketball, football and futsal are made, and you do volleyball, but we also need to have at least 2 vertical gyms, where young people could do the sport and its specialties. To cover a little part of what is the demand of young people, who do more than any improvised exercises with weights, which are another type of sport, which also has to be directed. We see many times in the neighborhoods how young people improvise a kind of street gym, but that does not have a follow-up to a specialist to accompany them. Young people learn as someone else learns in this discipline to exercise in this part, but it would also be necessary to recover one space, two spaces that we have to allocate for swimming lessons. This would also need to be recovered. And, not only the construction, but also the endowment, because one of the things that is most complicated is that the boys in the sports space, on their court have the value of play, the basketball or that also has the tights for the archeries, for the basketball hoops, or for the volleyball game. Often sports endowment is complicated, and sometimes we see young people doing sports tournaments, but with balls that are not completely suitable or enabled to make a good sporting day. For this young people often go to self-management, among them often collect money, or often pay an arbitration that is expensive, within the community, for which they too organize through the collection of money, through some pot, or some special day for sports endowment, which is very important. We now have canteens where we feed approximately 400 children, and in those canteens there are sports spaces, but they can not play sports, first because of the theme of the pandemic, but sure they cannot play sports because young people do not have a basketball, to be able to do their activity, and it is often frustrating because the boys are young. And even though we have pandemic, they need to have a space to do it.

AC:

That's right. Well, I think that would be it. Thank you so much for your time.

VP:

Completely to order, any other opinion you need, or, if you need later some photographs of our sports courts, the outer space, I am at the command to send you.

AC:

Great, a million thanks till later. Thank you.

## 3.2

# Study of the area



URBANIZACIONES



LAND USE

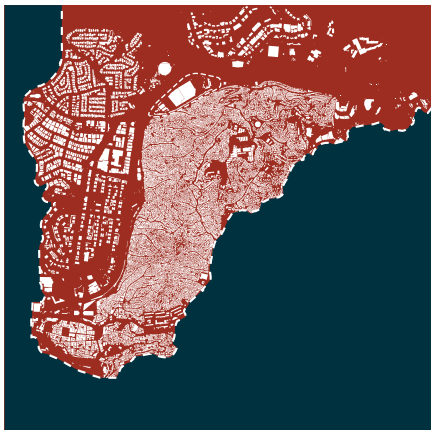
URBAN TISSUE



BLOCKS

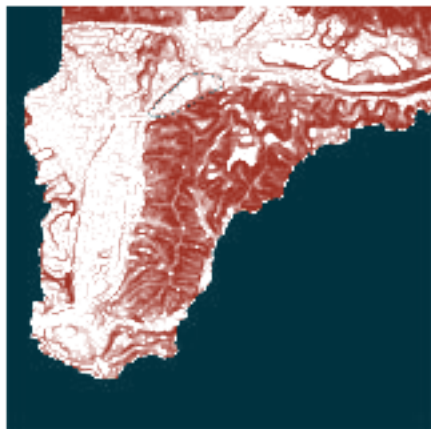


BUILDINGS

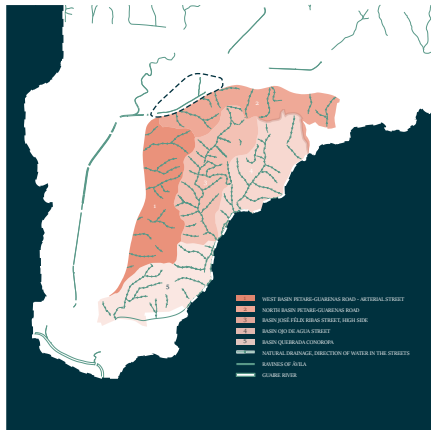


VOID

GEOGRAPHY



TOPOGRAPHY



HYDROGRAPHY



VEGETATION



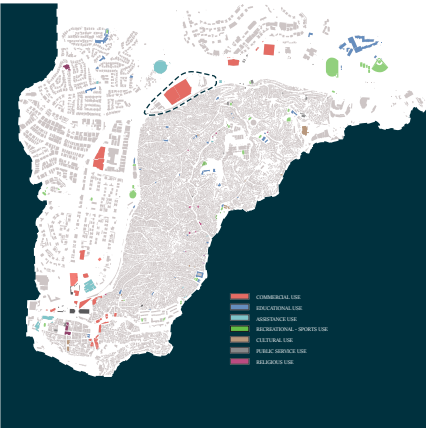
THE THREE MAIN ISSUES



MOBILITY



PUBLIC SPACES



SERVICES

# 4 The strategy

## **INTEGRATION THROUGH URBAN FOCUS**

## 4.1

# The aim: heal the urban fracture

Understanding slums as an important part of the city that struggles due to segregation, the aim of the investigation is to generate integration. The slum problem was not addressed at the time so now it is out of control. As the architect David Gouverneur exposed: *“We are in urgent need of new tools to deal with the processes of informal urbanization. It is mandatory to understanding informality not only as a marginal phenomenon but as mainstream city making and an integral part of hybrid cities in which the formal and the informal can co-exist and interact in a beneficial manner.”* The city thought as a whole, inserting the slum into the planned tissue aiming for the homologation of urban life conditions.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, the verb “to integrate” means *“to combine two or more things in order to become more effective. To end the separation of people by race, sex, national origin, etc., in an organization or in society. To become part of a group of people.”* Therefore, applying the term to the context of the study, it refers to the combination of the planned and the spontaneous into the urban dynamic to become a more effective city, a process by which there is no more separation so the inhabitants of the slums experience a sense of belonging to the urban context, exercising equal rights to the rest of the citizens. Urban Think Tank remarks: *“A smart city is a syncretic city - one that integrates its conflicting forces to generate a productive coexistence without giving in to a homogenizing tendency.”* Pg110 This process does not imply the elimination of diversity, but in the contrary it recognizes individual identity by building an environment of respect towards cultural diversity.

For the inhabitants of slums, the city is very distant. The solution to this issue cannot be their displacement intending to bring them closer to the services of the city, since they have invested much time and effort consolidating their home and their social structure. To move them from their neighborhoods means that they would have to start from scratch all over again, when they were already ahead on the path. The reasoning must be the opposite, creating a strategy that brings the benefits of the city closer to them, improving mobility and accessibility with the rest of the city.

The objective is to dissolve the barrier through an urban project that links the separated parts by inserting a common meeting place for interaction. Create a transition space that encourages connections in the city understanding the dynamics and characteristics of both sides to maintain their values and join them harmoniously, an environment of spatial, social and cultural integration. An intervention that deeply connects the slum into the urban system, because a linked city improves living conditions by maximizing opportunities to relate with others, proximity to urban infrastructure, diversity and freedom.

The purpose of integration carries along several objectives:

1. **Efficient connectivity:** sew the urban tissues to optimize mobility and accessibility, acting in all different levels: vehicular, public transportation, and most importantly the pedestrian.
2. **Void as a meeting place:** introduce public spaces and green areas as transition between the two realities, by using the void as point of relation and a place for encounter.
3. **Mix use metropolitan services:** provide diverse services and amenities needed in the area, with a metropolitan scale in order for it to work as a point of attraction not only for local people, but also for citizens from different areas of the city.
4. **Economic revitalization:** give value to the place by activating the economy, creating new job opportunities for local people, so they no longer have to transit long distances every day, and providing space for informal commerce, very present and important in slums.
5. **Integral transformation:** in order to achieve a real integration, it is crucial to produce social and physical impact simultaneously.
6. **Master plan:** because of the complexity of the issue, it is important to design a global plan that guides the decisions. A long-term intervention with punctual operations, planned according to phases over time.
7. **Sense of belonging:** establish a deep connection so that the people living in slums develop a sense of belonging to the city, always recognizing the local identity.
8. **Access recognition:** recognize the entrance to the slum, create an entrance that makes people feel welcome. The will of integration is contradicted by the portals that give access to the slums, since they act as a barrier separating the inside from the outside.
9. **Promote culture and education:** create places of culture and education, since they are the clue for equity and inclusion, they might as well reduce violence.
10. **Respond to local needs:** understand deeply the context in order to solve the problems of the area.



## 4.2

# An advantageous outcome

The “International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning”, approved and published by UNHABITAT in 2015, establishes the bases for “Urban and Territorial Planning and Social Development”, some of which evidence the importance of the integration of slums:

- *“Promote social and spatial integration and inclusion, particularly through improved access to all parts of the city and territory, as every inhabitant (including migrant workers and displaced people) should have the ability to enjoy the city, its socioeconomic opportunities, urban services and public spaces, and to contribute to its social and cultural life.”*
- *“Provide good quality public spaces, improve and revitalize existing public spaces, such as squares, streets, green areas and sports complexes, and make them safer, in line with the needs and perspectives of women, men, girls and boys, and fully accessible to all. It should be taken into account that those places constitute an indispensable platform for vibrant and inclusive city life and are a basis for infrastructure development;”*
- *“Ensure that low-income areas, informal settlements and slums are upgraded and integrated into the urban fabric with the minimum disruption of livelihoods, displacements and relocations. Affected groups should be compensated at the appropriate level when disruption is unavoidable;”*

As exposed in these guidelines, integration is indispensable for social development, it brings with it several positive consequences. The city must be understood as a whole, mixed, diverse, containing the different identities, and this includes the slums. It is necessary to connect the fractured system of the city, where the disaggregation of the parts is affecting not only its functional development, but also the living conditions of a large group of the population. As citizens of the same city people should have the same rights, and thus, the same accessibility and opportunities

Integrating slums to the rest of the city is a political action that recognizes them and gives them importance. It is a demonstration of acceptance, a way to remind citizens that these areas of the city exist and are relevant. Slums need recognition from the outside, but also from the inside. It is a democratic act that promotes freedom and equality.

*“The performance of democratic roles is limited or constrained by such factors as availability of public spaces for democratic behavior, their design and the changing nature of the ownership of spaces. Design enables democratic performance by enhancing or limiting democratic values and behavior; good urban design becomes a condition for democracy. Certain kinds of spaces encourage encounters and others not (Gieryn 2002); proximity inspires interaction and the development of community; proximity is a condition for social formations (Buchli 2013). Walls present barriers for expression of rights and freedom, they limit certain actions and facilitate small range of other actions; the removal of physical walls makes people put up psychological and communicative barriers. Urban artefacts encourage encounters and ‘breaks’ by making people stop, sit and take in their surroundings (Sennett 2002). Thus, space is not a neutral, passive and inert backstage of political actions; it rather has an impact on political efficacy by virtue of physically preventing or mandating certain actions, encouraging certain kinds of behaviors rather than others and triggering a sense of identification or recognition.” (Yaneva, 2017: 29)*

There are many positive implications in the integration from the urban point of view, but also as a factor to promote a social change towards coexistence and interaction. It does not mean erasing the differences and trying to make them equal, but rather enhancing the identity of each one by contrasting them directly at a meeting point. It is a transformation that seeks a less violent and fairer city, by the equalization of life conditions.

## URBAN BENEFITS

The city is a system that needs to be connected in order to function properly. The integration of its parts carries positives impacts that are crucial for its development. Improving accessibility and mobility is one of the main aspects of integration, since it brings people close to the city enhancing efficiency and opportunities. Moreover, using the void as a public space to relate the parts, provides an important environment for encounter that slums lack. Integration is a strategy to achieve a unified city, and thus offer city rights to all.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The revitalization of the economy is an important step in the progression of the slum, since, as residential settlements, are economically dependent on the rest of the city. Most of the habitants must spend plenty of time to arrive to their jobs. Integration shortens the distance by improving mobility, connecting people to their jobs and the needed services, but also welcoming people from the outside, activating the internal economy of the slum and creating job opportunities.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS

The social impact is the most relevant one, due to the positive effect integration can produce in people's life and behavior. It motivates feelings of dignity, identity, respect and security among citizens. People are no longer isolated, apart from urban dynamics, stimulating the sense of belonging to the city. It can generate substantial changes in the quality of life of the inhabitants because of the physical improvements of the environment, and because of the changes that occurs in people's behavior. The removal of the barrier promotes interaction among different communities and diminishes the differences between them, bringing with it the reduction of segregation and violence. Accordingly, people's living conditions will improve as they are recognized as an integral part of urban life and are given their right to the city.

### 3.3

## An urban focus as the linking strategy

Following the premise of the value of integration, it is proposed to inhabit the gap, with the purpose of replacing the boundary with a new active node for citizen encounter. In order to explain the approach, it is necessary to first clarify the terminology. According to the Cambridge dictionary, the word “focus” means *“The main or central point of something, especially of attention or interest. The point where waves of light or sound that are moving towards each other meet. To adjust something in order to see more clearly. The central or most important thing for a company or organization. The ability to give all your attention, time, and energy to a particular activity.”* On the other hand, the Oxford dictionary states: *“To give attention, effort, etc. to one particular subject, situation or person rather than another. To adapt or be changed so that things can be seen clearly; to change something so that you can see things clearly.”* And the Merriam webster dictionary defines it as *“A center of activity, attraction, or attention. A point of concentration. A state or condition permitting clear perception or understanding. Adjustment for distinct vision. The area that may be seen distinctly or resolved into a clear image. To concentrate attention or effort.”* All these listed definitions give a clear understanding of the intention behind the word “focus”. Along these lines, the term “urban focus” refers to a particular area of the city that acts as pole of attraction, becoming a place of concentration of activities where people meet. An activator of local economy. A center that functions as a revitalization factor bringing interest and attention, so it can now be seen and recognized, giving life to its surroundings.

*“Informal settlements cannot be considered a marginal urban condition, but rather the mainstream of the dynamic forms of complex urban ecologies that are shaping highly populated cities of the developing world. The goal is to tap into this logic, to tap its inner forces and to foster a better performance of the system.” (Landscape Architecture Foundation, 2018)*

## INTEGRATION MEDIATOR

The urban focus works as an integration mediator. Behaving as a point of relation and interaction, it performs as a link for social and urban integration. Since small and medium scale interventions do not deeply join, the intention is to develop a global project, a metropolitan scale not sporadic strategy that is able to produce substantial urban changes. Available for the population of the entire city, including all different social classes, so it is capable of captivating diverse people from different areas creating an environment of synergy and cultural interchange.

*“The radical transformations in the neighborhoods of Río de Janeiro, Bogotá, and Medellín, relating to safety, civic activities, and infrastructural amenities, as a result of urban and architectural interventions and good managerial practices, began to attract non-residents to these areas, changing formal area residents’ perception of informal areas. In a similar manner, residents of the improved informal settlements began enjoying better living conditions and developed a sense of pride for what had been accomplished. A paradigm shift was taking place in these challenged districts, leading to an appreciation and acceptance of the “other city” by the formal sector, helping to produce a hybrid urban system with shared values in both the formal and the informal sectors.” (Gouverneur, 2015: 6)*

Some of the strategies used in the urban focus to promote integration are:

- Incorporate the public transportation system in the project so it connects with the rest of the city
- Include metropolitan scale services that might attract a great number of people from different areas
- Remove the existing physical barriers by joining the parts
- Penetrate the slum in order to achieve a deep integration

## SLUMS’ RECOGNITION

The proposition is to use this integration strategy to recognize slums and connect them to the rest of the city. Revert their condition of isolated periphery by introducing a new social, cultural and economic center that will evidence their importance as a significant component of the city. As the architecture office Urban Think Tank mention when explaining one of their projects: “Urban poverty is often perpetuated because it exists on the margins of cities – either geographically or within popular consciousness. But architecture and urban design have the potential to redistribute resources and draw attention to neglected zones. [...] By transplanting public facilities into an underserved community and providing incentives for a diverse population to use the programs and amenities on offer, the project seeks to catalyze a more egalitarian future for the city as a whole.” (Urban Think Tank, 2007). The objective is to address attention and interest to the slums by creating a dynamic place that provides services, amenities and recreation areas.



## INHABIT THE GAP

The gap can perform as an available void suitable for intervention site. As previously mention, slums have a dense urban tissue, its compactness leaves reduced and limited empty land. Vacant areas are insufficient hindering the implantation of big magnitude projects. Regarding the retroactive upgrading in already-consolidated informal settlements, the architect David Gouverneur expressed:

*“One reason for the difficulty of this approach is the degree of consolidation and the tightness of the urban fabric in the majority of these settlements.*

*Such improvement operations may be considered a sort of corrective surgery. In order to improve connectivity, provide infrastructure and community services, create a system of open spaces, and relocate residents from inappropriate locations (due to from geological instability, risk of flooding, locations under power lines or above gas lines, etc.), you need to have adequate space. Part of the existing fabric has to be carved-out—deleted—to make room for introducing the new components that will induce these corrective changes.*

*This has to be done without disrupting the existing fabric, and with the approval of the residents that will need to be relocated. There are also limitations as to the extent of the transformations. Let’s say that the informal settlements have grown into very large urban conglomerates—which is the case in many developing cities—where the informal tissue houses millions of inhabitants. A conglomeration of this magnitude would require some components and systems that operate not a local scale, but at metropolitan and regional scales that are currently not included in the informal city due to their size (i.e., large markets, manufacturing areas, technical schools, sport facilities, transportation nodes, recycling plants, cemeteries).” (Constante, 2019 ).*

Understanding the complications implied in massive interventions inside the slum, concerning the availability of space and the eviction of affected families, and aware of the amount and scale of services needed, the proposal consists in using the gap at the edge of the slum to have an spacious area and evade the destruction of the existent communities. “Using the territory between the formal and informal as a new point of contact further redefines sustainability as a more inclusive endeavor.” (Lepik, 2015: 111) This strategic location is also beneficial for the accessibility, as it is in a middle point between the slum and the surrounding neighborhoods it can be easily connected with the rest of the city.

## MORE THAN SELF-CONSTRUCTION

The intervention aims to provide the spaces and services that slums inhabitants are not able to build on their own. Despite the difficulties, people living in spontaneous settlements are capable of gradually building their dwelling. But they do not have the capacity to build the infrastructure, the services, the public spaces, it escapes their possibilities and it should not be their responsibility, since it is the task of the government and the public sector to provide the basic urban structure. *“Housing is not the problem. Although the resources of self-constructed shelters may vary greatly between different countries and within the same contexts, people have the ability to gradually construct their dwellings. The central problem is rather the lack of appropriate habitats where these shelters have a better chance to evolve as part of a healthy and robust system”* (Landscape Architecture Foundation, 2018). It is necessary to consolidate the place by providing them with what they cannot achieve, creating a healthy environment with accessibility to the different areas and services required for having acceptable life conditions.

## DYNAMIZATION OF URBAN ECONOMIES

The procedure propels a dynamization of the urban economies. An intervention of this magnitude carries along a positive economic activation. *“The recognition and full incorporation into the market of the existing and future production of uncontrolled urban residential settlements implies a profound dynamization of urban economies. Construction works can contribute, during an execution that will be medium to long term, to the reactivation or strengthening of the economy of a country. Expenses on physical qualification should not be seen as social charges for the national or local budget, but rather as investments that would increase general productivity by substantially improving the living conditions of a large part of the urban population, reducing costs of all kinds (such as transportation and health care) and promoting new productive activities.”* (Villanueva, Baldo, 1995). Even if it at the starting point the operation requires an important amount of capital, the positive economic outcome due to the improvements and activation of the area will return the investment.

*“Despite the strong cultural dynamic that fuels daily life in this favela, rapid urbanization and challenging topography have resulted in a community that has developed without the necessary social infrastructure and physical equipment. There are no major hubs or networks within the neighborhood to accommodate the residents’ needs. Therefore, the priority of the intervention becomes more than equipping this peripheral neighborhood with water, sewage networks, lighting, and services. Physical infrastructures must be coupled with additional social infrastructure in the areas of education, safety, culture, public space, and sports. This coupling ensures stronger social sustainability as a vital catalyst for the area, expanding music and cultural programs into the favela while forming a new network that serves the youth from all levels of society. This proposed urban model aims to translate a society’s need for equal access to employment, technology, services, education, and resources - fundamental rights for all city dwellers - into spatial solutions” (Lepik, 2015, 114)*

## PROVIDE URBAN ADVANTAGES

The urban focus satisfies the lack of services, amenities, green areas and public spaces. Due to their size and density, slums required a large amount of spaces and service buildings that are essential to satisfy people’s needs. *“Well-functioning cities have around 50% of the surface area dedicated to public space. Unfortunately, few cities around the world meet this target. Lack of quality public spaces reduces urban quality of life, increasing crime, social tensions, health and congestion. Public space provides leverage to optimize urban performance – build safer and cohesive communities, reduce spatial inequalities, build local economies and bring nature back to the city.”* UNHABITAT. Spontaneous settlements are very far from meeting the needed amount of public spaces and green area, environments for encounter are very scarce and most of the time in deteriorated conditions. *“Most informal settlements lack a good system of open spaces, a fundamental urban attribute, as well as communal and metropolitan services” (David Gouverneur, 2015: 27)*


On the other hand, as previously mention, these settlements lack most equipment, as they are apart from the rest of the city, they are far from basic services that are essential: hospitals, schools, pharmacies, markets, etc. The purpose is to face this issue, creating an intervention that provides them with adequate places where people can satisfy their needs, relate with others and enjoy the urban. Concentrating all these facilities and spaces in one area allows the generation of a new urban nucleus that not only solves many of the needs of the neighborhood, but at the same time gives it importance, requalifies the area, revitalizes the economy, generates jobs, solves existing urban problems, creating a sense of belonging and an environment of cooperation and relation. It is an operation that works in favor of a compact city, since it accomplishes accessibility, consolidation and sustainability.

## RESPOND TO LOCAL NEEDS

The strategy conducts towards an equitable city, seeking to respond to slum's problems and needs. Following the purpose of integration, the urban focus aims to provide a proper solution for the circumstances of its surroundings, an accurate equilibrium between void and built, between open air spaces and services. This intention requires a deep understanding of the context, of the different urban conditions and identities that will be directly affected by the intervention. Comprehending the situations that need improvement but being aware of the positive aspects so that they can be respected. The approach is to create a new system that works as a net of services and places for encounter where the inhabitants of the slum can now have access to the beneficial implications of an urban life.

*“It creates a unique platform for the integration of formal and informal. It is precisely this elusive critical territory that serves as a new point of contact for architecture and urban design. Critical territory here is not meant only as a physical space, but also as a way of thinking. Each can learn from the other. It is not an evolution from exclusion to inclusion, but from exclusion to collaboration. To simply include marginalized populations while implementing existing ideas of sustainability is not enough. These areas are instrumental in understanding possible new solutions. One must not only learn from and act in the formal city, but also learn from the informal city” (Lepik, 2015: 110)*



An architectural rendering showing a city development proposal. On the left, a dense urban area is represented by a grid of orange rectangular blocks. To the right, a new development is shown with modern, white, multi-story buildings, green spaces, and a curved road. The background features a light blue sky and a green landscape with a winding road.

# 5 The proposal

**A NEW  
URBAN FOCUS**

# 5.1

## Approximation to the site

### LAND USE



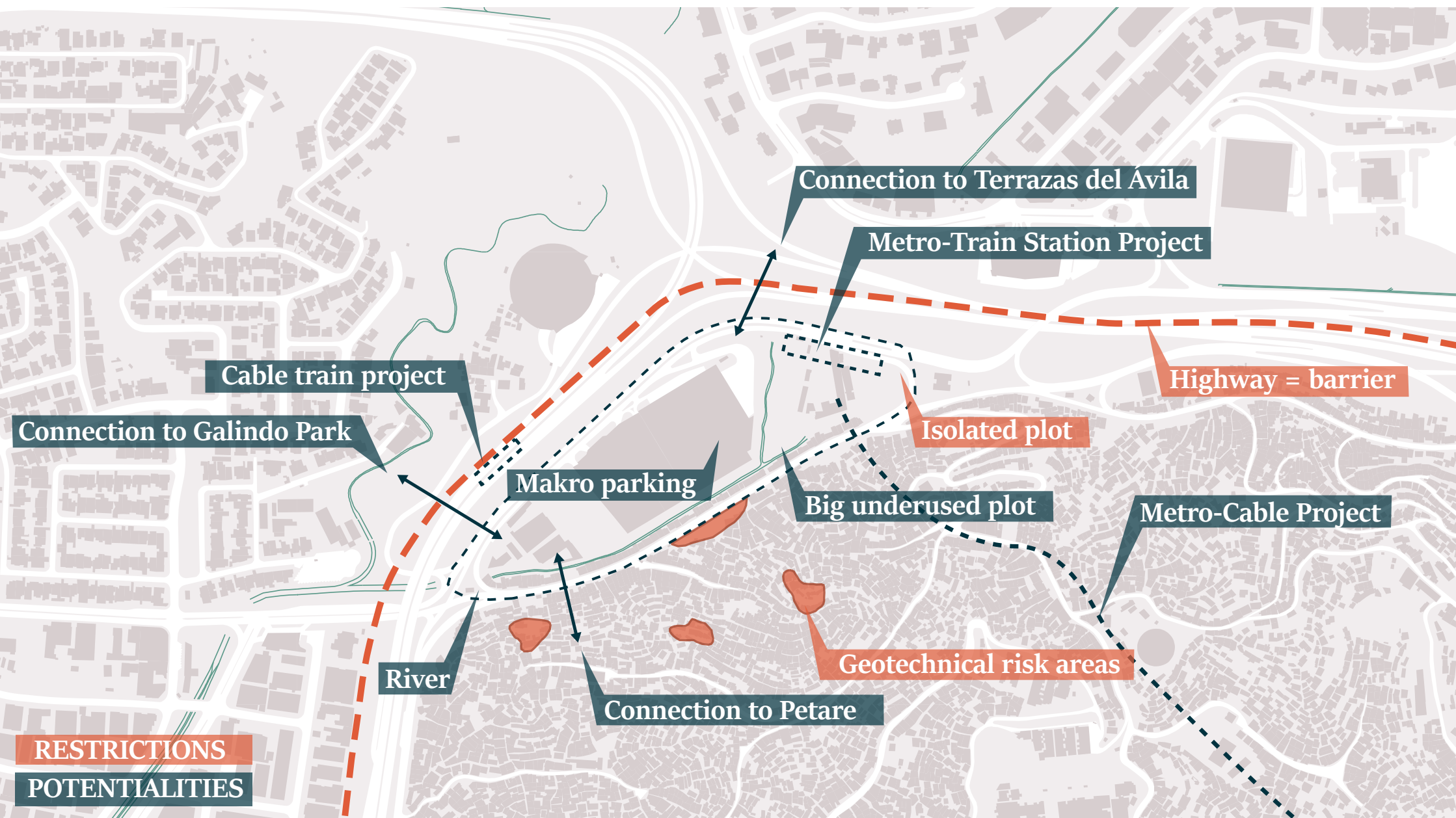
### MOBILITY



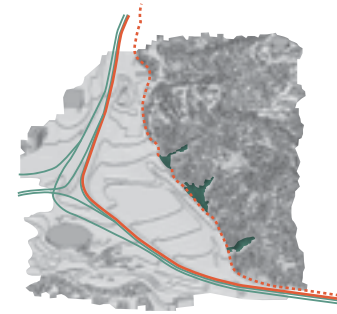
### GEOTECHNICAL RISK



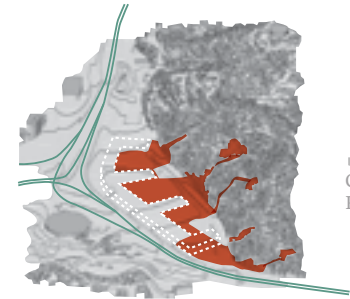




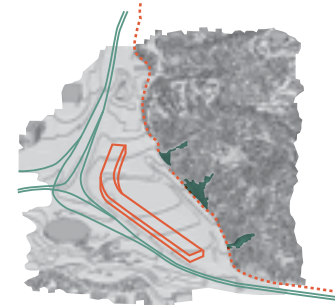
## 5.2 The master plan



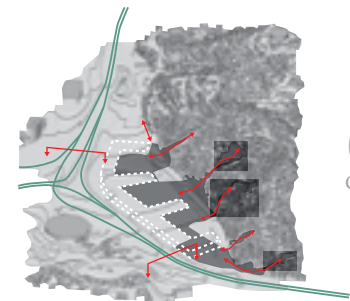
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Existing  
Boundaries



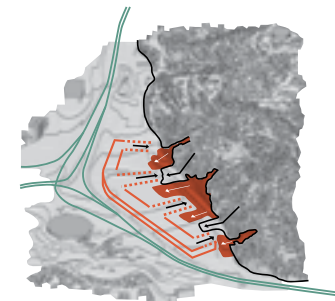
5.  
Continuous  
Public Space



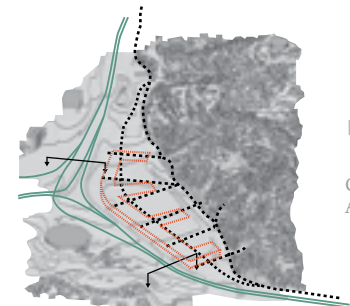
2.  
Construction  
of Perimeter



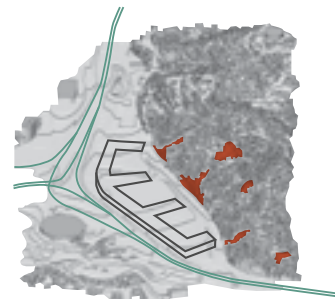
6.  
Connectivity



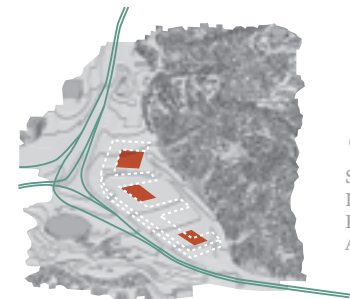
3.  
Rupture  
of Boundaries



7.  
Circulation  
Axes



4.  
Empty  
Geotechnical  
Risk Areas



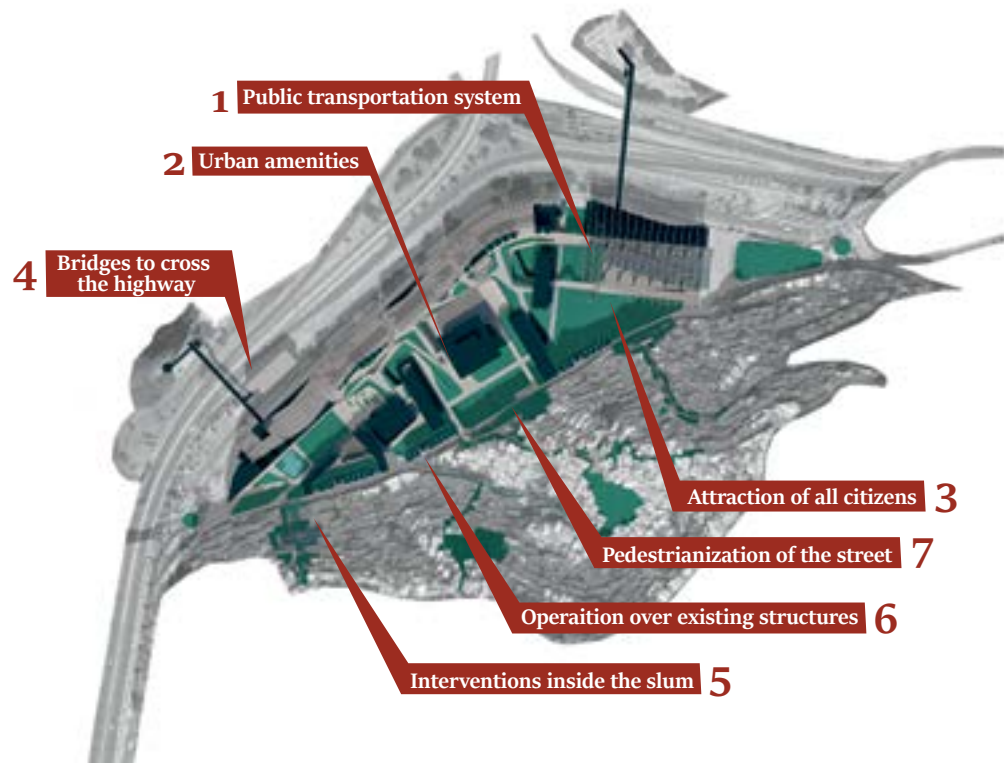
8.  
Squares  
Define  
Program  
Area





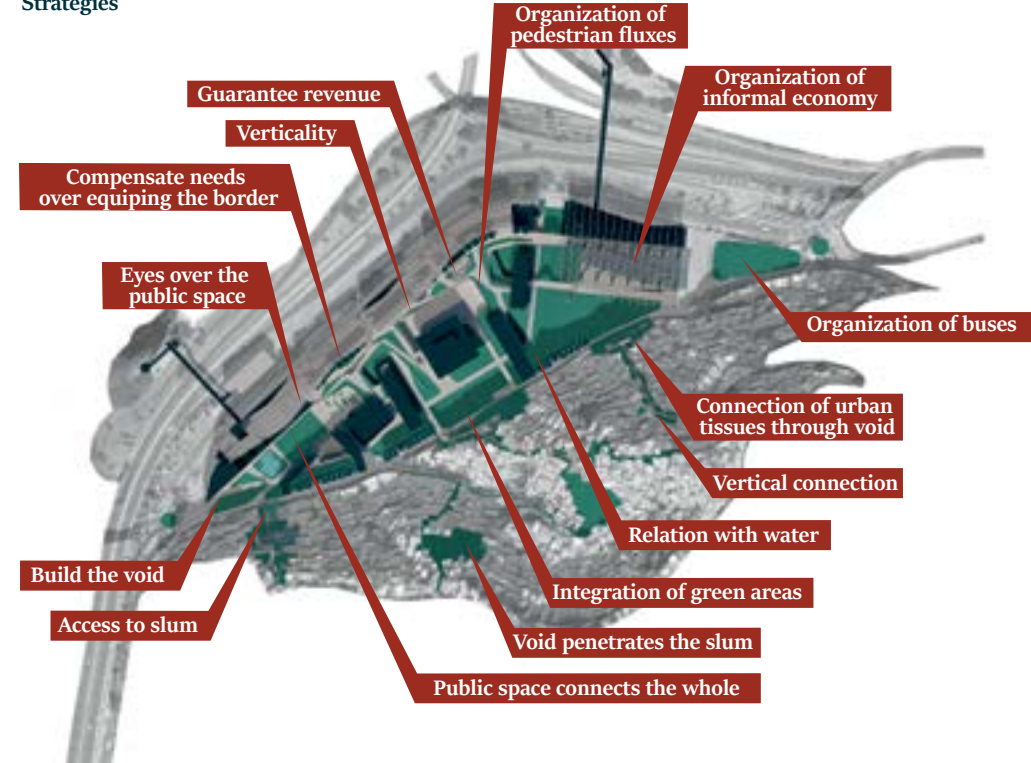


## Integration strategies



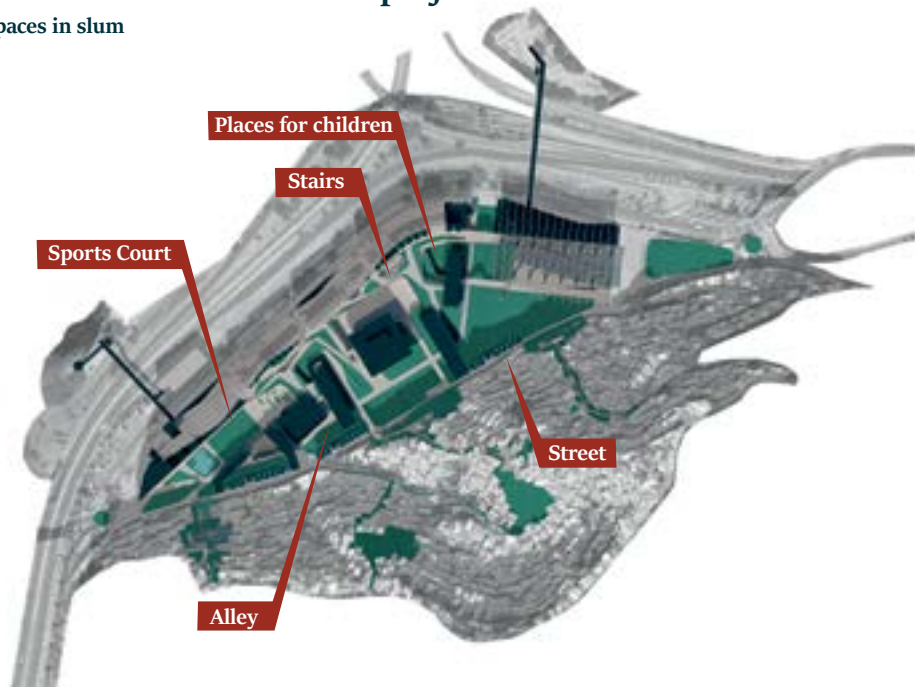
## Interviews translated into the project

### Strategies



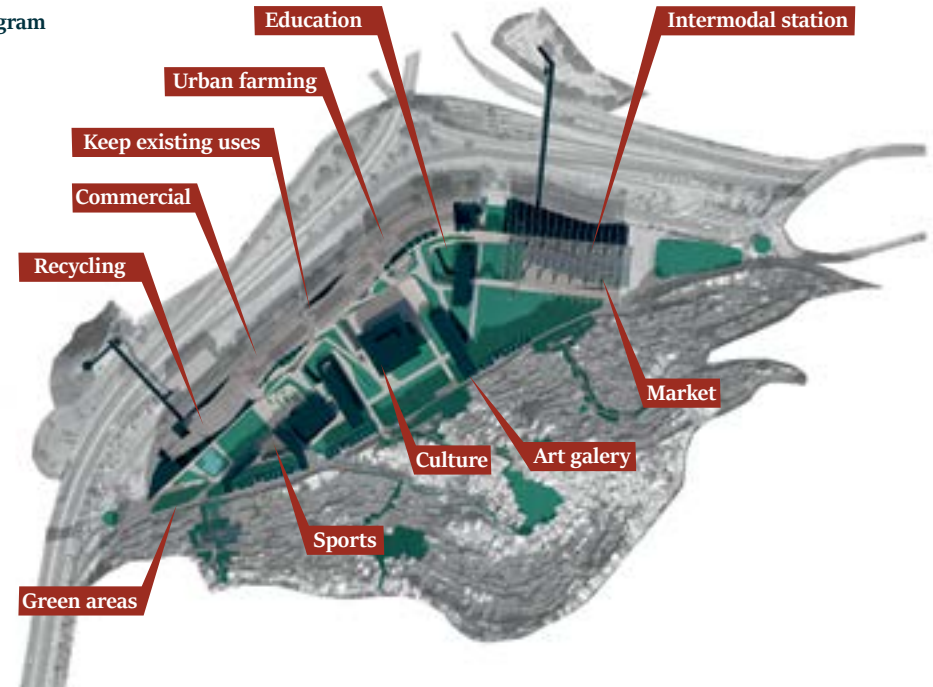
## Interviews translated into the project

### Public spaces in slum



## Interviews translated into the project

### Program

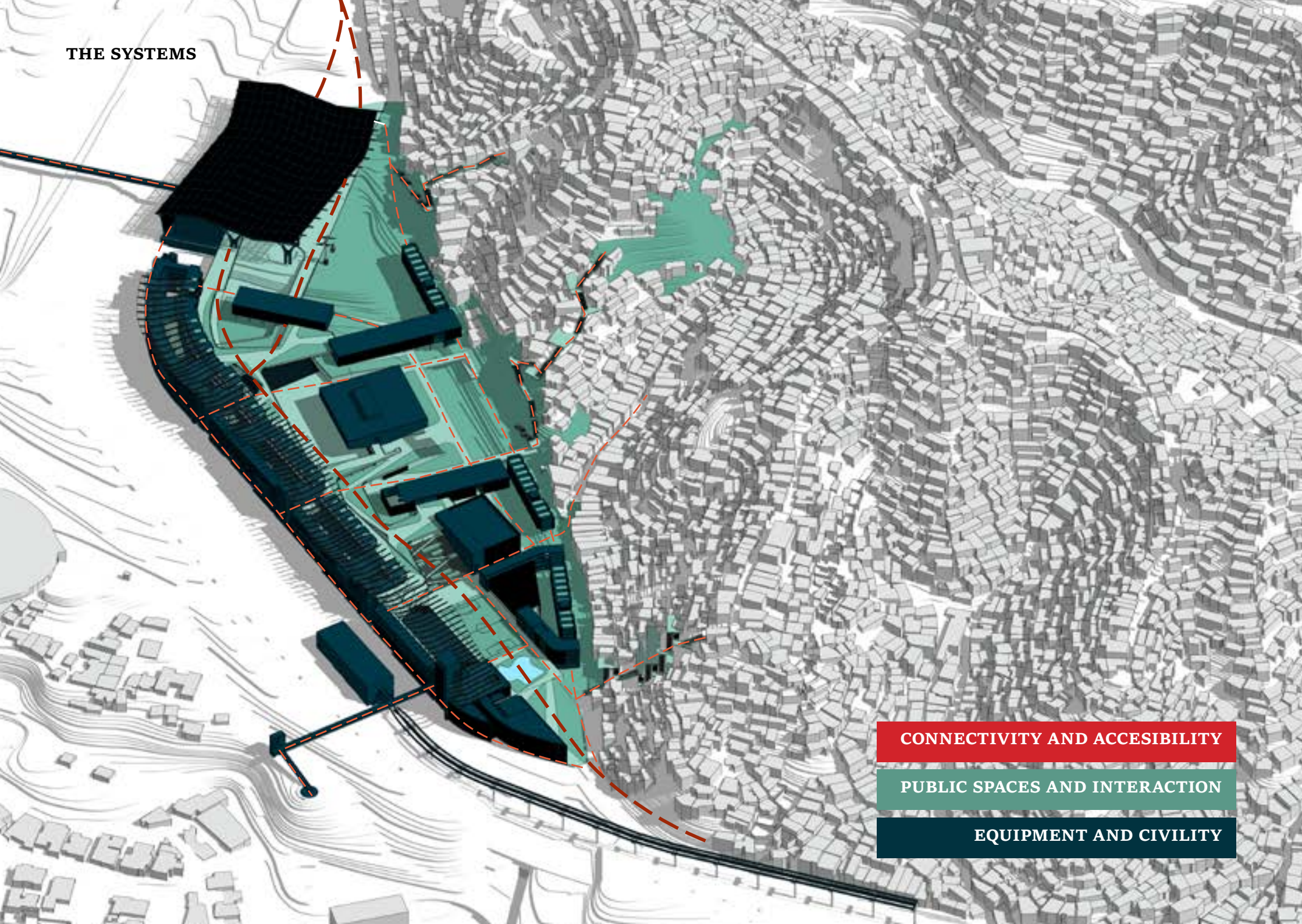








## THE SYSTEMS



CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESIBILITY

PUBLIC SPACES AND INTERACTION

EQUIPMENT AND CIVILITY



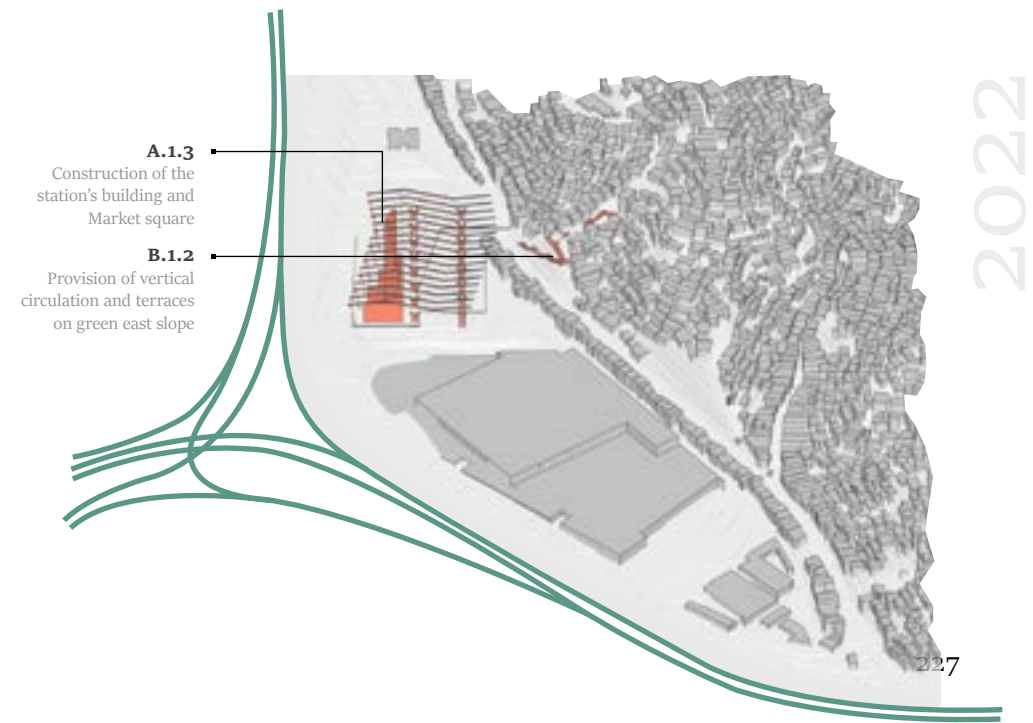
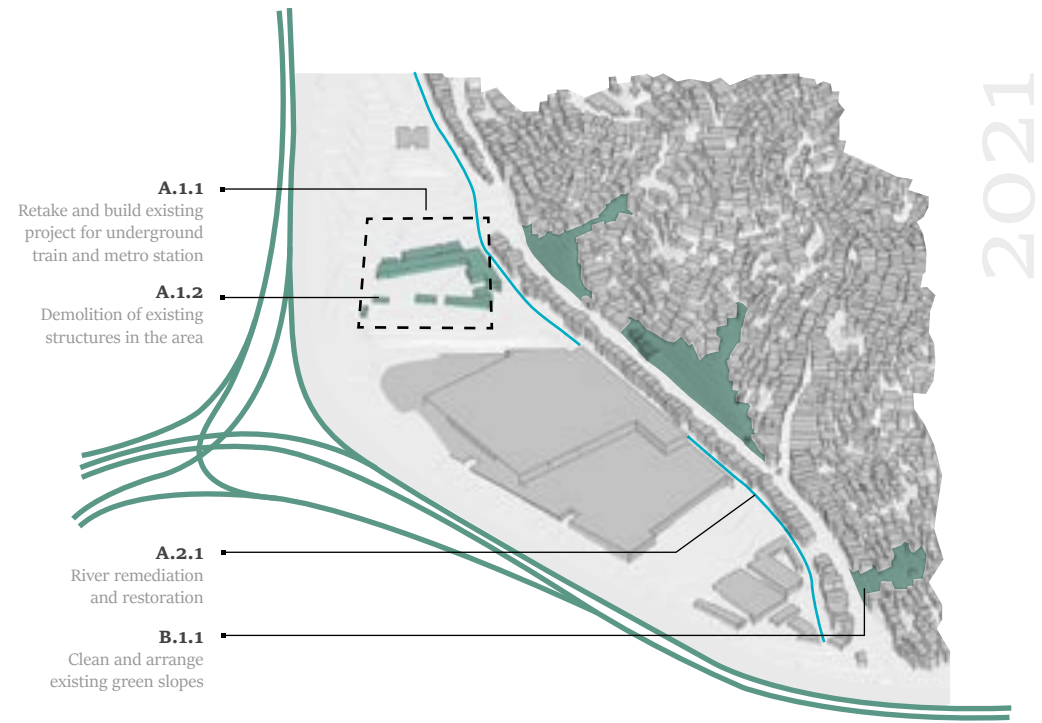




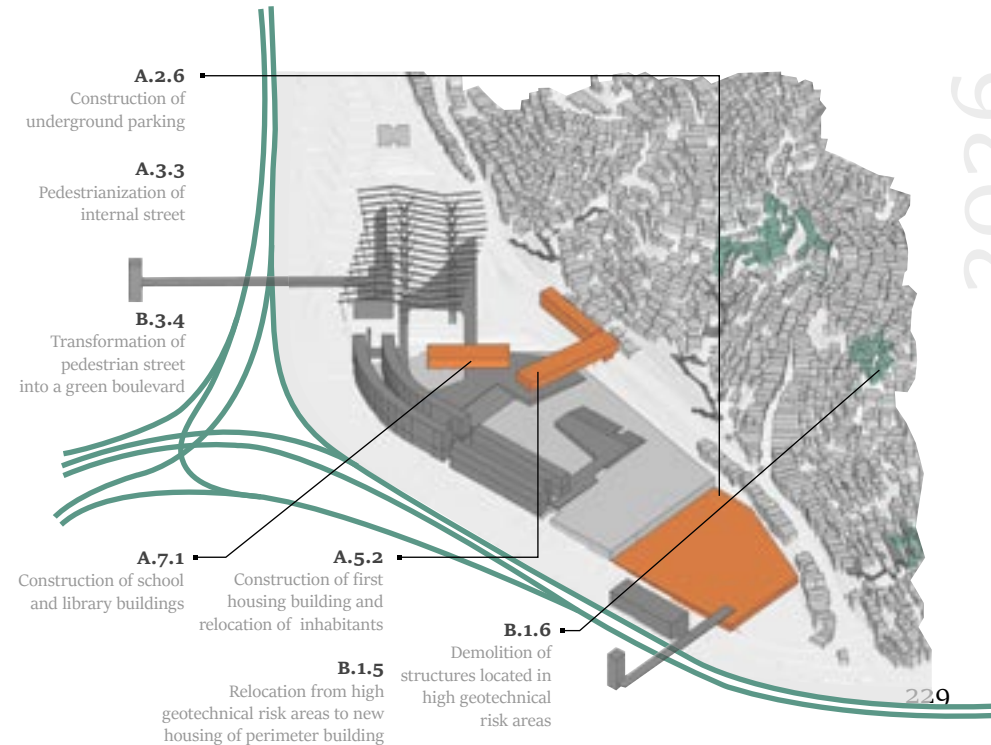
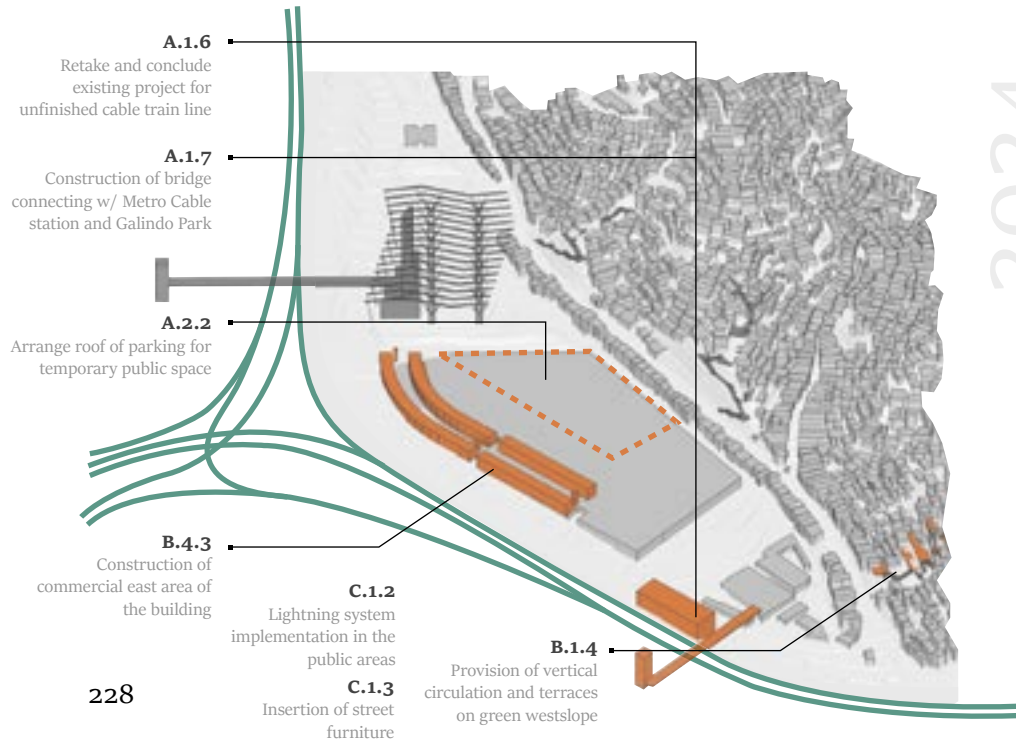
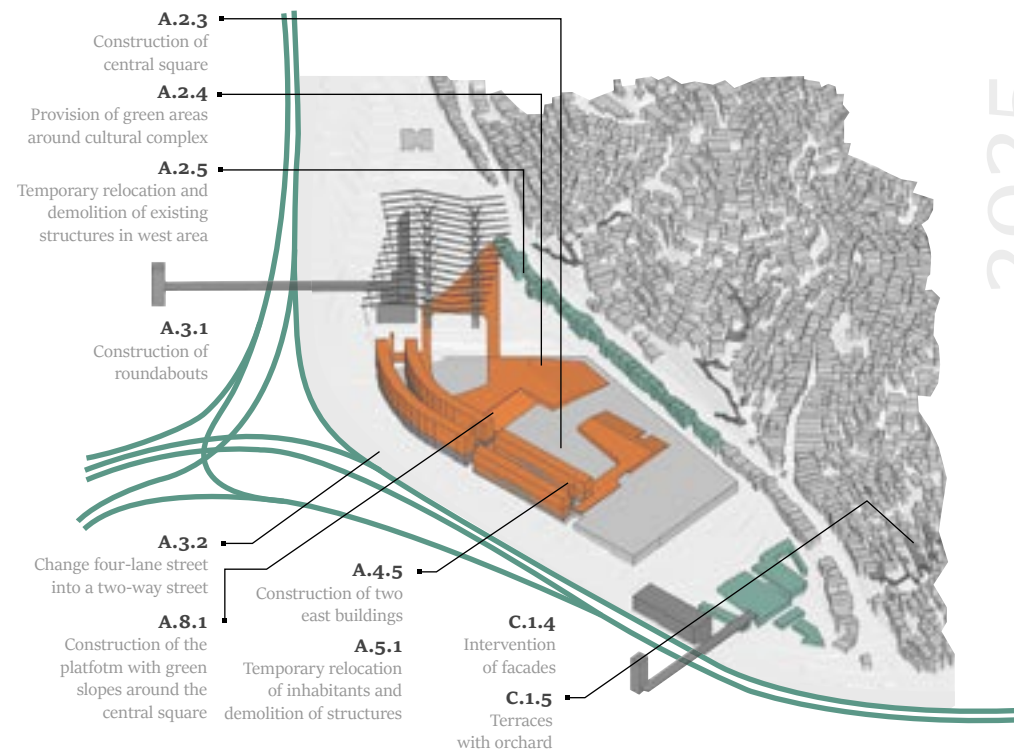
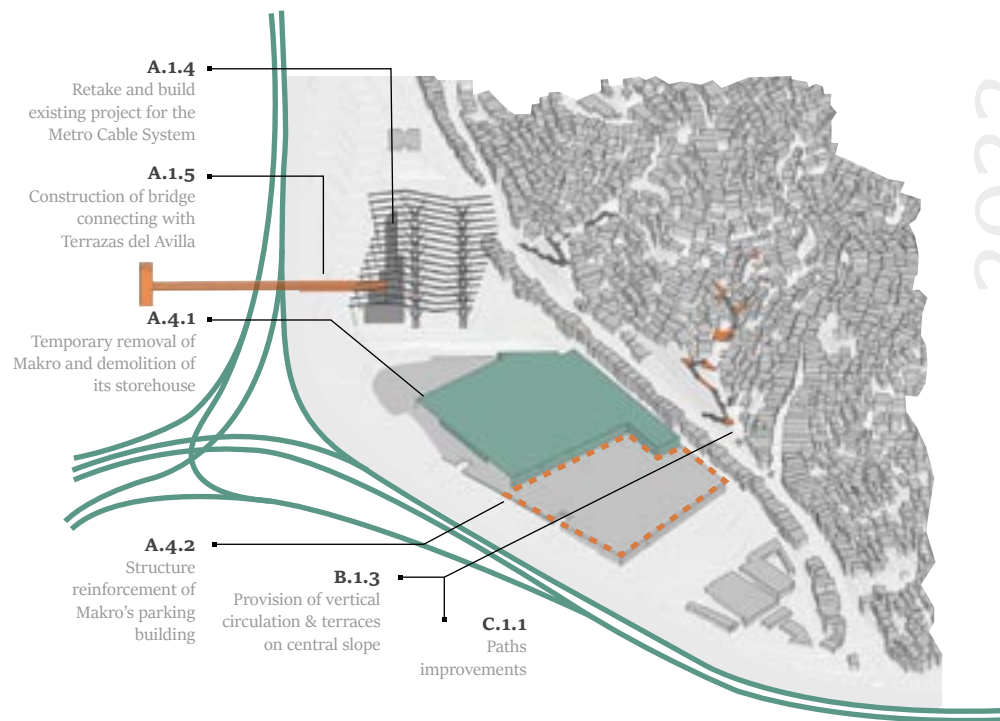
## 5.3 Sequence of actions



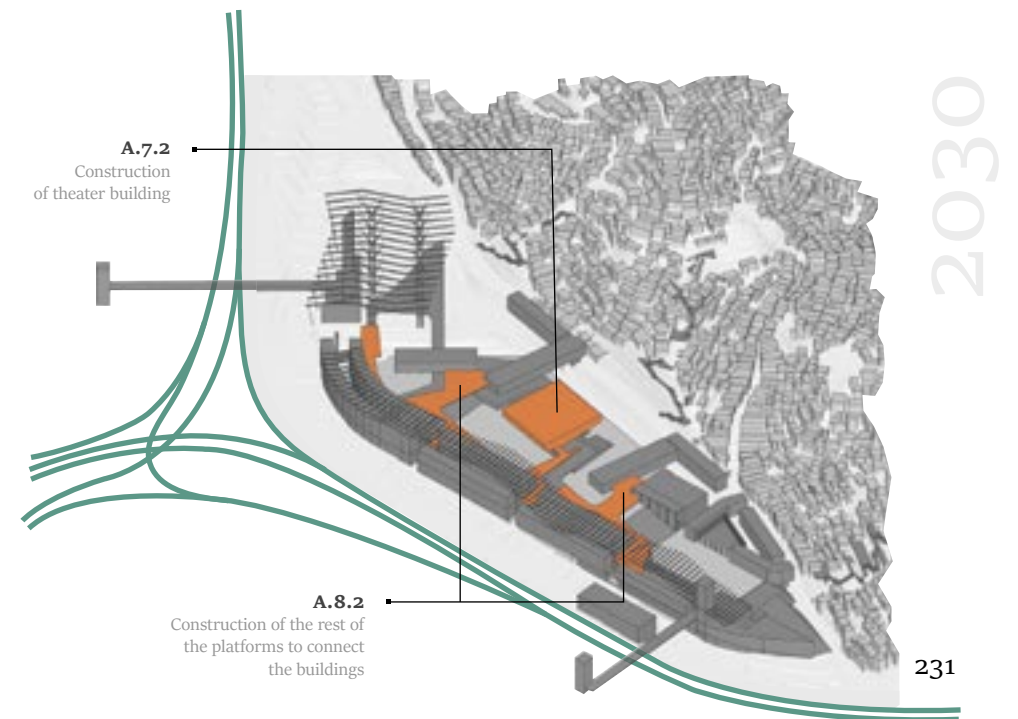
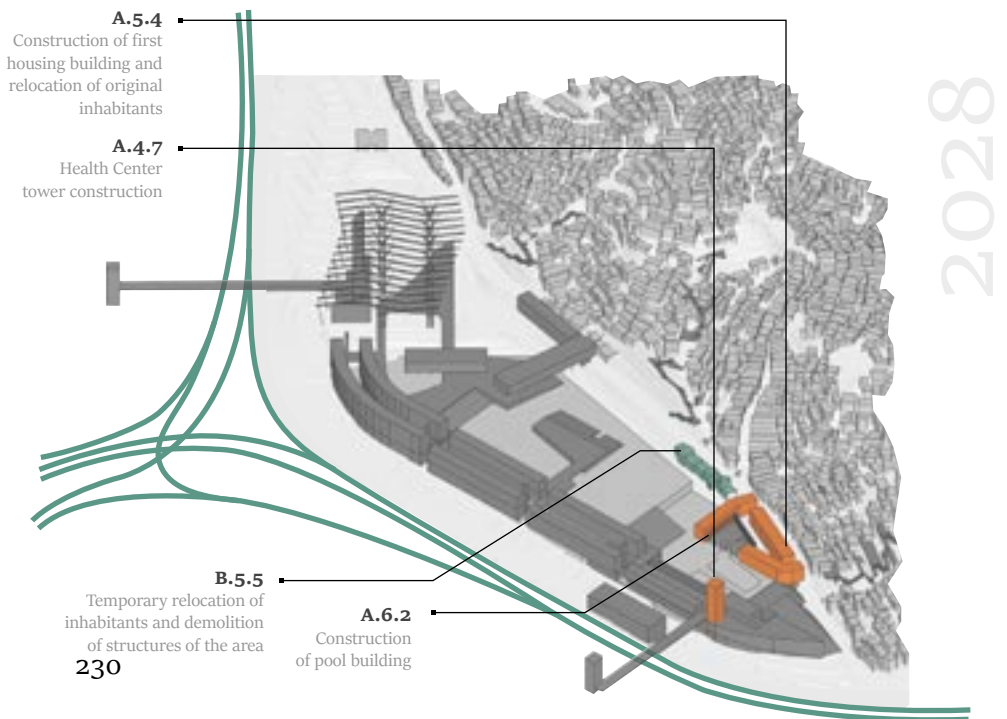
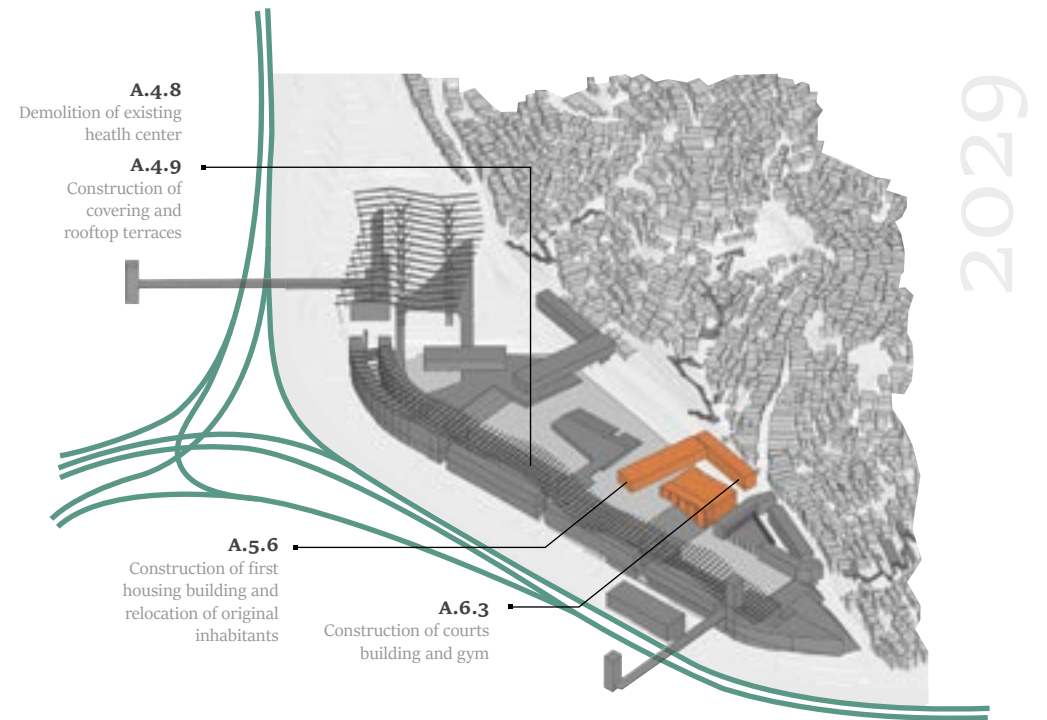
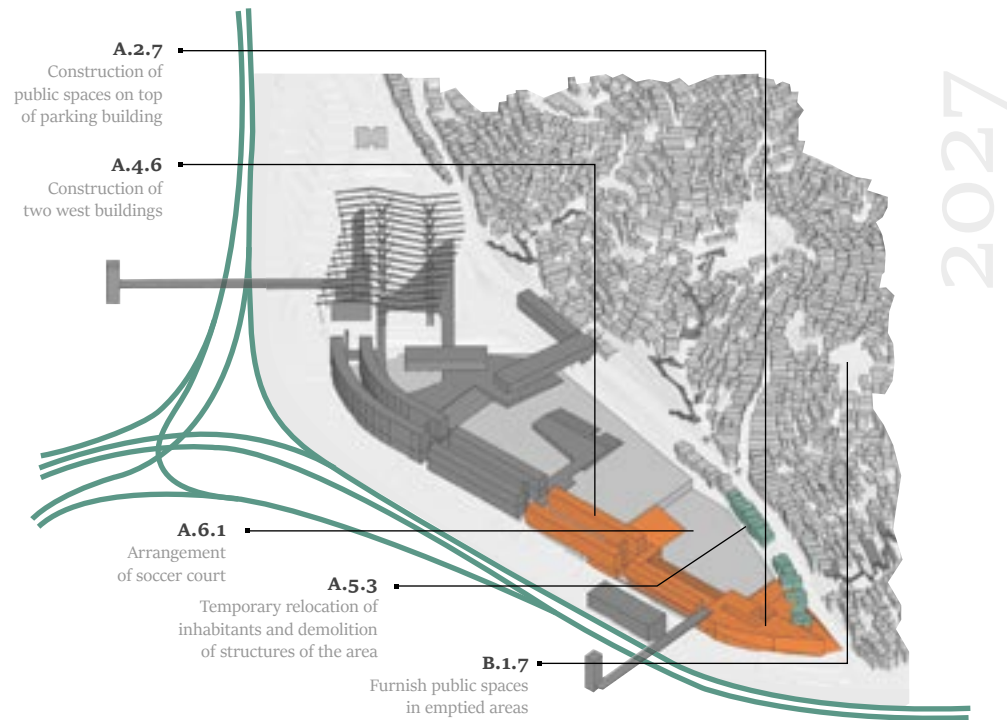
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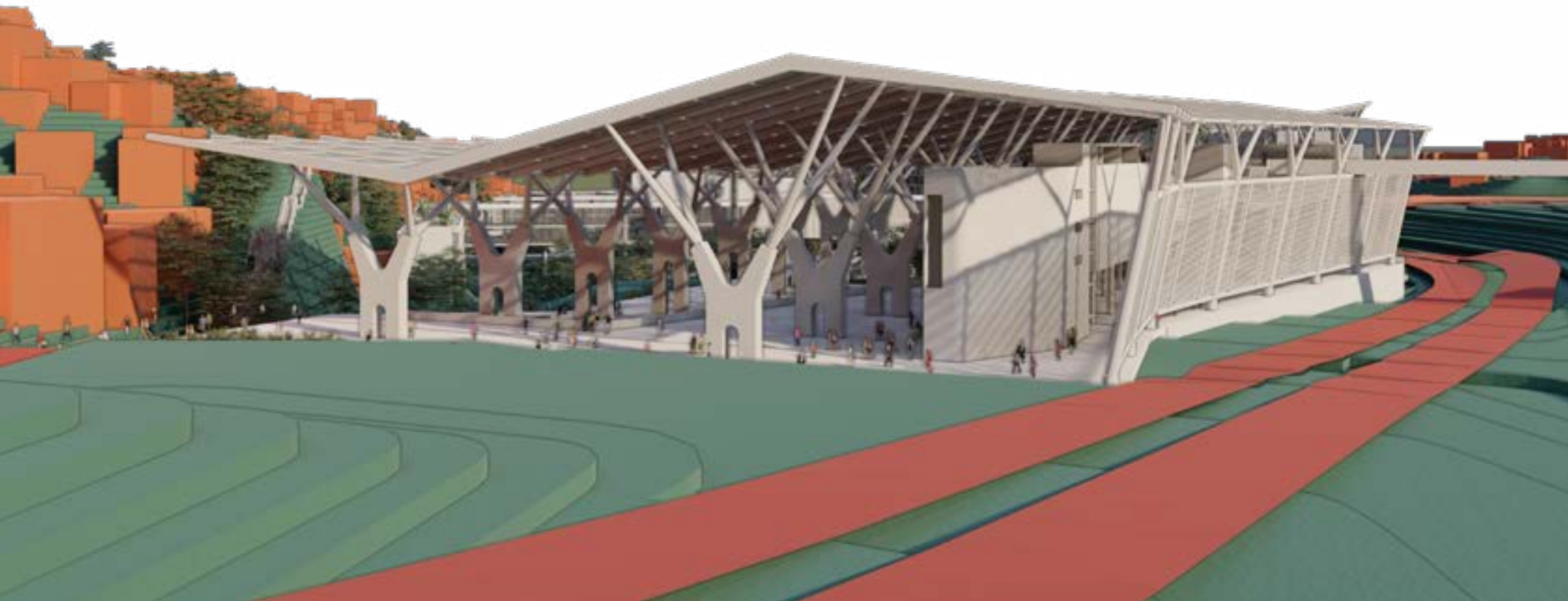




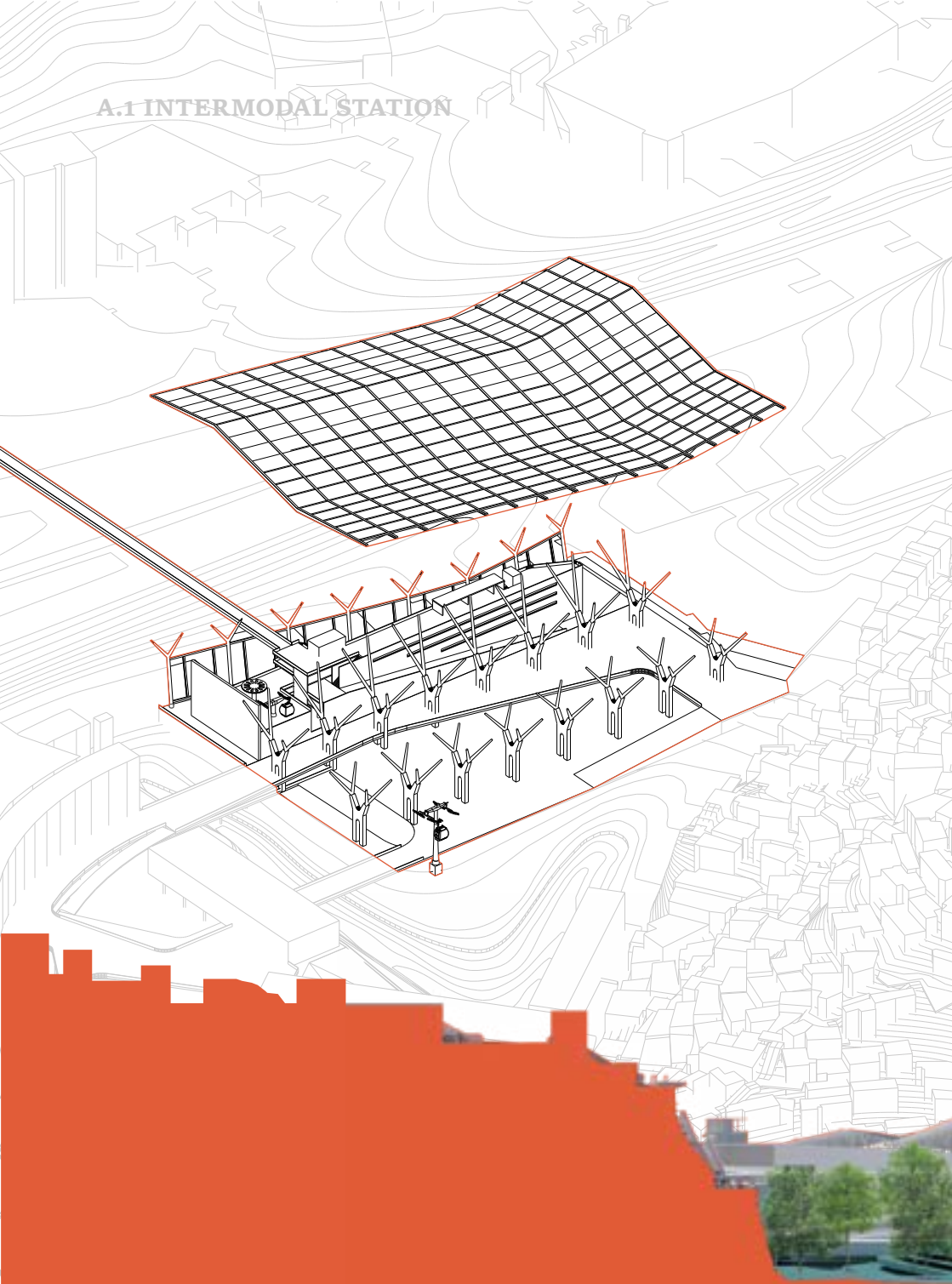




## A.1 INTERMODAL STATION

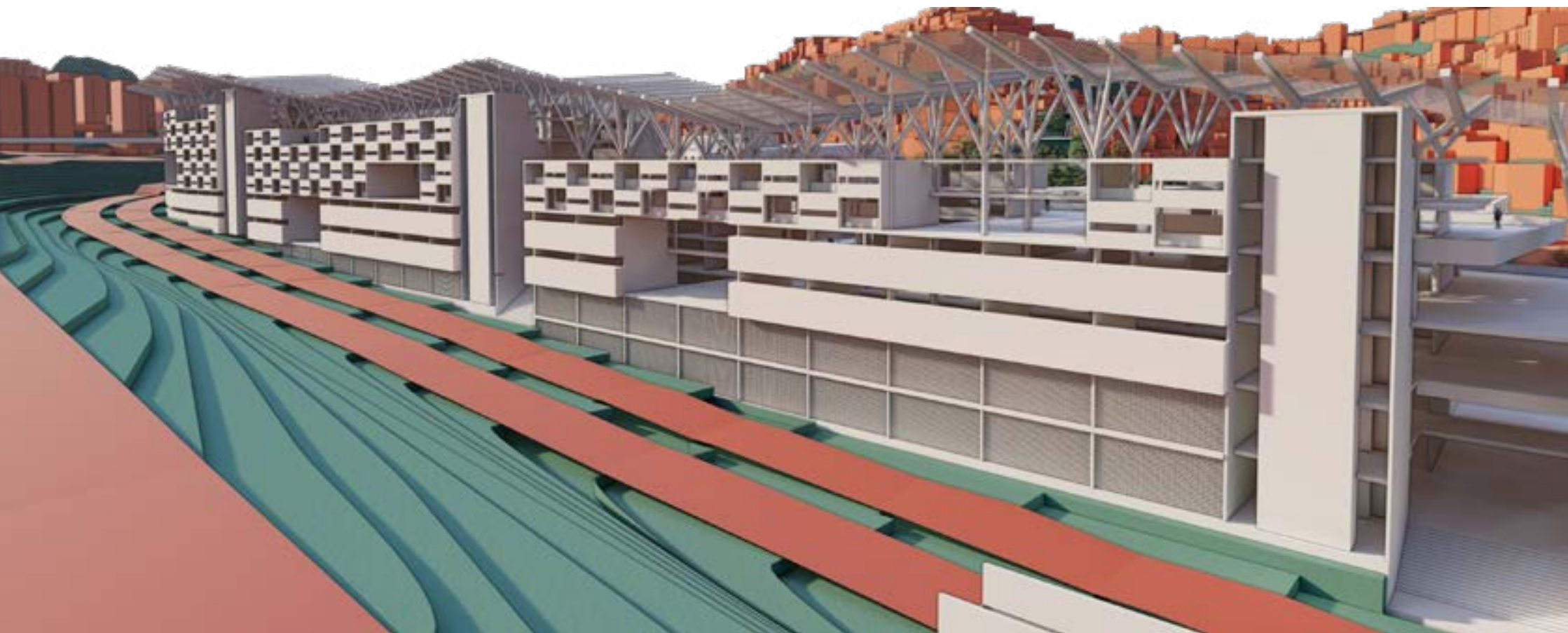


# A.1 INTERMODAL STATION

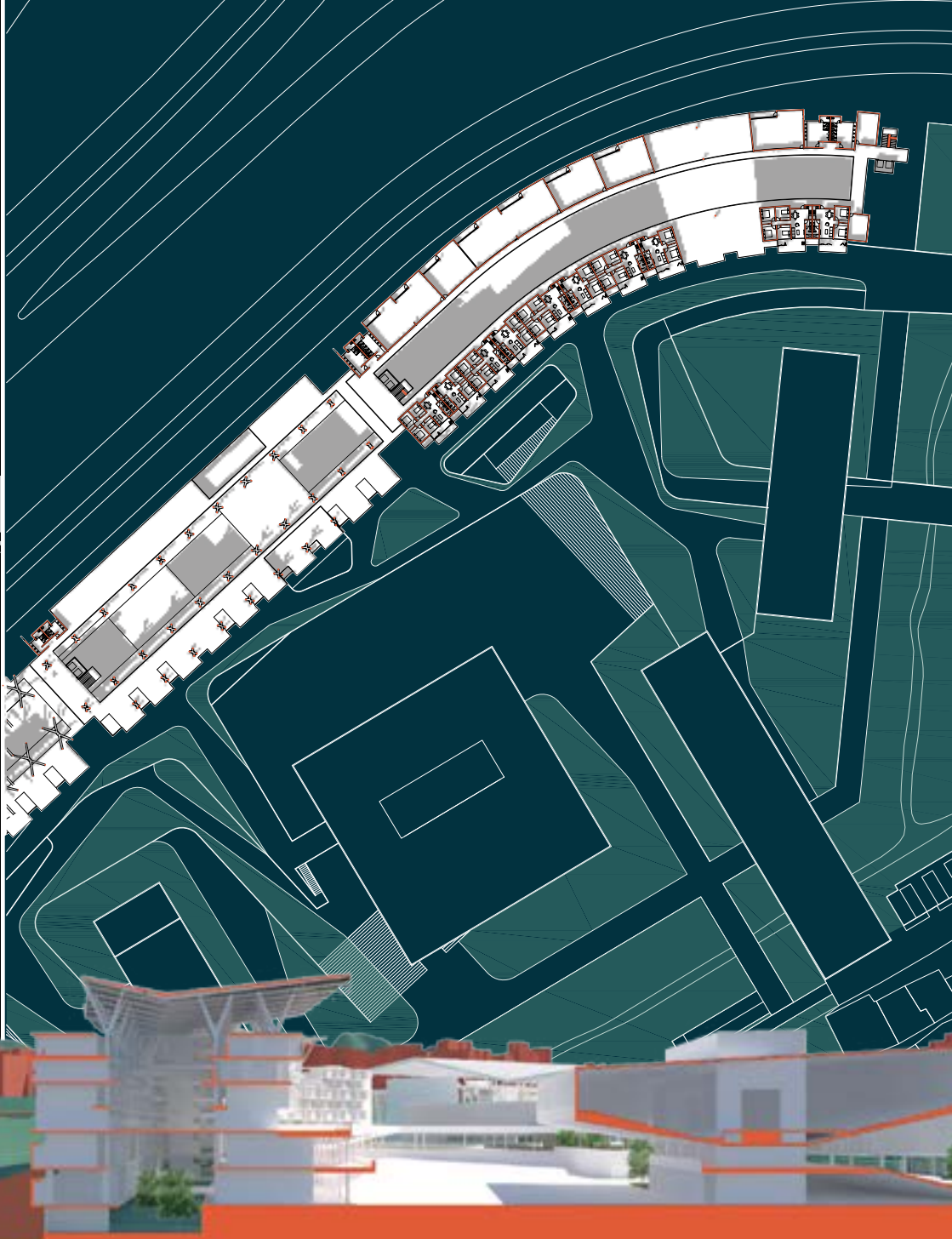
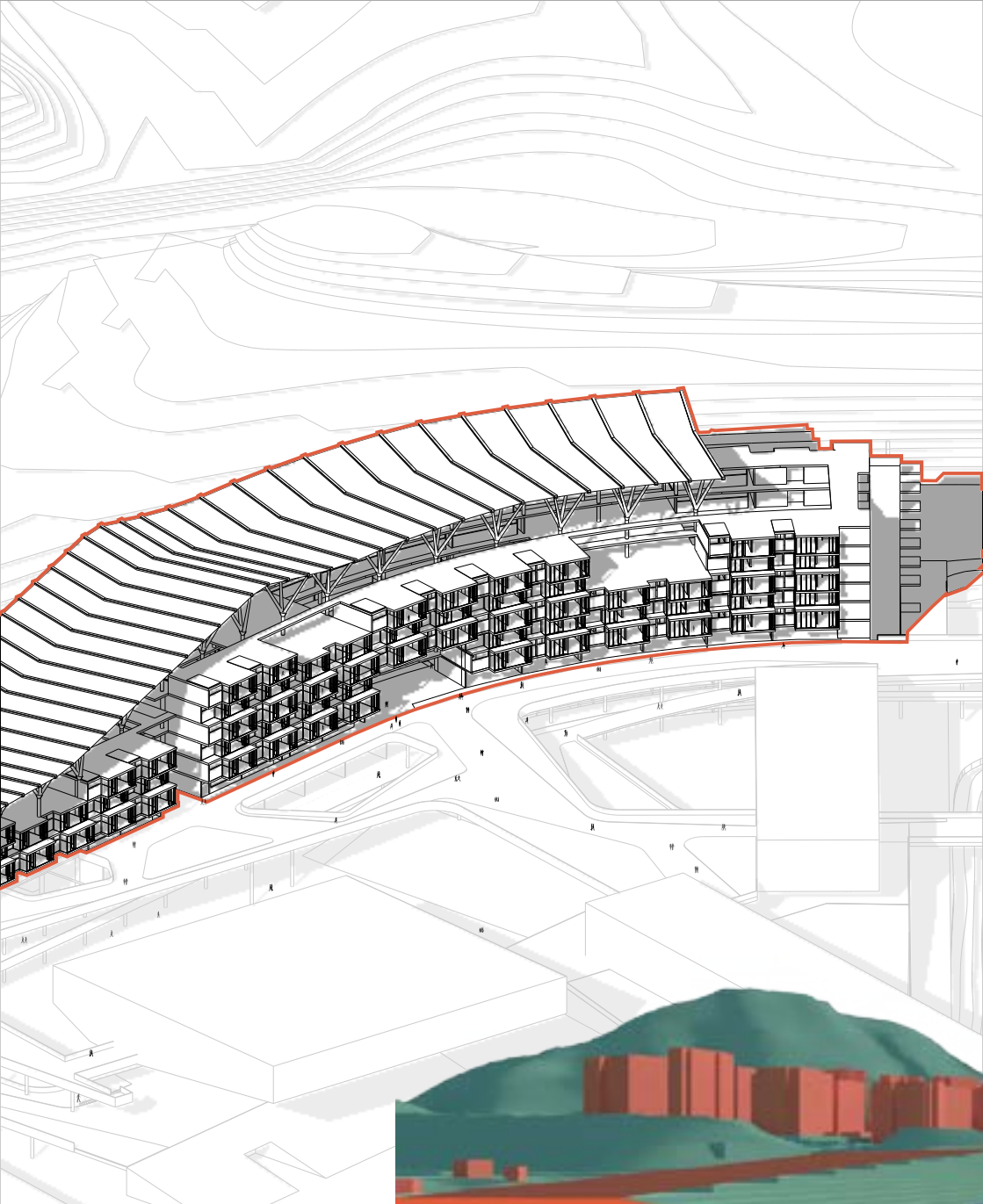




## A.2 PERIMETER BUILDING



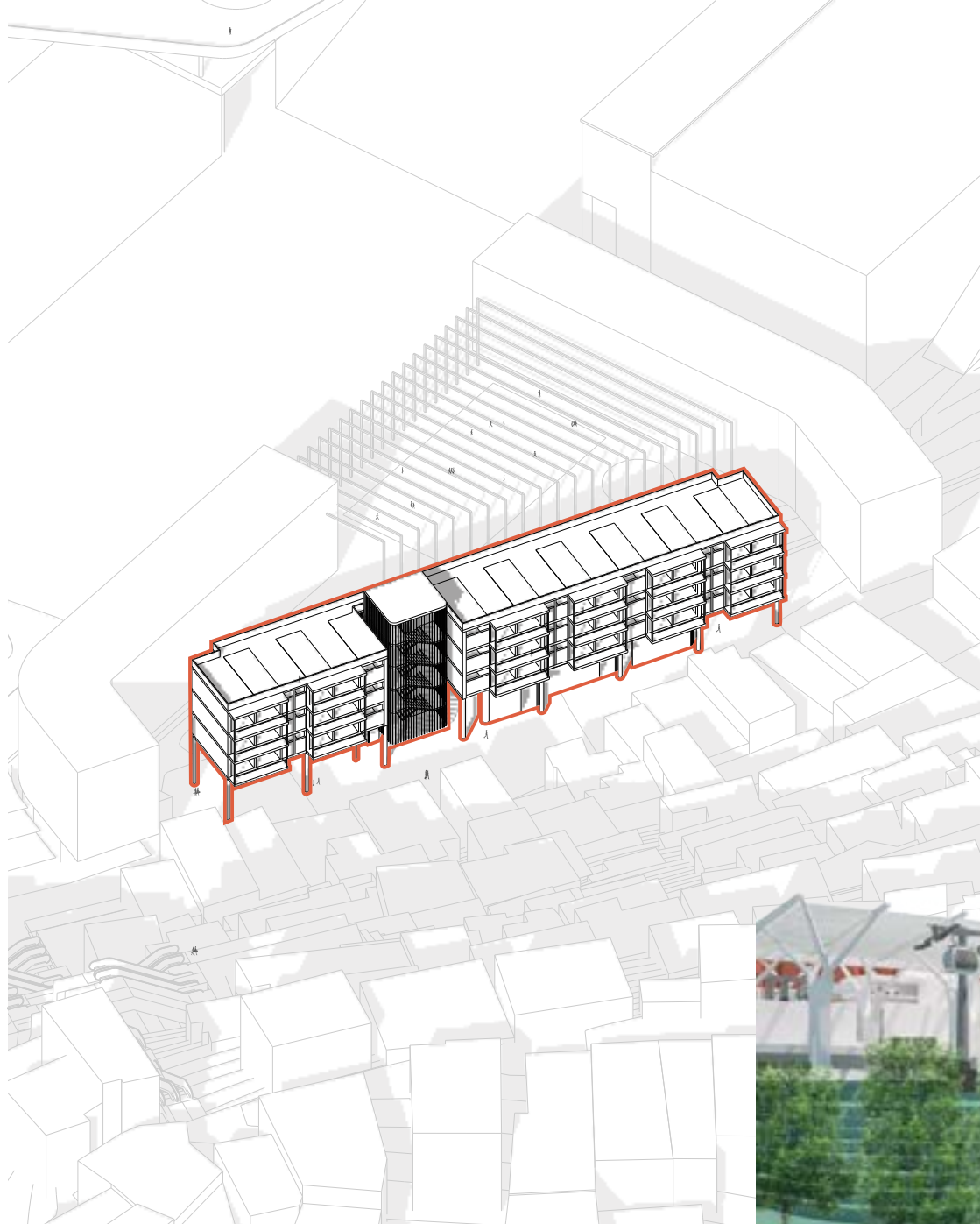




### A.3 HOUSING



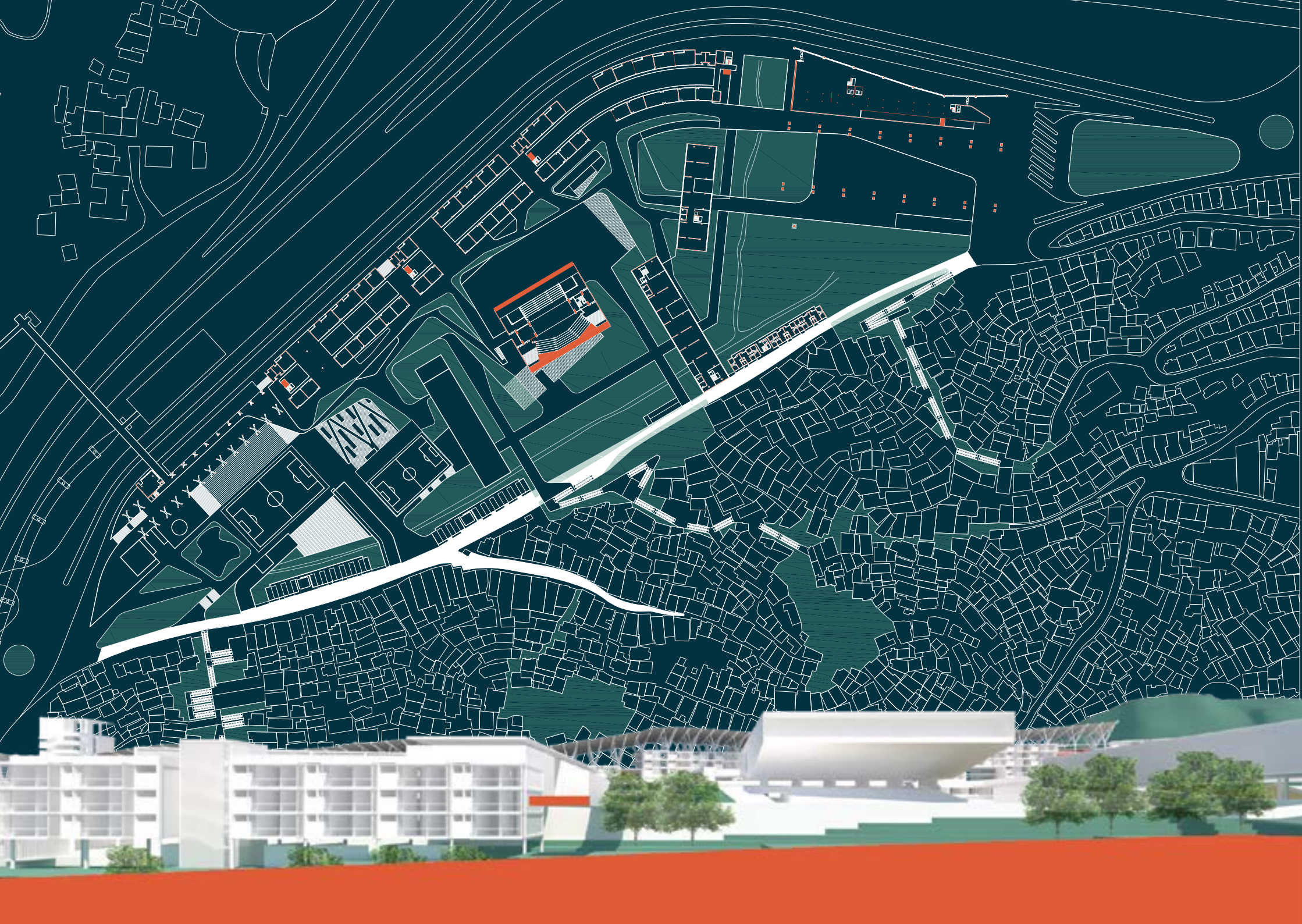




#### A.4 PEDESTRIAN BOULEVARD



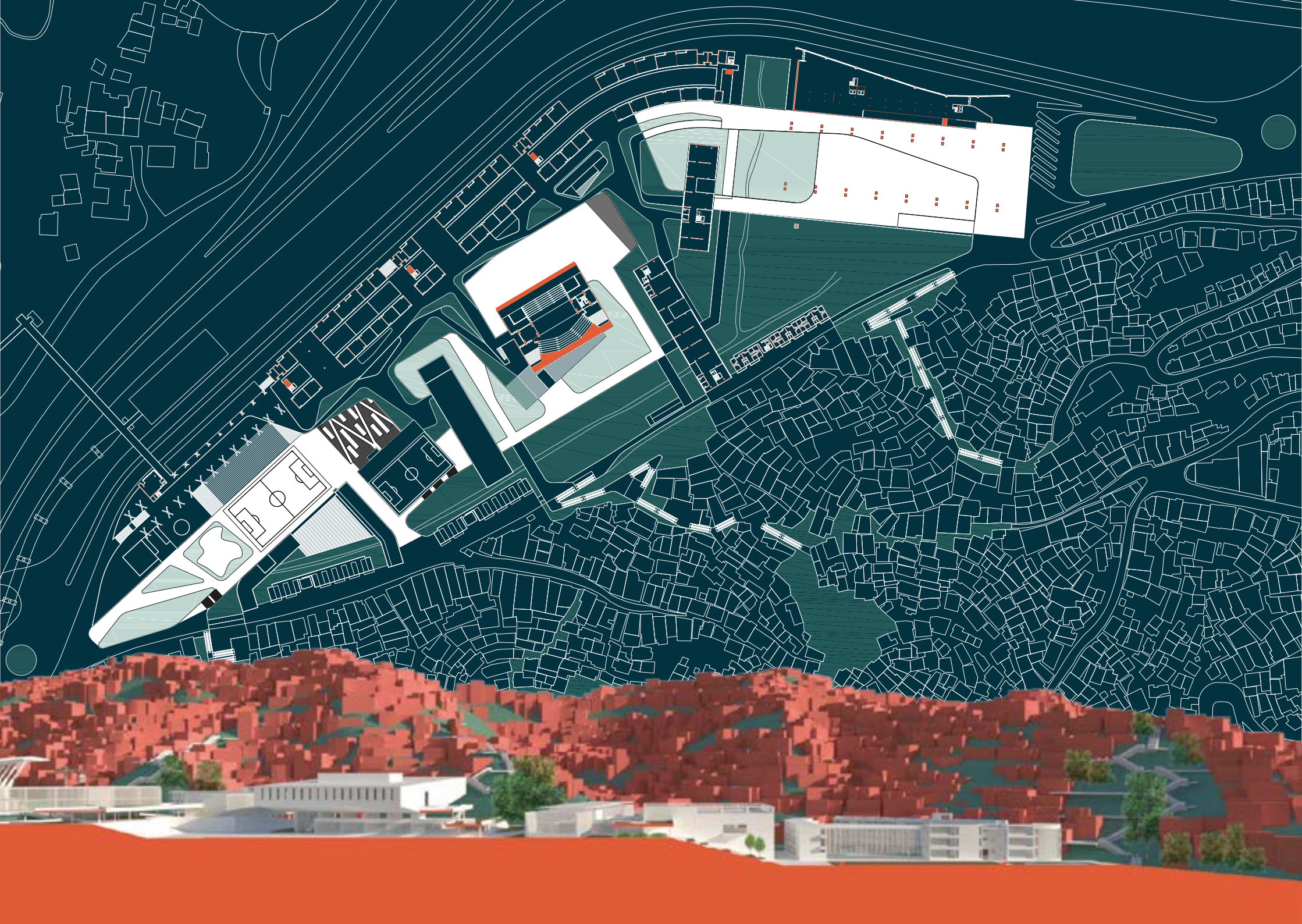




## A.5 PUBLIC SPACES



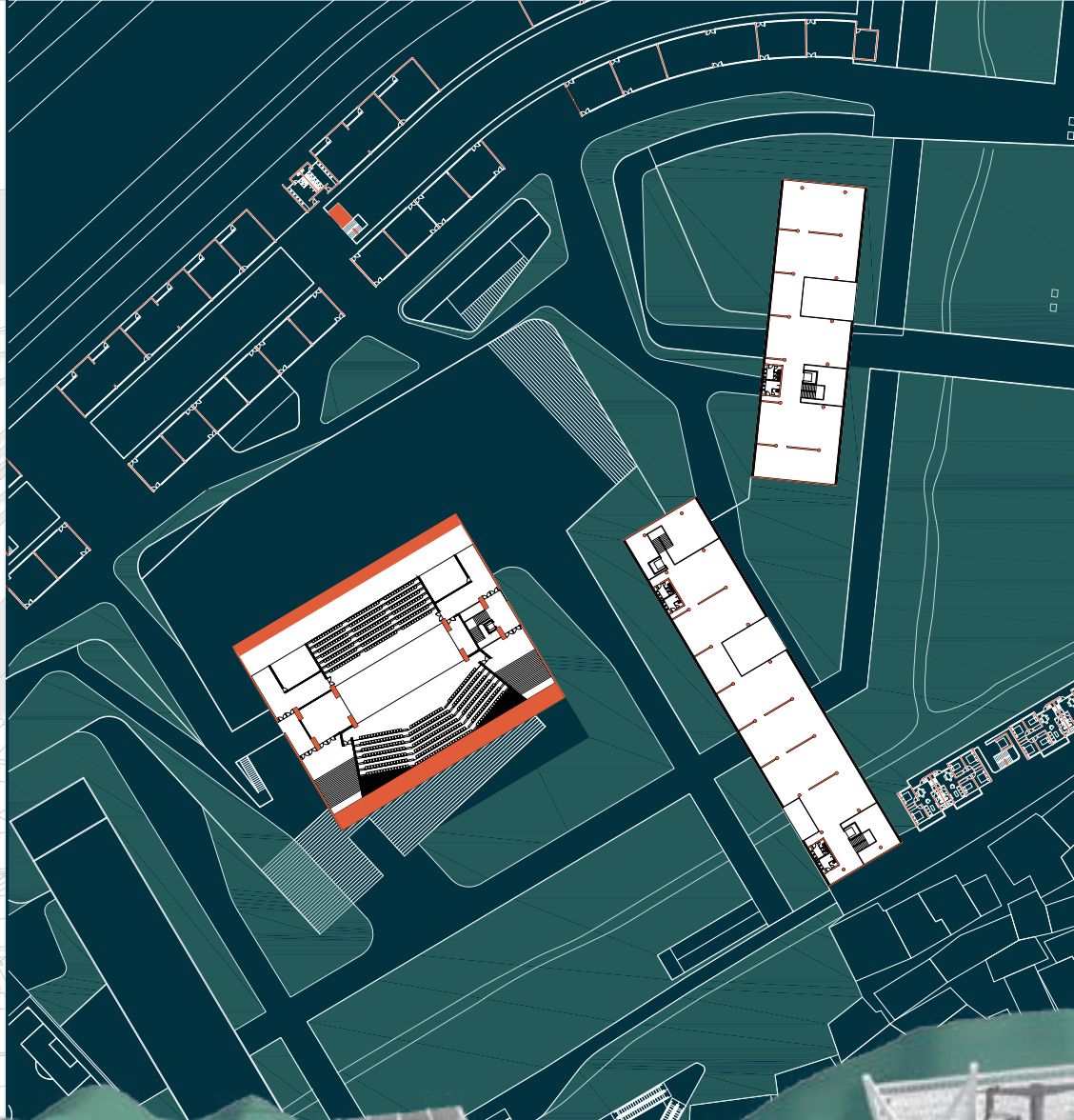
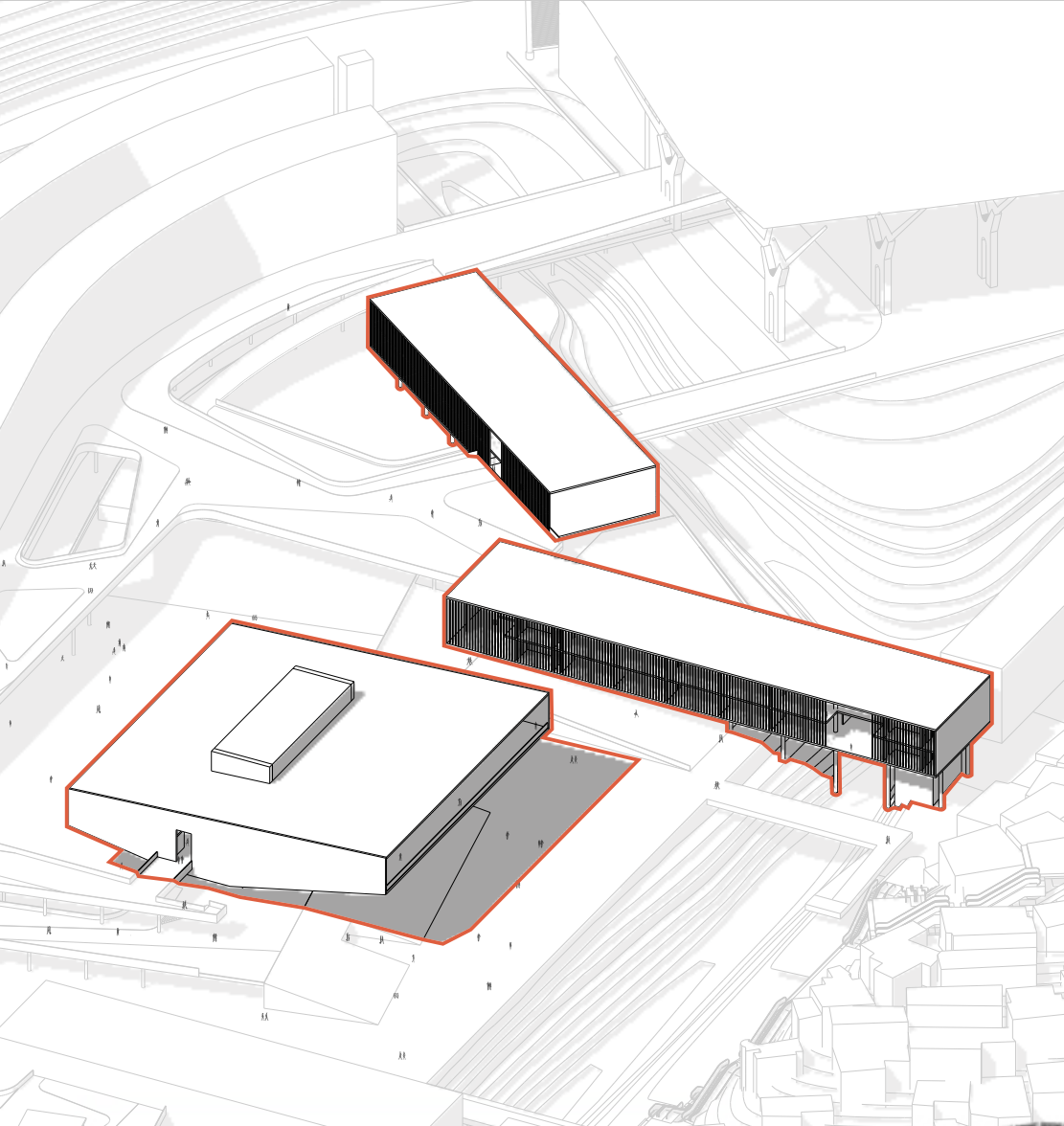




## A.6 CULTURAL COMPLEX



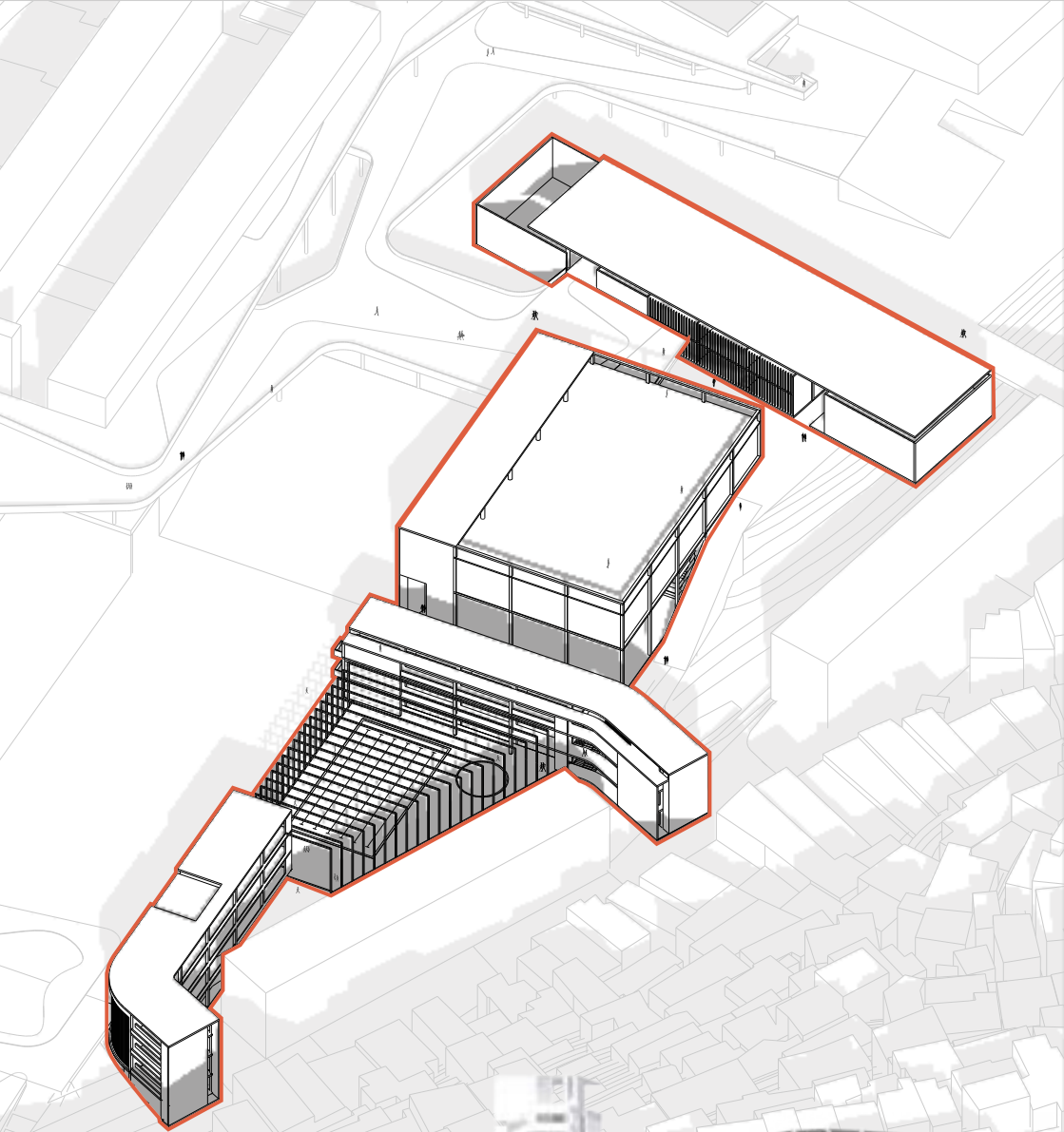




## A.7 SPORTS COMPLEX



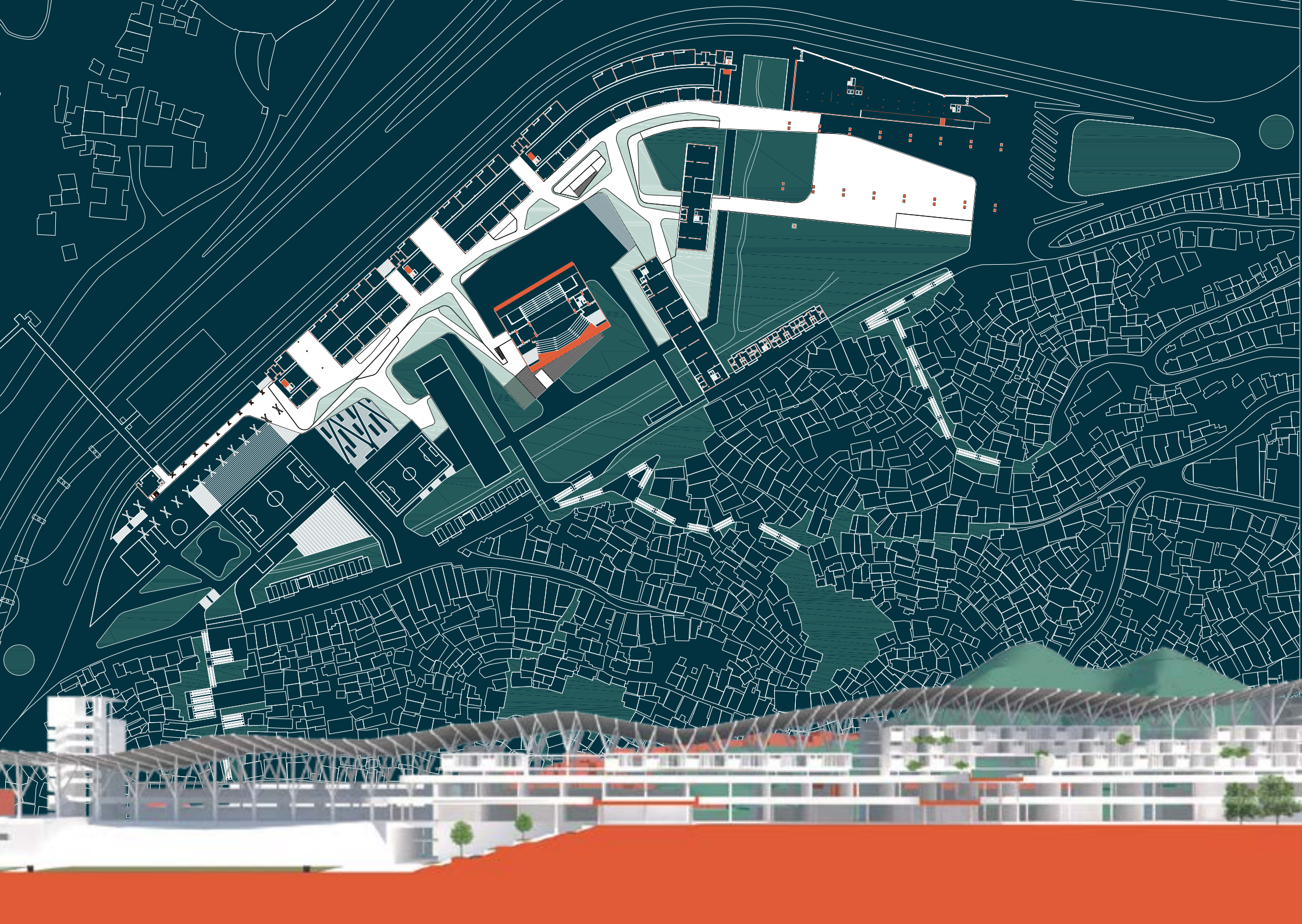




## A.8 CONNECTIVE PLATFORMS



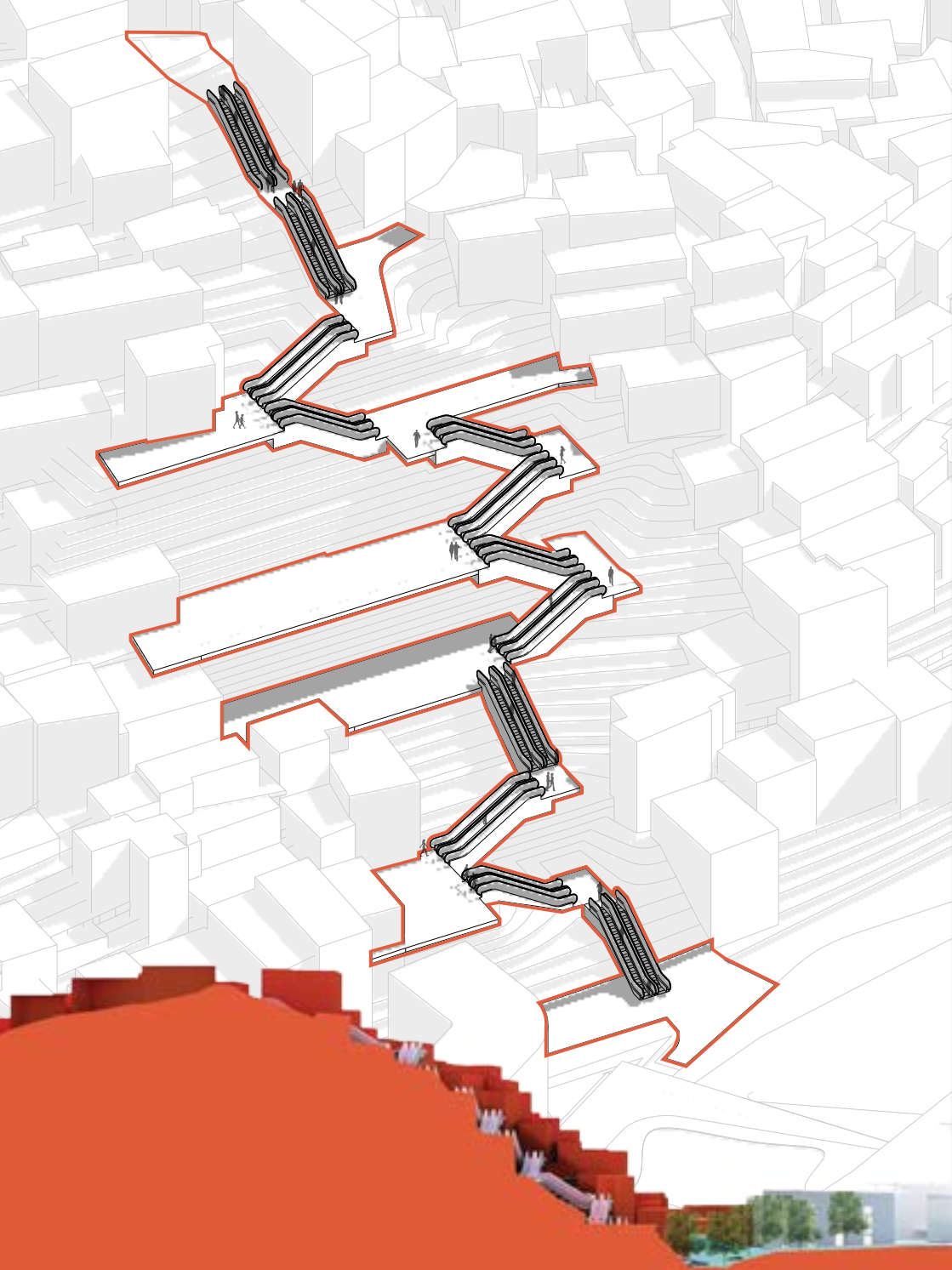


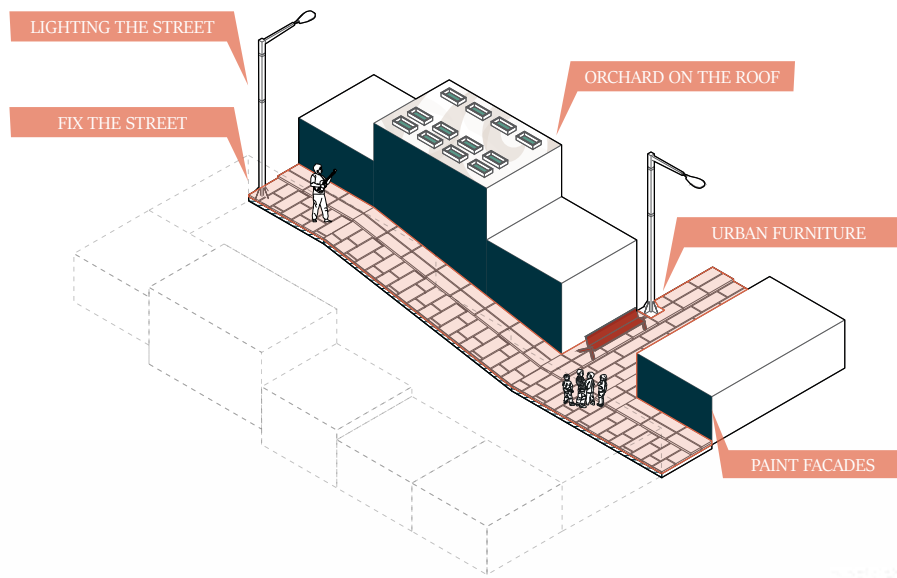


## B.1 SLUM PERMEATION

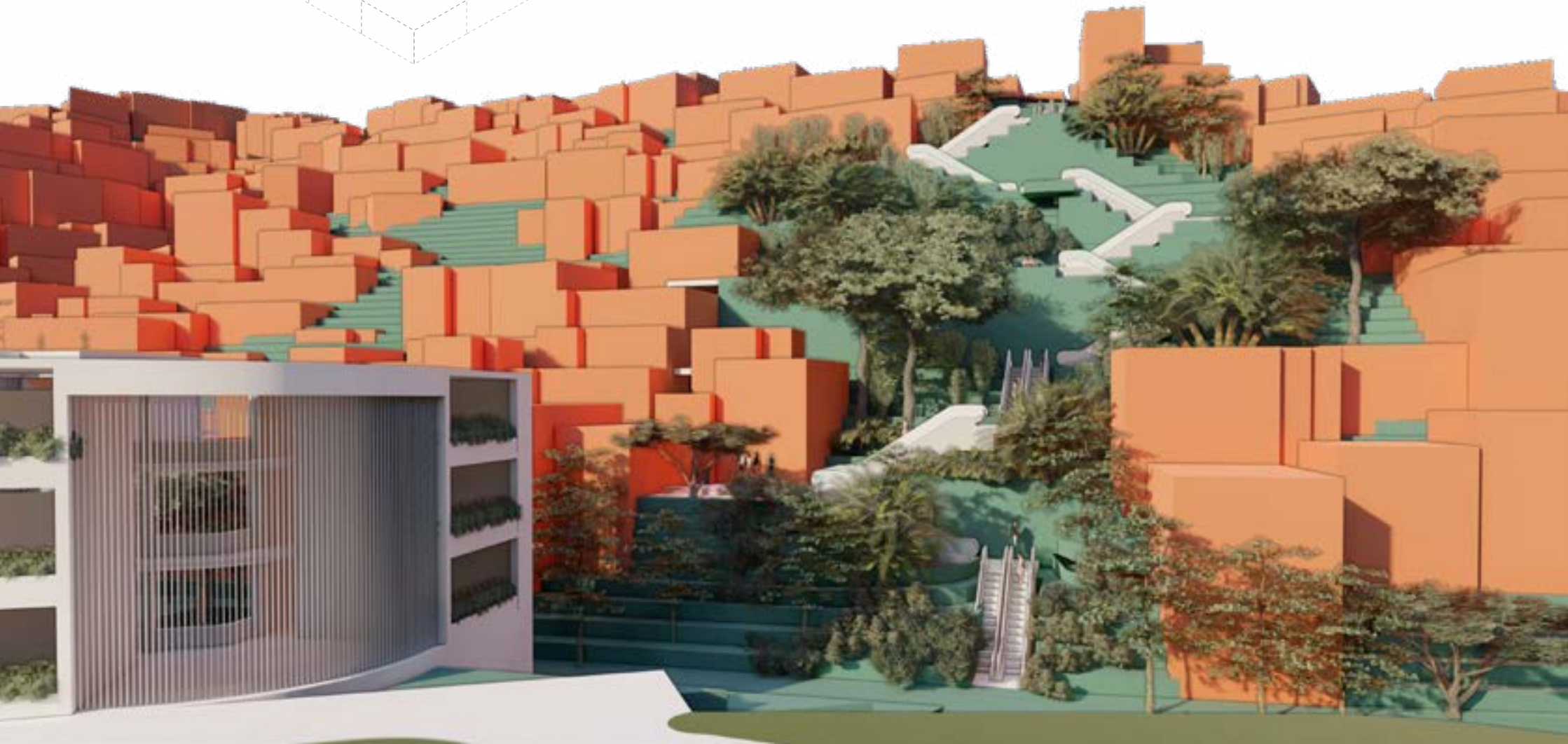








## C.1 INTERSTITIAL INTERVENTIONS





## 5.4 Respons to tropic





## COVERINGS





## PERMEABLE WALLS









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