



POLITECNICO
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Honors thesis

COURSE OF ARCHITECTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE
DESIGN

Abstract

**Looking south. Affinities and divergences in the
contemporary Latin American city.**

Tutor

Silvia Gron

by

Luca Secci

Co - Tutor

Niccolò Suraci

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The work presented in this thesis was born from some fundamental personal experiences, started from Valparaiso in Chile, continued in Brazil and finished in Colombia.

The goal of this research is the study of some architectural, urban and social dynamic that seems to be a constant in Latin America countries, although to different facets.

Therefore, the field of study has been extended initially to all of the countries of Latin America that have been colonized from Latin Nations that shares not only the language but have also common cultural, ethnic, geographic, religious, political and economic features.

The first part concern the theoretical bases of the studies, trying to clarify some of the characteristics that stands out from the observation of the contemporary global city. In the cities of the global south and in particular in Latin America cities these phenomena are strongly evident, by presenting enormous differences and social contrasts in a context of constant change.



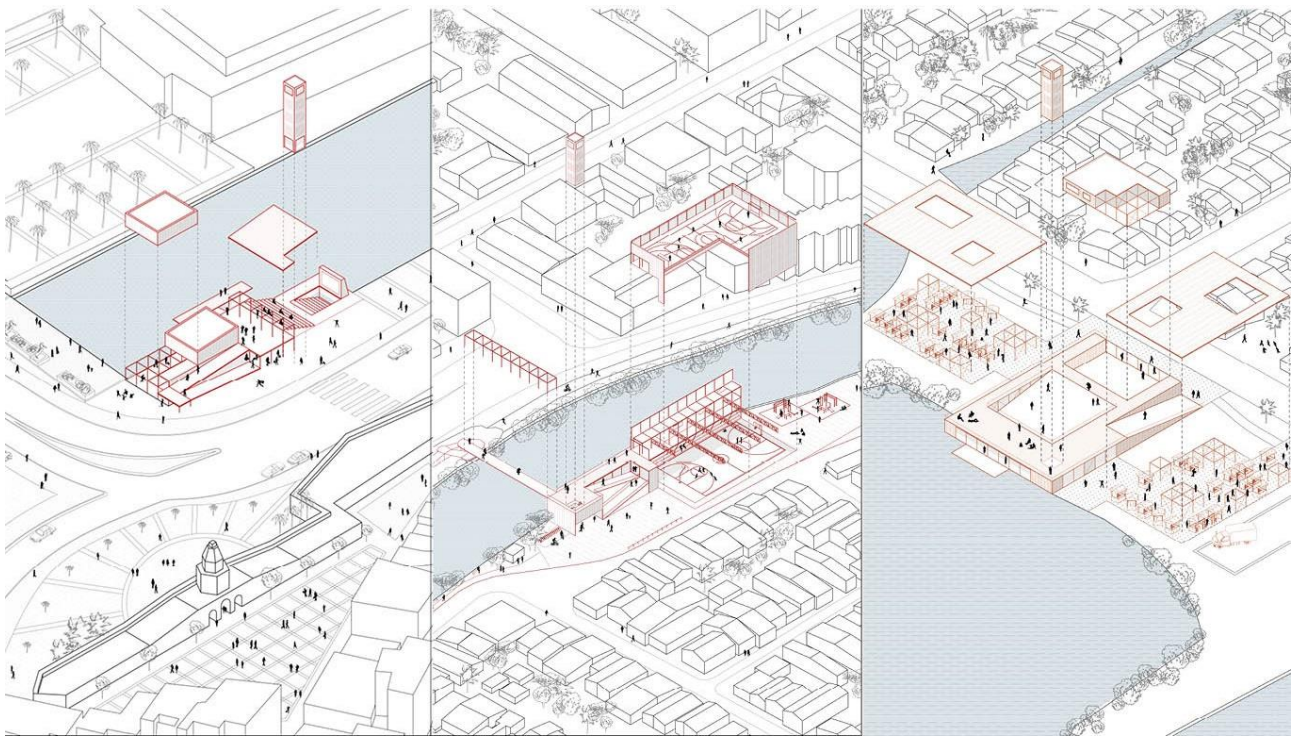
The research continues with the study of the historical common roots of these cities, from a colonial past to the XX century, when they turned out in one of the most important testing ground for the experiments of the modernist architects and their ideology.

Finally, were analysed some new urban and architectural tendencies of the last 20 years. Those new visions of planning tries to go beyond the functionalist perspective of the precedent models, using the power of the community to contaminate the established structures. That put in a new light the recent comprehension of the popular taste for self-building in Latin America, the attempts of formation of a new urban culture, and the importance of the infrastructure in a new role of connection able to start new urban transformations.



The thesis ends with the analysis of a specific case study, the city of Cartagena de Indias in Colombia that represents a good example for his historical, geographic and social characteristic. In this field an exercise of design is proposed in an effort to clarify the theory through the practice.

The proposal exploit the natural conditions of the city that is put in a very important natural context in which stands out the element of the water, found in various form. The proposal consist in a new water public transport system. In the process, the stations are not simple terminals, but they turn into something more complex able to accommodate a heterogeneous set of functions, depending on the location and needs. They become new city centres and space for the community. In this system, the choice was to elaborate three different stations, located in three different places in the city. The stations relate with very different urban fabrics and with three different kinds of water: the inner bay, a canal and a big lagoon.



The stations share some important features, like the division in different levels, ramps and vertical elements, well defined paths, materials and structural elements. However, each station is different in its configuration and additional functions. The project does not aim to represent a complete solution in its morphologic realisation, but rather to be used as an instrument for the clarification of the approach. It therefore should be seen as an exercise and not as a conclusion, using it as a tool for knowledge and comprehension.
