

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ART NET AS THE SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE IDENTITY OF PORTO ALEGRE THROUGH TERRITORIAL DESIGN

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ABSTRACT

The new economic order, based on a globalization process, has impacted in how we think about our cities, considering a much more systemic and complex view that goes behind physical limits. Consequently, the globalization market has forced cities to a constant recognition of their attractive potential, and to build a better definition of their position. In this globalization context, in which cities force themselves to explore other markets as a way to reinforce the internal economy and get sustainability conditions to the internal markets, it is possible to identify some challenges that cities should consider, as the following: the changes will not affect only the big cities; the social problems; the competition among urban cities; the new technologies, and the strategic management. Considering such reality, this article shows the structure of a design project applied to the territory of Porto Alegre, in the south of Brazil, which focus on its cultural identity reinforcement. This article is structured over a theoretical discussion about the cities situation in the current stage of globalization, following Sassen, Virilio and Manzini. Then, it is presented a methodological proposal based on strategic design in order to comprehend the territorial sustainability since a net action, articulating small groups of art and culture with other established nucleus in the city. Finally, this article shows a case related that has as characteristics the construction of an artists studios net around the local community sustainability with the intention to develop education projects to children and new artists.

Keywords: Strategic design, sustainability, globalization

1 INTRODUCTION

Since the late XX century, we have seen an increasing growth and differentiation in the processes of commercial exchanges. This radical transformation in markets and technologies has built a very particular urban picture compared to the one we have had so far. Unlikely the way the market used to organize itself and depend basically on urban structures for its effectiveness, we have gone through a period of nearly absolutely independence of the territory – the [des] territoriality.

It is believed that there are two fundamental factors for the comprehension of this process of territoriality: market, one reads product; and means of transport, one reads connection. Then, if ever since it is the same logic and it just increases the complexity, what is it on the base of it that can be relevant and that makes us rethink about the processes of territoriality today?

It is the Acceleration. The connection's acceleration and the markets' acceleration.

Sassen says that what characterizes the current process of territoriality is “the combination of the two big tendencies at stake, the worldwide geographical dispersion of the economic activities with the simultaneous possibility of keeping the systems' integration throughout communication (Sassen, 2004: 134). It is through this possibility of action at a distance that the [des] territoriality processes are consolidated.

Virilio ransoms an ethical and political dimension from this possibility of immediate connection to any point in the globe, arguing that “the fact of one being nearer than what is far than what one finds beside someone is a phenomenon of political dissolution of the human species. It is observed that the loss of the own body leads to the loss of the other in benefit of a species of spectrum which is far, than the one it is in the virtual space” (Virilio, 1999: 48).

The problem is that today the “accident”, paraphrasing Virilio, is global. The economies have become

independent from their territories of origin and are free to choose the best productive scenery. There is a strong process of [des] territoriality of economies interfering in the domestic economies.

“The correspondent economies to the more routinist branch activities, with markets basically regional or nation-wide, seem to have more and more liberty in the moment of moving or settling their main branches out of cities. Although the correspondent companies to the highly competitive and innovative fields and/or a strong guidance to the worldwide market seem to benefit from being located in the centre of business centre with international importance, irrespective of the costs that they cause” (Sassen, 2004: 137).

Then, the process is of [des] territoriality because the logical of the market is more strongly linked to the companies than connected with the local development of a specific territory.

If the market is already globalized and the major companies already have their territories spread around the globe, it is left over to the medium and small companies the urban territories. The urban territories not only provide conditions for these companies to survive but are also getting ready to attract the big fluctuating economies in the global market. It seems globalization irony because at the same time that one refuses the necessity of territory, one searches for it in a specific way, that is, it is the return to the territory – the [re] territoriality.

2 TERRITORY'S VALORISATIONS

In this context, “the new economic rule, fundamentally determined by markets’ globalization, commercial exchange impulse and entrepreneurs competitiveness increase, has arisen a new limit of reference for the functioning of cities’ economical basis: the necessity of improving the local companies of competitiveness level, the inversion in technological innovation, the sagacity in the foreign markets and labour capacity” (Güell, 1997: 44).

What is settled here is the effort that peripheral economies make to revert the economical logical based on values inversion. It is the suburbs getting qualified to attract investments currently located in big centers. This movement is so strong and so necessary for the survival of these economies that Güell talks about “sales strategies” for the cities as growing strategies.

According to him, “due to the changes accomplished by the economic scene and its implications in the urban development, nowadays selling the city has become one of the basic activities of local governments and one of main fields of public-private concentration. The intense competence that cities start to experience to take or even keep up economical activity obliges the local leaders to develop good promotion advertisings that highlight every attractive in their urban offer and make them different from the closest competitors” (Güell, 1997: 44).

This is the main theme of the [re] territoriality processes. In such perspective, the city’s territory goes over to an exchange market organizer and becomes in its own product in the globalization logic.

In this globalization context, in which cities oblige themselves to prospect the external market as a way to reactivate their internal economy and give sustainability conditions to the internal markets compared to the interdependence with the new emergent markets, Güell (1997: 48) calls attention for some challenges which the cities must be aware of.

1. Changes, nowadays taking place, will not only affect the cities, but will also produce significant effects in the medium size cities and inclusively in the small ones;
2. There is a growing worry over the magnitude of social tensions that are causing a new economic rule, however, the efficient instruments to prevent a possible social burst are not ready;
3. There is a strong rivalry among urban centers turned in investments in infra-structures, equipment and marketing advertising, that are not always at every municipal districts’ reach to take advantage of the opportunities being offered around and then position themselves advantageously in the markets more and more open, dynamic and strongly competitive;
4. It has been clearly perceived the economic and social benefits of proper new technologies dissemination, but there are still obstacles to be overcome in the medium and small size cities;
5. The fast rhythm in which facts happen, obligate to approach reflection processes and strategic management with ability and promptness unknown in the past of our urban history.

The inversion in function that the city faces - from merchandise space to merchandise city - in the current globalization stage, obligates us to rethink the processes of organization and strategic development in the

cities. Although the city has its sustainability in the economical processes of market, it can not be limited only to this view.

Following this same reasoning, Sánchez argues that “the change value, printed in the merchandise space, one imposes to the use of space, and therefore the ways of appropriation become to be more and more established by the market. In such way, the access to the space takes place through mediation in the modes of use and consume, with the separation deepening of public and private space” (Sánchez, 2003: 45).

If the city can not only be seen by the market segment, it is fundamental that the processes of development face the social segments. This means that it is necessary for one to participate in a common strategic project which contemplates the majority of the city’s social agents and that constructs collectively a social spatial seal that supports this new [re] territoriality process. The comprehension of the territorial growth as a responsibility of everyone and the city as common good is fundamental for the social development and for that every segment feel taking part of this collective project. It is definitive that the society as a whole, or at least in its most part, feel itself recognized and represented by this project that is more than a Government political project but a construction of a collective social seal in the territory.

Rethinking the city from its internal logic means to build a “systemic discontinuity” in the globalization process. According to Manzini, it is necessary that this “systemic discontinuity in macro scale be preceded by many local discontinuities, that is, radical changes in local scales” (Manzini, 2008: 19). In this perspective, the systemic discontinuity, it is thought of the reinforcement of Porto Alegre’s cultural vocation from a net action built upon community base, being able to dialogue with the official cultural structure and that allows an economical sustainability for the territory.

3 WHY STRATEGIC DESIGN APPLIED TO TERRITORY?

As already seen, the current stage of the society points to a development in economy based on an economy of transformation, flow, and immateriality. Therefore, any projectual action about the territory must take into account this reality. The subject Design has progressed toward this direction.

Historically, the Design was a subject that used to focus on valorization processes of products created in the industrialization process, therefore, material products. In a new context, the subject Design enlarges its spectrum for the immaterial processes, projecting the whole value chain – products, services, experience and communication. According to Bertola (2004: 30) “the maturity of the industrial sectors, the markets’ saturation, the growing competitiveness at a global level and the processes speeding of technological obsolescence are conditions which produce the first mutation not much in the project itself, but in the field of its productivity.”

This means say that from this constitution of pos-industrial society, more specifically, from the consuming society, the user (consumer) begins to have centrality in the production process. Then, the whole strategy development of the value chain is centred in the user and not in the product anymore – “from the project we go to the offer system project” (Bertola, 2004: 31). Hence, it is added to the focus of tangible goods, services and experience in which the user begins to have.

This approach of Design to industrial products can and must be led to the territory scale. So, the territory begins to be seen as a product that must receive a valorization to meet several users. User understood as all those that enjoy in a certain way either as a dweller, or as an inhabitant or as a tourist, etc.

If this methodology can be led to the territory, which spectrum of this approach that makes no shadow to the known one of the urban planning and from the urban design?

Once considers that the urban planning, as a planning development, concentrates much in the macro strategies guidelines and, contrarily, the urban design acts very much in the formal resolution of a specific problem and of a limited way. In the case of the approach by the Design, the action over the territory acts in the interface of these two approaches. On one hand, one thinks the action in a global level of strategic way and, therefore, one enlarges the view over the project problem, acting in the whole chain of value, from the guidelines, going through space production, designing the services, the experiences and the communication. The act of design is through an effective action of the project process. The word Design is applied again as Project, but also as Strategy. Having this in mind, we go through the understanding

of the sense of which the word Design points. According to Flusser (1999: 23), “the word design works, irrespectively, as a noun and as a verb. As a noun it means, among several aspects, intention, plan, purpose, goal, form, fundamental structure. As a verb – to design – it means, among several other aspects, plot something, pretend, project, sketch, form, proceed strategically”. If we highlight the nouns, form and the fundamental structure, and the verbs, project, sketch and form, we can origin the sense broadly known in the word of design of “form” and “project”. However, soon afterwards, he let us realize another sense: as noun, intention, plan, goal and as verb, scheme something, pretend and act strategically. From this, we have started another very little notion in the field of design, the “strategy”.

All this strategic action of territory innovation is based on two important concepts: project and meta-project. According to Celaschi and Deserti (2007: 38), “the activity that we consider central to the inner process of innovation of merchandise through the design is subdivided in two subdivisable in two distinct processes: the one which is traditionally called “project” and the one we define as “meta-project”.

The project is the way through which one organizes the factors that compete with a result foreshowing the process and stimulating the effects that can produce for better face and prevent difficulties and problems, and the meta-project, contrarily, refers to the process of ideation and program of research and projection that we will make use”. In this conception, the notion of strategy present in the concept of design is incorporated in the meta-projectual stage and the notion of form, in the project stage.

Then, the design can be a methodology of strategic action about the territory. We call such approach Territorial Design. With that, the territorial design happens to be an intervention of action about the territory, in different scales, having as a goal the creation of value associated to an identity promoted for further then its own limits in order to develop economical, social and environmental sustainability.

The manner territorial interferes is:

- visualizing the power points;
- activating a process of critical anticipation;
- developing views and building sceneries;
- identifying strategies and possible partnership;
- transferring innovation from others areas.

Hence, the design approach to the territory becomes effective with an action that is able to add value and that allows the understanding and the involvement of several social segments in order to transform the urban space in collective and significant way of the local culture. Territorial design concentrates itself in a manner that gives prestige for outside the city, one occupying in the recognition of internal values, in the territory transformation in product, in the possibility of communicating it externally and in the potential of attractiveness that the territory happens to have. Then, the organizations realize the design strategic action as a space for value aggregation and differentiation. Such system is made potent from the strategic view that considers internal and external variables for making feasible the design activities.

4 CASE: A NET ART CHAIN

The present case has resulted from the projectual experience taken place in a workshop of the Master Course in Strategic Design at the School of Design at Unisinos. The theme of the project came from the identification of an opportunity for constructing of an art chain in Porto Alegre which would articulate the art movements already taking place in the city. Porto Alegre has been presenting systematically several cultural initiatives of great relevance for the local development. The last major initiative was the construction of Iberê Camargo (considerable local artist) Museum by the Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza. The Government has been able to make progress in this project owing the articulation between the private sector, the local community and the public power itself.

The starting point of this Project began from a briefing made by a businessman who wished to donate an area in Porto Alegre south bound, as long as it were used for cultural purpose. Being more specific, to create a cultural centre for the work of an acknowledged local artist, Xico Stockinger. This briefing has held out the workshops discussions during the work days. The workshop had as a goal to widen this briefing through the meta-project stage, in the sense of taking advantage of such opportunity for the city as a whole. The initial briefing has held out three types of analysis:

1. an analysis of client's reality – in the case at issue one has analyzed the territory context, considering the social local and cultural reality;
2. an analysis of user for the future project – the dweller and visitants' profile;
3. an analysis of the market in which the market of this territory is inserted – global economy compared to the economic local context.

In short, the area has shown itself with a strong hospitality and cultural development potential linked to nature, by the wonderful landscape gardening in the area and with strong environmental values. The area is seen either by the dwellers or by the non-residents population as a pleasant one to be experienced and be useful as an escape from the daily urban disturbance. There are several local artists' ateliers in the area that develop artistic activities independent from any kind of association among them. Parallel to the local project's characteristic, one has evaluated the development of the city at issue to try to identify the contacts points.

This stage was of utmost importance due to the fact that the project itself has gained a wider and more strategic feature not only for restrict context of the local area but also has benefited the neighborhood and the city in which it is in. From this evidences that are here in concise ways, one has redefined the project briefing in one contra-briefing: the area would constitute not only in one art atmosphere but would also work as an important art net which would be made part of the whole city's territory. The contra-briefing's need comes in the sense of locating the initial wishes with the possible reality. This is necessary because in the initial briefing the project's concretion and extent level is not always clear. The contra-briefing produces a new look with a clearer definition of the initial goals and with a mapping of partners to be interested in the project.

Remade the initial briefing and turned into contra-briefing, another type of analysis was made: the blue-sky research. The blue-sky research was incentive for the project process. While the first context analysis is more concrete, realistic and precise concerning viability, the blue-sky research has enlarged the view of projects for complementary projects to the object at issue. It was composed of a research of visual stimulus that was taken from different sources. One has studied more than 60 similar cases that used to relate art, land art, natural landscape for constituting project's incentive.

A trend survey for this analysis was added and one has defined the project's strong and weak points, punctuating the opportunities. One has finalized this stage with the building of project view and possible scenario. By that, one has reached the definition of a vision: art attack. From this view the art net about the whole territory of the city, the project organized itself around this theme. From this meta-project process has resulted in a dossier with possible innovation scenario through a repertoire of suggestions, stimulus and current trends that can guide the process of the future project. This material makes possible the visualization of possible stakeholders involved in the proposal and for defining possible ways and routes to be considered. The product-system of Art Net was summed up in five subprojects articulated among them and with the city's context:

1. Territory – the Project of a Cultural and Art Center;
2. Activity – activities related to art and education;
3. Service – the creation of a linear park that link the park-cultural centre to the whole city in net;
4. Experience – commercialization of local and artistic products made in this Art Net;
5. Communication – advertising in graphic products and signs spread by the territory.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS.

The advantages of this methodology is that it goes through a process of clear construction of strategic governess bound to the planning processes, making tangible the project's proposals. If on one hand it formalizes more than the traditional plans of urban planning, on the other hand it does not discourage in a fix and rigid project as the projects of urban design. This process has got a recursive characteristic. The Art Net project ended this stage with the tangibility of a project that values the territory and articulates the urban planning of the city as a whole. However, this is only a stage of recursive process. The stage that is in development is the articulate stage with the stakeholders.

This means build up an articulation among the interested:

1. the private sector that is donating the area to the city;
2. the Mayor that should recognize this project as an important factor in its strategic plan of urban development;
3. people need to believe that this is a project which benefits the local population;
4. people in general who may understand this area as a leisure and cultural alternative for the city;
5. investors who believe in culture as a collective well;
6. artists who visualize this net as a possibility of progress in their work relating the new artists' formation;
7. the University as scientific promoter for this project process.

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