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**The Thesis Committee for Edna Ledesma
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**Prescribing Catalytic Opportunities: A Spectrum of the Modern
American Urban Landscape**

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Simon Atkinson

Dean Almy

**Prescribing Catalytic Opportunities: A Spectrum of the Modern
American Urban Landscape**

by

Edna Ledesma B.E.D, M.Arch

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Dedication

To my mother, father, sister, and brother, you are the reason for my existence. Thank you for inculcating in me the values of persistence and faith.

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Abstract

Prescribing Catalytic Opportunities: A Spectrum of the Modern American Urban Landscape

Edna Ledesma M.S.U.D

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Supervisor: Simon Atkinson

In an attempt to engage the fundamental issues of design that are integral to our understanding of architecture and the built environment, this thesis investigates how spontaneous architecture can transcend political and social boundaries by acting as a catalyst in the urban environment. The act of catalyzing is exemplified in the informal sector through street markets and street vendors. And while the complexity of the current economic reality in the United States has resulted in a fragmented architectural typology, the dynamic articulation of marginalized vacant space in the urban core has become a strong player in a revival of localism.

The underpinning goal of this thesis is to develop an understanding of the significance that these catalytic engines play in the reintegration of cities still fighting to overcome the spoils of modernity. Through a revival of localism and a re-appropriation

of urban energies, markets exemplify the bottom-up approach of incremental urban design powered by formation of strong micro economies.

Market case studies we visited in 6 cities in the United States: St. Louis, Missouri; Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Detroit, Michigan; and New York, New York. The case studies were used as means of deriving at potential insights to the state of the American street market. An examination of prescription of catalytic opportunities – a dynamical system that has a sensitive dependence on the initial conditions of a place – presents a series of guiding principles for successful market design.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

A paradigm of contemporary American urbanism exists between the formal sector- comprised of real estate, planning and bureaucracy - and the informal sector being driven from the core of cities when throughout history the informal sector and architecture have been side-by-side in order to maintain a spatial dialogue of the small-scale, spontaneous, and street events. By documenting the activity and character of key urban centers in the United States, one could begin to build a discourse of America's state in the world and, in turn, the domestic future for both architecture and urban design disciplines. Much of the inspiration for the inquiry this thesis underwent was a result of the current social and economic crisis in the United States and a curiosity to give light to a better understanding of urban design theory in our constantly evolving world.

Research conducted over the past several decades by the Brookings Institute, a non-profit public policy organization and advocated of democracy and health welfare in America, has shed light to some of the reasons for the current state of American cities. In a report first published by the institute in 1982, a study revealed reasons for the decline of many American cities and although the study was conducted almost two decades ago, the results still hold relevance and parallel the status of today's economic crisis. Brookings identified the basic social functions of urban areas to be: large scale production of goods and services, creative innovation; provision of a desirable residential environment; and provision of a social support system for residents.¹ And if these functions coincide to a particular urban environment, then prosperity and social health become an integral part of that environment. Other studies such as one published in the journal *Built Environment*

¹ Katherine Bradbury, Anthony Downs, and Kenneth A. Small, *Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 21.

also believe like Brookings that in combination, economic and social trends and governmental policies are to blame for the fate of urban city centers. The combination of all these factors has long encouraged outward migration enabling the growth of suburbs and their prosperity at the expense of central cities.”²

In her book *Integral Urbanism*, Nan Ellin declares that a revolution has taken place to mend the wounds of the Modern and Postmodern eras inflicted by sprawl, a growing perception of fear, a declining sense of community, and environmental degradation.³ Much of this affliction which was a product of a now dated architecture and urbanism discourse has in turn been augmented by more than that agenda but by socioeconomic and political factors. And in the mist of our current economic crisis the decline of American cities has been on the radar of more than designers. In a paper presented at the 8th Global Conference on Business & Economics in Italy by Stuart Rosenberg in the fall of 2008 he stated that “the key determinant that accounts for those U.S. cities and towns that have declined in population over the last couple of decades has been the transition from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy.”⁴ And partially due to this shift, over the last several decades an ongoing shift in the population of the United States has undergone from the urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest, where many are now in decline, to cities in the South, Southwest, and Far West where many are now prospering.⁵

The Brookings Institute defines urban decline in two ways: *descriptive decline* is any loss of population or jobs in an urban area; and *functional decline* means changes that

² June Manning Thomas, “The cities left behind,” *Built Environment*, volume 17 no.3-4 (1991): 218.

³ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

⁴ Stuart Rosenberg, “Growth, Decline, and Structural Change in U.S. Cities and Towns,” (paper present at the 8th Global Conference on Business & Economics, Florence, Italy, October 18-19, 2008), 9.

⁵ Ibid, 1.

are socially undesirable because they reduce the ability of a city or metropolitan area to perform its social functions effectively.⁶

The challenges that such diagnoses of the American metropolis presents are at the hands of some contemporary urban design theorists, the transition from theory to practice is not always made. While an analysis of the American city would inevitably have to address pertinent issue central to sustainability, the sustainability of social urbanism is significantly overlooked by many urban designers today.

Jane Jacobs was an urban philosopher whom for decades preached about the significance of social sustainability in a city. In her 1961 book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs stated:

Dull, inert cities, it's true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But vital cities have marvelous innate abilities for understanding communicating, contriving, and inventing what is required to combat their difficulties ... Lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and need outside themselves.⁷

The question this thesis presents is: can “seeds of destruction” be formulated to be reinvented into seeds of a vital city; if we understood chaos and its pattern language could we then derive at an understanding of order through disorder?

Nan Ellin's book has served as inspiration to the structuring of this thesis due to its strong pursuit in defining a new pattern language of urban integration in the American environment. And Nan Ellin dictates the five qualities of Integral Urbanism to be: *hybridity*, *connectivity*, *porosity*, *authenticity*, and *vulnerability*.⁸ Much like the author sites in her study, there is a long list of predecessors of which have too formulated lists of

⁶Katherine Bradbury, Anthony Downs, and Kenneth A. Small, *Urban Decline and the Future of American Cities*, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 4.

⁷ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 9.

⁸Ibid, 14.

five or so key principles of good urban design. “In *The Image of the City* (1960), Kevin Lynch reported that *paths, nodes, districts, landmarks, and edges* are the organizing principles of our mental maps of the cities. These categories bear similarities to those of Integral Urbanism with nodes offering hybridity, paths providing connectivity, edges allowing porosity, and districts and landmarks endowing authenticity.”⁹ Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollak: identified five “operations” describing the relationship between landscape and architecture: *reciprocity, materiality, threshold, insertion, and infrastructure*.¹⁰ In her book Ellin states that “Integral Urbanism simply validates our intuitive understanding of how places should be- dirt, disorder, and unpredictability included- rather than propose some ultimately undesirable as well as unattainable utopia.” These elements urban design served as inspiration for an attempt at measuring the level of success that markets and street vendors have on impacting the quality of a street. Reading an urban environment through a dynamic understanding of space as an involving thing thus became a principle challenge to this investigation.

The underpinning goal structuring the investigation of this thesis is to derive at a formulated set of guidelines needed to increase the life of street markets. This is an attempt to give light to an urban design agenda that is moving away from traditional finite design strategies onto an understanding of dynamic urban patterns in constant evolution.

The thesis can be broken down into four primary sections. The first section is an attempt at depicting the evolution of the modern American urban design agenda and framing the challenges which history set upon the American city during the 20th century. This narration transitions into a contemporary view of addressing the challenges of urban

⁹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

¹⁰ Ibid, 14.

design in a dynamic manner. Focusing on ideas of integration, temporality and the embrace of the quotidian, contemporary design theorists are beginning to shed light on to pragmatic methods of healing desegregated cities. The second portion of the thesis is a response to this contemporary way of thinking and presents a new urban design agenda focused on the ideas of catalytic opportunity.

The third part of the thesis consists of fieldwork analysis. The presented case studies are analyzed through a systematic count of all vendors present when visiting each of the seventeen sites found in the six cities visited: St. Louis, Missouri; Los Angeles, California; Portland, Oregon; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Detroit, Michigan; and New York, New York. A number of other variables were used to analyze the potential failure of success of each market or vendor cluster including: figure ground studies of the urban fabric, the existence of adjacent vacant lots, and land use. Along with the systematic count of vendors present per site, a simple survey was conducted to reveal other potential indicators for the spectrum of typology of vendors in this niche economy.

Finally, the thesis ends with a doctrine of guiding principles for successful market design. While the principles are significant to understanding the necessary elements needed for the proliferation of markets of any size, they are simply initial insights to this study still in need of further investigation.

Chapter 2: Defining Urbanism

AMERICAN URBANISM: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

It is imperative to examine the state of contemporary American urbanism as it is manifested in public spaces. Much of our understanding of the social cultures inherent to each geographic region is dependent upon the history of development as individual municipal entities but also on a national perspective. That national perspective grew to be a slave of 20th century planning principles dictated by the ideals of modernism and we now bear the consequences of those visions. These principles were manifested as sprawl, the growing perception of fear, a declining sense of community, and environmental degradation. Today, architecture and urban planning has begun a revolution aimed at healing the wounds inflicted upon the landscape by the Modern and Postmodern eras.¹¹ Perhaps the a closer examination of the ideas the helped shape two major metropolitan regions in the United States could begin to further our understanding of why cities in America are characterized by disconnection, overdevelopment, fragmentation, and over sanitation. Why it is critical to understand the development of these two distinct metropolitan regions is because of the differing yet equally significant priorities in development. While Los Angeles based development on speculation of a service society ever expansive to maintain its industrial economy, New York City used real estate as the key engine in spatial change. And while both model to a certain extent could be noted as having succeed in proliferating expansion and urban development, America failed when applying both models as the driving economic engines for urban growth stripped of social economic factors.

¹¹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

In looking at the development of the New York City landscape, David M. Scobey's *Empire City* reverts back to the 19th century as a key period for planning and layout of what is the Manhattan and the New York City boroughs. For Scobey, *Empire City* began from the discovery of an article on the *Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* published in 1868 written by William Cullen Bryant. Bryant, the leading advocate for parks and public improvement in New York City, asked if a city could be planned and thus sprung Scobey's investigation of the development of the New York City landscape. There are 3 key themes that author discusses: first, urban landscape must be understood not only as a setting for social and power relations but also as the product of those relations as a mediating cause in redeveloping them; the second is "sociospatial dialectic"- the interplay between spatial change and class formation; and the third the Marxist tradition of urban studies helps in making sense of the fundamental datum of the mid-century boom while the metropolis was divided against itself. This 19th century ideology became evident with the implementation of the New York City parks systems and most notably central park. However with the rise of urbanization, high rise development, and the expanding ideology of modernism, the priority for the sociospatial dialectic became eroded onto a need for density, sanitation, and high speed mobility.

No other singular player in the formation of the urban identity of the city is most representative of the erosion of sociospatial principles in the city due to the modernist agenda like the rise and fall of the New York City pushcart. The rise to prominence in urban commerce by the New York City pushcart came in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Driven by the mass migration of European immigrants, ambulant peddlers began to gather in mass numbers to service the newly arriving working class which was familiar with European street markets and was anxious to purchase

affordably.¹² Daniel Bluestone, professor at the University of Virginia, chronicles the history of the New York pushcart street markets between the 1880's and the 1930's through four distinct periods. The first phase was that of the illegal street markets which were characterized by those which violated city ordinances of peddling at one spot longer than fifteen or thirty minutes. The second phase came in 1913 when the city pushed for enclosing them in places they considered "out of the way" underneath the approaches to the Manhattan, Williamsburg, and Queensboro bridges. The third phase evolved parallel to the poor economic status of the country held during the First World War. Because of the city's great necessity to address issues of food shortage and a need for affordable goods, New York legalized a great number of the established markets in an effort to control them at designated streets. Finally, during the fourth phase in the 1930's pushcart markets and street markets were for the most part abolished to transition vendors to enclosed market buildings.¹³

These pushcart markets provided immigrants with a free social space as well as availability of food which lacked overhead costs attached to the use of private property.¹⁴ In 1936 New York City commissioner of markets William Fellowes Morgan, Jr. successfully lobbied to advance in what he called the social progress of the city and move all pushcart merchants to an enclosed market. In his perspective, the pushcart had long outlived its usefulness in the new days of modern, quick and sanitary distribution of food. The movement for a beautiful, clean and efficient city was a continuation of the Progressive Era in the United States to purify the government and in turn regulate street commerce.¹⁵ As cities began to grow as did its citizens' change in perspectives on the

¹² Daniel Bluestone, "Pushcart Evil," *Journal of Urban History*, volume 18 no.1 (1991), 71.

¹³ Ibid, 72.

¹⁴ Ibid, 74.

¹⁵ Ibid, 68.

city, so did visions of the proper use of public space. The banning of pushcarts in the city by the upper classes aimed at eradicating old traditions of urban commerce and extending ideals of public decorum and social separation to the street, one of the least ordered spaces in the modern city.¹⁶ At the peak of modernity, the coexistence of pushcarts and skyscrapers serves as evidence of an uncomfortable polarization in urban life between poverty and progress.¹⁷ Short of a complete ban of pushcart nuisance in the city was the remedy of setting aside areas for pushcart markets to concentrate.¹⁸

With the approach of the 1939's New York World's Fair, then city mayor Fiorello La Guardia and his market commissioners helped push reform against pushcarts with their department's report for the World's Fair exhibit titled "The Life and Death of the Pushcart."¹⁹ Year after year the La Guardia administration pushed for a consolidation or closure of pushcart markets with numbers totaling a decrease to only seventeen markets remaining open in 1937 of the sixty that were in operation in 1934. During the 1940's only ten were in operation.²⁰

Critic Ronald Buel blamed the automobile for a dehumanization of the typical urban dweller. The automobile became a private capsule isolated people from casual contact with other people.²¹ Ideals of modernity dictated a street as an avenue exclusive for smoothly circulating traffic. Traffic arteries were not to be of social use, for political activity, socialization, nor popular amusement. Streets were the promulgators of physical separation in a modern city and this effort was complemented by a sorting of social and

¹⁶ Daniel Bluestone, "Pushcart Evil," *Journal of Urban History*, volume 18 no.1 (1991), 69.

¹⁷ Ibid, 75.

¹⁸ Ibid, 81.

¹⁹ Ibid, 81.

²⁰ Ibid, 88.

²¹ Mark Foster, "City Planners and Urban Transportation: The American Response, 1900-1940," *Journal of Urban History*, volume 5 no. 5 (1979), 366.

economic class.²² As an economic model, the city believed that if streets were allowed to service as transit arteries, this would raise the possibility higher density and real estate values.²³ While New York City became a victim of sanitation and speculative development at the expense of street life, modernity took a different effect in the form of excess growth and expansion in the Los Angeles region.

Coined as a compelling “diagnosis of the city’s rise and fragmentation,” Robert M. Fogelson’s urban biography *The Fragmented Metropolis* narrates the tale of young metropolis of Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century. The book is a historical analysis of what one could call the formative or young years, of the city of Los Angeles from its beginning as a small Spanish town to a metropolis of the 20th century. Through an analysis of its history, Fogelson believes that the development of Los Angeles revolves around two themes: the first being the emergence of a populous, urbanized and industrialized settlement; and second is the rejection of a centralized metropolis in favor of the suburban decentralized landscape.

The shifting economic times of the 20th century American city brought on a flux of migration patterns into all major metropolitan districts. In the 1980’s LA was the leading immigrant destination in the United States.²⁴ While most municipalities’ response to this population growth was in the form of increased industrial expansion and provisional facilities, LA responded by realizing that the real business was in the form of physical growth itself. Their strategy focused on providing the essential infrastructure needed to be implemented to lure in the new population and businesses.²⁵ Condemned by

²² Daniel Bluestone, “Pushcart Evil,” *Journal of Urban History*, volume 18 no.1 (1991), 69.

²³ Ibid, 76.

²⁴ Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, (London: University of California Press, 1967), xvi.

²⁵ Ibid, xvi.

Fogelson as a “fragmented” city, this fragmentation is primarily one of political nature in the sense that it never evolved into a single political unit.²⁶ A city characterized by an economic victimization, residentially separation, and socially isolation it is difficult to explain how it managed to grow.²⁷ LA thus became the “inevitable culmination of growth obsession.”²⁸ As a case study, it is important to look at the city of Los Angeles because it epitomizes the American ideal of urban growth. Every single American city experiencing growth today is growing in the likes of LA with multiple urban cores.²⁹ What at one point was a nineteenth-century town, Los Angeles grew to become lost in the midst of a massive metropolitan region of more than fourteen million people that is surpassed in population in the United States only by the New York region.³⁰

Modernity and the ideas of mass production had a tremendous impact on shaping the city through the ideals of Fordism. While this idea of Fordism called for an increase in volume of production and spatially extending industrial structures.³¹

Functionalism became the dominant ideology of space: it not only established, for several decades, a certain degree of cohesion between urban planning, politics and everyday activities, but also co-ordinated diverse social practices.³²

Modernism drove cities to dictate form and urban life through the eyes of the machine. As in the principles of Fordism, “the conceptive ideologies of the modernists were based on the idea of treating the industrial city as both a mechanical unit and a huge integrative

²⁶ Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, (London: University of California Press, 1967), xvii.

²⁷ Ibid, xviii.

²⁸ Ibid, xvii.

²⁹ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. (New York: Random House, 1988), 3.

³⁰ Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, (London: University of California Press, 1967), xvi.

³¹ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel. *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 49.

³² Ibid, 50.

machine.”³³ Along with the increase of priority of speed that drove the automobile to the principle agent on the streets, the rise of retail stores and consumerism drove a parallel internalization of inhabitation.³⁴

In 1958 *Fortune* editors published “The Exploding Metropolis: a Study of the Assault on Urbanism and How Our Cities Can Resist It” with written contributions by authors Francis Bello, Seymour Freedgood, Daniel Seligman, and Jane Jacobs. A criticism of modernist urban development as one of an “inhuman scale,” it warns against excess bureaucracy and parking lots, the trend for downtown redevelopments which essentially turn the city into a “well-kept dignified cemetery,” and how cars, parking lots and highways would inevitably change the character of the city through devaluation.³⁵ Urban sprawl is to blame for the disappearance of green spaces and the degradation of the human environment.³⁶

Critic Lewis Mumford, like many others, demarked the automobile as promoters of suburban sprawl. This form of development produced a highly inefficient use of space.³⁷ In *Edge City* Joel Garreau characterized American development as one behaving as an ad hoc phenomena, one which is being made up as we go along.³⁸ Defined by Garreau as a developments rising from the 1980’s and onward holding a higher concentration of jobs then bedrooms, the phenomena of the edge city has become a standard model to suburbia in America. ³⁹ Garreau describes the concept of the “edge

³³ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel. *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006) 49.

³⁴ Daniel Bluestone, “Pushcart Evil,” *Journal of Urban History*, volume 18 no.1 (1991), 70.

³⁵ Hans Krabbendam, *The American Metropolis: image and inspiration*, (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2001), 1.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 1.

³⁷ Mark Foster, “City Planners and Urban Transportation: The American Response, 1900-1940,” *Journal of Urban History*, volume 5 no. 5 (1979), 366.

³⁸ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. (New York: Random House, 1988), xii.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 7.

city” as a state more indicative of a psychological location- a state of mind- rather than that of the physical place.⁴⁰ But while edge cities are multi-dimensional and not meant to be a general definition of a suburb, then as a branch or offspring of American ideals of suburbanization which is an accurate depiction of how the United States has grown.

While attempting to correct the limitations of Modernism, Poststructuralism placed a “premium on separateness, autonomy, and control.”⁴¹

From ‘less is more’ to ‘more is more,’ the byword has become ‘more from less.’ Louis Sullivan’s dictum that form follows function was supplemented by the deeply cynical late twentieth-century tendency for form to follow fiction, finesse, finance, and foremost fear.⁴²

But to this day, cities are working to repair the wounds that both profit driven real estate speculation and sprawl induces onto cities. Fragmentation and lack of integration are the problems urban designer have to repair.

The New York City parks system exemplifies the flaws of our economic system and social value with regards to public land. In a 2007 article of the *New York Times* titled “Planned Parks May Cost City Too Much,” a report by an independent planning group brings to light the budgetary incapacities of the city to realistically maintain and expand its parkway systems. In a city with few backyards, everyone loves parks but no one is willing to pay for them. The article states that in light of city mayor Michael Bloomberg’s announcing a 2030 goal to have every New Yorker be within a ten minute walk to a park, the funding problems finance comes to the surface. While it is good idea for social economy of a place to have sites for mixing of people and public amenities to a city, the structuring of our capitalist economy is always a preventative measure, limiting

⁴⁰ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. (New York: Random House, 1988), xiv.

⁴¹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 10.

⁴² Ibid, 6.

risk taking in developing open space that may have negative return on investment in a monetary sense.

The lack of places of opportunity to mix in a city has thus become the driving factor in self-appropriation of land. It is through appropriation and contesting the use of urban space that certain marginalized groups create their own communities. The result becomes a complex, democratic and paradoxical urban culture.⁴³

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* Jane Jacobs states that such diversity created by the mixing of complex urban cultures is necessary on a multifunctional level. Comingling of old and new and concentration of people are key ingredients to create diversity.⁴⁴ Perhaps the demise of early 20th pushcart markets could be partially to blame to the fact that markets were operated by poor people selling food and merchandise to other poor people.⁴⁵ If we go by the principles dictated by Jane Jacobs, the thriving of rich urban cultures are dependent on the mixing of groups and social classes. Jacobs states:

Dull, inert cities, it's true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But vital cities have marvelous innate abilities for understanding communicating, contriving, and inventing what is required to combat their difficulties ... Lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and need outside themselves.⁴⁶

While this was written in 1961, the principle message which she is professing is one that even today, almost fifty years later are struggling to enforce in the city.

⁴³ Hans Krabbendam, *The American Metropolis: image and inspiration*, (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2001), 18.

⁴⁴ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 19.

⁴⁵ Daniel Bluestone, "Pushcart Evil," *Journal of Urban History*, volume 18 no.1 (1991), 73.

⁴⁶ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 9.

INTEGRAL URBANISM

In her book *Integral Urbanism* Nan Ellin presents a model of urbanism which attempts to decode the reality of our fragmented society, a resultant of our postmodern society. In today's age, society though the eyes of architects has transcended past the ideology of the machine age in Modernism, from viewing the cities of the past as a model such in Postmodernism and on to a model that seeks stimulation in ecology and information systems in our present time due to the world wide web.⁴⁷ According to Ellin, what this new stimulation with thresholds has brought about has been a fascination with edge condition that is produced, with the in-between, all as concepts of an actual place.

In an attempt to define urbanism of the 21st century, Ellin states the need to validate an understanding of how places should be. Unlike unattainable utopias, real places are composed of dirt, disorder, and unpredictability.⁴⁸ Therefore it is through this understanding of place and acceptance of reality that we can begin to form a reading of urbanism in today's society. What one could begin to understand is that a complexity elements or variables that compose a place are so deeply interwoven into the many spectrums of society that successfully dictating space through the static reality of a master plan is simply unrealistic. Through the method of Integral Urbanism, Ellin "proposes more punctual interventions that contribute to activating places by making connections and caring for neglected or abandoned 'in-between' spaces or 'no-man's land.'" ⁴⁹ Described as a series of "acupuncture" type interventions, Integral Urbanism depicts tradition master plan methods in parallel to that of surgery on an anaesthetized city.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 7.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 9.

In defining Integral Urbanism, five qualities that characterize such an urban condition are proposed: *hybridity*, *connectivity*, *porosity*, *authenticity*, and *vulnerability*.⁵¹ The first two deal with integration, authenticity is the goal and it is achieved best by vulnerability.⁵² Because these qualities of urban space have a tendency to catalyze on borders, there is a relationship that begins to form a dialogue between built space and an architectural representation and these marginalized spaces. This relationship can be described as flow. The ultimate goal of an Integral Urbanism is a state of flow.⁵³ As defined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihaly “flow is the intense experience situated between boredom and overstimulation.”⁵⁴

Following the cataloging trends of past urban design scholars, Nan Ellin’s five qualities of Integral Urbanism are alike in number.⁵⁵ Kevin Lynch, Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollak all identified elements that encompass an index for recording our built environment. Seen as principles of organization for mental maps of cities, Kevin Lynch presents his five elements: paths, nodes, districts, landmarks and edges in *The Image of the City*.⁵⁶ Likewise, Anita Berrizbeitia and Linda Pollak described the relationship between landscape and architecture through five elements of “opposition”: *reciprocity*, *materiality*, *threshold*, *insertion*, and *infrastructure*.⁵⁷ In recognition of the parallel, Ellin depicts the similarities bore between those of Kevin Lynch and her elements of integral urbanism as such: “nodes offering hybridity, paths providing connectivity, edges allowing porosity, and districts and landmarks endowing authenticity.”⁵⁸ As a modern

⁵¹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

⁵² *Ibid*, 14.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 14.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

adaptation of Kevin Lynch's 1960's elements, integral urbanism understands the importance of reading a city through marginalized cityscape, the leftover space of architecture.

While earlier models aspired for a level of control in our built environment that would produce perfection, Ellin's model is suggestive of an environment that gives importance to connectedness and dynamism.⁵⁹ The threats posed by globalization and standardization which are endangering the soul and character of our landscape could be remedied by an acceptance of the interdependence amongst activity and city form.⁶⁰ It is through an embrace of her elements of integral urbanism, hybridity, connectivity, porosity, authenticity, and vulnerability that one can begin to understand the complexity of contemporary urban spaces?

Hybridity & Connectivity

Through the elements of hybridity and connectivity, Integral Urbanism tries to address the problems of dispersal and fragmentation. According to Ellin, the hand-in-hand collaboration of the latter spells an end to achieving a sense of place that existed in pre-vehicular landscape through connectedness and walkability.⁶¹ As modernity and the automobile separated living and working fueled by a need for speed, sprawled developments induced a displacement of the concentration of life at the city centers and a new multi nodal pattern of city form became the status quo. Integral Urbanism reaffirms the symbiotic nature through these two methods of linkages.⁶²

According to Ellin "along with intensifying activity and opportunity through hybridity, tremendous attention has been paid in recent years to facilitating movement

⁵⁹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 18.

⁶² *Ibid*, 18.

within and between urban nodes” often accomplished by reclaiming abandoned or construction of new infrastructures.⁶³ Similarly, opportunities for hybridity are being enhanced through architecture and building form regulations championed in hybrid programs and building codes that allow for flexibility and adaptability of use through form-based coding.⁶⁴

As this fragmentation of the urban fabric becomes mended through uncommon connections, Fred Kent, former student of Whyte, describes the result as a synergy caused by the triangulation unlikely pairs that exceed the imagination.⁶⁵ Through the strategy of hybridity, urban design can shift from a methodology traditionally focused on site and centers and onto a fusion of sub-networks in the multi nodal city. Infrastructure, landscape, and marginalized space can thus be activated when paired with an element of unexpected compatibility.

A prime example of this of the element of hybridity translated into a built project is the High Line by landscape designer James Corner with Field Operations and architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro.⁶⁶ [expand] As a result of projects such as these, “the approximately 25 percent of our landscape composed of highways, roads, parking, driveways, gas stations, and garages is increasingly [being] valorized and reconsidered.”⁶⁷

Similar to hybridity, connectivity examines the relations of the varied networks in a cityscape. As would its Latin root infer, *contextere*, which mean to make connections or weave together.⁶⁸ Integral Urbanism describes a connected urbanism that

⁶³ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 43.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 20.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 43.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 47.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 56.

focuses on: natural networks such as wildlife corridors, weather patterns; people moving networks such as roads, paths, trails, airways; exchange and economic networks, communication and virtual networks; social and historical networks.⁶⁹ Integral Urbanism enhances these flows and allows them to flourish; taking cues from ecological thresholds and their larger networks also preserve the integrity of each other- specificity of time, place culture- and diversity.”⁷⁰

Porosity

As a method of enhancing our experience of the city, translucent urbanism is a element in this process. Porosity is the means by which this urban translucency for a city is enhance in a controlled method.⁷¹ Serving as filter, porosity allows for a type of seepage which in turn is controlled, not allowing for a free-flow condition.⁷²

Nan Ellin goes even further to divide porosity into two types: functional and circulatory; the first allowing access to a place and acting as a modulator between us and them while the latter occurring at circulation paths such a sidewalks and street where their edges are not clearly defined allowing for flexibility of use.⁷³

Authenticity

The quality of authenti-city is described as inherent to an authentic city which is aware to a need to grow and expand according to the needs of the city. These needs will vary and arise over a time frame which is never ending.⁷⁴ This quality of integral urbanism discredits the archaic idea of *table rasa* which indicates a type of design

⁶⁹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 50.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 50.

⁷¹ Ibid, 62.

⁷² Ibid, 62.

⁷³ Ibid, 75.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 103.

strategy that asked for a demolition of context and starting from scratch. Authenticity encourages a mixture of scales, old and new, and a response to community needs of a region.⁷⁵ “Authentic urbanism” is produced when design is applied through a method which learns from the wisdom passed down through the ages.⁷⁶

Vulnerability

The final element of integral urbanism is that of vulnerability. As the last element discussed by Elli, it seems fitting as a final manifestation to designers to reinterpret design to be non-static. To be vulnerable means to be dynamic, improvisational, and many times not fully resolved.⁷⁷ This vulnerability one could say is the ability to recognize the implied relationship that a built environment has with time and therefore change. Vulnerability is a type of flexibility in nature and design to more easily allow for adaptability. Furthermore, in an attempt to romanticize this concept, Ellin declares vulnerable urbanism as soulful and poetic.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 103.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 105.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 122.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 122.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Integral Urbanism presents a taxonomy of elements for place-making. The lesson at hand is that individual elements never exists in isolation and are constantly reacting to it context.⁷⁹ Something integral is defined as that which is “essential to completeness, lacking nothing essential, formed as a unit with another part.”⁸⁰ Thus it could be inferred that such state of being described a mutually dependent relation. Then through the integration, blending or merging of the elements produce uniformity in the whole.

Integral Urbanism is not a determinist approach to design; contrary to tradition design methods seeking to achieve a static finite master plan.⁸¹ It does not aim to control outcomes but rather to identify the key ingredient that would ignite cities through the integration of buildings and their context.

Like Ellin’s argument of integration of urban spaces, other s have insisted on this integration at the architectural level. For instance, Aldo Van Eyck stated that “the time has come to conceive of architecture urbanistically and urbanism architecturally.”⁸² Architect Rem Koolhaas stated that

Urbanism is something that creates potential, and architecture is something that exploits potential, exhausts potential... Urbanism is generous, and architecture is egotistical.⁸³

It is the role of designers to understand the mutually dependent relation that architecture hold to urbanism. They cannot be self serving and must coexist, and it is through an understanding of the two that Integral Urbanism succeeds by capturing a contemporary

⁷⁹ Nan Ellin, *Integral Urbanism*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 83.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 1.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 10.

⁸² *Ibid*, 17.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 17.

understanding of the dynamiscism that exists in a truly modern city and the relationships that must be established in order for urban life to prosper.

EVERYDAY URBANISM

Margaret Crawford's book *Everyday Urbanism* is an attempt at delineating the amorphous contours of everyday life. In concept, 'everyday urbanism' looks at the quotidian, the in-between spaces of residential space, work space and institutions.⁸⁴ The publication was a resultant of a symposium held the spring of 1994. Part of the LA Museum of Contemporary Arts: "Urban Resisions" Exhibit.⁸⁵ With a close examination of New York city events such as parades and children at play, and Los Angeles' prevalent garage sales, street vendors, and bohemian enclave cultures, the book's ultimate goal is to reveal that "everyday urbanism seeks to release the powers of creativity and the imagination already present within daily life as the means of transforming urban experience and the city."⁸⁶

Crawford argues that a reading of the city can never be reconciled in to a singular understanding due to their many overlapping and at time contradicting meanings.⁸⁷ A particular meaning innate to all cities is which is exemplified by everyday life and arguably lacking attention by designers. Designers are in turn guided by a "professional design discourse ... based on abstract principles, whether qualitative, formal, spatial, or perceptual."⁸⁸ Crawford argues that a breach with reality can be avoided through the radical repositioning of the designer demanded by everyday urbanism; an ultimate shift in power from professionals to the ordinary people.⁸⁹

Despite the varied meaning that this aspect of the city holds through, social, spatial, physical and aesthetic principles, they are all present in daily, weekly, and yearly

⁸⁴ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel. *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006) 56.

⁸⁵ Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 10.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 12.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 6.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 7.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 9.

routine⁹⁰. Induced by a lack of study *Everyday Urbanism*, through a series of investigations presented by various scholars in Crawford's book claim a discovery of an overlap of the qualities in places such as streets, sidewalks, vacant lots and parks all which are mostly overlooked, marginalize places.⁹¹

At the peak of modernism in the late 1950's, The Situationist International (SI) formed as a coalition in response to the homogeneity and disciplinary efforts of functional urban planning.⁹² The Situationists were invested in the idea of mobile urban architecture that could be transformed to be in tune with its inhabitants' desires.⁹³

Situationist ideas were based on the fundamental premise of the absolute necessity to relate the constructed environment to the social context by conceiving space as a product of social activity. French philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who was in close contact with the Situationists for a time: systematized this perspective on urban space as one seen both as a product and a medium created by social praxis which also structured society.⁹⁴

Predecessor to Crawford and her colleagues, Henri Lefebvre believed that locating the differences "physically in everyday life is to map the social geography of the city."⁹⁵ And this social geography is best manifested by the victims of everyday life: woman, low income workers, immigrants, etc.⁹⁶ Crawford believes that potential sites for everyday urbanism are the places where these places/experiences collide.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 6.

⁹¹ Ibid, 7.

⁹² Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 47.

⁹³ Ibid, 47.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 48.

⁹⁵ Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 8.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 8.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 8.

According to Lefebvre, there are two contrasting modes of representation: cyclical and linear. A third element, that of fleeting sensation is a common bond in the two ⁹⁸ Furthermore, cyclical representation can be translated into elements of rhythm and nature while linear representation correlates with time and measure⁹⁹. It is through a combination of these modes that a social geography of a city can be mapped and begin to form of reading of simple measures of everyday life that although subject to bias, could be quantifiable.

Lefebvre's philosophy prescribed space in multiple dimensions. *Perceived* space represents the first dimension and it is "concerned with the collective production of urban reality, in other words: with the rhythms of work, home life and leisure activities in which a society decodes and reproduces its spatiality."¹⁰⁰ *Imagined* space is the next dimension which is shaped by forms of knowledge, signs and codes. It is in this dimension that we have the ability to conceive of representation of space by the works of planner, architects and designers into individual elements which can then be reassembled into a-new. *Experience* and *suffered* space comprise of the last dimension. In this dimension we deal with space of representation: space as experience by different users through images and symbols of everyday life as mediators.¹⁰¹

Following in Lefebvre's principles, Edward Soja conceptualize of a category of spaces called "thirdspace." "Thirdspace" is neither a representation of space nor the material space which we experience; it is instead a space that bears the possibility of new

⁹⁸ Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 9.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 48.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 49.

meaning activated through social action and social imagination making it in turn a space of representation.¹⁰²

Theorist B.K. Gimblett states that spatial form is produced through performance which it in turn is a key element in the production of the urban vernacular.¹⁰³ If space is constructed in performance, then the activities that activate these spaces are themselves architectural in the sense that performance gives form to space.¹⁰⁴

As part of her exploration of Everyday Urbanism, Crawford credits Nancy Fraser's article "Rethinking the Public Sphere" as a significant point of departure in her quest though a clarification of the significant political and theoretical limitations of prevailing formulations of "public".¹⁰⁵ The idea of public brought Crawford back to the start of her investigation by questioning public space in relation to democracy. She states that although a single garage sale may not solely generate new urban politics, its juxtaposition and collision of place, activity and people creates a condition of social fluidity which in turn break down the hierarchical structures of everyday life as is evident in Los Angeles.¹⁰⁶

According to Crawford:

Everyday Urbanism embraces the diversity of life, in contrast to other schools of urban design that target a particular ethos and then create an approach to further this worldwide. If upper case Everyday Urbanism still designates a design approach, lower case everyday urbanism has become an accepted term to positively describe ordinary urban places and activities.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 29.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 19.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 12.

She further clarifies that it was never intended to be an over-arching approach to design; it in-turn is concerned with the visionary and transformative goals inherent in Everyday Urbanism in contrast to more contemporary urbanism theories.¹⁰⁸

As we move to examine other forms urbanism, a correlation can be tracked between temporality and the approach presented by Margaret Crawford's Everyday Urbanism. In contrast to locations of standardized, expensive, permanent and large-scale developments, Crawford's concern with the small, temporary, unintentional, inexpressive and highly frequented transcends to an urbanism that is of value for its temporal status.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ Margaret Crawford, *Everyday Urbanism*, (New York: Monacelli, 2008), 15.

¹⁰⁹ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 56.

TEMPORARY URBANISM

Temporary Urban Spaces, edited by Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, presents the concept of a temporary urbanism focusing on the use of space temporarily, especially in the urban context. Conducted primarily as a European study, the book describes its limitations by stating that “an expansion into other geographical areas would have to take different social and economic contexts into account and was therefore excluded.”¹¹⁰ As stated, although it is composed primarily of European studies and while a number of American cases are presented, the general framework of understanding the key players: politics, practice and desire all affecting the implementation of this transient urbanism, is important to the understanding of them in a capitalist economy as we have in the United States.

Because all urban uses are limited in time and there is an increasing number of uses which exist for an increasing shorter period of time, the term temporary is one that is difficult to define.¹¹¹ For architect Rem Koolhaas, there is no longer a distinction between public and private spaces. The boundary has become obsolete and it is thus best to speak of space by defining them as controlled versus abandoned residual space.¹¹²

Space could also be defined as one of three parts: private space which is ruled by the owners, public space which is ruled by the public, and third space which is pseudo-public space. This third type is a type of private space or a space administered through a private organization but which denotes the space to be public thus staging a pseudo-public

¹¹⁰ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 19.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 77.

¹¹² Ibid, 76.

activity.¹¹³ Pseudo-public space can also be formalized through the privatization of former public institutions.¹¹⁴

Politics

The term temporary use has increasingly been a part of contemporary planning discourse as a new form of planning methodology.¹¹⁵ In his essay “Temporary Uses, Deregulation and Urbanity,” Rudolf Kohoutek states that generalizations about temporary use raises questions such as how we can distinguish between ‘temporary use’ and ‘normal use’, what is ‘use’, and questions on whether one should consider all urban uses to be temporary in nature.

“For some time, and with increasing frequency, temporary use has turned up on the discourse on planning as a new concept, as a new urban planning method. Against the backdrop of specific examples, it seems clear what is meant. As soon as one tries to generalize from specific phenomena, however, several questions arise. What distinguishes ‘temporary use’ from ‘normal use’? Aren’t all urban uses already temporary in nature? Aren’t all uses tending to become shorter in life? What is a ‘use’ exactly? What temporary uses achieve, it seems, is a good deal of deconstruction work: they fundamentally call planning and, even more so, its premises, into question.”¹¹⁶ Thus the idea of having a use that by nature contradict by demeanor the essence or need to plan would undoubtedly raise anger in the planning profession.

The concept of use as an idea of economic consumption or habitation can be interpreted on two levels. Objectively, “use” can be seen as a descriptor of things such as

¹¹³ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 108.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 110.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 25.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 25.

a lot, a building or a space, while the subjective value of that “use” is seen as a “space as a container for sensible objectives: dwelling in a dwelling, teaching in a school building.”¹¹⁷ In present day, politics has played a significant role in codifying the use a particular space objectively thus allowing for a fleeting in the understanding of use in a subjective manner.

According to Kohoutek, “use is, in any case, not a quality that is inscribed in things, buildings or spaces but rather a social relationship in the triangle of property, possession and right of use.”¹¹⁸ This triangulation is one that has in the United States transcended onto a direct relation amongst the first two elements and with a merging of rights onto the proprietors only. And it is through deregulation or a break from traditional ties that one could begin to repair the damage that has emerged from the disrupted social triangulation.¹¹⁹

While in the United States the phrase “temporary use” can be found in many planning and building ordinances as the collective term for uses of brief duration, temporary use is a more fixed repertoire of the events culture of European cities. In the U.S., “normal economy” is viewed as a barter system controlled in a political framework aimed at profitable exchange. While the idea of “urban economy” is supposed to be understood to be “the totality of all activities and uses that are important for a city,” the idea of profit has become the driving mechanism for prescribing our economic system.¹²⁰ Urban economies encourage innovation. Start-ups and creative industries are key players in the economic flow of their needs for special space and production conditions are

¹¹⁷ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 25.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 26.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 27.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 30.

typically offered at unaffordable scales and prices by a normal economic market.¹²¹ The economic barriers that a normal economy presents through standard legal relationships and planning procedures are inhibitors on growth of true urban economy.

Kohoutek describes this as a paradox of control. While on one hand there is an increase record of vacancies in cities, cities are in urgent need for revitalization and innovation policy regarding systems of localized completion. What remains to be seen is whether temporary use as economic agent could begin to present a solution to this problem.¹²² Deregulation though could become the gateway of interpreting this paradigm through new and innovative forms. The “normal economy” has failed to address the needs of all contributors to the system and thus resulted in the collapse of it as whole. It is only through a reevaluation of its principle political drivers that opportunities could begin to flourish.

Ultimately Kohoutek credits the need to rethink this paradox to the failures of modern planning through which over the last two centuries a disintegration of traditional architectural form and the dissolution of the bond between buildings, residents and use through the real estate market has flourished.¹²³

The difficulty that exists in the paradox of control is principally that of the ideology of proprietorship. While we want to reinforce the ideas of an ideal “urban economy,” the capitalistic views that drive our “normal economy” are perpetuated through the image of “isolation and dispersion of individual uses and the ‘appropriate’ rehousing in specific buildings, in keeping with the logic of functionalism” as indicators

¹²¹ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 30.

¹²² Ibid, 31.

¹²³ Ibid, 37.

of increased wealth.¹²⁴ One can begin to see how the conflict in value of ownership would not correlate to a positive conception of urbanity which would reinforce the multiple uses or repurposing of space, overlapping uses and the resulting ‘density’: all the result of shortage.¹²⁵

In his essay “Urban Planning and Interim Use,” Peter Arlt goes a step further than Kohoutek and defines interim use fundamentally as a classical principle of the market economy.¹²⁶ The key ingredient in this economic model is the co-operation that is required of the public-private partnership (PPP). Through collaborations, public and private actors can work towards implementation of urban planning projects. We can consider these private actors to be interim users and public actors the governing agencies; they each have specific roles that must be undertaken for the success of such a partnership. While interim users take advantage of interruption in use that occurs when a building or lot is left empty in order to demonstrate a concept that may in time become a permanent solution, many times the smaller the capital investment the greater the chance of rejection as a partner in the PPP through urban planning development.¹²⁷

Robert Temel synthesized the concept of temporality in his essay “The Temporary in the City” in relation to a political framework. He believes that when applying the concept of temporality to the practice of urban planning, it could become clear how although the city as a whole inherently will have a long life the practice of urban use and urban planning will lead to certain qualities that are temporary.¹²⁸ In a political framework, he argues that one should develop an appreciation for the practice of

¹²⁴ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 36.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 36.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 39.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 44.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 55.

planning in order to induce the qualities of temporality. He believes that the requirements of our accelerated capitalist economy are in conflict with the immobility of real estate. As stated in the *Communist Manifesto*:

All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudice and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.¹²⁹

The principle argument in this is that temporality in a political sense is not simply a specific quality but rather a universal applicable principle. The concept should be allowed to transcend onto a method of liberation of land as a means of production from the shackles of the permanent into forms of interim use. Interim uses allow for a utilization of unproductive idle time. Because the market requires use to give room for succeeding more productive uses, liberation of means from an economic permanence is inevitable.¹³⁰ But because we live in a capitalist society, the likelihood of a political ideological change in line with the stated principles of the Communist Manifesto is slender.

As a reactionary agent of the constraints of our market economy, contemporary views held by the creative class see and increased wagering on cultural policies rather than economic policies as a means of improving their image through locational competition. Temporary urbanism is manifested in cultural policies through the use of cultural events intended to increase tourist interests.¹³¹ The episodic tendency of cultural events allow for political flexibility in easing policy reform due to the non-permanent nature. These temporary uses tend to appropriate spaces that become transitional in use. Temel states that while they are located in a specific place these are part of a material

¹²⁹ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 56.

¹³⁰ Ibid, 56.

¹³¹ Ibid, 57.

space which is a “physical substratum of social relationships.”¹³² These catalytic engines while acting as political initiatives start to have secondary affects as micro mixers of social interaction.

Practice

In his essay “A Material that Never Comes to Rest: Concepts and Potentials of Temporary Spaces,” Florian Haydn describes the significance for having temporary space in three basic concepts. He defines temporality as “... an aggregate state, a material that never comes to rest. Its molecules are the people involved, the residents of the city.”¹³³

The first concept is embodied by the idea of creating community.¹³⁴ As negative byproduct of modernism’s programmatic isolation of functions, mono-functional islands were created and this separation is healed by the use of temporary programs that encourage the formations of community as a means of integrating all separated components.

The second concept enhanced by temporary spaces is that public space. According to Haydn, public spaces are engines and protect us from an excess of intimacy.¹³⁵ Because urban life is composed of an immeasurably diverse number of overlapping spaces many with incongruent boundaries, public spaces are the vehicles staging connections. Temporary programs have a propensity to occur in public spaces thus reinforcing this principle idea highlighting the incongruent edges of urban space.

The third concept necessary for perpetuating the importance of temporary uses is the basic idea of planning. Urban planning as a primary goal has aimed to locate building

¹³²Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 59.

¹³³ Ibid, 67.

¹³⁴ Ibid, 67.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 67.

and allowing for connectedness at a number of levels: local, national, and international, through the use of network systems.¹³⁶ Through the use of this principle of buildings as mediums of connectivity as the guiding element for planners, Haydn states that the *programme* itself becomes secondary and interchangeable to its primary goal of placement.¹³⁷ It is through the planning process that the basic idea of public space comes into play when carving out edges in connections out of central locations. These public spaces which are many times the central locations for temporary use illustrate at best a type of “de-urbanization” through the inverse action of building and densification.¹³⁸ Planning in turn becomes a key player in implementing an urban form that allows for a flexibility of use through an interchangeable program and secondly through the implementation of public spaces. Ultimately, Florian Haydn believes that the successful method to implement through practice the basic concepts of temporary is achieved best if viewed in terms of Buckminster Fuller ideas whom stated:

We must put all the resources of the world into a fluid, fluctuating, mobile state so that nothing exists that we have to try to get rid of.¹³⁹

The work of the European group Urban Catalyst (UC) is an excellent example of how to put into practice the ideas of temporary use. UC is an interdisciplinary platform for research, projects, public interventions, conferences, exhibitions and publications. Two of their primary goals are to: foster public discourse on contemporary urban issues and develop concepts and strategies for planners and architects to implement these. UC is

¹³⁶ Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 68.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 68.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 70.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 73.

a reaction to how traditional instruments of architecture and urban planning are increasingly unable to address new challenges.¹⁴⁰

Founded in 2003 by Philipp Misselwitz, Philipp Oswalt and Klaus Overmeyer the organization developed from a European research project of the same name which explored strategies for temporary use in residual urban areas during the period of 2001-2003.¹⁴¹ Their research is framed under the fundamental thesis which concluded the necessity to explore the potential that temporary use has on urban developments and what are the means necessary to effectively employ them.¹⁴²

In application, UC reinterpreted temporary uses as interim uses and considered them a subset of temporary uses but as an alternative economic model. In this model, the distinguishing characteristic between the two is the first being supply-oriented while the later demand oriented.¹⁴³ While Urban Catalyst focused on the idea of these uses as transitional vessels to further or potential future use, a certain aspect of temporary use, that which is the focus of this thesis, remains unexplored. Issues of the informal sector, spontaneous, self-organized uses characterized by the self-appropriation of available, economically open spaces.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Urban Catalyst, "Urban Catalyst," accessed November 22, 2010, <http://www.urbancatalyst.net/index>.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Florian Haydn and Robert Temel, *Temporary Urban Spaces: Concepts for the Use of City Spaces* (Basel: Birkhauser, 2006), 76.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 77.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 79.

Chapter 3: Catalytic Urbanism

DEFINITION: CATALYTIC OPPORTUNITY

Catalyst

Chemically, a catalyst is defined as a substance that initiates or accelerates a chemical reaction without itself being affected.¹⁴⁵ As precipitants of an event or change, catalysts are necessary combustion engine that disrupt the status quo and provide the necessary accelerating capacity in a dormant or inactive reality in order for change to be felt. Urban catalysts are those agents which induce change in an urban context. While it is a given that any agent of positive change is one which ought to be desired and promulgated, the challenge comes in codifying the catalysts as principles of urban design.

Catalysts are in turn a cause for change. Whether this cause is perceived to be natural or not, the process of initiation is nonetheless a vital principle to change itself. In order for any element to transcend from a passive status to that of a catalytic agent, there is a necessary mixing that must occur, as described in its chemical definition. A catalyst only becomes a catalyst when coming in contact with a secondary element which it in-turn becomes accelerated. Not only do catalysts allow for an accelerated development of living cells, they are essential to growth and the repair of tissues.

Catalysts can be broken down into two types: a causal *agent* and a causal *agency*. Both agents and agencies act as forces which induce an effect on secondary element. What is important to note about these is their power to change or manipulate the present. Causal agents are typically characterized as individuals, people, or a physical entity. A causal agency is an impalpable condition, or a state of being. When in action, causal agencies can have a positive or negative effect.

¹⁴⁵ Visual Thesaurus, "Visual Thesaurus," accessed November 22, 2010. <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>

Opportunity

Defined as an advantageous combination of circumstances, opportunity has a direct correlation to time. It is an aperture for a fresh start but it is only when the combination of circumstances occurs in unison that an opportunity becomes advantageous. The physical state of opportunity is that of an opening and in an urban context, *street* as the absence of built form is the ideal embodiment of opportunity.

Streets are often seen as residual space, buffers that define districts, communities and neighborhoods. As a living organism, streets occur in both a mobile and sedentary state. Primarily they are vessels for movement, thorough fares and routes to navigate a city. In their state of impasse they exist as dead-end streets, cul-de-sacs and blind alleys. While it is a grand generalization to assume one to be better than the other, it was this same mentality that drove city through the ideas of modernism and the automobile to consider speed the necessary agent to a thriving metropolis. One state is not more important than the other but the understanding that streets exist in these two extreme states is important to be able to identify combination of circumstances that must group in order them as opportunities to flourish.

As a physical environment, streets are more than simply the void of built mass. There is a direct relationship between streets and buildings. The act of surrounding becomes the method through which the dialogue between the two is manifested. Streets can surround in a variety of forms. They can act as invisible walls which delineate a secondary space. Streets can serve as borders between adjacent spaces. But where their capacity to surround becomes dangerously exploited is when the dialogue between them and buildings becomes one of asphyxiation. As living organism, streets should maintain a circulatory rhythm which is best portrayed by the relationships they have to their context.

Ultimately, streets are the key sites of opportunity in an urban context. As generators of place, they have the capacity to dictate the life of its context through their capacity to allow for interaction. The connections, relations and activity which they induce are the regenerators of events potential change and positive acceleration in an urban environment. While streets are not all meant to circulate at the same speed and rate, they mustn't be allowed to suffocate their environments.

WHY HAVE CATALYTIC OPPORTUNITIES

Catalytic opportunities in an urban context are imperative in our contemporary metropolitan environments. At a time when many American cities are characterized as being decentralized, segregated and chaotic environments, a reintegration and reknitting of the city is necessary. Cultural amalgamation occurs when two cultures mix to create a new culture. Catalytic opportunities are important to contemporary American cities because they serve as mediators of interaction in the city. It is through mundane interaction that cultures begin to mix resulting in an inherent increase in tolerance for strangers.

The key problem is that we have reached a point in society where physical contact has been lost as have the opportunities for mixing. Separation due to fear has induced limitations in our interactions with people that may differ in values, culture and lifestyle. In order to amend the separation, amalgamation must be allowed to exist as a necessary element to a healthy society. The question thus becomes, could cultural amalgamation be codified as a service?

If we consider mixing to be a good thing, the challenge then arrives as we attempt to provide this amenity in a city as a utility. By definition, we know that a catalyst can be found in the form of an agent or an agency and streets are the ideal sites of opportunity. Cities have come to push forward the modernist agenda that a street is an artery for fast circulation, for movement and as the public realm of the city; they must be representative of health through sanitation. With an increasing priority in street usage for vehicular circulation comes a diminishing priority for pedestrian movement. Sidewalks are shrinking and many times they are non contiguous.

Catalytic opportunities are a remedy to the disappearance of space. Economic factors could be to blame as a driving mechanism in the ruthless speculation of land but

urban designers and planners have allowed the trend to be the status quo. While this is not an advocate call for a proliferation of open space, it is important to understand the direct relation that land as the opportunity has to accelerating agents and agencies. If an excess of land is left unused and inactive, it can be just as deadly to a city as the lack of there-of. But the economy is not the only cause. Society has developed an extreme phobia for sanitation as has the power of bureaucracy in fear of liability caused by the uncontrolled.

If cities could overcome the fear of the uncontrolled it would become clear how if left to flourish urban catalysts improve the face of the city. They can serve as amenities to the areas adjacent to the sites of opportunity. If cities are seen as a living organism, it seems illogical to not allow life to proliferate. Life on the streets is a social nutrient to a city which builds identity. A catalytic opportunity is one which provides the city with that necessary nutrients needed to live. Due to the structuring of the political framework in a city obliged to quantify through monetary restrictions every service and amenities to a city, the use of micro interventions by third party members should be seen as a good economic strategy. Opportunities at streets that can ignite interaction by people and the mixing of groups are the byproduct micro interventions. This affordability is best represented by the micro economy at work through a street vendor and its purchasers.

The challenge that designers and planners should aid cities in is in the act of identifying opportunity. Can change and opportunity be identified and how could one begin to do so. And furthermore, once these opportunities are identified, how do you balance these catalytic agents as well as agencies to allow them to maintain the same inertia that they start with.

The answer to these questions is in the form of *incremental urban design*. Because catalytic opportunities are affected by the variables of time and opportunity,

urban designers must take into account time as a key ingredient to allow opportunity to flourish. The element of time in urban design agenda should be understood as dictator of evolution and morphology and less for the phasing of a singular strategy through staging. In order for incremental urban design to function, both accelerators and decelerators must be identified. As implied by their names an accelerator fuel at an increased rate the effects of a catalyst. Decelerators are elements that impeded the mixing of opportunities with catalyst and thus preventing the possibility of change to take effect. Incremental urban design is dependent on the ability of the designer to identify both elements which accelerate and decelerate catalytic urbanism.

Along with these, the strategy of designing incrementally should consider the application of the following elements additively: scale, users, and uses. While these will further be expanded on, it is important to note that while they should be taken into account as key elements in incremental design, one cannot have complete control of them through every stage of their development. The role of the urban designer is to identify the elements that accelerate positive interventions in a city, allow them to flourish by allowing the accelerators to be fed into the equation systematically, but the chemical reaction which they will produce as affected by time is never entirely predictable. Urban designers cannot control the true reality of the future but they can simply allow for positive catalytic engines to make the changes needed for a place to thrive not just economically but also socially.

CONDEMNING SANITATION IN THE CITY

While many cities spent a major part of the 20th century clearing the streets of the filth and byproducts of industrialization the sight of anything foul gain zero tolerance. Dirt became synonymous of disease and a push for sanitation became the way to develop a healthy urban environment. The state of being for a city turned to one of cursory against elements indicative of plague. Thus, elements which could not be controlled became plague in the eyes of the city. This brings forth the primary decelerator to urban catalysts: sanitation.

Sanitation for the benefit of public health is bad when taken to an extreme. As cities grew and learned the importance of sanitation and hygiene, its principle property became extended to other aspects of the city which in turn induced a state of asepsis. By definition, asepsis is the state of inhibiting growth and multiplication. When a city is sanitized in the sense that it is stripped of lingering elements, of the mundane, street life, and socially marginalized people, streets as the sites of opportunity are missing of the mixing element to form a positive urban catalyst. The proliferation of the active ingredients in a catalyst through the process of acceleration is thus not allowed. If contact is not allowed, a catalyst cannot accelerate and much less its affect cannot be multiplied across a site or adjacent communities.

A secondary byproduct of sterilizing a city is thus infertility. If a venue of opportunity, arguably the street, is driven to an extreme level of sanitation, life and activity on the street would be incapable of reproduction. Reproduction of social energies, of strong micro economies and serendipitous moments become impossible. Sanitation in a city comes in the form of regulation and law enforcement. Rules that condemn improper activities on the streets wayer restrictions to the parties involved, many characterized as individuals of limited means.

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PROCESS

Understanding the socio-economic conditions of a city is important to a flourishing catalytic urbanism. A social-economic process is one that takes into consideration both social and economic factors. As a nation founded by immigrants, the makeup of the American city has evolved over the centuries but they still strongly maintain the metaphor of the melting pot of cultures.

People are naturally interpersonal, friendly and gregarious when allowed the opportunity to mix. It is the job of the city to provide them with the events and opportunities that instigate this natural tendency. Being social also alludes to an embracement of different cultures. The ontogeny inherent to each group in a society cultivates a degree of perceptiveness about a place. This evolving history changes the sensibility of a place and the longer a place become intertwined with a group, the larger the level of maturity that is perceived in that place. Cultural history is important to catalytic urbanism because history brings to a place an embedded layering of elements which become mini accelerators to a catalyst. Arguably, the movement of sanitation in the city has negative repercussion in a place with a rich ontogeny. By whipping away the layers of history, the sterilization of that place eliminate the opportunities that cultures have to relate to that place as their own and may not feel a need to maintain the connection.

The existence of different social groups in a city is important because this allows for this guild to bring about a sense of order. Ethnic groups have a tendency to migrate and habitate in areas where they feel a sense of community and place thanks to the groupings of individuals of similar tastes, likes, and habits. While this is beneficial to a city's formation as a method of delineating districts, zones, and neighborhoods, it is not healthy to the social life of the city to maintain this separation as a finite one.

Mixing is the key component in the accelerant of social-economic process. The process of amalgamation in a cultural sense is not one that dictates a rejection of one culture for the acceptance of another. What is important in amalgamation for catalytic urbanism is that two very distinct groups can come together at a venue of opportunity, the street, and the cohabitation of the two creates a third distinctive culture: a compound culture. Catalytic urbanism does not dictate stripping the culture from the two mixtures but simple act of allowing both to come together on the streets makes the combination a new and richer society.

Catalytic urbanism is dependent on the timely episodic crashing of both an event and an opportunity. That event has an inherent inertia which becomes accelerated if the vessel of opportunity is incubated properly. While it is not possible to cap the size of a catalyst to say it is too big for the opportunity, it is possible to have a catalyst not have the scale necessary to project and grow in the platform of the opportunity. The scale at which these catalysts emerge is typically small by numbers but also most importantly small though economic resources.

Understanding an economy of scale is critical to catalytic urbanism. Being the top player in a world economy has driven the United States push commerce at a macro scale and gives priority to the most profitable players in an effort to drive the value of the dollar up. The negative repercussions that this has on the economy when brought back home is the lack of opportunity for micro economies to flourish. Economies exist at a world or macro scale, at a regional scale, and also at a micro scale. Micro economies are frugal, many times temporal, and they also provide advantages to the elements they come in contact with.

In a capitalist society, while there may be varying degrees of economic capacity, the ultimate goal of the economic system is profit. Seeing profit in monetary stipendiary

form is a decelerator to catalytic urbanism. Speculative practice by the hands of planners and developers are in fact what drove to the erosion of the street and public spaces in an effort to quantify all possible square footage as saleable or leasable space. A way in which the economy can become an active accelerator to a catalyst is if the economic process shifts to view utility as a profit.

On a micro level, what are the advantages to proliferation of a particular event or service? Identifying these is difficult because they will differ based on the utility of the service. Perhaps the best method for identify benefactors in micro economic services is to examine the elements at play. First we have the catalyst, the depository of an activating agent to the street. A catalyst is typically characterized as resourceful element; it takes advantages of timing, investment limitations, and therefore must concentrate energy onto a focused product or time scale. The benefits to the catalyst are many times fleeting, a return on investment is low based on the high concentration of energy needed to accelerate its success on the areas of opportunities. The second element at play is third party members that cross paths with the catalyst. While these third party members may be of a different economic tear, by them transcending through this spectrum, a mixing begins to occur and thus accelerating the benefits to the catalyst. The mutually enhancing relationship that emerges between catalysts and third party members becomes one of the “social” profits as a utility in the equation.

If we consider catalytic urbanism to be directly intertwined to the city’s socio-economic process, the element of process must also be examined. We know that catalytic urbanism is directly affected by the variable of time. Process implies a partitioning of time.

So if time allows for a constant evolution, can this process be ciphered to a precise code for success? Perhaps one could but it seems highly unlikely given the constant evolution of time and place. The only constant in the equation would be change.

It should now be clear that a social economic process is the key connector in a catalytic urbanism between the catalysts and opportunities to third party members. The mixing of classes and social groups allows for their relationships to evolve. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that given certain combinations of catalysts and opportunities, forecasts can be made of the probability of success and thus one could make intelligent estimates of the quantity of the necessary ingredients needed to maintain a thriving relationship. In order for these relationships to persist and keep growing, they must be managed in a way that both the catalyst in the venues of opportunities and the third party members must learn to negotiate with each other over time.

Prioritizing the significance of the socio-economic process is important. It is through this process that the links between catalysts and those affected become tactile. And once again, condemning sanitation is necessary in order to proliferate the “dirtiness” of these connections.

INCREMENTAL URBAN DESIGN

Catalytic urbanism is forever evolving and in order for designers to implement this as a design methodology, the process must be outlined. The questions that this brings forth are: how do you measure increments, what constitutes an urban setting, and how much does one actually design?

Step one for incremental urban design would be to identify the directionality of the increments. Incremental growth can be an additive process as well as a subtractive or condensing process. Both can bring forth a sense of progression but identifying which of the two would be best is site specific. With respect to catalytic urbanism, the goal of a catalyst is to mix with the right accelerants initiating a type of multiplicity of events through opportunity. In this case, one could argue that increments are necessary in an expansive manner. Power by numbers implies a type of critical mass which makes the growth of a positive catalyst less likely to be trumped.

Increments can occur in a number of patterns. As a catalyst meets its sight of opportunity, the pattern of growth will be a response to the availability of land or opportunity in the street. Many times venues of opportunity have the capacity to expand through vacancies or availability of land in adjacencies to the streets. For example a high density area such as New York City, availability of land is highly unlikely. The density of the urban blocks only reinforce the limited open space in the streets dictating the incremental process of the catalysts to expand in a *linear* pattern. On the other hand, New York City is an atypical example of density in an American city. Lot availability and vacancies are more common in other American cities and therefore the possibility of expanding catalytic growth incrementally is possible. Relative to the position on the street and the proximity of the catalyst to available vacant land, a catalyst can increment *supplementary* to the occurring pattern of development. A supplementary growth would

imply a gradual “bubbling” affect that exhibits an organic contraction or expansion of the catalyst through the areas of opportunity. Although the expansion may not necessarily be contiguous, the density of the clustering should maintain a level of visual connectivity that allows for a transgression through the various interconnected spaces as one. A third type of additive incremental growth could be *complementary*. This pattern of growth in non-contiguous and could run the risk of being decelerated due to the lack of adjacent critical mass but it is not to say that this type of increment is not possible. Complementary increments could be described as one that occurs at such high concentration that a break and the catalyst could be stabilized simply by the existence of a secondary concentrated catalyst on opposing direction. Complementary increments will not always follow linearity or a direct path, best characterized as sporadic.

Step two in the incremental process is to identify the possible accelerators. While some might already be in action at the site, it is important to identify them in order to reinforce their needed for a catalyst to flourish at a site of opportunity. As previously identified, mixing is the key accelerator to catalysts. Mixing of people in the sites of opportunities will bring forth a transient density of people and services. A necessary accelerant thus becomes the need to accommodate for the transient groups to inhabit the catalytic venues. Comfort should be a guiding principle in identifying the accelerator. If catalytic urbanism is trying to encourage is the mixing and interacting if people with catalyst, you want people to feel that they can stay and keep mixing. Amenities for comfort should take into account thermal, psychological, and physical comfort. Other accelerators will be identifiable as a remedy to identified decelerators on the site. Ways in which a catalyst could be decelerated is through a lack of opportunity to flourish. This might be the lack of amenities for a catalyst itself. Amenities could be the availability of space that allows for an expansion of the catalyst.

The third step in incremental urban design is defining the logic of the design. Because catalysts are forever evolving due to the variable of time, a finite plan becomes obsolete. What is most important to the success of the catalysts is identifying the natural pattern language of growth in the system. In order to design the logic of growth for catalytic sites, one must define the purpose of use and the aim of the users. A design will thus come forth not in the form of a master plan for speculative growth but in the form of guiding principles which one as a designer understands as the necessary ingredients needed to allow for the logic of growth to evolve.

All three steps for incremental design: directionality, acceleration, and logic design, must further be broken down into four categories in order for their application to the maximum return. The following elements must be considered.

Scale

Scale must be understood in increments of physical, time, and success. A catalytic agent composes the smallest type in the physical scale. This singular agent will have a harder time reaching acceleration and therefore it is imperative to allow for frequent mixture of it with third-party members. Grouping of singular agents is the intermediate scale of a cluster. The third physical scale is that of an agency. While clusters can reach a scale by numbers that could surpass an agency, it is typically rare for such a large grouping to remain ungoverned or over sought by a political entity.

Time plays a role in the sense of scale not just for reasons previously stated dealing with time as a variable for evolution, but also in a scale of intensity of action. For catalytic urbanism to succeed through incremental design, the ideal time of blossoming for the catalyst at the sites of opportunity must be identified. To do this, the use and function of the adjacent territories must be identified. Use can be an indicator of what

time of highest occupancy as well as give light of ideal niche times in need of reinforcing through activity. Scale of time thus becomes the a designation of days of the week, time of the day, etc. at which the catalytic opportunities would best be accelerated through mixing.

Incremental scale is lastly important to identify the level of success at the first initial catalytic acceleration. Identifying a measure of success on a framework as basic as beginners, intermediate, and advanced is critical to the incremental urban design process of constant reciprocity of acceleration.

It is also important to note that scale is critical to the level of success of a catalyst. Scale can affect the potentiality an accelerator. If not enough energy is present, the accelerant might not have a large a reaction as need for the multiplication of the event. On the other hand, there is no limit to the number of catalytic events that could happen on a site simply because growth can be expanded, as previously discussed, in a number of manners across the site and even across extended parts of the urban fabric.

Uses

The utility of a site for catalytic opportunities can give insights to a designer regarding the frequency of interaction the site will inherit. While the frequency of mixing at the site is a derivative of time from evolution and intensity of activity in adjacent sites, the type of service that a catalyst provides will have different measures of procession on the site. The various uses of a site for prepared food, produce or crafts will all have a different logic to how they are integrated into the site for maximum mixing potential, but the concept of practicality must always be the ruling agent to preserve their economy of scale.

Users

Users are the agents at play that allow for catalytic urbanism to success. The catalyst is generically a member providing a service at the expense of the availability of opportunities. These opportunities when presented make the availability of the service appeal to those third-party members being served. The job of the third-party members is to have tolerance for mixing in order for the growth of the catalyst to be incremental in all respects.

Prescription

Ultimately, being prescriptive about the application of the steps to incremental urban design is important but with the understanding that any of the elements at play may evolve into something previously unpredictable. The underlying criteria to a successful prescription of incremental urban design is a consciousness of economic means and an effort to sustain the inertia of a catalyst no matter even a diminutive starting scale. Perhaps periodic evaluations of the economic implications, both in a monetary and social sense, are the best way to give direction for further growth of the system.

Chapter 4: Case Studies

METHODOLOGY

The field research was conducted in order to develop a better understanding of possible trends and patterns that may depict the current spectrum of street vendors in the United States. In order to answer the research goals, the researcher traveled to 6 different cities in the United States: St. Louis, Missouri, Los Angeles, California, Portland, Oregon, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Detroit, Michigan, and New York, New York. A total of 17 sites were visited within the 6 case study cities. The length of travel conducted for the fieldwork was a total of 5 weeks over the months of August and September of 2010.

Two types of site were selected for the analysis. Type 1 consists of street vendor clusters scattered throughout the city, primarily in the city core and in the adjacent ring of districts that surround the downtown areas. Type 1 consisted of areas where street vendors have shown patterns of clustering. Each was previously selected through recommendations of local citizens of each case study cities and through inquiries with their local planning departments.

Type 2 consists of established market types which are run and structured by either a governing agency or a non-profit third party member but which maintain and monitor the event. Type 2 sites generally were in the form of farmer's markets with the distinction of some occurring on a permanent site and others traveling throughout the city.

Data was collected in two manners. First, a visual count was conducted through mapping and photo documentation of the vendor type, type of service provided by each vendor, their placement on the site, and mobility capabilities. This type of data was collected at both type 1 and 2 of the site typologies.

An anticipated problem that was expected prior to conducting the fieldwork was the possibility of not finding vendors at the pre-selected site. Given the limitations of time possible to be spent on each site, the frequency of vendor visits and intensity of clusters found will vary. The survey findings are not intended to be concrete representation of the reality and characteristic of each site but a simple insight of possible indicators based on found tendencies from the two surveys.

The quantitative analysis for this study was based on the researcher's perception and reading of the environment. Each site visited was visited once and all sites had never been visited in person by the researcher. Each site was visited during the day and the days of the week in which they were each visited varied based on pre-indication of days where the most frequency of activity was believed to be held.

The quantitative data gathered from the surveys was run through frequency analysis using the IBM SPSS Statistics software.

FINDINGS

Site 1

Location: City Garden, Downtown, St. Louis, Missouri

Site: Type 1



Illustration 1.1: City Garden Park



Illustration 1.2: Ice cream truck vendor



Illustration 1.3: Downtown park plaza

Site 2

Location: Boyle Heights, Los Angeles, California

Site: Type 1



Figure 2.1: aerial photograph



Figure 2.2: street grid



Figure 2.3: figure ground



Figure 2.4: land-use map



Figure 2.5: site walking path



Figure 2.6: vacant lots



Figure 2.7: vendor placement

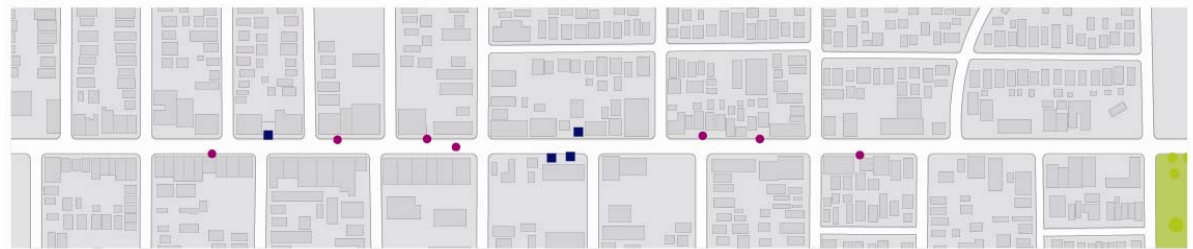


Figure 2.8: vendor service type



Illustration 2.1: fencing off vacant lot



Illustration 2.2: street intersection



Illustration 2.3: temporary front porch market



Illustration 2.4: fruit cups street vendor

Site 3

Location: Pershing Square, Downtown Los Angeles, California

Site: Type 1



Figure 3.1: aerial photograph



Figure 3.2: street grid

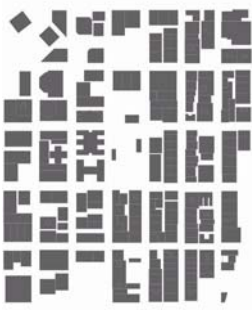


Figure 3.3: figure ground

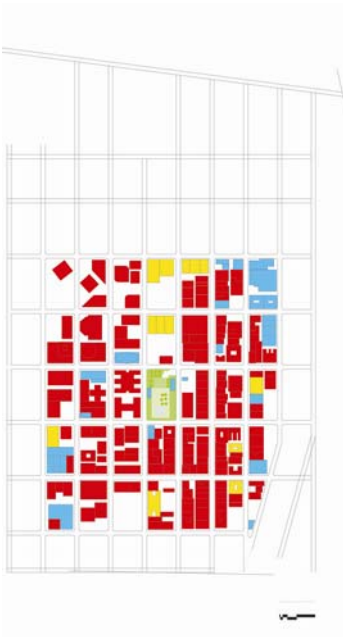


Figure 3.4: land-use map

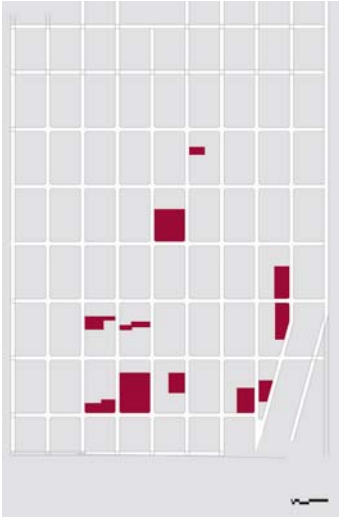


Figure 3.5: vacant lots



Figure 3.6: site walking path

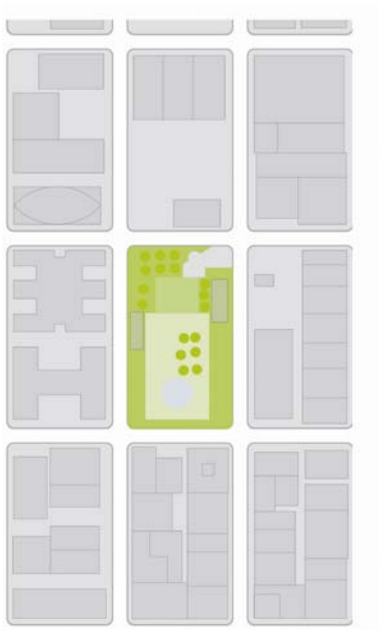


Figure 3.7: vendor placement



Figure 3.8: vendor service type



Illustration 3.1: Pershing Square

Site 4

Location: McArthur Park, Los Angeles, California

Site: Type 1



Figure 4.1: aerial photograph



Figure 4.2: street grid



Figure 4.3: figure ground

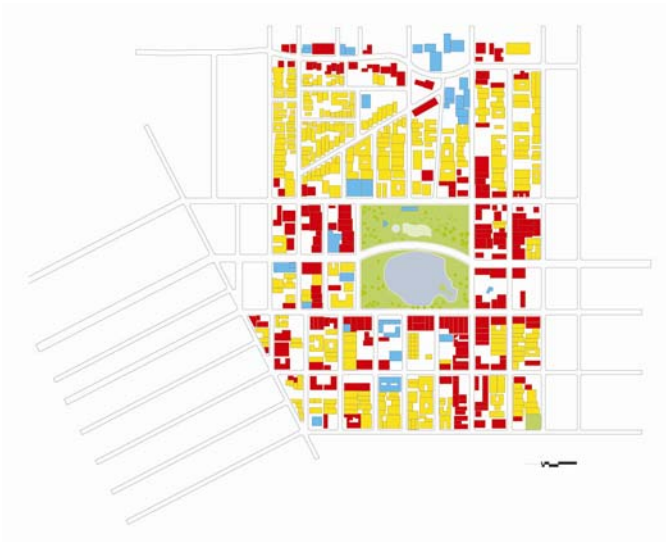


Figure 4.4: land-use map



Figure 4.5: vacant lots



Figure 4.6: site walking path

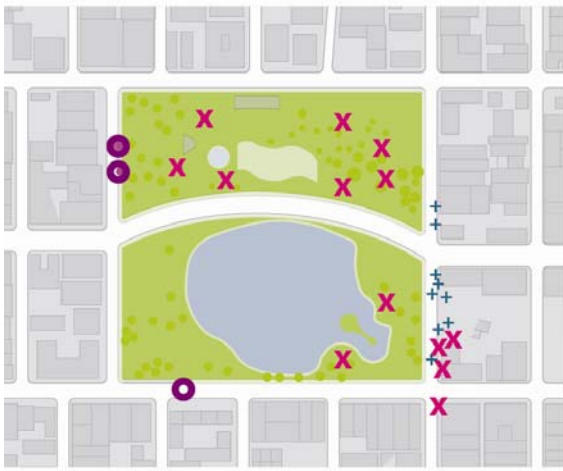


Figure 4.7: vendor placement

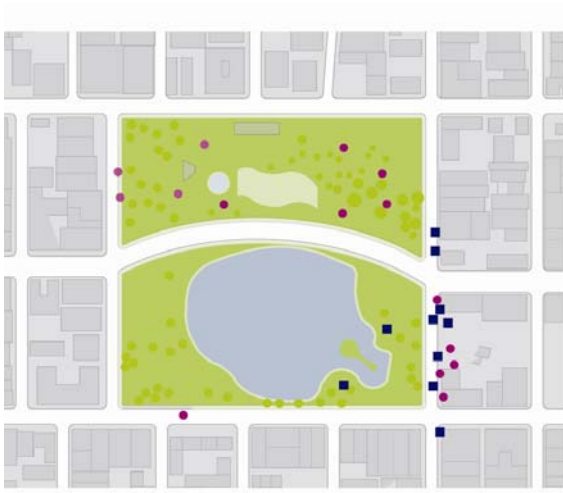


Figure 4.8: vendor service type



Illustration 4.1: pushcart vendors



Illustration 4.2: street vendor

Site 5

Location: Echo Park, Los Angeles, California

Site: Type 1



Figure 5.1: aerial photograph



Figure 5.2: street grid



Figure 5.3: figure ground



Figure 5.4: land-use map

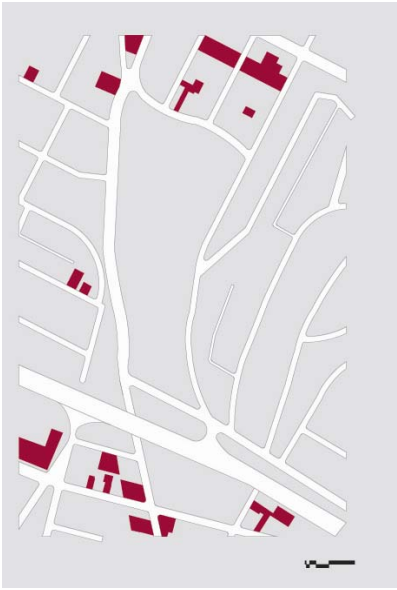


Figure 5.5: vacant lots



Figure 5.6: site walking path



Figure 5.7: vendor placement



Figure 5.8: vendor service type



Illustration 5.1: food truck

Site 6

Location: SW 5th Avenue and SW Oak Street, Downtown, Portland, Oregon

Site: Type 1



Figure 6.1: aerial photograph



Figure 6.2: street grid

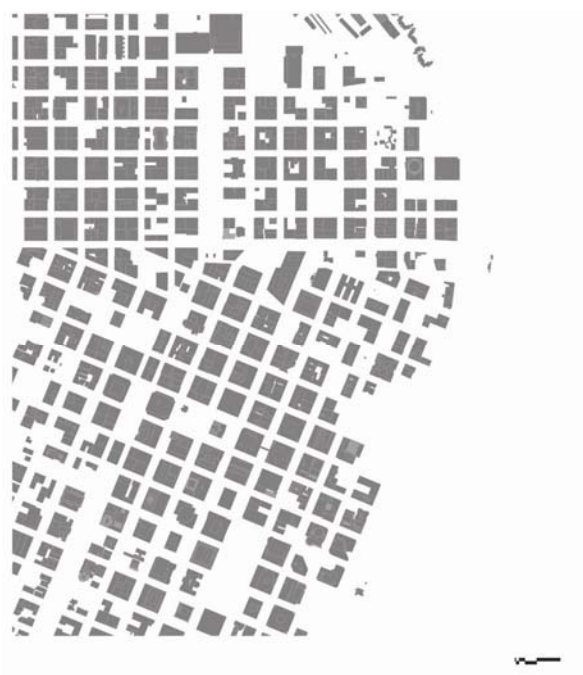


Figure 6.3: figure ground

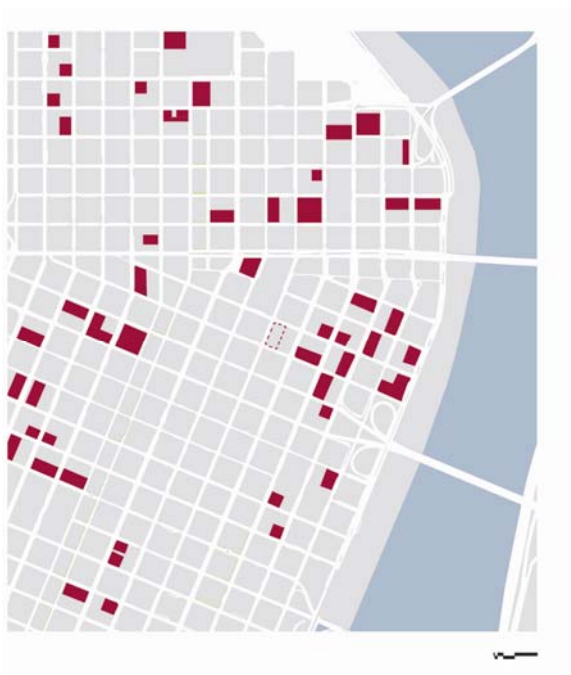


Figure 6.4: vacant lots



Figure 6.5: vendor placement



Figure 6.6: vendor service type



Illustration 6.1: view of food cart cluster from the street



Illustration 6.2: food carts cluster



Illustration 6.3: view of parking lot occupied by food carts cluster

Site 7

Location: SW 4th Avenue and SW Hall Street, Downtown, Portland, Oregon

Site: Type 1



Figure 7.1: aerial photograph



Figure 7.2: street grid



Figure 7.3: figure ground



Figure 7.4: vacant lots

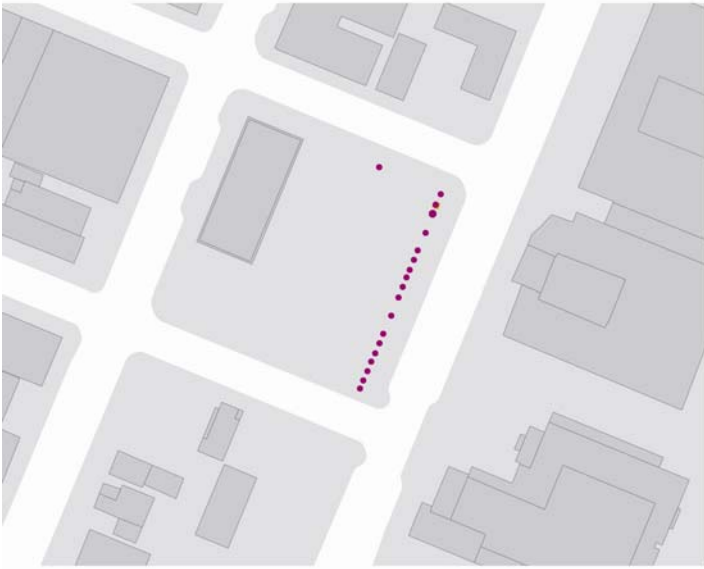


Figure 7.5: vendor placement



Figure 7.6: vendor service type



Illustration 7.1: food carts cluster



Illustration 7.2: view of sidewalk adjacent to cluster

Site 8

Location: SE 12th Avenue and SE Hawthorne Blvd., Portland, Oregon

Site: Type 1



Figure 8.1: street grid



Figure 8.2: figure ground



Figure 8.3: vacant lots

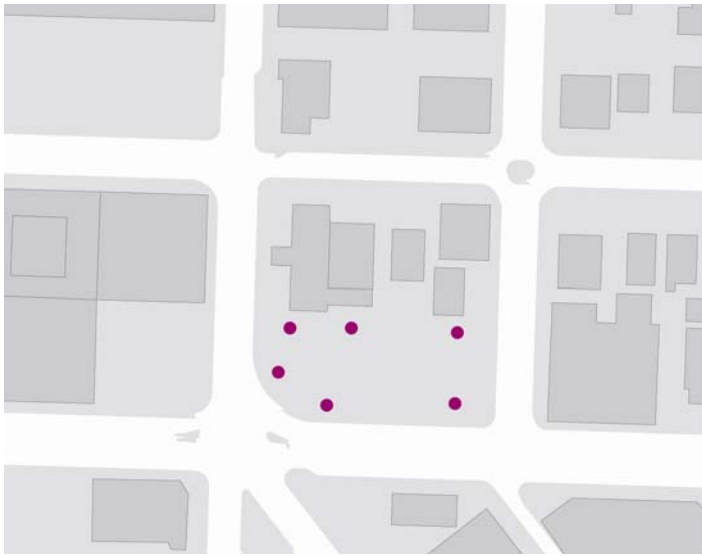


Figure 8.4: vendor placement



Figure 8.5: vendor service type



Illustration 8.1: food carts cluster

Site 9

Location: Portland Farmers Market: SE 19th Avenue and SE Salmon Street, Portland, Oregon

Site: Type 2

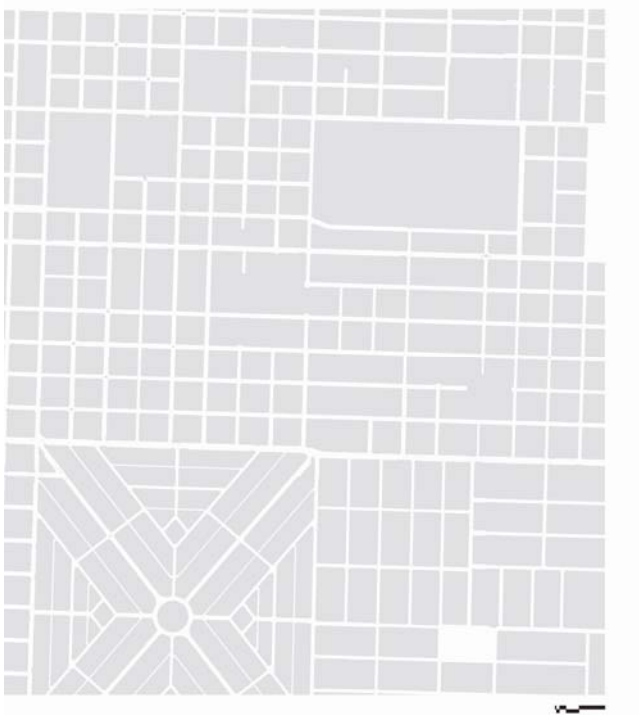


Figure 9.1: street grid



Figure 9.2: figure ground

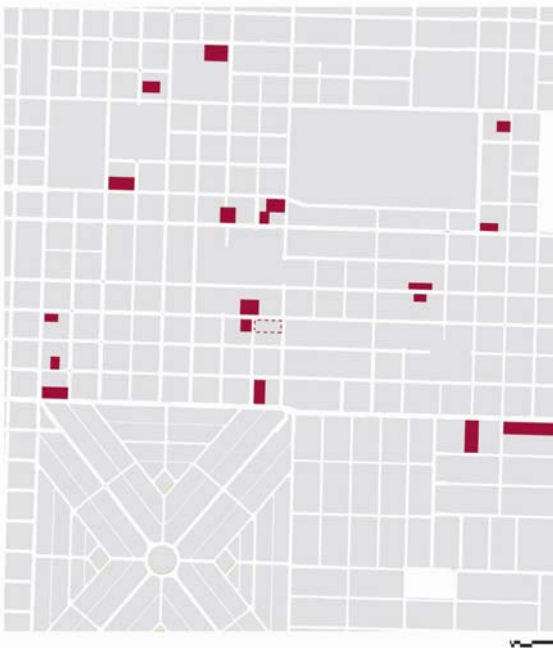


Figure 9.3: vacant lots

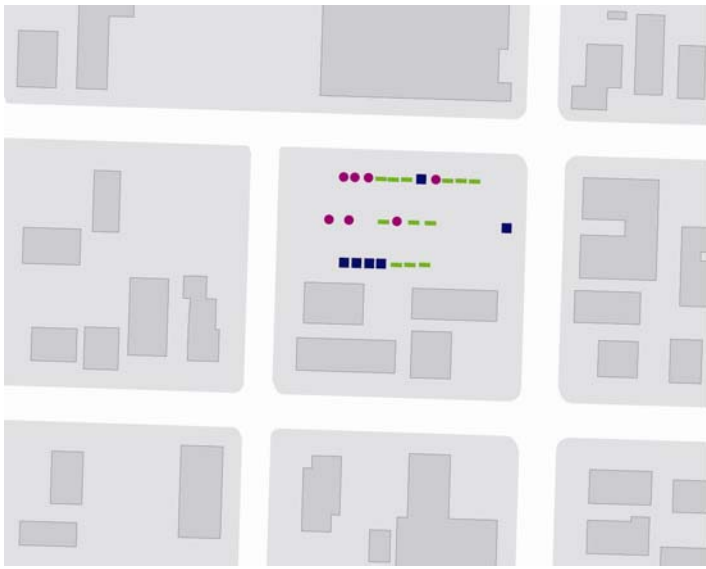


Figure 9.4: vendor placement



Figure 9.5: vendor service type



Illustration 9.1: farmer's market in parking lot



Illustration 9.2: push cart vendor at farmer's market



Illustration 9.3: local citizen selling ready-made tamales

Site 10

Location: Market Square: Forbes Avenue and Market Street, Downtown, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Site: Type 2



Illustration 10.1: view of market square farmers' market



Illustration 10.2: second view of market square farmers' market

Site 11

Location: The Strip District: Penn Avenue and 21st Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Site: Type 1



Illustration 11.1: flower vendor at the Strip District



Illustration 11.2: food cart vendor at the Strip District

Site 12

Location: Forbes Avenue and Margaret Morrison Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Site: Type 1



Illustration 12.1: food truck cluster at Carnegie Mellon University



Illustration 12.2: food truck cluster at Carnegie Mellon University

Site 13

Location: Downtown, Detroit, Michigan

Site: Type 1



Figure 13.1: aerial photograph



Figure 13.2: street grid



Figure 13.3: figure ground



Figure 13.4: vacant lots



Illustration 13.1: parking lot for downtown sports complexes

Site 14

Location: Eastern Market: Rivard Street and Napoleon Street, Detroit, Michigan

Site: Type 2



Figure 14.1: aerial photograph



Figure 14.2: street grid



Figure 14.3: figure ground



Figure 14.4: vacant lots



Illustration 14.1: warehouse district adjacent to the Eastern Market



Illustration 14.2: fresh produce at Eastern Market



Illustration 14.3: plants for sale at the Eastern Market



Illustration 14.4: street food stands the Eastern Market



Illustration 14.5: view under the covered roofs at the Eastern Market

Site 15

Location: New York City Street Fair: Broadway Avenue and 121st Street, New York City, New York

Site: Type 2



Illustration 15.1: NYC Street Fair at Columbia University



Illustration 15.2: NYC Street Fair; reversed use of street and sidewalk

Site 16

Location: Union Square Greenmarket: Park Avenue and 14th Street, New York City, New York

Site: Type 2



Figure 16.1: aerial photograph



Figure 16.2: street grid



Figure 16.3: figure ground



Figure 16.4: vendor placement



Illustration 16.1: core of Union Square; bench seating



Illustration 16.2: edge of Union Square to the street



Illustration 16.3: Greenmarket at Union Square



Illustration 16.4: Greenmarket

Site 17

Location: Zuccotti Park: Broadway Avenue and Liberty Street, New York City, New York

Site: Type 1



Illustration 17.1: NYC density, Financial District



Illustration 17.2: food cart cluster at financial district

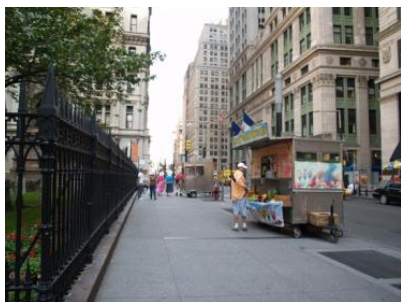


Illustration 17.3: food carts

STREET VENDOR STATISTICS

vendors surveyed at ech city

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| St. Louis | 1 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 1.9 |
| LA | 7 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 15.1 |
| Portland | 33 | 62.3 | 62.3 | 77.4 |
| Pittsburgh | 5 | 9.4 | 9.4 | 86.8 |
| New York City | 7 | 13.2 | 13.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 53 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 1: vendor surveys per city

owner

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid No | 19 | 35.8 | 35.8 | 35.8 |
| Yes | 34 | 64.2 | 64.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 53 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 2: total number of vendor whom are owners

ethnicity

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Hispanic | 14 | 26.4 | 26.4 | 26.4 |
| White/Caucasian | 18 | 34.0 | 34.0 | 60.4 |
| Asian | 16 | 30.2 | 30.2 | 90.6 |
| African American | 1 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 92.5 |
| Other | 4 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 53 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 3: vendor owner ethnicity

Chapter 5: Prescribing Catalytic Opportunities: Guiding Principles for Successful Market Design

Markets are potent carriers of catalytic energy for invigorating urban environments. In the United States, as proven by the visited case study sites, they manifest themselves in a variety of shapes and sizes yet they are all tied by a common thread of potentiality: a desire for growth and reinvigoration. The challenge thus becomes to implement strategies of incremental urban design in an attempt to allow the markets to flourish in the city. The following are simple guiding principles based on the indications and insights gained from having visited seventeen distinct market clusters across the country. While these rules may not be the only methods for improving a market, they are insightful strategies that assure the healthiness of the market as economic engine in the city. All five principles are based on the principle message that catalytic opportunities are a function based on time. They are dependent on the appropriate mixture of catalysts and opportunities, in this case, the market vendors and the street.

PRINCIPLE #1: MARKET VENDOR REGULATORY LIBERALIZATION

Based on indications from the six case study cities visited, an underlying theme with regards to the capabilities of street markets to expand or evolve is controlled by the policy and regulator at the municipal level. Food truck vendors in the city of Los Angeles are forced to migrate across the city in order to abide by a law that prevents them from parking at any location for longer than two hours. In Portland, Oregon a different approach to over regulation is keep the trucks off the streets and assigning vendors to specific car lots where they are expected to cluster. While the economic niche has managed to thrive both cities, the inability to control their location prevents a problem. If

vendors as catalysts are not allowed to navigate and take ground in places which have the highest potential of opportunity, the resulting urban environmental impact will not be at maximum potential.

Health regulations should by no means be downplayed given that it is a form of regulatory policy on food vendors. The regulations that impact the social health of a space are those which impede the mixing of vendors as catalyst and people traversing the venues of opportunity, the streets. Trumping mobility for vendors inhibits their ability to work with the changing characters and potentiality of sites.

Public policy should thus focus on creating regulatory mandates that perhaps sets up an inherent accountability as an amenity to the city but this amenity is allowed to be self governing in regards to their mobility.

PRINCIPLE #2: MORPHOLOGICAL STREETS DESIGN

As previously proven, streets are the best venues of opportunity for catalytic engines to thrive. For this reason urban designer should design streets with the recognition that vendors as amenities to the social-economic economy of the city will need these to be suitable for profitable social development. The implications that this brings about to is that streets should be able to adapt through time to a change in use of these by transient members of the community and for the sporadic formation of markets through extended portions of these venues.

Dimensional morphology is one design strategy that designers could take into consideration. Street to sidewalk ratios could be balanced through appropriation of unused lanes the certain days of the necessary to be invaded and used by vendors.

A dimensional module of one parking spot could be used to identify potential sites of opportunity for appropriation by vendors. The city of Portland has taken this

approach and used the parking spot module to designate a location of operation for food cart vendors. This benefit of this is that more and more parking lots are being reappointed by the city to make use by an arguably more beneficial use to the city.

Urban infrastructure should be redesigned to provide the necessary public amenities to vendors for ease of claiming a site. A plug-in type system should be designed into the streets, the sidewalks, in green-scaping and as lifeline of utilities for vendors as public servants. In other words, streets should be designed as modular outdoor live spaces with flexibility of providing utilities to any server that may need it.

PRINCIPLE #3: PERMEABLE SITES

Permeability, a string of Nan Ellin's concept of porosity is a design principle which would encourage the idea of proliferating the life of the street market. As amenities to the streets and vacant lots, markets should be guided to expand throughout availability of land but the circulation of the pedestrian should never be compromised. Markets should never be fenced off or controlled through internalization because this would stop people from being able to easily move through the site. A permeable site should maintain a certain degree of edge, such as the lining of a series of carts, or tables, or etc., but the visitor should always remain visually connected to the surrounding context and feel that he or she has the opportunity to navigate in and out of the site as much desired.

Market expansion should permeate other vacant lots, sites of opportunity. Patterns of physical expansion will vary according to availability of land but their visual connectivity should remain present. The connections through these lots should exhibit the idea of permeability for the user.

PRINCIPLE #4: CLUSTER-PHYLIA

There are cities that view the clustering of street vendors as a plague in need of control by regulation which prevents them from grouping along streets. This phenomena is of “cluster-phobia” should be attacked through the principles of “cluster-phyilia.” Cluster-phyilia dictated and welcomes a clustering of market vendors. Cluster-phyilia understands the power that this method has in terms of bringing a sense of community to the users. Varying patterns of cluster typologies will encourage a different sense of place to the markets, so designers must take these into consideration when examining places of opportunities for markets.

PRINCIPLE #5: PHYSICAL COMFORT

The fifth principle the most basic principle in designing for people but one that is generally ignored by cities when designing streets. If streets are to be the sites of opportunities where markets will coexist with transit, a measurable level of comfort must be designed into the street systems that is served are given just as much priority as the vehicular movement. Because markets are transient, streets should have flexibility in providing shade and protection from the weather. Places such as Detroit’s Eastern Market have designated city blocks that have permanent shading structure built, but they are open air and completely navigable during market hours as well non-peak use times. The shading structures could be permanent or flexible to be put in and out when needed. Permanent structure could themselves become catalysts to allow for other temporary urban activity to occur within them when not being used by the markets.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Historically, Americans have done better than any other culture to handle chaos and change and invent the future. Because of our wildly individualistic and deterministic culture, although we may not know how to resolve everything, we know how to attack obstacle to find a new solution.¹⁴⁶ It is under this premise that this thesis presents the argument that augmenting micro economies and re-appropriating the energy needed to catalyze market opportunities are achievable goals in the American city.

As a study that focused on a reevaluation of urban design practice through the view that the element of time is a key component in design implementation, this thesis only scratched the surface of analysis with regards to a very specific form of urban typologies and how it can help augment a positively charged urban environment as affected by time. The urban typology of street markets became the primary item of research for their power to serve as mixing grounds of people, cultures, and their ability to reenergize the urban fabric.

As argued by this thesis, catalytic opportunities provide a city with the necessary nutrients needed to sustain it. Cities should take this lesson and upon the discovery of an informal clustering of services such as food cart vendors, the set principles ought to allow for a structuring in the planning and design field for methods to allow a rich proliferation of their inhabitation. The city would progress with their evolution through time and both parties would benefit from the social and economic repercussions.

It is important for cities to overcome the fear of the uncontrolled because only then would it become clear that if left to flourish, urban catalysts improve the face of the city. They can serve as amenities to the areas adjacent to the sites of opportunity. If

¹⁴⁶ Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*. (New York: Random House, 1988), xii.

cities are seen as a living organism, it seems illogical to not allow life to proliferate. Life on the streets is a social nutrient to a city which builds identity. Due to the structuring of the political framework in a city obliged to quantify through monetary restrictions every service and amenities to a city, the use of micro interventions by third party members should be seen as a good economic strategy. Opportunities at streets that can ignite interaction by people and the mixing of groups are the byproduct micro interventions. This affordability is best represented by the micro economy at work through a street vendor and its purchasers.

The challenge that designers and planners should aid cities in is in the act of identifying opportunity. Can change and opportunity be identified and how could one begin to do so. And furthermore, once these opportunities are identified, how do you balance these catalytic agents as well as agencies to allow them to maintain the same inertia that they start with.

This thesis argues that incremental urban design is the answer to this question. Because catalytic opportunities are affected by the variables of time and opportunity, urban designers must take into account time as a key ingredient to allow opportunity to flourish. The element of time in urban design agenda should be understood as dictator of evolution and morphology and less for the phasing of a singular strategy through staging. In order for incremental urban design to function, both accelerators and decelerators must be identified. As implied by their names an accelerator fuel at an increased rate the effects of a catalyst. Decelerators are elements that impend the mixing of opportunities with catalyst and thus preventing the possibility of change to take effect. Incremental urban design is dependent on the ability of the designer to identify both elements which accelerate and decelerate catalytic urbanism.

To prescribing catalytic opportunities, five guiding principles for successful market design were presented by this thesis as basic concrete strategies for urban designer and planners to implement in order to allow catalytic urbanism to flourish in the city. Markets are arguably a marginalized amenity to a city which over time has had varying levels of success and failure in the American city. In a current economic crisis, the power that found in the success of a micro-economic structure as that of the market is tremendous. The degrees by which their benefits are felt across members of society are significant because this bottom up approach to urban design practice is sensitized by more the money economies and mostly to social economies.

The hope is that this thesis becomes a catalyst itself in a continuing dialogue of an urban design agenda power by an emphasis on the evolution of space as a response to cultural and social energies.

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Vita

Edna Ledesma was raised in Brownsville, Texas. She attended the Science Academy of South Texas and graduated with honors in 2003. She then attended Texas A&M University College Station where she received a Bachelor of Environmental Design graduating magna cum laude in 2007. She received her first professional degree Master of Architecture from the University of Texas at Austin in 2009.

Permanent address: 130 West Avenue, Brownsville, Texas 78520

This thesis was typed by Edna Ledesma.