

## **Las Ciudades del Boom**

### **Economic Growth, urban life and architecture in the Latin American city, 1989 – 2014**

#### **Summary**

The research course explores the consequences of the economic growth experienced in Latin America in the past 25 years on the social and spatial organization of cities. We will analyze how the modification of political systems and the parallel neo liberal restructuring of economy have impacted on the production of space. Critical analysis will consider the connections between new phenomena of urban transformation, renewed social articulations and the surge of responses from the design fields. Within the general frame of a contemptuous concept as “Latin America”, the research course will explore for local differentiations and particularities.

#### **General readings**

Nestor Garcia Canclini: Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity

Felipe Hernandez: Beyond Modernist Masters. Contemporary Architecture in Latin America

Mariana Leguía: Latin America at the Crossroads

Thomas Skidmore, Peter H Smith, James N Green: Modern Latin America

Victor Bulmer-Thomas: The Economic History of Latin America since Independence

Un-Habitat: State of Latin American and Caribbean cities. Towards a new urban transition

#### **Syllabus**

##### **Introduction**

In literary criticism the precipitous international attention generated at the beginning of the ‘60s by Latin American novelists such as Mario Vargas Llosa, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Julio Cortázar and Carlos Fuentes is often referred to as “literatura del boom”. The definition, which used an economic term, first coined by the Argentinean-Chilean critic Luis Harss, connected the rise of these authors from different contexts with a moment of growth and modernization.

The research developed within the course intends to describe and analyze how the sustained economical development and progressive democratization of Latin American societies since the end of the cold war has had a significant impact on cities and territories and how urban design and architecture practices have responded to such phenomena. The use of the word “boom” is a deliberate allusion to the interpretative model in literature that is aimed at understanding similarities and proximities between different urban developments.

The research intends, in analogous manner, to detect, describe, map and analyze specific local conditions, with the objective of identifying the common patterns and tendencies or on the opposite of highlighting differentiations that may characterize the contemporary Latin American city.

## General Themes

### Themes

*Affirmation of democratic process and economic growth 1989-2014 in Latin America.*

Since the end of the cold war, the region has experienced a progressive return to democracy, after a period characterized by military regimes and dictatorships. At the same time intensive processes of economic restructuring, often consistent with neo liberal agendas, have occurred, triggering significant changes in spreading of wealth, production and distribution and determining intensive processes of urbanization. The course will, therefore, be developed within a general framework of reading and interpretation that consider political realities and macro-economical data with particular attention to the processes of urbanization and to the development of real estate.

*Demographic and territorial expansion of the city.*

Cities in Latin America have catalyzed economical concentration and become the destination of vast processes of internal migrations. According to the United Nations Human Settlements Program report from 2012, Latin America is the most urbanized region of the world with 80% of population, living in cities. The processes of migration and demographic growth have determined a massive conversion of land use, from rural to urban. This part of the course will analyze a series of large-scale transformations that have had an important impact on the morphology of the city, either by the conversion of land or densification of the existing fabric.

*Public infrastructure and collective equipment as a reaction to neo-liberal development.*

Rather than as an a-priori planning strategy, public intervention in services and infrastructure often occurs as a response to the hyper-activism of the private sector or to mitigate the consequences of unregulated informal settlements. The participation of the public in the processes of change greatly varies according to each country, depending on historical roles by the State and from taxation systems. This portion of the research will consider the tactics of opposition or collaboration between public and private actors, considering different socio-economic strata.

*The new affluent class: suburbanization and enclaves. Contemporary as style.*

A sustained economic growth over several years and a parallel inequality in wealth distribution (11 of 20 countries in the first positions of the Gini ranking are in Latin America) have determined the rapid emergence of a new affluent class, a main driver of the demand for contemporary architecture. The research will analyze the sociological and cultural component of this novel constituency, its recurrent aesthetical values and desires in relationship to the city and dwelling.

*Renewed private typologies: the mall, the office, the factory, leisure complexes.*

Intense primary accumulation has determined the consolidation of new modes of consumption (the shopping mall or the high-end shopping neighborhood, in Mexico, Argentina or Brazil for instance), an intense need for office space with the appearance of new business districts often placed far from historical downtowns, the upgrade of factories and plants, with an unprecedented use of custom-made architectural design, rather than prefabrication (in Chile and Mexico) and the surge of new leisure facilities (tourist resorts or new gastronomical destinations, in Peru or Ecuador). Morphologies, architectural tropes, technical and material solutions, often provided by transnational companies migrate from one country to the other, creating a catalogue of new typologies.

*The housing market.*

The intense processes of urbanization has determined the surge of a vast demand for housing that has been satisfied by a multiplicity of actors and solutions. This section will consider the principal trends in residential planning and architecture through a series of case studies in which market tendencies have been matched by typological experimentations (residential towers in Rosario and Buenos Aires, Argentina; massive tract houses areas in Mexico, compact apartments complexes in Peru and Colombia).

*Design as political tool: Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil.*

The provision of public space, upgraded transport systems and new civic equipment (mainly in education and health) as well as the operation of eradication and upgrade of informal settlements have acquired a central role within the political discourse and policy building in large metropolises (Medellin and Bogotá, Curitiba, São Paulo, Caracas). The research will consider the role of planning and design within the current political scenarios, taking into account differentiations according to the specific political and social conditions of each site.

*The response from architecture: education, new professional roles and media.*

The architectural field has responded to the massive processes of transformation occurring in contemporary Latin American cities, through the diffusion and strengthening of educational programs in architecture and urban planning, the affirmation of the social and cultural role of the architect (quite often very present in the media or participating directly to political decision-making processes), new emerging professional expertise and a novel editorial landscape, in which formats of digital distribution have acquired a crucial role.

## SEMINAR STRUCTURE AND CALENDAR

The suggested readings will be discussed during each seminar. Appropriate reference material and sources for the assignments will be provided during the seminars. The students will be invited to prepare interviews with the guest lecturers based on specific bibliographies.

The students' work will consist of three assignments, which will delineate a general framework for the course and a thematic research, which final result will be in the form of a booklet.

The texts indicated in bold and underlined will be the principal texts discussed and commented in each seminar, while the other publications are mentioned as suggested references.

### Week 1 / Thursday 11 September 2014

#### **Introduction to the seminar**

Overview of the objectives and content of the course. Presentation of the assignments and the research work

#### **The question of modernity in Latin America. Review of literature.**

The lecture and seminar will consider some of the principal theoretical and historiographical narratives on Latin American architecture, considering the notion of "modernity" and its transformation from the '70s. The dichotomy between international and local narratives will also be explored.

Suggested readings:

- 1) Valerie Fraser, *Building the New World*, Verso 2000.
- 2) Malcolm Quantrill, *Latin American architecture: six voices*, Texas A&M University Press, 2000.
- 3) Hugo Segawa, *Arquitectura latinoamericana contemporánea*, Gustavo Gili, 2005.
- 4) Felipe Hernandez, *Beyond Modernist Masters. Contemporary Architecture in Latin America*, Birkhauser 2010. Introduction**
- 5) Review of Felipe Hernández, *Beyond Modernist Masters: Contemporary Architecture in Latin America* (Basel: Birkäuser, 2010) by Luis M. Castañeda in *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* vol. 70 no. 2 (June 2011): 254-255.
- 6) Josep Maria Montaner, *Arquitectura y crítica en Latinoamérica*, Nobuko, 2011.
- 7) Patricio del Real, Helen Gyger, *Latin American Modern Architectures: Ambiguous Territories*, Routledge, 2012. Introduction.
- 8) Jeannette Plaut, Marcelo Sarovic, *Pulso 2 : nueva arquitectura en Latinoamérica = new architecture in Latin America*, Constructo 2014.
- 9) Valerie Fraser, *Art and architecture in Latin America* in *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Latin American Culture*, Cambridge University Press 2014.

First assignment: analysis of modern and contemporary architecture circulation by country.

## **Week 2 / Thursday 18 September 2014**

### **Macro Scenarios**

General economic and socio-political framework for the region

The democratic transition and the emergence of neo-liberal policies within a globalized world. The dependency from exports in the formation of local economies. Intensity of urban development and public policies.

Suggested readings:

- 1) Harry E. Vanden, Gary Prevost, Politics of Latin America: The Power Game, Oxford University Press, 2011.
- 2) Un-Habitat, State of Latin American and Caribbean cities. Towards a new urban transition, UN Habitat 2012
- 3) Dennis Rodgers, Jo Beall and Ravi Kanbur, Latin American urban development into the 21st century: towards a renewed perspective on the city, Palgrave MacMillan 2012.
- 4) Patricio Bouillon César, Room for development: housing markets in Latin America and the Caribbean, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.
- 5) Victor Bulmer-Thomas, The Economic History of Latin America since Independence, Cambridge University Press 2014.

Review of first assignment and presentation of the second assignment

Second assignment: data visualization of macroeconomic tendencies by country.

## **Week 3 / Thursday 25 September 2014**

### **Sao Paulo / Mexico – morphing of traditions**

The lecture will consider the evolution of architectural strategies in relation to context and market.

The trajectory of the Paulista school of architecture is considered with regards to construction techniques and demands from the local context. In Mexico City, the surge of practitioners exploring new residential typologies is analyzed with reference to the progressive privatization of housing.

Suggested readings:

- 1) Rosa Artigas, Paulo Mendes da Rocha, Princeton Architectural Press 2002.
- 2) Miquel Adrià, Mario Pani : la construcción de la modernidad, Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2005.
- 3) Lucia Sa, Life in the Megalopolis: Mexico City and Sao Paulo, Routledge, 2007.
- 4) **Jose Castillo (2007): Mexico City's paradoxical dialects of growth in: Domus No. 899 2007.**
- 5) João Vilanova Artigas, Gustavo Gili, 2010.

6) Angelo Bucci, Sao Paulo, reasons for architecture: the dissolution of buildings and how to pass through walls, University of Texas at Austin Center for American Architecture 2011.

7) Javier Sanchez Corral, La vivienda social en Mexico, Mexico 2012.

Review of second assignment and introduction of third assignment.

Third assignment: analysis of keywords, derived from economics, geography and urban studies.

#### **Week 4 / Thursday 2 October 2014**

##### **Densification and typological innovation**

The intense processes of urbanization and horizontal expansion of the cities' limits have determined the emergence of planning and architectural strategies aimed to respond to densification. New typologies have either been invented or transplanted from other contexts, addressing issues of housing, work and leisure, seeing a substantial change in the type of clients, from the state to private sectors.

Suggested readings:

1) Clara Eugenia Salazar, Irregular : suelo y mercado en América Latina, El Colegio de México, 2012.

**2) Fernando García-Huidobro, Diego Torres Torroiti, Nicolás Tugás, El tiempo construye!: el Proyecto Experimental de Vivienda (PREVI) de Lima : génesis y desenlace = Time builds! : the Experimental Housing Project (PREVI), Lima : genesis and outcome, Gustavo Gili 2008.**

3) Antonio Bessa, Beyond the Supersquare: Art and Architecture in Latin America after Modernism, Fordham University Press, 2014.

Review of third assignment

#### **Week 5 / Thursday 9 October 2014**

##### **Gated communities / Leisure homes / Landscape(s)**

The core of historical Latin American cities, historically the foundational sites by the Spanish or Portuguese colonizers has been for century the epicenter of civic life. Since the '70s a consistent movement of inhabitants out of the center has modified the urban hierarchy, determining phenomena of suburbanization and the emergence of a multi-polar structure of the city. The lecture explores this tendency, associated to the rise of a new middle class, which also has augmented the demand for tourism and second homes, a significant feature in contemporary Latin American architecture.

Suggested readings:

- 1) Leonardo Barci Castriota , Urbanização brasileira : redescobertas, Editora C/Arte, 2003.
- 2) Jean-François Lejeune, Cruelty and utopia: cities and landscape in Latin America, Princeton Architectural Press 2005.
- 3) Carlos Monsivais and Francis Alys, The Historic Center of Mexico City, Turner 2006.
- 4) Renaud Le Goix, Condominios fechados and barrios privados : the rise of private residential neighbourhoods in Latin America in Private cities : global and local perspectives / edited by Georg Glasze, Chris Webster and Klaus Frantz. Published/Created: London ; New York : Routledge, 2006.**
- 5) Jimena Martignoni, Latinscapes - Landscape as Raw Material, Gustavo Gili, 2008.
- 6) Miquel Adrià, Nueva arquitectura del paisaje latinoamericana = New Latin-American landscape architecture, Gustavo Gili, 2009.
- 7) Casas. Magazine ARQ 75, 2010
- 8) Jorge Sarquis, La arquitectura de la vivienda para la clase media, Nobuko, 2010.

Introduction of final work: stories of cities.

### **Week 6 / Thursday 16 October 2014**

#### **Industrialization, commerce and the export economy**

Based on the export of primary goods, Latin American economies have seen processes of industrialization, led by foreign investors or by the state, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The current processes of globalization have significantly altered the patterns of production, determining a new dotation of infrastructure and buildings.

Suggested readings:

- 1) Beatriz Sarlo, Scenes From Postmodern Life (Cultural Studies of the Americas), University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- 2) Robinson, William I, Latin America and global capitalism: a critical globalization perspective, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
- 3) Dionisius Narjoko, Industrial Policies in Latin America in Adam Szirmai, Wim Naude' and Ludovico Alcorta , Pathways to industrialization in the twenty-first century : new challenges and emerging paradigms, Oxford University Press 2013.**

### **Week 7 / Thursday 23 October 2014**

#### **The informal**

Intense migrations from rural areas to the city, as well as an urban organization already established in the XVI century as a mean to separate citizens by class and race have been the determining factors of the practice of informal dwelling, which characterize with different nuances many countries. The lectures explores the current condition and the political and disciplinary responses, highlighting the extended ideological palette of the interventions

Suggested readings:

**1) Alfredo Brillembourg, Kristin Feireiss, Hubert Klumpner, Informal city : Caracas case, Prestel, 2005.**

2) Mike Davis, Planet of Slums, Verso, 2007.

3) Felipe Hernandez, Peter Kellett and Lea K. Allen, Rethinking the Informal City: Critical Perspectives from Latin America (Remapping Cultural History), Berghahn 2012.

4) Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner, Torre David. Informal Vertical Communities, Lars Muller 2012.

5) Marc Angélil & Rainer Hehl, Building Brazil!. The Proactive Urban Renewal of Informal Settlements, Ruby Press, 2012.

6) Justin McGuirk, Radical Cities: Across Latin America in Search of a New Architecture, Verso, 2014

7) Brodwyn Fischer, Bryan McCann and Javier Auyero, Cities from scratch : poverty and informality in urban Latin America, Duke University Press 2014.

Suggested readings:

Presentation of selected works

**Week 8 / Thursday 6 November 2014**

**Alternative practices and political responses**

The surge of participatory, grass roots and alternative modes of production of space, often juxtaposed to the most established practices has characterized the urban experience of the past 20 years with significant examples in Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela. The connection with political engagement, critical rethinking of the economy, and other disciplines as the arts and cinema has generated a very fertile environment. At the same time public agencies have intervened to actively direct the process of transformation of the city, often in response to the private sector, thus using architecture as a political tool.

Suggested readings:

1) Panorama emergente iberoamericano in Arquitectos magazine, issue 164, 2002.

2) Verónica Restrepo, Miguel Mesa, Alfabetos: variaciones en la arquitectura de Giancarlo Mazzanti, Mesa, 2009.

**3) Mariana Leguía, Latin America at the Crossroads, Architectural Design 2011.**

4) A77 in Nueva arquitectura Argentina, Clarín-AGEASA 2011.

5) Alejandro Aravena and Andres Iacobelli, Elemental: Incremental Housing and Participatory Design Manual, Hatije Cantz, 2013.

Suggested readings:

**Week 9 / Thursday 13 November 2014**

**Guest lecture: Justin McGuirk on Radical Cities**



Discussion with lecturer.

### **Week 10 / Thursday 20 November**

#### **The new profiles of architects media, education and political engagement**

The lecture will delineate the characteristics of a renewed professional role for architects and planners, which is accompanied by a fluid landscape of media, schools and other agencies.

Suggested readings:

Review of magazines (2011-2014)

Arquine, Mexico

Arq, Chile

Projeto Design, Brazil

1:100, Argentina

Revista de Arquitectura, Colombia

Summa+, Argentina

### **Week 11 / Thursday 4 December 2014**

#### **Intermediate general review**

Guest critics: TBD.

### **Week 12 / Thursday 11 December 2014**

#### **Guest lecture: Fernanda Canales on Mexico City**

Discussion with lecturer.

### **Week 13 / Thursday 8 January 2015**

Review of work

### **Week 14/ Thursday 15 January**

#### **Seminar: Horacio Torrent, Pablo Leon de la Barra, Luis M. Castañeda (to be extended over 2 days)**

Review of work

### **Week 15 / Thursday 22 January 2015**

#### **Final presentation**

#### **Grading**

Oral Presentation (guests interview)	20%
Term Papers (3 assignments, 10% each)	40%
Paper in lieu of Midterm	10%
Paper in lieu of Final Exam	30%