

**DIENER HERZOG MEILI DE MEURON**

**WS 2005-06**

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Exercise type: P

Group work in Basel and in research location

Start: Tuesday, 25. October, 2005, 10 AM at ETH Studio Basel, Spitalstrasse 12, 4056 Basel



**Canary Islands – Part One**

Our first steps on the Canary Islands were accompanied by prejudices and doubts whether there would be something interesting to see there, except the usual phenomena of the distasteful development of mass tourism. Whether somewhat could be found, which could illuminate the complex topic of urbanisation in the 21st Century.

We do not want to place explicitly the topic of tourism into the foreground, rather its concrete, structural effects on the rapidly progressing urbanisation of the seven Canary Islands. The driving economic force of this urbanisation process is tourism, which not only reconfigures and displaces the preceding territorial structures – based on intensified agriculture– but which also causes a new social and spatial differentiation on the islands.

**Thesis**

As a preliminary outline of our research, we can sketch the following theses: the Canarian territory was always casted by monocultures, which were forced upon to the islands from outside. These monocultures shaped economies, society and urbanisation of the islands. After centuries of agricultural monocultures, being them cultures for the production of dye material, or vineyards, or banana plantations, today it is the tourism industry from Europe – above all from England and Germany– which reshapes the territory of the islands at a large rate. The terraced landscapes created for an agricultural use of the territory are destroyed, abandoned or eroded to a large extent.

Today there is a new spatial/social and economic fragmentation and allocation of the territory: tourist cities and support cities in the south, and the local cities in the north of the main islands Tenerife and Gran Canaria: the capitals with their agglomerations and a set of smaller cities and urbanized zones. These northern towns were once touristically or agriculturally successful, but today they are confronted with growing identification and economic problems.

The touristic urban centers try increasingly to emulate the local "genuine" city by means of simulation of historical architecture, "local" style or public space. In reverse, the "local cities" are adopting models and leisure infrastructures from the "tourist city" and integrating them into the public space: as in the case of the transformation of industrial harbours into Marinas and parks, as well as the construction of important cultural facilities.

One could derive from this a formula for a global urban trend of development under way which unfolds in two directions: the Touristic Resort aims at becoming City and the City wants to become Touristic Resort.

## **Places**

We do not want to examine abstract phenomena, rather to cover extensively the urbanisation of the islands with our studies. As in the Swiss study, a series of "drills" –analyses of locales that can reveal larger emerging phenomena– will try to outline the transformation processes that are forcing on the islands.

### **Places for tourists - *tourist cities***

What is the status of the touristic areas? Is there a public space? How is the relation to the landscape? How do the tourists move? Are they confined to the Tourist areas? How did the tourism architecture develop from the simple hotel box to the simulation-paradise of today's hotel resorts?

Cesar Manrique developed his own architectural style, which was assumed as "native" in the 60's on Lanzarote. What are its basic elements? What remains today of it? What can we learn of it? Does a basically different attitude reside in it? Or is it a special variation of simulation architecture? Lanzarote is shaped still today from this "Manrique style", which causes a more homogeneous landscape than on all other islands. Which architecture model is more successful: the homogeneous, allegedly local Manrique-model or the heterogeneous, non-uniform model of Tenerife and Gran Canaria?

### **Places for tourism workers - *support cities*?**

As a consequence to the rapid growth of the touristic resorts, a vast urban area which houses the workers of the touristic sector has developed. These massive developments are inhabited by waiters, cooks, hotel employees, maintenance teams, cleaning workers, drivers etc. (statistics show a one-to one ratio of tourist beds and employees). How do such cities develop? Who designs them? Who builds them? According to which rules? Who inhabits them? Is there a high percentage of African immigrants? How do people live there? Which developments are recognizable? Are spatial-social gradations also visible in these new developments, as they are between the coastal towns and villages of the upper settlements, where there are remains of the agricultural activities?

### **Places for the local population – *local cities*?**

The two capital cities, Las Palmas and Santa Cruz, are spatially, socially and economically complex cities that historically grew like other Spanish cities. They do not directly depend on tourism. Nevertheless, they both undertook in the last years large efforts in order to bring their technical and cultural infrastructure on an international level. These considerable efforts are to be seen in connection with the unique Spanish thrust toward urban renewal. An important exhibition on this theme will be developed by the MoMA in NYC next February. Where does the local population live outside of the capitals? Who settles in the north of Tenerife and Gran Canaria, where the weather for European tourists is too unstable and former tourism centers are struggling with an upcoming crisis as in Puerto de la Cruz? How are these "other" tourist places built, with no sand beaches, but cliffs and Charcos?

## **Semester organisation**

After Napoli, Hong Kong, Paris and Casablanca, we continue our series of international urban portraits with the study "Canary Islands –Part One". The study is coordinated with a complementary research carried out by Thesis students of the Harvard School of Design, who will work on the same subject as the ETH students. The start of the semester is at 10 AM, Tuesday 25th October 2005, at ETH Studio Basel, Spitalstrasse 12, Basel. The previous day, Monday 24th a presentation by the Harvard students, together with a symposium on urban research, will take place at Studio Basel. ETH students are invited to participate.

Divided in groups of two, and in close co-operation with Professors, scientific collaborators and teaching assistants, the students will investigate a series of specific places on the islands of Tenerife and Gran Canaria. The diverse samples will sketch the outlines, or fragments, of a master-plan for the Canary Islands. The results of the fieldwork and of the activities conducted in Basel will be a series of maps, diagrams, interviews, architectural portraits, urban biographies, diagrams of transformation. The final presentation of the student's works will be in the form of a book and of a slide presentation.

A series of lectures and seminars will complement the studio activities.

The work will be conducted on a weekly base at ETH Studio Basel's premises in Spitalstrasse 12, Basel. Fieldwork on the Canary Islands, together with the Seminar week, is part of the activity of the course and is mandatory. The previewed costs of the Canary Islands fieldwork (travel expenses and hotel) will be of 1260.- CHF per student. Financial issues should not be an hindrance to the participation to this course. Access to a special fund can be discussed in case of grave impediments.

Date		Place	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
OCT	24	Harvard seminar ETH students are invited	Basel	Harvard thesis students reviews	Seminar on urban research with international guests
	25	<b>Semester start</b>	<b>Basel</b>	<b>10.00 AM: Introduction Canary Islands ETH Studio Basel</b>	
NOV	31	Desk reviews	Basel		
	1	Seminar / Lecture / Desk reviews	Basel		
	7	Desk reviews	Basel		
	8	<b>Pin-up reviews</b>	<b>Basel</b>		
	14	Desk reviews	Basel		
	15	Seminar / Lecture / Desk reviews	Basel		
	20	<b>Fieldwork</b>	<b>Canary Islands</b>		
	21		Fieldworks and meetings with local experts		
	22				
	23				
	24				
	25				
	26				
	27				
	28				
	29	<b>Pin-up</b>			
DEC	30				
	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5	Desk reviews	Basel		
	6	Desk reviews	Basel		
	12	Desk reviews	Basel		
	13	Desk reviews	Basel		
	19	Desk reviews	Basel		
	20	<b>Pin-up</b>	<b>Basel</b>		
JAN	9	Desk reviews	Basel		
	10	Desk reviews	Basel		
	16	Desk reviews	Basel		
	17	Desk reviews	Basel		
	23	Desk reviews	Basel		
	24	Desk reviews	Basel		
	30	Desk reviews	Basel		
	31	<b>Final Review</b>			Dinner