Downtown Revitalization in San Salvador

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The thesis is made by Elisabet Ejeborn and Julia Nedersjö, all the chapters are created together except the design proposals which have been made individually.

We would like to thank the wonderful Sol family for their help and hospitality as well as all of the co-workers of Leon Sol Arquitectos.
Summary

The aim of this master’s thesis in spatial planning is to research the conditions in the historic city centre of San Salvador and make a strategy and urban design proposal for the area, but also to investigate the relationship between economic development, public institutions and the public space in this area. The research has been done through literature studies on El Salvador and formal/informal economy, onsite inventory, studies of good examples and interviews with people in the area. In the analysis of the area we investigate four topics; Functionality, Economy, Sustainability and Place Qualities. To do this we use concepts concerning city life and form from Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl and sustainability concepts from The Natural Step. The urban design proposals have been created through sketching, discussing and testing in three-dimensional modelling.

The republic of El Salvador is located on the pacific coast of Central America and it is the smallest country in the region. It has a population of 6.2 million and the capital San Salvador which is located in the middle of the country is the demographic and economic centre with 1.5-2 million inhabitants in the metropolitan area. The country was in civil war between 1980 and 1992, when the left wing guerrilla was fighting the military government for the people’s right to the land.

The historic city centre has a grid structure and contains many historically important places and monuments, like the national palace and theatre. The grid structure is several hundred years old but because the city is located in a region that is frequently struck by earthquakes the area has been rebuilt several times. One of the main problems is the extensive street vending in the public space. These informal markets are competing with the formal economy in the area and one of the consequences is that there are no longer any investments made into the built structure. Together with other causes, such as extensive regulations on what can be changed or built in the area, it causes the historic centre to deteriorate while investors are choosing more peripheral areas of the city to invest in. Most of the downtown is commercial space and 90% of the buses pass through this area. It is not a pedestrian friendly city and people who can afford a car will choose driving before the public transport. An alternative development for the public transportation has been made by the Leon Sol Arquitectos office. It suggests a network of faster and more efficient busses in a Bus Rapid Transit model.

In the core of the downtown there is a concentration of plazas which together with the historic buildings makes it a unique part of the city. In the interviews conducted people expressed that the city centre was disorganized and neglected, few people had public space as their favourite place downtown.

The street vending is a part of the informal economy, which consists of economic activity that occurs outside the government registered formal economy. The informal economies are growing in developing countries.

We found a good example on how to develop the public space in the neighboring municipality of Santa Tecla. There a stable political majority and more economic funds made it possible to renovate an old building to create a cultural centre and at the same time renovate the public space connecting it with another public building. This resulted in a very nice public space with good prerequisites for restaurants and shops.

The analysis is divided into four topics; functionality, economy, sustainability and place qualities. In the functionality analysis we find that the city centre could be functioning better when it comes to traffic and street environment, the street vending together with too many buses is causing chaotic and crowded streets. The public space is also worn down and badly maintained in many places. In the economy analysis we conclude that the informal economy is making it unattractive for the formal economy causing the built structure to deteriorate due to lack of maintenance. In our sustainability analysis we find that the street vending as an informal economic activity is hindering people to meet their human needs of participation, leisure and protection. But the area has good prerequisites for people to lead a lifestyle without fossil due to the location and accessibility to public transport. A more efficient use of the existing structure could make the area contribute to less land being degraded through human activities elsewhere. The qualities of this area are, as mentioned earlier, unique for San Salvador. No other part of the city has such a walkable structure with so many plazas and historic buildings. Despite this the environment is not good enough for people to do optional activities. Our conclusion is that the street environment needs to be improved when it comes to the traffic, the street vending and the quality of the physical structure. This will also give the formal economy of the area a new chance to grow and improve the economical willingness to take care of the built structure. The street vendors need to be
provided new places or alternative employment and to be incorporated into the formal economy. Measurements like this may be difficult to implement because of political instability, criminal gangs, corruption and lack of economic means.

The studies and analyses resulted in a general strategy, recommendations and urban design proposals. We recommend a strategy similar to the Santa Tecla example, the municipality need to make the area attractive to people to make it attractive for investments and development of the formal economy in the area. To achieve this the street vendors need to be moved and be provided an alternative location, the streets and plazas need to be renovated and in combination with the renovation and activation of public buildings. The traffic situation should be improved through implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The recuperated and renovated public space also needs to be maintained through policing, cleaning and reparations.

This strategy is the basis for the individual design proposals. The proposals aim to provide suggestions on what the public spaces in the city centre could look like. Each proposal has a distinct character and serves different purposes to create diversity in the area. Julia’s proposals transforms Plaza San Martin to a plaza integrated with a bus station for a new BRT bus line, develops Plaza Barrios through a monumental pavement and makes Parque Libertad more accessible for recreation. Elisabet is proposing to develop Calle Arce into a pedestrian street with organized street vending, making Hula Hula into a centre for the street vendors and suggesting a transformation of Plaza Morazan to better cooperate with the theatre.
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Introduction
Introduction

This thesis investigates what actions and designs that could help develop the physical environment and formal economy in the city center of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador.

El Salvador is a developing country with high poverty rates; in 2009 the poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line was 37.8% of the population (World Bank, 2010). The city centre of San Salvador, is run down and neglected. During the day the streets are filled with informal vendors turning them into a bazaar-like structure in some parts covering the street from building to building. This city life is bustling with life and energy, but the formal economy and the built structure suffers. Many of the historic buildings are beyond saving due to lack of maintenance and few people are willing to invest in their property in the city centre.

Several of the issues researched in this thesis are not unique for San Salvador. Many cities around the world are developing in the same direction, with a degradation of the city center and increasingly large part of the population choosing to settle in suburbs.

Poorly used centers may cause cities to develop in a way that demands more of the hinterland for the growth of the city. This development can in many cases lead to an unsustainable use of land. We find this to be an important planning task due to the rapid growth of urbanization in the world. El Salvador is one of the most densely populated areas in Latin America, this makes the question of how the city center of the capital San Salvador is functioning relevant to study in a spatial planning context.
Aim

The aim of this thesis is to create a strategy and urban design proposals for San Salvador’s historic city centre to strengthen the economy and make better public spaces for the inhabitants.

The study, analysis, strategy and recommendations are done together while the urban design proposals are done separately. The goal is for the design proposals to complement each other and work together as a whole.

Problem framing

The topic spans over a broad range of planning issues, from big scale infrastructural and organizational issues and down to a more detailed scale. The project area is small but has a value for the city as a whole. It has symbolic and historic value with its structure that dates back hundreds of years. For example the cathedral, the plazas and the national palace are places of great significance. In the area there are many historic building which are deteriorating; this means that a great architectural and historic value is at risk of being lost.

One of the big challenges is how to handle the street vending in the area. The public space is today overtaken by street vendors to the extent that they are blocking off traffic on some streets. This is not the only issue in this area, but it is one of the key issues when it comes to the question on how to develop the city center. It is problematic because there has been street vending in the area for more than 15 years and many people earn their living here.

The city centre is a node for buses, as many as 90% of the buses in the city pass through here. It is also the place where many people do their shopping, weekly grocery shopping as well as clothes and other items. Due to this the public space of the area is under a lot of pressure. Together with a lack of maintenance from both the municipality and property owners this is wearing the historic centre down. The traffic situation, street vending and a high crime rate also makes it unpopular for housing and offices. Thus the city center has to a large extent become mono functional with street vending as the primary function.

Delimitation

The delimitation for this thesis is based on the, from our perspective, lack of quality public space in San Salvador. We do not investigate the administrative and regulatory issues of the planning process but focus on the general relationship between planning and economical development. Planning instruments and processes are vital for the implementation and can be investigated in further research, but is not a part of our focus.

The analysis and strategy are created through looking at the situation in the whole city centre while the design proposals only concern the heart of it. This area is spatially interesting not only because of its historic value but also because of the concentration of plazas, with in a rectangle of 15 blocks, there are five plazas.

Structure of the thesis

The document consists of one common part and two individual parts with design proposals. The chapter Design proposals contains the individually made urban design proposals. The Context chapter provides general information about El Salvador. The Inventory chapter contains both an inventory of the physical structure and land use of the area as well as interviews and the result of literature studies. It provides the background information for the Analysis, Strategy and Recommendations and Design proposals chapters.
San Salvador Metropolitan Region

Urban areas

Historic city center

Lake

San Salvador Metropolitan Region

Urban areas

Historic city center

Lake
METHOD
Literature studies

To be able to understand the context of this area we have done literature research on the history, politics today and general information about El Salvador. We have also researched literature on informal economy and developing countries in order to understand the situation with the street vendors. The result of these literature studies are found in the Context chapter and the Inventory chapter.

Site inventory

We have mapped and documented the area though walking and driving around, taking photos and noting on maps. We have also researched already existing inventories, maps and other material on from the municipality. Much of the inventory work has been done in the company of the architects from the Leon Sol Arquitectos office; they have complemented and affected our impressions of the site. Their diagnosis work for the master plan of San Salvador has also been an important source of information.

Other places and good examples

We have looked for good examples and tried to understand how public spaces are used in other places in the country. We have also discussed our impressions with our contacts and this have helped in the understanding of society and culture.

Interviews

To get a better image of what the users think about the area we made short interviews with vendors and other people in the centre. The interviews were done on two occasions, both on a morning of a weekday. They were done in Spanish and consisted of the following three questions:

1. What do you think about the historic centre of San Salvador?
2. Is there anything missing in the city centre?
3. What is your favourite place or building in the city centre?

The first question was deliberately made very open so that the responses would not only relate directly to our project. We introduced ourselves as university students, doing a project about the city centre, however we did not say what field we were working in.

The aim of the interviews was to get a broad perspective from the people using the city centre today. Out of the 15 people interviewed 7 were women and 8 were men and their ages approximately varying between 16 and 70. Five of them were working in the street, vending or shining shoes. Four people were working in shops or cafés, the rest were visitors; a student, a taxi driver and people looking for work.
Analysis

Our analysis method is structured around the vision for the city center made for the municipality. We compare today’s situation with the vision and the outcome of this comparison is the basis for our proposal.

We did not want to use only our own perspective and values therefore we chose to use the vision created in a workshop made for the *Territorial Development Plan for the San Salvador Metropolitan Sub region* as a basis (you can read more about this plan in the *Context* chapter). This vision was created in a workshop held by Leon Sol Arquitectos together with professionals and the representatives of different governmental institutions, from the local level such as the Alcaldía (Municipality) to the governmental ministry of culture, SECULTURA. The vision states:

“A functionally, physically, socially and economically revitalized Historic Downtown. Competitive and established as a center of comprehensive and sustainable development, which attracts private investment and allows the recovery of its centrality, architectural and urban assets, respectful of its history, with the principles of order, security and social integration.”

– Vision made for the *Territorial Development Plan for the San Salvador Metropolitan Subregion*.

We find this vision to be a good basis, however we have some oppositions. This vision states a solution, it implies that this should be done “...with the principles of order, security and social integration.” Since we are using the vision as a goal, we at this stage focus on what the vision want to accomplish, not on the methods. The means necessary to fulfill the vision will come at a later stage as a result of the research. From the vision we derived four topics:

**Functionality**  
*How is the city centre functioning today when it comes to the flow of traffic, people and goods? What is the physical environment like for people?*

**Economy**  
*What does the formal and informal economy of the city center look like? Does it attract private investment today?*

**Sustainability**  
*What is unsustainable/sustainable about the center today?*

**Place qualities**  
*What are the place-specific qualities compared to the rest of the city? How could the center be an arena for all levels of society to use and enjoy?*
Theoretical framework

In our analysis we have used the concepts, theories and information described here:

Spatial concepts

For the spatial analysis we have used the theories and concepts of Jane Jacobs and Jan Gehl. Even though they both come from a very different context then San Salvador (New York and Copenhagen) we find the concepts to be useful and relevant to describe and understand different qualities of spatial structures. In her book *Death and Life of Great American Cities* Jane Jacobs describe four conditions for city diversity:

Mixed use

“Condition 1: The district, and indeed as many of its internal parts as possible, must serve more than one primary function; preferably more than two. These must insure the presence of people who go outdoors on different schedules and are in the place for different purposes, but who are able to use many facilities in common.” (Jacobs, 1961, p 152)

Small blocks

“Condition 2: Most blocks must be short; that is, streets, and opportunities to turn corners must be frequent” (Jacobs, 1961, p 178)

Aged buildings

“Condition 3: The district must mingle buildings that vary in age and condition, including a good proportion of old ones (Jacobs, 1961, p 187)

Concentration

“Condition 4: The district must have a sufficiently dense concentration of people, for whatever purpose they may be there. This includes people there because of residence” (Jacobs, 1961, p 200)

In the book *Life between Buildings – Using public space* the Danish architect Jan Gehl discusses the three types of activities that take place in the public space: the necessary, the optional and the social activities.

The first ones are the necessary, these occur even with bad conditions and poor quality of the physical environment. These activities include, going to and from work, running errands, waiting for a bus etc and they take place all year round and under all conditions because the participants have no other choice.

The second category is the optional activities. They are the ones we choose to do in the public space because we enjoy it, like taking a walk or sitting down on a bench in the square. These activities place high demands on the quality of the physical environment and the design of public space.

The last type of activities are the social activities; these are the kind of activities that arises as a result of the two other types of activities. Social activities are the ones that occur when we meet other people in the public space. It can be as simple as a short conversation with a fellow visitor next to you on the bench or just observing the people passing by the café where you are having a coffee.

Sustainability concepts

In this project area we have used four sustainability principles created by scientists, and continues to be used, promoted and researched worldwide, namely by The Natural Step (an international NGO) and Blekinge Institute of Technology, amongst others.

We have chosen this concept because it falls back on a commonly accepted definition established 1987 in the *Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* (made on commission from the United Nations led by Gro Harlem Brundtland): “Sustainable development is development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to fulfill their needs”. But more clearly defines what the factors are to achieve a sustainable society.
The four Sustainability Principles are:

1. In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing concentrations of substances extracted from the earth’s crust. This means that fossil fuels, metals, and other minerals cannot be extracted at a faster rate than they can be re-deposited, unless they are kept in a tight technical loop and not allowed to systematically accumulate in concentration in the biosphere.

2. In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing concentrations of substances produced by society. This means that toxic substances must not be introduced in nature at a faster rate than they can be broken down, and that synthetic compounds that do not break down must be systematically eliminated or also kept in tight technical loops.

3. In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing degradation by physical means. This means that when we use our land it must be ensured that it is done with consideration to the regenerative capacities of ecosystems, because we are dependent upon the land since photosynthesis is the primary producer in our biosphere.

4. In a sustainable society, human’s abilities to meet their own needs are not systematically undermined. Because we cannot care for our future unless we can meet our own basic needs, and sustainability is about ensuring the ability for future generation to meet their needs. If we continue to systematically undermine people’s abilities to meet their needs, we will continue to ruin the social fabric and trust that exists within our societies. Without a healthy social system, the stress on the physical system (nature) will continue or worsen (Robert et al).

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Creating the plan

The plan proposals has been created through an analysis of each place and the design work has been done through sketches by hand as well as three-dimensional sketch work in SketchUp.

We have presented our sketch-work and ideas for architect students working with the area as well as Leon Sol Arquitectos. Their reactions and thoughts have helped us to in the process of developing our ideas.

When developing the plan proposal we have worked together to create the strategy but the design of specific places has been done individually. Sketch work means to try out and explore rough ideas with a pen and paper, in this work it is important to try different ways to look at a problem or a place and to move between scales. Sketching is a method for examining a problem as well as creating a solution, in this work there is a continuous reevaluation of what the problems and opportunities are (Schön, 1983). Therefore it is important that the sketch work and the analysis are overlapping.
General

The Republic of El Salvador is located on the Pacific Coast of Central America and it borders to Guatemala, Nicaragua and Honduras. With an area of 21 040 km² and a population of 6.2 million inhabitants it is the most densely populated country in Central America (BBC News, 2009). San Salvador, which is the capital, is located in the center of the country and has a population of approximately 1.5-2 million inhabitants in the larger metropolitan area (Espitia, 2009). The country is divided into 14 regional departments and 262 municipalities. In 2007, 27% of El Salvador’s population lived in the regional department of San Salvador and the region is the fastest growing one in the country (Ministerio de economía, 2008).

El Salvador has a tropical climate in the coastal areas and a temperate climate in the higher regions. There are only two seasons, the rainy season between May and October and the dry season from November until the end of April (Nationalencyklopedin, 2010). The landscape is characterized by its dramatic mountains and many volcanoes. The highest one is Volcán de Santa Ana or Llamatepec as it’s also called. It is 2365 meters and is located in the western part of the country (Espitia, 2009). Agriculture is an important income and the mountainsides are ideal for growing coffee, which is a very important export for the country.

El Salvador is a developing country and has since the civil war ended in 1992 had a positive development with an increasing economy, higher literacy level and longer life expectancy (World Bank, 2010).
History

Before the conquistadors came in 1524 the country was populated by various indigenous groups. The majority were the Pipiles, a people who have their roots in central Mexico. It took the Spanish four years to conquer the Pipiles and in 1528 they had gained control over the land and were giving it out to settlers (Medina, 1996). Unlike its neighbor Guatemala, El Salvador does not have much indigenous culture preserved. Today it is very rare to come across people that still practice native traditions or speak one of the indigenous languages.

El Salvador was a part of Spain up until 1821 when they gained their independence. After the countries of Central America became independent they formed a federation called Provincias Unidas del Centro De América. It included El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The organization was based on the model of the United States, however the federation only lasted 15 years and in 1838 it was dissolved in a civil war and El Salvador became an independent republic in 1841. The countries of Central America have over the years made several attempts to reinstate a union but none of them have been successful due to political instabilities, conflicts and lack of common goals (Keen & Haynes, 2009).

The Civil war and politics today

El Salvador’s history has for extensive periods been filled with conflict since the Spanish came almost 500 years ago. The Catholic Church and the military have together with the rich landowners been strong forces and several attempts of rebellion have been made by the peasants to fight for their rights to the land. This culminated in the civil war that lasted between 1980 and 1992. On one side of the conflict stood the military government with the support from the Regan administration in the United States and on the other side stood FMLN, and the guerilla which had support from many socialist and communist organizations in other parts of the word (World Bank, 2000).

One of key events that triggered the conflicts and created a full blown war was the killing of the arch bishop Oscar Romero. He had boldly spoken out for the rights of the poor and criticized the United States’ support to the military government. He was shot in a church while doing one of his sermons and the murder is believed to be linked to the government at the time. Today he is an important symbol that you can see all over El Salvador on everything from portraits to t-shirts and he rests in the tomb of the cathedral in downtown San Salvador.

The war ended in 1992 when a peace treaty was signed by the military government and the FMNL guerilla. The treaty meant that the government was to conduct a land reform whilst the guerilla was to give up its weapons. After the war ended El Salvador has had democratically elected governments and they have all been from the right wing ARENA party up until 2009 when the left and the former guerilla, which is now a part of the established political system won the election and El Salvador got its first leftwing president Mauricio Funes.
Master plan for San Salvador

Leon Sol Arquitectos, the architect firm that has supported us with guidance and information in this project are commissioned by the government develop a new territorial plan for the metropolitan area of San Salvador. The original title of the plan is Plan De Desarrollo Territorial Para La Subregión Metropolitana De San Salvador (Territorial Development Plan for the San Salvador Metropolitan Subregion). Because San Salvador is the capital planning is a governmental responsibility, in the other regions the local governments and municipalities have more autonomy when it comes to planning.

Leon Sol Arquitectos started working on the plan in 2009 and in the spring of 2010 they presented the first part, a diagnosis of the current situation. The plan has a more detailed part for the city center, the same area as this thesis. The diagnosis shows amongst other things, land use, if the buildings are in good or bad shape and where the public places and institutions are located. It also contains a study of the street vending, with information on what they sell, where the highest concentrations of vendors are and how much space they take up.

The next step to create the plan for the city center was workshops that where held with official stakeholders like the municipality and the different governmental departments. The purpose of the workshops was to pinpoint important issues and to create proposals for the development of the city; in the first one of these workshops the vision for the Centro Historico was created:

“A functionally, physically, socially and economically revitalized Historic Downtown. Competitive and established as a centre of comprehensive and sustainable development, which attracts private investment and allows the recovery of its centrality, architectural and urban assets, respectful of its history, with the principles of order, security and social integration.”

(translated from Spanish)
Introduction to San Salvador

San Salvador is situated in the middle of the country and its larger metropolitan area has 1.5-2 million inhabitants (Espitia, 2009). The city is located between the San Salvador Volcano and the lake Lago de Illopango. The valley was called the valley of the hammocks by the Pipils (the native people of the area) because of the frequent earthquakes. The city is cut thru by several rivers but some of them only have water during the rainy season. On the sides of the rivers, informal settlements have been built. These settlements are at risk of flooding and landslides during the heavy rains. The rivers are also a health risk because they are polluted.

West of San Salvador is the city of Santa Tecla also called Nueva San Salvador, the two cities have now grown together and it is hard to distinguish where the San Salvador ends and Santa Tecla begins. The historical city centre (marked out in black on the map) is divided into the consolidated centre (covering a larger area), the city centre and the micro centre. Our focus in this work has been mainly on the micro centre, it is the core where the city once began and it contains many of the important cultural and historic places.
History and built structure

San Salvador was founded by the Spanish in 1525. However it was not located where it is today. The first location is believed to have been in the area of what is now the municipality of Suchitoto, about 40 kilometers northeast of the current city centre. The oldest plan that has been found of San Salvador’s current location dates back to 1594 (Herodier, 1997).

The urban fabric of the city centre grew around the main plaza, today Parque Libertad. It expanded in a grid structure and contains important civic and symbolic buildings such as the Cathedral, the National Theater and the Telegraph building. Many of the historic buildings are one storey, only newer buildings and buildings which housed official functions rise up to 3 and 4 stories. The built structure within the city centre consists mainly of small one to two floor single family houses, with the exception of a couple of high rises and some apartment buildings. In most cases the higher floors are not used, probably because all the commercial activity happens at street level and because it’s unpopular to live in the city centre.

In modern history the city grew on to the surrounding coffee plantations. These areas, called Colonias, were developed with single family houses and cut around by motorways. The houses in the colonias used to have gardens with a hedge or a low wall or fence around them, but since the beginning of the civil war, walls have been built around the properties. Today the only houses that can be found without walls and barbwire around them are within gated communities. New developments are almost always done as gated communities and old areas are as well being transformed into gated communities.

The city centre has the colonial grid pattern whereas the surrounding city has a more organic street pattern. The city centre also has fully built blocks where the facades of the buildings run parallel with the outer edges of the block giving the city centre a more city like image whereas the structures in the surrounding areas are more of a suburban character.

The city centre is not attractive for business with wealthier customers anymore. These businesses as well as offices prefer calmer areas then the city centre. Therefore the formal comers and business have to a large extent moved away from the city centre and are now located in former only habitational areas. This transformation causes problem with parking.
Land use

As the map shows the major function in the area is commercial (marked in red on the map). You can also see that many of the blocks are not fully built. There is a concentration of open spaces in the middle of the city. There are also four big indoor markets in the area (marked out with white and green).
Transport, roads and streets

The most popular way to get around in San Salvador is by car. If you can afford a car this is the means of transport you will choose to get to work as well as get around on your spare time, people who cannot afford cars use the public transportation system. This system is run by different private companies but the routes and the permission are made by the government authorities. There are two types of buses, the regular bus and the mini bus. The regular buses are old American school buses in poor condition, which are very polluting. Buses stop anywhere along their routes to let people on and off and the fair is paid directly to the bus driver. Approximately 90 percent of the bus lines run through the city centre, making it a major node for the public transportation.

San Salvador is connected to the west and east of by the main highway Carretera Panamericana (also connecting to Nicaragua and Guatemala) and Carretera Troncal del Norte (4N) to the north and road 5N to the southeast and the airport.

The pictures are taken from a walk way across one of the city’s main roads, these are common not only in the city but along the high ways in the rural areas as well.
Connecting within the city centre in an east-west direction is Alameda Juan Pablo II and Paseo General Escalon/Alameda Roosevelt/Calle Ruben Dario cutting straight through the heart of the city, passing important landmarks as the plaza/roundabout with the monument of El Salvador Del Mundo, Parque Custcatlan and the Hospital Nacional Rosales, the two central plazas Plaza Barrios and Parque Libertad and the Cathedral. Connecting north-south is 49 Avenida Sur (connecting to RN5), Avenida España/Avenida Cuscatlan and 2 Avenida Sur.

From a pedestrian point of view most of San Salvador is not accessible. If there are sidewalks they are often not maintained and crosswalks are often missing. To cross the barriers created by the motorways in the city there are pedestrian passage ramps like bridges.
Public space

As described earlier, many of the streets and squares in the core of the city centre are used as market places. Many of the vendors in the city centre are organized; the stalls are lined up along the streets leaving a small strip to walk on next to the building. The standard of the stalls varies; some of them have tiled floors, running water and electricity whilst others consist of a very basic metal structure to create a sheltered space in the hectic street environment. The organization is done by a man who rent out stalls in the city centre for vendors. He also offers a loan so people can start up their business. All of this is done without any permissions or taxes paid. There are also mobile vendors walking around with wheelbarrows or simply carrying their goods in their arms. The mapping of the vendors made by the Leon Sol Arquitectos shows how different vendors are grouped in the city, it also shows how much space they take up. The vending in the streets and public places in the city centre would take up an area equivalent of 10 blocks, only counting the first floor (see map on page 28). The space is estimated based on the inventory by Leon Sol Arquitectos and is not exact, there are always new vendors coming in and with so many of them being ambulant it is only possible to make an estimate.

Attempts have been done to reclaim some of the public spaces and in Plaza Barrios, Parque Libertad and Plaza Morazan the vendors have been removed. Recently 63 informal vendors in front of Parque Infantil where relocated to a nearby building, but the municipality says that they do not have any more alternatives to offer for the vendors (La Prensa Grafica, 2010). Many empty and abandoned places exist but they are privately owned and that makes it difficult to use them to relocate the vendors to.

The sidewalks in the city centre have been left to fall apart, damaged by earthquakes and worn down by usage and the lighting is poor or nonexistent.
The distribution of the vendors on the streets.
The map below shows a comparison on how much space the different kind of street vending would take up if it was gathered up in the different categories. The size of the coloured squares representing the squaremeters the vending areas take up in the same scale as the map. This comparison is based on the previous map showing the distribution of the vendors on the streets.
Green areas

There are two big green areas connected to the city, San Jacinto to the southeast and El Espino west of the city (both outside of the map). Within and in connection to the city centre you will find a couple of green areas. Parque Cuscatlan, Parque Infantil, Cemeterio General and Zoologico/Museo de Guerra. Together with the smaller plazas and parks they form important green spots in the city.
Population

The majority of the city centre’s 13,000 inhabitants live in the eastern and southern parts. Within the historic heart of the city centre there are no longer any inhabitants, the few residential houses that exist are now abandoned. The age pyramid for the city centre is similar to the one for the whole metropolitan area of San Salvador with about 50% of the population being under the age of 25. According to the diagnostics in the master plan of San Salvador 54% could not state their profession and the analysis claims that this not only reflects the unemployment but also the large informal sector with the market and commerce that exists (Leon Sol Arquitectos).

Form of living

More than 50% of the inhabitants in the city centre live in single family housing and the average household has 3 members. The most common form of tenancy is renting (44%) and the second largest form is owning (35%). Other forms that are hard to register are improvised and informal housing or occupation of abandoned buildings (Leon Sol Arquitectos).

The inhabitant’s view of the centre

A survey conducted by the non-government organization Fundasal (2009) shows that a majority (65.73%) of the people asked say that they like living in the centre. When people who liked living there were asked about the positive aspects of living in there 75.69% responded that it was the good access to service and the second most common response was the work opportunities, 10.98%. 5.49% said that the reputation that the centre is dangerous is a myth and that the problems are only concentrated to very small areas.

When the 34.27% who responded that they did not like living in the centre were asked why they did not like it the most common responses (52.46%) had to do with the insecurity, robberies and murders. The second most common response (36.07%) was the pollution and bad air quality. 8.20% said that the largest problem was the brothels with loud music, alcohol and bad morals that they generate.

When the people who had moved into the centre were asked why they did so, 45.27% answered that it was because they were seeking a better economic situation. 35.29% were people that were born in the centre and later moved back there. The majority of the rest came for family reasons or for political reasons during the civil war (Fundasal, 2009).
Interviews

To get a better image of what the users of the city center think about the area we conducted short interviews with vendors and other people in the center. Our questions were:

1. What do you think about the historic center of San Salvador?
2. Is there anything missing in the city center?
3. What is your favorite place or building in the city center?

Result

**Female owner of an old café and bakery** (lives elsewhere)
1. It is ruined by the street vendors.
2. It needs order and safety.
3. Likes Palacio Nacional.

**Female street vendor** on Calle Delgado (Arce) between 4a and 6a Avenida (lives elsewhere)
1. It is a tough place, it’s is hard economically with taxes and rent to the maras (criminal gangs) and the transport.
2. It needs work opportunities, order, better public transport and security.
3. Likes the Teatro Nacional, Palacio Nacional and the Cathedral.

**Female fruit and vegetables vendor** on the corner of Calle Delgado (Arce) and 6a Avenida
1. It is disorganized – too many vendors.
2. It needs more security.
3. Doesn’t like any place in particular.

**Female vendor** on Calle Arce
1. It is disorganized.
2. Needs to be cleaner.
3. Likes Parque Cuscatlan.

**Male shoeshiner** in front of the Biblioteca nacional
1. It has been neglected by the authorities.
2. ---

**Male taxi driver**
1. It is neglected and the image of the city needs to be recuperated.
2. It needs better security.
3. The tomb of Oscar Romero underneath the Cathedral.

**Man at Parque Libertad waiting for work opportunity**
1. It has a historical value for the citizens of San Salvador, it should be better taken care of for the tourists. For example Plaza Libertad has a long history that not everyone knows about.
2. The city center needs security.
3. Likes Parque Libertad.

**Male student visiting Parque Libertad**
1. The city center is neglected and unsafe, for example he says he would never take his children with him to the city center.
2. Wants security, cleanliness and more good spaces for the people.
3. He likes Plaza Barrios.
Male video salesman-street vendor
1. The historical city center has been lost.
2. It needs to become safer, more organized and a better image.
3. He doesn’t like any place or building in the city center, but he likes the World Trade Center building Torre Futura.

Woman working in a pharmacy on Calle Arce close to Mercado Ex.Cuartel
1. the historical city center has been lost to the street vendors, there are a lot of vendors here.
2. Surveillance.
3. She likes Teatro Nacional (and also the old building she is working in).

Two men sitting on the steps of Teatro Nacional
1. The city center is beautiful but needs to be cleaned up. There needs to be a market for the vendors outside of the city center.
2. It needs a good market.
3. They like the historic buildings in general.

Man and woman, working in a bookstore close to Parque Libertad
1. It is pretty but there are too many unemployed people.
2. They want more security.
3. They Like Teatro Nacional and Loteria Nacional.

Woman, working in a bookstore close to Parque Libertad
1. She thinks it is beautiful and that the street were the bookstore is located is a nice street.
2. No, she can’t think of anything in particular.
3. The Cathedral is an important building for her both because it is beautiful and because of religious reasons.

Analysis and conclusions

Even though the first question was a very open one the answers we got were similar. The people we talked to in the city center feel that it is neglected and unsafe. Even though some think it is beautiful the initial reaction was usually a negative one.

When asked what was missing in the center everybody, with the exception of a man who wanted a better market and a woman who did not think anything in particular, was missing things that the authorities usually are responsible for. They wanted security, organization and better maintenance.

The last question seems to be the one that people had the hardest time answering. Many could not think of a place or building they liked at first. The most common answer was the more monumental buildings; the theater, the palace or the cathedral. Very few answered a public space to the question about what they liked the most.

The factors that needs to be considered when interpreting the result of the interviews is the fact that they were done at an hour when many people are at work so maybe it would have been different if we where there at a time when there were more visitors. The language barrier also needs to be taken in to account. Spanish is not our first language and sometimes we did not fully understand the entire answers.
New Public Transport - BRT

Bus Rapid Transit is a less costly way to achieve many of the same benefits as a subway or tramway when it comes to efficiency and quality. It is a system that was developed in Latin American cities during 1970’s. This type of mass transportation is set around strategic bus lines and stations together with a prepaid and pre validated ticket systems that can ensure effective, fast and secure transportation. Systems like this require a lot of planning and research. For this bus system to be efficient it often needs to be separated from the rest of the traffic either by specific lanes or priority systems. The most famous example of BRT might be Curitiba, Brazil. In this system the buses have their own lanes within the major roads crossing the city and characteristic tube-like stations (Andersson, Gibrand and Kottenhoff, 2009).

Though the streets of San Salvador are not as wide and straight as the streets of Curitiba a similar system can be applied here. In the Salvadoran context this system could provide core lines with effective transportation that can be fed by the smaller buses. It could relive the city from some of the traffic congestion and give the citizens a more efficient way of getting around.

A plan proposal for suggested bus lines have been made by Leon Sol Arquitectos, the map shows how these lines would cross the historic centre as well as where the suggested stations are located.
Formal and Informal Economy

The street vendors of the San Salvador city center are a part of what is called the informal economy. Informal economy is a big issue in developing countries, because of unsafe working conditions, potential economical inefficiencies and because of the imbalance between tax collection and the use of publicly provided goods and services (Oviedo, Thomas & Krarkurum-Özdemir, 2009).

The informal economy is big in Latin America although it is not easy to define. The definition of what type of work should be included in the definition of the informal economy has changed over the years and has been cause for debate. Originally it was defined simply as undocumented by the anthropologist Keith Hart (1973). The undocumented nature of this part of society has also made it difficult to find concrete numbers for El Salvador. The UN has recently started an interregional cooperation to measure the informal sector and the informal employment which aims to improve data on this to promote evidence-based social policies at national and interregional levels.

Carr and Alter Chen (2001) describe how globalization has led to a growing informal sector in many countries in the world. When globalized companies take over more market niches as producers and traders, it also leads to changes within the informal sector with a shift from secure self employment to more insecure self employment. Instead of an informal sector of producers there are now more petty traders and industrial outworkers (Carr and Alter Chen, 2001).

The informal economy is economic activity that occurs outside the government registered formal economy. Why people or businesses work informally varies, some people cannot get a job in the formal sector and are forced to find other sources of income, some microentrepreneurs generate such low productivity and capital accumulation that they have no interest or possibility of becoming a part of the formal economy, small firms may be avoiding taxation just because they can and the enforcement is weak and others only register a part of their workers and a part of their sales to escape due to excessive regulations. The reasons for informality can be divided into two categories; as a result of either “exclusion” or “exit” from the formal economy and in most countries the informality is a result of both. “Exclusion” happened when people cannot find jobs in the formal sector or because of costly regulations to become formal and “exit” happens when people do not think the benefits of being formally employed are good enough or do not trust the public institutions (Oviedo, Thomas & Karakurum-Özdemir, 2009).

During the last 30 years the informal sector in developing countries has been growing (Flodman Becker, 2004), in Latin America 53% of the economically active population are not employed in the formal sector (ILO, 2006). An ILO report also points out the correlation between support for democracy and labour situation in Latin America; the more people working in the informal economy of a country the less support for democracy. The labour market is more than a place for people to earn a living, it also plays a role as one of the components that makes people feel like they are a part of society (ILO, 2006).
The Santa Tecla Example

In San Salvadors neighboring municipality Santa Tecla (Nueva San Salvador) the local authorities has a strategy to create a high quality and more frequented public space. When the historic Palacio de Santa Tecla (former office of the Alcaldia, picture 2 and 3) was renovated it was also dedicated to be a public center for the arts. This effort is combined with a renovation of the public space in connection to the Palacio and a path leading parallel with the central plazas to a newly constructed museum. The pedestrian path is made in a new material; it is wider than the normal sidewalks (about 3 meters wide) and has flowerbeds with trees and lower plants (picture 1, 3 and 5, see next page). It leads through a quiet area on a street with fewer buses and passes the Santa Tecla Gothic Cathedral. The street can now be used as a more quiet and convenient way of getting where you need to go or it can be used as a place to take a stroll. In proximity to the Palacio there are stores and restaurants which likely benefit from the cultural events that draw new people into this area.
This way of renewing an area attracts people in different ways. The attractive public space in combination with public activities and the renovation of a beautiful historic building makes it a point of attraction as well as a place for local people to enjoy every day in their regular routine. As Jan Gehl claims, the public space needs to be high quality if it is going to attract people for other activities then the necessary ones. In our personal experience we were thrilled to see that the Palacio had a street side café, it was the only one we had found during our months in El Salvador. Usually, the restaurants and cafés are not a part of the street life. This simple way of setting out a few tables and chairs on the sidewalk can create an interaction between the customers at the café and the people passing by, just in the way that Gehl claims that social activities are created.

A great part of the success behind this project was a strong commitment from the municipality. The Santa Tecla Alcaldía has worked hard on their public space. They are also a wealthier municipality than San Salvador and have had the same mayor for several terms. To have the same political majority for a long time means a lot for how the municipality can run projects, because all of the civil servants are replaced when the majority changes. However this can serve as an inspiration on how to change the public space.
The renovated sidewalk in front of the Gothic Cathedral.
Functionality

How is the city centre functioning today when it comes to the flow of traffic, people and goods?

There is a lot of traffic in the city center, with artery streets running through the core of it and buses using it as a central station. The flow of the car traffic is partly blocked by street vendors on a couple of streets and completely blocked on Calle Arce. It is a hub for changing buses, causing traffic congestion on several streets which is aggravated by the street vendors. The traffic in combination with the street vending causes a difficult situation for pedestrians, who often are forced to walk on the street between traffic and vendors. This indigestion also makes it hard to move goods in the area, trucks have problems delivering to the formal markets because of all the informal commerce taking over space.

The BRT system could relieve the streets from much of the bus traffic as well as providing a safer and faster public transportation for the people. We consider the BRT proposal (page 35) by Leon Sol Arquitectos to be good and will incorporate it into our plan proposals. But to make the streets functional again the street vendors need to be relocated.

What is the physical environment like for people?

The sidewalks in the city center have been left to fall apart, damaged by earthquakes and worn down by usage. The lighting is poor or nonexistent. The environment is noisy, polluted by traffic and dirty. Despite this people find places to sit down and rest in the shade. But the parks provide little space for recovery as they are disturbed by noise and pollution.

One of the problems which were described to us by the architects was the administrative problem because the municipality is responsible for the sidewalks and the state for the street. This makes it hard to coordinate maintenance, and the fact that there are different political majorities, right in the municipality and left in the state makes it even harder. Also the municipality is lacking funds since municipal tax is difficult to collect and fairly low.
Economy

What does the formal and informal economy of the city center look like?

The formal economy in this area consists mainly of stores and markets, but also some small restaurants and coffee shops. Many of the stores are having a rough time competing with the vendors, as the vendors continue to physically and economically take up more and more space. When the shop owners have to negotiate about paying less rent to keep the business going the property owners are less inclined to invest in their property. In several places where vendors have occupied the street with their stalls the bottom floor commercial spaces are empty, because the revenue of renting it out is less than what is needed for maintenance (this is illustrated in the section below).

As many of the buildings also are historic they are protected by law from being changed or demolished this creates a situation where a property owner earns more on letting historic houses fall into pieces and then rent the space out as parking, because the permit for parking is the easiest to get and requires little maintenance.

The informal economy is growing, turning the city center into a bustling bazaar where you can find almost anything you need. It provides job opportunities for those excluded from the formal job market, young men and women are the most common categories to be outside of the formal job market (ILO, 2006). The vendors of the city center, most likely, consists of a mix of people excluded from the formal job market and people who have chosen to exit the formal economy because of economic incentives. The center serves as a hub for the informal economy of vendors and this attracts job seekers.

Does it attract private investment today?

To attract investors to the formal economy the deadlock put on the area as a consequence of the street vending must be resolved. It is, of course, not the only obstacle for attracting investors to the area. The infrastructure of the area is aged and cannot carry, for example, a densification of the area which makes it harder to attract investors. To attract private investments the authorities need make sure that the basic infrastructure is available. The property owners will be more likely to invest if there are other investments made in the area such as public investment in streets and infrastructure. The area is situated in the heart of the city and on attractive flat land, easy to construct upon. It is easy to reach from most parts of the city and could be an attractive spot for offices and other businesses. The historic buildings create a unique environment that could be very attractive. When looking at other cities over the world, the historic centers are often very popular and after a period of functionalism and decentralization in the later part of the nineteen hundreds old city centers have once again become the most attractive place for investment.

The Alcaldia (municipality) also wants to develop the tourism of the city with its cultural heritage and as one of the important places for the independency of Central America. This could be a start for a positive economic development and possibly be a joint effort between the Alcaldia and private investors.
Sustainability

What is unsustainable/sustainable about the center today?

**Sustainability principle 1.**
*In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing concentrations of substances extracted from the earth’s crust.*

There is no recycling program in the area, but the design of the area does not hinder the development this. The area is central and most amenities can be found within the area and it is well-supplied with buses. This makes it possible to live in this area and not be dependent on a car thus makes it possible to not be dependent on fossil fuels extracted from the earth’s crust.

**Sustainability principle 2.**
*In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing concentrations of substances produced by society.*

The design and planning of the area is not creating any barriers to this principle.

**Sustainability principle 3.**
*In a sustainable society, the ecosphere is not subject to systematically increasing degradation by physical means.*

The density of the area is not very high, but the basic structure provides a quite efficient land use. But the situation in the area causes the basic structure to be underutilized, as many houses are left abandoned, others are illegally burnt down to make room for parking and it is common that only the ground floor is used buildings with more than one storey. This inefficient use of land and already existing structures leads to other areas being claimed elsewhere for the uses that could have been taken care of in this already existing structure. It is not the physical planning or the design leading to this but the social and economic situation of the area. Thus one of the most important actions to make the area more sustainable is to change the social and economic situation.

**Sustainability principle 4.**
*In a sustainable society, human’s abilities to meet their own needs are not systematically undermined.*

Today it is not healthy or safe for people in this area, but this is not because of the design of the area but due to lack of planning (buses) and maintenance and order (the chaotic street environment). The grid structure with its plazas provides places for meetings (Plaza Barrios) as well as for leisure (Plaza Morazán and Parque Libertad), but these are disturbed by traffic and pollution. The area could be a representative and identity creating part of the city, with its cultural heritage and beautiful buildings, is has potential to become a way of fulfilling the need for identity in a positive way.

As mentioned earlier a large informal sector also makes people feel like they are not a part of society (ILO, 2006), therefore the extensive street vending can be said to undermine the ability for people to fulfill their need for participation. It is also indirectly undermining the possibility to meet the need for leisure and protection, because the informal sector does not contribute to society and therefore society does not take responsibility for the public spaces the vending occupy. Leaving them deteriorated and not suitable for leisure or recreation not protected from crime or pollution. The street vending is a means for people’s subsistence and therefore must be treated with respect, but it can be transformed so that it does not create barriers for other human needs. The street vending needs to be relocated, together with actions to make it a part of the formal economy this will contribute to breaking down the barriers for people to meet their human needs.
A vendor is selling vegetables on Calle Ruben Dario; a street with many of busses passing by.

Place qualities

What are the place-specific qualities compared to the rest of the city?

The area has a lot of qualities within its built structure. There blocks are relatively small (about 80*80 meters) and the scale of houses and the relationship between open spaces is well suited for pedestrians. The basic structure of blocks, sidewalks and plazas makes it easier to walk around here than in many other places of the city where the environment is adapted to car traffic. The small blocks are one of Jane Jacobs criteria’s for city diversity. It makes it easy to find your way walking through the city. There is no need to make long detours due to the blocks and buildings being in your way. On the other hand there are today other reasons for choosing a longer way, such as the feeling of being unsafe or the streets being overcrowded with vendors.

The history and the historic buildings in the centre are also unique within the city, no other part of the city has the same structure or amount of historically important buildings. The buildings within the city fabric have often been replaced several times due to earthquakes, fires or other rezones. However the structure has remained the same and the grid with its streets and plazas can be traced back to when the city as founded. The fact that the buildings often are small and that they vary in age can also be seen as a big asset according to Jacobs. Aged buildings are needed to attain a good mix of functions and it allows people with different economic assets to use the area. There are also buildings that are abandoned or lots were the houses have been torn down. Therefore there are many opportunities to incorporate new building to complement the old and to heal the city fabric.

There are also several public spaces in close proximity to each other, for example Parque Libertad, Plaza Morazán and Plaza Barrios, the outer city structure have more spread out and fewer quality public spaces.

How could the center be an arena for all levels of society to use and enjoy?

In contrary to the rest of the city, the center has traditional public spaces, like small plazas and parks. Our experience is that it is very hard to find quality public space in San Salvador. For recreation you have to use your own garden or travel outside of the city, but even so many spaces for recreation are privatized. As described earlier the city center also has a good basic structure for
pedestrians, making the sidewalks a public space to enjoy as well as the parks and plazas. Therefore a recuperation of the public space in the city center can be a beneficial for the city as a whole. Well kept and enjoyable public parks, plazas and sidewalks open the opportunity for all citizens to enjoy the city center and to meet as equal owners of this public space.

The city center is lacking when it comes to the aspect of mixed use both in the public space and the built structure. Because the public space is overtaken by vendors it has become mono functional. It is a place for vending but not a place for recreation, contemplation or social activities. As such it provides an opportunity for people from different levels of society to meet while shopping, though many people do not enjoy being in the chaotic environment of the city center.

Looking at Jan Gehl’s categorization of activities that take place in the public space, the city centre is a typical example of a place where a lot of necessary activities take place, up to 90 % of the buses pass through the centre and a lot of people come to do there grocery shopping in the markets.

There are places to exercise the optional activities, for example there are places to sit down in Parque Libertad and Plaza Morazan but the streets are overcrowded and you do not see people just enjoying a stroll or even stopping if they do not have a specific reason. The last type of Gehl’s activities, the social ones can also be presumed to be lacking. You pass by a lot of people but because everybody is mostly there because of their necessary activities it can be assumed that few social and spontaneous activities occur.

However there is a sense of community between the vendors in the city centre and even though they are informal they are organized within their own group. These activities have an important role however they are not the sort of activities that Gehl means. Social activities in his terms are the ones that occur spontaneously when people get to getter in a common place, the social activity of the vendors are exclusively for them and it does not include the visitors. What San Salvador city centre is lacking is the opportunity for different people who are there for different reasons to interact in an enjoyable environment.
Conclusions

In the interviews we made with people almost no one mentions the public spaces of the city centre as something positive. Even though the grid structure with small blocks (about 80*80 m), low scale, sidewalks and plazas is well suited for pedestrians and this quality is quite unique in the city. The central location should also be attractive for investors, and its history should make it interesting for tourism as well as being identity creating for the Salvadorans.

What is making it unattractive from an economic standpoint and for people using the public space is the traffic, pollution, lack of maintenance, the street vending, high crime rates and sense of insecurity. To change this the municipality and the government need to take action with policing, alternative locations for the vendors and better public spaces. Otherwise the street vendors will continue to put a deadlock on the formal economy and with the unwillingness to invest the built structure it will continue to deteriorate (see the conceptual sections below). This way more of the architectural heritage will be lost.

The area needs public spaces which are more accessible for recreational use. It needs places where you are able to relax and feel safe. The physical environment needs to be renovated and in the long run it also needs to be better maintained.

In order to make changes possible there need to be a consensus between the different authorities on who is responsible for what. The obstacles for changing the situation may be political instability, maras (criminal gangs) and corruption, as well as a lack of economic recourses in the municipality. For a change to happen the authorities need to invest both administratively and economically, which can be hard if the political majority changes (see The Santa Tecla Example page 35-36). These changes also need to have support within the community and be executed in dialogue with the people affected.

As can be read about in the chapter on formal and informal economy Carr and Alter Chen (2001) sees a relationship between a growing informal sector and globalisation. This can be one of the explanations to the growing number of street vendors in the San Salvador City Center. What has happened here is similar to what has happened in other developing countries; when people started migrating into the city the formal economy could not absorb all the surplus labour and the large surplus of people that could not get work in the formal sector created their own sources of income (Flodman Becker, 2004) such as street vending. This means that the problem with the street vending is not place specific for this area; it is a structural problem in society. And therefore it also needs to be addressed in other measures in society then spatial planning.
SWOT
This SWOT is a summary of the background research, inventories, analysis and conclusions. Its purpose is to clarify what key things are that we will later take with us in the development of the strategy and proposals. In our SWOT analysis we consider Strengths and Weaknesses to be qualities of the area today while Opportunities and Threats describe the future possibilities for the area.

**Strengths**
- The grid structure with small blocks (about 80*80 m) and low scale.
- The informal economy creates job opportunities for people who are locked out from the formal job market.
- The land is attractive because of its location.
- The historic grid structure and historic buildings make the city centre both unique and important.

**Weaknesses**
- The street vending creates problems for traffic and pedestrians and puts a deadlock on the formal economy.
- The polluting buses and traffic congestion.
- The public space is poorly maintained.
- Many buildings are in poor condition.
- The high crime rates and sense of insecurity.

**Opportunities**
- A positive trend of investment can be started by the municipality by maintenance and upgrading of the public space.
- Because it is the capitol the government authorities may take an interest in investing.
- Investment in the cultural heritage and tourism could become an economic motor for the area.
- If the qualities of this structure are taken care of and made attractive they also provide a platform for social activities and may also result in people from different socio economic background sharing this space as equal owners.

**Threats**
- The deadlock on the formal economy and unwillingness to invest causes the built structure to deteriorate, due to the street vending.
- A risk that the city centre will no longer be a place for the locals with low economic resources. The qualities it has today can be lost in a gentrification process.
- Political instability, maras and corruption makes it more difficult to make changes happen.
- Lack of economic funds in the municipality makes them dependent on government funds or other resources.
- For a change to happen the authorities needs to invest both administratively and economically. It seems to be a discrepancy between what their legal power is and what powers they can implement in reality.
Recommendations and Strategy

Strategy and Recommendations
Strategy

The strategy we suggest is based on the idea that if the municipality can make the area attractive and functional for people it will also become attractive for the formal economy; in turn this creates a broader basis for tax collection which helps the municipality to afford sustaining high quality public space. A positive trend of investment can be started by the municipality by better maintenance of streets and sidewalks as well as upgrading plazas and parks.

To become a thriving space socially and economically, which is representative for the capital and the country we believe there need to be a combination of actions. At a first glance the street vending is the major problem of the area, but we believe that only dealing with the street vending is not enough to make the area thriving again.

The houses, streets and plazas are degraded and the question is where to start a positive trend of renovation, renewal and maintenance. Just removing the street vending will only result in a less active and lively area, still leaving the property owners unwilling to invest in their buildings. There need to be new activities in combination with a renovation of public space. Like the Santa Tecla example (see page 35-36) cultural activities in historically significant buildings combined with safe and attractive public space invites people to enjoy walk around exploring the surroundings and thus making it attractive for restaurants and shops. In some ways it can be compared to a gentrification process, but with the municipality as the change agent.

A well functioning relation between the citizens and the municipality is a condition for creating a good public space, without the tax money the municipality cannot take care of the public space. There are of course other issues for the municipality that are important to prioritize, such as health care and schools, but we believe that taking care of the public space is important to create a better economic development. Relocating the street vendors is also an opportunity to help them overcome the barriers to the formal economy. It can also contribute to the municipal economy if the vendors pay a small fee or tax.

The historic grid structure and many historic buildings make the city center both unique and important for the city and is an advantage when it comes to competing for visitors and costumers with the malls, together with the central location. The grid structure with small blocks (about 80*80 m), low scale, sidewalks and plazas is well suited for pedestrians and this quality is quite unique in the city. If the qualities of this structure are taken care of and made attractive they also provide a platform for social activities. A better maintenance and quality public space may also result in people from different socio economic background sharing this space as equal owners.
Recommendations

Public transport
The buses needs to be better organized we recommend establishing a core network of BRT bus lines as described on page 33. The bus traffic today creates health risks and makes the inner city unattractive. Public transport should be a safe and attractive means of transport. This is also a question of equality since the poor part of the population cannot afford other means of transportation. Pollution and traffic needs to become better to not endanger people’s health and safety.

Maintenance and policing
The area will not become representative and attractive without maintenance and cleaning of the public space; this is something that has to have continuity and should be considered when renewing parts of the public space. It needs to be durable and easy to keep clean. Safety is important to make the area attractive and the policing of the area is also needed to keep people from occupying public space for vending. The question of policing is not only a municipal question. There are three different kind of police forces; one belonging to the state, Forca Armada, one to the military, Policia National Civil, and one to the municipality Cuerpo de Agentes Municipales. The policing of the street is done by the state police force while the sidewalk is policed by the municipal police force.

Quality public space
Provide plazas and parks not disturbed by noise, pollution and made available and attractive, but also functional sidewalks, shaded places for rest and meetings and good lighting. Because the sun sets around six or seven P.M. street lighting is important.

Publicly organized vending areas
The street vending is a problem, the street vendors need to be removed or organized in a way that they do not create problems for traffic and pedestrians. We suggest that the municipality should provide alternative spaces but also to keep some of the vending in the core of the city center, but managed by the municipality. It is important to offer a good alternative so that the transition will benefit both parts. The informal economy creates job opportunities for many people who are otherwise locked out from the formal job market. An alternative place is the underutilized market just north east of the center, which can be reconstructed to house more vendors and at the same time improve the facilities. These actions should also be combined with an overseeing of barriers for small businesses to become formal. Many of the restaurants on Hula Hula could for example be housed in the buildings surrounding the plaza, formalizing the economy but keeping the bustling activity there is today.
The first phase is to move the economic activity from the streets. The purple area symbolizes the economic activity. In the second phase, the public space is upgraded and policed to avoid new vendors occupying the streets.
Design Proposals
Introduction to the proposals

The project area is located in the very core of the Historic centre and it contains important monuments such as the cathedral, national palace and theatre. The reasons for this delimitation are many; it is an area with great potential because of the many public spaces in close connection to each other. It is also culturally and historically important and we find it important that an area like this is a place that the whole city can be proud of.

The design proposals focus on the public space and this is the section of the thesis that contains our individual parts. One proposal on Parque Libertad, Plaza San Martin and Plaza Barrios from Julia and one on Plaza 2de Abril, Calle Arce and Plaza Morazán from Elisabet. The two projects are connected to each other and aim to function as one cohesive sequence of public spaces.
The Cathedral (Metropolitan Cathedral of the Holy Savior), the seat of the archbishop of the Roman Catholic church of San Salvador. It is open from both sides and underneath it lays the tomb of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Palacio Nacional
The former presidential palace, is renovated but empty except from a smaller exhibition.

Iglesia El Rosario
Church built in 1976 by sculptor and architect Ruben Martínez.

City Library

Portales
These portales are constructed so that the second floor gives shelter to the sidewalk. This is a traditional way of building around central plazas.

Teatro Nacional

Design Proposals Elisabet

Design Proposals Julia
Suggested traffic flows

The map to the right shows how the city center can relived from some of the bus and car traffic. This would benefit the pedestrian street and park life, relieving Plaza Barrios and Parque Libertad from excessive bus traffic.

Traffic flows

- Pedestrian street
- No local busses allowed
- No car traffic and local busses allowed
- BRT line
Design Proposals

Julia

Plaza San Martín
Plaza Barrios
Parque Libertad
Plaza San Martin, Plaza Barrios and Parque Libertad, these three plazas are in close proximity of each other and need to complement each other in function. I am proposing Plaza San Martin as a bus plaza because this is where two the new bus lines in the BRT system would meet. Plaza Barrios has the character of representative main plaza providing space for big crowds. Parque Libertad is the garden-plaza proving a space for meeting people, activities and also a place for idleness.
Plaza San Martin

Today

This plaza is half overtaken by vendors and half of it is used for parking (picture 2., taken from Palacio Nacional). It merges with the pedestrian/vending part of Calle Arce in the north and is partly covered by big trees. It is a small space when compared to the large neighboring buildings as the Cathedral and the Palacio Nacional, but the west block is low with many store fronts towards the plaza (picture 1.).

1. The one storey building, with store fronts towards the plaza.

2. View from Palacio Nacional, streetvending stalls surrounding the parking lot.
Design proposal-Plaza Bus

- *Space for cafés, resting and passing through.*

The new BRT bus line will require a station for changing busses in the intersection between Avenida España and Calle Ruben Dario, making the bus stops a main function of the plaza. It is also an important place when it comes to linking the pedestrian part of Calle Arce to plaza Barrios. It also opens up for a long view across the grid pattern, making it a different place in the city fabric. I want to pick up this movement and direction in the design, making the floor striped towards Plaza Barrios and the benches describing a movement between the bus lines. It’s a plaza for waiting for your bus as well as passing through inviting you to change direction while walking through the city or sitting down for a coffee.

Components:

- Paving in stripes to accentuate the breach in the grid pattern of the city
- Outdoor space for cafes
- Water feature for decoration
- Shading trees
- Benches facing Plaza Barrios
- Bus station for BRT
- Bus shelter
Café and benches for resting and watching the people passing through the plaza

New BRT bus line on Calle Ruben Dario

The benches are facing south east towards Plaza Barrios the backside of the benches are tiled in red and orange to accentuate that this direction is opposing the direction of the stripe paving.
Bus shelters with seating and shading roof

Water and shading trees decorates the plaza
Plaza Barrios

Today

The main plaza with the Cathedral, which is one of the landmarks downtown, is the very heart of the city with public buildings such as the National Palace, City Library and the Cathedral. This is also where the main traffic arteries cross.

The design of this plaza has varied through the years, today the design is facing Palacio National with an open part and in the middle is a statue of President Gerardo Barrios, who introduced coffee as an export crop.

A plaza or a square is not only dependent on the design of the plaza itself but also of the surrounding buildings. Surrounding buildings can define sense of direction, space and movements. On Plaza Barrios the direction is set by the tall, white cathedral. The restriction of the space of the plaza is not so strong. The buildings around it vary in height and do not always fill up the full blocks and the wide streets contribute to a lack of defined space.

The design of the plaza itself adds to the fragmented spatial impression with different park-like segments of grass and trees in elevated parts protected by fences. The fences around the square contributes to a park-like expression and do not add any spatial value.

During the day the park-like part of the plaza is used by people looking for shade and a place to sit down in the city center. On special occasions the open part of the plaza it is used for manifestations and other events.
Design proposal - Representative main plaza

- Monumental and made for big crowds

Even if Parque Libertad is considered to be the original main plaza my interpretation is that today Plaza Barrios has the best potential to function as a main plaza, made for manifestations and events with a lot of people, for example this was the place to celebrate when the peace treaty was signed in 1992. This function also makes it important to think about what the place represents. As a place for manifestations I want the design of the plaza to represent the meeting between the officials of society and the people. On Plaza Barrios the officials are represented by Palacio Nacional, the cathedral and the library.

The first step is to make Plaza Barrios into a more held together entity by reinforcing its edges. This is done through a permeable “wall” with medium high trees and low benches. This would provide a better defined space as well as shaded seating areas.

Central plazas are important for the identity of colonial Central American cities and towns; they represent the communal life of a city. As the main plaza of the capital the design of Plaza Barrios needs to be representative for the people of El Salvador. Therefore my suggestion is to make a modern plaza with no statues as symbols of power, but lifting forward other parts of society as representative for a Salvadoran identity.

The ceiba is an important tree in Pipil (the indigenous of El Salvador) culture. My suggestion is to keep this tree from today’s design of the plaza and also plant two new ones so that there will always be one fully grown ceiba on the square. This represents a fragment of the Pipil culture in the middle of this colonial town, just as there is fragments of it in contemporary Salvadoran culture.

My suggestion is to decorate the floor of the plaza with quotes from people who has been important for El Salvador and/or extracts from Salvadoran poetry and literature, forming a new, organic pattern.
Components:

- Paving decorated with an organic pattern with quotes from Salvadoran literature and history
- Difference in levels together with the three ceibas creates spaces within the plaza
- Three ceiba trees decorating the open space, an important tree for the native people of this region
- Shading trees and benches
Shade and benches to rest on around the edge of the plaza

The placing of the trees around the edges creates a separate space, still in contact with the surrounding buildings.
Monumental, strong pattern with red stipes swirling over the plaza.

The decorative text imbedded in the pattern are quotes from Salvadoran poetry and literature. As a temptation for people passing by the plaza, the quotes start at the edges and go inwards.

New BRT bus line on Calle Ruben Dario.
Parque Libertad

Today

Parque Libertad is used by a lot of people and at times almost crowded; it offers places to sit down and some shade and greenery. The triangular pieces of elevated lawn are fenced in so that people will not step on it, this also makes the desirable shade from the trees unavailable for the people. On the first picture you can see how people gather in the available shade. In the middle of the square is a liberty monument in form of a n angel carrying two wreaths.

The portal sidewalks have been cleared from vendors and now it is characterized by the shoe-shiners lined up along the wall (see picture on page 72). The west portal is lively and the businesses are doing fairly well and it is not as disturbed by the traffic as the north and south side of the park. The west side also functions as a taxi zone.

The north portal La Dahlia’s portal sidewalk is under utilized and the business premises are worn down and sketchy. It is more degraded then the portal west of the square, maybe because it is more disturbed by the bus traffic using this as an end station.

With the new plan for BRT this street would only have the new RBT buses passing by and the portals would be less disturbed by traffic.
Design proposal - Park-Plaza

- Green space providing possibilities for rest, play, dance and meeting people.

The old structure with the triangular pieces of garden-like structure surrounding the monument with the liberty angel is a nice green oasis in the city. My suggestion is to develop the original structure and make the grass available through steps, this also creates more secondary seating areas. I also want to invite different groups of people to enjoy the park through adding different features to each triangular part.

Components:

- Paving in decorative oversized pattern to accentuate the playfulness of this park
- Water feature for decoration
- Grass for playing and resting
- Shading trees
- Hard surfaces for dancing, performing or games
- Difference in level created by two or three steps makes the grass triangles both stages and separate rooms from the rest of the plaza
- Benches on the inside and the outside of the park
(triangle nr 2) Elevated circles in different sizes can serve as **stages**

**Benches** built into the wall/flowerbed surrounding the park
(triangle nr 1) Circles to **dance** or performe on in different materials and sizes

(triangle nr 4) **Flower beds and benches to hang out on**

Play (triangle nr 5) - **swings and play sculptures**
View over Parque Libertad today with Iglesia El Rosario and Los Portales (nr 1. on map on page 70).

View over Parque Libertad with the new design (nr 1. on map on page 68).
Design Proposals

Elisabet

Calle Arce
Plaza 2 de Abril
Plaza Morazan
The project area consists of a section of Calle Arce (Delgado) that runs from 3a Avenida to 4a Avenida, and of the two plazas, 2da de Abril and Morzán. The plan proposal is divided in to these three parts and is later finished off with a common conclusion for the whole area.

Except for around Plaza Morazán the buildings are mostly low like in the rest of the centre. One important landmark within the area is the national theatre and the area is full of buildings that are identified by the authorities as historic. With the exception of Plaza Morazán, the area is hectic and crowded with vendors.
The picture above shows Plaza Morazán with the national theatre. The photo on the right shows how Calle Arce and Plaza Hula Hula is built in and blocked by vending stalls and shacks.
CALLE ARCE
The decision to delimit the project are to the part of Calle Arce that goes between 3a Avenida and 4a Avenida is based on that fact that it is the most central part of the street and it is the part that connects many of the important public spaces and landmarks in the city center. It is also the section of that street that is the most overtaken by vendors. For pedestrians this is the most crowded part of the street and because of all the vending in the street it is completely blocked from car traffic all the way between 5a Avenida until 2a Avenida.

Calle Arce can be seen as a shopping street, it is very busy and it is also one of the places where the informal vending is made the most permanent by tiling on the street, metal constructions, and lockable shops. Some of the vendors even have electricity and running water. The street is illegally occupied, but because it has been going on for so many years people feel as thou they have the right to be there. The vendors don’t pay any fee to the authorities for the land but we are told that the criminal gangs have a great control over the vendors and that they do have to pay rent to the Maras (gangs).

Many of the buildings alongside the street are declared as historic, either by OPAMS (planning ministry) or by CONCULTURA (ministry of culture). Many of these buildings are however in a very bad state and because of the vending is completely blocking the streets and covering the facades the buildings are not visible and a lot of times they are empty. On the walk between Hula Hula and Plaza Morazán it is impossible to get a view of what the buildings look like because the street in entirely built in with the roof over the street vendors shops.
This pedestrian street makes the center more accessible by foot and more enjoyable to walk in. It connects three out of five open public spaces downtown: Hula Hula, Plaza San Martín, and Plaza Morazán. It is a street with commerce as well as a place to sit down and relax on a bench or at a cafe.
A pedestrian street makes the center more accessible by foot and more enjoyable to walk in and Calle Arce is perfect because it is in the heart of center and to make it pedestrian is not a problem in terms of traffic because the street is in reality already blocked to cars. Calle Arce is lined with historic small scale buildings that now are impossible to see because the street is built in buy the vendor. Many of the building are empty and the shop spaces in the bottom floors are not being used. To get some value back in to the buildings and create an incentive for the owners to invest in their property the street needs to be recuperated and the facades freed.

The proposal is to divide the pedestrian street in to two parts and letting the western part (between Plaza Hula Hula and Avenida Cuscatalan) be a market street but in a more organized form then it is today. By renting out market stalls instead of letting people build their own the comers can be concentrated to the center of the street. This will free the building facades and again making it possible to run businesses in the bottom floor.

• Take advantage of the fact that the street is in reality already a pedestrian street because of the vendors

• A small intervention to make an example of what a pedestrian friendly center could be like

• Keeping the street commercial but freeing the facades

• Market street between 3a Avenida and Avenida Cuscatalan

• Providing rentable market stalls to make the street design cohesive

• Concentrating market stalls to the middle of the street to make the facades visible an accessible

• A new character east of Avenida Cuscatalan free from vending allowing the public space to be used for other things then comers

• Provide plenty of seating and shade to make the street a place to reside for a bit, not just past through
DESIGN IDEA FOR THE SECTION BETWEEN 3A AVENIDA AND AV.CUSCATALEN

The sidewalks are removed and the pavement is made coherent and flat from façade to façade. This is the part of the street that is kept as a market street. It is done so with market stalls that stand back to back in the center of the streets. The stalls are not permanent so they can be removed if the street needs to be used for other things or the demand changes. The stalls are placed with gaps every 12-14 meters to make it easy to cross to the other side of the street. The small side street that connects Calle Arce and Calle Poniente is also included in the pedestrian area. A new market is created alongside 1a Avenida Norte. This is a lot that is used for informal corners today. The new market design is made up by booths that are 3 by 3 meters. These stalls are made with the more permanent vendors in mind.

The crafts market in Antigua, Guatemala has been an inspiration for the larger market stalls.
DESIGN IDEA FOR THE SECTION BETWEEN 3A AVENIDA AND AV.CUSCATALAN

1. Market street with rentable in the center fits a lot of vendors without blocking the facades
2. A market with larger rentable stalls is created
3. The small sidestreet is also converted into a pedestrian street
DESIGN IDEA FOR THE SECTION BETWEEN 3A AVENIDA AND AV.CUSCatalan

1. Small market stalls in the center of Calle Arce

2. Larger market stalls in the space alongside 1a Avenida Norte

2. Section showing the different functions
DESIGN IDEA FOR THE SECTION BETWEEN AV. CUSCATALAN AND 2A AVENIDA

This section of the street is given a line of trees in the centre with seating around them. This is a more quiet section of the street where the corners only goes on inside the shop spaces in the bottom floor. Just as the section with the market stalls the furniture is placed in the center of the street to not take away from the façade. The benches are round and made out of red bricks, a local material that is durable and require low maintenance. Some of the benches are connected to the one at the next tree by a curvy backless section.
HULA HULA
This square is a restaurant square on the inside that is enclosed by a ring of vendors on the outside. The ring of vendors outside the square makes it hard to find an entrance and in the morning before the rush to the restaurants has started, the inside is quiet and empty of people. It is not possible to get an overview at any place and when you are there square it is not perceived as an open public space.

The surrounding buildings are mostly low scale, the highest being three stories. Many of them are declare historic and the use of them is mainly commercial. The streets are wide and crowded which limits the connection between the square and the facades. The square has several old, large trees around the edges that provide a well needed shade as well as it gives it character. Hula Hula is connected to the main market by 3a Avenida Sur, a wide street with busy market activity. And because Calle Arce runs along the north of the square, Hula Hula is a strategic place for vending.

The real name for this square is Plaza 2a de Abril but the popular name is Hula Hula and the story that we have been told is that it got its name because when they redid the design several years ago, the new light fixtures had a decoration that looked like hula hoops. The paving of the square also has a characteristic circular pattern.
This is a vibrant and open market square as well as an entry to the heart of the city center. The square serves as a center for the local vendors with facilities provided for the ones that rent their market stalls in the city centre.
Today Hula Hula is a closed in space with street food and simple restaurants on the inside and vendors on the outside. The proposal aims to make the square more open so that you can easily pass through it. The square has old and large trees that provides shade and gives the space character and the new design will be adapted to them.

Because of its location between Calle Arce and Calle Ruben Dario, many people pass by Hula Hula and that makes it an excellent place for vending. One idea is to make it in to a market square in two levels, a regular square on ground level and a second level below ground. Such a market has been built in three levels in Guatemala City centre. The central market in Guatemala City appears to be a vibrant and well functioning market and by making the market in multiple levels you generate more space for the market without changing the historic structure and relationship between the buildings and the squares. Hula Hula will also be a center for the vendors in the sense there will be facilities such as water and restrooms to their dispense. These facilities will be available to all of the vendors that rent there market space in the center under formal circumstances.

- Keep the square as a market square but with rentable market stalls instead
- Narrowing 1a Avenida Sur, slowing the traffic and connecting the square to the buildings
- Investigating the possibility of creating underground levels, either for parking or for more market space
- Facilities for the formal vendors, an incentive to make them want to integrate into the system
- Preserve and design around the large trees
The design of Hula Hula is much based on the classical plaza/parque design, with paths leading from the corners into the center. However, one of the big differences is that the proposed design for Hula Hula encourages you to use the spaces between the paths. The triangles that are created are traditionally often fenced in grass or other plantations. In this design idea the whole plaza is paved surface but it has plenty of trees that provide shade for the benches underneath them. The benches are the same round type that is proposed on Calle Arce.

Along the paths the same kind of market stalls as on Calle Arce is put up. The paths are wide making it possible to walk in the middle and pass by the combiners without it being too crowded.

In the center of the square a small building is proposed. This is where you reach the lower floor of the market. Stairs lead down on the sides and in the building there is an elevator. In the bottom floor is also all the facilities needed by the vendors.

The street around the plaza is narrowed. This gives the surrounding buildings the opportunity to expand outside the shops and restaurants. Because Hula Hula today contains a lot of informal restaurants this is an opportunity to formalize them by getting them into the buildings while still having opportunity for outdoor service.

The circles that are the signature for Hula Hula today are repeated by the round benches, and the circular building and paths.

1. A small building in the center of the square contains facilities and elevator down to the bottom floor
2. Stairs down on two sides
3 & 4. A narrowed street gives the businesses in the bottom floor outdoor space
5. Market stalls along the paths
6. Trees with round benches gives well needed, shaded places to rest
7. The old trees are kept to provide character and shade
DESIGN IDEA
DESIGN IDEA

The plaza with the underground market

Section showing the different functions
The round benches

Market along the paths in the plaza

Hula Hula - Centre For Vendors
Today this small square has lots of furniture, greenery, a large statue and a surrounding fence. The furniture on the plaza mainly consists of large concrete constructions with benches and planter for trees and flowers. During the day Plaza Morazan is populated by people seeking shade on the benches under the trees, however at night the fence around the square making it impossible to use. The reason for this is said to be crime prevention.

At the south end of the plaza lies the national theater. A newly renovated building, that was one of the most popular answers to the question of favorite place or building during our interviews. Another predominant building is Edificio 123, an old bank building that was undergoing renovation while the inventory for this thesis was made. The plan is for the building to be rented out as several smaller offices space. Another asset to the plaza is the large parking garage that is accessed from 1a Calle. It may not be an asset esthetically but it provides much needed parking space for the visitors.
This more intimate plaza serves as a front yard to the theater. It’s a place to enjoy small cultural events or sit down at an outdoor café and watch the people and the street life.
The design today is a bit cluttered. This makes it hard to use for other activities then recreation. It also creates a lot of dark hidden corners at night and in a city like San Salvador safety and security is a big issue. The proposal is a more open design that allows you to have a better overview and also gives an opportunity to have activities in the square.

The proposal aims to make the square more connected to its surrounding buildings, especially to the theatre. This will be obtained by narrowing the surrounding streets and due to the fact that Calle Arce is proposed to be made in a pedestrian street the barrier between the square and the theatre will to a great extent be removed. Today the square is closed in by a fence with gates that are locked at night, and because the activity that goes on in the theater usually takes place at night it’s not possible for the two to interact. Instead of the physical boundary that the fence creates the square is proposed to have clear boundaries in the pavement instead.

Remove the barriers of traffic on Calle Arce and let the theatre and the square connect

Make the square more open to allow for more activities

Create boundaries with differences in the pavement instead of the physical boundaries like the existing fences

Narrowing 4a Avenida Norte to two lanes

Incorporating the small side street in to the square and close off to all traffic except for the cars going in to the parking garage
DESIGN IDEA

Because this is such a small square and it has the beautiful theater, the design proposal is simple and open, letting the theater be the main focal point. It is framed by trees planted on both sides of the sidewalk, creating an edge between the streets and the plaza without being a barrier. The trees are lit from below making them an effect full element at night. As well as it helps to create a sense of security.

The design is made with the idea that the plaza should be used in the evenings because one of the predominate thing about it is the theater, that usually has its activities at night. For a space to be used after dark it needs to be easy to oversee, therefore the design proposal is an open space with a low centerpiece that has a small stage with a water element in front that is lit at night. All around the edges of the stage and water are stairs that can be used as seating. The proposal is to make the stage about 60 centimeters high and keeping the water on the same level.

The statue that is now in the center of the square is taken down from its large podium and placed on a smaller one in the south-west corner, and can there by serves as somewhat of a landmark.

Whit the design proposal Plaza Morazán becomes slightly bigger because 4a Avenida Norte is narrowed. This also makes the plaza more in line with the surrounding grid. The small side street on the other side is made in to a zone for the businesses in the bottom floor; this makes it possible to have outdoor restaurants and cafés.
DESIGN IDEA

1. The trees on both sides of the side walk frames the plaza
2. An open well lit plaza makes it accesible at night
3. A low outdoor scene for cultural activities
4. The businesses in the bottom floorare given a zone for outdoor cafes
5. A low water element in front of the scene with seating around it
6. The street is narrowed making it less of a barrier
7. The statue is given a less dominant placing in the corner

Today the statue has a its place in the centre of the square on the top of a large concrete construction with benches and flowerbeds. In the proposal to give the statue a lower podium in the corner of instead. The more simplified design lets the statue stand out without making it dominant.
DESIGN IDEA

The plaza with a new and more open design

Section showing the different functions

Street
Commerce
Pedestrian
Plaza
Even though the proposal is divided into three parts they interact and are dependent on each other. Calle Arce that is the main connection does not only connect the two open spaces in this proposal, it is also an important link to the plan proposal made by Julia.

The theater is such a clear symbol of what this city could be a cultural center where the old historic center meets the new. By clearing up and redesigning the space around it, this part of town can be a place where you spend an evening or an afternoon. The inspiration came one evening when we went to a play at the theater. It would have been so nice to make an evening of it, perhaps a dinner but this is not an area that offers that. Even if it is too costly to redo the plaza, just opening it and removing the feces would make a big difference.

The proposal to clear Calle Arce and Hula Hula may sound drastic and difficult considering how overcrowded they are by vendors today and how permanently they have built their stalls. But these are places in the city center that has the most potential and that is probably one of the reasons it has become so popular for vending.

The massive problems that go on in downtown San Salvador will not be fixed easily. And because the resources are few the ideas behind these proposals is to start in a small scale and doing it well so it makes a notable difference. This can hopefully give ripple effect to other parts and give inspiration for improvements.
Discussion
Discussion

In this chapter the proposals are evaluated against our theoretical framework. We also discuss the possibilities of implementing the proposals we have made. If they were to be implemented they would affect a large number of people and maybe not all of them will be in favour of the changes proposed. This thesis treats large and complex issues and not all aspects have been considered within this project. There are also other possible methods to be taken in dealing with the subject then the one we chose; this project was made in a country that was new to us and our Swedish bias has most likely affected the outcome.

To cover the issues above this final discussion is divided in to five sections: evaluation of the proposals, consequence analysis, implementation, critique and further studies.

Evaluation of the proposals

Looking at the strategy and proposals using Jacobs four conditions, we find the proposal to be a step in the right direction. However the prerequisites for all of the conditions are already there beforehand; the small blocks and the variation in age of the building, so this is not something that is obtained thru our project. And when it comes to mixed use we suggest different, and in many cases multifunctional plazas. But we do not suggest how the private space should be used, this is a big part of the usage of the area and we have chosen to not recommend any regulations on this. However by changing the public space we also change the conditions for the property owners and the businesses, so the chances for the private space to become more multifunctional are better. With a more attractive property market in the area it is also possibility that new there will be an interest in new developments on the lots that are now vacant.

The concepts of Jan Gehl are perhaps more applicable to this kind of project then the ones of Jane Jacobs, for the reason that Gehl deals directly with the usage of public space. Gehl means that in order to get people to use the public space for optional and social activities the quality of it needs to be high. There also needs to be a combination of necessary and optional activities to obtain a situation where the social activities occur. The proposals we have made include space for both necessary activities like shopping and public transport as well as places for optional activity like recreation.

On a micro level the proposals relates to all of the four sustainability principals. They make the area more pedestrian friendly and by incorporating the new BRT system less people may choose the car. Taking away the old polluting buses will also make the air quality within in the area better. Developing on already built land saves natural recourses and because of the areas location in the centre of town it is a place that is accessible by public transportation for many people. When it comes to the fourth principle that relates to the social aspects of sustainability, interventions like the once we are suggesting gives people from different areas and social background the opportunity to meet and interact.

Consequence analysis

Because of its location in the very heart of the capital, this project will affect a large number of people. One group that obviously will be greatly affected are the vendors who together with their customers can be seen as the city centre’s main users today. The vendors are an established group and may feel entitled to be where they are, some have made substantial investments is there shacks and stalls. On one hand the proposals in this thesis will result in a decree of street vending in the core of the historic centre while on the other hand it will result in better conditions for the vendors, they will be given a legitimate right to a new place and they will ha facilities provided for them. A more organized street environment can also attract new customers. Because the proposals will increase the accessibility to the commercial spaces in the buildings, there is a possibility for the more established vendors to develop their businesses in to shops. In the short run the vendors can be affected negatively and there is no guarantee that they will make the same profits that they make if they are moved to other locations. On the other hand integrating them in the formal economy is important, this can contribute to making them active members of society which strengthens the democracy (ILO, 2006). Two of the design proposals are a compromise between the reclaiming the public space and keeping the street vendors. Another approach could have been to clear out all of the vending in
the area. We believe that keeping some of the street vending will help to not stigmatize it and that street markets together with high quality alternatives for the street vendors that will have to move their business is a positive thing as long as it is done in an organised manner.

The costumers and other people that frequent the area today are to a high extent low or middle income and the shopping in the streets is cheap. If the area becomes more attractive the risk is also that the prices will increase, for the people dependent on inexpensive goods this is a negative effect. That is why it is important to keep the market functions, and also keeping the rents of the stalls low so there will still be room for inexpensive and small scale commerce.

The property owners in the area will be positively affected in the sense that the facades of their buildings will no longer be blocked by vendors, and that may open up for new opportunities. An improved public environment can attract new groups of people to the area. A likely effect will be an increase of the value of the property and the possibility to rent it out with a profit.

The authorities will also be affected by these interventions. They are to ones that will have to implement then and also do de follow-ups of administration, policing and maintenance. In the short term perspective this could be costly for them. However the situation as it is today is not sustainable and to let it proceed will in the long run be a bigger cost as the crime rates increase and the vendors are becoming more and more.

**Implementation**

Changes like the ones suggested in this thesis are costly; moving vendors, providing new spaces and renewing the public spaces. To make these large changes happen, a strong commitment from the authorities is needed. We do not see that in is necessary to implement all of the proposals at once. It could be done in stages and positive effects can be achieved even in the event that the entire project cannot be executed. The design proposals need a long term plan for implementation; as well as a plan for maintenance. In the places that where already freed from vending there are guards or police that patrol and that would most likely be needed here to.

Another thing to clarify before a proposal like this can become reality is the question of who is responsible for what. Because the municipality does not have the funds to implement a project of this magnitude they most likely, need financial help from the state. A potential obstacle is the political situation. The state and municipality have different political majorities today and creating cooperation could be difficult.
Critique

Our expertise is spatial planning and the project affects many aspects where we do not have the professional knowledge. Therefore there might have been issues that we may not fully understand the complexity of. More input from professionals in other disciplines then planning, preferably people with good knowledge of the place specific situation in San Salvador would have given this thesis another dimension and made it stronger.

It is also inevitably so that the proposals that we have made are a product of our Swedish perspective and European views of what a city centre should be. We also had a limited understanding of the culture, political system and other factors. The outcome might have been different if we would have spent more time in El Salvador or if we had interacted more frequently with the people in the project area.

Even though we believe that strengthening the public space is the key issue we do not have proof that this will make formal economy of the area stronger nor that the project will have the positive spiral effect that we are hoping for. When you have the ambition to kick start a development you can never be sure that the end result is what you envision, nevertheless the development may be a good one even if it is not the one you expected.

Further studies

New Marketplaces
We have not investigated further how new markets outside of the area will be designed or where it is most suitable to place them, this investigation would be the next step to take. When it comes to designing the markets architects should be involved to ensure that they are completed in the best possible way.

A system for integrating the vendors in the formal economy
To be able to formalise the vendors, studies needs to be made of the administrative systems and taxation laws. This lies outside of the spatial planners area of knowledge and therefore other experts needs to be included in those studies.

Plans for the practical execution
The expertise of engineering is needed when it comes to making plans for the execution, technical issues like the electric system needs to be sorted out and the plans needs to be developed into correct drawings before the project can be executed.
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