

Courtyards to Support Urban Poor Communities

Introducing Courtyard-design Making Social Cohesion Thrive in
Neighborhood-based Communities in Metro Manila



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Introduction

During the last century neighborhoods have changed forcing displacement of low-income people from their homes in a variety of ways. During recent decades the building of communities has been promoted in revitalization of neighborhoods and urban areas (Fraser, 2004). In the year 2000, around 34.2% of the total household population in the Philippines lived below the poverty threshold set by the government. In Metro Manila nearly half of the households had an income of US\$400 or less. News reports claims that one out of five families in Metro Manila needs an income increase of at least US\$300 per month to meet basic needs (Ragragio, 2003).

The Philippines are positioned off the southeastern coast of Asia, directly east of Vietnam and northeast of Malaysia. The capital region Metro Manila accounts for approximately 0.2% of the total land area of the Philippines. The area is 636 km² divided into four districts with twelve cities and five different municipalities. The largest city when it comes to both land-area and population is

Quezon City (Ragragio, 2003), the base of our study trip with the course Urban Shelter at Lund University 2019.

By travelling to the Philippines to study urban conditions, in particular housing conditions for middle- to low-income households in Metro Manila my fascination for community within dwellings started to grow stronger. By performing interviews with local residents and doing observations in areas with diverse conditions I learned a lot about how people live and practice in Metro Manila. In the course we were given a site in which we were to do a neighborhood design. By meeting local governance organizations and private dwellers me with the rest of the course attendees got a solid ground in which we could influence with our own experiences and knowledge by carrying out the project. I noticed the lack of courtyard designs, both by visiting housing projects and by learning about planned revitalization. We also saw well-functioning neighborhood-based communities focusing on maintenance and safe keeping. This inspired me to write this essay, trying to introduce courtyard designs to enhance the liveliness and meaning of these existing communities.

Literature Review

Household conditions in the Philippines

The population in the Philippines is increasing along with the urbanization grade. Only 11.9% of all households in the Philippines lives in multi-unit residentials, 80.7% live in single detached houses. Community water systems with water good for cooking is only provided for 43.4% of all households (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019).

The number of households in the Philippines has increased with 2.80 million families, from 20.17 million in 2010 to 22.98 million in 2015, see Figure 1. (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). In the same time the average household size has decreased from 5.0 persons in 2000, to 4.6 in 2010 to 4.4 persons in 2015. In 2015 the number of households was measured to 3.10 million, with an average household size of 4.1 people, in the national capital region, Metro Manila. The population of Metro Manila was measured to 12.88 million people year 2015. The population has raised 1.02 million in five years and 2.94 million in fifteen years, see Figure 2. (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019).

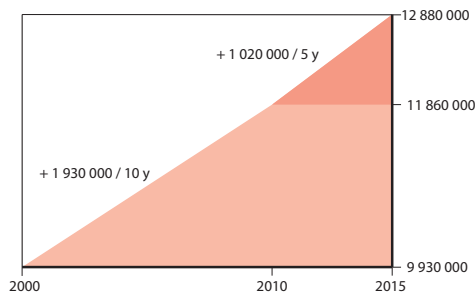


Figure 1. Total increase of households in the Philippines from year 2000 to 2015 according to POPCEN 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019)

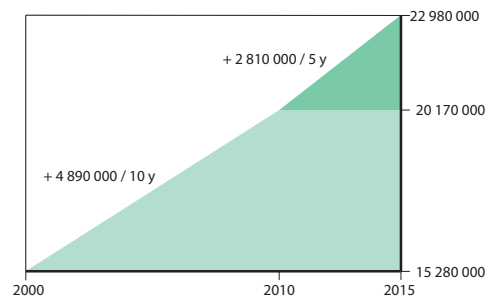


Figure 2. Population increase from year 2000 to 2015 in Metro Manila according to POPCEN 2015 (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019)

The slums of Metro Manila, which account for 2.54 million people, have the most depressed living conditions of the country. They are usually located in dangerous zones, for example along rivers and railroad tracks, or under bridges or even on top of, or besides garbage dumps. Households in depressed areas has an average household size of five and an extended family size of nine. More than half of the households in depressed areas consist of extended families. Many families have lived in the same unit of 12 m² to 20 m² in over fifteen years (Ragragio, 2003). The architect Charles Correa (1999) explains that it's not just the conditions of poverty in itself, referring to rural parts of India as poorer, but the de-humanizing conditions of urban poor that is truly striking (Correa, 1999).

In Mumbai, India, houses that only the upper and middle class can afford is prioritized, forcing half the population into unhuman living conditions. Charles Correa claims the architects and engineers has been asking themselves the wrong questions, trying to invent new cheaper materials to build with, instead of re-adjusting land use and distribution of assets (Correa, 1999).

In 2003 the global report on human settlements was published, including The Millennium Development Goals regarding issues related shelter and human settlements, among others. One goal was to improve the living conditions in slums regarding that lack clean drinking water, sanitation, housing situations and security. To improve quality in life in these slums, social and cultural movements should be provided. Previous upgrading projects had failed to address the underlying cause of their slums, which is mainly poverty. To really improve the living conditions income generating integration actions must be prioritized (Jenkins, Smitt, & Wang, 2007).

History

Metro Manila was a thriving Muslim Community before the 309 years long Spanish colonization. In the late 19th century Spanish had lost control over the Philippines when they got defeated by the American army in the battle of Manila Bay. The event that led to Americas colonization of the Philippines until they granted the independence in 1946 (Ragragio, 2003).

Western ideals have been implemented in developing countries since the colonization. Land started to be planned with master plans, a method which is still in use. In the sixties a reaction to the limited amount of details master plans contains was introduced, called structure plans. They contained details regarding for example housing- and environmental issues. This new way of thinking was followed up with community action planning; a planning process allowing the communities to participate (Jenkins, Smitt, & Wang, 2007).

Aldo van Eyck was an architect and playground designer active between 1947 and 1978. He thought that dialog was essential for life in the cities. He designed playgrounds without borders, surrounded by places for adults to stay, creating a stimulating community where children and adults were included, see Figures 3 & 4. Instead of fencing of the streets from the playing children, the adults guided them to learn to watch out for vehicles (Withagen & Caljouw, 2017).



Figure 3. Children playing in Aldo van Eyck's integrated playground in Buskenblaserstraat in Amsterdam (Courtesy of the Amsterdam City Archive)



Figure 4. Aldo van Eyck's playground Boetzelaerstraat in Amsterdam (Courtesy of the Amsterdam City Archive)

During the million programs in the sixties Sweden, buildings started to relate more loosely to its surrounding areas. Borders between public and more private areas started to blur in comparison with the previous popular courtyard structure. The scale of the entire neighborhood was taken into consideration while designing courtyards instead of providing more private courtyards enclose to the

residential buildings. There was no place for neighbors to integrate, due to the lack of community spaces, such as courtyards. When a courtyard is functioning as a social arena and is actively used by the residents, the place is claimed as a social territory. But the courtyards shouldn't only be claimed by individuals to form a socio-cultural unit, but by collectives formed by the residents (Minoura, 2016).

Housing in a courtyard typology

Charlottehaven in Copenhagen is an example of a big semi-enclosed courtyard which has a sense of community. The residents living on the bottom floor has elevated terraces which separates the private area from intruding on the main communal space, see Figure 6. The design is park-like with a lot of space, see Figure 5., which gives it a sense of security and makes the yard desirable to use. The yard only has one opening and that prevents the yard from being used as a passage and enhances the feeling of ownership for the residents. According to economist Elinor Öström clear boundaries to a courtyard enhances the feeling of community for the residents. The boundaries affect the social behaviors and lack of boundaries can limit the residents use of the space (Minoura, 2016).



Figure 5. Large semi-enclosed courtyard in Charlottehaven, Copenhagen by SLA (Landzine)



Figure 6. Residents in Charlottehaven, meeting in the courtyard space (nearlyplanner)

Lecturer in sustainable and healthy built environments Helen Pineo refer to B01 in the Western harbor in Malmö as a good example of a dynamic living environment. But explains that it has gotten critics for being exclusive with its expensive apartments. In the other spectrum of Swedish housing design, affordable but segregated low-income housing are built in less desirable places of the cities (Pineo, 2015).

The architect and PhD student Eva Minoura (2016) explain that the size of the courtyards effects the use of them. Large courtyards with open space are used more, especially by playing children, than small courtyards. Enclosed courtyards feel more safe than open courtyards. Large courtyards also enhance the feeling of security even if the yard is open and can be present with strangers. It can have to do with Jane Jacobs theory of “eyes on the streets”, the large yard is easy to survey and allows more people staying in the same time. Although the resident doesn’t feel the same sense of ownership if the yard is large with a large number of residents living there, especially not if the courtyards are open. In conclusion the highest usage and also sense of security occurs in large open- and enclosed courtyards, see Figure 8 & 10, while the highest sense on ownership is found in small enclosed courtyards, see Figure 9. Small open courtyards don’t only limit usage but gives the residents low sense of ownership and low sense of security, see Figure 7. (Minoura, 2016).

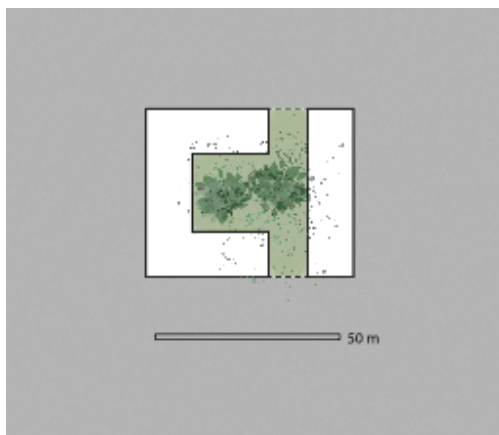


Figure 7. *Small open courtyard – low usage, low sense of ownership and low sense of security*

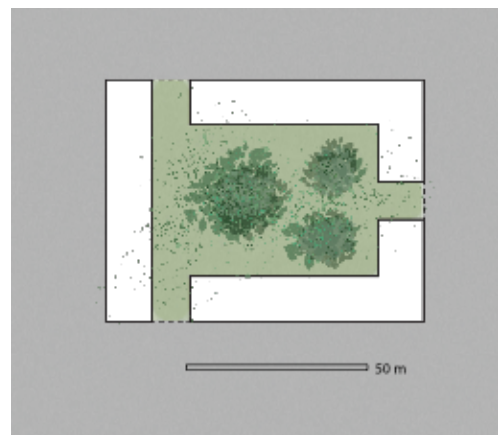


Figure 8. *Large open courtyard – high usage, low sense of ownership and high sense of security*

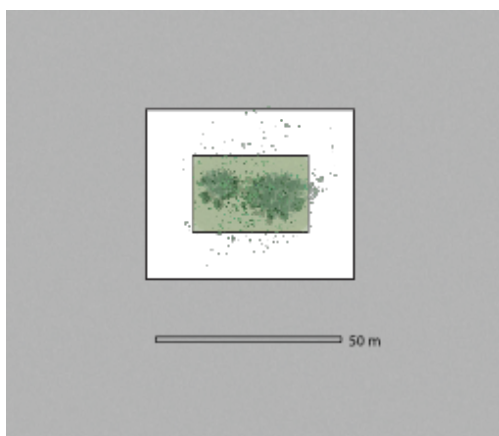


Figure 9. *Small enclosed courtyard – low usage, high sense of ownership and high sense of security*

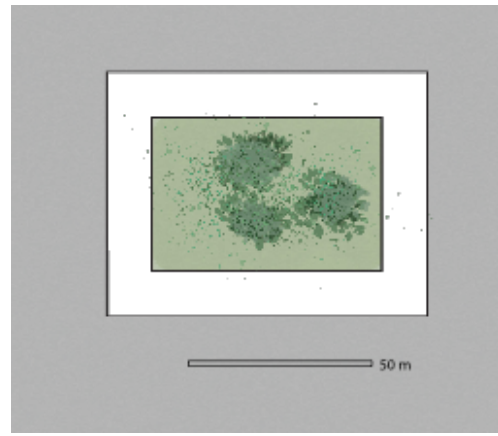


Figure 10. *Large enclosed courtyard – high usage, low sense of ownership and high sense of security*

Eva Minoura (2016) claims that her studies of Malmö in Sweden shows that the feeling of ease and harmony isn't affected by the level of privacy on the courtyard. The sense of isolation from the rest of the neighborhood isn't therefore important, instead the key for the residents use of the common space is their feeling of harmony with the other users of the space. She also found out that residents in Malmö which had a strong social connection with their neighbors used their courtyards more frequently than others (Minoura, 2016).

A study in Holma in Malmö showed that if the residents themselves are in charge of the maintenance, they will more likely create a strong community. A neighborhood will benefit from being based on many functioning communities. Small courtyards won't always provide enough space for community activities. Residents living on the bottom floor will be exposed and the lack of sunlight limit the willingness of people in Sweden to stay there (Minoura, 2016).

Courtyards with high sense of ownership shouldn't be too programmed or designed. There should be space for the residents themselves to make the courtyards personal based on their own habits and patterns. To program courtyards hard also decreases the usage of the space. Too many static furniture and play equipment's don't invite the residents to use the space the way they desire (Minoura, 2016).

Sören Olsson refers to the courtyard as a "social arena" meaning social in a communal sense and arena in the sense of being a stage for the residents to perform everyday life. He further explains that neighbors don't have to become friends for achieving a sense of community. By greeting each other, exchanging information and in sometimes solving problems they will coexist in harmony. Boundary as dynamic rather than static to great a social effect and defining an inside world for community to grow (Minoura 2016).

Outdoor space can be used more fervently and for more activities in warm climates. Many functions, such as cooking and gathering with friends, can take place on a terrace or in a courtyard. Indoor spaces have a different production cost than courtyards. The tradeoff between the two can help determine optimal patterns for housing. In most cases, certainly in warm climates, more outdoor space and less fully enclosed would be preferable. Therefore, we must not think of housing as fully enclosed structures. Charles Correa (1999) argues that to many low-cost housing projects only attempt to pile up as many "boxes" as possible on the given site, without concern of the outdoor space. He claims the result to be poor people

trying to live under conditions unrelated to their needs. This is tragic and doesn't often save much land for the city (Correa, 1999).

Humans essential need of community

Douglas Kelbaugh (1997) states that we would all be doomed to a selfish and loveless world without communities. Instead of letting our society grow with the individual in focus we should and in many times are desiring something beyond ourselves. For some people, belonging to a community is the highest spiritual need. We need communities to fulfill our need to share and socialize. But we must not forget that humans have a need of expressing themselves as individuals and to stand out in a crowd. Therefore, it's of high importance to balance peoples psychological and social needs with the group values within the community (Kelbaugh, 1997).

The sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) explains life itself as experiences of things we have done or have had done to us. We are formed to sense impressions and we can either accept or resist changes. The different wills of people can interact in many ways, creating different interactions in which can support or destroy well-being of one another. Tönnies mainly focuses on relationships with beneficial effects. All relationships involve balance of unity and diversity of people's energies and wills. He explains community as these social bonds filled with organic life. Society is explained as being the social bonds when they are purely mechanical constructions in our minds. He explains that all kinds of familiar, comfortable and exclusive co-existences can be seen as communities. (Tönnies, 1887).

Douglas Kelbaugh (1997) claims that few people denies the importance of mutual tolerance and respect as well as the existence of communities. He states that computers and telephones has changed our ways of living but that they haven't changed our need of physical communities. Living with computer screens in our faces and telephones in our hears all day, rather enhances our need of community. The poet Gary Snyder says that there isn't any community online because you can't hug anyone on the internet. You can't compare a website with an Italian piazza because they don't serve the same purpose (Kelbaugh, 1997).

In the big picture, society must be tolerant enough to allow minority groups and subculture communities to coexist in peace. For this tolerance to exist we need to develop skills in city living so that high density neighborhoods and communities can flourish. The neighborhood scale community is sensitive in

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creating social and political unity. Within the community all human nature, even difficulties and envy, must be dealt with (Kelbaugh, 1997).

Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) describes the society as individuals living independently alongside each other and suggest us to speak about community as something inclusive, where all kinds are welcome. He also suggests community to mean enduring life together. He compares a community with a family and describes fatherhood as the foundation for the concept of authority within communities. He explains the father to have authority over the children because of age and over the wife because of difference in sex and the physical strength that comes with being a man. He claims this authority to help guiding the community but shouldn't be used for advantages by the authority-holder (Tönnies, 1887).

Community can primary be explained as unity of existence. Community of place is mainly living close to, or together with each other. Further on community of spirit can be explained as working together for a mutual goal. Community of place is needed to hold together the community on a physical level while community of spirit is the link to conscious thought. The previous two communities combined makes a human community in its best form. All mentioned communities are connected in the whole of human culture and history (Tönnies, 1887).

Neighborhood-based communities to decrease poverty

The sociology professor James C. Fraser explains that resettlement of low-income residents has occurred in a variety of ways, trying to revitalize and emphasizing the building of community. He talks about providing social welfare by adapting certain formations and activities in neighborhood-based communities (Fraser, 2004).

Urban areas attract all kind of people with varying economic, cultural and social background, arriving with different expectations about life in the city. Neighborhood-based communities can be described as a group of individuals, gathering as social actors, claiming right to a space. These spaces are often set by stakeholders with capital interest or the government with different perspectives or priorities for the neighborhood's identity than the residents themselves (Fraser, 2004).

A neighborhood can be explained as life together in the closeness of a dwelling, common field or part of a city or village. People in a neighborhood can meet and get acquainted with each other, therefor Tönnies (1887) argues that it's

necessary to share any type of work, organization or administration. He suggests mutual understanding or sympathy to be the core value for genuine co-existence allowing people to live and work together in communities (Tönnies, 1887).

Neighborhood-based communities hasn't received enough consideration when it comes to communities' interactions with stakeholders who try to seek and control neighborhood space. Governments control the formations of social actors gathering in a community in the fact that a group of people will only be given the status community in which they are approved as a non-profit corporation by some type of governmental organization. In case they don't have the governmental approval, they are just a group of people operating as a gang or an underground organization. Neighborhood-based communities should be recognized by public and private city stakeholders, without them getting profit or fulfilling their interests (Fraser, 2004).

If groups of residents actively take part in building and maintaining neighborhood-based social capital or community capacity, poverty on an individual- or family-level will decrease. James C. Fraser (2004) states the importance in examination community as a for of civil society which can be involved in governance and other stakeholder's revitalization of place so they can be part of the change of identity of place. He describes that in some renewal projects people are leaving their neighborhoods because the physical environment has changed to the degree, they don't feel at home any more. Gentrification is an example of how people are driven out from their neighborhoods by economic interests of private investors. These phenomena are actually often driven by local governments with the desire for maximum profit for both investors and the city. The revitalization of neighborhood and other urban places can be seen as a realization of the ongoing struggle of defining the meaning of the city and if it really exist for all citizens (Fraser, 2004).

Discussion

The way Tönnies (1887) compare a community with a family, were the father is the leader because of his natural authority isn't accurate in 2019, but by seeing the hierarchies of the local communities in Metro Manila, one may suggest that some type of structure may be in order. In some of the re-settlement projects we visited during our study trip, they had a clear hierarchy with president of every building. This concept seemed to work fin but as Tönnies (1887) also argues, it's important

that the authority holder takes responsibility of being fair and sensitive of the will of the members of community.

According to Eva Minoura (2016) the sense of security and the likeliness of courtyards to be used, both open and enclosed large courtyards hold the same qualities, see Figure 7 & 8. Therefore, when it comes to designing large courtyards, I find it more suiting with open or semi-open boundaries, than a fully enclosed structure. Although, when it comes to smaller courtyards the enclosed ones hold a higher value to the sense of community because they enhance the sense of ownership, which I think will enhance the members of the community desire to maintain the space. Smaller courtyards should be more likely to be used in Manila where the lack of sunlight can be a strength rather than the disadvantage it usually is in Sweden.

While arguing for a courtyard design, I must not get lost and forget the importance of the surrounding neighborhood environment. Withagen (2017) presents Aldo Van Eyck strategies of designing playgrounds without borders in an urban setting. Something I wanted to include in the neighborhood design. Aldo van Eyck's playgrounds that Withagen (2017) describes are focusing on children's affordance and are located in the urban environment in a way I think is interesting to elaborate in the context of Metro Manila. While visiting different housing sites I saw that the children were using the Urban fabric in a free and creative way. I think playgrounds inspired by van Eyck's ideas could further promote their fantasy. The children I saw playing in the residential areas were already adopted to the streetscape, the new how to relate to vehicles and other urban elements, therefore I don't think they need the traditional borders that are provided in traditional Swedish playgrounds.

As Minora (2016) argues, borders are important to support the courtyard community. But to create a neighborhood-based community they should be dynamic rather than enclosed, so the communities can be interconnected. How the boundaries of the courtyards should reflect the set of the whole neighborhood. To create a larger community of small courtyard communities the borders should vary, and the courtyards should be semi-enclosed, supporting a small community while inviting the larger community. I find the residential courtyard in Charlottenhaven a good example of how to promote these types of borders, that aren't fully enclosed, but that support the community to thrive inside. But as Helena Pineo (2015) argues BO01 in the Western Harbor in Malmö, to be

exclusive with mainly expensive apartments for high income residents, one can question the inclusiveness of Charlottenhaven. This could be another example of making desirable neighborhoods exclusive for only the wealthy part of our society, supporting Frasers (2004) hypothesis about cities only being designed for certain citizens.

Helen Pineo (2015) makes an interesting argument regarding providing qualitative living and housing environment that doesn't exclude low-income households. In this context, providing residential neighborhoods that fulfill basic human needs seems to be enough in many local government projects. But as Charles Correa (1999) argues, the government doesn't lose much land or assets, trying to provide genuine livable conditions.

Jenkins, Smitt, & Wang (2007) makes a justified argument suggesting income generating activities being a solution to decrease the issues in urban poor communities. I want to suggest that some of those activities also could be enhancing social cohesion and psychical welfare. For example, urban gardening, or even farming, could give the community a common purpose, which Tönnies (1887) explains as important. The harvest could even be income generating and the prosses would be educational for the children, besides from giving the members of the community food.

Understanding the households

Me and my fellow students Isabella and Emelie carried out thirteen qualitative interviews with households in five different re-settlement projects in Metro Manila. We wanted to learn about their lives and hear their stories of why they came to live in their current location. Also, we came to learn about how their local communities were functioning. Many neighborhoods had well-functioning committees in every building including the building president whom had the main responsibility of keeping the building maintained and communicating with the rest of the neighborhood.

In Smokey Mountains we talked to a 40-year-old stay at home mother Mahalia¹ who used to live on top of a garbage dump. Now she lives in a 24 m² apartment on the fifth floor in a re-settlement building, together with her husband and her three youngest children, her youngest daughter is seen in Figure 11. Her resident building is from the second stage of re-settlement in the neighborhood

¹ All interviewees names are anonymized, a fictional name is being used.

and is better maintained the buildings from the first stage, see Figure 12. She explains that she is very lucky to be able to live in what she calls a nice and safe place away from danger. When we ask her about her dream-home she laughs and says she doesn't want anything bigger because she is afraid of ghosts. Her three brothers are all neighbors and their children can run from house to house. When we greet her she is holding her brothers' baby in her arms explaining the importance of supporting the family. She explains that she is friend with most of the people in the building and that she loves to walk around chatting with the people in neighborhood (Mahalia, 2019).



Figure 11. Photograph showing Mahalia's youngest daughter playing in the hallway of the building with her friend



Figure 12. Photograph taken from Mahalia's balcony, showing neighboring façade



Figure 13. Photograph showing Jasmine holding her infant son in their home



Figure 14. Photograph showing children playing on the street, outside of Jasmine's house

In Bistekville 4 we interviewed 34-year-old Jasmine², see Figure 13., who was living on the ground floor in a two-story building in a 21m² unit, together with her boyfriend, her infant son, her parents and her 22-year-old sister. She describes the indoor climate as fine when they keep the front door open. She wishes she had a backyard and some more space for hanging laundry. She complains about the apartment being small, the grocery store being far away and

² All interviewees names are anonymized, a fictional name is being used.

the price for the unit getting higher. But she describes the neighborhood as good, see Figure 14., she only misses a basketball yard (Jasmine, 2019).

When we went to NGC west, we interviewed Marisol³, a 34-year-old stay at home mum. The household consisted of her, her husband and their three children. She was running an internet business from home, while her husband worked as a messenger. She moved to Manila with her parents and had been living in the apartment since 2009. She explains that the home is safe from weather conditions, she doesn't even feel earthquakes. But she also says that the 19m² apartment is way too small, especially because of the fact that her youngest son has down syndrome and requires special needs. She thinks she would need two bedrooms and a kitchen to manage her living conditions. Something she's aware of not affording. She doesn't really enjoy being out in the neighborhood, but she senses a friendly feeling, and know her nearest neighbors. When we asked if she's missing any shared utilities in the area she explained that it already has a playground, basketball court and a school, which seem to be something many in the community appreciates (Marisol, 2019).

We found a strong neighborhood-based community, visiting the NGC west site. We were greeted by the local committee who gave us a tour around the neighborhood. Men, women and children were out on the street socializing and gathering in activities, see Figures 17 & 18. The children were out alone in the urban structure, playing in the safety of the present community, see Figures 15 & 16. They had a roofed activity center with basketball and volleyball, see Figure 19, with terraced seating's, see Figure 20, and a lot of space for people to stay.



Figure 15. Photograph from NGC West, showing children playing under roof giving shadow to the pedestrian way



Figure 16. Photograph from NGC West, showing children gathering on bridge for social interaction

³ All interviewees names are anonymized, a fictional name is being used.



Figure 17. Photograph from NGC West, showing women using affordable seating on the edge of the walkway



Figure 18. Photograph from NGC West, showing men hanging out in the street under sun-umbrellas



Figure 19. Photograph from NGC West, showing basketball court in the communal roofed activity center



Figure 20. Photograph from NGC West, showing people using terraces seating while watching others in the activity center

Urban Shelter Design

The site

The site is located in the eastern part of Queson City in Metro Manila in the Philippines, see Figure 21.

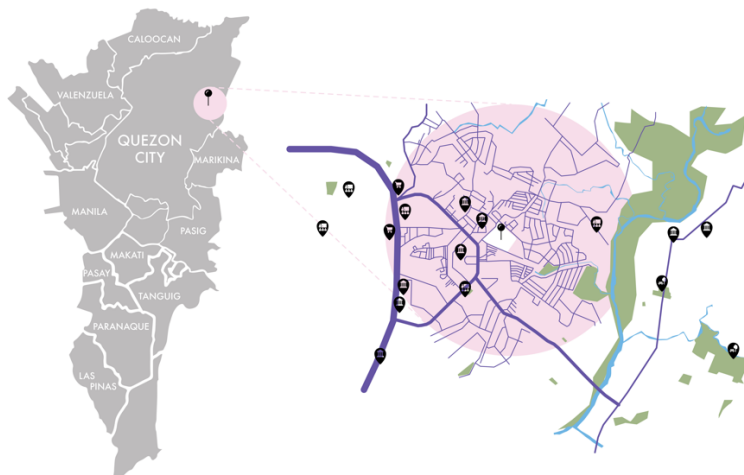


Figure 21. Site location and surrounding infrastructure, services and greeneries. As shown in the map, the site is located with close access to the highway. Several schools and municipal institutions are located in the nearby area.

The site has a simple street-network accessing to the informal residents. There aren't any planned communal areas for gathering or play. In the middle of the site there is a governmental green area illegally claimed and used as a coq farm. All outdoor activities take place on the streets, see Figure 23., or in privately claimed yards. There aren't any grocery stores within the site, but a few sari-sari stores; local kiosks owned and practiced by residents in their homes or front yards, see Figure 22.



Figure 22. Photograph showing sari-sari store in the western corner of the site



Figure 23. Photograph showing boy standing in front of informal buildings of typical character in the site

Design Proposal



Figure 24. Perspective over the proposed design in the western part of the site, showing the courtyards corresponding dynamics and the key idea of the building design (illustration credit Brendan Cooney)

We tried to design a dense urban neighborhood-based community with dynamic building structures and a vivid greenery, see Figure 24. We thought of communities on five different levels starting with the household, to the floor, to the building, to the courtyard and ending with the neighborhood.

Our main goals with the design was:

- To create a dense, diverse, interconnected community
- To adapt the streetscape to the site topography
- Focus on weather and disaster resilience in our design
- Create a community responsible for the urban landscape
- Centric points of community focus with communal programming
- Create privacy and passive surveillance within urban spaces
- Balance the quantity of housing with quality outdoor and communal space

We designed the courtyards trying to bring components that could support the existence of communities. We balanced more flexible and adaptable spaces, with programmed spaces, see Figure 25 & 26. We suggested space for urban gardening where the residents can come together to plant and harvest healthy food. We also wanted to introduce forestry gardening, a gardening form that doesn't take as much maintenance, but that could support the community with fresh fruit and vegetables. We supported this by providing space to locate a small market or other income generating activities. We programmed a barbeque area and suggested play areas of different characters, focusing on affordance and learning for children. All courtyards had space for playing basketball, which we learnt was highly appreciated in this cultural context. We saved space for flexible seating and suggested different pavement to be able to use the space as a stage or dance floor. We programmed each courtyard with a cultural-space; a roof to which the community itself were to adopt and use as desired and a communal building for support community activities, such as celebrations, gatherings and events.



Figure 25. Section over courtyard; 1 - six story rental unit building, 2 - lofted rowhouse, 3 – block community building, 4 – three story lofted multifamily building, 5 – basketball court/open space for activities, 6 – playground (illustration credit Alexander Jones)



Figure 26. Zoomed plan of western corner of the site showing typical courtyard design and illustrated public place; 1- recycling station, 2 – lofted rowhouse building, 3 – community building, 4 – roofed outdoor space for local market or events, 5 – flexible space for dancing or seating, 6 – hen house, 7 – collective urban gardening, 8 – six story rental unit building, 9 – roofed multipurpose cultural space, 10 – forestry garden, 11 – three story lofted multifamily building, 12 – basketball court/open space for activities, 13 – playground, 14 – elongated park with green canopies, storm water collection, seating and pedestrian walk ways, 15 – workshop building, 16 – portable roofed market places, 17, public playground (illustration credit Brendan Cooney)

The design consists of thirteen courtyard communities surrounding a neighborhood activity park with communal center, see Figure 27. The building blocks are connected by a street network characterized by pedestrian accessibility and greenery. The blocks are designed in a way to create wind tunnels ventilating the courtyards, with high building strategically placed to provide shadows, to make it possible to stay outdoors in this warm climate. There are three types of residential buildings; lofted rowhouses, 2-3 stories lofted multifamily buildings and 4-7 story rental unit buildings. Every block consists of all these typologies and the community supporting structures mentioned above.



Figure 27. Masterplan showing proposal for entire site; 1 – block community building, 2 – five story rental unit building, 3 – neighborhood community center, 4 – shared urban gardening lot, 5 – playscape, 6 – Multipurpose roofed space with basketball court, 7 – three story lofted multifamily building, 8 – lofted rowhouse building, 9 – public square

5 The Role of Architects

Karl Kropf (2011) tries to explain tools to use the urban tissue as a key while understand the complexity of the built environment to be able to create, transform and manage it. He claims that it for example is important to understand the material which you are working with to be able to plan and design a good built environment. Just like a craftsman architects needs to know the medium they're working with. He wonders if we are doing the most out of the set conditions which we're working with (Korpf, 2011).

Furthermore Korpff (2011) means that our role as architects and planners are not to predict social behavior in order to be able to understand people better but to be able to form foundations for successful interventions. He claims that it's the role of all the built environment professions to make sure that the built environment fulfills the needs of the people. It's us that directly faces all the values at a planned site, for example how the design is facing existing elements

and are contributing to social values (Korpf, 2011). I know that Architects and planners doesn't always have the chance do affect all decisions being made on a governmental level, but I think we can do more than we sometimes try to, especially people working within municipalities. We need to argue for the importance of creating inclusive and integrated residential areas for the society to thrive. Also, we must not forget the importance of doing research in order to learn and understand environments and the people using it better.

Douglas Kelbaugh (1997) clarifies the importance of providing clear and simple design principles together with the communities. These should among others include mixed-use zoning, compact site design and community plans and community empowerment. He argues that citizens always should be encouraged and given an active role in the planning process. He explains that citizens participation enhances shared ownership and moral matter of decency, creating democracy. He also argues that the best and most well-suited ideas often come from the people living in the area. This can help creating communities in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable neighborhoods (Kelbaugh, 1997). As architects and planners, we have the responsibility to interact with communities to gain mutual understanding. If we don't include the voice of the people in our work proses we can't expect people to understand the output of our design. Our prioritizations should be transparent, getting people to react earlier in the proses, when changes still can be made.

Charles Correa (1999) suggest that we pay too much attention on physical and economical aspects while designing the city. Instead we should prioritize more soft values making cities beautiful as habitats for all humans. We need trees, uncrowded roads and open spaces, not the insufferable urban qualities we call city (Correa, 1999). In Sweden, architects and planners are well-informed when it comes to humans need of green spaces for psychical welfare and the importance of creating inclusive places, but we are still struggling with making healthy cities. But because of the differences such as number of inhabitants, we can't even compare with the challenges in the Philippines. Therefore, I find it important for Swedish architects and planners to work abroad, trying to make the world a more equal place, where housing, clean drinking water and other basic human need should be available to every woman, man and especially child.

In the context of Metro Manila, I think that neighborhood-based communities can help decrease poverty if the government, planners and architects provide certain standards and utilities for them to grow in.

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Images and illustrations

If not mentioned in the list below, images are taken by the author and illustrations are made by the author.

Figures 1. Data from Philippine Statistics Authority. (2019, April 23). *Total increasement of households in the Philippines from year 2000 to 2015 according to POPCEN 2015*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/tags/popcen-2015>, illustration made by the author [illustration]

Figures 2. Data from Philippine Statistics Authority. (2019, April 23). *Population increasement from year 2000 to 2015 in Metro Manila according to POPCEN 2015*. Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/tags/popcen-2015> illustration made by the author [illustration]

Figure 3. Courtesy of the Amsterdam City Archive, *Children playing in Aldo van Eyck's integrated playground in Buskenblaserstraat in Amsterdam* [photograph]

Figure 4. Courtesy of the Amsterdam City Archive, *Aldo van Eyck's playground Boetzelaerstraat in Amsterdam* [photograph]

Figure 5. Landzine, *Large semi-enclosed courtyard in Charlottenhaven, Copenhagen by SLA*, <http://landzine.com> [photograph]

Figure 6. Nerdyplanner, *Residents in Charlottenhaven, meeting in the courtyard space*, <http://nerdyplanner.blogspot.com> [photograph]

Figure 24. Designed by author together with Alexander Jones and Brendan Cooney, *Perspective*, AutoCAD drawing by author, 3D modelling by Brendan Cooney, illustrated by Brendan Cooney [illustration]

Figure 25. Designed by author together with Alexander Jones and Brendan Cooney, *Section over courtyard*, AutoCAD drawing by author, illustrated by Alexander Jones [illustration]

Figure 26. Designed by author together with Alexander Jones and Brendan Cooney, *zoomed plan of western corner of the site*, AutoCAD drawing by author, illustrated by Brendan Cooney [illustration]

Figure 27. Designed by author together with Alexander Jones and Brendan Cooney, *Masterplan*, AutoCAD drawing by author, illustrated by author [illustration]