



Local Architecture Built In Wood and Bamboo “Coffee Region”, Colombia the Conservation of Local Heritage Undergoing Transformation for Today and Tomorrow

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Based on research developed in 2006, this proposal presents the unique local architecture of wood and bamboo characteristic of the “coffee region” of Colombia; case study is the city of Manizales. This research had two specific goals: A more detailed study of the city’s architecture from a technical perspective, developing three-dimensional models of the structures under study, including precise details.

On a broader level, this study contributed to a regional inventory of “the Colombian coffee cultural landscape as a Human Heritage” for the UNESCO classification process. This proposal has been accepted by the Colombian commission to UNESCO to be the next Cultural Landscape to be presented to the international committee. This lecture will focus on a particular interesting urban phenomenon that is relevant to urban transformation, the main subject of study for this year’s call for papers. The case of low height architecture built in wood and bamboo in the city of Manizales, gives versatility to a series of urban forms, which transforms not only architecture, but also the urban landscape; that includes people, business centers, urban poverty, territorial appropriation and risks, and disaster challenges. To get to understand both technical problems and regional variety it’s necessary to take a look at the whole historical, geographical, political and economical context that is involved. It is necessary to analyze how this territory becomes a landscape, a cultural object to a community with a unique history and identity. That’s why this lecture is meant to be structured this way: Approach to the geopolitical situation. Manizales, one of the 3 principal cities in this area, is a city situated at 2.150 meters above sea level (masl) and has a constant temperature between 16 degrees to 23 degrees the whole year. The principal design challenge was to build a city in a mountainous zone, with a humidity average over 80%, and where the seismic and other disaster risks have to be considered because of the proximity to the Pacific Ocean, among others geo-morphological particularities. Analyzing this territory as a real cultural landscape: how the community has felt about this heritage throughout the years and the present appropriation phenomenon. The ancient communities of Colombia had developed the technical system that must be applied to meet these design challenges. Analyzing the environment, they chose bamboo (*Guadua Angustifolia* kind) as an essential material for the construction of the historical center. We emphasize the historical center, because it was, in fact, one of the first examples of urban development in bamboo and remains a great place to visit for those interested in the *Guadua* (giant bamboo) construction style. The houses and churches, all built in *Guadua*, are still in use. Their preservation makes them a great study of ancient urbanism (regional and colonial architecture mixed) adapted to contemporary life. In this part of the lecture, examples of the new architecture using wood and bamboo will be shown, not only in the city’s downtown, but also in suburban places, and in spontaneous settlements on the periphery. These examples help us understand how people use this natural resource which could solve all the habitat problems of today’s world. Explanation of the technical evolution of the construction system. This way, professionals get to understand not only the system, but also the accessibility of the bamboo construction for all people, thanks to the low local market costs and the expanded building tradition and knowledge. To this end, three-dimensional examples of the structures have been analyzed and classified in order to understand how the system has changed between generations; and to understand how each element is built in a simple comprehensible way even for people that are not in the construction or design domain. The three-dimensional examples show the whole construction process from the foundation of the building up to the roof. Presentation of the different possibilities that the city has today to face its future: is this a cultural heritage to conserve? To restore? To renew? And when we talk about the future, we talk about how the city can adapt and take advantage of this knowledge and heritage, not only to act as a tourist destination, but also to educate people for the future. The different architecture schools must work with both their students and with the community; teaching people how to improve this ecologically sensitive, economically viable, and effective construction system, and also finding solutions for the realities of today’s urban management, social interactions, land-use planning, environmental protection, and the excessive uncontrolled growth of the city. Questions and discussion “The coffee region” as Colombian people know this important economical triangle, is known also because of its wild landscapes, that vary

because of the different altitudes and climate, but also because of the multiple responses communities have given to their daily life. We want to share the design possibilities of our city with people from all over the world. People in developing countries and in medium sized cities may learn how to develop improved politics, studies, and campaigns that involve not only the administrative system but also the community, who actively participate in the process.

KEY WORDS: Housing markets, land prices, house prices, geographic weighted regression, Istanbul.