LIVING IN LA PAZ: an ethnographic evaluation of categories of experience in a “new urban” residence hall*

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The La Paz residence hall on the campus of the University of Arizona is the object of a chapter in Katz’ foundation book on The New Urbanism, authored by the architects, Moule & Polyzoides. Its unusual characteristics in this and other regards prompted the university to fund a post occupancy evaluation and post the results on an extensive website. The author’s literature search, walkthrough, and interviews were structured by an understanding of distinct situational experiences that fall into categories of wayfinding, visual and non-visual aesthetics, task-performance, territoriality, and cultural expression. A subsequent piece of the funded research also relied upon this structure of environmental knowledge to develop a predesign survey and design prototype testing for future projects. The paper describes the ethnographic portion of the work and briefly summarizes the overall project. The examination of the setting’s social territoriality and cultural expression provide a novel ethnographic test of New Urban intentions.

Description of the setting

La Paz is the first residence hall to be built in a planned area, the “Highland District” on the campus of the University of Arizona. La Paz is organized into 19 wing groups of about 25 students for a total population of 482 (see floor plans of figures 1 and 2). In the 219 doubles and 44 singles, one finds a total of 39 different room plans. Each wing has a "resident assistant" living on the wing corridor. Either two or three common bathrooms serve each wing and there are 11 different bathroom plans. At the time of this evaluation 15 wings were mixed gender with respective bathrooms and 4 wings were single gender. The University of Arizona traditionally does not include dining facilities in each of its residence halls. The building was first occupied in 1996 and the evaluation took place in 1998-9. La Paz is a preferred hall for upper classes even though its wings and larger shared bathrooms are more typical of freshman and sophomore housing. Administration policies nevertheless insure that a sizeable minority at least of La Paz’s residents are underclass men and women.

Categories of environmental experience

The author for some time has been developing the predesign, design and evaluation application of five distinct kinds of environmental experiences (Doxtater 1996). Perhaps the most important
Figure 1. First floor plan.
Figure 2. Second and Third Floor Plans
aspect of focusing on wayfinding, visual and non-visual aesthetics, task-performance, territoriality, and cultural expression is their independence from space based typologies, mainly room labels, that often prematurely structure our thinking. Unlike more holistic approaches such as Barker's "behavioral settings" (Schoggen 1989), or Alexander's "pattern language" (1977), "categorical" thinking is more interested in the way setting influenced behavior connects across or through conventional place entities. The practical advantage lies in the structural isomorphism of spatial strings of experience to essential spatial strategies or orders in design. The behavioral and cognitive assumption is that people "frame" their experience according to what they are "doing", whether social (Goffman 1974:1-39) or otherwise. It is in effect a kind of reversed "space syntax" (Hillier & Hanson 1984), where rather than beginning with a holistic morphology per se and then deriving syntax, one begins with strings of spatial behavior themselves. This approach receives some confirmation from relatively discrete parallel domains of environmental research, and in the field users quickly understand the unique meaning of the categories, defined briefly as:

Wayfinding: the cognitive connection of landmarks and other characteristics by particular users with particular destinations across a larger spatial setting (Lynch 1960, Arthur & Passini 1992). The idea of the cognitive map, associated with wayfinding and other psychological phenomena, provides a good initial "image" of how environmental information may be organized. In Lynch's terminology, "paths" provide spatial structure, while "landmarks" contribute necessary object content. This reflects a more pervasive understanding of the distinction between spatial information and object information in cognitive psychology, even to the extent that the two may be stored in different parts of the brain. It seems logical to apply this distinction to other categories of environmental activities or information.

Visual and Non-Visual Aesthetics: inherent or personally developed responses to natural and architectural forms that are perceptually pleasant or unpleasant. Visual and spatial pattern, the kinesthetic movement of the body, texture, color, sound, aroma, warmth, coolness, all can be stimulating, boring or offensive. Do we experience such content more "holistically" from a point in time or space, e.g. a scenic view or the sound of water on a hot day, compared to more sequential experiences such as walking through interesting architecture, hiking on a scenic trail, or kayaking a wild river? Architectural theory such as Arnheim (1977) emphasizes movement;
while a more static view appears in Weber (1995), suggesting that movement occurs with the stationary eye rather than necessarily through spatial sequence. Experiencing architecture or landscape as "frozen music", however, seems less aesthetically interesting than moving through a variety of spaces, as one metaphorically does when listening to music. Landscape disciplines do most research in the area of visual aesthetics--see overview in Taylor, et. al. (1987)--but tend to favor examples of static perception. A second, and similarly rare, example of psychologically based inquiry from architecture is found in Peter Smith's creative ideas about different kinds of aesthetics of form being possibly related to different parts of the brain (1979).

**Task-Performance:** the efficiency of actual physical tasks depending upon the environment as a "tool", e.g. producing things, moving people and objects, storing goods or information, adjacencies, communicating with others, accessibility, making places secure, avoiding injury, reducing interruption or disturbance while working. These will either be spatial patterns strung through settings or more intensive use of "workstations" such as a study space or bathrooms. Our current attention to making built settings "accessible" provides an obvious example of how an individual depends upon both spatial structure (distance or adjacency) and material or object shape (capacity or access) in performing locomotion tasks. These two aspects of task performance, however, are by no means limited to the physically disabled. We can quickly think of a myriad of physical jobs where the distance one has walk or move things becomes a cognitively separate kind of information, along with strategies for minimization of time and effort, from the actual physical accommodation of one's feet or vehicle, storage capacity, or the like. While this category of "information" also receives little serious evaluation from the design fields, one only has to look to Systems Engineering algorithms for examples.

**Social Territories:** environmental activities having as a primary intention the maintenance of social identities and organization of individuals and/or groups. Which aspects of the environment are appropriated for dangerous behavior, privacy or exclusivity (including crowding), spontaneous socialization, ranked statuses? Good examples here are Hillier's "space syntax" as applied both to buildings and urban settings (1996), or the more ethnographically oriented Steele (1986) for office buildings. Of course the literature for privacy and human territoriality is quite extensive, in spite of some lack of clarity about simpler, non-symbolic forms of social space. In this category the present approach looks for an immediately understandable structuring of spatial
boundaries, exclusive or hierarchical—or the lack thereof in spontaneous settings—and the way objects such as doors, gates, walls, personal belongings and the like function as signs of occupancy or control. Included here are the authority of monumentality or simple scale of a structure and the immediately understood cost of such a large building together with often accompanying decorative or tectonic detail. Tidiness or its opposite can also be a social sign. By definition, a “sign” is immediately associated with its use or surroundings, while a “symbol” depends upon a much more extensive, and even arbitrary set of learned associations. Both are often intentionally social in meaning. The so-called “symbolic territories” that exhibit both simple territoriality and obvious symbols are included in the following category.

Cultural Expression: attaching spatial and object associational/symbolic meaning in a setting for some social purpose. How do historical references, artwork (beyond visual aesthetics), personalization, organizational or professional themes or religious artifacts help influence values or belief? Are there patterns of formal, ritual-like spaces and activities through the setting? The literature from historical and cultural studies in this regard is obviously vast. The author uses a somewhat more specific, contrastive set of definitions within this category. First, more traditional cultural settings will likely contain a spatial structure of axes, thresholds, orientations and other patterns such as homologues that organize symbolic “objects” into oppositional pairs of domains. These frameworks may be extant at scales of body, dwelling, settlement, city, landscape, or more generally as “cosmos”. Typically, such cognitive, environmental phenomena make ceremonial contact with spirits and become a means of influencing social organization: such can be termed “sacred ritual”.

At the opposite end of this spectrum of culturally expressive space, and more pertinent to La Paz, lies the less coherent, essentially modern or hegemonic combination of simple territoriality and attached symbolism, not used ritually but “rhetorically”. Other, non-spatial, authored media, e.g. literature, art, photography, film, etc., become more instrumental in developing the architectural symbolism. Most of our architectural history concerns this end of the spectrum. Ritual is the common, shared, participatory, social use of pervasive spatio-symbolic frameworks, while in the rhetorical, individuals and self-interested entities compete through non-integrated territorial spaces and attached symbolism or style. The social processes and effects are fundamentally different (Doxtater 1994). In between the two idealized poles of the ritual-rhetoric continuum exists “local ritual”, a version of integrated spatio-symbolic frameworks but
without the effect of making contact with the spirits. Symbolically elaborated territories are also absent. Many peasant villages in traditional societies are examples here, while such patterns can happen less frequently in modern milieu as cohousing, coworking offices (again Doxtater 1994), as well as social groups like fraternal lodges, summer camps, and perhaps even some theme parks.

Methodology of the La Paz Ethnography Phase

Two previous evaluation and programming projects here at the University of Arizona were structured by “experiential categories”. The programming of a new learning disabilities building on campus was done in conjunction with the business college’s Center for Management Information Systems. Thirty users participated in three facilitated sessions in a GSS (group support systems) room (Doxtater and Mittleman, 1996). Each participant used a computer equipped with MIS’ decision-making software that displays and organizes graphics and text, particularly the comments by other participants. The second campus project evaluated the student union building. The large graphically enhanced report became part of a decision-making process that eventually led to the replacement of the existing building. We have also conducted such an evaluation of one of the Tucson campuses of Pima Community College.

The first step in the La Paz evaluation involved a literature search and walkthrough with the Director of Campus Residential Life, the Residence Hall Director for La Paz, and another administrator involved in the planning of the hall. Custodians were also interviewed. Because of ongoing litigation concerning an aspect of building construction, unrelated to our present evaluation issues, the architects could not be included in the process. An initial list of categorized experiences was created for each of three scales: rooms and corridors, bathrooms, and public spaces.

Next, a web site was built that allowed students to graphically move through the entire setting, while carrying on a text dialogue about the initial and new kinds of experiences. Database software lay beneath the graphic and text interface. The intent here was to replicate in the field processes formerly confined to the GSS lab described above. Rather than generating
Fig. 3 Views of La Paz Residence Hall

computer facilitated, interactive comments based on environmental images during organized group sessions in the lab, the idea was to let any resident of La Paz move through a virtual reproduction of the building on their own computer. As they moved through, they could pull down menus of kinds of categorical experiences at the three different scales. With each particular experience, the user could see related comments made by other residents and could add his or her own. New kinds of experience would have been added to the lists as the process developed.

While the web site technically worked to specifications, it failed to perform in practice for several reasons. Web navigation through the building was awkward. The site was late, coming online during semester finals. The comments areas for each experience were not preloaded to generate interest in discussion. And a promotion of particular times for participation might have worked better than the idea of total individual convenience. Given the fact that no prototype was known at the time, the attempt was valuable as a development tool. When shown to campus administrators, their enthusiastic first response was that “we need one of these for each residence hall”.

More conventional processes were already initiated at the time of the web based attempt. The same initial structuring of categories of experience and the three scales of the setting became the basis for conducting 24 interviews with a demographically diverse group of occupants, based on gender, ethnicity, race, year in school, geographic region of home town, representation from
all wings (both mixed and single gender), able and disabled (one in a wheelchair/ scooter), and both residents and RA’s. Prior to beginning the hour-long interview, each student filled out a form indicating how often he or she used the listed public spaces for studying or socializing from 12 noon to 12 midnight. The student’s room location, existing and prior, and the locations of friends in La Paz were mapped as well as their typical daily routes through the building. The interactive web site graphics were used as a stimulus during the recorded interview sessions. The overall list of experiences was constantly revised throughout the interview sessions; the final number was 154.

Many of these edited comments along with a demographic and map summary profile for each interviewee appear as part of the final project web site (w3.arizona.edu/~cfp/planning_studies/reports_analyses/la paz_poe). Examples of this ethnographic content are included in the main body of the present report below. Also included in the website are the other two aspects of the project focused on future predesign of the next residence halls. The primary purpose of this more informationally intensive approach is less a scientifically demonstrated relationship between each experience and designed form, then an attempt to develop a most inclusive set of interesting, mostly spatial experiences, considerations of which can more easily flow through and influence decision making in predesign and design processes.

LIFE IN LA PAZ
From the administration walkthrough, custodian interviews, informal observation of the total setting during photographing and other tasks, recording of study and social use of public spaces, and the 24 profile and interview sessions, certain general patterns emerge. The most obvious is that students spend the vast majority of their La Paz time and experience in their rooms (or bathrooms), not in other settings in the hall. This corresponds with Van der Ryn’s study of Berkeley dorms where students spent about one third of their waking time in their room (1967:31). The most actively used public social space is the front entry desk with about 16 “situations” per hour; yet there is no seating in the entry area and no place to “hang out” other than while standing at the desk talking to whomever is on duty. The next most used public spaces are the two “living rooms” adjacent the entry court and the two kitchens, where the typical number of situations per hour is only about 3.5. The many other specifically designed social settings throughout the rest of La Paz typically have an even lower number of users per hour, less than 0.5. The use of public spaces for studying is also relatively infrequent, with the
exception of the small Study Bridge on the second floor where about 3.4 situations per hour were recorded. The next highest usage, 2.9 per hour, occurs in the classroom off of the Luna courtyard. More socially oriented studying occurs in the two living rooms at a rate of about 2.4. In the five small study spaces throughout the building, the incidence is about 1.7 per hour. The situation rate for several of the other, non-designated spaces like the kitchens and laundry room is below 1.0. We can, however, be more specific about the actual experiences in terms of the five categories and three spatial areas of the setting.

Rooms and Wing Corridors: visual/non-visual aesthetics

(selected comments from 2 of 10 visual/non-visual aesthetic experiences at this scale on the website)

*Getting fresh air into your room*
Mike: "keep window open once every two days for fresh air, becomes musty, stale after awhile when closed"
Ruth: "I keep my window open a lot...for fresh air"
Jen: "need to keep the door open besides window to get good circulation" [this can be conflict with social if resident doesn't want to be available]
Dan: "I usually keep the window open because I like have air circulating through the room, otherwise gets too stuffy...better to keep the door open slightly to get flow"

*Hearing annoying noise when you are doing things other than work or sleeping*
Mike: "I know a person who complained about bathroom water flow noises" [room adjacent to bathroom]
Ruth: "airplane noise sometimes a bother" [may be more reverberation off stadium for back rooms?]
Dan: "there are some people, we call them idiots, with their cars, have to honk their horns...bad thing is that we're right there in front [overlooking street]...some people coming back partying at two three in the morning outside in front, the down side is that it echoes through this whole front courtyard...but that's not usually too bad...right now I'm used to blocking it out, but at the beginning of the year..."

Given the intense usage of room, really as mini-apartments, it is not surprising that one of the most important visual/non-visual aesthetic issues is "being able to open the windows for fresh air" (for a discussion of this issue with regard to door placement, see Wheeler 1967). This potentially negative non-visual aesthetic becomes obvious because of the food preparation, personal hygiene, group hanging out, and other olfactory contributors in a very small space. Noise is also given importance, especially all the fire alarms, either for drills or from pranksters. The neighbor's music or street traffic, are given very high importance under task-performance (since it keeps one from sleeping or studying). Rooms adjacent to bathrooms report negative responses to sounds of toilets flushing. In general the greatest "aesthetic" experience for students in rooms comes not from window views or color coordinated room furnishings, but from the acoustic patterns of music.
Rooms and Wing Corridors: task-performance

(selected comments from 1 of 14 task-performance experiences at this scale on the website)

Studying in your room

Liz: [single RA room] "had to add a lamp, and there's still not enough light..."

Dawn: "yeah I study in my room...the lighting, there isn't enough of it...and like in B207 when you walk in there's that area where the air conditioning is [duct space]...and it doesn't really get much light over there...the closets are always dark and we can't see..."

Ben: [single room RA] "probably don't do a majority of my studying in my room...the light's a little dreary...

Judy: "usually leave stuff on my desk so its kinda hard to study unless I clean my stuff off...which isn't very often...so I don't study in my room very often....sometimes I'll just lay on my bed and study...usually study at the library or at friend's places like group study...."

Bud: "there is not enough room sitting at my computer [desk]...I'll sit on my bed and read, but if I have written work to do I'll go to a lounge...."

A more fundamental visual aesthetic experience discussed, one that converges with task-performance, is “having enough natural daylight in the rooms”. Because of the large number of different room shapes, window sizes and window placement, some rooms do not receive as much daylight as others. In that La Paz students do not give much significance to viewing pleasant landscape or architectural form from their windows, the daylight issue may be largely connected to the frequent task-performance problems of finding good light, artificial or natural, for studying. This experience in turn relates to the limited size of the provided desks that tend to be consumed by computer equipment leaving no space for conventional studying as reading and writing. As one can also predict from the intense room usage, storage was a subject of some discussion, particularly among women. Related to task issues of finding a place to study and storing items is the large number of appliances used in rooms. During the interview, the researcher began asking about the number and variety of electrical devices, e.g. microwaves, popcorn poppers, hairdryers, computer equipment, TVs, CD players, refrigerators (supplied by residence life), hot plates, extra lighting, toasters and more. Stringing extension cords with additional outlets around the room is necessary for most residents, and can be problematic because of furnishings and a multitude of room activities.

With the intensity of task experiences in these small spaces, one would expect considerable concern during the interviews. This is not the case. Students seem not to be particularly bothered by going down the hall to wash dishes in the bathrooms, or by not having any garbage
containers or pick-up in building. They cannot use bathroom containers for room trash that must be emptied directly into dumpsters outside of the building. Residents are only moderately bothered by having to lock their doors when going down the hall to the bathrooms. Most, however, leave their dead-bolts out instead, propping the doors open slightly and providing at least some sense of security against theft.
Room and Wing Corridors: social territories

(selected comments from 2 of 16 social territories experiences at this scale on the website)

**Having social activities with your friends**

Molly: "have parties occasionally...at the beginning of the year there could be up to ten people in there...they sat on the beds, chairs and on the floor...our TV is kind of a waste we don't really every watch it..."

Donna: "get-togethers to like watch movies...two to three times a week...five or six friends..."

Chad: "no...unless you count lunch....but we will watch TV together..."

Brad: "maybe having a couple of people over...I have a TV...people sit on the floor or bed or where ever, nobody complains...because my room was a little bigger, people tend to hang out here..."

Jeff: "sometimes...I think our room is smaller than some of the other ones...I hate sitting on the floor....[have you been in other rooms where there are a lot of guys sitting around on the floor?]...not usually, either they're sitting on the bed, a chair or on furniture...."

**Having privacy from your roommate**

Jen: "my bed is in the middle, so if I don't want to see her I don't have to..."

Dan: "our schedules give us time to ourselves...just happened, didn't organize especially...last year he tended to stay in the room a lot, so I would just go over to other people's rooms a lot, or just go out for a walk or something...to me it didn't matter much" [this is perhaps the most social male interviewed]

Judy: "she's an athlete so she's gone a lot...." [hangs out with others down the corridor]...

Bud: "I don't have a lot of time alone [from his roommate]...but we get along perfectly well....it would be nice to have quiet time...in the evenings we're usually there...."

Ann: "we knew each other schedules so we knew when we would have the room to ourselves...."

Again, little socializing takes place outside of the rooms, even in the corridors. In spite of efforts by RAs to develop open door traditions in corridors, one finds such activities in only two corridors of the entire hall. Of these two, the “Courses in Common” wing exhibited considerably greater intensity of hanging out in the corridor. They share more because of taking some classes together, one in the La Paz building itself. Yet even in this wing, where residents will sit in the corridors talking until all hours of most nights, the initial clustering usually begins in the rooms themselves, ultimately spilling out into the corridors when the numbers get too large or someone needs to study or sleep.

The student’s room itself is the preferred place to socialize. Residents in La Paz hang out with friends and roommates, watch TV with others or by oneself, eat a pizza or other takeout food together, play cards or other games, romance with one’s girl or boy friend, or even have one’s parents as overnight guests. Associated task-performance issues of sitting and eating wherever on beds and carpeted floors—there are no sofas or dining tables—don’t seem to be of any concern, particularly since the primary experience is social. The opposite social effect of exclusion or privacy, particularly between roommates, is most often accomplished by simply knowing the other’s overall schedule and consciously limiting the amount of time spent together in the room. Otherwise one finds a clear and perhaps natural tendency to territorialize the two
halves of the room. Given the large number of different room layouts in La Paz and the not infrequent odd positioning of beds and desks in relation to the room shape, some were found to be less amenable to an equitable division of space. Room window blinds comfortably handle simple visual privacy from passersby and room windows of La Paz’s relatively intimate courtyards.

One privacy issue that female interviewees discussed with some interest was the trip from room to bathroom when dressed in shower apparel of various descriptions. This was not a question of being seen by other wing members of the opposite gender who are known at least by face and name. Rather, the issue is of strangers, i.e. unrecognizable residents from other wings. Because of the relatively contiguous connection of corridors both horizontally and vertically, they will take the shortest route from their wing through other wings to one of the seven exterior doors on the main level.

La Paz has several smaller-scale social terraces immediately adjacent to wing corridors. Only on the small second floor terrace just above the main entry did social activities from the wing corridor occasionally spill out to this space. But again, this was the most socially active “courses in common” wing. The researcher’s background in co-working settings (Doxtater 1994) prompted discussion about comparisons of certain La Paz wings with co-housing (Marcus 2000). The Courses in Common students were in fact most inclined to use shared food preparation and eating areas one floor down in the kitchen. All other wings, however, remained consistent with the American student’s social experience of using both private dwellings/rooms and public spaces as chosen venues for friendship-based interaction, as distinct from a more obligatory socialization in co-housing or co-working, particularly in Scandinavia. This researcher stayed for a month in a graduate facility at the University of Stockholm. One entered the wing of twelve individual rooms each with private baths through a common living/dining room and kitchen. All food preparation and most eating occurred in these common spaces, as did a good deal of the socialization on the wing. In some wings with more permanent, Swedish students, one would tend to be obliged to eat several meals a week with a larger wing group, in addition to participating in more formalized cultural events.

In non-apartment American residential halls the primary obligatory social location for residents is the wing bathroom (see also Heilweil 1973:382). At La Paz too, this is where underclass students in particular are likely to say hello and exchange small talk with a large enough number of individuals to develop long-term college relationships with a few. Wing food
preparation and eating spaces apparently would not have the compelling task-performance attributes, since people are getting by at the present without (this is partially verified by the subsequent survey). Simply, put, American students do not wish to socialize with others based solely upon some premeditated spatial definition such as the “wing”.

**Room and Wing Corridors: cultural expression**

(selected comments from 1 of 7 cultural expression experiences at this scale on the website)

*Do you celebrate any special event in your room and who participates*

Ruth: "we decorate for whatever holiday...stuff on the door, lights in the window at Christmas...Valentines Day we have those things that go in the window...also for Thanksgiving..."

Jen: "we did for a friend's birthday...with a few of our mutual friends...nothing special, usually we'll leave...mostly go out to a friends house for these kinds of things where the space is bigger...and more people can come..."

Bill: "had some Passover food the other day, I wouldn't call it a Seder..."

Cathy: "my friends, like when they had a birthday we go to their room and like open presents and stuff...was ten or fifteen people...in a double room...wouldn't stay too long...we wouldn't go anywhere else in the building..."

Liz: "not a special event, a group of friends of mine if we're going out we like to get ready...maybe four of us..."

Dawn: "we put up Christmas lights in the windows...decorations on the doors...the Casa de los Ninos come trick or treating to our rooms...and we decorate our hallway...just certain wings that have people that want to hand out candy..."

Probably the most significant form of cultural expression at the scale of rooms and corridors is personalization. Although the supplied furnishings of the rooms are appreciated for their visually aesthetic Southwest tones and natural wood--and some students do make an attempt to color coordinate additional furnishings--nevertheless site photos such as those of figure four clearly illustrate the dominance of associational meaning primarily in the form of pictures, photos, signs, memorabilia, posters and the like. An important associated task-performance issue is the ability or inability to attach things to the different wall surfaces of La Paz using various kinds of adhesive substances. From personalized cultural meaning of friendship, romance and family to more widely shared meanings of religion, avocation, popular film or music, these expressions dominate the visual character of most rooms and show little if any connection to La Paz culture whether at the scale of wing or hall. The exception here may be the decoration of exterior doors at Halloween, Thanksgiving or Christmas/Hanukkah, where, in addition to national contexts, some association may exist with social events either in rooms or in the major public spaces of La Paz. Again, there is virtually no social space for each wing in which such events might take place. Certainly the most ubiquitous traditional celebration is the birthday party, which naturally takes place at that locus of friendship, the room.
Most of the time, corridors are devoid of the more spontaneous, "indigenous" attachment of meaning we see in the room. Against a very plain, even "institutional" interior architecture of the corridors, the only group expression exists as bulletin boards organized primarily by resident assistants and others of La Paz administration. Much of the communication here tends to be informational rather than rhetorical as in the case of the typically large number of posters in the main lobby persuading residents to participate in some social or informational event. Specific wings do not develop their own indigenous cultural expression at least in terms of associational meanings attached to the walls. The Swedish co-housing residence hall offers a nice comparison. The common living spaces decorated by their residents are different from each other, creating the impression of unique social groups. There may even be a reversed tendency for the common rooms to have more things attached to their walls than the individual rooms.

Bathrooms: All Issues

(selected comments from 1 of 20 bathroom experiences on the website)

*Showering (enough space, drying off, places to hang towels, put soap, etc.)*

**Mike:** "for me soap dispensers would be important, I was a little surprised when I moved in..."

**Mike:** "lot of people bring shower buckets or containers...but there isn't a whole lot of space to put them..."

**Ruth:** "most people don't shower in the middle stall, they have three...if there are two people in the showers, then people usually don't go in the middle..." [bathroom B305].

**Jen:** "two showers in there, but for some reason everyone lines up for just one, nobody likes the other...its not as strong as the other..."

**Ted:** "a design flaw, is the way the water from the shower leaks out because there is no barrier to keep it from going out on to the whole floor area....even what they did to fix it doesn't always work because the shower curtains don't go all the way to the floor..."

**Liz:** "pleasing in color and form...its very poorly lit...especially in the showers, the lighting is very bad [S312]...in our wing we bought stools, to put all our stuff on...because the little thing in the wall just doesn't do it...in the shower...for our buckets...the ledges aren't wide enough...so they'll fall...and we shave our legs while sitting on the stools..."

Residents reported having good light and nice colors as *visual aesthetics* in these spaces. They had little to say about acoustics, in spite of the hard surfaces necessary in these settings; nor were *non-visual* olfactory issues of concern. When asked about temperature, again most interviewees offered little response, with a couple of interesting exceptions. There exist some rooms in La Paz that are accessed from single-loaded exterior passageways, e.g. on one side of the second and third floor Sol and Luna courtyards. One of the interviewees was living in such a room, but was preferring an interior corridor room for the next semester because of having to walk at times through a cold outside space to and from the shower (located on the adjacent interior corridor). Many students talked positively about taking long showers as a non-visual aesthetic
means of relaxation. Those shower stalls with accessibility seats are particularly appropriate for this experience.

As one might well imagine, task-performance experience would be of considerable importance in intensely used wing bathrooms. Standing water on the floor, places to set the “shower caddies” (containers for numerous things which must be carried from room to bathroom), enough hooks for changing clothes in shower and toilet stalls, enough light to read in toilet stalls, water and mess on countertops, enough space to set things near the sinks all appeared as important issues. Custodial comments were particularly useful to understand related problems, e.g. some men’s refusal to put toilet seats up before urinating (all La Paz bathrooms are designed to be gender neutral without urinals), no place to set reading materials, flush handles and toilet paper set too low and are often urinated or “puked” on. The disabled interviewee who uses a scooter described how on occasion when his roommate was using their private bathroom (in one of the shared rooms for the physically disabled) he would easily use one of the accessible wing bathrooms.

In the category of territoriality, it has been mentioned above how the residence hall’s bathrooms create the place where one is most likely to spontaneously bump into someone known by name. While residents don’t usually “hang out” in bathrooms specifically for social purposes, aside from the rooms, these are the places in La Paz, including wing corridors and all the larger public spaces, with the greatest intensity of conversation. A few of these acquaintances then are most likely to turn into strong college friends. On single gender wings with a total population of from 26-28, residents can choose between one of two bathrooms, while in mixed gender wings, a resident has no choice about the 13-14 others with whom he or she shares a bathroom. Given the intriguing apparent tendency for students to change room locations over time, either within the same residence hall or between halls (12 of the 24 interviewees had lived on different wings in La Paz during previous semesters, and several had lived in or were going to move to other halls) the question arises as to whether the best way to meet new people on campus is to experience different bathrooms? It appears from the mapping of best friends in La Paz that with time, one’s friends tend to be spread out throughout the hall rather than converging on a particular wing or other locus.

Compared to the cultural expression of rooms, bathrooms, like the corridors tend not to be highly personalized. Yet beyond the simple communication of wing information, RA’s and occasionally wing residents will put up thematic posters, jokes, pads for comments in stalls and
the like. Like the corridors, however, bathrooms show little or any consistent thematic content that might develop difference between wings as socio-cultural groups.

Public Spaces: wayfinding

(selected comments from 1 of 9 public wayfinding experiences on the website)

Finding your room the first day

Mike: "took about "30" minutes (was during construction) even so, a difficult building to find one's way..."  
[informant had difficult locating room on map]

Dan: "like the first day moving in with my parents, trying to find my room, they thought it was weird..."

Dawn: "well the first time I came here I got lost trying to find my room...went up the middle staircase...with my sister and her friend...was kinda weird because there was so many doors...got to the third floor but couldn't find it, but then we went down and found an RA to show us..."

Judy: "at the beginning of the year it was kind of confusing, but now everybody kind of knows where things are...its pretty tough, it took me a while at the beginning..."

Bud: "the first floor took me some time but I don't remember any particular route that was especially tough..."

Ann: "my friend who lived here before gave me the tour...I said it was like a maze, she said its not true...then I finally got my bearings...and it wasn't so bad...just that the first time I had heard about it everyone said it was like a big maze...because the wings were all separate...on the third floor ABCD wings are connected but everyone else isn't...and you have to go down to the second floor and then back up to the front wings...people get a little bit frustrated because they're trying to find their way around..." [a two year vet who socially knows the entire hall very well]...

In part because of the hall's immediate adjacency to perhaps the largest landmark on campus, the football stadium, La Paz's location seems relatively easy for newcomers to find. From Highland Street, the hall's spacious west court architecturally identifies the entry; added signs on the administrative offices doors on the Highland arcade itself, however, reveal confusion for some about the actual main doors. Signs also have to be put up at the first of each semester to direct people from the most proximate UA parking lot behind La Paz around to the main entry.

When interviewing students, one quickly discovers La Paz's most ubiquitous nickname of the "Maze". The researcher observed two subtly displayed Escher prints--the one with stairways merging into themselves--on a room and bathroom door in a more complex wing location. The stories they tell about finding their way around during their first days in the setting are fascinating. One student described a first route for a few days to a room on the third floor before eventually discovering a much shorter way through a different stairway. Almost all describe the revelation when finally realizing that one cannot go directly between the front and back third floor wings without going down to the connecting second floor. It is also true that disabled residents have to learn distinct wayfinding routes.
The cause of La Paz’s initial illegibility, as seen in figure six, can be traced first to the difficulty of understanding the spatial relationships between the setting’s courtyard spaces. The two large front courtyards have no strong spatial connection to each other or to the four smaller rear courtyards. While an exterior pathway spatially connects the rear courtyards, they are architecturally identical and hence on occasion cannot be distinguished from each other. Compounding this horizontal layout of exterior forms is the obscure location of the many stairs with respect to the spatially dominant courtyards.

Yet is clear from interview discussion, that a resident’s wayfinding in the “maze” is only problematic during the first few days. After that, the highly architecturally varied linkage of corridors becomes somewhat intriguing as a setting to be explored—for perhaps a variety of potential category experiences. The biggest wayfinding problem for La Paz turns out to be the extra administrative effort that must be taken to show unfamiliar students, family and service personnel around the building at various times, especially at the start of the academic year. One very interesting, though probably not critical, wayfinding experience was reported in one of the interviews where the resident also worked at the main lobby desk. It happens at night, on occasion, that a newcomer will enter one of the two sets of double doors into La Paz’s lobby—flanking the small, prominent office intended for academic discussions with invited UA faculty—and then after doing some business at the desk will turn to leave and mistake the glass office doors (dark at this time of night) for the main exit doors. Perhaps of more concern is the
frequent difficulty non-residents have in following verbal instructions from the desk to La Paz’s classroom which must be accessed from the Luna courtyard; again the issue is of a legible cognitive “image”, in Lynch’s terms (1960), of path relationships between spaces.

Public Spaces: visual/non-visual aesthetics

(selected comments from 1 of 15 public visual/non-visual experiences on the website)

Meditating or relaxing in a quiet space

Jen: "out on the balcony outside the rooms [her room adjoins] ...if you are out there early in the day the sun will be shining and is sort of relaxing...by myself and listen to music...”

Bill: "sometimes I'll go to that two story study room...usually there is nobody there and I'll just sit and read or something..."[seems to be a roommate escape]...

Ted: "the Iwans, because nobody every uses them, once in a blue moon I'll sit out there...at night...”

Ben: "on the Sun Terrace...a little bit...watch the sun set or something like that...kinda relax...”

Molly: "sometimes I'll use the little study room with the couches, and if there's no one in there, I'll just read or something...” [lives on most social S200 wing]...

Jeff: [not too good of relationship with roommate] "sometimes I'll go to the third floor study room...the upper floor of the two story one...or I'll go out to this terrace sometime [Sun Terrace]...semi-frequently there are people there [prompt]...not really used that socially by people from my wing [3SL]...[how often in the evening would there be somebody out there?]...people study out there sometimes...sometimes people sometimes not...the most people I've ever seen out there was about six people...more typically one to two people....”

Sixteen aesthetic experiences, such as that directly above, were discussed through the interview sessions, all of which were again seemingly subordinate to the resident’s preference for music. Architecturally, La Paz’s interesting balconies, terraces and other minimally used social nodes,
some with limited larger landscape views, serve a more intrinsic aesthetic purpose of introspective quiet or mediation. Interviewees were also asked whether they consciously took particular routes through the complex setting for purely aesthetic reasons. One of the motivations behind this question was the administrators’ comment that the designers had been interested in a “rhythm” going from sunlight to shade (also apparently from outside to inside). Few clear preferences for La Paz routes emerged for other than task-performance reasons. Uniformly positive responses were, however, given to specific questions about architectural character *per se*, though less so about landscape. Compared to the lush Sol courtyard, Luna and even the four smaller courtyards to the rear have limited vegetation. Discussions about “being or not being annoyed by noise in public parts of the building”, corresponded with the growing image of La Paz as a place more quiet, meditative or studious, than socially active.

**Public Spaces: task-performance**

*(selected comments from 2 of 20 public task-performance experiences on the website)*

*Studying in a quiet place*

Mike: “second floor study L239 is noisy because of proximity to most social wing...”
Mike: "sometimes when I'm studying in the Sol study room [Sasco] I can hear water running in the director's apartment...”
Mike: "I think L239 study room should have more acoustic treatment...”
Jen: "like to use the study bridge, its nice, quiet...”
Dan: "the Octave [top portion] is really nice, quiet...”
Cathy: "use the Tip Top study room [above desk, even though she has a single room] and the bridge...can find a place there earlier in the day...it will fill up around nine in the evening...” [but also studies in her room]
Dawn: "last year I studied in the two-storied study room and the study bridge...usually a place available...”
Holly: [very social] “the Tip Top study room is the only quiet place I'll study, prefer the others...”

*Getting or fixing a meal in the kitchens*

Ruth: “really far from kitchens in front [she lives on third floor back] you just don't feel like going all that way to cook or wash dishes...maybe rather than using the bathrooms, if we had a sink or something...” [explains that eating in is an economic thing]
Jen: "probably once or twice a week, but the vending machines I would use once a day...”
Dan: "don't have a microwave this year so I use the kitchen pretty often....there're nice, its pretty nice because I just shoot down the stairs...” [lives right above on 3d]
Bill: "use the kitchen maybe once or twice a month...”
Cathy: "maybe once or twice a semester...”[fixes a lot of food in single room]
Ted: "I like cooking, I try to cook but its hard to haul all your pots and pans to the kitchen [lives fairly close on the same floor].its a chore trying to carry everything...but I'll wash dishes in the kitchen...generally there's no one there, but once and a while...[Sol]...very rarely will it be busy....”

While the mapped incidence of students studying in the various public spaces is relatively low, the interviews generated some discussion. Given the typically comfortable weather in Tucson, Arizona, many of the exterior spaces add to the interior public rooms to provide enough study
places. The unique, visually interesting room called the “Study Bridge” is the most popular locale for studying outside of one’s room. It possesses good desk space and light arranged linearly without connotation of or opportunity for possible social gathering as occurs in the two “Living Rooms” (used for both) and designated smaller study rooms.

Responses to “fixing a meal or washing dishes” developed an understanding about the small number of kitchens, two, and their distance from many of the upper floor rooms. Again, most dishwashing occurs in the wing bathrooms with the attendant problems of water and mess on the countertops. Along with several other mentioned task-performance inconveniences, residents don’t really mind using bathrooms instead of the kitchens (only used minimally for task-performance). “Bringing groceries or heavy goods from the rear parking lot” is an experience interesting because of the design/economic decision to place only two elevators in the building. It is not illogical for college students to walk up to second and third floors in a scheme that intentionally distributes pathways and stairs through seven courtyards. The two elevators can be used at any time by disabled residents or by everyone when moving in or out. Nevertheless, in a society with an increasingly inactive youth, it is not surprising to hear at least a couple of comments from interviewees about preferring to live in the first floor for these reasons.

Other examples of task issues of interest are “storing large items outside of your room”, “parking your bicycle in a secure location”, “parking your car close enough to the hall”, or “climbing on the exterior walls of La Paz”. Because there is no designated drop-off space in front of La Paz, occasional problems develop, particularly with campus police, when residents are moving in or out, or when people drop off or pick up during the semester. Interviewees and custodians talk about the constant negotiation of all the heavy doors between indoor and outdoor spaces; some residents mention taking different routes specifically to avoid certain doors. A clear safety issue was reported by two interviewees who told of friends slipping on wet surfaces of the second floor rear wing patios. La Paz meets standard accessibility codes.

**Comments on the New Urbanism:**

**Social territories and cultural expression in the public spaces of La Paz**

(selected comments from 3 of 45 public social territories and cultural expression experiences on the website)

*Hanging out with friends (social territories)*

**Mike:** "For the most part La Paz is a very isolating building...when I lived in Apache Santa Cruz one summer I though it was a much more social place, kind of have this space where TV, kitchen and game room are on one floor, one central location, seems to be much more successful at drawing people to be social...had a living room with a lot more couches...also remodeled it with a bunch of ice cream parlor type tables...La Paz not too successful because each room is too isolated and separated..." [Mike is a third year psychology major]
Ruth: “most socializing takes place in the Union or at McHale with other athletes...”
Jen: “if I don't have a reason, I usually don't use the first and second floors...” [lives in S322]
Bill: "La Paz is so big that there is no really one congregate place...I mean the desk area is your best bet as far as running into people...occasionally I might check the TV room [Luna]...especially on a football Sunday...the thing is about the TV room is that it is usually just occupied by one person at a time...”
Bill: "I've said I think it isn't very conducive to community...but its hard to have a community with so many people...generally hang out in corridors or rooms, not in public areas...”

Getting to know people in other wings (social territories)
Mike: "I feel a little uncomfortable walking through other wings simply because I feel I'm walking through someone else's house or property...”
Bill: "sometimes we will hang out in the third floor corridor and listen to guitar...a lot of them leave their door open...not where I live [has virtually no corridor, only a vestibule with one room and bathroom opening off] its not very welcoming in my neck of the woods...some wings are like ghost towns...”
Ted: [on ground floor on ABCD court] "in the day I keep my blinds open....at night if you really want privacy...some people can look through the cracks in the blinds [can walk right up to the window outside]...during the day a lot of people walk right in front of the window...they'll look in...I don't mind...some of the people I know...the dorm isn't conducive to meeting people...its segregated...sections...not easy to know people...that's what everybody says...”
Ben: "I'd like to reemphasize that a lot of the way the wings and rooms are laid out...is kinda of antisocial...I don't think its an easy place to meet people [has been an RA for two years]...like being way up there in the corner, I don't get a chance to run into a lot of the other people...there are so many entrances...everybody has their different route...not really a common lobby, there is a lobby but...but here there's not a lot of integration between different parts of the building...[what are the goals of RA's in regard to getting people to know more than their bathroom group, for example?]...you might not get along with some immediate wing people...might be people on the other side of the building that you might have a lot in common...to try to get residents to have as many different experiences...we're encouraged to promote community on our wing...as well as special interests in the whole hall...social integration...education...”

Making a good first impression on friends and relatives (cultural expression)
Mike: "for the most part a very nice classy look...”
Jen: "friends have commented that from the outside it looks like a hotel...[positive]...only comments are that when you come inside its sort of a maze, trying to find the laundry room, or kitchen, or rooms in the back...?”
Ruth: "yeah, its good...”
Dan: "I think it does...it is a little imposing at first looking at the architecture...yeah know the huge [?] but once you walk in is pretty nice...”
Bill: "no, it doesn't...they think its a maze...”
Cathy: "uh huh...I think its different because of the indoor outdoor kind of...my mom loves it...”
Ted: "first impression, yeah....”
Liz: "I think they're impressed with the architecture and everything, but one of the first comments I always hear is how do you find your way around, because it's so easy to get lost...it didn't really bother me that I didn't know my way around, I'd just find other ways...”
Dawn: "yeah...my sister was very impressed because she wasn't in a cinder block dorm...like at her college...though it looked like the Hilton...”

After the discussion of the larger district context in Katz (1994), the brief explanation of the building’s form begins not with social issues but energy and resources in the desert Southwest...”like the patios and paseos of Mexico or the intricate spatial network of the middle Eastern casbah, the district’s many small ‘self-shading’ courtyards encourage movement of air, but keep the sun out during most of the day”. Somewhat secondarily, the definition follows that...”the physical structure of the district plan also reinforces its social goals. Student rooms
are organized into clusters around the small, private garden courtyards” (ibid:200). The intent of the well-furnished diverse public spaces of La Paz—the climatic determinants notwithstanding—is to provide a place for residents to socialize.

Observation, interview mapping and discussions again confirm the student image of La Paz as a (socially) quiet residence hall compared for example to the reputation of its close neighbor the more conventional Apache Hall. This also explains the length La Paz administration goes to encourage social activities. As we have already seen, the primary place to hang out is in the room, not any of the courtyard or designated social spaces at the larger public scale. At the opposite pole of a new urbanism sociability of space one finds examples, though not serious, of perceived indefensible space, a la Newman (see overview in Tijerino 1998). The narrow exterior corridor on La Paz’ north was felt by a male interviewee to be inhibiting at night. Similarly at night, female interviewees felt somewhat uncomfortable looking through their purses for their hall card while standing at the back parking lot entrances. During both day and night, it is easy for non-residents to “tailgate” into the building behind a resident opening the door in front of them. This combines with an overall awareness of strangers in the building and of the inability to distinguish between those who belong and those who don’t, even at the scale of the wings. Even the dimly lit courtyards and corridors of the interior can be problematic for some at night. One female interviewee told how she and her mother literally ran from the main entrance through these spaces to get to her room on one of the back upper floors. There was, however, no record of anyone having ever been physically assaulted in La Paz.

An interesting social aspect of “accessibility” exists because of the four foot slope of La Paz’ site from north to south. My physically disabled informant who used a scooter told of heading out of the building with able friends from the southeast wing. Rather than going the most direct route to the main entrance, his friends must accompany him on a detour to the northern part of the building where no stairs exist. The building is accessible from a task-performance perspective but can create an undue social emphasis of one’s disability.

During the walkthrough administrators described how La Paz’s separate wings and multiple entrances, its “layout”, did not foster knowing residents beyond one’s wing, unlike other residential halls where “elevators or other spaces cause more contact”. La Paz’s social spaces are simply too spread out and visually disconnected to foster spontaneous gathering of residents. This is particularly true of the designated social spaces like kitchens, game rooms, TV rooms, and living rooms, whose entrances from Sol and Luna courtyards are separated from major flows
through the main lobby and to stairways. For the most part these spaces become occasional destinations for previously arranged groups of friends, rather than social places more accessible to everyone. When a group of friends has gone down to watch a game on TV, for example (remember that most rooms have their own TVs), others may be inhibited from even opening the door to the well-defined, territorially controllable room. One of the reasons why all the attractive courtyard and terrace spaces closer to the wings aren’t used either, depends as well upon their separation from active flows of people; again the only node that begins to approach this kind of criticality is the front desk and mailbox area. To repeat, everything happens in the room.

In the category of cultural expression, when asked what building type La Paz most reminded them of, the common answer was either “hotel” or “resort”. Administrators report nicknames like “Club La Paz”. In the same vein residents were aware of the non-institutional character of this residence hall compared to the others on campus. The unique materials, form and art of the building are reported to make a good first impression on friends or family. Interviewees, however, did not identify La Paz’s courtyard forms and materials with a Southwest Style, nor was there much association of its red brick with the intentional ubiquity of this material on most of the other University of Arizona campus buildings.

Discussed within the experience labeled “participating in scheduled events, celebrations, performances in special spaces”, were the Barbecues and Drag Queen Show in the large Sol courtyard, and mixers, exhibits and other events up on the Sol Terrace and in the Living Rooms. Not unlike the less structured social use of public spaces, here too the decision to participate in these events and places is much more predetermined than spatially spontaneous. Rhetorically, one finds no artifacts in these spaces specifically designed for the symbolic content of the events. Similarly, one finds little or no artifactual expression of the hall student government in any space.

While perhaps not the best setting to apply New Urban principles--because of the need for overall territorial control and the potential for more cooperative, co-housing organization at some scales--nevertheless La Paz may provide an instructive commentary in this regard. It may even link user values with those of some architects, albeit in a controversial way. The most vocal criticism of the New Urbanism asserts that the movement’s use of the term “community” is largely symbolic, a cover-up for conventional real estate practices (Hall 1998:23). Furthermore, the symbolic label attracts the criticism of the less socially interested “tectonic” architects, suspicious as they are of any non-intrinsic, representational content.
Think again, however, about the typological image of a hotel or resort, a rhetorical device used frequently for example in congregate housing for older people. Why not a residence hall? What if the handsome social spaces are seldom used in practice? Why not functionally distinguish the simple social territoriality that occurs primarily in smaller scale rooms, bathrooms and lobby from a cultural veneer produced by overall, large scale architectural form in concert with other media, e.g. folklore, brochures, web sites, videos, newspapers, film, etc? Perhaps this veneer functions independently, at different times and with different social effect than socialization influenced by the actual physical spaces. The La Paz rhetorical, representational image may not be very interesting or important in the daily lives of most of its residents, yet on certain occasions it may be socially useful. It certainly plays a role in the recruitment of freshmen students, not only to residence hall life but even to the university as well. It can also serve as a status image in relationships with parents or friends living elsewhere.

But most important, perhaps, and a topic for future research, is its utility in the construction of and participation in a much larger world of self and society created primarily by mass media. The image of “sociability” or even “community” may be useful to one’s construction of more abstract beliefs of how he or she relates to global groups. In a world of increasing informalization, fleeting friendships, and “bowling alone” (Putnam 2000), the representation of social space as “hotels”, “villages” or “traditional towns” may play a unique role among other forms of representation, beyond their use for marketing and consumption. At least the “new urban” symbolization of “community” or “sociability” requires some greater consensus for its creation, exists more permanently, and even carries some obligation of perception, i.e. it cannot be easily turned off.

Executive summary and subsequent aspects of the project

Beyond these more theoretical considerations, La Paz is at the very least, a successful exploration in de-institutionalizing the traditional "dorm" image, creating a visually distinct and highly valued hotel-like character on campus. In concert with American uses of space, La Paz focuses greatest functional and social activity at the scale of the private room. The only exception in this regard is the incidental friendship formation occurring in shared bathrooms and one or two of the corridors. In spite of some task-performance problems of desk space, lighting, electrical outlets, storage, and plumbing noise residents seem surprisingly quite comfortable with the overall intensity of different room uses. Many organizationally inclined interviewees
expressed concern over La Paz' lack of "sociability" compared with other halls, and many hall activities are specifically intended to increase contact, friendship formation, and even social groups. Nevertheless, the subsequent survey questions seem to paradoxically reflect a general disinterest in a hall's (physical layout) ability to stimulate group and even friendship formation. Even though wayfinding is widely felt to be unusual especially when residents first arrive, it may present a greater problem for administration during these periods. Two safety issues might be immediately discussed or investigated further: falling on wet patio surfaces, and the perception of territorial non-surveillance within portions of the building at night.

Beyond the this evaluation of La Paz, the web site additionally documents the next predesign orientated phases of the project, a survey and prototypical design testing--all structured by experiences in the five categories. Now expanding into future residence hall design on campus, the survey listed 96 issues. Residents were asked to indicate the importance of each issue on a scale of 1 to 3 (1=very important, 2=moderately important, 3=not really important). Fifty-four students, persuaded by resident assistants from all wings, completed the survey. The primary purpose of the survey was to partially validate ethnographic information and generate potential new design issues that will be interesting enough to users, administrators and architects to serve as predesign information in subsequent processes.

Fig. 7 Existing layout of social spaces in La Paz (left), larger circles indicate public social spaces, and smaller circles represent wing bathrooms; hypothetical social territories study (right) that maximizes spontaneous connections by clustering main entrances, public social spaces, primary stairs to wings, and suggested additional social space at entrances to each wing (diagram from third phase of project on web site). The study serves only to maximize the interests of one kind of categorical experience in a design process, and must be reconciled with other categorical diagrams in the creation of a composite prototype.
Reflecting upon these issues, in an ideal next step of a new residence hall would be the
design of five distinct spatial “frameworks” of a chosen site each maximizing wayfinding, visual
& non-visual aesthetics, task-performance, social territories, and cultural expression (see
“Design Process and Prototype Testing” in the website). Figure seven provides one example of
how this process could have worked in the case of the La Paz site. After this process, architects
would then be instructed to produce a single prototype design as a composite of the five previous
exercises. The web site illustrates as well the way the prototype would then be tested against
simulations of some total list of experiences in all categories. User and administrator
participation would be built into all activities.

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