

THE OPPORTUNITY IN BETWEEN

THE ADVANTAGE OF THE EDGE

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2020-2021 Master of Architecture Thesis
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“The division
is more than a
physical
boundary-
it limits
imagination,
empathy and
connection.”

can Architecture affect/improve society in country borders?

This study will research first how spaces between countries behave/form depending on the social-political, architecture or geological relationship between countries.

Analysing the fabric of the threshold between countries, to get the concept aspect of the existing borders where the multicultural experience and/or atmosphere is achieved.

types of borders

Material ;

Natural Elements
Man Made elements

Territorial ;

Transnational
National
Sub National
Protected Area

Functional ;

Political
Economical
Juridical
Administrative

Sociocultural ;

Language
Religion
History
Ethnicity
Tradition

Mental/Cognitive

Perception of the border as non- separating
Perception of the border as limen
Perception of the border as a barrier

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Definition of Border.

A line separating two political or geographical areas , especially countries.²



Landscape/ texture in between: series of vertical barriers along the Mexico-United States Border.

Borders are everywhere and exist at every level of our lives. They are among the most fundamental instrument in modulating the logistics of space, more specifically what is inside and outside, delineating what is included and excluded.

When two: countries, languages, traditions, architecture, overlap there is a third condition created because of these two, there is a situation in between blending all these. it is imperative that we acknowledge this overlap as an opportunity that we could learn from to revitalize or improve the spatiality specifically along the division of these.

What is special in a border city?

What are the opportunities or advantage

between overlap division opportunity



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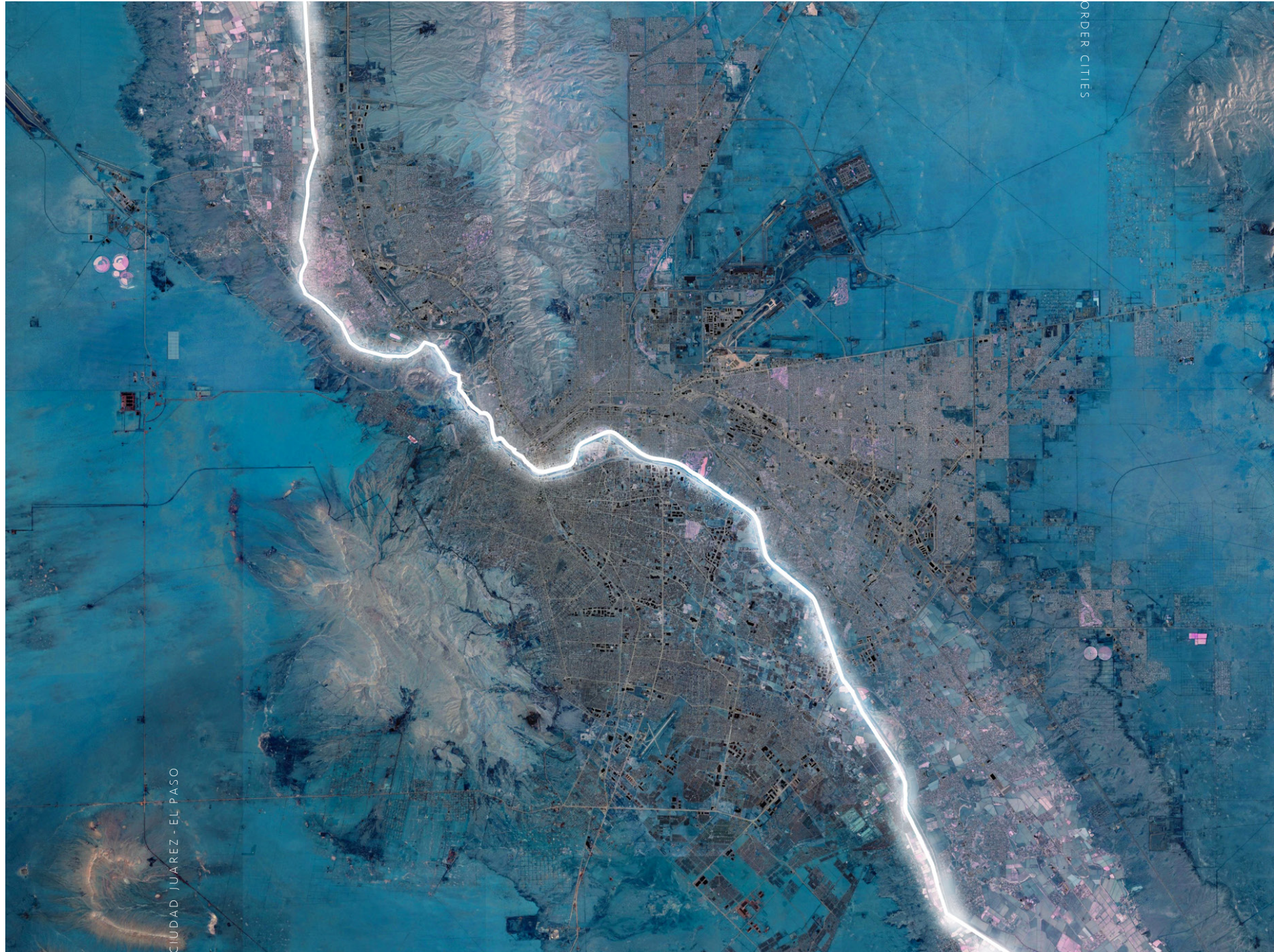
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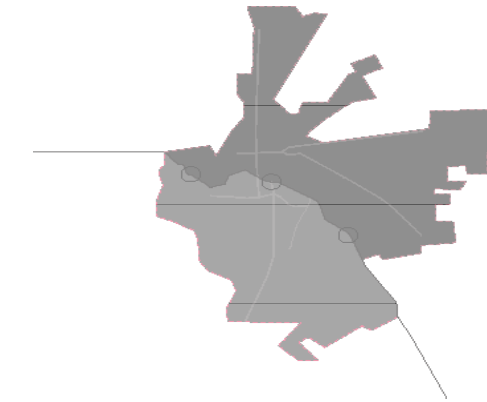
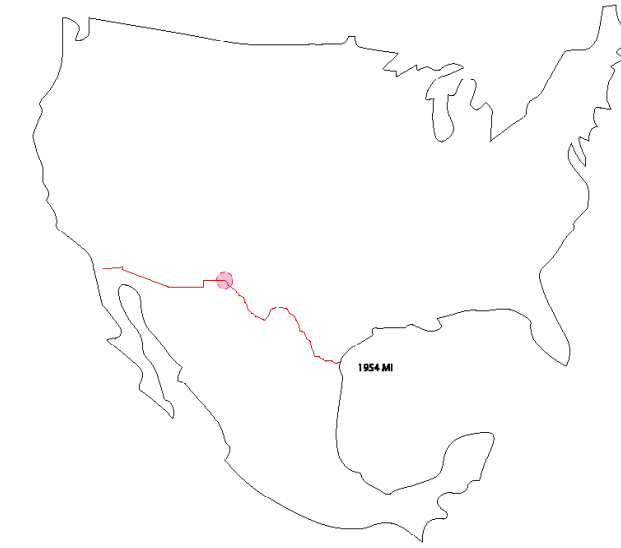
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Site/Border Selection

Mexico- United States El Paso / Cd. Juarez

One of the most important borders in the world is located between Mexico and United States, located right in the middle of north Mexico area; Ciudad Juarez and El paso Texas.

Ciudad Juarez/ El Paso



BORDER
USA/MEXICO
1954
MILES
LONG

3 Main Checkpoints

USA
EL PASO, TEXAS

MEXICO
CIUDAD JUAREZ



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The frontier is unique and with thousands of crossings every day. These two cities are completely different worlds and despite of the border restrictions both cities are incredible connected, economically, socially and culturally. The cities are co-dependable and need the fluidity from the other one to function.

No distance exists between the border cities, and its citizens have a unique and specific way of living and interacting in daily activities. the feeling of living in the area is unique because there is a condition created by the community to take most of the advantages from both countries to create their own benefit and functional lifestyle.

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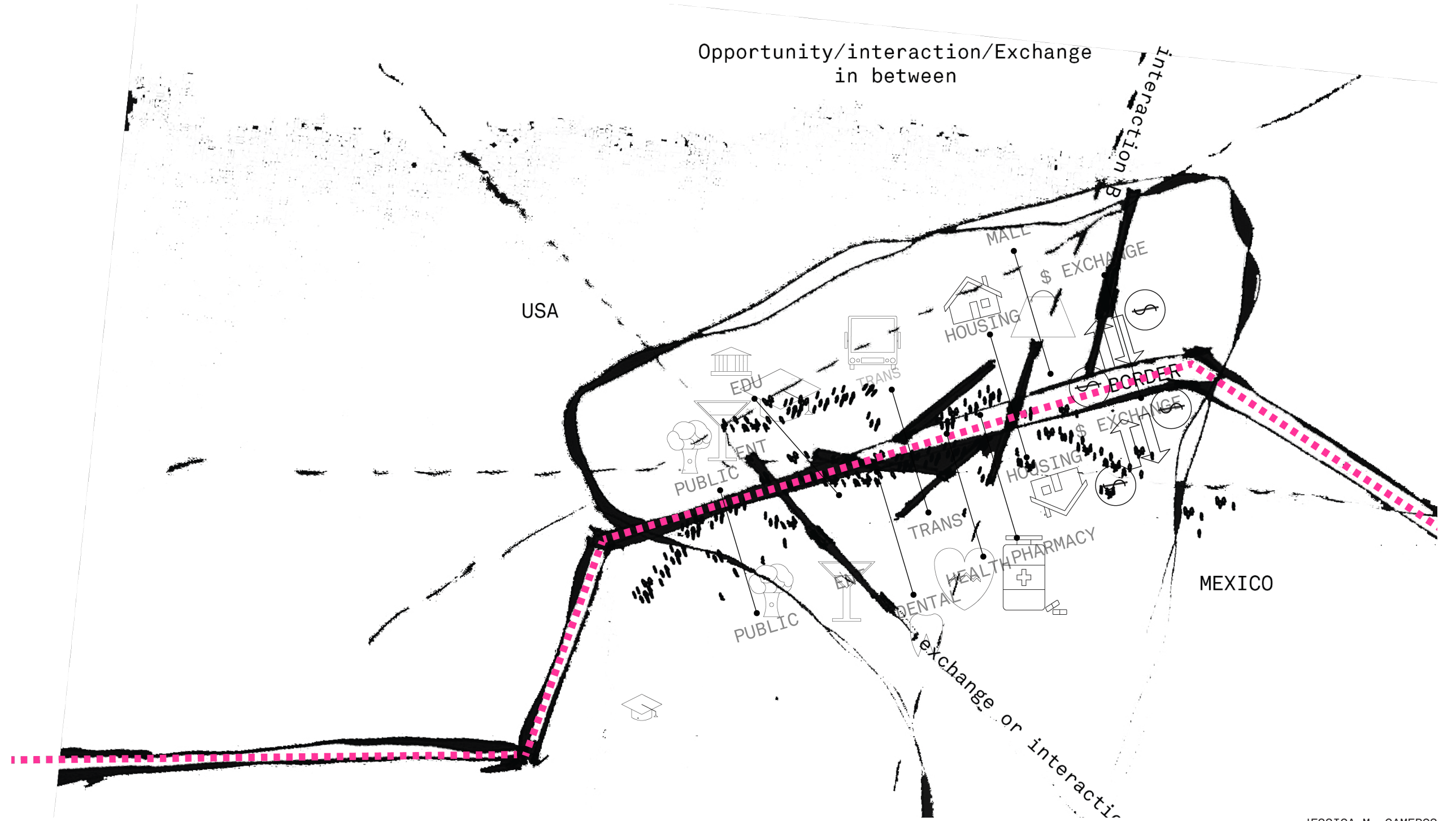
Integrate and underscore the essential links between

The border cities Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and El Paso, Texas United states

This Thesis seeks an attempt to integrate and underscore the essential links between the border cities Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and El Paso, Texas United states. The investigation will focus on the urban hierarchy of the border space: proposing geographical adjacency of structural differences and the interaction of simultaneous process in between the spaces. The border itself. The project is a statement to reiterate why the border should exist and the advantages of a frontier city.

population
Ciudad Juarez- 1.3M
El Paso- 683,500

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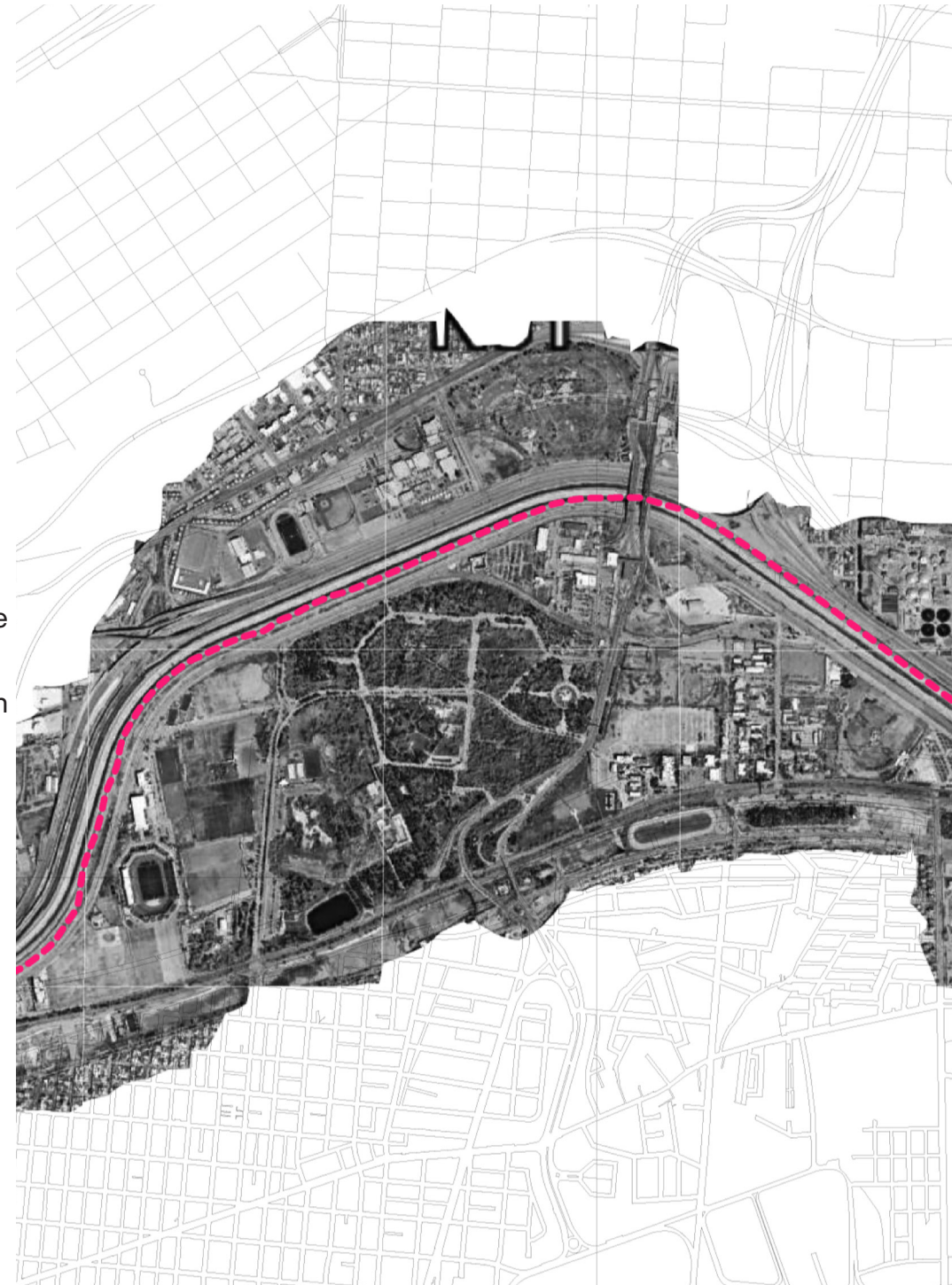
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The Selected site for this thesis has been based in history of the border itself, the edge

that divides these two countries

in this specific area is a concrete channel. The Chamizal dispute from the early 1900s through the 1960s acted as precedent for how changes to the river's path could legally change the resident's citizenship and the countries border with a single flood. Starting in the 1960's the Rio Grande was emptied and replaced with a cement trench. The water of the Rio Grande remains in the U.S. Franklin Canal due to a diversion gate controlled by the US.



A Tale of Two Treaties

1848

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American War; US gains much of its present-day West. Mexico agrees to recognize the Rio Grande as the Texas-Mexico border.

1864

Massive flooding alters the course of the Rio Grande, initiating a hundred-year-long dispute about exact position of the international border.

1884

International boundary is established at the center of the river's deepest channel. If river course changes abruptly, the old boundary remains in place.

1895

Mexico makes claim on behalf of Pedro Garcia, whose land—the Chamizal tract—ended up in the US after the river course shifted.

1899

River channel is straightened to prevent flooding. This creates Cordova Island, a piece of Mexican agricultural land jutting into U.S. territory.

1911

Arbitration of the boundary dispute takes place in downtown El Paso, while blocks away, the Mexican Revolution is underway.

1920s-30s

Cordova Island (still Mexican territory) becomes a drinking and smuggling haven during Prohibition. Efforts, including a four-mile fence, are made to bar Americans from the "Island."

1962

With the Cold War escalating, President John F. Kennedy seeks to secure relations with Mexico; travels to Mexico City to meet with President López Mateos. The two heads of state resolve to settle the Chamizal dispute.

1963

Chamizal Convention signed. Specifies construction of concrete channel to serve as permanent international border. Also divides Cordova Island between U.S. and Mexico.

The concrete channel that divides these two countries

The project is a statement why the border should exist, and how we can take advantage of it as it is, as a border!

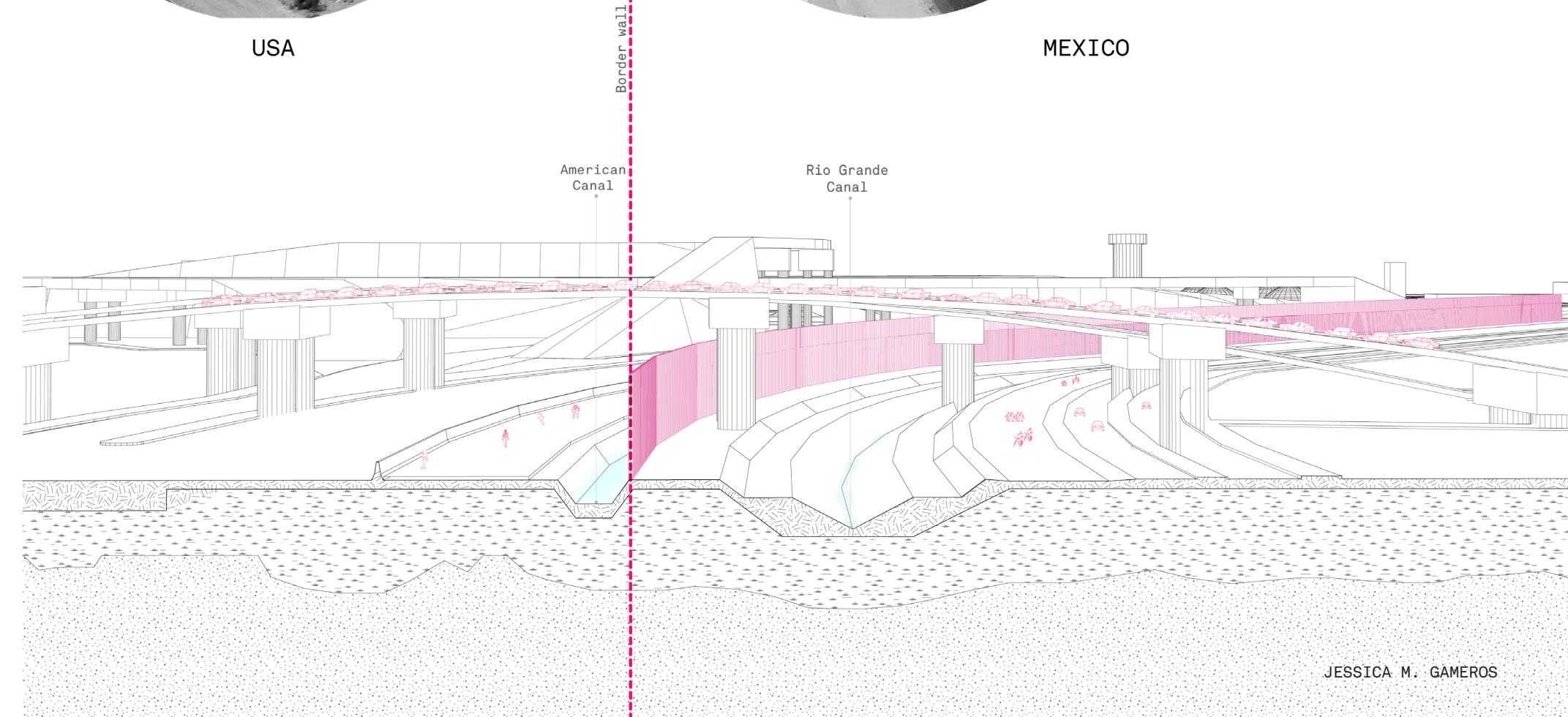
the concrete channel now serves as the edge between ciudad juarez and el paso but now this is a problem, is just that a dead zone for both countries, in the mexican side the space is mostly occupied with debris, people dealing with drugs, there is no opportunity for vegetation, social interaction. etc. In the USA side is not that different but we think the space could be utilized better.



USA



MEXICO



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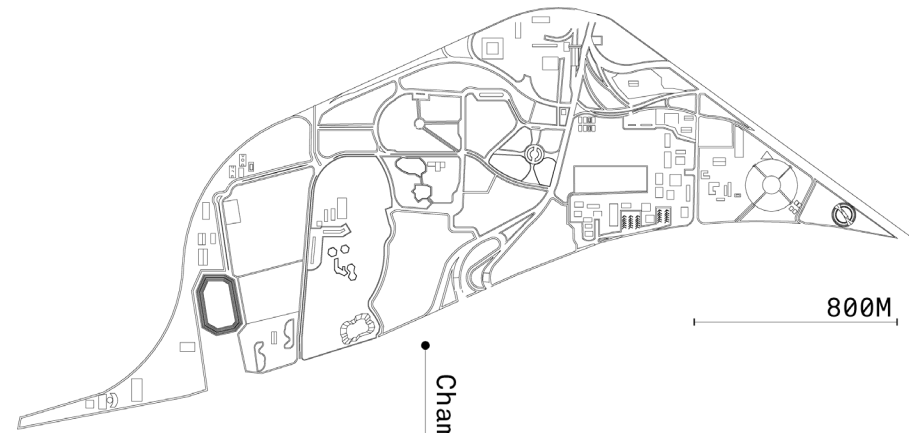
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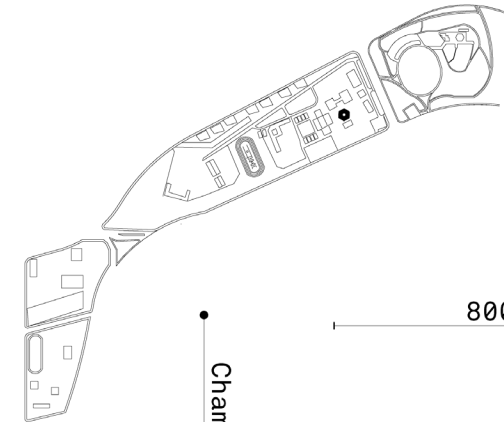
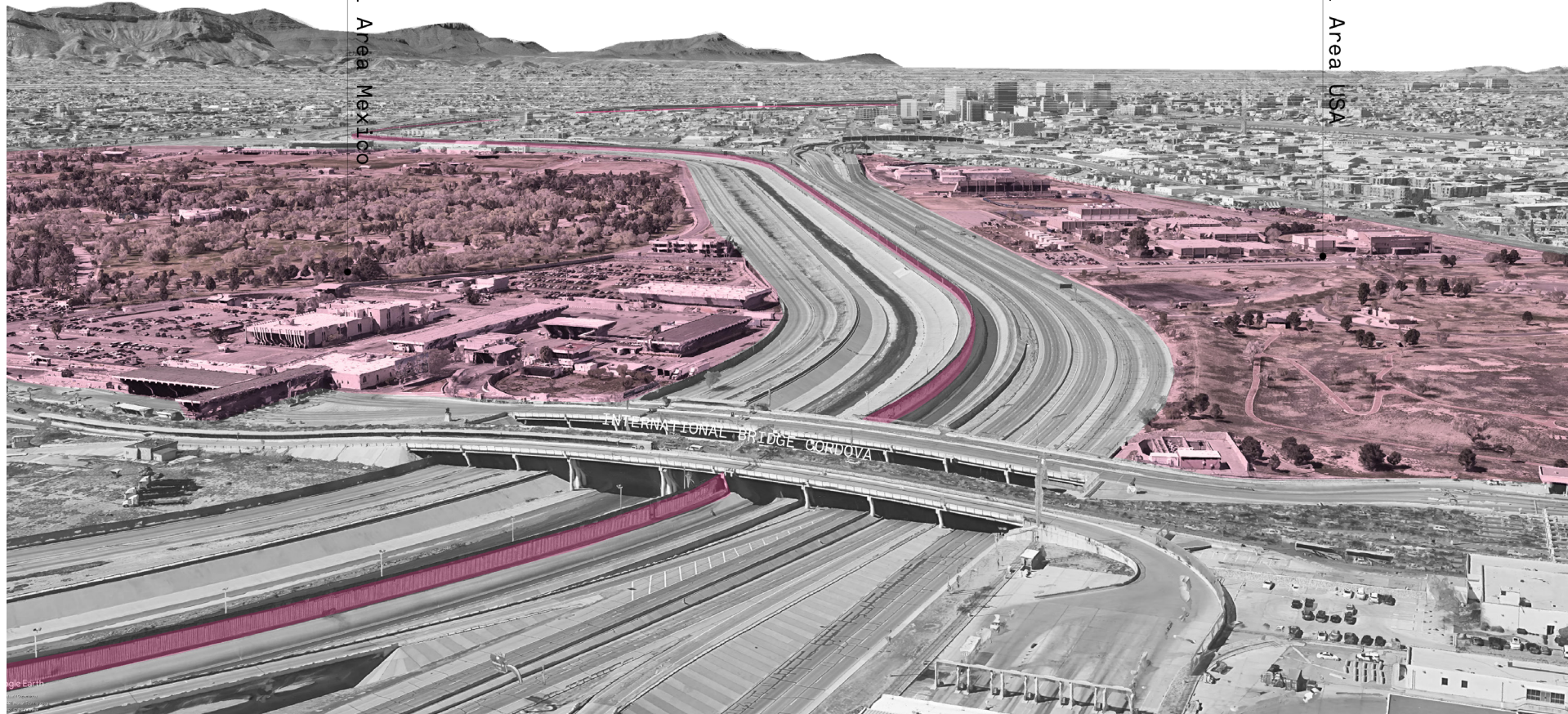
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Chamizal Area Mexico



Chamizal Area USA

the main idea is to find the co-dependencies between ciudad juarez and el paso and make a statement with our program.

Make architecture, community and opportunity activate and create different scenarios to improve people's life in both sides of the border.

There should be a negotiation between two communities to create the best of both worlds.

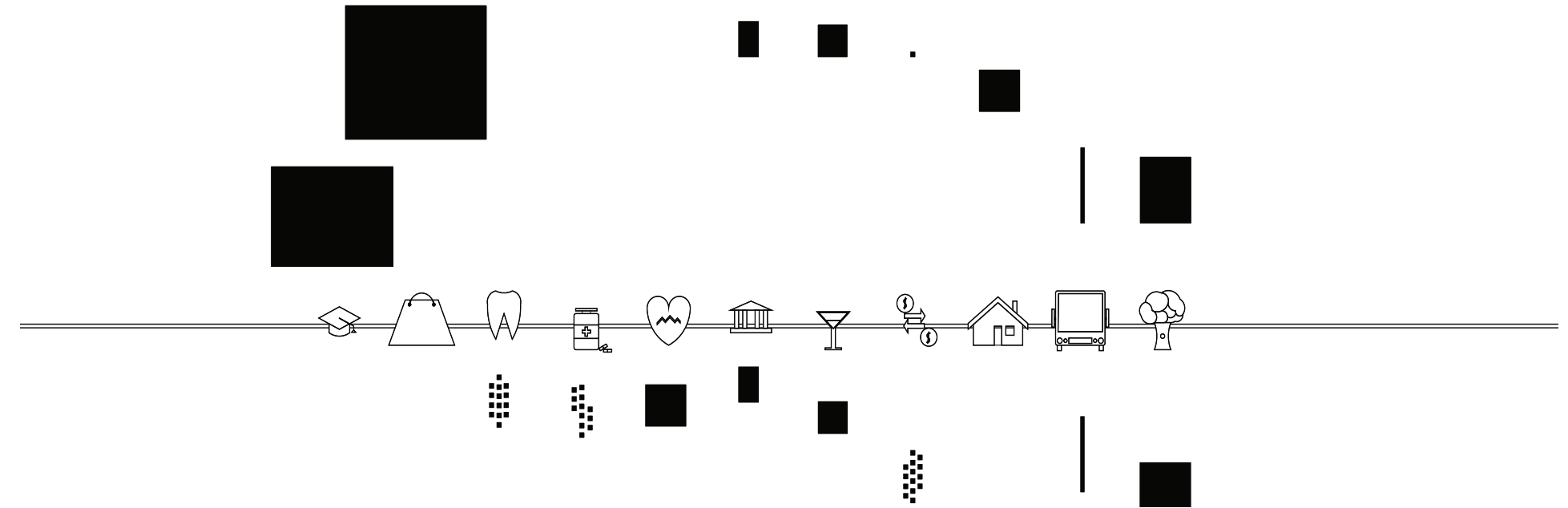
This program consists of housing, education, entertainment, health, import and export goods. cultural exchange among communities.

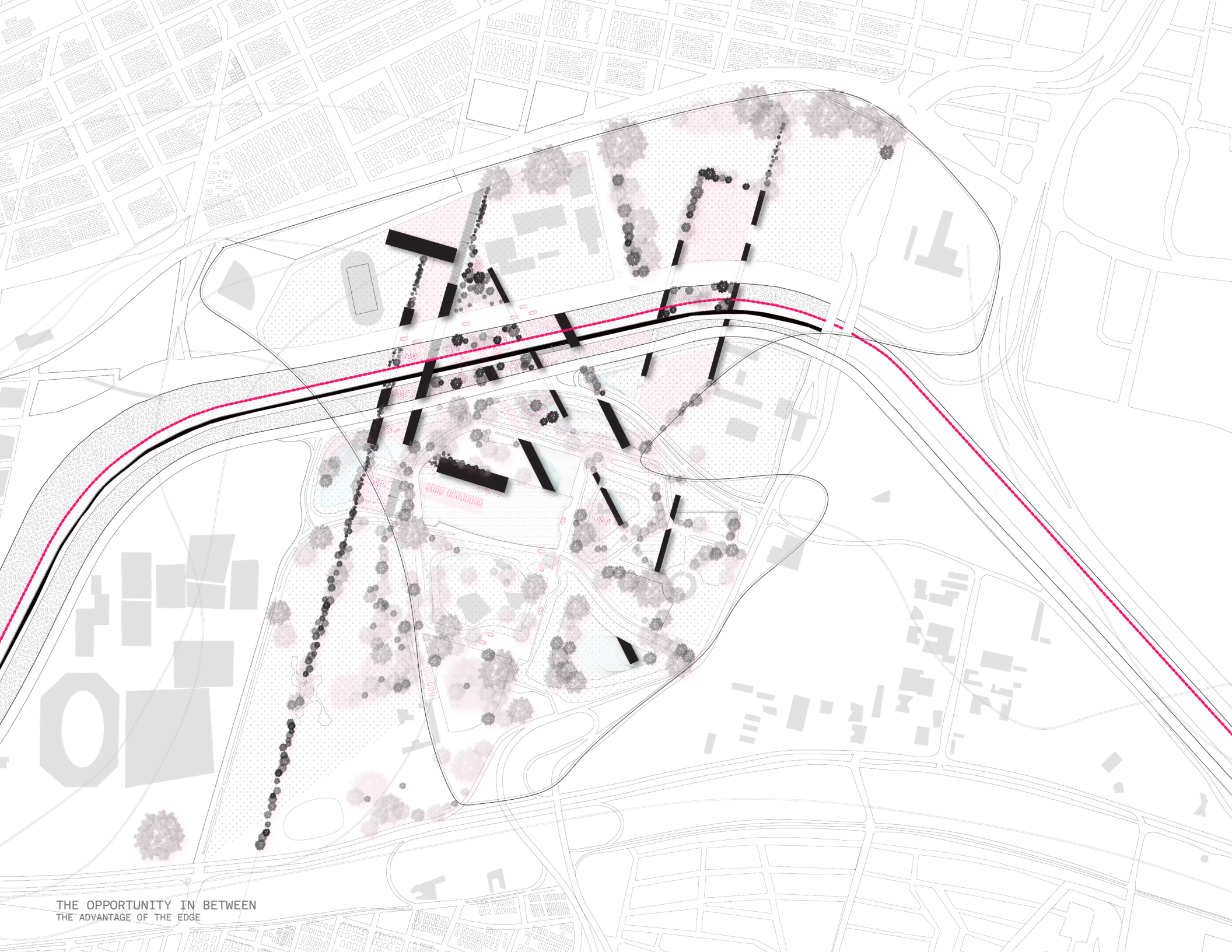
The program will help to activate the border area and the surrounding areas of el chamizal .

With the channel now being use with different scenarios will help the community to embrace the advantage of each side and take the opportunity to make both cities better, the open spaces and the building sizes will help the people to organically occupied the space and create all different type of scenarios along the border , around, on top , under the border edge

EDUCATION
 RETAIL
 CONSULATE
 ENTERTAINMENT
 CURRENCY EXCHANGE
 HOUSING
 TRANSPORTATION
 PUBLIC GREEN AREAS

THE PROGRAM CONSIST OF THE ADVANTAGES OF EACH SIDE OF THE EDGE





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The thesis proposes as a statement to create a suggestion of a program to the community but is not limited with the space being a white canvas for its citizens from both countries , still the proposal is shaping the areas and contours of the to be use spaces, some spaces will be open , some will be enclosed, some will be semi enclose , the variety of sizes will also depend on the suggested program.

The program should be about co-dependencies to maintain a relationship between the two countries with connected structures but not necessarily accessible from both sides, the border will still be in between keeping each country's boundaries but the program will run across both sides , one thing happening on one side will trigger the other side.

In the diagram the overall landscape and structures are suggested according to the proportions of the spaces and walkways, roads, parking already available.

One of the suggested scenarios inspired by the book *Bordewall as Architecture* by Ronald Rael is having an Elementary school serving for both sides but with the boundary in between and having the kids sharing the playground with the see through wall, allowing the kids to exchange, play and socialize with each other, education might not be the same but there should be opportunity to learn from your neighbor country.







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Living and experiencing the border is not a negative scenario and it should be taken as an opportunity. Architecture and communities can help to take this opportunity in our hands, there should be no space forgotten in any part of the world and a border shouldn't be feared or perceived as something against nations, because divisions are also what differentiate and help people to preserve their own traditions, and culture. A frontier is an opportunity in between to take advantage of.

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Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/destinations/asia/south-korea/things-to-do-photos-demilitarized-zone-dmz/>
- 2 Nicol & Minghi, 2005, p. 684
- 3 https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2018/10/24/Cross-border-life-in-Jurez-El-Paso-Work-family-and-long-waits/7091540326157/
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- 5 <http://www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/bdd-borders/frontiers/frontier/show/france-italie-monaco/>
- 6 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/crossed-boundaries-migrants-and-police-on-french-italian-border/>
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