The José Villagrán García’s Theoretical Notions and their Application to the Architectural Project During the Modern Era in Mexico (1925 – 1954)

This research is motivated by the research lack in the exploration of the application of José Villagrán García’s architectural theory to the professional practice. The aims of this research are to clarify the notions which are the foundation of the Villagranian theory and to explore its application to the architectural project.

Supporting this study, in the chapter 1, the introduction and research framework are developed. On the same way, the context and statement of the problem are raised, the research questions and hypothesis are established, the research objectives are pointed out, and finally the literature review is related with this study as mean to the organization of the dissertation.

The chapter 2 responds to the period between 1918 – 1935. In this stage, the teachings received by José Villagrán at National School of Architecture (NSA) are examined. On the other hand, the main characteristics of the historical and sociopolitical context in Mexico are analyzed, as well as the ideological influences on Villagrán’s academic life (1918 – 1923), his initial teaching at NSA (1924 – 1930), and his new concepts disseminated through his lectures at NSA (1930 – 1935). These topics were developed in order to explain the general background which influenced on Villagrán. Also, this analysis makes possible to recognize the initial theoretical notions that José Villagrán implemented at the beginning of his professor career at NSA.

In the third stage (1927 – 1964), chapter 3, the first José Villagrán’s theoretical notions are detected and examined. His first questions and discourses are analyzed revealing his three notions established in his theory: “modern architecture”, “the human”, and “modern architect”.
Through the Villagrán’s theoretical notions his ideological transitions are recognized. In his first ideological stage from student to architect and in second place from architect to theorist of architecture.

In the chapter 4, the connection between Villagrán’s theoretical notions and the Plastic Integration Movement (1934 – 1954) during the Mexican modern era is exposed. The Plastic Integration Movement is analyzed from the recognition of the ideological, social, and political reasons which motivated Villagrán in the development of the concepts of “decoration” and “ornament”. In addition, the mural painting is identified as the main plastic art applied in the Mexican modern architecture in order to analyze the case of University City which relate the Villagrán’s notions and the ideology developed during the Plastic Integration Movement.

The adaptation of José Villagrán’s architectural theory in the realization of the NSA’s project is verified in the fifth stage, chapter 5. The Villagrán works and thinking are classified according its temporality for identify the theoretical moment in which Villagrán conceptualized the NSA’s project. In addition, the first Villagrán’s sketches for NSA are analyzed and interpreted with the focus on the methodology applied during the design process having as main aim to relate it with the Villagrán’s theory.

Finally, in the chapter 6, the conclusion is exposed for answering the research questions and in order to establish the discussion proving the hypothesis raised at the first stage of this study.

As a result of the examination, we estimate that this study clarify the international spread of modern architecture and have uniqueness and usefulness as research, and we approve the author of this dissertation have sufficient qualification as a doctorate (engineering) degree.