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**'BRIDGING THE GAP'  
ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN PARALLEL  
APPROACHES TO SIMILAR PROBLEMATICS**

Through grounded research process that looks into built case studies of SVET VMES architectural practice from Ljubljana, Slovenia, linked to research interviews made with various stakeholders (policy makers, headmasters, pedagogues and pupils), this practice based doctoral research explores the spatial, social and learning potential of non-formal, in-between space of Slovene educational buildings that has been, according to the last valid update, the 2007 Normative – Instructions for the Construction of Elementary Schools in Republic of Slovenia, stripped down to the utmost minimum. Summed up in a functionalistic triad of ABC spaces (primary – 'A spaces' for teaching - 53%, secondary – 'B spaces' for supporting activities – 25% and tertiary – 'C spaces' for merely connecting purposes – 22%), hierarchically last – 'C space', defined as the shortest corridor of minimum widths, 'suffocates' within the dogma of spatial, financial and mental 'existenzminimum'.

By transforming the left-over 'C spaces' into places of events, comfort, interaction, negotiation, solitude, seclusion and *delight*<sup>1</sup> – coined by SVET VMES as '*the loaded nooks*', one establishes new, encouraging, non-formal, loaded in-between environments, where unknown programs, spontaneous behavior and emotions can arise among pupils, recognizing their autonomous right to choose their own activity in a particular time and place, while being in a school institution.

Through dense, isometric, line drawing of utopian Ljubljana, comprised out of public, institutional buildings where numerous research interviews and activities took place, the forthcoming presentation at Berlin CA2RE Conference gives insight into a complex, dual position of an architect-researcher, who acts like a bridge between various realms and groups of people, in order to evaluate and position SVET VMES'S built case studies. Through this ongoing research process one does not seek for a mere confirmation of success/non-success of architectural intervention but wishes to demonstrate how the '*loaded nooks*' appear to become a stimuli for new insights: pupils, pedagogues, headmasters become aware of the shortcomings of the Slovene educational system and formulate a critique against it. Hence architecture can instigate a debate on the improvement of the outdated merely quantitative 'ABC normative' for designing school buildings.

**Keywords:** educational architecture, intermediate spaces, loaded nooks, delight, research interviews, practice-based doctoral research

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<sup>1</sup> **Delight** with its contemporary synonyms like pleasure, happiness, joy thrill, captivation, excitement, etc. first occurs as an intriguing translation of Vitruvius' *venustas*, used by Sir Henry Wotton, in his *Elements of Architecture* from 1624, where he wrote: "*Well building hath three conditions: Commoditie, Firmeries, and Delight*".

