

07

REFLECTION

| Reflection on Urban Biography approach

The Urban Biography approach is universally applicable. In the next piece will be elaborated on the different components of this approach.

1. Focus on public space

Public space can only improve social inclusion to a certain extent. It is definitely not the only aspect that needs to be tackled in order to solve the problem of exclusivity and inequality. However, public space is the place where people meet and interact with each other, everyone uses public space. When this public space is well designed, it provides inviting places for interaction between different people. This will contribute to the improvement of inclusivity and equality. Public space brings people together.

2. Physical, social and mental component

In order to alter the public space, it is important to gain a deep understanding of the space. Therefore it is important to look at all the elements that form a public space: the physical, social and mental. Only when all three of them are examined, this deep understanding is gained. This makes it possible to alter the public space to a coherent and desirable place.

3. Development approach

The history and heritage of a place is a complementary aspect in this approach. Every place has its own history, that is part of what makes every place unique. If the development story of a place is part of the gained knowledge, it can help with the identification of the place specific identity. If this development is taken into consideration, it can enhance the identity of a place and will therefore have added value. This implies that public space

needs place specific interventions because every place is, and should be, unique.

So the approach of the Urban Biography is universally applicable. However, there are a lot of social problems that are place specific. These will have different implications for the desired design. The two main components on which the design for Statenkwartier is built: identity and connection, are universally applicable as well in order to increase interaction and reduce inequality. However, the implications of these components on the design are place specific as well. The Urban Biography approach gives the tools in order to elaborate on this place specific.

| Moerwijk

In the appendix a brief example is given of the application of the Urban Biography approach on a different kind of neighbourhood: Moerwijk. This neighbourhood is often called a problem neighbourhood (Wittebrood & Permentier, 2011; Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2014). Moerwijk is a residential neighbourhood and one of the least expensive neighbourhoods of The Hague (Wonen in Den Haag, 2017b). Remarkably enough, Statenkwartier and Moerwijk are connected by tramline 16. So this tram takes you in one hour to two completely different worlds.

In Moerwijk something similar happens as in Statenkwartier. The neighbourhood appeals a certain homogeneous type of users and residents. However, this type is completely different from the one in Statenkwartier. Where Statenkwartier is seen as an elite neighbourhood, Moerwijk is more seen as a problem neighbourhood. Moerwijk is highly accessible for people with a low income and ethnic minorities. Despite the differences between them, for both of the neighbourhoods applies that the accessibility for different kind of users should be improved in order to reduce exclusion and exclusivity. The Urban Biography approach makes it possible to examine this problem in more depth.



Fig. 64 Position of Statenkwartier (top) and Moerwijk (bottom) within The Hague



Fig. 65 Moerwijk

| Relationship between research and design

This thesis is especially focussed on the spatial implications of a social problem. So the thesis contains a large research part. This elaborated research is used to develop a new approach for the reading of a city. The development of this approach could be seen as a theoretical design. In which the research is translated to a usable tool. In the next step of this thesis, the new approach is applied to a test case city. This test case created the opportunity to make a location specific design and to test the new approach. So the design within the test case reflects the research on spatial implications of a social problem.

| Relationship between graduation topic, graduation studio, Urbanism master track and the master programme

The master Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences tends to blend knowledge and skills from design practice, physical and social sciences and technology (TUDelft, 2018). The Urbanism track combines urban design, landscape architecture, spatial planning and engineering. In order to shape and plan a more sustainable development, the track integrates social, cultural, economic and political perspectives with the natural and man-made conditions of the site (TUDelft, 2018). The History and Heritage studio studies policy, theory and methods related to tangible and intangible aspects of (historic) urban landscapes. It explores how these spaces can be assessed, (re)defined, and used in urban and regional development plans (TUDelft, 2018). The studio is especially focussed on identifying and grasping the essence of a place. This essence should contribute to the development of a place. This thesis project strives to grasp the essence of a place by the development of a new approach for reading the city and implement the essence of a place in the redesign of this place. Just as the Urbanism track prescribes, social and cultural perspectives are combined with the specifics of a site.

| Elaboration on the relationship between graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project results.

This thesis fills the gap of knowledge between the current morphological approaches of research, with a focus on the physical aspects of public space, and the increasing social problems in cities.

A change in the physical environment is a reaction to a change in the social environment. The physical environment is therefore always behind on the social reality, unless a suitable prediction for the future is being made.

Therefore it is useful to learn from the past to be able to recognise similarities and patterns. This knowledge can be used to predict and prepare for the future. Current research methods as a preparation for a public space design lack this historical approach.

Current research methods focus on the physical condition of the public space in order to find out the spatial qualities and flaws of this place. However, a social approach is lacking in these methods. By whom the public space is used and for who the public place should therefore be designed, should be the key components of the public space research.

This thesis strives to implement this social approach in the early stages of the public space research. It makes it therefore possible to integrate the social component of public life in the design of public space.

The developed approach in this thesis could be applied to any city in order to get a deeper understanding of the social component within the development of this city.

| Ethical issues and dilemmas

This research focusses on the current social-spatial inequality problem in cities. This problem has both a social and a spatial side. In this research the focus lays on the influence of the spatial part. However, it is important to state that spatial interventions in public space will by no means be the only thing that helps tackle social-spatial inequality. This problem is broader and has therefore big social implications, like exclusion of certain groups of society.

The exclusion of certain groups could be seen in the light of discrimination and racism. It is therefore important to make sure that no-one can get offended by the descriptions in this research.