10.3 **REFLECTION**

REFLECTION OF THE GRADUATION

Urban fabrics

This project carried out within the department of Urbanism as a part of the Design of the urban fabrics research group. This year, the studio focused on the topic of Automated mobility, exploring the possible impact of technological and societal innovations on the built environment within different scenarios. This theme is explored through three lenses, Living quality, Intensification (growth & densification) and Segregation and social sustainability. This thesis is related to the first two lenses the living quality and intensification as it addresses both the livability and expected population growth in Amsterdam.

Introducing Future mobility x livability

In the backdrop of this studio, this project investigates the relationship between the future of mobility and livability in Amsterdam. The current mobility network in Amsterdam has a negative impact on the livability in the city. Amsterdam continues to grow, an increased population means there are more people seeking to travel. This ultimately increases the pressure on the impact of the current mobility network. This project seeks to counter the negative impacts of its current mobility network by introducing automated mobility to preserve and enhance the livability in the city. This research project seeks people to think how automated mobility can be used to improve the living quality of urban areas by showing a possible future for the case of Amsterdam. Further, this project also explores the possibility of creating a healthy & sustainable living environment for the growing population of Amsterdam. The project can

be understood by positioning it against the studio's objectives to grasp its academic relevance. Design of the urban fabrics research group aims to foster a sustainable livable urban environment, which is also an objective of this research project. Future mobility x livability looks at opportunities to enhance and preserve the livability of Amsterdam through introducing automated mobility.

Role

This graduation project takes on the role to explore and critically analyze the various possibilities automated mobility introduces to the urban environment. The role of the urban designer in this project is to understand the spatial implications which this new shift in mobility brings to society and how to use this as an advantage.
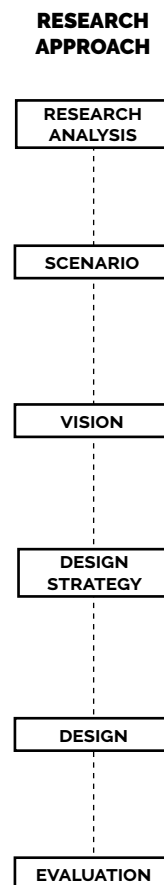
Relationship between research and design

Research and design both played a crucial role from the start of the project. In the first semester the relationship of research and design was mostly visible through the spatial translation of general knowledge and theories into a site analysis. According to Nijhuis (2017) this process is described as research for design, research is utilized to feed the design process. The research in this phase mainly consisted of mapping, literature and translating data into maps. Amsterdam has a broad range of data and maps available which made it easy to research certain topics. However, this also made it more difficult to narrow the research and choose a guiding

theme of the research project.
"Designing is exploring and deciding within a potentially endless number of possibilities, to come up, in the end, with an internally coherent whole. To be able to create a coherent whole, a designer needs an inspiring direction or order. Using a guiding theme or qualities not only gives the design its character and identity in the complex and open design process, it also helps in making choices. The guiding theme is the way in which the designer sees or frames the design situation at hand. "(Van Dooren et al., 2013, p.8)

When reflecting on my own process, I have to mention that this research project started with a focus on the spatial impacts of automated mobility in Amsterdam, but it evolved in an attempt to create e new urban living environment by introducing automated mobility. It unravels the importance of the relationship between the urban living environment and the future of mobility. The mapping process started with a number of maps regarding mobility in Amsterdam, but this was quickly transformed into a series of layers which shows the impact of the current mobility network of Amsterdam. The guiding theme has changed after literature, mapping and data has been collected which according to Van Dooren et al. (2013) is a common process while designing. The guiding theme has changed because o series of information and interests were made aware during the research. During the research process I could affirm that in the first semester the 'research through design' method was used more than the research through design . It was until after P2 that the switch was made from research to design, I found it difficult to bring an end to

GUIDING THEME

HEALTHY URBAN LIVING ENVIRONMENT

AUTOMATED MOBILITY

RESEARCH APPROACH

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

SCENARIO

VISION

DESIGN STRATEGY

DESIGN

EVALUATION

this analysis phase. This was mostly because of the construction of the scenarios, it was difficult to come to the point to make certain statements about the future because of the endless possibilities. Statements were made and the design phase was completely in motion. The research beforehand provided a clear path for the design, it highlighted the bottlenecks and attention areas which the design would address. After P3 there was a moment of realization, several questions were raised. Why am I making these design decisions? How does this specific design intervention contribute to the aim of the project? How does it contribute to the larger context? It was an attempt to start formulating a coherent story of the graduation project. This attempt however, was not clear to the audience as the questions above were raised after the P3 presentation. It forced me to sit down and create a coherent story line where all aspects are linked to each other. This provided some clarity. The phase between P3 and P4 is identified as the experimenting phase in the design process. According to van Dooren et al., (2013) a designer looks at the design problem and experiments in multiple ways with a variety of solutions. The designer collects a ton of information about the problem and the possibilities to come up with a specific design to address the problem. "It's a process of thinking, experimenting, and learning from the results, a process of sketching, modeling, and critical rethinking the results, a process of continually changing and developing until a satisfying solution is
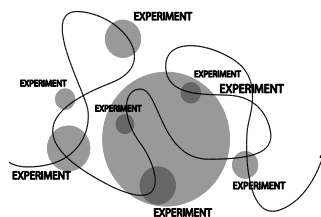
found." (van Dooren et al., 2013) This process is described as a research by design method. (Nijhuis, 2017). The figure below describes the experimenting phase where the results are critically reviewed and developed until a desired solution is found.

During this process, I've learned to critically view my design and if my drawings are communicative enough. After the P4 presentation the design had to be refined. Especially the design of the street profiles in the city centre. Because of the scale and complexity of the Sloterdijk location, I have neglected the design of the street profiles of the city centre. The contrast between the two locations was quite challenging throughout the project. Looking back at the process, I should have started on the city centre design earlier as the detailing and small scale of the city centre demanded a great amount of focus and understanding. However, given the little time I had left for the city centre design, I managed to zoom in quite a lot.

Finally, to conclude my reflection, this graduation project gave me a chance to enhance my capacities as an urban designer and has made an enormous impact on my intellectual development.

Sources
10.1 Designing is experimenting: a process of exploring and deciding, of trial-and-error. (van Dooren et al., 2013)

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