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Reflection P4 and P5

<u>The relationship between the research and design</u>

The first part of my research consisted out of studying theories of neoliberalism and its effect on urban development, with the aim of constructing an understanding of the driving forces behind the current problematic housing situation in Addis Ababa. The second part looked at the specific case of the lower income groups living in the inner-city slums area's of Addis Ababa and analyzed what kind of processes they are subject to, due to these neoliberal tendency's, and what the effects and outcomes are of these processes. The third part consisted out of an urban analysis.

The research tried to give an answer to the question 'How should the inner-city settlements of Addis Ababa transform in a sustainable way, with the aim to keep the existing low-income groups of the population but to adapt the area to future needs and challenges'. The outcome of the research gave my insides in the qualities and vulnerabilities of the traditional inner city settlements. It created a deep and valuable understanding of the existing housing and living situation, the process of relocation, its different stakeholders and actors evolved, but also the important social, cultural and economical networks currently existing in these old areas.

Coming from this I had a clear idea about which of the current existing conditions had to be avoided, preserved or even reinforced. Slowly approaching to the end of my project I can now say that these ideas have not changed and the conclusions I drew, still form the general framework of my project. Especially the second part of the research, where I analyzed the political, economical and social consequences of The Grand Housing program on the lower income groups, have resulted in the process related design that I made and the different levels and scales of implementation that are included.

<u>Reflection on approach</u>

The goal of my research was, next to the conclusion, to end with a chosen strategy that included the goals, aims and intentions of the project. After the p2 I could start working on 'how' and 'where' to implement this strategy on the selected site. After p3 I planned to elaborate the selected design direction on the specific location on an urban, architectural and building technology level.

The process turned out a bit different then that. The toolbox I made during the P2 period was more a general project intentions and requirements list derived from the research, then an actual strategy. Instead of working on 'how' and 'where' to implement the chosen strategy, I still had to start working on it after my p2. Most of the period between p2 and p3 I worked on forming a strategy and translating this to a conceptual design.

After my p3 it turned out that the chosen strategy required more and also different information out of the urban analyses. The urban analysis I had made resulted in valuable information, but it did not go into water and sanitation issues. I had to spend a couple of weeks on researching water and sanitation issues during this period, which was quit a challenge because of the lack of information, reports etc, and also because I was not able to make site visits anymore. Next to the urban analyses on these topics I also had to do more general research on sustainability, the different systems and possibilities of water harvesting, water networks and sanitation. I found the period between p3 and p4 to short, to take upon this newly chosen direction together with the extra research it required and also make enough process with the design and therefore I had to extent the duration of my project till the next graduation period. In hindsight it would have been more practical if I had included this topic in my research period before P2, but since the focus of my research was more a study on a social/political urban condition, this was not a logical thing for me to do at that point.

The relationship between the project and the wider social and scientific context

I think my graduation project is of important social and scientific value, because like in Addis Ababa at the moment many other big African cities are also subject to extreme changes. The major migration flow from rural regions to these cities is causing that the existing low-income residential neighborhoods are overcrowded, extremely dilapidated and lacking many facilities. These cities are now looking for solutions, but many of the chosen models are recklessly taken over from western examples, causing that building materials have to be imported for a lot of money and forcing people in houses not adjusted to their lifestyles. Now, the African cities are at an enormous pace loosing their urban traditions, characteristics and making it very difficult for the urban poor to survive. Research on new urban models, housing typologies and building materials that fit the local context has to be done at this moment, while this process is still in an initial stage.