

Reflection Paper Artuur Slob 4122364 09-11-2018

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The relationship between research and design.

Within the graduation process multiple researches have taken place. For the research paper, I chose to examine the topic of money flows through the neighborhood. Using existing money flows matched well with my goal to empower the inhabitants of Overvecht but due to the abstractness of the topic, it was challenging to provide me with a strict framework to design in. The research helped in forming a strategy on an urban level, but less on a building level. On top of that, the researched showed that there would be difficulties with the financial realization and thereby eliminated certain approaches to the design.

Another part of the research was the making of models, analyzing the direct surrounding, conducting interviews, researching different references, sketching and environmental analysis. Conducting the research in these ways gave me a large variety of different ingredients to use for the design, but still did not provide me with a framework to make choices between the different ingredients.

It has been a struggle to streamline the different concepts and researches into a coherent design. One of the things lacking was the way the architect controls the situation. The situation eventually asks for a different way of dealing with the design than the traditional way. A research was conducted of different architects dealing with new kind of situations. From the research an overview was made of what kind of role they took dealing with their design. From this position the design could take shape in a more coherent matter.

Thereby all along the design research was conducted. The research supported the different steps in the design process.

the relationship between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable),

The research conducted is mainly part of the flow topic within the studio. The research on money flows is fully related to the flow topic. Also the other researches of different materials available nearby, the forming of business models and the creation of different collaboration falls under this topic. How to use the materials in a pragmatic way falls under the make topic of the studio.

Thereby, the flow research helped in forming the bigger picture, though in quite an abstract way, while the make research was used in order to research how the different materials combined with the different active actors and their knowledge can be used to create architecture.

Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.

The metabolic method is used to analyze the different flows. As flow is one of the topics of the studio, it is in line with their methodical line of inquiry. The method used, creates a different view on how to

deal with goods flowing around and through the location. By using these flows in a smart way, a benefit can be achieved on an economical, ecological and social level, creating a holistic approach. On top of that, using the metabolic method, it becomes clear that one is working within a large network of different actors. By acknowledging this network, collaboration are easier to be found in order to create a win-win situation. Doing so, will mean that the role the architect can be different than the conventional one.

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

The research of the money flows is a method which can be used in any situation and on any scale. It will show some characteristics of the neighborhood, but can also show how important certain nodes can be within the system and make a calculated guess of the impact of a new project. Furthermore, money is an abstract thing to which everybody can relate to. Thereby, the research is able link together different proficiencies. This already happened to me while doing the graduation project when I established contact with the Utrechtse ruimtemakers which are no architects, but were interested in the research. The same happened when talking to people on the street and explaining my project and goal. So, I believe that this method is not only a way to analyze an area (or system), but is also a way to open up communication to other proficiencies.

Furthermore, as there are many similar neighborhoods as the neighborhood dealt with, showing a different approach on how to deal with the regeneration of such deprived neighborhoods by using a metabolic method, opens up new ways for regeneration not only for this location, but also for many others.

Aspect 5

Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered in (i) doing the research, (ii, if applicable) elaborating the design and (iii) potential applications of the results in practice.

One of the issues I have found when researching the money flows and how to use these within different hubs to keep the money within the area, is that it is very hard to have enough capital to start up a hub. The main problem is obtaining the ground which is very expensive. This made it difficult to maneuver within this field since the goal is to empower the inhabitants and not to enlarge the money flow to the private investors or banks.

In order to lower the capital needed to get to action, social and human capital are used to create a situation for social action. By making the inhabitants part of the project it is possible that they are willing to use their human capital to socially act. From the social action, economic developments can be generated and the hub can grow to a valid player with the existing power field. In order to do so, it is important that a variety of parties are willing to co-operate. In this case the municipality will be an important actor since they own the ground. Being so dependent on other parties makes this project, especially in the beginning, very weak. It is possible that certain key partners are not willing to co-operate or (maybe worse) have a second agenda of enlarging the value of the property, to later pull out the plug and sell the ground to commercial parties.

Furthermore, the combining of labor with for example social workplaces and volunteer work to keep the prices down, can be questioned. It is possible that an unfair economic competition exist with other projects. Also, the use of free labor is in line with the conventional economic models. It might have a negative effect on the general labour prices and employment rates.

The cheap labour is used in order to become a valid player with the actual capital system and still be able to combine it with some social and ecological aspects. Mostly, the economic layer easily overrules the natural and social layer. Thereby, it is important to reflect many times upon this matter to create a good balance between the three layers. It is important to seek for combinations between

different layers and combine these with each other in order to find a balance between the different layers as they were equal.