P4 *REFLECTION*

Monica Lelieveld – 4166167

Dwelling, Global Housing

Affordable Housing for Sustainable Development in the Global Urban South, Addis Ababa

Nelson Mota, Dick van Gameren, Anteneh Tola

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This reflection compares the preliminary results of the research with the present outcomes of the design. It attempts to answer if the chosen approach worked or not and tries to explain why. However, the design is still in an 'unfinished' state, this reflection offers the possibility to learn and understand how and why certain decisions were made and how they affected the resulting design.

Furthermore this document will elaborate on how the last part of the graduation will be carried out.

"It is not merely a place for living and working, for sleeping and eating and shopping; it is most importantly a place of transition."

Doug Saunders[1]

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[1] Doug Saunders, Arrival City: How the largest migration on history is reshaping our world (London: Windmill Books, 2010), 10.
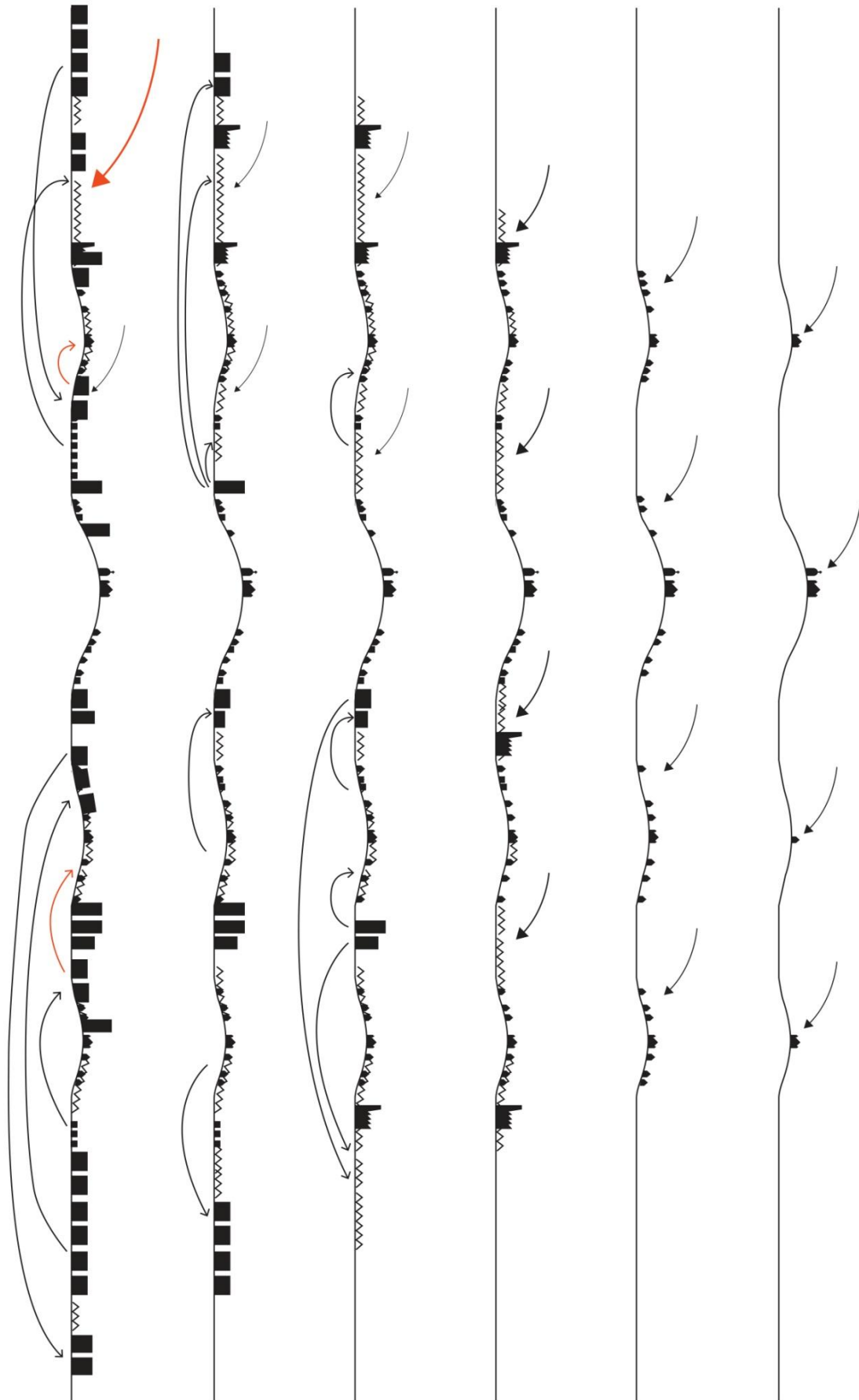
My research focussed on urban transitory spaces and their contribution to a developing city regarding the opportunities they offer to external and internal migrants. The following themes were particularly addressed:

> The settlement patterns and why migrants move to the city

> The qualities of the places where migrants settle

> The ways that transitory spaces can contribute to developing cities

> The different migratory types that can be distinguished through time on an urban scale

> Comparing the neighbourhoods in which migrants settle in developing cities with western temporary housing projects

Before visiting Addis Ababa (the initial phase of the individual research) these themes were not only fixated on Addis Ababa but addressed African developing cities in general. During this phase the investigation was mainly conducted by inquiring books, articles, reports and documentaries. The fieldtrip in November provided more in-depth information about Addis Ababa and in particular about the Basha Wolde Chilot and Serategna sefer; two centrally located historical neighbourhoods. During this visit I recorded visual data through photo's, short videos and sketches. With the help of some very nice Ethiopian students it was possible to talk with residents of the 'sefer'. Visiting some of their homes and other private plots gave me more qualitative insight of the site and city. The conversations and visits provided me with the following information; where the residents came from, if they had a rural or urban background, how they moved through the city, what their socioeconomic status was, their opinion and attachment regarding the 'sefer' and the opposing condominium and their own or imposed future plans regarding housing.

My research before the site visit was mainly focussed on external migrants and their settlement patterns. Literature and field inquiries gave insight on the reasoning behind migration and which factors are influential in their settlement, such as the location regarding job potential, social ties, ownership and costs. Statistics gave more city related information, concerning the location of these settlements in Addis Ababa. During the fieldtrip I discovered that the Ethiopian capital has a lot of habitants on the move. Citizens whom are displaced because of the new developments the city is experiencing, such as the Integrated Housing Development Programme (IHDP), large infrastructural construction, big commercial buildings and so on. Inhabitants of the 'sefers', the cities historical neighbourhoods often in slum-like conditions, have to make place for this modernization. This meant that besides the external migrants, there was an additional social group to focus on; the internal migrant.

To understand what the qualities are of these transitory spaces, often slum-like areas, I tried to exert from literature and field research what the function is of these neighbourhoods and which aspects were of importance in fulfilling this function. Described by Peter Cutt Lloyd, as well as by Saunders, these areas are dynamic entities filled with ground-bound shacks which serve as cheap accommodation but which are also frequently used as workspace or shop, allowing a measure of flexibility due to the lack of regulation.

1. Movement and arrival scheme Addis Ababa

Thereby the units have a close relation to the street, what facilitates public interaction. The lack of regulations makes self-employment imaginable, which is generally more valued than a secure factory-job[2]. The actual visit showed that sharing facilities and objects with neighbours, living around a courtyard and the street as extension of the living space are also important characteristics of these areas.

The importance of these transitory spaces regarding economical development of a city has been argued in several articles. Nevertheless, a large amount of migrants can put pressure on a city leading to the formation of informal settlements, when the city fails to have the capacity to adequately house all these newcomers. The consequences of migration, such as increasing inequality and job competition should be taken into account when designing for this group in respect to the society. When actually seeing what arrival cities like Merkato in Addis Ababa produce and contribute to the city one comes to understand how vital these areas are to the city and its development.

Distinguishing different types of movement, from rural places to the city and within the city, in the specific case of Addis Ababa has led to a better understanding of human flows on an urban scale. It contributed specifically to the phasing of the proposal, which has played a key role regarding the proposed transitory character of the design.

Comparing the 'sefers' with contemporary temporary projects displayed what the current situation is in these historical neighbourhoods concerning the density, plot size, usage of social spaces and the availability of public and commercial facilities. Thereby the analysis of some temporary housing projects showed how architects deal with the issue of temporality, unit size, facilities and how they relate to their surroundings. In this respect it was also important to look at the condominium sites and how this approach performed on all these different aspects. As my design proposal aims to complete a centrally located condominium site, the IHDP approach was often used as a bench mark.

Some articles of Herman Herzberger, like *Polyvalence; the competence of form and space with regard to different interpretation*[3] and his book *Architecture and structuralism*[4] inspired me on how to find a balance between the permanent and the temporary towards a more polyvalent structure which could host a multitude of different futures.

This all led to some key principles that I took as leading factors when developing the concept of the transitory block/complex, such as the importance of a social network/community, an entangled circulation encouraging informal encounter, flexibility, local labour, the possibility to transform and reducing cost through sharing.

The main goal of my design proposal is creating housing for a social group which is left unattended in many parts of the world by the housing market. This is attempted by developing a strategy which can provide and revitalise certain areas by inserting missing facilities which are accompanied by transient dwelling blocks, which are meant to provide a foothold towards the city but which eventually will evolve into the city itself.

The approach of developing temporary housing in a permanent structure seems somewhat deviating from what is currently the norm in Addis Ababa. The approach to not solemnly focus on one site in particular, but to make a strategy which is applicable on various locations seemed to be a logic choice when trying the tackle a challenge which isn't bound to only one or two areas. Although other students also intended to make their design applicable to other locations, I was the only one which

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[2] Peter Cutt Lloyd, Slums of Hope?: Shanty Towns of the Third World (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 27-30.
[3] Herman Herzberger, Polyvalence: "Polyvalence: The competence of form and space with regard to different interpretation." (Architectural Design 84:5, 2014) 106-113.
[4] Herman Herzberger, Architectuur en structuralisme: Speelruimte en spelregels (Rotterdam: NAI010 uitgevers, 2014).

Current situation
Basha Wolde Chilot

Design proposal
Basha Wolde Chilot

2 Current situation vs. the designed masterplan

attempted to actually develop a written strategy. Especially for myself, elaborating on this process has helped me to clarify what the necessary steps were to come to a qualitative design.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THEME OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE SUBJECT/ CASE STUDY CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK (LOCATION/ OBJECT)

Although at the time of actually choosing the MSc3 studio I was contemplating heavily, the eventual choice to enrol for this studio really suited my interests. The studios theme regarding providing the less wealthy of society with decent housing in the Global South matched my interests regarding a more humanitarian side of architecture.

It might seem rather idealistic, but my interest lie with finding an attractive housing strategy for the ones whom do not poses the economic capabilities to buy or rent a dwelling. As already mentioned in the graduation plan, I am intrigued, especially since a trip to Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, with the workings of the often negatively associated slums. In that respect the assignment and theme of the studio to create affordable housing in Addis Ababa addresses both of these subjects.

Addis Ababa in particular is struggling with an incredible growth over the past century, a large number of migrants, a huge housing backlog and current new developments which are unfortunately not targeting the lower income households. The aim of the studio is to develop an out-of-the-box solution to deal with the large housing backlog of the city. My proposal serves the studios aim well, as it tries to address a large group of the Ethiopian society whom are not able to pay an apartment in the condominiums on the short term, but also acknowledges the uprising middle-class on the long run. The approach that I have taken deviated from the general approach of the studio, as it focussed on shared facilities, even the most basic ones, and the transient aspect of the building instead of a static outcome and target group.

The 'sefer', which was initially assigned to me for the in-depth analysis proved to be a very interesting location regarding the developments it has undergone the last decade. The site hosts a great contradiction. The Basha Wolde Chilot and the Serategna sefer are divided by a river with on one side the historical neighbourhoods and on the other side a newly developed condominium site. It exemplifies what is happening throughout the city. My design proposal concentrates on the condominium site at the Basha Wolde Chilot and is comparable to other newly constructed and future areas in the city.

The studio has been well organized and structured, especially compared to some other studios. What I found very pleasant is, that although there was such a clear and structured framework there was enough space for some deviation. Making it possible for each student to develop their own design process.

The graduation year started off by doing research in groups of two, three or four students into a certain part of the city. The fact that we could built further upon the knowledge acquired by students during the last two years and that in turn our research would contribute to this body of knowledge was particularly nice. The idea was that the information which was gathered by the four groups would lead to a common base of knowledge, which would make it possible for students to eventually choose a location in one of the four 'sefers'. Creating this common body of knowledge worked quite well, although no one actually changed sites anymore (predictable). One the one hand one could argue that this is good because we all got to know the neighbourhoods quite well through some visits, but one the other hand this also limits your vision from the start.

The clear organisation really has seemed to push everyone further in their own design and research. I really appreciated the guidance regarding the written essay/research, as this element often gets neglected regarding design.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

Especially now, after already having spend some time being submerged in this subject, I am even more convinced about the gravity and urgency of the matters that are raised by the studio. In developing cities across the globe, as in Addis Ababa, the number of residents is rapidly growing while the amount of good-quality housing remains relatively low. In turn, the demand for low-income housing is rising rapidly due to the contemporary aim to eliminate the unhealthy living conditions and the increasing amount of migrants reaching the city.

Although it was only half of the predetermined amount, the IHDP developed by the government at the beginning of the 20th century has created a large amount of dwellings in the last couple of years. While this programme was initiated under the best intentions it did not live up to its initial goals or the citizens' needs and expectations[5]. It has failed to cater for the lower income group and has displaced many citizens. The so-called urban renewal begins with clearing out the site, meaning the often clinical demolition of entire neighbourhoods[6]. This means that the places which used to function as a foothold, the informal settlements, are being destroyed and replaced by static housing units where the newcomers and other poor can only dream of living in.

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[5] Sasha Delz, "Ethiopia's Low-cost Housing Program: How Concepts of Individual Home-Ownership and Housing still Walk Abroad" (Article, ETH Zurich, 2016), 2-3.
[6] Nelson Mota, From the Kebele to the Condominium: Accomodating Social and Spatial Practices in Ethiopia's Politics of Affordable Housing (Delft: Delft University of Technology, 2015) 11.

In this respect my design proposal is relevant, because it provides a strategy for cheap temporary housing for external and internal migrants, but also tries to tackle the problems of the new condominium neighbourhoods. It aims to deal with these 'unfinished' spaces, like the Basha Wolde, which struggles with vast undefined spaces, lack of social facilities and other resources. These challenges are not only to be found in the Basha Wolde Chilot, but throughout the city. The strategy of the flexible small transient block could play a vital role in densifying and revitalising areas across the city while providing affordable housing.

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