Landscape Networks: Fragmented Urban Landscapes

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P4 Reflection Report

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Introduction

The aim of this reflection will point out information about the relationship between the theme of the thesis, the theoretical framework and the design focusing on the four aspects described in the graduation manual.

The study area is the region of the Old Maas River and its surroundings urban and rural areas. The starting point of the theoretical research started from the vision of looking at the area as a mosaic Landscape. Likewise, due to the area appears to be a mosaic with urban and rural patches; landscape ecology seems to be appropriate for the understanding of the area due to it focuses on the analysis of the land mosaics and their three spatial arrangements: the matrix, the patch and the corridor.

Since at any scale, a mosaic landscape is composed of matrix, patches and corridors they conformed the basic spatial elements of any land and therefore, landscape elements, are simply the spatial elements at a landscape scale (Forman, 2008)

In a Regional Scale, a mosaic landscape is composed of urban, suburban and rural patches. In suburbs, is common to find un-used public spaces which can be an indicative of lack of identity and sense of community. Therefore, public open spaces and recreation can be used as strategy to integrate the suburbs and main cities while promoting identity and attachment. According to Seymour Gold, open spaces give to the urban citizen a sense of identity, direction and association. It can separate or integrate urban areas or neighborhoods from each other and to the surrounding area (Gold, 1973)

The relevance of this research is using the patch, matrix and corridor approach to understand the potential that lies in spatial elements of the landscape, in order to design and develop networks that interact with the different programmatic situations integrating the urban and rural areas of the landscape. The integration will take place through corridors as facilitators of relations in order to form a recreational network capable of creating attachment to the site promoting identity.

Keywords: Landscape Ecology, Mosaic Landscape, Urban and rural patches and Urban Recreational Planning
1. The relationship between research and design

The relationship between the research and the design can be simply summarized into the relationship that lies between the corridors as spatial element of the matrix and the dike as spatial landscape element. Basically, dikes are corridors and landscape elements of a matrix or region. The studied method revealed the different corridors at all scales and their connectivity potential, whether natural origin or artificial, they are in most cases fluid connectors. Studying and identifying the different multi-scalar corridors of the landscape and selecting one of them to explore its connectivity and recreational potential; is possible to establish the necessary landscape infrastructure to achieve landscape and social integration. After exploring multi-scalar corridors, the dike was chosen as the infrastructure and landscape element capable of integrating the different urban, suburban and rural areas. It seems to be the perfect spatial element with the potential of relating the surrounding suburbs and communities, showing the beauty of the landscape and genius loci. On the other hand, the dike has been seen as a utilitarian tool for flood defense since centuries rather than a spatial tool to narrate and create attachment to the landscape which represents for me, an unexplored field full of new opportunities.

2. The relationship between the theme of the graduation studio and the method chosen

The theme of the graduation studio is flowscapes, where flow means movement and scapes make reference to spatial entities like territories. The aim of the studio is relating the landscape as relational structure in connecting scales, spatial situations, ecology and social entities. The chosen method was the study of landscape ecology and its spatial elements: matrix, patch and corridors in order to connect the different patches through scales.

Choosing the corridors as framework and translating the functionality and flow purpose to the dike infrastructure, I am exploring the infrastructure as type of landscape which is the main objective of the graduation lab. Landscape infrastructures, whether natural origin or human, integrate movement and flows through different scales facilitating spatial relations and attachment. Therefore, the method chosen is precisely on the line of thinking that the graduation lab demands and aim to address.

3. Relationship between the methodical line of approach of the graduation studio and method

The methodical line of approach of the graduation studio is focus towards innovative spatial opportunities in the process of guiding urban and rural developments while representing cultural relevance through the use of landscape infrastructures. Therefore, the graduation studio focuses on different kinds of infrastructures such as: transportation, green, water and spatial infrastructure in which the dike as corridor fits mostly all of them. It is for
transportation, it can allow ecological relations and connect different green areas creating a

green network; it is a flood line defense which makes it very related and in continuous contact
with water and finally, it is a spatial element of the landscape. I would like to add a new

function as infrastructure related with the social context such as: recreational infrastructure.

The chosen framework is a representation of corridors as networks and infrastructures capable

of combine different kinds of infrastructures.

4. **Relationship between the project and the wider social context**

Throughout the research process, the dike was studied and analyzed as facilitator of social and

recreational relations in regional and local scales. In all cases, the dike appeared to be a

landscape element with endless spatial possibilities capable of integrating different cities with

suburbs and urban areas with green and public areas.

In the Netherlands, dikes are structuring flood defense lines that are being fragmenting or

stitching the landscape. In my personal opinion, I prefer consider them connectors rather than

divisors of the landscape that embedded an enormous potential as connectors and social

integrators. In the project, the dike is used as connector to the different types of landscapes

responding to different situations such as: the river landscape, the polder landscape and the

city landscape understanding not only the landscape itself but the communities and people

that inhabit those landscapes. Whereas the dike provides the necessary infrastructure in order

to connect the different patches, it also will be connecting people between the Old Maas
Region. Relating, interacting and integrating landscapes and people while creating identity.