Reflection

Almost four months have passed since the P2 and the research has made full progress. A time of looking ahead became a time of looking back. The well thought methodology is executed and all data have been processed to actually result in something. A period of fine tuning arrived to draw clear conclusions and almost finish this period of graduation.

The relationship between the methodical line of approach of the studio and the method chosen by the student in this framework

Within the graduation lab of Design & Construction Management we were confronted with choosing a graduation topic straight away. It helped that I provided a short list with my interests during summer. Fortunately cost and time overruns of building projects was on the list of existing research topics within the department of Real Estate & Housing. So the topic was chosen easily which gave the opportunity to start directly with the first approach on the topic. At the beginning sometimes the question raised if this was the topic that would keep me busy and enthusiastic enough during a year, but the kick start was not able to stop me anymore. The previous research of Robyne van Notten gave some quick entries into the subject of cost and time overruns. Along her research and especially the recommendations the specification of my subject was born: success projects in relation to cost and time overruns.

With the P2 ahead some first perspectives on the period to come were came in. Several case studies and a survey had to be conducted within a time frame of a bit more than a quarter. It would be a total new experience to conduct an actual case study and survey especially because it is within practice. The expectation was that the interviews and survey would be conducted with no problems for a first real research but I was more curious if the outcome would meet the expectations or that it would be a huge disappointment.

The time pressured the research to retrieve enough information and furthermore it was a total guess what it would bring actually. At that moment the enthusiasm was still. Well the methodology as defined in the first semester has been executed all. It was tricky if it would be possible to set up a survey cause of time restrains. I had to push myself as well to tackle all interviewees in time otherwise it would ruin my own planning. All just fitted in the timeframe as provided by the faculty.

The relationship between research and design

The kick start from the first quarter actually helped a lot and provided a clear base for the literature research. Using the structure as described above studying literature meant: the right literature was needed to be found to substantiate the chosen direction. This was good performable for the general part on causes and indicators and research methods but it was a lot harder for the control factors and the analyses of the management method of PRINCE2. It took a while before I realised that the focus on success projects was retrievable within the control factors of project management of building projects. Still I am not really convinced because much research has taken place and different factors pop up all the time. Cost and time are included anyway but so much more is involved. This topic could be a separate research. For the research on management methods it was clear that PMBoK and PRINCE2 were the current methods that are most often used as a complete approach for these processes. Unfortunately
PRINCE2 is still working on its introduction in the building sector. This method is not so often included in research in relation to overruns and therefore it was very hard define the right management tools. Luckily the guidance of ISO21500 came up and enabled the integration of both methods.

If I had to perform a literature study a next time then it would help to write more parallel to the study on literature, especially for the control factors of successful management, it would have provided conclusions earlier in the process. This time I have read a lot of literature that was very interesting but not directly applicable for this research. For the analyses of PRINCE2 it was hard that the method was not as approachable as I thought. It took a long time before I found the underlying structure I needed. Unfortunately I do not know a solution how to approach this different the next time. I guess this is always hard when new topics are included in research. Anyhow I think I provided enough for this literature study and luckily the kick start already helped a lot in the beginning.

For the empirical research the first month went to slow. I was busy with everything but it took a month before it all started. For the process it would have been better to perform this more parallel to the literature study. Unfortunately the graduation process is stuck to the structure of quarters and the RE&H students even have exams in halfway because of their free electives. This is far from ideal. Well I gave my effort to fulfil the interviews before the P3 and the survey around that time. Luckily all interviewees were enthusiastic and cooperated. This enabled me to conduct these interviews in time. The survey was tricky because of time and the needed input from the case study. Ideally some extra time in between would have been better, but was not possible. The theoretical and empirical research headed into the result fluently. The research in both ways was the absolute basis.

The relationship between the project and the wider social context
The topic of overruns was hot, is hot and remains hot until it is solved. A lot of people are confronted with it in their daily business or lives. I experienced this as well when I started my empirical research at AT Osborne, my graduation company. These people in the field were all willing to discuss with me because they had their own experiences with it. Another view is when close by people ask on what you are graduating on. Well this topic takes some seconds but then everyone is able to create an image that is linked to this topic. It would be world news if I would be able to solve this problem with my graduation research. But well I knew soon this would not be the case. But the positive perspective and some confirmations within this topic are strongly related to the current situation and will trigger the importance again.