Reflection

This section offers a reflection on the research planning, process, and results. The preceding methods and argumentation are evaluated and the position of the research in the graduation studio & a wider social context is reflected upon.

The position of this research within the Urban Area Development studio is addressed in chapter 2. Post-disaster redevelopment is a specific form of urban area development, and participatory development is a specific process within urban area development that is suitable for both post-disaster situations and “normal” context. This means that, even though the main course and results of this thesis are aimed at post-disaster redevelopment, the supporting theoretical framework and methodology can be applied in any sector of urban area development.

The official planning guidelines for graduating offer a 6 month timeline. The execution of this research took longer. There are several reasons for this delay, some regarding personal matters and others simply because I chose to perform a case study abroad, which asked for additional research time and time to manage and pursue contacts. The overall process has been highly iterative. Looking back at products for the P1 and P2 reviews, the envisioned course of research has been adjusted multiple times. The problem statement remained virtually the same. During the execution of the case study, the increase of my personal understanding of the research topics and the amount & quality of input about specific local issues has lead to changes in the determined final products.

The methods selected for the research have been generally sustained throughout the process. The Delphi method is adapted in order to create a designing fit for the context of this research, but the methodology of Delphi has been the method of choice from an early stage. The Atlas.ti method has been incorporated into the Delphi design after the interviews were already executed; the need for a scientific and structured way of analysis arose at this point in the process. Both the Atlas.ti software and the Delphi method proved to be highly appropriate for this research.
The models for implementing participatory development in a pre-disaster phase cannot simply be duplicated for post-disaster purposes. The characteristics of both phases are fundamentally different and obstruct the use of pre-disaster systems in a post-disaster setting. The model presented in this research offers a way to facilitate the initiation of a participatory development process in the post-disaster recovery phase. The model is a preliminary document that is recommended for further testing and research. It is in the early stages of development and should not be seen as a final protocol.

In conclusion, the effectuation of this research has been highly iterative and has run into some obstacles, but the final thesis has used the process and the issues it ran into to improve the quality of the methodology, input, and the overall results regarding the case study. The conclusions and recommendations offer several starting points for both stakeholders in this research to support the Lower Ninth Ward in joining the city-wide redevelopment efforts. The final products of this thesis are recommended for future research in order to validate the potential of the model.

I have gained so many skills and so much knowledge during this process, not just about urban area development, but about myself as well. Shaping this research has also shaped me as a person. The process was long and at times hard, but in retrospect I would not change it. Looking back, every obstacle offered a new moment of education.

_Yara Crobach_  
_Delft, April 2014_