Reflection

Theme of the studio and my subject
The theme of the graduation studio was ExploreLab. This is a research driven studio where students can explore their fascination. The fascination I wanted to explore more was informal urbanism related to the issues of how to deal with informality or informal settlements. As a half Dutch-Peruvian student I therefore chose a project in Lima, Peru, that was related to informality.

The relationship between research and design
The methodology used for the design was obtained through research. Through literature review different means of analysis were obtained to identify problems or missing links in the context. The same literature review made it possible to recognize different concepts and generate opportunities for each concept. The designs have been obtained using the different concepts and their opportunities that have been identified through analysis. This theory helped to create different steps to obtain the design. Necessary knowledge has also been gained through research focussed on the historical, spatial, socioeconomic and political and planning dimensions of metropolitan Lima. This resulted in an integrated design on all these aspects. This means, while designing there was always a relation on the research that was developed and while it was developed there were some setbacks in design due to unknown functions or relations. Research and design have therefore been coexisting during the graduation project.

The relationship between the proposed method and the actual process
The methodology consisted of six steps that were obtained through literature. In the fourth step general objectives and opportunities were established. For this, concepts from Atelier Zuidvleugel’s research and development proposal (2006) were used, but were adapted to Lima’s context before doing the analysis of the historical, spatial, socioeconomic and political and planning dimension of chapter 2 Opportunities in the regional context and the analysis of positioning of station areas in section 3.4 Station areas – position in the network. After the analysis of the positioning of station areas the difference between the western context and the context of Lima became more obvious. This is also the moment when the names of the concepts had changed.

For example, the concept Outskirts of Cities in a western country was interpreted as a small town with mainly residents surrounded by a quiet, green and spacious environment. In Lima this concept was represented by a residential high density suburb and was not quiet or green, and was thus renamed as Peripheries of Cities. Only in some specific cases the Peripheries of Cities were also spacious. The interpretation of this area was, also as found in literature, a place with an opportunity for local scale commercial development with small businesses. When integrating these station areas to a mass public transit system the opportunity had changed to a higher scale of influence, due to the already high amount of residents living in the peripheries and travelling by public transport. This is how the
opportunity for transit node development had increased and led thus to a more efficient use of the Metro Line 1.

Another example, the concept Cities of the Future in a western country was identified as an extension of the city with high population density, which is well accessible by car and public transport and has cheaper mono-functional sites. For Lima the interpretation of this concept could not be seen as the concept of a future city, because these sites were places with high density, a high mixed-use degree and were not necessarily well connected. These station areas were more areas with a higher potential to develop due to their current different functions and density, which is why it was renamed as Developing Sub-centres. The opportunity for this concept stayed the same because its character as a small developing centre remained.

As last example, the concept Business Sites in a western country was characterized as a station area located along main roads or highways, far away from the centre, well accessible by car and with a low density. In the context of Lima these sites were low density areas located along principle roads but with residential character and located in the city instead of outside the city. For this reason the concept was renamed as Residential Sites. The opportunity of this concept stayed the same due to its location and new future connection with mass public transport.

Design intervention variations

In the beginning of this project two design interventions of the two last metro stations in the south were planned to be designed. This was chosen due to their location in an informal settlement with a significant historical background. These two stations had almost the same functions and location in the network. To make the project more interesting another station area was chosen to replace one of the southern stations. This new station had a complete different station area concept than the one in the south. But after analysis of the metro line and the regional context of Lima three urban patterns were identified in the city. These patterns also reflected on densities, income per capita and land-use in the station areas. At this moment a third station was chosen in order to create three designs in the three different urban patterns of the city.

During the design process of the three station areas different ideas and variations of concepts have been thought through. Some of these design solutions have been rejected after more investigation of the current local situation or the consequences on the perception of public space. These different variations and the criteria to rejects these are explained further in the thesis at the beginning of sections 4.3.1 Station area design Miguel Grau, 4.3.2 Station area design Cabitos and 4.3.3 Station area design Villa El Salvador.

Concluding

The process has not been completely linear. The interpretation and names of the concepts and opportunities of station areas had been readjusted after the analysis of the station areas of Metro Line 1. Different variations of urban design interventions have been developed
before the appropriate solution was found. Fortunately, this has not caused too much disruption for the graduation project.

The graduation project itself has been very interesting with many moments of learning, understanding and applying new aspects of TOD and urbanism in the context of a low-income city in a developing country characterized by informality and socio-spatial segregation. These moments of creating new knowledge have also added to the body of knowledge of urbanism concerning TOD in a city as Lima. This new knowledge and research could also be useful for other similar projects of TOD and transit nodes in a low-income city in a developing country.