



The redefined Social

Production in and of an eco-social condition

Reflection

Pooja Mishra

Student No. 5335256

Heterogenous City : Architectural Design Crossovers Graduation Studio

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2022 - 2023

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Johan van Lierop
Florian Eckardt
Alper Alkan

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Student No. 5335256
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
TU Delft

1. What is the relation between your graduation project topic, your master track (Ar, Ur, BT, LA, MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The scheme of the heterogeneous city by Architectural Design Crossovers Studio is especially relevant to the agriculture industry's changing patterns and productive landscapes. The concept of heterogeneity is demonstrated by how the city of London has changed because of urban culture. The city was constructed using garden city urban planning theories. The multidisciplinary structure of the graduating studio's design by research approach further supports the project's methodology. I decided to investigate productive landscapes to explore the social because this is the underlying framework for a city's development.

Food has shaped cities, and the defect in the current system that results in the growing gap between food producers and consumers has caused a progressive fall in the social significance and value of land in the production of food, further dividing society. As a result, the study investigates allotment gardens and the social implications they have. It then evolved into an analysis of the food axis, essentially the social connections surrounding the production, preparation, harvesting, and celebration of food. The relationship between traditions and identities surrounding food that reflected the diversity of people in the Newham borough was coherently highlighted by the celebration of food. The inquiry was quite multi-scale throughout, which was consistent with the Studio's methodology. The inter-scalar study has significance for our responsibilities as architects during the design process given that it engaged users at different phases and led to the development of a productive landscape that was developed by, with, and of users.

2. How did your research influence your design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?

Understanding the true definition of social which includes not just people but the entire eco system, including the commons as well, came from the research that was done. We have pushed cities at a crossroads where ecology and social dimensions are at stake due to our ignorance of the reality that cities have survived due to the imminent commons – water, earth, air, and energy. The research trajectory diverges to include food-related study. Understanding the social aspects and behaviours taking place in such an environment was made possible by layering analysis of the food axis, which includes growing, cooking, celebrating, harvesting, and composting. It helped to clarify the symbiotic relationship between the city, social environments, and interpersonal interactions. As architects, it is our responsibility to design landscapes that are visually appealing and beneficial to the environment. This approach inspired further research for redefining the productive landscapes in a way that restores the relationship between food and people from the perspective of an architect. By using the results of on-site surveys, workshops, and site analysis to design with the support of a list of programs and their adjacencies, this strategy has shown to give substantial information. The functions

were derived upon the aim to promote know-how of food production through educational initiatives. The proposal, therefore, attempts to redefine the social value of land amidst the trending urban culture of the twenty-first century by reintegrating the socio-spatial construct of the heterogeneous cities.

3. How do you assess the value of your way of working (your approach, your used methods, used methodology)?

Since the initial objective of the research was to examine how productive landscapes might function as social realms that regenerate the social fabric of the city of London, the approaches employed a variety of methods that came together to form a coherent finding. This study's fascination with the idea of using food as a social binder served as its impetus. Conceptual, theoretical, and contextual frames of knowledge were maintained by the methodological approach. To understand how patterns of spatial activity are influenced by productive landscapes and how the dimensions of various productive landscapes might be combined to include self-sufficiency, it was helpful to analyse the food axis and productive landscapes. Along with information from precedents, the geomorphological analysis used to understand the evolution of London's productive environment was used to comprehend the shifts that agriculture underwent because of urbanization. The study used a multi-scalar methodology to conduct assessments at many scales, including macro, meso, and micro. As a result, each scale's set of procedures and approaches was dictated by the pertinent limitations. The research has employed literature reviews frequently. The research's primary frames of reference were phenomenology and praxeology.

These insights ultimately served as the foundation for the design by research phases. To balance out the energy and water consumption of vertical farming, we need to explore for urban synergies in cities. Understanding ecological vulnerability becomes crucial to achieving the design objective as a result. Agriculture must be seen as a crucial activity that shapes our humanity and way of life in the entire world, not only as a simple commercial endeavour. After all, if combined with the primary objective of reintegrating the productive landscapes towards an ecological and social balance, such productive landscapes produce the potential to evolve into an eco-social realm.

4. How do you assess the academic and societal value, scope, and implication of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

The expansion of urban culture has led to the creation of a society of isolated individualism where people and families have become exclusive isolated entities. This has led to a strain in the fabric of communal cohesiveness, and a contributing factor to this is lack of common purpose around which communities can gather

and unite in the fast-moving, distracted, and discorded urban culture. Researching the urban landscape through the lens of through a bottom-up approach revealed the actual definition of the social. Furthermore, the onsite experience of joining the workshop with the neighbourhood and understanding their agendas for the site, illustrated how an architect needs to find a middle ground through design that justifies the built environment as well as the sensitivity of the users. Therefore, the site visit and workshops were an eye opener that transitioned my hypothetical project into a real case scenario.

This stage helped me in understanding the user's association with the site which led to the decision of retaining most of the structures on site which earlier used to be the Newham city farm. Additionally, the surveys aided in understanding how valuable productive landscapes are for the city of London, that thrived its social relations on allotment gardens to the state today where there is a ten-year waiting list to own a plot. Agriculture in cities can only exist if people interact with nature on a personal level. Therefore, research on the role of architecture in the realm of space and food is crucial. This research was essential to discover an intersection or a middle ground for identifying a place-making strategy through productive landscapes in otherwise deprived regions. The problem is vast and multifaceted, and the research does not provide an easy answer for connecting agriculture and people. However, the study aims to uncover the possibility of combining agriculture and architecture in a participatory way for the people.

5. How do you assess the value of the transferability of your project results?

Cities have been shaped by food, and the flaw in the current system that leads to the widening gap between producers and consumers of food has led to a progressive decline in the social value and importance of land in the production of food, further dividing society. This production of and in an eco-social condition is significant since it intervenes beyond the productive landscape's capacity to provide food, as doing so would only partially promote egalitarianism towards the actual social. We need to be ecologically and environmentally conscious. It is our duty as architects to create landscapes that are both visually beautiful and beneficial to the environment. Given the depleting value of land, the design attempts to redefine allotment gardens and productive landscapes. Urban farming has expanded owing to new technologies like vertical farming, but it is up to us whether we will use this technology to improve or degrade the urban environment. We must look for urban synergies in cities to counteract the energy and water consumption of vertical farming. Therefore, comprehending ecological susceptibility is essential to accomplishing the design goal.

Therefore, the reimagined Social has the potential to include individuals in food production on a personal level to develop both new and current knowledge about the food axis. They will be better equipped to adapt to the varied behaviour of the land as a result. The agri-food systems require major reform, and a greater

emphasis on environmental ethics is widely advocated. Because these are matters of legislation, policy, and societal resilience, it is crucial to integrate technology and social aspects. The ability to customize food in different-sized facilities helps to diversify food sources and variations, which strengthens the resilience of food production.

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