

Inequality of access to culture for children and young people in London

Culture as a regeneration power bringing the London community together

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Reflection Report
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May, 2022

Aspect 1.

The relationship between research and design.

The research that was conducted during the first semester focused on the cultural infrastructure of London and its unequal accessibility throughout the city to Londoners with different backgrounds and especially children. Taking into account other aspects such as area deprivation, population density, access to public transport, income levels, distance to schools among others a territory of deprivation was demarked and within this territory the best location was chosen for the project.

Considering the focus on culture and its accessibility in a deprived area of London the design of a Cultural Center came naturally. Defining the program was also a response to the demands found out through the research, so it can be said that there was a close relationship between the research and the design.

Aspect 2.

The relationship between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master program (MSc AUBS).

The ADC graduation studio and its multidisciplinary approach opened up a great number of project topic possibilities. The theme of 'Heterogeneous City' and the possibility to investigate more social aspects of the city of London contributed to broaden up my perspective on the relevance of architecture and its importance to help change and improve social issues.

Initially, it was hard to see the relation between the topic of inequality in the access to culture in London and architecture. However, after learning more, understanding the issue, its developments and how it affects society through the conducted research the relationship became more clear. Architecture has a unique way to contribute to society and social dilemmas.

Studying more about precedents and projects of Cultural Centres it started to become clearer how we can contribute to a more equal world. A great and inspiring project was the SESC Pompeia in Sao Paulo for example. It is more than a Cultural, Leisure and Sport Centre. It is part of the community of that region, it is more than an extension of their homes. It is part of who they are and makes them feel part of something bigger in the world.

Aspect 3.

Elaboration on research method and approach chosen by the student in relation to the graduation studio methodical line of inquiry, reflecting thereby upon the scientific relevance of the work.

In the ADC studio there was not a clear methodical line that we were supposed to follow, the tutors since the beginning gave us freedom to choose our own methods and hence draw our own individual paths throughout the research. In my case, I have used historical and literature review combined with data mining as the starting point. With the initial data analysis it could be observed an asymmetry in the distribution of the cultural infrastructure of London. While investigating this asymmetry, quantitative research through data mining was carried in order

to understand better this asymmetry in numbers. In possession of the data of the cultural infrastructure, the numbers were converted into positions in maps and the clusters and voids became evident.

In order to understand the cultural inequality in London it was necessary to investigate the causes of this phenomenon and which were the best ways to answer the research questions. So, besides more literature review, data analysis and cartographic mapping context-led research was also relevant for the understanding of each place's values, the existing qualities and what would be an adequate response. In parallel to the context-led research a typomorphological research was conducted to understand the London cultural infrastructure itself and the type of buildings these cultural institutions function in and see if there were common features among them.

During the excursion and visit to London, fieldwork was carried out, using a combination of diverse heuristics techniques as cartographic mapping, photography, videography and drawings. The qualitative analyzes alongside all the mappings with the different layers helped me in identifying suitable places which could support new developments and opportunities for enhancement. On a later stage, interviews and case studies were also used to better define the building functions, uses and programs that would possibly enhance access to culture from an early age.

Regarding the scientific relevance of the work, my graduation project is a Cultural Center in a deprived area of London which will help in the city integration, community engagement and social cohesion. A Cultural Centre will affect directly the borough region in which I am working on a cultural, educational, social and economic level. Offering people a great and inspiring place to engage with cultural activities, art workshops, study, work, visit, meet and engage with their community.

Aspect 4.

Elaboration on the relationship between the graduation project and the wider social, professional and scientific framework, touching upon the transferability of the project results. The research that was carried out for the graduation project will help me (and hopefully others as well), around social and architectural studies that look for ways to support and help communities to thrive. In this case, though an accessible cultural education for all, making use of architecture and a coherent program. I have learned and I am learning a lot about conducting an academic research, using different methods that complement each other which are supporting my design decisions.

It has been really nice to learn about the cultural infrastructure in London, the education system and how privileged and unprivileged people have different opportunities also regarding access to culture, besides the importance of culture on a deeper level and how it affects people in varied ways and different aspects of their lives. All the knowledge I am gaining will help me further on the conclusion of my graduation project, but also on my next professional projects. Expanding my knowledge on these subjects has been eye opening

regarding so many topics and layers that were before hidden. I am looking forward on developing the design project further and integrating the so many ideas that have been popping on my head regarding the program, building technology and sustainability.

Aspect 5.

Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas you may have encountered in (i) doing the research, (ii) (if applicable) elaborating the design and (iii) potential applications of the results in practice.

Some ethical issues and dilemmas that I have encountered during the research and the design process were to truly relate to how people without a privileged background are affected by not having some opportunities in life that we sometimes take for granted. Access to culture and cultural activities are things so common to many, that sometimes we do not even consider how our lives could be affected if we were not exposed to so many different and interesting things from an early age.

Learning about the issues through researches and data made me realize that culture has a deeper influence on people's lives than I could think before and even reading about it is still hard to truly understand how deeply it affect someone's lives not been part of certain activities from an early age.

However, the final results of the research helped guiding the design proposal in a significant and meaningful way, giving a deeper purpose to the project as a whole. It was a really interesting, insightful and overall great experience to do work on this project. And I can see the conclusions driven out from it helping and with a great potential to be applied and used in practice.