

# Research portfolio

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## **Preface**

I think it is good to mention that there is a rather large gap between the creation of my research plan and the current document, the essay report. I decided to merge the essay and the research plan into one document. As a result, I noticed that the two documents did not fit together properly. I could rewrite the research plan or I could keep the research plan as it is to show how the process went and that it is logical that after so much time I have a different approach and my reasoning may differ from what was stated in the research plan. The final chapter consists of the reflection on the design process.

Chapter 1 as such is the old research plan. Where chapter 2 is the essay and thus it forms the core of this portfolio. Chapter three consists of the reflection on the design process.

# 1 RESEARCH PLAN

## 1.1 Abstract

If the hustle and bustle in the cityscape of London were a movie, then the public space is the stage and the urban texture its décor. The movie would be about culture - city life - and the people who are in it will be its social actors. The different identities of the social actors makes the film heterogeneous by nature.

But there is an unbalance in this discourse and it is almost opaque due to the acceptance of it. The decorations, the forms and the infills of the urban texture are not in sync with the many communities that are present in the city. London is one of the most diverse cities in the world looking at its people and their backgrounds. Not even half of its users is British by origin. This number will probably become even less in the future due to the trend of urbanisation. If we look at the architecture and the urban texture of the city it doesn't show an accurate representation of its users inhabiting the city.

At the same time social cohesion of neighbourhoods are depriving due to segmentation and isolation of everyday life. The gap between rich and poor is increasing, activities become more and more digitized and short term population is rising.

The determinative architecture stems mainly from the history of England and is part of its culture. That is a natural course of events and there is nothing wrong with that. However to obtain a better understanding of each other, both on an individual as an group level, it is important that people can relate oneself with someone else. Architecture is the most effective asset to make this happen.

## 1.2 Problem statement and research questions

If the hustle and bustle in the cityscape of London were a movie, then the public space is the stage and the urban texture its décor. The movie would be about culture - city life - and the people who are in it will be its social actors. The different identities of the social actors makes the film heterogeneous by nature.

But there is an unbalance in this discourse and it is almost opaque due to the acceptance of it, people have a tendency to just take it for granted. The decorations, the forms and the infills of the urban texture are not in sync with the many communities that are present in the city. London is one of the most diverse cities in the world looking at its people and their backgrounds. Not even half of its people is British by origin. This number will probably become even less in the future due to the trend of urbanisation. If we look at the architecture and the urban texture of the city it doesn't show an accurate representation of its people inhabiting the city. As a result, people of the city are less likely to feel at home and have fewer sense of ownership for the place where they live.

The determinative architecture stems mainly from the history of England and is part of its culture. That is a natural course of events and there is nothing wrong with that. However to obtain a better understanding of each other, both on an individual, as an group level, it is important that people can relate oneself with one another. Architecture and urban design are the most effective assets to make that happen.

At the same time social cohesion is depriving due to segmentation and isolation of everyday life. The gap between rich and poor is increasing, activities become more and more digitized and short term population is rising.

On the basis of this observation, research will take place that provides insights into how architecture and urban design can positively influence the social cohesion of communities. Different components within architecture and urban design play a role in this, what are their respective spheres of influence and on the basis of which parameters can these contribute positively or negatively to the overall social cohesion of a place. The following research question has been formulated to give structure to the research:

*'How can architecture and urbanism be used to enhance the social cohesion of communities?'*

To answer this main research question it will be subdivided in multiple sub-questions which will form together the answer to the main research question. The questions are:

1. *What are the communities of London's outer boroughs and how are they formed?*
2. *What is the role of architecture within the forming of social cohesion in London?*
3. *What are the parameters within architecture that can be tweaked to affect the social cohesion of an area?*
4. *How much influence does urban design have on creating social cohesion within communities?*

### 1.3 Definition of theoretical framework

In this research several parts come to the foreground. The underlying communities will have to be specified. What is needed to form a strong community and how can architecture and urbanism strengthen this process? Finally, the expression of architecture and how collective space can contribute to this process will be explored more in-depth.

#### *Hierarchy of community needs*

Maslow's hierarchy of community needs is well known around the world and is being mentioned in a lot of different fields. It dates back from 1943, it was first being mentioned in the paper: "A theory of Human Motivation" (1943). It's a system where a person can thrive to fulfil the next level once the current level is fulfilled. If one of the lower levels isn't saturated any more than the person goes back to that specific level and it begins again. It is a continuous loop. The needs that are required by a community can work in a similar way. Different components of community building need to be satisfied before it can start enhancing the internal social cohesion of a community. Figure 1 shows what the hierarchy is of community needs.

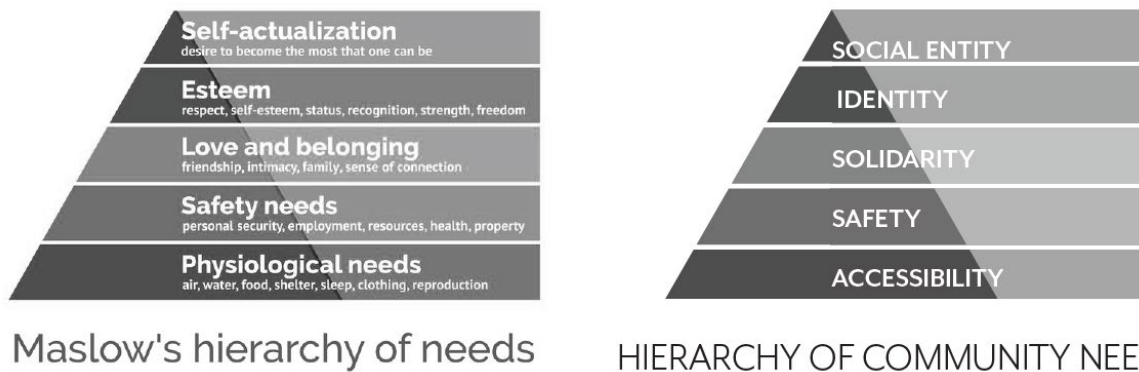


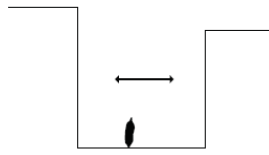
Figure 1 hierarchy of community needs

#### *Soft Edge*

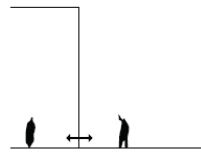
Soft Edge is a term that Jan Gehl introduced in his book: "Cities for people" (2010). The soft edge is where city life and building meet. It can take on different roles as shown in figure 2, it can be an exchange zone between inside and outside, it is an framing device and it is an staying/waiting zone. In this research the soft edge will be the zone where the décor and the stage meet. How they connect and communicate with each other is for the most part being accomplished by certain parameters. Those parameters are:

- scale & rhythm
- Transparency
- Appeal to many senses
- Texture & detail
- Mixing of functions
- Vertical façade rhythms

Edge that defines space



Edge as exchange zone



Edge as staying zone

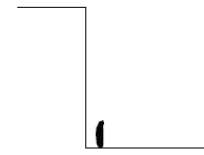


Figure 2: the different roles of 'soft edge'

### Architecture and communication

If architecture was a language than what is its message and how many interpretations are there? A follow up question would be what the effect of culture is upon the interpretation of architecture. It is a complicated matter. In order to get grip on this complex subject, the research looked at theory in regards to what is seen and how it is interpreted. The theory is called: semiological triangle from Ogden and Richards, as can be seen in figure 3. This theory will be used to get grip on how the expression of architecture is perceived by the people and which message it contributes to them.

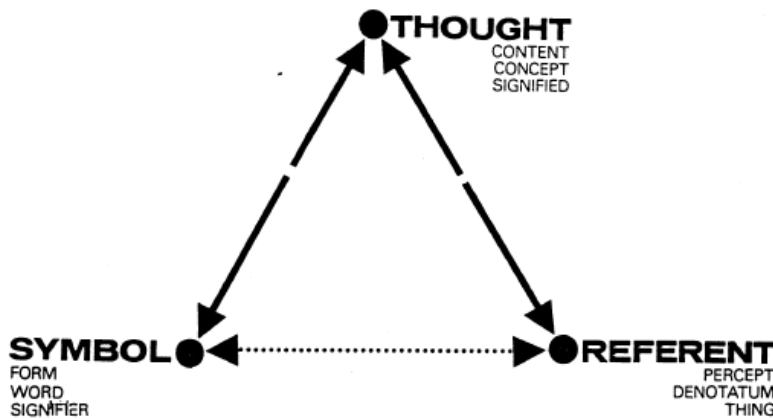


Figure 3: Semiological triangle

### Collective space

Social space is everywhere around us. As Herman Hertzberger said in his book: "Lessons for Students in Architecture" (1991), social space can be found everywhere, where we live, where we work and where we interact. Although collective space can be a continuously it is not in the contemporary city, both, fire, regulations and hard lines between inside and outside of a building, as well as other factors are obstacles for this continuation. Within the collective space, social space might erupt if the conditions are right and they are breeding grounds for strengthening social networks and creating identity for the community. Both collective and social space are concepts that will be explored in this research.

## 1.4 Methodological positioning and description of research methods

The social cohesion of Newham, the most diverse borough, will be mapped on the basis of what can be measured given the limits that COVID-19 brings with it. Step-by-step methods of research will be done in order to analyse contemporary social cohesion. In Newham 5 wards are chosen to conduct research since they show overlapping characteristics on multiple aspects like social-economic conditions. The methods that are used can be placed in 4 operations. Data study, public/private mapping, identity/expression mapping and social potential mapping.

Through data study a selection is made of 5 wards within the London borough of Newham where this research will be conducted. These wards share social economic values have similar urban design patterns and have a similar mix of backgrounds living there. Databases and municipality reports are the sources of this. A shortcoming of this approach is, that it is mostly based on quantitative research and data that might not be representational anymore since it might not be completely up to date.

The second operation consists of mapping the public and private spaces in those wards. The Nolli map will be used as tool to do this. This method stems back from 1748, Giambattista Nolli was the originator of this tool. It gives a clear overview of what is private through black hatches and everything that is not a hatch is public. A problem of this visualisation is that is merely a aesthetically looking visual without to much information. Quite abstract in other terms.

The third operation continues on the base of the Nolli map with a three dimensional layer on top of it. Through this projection the visual expression becomes evident. Spatial qualities, façade patterns and deviations becomes clear and it complements the Nolli mapping through manifestation of the décor. With this operation the unbalance between décor and social actors comes to the surface due to forming the visual identity of its build environment.

The last operation comprises of social potential mapping of this newly created three dimensional world. Jan Gehl's soft edge, gives parameters to work with in how to add qualities on a social level. Herman Hertzberger talk in his book: "Lessons for Students in Architecture" about how to add qualities of the city within a building and vice versa. In this operation the context will be framed in where social encounters can take place.

A sidenote to this way of conducting research is that the underlying data is not done through primary sources as such. The current pandemic of COVID-19 makes it almost impossible to do research on the actual site. Closer as Google street view is up till now not possible.



## **1.5 Argument on relevance**

It is important because communities are becoming more and more a mix of cultures and nationalities. Of course this has to go well together and there will have to be understanding for each other to be able to live together on a good base, segmenting groups has shown that it is not the way out, as stated by J. Vollhardt in the paper: Social Cohesion and Tolerance for Group Differences (2009). Architecture and urban design can help by creating a balance between the people who live there and the built environment in which their lives take place.

The contemporary idea is that buildings are there to serve the community. Each building responds to a function that is required. However, the building is more than just a program. It has a face and this face has an expression. Think of it as a message. All buildings together form a composition that tells a story. The relevance of this research is to synchronize this story with the people who live there. Something that is missing in certain parts of London. By taking an area within London as focus point and use it as a pilot to showcase how the balance can be, partly, restored.

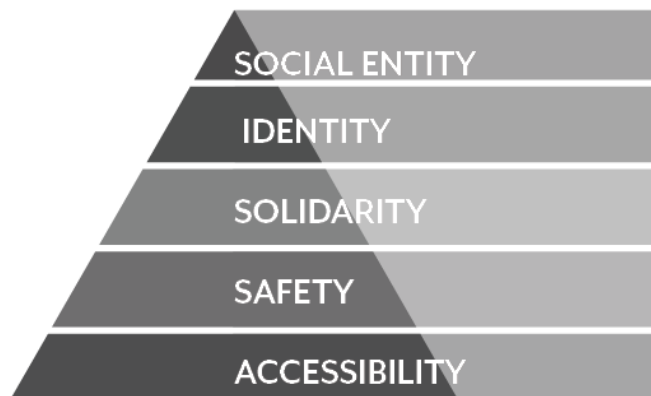
## 2 ESSAY

### 2.1 Manifestation of the community

The cultural film about London's urban life takes place in the public space where both the décor and the social actors mingle. A number of themes are important in this context, which to a large extent dictate this convergence and exchange. The themes involved are social by nature with a focus on identity and the creation of a communal identity.

There is an identity glitch that creates an unbalance between the décor and the social actors. This is a hard statement that needs context in order to come across as credible. This identity glitch is shaped by the expression and design of the décor. In other words, the form language as described by Nikos Salingaros in 'A Theory of Architecture'. This language is geometric by nature and is subject to the social conventions (Michiel Riedijk, 2018) that have been formed over the years. Complementary to this, it is partly formed by cultural conventions from history. In recent decades, urbanisation has been accelerating worldwide; at the same time, international emigration has become more widespread as a result of technological innovations. The formation of multicultural neighbourhoods is a logical consequence of this.

The neighbourhood itself extends beyond geographical matters. It also constitutes of local overlapping social networks (Forrest & Kearns 2001, 2130) who are the thrivers of establishing social cohesion amongst its users. The social cohesion of neighbourhoods is derived from the hierarchy of community needs which in its place is based on Maslow's pyramid of needs. See figure 1 for the hierarchy of needs. Social entity is the highest level to be achieved, and it can only be done once the other levels are fulfilled. The role of architecture in this discourse will be elaborated in the next paragraph.



### HIERARCHY OF COMMUNITY NEED.

*Figure 4 hierarchy of community needs*

## 2.2 form language and its expression

Architecture is the context in which neighbourhoods manifest themselves and convey identity. From this line of reasoning it is clear that architecture makes a major contribution to the formation of social cohesion at neighbourhood level. Especially on the fourth level of the hierarchy of community needs, it is inextricably linked because architecture largely determines identity. The exterior of the built environment determines the communication it represents or radiates. But how did this language of form come about? The zeitgeist of the architecture in question has a major influence on this. Modern functionalism has a different relationship between programme and façade than, for example, the English Victorian Era. The possible transformation of a building or a change of owner also has an influence on the connection between programme and façade.

The decor of city life is thus partly created by the façade and the programme that takes place in it. In order not to move too much in the direction of the different architectural forms and how they differ from each other, we will look at how the décor is formed through a different way. 3 different types come to the forefront when describing the connection between the façade and the programme. The first one is a *reflection* and this one appeals most to the imagination and responds to the social and cultural conventions ((Michiel Riedijk, 2018) that have been formed over the years. The church, for example, has a vertical structure that symbolises its elevation to heaven. Another example is a coffee house where there is a high degree of transparency that shows the cosiness inside and minimizes the separation between inside and outside. The second type is a *projection* in which the connection between facade and programme is unclear and it is difficult to find a connection. The facade has a certain outspoken language of form that radiates something different from the programme that hides behind it. An example of this is an old post office which now serves as an office. The third type is a *disguise* in which the facade conceals what kind of programme is hiding behind it. This type has a subdued character where the facade does not want to stand out and goes along with the prevailing architectural design language of the area in which it is located. An example of this is a mosque housed in a terraced house. These 3 types show how the decor is composed and how they give shape to the contextual decor.

## 2.3 The facade and its influence

The previous section revealed that the urban decor can fulfil various roles that are also subjective in nature. The façade of a building plays a major role in this respect because it is the outer shell of the whole and therefore serves as the exterior of a building. Take a brick wall as an example. This wall can have various functions such as a physical boundary, framing device, emphasiser, canvas, obstacle and so on. Which function this wall has depends on the context in which it takes place, where time also plays a role. The wall in question is part of the decor in which everyday life takes place.

The facades of the streetscape together form the framework of street life. The atmosphere experienced there is thus partly determined by the expression of the facade. In addition, the social aspect that is filled in by people is the scene that takes place. Time is a factor in this and causes it to fluctuate. During the day, a market can take place where there is a lot of social activity, while at night it is a lifeless place and you can hear the wind echoing through the facades. It only becomes interesting when the facades actually participate in the play instead of simply being a frame or, in other words, a boundary.

The three types of connections between facade and programme described in the previous section also shape the streetscape in themselves, for example, the texture of the materialisation the accents of the facade composition, the porosity of the facades or the degree of transparency. The question that arises is to what extent the character of a façade contributes to the expression of a street and thus to forming a backdrop with which a community can identify. Jan Gehl writes exuberantly in his book: 'Cities for people' about factors that make a city liveable and he has come up with a term that refers to the interaction between the street and the façade where the maximum effective height is two to three storeys. He calls it the 'soft edge'. He has created many parameters in which he tries to quantify

qualities so that a sort of tool can be used to create lively streets and cities to linger in. This way of thinking has potential but misses the target by not taking into account that not every street should be a nice place to walk, a street is more than a place to walk through and thus it shouldn't only be judged by this discourse. After all, it is from this lens that the city is viewed. A city that is pleasant to walk through. The tool could work as such in an inner city where there is a lot of commerce and where large masses of people walk through. The history that is incorporated in buildings provides the characteristic of a neighbourhood and thus contributes to its identity.

A façade is more than a pleasant environment to walk through. Complications start to arise when you take into account the theory: 'form follows function', which was introduced by the International Style. Because this approach between programme and exterior is rather egocentric and all the buildings in a street are simply connected like separate islands by a street that only physically ensures that there is some form of connection. An enclave seen from the reasoning of the international style.

It should be said that Jan Gehl's approach takes place on a very large scale and the approach from form follows function takes place at the building level, these are two very different scales that can hardly be opposed. Yet these two theories could reinforce each other, working through the scales and creating interaction between the different levels of scale. The isolating approach to the facade and its influence on the streetscape cannot actually be separated from what takes place around it, the street life. The public space that facilitates this will also be outlined to locate the relationships between them.

## 2.4 The potential of public space

The influence of the decor is stressed enough at the moment. The scene itself is played out on the stage. If the exterior of the buildings is the decor in a city, then public space is the stage itself. First of all, it is important to be clear about what the scope of public space is. Is it simply everything that people can come to, or does it also extend into the buildings themselves? Giambattista Nolli was already working on this question in 1748 and, as a result, he made the Noli map. This is a well-known method, which is still used today, in which a map is made that indicates with contrasting colours, often black and white, what is public and what is private. This information is fairly abstract in nature and provides an overview without actually being a guide. However, it is an extremely effective method of seeing how the relationships between private and public manifest themselves alongside each other. Though the quality of public space is left out of the equation.

There are two different archetypes of public space, public space in a building and public space in the open air. These two archetypes in turn have many different gradations. A plaza behaves differently than a public park, responding to different needs and wishes. The focus is on how public space can stimulate community-building in an area. The focus is mainly on public space that takes place in public areas and, to a certain extent, public space that takes place in buildings. 'The Organisation Project' for Public Spaces has drawn up a nice overview of the components that lead to having qualitative public space. The four main pillars are 'Sociability', 'uses & activities', 'access & linkages' and 'comfort & image'. This theory was developed after examining many precedents around the world. A wide range of assessment criteria was used, which again shows how complex it can be. Using these focus points does not have the same desired effect anywhere in the world because there are variables that also participate that are not really measurable because otherwise it would become too complex. Cultural elements for example. It expresses itself best as a sort of handbook.

In order to get closer to the essence of when a public space can be considered good, several studies were consulted that take people as their starting point and address qualitative pillars. In figure 2, the information obtained is critically evaluated and translated into a theory. Social interaction of people is the focus of this discourse.

The attachment that a person has to a certain area determines to a large extent how much participation he or she experiences towards the respective place as described by Katie Simons in the paper: 'Living In Between Designing to Encourage Social Interaction'. This attachment is formed by

the social network which is stabilised locally, but more importantly the continuity and the degree of adaptation of the neighbourhood in terms of local developments and innovations on an urban scale. However, there is a big disclaimer here as also stated by Clara G, in her book: 'Social town planning'. In some cases, urban developments can also reduce the quality, something about which there are many precedents as for example in South Boston. The uniqueness of course also plays a role, but it is not the determining factor for identity. Uniqueness can also be very subjective and difficult to measure.

The social encounters that take place in public space can actually be categorised in two ways. Routine encounters and coincidental encounters, whereby value is mainly attached to the occasional, but that depends of course on the size of someone's social network.

In addition, there are a number of conditions that must be in place if people want to move around a lot in their own neighbourhood instead of going somewhere else in the city. The proximity of public space is something that is certain, and this means more than just the street where you live, but also passages, plazas, parks, etc. The social infrastructure and the range of commerce must be adequate according to Regan Koch in his paper: 'Rethinking urban public space accounts from a junction in West London' with a wide range of facilities located in close proximity, sports facilities, education, health institutions, public transport, community centres, etc. The proper maintenance of a neighbourhood is important. Finally, enough public space where one has the freedom to wander around without having a direct goal in mind source.

In its own way, the range of activities also contributes to the creation of social activities. An active community can facilitate this, with all sorts of activities being created for young and old. It is important, however, that the public space can facilitate this, and a good deal of participation from the neighbourhood is required, which in turn is related to the other pillars of this theory.

Can public space be raised to a higher level if there is sufficient social interaction, and is that in turn an additional attribute for the neighbourhood that it can lend itself to in terms of quality? These are questions raised by this discourse.

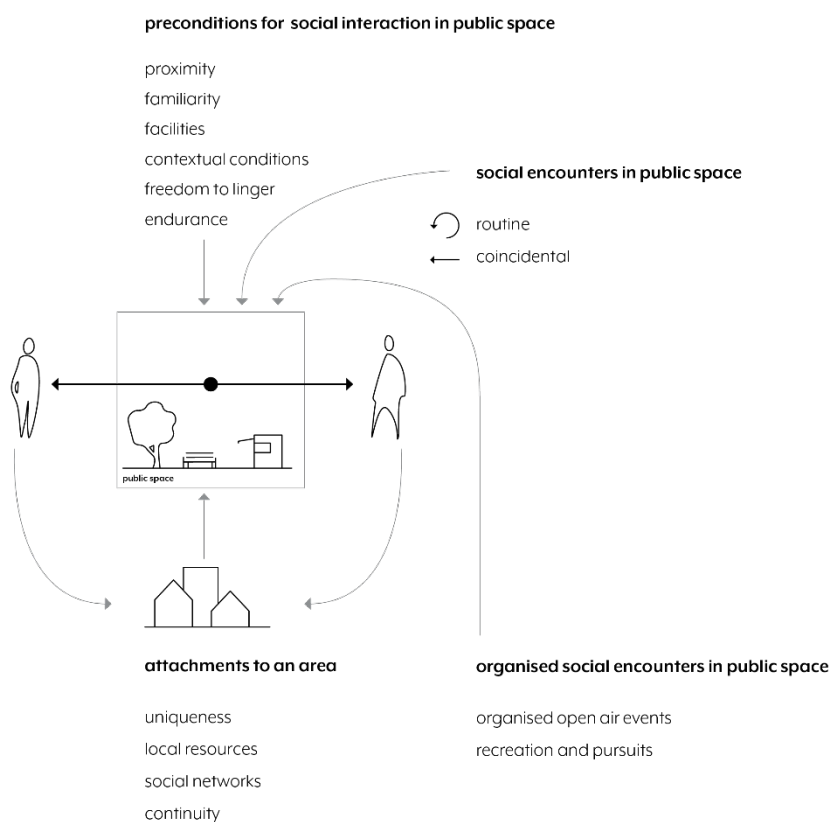


Figure 2 hierarchy of community needs

## 2.5 Rethinking public space

If we look at what is included in public space, then a number of buildings facilitated by the government are also included, including educational institutions. A primary school is a good example where both the building and the schoolyard belong to the public space. However, the schoolyard is not an accessible public space during the occupation and after the closure but it should be accessible as stated by Jos Brok in the book: 'De onzichtbare openbare ruimte'. The schoolyard is actually not accessible to outsiders, which can also be explained by the fact that the children need to be protected from external influences up to a certain extent. However, there is great potential for opening up the schoolyard to the public, taking into account that the safety of the children can be guaranteed. In this way, a piece of qualitative public space is added to the programme, which is at the service of people from the neighbourhood.

This paradigm of thinking about how public space can be filled when it is not being used, read after closing time of a primary school. Recently, the Danish architectural firm BIG built a waste processing plant with a roof that serves as a ski slope for the neighbourhood to use. The nuance is slightly different here, and a waste plant cannot be compared to a primary school, but the principle remains the same. Another example that may be slightly more far-reaching but is to some extent in line with the one raised is the Boijmans van Beuningen art depot by MVRDV, which has been opened up to the public instead of being shut up in a fat bunker.

## 2.6 Discussion

Various sources have been used to write this essay, and if there is always some form of bias in the discourse being described. This research could increase in strength and conviction especially when field research is applied where own measurements, observations and conclusions can be drawn. The manifestation of a community in the built environment at neighbourhood level should actually be accurately recorded and then in different places in the world in order to be able to really establish correlations that are common to the various cases. The input of public space on community building is a subject that has been researched many times, but there is still more than enough room to highlight other angles that have not yet been researched enough at the time of writing. The embedding of public space is also a subject that is constantly under discussion, especially its temporalities. Architecture in turn is closely intertwined with public space and sometimes they are even intertwined. The role of architecture in community building is a very interesting subject that in the future could certainly be the subject of a follow-up study to see where its extension lies and whether it can be shifted by means of new architecture.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The hierarchy needs of community building have been clarified, and it has been made clear how they can come about, with the community manifesting itself as a social entity. The decor of the city where daily life takes place can take on different roles and contributes to the identity of that place. The façade, the exterior of a building, has a great influence on street life and the texture of the facade adds much to the experience of it on the street. The public space where city life actually takes place has already been explored in various studies and manuals have been written about it, but these are often formulated in a too global and abstract manner, which is no guarantee of success. The human approach is a starting point that brings more qualitative data to the foreground that can potentially create more liveable environments, particularly by increasing the participation of the people in a neighbourhood. The public space can also be further explored to add more quality if one looks at how it can be used more effectively. Interaction between them stimulates the quality of life and can make it more pleasant, thus enhancing community building.

## **3 REFLECTION**

### **3.1 Intro**

My graduation research is focused on how communities manifest themselves in and through the urban context. The urban context in this case is the thriving city of London with its many and diverse inhabitants. The focus was guided by themes such as social deprivation, cultural backgrounds and the urban décor that facilitates everyday life. This led my research to the London borough of Newham. On different scale levels I conducted research to public programs, public/private space and social economic differences in regard to the neighbourhoods.

The convergence of these subjects ensures that it fits in with the studio's theme of London as a heterogeneous city. To give the research structure I formulated a main research question: 'How can architecture and urbanism be used to enhance the social cohesion of communities?' in my essay I will address this discourse and in this document I will explain my process, reflect on it and I will describe how I can work more constructively and efficiently in the future learning from my shortcomings.

### **3.2 - Research outline**

In my research the main focus where communities in the city of London. How they are formed, how they evolve and which factors contribute to the dynamic bond between building and people. In the beginning, I was mainly focusing on the inner city. However, it soon became clear to me that communities related to an area in the city centre were too complex to form a good impression of.

My focus shifted to boroughs surrounding the city centre. I spent quite some time analysing the London boroughs of Hackney & Islington. The analysing was done by using mostly quantitative data and look for correlations. I soon discovered that either the data is too overwhelming since it is difficult to pinpoint if a correlation is the result of certain events/trends or there is more to it than meets the eye, or the scope that I had was too broad and I should narrow down. So I felt that I was scratching the surface for what I was aiming for but it didn't get me anywhere, which in my case was valuable information in regard to my research question. The time period where this was taking place was around the P1 presentation.

I went back to the drawing board to formulate a new approach through the abstract of my research, which was much more focussed on the humanistic part through a bottom up approach instead of the other way around which I was doing beforehand. The city life that is formed through social actors and the urban décor became the lens of my research at that point. The books of Jahn Gehl gave me a lot of valuable insights in how people can experience cities and how they experience everyday life in it. At the same time, I received feedback about the fact that I was looking too much at public space and thus had a bit of a one-sided focus, because after all, there is more to the city than public space. At that point I started looking for a better balance between urban planning, architecture and what influence this has on the manifestation of communities.

The London borough of Newham became the new playground on which I conducted research since it was a place in my opinion where the urban décor is not in sync with the people inhabiting it. Several collages of landmark buildings in wards across Newham gave me a better idea of what the backdrop would be if daily life in the city were a move like the one I articulated in my research essay. Going back and forth to my research essay and the site, Newham, I bumped into elementary schools and saw the potential they had in enhancing the community feeling, because of their ideal location in the middle of neighbourhoods and the fact that it is a place that will be used by both old and young people.

My eye fell on a primary school in Manor Park. At the site in question, I did a lot of research on urban texture, program, infra flows and people flows. Through this I acquired a lot of input that I can use for the architectural and urban components of the primary school with its schoolyard. On an urban planning level, I wanted to create an access point where both high streets have access to the site. One of the leading issues in reactivating the schoolyard as a public place was the metre-high fence that framed it. I wanted the fence to reappear as an architectural instrument that offers added value instead of being a physical and mental boundary. The fence became an connector instead of a physical boundary separating certain areas.

After comparing a number of sketch designs with each other, it became clear that I wanted to use a wall from the primary school where the doors and windows have been bricked up. An extrusion was drawn from that surface, which largely determines the grid of the volume that will be designed. From that moment onwards the design process quite well, I made quick progress.

At a certain point I noticed that even though I had a good overall concept and already develop an architectural language I was stuck in the design process. Through the weekly feedback sessions I got a feedback to step out of the 3-dimensional software and try to work more with drawings, and in special floorplans and sections. This helped me to see where I was struggling. Architecture is an integral discipline where areas of the design have impact in each other. By being to isolated from a certain perspective doesn't contribute to the overall design on both a building level as well as an urban level. I was isolating the urban level and architectural level too much. After zooming out more I noticed that my urban concept wasn't working yet. I needed a second intervention to complement the first intervention and thus realise the multiple access points from both highways. By doing this I noticed that this gesture was the missing piece of the puzzle. The second intervention. The second intervention took shape by involving the old wedding centre that was situated by the schoolyard in my project. To revitalise this wedding centre into a building that accommodated a programme that fit in with my goal of turning it into a community hub.

A lot of time was spent on the composition of the two interventions, whereby the materialisation and engineering could have been involved earlier in the realisation of the architecture, the exchange between composition, materials, texture and construction technique came about too late, which cost me the necessary time.

### **3.3 Reflection**

I had quite some difficulty with the freedom that the studio offers where you can research on a autonomous base. I was used to have certain certainties which can rely on such as a program, site or architectural language. Especially in the beginning part where you need to determine focus/scope on what you want to discover. Mainly the part in which you need to connect your topic to architecture and the build environment.

I have a tendency to focus too much on certain subjects and disciplines, losing sight of the bigger picture. As a consequence, I get results that are not necessarily right or wrong, but are often one-sided in nature. This happened a few times during the Msc 3 & Msc 4 semester. Towards the end, I got more and more insight into this and through the awareness I was able to respond to this. As a result, I started applying more and more tools in order to realise the desired architecture and urban development integration. what I was looking for in relation to my research.

Architecture consists of more than a nice composition and a nice facade. this is something that is quite logical but that I ran into while creating my architecture. When I made the translation step to the building technique, I noticed that i ran into many problems as if I would approach these disciplines integrally, because they can actually reinforce each other.



### **3.4 Towards the future**

During the graduation phase, I developed myself in many areas that are part of the architect's profession. Especially doing autonomous research and giving it structure has given me a lot of insight. 'Kill your darlings' is an expression that I have heard many times during my time at TU Delft, but it remains a recurring phenomenon that deserves attention in terms of how to deal with it.

Doing research is not a straight path and there is no single route to get to the end goal. The interaction between different ways of doing research all contribute to the process and can only reinforce each other if there is a form of pragmatism underneath that brings structure to it.

recognising the systems and ecologies that are present in a city have taught me to look at things in a different way, whereby the (architectural) interest is greatly stimulated to investigate other subjects and to translate them into architecture. For my professional development as an architect, this is very precious to me and makes me look to the future with pleasure.

## **Bibliographical references**

### ***Capital spaces - The multiple complex public space of a global city***

This book offers an overview of the different programs that public space is offering the inhabitants of London. Each chapter is accompanied with 3 examples that shows how they did research and which parameters they used to create an index of the effectiveness of the projects in question.

### ***Cities for people***

The title of this book is really on point considering the content of the book. It's an richly illustrated book and each described element is accompanied with examples. The book doesn't go really in-depth into certain locations/projects but quickly jumps from one another. This book can give many insights on what public space in a city needs to be attractive for its inhabitants.

### ***A pattern language - Towns, Buildings, Construction***

This book is an overview of patterns that are evident in every city/town. The spectrum of those patterns are very wide as it talks about the interior of a house up until the discipline of urban design. Not every part of this book is interesting for this research. The parts about the community are insightful and can give better understanding of the community places in the city.

### ***Living together in multi-ethnic neighbourhoods***

This book is an PHD research from the university of Wageningen. It mainly focusses on how different ethnicities can live together and how they can integrate in the most effective way. They book gives a lot of insights how to design places where everyone can spent their leisure time regardless of their cultural background. London context is really similar in a way that there are many ethnicities living together and who have to share them same spaces in daily life.

### ***The social logic of space***

In this book a new theory is being introduced about social space. How it works and why it's properly functioning is vital to a city. This proposed theory is backed up by thorough research and focussed a lot on mathematical to explain its findings. Its more on the side of system thinking which is an different approach than let's say Jan Gehl's' *Cities for people*. In that way they can be compared with each other and give new insights.

### ***The social life of small urban spaces***

This book is from 1970 and can be considered a bit outdated. None the less are its findings still relevant because social life in public space is unchanged in its core even though people are using it differently as times are changed. This book is heavenly leans on empirical research in New York and that's where it got its findings from. A lot of those insights can be projected in London and thus give valuable information about the community spaces.

### ***Lessons for Students in Architecture***

Herman Hertzberger wrote this book in 1991. It is book that covers many aspects of being an architect an working as an architect. The relevant parts for this research are about the collective and social spaces within the city and buildings. How to translate certain qualities from the city into a building and the other way around. The parts about the social encounter studies are relevant in ways that it gives guidance on how to manipulate them.

### ***Architectural Representation and Meaning***

This paper handles different theories on how architecture is interpreted and how it this can differ between people. the methods described are very theoretical in nature and not much is elaborated on the practical applications of them. None the less is it valuable information to use in this research.

## **Personal glossary**

***Stage*** – The public space between buildings

***Décor*** – The build environment adjacent to the stage

***Urban texture*** – the infills, materials composition, openings that form the facade

***Soft edge*** – This is where the stage and décor meet

***Community*** – A group of people living in the same neighbourhood/area

***Social actors*** – The people that are part of the neighbourhood/area

***Collective space*** – Collective space is space where people encounter each other

***Social space*** – Collective space with a lot of qualities for the social realm becomes social space

***Social cohesion*** – be a member of the same community where the same standards and values apply. Feeling that you are not alone in the challenges of life and can depend on others.

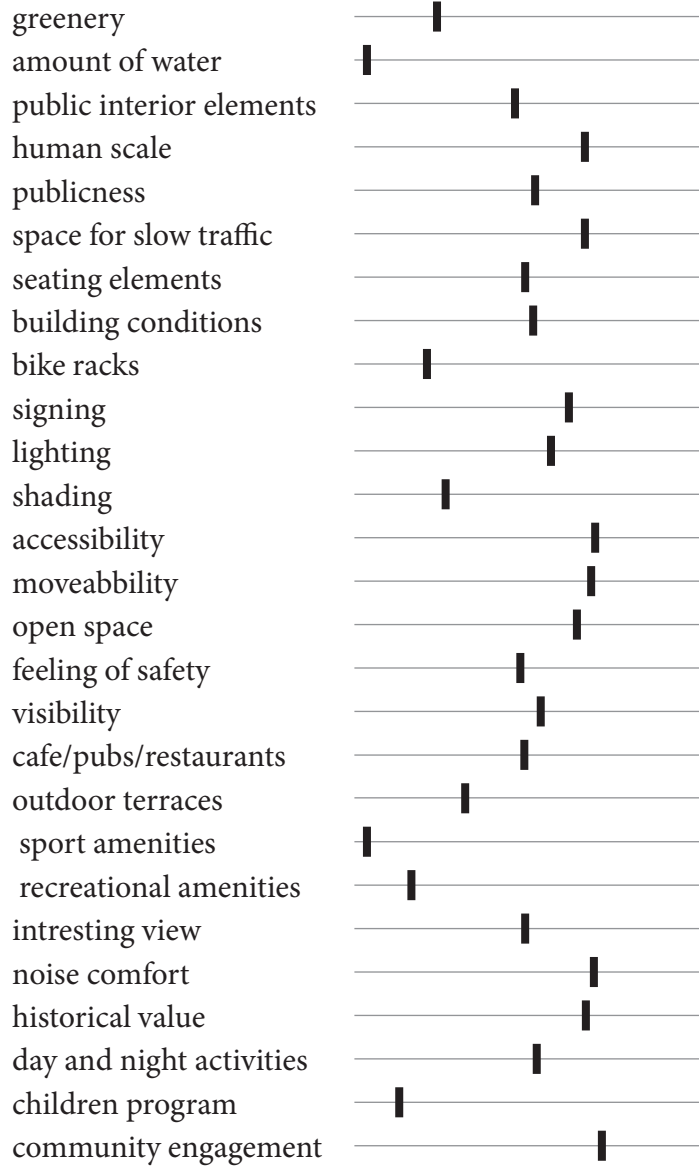
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## **Drawings**

# SOCIAL PARAMETERS IN PUBLIC SPACE

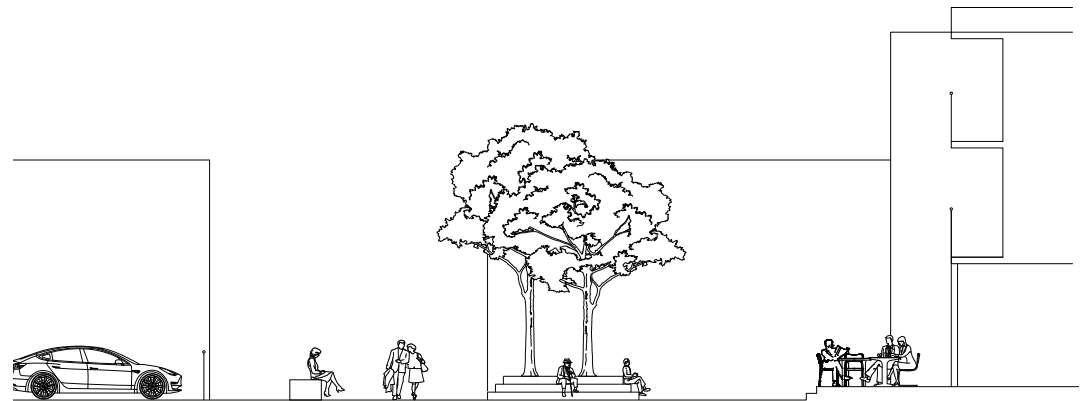
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type: square



Gillette sqaure - London borough of Hackney



# 'DÉCOR' OF MANOR PARK



# HOMOGENOUS 'DÉCOR' OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS





# TEMPORALITIES IN THE PUBLIC SPACE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS

