

# REFLECTION P4

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## ASPECT 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND DESIGN

The forms of research carried out varied from research on practical areas as well as theoretical. Having visited our site and location in Addis Abeba for 3 weeks, allowed us to witness, observe and analyze the current conditions and context of our subject. Theoretical research helped to organize the observed information into a clear structure that helped to understand the observations in a larger context, with the position of various architects. Realized projects used as references helped to trigger thoughts and thinking towards possible solutions to similar problems in similar social and economical contexts.

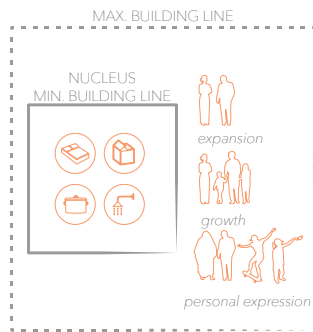
A preparation analysis was carried out before visiting our site in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia. This mainly focused on the historical development of the location as well as the current characteristics. It resulted in understanding that our site was significant in a way that it included a very green and natural area in one of the busiest centres of the capital. When visiting the actual site, we paid attention to the social structure, cultural activities and collective spaces that were visible and invisible but recognized through communication and interviews with local students and the residents of the site and passer by's. Creating the Book of Patterns with a group of students as part of one of the graduation seminars, allowed for more insight into our observations of the site survey and created a focus on 4 different categories, namely social spaces, building techniques, income generation and borders.

As a supporting tool and a tool for deeper understanding of the observed patterns and aspects on the housing in Addis Abeba theoretical literature research was also very helpful. It helped to understand the observed matter from a larger scope point of view. This theoretical research of course included various architects with their own standpoint within the architectural discourse. It is this what made it very interesting to organize thoughts and trigger other ideas and approaches. I personally looked at the topics of balancing Resilience and Efficiency discussed by Bredenoord, Lindert, and Smets, but also at sustainability and change, the individual and the social, and freedom of expression, discussed by Hertzberger and Bakema on facilitating for basic needs as well as personal freedom.

These quickly guided me to the direction of incremental housing and housing with flexibility. I personally found this a very intriguing topic of catering for changes over time and freedom of personal expression while simultaneously also facilitating the very basic needs for daily life through affordable housing.

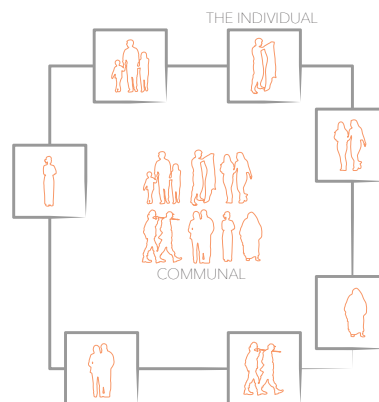
Looking at realized incremental housing projects with similar contexts of affordable housing in developing countries or cities, helped to see possible solutions to the similar challenges that are faced. This also allowed to gain insight on architectural tools which worked strongly or would not work when implemented in my specific case of the project. The references looked at were Quinta Monroy in Chile and Monterrey Housing in Mexico, both using the half house concept.

I found that this concept was a great way to cater for future growth of families, and allow for adaptability and flexibility that contributes to the freedom of personal expression of the residents themselves.



BAKEMA, J.B.

In *FORUM* 1962 Bakema has written about the issue of standardization and normalization in housing, and states that the sector tended to insufficiently cater for the individual's personal exploration of variation and relation to space. He discusses that a balance needs to be found between facilitating the essentials of housing within the minimum building line, which he calls the nucleus, but also to provide space within the maximum building line for personal freedom such as; growth, personal expression and expansion.



HERTZBERGER, H.

Herzberger discusses the equal importance of the social and the private parts of architecture in his book *'Architecture and Structuralism'*. The social and communal spaces that unite people and let people meet others to find a sense of belonging and make a communal claim are according to him as important as the possibility for the individual to make private transformations that are specific to the individual and create a space for the personal position and make individual claims. He describes it as finding the right balance between what needs to retain and what needs to change. As he finds that the communal is often what a greater group believes in and therefore more permanent, whereas the individual may want to practice personal freedom and therefore express different interpretations which means that this is therefore more adaptable and temporary.

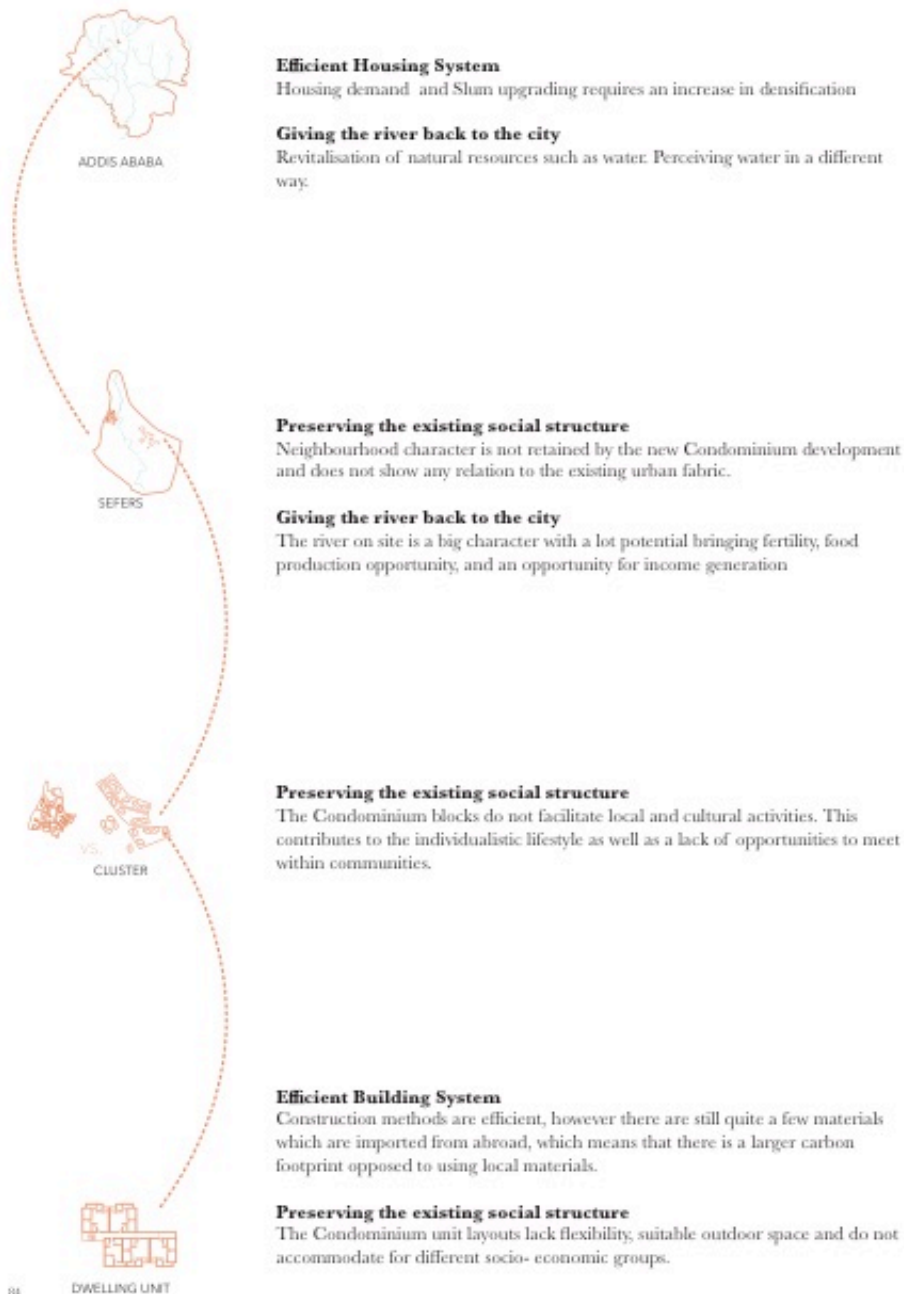
The research done helped to articulate the context of the brief at various scales, which helped the further process and proceeding with the *research question* I formed:

*How can the social structure and income generation opportunities in the sefer be preserved to retain its existing qualities in modern affordable housing while simultaneously contributing to the city's urban and housing development plans?*

This questions namely focuses on three main things

1. Preserving the existing social structure & income generation opportunities
2. Giving the river back to the city
3. Developing an efficient housing system

## - SCALES OF CHALLENGES -

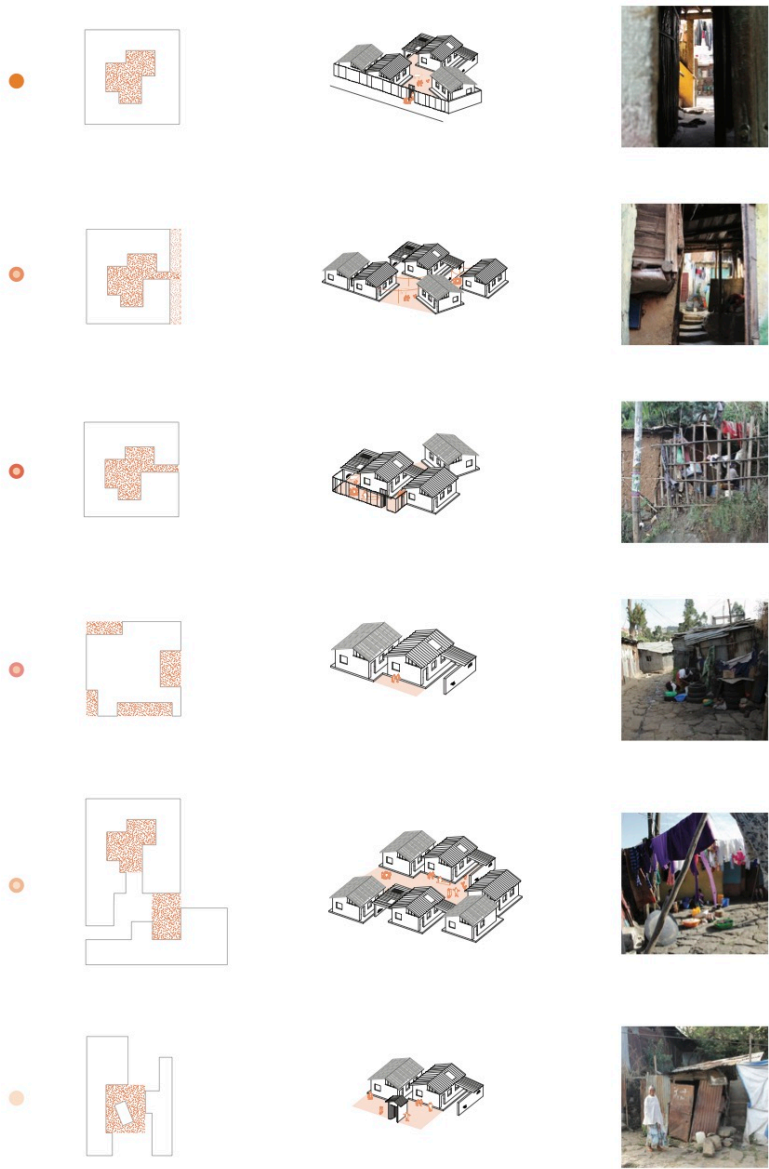


I then arrived at the *design hypothesis*:

*The affordable housing model introducing 'anchors' and 'space for time' create a cluster boundary, which is part of a network of various types of social spaces per cluster. At the same time a balance is achieved between resilience and efficiency creating a sequence of a gradual permeability creating an active and inviting route towards the river.*

I believe that making use of the various different kinds of research one can implement definitely helps to explore the possibilities and the approach towards the design task. It allowed me to do research on different scales and to be able to tie the different scales together to one coherent story.

- SOCIAL SPACE -  
THE GRADIENT OF PERMEABILITY



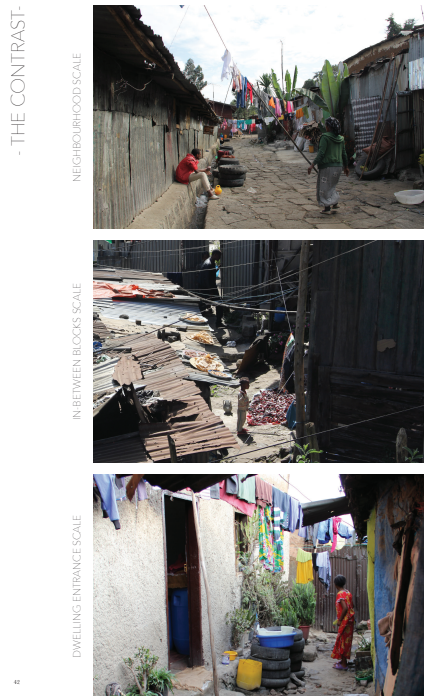
The gradient of visible social and cultural activity from the commercial road towards the river

**ASPECT 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE THEME OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE SUBJECT/CASE STUDY CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK (LOCATION/OBJECT)**

In the first half of the graduation studio, it really helped to write an essay focusing on the problem statement in the direction of where your personal interest lies. Writing the essay helped as the research done gave us the opportunity to look at our project from a larger scope. The larger theme of affordable housing for sustainable development in the Global Urban South of course indicates a region facing this challenge of the housing stock, but mainly revolves on the challenge of the rapid growth of the housing stock demand due to increasing rural-urban migration. This means that there needs to be dealt with density, the efficiency of a building system to cope with the high speed development of the growing cities, and how the local identity is still considered during all these developments. What we see in the case of our project in Addis Abeba, is that the government imported a Western housing model, namely the condominium, which does provide for domestic activities, however lacks the provision of space for cultural specific activities. Additional to this issue in the compatibility of the housing model come financial challenges as well, people whose houses have been demolished, face the incapability of affording the condominium apartments which have been built on the location instead.

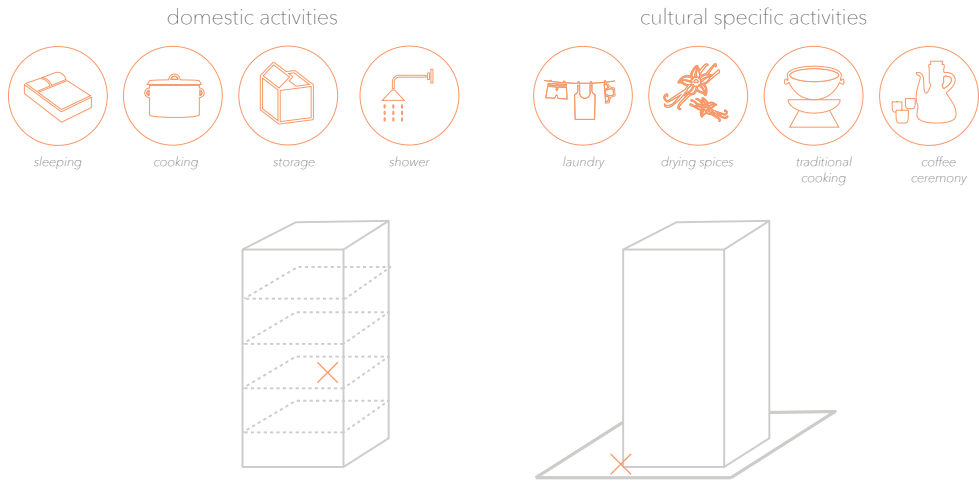
This specific case therefore relates to a housing model, which in the design process is often used as reference as to why this model is not compatible for the people it is provided for and how certain aspects can be improved. This helped me to arrive at the problem statement:

*There is a big issue with fast growing and developing cities in urgent need of housing, where the efficiency of the housing model outbalances the identity and core values of the culture and place.*



BASHA WOLDE CHILOT

## DISTINCTION OF ACTIVITIES

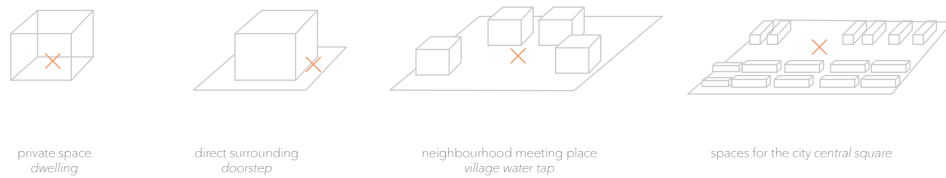


The domestic basic needs are facilitated within the condominium block, however the cultural specific activities are often not provided with a space within the block and therefore occur in its immediate surroundings.



Cultural activities show to bring the community together at different scales. They are important because they bring the people together, which is a big part of Ethiopian Culture

## SEQUENCE OF SCALES





### ASPECT 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE METHODOLOGICAL LINE OF APPROACH OF THE GRADUATION LAB AND THE METHOD CHOSEN BY THE STUDENT IN THIS FRAMEWORK

The seminars of the graduation lab in the first half were a good preparation to get a thorough insight on the topic of affordable housing. The case studies and the typology transfers gave a very good and in depth impression on the subject we were going to work on. Also references made to the literature 'A Pattern Language' written by Alexander gave a nice support on theoretical ideas of the different scales of a city and their relation to the people, the social side of it all. For myself I also created a table to tie the narrative together on various scales with the goals I set and mentioned in aspect 1.

Personally, my interest really lies in the social aspect of architecture. How architecture has an impact on the spatial qualities and even social activities that are linked to cultures and ways of living. And therefore as mentioned in Aspect 1 of this reflection I did more research using literature on this field of interest.

It also helped that the subject Research Methods was taken alongside the graduation studio in the first half, to position oneself within the discourse of architecture, and in particular for me, the subject of globalization and the individual. This also relates back to aspect 2, where the studio's framework is understood to be part of a larger scope of rapidly growing cities globally.

During our trip to Addis Abeba we had the pleasure of working together with local students from the EiABC. I kept in touch with one of the students I worked with there throughout the project, even after our visit, and it was very nice to have discussions about thoughts and ideas and whether they were realistic or not. I think it helped a lot in terms of understanding the culture better, from someone who is also like myself in the same generation and studying the same field.

All in all, I believe that the method and approach of the graduation lab gives a great foundation on how to find yourself in how to go on in the process but also to find aspects in the projects you personally find very interesting and take the initiative to do more in depth research on by means of other resources.

ESSENCE: **1** Preserving the existing social structure **2** giving the river back to the city **3** developing an efficient housing system

	URBAN (CITY)	URBAN (SEEFER)	MASTERPLAN	CLUSTER	DWELLING UNIT	DETAIL
<b>1</b> Preserving the existing social structure	the sharing of moments and resources culture: whether ceremonial events or just day to day events  communal activities and communal funds like Edir and Eqube	the compound courtyard the formon facility as meeting place  space for personal expression and organic growth	communal space gradient of visible social and cultural activity  using the existing infrastructure  scale of blocks is in relation and proportion to the existing informal settlements	social spaces designed for different activities  possibility for own interventions eg. multi-purpose interventions	communal programme near the front, private spaces at the back	using vernacular building materials: stabilized earth blocks  allowing for personal interventions: freedom of expression (incremental space)  Façade panels
<b>2</b> giving the river back to the city	revitalizing the green valley and river for people of the city  public park  filtered black water back into the river (non polluting)	river providing something for the sefer? food production/ income generation opportunity- due to fertility that the river brings  inviting route: for the public	vegetable garden+ urban park  using the existing connections towards the river  communal effort to revitalize: sweat equity: bonding the community collecting the plastic in the river, put into public route paving as collective memory	clusters with shops units: income generation from selling vegetation from along riverbanks	views to the river	Helophyte filter system  Water stream Turbines- energy generation  Paths and platforms for direct access  Vegetable- terraces
<b>3</b> developing an efficient housing system		applicable at other locations reaction to topography  typology applicable along connection of the road and to the river	the modules 8x4 and 6x4	diversity of combinations of the module  - various dwelling unit types  various communal spaces	anchors of basic needs connectable to the flexible space	connecting water pipes to anchor units through hollow concrete blocks floor  flexible space detailed water draining whether occupied or not (indoor or outdoor)  floorspan direction

Table of set goals in coherence with different scales

#### ASPECT 4: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PROJECT AND THE WIDER SOCIAL CONTEXT

We can see that globally the modernization of the way of living is occurring. Part of this is the occurrence of globalization and individualism. A lot of literature can be found on the discussion whether all cities will look the same in the future. This studio is related to the larger social context, as the importance of the value of identity and culture is taken into account, and worked with in the design of the housing scheme. Deliberately looking at the social structures of communities helped to understand the way of living in Addis Abeba in terms of living habits and activities as well as understanding the mentality of the people.

It is of great importance to recognize the social context as the relationships people have with each other and with their environment have a great impact on how society forms and further develops. It is in my opinion important to remember our cultures and identity, because it also allows us to understand ourselves and have a sense of purpose and belonging in our society.

It may be argued that our modern world is becoming more individualistic and less focused on the community. However I do believe that knowing and taking into account where your roots are can help a lot in understanding yourself and one another. I find that to preserve a peaceful, happy society with a great tolerance for co-existence the community is a very important aspect.