

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
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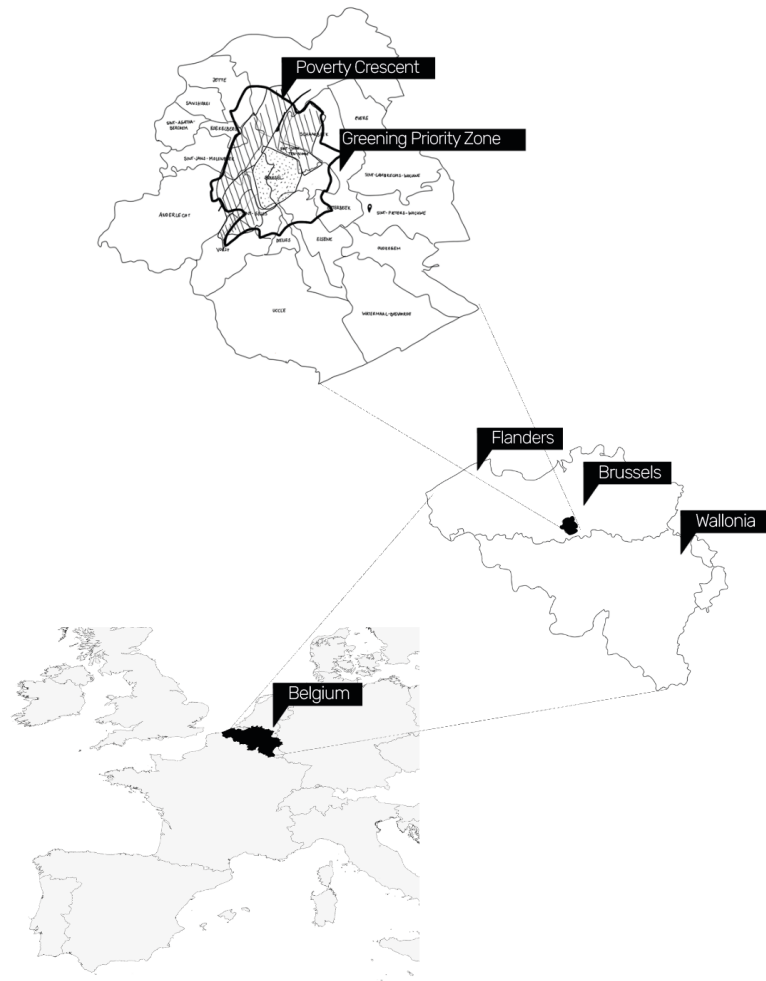
Studio		
Name / Theme	Metropolitan Ecologies of Place (MEP)	
Main mentor	Birgit Hausleitner	Urban Design
Second mentor	Caroline Newton	Spatial Planning and Strategy
Argumentation of choice of the studio	To comprehensively address inclusive and just design in the urban context, I believe the thesis should combine research and design at various scales. In my master thesis, I have put an emphasis on spatial and systemic design as it has the power to shape socio-spatial relations in an equitable and hopefully long-lasting way for urban minorities, particularly the fluidly housed community. This will be accompanied by planning recommendations to show the feasibility. The systemic context in the MEP studio allows me to start with theoretical knowledge about my focus group and from there investigate important socio-spatial patterns to relate the topic to space. This was important as the unhoused community is highly fluid and spatial data limited. By intertwining design elements that empower bottom-up activism with top-down strategies that enable commons in Brussels, the trajectory seeks to visualize, implement, and propose innovative solutions for creating more inclusive, equitable, and healthy urban spaces that foster solidarity.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Carescapes enhancing liveability for young unhoused adults through commons in Brussels

Goal

Location:

Brussels, Belgium, 'Croissant Pauvre'



The posed problem,

Important definitions:

It is essential to clarify the meaning of key terms used in this thesis to ensure a clear understanding of the problem statement, research aim, and research questions. Therefore, I have provided a glossary that defines these terms in the context of my research.

Care

'a species activity that includes everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web' (Tronto & Fisher in Tronto, 2019)

	<u>Care-Infrastructure</u> a socio-spatial network shaped by physical space and driven by both bottom-up and top-down processes (own definition) <u>Carescape</u> an environment designed to empower individuals to meet their needs while staying within planetary boundaries. It focuses on the broader landscape that supports human and planetary well-being (own definition) <u>Civic Citizenship</u> rights, duties, and participation of individuals within a society, particularly their involvement in political, social, and community life, as well as their recognition as active, contributing members of the public sphere. (Marshall, 1992) <u>Commons</u> places that can be activated through active processes of commoning, enabling the fulfillment of both short-term and long-term needs (own definition) <u>Commoning</u> community based, active, self-organised process and/or a shared action to use, collectively manage, and organize generally accessible places and resources (based on Ostrom, 2011 ;Helfrich, 2015; Armstrong et al., 2023) <u>homeless / unhoused</u> Includes every Individual that is not living in a home of their own, including people sleeping rough, in institutions or temporarily living with friends due to a lack of affordable housing (Feantsa, 2024) <u>living rough</u> Living in the streets or public spaces without a shelter that can be defined as living quarters (Feantsa, 2024) <u>liveability</u> quality of the relationship between people and their living environment (Van Dorst, 2011) <u>youth homelessness</u> 'Youth homelessness occurs where an individual between the ages of 13 and 26 is experiencing rooflessness or houselessness or is living in insecure or
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inadequate housing without a parent, family member or other legal guardian.'

(Feantsa, 2020)

young unhoused adults

individuals aged 16–25 experiencing any form of homelessness

(Van Noppen, 2022)

young fluidly housed adults

individual aged 16–25 experiences fluctuating conditions of homelessness – sometimes being sheltered in occupied buildings, sometimes staying with friends, and at times enduring periods of rough living (own definition)

Also: Being at home in changing accommodations within the same city.

Problem Statement

Neoliberalism's inability to meet human needs within planetary boundaries highlights the disconnect between economic growth and liveability. This system has influenced planning practices that marginalize vulnerable groups, such as unhoused individuals in Brussels, who are heavily concentrated in the inner city ring. This area is characterized by a lack of green spaces and poor air quality, exposing them to harsher living conditions.

Among the most affected are young adults who are fluidly housed, cycling between temporary living arrangements such as staying with family, squatting, or occasionally living on the streets. Many do not recognize themselves as homeless, which limits their access to support services. As a result, they struggle to meet immediate needs through satisfiers like food, shelter, and water.

In addition, these young adults are navigating the difficult transition into adulthood, further hindering their ability to meet both short-term and long-term needs. They face significant challenges in achieving autonomy, maintaining health, and attaining stability, which exacerbates their vulnerability.

research questions and	Main Question: What socio-spatial interventions could form an 'infrastructure of care' that enhances the liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels while staying within planetary boundaries? Sub-Questions: <u>SQ1 Analysis</u> What is liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels and how can it be achieved in space? <u>SQ2 Pattern Language</u> Which socio-spatial conditions have the potential to foster commons and this way provide the conditions for an infrastructure of care in Brussels? <u>SQ3 Design & Strategy</u> How can the urban fabric be activated to improve the liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels?
design assignment in which these result.	Project Aim This thesis aims to understand how socio-spatial interventions can form an 'infrastructure of care' that fosters systemic change, enhancing planetary well-being and improving the liveability of fluidly housed young adults in Brussels. It aims to explore: first, gaining an understanding of what liveability means for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels and how it can be supported through spatial design; second, communicating these findings through a pattern language that integrates insights from fieldwork, literature, and recommendations on commons-based care infrastructures (combining bottom-up and top-down approaches); and third, demonstrating how these ideas can be made appealing and feasible through design interventions and strategic top-down decisions, showing that a just and equitable city is achievable. Process <u>SQ1 Ethnographic Mapping and informal conversations</u> An essential step in this thesis is to deeply understand the needs of my focus group. This requires going beyond conventional analysis methods such as literature reviews, morphological mapping, and interviews with professionals. Given the lack of spatial

data and the limited information specifically about young adults in Brussels – compounded by the fluid nature of the group and their often unawareness of being part of unhoused individuals – it is crucial to approach this with care and respect.

This process needs time and sensitivity, beginning with identifying spaces where these individuals are present and engaging in conversations about their daily lives.

These interactions aim to uncover insights about significant places and routines, which are then interpreted collaboratively with them. Additionally, this approach involves fully immersing myself in the area, using techniques such as walking, observing, spending time in key locations, and speaking with people in the surroundings. This immersive method ensures a nuanced and empathetic understanding of their lived experiences.

Two exemplary projects that used the immersion into an area and informal conversations last year

- Garritsen, M., Harteveld, M., & Broekmans, T. N. (2024). Inside-out // outside-in empowering urban design.
<https://repository.tudelft.nl/record/uuid:9c42ebc9-ece9-4c56-ba26-70206ab3bd49>
- Dekker, K., Burg, L. P. J. van den, & A. Petrovic. (2024, June). Urban Homelessness.
<https://repository.tudelft.nl/record/uuid:aff4e5d7-8144-40f9-8ddb-16f7a58fca46>

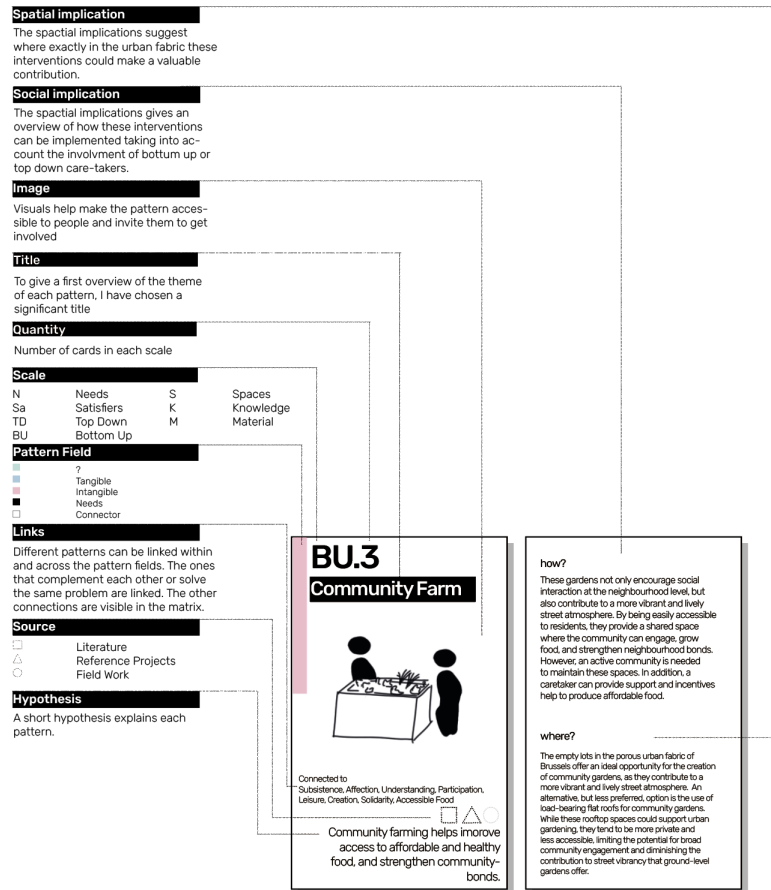
SQ2 Making findings transparent for professionals

The pattern language enables me to break down my fieldwork findings into smaller, interconnected patterns that illustrate the ecosystem of young fluidly housed adults, while also ensuring the transparency and accessibility of these insights for future researchers and professionals. By revealing the relationships between patterns, I can demonstrate how certain patterns reinforce or hinder others. In the next step, these patterns will be integrated with findings from literature, recommendations from organizations supporting unhoused young adults, and strategies for creating healthier and climate-proof cities. This approach serves as the foundation for developing socio-spatial interventions within my proposed Care Infrastructure, addressing both planetary and human well-being in a comprehensive way.

An exemplary project that worked with a circular Pattern Language last year

- Grimbacher, E., Wandl, A., & Hauleitner, B. (2024, January 12). *Circularity of the Everyday*. <https://repository.tudelft.nl/record/uuid:5f7cbd56-d225-4f7f-b10c-035748db55d4>

Exemplary Pattern developed for this thesis



SQ3 Showing an Imagination of a Just Future for My Focus Group and the Planet

This sub-question focuses on imagining and demonstrating a just future for my focus group and the planet by synthesizing the knowledge gained throughout this research. This involves designing multiple scales including a smaller area in more detail, that holds significant importance to my focus group. With this I hope to showcase how grounded, realistic interventions can address the needs of my focus group without being overly utopian. The goal is to present a vision that appeals broadly, illustrating how improving the liveability of the most vulnerable members of society often leads to enhanced conditions for others as well.

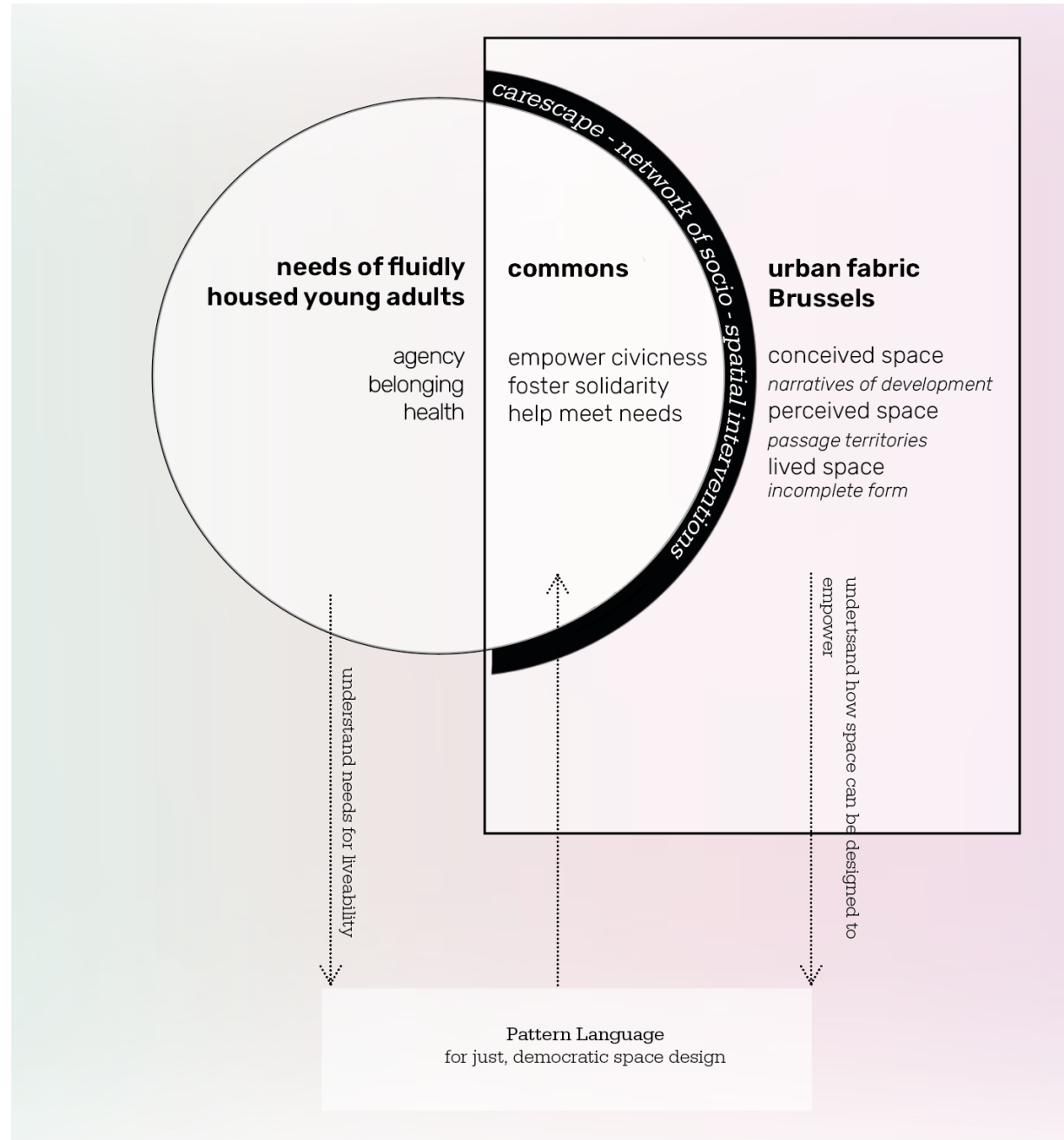
Two exemplary projects that used design with the Pattern Language on multiple scales (1) and from eye level perspective (2):

- Bil, D., Newton, C. & Hausleitner, B. (2025). Recognising the informal: urban design for environmental justice in Manshiet Nasser, Cairo (link follows)
- Kruizinga, M., Rizzetto, F., & van Dorst, M. J. (2025). A playce like home.
<https://repository.tudelft.nl/record/uuid:07d905be-572c-42be-a73d-5f2e62cca5f7>

This design process is coupled with an analysis of Brussels' existing political system to identify gaps that hinder or enable connections between top-down policies and grassroots, bottom-up commoning initiatives. An illustrative example is the city of Bologna, where public policies actively facilitate collaboration between individuals, organizations, and local authorities to manage and transform public spaces through accessible, low-threshold activation practices.

- Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons (2014).
<http://www.comune.bologna.it/media/files/bolognaregulation.pdf>

Conceptual Framework



Process

Method description

Conceived Space

Literature Review

A descriptive analysis providing a scientific context to the project. It supports all phases of the research by grounding statements and decisions in existing literature. This method will use APA 7th edition citation style, ensuring that all references are properly listed in the bibliography.

Pattern Language

A systemic method for bridging research and design, breaking down complex systems by linking spaces, stakeholders, and activities. It clarifies the relationships

between perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, serving as the foundation for communicating the care-infrastructure patterns.

Policy Analysis

(including Stakeholder mapping + news & media)

A systematic approach to assess existing policies or interventions in the domain of interest. This process identifies the effectiveness, gaps, and implications of current policies related to empowering activating spaces, helping inform strategy + stakeholders to include.

Systemic Design

A design method that identifies essential spaces for systemic change. The design will focus on a location highly relevant to young fluidly housed adults in Brussels. By applying the pattern language, the design aims to be transferable to other locations, contributing to systemic improvement.

Perceived Space

Systemic Section

A method to identify systems linking spaces and activities. It analyzes flows of people, goods, and services within urban spaces, pinpointing leverage points to improve the livability of unhoused young adults. Diachronic mapping will explore how socio-spatial conditions have evolved, informing the pattern language.

Morphological Mapping

A tool for identifying spatial conditions that support the strategic location of commons, ensuring accessibility while protecting against potential development pressures. This method connects needs to physical space and will inform the design phase.

Space Syntax

A method that uses scientific data to understand how people navigate urban spaces and the relationships between built environments and social patterns. It will identify gaps in the spatial network that can be improved to meet the needs of unhoused young adults.

Site Visits

Visits to the project sites will ground the research in real conditions, testing assumptions and ensuring the design process remains human-centered. Multiple visits will help avoid planning from a detached perspective (Gehl, 2021).

Lived Space

Ethnographic Mapping

This method helps understand the socio-spatial dynamics by observing how young fluidly housed adults engage with their environment. It will uncover behavior patterns in relation to urban spaces, providing insights into their lived experiences (Garritsen, 2024). These insights can then inform the design of spaces that empower them, creating environments that better meet their needs and foster a sense of agency.

Informal Conversations

Informal conversations with young fluidly housed adults will provide valuable insights into their lived experiences. These discussions will help validate observations and ensure the research accurately reflects their perspectives, while minimizing researcher bias. To protect these individuals from potential harm, I will take care to handle sensitive data responsibly, using only the most relevant findings in the report and ensuring their anonymity and privacy throughout the process.

Structured Interviews

Formal interviews with local stakeholders will reveal insights into the challenges and opportunities related to unhoused young adults. These conversations will identify gaps and potentials that might not be obvious from other research methods.

Subjective Mapping

This method involves asking unhoused young adults about their favorite places and the spaces they use, with help of drawing. It aims to understand their needs and identify urban spaces that can improve their livability and well-being.

SQ1: Liveability and Needs of young fluidly housed adults in Brussels

Methods: Literature Review, Site Visit, Pattern Language, News & Media, Ethnographic Mapping, Informal conversations, Structured Interviews, Subjective Mapping

My focus group is often overlooked, as their unique needs and challenges are not widely recognized. To design in a way that empowers my focus group to meet their needs and actively participate as civic citizens, it is essential to first understand what contributes to their well-being and liveability.

Understanding the liveability and needs of fluidly housed young adults in Brussels requires time and immersion. Ethnographic mapping and informal conversations will play a key role in this process, allowing me to gain deeper insights into their lived experiences and unique perspectives.

To make these findings accessible and actionable, I will create personas and summaries of the fundamental needs of young fluidly housed adults in Brussels, based on my research. This approach ensures that the process is transparent and outcomes are adaptable to new findings.

Ultimately, this question aims to define liveability for my focus group and develop design principles that help me achieve this in space.

SQ2: Socio-Spatial Patterns and Empowerment

Methods: Systemic Section, Morphological Mapping, Space Syntax, Site Visit, Literature Review, Pattern Language, Ethnographic Mapping, Informal Conversations, Structured Interviews, Subjective Mapping

To understand how young fluidly housed adults activate and engage with space, it is essential to analyze the spatial components that empower them within their environments. This involves exploring the socio-spatial system in which these

interactions occur, uncovering the dynamics between people, spaces, and processes.

By combining these approaches, I hope to develop a nuanced understanding of how socio-spatial systems influence the ability of individuals to activate spaces. This understanding lays the foundation for spatial design interventions that foster well-being, agency, and equitable urban environments. This can be achieved by combining research with design in the form of the Pattern Language.

SQ3: Design and Strategy

Methods: Site Visit, Pattern Language, Policy Analysis, Stakeholder Mapping, News & Media, Systemic Section

This phase focuses on translating research into actionable spatial design interventions, grounded in theory and enriched by participatory research. The aim is to propose how the identified pattern language can be spatialized through design while addressing gaps in the governance system that hinder young unhoused adults from activating space.

By combining spatial design with governance strategies, this phase bridges the gap between theoretical insights, practical implementations, and governance suggestions.

The sub questions are outlined below, each accompanied by its aim, the methods employed, and the intended outcomes:

Subquestions	Aim	Methods												Intended Outcome						
		Perceived Space	Systemic section	Morphological Mapping	Space Syntax	Site Visit	Conceived Space	Literature Review	Pattern Language	Policy Analysis	Stakeholder Mapping	News & Media	Systemic Design	Lived Space	Ethnographic Mapping	Informal Conversations	Structured Interviews	Subjective Mapping		
analysis																				
SQ1 What is liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels and how can it be achieved in space?	Understand liveability and needs of fluidly housed young adults in Brussels	☐			☒			☒	☒			☒			☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	Persona and summary of fundamental needs of young fluidly housed adults in Brussels
	Understand how to improve their liveability	☐			☒			☒	☒			☒			☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	Definition of liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels
pattern language																				
SQ2 Which socio-spatial conditions have the potential to foster commons and this way provide the conditions for an infrastructure of care in Brussels?	understand spatial components of places that empower young fluidly housed adults to activate space	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒		☒	☒						☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	Diachronic Mapping of Commons, Systemic Section, Subjective Map showing spaces and processes happening in them
	understand the socio-spatial system	☐	☒	☒	☒	☒		☒	☒			☒			☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	Pattern Language
design & strategy																				
SQ3 How can the urban fabric be activated to improve the liveability for young fluidly housed adults in Brussels?	understand how to spatialise Pattern in Brussels	☐			☒			☒				☒							☐	Concrete Design based on Pattern Language
	understand which Top Down and Bottom Up actions are needed to achieve proposed design	☐			☒			☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒						☐	Strategy Timeline showing in-between steps towards design-vision

Literature and general practical references

More elaborate form of the main theories and concepts in the appendix

SQ1: Liveability and Needs of young fluidly housed adults in Brussels

- Max-Neef, M. (1991). Development and human needs. In Human Scale Development.

- Van Dorst, M. (2011). Liveability. In Sustainable urban environments—An ecosystem approach. Springer.
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-1294-2_8
- Boccagni, P., & Duyvendak, J. W. (2021). Homemaking in the public. On the scales and stakes of framing, feeling, and claiming extra-domestic space as “home”.
<https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/soc4.12886>
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- Feantsa, European Youth, & Centre of the Council of Europe. (2019, November 19). Homeless Rights are Human Rights.
- Housing First Europe Hub. (2020). Rock trust housing first for youth polit.
<https://www.rocktrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/HF4Y-Evaluation-Report-Executive-Summary-July-2020.pdf>
- Euro Cities. (2023, November). Ending youth homelessness in cities.
<https://eurocities.eu/resources/ending-youth-homelessness-in-our-cities/>
- Feantsa. (2024). ETHOS light—European typology of homelessness and housing exclusion.
<https://www.feantsa.org/download/fea-002-18-update-ethos-light-0032417441788687419154.pdf>

SQ2: Socio-Spatial Patterns and Empowerment

- Wyckaert, B., Leinfelder, H., & Decker, P. D. (2023, 14.03). Migrating in small- and medium-sized towns. Experiences, challenges, perspectives for participation.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education. Greenwood Press.
https://home.iitk.ac.in/~amman/soc748/bourdieu_forms_of_capital.pdf
- Newton, C. (2025). Design for Justice. In Envisioning Spatial Justice. Explorations, Reflections and Design Approaches. JapSam Books.
- Oosterlynck, S. (2022). Duty of Care—A podcast for the just city (Season 2, Episode 3) [Broadcast]. Retrieved 24 October 2022, from
<https://shows.acast.com/duty-of-care-podcast/episodes/stijn-oosterlynck>
- Hill, A. V. (Ed.) (with Croxford, B.). (2020). Foundries of the future: A guide for 21st century cities of making. TU Delft Open.
- Mentink, B., Henriquez, L., van Niekerk, L., & Verheul, R. (2013). Using patterns tackling the complexity of urban design.
- Salingaros, N. (2000). The structure of pattern languages.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231886614_The_structure_of_pattern_languages

SQ3: Design and Strategy

- Lefebvre, H., Nicholson-Smith, D., Lefebvre, H., & Lefebvre, H. (1997). The production of space (Reprinted). Blackwell.
- Sennett, R. (2006). Housing and urban neighbourhoods -The open city. Urban Age.
http://downloads.lsecities.net/0_downloads/Berlin_Richard_Sennett_2006-The_Open_City.pdf
- Regulation on Collaboration between Citizens and the City for the Care and Regeneration of Urban Commons (2014).
<http://www.comune.bologna.it/media/files/bolognaregulation.pdf>

Intended formal Interviews:

- Stijn Oosterlynck, Professor of Urban Sociology at the University of Antwerp and a member of the Centre for Research on Environmental and Social Change

- Aurélie de Smet, who completed her PhD on co-design and homelessness, focusing on activating 'waiting spaces'
- Koen Hermans, a leading researcher on urban homelessness in Belgium (awaiting response)
- Adèle Pierre from Bruss'Help
- representatives from Samusocial (awaiting response)
- members of Woningen 123 Logements, a squatter organization in Schaerbeek (awaiting response).

These interviews aim to gather a range of perspectives from academic experts, practitioners, and grassroots organizations to inform the research and proposed interventions.

Reflection

Relation Between the Graduation Topic and the Studio Metropolitan Ecologies of Place

The 'MEP' studio has proven to be an excellent choice for developing my thesis. I am deeply committed to improving the liveability of young fluidly housed adults—a group whose numbers are growing rapidly. This population faces immense social challenges due to socio-spatial exclusion and marginalization while also being disproportionately exposed to the impacts of the climate crisis.

In my research trajectory, I focus on liveability through practices of care that aim to enhance both human and planetary well-being. Within the studio, I can address these interconnected challenges by integrating human needs with spatial components through the concept of commons. This approach enables me to link social processes with spatial interventions, creating an infrastructure of care that addresses the specific needs of this vulnerable group.

The topic of "home" carries a deeply emotional resonance for me. While this has sometimes been overwhelming, I am fortunate to have mentors who help me remain optimistic and engaged with my research. Their guidance has enabled me to see what is possible, turning what once felt like a grim subject into a more hopeful and actionable focus. Through this process, I have gained valuable insights, shifting my perspective toward creating solutions grounded in research and feasibility.

In conclusion, the MEP studio provides an ideal platform for my work, enabling me to explore the interconnected nature of needs, spaces, and processes from a systemic socio-spatial perspective. This experience not only enhances my skills and deepens my understanding but also prepares me to propose meaningful and actionable interventions to improve the liveability of young fluidly housed adults in Brussels.

Relation Between the Thesis Topic and the Master Track of Urbanism

The thesis aligns closely with the master program of urbanism by addressing the interplay between vulnerable groups, planetary well-being, and urban design and strategy. Situated in Brussels, the project investigates how to design just and equitable environments by examining the spatial manifestations of social phenomena. It will critically explore how both bottom-up and top-down

commoning practices impact individuals' ability to activate and engage with urban space.

By delving into the spatial dimensions of justice, the research reflects on the role of urban design and urbanism in shaping more equitable futures. This aligns with the program's goal of advancing knowledge on sustainable and equitable urban development. Addressing Brussels' unique and complex context, the thesis highlights the importance of tailoring urban solutions to local conditions, reflecting the department's commitment to understanding the interconnected relationship between the well-being of citizens and the built environment.

Spatial Relevance

While social and political models such as Housing First play a crucial role in addressing homelessness, many individuals are still waiting for access to stable housing. In the meantime, homelessness continues to rise, leading to unmet needs that contribute to a significant lack of liveability for these individuals.

Although ending homelessness would be the ideal solution, as urbanists, we have a responsibility to impact the liveability of homeless individuals in the interim. This can be achieved by designing urban spaces that empower individuals to activate them and this way meet their fundamental needs, both in the short term (e.g., access to food, shelter, and safety) and in the long term (e.g., autonomy and stability) – even without access to stable housing.

Societal Relevance

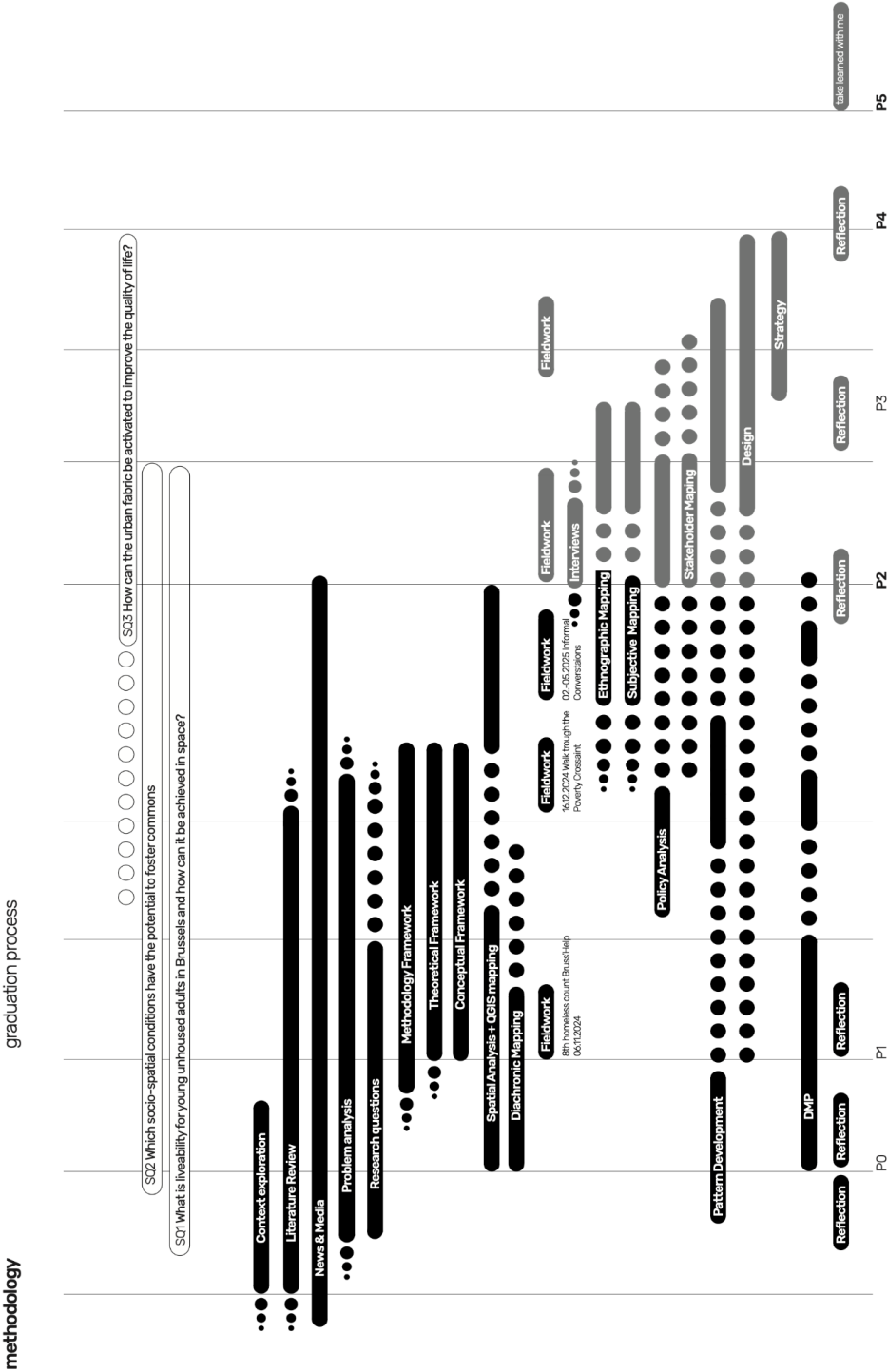
Fluidly housed young adults – those who cycle between staying with family, in squats, or occasionally living on the streets – are an often overlooked and invisible group within the homelessness discourse. These individuals face significant challenges due to the instability of their living arrangements, but they rarely identify as “homeless” and thus may not seek support or services. Society and policy often remain unaware of their unique needs, as these young adults do not fit the conventional image of homelessness. This lack of recognition exacerbates their marginalization, leading to unmet needs in areas such as mental health, social support, and stability. Addressing their unique situation is crucial for improving public understanding of homelessness, ensuring that all forms of housing insecurity are acknowledged, and ultimately reducing the stigma around temporary living conditions.

Scientific Relevance

The experiences of fluidly housed young adults remain underexplored in homelessness research, particularly regarding how urban spaces can support their fluctuating needs. Scientific research has not fully examined how society, policy, and urban infrastructure can be adapted to better meet the needs of young fluidly housed individuals. Investigating how urban spaces and services can support this

group is vital for creating more inclusive interventions and shaping equitable futures. Scientific exploration can help inform new models of support that bridge the gap between short-term satisfiers and long-term stability, offering a deeper understanding of how space and policy can better address the complex needs of this vulnerable population.

Thesis Plan



Appendix

Theory of Human Needs

This framework highlights the importance of addressing not just material needs (like food and shelter) but also emotional and psychological needs (e.g., identity, participation, and freedom), each equally important (Max-Neef, 1991). It provides a holistic lens for understanding how the living environment can fulfill the diverse and interconnected needs of young fluidly housed adults, beyond basic survival.

The Notion of Home

The evolving definition of home, particularly for marginalized individuals without stable housing, underscores the importance of providing not just physical shelter but a sense of belonging and security (Boccagni & Duyvendak, 2021). This concept is essential, as it guides the creation of spaces that foster a sense of home, identity, and stability for young adults who are fluidly housed.

Liveability

Liveability focuses on the quality of the relationship between people and their environment, addressing both physical and social dimensions (Van Dorst, 2011). It supports the project by highlighting the spatial needs—such as health, security, and social connections—that must be met to improve the overall well-being and happiness of young fluidly housed adults in a sustainable, just manner.

Design for Justice

This concept emphasizes the need for equitable design that fosters solidarity and agency (Newton, 2025; Oosterlynck, 2022). It guides the creation of inclusive, participatory spaces where young adults can exercise agency, strengthen community bonds, and improve their quality of life, all while ensuring that the design respects both human and planetary well-being.

Spatial Capital

This concept stresses how proximity to resources and the ability to access them influences individuals' quality of life (Levy in Wyckaert et al., 2023). It is critical because it helps assess how spatial positioning and accessibility to vital services can improve the lives of fluidly housed young adults in Brussels, enabling them to better navigate urban challenges.

Commons

The concept of commons emphasizes shared resources and community-based management within planetary boundaries, shifting away from top-down approaches to resource allocation (Armstrong et al., 2023; Helfrich, 2015). This is relevant as designing commons can empower marginalized groups, offering spaces for young adults to meet their needs, reclaim agency, and foster community solidarity, which enhances their overall well-being.

The Production of Space

Henri Lefebvre's concept of the "production of space" serves as a crucial theoretical framework for my project. It highlights how space is not a static, neutral backdrop but a dynamic product shaped by social, economic, and political forces, as introduced in his influential work *The Production of Space* (1974). This concept is important for my project because it helps me understand how urban spaces are not simply physical environments, but are actively shaped by interactions and power structures within society. By integrating Lefebvre's framework with Richard Sennett's concept of 'The Open City' (2006), which challenges static, top-down spatial planning and advocates for spaces that evolve through user participation, flexibility, and openness, I can apply design principles for the commons. This approach enables the design of spaces that meet the needs of my focus group while fostering social interaction, inclusivity, and a sense of ownership in the urban environment that is important to foster solidarity (Oosterlynck, 2025).