

# Poiesis of Resistance

through

Performative  
dissidence

&

Pockets of  
Resilience

aspiraciones, ideas...

Erkan Mestan  
4604229





TU Delft Faculty of Architecture

**Graduation studio:**

Architectural Design Crossovers - *Heterogeneous City*

*Expanded city - Urban commons*

2023-2025

**Project name:**

*Poiesis of Resistance through Performative Dissidence &*

*Pockets of resilience along a route as urban social pilgrimage*

**Author:**

Erkan Mestan

4604229

17.01.2025

**Tutors:**

Roberto Cavallo

Freek Speksnijder

Alper S. Alkan

# C O N T E N T S

01	<b>A GLIMPSE</b> <i>prologue</i>	6-9
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Synopsis - prologue</li><li>• Personal fascination</li></ul>	6 9
02	<b>ACT I - CURTAINS</b> <i>exposition</i>	10-15
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research plan summary<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Problem statement</li><li>- Objective</li><li>- Relevance</li></ul></li></ul>	12 12-13 13-15
03	<b>ACT II - TAPESTRY</b> <i>rising action</i>	16-47
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Methods</li><li>• Theoretical framework<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Setting</li><li>- Events</li><li>- Movements</li><li>- Space</li><li>- Architectural materiality and tectonics</li><li>- Lens for site analysis</li></ul></li></ul>	18-23 24-29 30-33 34-37 38-41 42-45 45-47
04	<b>AN EPIPHANY</b> <i>bridge</i>	48-53
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preliminary findings</li><li>• Precedents</li></ul>	48-50 50-53
05	<b>ACT III - STAGE</b> <i>climax</i>	54-83
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SETTING - Madrid</li><li>• SCENE 1: Plaza Nelson Mandela</li><li>• SCENE 2: Plaza de Augustín Lara</li><li>• SCENE 3: Espacio Dragones Lavapiés</li><li>• Observations from the site analysis</li></ul>	58-69 70-73 74-77 78-81 82-83



# C O N T E N T S

## 06 **ACT IV - POIESIS** *falling action* 84-101

---

- Towards a design of conditions 86-87
- Significance of site 88-91
- History of site 92
- Corral de Comedias 93
- Concept / diagrams 94-101

## 07 **ACT V - CURTAINS** *resolution* 102-109

---

- Plea 104-106
- Discussion 106
- Bibliography 107-109

## 08 **APPENDICES** 110 ~

---

- Appendix 1: Reflection report
- Appendix 2: Research plan
- Appendix 3: Graduation plan





# 01 A GLIMPSE

*prologue*

◀ Figure 1.1 View of a corrala through a key hole  
(Source: Author)

## Synopsis

This research paper aims to explore performative dissident practices within the context of Madrid, focusing on how architectural practice can gain insights from these practices to inform the design of interventions or conditions that foster empowerment, particularly for vulnerable communities. The intention is not to provide a socio-political critique, but rather to advocate for the significance of these urban battlegrounds as pedagogical instances that can enrich architectural discourse.

Therefore the research seeks to answer the following question:  
*How can architectural practices, focused on contested urban environments, draw from the dissident practices manifested in the built environment and thus foster resilience for the vulnerable communities?*

In the rising action of the research, the paper first constructs a methodological and theoretical tapestry, developing a lens through which to conduct a site analysis. This is done by employing architectural analytical drawings, as well as narration and experimental writing, to highlight the more latent, experiential aspects of dissident practices. The climax of the research applies this lens to three squares within Madrid's most vulnerable neighborhood, Embajadores/Lavapiés. In the falling action, the research delves deeper into the site of choice and its significance for the project and expands on the conceptual framework that can be applied towards a design of conditions.

## Keywords:

Architecture, Social ecology, performative, violence, transgression, dissidence, lived space, social space etc, spatial justice, equity, agency, empowerment, resistance, resilience, disruption, appropriation, subversion, urban commons, vulnerable communities



## Personal fascination

My personal fascination with dissidence began with an interest in graffiti and questioning its worth and function, particularly as it becomes part of the built environment. Over the past few months, I have observed various subversive practices and realized they are manifestations of systemic issues, carrying messages that demand attention. For example, some streets worldwide are fully covered in graffiti. Beyond being a creative outlet, these spaces have grown to hold significance for certain events and communities. The same can be said for protests that follow specific routes.

Many of us perceive these practices as “bad” or “ugly” because they disrupt private or public spaces. However, I believe they open up new possibilities by serving as grounds for critical discussions. While their immediate expression is in the built environment, they point to larger systemic problems. This makes it essential to examine these issues, the dissident practices as coping mechanisms, and the potential outcomes if their direction were altered.

This is why I think it is vital to study this multi-layered subject of dissidence. With openness and a critical mindset, it can offer insights into the lives of the communities that engage in these practices. What began as a personal fascination with the tension surrounding graffiti has grown into a broader focus on dissent and subversion in urban spaces, including graffiti, squatting, and the occupation of public space to name a few examples.



▲ Figure 1.2. Collage of graffiti / street art observed on trips  
(Source: Author)



▲ Figure 1.3. Dialogue through graffiti  
(Source: Bored Panda)







## 02 CURTAINS

### ACT I

*exposition*

◀ Figure 2.1. Tents on Plaza del Sol during the 15M Occupy Movement.  
Source: Rice, L. (2013). In *The architecture of transgression*

*In urban areas, dissident practices emerge not merely as acts of destruction or deviance but as performative, disruptive expressions aimed at critiquing systemic failures. These practices, from graffiti to public space occupations, not only challenge the built environment but actively reshape it, positioning architecture as both a medium and a battleground for dissent.*

## **2.1 The struggle** *(problem statement)*

With dissent there is always tension involved. Whether dissident practices are destructive or disruptive, they are most often met with suppression. Spatial dissident practices, such as graffiti, squatting, and public space occupations, frequently face repercussions like the cleansing of contested spaces and the imposition of heightened control as a result. These acts, however, often serve as coping mechanisms for struggling communities and thus are indicators of more significant systemic and/or societal issues.

If we focus on the more performative, disruptive acts of dissent, these are most of the time coping strategies coupled with critique aimed raising awareness and ultimately arriving at solution. These coping mechanisms inherently hold the characteristics of the futures vulnerable communities long for. If dissident practices are reframed to highlight their generative potential, they can not only address systemic and societal issues, but also foster the awareness necessary to work towards more equitable futures in urban areas. Futures where their voices are heard and listened to, their needs addressed and their rights respected.

## **2.2 A turning point** *(objective)*

This project aims to shift the focus from eliminating performative dissent in the built environment to acknowledging its potential as a catalyst for change and debate. By focusing on the generative potential of performative dissident practices, the research seeks to examine how architecture can play a role in fostering resilience within the vulnerable communities. It seeks to probe into the acts of performative dissent to get an comprehensive insight and draw inspiration from the language of dissent.

The aim of the project is to investigate how architectural interventions can create these pockets of resistance and resilience in urban spaces, amplifying the inherent characteristics

such as temporality, visibility and impermanence as mechanisms for empowerment and agency within an adaptive ongoing cycle.

The central question driving this research is:

***How can architectural practices, focused on contested urban environments, draw from the dissident practices manifested in the built environment and thus foster resilience for the vulnerable communities?***

Rather than ignoring these calls for change, the project advocates for a shift in perspective - listening to the unheard voices and addressing these expressed through the dissident practices manifested in the built environment.

## 2.3 Relevance

The exploration of dissidence and acknowledgement of its generative potential as coping mechanisms sheds a new light on the topic. It goes deeper into understanding the actors in existing social structures and their diverging desires. This research delves into the underlying systemic and societal issues, systematically observing and depicting dissidence and could draw connections to other disciplines like sociology and anthropology.

By observing dissidence through this lens, this research expands the scope of architectural discourse to consider human and social behavior. It is a critical approach to dissent, that has mostly been viewed as acts of deviance, proposing instead that they are understood as expressions of resistance and resilience. This can provide new insights into how architecture can play a role in the mission for equity for all.

The ability of architecture to foster diversity, meeting in basic needs and offering agency in urban settings is key, as performative dissident practices that often manifest in the built environment point towards alternative ways of doing and being withing the city.

### 2.3.1 Architecture as Catalyst

This project explores how architecture can act as a catalyst for empowerment by focusing on selected performative dissident practices and the communities they represent. Rather than seeking to impose a fixed architectural solution, the approach will focus on creating an open-ended design of conditions that allows for future addition of other dissident practices.

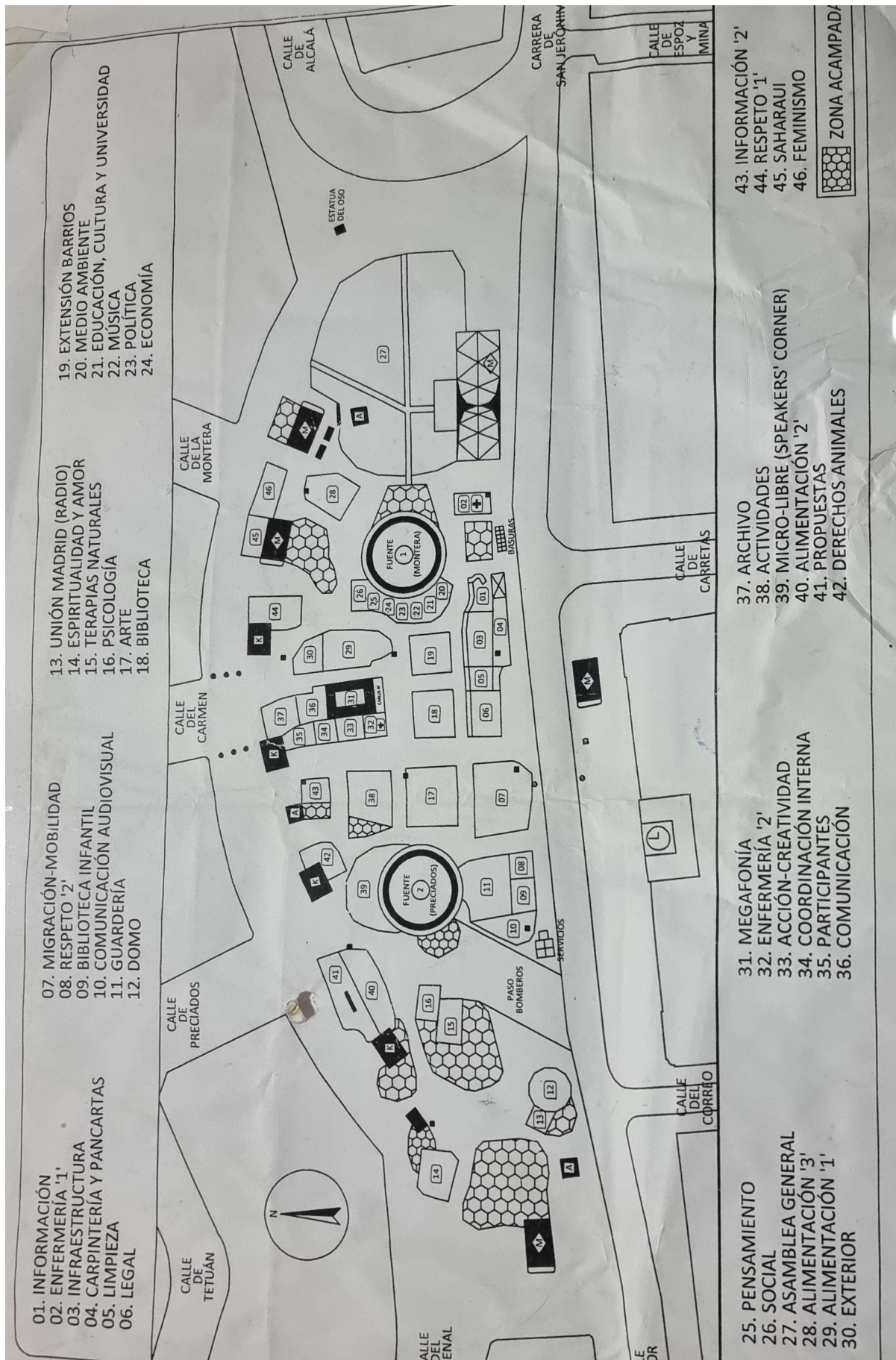


The goal is to draw inspiration from these for intentional architectural interventions that offer potential remedies. These interventions will be shaped in a way that is mimicking the inherent characteristics creating responsive and dynamic spaces that are rooted in its context.

Furthermore, the materiality of architecture will play a pivotal role in capturing the spirit of protest and subversion. Unlike traditional monumental architecture which often were created to exude power and control, this research adopts a bottom-up approach to shift the narrative toward equity and empowerment for vulnerable communities. By integrating this language of dissent into the existing urban fabric through acupuncture urbanism, the project aims to foster this transformation, both physical and symbolically. Drawing inspiration from Bernard Tschumi's notion that events are strategized in space, this research will explore how architecture can embody these events through its materiality and tectonics. By doing so, the design will seek to empower vulnerable communities, offering them a platform for their voices and aspirations to be heard and reshape the built environment for equity.

## **2.4 Madrid as framework**

The relevance of this topic becomes particularly evident when applied to Madrid, a city that, like many other capital cities, is a melting pot of diverging lifestyles and perspectives. This diversity, along with the challenges faced by its residents—such as unemployment, homelessness, and evictions—gives rise to various coping mechanisms, many of which manifest as dissident practices. One notable example is the 15M movement, an anti-austerity protest that unfolded in Plaza Sol. In a short time, citizens set up a tent city, creating a temporary 'city within a city'. The figure on the next page shows a floor plan of this tent-city and the functions it accommodated. This movement not only critiqued systemic issues but also integrated basic needs, symbolizing a response to social pressures and emphasizing other ways of doing, both spatially and legislatively. These visible expressions of dissent in Madrid are a result of the complex social issues that have shaped the city, making it an ideal context for exploring the potential of architecture in addressing such systemic concerns. As these dissident practices emerge mostly from vulnerable communities, they offer valuable insight into the ways architecture can foster empowerment and resilience.



▲ Figure 2.2. Floor plan of the 15M Occupy Movement, on Plaza del Sol  
(Source: Author)





MADRID

MADRID

CALLE DE  
JAMECAYETAN



# 03 TAPESTRY

## ACT II

*rising action*

**Sub-question:** *How can dissident practices be studied through a lens that combines architectural theories and urban literacy highlighting their latent experiential aspects?*



### 3.1 Methodology

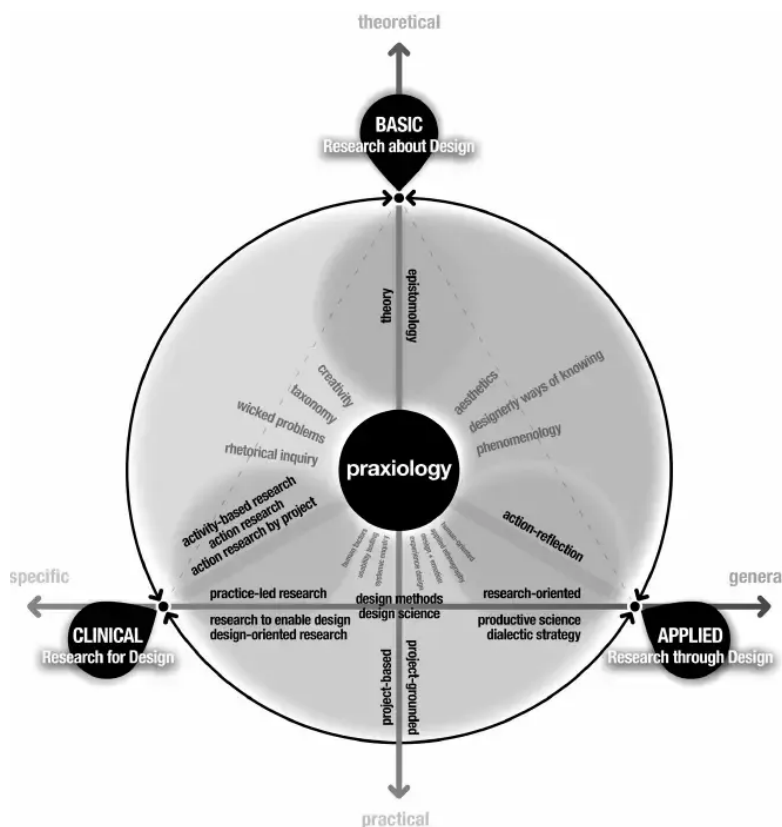
This project is divided into three parts: theoretical, explorative and a speculative approaches. This tripartite structure is essential to address the complexities of this multi-layered topic.

The framework distinguishes between lab-based research and field-based contextualization aiming to get the necessary insight, both from theory and practice. The theoretical part to answer the following question:

*How can dissident practices be studied through a lens that combines architectural theories and urban literacy highlighting their latent experiential aspects?*

The speculative part is the design phase of the project, building on findings from the research and propose tangible outcomes.

This structure aligns with the praxeology of design research<sup>1</sup>, which encompasses research about, for, and through design, as articulated by Frankel and Racine (see methodological diagram).



◀ Figure 3.2. Map of Design Research Categories  
(Source: Design Research Society)

<sup>1</sup>Frankel, L., & Racine, M. (2010). The complex field of research: For design, through design, and about design. In D. Durling, R. Bousbaci, L. Chen, P. Gauthier, T. Poldma, S. Roworth-Stokes, & E. Stolterman (Eds.), Design and complexity - DRS International Conference 2010, 7-9 July, Montreal, Canada.



### **Theoretical part**

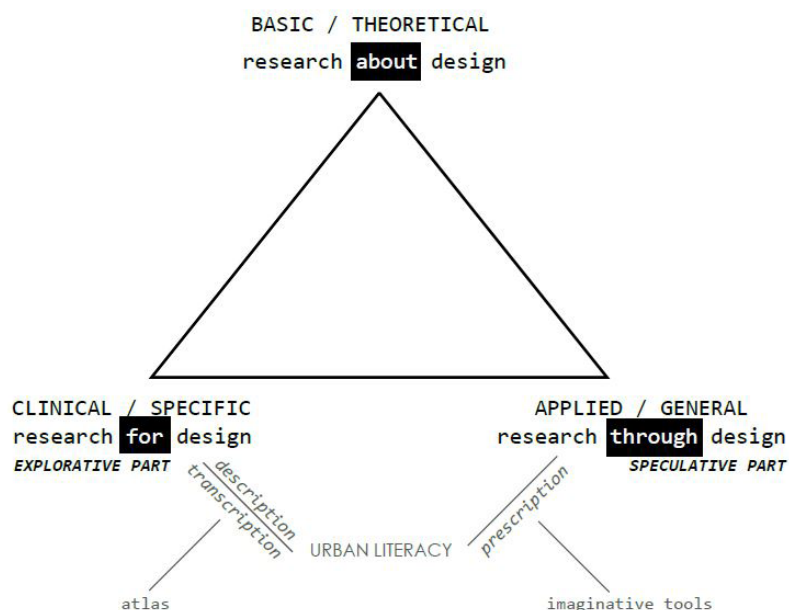
The theoretical stage consists of a literature study, layering recent theories that support research within the discourse of architecture. This phase represents research **about** design, focusing on key topics related to dissidence and subversion. These topics are further elaborated in the glossary and the theoretical framework, providing a foundation for a deeper exploration.

### **Explorative part**

The explorative stage bridges theory with practical inquiry, a site analysis, aligning with research **for** design. This phase explores dissident practices, the underlying intentions and their manifestation in the built environment, situated in Madrid. In addition to conventional plans and sections, this research will analyze the narratives and rituals of dissent as new spatial experiences. These will be examined through a threefold transcript, distinguishing between objects/buildings, movements, and events. This approach aligns with Bernard Tschumi's Manhattan Transcripts, which demonstrates how architecture can script spaces.

### **Speculative part**

The speculative stage serves as both approach to design and the actual design phase, regarded as research **through** design due to its experimental nature. By crafting narratives, this phase creates a layered tapestry of new spatial experiences woven into the urban fabric. It synthesizes findings from earlier stages of research to inform and propose design conditions that are aligned with the insights gained during the research.



◀ Figure 3.3. Praxiology of design research in relation to urban literacy  
(Source: Author)

## 3.2 Urban literacy

### *Reading urban spaces - imagining narratives*

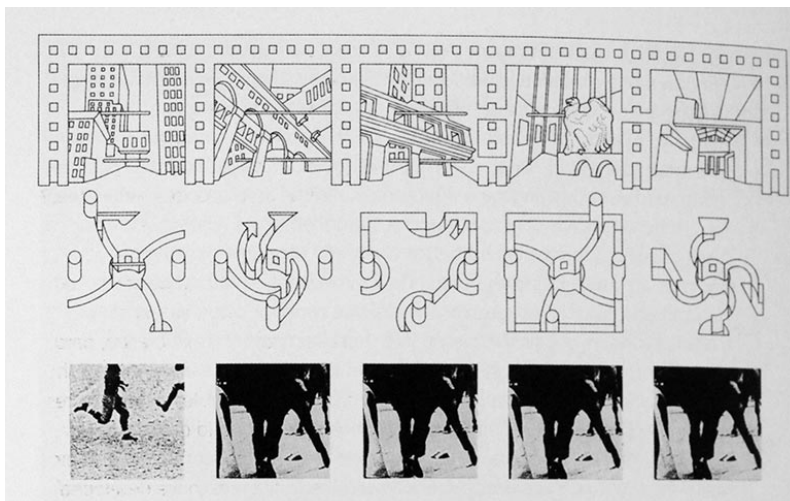
Part of the explorative phase of the research, will explore the more experiential aspects of performative dissidence through urban literacy. This approach involves 'reading' urban spaces and experiences, providing a means to interpret and understand cities through both their physical and social dimensions. For this some methods from the book *49 Methods of Writing Urban Places* will be incorporated into these narratives in order to reveal latent aspects related to dissidence and subversion.

These methods bridge the gap between theory and experience, uncovering interactions that often go unnoticed. Urban literacy<sup>3</sup> adds a poetic and experiential layer to our understanding of the built environment, allowing for subtle yet meaningful propositions that respond to the existing urban fabric, while imagining possibilities beyond it.

A deep dive from analytical drawings to creative writing uncovers new qualities, offering a meticulous description of the social and material ecologies that make the built environment multifaceted. Narratives serve as a medium for expressing resistance and the situatedness of performative dissent practices. Since narratives evolve in many directions, choosing Bernard Tschumi's sequencing method<sup>2</sup>, exploring the relationship between space and events, will provide the analytical structure for these narratives.

Layers for sequencing of the analysis:

- Setting
- Event
- Movement
- Space
- Elements



◀ Figure 3.4. Disjunction triad of Event-Cities  
(Source: *Manhattan Transcripts*)

---

<sup>2</sup>Tschumi, B. (1996). *Architecture and disjunction*. MIT Press

<sup>3</sup>Havik, K. (Year). *Bridging: Urban literacy. A scriptive approach to the experience, use and imagination of place*. Delft University of Technology.

## Writing urban spaces - building narratives

The design phase is also employing a narrative approach that seeks to imagine possibilities and conditions rather than imposing. The aim is to arrive at a thoughtful design of conditions that aligns with the objectives of performative dissidence, critiquing and creating resistance/resilience for the vulnerable communities. The narration will follow a structure inherent to every performative dissidence, progressing from a build-up of annoyance and grievance toward a resolution. These acts will be narrated through the use of Bernard Tschumi's sequencing.

ACT 1: Exposition

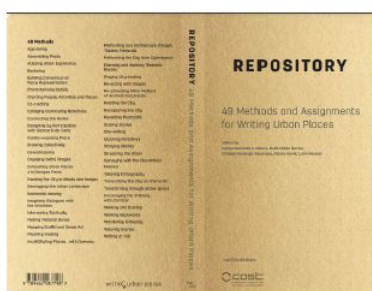
ACT 2: Rising action

ACT 3: Climax

ACT 4: Falling action

ACT 5: Resolution

For this five-act structure, methods from 49 Methods of Writing Urban Places<sup>4</sup>, such as site writing and imagining dialogues with the voiceless, will be used to create critical narratives. These narratives will synthesize and highlight the inherent characteristics of dissidence and subversion, mirroring these qualities for ongoing performative critique as urban feedback, while empowering vulnerable communities. The exploration of these acts will extend to architectural materiality and tectonics, revealing how these forms of spatially performative critique can be made possible in urban spaces.



SITE WRITING



IMAGINING DIALOGUES WITH  
THE VOICELESS

◀ Figure 3.5 Repository: 49 Methods and Assignments for Writing Urban Places  
(Source: TU Delft Books)

<sup>4</sup>Machado de Moura, C., Medina Bernal, D., Restrepo Restrepo, E., Havik, K., & Nacu, L. (Eds.). (n.d.). Repository: 49 methods and assignments for writing urban places

# FRAMEWORK

RESEARCH  
about design

## THEORETICAL

- Methodological approach  
*Narratives & Urban Literacy*
- Theoretical tapestry  
*Disjunction Triad (Event-Cities)*
- Lens for site analysis
- Precedents

## DISSIDENCE

*/'dɪsɪd(ə)ns/*

Hold or express  
opinions at variance  
with those commonly  
or officially held.

## EXPLORATIVE

LENS FOR  
SITE ANALYSIS

- Context  
*What is the context (of dissidence)?*
- Events  
*What is there (as event)?*
- Movements

MADRID  
as framework

Setting

SEARCH  
design



▲ Figure 3.6. Framework for research paper  
Created by Author.







## Theoretical framework

### *Disjunction triad*

To give this theoretical tapestry a structure, and also further for the application on the site analysis, a theoretical framework will be followed from the 'Architecture and Disjunction'<sup>5</sup> by Bernard Tschumi and it will partially overlap with this same structure.

For this the already existing triad of Events, Space and Movements<sup>6</sup>, will be developed further from the macro level of settings (context specific) to architectural elements to also explore down to the micro level of the tectonics of the built environment.

So the resulting order will be as following:

1. Setting (What is the context?)
2. Events (What is there?)
3. Movement (What it does?)
4. Space (What is the effect?)
5. Architectural materiality (What is the intention?)

This structure aims to move from broad socio-political phenomena like dissidence to its manifestation in specific spaces and architectural features.

◀ Figure 3.7. Art piece in Zapadores, Madrid  
(Source: Author)

---

<sup>5</sup>Tschumi, B. (1996). *Architecture and disjunction*. MIT Press.

<sup>6</sup>Tschumi, B. (2004). *Event-cities*. MIT Press.

## **CHAPTER 1: Setting the stage for dissent**

What is the context (of dissidence)?

Before events are explored, the context is imperative to develop an understanding for. Since events can be dissident in one place, and not in other, this topic is context specific and thereof the utter macro level. This layer sets the historical, social and political aspects in perspective and explores the specific conditions that provoke dissidence in a particular place.

### **1.1 Dissidence in relation to Architecture<sup>7</sup>**

Within this project dissidence is explored from the perspective of architectural discourse, since very often there are the traces of its manifestation in the built environment. As these are often coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities and mostly criticize and reach out to a more just living conditions they inherently poses the characteristics that can make this possible. Therefore it is imperative to listen, observe and try to find a way to implement these characteristics into the physical designs we put out in the world that could have a physical but also socio-cultural impact in the right direction of empowerment and equity.

As cities become more and more populated, the built environment becomes a site of both tension and contestation. Differences and strict normative systems lead to some communities becoming more vulnerable than others. This is most of the time where dissidence is observed, as vulnerable communities critique and challenge dominant power structures through resistance and dissident practices.

In the light of this topic, it is essential to clarify, that dissidence in this project is purely seen as a productive act. It is important to realize that there is a distinction between violent acts as being harmful and destructive, and performative acts of dissidence/violence as merely subversive or disruptive acts with the intention of challenging and reconfiguring societal systems and dominant norms. It creates a ripple effect by challenging these norms.

To explore this topic in depth, this framework will expand on architectural theories, social ecologies, urban commons and how the built environment can be explored as both an object and a subject for dissident acts. The objective of this theoretical framework is to layer different concepts and arrive at a lens to complete a site analysis in the context of Madrid and consider the potential of these acts on how architecture can be both a tool for control and an agent of empowerment.

---

<sup>7</sup>Weizman, I. (2014). *Architecture and the paradox of dissidence*. Verso.

As a result this framework sets the foundation for the analysis on how dissidence can shape and is shaped by architecture in times of social and political upheaval. Given the complexity of this topic with its multi-scalar structure, it is important to introduce some of the terminology that is crucial to create the required insight and understanding of it.

## ***1.2 An understanding of: Key Concepts in the intersection of Architecture and Dissidence***

This chapter explores relevant key terms and acts as a conceptual primer to offer an understanding of the intersection of architecture and dissidence. It is essential to set a foundation and frame our understanding of the topic of dissidence and relevant theories in the architectural domain.

Here's a glossary and a brief explanation:

### ***Dissidence and subversion***

Dissent and dissidence is resisting the official policy. It is a form of subversion, of protest, a form of objecting to dominant societal structures, in a rebellious spirit, but with a productive objective in mind. In the domain of architecture and the built environment it can point out to design principles that oppose mainstream ideologies and propose alternative ways of doing and the use of space to create a more equitable society.

### ***Social Ecology***

As shown on the diagram the topic of dissidence in relation to architecture is multidisciplinary. This can be best explained through the lens of social ecology. It is a framework that explores the interconnectedness of power dynamics, social structures and spatial aspects and it examines how architecture and urban planning can either reinforce dominant structures or make way for pockets of resistance and resilience, empowerment and foster sustainable social-spatial justice.

### ***Vulnerable communities***

Within the dominant structures of societies, there is also an inherent aspect of inclusion and exclusion. Due to many various, personal conditions that clash with the societal norms and systemic issues, individuals can become vulnerable. From the perspective of the built environment, some spatial practices such as gated communities can reinforce these differences and fragmentation. Therefore, architectural practices that advocate for empowerment should create spaces that foster inclusivity and spatial justice and where



the material ecologies reflect an inclusive approach in which the use of that space is made accessible to different types of users, and does not exclude anyone.

### ***Spatial justice and equity***

This topic of spatial justice is then at the core of this inclusion/exclusion paradigm. It refers to a fair distribution of the (urban) common goods, or the Right to the City, for all, regardless of their socio-cultural background. Rather than equality - which is unattainable in the complexity of urban environments - spatial justice calls for equity, focusing on a more personalized, context-specific approach.

### ***Socio-spatial agency and empowerment***

As a result of the aforementioned concepts, in order to arrive at a fairly distributed urban commons and where architecture can move into a more bottom-up collaborative domain, it is imperative to introduce spatial agency and empowerment. It introduces a collaborative approach to design in which all agents act with and on behalf of others. This allows a certain level of involvement for the end-users, enabling them to take the control of their own environment.

### ***Resistance and resilience***

These two concepts are interrelated, however, one is a state of doing and the latter one more of a state of being. Resistance is the collective acts of these communities, that actively are resisting and challenging oppressive societal systems. Whereas resilience, is the state of the communities that enables them to recover and adapt often by employing context-specific coping mechanisms.

### ***Collective action***

Collective actions<sup>8</sup> are actions that are undertaken by a group of people that have the same values or have shared struggles. Their difficulties bring them together and from strength from collectivity is being created therefore sticking together in the face of difficulties is a powerful collective act.

## **1.2 The standardized vs the coded: The production and contestation of urban space**

Urban space, especially within the context of dissidence can be best understood through the lens of social ecology. This theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of political, social and environmental factors, highlighting how space is continuously shaped by external forces.

---

<sup>8</sup>Awan, N., Till, J., & Schneider, T. (2011). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.

This resonates with Henri Lefebvre's theory on the Production of Space<sup>9</sup>, on the same topic emphasizing a triple dialectitic process that produces urban space:

- **Conceived space:** space as designed by architects and urban planners
- **Perceived space:** the way space is physically experienced and used by individuals
- **Lived space:** emotional and symbolic meaning attached to space by users

Both urban ecology and Lefebvre's dialectic move beyond viewing space as static and considers it as dynamic, shaped continuously by various external factors.

While these three aspects of the production of space can sometimes overlap harmoniously, there are moments when they oppose each other. This notion is enlightening for the role of dissidence in architecture. This is the case especially when physical characteristics of space due to rigid urban planning (conceived space) conflicts with the emotional and lived experiences of users. (lived space). Systemic issues and this friction over the notion of space leads to social unrest and manifests itself as the dissident practices in the built environment, where control and resistance are in interplay.

Rigid, standardized urban planning interventions often fail to meet the needs of local communities. Therefore, it is important to make the distinction between standardized vs coded urban spaces. There is no one-fits-all approach with urban planning, however capitalistic aspirations impose uniform design principles resulting in a loss of local character and some cases, displacement of vulnerable communities through processes like gentrification.

In contrast, coding urban spaces fosters uniqueness and specificity infusing urban spaces with unique meaning and functions that reflect the social, political and historical contexts of their communities. Understanding urban spaces within their social and ecological contexts requires recognizing the complexity of their formation. Each city, and even its individual neighborhoods, are shaped by a unique combination of historical, economic, geographical, cultural, and socio-political factors. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of these contexts is imperative in exploring the socio-spatial dimensions and the dissident practices that take place. Spaces designed with this approach can better respond to changing local conditions and community needs and create just, resilient urban environments.

---

<sup>9</sup>Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Blackwell. (Original work published 1974)



GRUPO **EMX**  
COMPRAS <sup>ESTA</sup> FINCA  
**NO** a **ESPECULACIÓN**  
**OLa**

CALZADOS VINIGON

DESDE 1940





## CHAPTER 2: The role of events in reconfiguring space

### What is there (as event)?

This chapter examines how various events serve as catalyst for architectural reconfiguration.

Narrowing down from the broader spatial and temporal aspects of dissidence, it is crucial to view dissent as an event in which architecture actively participates. Architecture is not simply a backdrop for dissident practices, but it becomes an integral part of these events and the practice of everyday life<sup>11</sup>, often influencing their dynamics. In a moment of unrest, architecture can be center stage for dissident events and may even become the object of defiance itself shaping and being shaped continuously.

Bernard Tschumi, in his book *Event Cities*<sup>10</sup>, argues that there is an inherent interplay between space and the events that unfold within it. That is to say that architecture should dynamically engage with the events that it may host. This argument aligns with Henri Lefebvre's theory, that it is about designing real spaces - considering not just the physical form but also the temporal and emotional aspects connected to the spaces and events within them.

Building upon those ideas, this chapter explores how events of dissidence reshape and reconfigure spaces. These modifications can be either permanent or temporary and are analyzed through the lens of Bernard Tschumi's theory of event-cities. Since the focus is on performative dissidence, this theory manages to capture the performativity of the dissident practices in their components in relation to architecture.

Performative dissidence often involves transgressing physical or societal boundaries and regulations to assert alternative uses of space. There are a various types of dissident practices and are often very on-point with addressing the issues at hand. Some of these practices are: graffiti, protests and occupations, informal settlements, guerrilla projects, direct action, flash mobs and street theatre performances.

Following are some identified major types of dissent:

---

<sup>10</sup>Tschumi, B. (1994). *Event Cities*. MIT Press.

<sup>11</sup>Certeau, M. de, & Rendall, S. (1988). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

◀ Figure 3.8. Concert and protest in front of Calle Tribulete 7, Lavapiés  
(Source: Madrid No Frills)



## **2.1 The claimed city**

### ***Occupation, appropriation and reclamation of space***

A primary strategy of dissidence is the occupation, appropriation and/or reclamation of urban space by vulnerable communities, often in abandoned or restricted areas. Marginalized communities take over and assert their presence by reclaiming these spaces.

This often emerges in spaces that have no overriding functions typically found in abandoned and vacant plots. They are stumbled upon and are discovered in the existing fabric of the city; they are found spaces. When a space is found, so are the qualities and affordances of that space. Their openness and specific physical features invite new uses and suggest new ways of occupying space, of working and recreating, of seeing and feeling the world. Discovering the site is not only the discovery of a space, but also the rediscovery of alternative ways of being and doing which creates opportunities for new spatial experiences.

This act of reclaiming ownership overlaps with Henri Lefebvre's concept of the 'Right to the City', emphasizing the need for individuals to participate in shaping their urban spaces. Examples of such dissident practices include squatting, informal street markets or street art. Public urban spaces, like those seen in the Occupy movement where public urban squares were transformed into venues for political dialogue and resistance.

## **2.2 Fleeting moments of dissent**

### ***Temporary and Ephemeral interventions***

This strategy uses the transient and temporal nature of dissent, often manifesting through temporary and ephemeral interventions that can have lasting impacts. One such tactic is the concept of Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ), where the legal framework for the use of space is briefly suspended, allowing for alternative uses. In TAZ, temporary uses of space are created outside the conventional legal framework, enabling users to redefine the intended functions. For example in Barcelona, skaters occupy a square for a few hours each day, asserting an alternative use of public space.

Ephemeral occupations and appropriations are one example that can open doors for critique and if successful, may lead to permanent transformations. An example of this is the underground tunnels of the La Tabacalera factory in Madrid. Initially used for graffiti art, these spaces have slowly gained recognition and are now being transformed into an official

graffiti art hub, with a permit.

## 2.3 A halt to the loud one, to allow the unheard

### *Disruption of Urban Flows*

This strategy focuses on disrupting urban flows as a form of critique, intentionally halting the urban flows of the city. Actions like flash mobs, carnivals, and protests seek to interrupt the daily routines of city life, drawing attention to societal issues and inequalities.

For instance, protests and flash mobs are designed to disrupt the normal flow of daily life, but it can also be done by employing non-human objects such as layering the highway with thousands of bricks to halt the mobile transport system as a form of critique. Carnavalesque forms of dissent achieve this through performance, mixing joy and defiance. These strategies reclaim and reroute urban flows of people and vehicles, but also resources.

## 2.4 Cracked and hacked monuments

### *Symbolic Subversion of Space*

Subverting symbolic spaces of power is another strategy that seeks to weaken or loosen the power structures through acts of defiance. These symbolic acts of defiance often target monuments, government buildings and financial centers challenging their authority - an example being the 15M movement in Madrid.

Dissident practices can vary widely, ranging from the individual actions to nationwide movements depending on the visibility and scale of the issue at hand and the communities that struggle with the specific systemic challenges. These strategies and tactics serve as responses to normative structures with each previously unheard voice contributing to the broader pursuit of equity.

---

*Strategies informed by the following readings:*

1. Mosley, Jonathan & Sara R., *The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 5, 15-20, 23.

2. Tschumi, Bernard, *Architecture and Transgression: An Interview in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 34-36.

3. Rice, Louis, *Occupied Space in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 73-75.

4. Sara, Rachel, *Citadels of Freedom in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 54-55.

5. Altay, Can, *Transgression in and of the City in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 103-107.

6. Faustino, Didier, *In Praise of Transgression in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 121-122.

7. Schumacher, Patrik, *Transgression, Innovation, Politics in The Architecture of Transgression* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013), pp. 131-133.







## CHAPTER 3: The power of movement in disrupting space

*What it does (through movement)?*

This chapter explores the significance of movement<sup>12</sup> in dissent how the circulation of bodies through urban spaces disrupts the intended urban flows. It examines the ways how both regulated and fluid movements can reshape urban experiences, contributing to the emergence or dissolution of resistance.

### 3.1 Bodies in space

Building upon the concept of performative dissidence and performativity in urban contexts, our bodies serve as our primary means of orienting ourselves in the daily life<sup>13,14</sup>. The way we act, whether compliant or subversive, is shaped by the environments we navigate.

When bodies move through spaces in ways that clash with the intended uses of that space, they can act transgressively, challenging spatial norms and disrupting urban order. The scale of this disruption depends on the number of bodies involved. A solitary individual may provoke little reaction, but a group of people - such as in a protest - can have a significant impact. In these instances, bodies become the agents of disruption, paving the way to new spatial experiences through the following steps.

1. Physical environment acknowledged
2. Bodies move through space
3. Image and meaning are created
4. Thought: reflection and reconsideration
5. Actions materialized

This can be understood as a choreographic act - a deliberate sequencing of movements in an urban performance to convey a message of common shared struggles. In such performative dissident practices, presence and motion of bodies become tools for disruption.

Similarly, non-human actors also play a role as disruptors in space, whether through intentional acts or not. Some disruptions are so normalized that they no longer register as subversive. One such example is the white plastic chair, often used to temporarily occupy urban spaces. Placed on parking spots or on sidewalks, these chairs extend personal territories

---

<sup>12</sup>Tschumi, B. (1994). *Event Cities*. MIT Press.

<sup>13</sup>Franck, K., & Stevens, Q. (Eds.). (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life*. Routledge

<sup>14</sup>Certeau, M. de, & Rendall, S. (1988). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

◀ Figure 3.9. Crowd at the El Rastro sunday market in Embajadores  
(Source: Author)



into public spaces, offering flexibility and agency. Although not seen as dissident, it empowers citizens to reconfigure their surroundings.

### **3.2 Choreography: Spatial control vs Movement as agency**

Movement - particularly the freedom to move - is a powerful form of asserting presence and disrupting established norms. The ability to move independently and make choices that influence one's surroundings is central to the concept of agency. In this context, movement becomes a tool for claiming space, appropriation and critiquing dominant norms.

Architecture and urban planning plays a dual role in this dynamics of movement. It can either enable freedom by creating open, adaptable spaces or restrict it through rigid design manifestations in the shape of barriers, relatively fostering inclusion or reinforcing exclusion. Architecture not only influences dissent but is also transformed by the movements and acts of resistance it confronts.

Urban design is quite often a top-down approach regulating flows and movements within the city. While efforts to beautify and enhance public spaces may be well-intentioned, they frequently overlook and inherent rigidity that can become restrictive - sometimes deliberately so. This 'architecture of control' often manifests as exclusionary measures, such as barriers, fences, and gated, which limit movement and access rather than fostering inclusive solutions.

Rigid urban planning and architecture enforce top-down control over movement, but dissident practices, such as carnivalesque disruptions, protests and flash mobs subvert these regulated flows of movement creating temporary moments of spatial liberations.

Ultimately, for spatial justice and equity to materialize, agency and empowerment through movement - across spatial, political and social realms - must be fostered. Achieving this requires not only adaptable and flexible design principles but also loosening the authoritarian control, striving for safety and security through alternative approaches such as fostering social control.

## **3.2 Vulnerable communities and their movements**

For vulnerable communities, movement and performative acts of dissent serve as powerful tools for empowerment and resistance. These communities often face spatial restrictions imposed by rigid urban design and policies that limit their mobility. These limitations can be both architectural - through physical barriers and legal or policy-based, which constrain their movement and access to urban spaces.

In response, these communities navigate and challenge these imposed constraints through movement. On a larger scale, protests and demonstrations disrupt the regulated flows of movement, temporarily carving out spaces of autonomy and resistance. On a smaller scale, pockets of resistance subvert the boundaries between public and private domains, challenging the spatial norms that confine them.

Architecture plays a significant role in this dynamic. It can be an instrument of control, where design choices are deliberately made to limit the mobility and visibility of vulnerable communities. Examples of this include gated communities and hostile architecture, which target homeless people, showing how urban planning and architecture can be further create struggles for the vulnerable communities.

In response to these limitations, movement - both physical and social - becomes a strategy for resistance. Through movement, vulnerable communities carve out spaces, reclaim autonomy, assert their presence and raise awareness of their grievances. Movement allows unheard vulnerable voices to be seen and heard.

One notable example of this is graffiti on the subway and trains. The moving train transforms into a canvass of dissent, amplifying the message across the city as it moves through urban spaces. This subversion of space creates a wider public awareness, as the transient nature of the train draws attentions in a way that static objects cannot.







## CHAPTER 4: The stage of dissent

*What is the effect (on space)?*

This chapter explores the effects of dissent on space<sup>15</sup> both physical and semantic. It examines how different forms of resistance have an impact on the reconfiguration of the built environment.

### 4.1 Action - Reaction: The dynamics of dissent

Dissident practices initiate a dynamic interaction with the built environment. It is important to point out that dissident practices cannot directly influence the design of the built environment, however it can be the reason for certain design choices. As previously stated, hostile architecture for example is implemented with that in mind to prevent specific dissident practices.

Although many dissident practices are short-term, some of them leave lasting effects on the socio-spatial context. These can however over time have long term effects and lead to physical transformation of spaces, either impacting the vulnerable communities positively or negatively. Then this creates a cycle where tension persists between control and resistance.

### 4.2 Reconfiguration of space

As previously mentioned, strategies and tactics such as occupation, repurposing, or symbolic alterations, dissent has the effect of reconfiguring how space is experienced, used and valued, be it short or long term.

This can be best seen in more long term dissident practices such as occupations of private and public spaces since these are sites where new spatial experiences build onto one another. Over time these alternative uses can be made official if the productive impact on the community is acknowledged. Which can be a liberation and autonomy of space.

### 4.3 Collective meanings: a language of common struggles<sup>17</sup>

Dissident practices<sup>16</sup> often serve as collective coping mechanisms, where communities unite to express shared struggles. These actions, whether large-scale protests

---

<sup>15</sup>Tschumi, B. (1994). *Event Cities*. MIT Press.

<sup>16</sup>De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

<sup>17</sup>Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.

◀ *Figure 3.10. Design choices as hostile architecture to prevent public space occupation and protests*  
(Source: Author)



or informal occupations create a common language of resistance. While context-specific, such practices are often seen across different neighbourhoods and cities, indicating a shared understanding of resilience.

The built environment becomes central to these expressions, either as stage for dissent or as participants in it. The Occupy Movement, for instance, used the appropriation of public square to symbolize resistance, transforming urban spaces into sites of collective action and defiance.

Through these practices, space is reconfigured, giving voice to common struggles and challenging power structures in both symbolic and practical ways.

This chapter refrains from expanding further on the effects of dissent on space in text, as these effects can truly be understood and fully experienced through direct observation of the spaces, either in person or through visual representations.







MINISTERIO  
DE CULTURA  
Y DEPORTE

REHABILITACIÓN DE LAS FACHADAS  
CARPINTERÍAS DE TABACALERA



Presidencia del Gobierno

Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte

Proyecto de Rehabilitación

de las Fachadas

de las Carpinterías

de Tabacalera

de Madrid

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984

de 1984



## CHAPTER 5: *Architectural materiality of resistance*<sup>18</sup>

*What is the intention (of architectural materialities)?*

This chapter shifts focus to the architectural materiality, exploring how these aspects are altered by acts of dissent. As the final chapter, it examines the material aspects that inherently belong to the realm of dissidence. Understanding and cataloging this language of dissent can empower vulnerable communities by transforming these insights into actionable design principles.

### 5.1 Thresholds and boundaries: defining control

- **Theme:** *Barriers and entry points*
- **Tectonics:** *Construction and positioning*

This section explores architectural elements/configurations like doors, gates and checkpoints which control access and define who can enter a space. Their construction, positioning and scale determine their effectiveness in restricting movement.

Subversion occurs when these thresholds and boundaries are either physically or symbolically crossed, or are repurposed by dissenting individuals or groups. For instance, occupations of urban spaces or buildings defy these boundaries, acting as a critique of systemic issues and a coping mechanism, as seen when homeless individuals occupy vacant buildings.

### 5.2 Open vs. Closed space: The Space of Gathering

- **Theme:** *Architectural Forms for Assembly or Containment*
- **Tectonics:** *Spatial arrangement*

This section examines the interplay between open space - such as squares and plazas - and closed or confined spaces, as well as the porosity of the urban fabric that regulates the flow of movements. Open spaces often serve as stages for dissent, facilitating gathering and expression of collective action.

Dissident practices exist on a visibility spectrum: some thrive in public, open spaces, while others seek concealment, such as those that take place in underground areas.

◀ *Figure 3.11. View of the La Tabacalera that sums up some of the materiality aspects and tectonics of dissidence*  
(Source: Author)

---

<sup>18</sup>Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.

Dissident practices often repurpose both open and concealed spaces, altering their intended uses, halting flows and using the inherent affordances of these spaces for subversion.

### 5.3 Surfaces of Subversion: Materiality and Expression

- **Theme:** *Facades and Surfaces as Canvas for Dissent*
- **Tectonics:** *Material qualities*

Urban surfaces, including walls, facades, floors and temporary & ephemeral or moving surfaces, are key elements in enabling or restricting dissent. All of these urban surfaces that have become subject to dissident move beyond being mere thresholds between spaces. They transform into canvases where messages can be conveyed through graffiti, posters or physical alterations.

Urban surfaces become the platforms for dissent, providing a space where acts of resistance can unfold, gaining new meanings over time. By reclaiming these urban surfaces dissenters challenge the control of state-regulated spaces and offer alternative narratives to those imposed by authority.

These surfaces also become sites for communication facilitating dialogue between different groups, often in more latent or indirect ways.

### 5.4 Monumental Architecture as Object of Subversion

- **Theme:** *Symbol of Power and their Subversion*
- **Tectonics:** *Mass, scale and symbolism*

This section examines how acts of dissent subvert the symbolism embedded in monumental architecture and structures. Monumental buildings are often constructed with the intent to symbolize power and control. The destruction or alterations of these structures, becomes a symbolic act of defiance, challenging and undermining their meaning they were constructed to uphold.

Dissident practices that target monumental spaces, through marches, protest or occupations, aim to reclaim monumental spaces, confronting and undermining the authority these monuments represent. While monumental architecture can be a tool of oppression, it also offers opportunities for resistance, as it becomes a site where their symbolic power can be contested and redefined by those who seek to challenge the

systems of control it represents.

## 5.5 Adaptive structures: flexibility in space

- **Themes:** *Modular and Moveable Architecture*
- **Tectonics:** *The moveability and flexibility*

This section examines the adaptability of architectural elements in relation to dissidence, focusing on structures that can either support or obstruct acts of defiance. Temporary or adaptive structures, such as those employed during the 15M movement in Madrid, allow for the reclamation and reconfiguration of urban spaces to facilitate protest.

Interestingly, the structures of control and defiance can often overlap, depending on how and by whom they are employed. For instance, temporary pavilions, stages or platforms can serve as flexible sites for dissent, while temporary fencing or barriers can be deployed to prevent these same activities.

Urban design can incorporate or resist these subversive uses of space. Flexible design principles allow for the fluid repurposing of urban areas to changing needs and addressing the dynamic and evolving nature of dissident practices.

## 5.6 The Architecture of Ephemerality: Temporary Installations and Occupation

- **Theme:** *Temporary Architecture and Structures*
- **Tectonics:** *Temporary construction and deconstruction*

This section examines the fleeting, ephemeral nature of architectural interventions employed in dissident practices, as well as those designed to prevent such activities. Practices such as flash mobs, temporary tents, protests all have a fleeting nature, so they intend to reclaim urban spaces within a specific timeframe. These short-term disruptions serve as both coping mechanisms and acts of performative defiance.

Dissidents often challenge conventional uses of space by creating (temporary) pockets of resistance, as seen in the 15M movement in Madrid. These ephemeral interventions open spaces to alternative, subversive uses, disrupting the dominant uses of spaces.

These ephemeral tactics of dissent challenge the top-down approach to architecture and urban planning, by proposing more fluid adaptable urban spaces, offering moments of spatial liberation through brief but impactful acts.



### **3.5 Synthesis: A Lens, A Toolbox for site analysis**

Now that architectural theories have been linked to the topic of dissidence and a framework has been created along dissecting its components, a toolbox emerges to guide the analysis of urban spaces. This synthesis offers a methodological approach that integrated theoretical concepts into practical tools for site analysis, particularly in the context of Madrid. By dissecting it into these 5 layers of components, the lens that emerges reveals the socio-spatial dynamics of dissident practices and their manifestation in the built environment.

#### **Layer 1: Setting**

The first chapter, focuses on socio-spatial aspects of dissent and explored how different notions of space can lead to dissident practices manifested in the built environment. Urban spaces are examined for their unique socio-spatial components revealing systemic conditions that may provoke dissent. This layer emphasizes the interplay between the socio-spatial factors that shape urban spaces and the vulnerabilities that result in contestation and resistance.

#### **Layer 2: Events**

This second layer examines types of events associated with dissidence observed in the urban environment. Performative dissidence is emphasized as being disruptive rather than destructive, capable of creating ripple effects that transform spatial relationships.

#### **Layer 3: Movements**

The third chapter, examines the movement and flow of both human and non-human actors within urban spaces as part of dissidence. It emphasizes movement as a powerful expression of agency, allowing vulnerable communities to assert their presence, challenging ownership, and confront exclusionary practices. It argues that movement, both physically and systemically, can have an empowering effect on these communities and offer agency.

#### **Layer 4: Space**

The fourth chapter on the effects of dissidence on space, both physical and symbolic. It explores how dissident practices reconfigure urban spaces by transforming their meaning, functions and uses. Dissent creates a dynamic interaction between communities, and the built environment, where practices such as occupation, repurposing, or symbolic alterations redefine how space is experienced. These transformations may range from temporary interventions to long-term impacts that challenge the status quo. The stage of dissent reveals the tension between control and liberation, emphasizing how dissidence reshapes spaces to reflect collective struggles and aspiration.

### **Layer 5: Materiality and tectonics**

The last chapter focuses on architectural elements and objects in the urban environment, examining how they are employed in both top-down control and bottom-up subversion. These architectural features are investigated for their potential to enable or obstruct resistance, reflecting the material dimensions of dissidence. Key elements include:

- Thresholds/ boundaries
- Open vs. closed spaces (Porosity)
- Surfaces of subversions
- Monumental objects as objects of subversion
- Adaptive and flexible structures
- Ephemeral structures







## 04 EPIPHANY

*bridge*

**Sub-question:** *What preliminary findings and precedents have been observed, and how do they inform the direction of both research and design direction?*

◀ *Figure 4.1. Art piece of footsteps, in a public park that is partially occupied by vulnerable communities in the Embajadores neighbourhood.  
(Source: Author)*

This chapter presents some preliminary findings on the types of dissent observed in Madrid, aiming to create a broader understanding of patterns of dissidence. These initial observations offer insight into the dissent merging in the city, highlighting how local dynamics shape expressions of opposition. Secondly, it introduces some precedents that mostly are also from Madrid, and showcase some aspects that foster agency and empowerment for the vulnerable communities.

## **4.1 Preliminary findings: Madrid as framework**

Before conducting a site analysis, several preliminary findings are presented that guide the direction of the project. These findings primarily draw from external sources such as Madrid No Frills, which highlights the vulnerabilities and struggles experienced in Madrid. As can be seen on the right, there are four examples of dissident practices were observed initially and are relevant to the topic of the project.

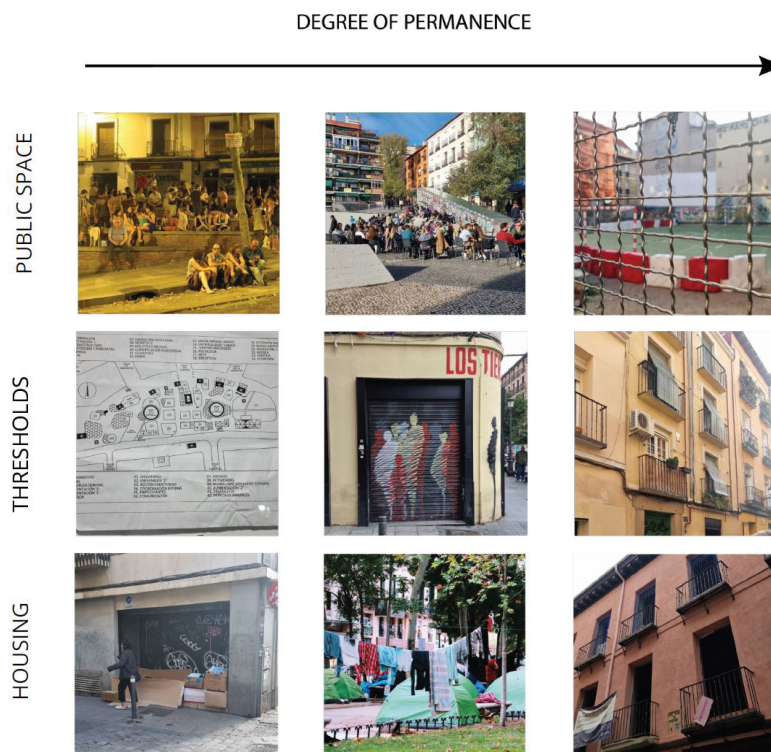
The first example is the use of plastic white chair in public spaces. This practice allows individuals to extend their influence in urban spaces and take temporary ownership of public spaces. The second example is botellón, now illegal, an informal practice where people gather in public spaces to consume alcohol and socialize, often as a response to the high costs of drinking in commercial establishments.

The third example is guerrilla gardening, where individuals or groups plant crops or flowers in underused or neglected public spaces as a form of occupation and reclamation of urban spaces. Last but not least, squatting - where evicted or homeless individuals occupy vacant properties out of necessity - represents another form of resistance against social and economic exclusion.

In the lower right corner of the page, additional dissident practices observed during the research trip to Madrid are categorized. These practices highlight key spatial aspects of dissent, particularly in relation to housing, public space and the thresholds. The degree to which dissent is permanent or ephemeral is a significant factor to consider when designing conditions and interventions that address these forms of resistance.



◀ Figure 4.2. Examples of dissidence in the Embajadores neighbourhood observed by a journalist  
(Source: Madrid No Frills)



◀ Figure 4.3. Observed dissidence on site visit in the Embajadores neighbourhood  
(Source: Author)



## 4.2 Precedents

### 15 M - Okupa movement

The 15 M movement, was a protest that took place in Madrid, in response to citizens' dissatisfaction with the economic state and austerity measures imposed by the government due to the economic crisis of 2008. The protest was not violent, striving for democracy and transparency.

Thousands of citizens occupied Puerta del Sol for weeks, creating a temporary tent-city in the square. This self-managed space offered about 30 types of social services, addressing societal issues through a bottom-up approach, helping vulnerable individuals while bypassing regulations. It demonstrated alternative ways of doing and being in the city.

The relevance of Okupa, other than being a dissident practice, it also manifested itself in architectural and material sense within the city. Although it wasn't a lasting case, its effect endured. It has articulated on topics such as community, empowerment and agency through self-built and managed structures, and has also showcased the material and temporal language of productive / disruptive actions to challenge the norms of the society. The 15m has signified the transformative potential of urban spaces as a tool for social and systemic change.



▲ Figure 4.4. Tents on Plaza del Sol during the 15M Occupy Movement. Source: Rice, L. (2013). *In The architecture of transgression*

**Topic:** Reappropriation of public space in the form of sit-ins, a symbol of resistance  
**Location:** Puerta del Sol, Madrid

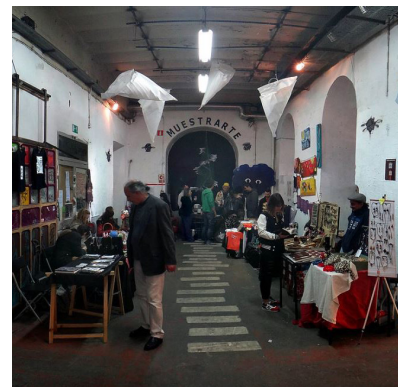
### La Tabacalera

La Tabacalera is an old tobacco factory, nowadays occupied as a communal space for social and cultural events. It has been operating as a self-organized space since 2010. The factory has become a hub for various events and celebrations and a gathering point for activists, grassroots, art and community engagement.

It hosts an array of activities, including workshops, art exhibitions, sales, concerts and social projects. It serves as a hotspot for cultural production and social activism, providing a platform for vulnerable voices and fostering a more inclusive community.

La Tabacalera's significance lies in its intention to empower vulnerable communities, with an open-ended organization that supports various activities in a dynamic environment.

The raw and unfinished surface within the building are inviting engagement and to personalize through art and graffiti but also spatial appropriation. It exemplifies the power of collective action in promoting participatory approach for the use of urban spaces and abandoned buildings.



▲ Figure 4.5. La Tabacalera indoor market (Source: Flickr. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tabacalera-lavapies/13285958034/>)

**Topic:** Occupation for cultural and social dissidence  
**Location:** Embajadores, Madrid

## Vecinos Tribulete 7

In February 2024, Tribulete 7, a residential building in the Lavapiés neighborhood of Madrid, hosted a unique gathering as a performative protest, in response to mass evictions driven by vulture funds who's purpose is to gentrify the neighbourhood.

The building has served as the venue for a large concert featuring a variety of music genres, including flamenco, jazz, blues, bolero. This event was a celebration of the cultural richness and diversity of Lavapiés. The residents have opened their homes to artists where everyday spaces like doorways, kitchens and living rooms have become stages for this performative dissidence. Approximately 500 neighbors attended the event, which served as a powerful call for help and solidarity.

The significance of Tribulete 7, lies in its performative approach to social and political matters where culture becomes the pivotal aspect. It shifts the focus to its strengths demonstrating the value of the neighborhood and the importance of preserving it from evictions. By harnessing the power of culture and music, the event affirmed the unique cultural identity of Lavapiés, challenging societal norms in a performative way.



▲ Figure 4.6. Concert and protest in front of Calle Tribulete 7, Lavapiés (Source: Madrid No Frills)

**Topic:** Performative dissidence and agency

**Location:** Embajadores, Madrid

## Sargfabrik

Sargfabrik is a cooperative housing and cultural center located in a former coffin factory. It serves as a model for sustainable community living and alternative urban development. It has been refurbished in 1996, promoting vibrant spaces for social interaction, artistic expression and collaborative projects.

The complex operates on principles of cooperation and self-management and offers a variety of housing configurations to accommodate a diverse community. The original design of the building creates a dynamic interaction between private and public spaces where these two blend in unique ways. Additionally, it functions as a cultural hub, hosting workshops, exhibitions, performances and events that encourage active participation. This space fosters social cohesion within the community while also facilitating cultural exchange with visitors.

The significance of Sargfabrik, as a precedent lies in its self-managed, bottom-up approach to addressing social issues and promotes empowerment through social cohesion and cultural engagement. One of its unique features is the bath-house, which exemplifies its commitment to both communal living and cultural importance.



Figure 4.7. Sargfabrik (Source: Unknown)

▲ **Topic:** Alternative living, community empowerment

**Location:** Vienna, Austria







# 05 STAGE

## ACT III

*climax*

**Sub-question:** *What are the observed manifestations and key components of dissident practices in the contested neighbourhood of Embajadores, in Madrid?*

## The lens

This chapter explores dissident practices in Madrid focusing on three public squares, combining architectural and experiential analyses. The following frames provide a tool for understanding the dynamics of dissent within these settings. Each frame addresses the sub questions derived from the previous chapters.

---

### **Setting:** *What is the context?*

This chapter introduces the socio, political and spatial context of the site, forming the foundation of the analyses. It lays out the conditions for the production and contestation of urban spaces where dissent and oppression occur.

**Themes:** Socio-political-spatial aspects

**Methodology:** Mapping

**Result:** Urban maps, geosocial mapping

---

### **Events:** *What is there (as event)?*

This layer investigates the events that occur on the on the site and the systemic issues behind these dissident practices. It examines specific events that have sparked resistance, such as common struggles, and highlights the tension and conflicts between the parties involved.

**Themes:** Performative violence, events, strategies and tactics

**Methodology:** Images, Mapping, Interviews

**Result:** Images and maps

---

### **Movement:** *What it does (as movement)?*

This frame focuses on movement and flows. Movement is analyzed as the ultimate act of defiance - visible and dynamic - disrupting urban life both physically and symbolically. It explores how these actions create new spatial experiences.

**Themes:** Bodies in space, urban flows and movements, vulnerable communities, architecture of control

**Methodology:** Mapping

**Result:** Urban maps, routing maps

---

### **Space:** *What is the effect (on space)?*

This frame examines how dissidence has reconfigured the urban fabric and transformed user experiences. It analyzes the tactics and strategies that redefine space and emphasized the role of architecture in these processes.

**Themes:** Effects of dissidence on the notion of space,

**Methodology:** Vertical studies

**Result:** Elevations and sections

---

### **Architectural materiality and tectonics:** *What is the intention (of architectural materialities)?*

This layer explores how materiality and tectonics embody the dynamics of control and resistance. It delves into the physical sites but also abstract characteristics of dissent in the built environment. Through creative writing, it reveals the material manifestations of dissident practices.

**Themes:** Thresholds/ boundaries, Open vs. closed spaces (Porosity), Surfaces of subversions, Monumental objects as objects of subversion, Adaptive and flexible structures, Ephemeral structures

**Methodology:** Photography and urban writing

**Result:** Images, narratives











# SETTING

*Madrid as framework*

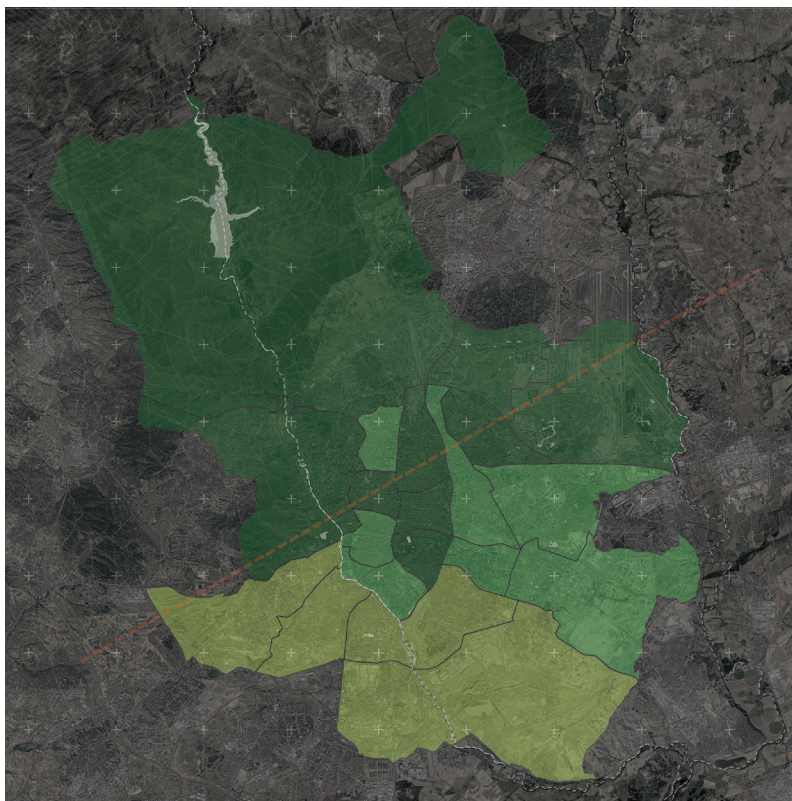




**Frame:**  
**Foreign background index**

This map highlights Madrid's ethnic segregation, showing higher concentrations of foreign-born citizens in two areas: disadvantaged peripheries with lower costs and central neighborhoods with more opportunities but higher costs. It reveals the divide between advantaged and disadvantaged communities, pointing to areas where there is rich cultural diversity.

◀ Figure 5.3. Foreign background index - Madrid. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

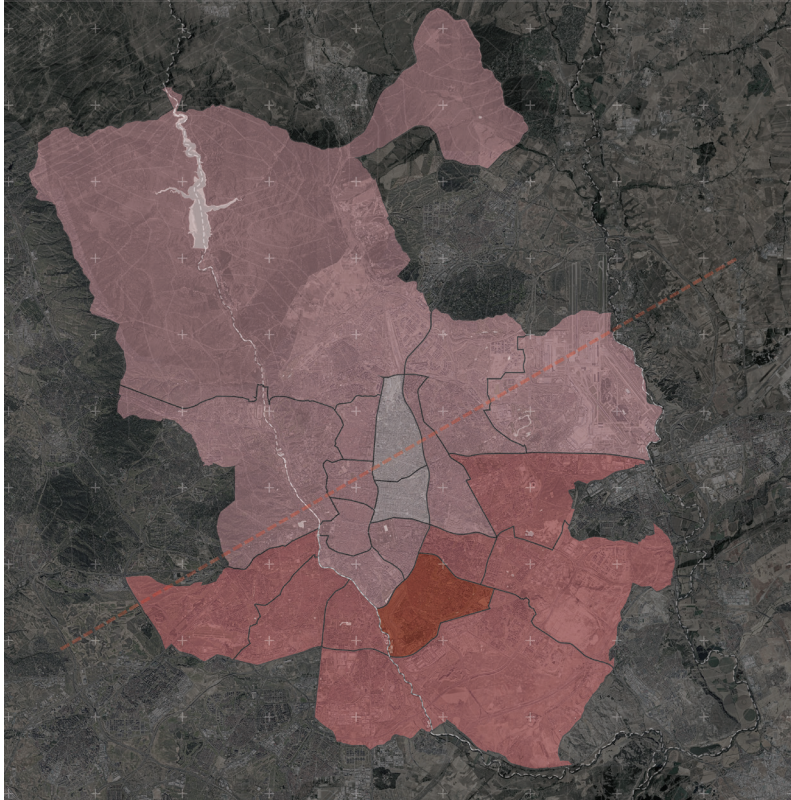


**Frame:**  
**Household income**

This map of Madrid highlights the invisible boundary of the Madrid Diagonal, separating neighborhoods by household income. Above the line are areas with higher income, reflected in wide streets and urban care, while below it are lower-income neighborhoods. The Madrid Rio river also acts as a physical division, with the lower-income areas located at the peripheries. This creates a self-reinforcing cycle, where scarce opportunities and long commutes further limit household income.

◀ Figure 5.4. Household income - Madrid. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

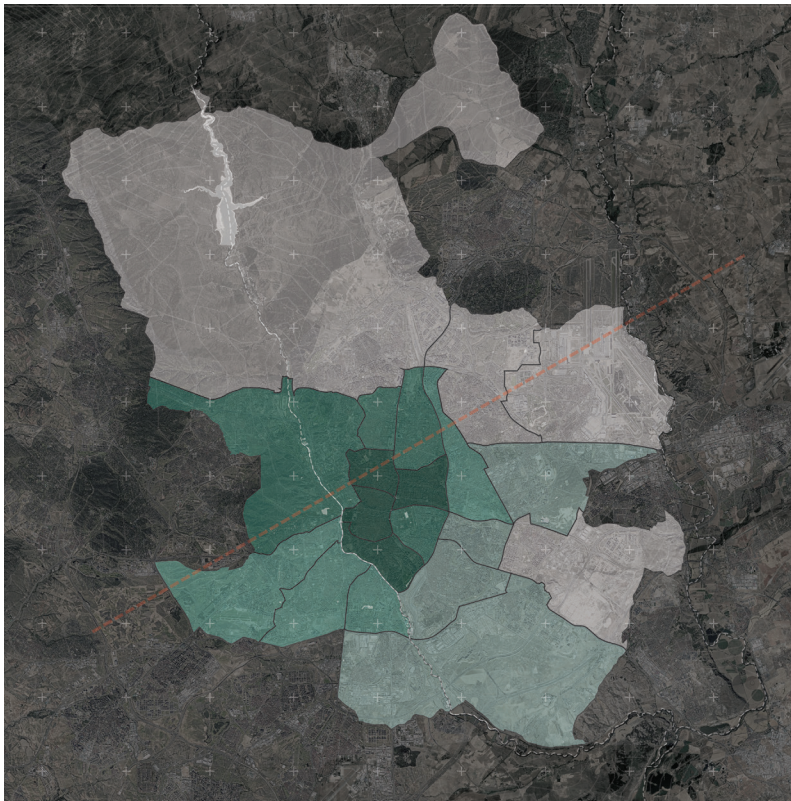




**Frame:**  
**Unemployment rates**

This map visualizes the Madrid Diagonal line, highlighting southern peripheral neighborhoods with the highest unemployment rates. Marginalized communities here have less stable education, limiting access to stable jobs. High-paying opportunities are scarce, leading to unstable informal economies. These areas, marked by unemployment and job insecurity, can become battlegrounds for dissatisfaction and various coping mechanisms.

◀ Figure 5.5. Unemployment rates - Madrid. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

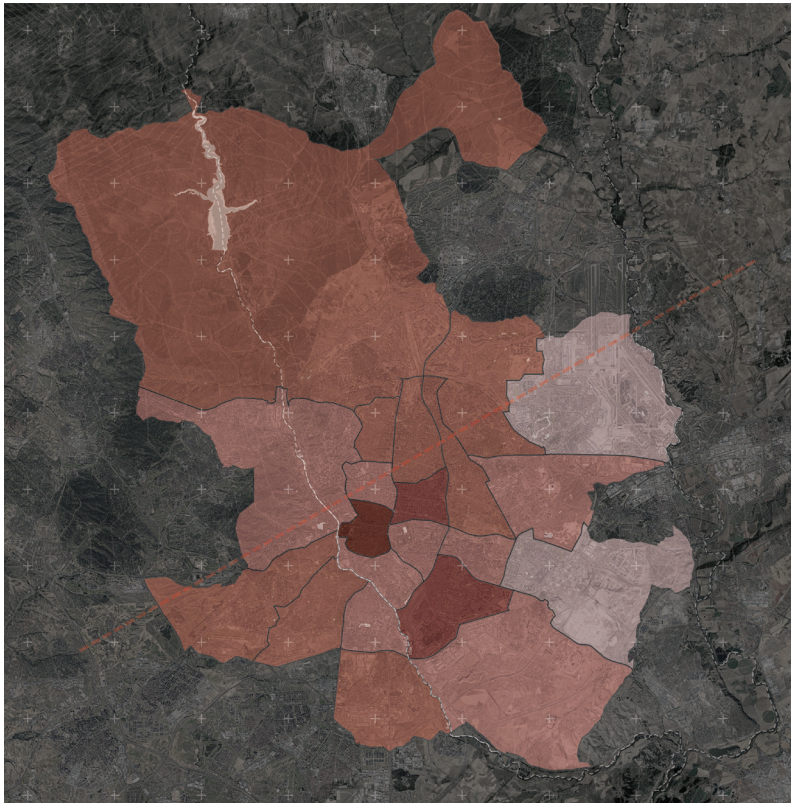


**Frame:**  
**Gentrification**

This map illustrates gentrification in Madrid, starting at the city center and pushing vulnerable communities to the peripheries. The process erases the identity of the oldest, most vulnerable areas, prioritizing tourism and attracting higher-income families, creating soulless spaces. While it highlights desirable neighborhoods, it also visualizes displacement and the loss of residents forced to move to other areas

◀ Figure 5.6. Gentrification - Madrid. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

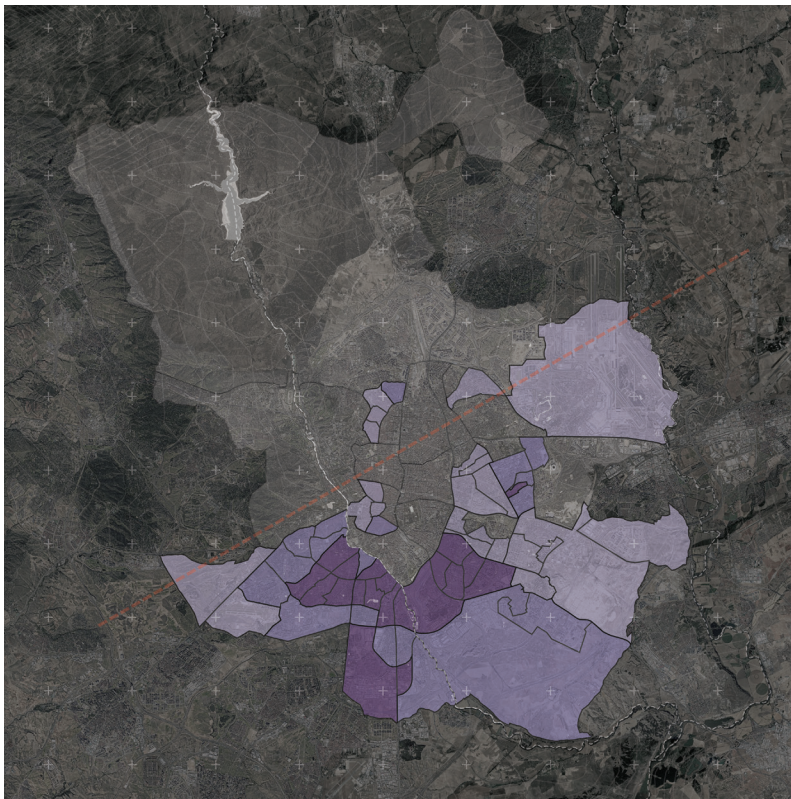




**Frame:**  
**Crime rates**

This map shows crime rates in Madrid, which overlap with other layers in certain neighborhoods. Crime is most prevalent in the city center, where safety is fragile due to socio-spatial neglect. The area becomes a backdrop for acts of desperation, where dissident practices occur and police forces patrol, with citizens caught between neglect and high control, treated as subjects to be managed rather than communities to be nurtured.

◀ Figure 5.7. Crime rates - Madrid.  
Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

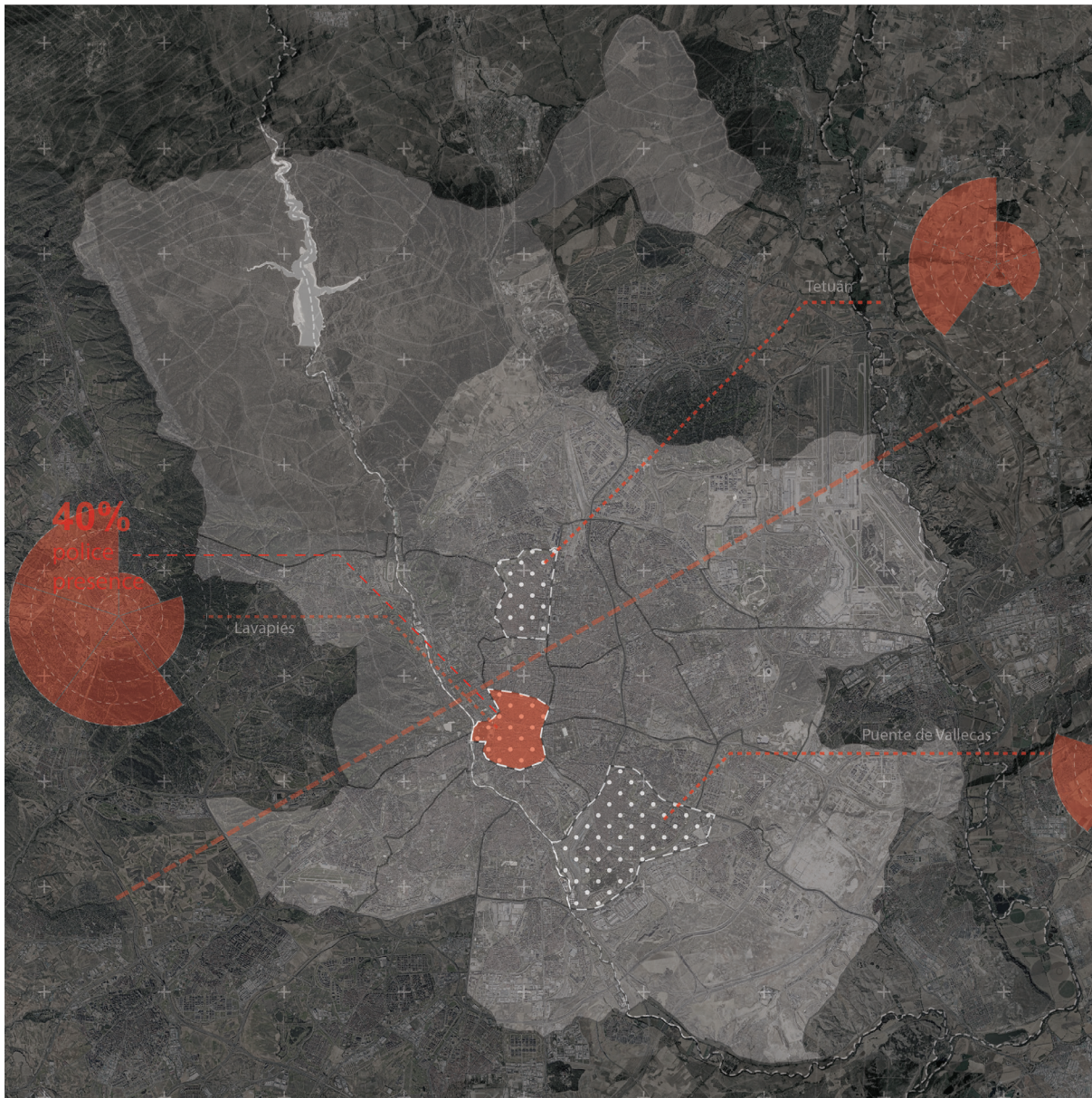


**Frame:**  
**Vulnerability index**

This map visualizes the Madrid Diagonal line, highlighting the most vulnerable neighborhoods where survival is a daily concern. The peripheries, also disadvantaged in other layers, show areas of cumulative disadvantage, with limited access to health, education, and job security, creating a self-reinforcing cycle of hardship

Figure 5.8. Vulnerability index -  
◀ Madrid. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.





**Frame:**  
**3 most vulnerable neighborhoods**

This map focuses on three neighborhoods that exhibit cumulative disadvantage across several layers. Each neighborhood has its own unique geographical context but shares a complex mix of socio-spatial challenges. The map also highlights various types of dissident practices observed in these areas, with the city center showing the highest concentration of such activities. These neighborhoods reflect a blend of social, economic, and spatial factors that contribute to their struggles, offering a deeper look into the dynamics of inequality and resistance within the city

▲ Figure 5.9. Most vulnerable neighbourhoods - Madrid.  
(Source: Author)

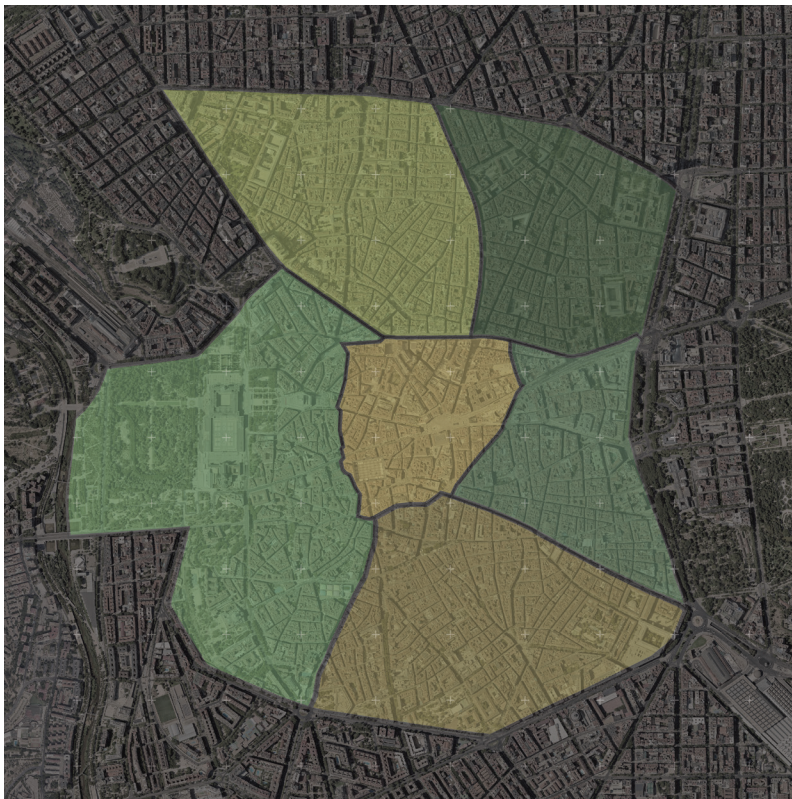




**Frame:**  
**Foreign background index**

This map highlights the neighborhoods of Sol and Embajadores, where foreign-born citizens are most concentrated. Immigrants often settle in these areas due to factors like affordable rent and older housing. It also shows where communities form, with people of similar backgrounds living close to each other. As a result, the appropriation of public spaces is more visible in these neighborhoods

◀ Figure 5.10. Foreign background index - Centro. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

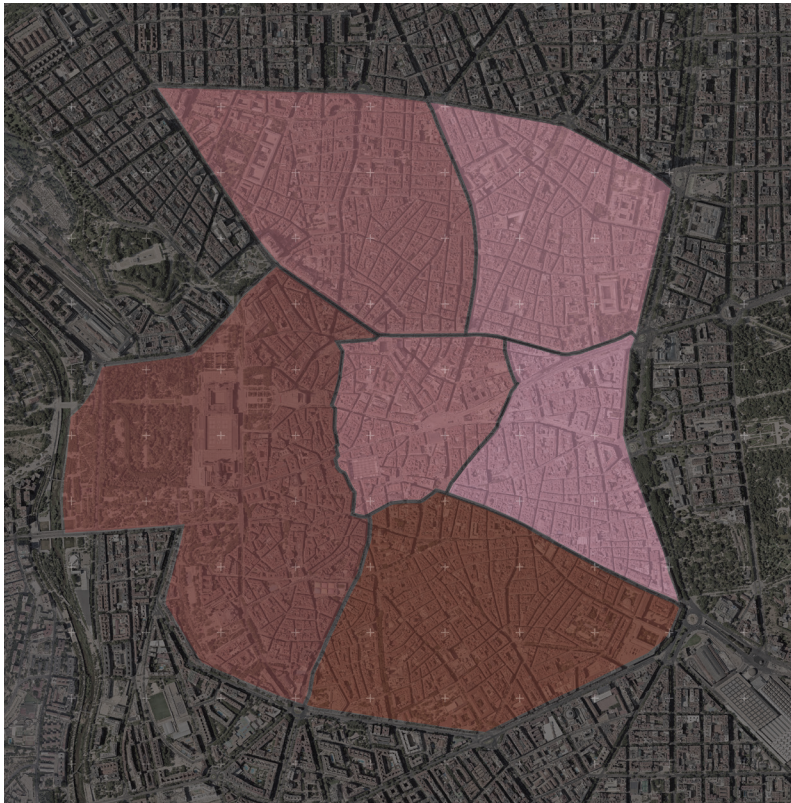


**Frame:**  
**Household income**

This map shows that the neighborhoods of Universidad, Sol, and Embajadores have the lowest household incomes. These areas often feature older, cheaper housing and are targets for gentrification efforts. Historically, these neighborhoods have had a strong working-class identity, which is also reflected in their high urban density.

◀ Figure 5.11. Household income - Centro. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.





**Frame:**  
**Unemployment rates**

This map highlights a similar pattern of disadvantage, with the neighborhood of Embajadores having the highest unemployment rate. As mentioned earlier, high unemployment often signals areas where dissident practices emerge, as job insecurity leads to despair and dissatisfaction, creating space for coping mechanisms.

◀ Figure 5.12. Unemployment rates - Centro. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.



**Frame:**  
**Vulnerability index**

This map highlights the neighborhood of Embajadores as the most disadvantaged, showing it as the most vulnerable and contested area, where the levels of vulnerability are the highest.

◀ Figure 5.13. Vulnerability index - Centro. Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

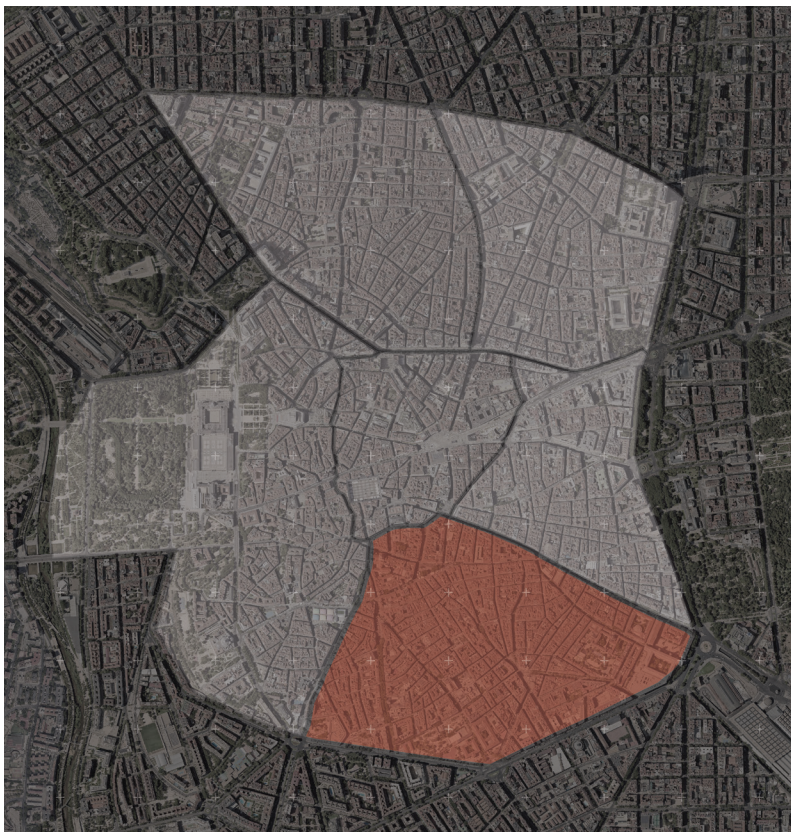




**Frame:**  
**Gentrification**

This map shows that Embajadores is currently the most gentrifying neighborhood, with low housing prices due to the age of the buildings. The area experiences frequent evictions, leading to displacement and a gradual loss of its original identity.

◀ Figure 5.14. Gentrification - Centro.  
Data sourced from Ayuntamiento de Madrid. Created by Author.

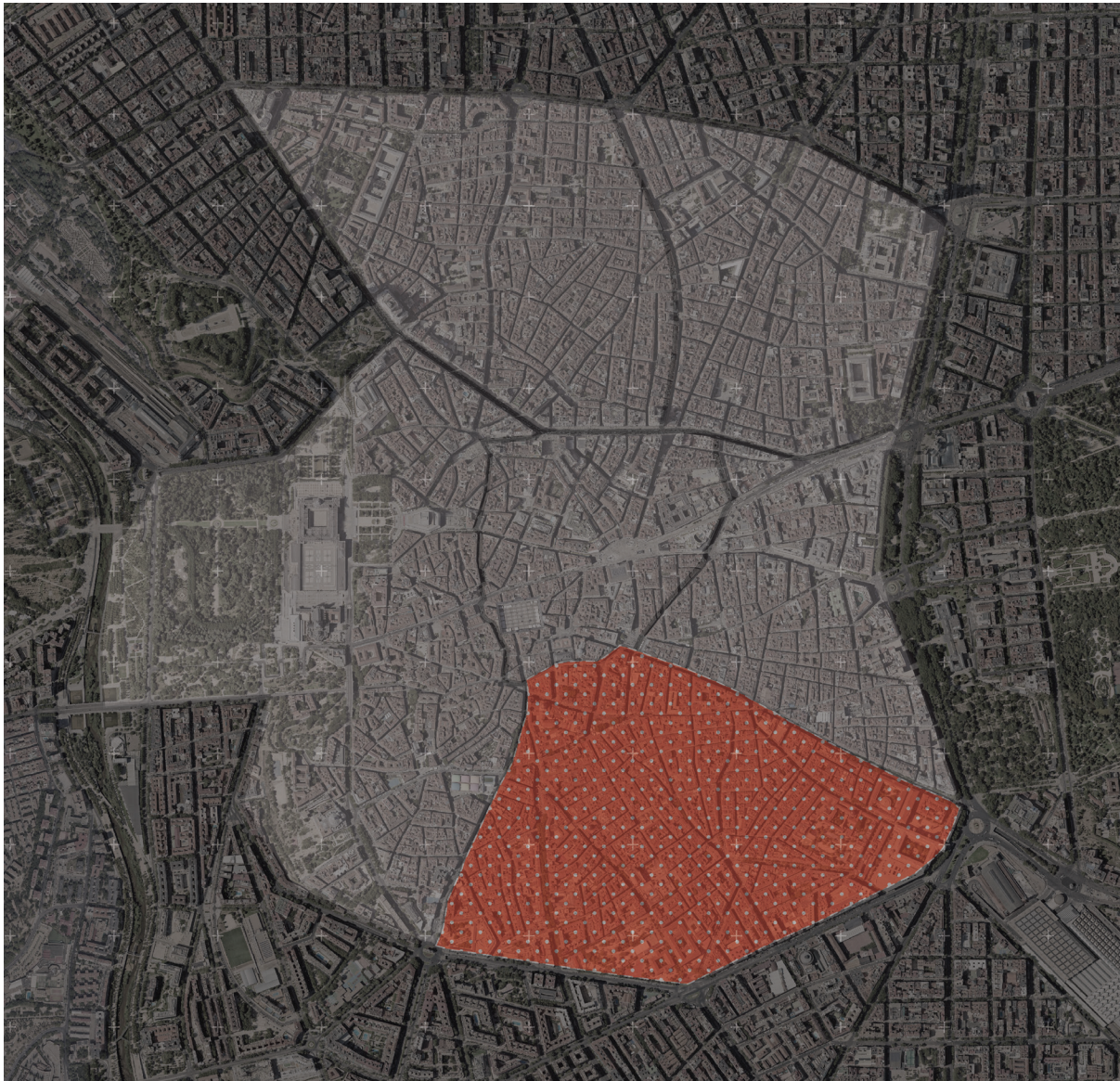


**Frame:**  
**Police presence**

As the Centro district has the highest crime rates, some of which may be dissident practices, Embajadores stands out for having the highest police presence. At any given time, 40% of all police officers in the city are deployed in this neighborhood.

◀ Figure 5.15. Police presence - Centro. Data sourced from an interview. Created by Author.





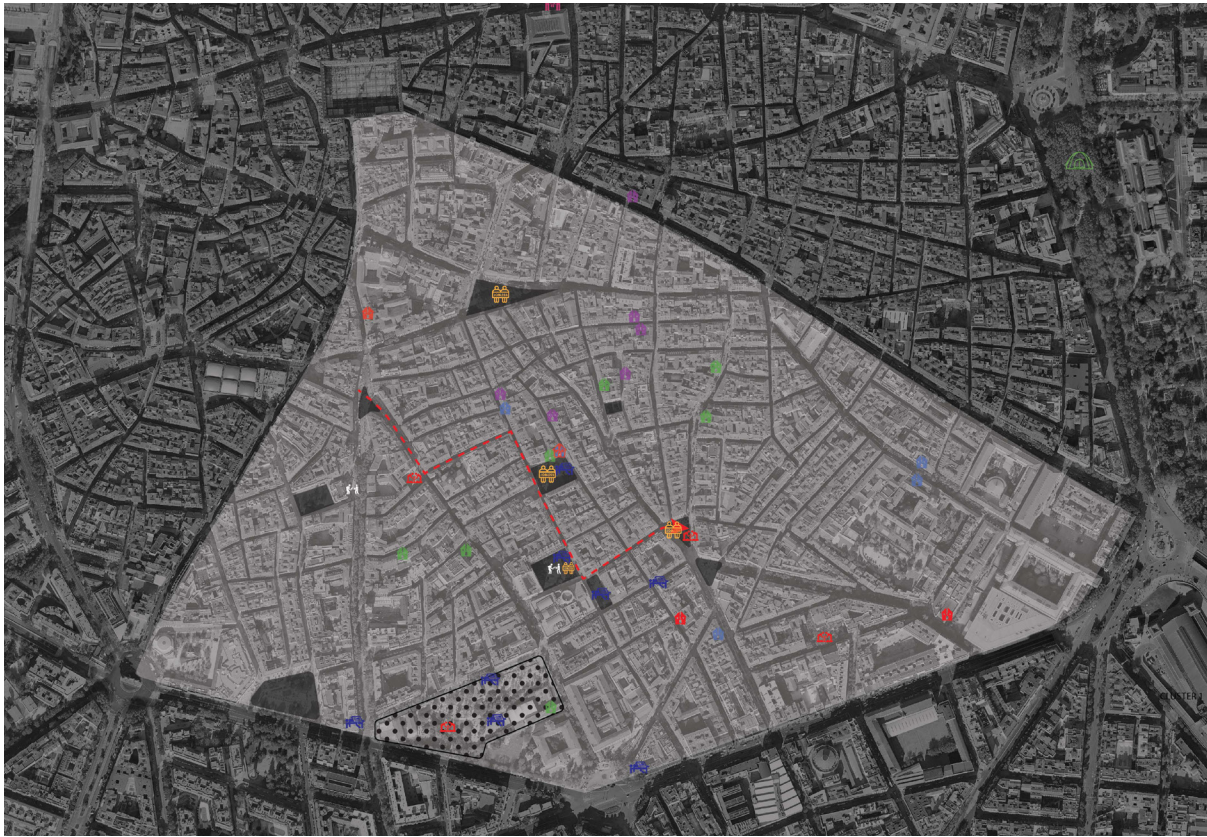
Frame:

### **Barrio Embajadores**

The neighborhood of Embajadores stands out as the most disadvantaged, vulnerable, and heavily gentrified area in the city. These factors point to a daily struggle for survival for its residents. Because of this, Embajadores is the primary focus of this project, emphasizing the need for interventions to empower the community and address the challenges they face, offering a counter-movement to the forces of displacement and inequality.

▲ Figure 5.16. Barrio Embajadores highlighted - Centro. Created by Author.



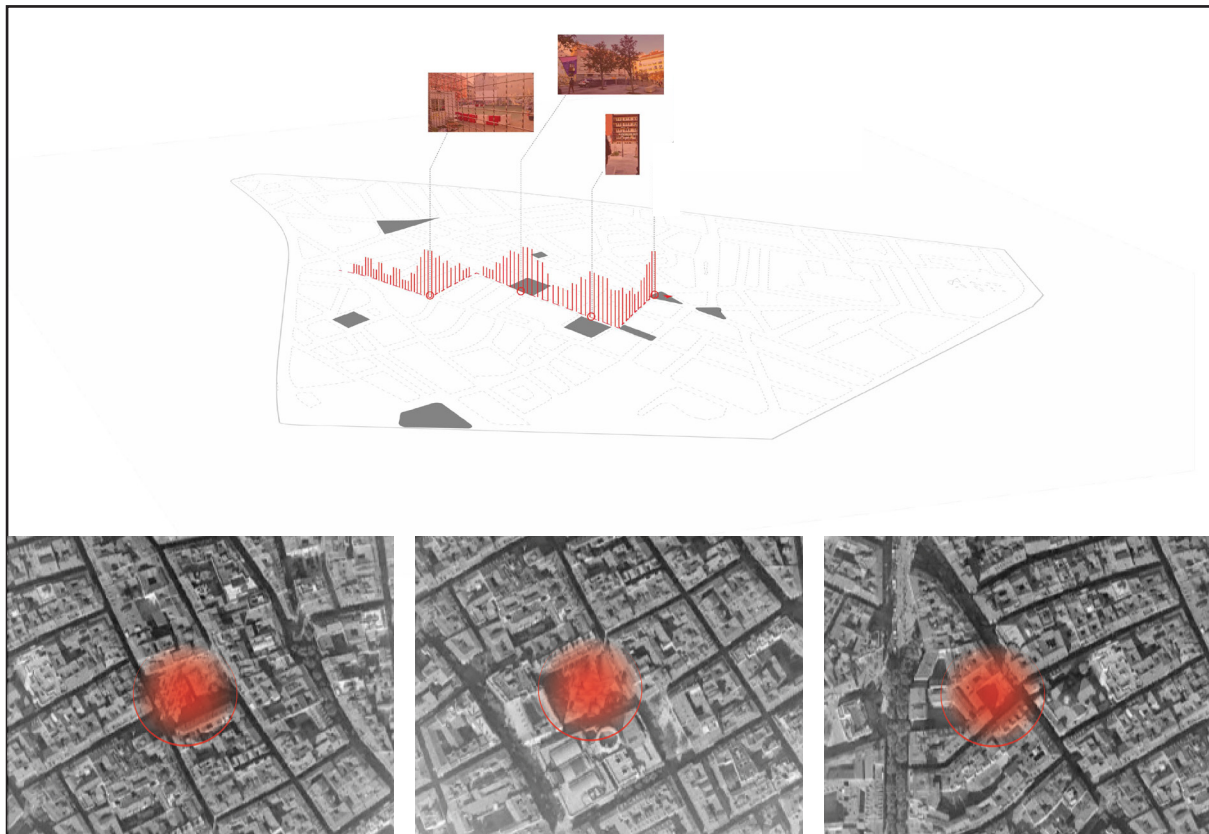


▲ Figure 5.17. Observed dissident practices in the Embajadores neighbourhood. Created by Author.



▲ Figure 5.18. Route followed during an interview with a journalist. Created by Author.





▲ Figure 5.19. Psychoanalysis of the route in terms of tension and emphasis on 3 squares in the Embajadores neighbourhood. Created by Author.

## The scenes of dissent

The first trip to Madrid provided a valuable firsthand insight about the city. While many parts of Madrid were visited with a focus on dissidence, the neighborhoods of Embajadores and Lavapiés stood out.

Various types of dissident practices were observed and mapped as shown in the figure in the left corner. As it is apparent that many of these practices were clustered around public squares, possibly reflecting solidarity within these communities.

Before the trip, arrangements were made to consult Leah Patten, a journalist specializing in this neighborhood, who highlights the struggles faced by its residents. During the interview, several challenges facing the neighborhood were discussed, and a route was followed that highlighted some of the dissident practices (see bottom left corner).

After the journey, a psychoanalytic analysis identified three key sites with the highest levels of dissident practices:

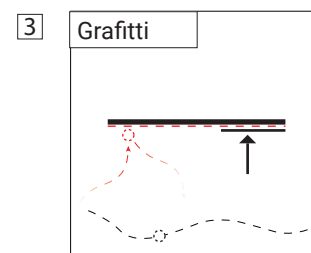
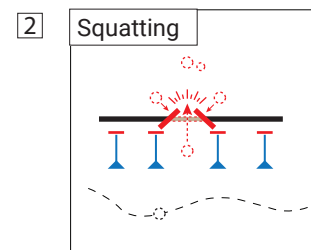
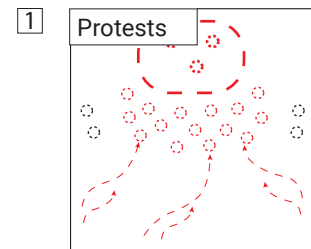
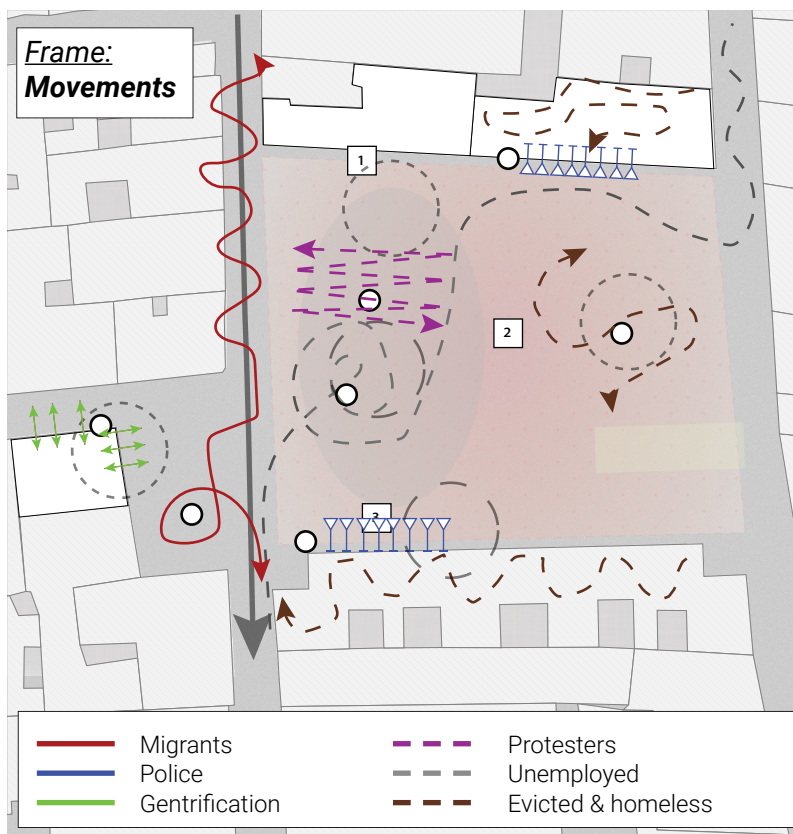
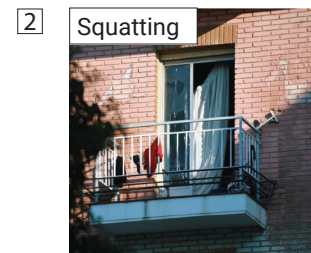
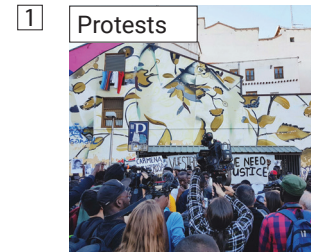
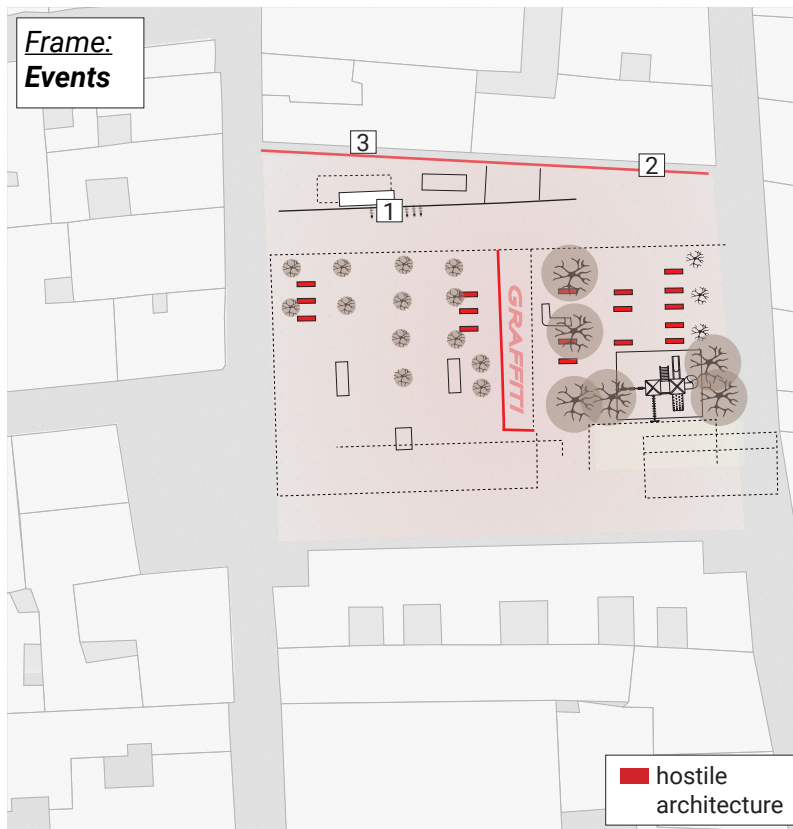
1. Plaza Nelson Mandela
2. Plaza de Agustín Lara
3. Espacio Dragones Lavapiés





# SCENE 01

*Plaza Nelson Mandela*







**Visitor:** This square and its surroundings seem vibrant and full of activity. What makes this square so special?

**Host:** Plaza Nelson Mandela is one of the most politically charged squares in the area.

**Visitor:** Could you elaborate on that?



**Host:** Over the years, the square has been the epicenter of numerous uprisings and moments of opposition.

**Visitor:** Can you provide some examples?

**Host:** Certainly. The two buildings adjacent to the square have been occupied multiple times and have faced repeated evictions. The square itself has been a hub for raising awareness and hosting large gatherings addressing societal issues such as anti-eviction protests, anti-racism movements, police violence, gender and racial equality, affordable housing, and gentrification.

**Visitor:** Are there any other notable aspects of this square?

**Host:** Yes, the square has been redesigned with hostile architectural elements, like concrete benches, which seem aimed at discouraging protests and public gatherings.

### Frame: Materiality



**The door** - access, and owner rights

I am, the door, the one that allows and stops, the one that guards and the one that separates. I have a face on both sides, yet mysterious when looked at, not revealing what's on the other side, because

that is my sole purpose, to keep worlds separate. My use is equal to contamination of both realms.

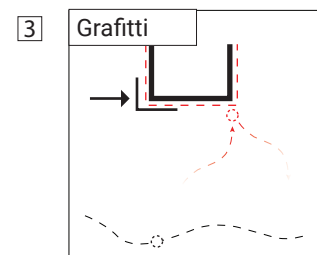
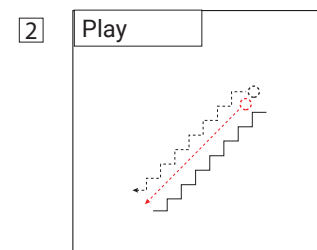
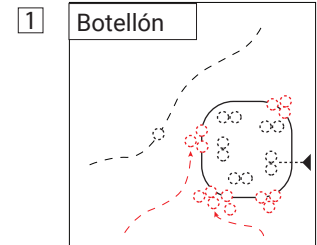
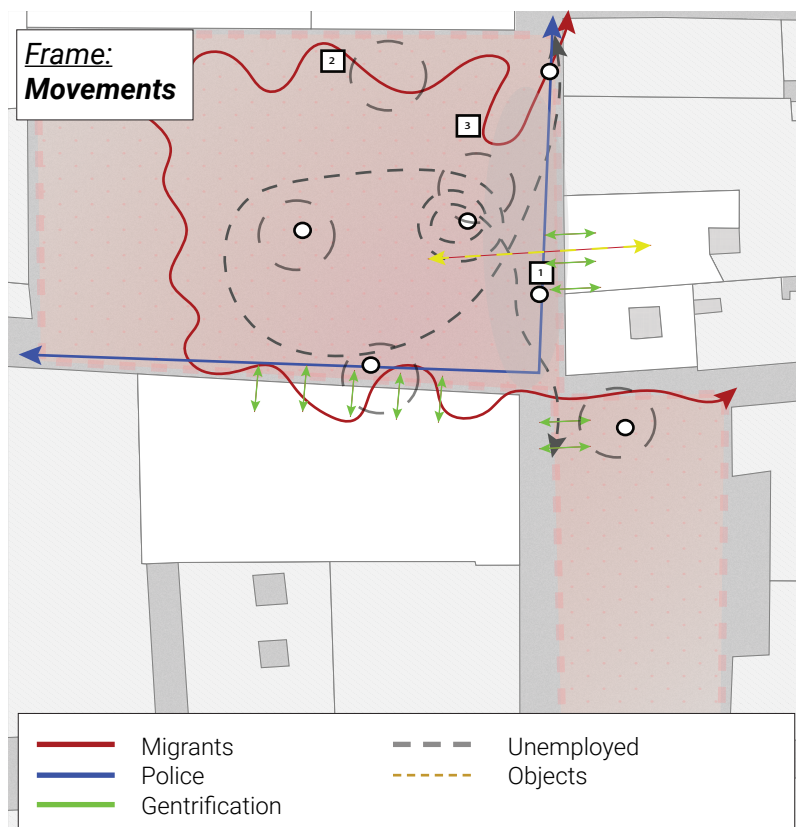
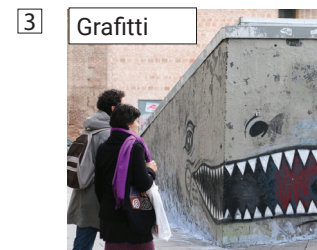
I sit still in the frame that was made for me, or hang... or maybe more like stuck, over time gradually warping and skewing because of the pressure around me. More so now, than when I used to fulfil my purpose. Yes, I, am not being used as often anymore, because one of my sides, the warmer one that I used to belong to, is gone. My purpose has been diminished, denied, gone a soft division to a hard one. My other face has been wiped clean, faded into the surrounding of painted bricks. I have been made subject to conflict, but whose conflict? I can't see, one side is dark and the other blindfolded.





# SCENE 02

*Plaza de Agustín Lara*





**Frame:**  
**Space**



Conceived



Lived

**Frame:** **Materiality**



- Creakkk: Here we go again, another day ahead of us. Oh my what happened to you?

- I must've fallen down during the night. I have never felt the surface on which we stand like this before, it feels weird. It feels very rigid to my nature. All the things

around us feel rigid, maybe we are the ones out of place here?

- You've had some time to think. They will arrive soon and arrange us to our positions, every day with a different bunch of you. Maybe that's our strength, that we can move freely within this rigid realm. Maybe we soften its roughness?

- If that is the case, why this choreography of movement, folding and unfolding every morning and every night? Do we have an impact on this roughness, do we have control? Or are we the ones being controlled? Copies of one another, stacked on top of each other. Why is our use prevented at night? or are we being protected? What is our value?

- Calm down, maybe our ambiguity offers familiarity. We might look the same but we do contrast with this rigid realm around us offering freedom.

**Host:** So, this is the second square in Lavapiés that has served a similar function in community agency.

**Visitor:** Could you explain what makes this square special? What are the events that have taken place here?

**Host:** Certainly. This square is another melting pot of the diverse users of Lavapiés, but it is also a site of tension, especially when we consider the reasons behind its design choices.

**Visitor:** So who are the users, and what specific events have actually taken place here?

**Host:** Lately, it has become a focal point of gentrification and increased control, partly due to the hostile architectural design elements. It's also where cafés have become trendy spots for the middle class. Meanwhile, in the background, unemployed immigrants gather here to share struggles and experiences, creating a space where culture is actively exchanged.

**Visitor:** That dichotomy is compelling. So, would you say this square is politically charged as well?

**Host:** Certainly. It has been used for protests, marches, carnivalesque occurrences, and even as part of the infamous 15-M movement, which spilled into the squares of Lavapiés, including this one.

**Visitor:** Any other crucial details about this square?

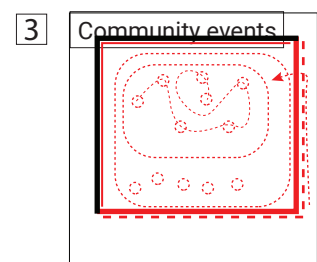
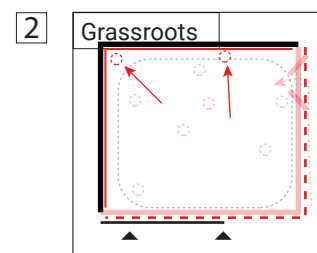
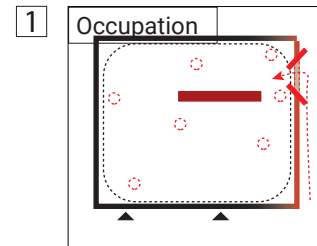
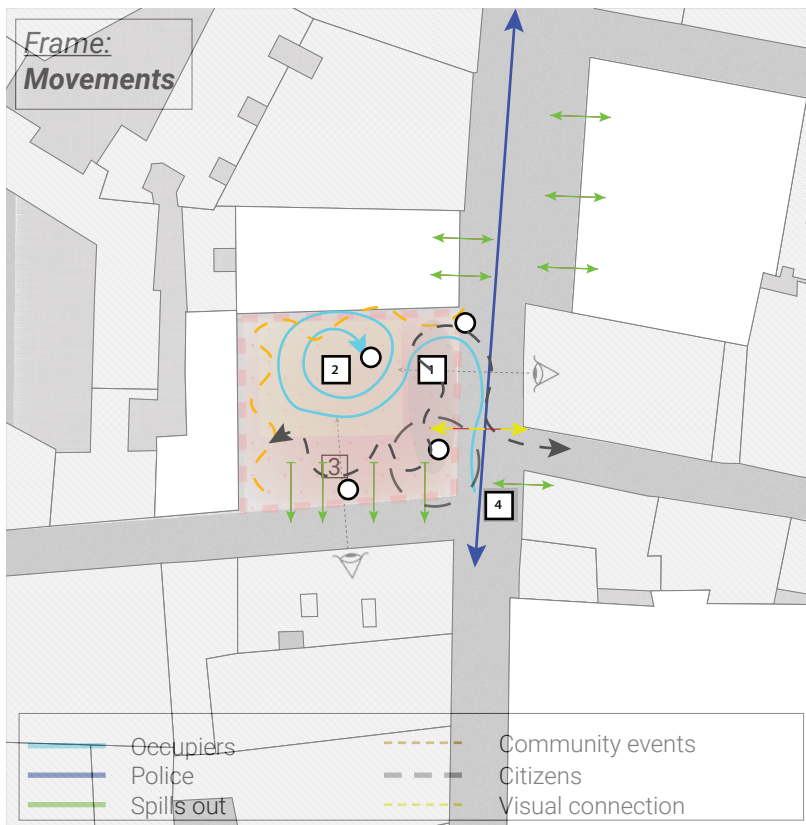
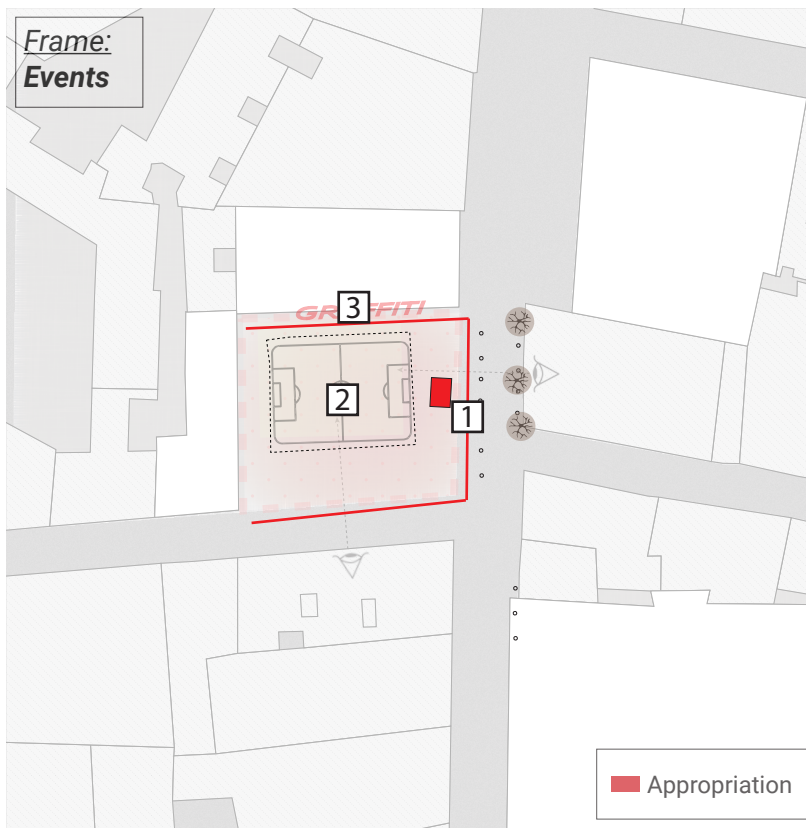
**Host:** Perhaps the library, which was opened in the ruins of an old building. It embodies yet another dichotomy—seen by some as controlling, while others view it as emancipatory.





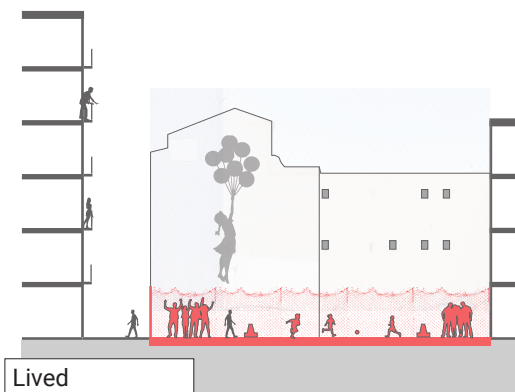
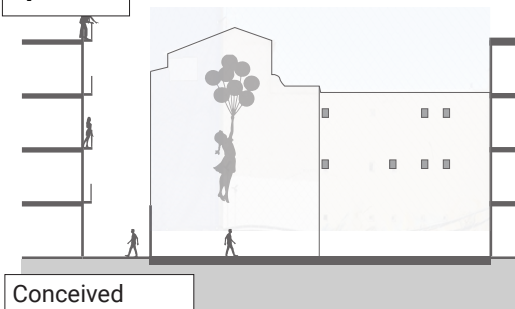
# SCENE 03

*Espacio Dragones Lavapiés*





**Frame: Space**



**Frame: Materiality**



**Rattling anxious wire:**

Oh that was scary, I feel like I am going to fall apart with each impact from the football. But I guess I was made to withstand those... Was that my core purpose or was I meant to separate and to keep both sides divided? But I don't entirely know, you can still see through me, as opposed to the walls around me.

In fact I stand in the place of an old one that used to be here, I can still feel its presence and weight contrasting my own.

I actually surround its now empty territory. But is it really empty? Maybe it is more full than it used to be... I surround this terrain where they come together and celebrate collective communal desires. They have nothing to hide... maybe that's why I was reinstated, to protect the others outside of this territory and allow them to look through me. They too get happy when they see the celebrations, maybe my purpose is more connecting than dividing after all...

I am a witness of the orderly chaos inside and the strictly ordered outside... Am I a divider of space and rules? Does my purpose change when the games are not being played, when they are not here, do I then govern the inside? Sometimes, I question whether I am more than a physical boundary, whether they recognize me or am I just a fence?

**Host:** This is one of the more fascinating 'squares' in the area—Dragones Lavapiés.

**Visitor:** What makes this square so interesting, and why is it relevant to the topic?

**Host:** This plot was taken over by the neighborhood's football club, Dragones Lavapiés, after the previous building was demolished.

**Visitor:** So, the users repurposed the plot for leisure activities?

**Host:** Exactly. Many in the community face economic and spatial scarcity, so this plot has become a vital gathering spot. It's a place not only for football but also for community celebrations and grassroots initiatives where people come together to support one another.

**Visitor:** Does someone else technically own this plot?

**Host:** That's precisely the issue—it challenges traditional notions of ownership. Empty plots like this can provide temporary relief when communities take agency. Over time, the municipality recognized this and issued a legal document permitting Dragones Lavapiés to use the space for their activities, though it's unclear whether this arrangement is temporary or permanent.

**Host:** Additionally, the graffiti revealed on the wall after the demolition has gained landmark status, preventing further construction on the site.

## Observations from the site analysis

The site analysis of the Embajadores neighborhood highlights various aspects of dissidence, using a range of methods to provide a multifaceted understanding of the topic. These methods include architectural drawings to map and analyze spatial dynamics, as well as narrative techniques that explore the experiential and less tangible qualities of urban spaces shaped by dissidence.

The analysis in plan highlights how spaces are being used and navigated within the framework of dissidence. Pavements divide, slopes create barriers, fences provoke questions, and galleries and balconies foster connection. These material elements reveal how dissent manifests spatially and how they influence movement and interactions within urban squares.

In sectional studies, the analysis compares the spatial and social characteristics of urban squares when dissident practices are present versus when these are absent. It demonstrates how dissent, as both action and reaction, transforms the spaces and how various actors engage with each other and the environment.

Narrative methods uncover the more latent and experiential aspects of these spaces. This is achieved through two perspectives: dialogues between a host and a visitor, offering insight into lived experiences and local dynamics and the second being experimental writings that reveal hidden material ecologies and coping mechanisms often overlooked by passersby.

From the site analysis, three primary categories of actors emerge, each with distinct objectives and concerns related to dissidence:

### **Dissidents**

- **Core motivations:** Necessity, urgency, direct action, critique, reclamation, risk, and emancipation.
- **Community and culture:** Solidarity, socializing, cultural traditions, community building, and freedom of space.
- **Creative expression:** Visibility, expression, resistance, redefinition, exploration, creative freedom, and playful challenges.
- **Opposition to authority:** Rejection of control, protest against inequities, and a push for self-determination and resourcefulness.



## **Authority**

- **Regulation and control:** Management, ownership regulations, enforcement, safety, and public order
- **Concerns and interventions:** Prevention of damage, unauthorized actions, health and safety, liability, and economic considerations.
- **Cultural and social influence:** Surveillance, policing, regulation of visual appeal, and maintaining neighborhood standards.
- **Impact management:** Dialogue, negotiations, and interventions to balance competing interests.

## **Users**

- **Community dynamics:** Neighborhood impact, support, division, and reframing perceptions.
- **Emotional responses:** Engagement, appreciation, dislike, frustration, and tolerance.
- **Concerns:** Safety, noise disturbances, inconvenience, and changing perceptions.
- **Identity and belonging:** Interpretation, observation, and navigating shared spaces.

Design objectives can incorporate the concerns and goals of different types of actors, leading to balanced design interventions or the creation of conditions that foster a more bottom-up approach to design, with the aim of improving the everyday lives of vulnerable communities.







# 06 POIESIS

## ACT IV

*falling action*

**Sub-question:** *What urban contextual aspects can be further explored and integrated to support the development of a design framework for resilient conditions?*

## **6.1 Towards a design**

Now that dissidence in the context of Madrid has been explored extensively, with specific cases and the nature of these various forms of dissent articulated and their productive objectives acknowledged, it is crucial to consider how this knowledge can be harnessed to create empowered communities.

It is essential to apply this knowledge in a design project to explore its possibilities and, hopefully, for it to act as a pedagogical tool to address vulnerability and the communities facing challenges. The design project is necessary to demonstrate that there are alternative ways of doing architecture—ways that incorporate performative dissidence, challenge normative societal structures, and respond to dynamic social contexts.

A design brief is still necessary; however, this design brief will operate on macro, mono, and micro levels, fostering open-endedness and principles of self-built and self-managed design. This makes it quite different from a traditional design brief. The brief/concept will be directed in this part, drawing from the knowledge gathered in the previous chapters. This chapter will elaborate on the stepping stones and build a toolbox for the design project.

### **6.1.1 The site of choice**

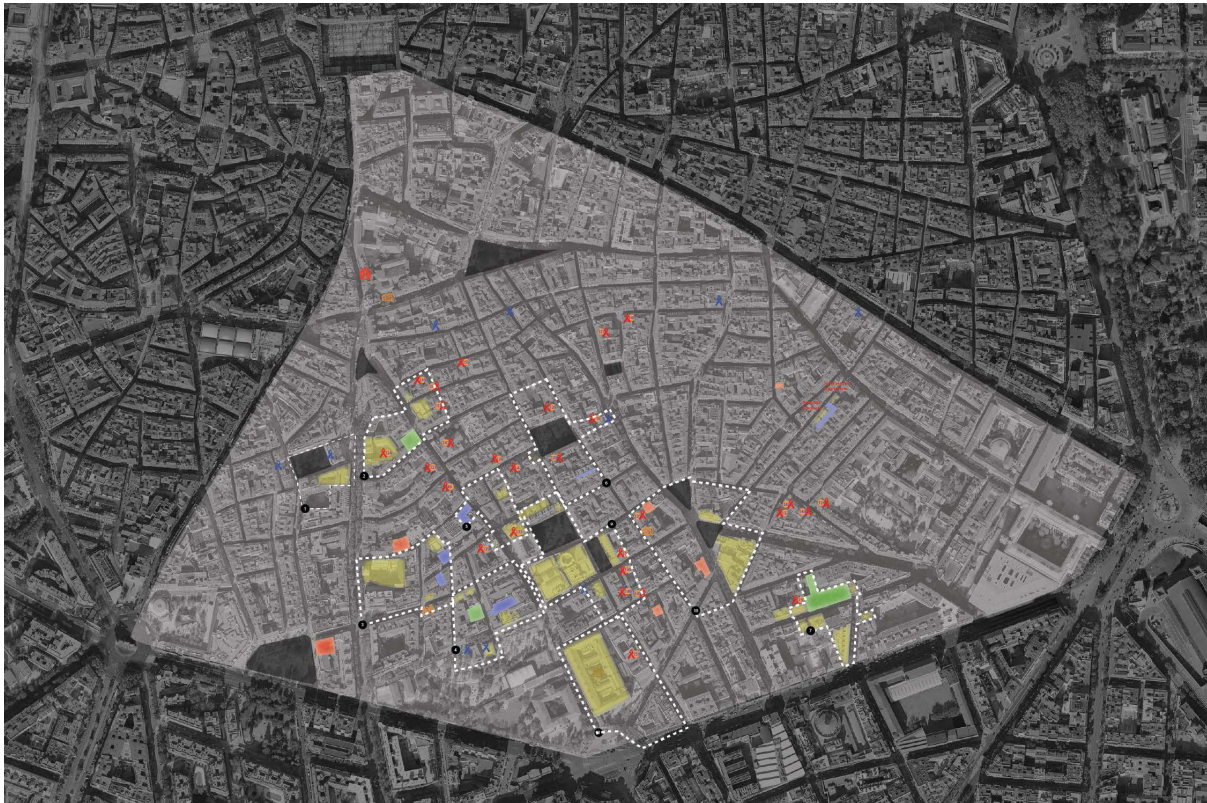
As the context of the design studio is Madrid, the city serves as the focal point where various types of dissidence have been observed. As articulated in the previous chapters, the most vulnerable area of Madrid is the neighborhood of Embajadores/Lavapiés.

Therefore, it is logical to situate the design within this context, aiming to address the direct struggles of the most vulnerable and central part of Madrid, while also serving as a pedagogical tool with the potential to benefit the wider city, if not beyond.

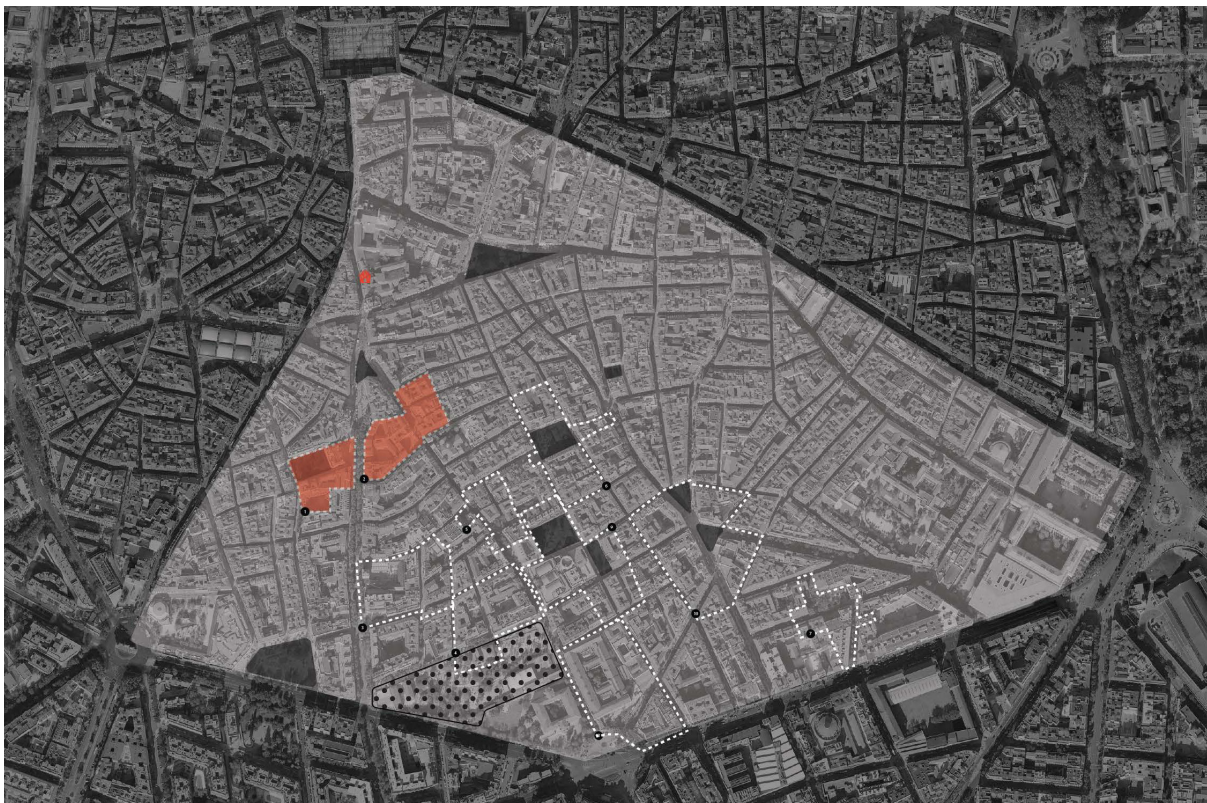
To this end, ten locations have been identified, each with its own distinct characteristics (see next page). These locations have been selected based on the accumulation of dissident practices observed. For this design project, only one location will be explored in depth, though the others may be explored in future work.

For this project, the chosen site arises from the conceptual combination of Clusters 1 and 2, with the primary focus for implementing interventions centered on Cluster 2.





▲ Figure 6.2. Potential clusters within the Embajadores neighbourhood  
Created by Author.



▲ Figure 6.3. Cluster of choice within the Embajadores neighbourhood  
Created by Author.



### 6.1.2 Significance of site

The two clusters, as shown in the image below, exhibit several potential characteristics that led to their selection for further exploration and the application of specific design conditions. Together, these clusters, or now one cluster, forms a dynamic area with unique, spatial, social and historical elements. This can result as a multilayered design of conditions. Its characteristics can offer opportunities to address a multiscale urban issues while being the focal point for vulnerable communities of the local neighbourhood.



▲ Figure 6.4. Zoom-in to cluster  
Created by Author.



Firstly, this cluster includes one of the research case studies on the occupation of a private plot. The occupied football plot, located within the clusters can serve as an asset for this project, a catalyst for further empowerment for the vulnerable communities. Looking deeper into the configuration of the site, there is a particular part characterized by intricate circulation and a mixture of public and private, indoor and outdoor spaces. This allows for a multilayered design approach.



▲ Figure 6.5. Site of interest: Corrala circulation and highlighted occupied plot  
Created by Author.

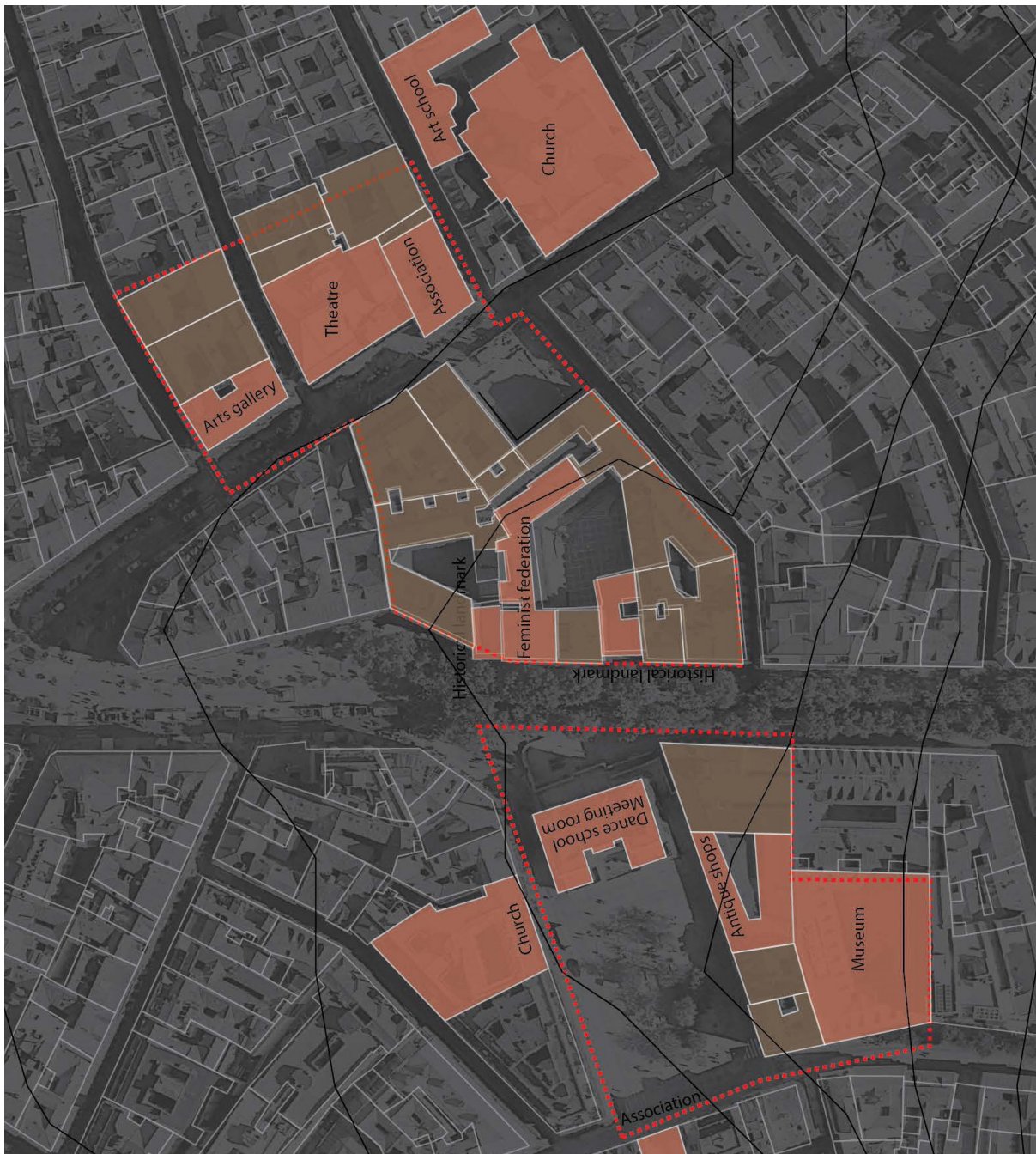
Secondly, the El Rastro street market which borders this cluster, brings significant value. While not inherently dissident, its characteristics and history could offer relevant insights for the design phase of the project. Its linear form and ability to temporarily disrupt urban flows resembles the dynamics of a protest. It has transformed over the years without disappearing, asserting its significance as a potential asset when viewed through the lens of resistance. The design project can replicate this spilling out of functions into public spaces during events, similar to the concept of TAZ. This gradient character can activate surrounding functions and foster a temporary urban porosity.



▲ Figure 6.6. Creating potential connections with the corrala and the direct vicinity.  
Created by Author.



Additionally, some of the buildings in the vicinity hold UNESCO heritage status, which introduces both opportunities and challenges. These heritage sites can enhance the project's visibility, prevent gentrification, emphasize cultural significance, and unlock funding opportunities. This aspect demands a thoughtful integration into the design. Lastly, the cluster is home to cultural landmarks such as a museum, church, and theater, which strengthen its performativity potential. By creating connections within the cluster and the broader neighbourhood, the project could enhance the site's significance, increasing both its physical accessibility and symbolic representation.



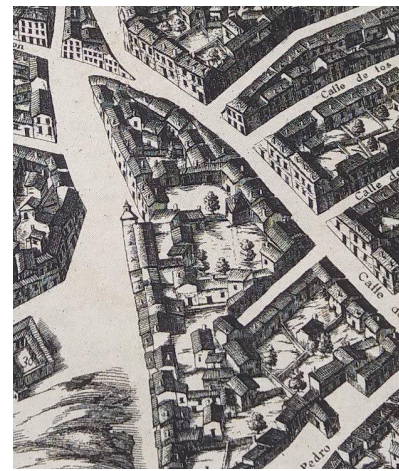
▲ Figure 6.7. Functions in the vicinity of the site  
Created by Author.

### 6.1.3 History of the site

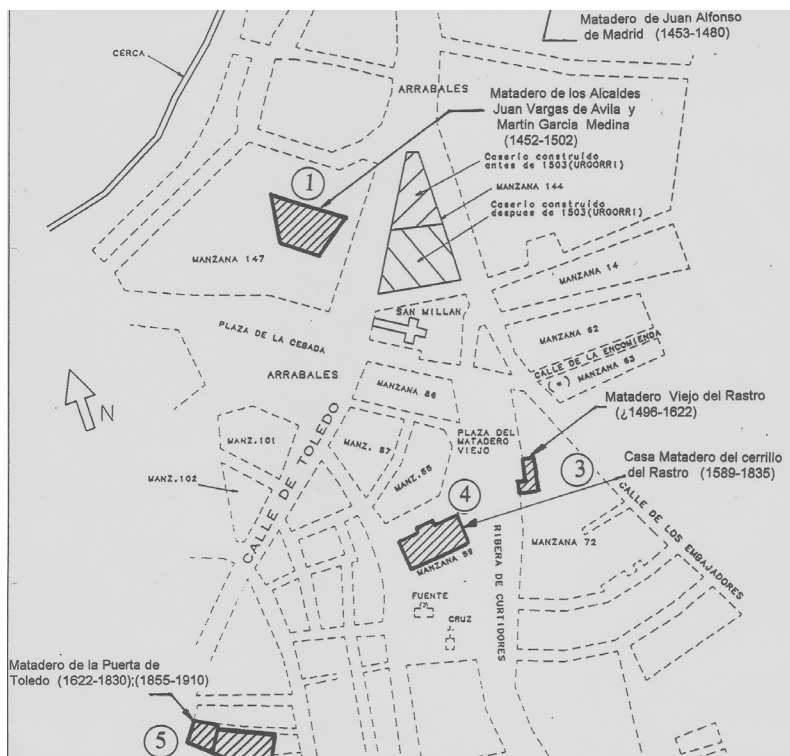
This site has undergone many reconfigurations over the centuries. The El Rastro street market is one of the key aspects that connect the site to its past. The entire site was characterized by slaughterhouses – Matadero – as there were many in the area. On Sundays, these slaughterhouses would bring their products to the street market for sale. In addition to meat, also leather and leather products were sold. The nearby channel of the Rio river was used to wash the leather coming from the slaughterhouses.

Part of the plot in focus is one such slaughterhouse, and it got its name from the leather-washing process, Ribera de Curtidores. Although no physical remains from this era exist on the site, the El Rastro market still carries echoes of the neighborhood's past. Today, the market is a street market selling all sorts of items, except produce and meat. While its content has changed, its function has remained the same and is deeply rooted in the community's life.

Therefore, this resilience of the market – not succumbing to the homogenization and institutionalization of commerce – is an inspiring, sustainable, and powerful cultural asset that can be harnessed and tied to foster community empowerment and visibility for this objective.



▲ Figure 6.8. Old map (16th century) of the Corrala  
(Source: Rastro Madrid)



▲ Figure 6.9. Map emphasizing the slaughterhouses in the neighbourhood (16th century) (Source: Author)



▲ Figure 6.10. Comparison of the Sunday market: past vs now  
(Source: Author)



### 6.1.4 Corral de Comedias

One significant feature of the cluster is its inclusion of a historic typology known as *corralas*. This courtyard-based design consists of a semi-public space surrounded by private residences, creating a unique blend of shared and private living.

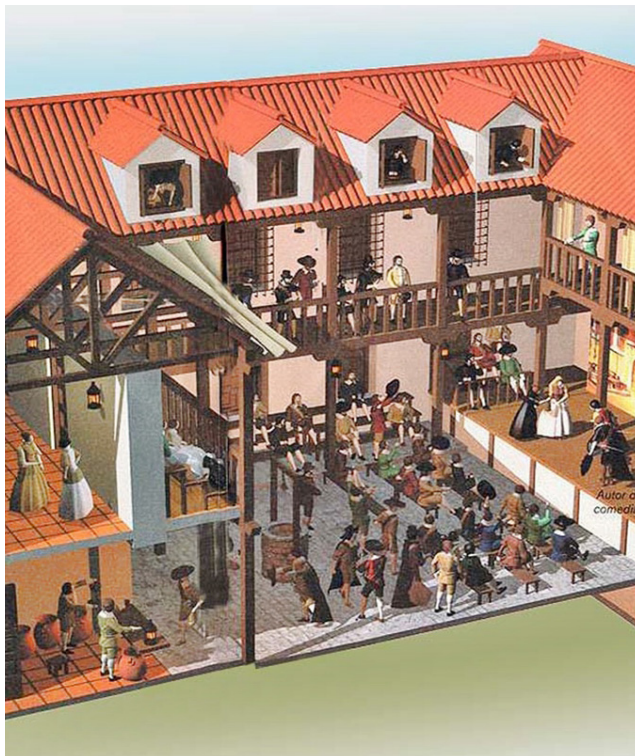
These *corralas* were once widespread but have largely disappeared, replaced by modern typologie Today, they are exceedingly rare, particularly in Madrid. Historically, the courtyards of some *corralas* were used as open-air theaters, known as *Corrales de Comedias*. These spaces featured a stage, with the rest of the courtyard serving as the audience area. Surrounding galleries functioned as vantage points for noble families, much like balconies in a traditional theater, further enhancing their performative character.

While *Corrales de Comedias* remain active in parts of Spain, they are no longer prevalent in Madrid. The *corrala* within this project's cluster is one of the few remaining intact examples in the city. However, its potential is currently underutilized.

Given that this project emphasizes performative dissidence—and theater serves as a medium to mirror and critique societal events—integrating the historic character of the *Corrales de Comedias* into the design would allow the *corrala* to embody elements of performative dissidence, he space could become a site for dynamic expression and social critique.



▲ Figure 6.11. Small-scale performance within a corrala  
(Source: Escenas Cervantinas)



▲ Figure 6.12. The old corrala theatres of Lavapiés.  
(Source: Madrid No Frills)



▲ Figure 6.13. Corral de comedias.  
(Source: ABCdesevilla)

## 6.2 Concept

### 6.2.1 A Matter of Scale

#### **Macro scale**

*Urban cluster*

This scale goes beyond the site of focus, looking at the urban cluster. The key aspects here are the connectivity and influence of nearby amenities, especially social and cultural ones, which can enrich the performative dissidence of the communities and foster empowerment. The goal at this scale is to create or strengthen existing connections, activating these links through the project. In turn, it's important to contribute to social and cultural services to build mutual, long-lasting relationships and increase the visibility and significance of the project.

#### **Mono scale**

*Block cluster - gradient*

The mono scale zooms in on the project site and its cluster of blocks and urban spaces. It focuses on the exchange between the inside and outside, involving the movement of people, goods, and opportunities. As the site mixes public and private users, it's essential to distinguish between the types of users and uses of space. Considering the site's size, creating a gradient between spaces is crucial, reflecting the events and people engaging with them. A gradient approach ensures varying intensities of experience within the site.

#### **Micro scale**

*Private and public spaces*

At the micro scale, the focus shifts to the functioning of private and public spaces, considering both material and experiential aspects. This scale explores architectural and material expression that contains and enables dissidence in performative, disruptive ways. It challenges societal norms, capturing the spirit of resistance, resilience, and empowerment. By allowing performative dissidence, it also maintains an open-ended approach to the design of these spaces. Architecture, at this scale, becomes both the subject and object of dissident practices, acting as a material repository that reflects the language of dissent and empowerment.



## 6.2.2 Users

Since dissidence is a complex issue involving various citizens and actors, it's essential to explore the different types of users. Each actor on the spectrum either facilitates, practices, tolerates, or prevents dissent. Zooming into the chosen cluster, there are specific actors and users at the mono scale, whose characteristics must be defined to empower marginalized communities.

### User type 1

*Vulnerable communities*

The first user group is the vulnerable communities, who are primarily responsible for practicing dissent. This group includes vulnerable individuals, such as the unemployed and elderly, who seek remedies through coping mechanisms society deems dissident. The project focuses on empowering these communities through communal solidarity, leveraging their strengths, such as reactivity, willingness to act, and deep insight into their struggles.

The goal is to create spaces where these individuals can utilize their strengths, engage in performative dissidence, and develop coping strategies in adversity.

### User type 2

*Inhabitants*

The second user group, equally important, is the inhabitants of the site. They play a facilitating and emancipatory role, advocating for coping strategies and helping vulnerable communities with self-preservation. Inhabitants are also part of a larger struggle—gentrification and marginalization—that might affect them directly in the future. Thus, while they primarily facilitate, they also contribute to the operations of events.

### User type 3

*Visitors*

Lastly, visitors, currently attracted by the historical significance of the site and the El Rastro market, may in the future engage with the functions and people on the site to advocate, raise visibility, and participate in volunteer work.

Other key actors outside the block include socio-cultural entities, NGOs, as well as municipal and governmental authorities.

### 6.2.3 A Pattern Language

In order to ensure the intended functionality and considering the scale of the site, the complexity of its users, it is important to establish a clear configuration of the interventions at the mono scale. A pattern language<sup>19</sup> must be in place to represent and signify assigned functions and events. Therefore, several spatial aspects need to be considered, as articulated in Christopher Alexander's A Pattern Language.

#### **Gradience**

*From public to private*

When considering the configuration of the existing project site and the intended uses and user types, it is fitting to include a gradient approach to design. This ensures a gradual engagement, from public to private, from outside to inside, and so on. This approach makes it clear which spaces are designated for which user types, without imposing harsh boundaries. It is essential for users to understand where they are allowed to be, but it also helps foster understanding and compassion when someone might accidentally wander into a space.

#### **Visibility lines**

*Guiding*

Another important element for the design of the mono scale and the intricate routing of the site is ensuring that all user types can find their way around the complex. Visibility lines are crucial for guiding users. These lines could be arranged in a way that clearly delineates private, semi-public, and public areas. Each user type would have a specific routing system and corresponding visibility to guide them throughout the site. This could involve opening up or closing certain existing elements in the layout.

#### **Functions in between crossroads**

*Pockets*

Another key element is the creation of pockets of space between these guiding lines, at the crossroads where people navigate. This aligns with the goal of using many of the ground-floor spaces—since the upper levels are already occupied by the inhabitants of the complex—to create these pockets along the intricate routes. This design would enhance the sense of guidance for each user type by matching functions with their respective spaces.

---

<sup>19</sup>Alexander, C., & Silverstein, M. (1977). *A pattern language: Towns, buildings, construction*. Oxford University Press.



## 6.2.4 Surgical moves

Renovating and refurbishing historical buildings requires a careful approach to preserve their integrity and cultural significance they hold. The key is to create design interventions that protect what's already there while also adding something meaningful on top.

In this project, the site holds a UNESCO World Heritage status as it is one of the few remaining *corralas* in Madrid. Some parts of the complex have stricter preservation rules than others, but instead of seeing that as a limitation, it can be turned into an asset. The heritage status opens up an opportunity to question and challenge what we view as culturally important, using the site's monumental nature to explore new ideas.

### Toolbox

To adapt the *corrala* in a way that respects its history while meeting new needs, a “toolbox” of strategies has been employed. This toolbox is both careful and impactful—perfectly aligned with the project's focus on performative dissidence. These strategies, or “surgical moves,”<sup>20</sup> guide how the interventions are applied (see the image to the right).

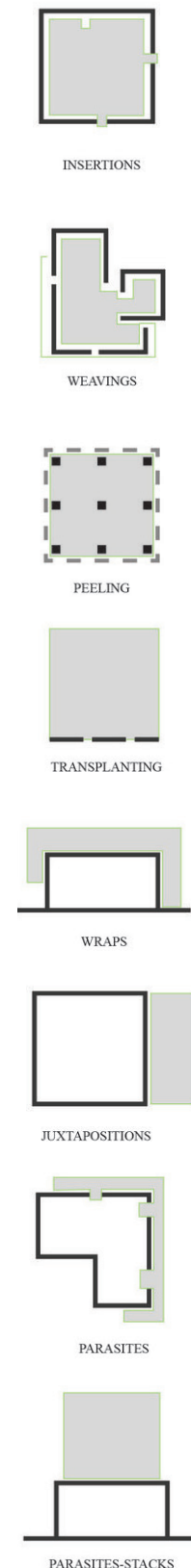
#### Meeting basic needs:

- Insertions
- Weaving
- Peeling
- Transplanting

#### Performative dissidence:

- Wrapping
- Juxtapositions
- Parasite
- Parasite stacks

By following this toolbox, the *corrala* can be carefully adapted to meet modern needs while staying true to its heritage. These moves allow the site to evolve—shifting from a static historical artifact to an active, changing space that engages with the social and cultural life around it.



▲ Figure 6.14. Adaptive reuse form, diagram based on Bollack, F. A. (2013), “Old Buildings New Forms; New directions in Architectural Transformations. (Source: Donghwan Kim)<sup>20</sup>

## 6.2.5 Urban commons and pockets of resistance

The concept of urban commons, a key sub-topic of the design studio, refers to the shared resources and spaces within the urban environment that are intended to be accessible to all. In this context, urban commons embody concepts like spatial justice, equity, and agency. They are critical in resisting privatization practices such as gentrification and evictions, which often harm marginalized communities. In this way, urban commons can become part of disruptive strategies aimed at empowering these communities and asserting their rights.

Urban commons serve as material ecologies within the city, providing resources meant to benefit a large portion of the public. These spaces and resources play a vital role in promoting equity, inclusivity, and community empowerment. They are essential tools for shaping both social and material ecologies, making them a central focus in the pursuit of a just urban environment.

In his seminal essay “The Right to the City”, Henri Lefebvre argues that this right extends beyond mere access to urban spaces. It encompasses the right to participate in the production of urban life. He expands on the importance of involving citizens in urban planning processes.

Henri Lefebvre, in his seminal essay *The Right to the City*, argues that this right goes beyond mere access to urban spaces. It encompasses the right to participate in shaping urban life itself, highlighting the importance of involving citizens in urban planning. Unfortunately, rigid urban planning often marginalizes vulnerable communities, as they cannot meet the standard expectations imposed by dominant societal norms. This limits their ability to influence the spaces they inhabit. Therefore, it is crucial to engage in dialogue with these marginalized communities, fostering a participatory approach to urban design that prioritizes spatial justice. A fair and equitable distribution of resources and access to urban spaces is at the heart of this approach.

Dissident practices often arise as a response to social tensions, particularly when over-control and marginalization occur between different groups. When the needs of marginalized communities are disregarded, coping mechanisms emerge, such as protests, occupations, informal settlements, or the appropriation of urban spaces. These acts of dissidence are essential in claiming the right to the city, resisting dominant norms, and demanding agency.

David Harvey expands on this idea in his book *Rebel Cities*, noting that the value generated in cities is often controlled by



private interests, which leads to exclusionary practices that deny marginalized communities access to urban commons. To achieve equity for all, it is crucial to redistribute the surplus of urban commons for collective benefit. In this sense, urban commons become both the battleground and a central element in the fight for spatial justice.

## **Guide to Urban Commons<sup>21</sup>**

Urban commons are reshaping cities worldwide by challenging capitalist processes of accumulation and enclosure. This discourse advocates for new institutions, spaces, and actors responsible for their production and reproduction (Handbook of Urban Commons, page 17). As relational spaces, urban commons form coalitions that resist fragmentation and emphasize interdependence, connecting differences across race, gender, class, sexuality, and physical ability (Handbook of Urban Commons, page 23). These evolving communities, grounded in collaboration and solidarity, embody forms of local resistance and cooperation, reclaiming urban resources and spaces as commons (Handbook of Urban Commons, page 25).

### **Economies**

Creating conditions that economically empower vulnerable communities is essential for developing alternative methods of managing financial struggles. These methods should focus on local exchange systems rather than capitalistic endeavors. Existing “diverse economies” present a “heterogeneous economic landscape” that, through a deconstructive process, challenges the binary hierarchy of market versus non-market activities. Once made visible, these economies have the potential to shift the prevailing capitalocentric hegemony—driven by the logic of exchange and capital accumulation—toward a “commonization of values” (Handbook of Urban Commons, pp. 33-34).

### **Knowledge**

The dissemination and connection of knowledge is crucial when designing conditions that offer vulnerable communities greater agency. Knowledge across places, positions, and disciplinary boundaries fosters epistemic permeability, creating reflective knowledge systems that disrupt the commodification of urban space. These systems support the development of localized tactics that appropriate urban spaces for the common good (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 99).

This approach aligns with the concept of life-wide learning, where a holistic method is employed to address diverse areas of knowledge and skills. This fosters interconnected understandings that enhance a deeper sense of agency and

---

<sup>21</sup>Urban Commons Research Collective. (2022). *Urban commons handbook*.

collaboration within the community.

### **Socialities**

Cities are sites where differences overlap, often leading to conflicts, yet they also provide settings where commoning can play a key role in resolving these tensions. Urban commons offer opportunities to rethink social reproduction. Cities produce a wealth of social and material entanglements that enable divergent ways of living, working, and caring. While urban environments provide opportunities, they also condense differences, highlighting the difficulties of living together, which can escalate tension and conflict. However, these settings also create potential for negotiation and translation across differences, making urban commons spaces for conflict resolution and collaboration (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 123).

### **Localities**

Smaller localities within neighborhoods hold significant potential to influence broader scales, from the neighborhood itself to the city or even internationally. By exploring localities, we examine how specific forms of sharing and connection might challenge broader systems of oppression, such as universalism, patriarchy, racism, and extractivism, as they manifest in particular locations (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 145). As Céline Condorelli and Gavin Wade suggest, understanding production through forms of mediation and interface allows for the creation of place—not through objects, but through relationships to context. Design tools can be developed to support this process, aiding the creation of more inclusive urban environments (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 156).

This approach enables discussions about the porosities at the edges of these enclaves and their transformation into urban thresholds, facilitating commoning processes across different urban spaces (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 160).

### **Governance**

Self-managed and self-governed spaces within the city are powerful examples of resistance and resilience, as their bottom-up approach prioritizes the interests of the inhabitants of specific neighborhoods or “pockets.” Self-governed systems, together with collective resources and the communities of commoners that produce and reproduce them, form a key component of the commoning process. Tine De Moor highlights in her study of collective action institutions that conflict—specifically the capacity to challenge, discuss, and transform governance rules—is essential for the collective’s ability to adapt to diverse needs and situations (Handbook of Urban Commons, p. 166).



### **6.2.6 Urban social pilgrimage - a journey of empowerment**

The objective of this project is to address systemic issues, particularly those observable in the Embajadores neighborhood, while creating novel spatial configurations aimed at empowering marginalized communities. The dissident practices within the existing urban fabric—spanning the domains of public, semi-public, and private life—require interventions beyond the capacity of a typical social center.

Rather than static gathering spaces, this project proposes dynamic interventions that contribute to ongoing empowerment. A “dynamic strip” of interventions weaves through the neighborhood’s fabric, reimagining daily life domains such as home, work, leisure, and public space as heterotopias—pockets of resilience and resistance to hegemonic structures. This strip suggests new ways of life for marginalized individuals.

This strip fosters community connections by uniting individuals with shared struggles, creating productive and empowering combinations. It utilizes existing buildings while proposing new interventions, as the current built environment may not adequately address the issues at hand. Inspired by the trajectories of protest, this strip becomes a route of empowerment, where different communities unite for a common purpose—an urban pilgrimage of sorts.







## 07 CURTAINS

### ACT V

#### *resolution*

◀ Figure 7.1. Notable graffiti in the Embajadores neighbourhood  
(Source: Author)

## **Plea - a bottom-up manifesto**

This research paper set out to prove that dissidence, when non-destructive, can be understood in a new light. Particularly in architecture, where dissidence is often seen as destructive to property, this work highlights how architecture and urban planning can be both the subject and object of dissidence. The aim was to prick through and examine dissident practices to reveal societal issues and harness their inherent characteristics to create pockets of resistance to empower vulnerable communities, and provide agency. So therefore this research paper concludes on the following central question:

*How can architectural practices, focused on contested urban environments, draw from the dissident practices manifested in the built environment and thus foster resilience for the vulnerable communities?*

To answer this question a multi-layered approach was employed to explore the complexities involved. Dissidence in architecture has a socio-spatial character, necessitating a twofold approach: analyzing spatial aspects from an architectural perspective - based on theories - and examining the more experiential, dynamic, and fluid aspects of dissidence. This analysis combines theories, architectural drawings with narrative methods like urban reading, and creative writing to capture the experiential aspects.

The site analysis focused on three significant locations within the Embajadores neighborhood of Madrid, delving deeper into their dissident characteristics. This process expanded upon Bernard Tschumi's Event-Space theory, adapting it to incorporate the socio-spatial features of Madrid and on the other hand also assessing the materiality and tectonic manifestations of dissent

Each of these lenses, though non-hierarchical, zooms from macro to micro scale, highlighting inherent characteristics of various dissident practices.

Starting with the macro, the 'Setting' layer focuses on the geospatial disparities within Madrid. It examines the southern part of the city, which is characterized by higher vulnerability and contestation. This layer explores how these spatial differences contribute to tensions between top-down urban design and lived experiences.

Zooming into the Embajadores neighborhood, the 'Events' layer provides deeper insight into the systemic issues faced by the Madrileños living in this central part of the city. This layer focuses on performative dissident practices that are disruptive rather than destructive. It uncovers the events



and strategies people use as coping mechanisms against these systemic issues. The site analysis, zooming into the 3 locations in the neighborhood, reveals various forms of dissent, including protests, occupations, appropriations, graffiti, informal gatherings, and unintended uses of space.

The next layer, 'Movement,' focuses on the urban flows of human and non-human activity within the context of dissidence. It explores how alternative uses of space emerge through the interaction of our bodies with the environment and the desired uses of those spaces. Dissidence is inherently dynamic, marked by tension and movement. This layer analyzes the specific types of movements in the observed dissent across the three squares of the neighborhood. Additionally, it examines the movements of authority aimed at containing dissidence, highlighting the interactions between different forms of dissent.

Approaching the micro level, the 'Space' layer examines the physical spaces where dissidence occurs, focusing on their characteristics and how they enable or restrict certain events and movements. This layer highlights the effects of dissident practices on space, showing how space is reconfigured both by and in response to dissent, and how the meaning of space can change as a result.

In the final layer, 'Materiality and Tectonics,' the analysis focuses on architectural features and their potential to enable or obstruct resistance, reflecting the material dimensions of dissidence. Spatial aspects such as thresholds, boundaries, open versus closed spaces (porosity), and surfaces of subversion, as well as temporal aspects like adaptive structures and ephemeral forms, are examined for their role in reconfiguring space in response to dissent. These features reveal coping mechanisms and remedies needed for vulnerable communities, creating a material repository—a language of dissent—to empower and give agency to those confronting systemic issues.

To test the validity of the notion that performative dissidence can increase resistance, resilience, and empowerment for marginalized communities through architecture, it is essential to apply this knowledge in a design project. This also acts as a pedagogical effort to restore agency and advocate for a bottom-up approach to design around societal issues. Therefore, steps have been taken in a conceptual, abstract manner to direct the design process, based on the knowledge acquired in the research phase.

The short answer to the research question is that performative dissidence is merely disruptive, and its inherent characteristics are a manifestation of the desired lived spaces of the unique

inhabitants and communities. Therefore, it is imperative to understand these complex occurrences systematically. The long answer is that all dissident practices and their contexts are specific and unique, and thus must be closely observed to be understood. Therefore, it is crucial to always probe into these context-specific events and look for alternatives that correspond with them.

## **Discussion**

This research aimed to explore dissident practices and demonstrate how their inherent characteristics can serve as coping mechanisms, which can be mimicked in the design process to foster a bottom-up approach and empower vulnerable communities.

The findings suggest that these practices are complex and must be analyzed vertically and horizontally to reveal the components of dissent, as demonstrated in the Embajadores neighborhood.

Ultimately, it was shown that a systemic approach, such as Bernard Tschumi's Event-Space theory, allows for a deeper understanding of dissent by examining space in its interconnected aspects, providing valuable insights into its workings.

However, there are some limitations. Although the study expands on various types of dissent, it focuses on just one neighborhood, meaning the findings are context-specific. Depending on the city, neighborhood, and systemic issues faced by citizens, the results would likely differ. While context-specific, this research serves as a pedagogical tool to address similar situations.

Additionally, due to time constraints, geographical distance, and language barriers, there was limited direct interaction with vulnerable communities and authorities. As a result, alternative methods, such as urban writing and narration, were employed to capture the experiential aspects of the research.

For future studies on dissidence, marginalization, and how architecture can serve as a subversive tool for the public good, it is recommended to engage directly with vulnerable communities and authorities. A participatory, bottom-up approach could facilitate mediation between different actors.

Despite these limitations, this research provides crucial insights into the coping mechanisms of vulnerable communities facing systemic issues. It demonstrates how the language of dissent can be harnessed to create empowerment and resistance within the urban fabric.



## Annotated bibliography

Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial agency: Other ways of doing architecture*. Routledge.

- **Annotation:** Collates examples of alternative approaches to architecture and design, showcasing how architectural practices can be more inclusive, open, and socially relevant.

Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (Eds.). (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and diversity in urban life*. Routledge.

- **Annotation:** Examines how public spaces are adapted by users, emphasizing informal, experimental, and flexible uses that transform urban spaces into dynamic places for interaction.

La Marche, J., & Tschumi, B. (1995). *Architecture and disjunction*. *Journal of Architectural Education*

- **Annotation:** A collection of essays by Bernard Tschumi over 15 years, discussing themes like disjunction in architecture and challenging traditional approaches to space and form.

Michiel, D., & Cauter, L. De. (2008). *Heterotopia and the city: Public space in a postcivil society*. Taylor & Francis Group

- **Annotation:** Explores and repositions Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, examining its significance in the context of public urban spaces.

Mosley, J., & Sara, R. (2013). *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

- **Annotation:** Highlights examples of critical architectural practices that challenge conventional norms and reimagine the role of architecture in society.

Stavrides, S. (2020). *Common spaces of urban emancipation*.

- **Annotation:** Investigates how communal urban spaces serve as platforms for resistance, emancipation, and collective action in the city.

Weizman, E. (2014). *Architecture and the paradox of dissidence*. Routledge.

- **Annotation:** Explores the interplay between architecture and dissident spatial practices, shedding light on how architecture can act as a medium for resistance and activism.

## **Bibliography**

Alexander, C., & Silverstein, M. (1977). *A pattern language: Towns, buildings, construction*. Oxford University Press.

Altay, C. (2014). Transgression in and of the city. In *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. University of California Press.

Faustino, D. (2014). In praise of transgression. In *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

Frankel, L., & Racine, M. (2010). The complex field of research: For design, through design, and about design. In D. Durling, R. Bousbaci, L. Chen, P. Gauthier, T. Poldma, S. Roworth-Stokes, & E. Stolterman (Eds.), *Design and complexity - DRS International Conference 2010* (p. 43). Montreal, Canada.

Harvey, D. (2012). *Rebel cities: From the right to the city to the urban revolution*. Verso.

Havik, K. (n.d.). *Bridging: Urban literacy. A scriptive approach to the experience, use, and imagination of place*. Delft University of Technology.

Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The production of space* (D. Nicholson-Smith, Trans.). Blackwell. (Original work published 1974)

Machado de Moura, C., Medina Bernal, D., Restrepo Restrepo, E., Havik, K., & Nacu, L. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Repository: 49 methods and assignments for writing urban places*.

Mosley, J., & Sara, R. (2014). Architecture and transgression: An interview with Bernard Tschumi. In *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

Rice, L. (2013). Occupied space. In J. Mosley & R. Sara (Eds.), *The architecture of transgression* (pp. 73–75). John Wiley & Sons.

Sara, R. (2013). Citadels of freedom. In J. Mosley & R. Sara (Eds.), *The architecture of transgression* (pp. 54–55). John Wiley & Sons.

Schumacher, P. (2013). Transgression, innovation, politics. In J. Mosley & R. Sara (Eds.), *The architecture of transgression* (pp. 131–133). John Wiley & Sons.

Tschumi, B. (1996). *Architecture and disjunction*. MIT Press.



Tschumi, B. (2004). *Event-cities*. MIT Press.

Urban Commons Research Collective. (2022). *Urban commons handbook*. DPR-Barcelona.





## 08 APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1**

### *Reflection*



This year's architectural graduation studio, Architectural Crossovers, focused on the Expanded City of Madrid, with a particular emphasis on urban commons. My graduation project, Performative Dissidence, aimed to offer empowerment and agency to vulnerable communities. The concept began with graffiti but evolved into a broader exploration of performative dissidence. This theme is highly relevant in Madrid, where vulnerable communities are found not only in the city center but also in the outskirts. The city center, a contested space, is where different perspectives collide, and many of these marginalized communities engage in dissidence as a coping mechanism. These issues, at their core, are multiscalar, and urban commons play a key role in understanding them.

Exploring these societal issues through the lens of architecture has been both challenging and insightful. It has provided me with knowledge into how contested urban areas are often the product of larger systemic/societal issues. As a graduating Master of Architecture, I have taken this complex issue, successfully dissected it down into its components, and applied my architectural knowledge to design conditions that offer empowerment and agency to these communities. Additionally, I was able to connect existing theories that supported the trajectory of the project.

The MSc programme's interdisciplinary approach has been invaluable in broadening my perspective. It allowed me to approach this complex topic from both research and design disciplines, which continuously informed and strengthened each other. This constant interplay between the two has been key to my development over the past year.

To expand further on the interplay between research and design, the research process has been crucially extensive in order to fully understand the interdisciplinary topic of dissidence, particularly from an architectural perspective. Early on in the research, I realized that dividing the topic into theoretical and practical site research was essential. This distinction arose from the gap in theoretical knowledge about dissidence, contrasted with the experiential actions that manifest in the urban environment. Gradually, I built a tapestry of theoretical knowledge from the architectural perspective, which I then tested systematically through site research. This process created the foundation for my design, offering a framework for implementing interventions from a multiscalar perspective. It allowed me to approach each urban setting, with its unique characteristics, and translate them into architectural materialization.

To address the multidisciplinary of the topic and its limitations, I applied a range of methods, particularly in the

experiential part of the site research. To avoid approaching the topic solely from an architectural perspective—since this would have been a top-down research method—I combined other research methods such as critical storytelling and narration. These allowed me to tap into the experiential aspect of dissidence and engage in an imagined dialogue with the voiceless, whether human or non-human. A notable limitation was the language barrier I encountered during the site visit. However, this limitation was nearly neutralized through the use of narration, combined with articles I found written in English by a journalist about the neighborhood. While I acknowledge that direct conversations and listening to specific stories would have informed my project in a different way, the articles still provided a valuable general overview of the issues within the neighborhood. This focus on broader societal issues allowed my research and design to concentrate on common challenges many face. For further research, gaining personal insight into the lives of the citizens would undoubtedly enhance the approach.

Overall, this project could serve as one of many examples that illustrate how certain societal issues emerge and manifest in urban environments. It also demonstrates how these coping mechanisms inherently contain the knowledge and expertise to inform architectural design that empowers vulnerable communities and critically challenges top-down systems.

For academia, this project can act as a pedagogical tool for addressing similar interdisciplinary and sensitive topics, promoting a more horizontal approach to design that addresses the complex issues affecting people's lives. However, it is important to recognize that these societal issues and the manifestation of dissidence are far more complex, with numerous factors influencing them depending on the context. While this project applies a multiscale approach, the content, causes, and materialization of these issues will differ depending on the context. Therefore, the architectural materialization in this project is not meant to be directly applied to other contexts. However, the approach can serve as a valuable guideline for addressing similar topics or disciplines.

Throughout this process, the feedback I received from my tutors has been invaluable. Their knowledge of various aspects of the topic has been encouraging, and their introduction to different instances and precedents has directly informed my design interventions. Additionally, the occasional lectures over the past year have influenced both my research and design approach. As a result, this project has grown stronger, with carefully considered aspects being adjusted and combined to meet the objectives of addressing basic needs and performative dissidence as critique to systemic issues.



Over the past year and a half, despite the challenges, this journey has been transformational both professionally and personally. I have gained new insights into what I want and do not want from my career. Moving forward, I would like to approach design projects by starting with theoretical exploration, as I believe this opens doors to other disciplines and theories that can enrich architecture and create a more layered approach.

Another key realization is the importance of advocating for horizontal relationships between the actors influencing design, as this can have a broader impact. Though it took me some time, I have come to trust my ideas, as the materialization of my work is deeply informed by my personal experiences, making it unique to me. I have also learned the importance of discussing my ideas, doubts, and challenges, as approaching them from different perspectives often proves more fruitful for the project.

Throughout this process, I faced health challenges caused by multiple factors, which led to a cognitive stagnation. However, looking back, I now realize that overcoming these challenges was necessary for my personal growth, both professionally and in other aspects of my life. As I addressed these issues, the design process began to flow again.

For the final phase of the project, following the P4 presentation, my plans include incorporating the feedback received during P4, creating a model that will serve as the focal point of my presentation, and producing renders to visualize the architectural materialization of the project.

This project has also led me to reflect on my role as an architect, specifically in relation to this work. There is always an effort to redefine the significance of the architect within the design process, whether through the work of star architects or specialized practitioners. I have come to understand that the nature of the project, with all its components, can influence the approach, whether it is bottom-up or top-down.

However, I also recognize that the specific project at hand makes a significant difference. Rather than advocating for a particular specialization, I now believe that an architect can take on various roles, as long as those roles align with their own values. These values should guide their mission and the projects they pursue.

For this project, I've realized that, unlike the typical approach, the architect must maintain some level of connection with the users to offer their expertise. However, at a certain point, the architect must step back to avoid becoming a controlling force. This allows for full agency in the ongoing development of the project, giving space for the project to evolve in response to shifting societal needs.

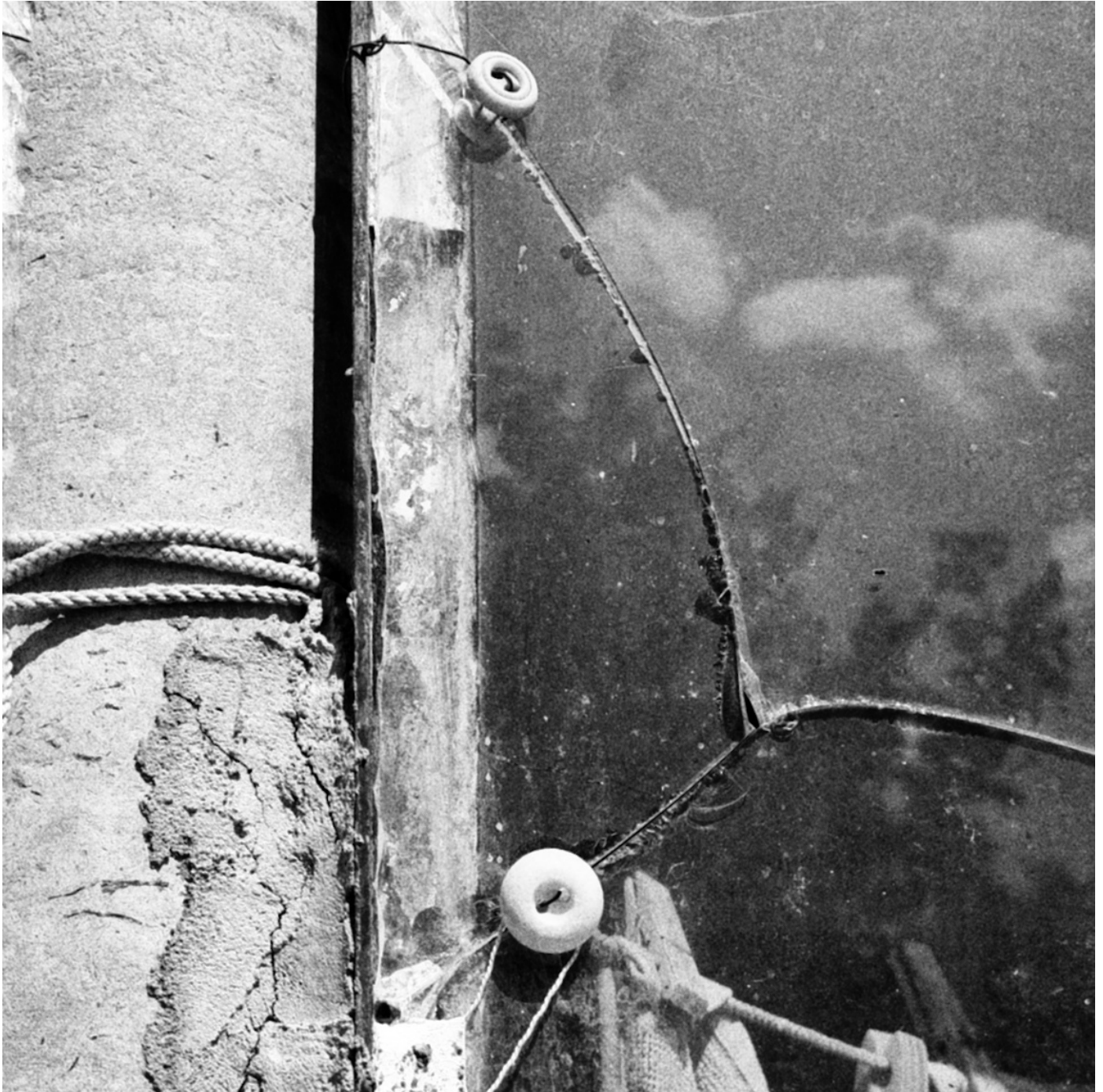
## **APPENDIX 2**

*Research plan*



# POIESIS OF TRANSGRESSION

Exploring the generative potential of creative occupancy



Research plan  
Architectural Design Crossovers: Heterogeneous City  
Graduation studio  
November 2023

By Erkan Mestan | 4604229

VANDALISM  
GRAFFITI



Figure 1: The initial fascination which vandalism in the form of graffiti

AREA OF INTEREST

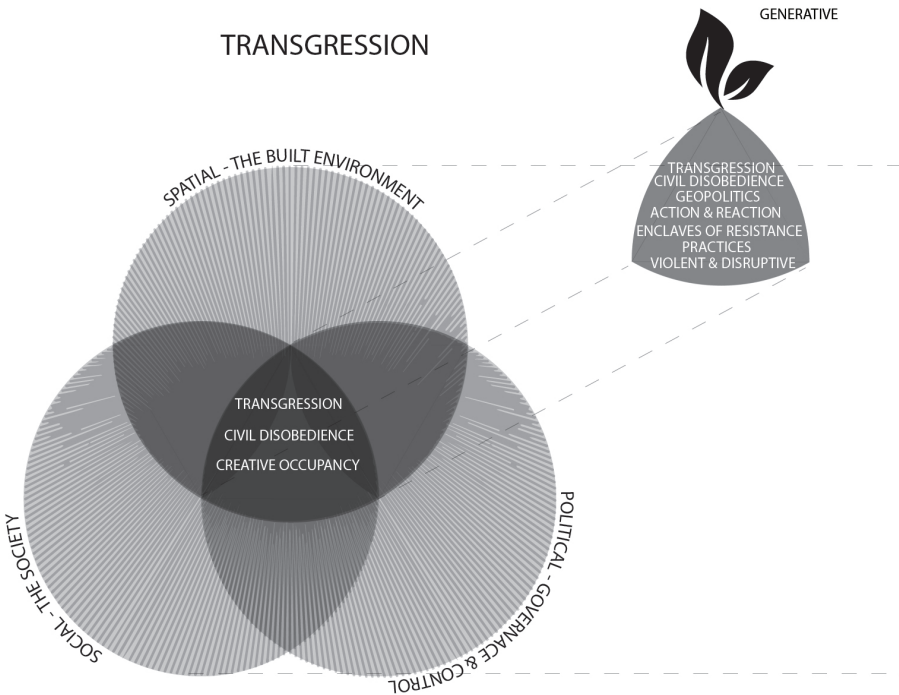
The most recent projects I've worked on have changed my approach to design for the better. Working on projects such as 'Ways of Doing' and 'Agential Materialism,' my approach to design has evolved to be less imposing. Other ways of doing architecture, the experimental side of it, have drawn my attention ever since. Considering the focus of these projects, I've uncovered that my interest lies in the otherness, the different, the alternate.

Initially, while working on this project, I was intrigued by such an example: graffiti (see Fig. 1). It was something I encountered during my recent field trips. I was struck by the creative manner in which it conveyed messages. However, graffiti is only one example of a broader, more overarching term I have adopted: transgression.

Transgression is a complex occurrence that intersects with spatial, social, and political aspects (see diagram 1). It is inherently violent and, therefore, has a disruptive nature, mostly perceived as disobedience and violation of rules, as damaging public and private goods, which is problematic in its own right. However, I see an opportunity and a platform for discourse and the exchange of ideas that can inform architectural and urban design.

I am particularly interested in the generative potential of civil disobedience rather than its destructive aspects. Transgression or civil disobedience might have the power to change how humans interact with and shape the built environment. This concept is closely related to the marginalized communities within cities, who have developed ways to cope with injustice and creatively claim and occupy urban spaces. Therefore, my research focus is on exploring the generative potential of civil disobedience through creative occupancy.

Diagram 1: Depicts the area of interest which consists of transdisciplinary domain of spatial, social and political



transgression:

an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence

Source: Oxford Languages

## MEANING OF THE CONCEPT

The term 'transgression' finds its roots in the work of the French philosopher Georges Bataille, in his book 'Erotism: Death and Sensuality,' alongside other related concepts such as taboo, sacrifice, language, death, and sensuality.

According to Bataille, transgression has an inherently violent element; it makes the difference between life and death. However, it is important to recognize that transgression, despite its inherent violence, does not always harbour destructive intentions.

*Transgression opens the door into what lies beyond the limits usually observed, but it maintains these limits just the same. Transgression is complementary to the profane world, exceeding its limits but not destroying it.*  
Georges Bataille, 1957, p.65

The intentionality behind such acts of violence is of crucial importance. Through the following analogy, this aspect can be clarified: Performing surgery and cutting a patient open with a knife is a violent act, but ultimately, the intention is to aid and heal the patient.

Our society and the built environment are often products of human constructs. While they may serve essential purposes, such as safety and health, they can lead to overdeterminacy in the name of these core values. Therefore, it is crucial to question these boundaries critically and continuously. The latter is relevant in terms of temporality, given the evolving nature of our societies and our understandings over time.

For me, transgression encompasses diverse acts that go beyond established norms and practices, beyond accepted ways of doing. It is violent in its nature but, in the context of our societies, only to humanity's own constructs, implying that we possess the agency to recalibrate these constructs when circumstances demand it.

## DICTIONARY

### transgression:

an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence

Source: Oxford Languages

### poiesis:

bringing forth, the process of emergence of something that did not previously exist.

## ETYMOLOGY

### Transgression in:

#### Late 15th c. English

To sin

#### Modern English: /transgression/

An act that goes against a law, rule or code of conduct; an offence

#### Spanish: /transgredir/

Actuar en contra de una ley, norma, pacto o costumbre

Acting against a law, rule, agreement or custom

#### French: /transgredir/

Passer par-dessus (un ordre, une obligation, une loi)  
Go over (and order, an obligation, a law)

#### Greek: /Καταπατάω/

Tresspass, intrude

#### Latin: /Praevaricatio/

To make a sham accusation, deviate (from the path of duty), literally "walk crookedly"; in Church Latin, "to transgress".

#### /Transgredi/

Trans (through or the other side or across) + gredi (to go)

#### Dutch: /Overtreden/

Je niet aanhouden aan (een regel of wet); Bepaalde denkbeeldige of daadwerkelijke lijnen te buiten gaan.

Not adhering to (a rule or law); to go beyond certain imaginary or actual lines/limits.

**The definitions listed above and considering the etymology of the word from Old French and Latin, the following meaning is adopted:**

/actions that deviate from the norm and go beyond certain imaginary or actual boundaries such as laws, rules, limits and customs/



## TRANSGRESSION & ARCHITECTURE

*... transgression is a whole, of which architectural rules are merely one part.*

Bernard Tschumi, 1976, reprinted in 1996, p. 78

As this quote clarifies, the term 'transgression' in architecture is going beyond accepted ways of doing that have become the norm and exploring other ways of making architecture. These norms have become the standardized ways of doing architecture.

In an architectural domain dominated by standardized ways of production, a consequence of industrialization's drive for efficiency, we encounter a globalized, homogeneous built environment (see diagram 2). Places become like every other place (Unknown). Although standardization is not evil, since it ensures a mass supply of things and ensures efficiency, it leaves little room for progress, for novelty. Architecture, therefore, became a tool of capital, complicit in a purpose antithetical to its social mission (Architectural Review, n.d.).

Although there have already been attempts in the architectural discipline as counter-projects to question and criticize the way the built environment is shaped. Artists and architectural collectives such as Archizoom, Superstudio, Ant Farm, The Anarchitecture Group, and Drop City are some examples that were exploring alternative approaches. Their counter-projects have broadened the spectrum of possibilities and fostered critical discourse.

This is where transgression finds its power — anger and frustration are the driving motor. These marginalized groups, due to exclusion, resort to acts of transgression to assert their rights and secure their livelihoods. However, these types of civil disobedience are mostly not tolerated and are met with repercussions instead of acknowledgement. Most of the time, their intention is to get justice and assert their rights to the city as citizens

While transgressive practices can be forceful, charged with anger and frustration, the focus of this research is not the destructive aspects of it. This side is recognized but already extensively explored in multiple disciplines. Instead, the focus of this research is the generative potential of transgression. The aim is to explore how transgressive practices, such as civil disobedience through creative occupancy, can inform architecture and urban design. The objective is to open up discussions to explore how architecture can create contemporary situations.

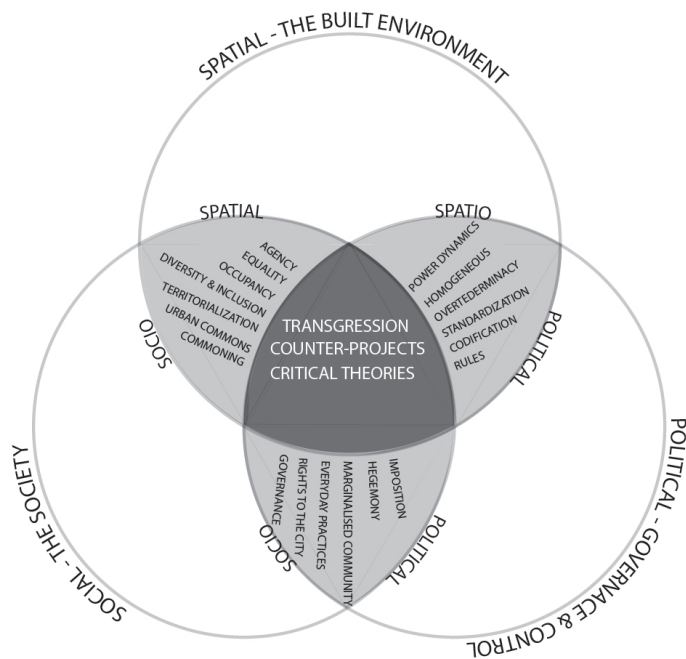
## CONTEXT

In addition, this topic holds relevance within the context of the ADC studio, which directs its focus towards urban commons like soil, water, energy, and mobility in the city. To study a city and neglect its sewers and power supplies means you miss essential aspects of distributional justice and planning power (Graham & Marvin, 2001, p. 16). So, urban commons are imperative to understand equality and justice. These commons are highly governed and controlled, directly juxtaposing transgressive practices. However, urban commons can be utilized to facilitate commoning to create a more just city based on the notions of the right to the city in a less imposed manner.

### Madrid as backdrop

Transgressive practices are more prevalent in bigger cities, like Madrid, which is the context for this project. As a metropolis, Madrid has complex structures of hierarchies, laws, and a diverse array of marginalized communities who do not or cannot conform to the established way of life.

Madrid, like many other urban centres, has witnessed countercultural movements and transgressive practices. An important moment of transgression in the form of urban squatting at Puerta del Sol in 2011 manifested itself in the built environment. It was a powerful movement/protest that showed the generative potential of civil disobedience.



**Diagram 2:** Shows the relevant concepts in overlapping domains where things become productive

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### **Main research question:**

*What if transgressive practices through occupancy, such as squatting and public space occupation could inform architectural design and, in turn, generate other ways of living for the marginalised groups and communities of Madrid?*

### **Sub-questions:**

#### **Explorative part:**

**Q1:** Who are the marginalized groups in Madrid that engage in urban space occupation?

**Q2:** How do these marginalized communities occupy various urban space?

**Q3:** To what extent do these transgressive practices provide empowerment for these marginalized communities?

**Q4:** What were the underlying reasons behind engaging in these transgressive practices?

#### **Speculative part:**

**Q1:** What if objects and systems of transgressive practices are utilized in order to dissipate inequality?

**Q2:** What if this could affect the way architects design in a more open-ended approach?

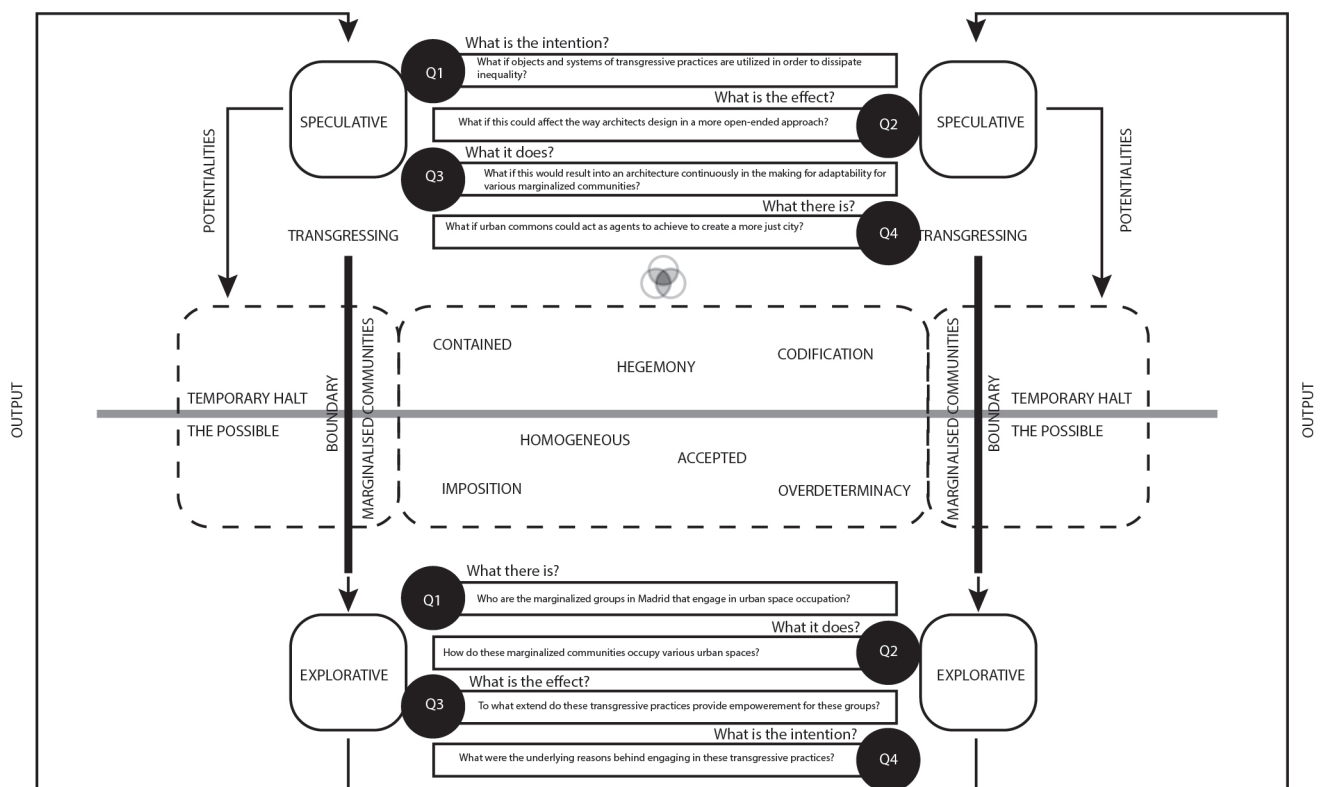
**Q3:** What if this would result into an architecture continuously in the making for adaptability for various marginalized communities?

**Q4:** What if urban commons could act as agents to achieve to create a more just city?



# PROBLEMATIZATION DIAGRAM

**Diagram 3:** Shows how transgression occurs and shows the explorative and speculative distinction with the subsequent research questions



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*"Limits remain, for transgression does not mean the methodological destruction of any code or rule that concerns space or architecture. On the contrary it introduces new articulations between inside and outside, between concept and experience. Very simply it means overcoming unacceptable prevalences."*

Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture & Disjunctions*, p. 78

Although transgression was introduced in other disciplines, architect Bernard Tschumi conveyed this bridge and brought the concept of transgression into architectural discourse. Tschumi argues that architectural theory is an elaboration of rules and that theorists rarely talk about their transgression. However, he explains that transgression is a whole, of which architectural rules are merely one part (Tschumi, 1996, p.66). In essence, this suggests that anything beyond accepted and tested theories and rules may be considered transgressive, yet it represents only a part of the possibilities within architectural practice.

Bernard Tschumi concludes his essays by emphasizing that in order to change the capitalist, imposing nature of cities, one ought to design the conditions that will make it possible for a non-hierarchical, non-traditional society to happen. As Michel Foucault points out, there is no liberating architecture. He argues that liberty is a practice. Non-hierarchical composition cannot guarantee an open society or equality in politics (Allen, 1999, p.102).

Tschumi, on that account, suggests that our experience should be strategized through architecture, steering away from imposing masterplans and fixed places, and instead embracing the concept of a new heterotopia (Tschumi, 1996, p.259). A term extensively explored by Michiel Dhaene and Lieven De Cauter in their book 'Heterotopia and the City,' including heterotopia as Michel Foucault coined it and a new understanding of public space heterotopias.

In 2013, the *Architectural Design* journal dedicated an entire issue to the topic of 'Architecture of Transgression,' delving into the challenging and generative potential of transgressive practices in the realm of architecture (p. 15).

*Transgression is neither good nor evil, it depends on the personal position. It is a challenge that forces recalibration of what is accepted. It is pushing at the boundaries of what architecture is, and what it can be. For architecture to have a fertile design culture, it has to move along with the times, so that the core is challenged and propelled forward by those operating at the margins*

(*Architecture of Transgression*, 2013, p.5)

As previously discussed by Lefebvre, the journal issue also emphasizes the role of events outside the official world. These events serve as the temporary suspensions of the established norms and allow us to revisit our understanding of those norms and to recalibrate their meaning (*Architecture of Transgression*, 2013, p. 19). One illustrative example is the carnival. As an analogy, it introduces the notion of architecture that transgresses the normative hierarchies and processes of production.

## GLOSSARY

**Transgression:**

An act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offence

**Dissidence:**

Protest against official policy

**Governance:**

The action or manner of governing a state, organization, etc.

**Boundaries:**

A line which marks the limits of an area or conceptual boundaries

**Limits:**

A point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass

**Codes of conduct:**

Set of rules around behaviour

**Norms:**

Something that is usual, typical, or standard

**Violation:**

To break or fail to comply with a rule

**Disobedience:**

Failure or refusal to obey rules or someone in authority

**Marginalized:**

A person, group or concept treated as insignificant or peripheral

**Urban politics:**

Diverse political structures in urban areas

**Civil disobedience:**

The refusal to comply with certain laws considered unjust, as a peaceful form of political protest

## THEORETICAL LAYERING

For the theoretical approach, diverse related concepts will be explored, on top of the existing literature about transgression (see diagram 4). Dissidence is another key term that will be explored further. It is a fundamental questioning of professional, cultural and political conventions (Weizman, 2014, p.1-12).

Examining the 'right to the city,' as coined by Henri Lefebvre, emphasizes the importance of equality, which encompasses not just equal rights and opportunities but also the equitable distribution of urban resources. Closely related aspects to equality and the right to the city are diversity and inclusion, essential for coexistence in the city. Creating this diversity within a city enhances its vitality and fosters multiple and varied activities (Mcgrath, 2013, p.46). As Can Altay argued, society is a collective of individuals that have nothing in common. Therefore, we should strive for diversity and inclusion within our cities (Architecture of Transgression, 2013, p. 104).

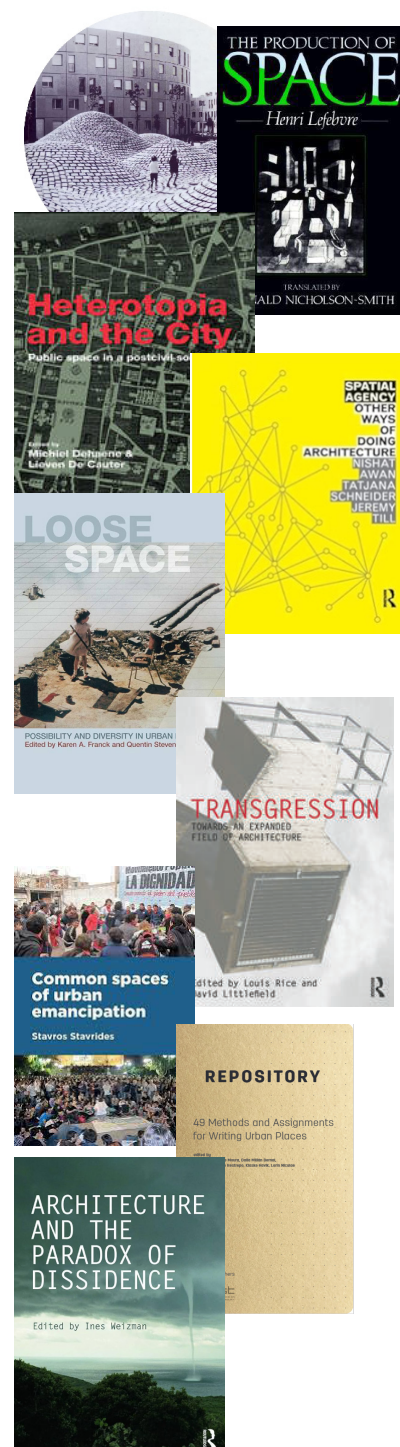
Bernard Tschumi emphasized the need to design conditions, an idea put differently by Can Altay and coined as 'setting a setting' (Architecture of Transgression, 2013, p. 107). The concept of 'temporary autonomous zones,' introduced by Hakim Bey, will be explored further on this account. Emphasizing individualized architecture that caters to inhabitants' needs, this approach creates flexible cities that embrace uncertainty (Mcgrath, 2013, p.46). A loose fit is proposed between the activity and the enclosing envelope. It is an architecture not invested in durability, stability, and certainty, but an architecture that leaves space for the uncertainty of the real (Allen, 1999, p.102).



## Poiesis of Transgression THEORIES TO EXPLORE

Henri Lefebvre

### The Right to the City



**Diagram 4:** Visualizes the correlations between related, authors, readings and concepts, to the concept of transgression



## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This research aims to gain a better understanding of transgressive practices like the occupancy by marginalized groups and communities, assess their generative potential, and explore alternative ways of making architecture in response to their needs.

The multidimensional nature of transgression, spanning spatial, social, and political domains, requires a methodology that reflects the interdisciplinarity of the topic. A mixed-research approach is suitable, given all the diverse analytical methods needed for each of these domains.

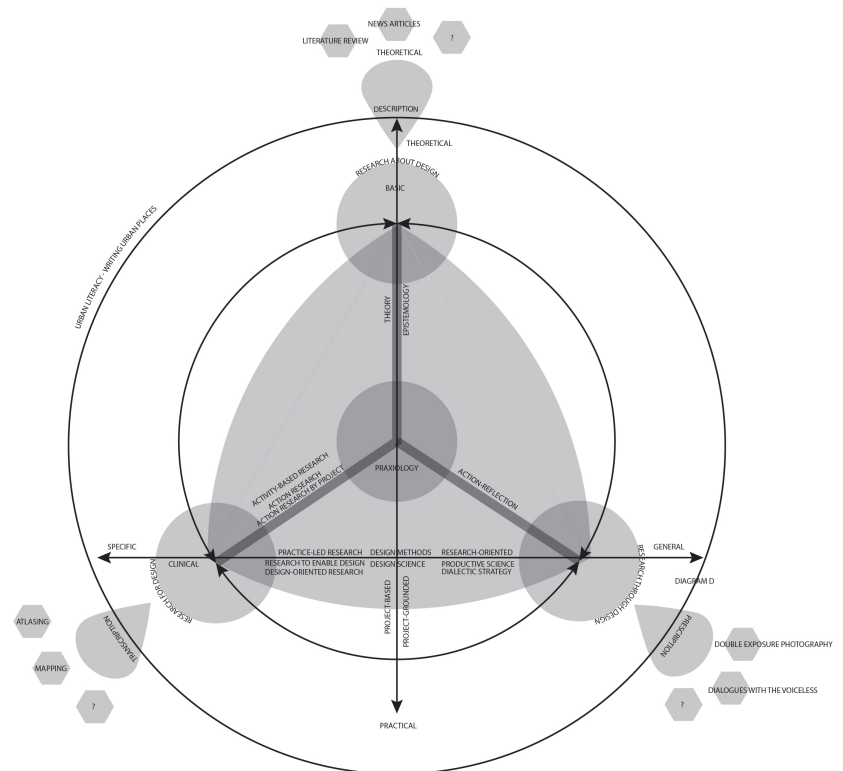
Those who say that architecture is impure if it must borrow its arguments from other disciplines not only forget the inevitable interferences of culture, economy and politics but also underestimate the ability of architecture to accelerate the workings of culture by contributing to its polemic. As practice and as theory architecture must import and export.

*Bernard Tschumi, Architecture and Disjunction, (p.17)*

As the quote by Bernard Tschumi clarifies, and Klaske Havik has expanded on it further, it is important to bridge different disciplines for the exploration of this hybrid topic but also to employ different sets of methods that would aid in uncovering aspects for a better understanding of it (Havik, n.d., p.59). Architecture must operate at the scale of a broader territory (Sheppard, n.d., p.79), in order to create these bridges.

This research consists of three parts: theoretical, explorative, and speculative approaches. This division is essential in understanding transgression within the architectural discipline, in practices, and in imagining other ways of making architecture. There is a clear distinction between lab-based research and field-based contextualization to create meaningful ways of living at the local level. This division aligns with the praxiology of design research that elaborates on research about, for, and through design, as structured by Frankel & Racine (Frankel & Racine, 2010), (see diagram 5).

**Diagram 5:** Visualizes the methodological approach based on design praxiology, added layer of urban literacy and the subsequent methods what will be employed



# METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

## Urban Literacy

Based on my experience in experimental writing and building stories, I've recognized the generative potential of this method. Rather than imposing specific programs or designs, I will use urban literacy as an interactive dialogue. In urban literacy, language becomes a tool to describe experience but also generate meaning. In literature, the experiences of space and spatial practice are often much more accurately described than in professional writing on architecture and cities (Havik, n.d., p.59). This relates to the lived space. This approach aligns with Bernard Tschumi's concept of how architecture scripts spaces and sequences, as seen in his *Manhattan Transcripts*, for example.

**Theoretical Part:** The Preparation

**Urban literacy:** Description of ambiguous relationships between concepts and the spaces, between the subjects and the objects

In this initial phase, the research inquiry will adopt a research-about-design approach and delve deeper into transgression in literature, in particular, the occupation of space. It will expand on related literature and concepts as discussed in the theoretical framework.

**Explorative Part:** The Lab --> The Field

**Urban literacy:** Transcription of transgressive practices and interactions

In this second phase, the research employs a research-for-design approach, focusing on real-world cases of space occupation within the context of Madrid.

This phase involves creating an atlas of specific transgressive practices, emphasizing the connection between objects, spaces, and events. For this research, objects and things are the focus of the atlas, as they are the signs where human relations are embedded. Our relationships, social bonds, would be as airy as clouds were it not for the contracts between subjects. The object, specific to the Hominidae, stabilizes our relationships (Serres, 1995, p. 87). To achieve this, marginalized groups and communities will be approached to gain firsthand insight into their daily lives and narratives. Additionally, in order to uncover these practices in the context of Madrid, various methods, such as mapping (cartographic and experimental) and actor-network visualization, will be employed to uncover the phenomenon. Therefore, methods of anonymization have to be explored.

**Speculative Approach:** The Field --> The Lab

**Urban Literacy:** Prescription of Reality and Imagination

In the final phase, the research shifts towards a research-through-design approach, which has a speculative nature. The research outcomes will inform the latter part of the graduation studio, informing the design as an experiment. It should, however, be remembered that the aim is not to provide concrete solutions but to create design knowledge based on practice and resulting in an applied experiment through imagination. Architecture has too slow of a pace for fixing things, however it can speculate.

Therefore, the research will employ imaginative methods that afford a shift in perspective, including double-exposure and dialogues with the voiceless - both human and non-human agents (Bernal, Havik, Moura, Niculae & Restrepo, 2023). Since this would be context-specific, the design outcomes cannot be considered applicable to other contexts, but its approach could serve as an example in similar conditions for a design assignment.

## ARGUMENT OF RELEVANCE

### **How could this topic be relevant to the architectural discourse and urban planning?**

Architecture has a social duty, but the capitalistic approach often places it in an antagonistic position. This domination of the built environment has caused marginalized groups to be deprived of their rights and opportunities. In Madrid, like many other big capital cities, this inequality can be observed, and it is palpable in the topography of the city. Marginalized groups are struggling with the societal boundaries imposed by hegemonic structures.

Transgressive practices are attempts to transcend these constructed boundaries. While it is a violent act in the sense that it overcomes and goes beyond these boundaries, it harbours generative potential since this is the only attempt that explores the uncharted, the unknown. However, rather than having a black-and-white, inside-and-outside division of the two sides of these boundaries, it is essential to place these practices on a spectrum.

Understanding these practices is crucial for the creation of non-hierarchical, more equitable cities where diverse communities coexist. These practices serve as temporary halts to domination, everyday life, and hegemonic structures, providing the space to question reality and come up with other ways of making architecture that is diverse and inclusive. This will recalibrate our ideas on hierarchies and drive societal progress in necessary directions.

This research does not aim to offer universal design solutions, given this notion goes against the discussed concepts in the previous chapters. Rather, it acts as a didactic and pedagogical guide on how to navigate similar conditions beyond conventions and poorly understood, marginalized communities."

*With its threefold phases - not necessarily in the same order, ideally moving back and forth - aims to understand the transgressive practices both in the architectural discipline and practice in order to shift the perspective rather than imposing a design on a poorly understood part of society. It aims to understand and, through urban literacy, imagine other ways of making architecture that are not yet studied.*

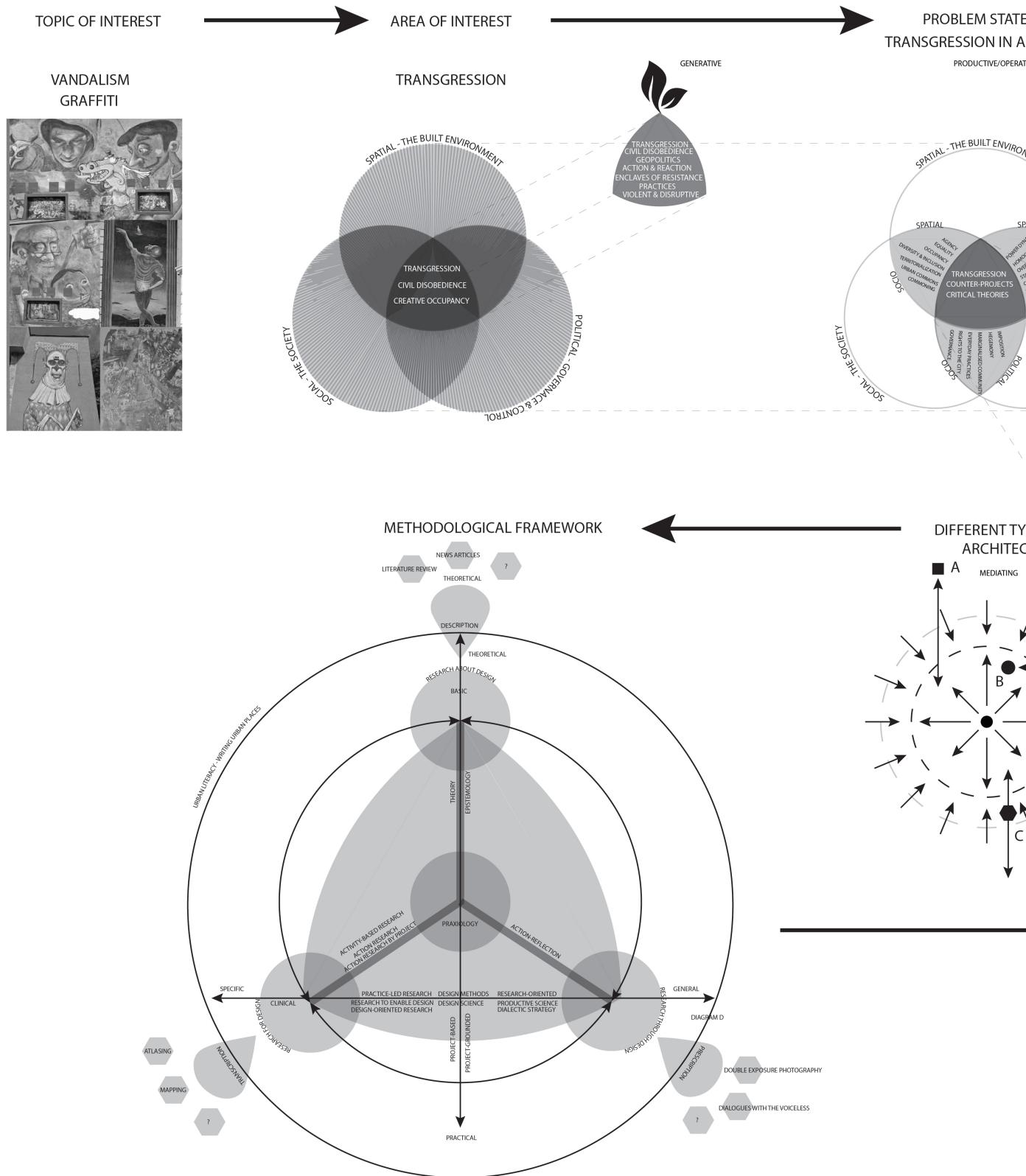
*Transgression is a part where architectural rules make up only part of the potentialities. This goes to show that boundaries are constructs and we should overcome these to explore what potentials lay out there.*

*Bernard Tschumi, Architecture & Disjunction, 1996, p.66*





## RESEARCH DIAGRAM







## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*.

Barbosa, J. C. (2020). *Transgressive Architecture: Analysing transgression as a tool for critique, resistance and ultimately design*. Geraadpleegd van <https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=9065270&fileId=9065271>

Doron, G. M. (2000). The dead zone and the architecture of transgression. *City*, 4(2), 247–263. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13604810050147857>

Findley, L. (2005). *Building change: Architecture, Politics and Cultural Agency*. Psychology Press.

Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*.

Graham, S., & Marvin, S. (2001). *Splintering urbanism: networked infrastructures, technological mobilities and the urban condition*. Retrieved from <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA52769402>

Haymes, S. N., Cresswell, T., & Vergara, C. J. (1997). In Place/OUT Of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 51(2), 138. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1425455>

*Heterotopia and the City : Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, edited by Michiel Dehaene, and Cauter, Lieven De, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/lib/delft/detail.action?docID=342368>.

Hill, J. (2003). *Actions of architecture: Architects and Creative Users*. Psychology Press.

Martin, L. (1990). Transpositions: on the intellectual origins of Tschumi's architectural theory. *Assemblage*, (11), 22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3171133>

La Marche, J., & Tschumi, B. (1995). Architecture and disjunction. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 49(2), 132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1425404>

A preface to transgression. (2019). In Cornell University Press eBooks (pp. 29–52). <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501741913-003>

Rice, L., & Littlefield, D. (2015). *Transgression: Towards an Expanded Field of Architecture*.

Sara, R., & Mosley, J. (2014). *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

Tschumi, B. (1996). *Architecture and disjunction*. MIT Press.

Stavrides, S. (2020). *Common spaces of urban emancipation*. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526158697>

Weizman, I. (2014). *Architecture and the paradox of dissidence*. Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315779942>

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

*Annotation for some of the books do delve deeper into:*

### **Architecture and the Paradox of Dissidence by Inez Weizman**

This book expands on a spectrum of dissident spatial practices to highlight the overlapping web of politics, culture, forensics and agency of the term dissidence.

### **The dead zones and the Architecture of transgression by Gil M. Doron**

This book investigates the dead zones and how transgressive practices can be adopted to subvert power structures. It explores the potentiality of transgression.

### **Loose space: possibility and diversity in urban life by Karen A Franck and Quentin Stevens**

The book explores the experimental and informal use of public spaces and how users appropriate these spaces according to their needs. Activities like familiar, unexpected or planned, momentary or long-lasting make urban spaces loose according to the book.

### **Spatial Agency: other ways of doing Architecture by Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider. Jeremy Til**

Collated examples of alternative approaches to architecture and design. These are good examples of how architectural practices can become more richer, open and inclusive.

### **The Architecture of Transgression by Jonathan Mosley, Rachel Sara & Can Altay**

Transgression opens up new possibilities for practice. Highlights the positive impact of transgressive practices to reinvent and reposition the architectural profession.

### **Transgression: towards an expanded field of architecture by Louis Rice and David Littlefield**

This book explores how the transgression of physical and conceptual boundaries produces new architectures and discourse. It draws an interdisciplinary approach from disciplines such as architecture, geography, urban studies, sociology, fine-art, film-making, photography and environmentalism.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### *Graduation plan*



# 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](mailto: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	
Name	Erkan Sezgin Mestan
Student number	4604229

Studio		
Name / Theme	Architectural Design Crossovers: Heterogeneous City – The Expanded City/Madrid	
Main mentor	Roberto Cavallo	Architectural Design
Second mentor	Freek Speksnijder	Technical Building Design
Third mentor	Alper S. Alkan	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	I had several reasons for choosing Architectural Design Crossovers as a graduation studio. As the name suggests, the studio offers a transdisciplinary approach to architecture, an aspect that resonated with me particularly, because I wanted to involve other disciplines such as sociology and anthropology that would enrich my exploration of the chosen topic. Furthermore, I wanted to initiate my project on a comprehensive theory basis, and I knew that this is the studio's approach. I see this as a crucial step that would contribute to a more thoughtful design process. Lastly, Design Crossovers has fewer constraints which allows us to explore our personal fascinations, which in my opinion, encourages creativity and in turn, innovative interventions for the built environment.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Poiesis of 'Enclaves of Resistance': Reclaiming Community Resilience along a strip as Urban Pilgrimage
Goal	
Location:	Embajadores – a neighborhood with high vulnerability rate in the centre of Madrid, Spain.
The posed problem,	The posed problem delves into dissident pursuits that are manifested in the built environment. Initially, it started from a personal fascination with the dichotomy around graffiti and has gradually evolved into a larger focus on dissent and transgression in the built environment, like

	<p>graffiti, squatting, public space occupation, to name some examples.</p> <p>These instances often serve as coping mechanisms for struggling communities and thus are indicators of more significant systemic and/or societal issues.</p> <p>Often, spatial dissident pursuits face repercussions such as cleansing of the public/private spaces and heightened control as a result. However, dissident pursuit can be viewed in a new light, revealing their generative potential, since they address the systemic / societal issues and have inherent characteristics of desired futures. These characteristics, – such as temporality, visibility, etc. - can therefore be utilized and result in new systems and spatial configurations that could result in loosened control that empowers communities.</p> <p>The aim of the project is not to solve and eliminate dissent from the built environment, but rather to acknowledge its potential and create room for debate. It seeks to address the underlying systemic issues and create possibilities for marginalized communities, while drawing inspiration from the characteristics of the observed dissident pursuit. The objective is to understand whether and how architecture can take on this role as a catalyst for societal change by creating pockets of resistance/resilience and the dissident strategies could be amplified as resilient tools for community empowerment within an ongoing adaptive cycle.</p>
research questions and	<p>The research part of the project is divided into two parts, with the last part progressing into design inquiries. The first part is the explorative stage in <i>research for design</i> approach, in order to understand the nature of and underlying reasons of dissent. Subsequently, it moves from the observable to the conceptual, in a speculative stage in <i>research through</i> design that materializes intentions. So, converting the structure enables this translation between exploring and speculating (see Process for further explanation).</p>



**Structure of the dual set of sub-research questions:**

Explorative part:

1. What is there?
2. What it does?
3. What is the effect?
4. What was the intention?

Speculative part:

1. What should the intention be?
2. What should the effect be?
3. What should it do?
4. What should it be?

**The main research question:**

*How can dissent that is manifested in the built environment inform architectural design and in turn generate novel spatial configurations that could empower marginalized communities?*

**The explorative part:**

1. What types of dissent are observable in the built environment within the neighbourhood of Embajadores?
2. How do these instances of dissent manifest in the built environment?
3. What impact do the observed dissidence pursuits have on the daily life of the citizens in the area?
4. What are the underlying motivations and reasons behind the observed dissident pursuit?

**The speculative part/experimental nature:**

1. How could these intentions be combined with the observed conditions and in turn, inform design inquiries?
2. what ways could architectural interventions have a positive affect the lives of the citizens in the area?
3. How could the observed characteristics contribute to the resilience of marginalized communities?
4. What are the architectural elements and configurations that could contribute to community agency and resilience?

<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>The objective of this project is addressing significant systemic issues, particularly observable in the neighbourhood of Embajadores and in turn creating novel ways of spatial configurations aimed at empowering the marginalized communities. The dissident pursuits observed in the existing fabric of the city consisting of different domains of daily life, from public to semi-public to private need interventions that go beyond the capabilities of a typical social centre.</p> <p>In contrast to static places of gathering, this project proposes new possibilities that contribute to an on-going empowerment. A dynamic strip consisting of interventions, weaving through the existing fabric of the neighbourhood, progressing and reimagining the domains of daily life such as the home, work, leisure and public space heterotopias as pockets of resilience and resistance to hegemonic structures and so suggest novel ways of life for marginalized individuals. This strip might foster community connections by uniting individuals with common struggles creating productive and empowering combinations. It utilizes existing buildings and suggest new interventions since the existing cannot always address the issues at hand.</p> <p>This strip of interventions was inspired by the progressions of protest, becoming a route of empowerment where different communities are united for a common intention – a form of urban pilgrimage.</p>
<p>[This should be formulated in such a way that the graduation project can answer these questions. The definition of the problem has to be significant to a clearly defined area of research and design.]</p>	
<p><b>Process</b></p>	
<p><b>Method description</b></p> <p>The research part is divided into three parts: theoretical, explorative and speculative approaches corresponding to the praxeology of design research. There is a clear distinction between lab-based research and field-based contextualization aiming to create meaningful ways of living at the local level. This division aligns with the praxeology of design research that elaborates on research about, for, and through design, as structured by Frankel &amp; Racine (see methodological diagram).</p>	

- The theoretical stage consists of a literature study, layering recent theories that support research within the discourse of architecture.
- The explorative stage involves delving deeper into observed dissident pursuit and their underlying intentions. This exploration dissects these instances of dissidence into their constituent parts, aiming to understand their manifestation in the built environment. In addition to conventional plans and sections, narratives and rituals of dissents will be analysed as new spatial experiences in a threefold transcript, distinguishing the objects/buildings, the movements and the events which aligns with Bernard Tschumi's Manhattan Transcripts illustrating of how architecture scripts spaces.
- The speculative stage concludes with potential architectural elements and configurations that translate and embody characteristics of dissents and desired intentions into the neighbourhood of Embajadores. Since novel ways are the objective, new spatial experiences will be imagined and depicted through urban literacy, a way of 'writing' urban spaces or experiences. One example of such imaginative methods are collages.

For the design part the outcomes of the speculative will be utilized, corresponding with the existing fabric of the chosen strip to incorporate the interventions.

## Literature and general practical references

### Key words and theories:

Architecture | public space | dissidence | transgression | loose space | indeterminacy | open-ended | experimental | adaptive | heterotopia's | enclaves of resistance | appropriation | tension | discovery | empowerment | agency | common struggles | marginalized communities.

### Bibliography:

*Spatial Agency: other ways of doing Architecture* by Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till

Awan, N., Schneider, T., & Till, J. (2011). *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture*.

- Collated examples of alternative approaches to architecture and design. These are good examples of how architectural practices can become more richer, open and inclusive.

*Loose space: possibility and diversity in urban life* by Karen A Franck and Quentin Stevens

Franck, K. A., & Stevens, Q. (2007). *Loose space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*.

- The book explores the experimental and informal use of public spaces and how users appropriate these spaces according to their needs. Activities like familiar, unexpected or planned, momentary or long-lasting make urban spaces loose according to the book.



*Architecture and disjunction: essays by Bernard Tschumi*

La Marche, J., & Tschumi, B. (1995). *Architecture and disjunction*. Journal of Architectural Education, 49(2), 132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1425404>

- Collection of essays written by Bernard Tschumi over the course of 15 years.

*The Right to the City by Henri Lefebvre*

Lefebvre, H. (1967). *Le droit à la ville. L'Homme Et La Société*, 6(1), 29–35. <https://doi.org/10.3406/homso.1967.1063>

- Expands on the collective right to change and shape the city.

*Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society*

Michiel Dehaene, and Cauter, Lieven De, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/lib/delft/detail.action?docID=342368>.

- Expands and repositions the coined term Heterotopia's by Michel Foucault.

*Architecture and Micropolitics: Four Buildings by Farshid Moussavi*

Moussavi, F. (2022). *Architecture and Micropolitics: Four Buildings 2011-2022*. Farshid Moussavi Architecture. Park Publishing (WI).

- Proposes that we abandon determinism and accept subjectivity to ground buildings in the micropolitics of everyday life.

*Repository: 49 Methods and Assignments for Writing Urban Places*

Repository. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.nai010.com/en/publicaties/repository/246097>

- Collection of visualisations of urban narratives.

*The Architecture of Transgression by Jonathan Mosley, Rachel Sara & Can Altay*

Sara, R., & Mosley, J. (2014). *The architecture of transgression*. John Wiley & Sons.

- Examples from the practice that have a critical approach and acknowledge the potential to rethink the architectural profession.

*Common spaces of urban emancipation by S. Stavrides*

Stavrides, S. (2020). *Common spaces of urban emancipation*. <https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526158697>

- Exploration of urban experiences and communing.

*Architecture and the Paradox of Dissidence by Inez Weizman*

Weizman, I. (2014). *Architecture and the paradox of dissidence*. Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315779942>

- This book expands on a spectrum of dissident spatial practices in different contexts.

...

**Precedents:**

In the neighbourhood of Embajadores some precedents were present but more in the conventional ways such as homeless shelters, community centres and art cities but investigating those might be useful in understanding what the neighbourhood lacks/needs.

**Casino de la Reina**

*community centre*

**Biblioteca Escuelas Pias**

*church turned into library*

**La Tabacalera**

*old tobacco factory occupied by subcultures.*

**Reflection**

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation project exploring the generative potential of dissident pursuit fits well within the studio. Architectural Design Crossovers studio has a transdisciplinary approach, starting from a theoretical foundation with existing theories but also extends to analyze how the practice aligns with the discursive exploration of the dissidence and analyzing the practice to understand these dissident pursuits. Additionally, it is also related to the more specific theme of the studio, which is Heterogeneous/Expanded City, focusing on urban commons. Dissident pursuits are often more present in rapidly growing cities where differences grow faster and experiences swift marginalization and common struggles, which these dissident pursuits are indicators of. Within the Architecture track, the project explores how architecture can materialize and amplify these dissident strategies to achieve empowerment and resilience. Within the framework of the MSc program, as a Master of Science, the objective is to produce knowledge, and this aligns exploring uncharted territories such as dissidence and/or critically rethinking these, such as acknowledging their generative potential.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

The exploration of dissidence and acknowledgement of its generative potential as coping mechanisms shines a new light on the topic. It delves deeper into the actors in existing social structures and their diverging desires. This research delves into underlying systemic / societal issues, systematically observing and depicting dissidence and could draw connection to human studies such as sociology and anthropology and overlays it within the architectural framework. It is a critical approach to dissident pursuits previously deemed only destructive and draws a connection to architectural practice and explores how architecture can amplify heterogeneity within the city.