

REPORTS

Anna Dolcetta Capuzzo
4228588
dolcetta.anna@gmail.com
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EVENING LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR THE GROWTH OF CITY CENTRES

Anna Dolcetta Capuzzo
4228588
dolcetta.anna@gmail.com
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Introduction.

What is the relationship between young people, above all students, and city space? What is the role of young people in keeping alive city centres' night life? In this paper I would like to discuss the importance of young people related to their activity in bars, pubs, night clubs and the entertainment economy. I think that night leisure activities are very important for the growth of cities, economically and culturally speaking. I will, first of all, describe the student user group as a way of categorizing entertainment and the importance of "playscapes" for city growth, both economically and culturally. Venues development is a constantly changing factor in our city and it is ruled by social users, their needs and the communities' trend. After this I will describe the contribute of evening entertainment to the vitality of local urban street life. Cafes and social spaces have always been part of the public realm and they are defined as "third places" in which it is possible to enjoy the company of strangers. Finally I will link evening entertainment with the concept of leisure arguing that it is an helpful factor in reducing stress among students. In the conclusion I will relate this research to the design project in Zuidas Amsterdam, describing in which way it is possible to improve the condition of one particular user group.

Urban Playscapes and their definition by the user group.

The city as night point can act as set for a diverse and varied collection of mix and match youth styles, cultures and lifestyles. If until few decades ago we assisted to the developing and spreading of leisure activities mostly on the countryside, with an impoverishment and abandonment of city centres, nowadays these have been remodeled as places in which live, work and be entertained and this is part of a wider process of socio-economic restructuring of centres. This process is un

derlying the potential employment and income effects of developing a strong urban cultural economy and cultural production system based on nightlife entertainment; moreover the night-time economy, through pubs, bars, clubs and music venues has an undeniable role in valorizing again the material and symbolic urban economy of city centres.¹ The spaces assign to this activities are called “urban playscapes²” and they are referred not only to bars, pubs and night clubs but also to other activities, such as cinemas, theatre, cafès etc. Playscapes can be understood through an integrated “circuit of culture” consisting of production, regulation and consumption and, at the same time, they can be understood as a mix of conventional and alternative nightlife spaces. These spaces are the well-recognized commercially provided bars, pubs and nightclubs that exist in the most large urban centres. Students are one user groups to which these conventional spaces are directed. They are attracted by promotional nightlife discounts such as happy hours and cheap entry prices and, in almost all the cities, identifiable students pubs, bars and clubs as well as students unions, exist to provide satisfaction to their own exclusive needs. The principal providers of student-based entertainment seem to have understood that students have typical needs which should be supplied separately from other type of needs. As one night-club manager commented: “*the only thing you can do to get students in the venue is to offer them cheap beer and cheap entry on the door or some type of theme night. They’re easily pleased*”³. The above quotes seem to indicate that those who provide student entertainment understand student-hood as a different type of experience which requires an understanding of their specific needs and specific spaces. These informal and formal processes create a student popular culture infrastructure within the city which is characterized by a distinctive time and space framework.

1. P. Chatterton (2011)

2. P. Chatterton (2011)

3. P. Chatterton (1998)

Concluding, I think that students and their selective leisure activities in urban playscapes are strongly modifying the cities' pattern and the developing of venues area in the city centres. Students are the user group with more freedom than most of the population; they hardly have the distinctions between weekends and weekdays, day and night, work and playtime. In this sense, the student infrastructure is characterized by high levels of possibilities, both economically and for the city vitality. Investing on students can bring a lot of advantages.

"Third places" give vitality to the city.

I think that urban playscapes have a fundamental role in increasing the vivacity of city centres and their public life. Speaking about public life, Arrendt⁴ says that actions and speeches are the only human activities which takes place directly among humans, without the intercession of things or matter. The public urban life happens inside an interconnected space in which exchanges and meetings take place, it is a shared space accessible to the most of the population. I think that nightlife coincides with this definition. Grazian⁵ celebrates the freewheeling nightlife of the city as an unequivocal social good; nightclubs, bars and music venues contribute to the public life of cities. Nightlife establishments have historically functioned as "*third places*"⁶ as intimate worlds of sociability, conversation and leisure in which people can enjoy the pleasures of informal public life, sharing this space with strangers. The definition of "third places" refers to the idea that these social arenas provided a "third" alternative to the two most dominant spaces of everyday life: the public world of labor and work and the private, domesticated home realm.

The poetic and romantic notions of the corner

4. H. Teerds (2008)

5. D. Grazian (2009)

6. R. Oldenburg (1989)

*dive, the martini bar and the after hours cafe are all scenes of urban nightlife that help to generate subcultural variety and intensity for their cities and give birth to innovations in culture, music and art, politics and performance*⁷.

In particular, students user group have a significant role in the urban cultural vitality through a number of *passive and dynamic impacts*⁸. *Passive impacts* are the one which refer to the number of students who go out into the city and sustain audience levels in pubs, cafes, night-clubs, cinemas, live music venues, galleries and exhibitions. *Dynamic impacts* refer to the role of students as cultural producers. This cultural production role involves a variety of activities such as local exhibitions and galleries, community art work, theatrical or musical events.

Finally, even though nightlife environment can be characterized by racial and class barriers, normalization of gender differences and the lack of inclusive surrounding local nightlife in urban neighborhood communities, I believe that it has a fundamental role in the contemporary urban metropolis in order to keep alive our city centres.

Leisure activities as factor that reduce stress in students.

In this chapter I would like to discuss the role of evening entertainment related to leisure. According to Kelly⁹ leisure is the activity chosen in relative freedom for its qualities of satisfaction. Leisure may be almost anything, anywhere and at any time for someone. It is personal freedom, expression and self-development, it is social interaction, relationships and expression of community. Moreover, according to Zuzanek¹⁰ fewer working hours and greater access to leisure are expected to bring considerable social, psychological, cultural

7. D. Grazian (2009)

8. P. Chatterton (1998)

9. J. R. Kelly (2012)

10. J. Zuzanek (2004)

and health benefits. Indeed involving students in leisure activities, different from the usual tasks they must do, can reduce their stress and improve their well-being. Students, being satisfied in their leisure activities, perceive less pressure in their normal activities. Students tendency to structure one's time and leisure satisfaction may be an important factor in reducing academic stress. Ranjita¹¹ describes the leisure satisfaction as positive feeling which arise when meeting other people and personal needs through leisure activities. In this way I think that providing space for social interactions for students is a great opportunity also for their personal achievements.

Conclusion.

Finally, in this paper I wanted to delimit my research to students user groups. I researched and described how evening entertainment and leisure activities can bring economical profit and vivacity in the city centres and can reduce stress factors in university students. Economically speaking, creating a system of playscapes for students bring profit because students want to spend time outside with friends and they identify certain range of venues that represent their community, transforming it in their second home. Moreover, students have lot of free time, in this sense they can frequent pubs, cafes, clubs every day of the week. Evening entertainment bring vivacity in the city centre because it keep alive the notion of public life also during night time. I think that students bring happiness and life in the street of the centre. Finally, related to the stress reduction, students can perceive less pressure if they manage to spend time outside with friends, improving their well-being.

Related to the design studio, Zuidas is close to the Amsterdam Vrije university but unfortunately students can not participate in any social and leisure activities

11. M. Ranjita (2000)

because there isn't the space for these activities. I think that it's possible to improve the area involving students and creating spaces for social interaction and public life also during night time, bringing more vivacity in the area.

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ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SPACE IN DIFFERENT TRAIN STATIONS

Anna Dolcetta Capuzzo
4228588
dolcetta.anna@gmail.com
Architecture of the Public Interior Fall 2013
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Introduction

In this essay I would like to describe the importance that a train station has in relation to the connectivity to the city, creating public environments which allow people to stay and the presence of shops inside the station. The train station is often considered simply a node where people from nearby areas converge to travel on trains and go to another destinations, but it has an important value as entrance to the city and it create the connection between the public transport (trains) and the surroundings. Nowadays more and more people spend their life in public buildings, from work places, to supermarkets etc. Consequentially, the private space is merging into the public and this implies a renovation in the characteristics of public spaces. As Frank Loer¹ says the relocation of human activities from the house to the public buildings implies a reconsideration of comfort and the feeling of being at home in a public space. As connection element, it should have a public interior which improve the feeling of enjoy to stay. Indeed even if people spent time in public buildings, they don't perceive any comfort feelings.

Since Industrial revolution, train stations are considered in between the factory and the *palazzo*² because of its function of connection between the industrialized world and the bourgeois one. It was considered a special space and it was designed to provide good place to stay. For many travelers of the time, stations were the impressive gateways into the city or the neighborhood, the first and last point of call; to the comfort of passengers and experience of the station was given substantial consideration. Gradually over the centuries, moving by train became more common and the station improved its value of connectivity losing the value of destination place. In the end the train station became a passage between the platform and the city and it's now mostly considered simply a space in which none wants to spend more than ten minutes, people are in a hurry and they stop inside only for checking the timetable or buying tickets. Nowadays people have to go from point A to point B via C and they don't care about this point C. With public transport becoming an increasingly important part of improving the sustainability and livability of our cities, it is imperative that railway infrastructure is not simply provided as an alternative to driving but

1. F. Loer (2013)

2. L. Montuori (2011)

that is also integrated into the existing urban landscape rather than as an ungracefully dropped add-on.

How is it possible to improve the station's function in order to transform it into a destination and not only a transfer point? Considering the station as a gate to the city, is it possible to create a public interior which will change your travel? I will analyze the merits and flaws of some interesting examples which I studied until now; the Termini Station in Rome, which I analyzed for the studio's workshop; Rotterdam Centraal and Den Haag HS which I would like to confront and finally two Amsterdam stations, the site project, Amsterdam Zuid Amsterdam Amstel.

Termini Train Station, Rome

Termini train station is the main station in Rome and it is considered the gate to the city for all the passengers that come by train. This station is not simply a building through which people enter the city; it is a place of the city made of streets, connection, spaces and monuments which tourists can visit; it is completely merged into the city urban context³. I would like to describe some of these spaces which are important from a user point of view.

First of all, the space which could create more attraction is an old roman wall outside the station. When the station was built the concept was strictly related to the conservation and relation to this wall. Indeed the big entrance hall is made of glass wall in order to have a connection to the old roman wall which is a mark of the great history of Rome and the tourists are immediately absorbed by the important history of the city. I think that the concept of preserving the history of the place is really important and this creates an attraction for people, both tourists and residents. The idea of having an attraction element is essential in order to create a space where people want to stay, indeed it catches the attention of the users and creates a good environment for traveling. Unfortunately, as you can see in the picture, nowadays a series of circumstances transform this place into a lost space. The old roman wall is surrounded by fences because of street works and there aren't other attractions, like cafes, which invite people to go and stay there. In conclusion, I think that this is an example of

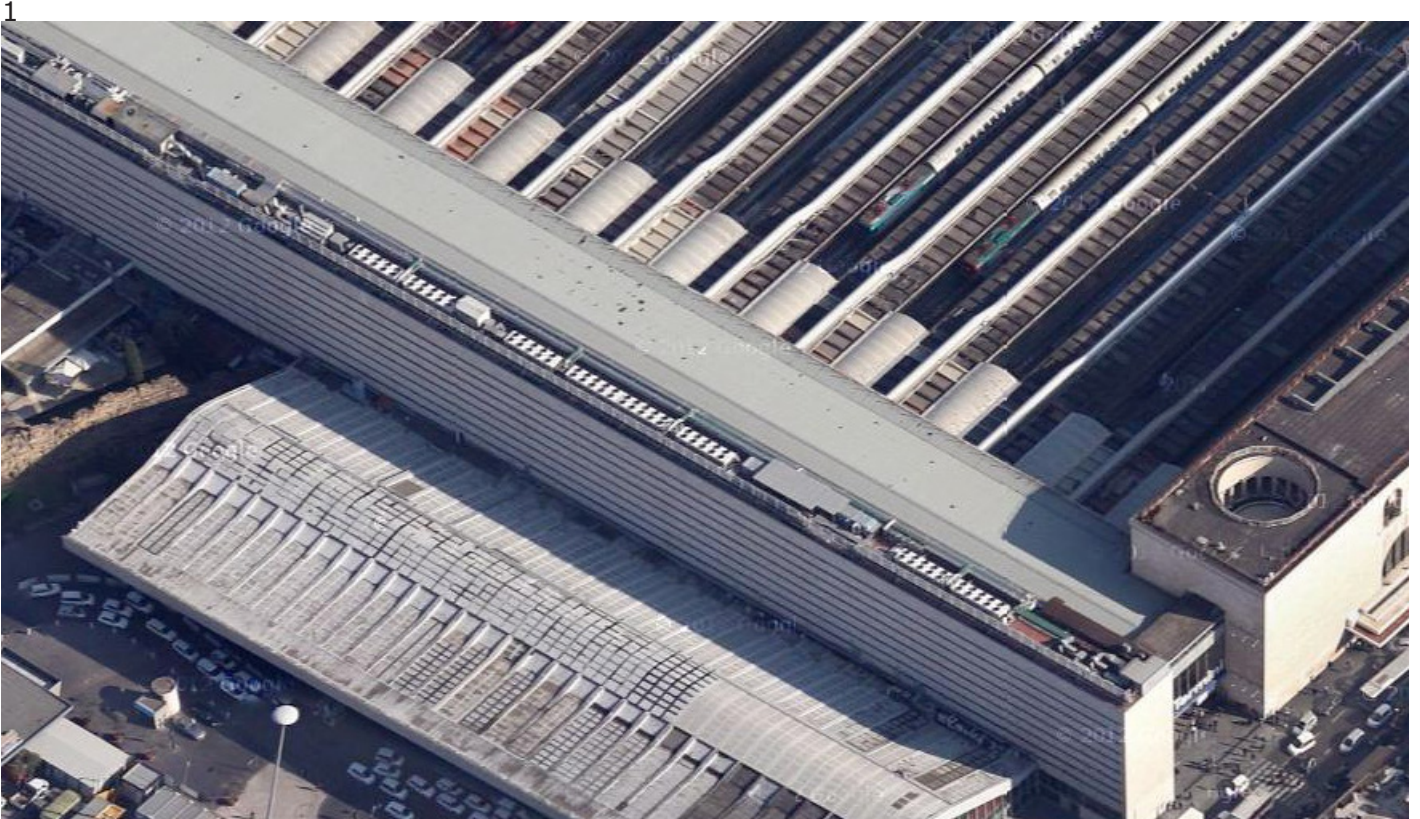
3. L. Montuori (2011)

having a good attraction element near the station and at the end don't use it. It sadly represents wasted opportunity to create good public environment.

Secondly I would like to write about the funny way people act in most of the train stations and it's directly related to the lack of public furniture. Precisely, I speak about the shopping gallery inside the station. This is one of the layers which bring from outside the station directly to the platforms. The gallery is defined also a *pedestrian highway*⁴ because everyday thousand of people pass through this space, and like an highway it's provided with exits to the station's spaces and to the outside. The gallery's shape, which is a long corridor, increases the pedestrian flow and it isn't a suitable space to take a break. Even though inside the gallery it is possible to find unusual spots which were not created for sitting but people use them for. Most of all the shops have outside metal handrails, 30/40 cm high from the floor, and people use them as seats. Using these handrails for sitting create a particular situation, indeed people seat here not only for taking a break but also for observing; from here it's possible to see people passing by and the space. I think that this is an example of how spaces which have been designed for something are then transformed by users for their needs and this implies that design should consider the different purpose of an object, leave it open to different interpretation. Finally using shops handrails means that there is a lack of benches and seats, public interior, inside the gallery.

In conclusion, I think that from Termini station we can learn the importance of an attractive space but at the same time the designer should be aware of it and use it to create a nice traveling environment. Moreover, we see the importance of creating a resting space even inside a shopping gallery, where people can seat, chatting and recreate the atmosphere of a living-room.

4. Vinci



1. Termini station picture which show the relation with the old roman wall.

2. Termini station nowadays: no relation between the old wall and the outside space

3. handrail used for sitting.

Rotterdam Centraal vs Den Haag HS

In this chapter I would to confront the train station Rotterdam Centraal and Den Haag HS. These two stations are totally different, the renovation of the first one is finished few months ago, on the other hand the Den Haag HS is one of the oldest train station in Holland.

Frank Loer⁵, who analyzed Rotterdam Central Station mainly focused on wayfinding. He says that we are guided to the platform by luminous shops and cheap fast food joints. Indeed I think that this station, beside the architectural composition, which could be good or not, represents most of all the train station in The Netherlands. The stations are merely spaces through which we pass and we don't recognize them as nice place for staying. I think that one of the reason is that the stations always connect two streets and they are long corridors under the train tracks. The station is characterized by every kind of shops and fast food and unfortunately without buying a burger or a coffee one is left in the emptiness of the space. It seems that the comfortable space is reserved only for the clients of shops and cafe. Indeed the enormous entrance hall is still empty, no seats, no benches, no free waiting rooms. Without any doubts shops and restaurant are great attractors of people and they encourage more activities in and around the station. Moreover, having such a furnished stations where you can buy your meal, warm it up and eating it in the metro, is the expression of our new lifestyle. But I also think that the train station should provide some more interesting space than a shopping area, a public interior where people want actually to stay for more than 10 minutes.

Secondly, I would like to write about the atmosphere related to Rotterdam station. The surrounding of the station are still under construction, indeed we can see a lot of fences which don't help the perception of the station. The act of entering the station is a bit tricky. Indeed often happened to me to arrive to the station, thinking that the entrance is on the main facade and then discover that there is only the entrance to the metro and to get in the station the entrance is on the side. Probably it is because of the works but I think it's confusing for users who are going to the station. Af-

5. Loer (2013)

ter entering the station, one is in the huge hall which, as I describe before, is empty, you can see only ticket machines and a ticket office. All the fences around the glass facade don't help the perception of the outside and it's quite difficult to see people on the street, place where life happens, which indeed is one of the most important attractor of users. Users directly go to the shopping area and the platforms. The long corridor is full of shops and, in a way, it's nice because it's a lively environment; maybe a bit confusing. It's full of graphic signals, sounds, people in hurry or people looking the shops' windows.

On the other hand Den Haag HS is a totally different train station from Rotterdam and it still has the values of old stations. Again Frank Loer⁶ explain that this station is at the same time practical and beautiful. Indeed, although there is the generic coffee kiosk, the station also features integrated furniture and waiting rooms. Surrounded by black painted cast-iron construction, one has the possibility to wait on a bench next to the platform, to meet inside a comfortable waiting room with the character of a lobby, or to grab a coffee at the kiosk. The range of spatial possibilities users have for waiting and meeting makes the station a comfortable place.

In conclusion I don't want to judge Rotterdam Centraal a weak station and Den Haag HS a good one, but I think they are the expression of the new society against the old one. Apparently nowadays we want a station full of shops and fast food instead of a good areas where to seat and enjoy a public space. On the other hand I think that having in a station twenty different shops and cafe doesn't make the station a final destination, unfortunately it's still a space through which one has to pass to go somewhere else.



Rotterdam Train station hall. People enter and they directly go to the platforms



Den Haag HS. In this picture it is possible to see that benches and waiting area are next to the platform.

Amsterdam Zuid and Amsterdam Amstel

Amsterdam Zuid and Amsterdam Amstel are again two totally different train stations in Amsterdam. One is the business district and it is under renovation and the other was built at the beginning of the 20th century with the old station concept.

First of all Amsterdam Amstel has a big entrance hall which leads to the corridor and then to the train tracks. In this entrance hall it's possible to find all the shops arranged around a covered square instead of being concentrated in the corridor which connects to the platforms. Visiting this station, I noticed that the hall became an attractor and I saw a lot of people spending more time inside the hall for shopping or for meeting. Indeed inside this hall there is a comfortable waiting area where everyone can sit, resting and watching other people passing by. I think that this is an example of a good public interior because people want to stay inside and stop here. And this is the proof that it's possible to create a space where people stop, even inside a station. It's enough to provide a comfortable bench and define the space appropriate for it and people will start having their meal there. Indeed this benches are on a defined area, with a different floor pattern and surrounded by plants which create a more private and cozy place and help people to feel comfortable.

On the other hand the outside space, even if it suggests a good connection with the other public transports, it doesn't work as users attractor. The four entrances are characterized by empty spaces without attractive facilities; one is directly open to the cars traffic, another one is addressed to the bus stop, the third one is small and connected to the corridors which leads to the platform instead of the shopping hall. The fourth one is open to a sort of parking space where cars and taxi stop to pick up or leave people. This space has a small green area, like a flowerbed. Unfortunately this green area is not used as a proper public garden because it's delimited and it doesn't encourage to spend time enjoying sun. When I spent two hours analyzing the station, I've never seen someone stopping in this area and sit on the grass. Mostly, there were cars around this green flowerbed and the people were standing near the station entrance. Concluding, even if green spaces are considered good public places, they have to be designed to suit

the place around. For instance, green areas without cars, accessible through pedestrian pathway, parks which have to be crossed in order to reach different places and while crossing them the feeling of being in a natural environment must be communicated.

Secondly, I would like to speak about Amsterdam Zuid train station. This station is used mostly by the business district employees and then by the people that live in the neighborhood. The north and the south part of the station (the two main exits) are both characterized by square; the interesting thing is that the south plaza, Mahlerplein, is desolate mostly during evening hours and weekend, but also during daytime employees tend to move to Zuidplein where they can find more shops and café. The square doesn't suggest people to use it as a place to stay and enjoy some resting moment. I observed for some hours the station during a quite sunny day and I noticed that, even during lunch, employees don't use the benches in the Mahler square.

What are the factors which create this difference?

Firstly I think that the north square is designed in order to create different corners and areas where group of people can feel protected. The space is designed using trees, arranged by lines, and all around them there is the possibility to sit. Trees are very important in the space organization. Moreover, this square is surrounded by shops and cafe which have tables outside. This is another really important factor which attracts people: shops and cafe with an outside space to sit and having lunch.

In conclusion, these stations are differently organized and both have some attractive areas. Amsterdam Amstel has a good interior organization and provides to the users an inside place for resting and sitting. On the other hand, Amsterdam Zuid values the north square creating a lot of opportunities and possibilities of choice.



Amsterdam Amstel entrance station



Amsterdam Amstel entrance



Amsterdam Zuid plein

This is a place where I want to stay.

In this essay I've tried to point out some of the interesting factors in train stations. The starting point of my research was the realization that nowadays train stations are more and more a passage, people have to go from A to B and they pass by C, the train station and the train. My main aim was to identify the elements which could change the train station and transform it in a destination place or at least in a place where it's nice to stay for few hours.

First of all I think that the most important thing is to provide a good space to sit. W. H. Whyte⁷ says that people tend to sit where there is place to sit. Moreover the most important activity people do while they are seated is watching other people. As I described before, in Termini station people use shop's handrails to sit and they create a sort of living-room where they can chat, meet people and watch other people passing by. Another important factor of the resting place is providing a sort of privacy and giving the feeling of being protected. A good seat or bench moreover has to provide the possibility of choice. Indeed people have to choose where sit and they should have a wide range of position in relation to their feelings and emotions.

In the end a good space has to provide a living-room environment where people can feel free to sit and watch other people, eat their meal, meet friends. It has to be comfortable and this implies creating a feeling of intimacy and protection and it must provide the possibility of choice.

Creating a good space to stay implies a sequences of places, different corner, different views which bring the passenger from outside to the platform through a long and exciting way.

Secondly, another important aspect is the relation with the street. As we have seen in Rotterdam Centraal the entrance hall doesn't work well yet because it hasn't a relation with the street. The life action is in the street and closing public space with fences creates a feeling of imprisonment which will not bring people to spend time there. The importance of the street is related to the attraction that goes on there. Indeed the attraction element is another fundamental characteristic of a nice space. Street performances, sculpture attraction etc stimulate the flow of people and attract them around.

7. Whyte

Moreover, the presence of green create a good environment. We have seen in Amsterdam zuid that the north square was more used than Mahlerplain because the public space was more designed. A series of trees surrounded by benches create a nice urban pattern where people sit and eat their meal. The presence of trees in a public space is important because, beside the shadow they create, they improve the feeling of protection and the feeling of being in a small area with other people.

Concluding, these are few elements which I think create a good environment and encourage people to stay. In my design I will consider them, especially the importance of a well-design open space where there is the possibility of choice.

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BRINGING STUDENTS INTO ZUIDAS

Anna Dolcetta Capuzzo
4228588
dolcetta.anna@gmail.com
Architecture of the Public Interior Fall 2013
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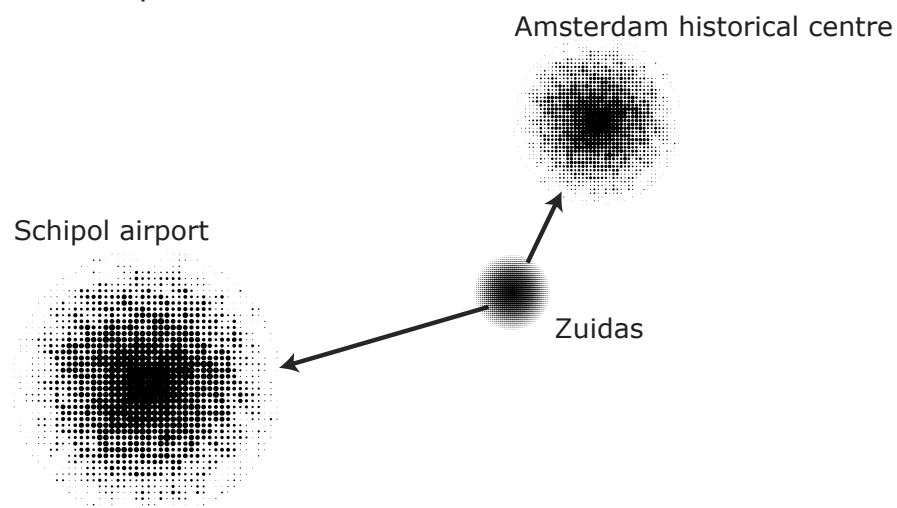
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Introduction.

Zuidas is a business district in the south of Amsterdam which embraces a train station (Amsterdam South) and a highway. It represents Amsterdam wish of competing with other European and world cities having a stable and strong business district, “the enterprise dream of impressive towers as an expression of financial stability and strength”¹. The hectic competition between cities has brought to the development of small “Manhattan” districts with highrise buildings and towers in order to create an image of power, economic solidity and well-being. Amsterdam, as almost all the European cities, had to find a suitable place into an existing and funded city fabric, close enough to historical city centre and to the most important ways of communication, ending up with an urbanistical tension between the surroundings and the chosen place.

In 1998, Amsterdam municipality saw on the south axis, connection between Berlage’s urban plan and Van Eesteren expansion plan, the right place in which create the new business district. It was meant to be the new city centre, well connected to Schipol airport, crossed by the railway and the highway A10, surrounded by green areas and close to the historical centre; a key point for the development of Amsterdam as international city. Furthermore, the developing plan wants redirect car and train traffic underground in order to improve the pedestrian connection.



Looking into Zuidas closer, it is obvious that it is still an *incoherent whole*². Indeed, if the new centre should provide one million square meters of office space, an equal amount of housing space and 500.000 square meters for facilities³, nowadays it is perceived totally disconnected from the surroundings, with an

1. BNIEUWS #2 (September 2013)

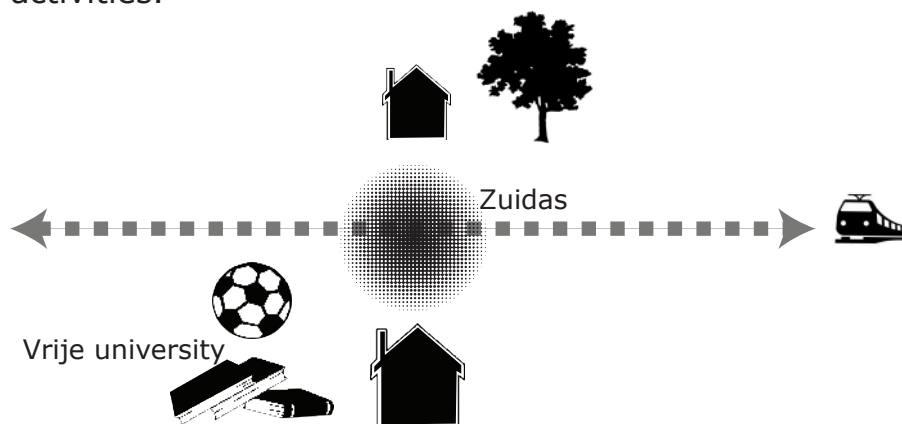
2. J. Zonnevald (2010)

3. BNIEUWS #2 (September 2013)

alternation of vacant lots, employees in a hurry during daytime and ebb atmosphere during night time. Although Zuidas has been the wish of Amsterdam authorities, it is inevitable that the representative quality of it as top location for business predominates; Zuidas is still mostly seen as an office location, a visiting card for businesses more than a city centre, a location for employees more than a place for alla population's activities⁴.

As J. Zonnevald says *"a city centre has a broader significance. One can only speak of such a centre once a section of the city appeals to people from the whole region, and people from different section of the population live, work and spend their leisure time in that area."* So, in order to change Zuidas from a business district into a proper city centre, a mix of functions and people must be brought in it. This is the starting point of my research. Is it possible to bring a mix of people into Zuidas? Is it possible to create interaction between user groups? If so, which kind of space can generate it?

In order to define the design location, I looked to the neighborhoods and the potential user groups of Zuidas. On the north and south side, Zuidas borders with residential neighborhoods, on the west side it borders with the Vrije university campus and on the east side with Beatrixpark. I think that the Vrije University could provide the right new user group for Zuidas. Indeed students could be interested in interact with the business industry and they could bring some vivacity in the area after working hours, involving employees to use the area not only as a working place but also for leisure activities.

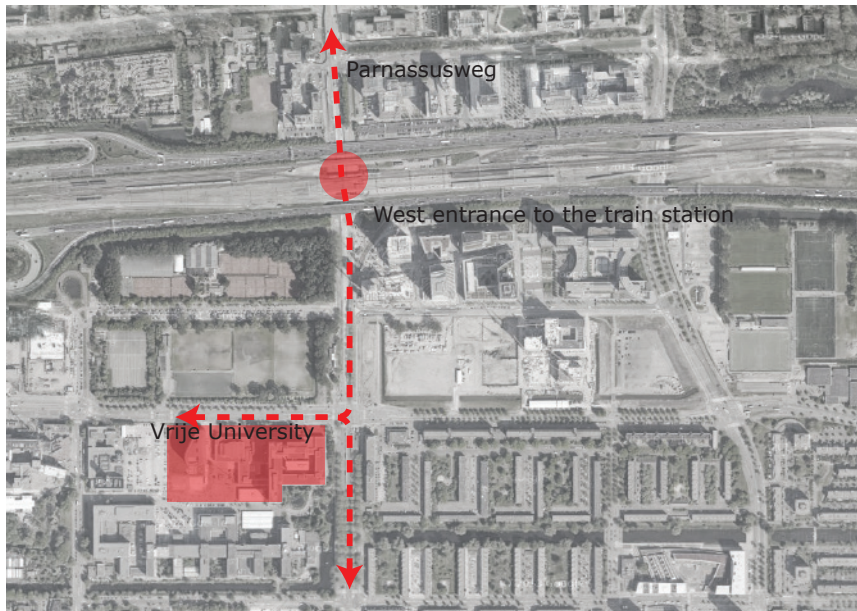


According to Oldenburg⁵ it's possible to define spaces for leisure and social activities as *"third places"* referring to the idea that these social arenas provided a *"third"*

4. J Zonnevald (2010)

5. R. Oldenburg (1989)

alternative to the two most dominant spaces of everyday life: the public world of labor and work and the private, domesticated home realm. Moreover, I think that this third place should be designed on the border between user groups' community. Indeed the border can be seen as mediator space on which people can feel free to establish communication. Because of this reason, I chose Parnassusweg as design location. This street is the border between Zuidas and the university campus, it leads to the west entrance of the train station and there is a big amount of moving people.



It could be argued that looking for social interaction between people on a border condition (the street) may bring to uncertain results. Indeed user groups have different wishes and behaviors and they tend to identify themselves in a certain kind of space. Levy⁶ says that *public space is a reasonable utopia because there is nothing impossible in its principle, except for the risk that some of the population might refuse co-presence with others*. Moreover, Lamont⁷ explains that groups tend to differentiate themselves from each other through a process of in-group/out-group comparison. Even if this theory is referred more to ethnic, religious and gender groups, I think that it can be a valuable definition also for user groups. Regarding Zuidas, different users may not want to interact each other because they recognize that they have different wishes and habits.

On the other hand, Augé⁸ explains that since the beginning, humans have always wanted to extend

6. J. Lévy (2008)

7. M. Lamont (2002)

8. M. Augé (1995)

their borders because they were attracted by the other side and by the wish to explore the unknown. It's possible to say that the border has to be in order to let the men crossing it, implying a connection with the other side. That is why I believe that the border is potentially the place where a relation between people can happen because it's the most active place. As Sennet⁹ says, "in natural ecologies, borders are the zones in a habitat where organisms become more interactive, due to the meeting of different species or physical conditions. The border condition is an active zone of exchange". Even if streets represent a shared and limited space in which there are different needs and different users, F. Careri¹⁰ explains that streets are also places for interaction and they generate other spaces where living and socializing. He says that the spaces in which people rest and stay are islands in the big sea made of the act of moving. I think that the street is the place for walking and at the same time it creates spaces for watching others walking. Pallasmaa¹¹ says that "*public space is a space for human and social interaction, a rich spatial instrument to see and to be seen*".

Concluding, in this chapter I defined my wide research which is the street as border between user groups and its potential in being a connection space. I'm interested in it because I think that it is one of the most active area for exchanging and, in this way, it can be the place through which different people enter in Zuidas. Indeed the main goal is to transform the dead business centre into a lively area which can be compare to a proper city centre. In the next chapter I will show the anthropological research I did, explaining the used methods.

Research question and method.

As I said, I am interested in studying the student user groups in order to define if they are interested in staying in the business district and have a relation with other users. Particularly my research question is: Do students want to stay in Zuidas during non-university hours (such as evenings or week-ends)? And which kind of space would attract them? Moreover, I wanted to study the actual situation of Parnassusweg between the university and the train station in order to verify the

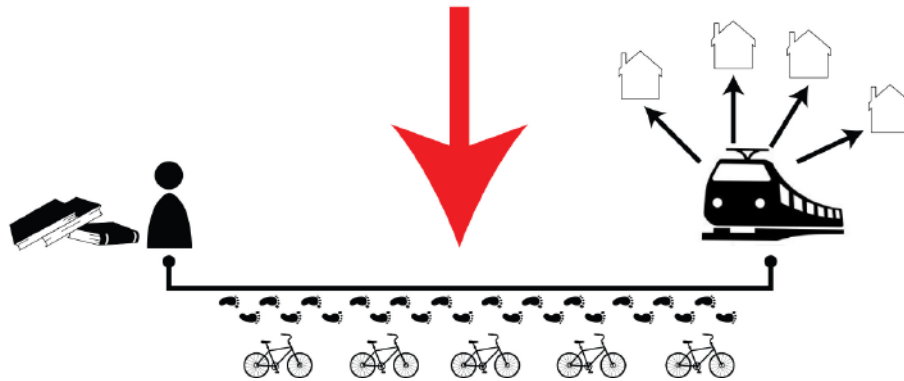
9. R. Sennet (2010)

10. F. Careri (2006))

11. J. Pallasmaa (2005)

feeling of marked border between Zuidas and the Vrije campus.

To give an answer to these questions I did questionnaire to the students, observation of the area and I looked to a case study in Rotterdam.



First of all, I did observation of people walking in Parnassusweg. The observation was made during a week day, between 12.00 and 14.00 inside the university canteen and between 14.00 and 18.00 in the street. I looked people while walking through this street, going to the train station or other destinations in order to understand the user groups, their habits and their needs. The observation was mainly made in the street section included between the university and the train station.

Secondly, the first type of questionnaire I did was focused on people that work/live in the university area and their habits. I wanted to understand the average time they leave university for going home, if they frequent the area during evening time or weekends and if they would frequent the area if there were spaces for different activities. Moreover I asked them to suggest some spaces for activities. I collected 28 questionnaire during a week day mainly at the canteen of the Vrije university between 12.00 and 14.00. Information was collected using anonymous questionnaires and respondents were randomly selected in the entrance hall and the canteen.

The second type of questionnaire I did was an online questionnaire for TU Delft students and it was focused on the use of Bouwpub, the Architecture faculty's pub. I wanted to discover the importance of having a pub close to the university, and the importance for social meeting after university hours. I collected 29 questionnaire, information was collected anonymously and respondents were anonymous.

Finally, I looked for a case study which could be useful for my research and design. I chose to look at the new Erasmus Pavilion in Rotterdam. The Erasmus Pavilion is meant to be the new vibrant meeting point in the heart of the campus of the Erasmus University Rotterdam. Students, employees and visitors can meet each other through an inspiring programme of science, art, culture and society. The Pavilion offers a podium for a broad scale of subjects and events and has a theater, grand cafe, foyer, study- and workplaces. *The Erasmus pavilion is outside college- and working hours the place to be*¹².

Research results.

Observation.

First of all I would like to discuss the results collected while doing observation. While I was in Parnassusweg and around the Vrije campus, I noticed that students use the street as a way through which reach the university or the train station. They arrived in Zuidas and they walk or cycle to the university campus without having any intermediary stop. At the same time, during lunch time almost all the students go to the canteen which is a relatively big space organized in different levels and it is used also as study area. Outside the university there are few sandwiches sellers on the street and few cafes. Nothing really happens outside the university buildings, also in the campus there weren't activities going on; students spend almost all their day inside the buildings. The amount of students walking on the street of course rises between 16.00 and 17.00 to reach a peak around 17.30 – 18.00 because it is the time when students go home. Even if the amount of people on the street increases, they use the street only as a way to go to the train station and then home. The side of the street doesn't suggest people to stop and chat, there aren't spaces which provide the possibilities to enjoy a few hours before going home. Furthermore, the street itself is a high traffic volume street with the addition of trams and railways. All of these elements produce an unwelcome environment for pedestrians.

12. <http://www.erasmuspaviljoen.nl/site/en/category/about-us>



Pedestrians cycle and walk to the train station or to the university campus.



Parnassusweg is a high volume traffic street.



separation of pedestrians, bikes, cars and trams way.



Students have lunch inside the canteen. Few of them buy sandwiches outside.

Questionnaires.

Secondly I would like to show the questionnaire's results. The first questionnaire is about Vrije students and their habits and needs. 28 students participated to the questionnaire which was made of 8 close questions and one open question. With the first part I wanted to understand the average time students leave university campus, how far they leave and the way they go home. In the second part I asked to students if they frequent the area also outside university hours and which kind of space would improve Zuidas.

The results (summarized on page 16) have shown that most of the students live close (1-10 km) to university and they go home mostly by bike and then by tram and train. Moreover, the average time students go home is 15.00 and 17.00 and someone goes home between 17.00 and 19.00. The interesting results are related to the second part of the questionnaire. Indeed it came out that almost all the students don't frequent this area outside university hours because they don't think they can find leisure activities and entertainments. At the same time they state that they would come in the area if there were activities such as evening entertainment and spaces for culture, art, cinema and theater performance. Indeed they say that the area lacks mainly in social activities, evening entertainment and shops.

These results show that a lot can be done to improve the community feeling in the university, most of all for students that don't live in the campus area. Indeed the university provides some facilities (cultural centre, green area, etc) but these are all inside the campus which developed on the contrary direction than Zuidas and the train station. For this reason students, that don't live inside the campus, don't have the opportunities of participating in cultural activities and make the area more lively. I think that providing a space for social interaction close to Zuidas and the train station, students would come and participate.

The second questionnaire I did was an online questionnaire made for TU Delft students. Architecture faculty has a pub, called Bouwpub, which is open twice a week and it is a gathering point for students that want to spend an hour with friends. I think that having the chance to stay with friends and people and create social interaction in a different environment from the faculty is

one of the most helpful and satisfying student's public life.

I collected 29 questionnaires (results shown on page 15) which have underlines that students believe in the importance of having social interaction between them in a space still close to the university but non in the same environment.



Vrije University



Bouwpub faculty of Architecture TU Delft

The aim of this questionnaire is to analyze Amsterdam zuid train station, focusing on Parnassusweg and the west entrance to the train station. I would like to find out which facilities could attract students and let them use the area also during night time and weekend. The questionnaire is anonymous and the answers will be used only for the purposes of the Research seminar's final assignment at TU Delft (faculty of Architecture) and for the graduation studio "New direction in the public interior".

What's your role in the university?

☐ student ☐ researcher ☐ professor ☐ other

How old are you?

☐ 18 - 20 ☐ 20 - 22 ☐ 22 - 24 ☐ 24 - 26 ☐ 26+

How far do you live?

☐ 1 - 5km ☐ 5 - 10 km ☐ 10 - 15 km ☐ 15 - 20 km ☐ 20+km

How do you go home?

☐ walking ☐ by train ☐ by bus/tram ☐ by bike ☐ by car

Usually at what time to you go home?

☐ before 15.00 ☐ 15.00 - 17.00 ☐ 17.00 - 19.00 ☐ 19.00 - 21.00 ☐ other

Do you frequent the university area also outside university hours (ex: weekend, evening)?

☐ yes ☐ no

Would you frequent the university area outside university hours if there was:

☐ evening entertainment ☐ cultural and art centre ☐ library ☐ other.....

Do you think that the area around university has enough:

BAR ☐ yes ☐ no

RESTAURANT ☐ yes ☐ no

SUPERMARKETS ☐ yes ☐ no

SPORT FACILITIES ☐ yes ☐ no

CULTURAL SPACE ☐ yes ☐ no

EVENING ENTERTAINMENT ☐ yes ☐ no

SHOPS ☐ yes ☐ no

Do you have any suggestion to improve the west train station entrance?

.....

Thank you for your attention!

82%

LEAVE UNIVERSITY BETWEEN 3 AND 7 P.M.

75%DO NOT FREQUENT THE AREA OUTSIDE
UNIVERSITY HOURS (EVENING, WEEKEND).**60%**WOULD FREQUENT THE AREA IF THERE
WAS EVENING ENTERTAINMENT.**92%**THE UNIVERSITY AREA DOESN'T HAVE
ENOUGH EVENING ENTERTAINMENTS.

Main results from the Vrije questionnaires.

100%

AGREE ON SPACE FOR SOCIAL MEETINGS

52%WANT TO SPEND ONE HOUR SOCIALIZING
WITH FRIENDS BEFORE GOING HOME**16%**

IMPORTANCE OF BEING CLOSE TO UNI.

71%THE ATMOSPHERE WILL CHANGE WITH A
DIFFERENT SPACE INSTEAD OF A PUB

Main results from the Bouwpub questionnaires.

Case study.

Finally, especially to decide the new functions needed in the area, I looked to a case study in Rotterdam, the Erasmus Pavilion.

"The transformation primarily addresses the need for a sense of place, orientation, way-finding and identity as well as providing a high quality of public space with a pleasant experience. The Erasmus Plaza is the new central axis of the campus, a boulevard and formal entrance to the University"¹³

This pavilion is based on a get-together concept: science and culture can merge, business world and research can find a place for meeting. Students, staff and researchers can organize their own events or attend the extended programme of lectures, debates, conferences, business events, film and performances. Moreover there is the possibility to organize parties. The Pavilion is open to anyone, faculty students, student associations, cultural organization, bands and so on; and anyone can rent the stage¹⁴.

Despite the pavilion is new (it was opened few months ago) and it is difficult to know if it really can satisfy with students needs; I think that it is a valuable chance to bring together different functions and activities and, at the same time, merge different user groups which can create a social interaction.

13. <http://archinect.com/news/article/84673725/a-living-heart-for-a-modern-ist-campus-erasmus-university-rotterdam-revitalizes-its-grounds>

14. <http://www.erasmuspaviljoen.nl/site/en/category/about-us>





Conclusion.

Summarizing, the starting point of the entire research (related also to the design studio Public Interior and the course Research methods) was the possibility of bringing a mix of people and functions into Zuidas. As I have written in the introduction, contrary to the municipality's wish to have a new city centre, currently Zuidas is a business district with highrise buildings in which the main feeling perceived is isolation and disconnection. A sequence of factors brought private investors into the development of Zuidas and this implied more concentration on business and financial office than on the general appearance of the area and the well being of people that live and work there. Studying the area and the possible way of bring people into Zuidas, I looked at the border of it where the exchange between people is more active and indeed I decided to research the west border (Parnassusweg) and the students user groups. Of course students stay in the university all day long, but are they interested in participating in social activities when they finish university? Nowadays students, when they finish their class, they go directly home. I believe that special spaces for social interaction and leisure activities can incite students to spend time in the area outside university hours. The anthropological research was focused on proving this statement.

The results, most of all of the questionnaires, have shown that actually students aren't interested in Zuidas mainly because there are no attractions, events and possibilities for interaction. Most of the students don't go into Zuidas because they don't find anything interesting in it. At the same time, they state that if the area provides cultural centre, evening entertainment, leisure activities, they will be more attracted and they will stay in Zuidas more time. Having a space close to the university but with a different environment feeling is really important for students. As the second questionnaire showed, almost all the TU Delft's students are thankful for having a space where spending few hours with friends, also from other faculties, before going home and start studying again. Moreover it is demonstrated that methods to reduce stress by students often include engagement in leisure pursuit, *leisure satisfaction is defined as the positive feeling of contentment one perceives as a result of meeting personal needs*

through leisure activities.¹⁵The greater satisfaction with leisure that students indicate, the lower their perceived academic stress will be.¹⁶

I think that these results are very important in the design developing process. The first results brought me to look for case study and I discover the Erasmus pavilion in Rotterdam. I think that this pavilion expresses the needs of all the students and includes all the functions which create interaction even between user groups. Indeed the design project will focused on developing a space for students on the border with Zuidas and on the way to the train station. Hopefully this will bring students to stay few hours in this space for socializing before take the train or the tram and go home. The programme will be various with cafes, restaurant students associations base, and also conference room and theater in which business-university events can be organized.

15. Seigenthaler (1997)

16. Ranjita (2000) For further details see the first report about students and evening entertainment.

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Erasmus pavilion website

<http://www.erasmuspaviljoen.nl/>

Appendix.

The following pages collect all the questionnaires collected in the Vrije University.