

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

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

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

Personal information	
Name	Jara Massimo Meindersma
Student number	4849825

Studio		
Name / Theme	Urban Architecture / Urban brownfields	
Main mentor	Ir. Elsbeth Ronner	Department of Architecture
Research mentor	Dr. Leeke Reinders	Department of Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	As the chair announced, 'sites may not yet have acquired a decisive urban form capable of sustaining further development – but they are not blank either'. They recognize outdoor spaces as an essential counterpart to built environments. This is crucial, especially when addressing the prevalent issue of abandoned 'brownfields' in our urban areas. Allegedly this context could celebrate experimentation and creativity, acknowledging the potential for unconventional solutions that respond to the unique character of the site. Conditions I valued highly when choosing the right studio.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Navigated Sport Frontier – Exploring Supporter Dynamics at the Intersection of Containment and Relief
Goal	
Location:	The Friche: from the Station platform, along the railway, to the open field.
The posed problem,	<p>Brussels breathes the football atmosphere, and simultaneously deals with issues of tension. It's seen throughout history with The Heysel Stadium disaster from 1985 in Brussels, where 39 people lost their lives, as well as in contemporary news. Think about the ban of away supporters in the Belgium competition after fierce riots between supporter groups (NU.nl, 2021). Think about Morocco's World Cup win in 2022 against Belgium, triggering riots, and leaving a fierce field of destruction behind (Mngqosini CNN, November 2022). All local examples that form this socially relevant debacle about the coming together of a force of relief (supporter groups) and a force to contain it (law enforcement and the public opinion).</p> <p>It became clear, as of today, communities of football fans are encountering difficulties to place themselves in the city. We are dealing</p>

	<p>with large groups expressing their group identity with lots of energy. This is valuable and necessary. They need a place in the city but require certain borders.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>This fascination about the sport and its energy generated by these large groups supporting it, makes me wonder how we can contain it in the city. From the start, I liked to see how this action of people in urban space shapes something spatially, has connotations and has an effect. To understand what kind of spatial quality these tangible and intangible borders have, and to start experimenting with the border as a space.</p> <p>It will be important to understand which borders are present in Brussels football spheres. To understand systems of behaviour and understanding how large groups interact with these borders. In order to explore the previous statements, the following research question will be the central focus of this narrative: How do large supporter groups interact with the concept of the border within Brussels' football networks?</p> <p>To formulate an answer, this question is deconstructed into the following sub-questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [A] How do borders and edges, as well as tangible and intangible, engage in states of emotions? - [A] In what ways do rival supporter groups mix inside one city? - [B] What are the hidden networks that service the football structure and culture of Brussels? - [B] How does the concept of the border unfold itself in these networks?
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>I encountered the site as a free space, with blurry boundaries, rough but still preserved in its intrinsic qualities. A coexistence of borders in a state of nothingness. A place where you are together, at the same time not heard or seen by many. Rich with an existing infrastructural layer that not solely forms a point of connection, as well of separation. Whilst the train cuts through the landscape, splitting the passing hours in three, the landscape, for seconds, gets overlooked. It speaks volumes about the tense character of the site.</p> <p>These states of tension interwoven in the landscape can be used to its advantage when we deal with groups that require thoughtful infrastructure and space configurations. Groups that require undeniable necessities of relief, who perform at their best whilst maneuvering together through the tense landscape. People who envision these borders not so much as a line but as a region that merges and connects everything around it. A spatial configuration that regulates their flow, slows them down or moves them faster and interchanges either peace</p>

	<p>or hatred. It forms a conversation between one and the other. We don't want to overcome these barriers, they are part of the formation of these groups. Instead of fighting it, we shall use it to our advantage and suggest a program that fits seamlessly.</p> <p>From this tension point of view, I further isolate the site. I introduce programs that ask for this character, that in some cases cannot be entered at all, or in others function for the goal of relief.</p> <p>From the platform to the tribune. The site becomes a stadium in itself consisting of all necessities and values that trespass the football field itself. A sequence of autonomous spaces. An area where the conflict happens. An infrastructure that is actually needed for tension to exist.</p> <p>The borders that became vivid in Brussels football structure and culture exist in tangible forms (that of Bodies and Movement, Walls and fences, and Infrastructure), and intangible forms (Sound, Smoke, Light and Color).</p> <p>The project will use these analysed interactions formed by, creating or vanishing the border and translate them into physical elements on site. It disassembles the elements of theatre, stadium and performance and transforms each single one of them into an action on site.</p> <p>To better understand how the analysed physical elements can function in the site, the following design sub-questions will be of relevance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How is tension present in the site? - How can infrastructural space act as a physical border? - What is the infrastructure of tension? - How can collective acts of sports communities engage in states of tension? - What are the spatial outcomes of the different stages of tension? - Who are the performers, audience and stages in the Friche imagined as a space provider for the more expressive sentiments? - How can we create space that triggers these sentiments? - In what way can light, smoke and sound form an extra dimension in the creation of atmosphere in the Friche? <p>The adopted methodology will eventually lead to the following design proposal, which is multilayered.</p> <p>The first layer proposes the general zoning and spatial division and program. It allows public spaces and public activities to co-exist with this very particular tension that is characteristic for the sport. I want them to co-exist without compromising this beautiful energy, but at the same time to maintain the safety, the pleasant characteristic of the</p>
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	<p>public space, the quiet, the peace, and law-abiding, necessary things that have to take place in a public urban setting. Those should co-exist harmoniously.</p> <p>The second layer is the circulation and points of connectivity. Taking into account the main entrances and the circulation routes. Considering first the practicality, without compromising the efficiency of the circulation, and besides the grander scheme of transport that occurs across different scales: vehicular, bike, pedestrian, public etc.</p> <p>The final level is the zones of criticality, where I identify critical zones and connections of tension, and I display a method of how these places could be and should be designed in order to achieve everything I mentioned earlier. This forms my design goal. These zones of criticality display how all the different layers of tension that I previously analysed and illustrated co-exist with normal urban function. I display an example of how that can occur. I am zooming in, that transcalarity is my approach.</p>
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Process

Method description

In order to answer the main research question, and to translate these findings in the design project, the adopted methodology consists of a three-layered approach that will comprise the following:

Firstly, to contextualize and elaborate on my first two subquestions [A], I will introduce the theories of the theoretical framework. I will briefly outlay the violent history of the sport and the history of the hooligan scene in Belgium. I base myself mainly on literature studies, listed in the Literature overview.

In second, to answer the two last subquestions [B], I consult newspapers, follow the groups on online platforms such as Instagram and Facebook and dive into a specific football scene in Brussels: that of RSC Anderlecht.

Fieldwork is done on 7 December 2023, when RSC Anderlecht plays Standard Liege and 23 December 2023, when RSC Anderlecht takes on KRC Genk. By visiting Brussels' stadiums and infrastructures on these game days, I go into the crowd. This offers the opportunity to precisely draw and describe which borders are created and document how people behave around them. Through photography and film, I can show this infrastructure as a series. I will conduct interviews with club supporters, barkeepers, caterers, merchandisers and neighbours.

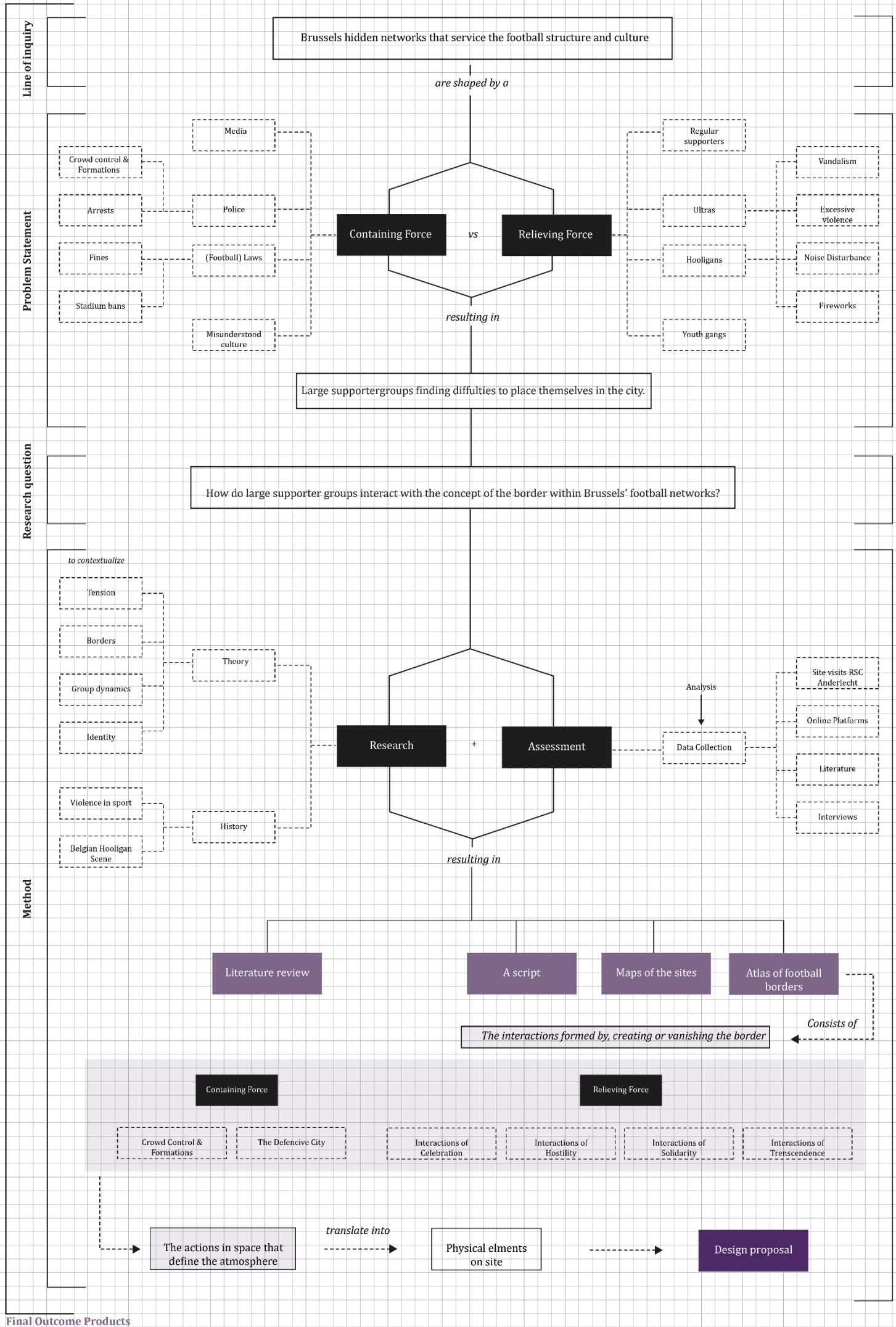
Since we are dealing with places of mass densities, mapping as a method is of relevance. Through these techniques I can sort the spaces on several actions by different actors; who stands where, how

do they move, what to avoid, where to stop, where to stay and how to walk around. It traces back my journey with the supporter groups through the several spaces.

Altogether this results in an Atlas. A handbook, glossary or catalogue of Border moments in the football sphere.

In third, after analyzing how large supporter groups interact with the concept of the border within Brussels' football networks, I envision projecting these findings on the Friche. I translate the interactions formed by, creating or vanishing the border into physical elements on site. This method that is systematically illustrating the tangible and intangible elements that define the space, results in different degrees of tension. The design reacts to this.

An overarching technique that should be further explored during the P3, P4 and P5 is the perception of the site as a stage. I will delve deeper into the acts of play as a technique, following up on earlier work with group 2 Station to Station. The station became a living testament to the dynamic interplay between architecture and the human experience and played with the role of the Audience, the Stage and the Performers and the dynamics between them. From now on I dived into the realm of football, where we witness behavioural transformations among supporters and a somehow voluntary "imprisonment" in their devotion to the club. They hang their moral jackets at the stadium gates racks and enter, embracing a role not solely as the spectator but as well as the performer in a theatre of football. This can become a valuable method of storytelling, in line with our live performance at P1.



Literature and general practical references

Literature references

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Method references

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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)?

Football is rivalry. It represents places, from villages, towns, and cities to whole nations. Within these places, communities are formed and conflicts arise. The project fosters the social approach of a habitat. An Environment. Therefore tries to understand the interconnectedness of various elements within a system. It showcases the capability of translating actions in space into physical elements on site. It makes not just an abstract notion but a physical representation of an idea. Therefore exploring the multidisciplinary character of architecture, seen as an art and a building science.

The project is constructed out of a multifaceted investigation, all linked to a very specific theme. It responds over multiple scales. From the observation of The Friche to the stadium and its neighbourhood, and from its smaller physical networks to its bigger infrastructures. Eventually spatializing all clues into the scale of the building envelope.

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

The social debates regarding issues of violence that Brussels deals with, intertwined with notions of connectivity, identification and tradition regarding its supporter culture, are relevant. This project raises peculiar awareness of profound user perceptions and activity in space, therefore offers opportunity to re-evaluate the existing and intervene with more precision as designers in the present and coming days. The process explores how an architecture can contribute to a wider understanding of unconventional topics, such as supporterism, and outlay deeper networks and actions that happen in its spaces. The used methods of observation and data collection can be of relevance too. Online and physical infiltration of a closed community is something that requires a social, professional, and scientific approach. Collecting data through an open and curious but above all respectful and careful attitude.