

Graduation Plan

Humanisation in addiction care design

A research on the affiliation of architecture and humanisation in drug addiction care

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Over the past forty years, the humanisation of people that suffer from addiction and mental health problems has become increasingly seen as a vital part of treatment and prevention in care. Concomitantly, there has been a growing societal opposition against the institutionalization of clients, resulting in large-scale demolition and transformation of institutional terrains. Corresponding with the increasing importance of sustainability in architecture, a discrepancy between the envisioned durability of the physical environment and the quickly changing demands of addiction care arises. With the increasing importance of humanisation, questions arise on its effect on the architectural translation of care and its relation to themes such as flexibility, safety and exploitation. As little research has dived into this notion, this paper scrutinizes this relationship, by confronting the findings of case study analyses with theoretical and empirical research. The research may pose questions, as well as touchstones upon which the design process of creating spaces for people that suffer from drug addiction in Liège may build upon.

I. Introduction

The Urban Architecture Graduation studio focuses on the neighbourhood Bressoux: A versatile yet vulnerable and relatively underprivileged neighbourhood south of the city centre of Liège. Interviews in Bressoux on our site visits gave an impression of how the complexities of drug addiction and crime affected the lives of citizens, and how this is seen as one of the biggest contemporary challenges of the neighbourhood. These observations have sparked the interest in designing spaces of care for people that suffer from addiction problems. The impact of the physical environment on the wellbeing and recovery has been increasingly valued over the past decades. Consequently, the meaning of humanisation, providing more humane circumstances and the (re)valuation of people that suffer from addiction, has become increasingly important in treatment and prevention. This research therefore examines how architecture forms the physical and functional translation of humanisation in addiction care. In the first chapter, there will be given insight in the development of addiction care in The Netherlands

and Belgium. Following up, different theories on the translation of humanisation in addiction care will form an understanding of this dynamic theme and its relation to architectural aspects. Following up, the architectural analyses of case studies entail several relevant topics, which will be confronted with theoretical and empirical findings regarding different stakeholders, giving an insight on the sometimes conflicting interests of architecture and addiction care. The case studies involve facilities that combine dwelling and care in The Netherlands and Belgium. Primarily, it will dive into two case studies that have a similar urban placement and program of care, but a vastly different architectural elaboration. These case studies will be compared to other case studies, among which in Liège, to provide an understanding of different approaches within this multidisciplinary field. This catalogue will provide an extensive overview, which will substantiate the answer to the main research question: "How is the meaning of humanisation affiliated with the architectural translation of inner-city addiction care?"

Site-specific relevance

The rising image of 'Liège le Piège' derives from the exceptional accessibility of drugs and the collateral effect of the high amount of people (re)lapsing into addiction (ToxCity, n.d.; 7sur7, 2022). Its geographical location: Being close to the Dutch border; Its topography: Being enclosed by hills, industrial wastelands and following La Muese; and the visibility of drug usage throughout the city are entailed as contextual factors that define its complexities (ToxCity, n.d.). Throughout the last few decades, the complexities and proposed solutions that arise with drug usage resulted in many different interventions on national, local and bottom-up levels. In the recently published "Evaluation of the Belgian drug policy" the main concern stretches the fact that there is a fragmented policy with a lack of vision, for some known as a "Compromise à la Belge" (Blomme et al., 2021). This fragmented policy seems to have translated into fragmented urban- and architectural interventions. Such complexities sparked the interest for a research on the multidisciplinary field of addiction care design.

Research Questions

As mentioned in the introduction, the main research question that will be answered is: "How is the meaning of humanisation affiliated with the architectural translation of inner-city addiction care?"

To answer the main question I pose three sub-questions:

1. How has the changing perception on the nature and treatment of drug addiction affected the development of drug addiction care in The Netherlands and Belgium?
2. How are theories on humanisation related to aspects of architectural elaboration?
3. How do the confronted findings regarding humanisation and architectural translation relate to the establishment and user-experience of the chosen case studies?

II. Methodology

The research will combine literary research, case study analysis and empirical research to construct an understanding of the heterogeneous theme. These approaches are portrayed in the following paragraphs.

Literary research

Firstly, the research will delineate the development of drug addiction care in The Netherlands and Belgium. As postulated by ToxCity - a research on the relation of heroin and Liège - the municipal policy of Liège often relates to Dutch policy (ToxCity, n.d.). Apart from this, the literary substantiation will look into research related to humanisation, involving themes such as centralization, spaces of deviation and socialisation. As an example, in her work 'Buiten het gewone' Doortje Kal, who promoted at the University of Humanistic Studies in Utrecht, describes ways of making people who are 'outside of the norm' feel at home and welcome in society (Kal, 2022). These theories will be compared and analysed in regards to different aspects that influence architectural design.

Case Studies

Case studies in both countries will form an understanding of the translation of humanisation in mainly inner-city addiction care. The case studies in The Netherlands are selected to constitute an understanding of various approaches and architectural elaborations, while the case studies in Belgium are also constituting site-specific knowledge on the development of addiction care in Liège, supporting the design brief. The case studies will be examined on four themes: Relation to urban context; Spatial organisation; Interior design and materiality. Within these categories, the sometimes conflicting aspects of safety, exploitation and humanisation are delineated. The two primary case studies have a similar urban placement but a vastly different architectural elaboration. The first case study (see figure 1) is a mixed housing project that offers more than three hundred studios for students, vulnerable young people and people that suffer from addiction. It was designed by De Zwarte Hond and chosen as source of inspiration for integral dwelling and care solutions in 2040, by the 'Taskforce vrouwen en zorg' (Taskforce Wonen en Zorg, 2022; Starink, 2015). The second case study is the 'Junky hotel Amsterdam' as named by its architect Atelier Kempe Thill (see figure 2). Apart from this, an example of case studies in Liège that are used as reference can be found on the following pages.



Figure 1. Tactus Pannekoekendijk Zwolle, De Zwarte Hond.



Figure 2. 'Junky Hotel' Amsterdam, Atelier Kempe Thill (Schwarz, 2012).



Figure 3. Exterior of Opération Thermos Liège.



Figure 4. Entrance of Opération Thermos Liège.



Figure 5. Exterior of Sans-Logis Liège.



Figure 6. Entrance of Sans-Logis Liège (sans-logis.be, n.d.)

Emperical Research

Lastly, the empirical research will involve interviews with different stakeholders in the topic of addiction care. Examples of these stakeholders are: Architects, employees or directors of care organisations and residents. This qualitative methodology may pose very relevant information that might spark discussion within the research or inspiration during the design process.

Research by design

The design project will present complex questions on themes such as the relation and consequences of urban context and the balance of adaptability and creating humane environments, which may be supported by this work of research. Concomitantly, studies and experimentation within the design project may pose new topics of discussion that may be relevant for the research, resulting in a cross-pollination within the trajectories.

III. Reflection

By confronting literary research, case studies and empirical research, this research attempts to provide an extensive understanding of the balance of humanisation and the heterogeneous aspects of addiction care in the inner-city built environment. Themes that are focus points of the studio, among which urban contextual awareness and multidisciplinary design relate directly to this theme. The research may provide new information to the body of knowledge regarding the relation of two professions, which little research has yet doven into. Finally, it will presumably help me position myself as an architect through becoming more familiar with multidisciplinary design, which I intend to remain involved in after my master.

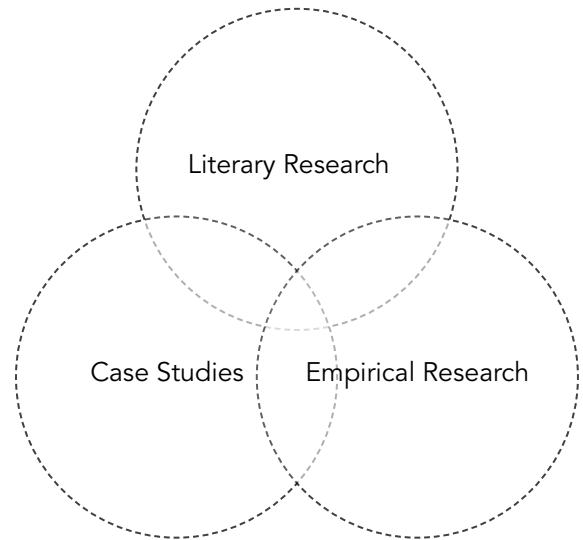


Figure 7. Research methodology scheme

Bibliography

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7sur7. (2022). Un vaste trafic de cocaïne démantelé à Liège. Consulted on the 7th of November 2022, from <https://www.7sur7.be/belgique/un-vaste-traffic-de-cocaine-demantele-a-liege~aa89671c/?referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F>

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Figures

Figure 1. Own work.

Figure 2. Schwarz, U. (2012). 'Junky Hotel' Amsterdam, Atelier Kempe Thill [Photo]. Consulted on the 19th of December 2022, from <https://divisare.com/projects/245436-atelier-kempe-thill-ulrich-schwarz-berlin-junky-hotel-amsterdam>

Figure 3. Own work.

Figure 4. Own work.

Figure 5. Own work.

Figure 6. Sans-Logis.be (n.d.). Entrance Sans-Logis Liège [Photo]. Consulted on the 20th of December 2022, from <https://www.sans-logis.be/je-cherche-une-information-generale/les-photos/>

Figure 7. Own work.