

# 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	Kika Zdziarska (Legal name: Weronika Jadwiga Zdziarska)
Student number	5502721

Studio		
Name / Theme	Explore Lab	
Main mentor	Leontine de Wit	Architectural Design
Second mentor	Rufus van den Ban	Building Technology
Third mentor	Amy Thomas	Research
Argumentation of choice of the studio	Explore Lab allows me, during the graduation year, to follow my fascination with feminist approaches to architecture and specifically women's urban safety. In Explore Lab, I can also continue to develop a project which I started in the first year of my Master's. Thanks to that, I can relate the graduation topic to what I have learned within the Honours Program Master and the History Thesis course. I appreciate how my graduation project can be strongly research-oriented in this studio. It is important for me that I can learn to lead myself independently through the design and research process, with the guidance and support of the tutors.	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Public (Infra)Structures of Care: Planning and Design Strategies for Enhanced Women's Safety.
Goal	
Location:	Medellín (Colombia)
The posed problem,	Women worldwide are disproportionately affected by safety issues and fear in public spaces. In Latin America, where inequality is pervasive, scholars and activists have directed considerable attention to this issue. While several urban interventions have been proposed by local and international institutions to improve urban safety, their long-term effectiveness remains unclear. Through this study, I evaluate

	<p>how women perceive the impact of infrastructural changes on their safety, especially those implemented since 2011 as part of the UN Women's "Safe Cities" program. Based on the results of the assessment, I want to propose planning and design strategies that consider women's safety needs. In the design, I aim to understand how the approaches to the built environment transformation can reflect the understanding of women's safety as a spatially and temporally continuous, collective experience and how public structures and infrastructures can support the networks of mutual care between residents.</p>
research questions, and...	<p>I am exploring how women in Latin America perceive the impact of infrastructure and public space elements across different architectural scales on their sense of safety. I also seek to understand how their experiences and perceptions of vulnerability can inform design strategies.</p> <p>To achieve this, I have formulated three categories of sub-questions. The first focuses on the general perception of urban safety and the relevance of the issue in Latin America. I investigate how women view the issue of urban safety and how important it is to them in their daily lives. The second category delves into the perception of the influence of physical cityscape elements on women's safety. Through this, I identify which physical factors or changes in public space and infrastructure are most relevant to women's safety in the view of the local community. I explore why these factors matter and how they affect women's sense of security. Finally, the third category involves assessing the UN Women's "Safe Cities" program and discussing the indications for future projects. I want to know if the community recognizes previously</p>

	<p>implemented interventions and if they have been effective in improving women's safety. Furthermore, I am seeking suggestions from local women on how to integrate their experiences into the design of public spaces.</p>
<p>...design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>For the design phase of my graduation, I am interested in developing a project of reuse and functional activation for one of the abandoned water tanks in Medellín and the surrounding lot. I want to follow the ideas of the successful municipal initiative of <i>Unidades de Vida Articulada</i> (Units for the Articulation of Life) and expand its assumptions by considering women's perspectives on safety. I would also like to investigate the concept of "Urban Blocks of Care" – units of the city, which contain various elements and functions necessary to support existing networks of care between residents, which are also crucial for enhancing women's safety. What functions would such a city unit contain? What spatial forms should be given to them? How can the presence of the reused water tank unit contribute to the "Urban Block of Care" and what would the role of this building be in this system? These are some of the questions that I would like to explore.</p>

**Process**

**Method description**

The methodology of this research is based on the assessment of the long-term effects of public space and infrastructural interventions within the UN Women's "Safe Cities" program on women's safety. The main source of information is qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews with 30 female residents and experts specializing in the topic of gender-based violence from various disciplines. The qualitative approach is useful to explore the plurality of meanings in women's experiences. I use quantitative data gathered through an online survey to enrich the understanding of the complex problem of safety, and the perception of the role of the UN Women's program. Data from the interviews and surveys were collected during the fieldwork between August and December 2022.

## Literature and general practical preference

### The most relevant literature:

#### 1. Early theories on planning and design for safety:

- Jeffery, C.R. (1971) *Crime prevention through environmental design*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Newman, O. (1972). *Defensible space: Crime prevention through urban design*. New York.
- Kelling, G.L. & Wilson, J.Q. (1982) *Broken windows: The police and neighborhood safety*. The Atlantic.
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Random House.

#### 2. Criticism of the long-established theories on planning and design for urban safety:

- Koskela, H., & Pain, R. (2000). Revisiting fear and place: Women's fear of attack and the built environment. *Geoforum*, 31(2), 269–280. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0016-7185\(99\)00033-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0016-7185(99)00033-0)
- Ortiz Escalante, S. (2014) *Espacio público, género e (in)seguridad*. Jornadas Urbanismo y Género. Ciudad en Construcción.
- Wekerle, G. (2000). From Eyes on the Street to Safe Cities. *Places*, 13(1). <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8mh913kc>
- Ceccato, V., & Nalla, M. K. (2020). *Crime and fear in public places. Towards safe, inclusive, and sustainable cities*. Routledge.
- Beebeejaun, Y. (2009). Making safer places: Gender and the right to the city. *Security Journal*, 22(3), 219–229. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sj.2009.4>

#### 3. Feminist approaches to urban safety:

- Kern, L. (2021). *Feminist city*. New York: Verso.
- Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2014). Fear and safety in transit environments from the women's perspective. *Security Journal*, 27(2), 242–256. <https://doi.org/10.1057/sj.2014.9>
- Toro Jiménez, J., & Ochoa Sierra, M. (2017). *Violencia de género y ciudad: Cartografías feministas del temor y el miedo*. *Sociedad y Economía*, (32), 65–84. <https://doi.org/10.25100/sye.v0i32.3878>

- Vera-Gray, F. & Kelly, L. (2020). Contested gendered space: Public sexual harassment and women's safety work. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 44(4), 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2020.1732435>
- Delgado, L. S. (2018). La Utilidad del feminismo. Empoderamiento y visibilización de la violencia urbana en las mujeres jóvenes. *Hábitat y Sociedad*, (11), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.12795/habitatsociedad.2018.i11.08>

#### 4. Feminist approaches to urban planning for safety:

- Muxí Martínez, Z., Casanovas, R., Ciocoletto, A., Fonseca, M., & Gutiérrez Valdivia, B. (2011). ¿Qué aporta la perspectiva de género al urbanismo? *Feminismo/s*, (17), 105–129. <https://doi.org/10.14198/fem.2011.17.06>
- Falú Ana (Ed.). (2009). *Mujeres en la ciudad: De violencias y derechos*. Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina.
- Falú A., & Segovia, O. (2007). *Ciudades para convivir: Sin violencias hacia las mujeres*. Ediciones SUR.
- De Simone, L. (2018). *Mujeres y Ciudades. Urbanismo género-consciente, espacio público y aportes para la ciudad inclusiva desde un enfoque de derechos*. In J. A. Riffo (Ed.), *El Estado y las mujeres: El complejo camino hacia una necesaria transformación de las instituciones* (pp. 229–250). essay, RIL editores.

#### 5. Feminist ethics of care and the built environment:

- Bednarczyk, A. (2022). 'We Are Here to Care' Gendered Urban Safety in Argentina. In A. Gabauer, S. Knierbein, N. Cohen, H. Lebuhn, K. Trogal, T. Viderman, & T. Haas (Eds.), *Care and the city: Encounters with urban studies* (pp. 65–74). essay, Taylor & Francis
- Fitz, A., & Krasny, E. (Eds.). (2019). *Critical care: architecture and urbanism for a broken planet*. MIT Press Ltd.

#### **Precedents:**

- EPM – Unidades de Vida Articulada (Units for the Articulation of Life) - Medellín (Colombia).
- LA Arquitectos - Las Pioneras Public Space - Montevideo (Uruguay).
- The City Government of Bogotá – Care Blocks – Bogotá (Colombia).

## 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)?

Relationship with the studio topic: Explore Lab - not applicable.

Relationship with the Master track: Architecture – I aim to develop an architectural project of a building and a public space, in which I will deal with the technical, social, and spatial challenges encountered in the built environment across different architectural scales. In this sense, I believe the graduation project addresses multiple facets of the master's track I selected.

Relationship with the Master Program MSc AUBS: Since safety in public spaces is a complex issue that cannot be understood within the boundaries of a single discipline, I refer to knowledge and examples coming from different fields, including architecture, urban planning, criminology, anthropology, sociology, psychology, gender studies, political sciences, and law. Although the approach was interdisciplinary, my background in architecture and urban planning was relevant and influenced the definition of the research topic, the course of the interviews, and the observations. Apart from the research, I will propose a design proposal, in which I will use a combination of skills relevant to the Master's Program that I follow, including those coming from design practice, social sciences, technology, engineering, and sustainability.

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

Violence against women has a major societal impact in Latin America where the rates of sexual violence are among the highest in the world and almost 5,000 femicide cases are reported annually. Women's activity and participation in public spaces are restricted not only by the objective danger but also by the sense of anxiety. Fear is an objective actuality, but it is also commonly reinforced by pressures arising from social constructs, which is manifested in the gendered division of public space and differences in how women and men use it. Women are being socialized into 'invisibility' in public spaces, which is supposed to protect them from violence. As a result, they feel that they are entitled to be in some locations, while in others their presence is less encouraged. Women are also excluded from certain parts of cities that are inappropriately planned from the point of view of security or the perception of safety. Understanding how planning and design decisions affect experiences related to safety is important because it influences people's well-being and the long-term social sustainability of a city. It is relevant to rethink how urban safety is approached through planning and design and propose a set of strategies and principles on the experiences of women, which consider broader socio-spatial dynamics.