THE

PUBLIC PARLIAMENT

- a spatial manifesto for a Binnenhof redesign

Graduation Thesis - 12 april 2016
Jan Maarten van Hemert

Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
Department Urbanism
Delft University of Technology
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INTRODUCTION
# COLOPHON

Graduation thesis  
Delft University of Technology  
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment  
Department of Urbanism  
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12 april 2016  

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Dear all,

Before you start reading this thesis, I would to say a few words in advance. This project is not only about graduation, about design and about the Binnenhof, but this project is mainly addressed to you, the reader. This project aims to trigger you to think about your role as a citizen in the Dutch democracy. The relationship between politics and space has been the starting point of this thesis and I aim to contribute to the debate of political involvement through this project.

Throughout my studies in architecture and urban design, I have been fascinated by how we live as a human species in houses, cities and with each other. The relationship between the human and his surroundings, whether it consist of other humans or the man-made surroundings of the city, has been an inspiration in the way of how I see urbanism. As cities are made up of people, the relationship between people and the city works both ways: people shape the city, but I am convinced that the city shapes us as well. The city reflects the way its inhabitants think and live.

This graduation thesis focuses on this interrelationship of society and spatial design of places in the city. As I wished to investigate the ‘why’ of how we live in The Netherlands as well as a design assignment on the human scale, this thesis contains three themes: spatial design, philosophy and the role of the public political realm. As this political realm is for this thesis limited to the politics of the Dutch nation state, I have investigated the place where national politics are most clearly present: the Binnenhof in The Hague, home to the Dutch parliament.

As a graduation project, it has resulted in a very explorative project. I have dived into the realms of philosophy, politics and urban design, looking for my own position as a designer and a human being. The Binnenhof proves itself as a complex piece of urban fabric, full of historical and present-day stories of human political activity. Trying to adjust the place of politics often tended to result in an attempt of adjusting politics itself, leading to the pitfalls of my own broad scope of interest.

Due to this constant personal reflection and this intertwined relationship of social and spatial matters, this thesis has resulted in a spatial manifesto on the way citizens engage in Dutch politics. It contains both explorative and theoretical design proposals as well as very concrete elements aimed to enhance political conversation between politician and citizens.

In this thesis report, various elements will be addressed. I will start by explaining the project structure, its site, aims, methodology and theoretical framework. In the second section, I will elaborate on the various themes of research: political philosophy, public domain and urban design. The third section presents the spatial strategy and designed elements on the scales of the city to the furnishing of urban space. In the fourth section, I aim to provide conclusive remarks on the project, as well as a personal reflection, and any recommendations for further research.

As I belief that taking part in politics - even in its most modest forms, is an important part of our lives, I want to ask you to use this thesis as a moment of personal reflection. Think of your own role as a citizen, in relation to politics, space and the so-called public sphere. This spatial manifesto is intended as a design exercise, but addresses a large debate. It addresses everyone who reads, sees or listens to the story. Let’s fire up the conversation by sharing these kind of stories!

April 2016,
Jan Maarten van Hemert
PROJECT FRAMEWORK
INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE

The Binnenhof area, one of two historical centres of The Hague, consists of a complex buildings around an inner court (literally the translation of the Dutch word ‘Binnenhof’), a 2.2 hectare large pond the Hofvijver and the in 1992 opened expansion of the Tweede Kamer, the Dutch Parliament. In its original function, the Binnenhof was founded as home to the residence of Count Floris of Holland. Throughout the ages, it has also been the home of Stadhouders, Kings, a bazaar, a military hospital and its current function as seat of parliament. Over time, the complex has adapted to the various ways it has been used, evolving into a complex of buildings of various ages, connected by a surprising interior route.

In its current state, the Binnenhof is home to the Dutch Parliament, consisting of the Eerste and Tweede Kamer, the Ministerie van Algemene Zaken and the Raad van State. (Explanation in separate frame). Recently, plans for extensive renovation have been revealed to adjust the historical complex to the requirements of the 21st century (NOS/report Spies). Although all involved parties agree on the urgency of the renovation, the main debate revolves about whether it is absolutely necessary to relocate parliament for a timespan of five years during construction, stating that the Binnenhof “is the symbol of the parliamentary democracy” (NOS/Broekers-Knol). The fuss seems to focus about having the parliament not at the same place as the past 200 years, instead of the enormous price tag of the renovation plans, which is estimated around 500 million euros.

The Dutch parliament consists of the following institutions: the Eerste Kamer (First Chamber, comparable with British House of Lords) and the Tweede Kamer (Second Chamber, comparable with British House of Commons) and the Raad van State (independent advisory board for the Dutch government). The Binnenhof also houses the Ministerie van Algemene Zaken (Ministry of General Affairs, the department of the Prime Minister).

The value of the Binnenhof as symbol for our political system triggers the question what makes it so special: is it merely the historic value, is it the quality of the offices and meeting rooms, or is it a spatial quality of buildings and surroundings? How can the value of a place relate to spatial and social fabrics? This thesis focuses on the position of the Binnenhof as a public space and as a spatial element in the public political domain. What is it that makes this as a place from a space, giving it meaning to a society and constructed in social value?

Besides its spatial quality, the political activity raises a third topic. As society and politics tend to revolve about a spectrum of ideas, various ways of politics and ruling are known. Every elections, a new balance of politics is made up. It made me wonder how these different ideas could be present in the process and results of an (urban) designer, triggering the topic of (political) philosophy. Assuming that my own ideas of society influence my design decisions, it seems worthwhile to see my own position in relation to other relevant positions. Understanding the motivations behind social statements and ideas might help to design with the socio-spatial relationship of place and politics.
As mentioned in the introduction, the project revolves about the design and the role of the Binnenhof complex, which touches the fields of urban and spatial design, politics and (political) philosophy. As they are related to each other, they will be defined in this section.

**Urban Design - Binnenhof as a public space in The Hague**

The project site is located at the Binnenhof complex, in the historical centre of The Hague. The plan site boundaries are marked by the following streets: Lange Vijverberg; Korte Vijverberg; Plein; Lange Poten; Hofweg; Buitenhof. The area measures roughly 90,000 m² or 9 hectare. Northwest to Southeast measures 290 metres; Northeast to Southwest measures 350 metres. The Binnenhof is the oldest part of The Hague (since the 13th century) and hosts the seat of government of The Netherlands since 1584. Since the constitution of parliamentary democracy in 1815, the open spaces of the Binnenhof are open for the public, as its purpose had changed from a military and seclusive to a public function. The latest change in the complex dates 1992, when the new Tweede Kamer building opened next to the Binnenhof.

Regarding the spatial organisation of the parliament complex, an important modification has been made during the 1992 extension. Due to the post-war increasing of the amount of members of parliament and their support staff, both the space for offices and the Tweede Kamer meeting room were regarded as too small and too enclosed. Although the design of the extension was meant to be open and connected to the urban fabric, an unfortunate series of events led to a secured complex of buildings, turned inwards. It enforces the separation between the offices, all connected by the atrium, and the open accessible outside world.

The positioning of the parliament entrances and room, now oriented towards adjacent urban spaces, led to a different use of the open spaces of the Binnenhof (Van Roosmalen & al., 2015, p. 137). The Plein became the new place for demonstrations due to the relocation of the main parliament entrance, the Binnenhof lost part of its atmosphere as connecting square for political activity and the new designed Hofplaats never lived up to its purpose as active open space.

**Politics – The Binnenhof as place where politicians meet and decide**

The government of the Kingdom of The Netherlands has been located in The Hague since the constitution of the country in 1815. Up until 1848, the King was head of the government and had more power than today, but in 1848, constitutional law was edited. From that moment on, the legislative power was put with the representatives that were elected in the Eerste and Tweede Kamer, a parliamentary democracy. The politicians of national parliament worked in The Hague to meet for three days a week, because not all of them lived nearby. As long as the people would have faith in the politicians that represent them, this system would do just fine: one could do his local...
job, and his interests on national level having represented in parliament through a political party.

During the 20th century, new types media started to play an interesting role in the contact between politics and citizens. Television and later on internet brought possibilities of contact that brought politics closer to our private domain than ever before. It is now possible to livestream the plenary meetings of parliament, while twittering with the politicians that are inside that very meeting. However, somehow the trust that Dutch citizens have in the Tweede Kamer has dropped to 35% (CBS, 2015, p. 99). Although the meetings are supposed to be publicly accessible, only journalists have access to the politicians’ area, performing a crucial role in the contact between citizen and politician. According to CBS, the press is even less trusted by citizens than politicians: 30% (CBS, 2015, p. 91). Recent news items report this ‘gap’ between politicians and citizens, but it remains unclear whether this is directly related to the way that citizens and politicians have contact.

Besides the place where politicians are physically present and where citizens can attend the parliament meetings, the Binnenhof also has symbolic value. As it has been residence of the parliament for over 200 years, the buildings and squares have become symbols themselves as décor for political activity. Both the image and the ability to visit the place also have value for the understanding of the political system, particular for children. The fuss in the media and among politicians about moving for 5 years during the upcoming renovation, as stated in the introduction, only proves the symbolic value of place in the political organisation of The Netherlands.

**Philosophy – The relation between ideology and design decisions**

In a very general and broad sense, the differences between people and their ideas are present between people themselves, but are for a large part culturally defined. Different cultures have organised their countries according to different ideas, resulting in different cities and different styles. In a more specific way, ones philosophy is also present in his work as an urban or architectural designer.

During graduation, I wanted to explore my own political position and philosophy as a designer in relation to my case and environment. Awareness of your own position as a designer may contribute in more explicit and outspoken design interventions, especially if they are related to social and political design challenges.
**PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As elaborated, the problem statement is related to both social and spatial aspects of Dutch politics and its parliament complex, located at the Binnenhof. Since the last reconstruction of the Binnenhof area in 1992, the Tweede Kamer exists of a conglomerate of connected buildings, resulting in one large secured parliament building, where the publicly accessible space is separated from the meeting spaces of the politicians. The chance of running into a politician inside the parliament area is low, due to this spatial organisation.

During this same renovation, the spatial reorganisation has led to multiple urban spaces that are associated with the parliament complex. The relation between buildings and open space is unclear and the spaces lack a well-defined purpose or activity.

On the social and political aspect, the relationship between Dutch citizens and politicians’ lacks trust. Research shows that only 9% of Dutch citizens try to contact politicians and less than 30% trusts the press, which acts as the main mediator between the citizens and political institute. The form and amount of personal contact has changed over the recent years, in which press and other types of media are relevant.

Finally, the political theme relates to the philosophical ideology of Dutch society in general and is thus related to politicians and citizens, but also to designers. Awareness of the ideology behind policy and proposals can contribute to the process and position of the designer.

**PROJECT GOALS AND QUESTIONS**

**Project goals**

The main design goal of the thesis is to explore spatial design solutions that contribute to solving a social and political issue: to contribute to closing the ‘gap’ between politics and citizens, using spatial design interventions on the scale of urban design. A secondary and more personal goal is to investigate the philosophical origins of my position as an urban designer as a base for developing my design approach. A third goal flows from this philosophical position. I want to explore the possibility to use a design project as a ‘spatial manifesto’. In a certain way, every design project is a call for change and if it raises a debate, design can achieve more than providing a spatial solution.

To achieve these project goals, the Binnenhof has to be reviewed from multiple disciplines which have to be combined. It is a specific area which can make it difficult to apply generic theories and interventions. This thesis aims to come up with a design that flows from the strong identity of the area, consisting of design elements that are both theoretical and exploring, as well as concrete and easy to implement.

**Research questions**

How can the spatial design of the Binnenhof contribute to increased awareness, understanding and contact between Dutch citizens and politics?

In order to understand and answer the question, it has been broken down into several subquestions, according the different elements of the question.

How are the spaces and activities at the Binnenhof related to the spatial design of the project site and the organisation and philosophy of Dutch politics?

How can the spatial arrangement of the Binnenhof and the design of the public spaces contribute to increased interaction, awareness and understanding between citizens (and politicians)?

How can (awareness of) the political and philosophical position of the designer and his methods of design process and presentation help the design of public and political design projects?
ACADEMIC AND SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

As stated earlier, the main themes of this project are as first the design of the public space, and second, the design of place for political interaction. As it focuses on politics as a particular piece of urban and social life, it raises the question whether theories for designing public space will suffice. On the other hand, the political theme is mostly regarded as a social issue, while the project focuses on the places where these social interactions actually happen. Investigating and combining the realms of urban design and political science and philosophy might provide a view of how to approach public spaces that have political social value, which can in turn contribute to the academic framework of researching politically themed public places. Besides this potential approach, the project aims to explore the positioning of my own views in a philosophical framework, giving more insight in the motivation of the decisions in spatial and strategic design that are made throughout the project.

Societal relevance

The societal relevance of the Binnenhof is inherently connected to its function as parliament, the place where important societal decisions are made. The Binnenhof has both symbolic and functional value for society. In this project, the relation between the design of place and its political activity is researched, aiming to contribute to a societal and political issue through interventions in spatial design. As the Binnenhof represents highly communal social value, its intervention strategy might contribute to the design of other public projects, both by low-key interventions as high-impact changes in the area.

Ethical relevance

The thematic research of the project is related to the concept of the public. This concept is related to the physical and spatial domains, but also to e.g. politicians or designers. Designing for the public is often interpreted as designing ‘for the greater good’. However, the process of designing may also be public-private related, as sometimes a ‘private’ process may lead to a result that very much contributes to the public value, while making the process public might cost more, or result in a lesser product. These antitheses are further elaborated at the conclusive section of this thesis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Political philosophy

What is my position?

The philosophical domain of this thesis’ framework will consist of an exploration between two major political philosophers: Habermas and Hobbes. Exploring their theories and trying to translate them to form has helped in a number of elements regarding the role of spatial design, understanding the concept of the public sphere and about the organisation of Dutch politics. These three elements helped me to understand my project site, the social themes in the project and my own development as an urban designer. My philosophical and political position will be related to the current political organisation and the site, resulting in a manifesto that acts as an inspiration for the design concepts.

Public political sphere

What is the role of space and place in political interaction/domain?

The concept of the public sphere and in particular the political activities are explored in relation to the spatial places where they occur. The philosophical theme Öffentlichkeit as posed by Habermas will be linked to the activities that occur at the Binnenhof. In addition to Habermas, the works and ideas of Arendt, Hajer & Reijdorp, Boomkes, Avermaete and Teerds will be explored. Although the concept of Public Sphere is mainly a social related idea, in this thesis the spatial elements will be investigated: ultimately, every social activity needs to take place somewhere, giving the public sphere a spatial aspect which must be designed.

Design of the public place

What makes a good public place?

Designing a space in such a way that it becomes a place is not only a spatial but also a social matter. Every physical place is a space. But, besides its spatial definition by walls or coordinates, places have mental aspects and identities and these aspects are socially defined. The particular social theme of this thesis, politics, might need a different view on public place theories. In this thesis, the framework of public spaces will be regarded as follows. The broader scope of making a good public place will be researched as first. After, the thematically desired social activities will be matched with these theories of experience, activity and spatial dimensions. The framework will rely on the research of the past decades until recently: the work of Lynch, Gehl, Cullen, Venturi and others.
PROJECT METHODOLOGY

During the setup of this thesis, my own motivation and fascination have been leading to the themes of research. Due to my interest in politics and the experience of the human scale space, the starting themes were related to political philosophy and public space. My philosophical interest were related to the concept of Public Sphere and Dutch Politics, leading to a project site that makes this relationship most visible: the Binnenhof in The Hague, where politics literally takes place.

The problem statement acts as basis for the research questions. As major part of the research is based on the philosophical position, I have focused mainly on literature research regarding the themes of philosophy and the public sphere. For in-depth knowledge of the site, I have used:
- Site visits
- Mapping
  - Activity
  - Image / perception
- Form
- 3D modeling in computer and physical model

Besides this gathering of site knowledge and understanding, I have positioned myself in a manifesto as basis for an answer. The position stated in the manifesto is meant to formulate social design goals in a very explicit way, making them easier to translate in spatial design goals and concepts. These spatial concepts act as foundation for the design interventions.

End product:
Public Parliament

(Dutch) Politics
Public domain
Communication

Project site
Binnenhof, The Hague

Problem Statement

Methodology

Fascination
Motivation

Human scale
Public Space

(Political)
Philosophy

Dutch Politics
Public domain
Communication

Site Visits
Mapping
- Activity
- Image / perception
- Form
- 3D Modeling

Literature
Research
- Philosophy
- Public Sphere

Spatial design goals
Design concepts

Manifesto

End product:
Public Parliament
THE BINNENHOF: PLACE OF PARLIAMENT
In the era of the French domination of Napoleon (1795-1813), and the early age of the Dutch Monarchy (1813-1848), the complex closed again for the city, secluded by canals that served a military defensive purpose. The private complex was used as military hospital and rookie training centre during French command, and divided in ministry departments to be governed by King Willem I. As centre of royal government, it was once more apart from the daily life of the city The Hague.

It was after the constitutional law of 1848 that the power shifted from King Willem II to the parliament. The new system of parliamentary democracy removed the urgency for a secluded Binnenhof complex and the area was reopened for the city. All political bodies and ministries were located either in or next to the Binnenhof. Large plans for a new complex were designed, but never executed. Any reconstruction plans were limited to small and inconspicuous interventions, merged into the coherent brick mass and only to enhance union and the existing style (Van Roosmalen & al., 2015). Up until the end of WW-II (1945), this compactness remained, as well as the renewed open connections with the city.

After the Second World War, the Dutch political approach of rebuilding the country resulted in a growth of the civil servants in the ministries and parliament, leading to a lack of space at the Binnenhof. As ministries moved to other parts of the city, parliament members and their support staff resided in the Binnenhof complex, deciding to opt for a new parliament building to show openness and hospitality.

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

According to the research by Wilm Floet and her students, four eras of the Binnenhof can be distinguished (Wilms Floet, 2011). The era of the Count of Holland (1230 and 1580); the era of Governors (1580-1795); the era of Kings and (early) parliamentary democracy (1795-1945); and modern parliamentary democracy (1945-present). Throughout these times, the complex has had private and public characters. In its primary function as residence for Count Floris of Holland, the area was secluded for his family only as a gated community, to serve as a base for hunting in the area. The complex expanded slowly as the family and (highly placed) support staff grew and new small homes were built. The current Ridderzaal was the heart of the complex, being in its current dimensions impressive in size.

After the establishment of the Republic of Seven Provinces in the 16th century, the Binnenhof was installed as central meeting place for the Staten-Generaal which consisted of deputies of the provinces; a court of justice and the treasury of the Republic. In between the former residential buildings, luxurious meeting rooms were built and the organically grown set of small buildings were slowly unified behind larger facades and arcades. The formerly secluded courtyards and gardens opened up to the public, a bazaar and markets were hosted in the Ridderzaal, and the Plein transformed in 1633 from a garden to a square designed for parades and sauntering. The buildings were given more decoration and grandeur while the surrounding open spaces gained public functions, the gated community became an open part of the city.

In the era of the French domination of Napoleon (1795-1813), and the early age of the Dutch Monarchy (1813-1848), the complex closed again for the city, secluded by canals that served a military defensive purpose. The private complex was used as military hospital and rookie training centre during French command, and divided in ministry departments to be governed by King Willem I. As centre of royal government, it was once more apart from the daily life of the city The Hague.

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more suitable for the new way of parliamentary democracy. In 1992, the new building opened, once intended as a public passage but now heavily guarded and only accessible through security gates. The political heart of the Netherlands moved next to the complex, its main entrance at the Plein, not the Binnenhof. Only the Eerste Kamer, the annual Prinsjesdag parade and the Ministry of Algemene Zaken reside at the original court, which is now as an open pedestrian route more part of the city than ever, but also left behind as former core of democracy.
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAGUE

Established as a single residence for Floris V, The Hague was founded due to its favourable location nearby the woods, on solid sandy grounds. As a base for hunting and governance it steadily grew, attracting not only noble residents at the court, but also villagers, who worked for the residency. The court and town grew due to the trade and its position governmental centre, but never was regarded as a city, lacking city rights and defensive walls. Mainly due to the absence of these walls and rights, The Hague has been pillaged and raided, and wasn’t allowed to take a seat in the Statenvergadering, the governmental board that decided on Holland during the 16th-17th centuries (de Nijs & Bartels, 2009; Wilms Floet, 2011).

However, it may have been this underdog position that led to the decision of continuing the use of The Hague as national centre of governance. Its ‘weak’ and neutral position acted as a common ground, preferable over Amsterdam, Delft or one of the smaller cities, as they would become too powerful. This governmental centre has been a stable and continuing factor for the development of The Hague up until its present situation (de Nijs & Bartels, 2009; Rutte et al., 2011).

Timeline

1220
Presumed founding of the residence of Floris IV
1300
Development town nearby the court due to the attractiveness of the court
1335
Digging the canals Hofvijver, Spui, Trekvliet leads to increasing of trade connections. The village expanded: the court on sandy grounds, the village on peat grounds.
1450’s
Fierce trade competition of Delft and Leiden 1500’s
Raiding and pillaging of the city as the Hague lacked a defense system such as walls or canals.
1587
The Hague as governmental seat of the Statenvergadering. Due to the lack of city rights, it wasn’t able to vote in the council, making the city a central and neutral location.
1600’s
Digging of the Singels (canals) and expansion of the city. Again: workers on the peat, rich merchants and politicians on sandy grounds.
1700-1850
Slowly expanding up to the Singels.
1813
Founding of Kingdom of the Netherlands
1843
Railway Amsterdam-Rotterdam → Station Den Haag Hollands Spoor
1900-1920
Development nearby station HS: Laakhaven, Spoorwijk
1909
1st AUP (general expansion plan) by Berlage: major axes in the inner city and expansion to the west.
1940-1945
World War II: various bombings in the city
1947
Dudok presented his plan for Groot Den Haag
1960’s-2015
Further expansion of the city.
At the Binnenhof, mainly political institutions are housed. It is home to the Tweede Kamer, the offices of all 150 representatives and all support staff, in the Southern part of the complex. The northwestern wing is home to the Eerste Kamer, plus support staff and the Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. Located in the centre is the Ridderzaal, the main hall since the 14th century, home to conferences and the yearly Prinsjesdag ceremonies. Southwest are the offices of the Raad van State. Besides the political institutions, the plan area also houses the Mauritshuis, a museum containing the royal art collection.

Most of the outdoors spaces are publicly accessible, making the southwest-northeast route part of the existing urban fabric, frequently used by both pedestrians and cyclists. Apart from the authorised services and ministers, motorized traffic is not allowed in the area, making it primarily a pedestrian-dominated space.
SPATIAL AMBIGUIT Y

The open spaces are defined by the buildings at the court, resulting in a series of squares. Each square is a different element as part of a larger route, creating a sense of ambiguity.

Looking closely, all routes are dominated by the orientation of the Ridderzaal, the Lange Poten and the Hofvijver water.
Analysis by serial vision is based on the approach of Cullen (1961). His theory builds on the experience of visiting a place as a series of views. By observing the guiding elements in a sequence, (in)coherence in a route can be found.

The following set of drawings visualises a way of looking that is used to identify legibility and contrast. By reviewing three routes through the complex, it can be seen that the routes through the Hofpoort are not very clear and certainly not used much. They lack directions and activity in the facades.

The black route starts south, going north past the Tweede Kamer and through the Hofpoort.

The transparent passage offers a beautiful view on the original courtyard.

Windows blinded, messy street. Hard to see what happens inside.

The shade conceals a passage, while the small but sturdy pillars scare visitors away.

The presence of people draws towards the square.
Left:
The other way around, from Binnenhof to Hofplaats, is similarly troublesome. It is not attractive and clear to enter the passage, and blind facades and service-like atmospheres have a repelling effect. The play of wide versus narrow, light versus dark however creates a dramatic effect.

Below:
The route from Buitenhof to Binnenhof, however, shows the next goal as soon as one enters the space. As a sequence of spaces, its order is clear and legible, making it easier to follow.

Focus is directed towards Ridderzaal

The narrow passage opens up to reveal a messy area

Blind facades, but attracting lights and dramatic play

People look away from parliament due to orientation of the seating element

Pavement and security lock align movement

Gate and pavement are followed by the flow of people

The next destination is already visible, as well as the people heading towards it

Clear goal and elements enforce direction
LYNCH-BASED ANALYSIS

Analysis using Lynch’ theory of legibility (Lynch, 1960) reveals a big node just south of the Tweede Kamer, where the Lange Poten crosses the Spui. This big node is due to a tram stop located at Spui and the Lange Poten being a major route between the shopping district and the central station. However, due to the inactive facades and the line of trees next to the Hofplaats, the complex forms an edge next to this major route, leading citizens next to the parliament, instead of inviting them in.

SEATING AREAS

Sitting and observing is one of the basic forms of urban life (Gehl, 2011). This map shows all small places where view and other people can be observed. Interesting notions, based on observations during site visits, are that those seats which are either specifically comfortable (due to sunlight or sheltered from wind and cold) or with view on activities are more used than those which lack these qualities. During all observations, multiple benches within sight of each other are used.
Analysing the differences between the routes of citizens and politicians, one can see that the politicians use multiple entrances to their offices, which are all connected to the plenary room. They can move freely and separated from visiting citizens, who are able to use a separate entrance (and another exit). Mingling between politicians and citizens is reduced to those occasions where politicians actively choose to appear in the publicly accessible spaces.

In 1748, Nolli constructed the famous map of Rome containing only two elements in its legend: public and private. Interesting element was that he not only regarded the streets and squares as public space, but also the interior of churches, theatres and other public places. As it addresses the grey area between the public and private territories, this theory can be applied to modern cities as well, trying to discover the semi-formal public space (Meyer et al., 2006, p.17).
RESEARCH OF ‘THE PUBLIC’
ABOUT PHILOSOPHY & POLITICS

INTRODUCTION

In this graduation research the work of Thomas Hobbes and Jurgen Habermas will be reviewed. Hobbes (1588 – 1679), lived in England and is regarded as one of the founders of modern political philosophy. Habermas (1929 - ), German, is more modern and is one of most influential philosophers nowadays.

Hobbes

A lawless society is the start of one of the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, who invites us to think about the State of Nature: a society without rules, laws or structure. Without laws that pose boundaries and values, the citizens of such a society would have to judge for themselves. Hobbes has put it as a “dissolute condition of masterlesse men, without subjection to Lawes, and a coercive Power to tye their hands from rapine, and revenge” would make impossible all of the basic security upon which comfortable, sociable, civilized life depends (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2014, p. 2). If people would take all matters in their own hands, as Hobbes summarizes it, the State of Nature can end up in a practice where citizens have right to do potentially everything.

Hobbes continues his argument by posing that the State of Nature will eventually lead to war, which would lead citizens into altering the situation into one that is beneficial for them. It is in their personal benefit and the communal benefit to agree for peace and stability. To achieve peace, Hobbes argues that people should lay down part of their liberty to mutually agree to a body of governance, to establish sovereignty. By making these communal arrangements, the first basis of structure and regulations has been made.

Ultimately, Hobbes argues that the State of Nature is a state that should be avoided and he believes in doing so by proposing a government whose power is undivided: absolute power. He believes that the rules and regulations to achieve and maintain peace must be strong and clear. Only a strong government whose position is indisputable can prevent war and ensure peace for its citizens, who in return give up (part of) their individual liberty; order is needed to ensure prosperity and stability (Lloyd & Sreedhar, 2014).

Habermas

Habermas however, believes that the actions or choices of people are only justified, if all those affected by this decision, accept it by reasonable discourse, unlike Hobbes, who argued that in the state of nature everyone would prioritize their own benefit. The idea of Habermas; only if all actors agree, an action is justified, is a moral point of view that is recognizable in modern society. Discourse and mutual agreement is the basis for a well-functioning society, regardless of any actor’s background.

“The task of moral theory is to reconstruct the unconditional force of such (unconditional moral obligations: prohibitions, positives and permissions which together regulate interaction) obligations as impartial dictates of practical reason that hold for any similarly situated agent (ibid., p. 14).” Equal situations ask for equal moral standards. This notion of equal treatment is the basis for Habermas’ theory of Universalization, where he regards the commonalities in the moral values of mutual agreement as a universal framework of society. In the cases where the outcomes and side-effects can be predicted and all parties mutually agree on actions, without any coercion, moral norms can be applied (ibid.). Again, if all parties agree, it is ok.

As mutual agreement without any coercion is reached through arguments and words, the theory of Universalization is “a principle of real discourse” (ibid., p. 15): one can only count a moral judgment as valid once mutual consensus has been reached. The interesting part of this is that there is no absolute good or wrong, as is the case in Hobbes’ theorem. Moral
values are subjective as they are the result of subjective discourse and exist of the value that people add to it, instead of being referenced to an independent objective framework. As long as moral values are subjective to the mutual consensus, they are worthy as base to act on.

The principles of moral values, equality and discourse are core values in Habermas’ views on modern law, as law should make sure that all who are subject to it, are able to participate in discourse and are regarded as equal (ibid). This ability to publicly participate forms the base of Habermas’ theory of Öffentlichkeit, on which the concept of ‘Public Sphere’ is based. (Constitutional) law should give citizens a definition of place, protection and rights, in various context. At any time, a citizen must be able to speak according to his views, regardless of his background, without having to fear for coercion. These laws, values and political rights should also reach mutual consensus with all who have to act on it, however this has not proven as doable in modern complex cities, as it bounces on two subjects. First of all, democracy works not in the way that all have consensus about what is going on, but rather about the view and opinion of the majority, by an absolute system of voting – Ye or Ney. The second point deals with the complexity and size of modern societies: they are simply too large to discourse with all those subject – that’s why a system of representatives or a parliamentary democracy is installed.

The Dutch Parliamentary Democracy

It is not just recently that we debate the system that we live in (NOS, 2015): as long as the human society advances, the view on how it should be ruled, advances with it. It is part of this process to wonder about how this is organised in the future. This ongoing debate can be fuelled by providing some possible futures, to reflect on the current situation, to decide which route will be the best. For the past centuries, it is a trend that the people get more influence in politics: up until only roughly 100 years ago, only rich men were allowed to vote for Dutch parliament, a phenomenon that is unimaginable nowadays. After 1848, when Dutch constitutional law was rewritten by Thorbecke, most of the power was transferred from King Willem II to the Dutch parliament. Since 1922, all citizens over 18 are allowed to vote. The rise of both newspapers and political parties at the end of the 19th century led to public debate about political matters (Tweede Kamer, 2016). Politicians became well-known individuals who expressed themselves in papers and through this increasing flow of information, citizens became more aware and involved in politics. Due to the increasingly important role of the media, the domain where politics were discussed became more and more public.

Nowadays, Dutch system of parliamentary democracy consists of a two-house system: the Eerste Kamer and the Tweede Kamer. The Tweede Kamer is directly elected by every Dutch citizen over 18 years, every four years, and consists of 150 representatives. Due to
THE CONCEPT OF ‘THE PUBLIC SPHERE’

First of all, it is important to note that the public political sphere can’t be described solely by spatial elements, as exists in its main appearance as series of social interactions. However, they do all take place. It involves interaction and movement between human beings who have a spatial element to them, which isn’t necessarily a fixed one. Although it involves primarily the social dimension, the Public Sphere also consists of a physical dimension.

The concept of the Public Sphere as described by Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) revolves about the freedom to speak, listen and act. She positions the public sphere as the sphere of ‘politics and the debate about the future of the city and its citizens’, opposed to the private sphere, which consists of elements such as having a job and making a living, having a home, family, commuter travelling: all part of the private domain of the domestic and labour environment (Boomkens, 2008, p. 12). Arendt distinguishes private and public between the domains that we choose to step out to speak: no public sphere without a private sphere to retreat to, according to Arendt, the one can't exist without the other: no public sphere without a private sphere to retreat to. This statement is also observed by Loukilou-Siders and Banerjee, who state that the public life involves ‘relatively open and universal social’ elements, opposed to the private life, which we share ‘only with family and friends’, as it often has intimate and shielded elements (Carmona et al., 2010).

According to Hajer and Reijndorp, the public domain is also about the exchange of stories, cultures and experiences, instead of merely an element of space or activity. They state that these exchanges in the public domain are essential for the development of the person and his opinions (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001, p. 116), which are very important for the construction of his arguments, as especially through the exchange and confrontation with other culture, one’s own idea can be developed. It relies on a constant reflection and awareness on one’s personal frame of references in order to create this exchange (ibid., p.13). This statement is also present in Teerds’ definition of the public sphere as a space that “contributes to the development of identity and political belief, which is crucial for society, and especially politics” (Teerds, 2011, p.15).

As described above, the social dimension of the public realm consists mainly of socially interactive activities, related to speaking and discourse. Arendt already linked to politics through the importance of the public sphere for its debate, Hajer & Reijndorp focused on the exchange of experiences and personal development and Teerds links the development of identity and belief to the larger society and politics. These statements can be linked to the theories of Habermas, as explained in the previous chapter. There has been stated that speaking and discourse is key for the process of decision making, according to Habermas. For a public political discourse, it is essential that all who are involved, are able to join the debate. Following his theories, the public sphere is not only the place where we speak, but mostly the places that are accessible to all. Everybody must be able to join in, and with this, Habermas’ theory can link the public sphere to accessibility, giving it the spatial dimension as the accessibility of public spaces relies on a spatial organisation.

A very interesting development of the past twenty years is the emerging digital virtual sphere. As the access to digital platforms is open to everyone, the virtual sphere provides a place where everyone with access to the internet can speak and listen and can contribute to a conversation. In this sense, the virtual sphere is also part of the public sphere. Digital communication, however, is often limited to words and an attempt to act is not always followed by a re-action. As the ‘dialogue’ in this virtual sphere is delayed with every statement and reactive statement, it is a different kind of dialogue than the physical connection of a face-to-face conversation. The digital domain offers the possibility to share an opinion easily, but it is the combination of words and actions based on experiences and vision that makes an active contribution to the public debate (Teerds, 2011, p.15).

The role of the media is a very complex one as it performs a translation in the dialogue. As stated, the virtual sphere creates a gap between the actors that join the dialogue, whether it concerns communication through the digital domain or the more traditional mass media such as the papers and television. The importance of face-to-face communication is illustrated through the arguments of action, accessibility and the exchange of experiences. However, the virtual realm lacks the interaction of the physical face-to-face dialogue, not to mention a matter of independence and integrity (Avermaete et al., 2009, p. 28), enhancing the importance of space and place for the construction of the argument, the exchange of experiences and the participation through
speaking and actions.

Building on the previous statements, it can be stated that the Public Sphere exists of dialogues, accessible for all, about politics and the future of our cities and society. During these dialogues, exchange of views and positions contributes to the development of (political) identity, which is essential for this political debate. However, it seems that the upcoming virtual space lacks the physical proximity of the physical space. It is exactly this why Hager & Reijndorp, besides their definition for exchange, emphasize that the physical experience of one other’s presence in the same physical space is important for the development of this exchange (2001, p. 13). The importance of this physical presence relates to merely seeing, hearing and meeting, which creates opportunities for making contact, but also for information and inspiration about the social experiences outside (Gehl, 2011, p. 15).

Proximity and physical meeting in public space adds to the experience of exchange and contact, which the virtual sphere lacks. As stated, the spatial dimension of the Public Sphere is essential for providing proximity and physical presence. Although all spaces can be used for political interaction, it is important to note that the spaces we associate with the ‘private sphere’ as called by Arendt, are the spaces that we share just with our friends and family. It is the experience and exchange of other ideas that only takes place in the public space.

Public space has in its meaning spatial elements based on the qualifications that are visible in the philosophical ideas of the public sphere such as open access, used by people and communal ownership. Regarding the relation between the public space and the (political) public realm, Loukaitou-Sideris & Banerjee (1998) identified three key functions (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 139): (i) regard the public space as a political stage or forum, for political representation, display and action; (ii) public space must be on neutral or common ground to be suitable for social interaction, intermingling, and communication; and (iii) see space as a stage for information exchange, personal development and social learning - that is, for the development of tolerance and the exchange and experiences as also marked by Hager and Reijndorp. In a similar way, Carmona described Tiesdel & Oc (1998), who identified four generally desirable qualities of the public realm: (i) universal access (open to all); (ii) neutral territory (free from coercive forces); (iii) inclusive and pluralist (accepting and accommodating difference); and (iv) symbolic and representative of the collective and of sociability (rather than individuality and privacy) (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 140).

Besides the elements as marked in Carmona’s work, which revolve on the open character of the Public Sphere, one can also view the space from the political perspective, as visible in the work of Parkinson. From the view of democracy, he regarded public space as facilitator in the following statements. First, he states that space acts as the stage and décor for the political dialogue, and that this space must be claimed to make a statement. Secondly, he stresses the communal character of public space, as it should be shared and inhabited by people. As third, he mentions a rather different side of public space, as its openness allows everyone to access it and confront the other with an opposing view. In other words, in the public space, there is no place to hide as it is the place and stage for everyone to speak their minds (Parkinson, 2012, pp. 200-204).

As stated, the organisation, accessibility and activities (or absence of them) defines public space, in which the possibility for its political potential is essential, but not explicitly necessary: if it is absent, it doesn’t make the space not public, but it should be possible at all times, providing a clear objective for designers of the public space.
Since the establishing of parliament at the Binnenhof in the early 19th century, the Binnenhof squares have been publicly accessible for citizens. In the previous section the political and philosophical ideas behind public spaces have been elaborated. The presence and activities of people have a major role in this, as also being stated by William H. Whyte: “What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people.” What makes a space a good people place?

According to Montgomery (1998), the urban sense of a place is built up out of three domains: activity, image and form. He defines activity as the domain of social activities, such as the presence of people, diversity and vitality, but also more economical based elements, such as cafes, events and opening hours. Image is based on the mental perception of the area in the spectator’s mind. Symbolism and memory are important as well as the legibility, experience and associations. As third, form is about the more physical aspects such as scale, permeability, open-closed ratios. In this thesis, these three domains will be used to research elements for good people places.

### Activity

Following the statement of Whyte, the presence of people is crucial for attracting other people, one should search for liveliness and activity. In short: people should have something to do or to see that keeps them there. Carr et al provides six terms on activities in public space (Carmona, 2010, pg 209): 1) Comfort; 2) Relaxation; 3) Passive Engagement; 4) Active Engagement; 5) Discovery; 6) Display. This implies that each space must provide room for activities and observation, space for both interaction with other people or just sitting, observing and being observed. According to Carmona, Gehl wrote on what public space should provide to function as good. They are more elementary elements and he defined them as 1) protection; 2) comfort and 3) enjoyment. The order of these is important: without protection and comfort, enjoyment can’t be achieved (2010).

To generate activity, spaces for activity must be provided – spaces where people live their lives. Daily life involves multiple activities such as work, shopping, having a drink, eating, sleeping, being at home or out in town. By following and organising the spaces where these activities take place, activity can be organised and designed. Programming spaces to activities in certain time-frames helps to attract people, but mixing these activities and time-frame up is essential for generating all day urban life, states also Montgomery (1998). Diversity of activities in the same space, sometimes sharing these spaces, is key to successful spaces, as stated by Jane Jacobs (Jacobs, 1961 in Montgomery, 1998).

### Image

Lynch has provided a framework to identify the perception of structure of paths and routes in the area. In his book The Image of the City he stated that the mental image of people is built up by a network of 1) paths, 2) edges, 3) nodes, 4) districts and 5) landmarks (1960). People tend to use paths to move from one place to another. A good route asks for a continuous path which is accessible. These paths are to be accompanied by guiding edges, for example a river. Nodes are places where high concentrations of functions are located or where two or multiple paths cross at a junction. They are points where people make decisions on where to go. Landmarks provide points of reference and can be either physical (like a church spire) or functional (like a city hall). Recognizable and well-structured elements add to the legibility, as they are remembered by the users and used for references and explanations.

The perception of the urban space has also been framed by Gordon Cullen. In his concept of ‘serial vision’, he argues that the environment is seen in a series of successive views. For a clear series of spaces and views, each existing view should provide the hint for a next, emerging view (Cullen, 1961). By creating a sense of ‘here’ and ‘there’, differences in place can be framed and experienced. These contrasts and juxtapositions, such as light and shade, narrow and open spaces, form important part of Cullen’s concept (Carmona et al., 2010, p. 175). These series of visions and differences in spaces contribute to different routes and interesting experiences.

### Form

In the previous paragraphs, it has been stated that activity, diversity, clarity and legibility contribute to a lively city. The form of spaces and buildings is what shapes these activities,
it gives a body to the urban life. On vitality in places, Jane Jacobs wrote and suggested the following: 1) districts and urban blocks should house more than one or two functions; 2) urban blocks should be short in order to provide an extensive network of streets and alleys; 3) a mingle of age and form of buildings improves the vitality and prevents monotonous images and 4) vital neighbourhoods must have a sufficient density of people and activity (Carmona, 2010).

Montgomery defined 12 physical conditions for making a city, although some of them are strongly related to the previous mentioned domains of activity and image: 1) development intensity; 2) Mixed Use; 3) Fine Grain; 4) Adaptability; 5) Human Scale; 6) City Blocks and permeability; 7) Streets: Contact, visibility and horizontal grain; 8) Public Realm; 9) Movement; 10) Green space and water space; 11) Landmarks, visual stimulation and attention to detail; 12) Architectural style as image. "Put simply, cities should be places which are diverse, cosmopolitan and cultured (Montgomery, 1998)." Diversity, connectivity and flexibility are related to generating and keeping activity, size and distance are related to accessibility and movement, style and recognizable elements are related to the mental image and perception. By adapting these elements to that what is already there, cities can become places with their own identity, making them unique but recognizable.

Activity, Image and Form together are required for successful people places, and they are interrelated to each other. Designers should look for diversity in activity, place and time, generating a sense of place, using contrast, movement and clarity, but also mystery and discovery. Many combinations of form, image and activity can lead to a successful urban place. Giving a place an identity – make it recognizable and relatable, but not identical to others places or cities. Maybe, places might be regarded as humans: we like those we can relate to, which we can read and understand, yet a certain air of mystery contributes to the attraction.

The public sphere is primarily built on social interaction and is closely related to the all-accessible debate about city life and politics. Although all interaction has to take place somewhere, not every political interaction takes place in the publicly accessible space, as this social phenomenon is not bound to one specific place. This non-bound phenomenon works in the same way, the other way around: not every public space is used as a political space. However, if it is desirable for a place to have more physical (political) interaction, it definitely benefits to the physical proximity of people, who are attracted to well-designed publicly accessible spaces.
(Spatial) Manifesto: The Public Parliament
WHY A MANIFESTO?

Why writing a manifesto?

Two of the goals of this graduation thesis were to take a political position and to use a spatial design as expression of this idea. To create clarity in my position, I wanted to formulate short and precise statements that express my thoughts, as well as translating them to elements for action and change - elements that could act as a base for a design intervention.

A manifesto - a series of short and powerful statements - seems fit in the political and philosophical context of this project. It forces the author to be very explicit in his ideas, as it is an outspoken medium. Using a manifesto frames political and philosophical ideas, providing the project with a foundation to develop spatial design statements.

1. IT IS BOTH A PRIVILEGE AND A CIVIC DUTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DEBATE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OUR SOCIETY AND ITS CITIZENS

In a country where we share our work, cultures and daily activities together, it is of the utmost importance to decide together about the rules of the playground of our lives. To live in a democracy means that we have the right to take part in the process of ruling our country, a privilege has not been around for always. Besides a privilege, we must see this as one of our moral duties as a Dutch citizen.

2. MAKING DECISIONS TOGETHER ASKS FOR AN OPEN ATTITUDE, IN ORDER TO SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION IN A CONSTRUCTIVE AND DISCOURSIVE MANNER.

A society that is based on making decisions together has to be based on mutual respect and understanding. Often we find ourselves in disagreement of how to proceed, while keeping the status quo is for neither party a suitable option. Although we all differ in opinions based on our backgrounds, experiences and daily lives, we must overcome those differences and reach consensus in order to move forward together. It is most important to communicate with respect for the various situations we find ourselves in, to learn about the other sides that are bound to the story. Only by opening up our scopes we can find the mutual ground to give direction to our nation.

3. THE DESIGN OF THE POLITICAL PUBLIC SPACES MUST FACILITATE AND EXPRESS THE IDEOLOGY AND COMMUNAL CHARACTER IN FORM, IMAGE AND USE.

The Binnenhof has to remain the place where the Dutch discuss and construct the future of their country. As each place has meaning because society gives it meaning, the Binnenhof has to do justice to our ideals, norms and values that come along with an open and public democracy. It must facilitate a discourse based on constructive arguments, it must spatially organise this in such a way that it supports our democracy and it must reflect and symbolize the way we organise our country, our politics and our daily lives.
The redesign of the Binnenhof is based on the spatial analysis of the area and the stated philosophical position. Together they form my view on the area, combining the ambition for a publicly accessible parliament with the complexity and unique features of the Binnenhof site. The design approach is a result of combining the theories of philosophers on politics and the public sphere, and the theories about designing successful public places.

Based on the manifesto, the design intervention must:
- Organise the offices and meeting spaces in such a way that they cross the public domain so that politicians have to use the public routes when travelling through the complex.
- Organise and display the institutions of the political system so that their spatial relationship helps explaining the system.
- Connect the inner squares with outer nodes to increase (passing-by) movement through the Binnenhof.
- Add politically themed public programme that supports the political public activities such as listening, experiencing, understanding, being there.
- Add urban furniture that relates to the political system to encourage interaction and play, as well as informing and explaining (places for sitting and standing).

While designing, it is important to keep several issues in mind. In the case of the symbolic value of the parliament, this (political) space expresses message, offers space for confrontation and represents the Dutch nationstate. Besides this, it is also a place of work for politicians, and it is an essential feature of democracy that they are able to work in a safe and pleasant environment.

It should be noted that this design project is explorative and can be seen as a spatial manifesto. Spatial design is used as an expression, a call for change. The interventions can and should be in a range of easy implementation at one side, while larger interventions are introduced to explore possibilities and expressions. The design, however, should fit the spatial character of the Binnenhof area and its surrounding urban fabric, directing the project in (sometimes extreme) interventions adjusted to the site’s character.

**DESIGN STRATEGY**

- Recognizable
- Space > Place
- Urban embedding
- Design through organisation
- Private and Public organisation
- Organisation of routing
- Design by social referencing
- Recognizable
- Space → Place
- Urban embedding
- Design by experience and storytelling
- Eye-level perspective
- Series of spaces
**DESIGN GUIDELINES**

To shape the manifesto into a spatial design, several organising principles have been initiated. Together they form the aim and spine of the design plan. As first, the design aims to increase the contact between politicians and citizens, even at its most modest level. By bringing their movements together in the shared urban space as much as possible, modest forms of contact are to be initiated, forming a base for more interaction.

Second, the design organises the three major political spaces in a clear and distinctive manner, aligning the Eerste Kamer, Ridderzaal and Tweede Kamer. The clarity and distinction of these buildings contributes to a clear political system, in which the roles of each institution are made more explicit. This clear organisation is to make understanding of the system easier for both citizens and politicians.

As third, the design of a successful people place benefits from the presence of people. As the urban structure of the Hague is mainly directed parallel to the complex, a perpendicular direction should connect the parallel flows, increasing the amount of connections in the urban fabric.

Finally, urban furniture and objects are designed in a coherent and communal style, to guide visitors along the route. Each object refers to the political atmosphere or activity that is directly related to the space. They are painted orange, referring to the communal color of the Dutch nation.

**CONCEPT**

As explained in the previous pages, the spine consists of a route across the Binnenhof, organising and aligning its major political institutions and providing a connection between them. The rearrangement of offices, meeting spaces and entrances contributes to increased social activity along the route.

The guiding principles of contact, clear organisation and a crosswise connection can be combined in an organising axis through the Binnenhof structure. By relocating the Eerste Kamer to an independent position in the Hofvijver, the three major institutions are aligned, resulting in three distinctive buildings and contexts, each with its own atmosphere.

To encourage movement along the route, all entrances are organised along the connection, stimulating the people at the Binnenhof to use the public urban space.

To connect the three institutions and their immediate surroundings, the route pierces through the existing structure. These interventions result in possible new entrances and redefines the spatial organisation of the buildings at the Binnenhof.

Interaction and encounter can be encouraged by designing these elements so that they trigger attention of both citizen and politician. Each element is part of a large family of connecting objects, recognizable by the same collective symbol that represents the Dutch nation-state: the colour orange. The elements can be objects for information and elaboration of furniture, challenging passers-by to use and interact with them.
The plan can be divided in several elements, as it connects the Lange Vijverberg via the Binnenhof to the crossing between Spui and Lange Poten. Starting at the Lange Vijverberg, a lightly constructed bridge crosses the Hofvijver to a small but firmly designed island which acts as a new element, home to the Grondwetshuis. In the Grondwetshuis (House of Constitutional Law), the constitutional law will be permanently archived, exposed and explained. Once a week, it will be home to the meetings of the Eerste Kamer. A second pedestrian bridge connects the Grondwetshuis to the Binnenhof. A small gate pierces the existing structure to form a connection.

A second piercing connection cuts through the former Landsdrukkerij, now part of the Tweede Kamer office complex. It connects the Binnenhof to the Hofplaats, making a cross-section of the former structure. By applying a slice, the element both divided the internal structure, as well as providing new entrances and connections. As the political parties can relocate to the vacant Eerste Kamer building, space has become available for ProDemos, providing information and tours for citizens, now directly inside the parliament complex.

The Hofplaats is redesigned to accommodate confrontation and representation in coherence with the new entrance of the Tweede Kamer building. Rearrangement of the square is to reflect the political activities inside and generating more activity in the public space.
Opening up existing spaces to connect and tie them together to form a route perpendicular on the existing fabric.

Relocating the Eerste Kamer opens up space in the parliament complex. As rearrangement of the Tweede Kamer offices encourages parliament members to use the public space, a central spot opens up to house the ProDemos information centre for citizens.
The Hofplaats will be the new public decor as entrance for the Tweede Kamer and one end of the designed route. In this role, it has a major role in both the political and public theme, as well as its infrastructural position in relation to the surrounding urban fabric. To open up the square and to change its orientation, trees and infrastructure have been relocated.

As entrance square for the Tweede Kamer, it has to possess a representative character as well as providing a place for demonstration and confrontation. By applying a solid pavement of natural stone, the durability and stability of the democracy is symbolized. At the same time, this clean pavement provides a solid base for a gathering and confrontation.

By applying small variations in the alignment of the pavement, direction of the square and people flows can be marked, guiding people to the entrance points of the square. Central, directly in front of the parliament entrance, a reduction parliament element is installed, representing the political action inside and providing seats for visiting citizens. These seats form the lowest point at the square, leading all people to the seats as they head to their next destination.
Part of the spatial organisation and accessibility is the replaced main entrance of the Tweede Kamer. Directly beneath the plenary room, the entrance room will be located. The relocation of the entrance must contribute to the liveliness of the square and the clear alignment with the Ridderzaal and Grondwetshuis. By continuing the glass facade, transparency is symbolized and applied as it shows the movement and activity of people inside, at the same level as the public life at the square.
The lighting plan at the Hofplaats is based on several elements. Mandatory lighting is found at the southern side where tram and bikelanes need traffic lighting. By lighting up the trees, the green is accentuated at night.

The historical buildings are lit by wallwashers from street level. The reflection of the lighting should provide enough light to see, but leave enough dark to see contrast.

At the Tweede Kamer, the publicly accessible staircase and hallway are lit from inside, showing up at the square.
While the connection through the Hofkapel is quite modest, the aims of the Landsdrukkerij connection are quite different. To achieve the organisation of entrances along the designed route, the current Tweede Kamer complex has been split, creating new entrances and dividing the buildings. The route slices across the building, opening up the former inner spaces and providing a direct connection, visually linking the Binnenhof with the Hofplaats.
SLICE LIGHTING

Most lighting in the connection is from inside, as these areas are the parts that should draw attention. The lit room, the Oude Zaal, becomes an attractive focal point in its chandelier.

The glass strips are lit vertically to guide and to accentuate the vertical aspect of the sliced connection.
The connection between the bridge and the Binnenhof has to go either through or under the existing Hofkapel building. To emphasize the contrast between the Hofvijver and the Binnenhof, a small gate has been designed that leads the user through the Hofkapel. This modest intervention is intended to connect, rather than to split the building, as it part of the spatial frame of the existing route leading parallel to the Ridderzaal.

The gate is located for optimal visibility from all angles at the Binnenhof and is accentuated by a reduced steel frame, one of the guiding elements in the area.
LIGHTING HOFKAPEL GATE

The gate is accentuated on its transparency by placing soft lighting behind the glass. The glass strips form a lit mark. In the tunnel, lighting from inside the building lights up the space in a soft glow that peeks outside.

- Large diffuse wallwashers
- Lights located below eyeline
- Lights located above eyeline
- Traffic lighting
- Wall-mounted lighting
When walking across the bridge, the contrast between the elements should be felt as well. The hollow structure of the bridge may cause the sound beneath the feet of people who cross it, providing contrast with the muffled sound of steps on gravel.

Along the bridge, several seating elements are installed, each telling a bit of the historic and political stories of the Binnenhof area.

The Hofvijver island provides the foundation for the Grondwetshuis and its position parallel to the Binnenhof structure symbolizes the independent character of the Eerste Kamer. To strengthen this identity, the element is designed to look like one poured concrete solid structure, reflecting the constitutional character of the law.

Regarded as strong and solid from far away, its surface should be more friendly and inviting. As this is not the place for political demonstration and confrontation, the place can be one of stay. People can enjoy sunlight, interact and philosophise about their ideal country. The edge of the island is made of solid stone to smoothen the transition from concrete foundation to gravel-like top layer, comparable as the Lange Vijverberg.

At the Binnenhof side of the island, two small terraces represent the space of the tentje (office of the prime minister) and the Treveszaal (meeting room of weekly minister meeting). From there, visitors can have a view on the Binnenhof and read the story of the places.

The bridge over the Hofvijver is connecting the Lange Vijverberg to the Grondwetshuis and the Binnenhof. As its main purpose is connecting without being too present, the bridge has a light constructing. This way, it accentuates the historic image of the sturdy brick Binnenhof and the solid concrete foundation of the Grondwetshuis. From a distance, it should look like a thin thread that connects the elements.
The architectural guidelines for the Grondwetshuis can be defined as follows: It must provide programme for the archives, a shared space for exhibition and formal meeting, entrance and supporting amenities such as sanitary and security. In its appearance, it consists of a solid and transparent part. A solid base for the archives, to symbolize the strong foundation of the constitutional law, a transparent top as symbol for the public character of parliament. Its entrance is to be aligned with those of the Ridderzaal and Tweede Kamer, to be entered from the southwest.

In the way that the Dutch political system is designed, it is the main purpose of the Eerste Kamer to validate all proposed laws in relation to their execution in daily life and to the constitutional law (see also page 26). To emphasise this independent and a-political position, the Eerste Kamer will be relocated next to the Binnenhof complex. The programme of this Grondwetshuis (House of the Constitutional Law) will exist of a permanent exposition and archive of the constitutional law, as well as providing meeting space for the Eerste Kamer. As they meet only once a week, during the remainder of days the Grondwetshuis can be open for public. An explaining exposition aimed to educate visitors on the constitutional law will be on display. For the representatives of the Eerste Kamer, it implies that they will have their meetings literally on top of the constitutional law, making them more aware of the independent manner of their job.

As the constitutional law is the political foundation of the Dutch system, the Grondwetshuis is designed on a solid foundation, existing of two levels. Poured in a continuing concrete structure, the lower floor holds the archives, symbolizing the firmness and indisputable position of the constitutional law. On top is the exposition and meeting room, symbolizing the position of the Eerste Kamer as ‘guardians of the constitutional law’, and explaining the law to visitors. Its transparency both emphasizes the public character of the parliament as well as minimalizing the impact on the view on the Binnenhof, as seen from the Lange Vijverberg.
The lighting plan near the Grondwetshuis and the bridge is set up of several starting points. Large wallwashers light up the Binnenhof buildings to provide coherent view from the Lange Vijverberg.

The lighting at the bridge is set up from below, to accentuate the curves of the structure from far away while avoiding lighting pollution through the glass deck for the pedestrians that use the bridge.

The Grondwetshuis is the main attraction of the area and the contrast between the transparency of the cover and the sturdyness of the base is enlightened by spots from below for the concrete part and light from inside that shows the transparency.

**LIGHTING PLAN**

- Large diffuse wallwashers
- Lights located below eyelevel
- Lights located above eyelevel
- Traffic lighting
- Wall-mounted lighting
Designers have the ability to organise and shape spaces, to create the decor of life. Besides the contribution to society by giving form to public buildings and spaces, designers also have the responsibility to design for users they don’t directly know. When the design relates to the government, the guarantee of democratic values are at stake. Design assignments related to institutions have to deal with this responsibility of ensuring proper access to the government and expressing a suitable message in their designs.

How can the spatial design of the Binnenhof contribute to increased awareness, understanding and contact between Dutch citizens and politics?

As the question has been split up, I have used the sub-questions to draw conclusions.

*How are the spaces and activities at the Binnenhof related to the spatial design of the project site and the organisation and philosophy of Dutch politics?*

Every meeting needs a space and if the meetings are given value, the spaces grow these values as well. The spaces at the Binnenhof become symbols for the social activities that take place. The organisation and philosophy of Dutch politics is present in the sense that the Binnenhof is part of public urban fabric, a very open and accessible space. However, the building complex of parliament itself is quite focused inwards, at some places showing its back to the public space. Physically, politicians and visitors are separated from each other.

As access points of the complex are incoherent, the spatial composition of the area is not very clear in relation to the organisation to the political system.

*How can the spatial arrangement of the Binnenhof and the design of the public spaces contribute to increased interaction, awareness and understanding between citizens (and politicians)?*

As demonstrated in this project, spatial design can contribute to increased awareness and understanding through the provision of information and explanation. By organising space in a clear, simple and consistent manner, architecture and urban design can contribute to a clear explanation of an abstract system such as politics. Spatial design can also contribute to contact between people, as it can contribute to the design of successful people places. As Whyte stated, ‘people are most attracted by other people’. Carefully shaping the conditions that attract people can contribute in providing the primary necessity for contact: physical proximity.

*How can (awareness of) the political and philosophical position of the designer and his methods of design process and presentation help the design of public and political design projects?*

During the design process, conflicts concerning the interests of different users almost always raise, resulting in a dilemma for the designer, as some of these conflicts are related to the stated responsibility towards the public. Awareness about the ideas of the public and the private can assist a designer in making a decision in what’s more important, which sometimes might be design process while in other situations, design result is of higher priority. It mainly relates to your own ethics of work, but also to dilemmas as sketched. Also very practical: understanding of different philosophies helps communicating with different people, as you know something about their beliefs and ideas. It helps making nuance.
In this part of the thesis, I will reflect on the project and process of the graduation project. First, I will shortly write about the development of the project, as the final result was not exactly what I expected to happen when I started, almost a year ago. Throughout the reflection, I will touch upon the relationship between research, design, its relation to the societal and academic context and the methodological approach of the project.

**Project and studio**

It is important to note that the Urbanism graduation studio is very broad and based on the fascination of the student. This offers an almost extreme amount of freedom for both student and mentors, but also implies the search for a guidance. In my case, I could benefit for pursuing a fascination without knowing where the project would end up, but it also meant that the project was on its own. As there was no larger research project on track that fits my project, it was sometimes unclear to link the project to the larger urbanism graduation lab, especially throughout the period when the project was still quite unclear.

The final result is a project that focuses on public space in political, philosophical and spatial aspects. It explores what makes a space public, the values of public space and the embedding of symbolic design in the daily life of a city. It deals with Urban Transformations, with the Urban Fabric, with social sustainability and with the position of design in a political debate. It is in the grey area between urbanism and architecture, but definitely approach from the public and political point of view. The research investigates tension between form and organisation and approaches design on democratic based programmes and organisation.

As far as the Urbanism lab consults any consistent methodological line of approach, I think the customized development of the project resulted in a very much customized methodology. It relies on creating a philosophical framework and theories of the design of public space, based on a larger strategy. This relation of strategy and design fits the attitude of the Urbanism department and is customized through the advices of the mentors. The project has used explorative design based on philosophical starting points to identify relationships between philosophy and space, which can be implemented in the final design.

**About graduating in the Urbanism Graduation Lab**

As shortly stated in this reflection, the Urbanism Graduation Lab is very broad and offers immense freedom. I noted some things happening to me during the start-up of the project. 1) I had little clue of what was expected of me by either the department, possible mentors or even myself. How to set a goal if you don’t know what you want? 2) The amount of possibilities was endless. Endless in the sense that the amount of possibilities kept growing throughout the orientation period. During the introduction weeks, new information kept emerging, while the pressure to make a decision kept growing. 3) I think these first two observations can be derived from the statement that at the start, I wasn’t aware of what I wanted to achieve, and that the guidance offered in the first few weeks didn’t push me to be clear about this. I believe the first half year of the project can be improved, by creating clarity about expectations and possibilities, even before the project starts.

**Place and Idea**

The link between place and idea is traceable in the name of the project: the Public Parliament. It relates the parliament – a political place – to the philosophical concept of ‘the public’. By combining generic and specific places and ideas, better understanding of its relationship is generated: the parliament as a specific place is researched as idea of public accessibility and symbolic value; the concept of ‘public’ is researched as specific political idea and related to space in general, but applied to the specific place of the Binnenhof.

In the research, place and idea had to be related to both the current situation of the Binnenhof area, as well was to my philosophical and political position stated in the manifesto which acted as the ground for the design assignment. The research on ‘the public’ was ground for the manifesto, but before applying it to the area, the relation between place and idea had to be researched as well. I tried to cope with this by formulating social/political statements and relating these to stated definitions as found in literature. An example can be found in the social goal of facilitating discourse and contact, which requires increasing presence of people. Theory about creating places that attract this presence of people can be related to this, keeping in mind the specific programme that suits a place of parliament.

Designing with abstract components as politics and philosophy requires a translation to practical and spatial statements: as it relates to activities performed by humans, they are bound to take place somewhere, as the affected persons have to be somewhere. By organising and visualising the places of these activities, changes in organisation can be proposed, which acts as a concrete starting point for the redesign. In a similar fashion, the other starting points are derived from the translation of a social statement to a design-related starting point. The design concepts are, as derived from the political manifesto, literature research and analysis of place, the leading elements in the different design elements. Throughout the various scales, each designed aspect is reviewed to these spatial and abstract components to achieve a clear and coherent project from philosophy to design to presentation.

**Project and Social Context**

A project that is located at the parliament is inherently connected to the society it represents, which is in this case the Dutch nation-state. Besides appealing to the social value of the site, due to its history and current use, the project addresses the potential role of the citizen related to politics and politicians. By giving form and design to a manifesto, I aim to address an ongoing debate by showing that changing the place can contribute to changing the social manners present at the site.


