HOMELESS CITY

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ABSTRACT

De-centralised policies and care-focused homeless support in the Netherlands has led to an over-simplified definition of homelessness in Rotterdam, meaning the gemeente fails to recognise and address some of it's most vulnerable groups. Primarily through literature reviews and interviews with actors from the homeless sector, this research paper analyses the pathways into and out of homelessness in Rotterdam, identifying the groups experiencing similar prejudice or treatment, and evaluating the means necessary to end their homelessness. This is compared against the existing services available across Rotterdam to understand the social support system as a whole, and the role architecture does and should play in helping the homeless. This paper then identifies two groups: EU labour migrants and sofa-sleepers, as potentials for non-care based support, centred around an architectural intervention. Finally, an architectural framework is proposed, aimed at promoting a positive image of homelessness through symbiosis between these two groups and the wider Rotterdam population, ultimately generating a self-sustaining socially inclusive community.

KEYWORDS: *Homeless, Rotterdam, EU Working Migrants, Sofa-sleepers, Socially Inclusive Design*

I.   INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2020, restaurants in the Netherlands have regularly been closed due to government enforced restrictions in response to the outbreak and fluctuating infection rates of the coronavirus. As a chef, my partner has lost her job on three separate occasions. We were denied financial support by the government but still had rent to pay each month. Due to our immense privilege we were able to receive assistance from our parents. However, many in that situation would have been evicted and made homeless. Not because of an addiction or an inability to care for themselves, but because of bad luck.

By recognising this truth we see that homelessness could be right around the corner for most of us, perhaps only one missed pay-cheque away. This should enable us to sympathise with the issue, as people share a deep-seated need for a sense of home (Dovey, 1985). However, in reality homeless individuals are frequently disconnected and alienated from society due to the stigma surrounding those affected by it and the prejudice derived from it. It is common among the homeless population to be seen and heard, but still ignored (Rennels & Purnell, 2015). This ostracism exacerbates health issues, maintains unemployment rates, and makes rehabilitation into broader civilisation difficult. Furthermore, the longer a person is homeless the greater the impact on their mental health and social stability. In the case of rough sleepers this cycle also impacts upon physical appearance, which feeds back into the stigma and conjures up a caricature-like image of the homeless: ragged clothes, a cardboard sign and a paper cup for handouts. This generalisation propels the homeless into a 'world of invisibility' (Rennels & Purnell, 2015), further encouraged by their threatened self-definition, as a result of the overwhelming change that occurs when adjusting to the loss of home (Rennels & Purnell, 2015).

Perhaps because of the distance that prejudice forges between homeless people and broader society, or because of an instinctive defensive reaction to the thought of becoming homeless, or

both; this attitude incites the misconception that homelessness exists in a separate domain. As though by going to work, paying rent and getting eight hours sleep you are immunising yourself from an alternative lifestyle. *The Babylonian Tower of Modernity* (Figure 1/Appendix A) depicts the hierarchy of capitalist society, represented by an unfinished tower forever reaching upwards; marking success by growth. We can see nomadic figures outside the tower gate, denied entrance because they don't have the right papers (Gardner et al., 2017). This image illustrates how homelessness exists not in an isolated place, but as a level at the bottom of mainstream society that almost anyone could fall (or climb down) to.
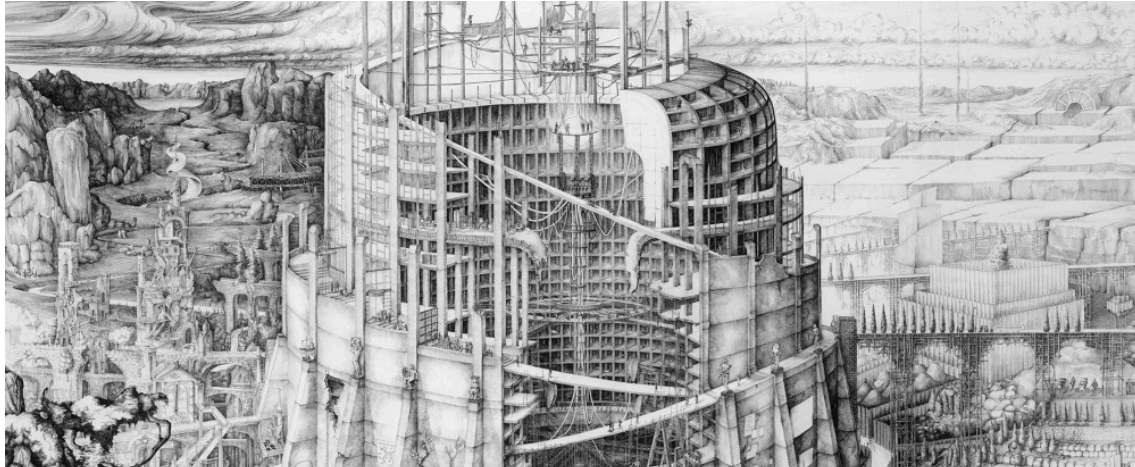

Figure 1. *The Babylon Tower of Modernity* (see Appendix A for full image).

Hand-in-hand with this understanding is the shift from perceiving homelessness as a static identity to recognising it as a dynamic phenomenon (Appendix G.12). The term 'homeless' implies a polarity between those with homes and those without. This in itself proves that it is an insufficient term to explain what should be recognised as a spectrum.

1.1. Problem Statement

According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS, 2019) the number of people in the Netherlands sleeping on the streets, in shelters, or in the homes of their friends has more than doubled since 2009, reaching 39,300 by 2018. Of this total, it is estimated that 4,000 reside in Rotterdam (Pauluskerk, 2019; CBS, 2019). However, the city government fails to recognise the majority of this group as being in need of social support. Their response to homelessness is largely the same as it were in the 90s, when there was a relatively homogenous population of homeless people: native Dutch, middle-aged men with care-related issues such as addiction or mental illnesses (van Doorn, 2020), as made infamous by the Perron Nul era. Today there is no typical profile, meaning the average homeless person can blend into the cityscape with ease (Appendix G.03). This is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that when discussing this paper with my peers, most were surprised at my topic and said that they had never seen a homeless person in the Netherlands.

A survey conducted by the Pauluskerk (2016) reported that the average Rotterdammer doesn't want anyone to have to sleep on the streets. In addition, every euro gemeente Rotterdam invests in homeless services will eventually save them two euros (Appendix G.15). However, gemeente Rotterdam generally considers those without psychological issues, psychosocial issues, mental illnesses or addictions (from here on referred to as 'OGGZ') to be 'self-reliant'. Once labelled as such it becomes difficult to get help from the municipality (Flentge, 2020). The response to those that fall outside the scope of care-focused services is largely non-existent. Therefore, those that do get help are likely to find themselves in an institutional environment that they are not suited to (Appendix G.07). Furthermore, despite the common belief that shelters fail to provide an appropriate setting for care and rehabilitation (Augustin, 2020), they are still a key part of

almost all social support pathways. The result is that more than half of shelter residents drop-out before agreeing on a social support plan with the gemeente (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2018).

In recent years it is possible to observe the beginnings of a shift across the Netherlands from a care-focused response to one centred around housing. By the end of 2020, gemeente Rotterdam will have housed 50 ex-homeless people via the 'Housing First' method (Appendix G.15), which bypasses the shelter system, taking participants directly from the streets and giving them the keys to a new home (Appendix C.04). Unlike other schemes, with Housing First the participants sign a rental contract in their own name, giving them more stability and security (Appendix G.15). By taking the right to housing as a starting point, the ex-homeless are given agency over their own life, with a nourishing and private environment to focus on their personal goals (Appendix C.04). They continue to receive support from the care system, but it is integrated into their lives, rather than the other way around. Through this method we can arrive at more sustainable solutions to homelessness (Hogeschool Utrecht, 2020).

In order to provide adequate support for the homeless population of Rotterdam, we must first understand their needs. This is dependant on both why they are homeless and at what point on the homeless spectrum they are. As housing-based responses gain favour, the role of architecture becomes evermore relevant and the role of the architect comes under scrutiny.

Through this paper I hope to contribute to the discourse of homelessness by identifying the value architecture could bring to a specific group of homeless Rotterdammers. I believe that architecture could be used as a tool to establish communities amongst these marginalised groups, in turn increasing their social autonomy and creating opportunity. Furthermore, by demonstrating the value homeless individuals can bring to both their own and wider communities, the stigma surrounding homelessness will be reduced. Additionally, by working with the homeless we can understand the shortfalls in Rotterdam's strategies for social support, ultimately leading to a more socially sustainable city.

1.2. Relevance

The COVID-19 pandemic adds significant urgency to the plight of the homeless. Governments worldwide are encouraging their citizens to stay home (Leger des Heils, 2020), but without a home to stay in and with public spaces closed, homeless people have been left stranded (van Doorn, 2020). Furthermore, existing shelters and support facilities are not designed for social distancing, forcing institutions to drastically lower their capacities (Appendix F). Due to their limited space, shelters are showing preference to their most vulnerable clients and ex-homeless individuals, who could previously make use of day shelter facilities, are being turned away (Appendix G.10). A temporary 'corona-village' has been craned into the ADO football stadium carpark in Den Haag offering treatment to any homeless people who have tested positive (Lingen, 2020), and the Salvation Army has been able to house the displaced shelter residents in hotels around Rotterdam (Appendix G.09). However, when the pandemic eases the football stadium and hotels will want their carpark and rooms back. Furthermore, according to CBS (2020) the stall on the economy has caused over 146,000 people to lose their jobs between March and November 2020, which we know to be one of the main pathways to homelessness.

However, conversely the pandemic is also providing proof that we can (temporarily) end homelessness, as all over the world we are witnessing rapid implementation of policy, sometimes overnight, to maintain public health (FEANTSA, 2020). Furthermore, doctors in Rotterdam are reporting that the privacy shelter-occupants are experiencing, due to social distancing measures, is significantly improving their mental health (Appendix G.14). Gemeente Rotterdam has even pledged to make private rooms the standard in all shelters from now on as a result of this improvement (Appendix G15; Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020).

The corona crisis has further clarified the failings in the current approach to homelessness (van Doorn, 2020). Recognising this, the Raad voor Volksgezondheid en Samenleving (Council for Public Health and Society - RVS) has advised the national government who have made €200 million available to tackle homelessness in 2020 and 2021 (Rijksoverheid, 2020), of which €20
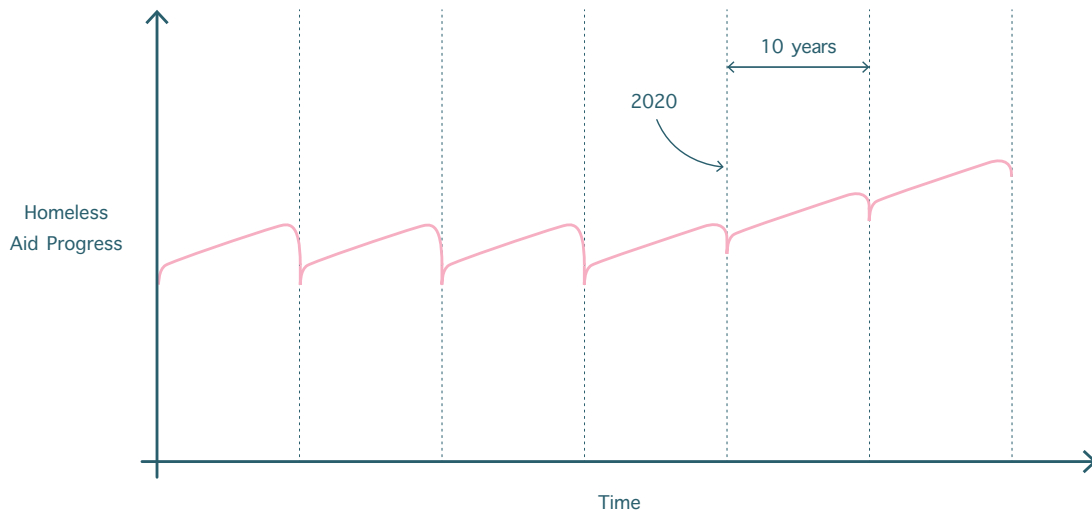
Figure 2. Altering the Homeless-Aid-Progress Paradox (created by ETG).

million is for gemeente Rotterdam (Rijnmond, 2020). In 2006 there was a similar investment and 3,000 homeless Rotterdammers were housed. In 2010 it was reported that 75% were living relatively normal lives - an overwhelming success (Appendix G.05). Feeling secure in their victory, the municipality pulled funding from the emergency homeless services (Appendix G.15), but the homeless rates doubled over the following ten years (CBS, 2019). Likewise, cutbacks made in the 80s were (partially) responsible for the boom of homelessness in the 90s. Through this we recognise a pattern of a ten year cycle (Figure 2), as the impact of policy change only becomes apparent five to ten years later when the next generation of homeless is visible on the streets (Appendix G.03). Rotterdam's pledge to spend €20 million marks the beginning of a new cycle. There will always be another homeless generation (Appendix G.12), but what we do now is critical for them. If we can learn to recognise groups at risk of becoming homeless, then perhaps we can get ahead of the curve, break the progress paradox, and install appropriate measures to prevent mass homelessness.

1.3. Thematic Research Questions

How can architecture be used as a tool to help Rotterdam's homeless population?

Sub-questions:

1. Why are people homeless in Rotterdam?
2. What happens when you become homeless in Rotterdam?
3. How can we categorise the groups of homeless in Rotterdam?
4. What do these homeless groups need in order to acquire adequate housing?
5. Who can satisfy those needs?
6. What role does and should architecture play?

II. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

2.1. Methods, Methodologies & Theories

Throughout my research process I utilised a combination of methods to gather and analyse information. Literature reviews helped me build a theoretical framework, forming the bedding and tone that this paper follows. Case study analysis (Appendix C) has enabled me to reflect on the success of existing programs and buildings throughout the homeless sector, focusing on the user experience and key topics derived from my literature reviews.

In his project, *A Sense of Home* (2019), Patrick Roegiers gained valuable insight directly from the homeless by going undercover on the streets and sleeping rough (Appendix G.01). For my research, the coronavirus renders this impossible. Instead I have conducted interviews with

actors in the homeless sector, including: fellow researchers and designers, activists, members of gemeente Rotterdam, street newspaper editors, field workers, street doctors, street advocates and shelter staff (Appendix G). Through hermeneutic phenomenology I discovered a broad range of positions; gaining historical perspective and hearing personal accounts of homeless tragedies and fortunes. Where possible any quantitive data gleamed from interviews has been verified by secondary sources, leading to the production of my homeless flows diagrams (Appendix D).

As a practice of phenomenology, I have been volunteering at the Pauluskerk for the past few months, engaging in casual conversations with homeless individuals and conducting praxeology studies. After each shift I recorded my observations in autoethnographical-style diary entries (Appendix F), allowing me to build up knowledge of the population that utilises the Pauluskerk's facilities. I have also conducted empirical research in Rotterdam: walking through neighbourhoods and observing how the urban fabric addresses the homeless, recording my findings through mapping (Appendix B).
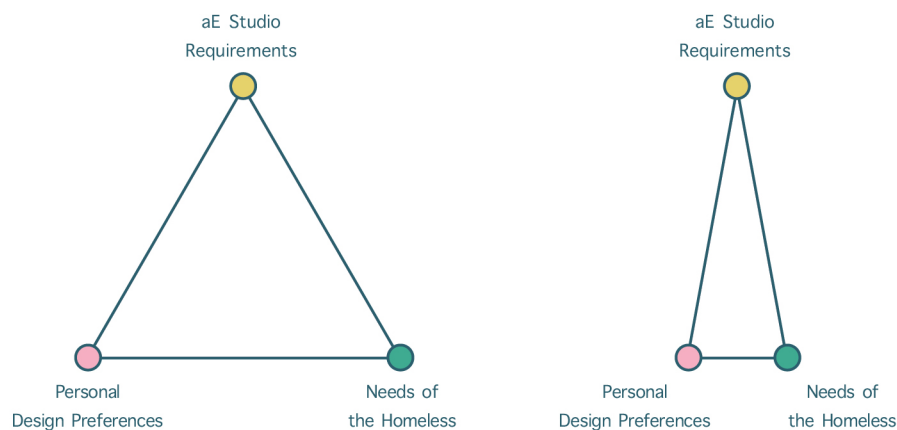

Figure 3. Unbiased Positions VS Embodied Knowledge Positions (created by ETG).

Inspiration gained from my literature reviews, case study analysis, interviews and mapping has been translated via drawings and diagrams into potential architectural intervention scenarios (Appendix E). In turn these have stimulated further desktop research and interview discussion topics, leading to an iterative process of research by design. Furthermore, these scenarios help ensure that this project achieves the right balance between helping the homeless, satisfying the requirements of my graduation studio, and my personal design preferences. However, I believe that as a consequence of my research methods, I have embodied knowledge that intrinsically brings my design preferences (more) inline with helping the homeless (Figure 3).

III. DISCUSSION & RESULTS

3.1. Definitions of Homelessness

As stated by Greve and Currie (1990), what defines homelessness and how many people are homeless has been an active debate since at least the 1960s. A clear definition of homelessness is crucial for making informed policies, as meaningful statistics such as the size and characteristics of a homeless population are derived from the definition (Amore et al., 2011). According to the European Journal of Homelessness, a useful definition is one that allows for accurate classification of homeless individuals, facilitates policies to respond to specific manifestations of homelessness, and enables the efficacy of these interventions to be monitored (Amore et al., 2011). However, more than that, a definition of homelessness should recognise the pathways in and out of homelessness, in acknowledgment of it's dynamic qualities (Edgar et al., 2007). By understanding the pathways we understand who is at risk, allowing for the implementation of preventative action.

This has been understood by FEANTSA (n.d.) (the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) for some time, resulting in the ETHOS classification system (European Typology of Homelessness and Housing Exclusion), developed specifically to recognise these pathways, and employing the right to housing as the foundation for it's categories. The ETHOS model identifies three domains that constitute a home: physical, legal and social. Exclusion from anyone of these domains is defined as 'housing exclusion' and from two or more as 'homelessness' (Amore et al., 2011). These two umbrella terms are further subdivided into insecure and inadequate, and roofless and houseless, respectively (Figure 4). The four terms reflect a scale of vulnerability that we are already aware of, but also allow us to consider the permeable framework of each situation; recognising housing exclusion as at-risk of homelessness and, equally importantly, vice-versa.
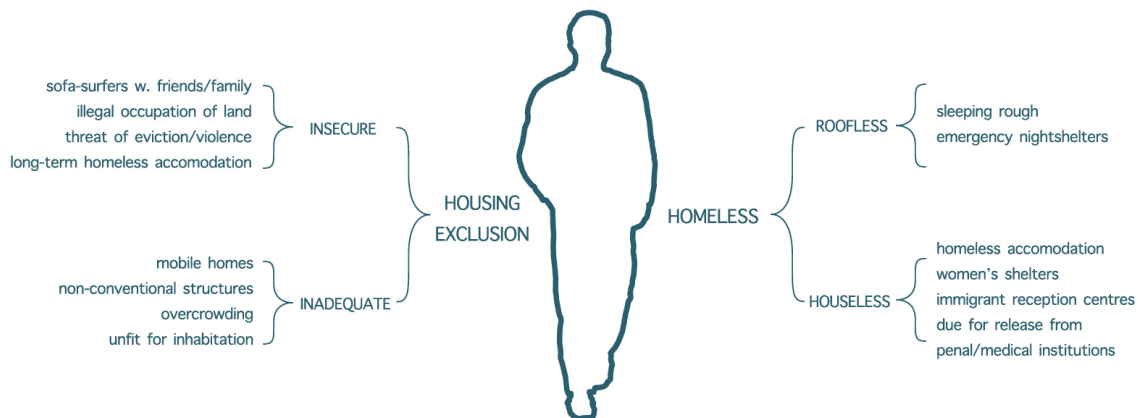

Figure 4. ETHOS classification (created by ETG, information sourced from FEANTSA, 2005).

There are some flaws in the model, such as the relevance of the permanence of a living situation (Amore et al., 2011). For example, the ETHOS model will identify an individual sleeping on their friend's sofa as insecure, even if it was only whilst looking for their own place. Furthermore, the threshold between homelessness and housing exclusion is seemingly arbitrary in some cases (Amore et al., 2011). Using the same example, if the individual was permanently living on the sofa, they could be one falling-out away from becoming roofless. Therefore the same classification might be used to describe two people at polar ends of the homeless spectrum. More indicators are needed to distinguish a temporary living situation from a total lack of housing prospect.

Michele Lancione (2013) goes one step further, arguing against the use of labels altogether as they rely on personal interpretations and subsequently the understanding of a framing will vary from person to person dependant on their pre-conceptions. Furthermore, it reduces rather than unfolds the complexity of a person or situation. I discussed this argument with Lia van Doorn, an advocate for the ETHOS model and a "homeless expert" (Appendix G.12; Appendix G.03), who in principle agreed with Lancione. However, van Doorn went on to counter that avoiding labels is simply not a luxury we can afford and referenced ETHOS light as a partial solution, which employs more descriptive categories (FEANTSA, 2017), thus reducing opportunity for bias.

The Netherlands are one of the few Western European countries not to adopt the ETHOS system (van Doorn, 2020). Instead, homeless services, and consequently homeless definitions, are de-centralised and left to the 43 central municipalities to specify (Planije & Tuynman, 2013). The only official national statistics for homelessness are provided by CBS (van Doorn, 2020), who's definition is close to that of the ETHOS classification. Although, CBS's count also includes those registered at a proxy address (Coumans et al., 2017), which resolves the flaws surrounding sofa-sleepers discussed earlier. Gemeente Rotterdam chooses instead to create two categories, distinguishing between 'actual homeless' - people sleeping rough or in emergency shelters, and 'residential homeless' - anyone else. Typically the latter group are perceived to be self-reliant and consequently considered to be of low to zero urgency. Furthermore, it is generally believed

by the gemeente that CBS statistics grossly inflate the scale of the homeless problem in the Netherlands (Appendix G.15). However, the RVS (2020) are advocating the abolishment of the self-reliant category, and the number of people residing in unstable living environments such as temporary structures, caravans, or overcrowded apartments are increasing, as are reports of people released from detention centres with zero prospect of finding stable housing (van Doorn, 2020). By failing to recognise these groups, policy, aimed at reducing the number of rough sleepers, will also stimulate it, as sleeping in a public place is one of the few ways of being recognised as in need of urgent help (Tonkens & van Doorn, 2001).

Adopting ETHOS would allow the Netherlands to identify these at-risk groups and prevent their situations from worsening. Furthermore, by joining wider Western Europe, the Netherlands would gain access to the knowledge, strategies and support of neighbouring countries by the simple expedient of having a common language.

Table 1. Ontmoeting rough sleeper counts, 2020. Data provided by Ineke Bergsma.

Month	Total count	Structural basis (>2 months)	Maasilo shelter open?	Dutch Citizens	EU Migrants	Undocumented persons
January	134	41%	No	40	84	10
February	163	36%	No	48	103	12
March	164	N/A	No	43	106	15
April	217	N/A	Yes	79	119	19
May	224	N/A	Yes	96	104	24
June	240	N/A	Yes	119	102	19
July	137	N/A	No	29	100	8
August	131	N/A	No	30	95	6
September	146	N/A	No	34	95	17
October	156	N/A	No	36	98	22
November	261	N/A	Yes	79	148	34

However, even with a robust definition, accurately estimating the size of a local homeless population can be problematic. Some organisations are attempting to introduce technology to keep track of their most vulnerable citizens (Appendix G.03), although this is unreliable as amongst the homeless phones are often lost or stolen (Appendix G.04; Appendix F), giving evidence to a digital divide (Hegeman, 2020). Through my research I have discovered that buildings can play a valuable role in improving the accuracy of population counts, as they offer opportunity for group types to be unified in a finite space. For example, Frank Dries told me about a small municipality that placed two shipping containers adjacent to their town hall and invited the rough sleepers to socialise there, even decriminalising public alcohol consumption within the zone of the containers. Word spread and soon the municipality gained a better understanding of the population size and an opportunity to communicate with the group at large (Appendix G.03). Similarly, the counts of rough sleepers in Rotterdam by field workers in 2020 are much higher on nights when the Maassilo winter shelter is open (Table 1). Due to the pandemic the shelter has been open more often in 2020, improving the reliability of this data. In November, the coldest month with the shelter open, field workers counted almost double the amount of rough sleepers compared to the warmer months of July and August when the shelter was closed.

3.2. Homeless Groups & Flows

Gemeente Rotterdam are the self appointed front line of defence for homelessness, operating under the Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning (WMO - Social Support Act 2015, Rijksoverheid, n.d.), which entitles people who can't support themselves to shelter and care.
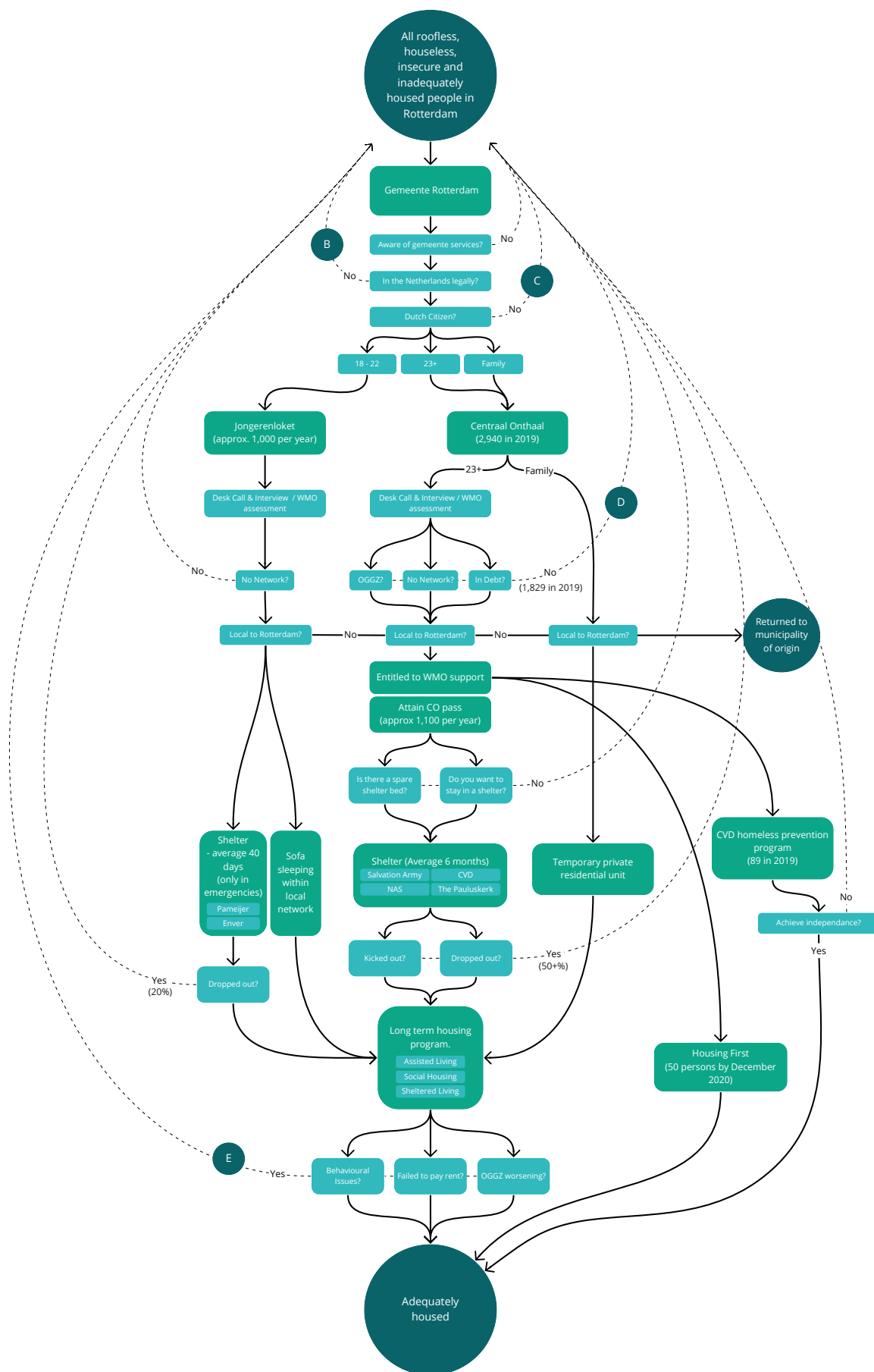
Figure 5. Master homeless & housing exclusion in Rotterdam flow (created by ETG).

(Appendix G.15). Their website invites anyone experiencing homelessness in Rotterdam to visit them at the Centraal Onthaal (CO) desk. However, it also stipulates that in order to receive support they must meet a list of criteria, including evidence of OGGZ problems, and they must be unable to arrange accommodation within their personal network of friends and family (Gemeente Rotterdam, n.d.). According to Frans Bosman (Beleidsadviseur/Policy advisor for Gemeente Rotterdam), the selection criteria is not as black-and-white as this. He says that it takes years to train his colleagues on the subtleties of who is entitled to support, and that every case is unique and treated as such. Furthermore, he also clarified that debt can be a reason to receive support (Appendix G.15). However, the website is the primary advert for the CO, and so it is logical to assume that many vulnerable people who might be entitled to support will compare themselves against the checklist and not make an appointment (Rekenkammer Rotterdam, 2018), leaving the CO blissfully unaware of their existence. Each year approximately 1,100 people are granted CO passports, gaining them access to shelter accommodation for a maximum of 90 days (Appendix G.07; Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2018). As of December 2020, gemeente Rotterdam has 318 beds at its disposal (Appendix G.15), which allows for approximately 1,290 persons to be granted shelter each year. However, in reality the average stay for those over the age of 23 is six months (Rekenkamer Rotterdam 2018; Appendix G.15), and some individuals live in shelters for over a year (Appendix G.16). This is largely caused by a shortfall of suitable housing for those leaving the reception services, meaning the outflow doesn't match the inflow which causes a bottleneck and creates long waiting lists for shelter spaces. In addition, experiencing a lack of privacy and excess unrest causes half of all shelter participants to drop out early (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2018). Either way, the result is more roofless individuals.

In order to fully understand the path of homelessness in Rotterdam as supported by the gemeente, I have created a flow diagram (Figure 5) that illustrates the path of least resistance from the point of being homeless or housing excluded in Rotterdam, to the point of being adequately housed. Specifically, I was interested in the ways you can fall or be removed from this path, as these represent the cracks in Rotterdam's homeless support system. By identifying these cracks we also identify the specific characteristics of people that fall through them. Subsequently, the development of this flow diagram generates a method of identifying homeless groups specific to Rotterdam, of which I have chosen to explore four in more detail with their own flow diagrams: sofa-sleepers, undocumented people, EU labour migrants, and long-term homeless (Figure 6).
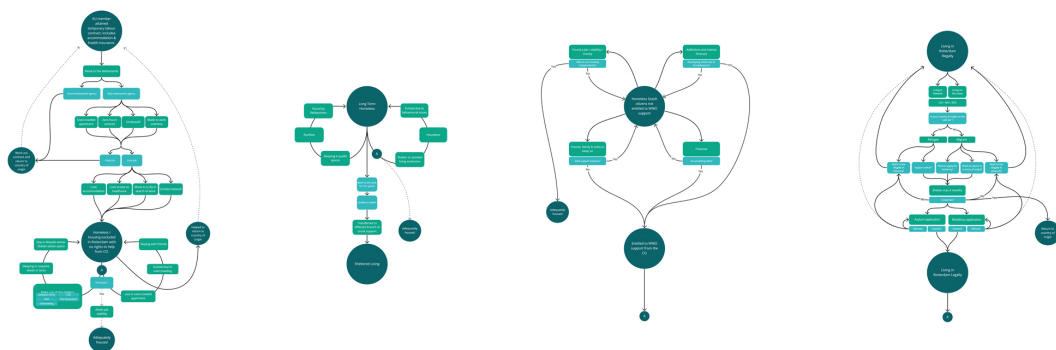

Figure 6. EU labour migrant, sofa-sleepers, undocumented persons & long-term homeless flows (created by ETG, see Appendix D for full size flow diagrams).

In the case of the long-term homeless, significant municipal aid is already in place, largely centred around care-focused environments such as sheltered living institutions, which operate under Wet Langdurige Ondersteuning (WLZ - Long-term Support Act), and are the responsibility of the national government. The difficulty in assisting these individuals typically derives from their extensive OGGZ problems and general behavioural issues (Appendix G.07). According to the reports of Ontmoeting field workers, there are currently approximately ten of

these individuals sleeping rough whom Ontmoeting have been in contact with for ten or more years (Appendix G.14).

The undocumented persons group is much larger, with an estimated 5,000 - 10,000 residing in Rotterdam (Appendix G.11). The Netherlands national government keeps a list of countries deemed unsafe due to evidence of torture, inhumane treatment, or persecution for reasons such as race or religion (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Approximately 10% of the undocumented persons are from these countries are therefore entitled to apply for asylum (Appendix G.11). The remaining 90% are residing in the Netherlands without residents permits and are considered illegal. If they agree to apply for a residence permit or to return home, the Landelijke Vereniging van Vertrouwenspersonen (LVV) pilot will grant them six months shelter accommodation. However, only approximately 25% keep their promise (Appendix G.11). The rest vanish into their networks, where they have access to the informal job and rental markets. These often feature overcrowded accommodation, which, in-line with the ETHOS classification (Figure 4), makes the occupants vulnerable to homelessness. ROS stitching reports that there are approximately 100 undocumented rough sleepers in Rotterdam, meaning there are between 4,400 - 8,900 undocumented people hidden in the city. Most will only resurface when they require medical attention and their networks are almost impossible to infiltrate (Appendix G.11; Appendix G.05).

For the remaining two groups, sofa-sleepers and EU labour migrants, there are fewer measures in place and consequently their populations are growing (Rekenkamer Rotterdam, 2018; Appendix G.05; van Batenburg-Eddes et al., 2020; Aanjaagteam Bescherming Arbeidsmigranten [ABA], 2020). In 2019, 2,940 people reported to the CO, of whom 1,022 were granted a CO pass (Appendix G.15). Of the 1,918 people not given a CO pass, 89 (or 4.6%) were omitted to the CVD homeless prevention program, and the remaining 1,829 (or 95.4%) were deemed able to look after themselves. These are the sofa-sleepers. This group are entitled to advice if they have specific queries and can register a postal address at the municipality, but otherwise they are left alone with no follow-up procedure. For some this is sufficient as they are able to find adequate housing themselves, but others will exhaust their networks, moving from sofa to sofa until their situation worsens, potentially opting to use day-shelter services, resorting to sleeping on the streets, and/or developing mild-OGGZ problems (Appendix G.12). Evidence of this can be found in the contrasting demographics between day and night shelters. Between 53 - 66% of night shelter occupants have been homeless before (Rekenkammer Rotterdam, 2018), whereas most day-shelter occupants are homeless for the first time, typically as a result of financial or relationship issues (Hammink & Rodenburg, 2014). It is believed that a combination of economic crises, vulnerable social networks (partially due to overuse of social media), a lack of financial education, and a shortage of affordable housing are contributing to this increasing population (Appendix G.12; Appendix G.15; Hammink & Rodenburg, 2014). Gemeente Rotterdam admits that for some, being identified as self-reliant only prolongs the time until they can receive help (Appendix G.15).

Lastly, we have the EU labour migrant group. In my opinion these are the most vulnerable people in Rotterdam as they are not entitled to any WMO support (Appendix G.15) and have reported that they feel treated like second class citizens (ABA, 2020). In addition, unlike the undocumented persons group, they frequently do not have a local network to rely upon (ABA, 2020). This is especially true in the case of Polish migrants (Hammink & Rodenburg, 2014). Due to cheap labour potential, there are approximately 14,000 employment agencies across the Netherlands hiring migrants from Central and Eastern Europe to work in vital sectors such as agriculture, horticulture and distribution. There were approximately 532,660 migrant workers employed in 2018, forming a structural part of the Dutch economy (ABA, 2020). Typically, accommodation and health insurance are part of the package, making the migrants dependant on their employer (Appendix G.10; Appendix G.11). Some employment agencies respect this position, providing fair work conditions and good housing. However, some take advantage of the limited knowledge their workers have of their own rights, forcing them to work overtime and live in overcrowded accommodation, using the threat of unemployment to keep complaints at bay. In extreme cases there are reports of money laundering and human trafficking (ABA,

2020). Furthermore, migrant workers are often only given zero hours contracts and therefore have very little job stability (Appendix G.11). The result is that many end up homeless and flock to cities such as Rotterdam in search of work and cheap accommodation (Appendix G.10). With no access to government support or healthcare, very little grasp of the Dutch language and no money to support themselves, they are completely stranded.

3.3. Rotterdam's Homeless Network

For those who are homeless or experiencing housing exclusion and are not entitled to WMO support, Rotterdam must seem an impossible city. There are several organisations and institutions that will provide informal support for the neglected groups, but no central information point to make these services accessible. In addition, almost none of the organisations advertise their services, relying instead on municipal referral or word of mouth (Appendix G.16; Appendix G.07; Appendix G.10; Appendix G.09; Appendix G.05). If you know when and where to go, it's possible to find free food, free clothing and free advice, but this knowledge can only be attained through experience, or by laboriously trawling through individual websites. Inspired by Patrick Roegiers (Appendix G.01), I decided to tackle this problem myself and began mapping all instances of support available for homeless and housing excluded people that I encountered in Rotterdam (Figure 7). In order to realise it's full potential, the map should be made digital and in collaboration with the homeless organisations, who could then provide up-to-date details for accessing their services. Through this tool, the homeless individual will gain more autonomy over their day-to-day life and maximise their opportunity to fulfil their basic needs.
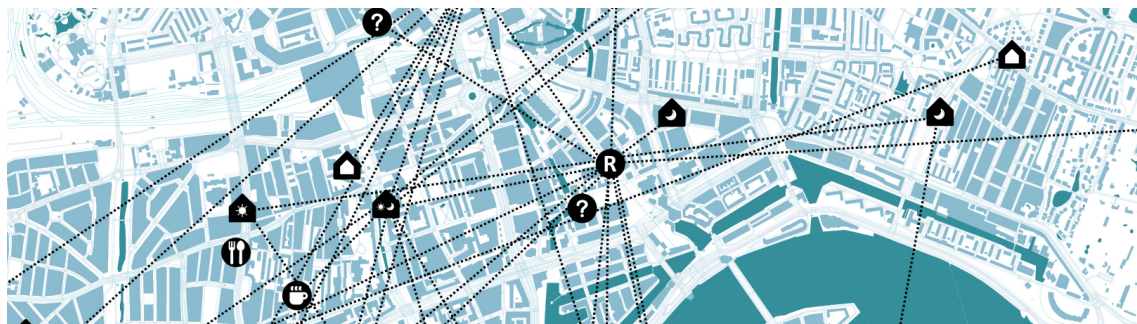

Figure 7. Homeless map of Rotterdam: Network of homeless services
(created by ETG, see Appendix B.02 for full image).

This map would also enable the organisations to better understand their own networks and forge stronger connections. For example, although Rotterdam South is poorer than the North (Appendix G.07; Appendix G.13), we can observe that there are significantly fewer services located there. Furthermore, majority of the services in Rotterdam South are extensions of service hubs in the North, creating both a physical and social distance between the organisations and the groups they are trying to reach. The benefits of organisations collaborating more with one another are evident by the ones that already do. Nico Adriaans Stichting (NAS) was founded in collaboration with the Pauluskerk (Appendix G.05) and as such they maintain a close relationship. During my volunteering shifts at the Pauluskerk we are frequently joined by NAS staff members to cover gaps in the rota. Also, NAS runs the catering team which supplies food to the Pauluskerk, offering hospitality training for NAS guests whilst keeping meal costs low for the Pauluskerk guests (Appendix G.05). By extension, if Rotterdam's organisations understood each other better they would be able to attain a level of symbiosis and subsequently provide a more complete range of services.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Figure 8) teaches us that we must have our basic necessities met, such as food, shelter and security, before it's possible to attain intimate relationships or realise our potential (Mcleod, 2018). Using this as a measuring stick, we realise that the services available in Rotterdam often fall short of meeting basic human needs, as there is little consistency to their availability or accessibility, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic.
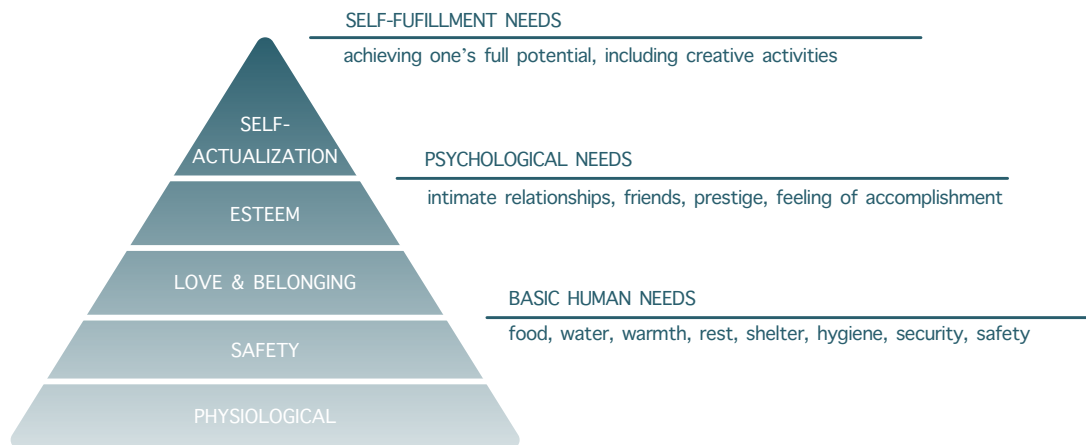
Figure 8. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (created by ETG, information sourced from Mcleod, 2018).

This supports the concept of housing-centred homeless services. However, there is evidence to suggest that just providing permanent accommodation is insufficient. "Home is not given, it is made and it is made through interaction" (Rennels & Purnell, 2015, p. 506). Some ex-roofless individuals are drawn back onto the streets because of loneliness, boredom, the attraction of street-life and with it, their friends. Activation programs are offered in shelters to tackle this boredom and impart new skills, whilst aiding the development of self-esteem and social competence (Tonkens & van Doorn, 2001). It has long been understood that social cohesion blossoms through recurrent human interaction and shared experiences (Klinenberg, 2018). However, the (typically) institutional settings of shelter facilities in Rotterdam are poorly suited to establishing meaningful social interactions. For the homeless, an environment is never sustained; instead it must be constantly fed and produced (Kaplan et al., 2019). During my volunteering shifts at the Pauluskerk I have witnessed glimpses of an open house community culture surfacing. I observe the weekly rituals where guests meet their friends, buy each other cups of tea and engage in conversations that sometimes involve the whole room. But these experiences are always cut short by the rigid pre-determined frameworks of the shelter, be it the closing time or the limited capacity (Appendix F). Public outdoor spaces would offer freedom from this lack of autonomy, but many central public spaces in Rotterdam are littered with aggressive signs that the homeless are not welcome. In homeless communities, the need for a sense of home is often satisfied by re-appropriating the purpose of a space or object (Rennels & Purnell, 2015). When objects are designed specifically to negate this appropriation, the right to a sense of home is being denied. In continuation of my homeless mapping exercises, I plotted the instances of visible hostile design across the city (Figure 9). When compared to the instances of

Figure 9. Homeless map of Rotterdam: Hostile vs homeless
(created by ETG, see Appendix B.03 for full image).

homeless services (Appendix B.01) we can see that the contrasting icons largely share the same portion of the city. Furthermore, city officials will move anyone along they suspect as being homeless and drinking a can of beer on a bench will cost them a €45 fine (Appendix G.07). The resulting city is an archipelago, where the social service nodes are tiny islands of relief amongst a sea of hostility. Data supplied by Ontmoeting fieldworkers indicates the districts of the city in which rough sleepers are most likely to be found (Appendix B.04). Very little pattern can be

observed from this, indicating further evidence that no part of Rotterdam is established for these marginalised groups. Alienation from public life coincides with immersion into private worlds (Klinenberg, 2018). Therefore, efforts to decrease nuisances in public spaces have pushed the rough sleepers further into the realms of invisibility (Tuynman & Planije, 2014), encouraging the 'street culture' that, ironically, the gemeente wants to stamp out.

Irregardless, by looking more closely at nodes on this network I was able to identify examples of success. Of particular note is Pension Almonde: the product of a vacant street and an ambitious housing coop that formed a temporary yet highly active community of 'urban nomads'. The scheme successfully housed a group of ex-homeless residents within it's program in collaboration with local homeless organisations, who later reported that the ex-homeless were thriving in the environment (Appendix G.08; Appendix C.05). However, what's most noteworthy about this initiative is that it was achieved without municipal involvement. Not only is this evidence for the potential of bottom-up residential schemes, it also proves that wider community involvement can play a key role in re-integrating the ex-homeless into broader society.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, now that the previously ubiquitous homeless addict is becoming extinct, we are recognising other groups of homeless people with lighter but no less complex problems. The common trend among them is loss: loss of family, money, jobs or relationships (Schwartz, 2019). Gemeente Rotterdam's lack of awareness of these new groups caused their numbers to rapidly increase in the decade that followed 2010. By adopting the ETHOS classification system, the Netherlands would gain the tools needed to identify and address this and future generations of homeless people. Furthermore, by clarifying the different manifestations of homelessness and housing exclusion, we can recognise the groups who should be considered at-risk of homelessness. By understanding this spectrum, the flaws of the existing care-focused
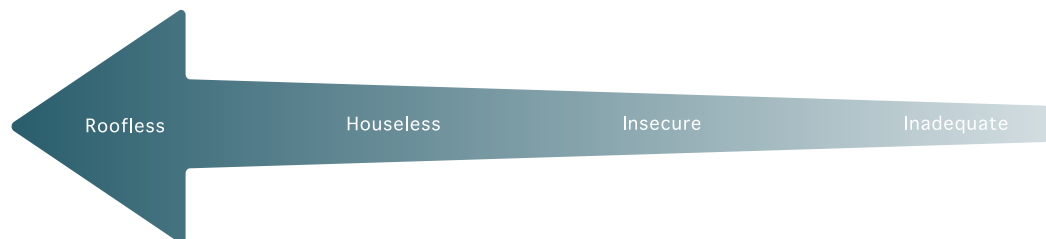

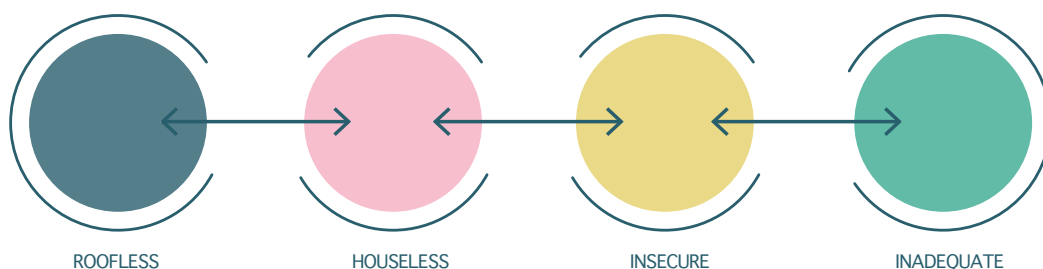Figure 10. Gemeente Rotterdam homeless urgency scale (created by ETG).

Figure 11. Proposed model: Support strategy differs dependant on housing situation (created by ETG).

system become apparent. Namely because it projects a scale of urgency onto these groups (Figure 10) in connection to a one-strategy-fits-all approach. Over time the least urgent cases become more serious, inadvertently gathering sufficient issues to leap-frog their way to the front of the queue. By this time the care system that would previously have been unsuitable for the individual has become an appropriate solution. I propose a new system, where the response is

dependant on an individual's specific manifestation of homelessness (Figure 11). Critical to this approach is the recognition of the permeability of each framing under the ETHOS system and the provision that reception services be adaptable to reflect the dynamic nature of the homeless spectrum.

Central to the ETHOS classification system is the notion that housing is a basic human right. By positioning the definition of homelessness from the perspective of housing, we shift the label away from the people affected by it and group it under the larger issue of the affordable housing shortage. In turn this reduces the stigma surrounding homelessness and diminishes the social barriers between the marginalised groups and wider society. By recognising the value in the individuals behind the stigma, we can draw from the agency and experience of the homeless population, who could offer rich insights into building more inclusive cities (Rennels & Purnell, 2015).

I also call for the individual homeless organisations of Rotterdam to be more aware of their part in the larger picture. Establishing a guide of the services available in the city will enable organisations to work together to ensure that all pieces of the puzzle are present. Making the guide visual and publicly accessible will allow the homeless to access it, granting them more comfort in their day-to-day life. Furthermore, informing Rotterdammers of their rights and the availability of social services will shorten the timeline between the point of becoming homeless or housing excluded and the point of being adequately re-housed. This will reduce the impact of homelessness on the individuals, resulting in less need for urgent care. In turn, this will lower the cost of running shelters and subsequently create financial opportunity to support more vulnerable people. However, essential to this model is a greater outflow from the shelter systems, which can only be satisfied by the provision of suitable housing.

By looking again to *The Babylonian Tower of Modernity* (Appendix A) we can see that outside of the tower, to the left of the central walkway, Rotterdam's *Luchtsingel* bridge leads to another place: an alternate home - suggesting that regardless of whether you're homeless or on the fringes of society, there is always opportunity for a new eden. Through my research I have identified two groups of vulnerable Rotterdammers that I believe are deserving of, and suitable for, support via the means of architectural intervention: EU migrants and sofa-sleepers. Looking ahead, the Dutch government must play a greater role in controlling the content of labour migrant contracts, and recognise that the complexities of our 21st century society generate many pathways to homelessness that require government intervention instead of criminalisation. As criminologist C. Ray Jeffrey said, "There are no criminals, only environmental circumstances which result in criminal behaviour. Given the proper environmental structure, anyone will be a criminal or a noncriminal" (Klinenberg, 2018, p. 56). However, we cannot wait for the red tape of bureaucracy to catch up to this realisation. We must act now, creating our own bottom-up pathways to adequate housing for those neglected by gemeente Rotterdam.

I have identified potential for symbiosis between unemployed roofless EU migrants and sofa-sleepers with an income (either via employment or unemployment benefits), and propose the creation of co-live, co-work micro-communities (Figure 12). Inspired by the Pension Almonde model (Appendix C.05), this system relies on continuous small financial instalments (rent) to be paid by the sofa-sleepers and EU-migrants in exchange for accommodation. This is subsidised by commercial rent from the ground floor units, occupied by community groups and entrepreneurial companies, who in turn generate income from the custom of the general public, thereby integrating broader society into the homeless solution. Local social infrastructure is bolstered through the creation of these 'third places'; a term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenburg for spaces where people are welcome to congregate regardless of their purchases. Jane Jacobs agrees, arguing that shops, cafes, bookstores and barbers draw people out of their homes and into public spaces, where they create cultural vitality. (Klinenberg, 2018). According to Erik Klinenberg (2018), third places are essential in uniting polarised societies and protecting vulnerable and alienated citizens.

As a condition of their tenancy, the ground floor occupants must offer employment to the EU-migrants, supplying them with the income necessary to pay their rent. Additional employment would be feasible if the architectural framing was suitable for self-build, enabling the EU-migrants to contribute towards the establishment of their own homes. (This would also assist in satisfying the architectural engineering requirements of my graduation studio) (Figure 3). Assuming the pilot is successful, once the initial investment is sufficiently paid off, the profits will be used to establish more micro-communities, in turn housing more sofa-sleepers and EU migrants. The flow of these groups is likely to be continuous, as overcrowded apartments are often subject to mass eviction following neighbour complaints, rendering previously hidden and
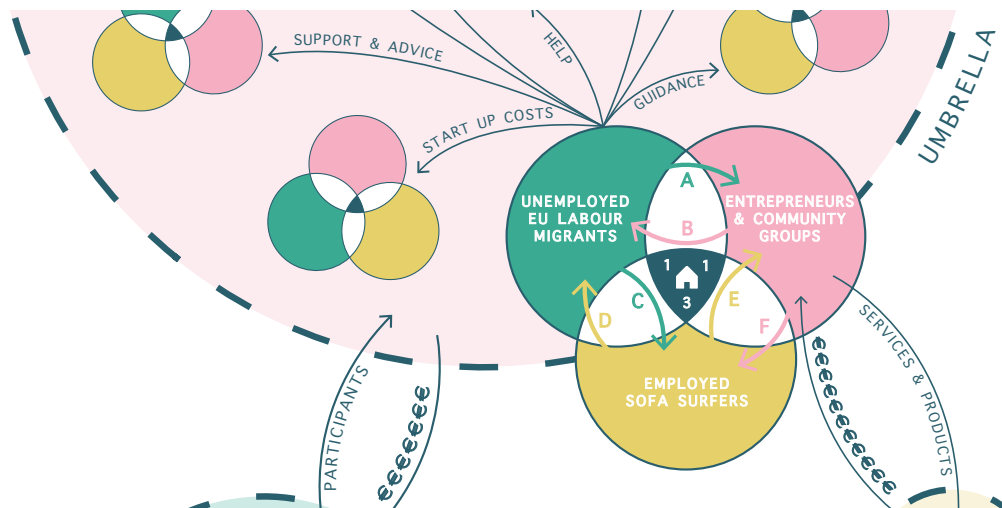

Figure 12. Proposed Model: Symbiotic exchange between different homeless groups
(created by ETG, see Appendix E.05 for full image).

inadequately housed EU-migrants, now roofless (Appendix G.10). In addition, Rotterdam has a proportionally greater population of citizens experiencing poverty than other cities in the Netherlands (Pauluskerk, 2019), meaning the CO is likely to keep producing sofa-sleepers.

Clustering these micro-communities together will enable utilities and amenities to be used more efficiently, generating a localised shared economy, and increasing the range of community initiatives and jobs available to the ex-homeless residents. As the communities grow they will eventually become self-sustaining and then profitable, enabling them to supply funds to existing branches of homeless support offered by organisations such as the Pauluskerk. Extension of this relationship will enable the Pauluskerk (and others) to refer guests that they deem suitable to the micro-communities, introducing care and community support as necessary. Over time the clusters will spread out over Rotterdam, filling in the currently fragmented network of established homeless-friendly spaces. Eventually Rotterdam will arrive at the eve of the next generation of homeless. Perhaps global warming will displace whole nations, forcing a new refugee crisis (Appenix: Lia). Or maybe all European countries will become emancipated and we'll see the right to work extended to third-world nations in order to maintain the pool of accessible cheap labour. Regardless, the architectural framework supporting the clusters will enable flexibility in the program. This will allow the communities to adapt and house new groups of homeless as identified by the ETHOS classification system, subsequently breaking the pattern of the ten year cycle.

Ultimately, the numerous instances of micro-communities will comprise a range of nationalities and enterprises, supporting different manifestations of homelessness and bringing value to diverse communities. However, all will function under the same umbrella organisation, representing a reformed, more humanistic image of homelessness; one that challenges the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, because it illustrates the great lengths we'd all go through to create a home (Rennels & Purnell, 2015); one that is empowered to establish its own socially inclusive community; and one that asks for a hand-up, not a hand-out.

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