

1. Reflection

At the start of the master's track Management in the Built Environment, you get the opportunity to choose from one of the themes presented in the first two weeks. My choice fell on the 'user perspective' theme, which focuses on user needs and preferences, with a good understanding of these being crucial for effective decision-making. This theme fits perfectly with my interest in how the built environment can optimise the user experience and how real estate can best be used.

In addition, my interests lie in the public sector and the complex challenges of real estate management within this sector. Such as balancing between cost control and maximising public value. Each project brings its own set of stakeholders with different, sometimes conflicting, interests and priorities. This complexity requires strategic approaches to ensure that each project is not only economically viable but also socially responsible. At the police, I was allowed to carry out my research.

At the police, they came up with several issues that play a role in their real estate management. Embedding the PAS method in the police organisation was one of these topics. After reading up on the method, I found out that the PAS method focuses on the preferences of stakeholders and that with the stakeholders' preferences, it searches for the portfolio design that best matches these preferences. This fits perfectly with my interests and last year I did not regret my choice.

In addition, it became clear to me how broad the social task facing the police is. The impact of organised crime on society is growing, with increasing threats, extortion and bribery, often related to drug crime and involving the use of force. The need for police deployment to guard and secure people and objects also continues to rise, with a record number of reports of serious threats to politicians and journalists in 2022. From over 800 buildings, the police are trying to manage these problems. I hope my thesis research has contributed to making better use of police real estate for these societal challenges.

11.1 Process

Having reached the end of my research process, I can say that I have completed a fairly unique journey. In good spirits, I began by defining my research problem, where my goal was to propose an improved version of the PAS method. This included identifying areas for improvement and then translating these into a Python model specific to the police. Given the complexity of the police organisation and accommodation challenges, this was not an easy task. Moreover, I tried not only to identify improvement proposals but also to implement them at the same time.

During the process, I noticed that I did not have a grip on my research, but I could not place exactly why. This uncertainty came to a head during my P3 presentation, where it was suggested that postponing my graduation until October might be wise. Since I perceived graduation as a stressful period and I am not particularly keen on doing research, I was determined to meet the July deadline at all costs.

The weekend after my P3, I reflected intensely and had conversations with friends, family and fellow students about my approach. This made me realise that my attempts to implement improvement proposals immediately were an impossible task. I then decided to focus my focus exclusively on thoroughly researching the improvement proposals. This meant I had to change my research method and completely rewrite it.

With the decision to change the research method, my determination to still graduate in July and a new focus on carefully crafting the improvement proposals, I set to work. This turning point after my P3 was crucial; without this escalation, I could never have understood what went wrong in my research. Although the schedule was tight and a lot had to be done, I am satisfied with the final result, this report. This process only proved again that sometimes escalation is necessary to make progress.

11.2 Method

As part of my graduate course, I chose Operational Research Methods, where we learned the basics of modelling in Python. This course opened my eyes to the possibilities of modelling. During this course, my focus was very much on developing a model. After I changed my research method, my focus shifted from modelling to conducting interviews. Although learning to model gave me a lot of insight into the PAS method and the techniques used in it, I realised that I had not gained enough knowledge about interview techniques.

Interview techniques are a crucial part of qualitative research. I had underestimated the complexity and importance of these techniques. Therefore, I had to read up quickly and improve my skills. I learned how important it is to follow a structured approach, using codes, categorisations and quotes, for example. Thanks to this extra effort, I was still able to extract valuable information from the interviews, which ultimately contributed to a successful final result.