

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Jonah van Delden
Student number	4454286

Studio		
Name / Theme	Design of the Urban Fabric	
Main mentor	Els Bet	Section of Urban Design
Second mentor	Caroline Newton	Section of Spatial Planning & Strategies
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>In my graduation project I would prefer to focus on an imagination-based design perspective which results in detailed local public space designs. A topic and project like mine need more perspectives than mine and therefore I would like to learn how to read places more in depth to understand the needs and local challenges. Also, I see myself after graduation as an urban designer at an office which actively tries to understand the local conditions of a place and works together with several stakeholders from different perspectives. Therefore, the Urban fabrics studio is a good preparation in my opinion.</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Masculine Spaces – Reshape heteronormative spaces to facilitate diverse gender identities.
Goal	
Location:	Gaasperdam, Amsterdam
The posed problem,	<p>Public space is normatively coded as masculine and heterosexual, especially in modernist neighbourhoods, like Gaasperdam (Spain, 2014). The separation of residential and labour spaces and the homogeneous urban plan controls people's lives. Moreover, modernist development is a spatial manifestation of a patriarchal society, which maintains the ideal of a nuclear family (Hayden, 1980; Valentine, 1989; Massey, 1994). To reshape our public spaces and facilitate diverse gender identities we must problematise the dominance and authority of hostile and inflexible masculine behaviour (Hooks, 2004; Puwar, 2004). Which mostly relates to courage, confidence, and refusal to acknowledge vulnerability (McVittie et al., 2017). The urban fabric of Gaasperdam is remarkably unchanged, while multiple societal and demographic trends show that single person households and households without children are increasing (Sanchez de Madariaga, 2016; OIS, 2021). This raises the question how the urban fabric limits people with diverse gender identities to use public space.</p>

research questions and	<p>Main RQ: How can we reshape heteronormative spaces in Gaasperdam to facilitate acceptance to diverse masculine identities?</p> <p>Sub RQ's:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In which way do gender roles relate to the built environment? 2. Which spatial elements contribute to heteronormative space in Gaasperdam? 3. Which demographic changes in Gaasperdam disrupt heteronormativity? 4. How can the urban fabric react to demographic changes? 5. Which subordinate gender identities are present in Gaasperdam? 6. How could public spaces facilitate diverse masculine identities?
design assignment in which these result.	<p>The design assignment of this thesis is to firstly, critique our built environment and highlight spatial and non-spatial elements which (un)consciously facilitate specific gender identities. Secondly, various possibilities will be explored to facilitate non-normative behaviour in our built environment. Thirdly, multiple designs for public spaces in Gaasperdam will be made which facilitate diverse masculine gender identities. This all contributes to more inclusive cities which are safe enough for everybody to express in the way they would like to.</p>

Process
Method description
<p>Research by Design An exploratory way of research is essential to unravel inter-related themes (Breen, 2002). Research by design is a suiting method in this case to produce knowledge as it stimulates to explicitly experiment within different domains. This helps to guide the design process as it triggers questions to improve the overall design (van Dooren et al., 2014).</p> <p>Literature review Many works have been written about gender in diverse research fields. Feminist work stretch from gender studies to urban geography. It is therefore very valuable to discover key insights and notions from this research to improve and embed the spatial interventions.</p> <p>Spatial Analysis To understand the spatial dimensions of the site, spatial analysis is an important collection of methods used in this thesis project. The most dominant spatial analysis methods used are Plan analysis and GIS analysis, where systematically separate elements are drawn to understand its relationship with different domains (Bouma & Bet, 2019).</p> <p>Fieldwork Cities and spaces are dynamic. Fieldwork is a valuable and intensive method to understand the use of space by different people. It helps to simultaneously observe, understand, analyse, and compare the place which is visited (Bouma & Bet, 2019) Moreover, many other forms of information are dated and maybe not relevant anymore. While doing fieldwork you observe the now.</p> <p>Interviews To understand specific ideas and perspectives from local communities, interviews are valuable research methods (van Boeijen et al., 2014). It is important to go beyond conventional, expected answers to improve the research by design process. Therefore, it is essential to allow the narrator to guide the conversation (Anderson & Jack, 1991).</p>

Trend analysis

Demographic changes and other societal and political transitions could be opportunities for urban redevelopment. Therefore, a trend analysis will be used to discover the drivers of change.

Literature and general practical preference

Production of space

Lefebvre (2009) addresses the production of space from three different angles, namely: lived, perceived and conceived. This spatial triad is highly relevant for the thesis as it explains that the people who use certain spaces the most, can be seen as a dominant producer of that space. Therefore, space is a social product and based on accepted values in society, which means that space affects people's behaviour and perceptions.

Heteronormativity

Gender and space are strongly related, and space reflects the dominant gender identity. According to Butler (1999), The most pressing and dominant gender identity is heterosexuality. Individual people continually behave in the most socially accepted form, and thus confirm to the existing norms. These norms are explicitly based on the binary framework of male and female. Butler (1999) refers to this interrelation as the 'heterosexual matrix', where man must behave masculine, and woman must behave feminine. Society in general expects and presupposes heterosexuality as the norm. Heteronormativity defines itself therefore as the political power that heterosexuality has in society (Chambers, 2007).

Reflection

Relationship between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

The topic of the Urban Fabric studio addressed this year is: At Home. It questions how the future city will look like. My thesis project actively questions our built environment and discovers how spaces could function to facilitate non-normative behaviour and create a sense of home as well. Within the Urbanism master track, a growing need exists to work cross disciplinary as it is essential to face the local and global needs (Urbanism Semesterbook, 2021). My project emphasis this cross disciplinary approach by using knowledge and insights from diverse research fields. The project in general relates to the MSc AUBS as it questions how we will live together and how design is essential skill and tool to reshape the built environment.

Societal Relevance:

The dominance of particular gender identities in society normalises certain behaviour. One could feel limited to express their gender identity if this is different than what the norm describes. Exclusion, discrimination and harassment are common practises to reaffirm people to the norm (Berry et al., 2021). Thanks to social changes, like women emancipation and queer acknowledgement, progress has been made. But increasing presence of alt-right movements, which attaches great importance to traditional masculinity, jeopardises more inclusive notions of masculinity and gender in general (AIVD, 2020). This thesis project designs & researches various possibilities to facilitate non-normative behaviour in our built environment.

Scientific & Professional Relevance:

Within research fields like sociology and urban geography, concepts and notions about gender identities and heteronormativity are discussed. Also, within health studies the impact of gender identities such as hegemonic masculinity is researched. This master thesis translates these sociological and non-spatial insights to space and explicitly questions our current urban environment. The insights are valuable to research fields which focus on spatial issues, such as urban design, urban planning, and architecture since it offers design principles to reshape our built environment to more gender diverse spaces.