

Monolithic Spaces

Life in the shadows of fast urbanism

Architectural crossover/ London 2022/2023/ towards heterogeneity

only
lazy roads

winding

my

authority

mislead people

too scared to

think



*“ I’ve always been proud to be Nigerian but in my case, it feels like I’m not allowed to be. In certain spaces I feel too Nigerian and in others - too British , it’s a complex issue but I’m working of it”
- Tola*

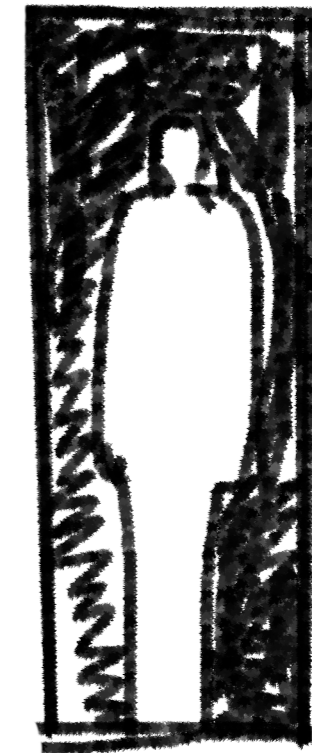
“ Moving to England at a young age led to constant inner conflict regarding my identity and my sense of belonging in the two nations I called home” - Lila

“ We all seek desperatley to hear our voices echoed around us, but are often left at a loss” - Dalia

Found on 'Road-to-nowhere' Instagram page

Mentalscape

Body is a vehicle of sense-making and has a fundamental role in constituting the way in which humans enact and understand the world. Through notion of embodied experiences we are able to translate the social, cultural and symbolic values tied to the urban fabric and is what I define in this research as a *mentalscape*. This understanding allows us to develop better models for our built environment that cater to diverse and multifaceted audience. This is what I define in this paper as a mentalscape.



Antony Gramley

Own sketch
Exhibition 'Ground'
Voorlinden Museum
Body is an archive

subjectivity threshold gentrification
 stories collective trauma subliminal
 ecologies of care informal space memories
 post-colonial cultural identity hegemony

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Everything is connected

These reflections about different forms of spatiality and territoriality in the contemporary world bring us to the question of physical space, and its relationship to social and political space. The starting point here is that physical space partakes of our general category of space. When thinking of the notion of 'space', does one think of its scientific meaning? its political? or is it created through the colliding and passage of objects?

SPACE
 SPACE
 SPACE
 MONOLITHIC SPACE
 OPEN SPACE
 PUBLIC SPACE
 SPACE POLICIES
 SPACE SURVEILLANCE
 PRIVATE SPACE
 INFORMAL SPACE
 SPACE OWNERSHIP
 CONTESTED SPACE
 SPACE APPROPRIATION
 PERFORMACE SPACE
 SPACE DESIGN
 SPACE TIME
 MEMORY SPACE
 SPACE EMANCIPATION
 POLITICAL SPACE
 ENCLOSED SPACE
 INBETWEEN SPACE
 SPACE TIME
 SPACE THEORY
 SPACE DEVELOPMENT
 URBAN SPACE
 SPACE SUBJECTIVITY
 SPACE REGULATION
 COLLECTIVE SPACE
 COMMONS SPACE
 SPACE
 SPACE

Introduction

From Genius Loci to Genius Logo

¹ Political relation theorist, Joseph Nye coined the term *Softpower*. A foreign policy adopted by countries to 'persuade rather than coerce' nations into investing into their economy. Within this Architecture stands as both an asset and a symbolic force that adds to a nation's attractiveness and becomes part of its cultural branding framework. Hence, the Bilbao Effect.

²(Saving London's music venues, n.d.)

³(Greater London Authority, 2014)

⁴(Sendra, Sennett and Hollis 2021)

⁵

⁶

⁷(McWilliams 2015)

London, a city powered by three decades of growth transformed its identity from a fading imperial capital into the epicenter of culture, finance, and technology. All that exponential growth fed a frantic construction boom that is redrawing London's historic skyline and includes several of the largest regeneration projects in Europe. Yet, the city is growing more monolithic and homogenous with a focus on branding itself more as a product than creating places - the *Bilbao Effect*¹.

As a result, statistics have revealed the capital's loss of multicultural social infrastructure. Londoners lack access to community spaces for cultural development. In the last decade alone, the city has lost 35% of its grassroots music venues² and over half of its youth clubs. In the following four years, 25% of artist studios will disappear³. *The Greater London Authority* (GLA) has acknowledged this drastic decline and the proposed antidote has been the *2019 Cultural Infrastructure Plan*⁴. However, with interventions that grasp a narrow understanding of what constitutes genuine culture and art, impeded the plan's ability to support and produce the grassroots cultural spaces that the city needs.

The 2020 lockdown, the lack of adequate funding, the privatisation of public spaces and the continuous state-induced gentrification have reignited social movements such as Black Lives Matter that have placed a spotlight on the lack of access and ownership of community spaces. As the world awakens to spatial injustices and eurocentric narratives through the global *Decolonisation movements*, the need to cater to a multifaceted audience has grown.

The city is home to approximately 8.8 million residents. A population expansion largely fed by immigration, which despite Brexit is growing by 2 million more by 2050⁵. Statistically, 40% of the capital's population identify as non-white and 37% of its population is born outside of the UK⁶. These figures arguably recognise the necessity to understand the spatial and cultural needs of the city's pluralist demographic.

My experiences as a multilingual immigrant inspired my curiosity in psychology and storytelling. Objects, photographs and stories from 'back home' have been important tangible and intangible archival elements that helped embed immigrants in a new environment. Today we live in a mainstream media which controls what we see and hear, and preconditions our self-perception and our role in society. Immigrants have played a big part in the economic development of Britain. Therefore, the research lies in 'stories', 'people' and 'spaces', exploring questions such as:

Who designs new public spaces ?

Who has **access** to these new public spaces?

What is the **cultural** impact of these new public spaces?

Who is the **target** audience for these new public spaces?

Which **communities** are affected by these new public spaces?

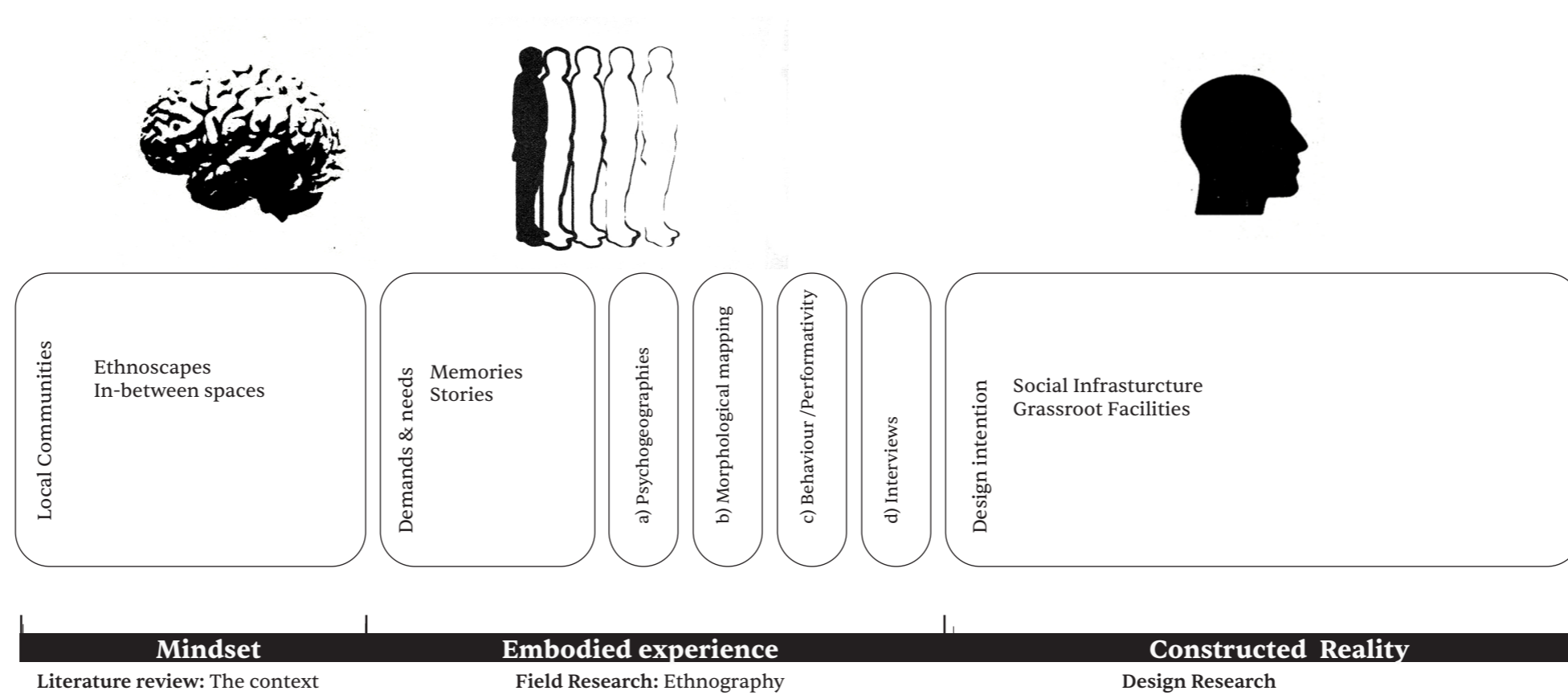
What **narratives** are preserved in the designing of these new public spaces?

These guide to ultimately formulate the research question:

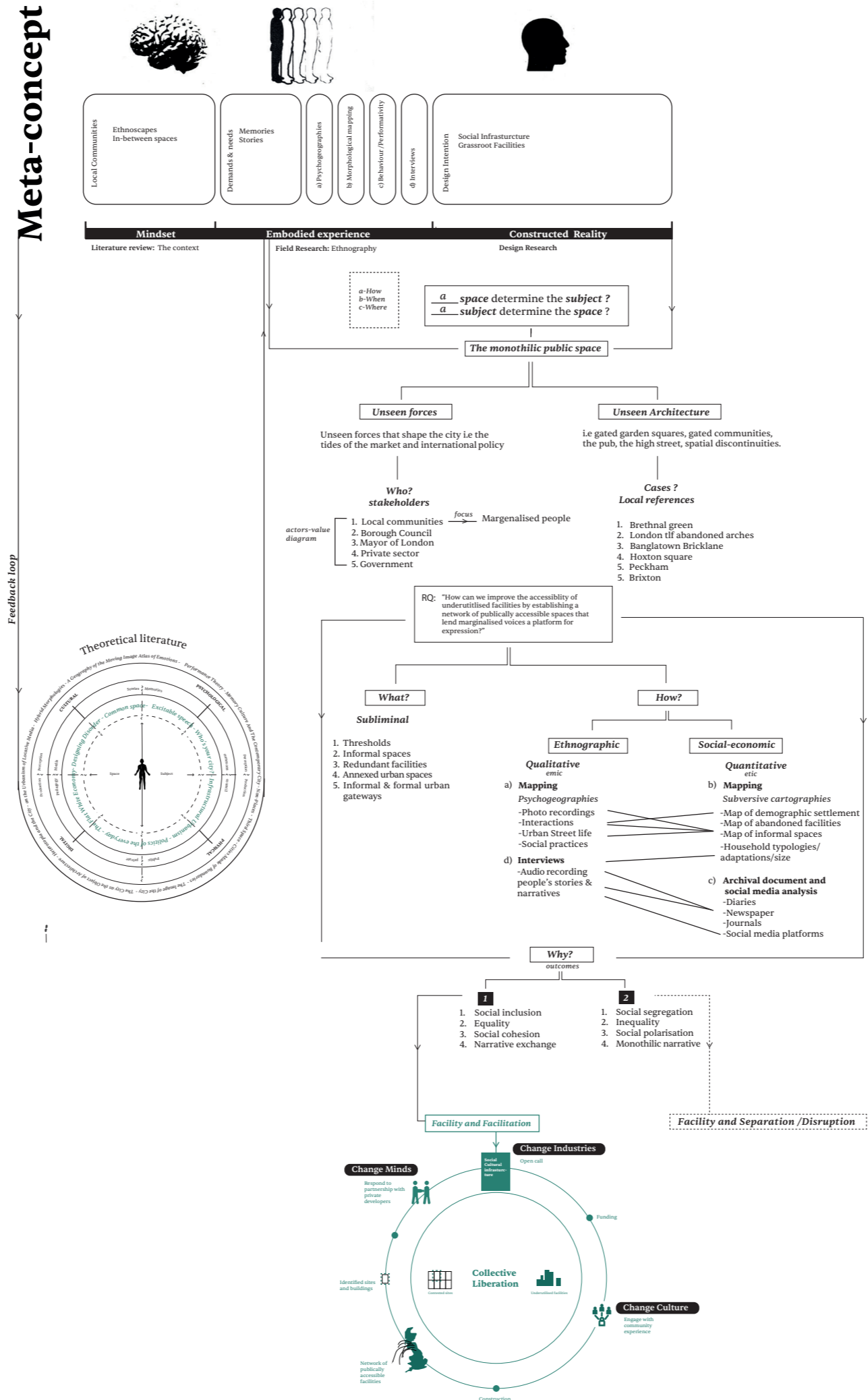
'How can we improve the accessibility of underutilised facilities by establishing a network of publically accessible spaces that lend marginalised voices a platform for expression?'

The ability to access and produce space is essential for one's political subjectivity and its a vital precondition for one's education: *space is power*. The ability to gather and exchange meaningful ideas, stories, memories to make decisions that shape our neighbourhoods and the wider socio-political context we live in is fundamental. Without space, we are stripped of the agency to influence change that is needed to achieve spatial equity and inclusion. This is especially important when discussing individuals and communities of colour - *marginalised voices*. When unable to access and develop space which responds to their needs and aspirations we result in a built environment that not only is restrictive and encourages segregated lives, but delivers one-off projects of that flatter to deceive with a thin but colourful layer of culture.

Meta framework



Meta-concept



Research Statement



Facilitate /disrupt social outcomes
loss of cultural infrastructure

Target group

*“How can we establish a network of spatially **inclusive spaces** through systemic disruption that lend **marginalised** voices a platform for expression?”*

(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen
(un)seen

1

How are social structures and soft systems coded and translated into architecture?

2

What forms of systemic disruptions can enable inclusive spaces?

3

What design instruments produce spaces of heterogeneity compatible with the radical democratic demands for equality? And can the answer form the foundations for a post-structuralist conception of a cosmopolitan city or a post-colonial framework?

4

Where can the unseen be found? Does it refer to the periphery of the city - its thresholds - in the 'subliminal' lived layer of the city?



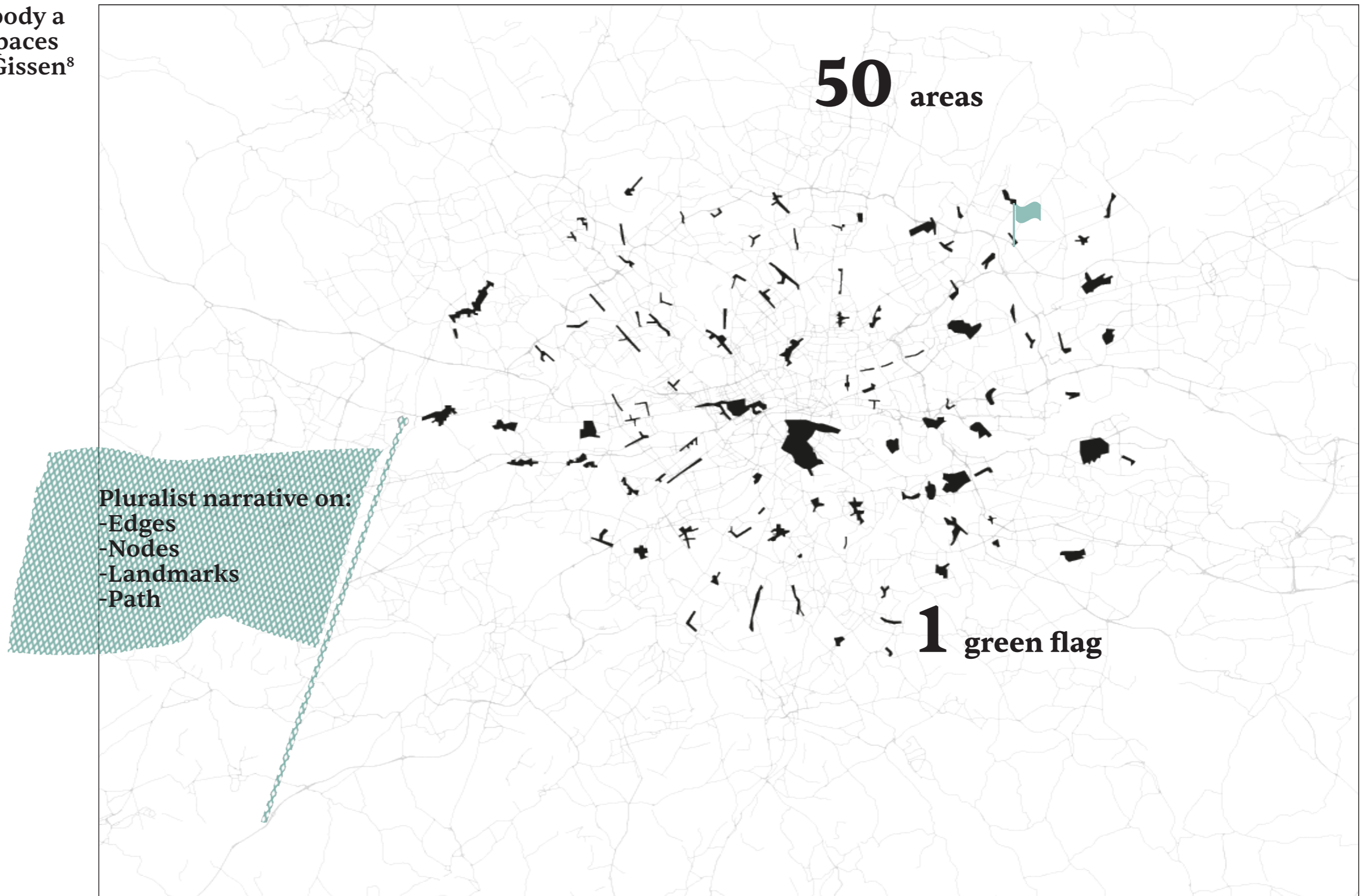
'Prime' city areas

'I wonder whose body a lot of the public spaces relate to' - David Gissen⁸

⁸ Sevilla-Buitrago, Alvaro. "Publicity ." *The Architectural Review*, 2022.

The map is inspired by Kevin Lynch's study of the city and using GIS Data base to investigate the edges, nodes, landmarks and paths that relate to non-western centric global design references. The result being one, *Warm Shores in Hackney*. However, can we study a city merely in plan? what is being missed in the process?

Conclusion: Lynch's functionalist approach reduces the city to a network of organised buildings and patterns, but forgets to render or register the social and lived layer present. Thus, lacking in truly representing the city.



Theoretical Framework

The (un)seen

Monolithic

1. in society refers to rigidity and homogenization.

2. (of an organization or system) large, powerful, indivisible, and slow to change.

⁸(Florida, R., 2001)

⁹(Soja,)

¹⁰(Schechner, 2015)

¹¹(Kohn, 2003)

¹²(Sevilla-Buitrago, A., 2022)

¹³(Stavrides, 2016)

¹⁴(ibid)

¹⁵(Oakland, CA: PM, 2013).

Figure 4: Lou's 'Border door', the metaphorical crossing of borders. However, concepts of decolonisation and spatial equity are used as analogies. The research plan recognises that we can no longer speak in metaphors and that these systemic issues can only be changed through systemic change.

The research looks into 'who' or 'what' constitutes the monolithic public. Historically, the city was studied based on physical nodes of references and orientation (p.13). Thereby, missing an important social and lived layer that appropriate and render our city. The theoretical framework is based in Henry Lefebvre's conflation of space as 'both network and process, both place and flow'⁸ where space is not abstract, it's both mental and material. Together with Edward Soja's theory of *Thirdspace*⁹ which encompasses both the built and lived environment, both intellectual and empirical, real and imagined, lends the research another lens: *the subliminal, the unseen* and inspires what I defined as a *mentalscape*.

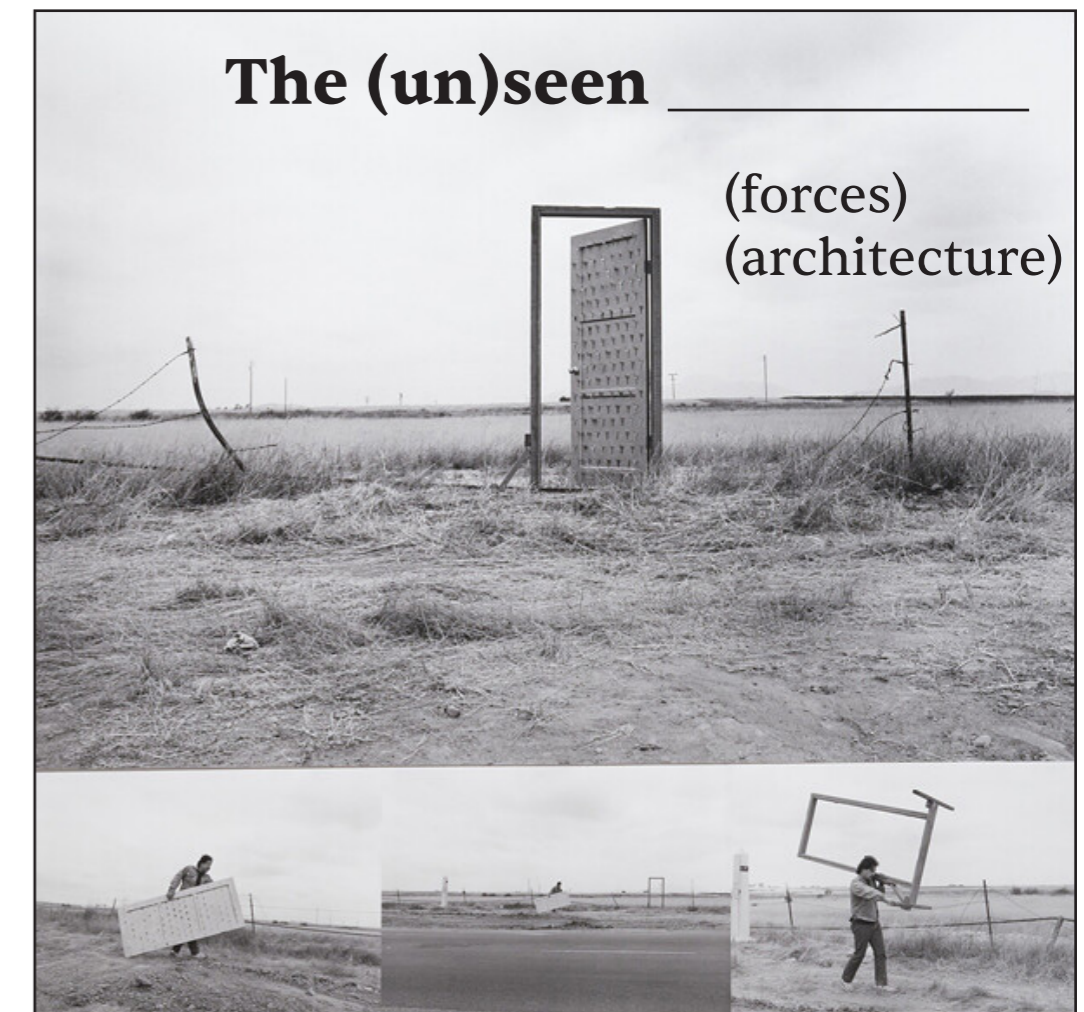
Building on this, the research does not investigate the center, but looks into the periphery, in the border, because that's where spaces have the capacity to generate unseen situations. Here the paper looks for undercurrents that bring this phenomena into existence. *Performance theory*¹⁰ suggests that every individual puts on a performance in our society, determined by preconditioned social codes, surveillance and media indoctrination. The relevance of this lies in Margaret Khon statement: '*space* affects how individuals and groups *perceive* their place in the order of things' and function 'to initiate, maintain, or interrupt interaction'; and 'determine the form and scope of contact'.¹¹ Thus, the paper examines the adaptation of spaces in the periphery and its performances and stories.

With these theoretical tools, the research engages in understanding the interaction between people's lived experiences/choices and the *unseen forces* on ground. For much of the 20th century, the implementation of neoliberal urban policies and privatisation, led theorists such as Mike Davis and Michael Sorkin to announce the end of public space and its threat to democracy. These criticisms, led me to question the category of space. How has space been rendered? Not only is there significant debate about the definition of space, but also its importance for social and political analysis. The research, aims to consider these disputes and develop a category of space that can inform our understanding of social and physical space. Social antagonisms, construction of political boundaries and media indoctrina-

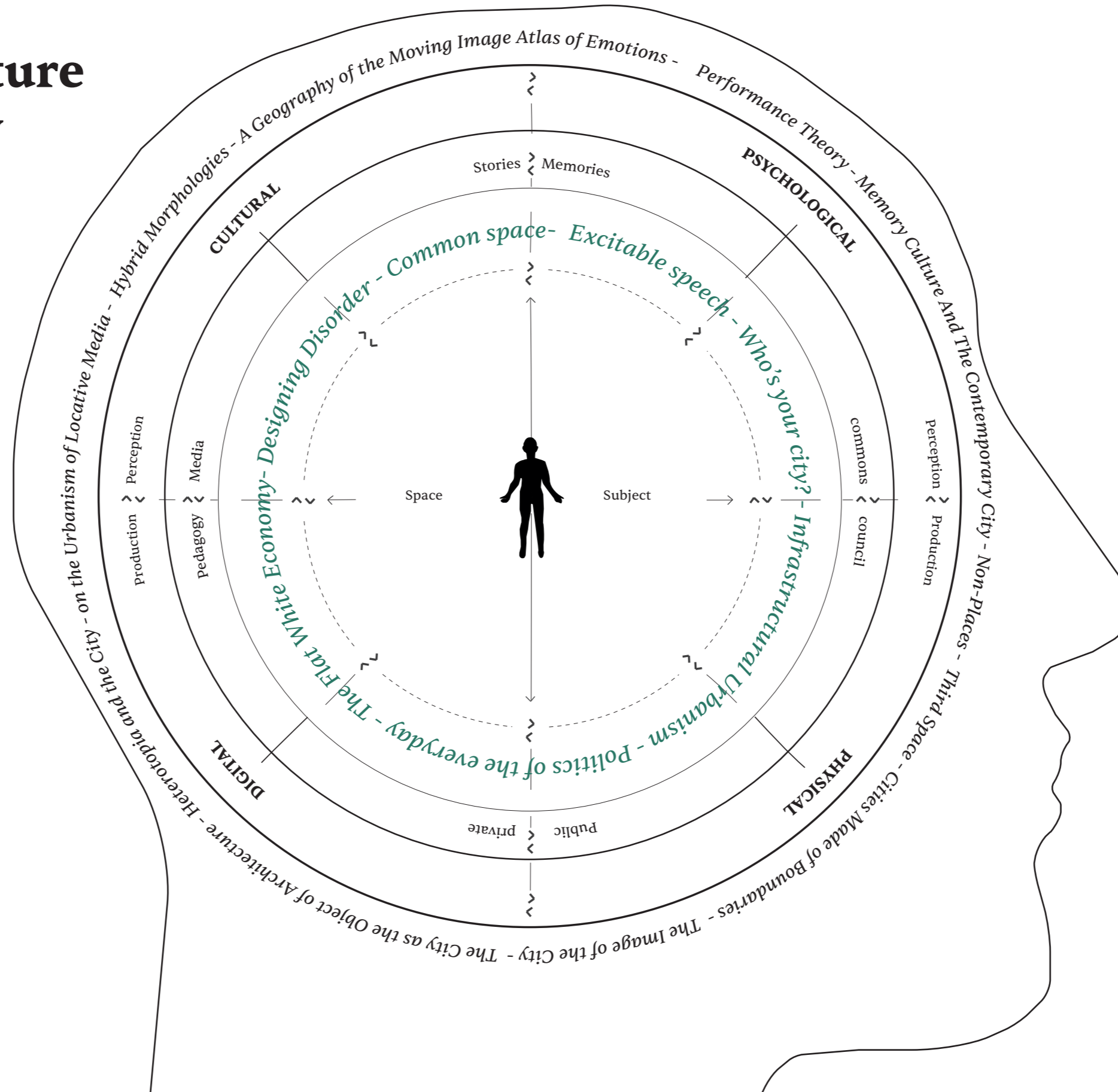
tion lie in the heart of this entanglement. Therefore, how much of the outside is the inside? Seeing the city as an elusive room.

Based on the last claim, the paper examines questions on boundaries and their political origins: as new ones are forged certain social spaces are forgotten. This concealment is often happening with a colourful layer of culture that fails to recognise the ongoing struggles to appropriate the publicness through systemic change: architecture as a conduit of political intervention. Global social street protests and occupations have revealed the collective attempt to reclaim and reimagine the publicness beyond economic and state control - it is a struggle for autonomy, suggesting that space is power. In London, this friction and negotiation between heterogeneous actors and state-forces over contested spaces that act as a vessel of communality and shared practices, is a daily reality. However, what constitutes such a space? and how can architecture practices yield such power?

In answering this question, the paper looks at the process of *commoning* or *collective inventiveness* coined by Stavros Stavrides¹³. It defines shared infrastructure that supports the collective lives of its community through 'cooperative appropriation' and 'creative emancipation'¹⁴. The act of commoning in this context can be argued as an act of survival. How and where does this occur in London?



Literature review



Methodological framework

The (un)seen to the scene

¹⁶(de Assis and Giudici 2021)

¹⁷ (Schoonderbeek, M., 2022.) *Subversive cartographies* "To be subversive, is to wish to overthrow, destroy or undermine the principles of established orders. As such subversive cartographies offer alternative representations to established social and political norms." This technique builds on my entire research intent.

¹⁸ (Landa, Manuel, 2019)

¹⁹ (Schechner, 2015)

limit

1.a point or level beyond which something does not or may not extend or pass.

2.a restriction on the size or amount of something permissible or possible.

The collage illustrates one of the ways I will attempt to investigate the city and collect data (own material).

The work of Larissa Fassler *My Body is the City* builds on the theoretical framework in studying the city as a mental space. The shift from hitherto Lynch's functionalist view to the understanding of the city from *Psychogeographies* enables the recording of urban life, registering the subliminal, interpersonal connections to places and arbitrary routes¹⁶. This technique creates a method that produces a new kind of 'mapping of space', one that shows how geographic environments shape 'behaviours' in public space. Mapping becomes a series of questions and answers: why space is contested? how are boundaries constantly forged and reformed? This brings other spatial dimensions - the subaltern - to provide proper account of social practices found in the city. The city is no longer made of known trajectories but of memories, identities, stories and sounds.

Subversive cartographies¹⁷

'outside is the inside', seeing the street as an elusive room provides a glance into the private lives and livelihood of the commons and blurs spatial boundaries. What happens behind closed doors? How do we act and behave when not observed? A report on *Super-diverse street*, has shown the informal room divisions inside domestic dwellings for mixed services/ home businesses, hidden away from the high street¹⁸. What do they tell about what is absent or present in the public space? The concept of 'performing in everyday life'¹⁹, envisaged by Schechner can give clues to these spatial configurations. What are the different scales of performativity found at an urban scale: a) Intersubject performativity b) Intercommunal performativity c) Racial performativity d) Gender performativity.

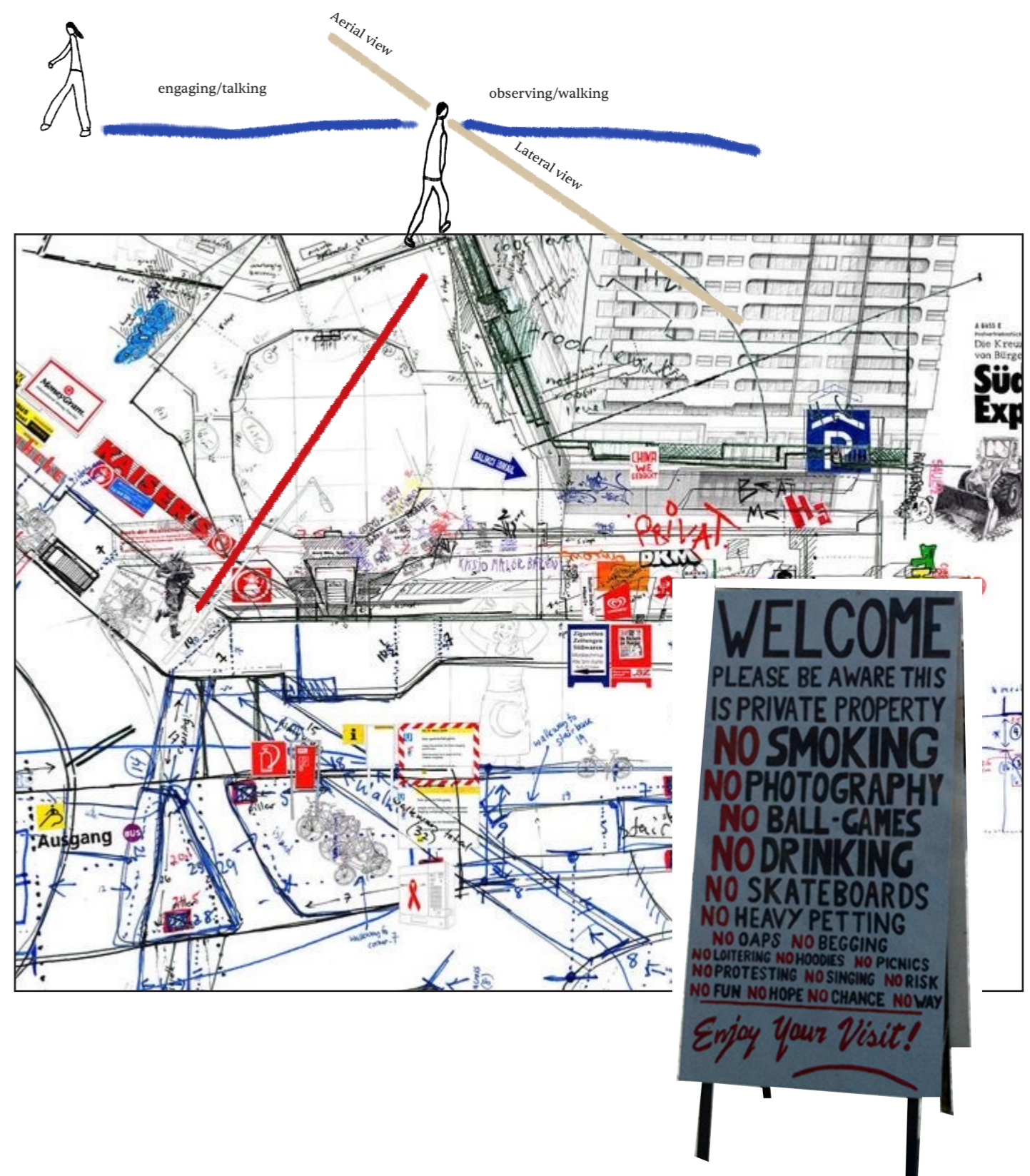
Tools: to help map these questions and answers are reports, photographs, newspaper and journals.
Scale: street, building scale.

In the city, people are united only by their transient roles in the flow of capital. Public spaces filled with official signs, posters, graffiti, advertisements and political messages and CCTV surveillance cameras, are reminders of our consumerist, transient roles. As part of the research, it is important to pay attention to how these sites are con-

trolled and by whom. The plan comes up with three forms of limitations: a) **Tangible-visual limit** b) **Tangible-physical limit** c) **Intangible-sensory limit**.

Tools: sketches and photographs to visually capture the aforementioned limits.

Scale: community scale.



The collage is an illustration to show the way I intend to analyse the city through the layering of diary entries, photographs, newspapers to reconstruct lost narratives and to compare performance of spaces as described in the past to the present. This will lend various perspectives on spaces (own material).

20 (Butler, J., 1997)

21 (de Assis and Giudici, 2021)

Interviews

As part of the qualitative design research, the aim is to carry out interviews in the form of dyad or 'friendship pairs'. The act of sharing personal experiences and memories is often lost in formal settings. Achieving this vulnerability is the objective in order to attempt to grasp the *absence in space, predetermined narratives*. Ultimately to find design answers towards collective liberation.

Tools: organised interviews with professionals from diverse backgrounds, race, gender and age.

Scale: individual, community scale.

Social media analysis

The message broadcaster becomes the cartographer with Judith Butler's *Excitable Speech*. Butler explores the ways that social reality is constantly created as an illusion 'through language, gesture, and all manner of symbolic social signs'²⁰. Social media platforms, in that manner have the power to inform or to conceal informations, dominate certain narratives and overshadow others. For diasporic individuals, objects and stories have been a vital source in informing of their identity. Storytelling and myths has been one of the oldest knowledge transmissible methods in humans history. The information gained in the study of these outlets will be relevant to understand the relationship between appearance through 'language' and performance of neighbourhoods.

Tools: personal diaries, instagram communities, Tik Tok content.

Scale: city, neighbourhood scale.

Archival documents and economic data analysis

The research will focus on highly contested public sites to interpret the present spatial inequity. To identify these spaces, Deleuze's *Theory of Assemblage* which recognises that 'social reality is multiscaled with assemblages occurring at every level'²¹. This technique helps think about the built environment as a product of economic values and assemblage of complex social configurations. Therefore, layering morphological maps that highlight all the systems of facilities and institutional structures that enable economic development, and its correlation with for example rent prices and migration routes (both domestic and international), can reveal seen and unseen undercurrents.

Tools: legal documents, digital statistics, governmental websites and annual reports.

Scale: city scale.

JAN 1982



The man stumbling through the snow slid to the ground. He struggled to his feet and immediately fell on his face. He crawled up on his hands and knees, stood up, swayed, and fell backwards. He lay on his back in the snow, his arms waving feebly until, exhausted, he became still and the snow settled on him. The pedestrians on the opposite pavement resumed their journey to the bus stop.



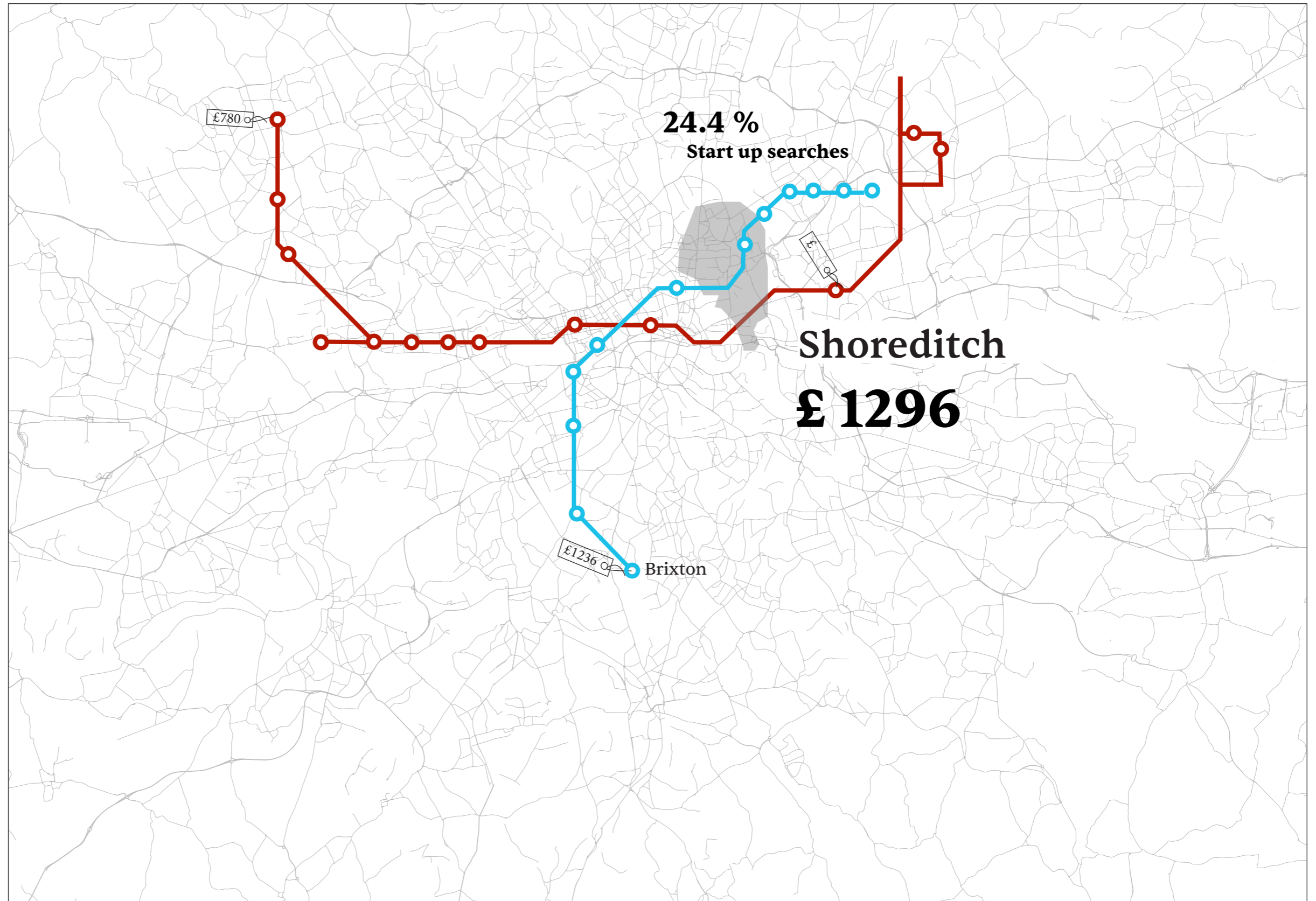
‘Maintaining a public space commons requires constant collective appropriation and activism, autonomous in the face both state and market control’²² - Alvaro Sevilla-Buitrago

²²Sevilla-Buitrago, Alvaro. "Publicity ." *The Architectural Review*, 2022.

I define Sohofication as the ongoing process of homogenisation where neighbourhoods that previously contained a variety of amenities for its inhabitants is over run by restaurants targeting mainly tourists.

The map is an assemblage of various layer: the London underground, the rent prices, start-up location searches and migration routes. It shows a correlation between these four factors and that the heart of London - the center has shifted to the periphery (Shoreditch and Brixton). Therefore, my initial analysis brought my focus to these neighbourhoods in order to understand this entanglement.

‘Sohofication’



Reflection

Gaps, issues and potentials

Confirmation bias, a phrase coined by English psychologist Peter Wason, is the tendency of people to favor information that confirms or strengthens their beliefs or values and is difficult to dislodge once affirmed.

Linguistic determinism is the concept that language and its structures limit and determine human knowledge or thought, as well as thought processes such as categorization, memory, and perception.

²³(Maxwell-Anderson, A., 2020)

²⁴ Actor value system identifies the needs, demands and motivations of various stakeholders involved in an enterprise or institution.

²⁵(Farthing, Stuar, 2016)

Here follows an introspective reflection where potential issues and gaps are acknowledged in the research process. To respond better to these challenges, a multidisciplinary approach is taken into account, interrogating the role of an architect as also a scientist/historian and an anthropologist in an attempt to blur the dualities of empathy and rationale. Moreover, to counteract personal beliefs, values, generalisations from previous indoctrinations, an epistemological approach in the research is imperative - *how do I know what I know?* I must remain aware of the subconscious influence present. The reflection wheel on p.24 investigates these objectives to remain skeptical throughout the project, meaning all proposed ideas must be tested and scrutinized.

Linguistic determinism

The first reflection is on language and its influence in the way information is interpreted, received and could explain the ways in which cultures are organized. Edward Said's colonial study *Orientalism* also lends a perspective on the act of writing and cultural politics. Whose mentality have we adopted and whose representations have we accepted? Furthermore, when analysing the repertoire of images, texts and speeches collected, what are the connotations behind these? What narratives have been concealed and which dominate? Who declared these documents as honest?

These questions need to be posed when reading archival sources and maps to understand the intent and motivations behind their creation. Even the *Psychogeographies*, one of my research techniques has its biases: my interpretation, selection and elimination process of what will be included in my drawings. A natural response 'to avoid hiding critical information in a fog of detail, the map must offer a selective, incomplete view of reality'²³. This is the cartographic paradox: to present a truthful picture, a map must tell lies. For this reason, *research skepticism* is important, which I intend to achieve at every stage of the research by applying critical evaluations of my research sources and initiating discussions with my peers. Adding a comparison variable diversifies the source of information and authors through gender, age, race and profession and allows me to remain

skeptical throughout the project.

Another flaw in the research can be *circular reading* and *confirmation bias* whereby sources are referenced and quoted selectively to strengthen a chosen narrative. This results in a singular narrative, which goes in hand with my problem statement relating to monolithic perspective and is something I should remain aware of throughout my research. To prevent this, I need to clarify my agency in the project.

Objectivity in field research

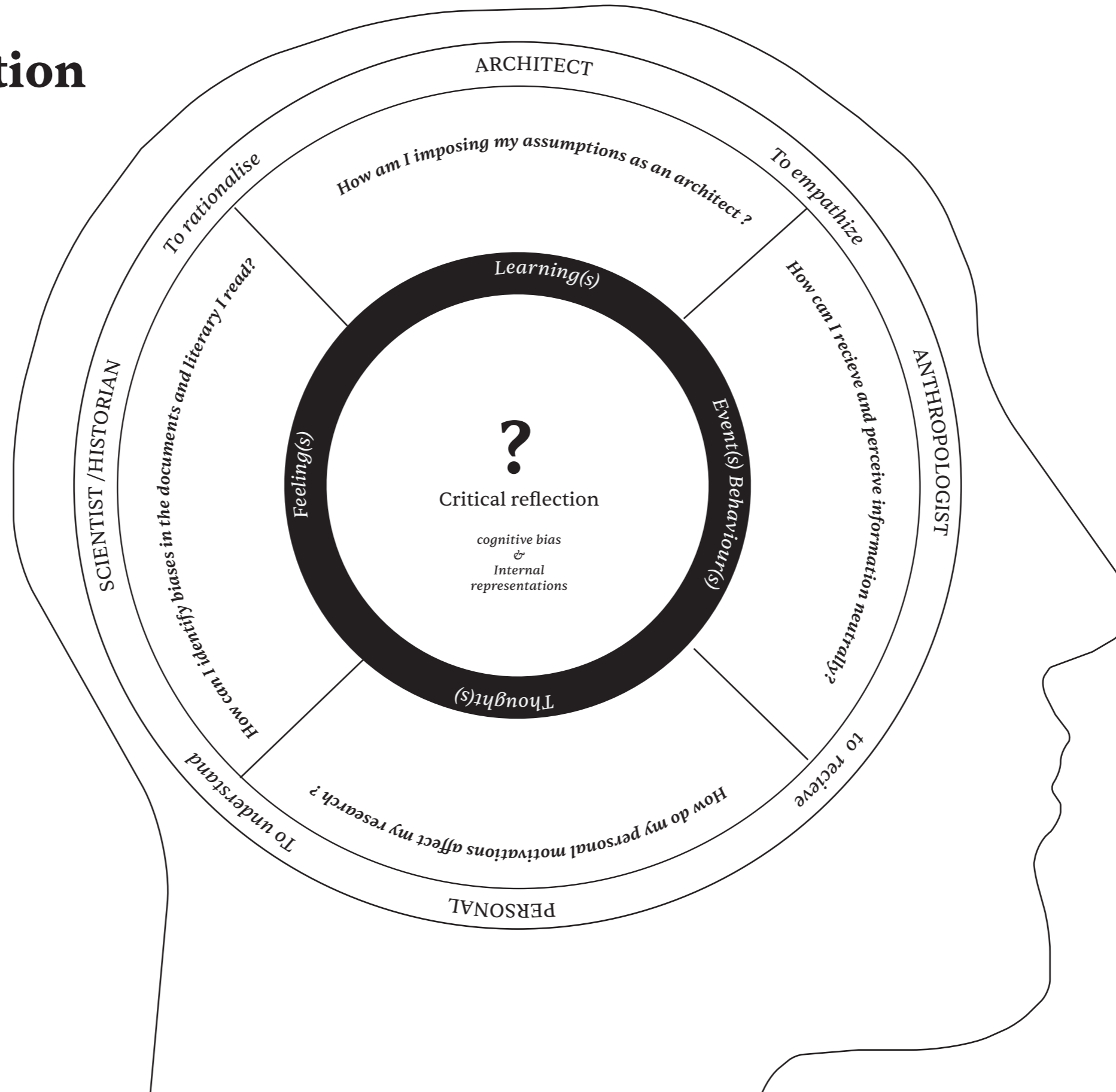
Architecture can never claim objectivity even in the case of a participatory approach where local communities are asked about their needs and demands as part of the design process. Indeed, all stakeholders involved and their values need to be considered. TU Delft Professor Carola Hein stated once in a lecture that the built environment is a product of values. The community is not the only acting party, but also the local authorities, private developers and councils. The architect has to stand as a negotiator that helps blur these dichotomies and thus an *actor-value-system*²⁴ could aid in this endeavour.

Misinformations and algorithms

The use of *social media* content as one of my research methods has its disadvantages as these platforms often spread low-credibility content quickly and easily, making algorithms vulnerable to manipulation. The intentional systematic discrimination probes an ethical obligation to acknowledge this in the research and recognise the overshadowed voices. Furthermore, to realise that both the physical and digital spaces have their regulations and policies, and both bear the power to facilitate or destruct social outcomes.

To conclude, I recognise my position to understand data production and processing ahead of architectural decisions. However, I believe that research should be partisan and I recognise through the research 'the diversity of perspectives, and to conduct research which gives voice to those whose views have been marginalised in policy debate'²⁵.

Reflection Wheel



EXPERIENCE

See
Hear
Feel
Smell
Taste

Conclusion

Design agenda

²⁶ 'ends' british slang for neighbourhood.

²⁷ Infrastructures for disorder. Applying Sennett's notion of disorder to the public space. Many urban regeneration processes in social housing neighbourhoods have attempted to remove all kinds of disorder from the city, thus removing Sennett's proposed strategies for intervention that create conditions for the unplanned use of the public realm in social housing estates.

²⁸ (AfterpartiCollective, 2022)

²⁹ (MacWilliams,D.,2015)

Figure 5: Banglatown slowly taken over by Sohofication.

System-Site-Program

Urban planning has the potential to be a tool that can enable social value and generate designs for a more pluralistic cities. But to achieve this, it needs its power and resources devolved to local communities empowering people to propose plans for their own 'ends'²⁶. Nonetheless, the extent of this think local and act local strategy is debatable and have to respond to the structure and governance of local democracy to be effective. An example of such execution can be Richard Sennett's contemporary framework known as *infrastructure of disorders*²⁷ where citizen-led practices in the fields of politics, architecture and planning facilitate the desires of citizens. Yet it is not grounded and specific enough. As Afterpartizine, a London-based collective of young architecture writers, state 'I'm beginning to think that this whole thing of the participant city is just a con - it's actually a neoliberal expectation to make citizens collaborators, when the citizen will always be the diminutive part of that relationship, whether that is the state or the private sector'²⁸. Refusing to understand the limitations of design and interpret political implications with a myopic lens lead to superficial interventions.

To conclude, the agenda is to work through architecture by realising a political form of power: a collective workers' power. References of practitioners using architecture as a conduit of political intervention is: the architecture union (UVW-SAW), the Architects Climate Action Network. The project aims to learn how grassroots cultural spaces give 'voice' to those marginalised in an unequal city. The intervention strategy is not adopting a bottom-up cultural approach, but to create a framework for systemic change at an individual, group and socio-economical level.

Why East/South London?

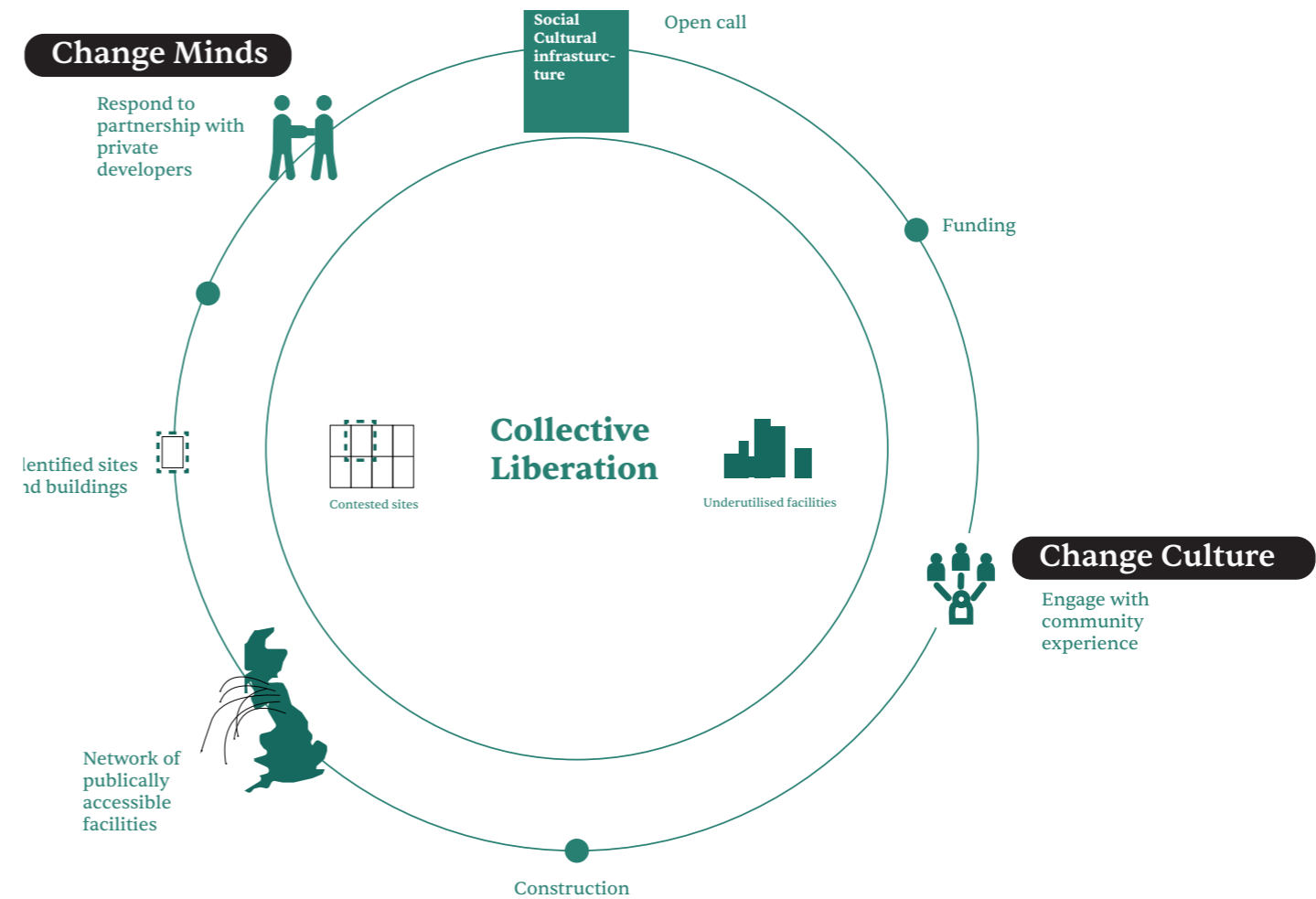
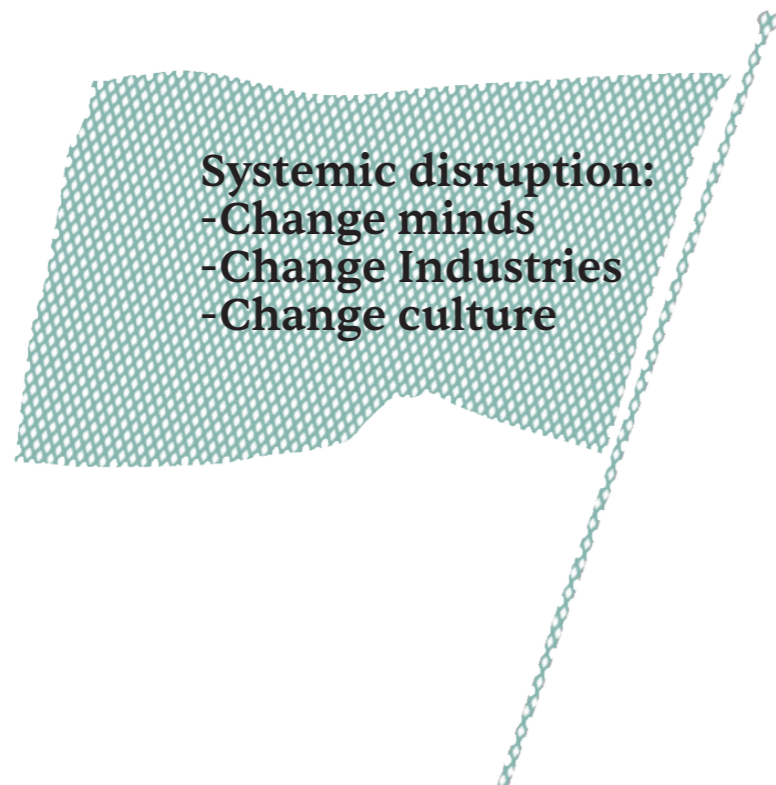
During my visit in London, the parameters I used in choosing where to walk was based on which neighbourhoods were considered 'hipster' and culturally diverse, such as Shoreditch and Brixton, which are deep rooted in the history of economic transition and migration. Douglas MacWilliams' *Flat white Economy*²⁹, named after the increasingly popular coffee, sparked my interest in understanding the

undercurrents in the built environment and looking at the depressed city fringes for clues (such as Shoreditch and Brixton). The growth in people traveling to work in the area around Shoreditch and now Brixton is reflected in the growth of rent prices (as shown in p.21) which have become more than near St Pauls, the heart of London - the center has shifted to the periphery. Therefore, my initial analysis brought my focus to these neighbourhoods.



Collective Liberation

Systemic issues require systemic disruption. Therefore, I recognised three starting ingredients that yield political power in the design field to affect socio-economical change a) **changing minds through pedagogy** b) **changing industries through practice reform** c) **changing culture through point a and b, introducing a green and more ethical mentality.** The roots of these existing frameworks stem from colonial, racist and discriminatory structures. In today's urgency to act on the climate crisis which is also a human crisis, new systems have to be forged. I hope to explore the way design practices can contribute.



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Appendix I

List of illustrations

Front cover “Roads: Blackout Poetry Art, Poetry Ideas, Blackout Poetry.” Pinterest, June 23, 2016. <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/53902526768975029/>.

Figure 2 Azeema. “Banglatown! Fariyah Chowdhury's Short Documentary Exploring the Desiccation of a South Asian London.” AZEEMA. AZEEMA, October 23, 2021. <https://www.azeemamag.com/stories/banglatown>.

Figure 3 (Ibid)

Figure 4 “‘Border Door’ Provided a Poetic Welcome to Immigrants 30 Years Ago. an Art Show Brings Back Its Message.” Los Angeles Times. Los Angeles Times, May 4, 2018. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/la-et-cm-soul-mining-vpam-20180504-htlstory.html>.

Figure 5 Grogan, Siobhan. “A Guide to Exploring Brick Lane, London.” Culture Trip. The Culture Trip, February 13, 2017. <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/united-kingdom/england/london/articles/a-guide-to-exploring-brick-lane-london/>.

Backcover Raco, Mike. State-Led Privatisation and the Demise of the Democratic State.: Welfare Reform and Localism in an Era of Regulatory Capitalism. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2016.

Archives

EAST & SOUTH LONDON

Lambeth archive
Dalston archive
Brixton archive (black history)

Talks

WE ARE HERE /LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL X SOUND ADVICE SEP 2022

We Are Here was an event organised by Sound Advice for the London Design Festival, taking over the Rio Cinema during London Design Festival 2022 to celebrate migrant voices in the urban and cultural realm.

ROADTONOWHERE/ REFERENCE BAR LONDON/2022

The commodification of culture as a means to survive in today’s consumer culture and the need to package immigrant aesthetics for purchase in western context.

Interview

CARDS TOWARDS HUMANITY/JAKE OBICHERE AND PRIYA ADDANKI /2022

RIBA professional category winners of ‘ Coventry’s Tapestry’.

Discussions

TU DELFT PROFESSORS LEEKE REINDERS AND PHD STUDENT JOHN HANNA

Speaking to Leeke Reinders provided an anthropological lens to the research. In our discussion, he mentioned the importance of observation and to look at the city from behind walls and not to simply rely on the highstreet and so called public spaces. This in turn, inspired the chapter ‘Room with a view’.

Events

ROBINHOOD GARDENS/ARCHITECTURE FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM/ 2022

The movie lent insights into East London and its great spatial transformation under political subjectification - high levels of unemployment, racism and production waste. It also reflected on the problem with relying on theory of so called ‘good’ and ‘humane’ design rather than pursuing ethnographic research to understand the needs of the future tenants: a tragedy of Architects with great intentions. The documentary therefore reinforced the notion of having to not just predict great outcomes of the design but to look for clues to what would constitute this in the social fabric itself.

Life in the shadows of fast urbanism

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