Fostering Brussels democracy:
an exploration

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Graduation 2017

Part I: Research

Graduation Project

FOSTERING BRUSSELS DEMOCRACY: AN EXPLORATION

Part I: Research

Intro-duction

This graduation project focuses on the opportunities within democracy to overcome inequality on social, economic and political aspects. The opportunities will be focused on changes within public space. The research will start with aninvestigation of the starting point of the project. Then, the methodology used to come to the research results will explained. Thirdly, the evaluation of the research outcomes will be presented. This will be done through presenting the historic development of Brussels and an analysis of the democratic system in Brussels with its relation with public space. Lastly, conclusions & recommendations for the design will be constructed. These will be used as the starting-point for part II of the graduation project, in the corresponding booklet.

Democracy is a system of government that is not dominated by the point of view of one group, but takes account of and provides voice for the different groups that dwell together in the city without forming a community.

· by Iris Marion Young, 1990

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Graduate student
June 2017

starting point | orientation >
                 problem statement

research questions + aim

methodology

history

research:

democratic system;

participation;

public space.

conclusions

recommendations

references

Problem Analysis

Orientation and problem statement formulation

GENERAL CRITICISM ON DEMOCRACY

Democracy is under fire. Although democracy is a societal system built on housing different people, globalization is causing polarization and struggle with difference, and current democratic systems are struggling to work with this (Keith, 2005; Saramago, 1999; Harvard GSD, 2017). This struggle raises questions about the capabilities of democracy in dealing with difference and inequality in a globalizing world. Also, how our democratic system can be stimulated or changed to cope with these effects of globalization.

• **Creating discrepancy**

This struggle also creates a discrepancy: on the one hand, people are starting to fight for democratization, while on the other hand people say there is no real alternative possible or use democratic right to redeem democracy towards their wishes (Panizza, 2007). There are movements such as Occupy, the Arab spring and demonstrations against certain politicians as a call for a renewed vision on democracy. People are starting to recognize that contemporary democracy has become a display, without the possibilities of questioning or interrogating it (Saramago, 1999). There have even been situations where the people could vote 'wrong' according to their representatives: for example, after the referendum that determined that Great Britain would leave the European Union. while so-called democracies further away from the European, have been doing this for quite some while already (Harvard GSD, 2017).

This is a clear perversion of the democratic process, where the current democratic process is a caricature of the democracy the Greeks once invented, a vote transferring all the political rights we seem to have to politicians, while getting nothing in exchange but promises during election campaigns (Moyersoen & Swyngedouw, 2006).

This development can also been seen in larger democratic processes such as the European Union, however the characteristic aspects have a larger scope. As power relations change due to globalization processes, the power fleets from citizens through economic systems. Citizens elect governments but governments are increasingly serving to the market (Keith, 2005). This market has become an instrument of governance for financial means. As Jose Saramago, Nobel prize winner in the literature says it: **"This instrument is not democratic: it is not elected, it is not managed with responsibility for the people and the people's happiness is not its aim"** (1988).

• **Relation of democracy & the city**

This also greatly affects the relation of democracy and the city, starting with the spatialisation of the city. In ancient Greece, where the model of the polis (city) is founded on a mixed political center, the agora, to the

current de-political times where the center is merely a commercialized area and political processes are moved to the border of the cities (Arendt, 1963).

This all sparked a outburst of insurgent democracy, not just visible in insurgent parties such as the Freedom Party in the Netherlands or in England the UK Independence Party. But also insurgent democratic activities by citizen, such as the Arab spring or the Occupy movement, mentioned before. But also violent outbursts, ways of claiming democracy or society nobody would like to see (Harvard GSD, 2017). It has even gone as far that it's hard to distinguish pro-democratic insurgencies with anti-democratic insurgencies, although movements from all over the spectrum have been growing, all claiming their Right to the City from one point or another.

This rise of insurgencies created a battle between the insurgent democracy and instituted 'post-'democratic politics, including insurgent democratic parties who already infiltrated the democratic institutes, but haven't been successful in increasing democratic value yet (Dennison & Pardijs, 2016).

DEMOCRACY IN BRUSSELS

This struggle is also being fought in Brussels. On the institutional side, it has a higher ratio of institutes versus other functions then anywhere in the world. It has more than 13% of its citizens working in political institutes, and it is the home of the biggest direct representative organ in the world: The Parliament of the European Union. Instead of a general city governance, it still has 19 municipalities that range from 1.1 square kilometers to 32.6 square kilometers and these are governed by directly elected municipal councils. But as mentioned before, these institutionalized forms of democracy, seem to have lost their value in actual political life.

- **Brussels & ISIS**

In Brussels, this is for one experienced trough the high-rates of ISIS-fleeing teenagers. Belgium in general has more teenagers going to Syria or Libia to join ISIS than any other country in Europe. Moreover, multiple ISIS-bases have been uncovered in Brussels. This is only a hint of the insurgencies growing in the city, as there are assumable many more insurgent parties ready to claim their rights.

As Brussels is becoming known for its citizen being attracted to ISIS, and terroristic alliances being formed in it's urban fabric, while also headlining the news as the house of the European Parliament, talk of Brussels as the most democratic city has become absurd, but interesting.

SOCIO ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IN BRUSSELS

As the power of the European Union is expanding, so is its fabric within the city of Brussels. Although this can have positive effects: more investments in the city, a higher amount of high-income citizens able spend their money on the local economic system, and more, this is currently not the case. When looking at the effect of the European Unions institutes on the dynamics of the city, we see a problematic gentrification frontier appearing, driving away the immigrants from areas of opportunity, towards the periphery. All while the democratic institutes work on decreasing terrorist-treats, inequality and appetite to participate in the current democratic system.

"The Greek dream of a harmonious society making no distinction between masters and slaves, as conceived by innocent souls who still believe in perfection."

JOSÉ SARAMAGO IN HIS NOBEL PRICE WINNING NOVEL *SEEING* FROM 2007

CONCLUSION

This is process of investment together with the specific rising inequality in Brussels is contradictory, and creating an unsustainable relationship between citizen and democracy, while also worsening the socio-economic and socio-spatial relations within the city.
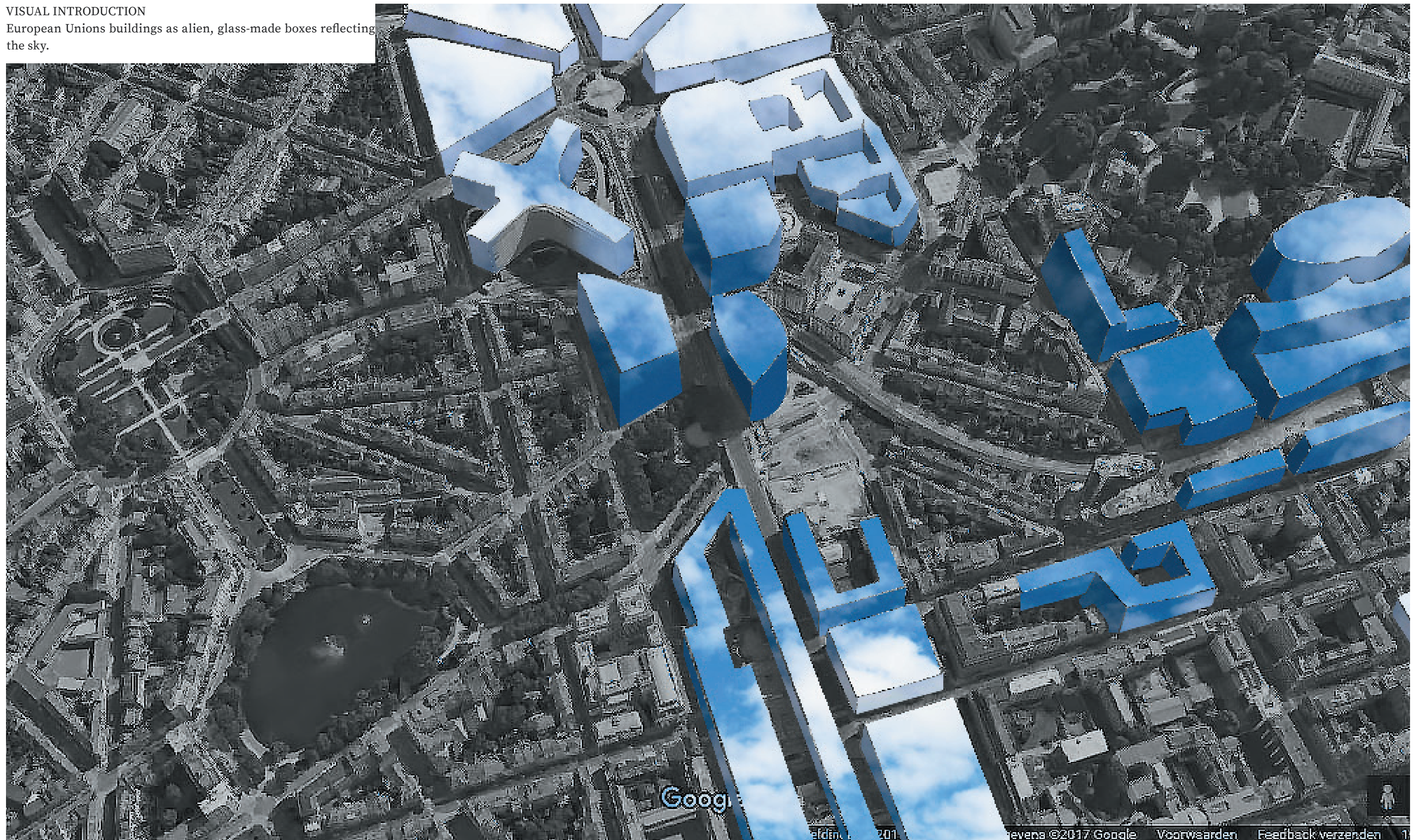
While governmental organizations continue to operate on ever larger scales, and the migration of people over the world increases local diversities, this situation is demanding change (Fincher et al, 2014).

VISUAL INTRODUCTION
European Unions buildings as alien, glass-made boxes reflecting the sky.

While Brussels is full of democratic institutes, it's unsuccessful in being a democratic city. The politicians stay isolated from public life, and political processes are unattainable. Meanwhile, socio-economic inequality is increasing and frustration among citizen grows and reaches explosive levels.

The aim of the project is to explore potentials of a stronger fostering of the democracy to decrease the social, economic and political inequality. The project will focus on the interrelation between public space, political institutes and the democracy. By understanding both the strategic as the spatial dimensions of democracy, a set of design tools will be defined in order to propose a way of fostering democracy. These guidelines should be transferable to other political institutes dealing with their integrating in society.

How can fostering democracy decrease social, economic and political inequality in Brussels?

Research question:
How can fostering democracy decrease social, economic and political inequality in Brussels?

What is democracy in Brussels?

General knowledge about democracy in Brussels from analytical maps to literature and the development of democracy will provide a basis from where the next sub-research questions will be answered. Moreover, the results from this question will form the possible ways of fostering democracy and limit the ways of decreasing social, economic and political inequality.

How to solve the problems of democracy in Brussels?

A big part of fostering democracy is first solving the problems democracy faces today. In a problematic democratic situation, it's impossible to first of all sustainably foster democracy and secondly decrease socio-economic inequality.

## What are the problems democracy is facing in Brussels?

In order to find ways of fostering democracy, it's important to first analyze the problems that democracy in Brussels faces. A look into Brussels history, current democratic processes and general political life will provide insight into this.

What role can the solution for democratic problems play in decreasing social, economic and political inequality?

Literature research as well as historical references and spatial experiments will provide a understanding of decreasing social, economic and political inequality by using democracy. This understanding can then be used in relation with the formerly analyzed problems, to specify the solutions that will decrease the social, economic and political inequality.

GENTRIFICATION VS DIFFICULTY IN THE CITY
& POLITICAL INSTITUTES
Neighborhoods which are in difficulty on socio-economic terms
are marked. These areas lack prospect for improving any situation
on social or economic terms. Together with the locations of the
political institutions and the gentrification frontier, an interesting
relationship appears.

Legend

In slight difficulty
In great difficulty
In gentrification
Political institute

Scale 1:50.000
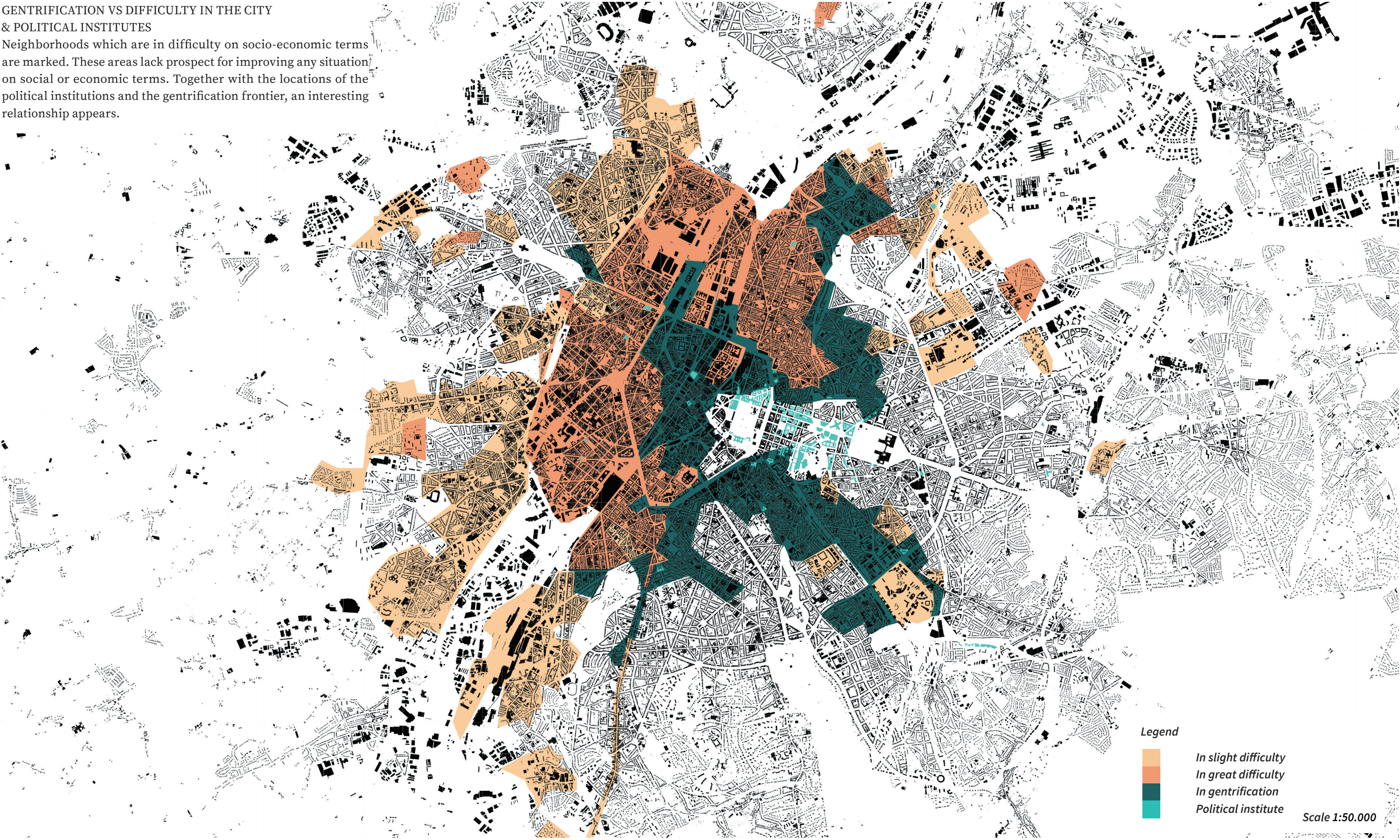
Method-ology

Planning of the execution of this research

Taking Nancy Frasers' part of the book 'Recognition or Redistribution' from 2001 as a directory, a framework is made to analyze Brussels and answer the research-questions. **This framework defines the inequalities through the perspective of participation.** Instead of analyzing merely social statuses and political positions, the relation with social, economic and political inequality with the way of participation is taken as a focus point for executing the research. Furthermore, the inequalities are taken apart into three pillars: Social Status, Economic Class & Political Position. These pillars, as taken from Fraser's book, are the main causes of subordination and subsequently participation imparity, and thus inequality

Because the theoretical side of this research is extensive, to assure a spatial analysis, the analysis is cut up in two pieces: a strategic one which uses this framework, further explained below under the head 'Strategic Research' and an experimental one which uses simple spatial experiments, further explained below under the head 'Experimental Research'.

STRATEGIC RESEARCH

Analysis based on static output: data, theory, and other static sources.

- **Execution**

  Coming from three pillars of Social Status, Economic Class & Political Position the relation with urban aspects is the key to solving the problems of democracy and inequality as an urban issue. The translation of the social status, economic class and political position into processes in an urban system is for social status: recognition of different features, for economic class: the redistribution of recourses and wealth, and for political position: the democratization of decision-making processes. This is important because it's exactly these processes that are being influenced by urban aspects that are to be analyzed to understand the malfunctions of the current system (Fraser & Honneth, 2001).

- **Matrix**

  Sequentially all 9 boxes in the figure on page 20 will be analyzed, all answering the question of: how does X influence someone's Y, in the perspective of participation? For example: how do people influence someone's Social Status, in the perspective of participation parity? And: how does the program influence someone's Social Status, in perspective to participation parity? Because every box has different questions every box needs a different methodology of research. Above, in figure 6, you can see an interpretation of these relations in the strategic analysis. It must be made clear that the questions written down are not set in stone: it is probable

METHODOLOGY SCHEME
A schematic overview of the planned execution of this project

fascination > orientation > project definition

Problem statement

Research Question

Aim of the project:
explore potentials of fostering democracy for decreasing social, economic and political inequality,
focused on the interrelation between public space, political institutes and the democracy
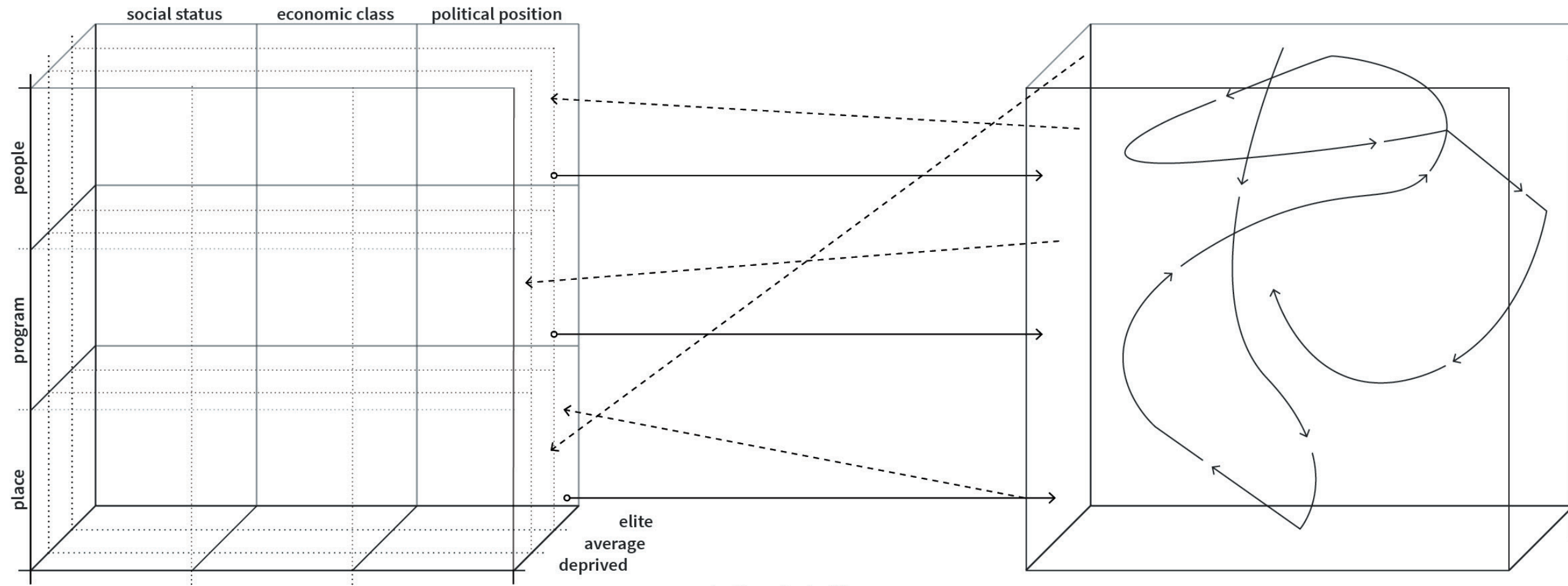
strategic analysis:
comparing the relations between status, class, position & people,
program and place

experimental analysis:
creating spatial solutions without rules

social status   economic class   political position

people

program

place

elite
average
deprived

**evaluation of valuable
synthesis-parts &
recommendations for
design**

**spatial
proposals for
implementation**

**detailed spatial
consequences
in case-study
site in Brussels**

strategic synthesis:
a set of challenges going through all layers of society, about social,
economic and political inequality related with people, program and
place.

experimental summary:
a synthesis of all spatial experiments conducted during the
research in order to get an overview of drawn conclusions and
implicit consequences or prejudices.

that while analyzing a certain relationship, other, more important questions will arise and some will become less important.

Every box answers something about the relation between the X & Y axes and demands a specific methodology, as can be seen in figure 6 above. In carrying out these methods, it's important to derive a distinction between deprived, average or elite actors in the situation. For example, when looking at the relation between the program and the economic class from the perspective of participation parity, and we map the distribution of amenities and the access to them, we can subsequently subdivide the map in a deprived, average and elite area. The deprived area will have very little amenities and little access, where the elite area and users of

	Social status	Economic class	Political position
People	-The recognition of people; -The self-recognition of people; -The level people are autonomous; - >*Individual and group interviews*	-The extend to which a network can help with distribution; -The amount of volunteerwork in the area aimed at distributing resources; >*Individual interviews, mapping volunteer-services.*	-Organization of groups of people democratizing processes/their scales of influence; -Voting behavior; -The distribution/democratiztiong of ownership of property; >*Mapping ownerships & organizations, statistics of voting behavior & policies.*
Program	-Use of functions by different people; -Houserules per amenitie; -Functions with specific dress-code/appearance and/or aim; >*Fieldwork, interviews on the street*	-Different types of employment possibilities; -Distribution of amenities and acces too them; -Different types of housing; >*Mapping*	-Placement of political functions spatially; - >*Mapping political buildings*
Place	-Use of places by different kind of people; - >*Fieldwork*	-Accessibility of area's per trans-portmode; - >*Mapping*	-Accessibility of politically important buildings/areas per transport-mode; -Places to gather/organise; -Places to express thoughts, debate; >*Fieldwork, mapping of transportmodes, activities, streetart, protests*

Elite
Average
Deprived

this area will have a lot of amenities, different kinds of amenities and high access to these amenities.

This differentiation is important to draw a conclusion about the challenges in participation parity. When making these distinctions along the way, a profile can be made of deprived area's/users in different ways, and elite area's/users in other ways, creating a complete image of the ability for participation not only humanitarian but also spatially.

- **Concluding the strategic research**
  After these relations are examined, or probably already begun while

examining them, a matrix can be made of set of challenges or advantages that are influencing participation in the area through people, program and place. Important here is that the outcome visualizes real implications, like area's where recognition is low, where the diversity of amenities is to scarce or how people are not able to participate in any decision-making. Only then will the framework has done its job in setting challenges that can be evaluated to create a realistic strategy.

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH
Spatial analysis done experimentally, without rules, by asking questions
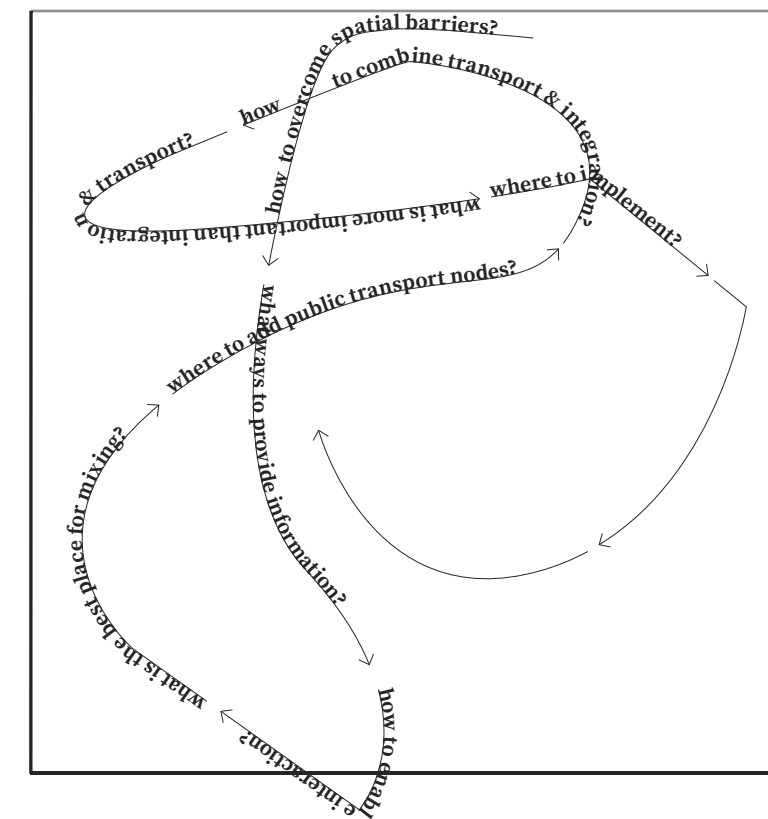
and looking at how to solve them spatially.

- **Execution**
  During this strategic analysis, it's important to keep the focus on the spatial aspect of the strategy and relate the precedents to a spatial implication. For this, experimental analyses are done. The experimental analyses are free-bound designs, aimed at solving the research problem in one go. These solutions won't be sufficient or complete, but will help to make the social, economic and political vision of this research spatial. These experiments do just that: less thinking, all learning by doing.

The more is learned by doing the strategic analysis, the less uncontrolled and the more valid the results will be. In the end, a spatial summary can be made of the experiments by making a synthesis and being able to draw conclusions of implicit consequences of certain spatial implementations and of possible prejudices in these experiments.

The conclusion of the design experiments is a synthesis of all experiments, extracting what the prejudices were when starting with the experiment, how they changed, how they influenced the next experiment and which values contributed to the understanding of the strategic analysis. Some conclusions will already be made during and after every singular experiment, to be able to stack the information and ad every new experiment, reach a new and higher level of spatial information then the one before.

EVALUATION

After the analysis, an evaluation will be done in order to combine both types of research into a complete design.

- **Execution**

The summaries of the analyses are thus a synthesis of design by research (knowledge from the strategic analysis influencing the experiments) and research by design (knowledge from the experiments influencing the strategic analysis). Thus, both summaries are very valuable and are considering context specific spatial, theoretical and social information.

The summary of the strategic analysis is a set of challenges and the summary of the experimental analysis will be a set of spatial conclusions, the combination will provide a full understanding of the context. With this understanding, an evaluation criterion can be made to help in the process of proposing a spatial strategy.

Through this evaluation, the research will be able to look at aspects left untreated until now, for example through which scales certain goals should be achieved. Moreover, because the three pillars were merely divided to create a clear analysis, in the evaluation-phase the most important aspect will be how to combine the spatial and strategic outcomes in a way that integrates the challenges and opportunities found.

- **Guidelines**

From the evaluation, guidelines are derived that should be precisely implemented in the context of Brussels, proposing an alternative to the current society that stimulates inequality. Through guidelines coming from the evaluation, integrative aspects of the analyses will be formed and used for the spatial strategy design.

SPATIAL IMPLEMENTATION

From the evaluation and the strategic proposals concluded in this, a exploration of spatial consequences will be made.

- **Execution**

The strategy is used to extract spatial principles and possibly new form of development. In this step, each of the principles will be implemented in a specific location. By doing so, the strategy is not only tested but also elaborated with an illustration and further explanation of the precise consequences of the strategy, for this location specifically, but the principles could also be applied in another city.

TRANSLATION IN THE REPORT

The methodology and the translation of the project in the report are not 1:1 related.

- **Execution**

The summaries of the analyses are a synthesis of design by research (knowledge from the strategic analysis influencing the experiments) and research by design (knowledge from the experiments influencing the strategic analysis). Thus, both summaries are very valuable and are considering context specific spatial, theoretical and social information. But the processes of the analysis are not translated 1:1 into recommendations. The process of analysis through these two methods is disordered in the way that they consequently influence each other and steer into new directions, without clear A > B relations. But, because of this relation, it is possible to get lead to a conclusion that takes into account both spatial as well as all other data, combined. This disordered process is not interesting, as it would merely mean the repetition of a chronological thoughtprocess, nvolving many useless conclusions and sidesteps.

That is why this report focused on the last phase of the methodology: the evaluation. After the separate conclusions, an evaluation is done with all relevant information taken from both researches. From this evaluation on recommendations are drawn. This report is the elaboration of these decisions made from the evaluation of all information during the research and the steps from this information to the recommendations.

History

A overview of the historic development of Brussels democracy

The history is fundamental to understanding any city, as it's the whole reason why situations are the way they are now. There are still a lot of traces visible of the time that has gone, not just in old buildings like the old Town hall (from 1420), but also in the way the city and it's governance works.

We will pass through six major periods in the birth of Brussels, to the current day to find, through schematic maps, the urban development of Brussels.

^ BRUSSELS IN 1357, *scale 1:30.000*

MEDIEVAL TIMES – 1357

The first evocation of Brussels (Broecsele: ≤broec-≥ wetland and ≤-sele≥ room or house) dates to the eleventh century and recounts a port city historically established around two centers, one along the Roman road crossing the country from east to west, linking the coast to Liège, the other along the Senne, North-South axis. It is at this moment that the town begins to develop on the right bank of the Senne around the islet Saint-Géry. The basin of the Senne was then still a vast wetland domesticated here and there by farms. The Senne was only an undefined stream.

• **The starting point**

The city has a landing stage of one crossing, one dirt road, and the waterway: the Senne. Commercial navigation on the Senne is attested for the first half of the twelfth century as well as the existence of a market economy along its banks. Around 1175, 6 water mills that obstruct the course of the river make it possible to go upstream and that ultimately makes Brussels the best destination of navigation on the Senne.

• **Building a palace**

From 1150 to 1260, the city created an inferior forum: the Grand'Place. This palace was built together with the first gates of the city, the pentagon was born, connected little by little by walls. The three major artisanal branches of Brussels are the textile, food and leather industries which use water in their manufacturing processes and discharge a lot of wastewater. The Senne fully initiated the starting position of Brussels market position. The position of craftsmen in the city follows an economic and social ligature - close to suppliers and consumers - without ecological regard.

THE BAROQUE VILLAGE – 1550

The second building phase is built around the city which is now governed by a bourgeois elite. The city is built over the former relief. Trade is developing both on the road and on the water.

• **Trade via the Senne**

In 1550, it was decided to dig the canal of Willebroek parallel to the Senne and fed by the latter, which would connect Brussels to the Rupel by an easy navigable route which avoided the payment of the rite of passage for navigation on the Senne to the city of Mechelen. This great project is part of a wave of European projects in the 15th and 16th centuries that drew up a chessboard of highly dynamic river trade networks - first in Italy, then in our regions and very soon in Germany, Spain and France. For Brussels, as for Tirlemont, Louvain, Ypres, and at the same time, it was a question of maintaining its place in the movement.

BRUSSELS IN 1550, *scale 1:30.000*
The little villages, medieval streets, the first fort, the Senne and canal Willebroek.

BRUSSELS IN 1770, *scale 1:30.000*
The city walls, the development of the roads around the palace and new portstructures in the Northern of the city.

INDUSTRIALIZATION AND FRAGMENTATION - 1770

The canal of Willebroek was inaugurated in 1561. With a length of 28km, it is endowed with 1500m of basins allowing docking in the heart of the city, inside the fortified enclosure.

• **The construction of the Basins**

Three years later, the construction of the Sainte-Catherine basin, bordered by quays and trading houses, was completed. The port and its infrastructure are developing in a north-south relationship that is decisive for the future growth of the city and will stay a border between rich and poor for years to come. Economic priority is no longer production but trade. The mills and trades using the water of the Senne undergo the gradual abandonment as investors and authorities focus on the development of the canal and the port.

The districts specialize around the major urban centers, the city is clipped between the high and the low areas, between the industry of commerce and the bourgeoisie. The residents of low status live in the low parts: the western and southern part of the pentagon. The wealthy residents live on the east side of the Senne, in the higher part.

• **Industries rapidly developing**

Industries are multiplying and transforming the catchment area of Brussels very quickly. The quality of the water is undermined by increasingly unpleasant organic and chemical pollution. Hygienist policies carried by the industrial, political and financial bourgeoisie bring running water to the homes of the richest and place sewers flowing into the Senne which becomes the first receptacle of faecal matter in the city. Predictably, because the receptacle area is on the western and low part of the city, there is not much need for the ruling aristocracy to improve the situation, living miles away from the problem areas.

BRUSSELS IN 1835, *scale 1:30.000*
The start of the rail network, the car-boulevards, extension of the port and intensification of the car-roads.

THE INDUSTRIAL AND BOURGEOIS CITY – 1835

Premises of the rail network, the construction of the Allee's and the first great boulevards.

Brussels is witnessing a period of major transformations in its urban landscape. Expansion outside the pentagon has the main focus now, and industrial activity is the most important. In order to improve freight traffic, the first railway station in Brussels is built at the Allée Verte station.

- **Brusselisation 1.0**

From 1812 to 1833, the ramparts were demolished and replaced by the belt-boulevards. In 1832, the Charleroi canal was completed and now connects Antwerp and the south of the country -a thriving industrial and mining center through Brussels which becomes a real hub for the trans-shipment and exchange of coal, metallurgical and agricultural products. Industries are established along the canal and in the Molenbeek districts.

From 1860 onwards, the first urban planning and transformation of the Old City was revealed: extension and embellishment of the urban area, definitions of the vocation of the districts and connection by the exterior boulevards. Neighborhoods along the canals are developing. Utilizing and functional, they are built without intent of aesthetics or pleasure. These are the premises of a new outer-mural port and the disinterest for the intramural basins filled in thereafter appear.

- **Connection to the sea**

In 1863, the Belgian government bought the right of passage over the Scheldt in the Netherlands; Brussels is now connected to the sea. Two years later, the Royal Nautical Sports of Brussels, a nautical club and a rowing circle, is created. A symbol for the eye of the government, on the bourgeois.

BRUSSELS IN 1950, *scale 1:30.000*
Finalization of the rail and metro-network, development of the port and the tour & taxi area in the Northwest.

THE MODERN CITY – 1930

Drawings of the central boulevards. The railway network is developing (3 main lines: Brussels-Grand, Brussels-Mons and Brussels-Namur). The channels, their technical infrastructure, are at the forefront of industrial technology.

- **Brusselisation 2.0**

Jules Anspach, mayor of the city, decided to vault the Senne in 1866 because of contaminations of the receptacle and for the modernization of Brussels. The bed of the Senne becomes the axis of the central boulevards. The vaulting has solved the problems of flooding of the Old City but this is not the case of peripheral municipalities, despite the drainage works and the weirs in the canal. The peripheral municipalities, still have many problems caused by flooding and contaminated water.

1882: the city begins with widening and deepening of the canal to face the competition of railway networks. A new port is envisaged outside the city center, accessible by a redesigned canal and new basins.

The first modernizations were supported in 1869 by the creation of the Canal Society. The projects envisage the vaulting of the basins inside the pentagon (completed in 1910) and the creation of the Bassins Béco and Vergote.

- **Economic segregation**

The development of industries and demographic growth are in parity, mainly in the municipalities of Anderlecht and Molenbeek. As the increase of industry attracts industry workers and their families, they house near the canal in the lower parts of the city and the difference in prosperity between the high and low area's of the city increases further. Brussels becomes the first industrial city in the country (in number of jobs) at the end of the 19th century.

THE CONTEMPORARY CITY - 2008

After WWII, suburbanization, North-Midi junction, motorway ring and connection to the second ring-road.

- **Industrial city**

From 1950 onwards, the decline of the industrial city was observed. The car and truck are becoming widespread for the transport of goods. In addition, the government encourages functionalist planning by zoning activities, property speculation and uncertainty lead to the downgrading of the built-up in the downtown core. The decaying North quarter is destroyed and people are moving out of the city, making space for poor migrant workers, mainly in the older parts of town. Originally, the migrants were of Southern-European origin, but from 1960 onward the number increased with migrants from Maghreb and Turkey.

The modern visions of Expo 58 will transform the face of the northern and eastern district, which are imagined like the Belgian Manhattan: office towers stand out whose pedestal was to carry an urban motorway to the heart of the city, Allée Verte station is destroyed to establish a heliport that will connect by air Brussels to London, Paris, Amsterdam, and other cities of importance.

The great works of expansion and modernization of the canals (1965), initiated to adapt them to the traffic and the increasing size of the boats, accentuating the uncertainties concerning the development of their shores.

The 1970s were marked by contradictory policies and adjustments. The urban break caused by the drilling of the Molenbeek metro further damaged the district, as the focus once again is for the bourgeois.

1974: Migrant workers are put on hold, but there is still a strong population growth due to family reunification and so-called marriage migration.

- **A recession**

During the 1980s, the recession was profound in the industrial sector. Slaughterhouses are experiencing a new vitality while other buildings announce a difficult reassignment (Tour & Taxis warehouses, the Veterinary School, the small castle ...). Numerous urbanistic projects are being launched in a general trend towards tertiarisation (the service sector becoming the largest sector of the economy), and transforming the city center and eastern into international administrative areas.

At the end of the 20th century, the diversity among migrants reaches it's peak. With the increasing importance and presence of the European Union, the migration has become a highly diverse mixture of people. Either of very low (migrants aiming to work in the industries, and living in the old neighborhoods in the western pentagon, from southern-European or Eastern-European background) or very high social-economic

position (employees for the European union, living outside of the pentagon, mostly in Flemish districts).

BRUSSELS IN 2008, *scale 1:30.000*
More development in the East, the closing of the inner bassins and implementation of the North-South connection.

CONSEQUENCES FOR CURRENT BRUSSELS

All these processes have stimulated the early segregation between the higher and lower parts of the city: the former-industrial and the newly metropolitan administrative. Although the old parts of the Pentagon has seen some forms or revival in the last decades, the former-industrial area is forming a deprived area in the shape of a croissant that embraces the inner-city and the metropolitan administrative part.

BRUSSELS IN 1950 AND 1985
Showing the extreme spatial transformation in the European Quarter, and visualizing the focus of the planning department on metropolitan processes instead of the local.

1950

1985

The Demo- cratic System

An analysis of the manifestation of Brussels democracy

In order to answer the questions 'What is democracy in Brussels?' and 'What are the problems democracy is facing in Brussels?' an assessment of democracy is made. Along the lines of democracy-expert Larry Diamond, the project looks at the actual manifestation of Democracy in Brussels. By looking at the manifestation of democracy it is possible to translate the findings of the analysis in urban recommendations instead of policy or governmental changes. The democratic manifestation are chosen by the analysis of democracy by Larry Diamond in 2014.

Starting with an assessment of the Democratic System to an assessment of participation opportunities on social, economic and political aspects, we will draw a conclusion about the current state of democracy and it's problems.

THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM

The base of the democratic system is a group of citizens holding power of governance, either through direct authorization or indirect authorization by choosing representatives. This is called an electoral democracy. In this system, first of all citizens have the right to choose and replace their leaders. This is the system currently in place in Brussels.

The elections where via parties the most suitable representatives will be chosen, must be regular, free and fair. There must be a neutral, fair, and professional body that treats all political parties and candidates equally. Before the elections are held, all parties and candidates must be able to campaign freely, present proposals to the voters both directly and through the mass media. The neutral, fair and professional body administrating the elections must also make sure that the voting is free of corruption, intimidation and fraud.

- **Controlling your own fate**

  In contrast with dictatorship or tyranny, democracy focuses on opportunities for the people to control their fate as citizens are the ultimate form of power. In a electoral democracy, they hold their fate through their leaders, so to oust them without the need for a revolution is extremely important for the control of faith by the citizens themselves.

  As the leaders or representatives are only in the position of power temporarily., there should be multiple ways for citizens to practice their authority, and the ways in which the democracy stimulates or enables this is a good measuring instrument for the level of justice in it's society.

- **Necessities of Democracy**

  As citizens are of highest authority, they must also be able, after holding their leaders accountable for their actions, to choose to replace them at times when they don't respond to their needs and suggestions. In the
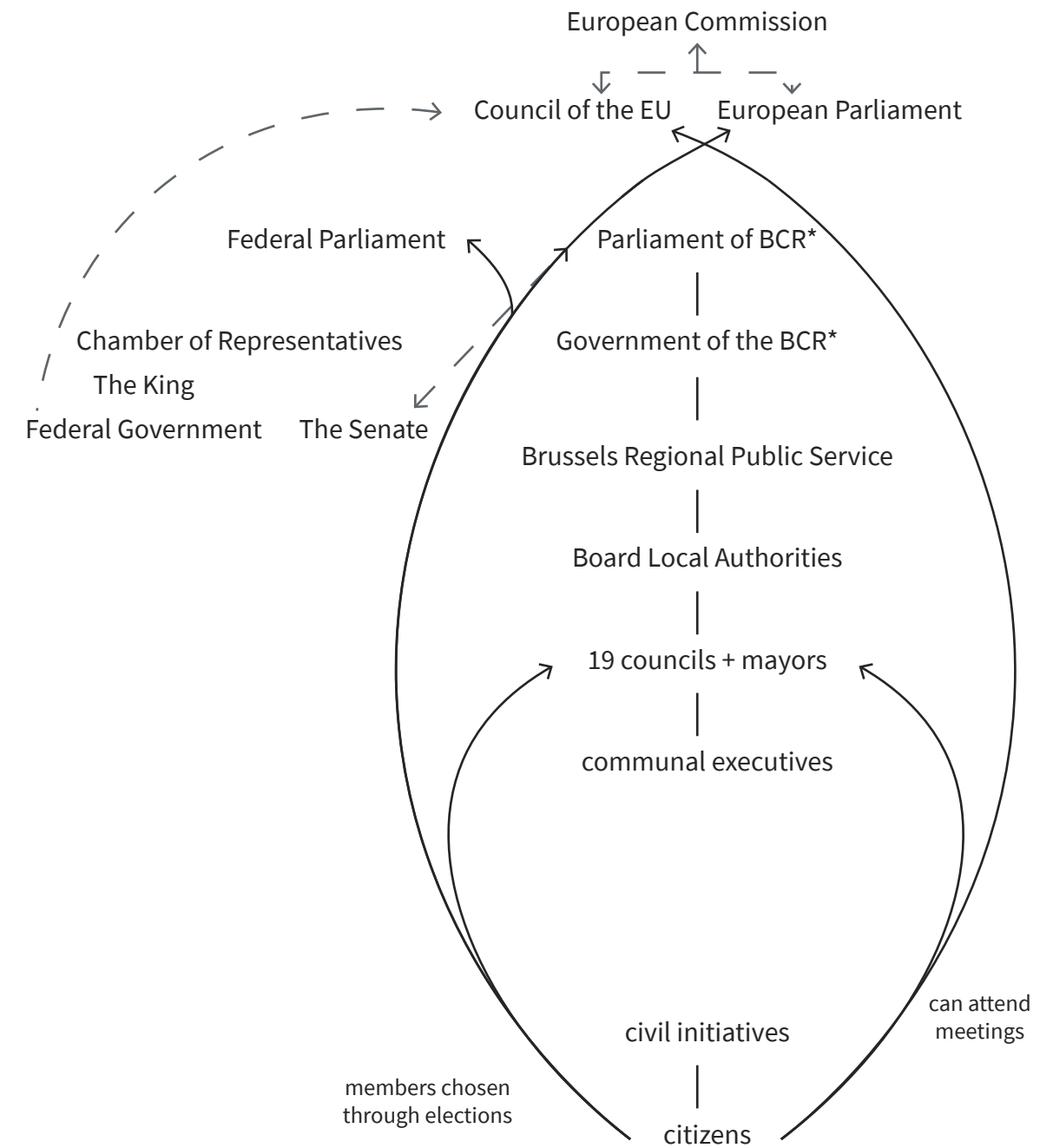
OVERVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC BODIES REPRESENTED IN
BRUSSELS

case of an electoral democracy, like in Belgium, this results in the need
for the system to make it possible to hold leaders accountable for their
policies and their conduct in office.

Moreover, these elections and the system of electoral democracy
requires not only these free, fair and competitive elections, also the free-
dom to make these elections and their result meaningful. This results
not only in the ability of holding leaders accountable and to be able to
replace them, but also in freedoms such as the freedom of organization
and freedom of expression. The freedom to conceive alternative sources
of information (not to be confused with alternative facts) and preferably
institutes that ensure government policies are depending on the votes
and preferences of citizens.

All these elements of an electoral democracy together ensue a democ-
racy where all citizens are represented equally and hold power. The key
elements in this system are:
    -the quality of the elections;
    -the way citizens are granted authority;
    -the possibility of holding leaders accountable;
    -the meaningfulness and way the electoral victors hold office after
the elections.

European Commission

Council of the EU   European Parliament

Federal Parliament   Parliament of BCR*

Chamber of Representatives   Government of the BCR*
The King
Federal Government   The Senate

Brussels Regional Public Service

Board Local Authorities

19 councils + mayors

communal executives

civil initiatives

can attend
meetings

members chosen
through elections

citizens

THE QUALITY OF ELECTIONS

The quality of the elections is derived from the regularity of elections, the amount of suffrage, the freedom in electing whomever and the ability for every candidate to campaign freely and meaningfully –by presenting their proposals in a thorough manner. This chapter will assess whether all democratic layers in Brussels achieve this level of quality.

• **Quality of elections through layers of democracy**

The different layers of democracy in Brussels all have regular elections, shown in the overview on the opposite page.

The universal suffrage is covering 52% at the least, which is for the municipal elections. For these elections, which decides on the representatives and parties in the local councils, there are multiple rules determining the suffrage. These rules make it impossible to vote for Brussels residents who are not registered with the Belgian nationality; under 18 years and are not registered in the population register. This is almost 50% of the citizen in Brussels. The notion to have the Belgian nationality deserves a bit more explanation, as only 23% is under the age of 18 and a large amount of people is thus not registered in the population register or has the Belgian nationality.

To get the Belgian nationality one must:
-live in Belgium for 5 years at least;
-has knowledge of French, Dutch or German language;
-has a proof of social integration through either marriage or education higher then secondary school, a professional education of at least 400 hours, followed a integration course or worked uninterrupted for the last 5 years in governance services or as an independent in a leading profession;
-has a proof of his or hers economic participation by having worked at least 468 working days or paid the social security contributions for self-employed people.

• **Suffrage of the elections**

 More than 25% of the Brussels residents don't meet these requirements, or haven't registered to be granted the Belgian nationality or haven't registered to vote. This is more than 275.000 people for the whole capital region, makes the universal suffrage questionable.

For the national and regional elections, the same rules apply for being able to vote. You must have the Belgian nationality, must be at least 18, must live and be registered in a Belgian municipality, not been condemned for a jail-sentence but are registered automatically to vote, making the amount of people that can (and therefore must) vote in the national and regional elections 66,9%, having 381.771 people that cannot vote in these two elections.

Voting for the European Union can be done when you are in the possession of a nationality from a country within the European Union. Only 9,8% of the residents in Brussels don't have a EU-nationality, giving the European Union the highest number of possible voters. Because Belgium has compulsory voting, the Belgian citizens are obligated to vote. Nevertheless, more than 10% decided in 2014 not to vote for the European elections, even though they must pay a penalty for doing so. This number shows how little concerned the Brussels citizens apparently are with the European democracy.

• **Concluding about the quality of the elections**

Thus, even though the fairness, regularity and controllability of the elections are of quality, the inclusiveness of the elections can be improved. As Aristotle says, "The factor of liberty being to govern and be governed in turn; for the popular principle of justice is to have equality according to number, not worth." The elections, the base of an electoral government, should be accessible to more people, as this currently is the main element of influence for citizens. Moreover, there should be made an effort to make people interested to vote, instead of making it compulsory and seeing that still 10% doesn't vote for the European elections, and paying a fine solely because they don't want to vote for the European Union.

Municipal elections	every 4 years	481.151 people voted last time (40%)
Brussels Capital Region	every 5 years	462.696 people voted last time (38%)
The Senate	every 4 years	499.082 people voted last time (42%)
Chamber of Representatives	every 4 years	499.082 people voted last time (42%)
European Parliament	every 4 years	696.754 people voted last time (58%)

PHOTO AFTER AN DEMONSTRATION PAINTING RED HANDS ON
THE FACADE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PLACE OF AUTHORITY

The ultimate place of authority should lie with the citizen. A way of
testing this is looking at how citizens are being engaged with the decision
making within the democracy (Diamond, 2017; Fraser, 2009).

- **Authority through the layers of democracy**

This is different for the different scales of democracy within Brus-
sels. We subsequently look at the local – municipal – regional – national
and continental scale to asses the level of authority for the different lay-
ers of democracy. As Brussels is a complicated example of a democracy,
with also language based communities, no one city council, the different
municipalities and their extensive authoritativeness, for the execution
of this research only the formerly mentioned levels will be considered,
as all the sub-levels in between derive their responsibility back to these.

- **Authority on the local level**

On the local level, a level smaller than the municipalities, there are
civil activity groups who gather mostly on a voluntary basis. On this scale,
no matter the place, the authority always lies with the citizens of the
specific place. But, in local areas, there are rules and boundaries set up
by the bigger democratic systems as well. For example, the municipality
decides on the different functions within an area, if something should
be a parking lot or a park, this in some cases could even be decided by
the cities' authority or the national.

In the case of municipalities, the council meetings that they hold
with the mayor are publicly attendable, but citizens cannot speak during
debates, only listen. The way you as a resident have authority within the
municipality is through voting for either elections or referendum, setting
yourself electable for the elections through a political party, joining a
political party that sits in the council or directly speaking to communal
executives who are responsible for decisions, documents and portfolios
within the municipality. Typically in an electoral democracy, citizens
are only able to activating their authority through their representatives,
who should respect their problems/statements/ideas and for them to give
it priority, before they are possibly turned into action or even discussed
in the council meetings.

- **Authority on the regional level**

In the case of regional democratic processes, for Brussels Capital
Region it exists of a Parliament and a Government of the region. The
parliament decides and debates about the laws, where the Government
defines how the laws are implemented. There is no other way to interact
with the Government of the Parliament of the Brussels-Capital region
than through voting at the elections.

PHOTO OF AN EXAMPLE OF A PUBLIC INQUIRY

- **Public inquiries**

Luckily, through public inquiries citizens can intervene in development plans in the Capital Region. These public inquiries are placed on the boundary of areas that will be transformed from the authority of the BCR. It is a red poster with all relevant information regarding the transformation: identity of the applicant, the address, the reason for the inquiry, the start & end date of the public inquiry, the date and location for the meeting of the consultation committee, and the location and hours for consulting the file. So, to access detailed information about the inquiry one must request a consultation. Moreover, the language on the posters is concise and schematic, with a high amount of abbreviations and terminology. For people that want to intervene or have other interests, can contact their municipality, or Bral. Since July 2010 the poster of certain big project should also include a 3D visual of the future project, but according to Bral this doesn't happen enough, and it's creating another barrier for participation in the decision-making process (Bral, n.d.).

The fact that the government initiated this process of public inquiries, shows that they value the citizens authority to the level that they can stop development. Although this process still has a lot of improvement to be done, before way of working with these inquiries will be practical, it is a good starting point.

- **Authority on the national level**

On the level of the national governance, the federal government and the federal parliament are on the same authority level as the governance & parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region. These boards have a controlling function for each other, where both Parliaments are directly chosen, the Parliament of BCR choses the Senate, and the Chamber of Representatives on the Federal level controls the laws of the Parliament. For this level citizens only have authority in electing members of the parliament.

- **Authority on the European level**

For democratic system on the biggest scale, everything works differently again. If we look at the European Union, there is a very complex system of control, representation and authority. First, there is the Parliament of the European Union, directly elected by all citizens of the European Union. The Parliament forms, together with the European Council and the European Commission, the legislative function of the EU. This Parliament is composed of 751 members, from whom 21 are elected by Belgian citizens. The Council of the European Union consists of 28 members, all ministers of the 28 member states of the European Union, who've been elected at national elections before. The Parliament decides the laws, the Council of the European Union must pass them and decides upon the general political direction of the EU. The EU's commission is

PHOTO OF REVOLUTIONARY PROTEST IN TIANANMENSQUARE
IN 1989

the executive body and the guardian of the treaties, and responsible for the implementation of the laws proposed by the Parliament. The Commission consists of 28 members as well, but these are not elected. The commission is nominated after the Commission President is proposed, and elected by the European Parliament. The commission is then approved by the European Parliament, to secure the citizens authority in this part of the institute. The commission operates from the perspective of the EU, not from the member states from where they are appointed. None of the meetings of any of the EU-meetings are publicly accessible.

The arrangements set up in the organization of the EU are complicated because they must cover a very politically diverse area: Europe. Unfortunately, this doesn't clearly articulate tin the system being open for differences, but is translated in a complicated system of control & authority of and within the different institutions, to secure the fairness of all processes despite these differences. The Parliament, as the citizens direct representatives and translation of their authority, does -theoretically- have the last word. In addition to its role in approving the new Commission, the European Parliament has the power at any time to force the entire Commission to resign. This requires a vote of 'no confidence' and requires at least two-thirds and a majority of the total members of the Parliament. It has never used this power, but it is a symbol of the authority of the people and their direct representatives to being the highest authority.

- **Conclusions**

As we've seen, at the smallest level, the local politics, the authority theoretically lies fully with the residents. Nevertheless, because the bigger democratic systems ultimately influence aspects on the local level, the bigger levels and the way the citizens have authority on these levels decides whether the citizens are of any useful authority.

On the municipal level, citizens are only able to attend the council meeting but not allowed to discuss and engage in any way. On the national and the level of BCR, we see an even less acknowledgment of the authority of the citizens. Citizens are not able to attend meetings. Only through the set-up of public inquiries, they can discuss through certain inquiries within a certain period with someone from the government, what the plans are and what they think about it. This is a great way of giving authority back to the citizens, but, it shouldn't be the only one. On the EU level, it's similar to the municipality again. Citizens can join council meetings, but not intervene in discussions.

PHOTO OF A ADVERTISEMENT USED TO DEMONSTRATE
AGAINST CETA & TTIP

ACCOUNTABILITY OF LEADERS

As citizens, besides having the last form of authority, in an electoral democracy this authority should be related to the possibility to hold your representatives accountable.

- **How to hold representatives accountable**

Holding representatives accountable starts by being able to observe how they conduct the business of government and the changes they are planning to implement. Secondly, citizens should be free in criticizing their elected leaders and representatives. To be fair representatives and give citizens the highest form of authority, the representatives should be vulnerable publicly and listen to this criticism and respond to their needs and suggestions, either through debate, conversation or any other form of expression.

This all can be done in multiple ways, through media, civil society, personal contact, referendum, demonstrations, and much more. Luckily, citizens are enormously creative in voicing their criticism. Nevertheless, they shouldn't need to be. Having criticism, voicing it and being able to debate or have a conversation with opponents, or your chosen representative, should be an undiscussed part of any functioning democracy.

As we've seen before, in the previous paragraph, on municipal level it's possible to join the council meetings, and because the sizes of the municipalities are quite manageable, the possibility to bump into the mayor while grocery shopping, and ask him directly why he was so stupid to handing his checks of going out of diner with his wife in with the municipal balance.

- **Public space for holding representatives accountable**

As public space is the place for eruption, discussion and conflict, as designed in history it also is an essential breeding ground for democracy. Public space has always been the place to discuss politics (Harvey, 2012). Thus, public space has a big influence on the ability to hold leaders accountable, as public space could either serve this need, or dismantle it. We see this in multiple international examples where important political tipping points happened in public space. Remember Tienanmen-square, the occupy movements or our own famous Dam-square? In Brussels, there are places that are designed for this purpose as well. Unfortunately, looking at these places, or other similar places in Brussels where this type of public spaces would be of value, this kind of facilities are lacking completely, and any activity with it. As this is of high importance for the functionality of democracy in relation to the city scape through all layers of democracy, in this research an extra chapter is dedicated to the notion of the current relation between democracy and public space in Brussels.

- **Accountability as part of the system**

Still, holding leaders accountable is not made an integrative part of the democratic system on a municipal level. There are no weekly or monthly debate nights, there are no public arrangements with civil initiatives where certain key-members of the municipality can join the councils' debates, or any other form of publicly announcing how the citizens would be able to hold the council accountable. Although the first step -of observing- is considered to some extend, the second step -of holding the representatives accountable, through criticism- is not implemented sufficiently.

In the next layers of democracy, this requirement for a just democracy is made possible through the possible observation of the discussions and votes in the European Council. About the European Unions' Parliament, as it has 3 locations, the location in Brussels is mostly used during preparation work, before the plenary sessions in Strasbourg. In these weeks, the parliaments' members gather with different committees and with their political groups. These meetings are all closed, and the conclusions drawn in these meetings can only be revised through annual accounts, which, for the public, are hard to understand. Then, the MEP's (Member of the European Parliament) also have a week to visit their constituencies, and meet the residents they represent. It is unclear whether these visits have an actual political value or if they are only of a representative for without creating a function of holding the politicians accountable. As it is impossible to find agenda's or planners that describe the activities of the MEP's during this week, it's assumed that the political value of these activities is limited.

Thus, at the European level, the MEP's are chosen directly and therefor represent the citizens' high authority ad should be hold accountable the easiest. Furthermore, the council discussions are public and so is the voting behavior, which makes the building of the European Union public and creates opportunity for holding politicians accountable, even though the members of the Council were not directly elected. This ensures that even within institutes where the members are not directly elected, ability to hold these members accountable for their actions is slightly present. But, just like in the other levels of democracy and mentioned in the paragraph about the accountability of council-members in the municipal councils, urban space should be the ultimate confrontation area for these objectives, not within the territory of the politicians like the Council building. The research further looks more deeply into this in Chapter Public Space

- **Conclusions about accountability**

Concluding from this research is that the accountability of the politicians is currently insufficient. Although there are several implementations to create observation by the possibility to join council meetings

on municipal and European levels, listen to the discussions and votes and from there on out possibly criticize. But, the second step in holding accountable: active criticism, is implemented in none of the layers. This is a very big problem, as it influences the relation between the electorate and their leaders and in an electoral democracy the relation between the leaders and the electorate is one of the most important factors for the democracy to function in a stable manner (Diamond, 2008).

Even more so, the public space can add great value in the process of being able to hold politicians accountable. As explained before this is an important analysis to be done on the city to say something about the ability of citizens to hold politicians accountable. This is thoroughly examined in the chapter Public Space.

CARTOON VISUALIZING THE 'REVOLVING DOOR'
PHENOMENON

MEANINGFULNESS OF THE ACT IN THE OFFICE

The fourth element of analyzing how democracy in Brussels is functioning, and what problems it is facing is the meaningfulness of the act in the office of politicians and the way they act in the office generally. How do they go about conducting business? Are they objective, credible?

For the municipalities, the federal and capital-region systems, the meaningfulness of the act in office is a different story then for the European Unions politicians. For these smaller democratic institutes, the observatory processes are smaller and the control is more natural, via acquaintances. Moreover, as the meaningfulness of the act in office for these levels of democracy have not been openly and thoroughly discussed in media or science, it falls outside of the scope of this research to go into this. Therefor, this part of the research will focus on on the meaningfulness of the act in office of the European Union's employees.

• **Credibility of European Union's employees**

There have been several researches about credibility and meaningfulness of conducting business for the European Union's employees by journalists, civil society and the European Union itself. (Amin, 2004; De Groof, 2008; Janning, 2016; European Commission, 2001). Most of them focus on the role of the lobbyist and the 'Revolving Door' in relation to this. One of these researches done by a cooperation of The Guardian, Le Monde, El País, Süddeutsche Zeitung and La Stampa (2014), say the lobbyist are influencing 75% of the European legislations.

Lobbyist are individuals who, mostly from corporations, private sectors, NGO's or associations try to influence the actions, policies, decisions and direction of the political processes. Many of these organizations hold their office in Brussels exactly because of this reason, so they will be in closer contact with the legislators of the EU. This is a clear sign of the potential a city has when it houses political institutes. A city is able to either isolate or involve politics with the city, and is thus of great importance in it's relation.

• **The 'Revolving Door'-phenomenon**

Then there is also a phenomenon called 'the revolving door', meaning EU employees find new jobs after their EU-career in lobby organizations, and using their information of EU institutions and the inside knowledge about the processes for influencing the policies in favor of one goal or company. This is one of the most important ways in which lobbyists can influence the political agenda. A senior European decision-maker leaves office and goes straight into lobby jobs, adds significant risks of conflicts of interests, undermining democratic, public-interest decision-making (Corporate Europe Observatory, N.D..). An example in this is the process of regulating chemical use within the European Union. Obviously, the

chemical industry would be put in risk by any legislation implementations, as it might impact their profit. According to the CEO, the chemical industry launched a multi-million euro campaign to completely dismantle the proposal. Furthermore, the director of the department that was working on this proposal was headhunted as general advisor for Business Europe, while the chemical multinational BASF was founding advisors within the department, and seconded more than 200 of its staff members to the German government, making it easier to get policy information and influence decisions made about it. These are all separately and as a whole signs of the flawed way of acting in office of the European Union's employees and all governmental layers underneath. As these ways of influencing all only enabled through the inattentiveness of the politicians themselves, the consequences will be felt throughout the whole democratic system (Diamond, 2008).

- **Lobbying**

In theory, lobbying stems from the fact that, just like in local democratic systems, politicians are approachable on the street or via the regular ways, and that by talking to them you can not only hold them accountable for their way of working, but also influence them by expressing your views and opinions, or facts and expertise. This is valuable for the politicians, as it gives them valuable feedback of the wishes and needs of the people. But, as is made visible through multiple researches into the world of lobbying, lobbying is done for 75% to influence politics for corporate interests (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2011). For them, it pays out to invest in the lobbying process with millions of euros and often direct access to policy-makers through the revolving door mechanism. Websites such as lobbyplag.eu, https://corporateeurope.org/, https://transparency.eu/ and http://www.integritywatch.eu dedicate all their time to finding out what the influence is of lobbyists on the regulatory processes within the EU. These websites discovered that over 30.000 people are actively lobbying and earning money with this activity within Brussels alone, almost having one lobbyist per EU-employee to influence directly (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2011).

Furthermore, as the EU has a business of calling out expert-groups to ask for advice, before setting up concepts for legislations. These experts are not chosen by the people and have no other responsibility other than their backgrounds. In some expert groups, it's been proven that the experts coming from industry and therefor are commercially motivated outnumber all other categories, from academia to consumer groups or trade unions in a ratio from 4:1. So for every academically motivated, consumer motivated or employee motivated expert there are 4 commercially motivated experts on the table to advise the Commissioner on the legislation. If looked at a random example, the financial sector, after the big financial

crisis, the expert group was filled with 4 experts from the biggest financial corporations: Lehman Brothers, BNP Paribas, Goldman Sachs and Citigroup. So, the European Commission is being advised on regulating the financial sector, by, the exact financial sector that would be regulated by this legislation (Corporate Europe Observatory, 2011).

- **Knowledge of Fraud**

Only a few of these cases of fraud and corruption are ever brought to light or reported, and even fewer are brought to justice. Journalism and mass media can be a powerful tool that can help shed light on and raise awareness around corruption cases, indirectly applying pressure on public authorities and ultimately contributing to the prevention and fight against corruption. These types of activity come back to giving meaning to your act in the office, and being responsible for the life of thousands if not millions citizens. This is an indication that, instead of the highest authority being with the citizen, who elect their representatives and such, the highest form of authority is with the market, and most of all the NGO's and corporations that lead the market. This is not due to the quality of the elections or the accountability, but due to the way the politicians act while in the office, and the meaningfulness of their acting for the citizens.

CONCLUSION

When assessing the manifestation of the system of democracy in Brussels, the following elements have been discussed:

-the quality of the elections;

-the place of authority;

-the possibility to holding politicians accountable;

-the meaningfulness of the act of politicians in the public.

All of these elements have been assessed as insufficient.

• **Assessment of the quality of the elections**

The quality of the elections is undermined due to the lack of inclusiveness of the elections: the elections dismiss around 50% (municipal elections), 20% (national/regional= elections) or 10% (EU elections) of the population. Moreover, the citizens that are represented by these numbers are equally the citizen dismissed due to the age limit of 18, and the citizens dismissed because of a migration background. This diminishes a large group of people that are repeatedly underrepresented, not just in these in elections, but also in the rest of the city's system that influences the inclusiveness of democracy.

• **Assessment of the place of authority**

Regarding the place of authority, as it is an electoral democracy the authority lies mostly indirectly with the citizens. Nevertheless, it is interesting to assess the way the high authority level of citizens and of their direct representatives is implemented in the democratic system. This implementation is only seen at the level of the municipality and the EU. On these levels, citizens are at least able to join the council meetings, but unfortunately, they are not able to engage. In the national and the democratic level of the BCR, citizens are not able to make use of their theoretical authority in other ways then elections.

• **Assessment of the ability to holding politicians accountable**

The third aspect of the manifestation of the democratic system is the possibility to hold politicians accountable. As people can join council meetings, it's easier for them to hold the right politicians accountable. Everything that happens behind closed doors eliminates this process and breaks down the democratic system. Although the EU has a full week per 6 weeks planned for meeting their citizens, it is unclear what value this has in political sense, as there are no agenda's or plans public to show what the MEP's will do during this week and who they will see or what they will discuss. This creates the assumption that this week is more for the promotion of the European Parliament and their activities, then for discussions or opening up to their weaknesses and thus being able to hold the MEP's accountable. But, as said in this paragraph extensively as well, the assessment of the public space in the process of holding politicians accountable is essential. Through the assessing of public space, we can further enhance the analysis of the possibility to hold politicians accountable, as the public space has always been the place for negotiation, discussion and conflict. More about this assessment can thus be found in Chapter Public Space.

• **Assessment of the meaningfulness of the act in office**

The fourth element and again a very essential element of a just (electoral) democracy is the meaningfulness of the act of politicians in the office. As the municipal and federal levels are not researched thoroughly or discussed openly for Brussels, the analysis on this side will be saved for future research. In the case of the EU, lobbyists highly influence the meaningfulness of the politicians act in office. As researched, more than 30.000 lobbyists everyday try to influence the legislation processes within the European Union. This would have never grown to this size if it wasn't working what the politicians were doing. As these lobbyists for 75% represent corporate or commercial interests, this is an example of how the workings of the employers isn't meaningful, but is following interests outside of the citizens.

Partici-
pation

*An analysis of the manifestation
of Brussels democracy*

As the goal of this research is to find out how to foster democracy to create a more equal society, the analysis of participation must go a bit further than just the participation in civic life. **Therefore, in this chapter, the participation factors got analyzed on Social, economic and finally political aspects.**

NANCY FRASER

From the theory of Nancy Fraser in the book Redistribution or Recognition, at least a dualist perspective is needed to analyze peoples' opportunities in society. These opportunities fully influence the ability to participate, not only in specific political organizations but also in general, in public life. This way, the full scope of participation will be examined, which, ultimately, all influence each other and must be considered as intertwined for creating a functional strategy for solving any possible problems with participation and democracy.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

The base of social participation is recognition.

- **Normative and psychological recognition**

Recognition is a normative and psychological element and comes from recognizing other people despite their specific features, as an autonomous agent. The normative part of recognition is to firstly admit that the person not only has a specific or set of features but is more than just a set of specific features, and that you embrace a positive or neutral attitude towards the person for having this feature. This means that to recognize someone, implies that you bear obligations to treat the person in a certain way: as a free and equal person. This is the normative part of recognition, the psychological importance, comes from the negative effect of being depicted by the surrounding others or societal norms in a one-sided or negative way. If this happens to someone, it is much harder for them to acknowledge themselves and their lives as being valuable. This not just limits people in pursuing greatness in their lives, but also harms them by being demeaned as inferior humans. Thus, recognition is not only a normative element in society but also a psychological necessity for individuals. (Taylor, 1992, 26) (Fanon, 1952).

- **Struggles with recognition**

Struggles with recognition for example come from indigenous land claims, women's care work, homosexual marriage or Muslim head-scarfs. This theory ultimately comes from the figure of 'The struggle for recognition' first introduced by Hegel in 1977, as it finds a renewed purpose in the

EMPTY QUESTIONNAIRE

globalizing and capitalist society that accelerates transcultural contacts, breaking up typical identities, making them more interpretative and building cross-cutting differences (Fraser & Honneth, 2001). In Brussels democracy, it's not just the before mentioned examples of recognition for minorities, but also the process of recognition that enables a mirroring of the self through the other, that is essential. As the politicians in Brussels have been proven to work isolated and not foster the needs of the subservient citizens, adequate recognition can foster a mutual relation between the politicians and the citizens, serving democratic processes from there on out (Hein, 2004a).

- **Assessment of recognition in this project**
  To assess the status of recognition in Brussels, an extensive research would be needed, including focus-groups and in depth interviews. As recognition is a psychological element and these research tools fall outside the possibilities for this research, the assessment of recognition is done on a thin layer of information, and needs further investigation before being able to proof anything regarding this subject. Nevertheless, there are certain ways to find hints of the level of recognition currently in place in Brussels. Especially when focused on the objectives of this research: to assess whether fostering democracy will establish more equality in social, economic and political opportunities, it's possible to set up an assessment and possibly draw some conclusions.

- **Fieldwork**
  This assessment is done via fieldwork in a specific politically and economic laden area (See the red rectangle on page 74). This area is chosen as a key point in assessing recognition, as it covers highly diverse groups and is subject to capitalizing processes, resulting in the cross-cutting axes of differences as mentioned above. The fieldwork consisted of observations and interviews on and about the use of public space. The interviews were done via a short questionnaire with people in the different public spaces and was focused on who these people were, why they were using the specific public space and what they were doing there. The full completed questionnaires can be looked at upon request. The observations were done to examine the different peoples' way of using the public space and count the different types of people using different types of public spaces.
  The result of these observations can be seen on the next page. What shows this is, and this covers the results of the questionnaires as well, that the different people live very segregated, in a specific way. The biggest differences in peoples' features can be found in the northern part of the assessment area, where the deprivation is the highest, the mix of people there was the highest as well. Seeing old, young, African, white, Hispanic, busy and laid back people all together in just a couple of public

Name: _____
Age: _____
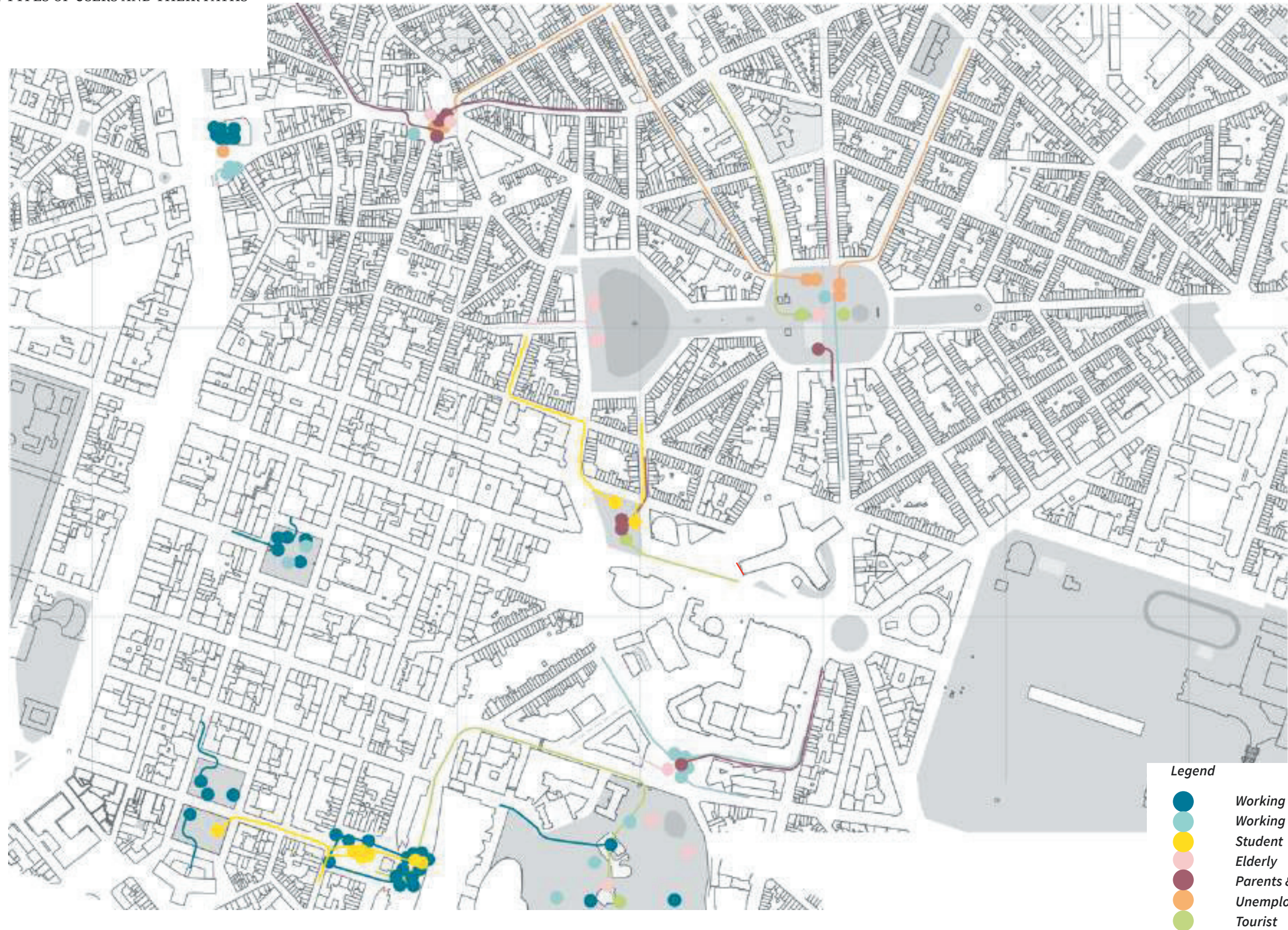Job: _____
Place of residence: _____

What brings you here? | Is it occasional or frequent? | How do you feel about the area?

Where were you before you came here? | What do you do when you come here? | Who do you meet in this area?

Can you mark on the map, places like this that you know, and give an X to the place you dislike, and an O to the places you like, like the example below.

~THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE REPRODUCED OR USED FOR ANY UNETHICAL GOALS, IT IS MERELY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

RESULTS OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF USERS AND THEIR PATHS
IN PUBLIC SPACE

Legend

- Working for EU
- Working
- Student
- Elderly
- Parents & kids
- Unemployed
- Tourist

Scale 1:750

spaces. But, when going south, near the political institutes, this changed completely. Even though the distance between the public spaces didn't increase above the distance people mentioned they traveled for going to the public space, the mix of different people vanished.

As mentioned before, this assessment cannot be a full declaration of mis-recognition in this area. For this, it is too small and the results are not viable enough. Still, the results are so extreme that a conclusion about the mis-recognition of differences is inevitable. As there is absolutely no mixing between North & South, it can be said that this disables the notion of recognition in this area, or the mutual relation between politicians and citizens that can enforce recognition.

Participation on economic aspects focuses on the distribution of trading means, euros in the case of Brussels. Thus, this part of the analyses focuses on how the distribution of money disables or enables participation in certain groups in Brussels' society. For this, a look in the economic distribution of Brussels is necessary. This is divided in the following subjects:
-The youth unemployment.
-The amount of long-term unemployed;
-The median income;
-The access to internet in the household;
-The surface area;
-The distinction in employment rates differentiated for foreign-born employment in Europe.

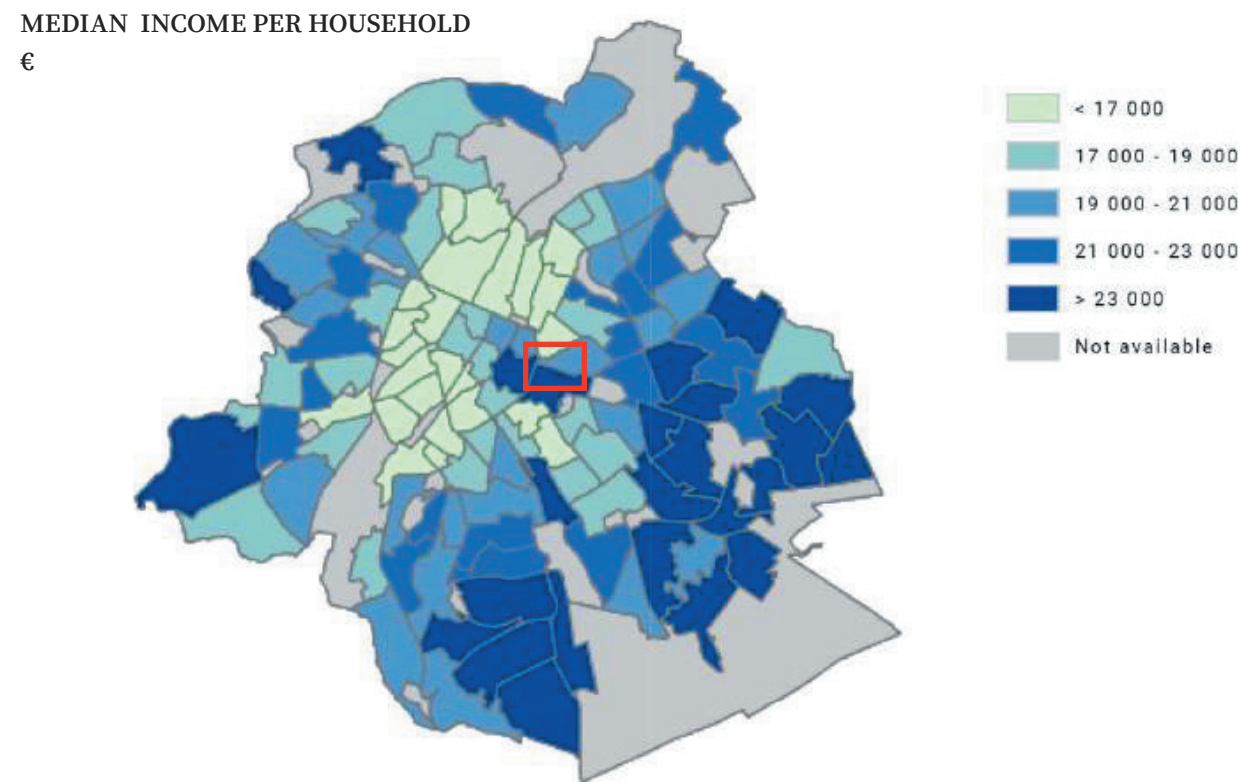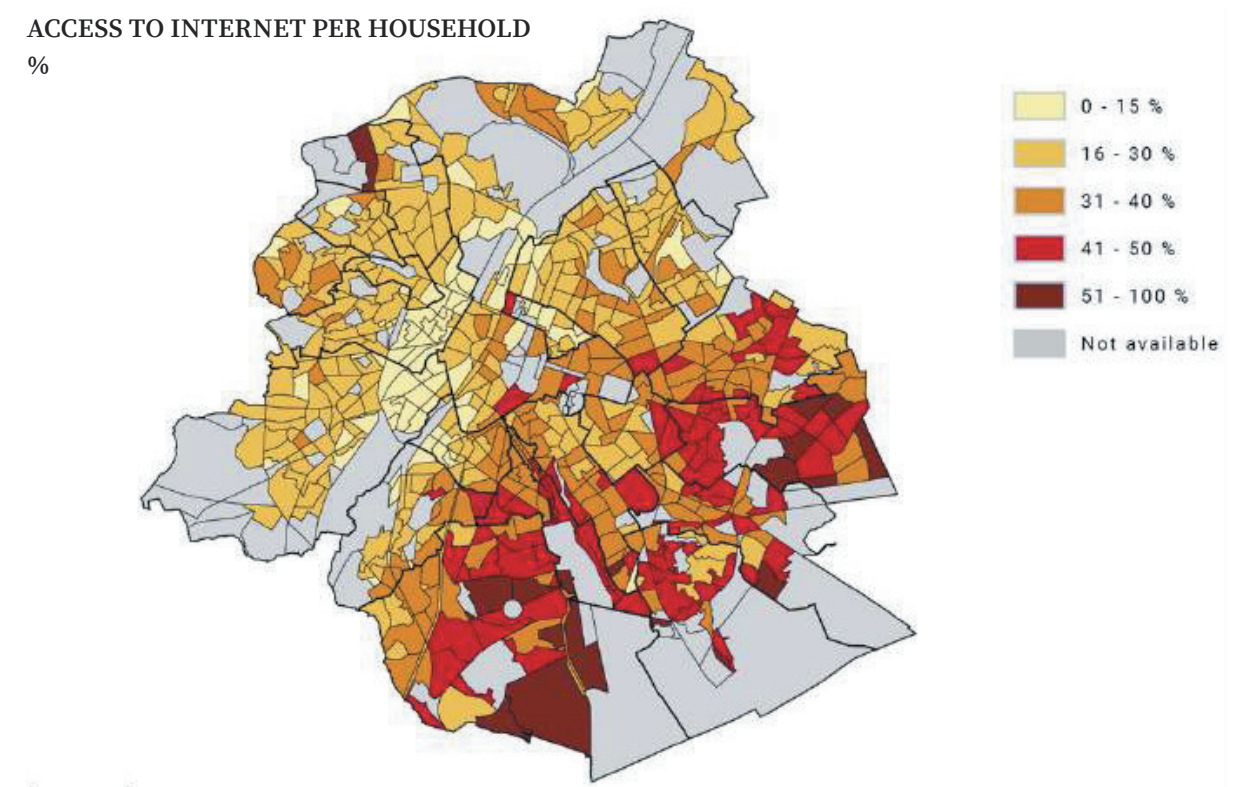All maps are visualizing the entire Brussels Captial Region.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT
%

	< 29
	29 - 33
	33 - 36
	36 - 43
	> 43
	< 100 active youngsters
	Not available

2 km
2 mi
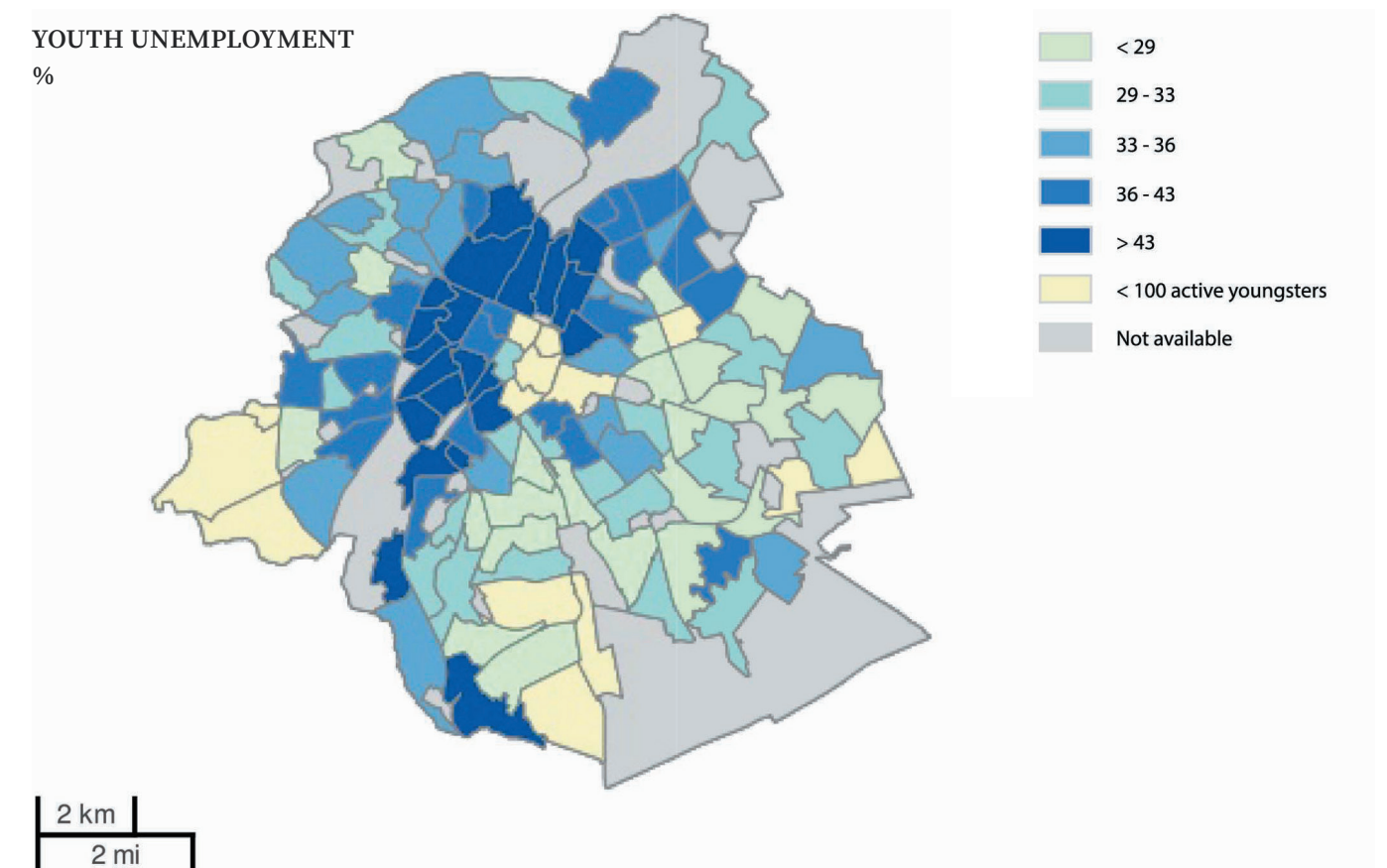
LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT
%

	< 59
	59 - 62
	62 - 64
	64 - 66
	> 66
	< 50 unemployed
	Not available

ACCESS TO INTERNET PER HOUSEHOLD
%

	0 - 15 %
	16 - 30 %
	31 - 40 %
	41 - 50 %
	51 - 100 %
	Not available
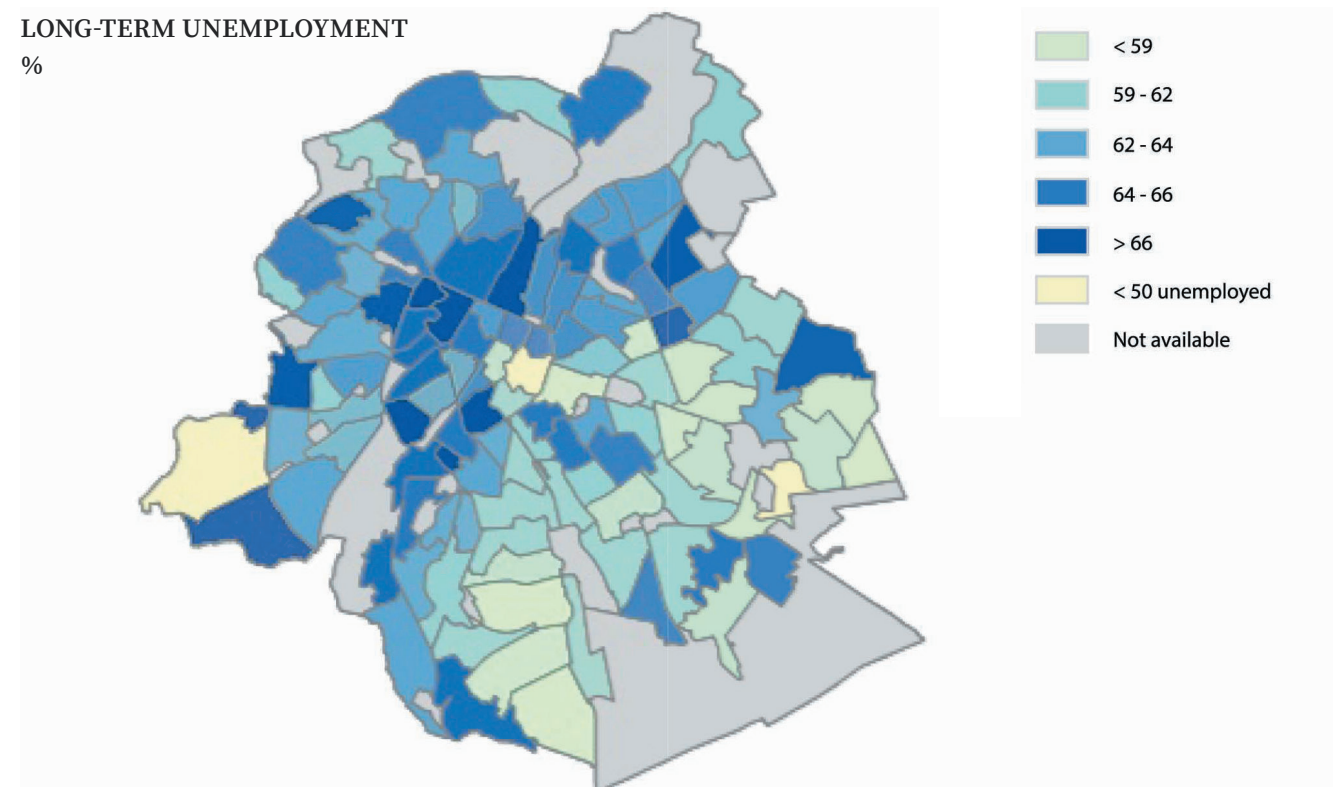
MEDIAN INCOME PER HOUSEHOLD
€

	< 17 000
	17 000 - 19 000
	19 000 - 21 000
	21 000 - 23 000
	> 23 000
	Not available

HOUSING SURFACE PER HOUSEHOLD
M²

	< 30
	30 - 35
	35 - 38,5
	38,5 - 42
	> 42
	Not available

2 km
2 mi

2 km
2 mi

• **Conclusions from the data**

So, what is made visible in the above images is there is some segregation in the aspects of economic distribution. There is a small transition area between elite and deprived. Brussels residents are either deprived, or in great prosperity, living in the suburban areas of the city, only a small area is seen as average. This is also visualized in the fact that Brussels is the richest city in Belgium but still has the highest unemployment-rates in Belgium as well, with a big difference in comparison with the rest of the country.

As seen in the paragraph about social participation, ethnic aspects play a role in the distribution of wealth in the city as well. Visualized in figure V, is the unemployment rates of foreign-born citizens. And although the unemployment of foreign-born is generally high, Belgium is scoring extremely low for a prosperous democratic county. The most problematic area of this is Brussels. As the city with the most immigrants, without any further improvement in relation to foreign-born employment in the perspective of the rest of the country, there is a need for change.

Furthermore, the difference between prosperous and deprived areas in Brussels, as seen in figures above, where the livability ranges from 40% deprived and underprivileged due to access to sufficient housing, internet and employment to neighborhoods in the east with generous surface areas per citizen, very little unemployment and high incomes.

• **Economic regulation**

While Brussels has always been, and still is, a rich city and the richest region in the country, one out of four people lives below the poverty line, and a big part of the wealth is produced by people who live outside the BCR while the residents of Brussels themselves are being confronted with the low employment rates. These low employment rates result in 145.000 Brussels households living on forms of welfare, that are insufficiently protecting their income to live in a humane way.

Hegel already wrote in his book The Phenomenology of Spirit in 1977, that only a strong regulated economy through state legislation can stimulate a free and equal society. According to Hegel, the economy itself is blind to the needs of social communities and minorities, and through the free division of labor, fragmentation and diminished of differences occurs. As already argued by numerous scholars (Amin, 2004; Guérin et al 2007; Hein, 2004; Harvard GSD, 2017; Rifkin, 2001) that the economic system of the EU is a capitalist system with little regulation, going against the notion Hegel made for creating strong state (or continent) regulations for the economy.

FOREIGN-BORN EMPLOYMENT
%

- **Conclusions from the data**

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Besides social and economic influences on participation and democracy, there is of course also political influence on participation and democracy. As recognition influences distribution, social participation influences economic participation, and vice versa, political participation is also part of this and Hegel repeats the need for strong state regulation also in regard with political participation, as it also provides the means for the peoples' political participation and the further development of recognition and redistribution.

- **Analysis method of Political Participation**

The level of political participation derives from the amount of civic activity, the diversity in civic activity and the influence civic activity has on the society. Civic activity entails a lot of different processes in society, it can be a volunteer group for keeping your street clean, it can be a multi-country organization striving for less poverty, or it can be you, alone, opening your doors to people in need.

- **Brussels Citizens Action**

When examining the civic activity in Brussels, all these kinds, and more, appear. One established civic institute, that started as an activists group, is now a credible part of the decision-making in Brussels. This institute is called Bral- Brussels Citizens Action. In their own words: "BRAL organizes actions, lobbies, supports citizens' initiatives and provides advice to the authorities. Our priorities today are: better air quality, an economy that is both green and social, and an efficient city development with room for participation. We work in the Brussels metropolitan region, in all its social and cultural diversity.

As they say, they also support citizen initiatives and receive federal financial support for this. Initiatives they have supported range from activist groups demonstrating for clean air together with public institutes to three people wanting to improve the public space in their neighborhood. But most importantly, they form a bridge between the citizen and the private field, the midfield, start-ups, public administration and other volunteer-organizations. This makes the local civil initiates stronger and the social network more integrated, as multiple different social communities can connect and exchange knowledge, building on previous processes instead of trying to re-invent the wheel.

- **Possible improvements**

Looking from this perspective, the political participation is active, and accessible. But, in the meantime, reports have come out the describe the civic activity as being exclusive (Bral, 2012) and a poor reflection of diversity in Brussels society.

In the case of the specific political system in Brussels, including the Capital-Region and European Union democratic system, and the political participation on this level is necessary. Other than the public inquiry, discussed in the analysis of the authority level of citizens, there are no notable options to participate in decision-making on the level of the federal or capital level, which is in Brussels the same level of democracy.

- **Participating in the European Union**

Looking at the European Union scale of democracy, political participation is differently organized again. In the case of the European Union, participation in decision-making is limited to the processes earlier described, trough voting and visiting the commission discussions and debates. Furthermore, all citizens who are pass on the requirements to vote in the parliamentary elections can propose a legal act in areas which are within the competences of the European Commission. But, to be considered, there are a lot or requirements. The biggest obstacles in executing any initiative is the one million votes from at least 7 different member states, and moreover the group of initiators themselves also must be compose of at least 7 EU citizens from at least 7 different member states. This means, that whenever someone would be eager to change something or propose a change, they will have to gather 6 other people from 6 other EU member states that interested in the change, and are willing to invest the time and money to get it as far to present it to the EU Commission and the EU Parliament.

Furthermore, regarding the lobbying in the EU, in theory it is part of the political participation, as it can be a way for citizens to participate as well. Unfortunately, right now, it isn't. This is due to the aspects mentioned before in the paragraphs about the quality of the elections, holding politicians accountable and the participation opportunities in social and economic aspects.

Further there are no other possibilities for participation.

CONCLUSION

From the three participation possibilities, and the conclusions taken from them, they will be summarized here.

- **Recognition and empowerment**

As different groups in Brussels live very segregated, it's assumable that there is some form of mis-recognition. Thus, stimulation of recognition has to be stimulated.

But recognition is not the only solution: sometimes exactly by denouncing from the traditional, in this case the elite, minorities create social participation, as inclusiveness after systematic forms of oppression is not necessary the solution. The empowerment of the oppressed to define their own aims, their own morals and traditions despite of difference with the traditional majority provides a base for full social participation (Fincher et al, 2014). This also influences the opportunities for the other forms of participation, and thus is a valuable recommendation.

- **Distribution and ethnic minorities**

Regarding the economic participation, there is a disadvantage for ethnic minorities in Brussels. Even 3d generation immigrants still have big disadvantages compared to similar native citizens. Moreover, general employment-levels in Brussels are low and while it's the richest city in the country. Thus, the distribution of means in Brussels should be re-evaluated in order to come to a more equal society.

- **Representation and participation**

Regarding political participation, we see a similar line between ethnic minorities and the specific participation. Moreover, the presence and influence of authority within the political participation on the levels of the EU make the political participation extremely unfavorable for regular citizens.

All in all, participation opportunities are distributed unfairly. This is due to either segregated public lives, no integration in daily patterns, immigrants having disadvantages in education and job-markets, but also general segregation between rich and poor, exclusive civil activity groups and lobbying as a very exclusive activity.

Public Space

Analysis of the facilitation of democracy in public space

After analyzing the manifestations in democratic system and through participation perspectives, it is important to also asses the urban fabric's influence on democracy. **Democratic manifestations are not happening in a void, but in a city, and the way the city is set-up has a big influence on the way people are able to participate in democracy .**

This chapter will analyze how the form of a city has an influence on democracy and what the specifics of this situation are present in Brussels.

- **Set up of chapter**

The analysis will first look at notions of the use of public space found through the spatial experiments conducted during this project. After that, three stereotypical public spaces will be analyzed to look which different relations between political institutes and public spaces are present in Brussels. By only using stereotypical public spaces, it is possible to say more by looking less in detail and more in similarities. By securely choosing the stereotypical public spaces and addressing their differences and specificities, it's possible to draw conclusions before going in depth for the whole city. By choosing the stereotypical pu4blic spaces correctly, it will alo be possible to draw conclusions about different scales of democracy and their relation with public space.

Changer la ville, changer la vie.

- **by Henry Lefebvre**

WHY IS PUBLIC SPACE IMPORTANT IN DEMOCRACY?

As mentioned in the introduction, the relation between democracy and public space is of big influence on the value and manifestation of democracy (Hein, 2006). Even so, that you can analyze the state of a democracy through the state of its public space (Mouffe, 1993).

- **Scholars and writings about democracy in the city**

Multiple scholars have been discussing this in the last decade: Lefebvre, famous for his essay 'The Right to The City', and inspired by this, David Harvey, but also before already Marxist writers and more philosophical scholars like Hannah Arendt have discussed the importance of the form of city in the functionality of society (Arendt, 1963).

In the context of urban transformation, rights are increasingly questioned. What happens after the transformation ultimately influences the rights of the citizens in and around this transformation is in the core of this subject (Smith, 1996).

Lefebvre makes a strong case of designing cities with centers, and by these centers changing the modes of capital accumulation (Lefebvre,

2000). Harvey underlines this by adding more emphasis on flexibility of urban form and the assimilation of new cultural forms in these centers.

• **Focus of this analysis**

This analysis looks at Brussels public spaces that have potential to facilitate democratic manifestation.

After analyzing the whole city, three stereotypical public spaces have been derived that have the potential to fully foster democracy, each of them for different reasons. Therefor, the executing of this assessment will focus on these stereotypical public spaces instead of the whole city. In future researches it should be further assessed and more differentiating in the cities potential for fostering democracy should be made.

Furthermore, the assessment criteria of this research are focusing merely on the manifestation of democracy in this public space. This means how the different public spaces are being used currently, how different elements in the public space influence these uses and how this could be improved in order to facilitate democratic manifestation.

GENERAL NOTIONS OF RELATION OF THE CITY AND POLITICS IN BRUSSELS

Firstly , certain notions of the use of public space found through specific parts of the experimental researches will be listed here. This information is highly valuable as it deepens the information this project presents about democracy, public space and equality.

• **The lifestyle of employees of the European Union**

By trying to create integration or interaction during the experimental phase of the research, it became clear that, like found in the fieldwork, the employees of the European Union live and work very isolated from the public life in Brussels.

This is not only visible from the fieldwork, when we saw a high segregation in the use of public space by different types of residents but increases if we look more deeply into the lives of these employees. Started from the mere beginning of the political life in Brussels, the rich and well-off lived in the Southeast and the poor in the Northwest. It's convenient for the new metropolitan employees of the corporate offices and European Union, that the EU-institutes were built in the East of the city as well, with good connections to the better housing in the Flemish community around the city. This is where the appropriate housing for them were built, and with them the specific amenities that they need for living. For example, European Schools that serve the children of European Union's employees.

These specific amenities and location of their housing being focused on this area, further stimulated the segregation between these politicians

and the general city life. The European Unions employees life far away and only have access to these schools and maybe other specific amenities in this area, ultimately decreasing the possible interest in living in the center of Brussels for most employees.

This is stimulated even more by fully servicing these lifestyles by adding parking space for every employee directly under every European Union 's building (51N4E et al, 2012). Together with the full service of cafeterias for emplyees within the buildings, the employee only has their car as a connection to the public space in Brussels, without actually touching it themselves, if they don't go out of their way.

BRUSSELS SERVING THIS IMPORTANCE

For the assessment of the democratic value of public space in Brussels 3 different spaces are chosen as representatives for the cities public space:

1 Traditional old square in the center of Brussels, adjacent to the Beurs –the old stock exchange-;

2 Modern political institute with a designed public square adjacent to the EU Parliament;

3 Traditional old square of the municipality.

These three spaces have been chosen on the basis of contrasting and corresponding elements. On the one hand, all the public spaces are laden with democratic value, as a place for the stock-exchange, as a space next to the EU Parliament and as a historically designed public space for interaction, they have different meaning in democracy. The analysis of it's democratic value and the way it fosters democracy, in relation to the other stereotypical public spaces will be discussed in the following section.

EUROPEAN UNIONS LIVING AREAS IN COMBINATION WITH
THE EU-QUARTER AND THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS
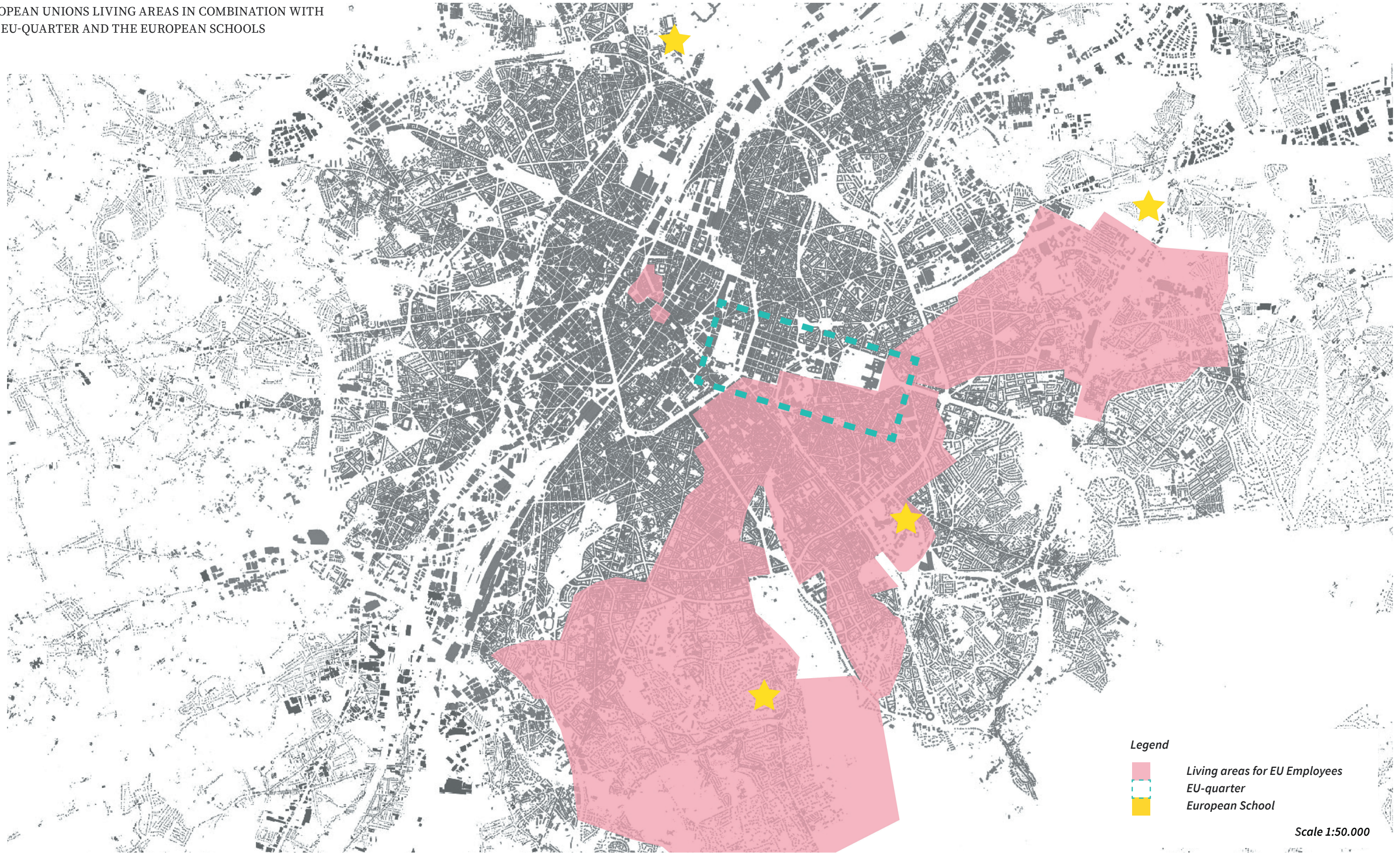
Legend

Living areas for EU Employees
EU-quarter
European School

Scale 1:50.000

BEURSPLEIN MAP
Including amenities

BEURSPLEIN (SQUARE ADJACENT TO STOCK EXCHANGE)

- **Building history**

The stock exchange was built in 1868, and along side the Brusselisation and the vaulting of the Senne. This process, as described already in the beginning of this book, was a very undemocratic process. Regardless of this, the current use of the square is the most democratic of the whole city. As can be seen on the following page, during a demonstration against Trumps arrival in Brussels.

The reason for this livelihood is due to the prominent location of the building, and the prominent architectural design. The building is situated in the middle of the old city center, and surrounded by a commercialized area. Shortly after it's completion the square got filled with public transport lines bringing the stockbrokers to the building. This resulted in the square becoming a important nerve in the daily lives of people, with multiple public transport and car routes mixing, a lot of different types of people were crossing the square and this created a multitude of activity (Moyersoen, 2013).

- **Current use**

The results of this process can still be seen today. It is still a crossection of a multitude of people and together with the commercialization of the area, the pedestrianizing became a priority. Not longer then a year ago, the square completely transformed into a pedestrian area. Moreover, the function of the stock-exchange has been moved to another building somewhere outside of the city, and this building gets a new function as a beer-museum. This transformation, together with the functions surrounding the square is a clear reflection of the commercialization of city centers, and the dismissal of possible political activity (Smith, 1996).

- **Conclusions**

Although the square is regularly being used for democratic purposes because of these processes of transforming the function and commercialization of it's surrounding, the square misses the integrating with a part of the political system of Brussels. While the squares dimensions, place and design are very suitable for demonstrations, as confirmed by the amount of demonstrations taken place there, the only way to communicate the objectives of the demonstrations with the target (people in place of decision-making processes) is through the media. This is merely a indirect communication and this could be improved through placing the demonstrations in the near distance of a political or politically-involved building.

Legend

The old stock-exchange

Scale 1:2000
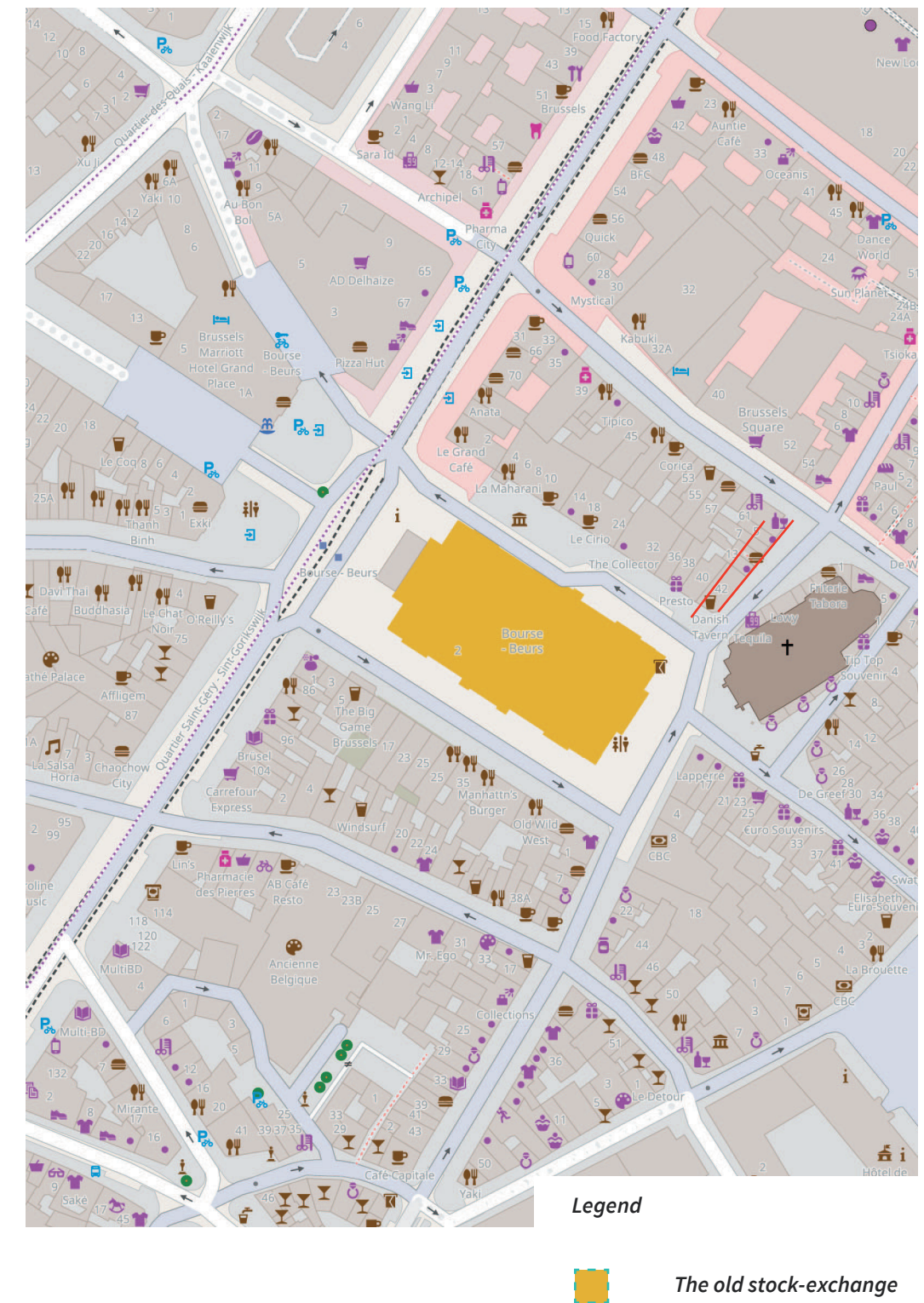
BEURSPLEIN IN 1885
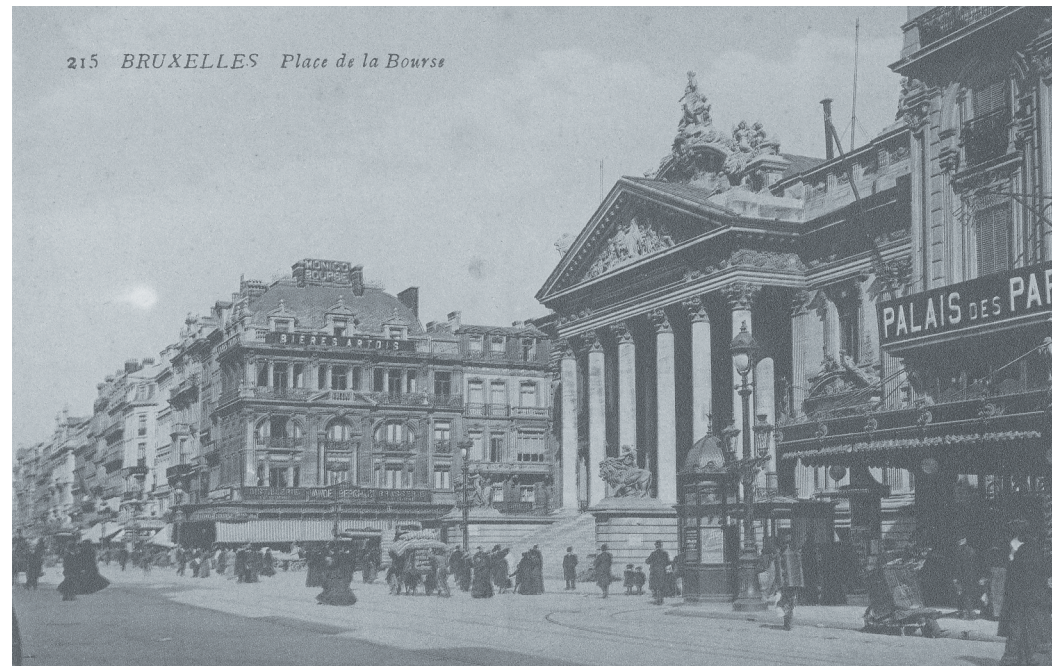
BEURSPLEIN IN 2017
During an anti-Trump/pro-peace demonstration

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTS-SQUARE

- **History**

The European Parliament opened in 1993, but the square, or simply 'The Mall' as it is being called, was completed in 2002. The big pedestrian esplanade runs the total length of the European Parliament building(s) and connects the building to the Luxembourg Square. It covers a railway station that links the Parliament with the rest of the world, and connects Luxembourg Square with Leopold Park in the east.

- **Current use**

The promenade has been criticized for being devoid of life. As the parliamentary authorities did not want to share the site with private enterprises, together with the high security measurements that they found necessary to undertake, the attractiveness of the promenade is extremely low.

Besides these obstacles that the site faces, the directional design of the area is also resulting in very low use. As the square is very long, seen in the plan on the opposite page, but leads nowhere. In the north, it gets cut of by Rue Belliard and in the south it ends at a residential street, although in close proximity of local museum. Unfortunately there has never been any effort made into enhancing routing through the Mall, not from North-South but also not from East-West, even though this was originally part of the design-objectives (Demey, 2007).

- **Conclusion**

So, even though this square has the elements of being adjacent to important decision-makers in the political system of democracy. Because it is completely isolated from any daily pattern and derived from any kind of function, the use of this square in order to stimulate democratic activity is zero. The use of this square to stimulate any other activity is also zero. The only cause for activity on this square has been when the European President organized a festivity to open it up, and even then probably the amount of security employees was higher then the amount of visitors. It would be advisable to implement a multitude of functions and transport-modes in the proximity of this square, to stimulate different uses and different users and create a more lively atmosphere from whereon out all kinds of activities can spring, like seen on the Beursplein.

PARLEMENTSBUILDING
Including amenities

Legend

The European Parliament

Scale 1:2000
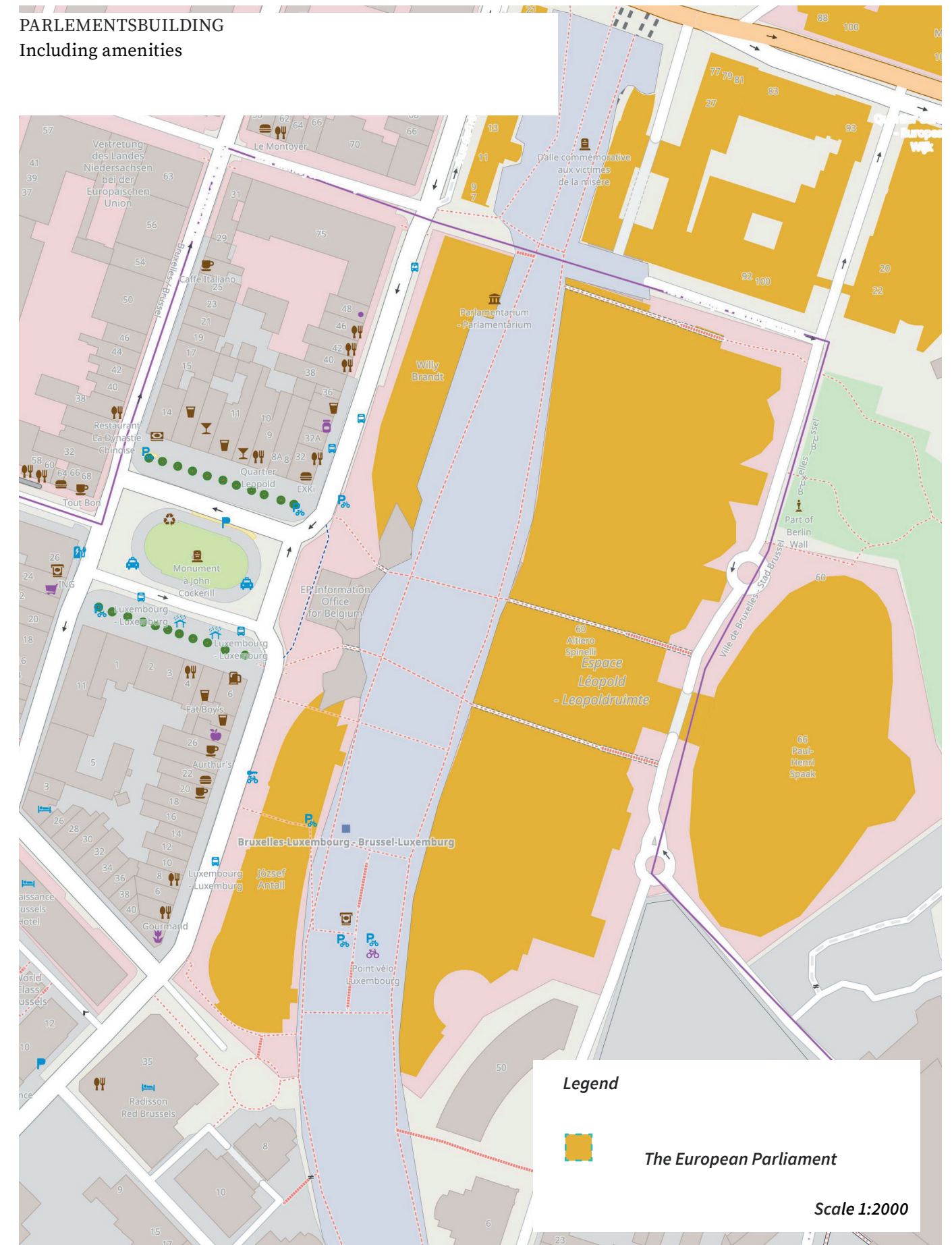
THE ENTRANCE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND CON-
NECTION FROM EAST TO WEST

THE SIGHT FROM THE MAIN ENTRANCE ONTO THE SQUARE

ST GILLIS MUNICIPAL BUILDING

GEMEENTEPLAATS (MUNICIPALSQUARE)

- **History**

The municipalities in Brussels all have very extravagant municipal-buildings. The municipal building for St. Gillis and it's square was designed in a eclectic style, construction finished in 1904. Its plan is designed in a way to form a square in front of the entrance that is embraced by two wings of the buildings, as to embrace the visitors. Today, this embraced square is solely used for parking, as seen in the picture on the next page.

- **Current use & Conclusion**

Because of this, it's striking that the design that was meant to integrate the residents literally with the building, by the use of the wings, now creates an even bigger distance between the resident and the politicians. The square is almost enclosed by the cars and pedestrians have to cross a car-road without a pedestrian-crossing and walk over the car-centered set-up of the municipal building in order to reach the building, where the neo-renaissance facade with a big stair in the middle, also radiates a sense of being unattainable and mainly focuses on creating a powerful / representative appearance.
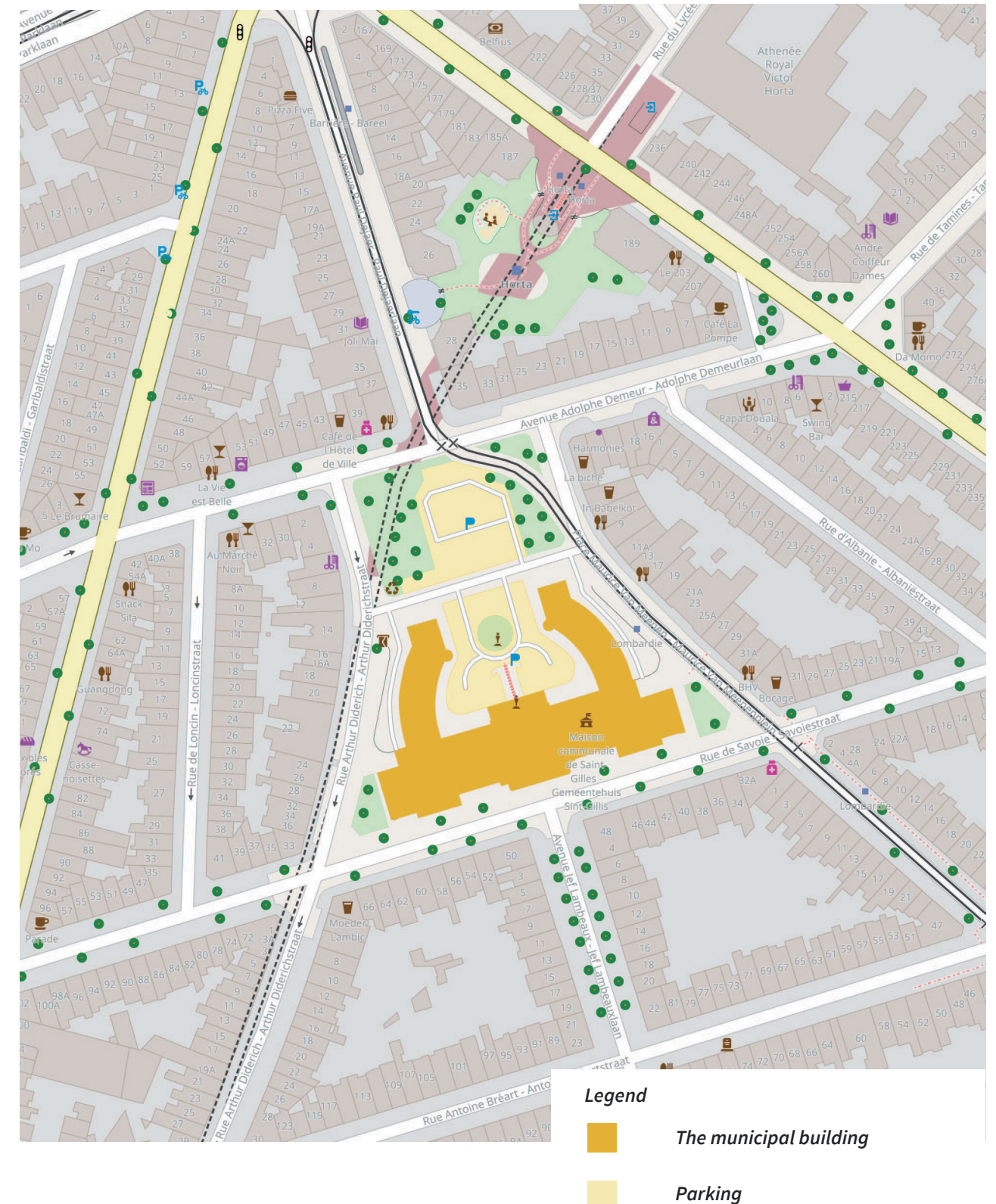
CONCLUSION

This chapter and analysis of democratic public space merely focuses on the ability of public space to facilitate the manifestation of democracy, and also limits itself by looking at three stereotypical public spaces in Brussels that should or have the potential to achieve this. But regarding the 3 types of public space discussed, certain conclusions can be made.

First of all, the most important aspect of a facilitation of democratic manifestation is the use of this space. Made very clear with the example of public space type 2 is that a public space can have every element of creating a public space that facilitates democratic manifestation, but lack elements that create use. Elements like this are the integration with daily patterns of people, a multitude of functions and a pedestrianized area, taken from the analysis of the highly used square of the Beursplein.

Secondly of use is the integration of this space with a political institute, as the first example, the Beursplein, has these 3 examples but misses the integration with a political institute and because of that misses an important aspect of democratic manifestation, namely reaching the target group.

Legend

The municipal building

Parking

Scale 1:2000

MUNICIPAL BUILDING FOR ST GILLIS IN 1906

MUNICIPAL BUILDING FOR ST GILLIS IN 2014

Conclu-sions

Conclusions of evaluating the current democratic situation

The conclusions of this analysis are based on the functionality of democracy in Brussels. This analysis is based on democracy as it is taken as the main focus for improving equality among the citizens in Brussels. But, before this equality can be improved, it's important to asses problems present in the democratic system itself.

For this, the research looked at the elements of a democratic system, at the participation opportunities and at the public space in relation to this.

The elements that are taken to analyze the democratic system and the conclusions made about these elements will be shortly repeated in the following section.

THE QUALITY OF THE ELECTIONS:

The elections are fair, regular and controllable but not inclusive, which is bad because it is the main element of influence in electoral democracy. Around 400.000 people can not vote in any elections from which 25% is under 18 and 75% is either not registered as part of the electorate or can not register because of they are not illegible for becoming a Belgian citizen.

PLACE OF AUTHORITY:

Citizens are able to attend council-meetings on municipal and EU level, but not able to intervene, discuss or influence these meetings. On the federal and level of government by the BCR, citizens are not able to attend meetings. There are public inquiries to engage upon.

ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE LEADERS:

The ability of citizens to hold their leaders accountable is insufficient, observation is possible but the second step, active criticism is not possible. There is no relation between citizens and politicians. More about this in the conclusion about the public space.

MEANINGFULNESS OF THE ACT IN OFFICE:

The big influence lobbyists have on politicians in the EU parliament is a clear sign that the meaningfulness of their act in office is insufficient. For the municipalities, federal government as well as the government of the BCR, these lobby practices are of no importance, as these levels of governance have less of a impact on big processes, and are thereby of less interests on these global players that invest big in these businesses.

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION:

Socially, there is segregation in the way groups life their public life. This is a reason to assume that there is mis-recognition in the specific area analyzed regarding this. Stimulating recognition can be a start in solving the inequality of social participation, but it's important to keep in mind that only recognition should not be the full answer to this problem. A stimulation of empowerment of the oppressed should be a part of the solution as well.

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:

Regarding economic participation, namely the big difference between native citizens and citizens with an immigrant background is essential. Due to free market regulation, oppressed groups like these are disadvantaged and elite groups profit.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:

About political participation, there are citizens who join the civic activity in local groups, and there is BRAL that increases civil participation on all levels of governance within Brussels. Moreover, the public inquiries make it possible to participate in decision-making-processes on federal levels as well. Theoretically all citizens can also participate in decision-making processes through lobby activities, as all government levels are represented within the city, the accessibility of this activity is much higher. Unfortunately, this type of participation is only accessible for the top of the elite class as it takes a lot of time and money to get in contact with the correct politicians.

PUBLIC SPACE:

Lastly, the facilities of public space in regards to democracy are assessed. The three different public spaces that serve democracy are facilitating democracy in through their own characteristics, but the conclusions of the similarities and differences mainly resonate on stimulating use and integrating the correct target groups. Moreover, the employees of the European Union live a life isolated from Brussels, as their daily pattern focuses on traveling by car between their living environment on the outskirts of Brussels and their work-environment in the European Quarter.

Recom-menda-tions

Improvements based on the analysis of the current situation

01.   Integrate public spaces adjacent to political institutes with the daily patterns of different people;

02.   Implement a multitude of use in these public spaces;

03.   Lobby activities should be accessible to larger groups in order to use the political potential Brussels has;

04.   Citizens with a migrant background should get more opportunity to participate in the economy, for example by giving them priority on the job market or by stimulating counter-economic practices;

05.   Social participation should be improved by stimulating recognition but also by empowering oppressed groups;

06.   Lobby practices should be moved to the public;

07.   Accountability of politicians should be improved by facilitating open criticism of politicians;

08.   It should be addressed to give a voice to people that are unheard due to the current exclusiveness of elections.

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