interiors between buildings.

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF URBAN PUBLIC SPACE AND ITS EMOTIONAL ROLE FOR A 21st CENTURY SOCIETY

BDes (Hons) Interior & Environmental Design

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INTRODUCTION

It is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population will be urbanised by 2050 (UN DESA, 2018). Public space is a core element of the city that is never far away from urban life. The most commonly acknowledged versions of public space are places to gather outdoors such as squares, streets or parks. However, functional urban infrastructures such as roads, pavements, alleyways, lanes and elevated walkways are also public spaces, connecting the many elements of a city, containing ever-changing combinations of people and interactions. These physical entities have come to mean a lot more to people in cities than just their ability to connect places and neighbourhoods geographically.

'The street is the river of life of the city, the place where we come together.' (Whyte, 2012, p.7) However, much of last century's urban development has adversely affected the social quality of public space, in many cases as by-product of architecture or civil construction projects. This dissertation will explore public space beyond its physical and functional roles in the city. Many historical and socio-economic factors could be considered to analyse twenty-first century urban design, but the author's studies in interior and environmental disciplines have informed this particular focus on the sociological and emotional role of public space. 'The city' will be referred to along with 'urban' as its relative adjective for the purposes of this critical analysis, to represent all varieties of cities known and recognised, from large towns to current megacities. 'Interior' is used The term 'urban designers' will be used as a catch-all term for any form of practitioner involved in shaping city spaces. This includes, but is not limited to designers, architects, engineers, urban planners and municipal bodies. Literature from all the disciplines stated has been studied to develop a

practical as well as a philosophical understanding of urban public space. The terms 'individual' and 'user' are used, sometimes interchangeably, to refer to any person who uses urban public space.

The philosophies discussed in this dissertation to demonstrate predominantly European and North American arguments. This is a result of the author's education in design through British University and Higher Education structures. It should be acknowledged that this topic could also be addressed through other cultural lenses. Where studies on human behaviour are cited, the author has made an effort to use global publications from organisations such as the United Nations to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of urban peoples as a whole.

This dissertation is split into three chapters. Chapter 1 is an attempt to understand and deconstruct the origins, theory and context of 'the city' and its physical public space, limited to key design movements of the last century. Chapter 2 concentrates on the less tangible aspects of public space through an emotional analysis of individual and collective wellbeing. Chapter 3 applies the research gathered and proposes three analogies linking interior spaces and successful urban spaces. The analogies critically compare public space to the Living Room, the Art Museum and the Jazz Club covering themes of domesticity, creativity and music. This final chapter is also supplemented by the author's sketch collages to visually depict the analogies as human-scaled interactions.

DESIGN METHODS

1.

Chapter 1 acts as a critical review of urban design methods referring to case studies and literature. This will be limited to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, analysing specifically the proponents and critics of 'Modernist Cities' (section 1.1) and the reactions against this legacy in 'The Human Scale' (section 1.2). Both sections review movements and discussions that have altered perception of public space in the urban realm.

1.1 modernist cities

As an urban design movement, Modernism emerged through the work of practitioners of the early twentieth century. It acted as a physical reaction to social problems of the nineteenth century that had caused cities to become unequal, unsanitary, and unorganised. The City of Tomorrow and its Planning (1929) is a manifesto by the Swiss-French architect and planner; Le Corbusier. Through these writings he encapsulates the Modernist attitude towards the state of the early twentieth-century urban environment describing it as; 'a menacing disaster… no longer governed by the principles of geometry' (Corbusier, 1929, p.62). Le Corbusier (1929) proposes visions of a modern city that will be the answer to solve this developing urban crisis. Plan Voison (Figure 1) was a proposal for central Paris by Le Corbusier in 1925; named after aeronautical designer Gabriel Voison. Although this proposal was never implemented, it shows the modernist 'Tabula Rasa' approach to city-making, a Latin term for wiping a slate and starting again, which can be applied to cities.

The invention of the powered aircraft at the start of the twentieth century allowed society to gain an aerial perspective of itself (Dümpelmann, 2014). Le Corbusier's view of the city was heavily influenced by his adoration of the machine age and technology: prioritising efficiency above all else, which symbolised ultimate modernity (Le Corbusier, 1929). Gaining this new perspective changed the way that urban designers such as Le Corbusier viewed their role in society, now with the ability to make sculptures from the sky. The Modernist movement arose from the technological revolution of the early twentieth century but was as much a philosophical movement as an architectural one.

Zoning is a technique that urban planners and municipalities utilise to organise cities into functional categories (eg residential, commercial and industrial). Modernist city planners often separated these functions by tunnels and highways, for example, in Corbusier's Plan Voison for central Paris (Figure 1). These layouts were designed to prioritise the automobile and created many unintended, unsociable consequences for inhabitants. They are a visible legacy of modernism in many twenty-first-century cities.

From an aerial view, plans such as Le Corbusier's Voison seemed like perfect templates for the modern city, with logical urban geometries based on functional zones. In retrospect, modernist urban designers favoured architectural harmony and geometry over facilitating human complexity.

FIGURE 1 *Hand of Le Corbusier with the scale model of Plan Voison* (1964). [Photograph]

The Architecture of Happiness by Alain de Botton (2008) explores the history and psychology of the built environment and its emotional impact on the individual;

'Bad Architecture is as much a failure of psychology as of design' (De Botton, 2008, p.248).

Brasília (Figure 2) is an example of a city built in the style of international modernism some years after Le Corbusier's Voison. Plans for the city were developed by planner Lúcio Costa and architect Oscar Niemeyer and were revealed by President Kubitshek in 1956. This brand new city was designed using a 'top-down' approach (Urbanized, 2011), replacing Rio de Janeiro as the country's capital in 1960. Unlike Voison, Brasília was built

as planned and shows the sociological impact of modernist urban design on people at the human-scale.

FIGURE 2 *Drawn plans for Brasília* by Costa (1956) [Drawing].

The masterplan was a promise of a new reality for Brazilian people, consisting of wide avenues, minimalist facades and beautiful geometry. It was an infusion of sophistication meant to eliminate the chaotic sprawl of other Brazilian cities (De Botton, 2006). In reality, Brasília did not create the utopian conditions that it promised. Homeless populations grew and 'favelas', informal Brazilian slum settlements, sprung up across the city's perimeter; just as they had in Rio (Tauxe, 1996). It is believed that these eventualities; 'would not have dissuaded the champions of idealisation in architecture' (De Botton, 2008, p.229) despite these practical failings, as their aspirations seemed more important than the realities of human experience.

De Botton (2008) acknowledges that plans such as Voison and Brasília were made based on 'objectively rational grounds' (De Botton, 2008, p.231). However, Jane Jacobs (1961), activist and writer of the acclaimed 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities', shows no mercy for the illusion of Modernist ambitions. She takes aim at the arrogance of many

similar architects whose legacies could be traced in the design of American cities of the twentieth century. She explains that she favours intricate, mingled-use cities, arguing that they are not chaotic, but 'on the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order' (Jacobs, 1961, p.229). This is a clear reaction to a century of city building where decisions were made without involving existing communities or considering the human-scale.

The ambitions of modernist designers were optimistic, applying the latest innovations of modern technology to the future of everyday urban life. They reflected common goals for society at the time and attempted to physically represent a solution to fears about population growth and disease. However, these spaces lacked the emotional depth of the existing communities that Jacobs (1961) fought to sustain. In the twenty-first century, many cities have moved towards 'bottom-up' urban design, the antithesis to the aerial view, top-down urban design of much of the twentieth century.

1.2 the human scale

The reaction against Modernism has arguably been one of its biggest legacies with its shortcomings highlighting a need for more zoomed in design approaches. Critics used these failings to form the principles of New Urbanism, a movement that officially began in 1993 but can be traced back to the writings of Jacobs (1961). It is founded on the basis that urban design has a direct impact on community and happiness in the city and should focus on the individual's ability to live a; 'happy, prosperous life' (CNU, 2001, p.2).

Jan Gehl (2011) is a Danish architect who has fought for the consideration of the human-scale in urban design since the 1970s and heavily influenced the philosophy behind developing Copenhagen into 'A Metropolis for People' (City of Copenhagen, 2009). In Gary Hustwit's documentary 'Urbanized' (2011), Gehl is interviewed about Brasília (Figure 2). Gehl indicated that on foot, the city has unnaturally large distances between public spaces, and claims that the city is 'a disaster […] nobody ever thought what it would be like to be out in Brasília amongst all these monuments' (Urbanized, 2011, 00:18:00). Its large open plazas and buildings with few distinguishing features show a lack of thought for human-scale and experience.

Gehl (2011), like Jacobs (1961), were amongst the first reactionaries to the modernist disregard for the human-scale which often resulted in unsociable public space (Wall and Waterman, 2010). Jacobs recognised the importance of sociable public space for human interaction; 'streets and their sidewalks, the main public spaces in the city, are its most vital organs' (Jacobs, 1961, p.39). In contrast to the modernist obsession with technology, these urbanists use anatomical language and the human body to describe parts of the city. Gehl (2011) coined the phrase the human-scale in his book, 'Life Between Buildings'. Gehl believes that;

> 'Life in buildings and between buildings seems in nearly all situations to rank as more essential and more relevant than the spaces and buildings themselves.' (Gehl 2011, p.29).

This is known as bottom-up design thinking, an approach which considers human experience over presumptuous ideologies set by authority or urban designers. Similarly, Attiwill (2015) argues that a bottom-up approach would mean public space could be reshaped and made more responsive to people's needs; 'by moving from a top-down approach to a grassroots one' (Attiwill, 2015, p.5). A grassroots process can increase feelings of ownership for citizens of public space, which shows another facet of human-scaled design, not only considering users but consulting them too.

Attempts to impose new identities on existing communities is discussed in the Dutch manifesto, 'Spontaneous City' by Urhahn (2010). They believe that top-down methods are not received well by citizens and should be left in the previous century, which is discussed in an interview James C Scott who states;

> 'People don't resist change, they resist being changed' (Urhahn, 2010, p.111).

This demonstrates the approach of the Spontaneous City manifesto, which focuses on the existing beauty and value of a community rather than injecting unattainable beauty or order into the built environment. Urhahn (2010) focus on criteria such as spontaneity and flexibility to allow citizens to occupy regenerated city space naturally. It can be concluded that by paying attention to the existing personality of a place, emotionally rich public spaces can emerge out of human-centred design methods.

The development of Copenhagen towards being the world's most liveable city was outlined in a report by City of Copenhagen (2009), with consultants, Gehl Architects. Nordhavn (Figure 3) or 'North Harbour', a new district of Copenhagen, is currently Scandinavia's largest masterplan. The development commenced in 2008, with urban design practice COBE winning the commission to reshape the previously industrial area. Dan Stubbergaard, the founder of COBE, explained that the urban strategy involves viewing the neighbourhood is a 1:1 scale laboratory (Payne, 2018), where the sustainability of community and increasing liveability are among the top priorities.

Nordhavn is planned to grow out into the sea, inhabit 40,000 dwellers, and create organically formed urban neighbourhoods over a forty-year span (COBE, 2008). The physical relationship between the proposed neighbouring islands is mapped out already in COBE's

plan (2008); connected by a system of canals similar to Venice (Figure 3). However, it is explained that the design detail of each individual neighbourhood; its public space, streetscapes and facilities; will be flexible and respond to the timely needs of its inhabitants (COBE, 2008). This seems to be a more sustainable approach to urban design compared to Modernism's inflexibility. Much like the philosophies of Urhahn (2010) and Gehl (2011), the COBE (2008) masterplan does not set out to impose a brand-new identity on citizens and communities, rather their identity is allowed to form over time.

FIGURE 3 *Nordhavn, Copenhagen* by COBE (2020) [Photograph]

The public space already completed in Nordhavn gives a flavour of its evolving liveable model. Park'n'Play (Figure 4) a multi-story car park designed by Ja-ja Architects, is an example of human-scaled architecture. Even though this multi-storey car park is a 'house for vehicles', (DAC, 2016) it is designed with human experience as a priority. The parking facility is shielded from view using foliage and softened with a perforated render made to mimic the area's traditional red-brick harbour buildings. These design details enhance the existing context of the area rather than wiping it away. Where modernist car parks are often brutal concrete sculptures (Figure 6), this building is activated from the outside as a public plaza. Ja-ja Architects have designed an exterior staircase that allows pedestrians to climb up the façade and become a part of the exterior. This leads up to a dynamic roof-

top play park with vistas over the Nordhavn harbourside (Figure 5).

FIGURE 4 *Park 'n' Play, Copenhagen* by JAJA (2016) [Photograph]

Nordhavn and Park'n'Play show how urban development of public space can learn from the mistakes of modernism, but also shows that human-scaled design does not only apply to physically small development. Sustainable public space projects cannot ignore the reality of transportation, but designers can build large, functional buildings while also giving full consideration to the eye-level experience of people.

FIGURE 5 *Park 'n' Play at the human-scale, Copenhagen* by Moore (2021) [Photograph]

FIGURE 6 *Brutalist Gateshead Trinity Square car park* [Photograph]

EMOTIONAL ANALYSIS

2.

Chapter 2 seeks to explore the emotional role of public space through analysing psychological, philosophical and architectural theory. This will focus on 'Individual Wellbeing and the City' (section 2.1) and 'Collective Experience and the City' (section 2.2).

2.1 individual wellbeing

Public space and the urban interior are likely to provide a backdrop for significant experiences in many people's lives. However, the perceived success of public space, with various units of measurement, is difficult to quantify. Measuring happiness seems subjective, but attempts have been made to formalise this into political framework.

In Bhutan, the term 'The Gross National Happiness' (GNH) is a philosophy that was introduced into policy by the country's former King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in 1972. The GNH Index would be a new way to measure the country's progress through tracking the growth of happiness and wellbeing rather than the previous economic metric, Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Wangchuck's successor and son, the current King Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck stated;

'Our Government must be human' (Ura et al 2012, p.6).

This informed the nine pillars outlined in Bhutan's most recent 2015 GNH report to measure happiness holistically. (Centre for Bhutan Studies, 2015). This section will look at pillar one: 'psychological wellbeing' and its connection to public space. The goals were originally based on the Buddhist philosophy of happiness and strive for; 'fulfilling conditions of a good life' (Ura et al, 2012, p.6). Ura et al (2012) show that human-scaled principles were able to guide emotionally engaged progress in the country. This lead to happiness being outlined in a speech at the UN 2012 assembly as 'a fundamental human goal' (Thinley, 2012).

Socrates, an early philosopher of western morality, once asked a fellow member of the polis; 'do not all men desire happiness? Or is this just a ridiculous question?' (Socrates quoted by Montgomery 2013 p.15). Although happiness as government policy has only arisen in relatively recent society, discussion around how to find happiness is well-trodden path. Bhutan's GNH initiative shows that an individual's emotional wellbeing should be an essential unit of measurement in the progression of society.

Plato's theory of The Good Life (Jowett, 1888) explains that happiness is the combination of individual self-awareness, community and the state that makes 'living well' possible. (Van Riel, 2000, p.46) Plato also conceived the theory of forms which divides human life into two realms: physical and transcendent. Plato believes that all things perceived by the mind, in the transcendent realm, are more valuable for an individual's pursuit of happiness than anything physical because the mind can transcend the pains of the material world.

Plato presents ideals of order and harmony for the mind much like Le Corbusier's (1929) ideals for architecture. Happiness is attainable only once an individual reaches a state of being utterly virtuous in the mind (Van Riel, 2000, p.41). Alternatively, De Botton (2006) suggests that 'physical' aesthetic realms can change people through stating;

> "Belief in the significance of architecture is premised on the notion that we are, for better or for worse, different people in different places - and on the conviction that it is architecture's task to render vivid to us who we might ideally be" (De Botton, 2006, p.13).

This belief would suggest that urban public space has more than a functional role and that it should allow complex human emotions to thrive. Conviviality is an emotional state that can be created through urban opportunities to form social connections. Montgomery (2013) presents evidence to show how happiness relates to the design of urban space. He believes that the design of cities cannot be separated from the research into the construction of happiness.

Love Night (Figure 7) was a 'Happy City' (2013) social experiment in New York City at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. This event aimed to showcase the power of convivial connection through trust-building exercises and encourage physical touch. The happiness hormone, Oxytocin, was measured throughout the evening to test whether it would result in individuals being more compassionate towards others (Bart-Stewart, 2015). This was examined by getting participants to vote before and after Love Night on urban issues such as equality and sustainability. Montgomery (2013) was able to demonstrate that 'happy cities are equal cities' (Montgomery, 2013, p.44), concluding that increased happiness would manifest as more convivial and equitable communities.

FIGURE 7 *Love Night*, New York by Stanton (2011) [Photograph]

Ura et al (2012), Plato (1822) and De Botton (2006) present philosophical ideas about happiness and wellbeing, all focusing on improving an individual's psychological wellbeing. The report 'The Social Value of Public Spaces' by Worpole and Knox (2008), states that successful public space acts like a self-organising public service that improves the quality of life of the individual; 'experiences and value are created in ways that are not possible in our private lives alone' (Worpole and Knox, 2008, p.8).

Both Worpole and Knox (2008) and Montgomery (2013) do not claim that public space could eradicate the structural, political or personal strains which affect an individual's happiness. Montgomery (2013) presents a practical way of improving happiness in the city as his findings show that 'feeling' happy is more important than 'being' happy (p.45). This evidence-based research shows that developing strong social connections with others improves emotional wellbeing in the city.

Urban public space can encourage happiness, community, connection and empathy in the life of an individual. Psychological wellbeing has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic due to limited social contact (Galea and Lurie, 2020) which shows that it is increasingly important to create emotionally engaging experiences in the city. Although emotion is more difficult to measure than GDP, it is essential to focus on the growth of happiness to create cities that function for people.

2.2 collective experience

Collective experience refers to the emotional or sensory experience created amongst people, participation in public life and the emotional wellbeing of strangers. The origins of public space as a social tool can be traced back to the Agora in Ancient Greece. Being a part of public life is as healthy for individual wellbeing, as it can be collectively: for democracy, progression and collective enjoyment.

The Greek agora (Figure 8) in 10-8BC would involve gatherings of 20,000 citizens and act as a physical representation of public life and all it concerned. 'Agora' means a place to gather but has since come to be known as a physical entity such as a paved square. It represented centredness in Greek cities but was rarely their geographical centre (Montgomery, 2013). It was also the centre of athletic, cultural, spiritual and political life in the city (Gehl, 2011). Debates would take place here on life's biggest existential questions, such as conversations about 'The Good Life' between philosophers (Jowett, 1888). It can be stated that the gathering of people in public was and still is a key part of the human experience: emotionally, democratically, and spiritually.

FIGURE 8 *Greek agora* by De Agostini Editore (10-8BC) [Illustration]

The draw of the agora was not its built form but its ability to bring people together. The Scandinavian proverb; 'people come where people are' (Gehl 2011, p.25), summarises the essence of the agora and this can still be witnessed in urban spaces such as the banks of the River Seine (Figure 9); where crowds of people gather as a result of existing human activity.

FIGURE 9 *River Seine, a modern agora, Paris* by Macleod (2019) [Photograph]

In an interview (Wall and Waterman, 2010), urban theorist Kevin Lynch comments on the urban layout of a city and believes that public spaces provide 'a focusing point of a wider city diagram' (Wall and Waterman, 2010, p.52). Mapping individual emotional experiences can be used to break down the city into a series of collective situations. The group Situationist International declared a movement against western city-building from 1957 throughout the 1960s believing that;

'A mental disease has swept the planet: banalisation' (Coverley, 2018, p.84).

The Situationists, none of whom were architects or urban designers, were fascinated by the psychological and social layout of the city rather than its geographical form. They claimed that the organisation of modern architecture was to blame for sterilising the

intrigue and emotional quality of everyday life (Sadler, 1999). Guy Debord, a founding member, invented the term 'Psychogeography' to describe this practice.
The Naked City (Figure 10) is a screen print by by Debord and Jorn (1957) of the Situationists. This counter-map of Paris is made from two municipal tourist maps, cut up and rearranged into sections where an individual had chosen their route. As the title suggests, the map forensically analyses the city based on fleeting encounters or unpredictable situations. (Morris & Voyce, 2015) This map exemplifies the 'dérive', a technique invented by the Situationists that translates to 'drifting' through the city (Sadler, 1999). It is said to be a reaction against the modernist interpretation of the city and the; 'straight-jacket of rationality and regulation' of Le Corbusier's efficiency-driven urban plans (Wakeman Fordham, 2000). The 'dérive' involves following playful and intuitive feelings to navigate the city, rather than following its architectural layout.
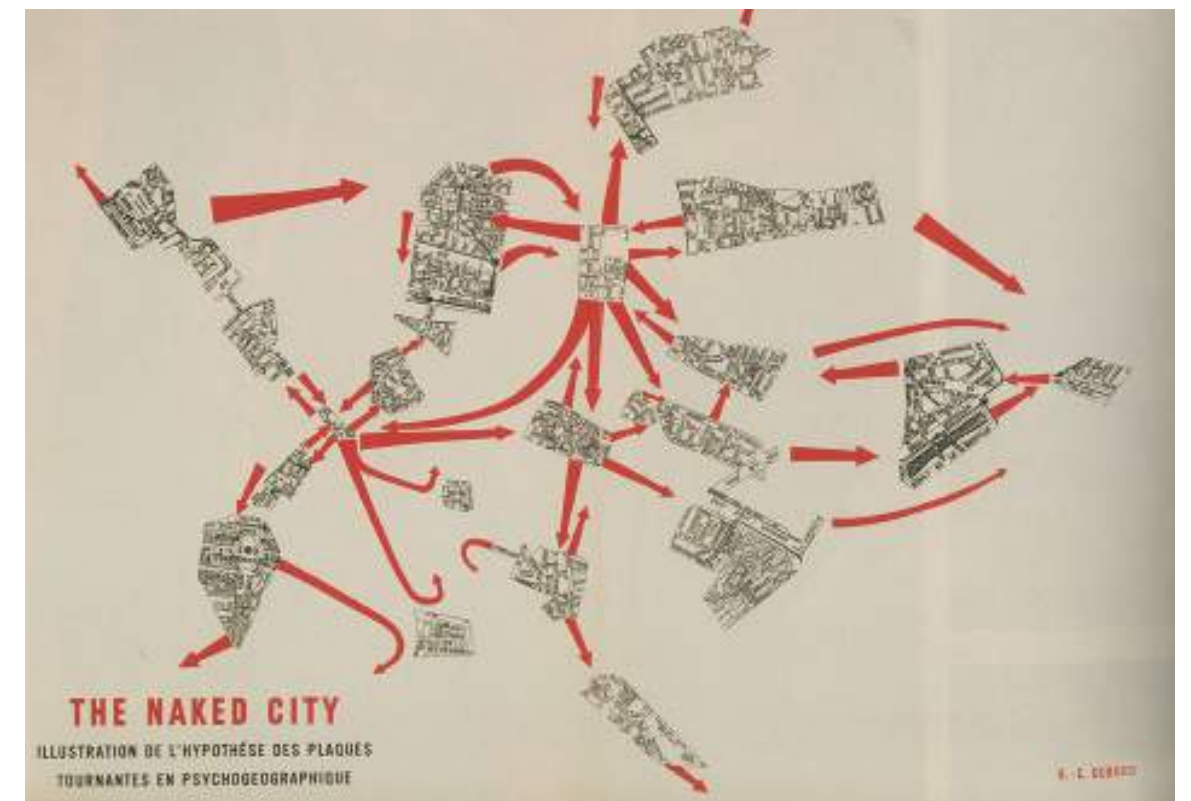
FIGURE 10 *The Naked City* by Debord and Jorn (1957). [Screenprint]

The Naked City shows that the activity of the past is never fully erased and that cities are layers of temporal activity built on top of past urban fabric. If this was practiced more widely, every individual's Naked City would look very different, but perhaps they would be drawn to the same hubs of activity in or surrounding public space just as described by Lynch (2010). Canadian artist Larissa Fassler (2015) explores the temporary and social

side of city life through cartographic works. The piece, Gare du Nord III (Figure 11) is an experiential map of a primary transport hub in Paris, connecting the heart of the city both to its suburbs and to elsewhere in Europe. She explains that it is 'a complicated, chaotic, and constantly moving place' (Fassler, 2015). This station is in many ways emblematic of France more generally' (Fassler, 2015). Gare du Nord is essentially a large public space and Fassler (2015) assembled the piece following months of observation, where she documented the trivial details and behaviours of the users. The result was a 170x190 canvas that, from a distance, looks undecipherable. However, on zooming in on the detail of her observation (Figure 12), the chaotic crowd and meandering behaviours of Gare du Nord users demonstrate deliberate and enjoyable rationality that takes place at the human-scale.

With each individual interaction and temporary situation, a station, a street or a square becomes activated as a self-organised public space that goes beyond life's functional demands and becomes playful. This section shows that collective urban experience can create creates spontaneous interactions and is a sophisticated role of urban public space. The modern individual is increasingly busy and overwhelmed (Anderson and Rainie, 2018), but the collective experiences of a crowd also allow individuals to share joyful moments with strangers amongst the apparent chaos. So too, People naturally overwrite and override rational urban grids with layers of personality, enhancing public space in doing so.

FIGURE 11 *Garde Du Nord III* by Fassler (2014-15). [Pen, pencil and acrylic paint on canvas, 170x180cm]


FIGURE 12 *Garde Du Nord III in detail* by Fassler (2014-15). [Pen, pencil and acrylic paint on canvas

INTERIOR ANALOGIES

3.

Chapter 3 presents cultural and philosophical observations and proposes three analogies to demonstrate the roles that public space can adopt in the city. Building upon the historical and sociological findings of the first two chapters, this final chapter uses associations of other city spaces as metaphors: 'The City is a Living Room' (section 3.1), 'The City is an Art Museum' (section 3.2) and in 'The City is a Jazz Club' (section 3.3). So too, it will analyse the existing intimate, creative and vibrant essences of public space that can be enhanced to make the city more responsive to individual wellbeing.

3.1 the city is a living room
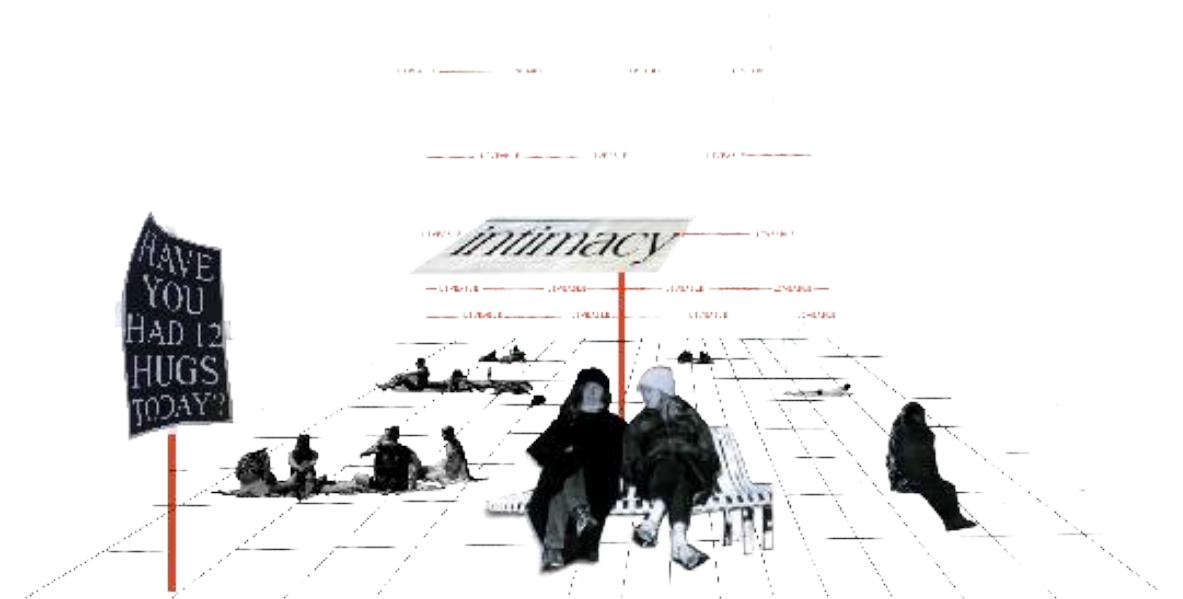
The analogy of home, and specifically the Living Room, suggests a nostalgic familiarity, unique to individual circumstance but universally recognisable. An individual's private life as opposed to their public life does not always take place in the confinement of private, domestic places.

Liveable public space allows individuals to exist within the public realm but perform as if they are in a homely setting. This can be through facilitating intimate experiences between people or emotional triggers for an individual. The use of urban public space as a Living Room is well-established but has been highlighted by the restrictions on meeting indoors imposed due to COVID-19 (Dawsin and Golijani-Moghaddam, 2020).

Conceptually, the city can be broken down into public and private zones, with some thresholds being more distinctive than others. The Nolli plan (Figure 13) is a map of central Rome's urban fabric drawn by Giambattista Nolli (1748). The volumes depicted are starkly white and black to differentiate two masses of the city; public and private, described respectively as; 'positive' and 'voided' (Nolli, 1748, p.4). The white areas, annotated

through script and symbols, represent the public space of eighteenth-century Rome including public buildings, streets, squares, parks and monuments. This shows how much of the city is largely public or semi-public space, which is carved out of the voided private architecture.

FIGURE 13 *The Nolli Plan 'La Nuova Pianta di Roma'* by Nolli (1748). [Drawing]

Semi-public space has an important role in everyday life, illustrated by Manuel de Solà Morales who discusses that 'the richness of a contemporary city resides in the collective spaces that are not strictly public or private, but both simultaneously' (De Solà Morales, 1992, p.25). As urban property prices upsurge in city centres, it is increasingly important that twenty-first-century public spaces are successful secondary living rooms. De Solà Morales (1992) illustrates that when some intimate behaviours of the home are performed in public and semi-public space, they can create richer experiences.

American sociologist Richard Sennett (2018) argues that cities have pushed people into the private sphere in recent times which has created lethargic public space, and 'an interruption of intimacy in daily life' (Sennett, 2018. p.45). The increasing lack of intimacy in public space is also discussed in the IDEA journal by Mace (2015);

'The relationship between private and public starts with the body and the inner space of our consciousness […] it becomes increasingly important for the urban environment to foster the sense of place and belonging that underpins our need for emotional stability' (Mace, 2015, p.57).

Although intimacy can be regarded as a physical trait of the home between people, Mace (2015) further suggests that it can be an emotional trait between body and place. The metaphysical intimacy of memories and consciousness is also dissected in 'The Poetics of Space', a philosophical analysis of domesticity by French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1958). This breaks down the emotional significance of intimate spaces from houses to rooms to drawers. He calls this topo-analysis, the study of human identity on the sites of their intimate lives, concluding that an individual's home roots the essence of their soul and their childhood memories (Bachelard, 1958)

Mace (2015) and Sennett (2018) both indicate that public space can cultivate domestic associations of warmth, comfort and nostalgia which in turn, could create an emotional attachment between public space and its users. The philosophy of intimacy and place presented by Bachelard (1958) could offer emotional relief to urban societies of the 21st century that are faced with contemporary issues already stated such as gentrification, displacement and loneliness.

The metaphor of feeling 'rooted' is based on the roots of a tree; an embodiment of stability and deep connection to the ground that lies beneath. Bachelard (1958) alludes to this in relation to the home;

'That out of a nameless and unknown place they could grow […] with love, and call it HOME, and put roots there […] so that whenever they left this place, they would […] write poems of yearning for it, like a lover.'
(Bachelard, 1958, p.58)

This illustrates that deep, loving connections with place can outlast a human lifespan, much the same as trees and their roots. Green public space including parks, community gardens and allotments are arguably the most authentic Living Rooms for the city due to their permanence and participatory potential.

City parks of the nineteenth century, garden cities of the twentieth century and long-established allotments are all examples of green public space that still exist in the twenty-first-century city. The High Line (Figure 14) in New York is a public park built in 2009 on an abandoned high-level freight railway line. It is now 'an integral and vital part of the fabric of the city' (Wall and Waterman, 2010, p.30). As well as being an injection of green public space for the city, the High Line runs a Community Parks Initiative (Figure 15). Members of the community can get involved with planting and weeding in gardens across the city to create 'connected, healthy neighbourhoods' (The High Line, 2016).

FIGURE 14 *The High Line from above, New York* by Ligon (2018). [Photograph]

This example of participatory public space provides another allusion to the Living Room: one of active autonomy, which is also demonstrated in more traditional urban allotments. Similarly, in the home an individual has the choice to decide what happens physically and socially within that space. It can be seen that community gardens are a place for people to create social connections with others but also participate in physically nurturing their city.

The individual has an influence on their home as much as Bachelard (1958) shows that the home impacts on the individual. The reciprocity of the Living Room analogy can sug-

gest a mutual benefit to the public space and the user when applied to public space. With inflation on land and property assets ever-increasing (Zuk et al, 2018), secondary living rooms in the urban environment have an important role.

FIGURE 15 *Community park initiative, New York* by Ligon (2018).   [Photograph]

3.2 the city is an art museum

For this section, the term Art Museum is used to describe both traditional museums and contemporary art galleries. The Art Museum originated in the late seventeenth century as a 'Wunderkammer', a German term meaning cabinet of curiosity, for privileged circles to display novel artefacts from overseas and eventually civic collections (Grice, 2015). Philosophers De Botton and Armstrong (2013) claim that people did not expect emotional enrichment from curation until they started searching for completeness in their everyday lives, and that this should be addressed more by art museums. They further argue:

> 'The problem is not primarily located in the individual. It lies in the way that art is
> taught, sold and presented by the art establishment' (De Botton and Armstrong,
> 2013, p.5).

Here, De Botton and Armstrong (2013) suggest that displaying artefacts in the traditional glass box method brands the art museum as a large, displaced filing cabinet of the past. Cities affected by post-industrial decline have been found to lack a strong sense of identity (Henley, 2018). Feelings of disassociation could be worsened in communities where modernism's legacy created monotonous architecture and dismissal of the locale.

Placemaking is an approach in urban design which uses existing values of a place; its community, its history and culture with the intent of making memorable public space. (Walljasper, 2007). Combining qualities of the art museum with public space would benefit both art and users of public space, making cultural experiences more accessible. Mmuseumm (Figure 16) by 'What Studio?' is a micro museum space, located at the bottom of a freight elevator shaft in New York. It is the smallest museum in the city, and it exists to showcase collections of everyday objects to tell stories of the modern world. Founder and curator of Mmuseumm Kalman, 2020, describes its contextual nature within the city:

> 'I have always felt that a museum in a city is like a book on a bookshelf' (Kalman
> and What Studio?, 2020)

FIGURE 16 *Mmuseumm, New York* by What Studio? (2020) [Photograph]

If something is unique to its surroundings and community, it has the potential to promote happiness and wellbeing for the people who reside there (Walljasper, 2007). When public space is used as a museum of storytelling and art, like the Mmuseumm, it might be of greater emotional significance in the lives of the people who use it.

A sense of fulfilment and togetherness could be the reason that religiously affiliated adults have higher levels of self-reported happiness than those who do not (Lelkes, 2006). It can

be argued that the role of religion in communities is as much social as it is spiritual. Montgomery (2013) suggests happiness in religious communities could be down to the church as a place to gather, as well as the intrinsic happiness that religious experience creates for an individual. De Botton (2008) proposes a new proposal where cultural experiences could fill the gaps left by the departure of religion in twenty-first-century life; 'art can help us heal problems of the soul.' (De Botton, 2008, p.120). He further states that there could be Museums of Love, Friendship, Hate and Death, and that the art museum could act as a public space with a similar social function as a place of worship. (De Botton, 2008)

Henley (2018) discusses the 'Mappiness app', a project by the London School of Economics, that asked 20,000 participants to record their levels of happiness along with what they were doing at that moment. Within the top twenty list of activities recorded, at least seven involved creative activity (MacKerron, 2011). 'Here, then, is another case for creativity – its power to improve individual lives.' (Henley, 2018, p.71) showing the link between art and psychological wellbeing in agreement with De Botton (2008). This is also revealed in etymology of the word curator, which has roots in the Latin word 'Cura' meaning 'Care' (Balzer, 2014, p.26). He explains that medieval Christian 'Curatoures' were priests who were 'called to know and heal their parishioners' (Balzer, 2014, p.26). Therefore, the role of a curator seems to originate in the care for people.

Relational Aesthetics is an art term coined in the 1990s by curator Nicholas Bourriaud (2002). This contemporary art practice integrates performative art into city life and when it is not situated in the public realm, it aims to simulate everyday life within an exhibition setting (Bourriaud, Pleasance, Woods and Copeland, 2002). David Balzer (2014) presents a critical view of relational aesthetics but acknowledges that curation is more tied to everyday life in the twenty-first century than people may realise. Relational aesthetics 'directly celebrates the agency and quality of life promised by curated spaces' (Balzer, 2014, p.85). Relational aesthetics divides opinion amongst critics and viewers but is an authentic way of curating art that interacts with its viewers.

Francis Alÿs organised The Modern Procession (Figure 17) in 2002 which saw three iconic modern art replicas marched by participators from The Museum of Modern Art Manhattan (MoMA) to a temporary exhibition at MoMA-Queens. He praises the ability of art interventions to create change in cities in a temporary way which he believes is 'impossible in the heavy architecture machine, and even less so in the bureaucratic urbanist system.' (Alÿs, 2004, p.101) As a former architect and urban designer, Alÿs (2004) brought the cultural structures of the art museum into question and reframed the context of objects normally cased in glass boxes.

Carried by up to three hundred participants through the streets of Manhattan and across the Queensboro Bridge, The Modern Procession presents a version of participatory architecture where there is an interaction between the artefact and the viewer. In the exhibition book published by MoMA, Alÿs (2004) reflects on the event and marvels at the subversion of roles that the procession created;

'Instead of people going to the museum, the Modern Procession took the museum to the people' (Alÿs, 2004 p.153).

This pilgrimage of high art through the streets of the city enhanced existing energy and interaction in public space by infusing it with a surprising, fleeting situation. Much like the counter-maps in section 2.2 by Fassler (2015), art events like The Modern Procession can write on top of urban fabric but capture a moment in time shared by individuals. Alys's sketches and collages (Figure 18) of the Modern Procession show the city as a palimpsest for artistic intervention by drawing over municipal maps of New York.

Public space can be a means used by individuals to understand their local environment, and art creates memorable experiences that can develop that critical sense of place. As explained by Montgomery (2013) in section 2.1, a happy city can be surprising and temporary, celebrating the spontaneity of everyday life. Curating artistic experiences in the city, like relational aesthetics, allows people to interact with both art and other people.

Figure 17 *The Modern Procession, New York* by Elliot (2002) [Photograph]

Figure 18 *The Modern Procession* by Alÿs (p.1, 2002) [sketch]

3.3 the city is a jazz club

Jazz music originated in New Orleans at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is an integral part of African American history and much of its musical structure originated in experiences of racial oppression and slavery (Dorsey, 2001). Le Corbusier (1947) had a selective appreciation of black culture, which included a fascination with jazz;

> 'Jazz…is an event and not a deliberately conceived creation…The jazz is more advanced than the architecture. If architecture were at the point reached by jazz, it would be an incredible spectacle.' (Corbusier, 1947 p.158)

This metaphorical comparison suggests that Le Corbusier might be envious of jazz's ability to resonate with people in a way that architecture cannot. As explored in section 3.2, art can be an expression of everyday life through performance. Jazz can be seen a similar example of art mirroring human experience.

Ake (2002) explains that jazz can be summarised by three unique essences: harmony, rhythm and improvisation. These musical qualities can also be compared to sociological patterns and emotions. Marxist sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1992) analyses the reverberations of city life comparing them to musical rhythms. His collection of essays,

'Rythmanalysis' have similarities to the modernist aerial perspective. Lefebvre describes the rhythms of the moving crowd; 'from the window, noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, rhythms respond to one another' (Lefebvre, 1992, p.28). Here, he shows an appreciation for the regularity, patterns and atmosphere of urban life. Although he is viewing it from up high, just as Corbusier (1929) is frequently criticised for, Lefebvre (1992) does not view the city from an aerial perspective but the height of an upper apartment window in Paris. This allows a closeness that can discern individual interactions.

Lefebvre (1992) seems to present ways of listening, not to music, but the harmonic rhythms of people within cities. Harmony is associated with human communication. Ingrid Monson (1996) examines in detail how metaphors used by jazz musicians indicate the parallels between conversational and musical practice. Terms such as 'talking, conversation, and saying something' (Monson, 1996, p.73) are languages used in jazz to emphasises the human quality of improvisation. A harmonic social situation can be mirrored by the emotional expressivity of jazz amongst players.

Improvisation in jazz can be traced back to its roots in traditional African percussion and the prevalence of spontaneous invention during a musical session. Improvisation can also be seen in urban street behaviours backed up by Jacobs (1961) who states;

> 'the ballet of a good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place, and in any once place is always replete with new improvisations' (Jacobs, 1961, p.54).

Much like Jacobs' (1961) metaphor of the street, jazz is enhanced by the unique personalities of musicians present during improvisation, as they create a truly one-off performance. This can be compared to the temporary ways in which individuals activate public space and the sense of surprise that they can bring.

In a literal sense, the installation of musical interventions in everyday public space mimics improvisation in jazz, like Dundee's station piano (Figure 19). Piano Stairs (Figure 20) in Stockholm is an intervention by Volkswagen Sweden that aims to improve psychological wellbeing as; 'fun is the easiest way to change people's behaviour for the better' (Diaz, 2009). Surprise creates joy, and Urhahn (2010) explains; 'It's not about the spontaneity

of the intervention, but about the spontaneous social interaction it brings out' (Urhahn, 2010, p.139). Surprise in twenty-first-century life could interrupt monotonous routine and repetitive schedules. It is clear, however, that spontaneity requires spaces and situations that allow for individuals to express themselves, like a Jazz Club.

The vibes within a public space can be compared to the vibes of a musical score. In astrophysics, the entire universe is made up of wave vibrations, carried by the material world (Weinstein, 1988). Music, or vibration, is an anatomical part of the human experience but can create metaphysical experiences in public space; 'Musical rhythm has an ethical function… it illustrates real (everyday) life' (Lefebvre, 1992, p.52). In modern popular culture, it is commonplace to describe the vibe of a place to convey the emotional quality of its experience. The phrase 'good vibes' was popularised by the Beach Boys' (1966) single 'Good Vibrations'. In an interview, Mike Love explained the feeling of the bass line in Good Vibrations imitates jazz (Love, 2013). Understandably, terminology such as 'good vibes' lacks cultural impact because of hyperbolic over-use, nevertheless there is reason to pay attention to language trends to understand what one generation would consider a positive emotional experience in the city.

Collective experiences in public space are similar to a Jazz Club performance; and it is clear that they can become enjoyable experiences when they feel rhythmic, improvised and harmonic. The qualities that everyday life shares with jazz are both physical and non-physical. Gehl (2011) agrees that; 'a good city is like a good party' (Urbanized, 2011, 00:21:54). This demonstrates the innate human tendency to search for public spaces that feel good, and then stay for a while.

Figure 19 *Piano player in Dundee station* by Rankin (2019) [Video still]

FIGURE 20 *Piano Stairs, Stockholm.* The Fun Theory and Volkswagon (2009)

From this critical analysis, it is clear that the role of public space in the city goes far beyond its role as functional infrastructure and is ultimately about people. When considering evidence from the last hundred years through an emotional lens, it would be easy to conclude that Modernism failed society and left the twenty-first century with sterile public space. In some ways, that is true, but not all the critics of modernism lead to the energetic New Urbanism movement of recent times. While Chapter 1 reflected on failures of Modernism, the primary part of this dissertation is forward looking, learning lessons from the past. The cynical writings of The Situationist International eventually saw the group disbanding, as they had such a focus on the doomed structure of cities that they developed no implementable ideas. Debord, its founder, no longer associates with its earlier works (Sadler, 1999). Modernists did try to look forward and deserve to be shown some compassion, as displayed by De Botton (2008), as it was a reflection of the context its time. Urhahn (2010), with an entirely opposite manifesto, show awareness for context which should be admired. It now seems, after many years of campaigning, that the ideas of Jane Jacobs (1961) are finally widely acknowledged and at the fore-front of progressive urban development - Nordhavn, Copenhagen being a shining example. While social outcomes in development cannot be guaranteed, chapter 2 showed the psychological impact happiness can have on individuals. Desired sociological outcomes should be planned into urban development from the start and with the same rigour as economic outcomes. Happiness is one way to understand successful cities although it is subjective and not easy to measure. Practitioners like Montgomery (2013) showed that it is possible to make urban change through its pursuit. Imagining the possibilities for an urban future should involve active participation, as shown, bur it should also be fun for all involved. That is why the final chapter looks at experimental methods, using cultural references, to build colourful imagery alongside the

author's own collages made out of combinations of personal collected photos and newspapers. Ultimately, the city is like a collage of public interiors, with layers of domesticity, memorability, surprise, rhythms and spontaneity. At the time of writing, society faces the challenge of a global pandemic and it is difficult to predict the challenges that rest of the century will hold. However, with challenges comes the need for new ideas and approaches and this dissertation has shown that there is nowhere in the city better to test ideas than public space because of its reflective and adaptive nature. However cities choose to move forward, ensuring that public space is human centred will at best, result in a more democratic society and at worst, it will spark joy and surprise around every corner.

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