



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

Researching international student mobility: Everyday life stories of a group of transient students dwelling and learning in four European capitals

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2020 / Vienna, 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 664

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium DDP Urban Studies

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Abstract

International student mobility represents a growing theme in the fields of human geography and migration studies. However, studied through the lens of transience and the urban experience, the approach becomes also a rather sociological matter. Studying the lives of international mobile students opens a window to understand how this specific population contributes to globalization, migration, and education trends in the urban world. At the same time, by researching how international students dwell and learn in the city within the framework of everyday life stories of transience, larger narratives on new urban geographies of educational mobility can be traced.

Inspired in the ideas of Michel de Certeau and the assemblage theory delineated by Colin McFarlane, this research explores the representations of the urban experience during transience. An emic/etic approach is taken to study everyday life through personal observations, interviews, and mental maps. The 4CITIES students' urban experience in Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid in their condition as transient migrants provides the empirical evidence. On the one hand, findings allude to the subjectivity of the urban experience based on personal histories, gender, nationality, and other personal factors. On the other hand, they suggest a collective production of space and thus the construction of collective narratives of the four cities.

Die internationale Studentenmobilität ist ein wachsendes Thema in den Bereichen Humangeographie und Migrationsforschung. Dieser Ansatz wird nicht nur durch die Linse der Vergänglichkeit und der urbanen Erfahrung untersucht, sondern ist auch eine soziologische Angelegenheit. Das Studium des Lebens internationaler mobiler Studenten ermöglicht das Verständnis, wie diese spezifische Bevölkerung der Globalisierung, zu Migration und Bildungstrends in der städtischen Welt beiträgt. Durch die Untersuchung, der alltäglichen Geschichten der internationale Studierenden über die Vergänglichkeit in der Stadt zu leben und zu lernen, zu größere Erzählungen über neue städtische Geografien der Bildungsmobilität.

Inspiziert von den Ideen von Michel de Certeau und der von Colin McFarlane skizzierten Assemblage-Theorie untersucht diese Forschung die Darstellungen der urbanen Erfahrung trotz die Vergänglichkeit. Ein emischer / etischer Ansatz ist ausgewählt worden, um den Alltag durch persönliche Beobachtungen, Interviews und mentale Karten, zu untersuchen. Die städtischen Erfahrungen der 4CITIES-Studenten in Brüssel, Wien, Kopenhagen und Madrid in ihrem Zustand als temporäre Migranten, liefern empirische Belege. Einerseits verweisen die Ergebnisse auf die Subjektivität der städtischen Erfahrung, die auf persönlichen Geschichten, Geschlecht, Nationalität und anderen subjektiven Faktoren beruht. Zum anderen schlagen sie eine kollektive Raumproduktion, und damit die Konstruktion kollektiver Erzählungen, der vier Städte vor.

Keywords: international student mobility, transience, 4CITIES, urban experience, everyday life

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Preface

The human species is a traveling species, inherently on the move. Mobility is what characterizes our lives. As transient migrants, we tend to flow like pollen in the wind, throughout the world with a suitcase. We free ourselves from identities and materials, acknowledging that we are a patchwork of different locations and people. The only thing we appear to own is language and our self in the wilderness of the urban environment, but this is often challenged.

After being a migrant in other cities around the world, arriving to the 4CITIES program became like a continuation of that global citizen project that nowadays many young people like myself claim to crave. As an architect and urban dweller, more and more ideas and questions continue to arise as I move between cities. This program provided me the opportunity to experience unique cultures, spaces, and people. Words will never be enough to express how much I have learned throughout this 2-year experiential journey that 4CITIES has been. I am infinitely thankful for the support given by my alma mater- the University of Guadalajara and my most significant support of all, my father, my mother, and my two siblings.

During the odyssey, my classmates, now my 4CITIES family, became my leading support network and the mirrors from which I could see some reflections of myself. I am confident that our willingness to embark on this expedition and share it as a family will resonate for years to come. Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid are primarily them, their cultures, their personal histories, their hopes, and dreams. The urban environment was constructed through the words and eyes of those that accompanied us on the road – teachers, universities, flatmates, lovers, landlords, local students, institutions, the list is long. However, most poetically, the city itself provided the inspirational energy that made me write about the ‘insignificant’ and the trivial. The poetic vision of the city and its everyday life that brought about the idea of writing this project was beautifully presented by Henrik and Martin in Copenhagen, and for that, I am very grateful as it has changed the way I feel, think and dwell within the city.

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Introduction

*“Mais les vrais voyageurs sont ceux-là seuls qui partent
Pour partir, coeurs légers, semblables aux ballons,
De leur fatalité jamais ils ne s’écarterent,
Et, sans savoir pourquoi, disent toujours: Allons!”*

-Charles Baudelaire (1868)

During the last three decades, global cities have seen a significant increase in international student mobility (ISM). According to UNESCO (2019), as of 2017, more than 5.3 million students belong to this segment of the population. Having such a growing number of international students concentrated mainly in Western Europe, several prominent issues regarding the analysis of culture, education, migration, and globalization arise. In this regard, focus on everyday practices, social relations, and the experience of studying abroad as a transient mobile student is scarcely reflected in the literature and can open a window to learn about larger narratives in the exercise of ISM.

This thesis, conceived from an emic/etic approach, has three rationales. Firstly, and pragmatically, it reflects my professional biography and my student trajectory. I first became interested in how dwelling in the city led to learning about it and then decided to embark on the adventure of experiencing it myself. Secondly, it places the focus on the everyday lives of students as transient migrants. The transient or temporary condition is directly influential in how the urban experience is lived, perceived, and embodied. Thirdly, placing in the center the belief that people's lifeworlds have a transformative nature that becomes more evident when dwelling in mobility. The central premise is that urban learning is not only dictated by the city itself but also through the construction of individual and collective experiences by means such as perceptions, emotions, memories, interests, and family history. In order to carry out the investigation, the guiding research question is: *how does the transient urban experience defines how international mobile students dwell and learn urban studies in 4 European capitals?*

On the one hand, the everyday life of people inhabiting the city, most notably the life of transient international students, is often hidden away on the grounds that having a temporary status and time constraints makes it difficult to portray their relevance. Little attention, concerning providing empirical data, has been given to what 'ordinary' student's lives can reveal in the field of urban studies. Therefore, this research argues about the importance of shedding light on them, given that the 'ordinary' urban stories are overlooked continuously due to their brevity. On the other hand, it is essential to understand cities as both a product of narratives and inversely sites where narratives are constructed and cultivated. However, in this case, the student's daily lives structure those larger narratives in the changing geographies of the educational panorama. It is the ordinary occurrences in public space, commuting, or even being alone, that constitute students' mundane everyday lives, the so-called 'ordinary' that shapes our lives. The practices of everyday life frame the urban life stories that ultimately constitute the urbanity and whose impacts are not high on the agenda. Moreover, as stated by Teichler (2017, p. 197), it is complicated and problematic even to outline the state of knowledge systematically since 'available studies tend to be overlooked because the findings are widely scattered across different types of documents and publications in different languages.'

Therefore, triggered by the ideas of De Certeau (1988), the object of study is the fine art of dwelling and learning along with their particular significance and the extension of the analysis of the everyday practices to scientific fields. Consequently, this research contributes to new perspectives in the active debates on ISM by providing empirical evidence. The everyday life operations vis-à-vis the transient condition of international mobile students will lead towards adopting a more integrative approach (Yat Wai Lo, 2019) to ISM that emphasizes students' lives. In this regard, everyday urban life offers particular modes of 'learning through dwelling, and manifest in a range of ways, whether as a form of accretion or as more defined and sudden shifts in perception or ways of experiencing urbanism' (McFarlane, 2011, p. 32). The constant mutations in the student's lifeworld are often contested by a series of experiences that are stimulated by the urban. As a cohort of students, the narrative of the city ends up being a patchwork built and shared by them. The collective production of the city and its narrative grants insights on larger narratives revolving around the experience of being a student abroad.

Furthermore, this research aims at giving continuity to the practices and experiences that have been described in contemporary research of former 4CITIES Master in Urban Studies alumni across Europe (Arshia Eghbali, 2019; García Brenke, 2019; Hofmann, 2012; Kaye, 2018; Pranaya, 2018), to contribute to the knowledge gained during the experience of being transient international mobile students and urban dwellers.

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Literature Review

*"You must set about it more slowly, almost stupidly.
Force yourself to write down what is of no interest, what
is most obvious, most common, most colorless."*

-Georges Pérec (1997)

The following academic literature review draws concepts from the disciplines of urban sociology, human geography, migration, and comparative literature. Notably, the ideas rendered in the book *The Practice of everyday life* by Michel de Certeau have been the guiding thread in the conceptualization of the following research. The assemblage theory reproduced by Colin McFarlane serves as a backbone to explain the notion of learning the city.

First, the concept of international student migration (ISM) is defined according to various research agendas and conceptual approaches to the topic. An overview of the recent patterns in international student mobility is delineated to understand its urban geographies. Through this geographical approach, the concepts that surround international students' lives are unraveled, mainly globalization, and migration from an educational point of view. A brief introduction to the concepts of transience, transnationality, and emplacement frame the conditions of the subjects in question. A review of the subject of this research -a group of transient and mobile international students in the field of urban studies- is elaborated upon. The Erasmus-funded program of the 4CITIES master's in Urban Studies is briefly explained as well as a characterization of cohort 11, which was the case study to gather empirical evidence.

Second, the notions of dwelling and learning in the city are further developed. The depiction of the city as an assemblage for learning (McFarlane, 2011) sets the ground to discuss the everyday life in the urban environment. The spatial practices and ways of operating as well as the condition of 'dwelling in mobility' are unwrapped through an interpretation of De Certeau's practice of everyday life (1988). An epitomized explanation of the city as an educational setting is provided through the idea of learning through dwelling in the city and focusing on the ordinary urban lives, i.e., everyday practices.

Third, some representations of the urban experience, according to diverse authors, are briefly presented. These forms of representation rely on the epistemology of storytelling, memory, and mental mapping of the imaginative geographies. Thus, it is vital to highlight the subjectivity of the philosophical stance taken to study the experience of transient international mobile students.

International student mobility (ISM) in the field of urban studies

International student mobility is an experience that dates to the late medieval times with the *peregrinatio academica* in which the art of traveling was used as a traditional form of mobility (ÖAW Institute for Medieval Research, 2020). However, it is well known that new forms of mobility have arisen in the last decades (UNESCO, 2019). As Wei (2013) asserts, several nations and organizations have given weight to the mobility of talent, i.e., international students across borders; along with the belief that in the era of the so-called knowledge economy, students appear to be the driving forces of the latter. Moreover, scholars argue that the higher speed of globalization that started at the beginning of the last century has accelerated the international flow of production factors. The flow of talent is a fundamental factor of global modes of production (Wei, 2013). Among the tangible results of this flow of talent, the internationalization of higher education appears to become prevalent in the globalized economy.

The 'internationalization' of higher education (Teichler, 2017) is a fact as well as the appearance of new trends in education that are inclined towards a more experiential approach to learning about urban issues (McFarlane, 2011; Pipitone, 2018; Kolb & Kolb, 2005) which at the same time continue to expand geographically. Among those, ISM has emerged as a growing phenomenon in cities (Gruber, 2019), having border-crossing and study purposes as critical elements. Several researchers point out that the dominant source and host countries belong to the Western world (Collins, 2012; Kölbel, 2020; Lipura & Collins, 2020; Yat Wai Lo, 2019; Smith & Khawaja, 2011). In line with several authors cited by Kölbel (2020), Western 'education, in particular, is often associated with a host of benefits, including improved language skills and intercultural competences, better career prospects and security of citizenship'. However, as new modes and geographies of mobilities have continued to emerge at a rapid pace, the occasion to think of the experience at a counter speed appears to be less scrutinized in academia. There seems to be a lack of empirical evidence surrounding the experience of international mobile students, which might reveal findings on how students dwell and learn in and about the city.

International students, as defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), are ‘those who received their prior education in another country and are not residents of their current country of study’ (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020). In this sense, several reports have shown that the international student market has increasingly grown in the last decades, and with it, the higher education opportunities to study abroad. The most prominent precedent in Europe is the Bologna process, and the creation of the ERASMUS+ program¹ which promotes mobility within Europe (Teichler, 2012; 2017) as well as the construction of a *mobility habitus* (Robin, 2018) also referred to as ‘dwelling in mobility’ (Marcu, 2017).

The global world has witnessed a radical increase of individuals ‘dwelling in mobility’ lately – mainly in urban areas. A significant group of society is that of mobile individuals that travel for academic purposes and, more specifically, for higher education- tertiary students. According to UNESCO, as of 2017, more than 5.3 million individuals belong to the category of outbound internationally mobile tertiary students studying abroad (UNESCO, 2019).



Figure 1 Global glance at ISM. The top five countries with an inflow of international student mobility in the world are Luxembourg, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and Switzerland. Among the top 50 countries, 28 are European. Source: OECD (2020)

The increasing trends in mobility open a series of debates on new migration patterns in the field of education. Migration, as defined by Oxford, is ‘the movement of people to a new country or area in order to find work or better living conditions’ (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, 2020). Expanding on that, the modern concept of mobility situates a new category of migrants- international students- under the expressionism of international migration (Barcus & Halfacree, 2018; Gruber, 2019). This group has specific characteristics that differentiate them from others, mainly concerned with temporality, purpose and motivation, space, voluntariness, and legal situation (Gruber, 2019). The purpose in every case is education, while the rest vary according to situations that range from a personal or individual level to a national or supranational scale. The particularities in each international program will also be a decisive variable in enhancing or diminishing specific characteristics of the ISM experience.

The growing offer of international study programs in a diversity of fields and modalities has enhanced the main narratives surrounding ISM. According to several authors, three dominant discourses in ISM were identified. First, the instrumentalist (Yat Wai Lo, 2019) or economic discourse which seeks capital accumulation in cities by promoting the transformation of students into ‘neoliberal global subjects’ that respond to market forces (Lipura & Collins, 2020) while boosting the commodification of higher education. Additionally, ISM is used as a strategy to enhance national, institutional, and individual competitiveness in which the three types of capital –social, cultural, and economic – are cultivated among other actions through the national and local

articulations that create push and pull factors that attract or repel ISM. Indeed, a more substantial flow of students will result in the 'urban centers where reputable institutions are based, and broader educational markets are developed' (Collins, 2012). Second, the socio-economic discourse, which highlights the motivations, significance, and life-course circumstances of students to engage with ISM. In this narrative, there is a particular focus on the migrant condition of students, especially non-western students, cataloguing ISM as a state of *permanent temporariness* that is at the same time a strategy for resistance. In other words, this narrative views the educational experience abroad as empowering and emancipatory (Yat Wai Lo, 2019). Third, the discourse that broadens the limits of education as a fundamental human right to an international level and seeks global social justice. It features transnational networks and the nurturing of *global citizenship* (Yat Wai Lo, 2019).

Researchers have urged to move beyond the economic discourse, which appears to be one of the dominant narratives in the field of ISM (Lipura & Collins, 2020; Collins, 2012; Yat Wai Lo, 2019; Teichler, 2017). Existing research has primarily focused on the economic perspective that commodifies international education and views international mobile students as "neoliberal subjects who are amenable to targeting as 'cash cows' for public or private profit as instruments for public diplomacy, or simply as capital-seeking individual competing in the global marketplace of skills and self-cultivation" (Lipura & Collins, 2020, p. 7).

Although the three main discourses are frequently promoted by academia and national institutions by the approaches they take to study ISM, a wave of scholars (McFarlane, 2011; Ingold, 2000; Collins, 2012) in urban studies call to a more integrative approach (Lipura & Collins, 2020) which broadens the scope in the transient condition of international mobile students by providing empirical evidence on the everyday lives of those that dwell and learn in and about the city. Therefore, to facilitate the study of ISM, an integrative approach would attempt to bring into the conversation the transient or temporary mobility experiences which are understood according to Marcu (2017, p. 406) as 'a set of practices- work, careers, feelings, language – acquired through the life-course by different actors, who move and adapt to different environments in the context of time-space convergence.'

Transience, transnationality, and emplacement

In order to understand ISM through an integrative approach that concentrates on the everyday lives of international mobile students, the concepts of transience, transnationality, and emplacement need to be clearly defined. In the framework of this research, transience refers to the temporary character of student mobility, thus assembling transient lifeworlds (Collins, 2012). Transnationality, on the other hand, refers to a paradigm in which *transmigrants*, i.e., persons who live their lives across borders, have simultaneous embeddedness across nation-states (Glick Schiller, 2007). Additionally, emplacement alludes to 'the social processes through which a dispossessed individual builds or rebuilds networks of connection within the constraints and opportunities of a specific city' (Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016).

In this regard, scholars have pointed out that the different scales and multi-spatial analysis when studying ISM through the lens of transnationality, transience and emplacement allows to better grasp the student's urban experience, their involvement in the everyday life of places in the host cities and their social relations not only within the city but also back home and overseas (Collins, 2012; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016). The different scales involved in mobility range from the individual (the body) to the global, in the spectrum of family, community, urban, national, transnational. Accordingly, transient life is not only constrained to the temporal dimension but also the constant clashes of scales above mentioned.

To illustrate the multi-layered identity that students develop when experiencing ISM, Collins (2012; 2008; 2020; Collins, 2010) presents the theory and empirical evidence to prove that multi-local social networks traverse places and do not necessarily become fixed in space or time. Existing or newly built global connections and networks appear to be very relevant factors when studying international student mobility because while students remain in contact with their countries of origin and their cities of study, other places start appearing in their social realm.

Scholars also recognize the prominent growth of the virtual realm before, during, and after the ISM experience. Firstly, before the mobility has occurred, marketing and promotion of higher education programs abroad are done by a series of institutions and national governments (Collins, 2012; Jayadeva, 2020; Beech, 2014) and interpersonal mobilization in social networks (Beech, International student mobility: the role of social networks, 2015) as ‘bridges to learning’ (Collins, 2008). In this sense, researchers have investigated how the students are using the online sources for information (Chang & Gomes, 2017; Kölbel, 2020; Collins, 2012; Jayadeva, 2020; Beech, International student mobility: the role of social networks, 2015). Recent findings have demonstrated that technological advancements, mainly the virtual connectivity, have allowed for long-distance communication, which ‘facilitates exchanges which directly shape the geographies of ISM’ (Kölbel, 2020). The representations of the imaginaries promoted by mass media and, more specifically, social networks provide the students with dominant narratives about the ISM experience along with the benefits and privileges attached to the dominant connotation of ISM.

Secondly, from the moment mobility begins, transnational and translocal networks, many times facilitated through social media and other Internet resources, provide the student with a different experience. Collins (2012) discusses the transient and transnational connections that facilitate student mobility and situated encounters within urban spaces. Likewise, Jayadeva provides practical information to demonstrate that social media communities, such as those found on WhatsApp or Facebook, can act as a tool for democracy by broadening the student’s social networks and the social capital to which they have access (Jayadeva, 2020) and can have an effect on their emplacement in the city.

Thirdly, after the mobility period, the virtual tools like social media, email, or other online platforms allow the former students to stay connected to the global network that was created during the mobility period. Moreover, not only is the digital world mainly used to connect with contacts but also to continue embarking on a global sphere. At the same time, it reinforces the ‘global citizenship’ identity that was fostered during the period of mobility. Kölbel (2020) sets an example of this by outlining the establishment and maintenance of ‘friendships’ via Facebook. In conclusion, Kölbel (2020, p. 94) asserts that:

The internet and social networking sites are important means for young people to gather information before they travel abroad and to expand their social networks beyond their immediate circles of family and friends; the networks built and maintained through the use of modern technologies are an important stimulus for others to move. (Kölbel, 2020, p. 94)

Seen through the lens of space and place, studying abroad involves numerous challenges that include financial, legal, political, educational, psychological, family, and individual aspects. In recent years, novel ways have emerged to measure the challenges that students face when arriving in a new city. For example, the Intercultural Development Index sketched by Campbell (2016) illustrates the six stages of transition during ISM. The stages include denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration. Other examples include the acculturation models studied by Smith and Khawaja (2011), which are applied to examine the experience of acculturative stress and difficulties that international students frequently suffer during the adaptation process or adjustment to the environment of the host city. Among the stressors are language barriers, educational difficulties, loneliness, discrimination, and practical problems associated with changing environments (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). All of the stages mentioned above regarding the adaptation process and emplacement in the city produce what can be considered the urban experience, which will be examined in the following sections.

Mobile international programs: the case of the 4CITIES Euromaster in Urban Studies

4CITIES is a two-year master program in Urban Studies of an ‘exploratory nature in which travel is a constant’ (Grigsby, 2019). The joint program is organized by six international universities and takes place in 4 European capital cities: Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid. The traveling nature of the program implies that a student cohort moves every semester and lives in a different city for a period of 4 to 7 months whilst studying in different universities, with new teaching staff, and under diverse teaching traditions. Consequently, the students live in each city in their condition as transient migrants.

The 11th edition of the *4CITIES* program groups 24 students from 16 countries and 24 different cities of origin in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Cohort 11 started their studies in September 2018 and expect to graduate by September 2020 in Brussels. At the beginning of the program, the fourteen women and ten men who participated in this program were between 22 and 32 years old and come from different socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds as well as a myriad of disciplinary backgrounds; 75% come from disciplines in the field of humanities and social sciences, 4% from the field of natural sciences, and 21% from an architectural background. The interdisciplinary and international nature of the program in urban studies represents an added value to the educational program. Also, the excursions and further travels in four cities contribute to the on-site learning while learning about the contributions those cities have made in urban studies through experiential immersion. The comparative learning aspect is also present as the students inherently develop the skills to compare and contrast not only in the academic sphere but also in their personal and collective experiences.

Dialectic individual-city /one-self and otherness

The postmodern conceptualization of the city, as well as the notion of *the urban*, have frequently been discussed by numerous urban thinkers. Naturally, according to the field of study and differing philosophies, the conception of *the urban* and *the city* is given manifold and sometimes divergent definitions. Indeed, the city goes beyond being a material fact; a social and political dimension is fundamental for its understanding (Lefebvre, 1991). Henceforth, the city is delineated as the space in which a collection of interconnected stories lived by a group of individuals gives rise to the urban experience. Thus, cities are understood as nodes where international students experience and interact and exchange learnings and thus enlarge and complexify the ever-changing notion of urbanity and understanding of self and otherness.

Dwelling and Learning in the city: the everyday life

In one of his most influential essays, *Building, dwelling, thinking*, Martin Heidegger (1971) explores the meaning of dwelling. Moreover, drawing on the etymological roots of the verb 'to dwell,' Heidegger traces back the meaning to human's mere existence on Earth, i.e., it is identical to say 'I dwell, you dwell' and 'I am, you are' (Ingold, 2000). Consequently, to study dwelling is to study oneself and the Other. The work from Tim Ingold (2000) is inspired by Heidegger's and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological philosophies by undertaking a 'dwelling perspective' which affirms that the built environment only arises within the human life activities.

A more recent stance in late modern times is provided by Zygmunt Bauman (2000) when he describes his theory of liquid modernity in which dominant individualistic attitudes flourished in the city under the transition from modernism to postmodernism. For Bauman, foreigners represent the image of fragility and precariousness of the human condition. A dialectical relationship (Davis, 2013) is exposed as to what being connected means in the digital era: urban loneliness versus 'connected' students. The city thus appears as the stage in which resistance of those actors -transient international students- takes place through demonstrations of coexisting in alterity. Dwelling in the mobility paradigm is thus seen as 'the practical outcome of an ideology of speed, lightness, and fluidity' (Arshia Eghbali, 2019). Relevant to this research is the liaison between dwelling in the city and learning in and about the city through the subjective urban experience of international students dwelling in mobility.

Marcu (2017) defines the condition of 'dwelling in mobility,' which is derived from the theoretical background set by Pierre Bourdieu (1993) through the comeback of the old word *habitus*. The 'habitus' raised by Pierre Bourdieu is 'that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions' (Nash, 1999). The author also suggests that the concept is linked to a historical dimension, meaning that an individual's history is a driver of *habitus*. Adding other dimensions to the mix, Marcu (2017) assumes this position to assert that the socio-economic context and personal and professional life-course circumstances create different, uneven rhythms that influence student's everyday lives and

perceptions of mobility.

Moreover, the habitus of the student dwelling in mobility evolves to a mode of being in '*permanent temporariness*' (Marcu, 2017), which can be viewed as a tactic and thus a mode of resistance. As Sennett (2018) mentions taking the ideas of John Dewey, resistance prompts us to think. Tactics equal resistance as they can only use, manipulate, and divert spaces that would otherwise be produced, tabulated, and imposed in space (De Certeau, 1988). Therefore, tactics boost the corporeal and sensorial experience of mobility, which are represented in the ways of operating in the mentioned state of *permanent temporariness*. De Certeau distinguishes the 'ways of operating' and the role of space by developing the concepts of strategies and tactics. 'Strategies are able to produce, tabulate and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 30). Thus, one could say that practitioners of urban space appeal to strategies and tactics to produce space rather than meaningless places. Strategies materialize in the representations of space whilst tactics unfold in representational spaces. Therefore, the knowledge and symbolisms ascribed to the urban space are constructed time and time again, i.e., tactical learning is ever-changing. Whence, language and the speech act itself make possible the materialization not only of the 'imposed' strategies but also the tactical trajectories of the production of space that finally lead to the attempt of representing the subjective urban experience. As Lefebvre (1961) points out, 'language must use thought and knowledge effectively to make itself dialectical' making discourse an essential fact of everyday life. These dialectical movements are revealed in the black holes of coherent discourse.

On the other side of the spectrum, McFarlane (2011, p. 16) identifies three interrelated aspects surrounding the distributed process of learning: *translation*, *coordination*, and *dwelling*. Concretely, the notion of dwelling is relevant to consider how learning emerges through relations between an individual or a group and the city. He concludes that since our way of dwelling is practical and not cognitive, the Heideggerian *dasein* (being-there) is 'an everyday skillful, embodied coping or engagement with the environment' and thus: 'learning through dwelling entails shifts in perception, a way of seeing that is haptic – sensed, embodied, practiced.' (McFarlane, 2011, p. 21) Learning in the urban environment can arise from repetition, performance, formal training, individual experimentation, situations that interfere with the 'known,' or that lead to new ways of seeing and understanding. Henceforth, learning is used as a:

Name for the specific processes, practices, and interactions through which knowledge is created, contested, and transformed, and for how perception emerges and changes. Learning as a distributed assemblage of people, materials, and space that is often neither formal nor simply individual. (McFarlane, 2011, p. 3)

Learning the city is therefore understood as a dialectical sphere in which the physical and the sociological, the objective and the subjective, mainly the individual, the group, and the city emerge as an entity. Learning surges through an informal and experiential immersion in urban space-time in which the production and the contestation of everyday urban life are the main catalysts. Thus, it is relevant to draw on the approach taken by McFarlane (2011) in the book *Learning the City* in which he uses examples as heuristics to reveal not only the fact that the city is an assemblage for learning but also 'how learning as dwelling occurs through a process of incremental assembly' (p. 34) which connotes transformation. Hence, the assemblage theory places a focal point on the socio-spatial interactions that constitute the learning process. Resorting to the notion of assemblage as a guiding thread reaffirms three main premises that connote transformation. Firstly, the fundamental relations of history and potential that happen in multiple spatio-temporalities. Secondly, the fact that learning is produced by doing, performance, and events. Thirdly, learning is socio-spatially structured, hierarchized, and narrativized through unequal relations of knowledge, power, and resources. It is in this context in which McFarlane asserts that:

'Learning is not *only* a product of the encounter with the city itself (...) the learning that emerges is a combination of two broad constituent parts: the changing nature of urbanism itself, and individual and group experiences, perceptions, concerns, interests, agendas, memories, hopes, fears, and so on. Urban learning emerges through a relational co-constitution of city and individual.' (2011, p. 6)

This constructivist approach to learning is also depicted when considering dwelling and learning through everyday life in the city as pedagogical benefits. Anđelković et al. (2018) frame those benefits in the light of

didactic-methodical aspect such as immediate contact with objects of knowledge; interdisciplinary study of a problem; application of various methods of teaching; improvement of social relations, and development of skills necessary for fieldwork, all of which are primary goals of international study programs such as the 4CITIES master in Urban Studies. The total immersion forces the students to improvise in the ways they inhabit the city. This improvised way of dwelling comes from repetition and incremental engagement (McFarlane, 2011) with varied spaces and temporalities as well as negotiating with transnational and local networks. The improvisation can enable or disrupt different alternatives of dwelling that lead to new rhythms.

All urban dwellers apprehend daily experiential forms of learning; however, these forms are experienced in a drastically different manner based on many factors that include the cultural, physiological, psychological, and so on. However, there is indeed a complicated exchange between the individual and the dynamic city, both in constant change. As mentioned by Borden et al. (2000, p. 9), 'learning the city is first and foremost a 'project of becoming' though unfolding events and struggles over time and space, the city as 'a conjunction of seemingly endless possibilities of remaking.'

The constant re-making of the city as a palimpsest that can be read as a multi-layered text ascribes to the metaphor posed by Michel de Certeau (1988).

Beneath the fabricating and universal writing of technology, opaque and stubborn places remain. The revolutions of history, economic mutations, demographic mixtures lie in layers within it, and remain there, hidden in customs, rites, and spatial practices. The legible discourses that formerly articulated them have disappeared or left only fragments in language. This place, on its surface, seems to be a collage. (De Certeau, 1988, p. 201)

By touching upon the idea that the city is a text written by spatial practices, the 'art of practice' presents an immense and rich field of study from a bottom-up approach that is not certified by formal education, i.e., universities. The identifying symbolism ascribed to places is tangible in the informal, casual time. Urban informality is also evident in urban learning in the form of improvisation, i.e., incremental urban learning. Even so, the state of mobility itself provides a whole other experience that is both determined by the previous background and crucial for the future of the student's life course. In this context, different forms of learning in the universe of the urban can be realized through the focus on the everyday practices – learning through doing. There is a certain complexity in the standard agreement of the urban ways of operating in those 'ordinary' practices that happen without saying. 'It is because subjects do not know, strictly speaking, what they are doing, that what they do has more meaning than they realize '*Dogta ignorantia*,' therefore, a cleverness that does not recognize itself as such' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 56).

Accordingly, the act of walking appears as one of the most relevant everyday practices. It is to be considered fundamental to how we come to learn urban space from a socio-spatial perspective. The city is 'fastened' through the relational constitution of walking and the socio-spatial aspects, memory, and bodily experience. As a result, walking appears to be 'a particular kind of education of attention to the urban environment through which people experience and learn urbanism, an embodied condition of thinking and perception in constant flow' (McFarlane, 2011, p. 50). The reproduction and representations of the urban experience, although only expressed through language, discourse, and images, lay bare the assemblage of translocality, commodification, ecologies, histories, and unraveling of events. (McFarlane, 2011)

Representations of the urban experience

Several writers (Lefebvre, 1991; Benjamin, 2011; Pérec, 1997; De Certeau, 1988; Debord, 1994; Baudelaire, 1868; Sennett, 2018) from different disciplines have recounted the urban experience in the modern era all of whom embark in the intense and sometimes poetic adventure of the everyday. Urban thinkers have managed to capture the essence of everyday urban spatialities by way of different writing styles. On the one hand, Pérec (1997) commits to the infra-ordinary with lightness and humor when jumping between scales of what constitutes the urban experience. On the other hand, De Certeau (1988) adopts a more metaphorical

approach when understanding the city as a text that can be read from the top or by walking:

The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below,' below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thick and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it. These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. (De Certeau, 1988, p. 93)

While Lefebvre sets precedents for the situationist movement, Guy Debord and Charles Baudelaire experiment with the *dérive* and the figure of the *flâneur* to learn alternative ways of being in the city and producing knowledge. Something in which all the aforementioned writers agree is that walking is an elementary form of the urban experience itself that must be sensed and embodied through the spirit. As Benjamin describes, 'experience is meaningless and devoid of spirit only for the spiritless' (Benjamin, 2011, p. 117).

Literature is indeed one great source of inspiration; however, several representations aim to render the urban experience. As frequently discussed by Lefebvre (1961), the urban experience seen from the lens of the everyday life will merely reproduce an idea opposite to the thought of a universal reality. However, the narrative structures present certain benefits that elucidate new epistemologies in signifying spatial practices. In the words of Ingold, 'urbanism does not so much exist as occurs; it is a socio-material achievement continuously remade through different encounters, labors, and mobilizations' (2008, p. 1808).

Storytelling: the narrativization of life stories

The narrativization of the urban experience can be used as an approach to better grasp that learning in the field of urban studies is not only about developing perceptions through engagement in the city but also about creating knowledge. Despite its importance, the lived experience by the individuals studying the city is often not told or *raconté*, which is why storytelling can be useful to pursue an analysis of the relation between the experience of the practices and learning or what remains of them. Oral stories complemented with maps enable such spatial analysis:

The organization that can be discerned in stories about space in everyday culture is inverted by the process that has isolated a system of geographical places. The difference between the two modes of description obviously does not consist in the presence or absence of practices (they are work everywhere), but in fact that maps constituted as proper places in which to exhibit the products of knowledge, form tables of legible results. Stories about space exhibit, on the contrary, the operations that allow it, within a constraining and non-"proper" place... (De Certeau, 1988, p. 121)

Storytelling acts as a mechanism for the analysis of urban space by narrativizing the stories and using the latter as empirical support to the philosophy behind international student mobility, notably by identifying the strategies and tactics present in everyday life and the significance of overseas education. In the words of De Certeau (1988, p. 118), 'oral descriptions of places, narrations concerning the home, stories about the streets, represent a first hand, and enormous corpus.'

Narratives are made up of a myriad of stories that are often left out of the scientific discourse, being cataloged as rather unimportant or not as an object of study itself. 'Narrative contracts and compilations of stories are composed of fragments drawn from earlier stories and fitted together in makeshift fashion (*bricolés*)' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 122); thus stories become narratives that describe the space created by practices. There is a theoretical relevance of narrativity so far as everyday practices are concerned, making them appealing for the academic realm. Conducive to explore mainly the tactics in the ways of dwelling in a city, narrativity appears as a legitimate tool to produce a discourse composed of stories -*récits and recounted practices*. Like this, 'conversation is a provisional and collective effect of competence in the art of manipulating 'commonplaces' and the inevitability of events in such a way as to them habitable' (De Certeau, 1988, p. xxii).

The real discourse of the city then appears through the description of casual time. Casual time refers to the unforeseen, those spaces that are produced without programming and which do not make part prospective studies, i.e., formal and expected ways of learning in the city. These gaps in the formal discourse are spots that accede to the dimension of thinking. According to De Certeau:

Casual time is what is narrated in the actual discourse of the city: an indeterminate fable, better articulated on the metaphorical practices and stratified places than on the empire of the evident in functionalistic technocracy. (1988, p. 203)

Memory

Memory appears to be an inseparable element of storytelling. It is to memory and its evocative power that we appeal to access the universe of connotations (Maillard, 2011), signs, and meanings. De Certeau points out that the functions of the relations between spatial and signifying practices are indicated in 'the believable, the memorable, and the primitive (...), three symbolic mechanisms that organize the topoi of a discourse on and of a city (legend, memory, and dream) in a way that also eludes urbanistic systematicity' (1988, p. 105).

Furthermore, memory is also a selective process; it is shaped by the narrators and their crusade in 'turning social codes into metaphors and ellipses' (De Certeau, 1988). Memory, seen from the lens of transience, fosters intermediate periods or intervals that allow for the *decantation of experiences* (Maillard, 2011). The underlying rationales of the urban experience as a whole for the international students have to do with the remembrance and recognition of specific situations, places, moments, odors, movements, feelings. Travel produces 'an exploration of the deserted places of memories' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 107). Although the assemblage of stories will never allow one to grasp the urban experience as such fully, given the complexity of the experience itself, memory sets the atmosphere without which the story would not come to life.

Imaginative geographies of mobile students

When the students arrive in a new city, new microcosms of their own start to get built through new individual urban narratives. A new relationship emerges between the subject, in this case, the student, and the object, i.e., the city. An approach to understanding this relationship is through the mapping of the micro geographies that are shaped by the urban stories. The micro geographies woven by the individuals are a sum of the rhythms that emerge from socio-spatially. The meta stories that are intricate to those larger narratives that produce space are often simply left as projects of thick description. In the words of Lefebvre:

Space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users,' but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated- and hence passively experienced- space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 47)

Imaginative geographies of ISM are therefore used to study young people's experiences of studying abroad. According to Kölbel (2020), there are multiple ways in which students internalize and rework the dominant imaginaries of mobility and place based on the student's social identities and their lived experiences. Likewise, international students have an imaginary of what ISM and studying abroad is and means. Marketing and media play a defining role in the imaginative geographies of the cities they study in, even before starting the mobility period (Beech, 2014).

By drawing on the imaginative geographies that international students have of particular places, a direct relation can be observed in their process of emplacement as well as the construction of social belonging to the city. In this way, the city built by international mobile students links together space, place, and power, as described in the theory of the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991). To understand the complexity of the production of space in the students' lives requires to link the stories (narratives) to the hidden imaginative

geographies of the everyday use of space. It is thus essential to clarify the triad of the production of space: the perceived, the conceived and the lived. These three forms are conceptualized in the spatial practices (i.e., buildings and actions), the representations of space (i.e., conscious theories and figures) and the representational spaces (i.e., imaginations and experiences):

Social practice presupposes the use of the body... This is the realm of the **perceived** (the practical basis of the perception of the outside world). As for **representations of the body**, they derive from accumulated scientific knowledge, disseminated with an admixture of ideology: from knowledge of anatomy, of physiology, of sickness and its cure, and of the body's relations with nature and with its surroundings or 'milieu.' Bodily **lived** experience, for its part, maybe both highly complex and quite peculiar, because 'culture' intervenes here. (Lefebvre, The Production of Space, 1991, p. 40)

The multiple spaces, i.e., those produced according to the triad, and temporalities, give rise to an imaginative geography of embodied urban connections. The urbanism mapped by urban dwellers is the alternative to learn about the city while it being a political act of resistance, i.e., tactics (De Certeau , 1988). Rhythms again come to play in the assemblage that composes the imaginative geographies through mobility. The three main domains in which individuals interpret and act upon the city are: 'sensing the city,' 'knowing the city' and 'urban gestures' (McFarlane, 2011, p. 56).

3/

Research Statement

*"The intellectuals are still born on the backs of the
common people"*

-Michel de Certeau (1988)

Conducive to answer the research question and the sub-questions, an extensive theoretical literature review is presented, mainly inspired in Michel De Certeau's *Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) and McFarlane's *Learning the city* (2011). The importance of the 'fine art of dwelling' and its connection to the field of international student mobility is analyzed by using as a case study cohort 11 of the 4CITIES Master, in which the student's main trait is their transient condition. Therefore, the following research question guides this thesis: *how does the transient urban experience defines how international mobile students dwell and learn urban studies in 4 European capitals?*

The research addresses several critical interrelated questions regarding the experience of being a transient international student:

- *What are the factors that influence the everyday practices and experiences of a transient international student and its cohort in the city?*
- *How do international mobile students dwell in Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid in their condition as transient students?*
- *What do international mobile students expect from having a wide range of educational and life experiences in a mobile European program?*
- *What role does the Internet have in the development of the lives of international students?*

Using an emic/etic approach, i.e., being a student of the 4CITIES Master's in Urban Studies myself, the central premise of this thesis is that the transient condition of international students defines their lived experience in the city, from the individual to the global scale. This experiential immersion in urban space-time allows for individual processes of dwelling and learning in the city to happen. The narrativization of the lived experiences shed light on broader trends in the fields of globalization, migration, and international student mobility.

The stories produced during this research were assembled, following McFarlane's assemblage theory. Hence, the following objectives were met:

- Assemble different individual everyday life stories from a group of international mobile students learning in and about the city in a direction that can provide empirical evidence about the experience of student urban life.
- Identify the factors that influence the decision to embark in four different European capital cities.
- Understand the networks developed by transient international students and how they shape the student's emplacement and affect the adaptation processes in the city.
- Expose how 4 European capitals – Brussels, Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid – are experienced, produced, and represented by a cohort of international mobile students.
- Shed light on how the Internet facilitates or impacts the processes of dwelling and learning while being a transient student.

4/

Epistemology and Methodological Framework

"What the map cuts up, the story cuts across."

-Michel de Certeau (1988)

The following methodological framework aims to provide empirical evidence about the urban experience of international mobile students and thus suggests the use of qualitative methods. The research design is exploratory and is centered around the assemblage of urban life stories collected from a group of international mobile students and their ways of dwelling and learning in the city, mainly depicted by their everyday practices.

Researching about transience and everyday lives, in this case, poses particular methodological challenges (Collins, 2012; Pink, 2012; De Certeau, 1988). As previously exposed, the specificity and distinctiveness of this program are, in fact, the temporary or traveling nature of the program, making transience the object of study but also the primary limitation on the reliability of the collected data. In terms of temporalities, this issue is addressed through understanding stories told from memory but also by addressing concrete and objective experiences that were ongoing at the moment. As for the methodological challenges related to one's role as an insider, i.e., student of the program, this research undertakes a combination of emic and etic data, which will be further explained. A combination of 'insider' and 'outsider' input sampling strategies and methods were used: participant observation, diary-keeping, interviews¹, and the elaboration of mental maps² that integrate a geographical dimension of the urban stories.

As previously mentioned, the catalyzers of this research have to do with one's condition as a student. Hence, I acknowledge myself as a foreigner *away from home* (De Certeau, 1988), having a particular understanding of language that was inherently the departure point of this investigation. Nevertheless, the shared memories and the full immersion in the program enlightened hidden treasures in that which was not necessarily elucidated through speech but rather in an 'observational knowledge with an addition of a pinch of nostalgia' (De Certeau, 1988). This dichotomy between being in and out, away and at home gave rise to the emic/etic approach used in this research. Through the eyes of De Certeau and Wittgenstein:

In the accidental ways of being a foreigner away from home (like any traveler or keeper of records), Wittgenstein sees the metaphors of foreign analytical procedures inside the very language that circumscribes them. [On the other hand] being a foreigner at home, a "savage" in the midst of ordinary culture, lost in the complexity of the common agreement and what goes without saying (De Certeau, 1988, p. 13).

Needless to say, as a 4CITIES student, one could not entirely step out of an emic perspective to provide an etic perspective of the urban experience myself as a transient international student. Nevertheless, from an emic perspective, a heuristic method was built to fit with the objectives of the research. Conversely, the design of the in-depth interviews, in a semi-structured manner, protected an etic sense of disembodiment. The emic and etic roles of ethnography brought about new insights into the urban experience by suggesting findings that, as a participant myself, did not have access. First introduced by Kenneth Pike (1954), original meanings on emic and etic came from linguistics: phonemics referring to 'examination of sounds for their meaning-bearing roles in a particular language, while phonetics denotes study on universal sounds covering all languages' (Xia, 2011). Later applied in human behavior and cultural studies, Schaffhauser explains the emic and etic approach:

the **etic** point of view, being by nature, naive and outdated, constitutes, in epistemological terms, the starting point of the [anthropological] research whereas the **emic** point of view, so to speak, would be the goal to achieve for the anthropologist, in the sense that any culture constitutes a code, more or less secret and accessible and whose challenge [for anthropology] is to achieve its full decipherment. (Schaffhauser, 2010, p. 261)

Furthermore, stated by Hoare et al. (2012), 'emic and etic perspectives, along with embodied and disembodied feelings, are not binary opposites but rather sit along a philosophical continuum. Their position on this continuum depends on the role and relationships of the researcher in the social and cultural context.' Several pieces of research that deal with community issues like social justice, health impact and vulnerability, culture, and migration have appealed to emic and etic standpoints (Gaber, 2017; Weng & Clark, 2017; Spiers, 2000; Xia, 2011; Bala, Chalil, & Gupta, 2012; Rauf & Kumar, 2015; Mostowlansky, 2016).

1 The full transcript of the 1,270 minutes of in-depth interviews conducted in Madrid is available as a separate document and can be provided to readers upon request. I can be contacted at marcegarcial@hotmail.com

2 The collected mental maps are available in the appendix, pp. 65-75

Figure 2 shows graphically the theory applied to the empirical study of this research. In this context, emic refers to the exteriority and study of alterity, whereas etic requires the researcher (myself) to dive into one's interiority. When translated to the experiment and object of this research, the boxes exemplify the 4CITIES urban experience and how the emic and the etic approach is useful to study not only the subjectivity of the experience but also the objective collective experience that a group has while being embedded in it. Emic matters in some cases, more than etic, and the emic can often add value beyond the etic (Buckley, Chapman, Clegg, & Gajewska-De Mattos, 2014). Thus, they complement each other.

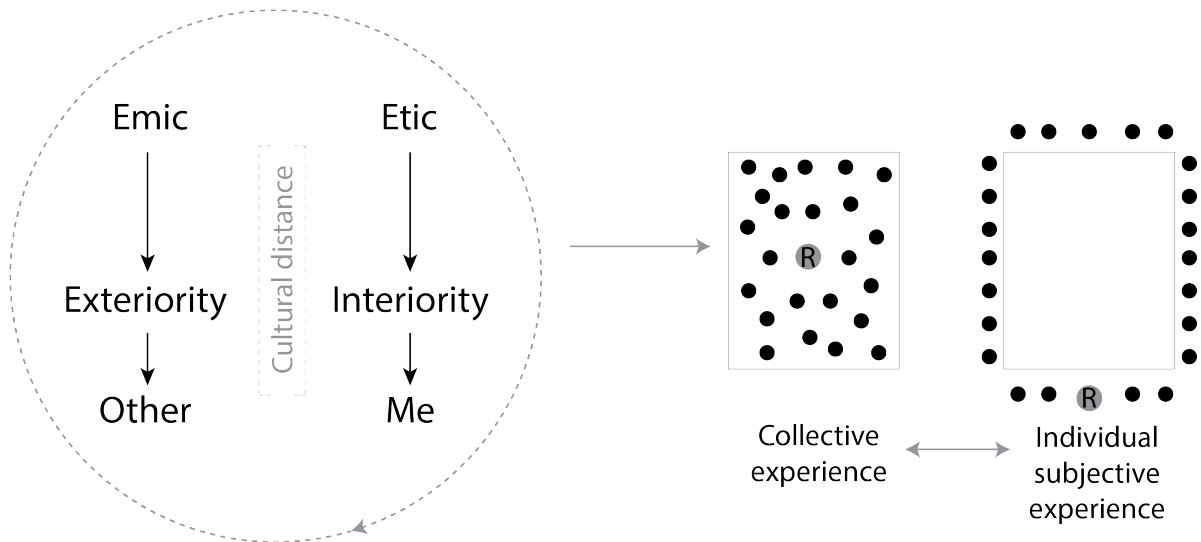


Figure 2 Emic and etic approach applied to the study of ISM in the 4CITIES program. Source: own elaboration.

Therefore, in terms of epistemology and methodology, the aims are twofold. On the one hand, the intention is to build empirical foundations to better grasp the subjectivity of the urban experience defined mainly by the transient condition of international mobile students. On the other hand, this research seeks to identify potential links between the collective narratives of the four cities students and the fine art of dwelling and learning in the city.

In this regard, the in-depth interviews suggest the existence of specific patterns in the everyday practices of a group of mobile international students; they present direct access to the life stories and allow at the same time to analyze broader narratives in new urban geographies of student migration, education, and globalization. They captured different dimensions of students' lives, such as the meanings and significances of mobility, virtual practices, housing conditions, social life, engagement with the city, and future professional and personal expectations. Figure 3 captivates the elements that were considered to develop the heuristic method.

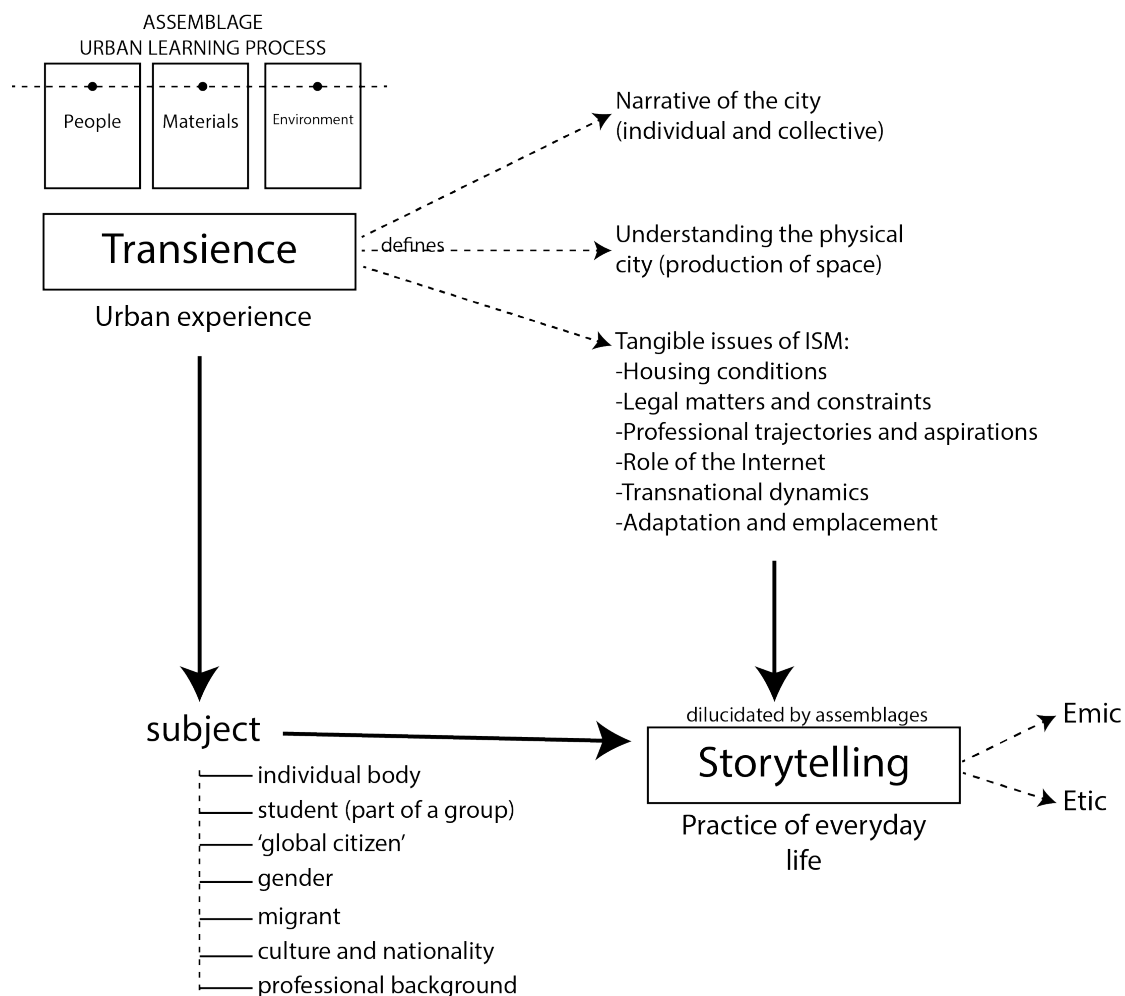


Figure 3 Elements considered to develop a heuristic method. Source: own elaboration.

The methods applied are integrative and multi-scalar in the sense that experiences in the four cities were discussed from different temporal and spatial dimensions. The observations, as well as the questions formulated, were designed in such a way that would expose the students' everyday lives beyond the formal institutions. The temporal dimension is approached from the memory for the first three cities, i.e., Brussels, Vienna, and Copenhagen, whereas Madrid was treated differently. Consequently, a degree of methodological flexibility and experimentation was allowed in the evolution of the fieldwork.

The 4CITIES experience: diving into fieldwork

This experiment explores the nuanced and diverse experiences of the four citizens through a series of collected and assembled visual and oral stories that constitute part of their urban lifeworld before and at the moment of practicing mobility. This section will explain how the methods and approaches were developed during the fieldwork, which lasted over a year. Since this research pretends to outline the nuances in the urban experiences present in the everyday life of international mobile students according to many determinants, different methods were employed to gather the necessary data that was further interpreted by establishing relationships with the literature. Not only did this design require a high involvement of the participants of cohort 11 but also a high degree of flexibility in the methodological development. For instance, the semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed each one to head in a particular direction based on the subjective experience of each one of the students.

Coming back to the emic and etic approach, as part of cohort 11, I gained access and trust by being part of

the group and having full immersion in the international program *4CITIES masters in urban studies*. Moreover, being a non-European student myself, I directly experienced the struggles of having to apply for visas and the economic burden that studying in Europe represents for citizens of the Global South. This ethnographic approach in the form of field notes and entries on my personal diary allowed me to observe and sketch specific patterns in the way we, as students, dwelled and learned in the cities. The notes and memos written during the first year of the program were used as a primary investigative technique to study the rhythms that constitute the urban experience (Marcu, 2017) as well as the situations of the students' lives while reflecting in my own.

Closer observations from time spent with my classmates allowed me to establish relationships between everyday life as a transient student and dwelling and learning in the city. More detailed attention was drawn to the activities of quotidian life – the ordinary- in conjunction with the ways of operating or undertaking similar agencies or processes. The ideas derived from the observations set off the foundations for the semi-structured, in-depth interviews I conducted as well as for some concluding remarks stated in the discussion section. Having previous notions about the personalities and anecdotes of the interviewees allowed me to guide the conversation that led to answering the question that first triggered my curiosity: *How do I dwell in the city and how is this translated into an embodied experience and eventually part of the learning process?*

The semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews served as a means to gather data about the students' urban life narratives, in the form of storytelling. During the interviews, body language was also considered in order to get a more holistic understanding of what is being said since the 'expressions, pauses or shifts in attitude, and systematic research notes can be as revealing as the recorded words' (Ward, et al., 2013, p. 43). It is essential to recognize the close relationship established between the interviewer (myself) and some of the interviewees (classmates) as being part of the same cohort of mobile students. It is, therefore, important to highlight the relational nature of the process – 'the 'betweenness of emotion' in the interview as a 'situated account of meaning-making and knowledge production'' (Ward, et al., 2013, p. 40). Thus, selecting a semi-structured format of the interview allowed to reduce the risk of potential bias while encouraging the interviewees to reflect widely on the questions posed (Collins, 2012) but at the same time allowing for the interview to take its very personalized path.

Overall, four sections can be identified in the interview guidelines³. First, respondents were asked to give their personal and professional background as well as their migration history, i.e., talk about the cities they had lived before the program. Second, they were prompted to choose between one of the three cities in which we had studied before - Brussels, Vienna, or Copenhagen. The instruction was to choose the one they thought most memorable, followed by a full description of it. A series of questions were posed regarding their living situation, their social circle, the urban space, and their everyday lives in the city. They were also enquired about the lessons learned related to the personal dimension as well as in the field of urban studies. Third, they were asked about the current city they were living in at the time of the interview – Madrid.

Given that the semester had recently started, and everyone newly arrived, the focus was mainly placed in their adaptation process, expectations, and perceptions of the city. Some conversations led them to explain their emplacement in the Spanish capital. Finally, in the last part of the conversation, they were asked to reflect upon the experience they have lived as transient mobile students in the previous eighteen months and their role in the multicultural, interdisciplinary cohort of students they belong to. Confidentiality, as well as the purpose of this research, was clearly explained before setting an appointment to get informed consent. The place and setting where the interview took place were chosen by the interviewee and agreed upon at least three days before it happened.

After having done the interview, the respondents were asked to draw a mental map of the spaces they frequent in the city they chose as most memorable and the places where they move about in the urban environment. Students were motivated to draw a map that reflected their own experience without being concerned about scale, proportion, or accuracy. They were provided with a piece of paper and markers and were given 30 minutes to do it. Looking for references on their phones or the Internet was not permitted. The mental maps served as a tool to geographically visualize the everyday lives of the subjects through memory. The perception they have of the city was noted through the way they graphically represented the places

3 The interview guideline is included in the appendix, pp. 58-59

and spaces that formed part of their everyday and how they make sense of it. The imaginative geography of the chosen city also represents their emotions, anecdotes, and understanding of the urban space. There is an assumption that the group of microcosms formed by micro-spaces metamorphoses into more extensive networks of knowledge shared by a cohort of students shedding light on a collective micro-geography of the experienced environment, which at the same time relates to broader flows of ideas, people and events that become embodied.

The reason behind doing the interview first was to bring memories to the present and then construct the urban experience in the city of their preference. Alongside the interviews, the fabrication of a geographical plan allows us to 'build up a more comprehensive picture of the participant's everyday lifeworld' (Collins, 2012). De Certeau (1988, p. 119) describes this as two symbolic and anthropological languages of space: the itinerary, portrayed by the narration gathered through the interview and the map, a plane projection totalizing observations. He also asserts the following:

'The drawing articulates spatializing practices, like the maps of urban routes, arts of actions and stories of paces (...) far from being 'illustrations,' iconic glosses on the text, these figurations, like fragments of stories, mark on the map the historical operations from which it resulted' (De Certeau, 1988, p. 120).

The fieldwork took place during February and March 2020. As the fieldwork was taking place, new dimensions of ISM were noted, and thus, the process of investigating always led back to new literature. Therefore, the results of the interviews and mental maps induced new topics in the literature, encouraging a back and forth technique between literature and data analysis. Not only did the preliminary data analysis prove different ways in which international students dwell in the city but has also contributed to an understanding of how the complexity of urban space is produced, lived, and contested. Moreover, the interviews have also revealed a transient and transnational dimension on the international mobile student lives.

From the 23 in-depth interviews that were to be conducted, only 20 were accomplished. The remaining three were not done in the same manner due to the sudden measures taken in the cities in response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the students that were interviewed were prompted to narrate about several dimensions of their experience being a transient international student in four European capitals. Nineteen mental maps were made: five from Brussels, six from Vienna, and nine from Copenhagen.

Once finished with all the interviews, they were fully transcribed before undertaking the analysis that organized the 'raw' data into categories. The main topics that appeared during the transcription were housing experience, sociality, and group dynamics, the depiction of the everyday practices, engagement with the city, perception of oneself, others, and the city and translocal and transnational practices. An analytical and heuristic method was created using as foundations the preliminary results that were identified as recurrent during the transcription process.

The heuristic method was developed to explain the categories and the aspects in each temporal and spatial scale that aims to provide empirical evidence in a more integrative manner (Lipura & Collins, 2020). The main ideas that emerged from the interview analysis were further studied with the interpretative grid shown in Figure 4, which was constructed when the summarized transcriptions were compared to the literature, focusing on the different scales and temporalities characterized by the respondents. The interpretative grid⁴ is used as part of an inductive process in which the data is organized in three main parts. The rows sort the temporalities in mobility - before, during, and after. The columns order the dimensions of the urban experience as a transient international mobile student.

As for the mental maps, an analytical table⁵ was also used to summarize the main elements according to each one of the cities. The appendix contains all the mental maps and a written summary of them while maintaining their anonymity. It is important to remark that the maps were only used as visual support to the stories and, in no case, are fundamental to the conclusions that emerge from this research.

4 The integrative grid that contains the results from the interviews is included in the appendix, pp. 60-62

5 The analytical table that contains the results is included in the appendix, pp. 63-64

INTEGRATIVE ANALYTICAL GRID								
Part 1 & 4. General information (background and program)	Perceptions and motivations of an international program; Push and pull factors		Future expectations (professional and personal)	Living and being a tourist		Meaning of home	Virtual realm	Applicable to the whole program
			Thoughts on the group and program					
Part 2. Memory	City	Moving about in the city (walking the city)	Understanding of self and others	Transient lifestyle: sociality, transnationalism & group dynamics	Emplacement: home-making in the run & adaptation process	Perception of the city	Virtual Realm	Learning in the city
	Brussels							
	Vienna							
	Copenhagen							
Part 3. Today	Madrid							

Figure 4 Interpretative analytical grid used to analyze the data from the semi-structured interviews conducted to 20 students from cohort 11 of the 4CITIES Master in Urban Studies. Source: own elaboration.

The analysis and discussion carried out in the next section come fundamentally from the results of filling in the interpretative grid. By combining both methods, the main argument is focused on how the lived urban experience of transient international mobile students is embodied and thus becomes part of the learning process. In this sense, by dwelling and experiencing the city, the students go through a process of learning that is strongly influenced not only by the academic and formal knowledge, i.e., information anchored to information, beliefs, and culture, but also by the so-called ordinary, everyday experiences.

5/

Analysis and Discussion

*"The open sea of common experience surrounds,
penetrates, and finally carries away every discourse."*

-Michel De Certeau (1988)

At the beginning of this research, the appeal for a more integrative approach to ISM is delineated in the literature review. It is also argued that the transient condition defines the urban experience when engaging in mobility. In the following section, the data obtained from the interviews and mental maps done with cohort 11 of the 4CITIES program support such ideas. The assemblage of stories recreates and represents a unique form of transience in international student mobility. As mentioned in the methodology, by following an emic/etic approach, this investigation appealed to storytelling through interviews, mental maps, and personal observations and notes to gather data from the primary sources, which are the 20 interviewed students and myself. The researcher-researched interaction enhanced by trust and *reconnaissance* provided insights in certain aspects of the students' mobile lives that are frequently taken for granted. The integration of the visual and verbal input provided evidence that speaks in different ways and thus complements each other.

In other words, by analyzing the everyday life stories of the individuals that belong to a larger identifiable population – international mobile students- trends and patterns were corroborated, assembled, and put into a debate with the literature presented earlier in this research. Accordingly, this section unpacks the 4CITIES experience by reviewing the data through the different scales and dimensions of dwelling and learning in the city that were obtained from the interpretative grids presented previously. When discussing the time lived in Brussels, Vienna, and Copenhagen, the data gathered was a product of the interviews and mental maps in which the respondents narrated their experience from memory. In contrast, when answering about Madrid, the experience was ongoing and thus densely biased by what was happening at the time of the interview while having vivid and somehow nostalgic and emotional memories about the previous host cities. Along with the discussion, fragments from the transcriptions are literally quoted to catch a glimpse of the *raconté*. The anecdotes and reflections expressed in the interviews, as well as the landmarks and elements recognized in the mental maps, shed light not only on the reinforcement of dominant discourses of the four cities but also on the dichotomy between the subjectivity of the urban experience and the collective production of urban narratives. The assemblage of elements in the maps reflects a way of thinking in the social, political, cultural, and economic dimensions when analyzing the interactions between objects, people, and the environment in the composition. Additionally, a brief reflection on the experience as an international student in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic is presented.

To consider the relationship between dwelling and learning, it is relevant to assert that 'learning as a process is distributed through relations between people-materials-environment' (McFarlane, 2011, p. 3). This threefold relationship that makes up the urban learning process is epitomized in the questions asked for this heuristic process. Although the questions did not discern between the three elements, the intricacy of the responses, mainly through the process of narrativizing stories, unveiled the interweaving of them. The assemblage of the stories depicted by the respondents reveals that transience is indeed a significant determinant of the urban experience, i.e., the fact of being a temporary resident determines the urban experience and the construction of a specific discourse of the city.

Discussing the urban experience is a broad intention, and if not well-structured, it could easily fall into only becoming a naïve and meaningless exercise. To tackle this risk, the assemblage of stories is framed into segments that range from the individual scale to the urban and transnational scale pinpointing the holistic urban experience as a transient international student. From a *dwelling perspective*, the urban experience avails itself of everyday life. The group collectively produces the city in the sense that the city arises within our activities, emotions, perceptions, and everyday life activities that ultimately have their origins in the subjectivity of one's own life.

The individual scale is focused on the urban experience based on gender, nationality, and personal histories. The mesoscale, i.e., cohort, staff, and urban society, are dealt through the idea of a collective production of space and narratives. On a similar scale, that of the urban environment, adaptation processes in the city, housing trajectories, and the urban places are chronicled. The transnational and global scales are touched upon tangentially to the other scales. Naturally, the comparative approach when thinking not only about cities but also about the urban experience regarding place, scales, and temporalities appeared as an essential part of their discourse. All the students inherently started comparing the cities even when prompted to talk only about the *most memorable*. Many gave their own definition of memorable, not necessarily the favorite one as a city but rather the one in which they had experienced intense moments with people, materials, and the environment. As depicted by Maillard (2011), the time elapsed gave rise to a *decantation of memories*.

Nonetheless, the decision to choose the most memorable was difficult to assert, as stated in the following extract from an interview:

That's a hard question because if I think about it, I've got memories from all of them. The one I have fewest memories from is Vienna. My life was somehow smaller in Vienna than it was in, I feel in Brussels and Copenhagen. Copenhagen obviously was more recent, so I have a strong image from then. Brussels was very memorable for me because I guess something about the fact that it was first, and the whole experience was new and exciting. I think Copenhagen will be burned on my memory for a long time cause I really feel like we all got to know Copenhagen really well, maybe because of its size and because it's such an odd place, it's really characterful and has a really strong geography somehow.

Having as foundations the ideas portrayed by De Certeau (1988) and Locke (2009), language is a problem due to the existence of linguistic constraints and ideas being liable to error. These limits lead to an ambiguity in ideas and thus have consequences in how individuals understand certain concepts. To give an instance, one of the interviewees considers the evolutionary and complex nature of a concept like 'the urban':

Some words changed ideas. What I find fascinating about urban studies is that potentially everything is urban and even the underside of urbanity, which is the countryside is like an undeveloped place. I realize much better where my interests lie in the substance of it all.

The distinctions and connections are accumulated by historical experience while linguistically manifesting logical complexities (De Certeau, 1988). Throughout ISM, ideas start becoming complex and sometimes inconsistent as more reasonings start adding to the collection of units that make up the idea of language. Dwelling is one of those ideas and therefore has proven to vary according to the mind who thinks of it. Therefore, it becomes even more complex thought from the lens of transience. When asked about the meanings of dwelling in a place, some interviewees associate such concept with a temporal dimension, whereas others relate it with the intensity of the experience. The dichotomy between being a tourist or living in a place is, in fact, a blurry notion when talking about transient international mobility, since every six months, a new physical space is to be called home; for some, it was, for some others home was still in their home countries where their families live. Nationality and family ties play a significant role in defining home. However, all of them narrate resemblances regarding the intensity of their urban experience being both personally subjective and collective at the same time.

The decision to embark on the journey of ISM cannot be encompassed in a clear chronological order. Nevertheless, a guiding thread starts when discussing the imaginaries of ISM, which act as a decisive factor in the decision-making process. According to cohort 11, pursuing a master's program like 4CITIES was associated with having benefits such as establishing an international network of friends and future colleagues, having intercultural competences, as well as broadening career prospects and learning in an interdisciplinary environment while being exposed to contrasting European cities and having immediate contact with the objects of study, i.e., the city. In many cases, especially among the non-European students, there was a perception that better opportunities would be available either back in their home countries or within Europe when having a European joint diploma. The attractiveness of not being rooted and in constant change and adjustment, along with the eagerness and passion for traveling within Europe, was also a defining reason in the personal election to apply for the program while acknowledging a strong desire to study on a practical basis, i.e., experiential learning. Often, they point out that the balance between empiricism and theory is also attractive. The reputation of the universities involved as well as the international network and exposure in social media were factors that promoted their determination to enroll in the program preceding a personal interest in the extensive topic of the urban cultivated in previous academic and professional tracks.

At an individual scale, learning about urban studies can come from repetition, formal training, individual experimentation, and distinct situations that emerge unexpectedly. For example, students come to learn how the local urban transport system works and which areas of the city it connects, or where to buy good coffee or fresh fruits at a lower price in public markets by dwelling in the city. Even which areas of the city are best for certain activities, not through formal training but through gradually developing and expanding a distinct sense of how things work and change in the urban environment, i.e., through embodiment. The public transport is learned incrementally as students develop an experiential understanding of the timetables, routines, connections, quality of the design, and materials. Even more, at a social level, by negotiating the

contingencies of everyday interaction with the local people in settings such as those involved in public transportation, people make sense of the implicit social rules relating behaviors as well as getting a hint on the idiosyncrasy of the people in the city. An anecdote recalls how one of them learned about social behaviors in Copenhagen:

going to the *Glyptotek* every Tuesday just to hang out. It has something to do with Danish culture, a communal place like the quietly social experience, the experience of socializing with strangers. We were all just peacefully friendly, coexisting in a kind of mix.

Likewise, before dwelling in the city, specific processes of adaptation and emplacement occur. Indeed, the degree of emplacement in the city is also evolving as new experiences of temporary dwelling happen. One of the respondents contemplates:

I feel I've learned both how easy it is to go and take up a new life in a place and feel a bit like a citizen of a place, but also how limited that is, and it's the work of a lifetime and would never be perfectly achieved to be fully embedded somewhere. We're all individuals living and sharing these spaces with other people, but being stationary at least to a degree is something like a commitment to a place.

Conflicting ideas and nuances in the continuum that goes from living in the city to being a tourist were defined. For some, living in a place has to do with a subtle change of mindset that has to do with the purpose of being in a place generally related to rhythm, whereas being a tourist is mostly about consuming the city. According to them, dwelling is also about experiencing everyday life with the local people, having associations with places, and making the culture one's own. In the eyes of one of the respondents:

I'd say tourism is about consuming the city to the point where you are consuming an image of the city itself rather than the everyday reality of living there whereas if you study there, then you experience the place in a completely different way whether that's for a month or five. I think there is something about the connection you establish with local people in the city. As a tourist, it's mostly about people that cater to your needs in restaurants or bars or hotels, but if you live there, you also get to experience the everyday life of other people.

Furthermore, it is by clarifying the concept of *home* during mobility that reveals insights on transient migration and emplacement. Contrasting responses came up, ranging from the idea of *home* remaining where the family is until discerning *home* as merely an address in which you inhabit. Thus, the idea of having a routine structured around activities sets the rhythm for a place to be considered home and feel 'grounded' and 'rooted.' The meaning of home goes from being a physical fact to be a feeling or an intangible concept built by memories, people, emotions, and in some cases, personal objects. The room is perceived as the safest, most comfortable, and controlled space from which one will gain stability, and therefore it is crucial to make space fit their taste. One of the non-European peers shares about the incremental collection of objects that he carries to every place and end up personalizing his room:

I've got a little bag of treasures that I've had from as far as I can remember. There's a lot of stuff I collected in different countries along the way. I got this little brass elephant from India. Sometimes I'll get like a little tree branch and hang it in the corner, and then you can hang stuff on it and then the incense burner from Guatemala. I got a little brass bookmark from Belgrade. I think on the road I've had this one little bag that has been evolving for like ten years, literally. There was a little teddy bear: Franklin. My mom gave it to me.

When discussing the adaptation process, it is relevant to go back to the experience of acculturative stress and difficulties that international students frequently suffer during the adaptation process or adjustment to the environment of the host city studied by Smith and Khawaja (2011). The dialogues held with the *4 citizens* refer to the language being a barrier to integrate and engage more authentically with the local culture, especially in the cities of Madrid and Vienna. Moreover, the level of English spoken by the participants also appears to be relevant in the group dynamics as well as the educational difficulties students face. Regarding the practical problems, non-Europeans often point out the adversities and mental burden of dealing with legal issues in what in the face of Europeans is a borderless Europe. In terms of how they perceive alterity, a non-Western student expressed:

I still think that for people who come from the developing world actually, they know more about the developed world but for people who are civilized enough and who come from the developed world, they somehow don't know the other part of the world.

On the opposite side, European students tended to refer to how much they had learned regarding conviviality with other non-Europeans:

I learned to be more respectful of the other in the sense that maybe you don't mean to be insulting, but some people can get offended by you saying something in a certain way or about certain topics, so you also become more self-reflective when it comes to approaching the other in order to be more respectful, so you take fewer things for granted.

The transient condition of the student's lives, i.e., having to move cities every six months, shreds of evidence that transience is a mechanism for self-development. Interviewees expressed the ways in which, as the program advanced, they started identifying their needs during the adaptation process in a new place and urban conditions while cultivating a sense of independence and being pragmatic. Aspects that the students think as trivial are, in fact, the elements that grant meaning to their house, turning home as an assemblage of dwelling. This assemblage is a set of feelings, emotions, and contingent socio-material orderings. Among these are having a routine, having objects and decorations that remind them of home, practicing sports, rent a room that they find comfortable and decoding conviviality with new flatmates setting to know the surroundings of the room in which they live, having a sense of direction. One of them reflects on the experience of arriving in the city:

Landing mentally is more an emotional thing, which just takes time, processing the new impressions. Also, physical things like a new house, the city environment, which just takes some time. There's nothing to avoid that, but there are practical things around that help facilitate that stability. For me that it is making my room into a personal space, buying things, making it cozy for myself, my to-do list of little practical things to sort out is always really big at the start of the semester, find your sports club, get your public transport card.

Diving into the idea of having a routine, the students expressed contrasting opinions. On the one hand, having a routine helped them keep a balance and lead what they consider a healthy lifestyle. On the other hand, the fact that they only live in a city for a couple of months offers a window for them to try new ways of operating in the city, which habilitate urban learning. After having accomplished establishing routines in four different cities in two years, students talk about the confidence and empowerment they gained:

The experience of packing everything up, moving across the continent, and living somewhere else is no longer scary as it once was.

Complementary to the individual scale, it is crucial to understand the subjectivity of the experience and how it leads to learning in the city, also from a gender perspective. For instance, women, in particular, tend to learn about the safe or dangerous areas of the city often by traversing them and getting a sense from them, usually identifying them as places of the city in which they feel (un)comfortable, (un)safe, or harassed. Specific public spaces in the city signify a threat to the female users, making them develop tactics to move about in the city while disputing for equal access to the urban space. Each city is sensed differently and challenging the power relations that are embedded in the representational spaces vary from one place to another. Many of the stories told by women who were part of this research refer to unfortunate events in the city of Brussels when going out late at night. Many times they were obliged to find alternatives to go back home during the evening or late at night that ranged from having to pay ride-sharing services to have digital applications to track their movements in the city while communicating others their live location. On the contrary, men never brought up stories that could provide evidence of them perceiving space differently due to their gender or sexual identity.

The subjectivity of the experience can also come from one's geographical provenance and family history. The interviewees often described their family background, their upbringing in an international sphere, and the habit of continually moving as part of their family history. The fact of being raised in a rural environment in some cases caused overwhelming sentiments when arriving in new cities. Also, non-Europeans appear to struggle more with the cultural shock, whereas Europeans appear to be more appreciative of more detailed

nuances between European countries. Hearing about examples of urbanity in foreign cities or countries from where the students come from, sharing them, and then learning from them was also something recurrent in their discourse. The knowledge is incrementally assembled by bits of information, informal conversations, and observations that enable the capacity to establish spaces of comparability among peers that are at the same time in constant transformation. As the stories reveal, the active making of these spaces grants the individuals to new life stories, worldviews, approaches, and framings of the urban. In a way, the interdisciplinary and multicultural dimension also promotes a comparative field in which to learn about urban life in the global era, making individuals prone to a shift in perception. As expressed by one of them:

I think consideration and tolerance and acceptance of different opinions is critical. We have so many different people with so many different goals, understandings of what life should be like and values, from sustainability to happiness to just what they want to get out of life. It also makes you question democracy.

Not only in terms of the individual identity but also on the social level, the intensity of the experience opens new conceptions of friendships and relations by understanding other sensitivities and cultural backgrounds. When prompted about starting new relationships and the development of an international network, one classmate explained:

it's a really satisfying thing when you can connect with and have a nice time with someone from a completely different culture to you. It's a more satisfying feeling than getting on with somebody from my home city because there's so much set up to make that interaction work. Such a nice feeling was finding some common ground, like common interests or shared like a sense of humor. It's just nice to feel like you're more connected to places than you might have previously thought.

The multi-layered identity is fostered during ISM mainly by the dichotomy between the cultural aspects of 'being a global citizen' and the acknowledgment of feeling more rooted to their home culture even with the physical distance constraints. At first, many expressed the fact of feeling identified with colleagues from the same geographical region, culture, and shared language. However, as the program advanced, the reflection about personality being more important than nationality was made. The concept of globalization and migration thus come into conflict with the sketching of the latter dichotomous relationship between the global and the local urban identities.

People become more a world-citizen instead of just our own nationality because we take parts of the others learning in this process.

From a mesoscale, learning from group dynamics is also part of the lived and embodied experience. The constant reassurance of classmates being the core social circle hint on a support network that reveals specific ways of coexisting in alterity. As many expressed, 'we are forced to interact with each other and be close to one another,' which is, mentioned by many, through activities linked to current interests and personalities. This frequent interaction leads to a keen sense of reliance among the group as well as a sentiment of comfort and confidence that, as time passes, strengthens an international network. Conversely, learning from alterity or Otherness is also demanding when transience appears to be one of the main burdens. Image management was frequently referred to as the primary strategy to protect oneself from being judged or ashamed of being authentic at the same time recognizing that it takes time to understand each other's (hi)stories and situate the relations in different levels within the group. Despite this, all the interviewees recognize that group dynamics is a valuable tool to learn about communication and cross-collaboration, even when tensions and confrontations arise. The act of being challenged or challenge others also appears to contribute to the learning process. One of them narrated it as follows:

I think the conflict that we experience is representative of the conflicts that we're meant to understand, happen in the political sphere of how a city functions. Politics is fighting; politics is conflict. You have all these groups, all with different interests, and seeing how they agree or disagree with each other is the foundation on which decision-making is based. I think we notice that in 4CITIES as well, so people have different opinions about things, but it's about reaching a compromise and moving forward together.

Conflict and group dynamics also had implications in the social circles created by the students. According to

many, the bubble that is formed within 4CITIES makes it challenging to involve people from outside. However, group work and interaction with local students in host universities make social circles prone to develop at the same time they enlarge the geographical knowledge of the city. For instance, the academic group work to be done in Brussels stimulated exploring areas of the city, which might otherwise not have happened, with a purpose. In the case of Vienna, the organization of a street intervention event (the Public Space Forum), granted access to how the city works at an institutional and administrative level and, at the same time, getting involved with urban stakeholders. The extra-curricular activities led to a comprehensive experiential lesson in which students were able to understand the impacts of urban planning in the quality of life, the urban challenges at a local level, engagement with the local citizens, and users of public space. At the same time, they have to confront with alterity through group work and the involvement of other local stakeholders.

Regarding the interaction with society in general, certain situations of everyday life allow the students to learn the implicit social rules of the city. The negotiation processes lie in the flexibility and willingness to engage with unfamiliar surroundings. For example, in Brussels, students refer to the diversity and multicultural aspects of the most different city of the four. Mostly known as the European capital, students expressed that one of the critical features of the city was that it offered the possibility to interact and engage with diverse identities. Having lived for the first time in Western Europe, one classmate pointed out the following:

There's a whole world outside of that main narrative of Brussels. What I heard mainly in the news was Molenbeek as a very dangerous neighborhood and Brussels as a synonym of the European Union. Those were the two rhetorics that I came across before going there, but when I moved and after living there, I can say that there is a much wider spectrum of identities and narratives present in the city. I don't associate Belgium with a strong urban culture; we need to dig a bit deeper to get how it works when compared to other contexts like Vienna or Copenhagen. Since Brussels is very multicultural, you have different ways of living and options to engage with other cultures in a deep and authentic way. I could see that there was a huge North African community that lives there, not as newcomers or outsiders, but actually part of what Brussels is. I had the feeling that I could have had the same experience in Morocco or Tunisia or other cities or countries as I did in Brussels while engaging with those communities.

The translation into spatial practices was embodied through experience by the mechanism of dwelling and interacting with the environment, materials, and people in their everyday life. Learning, in this case, comes into being by regarding everyday life in diverse ways, i.e., education of attention. To illustrate this, many opted to share anecdotes related to food and the act of eating and cooking. From understanding home as the place where you cook to having the feeling of not being part of the city wholly:

food is like a massive part of culture. I'm vegan. So, I'm unable to participate in those kinds of food traditions, which is also happening here, you know the whole tapas culture. It's still nice like go out, but I just remember experiencing places before I was vegan and it's not just being able to eat the stuff, you feel like you're doing what local people do and when I'm not doing that in terms of food, it's a bit of an element that is missed.

Additionally, by experiencing a smooth transition from Brussels to Vienna, most students highlighted the quality of life and the regulated housing market system, which is, in fact, frequently discussed in the dominant narratives of the Austrian capital. They perceived this city to be the most affordable, inclusive, and sustainable in terms of economy, environment, and access to public spaces and social services. The mental maps about Vienna clearly show the feelings and emotions during the time lived there. An example is shown in figure 5, in which a basic urban structure is used to fill in with foods and places that became significant in everyday life.

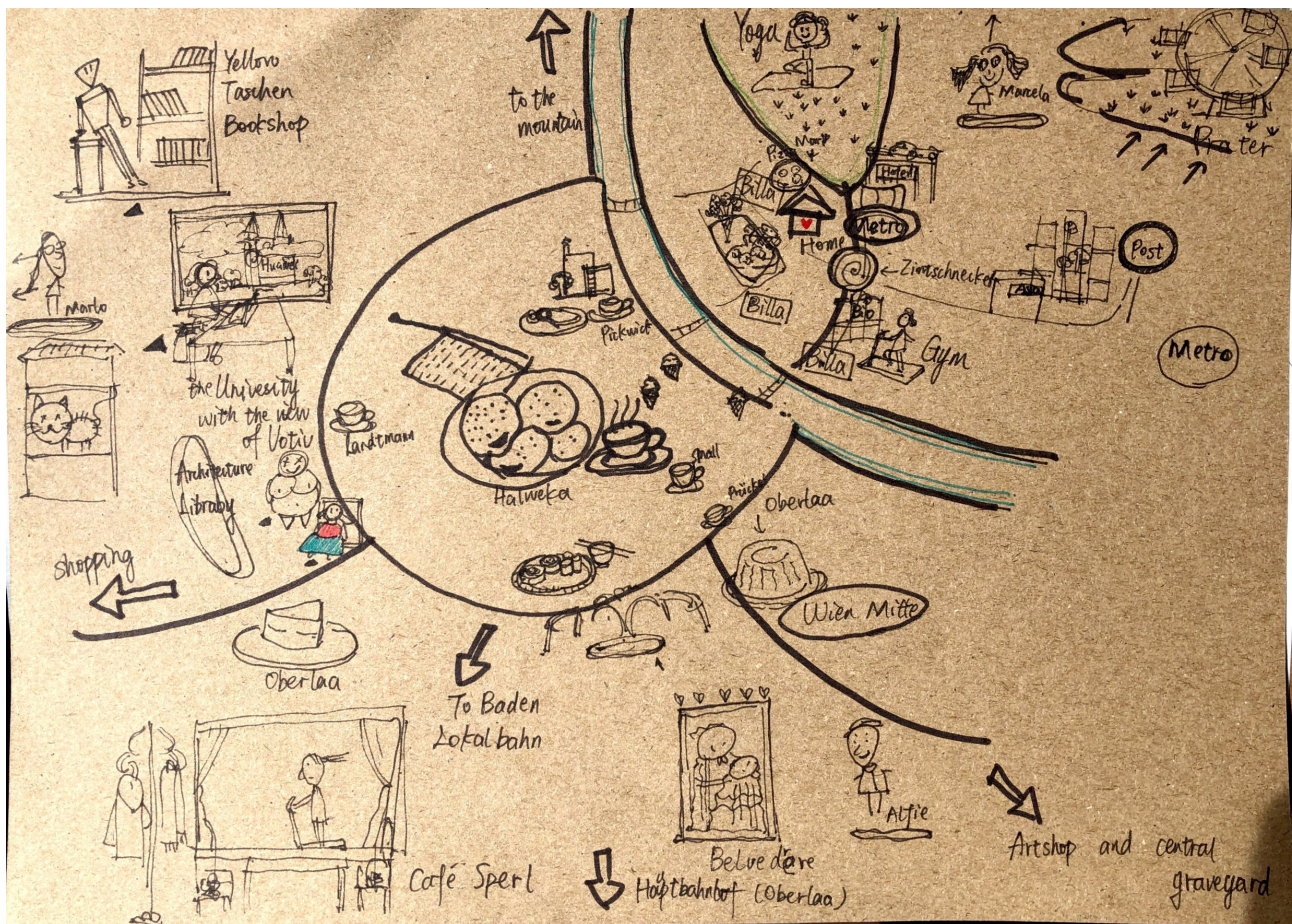


Figure 5 Mental map of Vienna sketched by a non-European student. She associates her experience in Vienna with cooking and going to traditional Viennese coffee houses. The stories told by her involve the practices of cooking and sharing food and coffee with others

Just as eating is essential, walking is an elementary form of experiencing the city as a walker. Walking is fundamental in how we come to learn in and about the urban. The act of walking represents a vast number of concepts that range from practical action to a more spiritual dimension of the act – all of them related to rhythms. Depicted as ‘strategic rationality’ McFarlane (2011, p. 50) refers to walking as a pre-reflective form of knowledge that ‘entails discovering and transforming our conception of urban places through the making and remaking of connections to past, present, and future, between the real and imagined, and through the noise, smell, vision, and touch.’ To illustrate this, a classmate tells a brief anecdote about a walk having recently arrived in Madrid:

Even today, I walked from my place to here, and on the way, I passed by this Egyptian temple that I had no clue was there. And then I also found this beautiful brick sort of boundary, which reminded me of the steelworks in Sheffield. And I found that in the middle of the park, fenced off with barbed wire and the garden of the police department—little sort of discoveries when I’m walking.

In a very poetic and philosophical manner, in the portrayal of their everyday life, students refer to themselves as the figure of the *flâneur*, meaning that by wandering and strolling in the city while being detached from the society that inhabits it, one can observe contemporary life. Thus, the operation of walking is essential to building and understanding the urban environment. As walkers, a sense of liberation is uncovered, habilitating the possibility to carve the city according to oneself precisely by wandering. Drifting from a deliberate, mapped, and controlled walking plan and making it in a more personalized fashion demonstrates how tactics take part in learning in and about the city.

Following McFarlane, it is argued that walking is also a form of dwelling which entails learning how to perform socially ‘as part of temporal patterns of economic and social life, performed at different paces and rhythms, tracing our paths and intersecting other people’s routines’ (2011, p. 51). Also, walking as an act to locate

oneself in the built environment and build a mental map of the city that will allow a better understanding of the urban dynamics. The experience of this form of motion develops a sense of direction, perspective, distinction, and morphology of the city. The careful attention to detail or 'education of attention' brings together an urban patchwork by way of a multisensory awareness of the environment. In the words of a student of the cohort that does not possess a smartphone to guide herself during the walk:

I don't have Google Maps. I don't like maps. I think that's also why my home is so important because it usually starts from there. I have a home, and from there, step by step, I start connecting the puzzle around my home. It's a patchwork. This time also around where I used to sleep, so the few *Airbnb's* I had. Whenever I move somewhere, I try to explore the neighborhood. Then, whenever I go somewhere else, I trace this line from where I am to where I go and everything in between. Once I cover it once normally, I can remember it. That's why I need to explore as many things as I can, and then I start connecting them to each other, and most of this also happens with landmarks. Also, the topography of Madrid specifically, or topography in general also. In Copenhagen, it would be water. Here, I realize how much the hills help me to situate myself. I know I need to go up if I want to go home.

According to the respondents, walking was also a way to be active when places are at a reachable distance even when exploring by taking deliberate detours in their paths, not set by any itineraries. The spaces 'produced' and knit by the students come from the resonance of those rhythms which change from one city to another. Rhythms have an impact as well on how individuals experience urban social life, the built environment, and even the meteorological conditions. For example, when describing dwelling in Vienna, one of the students excitingly recalls:

You can call me a *flâneur*. I did a ton of walking, often with no destination in mind, especially over the summer. I started just like bringing up a book and water and walking. I'll find a cafe, you know, get a coffee or pastry, keep walking, find a nice place to sit, and if I'm bored, I find another place, keep reading there, maybe sit and observe people for a while and then just keep walking. I don't necessarily like interacting with people on the street or want to, but I love that it's happening. I love that people are out and about and doing things. It doesn't mean I want to talk to them. It's not even like I'm often watching them. It sounds like *Sophie Calle-ish* creeping out, although I don't follow someone down the street, it's nice to just... things are going on around you. In [home city], that doesn't happen.

Other forms of moving about in the city also give rise to new urban rhythms. The urban experience threefold (materials-environment-people) mentioned previously will promote different rhythms in everyday lives. For instance, in Copenhagen, the rhythm of the city is characterized and built among other elements by the speed of cycling and the implications it has on the ways of operating in the city. The source of many of the memories dwelling in Copenhagen revolve around the action of cycling, which was indeed enhanced by the topographical conditions, urban design, and infrastructural facilities. For many, the distributed assemblage of the urban experience was defined mainly by the cycling culture, making of Copenhagen a city that is perceived as open, inclusive, progressive, and safe.

The assemblage of experiences allows them to have a critical opinion after having experienced themselves the benefits of cycling, such as the environmental, social, emotional, and economic advantages of such practice that is now being promoted in many cities around the world. Learning is prompted by the information and knowledge received in the formal institutions, mainly the university. However, one can say that learning is achieved by the embodied experience of moving about in the city by cycling. Furthermore, the respondents highlight the cycling experience and its association with Denmark's functioning welfare system to which they attribute living a healthy and comfortable lifestyle in which the culture is perceived as simple, quiet, and grounded while having an appreciation for the collective. Likewise, students narrate the lack of corruption and bureaucracy, as well as the details in which they perceive visible taxes in the city. While looking back in his time living in Denmark a non-European classmate ponders:

Seeing paying high taxes is one thing, but then being able to see the city run so fluidly and having everyone be so happy shows you that high tax rates can have a positive effect on cities. I would say that Copenhagen has been able to maintain a level of trust which promotes people to pay their taxes and to promote the government to do a good job with it to retain that.

The experience of everyday life grants the students with confidence about the dominant discourses of the city in the sense that students feel more capable of expressing not only their opinion but also their knowledge when they have experienced it first-hand. This confidence is gained not only by negotiating the contingencies of everyday interactions and socio-spatial interactions but also through the shared experiences with a traveling group of students that slowly become 'family' to most of them, as they naturally grow emotionally closer with time. As expressed by a classmate, 'being urban can mean a thousand different things' and 'the city can be whatever we want.' In that regard, urban and cultural immersion is 'promoted' by oneself much as a collective narrative of the urban which is continuously reinforced not only by the dominant narratives of the city but also acquired by the ways of operating in the city and the relations between individuals, the group and the city; from how students move about in the city to adapt to the new lifestyle, teaching, and academic traditions and local dynamics that are particular to new urban cultures.

Moreover, because of transnational connections, students developed individual tactics by learning different ways in which they can use these connections to find housing or starting a social life in a place where they have never been to in most cases. This tactical learning features in the production and contestation of everyday urban life. For example, having a community to celebrate national celebrations abroad, communicating with embassies, or simply asking for guidance related to the social, cultural, and administrative issues. Affairs like these show that the sudden confrontation and exposure to alterity is contested by the agency of translocal actors and the involvement of diasporas that ease the culture shock and sometimes facilitate the adaptation process. The unfamiliarity and newness of the physical space in the host city and the foreign culture become alleviated by the global culture of the Internet and the virtual space. Also, the easiness to travel within Europe makes it habitual for family and friends to visit, creating an opportunity for the students to bring out the multi-layered identity related to the 'fluidity of oneself.'

Not only are transnational networks relevant when building a social circle, but also the opportunities to meet international people outside the academic world. One of the non-European peers recalls with high regards her relationship with a foreigner she met in Vienna and who became very relevant during her stay due to similar personalities and hobbies:

I had a friend who is a Japanese lady. I met I think three or five days after I arrived in Vienna because I went to an art shop to get material for my decorations and I met her in the café inside the art shop, and we started talking. She is like 70, but I really enjoy my social activities with her because we don't really have to talk a lot and we go to museums, go to some nice Japanese concerts, and I went to her country house in Baden, which is like 30 minutes by train and we did some gardening together.

Another critical aspect of transnational practices comes back to the practice of cooking and eating. Individuals expressed that they would travel with specialty ingredients from their home country cuisines. Some others claimed to be content when finding shops or restaurants that would sell the traditional authentic food from their home country. Translocal agency also had a strong influence in the process of emplacement in the city as having places and senses that remind of home would induce more comfort and confidence. For instance, in Brussels, a participant remembers how living with a friend from his country of origin and experiencing everyday life practices with her helped him feel comfortable upon his arrival:

I was sleeping on the sofa for the entire semester because it was a one-bedroom apartment, but because we are so close, I could share with her all the new experiences. After we got home from a day's work, we both had that kind of support, that homely feeling. I didn't feel like an intruder in someone else's home. That's the city where I cook the most. I actually enjoyed going grocery shopping with my friend because there was an Arabic shop that sold Bulgarian cheese and Bulgarian wine, and we'd go there and have a lot of fun doing the house kind of tasks. It was very mundane things, but they were nevertheless very enjoyable. It was the sense that you're finding a piece of home somewhere else.

The similarities among the interviews and the mental maps hint on a collective production of space and the creation of similar forms of representation among the group. Thus, the discourse of the city is a resonance of these forms of representation and relational production of space. That is, specific spaces in the city acquire special meaning in the student's day to day life. Given that students study and sometimes live physically together, an exchange of thoughts, knowledge, perceptions is continuously in the making. As many of them expressed how they learn about the culture and spaces in the city is mainly by word of mouth, specifically

from other classmates and teaching staff. Many factors play an essential role in shaping the space; however, when depicted from memory, what remains in their individual narratives tends to be very similar. This collective knowledge, or 'group intelligence' as they characterize it, comes from the multiplicity of histories and experiences.

Another aspect in which one can see the relevance of networks and agents in ISM is housing for transient students. 'Enduring when one probably should not' was the phrase used by one of the students. The transient condition complicates the search for housing in some of the cities that do not provide a variety of alternatives or in cities that are not endowed as destinations for students. The mode of being in 'permanent temporariness' (Marcu, 2017) shows this form of resistance in which individuals come up with creative ways to sort out the difficulties presented in cities along with the financial, emotional, and legal constraints when finding housing.

The transient condition also determines the construction of a social belonging to the city, i.e., emplacement. Many of the adaptation issues arise before arriving in the cities. They have to do with problems finding housing, visa issues, and not speaking the local language in some cases, as well as involving multiple actors. Housing conditions have a considerable impact on the development and trajectory of the student's life; however, most of the respondents share the idea that 'one cannot be picky' about the living situation, given the short period of stay.

I think our position again comes into play looking for a place to live when you have to tell the landlord that you're a student, only here for four months. The pool that you can choose from drastically changes. So how picky can you be when you've got all these restrictions.

Often students recur to temporary accommodation before finding a place, such as Airbnb and hostels, that, in the long run, end up being representing an extra expense for students. Moreover, the lack of regulation in the private rental housing sector is more accentuated in countries like Spain, where there are no laws that regulate the private rental system. Oftentimes, students acknowledge the consequences of gentrification by experiencing it themselves. The use of portals like *Idealista*, *Badi*, Erasmus-focus agencies, even social media groups such as the ones that are common on Facebook, enhances the speculation on rental prices, having, as a result, a series of scams, lousy quality apartments and exorbitant prices that do not meet the quality requirements, legally as well. Consequently, students have expressed problems in every city related to scams, overpriced rents, required minimum stay, conditions, high deposits and not getting reimbursed afterward, informality with the contracts, among others. The anecdote about an experience in Brussels rescues these ideas:

the house was in quite a bad condition. It was some Russian guy for whom it was an easy investment to buy a very old dirty house just like roughly renovated but in a quite careless way and then put ten students in and squeeze the maximum money out of them as possible. The house was charming, but it had a lot of problems from malfunctioning toilets to at some point the roof of the living room just fell and stuff like that. I had a wonderful time there because most of the people I lived with were fun, and it was the first time I lived with such a large bunch of people, and we were also like sharing food. It was quite a communal experience. Everybody would pay 100 euros per month, and from that, we would go grocery shopping and buy everything and share it. I think part of the reason why I enjoyed it was because I knew it was limited. I think the fact that it was immediately time-bound time-limited allowed me to just like let go and enjoy it for the moment.

Moreover, many indicated that transience affects their engagement with local people. This sentiment is materialized when students avoid establishing more robust bonds with friends, romantic relationships, professional connections, and local agents. Anxiety and fright of establishing new connections or developing an attachment to the place occur to a certain extent when experiencing transience.

They all knew I was there temporary, and I also didn't want to build something per se that wouldn't last for a long time because there was already my 4 cities friends and then to invest so much in people you are going to leave in three months. I was not going to force it because I felt that was useless energy spent.

Additionally, the ability to speak or not the local language can also influence dwelling and emplacing in the

In Vienna, *Donauinsel* and the Danube canal were also a source of anecdotes told during the interview. On the one hand, stories include physical activities like running by the canal, swimming during the summer, and strolling in the nearby natural environments (e.g., Kahlenberg mountain), emphasizing on the healthy lifestyle and high standards in the quality of life. On the other hand, others sketched the city from a more geographical approach when distinguishing between different scales to think about a city like Vienna. One of the students drew three maps in one. First, he drew what he called his *emotional neighborhood* after having stated that the neighborhood is a bizarre unit that did not correspond with his everyday life. Second, the urban scale is dominated by the ring street and urban landmarks and third, showing the position of the city in relation to the main cities of the neighboring countries.

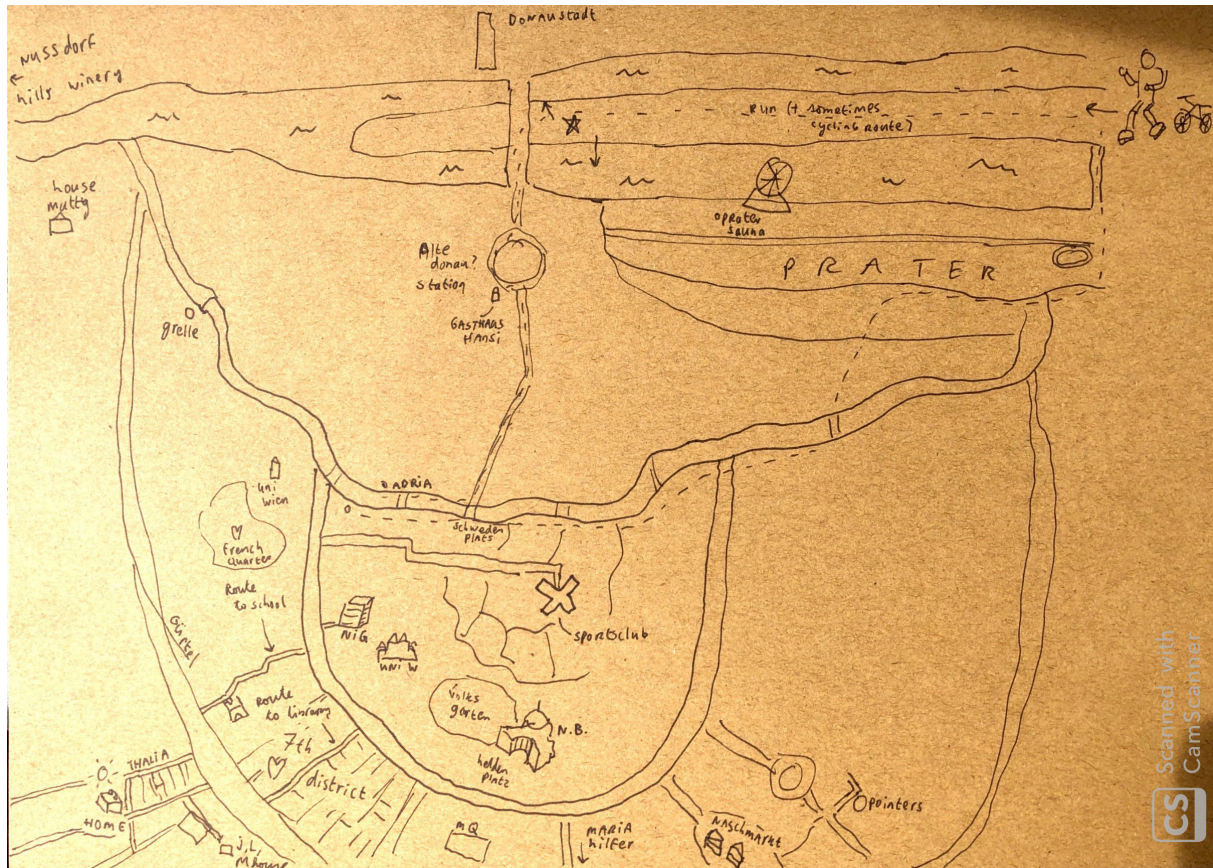


Figure 7 Mental map of Vienna. The urban morphology is the main structure in which landmarks and everyday life activities are displayed



Figure 8 Mental map of Vienna showing three scales: emotional neighborhood, urban scale and supranational scale (position of Vienna within Central and East European global cities)

In Copenhagen, the sea was always represented as the main structuring element and accompanied by a legend that said 'swimming' or drawings of people swimming. Also, recurrent was the communal space *Absalon* which became part of their everyday lives, from attending to yoga and communal dinners to becoming a place that brings emotions back. Figure 9 is complemented by the following passage in which the interviewee tells orally and visually how having a network allowed him to dwell in different areas of the city:

So often, I'm lucky. One of my mum's friends' brother has a brother who lives in Copenhagen, and he had a friend whose boyfriend is a writer and was going traveling for a month. I cat sat for him for a month in his flat in Vesterbro and just signed a contract with him for a month. And then, I had a slightly frantic hunt for somewhere to go after that. Eventually, through a Facebook advert, I found where. The guy and I had one friend in common because he's British. I moved into the one spare room in his flat in Nørrebro, which was in a seventies block, which is much less comfortable than the beautiful 19th century flat I've been in on my own for the first month. However, I really liked Nørrebro much better than Vesterbro. I feel like I upgraded in terms of my urban experience.



Figure 9 Mental map of Copenhagen displays places and emotions while providing a geographical base map in which everyday life is portrayed based on various activities. Arrows to other places indicate a larger scale of conceiving the experience of dwelling and learning in the Danish capital.

The relevance of the virtual realm in ISM has also intensified the experience. Under the assumption that cyberspace is nowadays also part of the urban experience, the virtual world was also talked through during the interviews. Technological advancements have opened new ways to expand networks in ISM. Ranging from communication and social to service platforms, the scope of the Internet grows by the day. Such access to communication technologies fosters a 'liquid life' as expressed by Bauman (2000), which can be paradoxical. On the one hand, there is more virtual connectivity and a degree of effectiveness and productivity in performing certain tasks. On the other hand, it can lead to urban loneliness and the loss of social skills in a multicultural context due to the difficulties it poses.

In the case of the 4 *citizens*, virtual connectivity has allowed them to expand an international network while staying in touch with their former contacts through social media and other long-distance communication tools. However, the virtual realm has also proved to be of great importance as they arrive in a new city. Social media, search engines, and local Internet websites were a source of relevant guidance. Not only for the arrival and adaptation process but also throughout their stay and afterward.

Access to the Internet provides the students with a myriad of services; from housing (e.g., rooms and flat sharing, temporary rentals, hotels), public and private transportation (e.g., taxi, bicycles, electric scooters, flights, walking itineraries), service and consumer goods (e.g., second-hand clothes and household items, upcycling, local and online shops), food pick-up and delivery, entertainment and leisure (e.g., online streaming platforms, videogames), administrative and medical services (e.g., insurance, appointments), engagement with local culture (e.g., events, cultural spaces), communication (e.g., social media, video calls, online journals), to tourism (e.g., travel advice and reviews). The virtual tools can also foster the degree of emplacement by providing a platform in which to learn the local language, finding romantic or sexual partners, getting informed about the local state of affairs, navigating in real-time or with offline maps, social media platforms, among others. A female classmate shares her experience using dating apps not necessarily to find a romantic partner but to explore the city with an outsider:

I used Tinder, and they were all very disappointing yet exciting because it was these catfish experiences. They all didn't look exactly like in the photo, but it was nice because through the dates you get to know a new bar, a new area maybe and a person who then also is a whole new universe that partly would even make me learn about the city.

However, this opens to discuss the argument that Internet algorithms can strongly influence how students experience mobility. In this regard, many expressed how having access to it would boost confidence and a sense of security. Then again, globalization comes at stake when the Internet contributes and promotes such a hyperconnected global network of people and services in which the physical space is no longer decisive.

Thought-provokingly, the virtual realm acquired more importance during the global lockdown as it allowed not only for students to follow their courses online but also to create an international virtual project that became global and implicated remote working. Hence, the virtual realm appears relevant before, during, after the mobility experience, even under an extraordinary situation such as the pandemic caused by COVID-19.

Cohort 11 after the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic

A new section regarding the development of this thesis surged in response to an extraordinary situation: the measures taken by the European national governments due to the COVID-19 outbreak that hit the globe in the spring of 2020. After the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, the Spanish universities closed indefinitely from the 11th March 2020. The 4CITIES courses were adapted to be imparted online, and in less than a week, the whole country closed its borders, banning travelers and all non-essential activities. Most of the students belonging to cohort 11, precisely 20 out of 24, fled back to their home country or left Madrid. However, because of previous experiences working on projects outside the academic curricula, a group of students from cohort 11, along with some former and current students of other 4CITIES cohorts, started a collaborative project remotely. The suddenness and uncertainty of the moment brought fresh airs of inspiration, which led to the creation of a platform named *Spread stories, not the virus* (2020). The platform aimed to collect stories from citizens around the world, which would inspire global solidarity, notably during the quarantine that changed community life in cities. While working in the initiative, the lessons rescued were indeed very much related to the new ways of dwelling in the city as well, not only the personal experience but also through the global network of storytelling.

The skills required during the creation of this project appear to be very much related to those acquired during the 4CITIES experience. First, the quick organization of a multicultural group of people that joined efforts and in which everyone counted with a different network of contacts around the globe. The consequences of cultivating an international network before and during the 4CITIES experience were exposed to this

initiative. These networks soon became a significant asset in the project. The agglutination of those local and international networks allowed for the project to grow faster than expected. Second, the collaboration of the students with different working traditions as well as different points of view materialized in a somewhat successful website. Third, the ability to work remotely and embracing their identity as 'global citizens' by transmitting stories in five different languages, exposing different realities, and opening new horizons by sharing the initiative with the international media. Not only was the website in English but also in Spanish after having received a grant from the Complutense University of Madrid, part of the 4CITIES consortium.

Furthermore, a reflection of how virtual space is also produced can be manifested through a project like this. Understanding that teamwork skills have been developed during the program, the COVID-19 pandemic opened new opportunities to explore ways of working together that overcome obstacles that would prevent an urban project from being physically achieved. As mentioned by Campbell (2016, p. 190), given by a transformation of the students' worldviews during ISM, 'the context of differences strengthens and develops qualities like empathy, language, interest in the world, emotional resilience, flexibility, openness, and personal autonomy.' It is also important to emphasize the resilience and adaptability that students in 4CITIES develop as transient students continuously on the move; the ability to exceed geographical limitations and legal impediments in some cases, to continue nurturing the identity of the 'global citizenship' even without actively participating in an international mobility program.

Due to the recentness of the event at the time of this research, many professional and personal future expectations stated by the respondents are prone to change. The transient condition of students became for some a lifestyle or ideology, claiming to want to pursue an international professional career by being 'available worldwide' and having 'freedom' to move. Opposingly, the desire to be embedded back in their home countries, and settle for a more extended period, demonstrated the intensity and energy that this form of mobility demands.

This, in turn, arouses new reflections and poses questions on the advantages and disadvantages of engaging in ISM. The current situation not only with the global knowledge economy but also with climate change and sanitary crisis forces us to contemplate new alternatives. According to recent interviews by DW News broadcaster (Harms, 2020), for those that belong to the 'generation lockdown,' i.e., current higher education students, the opportunities and challenges that arise foster an extraordinary degree of uncertainty. On the one hand, new challenges related to having to replace close encounters with physical distancing, followed by more pressuring issues like the financial constraints of living in the city while not finding jobs due to the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. On the other hand, opportunities like complementing physical mobility with online formats have also emerged.

Moreover, experts assert that due to the current global situation, there is a relation between the countries chosen by students to embark on ISM and the way those countries handled the public health crisis. For instance, applications in the US have decreased due to the insecurity regarding visa issues (Ittel, 2020). Also, depending on the implementation of response plans, universities have noted impacts on the inbound and outbound mobility patterns (Rumbley, 2020). Staff from the International Offices in several European universities also expressed a strong tendency in the number of students that apply for higher education programs in the field of health sciences (Harms, 2020; Ittel, 2020).

The difficulty of organizing and analyzing data with the rapid-moving nature of the situation today limits the ideas that were sketched in this section. However, the disruptive experience caused by the pandemic already provides lessons to be learned in order to improve our ability to respond to the challenges we face at a global level. In line with the European Association for International Education, the rapid spread of COVID-19 'highlighted the role that international travel can play in the broad dissemination of some diseases.' Thus, 'the outbreak's impact on academic mobility has been a subject of extensive conversation within the international education community in Europe and elsewhere.' (Rumbley, 2020, p. 10)

Now more than ever, and despite the uncertainty of the current situation, discussing dwelling in the city in a moment of crisis acquires more relevance. Reexamining the essential features of urban life during a crisis, especially those that happen in the everyday life of international students, can lead to new ways of dwelling in the city. At the same time, the latter is intrinsically related to learning and building more sustainable and resilient global cities.

6/

Conclusions

"We shall never be able to explain or justify the town."

-Georges Pérec

The study of the everyday life of international mobile students, often ignored by science, is relevant in many ways. On the one hand, by putting a spotlight on what seems insignificant and trivial through an *education of attention*, one can understand how the urban space is produced and thus understand how dominant narratives about the city emerge. Under the assumption that the city is not only a physical phenomenon but rather a palimpsest of meanings, signifiers, and experiences, one can attribute learning as a direct consequence of everyday practices. Furthermore, when dwelling in '*permanent temporariness*,' i.e., being a transient migrant, the opportunities and challenges become defining in the learning process.

The urban experience is as individually subjective as it is shared. The assemblage of stories presented in this thesis clearly shows the similarities between the narrativized experiences of a group of 20 students and myself. They lead to the conclusion that the subjectivity of the individual urban experience and the collective production of space complement each other, giving rise to a collective discourse of the city. It is without a doubt that talking about the urban experience equals to a spectrum which is dominated by nuances; nevertheless, the bits and pieces of subjectivity also seem to contribute to a collective experience which is enhanced by the traveling nature of the 4CITIES program.

Brussels, the most diverse and multicultural city in the eyes of the interviewees, represents the city in which friendships and relationships that would last for the next two years were forged. Especially in this city, students refer to the irrelevance that physical space acquired and instead expanded on the fact that people were the primary agents to give meaning to the urban experience. On the contrary, in Vienna, the physical space began to play a more decisive role. For example, stories began to be associated with specific spaces such as the Danube river and the Danube canal. Much more emphasis was placed on the triad: people-materials-environment. The stories elucidated the defining role that people, mainly the university staff and the 4CITIES colleagues had. Additionally, the materials and the environment combined to create a narrative in which quality of life prevailed. The latter dictated by a series of factors including architectural and urban aesthetics, access to culture, affordable housing, and highly valued public spaces.

As for Copenhagen, the rhythm of the city is more visible and recurrent in the individual and collective narratives. Memories about Copenhagen are deeply linked to the use of the bicycle as the principal means of transport. An object like the bicycle (material), in this case, is the representation of an entire urban narrative. The stories told by the students express the relevance of the bicycle in the urban experience they had while dwelling in the Danish capital. Finally, in Madrid, even though it was a program cut short by the pandemic, the discourse that dominated at the beginning had a lot to do with stereotypes. The moment in which the interviews were carried out does not allow a definite conclusion about the main narratives of the city; however, they allow to make visible the daily actions that take place in the process of adaptation and placement that happen when an international student arrives in a new city.

Moreover, many factors analyzed in the stories that make up this research lead to the links between the everyday and broader trends in globalization, migration, and education. The '*global citizen*' identity, which was often referred to by the students, suggests that lasting international networks grow when dwelling in mobility. The nurturing of this global identity as well as having access to international contacts lead the way to pursue a career or personal future in a different country than the one of origin, giving rise to new geographies of migration.

The idea that dwelling in mobility equals learning the city hints on understanding urbanism in a more progressive manner. On the one hand, one can say that the assemblage of personal histories, materials, resources, people, and the urban environment constitutes the experience-based nature of urban learning. On the other hand, the urban '*journey*' accomplished in transience is unique in the way it is produced, lived, contested, and ultimately embodied and learned. The constant exchange and exposure to contrasting ways of urban-dwelling create assemblages that will inherently materialize during professional exercise. The tactics and strategies developed while dwelling in mobility reveal how urban learning is intrinsic to the shape of dominant urban narratives.

Through the stories, one was able to find that access to the Internet, and digital media has also promoted ISM. The internet plays a crucial role in the mobility experience. In the case of international mobile students in the field of urban studies, the virtual realm provides tools and information that allow them to dwell the city differently while facilitating particular adaptation and emplacement processes. Even more, being transient

migrants, it sometimes enables access to housing options, creating social capital, and dealing with bureaucracy and legal matters. At the same time, having those facilities reinforces their identity as 'global citizens.'

As mentioned in the preface of this research, human beings are in constant movement. The links between migration, education, and globalization are uncovered when the rhythms of dwelling in mobility are carefully examined in the stories told by transient students. The everyday rhythms ranging from walking at different speeds and cycling and public transport mobility to university routines and schedules, and the negotiation of them, are central to the study of dwelling in the city. Even if any urban dweller can relate to the everyday experiential forms of learning the city, the urban experience will be profoundly contrasting according to class, gender, age, nationality, and professional background. This makes it relevant to push an agenda that studies ISM from a more integrative approach, i.e., scrutinizing what comes into being 'below-the-radar.'

Limitations and Further research

“Lo pequeño es inmenso en su trayectoria”

-Chantal Maillard

Limitations

Being part of the group has indeed facilitated the research process. However, it has also limited the research as specific data gathering, and analysis might appear to be biased by the author or the participants to whom the interview was done. The complementarity of the emic and etic approach tackles some of those biases; however, it must be acknowledged that language and culture do play an essential role in the worldview of the interpreter (myself).

Among the main bias are that students closer to the author might have inclined to share more detailed anecdotes of the lived experience. Facing the issues of close friendship as trust, treating them as an advantage to gain more insight but acknowledging that it might be overestimated. Also, the moment when the interviews were done also reflect on the answers given. In the section about memory, the students expressed, not only with words but also through body language, their frustration of not being able to remember specific names, places, and situations of their lived experience in the city they found the most memorable. The lack of remembrance of small details limits the more 'insignificant' or ordinary practices of everyday life, which are embodied but are complicated to reveal through language.

Finally, the fact that other previous cohorts of students were not contacted might limit the scope to understanding the urban experience of the 4 *citizens*. However, this methodology could easily be repeated with a larger sample of cohorts that have had a similar trajectory as transient students in the field of urban studies.

Further Research

This research can continue in various directions. Focusing purely on the field of ISM, these findings hint on broader debates in the field of educational geographies of mobility such as the meanings, signifiers, and associations with mobility and immobility in the contemporary social thought, i.e., if spatial mobility is considered positive and immobility is seen as a barrier for professional and personal development. Additionally, further research could show how the social significance of international student mobility has changed over time and the influence that personal histories, culture, and imaginaries have on the decision-making process.

Regarding the field of education in urban studies, this research could continue by identifying the spatial practices of everyday life that influence the learning processes. The exposure to changing urban experiences and environments as a transient student opens windows to gain more understanding about learning as translation. In other words, how the knowledge obtained is used in different contexts and what is remembered or forgotten altogether. Further research in this sense could examine the movement between the cities and how they interact or counteract each other.

The unexpectedness of the COVID-19 pandemic also opened new questions regarding sustainability issues and the role of the virtual space in education. From interrogating, whether traveling to practice mobility is environmentally and economically sustainable to cross-examining the real benefits of nurturing an identity of 'global citizenship.' Considerations from a sustainable development perspective should take account of the environmental and economic costs of ISM alongside its benefits in the global knowledge economy. In the virtual domain, further research could explore innovative online learning systems for international programs that can provide the experiential dimension acquired through dwelling in the city during ISM but without having as high environmental impacts. Encouraging research in the topic could lead to an inventive framework for virtual international mobility that leverages technology as a bedrock resource without compromising the fundamental nature of urban learning through dwelling in the city.

“As a practice of the loss of speech, writing has no meaning except outside itself, in a different place, that of the reader, which it produces as its own necessity by moving toward this presence it cannot reach.

-Michel de Certeau (1988)

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Appendix

The city is not built by urbanists, it is the image of the deepest longings of a community, it is to live together.

Interview guideline

Hello, today is (date) and we are in (place). It's (time) and we will start with the interview for the thesis: Learning in the city. I will record the following interview if you give me the consent to do so.

Part 1. Generalities

- Personal data: nationality, age, gender, professional background.
- What's your professional background and where did you study before doing four cities?
- In which cities have you lived before doing the program 4 cities?
- What were the motivations behind your decision to study 4cities?
- Was it your first time being in the 4 cities?

Part 2. Memory

- From the 4 cities in which you've lived in the past 2 years, which one do you find more memorable?
 - What do you remember the most from the mentioned city?
 - Could you describe your daily routine in the city?
 - Please talk to me about the housing conditions a bit more. How did you get your place, with who did you live, why did you like/dislike about it?
 - How much time would you spend at home?

Relation to neighborhood

- Could you describe your neighborhood and the places in which you used to hang out?
- How did you discover those places that became part of the routine?
- How did you move about in the city? What was your preferred mode of transport in the city and why?

Social dimension

- Tell me more about your social circle there. Did you make new friends or acquaintances?
- How do you relate to the local culture? What do you consider you have learned about the culture that you didn't know before?
- Did you start doing new activities/hobbies/sports?

Relation to the city

- In which other places of the city would you make your everyday life? Talk to me more about these neighborhoods.
- In your opinion, what does the city offer that you haven't found in other cities?
- Expectations versus reality. Has your image of the city changed after temporarily having lived there?

- What do you consider you have learned from the experience living there?
- Would you consider moving to this city and why?

Part 3. Today

- Madrid being the last city from the program, what are your expectations now that you've had the experience of being new to a city as a temporary resident?
- Has it been easier to move in and adapt to a new place? Tell me more about the experience of being new to the city.
- About Madrid...
 - Had you visited this city before? What was your first impression of it when you arrived? Has it changed in the first few weeks we've been here?
 - Describe briefly how was your experience finding housing?
 - How would you describe moving around in the city?
 - Tell me more about your social circle here. Have you made new friends or how do you relate to the Spanish culture?
 - Have you started doing new activities/hobbies/sports?
 - How do you find information about what the city has to offer in terms of urban culture?
- What do you get from your classmates with whom you've shared this experience?
- Do you have future plans or how do you envision yourself after 4 cities?
- Would you consider that your perception of the urban has changed after having experienced living in four different cities in a time span of two years?
- Is there anything else that you might want to add regarding your experience studying abroad?

Thank you for sharing your interesting insight. Now we will move to a second part of the activity which consists in making a mental map of the city you just described.

Interpretative grid: results from the interviews

RESULTS FROM THE INTERVIEWS					
Part 1 & 4, General information (background and program)	Perceptions and motivations of an international program: Push and pull factors	Future expectations (professional and personal)	Living and being a tourist	Meaning of home	Virtual realm
	• Money saved. Cheaper than national programs (UK, U) • Career-wise, broadening professional possibilities • Exposure to different European cities. • Eagerness/ passion for traveling • Desire to study a Master's program or go back into academia. • Better opportunities than home country • KU and Unive as the most attractive cities • Building on the subject of bachelor's thesis (urban-related) and/or courses enjoyed during their Bachelor. • Desire to study on a practical basis • Learn on the go. • Attractiveness of not being rooted and in constant change & adjustment • Meet international people, culturally different, interdisciplinary. • Perception that home country does not offer prestigious education. • Perceive the program as an investment for their future, career-wise. • Perception of studying with well-educated, ambitious and 'nerdy' people • Family background related to moving constantly • Upbringing in an international sphere (family history and family experience) • Complementing previous studies: links to society (interest in social sciences) • Interest in urban studies; having an international input on the topic. • Previous work experience on the field. • Attracted more by the concept than the content and push for more. • Prestige of the program: wanting to progress in terms of urban development • Financial support from institutions like Erasmus, universities, governments, or parents. • Desire to improve society • Live in 4 cities that could potentially become future home	• Desire to be more embedded in home and settle for longer periods • Desire to be active in society • Maintain freedom in job • Haven't sorted a plan • Going back to home country with a good professional image • Non-EU is to stay in Europe. Would accept any job that gives a visa (legal and financial challenges) • Work with an interdisciplinary and international group • Job co-creating the city. • Available worldwide • Consultancy or supra national level • Ambitions for the future influenced by other classmates	• Living in a place has to do with a "subtle change of mindset that happens to do with your purposes in being in a place related to the rhythm of the way you're being in the place. • Living is intensity of the experience. • Rhythm is a balance of time. Need for a routine. • Tourist consumes an image of the city, wants to see as much as possible in less time. • Living is experiencing everyday life with and of other people a bit your own • Living is having associations with the places and making the culture live. Catalogued as 'the dream'. • Living in Europe for a non-European is synonym of a good place to live. Structure around activities gives a routine when living in a city • Being transient avoids a further engagement with local people (establishing stronger bonds with friends, romantic relationships, local society in general) • Eagerness and openness to meet other people • Attempt to be grounded in a place	• Home is yourself, the people that surround you and the memories. • The place where you feel safe and where your bed is. • Details that make a place homey: photos, fairy lights, rearranging the room, buying used furniture and all the (modest) equipment required, plants. • Room is the comfort zone, safe space and controlled environment • Building strong bonds with flat mates vs. everyday life arrangements living together • Home is a feeling • Routine helps to gain stability and thus feel at home • Home is where your personality evolves • Hard to live with the owner of the place • Home is making your room fit your taste • Leaving a room door open is a sign of trust • You can live in a city without it being your home • Feeling as a guest in temporary home • Routine as a reminder of home • Home is where you cook comfortably	• Used Master's portals and university websites to find the program (key words in search engines) • Use of smartphone • digital apps such as dating apps, mobility apps, GPS, social media, food sharing, circular economy, tourism, academic purposes, housing • Use of Google Maps to find places that offer culture, leisure and entertainment • Find places, pin and save them on Google Maps • Positive and negative experiences on dating apps (catfishing, temporary, casual) • Dating app culture has changed the city and become more socially accepted → less encounters on public space • Diasporas have Facebook groups • WhatsApp and Telegram to stay in touch with family and friends
		Thoughts on the group and program • Personality has a bigger take than nationality (larger significance) • 24 different points of view/life stories/worldviews/approaches to life • Words changed ideas; potentially everything is urban • Interdisciplinarity is nourishing to listen examples from other countries • Unique and precious experience • Unsustainable concept (energy of oneself) • Group dynamics can be disturbing sometimes and bring tensions • Culture richness from non-EU's • Stigmatization • Everyone works to make it work • Collectively build a nice experience • Sometimes restrain of being oneself for fear of feeling ashamed/judged → difficult to be authentic → image management • Learn self-control, patience and tolerance • Forced to engage with virtually everyone in the group • Lack of technical skills • Intensity of experience • Administrative and emotional support from the group while traveling/moving • Cross collaboration and communication skills • Social history defines experience • Takes times to understand each other stories • Lack of understanding (EU & non-EU) • Balance between empirics and theory • Anonymity and urban loneliness • Different conceptions of friendship • Balance between local life and global to adapt → 'global' experience			
					• Stressful to move every time • Comparative approach • Collective knowledge → group intelligence • Collective production of space • Understanding other sensitivities and cultural backgrounds → Respect • Reliance on networks & contacts to find housing • Problems finding housing (scams, overpriced rent, minimum stay, quality, deteriorated state, high deposits, without contract) • Multiple actors involved in ISM • Tend to hang out on gentrified areas of the city • Network is also nourished by the friends of classmates' flat mates (chain) • Discover places by dating people • Communication and mediation are basic for successful relationships with flat mates, classmates and the actors involved in ISM • Confrontation leads to personal growth • Different levels of friendship within the group • Cohort is the core of social life • Support of the group → synergy • Weather determines experience the city • Map of the city includes classmates' homes • Memories are geographically located • Get to know places and activities by word of mouth or other networks • Difficult to involve people from outside; '4 cities bubble' • Appreciation of the unexplored • Gain confidence and empowerment to move anywhere → no longer afraid • Thesis influenced by lifestyle • 'Fluidity of one's identity' • Development of an international/global network of friends • Eye-opening. Theory and practice • English language can sometimes be a limitation for meaningful relationships • Maintenance of mental health by staying in touch with people from home country • Challenged by other fellow classmates • Conflict management • Adaptation to new environments • Learned not to assume anything: cultural interpretation goes under the radar (respect and self-reflectiveness) • Diversity of worldviews in the cities • Group work and social negotiation, prone to change • Learn social implicit rules of the city • Tendency to travel back to home country, often within the EU • Negotiation process: flexibility and willingness to engage with unfamiliar surroundings • Feeling 'can't be picky as a student'

City	Moving about in the city (walking the city)	Understanding of self and others	Transient lifestyle: sociality and transnationalism & group dynamics	Emplacement: home-making in the run & adaptation process	Perception of the city	Virtual Realm	Learning in the city
Brussels	- Reference to the flaneur; exploring the city by walking → building an individual mental map - Would spend a lot of time at the parks, excursions, markets, bars - Memories of coming back home walking with friends. - Tram and metro seemed confusing at first. Uber was a cheap alternative mostly at night. - Non-European: walking was a new experience: in home country, people use car; not used to using public transport either. - Walks to get active. Everything is at a reachable distance; - Walking is a good way to explore. If path is known, deliberate detours are something common. - Graffiti to recognize metro stations - Aggressive driving complicates cycling in the city - Walked also because people older than 26 pay full fare - Experience the city better when walking, discover	- New and exciting to start the program and meet the people with whom they will spend the next 2 years - Getting to know how studying in Europe is like - Rely on coming back home to their flat mates 23 minds to discover, decipher and understand - Where friend groups were first conformed - Overwhelming, even more for those that don't come from cities	- Tend to cluster with the same nationality/ culture/language but as the cities pass, they start acknowledging that culture is not so relevant, but rather personalities that determines their friendships. - Getting acquainted to the cheapest and best - Where friend groups were first conformed - Friends of friends, MUs - Students, people at parties, flat mates - Flings with classmates - Communal dinners/ communal experience at flat - Go to the tourist places when family or friends visit - Hosted by friends from home country - Found shops that sell authentic food from home country - Network of friends from home country	- Deliberately moving about a city in a way that's not guided by set itineraries. - Cooking at home - Adaptation to new housing situation, without commodities from home country - New schedules to eat and routine. - Biggest change of all	- Disliked the city however most memorable. - Strongest memories are from being in a bar with friends. - Experience of unsafety as a woman in public space - Brussels is a city full of contrasts - Mostly a negative idea before moving - Confusion on the identity of the city - Diversity and multicultural - Immigration is high and EU capital brings people from everywhere → international atmosphere - Neighborhoods seem sketchy and dodgy at first sight but after getting familiarized it doesn't feel as much - Diverse identities: Most visible are Moroccans, Maghreb, Congo, Brazilians. Interacted in shops, cafés and market → food. - City offers the possibility to engage with other cultures (deep and authentic way) and migrants room sharing - Offer to engage with the political life of the city - Chaos and internal disagreements - Rough edges	- WhatsApp to start new chatting with 4 cities people; creation of groups. - Facebook group before starting the program - Uber to move late at night (feeling unsafe) - Stay connected through social media and videocalls with previous home city. - Dating apps are also used to meet people - Facebook pages to find flats / room sharing - Use-it! Map	- Confronting to a new language (English) as the main → academic vocabulary - Urban Analysis allowed them to explore a neighborhood with a purpose (hands-on project) and then it became part of their mental map. - Discovering new study culture / teaching methods - Independence. - Academically, the most valuable for some - First time for some living in a Western European city - Had to catch up with concepts → study extra - Brussels is more than the EU capital - Experiencing the city is also a hobby
	- Swimming at the Danube - Stressful to cycle while fighting for their space (bike) - Walking in Danube bland to relax, read a book, have a drink and swim (hot weather) - Walking by the canal - Walked to get a feel for the places - Walking allows to do people-watching - Cycling to enjoy the scenery - Walking to enjoy the architecture and aesthetics of the city - Trams are enjoyable because you get a 360 view of the city. They also take you to nature. - Refer to places based on time-walking distance.	- Peaceful coexistence in society - Being German in Austria expected hostility - Communal quietness - Work-life balance - Society is active in politics	- Translocality. Germans often traveled back home - Social circle is linked to 4 citizens and extended connections - German speakers participated more in the local scene - Friends with neighbors by playing music in terraces - Vegan offer is not wide - New hobbies are influenced by other classmates - Met people from home country when there's national celebrations, sports, etc. - Cooking and baking to maintain mental health - Living with other 4 citizens - Locating supermarkets that sell specialty food	- Speaking German makes it feel like home and feel confident - Language facilitates involvement with the city, society and culture - Stay at flat of former roommate in Brussels - Room conditions help to settle and adapt to the city - Experience the city through its bakeries and cafés - Decorations at home to emulate home culture (calligraphy and origami)	- Going out is comparably cheap → students go out more - Affordability of housing, public transportation and leisure - Contact with nature close to the urban environment → easily accessible - Everything closed on Sunday. - Inclusive public spaces - Coffee and cake culture - Very antagonistic waiters - Markets (Naschmarkt and Brunnenmarkt) - Vienna can deal with small concerns (e.g. noise) - Perfect combination of livability and affordability - Offer and access to high culture	- Skype to have interviews with flat mates. - Facebook to find housing - Bumble and Tinder - WG-Gesucht portal to find housing - News media to understand social and political dimensions - Airbnb (negotiating long-term rental) - DW and duolingo to learn language	- Affordable and inclusive (social) housing → regulated housing market system - Quality housing - Quality of life and livability - Open and inclusive public spaces (consumption-free) - Access to nature. Non-urban leisure activities close to the city - Care for city's water sources - Public Space Forum: street intervention → group work and institution functioning - Volunteering to engage with society - Engaged with the local art scene - Austrian Welfare State - Observation of how the city functions; quality of life is also a reflection of society - Learn by the feeling of familiarity (by observing and getting to know people) - Influence of green space in quality of life - Experience had an impact in thesis topic - Efficiency at university
Copenhagen	- Discovered the city by cycling. - Memories based on being on a bike (source of memories) - Cycling is part of the routine - Cycling makes you feel energized. Keeps your body healthy - Running is a way to understand one's territory - Feels safe to cycle at night	- Confirming how oneself is and own needs - Teachers let students shine in their own way - Danes take care of their bodies, nutrition, clothes → healthy and active lifestyle (comfortable lives) - Lifestyle was infectious → healthy environment - Danish society. Simple and grounded lifestyle - Danes are confident bikers	- Abalone, place to meet locals - Social circle is often linked to activities (e.g. boardgames, jazz, bouldering, language...) - Social circle is also nourished by contacts from previous international education experiences - Found a balance between academia, other activities and rest	- Routine changed according to weather - No effort in trying to learn the language - Impression that there is no need to learn the language in order to understand urban dynamics - Spent time at home and university to save money - KU Housing Foundation	- Interesting urban regeneration projects - Open, welcoming and international - Everyone speaks perfect English - Good, quiet, private lives: value moments when they can do something collective - Weather was not conducive to hang out in public spaces / outdoors - Preliminary idea that finding housing was difficult	- App 'Too Good to Go': prevent food waste. Engaging with the city while saving money - Swapfests to get a bike lease - Bumble, tinder, grinder → dating - Findroommate.dk to find housing (3-day free trial)	- University website offers different services (activities, sports...) - Art galleries to learn about Danish art - Excursions to cultural places - Learn the importance of climate and culture: influences that come from context - Importance of good design in educational facilities - Veganism is offered - Different ways to deal with light

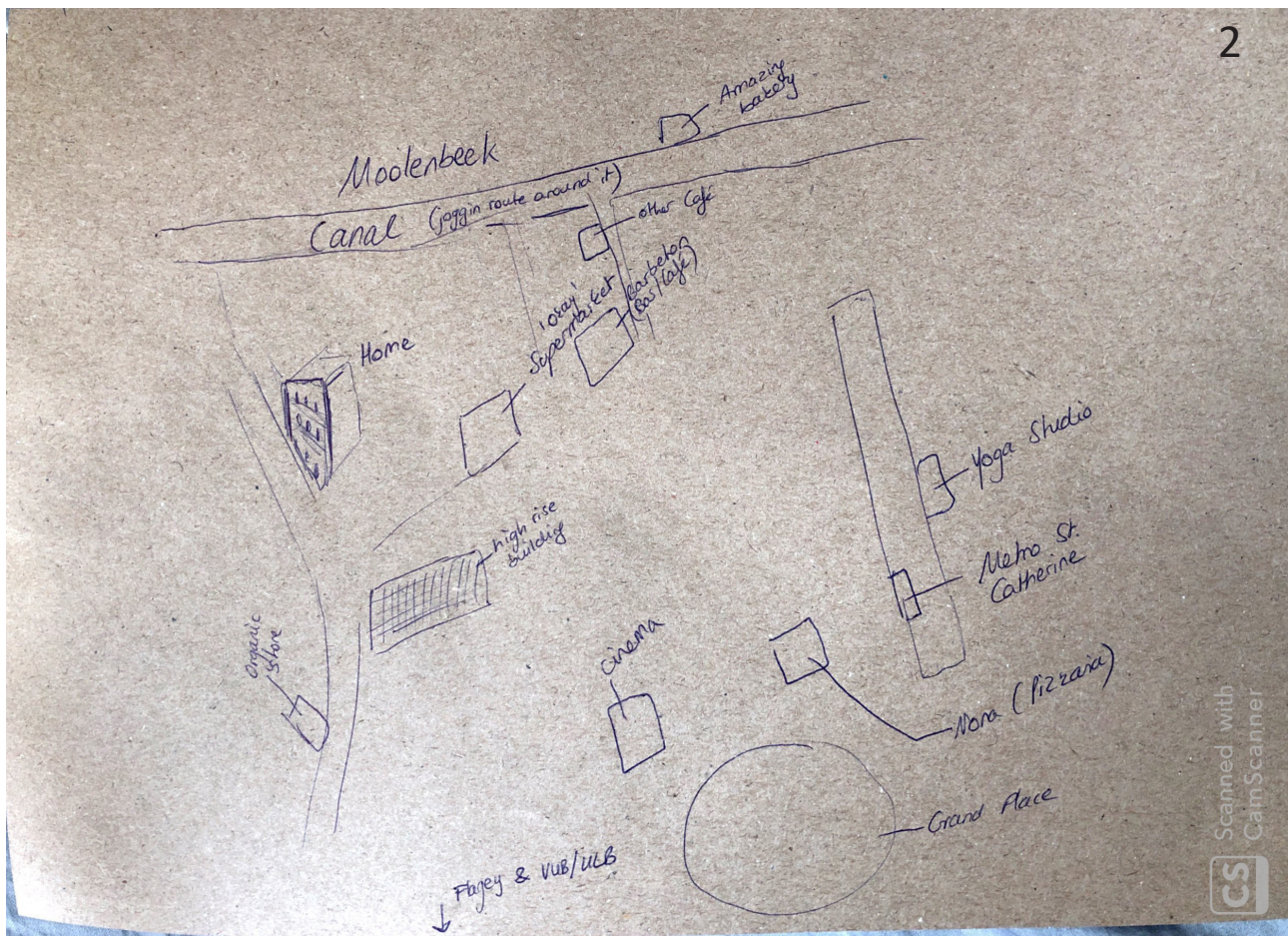
		- Distances and mode of cycling go really well in the city (not a big city and flat topography) - Bike gives freedom, not dependent on routes or times	- Danish is similar to Dutch - Casual dating is common - Feeling of independence and own agency - Confronted to difference - Self-development from living alone - Fashion style - Danish society follows the rules	- Easier to access social circles because they speak English widely - High living costs push to using public space and homes more - Packing has changed overtime - Reliance on people from the same nationality living abroad (international community of nationals)	- Stay for a period of time in the new room, by themselves. - Familiarize and walk around their neighborhood - Having a room somehow became a priority (things taken for granted) 'Wasted' time for viewings - Less personalized rooms/belongings - Tactic: unpack quickly and meet friends and walk to get a sense of the area - Scared of being scammed with accommodation - Housing through agencies 'Collective experience of housing' → temporary Airbnbs before finding a room - Meditation, cooking and reading to feel at home	- Language is a limitation. Few people understand English. - Dodgy landlords - Erasmus-focus agencies dominate the student housing market - Taking care of resources after 3 cities - Expectations decrease - Expect to learn Spanish - Got housing from contacts/ landlord previous city (snowball) - Last semester: better vibes - Brought food from home country - Extra-curricular activities related to Spanish culture (Spanish, flamenco) - Travel plans - Recur to body language - Recur to their embassy for help (housing and legal issues)	- Oneself being more pragmatic - People don't expect communication in English - Spaniards are friendly and loud - Learn personal needs when arriving to a new environment - Feeling of exhaustion and tiredness - Perception of the cohort as a family - Anxiety/Fright of establishing friendships/ connections 'bound to end' and/or of attachment to a place - Feeling of visitor stays a visitor	- By walking and repeating it you get to know the city very well 'Nobody cycles in Madrid' → It's impractical. - Public transport is efficient - Car-dominated city - Living in the center everything is within walking distance - Different train systems are confusing - Walking to create a patchwork of the city - Uneasiness of being in public space (due to language) - Home is chosen based on the distance and commuting time to universities - Easy to navigate	- University designed for the student's well-being - Progressive and alternative - City makes one feel part of it - Spaces of the city are heavily promoted (e.g. Superkilen, BIG projects, Tivoli...) - Alternative places (e.g. Christiania) - Hipster and hygiene - Clear and minimalist design - Lack of bureaucracy and corruption - Fast-moving city - Feminist city - Activism is strong - Politically active - Terrace and outdoor culture - Communal kind of lifestyle - Confrontative and challenging protests - Intimidating - Tend to compare it to the previous city (i.e. Copenhagen) - Chaotic and noisy but vibrant - Sense of openness - Art and museums	- Facebook to find places/events/groups of people with same interest - Spotted by locals to discover new places - Netflix	- Culture of gender & romanticism-flirt on the city) - Visible taxes in the city (one can see they spend it on the city) - Functioning welfare system - Experience what was read/taught - Possible to live without cash
Part 3. Today	Madrid								- Idealista, Badi to find housing - App 'Meet up' - Internet gives security (not being lost) - Trash to treasure Madrid: free furniture (upcycling) - Wallapop: cheap decorations - Airbnb (beginning and whole stay) - Instagram for cultural activities - App: Resident Advisor (dance music) - App: time to Momo (tourist website) - Tripadvisor for restaurants and cafés	- Results of gentrification - Speculation in housing market - Bad quality housing, bad conditions, poorly organized - Studentification and housing market problems - Local newspapers to find the cultural agenda of the city - Travel guides to learn about touristy places - Visa bureaucracy - Expectations decrease 'take it as it comes' mentality - Industrial heritage - Urban regeneration projects (e.g. river and linear park, slaughterhouse...)	

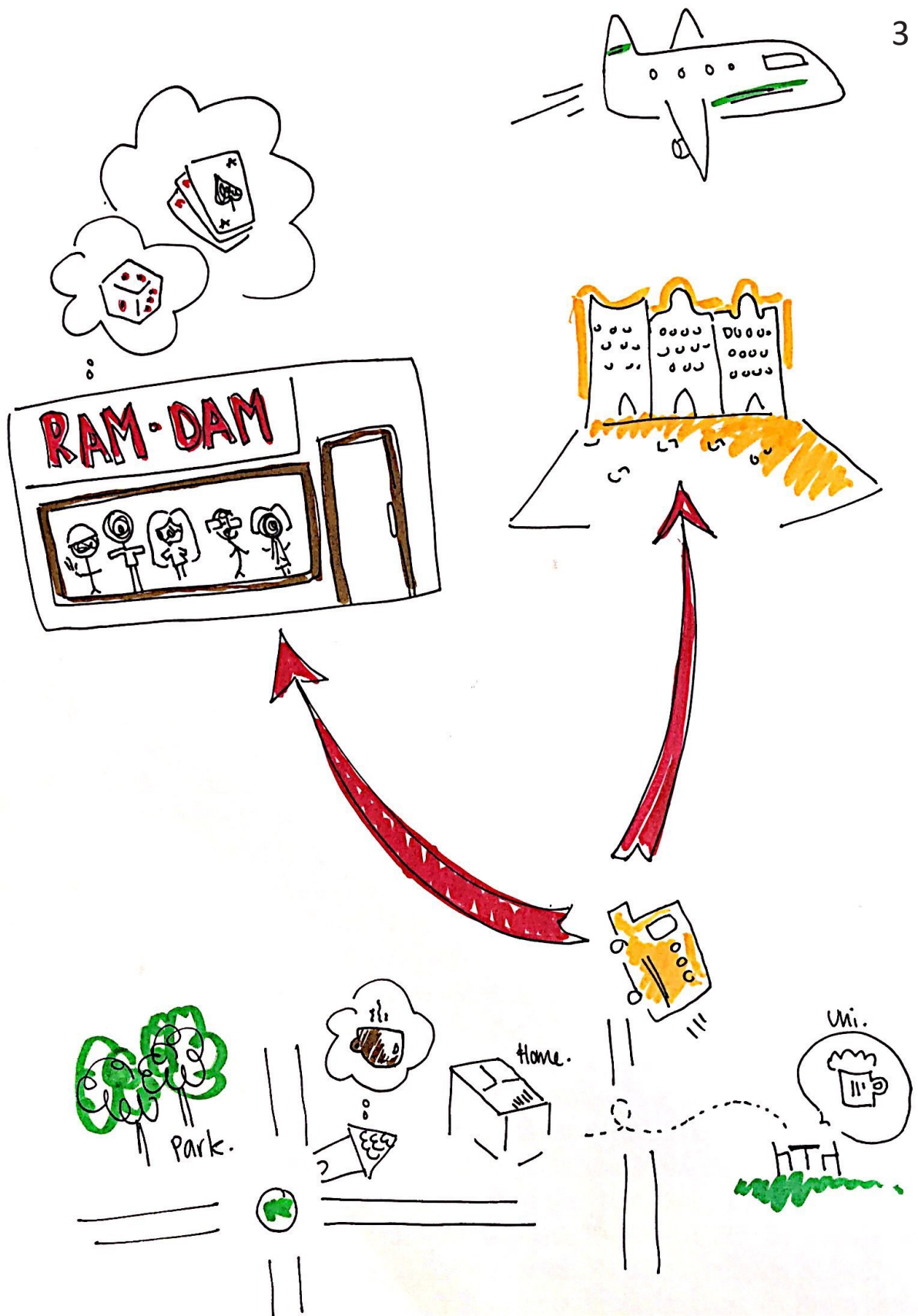
Integrative grid: results from the mental maps

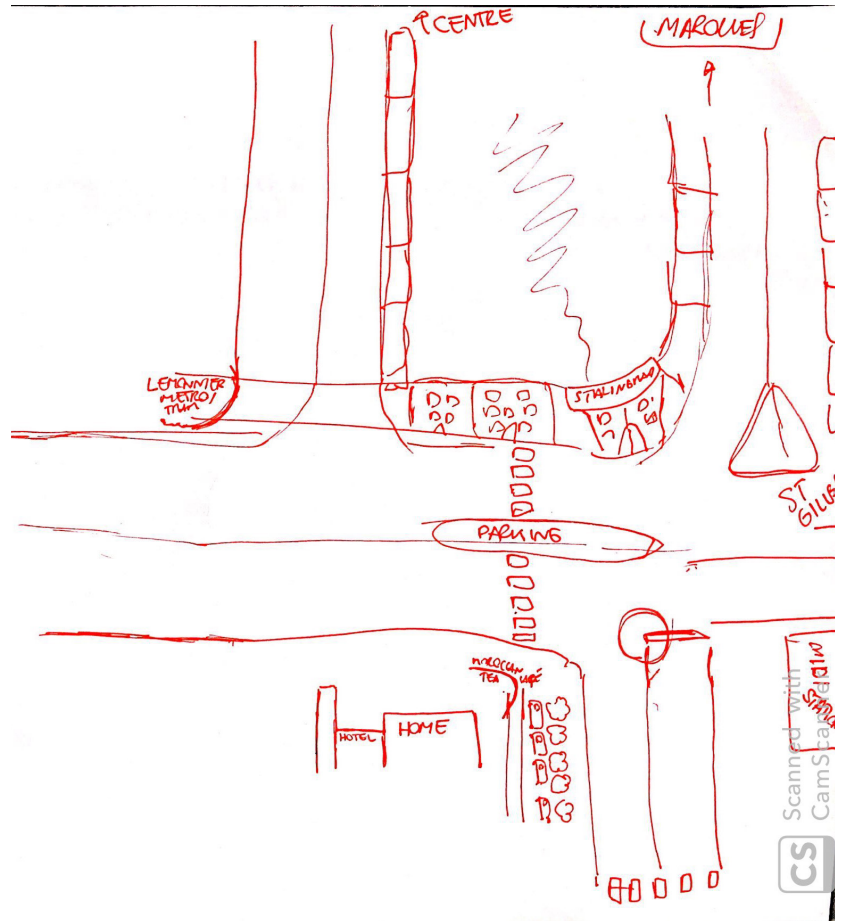
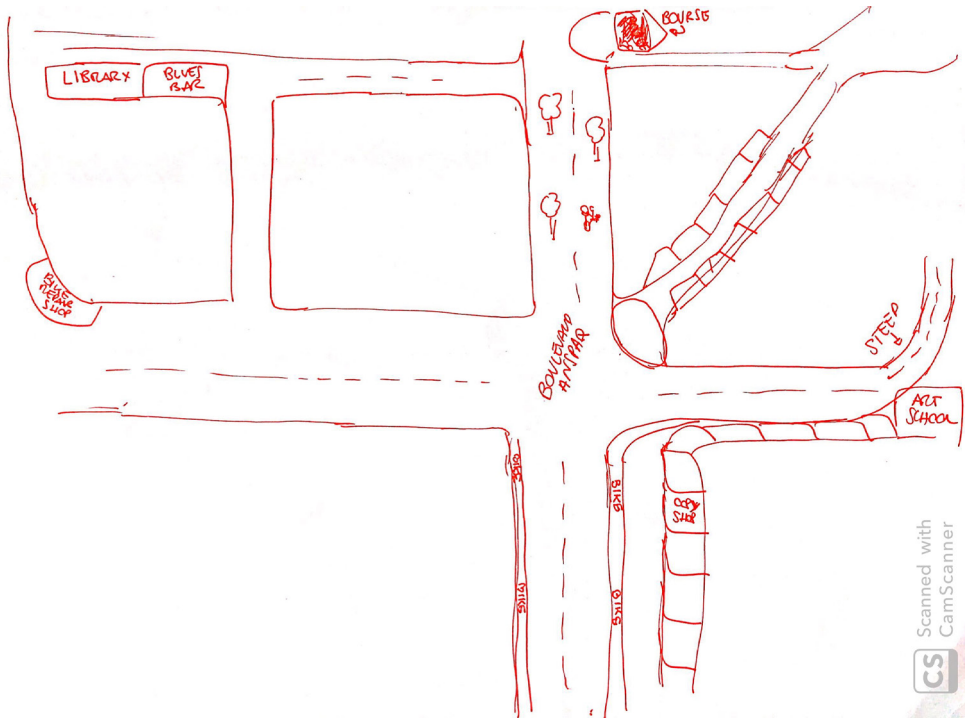
FINDINGS FROM THE MENTAL MAPS		
Brussels	Vienna	Copenhagen
1 (emotional map) - Situations when being with friends (bar, park, Flagey) - Drawing the weather - House as a referent point (normally the center and from there other places appear) - Friend's places frequently visited - Food, drinks, washing saloon, sleeping, listening to music - Academic activities - Text: '4 cities family' - Mode of transport: tram - Footsteps 2 (geographical map) - Home as a reference point - Representation of public spaces: Flagey, VUB and ULB campus, Grand Place, metro St. Catherine - Frequented places related to everyday life: cinema, pizzeria, yoga studio, organic store, bar and cafés, supermarket, bakery - Landmarks: high rise building, Molenbeek - Representation of the canal + activity performed there (jogging) 3 (anecdotal map) - Memories of people in places (bar with friends, beer at uni, traveling) - Traveling often to her former city of residence - Places: Grand Place, park, home, roundabout, café, university - Walking to places close by and bus to go further 4 (urban structure map)	6 (geographical and anecdotal map) - Arrows for international reference: Bratislava - Arrow for Schonbrunn, wine at Kahlenberg - Activities: swimming - Structure: Danube river, city center, canal and ring street, Mariahilfer street, metro stations - Anecdotes: Ikea (far away), little hangout spots by the canal, historic building/stables/older museums/library/balcony where Hitler spoke → very touristy, borek ladies, Modelplatz?, nudists, lovely little park - Places: historic Jewish district, stadtpark, long park with carnival-type things, Adria, school, Pakistani restaurant, museum quarter, Volksgarten, tourist market, Thai place, home, bakery, - References to friends' homes 7 (geographical and anecdotal map) - Structure: Danube river, Danube island, canal, city center and ring road, green areas - Indicates unexplored areas and no man's land - Activities: late-night falafel, sunbathe, nice walk (along the canal) - Places: Prater sauna, Flex (night club), Grelle Forelle (night club), - Within the historical city center → tourists, big buildings, shops/café - References to friends' homes - Own neighborhood Döbling: home, nice houses, main street, Aldi, metro station vegan ice cream, gym, Turkenplatzpark → scale and detail changes; shows more detailed and specific places 8 (geographical map) - Three different scales are part of the map: international (central Europe), city scale and neighborhood - Neighborhood: structured around main streets. Places: Gürtel, metro and tram stations, bakery, Brunnenmarkt, supermarket, sports courts, Yppenplatz, Afghan bread, home, home street, Serbian church. Arrows to football and uni and to forest, nature and mountains. - Urban scale: structured by Danube river, canal, ring road and gurtel. Places: Stephansdom, University, Leopoldstadt, Brunnenmarkt, home, nice areas in the west, Wienerwald - International: indicates main cities nearby: Venice, Ljubljana, Budapest, Bratislava, Salzburg, Prague, München	12 (geographical and anecdotal map) - Home is the reference (street name) - Lines express the cycling paths (cycling trajectories) - Places: center, wicked rabbit, student bar, Absalon, National Gallery, Park, Norrebro, Airbnb, superkilen - Activities: Massage, cacao ceremony, great brunches, swimming naked in the sea, boardgame nights, yoga, jazznight, tantra and movies 13 (geographical, anecdotal and emotional) - Main structure is the water (harbours, sea, lakes), train lines, cycling paths, green areas → urban morphology - Description of the places is expressed through emotions, activities and adjectives. e.g. beautiful bright harbor, sauna=joy, harbor swims, tourists, imposing walls, shopping, chaos, lakes=favorite run, grandeur; Vesterbro (Carlsberg elephants; Absalon's façade for yoga, food and coffee; Norrebro (bob, wine and coffee); further north= adventures - National scale (Sweden and the unexplored) - University is indicated with the authors read during the semester, coffee and a heart - Places: Royal playhouses, Charlottenburg Library (secret workspace), greenhouse in Glyptotek, superkilen, norrebro - Hearts in some green spaces - Bronshøj (house where he stayed first in the outskirts of CPH) 14 (geographical map) - Main elements: water, urban form, trees/green space and houses - Places: Boat, Christianshavn, university, Airport, Tivoli, James' house (street name), gym, coffee place - Activities: Mojo's blues, board games, swim 15 (geographical and anecdotal map) - Home is the center: gym, study, kitchen with heart. Arrows to places from home - Friends' home as references - Places: beach towards Sweden; University (oval bike parkings, Friday bar, coffee, lunch with friends, Danish classes, 4 cities courses); Amager Fælled (running route); supermarket (Rema); metro (Islands Brygge); Christianshavn (nice for walks); Louisiana (Avoid); mermaid (tourists); DAC; Library; Glyptotek Museum; train station; Tivoli; 'pretty' lakes; Norrebro (cool hipster territory); city center (tourists + studenthuset); design museum; Osterbro (Expensive and elite) - Only green areas are surrounding own place - Water divides home from the rest of the city. Bridge (cycle 3x a week) - Arrows towards the unexplored or 'don't go there' - Activities: swimming 16 (geographical map)

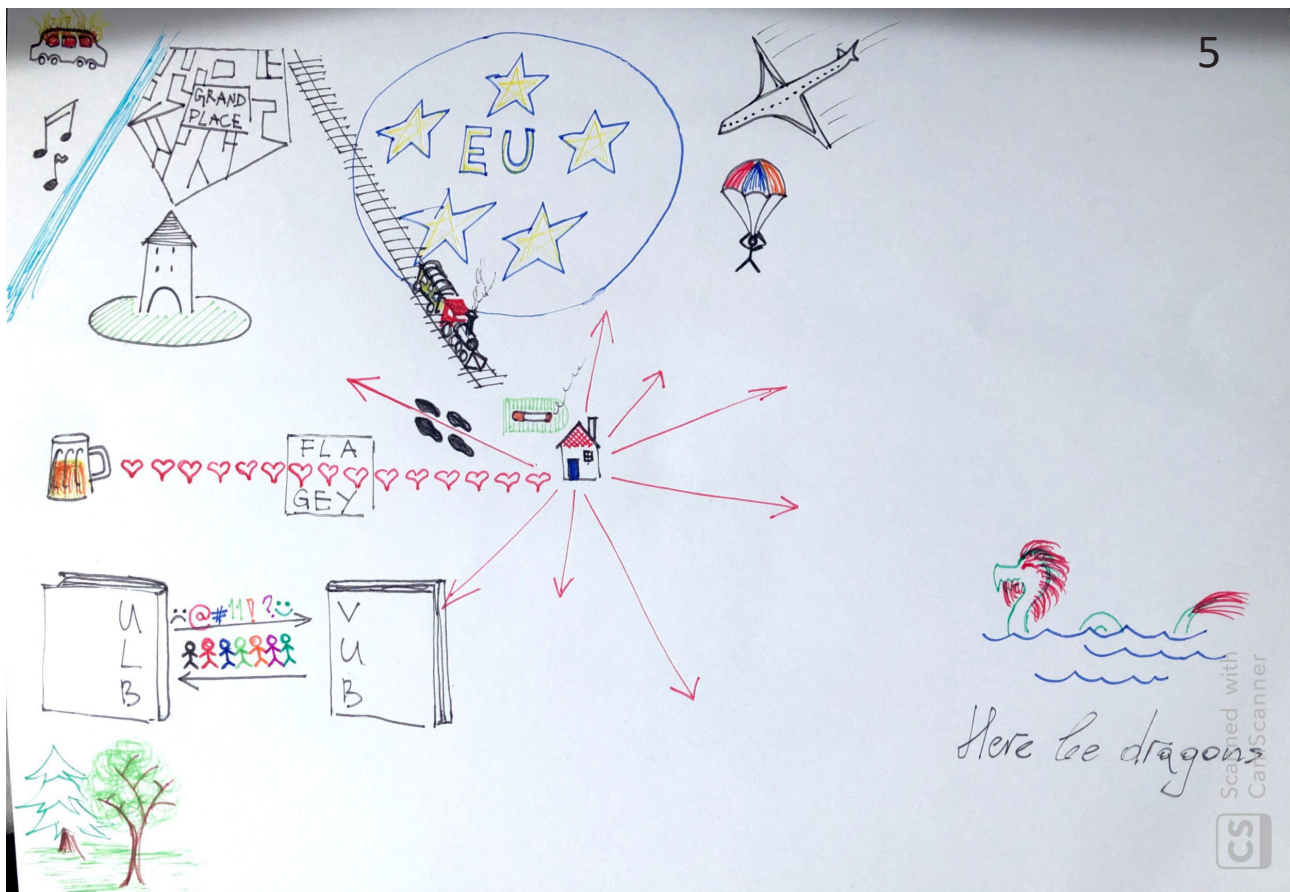
- Structured by roads/streets, crossings and bike paths (mainly Blvd. Anspach) - Home as a reference - Places: train station, hotel next to home, metro station, bar Stalingrad, copy shop, art school, Bourse, library, Blues bar, bike repair shop, neighborhood Saint-Gilles, arrows to city center and Marolles - Few trees 5 (emotional and anecdotal map) - EU logo - Modes of transport: Train, Airplane, walking - Home as a reference from which everything radiates - Smoking place outside home - Movement from ULB to VUB and the emotions of walking from one to the other - Park - Hearts that lead to Flagey → leading to bar with friends - Footsteps to the city center and port de hal (group project) - Water element: canal (not in a relevant position within the map) - Music - Dragons to represent unknown areas of the city	- Austrian flag repeats twice - Structured by Danube river, canal, ring road and the Gürtel. Bridges to Donaustadt - Activities: running and cycling routes to park, university and library (represented the steps), - Places: Prater (park), Prater sauna, Alte Donau station, Gasthaus, Nussdorf, hills and wineries, Grellé Forelle (night club), NIG, University, French quarter, Adria (bar), Swedenplatz, sportsclub, Volksgarten, Heldenplatz, N.B., Museum's quarter, Mariahilfer, Naschmarkt, pointers - References to friends' homes - Home in a far-out corner. Indicates home street Thaliastrasse 7th district with heart 10 (geographical map) - References surround home - Places: Café Eilles, University, Votivkirche, Canal, tram, jewish bakery (heart), Augarten (with tanks), Donauesing (with bridges), Kahlenberg (white wine) in the nature - Activities: swimming 11 (geographical, anecdotal and emotional map) - Structured around the city center - Refers to the coffee houses and the food - References to friends' homes - Drawings of situations with relevant characters in her experience dwelling there - Services: metro, post, gym, supermarkets - References to the places are related to the activities (Yoga at Augarten, art at Belvedere, coffee and reading at cafés, observing view from the university window, shopping) - Architecture library, Prater, art shop and central graveyard, train stations (Wien Mitte and Hauptbahnhof) - Arrows to Baden	- Places: Sydhavn, Absalon, University, Black diamond, monastery, Norrebro, Superkilen, Norrebrohallen - Structure: green areas, bridges, cycling paths, main highway/roads, lakes - Anecdotes: horses, boats 17 (urban structure + activities map) - Friends' home as references - Places: Absalon, Hillsong church, University, Field's, Meatpacking district, Tivoli, station, Glyptotek, Christiania, city center (shopping, coffee, drinks, museums), pole dance studio, house, Norrebro (coffees and walks), city hall - Activities: baby sitting address - Structure: water and roads, metro 18 (urban structure + activities map) - Friends' home as references - Base map are the three islands and the three metro lines with main stations: Amager, Christianshavn and CPH - Makes reference of the new metro line (nordhavn) - Places: Airport (happiness), aquarium, beach (diving wooden structure), University, 8 tallet, Field's, Home, Mountain VM, Bella center, Christiania, Kastellet (little mermaid), Norhavn (UN city and beach), Nyhavn, King's square, Royal library, Tivoli (happiness, central station, Norrebro, superkilen, Tingberg) - Activities: crossfit, 19 (geographical and anecdotal map) - Structured by the water - Drawings show the activities and the buildings/roads/objects - Places: university (lovely library); park; (futuristic) metro; Orestad (very cozy); bridge; station; Tivoli; Black diamond; city center (round tower); Nordhavn; Bopa; Norrebro; public bath; Maklud bar; meatpacking district; Absalon; 'cute' streets and cafés; superkilen; Urban 13; Frederiksberg's pool; Carlsberg; Window museum; opera home (sweet); beach - Activities: kayak's barracks, swimming, cycling, kayaking, walking, music, having coffee
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Mental maps: Brussels

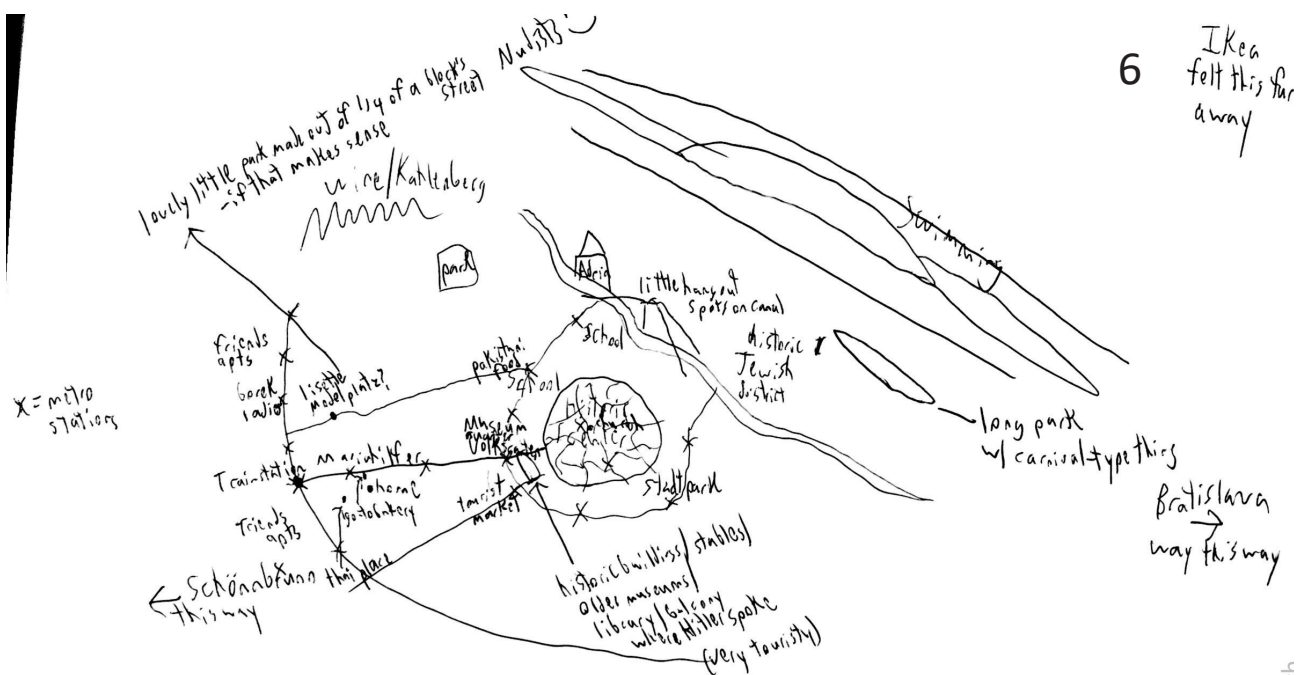


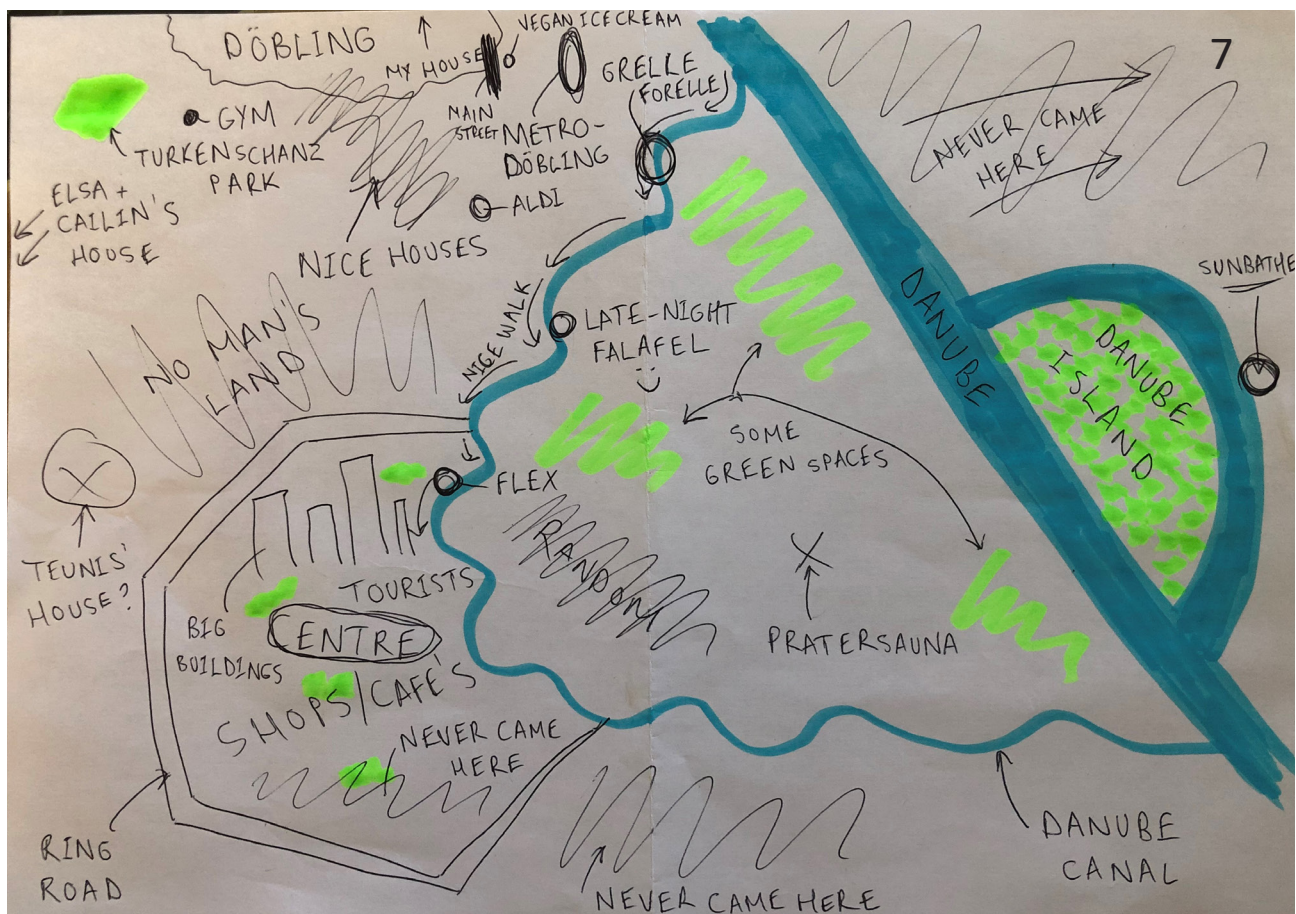


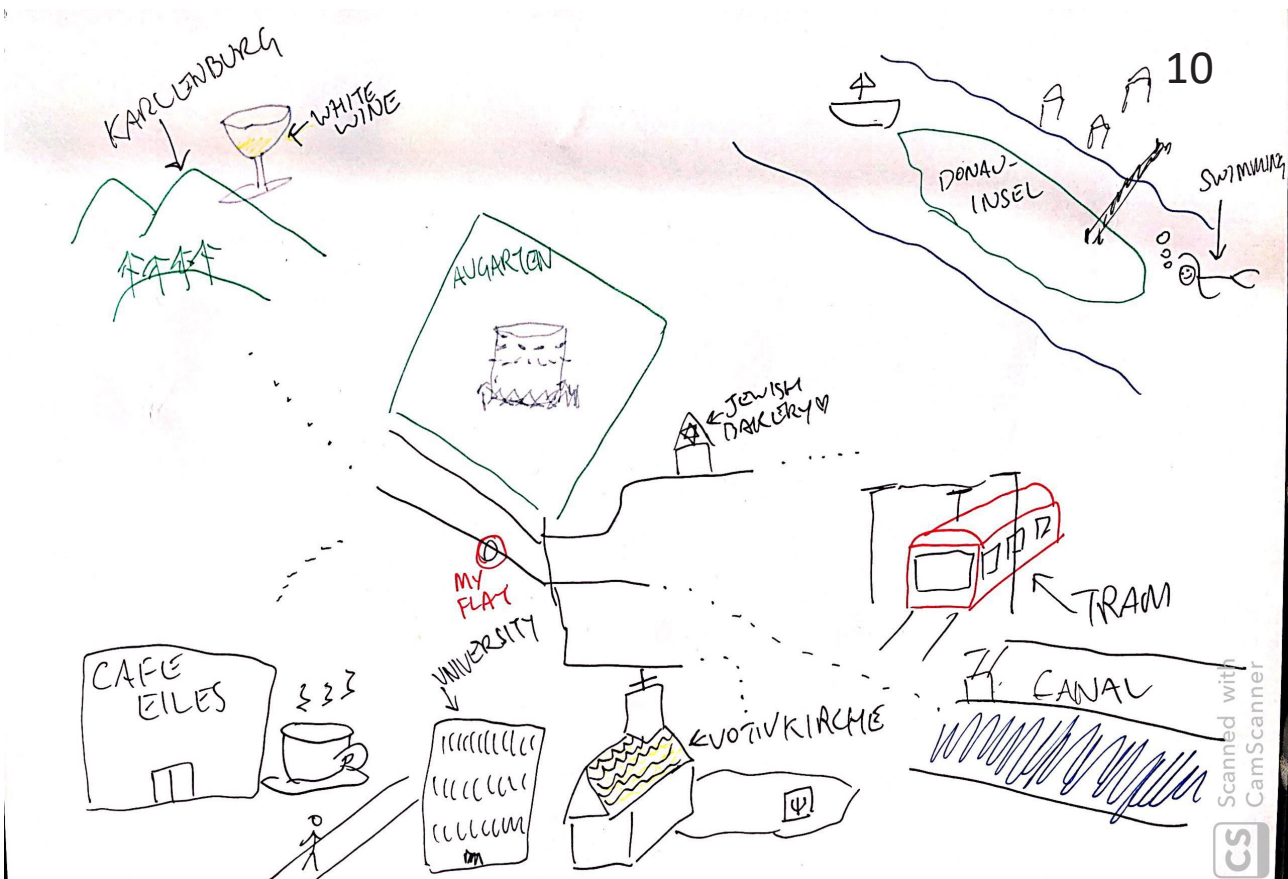
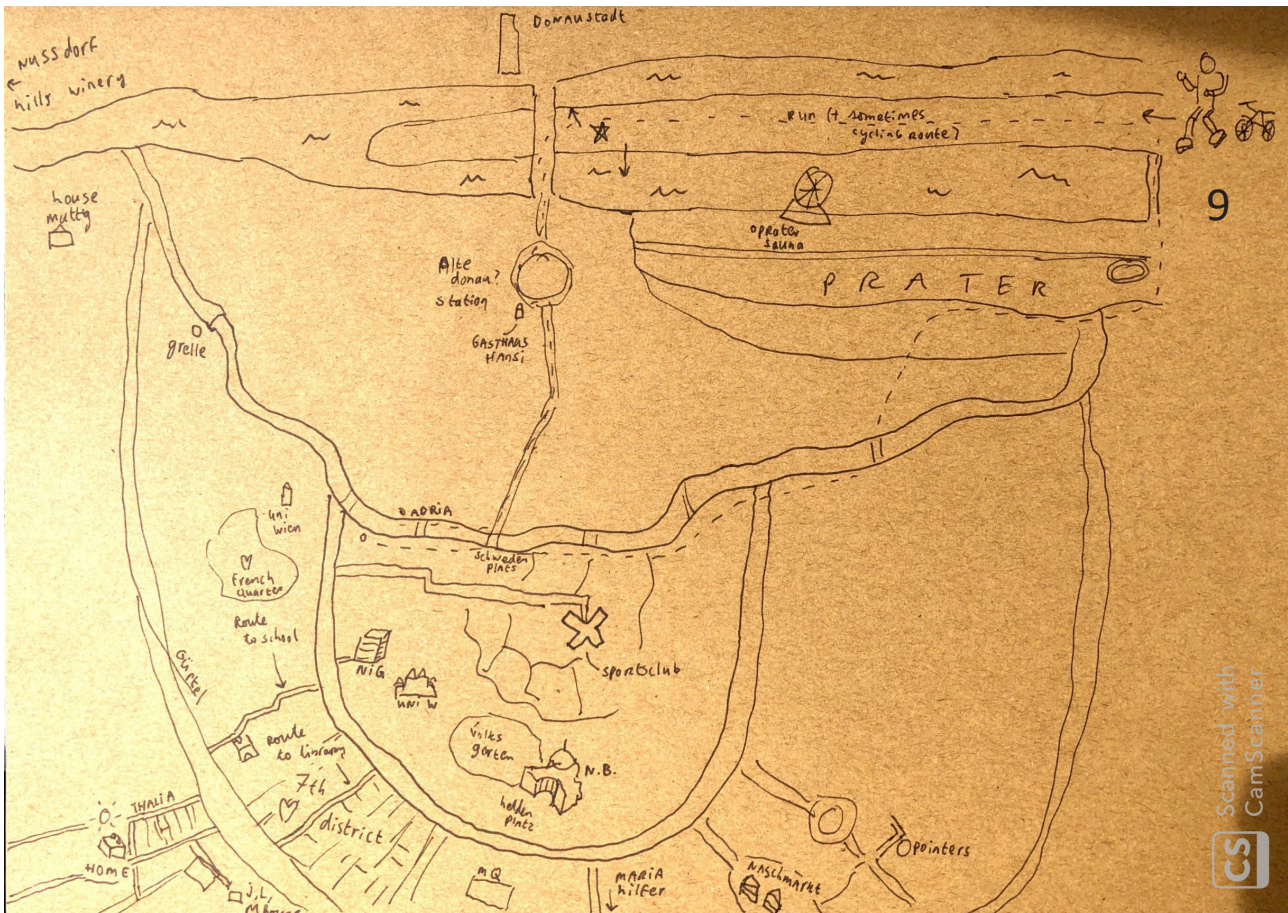


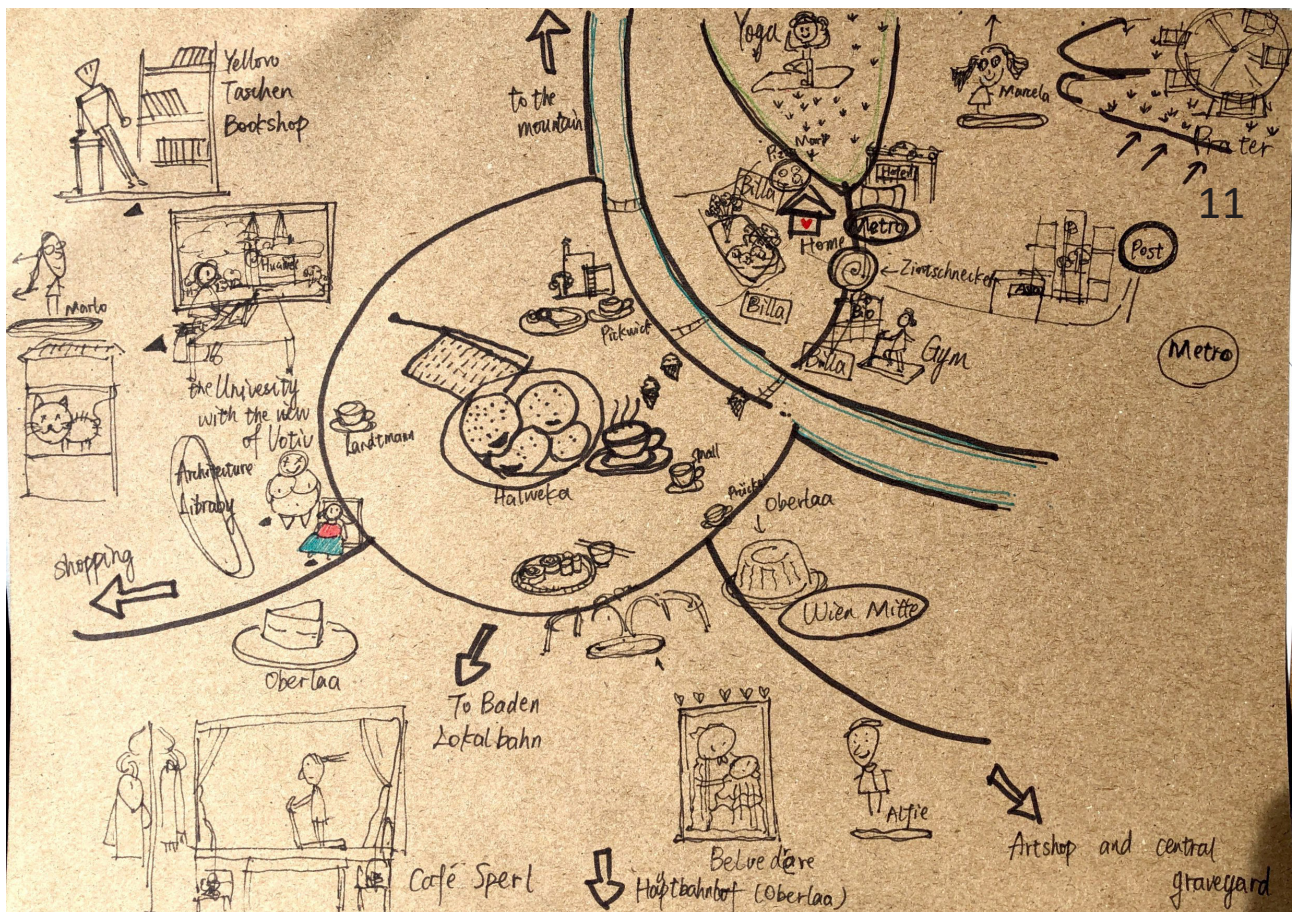


Mental maps: Vienna









Mental maps: Copenhagen

