

WHITENESS

& SPACIAL

CONSEQU-

ENCE

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Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering
2023
Examiner: Marco Adelfio
Supervisor: Emilio Da Cruz Brandao

Thank you,

to Emilio, Hoda & Ester for insightful discussion
(& Ester for great Illustrator tips)

to my parents for helping me proofread

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to my husband for always supporting and believing in me.



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ABSTRACT

Architecture is humanity. Spatial humanity. Architecture isn't just making a wall, a floor, or a window. We, as architects, analyze human movement, need, and connection. Architects study how space works for human needs and are responsible for reflecting on if the solutions are good solutions for actual people. Beyond the aesthetics, which are tedious since they are subjective, the architect is responsible for considering what happens in space. What movement does it dictate? What behavior does it encourage? Architecture is realizing that social injustices affect space.

The consequences of racism and colonialism are translated into spaces we use daily. This thesis explores these issues in Gothenburg and proposes a way to intervene and teach about them, through architectural, speculative, design. The thesis uses a few different concepts to speak about Gothenburg in a decolonizing way: confession, heritage, borders, exile, participation, listening, representation, neighboring, hospitality, decolonization, profanation and returns. To activate these concepts different methods are used: photogrammetry, to uncover truths; infographics, to be educational; cartography, to be bold; interviews, to act as a humble listener; ironic design, to point out fault of current power structures; speculative design, to ignite thought; and journaling, to reflect on my part in structural racism. Above all, using graphic, architectural material as a means of provoking a discussion.

It ends up with a few different suggestions on how to welcome new residents of Gothenburg while simultaneously commenting on how not to do it. In particular, the thesis shows how to take account of the narratives of space and places with the help of speculative design. The thesis invites and critiques whiteness as a construct and border in the built environment and deals with institutional racism, and my own position of power. Supported by stories and the narratives of space the thesis adds to a discourse and is an activated piece of anti-racist work, reflecting on the architect's accountability and calling to action.

keywords: heritage, critical whiteness studies, anti-racism, decolonization, spacial separation

CONTENTS

01

Introduction

- 01 Purpose
- 01 Thesis questions
- 01 Discourse
- 01 Working with references
- 01 Reading instructions
- 02 Methods & concepts
- 02 Mapping
- 02 How-To
- 04 Delimitations

12

Anti-racist architecture

- 14 Confession, Heritage
- 16 Collective amnesia
- 20 (Un)covering history
- 26 "Sverigehuset", the Sweden house
- 29 Borders, Exile
- 30 Spatial separation
- 32 Fort Gothenburg
- 33 "Blandstad", "mixed city"
- 37 Danger zones
- 40 Participation, Listening
- 41 Comfort
- 43 Measuring emotion
- 46 Representation, Neighboring, Hospitality
- 47 Blandstad, mixed city
- 48 (Un)welcoming
- 50 Space of comfort
- 52 Decolonization, Profanation, Returns
- 54 Accountability
- 56 Welcoming

05

Theorizing

- 05 Glossary
- 06 Spatial separation in Gothenburg
- 06 Flipping the script
- 07 The paradox of democracy

60

Discussion

- 60 Purpose & questions
- 62 Methods, concepts & chapters
- 62 Mapping
- 62 How-To
- 64 Thesis questions

08

My position

- 08 Bio
- 08 Journaling

68

References

- 69 Visual references

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

This thesis focuses on whiteness as a construct (what it means to be seen as white) and border (see Glossary page 5) and examines the effects and consequences of these in the built environment in Gothenburg. Considering different aspects of structural racism, the thesis deals with anti-racism and how to use anti-racist discourse when working in architecture, decolonizing Gothenburg.

Thesis questions

- What are the effects of racism in the built environment and architecture in Gothenburg, and how are they used in order to construct systems of oppression?
- In what ways can speculative design be used in an anti-racist manner in the context of Gothenburg?

Discourse

The thesis is grounded in decolonizing and critical studies of whiteness. The issue of racism is a growing issue, in Gothenburg (Socialförvaltningen Nordost, 2022) as well as the rest of the world, and architecture is helping with that (WAI think tank, 2020) through enforcing building typologies, city planning, funds and spatial separation. Not to mention the narratives that lay in the foundational groundwork of our city, weaving together a dark history.


Sweden's answer to racism has been in line with many European countries since the 1951 UNESCO-report "The Race Question" recalled that race is not a biological factor for difference. This kind of anti-racism is commonly called UNESCO-tradition (Lentin, 2004) and represents most of the European governmental efforts against racism. But the UNESCO-tradition relies on being colorblind, claiming there is no difference in the experience of being white or non-white. When this argument is used against the very existence of racism, it doesn't recognize racism as a social construct, thus not handling or dislocating any power inherited by the history of colonialism and racism (Lentin, 2004). This thesis aims to discuss and comment on these issues using an architectural narrative, spacial practices and alternative architectural drawings, to support and problematize something that is collectively ignored, being an activated piece of anti-racist work.

Working with references

The different chapters in the thesis are directly inspired by a few terms from the postmasters' studies Decolonizing Architecture Advanced Studies, held at KTH by two scholars, Marie Louise Richards and Alessandro Petti, with contributions from guests such as Eyal Weizman. The "pedagogical approach" and concepts used in the course are exemplified by the book "Permanent temporariness" where 14 different concepts are defined and used to activate 17 different sites (Daas, 2019). The concepts I have used in my thesis to activate Gothenburg and speak about it in decolonizing terms are: confession, heritage, borders, exile, participation, representation, neighboring, hospitality, decolonization, profanation, returns, and my own addition, listening. See glossary page 5.

To activate these concepts, the methods described in Methods & concepts, page 2, have been used, graphically inspired by a few different projects and organizations. Examples of such references are Forensic Architecture (<https://forensic-architecture.org/>), working with their way of uncovering truths through photogrammetry, Theo Deutinger's Handbook of Tyranny (2018), working with a clear infographical language, Radical cartography (<http://www.radicalcartography.net/>), working with making geographical maps that speak or comment on an issue, and Design Earth (<https://design-earth.org/>), the thesis inspired by their graphics and a way to visually start a discussion.

Reading instructions

The thesis is structured so that the main part of theory, background, positioning and process is in the beginning. Then moving on to the main graphic material, the material compiled under the chapter Anti-racist architecture, that activates the different concepts (see mapping under Methods & concepts). The graphic material is viewed with the help of a text of purpose and a line of questions marked P and Q, search for them when viewing the material. In the Discussion, there is a mapping of the purposes and questions showing how they are connected to each other. The booklet is made to be interactive; some images need to be rotated 90 degrees for viewing, these are marked with 

”For architecture to be radical it has to dig deep into its past, present, and potential future role into perpetuating the origins of social fragmentation, oppression, colonization, and racism.”

(WAI think tank, 2020)

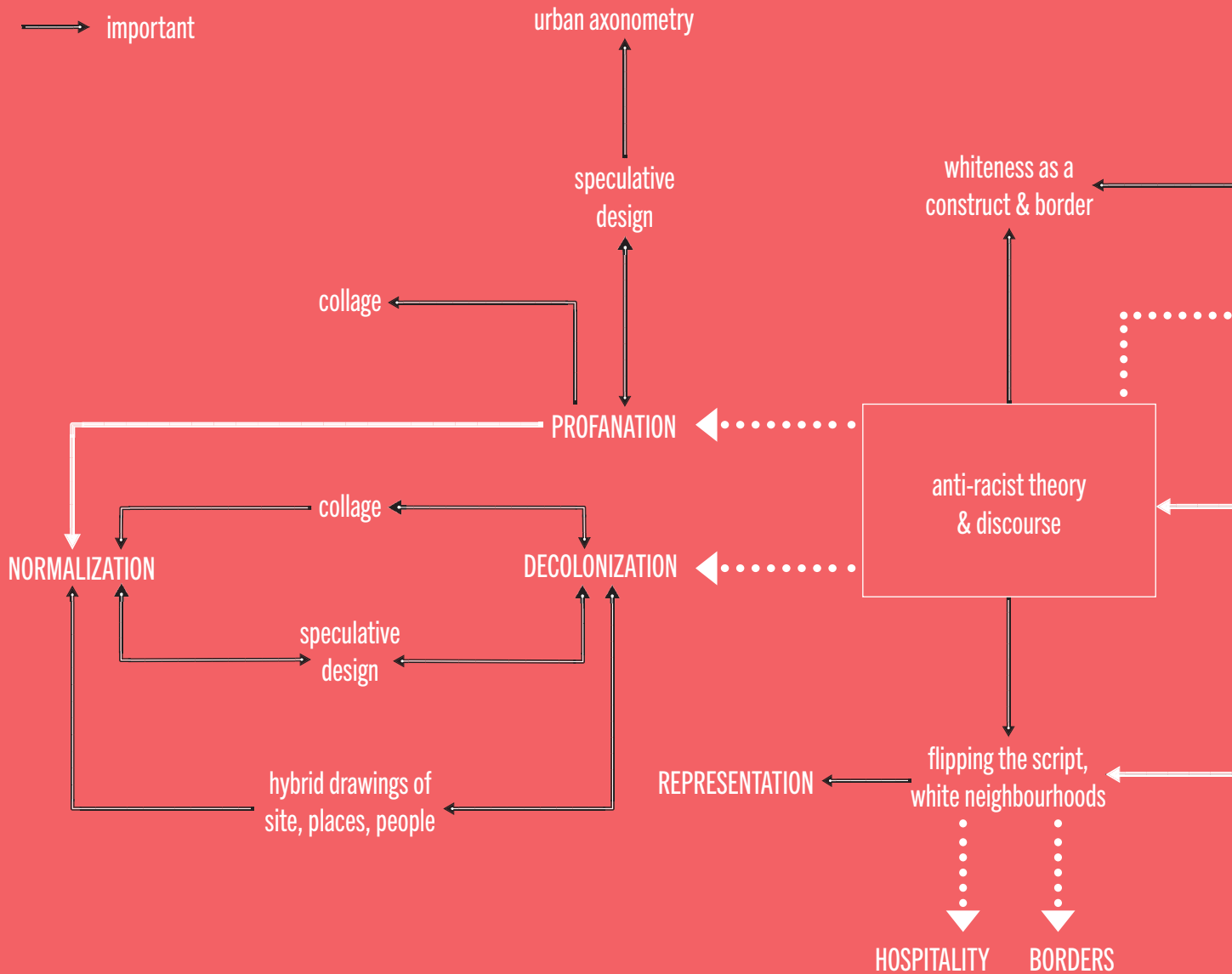
Methods & concepts

Mapping

...▶ critical

—▶ crucial

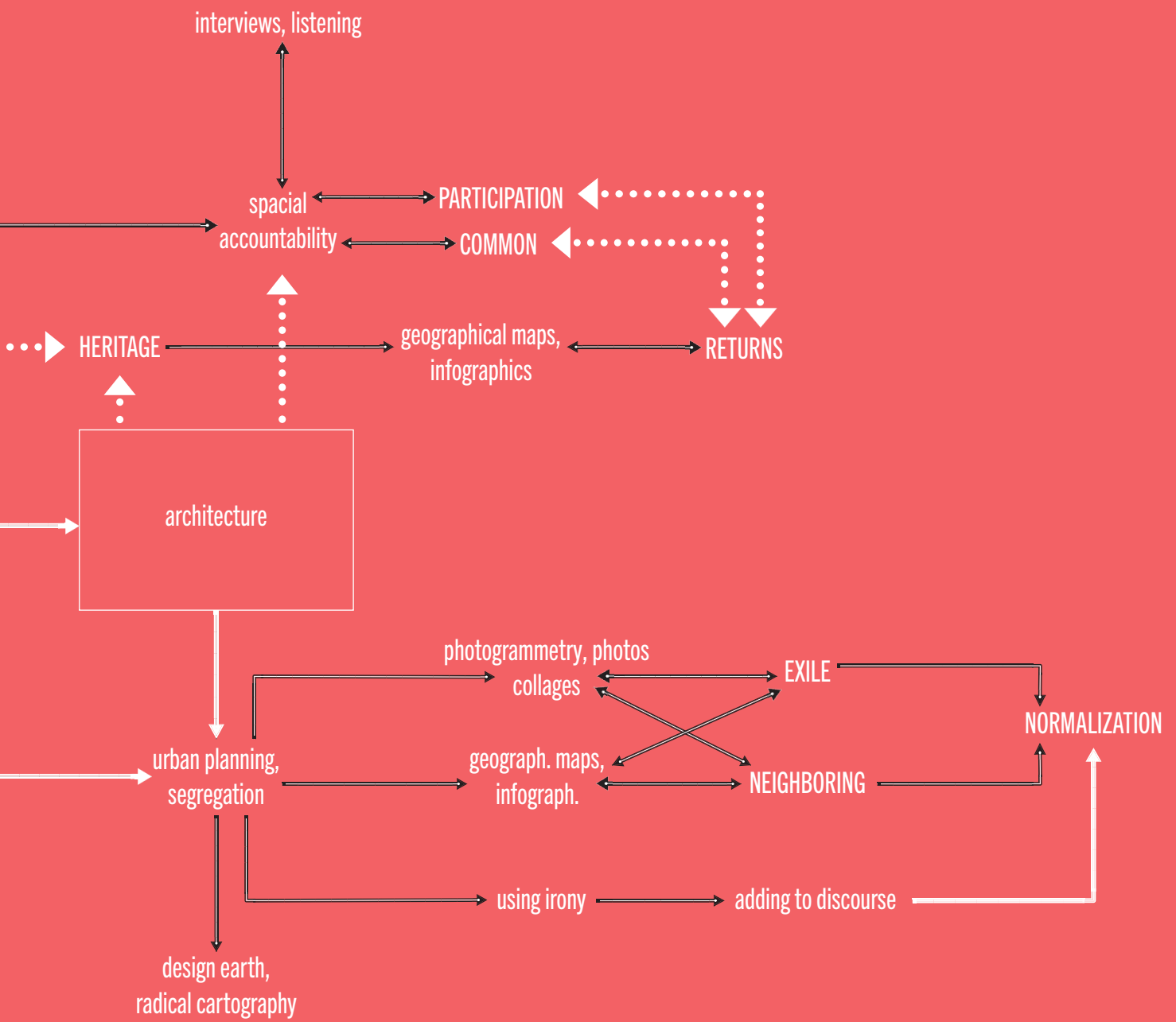
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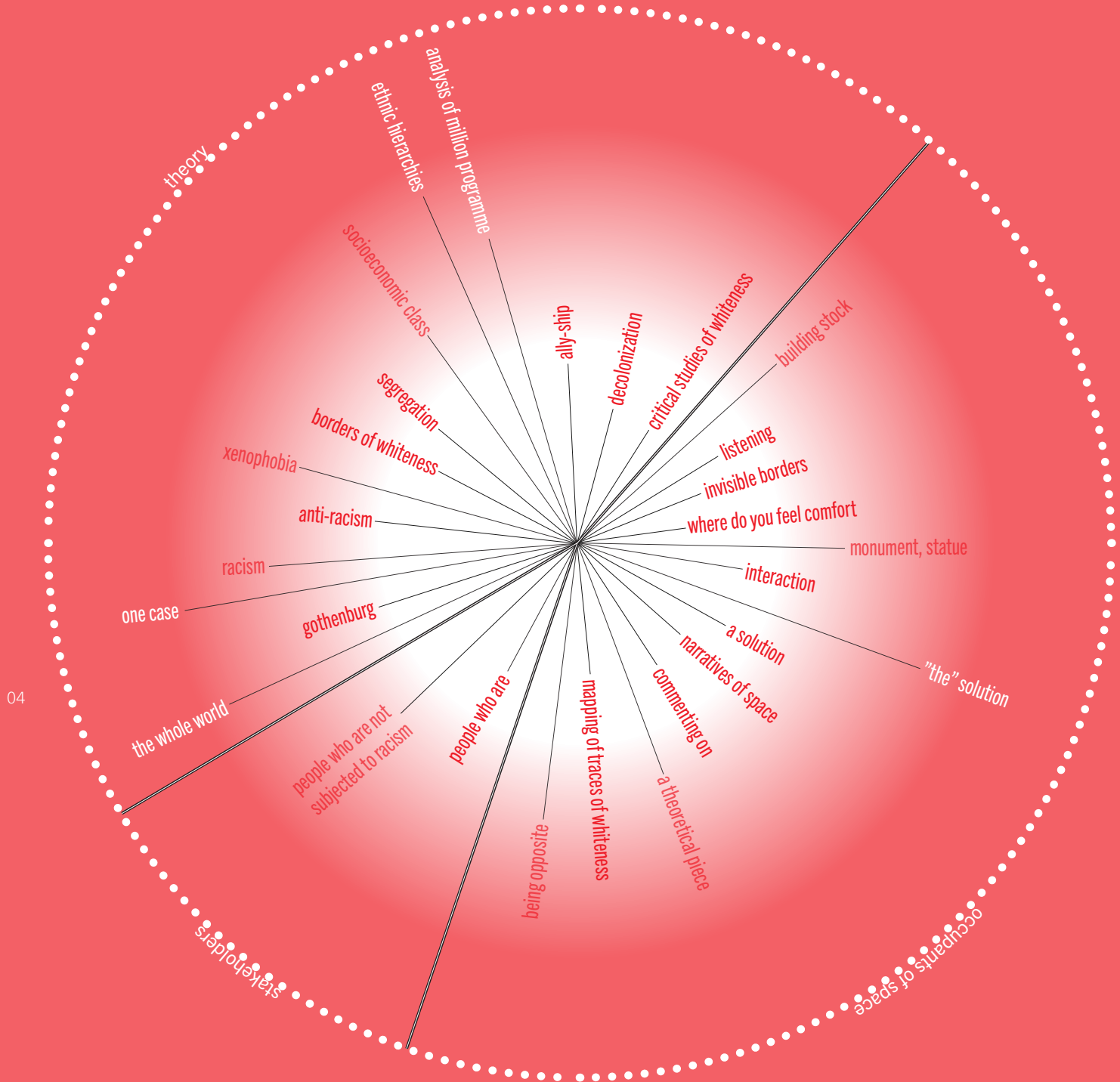
How-To

The mapping of methods & concepts aims to explain which methods that are used to activate what concepts and connecting the two central themes of the thesis; anti-racism and architecture. The arrows are either pointing one way, explaining that a subject/method is an offspring of the previous one, or they are pointing two ways, to show that the two subjects/methods give each other meaning and work in symbiosis. What is meant by critical, crucial and important is that all the methods, parts and theory are necessary and influential, but there are different layers illustrated with critical, crucial and important.

The main methods in this thesis are different methods of collaging, cartography, and representing different narratives and stories of our built inventory. Using irony in design to prove a point and make a comment, making the design political. And listening, since this thesis and project is made based on theory which criticizes my own position of power.



Delimitations



04

it is not about

This thesis will not consider ethnic/racial/religious hierarchies when dealing with Gothenburg's problem with racism. The focus will be the changes of borders of whiteness, how they constantly move and pin people against each other, how whiteness creates hierarchies amongst people. It will not consider ethnic hierarchies in Gothenburg's segregation, there will not be a lengthy exploration into the intersectional analysis of class difference in this subject matter either (although there is a connection between segregation and socioeconomic class as well). The hierarchies mentioned are the power dynamics between different groups of people subjected to racism, racism targets and works specifically

it is about

for grouping people together by race. Finally, there will be no in-depth analysis of the million programme-buildings either, the thesis isn't an analysis of typologies or discussion about why and how this has happened, but a comment on the issues of different living conditions.

Racism in Gothenburg, or racism in general, is a complicated and nuanced issue even in the built environment. Racism intersects with different types of oppression and the thesis seeks to cover the subject working with critical whiteness studies.

THEORIZING

Theorizing in this thesis refers to theory needed in order to explain the purpose and exploration, both of a more definite and discussive nature. The glossary defines words and terms, and the other parts of this chapter are more discussive.

Glossary

Borders

The borders in this thesis do not refer to a line on a map, they refer to the social, political and identity politics that goes into constructing a social norm and bounds. The type of border with depth and space, the type that makes and unmakes an identity (Hilal & Petti, 2019). Borders in this thesis are the ones made and upheld by a government and a capitalist system that seeks to divide and classify depending on the individual's relationship with the current state.

Collective amnesia

A term coined by the South African poet Koleka Putuma, refers to history that has been forgotten but not hidden, and is seen as a society-wide phenomenon (Nylund, 2022).

Confession

"There is no need for a priest to confess our sins. With confession, there is automatic absolution." (Hilal & Petti, 2019, p. 8). In Gothenburg there is an inventory of the built environment that holds a narrative of unseen history. A history that would gladly be forgotten and is not showcased. Confession in this thesis aims to uncover a part of our built history often not written or talked about, compiled in a graphical language to become evident.

Decolonization

In this thesis, decolonization is not only that of a state claiming independence from their former colonizer, but also decolonizing knowledge, perceptions, mindset and design. It is understanding that not only borders on a map are a direct result of colonialism, but power, economics and mindset. It is an analysis of how architecture continues to colonize and what can be made in claims against it, using decolonization at its core to understand the construction of borders and limitations of national identity. It is a starting point and an ongoing practice (Hilal & Petti, 2019).

Eugenics

Is the inaccurate scientific theory of breeding certain groups of people to "better" human attributes. The belief that whiter, able-bodied people had better genetics and therefore should populate the world, based off of scientific racism that used "science" to "prove" biological difference (National Human Genom Research Institute, 2018).

Exile

Exile refers to the radical practice of not accepting the status quo, creating a belonging in a non-belonging (Hilal & Petti, 2019), but using this notion to point out wrongs in the hierarchy of exile/non-exile in the spaces of Gothenburg.

Heritage

Heritage in architecture is an intersection of culture, history and aesthetics, and defines what is to be preserved and loved (Hilal & Petti, 2019). This thesis questions who decides what heritage is.

Hospitality

For refugees to be seen as a part of society, they must conform their identity to the one of the "hosts", be a "perfect guest" (Hilal & Petti, 2019). Who is permitted to what space and not? Who is comfortable in what space and not? The concept hospitality is one of outsiders, foreigners, and insiders, and a welcoming of difference, or non-welcoming. In this thesis the term hospitality refers to refugees taking part and agency in the built environment and borders of the norm.

Listening

Not only listening, but also understanding and feeling. Empathy is the leading concept under this term and being quiet is the second concept. Listening for this thesis, as it is the work of me, Zoe, a person who benefits from the systems put in place, is vital.

Neighboring

How do we move beyond academic terms into reality? This term highlights and activates the non-institutional organizing of communities

that happens organically (Hilal & Petti, 2019). In terms of Gothenburg, the thesis seeks to highlight when perceptions of the stranger change, through humanizing and flipping the power dynamics.

Participation

"The community' is often perceived as one solid entity in need of help and support." (Hilal & Petti, 2019, p. 14) This does not allow the practitioner to engage correctly and enforces current power structures. Participation is more than this. It is questioning what is already there, taking part in conflict to redistribute power (Hilal & Petti, 2019). This thesis uses participation as a means for me to participate in feelings and a larger power dynamic.

Poc

Stands for "person of color". A term to describe a person as "non-white", outside the border of whiteness.

Profanation

In this thesis it is to use the destructive powers put in place, colonialism and racism, to restorative claims. Profanation not only dislocates power, but also "reverses its operation and subverts its uses" (Hilal & Petti, 2019). It is to be understood as the subversive and radical means that uses colonialisms and racisms destructiveness to restore, deactivating power when provoking with speculative design suggestions.

Racialized

It describes a person subjected to the action racism. A person prescribed their "race" therefore being subjected to designated attributes.

Representation

Representation is a common narrative, the narrative of how we speak and how we view certain aesthetics, spaces or places are in direct correlation to one's own story and upbringing. The debate has been one of criminalizing, authorizing, but this thesis seeks to further that argument, focusing on what is brought to a community by representing different alternatives.

Returns

The term return is a term of diaspora and has been used to describe refugee life and doubleness in a material reality (Hilal & Petti, 2019). The concept in the thesis uses its literal meaning, in which the most basic material agencies, living conditions and public space, are returned, discussed or opened, in order to be just.

Speculative design

Using critical thinking to challenge our ideas about how the world works in order to come up with, speculate, new design suggestions. Critically engaging in a discourse of how the world works, refusing that and imagining new scenarios.

Stranger

"The image that emerges throughout history is as stubbornly recurring as it is unequivocal: that of a geographically isolated, physically, and culturally deviant figure, in the borderland between human and animal and associated with several generally negative characteristics." (Catomeris, 2017, p. 12. Translated by Zoe Thompson). In this thesis, this image of the stranger is questioned and opposed.

Whiteness

An invisible, movable border used to exclude and control the stranger, the stranger is whomever is not wanted or seen as human enough to deserve the same given human rights at birth. It is a term that maps political, economic, and social issues, not only being about skin colour, but about power. Many ethnicities with a light skin colour, such as Sami and Romani people, can be subjected to racism and discrimination (Socialförvaltningen Nordost, 2022).

“There is a reason Sweden is a ‘prosperous’ country, and connections to why the global economics looks the way they do.”

Spacial separation in Gothenburg

The term ‘spacial separation’ is, in this thesis, used for segregation as it directly correlates to architectural practices and an understanding of how a city is used and lived in. Spacial concentration and separation are to be understood from two main concepts, money and ethnicity (or ‘race’). Living in different housing situations, that are of different typologies, relates to financial wealth. If you have less money, an apartment is often what you can afford/rent, and if you have more money, there are more options for you in terms of how you want to live and in what type of building. These issues have over the years also become a pattern depending on where you are born and where you are from. Many people born outside of Sweden live in municipal rental housing and people born within Sweden live in owner-occupied housing (Andersson, Bråmås, & Hogdal, 2009). These different housing types are currently located in different areas, municipal rental housing being overrepresented in the north-east of Gothenburg. As shown in a report published by Socialförvaltningen Nordost (2022), 65 % of residents in northeastern Gothenburg have been subjected to racism, 43 % by strangers, 37 % by different faculty/staff of schools, stores or workplaces, and almost 50 % of answers tell you that this has happened in school.

When writing or discussing spacial separation, the argument against ‘multiculturality’ is that the human instinct and choice is living with and near people who have the same background and speak the same language, though this (can be the want of an individual) tends to be untrue when you look at the bigger picture. Spacial concentration is kept in place by the “host society”, pressuring ethnic enclaves into existence, denying them the inclusivity and subjecting these to institutional and structural discrimination (Bråmås, 2008). The danger lies not in the existence of ethnically, segregated areas, but in the fact that the living conditions vary drastically, that there is an institutional and structural issue of oppression (Boverket, 2005).

Furthermore, the images represented by media and institutions, such as by police, of ethnically diverse neighborhoods, work in order to exclude these communities from society and vital functions. For outsiders of these areas, they are perceived as dangerous, hard, criminal, full of concrete and like a space of exclusion (Mack, 2021). The far-right narratives have also latched on to the fact that these areas are ethnically diverse and use this argument to further their racist opinions. Asking residents in these neighborhoods their description is not the one of the outsider, but the opposite, of vast, green areas, communal feelings and neighboring (Mack, 2021).

Our history of colonialism and imperialism is important to understand these issues. Historically, Sweden has taken part in slave trade, colonizing and eugenics (Hübinette, 2017). On the precipice of these issues there is always the history of who has been in power, who has managed capital and funds, and in what way. There is a reason Sweden is a ‘prosperous’ country, and connections to why the global economics looks the way they do (Hall & Mercer, 2017).

Flipping the script

When speaking of spacial separation, it is vital that we talk about white, segregated areas. Due to economic situation and standing in society, they (we, myself included), do not risk being excluded, living in an ethnically uniform area (Boverket, 2005). The dangers of these areas leech on deeper functions of society, since residents of these areas usually oversee how society runs and operates. They contribute to a divided society and intolerance, that in the long run can pose a threat to our democracy (Boverket, 2005), and in some instances already has. By believing the narrative chosen by far-right parties, they curate the issues of ethnically diverse neighborhoods to serve their cause.

Theorizing about white, segregated neighborhoods, the issue of who is funding criminality of “criminal neighborhoods” and gangs needs to be brought up. The people that have money to buy drugs and use them are people of upper-class neighborhoods, their money is directly funding the difficult situations seen in lower-income neighborhoods (TV4, 2021), recruiting children and forcing a hand of those with no capital, creating a spiral of distrust. The current institutional discrimination makes sure that those subjected to criminality are excluded from getting help, and that criminality makes the institutions distrust the people subjected to it.

The paradox of democracy

We rely on democracy, an invented function to protect democratic values such as equality. And we protect it with everything we have. I have already pointed out the threat to democracy with white, segregated areas. In the beginning of democracy, it wasn't a democracy, and it was much later that everyone gained the right to vote.

Our democracy today is failing us. 20 % of our population are voting for undemocratic values, falling for a narrative of fault and how the solution to the problem is sending people away (Liberalerna, 2022). Our democracy is voting for undemocracy. It calls on our innermost being, in a capitalist society, to be the one who is not at a disadvantage. To desperately not be the one who gets excluded (Hübinette, 2017). Something goes wrong and it must be someone's fault. "It's the immigrants fault!", "it was much better before!" they shout from a position of confirming their inherent intuition. The paradox of democracy is that democracy is cannibalizing itself, it's destroying its own core through its very existence.

Background image: "Pericles' Funeral Oration", manipulated in Photoshop.

MY POSITION

Bio

My name is Zoe Thompson, and I grew up in an area called Hagen, just adjacent to Långedrag in the southwest of Gothenburg. I am white, with family-ties to Landvetter, just outside of Gothenburg, and Priozersk, located in Karelia, then part of Finland but now a part of Russia. My first name is because of our family relocating to Malaysia and Australia when I was young, and my last name comes from my husband.

I have studied architecture at Chalmers University of Technology since 2018, with a bachelor's degree in Architecture and Technology and MsC programme Architecture and Urban Design. One of my main interests in architecture springs from spatial politics, racial studies and inequality in the built environment.



Journaling

During the thesis, I have kept a diary, to reflect on my own position of power when discussing racism in Gothenburg. To make sure that each step in the process is made out of the best intentions, or, if something needs to be erased from the work.

January 18th

When I realized I was white I was provoked. I had never been reduced to race, and the teachings about racism or discrimination in my world, and school, had mostly been about the Holocaust, making the common opinion of dividing people by race/religion/ethnicity come with a certain angst. I take part in a system of racism on an institutional level, and personal level, continuously. Perhaps even without noticing. It garners me perks in life I didn't even realize were perks. But realizing this has helped me, and in return, I hope, helped people around me. Opening up to conversations and feelings that I have never understood before. Being able to be even more empathetic and knowing, attaining a knowledge that there is a difference in privilege, can be a road towards healing. It is a road of endless learning, listening, and improving, because of the way my brain has been wired by my surroundings.

Whiteness: excludes, conquers, denies history, puts itself in the best light

How do I exclude, conquer, deny history, put myself in the best light?

There has to be a constant reflection of realizing when I do this myself. Towards friends, towards family, towards people in my workplace. Knowing and realizing I do wrong as well, accepting that, but still trying. Maybe just by doing this piece of work for my master thesis is a wrong. Trying to put myself in the best light, trying to be a "good white person", or am I trying to be someone's savior? I should not be praised for doing this work, I should be criticized to provoke further discussion.

Racism is a problem of our society, and therefore not an issue just for the certain group of people subjected to it, but also a problem for me and every white person. I think it is important to reflect on your role, highlight injustices, and point out one's own weaknesses to be able to take one step toward de-colonialization. It will always be a process to un-learn inherited prejudices, and it can't be unlearned in one step, one process, one thesis, one go. What is anti-racism? What is it in architecture?

January 20th

Listening, to myself and others

The first week of the master thesis has passed. Already I have had a lot of performance anxiety and stress. But it is not bad, I think, to write and do this work, I should feel these feelings. I need to put myself in uncomfortable situations to create this thesis. Always have a lesson learnt at the end of the week.

I have also asked friends and family about their feelings when entering white spaces or different types of spaces. It has been thoughtful, and I am so thankful for them opening up about this, which I realize can't always be an easy thing. It is very easy to be open and willing to listen. Why is this something that is often denied lived racist experiences?

January 27th

Flipping the script on how we usually talk about Gothenburg's segregation feels like a step in the right direction toward what type of anti-racism it is I want to convey with my work. Critical studies of whiteness. I myself come from one of these white areas which makes it feel even more important for me to critically analyze and portrait it. Having been brought up in this place makes me see the world one way, and I must unlearn my unconscious biases.

When I made the map of segregation, I had already decided to focus on predominantly white and Swedish-born neighborhoods, but I unconsciously checked that neighborhoods like Angered and Bergsjön, were included on the map. And I am not bringing this up to say that they shouldn't be included in a map of Gothenburg, I am just realizing that the narrative around segregation in Gothenburg is so heavily tainted of making these areas seem bad, spoiled, and troubled, that when I am making a geographical map of segregation, I always had these in mind.

I am not saying that there isn't an issue with these neighborhoods, which all are curated and almost, kept in place, by the government. To me it becomes important, in my anti-racism and since the excluder is me, to be discussing the dangers of white areas and the threat they pose to democracy, multiculturalism and tolerance of a larger society. Because they, we, do not risk being excluded for living in a segregated community. Focusing on the excluder and what trouble whiteness brings is important for the discourse of racism. Racism is a societal issue that everyone is accountable for dissolving.

February 3rd

I think I know a lot
Because I try to stay humble

I think I know a lot
Then yet, to stand up for something,
I sometimes mumble

I think I know a lot
But knowing is different than feeling

I think I know a lot
I hope understanding and listening
can help shatter the ceiling

I think I know a lot
But my brain is wired

I think I know a lot
It's like picking apart your female appearance,
capitalism wants you to feel undesired

I think I know a lot
I have to constantly de-program my brain

I think I know a lot
Always keep learning,
so the work is not in vain

February 10th

This week has been a low week, probably because of my own mood and private stuff, but I've continued working as best as possible. My doubt in the thesis has been when working with making collages of photogrammetry of places with a nazi, racist and colonial history, from the infographic.

It's been difficult being sensitive and at the same time, literal in this step. I want the collages to showcase a terrifying history and narrative, but at the same time not be too exact, to not hurt or trigger any feelings. I don't want this work to be about me, although of course it will be from my perspective, since I am doing it, which is an infinitely complex thing to work on. Telling myself this again and again: it's good that I have low points and anxiety because I can use it to really filter my work. Iterate again and again so it is a product that addresses what I want it to address, without upsetting. I revisited my written manifesto from the project plan today. There is a point about me wanting it to empower those not usually empowered and exclude the excluders even though I am the creator, and it feels like I'm trying to do that.

The point about me being uncomfortable is true, at least this week. Which is a good sign too. I am thankful for this journal, being able to assemble my thoughts each week, recognizing if I'm still doing what I planned to do, and realizing that bad weeks and feeling unmotivated will occur. I want to take a closer look at the collages of photogrammetry to make sure they make a clear point, without using upsetting imagery.

February 17th

I'm slowly finding my groove again, and although this was a rough low place to get out of, this week has mostly been writing and defining concepts to make it clear what I want the thesis to portray and say. It's given me clarity in what needs to be done and what needs to be made clearer. I think I need to stay writing or read what I have written, simultaneously as I'm creating, so that the idea is always there, I think that this will be important working forward. I have made a diagrammatic overview which has helped as well, acknowledging the parts that have been made and the parts that are missing.

February 24th

It is very important to make clear what I mean with my graphics by clarifying in some sort of way. I have it in my head, now it is time to make it clear and coherent. Callouts, legends, descriptions and footnotes to make my intended message with each image blunt and important.

March 3rd

Measuring emotion

It feels intricate for me to draw random people who become racialized in Sweden. I am myself not subjected to racism, but somehow I want to channel graphically that people are and that feelings of comfort in spaces and with all people is sometimes not obvious for everyone.

Should I be able to draw a person with an afro? What people do I include in this graphical material? People subjected to racism are of all sizes, abilities and ages and it feels to daunting a task to include everyone. At the same time, it feels important to somehow show people when this is a chapter that is exclusively dedicated to people's comfort and emotions about spaces, people, and the relationship between them. I want to draw people, the stakeholders of this work, to show that this is something architects need to have in mind while designing spaces.

March 24th

“Sverigehuset”, “the Sweden house”

How to even begin criticizing the Sweden house. There are so many wrongs in this suggestion that I want to curl up into a little ball and never go outside again. What is an average family? We are moving away from the core family in many senses, and we need a housing stock that matches that demand. Are architects involved in suggesting the Sweden house? Is this suggestion made up from assuming that everyone wants to live in a traditional-style villa? I am baffled. Do they really think this is the solution to the housing crisis?

I grew up in an old wooden house in traditional Swedish style. In one of those areas that the Sweden democrats probably love. I'm not saying it wasn't a beautiful and great place to grow up (the house made different sounds, had its own quirks that you had to learn, it was a house that was alive), but

I think it could be immensely productive to romanticize not only the traditional, but also the newer building stock. I'm not trying to sound naive; I know the million programme buildings need caretaking, but maybe a step toward better caretaking of these areas is romanticizing. And who decides what to romanticize? Who sets the conditions and decides what is cultural, correct and beautiful?

March 30th

This week I have read articles about the protests against the suggestion for asylum accommodation in Gothenburg during the migration of Syrians to Sweden. All I want to say is that we live in a grossly racist society. 2016 refugees from Syria were not seen as human enough, white enough, to allow refugee accommodation in front of villa owners' precious sea views. Complaints after complaints about how the value of their property would decrease and that the area would be unsafe. Unsafe for who? Say you were born somewhere, there is a war or a natural disaster, and you must leave, would you want the same welcoming?

Compare it to when Russia invaded Ukraine last year. I've heard lots and lots of stories of people opening their homes (and their precious sea view) to them. The Sweden democrats tweeting that "they are at least real refugees". So, the Ukrainians, they are white enough? Huh.

April 14th

It doesn't matter how leftist or liberal you are, how good you think your analysis is, if you don't shut up and listen it doesn't matter. If you don't continue to listen and understand how people are being subjected to racism and all the institutional bullshit that comes with that, you will never be a good ally. If you don't continue your journey and try to evolve continuously, you will never be a good ally. If you are white, and think you are done with your own work of checking yourself, if you at some point say, I'm done, or use your proximity to people subjected to racism as a way to shield yourself, you are not being a good ally. I will, throughout my life, continue to check myself, because I want to be a person that is trustworthy.

April 20th

Was speaking to a friend about the thesis who jokingly told me that the work I am doing is the classical work of the white ally, more or less. What she meant was learning a lot about the subject, which of course is a first step, but then doing nothing with your newly learned information. And I agree, these thesis suggestions will not actually become reality. This thesis suggestions will not materialize; it is all theoretical and not real. I think what it can do is inspire more people to action, prove how colonialism and racism changes our spaces and how important it is as an architect to have different lived experiences in mind. I hope, especially white people who are reading it, feel guilty, and I hope it empowers at the same time. I want to change people's perspective, make introspection happen to make actual real change.

May 5th

Sometimes it feels like it's a bad thing to learn about all of the injustices that have been and are still in place against people who suffer from racism, I almost get consumed by guilt and think that white people should have no rights, we should be crucified for the history of our world. Why it feels bad is because it is not a very productive path but nonetheless a feeling that can sometimes occur in me. There should be guilt, but there shouldn't be the guilt that leads to paralysis and inability to activate the knowledge and work towards equal rights. I think that in order to work with whiteness (your own and other peoples) is to be humble and distance yourself from your ego. I think to properly learn, you have to detach yourself from your position of privilege, detach yourself from your colonized mind, see other sides and realize that the world doesn't work the way it works on accident. Whiteness, racism and capitalism are vital instruments in oppression, and have been throughout history.

I vow to never stop learning. I vow to never stop listening. I vow to be understanding. I vow to use my knowledge in my future profession. I vow to be a better listener. Realizing privilege is the only way to become a trustworthy person toward understanding people's experiences. I want to understand and do my part. I think white people (including myself), that take part and benefit from the system of oppression that is racism, can only do their part when realizing their contribution to racism and changing their ways. Or doing it wrong, apologizing, and then changing their way.

ANTI-RACIST ARCHITECTURE



Context

To understand racism and anti-racism in Gothenburg it is important to understand whiteness as a border; that not belonging or recognized as white enough creates an outsidership in our current context. And then, to understand the connections between racism and architecture; there are many in the narratives of space, buildings, monuments, and spacial comfort.

The connections are visible looking at capital and funds and how these historically have been allocated. The connections are visible in terms of who designs our spaces, and they are visible in who feels welcome in said spaces. For successful anti-racist architecture, it needs to be done with a decolonized mindset. Without a decolonized mindset it becomes historically inaccurate, hard to point out the issues, and not a thesis with intention of change.

The concepts chosen are made from an assumption and line of questions needed when discussing racism in Gothenburg.

Who are the people subjected to it in this context? What is the history behind it? Who is seen as white?

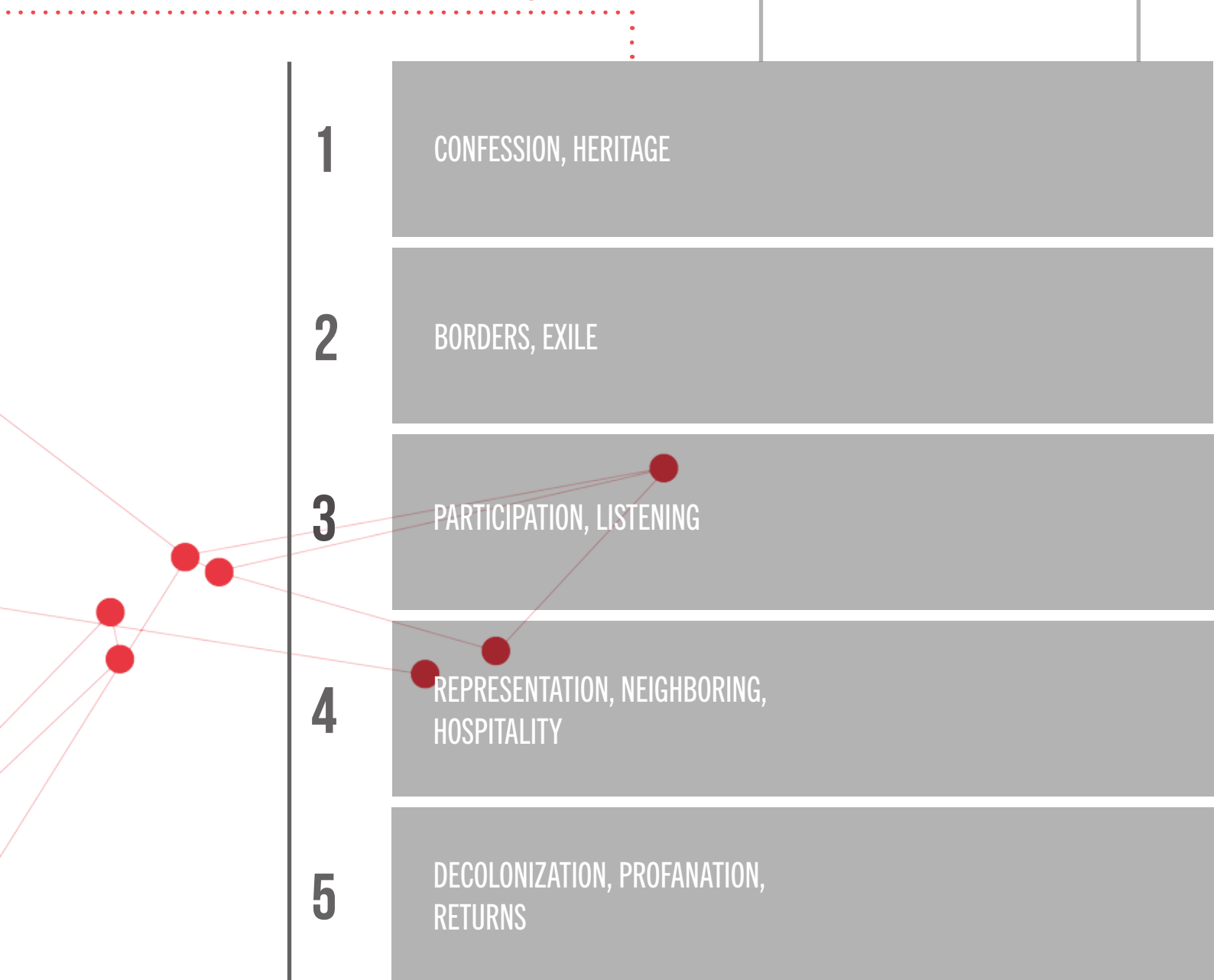
The concepts come from the work of Sandi Hilal's & Alessandro Petti's "Permanent temporariness" in which they are used to activate different sites in a decolonizing manner.

*connections; eugenics, imperialism, trading, colonialism, caricatures
see p. 16-17*

“For architecture to be radical it has to dig deep into its past, present, and potential future role into perpetuating the origins of social fragmentation, oppression, colonization, and racism. We must undo the damage created by the complicity of architecture with these systems of oppression.”
(WAI think tank, 2020)

“Buildings are never just buildings. Buildings respond to the political foundations of the institutions that fund, envision, and desire them. Buildings are physical manifestations of the ideologies they serve.”
(WAI think tank, 2020)

Architectural decolonizing concepts



From glossary

1

Confession

"There is no need for a priest to confess our sins. With confession, there is automatic absolution." (Hilal & Petti, 2019, p. 8). In Gothenburg there is an inventory of the built environment that holds a narrative of unseen history. A history that would gladly be forgotten and is not showcased. Confession in this thesis aims to uncover a part of our built history often not written or talked about, compiled in a graphical language to become evident.

2

Heritage

Heritage in architecture is an intersection of culture, history and aesthetics, and defines what is to be preserved and loved (Hilal & Petti, 2019). This thesis questions who decides what heritage is.

3

4

5

CONFESSION, HERITAGE



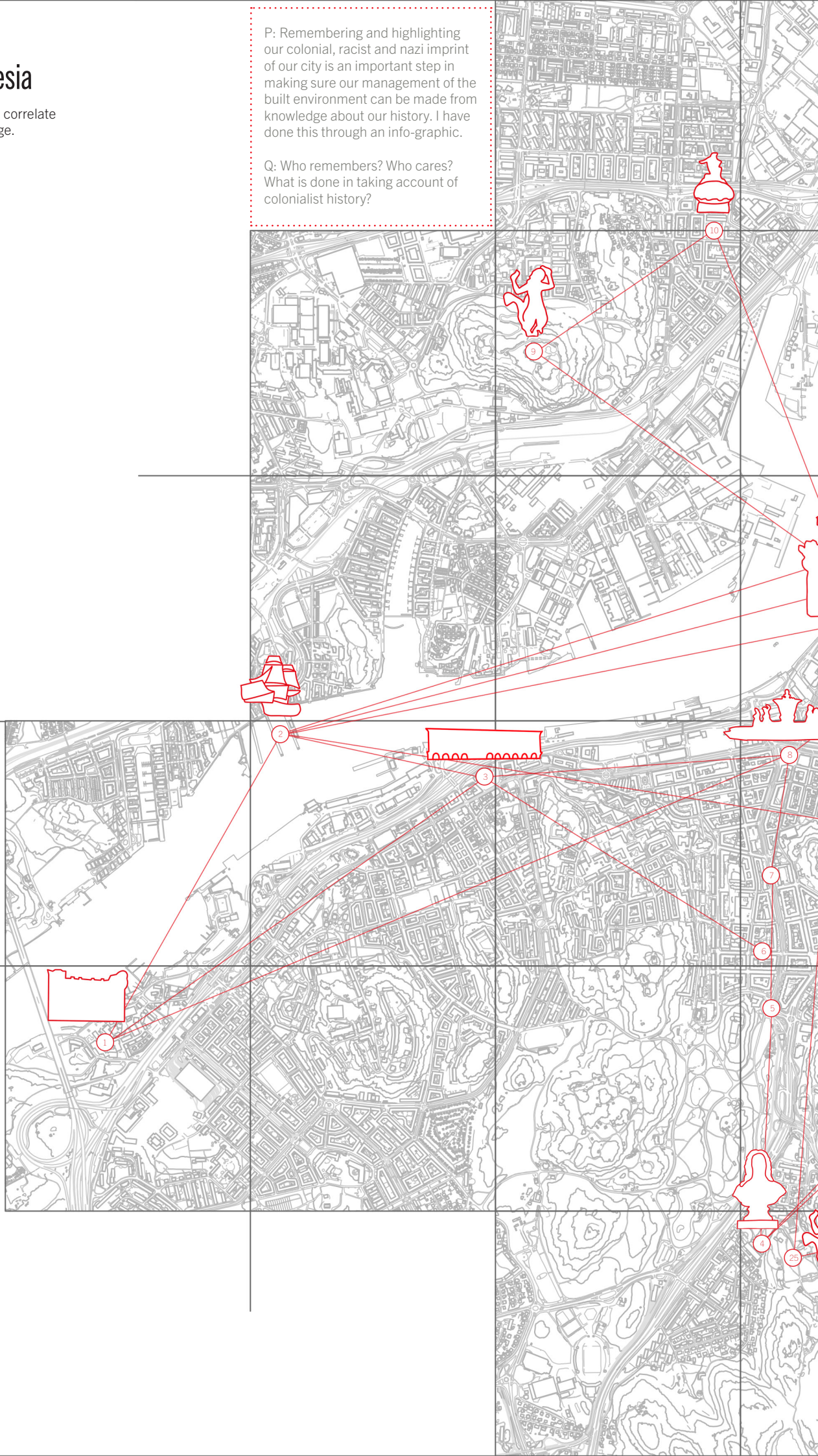
Collective amnesia

The numbers on this map correlate to information on next page.

P: Remembering and highlighting our colonial, racist and nazi imprint of our city is an important step in making sure our management of the built environment can be made from knowledge about our history. I have done this through an info-graphic.

Q: Who remembers? Who cares? What is done in taking account of colonialist history?

16





*connections; eugenics, imperialism,
trading, colonialism, caricatures*

1 "Sockerbruket", the sugar factory

Sugar was a key reason for starting the transatlantic slave trade. In 1452 the sugar production started as an industrial production by the Portuguese on the island Madeira, making way for the triangular trade, with slaves from Africa taking care of the crops and Europeans sending it back to Europe. Inspired by Portugal, Sweden took part in the triangular trade (Levin, 2019).

2 "Ostindiefararen Götheborg", the ship Götheborg

The ship Gothenburg, "Ostindiefararen Götheborg", brings up memories and traces of a colonial mindset. When the ship sunk, and was replicated, it made its travel through the historical, previous journey. Recollecting parts of a history and glorifying them, not bringing up any of the colonial aspects of this history (Lomfors, 2006).

3 "Sjöfartsmuséet", Maritime Museum and Aquarium

After a renovation of "Sjöfartsmuséet" (the shipping/trading-museum), there was a part about colonization and trading added to the residential exhibition. But there are some legitimate concerns about this added part. There is one mini-lecture, by Mekonnen Tesfahuney, about how colonialism to this day taints our society, in terms of capital and legacy, and mindset, but it is not reflected in the rest of the exhibition. The continued exhibition routes the passage and stories of Swedish people and how they brought materials and food that we can't imagine living without today, but nothing about the people that had to come here or came from other countries (Lundahl Hero, 2022).

4 Bust of Carl von Linné

At the entrance of the botanical gardens stands a bust of the "father of botany", which of course seems appropriate. What is not as evident, what we don't learn about in school, but must seek in other sources, is that this man is behind a school of thinking that has laid the groundwork for racial biology. In his work, *Systema Naturae*, a cataloging of "different human races" with different descriptions of these are depicted. In his book, the Europeans were described as light skinned, muscular, blue-eyed who were inventive, flexible and law abiding, while Africans were depicted as a black people with swollen lips and flat noses, who were lazy, indifferent and impulsive (Linné, 1735). Since much of his other work is accepted in our modern society, these categorizations of humans were accepted as truth.

5 "Linnéplatsen", place of Linné

6 "Nordenskiöldsgatan", Nordenskiöld's street

Behind the name of this street is a man called Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld. He was a baron and explorer, and many of these explorations have been captured in text. His connection to the traditional thinking of the time is not as evident as Linne's but reading through "Vegas färd kring Asien och Europa", "Vegas route through Asia and Europe", depictions, or descriptions of the people living in the "explored countries", you can account for offensive language (Nordenskiöld, 1832).

7 "Linnégatan", Linne's street

8 "De fem världsdelen", "Järntorgetsbrunnen", The five continents, the iron well

In the middle of Järntorget stands a fountain called "De fem världsdelen", "the five continents" made by Tore Strindberg. There are five naked women back-to-back, and each one is

supposed to represent a continent. The women are made with inspiration from Linne's human species, creating an offensive image of the woman representing Africa (Sawyer & Osei-Kofi, 2020). The fountain itself is a celebration of the Swedish export of iron, the export which played a vital part in the transatlantic slave trade, mainly the export of iron to England (Sawyer & Osei-Kofi, 2021).

9 "Najad", sculpture by Carl Milles

The sculptor behind this statue is Carl Milles, he was a nazi sympathizer and admired Hitler. How it is reflected in his artwork can be seen in the "monumentality and heroic expression in his sculptures" (Petersson, 2017).

10 "Susanna", sculpture by Carl Milles

11 "Delawaremonumentet", The Delaware monument

At the peak of Stenpiren, stands a vertical bronze block with a depiction of a ship on top called "Delawaremonumentet", the Delaware monument. A statue celebrating Sweden's first colony in North America (Wedel, 2020). It is also made by Carl Milles.

12 "Packhusplatsen", "Franska tomten", Warehouse site, the French plot

Not too far away from the Delaware monument is an area called Packhusplatsen. Here is also an old customs warehouse called "Tullpackhuset". This building and surrounding area were given to the French by the Swedish king Gustav III in exchange for the colony Saint Barthelemy in the Caribbean. A Swedish colony that engaged, traded and used slaves. Today the building is used as a casino (Nylund, 2022).

13 "Oterdahlska huset", the Oterdahl house

Niklas Sahlgren was director for the Swedish East Indian trading Company (Det gamla Göteborg, 2014) directly receiving its capital and money from unethical trading and a colonial mindset (Lomfors, 2006). Oterdahlska huset was part of what Sahlgren helped fund with his money, starting the first hospital "Sahlgrenska" which soon after had to move to a bigger location (Det gamla Göteborg, 2018).

14 "Chalmerska huset", the Chalmers house

William Chalmers was director for the Swedish East Indian trading Company (Det gamla Göteborg, 2014) directly receiving its capital and money from unethical trading and a colonial mindset (Lomfors, 2006). Chalmerska huset was part of what William Chalmers helped fund, starting "Chalmers slöjdskolan", Chalmers handicraft school, laying the groundwork for the school as we know it today, Chalmers University of Technology (Chalmerska huset, 2016).

15 "Stadsmuséet", the Gothenburg City Museum

The museum is housed in the former Swedish East Indian Trading Company building from the 1750s (Göteborgs turistinformation, 2023). Stating proudly on its front facade, "Byggnaden restes år 1750 af Ostindiska kompaniet, Göteborgs museum omdanade densamma år 1895 för sina samlingar", "The building was raised year 1750 by the East Indian trading Company, the Gothenburg Museum transformed the building year 1895 for it's collections".

16 Södra Hamngatan 23

On the other side of the street is a building which was a part of the old commerce area, one of Gothenburg's bank buildings. This building's facade has a depiction of an Asian person, a person from Africa and a person from America. These stereotypical depictions were common reliefs on houses from 1800's (Kamaly, 2021).

17 "Poseidon med brunnskar", sculpture by Carl Milles

18 "Danserskor", sculpture by Carl Milles

19 "Viktor Rydbergsmonumentet", "Den siste atenaren", The Viktor Rydberg monument, the last Athenian

The monument was made by a Ninnan Santesson in 1930, honoring Viktor Rydberg, who believed the Swedish "race" was the original. He thought that there was an impending threat of a "race war", and feared that the white "race" would be defeated by the "yellow" one (Kamaly, 2021).

20 "Viktor Rydbergsgatan", Viktor Rydberg's Street

21 "A stolen world", the Parcastextiles

Oscar Lara made an exhibition called Within Heritage Movements, highlighting the diplomatic argument in 2008 when "Världskulturmuseét", World Culture Museum, had an exhibition called "En stulen värld", A Stolen World, where they showcased Parcastextiles, stolen from a 2000-year-old, Peruvian grave, in the 1930s. He remade these textiles during 4 years and then showcased them. It wasn't until the summer of 2021 the textiles were returned to Peru (Lara, 2021–2022).

22 "Minnesbrunn med triton", sculpture by Carl Milles

23 "Genius", sculpture by Carl Milles

24 "Genius", sculpture by Carl Milles

25 "Najad", sculpture by Carl Milles

järntorget_the_iron_square_1935

*"Your open mouth, your gaze far away. Back turned against the water, so alive, frozen, looking out into space. The future. What are you trying to say? You speak to us."
(Sawyer, 2020)*

P: How to show this narrative and history through architectural representation? I have chosen a combination of photogrammetry and collaging techniques to uncover feelings and show past events, trying to be sensitive yet blunt at the same time.

Q: Who remembers? Who cares? What is done in taking account of colonialist history?

"The sound of water, the sound of the movement of iron, from mine, to scales, to ship, to sea, to iron. The sound of the whip on the backs of those who carried the iron, the sound of water as it flows through the fountain. In tension with the silence of water, in the vessel YOU carry. Water, the source of life. YOU, the carrier."

(Osei-Kofi, 2020)

iron_chains_mimicking_water

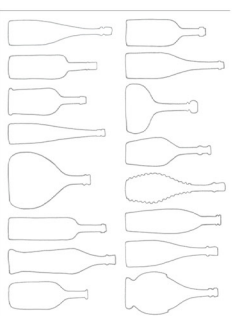
21

järntorgsbrunnen_the_iron_well



"Today, the French Plot is what one might call a non-place"
 (Nylund, 2022)

silhouettes_french_wine_bottles



customs_warehouse_tullpackhuset



swedish_map_of_st_bartholemy

"What kind of actions can make visible and interrogate collective amnesia? And, what counter-narratives can be formed as acts of resistance, to counteract this willful ignorance and imposing amnesia?"
 (Nylund, 2022)

Vår Värld
Vi väckte upp i en värld
Som inte ville veta rikedomen i vår historia
Ett samhälle...
Ett samhälle som är rädd för människor
Som såg
Och talade annorlunda
Tvingas glömma de livfulla färgerna
Smaker och språk i vårt hemland
Gjorda för att passa in
Och driva bort från vårt arv
I rädsla för att bli ett offer för ett hatbrott
Så vi har modifierat
Ändrade håret och kläderna
För varje nytt ord
Låter mindre och mindre som hem
Väntan
Som solen på sin uppgång
Som biet på sin honung
Som tåget på sin avgång
Som hjärtan längtade att få vila!

Poetry by Asra Talib
(Nylund, 2022, p. 12)

I Our world
We woke up in a world
That didn't want to know the riches of our history
A society...
A society that is afraid of people
That looked
And spoke differently
Forced to hide the vibrant colors
Tastes and languages from our country of birth
Made to fit in
And drift away from our heritage
In fear of becoming a victim of a hate crime
We have modified
Changed our hair and clothes
For every new word
Sounds lesser and lesser like home
Waiting
Like the sun for it's rise
Like the bee for it's honey
Like the train for it's departure
Like hearts yearning for rest
Poetry by Asra Talib
(Nylund, 2022, p.14, Translated by Zoe Thompson)

CAROLINÆ I

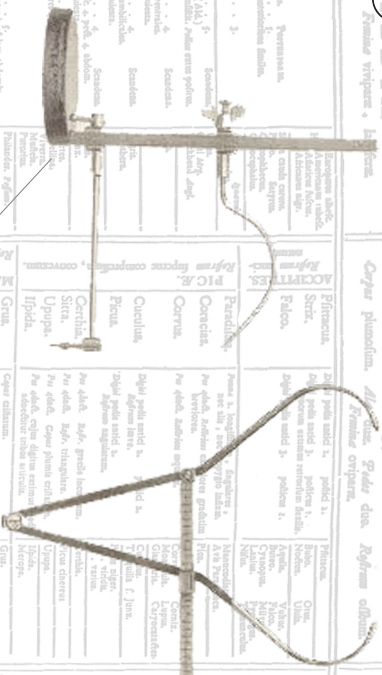
REGNUM ANIMALE.

I. AVES.

IV. PISCES.

V. INSECTA.

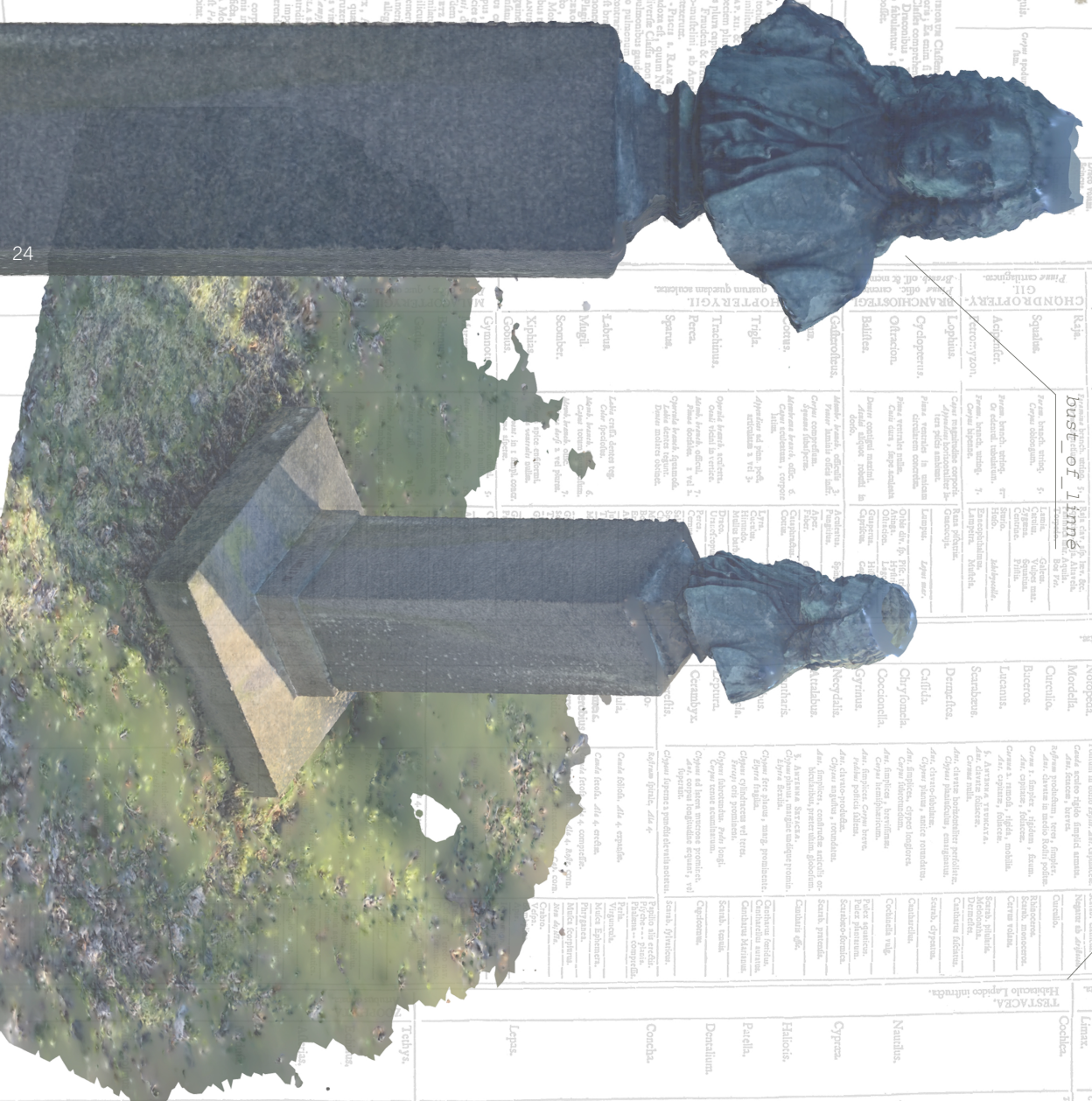
VI. VERMES.

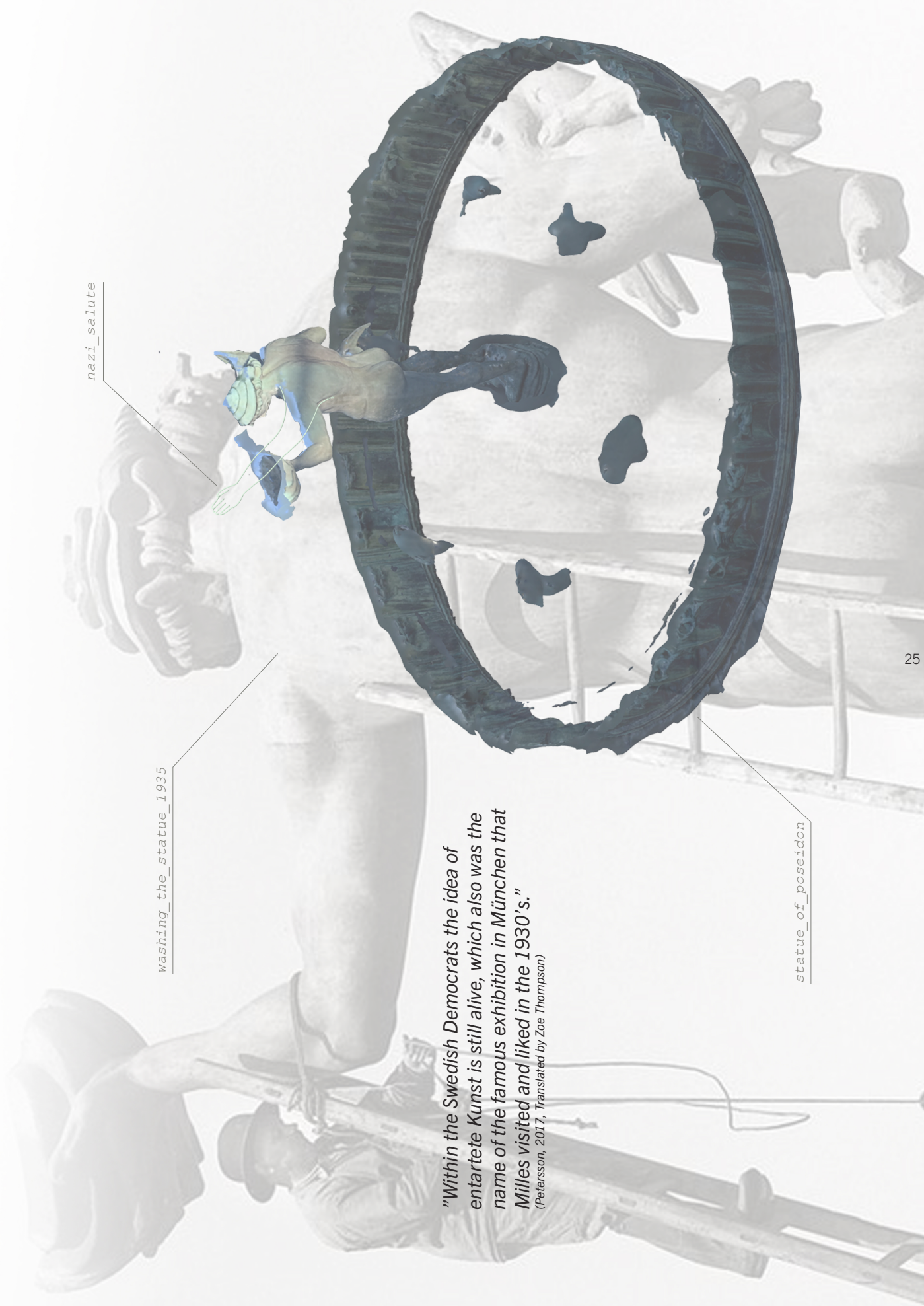


skull measuring tools

"The question is if racism, that was created by people from high culture, is going to be accepted again, by the racists from high culture. Will it soon be fine and cultivated to be a racist?"
 (Abdul Fattah, 2010. Translated by Zoe Thompson)

<p>III. AMPHIBIA <i>Cepus</i> induta, vel funicularis <i>Doris</i> <i>mallos</i> <i>mallo</i> : <i>Molge</i> <i>Europæ</i> <i>2</i> <i>Parus</i> <i>indis</i>.</p> <p>II. AVES <i>Cepus</i> <i>plumbeus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p> <p>I. AVES <i>Colinus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p>	<p>III. AMPHIBIA <i>Cepus</i> <i>induta</i>, vel <i>funicularis</i> <i>Doris</i> <i>mallos</i> <i>mallo</i> : <i>Molge</i> <i>Europæ</i> <i>2</i> <i>Parus</i> <i>indis</i>.</p> <p>II. AVES <i>Cepus</i> <i>plumbeus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p> <p>I. AVES <i>Colinus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p>	<p>III. AMPHIBIA <i>Cepus</i> <i>induta</i>, vel <i>funicularis</i> <i>Doris</i> <i>mallos</i> <i>mallo</i> : <i>Molge</i> <i>Europæ</i> <i>2</i> <i>Parus</i> <i>indis</i>.</p> <p>II. AVES <i>Cepus</i> <i>plumbeus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p> <p>I. AVES <i>Colinus</i>, <i>Alcedo</i>, <i>gula</i> <i>dis</i>, <i>Rufinus</i> <i>albiss</i>.</p>
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nazi_salute

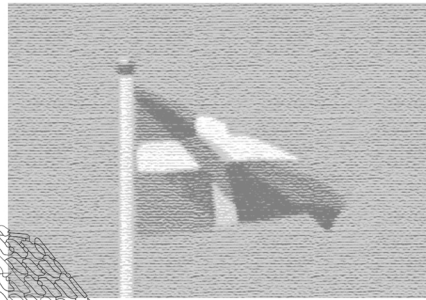
washing_the_statue_1935

statue_of_poseidon

*"Within the Swedish Democrats the idea of entartete Kunst is still alive, which also was the name of the famous exhibition in München that Milles visited and liked in the 1930's."
(Petersson, 2017, Translated by Zoe Thompson)*

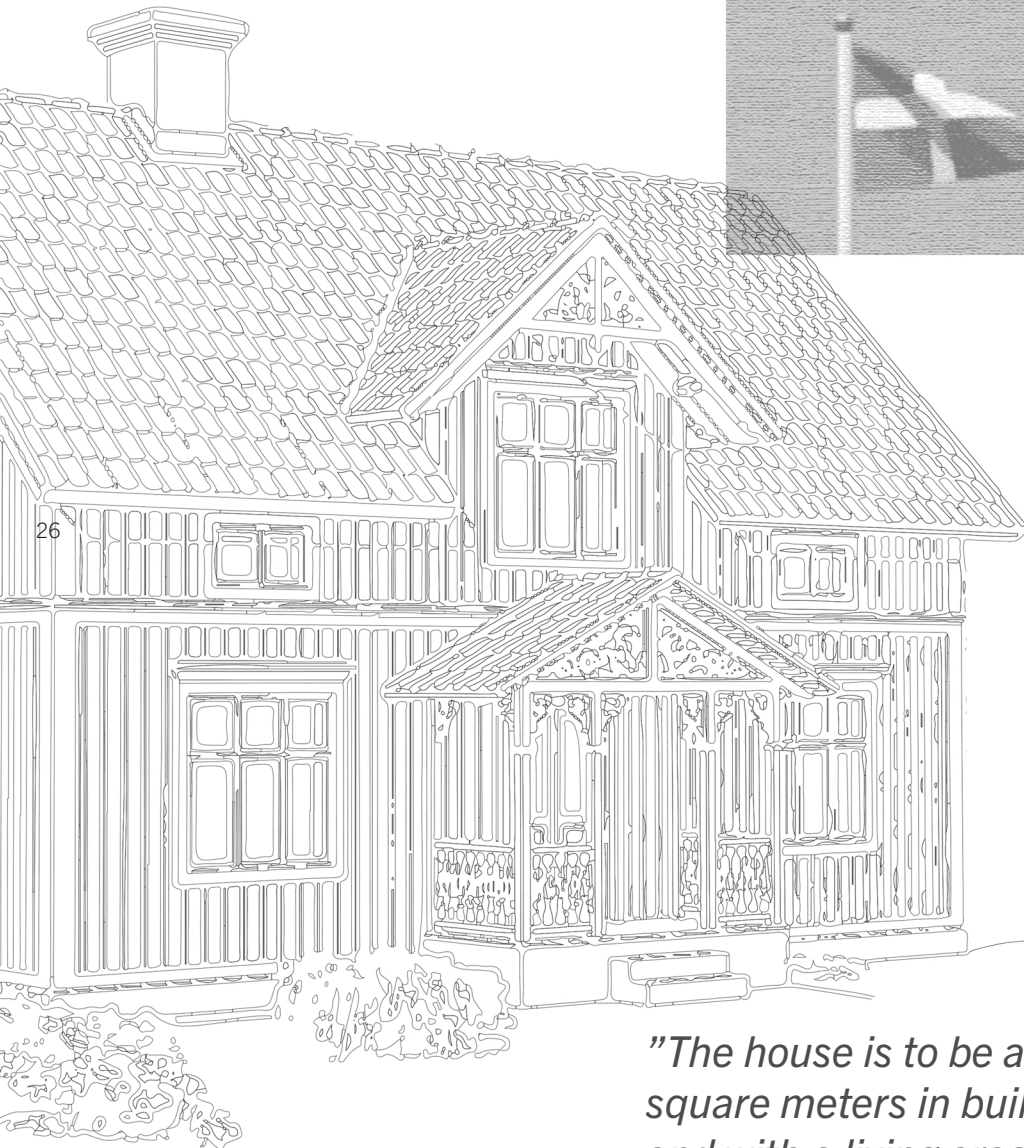
"Sverigehuset", the Sweden house

who_decides_heritage



"The house must be aesthetically pleasing, look nice and inviting, and be rooted in tradition."

(Sverigedemokraterna, 2022)

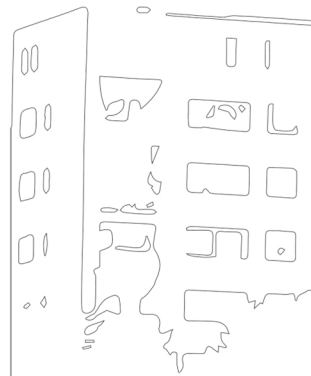


26

what_is_an_average

"The house is to be a 1.5-storey villa of 95 square meters in building area on the ground and with a living area of 150 square meters, large enough for an average family and also suitable for a smaller family."

(Sverigedemokraterna, 2022)



P: Criticizing the Sweden democrats' suggestion of "Sverigehuset", the Swedish house (which is a suggestion to have a small, wooden, traditional, Swedish house be able to be built without a building permit) by showing a different side to both Swedish "traditional" housing and the million programmes which are not seen as desirable.

Q: Who decides heritage? Why traditional? Why build for the average family when other families struggle with fitting in apartments? Who do you care about? Safe and traditional for who?

esthetically pleasing,
and signal security and

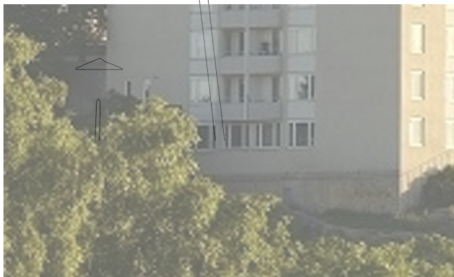


27

"High migration has affected the entire demography, giving rise to a housing deficit and at the same time making it difficult for the country's citizens to establish themselves in the housing market. At the same time, so-called areas of exclusion, which are sometimes called "particularly vulnerable areas", have arisen, which sometimes constitute directly unhealthy environments for those who live there."

(Sverigedemokraterna, 2022)

family



blaming_migration

WHITENESS

excludes

conquers

denies history

*puts itself in the
best light*

28

Journal extract, January 18th

How do I exclude, conquer, deny history, put myself in the best light?

There has to be a constant reflection of realizing when I do this myself. Towards friends, towards family, towards people in my workplace. Knowing and realizing I do wrong as well, accepting that, but still trying. Maybe just by doing this piece of work for my master thesis is a wrong. Trying to put myself in the best light, trying to be a “good white person”, or am I trying to be someone’s savior? I should not be praised for doing this work, I should be criticized to provoke further discussion.

Racism is a problem of our society, and therefore not an issue just for the certain group of people subjected to it, but also a problem for me and every white person. I think it is important to reflect on your role, highlight injustices, and point out one’s own weaknesses to be able to take one step toward de-colonialization. It will always be a process to un-learn inherited prejudices, and it can’t be unlearned in one step, one process, one thesis, one go.

What is anti-racism? What is it in architecture?

From glossary

Exile

Exile refers to the radical practice of not accepting the status quo, creating a belonging in a non-belonging (Hilal & Petti, 2019), but using this notion to point out wrongs in the hierarchy of exile/non-exile in the spaces of Gothenburg.

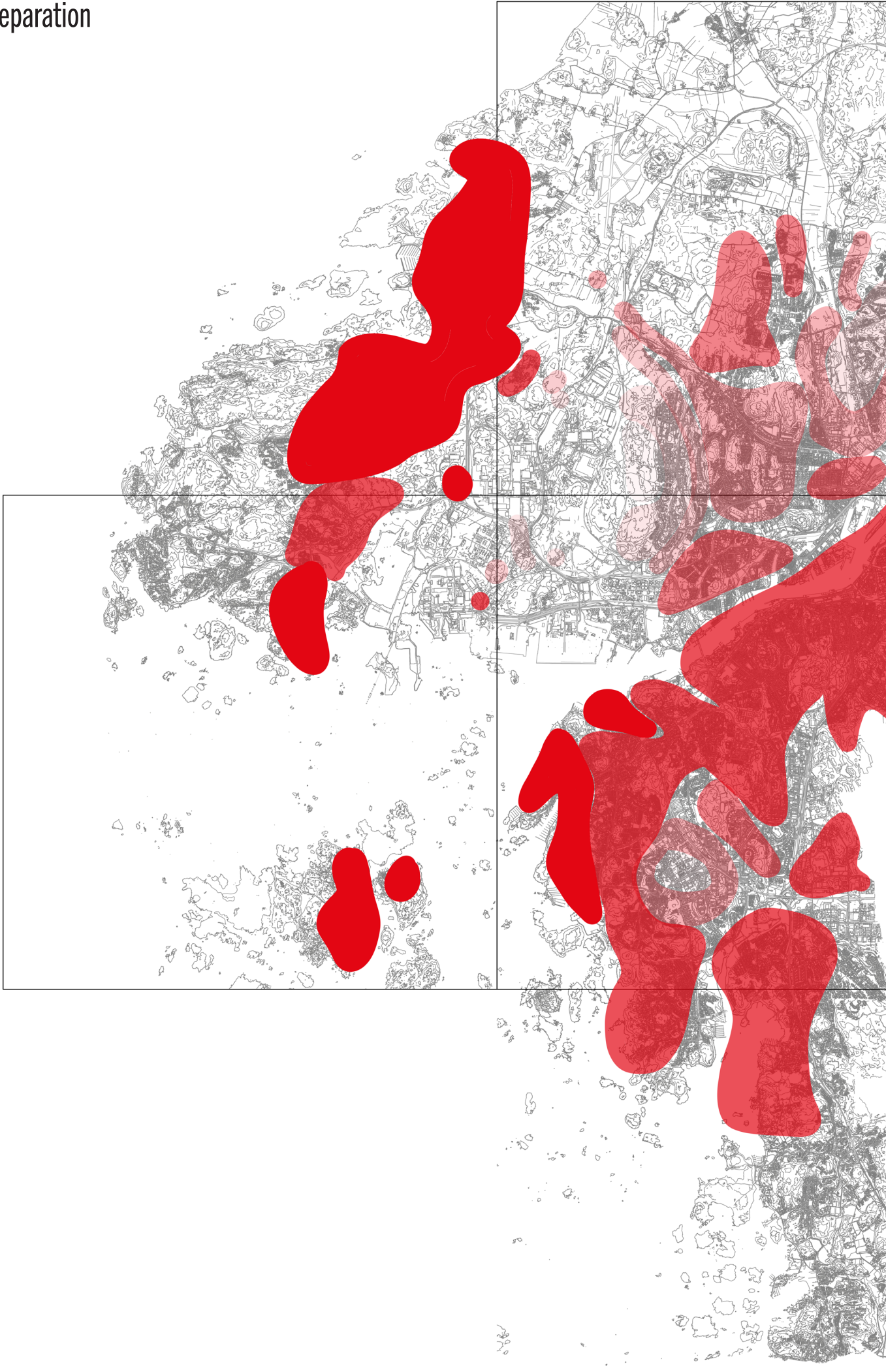
Borders

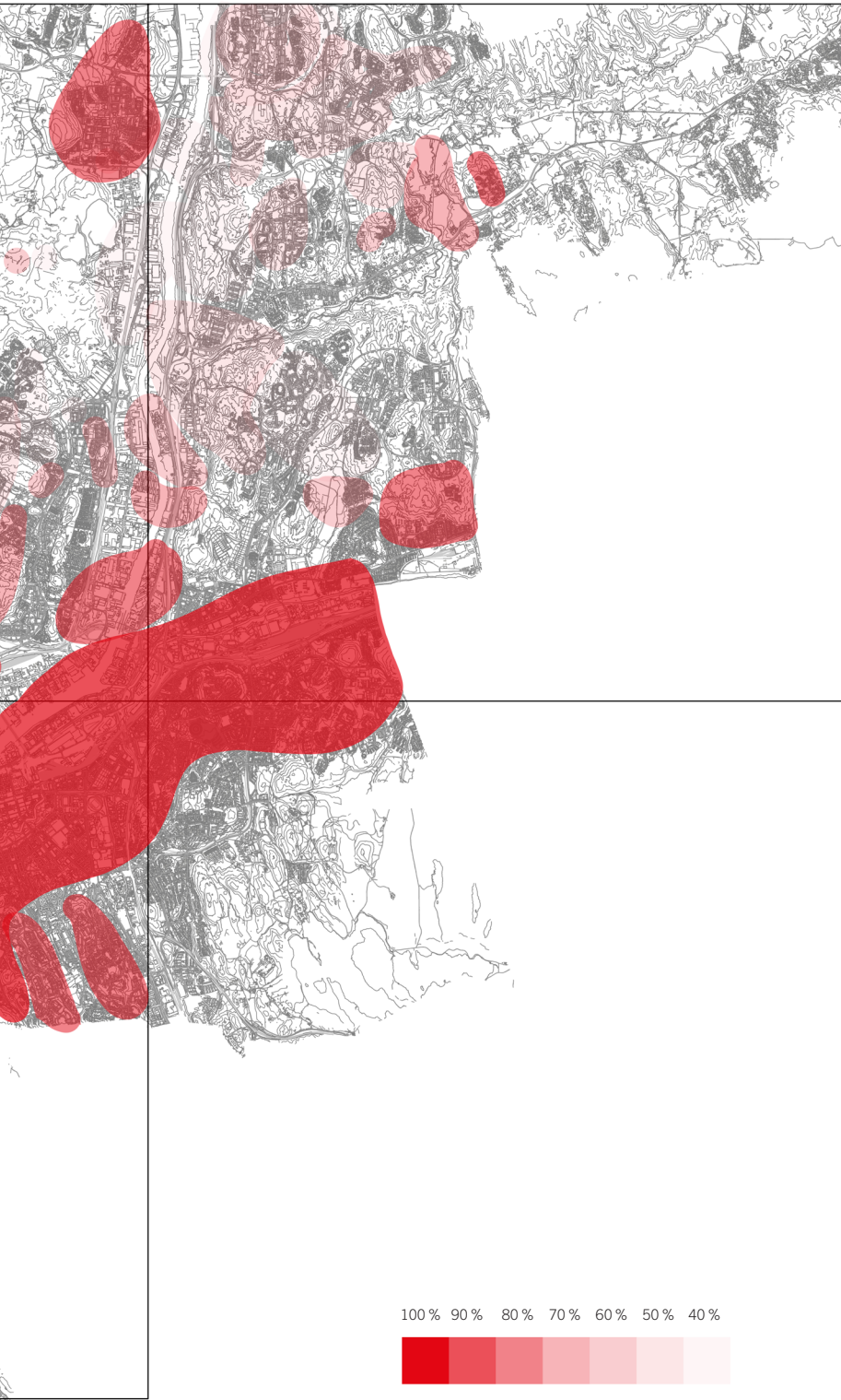
The borders in this thesis do not refer to a line on a map, they refer to the social, political and identity politics that goes into constructing a social norm and bounds. The type of border with depth and space, the type that makes and unmakes an identity (Hilal & Petti, 2019). Borders in this thesis are the ones made and upheld by a government and a capitalist system that seeks to divide and classify depending on the individual's relationship with the current state.

BORDERS, EXILE



Spatial separation





P: This map, being an abstraction of a map of segregation, uses the classical graphical language of symbolizing population by stronger and fainter colors, but I have chosen to flip it to instigate discussion about white, segregated areas.

Q: Why do we only speak about areas of multiculturalism when speaking of segregation? Why is the topic of discussion never the white, segregated areas?

100% 90% 80% 70% 60% 50% 40%



The proportion of people born within Europe amongst the 6400 nearest neighbours. The more red, the greater the proportion of people born within Europe among the neighbours.

(Örstadius, 2022)



Leo Gothicus.

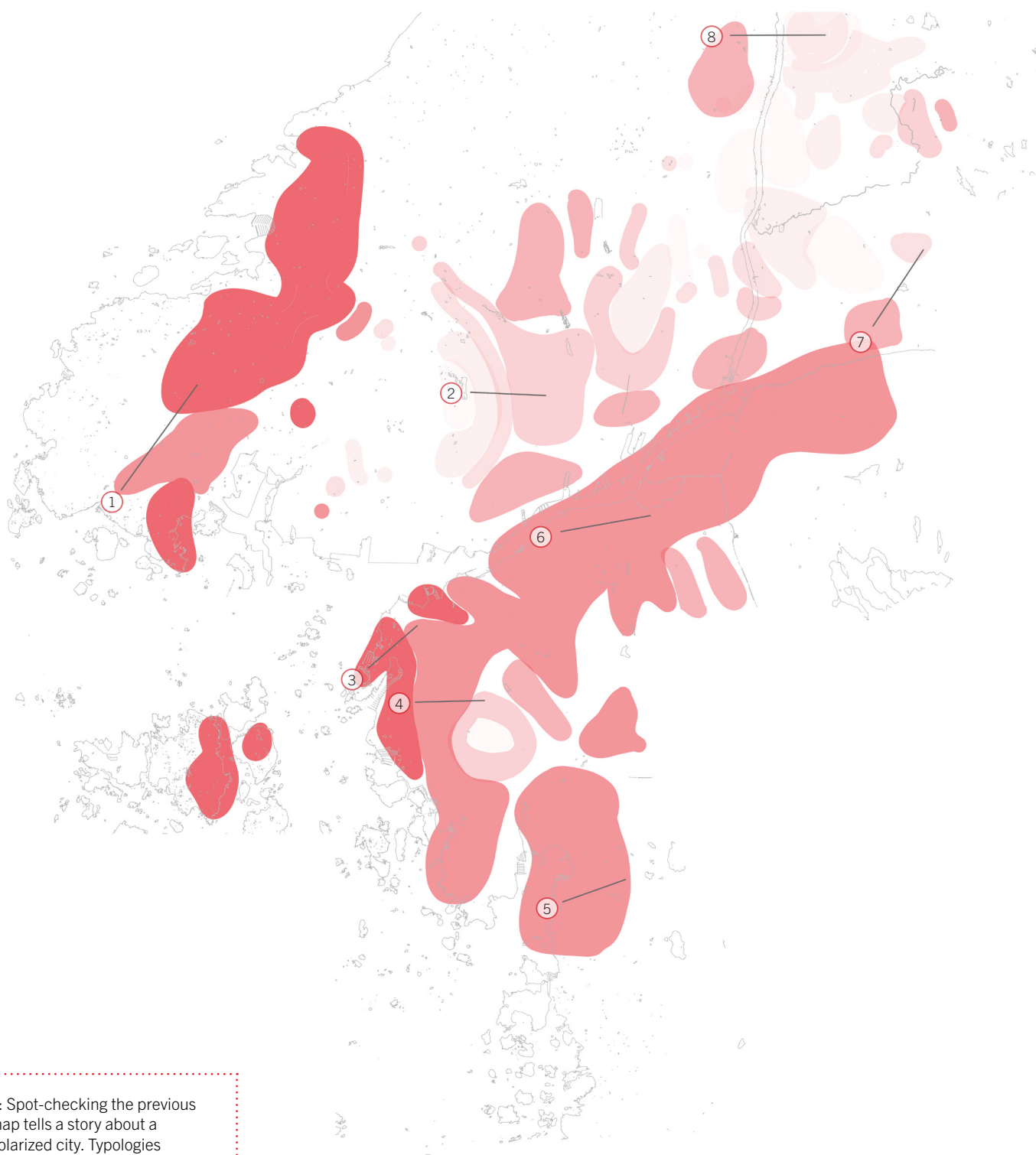
Fort Gothenburg

P: From the previous map, the pattern was made into a collage, symbolizing the invisible walls put up against Gothenburg's harbor and inner-city area.

Q: Who gets to live where?



"Blandstad", "mixed city"



P: Spot-checking the previous map tells a story about a polarized city. Typologies becoming necklaces of different living conditions.

Q: Who gets to live in what type of building?

The numbers on this map correlate to information on next page.

Torslanda

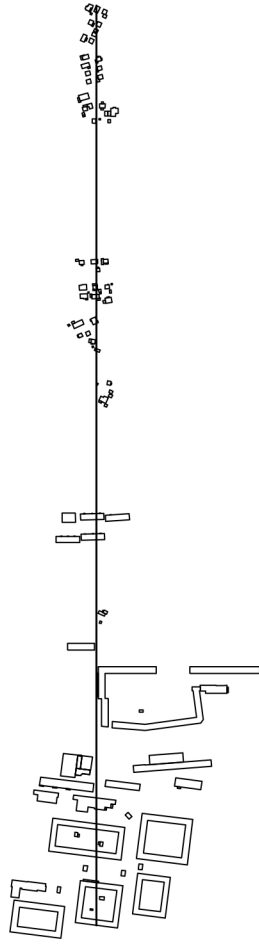
Hällsvik



①

Lundby

Biskopsgården



②

Älvsborg

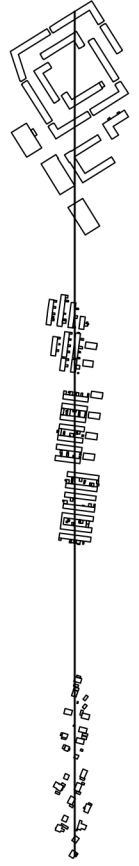
Långedrag



③

Grevegården

Fiskebäck



④

Hovås

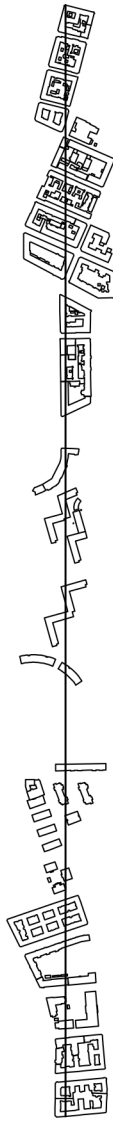
Askim



5

Majorna

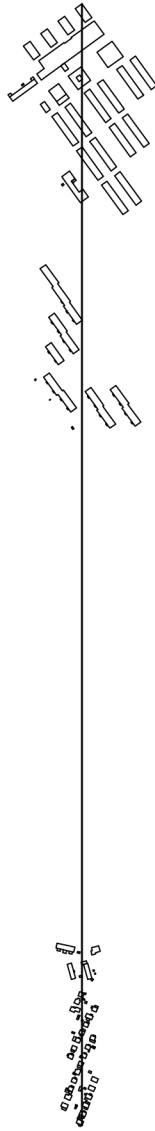
Haga



6

Utby

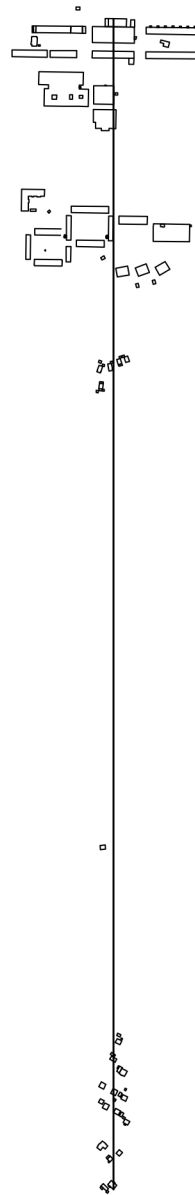
Bergsjön



7

Kärra

Gårdsten



8

Danger zones



Långedrag, aerial view, from Google Earth.

37



P: Usually photographs of north-east Gothenburg are taken from an aerial view, creating distance, or a repetitive facade against a grey sky, highlighting the mundanity of modernist architecture. The danger zones in my photos are the villa-suburbs, the threat towards anti-racism and democracy.

Q: Why do we only speak about areas of multiculturalism when speaking of segregation? Why is the topic of discussion never the white, segregated areas?

Långedrag.



Hovås, aerial view, from Google Earth.

38



Långedrag.

A street of barriers.
A street of different fencing.
This is mine and this is yours,
do not enter my
space and all will be fine.
Do not enter my gate,
do not enter my border.

Långedrag.



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3

From glossary

Participation

“The community’ is often perceived as one solid entity in need of help and support.” (Hilal & Petti, 2019, p. 14) This does not allow the practitioner to engage correctly and enforces current power structures. Participation is more than this. It is questioning what is already there, taking part in conflict to redistribute power (Hilal & Petti, 2019). This thesis uses participation as a means for me to participate in feelings and a larger power dynamic.

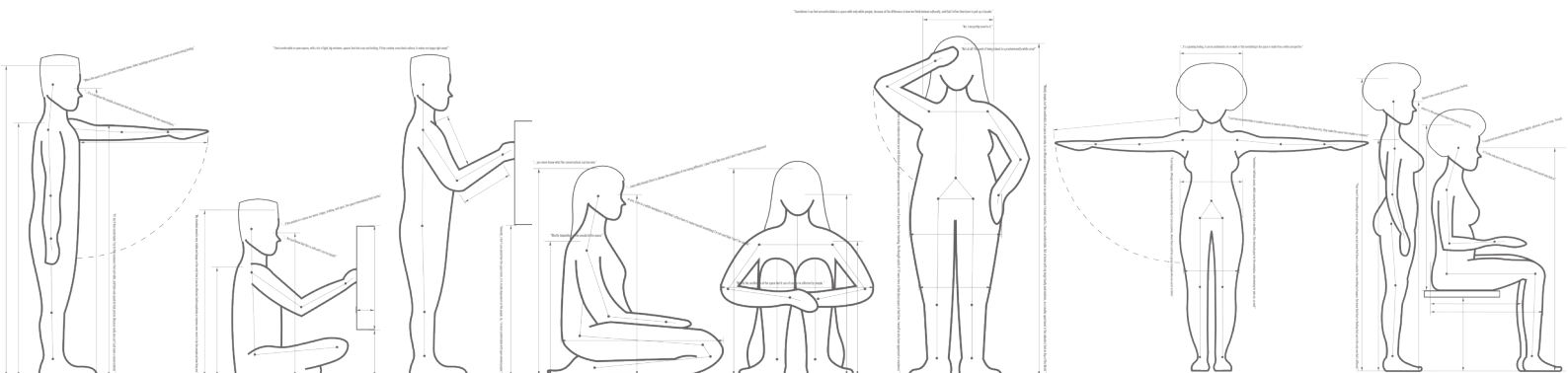
Listening

Not only listening, but also understanding and feeling. Empathy is the leading concept under this term and being quiet is the second concept. Listening for this thesis, as it is the work of me, Zoe, a person who benefits from the systems put in place, is vital.

4

5

PARTICIPATION, LISTENING



Comfort

What makes or breaks a space for you? People subjected to racism are not a unanimous group and to show this I have held written interviews with friends and family about spacial comfort. This group has been chosen because of the sensitivity of the subject, because my role of power can garner distrust. Questions and answers translated by Zoe Thompson.

Do you sometimes feel uncomfortable in spaces? The space can be large, small, digital, physical etc.

Saida: "I rarely feel uncomfortable in spaces, either digital, physical, small or large. Though, if I'm the only poc in the space, I am aware, and often I ask myself why that is."

Anonymous: "Yes. If I'm in a space where I know that I'm the only racialized person I become uncomfortable. This also applies even if I'm with my friends and someone (white) approaches us that I don't know. In my head there is the automatic thought that the person sees me as racialized, that I am in alienation. Sometimes I will look around, whilst among friends, and feel that I am different. This obviously goes for the workplace, interviewing for jobs etc. as well. Entering a space, scanning, and realizing that you're the only racialized person. It automatically becomes uncomfortable because you stand out."

Maya: "I can feel uncomfortable in smaller spaces or spaces with a lot of things in them (furniture etc), they make the space feel smaller or cramped. HATE cramped and also confined spaces without a lot of light."

Noah: "It can happen, although not in my everyday life and mostly at rare occasions, where there could be a group of people who are racist or idiots."

Helena: "Sometimes I can feel nervous in a space, but rarely uncomfortable. Spaces have rarely given me a particular feeling, often it is the people in a space that gives me a feeling. The only time a space has affected me was in Liljevalch +, I have never visited anything as nerve-racking before, and it was absolutely because of the space. I felt so small to the point of becoming nauseous."

Is this feeling dependent of the people in the space or the aesthetics of the space?

Saida: "Mainly people, but the aesthetics of a space can help. In an office landscape in Stockholm or an opera house I'm least used to, thus uncomfortable. But at home with my large family and relatives, in a smaller apartment in the suburbs I feel on top of the World. So it's a mixture of both."

Anonymous: "In every aspect it has to do with the people in the spaces. There are also instances where you visit historical sites where oppression has occurred, even if you are there for learning. The thought: 'if I were here at that place/space at that time, I would've also been oppressed or murdered' exists."

Maya: "Mostly the aesthetics of the space but it can of course be affected by people."

Noah: "Mostly depending on the people in the space."

Helena: "Definitely the people."

Is it a feeling that occurs because someone says something/acts in a certain way, or is it a feeling which is there from the start?

Saida: "No, it's a growing feeling, it can be problematic art on walls or that everything in the space is made from a white perspective."

Anonymous: "It's a feeling that just exists. Look at it from you being a white woman, stepping into a room with only men. They haven't done anything to you or said anything, you just know that there is a potential for something to happen. You know that they're thinking that you're the only one that's different."

Maya: "It's a feeling that happens naturally to me, but I can definitely feel uncomfortable with the people in a space depending on their energy, or things they say. People fill up a space, so they can affect the feeling."

Noah: "Yes, because of people saying or doing something is often the reason why I become uncomfortable."

Helena: "It's rarely a feeling which is there from the start, in that case often because of other people, that probably act a certain way, or say something. But never just from the start."

What makes you feel comfortable in spaces? The space can be large, small, digital, physical etc.

Saida: "When the space is airy and more stripped down. Older buildings and spaces can have an unwelcoming feeling."

Anonymous: "Honestly, the same answers as uncomfortable. You just know that this is safe and I can be myself."

Maya: "I feel comfortable in open spaces, with a lot of light, big windows, spaces that feel cozy and inviting. If they contain some black culture, it makes me happy right away!"

Noah: "Honestly, I don't care about how the space looks, it is mostly dependent on the people. So, I'm most comfortable with open-minded people."

Helena: "All fellow people. But also, my own security, depending on why you're in a space and if it's something that is to be done – how well prepared you are. So, it's a lot about the people around you but also because of myself, my own expectations."

Is it uncomfortable to be in a space with only white people?

Saida: "Yes, you never know what the conversations can turn into."

Anonymous: "YES. As said, even with friends there is always the feeling of me being different. I don't look like you and I don't have the same background as you. Even in a white workplace I feel that I often have to make myself something I'm not and that I can't be myself."

Maya: "Sometimes I feel uncomfortable in a space with only white people, because of the difference in how we think/ behave culturally, and then I often have to put up a facade."

Noah: "No, I am pretty used to it."

Helena: "Not at all! The perk of being raised in a predominantly white area!"

What do you do if you don't feel comfortable somewhere?

Saida: "Most often I leave, no one is forcing me to stay."

Anonymous: "If I don't feel comfortable I try to find someone I feel safe with, and then only speak to that person. Because sadly you can't just leave a social context."

Maya: "I leave or endure as long as I need. I then try to focus on myself and why I'm in the space (the reason for why I'm there, for work etc)."

Noah: "I shut the fuck up or leave, haha."

Helena: "Depending on my purpose of being in the space, it's different, because if it's something important like work etc I have to stay. But in other situations I can most often leave the space. If it's a situation where it's possible to interact in, to understand why the feeling is there etc, I can confront it, but I rarely do."

How does it feel to write to me about this?

Saida: "Good and safe."

Anonymous: "It feels nice and good."

Maya: "It feels good, like I'm answering questions from someone who will be designing my home so they get insight in how I feel about space, haha."

Noah: "Feels ok, nothing remarkable."

Helena: "Not remarkable, but can be because we go way back – there is a natural feeling of safety with you."

42

Journal extract, January 20th

Listening, to myself and others

The first week of the master thesis has passed. Already I have had a lot of performance anxiety and stress. But it is not bad, I think, to write and do this work, I should feel these feelings. I need to put myself in uncomfortable situations to create this thesis. Always have a lesson learnt at the end of the week.

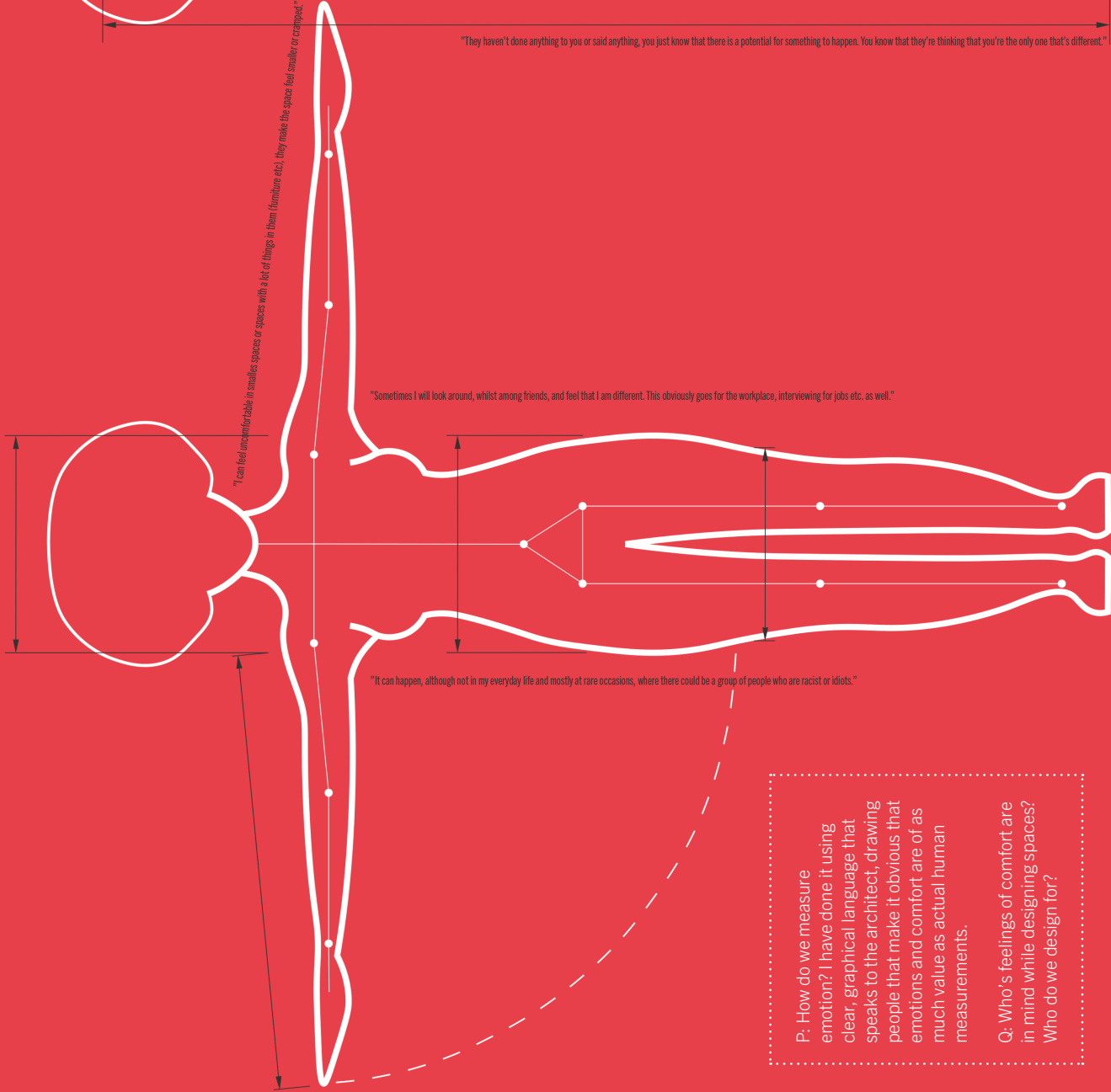
I have also asked friends and family about their feelings when entering white spaces or different types of spaces. It has been thoughtful, and I am so thankful for them opening up about this, which I realize can't always be an easy thing. It is very easy to be open and willing to listen. Why is this something that is often denied lived racist experiences?



thnx for telling me

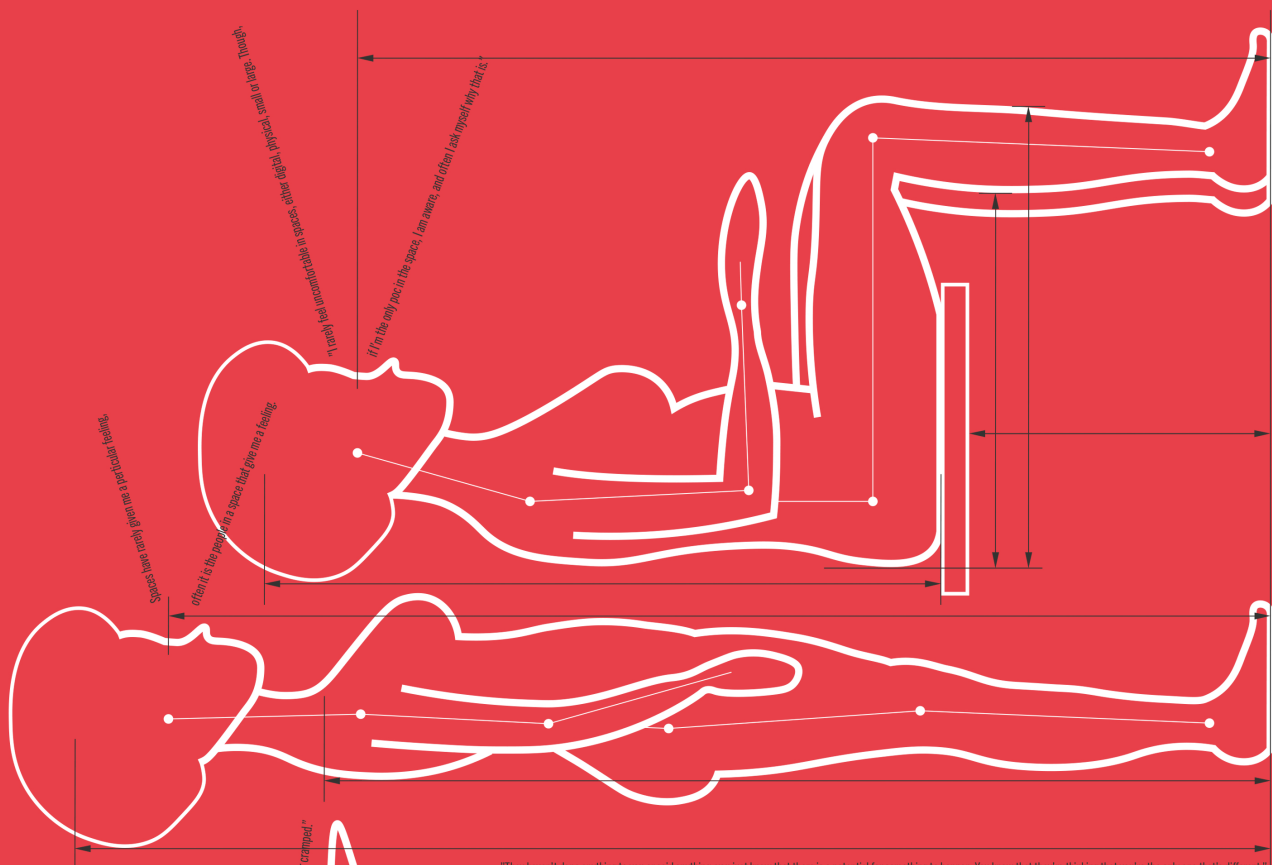
Measuring emotion

"...it's a growing feeling. It can be problematic art on walls or that everything in the space is made from a white perspective."



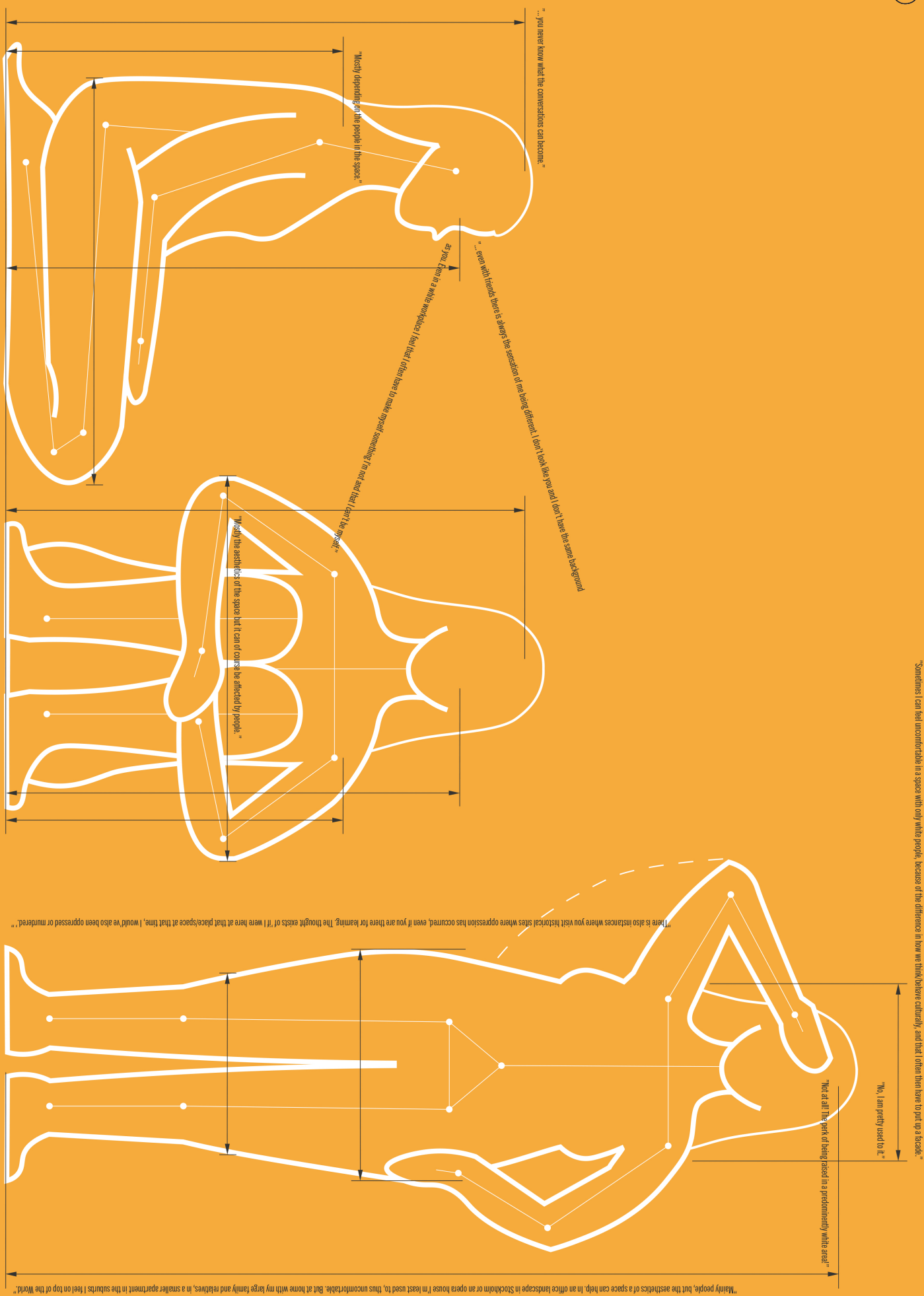
P: How do we measure emotion? I have done it using clear, graphical language that speaks to the architect, drawing people that make it obvious that emotions and comfort are of as much value as actual human measurements.

Q: Who's feelings of comfort are in mind while designing spaces? Who do we design for?



"They haven't done anything to you or said anything, you just know that there is a potential for something to happen. You know that they're thinking that you're the only one that's different."

"I can definitely feel uncomfortable with the people in a space depending on their energy, or things they say. People fill up a space, so they can affect the feeling."



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From glossary

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Hospitality

For refugees to be seen as a part of society, they must conform their identity to the one of the “hosts”, be a “perfect guest” (Hilal & Petti, 2019). Who is permitted to what space and not? Who is comfortable in what space and not? The concept hospitality is one of outsiders, foreigners, and insiders, and a welcoming of difference, or non-welcoming. In this thesis the term hospitality refers to refugees taking part and agency in the built environment and borders of the norm.

3

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Representation

Representation is a common narrative, the narrative of how we speak and how we view certain aesthetics, spaces or places are in direct correlation to one’s own story and upbringing. The debate has been one of criminalizing, authorizing, but this thesis seeks to further that argument, focusing on what is brought to a community by representing different alternatives.

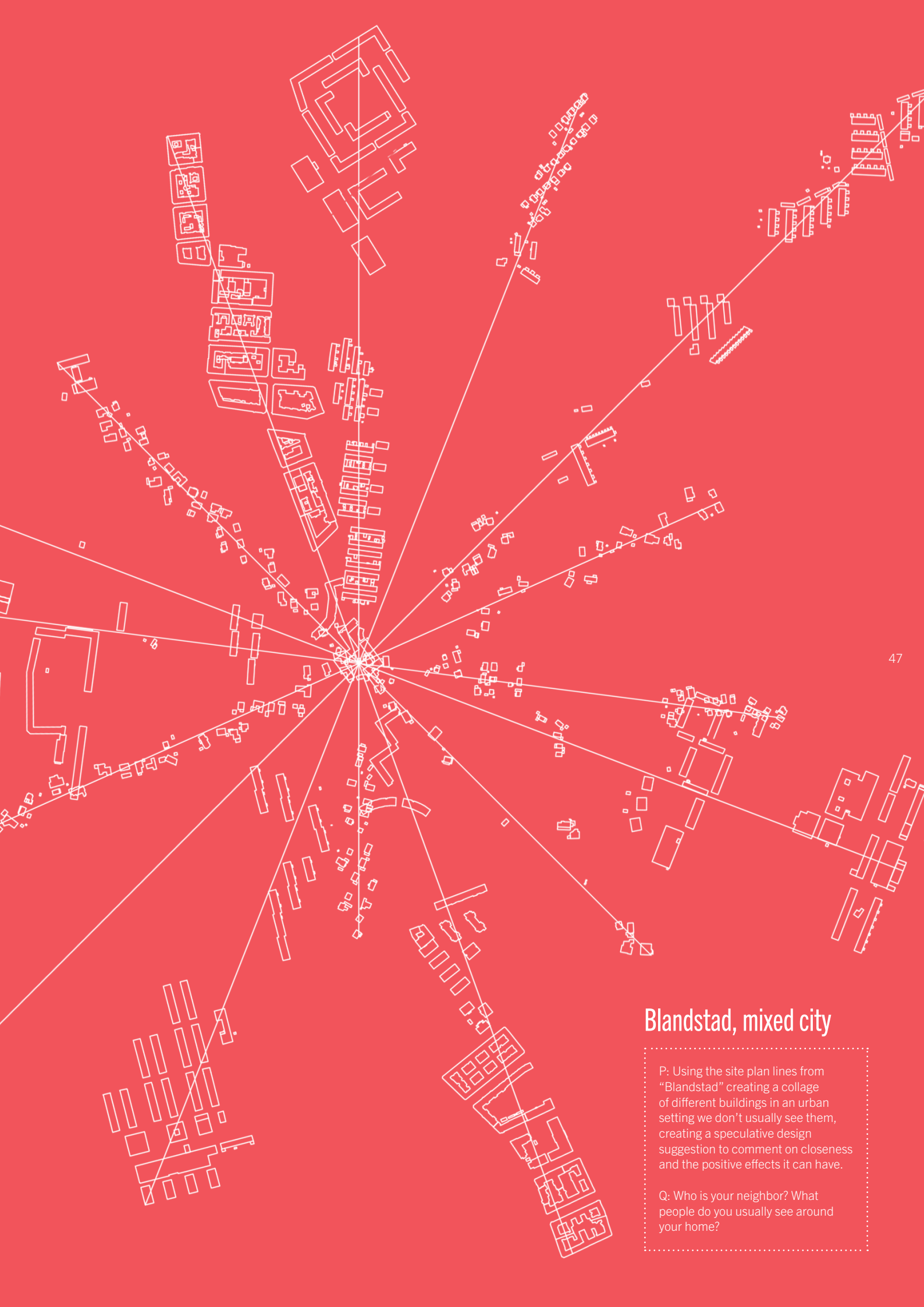
Neighboring

How do we move beyond academic terms into reality? This term highlights and activates the non-institutional organizing of communities that happens organically (Hilal & Petti, 2019). In terms of Gothenburg, the thesis seeks to highlight when perceptions of the stranger change, through humanizing and flipping the power dynamics.

5

REPRESENTATION, NEIGHBORING, HOSPITALITY





Blandstad, mixed city

P: Using the site plan lines from “Blandstad” creating a collage of different buildings in an urban setting we don’t usually see them, creating a speculative design suggestion to comment on closeness and the positive effects it can have.

Q: Who is your neighbor? What people do you usually see around your home?

(Un)welcoming

"The suggestion of temporary accommodation in Gothenburg. Some experienced a Facebook post from a Swedish villa resident. Wiklund, 2016"






"He lives close by and is also worried about losing sea view." (Nilsson, Wiklund, 2016)

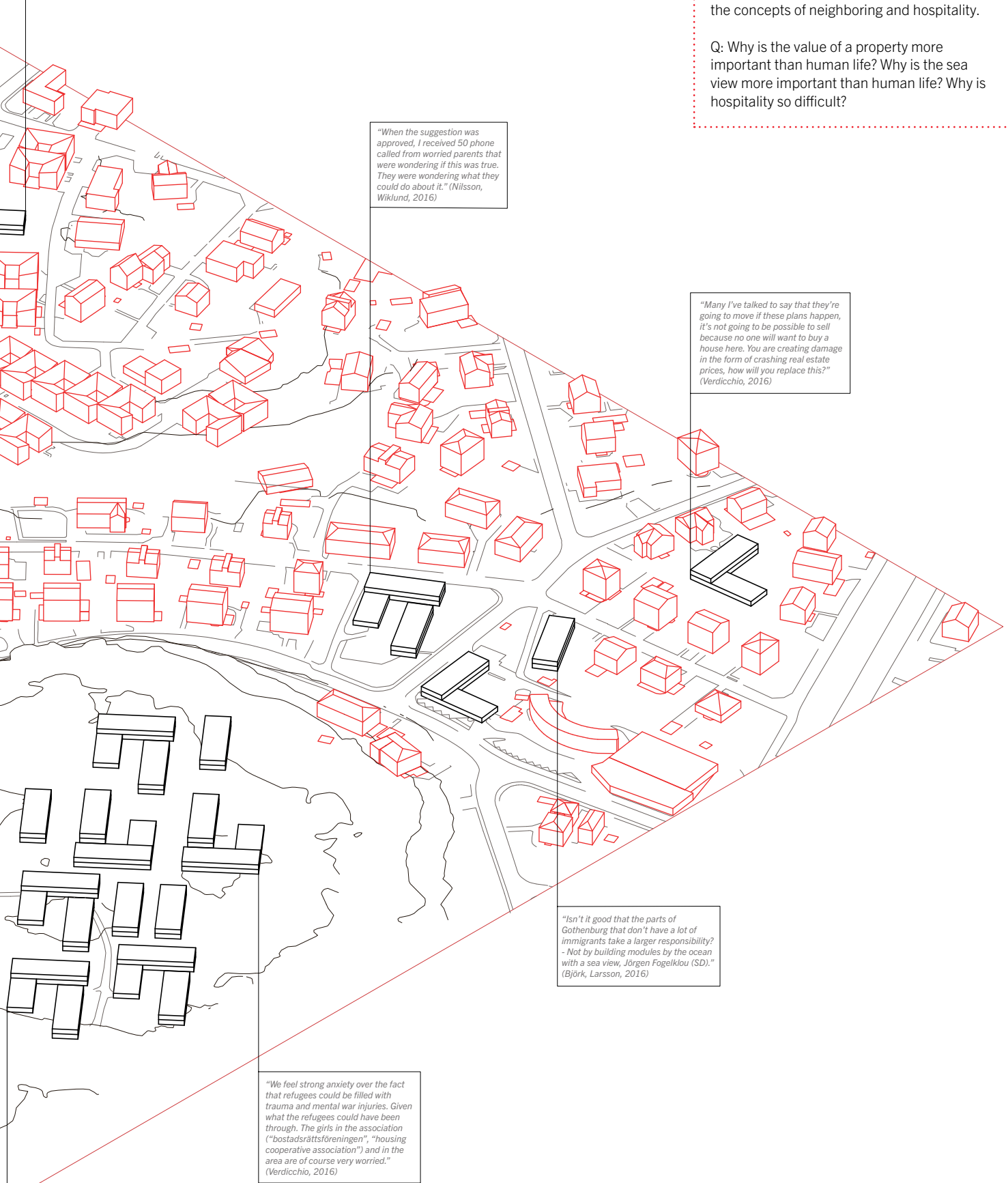
"I feel really bad over the threat of having violence, assault, fires and above all my children's safety are at the top of my mind." (Verdicchio, 2016)

"I've always strongly argued against all forms of racist comments but suddenly I'm in a situation that is new to me. Now when I'm personally involved, and my own children's safety is threatened, my old arguments become irrelevant." (Verdicchio, 2016)

"We are maybe 50 people here that would have lost sea view. Should we really have to pay 100 million for this building? It doesn't feel fair." (Björk Larsson, 2016)

-  Existing building stock
-  Temporary refugee accommodation
-  Villa-residents opinions

...tion of 12 new
...ylum accommoda-
...burg raises protests.
...resses their opposition in
...k-group started by the
...democrats." (Nilsson,
...2016)



"When the suggestion was approved, I received 50 phone calls from worried parents that were wondering if this was true. They were wondering what they could do about it." (Nilsson, Wiklund, 2016)

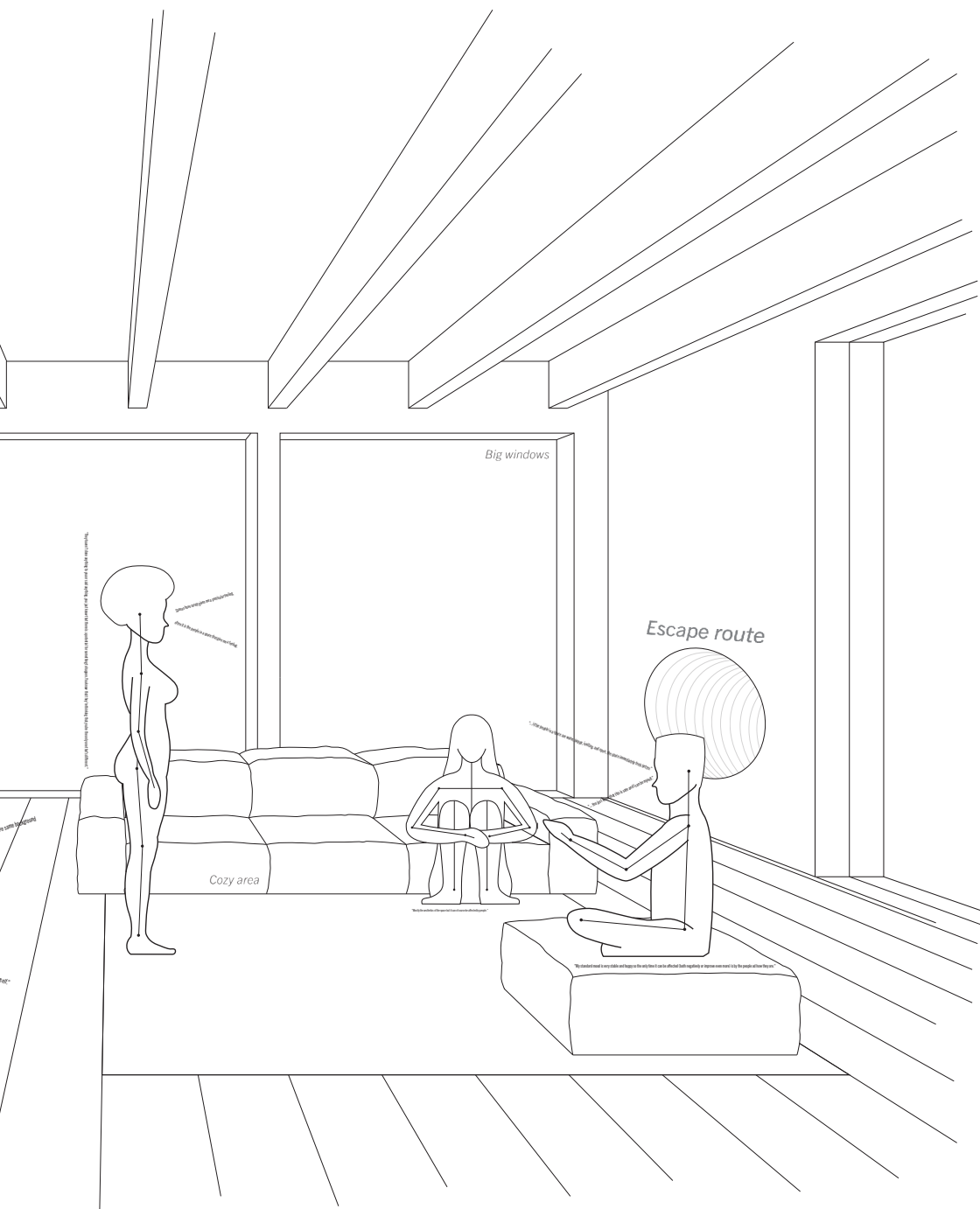
P: Through a speculative design suggestion seeing how much space there is for refugee accommodation in richer, white areas of Gothenburg. Paring it with quotations directly from the residents of that area, having in mind the concepts of neighboring and hospitality.

Q: Why is the value of a property more important than human life? Why is the sea view more important than human life? Why is hospitality so difficult?

"Many I've talked to say that they're going to move if these plans happen, it's not going to be possible to sell because no one will want to buy a house here. You are creating damage in the form of crashing real estate prices, how will you replace this?" (Verdicchio, 2016)

"Isn't it good that the parts of Gothenburg that don't have a lot of immigrants take a larger responsibility? - Not by building modules by the ocean with a sea view, Jörgen Fogelklou (SD)." (Björk, Larsson, 2016)

"We feel strong anxiety over the fact that refugees could be filled with trauma and mental war injuries. Given what the refugees could have been through. The girls in the association ("bostadsrättsföreningen", "housing cooperative association") and in the area are of course very worried." (Verdicchio, 2016)



1

From glossary

Decolonization

In this thesis, decolonization is not only that of a state claiming independence from their former colonizer, but also decolonizing knowledge, perceptions, mindset and design. It is understanding that not only borders on a map are a direct result of colonialism, but power, economics and mindset. It is an analysis of how architecture continues to colonize and what can be made in claims against it, using decolonization at its core to understand the construction of borders and limitations of national identity. It is a starting point and an ongoing practice (Hilal & Petti, 2019).

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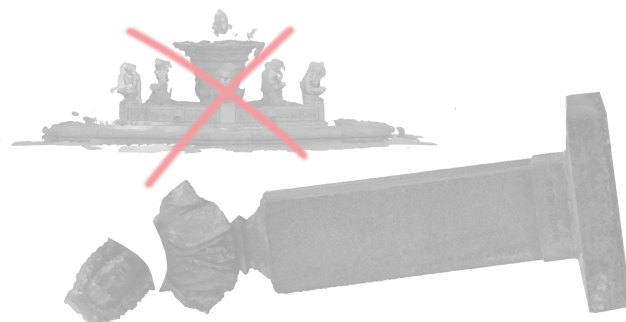
Profanation

In this thesis it is to use the destructive powers put in place, colonialism and racism, to restorative claims. Profanation not only dislocates power, but also “reverses its operation and subverts its uses” (Hilal & Petti, 2019). It is to be understood as the subversive and radical means that uses colonialisms and racisms destructiveness to restore, deactivating power when provoking with speculative design suggestions.

Returns

The term return is a term of diaspora and has been used to describe refugee life and doubleness in a material reality (Hilal & Petti, 2019). The concept in the thesis uses its literal meaning, in which the most basic material agencies, living conditions and public space, are returned, discussed or opened, in order to be just.

DECOLONIZATION, PROFANATION, RETURNS



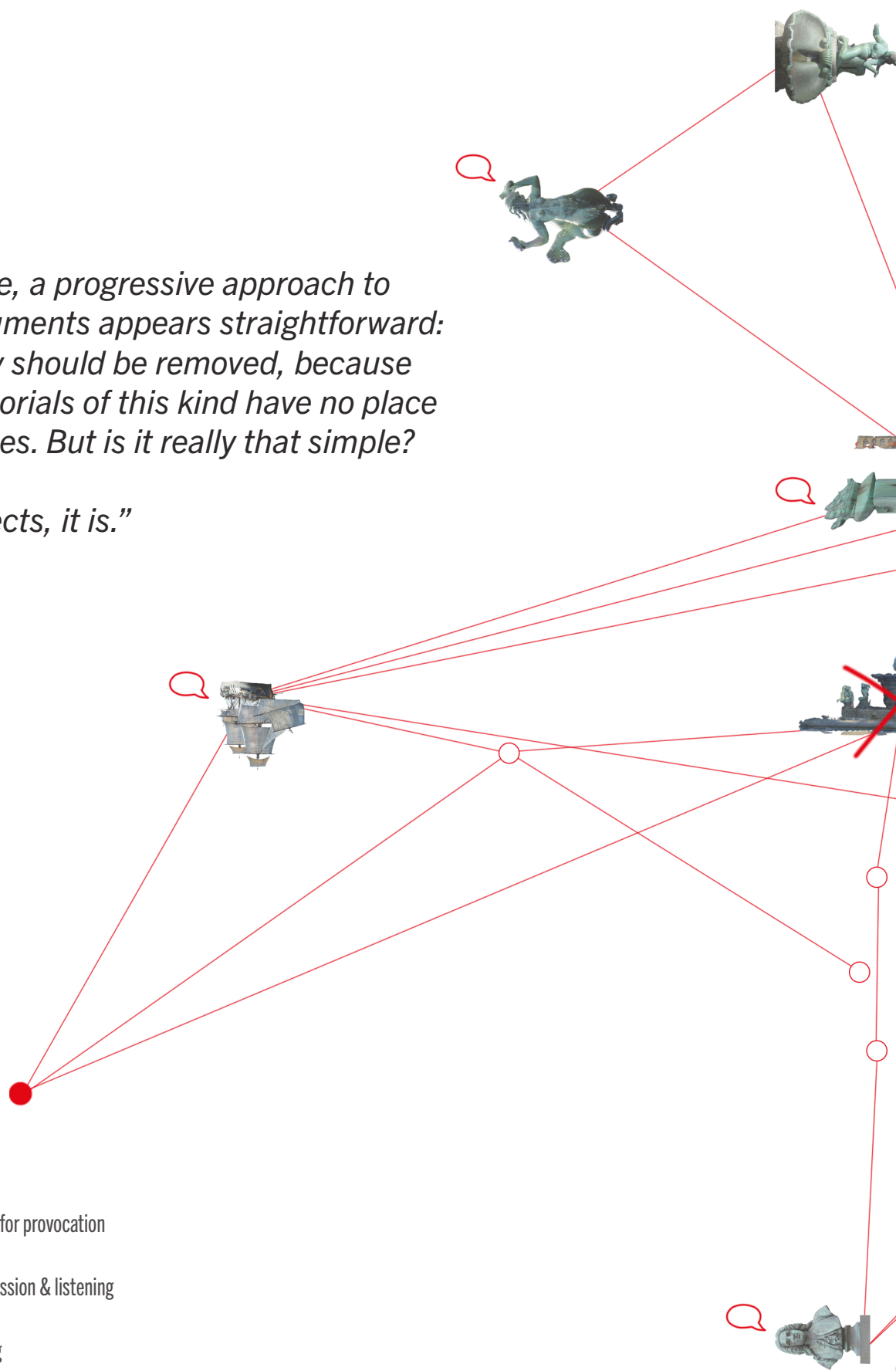
Accountability

"At first glance, a progressive approach to colonial monuments appears straightforward: of course they should be removed, because glorified memorials of this kind have no place in public spaces. But is it really that simple?"

In some respects, it is."
(Bohne, 2020)

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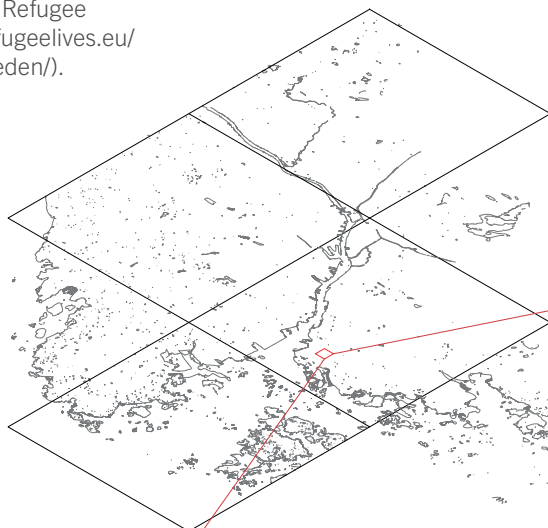
- Toppling monuments for provocation
- 🗨️ Possibilities for discussion & listening
- ✗ Removing & changing
- Start of handling or different activity in location
- Renaming or bad example of taking account



Welcoming

All quotes from Refugee lives (<https://refugeelives.eu/category/in-sweden/>).

"My name is Syria, I came to Sweden 17 months ago. I studied in my country and I only needed a few months to be able to work. It was not easy."







"My family was happy to know that I was still alive"

"First of all, let me start by telling you why people flee from their home countries. One of the reasons may be that some people lack human rights. In Afghanistan, there was a war that lasted for several years. The war became worse during the summer, so that's why I left my family at the age of 13."

"My name is Sulten and comes from Turkey. I came to Sweden 17 months ago. In Turkey, many women and men are imprisoned. They fly through a river called Meria. People fly together with their children. But some people are drowning with their children."

"My name is Jasmin and I come from Syria. I have lived in Sweden for 17 months. It's hard to get a job in Sweden. Employers prefer Swedish people than others. It also takes a long time to get an apartment. My dream is to work as an architect and have an apartment."

-  Existing building stock
-  Demolition
-  Temporary refugee accommodation
-  Refugee stories

"I am Aya and I'm from
Iraq. I came to Sweden 7 months
ago. I studied 8 years in my home
country. I went to the university. I thought I
would study Swedish to be able to
work with my education but
it's not as I thought."

"My name is Syeda and I come
from Pakistan, I came to Sweden
8 months ago. Please solve the
apartment crisis."

P: Through a speculative design suggestion removing villas to make room for refugee accommodation that in turn can become permanent housing solutions fitting both the current residents and future residents. Bearing in mind the concept profanation, that destroying people's homes, is not a new phenomenon, and is very much a colonial act still taking place.

Q: Who gets to claim the right to land and borders? Who are you? Where are you from?

"A home to me is where people
respect each other"

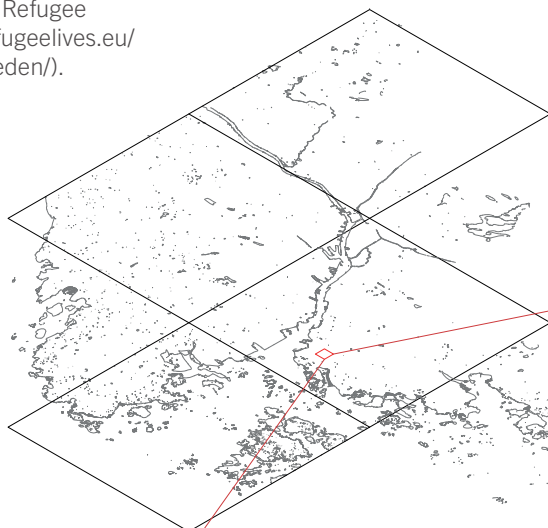
"My name is Zainab and came from
Iraq to Sweden 2 years ago. I have
difficulty learning Swedish. I miss my
mom."

"I just want to live my life just like
everyone else"

"I
2
h,
n
et
s"

All quotes from Refugee lives (<https://refugeelives.eu/category/in-sweden/>).

"You can
the rope"








"It's easy to fail in a new country."

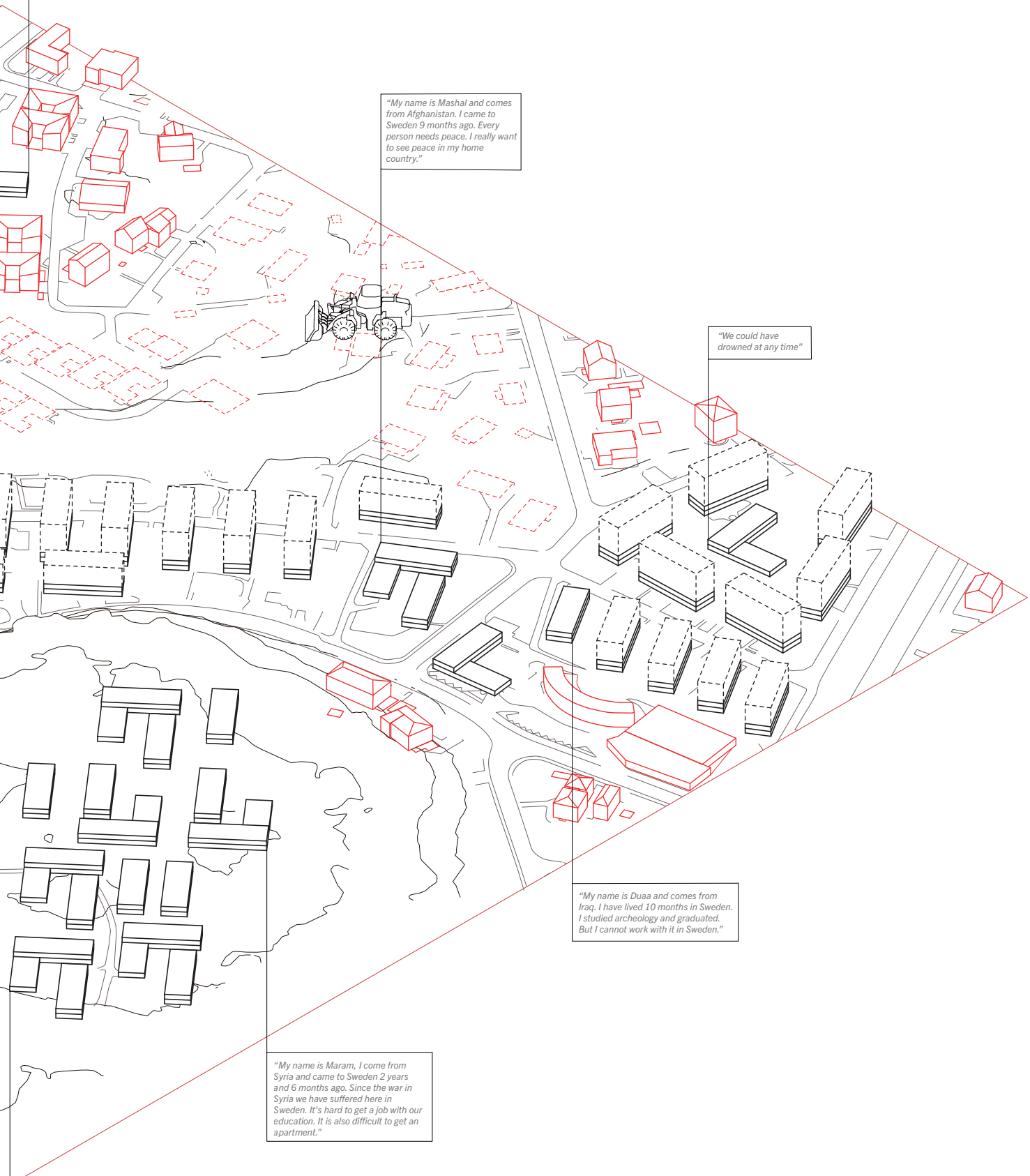
"My name is Ayad, and I am from Syria. I came to Sweden 2015. I am currently studying Swedish. The Employment Service does not help finding jobs. We want jobs that do not need Swedish. Sweden sells weapons to fighting parties in Syria. We die from these weapons. Human rights are the biggest lie."

"When you emigrate, you leave your roots in your home country. The foreigners sit down like a tick in your throat and reminds you in time and time that you are a stranger. It does not matter if you are new or old in the new country"

"My name is Eyad and come from Syria. I came to Sweden 2015. Stop supporting the war"

-  Existing building stock
-  Demolition
-  Temporary refugee accommodation
-  Permanent accommodation
-  Refugee stories

still see the marks from
on my arm"



"My name is Mashal and comes from Afghanistan. I came to Sweden 9 months ago. Every person needs peace. I really want to see peace in my home country."

"We could have drowned at any time"

"My name is Duaa and comes from Iraq. I have lived 10 months in Sweden. I studied archeology and graduated. But I cannot work with it in Sweden."

"My name is Maram, I come from Syria and came to Sweden 2 years and 6 months ago. Since the war in Syria we have suffered here in Sweden. It's hard to get a job with our education. It is also difficult to get an apartment."

DISCUSSION

Purpose & questions

P: How do we measure emotion? I have done it using clear, graphical language that speaks to the architect, drawing people that make it obvious that emotions and comfort are of as much value as actual human measurements.

Q: Who's feelings of comfort are in mind while designing spaces? Who do we design for?

Measuring emotion, p. 41-43

Q: Who do we design for? Who is represented when designing?

Space of comfort, p. 48-49

P: Designing a speculative space that alters its existence depending on the comfort of people subjected to racism in that space. Using the interview answers from the chapter Comfort to speculate design interventions.

Q: Why do we only speak about areas of multiculturalism when speaking of segregation? Why is the topic of discussion never the white, segregated areas?

Spacial separation, p. 28-29

P: Spot-checking the map from Spacial separation tells a story about a polarized city. Typologies becoming necklaces of different living conditions.

Q: Who gets to live in what type of building?

"Blandstad", "mixed city", p. 31-33

P: This map, being an abstraction of a map of segregation, uses the classical graphical language of symbolizing population by stronger and fainter colors, but I have chosen to flip it to instigate discussion about white, segregated areas.

"Sverigehuset", the Sweden house, p. 24-25

Q: Who decides heritage? Why traditional? Why build for the average family when other families struggle with fitting in apartments? Who do you care about? Safe and traditional for who?

P: Criticizing the Sweden democrats' suggestion of "Sverigehuset", the Swedish house, by showing a different side to both Swedish "traditional" housing and the million programmes which are not seen as desirable.

P: Remembering and highlighting our colonial, racist and nazi imprint of our city is an important step in making sure our management of the built environment can be made from knowledge about our history. I have done this through an info-graphic.

Collective amnesia, p. 16-19

(Un)covering history,

Q: Who remembers? Who cares? What is done in taking account of colonialist history?

Q: Who remembers? Who cares? What is done in taking account of colonialist history?

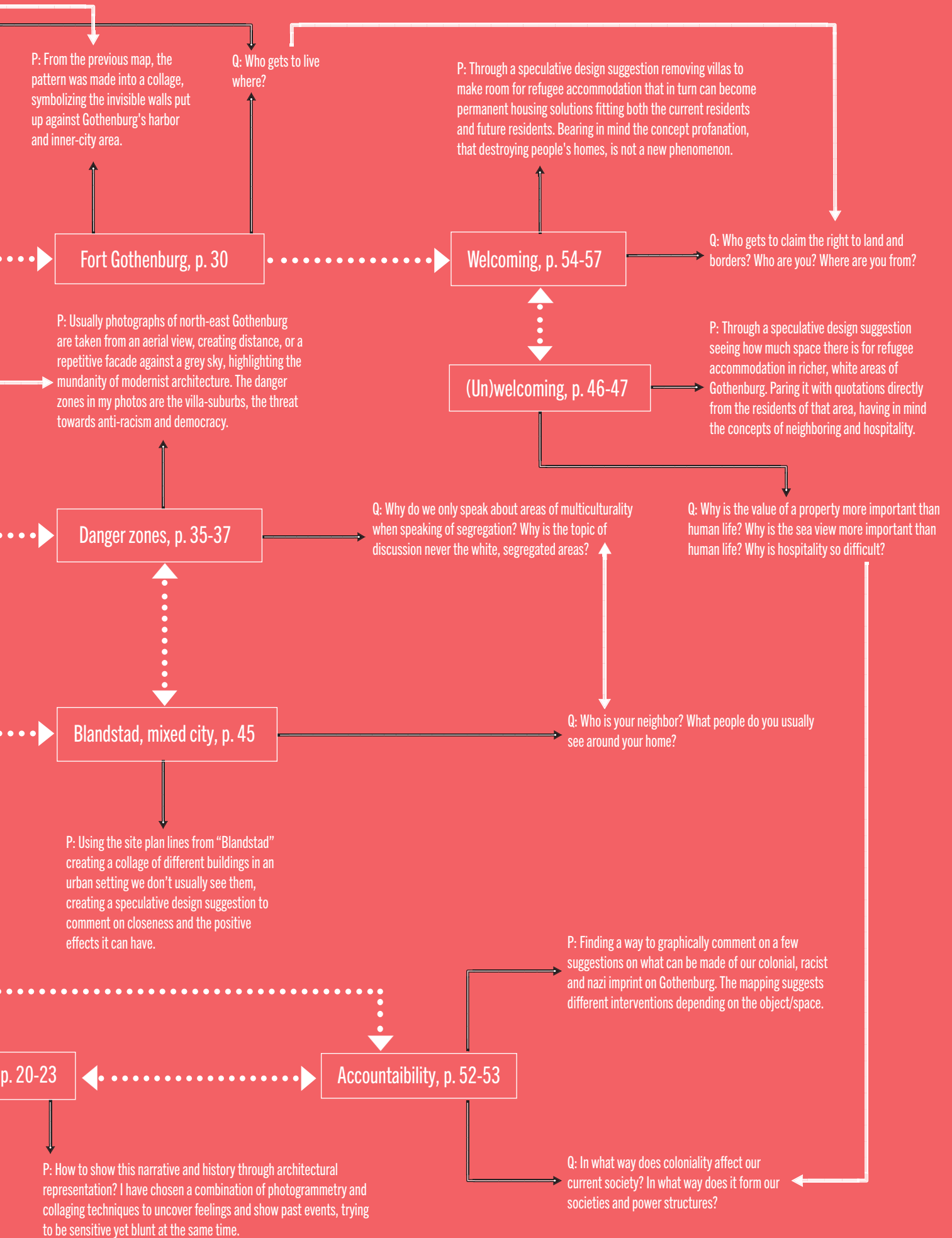
P purpose

Q questions

... critical

→ crucial

→ connected to material



Thesis questions

are you white?



An invisible, movable border used to exclude a stranger is whomever is not wanted or given the same given human rights at birth. Economic, and social issues, not only political power. Many ethnicities with a light skin tone, people, can be subjected to (Socialförvaltning)

how



What are the effects of racism in the built environment and how do these constructions

in what way



being not white enough



still, in 2023



how is it possible to use



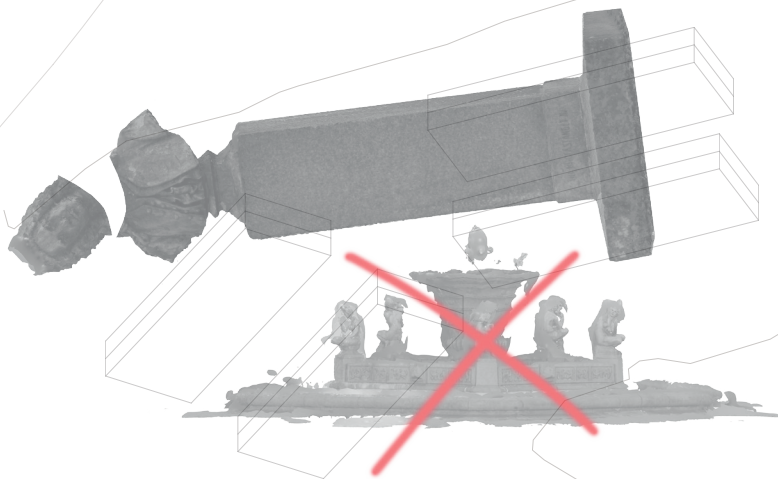
imagine



provoke



In what ways can speculative design in the context of



exclude and control the stranger, the
or seen as human enough to deserve
th. It is a term that maps political,
y being about skincolour, but about
kin colour, such as Sami and Romani
racism and discrimination
n Nordost, 2022).



Environment and architecture in Gothenburg, do they construct systems of oppression?

▶ colonialism

▶ racism

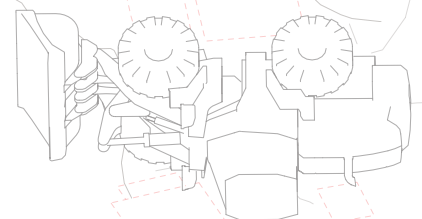
▶ segregation

do you benefit
from these?

Can they be used in an anti-racist manner in Gothenburg?

how do we implement these changes?

what are you doing about it?



what are YOU doing about it?

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