

THESIS TOPIC INITIAL PROPOSAL

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1. Common Space Map Design: Can cartographic choices change walking behaviour?

This research investigates how cartographic design can actively influence people's perceptions and use of common spaces by promoting walking as a form of active mobility. The project examines how map design can serve as a tool for behavioral change. It aims to understand which visual and spatial design choices, such as color schemes, forms of distance representation, levels of detail, or visual hierarchies, most strongly influence how users perceive the attractiveness and accessibility of urban areas for walking.

The study combines a literature review, experimental mapping, and user surveys to evaluate how different representations of the same area affect perceived walkability within that area. By comparing user responses across map variations, it seeks to develop design guidelines that optimize the communication of walkability potential. Using principles of persuasive cartography and emotional design, the results could inform sustainable urban design strategies offering practical insights for creating maps that promote healthier, more community-oriented urban mobility.

2. Cartographic choices on the common space: how to represent complexities?

How does fear of urban violence interact with the spatial configuration and quality of the common space? Does that shape walking patterns and accessibility in the city? The objective is to map the relationship between perceived danger zones and built form, land use, and open space characteristics, aiming to represent how these factors affect everyday walkability and access to urban opportunities. A possible methodology is to conduct a survey/interview about the perception of safety in town and whether it influences behaviors. This could also include sketch maps/mental maps where participants indicate areas they avoid or feel unsafe. The final creation of maps overlaying crime data, perceived danger, environmental characteristics, and typical walking routes will be evaluated by participants seeking to determine different representation modes that better capture the complexity of people's experiences in the common urban spaces.