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FROM DRIFTING TO THE COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION

Perceptual maps of Madrid and Barcelona

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ABSTRACT

This article studies the relationship between collective perception, urban imaginaries, and interpretation of the environment, focusing on Madrid and Barcelona. The image of the city is understood as a symbolic exchange between the individual and space, where drifts shape meanings and create alternative ways of moving through it. The research proposes a dynamic recording system aimed at creating maps based on experienced perceptions. The methodology combines participatory observation and a digital tool with automated flow, which organises the data obtained through walks and incorporates the use of colour as a common language to visualise emotions and compare the results of the routes through infographics and cartography. The hybrid technique, between digital and analogue, was applied in explorations with university communities. It is concluded that drifting is an effective resource for interpreting urban identity and a pedagogical practice with potential for replication in different contexts.

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1. Introduction

Contemporary cities are dynamic and complex settings where multiple dimensions of social, cultural and symbolic life intertwine. Beyond their functional nature, understood as places of transit, work or residence, urban environments are configured as spaces of meaning, encounter and constant negotiation between individuals and groups (Delgado, 2007). In this context, it is essential to analyse how inhabitants perceive, reinterpret and redefine places, generating processes of identity and memory. Reflection on urban imaginaries, experiences and forms of representation of the city thus becomes a field of research and exploration for urban studies, as well as for architectural practice, urban planning and the artistic disciplines (Lefebvre, 1971).

In an increasingly digitalised world, urban environments are rapidly transforming under the influence of digital culture and platform services such as Uber, Booking, Airbnb and Amazon, which are reconfiguring the distribution of commercial, functional and spatial activities in analogue-digital society (Barrale et al., 2024). Although many inhabitants grew up without access to the internet, mobile phones or social networks, everyday life today is permeated by clouds of information and digital data. This reality poses the fundamental challenge of developing hybrid analysis methods that integrate analogue events, such as walking tours and group work procedures, with digital tools capable of systematising and representing these experiences (Cámara Menoyo et al., 2017). In addition to providing a localised database, these technologies are essential for contemporary university teaching in urban planning fieldwork, as they enable the collection of geospatial data (Córdoba Hernández & Román López, 2023; Poveda Pineda & Cifuentes Medina, 2020).

Given the current situation, this work is situated at the intersection between analogue surveying and digital programming. Its objective is, first, to explain the processes of production of urban imaginaries and, second, to develop comparative evaluations of fragments of cities using maps that simultaneously integrate perceptual, emotional and intangible dimensions. Three collective drifts carried out with the university student community in the cities of Madrid and Barcelona are analysed as case studies, allowing us to explore how these experiences shape original forms of identity representation and understanding of urban space (Barrale & Seve, 2023; Careri, 2013).

Kevin Lynch (1984), in *Reconsidering the Image of the City*, argues that urban perception is a dynamic interaction between the person and the space, susceptible to transformation as the conditions of either of these two elements vary. However, this interaction is organised around patterns, dynamics and rules that make it possible to strategically evaluate and assess the urban image. In the same vein, José António Corraliza and Rocío Martín (2000) emphasise that space should not be understood solely as a container for action, but as a reality that is shaped by it; that is, where action and space form inseparable dimensions. "Space is both the result and the object of a personal, emotional and symbolic connotation" (Corraliza & Martín, 2000, p. 44).

At the same time, urban imaginaries are conceived, in the interview *Es real porque es imaginado* (*It Is Real Because It Is Imagined*) conducted by Paula Vera (2017) with Armando Silva, as a theoretical approach to perception oriented towards social coexistence in an imaginary state. According to Silva, these imaginaries can acquire a dominant character through their aesthetic dimension and psychic influence, transporting the individual to a perceptual horizon that combines the real with the imagined. Consequently, both urban perception and imaginaries, whether personal or collective, are decisive tools for understanding how inhabitants experience, interpret and re-signify the spaces of the city.

This paper conceives the imaginary as the ability to generate and transform perception, collective memory and the symbolic experience of reality. Thus, through the imaginary and the group exploration of urban drifting, individuals can qualify and re-signify geography, integrating observations with poetic, playful and affective dimensions in their rediscovery of urban spaces (Mejías, 2016; Muiño, 2016; Seamon, 2015).

This study builds on contemporary debates in urban studies on the contributions of Lynch (1984), who highlighted the importance of the image of the city and the elements that favour its

legibility. However, while his approach focused on the relationship between urban structure and spatial orientation, this work also dialogues with and delves into alternative forms of movement and the production of collective meanings of the urban experience. This perspective is linked to situationist psychogeography and, in particular, to the theories of Debord (1967), for whom deriving was a subjective and critical practice in the face of rationalist planning and an opportunity to explore interpretations and representations associated with urban space.

Along these lines, the experiences carried out with university students take deriving as a methodological device to combine routes, wanderings, photographic records and an instance of collective reflection aimed at constructing maps with shared perceptions (Mejias, 2016). An analysis questionnaire was added to this pedagogical process, designed with questions that guide the systematisation of the experience and facilitate comparison between the different routes. The integration of these responses and the words freely contributed by the groups allowed for a more rigorous treatment of the information collected, transforming individual perceptions into inputs for data analysis and the identification of urban scenarios (Topalov, 2013). The exercise proved particularly valuable for architecture and urban planning students, as it opened up a space capable of activating different perspectives and situations that break with routine and actions conditioned by the context of everyday life (Careri, 2013).

2. Design and Method

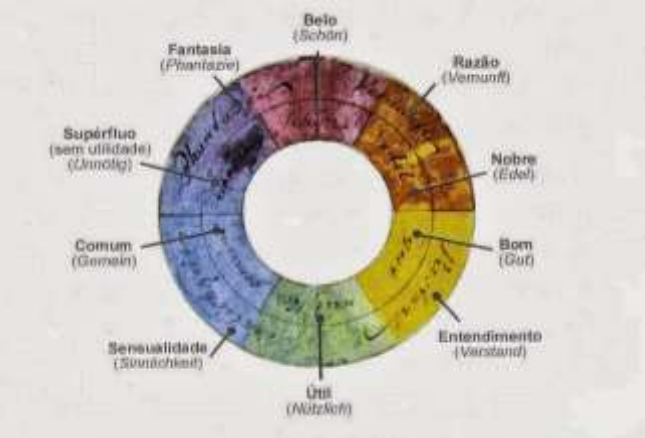
This pedagogical proposal is articulated under the motto “learning by doing”, in line with contemporary approaches to educational innovation such as “project-based learning”, which promote active and collaborative teaching linked to the social and spatial realities of the territory (Bell, 2010; Miranda Gassull, 2021). From this perspective, the working hypothesis is that diagnosis, research and creation, developed collectively through walks, questionnaires and maps, allow us to address the field of urban imaginaries as the articulating axis of the social identification of space (Barrale & Seve, 2023; Toldi & Seve, 2023). In this sense, the contribution of the experiment consists of the design of a methodical system with graphic tools for the construction of mental maps, through dynamic flows of information. This integration of stimuli, practices and responses based on collective action in the city leads to qualitative and quantitative evidence that is greater than the sum of its individual parts (Barrale et al., 2024).

The production of neighbourhoods and urban developments by the population directly influences their emotions and well-being (Corraliza & Martín, 2000). Various authors have shown that the orientation, legibility and identity of urban environments are decisive in understanding the relevance of the city as both a spatial and social structure in the collective imagination (Briceño Ávila & Gil Scheuren, 2005; Canadell, 2007; Corraliza & Aragonés, 1993; González & Moreno, 2014).

The first mental maps opened up a new way of thinking about urban spatial relationships from the perspective of those who inhabit the city (Appleyard et al., 1964; Blancafort & Reus, 2015; Halprin & Burns, 1974). According to Lynch (1984), society constructs an interrelationship with the place it inhabits, generating fundamental images that have an impact on both the dynamic functioning of the city and personal well-being. Although fieldwork techniques have been criticised for their partial or subjective nature, these pedestrian approaches also reveal configurations in various formats that allow us to interpret the significance of urban space for people (Careri, 2013; Cullen, 1996).

Thus, in the midst of the digital age of the 21st century, it is appropriate to systematise the perceptual experience of inhabitants with new tools that contribute to urban analysis and the teaching of urbanism in a participatory manner. In this sense, a fertile field opens up for recording intangible emotions and visualising symbolic appropriations based on the practice of spatial observation. In this context, we start from Goethe's *Theory of Colours* (1992 [1810]), who had already established colour circles to make associations between shades and moods —such as red with entertainment, yellow with goodness, green with usefulness and blue with commonness—; highlighting how warm colours stimulate and cheer, while cool colours convey calm and serenity (Figure 1) (Taboada, 2015).

Figure 1. Goethe's colour wheel



Source: Goethe, 1992.

Colour, therefore, becomes an operational code capable of sustaining a common language for collective expression and representation. Its use facilitated the generation of perceptual maps and dynamic cartographies where the observed and sensitive dimension converges with the digital (Geekiyanage et al., 2021; Karimi & Mattsson, 2022). In this way, the article presents condensed visualisations as site-specific results, revealing emerging meanings arising from interaction during coordinated tours between academic communities and three urban environments.

2.1. Constructive Method

The methodology proposed in this work combines analogue and digital approaches to enrich our understanding of urban spaces. Through direct contact between bodies and the city and the recording of their perceptions and observations, a situated, dynamic and collective database is formed, which can be used to reflect records of experiences (Córdoba Hernández & Román López, 2023). These approaches not only allow us to identify significant elements of the urban environment with different groups but also enable us to develop new cartographies that integrate the sensory and the empirical into urban analysis. Thus, the proposal lays the foundations for a mode of teaching and research in urban planning that is didactic, participatory and attentive to the experiential dimension of the city (Delgado, 2007).

To this end, it uses a form of movement known as urban drifting, which highlights psychogeographical value as a concept associated with the imagination in order to understand the relationships that occur between mind, body and environment (Barrale & Seve, 2023; Solnit, 2015). This practice has its origins in surrealist wanderings and the experiences of the Lettrist International (1952–1957), where it was conceived as a mechanism for generating situations and spatial configurations influenced by atmospheres and settings (Debord, 2001 [1955]).

Since the early 20th century, both Dadaists and Surrealists have incorporated drifting as an artistic and critical resource, aimed at re-signifying the use of urban space (Careri, 2013). Concepts such as the *flâneur* became established as methodological strategies for exploring the city from an alternative perspective, moving away from purely functional approaches (Bañón, 2025; De Certeau, 1984).

In this vein, drifting is understood as a contemporary device for creating collective links and testimonies (Agamben, 2011). These take the form of cartographic and situated pieces of communication that integrate experiences, perceptions and memories into the production of knowledge about the city.

Under this approach, the methodology proposes a way of recording and evaluating urban scenes, in tune with the digital conditions of today's society. The procedure is organised into four movements: (1) Urban drifting, understood as playful-constructive walks; (2) Identification and recording, through photographs or drawings of elements of the walkable city —paths, edges, neighbourhoods, nodes and landmarks— following the tradition of Lynch (1960); (3) Evaluation of results, based on questionnaires that allow the urban experience to be linked to the imaginary

expressed by the participating ; and (4) Generation of perceptual maps, using digital tools to transform information into representations.

The methodological matrix (Table 1) below summarises the scope of this procedure, combining the individual and the social, as well as the analogue and the digital, in the construction of new expressive forms of urban analysis.

Table 1. Methodological matrix "From drifting to the collective imagination"

	Individual	**Collective**
Analogue	Perceptions of space, personal maps, photos, videos, drawings: Records of drifting.	Conceptual interpretation of urban drifting. Kevin Lynch's mental maps, The Image of the City. Colour wheel, Goethe's theory.
Digital	Questionnaire responses, analysis, personal meanings, keywords, poetic and reflective writings.	Mind map, through information flows, data and graphics: Collective imaginaries.

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

3. Fieldwork and Data Analysis

The work analyses drifting as activist dynamics in academic circles and compares the urban narratives obtained as results (Colomina et al., 2016). The experiments in Madrid and Barcelona were carried out with students from the MSc TTE *Traffic and Transport Engineering* and MSc TIL Transport, Infrastructure and Logistics Mobility programmes at TU Delft; with students from the MSc in Urban and Territorial Planning at ETSAM UPM; and with students from the optional undergraduate course *Urban Notes* at ETSAB UPC. The first two initiatives took place in Madrid, one in the Ciudad Universitaria, Moncloa and Chamberí neighbourhoods near the ETSAB school and the second between Paseo del Prado and the Las Letras neighbourhood, while the last practice took place in Barcelona from Poble Sec to Montjuïc.

Student participation is not automatic, and ensuring the success of the educational proposals required coordination and clarification of certain instructions in order to understand the meaning of the experiences. The drifts were introduced with a brief historical overview that sparked interest and provided a conceptual framework for agreeing on the development of the process (Lippolis, 2015). At the beginning of each route, some rules of movement were detailed, and it was anticipated that a questionnaire would be handed out with the aim of recording perceptions (Barrale & Seve, 2023).

The information recorded in the questionnaires was used to create infographics with colours related to Goethe's colour wheel and to experiment with the possibilities offered by digital cartography in the representation of stored data. Prior to the graphic production, the collective words helped to understand the relationships between the different spaces, the groups and each movement. Thus, a series of cognitive maps were developed as a support that allows intangible and perceptual aspects of direct experience to be exposed, taking a step beyond the metric representation of urban reality. The use of diagrams to process the information provided by the participants in the urban drifts creates a collective interpretation shaped by perceptual experience (Colomina et al., 2016).

The methodology applied is based on fieldwork with students from different undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, where walking and physical contact with the territory become strategies for constructing knowledge, apprehending the city and, therefore, another way of expressing subjectivities or desires (Berenstein Jacques, 2012).

The recording of perceptions using a model questionnaire (in Google Forms) allowed us to build a geolocated database, which was subsequently processed in different representation formats. First, collective poems were composed using the words provided by the participants, which made it easier to identify significant links with the environments examined (Barrale et al.,

2024; De Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1971). The information was then transformed into chromatic infographics and digital cartographies, where colours and diagrams translated intangible experiences into visual representations (Cândido Lopes, 2019; Lynch, 1960).

The questionnaire provided to participants was the same (Table 2), with the aim of gathering latent impressions, key findings, captured images, and words to create short collective poems about the spaces in question (Figure 2). The questions were designed to explore (1) the image of the city based on the drift, (2) the observation of transformations perceived with the body, (3) psychogeographical visions during the walks, and (4) the definition of the experience from their personal perspectives.

Table 2. Questions designed to record the participants' experiences

Questions	**01. What kind of city did you observe?**	**02. Where were the most transformations perceived with the body?**	**03. What effect did the situation of wandering have?**	**04. How would you classify the experience of wandering?**
Options	Functional (green)	Density of commercial activities and land use (green)	Distant from everyday life (green)	Introspective (green)
	Global (blue)	Traffic noise and presence of urban infrastructure (blue)	Critical or analytical about urban mobility systems (blue)	Revealing (blue)
	Friendly (yellow)	Geography and nature (yellow)	Pleasant and enjoyable for the body (yellow)	Sensory and slow (yellow)
	Heritage (red)	Speeds and rhythms (red)	Emotional and artistic (red)	Social and playful (red)

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 2. Base maps for constructing diagrams showing the routes of the drifts

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

3.1. System for the Visualisation of Perceptual Data

During this research, work was carried out on the development of a tool or workflow that would allow the representation and spatialisation of the data obtained in the drifts. The aim was to systematise the management and visualisation of this data, using a common graphic language and a single medium: the map. At the same time, a flexible method with sufficient capacity for abstraction was required to integrate the different interactions between participants and urban spaces.

Thanks to advances in geographic information systems and real-time data collection, the methodology created by Lynch (1960) for obtaining mental maps has been "digitised" in various studies (Filomena et al., 2019) that seek to take advantage of urban information databases and

give them a degree of importance by cross-referencing them with qualitative or dynamic data collection.

In the case of this study, the tool was based on the behaviour of vector fields or force fields, such as the gravitational field, for the integration of different perceptions and interactions with the space travelled. Lynch's nodes, axes and edges are translated in this system into points and lines of tension, which can have a positive (attraction) or negative (repulsion) value. This is the informational structure on which the data obtained is based. The graphical tool was developed in a visual programming environment widely used by architecture students: Grasshopper 3D on the Rhinoceros platform. The phases that make up the workflow are explained below.

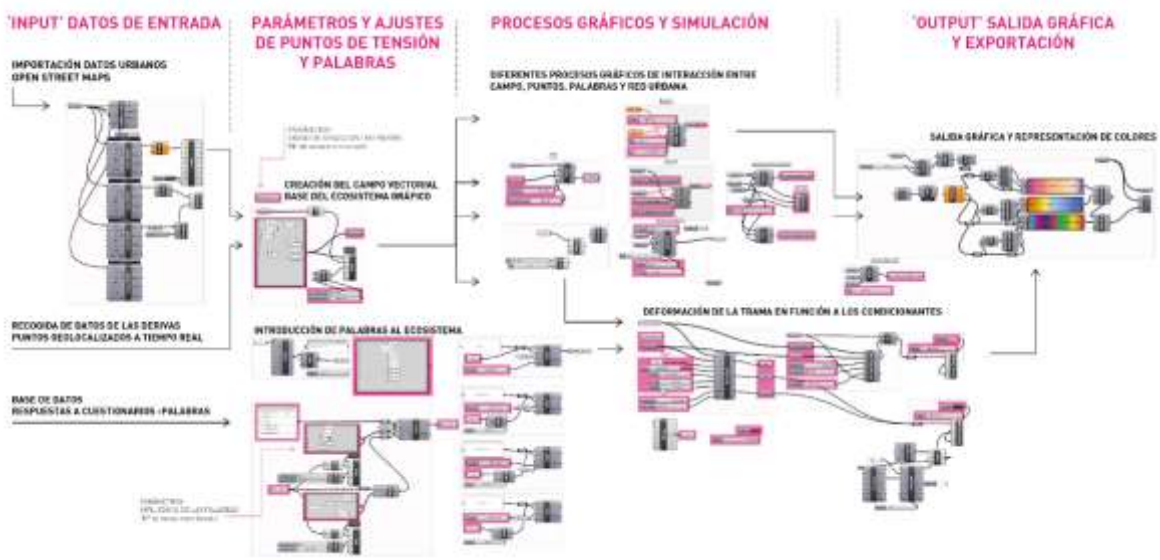
First phase: Importing input data and configuring the cartographic base. We begin by importing GIS data from the urban space under study into the interface. We use data from Open Street Maps because of its availability and common structure anywhere in the world, as well as the fact that it is collaborative information. Once this data has been read, it is transformed into vector geometry (points, lines, polygons). Based on this vector base of the urban environment, the data obtained during the drifts is also imported: the route followed and the responses to the questionnaire, which incorporate a spatial and temporal mark, constituting the dynamic data input to the system. The collection of this data via mobile phones allows for its georeferencing and, therefore, it is automatically positioned on the cartographic base.

Second phase: Establishing parameters for adjusting tension points. Based on the input data, the points or coordinates associated with the observations during the drift are entered into a list where they will acquire numerical values, as already mentioned, which can be positive (points of attraction, equivalent to Lynch's nodes) or negative (points of repulsion, defined as edges or barriers by Lynch). A higher value is associated with a greater number of observations or interactions at that position along the path.

Third phase: Graphic processes, simulation and generation of the graphic ecosystem. In the next phase, the different elements begin to interact with each other. The points and axes that obtained that “load” or “weight” construct a single field of intensities that overlaps the original urban network. At the same time, the words interact with the rest of the system and end up distorting the base of the original map. This form of representation seeks to illustrate the interaction and feedback between space and the mental image or thought of the city. The words collected in the questionnaires, positioned on the map at observation points, interact with the rest of the system and end up distorting the network. This represents the interaction of thought with space. All these parametrically constructed processes allow for adaptable visualisation, with the possibility of modification over time, as well as receiving data from the different drifts.

Fourth phase: Incorporation of colour and graphic output. The perceptual maps are finally constructed with the incorporation of colour gradients, related to the qualification given at each moment of the drift. Other minor graphic aspects are adjusted, and a vector file is exported. Figure 3 shows the four phases of the process, how they relate to each other in the tool's interface and the data flows that run through it.

Figure 3. Workflow system interface with drift data



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

4. Results

4.1. Drift 01. University City, Moncloa and Chamberí. Madrid, 2024

Table 3. General data for Drift 01

Date	Thursday, 6 February 2024.
Departure	ETSAM UPM, 5:00 p.m.
Participants	16 students from the MSc programmes in *Traffic and Transport Engineering (*TTE) and Transport, Infrastructure and Logistics (TIL) at TU Delft.
Duration	2.5 hours.
Route	University City, Moncloa Interchange, VAO High Occupancy Vehicle bus lane, Parque del Oeste (Figure 4), Calle Princesa towards the Chamberí neighbourhood, Calle peatonal Fuencarral.

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 4. Drift 01 in images

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The Drift 01 event was linked to a previous academic activity, which explains the choice of this location in the city as the setting for the experience. The Department of Urban Planning and Land Management (DUyOT UPM), as part of its programme for welcoming students from the Netherlands, organised a series of lectures on the urban transformations of Madrid, with the participation of professors and researchers from the Master's Degree in Urban and Territorial Planning (MUPUT UPM). In this context, the drift was proposed as a methodological exercise that allowed participants to compare, through walking, the city's mobility systems, infrastructure and

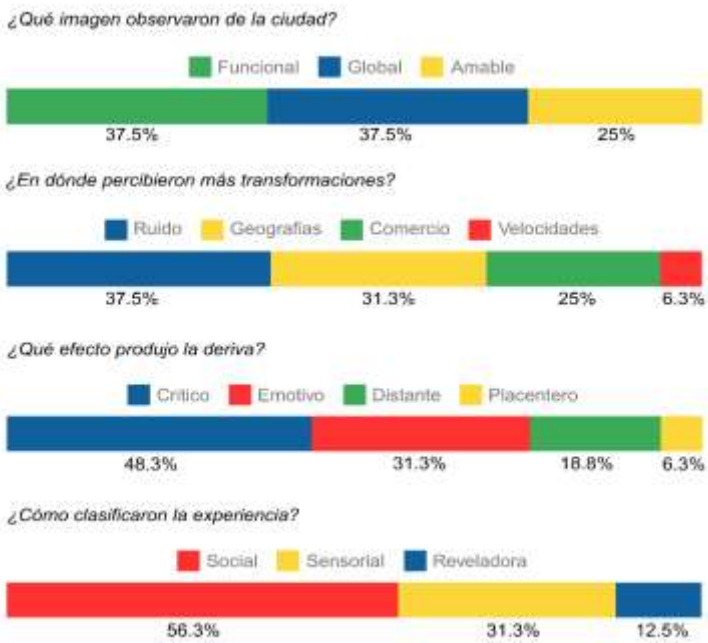
residential and commercial fabric, concluding in the pedestrian street Fuencarral, previously analysed and developed in the book *La Ciudad Paseable (The Walkable City)* (Pozueta et al., 2009) by Professor Patxi Lamíquiz.

The proposed presentations were rounded off with lectures by José Miguel Fernández Güell on *Madrid's foresight* and Andrea Alonso on the EELISA project for urban transition towards inclusive and sustainable mobility. This set of academic contributions was designed to deepen the walkers' perspective before the practice of drifting. In this way, during their immersion in the city, visitors identified relevant elements of the context, contributed images (Figure 5) and qualitative descriptions of the city using the platform detailed above. The words collected and the responses obtained through the shared form were used to create infographics of the experience (figure 6), which contribute to the temporal-spatial understanding and visual construction of the perceptual map (figure 7).

Figure 5. Commercial and residential network in the Chamberí neighbourhood

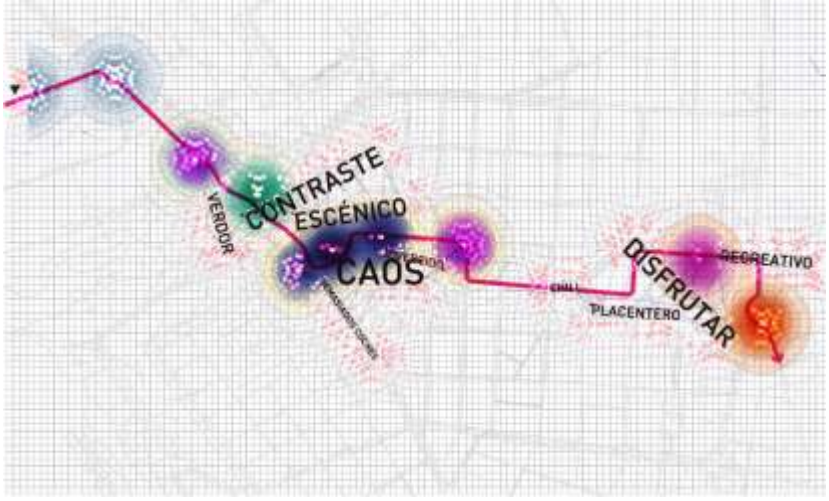
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 6. Infographic resulting from the questionnaire in Drift 01



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 7. Perceptual map of Madrid 01. Collective imagination of the first Drift



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The words related to geography highlight the psychogeographical effect and, in turn, reveal the meaning of the drift exercise (Muiño, 2016). These co-produced maps not only record the impressions of the journey, but also transform the territory into a pedagogical actor (Martín et al., 2021), where the streets become a stage for play, research, and experimentation (Huizinga, 2002) and students are active agents in the re-signification of space. In this way, interaction with the urban environment generated a deeper and more genuine understanding of the city (Colomina et al., 2016), which complements the technical analyses offered in the seminar given in the ETSAM school auditorium.

In turn, direct experience also highlights tensions, intersections in the fabric and limitations inherent in fieldwork. Factors such as the availability of time or the linearity of the route in the search for certain spaces condition the development of the drifts (Burckhardt, 2021). Likewise, the language of the participants and the characteristics of each area (residential or commercial) influence the type of links or exchanges possible with the local neighbourhood. These variables do not detract from the practical process but rather broaden the reflection with a more physical and corporeal dimension on the tools available to construct an alternative, graphic and situated view of the multiple forces that are articulated in cities.

4.2. Drift 02. Las Letras and Paseo del Prado. Madrid, 2024

Table 4. General data on Drift 02

Date	Monday, 19 February 2024.
Departure	Puerta de Murillo at the Prado Museum, 11:30 a.m.
Participants	22 students from the Master's Degree in Urban and Territorial Planning (MUPUT), ETSAM UPM.
Duration	1 hour and 30 minutes.
Route	Paseo del Prado, Plaza Neptuno, Calle de Cervantes, Calle de Jesús, Calle del Gobernador, CaixaForum, Paseo del Prado (Figure 8).

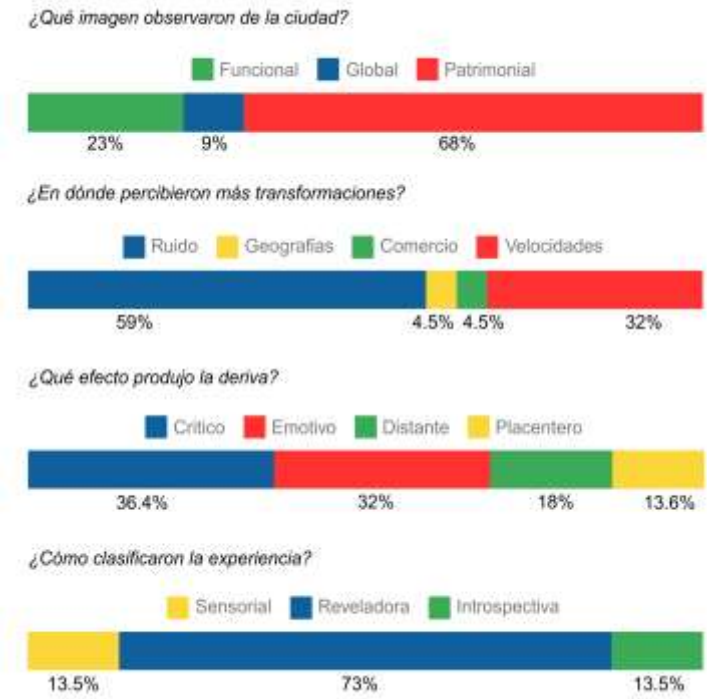
Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 8. Drift 02 in images

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

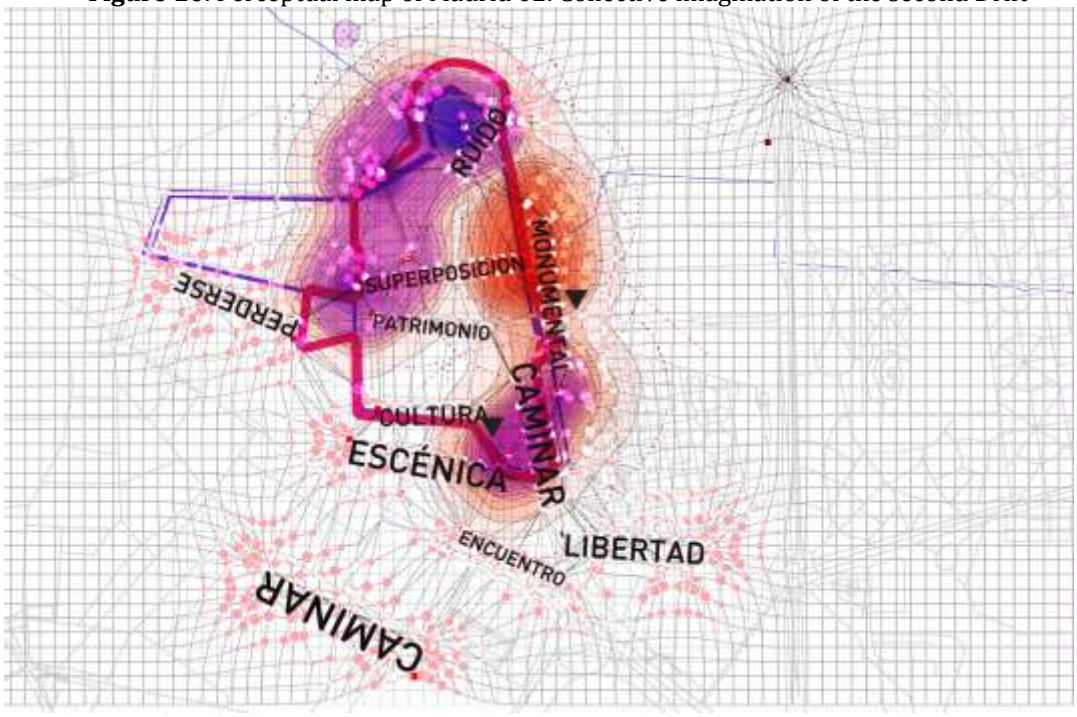
The words released around the performative act of walking organise, qualify and demonstrate the potential of drift as an instrument for getting lost, communicating and becoming aware of space (Topalov, 2013) (Figure 10). The area in question, studied using the form, reveals its central and heritage character, as well as recording a high volume of vehicular traffic during the morning hours of the second drift (figures 9). The circular movement of the route made it possible to link various liminal areas—such as the Barrio de Las Letras and Paseo del Prado—which are particularly close to each other but differ in their uses (commercial or cultural), in the scale of traffic flows, in the density of the urban fabric, and in the presence of green areas in the vicinity of the Retiro Park.

Figure 9. Infographic resulting from the questionnaire in Drift 02



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 10. Perceptual map of Madrid 02. Collective imagination of the second Drift



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

In fact, in this case, we can see how participants detected monumental buildings with public and private properties in a sector with low residential density. It should be emphasised that the records and representations resulting from the fieldwork are what make it possible to identify both the scope and the difficulties that the educational practice of urban drift raises in different territories, in relation to the possibility of collectively recognising, interpreting and transforming the landmarks and elements that define urban spaces (Lynch, 1960; Pereira, 2018; Topalov, 2013).

4.3. Drift 03. Poble Sec and Montjuic. Barcelona, 2024

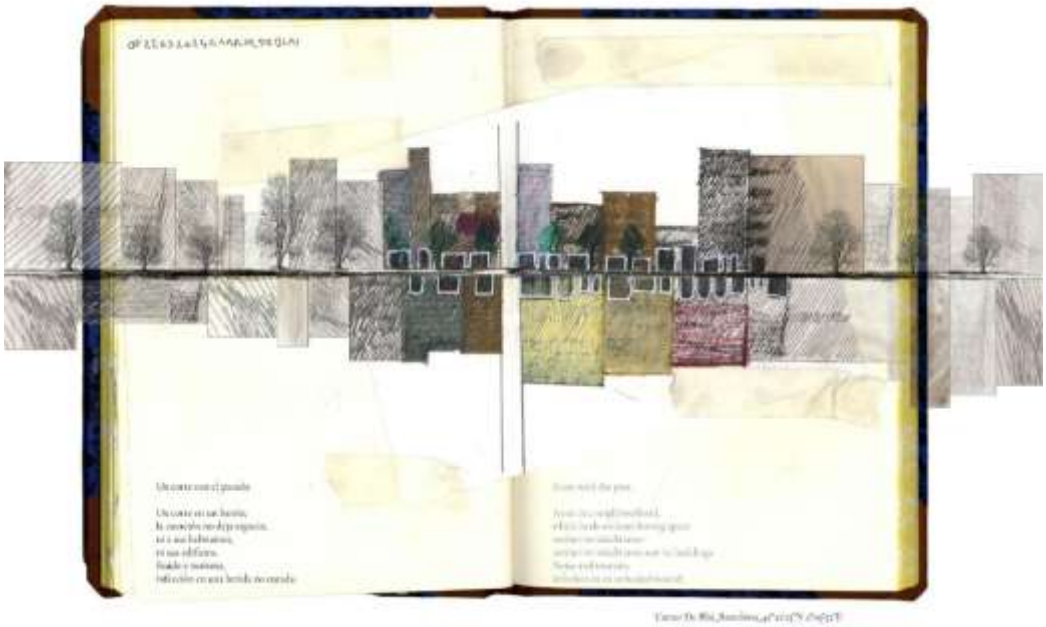
Table 5. General data on Drift 03

Date	Friday, 1 March 2024.
Departure	Jardines de las Tres Chimeneas, 8:30 a.m.
Participants	25 students from the Urban Notes course, ETSAB UPC.
Duration	2.5 hours.
Route	Calle de Mata, Carrer de Piquer, Calle de Cabanes, Calle de Villa i Villa, Calle Nou de la Rambla, Parc de la Primavera.

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

The third drift took place within the framework of the Urban Sketching course, whose main objective is to draw the urban space by hand and on foot for subsequent post-production. This elective subject maintains that the act of drawing in situ is a deep commitment to the place, in which an immersion in the environment is established. This process invites careful observation, listening to invisible stories and understanding the fabric of the community. Thus, drawing becomes a tool for reflection and analysis, facilitating an authentic and nuanced connection with the inhabited space (Figure 11).

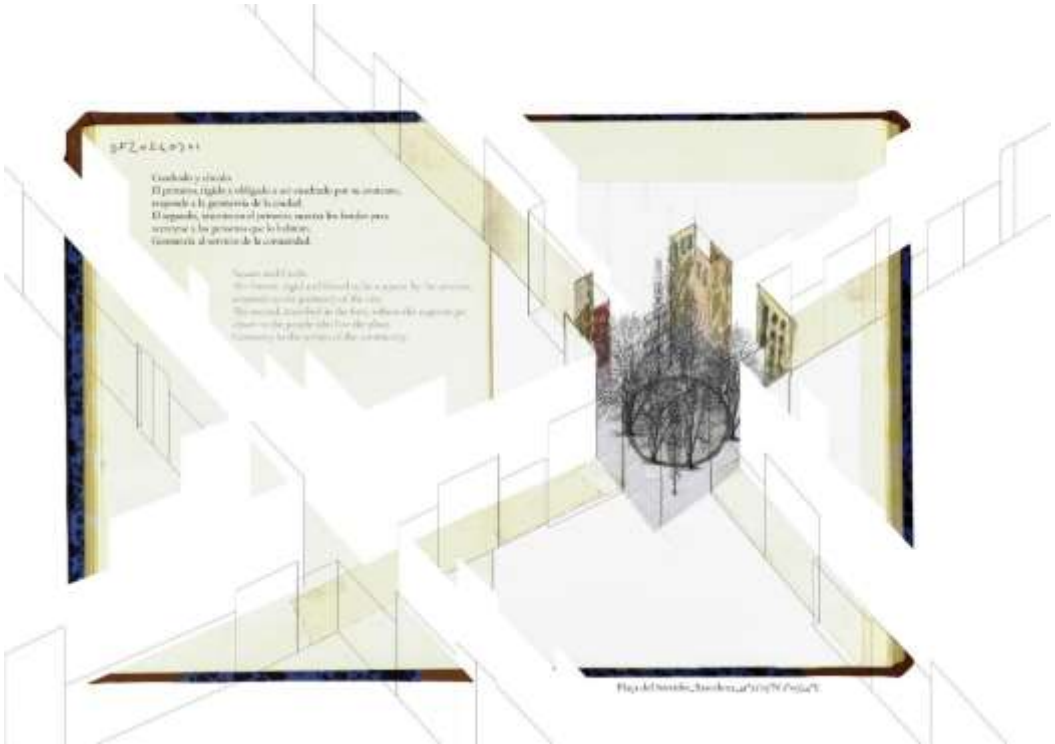
Figure 11. Carrer De Blai



Source: Production by Urban Notes students in Deriva 03, 2024.

The *Urban Notes* course at the Barcelona School of Architecture promotes a leisurely approach to knowledge, based on immersion in neighbourhood realities through observation, listening and the experience of walking and drawing (figure 12). In this way, priority is given to an analogue approach to the place and its community, so that students can try out ways of relating to a territory and apply this methodology in other contexts. This avoids rushing into purely abstract architectural or urban planning design, giving priority to a preliminary phase of artistic, cognitive, social, transversal and contextual analysis of the city.

Figure 12. Plaza Del Sortidor



Source: Production by Urban Notes students in Deriva 03, 2024.

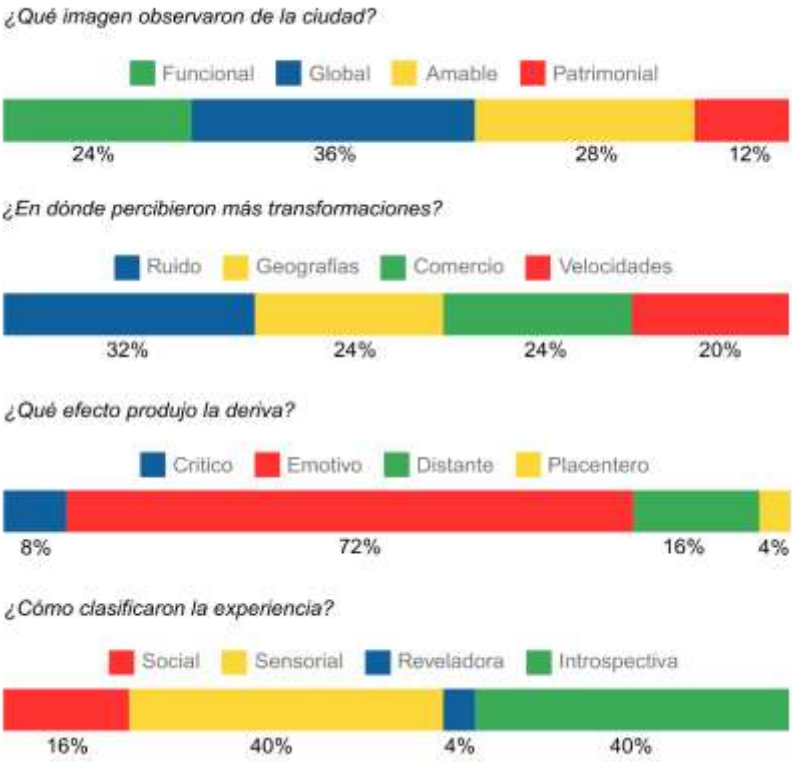
Hand drawing, accompanied by active listening to the people who inhabit a place and careful observation, is a fundamental practice to be recovered in the training of architecture students interested in urban co-creation and inclusive urban planning processes (Avilla-Royo, 2022; Seve et al., 2023). This collaborative way of thinking and participating is based on an open dialogue that transcends unilateral communication between specialists and citizens, seeking instead an exchange aimed at building common strategies for human and more-than-human good (Abram, 1996; Fieuw et al., 2022; Gutiérrez-Vázquez et al., 2023).

Furthermore, it is important to note that, in this case, the fieldwork was not an isolated activity, but rather the course enabled the continuity of the study and the creation of associations between students based on affinity and thematic interests. This sustained dynamic over time favoured the design of collaborative collages (Figure 13) with the sketches made during the drift. The *Urban Notes* proposal, combining community tours, open *Urban Sketching* meetings and participatory debates, provided a fertile ground for constructing an infographic as a diagnosis of the urban fragments found (Figure 14) and for sharing the joint production of the perception map (Figure 15).

Figure 13. Collage of Poble Sec and Montjuic

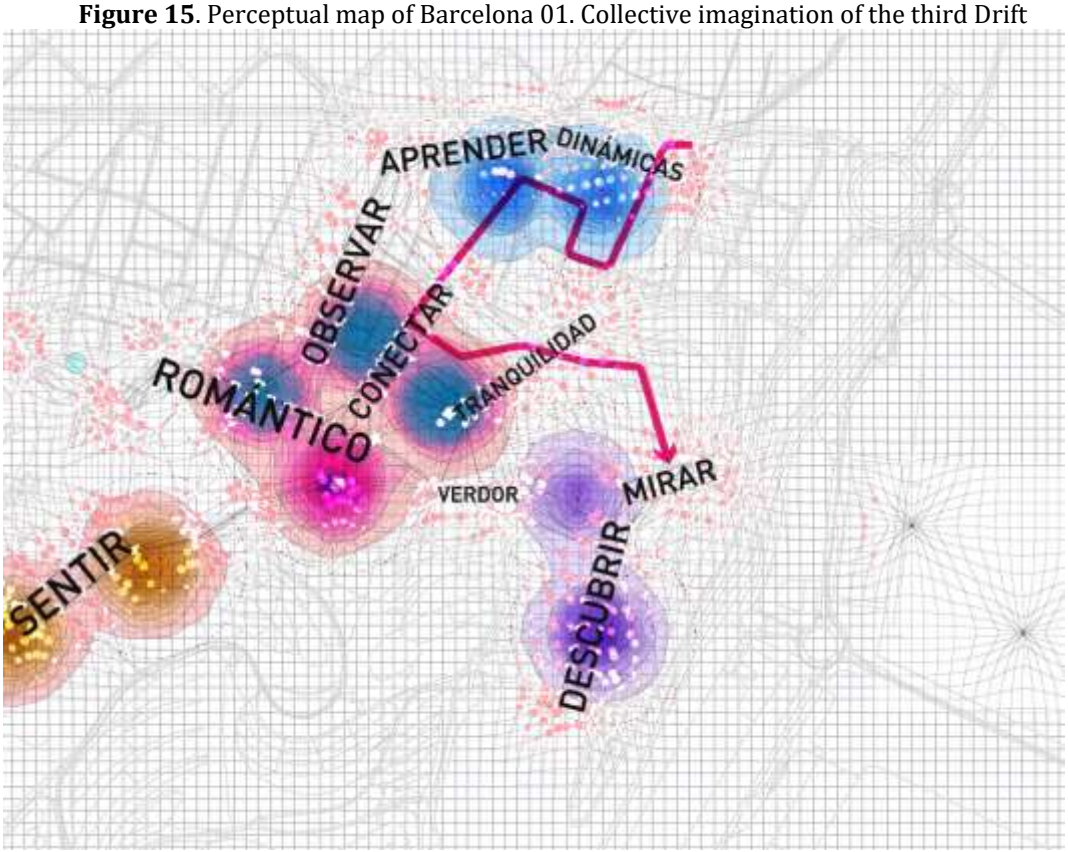
Source: Production by Urban Notes students in Deriva 03, 2024.

Figure 14. Infographic resulting from the questionnaire in Drift 03



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Figure 15. Perceptual map of Barcelona 01. Collective imagination of the third Drift



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

Unlike previous experiences organised in Madrid, the drift in Barcelona, which took place at 8:30 in the morning, helped to consolidate a bond marked by the search for silence and intimacy, towards the interior of the Poble Sec neighbourhood —as highlighted in the mapping and infographic—, with a slow, introspective and sensory character that was reinforced by the drawing exercise. In this way, the drift as an alternative form of exploration becomes a collective symbolic arena (Rebouças de Almeida, 2014), whose value is amplified at the moment of debate, reflection and sharing at the end of the experience. The process of observation and representation allowed the experienced space to be transformed into a place where memories, personal connotations and emotional associations define the urban experience (Wolff, 2000). In this way, through the situation map, the city was "rediscovered" and conveyed from multiple points of view, fostering the construction of urban imaginaries as a result of the joint coordination of a context that encourages both individual and collective graphic expressions.

5. Conclusions and Discussion

The experiences accumulated through the drifts carried out in Madrid and Barcelona show how the combination of analogue and digital tools, together with the participants' perceptions, allow for the construction of shared urban imaginaries. The methodological system used—with photographs, colours, sketches, and maps—functioned as a bridge between experience and territorial reinterpretation, offering complementary readings of the city. This process of observation and recording made it possible to identify significant elements of the urban landscape (passages, viewpoints, monuments, pedestrian areas, among others), thus articulating a perspective that integrates the subjective and the rational, as well as the individual and the collective, in the pedagogical construction of learning.

The three situations carried out highlight drifting as an educational resource capable of revealing the aesthetic, geographical, symbolic, and functional qualities of the city. The graphic and narrative production allows us to link diverse experiences and recognise common patterns, consolidating a framework for transversal analysis that validates the hypothesis that the methods developed in walks, questionnaires and maps facilitate work on urban imaginaries and the social identification of space. In this way, the research provides keys to collectively explore and represent structures and tensions in the urban landscape.

The use of tools, such as the questionnaire provided to obtain rigorous information, is essential for capitalising on "real-time" perceptions and ensuring that the days spent on participation are put to good use. Based on the questions, the general response indicates that the neighbourhoods selected for the tours in both Madrid and Barcelona are presented as "functional and global". Characteristics such as the "friendliness or heritage" of the streets have been nuanced by the centrality of some of the areas crossed, as was specifically the case in the second drift on the Paseo del Prado (Madrid). Among the transformations collected, urban noise was the aspect that the groups perceived to a greater extent than other alterations that make up the atmosphere, such as commercial, geographical or rhythmic factors. It is worth noting that "the analytical effect on mobility systems" coincided with the experiences in Madrid with teams from master's degree programmes in urban planning who are dedicated to the study of these urban infrastructure issues, while the *Urban Notes* course in Barcelona determined that 72% of participants felt "an emotional and artistic vision" during the activity. In this sense, it can be said that the drifts deepen and stimulate the personal qualities specific to the specific training of each delegation. This could indicate that we do not perceive things only as they are, but through individual or group interests. On the question that provides a definition of the properties of the experience, the option "sensory and unhurried" was the common factor in the three field studies. The order of responses continued with the characterisation of the drift as a playful-social, revealing and introspective dynamic.

In the free section at the end of the form, some students commented on the relaxed state of drifting "like a Sunday" and as "a new way of seeing things" that they do not stop to think about, detail or perceive in everyday situations. This research shows that fieldwork offers an effective methodology for developing practical and collaborative skills, regardless of whether it involves a

pre-established group of people or an isolated day. Activities outside universities linked to a form of situated mapping are presented as a sensitive and affective opportunity for learning and interacting with the city. As a limitation of the analysis, the practice was carried out in three case studies, making it a preliminary experience of how walking in cities allows, first, to encode information about space and, second, to compose a series of collective maps.

The use of Geographic Information Technologies in collaborative mapping experiences highlights both their advantages and limitations. On the one hand, the accessibility of mobile phones with internet connection and GPS allowed databases to be built quickly, facilitating interaction between the experience and geolocated information. However, the use of devices during the drifts can distract attention and exclude those who opt for an immersion without technology, so it is key to design systems that are permeable and capable of integrating these contributions as well. In this sense, the creation and application of a flexible workflow demonstrated its adaptability to possible changes in input data and, therefore, its great potential for real-time recording and visualisation of changes and developments in the drifts.

Within the processing system, the word relationships suggested by each group with the intention of catalysing the path were a brief contribution in literary terms, but significant for the appropriation and subsequent representation of the territories involved. The experience developed "at street level" using photographs, drawings, infographics and maps has made it possible to weave together complementary approaches such as the pedestrian view (of the drift) and the bird's-eye view (of the cartography constructed with digital programmes). In our experience, the integration of digital technologies with the analogue work used during the territorial survey is strengthening the teaching-learning processes and providing tools for the training of professionals capable of facing the challenges of current urban planning in a critical, collaborative, creative and transformative manner.

In particular, the article demonstrates that exploring unfamiliar areas enhances the observation and description of cities, generating a more impactful effect on the construction of meaning. This was reflected in the diversity of the participants involved: foreign students from the Netherlands in drift 01, international students from the MUPUT Master's programme in drift 02 and exchange students in drift 03, who, to a large extent, explored places that were previously unknown to them. For its part, the *Urban Notes* drift, reinforced by a large number of sketches and brief stops, differed from previous walks in that it was longer in terms of time and more limited in terms of distance. This allowed for a recognition of everyday reality from another logic of detailed perception and generated a more committed attitude in relation to the concerns of the group interacting with the space. In turn, this creative aspect significantly strengthens the relationships and alliances between students, which is particularly relevant as a dynamic for the consolidation of student teams.

In summary, the main contributions of this work of opening up the senses have been: (1) the technical development of an experimental way of representing urban scenes, adaptable to different contexts and the group's disciplinary training; (2) the opportunity to replicate this practice of interpreting cities on foot; and (3) the potential for graphic production and intelligible exhibition, for a wide audience, of maps of perceptions and appropriate images of spaces based on the drifts.

For future fieldwork connections, in longer research experiences or in peripheral areas with less commercial activity, different results are to be expected. In order to continue creating lived maps and generating, among them, collective imaginaries in cities, this methodology will be replicated in the MUPUT master's degree, in Apuntes Urbanos and in conferences with visitors and guests interested in producing identity as part of their training in Architecture and Urbanism.

In short, the experiments have made it possible to convert the individual into the collective and the analogue into the digital, resulting in three perceptual maps, which are the main contribution of this paper. These maps have been constructed using vector fields as a graphic information support to integrate the social and spatial interrelationships and observations of students walking around the city. The system presented is dynamic, open, flexible, easy to understand and helps to create a digital synthesis of the imagination of a group of people in the context of a drift: a first step towards the digital legibility of urban scenes from a collective perception.

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