A STATE OF THE ART OF INTERIOR'S PROFESSIONALIZATION PROCESS IN EUROPE

A BINARY SPIDER MODEL APPROACH

(ECIA/UA - 2023)

ECIA
University of Antwerp
Faculty of Design Sciences

1

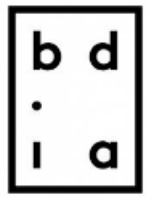
SPIDER MODELS RESEARCH

GATHERING DATA TO GAIN INSIGHT INTO OUR PROFESSION ACROSS VARIOUS EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP.

Contact : Dominic Haag-Walthert

Co-funded by the European Union

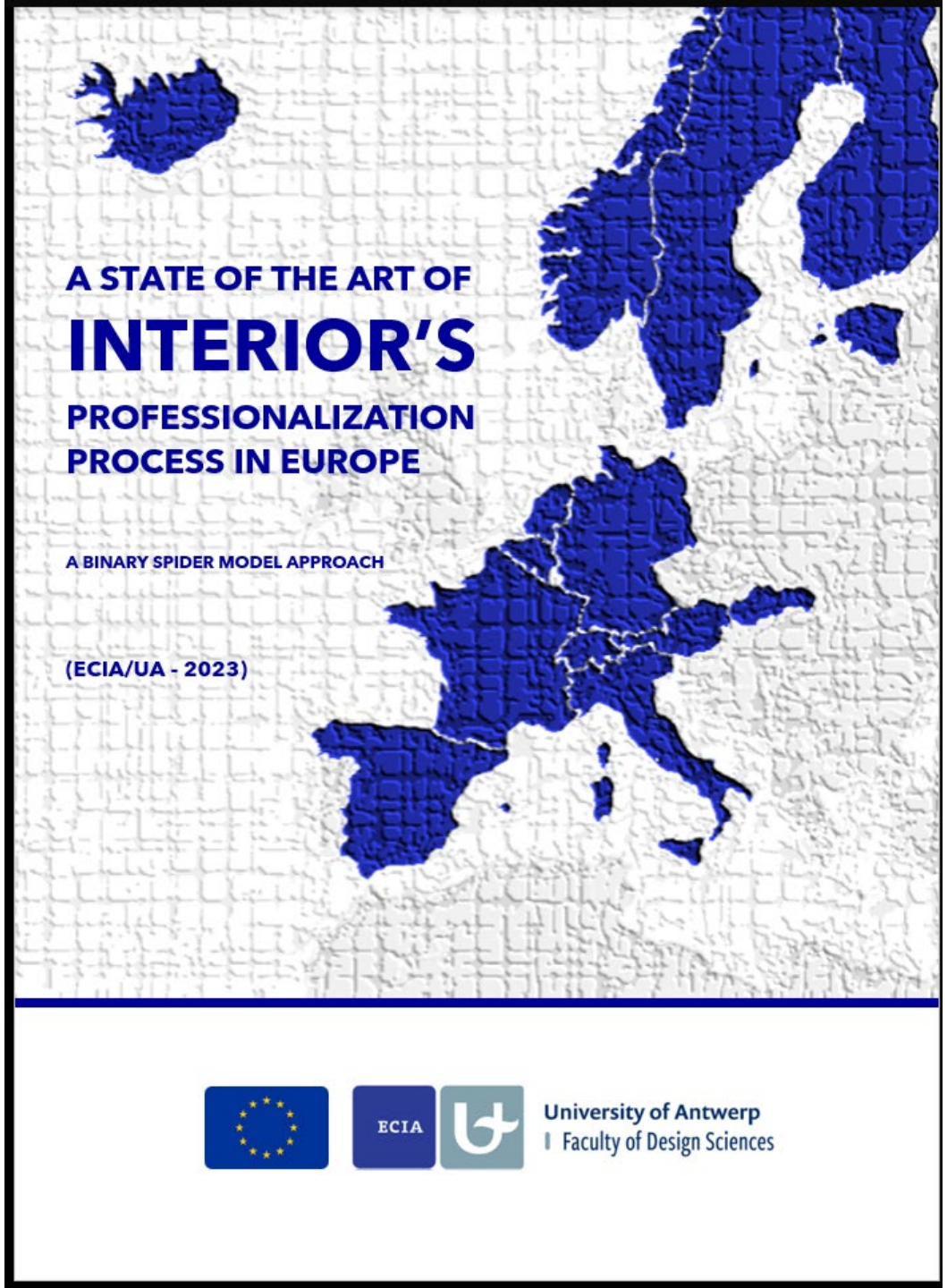
RESEARCH for ECIA, a European platform to represent and promote the qualified profession of interior architects/designers



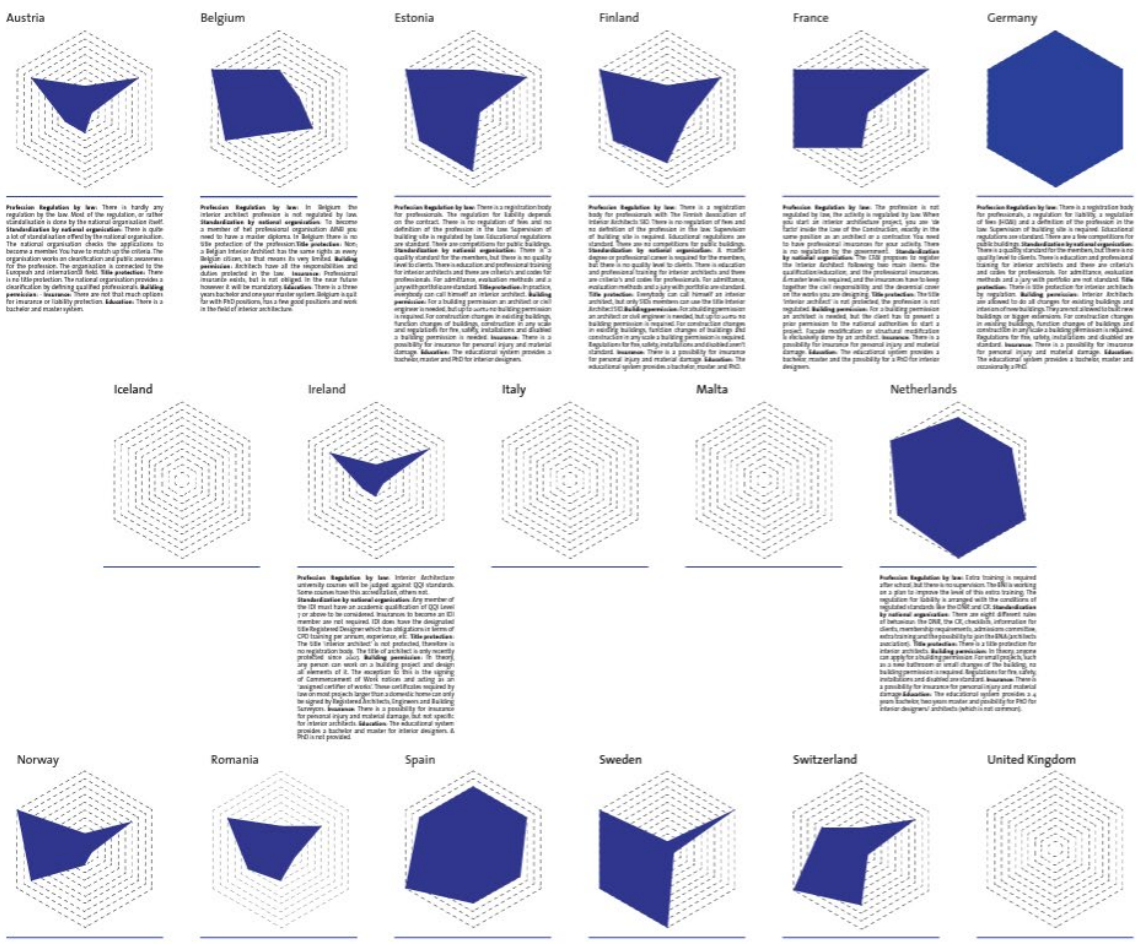
MAPPING

Mapping the professionalization of the Interior Architecture discipline in Europe

Research: Louis Debersaques
Supervision:
Els De Vos
Inge Somers



RESEARCH of ECIA, a European platform to represent and promote the qualified profession of interior architects/desingers



(2017)

(2021)

MAPPING THE DIVERSITY IN REGULATION OF THE INTERIOR DISCIPLINE IN EUROPE.

A study of France, Germany and Norway based upon three regulating frameworks: educational, professional and legislative.

PART 1: RESEARCH REPORT

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Faculty of Design Science
Interior Architecture
University of Antwerp

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University of Antwerp
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ECIA European Council of Interior Architects

COUNTRIES

Mapping state of the art of the diversity of the Interior Architecture discipline in Europe

In the countries included interior architecture has a certain visibility, organisation.

Recently 3 new members:

- the British Institute of Interior Design
- Slovak Association of Interior Designers
- the Association of Interior Designers of Bulgaria (observer member)

1		Belgium	AiNB
2		Italia	AIPI
3		Deutschland	GDIA
4		Netherlands	BNI
5		Austria	BOIA
6		Spain	CGCODDI
7		Estonia	ESL/EAIA
8		Iceland	FHI
9		Malta	MIDA
10		Norway	NIL
11		Sweden	SA
12		Slovakia	SAID
13		Finnland	SIO
14		Switzerland	VSI.ASAI
15		Netherlands	Architi.Rg.NL
16		France	CFAI/ReG

RESEARCH

Research question:

What is the degree of professionalisation between countries?

Subquestions: **how is the discipline regulated/organised**

by education

by professional organisations

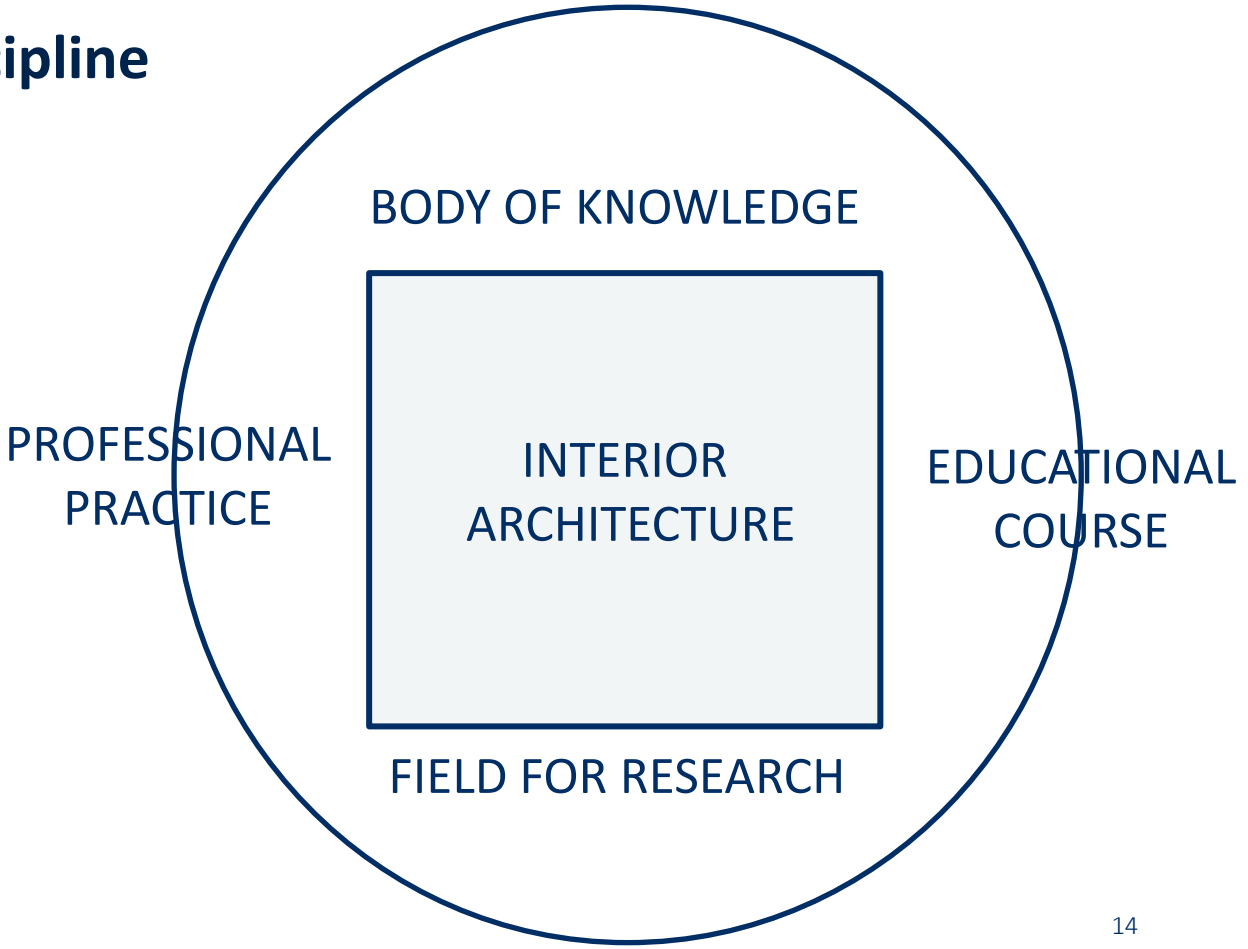
by the law

Hypothesis: a higher professionalization leads to higher acceptance and recognition of interior architecture

CONCEPT of the INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE DISCIPLINE

According to **Ellen S. Klingenberg (Professor of Interior Architecture in the Kunsthøgskolen in Oslo),** and elaborated on **by Inge Somers (University of Antwerp):**

the interior discipline as a **4-dimensional discipline**



CONCEPT of PROFESSIONALIZATION

Use of concept of professionalization of Grace Lees-Maffei (University of Hertfordshire)

professionalization can be defined as **the process of developing an activity into a general recognized profession through the setting up of:**

1. Educational institutions
2. Professional organizations
3. Articulation of the codes of conduct (+enforceability, cf. sanctions)
4. Educational rules of assessment
5. Networking and gatekeeping

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Are any '**lifelong continued learning**'-programs offered in **your country**?

Yes

No

Other

Is the continued learning **mandatory to obtain membership** in professional organizations/chambers?

Yes

No

QUESTIONNAIRE

Education

Practice/organization and legislation

Attention for
Gender
Diversity

qualtrics XM

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH EACH COUNTRY

Photo: Els De Vos

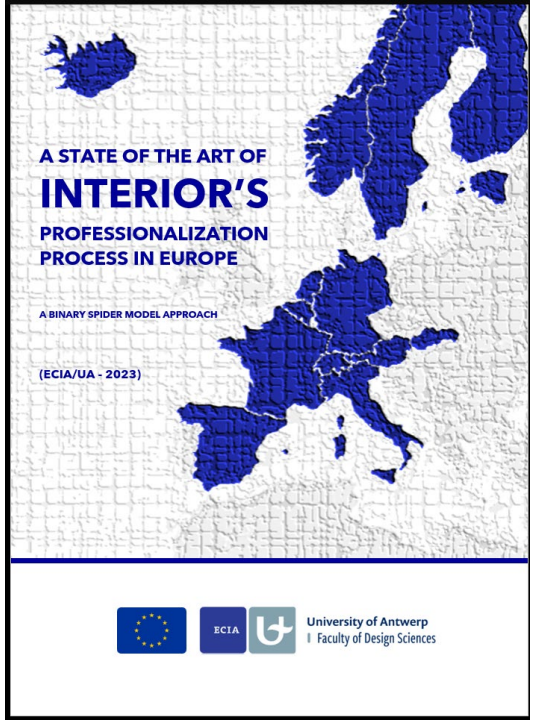
- **Verify & nuance the questionnaire data**
  - To contextualise the data
  - To mediate between education and organisations

Education

Practice/organization and legislation

CONTENT

1. General recognition difficulties / barriers to professionalization
2. Spider Model Analyses
3. On awareness, stigma: gender, diversity and inclusion
4. Concluding remarks

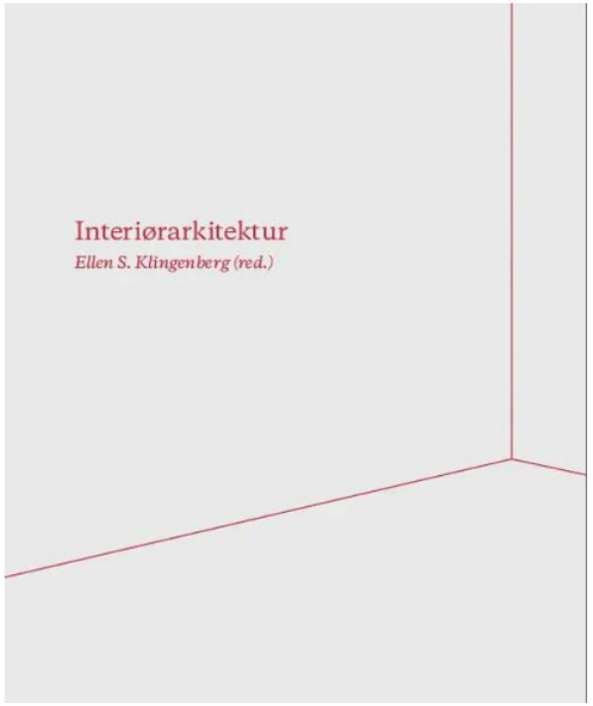


1. General recognition difficulties / barriers to professionalization

Barriers to professionalization due to:

1. Terminological obscurity
2. Disciplinary “in-betweenness”
3. General recognition issues

1.Terminological obscurity



Norway

Name of Regulated Profession	Country	Region	Recognition Under Directive 2005/36/EC
Architecte d'intérieur	Luxembourg	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Architecte d'intérieur	Switzerland	Genève	General system of recognition - primary application
Belsőépítészeti tervezési szakterület / Építészeti-műszaki tervezési tevékenység	Hungary	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Decorador	Spain	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Décorateur d'intérieur	Luxembourg	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Innanhússhönnudur	Iceland	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Innenarchitekt	Germany	All Regions	General system of recognition - secondary application
Interieurarchitect	Netherlands	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application
Raumplaner	Liechtenstein	All Regions	General system of recognition - primary application

1.Terminological obscurity

Interior architecture
(structural/spatial)

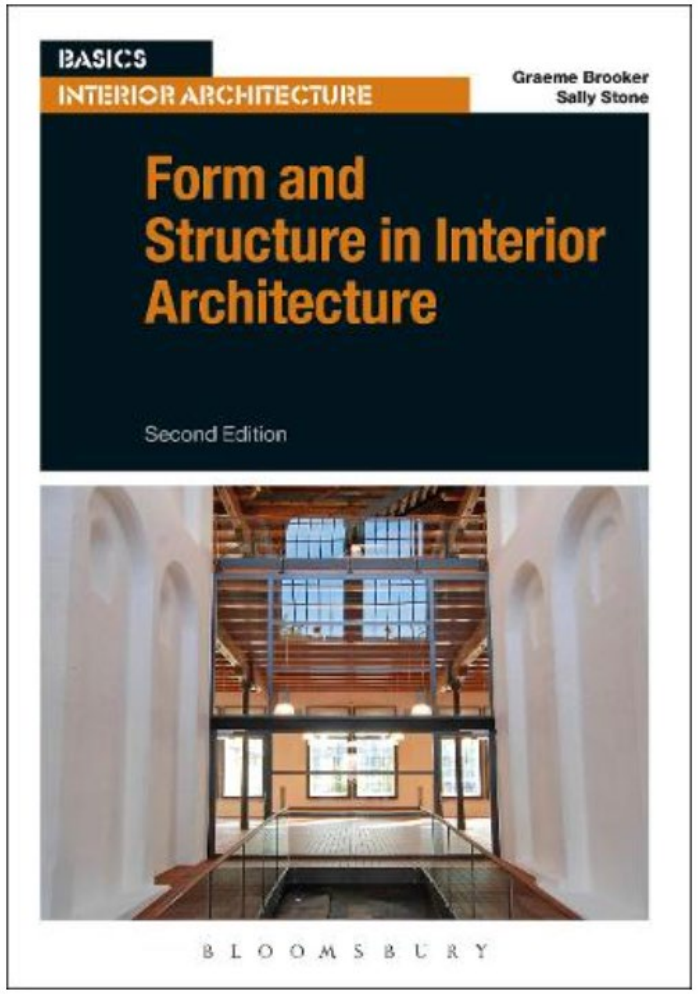
Furniture design
(working with existing materials)

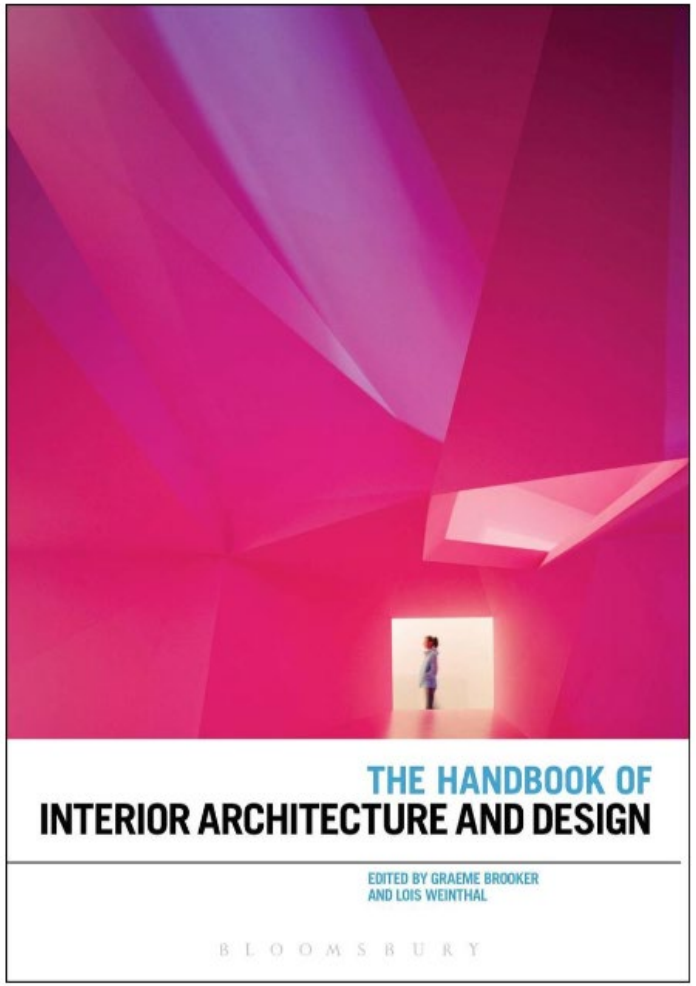
Interior design

Interior decoration
('finishing touches')

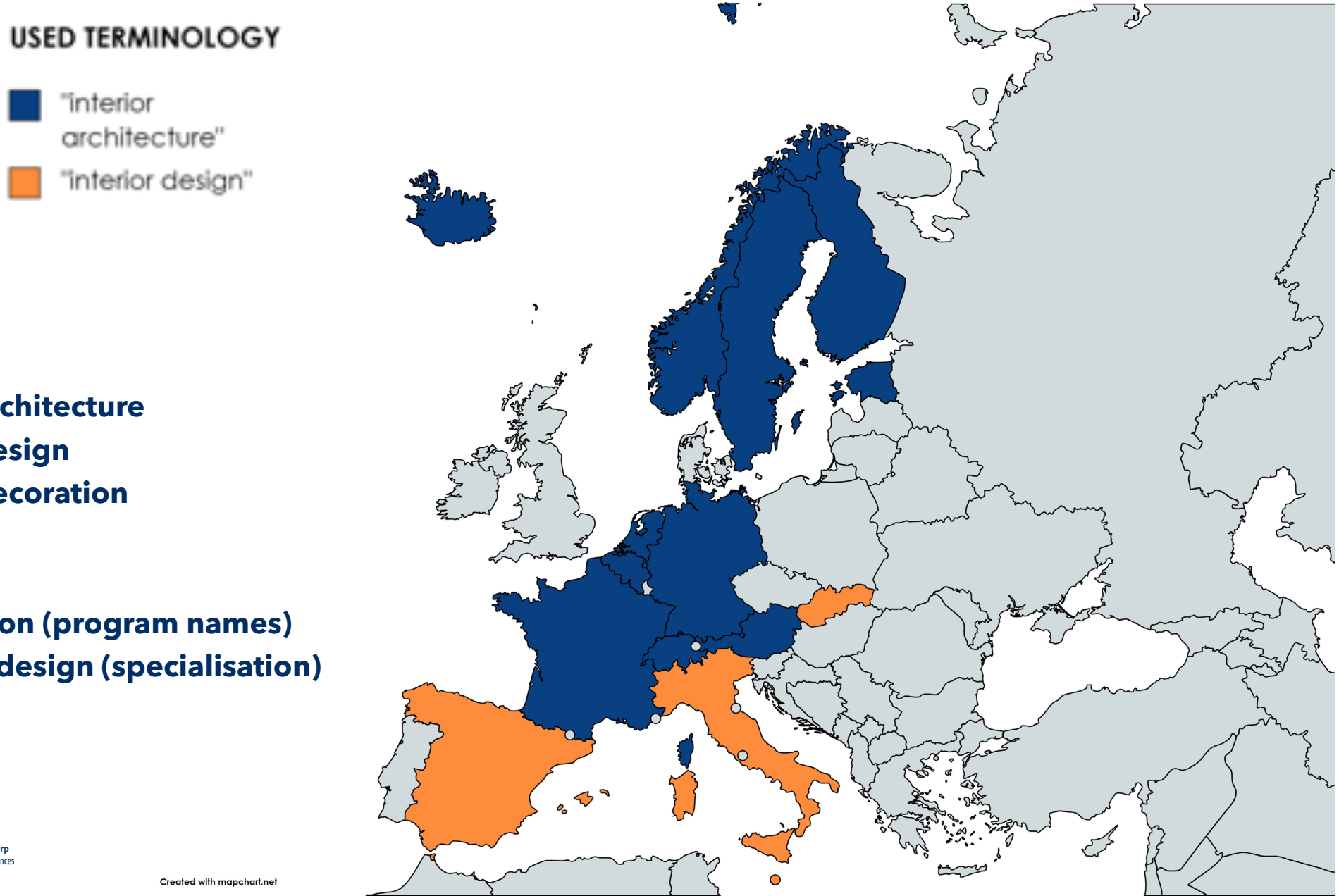
1.Terminological obscurity

Visible in titles of books





1.Terminological obscurity



- **Interior architecture**
- **Interior design**
- **Interior decoration**
- **…**

- **in education (program names)**
- **Furniture design (specialisation)**

1.Terminological obscurity

Sometimes the two terms are used:

In **Italy** at the Polimi of Milan both exist:

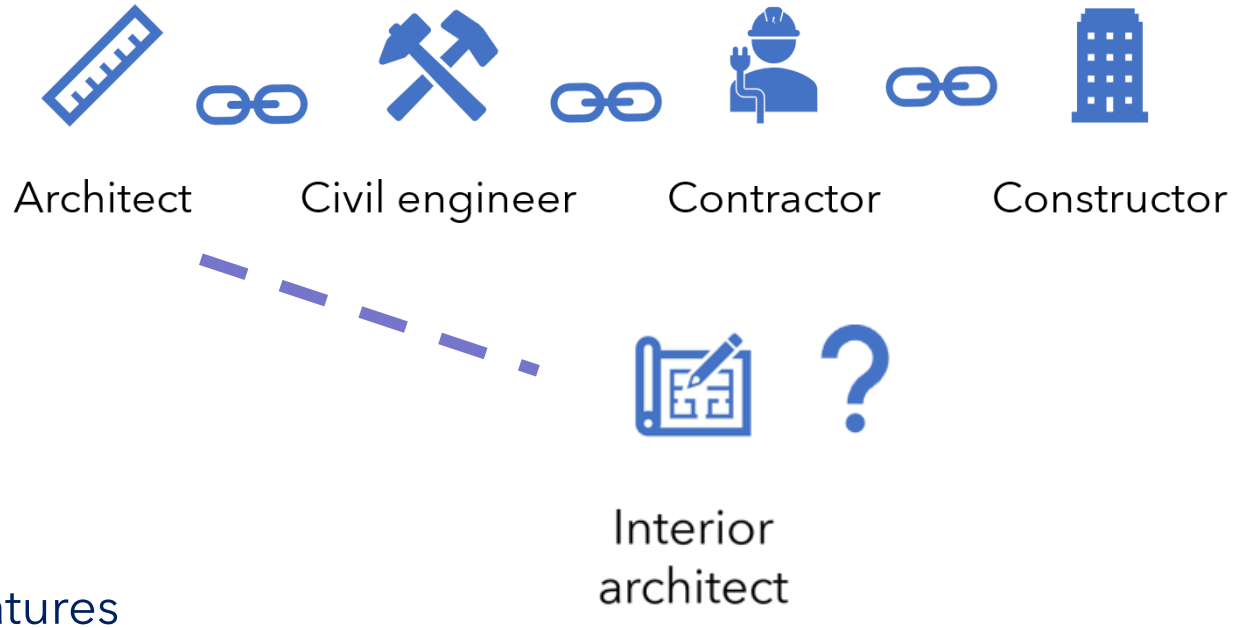
- *Interior and spatial design* at the School of Design
- *Interior architecture* as a kind of specialisation at School of Architecture and Urban Studies (DASTU)

Comparable to **Flanders**, but also different:

- Interieurarchitectuur > academic master at a university
- interieurvormgeving > professional bachelor at a university college

2. Disciplinary in-betweenness

- **Building team chain**
  - Expert vs helper vs adviser



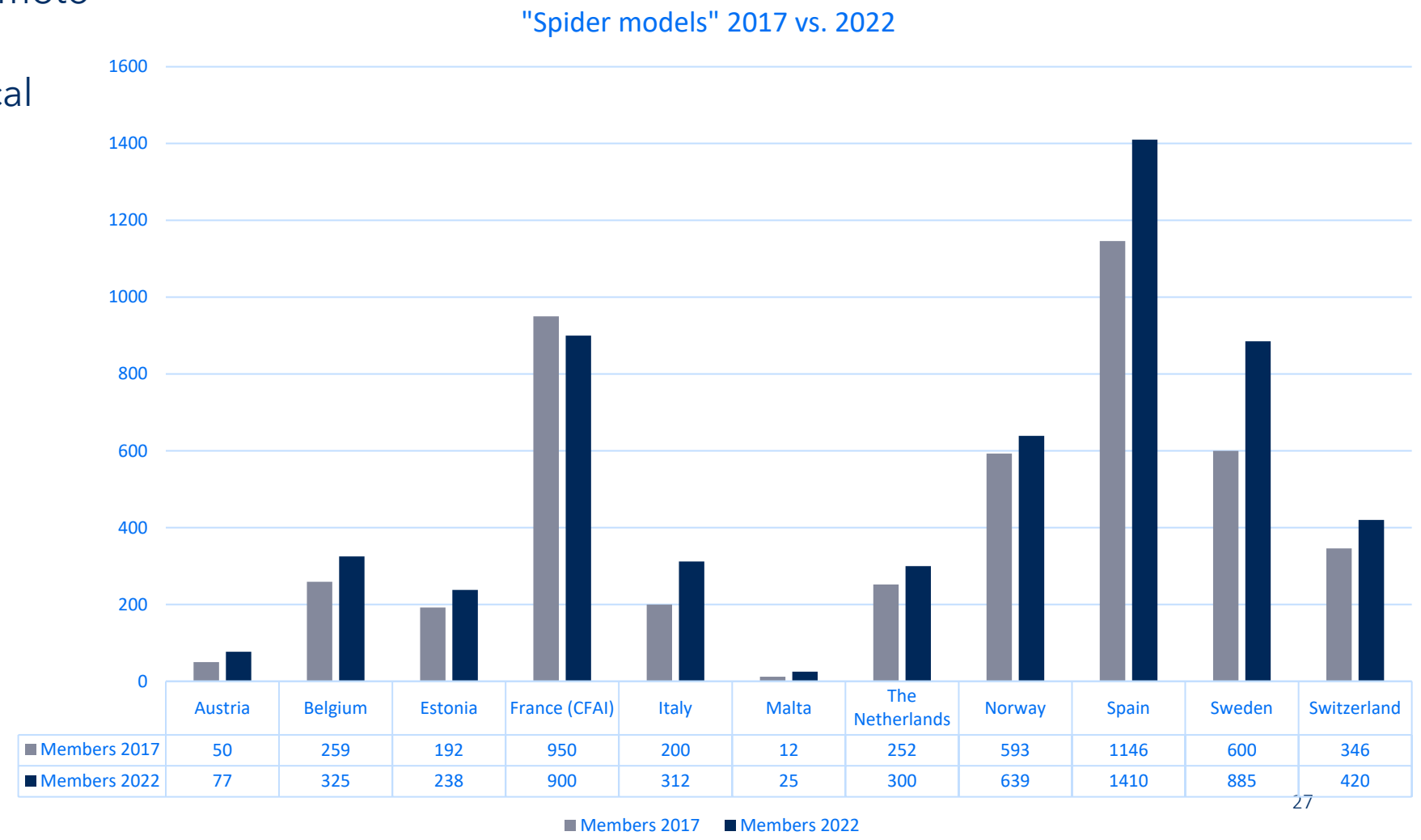
- **Conflicting building regulations**
  - Certification building permission signatures
    - Diversity in federal states; cantons; provinces
    - Diversity in regional environment

      (distant/desolate = more permissions ~ Finland, Austria)

3. Professionalization through general recognition

Recognition

- **Intradisciplinary recognition**
- (be able to define and promote oneself properly)
- national size + geographical peculiarity



	Austria	Belgium	Estonia	France (CFAI)	Italy	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland
Members 2017	50	259	192	950	200	12	252	593	1146	600	346
Members 2022	77	325	238	900	312	25	300	639	1410	885	420

3. Professionalization through general recognition

Recognition

- **Intradisciplinary recognition** (be able to define and promote oneself properly)
- national size + geographical peculiarity

  Large countries > more members

  Small countries > harder to exist. Although Slovakia & Malta, small but well organized organisations

  Italy: rich tradition in design, so more visible and does the effort to be so

- **Interdisciplinary recognition**
  - Germany and Slovakia specifically aim for an own chamber of Design, instead of being part of a Chamber of Architecture

If we look at, for example, competitions, which they're enrolling very much, they always ask for, for example, structural engineer, landscape architecture, but they seldomly asked for an interior architect. (…) So within architecture, interior architecture isn't perceived as additional quality within the team, but predominantly seen as some something that they can do themselves.

(Wim Van der Vurst, Belgium)

3. Professionalization through general recognition

Public recognition

"Stereotypes are stiff and stick very well." – on the depiction of interior architects in television programs

Lars RÄIHÄ (Finland)

"After women's fashion, interior [architecture/design] is, I think, the most described and shown subject on television, so we are also on everyone's tongue and ***you have to take advantage of that. You shouldn't see that as a threat****."*

Kees SPANJERS (The Netherlands)

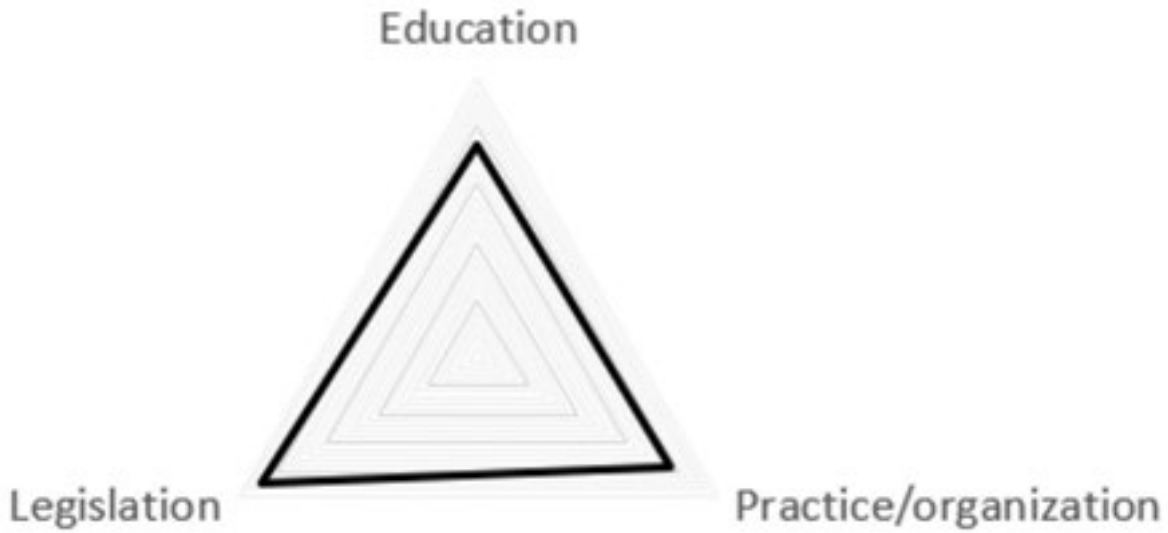
Translated from Dutch.

2. SPIDER MODEL ANALYSES

1. **Education**
2. **Practice / professional organisations**
3. **Legislation**

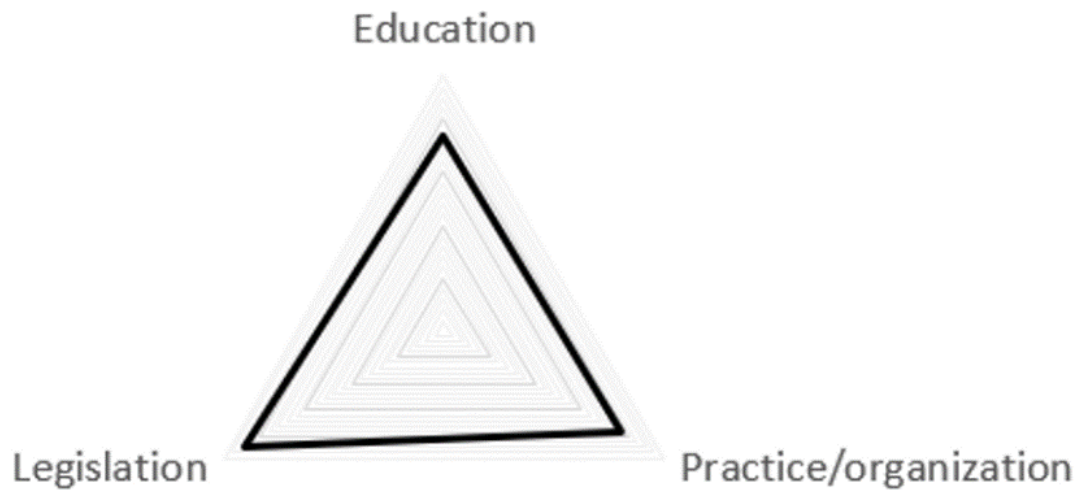
Binary point system

- 1 = present
- 0,5 = present to a certain extent (e.g. PhD in Architecture, specialization IA)
- 0= absent



The binary system

- **From binary to spider model graphs (%)**



1	1	1	Variation in educational programs / existence of autonomous interior programs
1	1	1	Variation in educational programs / educational levels / less than 3 years (interior design)
1	1	1	Variation in educational programs / educational levels / 3-year bachelor
1	0	0	Variation in educational programs / educational levels / 4-year bachelor
1	0	0	Variation in educational programs / educational levels / 1-year master
1	1	1	Variation in educational programs / educational levels / 2-year master
6	4	4	**Total Variation in educational programs**
0	1	0	Institutional context / university
1	1	0	Institutional context / university of applied science
0	0	1	Institutional context / techical colleges
1	1	1	Institutional context / academy of art
2	3	2	**Total Institutional context**
1	1	0	Research / PhD
1	1	1	Research / other
2	0	1	Definition of competences / specification of competences (BOK)
1	0	1	**Total Definition of competences**
1	1	1	Control on education / accreditation of education
1	1	1	**Total Control on education**
1	0	1	Internship/ mandatory
1	0	1	**Total Internship**
13	10	10	**Total Educational regulatory framework**

Datamapping: variables

Education:

Variety of educational routes

Autonomous interior program availability

Educational levels (bachelor, master, …)

PhD possibilities

Structure and accreditation

Lifelong learning possibilities

Internship options

Professional organization/practice:

Mandatory membership requirements for professional practice

Organization membership criteria

Codes, services and control of compliance as offered/enforced by the organization

Professional career possibilities for foreigners

Organization convention rate

Union work cooperations: presence/absence of intense communication with sister organizations

Legislation:

Legal title protection

Legal practice regulation

Legal profession definition

The need for architects/civil engineer concerning building permits

Legal restrictions concerning structural or technical intervention

Competitions/tenders

Copyright regulations

Business registration regulations

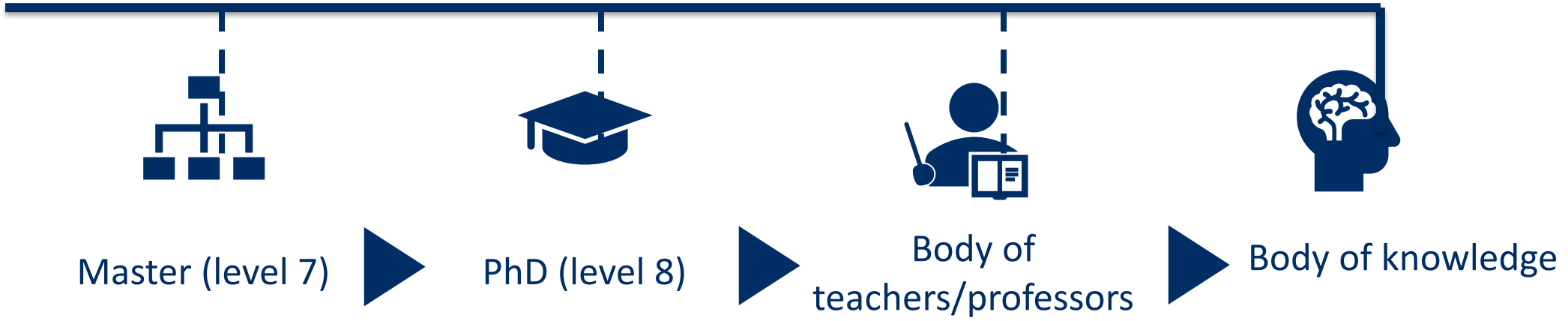
Liability insurance regulations

Education axis

AXIS EDUCATION	Edcutional routes / Institutional context / University	Edcutional routes/ Institutional context/ Technical University or Polytechnico	Edcutional routes /Institutional context / Technical College	Edcutional routes /Institutional context / University of Applied Sciences	Edcutional routes / Institutional context / Academy of Fine Arts	Edcutional routes /Institutional context / Academy of Applied Arts	Edcutional routes/ Institutional context / University College	Edcutional routes / Institutional context / Vocational secundary education	Edcutional routes / Institutional context / Other (e.g. Design Institute)	**Checkpoint 1: variety insitution**	Educational routes / autonomous interior program available (specific diploma)	**Checkpoint 2: program autonomy**	Educational routes/ educational levels/ 3-year bachelor	Educational routes/ educational levels/ 4-year bachelor	Educational routes/ educational levels/ 1-year master	Educational routes/ educational levels/ 2-year master	**Checkpoint 3: educational levels 1**	PhD	**Checkpoint 4: educational levels 2**	**Total: educational routes**	Control of educational standards / Accreditation of educational programs	Control of educational standards / Structure of educational programs	**Total: control of educational standards**	Lifelong learning possibilities	**Total: lifelong learning**	Internship options	**Total: internship**	**TOTAL EDUCATION (n=19)**	**TOTAL EDUCATION (100%)**
Austria	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	6	1	1	2	0	0	0,5	0,5	8,5	45
Belgium	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	3	1	1	8	1	1	2	0	0	0,5	0,5	10,5	55
Estonia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	3	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	8,5	45
Finland	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	2	0	0	0,5	0,5	8	42
France	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	6	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	9	47
Germany	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	13,5	71
Iceland	0	0,5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0,5	0	0	0,5	0	0	0,5	1	0	0	1,5	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	3,5	18
Italy	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0,5	0,5	6,5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	10,5	55
Malta	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	21
Netherlands	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	9	47
Norway	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	2	0	0	0,5	0,5	8	42
Slovakia	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	2	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	1	1	9	47
Spain	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	0,5	0,5	8,5	0,5	1	1,5	0	0	1	1	11	58
Sweden	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	8,5	45
Switzerland	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0,5	0	1	2,5	0	0	5,5	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	1	1	9,5	50

Development interior body of knowledge

DEVELOPMENT & STANDARDIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE



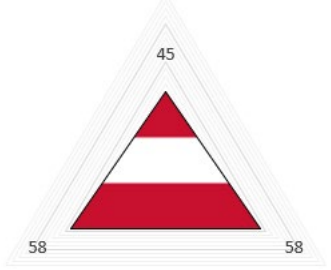
Practice/organization axis

AXIS PRACTICE/ORGANIZATION	Establishment of professional organization / existence of professional organization	Establishment of professional organization / more disciplines (does not count)	Establishment of professional organization / membership required to practice (legal title protection=automatic 1)	**Total: establishment of professional organization**	Controlled membership: educational level / educational level	Controlled membership: professional level (work experience needed)	Controlled membership: entry exam	Controlled membership: jury check	Controlled membership:portfolio check	Controlled membership: educational level / educational level membership / master needed (in case of title protection automatically yes)	**Total action 6: controlled membership**	Codes, services and control of compliance / code of conduct/ethics	Codes, services and control of compliance / code of conduct / in English	**Checkpoint 1: code of conduct/ethics**	Codes, services and control of compliance / services / legal advice	Codes, services and control of compliance / services / technical training (e.g. workshops)	Codes, services and control of compliance / services/ "cultural training" (e.g. inspirational exhibitions, lectures, ...)	Codes, services and control of compliance / services / magazine subscriptions	Codes, services and control of compliance / services / educational guidelines (in addition to ECIA-charter)	Codes, services and control of compliance / services / networking (in addition to ECIA conventions)	**Checkpoint 2: services by organisation**	Codes, services and control of compliance / foreigners admission (with education criteria) / EU	Codes, services and control of compliance / foreigners admission (with education criteria) / non-EU	**Checkpoint 3: foreigners admission**	Codes, services and control of compliance / formal conventions (1-3/yr= 0,5; 3/yr-.= 1	**Checkpoint 4: organization conventions**	**Total: codes, services and control of compliance**	Union work/lobbying: collaboration/communication other professions and associations (umbrella= automatically 1)	**Total: union work (macro-level networking)**	**TOTAL PRACTICE/ORGANIZATION (n=20)**	**TOTAL PRACTICE (100%)**
Austria	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	6,5	1	1	11,5	58
Belgium	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	8,5	1	1	11,5	58
Estonia	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	8,5	1	1	13,5	68
Finland	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0,5	4,5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	10,5	1	1	17	85
France	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	0	1	0,5	1	1	0	3,5	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	15	75
Germany	ECIA affiliated (1)		1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	16,5	83
Iceland	ECIA affiliated (1)		1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	4	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	7	1	1	13	68
Italy	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	1	1	10	1	1	16	80
Malta	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	7	1	1	12	60
Netherlands	ECIA affiliated (1)		1	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	10,5	1	1	16,5	83
Norway	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	0	1	0,5	1	0,5	1	3	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	5	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	8,5	1	1	13,5	68
Slovakia	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	5,5	1	1	10,5	53
Spain	ECIA affiliated (1)		1	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	14,5	73
Sweden	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	0,5	1	0,5	1	1	0	4	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	15,5	78
Switzerland	ECIA affiliated (1)		0	1	1	1	0,5	1	1	0	4,5	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	9,5	1	1	16	80

Legislation axis

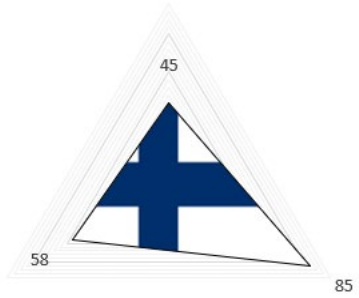
AXIS LEGISLATION	Establishing protection / title / interior architect	Establishing protection / title / architect (does not count to total)	Establishing protection / practice / interior architect	Establishing protection / practice / architect (does not count to total)	Establishing protection / practice / title by organization	**Total: legal regulation (title and practice)**	Control of the practice / legal restriction regarding practice (building permission) / signature architect/civil engineer or other NOT needed	Control of the practice / legal restriction regarding practice (building permission) / permission drawing structural interventions	Control of the practice / legal restriction regarding practice (building permission) / permission drawing technical interventions	**Checkpoint 1: building permits/general regulation**	Control of the practice / concerning competitions / specific interior architecture	Control of the practice / concerning competitions / general design (interior architects invited)	**Checkpoint 2: competitions**	Copyright regulations	**Checkpoint 3: copyright**	Control of the practice / license to establish a business (ministry/taxes/business registry)	**Checkpoint 4: licensing**	Control of the practice / mandatory liability insurance to practice	Control of the practice / mandatory liability insurance to join organization	**Checkpoint 5: liability insurance**	**Total: control of the practice**	**Total: legislation (n=12)**	**Total: legislation (100%)**
Austria	0		0		1	1	1	1	1	3		1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	6	7	58
Belgium	0		0		0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6	6	50
Estonia	0		0		0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	6	6	50
Finland	0		0		1	1	1	1	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	58
France	0		0		0	0	0	1	1	2	0,5	1	1,5	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	7,5	7,5	63
Germany	1		1		1	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0,5	0	0,5	7,5	10,5	88
Iceland	1		1		1	3	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	7	10	83
Italy	0		0		0	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	6	7	58
Malta	0		0		0	0	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	1	1	0	0	0	5,5	5,5	46
Netherlands	1		1		1	3	1	1	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	8	11	92
Norway	0		0		1	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	6	7	58
Slovakia	0		0		0	1	0	0,5	0	0,5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	4,5	5,5	46
Spain	0,5		0		0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1,5	1	1	2	0,5	0,5	1	1	0	0,5	0,5	5,5	6	50
Sweden	0		0		1	1	0,5	1	0	1,5	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0,5	0	0,5	5	6	50
Switzerland	0		0,5		1	1,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1,5	0,5	0	0,5	1	1	1	1	0,5	0	0,5	4,5	6	50

education

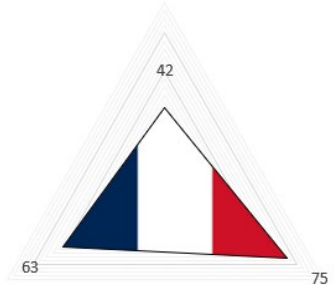


legislation practice

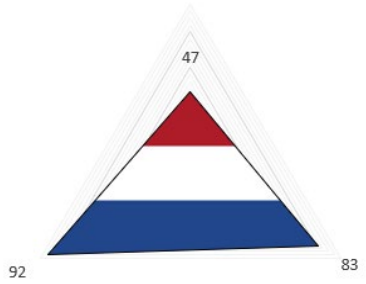
Austria



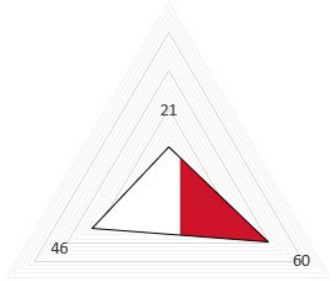
Finland



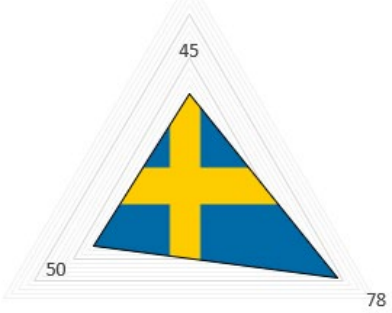
France



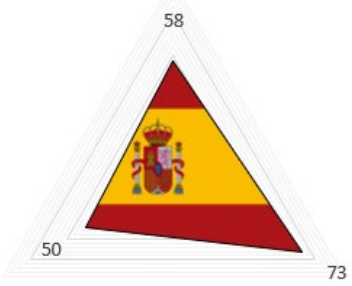
The Netherlands



Malta



Sweden



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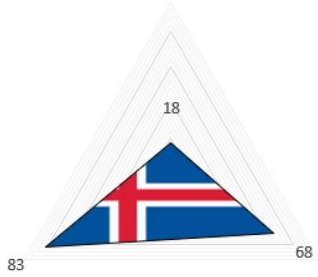
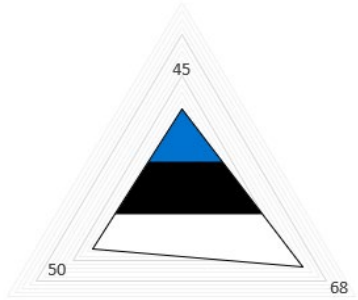
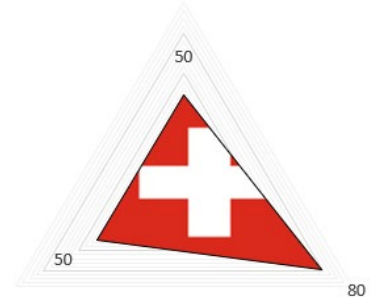


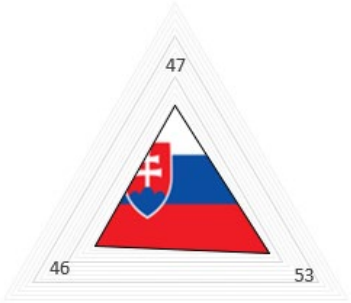
Iceland



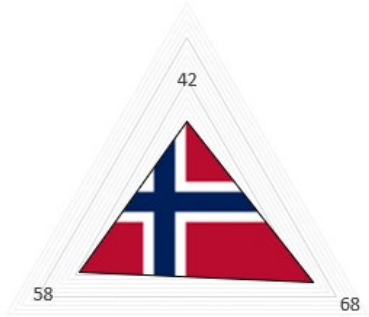
Estonia



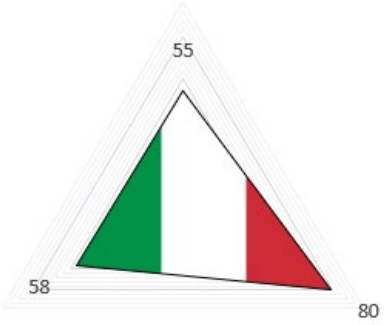
Switserland



Slovakia

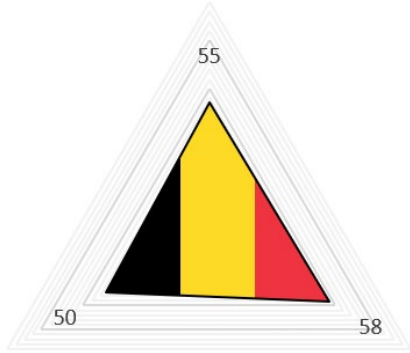


Norway



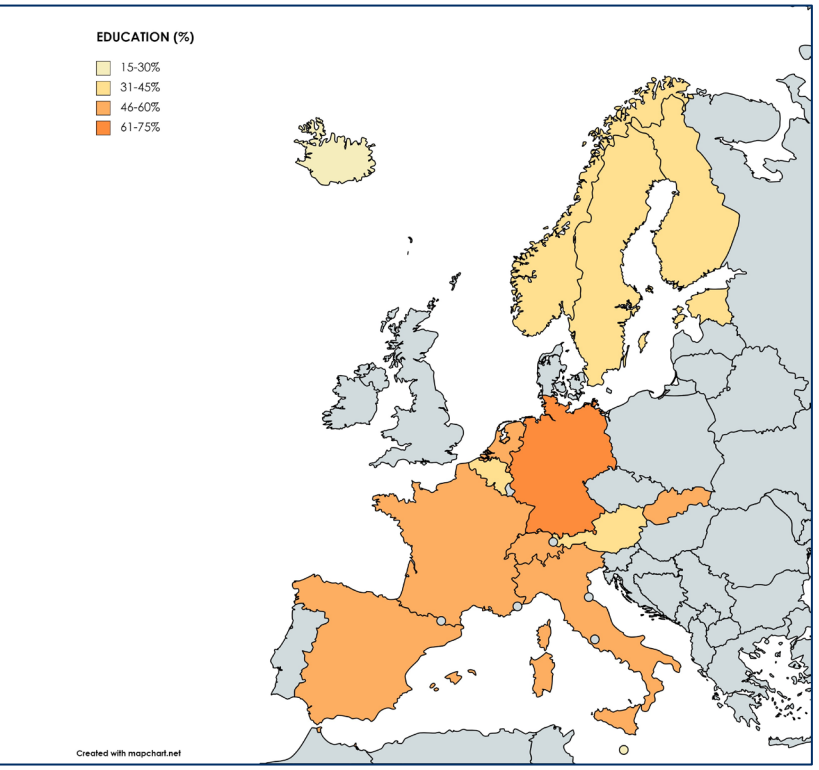
Italy

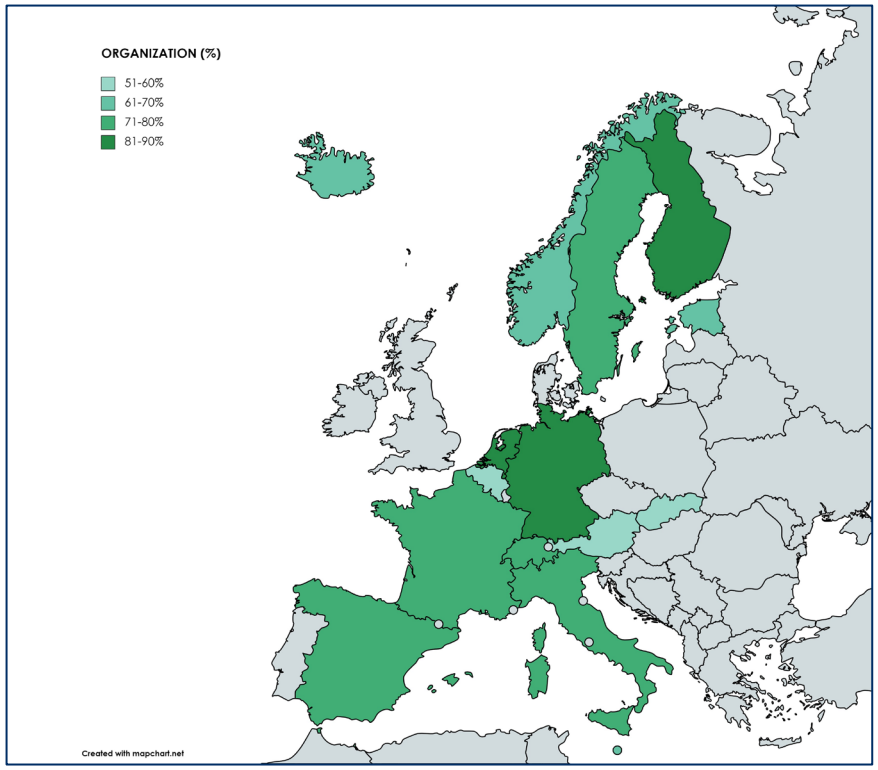
Germany

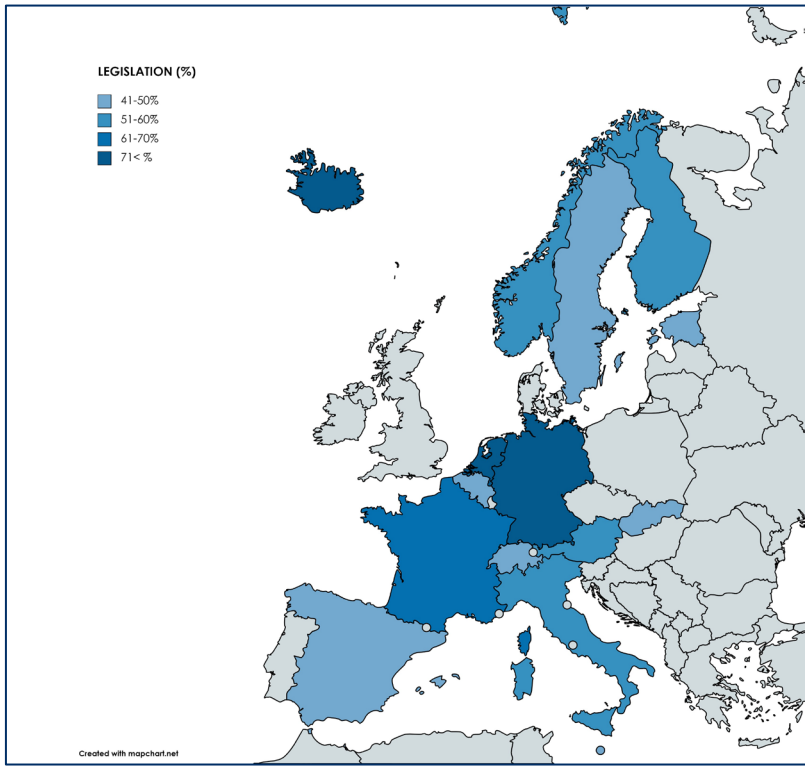


Belgium

4.Mapping professionalisation







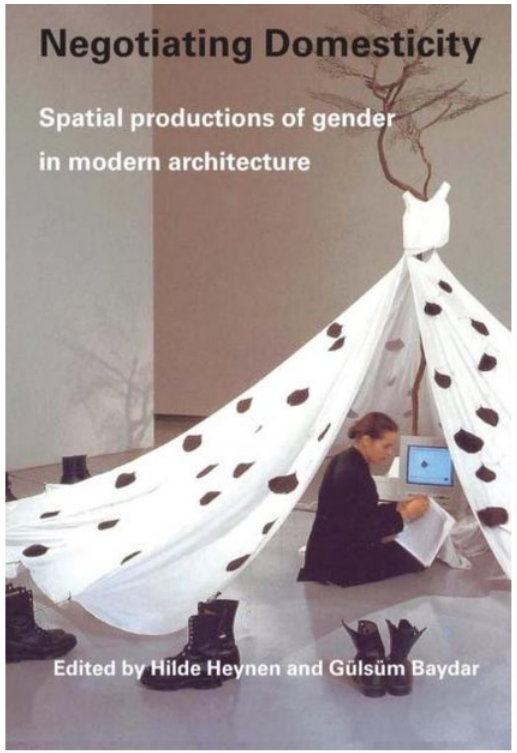
3. On awareness, stigma: gender, diversity and inclusion

1. Undeniable femininity

Female presence (90% female students in Europe), male dominance + motherhood and legislation

Photo: eva storgaard

3. On awareness, stigma: gender, diversity and inclusion



Gender inequality is clearly present in the Interior Architecture profession.

- the interior architecture discipline is often perceived **as female gendered** in comparison to architecture which is considered as male gendered.

- the profession was historically constructed **as hierarchically less important than architecture**. (Belis et.al)
- the discipline was **historically seen as a professionalization of housekeeping,** decoration and the arrangement of the home, which in fact was done by every housewife.

3. On awareness, stigma: gender, diversity and inclusion

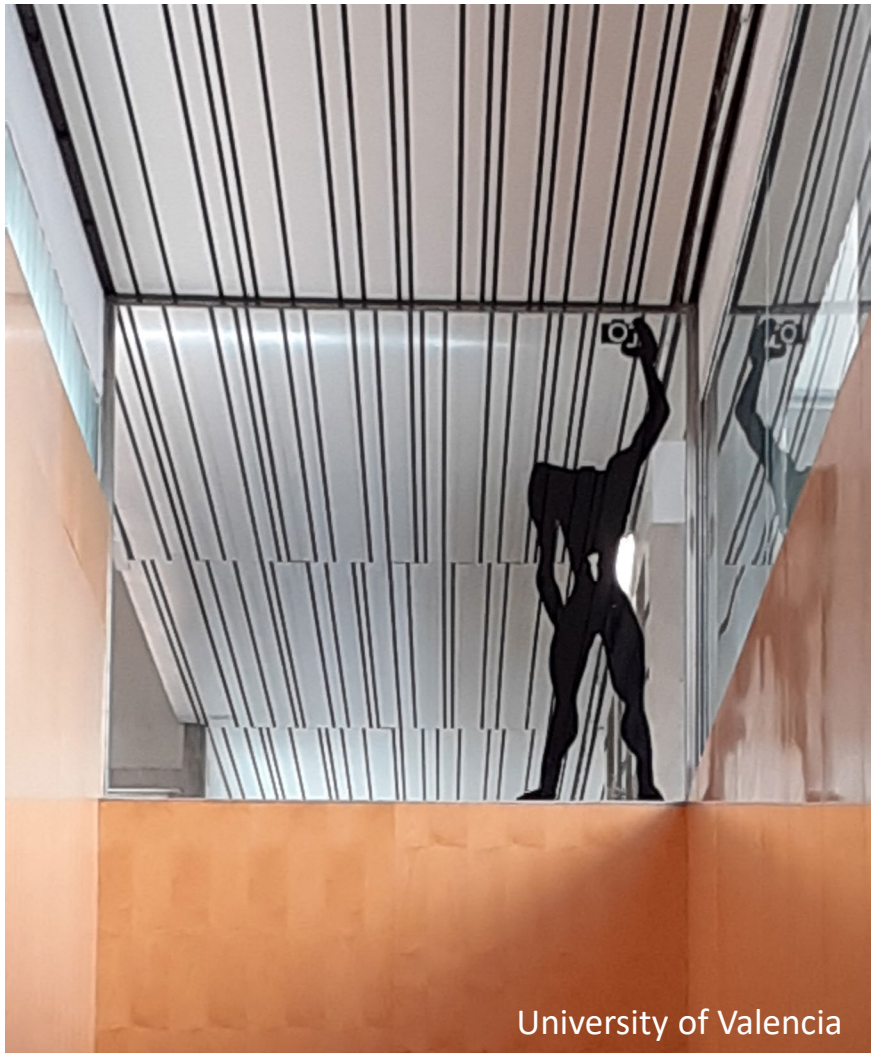
2. Refutable amateurism

"Stereotypes are stiff and stick very well." – on the depiction of interior architects in television programs

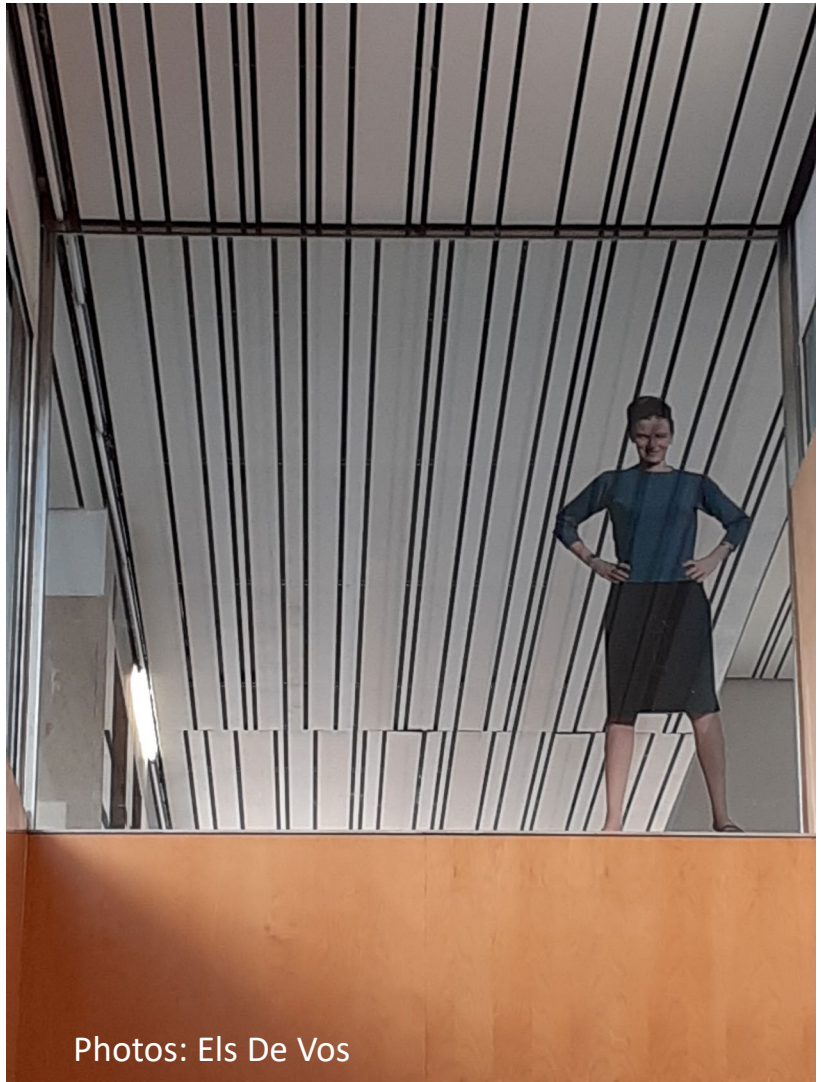
Lars RÄIHÄ (Finland)

3. On awareness, stigma: gender, diversity and inclusion

Less gender barriers for women in Northern and Eastern European countries > more conclusion necessary



University of Valencia



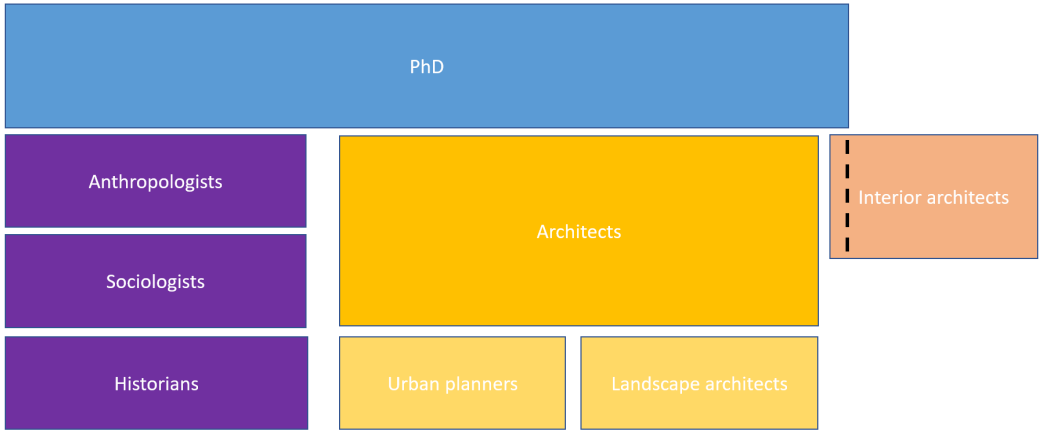
Photos: Els De Vos

4. Concluding remarks

> Degree of professionalisation varies from country to country and needs more (national) context to be completely interpreted.

> Still a lot of work to further professionalise

> For example explicit place of interior architecture and its PhDs.



4. Concluding remarks

Mainly examples of good practices for inspiration

Education	Academic research and student internship possibilities (both practical and theoretical)	Polimi
	Lifelong learning possibilities (mandatory)	The Netherlands + Germany
	PhD set-up (national)	Belgium
	Near future PhD set-up plans (2024/2025)	France (Camondo) + Norway (Kristiania) + Austria (NDU) + Sweden (Konstfack)
	Secondary/vocational education possibilities	Austria (HTLs)
Organization	Research (instigated/instantiated by national organization)	Switzerland (VSI ASAI): founding AIS archive
	Set-up national organization for smaller/candidate countries	Malta (MIDA)
	Brainstorming about the creation of a chamber of design as a counterbalance to the chamber of interior architects	Slovakia (SAID)
	Succesful nterdisciplinary work (non-umbrella)	Norway (NIL)
	Succesful interdisciplinary work (umbrella)	Finland (SIO - Ornamo)
	Mandatory registration (title protection)	The Netherlands (BA) + Germany (Chamber of Architects & BAK)
	Mandatory registration (no title protection)	Spain (CGDI)
Legislation	Legal title protection	The Netherlands + Germany + Iceland
	Recent legal defintion/recognition (governmental)	Italy (AIPi)
	How to deal with the abundance of regulation	Germany (BAK)
	Specific IA competitions	Slovakia (SAID)
	"Layered" building permits	Finland (SIO) + Austria (BÖIA) + Estonia (ESL)
General	Awareness and influence of stigmatization	Sweden (SA) + Finland (SIO)
	Importance English communication	Estonia (SISU Line)

4. Concluding remarks

- **Recommendations**
  - Visibility issue
    - Label of quality for interior architecture in particular
    - Appropriate English communication
    - Clear terminology
  - Constructive debate by revisiting HSW (health, safety and welfare)
  - Curricular reforms
    - Theory
    - Internship
    - Cultural diversity

Thank you

ECIA European Council of Interior Architects

Foto: Eva Storgaard