

Community Capital

Aiding low income communities in asserting their place in the urban space of Rotterdam

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P4 Report

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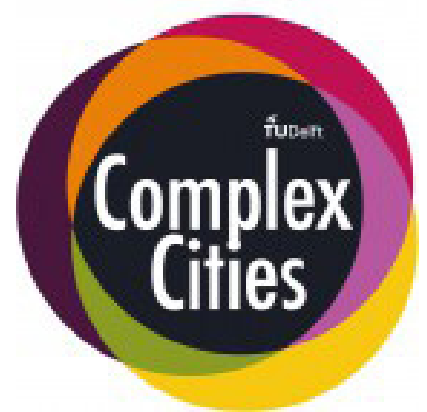


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Introduction

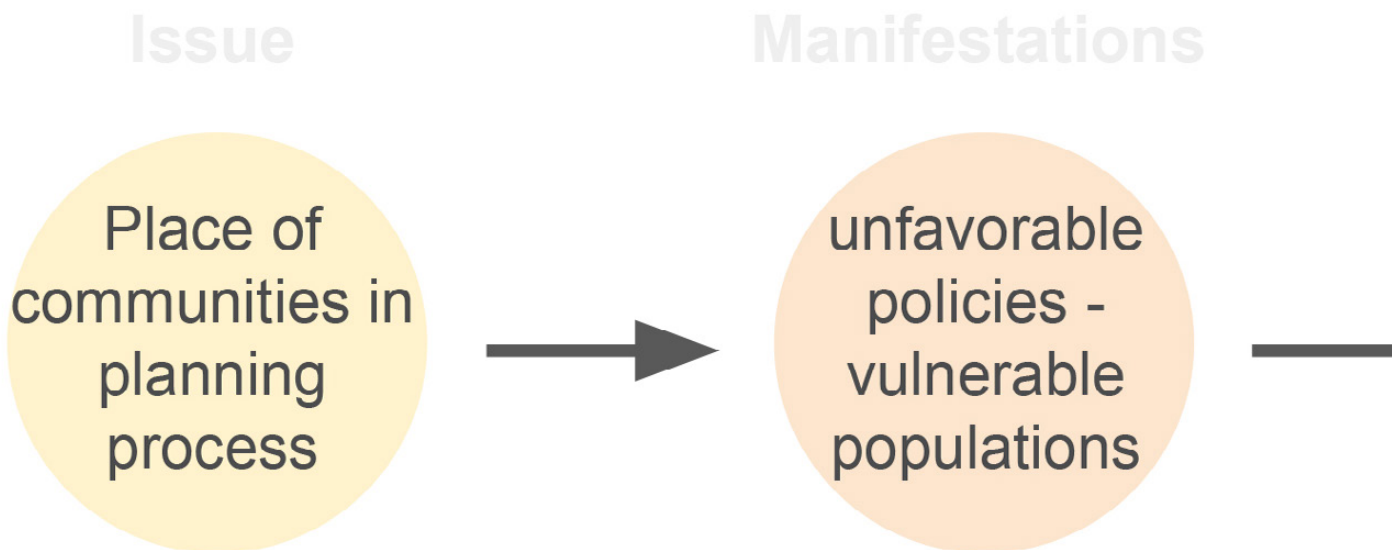
There is an element of tension between planner and community that is intrinsic to the situation of formal planning on large scales. Plans, whether good or bad, beneficial or harmful, are typically an act envisioned and laid out by the few and impacting the many.

Each time, whole communities are faced with the idea of having their environment transformed and their way of life destabilized - all the while having a limited ability to interject and fully influence the nature of that change.

Place communities differ in their ability to stand up for themselves and protect their own interests in space, but also in how often they actually are required to do so. The social and material capital available to each community differentiates between the strong and substantiated, who's strong social standing and good socio-economic situations mean that they are not easily trifled with, and the weaker communities lacking these properties, that are made vulnerable for their inability to

effectively influence unfavorable processes against them, while also been required to struggle for their place in the city more often. Their situation marks them as a "problem to be solved", motivating direct and sometimes drastic actions of intervention, which are carried out by planners and decision makers that are operating from a remote and detached standpoint, while also being influenced by complex and even contradictory agendas.

Such a situation is happening in Rotterdam, where planning processes promoted by the municipality are threatening many of Feijenoord's vulnerable population under the guise of aid. Specifically, they are promoting urban renewal processes with the stated goal of creating social integration by introducing an influx of new strong community members into the area, with the idea (or perhaps - the pretense?) that these newcomers would elevate these neighborhoods overall, with the benefits trickling down to the low class population already



there. However, there is a substantial hidden cost in such an action, as these newcomers would essentially be replacing many of the existing population, displacing them elsewhere, and perhaps even turning the remaining low income population into a minority, in a radically transformed space.

Given that the planning establishment's motivation for this approach, as well as the community's inability to resist them, are strongly related to lack of capital - social standing, material ownership of homes, knowledge in how to resist such planning threats - then perhaps a solution to these can be found in providing for these lacks from an external source.

Trying to supplement these lacks in capital was already attempted by the University of Birmingham, which enacted a program that strived to create human and social capital in similar neighborhoods in the same city. They did so by training community members with academic

tools, developing social projects conceived by them, and providing its reputation, connections and organizational abilities in leading them to fulfillment.

This project would examine if the principles of such a program would be translatable to the realm of spatial planning in dealing with the specific urban renewal processes promoted in Feijenoord, asking whether such an approach can be effective in helping the community there to protect its own interest and allow them a proactive participatory role in the policy and planning processes threatening its cohesion, questioning how that would be done, and to what consequences.

Site Specific



Addressal



Motivation

The motivation for this project came out of my own personal experiences as a planner in Israel, prior to attending TU Delft.

Specifically, I was part of a planning team that was tasked with planning a new urban entity for the Arab-Israeli minority population in the north, near the historical city of Acre.

This indigenous minority group is characterized with vastly different social features when compared to the Jewish ruling class of Israel in terms of language, religion, social structure and perceptions towards urbanity, public space and ownership of land.

The project's mission was to create a pilot case of a modern urban city that would be a paradigm shift for a population that was held back by living in small villages for many centuries while the rest of Israel (and the world for that matter) urbanized more and more.

Our own efforts when beginning the planning process were met with extreme distrust, minimal communication and an atmosphere of contention.

Lacking proper feedback and input from the community, we set out to create a plan the best we could. However, what we perceived as conservative and careful actions, was taken by the community as radical and insidious. The modern city we envisioned, filled with public buildings and open spaces, was dubbed as a suffocating ghetto.

The Arab community went to war against the plan - first by demonstrations, then via the media, and eventually through a difficult legal battle.

And It worked. After almost four years the state backed down its side of the conflict and met most of the community's spatial demands. Cooperation finally began in earnest, and mutual trust was established.

Once that happened and the rationales were heard from either side, work began anew from a collaborative standpoint instead of a contentious one.

We, the planners, realized how misguided our original plan was, while the Arab leadership realized how many benefits our proposal actually held. The threat of change, created by fear, misunderstanding and distance, was transformed into a promise, and the envisioned ghetto became a promising city tailor made to the local community's need, that was recently approved with full public support of the Arab community.

That experience has taught me an important lesson about how meaningful communication between planners and community is, and how dangerous and disruptive it might be when it is lacking. In that instance a poor and marginalized community was able to unify and organize itself into an effective resistance movement, allowing them to influence the plan and change it into what would be incorrect for them. However, the way they went about it was unnecessarily combative and on several occasions put the whole endeavor (that ultimately is necessary to their future) in jeopardy.

Not every vulnerable community can organize itself this way, and in not all circumstances such an effort would find the state as a willing participant as it did this time.

What I have seen first hand taught me that even a vulnerable community can stand up and protect its own interests, but also that they do not necessarily know the optimal way of how to do that.

Finding a way for the community to meet planners at eye level and interact productively would result in better plans leading to better functioning and more inclusive cities as a result, built off of understanding rather than narrow outlooks and misunderstandings.



Demonstration against the proposed plan, photo: Jemal Shaaban

Bargaining over land

State - Everybody needs to give 60% of the land for the public's sake

Arab Leadership - This is our land, we are not letting any of it go

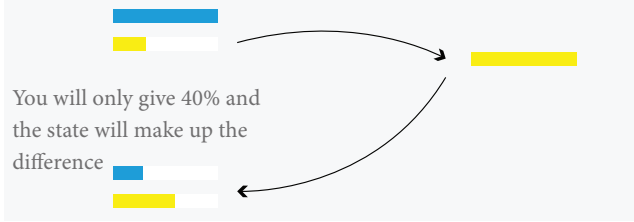
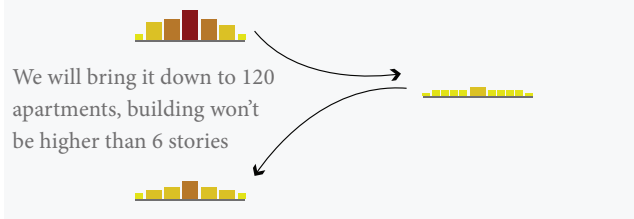


photo by the commity for Jdeida Makr

Bargaining over design

State - Ideal density would be around 200 apartments per hectare, Israel's average

Arab Leadership - This is our land, we are not letting any of it go



Bargaining over control

State -Organizing an operation this complex should be run by the state

Arab Leadership -This has to be controlled by us or you won't have the people's cooperation



The local Arab community went for a public battle over the fate of the new urban expansion of its villages, demanding a building morphology that fits their way of life, the preservation of their lands, and agency over their space



The resistance to the plan was fueled by fears that the proposed city would be oppressive, barren and densed. To the left - a distorted interpretation of the plan (y.Jabareen) | to the right - actual proposed morphology

Problem Statement

Disparity between planners and community

However potentially beneficial it would be to create the understandings and communication with the community - as was eventually achieved in my personal experience in Israel, the nature and circumstances of spatial planning, its profile and relevance to a wide array of stakeholders, and the strict and formal avenues of statutory planning means that the local population, despite its considerable size and personal stake are not necessarily at the heart of that process (Wildavsky, 1973).

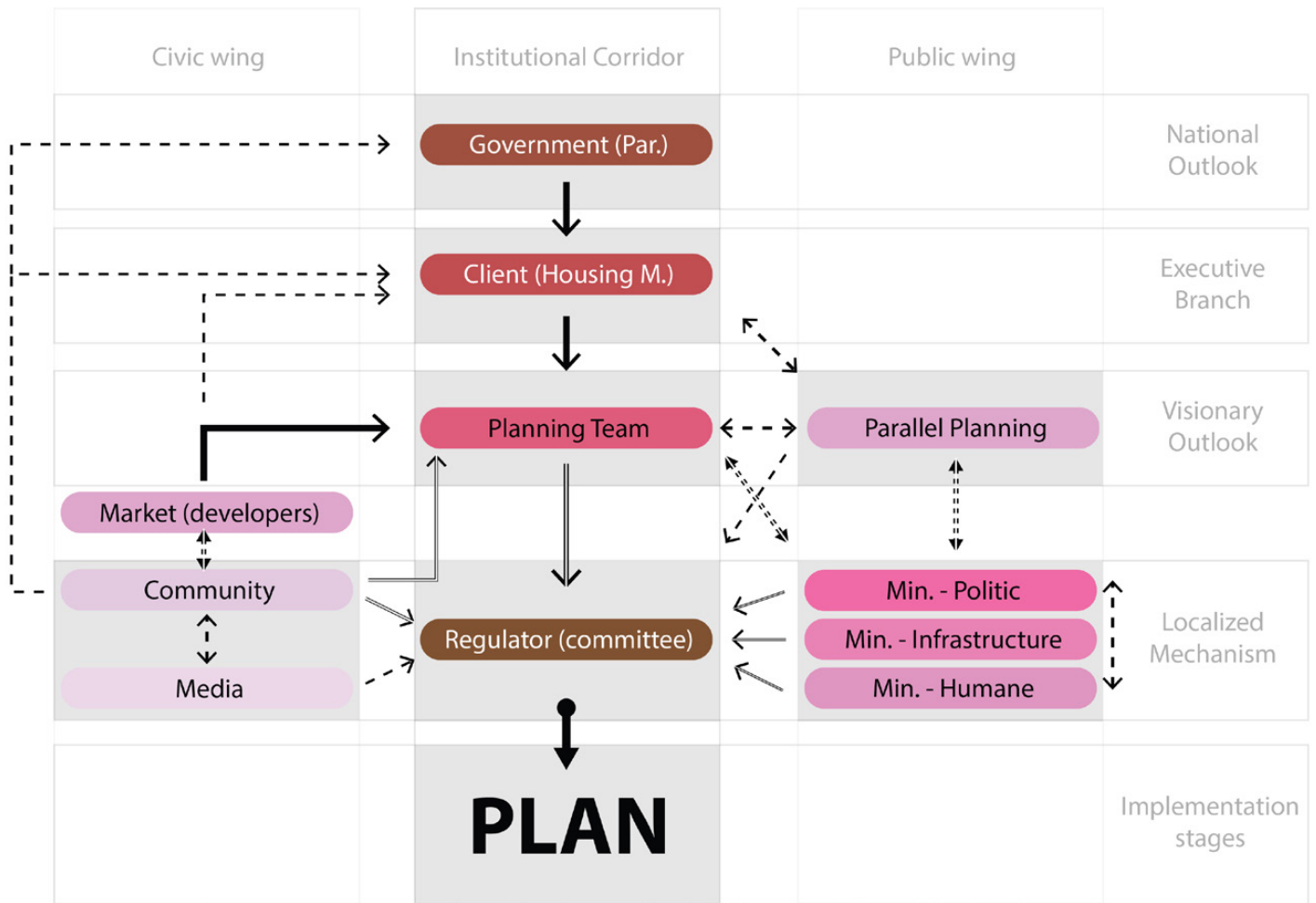
Large scale formal plans are serious business. They are the shapers of space, determiners of its uses and functions, its morphology, volume and intensity of use, and at certain resolutions - its style and spirit (Kropf, 2017). A large-scale plan is the tool with which physical reality is shaped, and thus it impacts everything and everyone within it and around it (Hall, 2014).

That is to say, as the plan touches on all aspects of life - personal, social, economical, and political - it is thus relevant to a plethora of individuals, groups and organizations throughout society, with varying degrees of relevance, personal stakes and agendas (Hall, 2014). And so, the endeavor includes a society wide set of considerations, as the outcomes of spatial plans impact everyone and everything within or around it.

Spatial planning conventions tend toward an administrative and remotely professionalized models (Gallant & Ciaffi 2014, Habermas 1984) requiring a certain vantage point that would be remote enough to encompass the entirety of the wide picture they are challenged with shaping, straddling a line between concrete and abstract, between narrow and focused outlooks and those much more general and remote (Ziafati Bafarasat et al 2021, Oliveira & Hersperger, 2018)

Planners and policymakers are also faced with very different situations to their own at times. Not every plan deals with populations and circumstances they can relate to from personal experience or to the familiar structures of their everyday reality (Barrios 2011, Koster 2019). External pressures also dictate much of the nature of their work, and they have to navigate a vast and complex set of stakeholders, each with their own ways of exerting pressure in getting their concessions or in shaping a plan's vision to fit their own (wildavsky, 1973, Gonçalves & Ferreira 2015, Sturzaker & Lord 2018).

This distance, especially in the context of vulnerable (and typically low income) communities is especially accentuated and pronounced in comparison to most other cases, considering the complexity and urgency of these situations, as these require attentive understanding in addressal, and careful and precise solutions in response, thus heavily reliant on strong communication between establishment and population (Gallant & Ciaffi 2014). When such is lacking, then the risk for misguided and heavy handed one sided actions and policies increases, by planners trying to impose a certain world view that might be incompatible with the population they are planning for (Koster 2019).



Stakeholders, in descending order of agency

- Regulator (committee)
- Government (Par.)
- Client (Housing M.)
- Planning Team
- Min. - Politic
- Min. - Infrastructure
- Min. - Humane
- Parallel Planning
- Media
- Community

Type of interaction

- - - - - > Request
- > Demand
- > Order
- > Determine
- ←-----> Negotiate
- ←-----> Co-operate

Typical planning structure in large scale plans

Problem Statement

State actions aimed at 'saving the poor' with questionable results

In the context of democratic societies, there is a general mandate to help the lower rungs of society, and the issues of equity distribution as a professional function of planners is increasing in importance as an ethical issue to be considered within a planner's purview (Talen, 1998, Wildavsky, 1973). However, how that might be done and to whose benefit are a matter of subjective interpretation, thus making it pervertible.

Plans meant at "saving" the poor are nothing new, nor are they a thing of the past (Hall, 2014, Atkinson 2000). Whether or not each is successful in achieving that end of actually alleviating poverty, and why, ought to be judged on a case by case basis. However, what these often have in common is an element of promise - a change toward a more just, modern, attractive and safe future - that often falls short or gets complicated in implementation, and at times that vision is even outright ignored for the sake of other interests (Koster 2019).

Of Course some visions fared better than others, and some had better intentions and stronger elements driving them than others. However, what all of these situations have in common is the standpoint from which the issue was addressed - The establishment, composed of established individuals, was positioned to intervene in a community that is at an inferior position to the one they themselves hold, imposing their own set of views and morals, rather than those of the community they dealt with (Hopkins, 2001).

Impoverished communities are not often consulted with, and even when they do, it is in most cases a token effort, where decisions were mainly influenced by local government (Atkinson, 2000). Low class populations are much more dependent on external aid, while having little clout in determining what that help would be and how it would look like (Atkinson, 2000).

And all this - assuming that the desire to create positive change is always pure, and unfortunately that is not at all times completely true. Cities, municipalities and societies are found in all sorts of situations and conditions, have a dynamic set of priorities and morals that are not constant, meaning that aspirations and needs of the city do not always include the poor, or sometimes even desire their

exclusion (Musterd et al 2020, Lin et al 2021).

When the worm turns against them, the vulnerable communities are actually the ones most convenient for the establishment to discriminate against, and in certain political climates, are even actively targeted by either the government, society or the private market (Jacobs., 1961).

Globalization of the urban space and economy also adds its own layer of complexity to the situation of the urban poor, especially in large and central cities whose urban economy relies on companies participating in the global market service based industries (Granqvist et al 2021). As these require highly educated and professionalized personnel, preferably located in proximity to CBD's in their city centers, modern municipalities are much more concerned in attracting and preserving such populations to their cities. The urban poor, who once were drawn to cities in large part for the employment opportunities they offered, now see these diminished, and so the value they have to offer the modern and globalized city is diminished accordingly (Musterd et al 2020).

This reality recontextualizes the attitude and treatment of vulnerable communities within cities by decision makers, creating its own urgency on their own side and influences the approaches taken towards solutions.

Even in cases where there are the material means and an honest desire by society and/or the establishment to create real change and help elevate a vulnerable population in a meaningful way, then it is a very tricky business, with little room for mistakes, as these are very costly to the vulnerable individuals in the community that is often very suspicious of these established others that are suddenly interested in helping them (Åström, 2020).

Thus, a key problem for vulnerable communities is that they are often unable to be proactive participants in their own 'salvation', but rather they are reactive recipients, dependent on the decisions of outsiders and the thought processes, circumstances and realities that are in many cases out of their control (Venn 2021)

Establishment



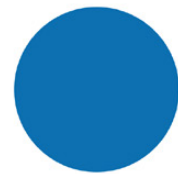
- Politicians
- Lawyers
- Planners
- Administrators

Gap

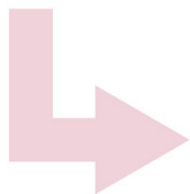


- Priorities
- Interests
- Communication
- Culture

Community



- Citizenry
- Activists
- Local Businesses
- Reporters



PLAN



SPACE



Planning establishment/community divide in formal planning processes - differences in vantage point between these two elements are at the core of this project

Problem Statement

Community must protect its own cohesion and its own interests

Although the community, as in the people actually living in a certain space and calling it home, can argue that they are the ones most directly impacted by the potential outcomes of a plan (Susser & Tonnelat 2013), there is no imperative - either judicial or ethical - that strictly ensures that its interests are looked after and protected by the planner while making a plan or a policy. In fact, quite often decisions are openly made in contrast to the interests of local communities in service of other visions or in answering needs that do not intersect with those of the local population (Harvey, 2003).

The urban space is a systemic and interconnected being, making questions of benefit and public interest not so single tracked and obvious at all times (Bolay, 2020).

It is a matter of perspective who exactly are “the people” that the planner has their interest in mind and what these interests are exactly.

In other words - right or wrong, it can be argued that the interests of the local community are at times lesser than those of the city, region or state at large, and questions of who needs to sacrifice what in the public space are a major question that is often raised (Gonçalves & Ferreira 2015). Often it is the case that sacrifices are required to be made on the local scale, for the sake of the functioning of the larger interest. (Ponzini & Palermo, 2009).

And so, communities cannot sit back and blindly rely on their leaders and the planners working for them to do what is best for them specifically, as that might be in contradiction to other larger interests or needs (Gonçalves & Ferreira 2015, Koster 2019). Part of a community's degree of success and prosperity is directly related to its ability in standing up for their own local interests when necessary (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014).

And of course, not all communities are equal in their ability to protect these interests - that would be greatly related to their circumstances, internal dynamics, the composition of its population and the individuals within it (Harvey, 2003).

When a community is capable of organizing and deciding on a cohesive vision that they can then translate into focused demands, then they gain the ability to effectively stand up for themselves (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014). However, when the community is fragmented, impoverished, and lacking the institutional knowhow to ensure that its needs are prioritized - then that ability is diminished, leaving it vulnerable to the possibility that its needs and interests might be disregarded or sacrificed more readily (Stillwell et al., 2010).



Example of straddling a low class community with an undesirable infrastructural entity - Tel Aviv new central bus station, Tel Aviv, Israel (pictures: left - Roi Boshi, Right - Bardugo.net)



Example of NIMBY attitudes by a strong community - 595 Maybell Ave. - affordable housing project in Palo Alto, California, USA transformed into expensive single houses due to public pressure (Palo Alto Online)

Problem Statement

Low class communities vulnerability due to lack of capital

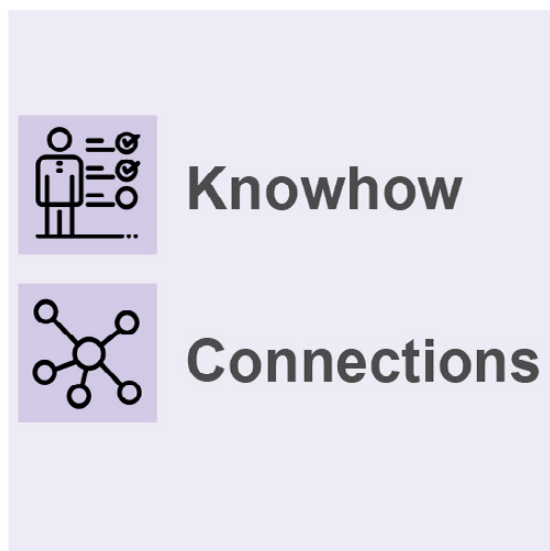
How would a community go about protecting its interests can be done in several ways and through several channels. It can be done by community building actions meant at unifying the community into a single purpose and vision, or through reactive approaches to society and establishment such as protesting or lobbying, self help actions meant at strengthening and aiding the community internally, or even through alternative planning actions meant to argue that other alternatives exists to unfavorable decisions (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014)

Such abilities are typically lacking in low socio-economic populations, given that they require a certain degree of organizational skills and access to professional knowledge by community members or through external sources (such as hired professionals), that such populations typically lack (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014). Such populations would most likely require outside intervention or special attention from planners in order to have their interests protected (Krumholz, 1994).

This lack in capabilities can be framed as a lack of capital of various types - social, human and material:

Social Capital refers to either a population's ability to organize and unify together for a common cause (Allan 2003, Gallant & Ciaffi 2014), while Bridging Capital refers to its ability to exert influence on other organized entities such as government or businesses (Gallant & Ciaffi 2014, Atkinson 2000). However, it goes also to aspects of reputation and public support to this group from society at large (for example, minorities often lack such social capital).

Human Capital manifests in the composition of the community itself, meaning - does it have individuals with capabilities that are relevant to standing up for themselves, such as leaders to provide organization and direction or professionals capable of contributing with knowledge and insight (Pernia & Quibria, 1999, Atkinson 2000).



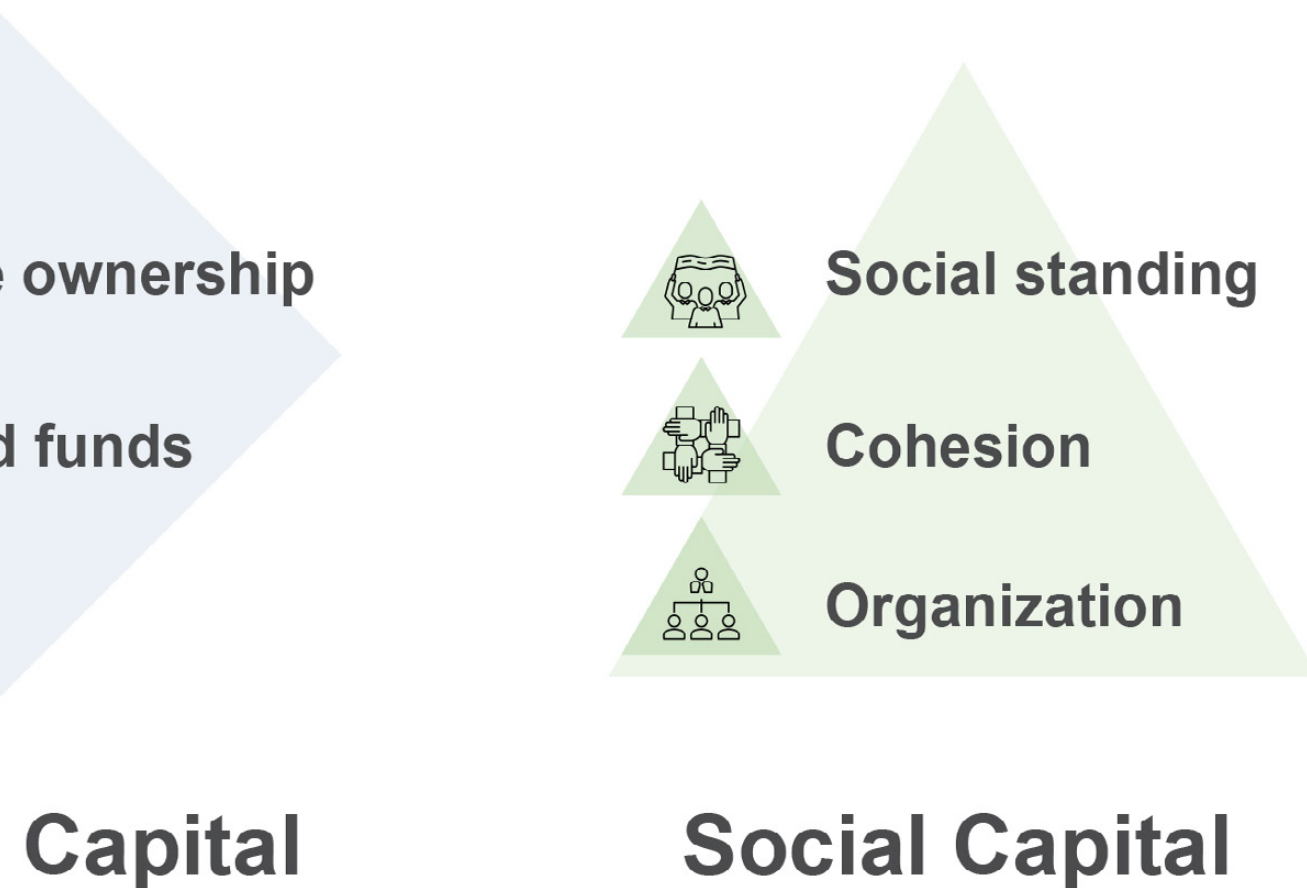
Human Capital



Material

Material capital refers to the economic situation of a community. In the context of urban poverty, home (or even land) ownership is a key feature, because without it, the claim of a community to its urban home becomes much less substantiated (Pernia & Quibria, 1999). However, that would refer also to the economic situation of a population, that may cause large dependencies on external support, or a diminished ability to fund actions of resistance (Pernia & Quibria, 1999).

These lacks of capital are what typifies low income and vulnerable communities, and even if they would not suffer lackings in all three categories, they are likely to be deficient in at least some of these. These lacks, in themselves would weigh on a community even in a vacuum (lack of social cohesion, or of income are objectively a difficulty), however, in situations where that vulnerability is threatened even further externally, then the vulnerable are in an especially difficult situation, with limited recourse.



Problem Statement

Initial conclusion

The reality of large scale planning processes is that they do not necessarily put the population living in space at the center of their attention in the making of a plan, and even when it does, planners and decision makers shaping space are doing so from a remote and detached vantage point. That vantage point means that a community's inclusion, if not striven for actively, usually does not occur on its own - despite how directly impactful these processes are to their lives.

Overcoming that obstacle requires either an active and aware effort by the planning establishment to involve the community, or that community requires of itself to assert its voice and protect its interests when that willingness is lacking on the establishment side.

In the case of vulnerable communities, this situation is complex on both ends - they are seldom effectively listened to by planners, and have a diminished ability to proactively assert their needs on their own. Compounding that is that their situation - exceptionally delicate and complex, draws a heightened degree of (at times unwanted) attention from planners seeking to intervene in their situations due to their urgency and the negative impact it projects on the rest of the urban space and urban economy.

All these combine to form a situation where the most vulnerable and sensitive parts of the urban society are the ones under the most pressure to their environments, while having the least abilities to alleviate these pressures or intercede in the negative aspects of such actions.

The following chapter will examine how this general problem manifests specifically in the case study of the Feijenoord neighborhoods of Rotterdam, demonstrating how the local population's situation and lack of capital, being an undereducated and low income immigrant populace reenacts this pattern in that specific context.

Case Study - Feijenoord, Rotterdam

Dutch policies of urban renewal and social integration

The Netherlands elected to address the issues of poverty and segregation of its communities through an 'explicit' method of urban policies, meaning that it approaches solutions with an attitude of strong and active government intervention to the workings of the public and urban space, rather than let society and the free market transform it more organically (Atkinson, 2000). These manifested with three main approaches - focusing on urban renewal and renovation, revamping the urban economy, and focusing on social issues - namely segregation (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008).

In the post-second world war era and up until the 1980's policies focused on developing the physical space and the urban economy, and the issue of urban poverty was addressed by constructing housing for the poor (the Feijenoord area was a major part of that movement) through governmental led programs within the cities themselves (incidentally, causing housing associations nationalized in the process) (Musterd & Ostendorf 2008, Van Gent & Hochstenbach 2020).

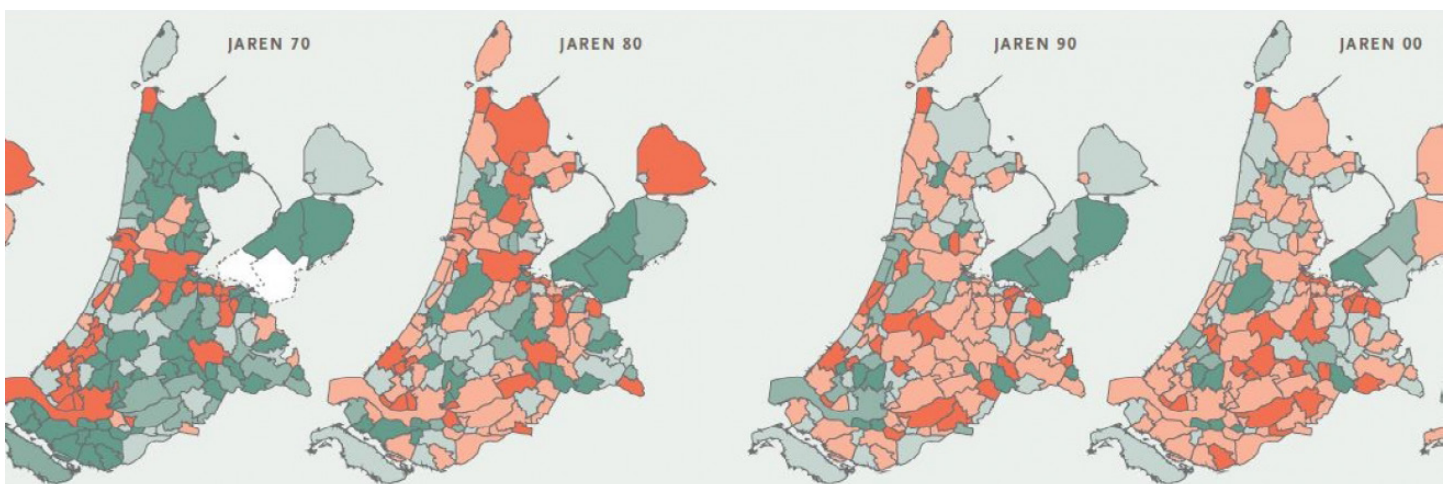
Suburbanization processes in the 1980's, happening all over the Netherlands, including major cities such as Rotterdam and Utrecht (ter Heide & Smit 2016), dilapidated city centers of both strong populations and businesses threatened the urban economic structure, causing the trend to flip (Musterd et al 2020). This was when urban renewal was first introduced as a response to the ailing urban space, looking to reinvigorate the city from an economic standpoint, although it completely ignored any social aspects such as poverty (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008).

In the 1990's that focus changed, and the orientation of urban renewal towards social issues has increased (and continued to do so ever since). It was then that the strategy of aiding the poor through urban renewal began taking shape and resembled more closely the prevailing approaches existing today, by combining the actions of urban renewal with those of social integration (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008), as can be seen in the NPRZ strategies for the south of Rotterdam, for example (Gemeente Rotterdam 2011).

This strategy stipulates that rebuilding the urban space in a way that introduces stronger populations into low income neighborhoods, mainly by reducing the social housing stock and replacing it with more diverse options made available by the free market, would break up 'income ghettos' and eliminate socio-spatial segregation as a result (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008).

Name of policy	Main goal	Period	Orientation	Slogan
Creating CBDs	Stronger urban economy	To 1970	Efficiency	New jobs
Urban renewal	Improving urban housing	1970–1980	Social justice	New housing for neighborhood
City renewal	Stronger urban economy	1980–1990	Efficiency	Stop urban degradation
Multiple-problem	Help disadvantaged neighborhoods	1985–1990	Social justice	Stop cumulating problems
Social renewal	More social cohesion	1990–1994	Social justice	Higher participation
Big Cities Policy I	Mixed neighborhoods	1994–1998	Social justice	Inmigration of high incomes
Big Cities Policy II	Stable neighborhoods	1998–2004	Social justice	Prevent leaving neighborhood
Big Cities Policy III	Stronger neighborhoods	2004–2009	Efficiency	Powerful cities
Big Cities Policy +	Integrated neighborhoods	From 2007	Social justice	Prevent parallel societies

Urban policies in the Netherlands since the end of the second world war
 (Source: Musterd S, Ostendorf W, 2008)



Internal migration trends 1970- 2010 (Source: geografie.nl 2016) - suburbanization trends in 70's and 80's are now reversing and cities repopulate

Case Study - Feijenoord, Rotterdam

The rationale being that the close proximity of various populations would encourage interaction among members of different classes ('positive role models'), result in better infrastructure and education which benefits would trickle down to the lower populations, and stigmatization associated with ill-repute neighborhoods would be reduced (Musterd, Andersson, 2005).

However, this strategy has several questionable and problematic consequences and manifestations, with the main one being that even after spatial segregation was eliminated in many of the big cities, it prevailed in more localized forms on the street and block level, with people from different backgrounds keeping to their own groups, although sharing the same public space (Blokland & Vief 2021, Uitemark et al 2007). Furthermore, the fact that integration was achieved did not necessarily mean that municipalities ceased from promoting more and more programs for (no longer necessary) integration (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008), arguably crossing the line between urban renewal and gentrification under questionable pretenses.

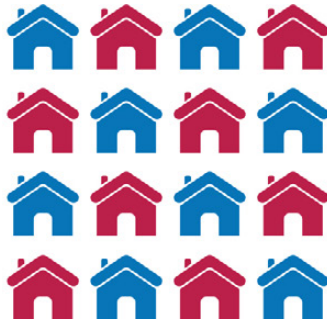
Additional problematic aspects of integration, are that certain actions made in its name, actions such as the legislation of the "Rotterdam Law" in 2002, which enabled municipalities to deny residency to low income or under-educated individuals, barring them from joining certain neighborhoods in the effort of preserving a certain socio-economic composition of its residents (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008)

Also problematic is that Integration did not apply equally to strong neighborhoods, who were often not required to take in low income individuals the same way that the low income neighborhoods did (Musterd, Andersson, 2005) - all this resulting in a situation where low income populations see their possibilities within the city increasingly dwindle.

Integration Principle



Disadvantaged neighborhood



Replacement of low income population with stronger ones



Socio-spatial segregation is eliminated, due to socio-economic diversity

Criticisms of integration



Why only in low-income neighborhoods?



What happens to those who leave?



Does segregation remains, but in closer scales?

Case Study - Feijenoord, Rotterdam

Rotterdam urban renewal/gentrification by expanding city center south

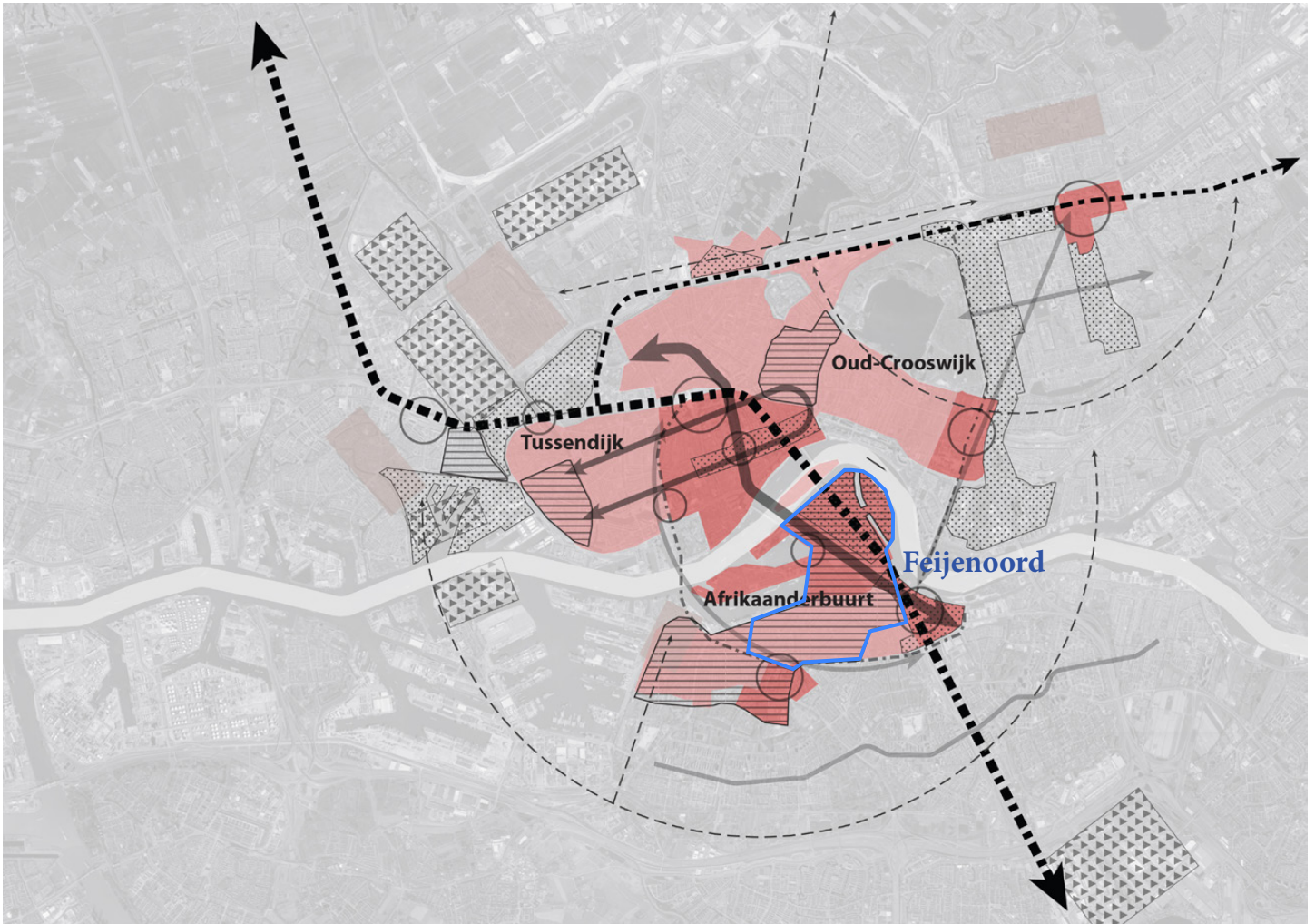
Rotterdam's processes of urban renewal heavily relate to the Netherlands' national policies (and in fact, some, such as the 'Rotterdam Act' were made with the city's situation in mind (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008)). However, bearing in mind that municipalities in the Netherlands are highly independent from national government (Vermeijden, 2001), means that Rotterdam's actions in creating integration in its low income neighborhoods are ultimately independent from any national edict, and are a combination of two desires that are intertwined -that of achieving a stronger community via integration (Uitermark et al 2007), combining with efforts to reorder the city around an expanded center (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007, 2016a, 2021) meant at creating greater connection and synergy across both sides of the Maas river and connect the sprawling extremities of the metropole together.

However, this is an effort that goes deeper than just improving the spatial organization of the city, and it also includes a meaningful ambition to transform the city's socio-economic situation overall (Uitermark et al 2007). Rotterdam is the Netherland's poorest major city and also its most ethnically diverse. This is in large part the result of its port-centric industrial origins, which played a major hand in defining the city's character and population makeup, as well as the industries that powered the city's economy (Ouweneel, Veenhoven, 2016, Musterd et al 2020, Gemeente Rotterdam 2011).

Globalization of the urban economy is impacting the transformation of many urban centers, both in their function, the approach and scale with which they are planned (Granqvist et al 2021, Masey 2004), and the diminishing clout local interests have in the face of larger scale needs (Berking 2021, Massey 2004, Susser & Tonnelat 2013). Rotterdam is no exception in that regard. As economies in developed countries are increasingly moving away from manufacturing and logistics, and into a service based orientation (Musterd et al 2020), Rotterdam is looking to respond to this prevailing trend and further reenforce an already ongoing transformation process that sees the city come increasingly closer to being a service based and more globalized economic urban center in the vain of major European cities - such as Amsterdam, for example (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007, 2016a).



Rotterdam/Amsterdam Comparison
(Stadsvisie 2030)



Analysis of Rotterdam's municipality future plans, according to Omgevingsvisie, Woovisie 2030 (background: Google Earth)

- ▨ Employment Area
- ▨ Urban Renewal Area
- ▨ Search Areas
- City Center
- Second City Ring
- Urban Center
- Railway
- Subway
- Heritage renewal



Rotterdam Strategy, taken from Woonvisie 2016

Case Study - Feijenoord, Rotterdam

This type of change is all encompassing, and directly relates to all aspects of a city - its built environment, infrastructure, the nature of the sectors and industries working within it, and its population composition - the human capital required to power such an economy (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016a).

The leadership of Rotterdam is reacting to the trends of our times, consciously and clearly setting goals of attracting higher income and more educated populations to the city, by passing policies that call for diversifying the housing market with an expanding stock of 'luxury' housings (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007, 2016a) .

These themes feature heavily in public policy documents such as Stadvisie (2007), Woonvisie 2030 (2016) or Omgevingsvisie (2021) - themed vision documents that define the city's aspirations periodically, every few years, and are the basis of much of its implementation of planning actions in practice. These, and naimly the Woonvisie ('housing vision') describe in detail plans to minimize the stock of social housing (deemed unnecessary) and replacing them with these luxury apartments.

It is planned to happen in several low income areas throughout the city, with the substantial and central one being the Feijenoord area - in the general vicinity of the southern bank of the Maas river.

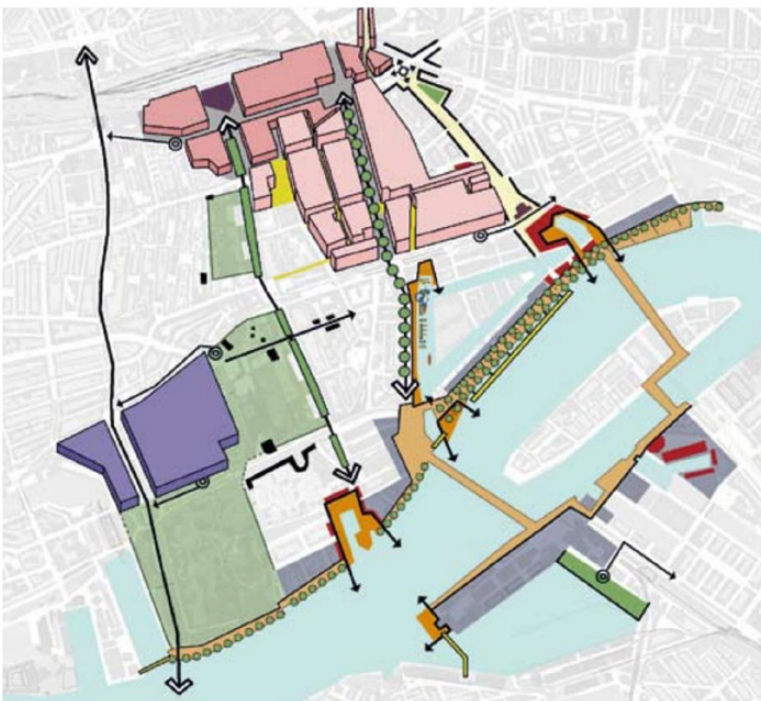
This is based in light of recent successes of a similar nature in that area - in places such as Katendrecht or Kop van zuid which were completely rebuilt as mixed used extensions of the city center, following the construction of the Erasmusbrug in the late 90's, with a stated ambition of becoming a high profile and internationally renown mixed business and upscale residential (Vermeijden, 2001, Gemeente Rotterdam 2011) . Contextualized by these areas, expanding the city center southwards in the neighborhoods of Feijenoord are seen as a natural progression of an ongoing process (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2007, 2016a, 2021).

This is the point where the overall plans of transforming and reorganizing the city, and the approach of urban renewal driven integration, intersects.

These neighborhoods of Feijenoord are now to be renewed and incorporated into the southern part of the city center (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016a, 2021), while the social housing dominated stock would be diversified, transforming much of these social housings into luxury apartments, attracting mid to high income populations and achieve a social integration goal in the spirit of the Dutch planning conventions as they were established in the past forty years of national policies.



Rotterdam Strategy of expanding center southward, taken from Stadsvisie 2030 (2007)



Expanded center - public spaces scheme, highlighting connectivity through Erasmusbrug and Koninginnebrug (Stadsvisie 2030)

Gentrification in Feijenoord

Low class communities driven out of the city due to gentrification

This ambition, and the process it creates, have a hidden cost in its implications to the local population of these neighborhoods already there.

Woonvisie 2016 openly states its aims to decrease 20,000 social housing flats from Feijenoord, with the addition of 36,000 'luxury' flats in their stead by 2030 (Woonvisie, 2016), essentially setting the stage for the removal of approx. 50,000 low income individuals to be replaced by higher income populations in the span of less than 15 years.

Based on the example set in Tweebos, a social housing complex in the neighborhood of Afrikkanderbuurt (just south of Katendrecht), this is not set to be done in a gradual way, reacting to a diminishing demand in low quality social housings, as the municipality's policies envision. The manifestation of urban renewal in that situation entailed the sudden and forceful removal of a strongly knit immigrant community by the housing association who owns the complex (Maroned, 2018, Vestia 2018), while only offering a fraction (roughly 26 percent) of the original stock of social housing in the rebuilt plan (Vestia, 2018, 2021), meaning that the vast majority of the local community would not be able to return after the complex is rebuilt, and they would have to be forced to look for housing elsewhere.

In this case, the community had enough social capital to unite and organize into a legal battle (Rijmond 2019, Woonbond 2019), however their lacks in human capital and in material capital (lacking ownership of their flats) cost them dearly, and ultimately resulted in their community being dissolved and their homes taken away from them (Habiballah et al 2021).

Tweebos is the most recent major example, and is significant as being the first major example within Woonvisie 2030 (Recht op de Stad 2021), but other such situations happened (or at least were attempted) in the past few decades. Added to the high profile renewals of Kop van Zuid and Katendrecht (Stadsvisie, 2007), are cases in Patrimonium Hof (feijenoord), HTH Blok (Noord), Pompenburg Flat (centrum) (recht op de Stad 2021).

Tweebosbuurt's high rate of renewal and replacement, proposing the removal of more than two thirds of its social housing stock, is also not a singularity, as the residents of Crooswijk can attest. They faced a similar plan in the late 2000's (which they effectively resisted), which proposed to replace 85% of the neighborhood, resulting in a massive decline in social housing stock - from 95% of the neighborhood's flats to a mere 30% (FBNC, no date).

Perhaps not all urban processes would be as blatantly unjust as the Tweebos Example, but even if the next situation would result in the unwanted removal of just half the population, or a quarter, it begs the question of who really benefits from this, and at what costs.



All information at a glance

Today you and your neighbors have been informed about the meeting. All information from the meeting can be found in this folder.

Plans Tweebosbuurt

Vestia and the municipality of Rotterdam have made plans to renew and give a new impulse to the neighbourhood. 599 obsolete homes and commercial spaces are being demolished. There are 374 homes for this; social and free sector re-occupied housing. Vestia is also renovating 90 homes.

Your home is being demolished

When your home is demolished, you will start looking for a new home. We will discuss with you: what you will receive from Vestia. To help you with this, our housing officers will discuss with you:

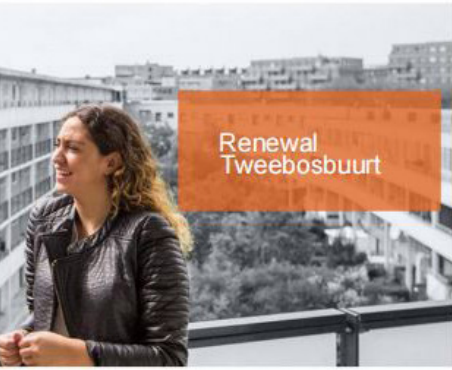
Letter informing the residents of Tweebosbuurt that their homes are being demolished (Source: Vestia, machine translated)



Tweebos, Rotterdam. January 2022 (taken from Twitter: @tweebos)

Tweebosbuurt

**Renewal
Tweebosbuurt**



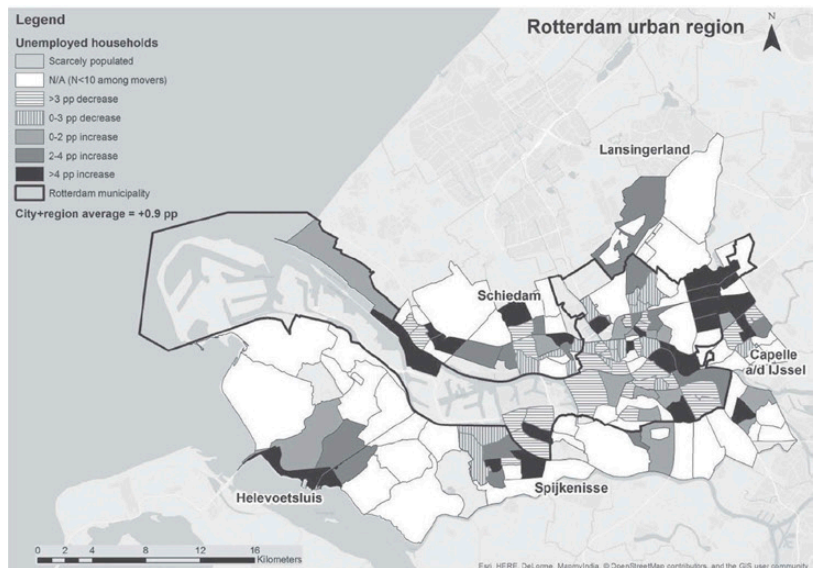
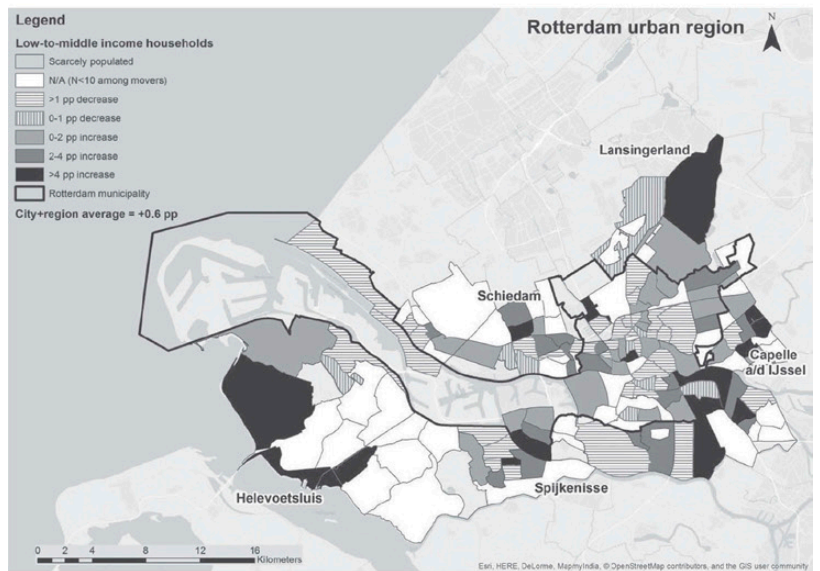
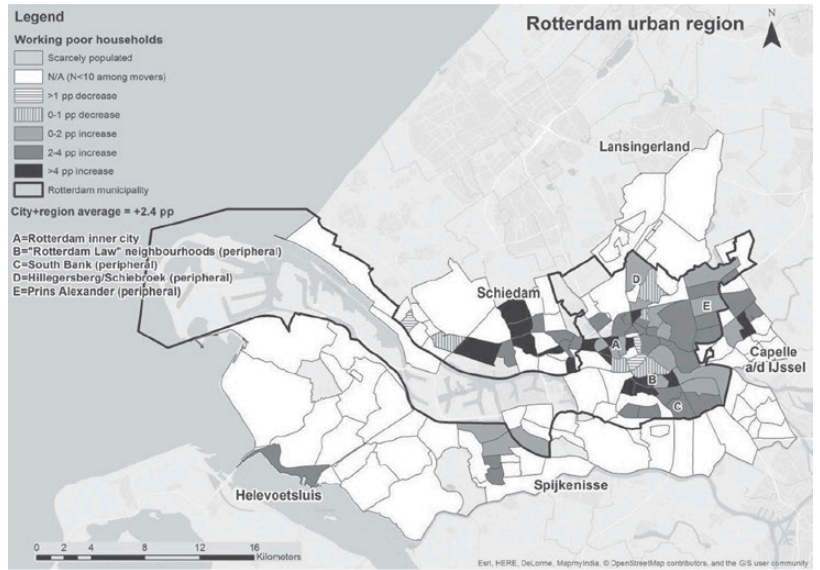
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Low income population increases/decreases in Rotterdam
(source: Gentrification and Suburbanization of Poverty, 2017)

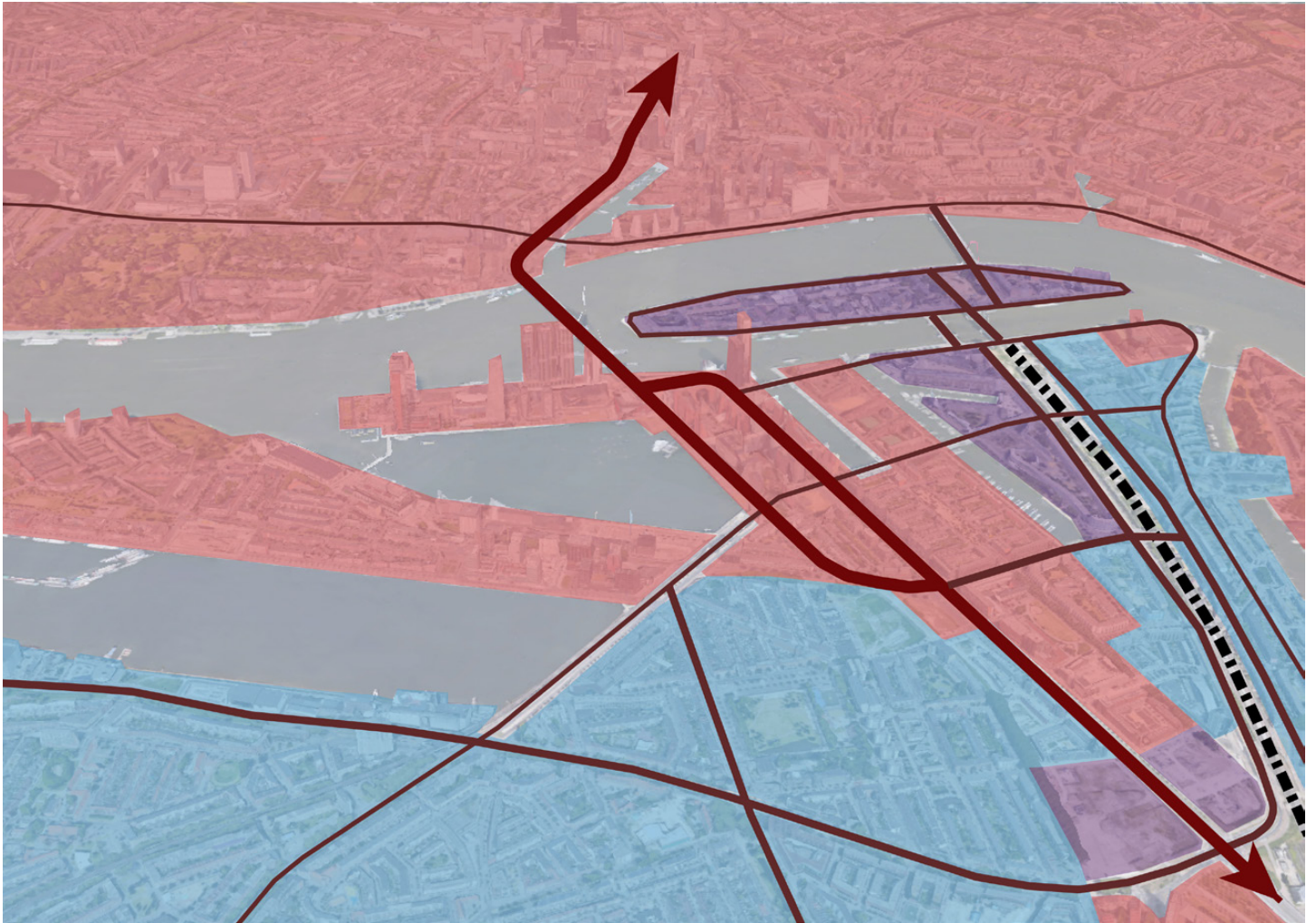
Gentrification in Feijenoord

However, it is important to realize that this is a more nuanced process, and not a single minded drive to push out the weak indiscriminately. Concern and investment in low income populations exists as well, but within an outlook that improvement for these areas cannot happen if these environments are dominated by low income populations, or lacking a critical mass of stronger populations to aid them (Uitermark et al 2007).

Also, the situation of the vulnerable populations is not uniform, and part of the problem identified, for example in the 'Promising Neighborhoods' initiative, is that even educated individuals or families originating from these areas, which are no longer interested in government support, are finding it hard to stay put due to lack of adequate housing stock or public amenities, and thus, find good reason in transforming the social housing stock to more luxurious models in response to these trends (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2018).

The 'Sterke Shouders, Sterke Stad' municipal policies, of which the 'Promising Neighborhoods' initiative is part of, openly expresses its goals of replacing underprivileged populations with more substantiated ones (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2020). However, that is combined with preserving those in transformation towards the higher classes that align to the city's vision - such as recently graduating university students, or highly trained foreigners. That is to say, the municipality is not strictly interested in replacing the rich with the poor, but rather, it is more focused on either attracting or preserving those capable of contributing to its vision in various situations - combining immigration of already strong populations, high potential ones (such as students), and elevating some of the vulnerable already there (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016a, 2020).

It does not account, however, for the future of those incapable of keeping up with the changes of time. Immigration trends in the city for the past fifteen years indicate increases to both highly educated middle to upper class populations joining the city, as well as working poor, while low income families and the unemployed are moving to the outskirts or satellite cities in the area (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2008). This corresponds to the transformation of the Dutch urban economy toward modern service based economy which is typically composed of a highly educated majority, and a low income minority that powers the industries that service and support them (Hochstenbach & Musterd, 2018). However, this also corresponds to the specifics of the 'Sterke Shouders' model as well, allowing for specific members of the existing vulnerable population to remain, just so long as they can contribute something meaningful to the city and its vision (Gemeente Rotterdam 2007, 2016a, 2020).



Gentrification process inserting into Feijenoord through the Erasmusbrug (background: Google Earth)
 Red - Renewed | Purple - Transforming | Blue - Unaltered

- ▨ Employment Area
- ▨ Urban Renewal Area
- ▨ Search Areas
- Urban Center
- Increase in Population
- Unchanged
- Decrease in Population
- Railway
- Subway
- Heritage renewal

Low income population changes in context of plans
 (based off of Gentrification and Suburbanization of Poverty, 2017, background - Google Earth)



Culmination of the Issue

Establishment detachment + community vulnerability = threat of its dissolution

Here we see the culmination of the phenomenon at hand: the intrinsic state of remoteness and detachment between planners and populations is leading to unfavorable decisions towards the vulnerable populations in Feijenoord. The nature of that vulnerability is also at the heart of the population's inability to intercede effectively in those unfavorable decisions. The combination of these two realities results in a concrete threat of the population's displacement, or even dissolution, under the guise of so-called social inclusion and aid. Aid for those few inhabitants who would be allowed to return to an upheaved environment vastly transformed, while the rest are forced to leave.

It is likely that the trend of displacing the weak in such circumstances will not end with the goals set by Woonvisie for 2030, nor would they be limited just to Feijenoord in the long term. As the core of cities would expand in time, the displacement of the urban poor would likely become more and more accentuated and widespread.

Woonvisie constantly repeats its desire to create stronger neighborhoods with better communities, but if the price of achieving this entails the replacement of the population within these neighborhoods, then it is clearly about improving the situation of the city's socio economics, its urban economy, its reputation and profile - rather than improving the situation of the population within it. That this would be so blatantly stated in official and public documents, and implemented so callously in situations such as in Tweebos, indicates an alarming lack of self awareness or introspection that is indicative of just how single minded and self assured these decision makers really are, and how far gone they are from doubting their own priorities, their set of values and the processes that play into the decisions they pass and the acts they encourage.

It would be a dangerous proposition for the people of Feijenoord (or any other similarly vulnerable population in Rotterdam, for that matter) to sit by and hope that Rotterdam's decision makers would change their attitudes and ways on their own. To these establishment members, situations such as Katendrecht, Kop van Zuid and Tweebos are success stories to be repeated and duplicated,

milestones of urban transformation that are the beginning of a strong and modern city better prepared for the future. That this requires that the poor and uneducated be replaced with other 'better' populations - educated, well behaved, conformed and contributing to the urban economy, rather than requiring resources and aid from it, is a natural and logical conclusion. Where would the displaced poor of Feijenoord go, and how long would they be allowed to stay in their next stop? The composers of Woonvisie do not really attempt to answer that.

Tweebos, now a noisy and busy construction site, is destined to be rebuilt into hundreds of new 'luxury' flats which will be bought and housed by hundreds of educated upper middle class young families - well behaved and positive 'luxury' citizens that would help power the renewed economic service based economy of Rotterdam, demonstrating in the process how urban renewal will treat the vulnerable all too well.

For the twenty six percent of the original inhabitants that would be allowed to return (Vestia, 2021), they would surely benefit from the positive influences their new neighbors would bring - the better schools, the clean and safer streets. Perhaps within a generation or three, these benefits would trickle down to their children or grandchildren, and they would gain acceptance in their space and in the city - this time as valuable 'luxury' citizens in their own right.

However, for the other seventy seven percent, their path towards acceptance and belonging in Dutch society is not so straightforward or clear. They would be pushed out and forced to restart at the outskirts of Rotterdam, Dordrecht or Schiedam. Perhaps in time gentrification would expand to reach these places as well, and then some of them would be allowed to integrate, while the rest would be pushed out again - as the cycle continues.

If the population of Feijenoord is to break that cycle and secure its place in the urban fabric, it must do so in its own right, and find a way to proactively assert itself in these processes despite the major deficiencies in capital that left it so vulnerable in the first place.

How that may be possible, would be described in the following chapter.

Research Aim

The research up to this point establishes that the policies set by the municipality of Rotterdam are sourced and supported by the national directives for integration, and are driven also by a strongly motivated local municipality, to transform Rotterdam in a way that would be much less accommodating to the low income members of Feijenoord.

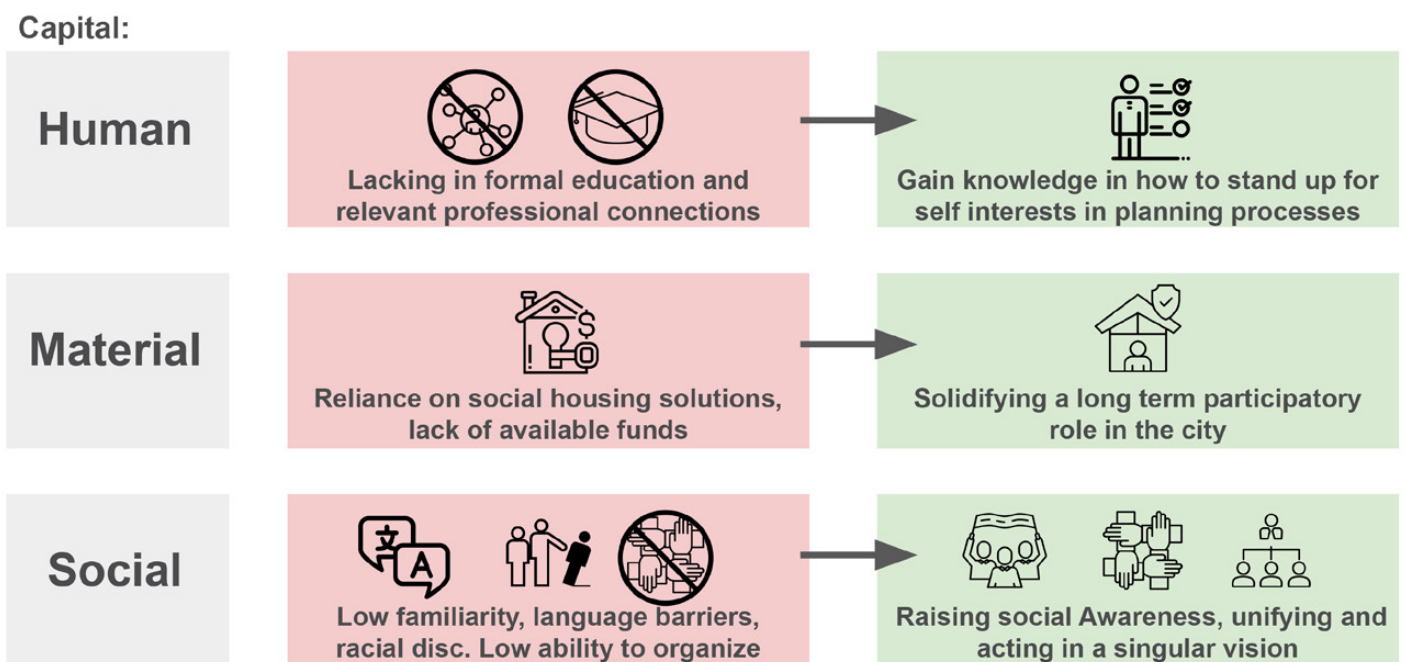
From the people of Feijenoord's perspective, their woes in this matter originate by lacks in capital - them being a collection of varied minority groups, typified by low education, low income, and a heavy reliance on social housing, makes them incompatible with the vision set for Rotterdam's future. At the same time, these very lacks that are tilting decisions against them, are also responsible for their diminished ability to resist or influence these trends, once these decisions are already made.

Thus, It is hard to imagine that this trend, or the situations it incur, would be reversed or altered significantly on its own if left unchecked, barring some unforeseen development.

The conclusion is that supplanting for these lacks of capital must be done from an external source. Although attempting to answer for these lacks promptly and directly (i.e -solving the socio-economic problems troubling the population) would likely be a monumental task taking

many years, perhaps in a more narrowed and focused way, by addressing specific elements of lack in capital that are holding Feijenoord's population from protecting itself, it could make for a more realistic approach in addressing this specific issue of displacement.

And so, the aim of this project is to propose a method of intervention in this situation threatening the population of Feijenoord, by supplementing these lacks in human capital, in social clout and in material possessions that are diminishing the place-community's ability to protect its interests effectively within the urban space and in a planning context, and proactively participate in the reshaping of Feijenoord in a way that includes them as an integral part within it.



Images: Noun Project, Users - Yannik Wolfel, Paltart, Andi, Vector point, Prithvi, The icon Z, Eucalyp, Blake, Barbara Haupt, Luis Prado, Logan

Ethical Relevance

These issues of socio-economic capital lacks, and their implications in the context of urban renewal processes, as they occur in Rotterdam's efforts at expanding and transforming its city center, are a global and universal issue (Lin et al 2021). Parallel processes can be found in many different places throughout the world. It can be found in China's greater bay area, in New York, and also in my hometown of Tel Aviv, Israel. All of these places are reacting to the rise in prominence of city centers to their societies and culture, and are all asking a similar question of what is to be done with the urban poor that are taking up expensive and high profile real-estate in the city, while (supposedly) holding it back from fulfilling its potential to the fullest (Lin et al 2021).

The answers each place provides are different, however, and the notion of cross-class integration as a process of urban renewal is perhaps more in line with western european sensibilities than in other places (Blokland, Vief, 2021), and perhaps more relevant to similar situations in that region for that reason.

However, displacement of just some of the city's poor, as is happening in the Netherlands, rather than all of them, is only a relative kindness, not an absolute one. The self assurance with which planners are pushing for such policies, regardless of the price they exort, and without concrete evidence they actually work are all disconcerting, and something that all planners everywhere would benefit to learn from and be aware of in the thought processes and consequences happening in their own work.

Hypothesis

- A** Low class communities are vulnerable to unfavorable planning decisions due to an intrinsic lack in capital - social capital (cohesion, organization capabilities, clout), human (institutional and professional knowhow) and material (home ownership, funds). These same lackings also mark them as a 'problem to be solved' by planners, making them especially vulnerable to interventions in their situation, while having a diminished ability to participate in decisions that impact their situation.
- B** Differences in terms of language, social norms, education, values, priorities and interests lead to planning decisions and designs that are detrimental and incompatible to this vulnerable population's needs, all the while its members are insufficiently equipped in ways of expressing themselves and standing up for their agency over their own environment.
- C** In order to minimize this gap, a method of supplementing for these lacks in capital is required, in a way that would create a better understanding between the community and the planning establishment, aligning their cause, and empower the community to stand up for itself and assert its place as an integral part of the city, with a degree of control over their communal homes.
- D** Such methods are already being examined and attempted with a varying degree of success, each offering its own sets of benefits and limitations, and although none managed to fully substantiate itself as a proven and widespread solution, the need and the potential of such methods addressing this issue is apparent.

Research Question

Can a method of community empowerment that supplements the social, material and human capital lacks existing in Feijenoord's communities become an effective tool for such communities to proactively influence changes to the renewal and integration policies threatening their social cohesion? What kind of inclusive visions for the city would such a method achieve?

1. What are the factors driving the urban renewal policies and processes that are ongoing in Feijenoord? How much are they related to socio-economic disparity between Rotterdam's planning establishment and Feijenoord's place-communities?
2. Can these policies be effectively challenged through a program aimed at supplementing lack in socio-economic capital? How would such a program work? What would they strive for in general, and in the context of such a program?
3. What are the possible spatial consequences that an effective community resistance effort may create in the urban space of Feijenoord? Would the implementation of such an engagement method, specifically, create results that are different from other approaches?

Approach for Action

The USE-IT! program by Birmingham University as a method of raising capital

The core research question asks if lacks of capital can be supplemented externally in the context of achieving a specific aim. In this instance - gaining influence over planning processes. However, similar attempts were made in different contexts that could perhaps be adapted to this specificity.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) proposes a 'glass half full' approach of identifying and developing strengths in vulnerable communities, rather than dwelling on its deficiencies (Stuart 2017) which could be used to raise social and human capital in Feijenoord's vulnerables, while the RPA (Regional Participation Authority) in Tuscany, Italy is an independent governmental agency aimed at promoting, guiding and funding planning community processes in the region, thus providing a degree of human and material capital to communities in their engagement with the planning establishment (Crawford 2012).

One specific method stood out, in that it addressed these specific lacks and in a very similar context within a social science experiment conducted by the University of Birmingham, attempting to supplant for lacks in human, social and material capital in the low income area of Greater Ickneild, north west of the city center of Birmingham (Scheffler 2017).

The project, named USE-IT! (Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together) attempted at using the university as a surrogate for the capital lacking in the community, by providing its reputation, connections, organizational abilities and fund raising abilities to establish social projects in the community (Scheffler 2020). What set it apart from other similar projects such as ABCD or RPA, was that these projects were conceived and promoted by community members themselves, as a result of the program teaching participants from the community in specific academic tools that would allow

them to identify problems through social research, propose solutions and create working projects that would be developed with the cooperation of external partners, such as local businesses or institutions (Scheffler 2017, 2020).

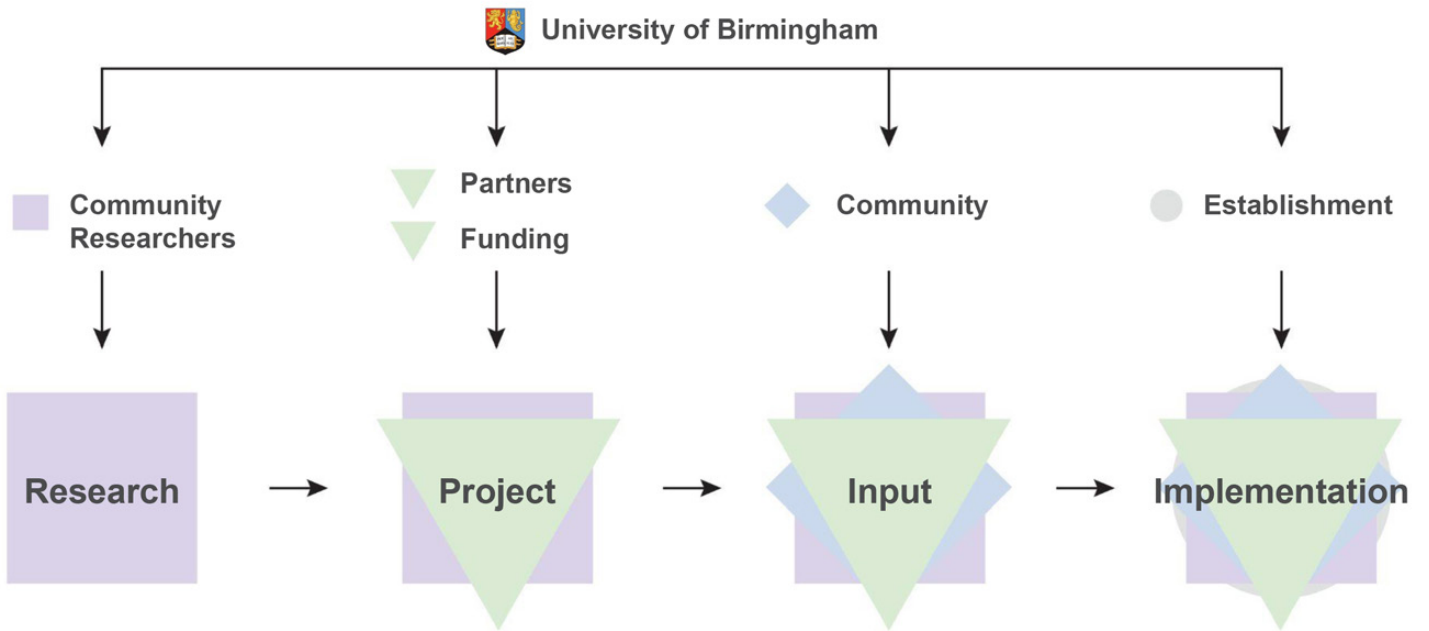
This approach managed to supplant for all three lacks that define the low income community as such, as well as their inability to break through and aid themselves and change their situation(Scheffler 2017, 2020):

The lacks in social capital, manifested with the community's inability to organize and collaborate together were answered for with an organizational structure provided and operated by the program, while the lack in reputation, clout and connections were met with the university attaching its name to the program and employing its connections in order to gain open minded cooperation by other substantiated actors in the Birmingham and Greater Ickneild space (Scheffler 2020).

Lacks in human capital were addressed with the teaching of community members of focused academic tools, and then guiding them in employing them in research programs that were then to be translated into practical application at a later stage (Scheffler 2020). Thus, the community gained representation that could express itself in the social language of the more established elements operating in that space, such as state, businesses and academia.

Lacks in material capital were also met by the university procuring funding for operations from the local municipality and from the European Commission, which were used to finance the renting of a physical space for operations, community outreach and in operating of the social programs conceived by the community members (Scheffler 2020).





Approach for Action

Adapting USE-IT! to the Rotterdam situation

Although USE-IT! did not deal directly with issues of urban renewal or gentrification, focusing instead on issues of employment and socio-economic sustainability - the way it went about creating change in very similar socio-spatial circumstances, by using a broad addressal of the problem to treat a focused and specific issue - could perhaps be translatable to the specific issue of urban renewal and integration causing displacement in Feijenoord, using similar means.

That is to say, since the problems affecting both communities originate from the same source (i.e - lack in capital), then perhaps the strategy and method employed in addressing these factors in Greater Icknield with the aims of creating better social and financial integration, could be similarly employed in Feijenoord in order to create better interaction and spatial agency for the community there.

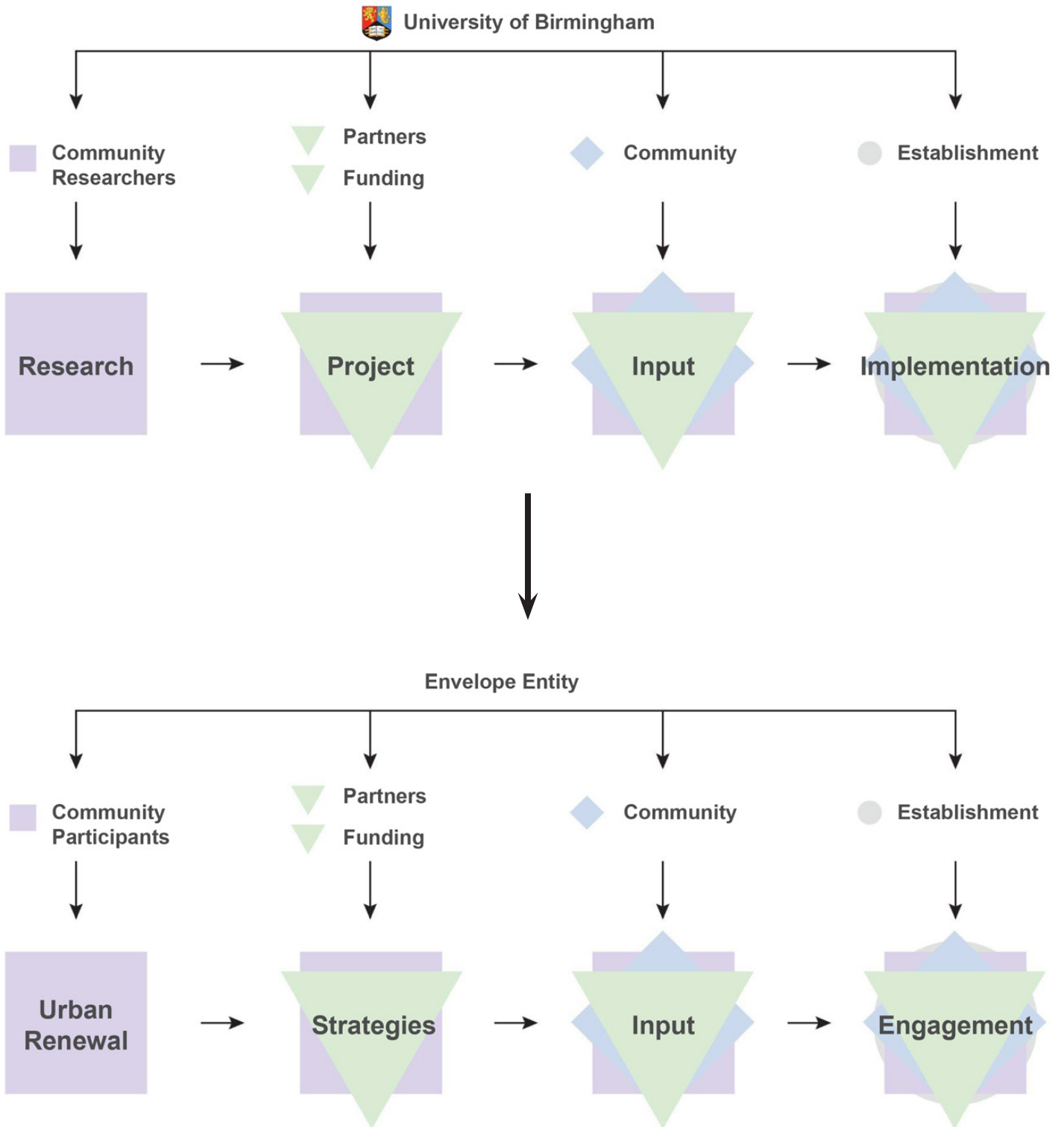
The research presented here proposes to examine whether or not a similar project, based on the structure and approach of USE-IT! can be implemented in Rotterdam in an effort of providing the population there with the tools to effectively challenge the urban renewal and integration processes that are threatening their cohesion and place in the city.

It will strive to learn the principles and methodology guiding USE-IT!, the challenges it faced and the way it went about going about to overcome them.

A plausible plan, based on these principles, would indicate that there is the potential for vulnerable communities to protect their interests in the urban space with relatively small, albeit focused, investment in the population already there.

USE-IT! operated with the belief that the capital required to make change already existed in the community, and that all it required was guidance and direction in order for it to help itself (Scheffler 2020). The same can be argued for Feijenoord's community, and outlining a possible and plausible way for it to utilize its hidden potentials could signal that vulnerable communities, despite their intrinsic lacks, can claim an active part in the processes of guiding a city's vision, rather than just passively withstanding its outcomes.

Capital:	USE-IT! Birmingham:	Feijenoord:
Human	Teaching academic tool Guiding research Implementation into social programs	Teaching engagement methods Guiding strategies, alternative planning Implementation into organized action
Material	Space for activities Budget for social projects Connections to attract partners	Space for activities Budget for activities, external aid Connections to attract Professional aid
Social	Reputation provides credence Vision includes communities Organization provides direction	Reputation - credence, corporation Vision enables communities say Organization provides direction



Critical Examination

Critical look at the implications of struggle-led inclusion

In order for such a program to be successful in altering the plans and vision of a city, it must be able to propose a feasible alternative in its stead. Meaning - if the community of Feijenoord manages to prevent its displacement, what would happen in its stead?

Would it strive for a status quo? for gentrification without displacement? or perhaps renovations would happen funded by mass government fundings?

Either of these options would entail unforeseeable consequences and exert prices from the population of feijenoord and from the city at large. And some possibilities would perhaps prove more disastrous than those proposed now. Merely looking for a way to prevent displacement as an end goal is limited in outlook and short sighted, and without providing a compelling alternative, it would mean that a Feijenoord version of USE-IT! probably would ultimately fail.

A critical outlook at the possible eventualities of such a project would help give it a more realistic dimension, either elevating it from an interesting idea and into an actual suggestion (or even proposal) for socio-spatial intervention in the Feijenoord space, or it would flesh out its shortcomings and challenges that such a method would likely encounter if attempted in actuality.

Examining validity of community demands through a design product

How can the feasibility (or lack thereof) of an alternative and its implications be demonstrated in this case?

Given that this is a spatial issue, projecting to transform the urban space of feijenoord, it would be meaningful to examine the question of what is proposed and what alternatives may arise in its stead through spatial tools, thus illustrating the socio-spatial implications of the various scenarios, while flushing the various challenges, complexities, limitations and opportunities that the physical dimensions of planning has to offer.

It would help add a meaningful layer of information as to how each scenario or option would impact the urban space of Feijenoord, and project what type of space may come from each scenario, what benefits it would introduce as well as what costs.

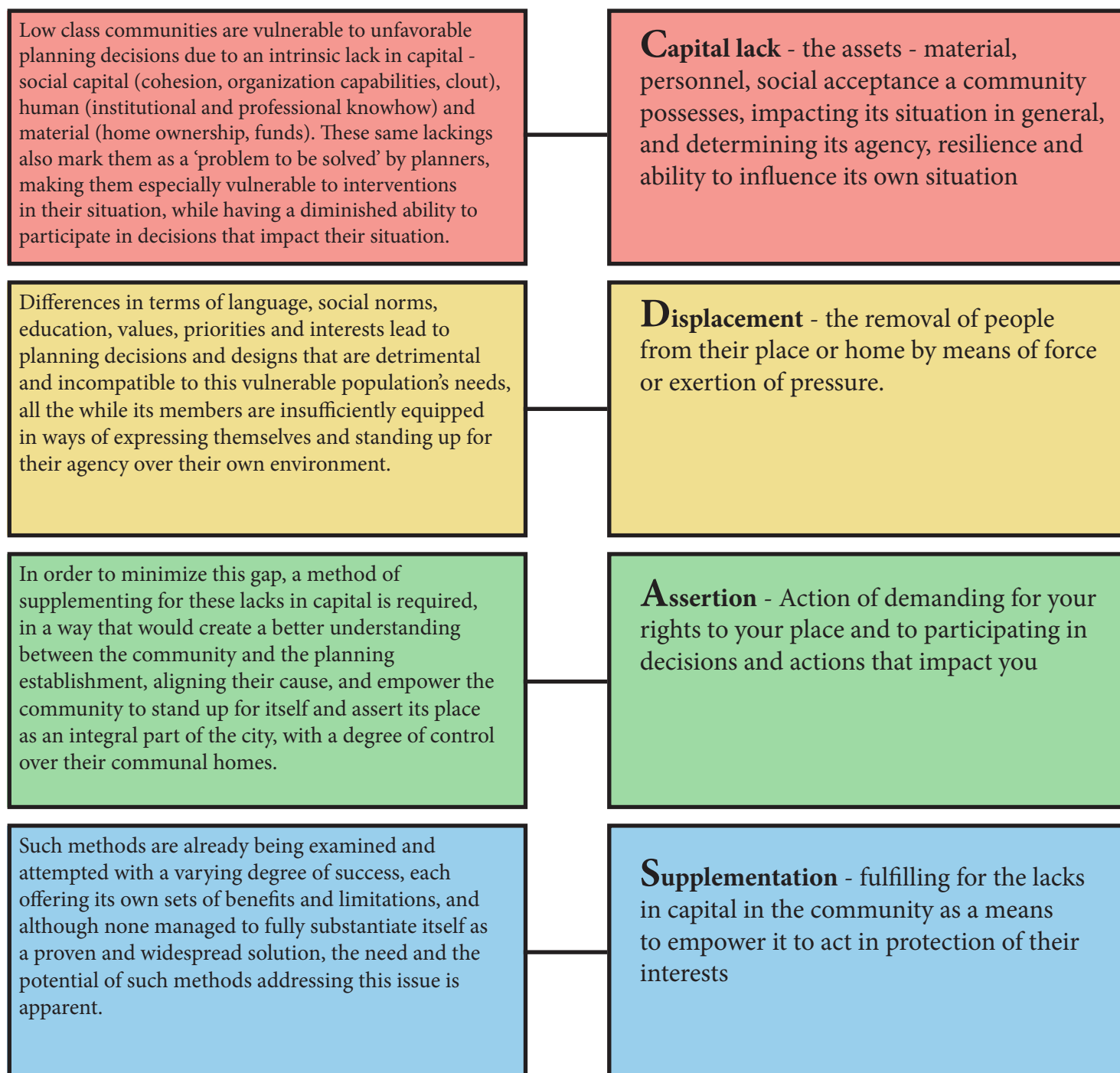
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework was structured in a way that it would serve as a conduit that transforms the key features of the argumentation, succinctly described in the hypothesis, into clearly defined concepts of research, rearranged in a non-linear way and focused around

how they interconnect, in order for their exploration to be effective in answering the core research question in a more informed way, addressing how these concepts influence and relate to one another - both in defining the problem, and in attempting to answer for it.

Hypothesis

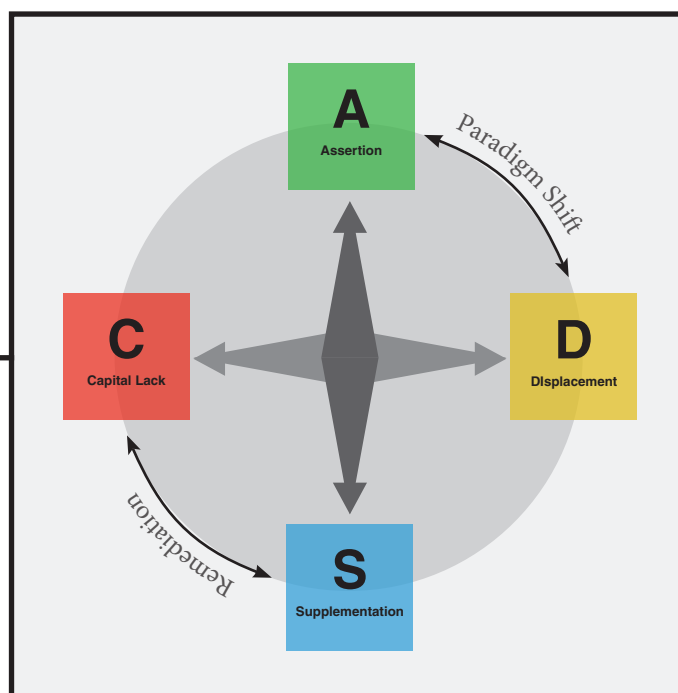
Key Concepts



Research Question

Framework

Can a method of community empowerment that supplements the social, material and human capital lacks existing in Feijenoord's communities become an effective tool for such communities to proactively influence changes to the renewal and integration policies threatening their social cohesion?



The theoretical framework looks to find a logical connection between two types of themes established:

- Situation: **Capital** <---> **Displacement**
- Solution: **Assertion** <---> **Supplementation**

Between these two states there are two points of interaction that would inform on that connection:

- Paradigm Shift: in how the community Views itself
- Remediation: Theorizing on a method of solution

Methodological Framework

Intended output

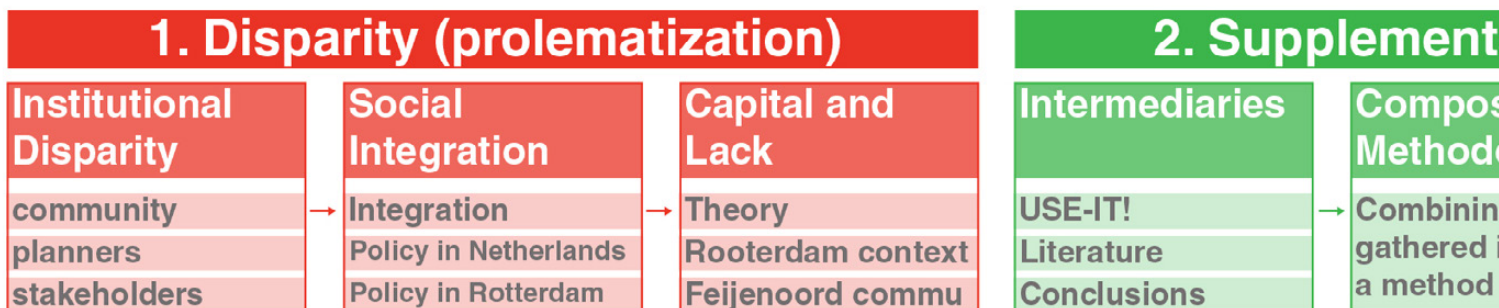
Complementing the approach taken in the theoretical framework, the methodology itself is closely interconnected to the sub questions, as these are phrased and structured in a way that they would build an organized argumentation in answering for the primary core question guiding the project. These sub questions were designed to essentially be chapter heads that would divide the research around three clear stages - Problem Definition, Proposed Solution, and a Critical Reflection.

The first sub-question enquires as to the situation happening in Feijenoord, its factors, the plans made to alter it and what they propose, while trying to frame a critical outlook as to these and contextualize these in accordance to theoretical background on these issues.

Accordingly, the approach to this type of research is more exploratory, and focused on assembling an information and theory base for a description and argument of the ongoings of Feijenoord in that context, and in arguing that addressing lacks in capital may serve to remedy the issue.

The second question is centered around examining a specific way of addressing these lacks and the situation they create, as attempted by the USE-IT! project. Thus, it is an in-depth examination of its theoretical base, methodology and components, and an authorization of a similar program in the Feijenoord context, as well as a critical analysis of what it may bring about - the opportunities, challenges and risks it would entail.

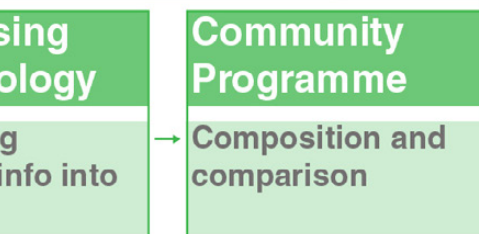
The third question is an examination of that method, in essence a critical reflection as to the possible socio-spatial consequences it may bring about. This would be done through the use of spatial design tools that would help visualize the possible spatial manifestations, helping in establishing if it is feasible that such an action by the community can result in a transformed urban space, and at what costs.



Can a method of community empowerment that supplements the social, material and human capital lacks existing in Feijenoord's communities become an effective tool for such communities to proactively influence changes to the renewal and integration policies threatening their social cohesion? What kind of inclusive visions for the city would such a method achieve?

1. What are the factors driving the urban renewal policies and processes that are ongoing in Feijenoord? How much are they related to socio-economic disparity between Rotterdam's planning establishment and Feijenoord's place-communities?
2. Can these policies be effectively challenged through a program aimed at supplementing lack in socio-economic capital? How would such a program work? What would they strive for in general, and in the context of such a program?
3. What are the possible spatial consequences that an effective community resistance effort may create in the urban space of Feijenoord? Would the implementation of such an engagement method, specifically, create results that are different from other approaches?

ation (method)



3. Spatial implications (design)



Disparity (Problematization)

Theory on social integration

Purpose: Gaining an insight into these would be meaningful in both contextualizing the actions proposed or already happening in Feijenoord, the mindset of the establishment forces operating and impacting these, and in theorizing what concepts and values would need to be addressed when potentially trying to alter these.

Method: Researching literature on the theoretical basis of social integration - where did that notion come from? How did it take hold generally? and what does it envision to achieve exactly, in what way, and how much time is that supposed to take?

Netherlands policies

Purpose: Understanding the issues of urban renewal and social integration in the context of the Netherlands specifically, while gaining an insight into how these more theoretical concepts of integration are manifested in policies and plans that result later on in concrete actions accordingly.

Method: A critical research and analysis into the history of social integration in the Netherlands specifically, examining what processes and outcomes did the past 30 years of this approach produce, and how did evolve and change to this point in time, via literature, policy analysis, statistics and spatial analysis.

Rotterdam planning policies analysis

Purpose: Bridging the gap between theoretical description to spatial manifestation, an examination of the policies, plans and actions taken in Rotterdam would help draw a clear connection between theory and reality. It would also help gain a meaningful insight into the vision and aspirations the Rotterdam leadership has for the city in a wider context, adding important complexity and depth to the understanding of the situation, as well as a more complete outlook upon it.

Method: Research and critical analysis of policy documents, compilation of data layers and plans in an effort to gain insight into the spatial trends planned, and observation of examples already happening as a result of these policies that may gain insight as to the future of similar places in the Feijenoord space.

Researching the community situation

Purpose: Would paint a picture as to the nature of their vulnerability, its social manifestations, and the impact these have on the space of the Feijenoord neighborhoods.

Method: This involves spatial analysis, statistical data, literature on the matter, and perhaps interviews with professionals involved with these communities (healthcare, teachers, social workers, NGO employees).

Theory on capital and lack

Purpose: Given that the main research question is centered around the addressal of lack of capital in the community, understanding what these are and how they impact the current situation as well as future plans is very important to establish.

Method: Must be fleshed out in theory on the matter, and connected to the Rotterdam situation by assembling key points from each of the previous methodology practices, demonstrating in a comparative way how the elements described in the theory are manifested in the case of Feijenoord.

Supplementation (Method)

USE-IT! Literature

Purpose: Learning about the idea at the core of USE-IT!, its methods of operation and the results it achieved, as described by the organizers of the program would be very telling as to how it may inspire a similar action in Feijenoord

Method: research and critical analysis of documents the program produced covering its methodology, as well as periodic progress reports it issued every six months, describing its progress, challenges and solutions.

Stakeholder analysis and power interest matrix

Purpose: Would be meaningful in understanding who are the various actors in space that may be able to participate and contribute to such an endeavor. This would help in identifying who would be these representatives in the community, who would provide the institutional backing, and what other players in space could plug in and aid such an effort.

Method: Information gathering of the various actors, analyzing their stake in the feijenoord space and drawing connections between them and the urban planning processes existing in that space.

Composing an adjusted methodology

Purpose: Combining the understanding of the USE-IT! program, the theory behind it and the mappings investigating into Fijenoord's socio-spatial landscape would allow for a plan demonstrating how such a method could work in this case (or conversely, if it cannot - what is lacking for that to work).

Method: Based on the analysis of USE-IT!, a distillation of relevant points according to key themes (goals, methodology, challenges and solutions) would be made, creating a document outlining how such a program could perhaps operate in the context of Feijenoord.

Researching the community situation

Purpose: Projecting the essence of what would be an end result of such a program would be meaningful as a closing argument to this chapter, giving it a critical depth that goes beyond the notion that the community would probably want to stay in place. Feasibility of their demands would also be meaningful to explore, trying to assess what the community would propose would be meaningful towards that end.

Method: Some assumptions can be readily made based on the research done to this point falling back on how populations in similar situations resisted change in the past, and also through questionnaires, research into past demands, interviews of individuals involved in previous or parallel struggles, and literature on the matter - academic or in media.

A step further, this programme would be compared and expanded upon according to the specifics of the intermediary method. For example - if the method includes anecdotal and focused community research empowered by business connections (similarly to the specifics of the USE-IT! method), then it would try to project demands that leans towards focused issues with business/institutional backing.

Spatial Implications (Design)

Establishing design principles

Purpose: Translating the conclusions of the previous chapter into design guidelines that would be set as planning parameters and goals would aid in examining potential consequences within a design product.

Method: Critical analysis of the needs and wants of the community as established in the previous chapter, as well as those of the planning establishment, as determined within the first question would be compiled into a few base scenarios attempting to answer what would come in place of the current integration vision, from a spatial perspective.

Current situation and context research

Purpose: Gaining a more precise and specific spatial understanding of the site in Feijenoord would add another layer of complexity to a design project, and very likely would transform the possible outcomes of the proposed scenarios. These are critical to any urban design project, and would be key in examining how a conceptual demand by the community might run into challenges or exert prices when the situation and its impact is now specific and tangible.

Method: Establishing a picture of the current situation in the design site (mappings, background information, larger scale plans, spatial properties of site), as well as the larger contexts that would influence it.

Design product preparation

Purpose: Contextualized by the intermediary method(s) established and cross-referenced with the two clauses above (principles derived, situation outlined) three scenarios would be defined aiming to examine the methodology in different ways

Method: This can be done as either two extremes and a middle ground (community has no effect/full effect/compromise) or if there are several methods - describing each in its own way. Either way, these would entail the programme, goals, expected changes to the neighborhood and its effects on the larger contexts of Feijenoord and Rotterdam.

Design product

Purpose: The design itself would be a descriptive 'proposal' based on the preparation work in the clauses above, describing the possible outcomes of each scenario using planning tools - plans, typical sections, isometrics and quantitative data that would construct the picture to each option, while possibly also uncovering qualitative parameters that can also be added to the set of considerations when assessing the merits of each.

Method: Spatial design tools such as plans, sections, diagrams and 3d means of expression.

USE-IT! Analysis

Researching into USE-IT!

USE-IT! documented its working extensively, mainly through three policy documents outlining its theoretical standpoint, analysis of the situation and the methodology they embarked on in detail. Another five 'journal' progress updates that were issued biyearly detailed the progress made, providing an in depth description of the challenges they faced and the solutions and changes that were conducted in response.

Analyzing these documents was conducted through a process of distillation and rearrangement of the material into seven key categories (later narrowed down to six) that outline how the program operated and the reasoning behind each:

Goals - what the program strived for, and the reason for these in relation to theories of socio-economic capital lacks.

Methodology - what it set out to do specifically in order to supplement for these capital lacks in the community of Greater Ickneild.

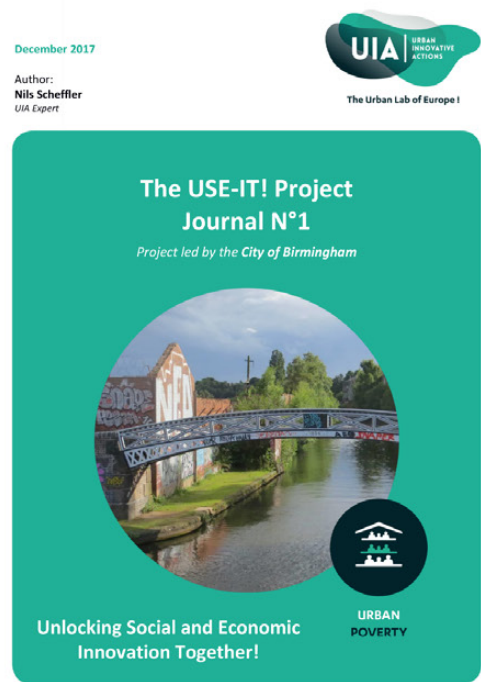
Organization - the pragmatic steps to run such an endeavor in the real life circumstances that it operated within.

Participants - its relation and interaction with the community members that actively participated in the program, and the external partners that joined in supporting them.

Community - the relationship with the community of Greater Ickneild at large, how and to what extent they were involved with the project and its outcomes.

Challenges - what challenges arose during the project, how they were addressed and what lessons were learned.

Each chapter was then filtered out for its key elements, and these were value judged for their relevance in dealing with the specific situation and themes explored in the Feijenoord integration context. This analysis ultimately revealed Whether or not USE-IT! would be translatable to Feijenoord, and assuming it could - in what ways specifically.





November 2018

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The USE-IT! Project Journal N°2

Project led by the City of Birmingham



URBAN
POVERTY

Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together!



The USE-IT! Project Journal N°3

Project led by the City of Birmingham



URBAN
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Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together!



22 June 2018

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The USE-IT! Project Zoom-in N°1 The creation of social enterprises

Project led by the City of Birmingham



URBAN
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Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together!



January 2019

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The USE-IT! project Journal N° 5

Project led by the City of Birmingham



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Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together!



The USE-IT! Project Zoom-in N°2 Jobs for overseas migrants

Project led by the City of Birmingham



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POVERTY

How to qualify 180 local overseas migrants to become employees in the health sector



March 2020

Author:
Nils Scheffler
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The USE-IT! Project Zoom-in N°3 Community research for a community-oriented urban regeneration

Project led by the City of Birmingham



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USE-IT! Analysis

General Description (what is USE-IT?)

Before diving into the breakdown of the program, however, it is important to establish the basics of what exactly it is, and what it set out to do.

The USE-IT! (Unlocking Social and Economic Innovation Together) project was conducted by the University of Birmingham in the years 2017-2019, focusing on the local community of Greater Ickneild, an impoverished part of the city, north west of its center.

It proposed an approach to empowerment of the local population by providing it with various tools for self improvement via training, research and entrepreneurship initiatives that would be focused into social projects aimed at improving the situation of the local population, conceived and operated by the community participants (Scheffler, 2020). These would be done with the university providing a support structure to organize and guide the operations of the various activities, while also using its reputation and connections in order to reach out and obtain further external support for the projects from institutions and organizations operating in Birmingham (Scheffler, 2017, 2018c, 2020).

The program split into three concurring activities ('Work Packages'):

Jobs for Overseas Migrants - focused on preparing qualified immigrants with adjustment struggles (language, credentials) for work in England (Scheffler, 2019a)

Social Enterprise Program - Focused on promoting local community startups with a social benefit to the local population (Scheffler, 2018b)

Community Researchers Program - Focused on training local community members in academic research tools and setting them in researching their own community (Scheffler, 2020).













It resulted in several successful programs, as part of these packages.

Jobs for Overseas Immigrants connected newly immigrant healthcare professionals to employment in the newly constructed local hospital (Scheffler, 2019a, 2019b). The Social Enterprise Project launched several startups and a mutual support network (Scheffler, 2018a, 2018b).

The Community Research Program resulted in a few projects conceived by the researchers that resulted in several community programs that are either active or are commissioned for implementation in the future (Scheffler, 2019c).



KEY

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Greater Ickneild area |  | New Secondary School |
|  | Development opportunities |  | Public greenspace |
|  | Ickneild Port Loop |  | New Midland Metropolitan Hospital site |
|  | City Hospital |  | Rail line and station |
|  | Spring Hill |  | Metro line and station |
|  | Ledsam Street |  | Major highway network |
|  | Chamberlain Gardens |  | Canal |
|  | Waterworks Road |  | Approximate walking and cycling time from Ickneild Port Loop |
|  | Western Road and Spring Hill | | |
|  | New Secondary School | | |

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Spatial dimension of USE-IT! in the Greater Ickneild area (Source: USE-IT!, Greater Ickneild masterplan)

USE-IT! Analysis

Goals

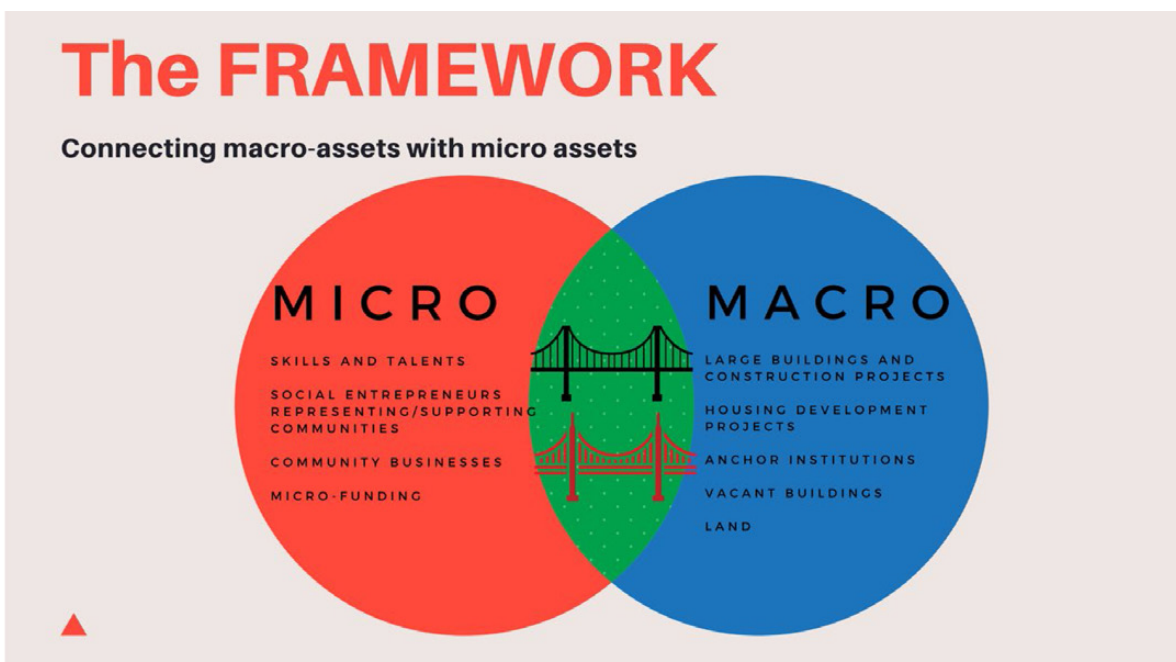
These activities and achievements were founded on a strong theoretical notion of addressing capital lacks in the community, and expressed that notion specifically through the definition of the project's goals. USE-IT!'s clearly stated that its aim is to supplement lack of capital in the low income area of Greater Ickneild (a wing of Birmingham north west of its center) by providing the community with focused tools with which it could aid itself according to its own vision and understanding, with the guidance and backing of the university in seeing them through to tangible action (Scheffler, 2020).

This came out of identifying that up to that point, efforts in combating poverty were focusing on either urban regeneration top-down investments, such as the works of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO), in the physical space meant to create benefits to the area overall - in the hopes that these benefits would trickle down to the weaker populations, or via bottom up neighborhood management programs, such as Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) - aimed at social empowerment that would create a more cohesive society in these areas (Scheffler, 2017). However, according to USE-IT!, both types of approaches tended to fall short of their goals - each for their own reason. The trickling down effect of urban renewal did not reach the low rungs of society, while social empowerment did not sustain itself after the programs that supported them concluded their operations (Scheffler, 2017).

The main problem, USE-IT! claimed, is that they failed to work in unison and give an overall treatment to both the social and the financial problems existing in the community in unison, resulting in imbalanced and unsustainable improvements as both are required to sustain each other in order for benefits to prevail long term (Scheffler, 2017).

The program theorized that the capital the community needed to sustain both goals already exists within the community, but due to various systemic problems such as socio-economic pressures or language barriers, it is not utilized to its fullest, resulting in capable people being held back and under utilized in helping themselves and their community (Scheffler, 2017, 2020).

And so, they defined goals in identifying these capable people, and providing them with training and backing so they could elevate themselves, while also aiding their community in the process - by providing focused guidance to their efforts, while utilizing the infrastructure already in existence in the area in support of the socio-economic efforts of the community there, thus ensuring long term sustainability that would outlast the program's existence (Scheffler, 2017, 2018a, 2020).



USE-IT! framework (Source: USE-IT!)

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

The goal of supplementing for lacks in capital has the potential to be key in answering for parallel lacks in the Feijenoord situation. This underscored aim and the specific approach to solution hints at the similarity of the root causes both in situations, even if the specific issues addressed are different.

The idea of investing in the training of community members - addressing its human capital lacks, and that the community already has assets within it that could be major contributors to it with the right guidance and in a focus way could be directly transferable to addressing this lack in Feijenoord, and providing the community with members among it, with knowledge and understanding that would be relevant to dealing with the issues troubling it when interacting with the Rotterdam planning establishment.

Utilizing existing infrastructures and urban assets, and connecting these to the local community with a strong and established organization to vouch for it could be a meaningful strategy to pursue, as there may be such potentials in Feijenoord that if they were to be approached and utilized correctly, may be able to provide help and support the community there, and perhaps even gain value for itself from the interaction.

The notion of utilizing the university's social and material capital in answering these lacks in the Greater Icknield community can be very meaningful in answering for the same lacks existing in Feijenoord as well, as these problems are very similar in their nature, and that of the factors creating it.

The idea that community research can be a tool of understanding the situation in the community in depth, and in identifying what is troubling to them, by their own people (rather than by external research dropped down to them) would be meaningful as it would give the community actual agency over the process and a sense of ownership and representation which would be very beneficial if successfully adapted in a similar process in Feijenoord, especially given the high stakes context of the urban renewal processes it would seek to alter.

What is likely to not be relevant:

The focus on financial initiatives as a solution to community problems, although it could very well be a sound idea to pursue in a vacuum, is not directly relevant to the theme of interfering with urban planning processes, and not of a scale that is relevant to the multi-billion issue dealt here. Simply put - a program focused on finding jobs for community members, or opening local businesses could not realistically offset the problems that serve as pretext to these urban renewal initiatives that threaten the community.

The overall goal or approach of tackling several aspects at once in a combined way is questionable in its relevance. The project deals with something more focused in scope - resisting the planning processes that threaten the place in the city of the current Feijenoord community - rather than trying to create an overall improvement to the problems that ails the populations there.

USE-IT! Analysis

Methodology

Translating these goals from principal to actuality relied on three sub programs (dubbed as ‘work packages’) that worked in unison under an overall project management (Scheffler, 2018a):

Jobs for Overseas Migrants: identified highly qualified immigrants, helped them bridge language and accreditation barriers, and connected them to local institutions that would provide them with employment (Scheffler, 2019a).

The program focused mainly on the construction of the new Midlands Hospital, by identifying qualified medical professionals in the community who immigrated to England recently, supporting them through language and professional accreditation examinations and then securing them positions in the hospital (Scheffler, 2019a).

Social Enterprise Program: identified initiatives for businesses with a social orientation, and provided them with guidance, funding and a social network to support them in their operations, while connecting them to established businesses that would provide it with guidance, while supply chains helped by opening their market share to the products developed by some of these new businesses (Scheffler, 2018b).

Community Researchers program: entailed the training of local community members in academic tools in effort for them to identify focused problems in the community while also assisting in the locating of candidates to the previous two programs (Scheffler, 2020).

This was done by recruiting interested members from the community and providing them with initial researching tools, that are then practiced in a focused research program according to their own interests (and if lacking those - sponsored projects were also available) (Scheffler, 2020). This is then processed and analyzed, and finally presented for its results. For their efforts, open university accreditation was awarded (Scheffler, 2017).

The participant’s research was conducted with an eye as for inclusion of local institutions and organizations in the proposed social programs they would produce, and as part of the process, proposals were presented to these entities in the effort to entice them to join, giving the projects the potential that they may be materialized in actuality (Scheffler, 2020).

The project provided an added overall value on top of the straightforward work conducted by the researchers, as the university researcher directing the program recorded (or rather- ‘collected’) much of the insight that emerged from their interactions with the participant community researchers and the community at large, in the effort of deepening their understanding of the situation in Greater Icknield (Scheffler, 2020).



Community Research Structure (Source: USE-IT!)

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

The Community Researcher's approach of training 'regular' members of the community in academic tools, and using their newly acquired education to investigating their own community, coming up with issues to address and situations to improve, along with strategies of how to do so - is something that perhaps can be adaptable to the situation and the themes explored in Feijenoord.

USE-IT!'s practice of assigning mentors to follow the operations of the CR's would likely be very useful for participants in a Feijenoord program with similar characteristics. Especially important is the long term outlook taken with these mentors, who would provide stability and continuity to what would likely be a prolonged endeavor, given that planning processes are drawn out and long term in nature, and so - would require close mentorship throughout.

Organizational connections and an eye as to how they may participate in the implementation of the projects in USE-IT! would be an important benefit if similar achievement could be had in a Feijenoord program. External backing from institutions and businesses would be a major boost to the credibility of the program both externally to the public at large, the Rotterdam leadership and planners, but also to the community itself.

However, the benefits extend further and deeper than that. Greater synergy between community and establishment would be meaningful in its own right. Creating a connection and cooperation such as the one made with the Midland hospital, has the potential to create long term and mutually beneficial gains regardless of the urban renewal context at hand.

The 'collection' of verbal data could be very meaningful in gaining an understanding of the situation in Feijenoord at depth, and help in compiling an overall vision for the space, which could be beneficial to many other related endeavors, such as creating awareness for the situation within larger society, or in gleaning critical information to the establishment forces on the municipality or national level.

What is likely to not be relevant:

The two other key work packages - job training and social entrepreneurship - are less in line with what is being striven for in the context of Feijenoord, and do not seem translatable to the problem addressed. There would be much merit to conducting a separate program that tackles the broader social problems existing in Rotterdam, however these are broader than the scope of the urban renewal theme addressed in this research.

The subjects dealt within the research programs themselves are also not necessarily relevant to the issue of urban renewal or displacement. The relevance has more to do with the general notion that the community can be trained to express itself using the establishment's 'language', however what the community elects to express within USE-IT! is less pertinent.

USE-IT! elected to conduct the research work around a plethora of individual projects touching upon a wide variety of subjects. IN the case of Feijenoord, the situation is much more clearly defined and the scope is likely to be more focused. Adapting such a strategy would likely be ill-fitting to the goals striven for. Having said that, the individual connection between researcher and project that was encouraged in USE-IT! is a preservable quality, and perhaps encouraging participants in Feijenoord to focus on niches within a larger project would allow for a similar kind of connection.

USE-IT! Analysis

Organization and Operations:

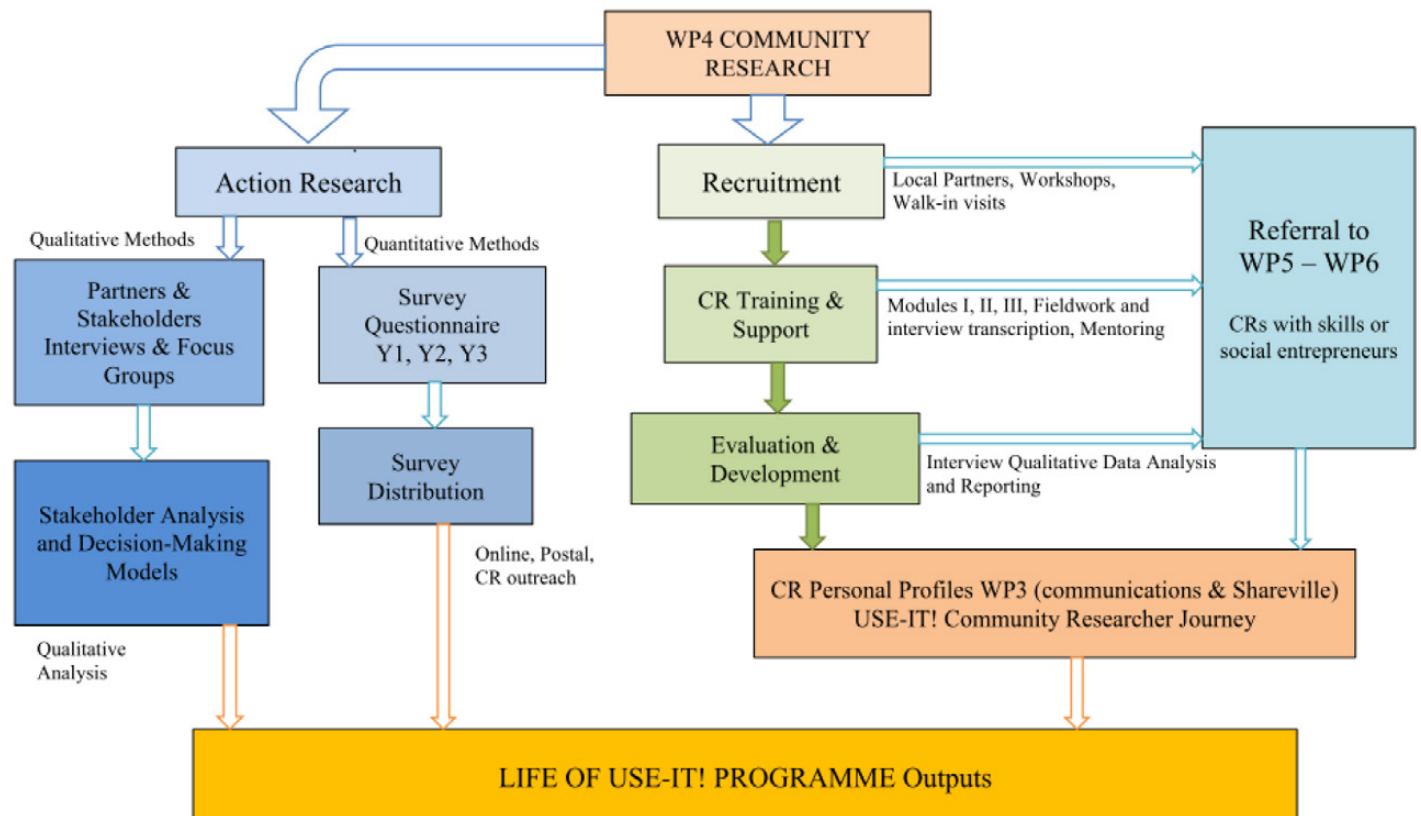
Operating such an endeavor, given its scale and complexity, required much attention and careful handling by the organizers of USE-IT!, and so, featured heavily in their documentation, stressing how important and pivotal a role it played in the success of the project (Scheffler, 2017, 2018a, 2018 c, 2020).

Each of the programs conducted its own operations separately (although in the same space), with monthly meetings that served to coordinate the overall project (Scheffler, 2020, , 2018c). On a day to day level, the university worked at running the project, providing an organizational envelope to operate the different projects (Scheffler, 2018a), as well as managing the external partnerships and their participation (Scheffler, 2018a), and handled the funding (approx. 3.56M €) that was obtained by the municipality of Birmingham and the European Commission (Scheffler, 2020) while also seeking and reaching out to potential new partners (Scheffler, 2017).

The university rented out a space in the local shopping center that served as a meeting place for periodic sessions, general meetings, as well as serving as a center where participants and interested onlookers can drop by and ask for information, receive guidance from mentors or just have a conversation and express what is on their minds (Scheffler, 2020).

The complexity of the project eventually required a specialist project manager to be hired in order to organize the various activities, operations, fund transfers financing the projects and in coordination with the external partners (Scheffler, 2019c).

Online message boards and organizational tools were very important as well, especially in context of the concurring projects being interconnected. These were then assembled by each project lead and summarized into a single document updated on a monthly basis, streamlining the process (Scheffler, 2017).



Community Researchers Structure (Source: USE-IT!, Dr. Peter Lee)

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

The organizational frame provided by USE-IT! would be extremely transferable to a similar one in Feijenoord, given that the overall structure of such a program would operate along similar lines, and so - its needs are likely to be similar.

This would serve to supplement the lack in social capital necessary to unify the local population, composed of many groups from different backgrounds, ethnicities and languages, and have them working in coordination.

The amount of work such an endeavor would require means also that the scope and complexity of organizing it would benefit from this external professional aid. Learning from USE-IT!'s experience, a project manager would be a meaningful addition that would be meaningful to the operations and in giving such an endeavor a professional outward appearance that would instill the same professionalism to its everyday practices.

A unified fund would be a very good idea in managing the operations of such a project and with external participants, and is completely transferable to a similar project in this and any other context.

Establishing a physical meeting space in the Feijenoord would be meaningful in bringing the work to the community and making it accessible to the people there. It would likely help in attracting participants and in preserving those already involved. It would also send a strong signal to both the community, prospective external partners, and the Rotterdam planning establishment that this is a long term and serious effort that is ought to be taken seriously by all actors and stakeholders in the Feijenoord space.

An online organizational tool would be useful to communicate and organize various aspects of such a program, and would allow operations to extend beyond the confines of the physical space where operations would be mainly conducted.

USE-IT! Analysis

Attracting and Interacting with Participants:

That organizational envelope also played a key role in supporting the lifeblood of the program - its community participants, dedicating their time and effort for the sake of the program and to the benefit of their community, and those, whose work is the essence of the project.

One of the key challenges is in attracting and preserving participants in the various programs (Scheffler, 2018a), with the biggest difficulty being with the CR's program, given that its benefits are less clearly obvious and immediate than those of the other two programs (Scheffler, 2018a).

The initial challenge was in getting the word out as to the program's existence and what it has to offer (Scheffler, 2018a). What was deemed most effective was (highlighted lines were described as particularly effective):

- 'Recruitment Events' or attending community events
- Word of mouth by exiting participants
- Leaflets in places people linger
- Physical presence in the neighborhood
- Publishing of 'success stories' in local media ('USE-IT! Champions')
- Online presence in social networks

Participants who joined the program did so for various reasons. Some came in with a particular issue they wanted to research, others wanted the university accreditation rewarded for their work (Scheffler, 2020). A major reason was the simple desire to help out and aid their own community and make their needs heard and understood (Scheffler, 2017).

Also important to note is that the university's involvement was meaningful as it gave a degree of credibility to the whole endeavor (Scheffler, 2017, 2020).

A major challenge was in the demands put upon the CR's, as many struggled (or even dropped out) of the program due to being intimidated by the scope and complexity of what they were asked to do (Scheffler, 2018a). In addressing this, the language of the courses was simplified, and the scope of research was maintained narrowed and focused (Scheffler, 2019c).

Monetary incentives in the form of sponsored research allowed people with the pressures of supporting a family to be compensated for their time and effort, with feedback from those researchers that they felt a sense of value and meaning from doing research work that was worth paying for (Scheffler, 2017, 2020).

For individuals interested in contributing, but were put off due to the demands in terms of depth and time, a more basic version of the program was available, focusing on more limited tasks, thus making the program more welcoming and inclusive (Scheffler, 2018a, 2020).

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

The methods of reaching out to the public and recruiting new members is something that is extremely replicable within a context such as in Feijenoord, and the methods stated here, based on USE-IT!'s experience can likely be implemented in a very similar fashion.

Another important notion derived from USE-IT!'s experience is the need to tailor the program to different participants who come in with a variety of abilities, limitations, time constraints and affinities. People are different. Creating several tracks that vary in either their content or depth would perhaps be a good idea to implement.

The need for simplicity and streamlining of information is very important in the engagement with participants, as one of the main challenges that intimidated the participants of USE-IT! was the academic jargon prevalent in the beginning, this was scaled back in time. That can also be relevant to engagement with the larger community, not just the participants, as the professional language barrier is one of the challenges that contribute to the problem to begin with (as it strongly relates to the issue of human capital in that sense).

What is likely to not be relevant:

The issue of rewarding participation is questionable, and dependent on the type of establishment that would supply the organizational envelope for such a program. It is hard to imagine that a non educational body (such as the University of Birmingham) could award academic accreditation, while monetary rewards require careful examination given the high financial stakes involved with spatial design.

What is encouraging in this context, is that much of the motivation of the participants originated in an honest desire to help and contribute to their community, and thus, this could perhaps be enough in generating interest and garnering participants on its own, especially given that the circumstances in Feijenoord would relate to anyone and everyone living there.

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Do YOU live around HERE? USE-IT!

UNLOCKING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INNOVATION TOGETHER

USE-IT! is a partnership project aimed at creating social and economic opportunities for residents from the Greater Icknield area: Cape Hill (Smethwick), Ladywood, Summerfield, Spring Hill (Birmingham).

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This project is co-financed by the European Regional and Development Fund through the Urban Innovative Actions Initiative

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program's pamphlet (Source: USE-IT!)

USE-IT! Analysis

Involving the community:

Without discounting the key role the community participants played in the success of the project, its end goal and final product was to create tangible benefits to the community overall, making the interaction with the population of Greater Ickneild a key feature for the success of the program, and so - close cooperation with the community was actively sought after.

Social media played an important role in reaching out to the community via the mainstream channels (facebook, twitter, Instagram, Youtube), allowing for the word to get out and community members to be exposed to the contents and offerings of USE-IT! in a manner they reported to trust (Scheffler, 2018a, 2018c).

Reaching out and gauging the community's situation and mindset was achieved through a questionnaire seeking for detailed input and gathering information that helped inform the CR's work (Scheffler, 2017, 2018a). This also allowed in identifying candidates to the employment and entrepreneurial projects as well, and in locating potential participants for the programs designed by the CR's, if those would reach fulfillment (Scheffler, 2019b).

Another important way at creating effective community outreach was in teaming up and cooperating with community partners and organizations operating in the area (such as NGO's and faith centers). This helped immensely in reaching the community, mainly by USE-IT! representatives having a social setting for them to attend and interact with people, mainly by attending community events (Scheffler, 2020).

Additionally, "Themed Awareness Raising events" were organized in order to reach out to the population of Greater Ickneild and inform them on the happenings of the program, introducing the concepts of social enterprise and community businesses (Scheffler, 2018c).

USE-IT! relied also on active figures in the community, and enlisted their help as 'Community Connectors' who used their social standings and vast social connections within the community to help find people who could benefit from the USE-IT! project in its various forms, bringing them in touch with the correct organizers within the project (Scheffler, 2018c).



Community Researcher interacting with a community member (Source: USE-IT!)

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

Social media use, as expanded upon in the strategies to attract participants, would also be relevant in creating outreach to the community at large, and help maintain that - although this project is conducted by representative volunteers, the voice directing the vision is more inclusionary . Online media can allow for more complex and in depth methods of gaining that input (questionnaires, polls, suggestion boxes).

Outreach to other social organizations operating in these neighborhoods could be very beneficial and helpful in garnering trust in the community, learning meaningful insight as to their situation and mindset, and arriving at hard to reach people in their own setting. Awareness raising events may be a good idea for the same reason, allowing people outside the project, wishing to only voice an opinion, to come and have their say in a welcoming environment.

Community connectors - informal representatives from within the community could help identify potential participants and get them in touch with the program, while they could also gather and convey meaningful insights they come across.

USE-IT! Analysis

Challenges and Solutions:

USE-IT!'s extensive operations provided a major benefit in fleshing out several meaningful and relevant difficulties that the project had to contend with. Hardly a surprise given the complexity of the situation they are dealing with.

The program ran into more than a few challenges and obstacles, and while many of them could be solved by making adjustments throughout the operation of the program, some were not as fixable, as they were more intrinsic to the circumstances of the program.

The key challenge that was unaddressable is in its sustainability once the program is concluded. The operators of USE-IT! were aware that this would be an issue based on the fate of other programs that had strong social outreach elements (Scheffler, 2019c,), and so, they did their best to establish long term viability to some of its key activities, such as the collaboration with the Midlands hospital, by ensuring that its fundings and operations were able to continue without USE-IT!'s guidance (Scheffler, 2019b). However, this was not the case with most activities, and it is important to understand that the long term aims of such a program has to be adjusted to the ability to sustain it.

Outreach of the USE-IT! programs to the community was challenging. There was a need to make the contents streamlined and accessible to casual listeners, but also a challenge was encountered with the business partners who were accustomed to their own professional jargon and struggled with the more simple and less specific language introduced (Scheffler, 2019c). These challenges existed not only during the day to day operations while the project was active, but also well past it and impacted the programs that continued after its conclusion, threatening their long term

viability. The dynamic between community participants and business partners relied on the university staff operating the program, and the question of how participants and business partners would be able to communicate with each other on their own is a major challenge to be addressed (Scheffler, 2019c).

Another challenge, as stated before, was with the demands and the scope of what was initially asked of the CR's turned out to be overwhelming to them, causing several to quit or question their continuance with the program (Scheffler, 2018a, 2020). In response, the demands were scaled back after a while and replaced with a more basic method. Additionally, a more basic track was made available as well to answer for people with diminished capabilities to contribute also.

Obtaining outside support from various sources was not always a simple and straightforward process, as not everyone was immediately willing and motivated supporters.

Some businesses and agencies were reluctant to be involved, especially in situations where there was no incentive for them to do so (Scheffler, 2019c).

Also, the recruitment of mentors to the social enterprise start ups was difficult as well. This was solved mostly through work to mouth and employing personal contacts by the USE-IT! organizers (Scheffler, 2018c).

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

USE-IT!'s limited timeframe raises a very meaningful question in regards to its timeframe that would be extremely pertinent to a potential project in Feijenoord as well. Such an endeavor would require a substantial long range commitment from any establishment that would take it upon itself to sponsor such a program. Planning processes are protracted affairs spanning many years. It could be such a program would require a chronic support structure, or alternatively, a strategy where the participants gradually take over its operations on its own.

It is quite likely that the same reluctance USE-IT! encountered with other actors in the Greater Icknield space would be met in Feijenoord as well. Moreover, the somewhat confrontational nature of the issue addressed here is likely to run counter to many business interests, potentially resulting in them actively trying to influence or even tamper with its operations. That is a serious danger to be aware of, and it would be prudent to have strategies at hand in preparation to dealing with such a threat.

The issue of relating (streamlining) to the community at large, and not just a matter of interacting with willing participants, would be important to such a project within Feijenoord. Answering for it can utilize the experiences gained in USE-IT in that regard, and would be meaningful for both an effort to establish a unified vision and voice with the community's endorsement or in interacting with new participants in the program. Streamlining would also be an important tool in answering for the challenge of interaction with external partners, as expanded upon above.

USE-IT! Analysis

Achievements and benefits:

Despite the challenges and imperfections of the project, USE-IT! was considered an overall success, in light of what it tried to achieve (Scheffler, 2019b). It is important to remember that it was first and foremost an experiment of an idea with a fairly short time frame, rather than an actual ambition to create a complete social transformation right there and then (Scheffler, 2019c).

The benefits are overall on the small scale, but meaningful, giving a hint as to what larger benefits a more long lasting program could achieve.

A key benefit was to the participants of the program. On top of teaching researching skills, participants also reported that they gained meaningful interpersonal skills as well, and that they developed as people (Scheffler, 2020). It introduced them into the field of research, created connections and interactions with other researchers and even served as a gateway for several CR's in pursuing higher education in the field, with several enrolling into Msc programs and one even applying for a Phd (Scheffler, 2020).

Based on the success of the commissioned research projects, several researchers launched a social enterprise independently of the project, in essence continuing the outlines of USE-IT! on their own past the conclusion of the university project, using the knowledge and capital they gained within the project (Scheffler, 2020). Regardless of whether this would ultimately be successful or not, there is a very encouraging indication in terms of how effective and confidence building the project proved, to at least some of the participants, that they would feel confident and knowledgeable enough to pursue such an endeavor on their own.

The university achieved a presence in Greater Icknield it did not have before, serving as an

anchor institution in that area (Scheffler, 2020), thus achieving a level of trust and familiarity with a community that typically has very little contact with higher education institutions. This is meaningful in itself, as putting a face and a name behind these usually distant professors and academics makes them, and the idea of higher education in general, much more down to earth and accessible in an environment that has few university graduates within their midst (Scheffler, 2018c).

The various social activities participated in, or even organized, although on their own were small things, created an accumulated effect that was meaningful to building trust between the program coordinators and the community, and in building social capital off the back of the activities themselves (Scheffler, 2018c). The CR's established themselves as unofficial community representatives, with many of the more hard to reach population seeing fit to approach them on different matters, thus an unofficial outreach hierarchy was established, and communication extended indirectly all the way to the more isolated parts of local society (Scheffler, 2019b). The CR projects resulted in two completed projects, and another 24 commissioned, with three of those about to be launched. One of the projects (Childhood Obesity) procured an additional grant of 300K (Scheffler, 2019c).

The Skills Matching in the NHS (involving the Midlands Hospital) was a great success and won three national awards, procured funding for English courses (IELTS), and will continue past USE-IT! given how mutually beneficial it is to both the community and the NHS (Scheffler, 2019c).

Furthermore, the developers building the hospital has extended their recruitment to include people trained in the construction professions to work on building the hospital (Scheffler, 2019c).

What may be relevant to a similar project in Feijenoord:

The personal development of CR's, even if not directly related to the issue addressed, is very beneficial in creating human capital in Feijenoord that would last it long term. There is the potential that some would gain the confidence to pursue academic or professional studies, improving the socio-economic makeup of the area.

The notion that several CR's continued their work on their own past USE-IT's conclusion is promising, especially in regard to the question of long term viability. It hints at the possibility that a similar occurrence can be built into a program in Feijenoord, enabling a gradual independence of the program as a possible long term aim.

The position of CR's as community representatives might prove very meaningful in establishing a social hierarchy that extends all the way to the more isolated extremities of the society in Feijenoord. It would be addressing such lacks in the social capital, and help account for the question of whether such a program really represents all members of society, or perhaps just a part of it that is strong and vocal enough to express itself or participate.

USE-IT! JOURNEYS OF COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS



Almost two years ago, I joined the USE-IT! initiative as a Community Researcher after seeing an advertisement on Facebook. My interest was in research as I wanted to work on issues affecting women and the over 50s, in particular how to create and facilitate employment opportunities. I was invited to a two-day training session which was held at Summerfield Centre in research techniques. This led me to developing my project brief and undertaking interviews around my area of interest. My journey after the training was to undertake Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Birmingham. My degree was sponsored through USE-IT! and the university. On a humorous note, I attended the induction expecting to enrol for a degree in regeneration and thought "Oh no, this is going to be boring." It wasn't. In fact, it has turned out to be a great educational and personal journey. I submitted my dissertation in August 2019 on time! The topic was women, austerity and planning. **What will I be doing next?** My plans are to apply to study for a Doctorate in Planning at Leeds Beckett University. (Debarah)



The USE-IT! Project came at the right time for me. I was at the crossroads with my career, juggling odd jobs and really trying to make ends meet. USE-IT! gave me confidence and real experience I could use when applying for jobs. Turned out just got a job and I'm starting next month. I'm absolutely thrilled. As it often happens when joining training groups, workplace or meetings I was the only Polish participant. Despite of diversity of the group I always felt my voice is heard and views are respected. Atmosphere has been very inclusive and very welcoming. It has been like seeing real, organic and holistic community: people of different age, race and backgrounds. We've made connections and work on the team projects - something that in real life would be almost impossible without USE-IT!. Therefore, it would be a pure loss not to carry on with our Community of Researchers. Carrying on legacy of USE-IT! under umbrella of a Social Enterprise would be a fantastic idea to continue an amazing work USE-IT! has started. Being an Eastern European immigrant in current Brexit political realm requires a lot of resilience. In an overwhelmingly hostile political atmosphere USE-IT! has created something special: a safe inclusive platform for people who want to work for local communities regardless of race, nationality or socio-economic background. It was like capturing representatives of our communities in action and it was beautiful. Many times it made me think that being the only Polish in the room 'I come as one but I stand as ten thousands'. For the first time for a very long time I felt proud of being immigrant in the UK. I felt appreciated, welcome and validated. Apart from robust training, countless drop-in sessions and networking opportunities I have got from USE-IT! there is something that can be easily overlooked in the evaluation of the project but I personally find equally important: it has been a fantastic opportunity to develop and sustain the sense of belonging. Something that is always an 'unfinished problematic project' when you are an immigrant. (Kat)

The Community Research project works on place based research into how residents perceive their local area as they talk about and walk through it brings the researcher closer to their community's, hidden issues, hopes, frustrations and possibilities. With raised awareness comes responsibility to try and effect change through sharing the research findings with others within and beyond the local community who who could make a difference. **The fact that community voices are listened to and valued, often for the first time, by such anchor institutions as the University should be setting a precedent for other parts of the city.** Birmingham as a city is changing rapidly. By keeping our ear to the ground the impact and possibilities of change can be heard and shared. (Hamid)



The USE-IT! project is a fantastic idea and experience. Training in have purposeful dialogue, deepening my personal knowledge of area and creating data that can really help in development. I think it also gets you closer to people, potentially creating stronger community bonds. You hear more of each individual's life story, promoting empathy, uncovering local issues and pointing towards action that needs to be taken. **It was excellent and I hope it continues.** (Mark)

I started my USE IT! journey last summer when I saw an advert for community researchers at a coffee morning and attended an initial information session at Cape Hill. I attended a training day where I learned the theories and practice of the research and how to produce topic guides and conduct the interviews. Our first project was to be one that we were particularly interested in, and I chose to work on the Icknield Port Loop Development. Very shortly after that a number of other research opportunities became available. I was honoured to work as one of the researchers on the Childhood Obesity Trailblazer project. When the results from all of the research were compiled and the report sent to the Government it was instrumental in obtaining substantial funding for Birmingham City Council to set up a pilot project to deal with some of the issues involved. I was able to act as community lead in a couple of projects. The thing I enjoy the most about being a community researcher is the wide range of people I get to interview. **There are so many amazing people doing amazing things in and around Birmingham. I have learned how powerful these people's stories are, and I am delighted that we are able to use these stories to have such a positive impact on our local community.** (Leanne)



I love to learn and especially about things on a deeper and meaningful level. My CR training has met and surpassed my learning needs. It provides theoretical knowledge and practical application, and importantly for me the high quality and very patient mentors that facilitate one's self development. **What really makes it successful is the equal valuing all knowledge, especially that of the trainees.** The accreditation that comes with the training enables remuneration for research work, there are no limits - the world is your oyster. The diversity of the cohorts of trainees gives testament to the sincerity of the inclusivity of the project. I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had and continue to have as a CR. I am pleased to be involved with the planning process for the legacy of this project. (Gatalia)



I got involved in USE-IT! project because I was impressed that a government funded initiative focusing on the Icknield Port Loop area. I have enjoyed gaining training on community research and also getting involved in workshops. **I hope the future will bring positive changes to the neighbourhoods as a result of USE-IT!** (Hameed)

My story with USE-IT! began when I enrolled for Community Research Training. After recruitment I was familiarised what the research involved and the research process. Working as a community researcher enables me to support the development of the community with research work that will bring the most benefit to people living in the area. It also enables me to acquire knowledge and understanding of community and social issues. Since working with various projects and communities within USE-IT! I constantly develop new skills, update old ones and acquire specific knowledge. **Working as a community researcher has improved my time management skills, creative thinking and problem-solving ability.** (Shazia)



I have been so happy to be involved and do research on the USE-IT! project especially with Ola, Sara, Lisa and Dr. Peter Lee. In the training they all helped me a lot to get experience on how to approach people, talk to them and interview them. **It has opened a new path for me because when I interviewed someone in my community to get their ideas about different subjects I had to translated things to English which has been very helpful for my English as my second language. I can't thank you enough for everything you have done.** (Hawar)



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Critical Review

In an effort to understand the project in ways that escapes the structured themes that were defined in its analysis, and adding a layer of deeper introspection and awareness as to the larger picture benefits and limitations that such a program would have, a reflection of the project was deemed important. This proved beneficial in identifying or highlighting other qualities of the program that do not fit any specific category, or in providing a more generalized and all encompassing outlook as to the features of USE-IT! when making a similar project for Feijenoord in the following step.

Although USE-IT! focused on economic themes in its operations, it is conceivable that many of the elements of social engagement and empowerment would be relevant to other aspects of the low income and vulnerable communities in the urban landscape in western societies.

The specific issues addressed - lack in income, liquid finances, access to formal education, social clout and an ability of a population to organize and unify into joint action - are all likely to cause a myriad of problems and difficulties impacting many other aspects of life, making USE-IT!'s approach to supplement these lacks a potential answer to as many problems as these lacks create.

Having said that, considering the deep seeded and complex nature of socio-economic disparity, it is unlikely that any single program would be able to solve or even to vastly improve it all at once and in one singular motion - this would be akin to a magic cure to poverty, which is of course ridiculous. At least, until proven otherwise.

USE-IT! were well aware of their limitations, and kept their goals accordingly modest and focused, trying to achieve focused gains and on a reasonable scale.

In that context, it is important to bear in mind that USE-IT! is a university program, essentially conducting a social experiment with the primary goal of learning and answering a research question as to the efficacy of this certain method, with whatever successes it achieves - although

very meaningful - are ultimately of secondary importance.

The scope of the project was perhaps too expansive, and it is unclear if all these various work packages trying to achieve so much (employment, business start up and research projects) was really required, and if their interaction really added meaningful value by their synergy. In the case of the CR program, feedback from the researchers gave indication that it was even disruptive to their work. Perhaps there were some research goals that accounted for this scale and complexity, or there is some benefit in the actuality of the projects that is not clear enough from the project documentation, but the overall impression is that the scale of the three work packages, which purportedly caused much difficulties to its operations, did not justify itself, especially given that each package aimed at completely different goals, that did strongly align in theme.

However, USE-IT! arrived at a very important observation in my opinion, and that pertains to a combined understanding that socio-spatial poverty is a deeply complex and interlocked problem that must require treatment to all of its aspects at the same time in order to be effective, while its scope and depth means that if attempted to create an intervention that is too general or broad, it would result in superficial and short lasting results.

However, if approached in a focused and precise way, it held potential to create deep benefits in a certain field, while also creating meaningful side benefits as a result of its operations.

This is what makes it so relevant, in my opinion as a tool to address the urban renewal threat in Feijenoord, given that the difficult situation that created the displacement problem are very broad, however the issue itself, as well as the likely actions required to rectify it, would be of a more narrow and focused scope. Thus, both the base understanding guiding USE-IT! and its approaches in creating solutions could quite possibly be applicable also in the instance of Feijenoord and Rotterdam as well.

Methodology for Feijenoord

The six key pillars that were identified and expanded upon in the analysis of USE-IT! served as the framework when defining a similar method for Feijenoord.

How plausibly can these pillars be addressed would help give an indication as to the plausibility of the whole intention, while making sure that all the key essentials of such a program are there and answered for, or failing to do that - they would give a clear indication of what is missing.

The content itself is based on the key points of each pillar, taking the ones that were deemed as relevant to the Feijenoord situation, but also expanding and inserting other values relevant to this specific situation - dealing with planning processes and in a different context altogether. However, although the specifics are different in both instances, what is at the core of both approaches is the same - training community members to engage establishment elements on the establishment's terms, and doing so effectively through the guidance and backing of the correct third party - making much of the principles and lessons from USE-IT! very much relevant.

Goals	Methodology	O
Supplementing lack of capital	Three parallel projects - CR, WOI, CE	Org pro
Investment in human capital in community	Community research to implementation	Pro org
Financial & academic incentives	Mentorship elements	In h of f
Utilizing existing infrastructure	Research into social issues	Phy in t
Addressing economic situation	multiple individual research projects	Onl too
University as means of capital	Collection of verbal data from participants	
Community research as tool of learning	Eye to involving external partners	

Organization	Participants	Community	Challenges
Organizational frame provided by USE-IT!	Active reachout to enlist participation	Social media community outreach	Long term viability
Project manager to organize operations	Rewarding participation	Cooperation with other social organizations	Relucted actors in the urban space
House management funds	Several tracks to fit various needs	Community connectors	Communication participants/partners
Physical space rented from the community	Streamlined delivery and contents		
Define organizational rules (boards, site)			

Methodology for Feijenoord

Goals:

Just as in USE-IT!, defining the goals for the project are key in outlining what actions are to be taken in the following stages. A project in the context of Feijenoord would look to assist the local populations of Feijenoord to assert their right to their place in the city and to participate in the planning decisions impacting their neighborhoods and community. More specifically, it would strive to provide the local community with tools that would enable it to exert influence over Rotterdam's planning establishment in an effort of altering the urban renewal policies that are threatening to displace much of the current population in that area.

These policies, aimed at creating class integration in a way that would replace low income populations with more affluent newcomers, are reactive to the socio-economic situation in these neighborhoods (Musterd et al 2020). These socio-economic deficiencies - lack of home ownership, of educated individuals and of social cohesion also leave these communities vulnerable and unable to protect themselves from the threat of displacement folded within these policies (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014, Pernia & Quibria, 1999).

The project proposes to supplement these lacks in material, human and social capital by providing an external support structure that would provide teaching, guidance and organization to a focused resistance actions to these policies that would be carried out by volunteers from the community.

An existing establishment (such as an association or university) would lend its reputation, connections and organizational skills, thus providing an envelope within which the operations of the project would be conducted.

Their role would be in locating participants, teaching and training them in the processes of planning and policy making, establishing a unified vision for Feijenoord's future, and providing guidance to their operations in asserting their right to participate in these processes, while linking them to external organizations, associations and business entities who would provide their expertise in aiding these actions.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Goals

Supplementing lack of capital

Investment in human capital in community

Financial & academic incentives

Utilizing existing infrastructure

Addressing economic situation

University as means of capital

Community research as tool of learning

The notion that answering for lacks in capital would aid the local community

Investing in the community, training them to help themselves with professional tools

Community researchers investigating their own community and proposing solutions

External body supplementing community lacks in capital by lending it its backing

Methodology for Feijenoord

Methodology:

- The goals for the project define the teaching and promoting of actions by community participants as its key activity. In order to do so in specific terms, the project would be broken up to three phases:
- Participants would be exposed to the urban situation impacting Feijenoord, instructed about existing policies, pending plans, the trajectories of the city at large and the implications of these for their community. The participants - according to their background, interests and time constraints - would split into groups that would investigate different elements of the subject, deepening their understanding of specific aspects such as the legal, financial, spatial, public and social elements relevant to urban design and arrive at a set of base conclusions or assumptions accordingly.
- With the aid of the program mentors (likely trained professionals in these fields) a presentation of the research and conclusions would be compiled, and presented to the community in meetings and online, through social media. The community would be asked to voice their opinion, weigh in on dilemmas and help focus the research conclusions into a unified vision of principles that ought to be striven for, which would guide the following phase.
- Based on the unified vision compiled, each group, together with an external partner relevant to the field, will prepare a plan to engage Rotterdam's planning establishment in its specific area of focus, which would then be implemented. For example - the legal team would work with a mentor who is a lawyer and an external law firm that would represent the community, working together in creating petitions to court, aimed at preventing ongoing urban renewal related displacement processes or in appealing town plans that would enable such processes in the future.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Methodology

Three parallel projects -
CR, WOI, CE

Community research to
implementation

Mentorship elements

Research into social
issues

multiple individual
research projects

Collection of verbal data
from participants

Eye to involving external
partners

Training 'regular' community members with
professional tools

Mentorship and guidance by a project lead

External partners to aid the operation of the project

Methodology for Feijenoord

Organization and Operations:

Just as in USE-IT!, it is highly likely that a solid organizational support system would be key for all of these activities to function and operate correctly.

Operation would be conducted in a rented space in a central location in Feijenoord, easily accessible, and open throughout the day and on weekends, ensuring its availability to all.

It would center around group work conducted at regular times, lead by each group's mentor and with a representative from the external partnership involved.

A monthly meeting involving all participants would be conducted, in order to see where synergies and mutual help is possible, and to make sure that work is done in coordination, and that the overall vision striven for is followed by all groups.

Logistics, financing, and overall management of the program would be done by a project manager, who would be incharge of coordinating the activities and operations of all the various participants in parallel.

An online board collecting the information of the various endeavors would also be created, aiding in this effort of cooperation, allowing easy access to the happenings of each group and allowing access to gathered information by each group and individual involved.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Organization

Organizational frame provided by USE-IT!

External frame backed by an institution

Project manager to organize operations

Organizational efforts conducted by a project manager

In house management of funds

A unified fund to finance all actions and operations

Physical space rented in the community

A physical space in Feijenoord as a staging ground and meeting place

Online organizational tools (boards, site)

Online board to collect and organize all information

Methodology for Feijenoord

Attracting and Interacting with Participants:

Another key challenge for the project would be in attracting participants to the project. This would be done by relying on two main strategies:

- Formal outreach efforts would strive at getting the word out about the project's existence and what are its goals. It would rely on publicity methods such as the spreading of leaflets, creating an active social media presence and sending representatives to public gatherings and events to generate interaction and showing a presence in the community.
- Supporting these would be more informal methods, such as encouraging word of mouth recruitment by active participants and the employment of 'Community Connectors' - individuals with high social profile in the community who would employ their familiarity with the community and their clout, and direct potential participants to the program.

Although it is unclear whether the program could offer monetary compensation or university accreditation the same way USE-IT! did, the fact that a major motivation of the participants in USE-IT! was simply to help (Scheffler, 2017), gives an encouraging indication that this would suffice in the context of Feijenoord, especially considering that the challenge at hand and the threat it entails to the community would prove a strong motivation in itself.

However, an encouraging attitude by the program's mentors would be warranted, and part of their role would include lending a guiding hand to participants exhibiting enthusiasm and aptitude to their field of work, helping them in achieving self development goals that are not directly related to the program. USE-IT! resulted in several of its CRs pursuing full academic studies at graduate and even Phd level, as a result of their work within the program (Scheffler, 2020) - similar success stories would be of major benefit in attracting new participants, or in preserving existing ones as well.

Tracks and roles in the teams would be clearly defined and tailored to the abilities, background and time constraints of the various participants, making them accessible to all who wish to participate.

The program would also account for the possibility that external circumstances may draw some of them away. People move, they have children, they start new careers, or they simply lose interest sometimes. The program would account for this fact of life and design its work processes to enable interchangeability of its participants, and allow frequent training opportunities to newcomers wishing to join it.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Organization

Active reachout to enlist participation

Rewarding participation

Several tracks to fit various needs

Streamlined delivery and contents

Recruiting methods completely rely on USE-IT!'s experience

Tailoring the roles and streamlining the content to fit each participant are also relying on the lessons learned during the USE-IT program

Methodology for Feijenoord

Research Content, community involvement, and implementation:

The content of these participants' work would focus on the urban situation in the neighborhoods of Feijenoord presently and in the future, according to the vision laid out by the municipality of Rotterdam:

- Current situation would define the socio-spatial situation in the neighborhoods, meaning the composition of the population, the dynamics between different groups, employment, health, safety, education and their relation to the physical condition of the neighborhood, and spatial aspects such as the quality of public spaces, availability of schools, the quality of housing, the prospects of obtaining home ownership, and much more.
- Basic (and streamlined) education as to the bureaucracy of planning processes in the Netherlands, as well as detailed explanations in how these relate to the future in that space - what is proposed by urban planners in that space, what is likely to happen as a result, and how the local community is likely to be impacted by it. It is vital that this would be done in a controlled and responsible way, presenting both the good and the bad, the outlook of all sides involved, so that a complete and informed understanding would be achieved, to serve the participants further on. The goal is not to manipulate or agitate! It is to aid in arriving at an informed outlook.

Once these are established, outreach to the community at large would be conducted more extensively, and the key information and conclusions would be passed along in a concise and simple manner in the form of public meetings with the aid of local NGO's, social organizations and social media. Input would be collected (gatherings, conversions, polls and questionnaires) from which key principles would be distilled.

Following that, the participants would gather an overall vision that would be compiled, and a short and clear principle document would be written with the aid and guidance of the project leads and mentors. Based on that, each group would focus on the specific angle of promoting that overall vision and form a strategy for action with the aid of the external entity or professional partnered with them.

As described in the methodology and organization chapters - in accordance to the agreed upon vision, participants would work within specialized groups, and build a strategy for action in the aspects of the vision relevant to them:

Planning processes - researching planning processes and participating in open forums of planning, attending participation events for promoted plans, filing complaints and objections to promoted plans, and assembling planning alternatives that would achieve municipality goals and interests without harming the local population.

Public reaction - would involve actions of public protest such as organizing demonstrations, spreading and making knowledge accessible, interacting with media outlets and lobbying for public and political support

Legal and political - resisting unfavorable planning decisions through the drafting of petitions, engaging in legal proceedings against active processes, lobbying for legislation that would protect the community from displacement, filing complaints with the state and the EU. in it.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Community

Social media community outreach

Cooperation with other social organizations

Community connectors

Social media outreach

Involving external partners in designing the strategy for action

Involving NGO's in public outreach

Translating ideas identified into concrete strategies for actions

Structured method of identifying issues and arriving at strategies for action.

Methodology for Feijenoord

Expected Challenges and possible solutions:

A program based on the principles of USE-IT! is likely to run across many of the same challenges, but would also have some of their own, given the difference in context and setting at hand.

Gaining the community's trust would likely be similarly difficult, and would require staying power over time in order to earn trust and build connections. The project can rely on local organizations such as Recht op de Stad or Woonbond to vouch for their intentions, while the hiring of a physical space, constant updating of social media would signal the seriousness of the endeavor.

The population of Feijenoord is not a single and cohesive community, nor is Feijenoord a singular place, but rather an area with several neighborhoods, each with its own character, features and a myriad of populations and sub cultures divided also around race and origin. There is the risk that the participants might not serve the whole community, but rather a small segment of it, ignoring the rest, or even promoting ideas harmful to some.

project coordinators and mentors would have to be mindful of these potential risks, and strive to include in their attention also the more marginalized groups and individuals in that area. Community outreach is critical in that context, and would be structured into the work, as expanded upon previously.

Attracting participants and preserving them over time was reported a challenge in USE-IT!, and quite possibly would be the case in Feijenoord also. This would be addressed, based on the experience gained in USE-IT!, by tailoring the roles and content to different participants, offering close and encouraging mentorships, and in streamlining the information and tasks as much as possible.

Unlike in the USE-IT! project, the goals of a project aimed at preventing urban renewal would ruffle some mighty powerful feathers, as the monetary interests involved in housing construction and the large-scale rebuilding of a whole urban area might earn such a program some very powerful opponents. This brings about a whole set of potential risks to be mindful of, and should set the tone of such a program. Such a project may include strong positive cooperative strategies, but very likely also elements of a more adversarial struggle.

Long term viability is another major question, and it would be important that a long term project would be established, accounting for it in terms of both budgeting and in organizing accordingly. Planning processes are prolonged affairs that can run for decades.

The external body organizing such an endeavor should realize it is entering into a very long (and perhaps even chronic) engagement. Accordingly, the structure of the program itself should account for the likelihood that participants would come and go throughout the years and be able to account for community departures, while also able to train and insert new participants at the same time.

Principles borrowed from USE-IT!:

Challenges

Long term viability

Defining an expected time frame and planning for it

Relucted actors in the urban space

Gaining community trust with the aid of NGO's and social organizations

Communication participants/partners

Keeping awareness for the need of preservation and motivation of participants

Community outreach and input

Need for streamlining information and tasks

Methodology for Feijenoord

Conclusion of exercise

USE-IT!'s core principle is of guiding and supporting community members into focused action targeted at economic themed issues in the Greater Icknield area by means of addressing capital lacks (Scheffler, 2018c). This proved to be transferable, in concept and in structure, into the situation investigated in Rotterdam, in large part due to the role that the same type of lacks play in this situation as well, and the focused aim that such a program proposes to undertake - with the major difference between the two approaches would naturally be in the contents of the program, its actions and their context.

Although the overall structure here applies, the specific subjects and circumstances of such a method in Feijenoord require a more critical exploration of its specifics, in order to be more conclusive in answering for the main research question, questioning more in depth what is to be done within such a program, and how. The next chapter would explore these in depth, attempting to further answer the question of USE-IT!'s approach as a feasible approach regarding Feijenoord's urban renewal situation.

Goals	Methodology	Org
answering for lacks in capital to aid locals	Training community members with pro tools	External by an in
Investing in community, training them	Mentorship and guidance - project lead	Organiz a projec
Investigating own and proposing solutions	External partners to aid operation of the project	A unified actions
External body lending it its backing		A physio Feijenoo
		Online b and orgo

Organization	Organization	Community	Challenges
I frame backed stitution	Recruiting methods relies on USE-IT!'s exp	Social media outreach	Defining an expected time frame
ational efforts by t manager	Tailoring the roles and streamlining the content to fit each participant	Involving external partners	Gaining trust with the aid of organizations
d fund to finance and operations		Involving NGO's in public outreach	Preservation of participants
cal space in ord		Ideas into concrete strategies for actions	Community outreach and input
board to collect anize information		Identifying issues and arriving at strategies	Streamlining information and tasks

Key questions outside the purview of USE-IT!

USE-IT!'s operational and structural transferability were important to establish as relevant to the specific situation explored in Feijenoord. Both deal with similar types of populations, and in similar countries and societies (at least in broad and general terms), and both programs would undertake the same method of investing in local participants and prompt them towards focused action for the benefit of their community.

However, there are some key points where the programs differ, leaving question marks which USE-IT! cannot give adequate indications in their regard, as they were not issues they had to contend with. Questioning these is not meant to provide conclusive answers as to the program viability, but rather it is about examining feasibility, examining whether or not these key points of difference are likely to be major obstacles to such a program's prospects, or can these reasonably be overcome.

One of the most basic points of difference, which is currently left up to a generality, is in the identity of the institutional supporting structure that would answer for the material lacks and guide the whole operation of the program.

One of the major benefits of USE-IT!, which is almost taken for granted, is that it was an initiative conceived by the local university, meaning that this important foundation pillar was the source initiating this endeavor, rather than an element requiring it to be located. In the case of Feijenoord, there is no such entity to date that is a ready and obvious choice to take up such a demanding task. Considering how pivotal a role such an entity plays, and how prerequisite it would be in order for such a program to get off the ground, it is important to establish that realistic options exist in the Rotterdam space, and explore their possible impact on such a program.

Another key difference is in the position each project takes. USE-IT!'s focus was on relatively small scale interventions that would be either neutral or beneficial to the established forces operating in Greater Icknield and Birmingham (Scheffler, 2020), while a Feijenoord counterpart would look to intercede in much larger and higher-stake processes that are intrinsic to the reality of large scale urban transformation. In such a case, win-win situations are not as readily available as they would be in the original USE-IT!, and to the contrary - would likely attract resistance from some very established forces.

Perhaps trying to predict what this resistance would look like, and preparing protections against such potentialities would be a bit ambitious, given how wide and varied the possibilities are in that regard. However - outlining who would likely be the key opposers to the program and why, may be beneficial in assessing their threat level, and also in speculating how mitigation or even cooperation might be achieved with those, and at what costs.

Finally, a third major difference between the two situations would obviously be in its contents. USE-IT! is focused on financial projects for the most part, and its initiatives of creating local enterpanouraship or helping immigrant doctors to find employment in Birmingham's local hospital are very different then the core action that would be striven for in Feijenoord - of asserting participation in urban processes of a spatial nature. Defining what these contents and actions may be would help give a more tangible understanding of is operations and highlight both the potentialities and challenges of these actions, and also perhaps in offering some possibilities to likely opposition, as inquired in the previous point of difference.

Who Could support a Feijenoord project?

One of the key questions as to transforming the idea outlined into a realistic proposition is in who exactly would be the external body that would provide its backing to the whole endeavor, in the way that the University of Birmingham did.

Several compelling options were identified, selected and assessed mainly for its ability to adequately support such a program, and highlighting each option's unique features, that may charge such a program with a different tone and approach to doing things, in accordance to their identity.

Establishing that any has this kind of capacity would be a major step towards making their participation feasible, however it is not the only criterion. Their interest in actually taking up such a demanding endeavor are also very important to examine as well, because it cannot be taken for granted that any of these entities would choose to involve themselves in such a demanding endeavor for no reason, thus feasibility is strongly attached to their potential interest in such a subject as well.

University

Similarly to the situation in Birmingham, it is possible that one of the local universities operating in the area, or even a cooperation of several, would be willing and able to provide the support structure needed for such an endeavor.

It is important to note that the key motivation in the actions of the University of Birmingham, was their desire to investigate and test out an approach in practice as part of a research (Scheffler, 2020). Thus, it is reasonable to expect that this motivation would be present also for a Dutch university as well, and without it, it is doubtful if such an entity would see fit to invest its resources in such an action, just for the sake of helping out.

That limits the available options to universities with relevant expertises, having experts interested in conducting such research and concurringly - having the correct knowledge base to be able to contribute to the endeavor.

TU Delft would be an obvious choice, due to its expertise in the building sciences which would make their interest and potential contribution both plausible, while its international reputation could perhaps carry significant weight in interacting with establishment forces and with external partners.

TU Delft's strategy documents clearly state a desire of emphasizing research into 'expert solutions to societal problems', going so far as dubbing the whole strategy's moto for the 2018-2024 period as 'Impact for a Better Society' (TU Delft, 2018), indicating that they may find interest in taking up such a program as a research, given its strong social theme.

Another strong possibility is the Erasmus University, who could field many relevant expertise due to their focus on matters of law, social studies and economics. Its location within Rotterdam would also be advantageous in creating a closer link with a community in the same area.

EUR is conducting several research programs that are highly relevant to the workings of this project. The Vital Cities and Citizens initiative researches the roles and relations of residents, policy makers and activists in the context of the inclusive city (Erasmus University, no date), while Dynamic of Inclusive Prosperity heavily deals with issues of inclusiveness within cities (Erasmus University, no date). These are just a few examples that strongly signify that they may find interest in involving themselves in such a project as well.

There are a number of smaller colleges in that space, however they all focus on subjects and interests that would be of lesser relevance to the matter at hand (business, hospitality, education, design and arts) and it is hard to imagine them taking a leading role in such an instance. One exception is the Inholland Hogeschool, located in Feijenoord and dealing in fields such as law, communications and environmentalism. They could perhaps be partnered to a larger university and participate in such an effort as an on-the-grounds entity and link to the communities of Feijenoord.

Who Could support a Feijenoord project?

Municipality

On its surface, the municipality of Rotterdam would have little interest in helping efforts that run counter to its own stated interests - if it was so inclined to improve its communication and inclusion of the communities of Feijenoord, then it can simply do so.

However, it is important to understand that large and complex governance bodies are multifaceted and departmentalized, and cooperation within them are not given, but rather they are contingent based (Fisher, 2017, Oliveira & Hersperger 2018), and internal conflicts can be quite commonplace as a result, making the idea of elements within a municipality involving themselves in such a context plausible. This actually happened in this very case, with SP's (Socialistische Partij) involvement in resisting Woonvisie 2016 (SP, 2016).

Politics could also play a part in such an occurrence. Any democratically elected body such as a municipality would have representatives from different parties, charged with representing the constituencies all throughout the city. Perhaps a party with a strong constituency in the area, or a platform dedicated to social issues such as the aforementioned SP, would find value in interceding on behalf of its constituency base.

Politicizing such an endeavor, is a precarious endeavor. Such a cause can be taken up and then abandoned by a party due to changing political circumstances, such as switching sides of a coalition (as happened with D66 in the recent elections cycle, for example (Groenendijk 2022)), or the opposite can happen, and the party's identity can overly influence the movement and politicize it.

Rotterdam's complex social and demographic situation is already resulting in a very high proclivity for 'protest parties' - extremist parties formed to express dissatisfaction at specific issues -such as immigration or unemployment (Ouweneel, Veenhoven, 2016). Tying political movements and agendas to such an effort here might end up pushing it into similar spheres, if the engagement with the establishment becomes too contentious.

Social Organization

An NGO (Non-Governmental Organization), or rather - a not-for-profit entity, could well provide the necessary organizational envelope to such a program. The strengths that an NGO could offer lay in their ability to appeal for donations from various sources ensuring regular funding to such a program, as well as offering an intermediary role with governmental forces , employing professionals to run such programs long term while also coordinating with external partners as needed (Gallant & Ciaffi 2014).

In this instance, the very nature of the issue of class based displacement of vulnerable populations would perhaps be motivation enough for such an entity to take action in its own right, making it a fairly compelling and realistic avenue in that regard, especially from the aspect of achieving long term sustainability for such a project.

However, its degree of capital within society or establishment bodies would likely be less substantial than the previously mentioned possibilities, given the scale of most NGO's, and possibly would not enjoy the same clout that a major establishment such a university or a governmental body already has. This deficiency can be overcome over time, but would perhaps make the beginning stages more complex as a result.

Who Could support a Feijenoord project?

Government body/ministry/EU

The EU intervention in the Tweebos situation (Rajagopal et al 2021, Rijmond 2021) indicates that it is possible that an entity with a much broader scope of operations may cast its gaze and put effort into the scale of a neighborhood or area within a city.

There is a big difference between filing a complaint and investing into a long term program costing millions of euros. However, the experience by USE-IT! in Birmingham, which received 3.56 million Euros, from the Birmingham municipality and the European Commission (Scheffler, 2020), indicates that both the attention and the willingness to spend and commit to long term programs exist within EU entities.

These, or national government scale body such as a ministry would provide a very strong material base, strong reputation and the ability to garner cooperation from external partners, hire high level professionals to run the program, and receive serious attention from the planning establishment of Rotterdam.

However, similarly to the UN complaint filed in Tweebos, it would open the door to much scrutiny that an external body would choose to intervene in such a localized problem, raising a complex question over jurisdictions within the Netherlands or

the EU, similarly to the comprehensive responses that complaint espoused from the mayor of Rotterdam and the foreign affairs ministry (Aboutaleb 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021) . That distance also entails a certain degree of remoteness - these would be outsiders, with limited connections and familiarity as to the matter and the local actors and practices existing in Rotterdam and Feijenoord.

It is also questionable if the population of Feijenoord would be receptive to help efforts from such a remote source, and perhaps would be put off or confused by such an official body seeking to intervene in such a close way in their lives. However, that solid identity would perhaps also be reassuring and beneficial in that regard. Gentle and careful attention to that initial contact with the community is more important than in any of the other instances, and perhaps would pose a major obstacle to be overcome.

However, perhaps a more localized body that is external to the municipality may work. The RPA example mentioned previously is successfully promoting participation processes in Tuscany, and such an entity may prove more acceptable to local authorities, as it was in Italy (Crawford 2012).

Who is likely to resist the program?

The 2016 NPRZ plans for Feijenoord are to replace 20,000 social housing units with 36,000 new 'luxury' ones by 2030 (NPRZ, 2016). This is a dramatic plan that would impact the lives of many tens of thousands of people and involve construction of real estate worth many billions of euros, entailing a substantial change to the face of the city in the process.

In other words, this is an issue involving very substantial interests that are important to some major stakeholders in that space.

Many major institutions and organizations would have high stakes tied to the fortunes of Feijenoord's planned transformation as it is currently set, and some of these are likely to find attempts to redirect these trajectories as threatening to their interest, and thus it is quite possible that some of these would look to resist efforts at changing the course set out by policy documents.

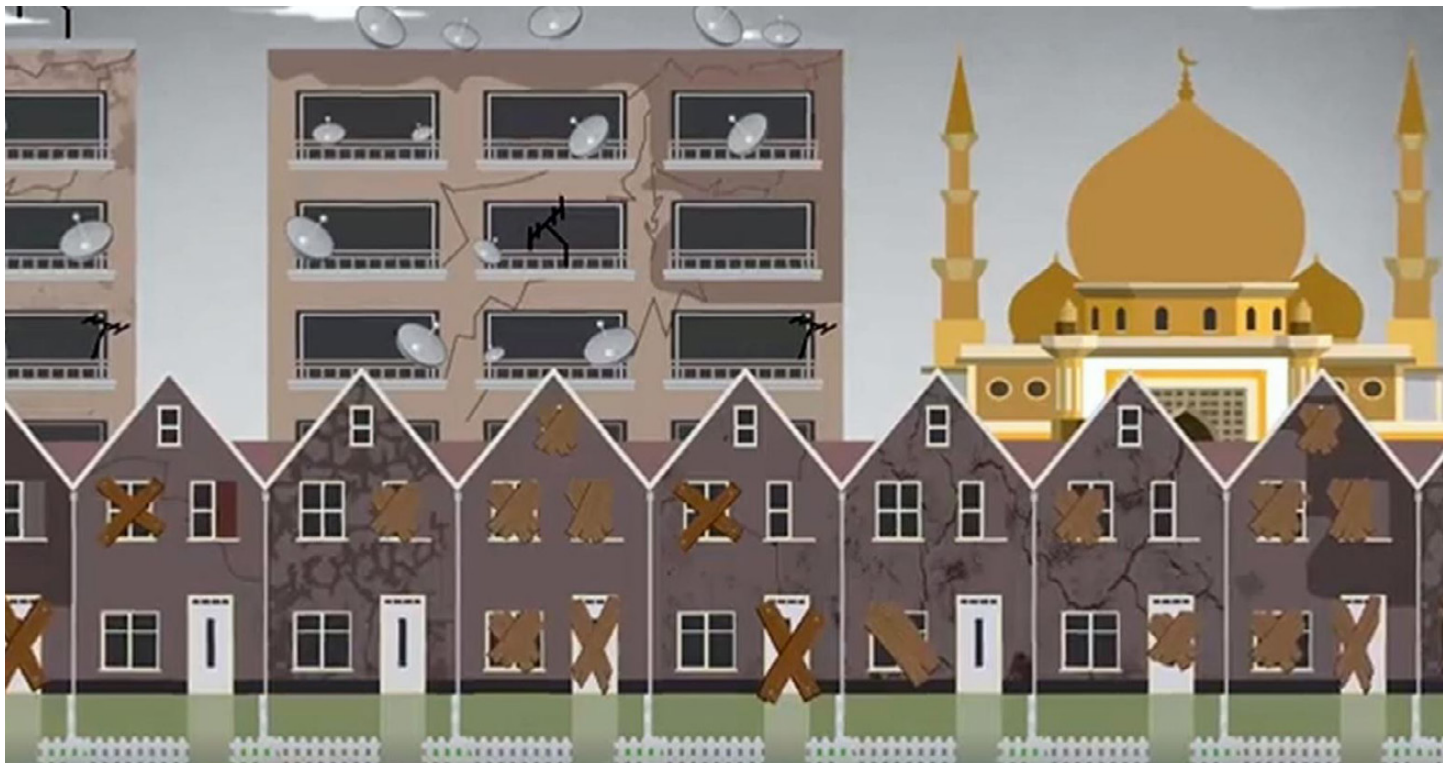
Trying to predict all the possible actions and possible responses proved to be a monumental task that is ultimately speculative in nature, and dependent on circumstances that can be variable - such as the identity of the entity supporting the program and the actions it would take. Instead, establishing feasibility is done through more generalized means - identifying the likely key actors who may find a reason to oppose, address previous actions by them in this context, and offering possibilities of what an organized and more proactive program may be able to achieve in mitigating either threats or encouraging cooperation instead.

The municipality

The most obvious entity to find issue with such a movement is the municipality, that is highly motivated in promoting a demographic change in Feijenoord, and it is doubtful they would take kindly to attempts to interfere with these.

One of the ways it could hamper such efforts is simply by maintaining what it is already doing - using its political clout in telling a story where integration is a win-win to all involved (Gemeente Rotterdam 2007, 2011, 2016a, 2020), while promoting and approving plans that fit their own policies, as much as the law allows them.

A major program could offer in response its reputation to raise public awareness, and its connections and professional acumen in proposing viable alternatives that may hit a chord with municipality decision makers (Åström, 2020).



Caricature of run down Rotterdamse neighbourhood, made by Leefbaar party (source: AD, 2016)

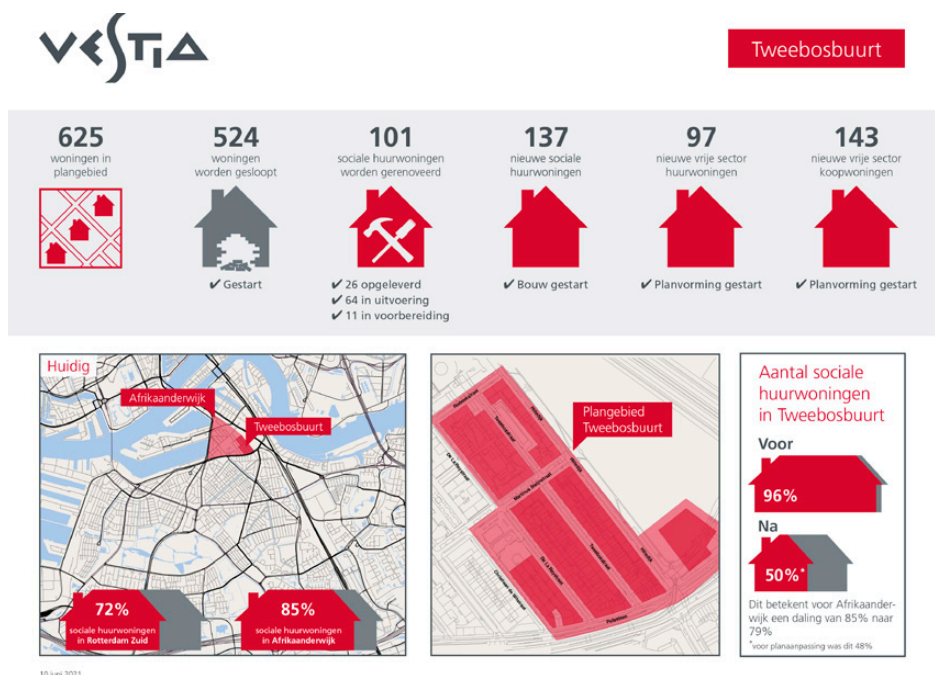
Who is likely to resist the program?

Housing associations

62% of the housing in Feijenoord are owned by housing associations (AlleCijfers, 2022) - former government companies that are charged with maintaining subsidized rental housing for low income individuals (Van Gent & Hochstenbach 2020). For these, the transformation of these for-rent properties into 'luxury' for sale flats is an opportunity to create large profits in relatively short term, and it is part of the mechanism that incentivizes them to participate in the outlined efforts of urban renewal (uitermark et al 2007).

A possible way these associations might react to actions threatening this opportunity, is to choose litigious avenues and appeal to courts, as happened in Tweebos and Krooswijk.

A well funded, organized and long lasting program can support long legal battles while also achieving wider public support in the meantime. But it also has the ability to create connections with other established players, that may make a more peaceful solution attractive and worthwhile instead, garnering cooperation for a different type of plan that is still profitable, without causing much displacement.













Vestia brochure regarding the situation in Tweebosbuurt (source: Vestia)

Business interests

























Redevelopment of the space is not the purview of only housing associations, and there is a wide array of business actors directly attached to the construction and marketing of housings that would be affected by a change to fortunes of a region the size of Feijenoord.

Construction companies, private market planners and architects, lawyers, real estate agents and developers, among others, would all be affected by such a change, and may lobby against such interventions.




















A large program may be able to influence these to stave off intervention, or bring them in and connect them to other alternative initiatives that would include visions that are both profitable and inclusive to the populace of Feijenoord, thus using their tacit cooperation as a tool of promoting cooperative processes that would be beneficial for everyone.

 Residential city →	 housing source →	 vestia →
 part steder →	 Municipality of Rotterdam →	 Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations →
 ATTA brokers →	 Schildvoorde NVM Real Estate →	 South City Real Estate Agents →
 Alliance Hand in Hand →		




School

 Albeda College →	 Food Innovation Academy →	 Avicenna College →
 Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences →	 LMC Secondary Education →	 PCBO →
 ROC Zadkine →	 RVKO →	 STC mbo college →
 BOOR Foundation →	 Horizon youth care and education →	 CVO →
 Wartburg College →	 theRotterdam care →	 Municipality of Rotterdam →
 JINC →	 Expertise Center for Social Innovation (EMI) →	 Lentiz Live College →
 Installation work South Holland →	 metalt →	 Building Netherlands →
 Rijnmond Construction →	 SPG Infra →	 Sector Institute Transport and Logistics →

Work

 defence →	 Deltalings →	 Port of Rotterdam Authority →
 Employers Service Point Rijnmond →	 iSITSouth →	 UWV Werkbedrijf Rijnmond →
 RET →	 theRotterdam care →	 Municipality of Rotterdam →
 Police Rotterdam Rijnmond →	 JINC →	 City Ports Development Fund for Innovation and Economy (SOFIE) →
 Alliance Hand in Hand →	 Installation work South Holland →	 metalt →
 Building Netherlands →	 Rijnmond Construction →	 SPG Infra →
 Sector Institute Transport and Logistics →		

Residents

 Municipality of Rotterdam →	 Like your neighborhood →	 Expertise Center for Social Innovation (EMI) →
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Culture

 Municipality of Rotterdam →	 Expertise Center for Social Innovation (EMI) →
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Safe

 Municipality of Rotterdam →	 Public Prosecution Service Rotterdam →	 Police Rotterdam Rijnmond →
 Alliance Hand in Hand →		

Pillars

 City Ports Development Fund for Innovation and Economy (SOFIE) →	 Lentiz Live College →	 Installation work South Holland →
 metalt →	 SPG Infra →	 Sector Institute Transport and Logistics →

Right - list of NPRZ partners (official website)

What would the program set out to do?

As detailed in the Methodology for Feijenoord subchapter, the proposed program would rely on the structure of USE-IT! in conducting its actions, breaking them down to three stages -

- Educating participants to the situation,
- Creating strategies together with the participants, and presenting these to the public
- Implementing these by engaging planning processes in actuality.

Meaning that a major part of the project is in deciding on approaches for action in a collaborative method between project mentors, participants, external partners and the community at large - and then translating these into action. So specific actions are not to be defined right here, right now, but rather the focus of the research is in the process leading up to it.

Having said that, it is still meaningful in trying to speculate what these approaches could be, and assessing their prospects in context of the more supportive and structured frame of the proposed methodology.

In order to do that, several basic methods of community engagement that were already attempted in recent Rotterdam history were examined for their circumstances, achievements and shortcomings, and then speculated through the prism of the program, attempting to see if it can offer anything different to these situations.

Another important element of assessment is in trying to determine the type of engagement these would bring upon, as it would be meaningful in gaining an understanding of the nature of the program's approach towards engagement, which is meaningful in answering the question of the type of spatial consequences it may achieve.

In order to do so, each method was examined for its possibilities of taking action through the two key models of community participation (Monno, Khakee, 2012) :

- communicative/collaborative model based on willing cooperation by the different stakeholders in a planning process
- radical/insurgent model that is based in grass-roots social actions led by the community that try to achieve goals through conflict.

Formal Participation

Although the Netherlands have a substantial history of formal participation practices dating back to the late 19th century (Michels, De Graaf, 2017), up until very recently - with the passing of the Environment and Planning Act - coming into effect in 2023, there was no statutory imperative to conduct such a process at all, and this act will only be relevant to certain large scale plans and in limited consultation capacities (Bisschops, 2019).

In the case of Feijenoord, recent examples indicate that the municipality is reluctant in conducting such processes in earnest. The pivotal Woonvisie 2016, for example, underwent public approval processes only after the 'Action Committee for Housing Referendums' (Actiecomité Woonreferendum), an organization formed by private associations together with the SP party, forced the municipality to conduct such a referendum (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016b, SP 2016, Woonreferendum, no date), by submitting a 13,000 signatures petition to the municipality in an effort to change the displacement elements it proposed to the south (Liukku, 2016).

The referendum itself resulted in a 72% vote against the plan, but since the total voters amounted to only 17% of the city's population, and well below the 30% minimum required (Gemeente Rotterdam, 2016c, Hoogstad 2016), Woonvisie was approved, and the situation in Feijenoord persists.

In more detailed scales, participation is also a contentious issue. Initiatives, such as Recht op de Stad, that are dedicated to the promotion of better participation practices in Rotterdam were formed in response to cases such as Tweebos, HKT-blok, Patrimonium Hof and several other similar situations in the city (Recht op de Stad, 2021), and are clamoring for the population's voice to be heard in these cases and others like it. They cite the only success stories (and limited at that) in situations such as in Crooswijk and Vreewijk, as a result of active resistance, rather than products of fruitful cooperation (Recht op de Stad, 2021).

In what way can a USE-IT! like program make a difference?

Cooperation - Either of the institutional bodies examined may be able to provide an added weight to requests of a more participatory approach to planning processes in the space that more reactive grassroots organizations such as Recht op de Stad could not - perhaps encouraging a more cooperative approach from the planning establishment, especially if the body supporting the program is governmental in nature.

Conflict - participation processes done in a reluctant way are somewhat precarious. A major risk is that the process would be conducted in bad faith, making it a 'token' engagement that would be done and then ignored by the planners conducting it (Monno, Khakee, 2012).



Push for the Woonreferendum regarding Woonvisie (AD, 2016)

What may the program set out to do?

Judicial Channels

Legal channels can be engaged if a planning process is mishandled or a plan was approved on questionable legal grounds. Tweebos, Crooswijk and Vreewijk all went through legal processes with mixed results. None managed to achieve outright victories, but partial ones were possible with some substantial results (Recht op de Stad 2021), by creating major delays in the approval of plans, Namely in Crooswijk (FBNC, no date).

However, the lack of outright victories in recent times is disconcerting (SP 2020), suggesting that in many cases it would be more of a tool of causing delays, rather than getting conclusive results.

In what way can a USE-IT! like program make a difference?

In the right circumstances, this could pose a meaningful tool in giving pause to decision makers from proceeding with actions that are not legally sound or when under time constraints. Such prolonged engagements are accounted for within the program, and the built in element of including professional partners may be able to approach these from a more calculated and planned out way, rather than being reactive to pending plans, as was the case in Tweebos or Crooswijk.

Cooperation can be sought after if a legal engagement is promising for the population, or manages to drag out in court for a prolonged time. After all, court cases often result in settlements, rather than conclusive rulings.

a more combative approach would simply be achieved by engaging procedures to their full extent, trying to win in court, or by creating very long delays stretching decades (as happened in Crooswijk). However, these would likely lead to status quos rather than improvements to the physical environment, which are after all needed by the vulnerable populations in Feijenoord.



Vestia/Tweebosbuurt court case (Source: Rijnmond 2019)

Public Interest

Raising the public profile of the people and situation in Feijenoord could be an effective instrument in swaying decisions in favor of the community, or at least in making the unfavorable more difficult to make. Politicians, especially in democratically elected societies, are sensitive to public opinion, and thus they are exposed to pressure on that front (Bernardi et al 2021).

However, public relation battles can be waged by both sides, and in a-symmetrical manners and scales (Demetriou 2013). Action conducted in the limited confines and means of Feijenoord, can be answered by a municipality response that approaches the whole of Rotterdam, South Holland, or even the Netherlands, using its greater access to media and appealing to audiences less familiar or invested in the specifics of Feijenoord.

That is not to say that PR tactics employed by a local population cannot work, but rather that they require careful and measured actions, using that a-symmetry in their favor, by combining a more personal touch to communications set out (Demetriou 2013), explaining the human element to a situation, rather than focusing on maps and figures.

In what way can a USE-IT! like program make a difference?

A team focused on media interaction, and collaborating with a public relations expert could promote stories onto these happenings, or highlight threats of displacement in the making, by engaging members of the formal media (such as journalists), or even by writing up articles themselves, and circulating them through social media channels.

A more established body supporting such claims perhaps may bring about a better

credibility to such communications, which would now be carried by an entity such as a national university or ministry.

The more structured approach, and the involvement of professional partners could also be meaningful in building a public argument over time that can be more proactive to the general situation, rather than reactive to immediate situations.

How such a method is cotentuous in nature is plain and easy to see. However, communication can also include positive messages promoting ideas and attempting to sway larger public perceptions towards pressuring public officials into cooperation in planning processes (Bernardi et al 2021).

1
Wonen is een grondrecht
Elke Rotterdammer heeft recht op een goede en betaalbare woning in een sociale, prettige en veilige omgeving, ongeacht inkomen, afkomst of woonduur. Woonzekerheid is de norm.

RECHT OP DE STAD
het betere plan voor wonen in Rotterdam*

Onze visie op nieuw woonbeleid 2021-2030:
De bewoner staat centraal. De stad wordt ontwikkeld vanuit de kracht van de huidige en toekomstige Rotterdammers.

2
Zeggenschap voor bewoners
Plannen worden samen met bewoners gemaakt en komen in samenspraak tot stand. De gemeente stimuleert en faciliteert bewoners om hun recht op zeggenschap uit te oefenen en ondersteunt nieuwe woonvormen zoals wooncoöperaties.

3
Behoud van de sociale woningvoorraad
Onderhoud van sociale woningen wordt geïntensiveerd en draagt bij aan verduurzaming. Woningen worden alleen gesloopt in samenspraak met bewoners en met terugkeergarantie en waarborgen.

4
Bouwprogramma: stad voor iedereen
Nieuwe woningen worden gebouwd voor alle inkomensgroepen, met aandacht voor groepen waarvoor de woningnood het hoogst is. Er wordt gebouwd op geschikte locaties, met waardering voor de sociaalhistorische karakteristieken van buurten.

5
Bescherming van bewoners
Marktwerking wordt zodanig ingeperkt dat het niet ten koste gaat van bewoners. De betaalbaarheid, beschikbaarheid en kwaliteit van de woningvoorraad blijven gegarandeerd.

maart 2021 | www.rechtopdestad.nl | info@rechtopdestad.nl | [Twitter @rechtopdestad](https://twitter.com/rechtopdestad) | p. 1

Recht op de Stad manifesto, front page (Recht op de Stad 2021)

What may the program set out to do?

Public Protest

Complementing the media engagement efforts, awareness can be raised in traditional grassroots social manners, such as by demonstrations, social events or the distribution of propaganda material like pamphlets or even stickers and the like. In addition to raising overall awareness to an issue, there is meaningful value in the unifying aspects of joint action, as it encourages cooperation that may serve as a social bridge between the various groups living within Feijenoord, building up social capital in that regard.

It is questionable if public protest is effective in garnering effective response from policy makers, who for the most part are more susceptible to general public input, rather than that coming from focused sources (Bernardi et al 2021). However, that is not to say such actions do not have any impact at all, but rather that they are dependant on the scale of the protest, and its ability to sustain itself (Bernardi et al 2021, Bunnstein & linton, 2002)

Perhaps meaning that in order for it to be effective in this case, it must expand past the confines of Feijenoord, and garner large support throughout the city, perhaps by appealing to other similarly situated neighborhoods in the west and the north for support.

In what way can a USE-IT! like program make a difference?

Although such operations can be planned and prepared for in many places, having a consistent (and consistently open) physical staging ground, as the program proposes to set up, would be beneficial in this context, given that the key value in this instance be more about establishing community bonding and creating stronger connections with the population of feijenoord, rather than in achieving tangible results in terms of engagement with the planning establishment of Rotterdam.



Demonstrations in Tweebosbuurt, March 7 2021 (Source Recht op de Stad, taken by (top) Joop Reingoud (Bottom) Joke Schot)

Alternative Planning

A powerful tool in engaging the establishment on its terms is in proposing workable alternatives to ongoing plans (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014). That is not done in an effort to force its hand in doing something specific, but rather in opening up the discussion and demonstrating that other approaches exist, calculating costs and benefits in the process (Gallant & Ciaffi, 2014).

Such a method was meaningful in the case of Crooswijk, a Rotterdam neighborhood north-east of the city center, which was dealing with a similar situation in the mid 2000's. Part of its efforts to resist gentrification processes there was by forming a residents federation - FBNC (De Federatie Bewonerscomités Nieuw Crooswijk), which enlisted the help of several planners, including two TU Delft professors, in creating an alternative master plan for the district (FBNC, no date), and ultimately led to a serious delay in the approval process of a plan that threaten to rebuild 85% of the neighborhood (FBNC, no date).

In what way can a USE-IT! like program make a difference?

A Similar planning team within the project could enlist the services of a planner to lead such efforts, an organization such as Veld Academie that is involved in similar actions in Rotterdam currently (Veld Academie, no date), or the help of a university such as TU Delft, especially if they were the ones providing the overall support to the project, then it would likely find active and eager participation within professors and its student body.

Such an action can also be very meaningful in supporting other activities, creating a spatial claim that things can be done differently, which would be useful to any of the previously mentioned practices. This plays into a program's strengths in a major way, as they can draw a direct and integral connection between various teams and endeavors that could potentially cause a meaningful synergy between them.

Cooperative results can come out planning with establishment goals in mind, giving them options that could be acceptable to them, if win-win spatial situations are possible.

Conversely, spatial planning tools can reveal hidden harms in proposed plans that would serve to argue against them, thus reinforcing a more combative approach in resisting planning processes.



Alternative plan for Crooswijk (source: FBNC)

Conclusion

No program can predict all challenges or prepare for all eventualities. USE-IT!, for all of the expertise of its operators and the large multi year process it was involved in, was met with unexpected difficulties or outcomes that were surprising, and had to adapt and adjust its methods throughout its operations (Scheffler, 2019b, 2020). It was, in fact, an experiment in its own right, and experiments do not guarantee a specific desired result.

The questions raised here were not meant at returning conclusive answers, but rather to uncover indications in either way, and highlight problematic areas as they arise.

This examination suggests that the actions such a program may undertake are plausible in their scope, and have the potential to create some impact in a real setting, while the effort to identify an institutional support structure indicates that there are several possible entities that would have the capability and interest to get involved in such an effort.

The issue of external resistance is perhaps the most difficult to predict either way, and it is unclear how much 'peaceful' solutions for cooperation would apply, when counterbalanced against the strong financial pressures and incentives of real estate development or political goals.

However, that is not to say these must fail at all times, or that other avenues do not exist to remedy these threats.

All these combine to a conclusion that such a method is generally plausible, however, just like any other such complex and large scale endeavor - it would likely require to be tested in reality if it was to be fully confirmed or overruled.

However, the plausibility of such an endeavor goes deeper than just establishing that such a program can see the light of day, or that it can organize and focus its efforts into an effective engagement. For that engagement to be effective, it must lead to meaningful results in the physical urban space that are doable in actuality, otherwise the whole endeavor would lack any real substance. In other words - the plausibility of the project also depends on its ability to lead to workable proposals for the space if it is to create any real benefit to the population of Feijenoord.

The next chapter would strive to answer this question of spatial implications, in an effort to provide a more complete answer as to the prospects of such a program in the context of Feijenoord's urban renewal processes.

Potential Implications of a USE-IT! Inspired Program in Feijenoord

The third sub question looked at the potential implications that an effective assertion of the population of Feijenoord would have towards the urban space, examining what would happen if it managed to include itself as a full partner in the reshaping of the area.

That is not something that can be accurately predicted in any specific way, as a design can manifest into an insurmountable amount of possible eventualities, and thus this is not meant to give a definitive prediction of what such a future would look like.

However, there is great value in exploring these possibilities in a specific site, as they give an insight into the thought processes likely dictating decisions, highlighting the situation of a site in specific socio-spatial ways that written research perhaps cannot achieve.

Understanding the situation in a specific site for all of its parameters - its larger urban context, the functioning of its urban systems, the condition of its buildings and the situation of its people, and how all these interact and influence each other would help establish a set of parameters, that can then be further examined in a design product - that would highlight the problems, limitations and challenges of a space, but also its hidden potentials.

In simple terms - design can be used to stress test the spatial situation and show what else it can and cannot do in comparison to what it is currently destined to become.

Whatever answers this would reveal would help answer for the latter part of the core research question - can the proposed method achieve a better, more suitable urban space for the people of Feijenoord than the one set to them right now by the municipality? And if so, then at what costs?

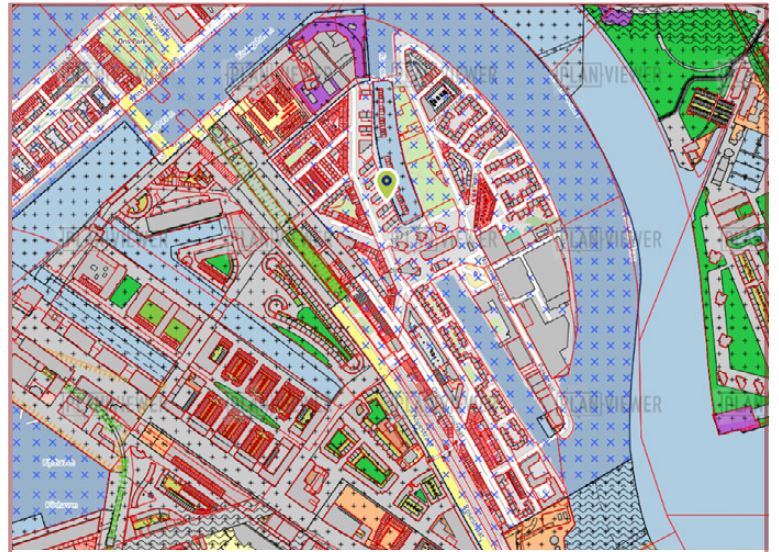
Project Site

This examination itself was conducted at the neighborhood scale, meaning that it was done at a resolution that would befit a detailed town plan outlining specifically lot divisions and infrastructure placements - straddling the line between abstract planning and specific geometry of individual structures. This scale was chosen as it allows for easy correspondence with both the abstract nature of the larger scale mappings found in the municipality's policy documents, but also with the more granular scales leading up all the way to the structural building blocks of the urban environment, allowing for an almost eye level of understanding and expression of that space, if need be.

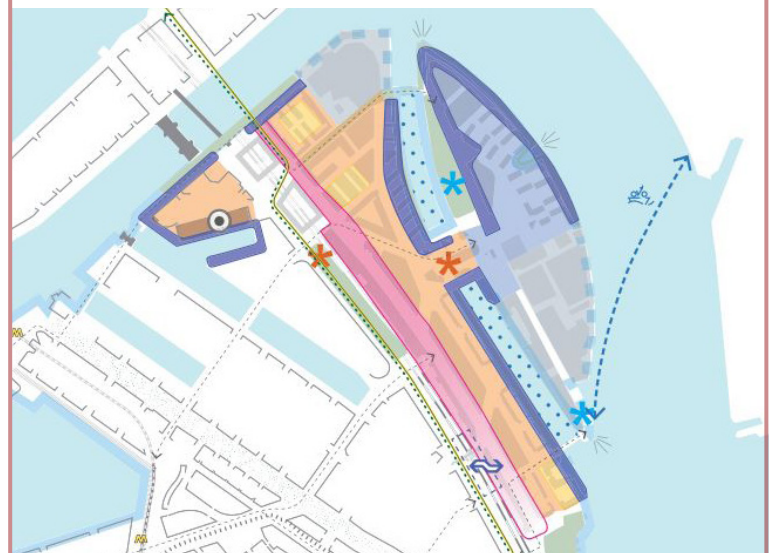
For this, a specific neighborhood in the Feijenoord area was chosen as a focus area, out of several examined in that area: Afrikaanderwijk, in close proximity to Katendrecht and home to Tweebos; Bloemhof, one of the Netherlands most distressed neighborhoods, to its south; and Kop van Feijenoord - a spatially complex neighborhood in a key location, with a strong industrial presence.

Of these options, Kop van Feijenoord was selected for its typical socio-economic situation of its inhabitants, the spatial complexities and challenges, its mix of residential and corporate entities and its key location in the city's transportation scheme - connecting to the koninginnebrug, having a key stop on the key rail line going from Den Haag to Dordrecht, and having a possible future connection to Prince Alexander area in the future.

These all marked the neighborhood as a place that exemplifies much of the overall situation prevalent in the Feijenoord quarter at large - it holds high spatial potentials in a prime location, while being held by a large population of vulnerable and typically low income members, resulting in a prime area for the urban renewal processes dealt in this research, which are already beginning to happen there, on a small scale.



Taken from PlanViewer



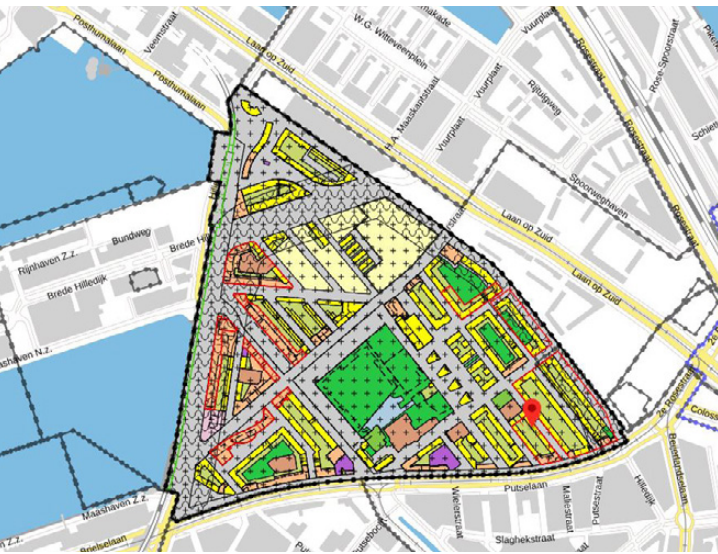
Taken from: Handelingsperspectief wijk Feijenoord (NPRZ 2013a)

Why is Feijenoord interesting?

- Challenging main street (Ornajeboomstraat) leading to Koninginnebrug
- Overall location and island based shape is challenging
- Strong corporate presence with many companies building there (divers programme)
- Gentrification threat is high due to river front property
- Future connection to Alexander is planned in this area
- Enterport commercial area introduces new quality to area

Why not Feijenoord?

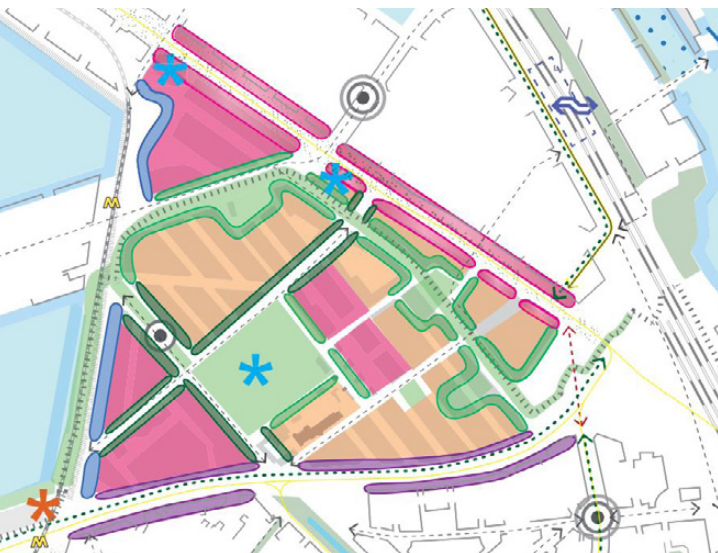
- its axis is less significant compared to the laan op zuid Axis impacting the other sites
- Overall shape is less obviously a neighborhood with a clear logic



Taken from NL.IMRO.0599.BP1029



Taken from NL.IMRO.0599.BP1085



Taken from: Handelingsperspectief Afrikaanderwijk (NPRZ 2013c)



Taken from: Handelingsperspectief wijk Bloemhof (NPRZ 2013b)

Why is Afrikaanderwijk interesting?

- Location between main axis to the bridge (Laan op Zuid)
- Long front to the river
- Main market and park with regional importance
- Streets connecting to Katendrecht, Kop van Zuid
- Empty areas in the north being close to reconstruction (maneuverability)

Why not Afrikaanderwijk?

- Most of the empty spaces are already close to being built?
- About half the neighborhood - the Tweebos area - is already being rebuilt
- Unclear if Laan op Zuid can be harnessed for buurt's sake
- Typologically uninteresting compared to the two other locations

Why is Bloemhof interesting?

- Highly dense low res typology is challenging
- Many key preservation structures (namely Kieftoek) are an interesting parameter
- Main waterway divides the neighborhood into two distinct halves
- One of the most problematic neighborhoods in the Netherlands, with immediate social problems

Why not Bloemhof?

- Low ability to maneuver, considering that vast parts of it are marked for preservation
- Lacking important functions. Is for the most part a vast carpet of residentials
- Location is less significant compared to two other options

Assumptions Based Off of Socio-Economic Statistical Picture

Understanding Kop van Feijenoord's situation in depth began with a general examination of the population's features, mainly from a statistical standpoint, in the hopes that these would reveal meaningful insights that can be translated into programmatic insights that may determine a planning approach further on.

For that, there is substantial amounts of data readily accessible, which was collected and compared to the averages of Rotterdam and the Netherlands overall.

These were then compiled into several key assumptions that were examined through the base definitions of lack of capital, as described earlier:

Material Capital:

The average income per capita in the neighborhood is 15.900 Euros per annum, 61% of the 26.200 that is the Rotterdam average, and only 53% of the national Dutch average of 29.500 (CBS 2020). Although Kop van Feijenoord has a slightly larger than average percentage of children, this on its own cannot account for such a stark difference, clearly indicating that the population there has diminished capabilities of earning in general. Programmatic conclusion - Access to employment, transportation, long term investment in social mobility through education

Home ownership is only at eleven percent, with eighty seven percent of its inhabitants relying on housing associations, which is in line with the rest of the area's neighborhoods, and compatible with the situation researched up to this point (AllCijfers 2022).

Programmatic conclusion - need to maintain, or even slightly expand, the stock of social housing units

Social Capital:

Built density is slightly above average, but the percentage of multi-member households, coupled with the high number of children (AllCijfers 2022), low number of elderly, and significantly low violent crime rate all paint a picture of a family oriented neighborhood, living in fairly dense conditions.

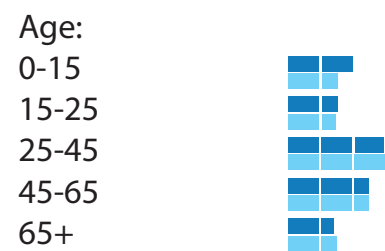
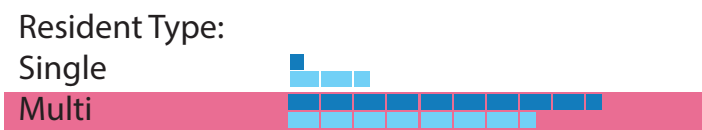
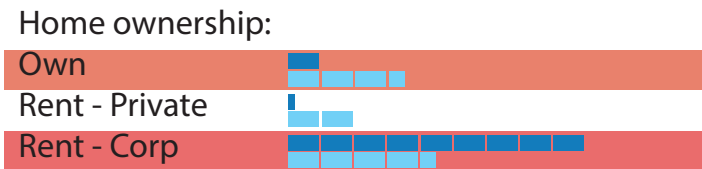
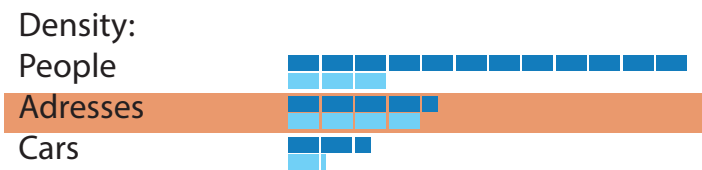
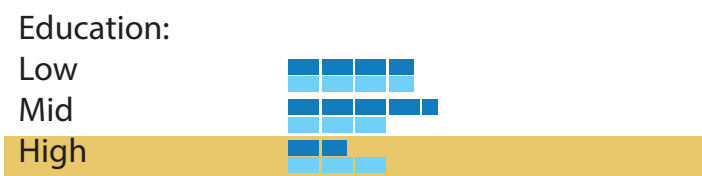
Programmatic conclusion - emphasis on youth investment via education programmes, improvement of condition of social housing stock.

Demographics are of a vastly non-white majority of almost 94 percent, originating from four key origins and many smaller groups (Weetmeer, 2022). These suggest a lack of social cohesion, and lower levels of integration into larger Dutch society.

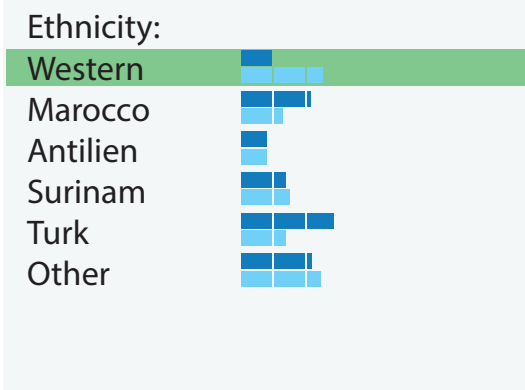
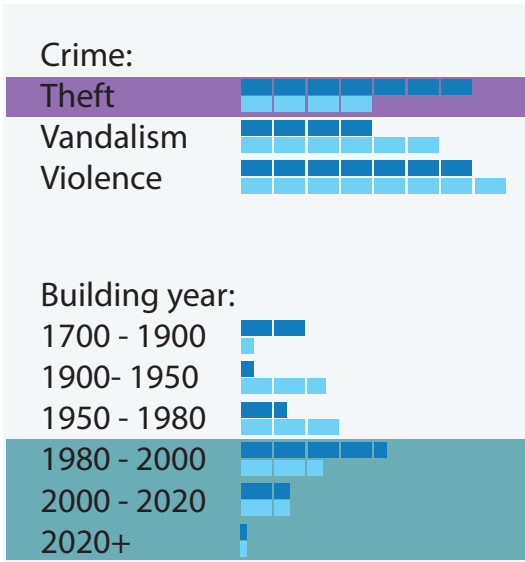
Programmatic Conclusion - emphasis on public structures with social orientation, faith buildings, and public spaces to create points of social contact.

Human Capital:

Lower than average university graduates at only fifteen percent, but higher than average percent of mid level (HBO) education levels (AllCijfers 2022), coupled with the low average income suggest that the neighborhood's population is distinctly blue collared, although having a university degree is not unheard of. A third of the population is uneducated though (AllCijfers 2022), suggesting that much improvement can be done in that regard also. This falls exactly in line with the municipality's understanding - people who as time goes by are less and less able to contribute to the modern urban economy. Programmatic Conclusion - would likely be beyond the scope that a spatial plan can address directly. Could highlight the need for strong transportation connectivity in order to encourage larger participation on metropolitan level economy, need for investment in education as previously mentioned.



■ Feijenoord
■ Rotterdam



- Lower than average income	64%
- Lack in high education	17%
- Above average density	+15%
- Low home ownership	11%
- Reliance on housing associations	87%
- Almost all shared households	96%
- Below average Health	85%
- Crime - non violant	+75%
- Majority of construction >1980	60%
- Vast majority is non-white	91%

Kop van Feijenoord Statistical Story - comparing the case study neighborhood of Kop van Feijenoord to the rest of Rotterdam, helped achieve a rudimentary place-specific understanding of it, giving inclings into its programmatic needs (Sources: AlleSijfers.nl, Weetmeer.nl, cbs.nl)

Current Situation Mapping

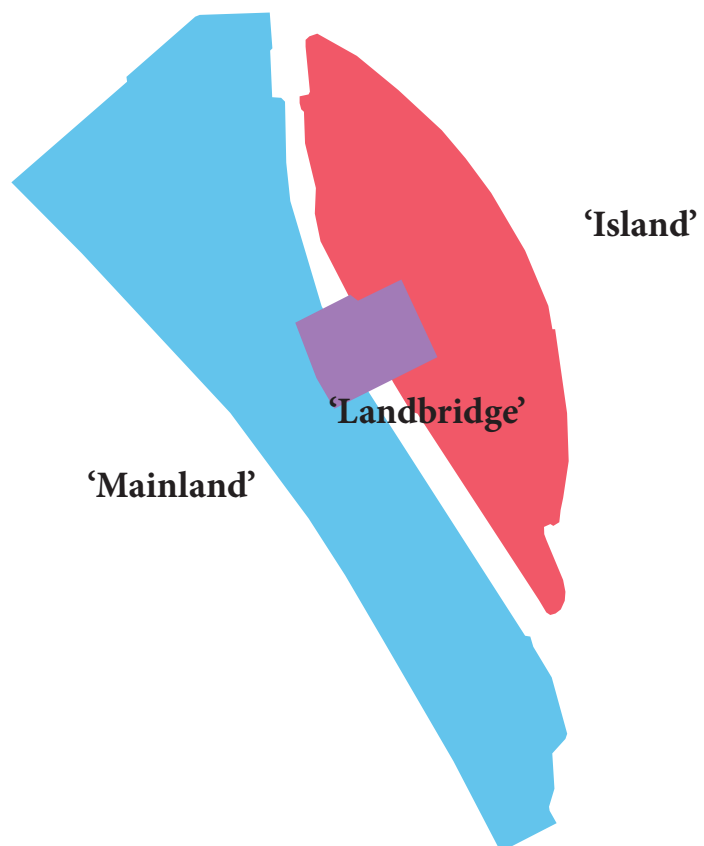
Complementing the understanding of the population's situation is in researching the spatial situation serving as the backdrop of their daily lives. Building this understanding began with a thorough eye level mapping of its streets, open spaces, functions and the various buildings that compose the neighborhood's built environment - these together they form a picture of how the neighborhood functions at current.

Kop van Feijenoord is built around two main land mass:

An eastern 'mainland' half that is a long and linear series of streets running north to south and is strewn with long blocks of low-rise high density residentials from various time periods over the past hundred years (Weetmeer 2022). These are almost exclusively social housing units, with exception to its northern end, where the Unilever factory - one of Rotterdams most prominent buildings - is located, next to a newly constructed luxury complex building (Google Maps, 2022). To the south, a substantial park is located on the waterline, with a sizable retirement home nearby. Running parallel to these streets on its eastern side is the Den Haag - Dordrecht line, serving as a barrier from the rest of the area for much of its length, while to the west, the shoreline overlooking the Maas is ofcourse a natural barrier as well.

The western "island" half is an elongated eye-shaped landmass, completely surrounded by water, with the exception of a substantial landbridge that is connecting the two halves, serving as a focal point for the neighborhood, and hosting several key public buildings strewn in expansive paved plaza (Google Maps, 2022).

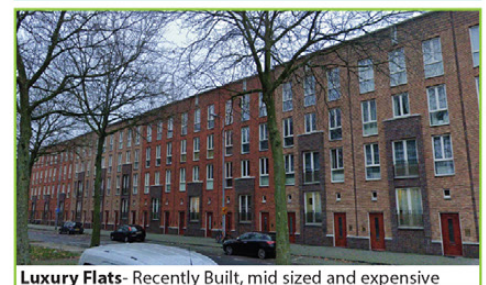
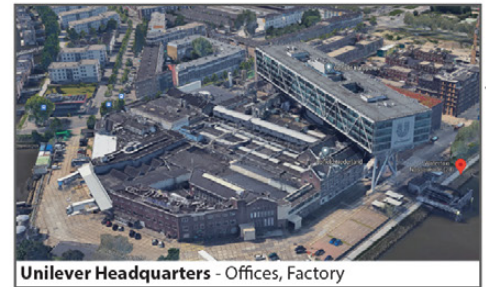
The island itself is bisected to two halves - a southern industrial area dominated by a Hunter Douglas complex, and a residential north that is a combination of a social housing complex spanning several blocks, and relatively new 'luxury' flats (Google Maps, 2022) complex in its most northern point - early examples of the urban renewal processes beginning to take form in this area.





Physical mapping of Kop van Feijenoord (background map: Google Earth)

Overall, the urban system at current is a hodge-podge of building typologies and entities combined with major infrastructural challenges, clearly indicating that this is a space in a state of transition, still suffering with remnants of outmoded planning decisions (such as dedicating prime waterfront real estate for industrial purposes, for example), that would be needed to be addressed in the mid-long term future, in order to complete the transformation of the space.



**Built elements in the urban space of Kop van Feijenoord
(background map: Google Earth, Maps)**



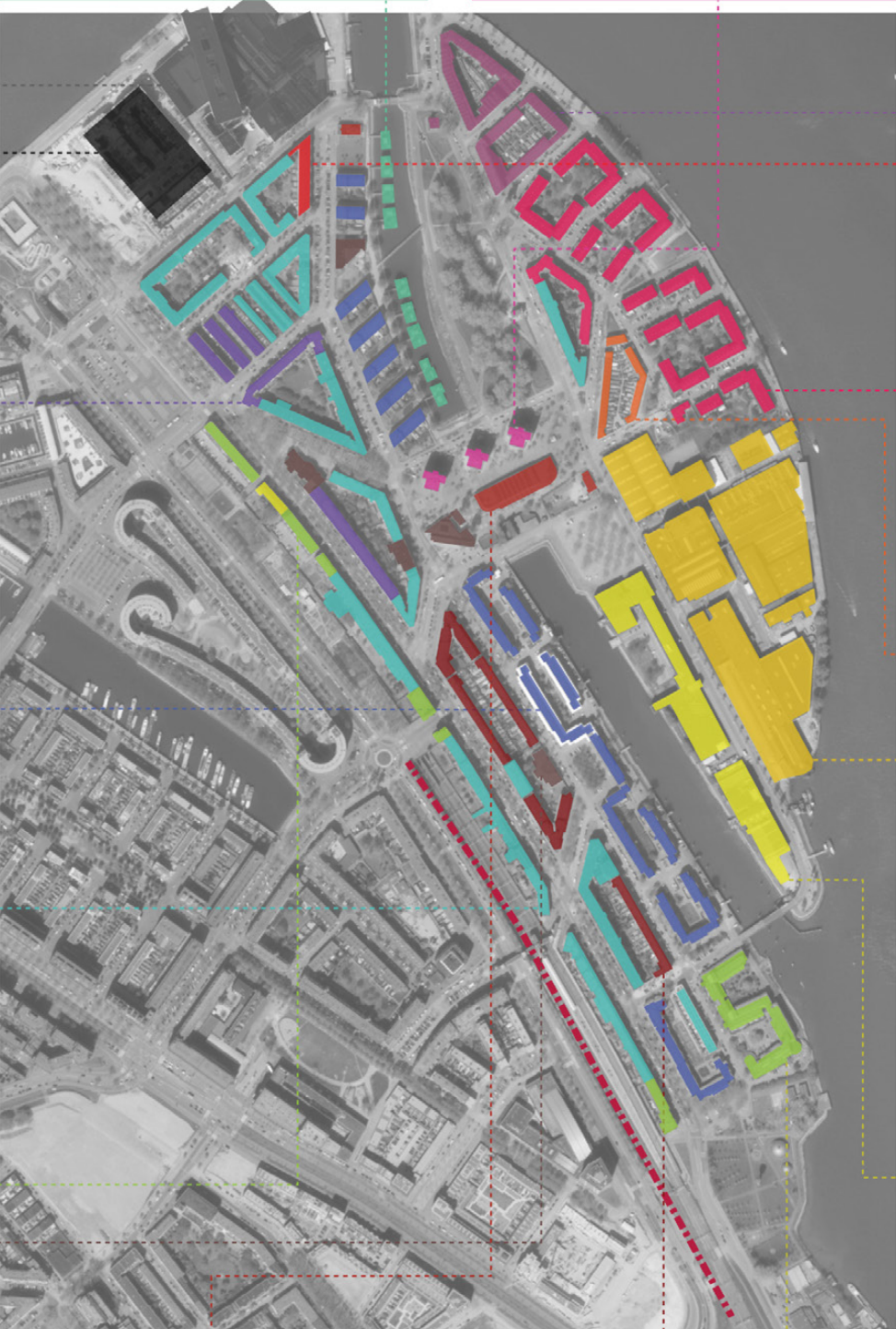
Social Housing - Built in 1980's, mid size, cheap



Social Housing - Built in 1980's, High Density, mid size



Social Housing - Built in 1980's, mid size, cheap



Luxury flats - New/historic, large size and expensive



Low Income Flats - Built 1980's, Small size and cheap



Luxury flats - Recently built, mid-large and expensive



Hunter Douglas - Offices and warehouses



Zuidpoort - offices and businesses



Community Center



New Low Income Flats - Built 2000's, Mid size and cheap



Care Center - for retired/handicapped

Spatial Projections in Context of Urban Renewal

In order to create predictions that would react to the municipality's plans for the future, it is vital to establish what that plan is, to serve as a baseline against which other possibilities would be examined and compared. This was done by creating a synthesis between two key data sets - the socio-spatial situation of the neighborhood at present, and the municipality's stated plans for the future of the neighborhood, as expressed in several policy documents such as the Wonnvisie and NPRZ.

This was done by distilling both into a singular mapping for each, that is a compilation of their available data, and then comparing both.

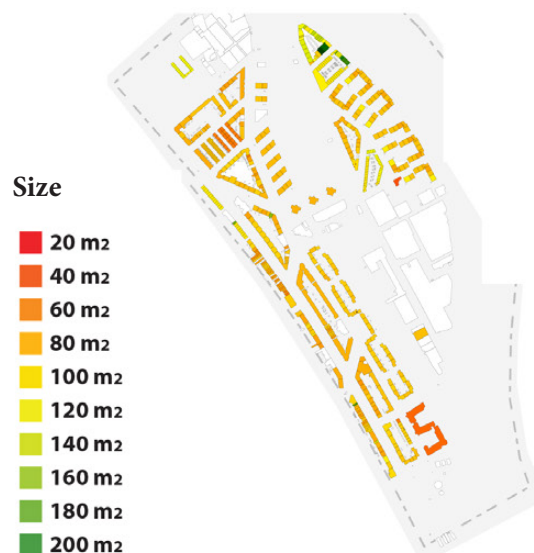
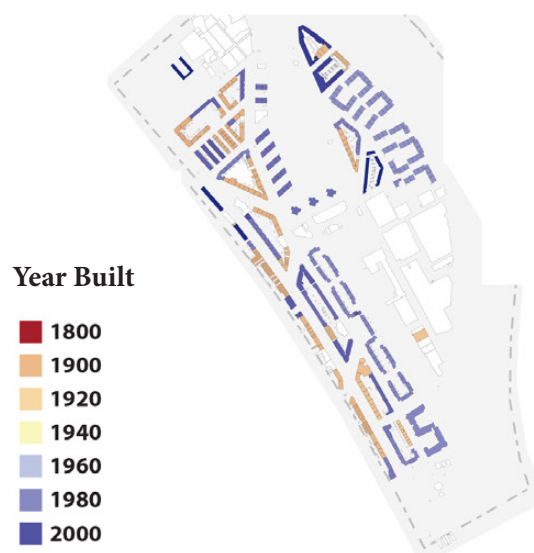
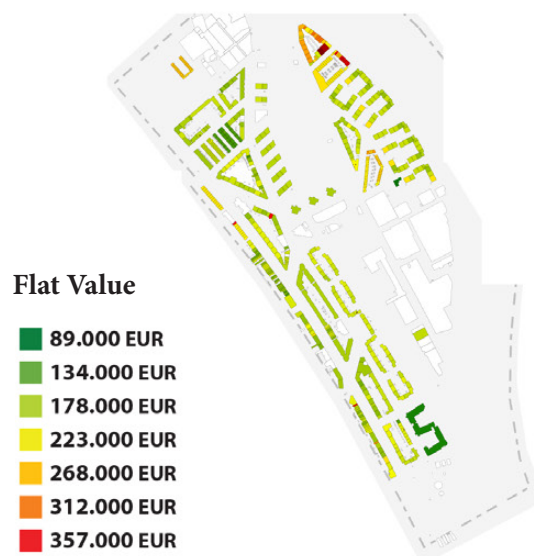
The distillation of the current situation manifested in a vulnerability assessment of the built environment of Feijenoord. For this, mapping of its physical space and urban functions were cross referenced with key properties of the residential properties in that neighborhood pertaining to the value of the flats, when they were built and their size (Weetmeer, 2022).

These together created a clear picture of the likeliness of each building in the space to be affected by urban renewal in the near to moderate future:

Stable - Mostly large, recently built and expensive luxury apartments, but also a substantial amount of newly built social housing units, that are indicative of the complex and multifaceted nature of integration. These amount to nine hundred units, which are exactly one quarter of the neighborhood.

Intermediate - Medium to small sized and cheap flats constructed in the 1980's, that are unlikely to be transformed in the near future, but perhaps will be subject to change several decades down the line (NPRZ, 2013a). These amount to another 1.100 flats, which are just under a third of the neighborhood.

Vulnerable - Are units constructed in the first half of the twentieth century or earlier, are all social housing units that are small and cheap. These are clear candidates to be replaced in the near future (in fact, some are in the process of being replaced right now (Google Maps, 2022) and thus are highly vulnerable to displacement. These amount to 1.600 units, which are close to being half of the neighborhood.





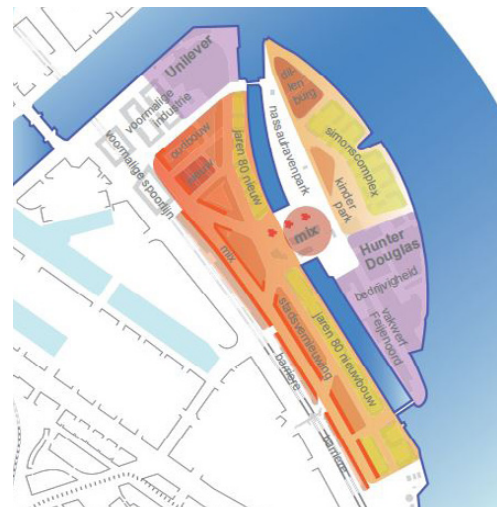
Vulnerability Assessment - cross referencing three basic data points housing prices, their year of construction and size proved very revealing in assessing their vulnerability to being demolished and replaced due to urban renewal (Sources: Weetmeer.nl, Land Registry)

Spatial Projections in Context of Urban Renewal

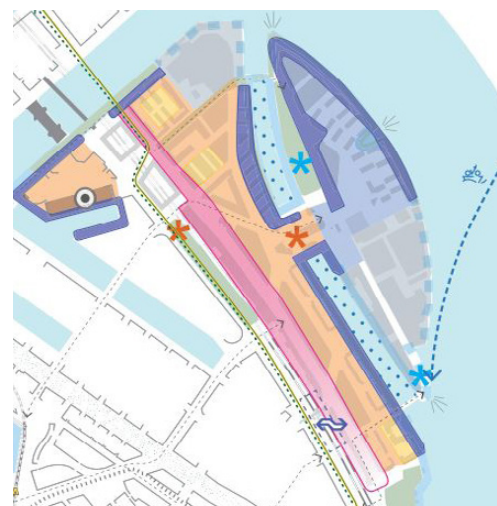
The distillation of the municipality's policy documents for Feijenoord are a combination of the mappings set out by the NPRZ, that are defining in detail a vision for the neighborhood's function and character, along with the official destination plan (NL.IMRO.0599) by the municipality, while also keeping awareness as to the larger scale documents that influence and contextualized these more specific ones.

NPRZ are defining a vision for each neighborhood in south Rotterdam by means of a booklet that consists of three key maps:

- 'Characteristics' mapping - defining key entities in the space and how they interact, while defining a sort of 'neighborhood motto' to guide its urban character, in this case of a "mixed neighborhood with living and working on the water" (NPRZ, 2013a)
- 'Perspective' mapping - is a more specific zoning map that is defining typologies in different segments of the neighborhood. This is done in vague terms, describing an atmosphere and spirit of a place, rather than setting more strict parameters. Here, however, is the first place where indication is made specific as to the type of housing that may be built, such as, for example, the 'River City' ribbons that are to be luxury apartments overlooking the river (NPRZ, 2013a).
- 'Strategy' mapping - defines how the intentions expressed in the previous stages are to be implemented, and by whom, and at what time frame. It goes as far as naming housing associations and business partners to undertake specific projects in the neighborhood, or by defining areas (or even specific building complexes) where such will be welcomed in the future (NPRZ, 2013a).



'Characteristics' mapping (NPRZ)



'Perspective' mapping (NPRZ)



'Strategy' mapping (NPRZ)



Statutory Picture - NPRZ's (National Program for Rotterdam Zuid) vision, for the neighborhood vaguely defined several types of living experiences in that space (background map: Google Earth)

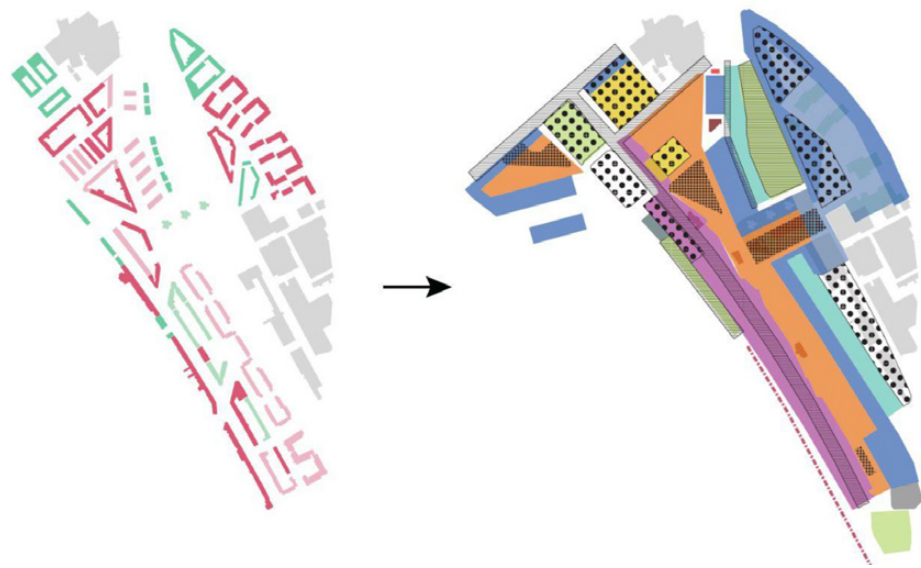
Spatial Projections in Context of Urban Renewal

Uniting these two mapping groups together paints a relatively specific approximation of the nature of Kop van Feijenoord's future. This would consist of a transformation of the waterfront areas into luxury apartments housed by mid to high newcomers that would pose a slight majority in that space, while the interior of the 'mainland' area would consist of a stock of renewed or rebuilt social housing complexes in good condition.

Most of the neighborhood's key spatial features, such as the large Nassauhavenpark, and the central plaza connecting the two halves would remain, with some localized refurbishments to be done in the long run to those. The major industrial entities of Unilever and Douglas Hunter are also to remain in place, maintaining a large-scale but low key presence in the neighborhood.

In short - the proposed vision by the municipality is one of low key changes to the public space and the urban function, combined with more substantial changes to the housing stock which will result in the long run with a completely rebuilt neighborhood consisting of a small majority of higher income populations that are to carry the neighborhood's community on its 'Sterke Schouders'.

The hidden cost here would be the reduction of 1.600 social housing flats that are currently housing about forty five percent of Kop van Feijenoord's most vulnerable population.





Projection for the Feijenoord space based on NPRZ (background: Google Earth)

Scenario Making

Having this point of reference established, it was then possible to speculate as to how the population of Feijenoord would look to intercede in this proposed vision.

Of Course this cannot be an accurate prediction, but an approximation can be made, based on the contents of the research up to this point, relying on several key assumption, that would suffice in order to compile the basis of a programme, for the purposes of this examination :

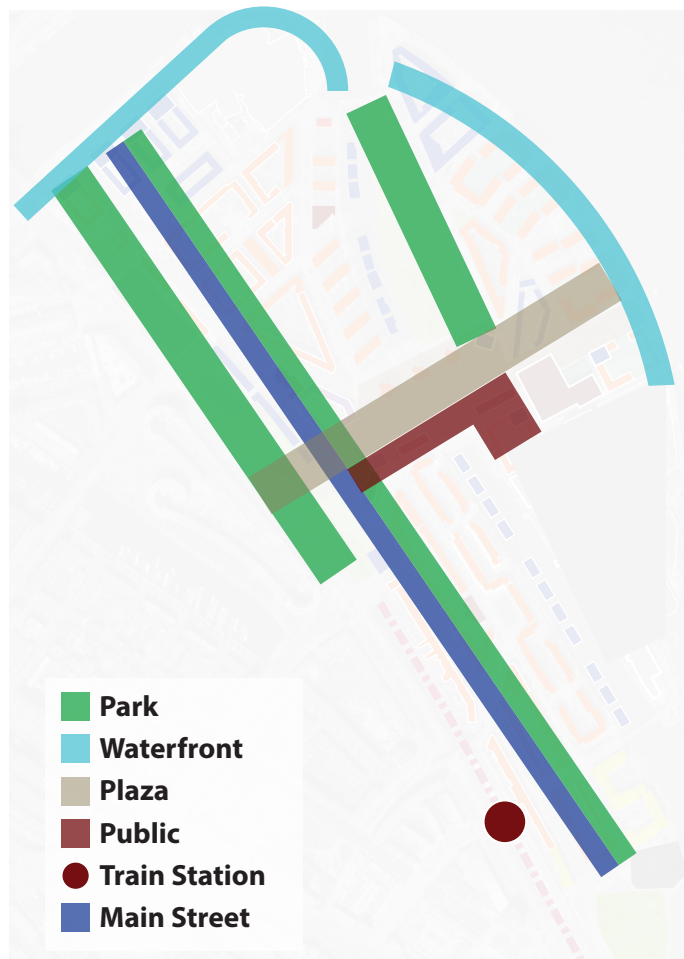
- Most of the community does not wish to be displaced, and require a similar stock of social housing units to the one existing at current (Recht op de Stad, 2021)
- It would look for a more children oriented space, with an element of investment in their future (more public buildings, better open spaces, investment in education) (AllCijfers 2022)
- The general adult population also requires support in terms of public buildings, faith structures, and infrastructure upgrades. (AllCijfers 2022, CBS 2020, 2022)

Of the key principles set by the municipality, several would likely be easily agreeable to both:

- Need for a central point to connect the neighborhood around, utilizing the land bridge plaza that connects the two halves (NPRZ, 2013a).
- Preserving the Nassauhavenpark while having a rich and developed tapestry of high quality open spaces (NPRZ, 2013a).
- Creating a more direct and involved connection to the rest of the city (NPRZ, 2013,a Woonvisie 2016)

Combining these two sets of goals resulted in three scenarios that were defined in the principle of a stress test - a 'minimal intervention' type plan, an 'extreme' version pushing the limits of the space and a 'middle ground' between the two. These would examine the extent to which the proposed municipality plan can be changed, while still serving as a mutually beneficial compromise that would work for both sides, all the while highlighting the types of urbanity these would produce, as well as the prices each would exert and from whom.

Urban Scheme - Minimal Intervention plan

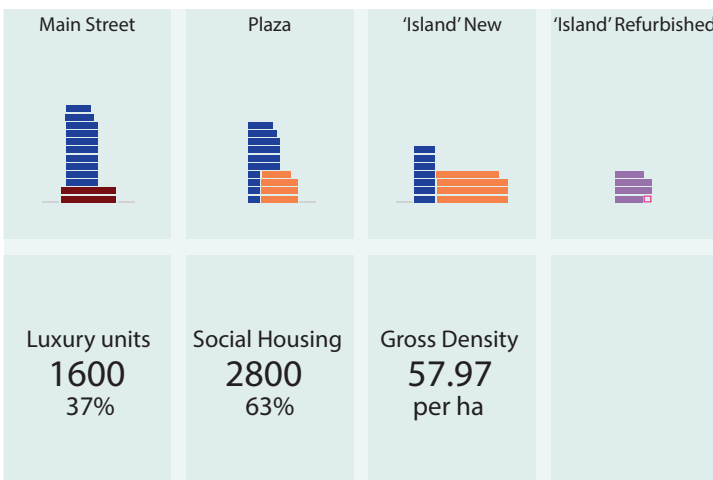


Main Street Mixed	'Island' Mid	'Waterfront' Mixed	'Core' mixed
Luxury units 900 23%	Social Housing 3000 77%	Gross Density 51.38 per ha	

Urban Scheme - Middle Ground plan



Urban Scheme - 'Extreme' plan





Minimal Intervention Plan (Background: Google Earth)

Would entail a very minimal change to the built space of the neighborhood, with only several social housing blocks being rebuilt or added, as well as a small amount of highrise buildings for luxury flats. This version's minimalistic approach offers little spatial changes, with the key one being an expansion of the central plaza and addition of some public buildings.

Social Housing Units: 3000 (77%)
 Luxury Flats: 900 (23%)
 Gross Density per Ha: 51.38

Winners:

- Business entities largely undisturbed
- Social Housing numbers completely maintained
- Neighborhood density same as current
- Closely resembles NPRZ strategy for space

Losers:

- Neighborhood quality is underwhelming, deals with strong business entities
- Luxury flat stock additions are greatly diminished
- Integration efforts well under 50/50 goals
- Requires substantial governmental funding to make it happen



Middle Ground Plan (Background: Google Earth)

Would entail a major change to the plan and replace Hunter Douglas (for a left competitor) with mixed housing complexes in the spirit of the northern part of the 'mainland' part is to remain are also mixed as well. The urban scheme and the neighborhood (due to need for re-expansive central plaza.

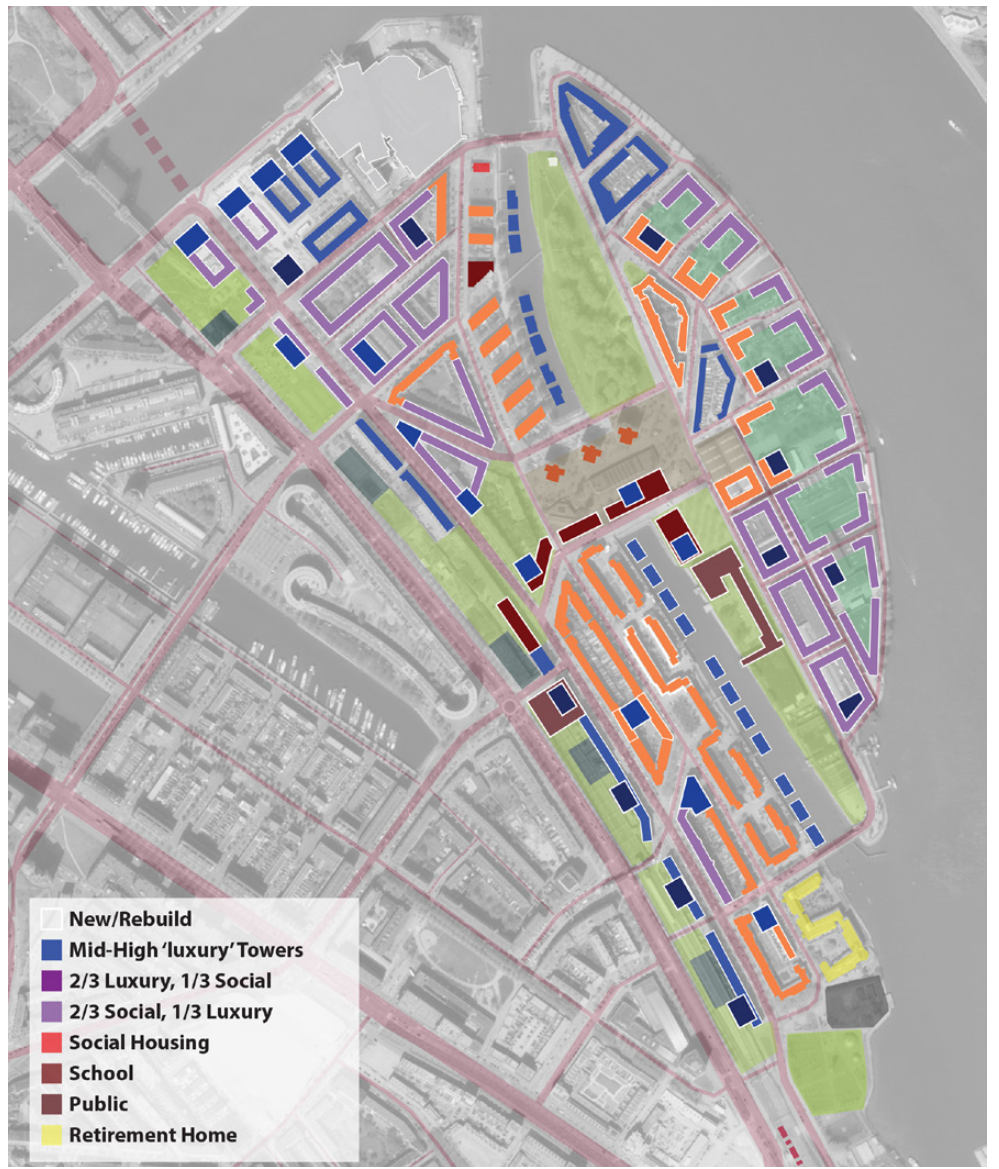
Social Housing Units: 2800 (63%)
 Luxury Flats: 1600 (37%)
 Gross Density per Ha: 57.97

Winners:

- Low income community gets to keep its
- Luxury flats stock is also maintained
- Hunter Douglas would turn a profit in

Losers:

- Municipality vision for city center, into
- Requires outside funding to enact full
- Housing association might not make a model



(Background: Google Earth)

at two areas - the 'Island' half would (re)construction) with a substantial amount of new construction in the existing northern part, while the southern part would be rebuilt into new housing complexes that are less connected between the river and the existing residential area, but offers a similarly

housing stock

order to leave

egration would be partial
process

as much of a profit with mixed housing

'Extreme' plan (Background: Google Earth)

This version offers a highly densified cityscape that is densely built with a combination of low to high rise - high density construction, that would nearly double the population of the neighborhood while creating a much more open and connected scheme. The purpose of raising densification to this point is to create a large stock of luxury flats, to be sold for profit, with much of the income from these would help subsidize major upgrades to the neighborhood such as a covering of the train tracks, developing an extensive open spaces network and a high amount of public buildings to support that larger population.

Social Housing Units: 3000 (50%)

Luxury Flats: 3000 (50%)

Gross Density per Ha: 79.05

Winners:

- Municipality aims at 50/50 integration achieved
- Social Housing numbers completely maintained
- Self-financing important infrastructural upgrades
- Extended open space scheme

Losers:

- Neighborhood density nearly double current, 33% more than other options
- Lower architectural quality due to addition of 25 new high rises
- Still a large core of social housing in the south area

Developing an 'Extreme' Iteration

The 'Extreme' version was meant to represent the most liberated and far reaching possibility that the neighborhood might transform into - an opportunity to stretch the confines of plausibility to its limit, not in order to predict what may be, but rather - to argue for what could have been, highlighting an untapped potentiality of a space to offer an added value that transcends the basic parameters of a programme, while still offering a realistic proposal for the neighborhood that could in theory made real.

The only problem with that 'extreme' scenario is that it was not that extreme. It was too tied to the specifics of the existing space, and too conscious of trying to predict a likely scenario rather than thinking of a more promising one, regardless of its probability. Thus, it was taken as a point of further focus, in an effort to strengthen the argument that changing the municipality's plan in the context of an active community engagement could offer substantial spatial benefits that go beyond the stated goals of preventing displacement while still renewing the neighborhood.

This reworked 'extremity' of planning would still maintain all the features established in the previous iteration - a density of between 80-100 units per hectare (roughly 7.500 units in this case), maintaining the existing 3.000 social housing flats, achieving an improved connection to the city by upgrading infrastructure, adding substantial amount of public buildings, while overloading the programme with a great many luxury flats and other money making entities that would help subsidize for it all.

The difference being, that this time around the design must add substantial spatial qualities that did not exist previously, making for a space that would be unique to Rotterdam, and perhaps even outline a pattern language that could expand outwards and influence the rest of Feijenoord.

The exploration into this scenario focused on the spatial qualities that a completely reorganized space may offer, focusing on four key elements to give coherence to the space, coded in color:

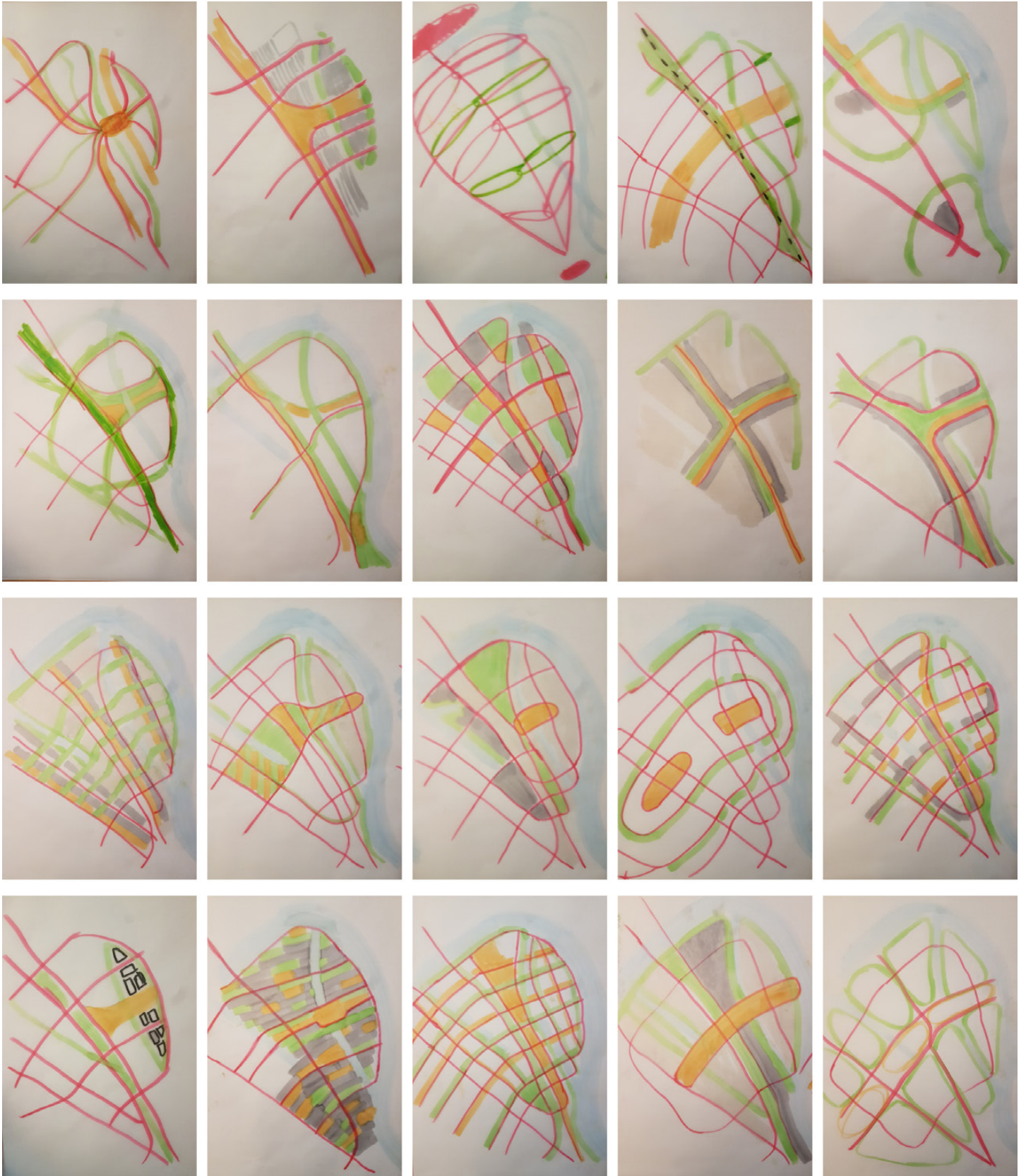
Green - open spaces that would define a leisure space and a pedestrian orientation network

Yellow - built public areas representing more intensive spaces where social interaction is at its center, with public buildings, commerce, employment and cultural activities are located

Gray - Intensive residential areas where typically the most densely built housings are to be located, usually in high-rise type construction, these would also be a spatial orientation element to help shape the neighborhood.

Red - the traffic system that would establish the overall structure, with a focus on creating connections between the 'Island', 'Mainland' and the rest of Feijenoord to its west.

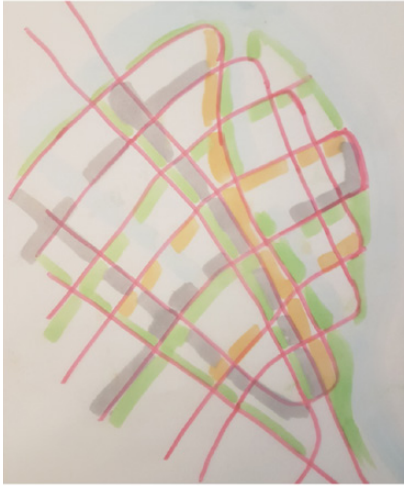
These elements were constantly rearranged in a very loose and non committal manner and in as many various forms as possible, in an effort to uncover several key typologies and design principles that repeat themselves (thus highlighting their importance) or offer a unique quality that can be expanded upon in a more detailed plan.



Various possibilities for the space of north-east Feijenoord were examined, attempting at a systemic outlook that would make sense and add value on both area and neighborhood scales.

Developing an 'Extreme' Iteration

These were distilled into six key examples, selected not necessarily for being the most promising ones, but rather for the key idea they proposed in each instance. Each one of the options was attempted to be redrawn more accurately and specifically to the actual space and its features, essentially examining it for its qualities and potentialities in that space.



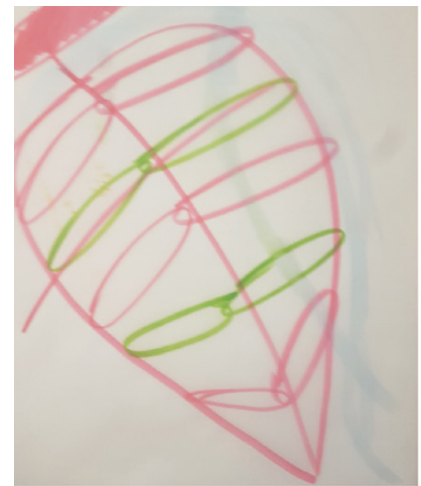
The 'Strips' version - Focuses on transforming the street system into a clear grid system, with a set of themed main streets leading to the river's coastline on the Island



The 'Tapestry' version - proposes a free-formed building block to



The 'Squid' version - focuses on creating an extremely centralized entity with the landbridge plaza, directing all urban traffics towards it



The 'Bands' version - is about creating vast sentral public masses to the city center

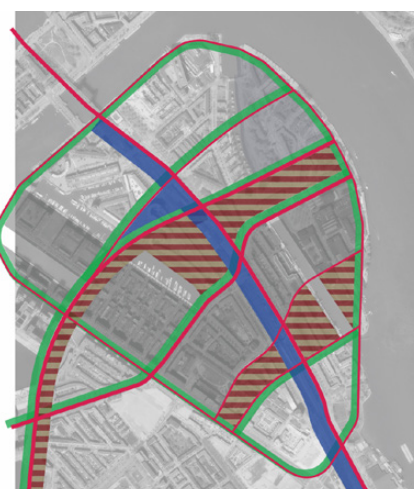
(Background: Google Earth)



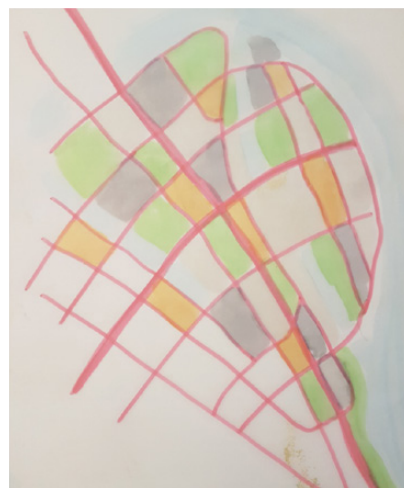
Diffusement of the urban blocks,
create a rich system



The 'Cross' Version - proposes two 'super streets' rich in all the public contents, forming a clear cardo and decumanus to orientate and connect the space



Very clear and stark east to west
streets that would connect the land



The 'Checkers' version - offers a collection of urban experiences that interchange from block to block, creating a rich and evenly distributions of functions in a highly interconnected grid.

Developing an ‘Extreme’ Iteration

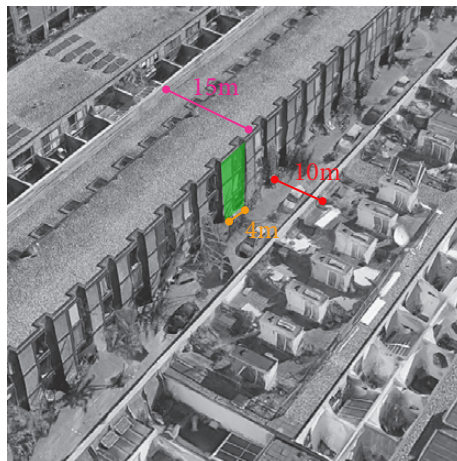
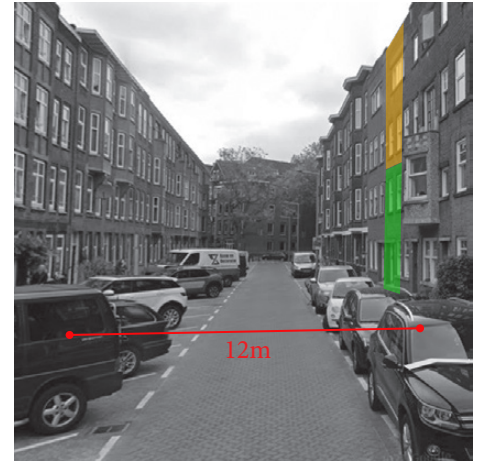
Of these, the ‘Tapestry’ iteration stood out for the rich and varied situations it created by using the typical Dutch row house as its basic building block, while maintaining an overall coherent grid like urban structure that relies on the overall regional street system and connects to and from it in a flowing way.

These two features give a strong indication that this system could be implemented fairly easily, without any overly complex construction endeavors or any major rerouting to the traffic scheme - with the exception of two minor overwater connections to strengthen connectivity with the ‘Island’ part of Kop van Feijenoord.

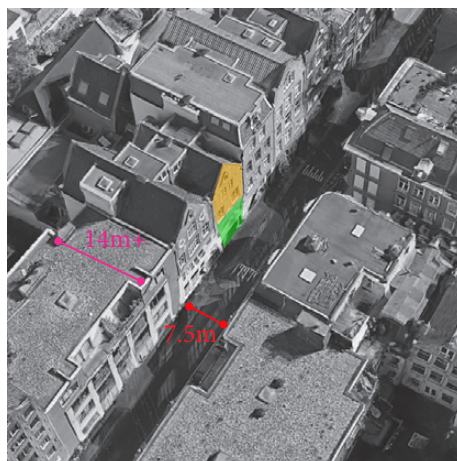
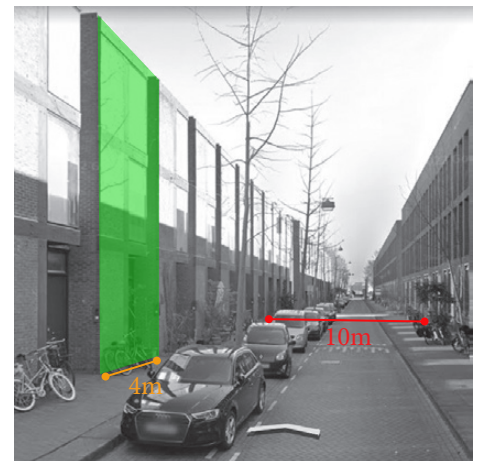
The other major benefit is that the tapestry like method makes for an open ended system that is expandable and repeatable, meaning that long term it could continue on to neighboring territories and continue this spatial language further out, if proven successful in the original neighborhood.



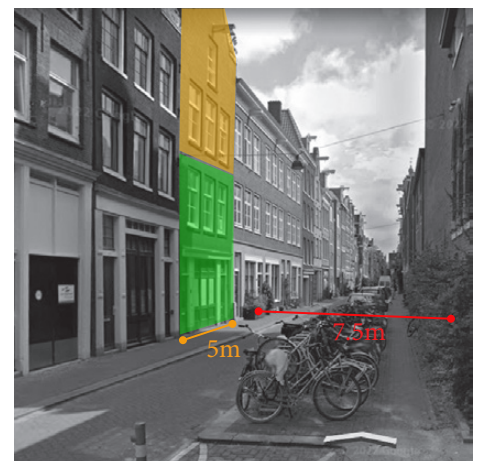
Beatrijstraat, Rotterdam



Lampenistenstraat, Amsterdam



Bloemstraat, Amsterdam



(Images: Google Earth)



The row house building method, allowing for narrow facades facing narrow side streets, with a block depth of 30-50 m is the basic and repeatable building block that composes the plan's strips

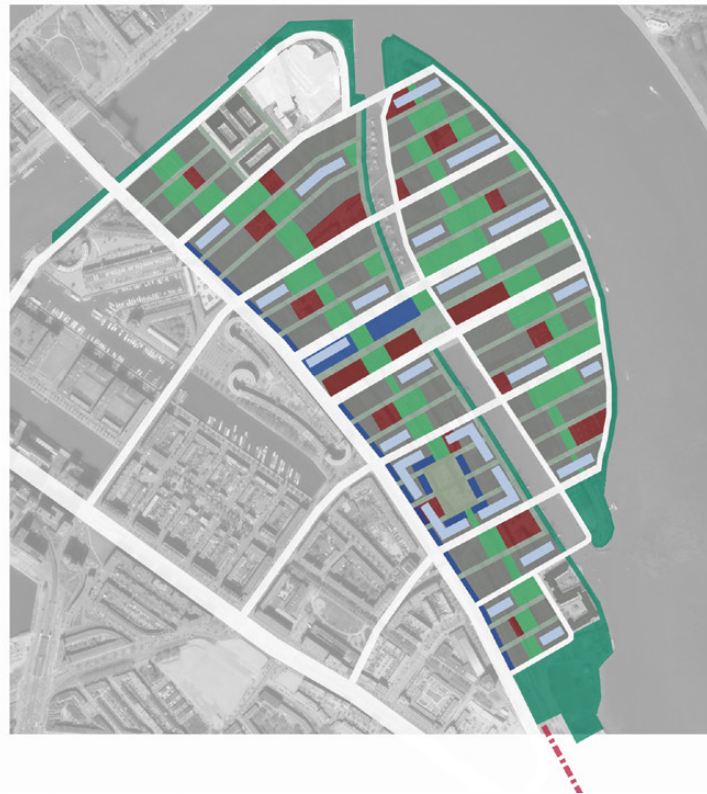
- Residential ■ Open Spaces ■ Shoreline promenade ■ Public Buildings ■ Commerce
- Plaza ■ Roads

(Background: Google Earth)

Planning in Detailed Scales

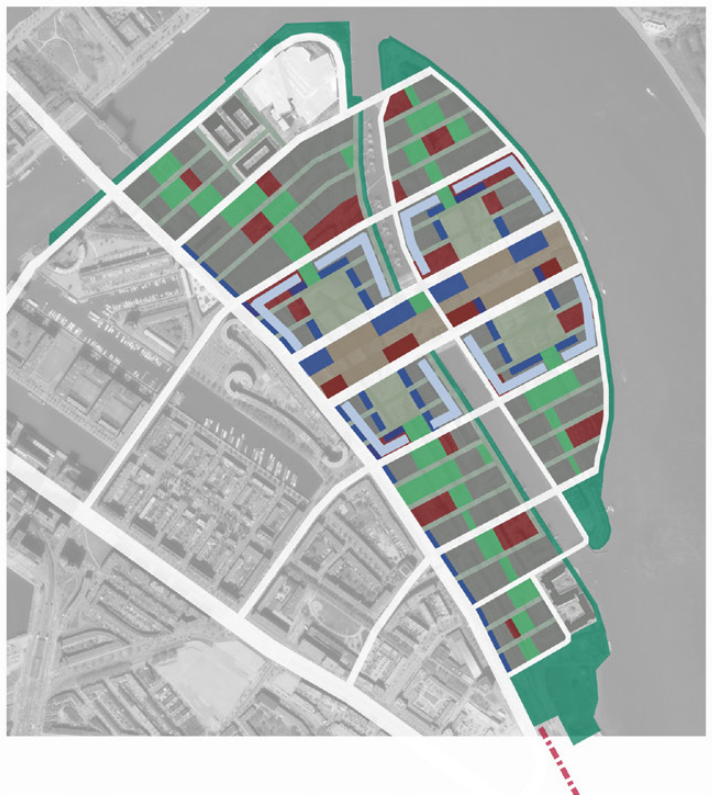
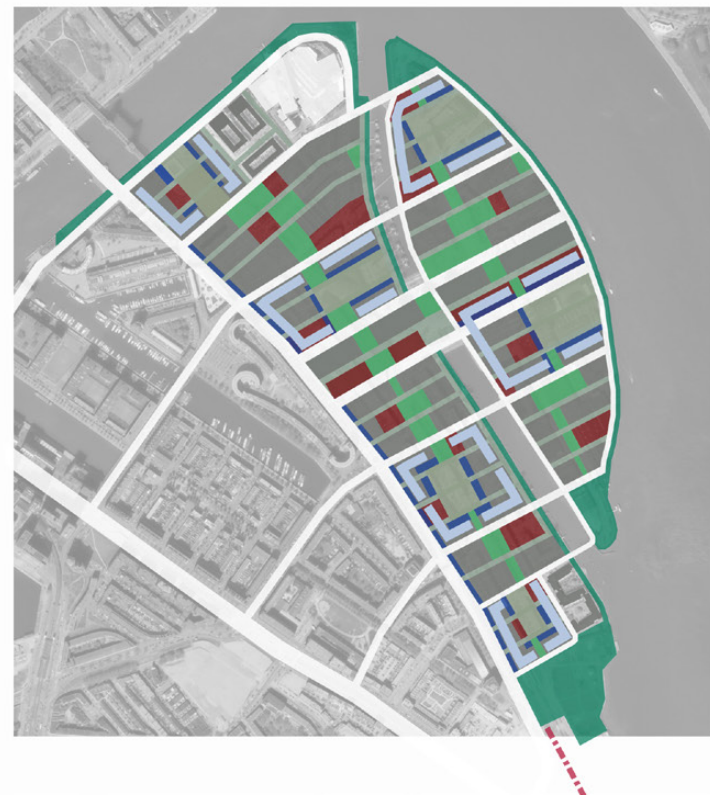
Planning on the neighborhood scale represents the final manifestation of the 'Extreme' version - a specific spatial plan with specific dimensions to all of its elements, a clearly defined built typology to its structures, a specific programme and a functional urban system - all the features present in the NPRZ plan that this proposal reacts to.

Just as in the scales leading up to this plan, this iteration looked at doing more than just adding detail to the same idea, but rather this plan looks to add more urban qualities that previously did not exist. The same type of exploration was attempted here, with three selected possibilities were examined in detail:



A diffused model that shifts the neighborhood's center towards the train station, while doubling down on the 'tapestry' nature of the design, creating a widely dispersed but ultimately uniform urban fabric

(Background: Google Earth)



A system of focal points that breaks down the center into several urban squares overlooking the river, where most public and commercial entities are concentrated, making for an array of key points interconnects by the open space system that defines the system

A 'super center' of large proportions that concentrates the neighborhood's public features into one area of high intensity, adding an element

Planning in Detailed Scales

Of the three, the multiple focal points version was selected as a final design proposal for this iteration as it offered a new quality that did not exist to the same extent in any of the other options explored - the possibility to create several high profile situations throughout the neighborhood through its array of squares that could potentially attract activities from throughout the city, while still offering a more private and low key experience in the narrow streets that connects these.

Such a plan would propose to transform the currently quiet and marginal neighborhood into a central and intensive part of the city, utilizing its key location in the city to attract citizens from throughout the city by offering an influx of public entities, commercial and employment areas that would serve both the local population and newcomers.

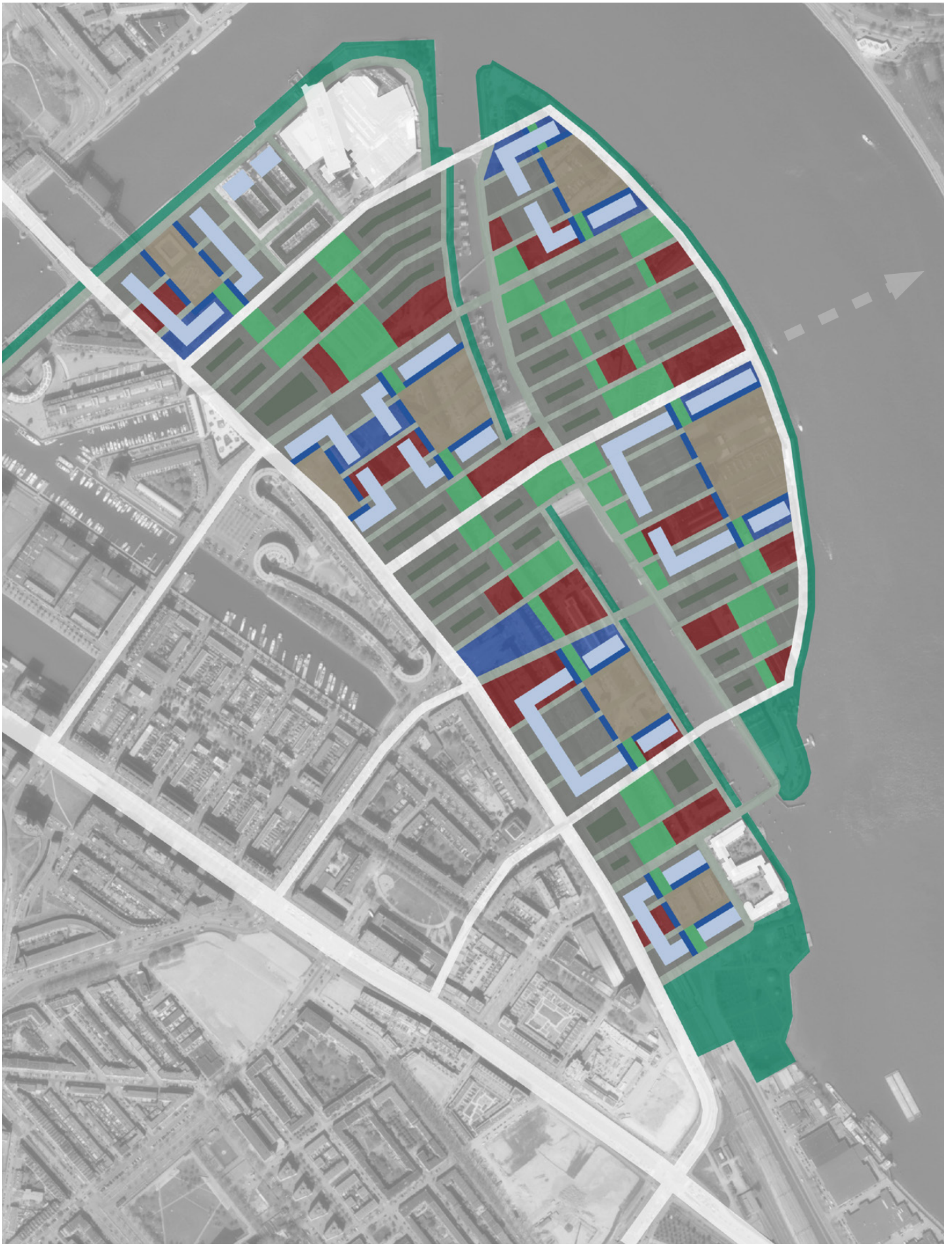
The high density manifests in a great increase to both types of housing when compared to the current plan - a twenty percent increase to the social housing stock, and a hundred percent increase to the luxury flat stock - these are to be concentrated in highrise building around the square, but also dispersed throughout the lower row houses that form the basis of the neighborhood, thwarting the possibility of block level segregation.

However, the important feature here is that both key desires by both sides is met - the municipality gets to achieve its aim of an integrated space with an even split of types of housings, that offers thousands of stronger families a place in the city to move into, while the local vulnerable population gets to remain in place, and even has space to grow into long term.

Ofcourse, no place and no plan is perfect. A change of such magnitude is extreme, as the iteration's namesake suggests, and this manifest in several challenges or downsides:

- Construction on such a scale is expensive. The great influx of luxury flats would help subsidize some of it, however, outside investment by the municipality would be required.
- This scale of construction is also difficult. Of course it would not be built all at once, but it means a prolonged state of reconstruction that is not easy to live with.
- This would be a major change in character that would not be agreeable with everyone, and likely some members of the population would choose to leave as a result.
- Densification on such a scale puts stresses on the larger scale urban infrastructural systems, such as transportation and utilities. The scale dealt with here is not that substantial, however, if this would be done on larger scales, would require even further municipality investments in these.

The suggestion here is a dramatic and total departure from the existing neighborhood, and thus it is not a simple thing. However, it highlights the fact that there are many opportunities to add significant value under these circumstances while grasping for a more complex aspiration than that in the NPRZ (albeit, with a price) - be it in a plan as far reaching as this, or in more moderate versions as well.



3 Storie high density low rise
 4 - 10 Storie high density luxury

Public
 Employment
 Commerce

Park
 Shoreline
 Plaza

Social **Luxury**
 3600(50%) 3600(50%)

(Background: Google Earth)

Features of the Plan

Each aspect the plan is also created with intention of creating a community benefit, and be adjusted to both the population already there, as well as the prospective newcomers that are set join it in the future:



(Background: Google Earth)

Road system

The road system would stem off of the Rosestraat main street, where the Den Haag-Dordrecht heavy rail line goes through. From it a systemic array of pedestrian streets would permeate the neighborhood, directing movement towards the 'island' half and the river's shore.

The system would have three key hierarchies:

- Traffic streets - 15 meter wide streets, allowing for car traffic, directing movement towards underground parking lots located underneath the main squares
- Pedestrian main streets - 15 meter wide pedestrian streets with bike lanes directing non- motorized traffic
- Capillary side streets - 7.5 meter wide paths that allow localized access to housings and local functions, allowing only one way traffic for utility vehicles

Key benefits to population:

- Covering train tracks would create an organic and pedestrian friendly connection to the rest of the Feijenoord area, something that is currently impossible
- Pedestrian centric layout emphasizes bicycle use, creating an inviting and democratic space to all types of inhabitants there
- Removal of car traffic is also much safer for children.



7.5 Meter wide pedestrian path - C.J.K Van Aalstraat, Amsterdam (image:Google Maps)

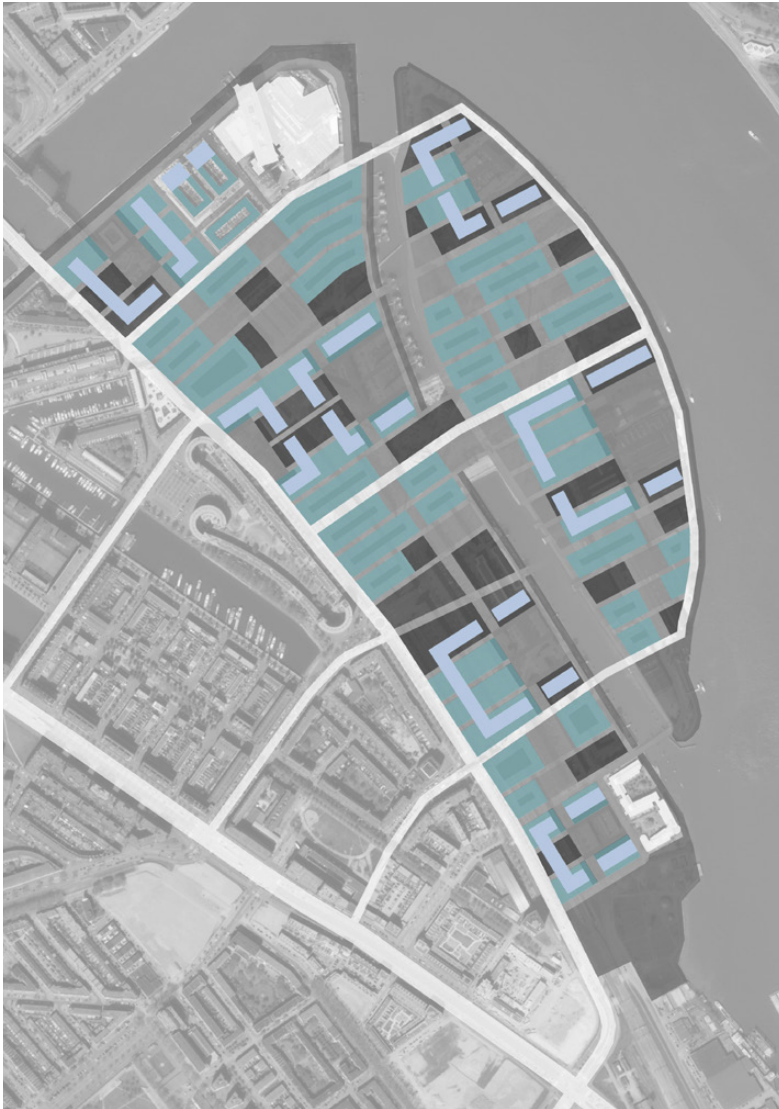


12.5 Meter wide pedestrian, bicycle path - Beatrijsstraat, Rotterdam (image:Google Maps)



15 Meter wide motor traffic path - s'Grave Zandelaan, Den Haag (image:Google Maps)

Features of the Plan



(Background: Google Earth)

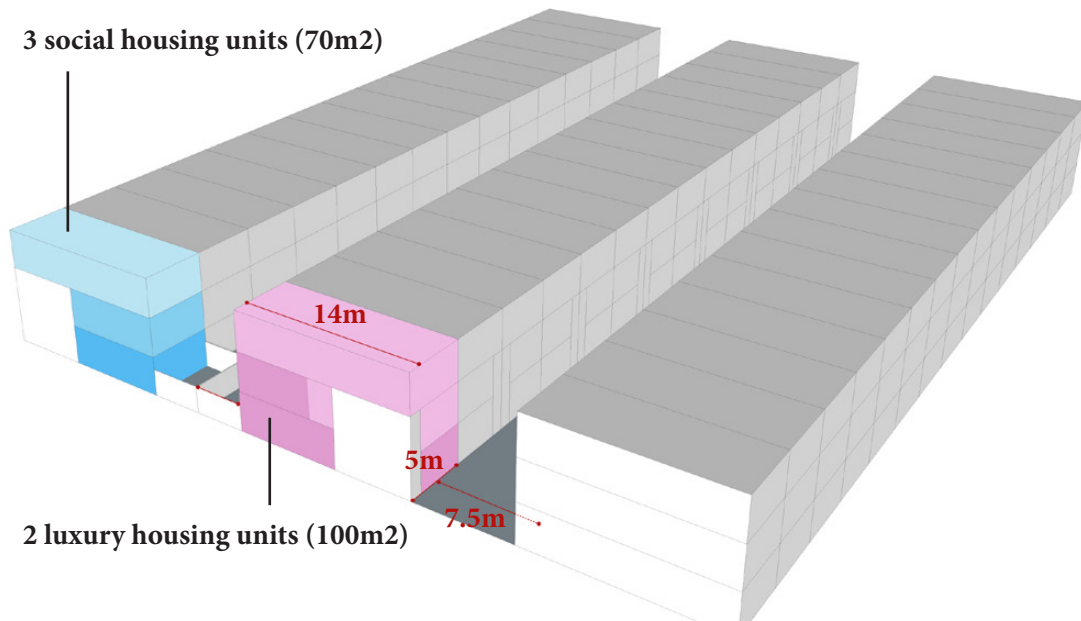
Residential space

The residential building block is the base off of which the plan was designed. It consists of a basic unit that is five meters wide and nineteen meters deep, allowing for either a single story social housing unit of 75 square meters (two bedroom apartment) with a small backyard or balcony, or a one and a half story luxury unit that is roughly 110 meters (four bedrooms). This standard measurement allows for play with the residential blocks - allowing to adjust the overall numbers of each in order to achieve a desired balanced number of units of either type. It also creates a more egalitarian space, where both types of housing units can seamlessly be placed next to each other, thus avoiding the possibility that certain areas would cater more heavily to specific populations (block level segregation), as was the result of the proposed in the NPRZ plan, given the current situation in the neighborhood.

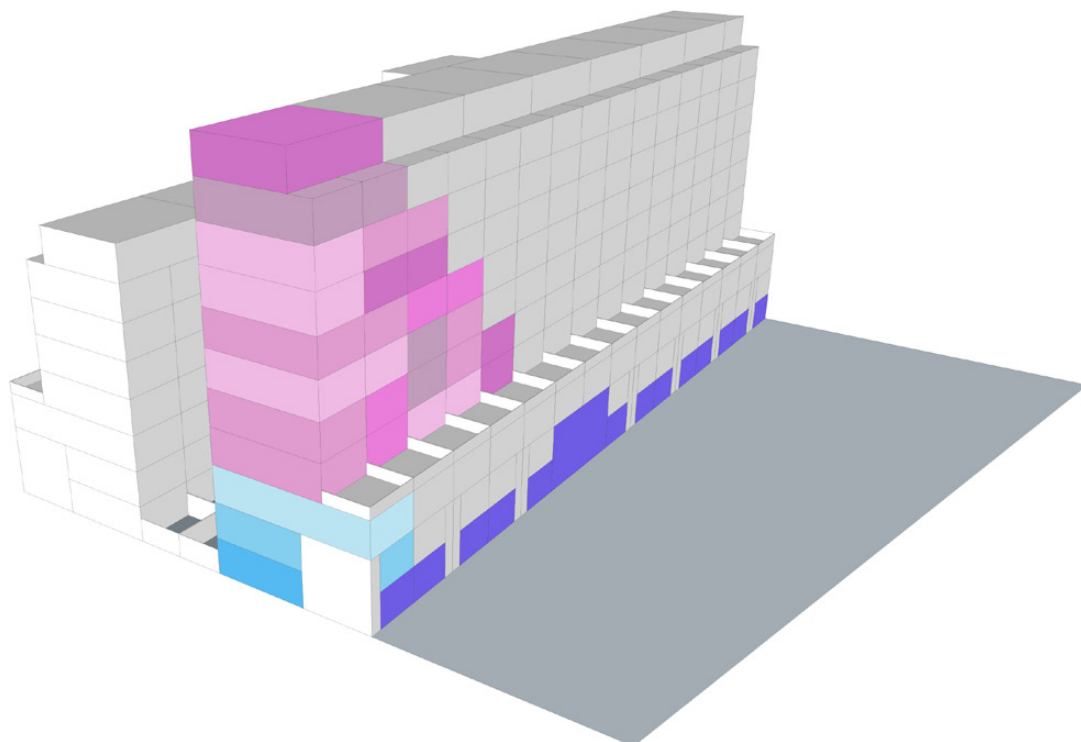
In order to achieve the desired overall density, high rise construction was also required. These would force a more complex integration of highrise construction above the standard built mass defining the project. Relying on similar examples in the built space, such as 25 Binnenwegplein in central Rotterdam, this building typology is quite feasible, but would be better dedicated for luxury apartments due to the added costs such a complex typology would incur in construction and upkeep.

Placing these in the square makes a lot of sense for several reasons:

- It creates a built mass hierarchy directing movements toward the squares
- They allow for high concentration of luxury flats facing the water, raising their value
- Their engineering complexities fit naturally to the already complex situation there, as these squares also host underground parking areas and varied public and employment programs. Lumping all these into the same profit-oriented complex to be designed and constructed in one go, by one entity, makes perfect sense.



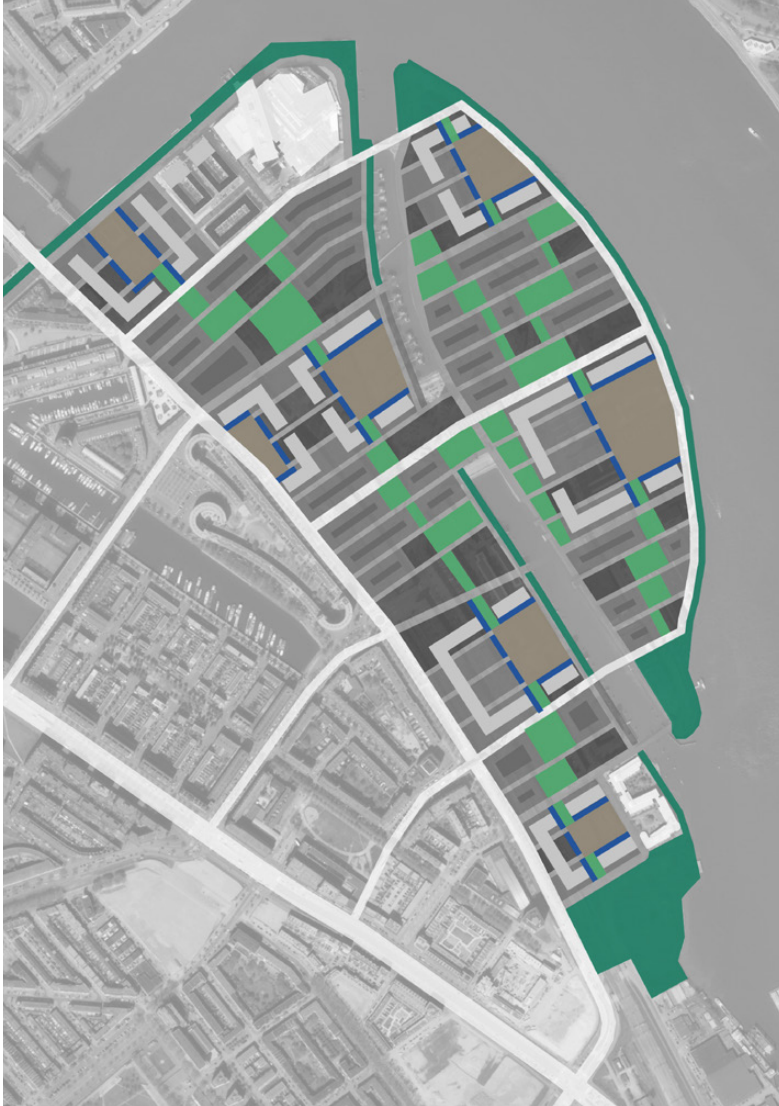
Basic residential uniti composing the building blocks for the space



Mixed use high density residentials built around the urban squares

- Luxury housing unit
- Social housing unit
- Commerce

Features of the Plan



(Background: Google Earth)

Open and public spaces

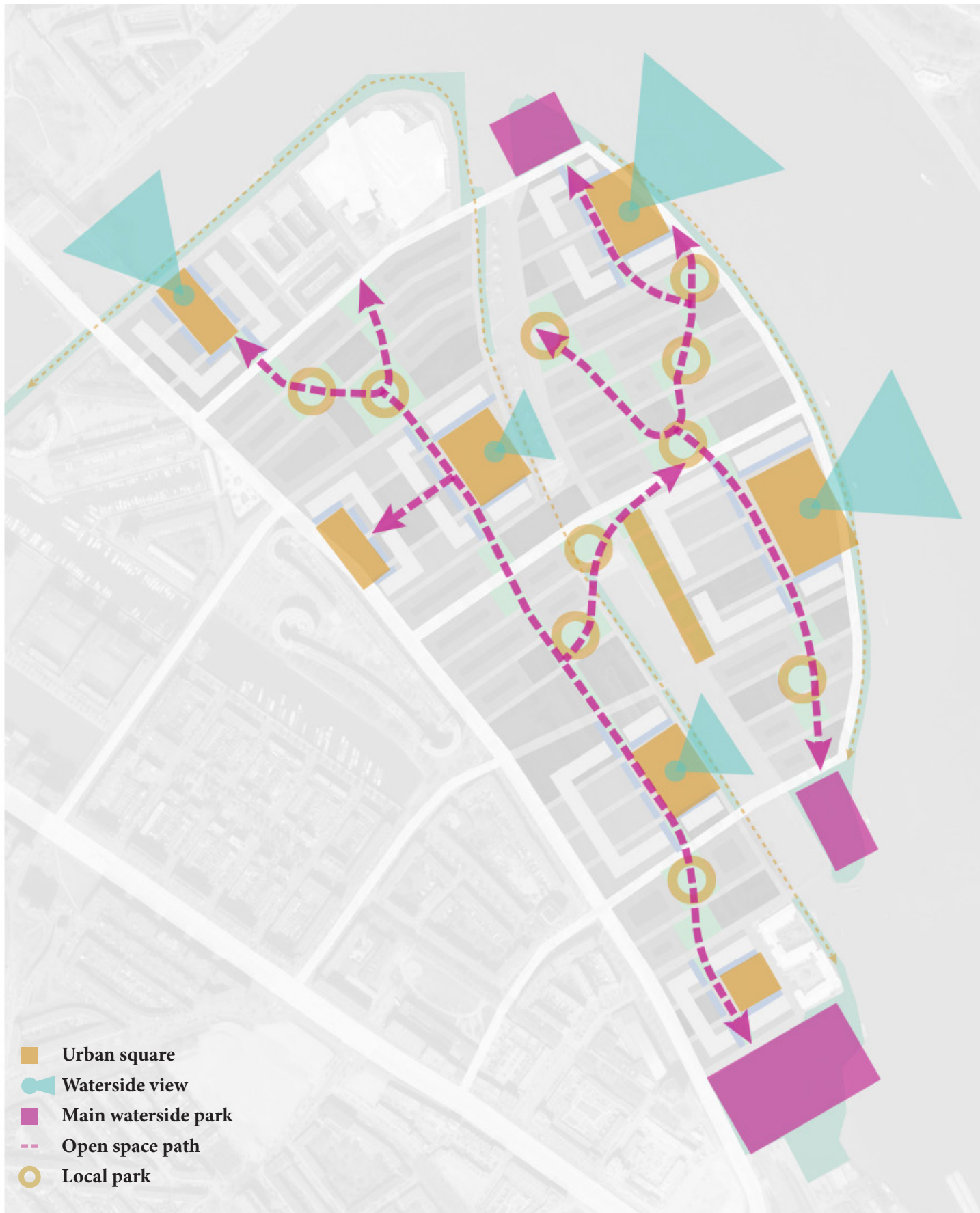
Contrasting the strict gridlike design of the road system, the open spaces system is a freeform play of spaces, creating connections within the neighborhood's space, naimly from square to square, in a more informal and strictly pedestrian centric manner, and offering several experiences and purposes within it.

The system is composed of two key type of spaces:

- local parks and open spaces allow for lateral north to south traversing of the built mass creating connections between the various focal points
- Urban squares are the key points of civic engagement, these are the locations of commerce, employment, public living and leisure, they create several small to medium scale lingering areas overlooking the river.

Key benefits to the population:

- Such squares would feature commerce, cultural and employment areas, adding a city- scale attraction that could open up the neighborhood into greater participation in the city at large
- the vast array of park areas, and their systemic nature, ensures an even dispersal of open spaces. That, coupled with the pedestrian centric streets that intersect them makes for a quiet and safe environment, especially for children



Features of the Plan

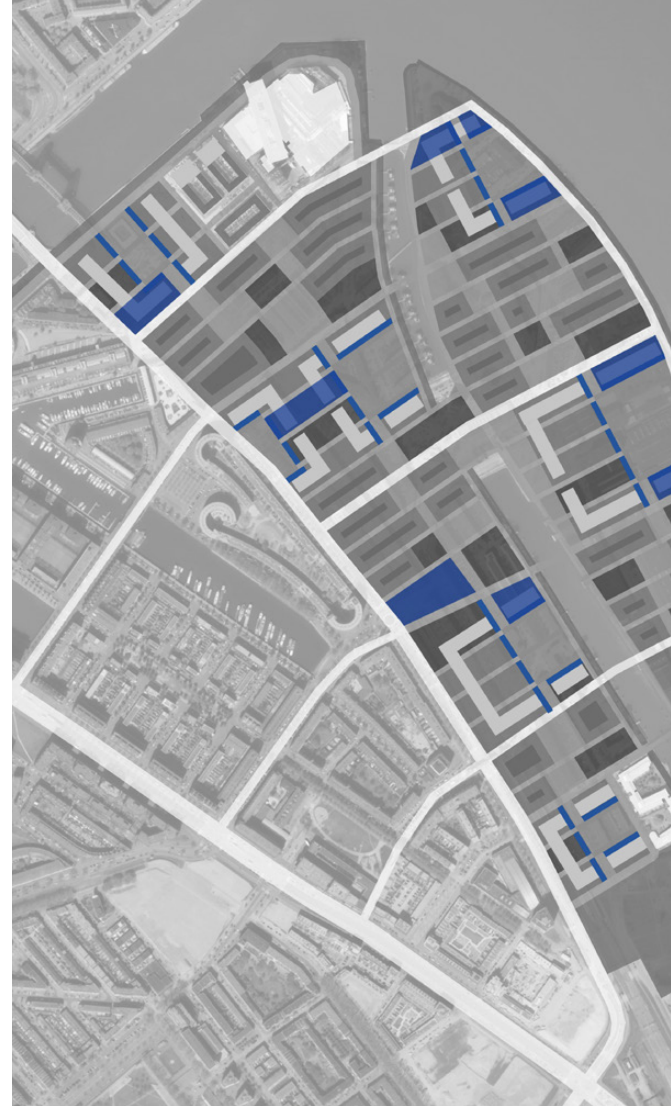


Public Buildings

The array of public buildings of various types - kindergartens, schools, community centers and more, are evenly dispersed throughout the plan, however, they are always positioned with an open face towards either a square or a park area, ensuring its prominence within the space.

In this case the benefit to the community is singular and simple - a very generous allocation of public structures - allowing for a built mass ranging between 100.000 to 160.000 square meters of built square meters, roughly 10 meters per capita, allowing for introduction of additional investments in the population, in the form of entities such as collages, training centers, sports structures and culture buildings that can all contribute in the long run in improving the neighborhood and benefit its population.

(Background: Google Earth)



Commerce and Employment

The assigned spaces for these - 125.000 square meters for commerce or office space are a relatively modest amount that would create some change to the neighborhood's character without completely transforming the nature of the area. However, such a mass could give employment to several thousands of people, creating a daily commute into the neighborhood, strengthening its participation in the urban economy in the process, introducing new populations in the daily working of the neighborhood.

Their location around the main squares and their dispersed nature ensures that these employees would interact with the neighborhood and add a new quality to it.



Existing entities

There are four existing entities in the space of the neighborhood that were deemed as mainstays in the plan. This is not due to any quality they possess, but rather for various other reasons making them entrenched in their place for the foreseeable future.

Such pre-existing entities are the realities in most any plan, and this plan took notice to incorporate them into the plan as best as possible.

- **Unilever complex** - A key prominent building, will open up its driveway and now will participate the shoreline prominand.
- **Nassaukade housing complex** - in final stages of construction, will be connected to the rest of the plan with pedestrian paths
- **De Steenplaat nursery home** - would benefit from an urban square, allowing easy access to its elderly residents
- **Rotterdam Zuid train station** - would be rebuilt into an underground station with commerce entities within it, opening up into an urban square and participates in the space.

Conclusions of design process

Transferring the research from the written word and into the realm of spatial analysis and design added an important layer of understanding of the project overall, revealing physical manifestations of the phenomenon of urban renewal that are happening in practice and making palpable the various considerations that must be impacting planning decisions in the Feijenoord space.

Attempting to predict Kop van Feijenoord's future, and speculating of other possibilities in reaction to that are revealing in that there are many possibilities to the future of that space that would be able to achieve the municipality's vision without causing a large scale phenomenon of displacement. However, these come at a cost - either achieving a weaker effect of integration, or requiring the removal of large business entities (namely - the Hunter Douglas compound) that would likely be a complex and perhaps also expensive affair to see through.

The more far reaching design proposal is ofcourse a somewhat less realistic proposition, and while such an idea would not be out and out impossible to carry out, it would be very difficult to see to fruition, at least for the short term. However the possibilities it raises for the space are meaningful in the added value they offer, suggesting that past the strict confines of a programme, an urban renewal process can also insert new qualities that are of value in their own right.

In answering the third sub question, about whether or not a USE-IT! like approach to the situation can create a different space then the one currently planned, then the answer is quite plausible in the affirmative - a design process that would be based in addressing the needs and wants of the local population, and include them in the planning process could offer workable designs that are substantially different then the current plans set out by the municipality.

Reflections

The thesis touched upon several key elements that revolve around the issue of the vulnerable urban populations living in the center of major cities, revealing much about the pressures applied to them externally due to their inability to contribute (or at least promise) enough to the future of the city for them to be included in its vision for the future.

This ended up being an interesting problem to explore due to its combination of simplicity and complexity. It is a story as basic as that of the strong picking on the weak, but also one where the mechanics underlying it are complexly interlocked, combining socio-economic disparity, changes to urban economics and the intricacies of urban renewal and integration dynamics, with the core of this socio-spatial problem also holding the key to a possible solution.

The reflections look to examine the various stages of the project in a way that reflects as to its structure, examining its theoretical base, the application of USE-IT! as a possible approach for a solution, and the insights that the design product gained into the implications of that solution.

General relevance and in context of Rotterdam

As stipulated earlier when addressing the ethical relevance of the project, the question of the place of low income populations in city centers would be relevant in many and diverse other situations in the world - cities and their economies are increasingly globalizing and their economies rely on more educated populations than ever before - and so, they are becoming less and less accommodating to the urban poor who are unable to contribute to it as they used to. Rotterdam offers its own manifestation of this phenomenon that is influenced by the general outlook expressed in the Netherlands' national policies, but also by its own specific situation and circumstances that are neither simple nor easy.

The heavy reliance on integration as a panacea for Rotterdam's socio-spatial and economical woes, although promising in concept, can be shocking in implementation if executed similarly to the Tweebos example, or several others existing in Rotterdam, which on the overall demonstrates just how deceptively easy can a seemingly ingenious idea be perverted by the complexities of socio-economic interests of the city. That the policy documents and media communications put forward by the municipality speak so openly about its ambitions to replace much of its population hints heavily at just how convinced they are of the merit and justness of their actions, casting a dishearteningly bleak light on the pitfalls and dangers hidden within outwardly socially minded policies.

The strength of these convictions, combined with the specifics of the spatial vision visually described in policy mappings, paint a worrisome picture as to the prospects of the current inhabitants of Feijenoord to remain in place, unless something unexpected is to happen. In such circumstances, a population has every right to push back and demand that their presence and place in the city be respected, and that the decision makers charged with their well being truly honor that social contract, and find a way to include them in their vision for the future of the city. They should also, in my opinion, understand that change is inevitable to us all, and accept that this does not mean a one sided support of them, or even a maintaining of a status quo, but rather a change made in compromise, with concessions and sacrifices are to be made on all sides.

Reflections

Theory and implementation of USE-IT!

The underlying reasons for the exclusion of the vulnerable populations of Feijenoord was framed within theories of socio-economic lacks of capital. Researching into this definition of the vulnerabilities of these low income populations, was eye opening as it informed also much upon the situation I experienced as a planner in Israel which led me to research this subject - as described at length in the motivation chapter. That these definitions of lacks in capital correspond so accurately to both the situation in Israel and to the one happening in Rotterdam, despite the vast difference to the context around them, gives me strong conviction as to their merit, and I believe will be of a major benefit to me, if ever I were to operate in such situations again in the future.

USE-IT! built its foundation on this theoretical basis, and it guided their work in Greater Icknield throughout the duration of that project. Although it did not deal with spatial subject matters in the same way as this thesis did, its focus on different problems stemming from the same source (i.e - lack of capital) proved that it was ultimately quite relevant, altold. Regardless of whether or not such a program would be executable in the context researched in the thesis, the accuracy and relevance with which the principles of a program focused on socio-economics was transferable to the outlining of a socio-spatial one was very revealing as to the importance that a theoretical foundation has to its subsequent actions, indicating that solutions from parallel fields can be crossed over and attempted in somewhat different situations, so long that they find a common denominator in its origin. Perhaps planners would benefit from keeping a broad perspective and look for ideas from a wide variety of sources, so that such opportunities will not be missed.

The focus on a method from the social sciences specifically, and attempting to transfer it into the theme of urban policies addresses a meaningful connection between society and spatial design that is important for planners to understand and remain aware of, and directly relates to the main themes explored within the studio of Planning Complex Cities, namely - governmental arrangements, planning schemes and civic engagement, and examining how these interact and impact one another, and that these could also be agents of change in the spatial environment. Researching these themes in the context of this project stressed that urban planning systems are not just technical or bureaucratic but also very much shaped by personal beliefs, planning philosophies and social and interpersonal sensibilities. All of which, to my impression, greatly impacted the policies reshaping Rotterdam.

Methodology of design exercise

Connecting the social elements dominating the thesis into the realm of spatial planning was a challenge throughout, but taking a designed based approach in examining possible outcomes of a USE-IT! like approach proved to be of a benefit both to understanding in vary tangible terms the manifestations of the researched theory in actuality, while examining its validity, but also in gaining insight into the vast range of possibilities that exist in that situation as well.

Ironically, the key limitation of design is that it is so open ended - there are an infinite amount of possible eventualities that could be proposed, and it was not always clear how exactly such an effort can give a focused insight that transcends the simple statement that things can be done better. Thus, it was important to direct the design efforts into a specific goal, answering the third research question of spatial implications by having the design 'stress test' the possibilities and limitations of the spatial situation of Feijenoord. Liberated from aspirations to 'solve' the situation, and focusing instead on the act of weighting in the costs and benefits of various scenarios, highlighted that the reality of planning is, in many cases, not an issue of finding an 'ideal solution' - but rather in considering eventualities that achieve certain things at the expense of others.

The act of taking up a plan and redesigning it also proved very beneficial in understanding in specific terms how does urban renewal looks like, and the thought processes that likely has led to specific decisions in the Feijenoord space, connecting the written text and abstract mappings found in various policy documents or described in theoretical

writings into the physical visage of streets and buildings in the neighborhood of Kop van Feijenoord.

I quite often caught myself making 'pro-gentrification' decisions for various reasons and objectives, gaining a deeper understanding of both sides of the issue, which I doubt basic mappings would be able to provide on its own, as they would not require the same active process of decision making that the design effort did.

The 'Extreme' version of Feijenoord's redesign offered an exciting possibility into its future, proposing a completely different form of urbanity from anything else in the city, and highlighted the potential of planning to be a socio-spatial difference maker in its own right, that to me personally is reminiscent of design attitudes prevalent in the first half of the 20th century. That is not to say that the design itself was particularly good or posed the ideal option for that space, but rather that the open minded and brave spatial exploration I was encouraged to undertake is also an important option to consider, despite its 'high risk - high reward' nature.

Reflections

Limitations and complications

In addition to the challenges expressed so far, naturally the thesis has its fair share of limitations, and encountered some complications throughout its making, making for a humbling experience as to the scope of a thesis and the importance of clearly defining a project aim and maintaining a focused examination of it. A particular challenge on my own part.

Why USE-IT! and not some other program? It could well have been another approach, or a combination of elements from a variety of approaches. However, USE-IT! proved to be very relatable to the issue in Feijenoord in both the core problem it addressed (lack in capital), the various elements it offered to supplement them, and the methodology it offered. While initially researching it, it was becoming increasingly clear that there was enough substance for USE-IT! to be taken whole and adapted to the situation as it is. Thus an in-depth exploration into this one single method was deemed just as beneficial as a more superficial exploration of several. However, given more time, adding more approaches into the research would likely have added more qualities to the method proposed for Feijenoord and enriched the final product.

Reliance on this singular method also posed challenges on more pragmatic terms. Reaching researchers from the program was a difficult and ultimately unsuccessful affair due to external circumstances, and perhaps in a wider array of methodologies, this would be less of a missed opportunity. Luckily, there was a very in depth and extensive written account of the program easily available, and some of the social programs it produced have an online presence - allowing for enough information that constructing a Feijenoord USE-IT! was a fairly straightforward affair after all.

The question leading the research focused on how might a population assert its place in such circumstances, however, it is important to remember that this is only part of a larger question relating to what kind of future can that lead to for this population within the city. The third sub-question addressed this very issue, but given the complexity of scope of such a problem it could only provide indications and possibilities, rather than conclusive answers.

However, It is also important to bear in mind that the goal of this project was not as ambitious as solving urban poverty overall, but rather its focus is in finding ways to ward off an immediate threat, first and foremost. Having said that, it would be very interesting to further develop this third question of consequences, given the opportunity.

The proposed USE-IT! like method, is itself is in many ways an outline or an overall program, which could, in a more advanced setting, be greatly expanded upon in describing its specific workings - as in contents it would promote, the approaches it could take in engagement of planning processes and in organizing and communicating with the local population and participants.

Finally, despite the city quarter/ neighborhood scale that is the focus of the research, this is an idea that could be investigated in a great many other similar situations in the Netherlands and also many other countries, as it is likely to produce different outcomes in different settings, making it meaningful in examining the roles that lack of capital can play both as a source of the problem and as a solution, in many other contexts and circumstances.

Conclusions

The research base managed to lay an adequate foundation in explaining how a general phenomenon of lack of socio-economic capital manifests specifically in a certain situation in Rotterdam, hinting that this basis may be relevant in many other contexts as well. While the initial assumption on my part was that these would be the result of socio-economic disparity between planners and community creating a distance between the two sides, the research revealed that it is also a case where interest and vision standing in contradiction that are playing a major role in this situation.

If the core research question essentially asks whether or not a method inspired by USE-IT! could be a tool for the population of Feijenoord to assert its place in the city, I would judge the answer discovered in this project as very plausible. Much of the achievements, as well as the challenges faced in the USE-IT! program, which was successfully implemented in Birmingham in practice, would directly apply to the Feijenoord situation, meaning that it is quite possible to replicate it in this context from an operational standpoint with USE-IT! as inspiration, and even as a general blueprint.

However, there are also some major potential threats that do not exist in the more neutral and benign circumstances of USE-IT!, which cast doubt in making the answer more conclusive. Questions as to the strong opposition such a program is likely to attract and the demanding nature of prolonged spatial planning processes (requiring a long term project) cannot rely on the experiences of USE-IT! in any way. How these challenges would be addressed would be an important determinant in its success if ever such a method would be attempted in actuality.

One of the main points of debate while in the making of this thesis revolved around whether or not the municipality really needs to be forced into cooperation with the population of Feijenoord, or would perhaps

such a program could be more persuasive in its approach. The deterministic language in policy papers, the vision they propose and the examples of parallel processes in Rotterdam gives off the impression that is unlikely at current, but also it is important to be aware that attitudes can change, and it would be beneficial for such a method to push also towards such cooperation as its ultimate goal in concurrence to more stern tactics.

The design outcomes strongly indicate that such a middle ground is possible, and even promising in what it may offer. The 'Extreme' scenario indicated that possibility, by greatly heightening the urban densities of Kop van Feijenoord in order to achieve the integration goals of the municipality without displacing any of the current inhabitants. This seems like a feasible proposition, and can probably be done on such a scale. However it requires a deeper study regarding whether or not this would be replicable on larger urban scales, and at what costs. Densification is always a very complex proposition, essentially impacting all of the urban systems it relates to, and requires a multidisciplinary examination that is by far beyond the scope of a thesis project.

In conclusion, the project demonstrates that a problem in the spatial planning practices in Rotterdam exists, casting an unflattering light upon the motivations behind the seemingly progressive approaches it takes in regards to the neighborhoods of Feijenoord. However, it also presents a plausible approach for the community to intercede and achieve inclusion in an altered vision for the city, that would perhaps add new and exciting possibilities in the process.

In simple terms - things do not have to be the way they are. The alternative Rotterdam that is inclusive to all of its population would pay prices for their concessions, and would take a harder route than the one it is on right now, but would also gain a meaningful moral, social and spatial benefits in return.

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