

An aerial photograph of a city grid, possibly Delft, with a yellow text overlay. The text is arranged in three main sections: 'DE-GROWTH' at the top, 'AND' in the middle, and 'THE CITY' at the bottom. A subtitle 'What is left is more than enough' is placed between 'DE-GROWTH' and 'AND'. Another subtitle 'Design as Politics 2016/2017-Graduation thesis-P2 report' is placed between 'AND' and 'THE CITY'.

**DE-GROWTH**

What is left is more than enough

**AND**

Design as Politics 2016/2017-Graduation thesis-P2 report

**THE CITY**

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12|01|2017 TU Delft

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## COLOPHON

**Thesis** De-growth and the city  
What is left is more than enough  
12|01|2017

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## SUMMARY

**RELEVANCE** As planners we have the responsibility to make cities more resilient and adaptable to changing demands (ie. migration, short-term tenancy, working and living patterns, aging population, affordability, pollution etc.). At the same time we have to make cities less demanding for the Earth's limited ecological systems. Current emphasis on the economical Growth as central concept of development should be challenged. The project starts from the negative consequences of growth based economy on the city. **The objective is to open up conceptual space for imagining and enacting diverse alternative futures that share the aims of downscaling affluent economies and their material flows in a just and equitable manner.**

**PURPOSE** The project is illustrating the benefits of Degrowth\* principles in a given location.

Research question:

***What are the spatial implications of applying the De-growth principles in urban planing of the city of Rotterdam?***

Sub-questions:

*q1 How the imperative of growth shapes the city of Rotterdam?*

*q2 What are the spatial implications of Degrowth theory?*

*q3 How does new non-growth oriented economy influence space in example of everyday practices of collaborative housing/working?*

The conducted research leads to proposal that works as a survival guide for the De-growth future in post-capitalist society addressing two groups of potential users. (1) Urban planners should find a new visual language and guidelines for getting familiar with the concept of De-growth and (2) small scale practitioners of collaborative and convivial refrain should be able to use it to empower their own ideas and understand importance of networking and thinking in bigger scales.

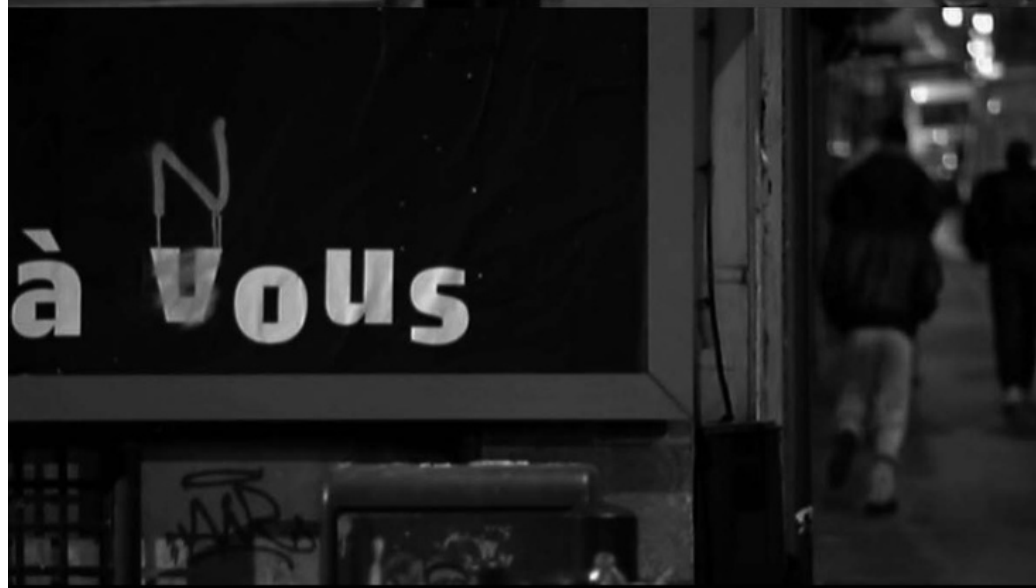
**METHOD** **This is done by** looking into existing collaborative living practices that combine living and working, their principles, concepts and spaces. Collaborative living practices are chosen because of their experiments in new economies and spatial production that present a good ground for imagining the aims of the De-growth theory applied in the city. Useful examples are combined with literature study of the De-growth to make analogies for larger scales of district, city and region.

**Chosen location** is city of Rotterdam for its history and presence in the growth oriented economy of Europe and the world and for its rich history and presence of small scale experiments in living/working/self-organizing.

The proposal derives from the conceptual strategy on regional scale based on set of 5 spatial inputs for De-growth. This step makes project transferable to other urban contexts.

**OUTCOME** **The outcome of the project** is a design proposal for the city of Rotterdam. Proposal is made on three areas on one strip of districts (2km wide) in Rotterdam that goes from the north to the south and includes: housing, transforming harbor, river. The emphasis is on two elements: new housing/working structure and new urban element that cuts the urban fabric inspired by Haussmann's *boulevard*, to slow down traffic and dynamics and include energy and food production.





"Anyone who believes in indefinite growth in anything physical, on a physically finite planet, is either mad or an economist."

– Kenneth E. Boulding

\*Degrowth is the intentional redirection of economies away from the perpetual pursuit of growth.

For economies beyond the limits of their ecosystems, this includes a planned and controlled contraction to get back in line with planetary boundaries, with the eventual creation of a steady-state economic system that is in balance with Earth's limits. ([degrowth.eu](http://degrowth.eu), 2010)

source: image is taken from movie  
La Haine, 1995, by M. Kassovitz

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## 1. Introduction - Design as politics

On the very beginning I wish to sketch my motivation to merge design with politics that take the form of a graduation studio. Having finished my Master of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Zagreb and after a period of working in practice I entered the Master of Science in Urbanism at TU Delft. For this second master degree I want to deeper explore the relationship of societal, political and cultural processes that shape contemporary (European) cities.

Call out for a graduation studio sets the following question as central to me:

*How can we design buildings, cities and landscapes that make the best of our restless lives?*

My first reaction is another question: what makes our lives restless? Besides a rather Marxist reasoning of struggle over means of production and recognition I would want to go further and say that it is also fragmentation of our options to practice and live our lifestyles and identities and organize into preferred living groups. I would say that contemporary city consists of fragmented spaces of mutually shared identities. In the Urban Revolution (2003) Henri Lefebvre for example writes that we see the simultaneous moment of homogenization (e.g. up-scale glass and steel architecture) and fragmentation (i.e. tearing the organic social mix apart) that a) makes capitalist cities look more of the same, while

b) separating/segregating the use of space with centre/ periphery.

What is happening is conflict over ever changing image of the city. Imposing image of competitive global metropolis over one's right to settle in self-created surrounding is globally present process that shapes not only urban matrices and skylines but everyday life and politics and collective struggles. My deepest curiosity is not just to understand this conflicting processes but to offer an radically different view on how the cities can be shaped based on forces of mutual aid instead of competition.

### 1.1. Individuality vs. Collectivity

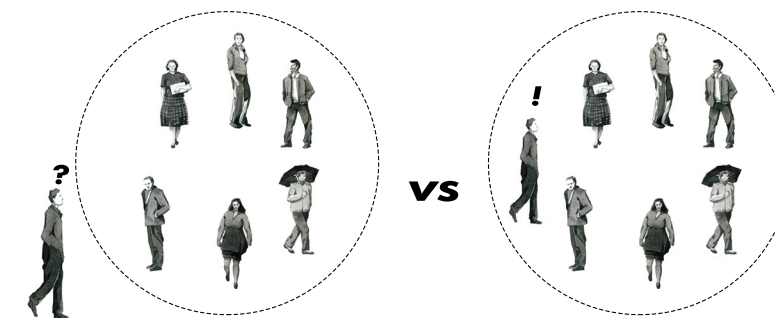
One of the initial cultural differences I faced when moving to Netherlands is the strongly present individualism that is part of local culture. Individualism is truly a value for many people in Netherlands that keep their personal life for them selves and respect each other's privacy. To a person that grew up in an extended Mediterranean family where 12 of us of three generations lived together in one house this was a trigger for some questions on a gap that seems to occur between individuality and collectivity. What are the actual benefits of living in large groups? Where is the exact boundary that shouldn't be crossed in respecting other persons privacy? What are the reflections of these two opposite lifestyles on society as whole? [fig.1.]

After I moved out of my family house I lived in number of intended communities, squats and living groups. This means that

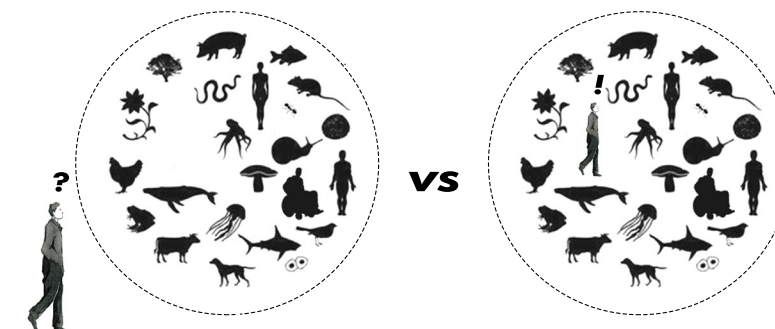
for major part of my life I lived in spaces where at least 5 of us were dwelling. Through the lenses of collectivity my perception of urban life, living qualities, social values etc. is shaped. The graduation project tries to add an useful argument for recognizing the qualities of life in self-aware groups and importance of utilizing the professional knowledges to make this practices more common and widely acceptable

### 1.2. Modernity vs Ecology

Other concern that this project is shaped by is urgency to rethink our cities and society as part of ecological system of the planet Earth. The origin of the word culture comes from French, which in turn derives from Latin 'colere'. This verb in Latin means to tend to the earth and grow, or to nurture. Today this verb developed a new meaning. The verb to cultivate '[...] shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth' (De Rossi, 2015). In human activity of 'cultivating' the nature for his/her own benefit there is an inherited conflict between competition and collaboration with the nature.[fig.2.] This conflict is present in recent discussions about the future of the cities. From the 'smart city' concept to the neo-primitivist and neo-malthusian call outs for abandoning the cities there is a number of different standpoints about role of the growing urban areas for balancing the ecological footprint and hindering pollution.



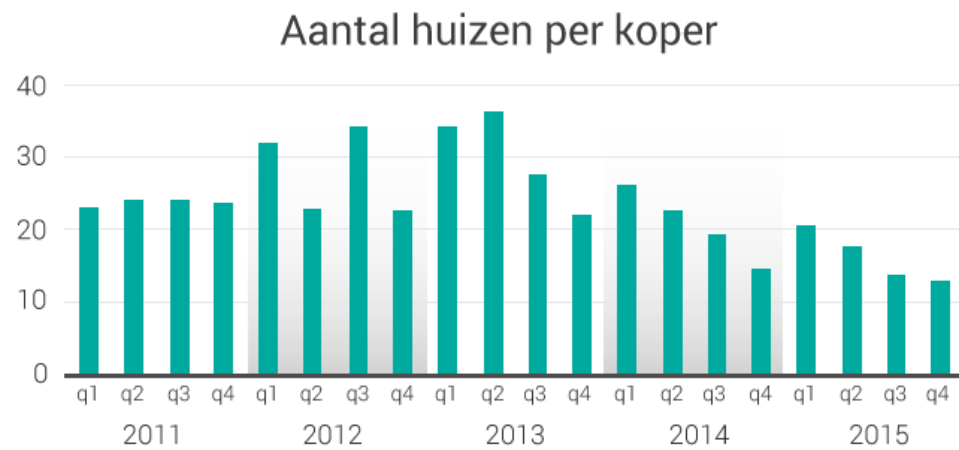
[fig.1.] Individuality vs collectivity



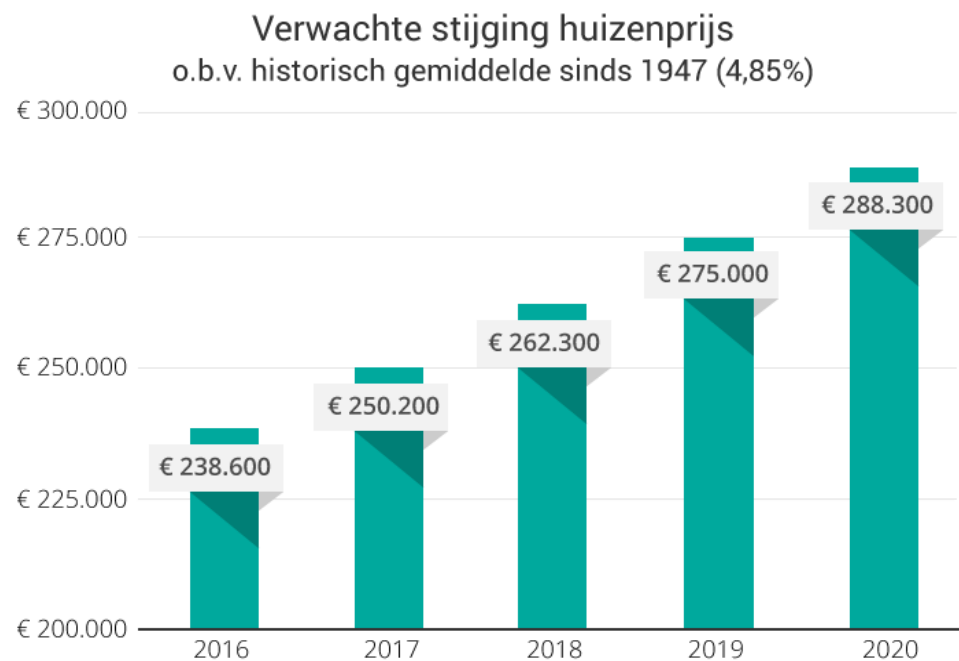
[fig.2.] Modernity vs ecology  
source:author



[fig.3.]Case of rotterdam, 2016



Number of houses on the market per buyer



Price of real estate  
source: Wegwijs.nl, 2016

## 2. Problem statement

### 2.1. Challenges of restless life in the city - from housing perspective<sup>1</sup>

This paragraph describes the observation of housing distribution related issues that triggered the research about city developed through imperative of economic growth and investment market.

Being the tenant in European cities means being on the market for a while already. If we take a look at the examples of advertisements for student housing in Rotterdam on Facebook pages, Criber, Kamer-net and other online platforms we can notice that they look a lot like each other. Future tenants are offering themselves a perfect inmates, presenting their skills, habits and character. They speak few languages, they are social but respectful, spontaneous but tidy, like to relax but hard working, and sometimes even they are never at home! These contrasts are there to fulfil every expectation of landlord or housemate that wishes to rent or share home. Reason for these generic self-presentations is commercialization of tenancy. Instead of trying to find a place to live based on his/her affinities and interests, the tenant today offers him/herself as a product that has to sell itself on the market.

Housing in 20th century was built, distributed and regulated through public or private domain. Depending on different historical periods, ideologies, geographical conditions the ratio of the two was different, however, property-led

urbanization was in the very root of most of the housing models. Recently these models are not able to give an answer to rising urban questions such as: ageing population, affordability and accessibility of housing options, changing of living and market patterns, environmental crisis etc. Housing is facing a big gap between being on one hand largely commercialized as property-led real estate market on the other hand one of the basic needs of every person. (Housing) crisis back in 2008. revealed alienation between material (property based) and immaterial (place and identity based) aspects of housing. Around 330 millions of households worldwide are struggling to find a decent or affordable housing and additional 3% of world's population does not have permanent address (Madden, Marcuse, 2016). This happens because the field of options for average buyer became smaller while the prices for these options became higher, in both private and public housing sector. [fig.3.]

Still, LeFebvre defines the city dweller as a new political subject substituting Engels' proletarian worker (Lefebvre, 1990). If we merge contemporary city dweller and his 'options' to settle with Guy Standing's precarious generation (2011) that shares same lack of opportunities we get a new European youth described. Whole generation of young people, ranging from creative class and artists to seasonal workers is moving around Europe in search of better life and recognition. Inflexibility of cities to create and distribute housing adapted to

this generation forces this generation to act on the market resulting in restless, unpredictable and stressful life. For this reason the fundamental concepts of economical and social development that result with the described issues of spatial production have to be challenged. By looking into the created gap between exchange and use value of housing attention is brought to the main argument for these investments- the imperative of economic growth. Following paragraph will explain the core limitations of this imperative.

<sup>1</sup> Although project doesn't work on problem of housing directly, this observation was the trigger for thinking about current development of the city and importance of the economy for it. For this reason I find necessary to write it down.

2.2. Definition of problem - Limits of the growth

In 2017. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the number used for measuring the economic performances of geographical regions, cities, countries etc. What this number tries to reflect is potential of produced surplus to be invested in well-being of society. As long as the GDP is positive the economy of the measured community is growing and consequentially this means the quality of life is rising. This means that we measure the successfulness of the economy based on the growth.

Measuring the economic performance this way has a few major limitations. Already Simon Kuznets<sup>2</sup>, the economist who suggested the first comprehensive set of measures of national income expressed the scepticism towards using the economic growth to evaluate the success of national economy:

*'Distinctions must be kept in mind between quantity and quality of growth, between costs and returns, and between the short and long run. Goals for more growth should specify more growth of what and for what.'* (Kuznets, 1962)

Later the criticism towards this measurement tool developed further. Today it is more clear that it doesn't reflect true social conditions since it doesn't reflect inequality, uneven development, unpaid work (care, illegal work, household work, etc.), political liberties and finally the harm that economic

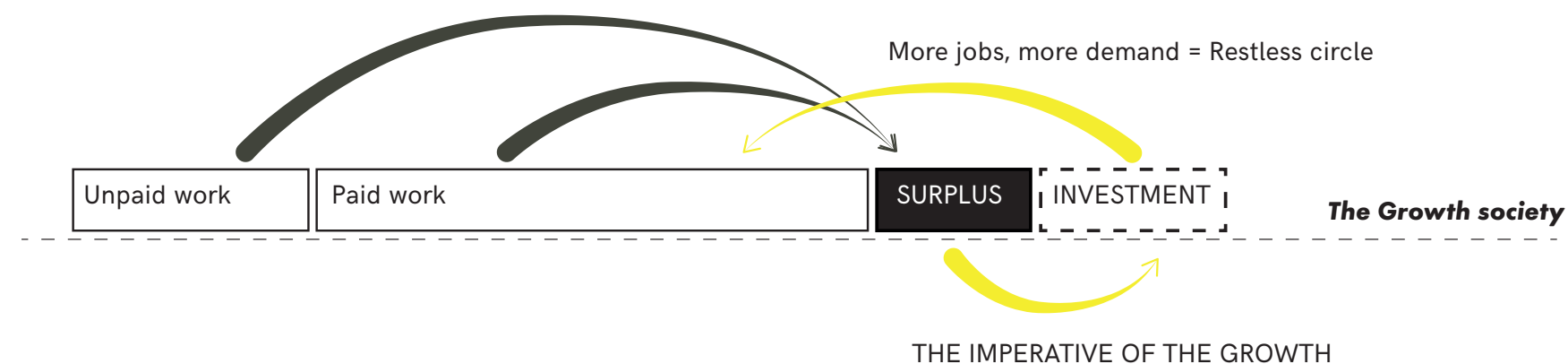
growth does to environment.

*'The conflict between environment and growth is ever-present. For "developers," the value of growth is not to be questioned: more mining, drilling, building, and manufacturing is necessary to expand the economy. Against developers stand radical environmentalists and local communities, who are often alone in questioning the inevitability of 'a one-way future consisting only of growth.'* (Kallis, 2015)

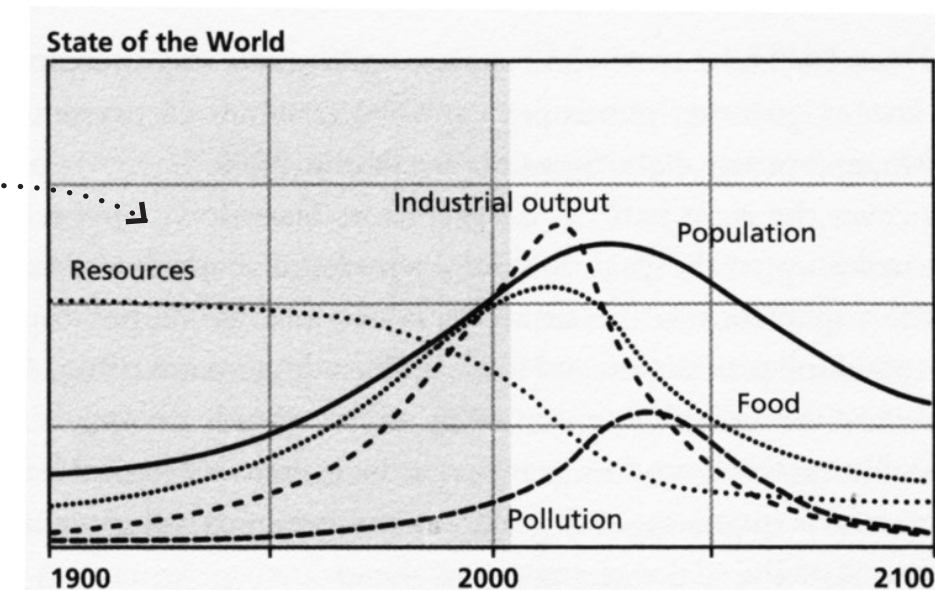
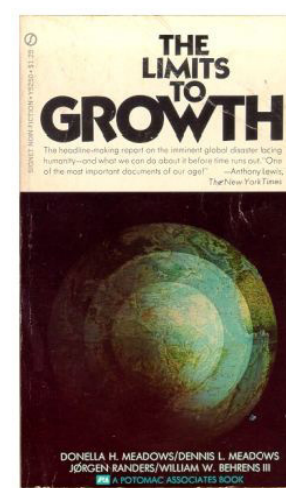
When talking about the economic growth as precondition for improving the quality of life in our cities it is often overlooked that the planet Earth is a limited system. This issue was presented in the book 'Limits of Growth' by Club of Rome in 1972. Group of scientists from MIT computed the future of needs of growing global population in terms of natural resources, energy, food etc. [fig.4.] Combining it with Malthusian scepticism of how much can we actually develop our technology and organizational systems they predicted that with current growth rate by 2030 we will face first global issues in production and distribution of food, water, energy etc. They concluded that orientation on constant economic growth, in combination with rising population, will at some point converge with the limits of how much natural resources we can extract from the planet Earth. It then became a question how soon will we meet these limits and how we can orientate towards them?

2 Congress commissioned Kuznets to create a system that would measure the nation's productivity in order to better understand how to tackle the Great Depression. Simon Kuznets, 1934. "National Income, 1929-1932". 73rd US Congress, 2d session, Senate document no. 124, page 5-7

3 The phrase is from Ursula Le Guin, whose social science fiction novel The Dispossessed (London: Panther, 1975) provides a vivid exposition of a degrowth world.

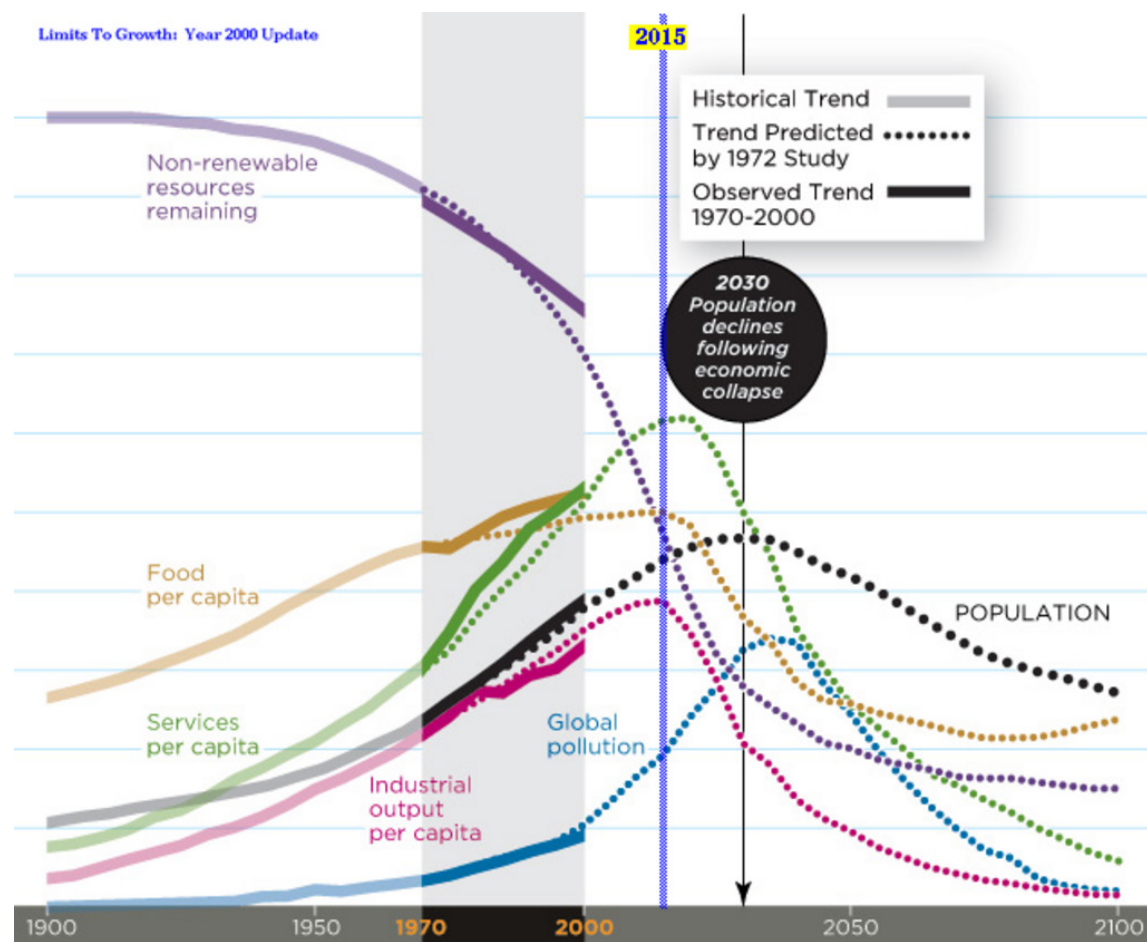


[fig.4.] What GDP measures is potential of produced surplus to be invested in well-being of society source:author



[fig.5] Club of Rome 1972





[fig.6] Our planet is a finite system and as such can not provide us with endless resources. Options that we have:

1. The business-as-usual scenario\* might cause global economic collapse and precipitous population decline could occur by 2030
2. The sustainable growth\* can save us if governments forged policies and invested in technologies to regulate the expansion of humanity's ecological footprint
3. The urgency of environmental protection \* would mean you can't have your next iPhone

source: [online]Limits to the growth year update 2000, 2015

### 2.3. Growth as an ideology

*"Anyone who believes in indefinite growth in anything physical, on a physically finite planet, is either mad or an economist."*

— Kenneth E. Boulding

In development oriented discourse economical growth is one of the central concepts. As explained above growth is an essence of how the economies are not only compared but led. Crisis of global economy showed that many concepts of neo-liberal economy are subjectable to criticism. However, growth was not often mention as principle that stands behind the collapse that happen. Greek philosopher Castoriadis calls it secular equivalent of religious dogma. (Kallis, Demaria, Deriu, 2015) 'The growth imperative' leans on assumption that without economic growth of 2-5% per year the healthy conditions for socio-economic development can not be sustained. (ie. The Balance, 2016) This claim became especially strong during golden neo-liberal age of 1990s. Under influence of this idea we have been developing our cities, economies, housing and lives for almost 3 decades now.

Growing criticism of radical environmental movements and authors revealed the odds between the ecology and growth. Instead of questioning the principle of growth the discussion resulted with the concept of sustainable growth. Defined as *"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"* (World Commission

on Environment and Development, 1987), sustainable development has emerged as the guiding principle for long-term global development. Consisting of three pillars, sustainable development seeks to achieve, in a balanced manner, economic development, social development and environmental protection. The rise of mainstream discourse on sustainable development effectively erased the radical promise of ecology. (Kallis, 2015)

*'The notion of sustainability that emerged from the 1992 Earth Summit neutralized and depoliticized the conflict between environment and growth. Since then, negotiations between government, businesses, and "pragmatic" environmentalists have assumed that new markets and technologies can simultaneously boost economic growth and protect natural systems. Environmental problems have been largely consigned to the realm of technical improvement, the province of experts and policy elites.'* (Kallis, 2015)

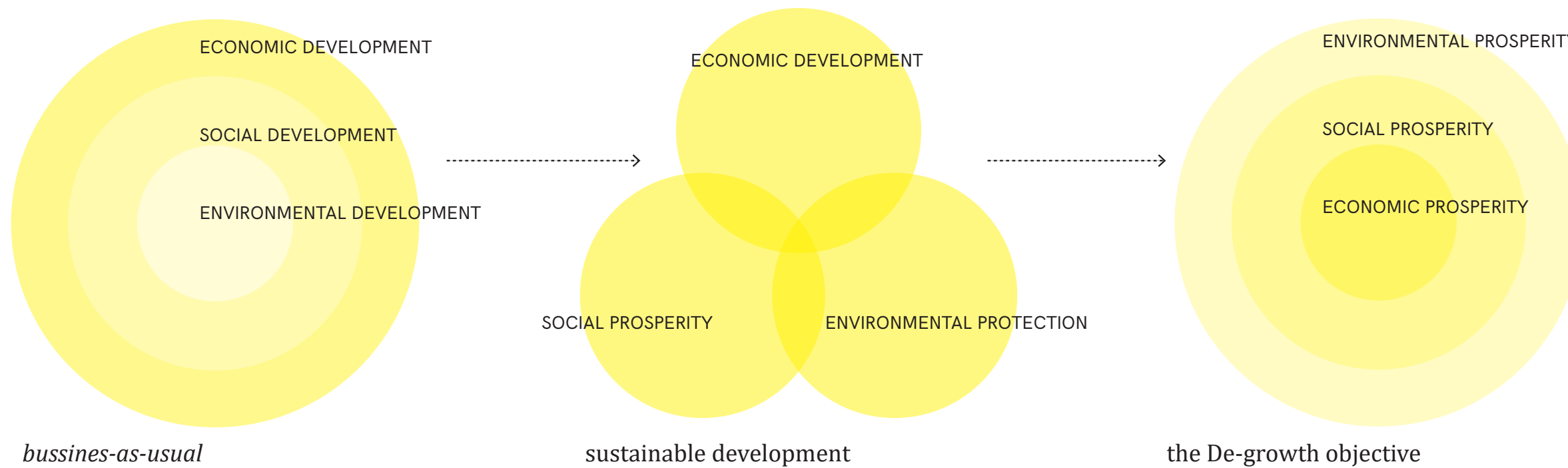
Seeing that the imperative of growth managed to incorporate itself in visions of sustainable future the environmentalists set the more direct demand in form of 'De-growth' to question de-politicization of environmentalism and 'oxymoron of sustainable growth' (Latouche, 2009). The economic prosperity in this case is conditioned by the social prosperity which is further conditioned by the ecological prosperity whose sustainability is a priority that sets the framework for all human activities.

### 2.4. The seed of Degrowth

The Club of Rome's view on the future of our society and urbanization derives from the fact that our planet is a finite system and as such can not provide us with the endless resources. This implies three possible scenarios that put in relation growth and societies position on it [fig.6]: (1) The business-as-usual scenario will cause global economic collapse and precipitous population decline could occur by 2030. As already stated presumption for continuing of capitalist way of distribution of resources is that economy grows 2-5% yearly. That would mean that our economy has to double every 20 years. That is not sustainable in context of climate change, pollution in general, and global tendency of decrease in population growth. (2) The sustainable development scenario can create sustainable future if governments forged policies and invested in technologies to regulate the expansion of humanity's ecological footprint. However it still incorporates the growth which, as previously shown, is not complement with ecological imperatives that we are facing. Finally, (3) The scenario predicted by Club of Rome and confirmed by number of later studies and extinct species urges going consciously backwards in terms of rapid development. It would mean a commitment not just to protect nature and ensure sustainability but to prioritize it, followingly create a conscious step into less resource intensive forms of social and economical interactions.

De-growth is a 'missile concept' (Latouche, 2009) that is developed to challenge the terms under which current development occurs. It is more the pragmatic concept than political and pro-active restraining from economical growth and resetting the preconditions of human development. [fig.7.] To de-grow does not mean to starve the society into recession and inflation or to stop all forms of developments. It means to teach the importance of 'diet' and think of those directions of developments that are left aside by the current capitalist dominance. The goal is not a negative rate of growth, but to collective deceleration of economy. De-growth is therefore not possible in a consumerist society where commercial credits are used for producing planned obsolescence and created desires are based on extrinsically renewed necessity. Here degrowth claims two important fields for implementation of change: (1) the individual which has to be re-politicized about his/her everyday choices as well as his/her everyday interaction with community and society and (2) the political and distributive systems that have to take in consideration limits of our planet.

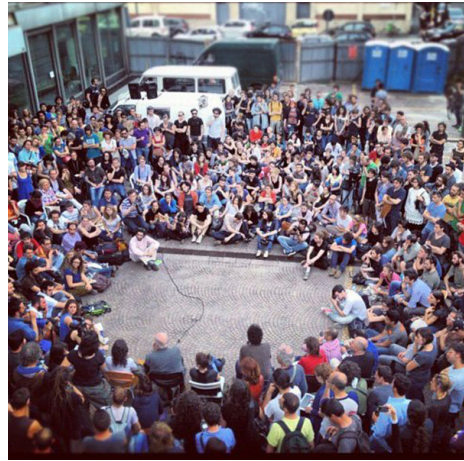
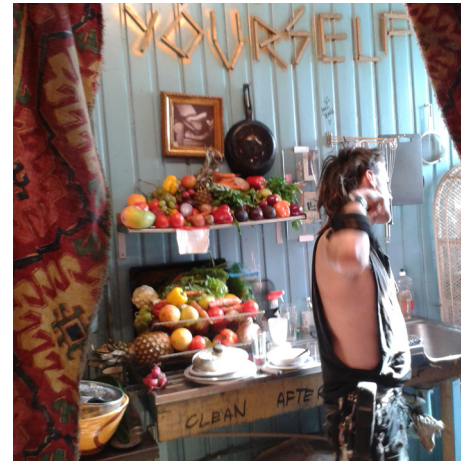
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[fig.7] Seeing that the imperative of growth managed to incorporate itself in visions of sustainable future the environmentalists set the more direct demand in form of 'De-growth' to question de-politicization of environmentalism and 'oxymoron of sustainable growth'(Latouche, 2009):

The economic prosperity in this case is conditioned by the social prosperity which is further conditioned by the ecological prosperity whose sustainability is a priority that sets the framework for all human activities.





[fig.8.] Images of non-growth oriented practices around the world

source: [online]various sources

*Degrowth alternatives have begun to flourish as the formal economy has fallen into crisis. These include food production in urban gardens; co-housing and eco-communes; alternative food networks, producer-consumer cooperatives, and communal kitchens; health care, elder care, and child care cooperatives; open software; and decentralized forms of renewable energy production and distribution. These alternatives are often accompanied, or even supported, by new forms of exchange such as community currencies, barter markets, time banks, financial cooperatives, and ethical banks. Such projects display various facets of degrowth. They promote a shift to a more locally based economy with short production and consumption cycles. They emphasize reproduction and caring, to satisfy use values, not profits. They replace wage labor with voluntary activity. They do not have a built-in tendency to accumulate and expand, and they are less resource-intensive than their counterparts in the formal economy. Such practices of “commoning” cultivate solidarity and humane interpersonal relations, and generate shared, non-monetary wealth. (Kallis, 2015)*



## 2.5. Problem statement

The incorporated absurdities of indefinite growth and even 'sustainable growth' on the planet that is finite system need to be challenged by the urban planning agendas. The imperative of economic growth hold a strong standpoint in our economic and professional discourses. However the cities and governing systems show inability to cope with the challenges of migration and changing living demands and are unable to fully control the impact they make on the ecological system they belong to. Economical growth demands spatial growth. More we produce more space and resources we need. The growth imperative is major paradigm of contemporary development that has negative reflections in urban areas of Europe. The urban small economies are endangered, housing is becoming unaffordable, cities are becoming more dependent on large infrastructures, public space is underused or misused and ecological footprint of the cities is increasing. These and many more urban problems can not be tackled while keeping 'the business as usual' in terms of economic growth that fosters development.

As planners we have the responsibility to make cities more resilient but at the same time less demanding for the Earth's limited biological systems.[fig.9] In the context of our restlessness in demand for better life and recognition we should strive for complement solutions with environmental issues. Otherwise, the scarcity of

sources and pollution will increase the bad conditions of life. The way how we live and produce the space in the cities can incorporate solutions for more responsible interaction with planet and redistribution of resources.

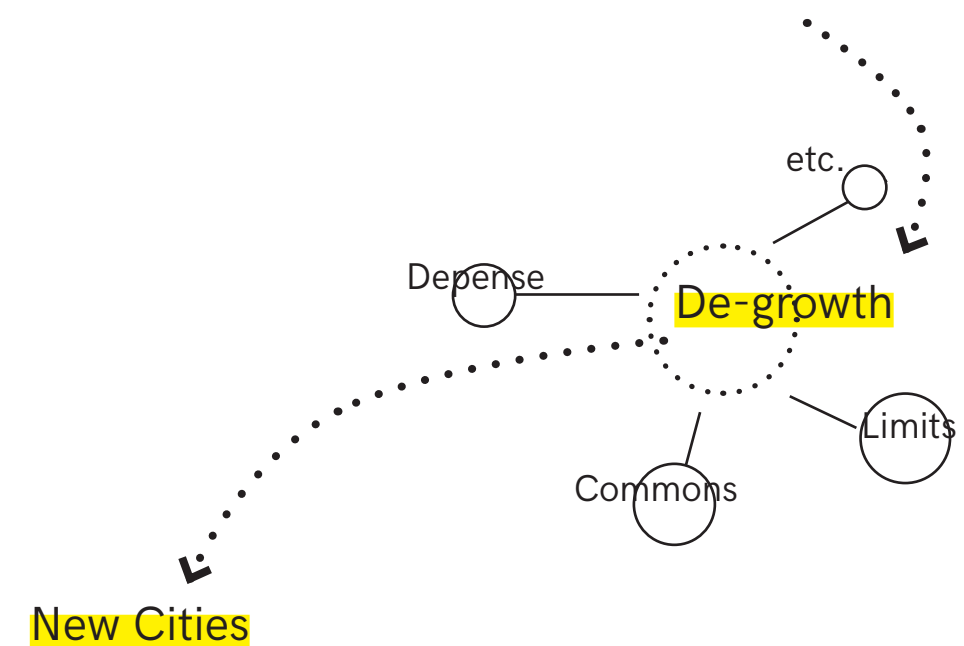


[fig.9] Diagram of problem statement

source: author, image is taken from movie La Haine, 1995, by M. Kassovitz

'I need a rest...from Growth'

True sustainability can not be reached through constant renewing of the growth imperative within the limited system of planet Earth



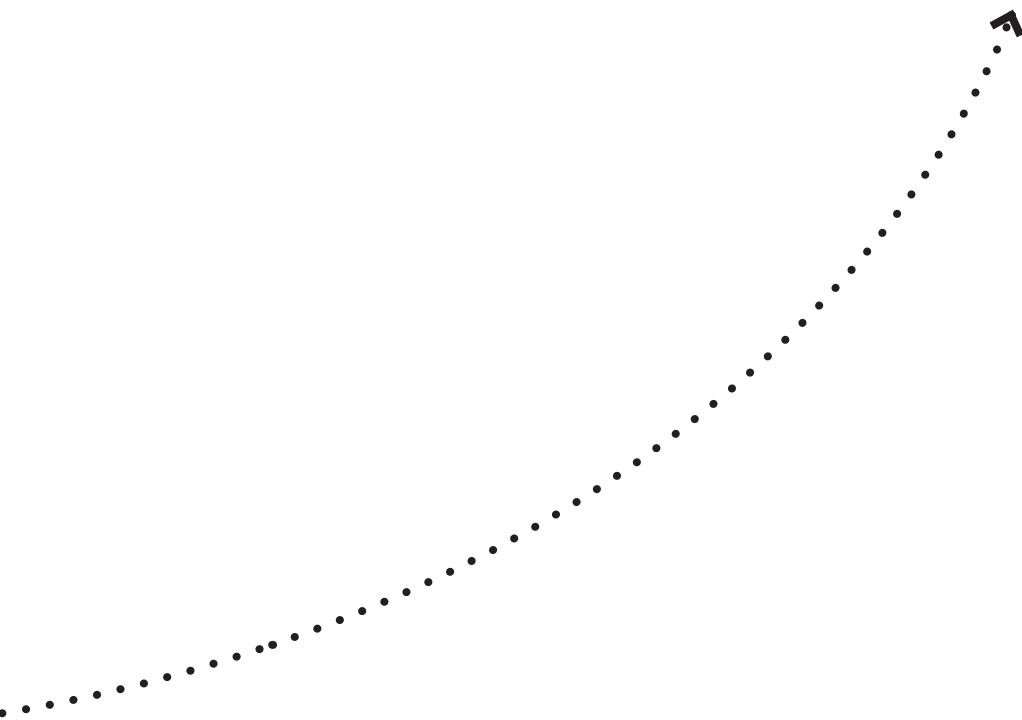
As planners we have the responsibility to make cities more resilient but at the same time less demanding for the Earth's limited biological systems.

### 3. Research question

The project therefore aims to illustrate the benefits of De-growth principles in a given location based on practical principles, concepts and spatial production of collaborative housing and living practices.

More on objectives and aims of the graduation project in following chapters.

What are the spatial implications of applying the De-growth principles in urban planing of the city of Rotterdam?



[fig.10] Graffiti in Paris explaining the 'Oxymoron of sustainable growth'

source: [online]simply internet

### 3.1 Problem field & Hypothesis

De-growth is by words of Latouche, “a political slogan with the theoretical implications”, whose function is to open up conceptual and practical opportunities for escaping the impasse and mentality of the current economy based on fixation on growth.

The chosen focus on the concept of De-growth comes from necessity to discuss intended futures that will make cities less demanding for the Earth’s limited ecological systems and simultaneously better places for life. New language that is offered by De-growth sets a field of potential solutions (Care, Conviviality, Commons, Simplicity, Anti-utilitarianism, Redistribution, Sharing of work, Environment, Food production, Emergy, Concentration of goods, etc). This language has not been investigated in the context of urban challenges where the two ‘scales’ (individual and system) interact intensely. The true challenge is to sketch the spatial implications of this language.

While being widely investigated in fields of economics and alternative social and ecological practices these futures are not so explored in spatial terms.

Therefore, a key degrowth thesis is that (the science and practice of) economics has colonized and depoliticized collective social choice. Indeed the degrowth project is not conceived by its advocates as merely a bio-physical question of “staying within limits” or producing and

consuming less (one can easily imagine authoritative yet “green” or dematerialized futures and the movie “Matrix” provides an interesting science-fiction example of these). Degrowth is a broader project of “escaping the economy”, re-embedding economic functions and decisions within the social and political sphere and hence deepening and re-politicizing our democracies (Cattaneo et al., 2012)

To determine the path for doing this sketch the project will combine theoretical inputs given by number of authors that worked on envisioning of De-growth (Latouche 2009, Kallis 2015, D’Alisa 2016) and case study of small-scale practices that combine living and working on the premises of intentional retreat from imperative of economic growth.[fig.11] In this context urban practices suggested by Kallis(2015) (ie. Urban gardens, grass-root neighbourhood initiatives, sharing the care work..) can work as converging points where theoretical field of the De-growth theory and condition of space meet. The chosen ‘seeds’ to be analysed are squatting and collaborative living practices around Europe and project Stad in de Maak in Rotterdam Noord. More on choice of case studies will be written in later chapters. However, one of the primary reasons is because in this examples collectively agreed values are most usually non-growth oriented and applied on everyday level with representative examples on how they shape their spaces.

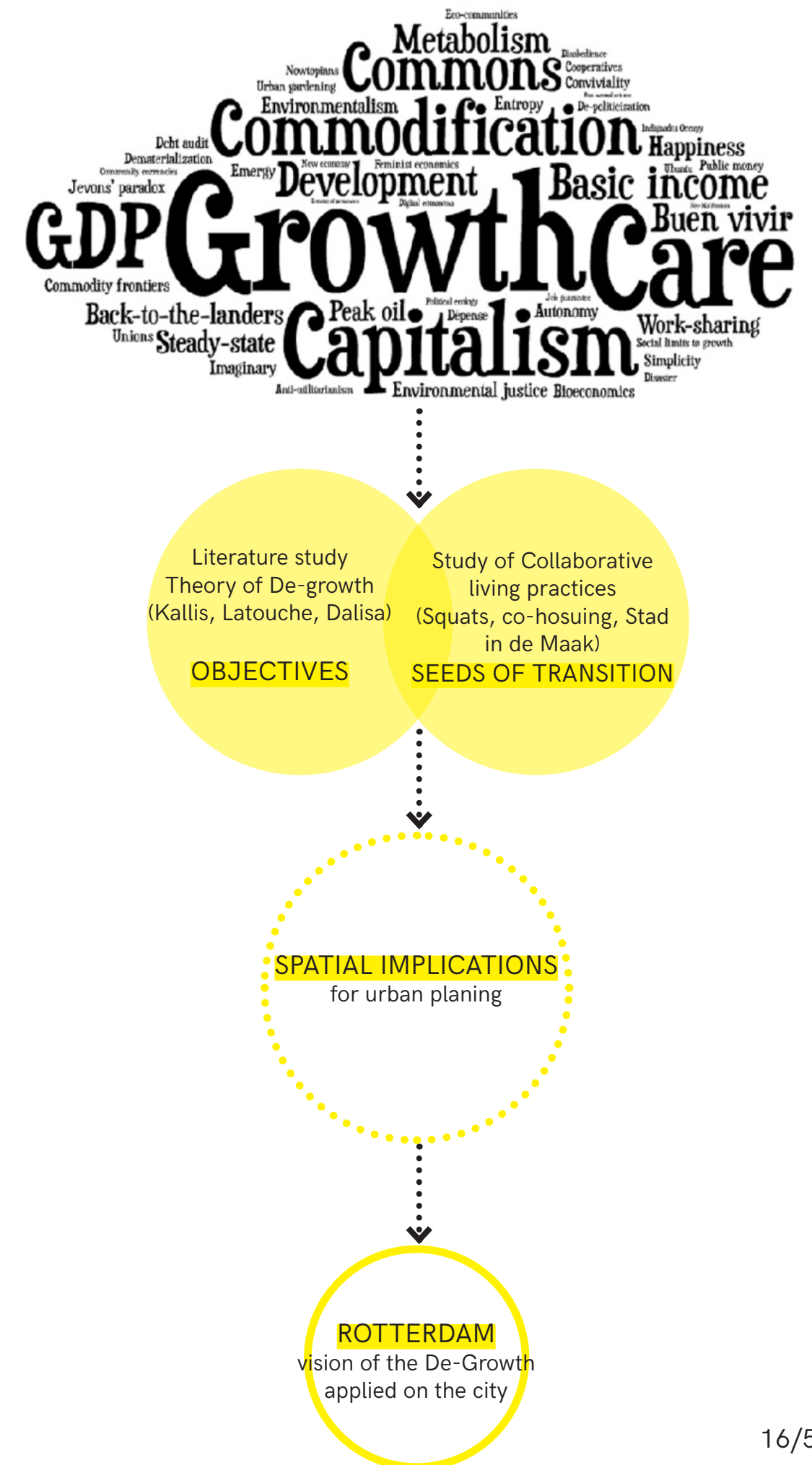
This method will be used to re-imagine the city from perspective of the De-growth theory. To be able to think in this direction we need to create new imagery for the cities. To realize De-growth within the society means to decolonize our existing imagery. Its primary goal of thinking about the future: To create new imagery that can substitute existing one (Castoriadis, 1996). Here Latouche gives few indicative directions that can be used to re-imagine our cities, neighbourhoods and homes:

*It will be recalled that the eight independent objectives that can trigger a virtuous circle of serene, convivial and sustainable contraction are: re-evaluate, reconceptualize, restructure, redistribute, relocalize, reduce, re-use and recycle.* (Latouche, 2012)

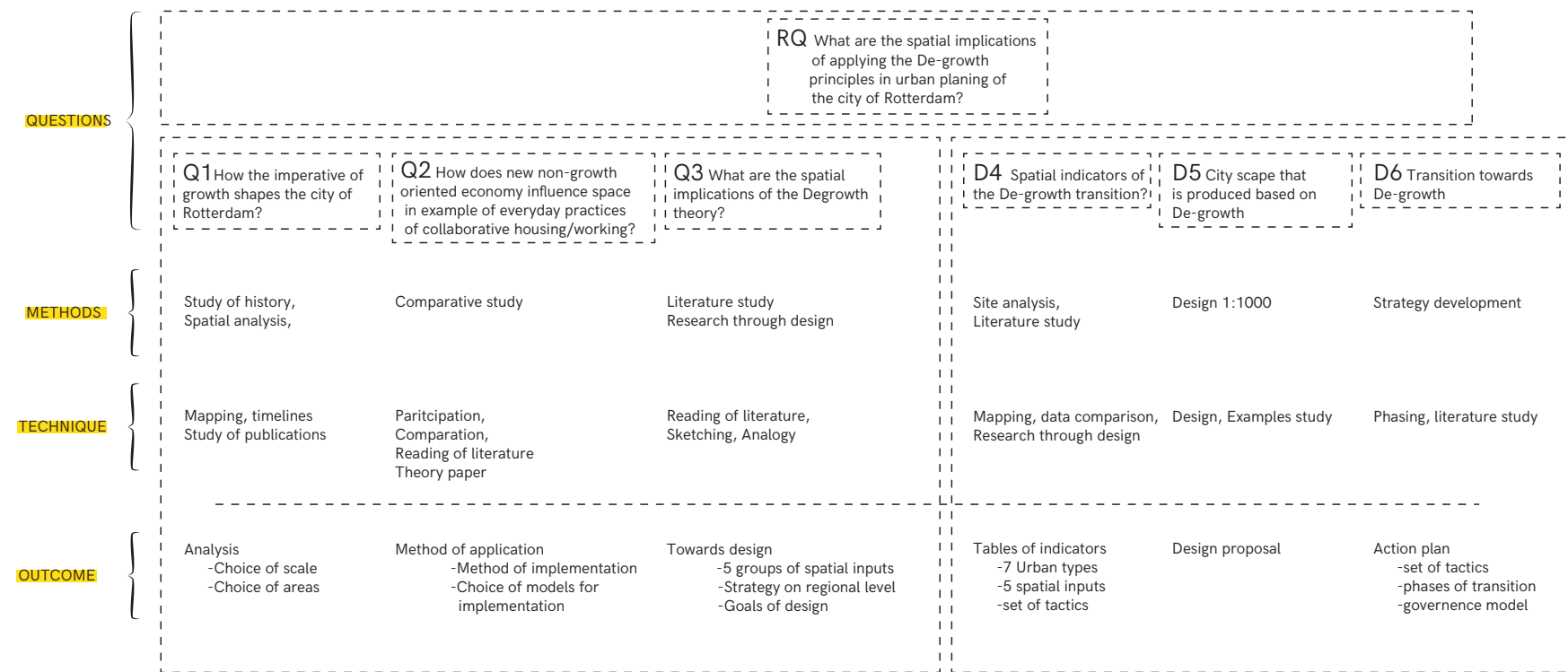
Although most of them are to some extent already known, researching deeper the De-growth theory gives a new light on why, how and by whom they should be implemented. The project revolves around this issue. While knowing from personal experience what are the limitations and potentials of collaborative living practices I want to see how can this specific form of spatial, political and economical redefinition of values inform spatial implications for the De-growth in the urban future.

[fig.11] Hypothesis for answering the research question

source: [image] De-growth, A vocabulary for new era, 2015, D’alisa, Demaria, Kallis







[fig.12] Sub-research questions

### 3.2 Subquestions - methods and techniques

To make a research as fruitful as possible for creating a coherent proposal for enacting a de-growth principles in the urban environment the research question is marked off by three sub-questions:

**(Q1)** *How the imperative of growth shapes the city of Rotterdam?*

**(Q2)** *How does new non-growth oriented economy influence space in example of everyday practices of collaborative housing/working?*

**(Q3)** *What are the spatial implications of the De-growth theory?*

To answer the sub-research question as the core of the analysis the set of methods and techniques are applied[fig.12]:

**(Q1)** *How the imperative of growth shapes the city of Rotterdam?*

The history of development of the city of Rotterdam was defined by the harbour. During 1960's the harbour was the largest global harbour and it stays one of the largest in the world till today. The Rotterdam harbour is a generator of cities economic growth and is placing the city on the global map. The relation of the city and harbour in terms of space, economy and affected population can give the image of how the growth based economy shapes the urban environment. By tracing and comparing development of

the harbour with the development of the city's living areas through the history this relation is highlighted. It is supported by study of socio-economic numbers and city's visions for the future (Urban Metabolism Rotterdam, Rotterdam Stadsvisie 2030, Port vision 2030 etc.).

**(Q2)** *How does new non-growth oriented economy influence space in example of everyday practices of collaborative housing/working?*

Although its a global player in the competition for creating and economic growth Rotterdam is also a city rich with a grass-roots movements and projects that fit the Kallis's suggestion of seeds of De-growth. These existing collaborative living practices that combine living and working, their principles, concepts and spaces are focus of case study.

The first set of cases is not particularly connected to city of Rotterdam. Personal experience of participation or observation of more than 60 squatting and self-organized communities is used to extract basic principles, concepts and spaces that share the aims of downscaling affluent economies and their material flows in a just and equitable manner. These principles, concepts and spaces are then more thoroughly observed on case of Stad in de Maak project in Rotterdam Noord. In the context of this this neighbourhood the potential for the grass-root change is analysed by looking into maps, interviews, review of historical doc-

uments etc. This method is crucial for later establishing the connection between the theoretical inputs of literature review on De-growth with spatial conditions of city of Rotterdam. More on the method of utilizing these observation will be explained later in the booklet since it is already part of the designing process.

**(Q3)** *What are the spatial implications of the De-growth theory?*

The first implications for spatializing the theory are derived from the literature study. From reading the crucial authors that recently offered new visions of applied De-growth like Kallis, D'Alisa, Latouche, Srnicek&Williams five major urban topics were addressed (distribution of services, density, public space, infrastructure and flows) It resulted with five points of input for applying the De-growth in urban planning which will further be tested in the space through projects outcome. This five points are tested on the city of Rotterdam because of its history and presence in the growth oriented economy of Europe and the world and for its rich history and presence of small scale experiments in living/working/self-organizing.

## 4. Objectives - Rethinking cities without growth

### 4.1. Field of objectives

The main objective of the project is to open up conceptual space for imagining and enacting diverse alternative futures that share the aims of downscaling affluent economies and their material flows in a just and equitable manner.

In order to reach the objective it is important to relate the implications of De-growth to general topics of urban planing such as infrastructure, flows, urban fabric etc. In order to make this relation clear the project starts its analysis from the negative consequences of growth based economy on the city. By drawing the relation between the economic growth imperative and urban conditions produced an argument for the De-growth theory is built. After this step the new concepts that are defined by the body of literature needs to be translated into context of urban planing. Here the urban planing is materialized by conceptual strategy for the city of Rotterdam. The strategy is not thought of as an literal directive for implementation of the values through guidelines and measures in space. It is more that the outcome needs to be useful as an tool for discussion and empowerment at the same time for those familiar with the De-growth concepts and those unfamiliar.

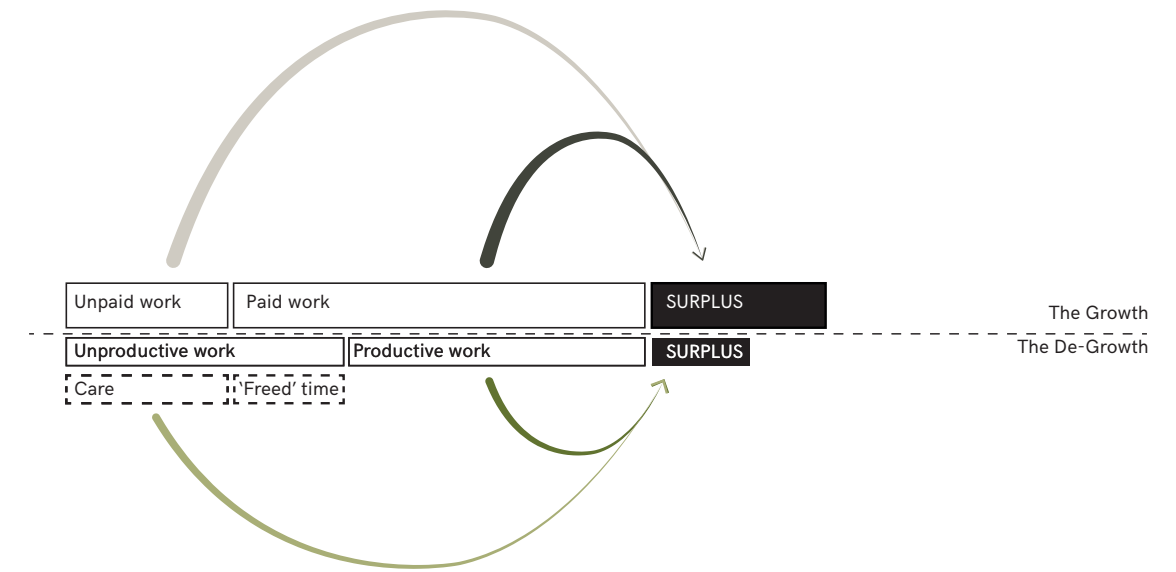
The proposal will use the conceptual strategy designed on the regional scale based on set of spatial inputs to derive into a proposal for smaller scale models of implementation. This step makes project transferable and re-scalable.

The combination of the two will work as a 'survival guide' for the De-growth future in post-capitalist society addressing two groups of potential users. (1) Urban planners that should find a new visual language and guidelines for getting familiar with the concept of De-growth and (2) small scale practitioners of collaborative and convivial refrain that should be able to use it to empower their own ideas and understand importance of networking and thinking in bigger scales.

### 4.2. The De-growth theory

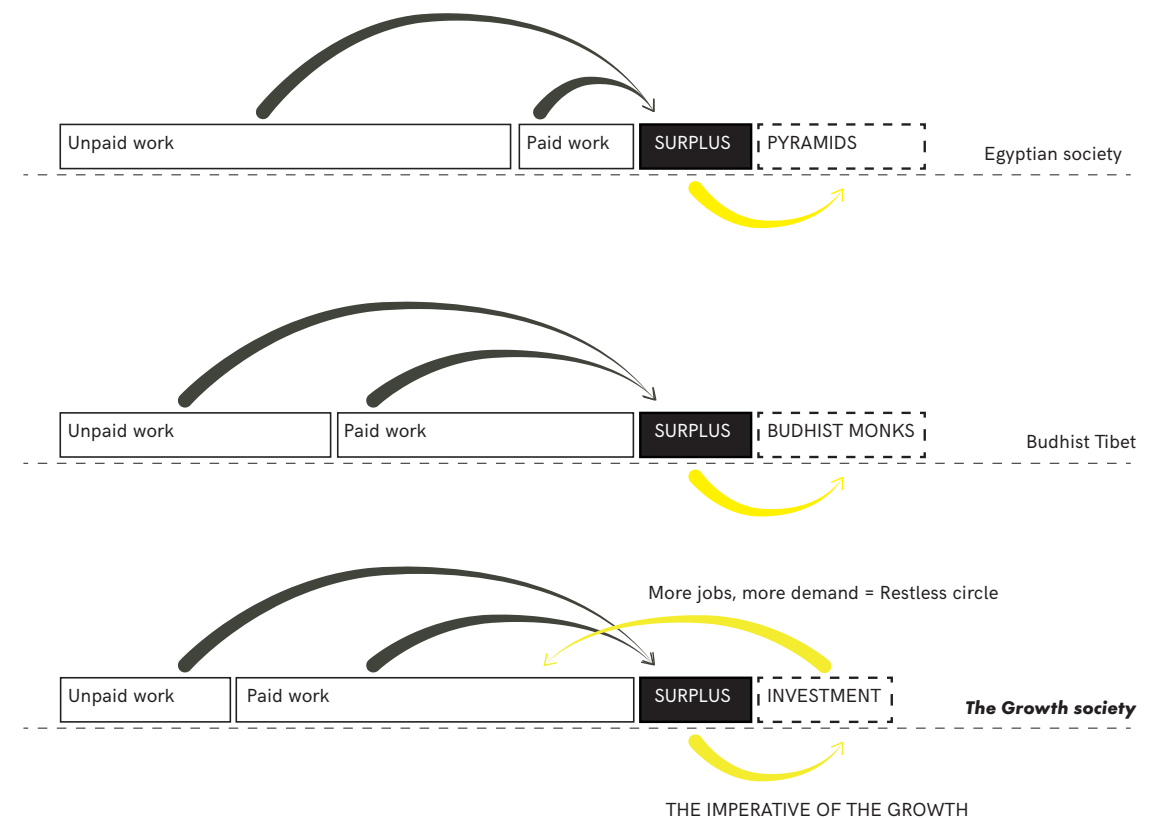
Since the objective is translation of environmentalist theory into realm of urban planing it is important to set the definition of what the theory is.

*De-growth is the intentional redirection of economies away from the perpetual pursuit of growth. For economies beyond the limits of their ecosystems, this includes a planned and controlled contraction to get back in line with planetary boundaries, with the eventual creation of steady-state economic system that is in balance with Earth's limits (de-growth.eu, 2010)*



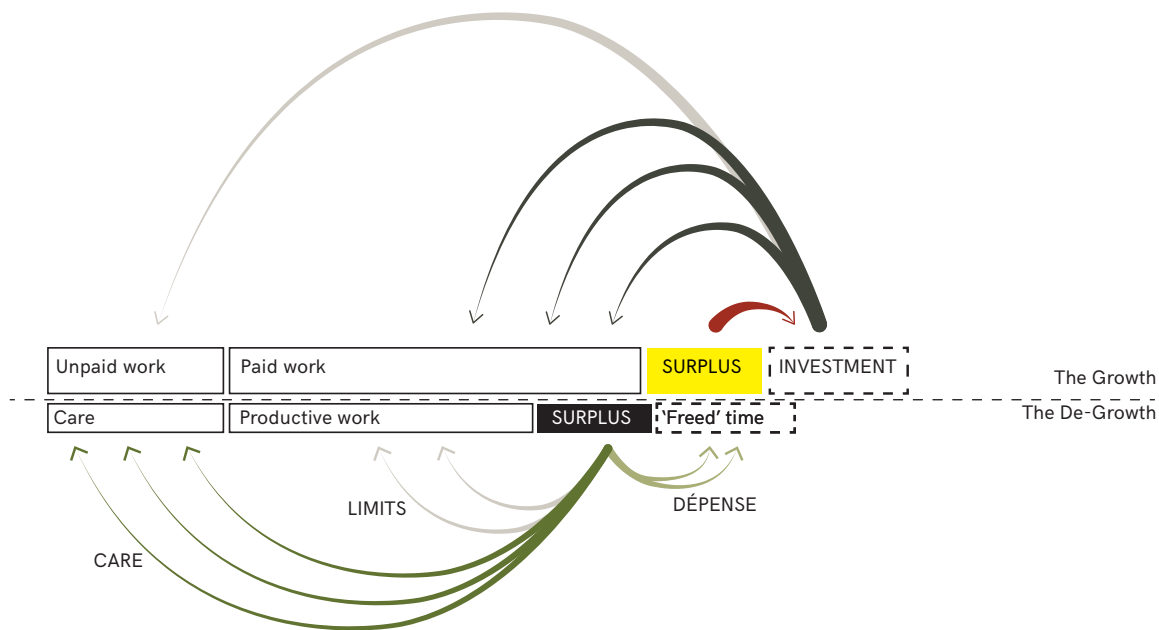
[fig.13] Production of surplus in the growth and De-growth society

source: author



[fig.13] Different societies distribute surplus differently

source: Alternative of Degrowth, 2015, Kallis



[fig.15] Production of surplus in the growth and De-growth society

source: De-growth, A vocabulary for new era, 2015, D'alisa, Demaria, Kallis

Contemporary capitalist society directs its surplus into new investments to ensure the economic growth that consequentially will produce new employment, wealth and market exchange. [fig.13] This is the key how the growth became a condition for improving the living standards. It is on this base that GDP is used to evaluate the successfulness of the economies. However it was not always the case that surplus is used for perpetual inducing of consumption and intemperance. In history different societies directed the surplus into different non-productive expenditures (ie. Egyptian pyramids, Tibetan monks etc.) [fig.14]

The De-growth is challenging not only the distribution of surplus but the values that are presented by its reinforcement in society. Idea of De-growth is a society that is prosperous society in which, as Latouche explains, 'we can live better whilst working less and consuming less'. As economist Tim Jackson puts it in user-friendly way it is about 'prosperity without growth'. (Asadourian, 2012) [fig. 15 and 16]

#### 4.3. Envisioning of the De-growth theory

As Latouche indicated this intended contraction can be made possible by re-evaluating, reconceptualizing, restructuring, redistributing, relocalizing, reducing, re-using and recycling different forms of surplus that is created. (Latouche, 2009) This is crucial input for imagining the intentional, convivial and sustainable contraction in a circular manner. This has to be adopted by,

on one hand individuals through their personal habits and on the other hand the human systems that are managed through laws, regulations and values. In order to achieve this Latouche's indicators have to be further developed into pragmatic steps. However this is not easy:

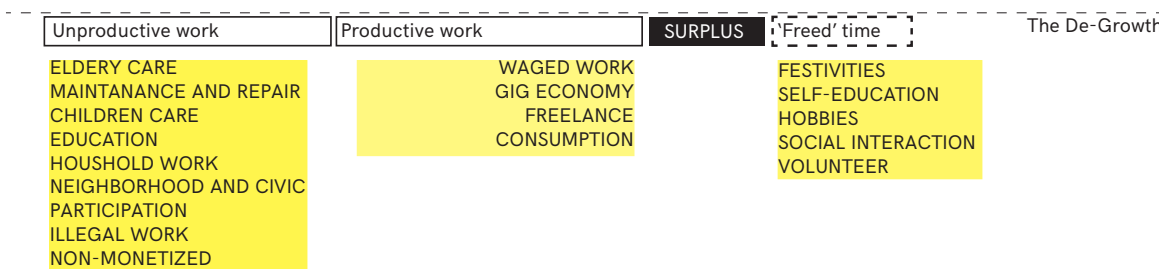
*Advocates of degrowth refrain from offering any one blueprint to replace today's growth-centric "free" market. Their objective is to open up conceptual space for imagining and enacting diverse alternative futures that share the aims of downscaling affluent economies and their material flows in a just and equitable manner. Reducing such material flows would likely lead to a decrease in GDP as currently measured.*

*However, degrowth is not synonymous with recession or depression, the terms we use for negative growth in a growth economy. Degrowth, instead, involves a rethinking of the organization of society signaled by terms such as limits, care, and dépense. (Kallis 2015)*

By limits here are meant 'self limitations' of individuals and systems to refrain from pursuing all that could be pursued. (ie. caps on carbon emissions, 100% reserve requirements for banks etc.). By care it is meant the revaluation of services and unpaid work that should be the foundation of creating the economy based on reproduction not expansion. (ie. Child care, elderly care, participation, maintenance and repair etc.) And finally Dépense means the unproductive re-direction of social surplus in terms of allocation of it into other

realms of life such as festivity, freed time and social interaction (Illich). [fig 15.]

Here only few concepts are presented that are developed in theoretical work of the others. These concepts are used as a foundation for thinking how to translate ecologically driven detachment from patterns of spatial production towards the convivial orientation on reproductive systems.



[fig.15] Redistribtion and revaluation of work

source: De-growth, A vocabulary for new era, 2015, D'alisa, Demaria, Kallis



#### 4.4 SWOT analysis of objectives

##### Strength

The strength of the project's objectives is their focus on the De-growth as a single goal that is well defined by the theoretical body of knowledge while not so investigated in practical field of urbanism. Complementary set of sub-research questions makes it possible to connect these two realm resulting in a discussion oriented proposal. The process of continuous oscillation between rational and intuitive argumentation together with structured theory based research confronted with experiential knowledge from the field of collaborative practices ensures well grounded results.

##### Weakness

The internal weakness of the objective is small number of referential projects that can direct the visualization of De-growth. More importantly it is the size or maybe 'ambition' to make the project in multiple scales and direction that might end with an incoherent proposal. Unconventional use of methods of transforming analysis into conclusions and choice of case studies might have the same weakness. It is also balancing between economic, social and ecological goals that makes the project fragile.

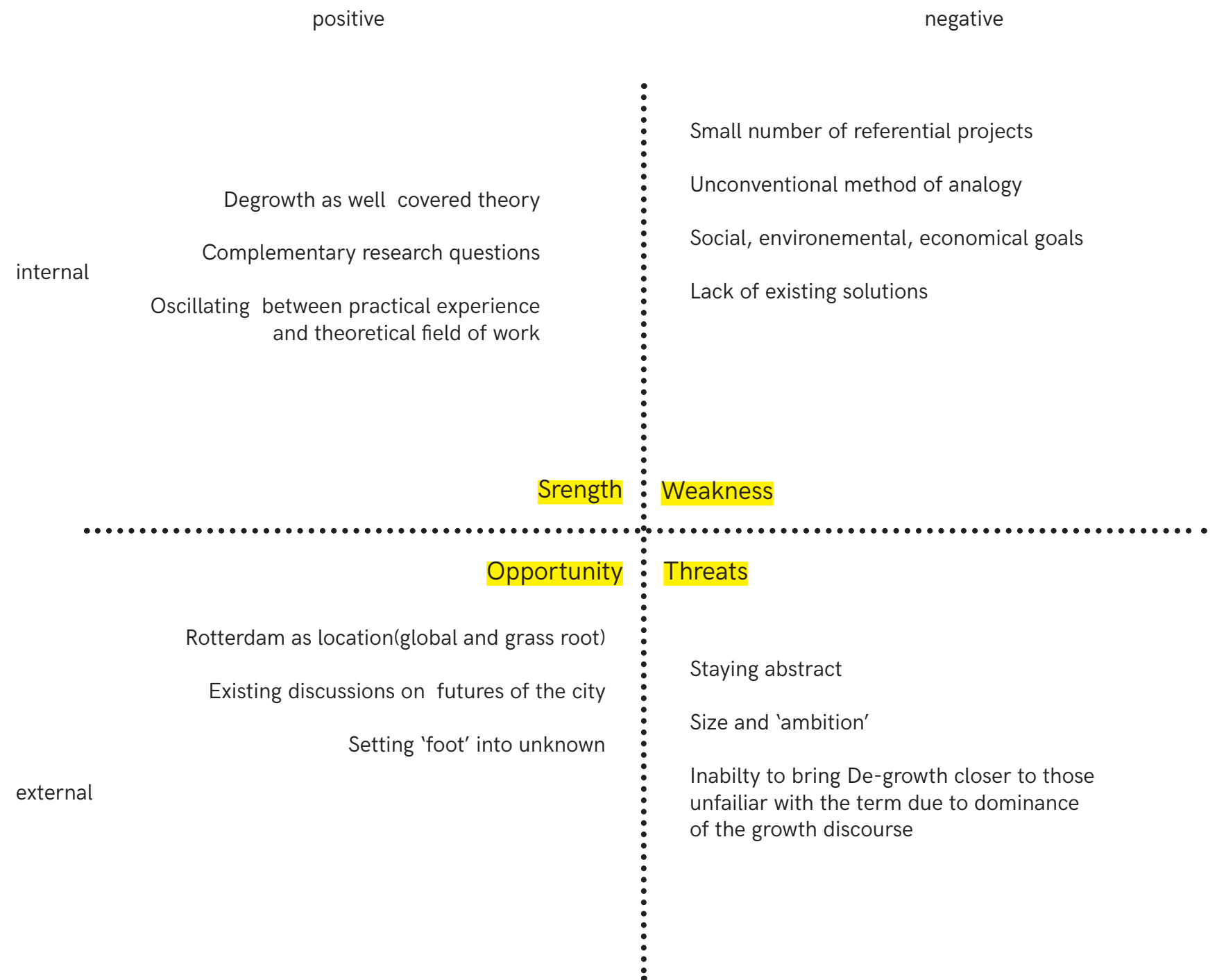
##### Opportunities

The chosen location of Rotterdam is rich with inspiration. At one hand one of the globally competitive cities with the harbour as an beautiful example of growth oriented generator of surplus, on the other hand flourishing history and presence of small scale initiatives that actively experiment with

new economies and living spaces. Opportunity is to use De-growth to change the balance between the two and direct the discussions on urban future towards more radical environmental demands.

##### Threats

The threat is to stay to abstract due to leaning on unprecedented theory. The De-growth has rational argumentation but it lacks solutions to its criticism in terms of their cohesion and feasibility. Analysis of many different scales might be hard to combine into one vision. Finally the dominant discourse of economic growth makes the idea of the city based on De-growth very distant from imagination. This means that project will be hard to translate into language that everybody can understand and accept.



[fig.16] SWOT analysis of objectives

## 5. Aim of the study - (De-)growth and the city

### 5.1. Aim of the study

The aim of the project is to use the city of Rotterdam (ch.7.1 and 7.2) as a test ground for implementation of the spatial implications derived from literature review and principles, concepts and space production inherited in collaborative practices (ch. 7.3 and 7.4) on different scales to spatial vision for the De-growth theory(ch. 8).\*

By finally presenting a model for new urbanity that takes in consideration the limits of our economical expansion besides the urban development being rethought the argument for existing alternative practices is built. These alternatives make the cities resilient, adaptable and affordable. As Castoriadis would put it, the project highlights the possibility that collaborative practices can help us to decolonize our imagination of how we think of city in relation of development.

### 5.3. Academic relevance

As the theory De-growth developed rapidly since early 2000's. Series of conferences and publications introduced the concept to the wider scientific audience, triggered reaction and elevated the 'missile concept' on the level of structured set of measures united around the one theory. Writing of Club of Rome about limits of the growth was picked by the whole range of authors and inspired number of theories in economics, environmental studies, social sciences etc. However it is not yet picked by the urban planing.

The academic relevance of graduation project is in line with this process. It is expressed in sub-research question (Q3) *What are the spatial implications of the De-growth theory?* Challenging the economic growth as criterion for evaluation of quality of life in society would have implications for the cities. Picking the objectives that are set by the literature on this topic project translates them into design proposal as a new vocabulary for imagining the future of the city without growth. It opens a professional discussion, giving the professionals in field of urban planing language for understanding De-growth and evaluating it.

### 5.4. Societal relevance

Societal relevance of the project has two sides. They are expressed with sub research questions (Q1) *How the imperative of growth shapes the city of Rotterdam?* and (Q2) *How does new non-growth oriented economy influence space in example of everyday practices of collaborative housing/work-ing?*

First one is the support in argumentation of urgency of change caused by the human impact on the nature. As the authors of *A blueprint for survival (1971)*, **Edward Goldsmith and Robert Allen** wrote "the breakdown of society and the irreversible disruption of the life-support systems on this planet" is not yet loudly considered as negative consequence of our development. By understanding the impact of the growth imperative on our life in the cities the urgency is brought to the perception of urban life. As city developed through strong agenda of economic growth and global dominance Rotterdam presents a good starting point. By using tools of urban planing the urgency pointed through the discourse of the limits of the growth should be offered a solution in the context of city of Rotterdam. The transferability is achieved by detailed presentation of implementation method. Spatial inputs are applicable to any urban context if similar method is followed.

The other relevance is stated through sub research question (b.). Importance of non-growth oriented economy is key for implementation

of De-growth. The number of small scale practices that hesitate from economic accumulation in order to practice different, radically sustainable values are seeds of this transition. (**Kallis, 2015**) The project supports this argument and wants to utilize their experiences for goals on larger scales. Even if collaborative practices exist in small numbers, there is a big amount of typological, structural and other variations. Therefore it would be interesting to find out what kind of urbanity they produce. In their principles, concepts and production of space lays the code for making the De-growth theory considerable in urban planing. At the same time if previous claim is true it would be the best way to build a valid argument for collective practices in housing.



## 6. Approach

### 6.1. Theoretical framework

Main body of knowledge revolves around the concept of De-growth (Latouche, 2009, Kallis, 2015, D'Alisa, Demaria, Kallis, 2015) and critical observations on the imperative of economical growth and limits of it (Kuznets, 1962, Club of Rome, 1972, Rifkin, 2014 etc). Through this readings, especially ones of Latouche and Kallis, implicated objectives of De-growth are translated into spatial inputs for planning and design. This part of theoretical framework is in detail covered in previous chapters (2.2., 2.3., 2.4., 3.1. and 4.2.)

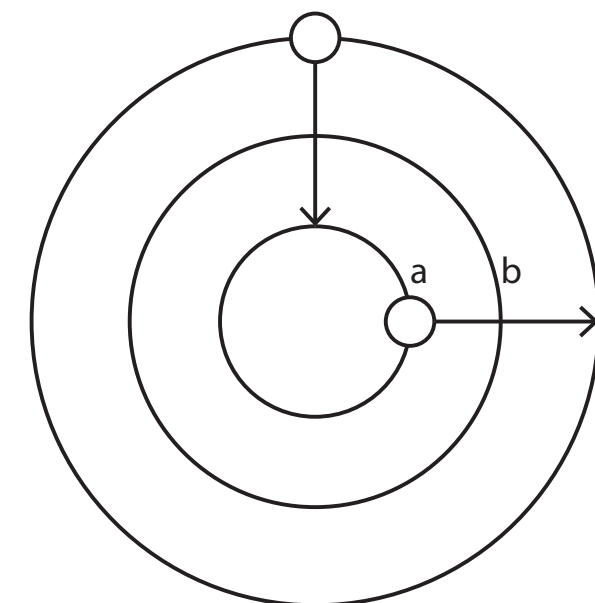
Personal experience of participation and study of self-organized and/or collaborative practices led me when researching possible methods of application of De-growth theory in practice. Here key insight was done through participation in project Stad in de Maak in Rotterdam Noord that actively experiments with new economies and combines living and work into new ways. However, the research was supported by the readings on collaborative housing and their relevance for the stated problem (Tummers, 2011, 2014, Buchholz, 2016, Maden and Marcuse, 2016) These readings helped to see how can professional field of urban planning evaluate this practices and create a framework for contextualizing their efforts.

Finally, in order to establish relation to spatial context of Rotterdam and be able to up-scale my conclusions I looked into studies and publications on different topics. In example: Urban Metabolism Rotterdam (IABR, 2014), Mapping urban agriculture potential (Dumitrescu, 2013), Room for Urban agriculture in Rotterdam (Eetbar Rotterdam, 2012), Rotterdam Stadsvisie 2030 (Geemente Rotterdam, 2007), Port vision 2030 (Port of Rotterdam, 2013) etc.

### 6.2. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study is described by the diagram on the right [fig.18.] Starting setting the De-growth as a goal I will look for analogies between the practices, concepts and spatial production of non-growth oriented local practices of squatting in Europe and Stad in de Maak in Rotterdam and urban elements of Rotterdam that carry potential for intended transition. Using this as a method the result will be presented in form of design proposal that will emerge from conclusions.

In order to get to conclusions i will use the methods and techniques that are described in chapter 3.2 and that are in detail explained by the diagram on the next page. [fig.19].

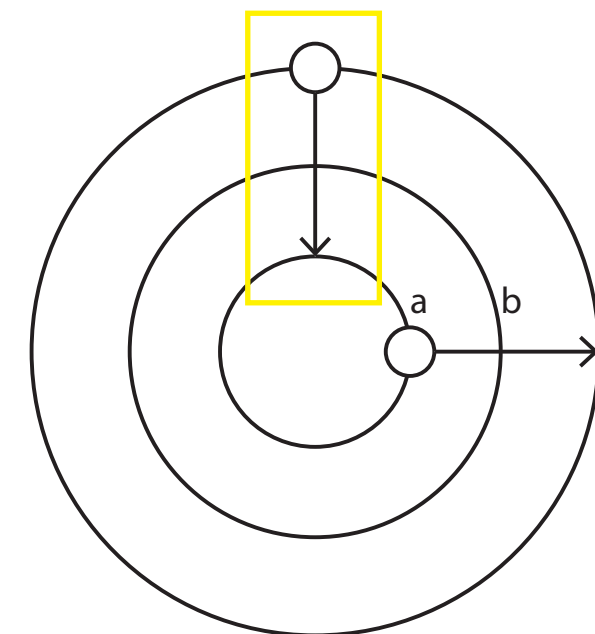


[fig.18] Possible approaches in conducting research.

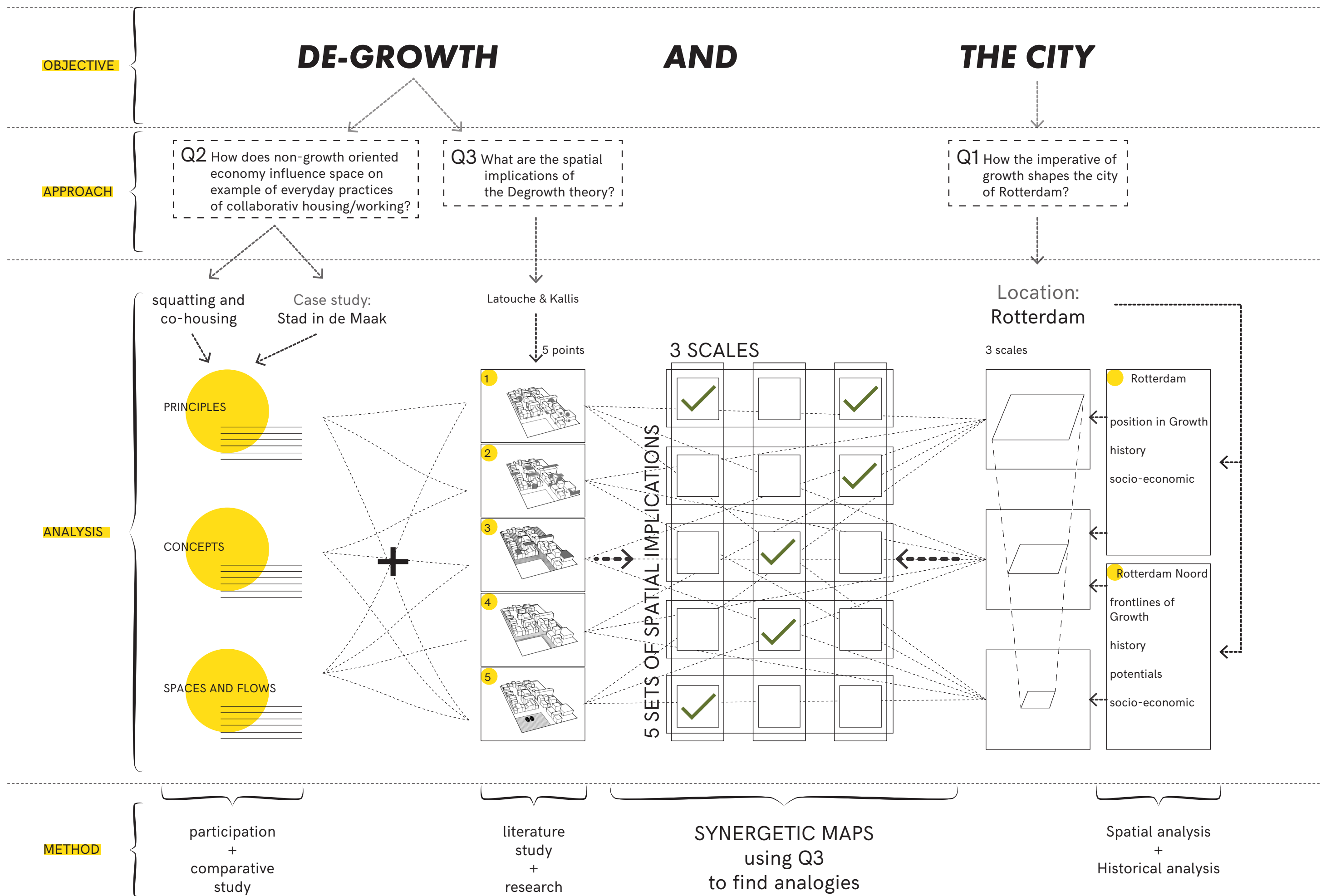
Three main parts (goal, method and product) can be differently prioritized (a,b,c) to answer the research question.

Approach can be deductive and inductive in terms of depth of research on topic.

The bottom diagram explains my choice.



- (c) **goal**-vision of Degrowth
- (b) **method**-analogies to collaborative housing/work
- (a) **product**-design proposal for city of Rotterdam



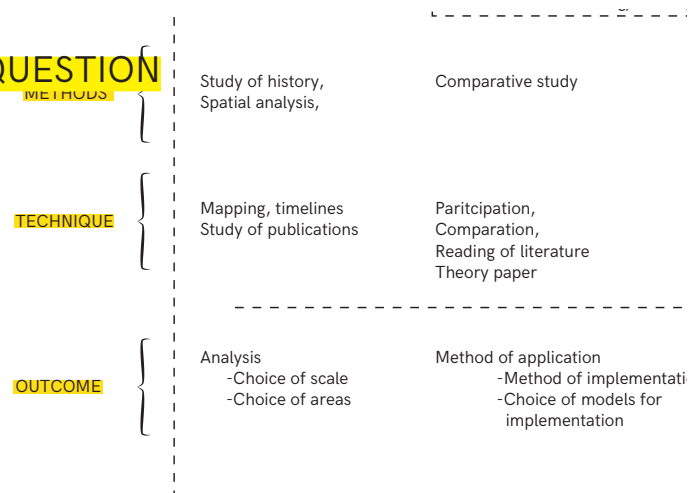
[fig.19] Diagram of research process





[fig.20] Satellite image of the Rotterdam area, Google maps

**SUB-RESEARCH QUESTION**





## 7. Analysis

### 7.1. Location analysis - Rotterdam

Rotterdam is situated in the western part of Randstad, the richest area of Netherlands. It is placed between the Green Heart of Netherlands and estuary of river Maas. River Maas, sea and infrastructure that connects it the most rich parts of Europe with the world are reason why Rotterdam is one of the largest ports of the world (between 5th and 10th) and largest in Europe. [fig.21] For this reason the city is called the Europe's gateway to the world. City it self has around 700 000 inhabitants that live in 14 districts.

Rotterdam is the city of constant transition. After the bombing in 1940 when most of the city's historical centre was destroyed it became site of intense development and renewal. After the center was rebuilt in most progressive manner of urban planning, during seventies large renewal plans less successfully changed the structure of living areas around the centre. In nineties big effort was put in redesigning city's relation to the river realizing project of renowned architects as Koolhaas and Piano. Today's it's centre is recognizable by its skyscrapers that are growing between the channels and city's remarkable commercial areas. In course of this transitions in recent years the space for many experimental projects and initiatives emerged. It is city with large number of migrants, emerging creative industries and with globally important business districts.

### i. Postition in global growth

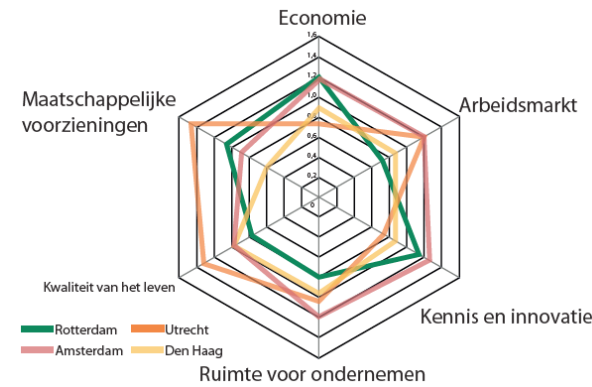
As already stated, city of Rotterdam is part of the Randstad area. It is one of the most developed conurbation areas in Europe. It is often not appearing on lists of richest metropolitan areas of the world due to big number Asian and African cities that are growing with immense rate.

However if we look at the map of the richest Europe cities and regions we will see that city of Rotterdam is position on the north end of the economically vibrant arc that stretches through centre of the continent. Knowing that Alps are closing it's southern end and that ship transport is still one of the most common modes of transport of all goods we can conclude that Rotterdam and Randstad will keep their role in the global economy. (Port of Rotterdam, 2007) This is further supported by the fact that it is among 10 biggest harbours and in close distance is Schiphol, 8th largest airport in the world.

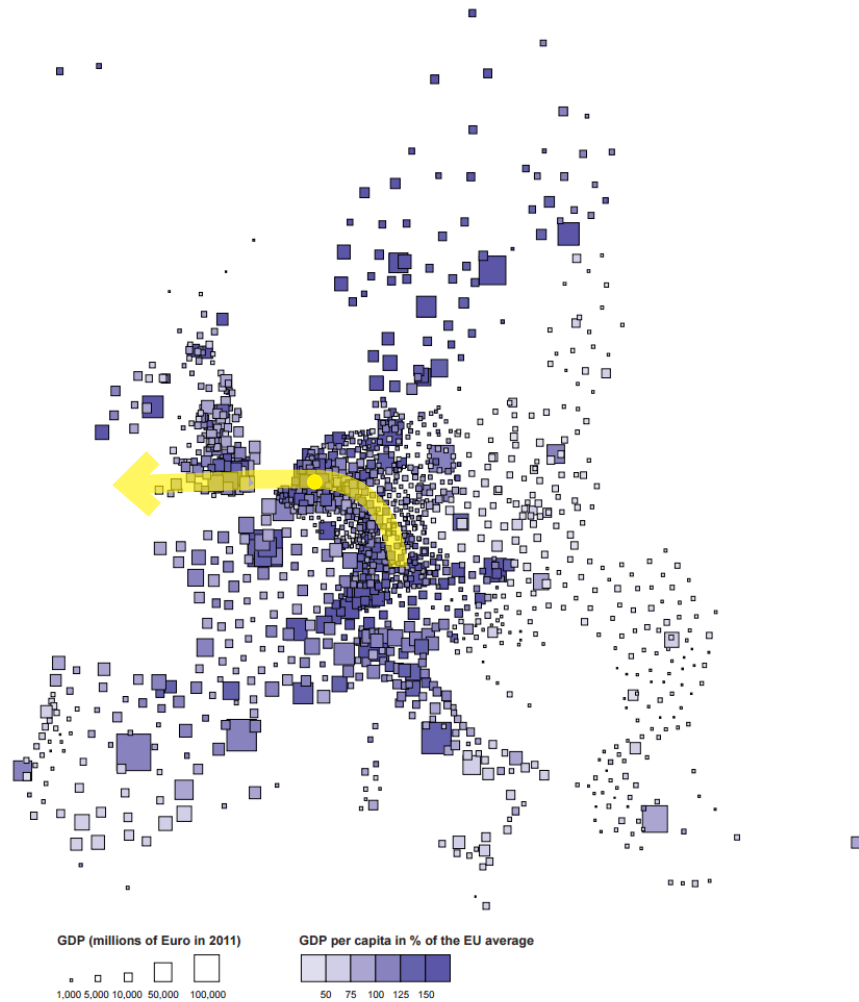
Main cities are Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Den Haag. Comparing these cities in terms of orientation on economy, quality of life, labour market, diversity, knowledge and innovation and civic amenities we can see Rotterdam's position within the Randstad. We can see that it competes with Amsterdam in orientation on economy and leading in innovation while not taking its part in labour market and having remarkably low quality of life. Reasons for this we can seek in fact that for a long period of time it was one of the poorest municipalities in terms of income per



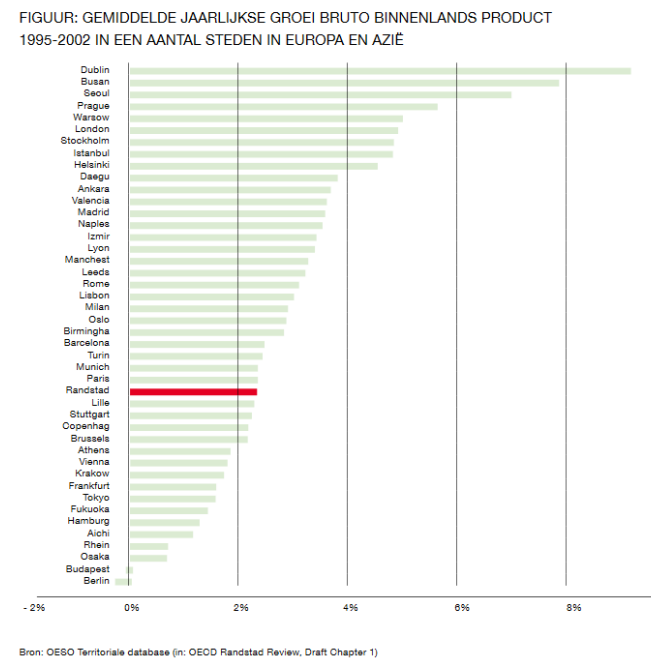
[fig.21] Rotterdam in Randstad, by author



[fig.22] Rotterdam in Randstad, cbs.nl



[fig.23] Rotterdam in Randstad, www.CityMetric.com



[fig.24] Rotterdam in Randstad, cbs.nl



household and only after golden age of Dutch economy in nineties it started its transition towards more diverse forms of business and production (ie. Creative industries, financial businesses).

Already here it is noticeable that main role in positioning city among the global most developed cities had the harbour and its economical growth. The size of it indicates that all surplus that this race brought to the city was further invested in more growth.

## ii. History

*Each phase in long history of the world economy raises specific questions about the particular conditions that make it possible.*

(Sassen, 2005)

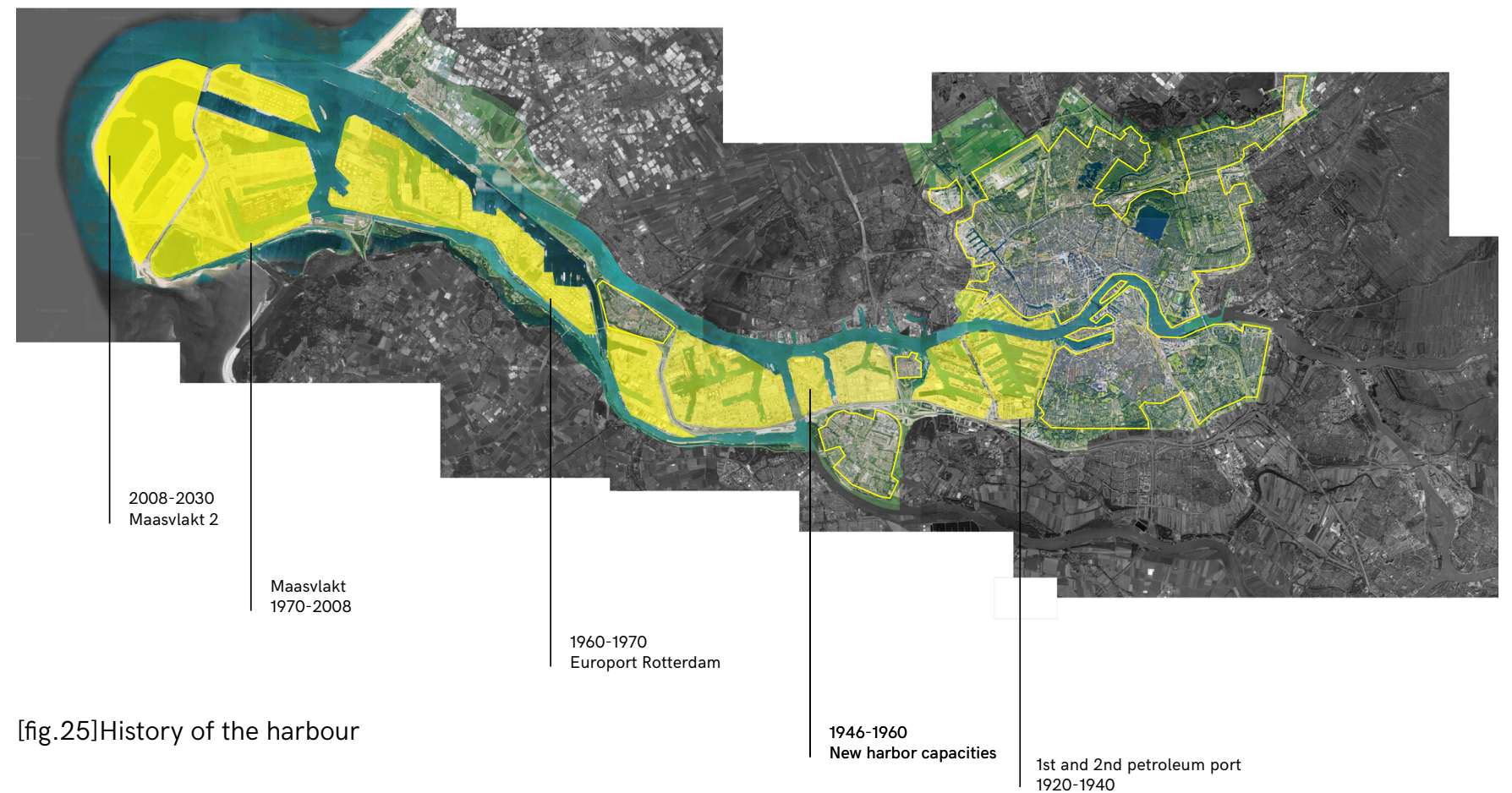
The same thing could be said for the economy of the city. In order to research the influence of growth imperative on the urban structure, population and quality of life in different periods it is necessary to look into history of the city. Here I decided to focus on specific relation between the physical growth of the city and growth of harbour. [fig.25] Next to it I tried to trace the changes in population. By this method I wanted to see how investment of surplus into harbour capacities affected the living areas of the city.

Harbour was originally on the north bank of the Maas where today's city main urban waterfront is. It grew first on the other river bank where the last harbour capacities worked until 1980's. New capacities for development were built towards

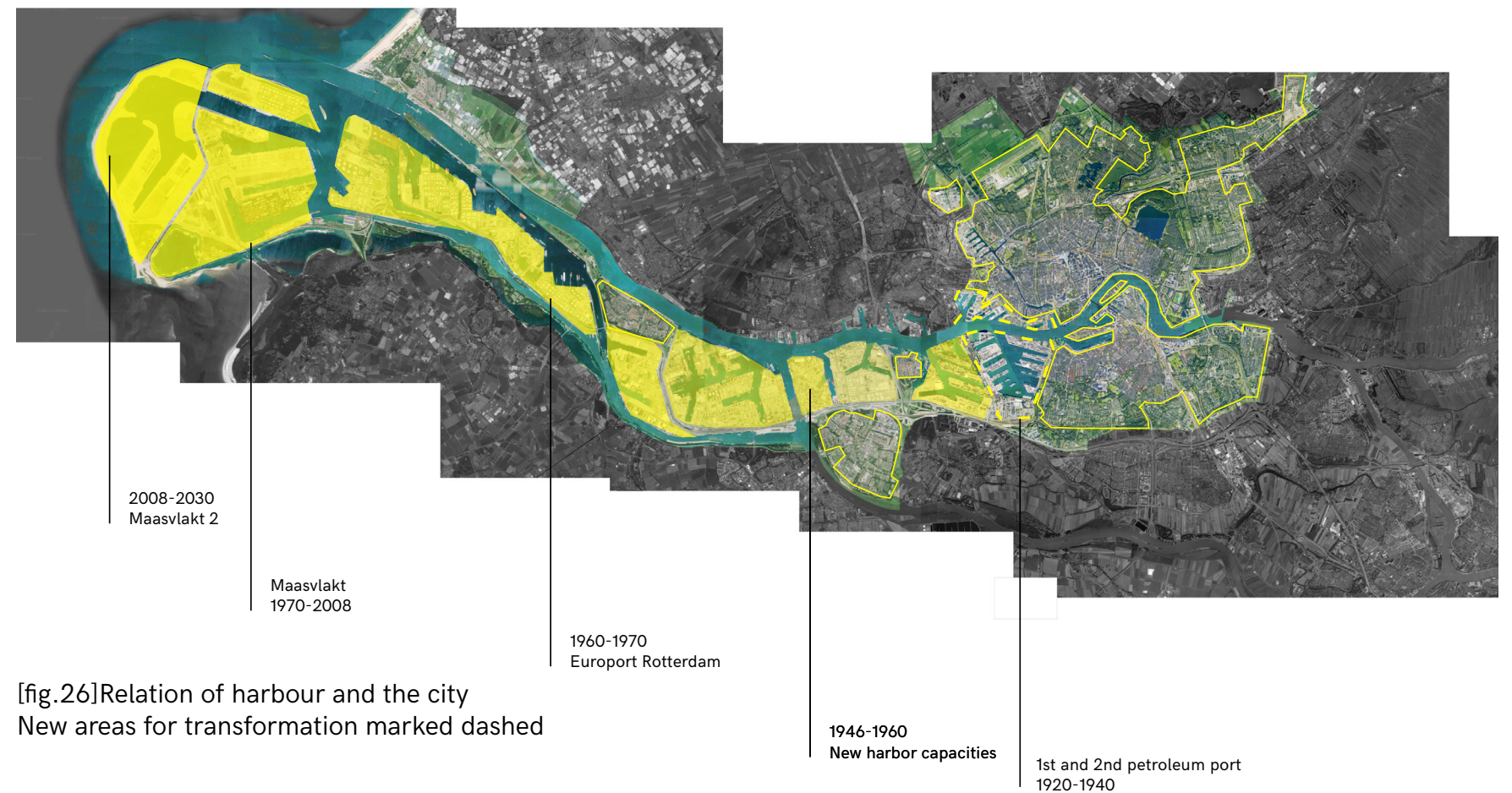
the east. First growing of harbour occurred in early 20th century with petroleum port. At that time living areas of the city grew significantly around historical center and towards south. We can say that prosperous period of the modern history of the city starts with this widening of the harbour. It continued until 1940 when one of the most significant events in history changes course of development. Rotterdam was bombed on the beginning of the 2nd World War. Rebuilding of the city marked the stagnation in terms of urban growth and part of the surplus of the harbour was directed in rebuilding the modern centre.

During this period old harbours are transformed into smaller recreational harbours. Until the 1970ies Rotterdam harbour continues to grow into one of the largest ports of the world. In 1962 it is officially the largest port in the world. At that time Rotterdam starts to have its contemporary size. However it is also period in which structure of population started to change. More migrant labour moved in and first effects of uneven development occurred. At that point large renewal projects start to change the living areas of the city. City is mostly a city of workers and poor people and one of the most dangerous cities in Europe.

Towards 2000s the harbour develops large areas on the far west of the city. Golden age of Dutch economy enables improvements in living standards. Special feature of this period were transformation of former harbour areas into representative living areas.

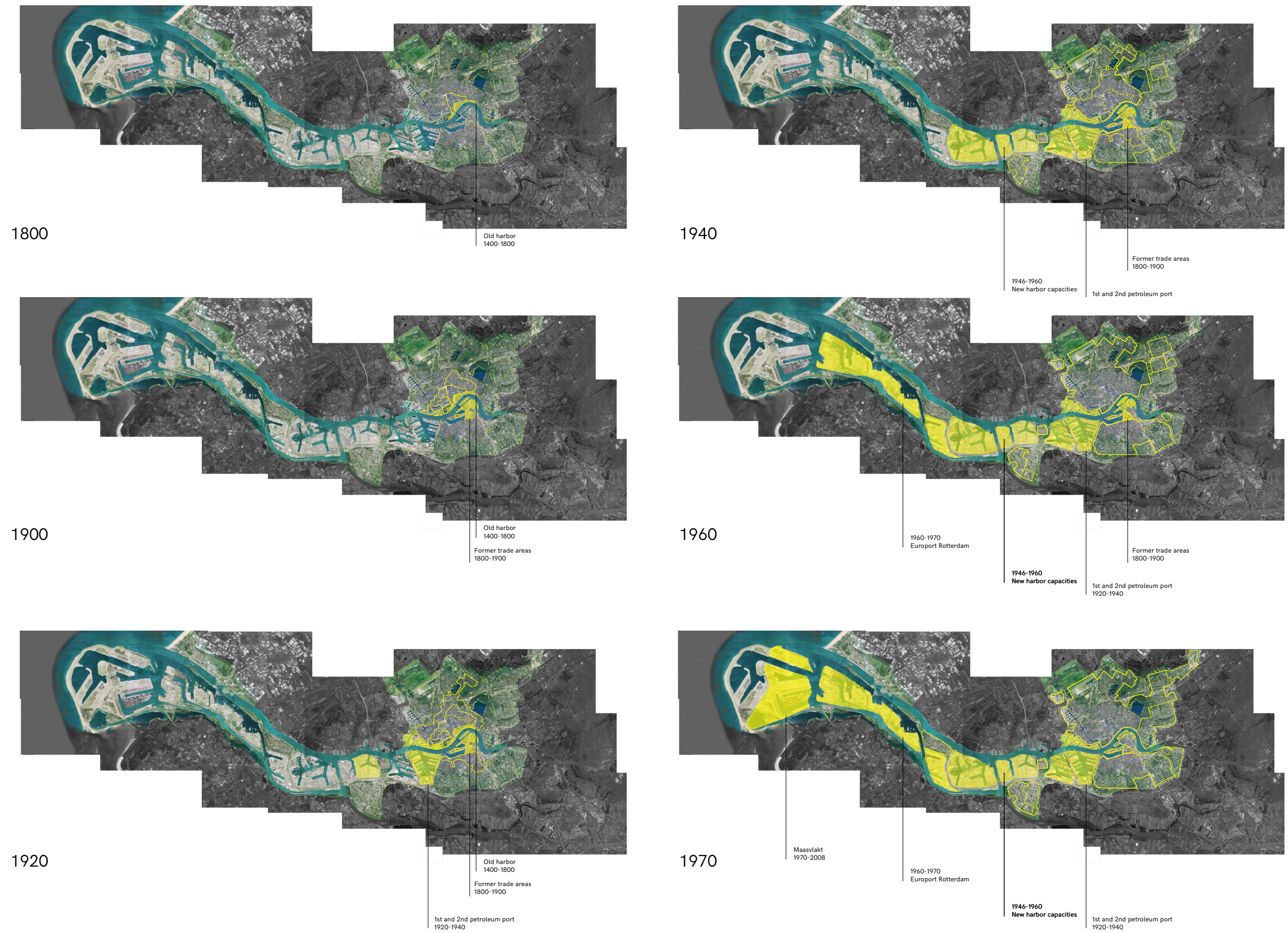


[fig.25] History of the harbour



[fig.26] Relation of harbour and the city  
New areas for transformation marked dashed





[fig.27]History of relation of the city and the harbour

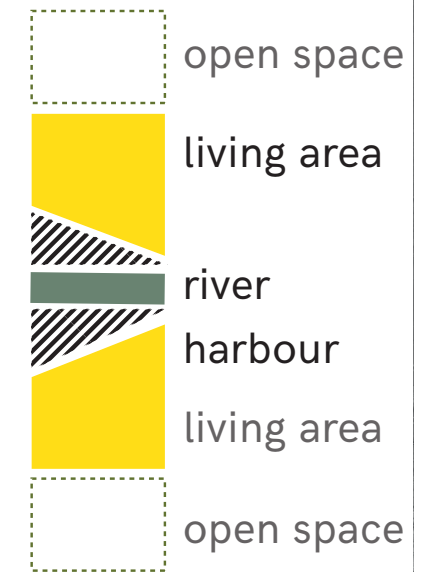
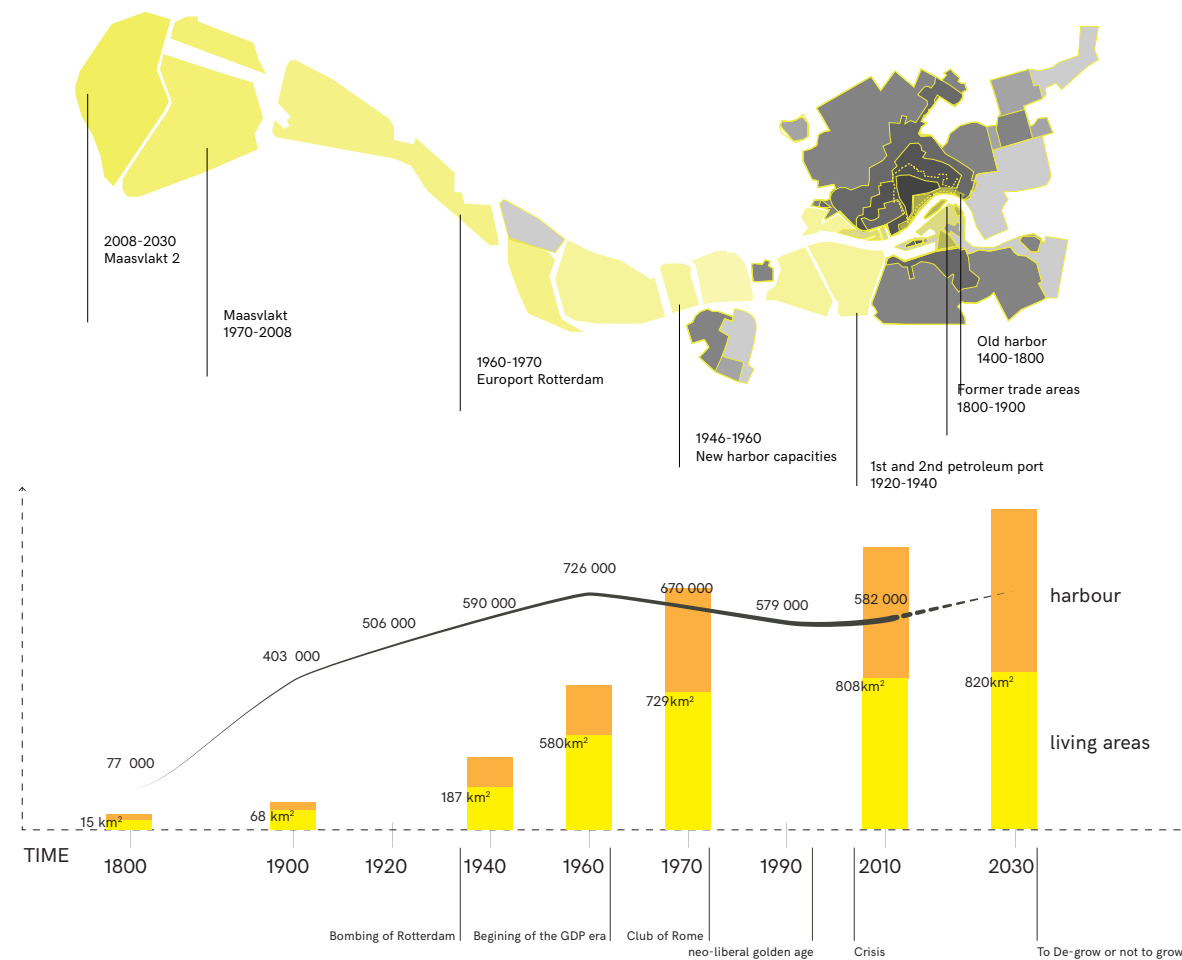


The city of Rotterdam has built itself on foundation of the growth imperative. Here it is important to say that harbour even though the harbour is a generator of this growth the living areas of the city didn't enjoy the same fruits of that development. When the harbour was expanding most rapidly the city itself stagnated in terms of population and quality of life. However most of the time harbour was the defining element of population migration and city expands.[fig.29]

Continuous transformation that take place on boundary between harbour and the living areas, same as river are the key for looking for locations for the implementation of the different futures. As Stealth. Unlimited points it is landscape of temporariness. Here the potential for De-growth can be tested. [fig.28]  
 In terms of scale the project should focus on scales that are encompassing all main elements of the city: harbour, river, living areas and open spaces. When zooming, as already stated it would be logical to start in the areas where harbour is transforming into more open forms at the moment.



[fig.28] Conclusion map  
 source: author



[fig.29] Comparison of harbour's and city growth  
 source: <http://www.mappinghistory.nl/projects/>



[fig.29] Port city safari  
source: Port City Safari, Stealth. Unlimited, 2007



## 7.2. Case-Study: Non-growth oriented practices - collaborative housing

When Kallis calls for recognition of grass-root practices such as co-housing, urban gardens, new currencies etc. as seeds for De-growth transition he points out that not all of them are consciously aware of their potential. However, he choose them because they are without exception re-defining the social relations and experimentally practising at least one if not all of the aspects of radical sustainability (social, economical, ecological) with intended non-growth principles:

*Such projects display various facets of degrowth. They promote a shift to a more locally based economy with short production and consumption cycles. They emphasize reproduction and caring, to satisfy use values, not profits. They replace wage labour with voluntary activity. They do not have a built-in tendency to accumulate and expand, and they are less resource-intensive than their counterparts in the formal economy. Such practices of "commoning" cultivate solidarity and humane interpersonal relations, and generate shared, non-monetary wealth.* (Kallis 2015)

For this reason analysis of this practices can give an answer to research sub research question: (Q2) *How does new non-growth oriented economy influence space in example of everyday practices of collaborative housing/working?*

When researching small scale non-growth oriented practices I

hope to find a code for translating objectives they share with the advocates of De-growth into inspiring inputs for urban planing.

### 7.2.1. Choice of case study

In vast diversity of different non-growth oriented practices I choose to focus Stad in de Maak in Rotterdam Noord. The project that defines it self as Pioneering urban econom based on collaborative practice.

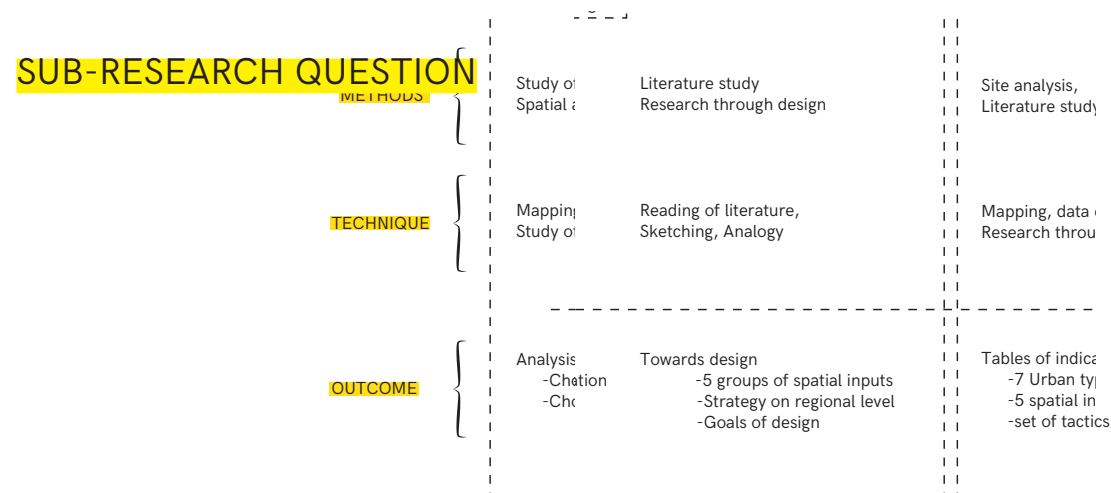
For two reasons. First is that their through participation I can have an insight in how they work. Working there one day a week and spending my time with people who collaborate on the project ensured me that their principles and objectives are closely conected to those of De-growth. They are not typical collaborative housing project because they insist on combining living with the work and they intentionally work on internalising circles of economy brining closer production and consumption. On top of that they practice recycling and re-use of materials and buildings. Also they are pro-actively implementing commons into their spaces and conviviality into their relations.

The other reason is that they are thinking of their work as a recipe for downscaling an economy and creating self-sustainable communities that can be translated to other places. While following set of long terms goals or principles they conceptualize them into their methods and everyday processes that finally result in particular produc-

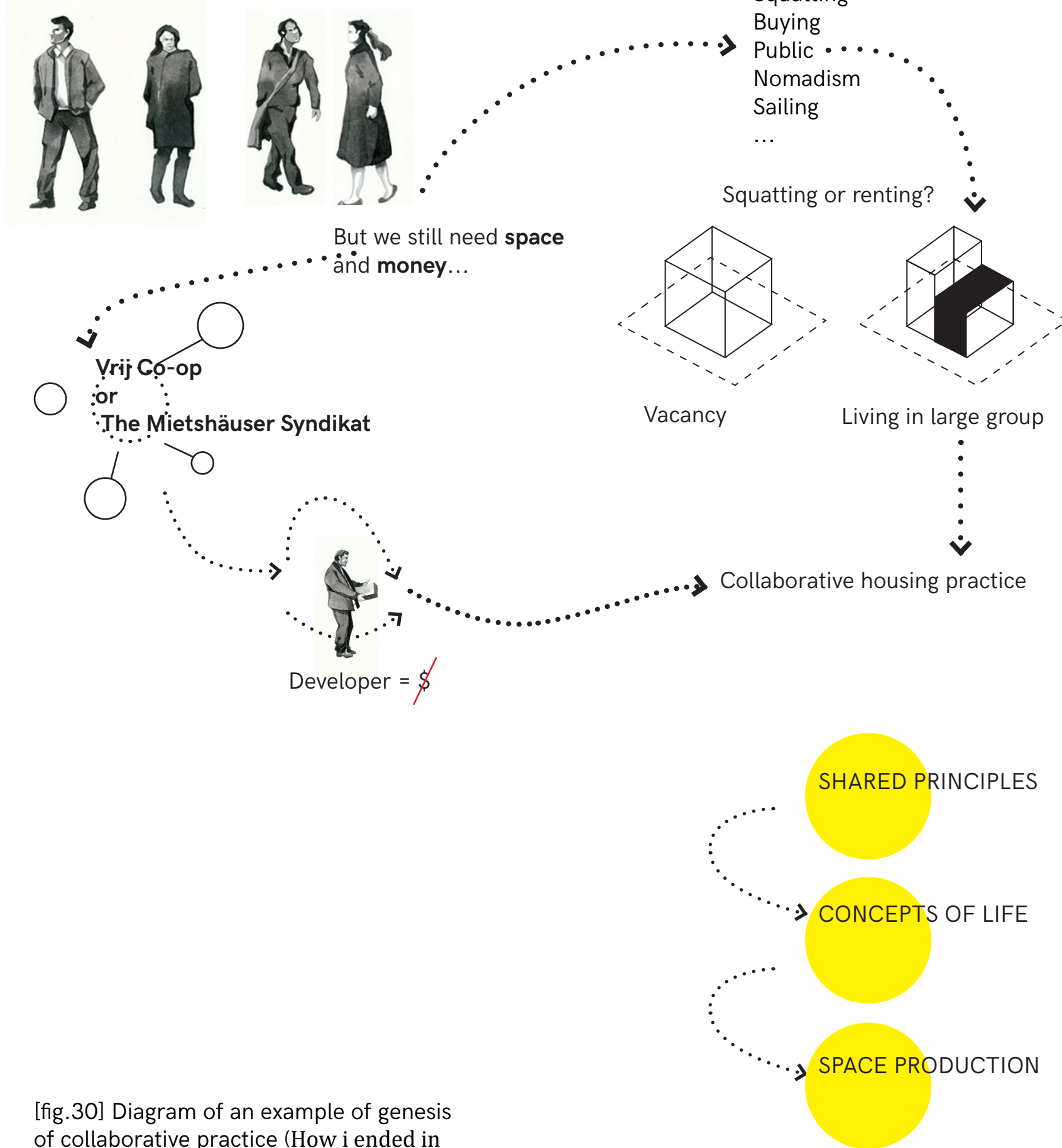
tion of space. Their discussion's are focused on sustaining radical social and economical autonomy on long term plan and opening opportunities for upscaling and translating their concepts and methods into other contexts.

Because they are clear in their method of applying the theoretical principles in everyday practice i find their work researchable and insightful for my research.

However in making my conclusions I used my expirience from 6 years of living, visiting and observing autonomous communities, squats and collaborative living projects. In my comparison and observations I sometimes did not just reflect on what Stad in de Maak is doing but also my previous and current expiriences on the side.



We want to live together cheap...



[fig.30] Diagram of an example of genesis of collaborative practice (How i ended in the house where i live now (Poortgebouw))

### 6.2.2. Principles, concepts, spaces

Recently the idea of co-operative housing is gaining attention as a third way of housing production. This concept of production of space is based on horizontal and democratic organizing to manage housing as need while expropriating real estates from market and to certain extent eliminating the third parties from deciding about your own housing conditions.

In my research I wanted to encompass number of different practices in housing that can be described as collective effort in housing as collective social and economical experience. Examples can range from traditional state recognized co-housing projects, over squatting and temporary-use practices to finally temporary autonomous zones like protests, occupations and festivals. *As form of non-property led housing model it presents a critical engagement with dualistic structure of property.* (Buchholz, 2016)

In this sense, chosen examples bring together new self-organized actors that are required social commitment to communities of shared values for alternative models of existence (ecological, economical, ethical, etc.). (Buchholz, 2016)

In order to structurally present the knowledge and experience obtained in almost 10 years of participation in squatting and alternative living projects I will compare the basic principles, concepts and spaces that are produced in these practices with those that are part of

practices with those that are part of more common perceptions that are present in majority of housing and initiatives that are not oriented on radical views of sustainability and imperative of growth. More details this will be presented in chapter 7.3.

By principles here are meant sets of values that are more or less successfully practiced in chosen examples. These principles are foundations for relating to existing patterns of social and economical interactions such as consumption and production, professionalism, distribution of surplus, ethical values etc.

Concepts are compared in terms of relating principles to every day life. Organizational patterns, perceptions, different comparable data represent the result of applying certain principles. They are in some cases measurable, in others they are symbolical, perceptual.

Finally spaces are most concrete and referable difference that is easy to communicate to everyone. The way how the space is organized, rooms that are appearing in case studies while not in traditional examples of housing show the difference.

As explained before, lack of larger relevant examples of in-trended refrain from orientation on economic growth directs me to experiences which I personally find most closest to what the goal of the project aims for.



## 7.2. Rotterdam Noord

In sense of the research method this chapter is more introduction for the body of analysis in following chapter that focuses on collaborative practices than it is important for final outcome.<sup>4</sup>

Rotterdam Noord is area right on the north of the main train station Rotterdam Centraal. For its location in vicinity of the city centre it is quite dominantly residential although its recently changing. It is at the same time the are of the city with the highest rate of depopulation and change in family structure. Onthe other hand large number of emerging experiments in collaborative housing, new economies and other grass roots initiatives are flourishing behind its pale suburban facade.

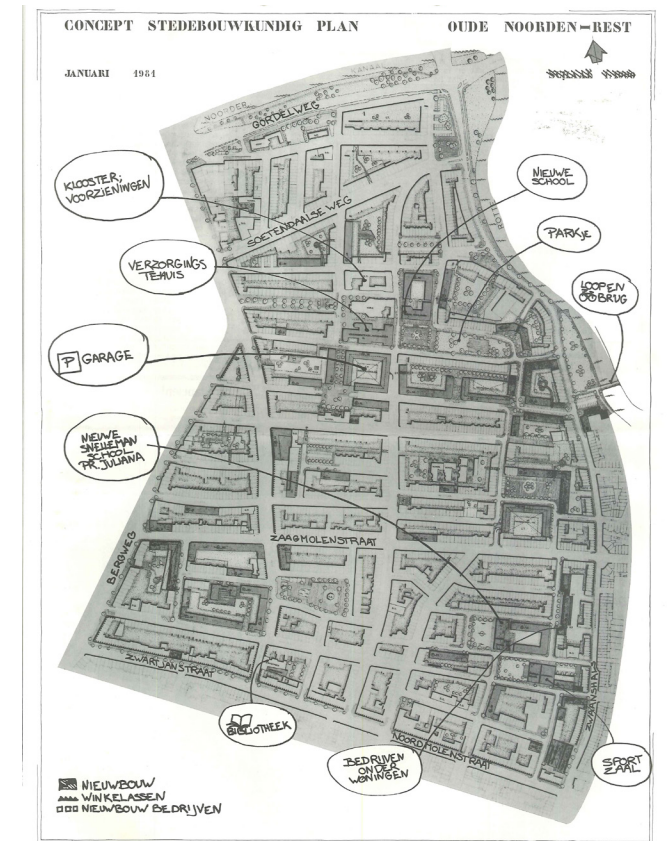
It is a good example of Rotterdam's transformations. Thorough its centre there use to run a small river called Schie. Until 1940ties houses on its banks used to be richest part of the city. After the bombing river was filled and area slowly transformed into a workers and imigrants neighbourhood. During 1970ties it was the place where conflicts over forced displacment and renewal were ofteh napping. Its dense structure of low rowed houses made it unuattractive for larger developments and hard to renew. For this reason its social structure is diverse and complicated. Maybe this is the reason for number of recents projects that are trying to refresh it on prepositions of different principles. In example, project Stad in de Maak is transforming 8 houses in

bourhood. During 1970ties it was the place where conflicts over forced displacment and renewal were ofteh napping. Its dense structure of low rowed houses made it unuattractive for larger developments and hard to renew. For this reason its social structure is diverse and complicated. Maybe this is the reason for number of recents projects that are trying to refresh it on prepositions of different principles. In example, project Stad in de Maak is transforming 8 houses in this area into self-organized hubs for experimenting in new urban economies, lifestyles and radically sustainable principles.

i On the frontline of Growth

As already written area of Rotterdam Noord used to be one of the richest areas of the city before WW2. As results of larger urban processes after the bombing it became site of partialy deprived and plans for renewal itended to demolish large amount of building in the area. On the edge of the area towards the city center the bombed buildings were substituted with modernist commercial block that after crisis turned into gentrification generators. This partially improved image of the neighbourhood. On the other hand since 70ties in this area there was number of neighbourhood initiatives and squats that were struggling against prescribed course of development. Here we can trace the begining of vivid network of grass-roots movements and initiatives. Until today it stayed most active area of the city in this sense.

Under its pale, homogenous appearance of low-quality housing with small commercial streets there is an intensive life of alternative housing and living initiatives flourishing, in some cases conflicting. Layers of neighbourhoo collaboration ranges from government initiated or formalized co-housing and support property guardianship to self-organized initiatives and illegal squats.



Zo kan het Oude Noorden er over 10 jaar uitzien

[fig.31] Example of 'renewal' plan made by inhabitants as oppositoin to plans of municipality.  
source: Slopen, Bouwen, Spelen and Parkeren, neighbourhood newspaer, private archive of interviewee

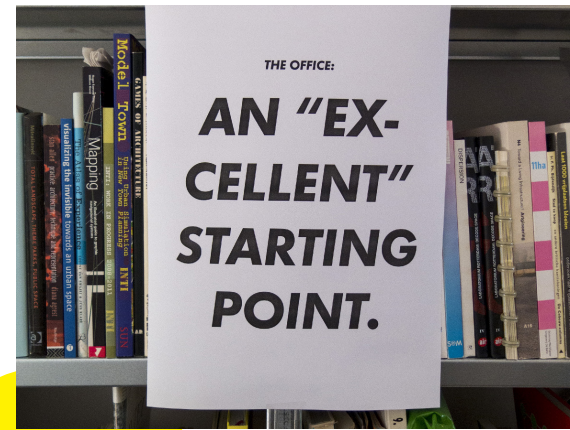


[fig.32] Struggle over Fiets Fabriek, 1984  
source: <https://maps.squat.net>



[fig.33] Stad in de Maak action  
source: SIDM\_presentatie, SIDM, 2015





Negotiating vacant properties in Rotterdam

Restoring them by hands-on communities

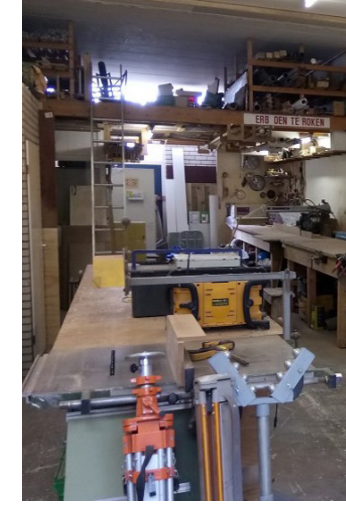
Housing and working spaces in collective ownership and management

Thinking of long-term socially and economically sustainable life in the city

[fig.34] Stad in de Maak's approach  
source: SIDM\_presentatie, SIDM, 2015

[fig.35] Stad in de Maak's projects in Rotterdam

Noord area  
source: author



### 7.3.2. Stad in de Maak

Collective Stad in de Maak is Rotterdam based collective that is really into collective housing. 'City in the Making' has been initiated by Erik Jutten, Piet Volvaard and Ana Džokić + Marc Neelen (STEALTH.unlimited) and at this point they work with buildings in Rotterdam turning them into co-housing platforms. They are also initiators of Vrij Co-op, a international (covering Belgium and Netherlands) organization for exchanging experiences in collective housing.

Their projects are clustered in Rotterdam Noord because that is the area where housing corporation Havensteder has most of vacant real estate. What Stad in de Maak does is negotiation of temporary contracts for vacant buildings where they set collaborative projects that combine living and work. Upper floors are used as living spaces being cheaply rented to young people that can't afford Rotterdam's prices. The ground floors are used as commons, from bicycle and motorbike repair shops to artist residences and co-operative businesses. They are together and example of implementation of new economy and new housing experiments. This area into self-organized hubs for experimenting in new urban economies, lifestyles and radically sustainable principles. These few houses are in nutshell showcases of possible redistribution of activities, re-scaling and re-localizing of neighborhood, commoning and networking.



- 1 TAKE PROPERTY FROM THE MARKET
- 2 AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND WORK
- 3 COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP / USE
- "COMMONS" EXEMPT FROM RENT
- 4 ECONOMICALLY, SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE
- 5 DEMOCRATICALLY ORGANIZED
- 6 LARGELY SELF-ORGANIZING
- 7 OWN REVOLVING INVESTMENT FUND
- 8 WHENEVER POSSIBLE, BOLDLY ON OUR OWN!

PRINCIPLES

[fig.36] 8 explicit principles that SIDM follows  
source: <http://www.stadindemaak.nl/>

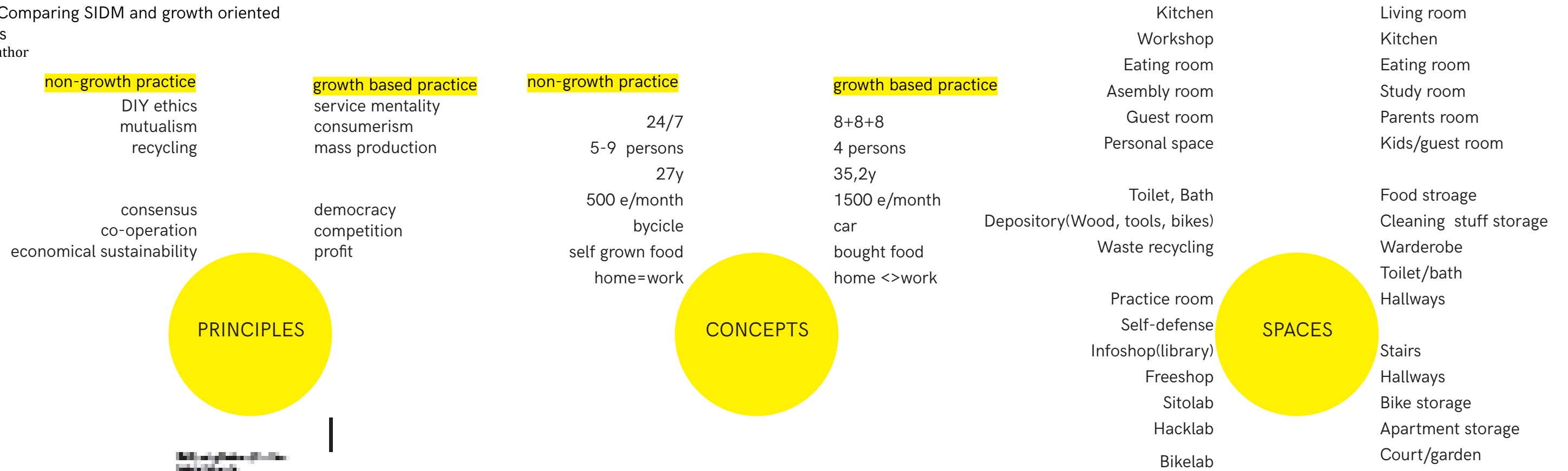


[fig.37] Timeline of Pieter de Raadstraat 35/37  
source: <http://www.stadindemaak.nl/>



[fig.38] Stad in de Maak archive presenting different flows of knowledge, resources and experiences of their practice  
source: SIDM archive

[fig.39] Comparing SIDM and growth oriented practices  
source: author





## 8. Research & Design ( for De-growth)

### 8.1. Research conclusions

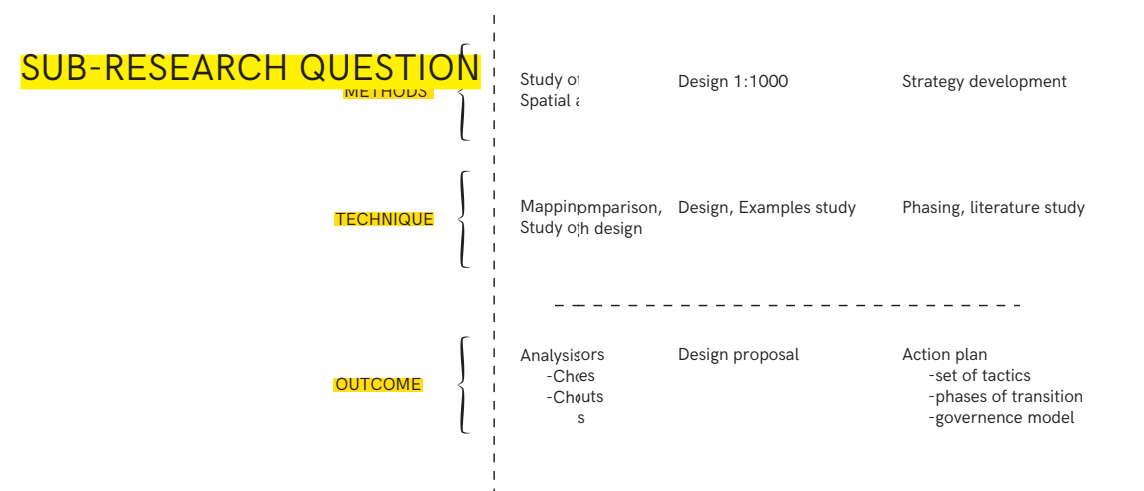
The research of the city of Rotterdam brought the focus on four main elements of the city which have to be taken in consideration: Harbour, river, open spaces and living areas. Historically the relation of the four was defined by the priority of development. Relation of these elements thus has to be seen through different eyes if the De-growth principles are considered. Transformation of harbour into more open and transparent space has to be in the root of general transformation. Areas where the harbour was open for new housing developments always were test grounds where the city implemented new agendas (Christaanse, 2015). Continuous transformation that take place on boundary between harbour and the living areas, river and both other elements are the key for seeking for locations for testing models of De-growth. *'The foreseeable future will be like this. It is interesting to think of these lands as temporary landscapes. When things get finished up and levelled-out there is little space for imagination left. Ok, that's it - but is it exciting?'* (Stealth.Unlimited, 2008)

Also the expected continuous rise of number of inhabitants implies densification and rethinking of housing distribution. Potential for this is definitely carried in the existing vivid showcase of experimental

collaborative projects as analysis of Rotterdam Noord's Stad in de Maak showed. These projects can become a seeds for different thinking of the city and region as whole. Different studies for future of Rotterdam give an importance to sustainability. Since taking a radically different position on concept of sustainable growth is central to the De-growth theory the space for new type of sustainability has to be found. Open spaces and again large areas of harbour that are waiting for development or transformation offer a clue. Rotterdam needs stronger relation to water finally. It has to be rethink as most common good of the city.

Insight in Stad in de Maak's practice gave a trace of what atmosphere and value can be produced with premises of slower, more content city dedicated to its more balanced role within the limited system of Earth. The topics such as commoning, combination of working and living space, conviviality, economy care have to be investigated more. This chapter shows results of this investigation.

[fig.31] Map of conclusions on the research.  
Main areas of interest: Transition of hrabour and living areas



## 8.2. Spatial inputs for Degrowth – 5 points

After the process of analysis of the given location and possible methods of implementation, next step is to transform the theoretical reading of De-growth into now familiar spatial context. For this 5 major urban planning topics are chosen to centre the implication of literature reading: Mixed use, Density, Public space, Infrastructure and Energy. By using the objectives that Latouche offered each of this topics is related to one of his objectives:

*It will be recalled that the eight independent objectives that can trigger a virtuous circle of serene, convivial and sustainable contraction are: re-evaluate, reconceptualize, restructure, redistribute, relocate, reduce, re-use and recycle.* (Latouche, 2012)

This way pairs are made that give an coherent set of spatial inputs to work with further. [fig.40] The redistribution of activities (care, commercial activities and commons) relates mixed use topic. Re-scaling and relation between everyday spaces for life and work are encompassed in topic of density where urban fabric and its content meet. Rethinking of public space in the city is set as third topic. The restructuring of infrastructure is the topic that has a potential to open discussion on changes in prioritizing different flows in the city. Finally rethinking the production of energy is set as independent topic.

In following five chapters each of the topics will be clarified

more in detail through relevance, purpose, method, scale and expected outcome.

Main 5 spatial inputs as combination of urban topic to be adressed and equivalent in terms of Degrowth objectives:

### a) Mixed use-REDISTRIBUTION OF ACTIVITIES:

A big amount of the care work and commercial activities would be redistributed among the community. Most of collective life would happen around commons that would reduce the need for tools, energy and time in terms of amount because of sharing of work etc. That means that Commons would have specific and precise function and would be used by many.

### b) Density-RE-SCALING:

The core concept of distribution of goods in society would become Commons. Neither public, neither private concept of economic engagement would need a new type of connections and a lot of localized networking. This is a field to rethink the whole scale of neighborhood. Reduction of use of resources and processes of re-convivialization of tools would intensify social relations in the neighborhood. Number of activities would actually merge and have need to be closer to each other. The city would become more condensed and there would be bigger number of activities happening in a less amount of space.

### d) Public space-RE-EVALUATE COMMONING:

Since big part of life would happen in community and commons would take a new role in socialization and democratization of social relation there would be less need for the plain public space that does not have function. That means that it can be turned into green areas for recreation and ecological renewing of the urban landscapes.

### c) Infrastructure-RE-STRUCTURE TRAFFIC (and food supply):

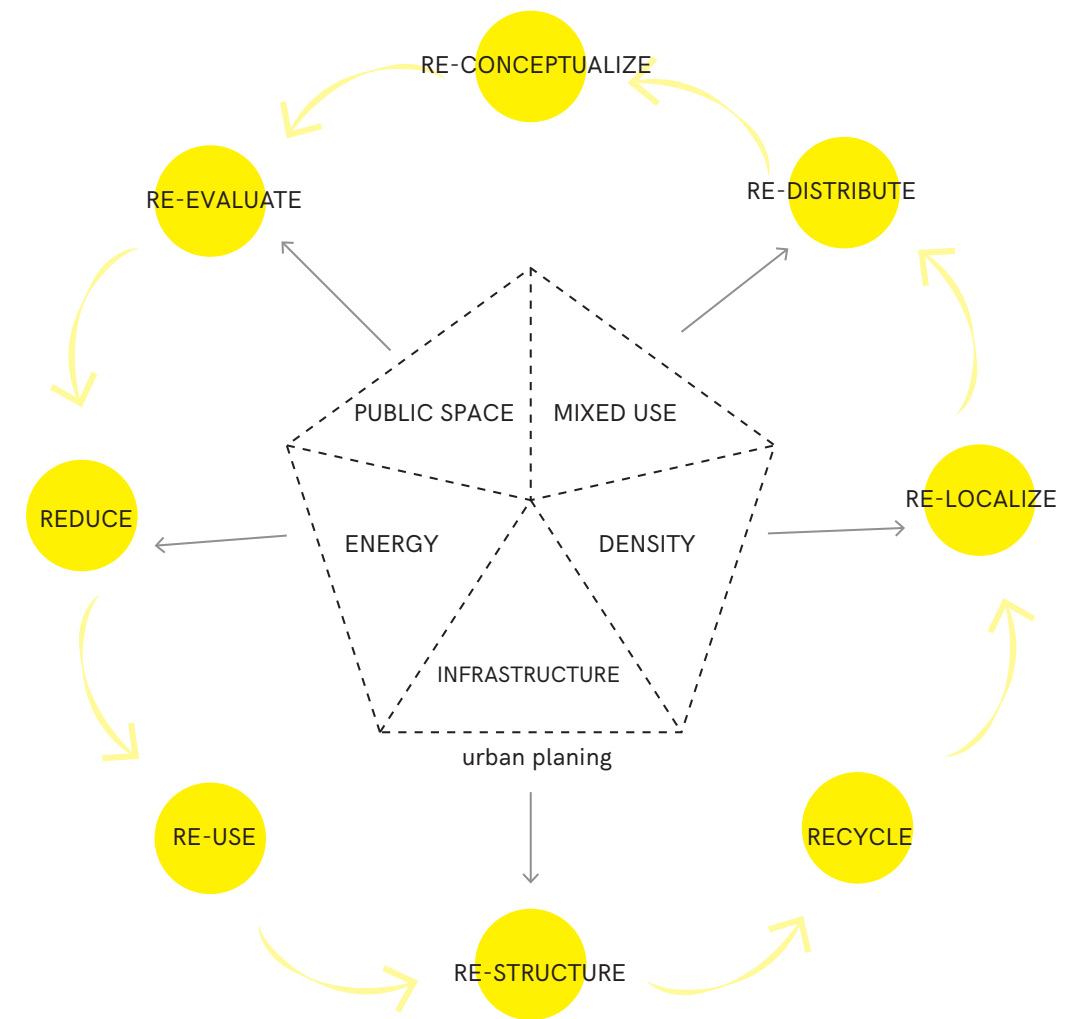
The city consists of large structures. One of the most spatially and energy wise demanding structures in the city at the moment is traffic infrastructure. In the Degrowth scenario this physical structure can be reduced to the minimum, even through forced measures. Amount of the space gained by this can be redirected to different function like *paideia*<sup>5</sup>, food growing, reducing ecological footprint etc. It can be used for a completely new infrastructure that can be build on the place of the traffic infrastructure. Like agricultural system for the new city or local production of energy.

### e) Energy-RETHINKING LOCAL PRODUCTION:

Using energy efficiently is not a solution of limiting the growth.

Energy has to be used in the way that it is not taken out of ecological systems but using of it becomes part of the circle of ecological life. This goes same for energy and resources. Recycling and reuse are basic steps. So recy-

cling gardens, sharing and reusing material facilities, recycling facilities, small water collection lakes, wind turbines and other energy plants would become standard equipment of neighborhood. Question is the scale. Simplification and localization of life are some of the next steps in rethinking the using of our resources. That means that one's life would happen in certain radius of the city and he/she could get most of what they need there. This is main parameter for re-scaling things.



[fig.40] Connecting Latouche's objectives for Degrowth to urban planning  
source: author



### 8.2.1. Mixed use-Redistribution of activities

#### (a)Relevance:

*How to involve commoning and economy of care in urban fabric?*

A big amount of the care work and commercial activities would be redistributed among the community. Most of collective life would happen around commons that would reduce the need for tools, energy and time in terms of amount because of sharing of work etc. That means that Commons would have specific and precise function and would be used by many.

#### (b)Purpose:

(1-Regional scale) To show cohesion between city, harbour and open spaces

(2-District scale) To provide guidelines for redistribution of activities in neighbourhood

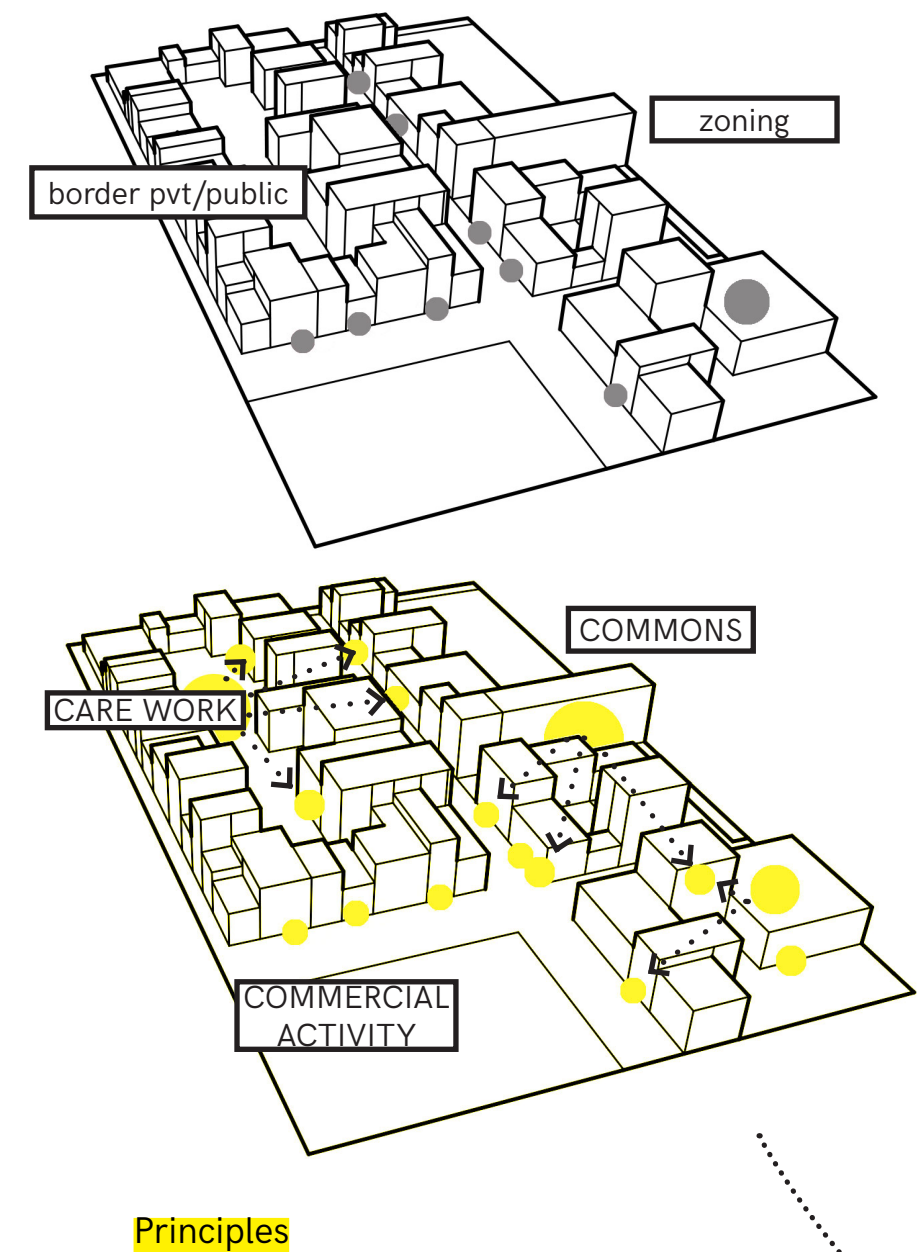
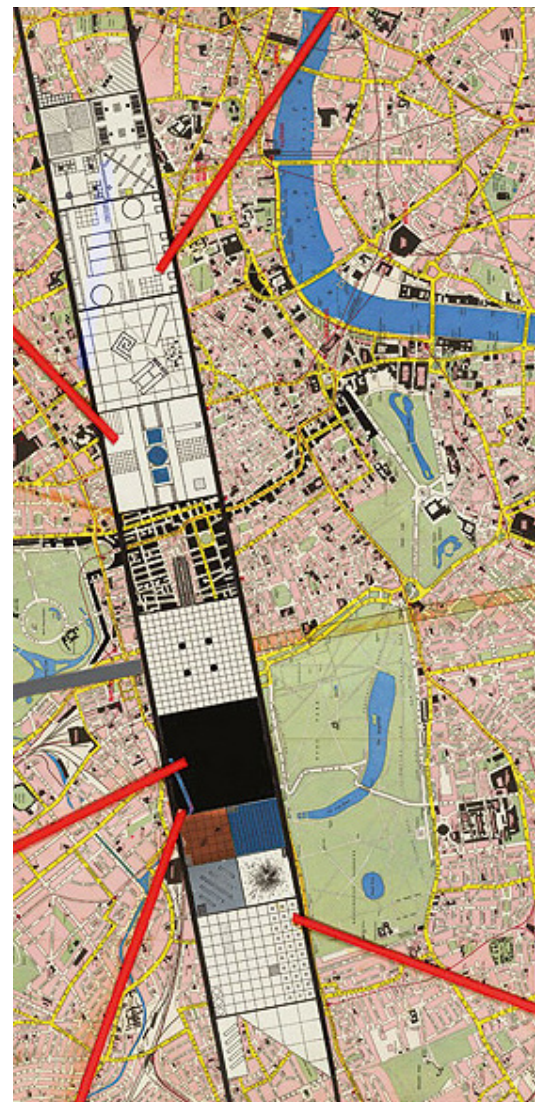
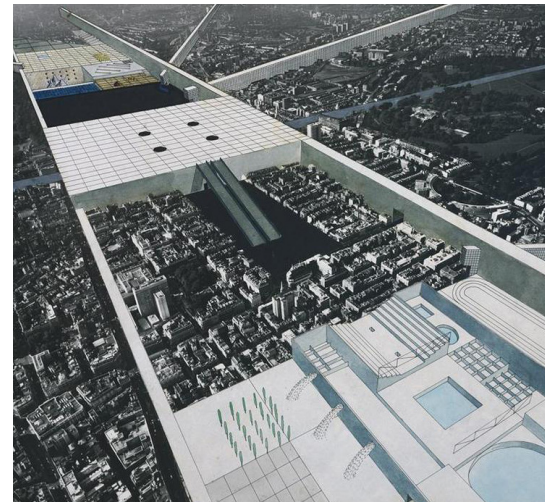
Envisioned transformation of the city encompasses transition from the globally competitive city towards locally self-sustained city. Consequentially it would mean that consumption would be less attractive than convivial interaction through shared work and learning. Revaluation of large amount of unpaid work and redistribution of unattractive work would change the relation between public and private space. This leads to conclusions on two scales: The relation of harbour as large production area, open spaces oriented on agriculture and living areas has to be changed.

in order to allow more local production and smaller economical circles. Except on regional scale this process has to happen on district scale. At the moment economic activities are placed on the boundary between the public and private space, on the outer edge of the housing block usually. Introduction of new care related facilities, communalizing the work and re-valuing local economy as well as urban production of food will break this boundary. Drawing the image of the radically sustainable neighbourhood is about presenting cooperation and localisation on the most immediate scale.

(c)Method: This implications can be tested on two scales the region and the district. The medium for both of them is mapping. However data source in case of regional scale is online available datasets for GIS software and reading of different planning documents. Based on this tracing is done that lead to conclusions on this scale. On the district scale the mapping is done based on participation in Stad in de Maak projects and interviews. The experimental economy that is practised in area of Rotterdam Noord gives a good ground for rethinking the boundary between private and public.

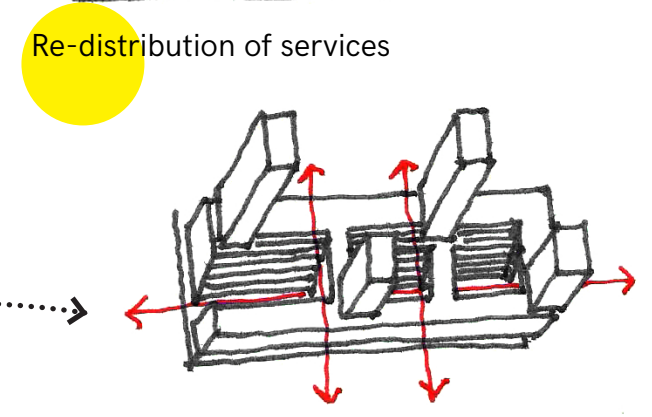
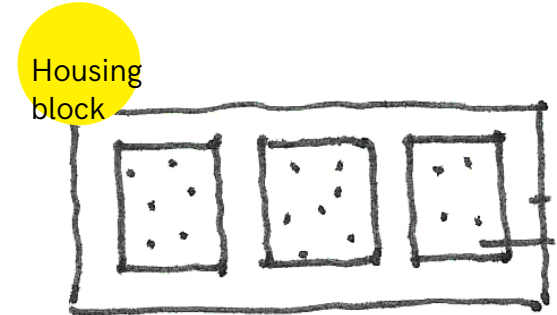
(d)Outcome: Both of the scales are presented on level of conceptual scale to indicate how the principle works on the large scale and in relation with following inputs. However the point of redistribution of activities is work out more in detail on district scale. It is part of the

proposal for new housing in different urban areas. The setting of the new economy based on the values of De-growth is elaborated in set of actions that help the final users obtain inspiration from the large scale principles.

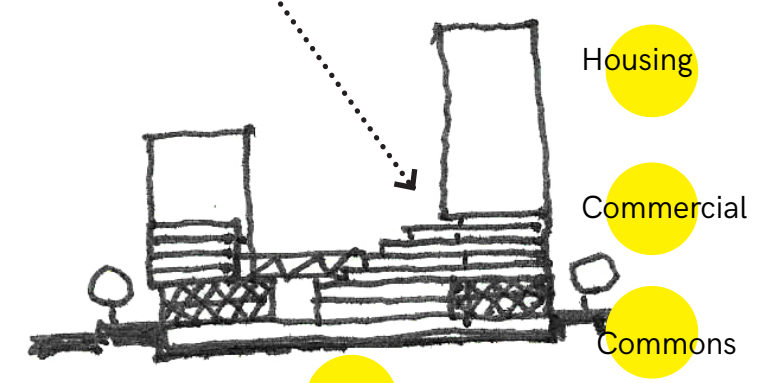
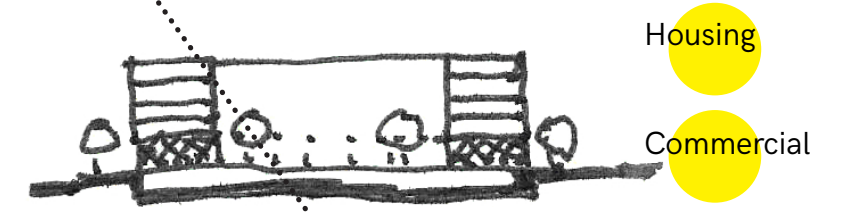


[fig.41] Rem Kolhaas-Exodus  
source: [online]Google images

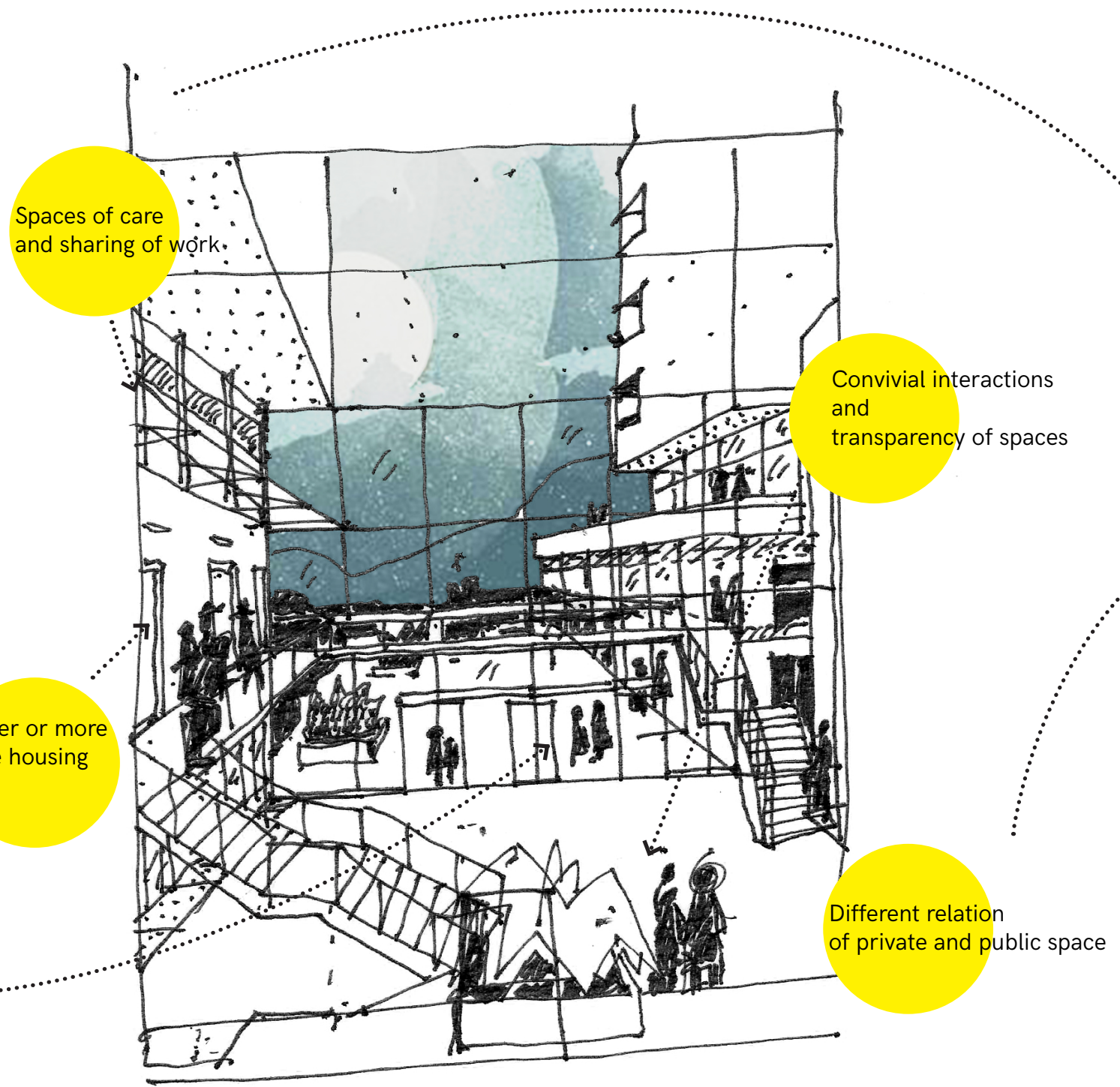




Spaces?



Economy of care



Conceptions



## 8.2.2. Density-Re-scaling

### (a) Relevance:

*How to combine living and working in existing urban form?*

The core concept of distribution of goods in society would become Commons. Neither public, neither private concept of economic engagement would need a new type of connections and a lot of localized networking. This is a field to re-think the whole scale of neighbourhood. Reduction of use of resources and processes of re-convivialization of tools would intensify social relations in the neighbourhood. If the city needs to control its ecological footprint that means that it has to stop grow through sprawl which then implies densification. Taking in consideration that population of Rotterdam will grow in the future this means new types of housing. Number of activities would actually merge and have need to be closer to each other. The city would become more condensed and there would be a demand for a different typologies. This applies especially on harbour which has a lot of potential for transformation.

### (b) Purpose:

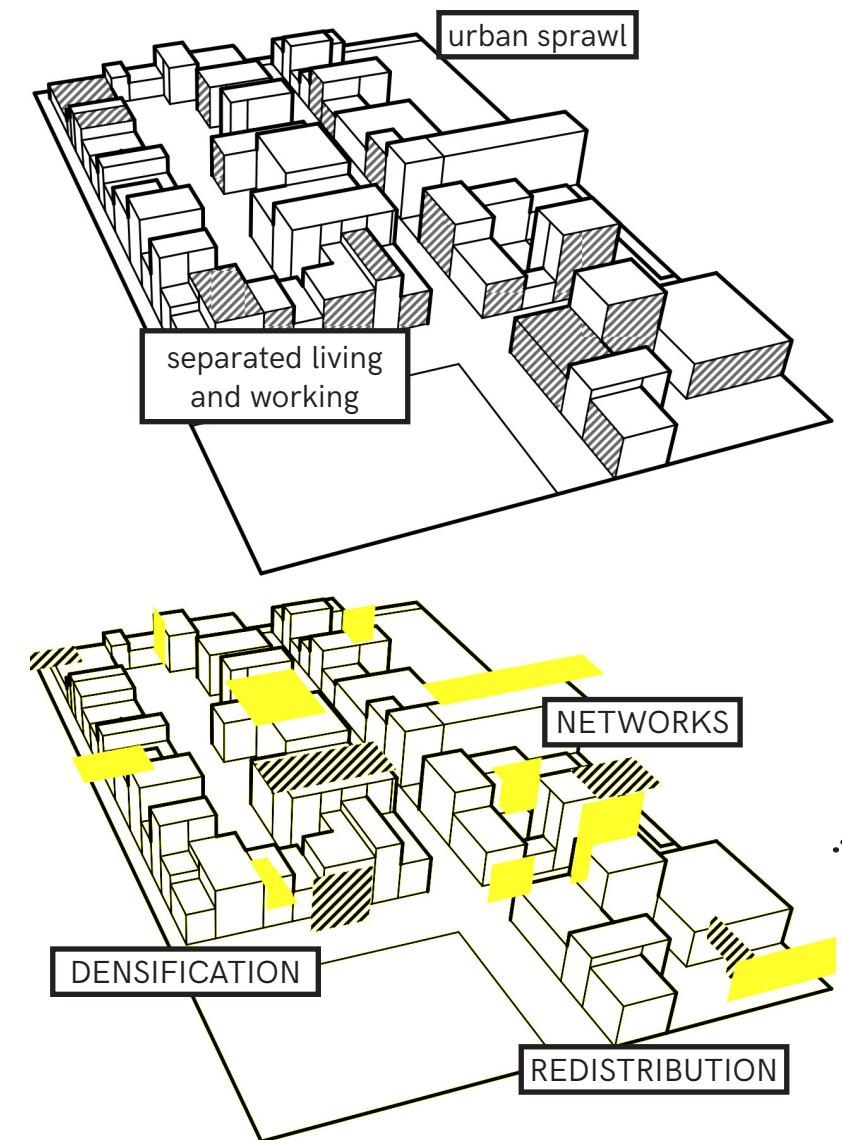
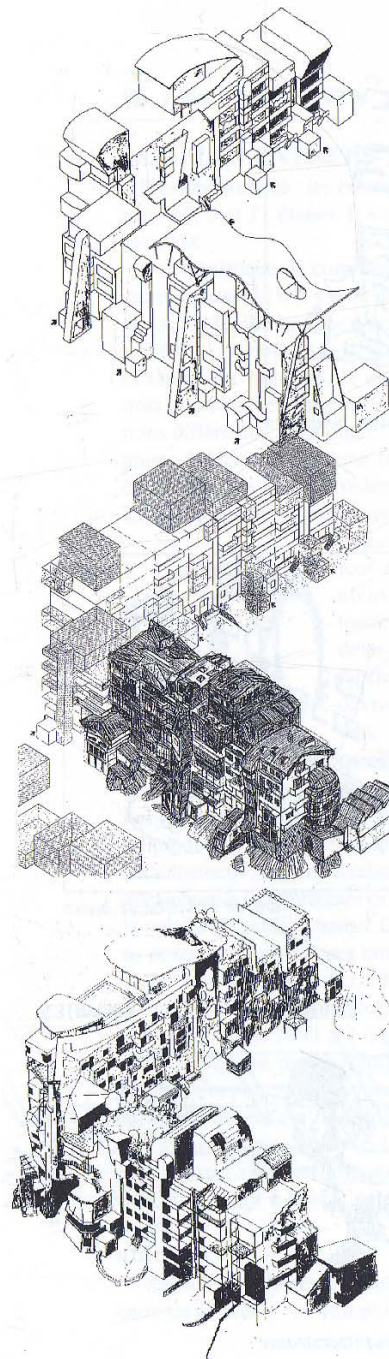
(District scale) To show transformation from monocentric to polycentric city.

In order to make circles of economy smaller and reduce the ecological footprint of the city all areas of the cities have to be densified. Also the changing patterns of economy and orientation on self-or-

ganization of the local life implies the shift from monocentric to polycentric city on various scales.

**(c) Method:** This is done on the scale of the district. By combining the prediction that Rotterdam will have more inhabitants in coming years with implications from the first input (ch. 8.2.1.) it is needed to think of new more dense housing that combines spaces for care, work and life. The densification should take place in a way that it supports the aim of decentralization of the city into polycentric network of districts. By looking into available data and analysing the existing elements of the city the inputs for restructuring the urban fabric are made. While going deeper into design the method is inspired by study of examples from the literature that is related. From examples of experimental theoretical work (Future city (Brayer, 2007)) and transformation of industrial spaces (City as a Loft (Baum, Christiaanse, 2012)) to particular projects like Kolhaas' Exodus. In this sphere the method looks for new typology.

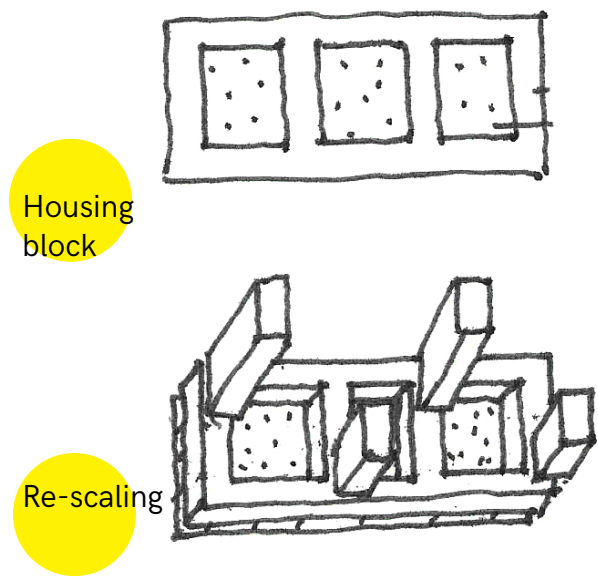
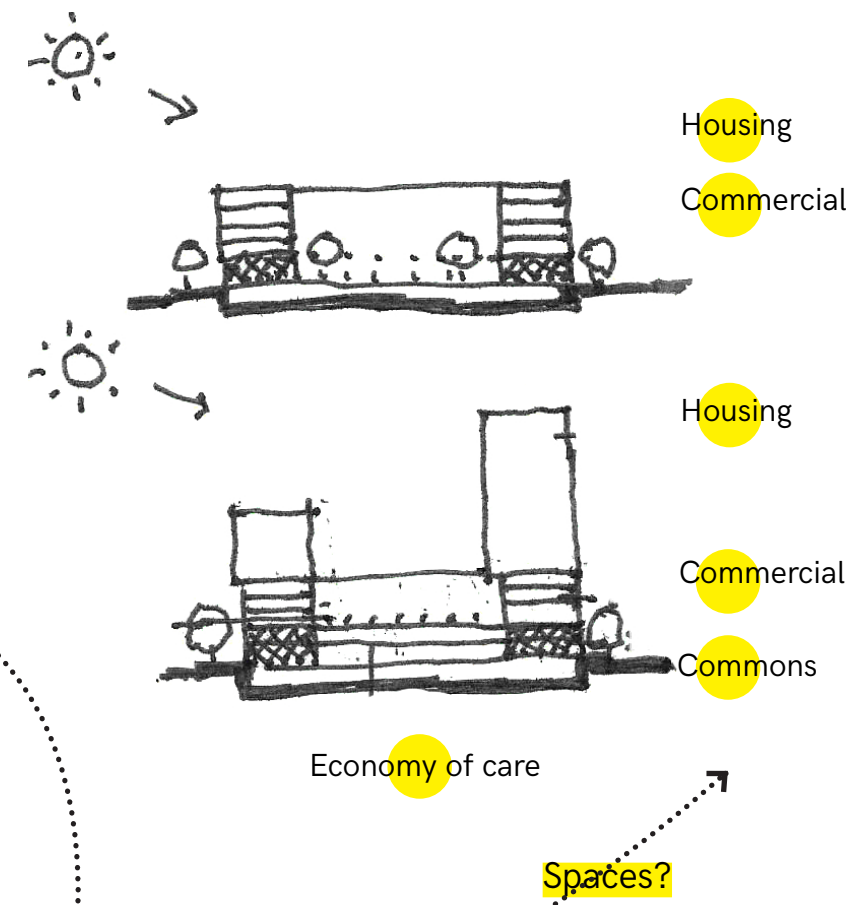
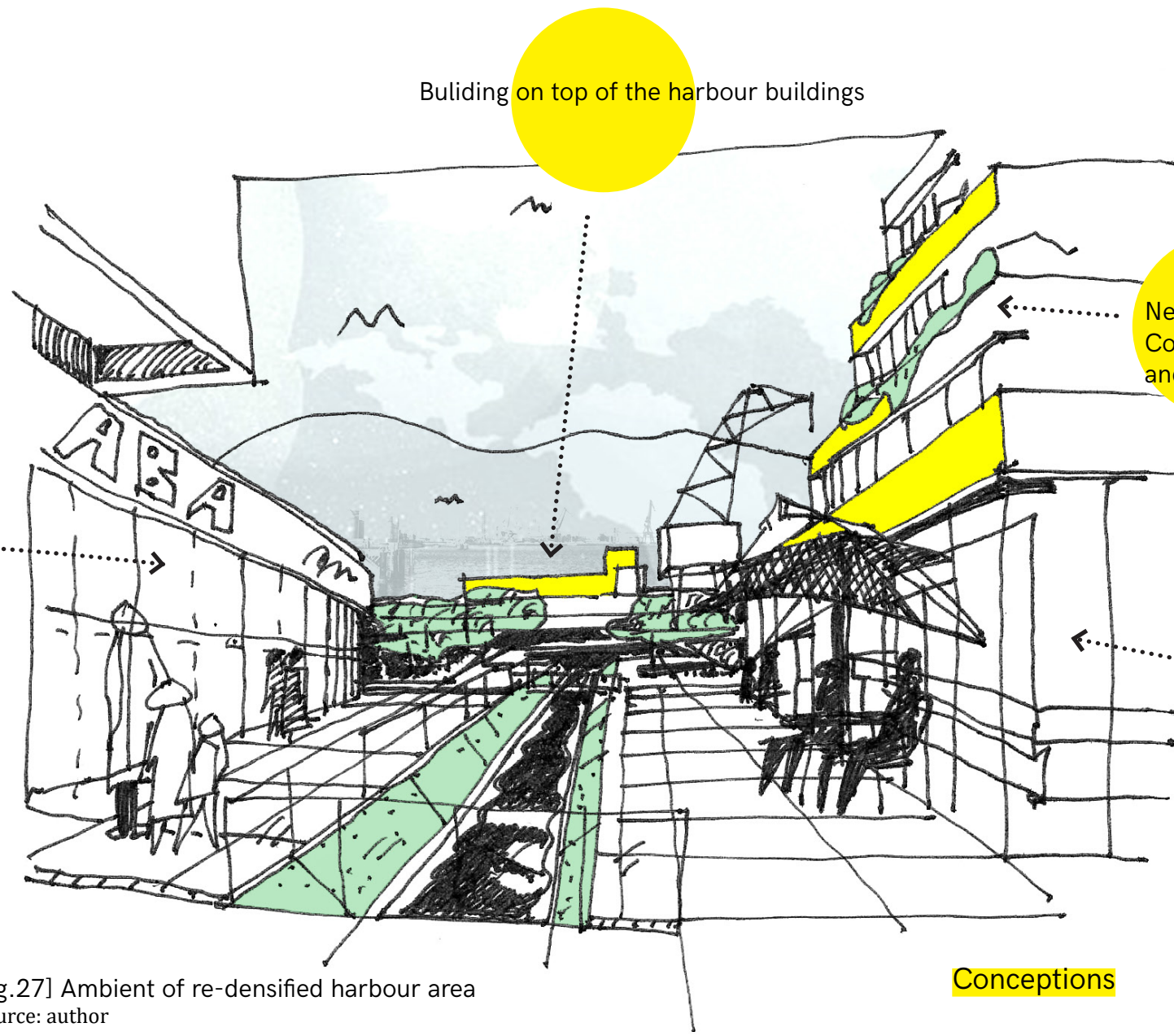
**(d) Outcome:** This input needs to be elaborated in more detail. Except being shown on the conceptual level of larger scale different urban areas are taken to apply the model for new housing. This is shown in strip of design and as model for new living.



### Principles

[fig.42] Lucien Kroll-housing  
source: [online]Google images







### 8.2.3. Public space - Revaluating commoning

#### (a)Relevance:

*What is the role of public space in process of commoning?*

Since big part of life would happen in community and commons would take a new role in socialization and democratization of social relation there would be less need for the plain public space that does not have function. That means that it can be turned into green areas for recreation and ecological renewing of the urban landscapes.

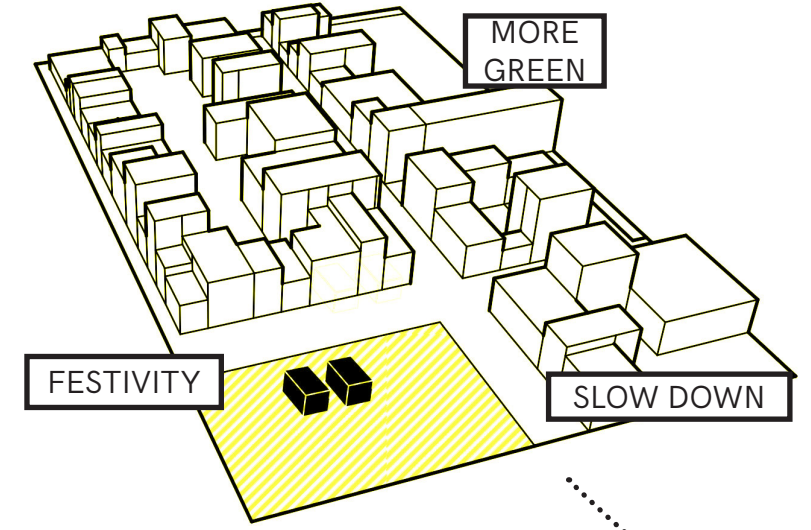
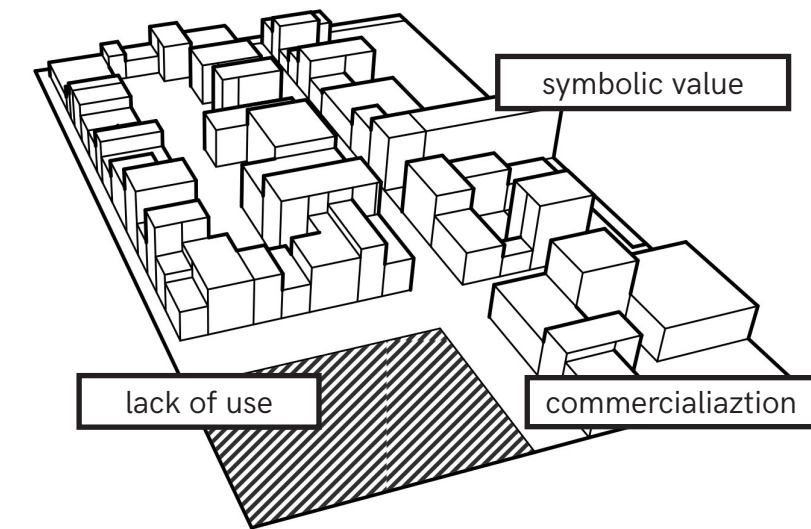
#### (b)Purpose:

(City scale) To reset the role of the city in the natural systems and to rethink the importance of open spaces in and around the city.

With the guess that the public life of the citizen will happen mostly in closed space or in communally defined open space the question rises what is the role of public space in the city? From symbolic realm of availability public space should shift towards utilization for new ecological infrastructure and communal activities that happen on larger scale that can not be self-managed. Reintroduction of nature as a biological system back into the city might be one solution. Or to dedicate it to festivity similarly like Indian cities did and still do until these days. To let the wilderness become a part of urban landscapes.

**(c)Method:** The analysis of exiting public spaces is made by tracing the map on the city scale. Based on other spatial inputs the reaction is built based on surrounding and function of the particular public space in the area. Structural analysis of public space is used to support the conceptual level of project.

**(d)Outcome:** The transformation of public space is presented on the conceptual level as the principle that can be research more in detail through further analysis and design.

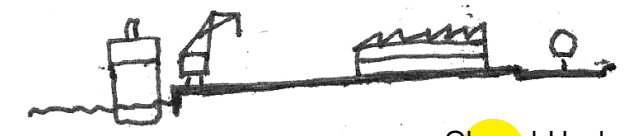


Principles

[fig.42] Diller, Scofidio-Highline-New York  
source: [online]Google images



Introducing nature  
in the city



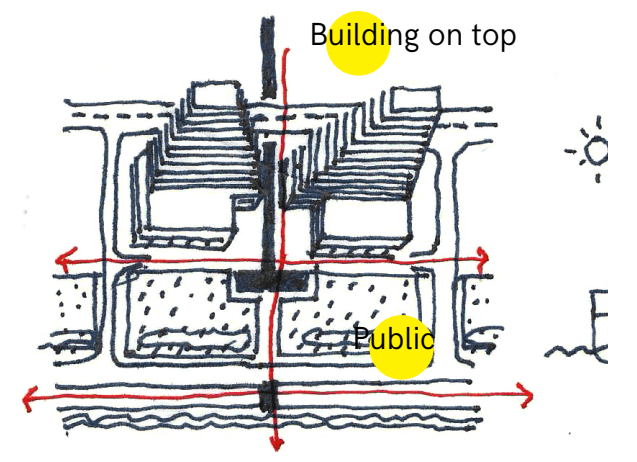
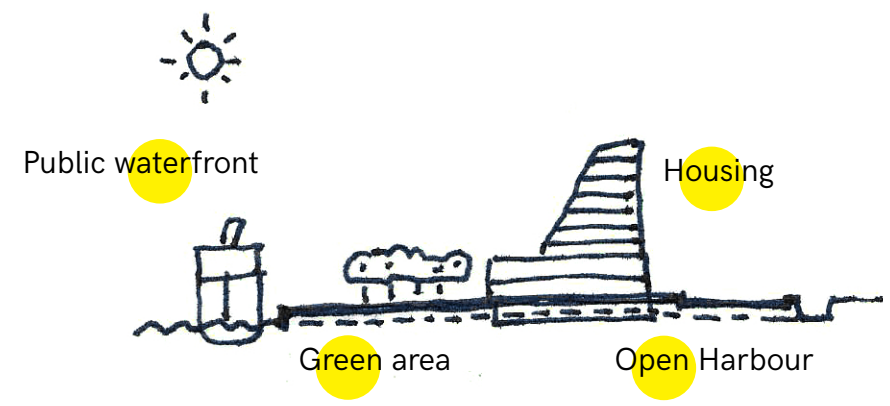
Closed Harbour

River as most  
common public good

Conceptions

Depense-  
slowing down  
the street scape

Spaces?





#### 8.2.4. Infrastructure - Restructuring traffic (& food supply)

##### (a)Relevance:

*How to use intentional limits of traffic(infrastructure) to open space for local food production and distribution?*

The city consists of large structures. One of the most spatially and energy wise demanding structures in the city at the moment is traffic infrastructure. In the De-growth scenario this physical structure can be reduced to the minimum, even through forced measures. Amount of the space gained by this can be redirected to different function like paideia, food growing, reducing ecological footprint etc. It can be used for a completely new infrastructure that can be build on the place of the traffic infrastructure. Like agricultural system for the new city or local production of energy.

##### (b)Purpose:

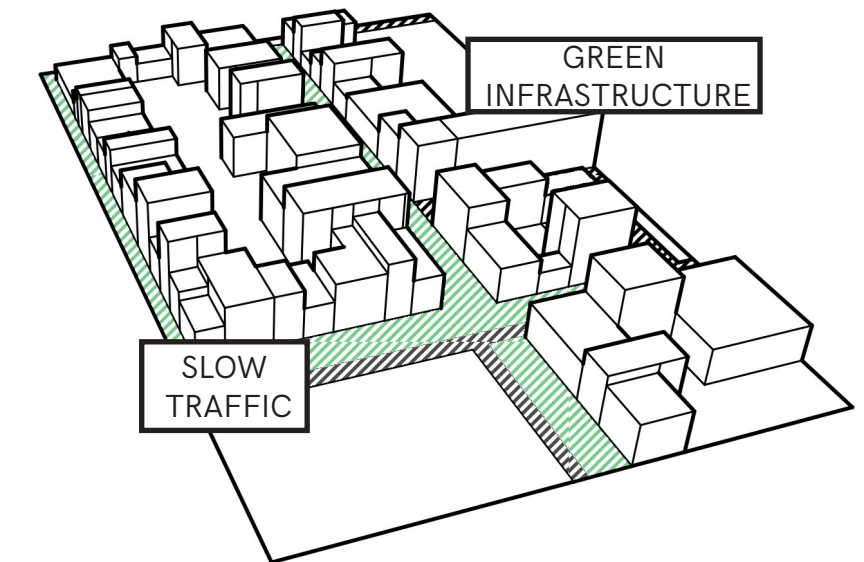
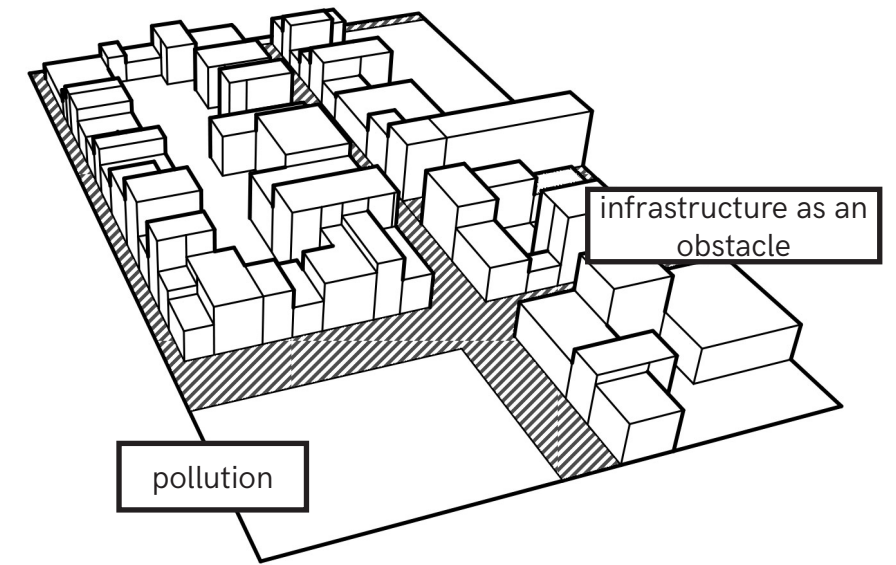
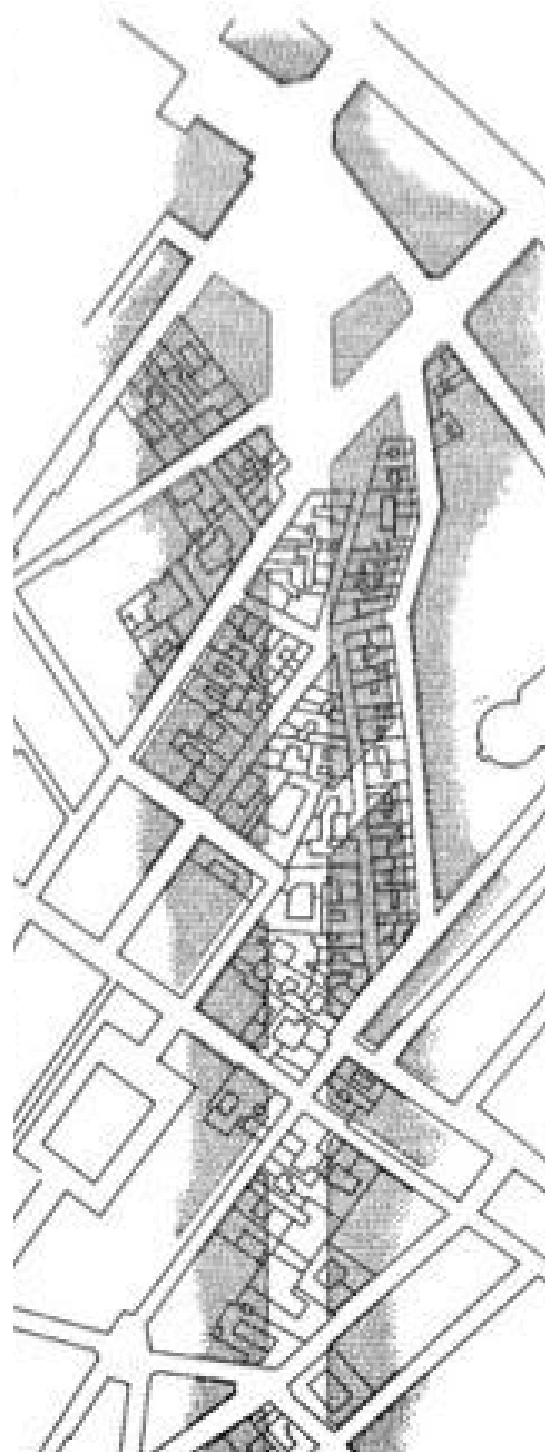
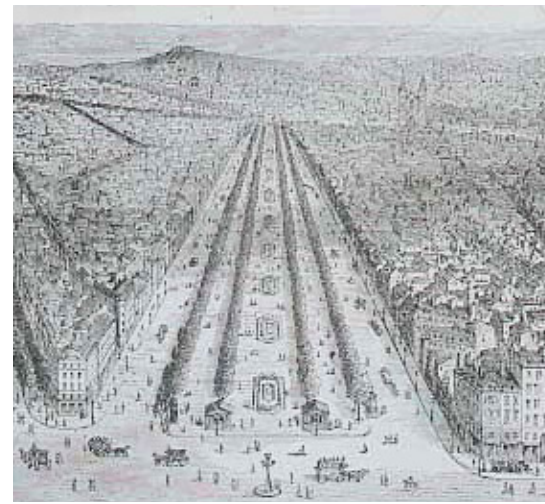
(City scale) To rethink infrastructure in the slower city

The traffic infrastructure should be restructured in De-growth oriented city. It is a good example of the system on which limits can be applied for the not only environmental benefits but also societal. Slowing down of life in the city would influence restlessness of its citizens and if that means removing some lanes from urban motorways, why not? The transformation from large traffic infrastructure to slow traffic would open space local food production and distribution. In this

sense limiting the systems that we are used to can be positive and it proof that De-growth is not about negative growth but collective effort of focusing on different directions of development.

**(c)Method:** The scale on which presentation of this principle would give most interesting results is the scale of the city. The reasoning for this is inspired by the Haussmann's boulevard where implementation of new urban element changed the direction of city's development. In this case towards growth and more traffic. For transformation of the Rotterdam's future towards De-growth the opposite intention has to be materialized while limiting the existing traffic and substituting it with new function that would revolve around food production. To find way how, the project looked in number of studies on urban food production in Rotterdam (Mapping urban agriculture potential (Dumitrescu 2013), Room for Urban agriculture in Rotterdam (Eetbar Rotterdam, 2012), ). Finally Haussmann's plan for Paris is used as inspiration for insisting on implementation of this input base on Kallis's suggestion of 'self-limitation'.

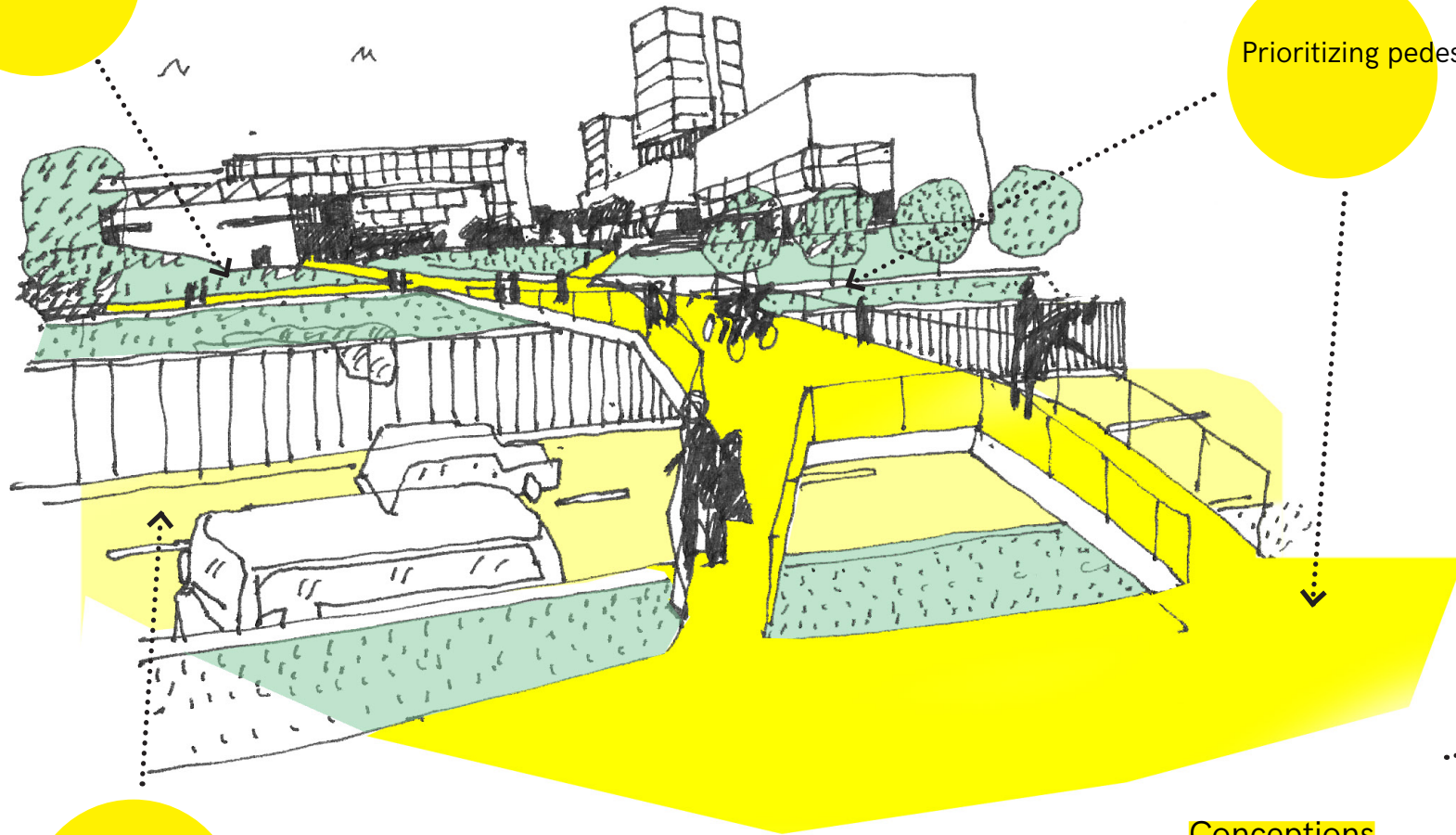
**(d)Outcome:** This implication is presented on the conceptual regional plan for the city as illustration of the principle under which this aspect of future urbanity should be thought.



Principles

[fig.43] Haussmann - Paris Boulevard  
source: [online]Google images

New infrastructure for local food supply

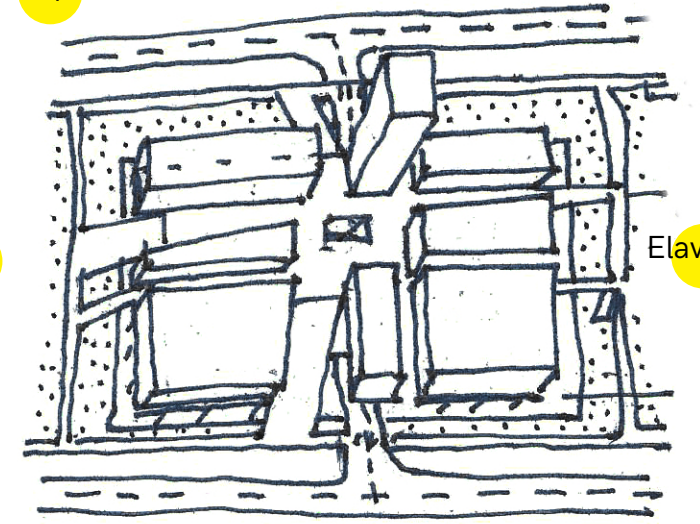


Prioritizing pedestrian traffic

Peripheral traffic

Bicycle highways

Elevated streets

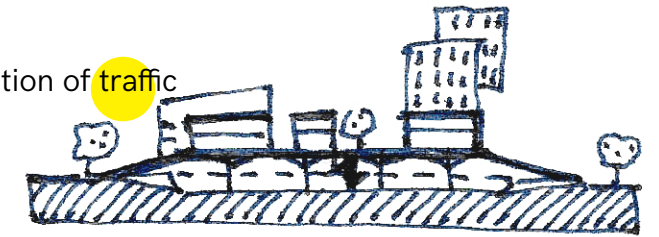


Spaces?

Limiting the urban traffic

Conceptions

Separation of traffic





### 8.2.5. Energy - Re-thinking Local production

#### (a)Relevance:

*How to produce locally?*

Using energy efficiently is not a solution of limiting the growth. Energy has to be used in the way that it is not taken out of ecological systems but using of it becomes part of the circle of ecological life. This goes same for energy and resources. Recycling and reuse are basic steps. So recycling gardens, sharing and reusing material facilities, recycling facilities, small water collection lakes, wind turbines and other energy plants would become standard equipment of neighbourhood. Question is the scale. Simplification and localization of life are some of the next steps in rethinking the using of our resources. That means that one's life would happen in certain radius of the city and he/she could get most of what they need there. This is main parameter for re-scaling things.

#### (b)Purpose:

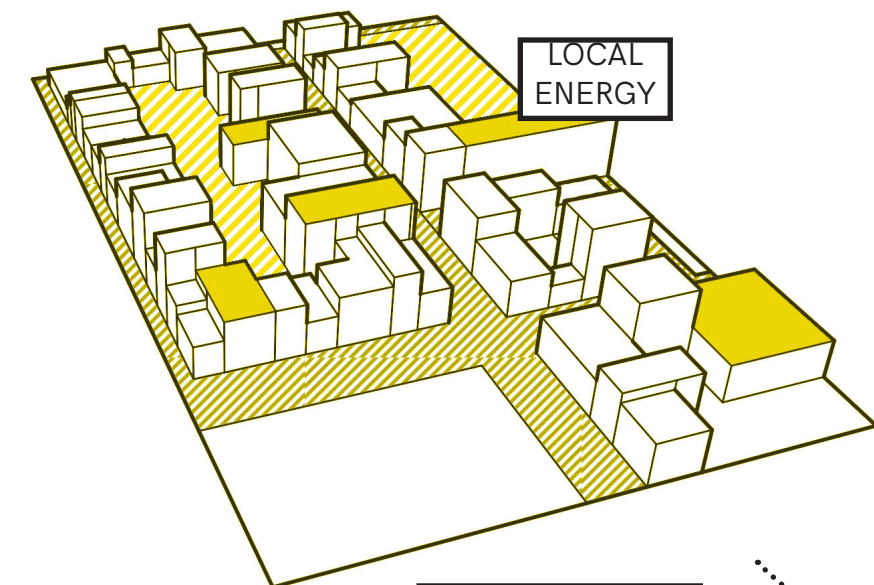
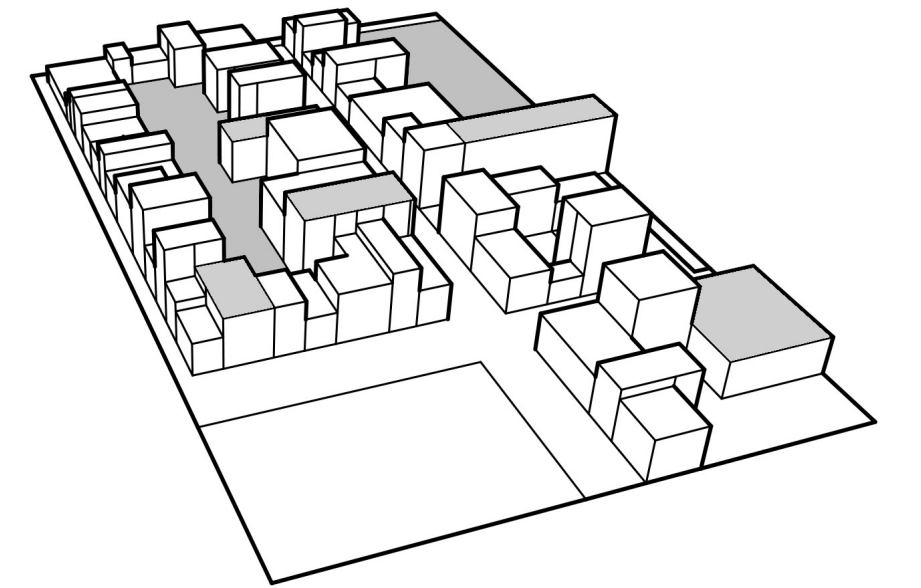
(Region scale) To make city independent in terms of energy and resources

Producing locally is fundamental for making less pressure on natural ecosystems. It is not about energy that can be produced on renewable sources but still in large centralized systems. It is more about taking the responsibility for the amounts of energy that we spend . In example 46% of energy produced by carbon in surrounding

cause it is released in form of heat or carbon dioxide. Utilizing this energy for heating of home and greenhouses would mean to take more responsibility over cities capacity for production of energy.

**(c)Method:** Re-thinking energy production should occur in all scales but on the level of principle it can be shown through regional scale. Here production areas, their large surfaces and heat production facilities, play an important role. By studying publications Urban Metabolism Rotterdam(IABR, 2014) and Mapping urban agriculture potential (Dumitrescu 2013) recycling as a flow is better understood. With analysis through GIS software the ideas can be applied on the regional scale of the city.

**(d)Outcome:** The local production is a layer of conceptual regional plan for the city as illustration of the principle. Some details can be shown in other more details plans, but they would be just suggestions not structured guidelines.



Principles

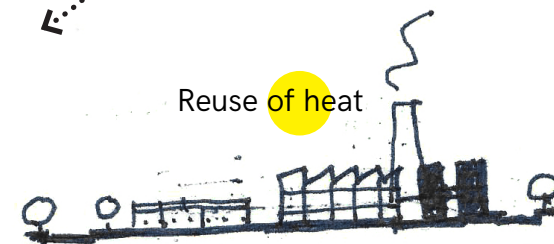
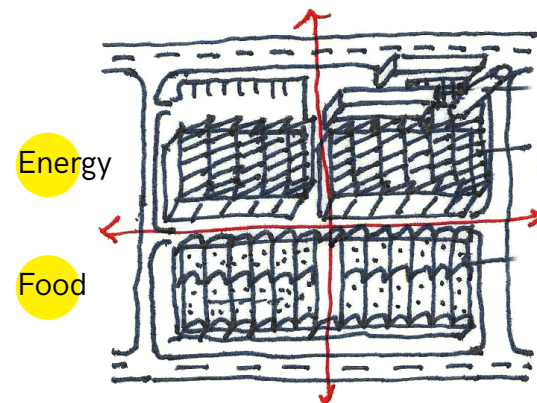
[fig.46] Organoponicos-urban gardens, Cuba  
source: [online]Google images





Conceptions

Spaces?





8.3. Analogy and up-scaling - exercise

Next step in envisioning these points is placing them in context of Rotterdam and finding a locations for test models. Since they present a broad topics that are common to every city this task I found not easy. In order to look for some hints about possible scales and locations of proposal I conducted an design excercise. I made an analogies between five spatial inputs and principles, concepts and finally spaces that are produced through non-growth oriented practices. Analogies are made based on more intuitive similiarities between the findings of these two parts of the research.

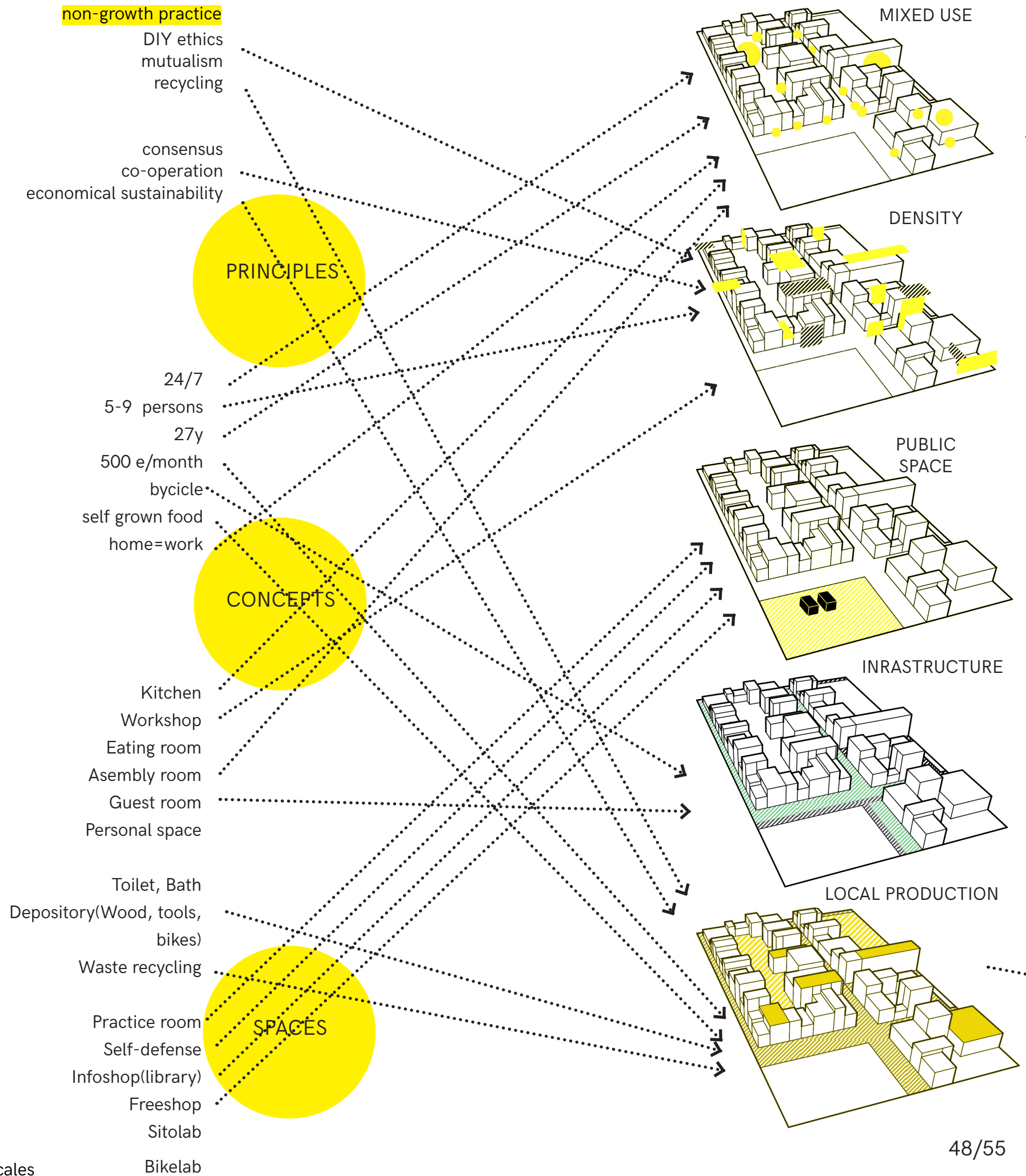
The collaborative practices that are analysed in previous chapters are experiments in new economies, self-organization and production. As such they follow certain set of values which are common to the De-growth aims. Although the analysis of the case studies of collaborative practices is focused on the small scale projects that are organized within the block or even one building, the processes that are defined by the principles, concepts and appropriation of space can be up-scaled through analogy. The analogy will be used to experimentally look into ways how the five spatial inputs from of De-growth can be applied on different scales. Where exactly the local production of energy should take place? What form would intensified combination of living and working take? Etc.

Using the analogies I want to test them by number of sketches made on three scales of city of Rotterdam. The sketches would try to imagine the city as a collaborative practice and through this, non-holistic and unstructured set of conclusions would be made:

How to think of recycling as a new flow?  
 Can ground floors become commons and transparent spaces of concial interactions?  
 How working spaces can be mixed in living areas and should they be exposed to an eyesight of a street passanger?  
 River is most valuable public space, how to design it?  
 What does it mean if the city is not sprawling but becoming more dense?

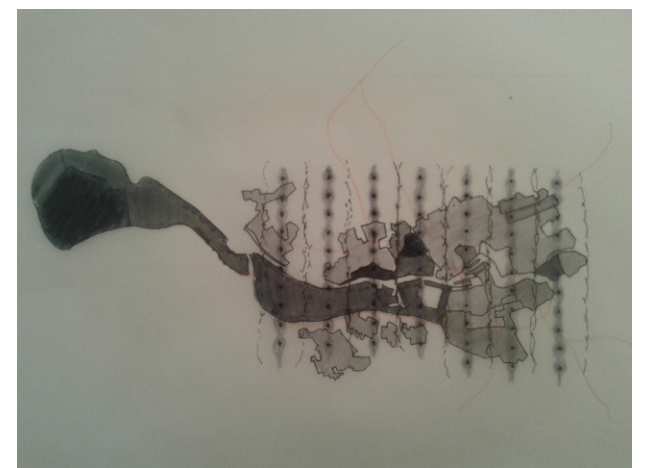
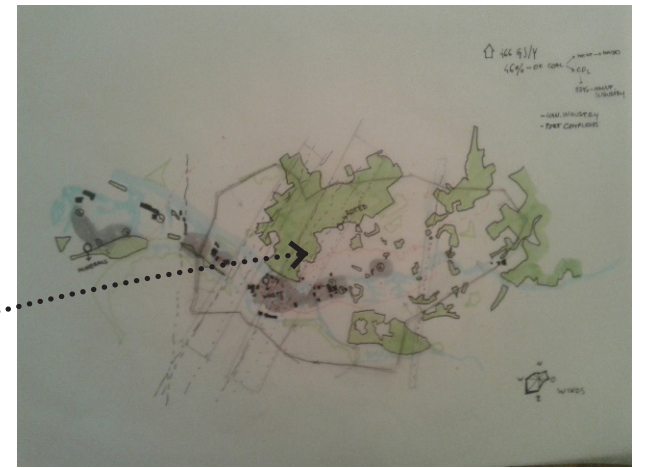
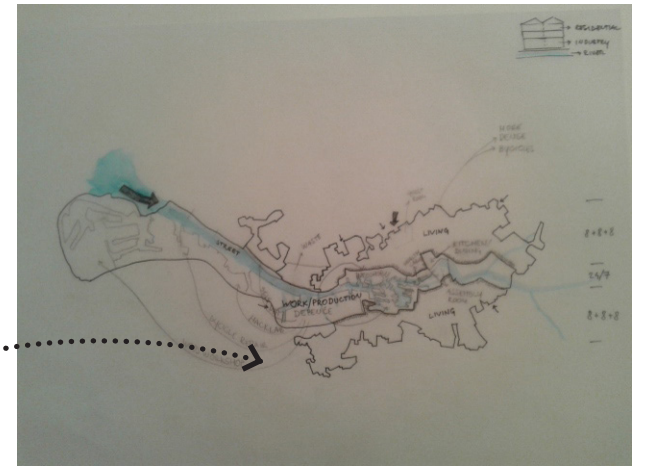
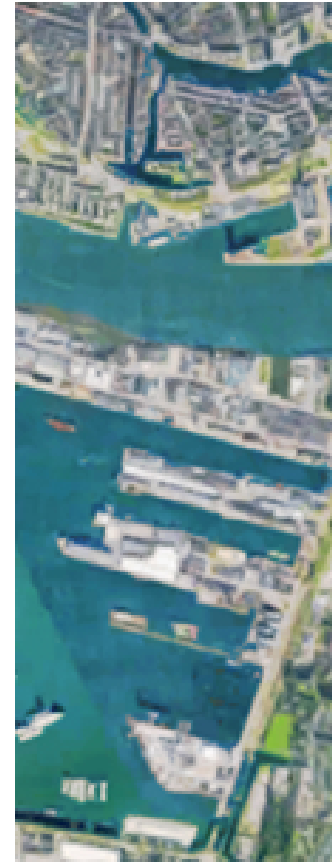
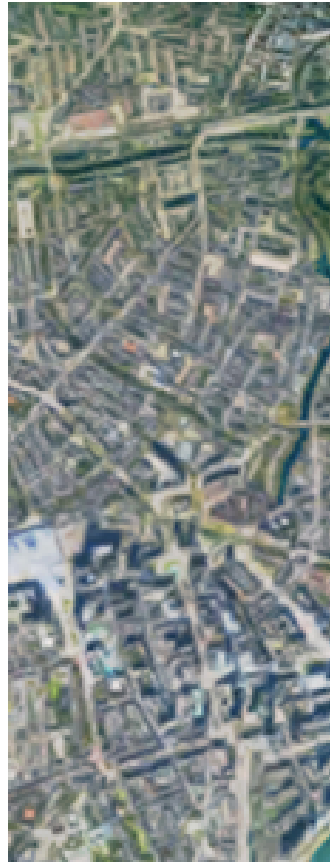
How to make sure that the infrastructure of food and energy production takes more importance than traffic?  
 What it takes to make the urban landscapscape slower?  
 Can large productions and harbour spaces be mixed with living and open to the public?

This exercise would be used as inspiration for entering a design state of the project. The aim of it is deliberating the design process from very beginning into a new language inspired by the research that is conducted.



[fig.47] Analogies between the Q2 and Q3 used to make schematic maps of different scales





[fig.48] Sketches in process.



## 9. Design outcome

### 9.1. Goal and method

The goal is to translate these spatial inputs on city of Rotterdam as a test case. Since the project works with principles it will need to be elaborated in real location to be presented in convincing way. I choose first two points to research further in design: Mixed use-redistribution of activities and Density-re-scaling. Other points will be presented in a more broad way through conceptual strategy for the urban region of Rotterdam.

The exercise of analogy described before combines the five spatial inputs for De-growth with the three scales (the district, the city and the region) in form of schematic maps. With this I hope that the outcome of the project will become easier to define. Some of the scales do not relate to the spatial implications that were tested and some of conclusions need precise method (scale and medium) to be presented. In order to deliver as relevant design as possible each of the five spatial inputs is related to its relevance, purpose, method and together they form a framework for the outcome.

Relevance defines the relation of implication that De-growth sets to the certain general topic of urban planning ie.(density, infrastructure, flows etc.). It is expressed as question. Purpose defines the reason why certain spatial input is expressed through certain medium, scale and reference. It is expressed by showing an intended envisioned

urban transformation, from what the reality is now to what is envisioned outcome.

Method clarifies three elements: scales in which the input is presented(it can be more than one), medium of collecting data and references for reflecting on data and translating it into a design. Method puts in relation all the points and structures the outcome.

### 9.2. Conclusion maps

Finally all this criteria will be combined to make six conclusion maps that are base for the outcome of the project. Each of them refers to one spatial input point except mixed use – redistribution of activities which is represented by two maps. They will be made in three different scales. The regional level will be made in scale 1:200000. It represents the point of redistribution of activities referring to relation of harbour and the city and energy as restructured flow between the city and its surrounding areas. The second level is the city level that will be presented in 1:75000 scale. In this scale transformation of infrastructure is will be presented and guidelines for revaluation of public space of the city will be given. This scale will present the principles applied in real urban context. Last conclusion map will be made on the level of district in scale 1:20000. This scale is used to present a again a redistribution of activities, this time in smaller scale, to present relation of living and working in different urban ambient. Other topic which will be presented by this scale is the topic of densifi-

cation of urban fabric and rescaling of the city. These two topics will be presented in detail because they relate to urban fabric and are the most easiest to develop in detail due to research on collaborative practices. Six maps together should make a clear input for making a design proposal based on layering the five theoretically brought topics in real context.

|  |   |                             |  |  |   |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
|  | <b>Mixed use - redistribution of activities</b> | <b>Density - re-scaling</b> | <b>Commoning - reevaluate public space</b> | <b>Infrastructure- restructuring traffic &amp; food supply</b> | <b>Energy - rethinking local production</b> |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--|--|---|

**relevance**

|                        |   |  |   |   |                                |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Research (sub)question | How to involve commoning and economy of care in urban fabric? | How to combine living and working in urban form? | What is the role of public space in process of commoning? | How to use intentional limits of traffic(infrastructure) to open space for local food production ad distribution? | How to produce energy locally? |
|------------------------|---|--|---|---|--------------------------------|

**purpose**

|                                 |   |  |   |  |  |   |
|---------------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|---|
|                                 | Show cohesion between city, harbour and open spaces | To provide guidelines for redistribution of activities in neighborhood | To make the circles of the economy smaller and limit the ecological footprint of the city | To rethink the importance of open spaces in and around the city.             | To rethink infrastructure in the slower city   | To make city independent in terms of energy                   |
| envisioned urban transformation | From city of globalism to city of localism          | From city of consumption to city of conviviality                       | From monocentric to policentric city on various scales                                    | From symbolic public space to utilizing it for new ecological infrastructure | From large traffic infrastructure to slow traffic and local food production and distribution | From centralized energy production to local energy production |

**method**

|            |   |   |   |                                 |  |                                   |
|------------|---|---|---|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| scale,     | Region  | District  | District  | City                            | City   | Region                            |
| medium,    | mapping, GIS data analysis, tracing   | mapping, participation, interview                   | mapping, data analysis, example studies                                     | Mapping, structural analysis    | GIS, mapping   | GIS, mapping                      |
| references | Urban Metabolism Rotterdam (2014), Rotterdam Stadsvisie 2030, Port vision 2030 etc. | Stad in de Maak, collaborative practices, Tedy Cruz | Future City-book, City as Loft, Exodus-Rem Koolhas, Dogma, Lacaton & Vassal | Future City-book, City as Loft, | Mapping urban agriculture potential (2015), Room for Urban agriculture in Rotterdam, Hausmann's plan | Urban Metabolism Rotterdam (2014) |
| ...        | in detail   | in detail   | in detail   | principle                       | principle  | principle                         |

**outcome**

|            |  |  |                              |                                 |                                 |                                 |
|------------|--|--|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|            | urban strategy(plan), principle  | urban strategy(plan), design, set of actions | urban strategy(plan), design | urban strategy(plan), principle | urban strategy(plan), principle | urban strategy(plan), principle |
| product P5 | Design proposal in scale of one strip of districts(2km wide) in Rotterdam that goes North-South and includes: housing, transforming harbour, river and again the same, emphasis on two elements: new housing (points 1,2) and new urban element that cuts the urban fabric inspired by hausmann's boulevard, to slow down traffic and dynamics and includes energy and food.(3,4,5). Sections, plans, visualizations, and 2 sets of actions, phaseplan |  |                              |                                 |                                 |                                 |

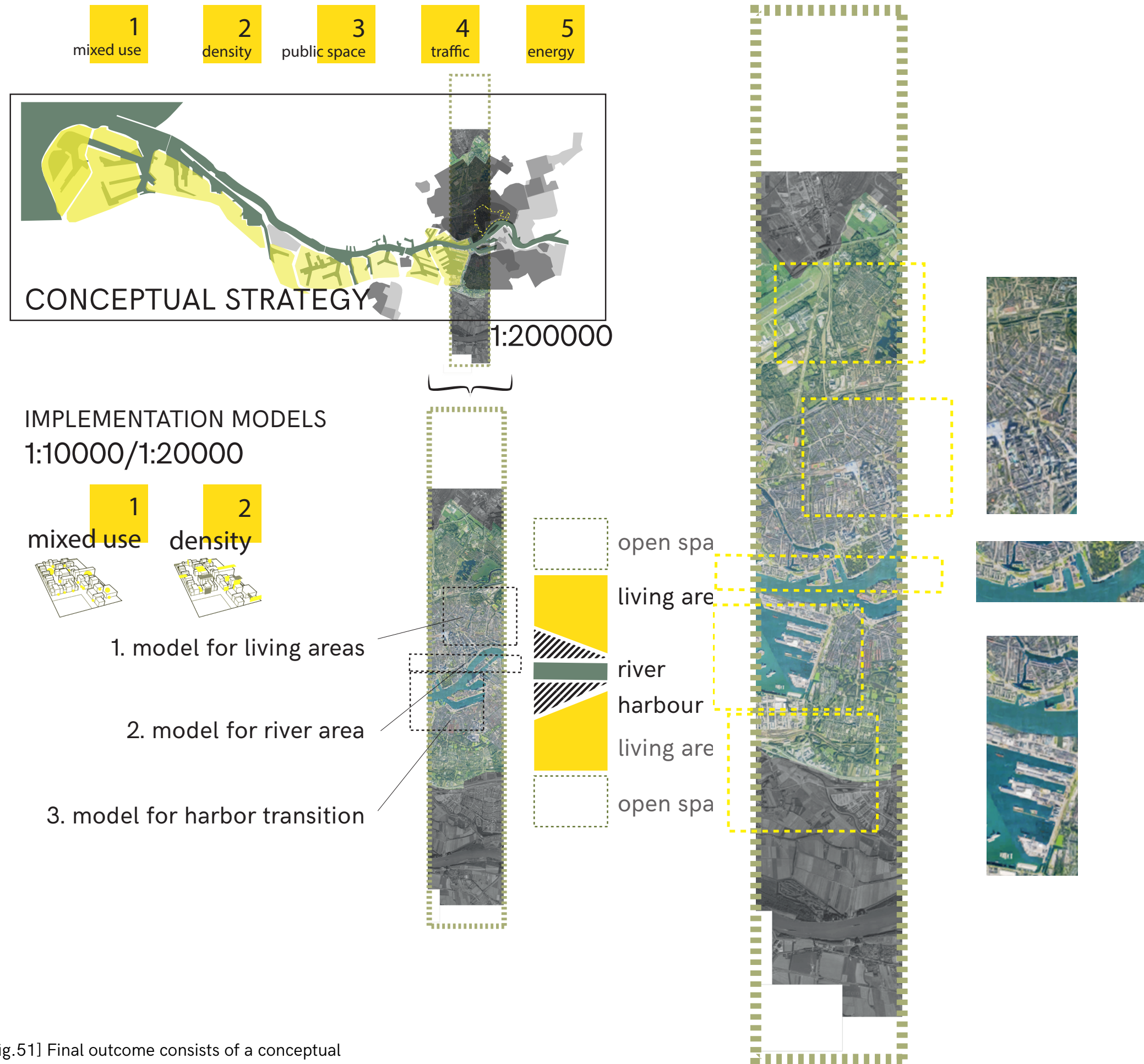
[fig.50] Relating 5 spatial inputs to their relevance, purpose, method and outcome  
source: author



### 9.3. Outcome and revision

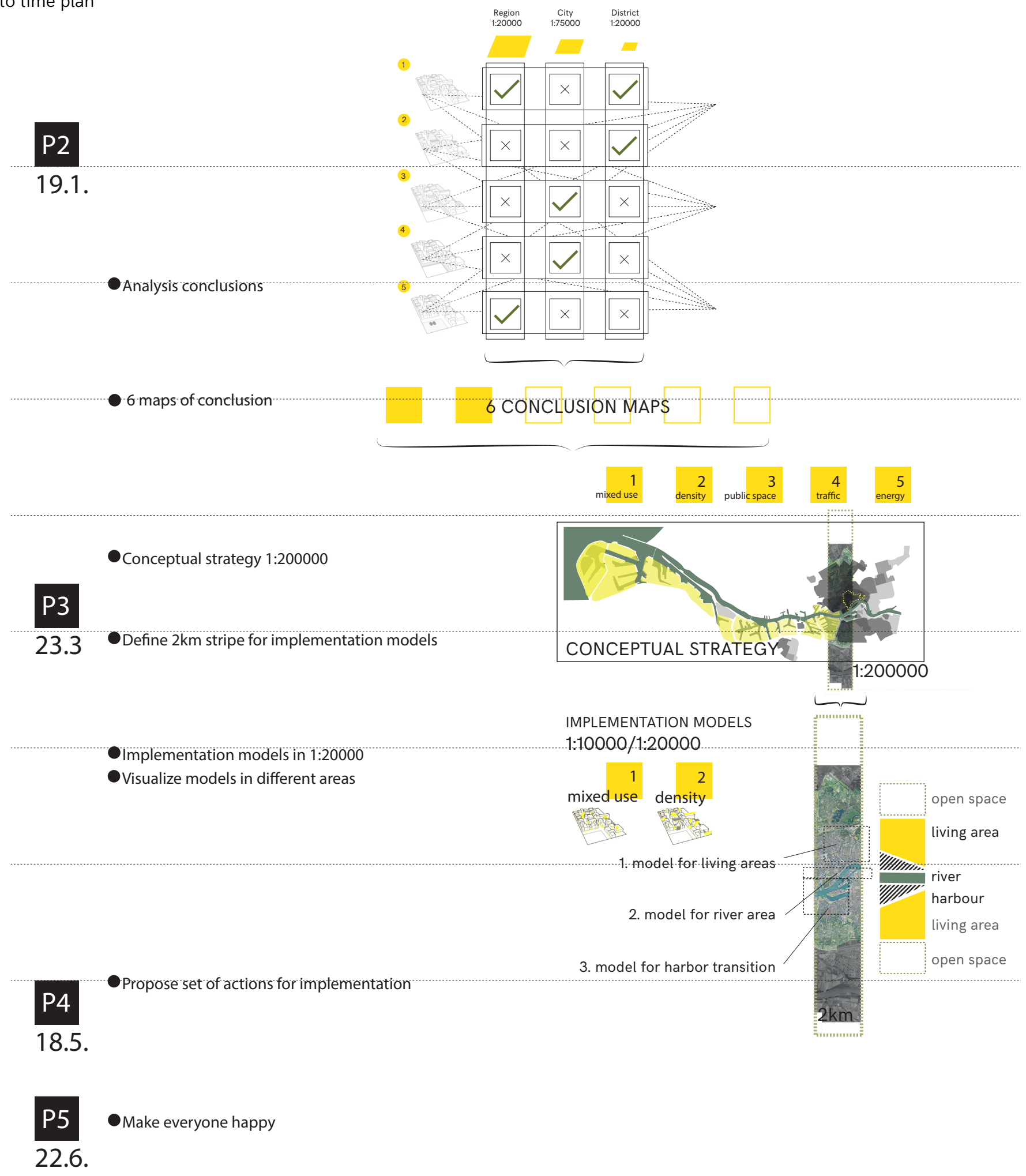
The outcome will have two scales. First one is a conceptual plan for the region of Rotterdam that includes the harbour, the city and the open space around. This conceptual strategy will show all five spatial inputs working together. The second outcome of the project is a design proposal for the city of Rotterdam. Proposal is made on one strip of districts (2km wide) in Rotterdam that goes from the north to the south and includes: housing, transforming harbour, river and again the same. The proposal will consist of three implementation models in scale 1:10000 or 1:20000 depending on location. Each of the models will show a two points that deducted from research (Mixed use-redistribution of activities and Density-Re-scaling) in three different urban ambients: Harbour in transition, living area, and river side(waterfront). The emphasis will be put on two elements: new housing/working structure and new urban element that cuts the urban fabric inspired by Hausmann's *boulevard*, to slow down traffic and dynamics and include energy and food production.

The proposal derives from the conceptual strategy on regional scale based on set of 5 principles. This step makes project transferable and re-scalable.



[fig.51] Final outcome consists of a conceptual strategy and implementation models for three urban ambients

[fig.52] Final outcome in relation to time plan

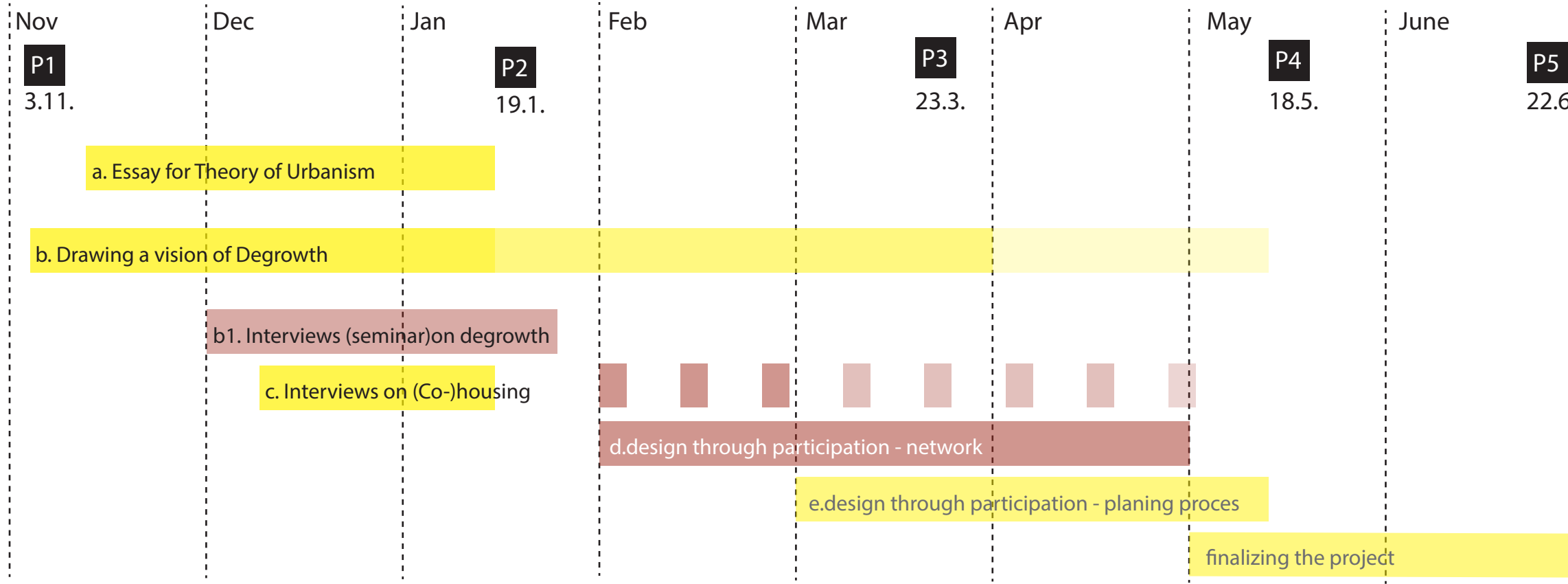


## 10. CONCLUSIONS

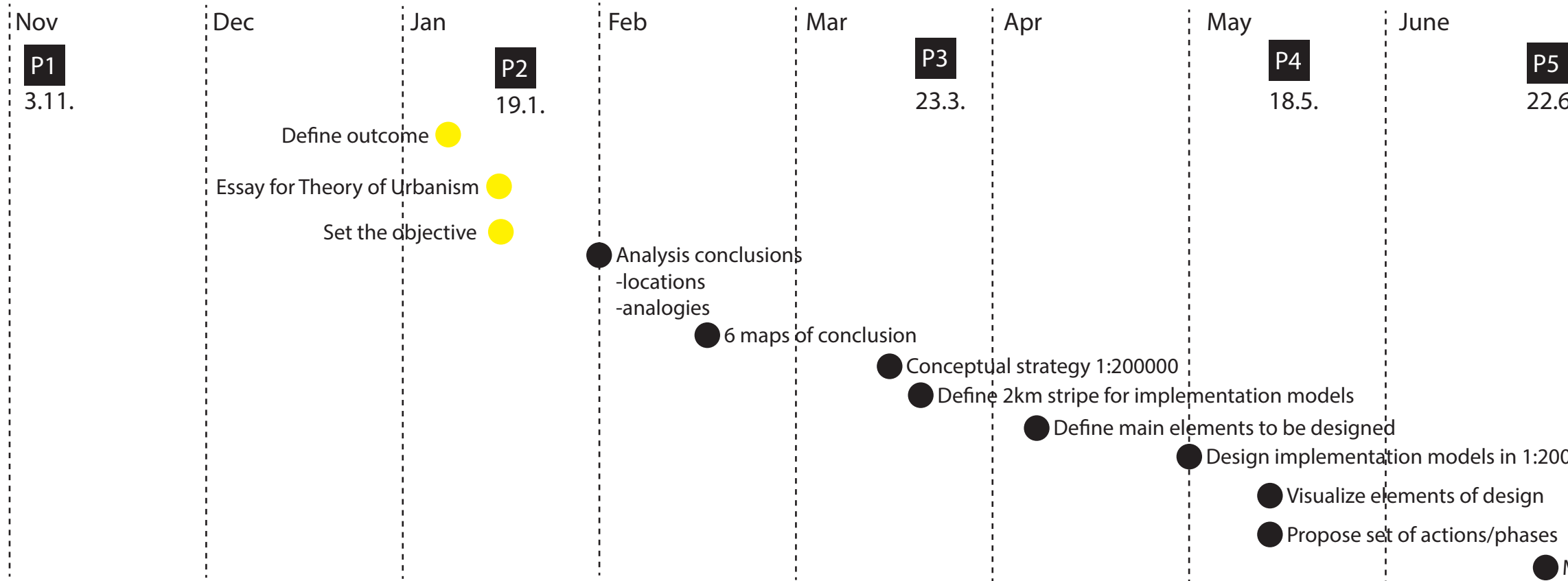
### 10.1. Reflection

Conducted research method in combination with precise goal delivered a good framework for a design proposal. Although the three research questions were researched through sometimes non-conventional or well structured techniques they created an complementary image of opportunities that city of Rotterdam and the De-growth offer mutually. Analysis highlighted the process of transition of harbour as an key potential for implementation of the design ideas. However it is important to reflect on living areas as well as open areas and river waterfront since all of these are important urban elements.

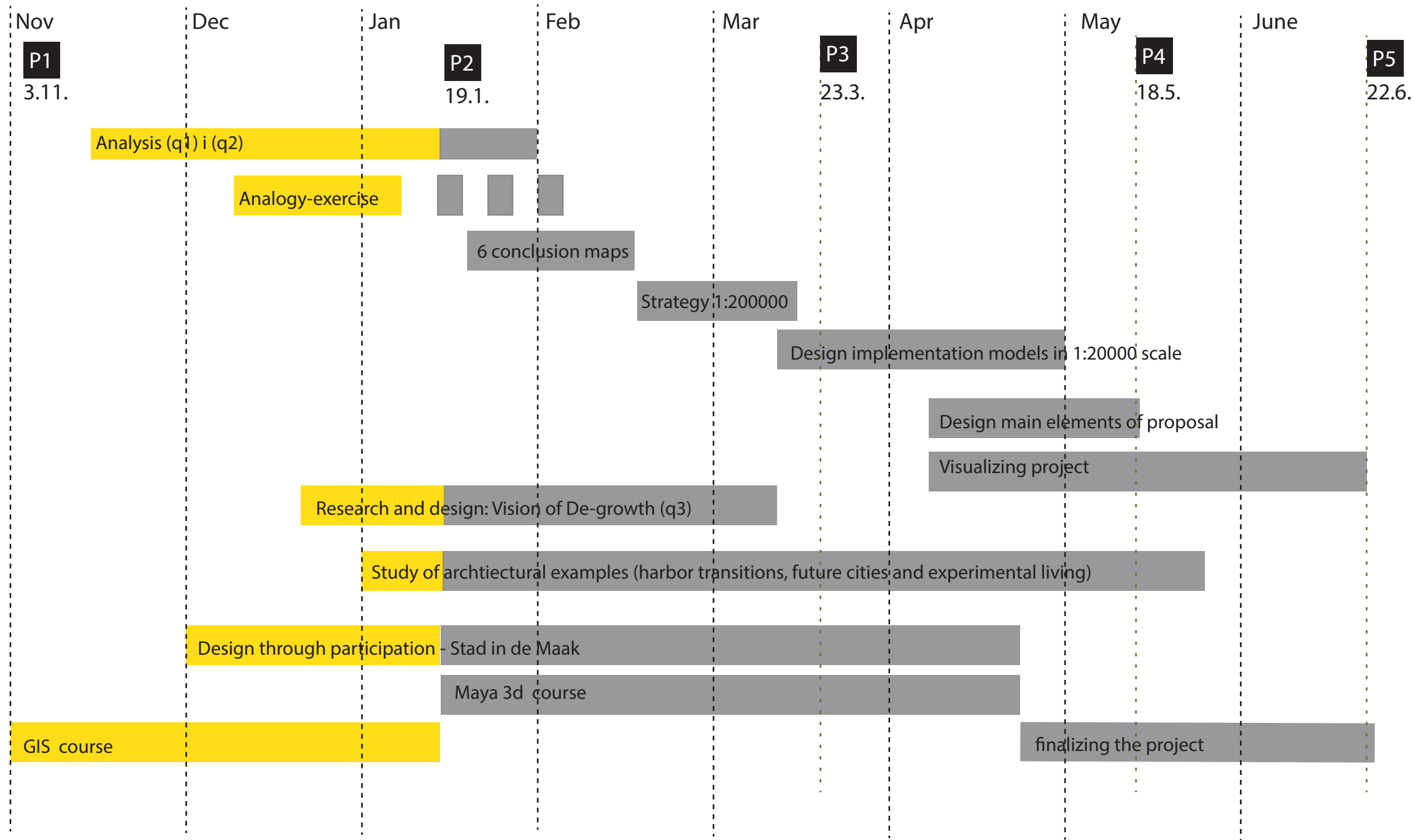




[fig.52] Revision of P1 Time plan



[fig.53] P2 Plan of goals



[fig.54] P2 Plan of design process



# Home is more than just a place

## How can positive experiences in co-housing practices help to overcome alienation between material and immaterial aspects of housing?

AR3U022 Theory of Urbanism (2016-2017 Q1)

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December, 2016

**Abstract** – Housing in 20th century was built, distributed and regulated through public or private domain. Depending on different historical periods, ideologies, geographical conditions the ratio of the two was different, however, property-led urbanization was in very root of most of the housing models. Recently these models are not able to give an answer to rising urban questions such as: ageing population, affordability and accessibility of housing options, changing of living and market patterns, environmental crisis etc. Housing is facing a big gap between being on one hand largely commercialized as property-led real estate market on the other hand one of the basic needs of every person. (Housing) crisis back in 2008, revealed alienation between material (property based) and immaterial (place and identity based) aspects of housing. However, if we look into the other models of housing production we can find inspirational ways to bridge this gap. One of these models is collaborative or (Co-)housing. This model is still not respectfully presented in general discussions about housing. The essay will a) explain the central issue of housing distribution, the alienation of material and immaterial aspect, and b) look into (Co-)housing practices as an example where these aspects are re-thought and that way a pragmatic solutions for above written urban questions are partially given. This is done by literature review and research by participation.

**Key words:** housing, collaborative housing, crisis, property led real estate, place and identity, negotiation

### 1 Introduction

Tenancy is on the market for a while already. If we take a look at the examples of advertisements for student housing in Rotterdam on Facebook pages, Cribber, Kamernet and other online platforms we can notice that they look a lot like each other. Future tenants are offering

themselves a perfect inmates, presenting their skills, habits and character. They speak few languages, they are social but respectful, spontaneous but tidy, like to relax but hard working, and sometimes even they are never at home! They are full of contrasts that every landlord or housemate wishes to give or share home with. What surprises is how these quite carefully chosen skills, habits and character are so

common to so many young people. Reason for this is commercialization of tenancy. Due to the influx of people looking for affordable housing there is a form of commodification of persons character, identity, interests etc. going on. Instead of trying to find a place to live based on their affinities and shared interests, the tenant today offers him/herself as a product that has to sell itself on the market. It says a lot about how we manage our cities as society and how much freedom does citizen have to settle under his/her own conditions. This process finds itself in the core of the inability of housing production and distribution models to create housing that satisfies ones wish for decent settling, sense of recognition and belonging and construction of idea of home.

*It is, therefore, necessary to rethink ideological notion of housing as an achievement, investment or privilege (i.e. private property) and re-focus on the social dimension of housing in terms of social values, social goods and egalitarian right (i.e. homes). (Buchholz, 2016)*

Since the housing market has a rising role in defining someone's chances to settle, individuals are supposed to compete for relatively small number of places in property-led housing. Most of the capacities are either expensive and over regulated private housing or crumbles from what is left from publicly built and managed (social) housing. Competition in tenancy market became more obvious after the crisis that hit the Europe back in 2008. Crisis of affordable housing is still present in most of the urban societies and the length of its lasting could be seen mean that we can talk about urban condition better than crisis:

*'The symptoms of housing crisis are everywhere in evidence today. Households are being squeezed by the cost of living. Homelessness is on the rise. Evictions and foreclosures are commonplace. Segregation and poverty, along with displacement and unaffordability, have become the hallmarks of today's cities. Urban and suburban neighbourhoods are being transformed by speculative development, shaped by decisions made in boardrooms half a world away. Small towns and older industrial cities are struggling to*

survive. [Madden & Marcuse, 2016]

The influence of this condition on personal life of citizens is best seen on the level of household economy. In 1970s one household used to spend 5-10% of its income to afford home, today it is more than 30%, in some cases more than 40%. (OECD, 2016) However, while housing became burden for a today household economy, on the other hand it became one of the main drivers of contemporary global economy. Largely commercialized on property-led real estate market housing is immanent part of speculative field of economy. The housing market is crucial element of today urban economy. On the other hand house is one of the basic needs of every person and as such is included in Declaration of Human Rights as an human right (UN General Assembly, 1948).

*Housing has a special character, not only because it consumes so large a portion of the household budget, especially for lower-income families, but because it is, ... the central setting for so much of one's personal and family life as well as the locus of mobility opportunities, access to community resources, and societal status. (Hartman 1975).*

For this reason, it is discussed beyond just its real economic value. Its central role in persons form of identity, sense of belonging and recognition (David Seaman & Jacob Sowers 2008, Altman & Low, 1992, Buchholz, 2016) is essential for understanding this paper.

### 2 Alienation of two aspects of housing

As shown in introduction, housing distribution is making mostly precarious population of today cities restless by the gap between, on one hand, commercialized real estate market and on the other, the basic need that it presents for every person. However, it is not crisis that created alienation between the housing as a right and as a commodity. Ideas of belonging to a place, local recognition and good life are since long ago not meter of self-definitum,

but other way around. In fact, neither public housing neither market housing, being the only large housing production systems of the 20th century's, didn't manage to bridge this gaps in most of the cases.

This gap can be described as alienation between material (property and real estate value based) and immaterial (place and identity based) aspects of housing. [Madden & Marcuse, 2016 ] While being focused on those type of housing that produces highest revenue market actors fulfil the need for housing for part of the citizens that can compete on this market while those who are left out are supposed to compete for the leftovers of welfare housing that is still in the hands of the municipalities or move to the outskirts of the urban area or squat. At the same time investors are all the time recognising new niches for developing a housing need into a profit generators. Doing that they discover new parts of the urban and suburban (recently even rural areas) turning them into a front-lines for investment and global competition of the cities. (Smith, 2002) Taking over parts of the urban fabric that offer more affordable housing this process leaves people with low income in constant struggle for jobs or recognition which then leads to resignation and relocation.(Buchholz, 2016) For those with better income this process means positioning in the social structure through choosing housing according to social status presented in architecture by the market criteria. Success driven happiness is tiring state of mind. Finally the home becomes a status symbol not a place of belonging and self-determination.

*The wealthy are happier than the poor, but wealth, in the aggregate, does not translate into a higher average level of happiness because aspirations also increase and comparisons intensify with higher standards of living. (Kallis, 2015)*

In both cases the value of home on economic scale is detached from its value on personal level.

## 2.1 Note on why alienation matters

What alienation creates besides inability of an individual to settle under its own terms is inflexibility of housing stock of the cities. The housing of the 20. century presents most of the housing stock that is still in use. This type of housing production, no matter if it was produced by the market or by the welfare state policies was centred around family as nucleus of society. 1, 2, and 3 sleeping room organized around living room, kitchen and services is the layout of the most of the housing today. Often made as fixed plan with little or no flexibility for the user to adopt it to its own needs these concepts are accepted today as standard of housing.

However, changes in our everyday practices, societal, economical and demographical trends etc. are creating conditions that housing has to meet. Clarifying all these changes in particular would need a separate research and there is plenty of material produced on many of this changing conditions that can be used to prove this. However few examples can be given in form of notes.

Europe is ageing continent. Together with the process of dissolving of traditional family and decreasing homeownership this presents a new challenge for housing distribution. How will ageing population be housed in the future?

Also increasing mobility and migration are creating demand for more flexible and diverse types of housing models. (Short stay homes, student hotels, seasonal workers settlements etc.) Housing on one hand needs less of individualisation, but on the other needs to house bigger diversity of lifestyles and periods of stay. Here flexibility of the units is of crucial importance.

Also the changing pattern of labour practices such as work from home, co-operative work, co-working etc. needs new types of housing and also new types of urban design and typologies that can incorporate this need.

Market being predominantly oriented on those parts of housing demand that provide largest assets carefully chooses the niches of this changing lifestyles that need different housing in the way that they can still be profitable. That keeps individuals still in competition for housing that in fact is not tailored for their need. On top of that that makes the cities unable to receive large influxes of migrants, house the older citizens, decrease number of homeless people. In general production and distribution of housing oriented on material assets leaves cities inflexible on changing urban conditions.

## 3 Collaborative housing practices rethinking the gap

Recently the idea of co-operative housing is gaining attention as a third way of housing production. This concept of production of space is based on horizontal and inclusive self-organizing to manage housing as need. Sometimes it is focused on expropriating real estates from the housing market and to certain extent eliminating the third parties from deciding about housing conditions. The number of different variations that exist under this umbrella term is due to different reasons why co-housing groups come together (political, religious, affinity, elderly care, ecological etc.), its organic development on the outskirts of mainstream urban development and finally different conditions that shape its form. Therefore we shouldn't frame co-housing as just an attempt to reach affordable housing. Precisely the number of variations of how co-housing projects form and manage themselves shows that there is inherited intention to bridge the gap between what home is as a material necessity and personal construct related to affinity, identity and self-recognition.

*Co-housing is a container of a rich variation of architectural and organisational forms. At the same time it is a nation that indicates, across national borders, an essential difference from the public housing sector or the market housing sector: the principle of*

*intentional interaction between residents regarding their environment, and a certain level of direct control over the development and management. (Tummers, 2011)*

However, the term can be confused with the term collective housing which often implies multi family housing as an architectural type in typology studies. If it is not confused with housing type, using it in its most common form co-housing often fixes to it the meaning of outdated concept from 1970s and 1980s of experimental living groups formed to work on specific social problem (ageing population, ecological communities, self-building communities etc.).

Because of importance of differences in modes of self-conceptualizing, forming, realizing and managing as well as a different rules of professional involvement in the process (Bresson & Tummers, 2014) as type of rethinking the alienation between material and immaterial aspects of housing, it is important to make some clarifications. (Co-)housing, as I will write it from now on, is recently increasingly consciously critical towards the housing production of mainstream practices. (Co-)housing encompasses number of different practices in housing that can be described as collective effort in housing as social and economical experience. Examples can range from traditional state recognized co-housing projects, over squatting and temporary-use practices to finally temporary autonomous zones like protests, occupations and festivals.

*They promote a shift to a more locally based economy with short production and consumption cycles. They emphasize reproduction and caring, to satisfy use values, not profits. They replace wage labor with voluntary activity. They do not have a built-in tendency to accumulate and expand, and they are less resource-intensive than their counterparts in the formal economy. Such practices of "commoning" cultivate solidarity and humane interpersonal relations, and generate shared, non-monetary wealth. (Kallis, 2015)*

As form of non-property led housing model it presents a critical engagement with



dualistic structure of property. (Buchholz, 2016) In this sense,

*(Co-)housing brings together new self-organized actors that are required social commitment to communities of shared values for alternative models of existence (ecological, economical, ethical, etc.).* (Buchholz, 2016)

However, this model is still not respectfully presented in general discussions about housing. Some of the main issues are that current co-housing practices are still often reserved for well-educated, middle class people with intellectual privilege to be busy with new experiments in economy and living. On top of that, contemporary precarious youth has no enough time for demanding life style that asks for dedication and contributing to the collective. (Tummers, 2011) Notion of collectiveness itself loses its crisp character in precarious times like these are, however this argument seems almost irrational if we look at benefits of this kind of housing. Sharing economy lowers the everyday costs, solidarity rents ensures tenants security, extended social and personal network provide community with more job offers etc. Numerous examples show ability to adopt to changing urban conditions in real context. Even if alternative housing practices exist in small numbers there is a big amount of typological, structural and other variations. Therefore it still a challenge for professional field of urbanism and urban planning to find out what kind of urbanity they produce. In their flexibility and autonomy might lay the code for making future housing adaptable to changing urban conditions. At the same time if previous claim is true it would be the best way to build a valid argument for collective practices in housing.

### 3.1. Positive experiences that bridge the gap

As already stated above, there are certain benefits<sup>1</sup> that collaborative housing bring to individuals life that help to build a sense of belonging and empower ones place-identity relation while at the same time lowering the demand that housing puts on the persons income.

Sharing economy lowers the everyday and long term costs. (Co-)housers often share many of everyday tools, resources and spaces. Instead of having ie. washing machine or a drill just for your own household-unit these are usually shared among few units making it more economically and ecologically efficient. Other example is ordering cleaning supplies in large amounts lowers the price of the share in costs per person on every day level. Sometimes communities have shared built in child-care units, elderly tenants living rooms, garden sharks etc.

Other example is the practice of solidarity rents. Some of the collectives support their members in case of temporary low income like getting fired, quitting job, health related costs etc. Solidarity rent means that in case of temporary lowering of income of person the rest of the tenants pay higher rent for some time until person recovers. In some cases the money is expected to be returned in some not. The specifics of this practice are arranged and discussed in the community and usually vary from one case to another. In some cases the rent is defined by relative income of person inside the community. This type of mutual support not only secures the person but creates a bond based on responsibility.

Other type of internal support is paying rent by labour. Many of the collectively managed housing projects are followed by public and semi-public activities such as workshops, theatres, bars etc. Some of them need work to be done in maintenance or managing finances etc. By participating in this kind of internal jobs

<sup>1</sup>These benefits are based on my personal experience of living in collaborative housing for 6 years in Croatia and Netherlands.

tenants can reduce their rent. This ensures tenants security and again pledges the responsibility and trust in the group.

Extended social and personal network provides community with more job offers. Living in the groups, from personal experience, supports individual with bigger chances to settle in the new city in shorter period of time. By settling its meant finding a job or financial sustain, friends, love and recognition.

Living with many cultures, ages, vocations is every day learning experience which even those who have not just arrived but also the stayers enriches with new skills and opportunities.

Outlined benefits of living in collaborative housing groups show in which way are material and immaterial aspects of living connected. The way individuals are housed largely influences this connections.

## 4 Discussion: Collaborative forms housing up scaled to be housing model

*The provision of adequate housing is seen as a technical problem and technocratic means are sought to solve it: better construction technology, smarter physical planning, new techniques for management, more homeownership, different zoning laws, and fewer land use regulations. Housing is seen as the domain of experts like developers, architects, or economists. Certainly, technical improvements in the housing system are possible, and some are much needed. But the crisis is deeper than that.* (Madden & Marcuse, 2016)

Housing is one of the major parts of city's production at the same time its is the most general need applicable on every person that is related to space. At the moment this aspect of city's economy and spatial production is left in hands of few bureaucrats in municipalities together with profit oriented investors of all scales. For both of this two groups neither affordable neither individually costumed housing are of direct concern. Limited apparatus of

participation in urban development together with sharp market conditions for both renters and new-buyers offers little or no space for the citizens to actually exercise their wishes in shaping their housing. Here the awareness of professionals involved in the process of planing and design is of immense importance. However it is not enough. They can listen but they can not initiate. To re-link real estate (material) value with the potential of the housing unit to become someone's home the citizens have to be the ones that are aware. Here collaborative housing practices made the biggest step forward.

One of the major challenges of collaborative housing practices is that they are still not present enough as a housing model that is recognized by the institutions, professionals and potential users. (Tummers, 2011) So the link between the those who are aware of the gap and those who are not has to be established. For this reason they often stay practised by specific groups of better educated citizens. Although many of the countries have legal frameworks that allow and in some cases support establishing this kind of civil projects there are still many complications occurring in practice. From ownership relations, inheritance, maintenance contracts, professional training and involvement etc. Its is still matter of big individual or group effort to protect their projects from various imbalances between market and planing expectations and internal practitioners abilities. However, sticking to certain clusters of principles and motives helps groups to be persistent and recognizable. Also it allow them the grow in scales and numbers and to be applied in other contexts.

Unable to offer universal proposal in further body of the discussion will just be pointed out one of the examples where one group stated their long term motives and principles. In this case it is the group Stad in de Maak that manages 7 buildings in Rotterdam Noord. Their projects are example of housing practices that are testing new models of economy and self-governance together with processes of

commoning the ground floors and using the extended professional and social network to improve their housing condition. Based on personal involvement in their projects author estimates their example as well tuned with the positive practices that are numbered in chapter 3.1. Their principles can be founded on their webpage under column *ambities*. (SIDM, 2016):

1. To take the property of the market
2. To offer affordable housing and work
3. To practice collective ownership and use 'commons' exempt the rent
4. To strive for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable living
5. To be democratically organized
6. To be as largely self-organising as possible
7. To make only own revolving investment fund
8. To be whenever possible, boldly on our own.

Although, it cannot be said that these principles are completely clear and holistic, some of them are even discussable under terms of collaborative practices, they offer set of priorities that professionals in fields should be informed about and that should as soon as possible be the part of discussion on prioritizing the projects and steps in urban planning and investment.

## 5 Conclusion: Overcoming alienation by doing things together

Housing in contemporary cities is increasingly unaffordable and inflexible to changing urban conditions such as ageing population, increasing mobility and migration, changes in patterns of labour and living, large owners of housing etc. The models of its production and distribution needs to be rethought through re-establishing the connection between material and immaterial aspect of housing, both its production and distribution. Housing has to be taken away from technocratic and property-led logic that

develops it as generator of investment. Housing market and large systems of public housing are alienating individuals and families from home as space of comfort with sense of belonging and place-identity dimension tailored according to individual and collective needs. (Turner, 1972)

At the same time there is number of practices initiated by self-organized groups of 'non-professional' and 'professional' individuals with precise motivation to find a solution for their housing as affordable and at the same time pleasant. In this light (Co-)housing needs more attention. While providing some interesting ideas on how we can rethink our society, economy and the housing, collaborative housing projects still stay limited in their outreach. The professional knowledges of planner have to be utilized in this direction. Together with other more structural and large-scale redefinitions in spatial planning and administrative prioritizing the cities could be more resilient and distribution of housing more adapted to particular affinities and possibilities of individual, family or a self-managed group.

## 6 Glossary

(Co-)housing is a concept of production of housing is based on horizontal and democratic organizing to manage housing as need while expropriating real estates from market and to certain extent eliminating the third parties from deciding about your own housing conditions.

*Alienation* is a withdrawing or separation of a person or a person's affectivity from an object or position of former attachment, or in Marxist terms the separation of things that naturally belong together, or antagonism between those who are properly in harmony.

Property-led real estate market is the concept buying and selling of land and buildings that is based on changing the image of the area, improving the environment, attracting private investment and improving confidence for further investment.

*Identity* the condition of being oneself or itself, and not another: or condition or character as to who a person is or what a

thing is; the qualities, beliefs, etc., that distinguish or identify a person or thing: *Place* is a particular portion of space, whether of definite or indefinite extent: *space* in general: or proper sequence or relationship, as of ideas, details, etc.:

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