



Deconstructing housing(policies)

A strategic framework for the implementation of
Rotterdam's new housing policy, mitigating the effects
of displacement caused by urban restructuring

Master Thesis Proposal

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Key words: *Affordable Housing Policies, Displacement, Urban
Restructuring, Gentrification, Spatial Justice, Citizen Engagement*

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INTRODUCTION



Afb. 1: Schot, J. (2020).
How a modern
democracy collapses:
De Tweebosbuurt.
Rechttopdestad.nl. [https://
rechttopdestad.nl/nieuws/](https://rechttopdestad.nl/nieuws/)

Motivation

With a background in both urban design and architecture, I have always been intrigued by the intersection of these fields with housing. During my academic years, I've focused on social issues, especially in the realm of inclusive, community-led design. Whenever possible, I've blended this focus with my interest in social counter-movements, such as those led by artists, squatters, or protest groups.

This combination of interests, along with being in an environment that actively advocates for housing rights, has led me to explore the context of the housing crisis. This focus allows me to explore the social issues within this context and to understand the conflicting voices of the people that are involved. Through this thesis, I aim to offer valuable insights that could help address some of the challenges tied to social housing and urban redevelopment.

Summary

The historical trajectory of housing policies in Rotterdam has undergone a significant shift from a strategy focused on minimizing ‘problematic’ demographics and stimulating gentrification, to a more inclusive and equitable approach. The housing policy of 2016 aimed to attract affluent residents by expanding the high-end rental market, largely through the active reduction of social housing stock. This exclusionary approach, which echoes earlier policies like *Stadsvisie 2030* and the *Rotterdamwet*, exacerbated social disparities and intensified housing-related challenges.

However, a transformative change in the discourse of housing policies emerged in 2023 with the introduction of the new housing policy. This revised policy framework places a strong emphasis on equal treatment of diverse groups, increased resident involvement in housing policy, and a commitment to providing affordable housing while preventing homelessness. The central principle is ensuring that “*all residents should have a fair chance at suitable housing*,” signifying a profound shift in priorities (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2023b, p. 3). Nonetheless, the new proposal exhibits certain ambiguities and inconsistencies while falling short in terms of spatial specification. Moreover, the potential for ongoing displacement pressures continues to exist.

There is an urgent need for concrete implementation to address displacement issues caused by urban redevelopment, especially against the backdrop of a persisting housing crisis. The primary objective of this thesis is to derive valuable insights from past housing policies, which will be used to revise certain existing guidelines and formulate new ones. These efforts are intended to improve and give spatial context to the new housing policy.

With this, this thesis aims for a more socially just way of urban development in Rotterdam, with a specific focus on mitigating future impacts of displacement.

CONTEXT



Afb. 2: Recht op de Stad.
(2020). Veldstraat.
rechttopdestad.nl. <https://rechttopdestad.nl/buurtten/veldstraat/>

Housing crisis

The housing crisis, a term that encompasses a range of housing-related issues affecting a growing segment of the population, is manifesting itself throughout the whole of the Netherlands. An increasing number of people are facing significant challenges in finding affordable housing, not only within major cities but also in regions outside the Randstad. Common issues include extended waiting lists for social housing, soaring housing prices, and homeowners who are consistently outbid (Hochstenbach, 2022).

Housing is internationally recognized as a fundamental human right, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and the Dutch constitution. Both declarations acknowledge the government's obligation to ensure access to adequate housing. While they don't explicitly mandate the construction of housing units by the government, they do emphasize that it is the government's responsibility to take adequate measures to safeguard housing quality and prevent homelessness.

The governmental roles and influences form the foundation of the story of the housing crisis. The current challenges in the housing market did not arise spontaneously; instead, they developed due to a complex interplay of political and economic factors. In the book *"Uitgewoond,"* Cody Hochstenbach describes how the housing crisis is the result of deliberate political policies that were implemented over an extended period. With this, he dispels the misconception that the housing crisis emerged unexpectedly, or more specifically, that it was an inevitable scenario (Hochstenbach, 2022).

This trajectory of deliberate political policies influenced the situation on the housing market for more than thirty years, before it escalated into a full-fledged housing crisis beginning in 2013. From that point onward, the issues spread throughout the country, impacting not only marginalized groups, but also the middle class.

Fig. 1: Mindmap that acknowledges the complexity of the context of the housing crisis (by author)

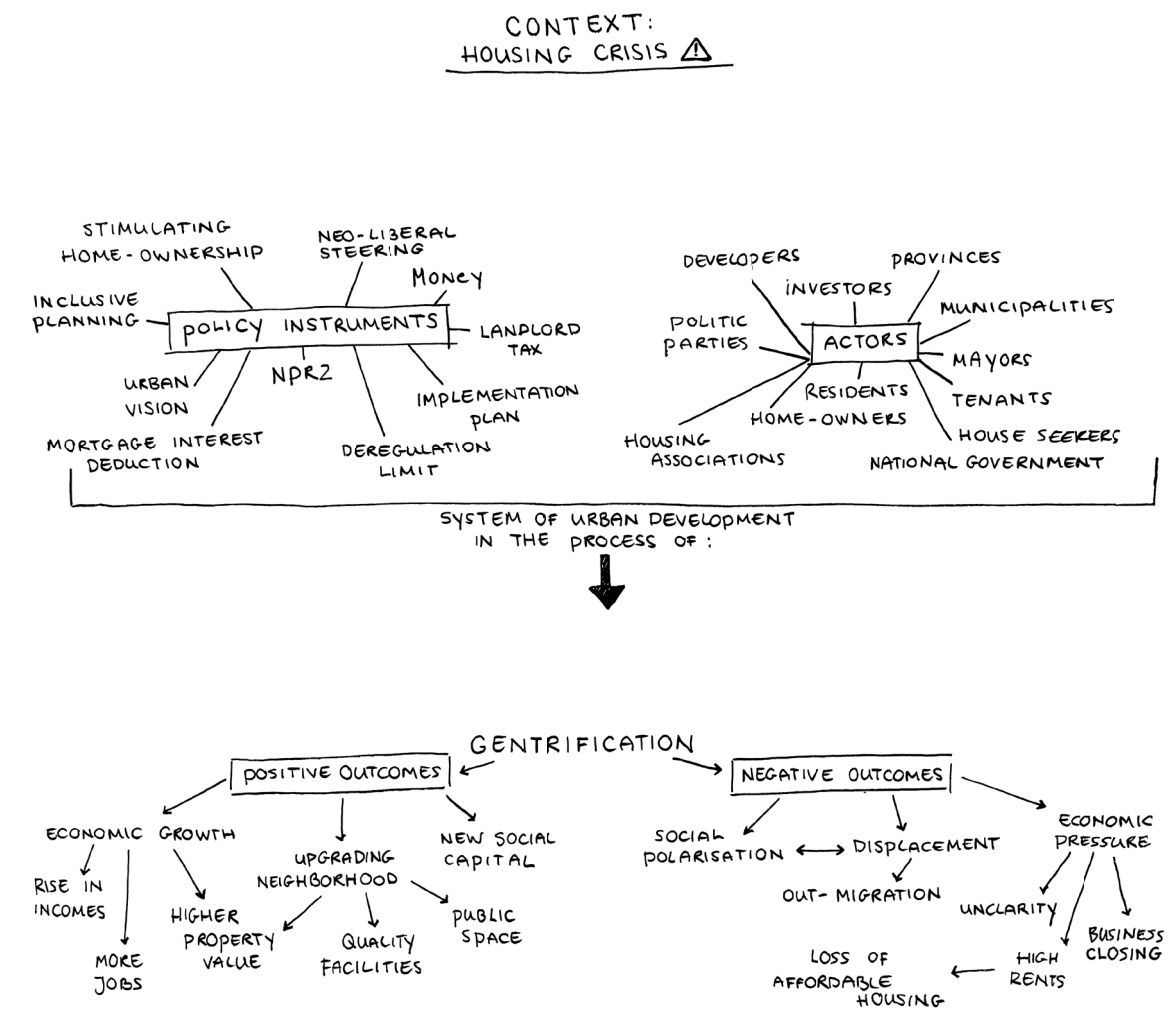


Fig. 1

Already since the ‘Nota Volkshuisvesting’ of 1982, policymakers have viewed homeownership as the ultimate goal, as homeowners are presumed to be more likely to invest in their neighborhoods, participate in local activities, and maintain their properties (Flint & Kearns, 2006).

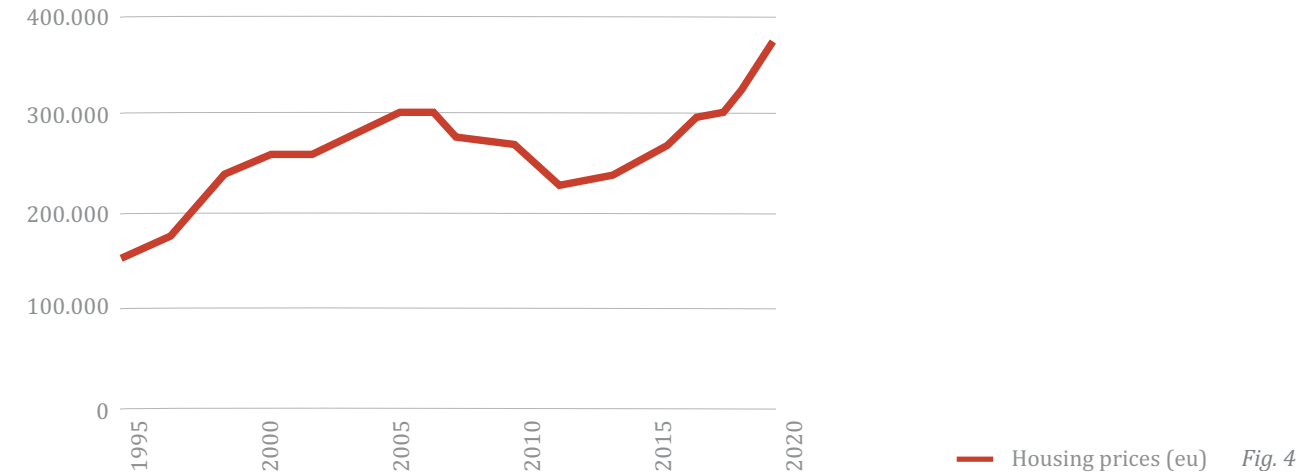
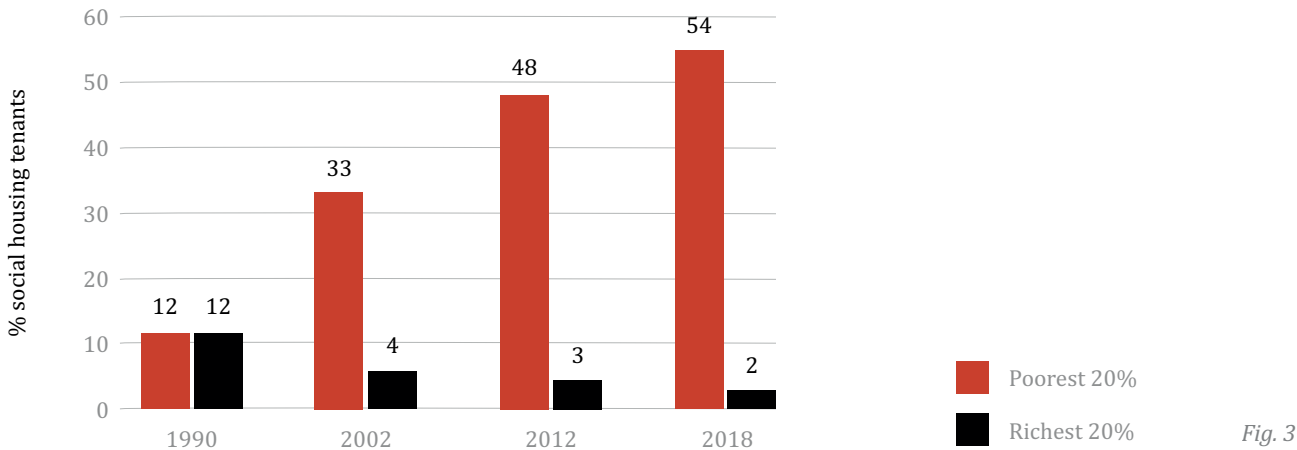
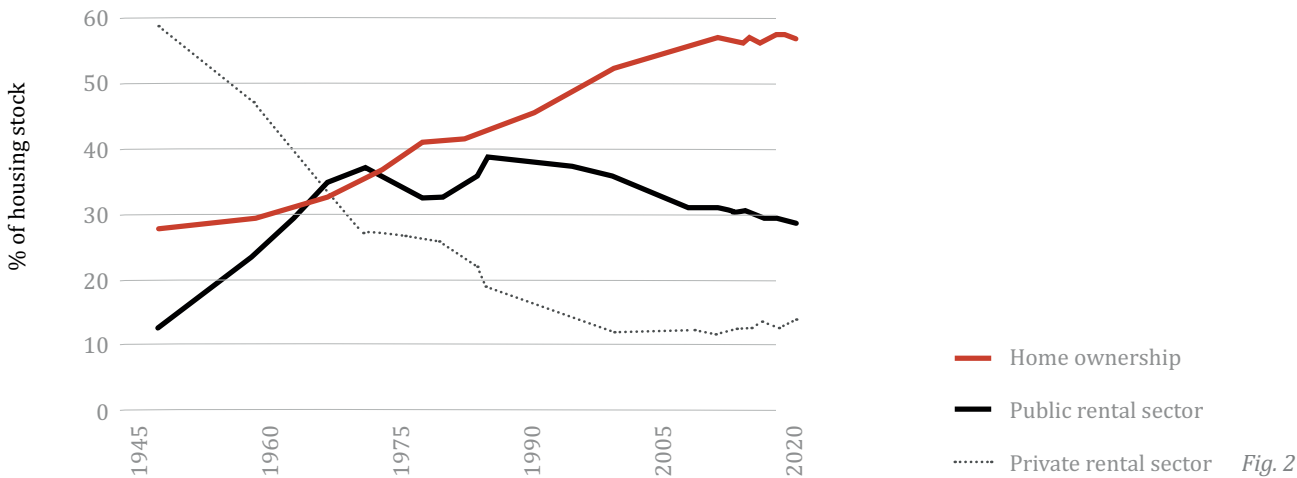
With this reasoning, the core objectives of the national housing policy have been to stimulate the market, promote ownership, and increase privatization (Fig.2). This was achieved through mechanisms such as the mortgage interest deduction, which contributed to subsidies for homeownership that reached a total value of 15 billion euros in 2009 (CBS, 2009).

As one of the consequences of this political strategy, renting became accompanied by uncertainty and inadequate tenant protections, making renting increasingly unattractive. The government targeted social housing by actively reducing the social housing stock, cutting investments, and further restricting access to this sector, limiting it to those with the lowest incomes (Fig.3). Consequently, social housing acquired the stigma of serving as a safety net for economically disadvantaged groups and was seen as a cluster of social issues and poverty (Hochstenbach, 2022). This created a situation where high demand for homeownership, coupled with an extreme escalation in housing prices (Fig.4), met a limited housing supply, contributing to a housing shortage of 390,000 homes in 2022 (ABF Research, 2023).

Figure 1 provides an overview of the housing crisis’s complexity, including the various forces and regulations that are involved. While this thesis recognizes the context’s complexity, it won’t attempt to resolve the entire scope of the housing crisis. Instead, it will focus on displacement pressures caused by housing related issues. This will relate back to the broader scope of the housing crisis by resulting in strategies for adequate housing and more inclusive redevelopment.

Fig. 2: Form of ownership on the Dutch housing market
Fig. 3: Percentage of social housing tenants with a low income (poorest 20%) or high income (richest 20%)
Fig. 4: Average housing prices in the Netherlands, adjusted for inflation
Source: Hochstenbach, C. (2022). Uitgewoond. Das Mag Uitgeverij B.V.

Fig. 2-4. Developments of the housing crisis under deliberate political policies



History of Rotterdam’s housing policies

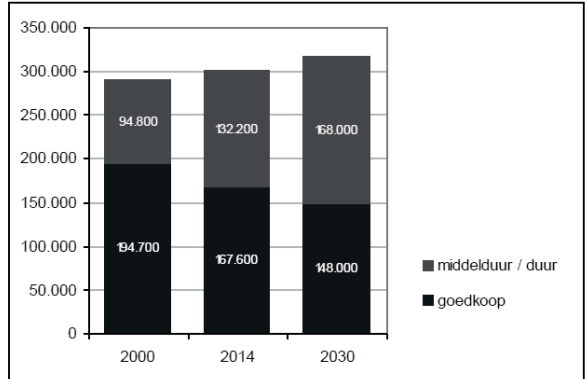
The stigma that had been placed on social housing has also been noticeable in Rotterdam. The city, which has long been recognized as the poorest city in the Netherlands, perceived the promotion of home-ownership and the stimulation of mixed neighborhoods as a way to upgrade the city and build social capital. As Rotterdam had a high rate of social housing, creating mixed neighborhoods mainly meant decreasing the social housing stock to attract more high-income residents (Doucet et al., 2011). The municipality started implementing a strategy of social engineering, to address the city’s challenges, primarily centered on minimizing the clustering of ‘problematic’ demographics and stimulating gentrification.

Over the years, various regulatory documents have reinforced this approach to urban development (see fig. 5-9). Exemplary is the Rotterdamwet of 2006, which allowed the municipality to exclude residents with incomes below a certain level from vulnerable neighbourhoods (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2006). Building on this, the city’s Urban Vision of 2007 and the Housing Accord of 2016 aimed to cater more to middle- and higher-income groups, leading to the demolishment of a substantial share of the social housing stock.

Such measures resulted in a net loss of 14,000 houses in the social sector between 2000-2009 (Dol & Kleinhans, 2012), and placed many in a vulnerable position. Despite the housing crisis, the municipality set the ambition to further decrease the inventory of social housing by 46,700 units before 2030, to shift the socio-economic balance in favor of middle and higher-income groups (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2006). Integrating such measures into the housing policy for an extended period, during increasing housing related challenges, raises pertinent questions about social justice.

Fig. 5, 7, 8: Gemeente Rotterdam. (2016). Woonvisie Rotterdam (Woonakkoord 2016): koers naar 2030 agenda tot 2020.
Fig. 6: Gemeente Rotterdam. (2007). Stadsvisie Rotterdam; Ruimtelijke Ontwikkelstrategie 2030.
Fig. 9: Gemeente Rotterdam. (2006). Wet bijzondere maatregelen grootstedelijke problematiek (Wbmgp) - BWBR0019388. https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0019388/2018-06-13

Figuur 2: Segmenten woningvoorraad in de jaren 2000, 2014 en 2030



Bron: Stadsontwikkeling

Fig. 5

Om gentrification te stimuleren

Om gentrification te stimuleren is het interessant om de openbare buitenruimten goed te beheren en waar nodig aan te passen, en daarnaast het eigen woningbezit te verhogen. In gebieden waar relatief weinig eigen woningbezit is, kan de verkoop van huurwoningen een stimulans zijn voor bewoners om te investeren in hun woonomgeving. Samen met corporaties onderzoeken we waar verkoop en samenvoeging van huurwoningen kan. Samen met corporaties onderzoeken we waar verkoop en samenvoeging van huurwoningen bijdragen aan het proces.

Fig. 6

Rotterdam kent een breed scala aan aantrekkelijke woonmilieus met een duidelijk profiel en een uitgebalanceerd woningbestand. Grote concentraties van zwakke woongebieden behoren tot het verleden. De Rotterdamse voorraad groeit en transformeert, waardoor een beter evenwicht tussen het goedkope, midden en hoge segment ontstaat. Zo verandert ook de sociaal-economische balans, ten gunste van midden- en hogere inkomensgroepen.

Fig. 7

Gekoppeld aan de toename van het middeldure en dure marktsegment, is een afname van het aantal goedkope woningen. Hiermee ontstaat meer evenwicht in de Rotterdamse woningvoorraad. Een evenwicht dat meer in lijn is met de andere grote steden. Onze voorraad bestaat nu immers nog voor 58% uit goedkope woningen, in andere grote steden ligt dat rond of onder 40%, zie figuur 1. In absolute aantallen heeft Rotterdam bijna 168.000 goedkope woningen. Dat is veel meer dan de 125.600 huishoudens, de zogeheten primaire doelgroep, die op grond van hun inkomen in principe daarop zijn aangewezen. Deze overmaat aan goedkope woningen heeft een aanzuigende werking op huishoudens in de primaire doelgroep van elders. Aanbod creëert vraag.

Fig. 8

De Rotterdamwet geeft gemeenten de mogelijkheid om in bepaalde wooncomplexen, straten of gebieden met sociale en economische problemen tijdelijk geen woningen toe te wijzen aan mensen met inkomens op bijstandsniveau (artikel 8 van de wet).

Fig. 9

Fig. 5-9

Social Justice and The Right to the City

The allocation of housing, the sale of rental properties, and the eviction of established residents to facilitate the demolition of social housing have the potential to contribute to more mixed neighborhoods. However, this approach raises the question of whether certain groups are afforded a greater right to the city than others. Can individuals be forced to move or denied access to a neighborhood because their personal profile is perceived to be undermining the city's development? In light of this, the concept of the "Right to the City," originally introduced by Henri Lefebvre in 1968, provides a suitable framework for assessing the social injustices embedded in the discourse of urban development.

With his concept Lefebvre advocates for open access to the city, not only through the democratization of use but also through the democratization of control and production of collective space (Lefebvre, 1967). Nowadays, designers build upon this concept as an effort to create more inclusive and accessible cities, challenging the effects of privatization, intensifying economic inequalities and social polarization (Brenner, 2013). Aiming for inclusive urban development involves touching on the issue of social justice: the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them (Soja, 2009).

In the context of Rotterdam's housing policy, the main discussion revolves around this concept of social justice. The top-down housing allocation, demolitions, and population flow management place vulnerable groups in a marginalized position, making the policies highly susceptible to injustices and the deprivation of rights.

Afb. 3: Odé, J. (2021, November 22). Hevig woonprotest door de stad. Noorderzon010.nl. <https://www.noorderzon010.nl/wonen-in-rotterdam-noord/hevig-woonprotest-door-de-stad/>



Afb. 3

Local conflict and distrust

Because of direct displacement due to the demolition of social housing, Rotterdam is facing local conflicts in the form of social unrest, protests and legal cases. Especially in Rotterdam South, where intense urban restructuring has been particularly impactful, driven by the National Program for Rotterdam South (NPRZ). A prime example is the Tweebosbuurt, where 535 social housing units have been demolished to make way for 137 new units that will be rented at market value, effectively displacing current residents. The housing association Vestia and the residents have been involved in a series of legal cases, culminating in the approval of the demolitions in 2021.

Cases like these have a profound impact on the residents that are involved. Many of them commit several, often highly uncertain, years of their lives to opposing these developments. Communication and participation between stakeholders in these cases are complex and frequently reveal serious deficiencies.

Rotterdam has multiple of these highly sensitive cases, that faced strong conflicting interests during urban restructuring. The map on this spread highlights several projects where the organization Right to the City [Recht op de Stad] has become involved in advocating for the concerns of local residents during the demolition of existing structures. Especially in Rotterdam South there are many ongoing cases, due to the impactful urban restructuring carried out under the National Program for Rotterdam South (NPRZ). Most of the cases listed below have had judgments rendered in 2021, such as Gerdesia Midden and Tweebosbuurt. However, several are even more recent. The decision to demolish Patrimoniumshof was made in June 2022, and the Pompenburg flat is scheduled for demolition in 2025.

Fig. 11: Map with active cases of local conflict in the context of demolishing affordable housing. Data based on *Rechttopdestad.nl*.

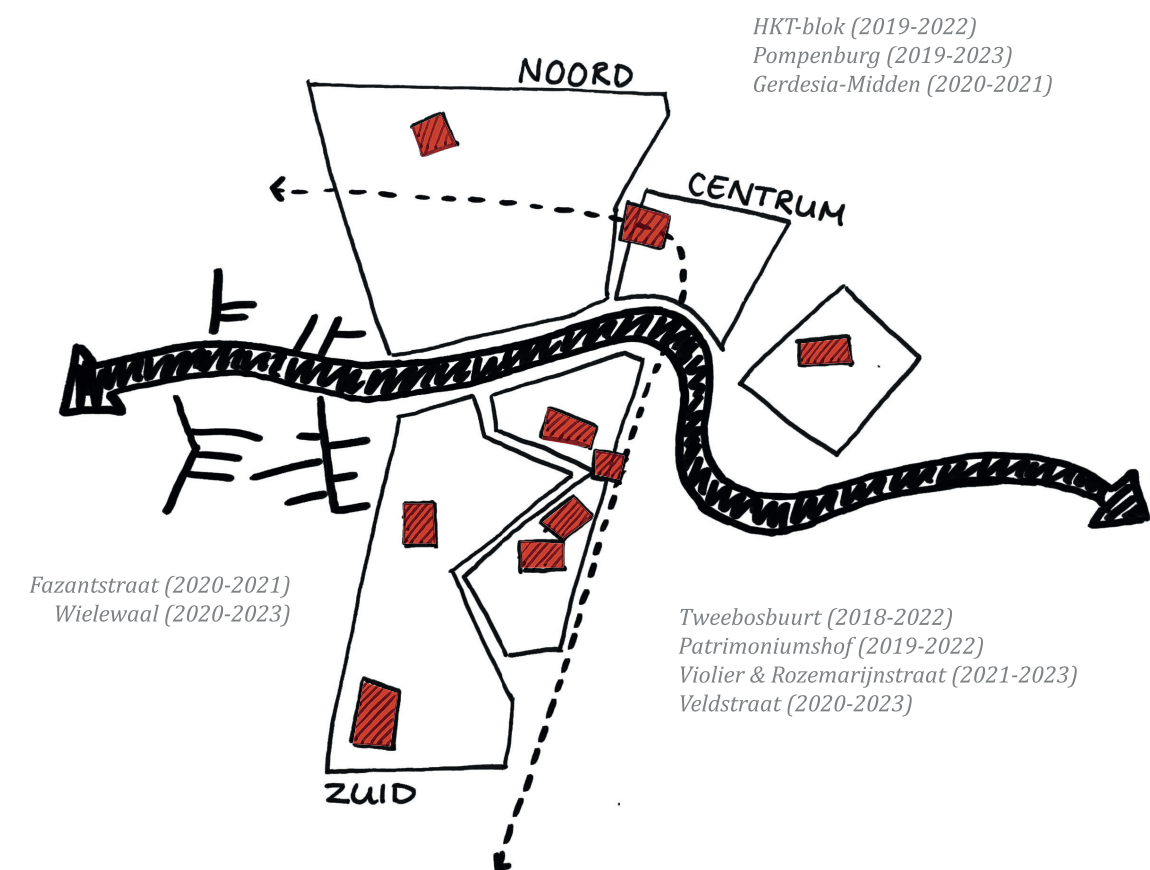
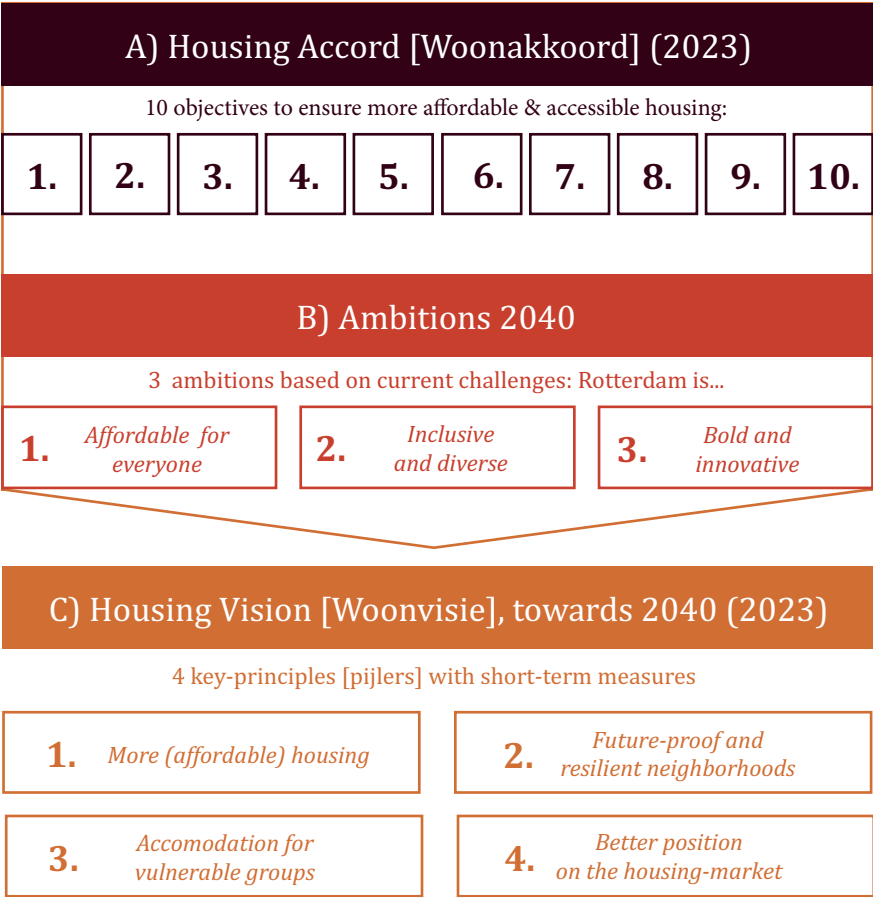


Fig. 11

The New Housing Policy: time for change?

As a response to persistent issues such as escalating homelessness, a severe housing shortage, rising housing prices, and local conflict, the municipality of Rotterdam is introducing a shift in policy. The ten objectives of the Rotterdam Housing Accord (A), established by the city council on 17 February 2023, form the foundation for a new housing vision. This vision addresses current challenges, formulated as three overarching ambitions for Rotterdam (B). The combination of the Housing Accord and the general ambitions resulted in the new Housing Vision (C), which is meant to lead the practical implementation. It connects Rotterdam’s visionary goals with a more concrete strategy towards 2040, and sets out a set of measures that should be implemented in the following five years.



The new housing vision aims to ensure a sustainable and inclusive future for its residents, building on four key-principles that each target specific aspects of the housing market and societal needs.

The first principle (1.) emphasizes the development of affordable housing, particularly in the middle segment, responding to the scarcity faced by middle-income groups in finding suitable housing in Rotterdam. Based on this, the municipality has set new construction targets (for 2026 onwards): 25% social housing and 40% mid-segment housing.

The second principle (2.) focuses on future-proof development, advocating for initiatives that improve existing housing stock, including transitioning to gas-free neighborhoods and enhancing energy efficiency. These initiatives address both environmental issues and mitigate financial pressures on citizen caused by poor insulation and rising energy costs. Additionally, this principle envisions vibrant, diverse neighborhoods with a balanced mix of housing types.

The final two principles (3&4.) of the Housing Vision are dedicated to equitable housing allocation. They focus on providing residents with housing that aligns with their income levels, ensuring fair access for vulnerable groups, and offering the elderly options to relocate to housing that better suits their needs. Fair renting and leasing practices are also promoted.

These are ambitious goals that appear to be the beginning of an adequate approach to Rotterdam’s housing crisis, as well as to the current concerns evolving around social injustices in the housing landscape.

However, due to the abruptness of the new policy direction and the way the ambitions have been formulated, there are doubts about the sincerity and competence of the municipality to implement this new policy. After critical examination, it is anticipated that former conflicts related to displacement are likely to reoccur, which will be elaborated on in the main body of this report. The remainder of the thesis will use the objectives of the new housing policy as a backdrop upon which to base future recommendations.

Positioning

This thesis focuses on the examination of the planning system as an institutional framework, with a specific emphasis on housing policies enacted by the municipality of Rotterdam. Over the years, the municipality pursued a top-down, macro-economic strategy, underpinned by a high-level of central control, as they concluded that the scale of the issues in Rotterdam could not be properly addressed at a local level anymore. This zoomed-out top-down view, meant that the regeneration of the city was aimed at enhancing the city's image as whole, while relying on other cities to absorb Rotterdam's decline in social housing.

However, this strategy overlooked the interests of existing communities, failing to prioritize their collective well-being, which should be a fundamental objective in spatial planning. The governance approach of pushing 'problematic' demographics outside the city and relying on other municipalities to address the housing issue, did not effectively address the social challenges faced by Rotterdam; instead, it merely relocated them elsewhere.

As housing-related challenges escalated, a paradigm shift in urban planning became apparent. During the 1990s, scholars began to be more explicit about the concept of justice (Fainstein, 2013). In this context, the municipality's approach of deconcentrating specific demographic groups and glorifying gentrification was no longer viewed as socially just. Consequently, social practices emerged as influential institutions, where like-minded groups united based on shared social norms, values, and ideas, championing the right to the city, as seen in local action groups.

To address their demand for a more sustainable and socially just approach to spatial planning, a new form of governance is required. Top-down steering remains necessary to create a more just and balanced dynamics between market forces and municipal interventions. Cody Hochstenbach emphasizes in his book *Uitgewoond* (2022) that the housing crisis has been steered by deliberate political policies. This substantiates the argument that it is also the responsibility of governance to turn tides. However, this top-down approach to governance has to be blended with bottom-up design considerations, as there is a pressing need to enhance engagement with stakeholders and the public. Civic engagement necessitates a more small-scale performative approach to spatial planning, allowing for negotiation and iterative processes.

RESEARCH PLAN



Afb. 4: Kievit, A. (2018, September 30). En toen bleef dit rijtjeshuis moederziel alleen achter. Volkskrant.nl. <https://www.volkskrant.nl/mensen/en-toen-bleef-dit-rijtjeshuis-moederziel-alleen-achter~b8b944a1/>

Problem statement

A pressing context

The current housing challenges in Rotterdam call for an urgent and critical evaluation and redesign of its housing policy, particularly to address the risk of future displacement. This urgency stems from the inadequacy of the previous housing policy in responding to the increasing homelessness and the persistent housing shortage. These issues have been exacerbated by escalating housing prices and an increasing number of individuals, particularly among vulnerable groups, in urgent need of housing. Furthermore, previous policy directions have contributed to the undermining of social justice in urban development, further compounding displacement issues.

Challenges of the new policy

While the newly implemented housing policy in Rotterdam aims to address these challenges, a critical examination of its effectiveness and authenticity is necessary. There are concerns about the extent to which it represents substantial change, and about its capacity to effectively counteract the directions of previous policies. These concerns are amplified by unclarities in the new ambitions, overlapping timelines and conflicting actions in recent or ongoing demolition cases, raising the possibility of ongoing displacement pressures. Although the policy includes objectives that suggest a shift towards a more inclusive and accessible housing market, this transition faces several obstacles, including the limitations of existing legal frameworks and the challenge of rebuilding trust with communities that have been negatively affected by past policies.

This study aims to address the existing knowledge gap by providing the first comprehensive assessment of Rotterdam's new housing policy from the perspective of displacement. Currently, there is a notable absence of scholarly work that evaluates the new policy direction and its implications in the socio-spatial realm. The study seeks to contribute to this area by developing practical and actionable design tools, informed by displacement theories. These tools are intended to facilitate a more effective policy approach that is grounded in theoretical understanding.

Fig. 12: Mindmap illustrating the problem statement (by author)

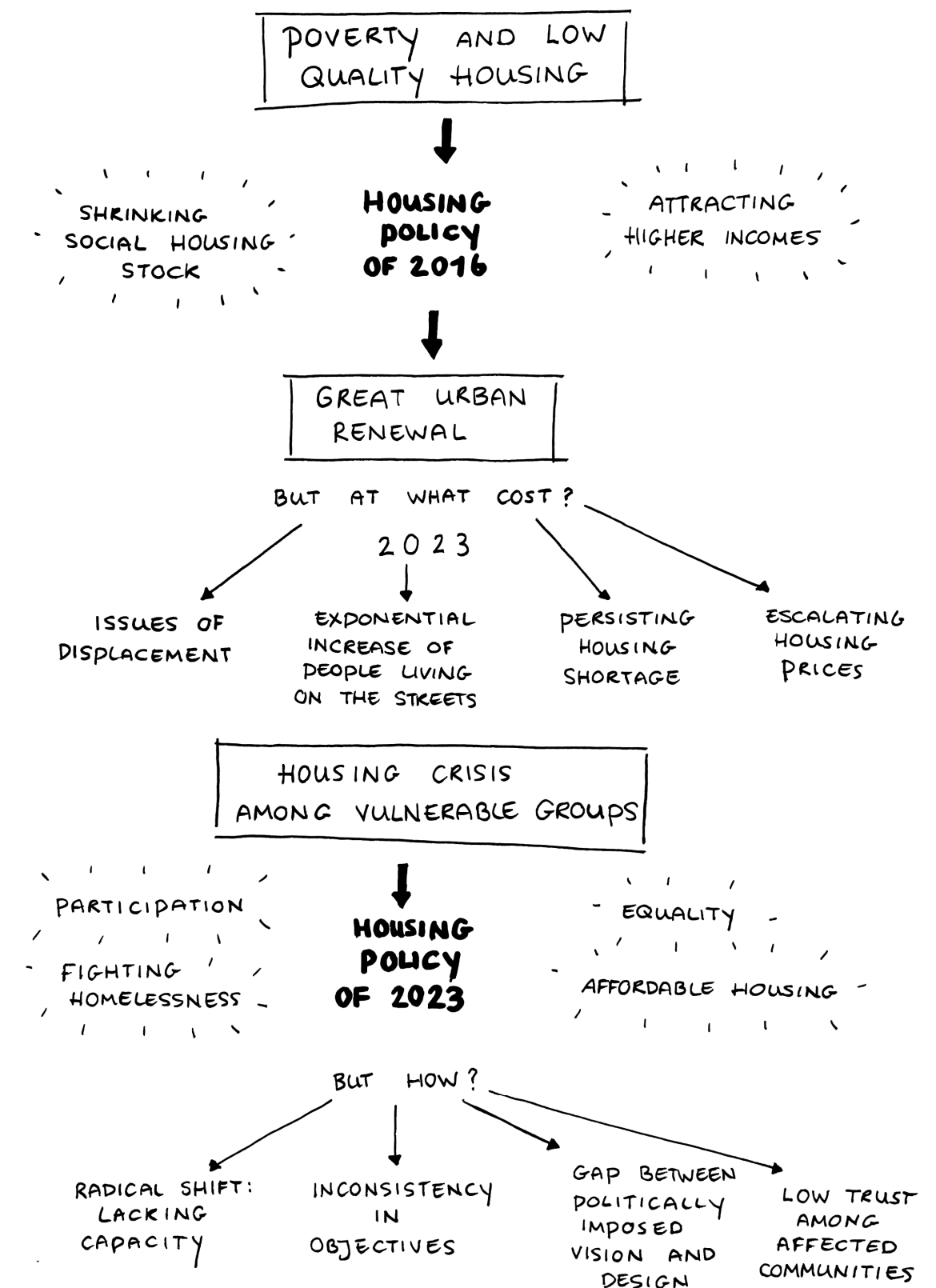


Fig. 12

Project aim

The outcomes of this research aim to effectively mitigate the impact of displacement in future developments, by offering practical guidelines that bridge the gap between regulatory objectives and their spatial implementation. Through a critical analysis of past policy shortcomings and an assessment of future displacement risks, this research aims to underscore the necessity of revising certain existing guidelines and considering implementing additional guidelines within the future policy direction.

The study uses the redevelopment of Tweebosbuurt as a case study, illustrating how a more thoughtful approach could have led to more socially just urban development. Considering the likely recurrence of similar redevelopment projects, the thesis proposes a practical framework to guide the municipality in realising future redevelopment objectives while simultaneously implementing strategies to mitigate displacement.

Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to a more equitable and spatially just resolution of Rotterdam's housing challenges, aiming to prevent local conflicts and build community trust. By integrating theoretical insights from the field of displacement studies, the study advises a new design approach to guide the development of a housing policy in Rotterdam that is not only responsive to current challenges but also proactive in preventing future displacement.

Research Questions & Methods

The risks of persistent displacement pressures in Rotterdam within the new policy direction, particularly in the context of urgent housing challenges, highlighted the need for an investigation into guidelines that can mitigate displacement in future development, leading to the formulation of the research question:

How can Rotterdam’s new housing policy integrate spatial guidelines to address the issue of displacement more effectively in future redevelopment of vulnerable neighborhoods?

Introduction: Methodology

To answer the research question, this thesis employs a qualitative research approach. Initially, the study involves an analysis of existing displacement theories. Using deductive reasoning, these theories will serve as a framework to systematically identify and understand displacement issues that emerged under the previous housing policy.

Subsequently, the research compares these identified issues with the objectives of the new housing policy, to discern how displacement might be a persistent risk within the new policy direction. This phase of study represents an inductive approach that uses empirical research, including an analysis of policy documents, reports, and interviews, to formulate a new hypothesis about potential displacement pressures within the new housing policy.

This research will result in the development of a practical, advisory conclusion, offering design guidelines that help address the issue of displacement more effectively. Subsequently, the focus will shift from Research for Design (formulating research-based guidelines), to Research by Design, an iterative process that explores the spatial implications of different guideline combinations in the case of the Tweebosbuurt.

Reading guide

The following text will explain how each sub-question contributes to the formulation of the answer to the main research question. It addresses each sub-question individually, detailing the specific type of data that is used. At the end, the text will revisit the broader scope of the research, by concluding on the rationale behind the choice of interviews as a research method, and the limitations inherent in the study.

RQ1: Reflecting back

First, the research will provide answer to the research question:

1. How did earlier housing policy directions (from between 2005-2019), particularly the strategy of social mixing, contribute to displacement during urban redevelopment in Rotterdam?

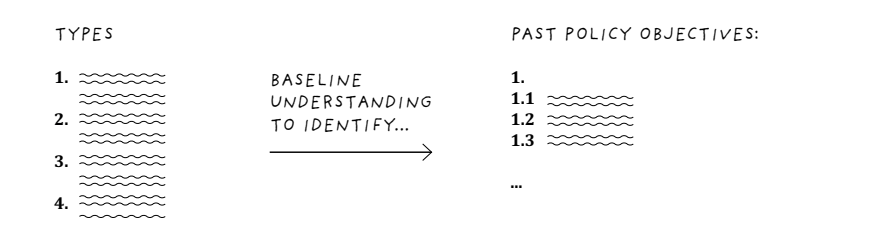
This research question is answered through a qualitative literature review, which is suitable to establish a baseline understanding of displacement pressures within earlier policy directions. The research will kick off with a literature review focusing on the definition and categorisation of displacement pressures. This will involve a thematic analysis of academic texts that explain direct displacement, social displacement, and other indirect displacement types.

These definitions will serve as a framework to understand how earlier policy objectives (from between 2005-2019) contributed to these various displacement types. For this, the research will delve into literature specifically related to Rotterdam’s urban renewal from 2005-2019. This will involve a detailed examination of earlier policy directions, particularly focusing on the strategy of social mixing, and their link to displacement outcomes. The selection of literature will be guided by its relevance to displacement in Rotterdam, taking into account a broader range of themes such as demolition, social exclusion, and gentrification.

Finally, this sub-question will deliver an overview of Rotterdam’s past policy directions that contributed to various displacement types. In the following step this will serve as a framework of reference to assess the risk of displacement within the new housing policy.

Results of RQ1:

1. Theoretical framework of displacement types
2. Overview of Rotterdam's past policy directions contributing to displacement



RQ2: Looking forward

Secondly, the following sub-question will be answered:

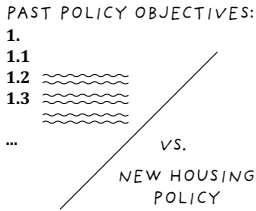
2. In what manner have past policy directions, known to contribute to displacement in Rotterdam’s urban redevelopment, been reintegrated into the new housing policy?

This research question will be explored through a combination of policy analysis and expert interviews. Building on the findings from RQ1, which established how past policy directions led to various types of displacement, this phase assesses how these objectives have been reintegrated in the new housing policy. A comparative analysis of the past and present housing policy objectives will be done, aiming to identify overlaps in objectives that historically led to displacement.

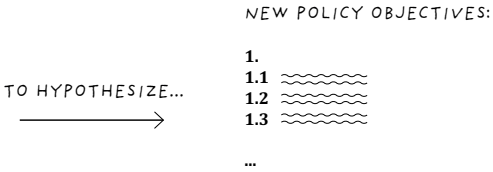
To further support the formulation of a new hypothesis regarding potential displacement pressures within the new housing policy, interviews with experts will be conducted. Given the subjective nature of policy interpretation, as a result of some unclarities in objectives, and the existing gap in literature regarding expert reviews of the new housing policy, these interviews are essenial to enrich the hypothesis. Experts from the domains of policy-making, social sciences, and urbanism (in NPRZ-areas) will be consulted to provide a comprehensive, more nuanced understanding of the new policy objectives. Ultimately, this approach will result in a well-informed hypothesis about the persistence of displacement risks within Rotterdam’s new housing policy. The rationale behind the choice of interviews as a research method will be elaborated on in the concluding paragraphs.

Results of RQ2:

3. Textual hypothesis of persistent risks of displacement



4. Overview of Rotterdam’s new policy directions with a risk of contributing to displacement



RQ3: Solutions

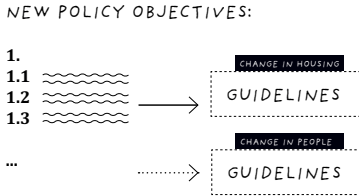
The subsequent sub-question to be addressed is:

3. How can specific objectives of the new housing policy be revised, and what additional guidelines could be implemented, to mitigate displacement more effectively during urban redevelopment?

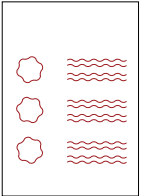
This phase involves revising the objectives identified in the previous step, aiming to enhance their effectiveness in addressing displacement. In addition to revising existing guidelines, new ones will be developed, drawing upon insights from literature reviews and expert interviews. Through a ‘Research for Design’ approach, this phase will use literature to formulate guidelines capable of effectively addressing displacement. The selection of literature will depend on the specific solutions required. For instance, if social mixing is recognised as a displacement-risk, the research could focus on finding guidelines that define what target groups should be mixed to minimize displacement. The formulation of guidelines will be shaped with expertise from the field of urban design and guidance from design tutors. Additionally, interviews will be conducted with experts who have a background in social sciences, a connection to the right-to-housing movement, or have a position in resident associations active in urban redevelopment contexts. These experts are chosen for their ability to provide practical, experience-based suggestions for mitigating displacement. Given the recent introduction of the new housing policy, and the resulting lack of literature on more effective solutions in the context of Rotterdam, targeted interviews can attempt to fill this knowledge gap.

Results of RQ3:

5. Scope of solutions defined by the identified policy objectives:



6. Overview of guidelines that effectively mitigate displacement



RQ4: Implementation

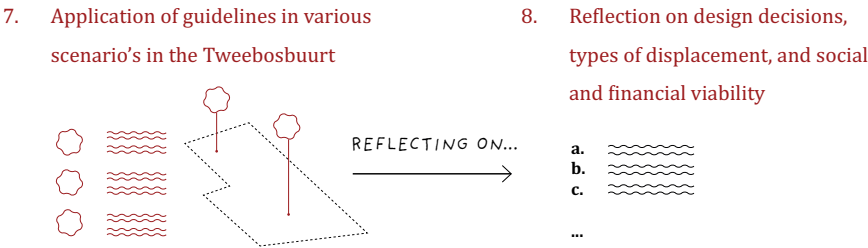
As a final step, the last sub-question will be answered:

4. How can scenarios based on different urban challenges be designed while implementing guidelines aimed at mitigating displacement, in the case of the Tweebosbuurt?

An in-depth site analysis, using maps and GIS data, will establish the foundation for scenario development. This will encompass spatial characteristics (like land use and zoning), demographic information (population density, age distribution, socio-economic status), and urban infrastructure data (transportation networks, urban amenities), along with an assessment of the location’s identity. Then, through Research by Design, the guidelines will be implemented. This will be an iterative process that explores the spatial implications of different guideline combinations in the case of the Tweebosbuurt. This has a high reflective nature, where the design process informs the understanding of displacement strategies, and this understanding, in turn, refines further design iterations.

Each scenario will include a detailed description outlining the design decisions made. A reflection will assess the extent to which each scenario anticipates and addresses displacement pressures, and will provide a rough estimation of the societal and financial viability of the scenario. The reflections will be grounded in earlier research on displacement. If necessary, additional research will be done to support the estimation of the financial viability, potentially through another expert interview.

Results of RQ4:



Concluding:

The use of interviews for data-collection:

The purpose of the interviews in this research is to gather information from diverse perspectives, including those from municipal authorities, residents’ interests, and the right-to-housing movement. These perspectives should be represented in similar quantities, to ensure a balanced view on the research topic. This page aims to illustrate how the chosen amount and type of interviews aims to achieve this balance.

Individuals from resident associations and the right-to-housing movement, particularly in the context of displacement, tend to share similar values; thus, these groups are both represented in yellow in the diagram on this page. In contrast, municipal representatives often embody different interests and are therefore depicted in red. The potential overlaps between these parties are acknowledged, as indicated in the accompanying figure. The selection of two municipal representatives (1&2), two Right-to-Housing movement representatives (4&5), and one researcher (3) capable of bridging these perspectives, reflects a commitment to a balanced interview sample size, thereby aiming to offer a nuanced view.

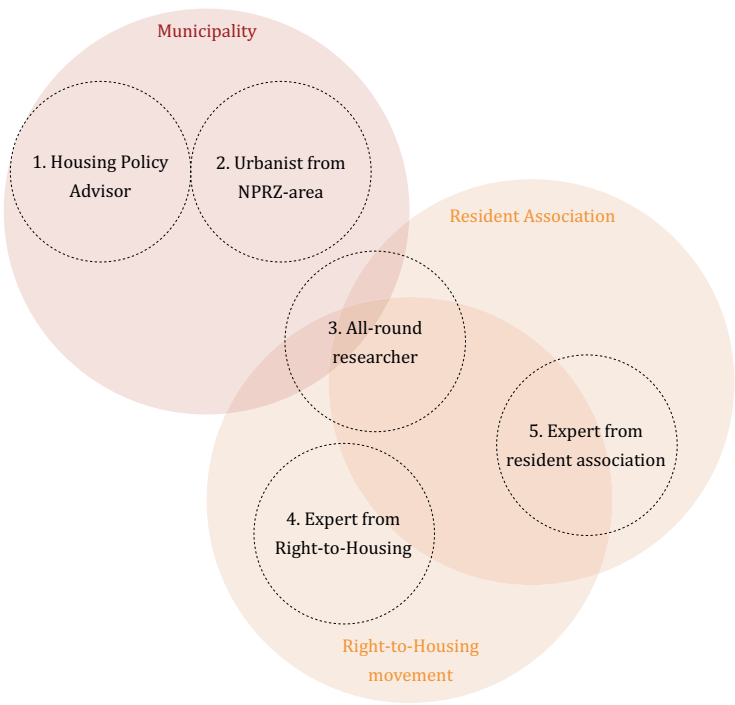


Fig. 13: Diagram of the five interviews that will be conducted, and the corresponding 'group' they represent (red and yellow)

To further explain the role of expert interviews in this research, the following table details the interviewees and their relevance to the research context. The table outlines specific characteristics unique to each interview. In addition to this, there are certain overarching attributes, such as the exploratory, semi-structured format of all interviews. It is planned to conduct these interviews in person, and with the consent of the participants, they will be recorded. The data derived from these recordings will be processed through thematic analysis, wherein relevant quotes are categorised into themes that align with and enhance the research narrative.

RQ		Topic	Who	Amount	Purpose	Addressed knowledge gap
2	✓	Policy	1. Policy advisor of Housing from the Municipality of Rotterdam	1 (2 people)	Further explanation of the new housing policy objectives, for a more nuanced interpretation	Unclarities or inconsistenties in the objectives of the new housing vision
2		Policy	2. Urbanist from the NPRZ-area	1	Further explanation of the consequences of the new housing policy for the NPRZ-area	No public information about expected urban transformation projects in Rotterdam
2	✓	Policy	3. All-round researcher (policy-/ resident advisor active within Right-to-Housing movement)	1	Provide additional input to enrich the hypothesis on persistent displacement pressures	Given the recent introduction of the new policy there are no other expert reviews that can be used as reference
3		Solutions			Form as inspiration to formulate guidelines to address displacement	Lack of new knowledge-based solutions to displacement specific to the context of Rotterdam's new policy
3		Solutions	4. Expert from the Right-to-Housing movement	1	Form as inspiration to formulate guidelines to address displacement	Lack of new knowledge-based solutions to displacement specific to the context of Rotterdam's new policy
3/4		Solutions	5. Expert related to resident associations active in urban redevelopment	1	Form as inspiration to formulate guidelines to address displacement/ input for reflection based on the resident experience	Lack of new knowledge-based solutions to displacement specific to the context of Rotterdam's new policy

Limitations of the research:
This research, while comprehensive in its approach to addressing displacement in urban redevelopment, is subject to several limitations. Firstly, the qualitative nature of the study, relying predominantly on literature reviews and expert interviews, may introduce subjective biases. Using quantitative data to measure displacement brings significant challenges, and therefore this research chooses to rely on displacement theories to anticipate displacement pressures within the changing neighborhood dynamics. Additionally, the recent introduction of the new housing policy, still in its conceptual phase, limits the availability of recent interpretations and insights that can be used as reference. This gap is partly bridged by conducting expert interviews.

Secondly, the interviews have a limited sample size and may not fully represent the diversity of perspectives within the broader community. Hence, the interview data mainly serves as additional support for the policy- and literature analysis. While interviewees’ perspectives may be coloured by their stance within the right-to-housing movement, this does not substantially undermine the study’s integrity. By incorporating diverse perspectives, the research aims to present a nuanced view where different viewpoints are weighted.

While the study focuses on urban redevelopment in Rotterdam, the guidelines that are proposed may have broader relevance. Many of Rotterdam’s housing policies, such as social mixing and housing differentiation, mirror national trends and thus may extend beyond the local context. Nonetheless, the application to the Tweebosbuurt, shaped by its distinct socio-economic and spatial characteristics, might limit the generalisability to other settings. Moreover, the iterative nature of the Research by Design approach in RQ4, although thorough, might not capture all potential scenarios.

Ethical Reflection

This research adheres to the TU Delft guidelines to ensure the ethical integrity of interviews. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, clearly outlining the scope of the research and how their contributions will be used. Confidentiality is ensured, especially when discussions involve sensitive topics related to housing rights and issues of displacement. As the interviews involve experts in authoritative positions, the focus is predominantly on professional insights rather than personal experiences, minimising the risk of emotional or psychological harm to participants.

While the study primarily addresses issues that are present within minority groups, any proposed enhancements to Rotterdam’s housing policy are intended to benefit society at large. Additionally, the research acknowledges and respects contrasting objectives in urban redevelopment among different stakeholders. By conducting interviews with diverse groups, and by developing scenario’s that strive to prevent displacement while still implementing various scenarios of urban redevelopment, this research aims to adopt a nuanced approach. The research is executed with sensitivity towards the experiences of Rotterdam’s residents, especially those in the Tweebosbuurt.

Given my background in urban design and architecture, and my affinity with the right-to-housing movement, there is an inherent personal bias towards issues surrounding social housing and urban redevelopment. This bias could potentially influence the research, particularly in interpreting data and formulating guidelines. To counteract this, the methodology incorporates interviews with diverse groups, aiming to mitigate the risk of overemphasizing a single perspective. To further support this, consideration is given to incorporating scenarios that address a broad spectrum of urban challenges, not just those aligned with my advocacy. Additionally, the research employs a systematic approach to the analysis of interview data and literature reviews to minimize subjective interpretation. During the research, there are regular feedback sessions with tutors and peer students, providing an external check on potential biases.

Expected results

The primary anticipated outcome of this research is to identify shortcomings in Rotterdam's past housing policy, specifically the 2016 Housing Accord, from which lessons can be derived to inform future policy directions. It is expected that the previous housing policy contributed to the spatial and economic development of the city but did so through an approach that compromised social objectives that should be prioritized by a governmental body. These findings are expected to identify aspects of Rotterdam's new housing policy that need to be revised, as well as additional guidelines that should be considered to effectively mitigate displacement in future developments. Given the context, without these enhancements, it cannot be assumed that the new policy guidelines will be effectively implemented to bring about meaningful change.

The final output of this project will be a comprehensive report providing guidelines that should be taken into consideration in future urban redevelopment to reduce displacement. With the Tweebosbuurt selected as a case study, the report will illustrate the application of these guidelines across various scenarios. This approach will equip the municipality with the knowledge to make informed decisions in similar future situations, demonstrating how urban redevelopment can be shaped and guided by theories of displacement.

Concrete sub-products, corresponding to each research question, can be found in the chapter Research Questions & Methods. These are expected to offer actionable insights and tools for policymakers, thereby contributing to a more equitable and spatially just housing landscape in Rotterdam.

Relevance

Scientific Relevance

This research holds scientific importance as it adds to the ongoing discourse on the housing crisis, which is not only a relevant topic of research in the Netherlands but also in broader international contexts.

The timing of the study corresponds with the recent introduction of Rotterdam’s new housing policy, making it a key resource for quickly delivering feedback and constructive recommendations to aid in the policy’s effective implementation. This aligns the research with contemporary events and recent urban renewal projects, thereby making it especially relevant to current academic debates. The research further engages with contemporary academic discussions by exploring the concept of social justice, a subject that has gained increasing prominence in urban studies.

The scientific contribution of this research lies in addressing Rotterdam’s new housing policy, particularly from the perspective of displacement, given there are currently little to no academic reviews in this context yet. This can set a precedent for future research in this area. Additionally, by employing displacement theories as a lens for policy evaluation, the methodological framework of this study can serve as a reference for future studies in housing policy analysis. Lastly, the focused examination of Tweebosbuurt as a case study provides a detailed, contextualised understanding of policy impacts.








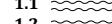

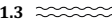
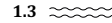
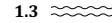




Societal Relevance

The research aims to relieve certain issues posed by the housing crisis, a situation with societal implications that extend to both lower and middle-incomes, thereby affecting a substantial part of society. This issue has received significant media attention, shedding light on injustices within Rotterdam’s housing strategies, and underscoring the study’s relevance to the ongoing public discourse.

In response to this discourse, the research places strong emphasis on the principles of social justice, and prioritizes a resident-centric approach in housing policies. These aspects are likely to align with the goals of housing rights organizations, contributing to their advocacy efforts aimed at promoting more equitable urban development.

Moreover, the research underscores the role of governance in enacting change, thereby making it highly relevant to municipal authorities that are responsible for policy implementation. By identifying risks of displacement within the new policy, and by proposing actionable guidelines, the study has the potential to influence the future course of housing policy, ensuring it is more responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups. The research reveals a long-standing neglect in addressing these issues, particularly from 2005 to 2019, resulting in a prolonged and disproportionate disadvantage to certain minority communities.

Current progress

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RESEARCH QUESTION 1		RESEARCH QUESTION 2		RESEARCH QUESTION 3		RESEARCH QUESTION 4	
1) Theoretical framework of displacement types		2) Overview of Rotterdam's past policy directions contributing to displacement		3) Textual hypothesis of persistent risks of displacement		4) Rotterdam's new objectives with a risk of contributing to displacement	
5) Scope of solutions defined by the identified policy objectives:		6) Overview of guidelines that effectively mitigate displacement		7) Application of guidelines in various scenario's in the Tweebosbuurt		8) Reflection on design decisions, types of displacement, and viability	
TYPES		PAST POLICY OBJECTIVES:		PAST POLICY OBJECTIVES:		NEW POLICY OBJECTIVES:	
1. 		1. 		1. 		1. 	
2. 		1.1 		1.1 		1.1 	
3. 		1.2 		1.2 		1.2 	
4. 		1.3 		1.3 		1.3 	
		...		vs.		...	
				NEW HOUSING POLICY			

The top half of this page shows an overview of all research questions and their corresponding products. For each question, an indication of the current progress is given with the grey bar.

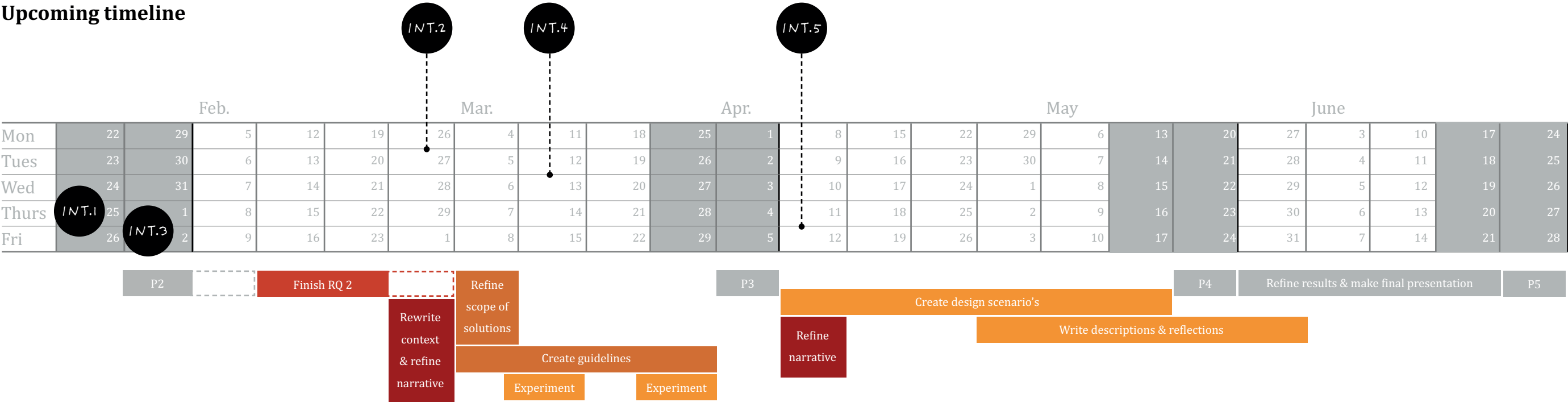
Thus far, the research process has been iterative; nearly all research elements were explored so that findings across all questions could inform each others' progress.

Therefore, most research questions, especially research questions 2 and 3, are currently in their draft or early draft stages. Research question 1 will be left as is for now. Later on, this question will be perfected depending on the final research narrative, but this is not an immediate priority.

The bottom half of this page shows the upcoming timeline, with the expected tasks that need to be done before P5. The next few weeks will focus on finalising research question 2. The hypothesis about future displacement risks within the new housing policy is currently unclear, and needs to be restructured and revised to be able to define solutions for research question 3.

The period between P2 and P3 will be spent developing guidelines, while aiming to complete most interviews. However, findings in this period may influence the interview schedule. Particularly for interview 5, which seeks a resident (association) perspective, the scheduling will depend on whether there is a need for additional input on the guidelines or feedback on the design. From P3 to P4, the focus will shift to designing.

Upcoming timeline



RESEARCH RESULTS

Afb. xxxxx xxxx
xxxxxxxxxxxxx
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fatrid remus,
uture eo, sendampl.
Ad
dicae intemquemum
peris.
Vala omneque re
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caperit, cupicae
pratia?
Soltusciam nos
firium et
pulabute, confentilica



Theory of displacement

Introduction

Displacement, defined as the forced relocation of residents from their residential housing units (Easton et al., 2020), is increasingly recognized as a social injustice stemming from housing policies such as those implemented in Rotterdam. The concept carries a multi-layered definition that has been, particularly in the context of gentrification and urban renewal, the subject of extensive research. Grier and Grier (1978) further clarify the term, by stating that displacement involves forced relocation that is involuntary and occurs due to conditions beyond the residents’ control, despite them having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy. These conditions render continued occupancy impossible, hazardous, or unaffordable.

Types of displacement

Displacement is often categorized into direct and indirect forms. Direct displacement arises from economic factors such as rent increases or physical eviction by landlords. Indirect displacement, on the other hand, comprises a wide variety of influences from urban renewal. For example, the upgrading of certain properties can elevate rents and property prices in the surrounding area, compelling residents to move even if their own dwellings were not directly affected (Easton et al., 2020).

Indirect displacement typically arises from a gradual accumulation of displacement pressures over time, leading to a sense of displacement. Marcuse (1985) defines these pressures as for example the perceived loss of local support networks through outmigration, as well as the disappearance of familiar local community services/facilities. Recognizing these elements provides a fuller understanding of the emotional and societal consequences of urban renewal.

There are more aspects influencing the impact of displacement pressures, which are hard to assess and are therefore often overlooked in research. Examples are “(...) the intensity of psychosocial ties that bind people to places (Davidson, 2009), the sacrifices lower-income residents may make over time to remain in their homes in gentrifying areas (Newman & Wyly, 2006), or the limitations that gentrification may place upon their future residential choices (Slater, 2009)”, as summarized by Easton et al. (2020, p. 2).

Fig. 10: Trouw. (2022, July 20). De sloop werd per brief aangekondigd: in Rotterdam is de sloopkogel sterker dan het spandoek. <https://www.trouw.nl/binnenland/de-sloop-werd-per-brief-aangekondigd-in-rotterdam-is-de-sloopkogel-sterker-dan-het-spandoek~bcfdaf51/>

Reportage Achterstandswijk

De sloop werd per brief aangekondigd: in Rotterdam is de sloopkogel sterker dan het spandoek



Sloopwerkzaamheden in de Tweebosbuurt te Rotterdam-Zuid. Beeld Otto Snoek

Met ferme hand knapt Rotterdam zijn achterstandswijken op. Daarbij verliest de stad geregeld het bewonersbelang uit het oog, zegt een evaluatiecommissie. ‘De sloop werd per brief aangekondigd.’

Merijn van Nuland 20 juli 2022, 08:53

Fig. 10

Measuring displacement

Given the multi-layered character of the definitions and pressures surrounding displacement, it is inevitable that the data related to these instances can be hard to measure. The paper “*Measuring and Mapping Displacement: The Problem of Quantification in the Battle Against Gentrification*” by Easton et al. (2020) elaborates on this by discussing several research methods and their limitations.

In displacement studies, interviews can be used to gather data about migrant characteristics. This offers the advantage of exploring the motivations behind migration which will help distinguishing between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ migration - a distinction often challenging to make in displacement studies (Grier & Grier, 1978). However, conclusions might contain inconsistencies as achieving a diverse sample can be challenging and time consuming (Marcuse, 1985), and people’s willingness to participate might be influenced by traumatic experiences (Baeten et al., 2017).

Recent research has attempted to quantify displacement by analyzing demographic and socio-economic shifts in neighborhoods. Studies typically observe how specific sub-groups are replaced by younger, more affluent populations using population and housing data (Van Crieelingen, 2009). An example is Brousseau’s (2015) study on the Mission District, which linked displacement to rent increases outpacing income growth (Brousseau, 2015). However, caution is advised in drawing conclusions, as the causal connection between in-migration and out-migration can often remain speculative (Easton et al., 2020).

Quantifying displacement may be difficult, but with a solid understanding of displacement theories, it’s reasonable to predict residents’ feelings of displacement due to changing neighborhood dynamics. Factors like increasing living costs, demographic shifts, and changes in local amenities can indicate displacement, though precise measurement remains challenging. This thesis focuses on analyzing these evolving factors and their potential impacts, acknowledging the complexity yet feasibility of forecasting displacement in such contexts.

Fig. X: Definitions of displacement, drawing on Marcuse (1986) and Zhang & He (2018)

Direct (last-resident) displacement	Direct last-resident displacement is caused by both physical (e.g. harassment from landlords) and economic (e.g. rent increases) actions. This form of displacement is usually immediate and visible, often involving the demolition or significant alteration of existing housing.
Indirect displacement	Indirect displacement happens when residents are compelled to leave their homes due to changes in their neighborhood that make living there untenable or unaffordable, even though their actual housing unit isn't directly affected.
<i>Forces:</i> Displacement pressure	Displacement pressure refers to the various factors and forces that contribute to displacement, typically suffered by less affluent families during the transformation of the neighbourhoods where they live.
<i>Types:</i> Social pressure	This could be due to the arrival of new groups with different lifestyles or values, or the departure of long-standing neighbors and community members, leading to a loss of familiar social networks and support systems.
Commercial pressure	This occurs when the amenities (such as local shops, services, or community facilities) are significantly altered or replaced. The original residents might no longer feel that the neighborhood caters to their needs or reflects their cultural or socio-economic identity.
Financial pressure	This form of displacement is primarily economic, affecting residents who can no longer afford their neighborhood due to rent increases or a general rise in living costs (such as increased prices for goods and services in the area).

Fig. X

Displacement in Rotterdam

Introduction

In the following chapter, the theory of displacement will be examined within the context of Rotterdam. The aim is to identify specific examples of various displacement types, building towards a more concrete problem statement. This analysis will encompass a variety of policy documents spanning from 2005 to 2022, which have played a role in facilitating displacement. Firstly, a concise historical introduction will illustrate the conditions that led to the formulation and implementation of these policies.

During the large-scale reconstruction of Rotterdam after the Second World War, there was a strong focus on social housing to accommodate the majority of the port’s workforce quickly and cost-effectively. The post-war expansion of the port attracted an increasing number of migrant workers, many of whom had limited financial resources. The growth of this demographic group, combined with the oil crisis of the 1970’s and an economic shift in the port towards greater automation and reduced traditional labor, led to escalating unemployment rates and lower average incomes compared to other Dutch cities. During the 1970s and 1980s, a particularly stark decline was observed in the city’s southern parts. Those with the means to relocate did so, leaving behind housing that became occupied by new migrant groups from Spain, Turkey, Morocco, the Antilles, and Suriname. This transition furthered social challenges, marked by a diminishing sense of community cohesion, increased segregation, and rising poverty levels (NPRZ, 2011).

Nowadays, over 32% of Rotterdam’s residents are low-income, and 56% of the housing stock consists of affordable social housing (CBS, 2021). The CBS still rates Rotterdam as the poorest city of the Netherlands, which the municipality has been fighting with their urban development strategy that has been active from 2005 onwards.

The municipality perceived the promotion of homeownership and the stimulation of mixed neighborhoods as a way to upgrade the city and build social capital. Considering the high rate of social housing, creating mixed neighborhoods mainly meant decreasing the social housing stock to attract more high-income residents (Doucet et al., 2011). The municipality started implementing a strategy of social engineering, to address the city’s

challenges, primarily centered on minimizing the clustering of ‘problematic’ demographics and stimulating gentrification. Over time, this strategy has resulted in various policies designed to steer demographic changes, such as the 'Rotterdamwet', and visions aimed at restructuring the housing stock. These efforts often specifically target the South of Rotterdam under the name of the National Program Rotterdam South ('NPRZ'). The figure summarizes the most important policies in this context.

	Year	Policy	Author
1	2005	Act on Extraordinary Measures for Urban Problems [Rotterdamwet]	<i>Tweede kamer</i>
2	2007	City Vision Rotterdam 2030 [Stadsvisie]	<i>Gemeente Rotterdam</i>
3	2011	South Works! National Program Quality Leap South	<i>Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ)</i>
4	2016	Housing Vision Rotterdam 2030 [Woonvisie]	<i>Gemeente Rotterdam</i>
5	2019-2022	Implementation plan for Rotterdam South 2019–2022	<i>Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ)</i>

Fig. X: Discourse of relevant housing policies in Rotterdam (by Arkins & French (2023)).

Fig. X

1. Direct displacement

Related policy approach

The City Vision (2007) and the Housing Vision (2016) aimed to restructure the housing stock to cater more to middle- and higher-income groups. To achieve this, part of the social housing stock was planned to be demolished in neighborhoods with a substantial share of affordable social housing, to allow for the construction of new family dwellings and apartments. Additionally, some of the remaining social housing was to be upgraded to attract higher-income families, and some units were planned to be sold, either to current residents or new arrivals (Ouwehand & Doff, 2013).

The Housing Vision specifically targeted the removal of ‘low-cost’ housing, defined as social housing properties below the rental cap of €629/month, or private rental and owner-occupied houses with a WOZ value below €122,000 (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2016). In this vision they set the ambition to decrease the inventory of social housing by 46,700 in less than 15 years, to shift the socio-economic balance in favor of middle and higher-income groups (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2016). In the years before, between 2000 and 2009, already 20,000 affordable units were demolished, while only about 6,000 new dwellings were built, resulting in a net loss of nearly 14,000 houses (Dol & Kleinhans, 2012). The demolishment of affordable housing, in times of a housing crisis, directly displaced long-term residents who relied on these housing solutions.

Impact on neighborhoods in the South

The South of Rotterdam has typically been subject to large scale urban restructuring projects under the name of the National Program Rotterdam South. The NPRZ execution plan (2019) aimed to renew one third of the district’s housing stock through renovation, merging, or demolition-new construction (Arkins & French, 2023). Entire neighbourhoods, like the Tweebosbuurt, were targeted for demolition. In this neighborhood, predominantly inhabited by migrants, the municipality demolished 535 social housing units in collaboration with housing association Vestia. Out of these demolished units, only 137 are being reconstructed as social housing, while the remaining units are being made available for rent at market rates, actively displacing long-term residents (Arkins & French, 2023).

United Nations rapporteurs criticized that the affected residents were not granted a right to return, and warned for major family disruptions (United Nations, 2021). For compensation, the affected households in Tweebosbuurt were offered a relocation allowance of 6000 euros, along with priority status to find housing elsewhere. However, due to scarcity, the options for rehousing are limited, and the distribution of priority statuses generally leads to longer waiting lists for social housing (Kleinhans et al., 2022; Versluis, 2017).

The Afrikaanderwijk is another neighborhood in Rotterdam South that experienced forceful restructuring. To encourage the opportunity for homeownership in the neighborhood, older social housing units were demolished and replaced with mixed tenure developments, leading to an increase of owner-occupied housing from 1% in 2000 to 11% in 2011 (Doucet & Koenders, 2018). While some residents could return to the neighborhood, other low-income residents that could not afford the new housing options were forced to seek alternatives elsewhere. A representative from the SP expressed concerns about displacement in Rotterdam, stating: *“I have spoken to people in the city and they had to move twice. They came from somewhere and were placed somewhere different in a neighbourhood, then their house got demolished. They had to leave again. Over time I can imagine that you get the feeling you aren’t welcome. Like if we feel like moving you, we move you.”* (as cited in (Versluis, 2017)).

Concluding on direct displacement

In summary, the housing policies in Rotterdam, have directly displaced many residents, especially those from low-income backgrounds. The key forces driving this displacement include the demolition of affordable housing for more expensive, owner-occupied units, the reduction of social housing stock through renovation and sales, and the scarcity of rehousing options coupled with long waiting lists. These strategies, of actively removing accessible housing and creating barriers for low-income residents seeking new homes, illustrate clear examples of direct displacement within Rotterdam.

1. Direct displacement	Forces in Rotterdam
1.1.	Demolishing 'low-cost' housing and replacing it with owner-occupied high segment housing.
1.2.	Upgrading, merging or selling affordable housing to reduce the social housing supply.
1.3.	Scarcity of rehousing options coupled with prolonged waiting lists.

2. Social displacement

Related policy approach

The City Vision (2007) and Housing Vision (2016) propose large-scale urban restructuring to enhance the city's living environment by attracting more middle- and high-income, well-educated groups (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2007, 2016). This approach anticipates that social risers will lead and inspire broader citywide change, especially in areas like Rotterdam South, with limited housing variety and pressured quality of living. Here, the NPRZ policy has set particularly high ambitions for reshaping the demographic composition, complemented by the Rotterdamwet, that legalizes the decline of lower-income households in '*krachtwijken*', predominantly found in the South district (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2016).

Social exclusion

The policy documents imply that there is a need of a new target group to adequately address the city’s challenges. The undermined relevance of the current residents in this process is emphasized by aiming for '*people from outside the area*', such as social climbers and young potentials, and by building housing to fit the needs of the '*future residents of the South*' (NPRZ, 2011, 2019). The 'South Works' policy paper specifically dismisses the current residents' ability to enhance urban quality, by stating that the South has to be temporarily excluded from the usual housing distribution system – referring to the Rotterdamwet - to attract people that can have a meaningful contribution to South (NPRZ, 2011). People that can have a meaningful contribution, also referred to as '*strong shoulders*', are specified as primarily Dutch, aged 25-35, working, and highly educated (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2020). This approach not only actively displaces groups based on social status but also sidelines specific demographics from participating in urban development.

The strategy of attracting higher income people, framed as ‘social mixing’, has proven to disproportionately disadvantage certain groups, especially migrant communities and people of color. Arkins & French (2023) note that these strategies are primarily proposed in areas of Rotterdam with high rates of affordable housing, lower-income households, and migrant communities; there's no equivalent strategy for integrating low-income households into upper-class dominated areas. Consequently, this adds to the problematization of migrant communities, by associating them with social issues, poverty and criminality (Kleinhans et al., 2022). The formulation of the Rotterdam’s policy objectives further substantiates this, by referring to urban issues as ‘*un-Dutch*’, and by making statements such as ‘*the color is not the issue, but the issue does have a color*’ (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2003; NPRZ, 2011). This contributes to certain groups feeling unwelcome in the city, as a researcher illustrates: “*You could also see this in the Tweebosbuurt but also in Charlois, Feyenoord and so on: when people with a bi-cultural background, for instance, Moroccan-Dutch or Antillean-Dutch etc. really directly ask ‘are we not allowed to live here?’ because they are made to feel that way*”, as cited by Arkins & French (2023).

Increased displacement pressures

Specialists question the efficacy of the ‘social mixing’ strategy, suspecting it may promote social segregation, thereby hindering the anticipated trickle-down of benefits and overall increase in prosperity. In 2015, several researchers from the University of Amsterdam concluded that the measures of the Rotterdamwet have had no proven effect on improving the livability in these neighborhoods, and that the measures mainly disadvantaged certain ethnic minorities (Hochstenbach et al., 2015; Ouwehand & Doff, 2013). Various quotes can be used to further illustrate possible unintended consequences of imposed social mixing. A manager of Woonstad, who studied the effect of social mixing in a gentrification project in Rotterdam, observed that “*the mixing didn’t work at the neighbourhood level [. . .] because [the gentrifiers] were in different groups [to those that originally lived there], used different schools, different shops etc.*”, as quoted by Arkins & French (2023). Similarly, Doucet & Koenders (2018) quote an Afrikaanderwijk resident who experienced minimal interaction with new residents, noting a lack of community integration despite efforts at places like the Klooster, a local cultural centre.

Concluding on social displacement

Rotterdam’s housing policies add to social displacement pressures by replacing lower-income households with wealthier individuals from outside the community. Considering the scale and intensity of this strategy, it can be concluded that this significantly disrupts existing social networks and support systems. As a result, the remaining low-income population is being reduced into a minority and is left in a drastically transformed environment (Shapiro, 2022). The stark contrast between the characteristics of the new target group and those of the existing residents, coupled with the unintended consequences of social mixing, such as enforced segregation, exacerbates this issue. Furthermore, these policies actively exclude certain groups from decision-making. Vulnerable groups being perceived as less relevant or valuable can erode their sense of belonging within the city.

2. Social displacement	Forces in Rotterdam
2.1.	Actively replacing lower income housing with housing for ‘social climbers’
2.2.	Reducing marginalized groups to a minority within a radically changed environment
2.3.	Disrupting existing social networks and support systems, exacerbated by insufficient community integration of a new, contrasting group.
2.4.	Excluding certain groups from the urban development process by undermining their ability to add value to the neighborhood.

3. Commercial displacement *onder voorbehoud*

Related policy approach

Rotterdam’s housing policies focus on transforming the housing situation, which encompasses not just the housing stock but also the public space and commercial services. This holistic approach is particularly evident in the ‘South Works’ policy document, which strategically targets the development of new businesses alongside housing, to facilitate new value creation in these areas (NPRZ, 2011).

Central to this strategy is the establishment of new economic focal points where work and knowledge is clustered, each with a distinct identity in sectors like technology or healthcare. It emphasizes the need for a more diversified and high-end range of business opportunities, by bringing forward the limitations of certain older neighborhoods that are characterized by an excess of low-quality retail with limited investment capacity (NPRZ, 2011). Additionally, the policy indirectly influences the type and demand for amenities by attracting a specific demographic: high-educated, higher-income households, an ‘economically active community’. However, it is important to note that the policy also acknowledges the potential of small-scale, possibly more local, new business initiatives within neighborhoods. It also recognizes the opportunity for some of the younger residents in strengthening the economic position of the South, suggesting an economic vision that aligns more closely with the current identity of the area.

Impact on Rotterdam’s commercial landscape

During the urban decline of the 1970s, when many original residents moved away and migrants from countries like Turkey, Morocco, and the Antilles arrived, both the vacant living units and empty commercial spaces got occupied. Rath explains how this led to a high share of ‘ethnic’ businesses emerging in the shopping streets, such as new tea houses, travel agencies, car garages, and halal butcheries (Rath, 2022). However, these amenities gradually deteriorated in the following years due to disinvestment and neglect, typically alongside the neglect of social housing in these neighborhoods.

When the municipality began its large-scale improvement of disadvantaged neighborhoods in Rotterdam, many residents appreciated the new attention for urban quality and services. Nonetheless, the introduction of well-educated, creative workers, and entrepreneurs often resulted in the displacement of existing workers and their businesses by trendier and more expensive establishments such as coffee bars, vintage boutiques, and vegetarian restaurants (Rath, 2022). This can be seen as a natural consequence of the housing policies’ objective to attract a new target group, leading to a new demand that aligns with different budgets and lifestyles, potentially clashing with the needs and cultural and socio-economic identities of the existing residents. Rath (2022) confirms that residential gentrification often coincides with commercial gentrification, where the upgrading of shops, cafés, and businesses contribute to new urban identities and lifestyles, further driving the process of change.

Shops, cafés, and small businesses, have increasingly become spaces where consumers shape their social identities, develop cultural styles, and publicly present them (Rath, 2022). Rath uses this to problematize the new situation in the neighborhoods, as the newly developing commercial landscape is often unaffordable and not intended for the old residents. A resident from the Afrikaanderwijk who, despite curiosity, found the new shops in his neighborhood uninviting makes the exemplary statement: *“Maybe they prepare food and deliver it to the other side of the bridge [the North of Rotterdam, typically wealthier] or something”*, as interviewed by Doucet & Koenders (2018). De Vries (2017) observed that between 1996 and 2014, Rotterdam experienced a rise in upscale, specialized services, particularly in the real estate and accountancy/tax advisory sectors, and a decline in more informal, community-focused amenities, including casual food and beverage facilities.

Concluding on commercial displacement

Rotterdam’s housing policy has had a clear view on the development of new economic focal points, alongside an increase in diversified and high-quality business opportunities, influencing the commercial sector. Based on this strategic direction, aimed at attracting a new, high-income target group, it can be concluded that the supply and demand of amenities changed. This contributed to more ‘ethnic’ facilities being replaced by trendier, more expensive, establishments, possibly from real estate and accountancy related sectors, which clashes with the needs and identities of the existing residents. This trend could be particularly impactful as shops, cafés, and small businesses are increasingly recognized as spaces where people express themselves, and as “third places” essential for social leveling and community vitality (Rath, 2022). However, it must be noted that the ‘South Works’ vision on small-scale business initiatives and the young local workforce might mitigate some of the effects of commercial displacement.

3. Commercial displacement *Forces in Rotterdam*

- 3.1. Aiming for a diversified, high-quality, commercial sector that fits the demands of a new, high-income target group.
- 3.2. Top-down upgrading of shops, cafés, and businesses, further driving the process of change.
- 3.3. A lack of “third-places” where different groups can shape their social identities and develop cultural styles.

4. Financial displacement *onder voorbehoud*

...

Concluding: displacement in Rotterdam

Summarizing the analysis of displacement types in Rotterdam, it is clear that the city's strategy of attracting middle- and high-income groups via housing differentiation is the main catalyst for various displacement pressures. Alterations to the housing stock and the attraction of new target groups directly led to social and direct displacement. Consequently, these changes initiated a series of indirect effects that further intensified displacement pressures, including the transformation of the commercial landscape and escalating financial burdens.

The notions of housing differentiation and social differentiation do not stand separately; rather, they are unified in an urban strategy that is based on the ideology of the 'balanced city' or an optimal 'social mix' - terms that form the foundation of Rotterdam's housing policy. Therefore, in the remainder of this thesis, **housing differentiation** and **social differentiation** will be central to the ongoing discussion, providing a basis for proposing solutions.

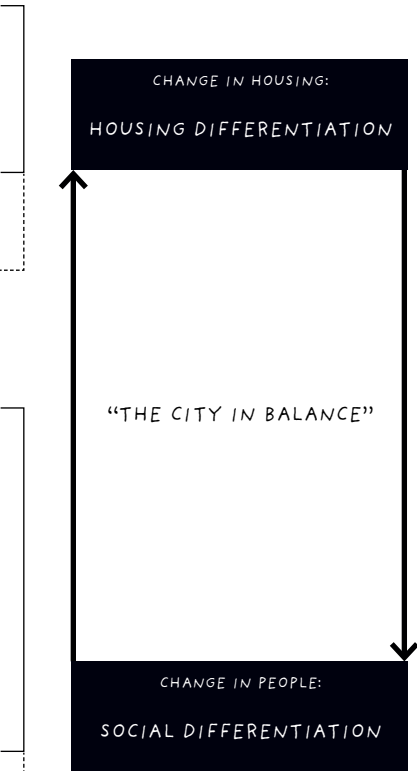
Concluding problem statement: main 'problematic' variables

1. Direct displacement forces

- 1.1. Demolishing 'low-cost' housing and replacing it with owner-occupied high segment housing.
- 1.2. Upgrading, merging or selling affordable housing to reduce the social housing supply.
- 1.3. Scarcity of rehousing options coupled with prolonged waiting lists.

2. Social displacement forces

- 2.1. Actively replacing lower income housing with housing for 'social climbers'
- 2.2. Reducing marginalized groups to a minority within a radically changed environment
- 2.3. Disrupting existing social networks and support systems, exacerbated by insufficient community integration of a new, contrasting group.
- 2.4. Excluding certain groups from the urban development process by undermining their ability to add value to the neighborhood.



(* Financial and commercial displacement not included for now)

Displacement & the new Housing Vision

Higher inclusivity

The ideology of the ‘city in balance’, incorporating more expensive housing in areas dominated by social housing, remains visible in the new Housing Vision of 2023. However, the municipality clearly opts for a different tone. Unlike the previous policy, which made statements such as ‘*the issue does have a color*’, the new policy avoids linking social issues to specific (ethnic) groups. Previously, the strategy for creating mixed neighborhoods was limited to areas with excessive social housing. The new Housing Vision also connects creating mixed neighborhoods with adding social housing in areas where this is scarce (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2023b, p. 36).

Additionally, rather than focusing on attracting ‘higher incomes from outside’, the municipality shifts its focus to the middle incomes, families, social climbers, and people in social professions. This indicates a more inclusive approach than before, as each of these groups could include current residents as well. Financially improving residents (from Rotterdam South) are explicitly mentioned as social climbers (Ibid., p. 42). When objectives aim for an improved socio-economic balance, or more diversified neighborhoods, this is increasingly related to providing current residents with opportunities to advance their housing situations.

Persisting social mixing

However, it remains questionable whether the municipality has distanced itself from its previous strategy of social mixing through housing differentiation, or simply adopted a softer tone. Their strategy of social mixing appears to be more inclusive, but it could still be argued that there are certain groups that have a higher risk of being displaced than others.

For example, the municipality proposes two scenarios to assess the housing demand, referred to as assessments of needs [behoefteramingen]. One scenario, labeled as ‘*more balance*’, follows the proposal of the Regional Agreement [Regio Akkoord (2023)], which aims for a more equitable distribution of the social housing stock among 14 involved municipalities. This scenario predicts an increase of 22,500 people with higher incomes, and a decrease of 3,700 people with lower incomes (Ibid., p. 17). Referring to these projections as assessments of needs implies they are driven by

naturally evolving changes in demand. However, they represent a form of municipal steering, predicting demographic flows following a ‘supply creates its own demand’ approach. A different terminology used for lower-incomes, the ‘*EU-target group*’, reflects an awareness of the sensitivities related to explicitly addressing the movement of lower-income populations in policy documents. The scenarios are concluded by acknowledging a required focus on developing more expensive housing (Ibid., p. 19).

Yet, the remainder of the housing vision emphasizes increasing the stock of affordable housing. It can be speculated that this formulation is strategically designed to ward off criticism. Within the document, ‘affordable housing’ includes both social and mid-segment housing, and it later becomes evident that the increasing the stock of affordable housing is primarily focused on the middle segment. Additionally, the construction targets for high-segment housing are nearly double those of social housing (Ibid., p. 28). Coupled with plans to reduce the quantity of social housing in areas where this is dominant, the objective for the affordable housing stock is eventually being reduced to “*we aim to maintain the current volume of the social housing stock*” (Ibid., p. 28).

The new Housing Vision aims for an improved socioeconomic balance in areas with either a disproportionally high concentration of high-segment or low-segment housing. However, the practical measures outlined in the document only consider areas with social housing. Housing differentiation is repeatedly being mentioned as a key objective, and, although the municipality intends to be cautious with demolitions, it is mentioned as one of the strategies that can be used to achieve a more differentiated housing stock (Ibid., p. 42). In this regard, NPRZ areas are specifically identified as suitable for initiatives like renovation, selective demolition and new construction, as well as the combination or enlargement of social housing units (Ibid., p. 48). Alongside the goal of housing differentiation, the Vision appears to prioritize certain demographic groups. There is a marked emphasis on middle-incomes, by prioritizing this group when buying newly built mid-segment properties, and by proposing to sell social rental properties to this group. The proposed measures seem to be reminiscent of earlier ideas on ‘the city in balance’ or ‘social mixing’, and raise concerns about the potential displacement of lower-incomes within the anticipated neighborhood changes.

Evaluating social mixing & housing differentiation

Need for a critical assessment

The strategy of balancing varied target groups through housing differentiation is a fundamental theme in this thesis, as it has been central in Rotterdam’s urban regeneration strategy and has contributed to both direct displacement and indirect (social) displacement forces in the city. While the municipality now shifts its focus somewhat away from this strategy, by emphasizing housing opportunities for current (mid-income) residents rather than attracting residents from outside, the belief that housing differentiation contributes to a better city still lingers in the new Housing Vision. Therefore, it is imperative to assess whether this approach of social mixing adequately addresses Rotterdam’s highlighted problems. Given the ongoing risk of recurring displacement issues during government-enforced social mixing, it is needed to explore alternatives to or guidelines for social mixing, which could help achieve the desired objectives more effectively and with fewer risks.

The emergence of the ideology of social mixing

Before assessing the effectiveness and potential alternatives to social mixing, it is important to understand the context in which this strategy emerged. The strategy was not only prominent in Rotterdam’s urban policy but also gained popularity (inter)nationally. In the late 1980’s, differentiation of the housing stock became necessary in the Netherlands as, especially in larger cities, the social renting sector often failed to serve its intended demographic. In the late 80’s, the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (1989) published a policy document, asserting the need to increase the number of expensive houses in cities, particularly in the purchasing sector. This was to motivate higher incomes to relocate, making social houses available for their intended demographic: lower incomes. Bolt & van Kempen (2009) explain in their article on social mixing in the Netherlands, that at this point the strategy did not aim to create mixed neighborhoods or improve social cohesion, but rather aimed to make social housing available to the right households.

In the 1990’s the notion grew that housing differentiation was needed to address the low socioeconomic status of economically challenged, homogeneous urban districts. When the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (1997) introduced a new policy direction for urban restructuring, achieving an urban mix to tackle social and economic issues became a key focus. This involved proposals for demolishing part of the social housing stock to be replaced by an increased number of expensive houses. This approach was widely adopted by most large cities in the Netherlands in the subsequent years. After 2001, the strategy of social mixing was increasingly proposed to counter the clustering of ethnic minorities. Such clustering was perceived negatively, as it was thought to limit their social chances and integration into the Dutch native society, thereby leading to a culmination of social issues.

In the following years, a strategy of urban restructuring was implemented that focused on the influx of middle-class and higher-income households in low-income neighborhoods. In these neighborhoods, over-representation of (non-western) low-income groups was viewed as problematic, primarily because it was thought to threaten the social cohesion in the neighborhood (Bolt & van Kempen, 2008). Additionally, the clustering of these groups was believed to restrict their ability to improve their social position and housing career, a concept referring to the ability to move through various types and qualities of housing over time. The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (1997) supported this view by necessitating the de-concentration of (non-western) low-income groups to enhance integration, strengthen social networks, and to provide role models for disadvantaged residents. As Bolt & van Kempen (2009) summarize, this was expected to lead to a range of positive outcomes, like social cohesion, social mobility opportunities, more social capital, better services, less crime, an improved neighborhood reputation, and more residential stability (see e.g., Arthurson 2002; Bolt and Van Kempen 2008; Kleinhans 2004; Tunstall 2003).

In this context, Rotterdam developed a similar strategy of social mixing, aligned with the concept of the ‘balanced city’. The strategy underscores the importance of a balanced housing stock in improving the city’s socio-economic status and tackling extensive socio-economic challenges like low education levels, high unemployment, and prevalent debt issues, as highlighted in NPRZ reports (2011, 2019). The municipality relates these issues to areas with an over-representation of ethnic minorities, a view that was common in most large cities of the period (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2003; NPRZ, 2011). Introducing more high-income residents was seen as a way to positively impact these areas, reinforcing the national perspective of such residents as role models. In the new Housing Vision of 2023, the notion remains apparent that social housing areas, often facing higher instances of disturbance, safety issues, and reduced livability, are in need of a more diversified housing stock to improve the socio-economic balance (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2023b, pp. 11–13)

Summary of common strategic motives for social mixing

Addressed issues	Strategy (parameters)	Reasoning	Aim
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic issues (low level of education, high unemployment, criminality, debt issues)• Low social cohesion or integration (social exclusion, social segregation, insufficient integration of ethnic groups, increasing divisions)• Low livability (low quality of public space and housing)• Problem cumulation (perpetual nature of issues, disadvantaged residents being stuck in unfavorable surroundings, further emphasized by selective outmigration)• Limitation of (social) growth (restricted housing career options, low social mobility, no options to ‘improve’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Change in housing through differentiation (demolition, new construction, renovation, merging, etc.) Synchronized with a change in people, conform the strategy of ‘social mixing’.	<i>Role-model ideology:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exemplary social norms (in a surrounding where people go to school or work every day)• Informal networking (with higher incomes, leading to job opportunities)• Stricter community rules (through a higher level of social control, contributing to decreased crime rates and increased safety)• Better access to high-end facilities (such as high-quality education and jobs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a socio-economic balance, an equally accessible, inclusive environment• Improve economic development of residents/ neighborhoods (through higher social capital, improved economic position, and access to better services)• Improve overall competitive position (reputation) of the city for businesses and investors• Decrease of social issues, increase of social stability, higher levels of social integration and community participation (or via problem dilution).• Increase of livability and urban quality

The figure summarizes the main arguments, found in research and policy papers, that are used to support the need for social mixing. Based on various documents (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000; Bolt & van Kempen, 2008, 2009; Brophy & Smith, 1997; R. Kleinhans, 2004; Ministry of Housing Spatial Planning and the Environment, 1989, 1997; Municipality of Rotterdam, 2003, 2023; NPRZ, 2011, 2019).

Problems in using social mixing as a strategy

1. Misunderstanding the anticipated effects

The figure illustrates that social mixing is used to address a wide variety of issues, and is expected to provide multi-layered solutions. However, when social mixing is employed to address such complex urban challenges, often of socio-economic nature, many researchers argue that the strategy does not achieve the desired benefits.

Bond et al. (2011) did a systematic review of recent studies on the effects of social mixing, which showcase a lack of positive effects, very mixed results, or even negative outcomes of social mixing. Specifically, these reviews found that mixing tenures did not contribute to any change in social disadvantage, inequalities and deprivation (Allen et al., 2005; Andrews & Reardon Smith, 2005; Atkinson & Kintrea, 1998, 2000, Rowlands et al., 2006). Furthermore, there are no results that show an increase in job opportunities (Allen et al., 2005; Scottish Homes Research, 1999) or a decrease in unemployment rates (Beekman et al., 2001; Harding, 1998; Jupp, 1999; Pawson et al., 2000). Any improvements in the socio-economic situation are expected to come from ‘problem dilution’ by attracting economically active households from outside (Beekman et al., 2001; Pawson et al., 2000; Kleinhans, 2004). Atkinson (2005) concludes that any claims that social mixing creates rolemodels is exaggerated.

The theory that role models might improve the circumstances of current residents relies on interaction and exchange between diverse groups. Yet, eleven of the reviews analyzed by Bond et al. (2011) perceived no positive effects of mixed tenure on social interaction and cohesion (Allen et al., 2005; Andrews&Reardon Smith, 2005; Atkinson & Kintrea, 1998, 2000, 2001; Beekman et al., 2001; Cole et al., 1997; Jupp, 1999; Meen et al., 2005; Pawson et al., 2000; Silverman et al., 2005). Some research even reported negative effects on social cohesion, such as increased tension and division between groups (Beekman et al., 2001;Cole et al., 1997;Wood&Vamplew, 1999). This also counters the idea that social mix, or balance, is something that should be aimed for as a final goal in itself. Gans (2007) argues against the idea that heterogeneity should be valued in urban planning, noting that simply having a mix of people does not automatically result in inclusive communities, nor

does it ensure that individuals will learn to respect each other’s differences. Housing differentiation could potentially resolve simpler issues, for instance, enhancing the physical quality of housing through new construction. However, within the complex network of multi-faceted problems where social mixing is currently applied, it becomes evident that this approach is ineffective. Utilizing social mixing strategies to tackle wider socio-economic challenges is not recommended, given the predominantly inconclusive or adverse outcomes. This could already be suspected from observing Figure (X), which illustrates that one strategy is recommended for an extensive range of issues, implying one solution is universally applicable.

2. Unclear (and lack of research-based) guidelines

In addition to a misalignment between the identified issues, the strategy of social mixing, and the validity of the desired outcomes, many policy documents fail to specify how a desired mix should be designed. Bolt (2004) problematizes the fact that Rotterdam strives for a completely equal distribution of minorities over the city as a whole, without ever specifying guidelines for how an optimal mix in each neighborhood would need to be designed.

Firstly, it is unclear how the process of socio-economic improvement would have to be facilitated by design. Earlier documents from the NPRZ suggest improvement through the influence of role models and ‘strong shoulders’, yet it remains unclear how this exchange between the newcomers and existing groups would occur, and where these different groups will meet. Interaction could take place at shared facilities such as sports clubs or primary schools, at workshops, in the street, or at a communal entrance of a housing complex. To accurately design this, it is essential to determine the details on the scale of social mixing, vital to ensure the success of the strategy (Bolt & van Kempen, 2009; Bond et al., 2011; R. Kleinhans, 2004; R. Kleinhans et al., 2019). Clarification is necessary regarding whether the desired balance is attained by integrating rented and owner-occupied housing within a single block, or through a street-level mix of tenant types, with different housing types adjacent to or facing each other, or perhaps even distributed across larger zones.

Given the impactful nature of the process towards a balanced city, it is important to have a well-defined approach to designing a social mix. The new Housing Vision's emphasis on redistributing existing resources, rather than prioritizing new social housing opportunities, necessitates careful implementation. This is particularly essential for Rotterdam, which is characterized by a significant number of vulnerable groups, and has a controversial history of displacement issues, such as those witnessed in the Tweebosbuurt. These factors underscore the need for an execution with caution and specific design guidelines in mind. When these are ill defined, this can contribute to negative effects of social mixing, as summarized previously by Bond et al. (2011).

Concluding: in need of a new design approach

The research discussed above leads to the conclusion that social mixing often fails to deliver its intended benefits and may even exacerbate the problems it aims to address. Additionally, the previous paragraphs point out a problem with formulation: the solution of social mixing is often tossed around without much thought, not only with a lack of insight into the improvements it will provide, but also with limited consideration of how it could be designed best. Subsequently, in the process of housing differentiation and social mixing, policymakers lack control over the resulting displacement pressures. This necessitates a new design approach.

History has shown examples where alterations in the housing stock and social composition were unjustified and inappropriate for the context in which they occurred. Yet, such urban change can sometimes be unavoidable, especially when addressing contemporary urban challenges. Therefore, this thesis proposes a new design approach that, instead of preventing such urban change, proposes a strategy that is grounded in understanding how such changes contribute to displacement pressures. This approach supports the recognition of increasing displacement pressures, and promotes to design with greater consideration in such scenarios.

This strategy is based on the idea that the main variables in urban transformation are changes in the housing stock (housing differentiation) and changes in the social composition (social differentiation). Whereas previous policies based these variables on the vague ideas of 'creating balanced cities', this thesis strives to align them with clearly defined guidelines to effectively minimize displacement. Alongside guidelines that are directly related to the two variables and their corresponding literature, this thesis proposes several additional ones designed to further improve the redevelopment of vulnerable neighborhoods.

The guidelines will be detailed in the following chapter of this report. This includes two sections that explain the guidelines for each variable, concluding with a section dedicated to additional guidelines. The precise manner in which these variables and guidelines can shape redevelopment strategies will be explained in chapter 06, Design.

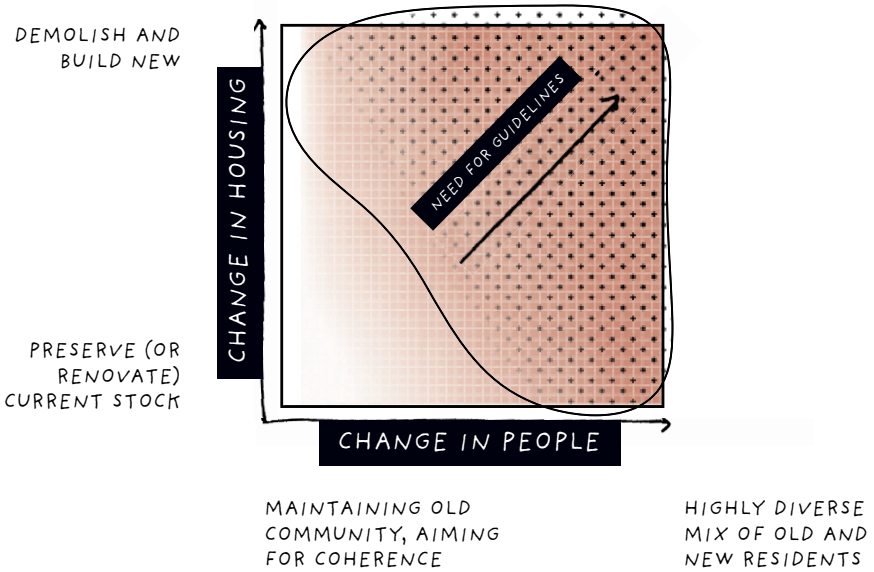


Figure summarizing the parameters of displacement: change in housing (housing differentiation) and change in people (social mixing). An increase in red indicates intensifying displacement pressures, necessitating the implementation of additional guidelines. RISK OF DISPLACEMENT:

05 GUIDELINES

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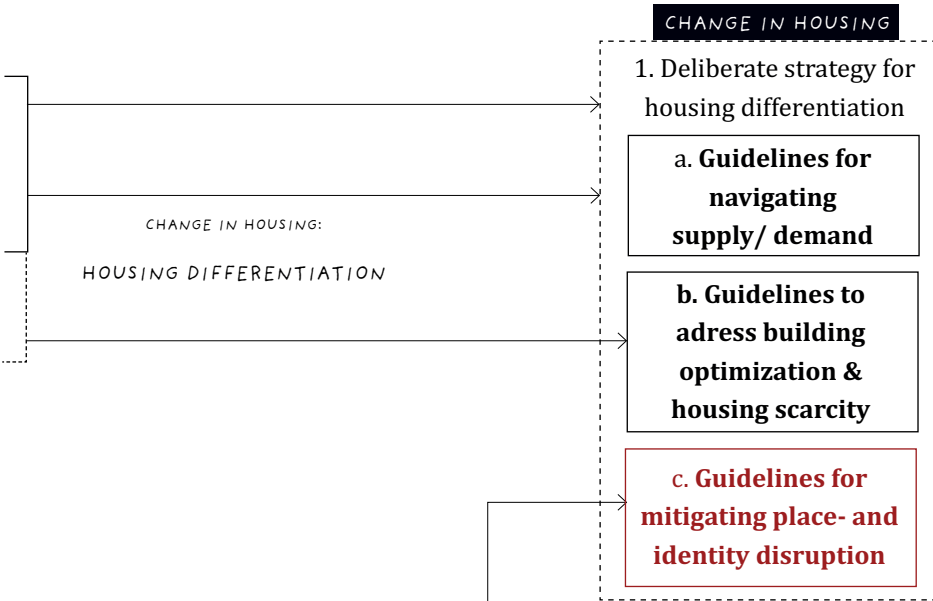
Reading guide: chapter of solutions

Problems

Solutions

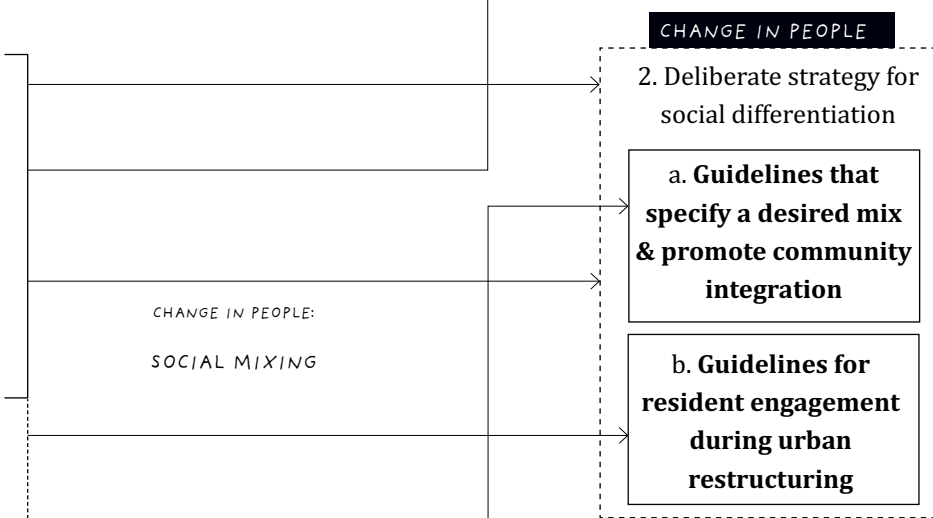
1. Direct displacement forces

- 1.1. Demolishing 'low-cost' housing and replacing it with owner-occupied high segment housing.
- 1.2. Upgrading, merging or selling affordable housing to reduce the social housing supply.
- 1.3. Scarcity of rehousing options coupled with prolonged waiting lists.



2. Social displacement forces

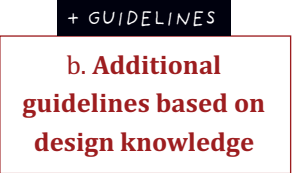
- 2.1. Actively replacing lower income housing with housing for 'social climbers'
- 2.2. Reducing marginalized groups to a minority within a radically changed environment
- 2.3. Disrupting existing social networks and support systems, exacerbated by insufficient community integration of a new, contrasting group.
- 2.4. Excluding certain groups from the urban development process by undermining their ability to add value to the neighborhood.



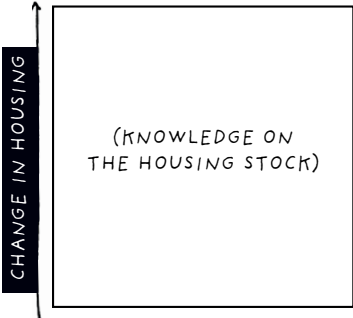
3. Social Mixing

The strategy of social-mixing lacks clear and research-based guidelines that specify the desired ratios, design, and scale for mixing.

Social mixing often fails to deliver its intended benefits and may even exacerbate the problems it aims to address.



In black are guidelines that are a direct result of the problem statement or literary basis. Guidelines in red are added to enrich the narrative, based on design knowledge and values from the field of urban design.



1. Deliberate strategy for housing differentiation

a. Guidelines that help navigate supply and demand targets:
While this thesis does not delve into the specifics of estimating the supply and demand on Rotterdam’s housing market, understanding the complexities and sensitivities of these estimations is relevant. This awareness informs a cautious approach to interpreting housing market dynamics and grounding impactful policy measures. The Audit Office’s [Rekenkamer Rotterdam] critique of the municipality’s supply and demand estimations for previous housing policies highlights the inherent variability in such assessments, influenced significantly by the data and methodologies used.

A significant issue highlighted by the Audit Office (2022) is the changing definitions of housing segments over time. These shifts have hindered the ability to make consistent year-to-year comparisons. Particularly, Rotterdam’s definition of the social housing segment has often been broader than national standards, leading to a distorted perception of the social housing stock’s size. Furthermore, the data used in prior housing policies frequently relied on estimates or models, such as landlord surveys for determining the size of the private social housing stock, leading to potential overestimations. Data concerning the housing stock and target groups has often been outdated and inconsistent, which further affected the accuracy and reliability of earlier policy decisions.

The Audit Office has specifically questioned the earlier policy’s objectives for demolishing social housing, which were based on an estimated surplus of 40,000 to 27,000 houses in the social segment. However, the data used did not conclusively support these numbers, and was later proven to be a severe overestimation. This raised concerns about adequately meeting the housing needs of low-income households, underscoring the need for impactful measures to be grounded in a fair and comprehensive data analysis.

Responding to these challenges, the municipality of Rotterdam has revised its approach to estimating the supply and demand in the housing market, focusing on more accurate and realistic assessments. The new Housing Vision (2023) acknowledges the Audit Office’s advice not to assume a surplus in the social segment. Steps have been taken to better understand the size and development of the private housing stock, recognizing inherent

uncertainties. The Housing Vision aligns as much as possible with (future) national definitions, using the government’s definitions of income groups and price segments, while making an effort to have a more thoughtful and transparent decision-making process during urban restructuring (Municipality of Rotterdam, 2023a).

With this revised approach, the municipality’s Research and Business Intelligence department [OBI] (2023) has formulated a new estimation of the supply and demand, forming the basis for the objectives in the new housing policy. The new housing policy anticipates a continued rise in housing demand, primarily driven by an influx of young households and foreign migrants. The total estimated housing demand is projected at 78,300 units, with the most significant demand concentrated in the affordable segment. There are 56,860 actively searching households with low incomes (EC-target group), of which, on average, 58% are from Rotterdam.

The report indicates that the supply in the social sector is not keeping up with this growing demand, due to a decrease in the social housing stock and fewer properties becoming available. The supply of social housing offered by corporations, has been decreasing annually from 2016 to 2020. Consequently, the success rate for social housing seekers has diminished. The waiting times were stable up to 2020, but are increasing during the past few years.

In line with these numbers, the construction target in the social segment (up to the liberalization limit) until 2040 is estimated at 37,600 units. This expectation is based on active housing seekers from Rotterdam, though it’s noted that the foreign housing demand and the group of domestic movers are not fully accounted for.

Despite these observations, the municipality’s strategy does not aim to expand the social segment but to maintain its current size. This approach is based on the assumption that creating new opportunities in the middle segment will prompt a portion of the current social segment residents to move up, thereby freeing up these units. The analysis estimates 46,300 rental units would become available, if all households wishing to move do

so. If successful, this exceeds the estimated demand of 37,600 units, and, therefore, there is no foreseen need to construct additional units in the social segment (OBI, 2023).

However, these estimates should be approached with caution, considering past data inconsistencies and the noted research limitations. The anticipated supply of social housing is based on all willing residents moving, a factor that is beyond the municipality’s direct control and is being influenced by various external factors. Additionally, the demand projections do not fully account for foreign housing seekers, who, along with young households, are expected to significantly drive Rotterdam’s housing demand. Based on these findings, it is advised to adhere to the following guidelines while designing with housing stock alterations, especially in the context of displacement:

Acknowledge the persistent increase in demand within the affordable sector, and the uncertainties in future supply and demand projections. This calls for a protective approach towards social housing, potentially favoring the expansion of the social sector. Considering earlier displacement issues, any restructuring or demolition measures should be done in collaboration with residents, minimizing negative effects. In scenarios where existing housing is demolished, new housing solutions should not rely on speculative dynamics, like the availability of housing from residents that are expected to move. Instead, alternative housing must be directly allocated to the displaced residents, or the development should be strategically phased to construct new housing prior to demolition. Lastly, the objectives for housing stock alterations should always be rooted in housing needs, based on a fair and comprehensive data analysis, and not driven by the aim of attracting a specific group. Always prioritize sustainability and renovation over demolition and new construction.

b. Guidelines for building optimization to adress housing scarcity:
(work in progress)

c. Guidelines for mitigating place- and identity disruption:

In some instances, despite previous guidelines promoting caution towards demolition, the process of demolition may be unavoidable due to poor housing quality or other pressing urban challenges. While demolition can signify progress, it simultaneously poses a threat to the historical and cultural identity of neighborhoods. This guideline emphasizes the importance of preserving neighborhood identity during substantial spatial transformations, by considering both the historical value and the resident’s personal place-attachment in the context of displacement.

Preserving historical and cultural values is particularly relevant in the context of demolition, especially concerning older buildings with distinctive character. An illustrative example is the demolition in Rotterdam’s Tweebosbuurt, where the loss of pre-war buildings was viewed as erasing critical elements of Rotterdam’s already limited pre-war history. These concerns were acknowledged when the Council of State [Raad van State] rejected the zoning plan for Tweebosbuurt South-East in 2022, due to inadequate consideration of the neighbourhood’s historic values and insufficient environmental impact research. Regrettably, this decision came too late for many buildings, underscoring the need for earlier integration of these considerations into redevelopment plans.

The new housing vision introduces a guideline that emphasizes the value of architecture and neighborhood identity, but focuses primarily on the architecture of housing blocks. The guideline of this thesis, however, broadens the context of identity preservation, particularly in relation to displacement. The concept of place-attachment, as defined by Altman & Low (1992), offers insight into the emotional bonds between people and places. These bonds, often perceived positively like the notion of home, are actually complex and multifaceted (Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2014). They can be built up from both social features, such as neighboring relations, as well as physical features and exist at multiple spatial scales (Scannell & Grifford, 2010).

It must be noted that someone’s attachment to a place or its identity can be highly personal, frequently shaped by specific memories someone has collected over the years, along with personal interpretations of stability and familiarity (Manzo, 2014). Additionally, someone’s notion of home is highly influenced by the social roots someone has established in that place. Such personal nuances can limit the ability to consider these characteristics in urban development.

However, especially when seeking a certain historical or cultural value, identifying common spatial elements that resonate with many people’s the notion of home becomes very relevant. Research by Paul Watt (2021) on place-attachment among relocated social housing residents in London, identifies universally valued elements such as the physical design of the housing block, its spatial location, and neighborhood facilities. These elements are not only valuable from a historical perspective but also hold significance for residents in terms of the identity they ascribe to their neighborhood. When such characteristics are heavily disrupted during urban transformation, this can lead to a sense of loss of both people and place, enforcing feelings of displacement (Atkinson, 2015).


Therefore, this guideline proposes a more comprehensive approach to identity preservation in the context of demolition or transformation, one that not only respects historical and cultural values but also recognizes common elements that contribute to the attachments of the residents. This approach aims to preserve the unique character and identity of neighborhoods, ensuring that progress does not come at the cost of community heritage and residents’ sense of place. In achieving this, it is advised to facilitate neighborhood revitalization in a way that accentuates the city’s historical narrative. Key elements such as existing urban structures, landmarks, architectural styles, and neighborhood amenities should be recognized as vital links connecting the community to its unique identity.

Housing differentiation: draft guidelines

a. Guidelines that help navigate supply & demand targets:

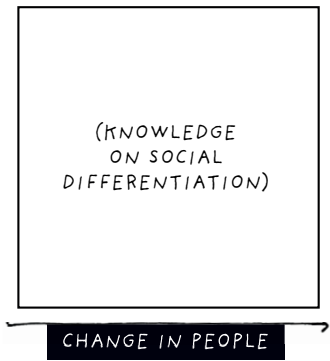
	EXPLORE EXPANSION SOCIAL SECTOR	Acknowledge the persistent increase in demand within the affordable sector and the uncertainties in future supply and demand, leading to a protective approach towards social housing and possible expansion of the sector.
	ENSURE RIGHT TO HOUSING & EFFICIENT PHASING	Alternative housing must be directly allocated to the displaced residents, or the development should be strategically phased to construct new housing prior to demolition. Ensure that any restructuring or demolition is done in collaboration with residents to minimize negative effects.
	USE FAIR OBJECTIVES & PRIORITIZE RENOVATION	Estimations in demand should be informed by a fair and comprehensive data analysis, and not driven by the aim of attracting a specific group. Always prioritize sustainability and renovation over demolition and new construction.

b. Guidelines to adress building optimization & housing scarcity:

	WORK IN PROGRESS	Work in progress
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c. Guidelines for mitigating place- and identity disruption:

	RESPECT CULTURAL/ HISTORICAL VALUES	Facilitate urban transformation in a way that accentuates the neighborhood's historical narrative, preserve unique historical and cultural characteristics.
	ACKNOWLEDGE RESIDENTS' PLACE- ATTACHMENT	Adopt a more comprehensive approach to identity preservation that recognises elements that contribute to residents' attachment, such as existing urban structures, landmarks, architectural styles, and neighborhood amenities, thereby connecting the community to its unique identity.



2. Deliberate strategy for social differentiation

Guidelines that specify a desired mix and promote community integration:

Mix similar lifestyles and activity patterns

Policy documents on social mixing often imagine neighborhoods with a diverse mix of residents, where the socio-economic position benefits from a harmonious blend of incomes, lifestyles, and ethnicities. However, studies reveal that such approaches tend to be more complex. People with different incomes (Rosenbaum et al., 1998), and especially different lifestyles (R. Kleinhans, 2004) appear to have a very low probability of developing social relations. Strong differences can trigger a negative effect on one’s sense of community, leading to people turning inward or isolating themselves, as observed by Putnam (2007) and Volker et al. (2007). Instead, similar characteristics (van Ham & Feijten, 2008) and activity patterns (Jupp, 1999; van Beckhoven & van Kempen, 2003) are very important in allowing for social interaction. People need to execute their daily routines at similar times, and in the same spheres in order to interact.

Activity patterns often differ between owner-occupiers and renters due to for instance differences in income, age, household composition and education (R. Kleinhans, 2004). Atkinson & Kintrea (2000) note that owner-occupiers mostly engage in activities that are outside the neighborhood, which is easily explained as homeowners tend to be able to afford their own car – or at least to frequently use it. Their research also concludes that this means most of owner-occupiers’ activities include contact with outsiders, which is only exacerbated by the fact that most of them found that community-based activities were not for them. Contrary, renters showed to have a stronger local network, seemed to have local jobs and used local amenities more often (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000). Based on this information, it is desirable to limit the differences between groups that are being mixed. Mixing rich and poor households might not bring about positive social returns, while a mix of the very poor and moderately would (Brophy & Smith, 1997; Rosenbaum et al., 1998).

For Rotterdam, The Housing Vision sets the ambition to establish balanced neighborhoods through a blend of affordable, mid-range, and high-segment housing options. Although the precise balance is unspecified, the Vision emphasizes the need to diversify areas with a dominant concentration of social housing by increasing the proportion of mid-segment housing. In practical

terms, this strategy involves integrating diverse target groups, defined by their income levels, into these housing segments. The following paragraph will explain how the municipality defines those target groups.

Based on definitions in the 2023 Housing Vision, social housing primarily serves the EU-group, encompassing primary target groups (earning up to €25,476 for singles and €34,575 for multi-person households), and secondary target groups (earning up to €44,035 for singles and €48,625 for multi-person households). Introducing more mid-segment housing in these areas will bring in middle-income households, classified by the municipality as those with incomes up to €57,573 for singles and €76,764 for multi-person households. Consequently, this integration will result in an income disparity between new and existing residents ranging from €13,538 to €32,097 for singles, and €28,139 to €42,189 for multi-person households. While the integration of mid-segment housing in social housing areas can be perceived as a thoughtful approach, by offering housing options that are essentially just ‘one step’ up in pricing scale, the above income disparities can considered to be significant.

The proposed scenario can lead to a situation where social housing residents are neighbored by individuals earning more than twice as much. The lack of definitive data on income disparity impacts in existing literature means that we cannot conclusively predict that such gaps will lead to high social tensions or conflicts. It is reasonable, though, to speculate that such income differences may result in different lifestyles and activity patterns. Consequently, the anticipated benefits of social mixing, such as enhanced social cohesion and socio-economic upliftment for existing residents, should not be assumed as guaranteed results. Given these considerations, it might be desired to either reduce the income disparities, perhaps through intermediate income classifications, or to employ other carefully designed guidelines that effectively facilitate a harmonious blend of different income groups. The following text will adress some of these guidelines.

Mixing can best be done on neighborhood-scale

Drawing from studies by Atkinson & Kintrea (2000), Cole et al. (1997), and Jupp (1999), it is evident that the proximity of residents plays a significant

role in forming social networks. Everyday interactions that occur among neighbors – saying hello on the street, the act of borrowing items, offering advice, or even more engaged activities like visiting each other – are crucial in building these connections (Jupp, 1999; Kleinhans, 2004). These voluntary social interactions are predominantly seen within the same apartment block or street, according to Cole et al. (1997) and Kleinhans et al. (2000).

The concept of social mixing at the street level is broadly perceived as positive, compared to the creation of larger, separate zones of different tenures. However, perceptions of mixing on a smaller scale, like within one building, are mixed. Jupp (1999), in his research on micro-scale mixing, referred to as ‘pepper potting’ in British literature, stresses the importance of close living for interaction, noting that even a street can act as a barrier. However, subsequent studies indicate several challenges with this level of mixing. The approach’s financial and practical difficulties, coupled with uncertain social benefits, prompt questions about its viability.

Minton (2002) questions the practicality of integrating diverse housing needs, such as family houses and private flats, in pepper potting designs. Furthermore, managing shared spaces in such mixed tenure developments poses challenges. Andrews & Reardon Smith (2005) note that ‘pepper potted’ communities require careful management of shared spaces to accommodate residents’ diverse lifestyles, routines, and expectations, with differences potentially leading to conflicts over use and maintenance. Norris (2006) highlights the complexity of phasing in such developments, where financial pressures can push developers to construct private housing first, potentially leading to community imbalances and negative impacts on feasibility and time-management.

Regarding social cohesion, Martin & Atkinson (2003) observe that increased proximity between different tenures can lead to resistance and tensions rather than community spirit. H. J. Gans (1961) and Goodchild & Cole (2001) caution against the potential for coolness or tension among neighbors when there’s significant heterogeneity at the block level.

Based on these findings, Roberts (2007) concludes that that the rigid application of ‘pepper potting’ and strict architectural uniformity in mixed income communities may not be feasible or beneficial. Focusing on larger-scale integration on the neighborhood level could be more effective for fostering genuine social cohesion and interaction. On this scale, Tunstall & Fenton (2006) encourage providing opportunities for residents of different backgrounds to engage in casual, positive interactions in shared spaces like parking lots or footpaths. When considering larger-scale mixing instead of building-level integration, several guidelines are recommended to prevent segregation into zones. Designs should avoid strictly segregated or monolithic (single tenure) developments, which can lead to social isolation, as discussed by Andrews & Reardon Smith (2005). In cases of segregated development, the interaction between different micro districts is key. These districts should be intertwined and share common spaces like streets, informal play areas, and green spaces, to mitigate segregation effects.

Roberts (2007) concludes that each community requires a unique development approach, with the local context informing decisions on design, scale, and layout. While certain risks are inherent in both building-level mixing and the creation of segregated zones, no universal rules apply to all scenarios. Mixing strategies need to be carefully considered, taking into account the community dynamics, practical design and management challenges, economic factors, and cultural and social norms.

Coherence in design can bridge social gaps in mixed neighborhoods

When mixing target groups, it’s important not only to adhere to guidelines regarding the composition of these groups, but also to thoughtfully incorporate architectural characteristics that limit social disparities. As noted by Groves et al. (2003), Norris (2006), and Roberts (2007), a cohesive design that minimizes visible differences can effectively bridge social gaps. This approach, avoiding the clustering of tenant types, housing sizes, or price ranges as advised by Tunstall & Fenton (2006), shifts focus from disparities to commonalities, thereby reducing stigma and bias among residents (Arthurson, 2013; Casey et al. 2007; Kearns et al. 2013).

Tersteeg & Pinkster (2016) analyzed residential experiences in a mixed housing block in Amsterdam, where the architectural design inadvertently enforced social divisions due to the allocation of different tenures. The layout saw large family apartments occupied by social renters, mostly non-Western ethnic groups, on the ground floor, while owner-occupied apartments were located above. Interviews revealed conflicts typical to shared estates, like noise complaints, that were being attributed to specific groups due to the clear spatial separation of tenants. Remarks such as *‘the upstairs houses do not like me’* and *‘the children from renters yell’* highlight the tensions. Among the smaller social housing units on the corner of the building, accessible to both couples, elderly and small families, such issues were less prevalent, suggesting that reducing distinct differences in housing allocation might help mitigate these tensions (Tersteeg & Pinkster, 2016).

Good maintenance of mixed estates can prevent tensions

When mixing target groups, it has to be considered that micro-scale mixing might make houses more difficult to market (Page & Boughton, 1997). Page & Boughton (1997) analyzed London housing estates, and found that while owners and tenants were generally happy with the mixed-estates, mostly the owner-occupiers would prefer to live in a non-mixed estate or would express stronger objections to living next door to a neighbor of a different tenure. However, the influence of mixing appears to be minor, as Page & Boughton (1997) also concluded that the issues residents experienced in the mixed-estates would occur in any housing estate, and both Cole et al. (1997) and Jupp (1999) even saw no relation between mixed tenures and negative perceptions of residents. To minimize risk of tension, well organized overall maintenance and estate management seems to increase resident’s tolerance towards living with different groups, and prevents the occurrence of conflicts (Jupp, 1999; Groves et al., 2003; Martin and Watkinson, 2003). Especially when differences between the mixed target groups increase, sufficient management by landlords tend to become more essential (Beekman et al., 2001; Cole et al., 1997; Companen, 2002; Council for Societal Development, 1997).

b. Guidelines for resident engagement during urban restructuring

- I have not yet started this section because I am uncertain about how extensively it will be covered within the scope of my thesis. For my design case, I will likely touch on the development process by discussing the phasing and potentially highlighting opportunities for resident initiatives. However, strategies for resident engagement largely fall outside the primary scope of my thesis. -

Social differentiation: draft guidelines

a. Guidelines that specify a desired mix and promote community integration:



MIX SIMILAR
INCOMES &
LIFESTYLES

Recognize the challenges of integrating diverse residents in close proximity: excessive heterogeneity can increase tensions and conflicts. Instead, seek for similarities in residents' characteristics, such as income levels and lifestyles.



ALIGN ACTIVITIES/
SOCIAL SPHERES

Align daily routines and social environments to enhance interaction opportunities. Casual, positive interactions among residents of different backgrounds can be promoted by public spaces like parking lots, footpaths, and green spaces.



MIX ON STREET-/
NEIGHBORHOOD
LEVEL

Favor social mixing at the street- or neighborhood level over the creation of large separate zones or micro-scale pepper-potting.



CONNECT MICRO-
DISTRICTS

Avoid segregated micro-districts of certain tenure-types. These districts should be intertwined and share common spaces like streets, informal play areas, and green spaces.



AIM FOR
UNIFORMITY IN
DESIGN

Design housing in a way that minimizes noticeable differences among various social groups, as this can help bridge social gaps.



PRIORITIZE GOOD
MAINTENANCE

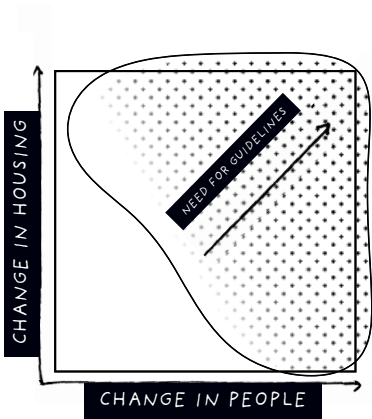
To reduce the risk of tension, prioritize well-organized overall maintenance and estate management.

b. Guidelines for resident engagement during urban restructuring



WORK IN PROGRESS

Work in progress



3. Additional guidelines (first ideas)

a. Alternative guidelines for socio-economic improvement

The strategy of social mixing, initially implemented to address a range of socio-economic challenges in a neighbourhood, has been largely ineffective. Consequently, it seems relevant to suggest alternative solutions to the socio-economic issues originally targeted by this approach. Many neighbourhoods selected for urban restructuring continue to deal with problems such as unsafety, criminality, and high unemployment rates.

Provide housing career options within the neighborhood

Research has highlighted that providing residents with opportunities to advance their housing careers within the neighbourhood can be an effective solution for improving their socio-economic status. Additionally, Beekman et al. (2001) observed that far greater levels of cross-tenure networks are found in neighborhoods where residents are able to organically develop from renting to buying a property. Offering priority to current residents who are looking to move within the area could be a strategic component of this approach. (...) - work in progress -

Other ideas:

Combine urban regeneration efforts in vulnerable areas with social community plans similar to the approach employed in the NPRZ strategy. This combined effort should actively aim to enhance the current situation, with a particular focus on children, education, and employment opportunities. This includes supporting small businesses, local entrepreneurship, and job creation initiatives, especially for low-income residents.

b. Additional guidelines based on design knowledge

Venues for interaction promote contact between new and old residents

In addition to casual interactions in the street, or on the housing-block gallery, thought needs to be given about shared facilities where social networks between owners and renters can develop. We already found that owners usually have different activity patterns, but those are exacerbated in neighborhoods where there's a lack of venues for interaction, or where there are predominantly low-quality amenities (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2000). While the introduction of amenities that are more attractive to affluent mobile

groups might be sensitive from the perspective of commercial gentrification, the presence of a qualitative local school could prevent wealthier households from taking their kids to a different school outside of the neighborhood.

Additionally, to localize the daily territory of higher-income households, urban planning could discourage their dependence on car-use by confirming to the standards of the 'compact city'. They suggest that cities and towns which are more dense and pedestrian-friendly, are both more environmentally beneficial and socially inclusive (see, for example, Rogers, 1997; Walsh, 1997) (...) - work in progress -



Other ideas:

Acknowledge current social structure: relocate in social clusters

Cost-efficient typologies (co-housing, micro-apartments, reuse)

Revise regulatory obstacles that discourage or delay development

Additional guidelines: draft

a. Alternative guidelines for socio-economic improvement		
	PROVIDE HOUSING CAREER OPTIONS	Offer residents opportunities to advance in their housing careers within the neighbourhood. This allows people to improve their socio-economic position, and promotes cross-tenure networks.
	WORK IN PROGRESS	Work in progress

TOWARDS DESIGN

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caperit, cupicae pratia?
Soltusciam nos firium et
pulabute, confentilica



Direction of final design

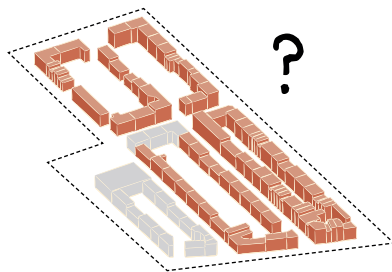
1. Choice of location, and why it fits the narrative

Why is a past case selected to demonstrate future challenges? Is it likely that a similar situation will reoccur?

After a critical analysis of the new housing policy, it appears highly plausible that projects similar to the Tweebosbuurt may recur. This conclusion is drawn from three observations. Firstly, the new housing policy continues to pursue the ideal of creating balanced neighbourhoods, an objective that also guided the redevelopment the Tweebosbuurt. Secondly, the targets for the social housing sector suggest a focus on replacing parts of the existing stock with new constructions. Aiming for approximately 1,000 new social houses anually, while also wanting to maintain the absolute number of social housing units, suggests it is reasonable to anticipate redevelopment projects of similar scale to the Tweebosbuurt (involving 500-600 houses) in the future.

Lastly, it is plausible to infer that, despite that there is no current public disclosure of future urban restructuring projects in Rotterdam, the municipality may have future plans that are not being publicly announced yet, in order to avoid controversy. This is concluded from several other strategic moves within the new housing policy that seem specifically designed to prevent sensitivities.

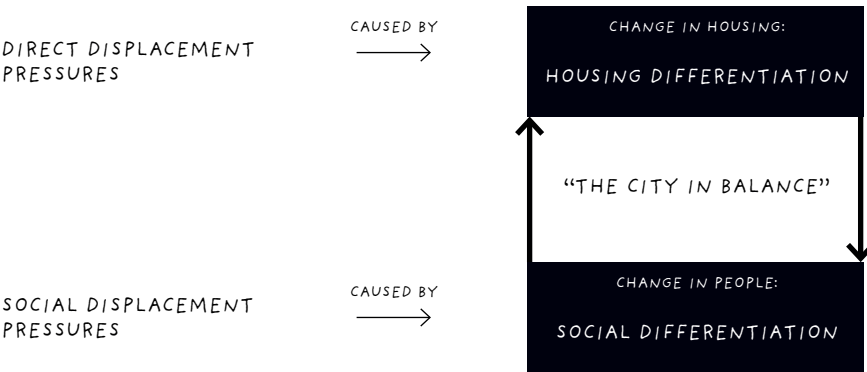
Therefore, applying this thesis’ findings to the Tweebosbuurt equips the municipality with the knowledge to make informed decisions in similar future situations, demonstrating how urban redevelopment can be shaped and guided by theories of displacement.



2. Designing scenario’s

Variables?

This strategy is based on the idea that the main variables in urban transformation are changes in the housing stock (housing differentiation) and changes in the social composition (social differentiation). It has been decided to focus on these variables as they are key themes in displacement, based on the earlier findings:



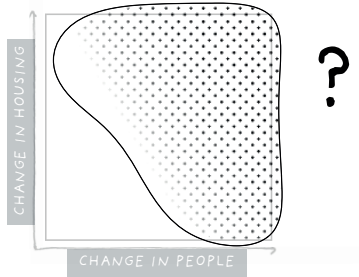
Guidelines?

While housing differentiation and social differentiation appear to be the key forces behind displacement pressures, the strategy does not aim to fully prevent such change. Instead, it aims to limit the risk of displacement during such change.

The image suggests that the more change in each variable, the higher the risk for displacement. This means, that the bigger the change, the more important it becomes to design with well-considered guidelines. Which guidelines that would be, can depend on the situation.

For example, if the scenario pushes you to introduce a large, new target-group, it becomes more important to adhere to guidelines such as; *design strategic connections between micro-districts of diverse groups to limit segregation* (guideline 4 from ‘social differentiation’). When a scenario pushes you to focus on demolition to allow new construction, it becomes increasingly important to; *create an optimized phasing of development to ensure right to housing* (guideline 2 from ‘housing differentiation’). Additional guidelines can be used during any change.

Of course, sometimes certain guidelines are ruled out, depending on the scenario. The next page shows that when you are pushed to design with a large new target-group, as in the first scenario, this limits the ability to only ‘*mix similar life-styles and incomes*’. Similarly, when a scenario pushes you to focus on demolition, this excludes the guideline ‘*prioritize renovation*’. However, other guidelines can still be employed to limit displacement as effectively as possible.



Other themes?

Also, the next page shows that change in housing, and change in people, are not the only variables that you can design with. While they primarily influence guideline implementation, additional themes can provide a focused direction for the scenario. For example, for now the themes ‘density’ and ‘identity’ are recognized as themes that can add an extra layer of complexity and challenge to the design.

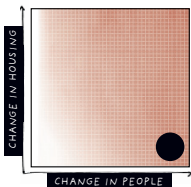


3. The choice of scenario's

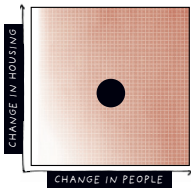
Which scenario's are relevant to explore, and why?

Type of scenario:

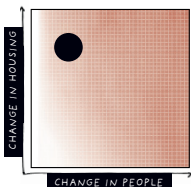
Maximizing density with minimal demolition: This scenario aims to introduce a large new target-group by constructing a significant amount of new units, with little to no demolition. This could be achieved through methods like building on existing structures, partitioning existing units, or adding high densities on empty plots. The key challenge is to creatively optimize space usage while blending old and new (social)structures to minimize segregation.



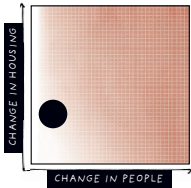
Optimal mixed, inclusive development: This approach involves a combination of selective demolition, new construction, and renovations to foster a diverse, inclusive neighbourhood. The goal is to cater to different demographics by offering various housing types and amenities. The main challenges include balancing diverse social groups, ensuring affordability, and maintaining neighbourhood cohesion while introducing new households.



Substantial demolition, while maintaining the identity: This scenario considers substantial demolition, specifcly in parts of the neighbourhood that are not viable for renovation. The neighborhood's unique character and history can eiter be preserved or brought back in new construction. The challenge regarding the neighbourhood's character lies in making decisions about what to preserve and what to replace, and how to seamlessly integrate new developments with the old.



Enhancing existing stock for current residents: This scenario concentrates on renovating existing housing while preserving the current demographic group. It may involve minimal demolition, primarily to enable affordable reconstruction for existing residents. The key challenges are enhancing living conditions within the existing structure and ensuring the financial feasibility of a development strategy that exclusively prioritizes affordable construction and renovation.



Societal relevance (contemporary urban challenge):

This scenario is relevant as it addresses current urban challenges of densification. It demonstrates how Vestia's portfolio renewal and the municipality's objectives for housing differentiation could have been achieved without directly displacing any residents. Of course, it raises questions about the desirability of this scenario, as this form of densification might challenge livability. Nonetheless, exploring this scenario and identifying guidelines to optimally navigate it within the context of displacement can bring interesting findings.

This scenario holds societal significance as it tries to 'optimize' the municipality's goal of creating balanced neighborhoods, from the perspective of limiting displacement. It seeks to incorporate as much of Vestia's new programme as feasible, while adhering to guidelines proposed in this thesis. The focus is on finding middle ground: how could the Tweebosbuurt have been redesigned better when given the opportunity to redo it?

This scenario gains relevance by acknowledging the necessity to develop modern, high-quality living spaces that also honor the local identity of the neighbourhood. Such an approach could lead to reduced local conflict and increased acceptance, as residents see their heritage and views being valued. It directly addresses the challenge of gentrification, a controversial topic in neighbourhood redevelopment.

This scenario is relevant as it focusses on one of the biggest challenges within the housing crisis: ensuring and preserving enough affordable housing. The design of this scenario will focus on making affordable housing both appealing to live in, as well as appealing to construct.

Other theme:

Density

N/A

Identity

N/A

Detail-level:

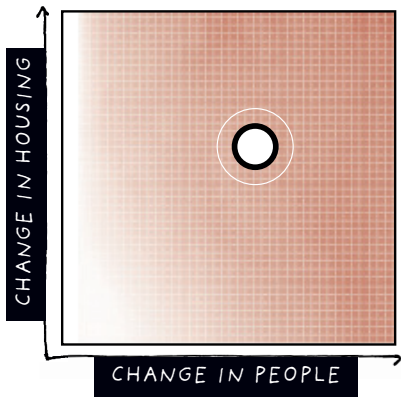
Medium

High

Medium

Low

Example of designing with guidelines



ASSESSMENT OF DISPLACEMENT-RISK

DIRECT



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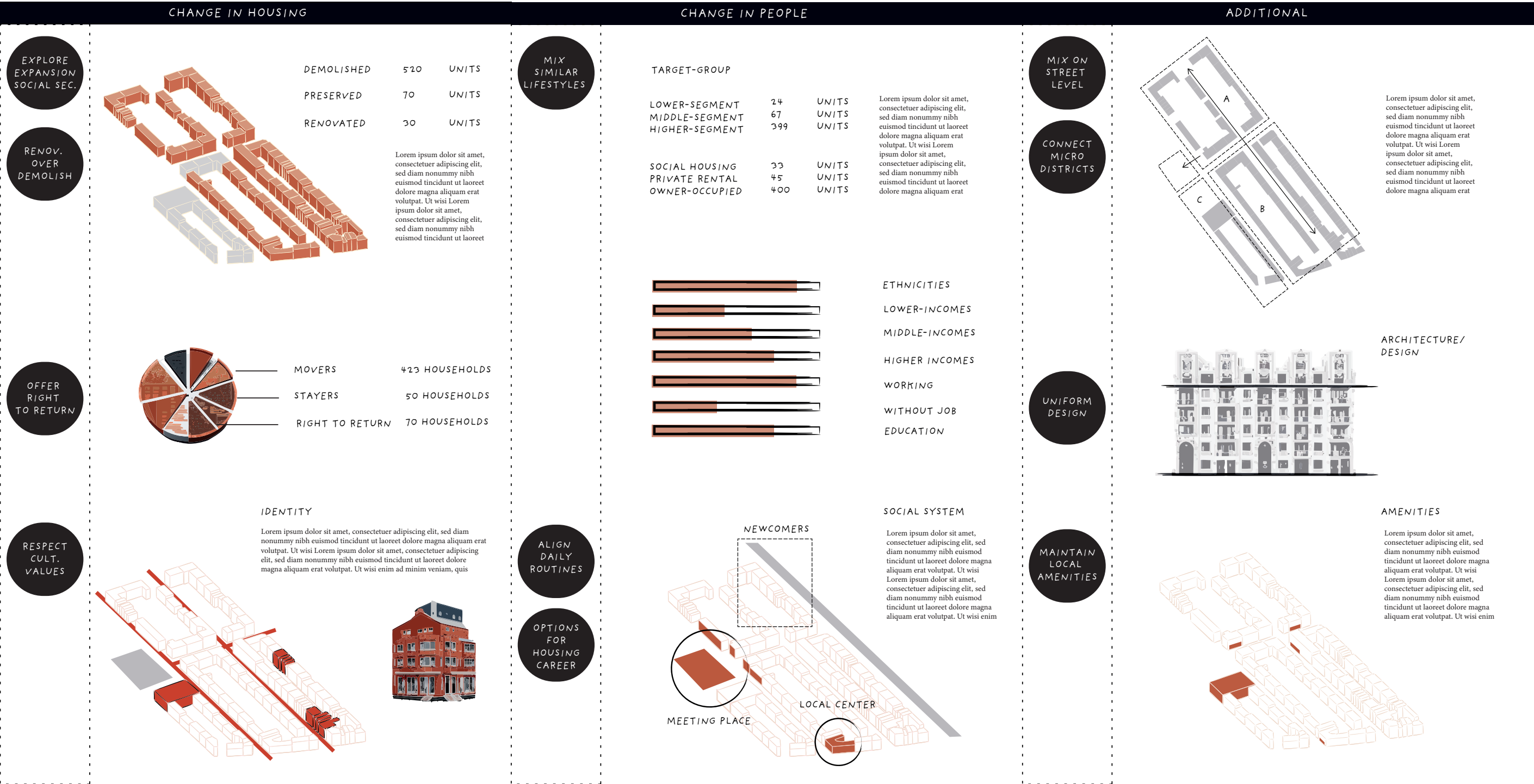


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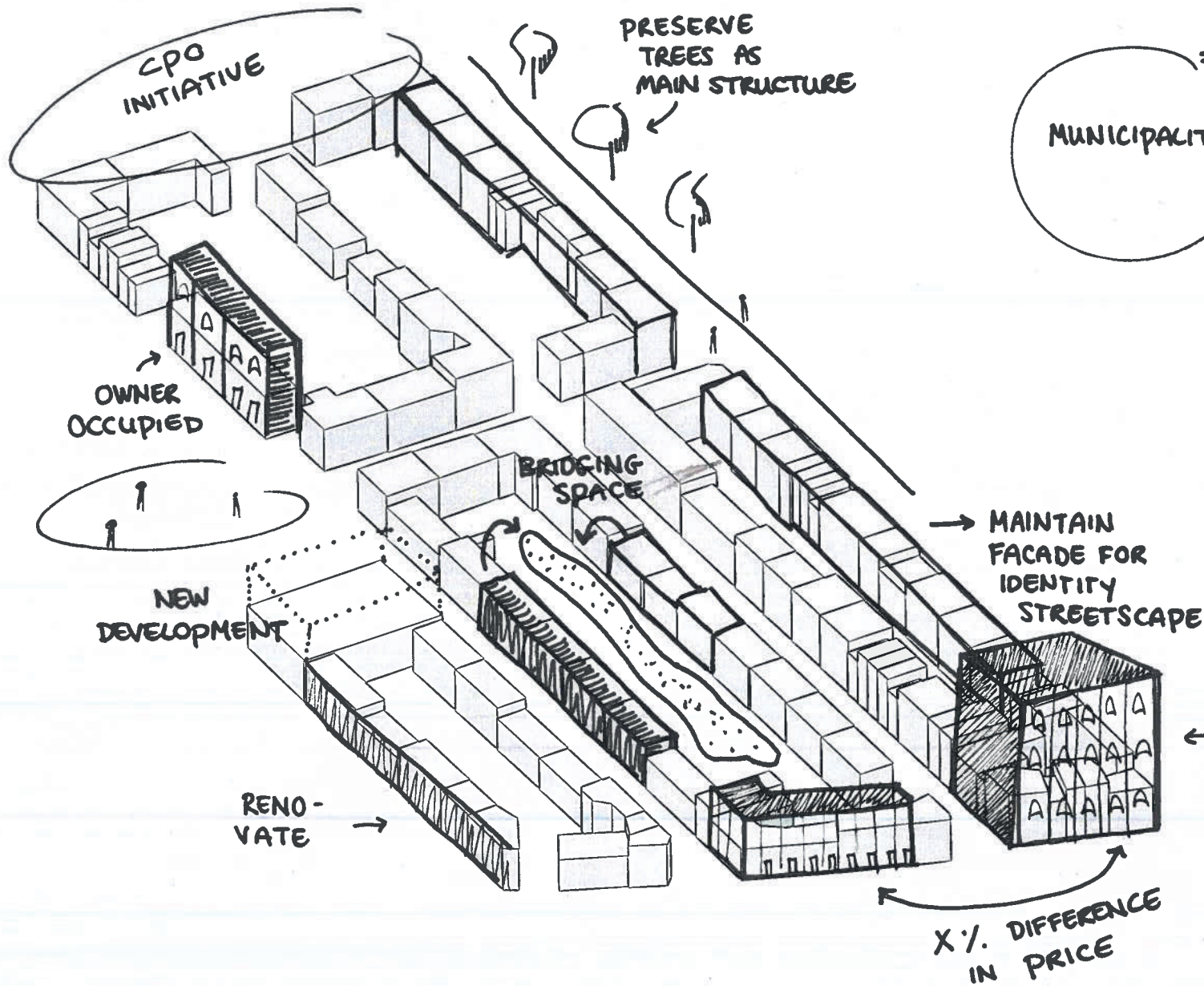
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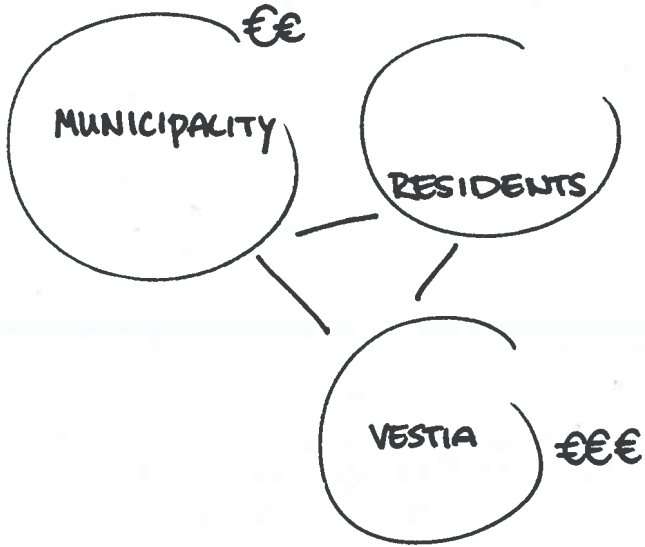
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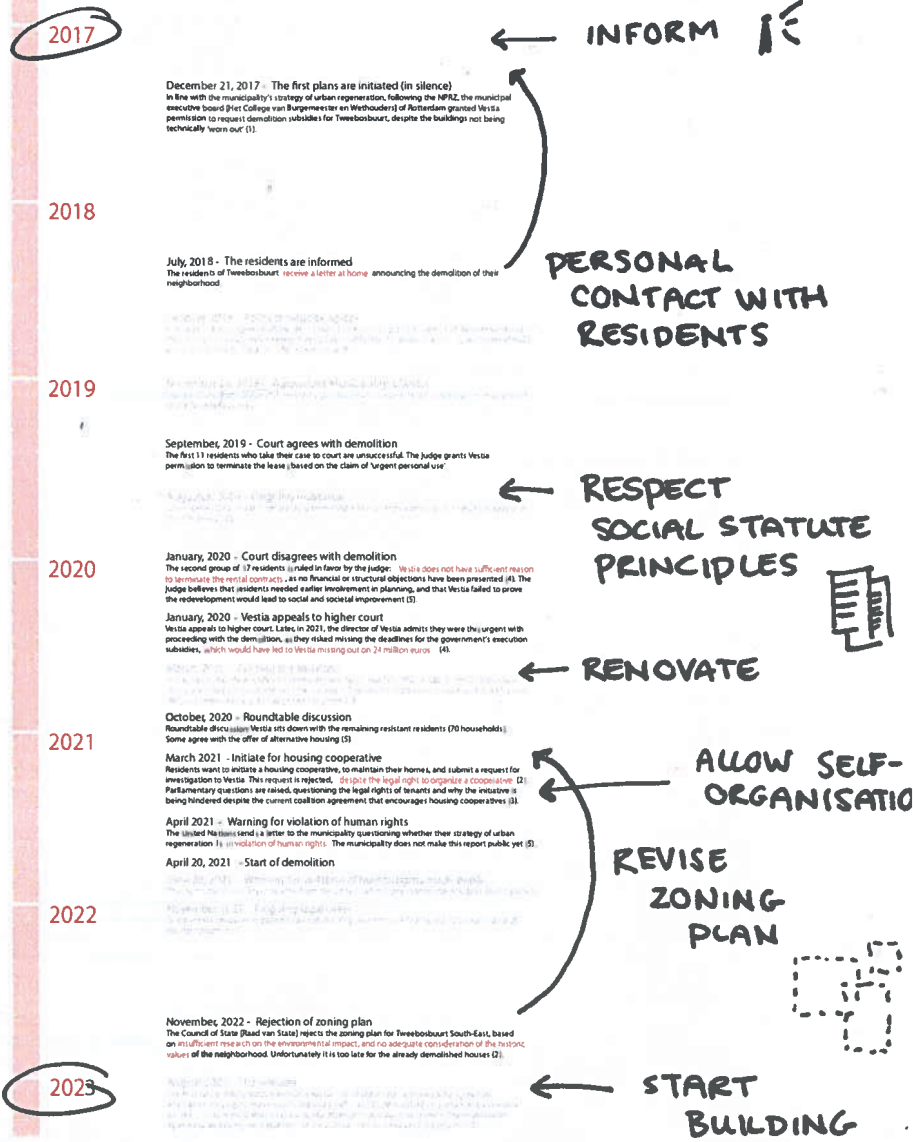
FINAL DESIGN SCENARIO A



(STAKEHOLDERS)



PROCESS



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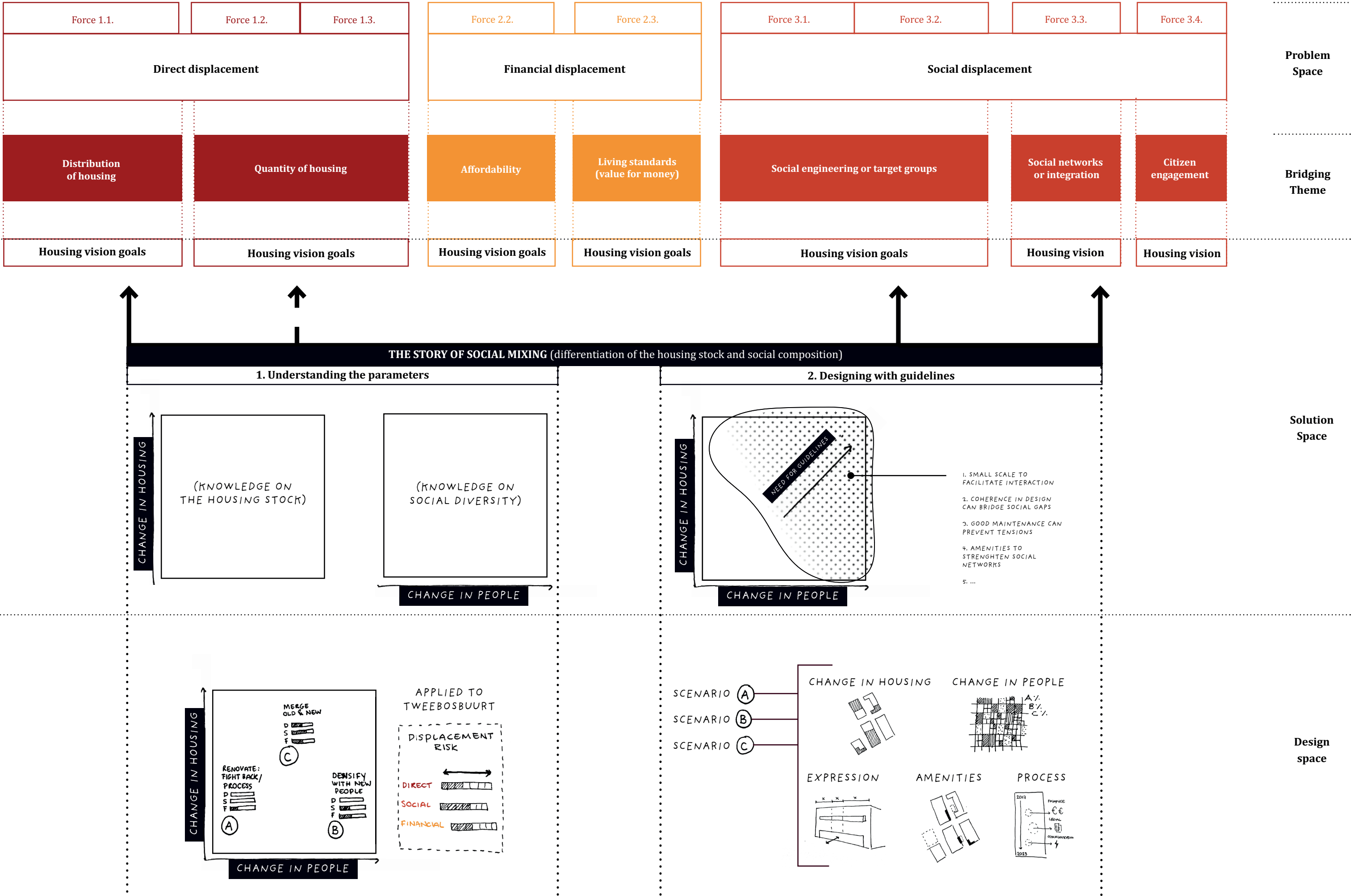
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07
APPENDIX

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Thesis framework (old)



Housing Policy (2023) guidelines

Displacing forces	1.1.		1.2.	1.3.		2.1.		2.2.	2.3.	2.4.	
	Demolishing 'low-cost' housing and replacing it with owner-occupied high segment housing.		Upgrading, merging or selling affordable housing to reduce the social housing supply.	Scarcity of rehousing options coupled with prolonged waiting lists.		Actively replacing lower income housing with housing for 'social climbers'		Reducing marginalized groups to a minority within a radically changed environment	Disrupting existing social networks and support systems, exacerbated by insufficient community integration of a new, contrasting group.	Excluding certain groups from the urban development process by undermining their ability to add value to the neighborhood.	
	Direct displacement		Financial displacement		Social displacement						
General topic	Distribution of housing	Quantity of housing		Affordability	Living standards (value for money)	Social engineering or target groups		Social networks or integration	Citizen engagement		
Housing Vision [Woonvisie] objectives, towards 2040 (2023)	1. d. New construction targets: Aim for 55% affordable homes (20% social, 35% mid-segment) until 2026, then 65% affordable (25% social, 40% mid-segment). 1. e. Measures for mid-segment housing: Ensure affordability through public and private legal instruments and financial resources. Half of the newly built mid-segment housing should be offered as rental properties. 1. g. Ensure accessibility: Monitor and safeguard the availability of housing for the intended target group, via for example anti-speculation measures (valid for at least five years), especially in the mid-range purchase segment. 2. d. Neighborhood diversity: Explore creating mixed neighborhoods by purchasing homes and adapting them to new living preferences. 2. e. Inclusivity and variety: Aim for inclusive neighborhoods wPut emphasis on innovative living forms, neighborhood identity, and engaging residents. 3. b. Fair Distribution: Ensure a fair allocation of available social housing across designated groups, namely 45% regular housing seekers, 25% Rotterdammers with urgency-status, and 30% other priority groups with urgency. 3. c. Regional agreements: Establish clear regional agreements for housing people in vulnerable situations in the housing care vision [Woonzorgvisie].		1. a. Continue construction: 3,500-4,000 new (temporary) homes yearly. 1. b. Utilize existing stock: Create more living spaces through for example loosening regulations, reducing vacancy, and innovative building solutions and living forms. 1. c. Add flexible housing layer: Add 2.000 temporary homes by 2026 to absorb the current peak in housing demand. 1. f. Innovative building processes: Fast construction of affordable homes with a new (flexible) Rotterdam Building Law.		4. a. Ethical Standards: Enhance the focus on fair renting and leasing, guaranteeing that all landlords adhere to responsible rental practices. 4. b. Reporting Centre: Establish a centre for reporting undesirable rental behavior, continuously educating tenants and landlords about their rights, duties, and responsibilities. X. Protection of mid-segment: The municipality will regulate the protection of fair prices in the mid-segment renting sector.	2. a. Improve current stock: Upgrade quality and sustainability of current properties. Issues with mold and dampness will be addressed. 2. b. Management and support: Ensure the effectiveness of homeowners' associations [VvE's], support sustainability measures, and ensure private landlords fulfill their responsibilities. 2. c. Localized approach: Implement area-specific approaches to private housing, by encouraging VvE's to address structural issues and enhance sustainability, supporting homeowners where possible. X. Ensuring quality: With the 'Good Renting and Leasing' [Goed huren en verhuren] policy, we tackle issues such as poor-quality housing for migrant workers and abuse by landlords.		X. No discrimination: In Rotterdam, there is no room for racism or discrimination on any grounds. The allocation of housing (both rental and purchase) is conducted transparently and objectively. X. Attracting and retaining certain groups: We aim to attract essential (professional) groups to our city by expanding housing opportunities for students, young people, professionals in social sectors, and social climbers. This includes appropriate housing allocation for middle incomes in high-demand areas using legal measures (like target group ordinances), offering purchase discounts or purchase priority to social professionals and social climbers in the middle-segment, prioritizing middle-incomes when selling corporation-owned properties, etc. X. Mixing target-groups: We challenge the market to develop plans that incorporate a mix of target groups in residential complexes, for example, combining social and middle-segment housing in one building		X. Adequate Facilities: We are committed to ensuring sufficient social infrastructure in all districts and neighborhoods, tailored to the needs of the area. Meeting spaces contribute to social cohesion. X. Accessible Facilities: Facilities should be affordable and accessible. We are exploring the potential expansion of services for vulnerable groups and for poverty support. X. Facilities in housing: In the case of smaller residential units, there should be enough communal spaces. Collective living arrangements that can contribute to self-reliance and social cohesion are encouraged.	2. e. Inclusivity and variety: Aim for inclusive neighborhoods with a balance of affordable, and mid- to high segment housing. Put emphasis on innovative living forms, neighborhood identity, and engaging residents. X. Rights and needs: Demolition will be used sparingly. When it is employed, current residents and their social networks play a significant role. We are transparent about the considerations and decisions made and ensure that residents are heard and seen in urban renewal processes. In a new Social Statute [Sociaal Statuut] we clarify the rights and obligations of involved parties, such as a guarantee for residents to return to the area and a strategy for resident support.
	<div><div></div> = 'Main measures' from the Housing Policy (2023) summary</div> <div><div></div> = additional objectives from the Housing Policy (2023) main report</div>										

Idea behind narrative

