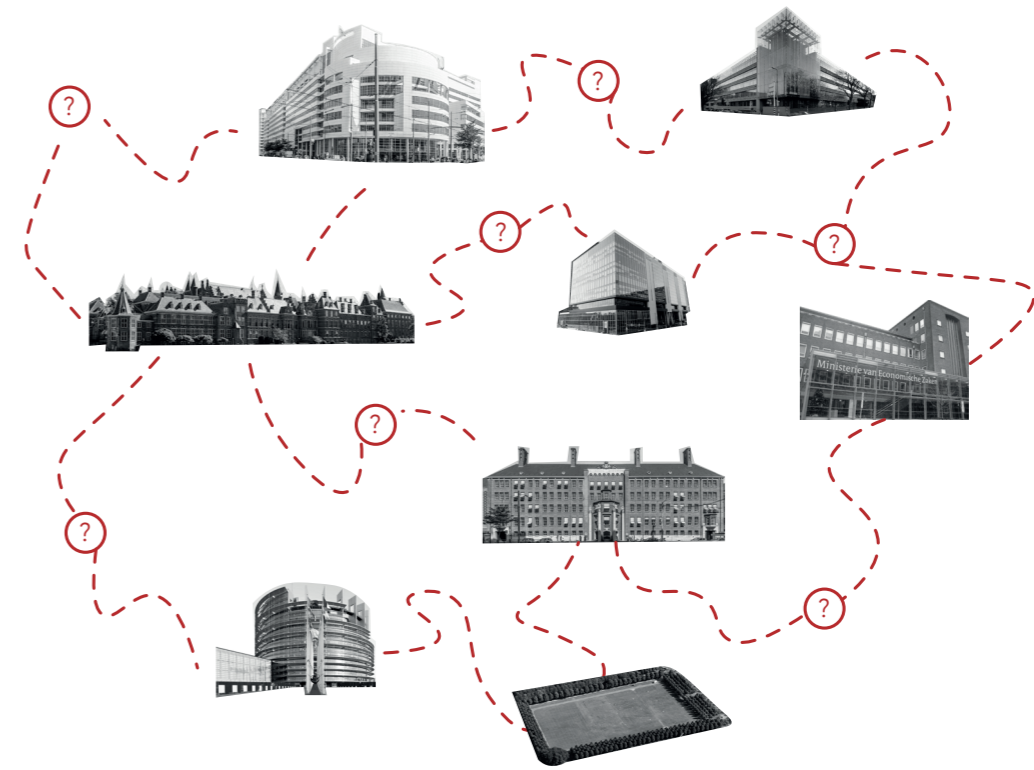




SPACES FOR DEMOCRACY

Spaces for a radical, pluralist democracy



COLOFON

SPACES FOR DEMOCRACY

MSc Graduation Thesis Plan - P2 Report
Master of Science Urbanism
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01.

INTRODUCTION



Correspondent, O. (2023, 8 september). Dagelijkse klimaatblokkade op de A12 duivels dilemma voor Haagse politie. Telegraaf. <https://www.telegraaf.nl/nieuws/75027466/dagelijkse-klimaatblokkade-op-de-a12-duivels-dilemma-voor-haagse-politie>

Climate justice protest - A12 - The Hague

ABSTRACT

Currently, the world is in a state of radical uncertainty, pressing the importance for strong democracies more than ever, in order to make sure decisions are made in a socially and environmentally just manner. However, in the past years, a global trend of democratic erosion has been identified. This trend is threatening even the older, well-established democracies. In the Netherlands, a growing distrust towards politicians has been identified as well. Solutions to restore this distrust and to bring citizens and government together, have a hard time addressing all different groups in society and are causing even more frustration among citizens. The main question this research focuses on is the following:

‘How can spaces for a radical pluralist democracy be identified, designed and used in order to strengthen the democracy of The Netherlands?’

In order to tackle the issue of democratic erosion, and to offer solutions to prevent the continuation of this phenomenon, this research proposes a radical approach of strengthening the democratic system, through a spatial lens. First, it determines what can be considered spaces for a radical pluralist democracy. Then, it applies a pattern language of said spaces in the context of the city of The Hague, a city with important symbolic relevance to democracy, housing the Dutch parliament and the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

PROBLEMATIZATION

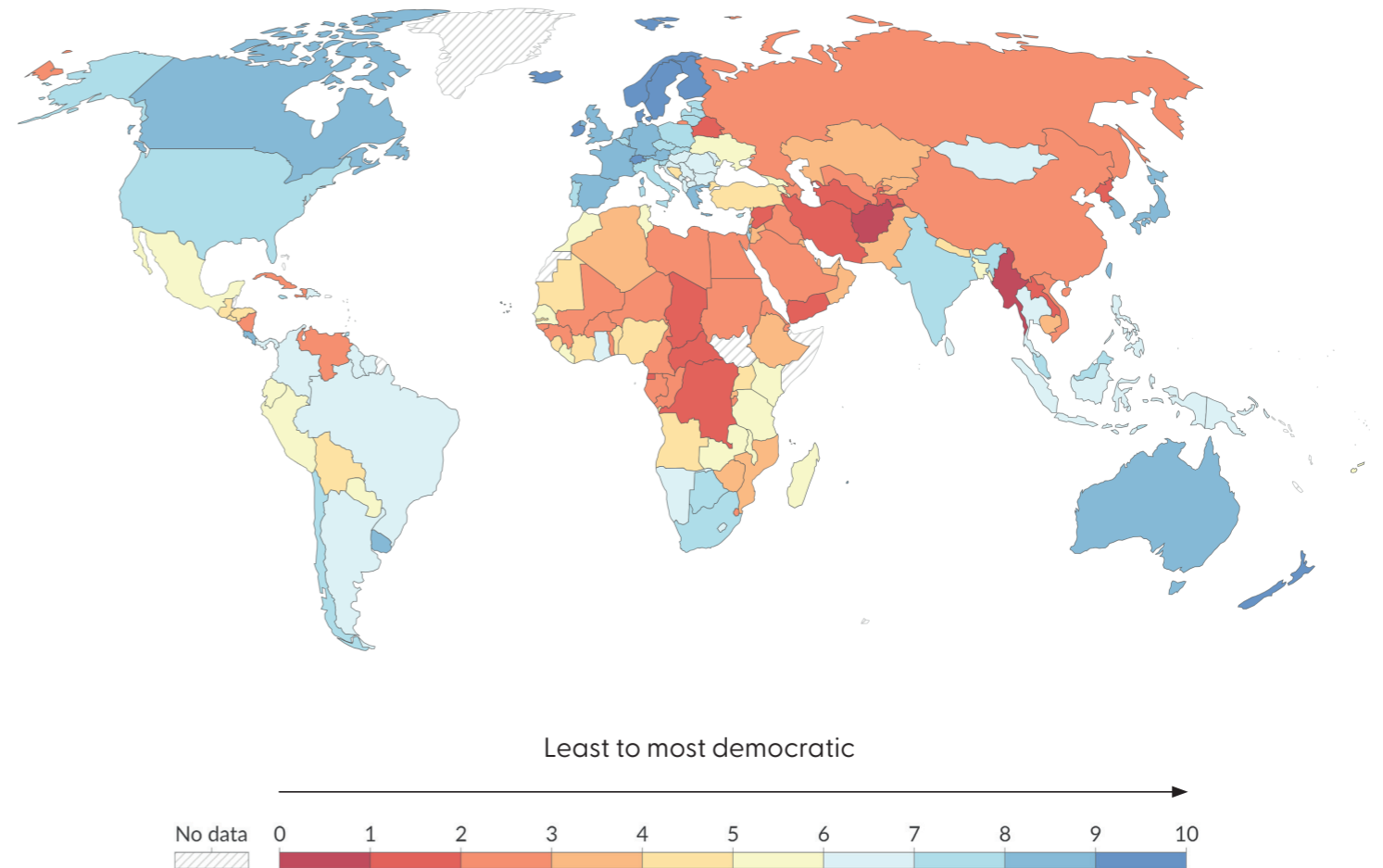
Global trend of democratic erosion

The planet is currently in a state of radical uncertainty (Executive Summary – The Global State Of Democracy 2024, n.d.). This stresses the need for socially and environmentally just decision making processes, thus for strong democratic systems. However, in recent years, democracies all over the world are in decline, including high-performing democracies in Europe and the Americas (Executive Summary – The Global State Of Democracy 2024, n.d.).

While the Democracy Index of Economist Intelligence Unit might not evoke the thought of urgency in the European context, in the recent years, a growing distrust towards national governments has been identified (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.).

The cause of this decline of distrust is declared a result of a cost-of-living crisis, among others (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.). More and more people, mainly groups living in rural areas and marginalized groups, feel a lack of trust and feel unrecognized by politicians and policy makers. Furthermore, social media platforms have an increasing devise role, exploiting and amplifying discontent of citizens. These trends could possibly influence the strength of the democratic systems in the European Union and destabilise society (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.).

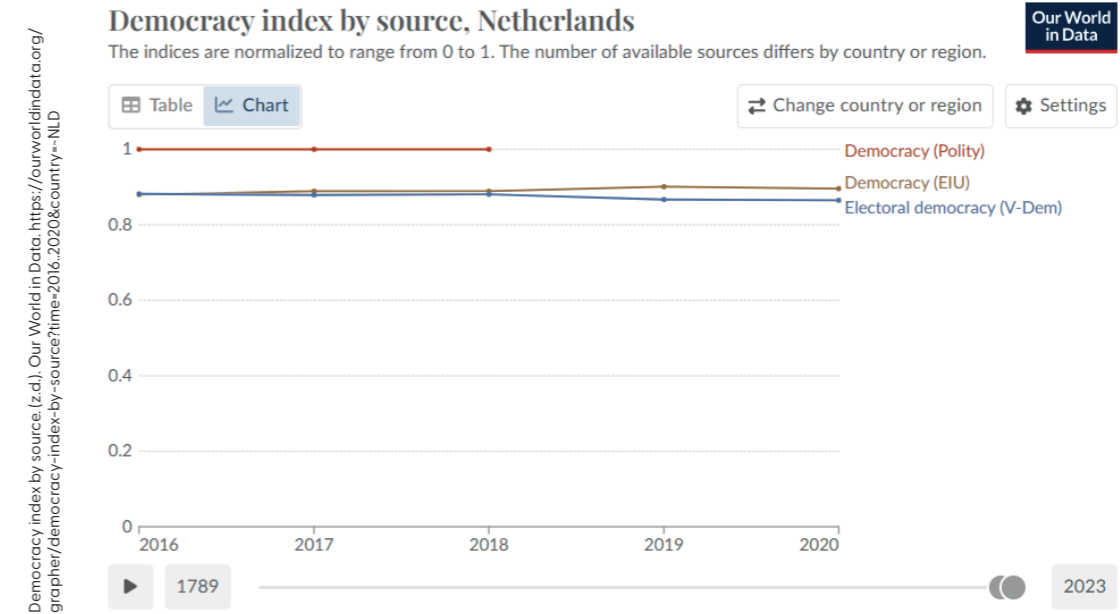
It becomes clear these strong democracies cannot be considered a given fact, but have to be carefully monitored and researched, in order for these societies to include all voices. The question whether the present-day systems of liberal democratic capitalism can be considered 'the end of history', already posed in 1992 by Chantal Mouffe, becomes ever so relevant in 2025 (Mouffe, 1992).



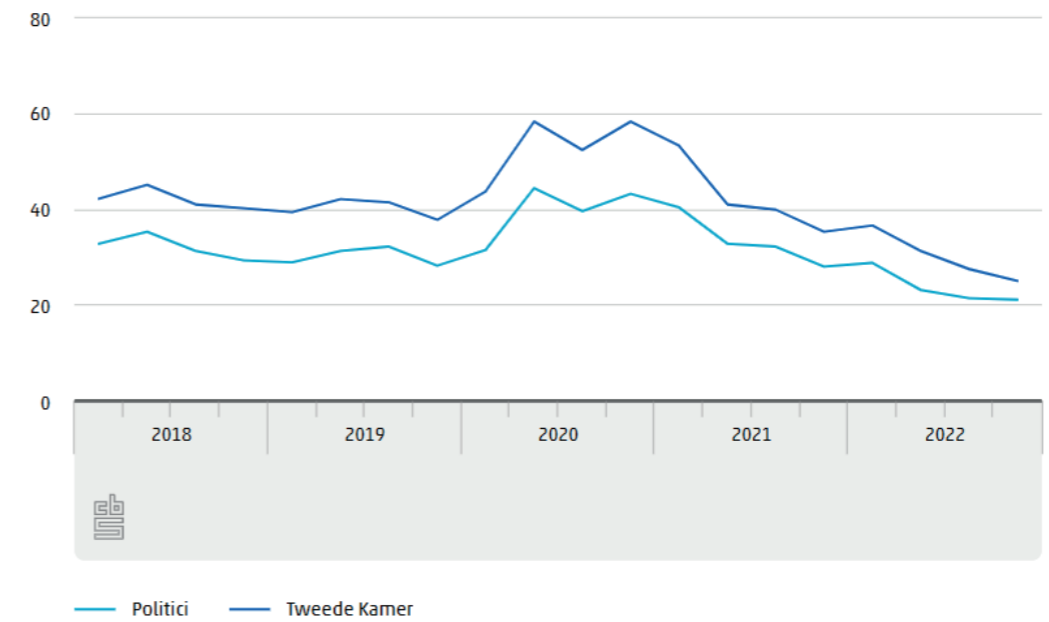
Democratic erosion in the Netherlands

While The Netherlands has been considered a stable democracy for decenia now, as can be seen in the graphic on the right, a similar pattern of distrust towards politicians and the presence of anti-pluralist parties, is present, among other symptoms that could indicate democratic erosion (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023) (Honingh et al., 2023). People feel the next generations will have less opportunities than themselves. This makes them feel insecure and powerless (De Ree, 2024). People desire politicians who are in close contact with the people (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport, 2024).

Since the covid pandemic, the level of trust people indicate having in De Tweede Kamer (The House of Representatives) and politicians is declining. In 2023, the Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek (the Dutch Central Statistics Office) measured the lowest level of trust for these two in the past 10 years (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023).



Trust in Politics, % people of 15 years or older



Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2023, 8 mei). Minste vertrouwen in Tweede Kamer in 10 jaar tijd. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/nieuws/2023/09/minste-vertrouwen-in-tweede-kamer-in-10-jaar-tijd>

Attempt of institutions in strengthening democracy and frustration in participation processes

In this area of a trend of democratic decline, governmental institutions attempt to restore the relationship with their citizens, among other things, by focusing on the integration of participation processes in decision-making. The United Nations, for example, have included participation as part of their Sustainable Development Goals, namely in goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) (SDG 16 - Verenigde Naties - Nederlands, 2020). They are committed to strengthening people's social capitals and state that participation as part of decision-making is essential for a just and secure society.

In the context of the EU, the statement of Massimiliano Mascherini, Head of the Social Policies unit at Eurofound, shows the awareness of the limitations of present day democracies. He stresses the need for rebuilding institutional trust, by concentrating on several key areas, namely on effective and transparent dialogue, delivering on promises, combating disinformation and manipulation and investing in social cohesion (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.).

Similar ambitions are set in The Netherlands. The Dutch government wants to involve citizens more actively in decisions through participation processes (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024). However, research shows that the current form of participation often turns out to have a low democratic content. Citizens find it frustrating that there is little opportunity for 'political conversations'. Moreover, certain groups are underrepresented in these processes, and it appears that mainly highly educated people participate (Burgerparticipatie Zonder een Politiek Gesprek Leidt Alleen Tot Frustraties, n.d.).

Solutions offered by governmental institutions do not yet address the root-cause of the distrust

However, even though all kinds of institutions, from the EU, to the UN, to the Dutch government, seem to acknowledge the limitations of the existing frameworks of present-day democracies, they struggle to not only treat the symptoms of these limitations, but the root-cause of the distrust and struggle, caused by the individualistic, universalistic and rationalist nature of liberal democracies (Mouffe, 1999). Applying this conclusion to the Dutch context, this quote of the director of the socio-cultural planning office (Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau), Karen van Oudenhoven, is relevant:

'Structural inequality in the Netherlands is on the rise, accompanied by a sense of unease and distrust in politics. This is a focus for the future. We need to look for connections, otherwise polarisation could take flight.' (De Ree, 2024)

Spatial dimension in strengthening democracies

Addressing and resolving the struggles of present-day democracies, like fostering social connections, is, apart from being a social problem, a spatial problem.

Relating the struggles of present day democracies back to the context of the city, Lefebvre's stand in 'the right to the city', is relevant to bring forward. In his writings, he demands not to consider the urban fabric solely as a neutral morphological condition. He considers the way that the urban fabric shapes, more or less intensely, a way of life. This is called 'the urban society' (Lefebvre, 1996).



"We see **big differences** in **trust in politics** between people who can get on well in society and those who are left behind. This is cause for concern because it makes trust **a potential divisive factor** in society."



"Citizen participation often has the ambition of making decision-making more democratic and convincing opponents. However, research shows that **the level of democracy is often low.**"



"Over **40 per cent of Dutch people** think the government **does not listen** to residents **enough**. And **almost 60** per cent believe that **politicians do not sufficiently stand up** for people like them."

This conceptualisation of the impact of the configuration of the city on social structures and vice versa, is the base of the hypothesis that the problems emerging in democracy have a spatial dimension. The conclusion is that the city can be considered as a condition that brings together and shapes virtual bodies, democracies for example, physically (Beveridge & Koch, 2023). If cities are the places where different kinds of people, with different ideas come together, then places to discuss and confront these ideas are essential (Jenlink, 2007).

Therefore, to ensure that everyone has a voice in decision making for the future, a new way has to be found to bring different groups of people into contact and provoke dialogue. The places existing for the purpose of facilitating conversation between different groups, are pressed by a pattern of the replacement of mixed-spaces, spaces bringing all kinds of groups together, by homogenised districts (Sennett & Sendra, 2022). This effect is caused by a process of sorting and segregating. Richard Sennett states: 'Flexible capitalism unfolds now in a rigid city. The city has become an iron cage - one that imprisons disoriented, labouring animalis.' (Sennett & Sendra, 2022).

Reconceptualising the current democratic system: Introducing the radical pluralist democracy

Concluding the crisis of the present-day liberal democracy, including the Dutch democracy, a broad reconceptualisation of the status-quo by many different thinkers is needed (Beveridge & Koch, 2023). Nevertheless, in order to keep this research concise, the focus of reconceptualising the current democratic system, will be on implementing the concept of the radical pluralist democracy. The goal is to address the root-cause of the current struggle, stressing the importance of taking into account the pluralist nature of democracies.

In order to give a brief understanding of the later further defined concept of the radical pluralist democracy, the definition of these terms is:

Radical democracy is an understanding of the democratic system extending 'beyond the formal procedures of democratic governance (e.g., voting, elections) to encompass broader dimensions of participation, inclusion, and empowerment in all areas of social life.' (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024, p. 110)

The focus of this research will be on not only a radical democracy, but a radical pluralist democracy. The aim of this focus of this form of democracy is to address the political demands of all members of society, all with different ways of viewing the world, connecting the social and political dimension, as proposed by Chantal Mouffe, among others (Mouffe, 1992).

The radical pluralist democracy in spatial context: the case of the city of The Hague

In order to examine the spatial dimension and the role of the urban designer in a radical pluralist democracy, the concept will be explored in the context of the city of The Hague. This city is the administrative capital of The Netherlands, thus having an important symbolic, both from an historical perspective, as a present day symbolic and practical relevance for the democratic system of the country. The city has this relevance on multiple scales, hosting the national government, the province of Zuid-Holland and the municipality of The Hague. The city also has an international relevance, seating embassies from all over the world in the Netherlands and being the host for the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court.

Furthermore, the city is considered the most segregated of the 4 big other cities in the Netherlands (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Utrecht) (Segregatiemonitor - 5. Werk en Inkomen - Den Haag, n.d.).

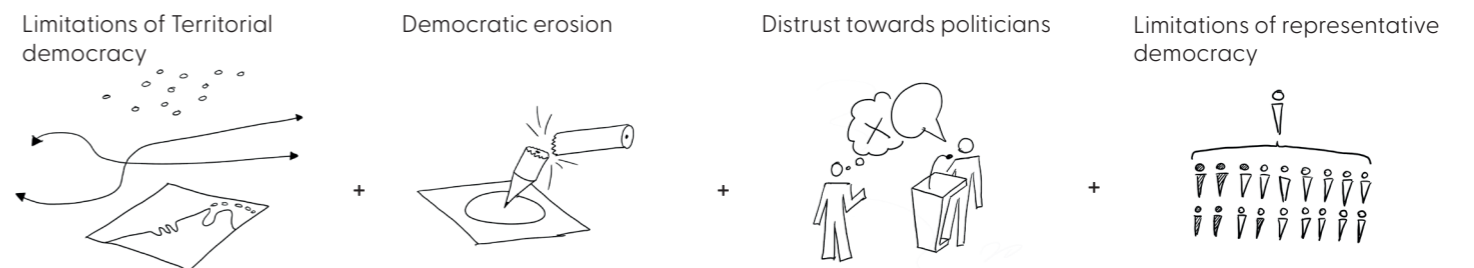
Problem statement: conclusion

In conclusion, in order to strengthen the democratic systems, it is important to take into account the spatial dimension. This research will attempt to find spatial opportunities for the implementation of the concept of the radical, pluralist democracy, in the context of the city of The Hague, administrative capital of the Netherlands, by focusing on the main question:

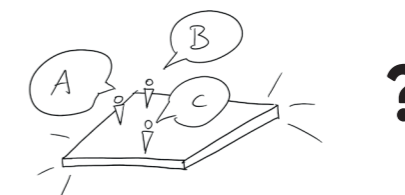
'How can spaces for a radical pluralist democracy be identified, designed and used, in the context of The Hague?'

This thesis will explore ways to discover ways to further deepen democracy, by proposing the implementation of spaces for a radical pluralist democracy. In order to answer the main question, spaces for a radical democracy will be defined. Also, the role of the urban designer in radical pluralist democracies will be investigated. Furthermore, the limitations of mapping for pluralist democracies will be identified. The research will focus on the urban fabric of The Hague, by identifying existing and possibly new areas for democracy and by creating a pattern language of possible design interventions, translating this to an urban design proposal.

Problems:



Hypothesis:



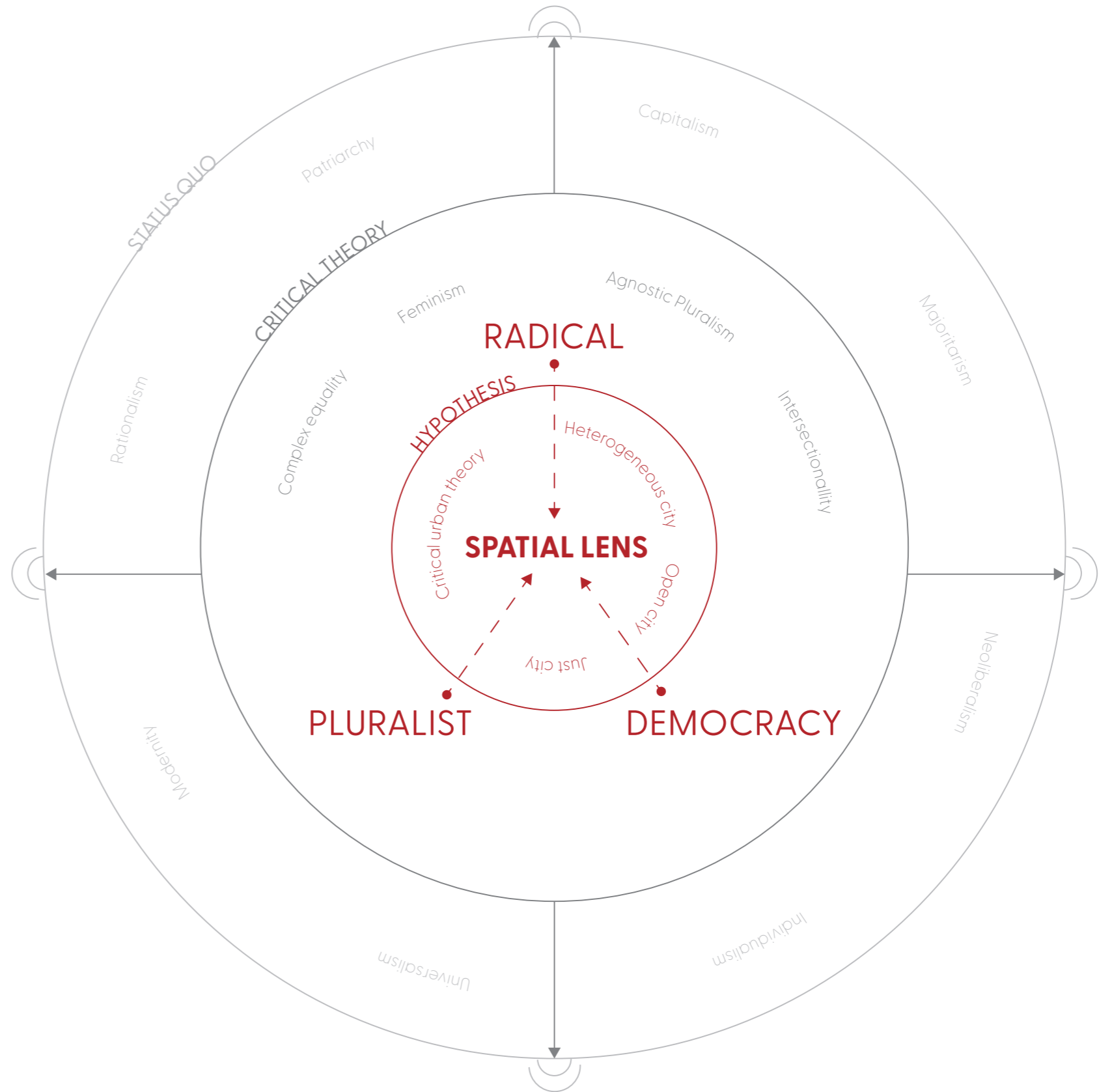
02.

METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

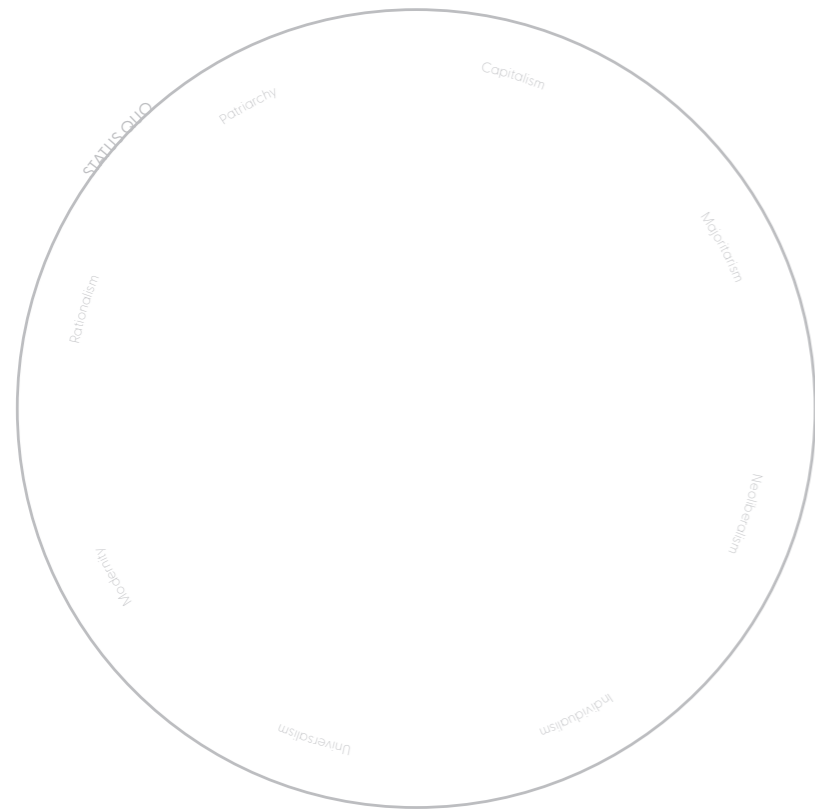
In order to address the struggles of today's democratic system, this research will examine the possibility of addressing the existing problems at their root, focusing on the opportunity of addressing in exploring the pluralist nature of the democratic system, proposing an examination of the opportunity of the radical pluralist democracy to strengthen today's system, through a spatial lens. In this approach, the concepts that shape the existing status quo are examined, and limitations are identified by implementing critical theory, related to the three core concepts of this research (Radical, Pluralist, Democracy), in a spatial manner.

As can be seen in the drawing from the conceptual framework, the hypothesis is that exploring the issue of democratic erosion through a spatial lens, in a critical manner, could possibly reveal some solutions for strengthening the present-day democratic system. This conceptual framework is open-ended, meaning that the goal is to add on to the framework throughout the entire research process. It would also be interesting to see the framework used in other research in the future, to compare the conclusions on what concepts are part of the 'status quo' and what concepts could deepen the critical understanding of this status. The goal of the framework is to be able to explore the concept of the radical pluralist democracy in this research, but also to provide a tool for others to change the framework, adding their own world view and experience into what 'critical theory' entails. It can serve as the basis for a broader discussion, rather than being a conclusion.



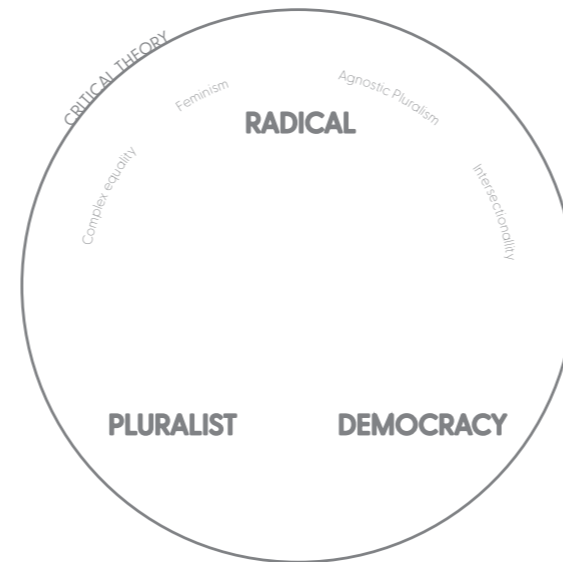
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Status-Quo



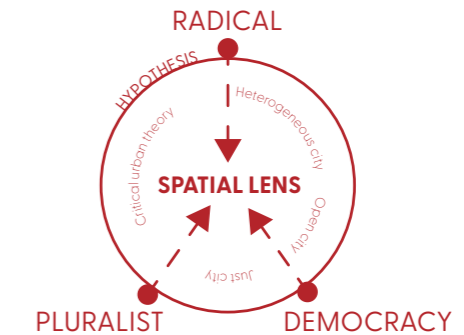
- Verkenning en verdieping democratische erosie en respons in Nederland - Marlies Honingh en Carolien van Ham, in collaboration with Carmen van Alebeek, Joep van Lit, Steven Bruintjes, Sanne Kruike-meier, Jorieke Manenschijn, Tom van der Meer, Maurits Meijers, Bastiaan Rijpkema en Rens Vliegenthart
- The 'Regimes of the World' data: how do researchers measure democracy? - Our World in Data - Bastian Herre
- What is a 'good' democracy? - Leonardo Morlino
- Powercube - The Participation, Power and Social Change team at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.
- ...

Critical Theory



- Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics - Kimberle Crenshaw
- The Concept of Representation in Contemporary Democratic Theory - Nadia Urbinati and Mark E. Warren
- Democratic Politics and Conflict: An Agonistic Approach - Chantal Mouffe
- Waarheid en democratie - Luca Consoli and Ronald Tinnevelt
- Deliberative democracy or agonistic pluralism? - Chantal Mouffe
- Dimensions of radical democracy : pluralism, citizenship, community - Chantal Mouffe
- Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism? The Relevance of the Habermas-Mouffe Debate for Third World Politics - Ilan Kapoor
- What is democracy? A reconceptualization of the quality of democracy - Gerardo L. Munck
- The Paradox of Democracy - Chantal Mouffe
- Representative Democracy Remains a Popular Ideal, but People Around the World Are Critical of How It's Working - PEW research centre - Richard Wike, Janell Fetterolf, Maria Smerkovich, Sarah Austin, Sneha Gubbala and Jordan Lippert
- ...

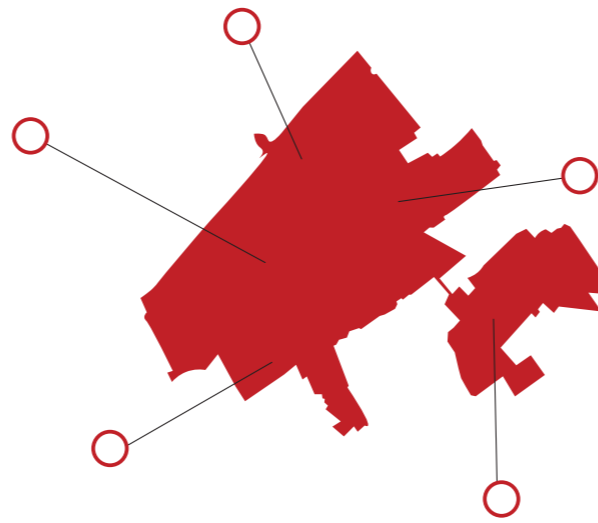
Critical Urban Theory



- The Right to the City - Henri Lefebvre
- The City is not a Tree - Christopher Alexander
- Art and Democracy - Chantal Mouffe
- From critical urban theory to the right to the city - Peter Marcuse
- Democracy and Urban Form - Richard Sennet
- Designing Disorder - Richard Sennet and Pablo Sendra
- What Do Cities Have to Do with Democracy? - Clive Barnett
- Seeing democracy like a City - Ross Beveridge and Philippe Koch
- An introduction to radical participatory design: decolonising participatory design processes - Victor Udoewa
- Actors, arenas and aims: A conceptual framework for public participation - Katrin Hofer and David Kaufmann
- Creating Public Spaces and Practiced Places for Democracy, Discourse, and the Emergence of Civil Society - Patrick M. Jenlink
- The Phenomenology of Change: How Conflict Drives Urban Transformation - Nanke Verloo and Diane Davis
- Conflict Mediations - Aleksandar Staničić, Marc Schoonderbeek and Heidi Sohn
- Processes for just products: the capability space of participatory design - Apsan A. Frediani en Camillo Boano
- The Spatial Justice Handbook - R. Rocco, J.E. Gonçalves and H. Lopez
- Designs for the Pluriverse - Arturo Escobar
- The Agency of Mapping - James Corner
- A Ladder of Citizen Participation - Sherry R. Arnstein
- ...

MAIN QUESTION

Main question: *‘How can spaces for a radical pluralist democracy be identified, designed and used, in the context of The Hague?’*



SUB-QUESTIONS

REFLECT AND DISCLOSE:

- What context, motivation and personal assumptions have to be acknowledged before the research process?
- What are the limitations of this research?

ANALYSE:

- What is democracy? *Literary review*
- What are the limitations of present-day democracies? *Literary review*
- What is a radical pluralist democracy? *Literary review*
- How does the democratic system The Netherlands currently function? *Literary review*
- How can the implementation of the radical pluralist democracy benefit the current system of The Netherlands? *Literary review + Expert interviews*

EXPOSE:

- What are other works in relation to urban design and democracy? *Literary review + Expert interviews*

REFLECT:

- What is the role of the designer in a radical pluralist democracy? *Literary review + Expert interviews*

EXPOSE:

- How can spaces for a radical pluralist democracy be identified? *Literary review + Expert interviews*

- What spaces for a radical pluralist democracy can be identified in The Hague by exploring the historical, spatial and social context? *Literary review + Spatial analysis, Socio-spatial analysis, Subjective mapping techniques, Soft Mapping + Street Interviews + Field trip + Pattern language*

PROPOSE:

- How can spaces for a radical pluralist democracy can be designed in The Hague? *Research by Design*
- How can spaces for democracy be implemented by actors in The Hague? *Literary review, stakeholder analysis*

POLITICIZE:

- What are the social and political consequences of the implementation of the design proposal, when implemented into reality? *Literary review, stakeholder analysis*

REFLECT

- How did the context, motivation and personal assumptions influence this research?

RESEARCH AIMS

To reflect on the context, motivation and personal assumptions involved in this research. To disclose the limitations of this research.

To define the definitions of 'democracy' and 'radical pluralist democracy'. Furthermore, the aim is to explain the struggle of present day democracies and explain why the implementation of a radical pluralist democracy could possibly serve solutions.

To explore the possible struggles of the democratic system of The Netherlands and to explore the possibilities of strengthening this system through the approach of the radical pluralist democracy.

To examine related works in order to gain a broader perspective on the matter. To create a pattern language.

To examine the role of the Urban Designer in designing spaces for a radical pluralist democracy, especially in mapping, to identify design methods that can be translated into the part of a pattern language.

To identify spaces for a radical pluralist democracy, looking at best practice examples and literature. Furthermore, interviews with experts and street interviews will be conducted. The goal is to translate these spaces into a pattern language, functioning as the base for the 'propose' phase.

To examine the context of the city of The Hague, identifying important areas of focus for the implementation of spaces for a radical pluralist democracy, by exploring the social, historical and spatial context of the city. Furthermore, the goal is to research if, and what kind of spaces for a radical pluralist democracy already exists. To translate conclusions into a pattern language.

To create a spatial design, exploring the possibilities for implementing the concept of spaces for a radical democracy.

To examine the roles of different actors involved in implementing the proposed design.

To examine the social and political consequences of the design proposal.

To reflect back on the context, motivation and personal assumptions involved in this research.

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to be able to translate Henri Lefebvre's right to the city into action, thus to apply critical theory in a spatial manner, the critical urban theory of Peter Marcuse will be used as the base of this methodological framework. The methodology of this research is structured around the idea to use six different main concepts, identified by Marcuse, in an iterative way.

Not only will this iterative process be part of the research process, the proposal is also to apply these concepts to test the design outcome, thus in the product of the research and design outcome itself. The six concepts implemented are analyse, expose, propose, politicize, reflect and disclose (Marcuse, 2009).

First, the role of the designer will be reflected upon, being aware of the influence that my own world view, upbringing and identity has in this research, taking into account the non-rational aspect of research and design. Also, assumptions involved and the limitations of this thesis will be disclosed.

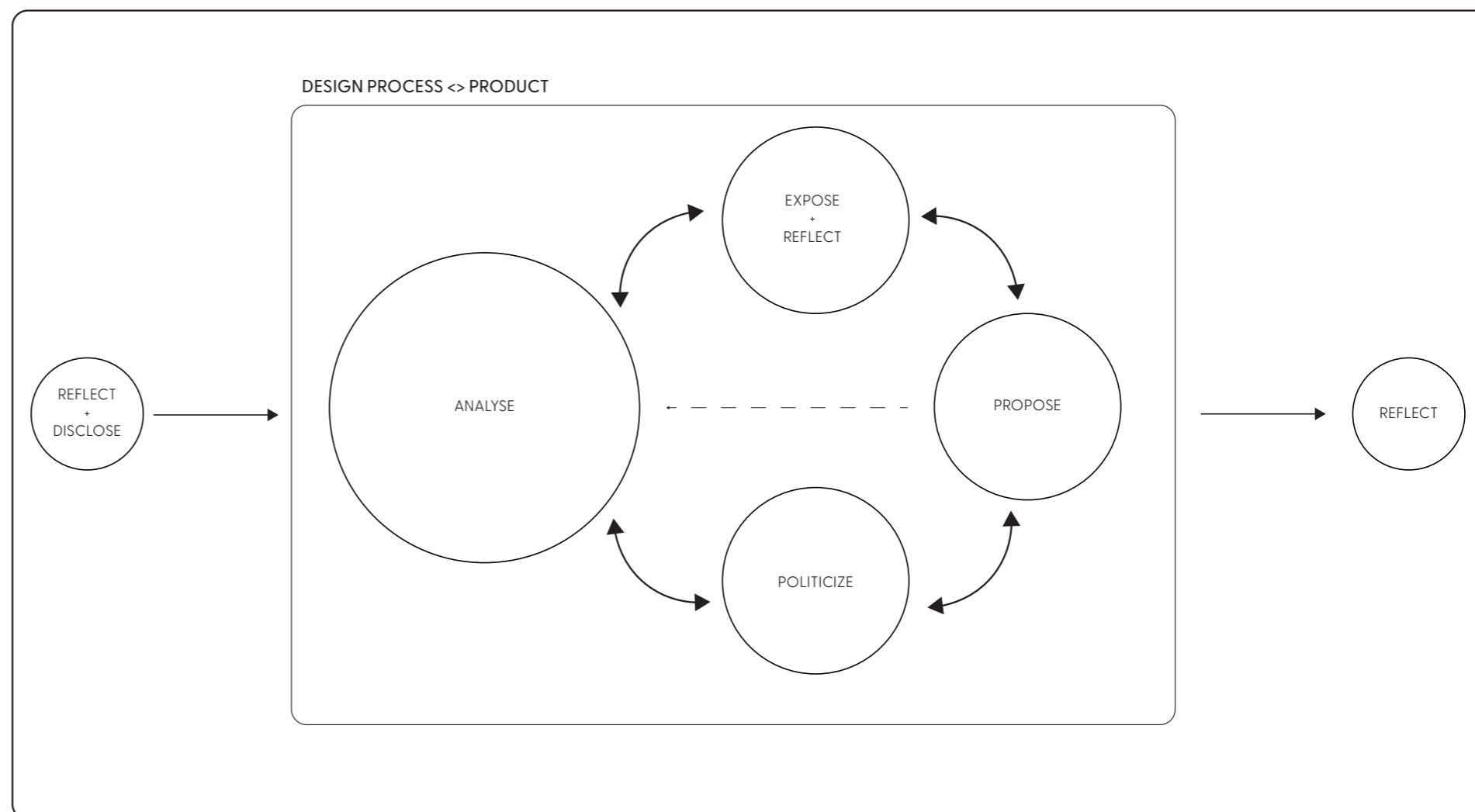
Secondly, the root-cause of existing problems will be analysed, by analysing the 'status quo' and critical remarks that have been made upon this.

Thirdly, the possible role of the designer and mapping in a broader context will be reflected upon. The role of urban design in present-day struggles will be exposed, identifying the roots of the problem in the current practice and a proposal for a new conceptualisation of the practice will be made.

Then, it is proposed to work with those affected by the present-day system and concrete actions will be explored. In the politicize phase, the political nature of the actions exposed and proposed, will be examined and it will be investigated how these proposals could be implemented.

Finally, the research will be reflected upon, to see if the initial reflection of the possible influence of personal values and the role of the urban designer in general, have influenced the process and project in the way that it was expected.

RESEARCH PROCESS <> PRODUCT



RESEARCH METHODS

In order to answer the research questions in the previous paragraph, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used, in an iterative manner.

Literary review:

The literary review will be conducted to explore the core definitions of this thesis, to examine the current status of democracies in general and in the dutch context. It will also be used to explore best practice examples and to examine the historical context of The Hague.

Interviews with experts:

In order to get a better understanding of the core concepts of the thesis, radical, pluralist and democracy, through a spatial lens, interviews with experts will be implemented. Experts are people that work with these concepts in their daily life. These experts can have a spatial background or a background in other fields, related to the previously mentioned concepts.

Spatial analysis:

Spatial analysis will be used to get an understanding of the morphological conditions of The Hague, throughout different relevant scales.

Socio-spatial analysis:

Socio-spatial analysis will be implemented to get a general understanding of the social-spatial condition of the city of The Hague, taking into account the limitations, due to the quantitative nature of this practice.

Experimental street interviews:

In order to get a more qualitative understanding of the city of The Hague, a sequence of experimental street interviews will be conducted, with the attempt of finding multiple options to interact with the citizens and visitors of the city of The Hague. The goal is to experiment with the way these interviews are approached, in order to reach out to different types of people.

Field trip:

The field trip will be implemented as a way to explore the spatial layout of The Hague, by sketching, walking, photography and interviewing.

Subjective mapping techniques:

Since this thesis has a spatial base, the field trip, street interviews, the literary review and the expert interviews, will be translated into a sequence of 'soft maps', showing the different experiences and worldviews through a spatial lens. Think of drift maps, Jan Rothuizen maps, layering techniques, rhizome drawings, palmbout drawings. This type of mapping is based on and inspired by the critiques of James Corner, in his paper Agency of Mapping (Corner, 1999).

Pattern language:

In order to translate the research findings into a spatial outcome, a pattern language of design methods and spatial interventions is made. The goal of the pattern language is to be able to translate the core concepts of the radical, pluralist democracy into a spatial design, not only in the context of this thesis, but to provide tools for other designers and researchers to implement these patterns in their own work.

Research by design:

In order to translate the pattern language to a spatial plan, research by design is used as a method to explore the different spatial configurations of spaces for a radical pluralist democracy.

Stakeholder analysis:

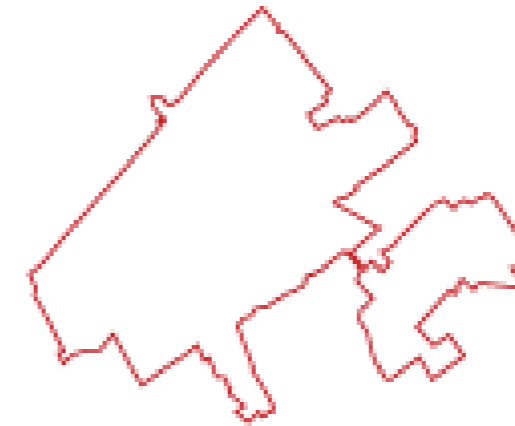
In order to politicize the pattern language and spatial plans, a stakeholder analysis is conducted, to get a better understanding of the social and political consequences of possible design proposals.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK



Global scale:

Limitations of present-day democracies will be explored on the global scale. Theories regarding democracy will be explored from researchers, internationally



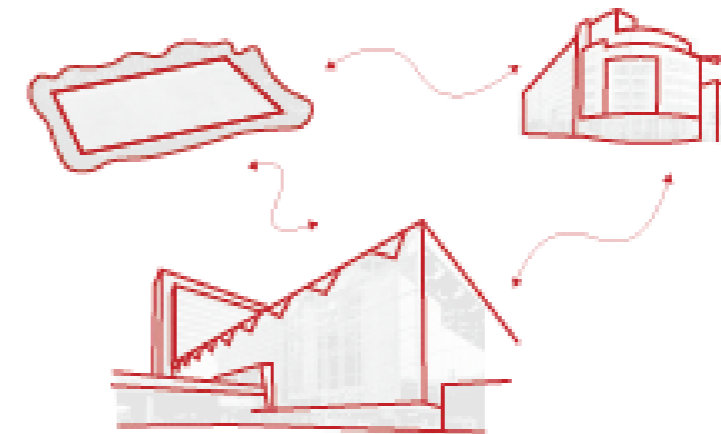
City-scale: The Hague

On the city scale, the social and spatial context will be researched, focussing on mapping and stakeholder analysis. The focus will be on The Hague, since this is the administrative capital of The Netherlands, housing the National Parliament, The International Court of Justice, embassies from countries all across the globe and is the centre of a lot of protests in The Netherlands. This city has a symbolic significance in relation to Dutch democracy and is therefore considered an interesting case.



National scale: The Netherlands

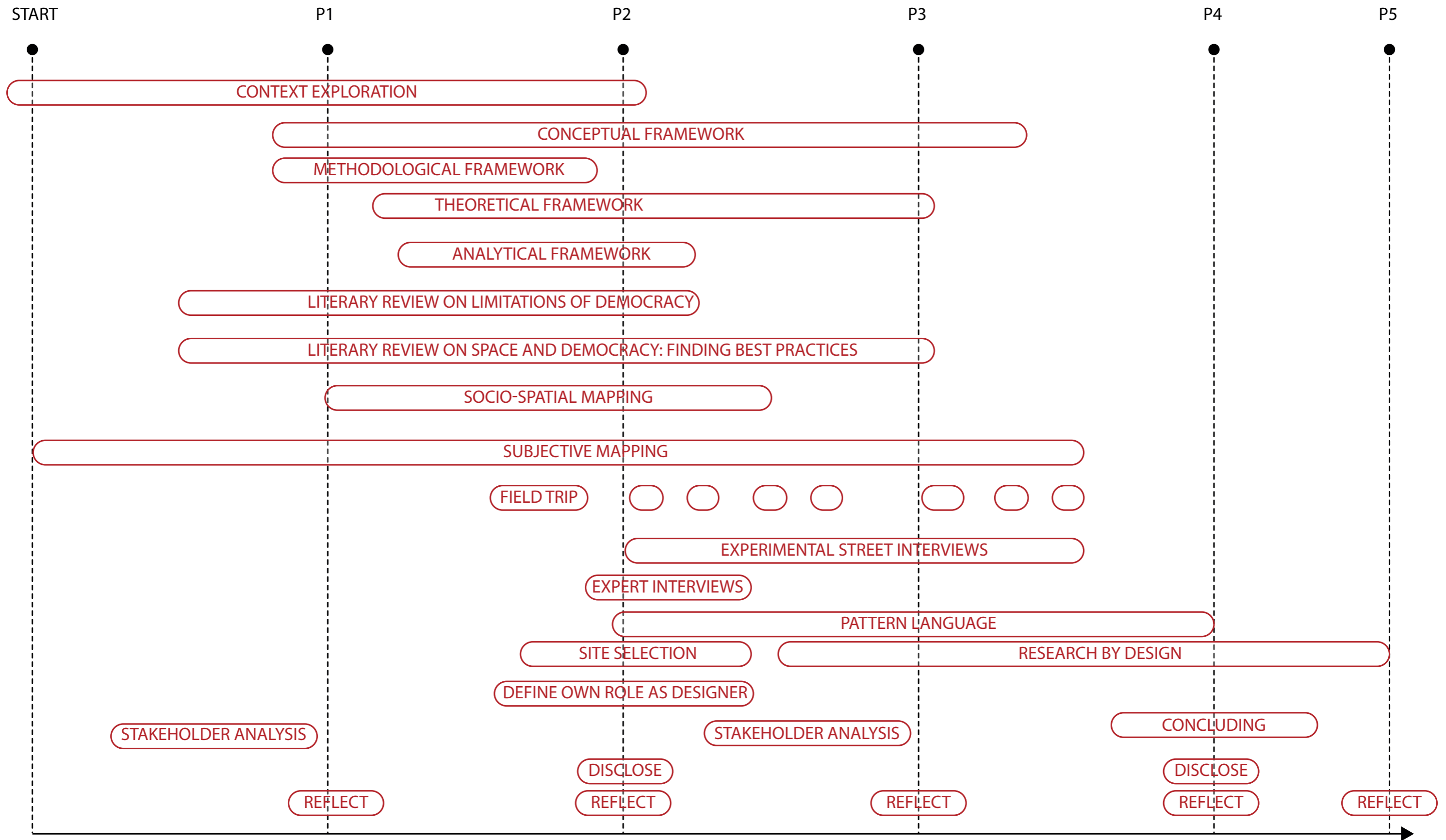
The focus will be on The Netherlands, because this is the area where the researcher is from, and lives and studies currently. Specific limitations of present-day democracy of The Netherlands will be examined on the national scale. Policies and visions of the national government, regarding deepening the democracy, will be examined. It has to be noted that this section will focus on the country of The Netherlands. Acknowledging that on most maps the 3 'special' municipalities are not drawn, namely the municipalities in the Caribbean Netherlands: Bonaire, Sint-Eustatius and Saba (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024b).



Neighbourhood scale:

The focus of the research will be on the area around The Hague Central Station and the route from the station to the Malieveld, the Headoffice of the Municipality/Library building and the Binnenhof area. This is a crowded area where a lot of people have to be, they live there, work in the government, or come to The Hague via the train station to protest, for example. The focus will be both on public space, on semi-public and on public buildings in the area. It will be the main focus for subjective mapping, field work, street interviews and research by design.

RESEARCH PLANNING



03.

REFLECT + DISCLOSE

REFLECT

Context

This graduation thesis is written as part of the second year of the Master of Science of Urbanism at The University of Technology Delft. This thesis takes one year and is guided by two mentors, Irene Luque Martín and Caroline Newton.

Motivation

Ever since I was a kid, political discussions were at the table in my family. While my parents align in their values, they have a different interpretation of them in a political sense. This created an inspiration to listen and think about these political problems from a young age and was one of the reasons why I started the master Urbanism. Urbanism, to me, is a research field where a lot of issues, also addressed in political debate, are present, the climate crisis and questions around diversity for example.

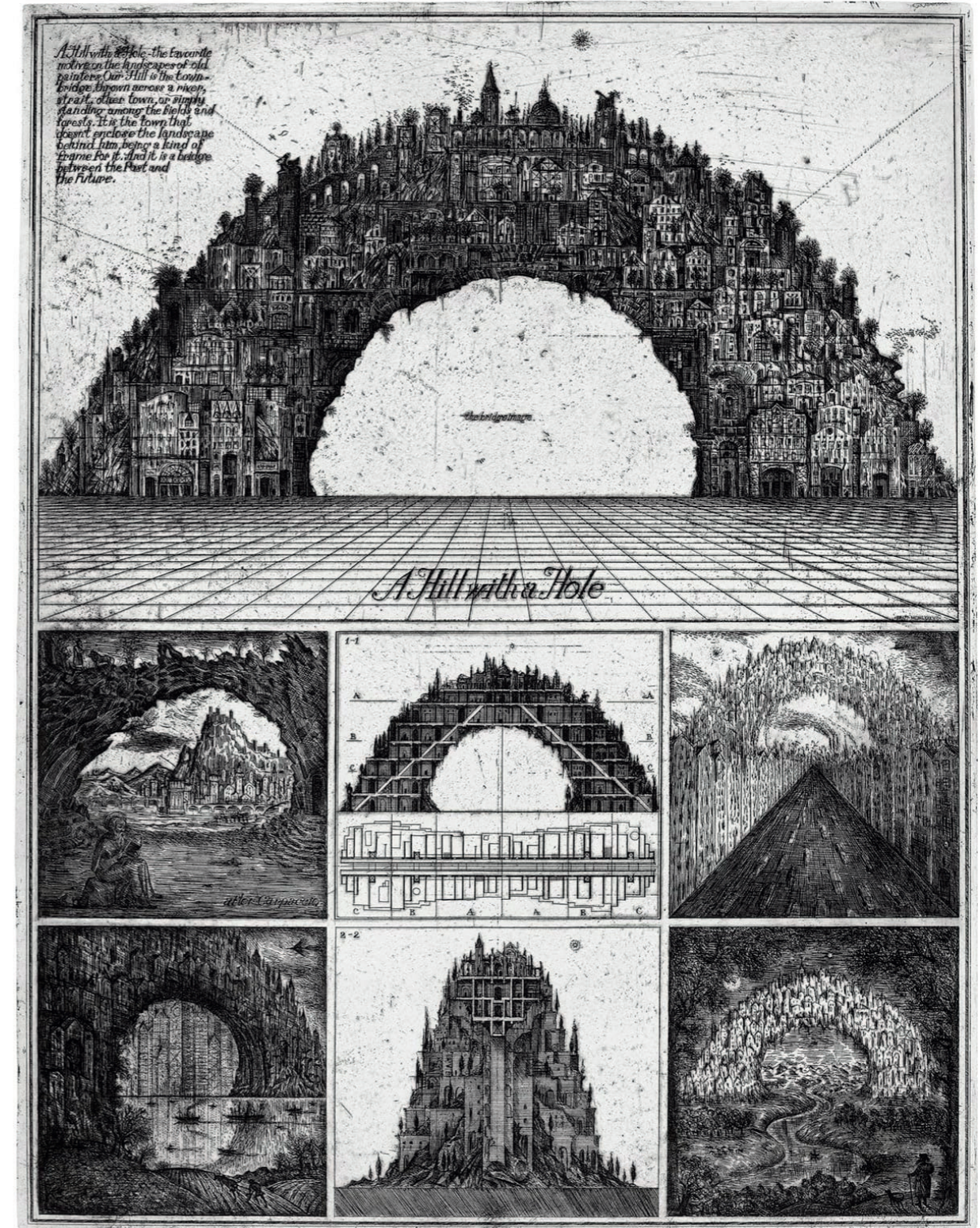
In the first year of my master's degree, my teacher showed me a book by Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin, both 'paper architects', explaining that in a time of Soviet utilitarianism Brodsky and Utkin were limited in expressing their ideas, only on paper. Their goal was to create a more emotional and humane form of architecture (Viva, 2022). One of the drawings contained a bridge, made out of a city. I interpreted this drawing as a conceptualisation of the importance of the city to bridge different people together.

In deciding on a topic for my master thesis, I started with a couple of fascinations. This fascination started in my first year, when I was seeing pictures of protests in The Hague and started participating in the climate justice protests that took place on the A12 highway. I also started noticing stickers on the streetlights representing all kinds of opinions and the upside-down flags of farmers along the highways. I thought back to the paper architects and wondered what urban design means. The highway was bridging all kinds of people, from bystanders, to activists, to policemen, but also all kinds of worldviews, a bit like in the drawing of Brodsky and Utkin. This made me want to explore the role of the urban designer in relation to democracy and protest.

Personal assumptions

In this thesis it is very important to acknowledge my own personal assumptions, since decisions on the research focus are shaped by my own interests and views. Before we delve into this section, I will have to explain that I am a Dutch woman, raised in Rotterdam, by highly educated parents, who themselves do not come from a highly educated background. I am white. I vote for political parties on the left and progressive side of the spectrum and am a member of the political party GroenLinks, but am not an active member.

The ideal radical pluralist democracy ideal aligns within my own assumption and experience of what would benefit our present-day democratic system. I also want to acknowledge that I think that due to my identity, as a Dutch person, I feel quite safe and protected by the democratic system as it is today. I feel the space to criticize this system. I consider this a privilege.



'Bridge' of Utkin and Brodsky : Hill with a Hole, 1987/90 . Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts Inc

Jobson, C. (2024, 28 augustus). Constrained by the Limitations of Soviet-Era Architecture, Brodsky & Utkin Imagined Fantastical Structures on Paper. Colossal. <https://www.thisiscosmos.com/2015/09/paper-architecture-brodsky-utkin/>

DISCLOSE

Research limitations

This section will address the research limitations of this thesis. The first limitation of this research is my own identity and experience. While I also consider it an opportunity, since it is one of the reasons to initiate this research, I think that in designing for a radical, pluralist democracy, it would be beneficial to have a much larger group of researchers, with a multitude of experiences and identities involved. I have to acknowledge that a certain level of bias will be limiting this research, this consideration also has to be applied to the literature and data that will be used for this thesis. Furthermore, the fact that I only speak Dutch and English will limit my ability to interview certain people in their mother tongue.

Also, I have little to no budget for the thesis. Additionally, the research will take a year, so there will be limited time to engage in a comprehensive iterative process. Also, due to ethical considerations, I will have a limited ability to engage with stakeholders. Another limitation of this research is the renovation of the buildings of the national government, 'Het Binnenhof', since this creates limited to no ability to see and interact with the space, in the way that it would if it was in function. However, there is now another building used for the same purpose.

In addition, the research is limited due to the fact that this is an urban design project, therefore there is not a lot of experience in engaging with certain types of knowledge, such as knowledge political and social science, for example.

04.

ANALYSE

ANALYSING DEMOCRACY

Defining democracy

As a first step in defining the word Democracy, we examine the etymological history of the word, since this reveals the essence of this concept;

The word Democracy comes originally from the Greek word *dēmokratia*, meaning ‘popular government’. The first part of the word is ‘Demos’, meaning public or people (Democracy | Etymology Of Democracy By Etymonline, n.d.). The second part, ‘Kratia’, means power or rule. Combining the two, the word Democracy refers to the following: ‘*Government by the people, system of government in which the sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole exercising power directly or by elected officials; a state so governed*’ (Democracy | Etymology Of Democracy By Etymonline, n.d.) Thus, democracy can refer both to people exercising sovereign power directly or indirectly. It reveals that democracy has something to do with ‘people’ (demos) and ‘power’ (kratia).

However, the previous definition does not discuss the fact that democracy as the word itself can refer to a construct or ideal (Munck, 2014), for a system that considers all human beings are free and equal (Mouffe, 1992). However, it does not reveal the definition of what power is referred to or what people are included (Ober, 2007). It does also not explain what a state governed by the people entails. These questions are at the base of an extensive debate.

Furthermore, in deepening the understanding of a possible definition of democracy, the question whether democracy is a construct, and not a quality or an objective itself, is fundamental. However, no matter if democracy is considered an object or a construct, addressing the ideal or the actual democracy, still the qualities that are related to the term are key in gaining a full understanding (Munck, 2016) (Morlino, 2004). The question on what these qualities are and how these can be translated to an actual system, are again part of an extensive debate, resulting in all kinds of different proposals for models to structure and consider democracy (Munck, 2016).

In the next paragraph, what the base of democracy is and what qualities relate to this basic understanding, will be put forward. For this section, we conclude the generally accepted conclusion is that freedom and equality form the basis of what qualities are essential in a democracy (Morlino, 2007) (Munck, 2016).

In this thesis, it will be concluded that democracy is a construct. It is the idea that power is in the hands of the people and that all people are free and equal in such a system. In order to actualise democracy into a governmental system that can be implemented, certain qualities are defined. In this definition, it is accepted that the core qualities of a democracy are freedom and equality. It is acknowledged that the attempt to define what democracy is, examining what other qualities are part of democracy, is crucial. However it should also be acknowledged that in what way these qualities, in procedure, content and result, should be translated into action is inherently a political question and will therefore be considered open-ended to a certain level, taking into account the paradoxes related to the ideal democracy (Munck, 2016). In order to deepen the understanding of democracy, in the next chapter it will be examined in what way ‘the people’ and ‘the power’ have been interpreted and defined. The qualities of these different systems will be summarized and limitations related to these qualities will be explored.

‘Demos’: Public or People

DEMO-CRACY

‘Kratia’, means power or rule.

Defining power

In order to explain different interpretations of power in democracies, first a general understanding on the definition of power is necessary. Therefore, in this research the definition of The Participation, Power and Social Change team of the University of Sussex is accepted. The team has concluded that there are many ways to define power, concluding that the term cannot be described as one fixed term, but has to be seen as a spectrum, containing certain factors.

Therefore, their proposal is to differentiate between ‘power over’, ‘power to’, ‘power within’ and ‘power with’ (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011):

Power over: *‘Refers to the ability of relatively powerful actors’ action to affect the actions and thoughts of the relatively powerless’* (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011).

Power to: *‘Refers to the capacity to act – to exercise agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice’* (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011).

Power within: *‘Refers to gaining the sense of self-identity, confidence and awareness that is a precondition for action’* (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011).

Power with: *‘Refers to the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building’* (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011).

In the next section, it will be explored in what way this spectrum has been applied and relates to certain qualities of democratic systems.

DEMOCRACY IN THE PRESENT-DAY

Limitations of present day democracy

Present-day democracy: The question on 'demos'

In determining what a democracy is, it was concluded that it is a form of government, structured around the ideal that the power is in the people's hands and that all people in such a system are considered free and equal. The previous section revealed that the term 'power', can be considered a spectrum of certain factors. This section will examine in what way power is structured in democracies, by exploring what qualities are linked to the concept of 'power', according to researchers. Many have attempted to classify political systems, in order to determine if this ideal of having a political system where the power is in the hands of the people is actualised, and if this actualisation results into a 'good democracy'.

In order to classify political systems, researchers determine what qualities have to be present in order for a governmental system to be considered a democracy. This segment will examine what those qualities are, focusing on the status-quo of today's governmental systems.

As a first step in examining what qualities are present in democracies, the conclusion of Bastian Herre on how democracies are measured, is explored. He concludes the following: 'We see that the approaches share a basic principle of democracy: a democracy is an electoral political system in which citizens get to participate in free and fair elections. The approaches also mostly agree that democracies are liberal political systems, in which citizens have additional civil rights and are protected from the state by constraining it.' (Herre, 2022b)

'Some approaches stop there, and stick to these narrower conceptions of democracy. Others characterize democracy in broader terms, and also see it as a participatory and deliberative (citizens engage in elections, civil society, and public discourse) as well as an effective (governments can act on citizens' behalf) political system.' (Herre, 2022b). Two of the systems he examined are the V-Dem's Electoral Democracy index and the Regimes of the World classification:

V-Dem's Electoral Democracy Index, is examined. This index states that there can be no democracy without elections, their focus is on electoral democracies. Their focus is also on limiting the analysis, by focusing on democracy as a system that is bounded by territorial borders. The definition they propose for an electoral democracy, is the following: 'Political system in which political leaders are elected under comprehensive voting rights in free and fair elections, and freedoms of association and expression are guaranteed.' (Herre, 2022c). They explain these qualities of democracy as follows' (Herre, 2022c):

- Elected political leaders: 'Broad elections choose the chief executive and legislature' (Herre, 2022c)
- Comprehensive voting rights: 'All adult citizens have the legal right to vote in national elections' (Herre, 2022c)
- Free and fair elections: 'No election violence, government intimidation, fraud, large irregularities, and vote buying' (Herre, 2022c)
- Freedom of association: 'Parties and civil society organizations can form and operate freely' (Herre, 2022c)
- Freedom of expression: 'People can voice their views and the media can present different political perspectives' (Herre, 2022c)

The Regimes of the World (RoW) classification, differentiates their classification, in the electoral and the liberal democracy, among others. They frame the research, by focusing on the boundaries of nation states (Herre, 2021). They define these two as follows:

'In electoral democracies, citizens have the right to participate in meaningful, free and fair, multi-party elections. Liberal democracies go further: citizens have individual and minority rights, equality before the law, and the actions of the executive are constrained by the legislature and the courts.' (Herre, 2022a)

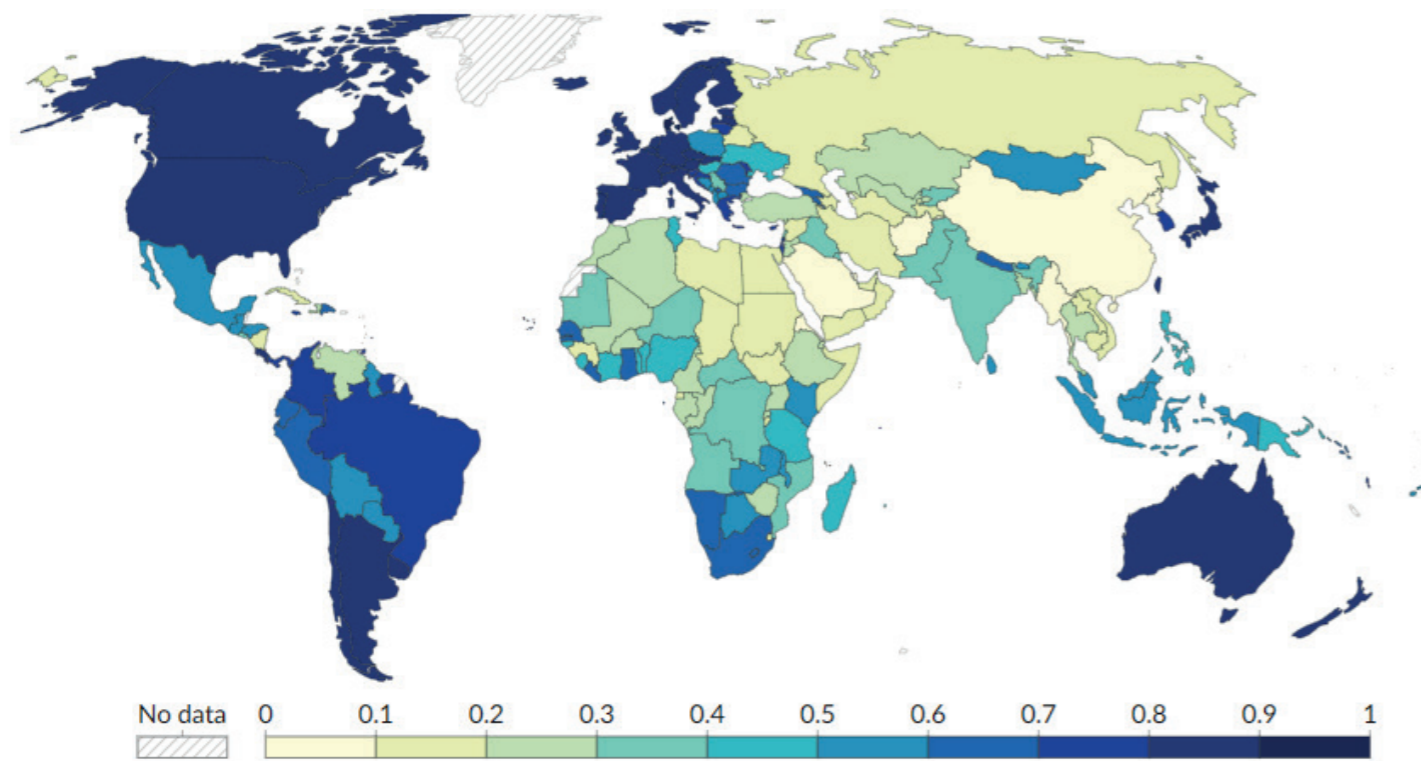
RoW differentiates regimes in the following categories: closed autocracies, electoral autocracies, electoral democracies, and liberal democracies. Closed autocracies are the least democratic according to them, liberal democracy is the most democratic (Herre, 2021).

- Closed autocracy: 'Citizens do not have the right to choose either the chief executive of the government or the legislature through multi-party elections' (Herre, 2021)
- Electoral autocracy: 'Citizens have the right to choose the chief executive and the legislature through multi-party elections; but they lack some freedoms, such as the freedoms of association or expression that make the elections meaningful, free, and fair' (Herre, 2021)
- Electoral democracy: 'Citizens have the right to choose the chief executive and the legislature in meaningful, free and fair, and multi-party elections' (Herre, 2021)
- Liberal democracy: 'Electoral democracy and citizens enjoy individual and minority rights, are equal before the law, and the actions of the executive are constrained by the legislative and the courts' (Herre, 2021)

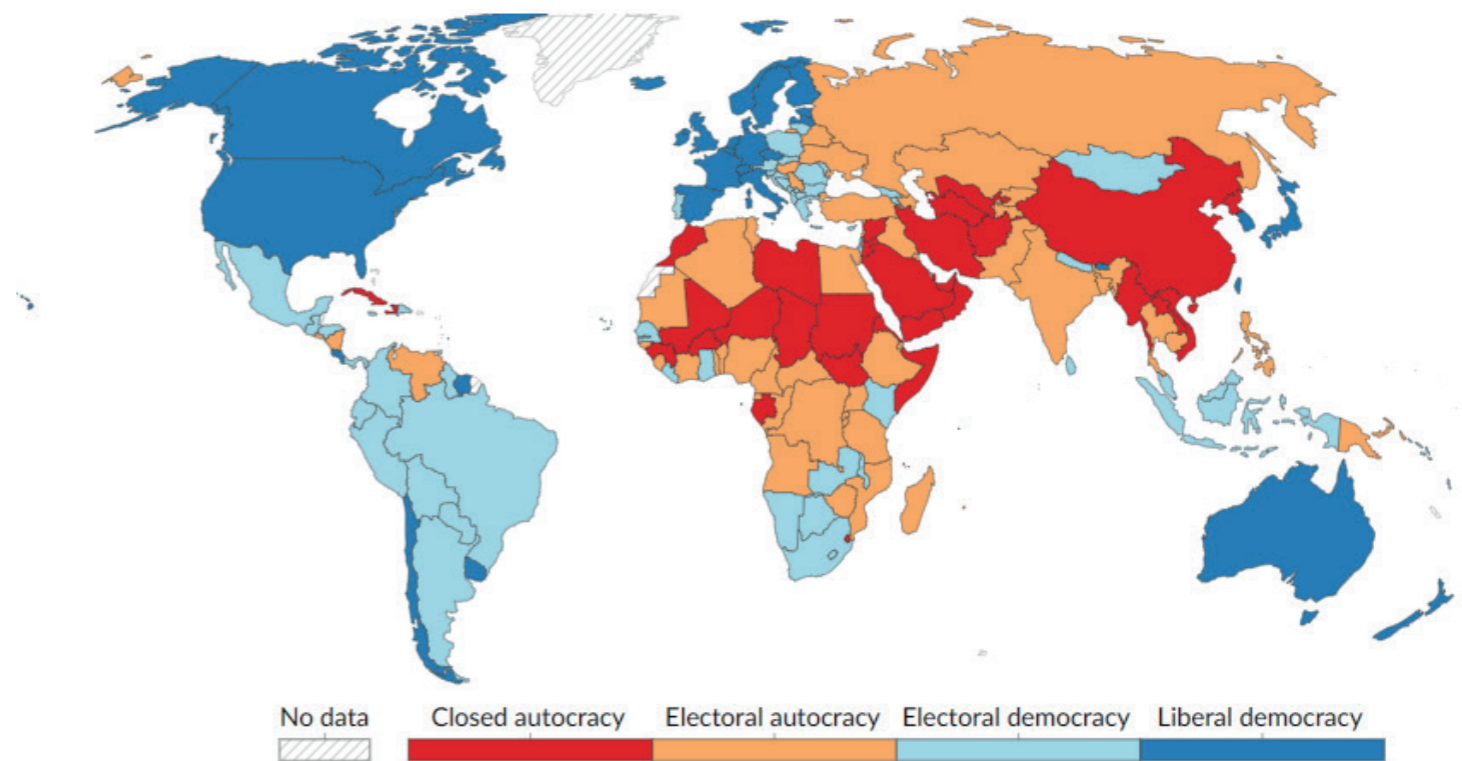
Next, Leonardo Morlino's definition of a good democracy is put forward. He considers democracy: 'A stable institutional structure that realizes the liberty and equality of citizens through the legitimate and correct functioning of its institutions and mechanisms'. Again, he views democracies as systems of a country (Morlino, 2004). In order to deepen this understanding, he describes what a 'good' democracy is, by differentiating into main qualities:

- Quality in terms of result: 'A good democracy is thus first and foremost a broadly legitimated regime that completely satisfies its citizens' (Morlino, 2004)
- Quality in terms of content: 'A good democracy is one in which the citizens, associations and communities of which it is composed enjoy at least a moderate level of liberty and equality' (Morlino, 2004)
- Quality in terms of procedure: 'A good democracy, there are the citizens themselves who have the power to check and evaluate whether the government pursues the objectives of liberty and equality according to the rule of law. They monitor the efficiency of the application of the laws in force, the efficacy of the decisions made by government, and the political responsibility and accountability of elected officials in relation to the demands expressed by civil society' (Morlino, 2004)

In conclusion, present-day democracies are confined by territorial borders. The status quo of present day democracies is the understanding that they are mostly indirect, thus they are electoral or representative democracies. Furthermore, in the actualisation of the democratic idea, into a form of government, the general conception on what a good democracy is, is that a good democracy oftentimes is conceived as one that actualises not only the democratic ideal by qualities, shaped by the liberal ideal. Thus, democracy as an ideal itself is influenced by other ideals, in its actualisation.



Electoral democracy index, 2023. Based on the expert estimates and index by V-Dem. It captures to which extent political leaders are elected under comprehensive voting rights in free and fair elections, and freedoms of association and expression are guaranteed. It ranges from 0 to 1 (most democratic).



Regimes of the World index, 2023: Based on the classification by Lührmann et al. (2018) and the estimates by V-Dem's experts. Democracy not as a spectrum, but determined over 4 categories.

05.

EXPOSE

LIMITATIONS OF DEMOCRACY IN THE PRESENT-DAY

Limitations of present day democracy

Present-day democracy: The question on 'demos'

In the previous section it was concluded that present-day democracies are generally characterized by territorial borders, having mostly an indirect governmental system, where elections are an important measure to give the power to the people. The present-day democracies are oftentimes influenced by the liberal ideal. This next section will explore the limitations regarding these actualisations of the democratic idea. Later on, the implication of this actualisation in the context of urban design will be examined.

General introduction on inclusion and democracy

Ever since the democratic governmental system was introduced in ancient Greece, democracies have had an exclusive nature. The amount of people included in taking part in public life and decision making processes through voting in ancient Athens, was limited. A definition that could be used for the ancient democracy reads as follows: 'The capacity of a public, consisting of all native adult males, to accomplish things of value in the public realm' (Ober, 2007). Through this definition, it becomes clear that slaves, non-native people and women were not included in the 'demos', at least not directly. Throughout history, this exclusive nature of democracies has been criticized, resulting in the conclusion that if in democracies all people should be free and equal, more people should be included, in an attempt to further 'democratize' existing democracies (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

Territorial borders

In this section we will examine the consequences of territorial borders for governing present day democracies. It has to be acknowledged that present-day governments, both democratic and non-democratic, are shaped by the idea of territorial sovereignty and the construct of the nation-state (Jenlink, 2007). If we ask the question on who is and who is not part of a governmental system, and the question on whether the democratic ideal of power for all, we have to be aware that in the present day, nation-states shape our understanding of inclusion and exclusion.

Considering the fact that nation-states are confined by the idea of the 'border', it can be concluded that this confinement resulted in the 'institutionalization of the state of exception' (Salter, 2008). A clear result of the institutionalization of the state of exception, is the assignment of passports and visas (Salter, 2008). The opportunity to be included in democracy is not solely determined by your place of inhabitants (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). This results in the question of 'whether there is a meaningful future for the democracy of the states that does not address democracy beyond the states' (Jenlink, 2007). Concluding that in present day democracies, bounded by territorial borders, it is difficult to actualise the idea that all people should be free and equal, due to the institutionalization of exception.

This exclusive nature of the state is critiqued as being based on fear, rather than reason and deliberation (Salter, 2008). Furthermore, it has been concluded that the territorial border does not at all provide rights for all, rather it renounces the rights of all other citizens, not part of said state.

Furthermore, in present-day democracies certain interests and opinions do not only affect the situation within the territorial borders of the nation states. Issues addressed in present-day democracies can be transnational, crime and the management of cross-border waterbodies for instance, extraterritorial, migration and climate change for example, and nonterritorial, issues around identity (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

In conclusion, if the ideal of democracy is that all people have power in the governmental system, the present-day nature of exclusion through the construct of territorial borders and the nation-state, has to be criticized.

Electoral democracy

Secondly, the limitations of electoral democracy will be investigated. The core question in this section is the question if democratic elections fairly distribute the equal change for each citizen to have their voice heard, called the issue of *isegoria* (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). In short: does representation create a meaningful presence of all?

The general understanding of electoral systems is that they revolve around a principal-agent relationship, in which territorial constituencies (principals) elect representatives (agents) to represent their interests and opinions (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). This means that the legitimate power is separated from those who exercise it. Responsiveness of representatives and political equality is ensured through universal suffrage.

The attention of this section should therefore explore the capacity of representatives to accurately grasp the interests and opinions of the principles and if these representatives accurately cover all the different principles, that are part of the territorial constituency. In exploring these two questions, the fact that in present-day democracies all issues are kept within the territorial borders of democracies, has to be considered, as explained in the previous section on territorial democracy. If the democratic ideal is to include all affected by decisions, we have to conclude that a democracy bounded by territorial borders cannot comply with this ideal (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

In determining up to what capacity present-day electoral democracies manage to reach the goal to equally and fairly represent all, it is important to look into data that investigated the question of if people feel like they are represented in their own democratic system. Recent research on 24 different countries in the world has concluded the following on representation: A median of just over four-in-ten say there is no political party in their country that represents their views, and very few feel elected officials care what people like them think (Wike et al., 2024).

It is concluded that in present-day democracies, the goal to accurately represent all voices, generally is not yet complied. Therefore, we bring the understanding of the idea that 'Democracy is about more than elections' to the table (Munck, 2014).

This quote from research on the concept of representation in democracy, is important to consider: 'The opposite of representation is not participation. The opposite of representation is exclusion. And the opposite of participation is abstention.... Representation is not an unfortunate compromise between an ideal of direct democracy and messy modern realities. Representation is crucial in constituting democratic practices.' (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

In short: present-day electoral democracies generally do not fully actualise the democratic ideal, through means of representation. Therefore, other means of power, apart from representation, should be included in order for a system to be democratic. This is an important conclusion in relation to urban design practice.

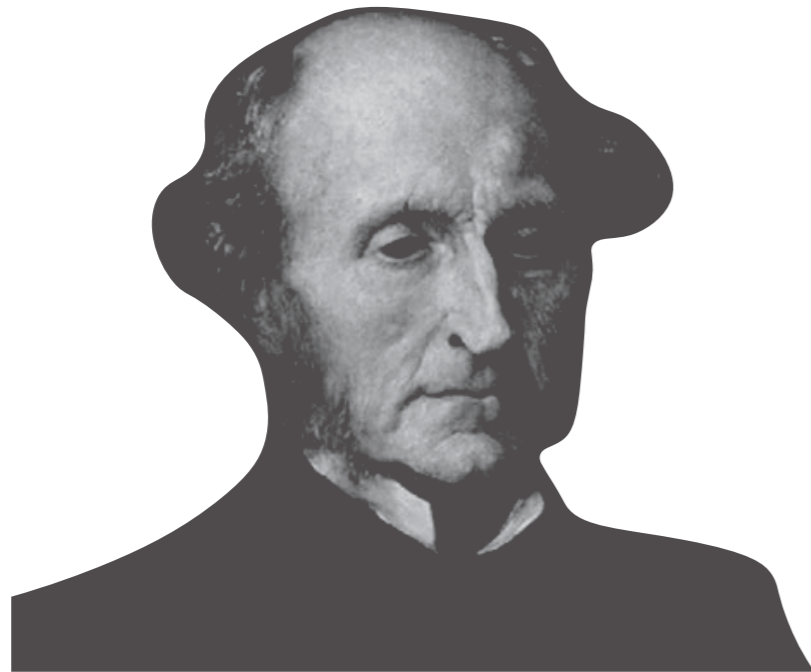


Alfredo Jaar: One Million German Passports - Announcements - e-flux. (n.d.). <https://www.e-flux.com/announcements/53130/alfredo-jaar-one-million-german-passports/>

Alfredo Jaar - One Million German Passports behind a Security Wall: 'The installation questions citizenship and identity, in the face of an increasing refugee crisis due to climate change and ongoing conflicts as well as the unequal treatment of refugees depending on their origin.' Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, 2023.

*'The less others interfere in our lives,
the freer we are. The less politics,
the more freedom'*

*'All of us have critical
remarks on that ideal!'*



John Stuart Mill



Jürgen Habermas



Hannah Arendt



Chantal Mouffe

Liberal democracy

Thirdly, the general conceptions of a liberal democracy will be explored. In the previous chapter it became clear that liberal democracies are considered democracies that have free, fair and meaningful elections and on top of that, in liberal democracies everyone is viewed as equal, protecting individuals, minorities especially, by legislative and courts, from the executive power (Herre, 2022a). However, this definition does not cover certain fundamental beliefs of the system. Namely, rationalist belief in the availability of a universal consensus and the tendency of the liberal system to have an individualist and rationalist approach (Mouffe, 2007). The liberal ideal, as described by John Stuart Mill, reveals the individualist nature of this ideal: *'The less others interfere in our lives, the freer we are. The less politics, the more freedom'* (Consoli & Tinnevelt, 2011).

His definition argues that freedom is a right for a private person. Furthermore, the reasoning in liberalism on the difficulties to address the pluralist nature of society and on the goal to include all, is explained by empirical limitations. Also, this ideal implies that if all these worldviews do become empirically understood, they will together form a harmonious ensemble. This understanding reveals the rationalist nature of the liberal ideal (Mouffe, 2007).

The present-day liberal ideal is broadly criticized. In order to keep this section concise, only a few critiques will be examined, namely the critical remarks of Hanna Arendt, Jürgen Habermas, Chantal Mouffe and Sheldon Wolin.

Hanna Arendt, critiques the individualist nature of the liberal ideal. Instead, she considers freedom in the following manner: *'Freedom is not owned by the private individual, but is enjoyed thanks to the political community where legal safeguards apply. Freedom lies in the experience of public actions, in a political community freed from dominance'*. (Consoli & Tinnevelt, 2011, p. 9). She argues that individual sovereignty could result in an individual free will that rejects others. She also explains that since no one is independent of their fellow citizens, the idea of self-provision and autonomy is conflicting with the pluralist nature of democracy (Consoli & Tinnevelt, 2011).

Sheldon Wolin critiques that liberal focus on the rights of the individual, has led to the devaluation of civic activity (Mouffe, 1992). The belief is that social responsibility limits individual freedom.

Jürgen Habermas and Chantal Mouffe both conclude that the liberal democracy is in crisis, but present different solutions. Both concluded that democratic quality and inclusion should be part of all spheres of social life and public institutions (Kapoor, 2002). They consider the problems of nationalism, religious resurgence, and popular protest, the product of the exclusive nature of present-day democracies (Kapoor, 2002).

In order to reach legitimacy and justice, that present-day liberal democracies not fully offer according to him, Jürgen Habermas proposes a 'deliberative democracy', this can be summarized as follows: *'[the deliberative democracy] relies on reasoned and inclusive public deliberation that is geared to reaching consensual decisions'* (Kapoor, 2002, p. 460).

Chantal Mouffe critiques the rationalist and individualist nature of the liberal democracy. She argues that the tendency of rational liberalism to consider 'the social', as a logical base-condition, without acknowledging the fact that identity implies the formation of difference and the fact that this difference is often the base of certain hierarchical social orders, is problematic, since it does not accurately reflect reality (Mouffe, 2016).

She also explains that this rationalist understanding limits the opportunity to see the political dimension of social order, which inherently has some sort of hegemonic nature (Mouffe, 2007).

Furthermore, Mouffe states that the neoliberal understanding of the idea that all political questions can be solved, like a technical question, as long as certain experts are capable of understanding and overcoming them, denies the conceptualisation of political questions that sees them as making a choice between conflicting interests (Mouffe, 2007). She critiques Habermas on still considering the opportunity for consensus and rationality and notes his lack of attention to the hegemonic nature in social order (Kapoor, 2002).

Also, Mouffe states that in criticizing the liberal ideal, the capitalist ideal also has to be acknowledged as a dominant part of our present-day democratic system. The focus of justice is often on economic inequality. However, the dominant idea is that the capitalist system will provide harmonious social order eventually (Mouffe, 2007).

In conclusion, there are limitations of the liberal ideal. It does not acknowledge the pluralist nature of democracy, resulting in a lack of attention for the hegemony in present-day social order and to provide a more equal system. Furthermore, the attention to the freedom of the individual, has devalued community and civic activity. This conclusion will later on be related to the effect of liberalism on urban design.

DEEPENING DEMOCRACY: RADICAL PLURALIST DEMOCRACY

In the previous chapter, limitations of the present-day democracies, with territorial borders, the electoral and liberal ideal, were examined. It has been concluded that present-day democracies do not fully connect with the ideal of democracy, namely the ideal to have a governmental system where the people have the power. These limitations are recognized by scholars like Jürgen Habermas and Chantal Mouffe, among others. Both theorists propose to deepen and extend the present-day democratic system, by extending the democratic quality of inclusiveness to social life and public institutions (Kapoor, 2002). The next section will explore their proposals.

Jürgen Habermas proposes a focus on communicative action and rational discourse in the public sphere in deepening or radicalising democracy (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024). Mouffe critiques his stand in the opportunity to seek a rational consensus. She considers every act of closure in decision-making, limiting in creating an inclusive democracy: *'antagonism is constitutive and irreducible'* (Kapoor, 2002, p. 465).

Therefore, she proposes not only the model of the radical democracy, where these ideals are practiced in social life, she adds the notion of agonistic pluralism to the conceptualisation of the radical democracy. She stresses the importance of viewing social order not as a factual base condition of society, but sees the plural nature of the social, with diverse values and identities crucial to 'symbolic ordering of social relation' (Kapoor, 2002, p. 465). Due to hegemony in every kind of social order, she says, a full, finite consensus should not be the focus in democratic decision making. This does not align with the democratic ideal, where everyone is considered free and equal (Kapoor, 2002). Mouffe considers pluralist not as a 'fact' of democracy, but as the base condition, she therefore concludes that difference cannot be 'solved' (Mouffe, 2000).

In coming to a closer understanding of what pluralism entails for Mouffe, she explains that in the attempt to grasp the essence of the term, the liberal tendency to come up with a rational definition can be criticized, due to its lack of accurately representing pluralism; it is more than a few checkboxes (Mouffe, 1992). It should address identity related to race, class, ethnicity and sexuality, but has to be acknowledged that this definition is not about these separately, but about the combination and complexity of all of the layers of identity in relation to others. She therefore critiques the act of identification in the understanding of pluralism and considers it 'the discursively constructed ensemble of social relations.' (Mouffe, 1992, p.3)

In order to broaden the understanding of what a radical democracy entails, we explore John Dewey's model. He considers radical democracy, a version of democracy where citizens have an active role (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024). This is a conceptualisation of democracy that Mouffe also adheres to: *'A radical, democratic citizen must be an active citizen, somebody who acts as a citizen, who conceives of herself as a participant in a collective undertaking. The citizen, as Sheldon Wolin rightly emphasizes, requires that we think from a perspective of commonality: this is incompatible with an individualistic framework.'* (Mouffe, 1992, p. 7)

Dewey thinks that the active role of citizenship means that citizens actively play a role in shaping their communities, through open communication and collaboration (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024). His model considers democracy as forever evolving. He demands the attention of democracy on discussion, diversity and dynamism. These discussions should be through open communication and the diverse perspectives of society should be present. He also states the importance of not considering solutions or policies finite (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024). In this conception of the radical democracy we conclude however that Mouffe's argumentation on the hegemony in social order, that she poses as critique against Habermas' deliberative democracy model, should again be considered.

In conclusion, the radical pluralist ideal considers democracy as a daily practice in all sorts of social spheres and public institutions. Active citizenship is at the core of the democratic system. There is a focus on commonality, rather than on the individual. In the radical pluralist democracy, addressing pluralism is not considered as a simple act of identification, but as 'the discursively constructed ensemble of social relations. (Mouffe, 1992, p.3)'

In continuing this research, Mouffe's conceptualisation of the radical pluralist democracy will be accepted. However, in defining opportunities for spatialising the radical democracy, the opportunities for engaging the social sphere in order to reach the ideal of the radical democracy, as explained by Habermas and Dewey, will be taken into account, while being critical on the possible lack of attention for the pluralist nature of social order and the possible hegemonies, also present in space. This next section will explore examples of scholars, with a spatial design focus, that have researched the opportunity to strengthen democracy through the process and act of design.

'A radical, democratic citizen must be an active citizen, somebody who acts as a citizen, who conceives of herself as a participant in a collective undertaking. The citizen, as Sheldon Wolin rightly emphasizes, requires that we think from a perspective of commonality: this is incompatible with an individualistic framework.'

- Chantal Mouffe

PARADOXES OF DEMOCRACY

Before continuing this thesis a few paradoxes of democracy, the electoral democracy and the western democracy have to be acknowledged. It also has to be acknowledged that other paradoxes can be added onto this list.

First, we address the paradox of democracy itself. This is the risk in democracy, that it could be democratically concluded that people can no longer be equal or free. Samuel Rachlin therefore concludes on this paradox: *'Democracy can be used to abolish democracy.'* (Rachlin, 2020). Furthermore, we have to address the conclusion that representative democracy inherently puts citizens into a passive role (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

Michael Walzer explains the paradox of active citizenship. He states that in only thinking about creating a more active role for citizens, we would neglect thinking about the conclusion that in present-day democracies the state is not fully in the hands of the citizens. Furthermore, he argues, citizenship is not the only role that members of a democratic state have. They also are part of other means of association, both formal, like families e.g., and informal, companies and churches for example. These different types of associations also depend on the state (Mouffe, 1992, p. 104).

Also, it has been acknowledged that western democracies have a tendency of hegemony, for example by language, meaning that in order to participate in the democracy, one has to express herself in another tongue than their native one. Therefore, it can be concluded that western democracies struggle to actualise the democratic ideal, since they do not comply to the pluralistic nature of society, in their systems (Kapoor, 2002).

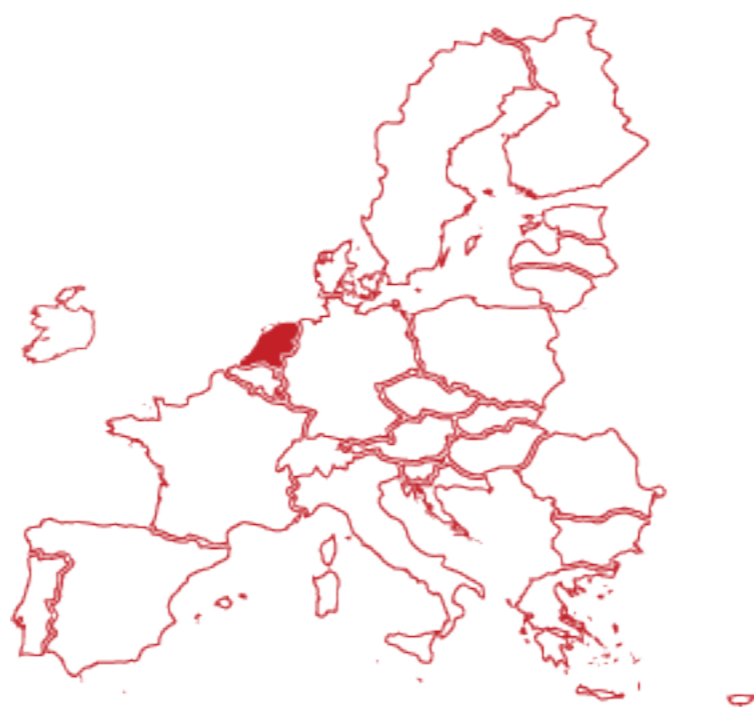
In designing for democracy, these paradoxes should be acknowledged and carefully considered. It should also be noted that there are more paradoxes to democracy, that might be added later on in the research.

STATUS-QUO AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Status-quo of the democratic system of The Netherlands: Scales of voting

This section will briefly explain the Dutch voting system. If you are 18 years or older, you are allowed to vote in The Netherlands.

Also, this section will explain who is allowed to vote in which election and it will roughly explain the responsibilities of each 'scale'.



International scale: European Union

All people living in The Netherlands, who have an EU-passport, can vote for the EU elections.

The policy of the EU is focused on a broad range of issues, among which are: agriculture, fisheries, free trade among EU member states, trade policy, development policy, environment, natural disaster relief. (Over Stemmen en het Kiesrecht - ProDemos, z.d.)

Furthermore, the EU has a range of committees, focusing on EU-wide topics. (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024c)



National scale: The Netherlands

Only people with Dutch citizenship can vote for the National Elections: De Tweede Kamer verkiezingen or House of Representatives. (Over Stemmen en het Kiesrecht - ProDemos, z.d.)

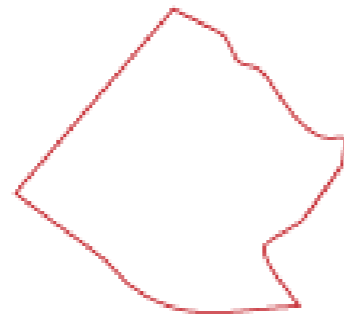
The House of Representatives has two main responsibilities: They have to control the government and make laws in collaboration with the government. The House consists of 150 representatives, from all kinds of parties. (Wat Doet de Tweede Kamer?, 2023)



Provincial scale: South-Holland

Only people with Dutch citizenship can vote for the Provincial Elections: De Provinciale Staten verkiezingen. The parties, elected for the Provincial States, can vote for De Eerste Kamer or Senate. (Over Stemmen en het Kiesrecht - ProDemos, z.d.).

Provinces control Water Authorities and Municipalities. The focus of their job is on infrastructure projects, building roads for example, and managing nature reserves. They make structural visions for these purposes. (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2024b)



Water Authority scale: Delfland

Three groups can vote within their Water Authority Territory:

First, People who are living in the Netherlands legally, that have been residing in the Dutch Water authority territory, Non-EU, for 5 years or more can vote. Second, all people with EU citizenship can vote immediately. Third, all Dutch citizens can vote. (Over Stemmen en het Kiesrecht - ProDemos, z.d.)

Water boards ensure the availability of clean, enough and sufficient water. They also manage water-related infrastructure, such as dykes and waterways. (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2024b)



Municipality scale: The Hague

Three groups can vote within their own municipality: First, People who are living in the Netherlands legally, that have been residing in the Dutch Water authority territory, Non-EU, for 5 years or more can vote. Second, all people with EU citizenship can vote immediately. Third, all Dutch citizens can vote. (Over Stemmen en het Kiesrecht - ProDemos, z.d.)

Municipalities are in charge of matters that directly affect citizens. For example, they give subsidies to swimming pools and libraries. They also manage roads and cycle paths. They in addition draw up zoning plans and spatial visions. (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2024a)

STATUS-QUO AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF THE NETHERLANDS

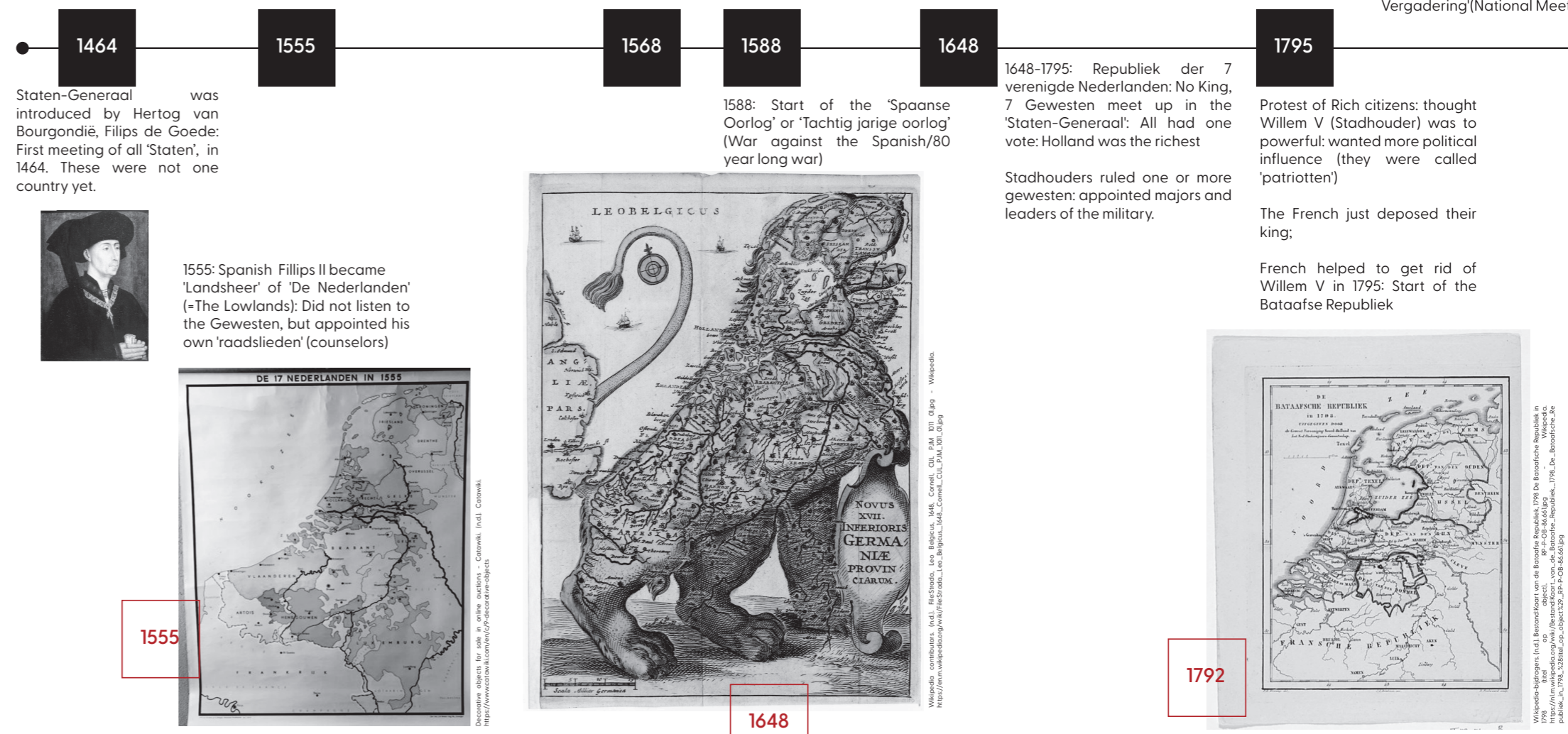
This section will introduce the case for this research, namely the city of The Hague, the administrative capital of The Netherlands. First, the history, status-quo of the Dutch democracy will be examined, taking into account the limitations of the present-day democracies. Finally, it will be explained why this research will focus on the context of The Hague.

Status-quo and limitations of the democratic system of The Netherlands

History of the Dutch democracy

The Dutch democracy did not come to be in one specific moment, but was rather a result of a sequence of events, as can be seen in the chart underneath. The most important events in the development of the democratic system of the Netherlands, can be seen in the timeline.

Derde Kamer. (2023, 30 maart). Geschiedenis van de democratie - De Derde Kamer. De Derde Kamer. <https://derdekamer.nl/meer-over-de-politiek/geschiedenis-van-de-democratie/>



1568: Revolt against the Spanish: 7 of the Gewesten appointed Willem van Oranje as their leader. These 7 gewesten together shaped a Republic without landsheer

1726-1750



Kaart van de Republiek der Zeven Verenigde Nederlanden, in d. Rijksmuseum, en Verenigde-Nederlanden--211687156264979142202644263

First elections: r participate: decided on a 'Nationale (=first parliam precursor of t tweede kamer)



1792-1795: French Ar attacked: first 'Nationa Vergadering'(National Meetin



1555: Spanish Fillips II became 'Landsheer' of 'De Nederlanden' (=The Lowlands): Did not listen to the Gewesten, but appointed his own 'raadslieden' (counselors)



1555



Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). Rijksstad, Leo Belgicus, 1648, Cornel. Cill. PAA. DII. 0199 - Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rijksstad_Leo_Belgicus_1648_Cornel_Cill_PAA_DII_0199

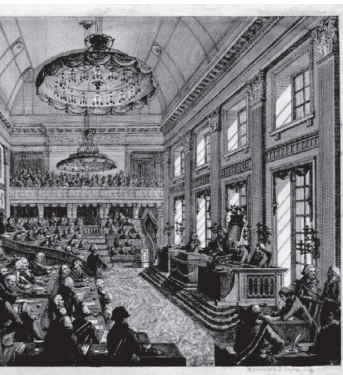
1648



1792

Wikipedia-bijdragers. In d. Bestand kaart van de Bataafse Republiek, 1795 De Bataafische Republiek in 1795. https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Kaart_van_de_Bataafse_Republiek_1795_De_Bataafische_Republiek_in_1795_1238166.jpg

which men could
 appointing the
 'Vergadering'
 in NL,
 the eerste en



1815: End of French Rule, Start of Koninkrijk der Nederlanden: The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg joined into one and created a constitution.

Constitution: power in the hands of both the King and the Staten-Generaal.

Staten-Generaal split up into eerste en tweede kamer

Eerste Kamer: Chosen by the king, for the rest of your life

Tweede Kamer: Chosen by members of the Provinciale Staten: Usually not part of nobility, only few men could vote



1830: Revolution of Belgium in Brussels: Belgium separated from the Northern provinces

1830

1917: General voting right for men
 And for women?
 In 1917, there is a first success: women are allowed to be elected as members of the Lower House.
 In 1918, the first woman enters the Lower House; her name is Suze Groeneweg.
 In 1920, the first woman entered the Upper House: Carry Pothuis-Smit.
 In 1919, women were also given the right to vote. They then still had to wait until the 1922 elections to actually vote for the first time.



1958

1806

1806: Napoleon attacks, end of Bataafse Republiek.

Napoleon (king of France) made his younger brother 'King of Holland'

In 1810 Napoleon took over the power and made Holland part of his French Kingdom

1813

1815

1830

1848

1917

1919

1940

1940-1945 Second World War: The Netherlands were occupied by the Germans

1945

1949

1949: Start of NAVO, The Netherlands joined

1951: Europese Gemeenschap voor Kolen en Staal

1958: Start of European Parliament

2025



Johan Thorbecke: Wanted to change the law in order to give less power to the king and more to the provinciale staten, Willem II did not agree: But agry citizens throughtout all of Europe: changed The Netherlands into a democracy in 1848: Grondwet (Constitution) was written by Thorbecke. What has been in the Constitution since 1848
 Thorbecke's Constitution contained some important changes:
 The members of the Lower House were no longer elected indirectly by the Provincial Councils, but directly by the people. The Upper House was

no longer appointed by the king. Henceforth, its members were elected indirectly, by the Provincial Councils.

The Lower House was given the right of amendment

A proposal by one or more members of parliament to change a part of a bill, the right of interpellation

A debate in the Upper or Lower House in which questions are put to a minister or state secretary on a subject that was not yet on the House's agenda. and the right of inquiry.



1940



Gedrukt in de Koninkrijks-Druckery der Nederlanden, 1815, on cartographic map of Netherlands by De Eerste Theorie en Mening from 1855, Krabbestelling, 2006. https://www.cartographic.com/showmap.php?map=1054

STATUS-QUO AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM OF THE NETHERLANDS

Dutch democracy

Previously in this chapter, general limitations of present-day democracies were examined. It was concluded that democracies bounded by territorial borders, the electoral and the liberal democracies all struggled to actualise the democratic ideal. This section will explore which of these limitations can also be found in the Netherlands and what measures have already been put in place to address these limitations by the national government.

First of all, considering the fact that The Netherlands is confined by a territorial border, we conclude that this leads to a state of exclusion. One example of this is that during the last elections for the House of Representatives, *de Tweede Kamer* in Dutch, only 75% of people living in the Netherlands were allowed to vote. This is 93% of all people above 18 years old (CBS, 2020).

Second of all, regarding the limitations of representative democracy in the Netherlands, research shows that in 2023, only 34% of people considered representative democracy a very good way to govern their country. In this research, which examined 24 different countries, it was asked what could help improve the system. They found: *'Respondents also emphasize that citizens have an important role to play in making democracy work better. They argue that citizens need to be more informed, engaged, tolerant and respectful of one another.'* (Wike et al., 2024a) This is an interesting insight, since this active role of citizenship relates back to the conclusion of the opportunity of strengthening democracies, through the ideal of the radical pluralist democracy.

Furthermore, research shows that the trust Dutch people have in their politicians is currently the lowest it has been in ten years, this could also lead to democratic erosion (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.). One cause of the decline in distrust towards politicians, is considered to be the increase of structural inequality. The director of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), said the following: *'In this regard, we see big differences in trust between people who can get along well in society and those who are left behind. This is cause for concern because it makes trust a potential divisive factor in society.'* (De Ree, 2024)

In order to strengthen democracies, acknowledging the limitations of representative democracy, citizen participation is often offered as a solution, also in The Netherlands (Burgerparticipatie Zonder een Politiek Gesprek Leidt Alleen Tot Frustraties, n.d.). Furthermore, deepening democracy by participation is on the list of the national government. For example, in 2024, *'de wet Versterking participatie op decentraal niveau'* (Law Strengthening participation at decentralised level), passed (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2024). This law on *'versterking participatie'* (strengthening participation), requires co-governments to develop *'participation acts'* with clear

frameworks for participation (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties, 2024).

However, research on Dutch participation processes recently showed limitations as well. Some of these problems could be relating back to the previously discussed limitations of the liberal democracy. One conclusion of this research, for example, was that participatory processes stay at a very technical level, where professional experts keep the power and state officials' knowledge is seen as the only correct view (Burgerparticipatie Zonder een Politiek Gesprek Leidt Alleen Tot Frustraties, n.d.). Furthermore, citizens find the processes not transparent enough and indicate they find it frustrating that there is no political discussion in the participation processes (Burgerparticipatie Zonder een Politiek Gesprek Leidt Alleen Tot Frustraties, n.d.). Researchers suggest that in participatory processes, experiential knowledge should be seen as equivalent to technical knowledge, considering the experience and measurement of noise pollution for example (Burgerparticipatie Zonder een Politiek Gesprek Leidt Alleen Tot Frustraties, n.d.). Also, this research discovered that the *'fun'* activities of participation could hinder the political and substantive conversation. The use of jargon or difficult words also appears to be a hurdle (Trust in Crisis: Europe's Social Contract Under Threat | European Foundation For The Improvement Of Living And Working Conditions, n.d.).

Limitations of participation were also mentioned in the debate regarding the law Strengthening participation at decentralised level, for example: *'[The GRIP-raport] warns that a shift from a representative democracy to a more participatory democracy 'is likely to mean less control for people who do not have enough time or the right competences to participate'* (Wet Versterking Participatie *'Geen Symboolwetgeving'*, n.d.). This is called the *'participation paradox'*. In the Netherlands, issues related to this paradox can also be identified. Higher educated people play a more active role in politics in general (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2017). Lower educated people are under-represented in citizen initiatives, not only due to a lack of money, social capital, time and knowledge, also because they feel like they are not good enough or because they feel resentment towards the government (Visser, 2019).

The national Dutch government acknowledges the world-wide trend of democratic erosion. Therefore, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties (Ministry of the Internal Affairs and The Kingdom Relations) has asked researchers to examine this trend in the Dutch context. The most important conclusion of this report is that research on democratic erosion should not be considered finished, but must remain monitored, since democratic erosion can develop gradually (Honingh et al., 2023).

Generally, the democratic norms are well-established among citizens in The Netherlands. However, this is not always the case for political parties and politicians, some of them have anti-pluralistic stands. The report also concludes that the electoral democracy cannot be without the 'maatschappelijke democratie' (societal democracy) (Honingh et al., 2023). Two quotes of the research are important in this regard:

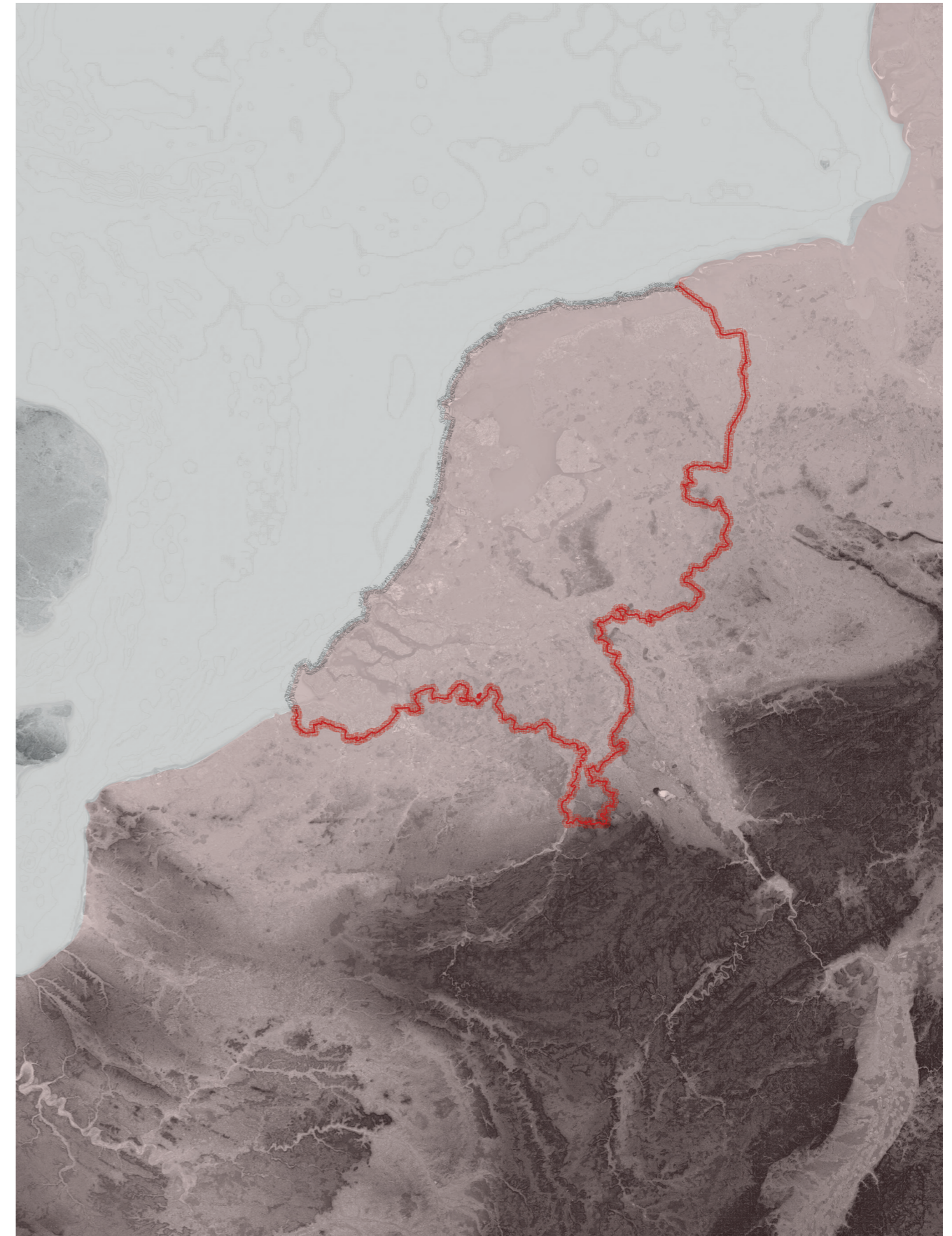
On societal democracy: *'More specifically, this concerns the quality of the connection between citizens and the public administration through a diverse collection of (semi)-public organisations and organisations that perform statutory tasks.'*(Honingh et al., 2023, p. 11))

On Dutch democracy in general: *'There is a systematic reduction in the democratic space for citizens as a result of decentralization, privatization, technocratization and the associated depoliticization of choices in the implementation of numerous semi-public tasks and services.'*(Honingh et al., 2023, p11)
This participation paradox has been identified in the Netherlands

In addressing 'the societal democracy', they stress that realising this democracy cannot solely be considered the role of educational institutions. They stress the importance of non-elected public institutions, like legislative power, central banks, among others, in being aware of their democratic responsibility in decision-making, since their decisions influence citizens as well (Honingh et al., 2023). The research stresses a need for organisations that gap this bridge between institutions and citizens (Honingh et al., 2023).

In conclusion, while the Dutch democracy is considered to be performing well and the fact that democratic erosion is not (yet) at risk among citizens, it should not be considered perfect or finished. In The Netherlands, there is a gap in realising 'societal democracy', research concludes (Honingh et al., 2023) . In the global north, including in the Netherlands, democracy is oftentimes strongly associated with the state (Beveridge & Koch, 2023). However, limitations of the present-day system show the importance of focussing on other scales.

In this regard, we conclude the opportunity of urban design to bridge this gap, since it has the nature of bridging different disciplines, institutions and people, through process, through physical interventions and in research methods. Also, there is an opportunity to explore the role of the active citizen and to spatialise this concept. We also conclude that there is an opportunity in bridging present-day limitations of democracy by implementing concepts related to the ideal of the radical, pluralist democracy. The next section will explore related work of other spatial researchers, related to spatializing democratic ideals.



Landscape: Territorial Borders and Morphological conditions of The Netherlands

RELATED WORK: DEMOCRACY AND SPACE

This section will explore related works that explore the role of urban design and the urban designer in relation to democracy.

Creating Public Spaces and Practiced Places for Democracy, Discourse, and the Emergence of Civil Society - Patrick M. Jenlink (Jenlink, 2007)

This section will summarize the article of Patrick M. Jenlink on creating spaces for democracy. To start, the following statement of Jenlink, is important: *'Geography is a defining feature of social life just as social relations is a defining feature of geographical space.'* (Jenlink, 2007). Therefore, since urban design practice focuses on the interrelations of the spatial and social dimensions, it can possibly play a role in the re-conceptualisation of present-day democracies and help to address the limitations of the status-quo. Jenlink concludes that in order to give the democratic ideal a spatial dimension, the attention should be on 'public spaces' and 'practiced spaces'.

In his attempt to define the public spaces, he refers to the conceptualisation of space by Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre argues that space is not just physical, but should be understood in a more complex manner, joining the physical, mental and social layers of space, into 3 different perspectives into the conceived, practiced and lived space (Jenlink, 2007). Jenlink argues that in creating public spaces, one should be aware of these 3 conceptions of space, as explained by Lefebvre. Jenlink says the following on practiced spaces: *'Creating practiced places for democracy and civil society, understood more broadly as spatial practices that encompass how spaces are perceived, is crucial to an understanding of the production of democratically practiced places as social instruments.'* He stresses the importance of conceiving both 'space' and 'place', by acknowledging the influence of 'proper rules' and other rules in place, rules that are at the base of the hierarchical nature of relationships. He brings the opinion of both Lefebvre and Mouffe to the table in this regard: they both stress that in spatial practice, it is important to acknowledge how space is conceptualized and by whom. His conclusion on the matter: Creating public spaces and practiced places for democracy and civil society requires an understanding of the power-geometry of social relations and a sensitivity to the spatial flows that define and redefine the social and geographical spaces of society.

Spaces of Democracy - Richard Sennet (Lucy et al., n.d.)

In exploring the relation of spatial design and democracy, we explore Spaces of Democracy by Richard Sennett. In Richard Sennett's essay 'The Spaces of Democracy', he explains that ever since democracy started in ancient Athens, democracy had a spatial component, mainly in the form of the Pnyx and the Agora. The Pnyx was a theater, where debates and decision-making took place. On the Agora, a large open space, surrounded by colonnades and important buildings, like the court and bank, all sorts of commerce, rituals and informal gatherings took place, people from all sorts interacted on the agora. He states that the visual qualities of the agora provide interactions that are more fragmentary. The visual qualities of the Pnyx, such as the fact that the men did not experience physical compartmentalization, resulted in debate.

Sennet, relating these concepts back to present-day, concludes the following: *'Nearly all modern urban planners subscribe to this Aristotelian principle. Diversity loses its force, however, if in the same space different persons or activities are merely concentrated but each remains isolated and segregated. Differences have to interact.'* (Lucy et al., n.d., p.3)

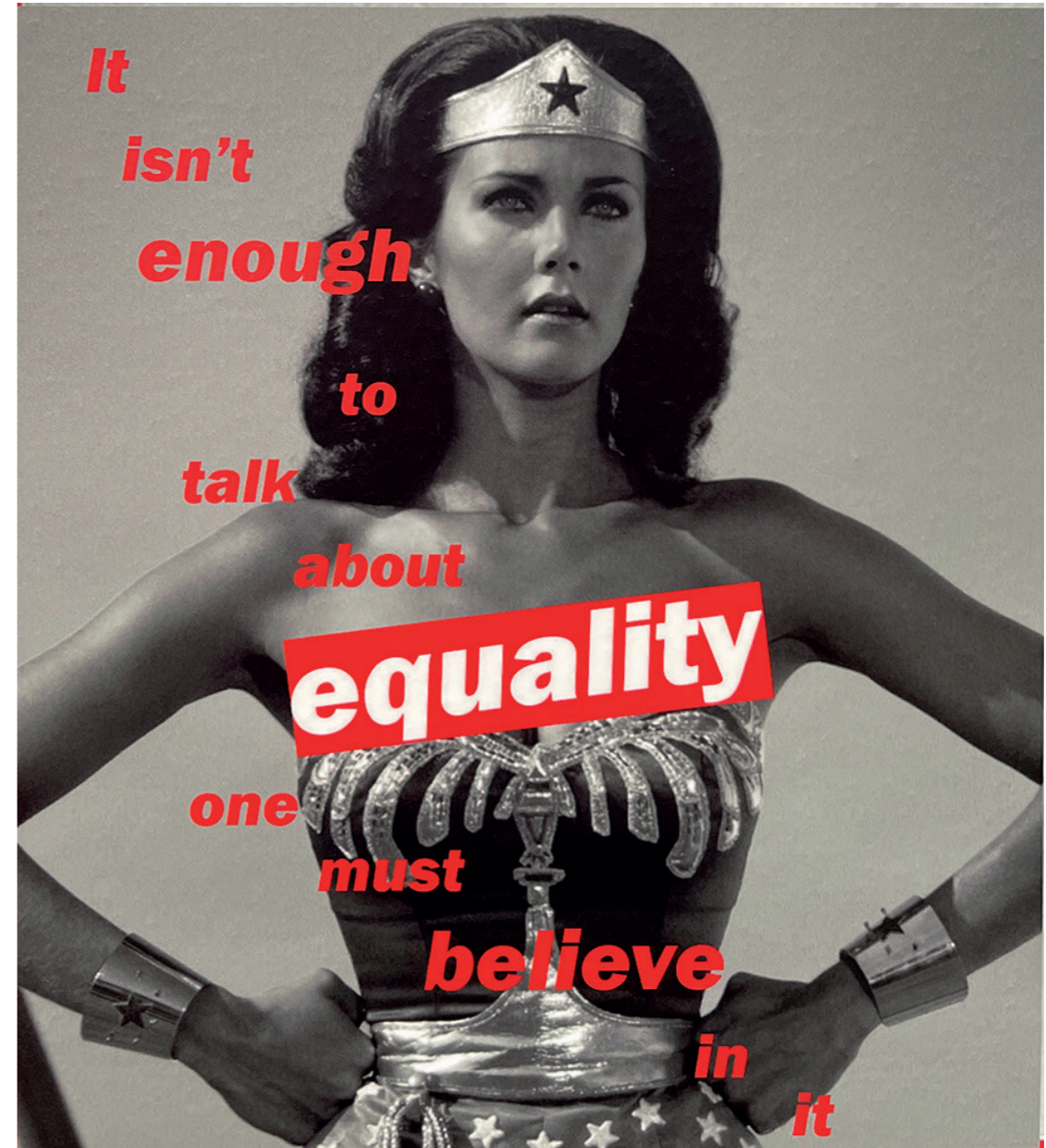
Sennet believes that in a democratic system, people need to be challenged by others and that they need to experience painful and confronting interactions, to grow physiologically and ethically. In designing for democracy, he argues, facilitating these interactions are crucial. These interactions can be designed for, he says, by disordering the city. He demands a city that does not have homogenized communities.

*'Diversity loses its force, however, if in the same space different persons or activities are merely concentrated but each remains isolated and segregated. Differences **have** to interact.'*

- Richard Sennet

Art and Democracy - Chantal Mouffe (Mouffe, 2007)

In order to actualise the radical, pluralist ideal, Mouffe proposes the implementation of critical artistic practices as part of public space, in order to undermine the dominant hegemony. While she critiques artistic practices as an element of capitalistic productivity, she still considers art as an important means to challenge the status-quo, and as a way to explore and discuss different values and perspectives in society. She proposes art in democracy as a way to comply with her proposal of 'agonistic pluralism', meaning a form of democracy, in which consensus is never considered finite. Art in public space adheres to this idea, since it could have the opportunity to create agonistic spaces, by interrupting an otherwise conceived smooth image, as long as the artwork challenges the existing consensus.



Barbara Kruger. Element. David Zwirner Gallery. Manhattan, NYC.

On Kruger's work, Mouffe says the following: 'There is the kind of work that more or less directly engages critically with political reality, such as that of Barbara Kruger, Hans Haacke or Santiago Sierra.'

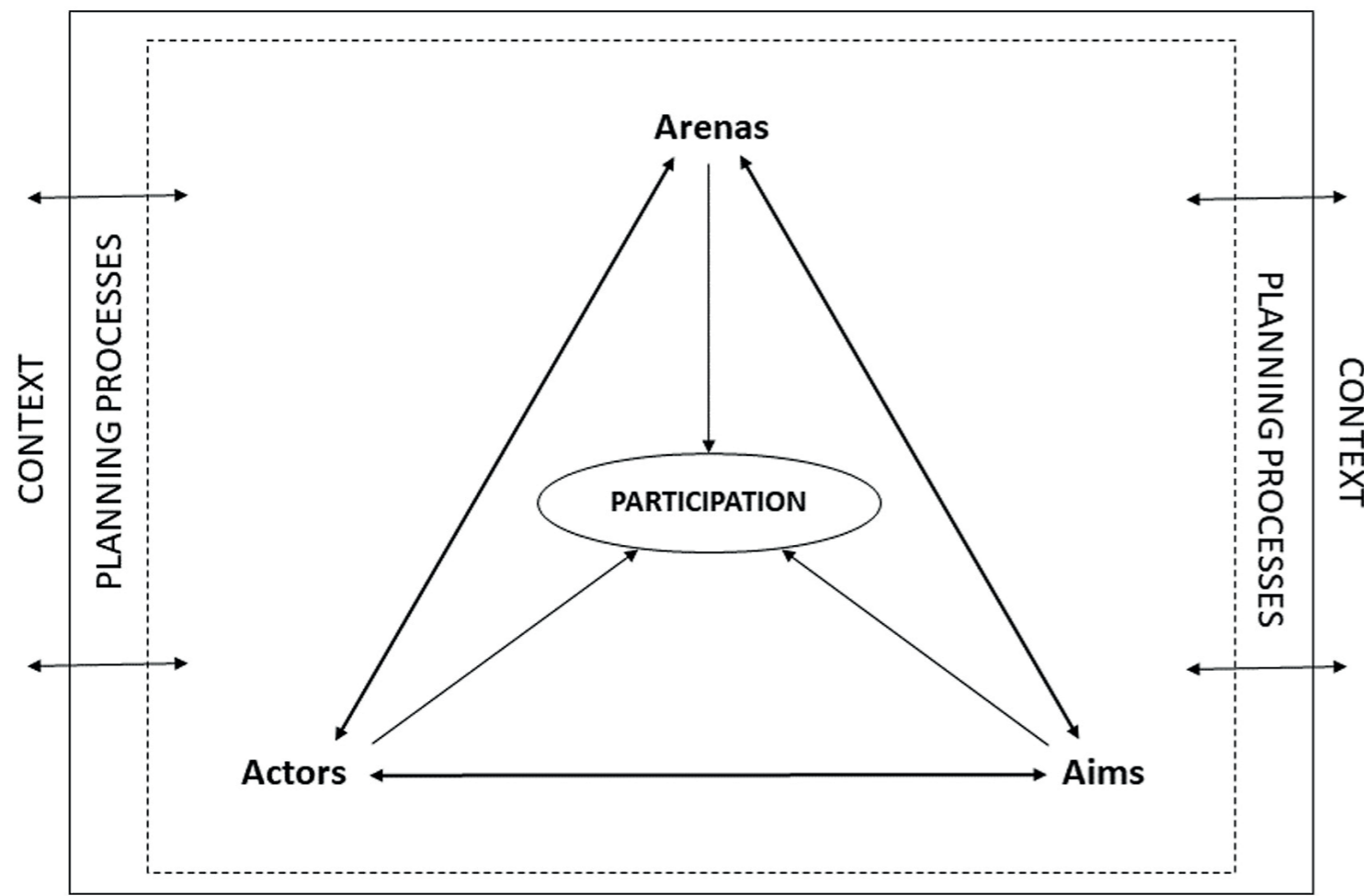
RELATED WORK: DEMOCRACY AND SPACE

3A model (Hofer & Kaufmann, 2022)

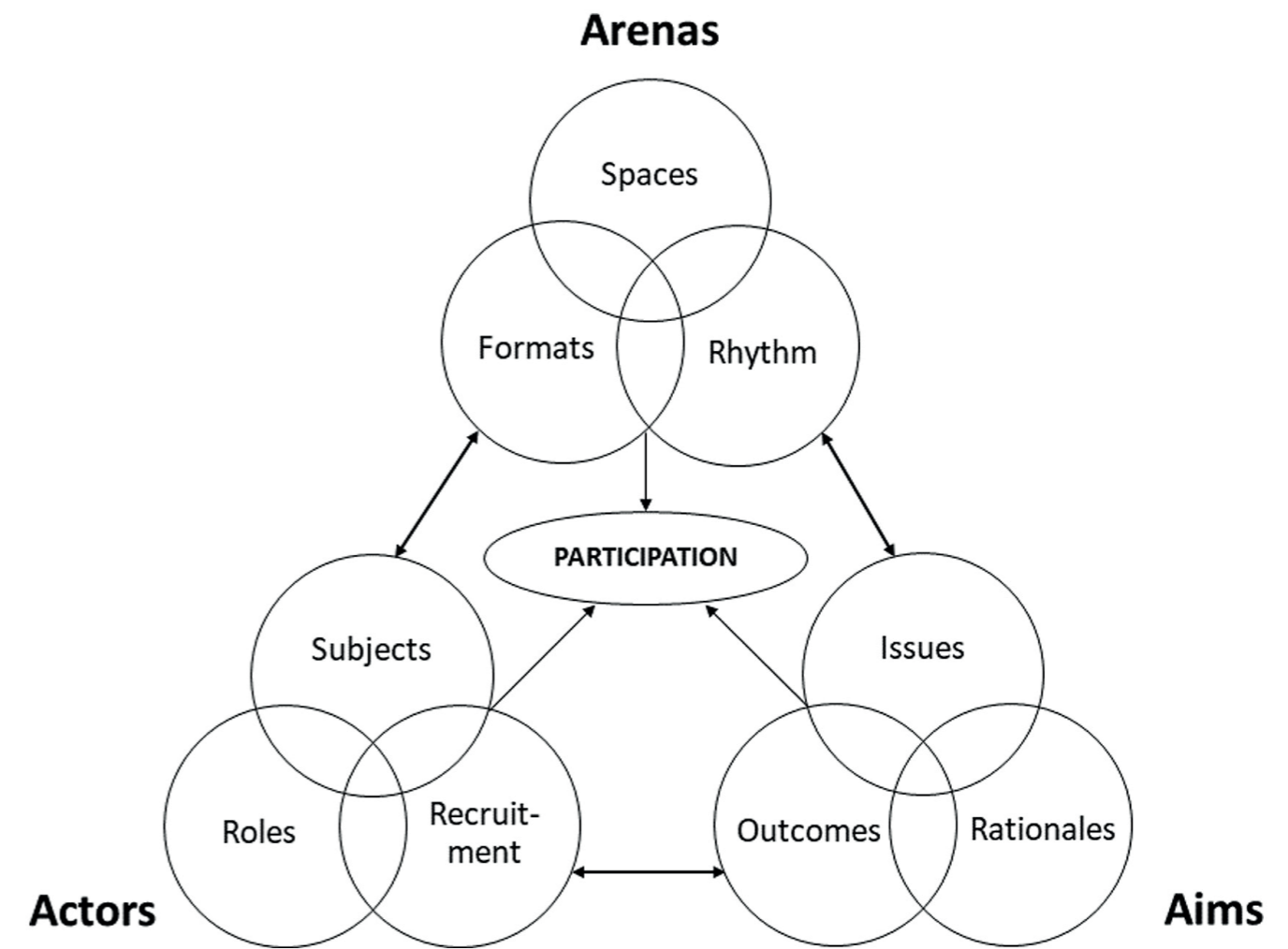
The 3A model is a framework to gain further comprehension of the layers of participation. It distinguishes between 3 A's: Arena ('how'), Actors ('who') and Aims ('why'). It explores not only the reason for participation, but focuses on the phenomenon of the concept.

An interesting conclusion of this research is: 'Only few scholars have engaged with "perhaps the most elemental consideration in designing participatory processes: how to create physical environments for productive interaction and conversation'.

The research considers participation a fluid and emergent concept, in which different elements interact. It concludes that participation can be a top-down, institutionalised practice, but can also have a bottom-up character, where the design and development of space is initiated through grassroots networks.



The 3A3 -framework of participation.
(Hofer & Kaufmann, 2022)



The dimensions of participation and their elements.
(Hofer & Kaufmann, 2022)

Processes for just products: The capability space of participatory design (Frediani & Boano, 2012)

In processes for just products, the link between design processes and design products is established. The research argues that in designing for the democratic ideal, both the process and the product of design should correspond to this ideal. In designing there should therefore be freedom in the process, in the deliberation, engagement and participation, and in the product, in the appropriation and production. The scholars stress the importance of the fact that designers should be aware of their own perspectives and values. They also state that designers should be critical of exploitative relations that can be part of the design process within and among communities. They mention the conception of participatory design as follows: *'Participatory design as an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people'* (Frediani & Boano, 2012, p. 4) and connect this to the following insight: *'Environments work better if citizens are active and involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers'* (Frediani & Boano, 2012, p.4). It can be concluded that the designer should consider the dimension of management, when coming up with a proposal.

The scholars conceptualise opportunities in participation, as components of freedom. In participatory processes, they argue, 3 components can help actualise freedom: choice, ability and opportunity. Choice meaning the option to choose between alternatives. Ability in the sense of the ability to be part of the deliberation, but also to appropriate the new design interventions. Opportunity in regards to the social, economical and political in deliberation and appropriation.

They propose the role of the architect to transfer into the rational artisan, where its responsibility is not to create form, but to create possible options. They stress the importance of dissensus in participation and ask the architect not to seek a homogeneous unity in its design. They conceive the role of the designers as 'citizen activists' and 'professional experts'

In order to actualise their ideals, they propose 4 roles of design: design as anti-design (refusal), design as research (evidence/dissensus), design as critique (demonstration and precedence) and design as resistance.

*'Environments work better **if citizens are active** and involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers'*

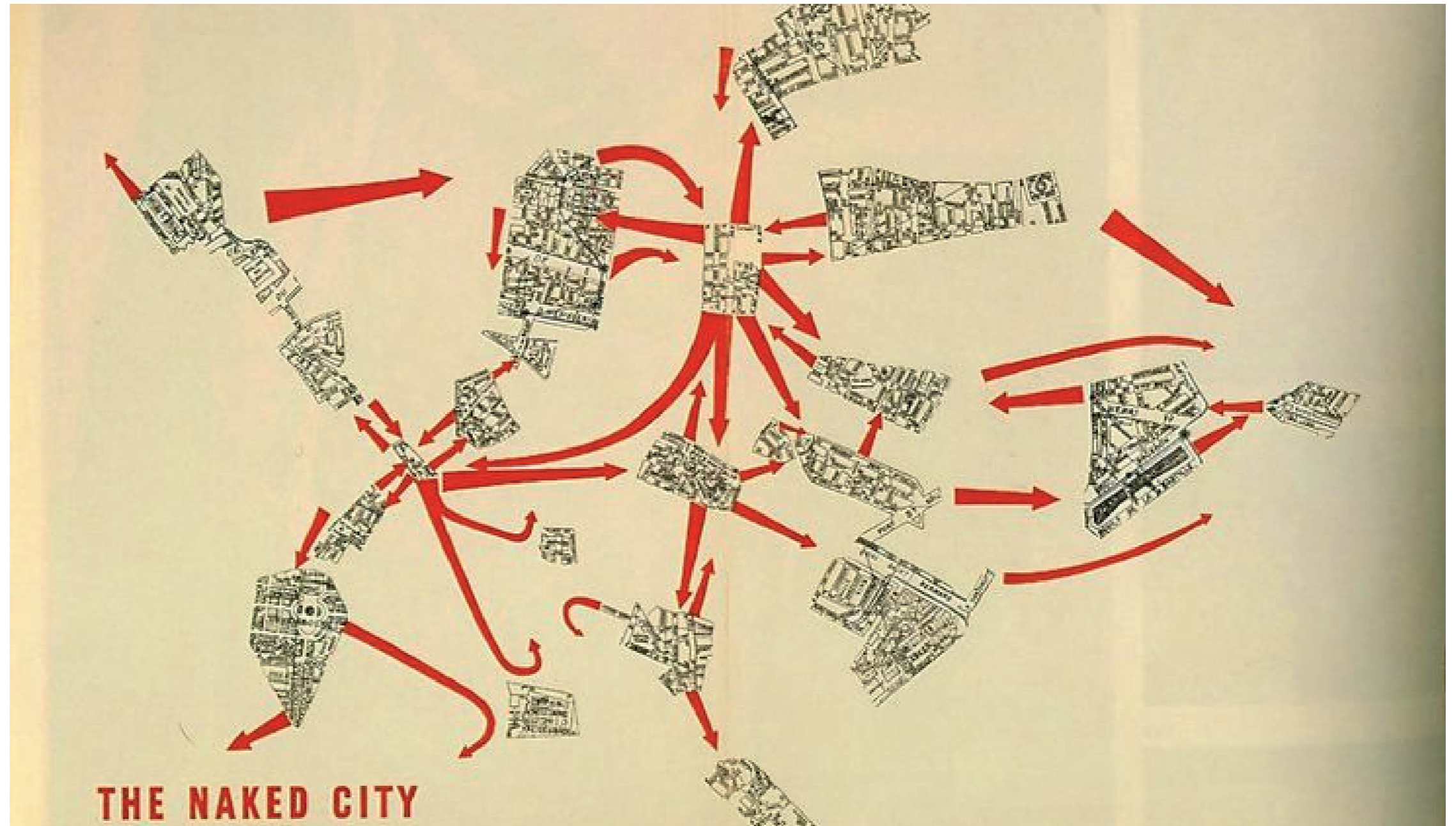
-Apsan Frediani & Camillo Boano

RELATED WORK: DEMOCRACY AND SPACE

The agency of mapping - James Corner (Corner, 1999)

In the agency of mapping, James Corner stresses the emancipatory potential in the practice. He proposes to see mapping not only as a means to project power knowledge, but as a means of deliberation and production. He sees mapping as a way to not only show the conscious, but the unconscious. One example he provides is hegemony in mapping: the effect that certain countries are at the 'centre of the world', due to the projection type used in the map.

Furthermore, he notes that in mapping with the aim to use the map as a way to assert certain conclusions on the social-spatial status of the city, one should be critical in whether the map represents the plurality of a space accurately enough. He proposes the drift, the layering, the game-board and the rhizome mapping techniques in order to map the subjective conceptions of spaces and to grasp the pluralistic experiences of spaces.

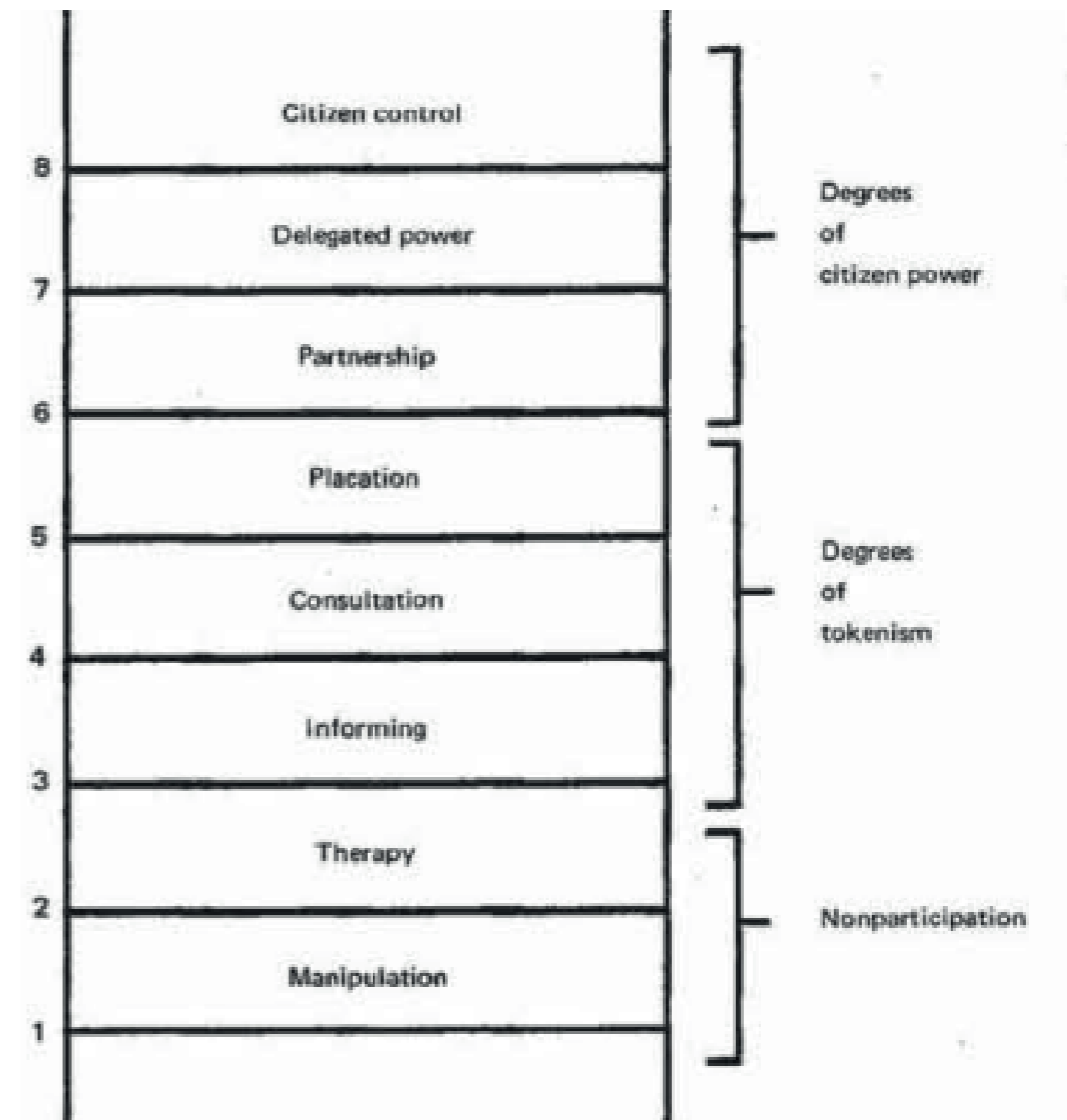


NAKED CITY, Guy Debord

One example of Drift that Corner shows, is the map of Guy Debord, called 'Discours sur les Passions de l'amour'. The Naked City is drawn in the same style.

A Ladder Of Citizen Participation - Sherry R. Arnstein (Arnstein, 1969)

Sherry R. Arnstein has created a ladder in order to show the different levels of citizen-power that can be identified. This ladder can be used to critically examine the actual level of power that can be executed in participation processes. Arnstein notes that, while these blocks are not homogeneous, and while in a project, different boxes can be part of a participation process, it is important to acknowledge the level of participation and thus, citizen-power. This is a means to critically examine a participation process to determine if actual participation is happening, or if it is a euphemism.



Eight rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation
(Arnstein, 1969)

06.

THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER

THE ROLE OF THE URBAN DESIGNER IN DESIGNING FOR THE RADICAL, PLURALIST DEMOCRACY

The previous chapters identified the potential for urban designers and to strengthen present-day democracy, by envisioning ways to implement concepts related to the radical, pluralist ideal, mainly focussing on actualising 'active citizenship'. From the readings, it can be concluded that in designing for the radical pluralist democracy, creating opportunities to participate is key. However, it is important to be aware of the limitations and the euphemisms in some participation processes that do not actually create citizen-power (Arnstein, 1969).

In order to make sure that a designer actually creates opportunity for citizen-power, and in designing for the radical pluralist ideal, the focus should be both on the process and the product of design (Frediani & Boano, 2012). This section will explain what this entails in terms of the design process for creating spaces for the radical, pluralist democracy and then explain what the qualities of spaces for the radical pluralist democracy are.

The process

In the design and research process, it should be considered that the experience of all people is different. Therefore, in determining what types of spaces should be part of the radical pluralist democracy, different experiences should be considered and mapped. Furthermore, the possible tendency of socio-spatial maps of showing only a hegemony in a specific area, should be acknowledged. It should also be considered in this regard that mapping is a subjective practice. The conclusions of the mapping should therefore be considered the start of a conversation, rather than a finite product. The product of the design should create the possibility to actualise freedom, as described by Frediani and Boano, focussing on the 3 components choice, ability and opportunity (Frediani & Boano, 2012).

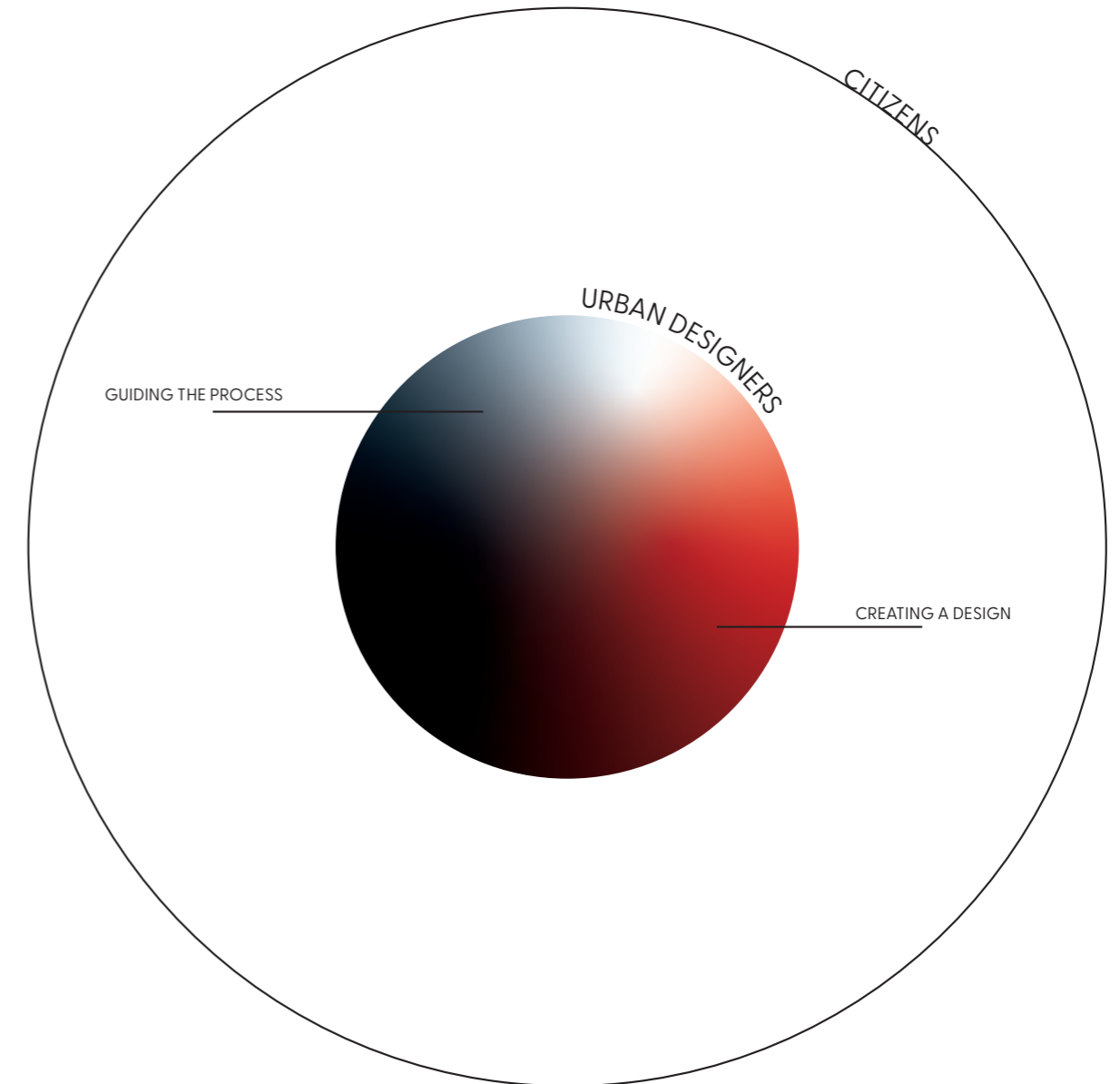
The product

The aim of this design research is to actualise the radical, pluralist democratic ideal in the form of a pattern language and a spatial design.

The spaces will be radical, in the sense of creating the opportunity for citizens to create and manage their environment; therefore considering active citizenship as a part of living in democracy. The spaces will be pluralist in the regard of acknowledging the differences of people, by creating not one specific space, but rather a sequence of spaces, that all create different opportunities in regard to active citizenship. It will be democratic, in the regard that these spaces should create the opportunity for all to be an active citizen. Therefore, the spaces should consider different needs and preferences in that regard.

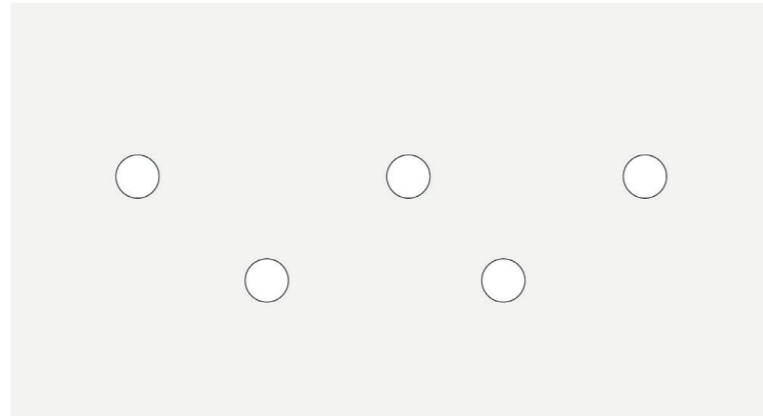
The proposal is to create a network of spaces, in different forms and functions, in order to create the opportunity to actualise the ideal of the radical pluralist democracy. These spaces should have a dynamic character, as proposed by John Dewey (Rocco, Gonçalves, & Lopez, 2024), this can be in short-time or long-term: spaces should be able to be changed to the needs of the ever changing society. In order to reach the goal of equality, we propose to implement the idea of 'complex equality', as proposed by Michael Walzer: 'This means that different social goods should be distributed in accordance with a variety of criteria reflecting the diversity of those goods and their social meanings' (Mouffe, 1992, p.7). The spaces and space-making should create freedom, as described in terms of 'ability', by Frediani and Boano: 'Ability relates not only to individual characteristics, but also collective capacities, such as the ability to generate collective action initiatives, such as meetings and protests, as well collectively appropriating, changing, maintaining or improving the existing built environment. It is crucial therefore to accept and reveal the multiple. (Frediani & Boano, 2012)'

ACTUALISING THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

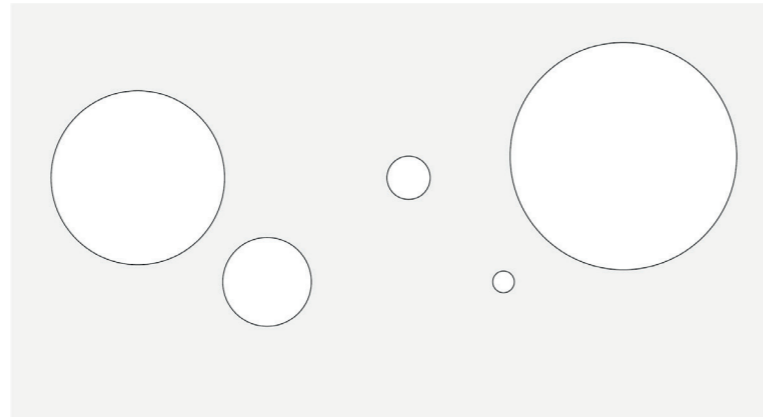


CONCLUDING: SPACES FOR THE RADICAL PLURALIST DEMOCRACY

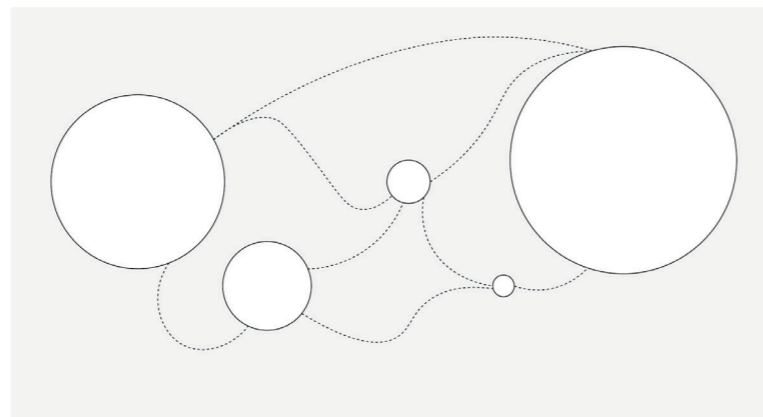
A MULTITUDE OF SPACES



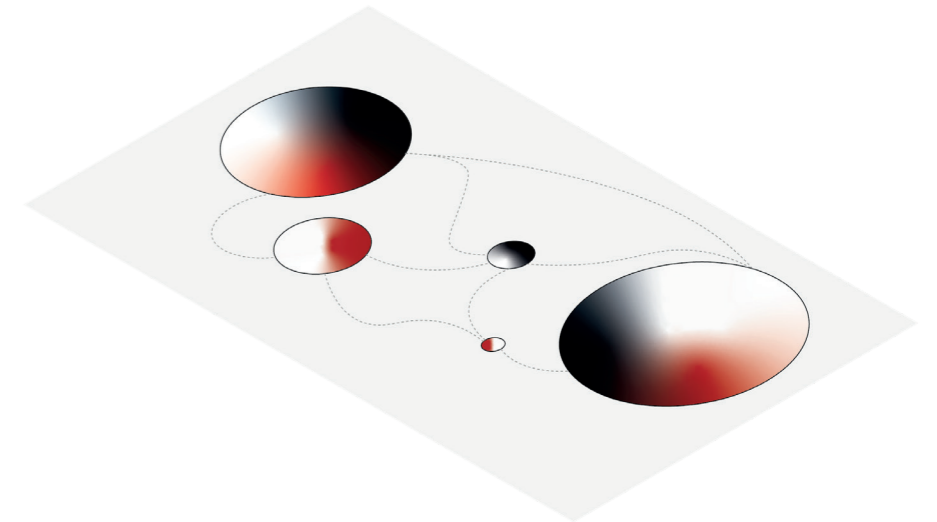
DIFFERENT TYPES AND SCALES



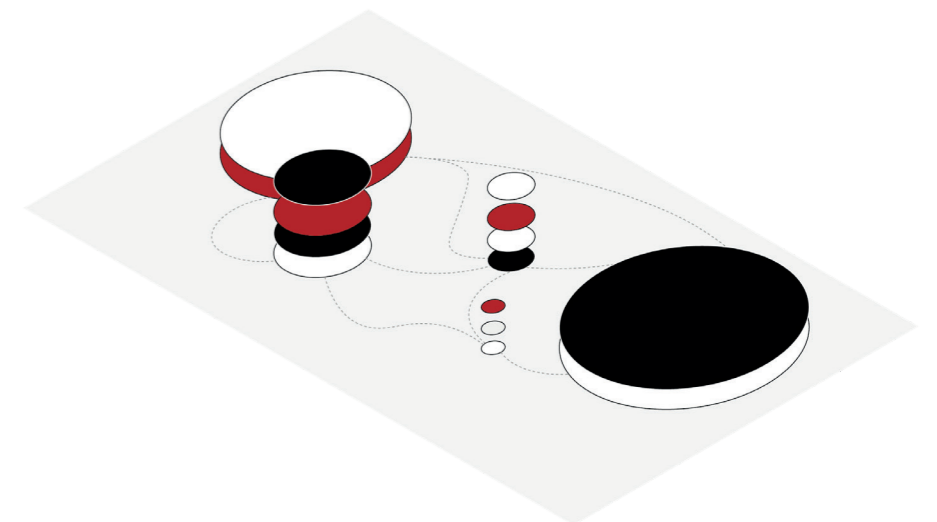
**FOCUS ON COMMUNITY,
CREATING NETWORKS**



MIXED IN FUNCTION

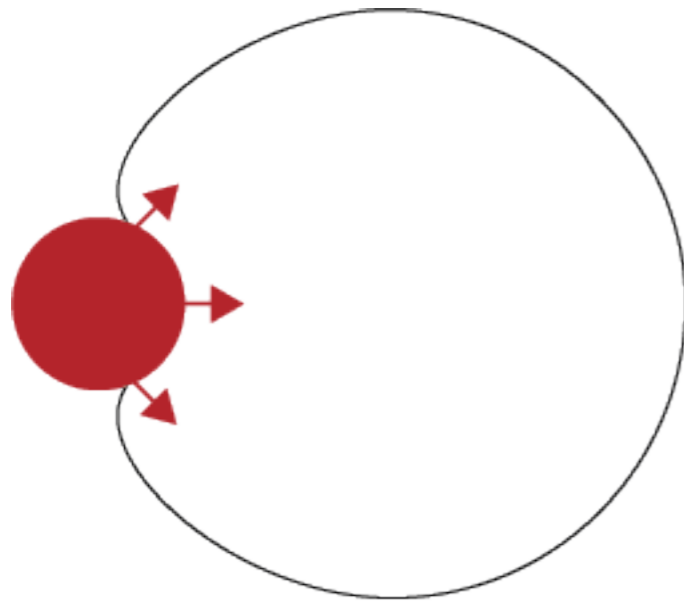


**DYNAMIC:
ADJUSTABLE IN TIME**



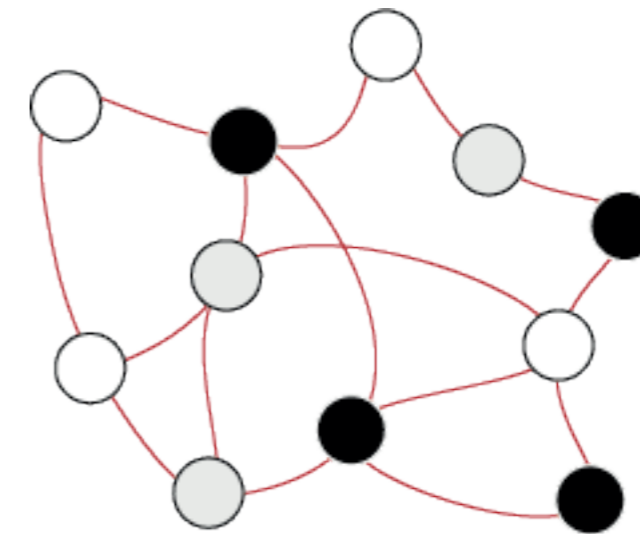
CONCLUDING: SPACES FOR THE RADICAL PLURALIST DEMOCRACY

In order to structure the design phase of this process, the hypothesis is that the present-day democratic system of the Netherlands can be strengthened, by designing spaces that create the possibility to be an active citizen. Thus; citizen-empowerment will become part of the urban fabric. In order to structure what type of power, we use the 4 different types that were identified by the University of Sussex (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011). The goal of structuring the research in this manner, is to facilitate empowerment in a complete and diverse way, in order to create 'complex equality'; thus, creating all kinds of opportunities for active citizenship, to reach a broad group.



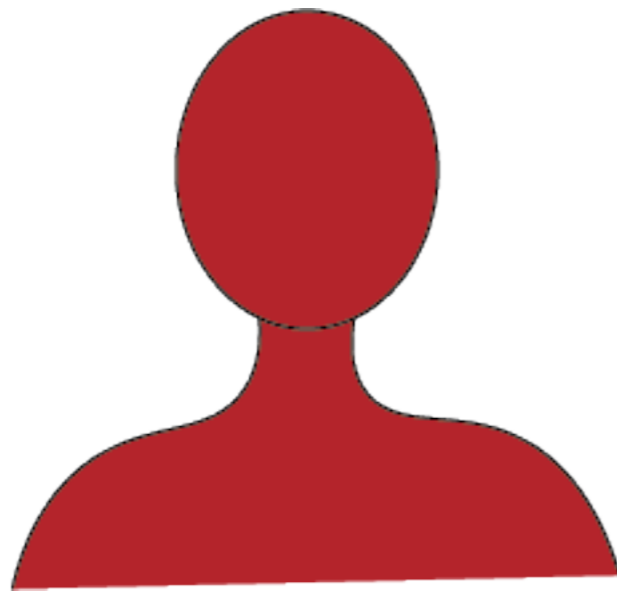
OVER POWER : **THE HEGEMONY**

In the framework of Sussex, they explain one of the 4 powers as 'Power Over', referring to the ability of relatively powerful actors' action to affect the actions and thoughts of the relatively powerless (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011). However, in this thesis we propose the 'complex equality' ideal. We therefore propose to seek opportunities to disrupt dominance in space, by art, for example (as described by Mouffe, in *Art and Democracy*, 2007): thus in stead of *power over*, the opportunity to *over power*.



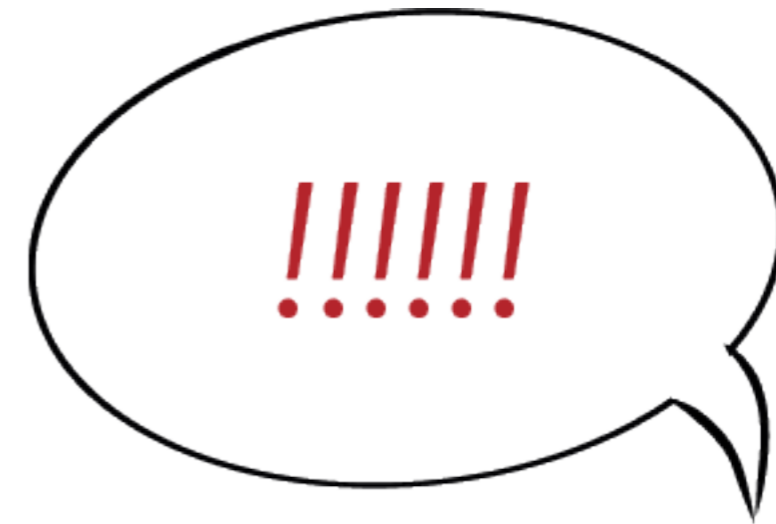
POWER WITH : **OTHERS**

Refers to the synergy which can emerge through partnerships and collaboration with others, or through processes of collective action and alliance building (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011)



POWER WITHIN: **ONESELF**

Refers to gaining the sense of self-identity, confidence and awareness that is a precondition for action (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011)



POWER TO: **ACT**

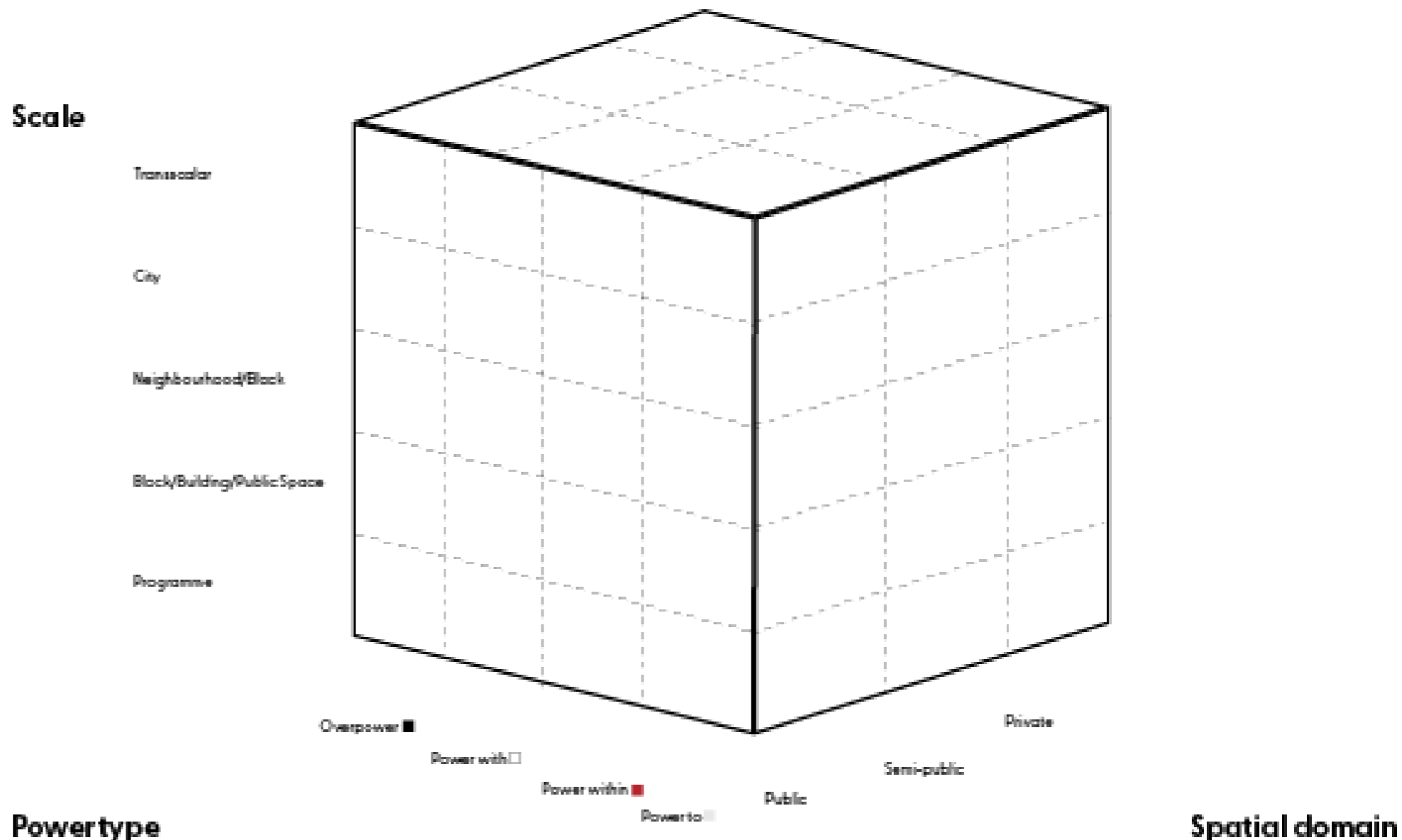
Refers to the capacity to act – to exercise agency and to realise the potential of rights, citizenship or voice (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011)

PATTERN LANGUAGE FRAMEWORK

In order to structure the design phase of this process, the hypothesis is that the present-day democratic system of the Netherlands can be strengthened, by designing spaces that create the possibility to be an active citizen. Thus; citizen-empowerment will become part of the urban fabric. In order to structure what type of power, we use the 4 different types that were identified by the University of Sussex (Understanding power for social change, powercube.net, IDS at Sussex University, 2011). The goal of structuring the research in this manner, is to facilitate empowerment in a complete and diverse way, in order to create 'complex equality'; thus, creating all kinds of opportunities for active citizenship, to reach a broad group. The framework allows for a multi-scalar approach, that focusses on both policy and spatial interventions.

The goal of the pattern language is to create an example of spatial interventions that could help to actualise the radical pluralist democracy, by other designers and policy makers. Ideally, others would add onto the language, in order to get a broad understanding of the possibilities.

The way the pattern is structured, is inspired by the scales and the card layout by Foundries Hill, Adrian V (ed.). (2020) Foundries of the Future. The power axes are a consequence of the Powercube research of the University of Sussex.



PATTERN CARDS

SCALE.CARDNUMBER

IMAGE

TITLE

Hypothesis:

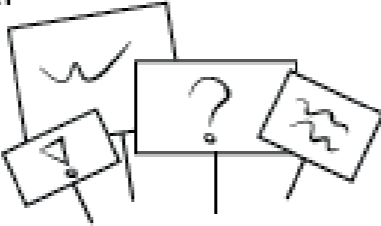
Power types: ■ ■ ■ □

Relation to other patterns:

Scale:

Domain:

T.1



ROOM FOR PROTEST

Hypothesis: Transparent and open policy on where and when people can protest, engage in demonstrations and manifestations, are an important measure in democracy to make sure everyone can have their voice heard and to have agency in society


Power types: ■ ■ ■ □

Relation to other patterns:

Scale: Transcalar

Domain: Public

B.1



GRAFFITY WALL

Hypothesis: A wall where everyone is allowed to spraypaint on and to show their art in the public domain, can be a way for people to express their opinion and to spark discussion. It can be a way for people to appropriate their surroundings.

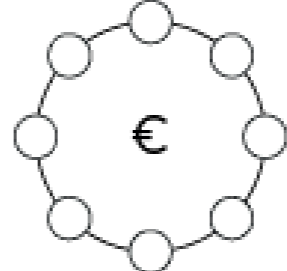
Power types: ■ ■

Relation to other patterns: P.1

Scale: Block/Building/Public Space

Domain: Public

P.1



PATICIPATORY BUDGETTING

Hypothesis: Participatory budgetting can create empower a community activating citizens to think about what they want their surroundings to be and by giving citizens the responsibility to decide money on all the proposals themselves.

Power types: □ ■ ■

Relation to other patterns: B.1 - N.1

Scale: Neighbourhood/Block

Domain: Public

N.1



COMMUNITY GARDEN

Hypothesis: A community garden can be a way to bring different people in a neighbourhood together and give them the agency over a public space

Power types: □ ■ ■

Relation to other patterns: P.1

Scale: Block/Building/Public Space

Domain: Public

07.

**EXPOSE, PROPOSE, POLITICIZE:
THE CASE OF THE HAGUE**

FIRST DRAFT ENSEMBLE: SPACES OF DEMOCRACY

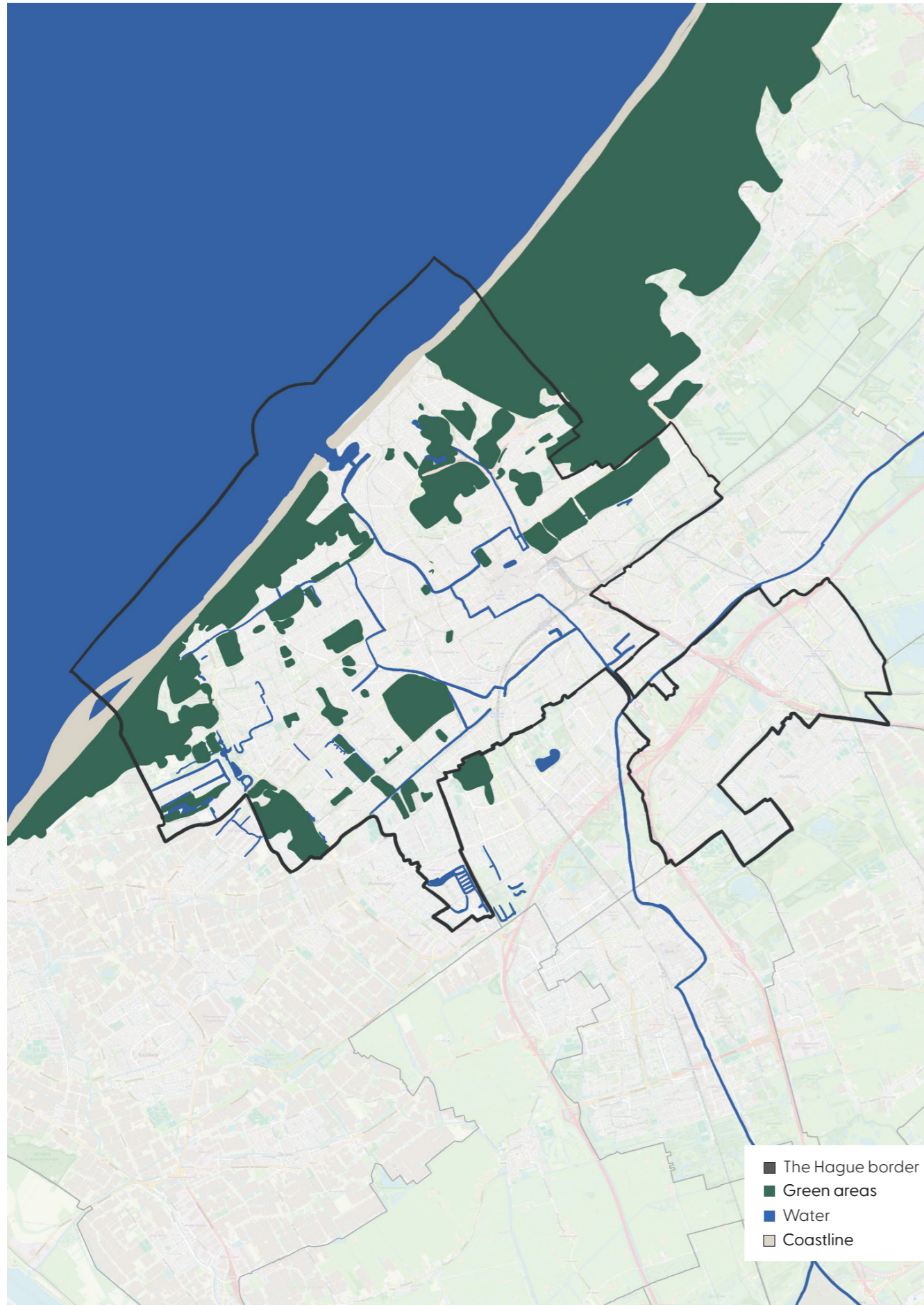


- Local power - accessible
- Local power - inaccessible
- International power

- ▨ Spaces of protest
- Waterbody
- Buildings



FIRST DRAFT OF SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS



Green-Blue structure

0 5 km



Road and train network

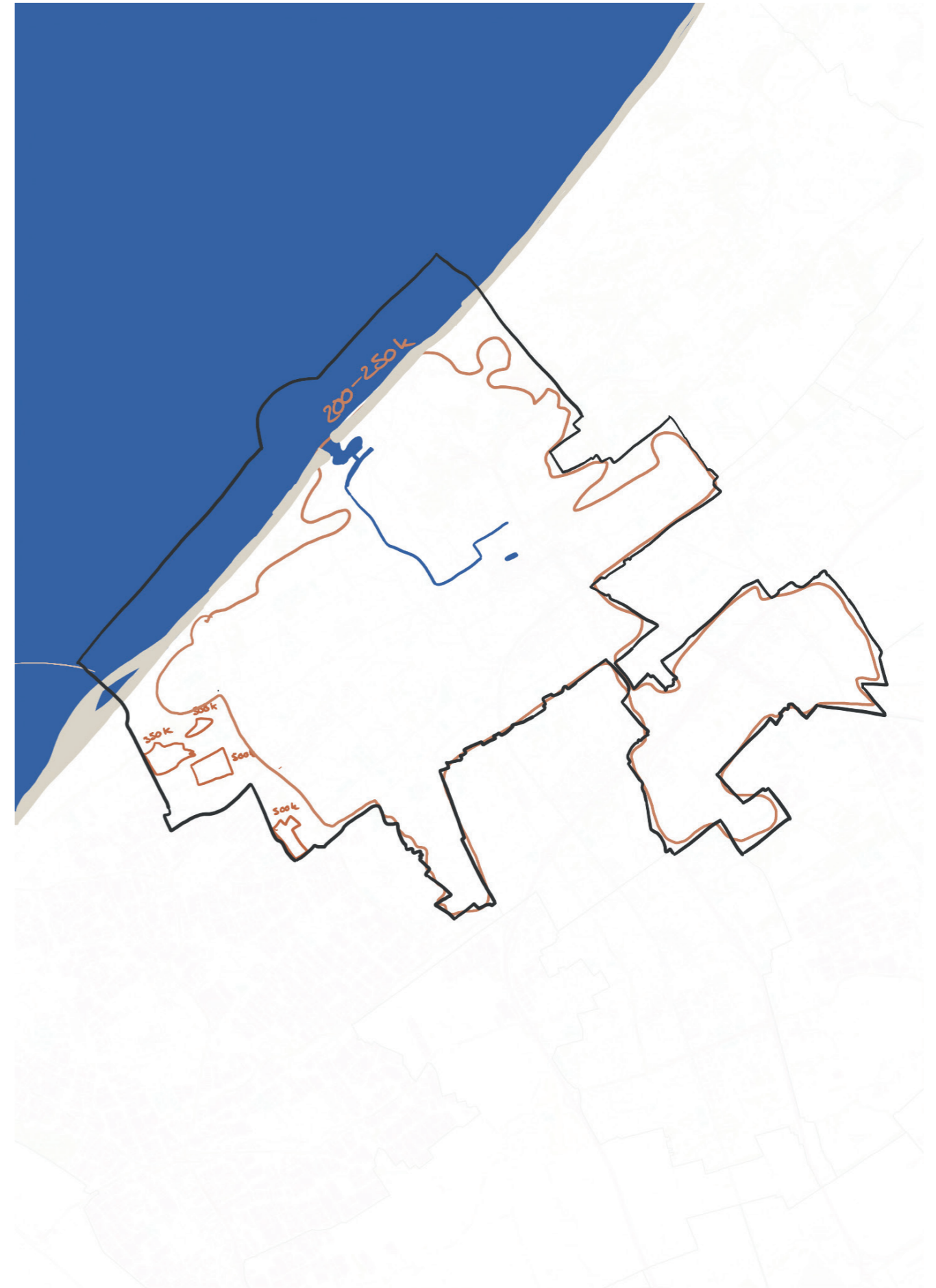
N



Urbanization

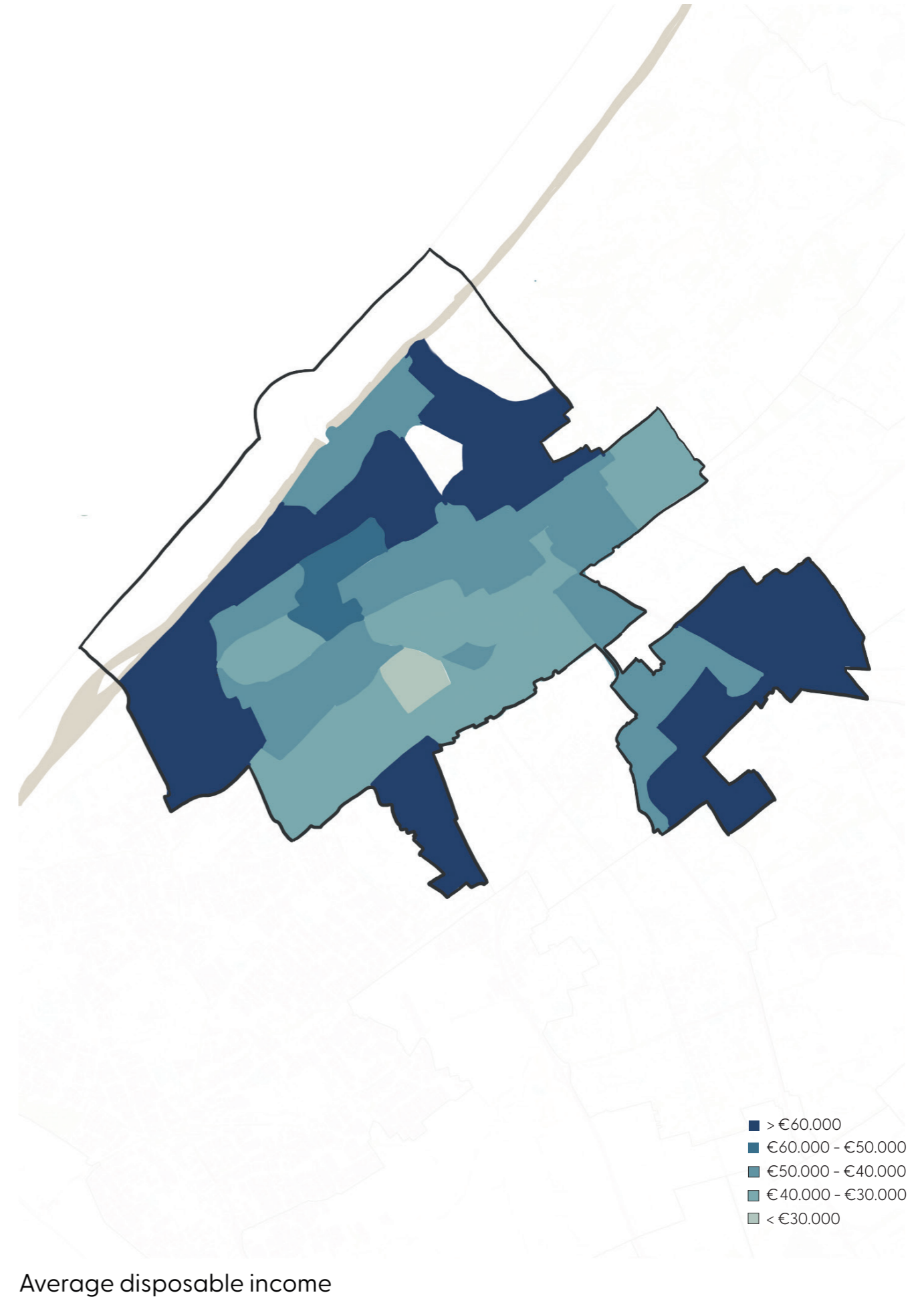
0 5 km

N



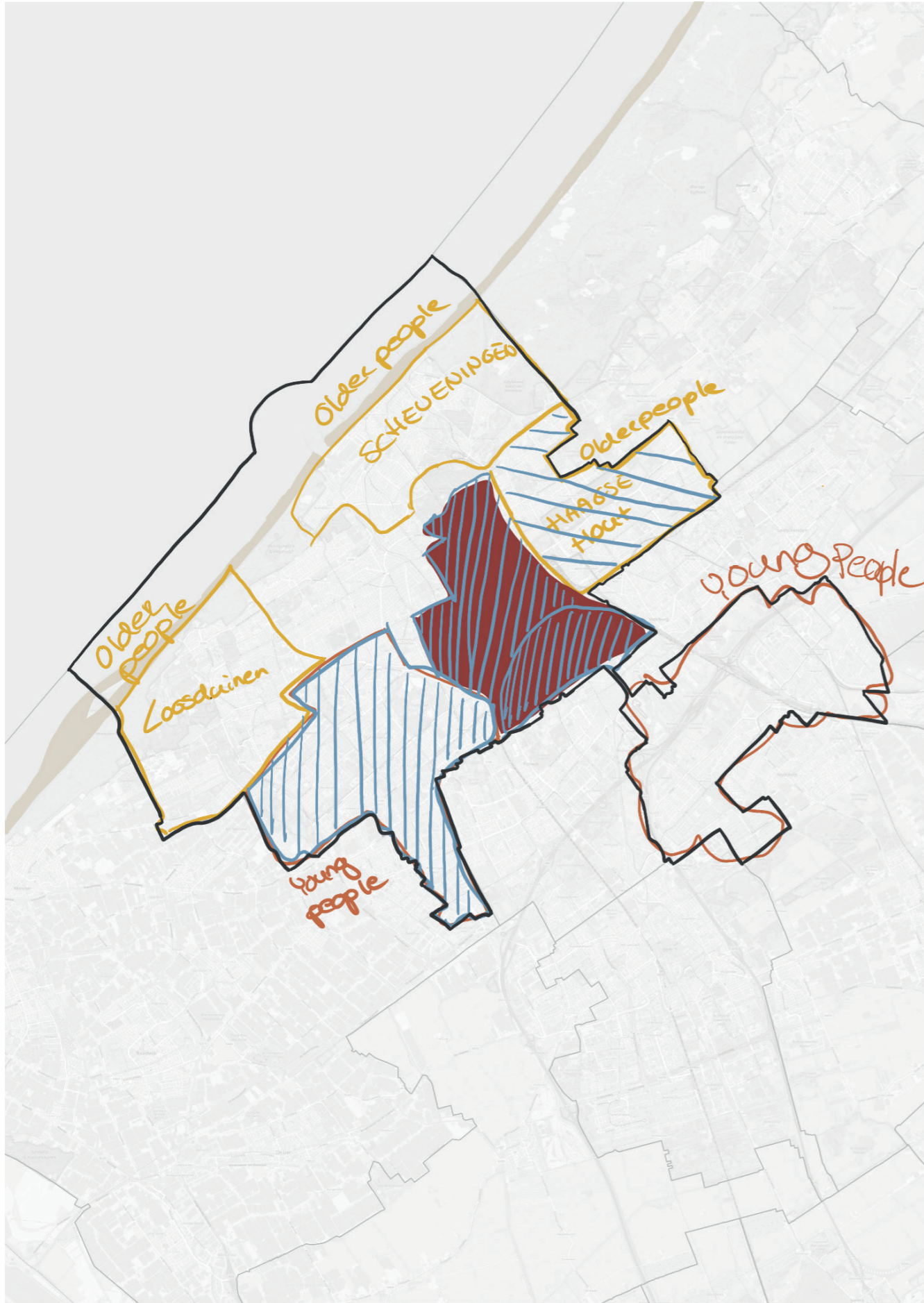
WOZ-value

FIRST DRAFT OF SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS



Density

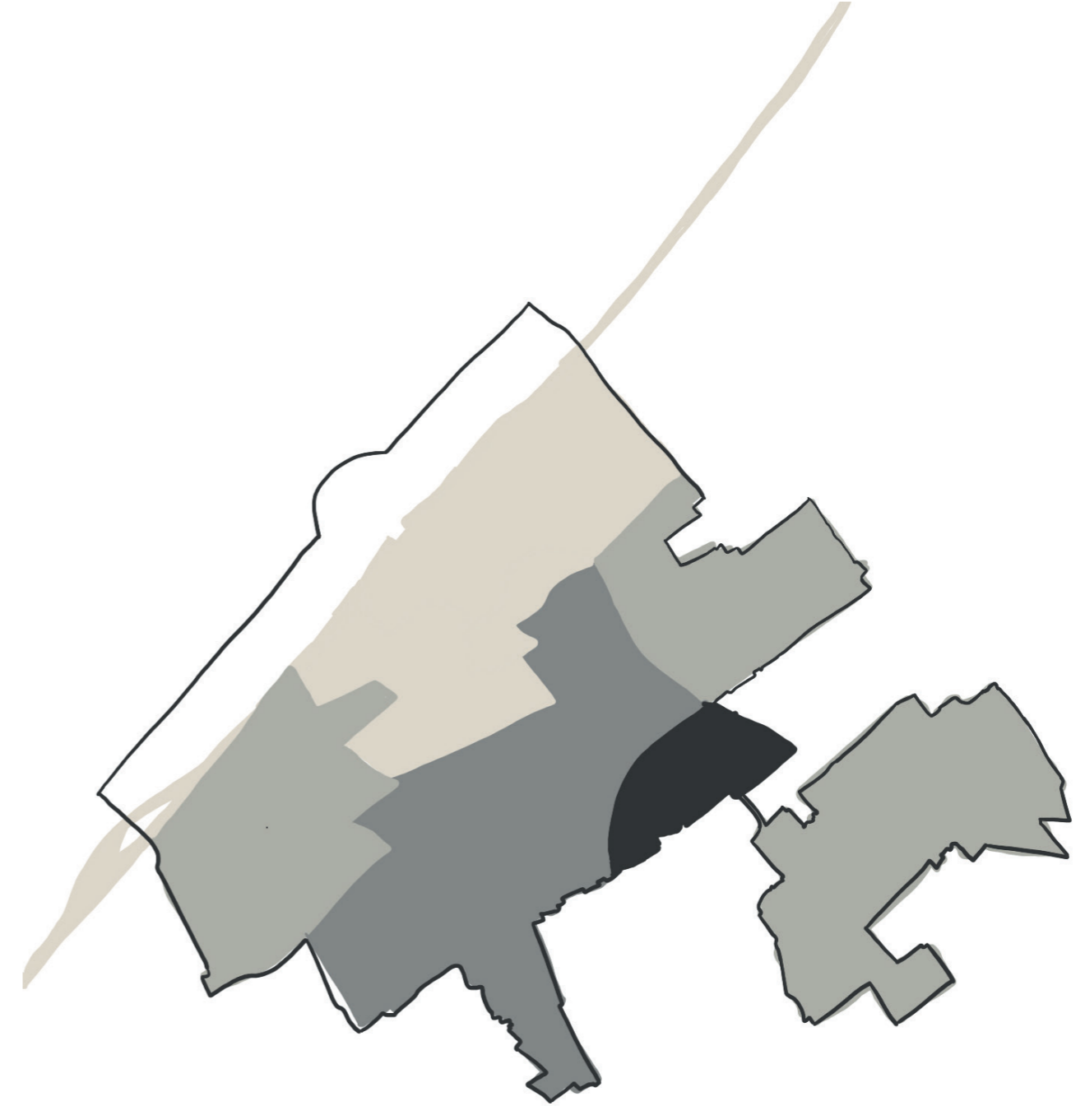
Average disposable income



Segregation index

0 5 km

N



Low literacy

- 50%
- 30%-40%
- 5%-15%
- 5%

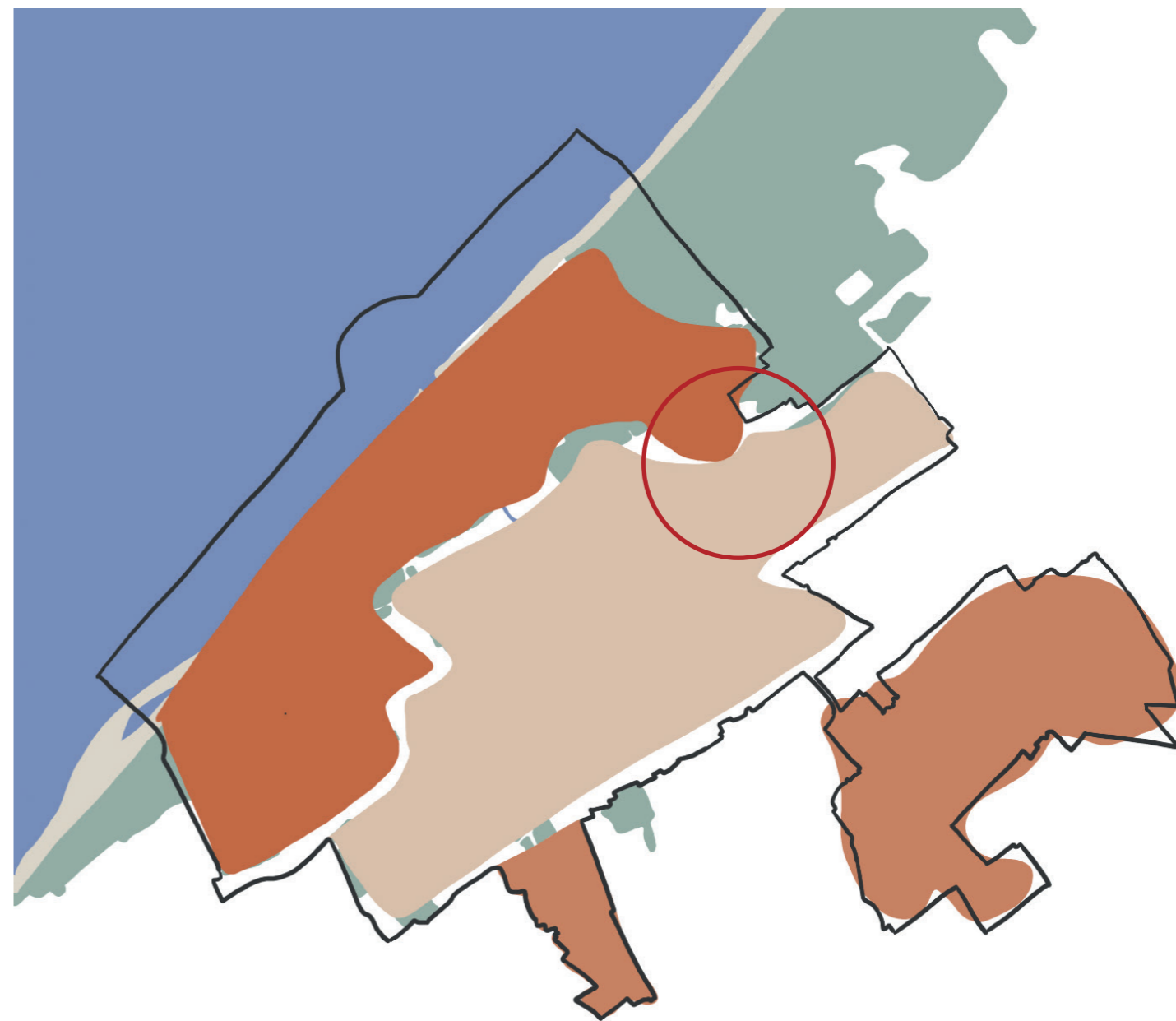
PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION ON SOCIO-SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The city of The Hague is the most populated area in The Netherlands (Nergens Zo Dicht op Elkaar Als in Den Haag, 2024) and one of the most population dense areas in Europe, with almost 6,900 citizens per square kilometre.

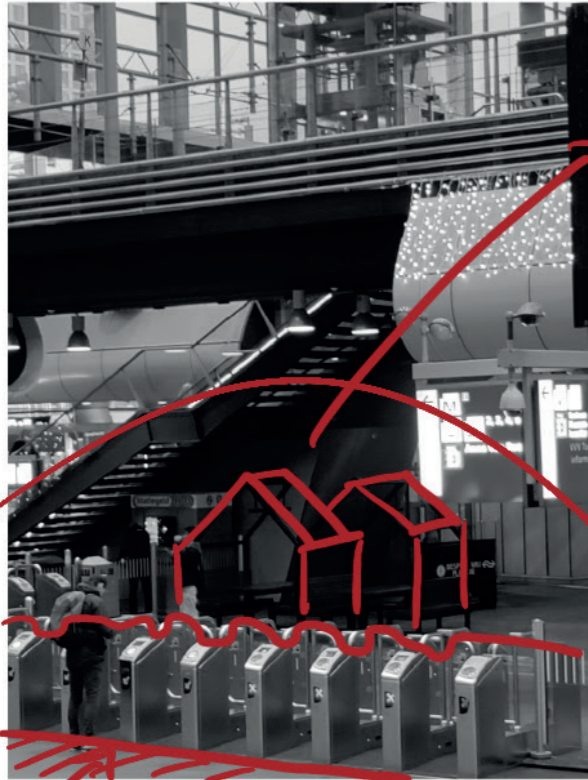
Also, The Hague, out of the 4 biggest municipalities in The Netherlands, is the most spatially segregated of them all (Segregatiemonitor - 5. Werk en Inkomen - Den Haag, z.d.).

In mapping certain socio-spatial data, a pattern becomes visible: People living on the seaside (dark orange) of the city often have a higher disposable income, while people living in the inland part (light orange), live in the most population dense area, have the lowest literacy rates of the city and participate less in elections, than people living along the seacoast.

An interesting conclusion is that around the Central Station Area, a lot of the different socio-spatial qualities of the city meet.



FIRST CONCLUSIONS AFTER FIELD TRIP



CLEAR
PUBLIC →
PRIVATE
TRANSITION

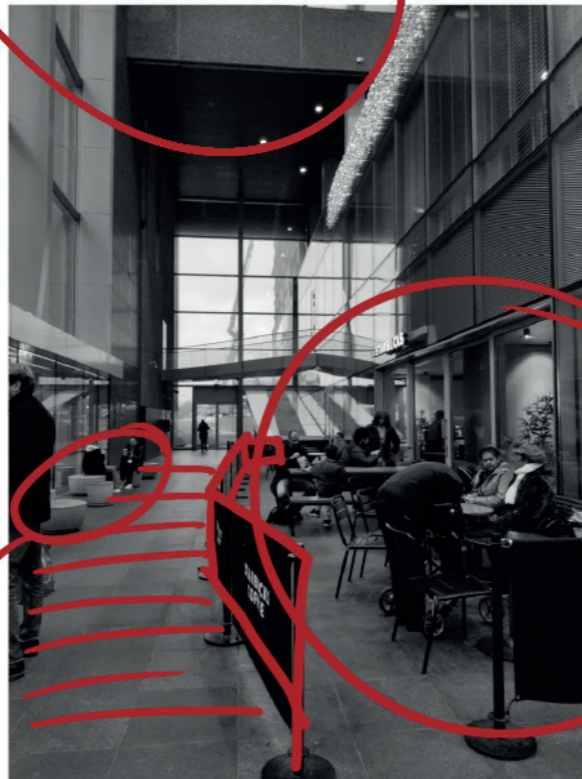
NOT PAYING
TO SIT? → ONLY
THESE
CONCRETE
THINGS

Active
plinth,
mostly
shops

NICE
URBAN
FURNITURE



Screen
for
ADPS (& ART?)



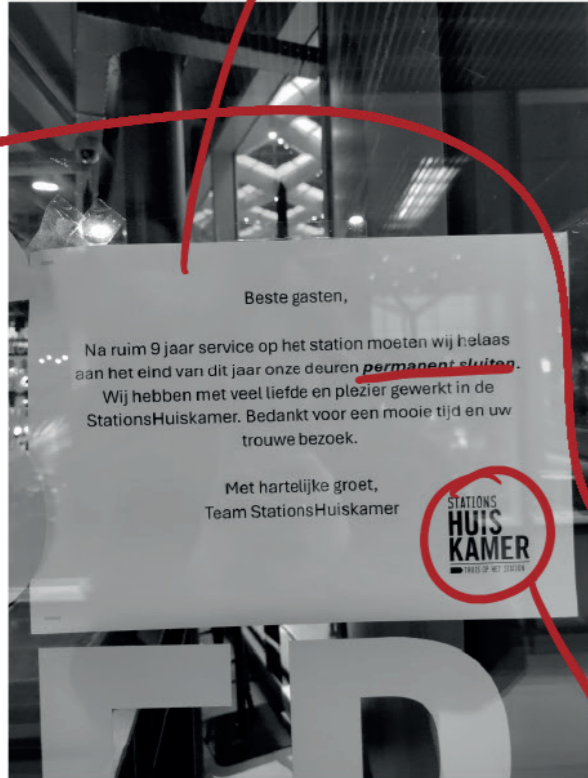
Starbucks
owns
PUBLIC?
SEMI-PUBLIC
space

↳ Fence
feels odd



→ No cars
No

ONLY RESTAURANT
WHERE YOU DID
NOT HAVE
TO PAY
IS CLOSED ...



Safety cameras



everywhere

But specific
NS DESIGN



Book swap
BUT!

WITH
card
you can
go here

BUILDING
INSIDE
THE
BUILDING



PEOPLE
MAINLY
WALK ON SIDES

CLEAR
GUIDANCE
FOR
BLIND
PEOPLE



FLYERS
WITH 'CONSPIRACY'
THEORIES

nice sitting
area.

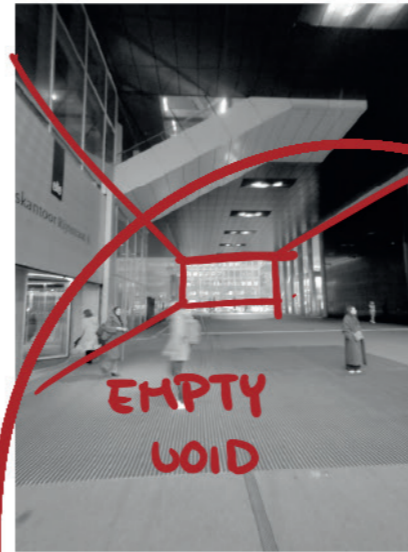
FIRST CONCLUSIONS AFTER FIELD TRIP



CROWDED AREA

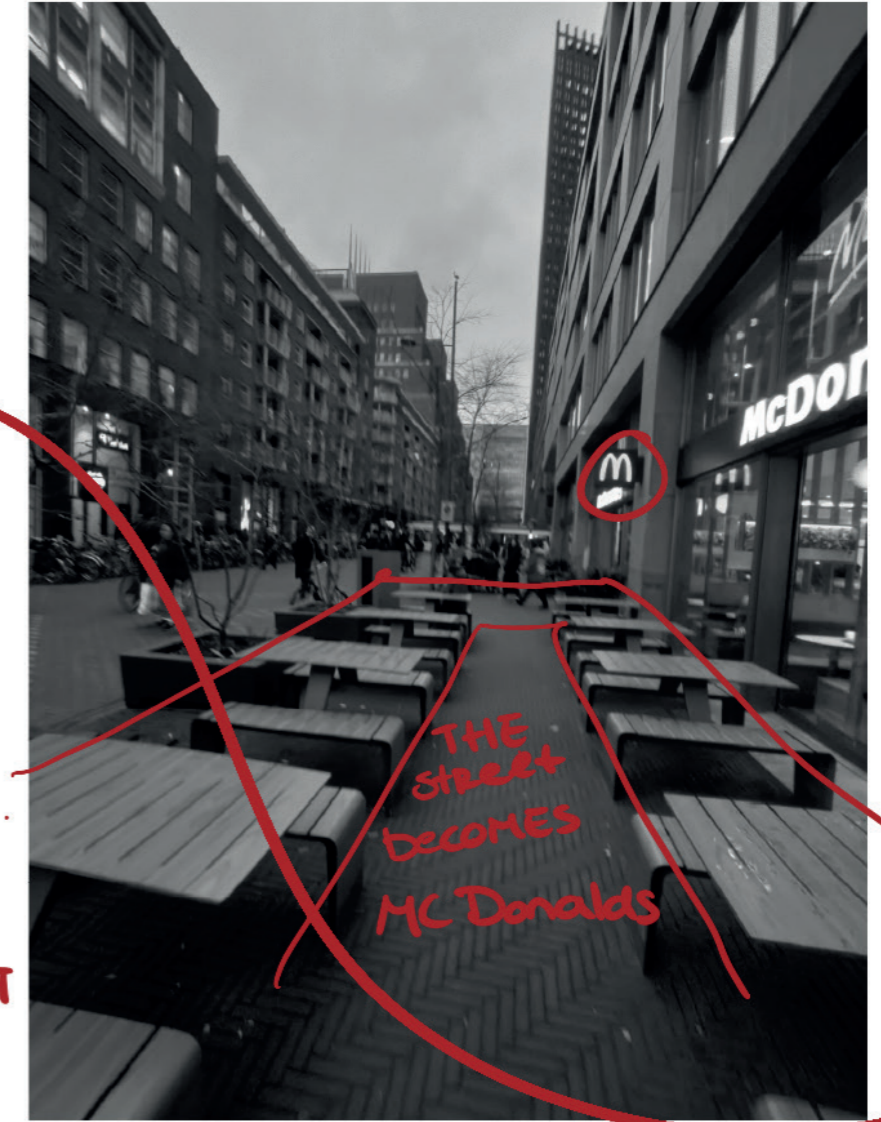
Station HAS TWO CONTRASTING IDENTITIES

OUTSIDE ↔ INSIDE IS VAGUE



EMPTY VOID

HIGH CEILING → CORRIDOR AS STREET



THE STREET BECOMES MC Donalds

Electricity box with political statements



GOVERNMENT BUILDING
↳ MIGRATION OFFICE
Monument

Intimidating
High rise of Government
**INTERNAL
AFFAIRS**



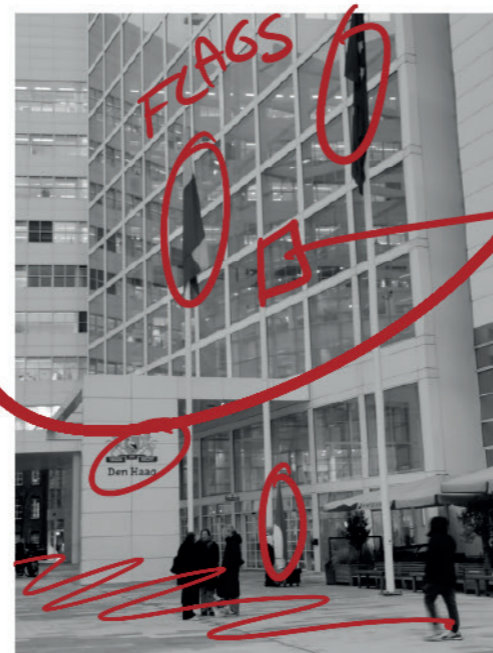
EU flag
DUTCH flag
Government flag?

Big fancy
fancy



Community
Initiative
& network
in Library

THE
END



Transparent
facade

BIG, OPEN SPACE

08.

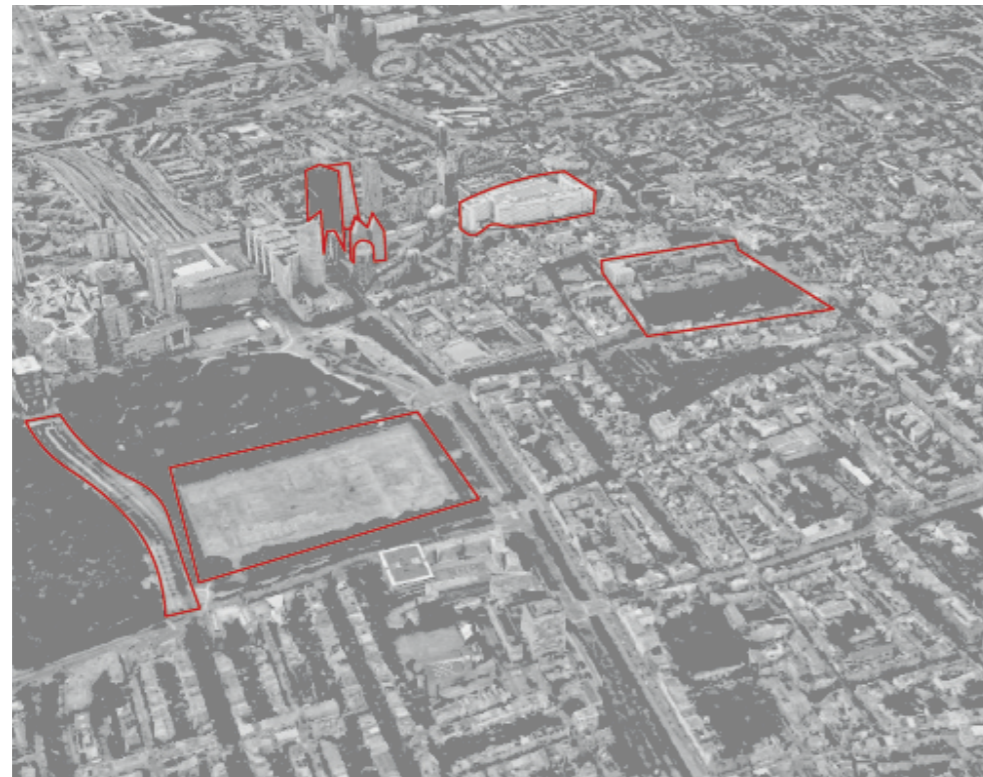
WHAT'S NEXT?

STEPS RIGHT AFTER P2: WHAT'S NEXT?

Continuing the Analysis of The Hague

As a first step, I want to focus on the historical and spatial analysis of The Hague, in order to define what spaces are already present. I want to decide what the focus area of the design will be. Also, I want to experiment with different mapping methods to gain a further understanding on how the city can be experienced, by exploring subjective mapping methods.

I also want to sharpen the design brief of the thesis further.

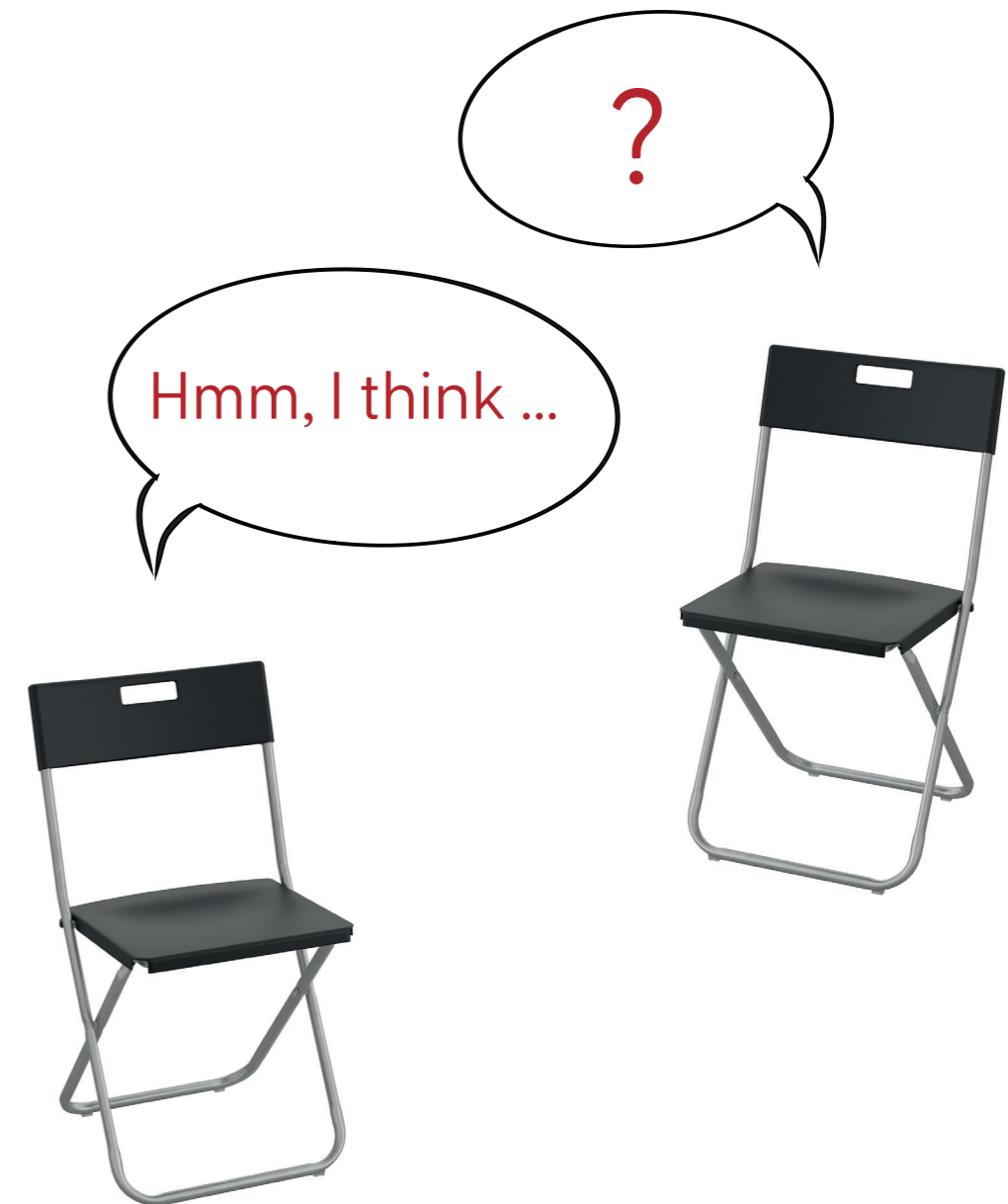


Experimental street interviews

In order to explore the context of The Hague further, I am planning on conducting a range of street interviews. I want to experiment the ways I can interview people, by interviewing during different days, times of the day, by bringing two chairs, by making a poster, and maybe other methods as well. I want to also reflect on if what I wear, how I ask questions and if how I feel during an interview, change the answers.

I want to aks people questions like:

- Where and how would you like to interact with people of your Neighbourhood?
- If you could change this space, how would you do it and why?
- In what way would you want to interact with people that think differently than you?

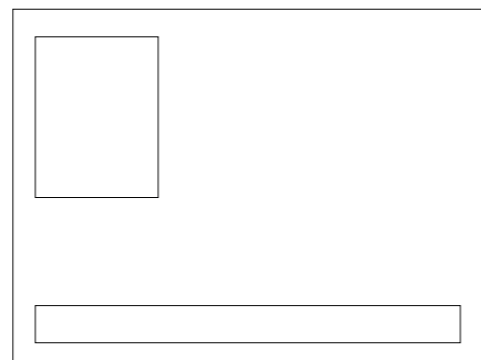
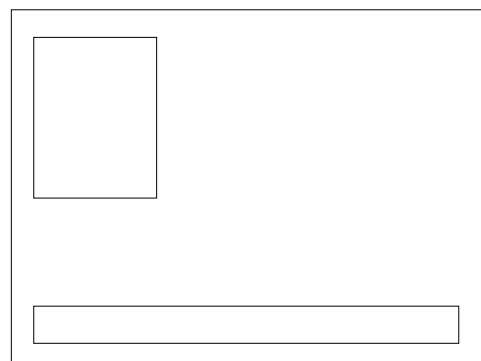
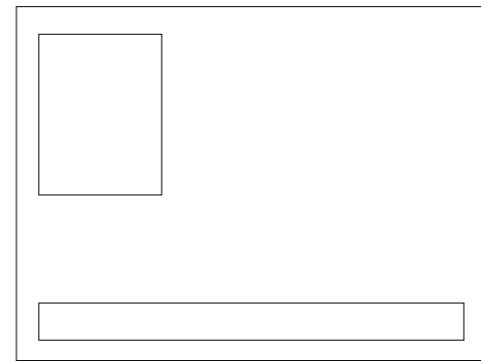
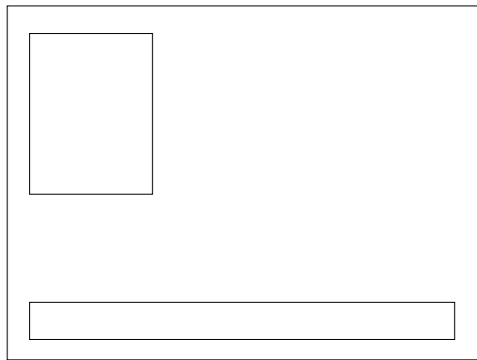


Expert interviews

To gain a broader understanding of the relation of space and democracy, I want to interview spatial designers, political scientists and maybe some other scholars. The goal of the interviews is to broaden the perspective and to be critical of the one I have proposed for now. My goal is to interview about 4 people. I am in contact with Wouter Vanstippenhout and will email other people right after P2.

Questions I will ask:

- What do you think is the role of a designer in a Democracy?
- What spaces do you think could be added, to integrate active citizenship or the societal democracy, into the urban fabric of today?

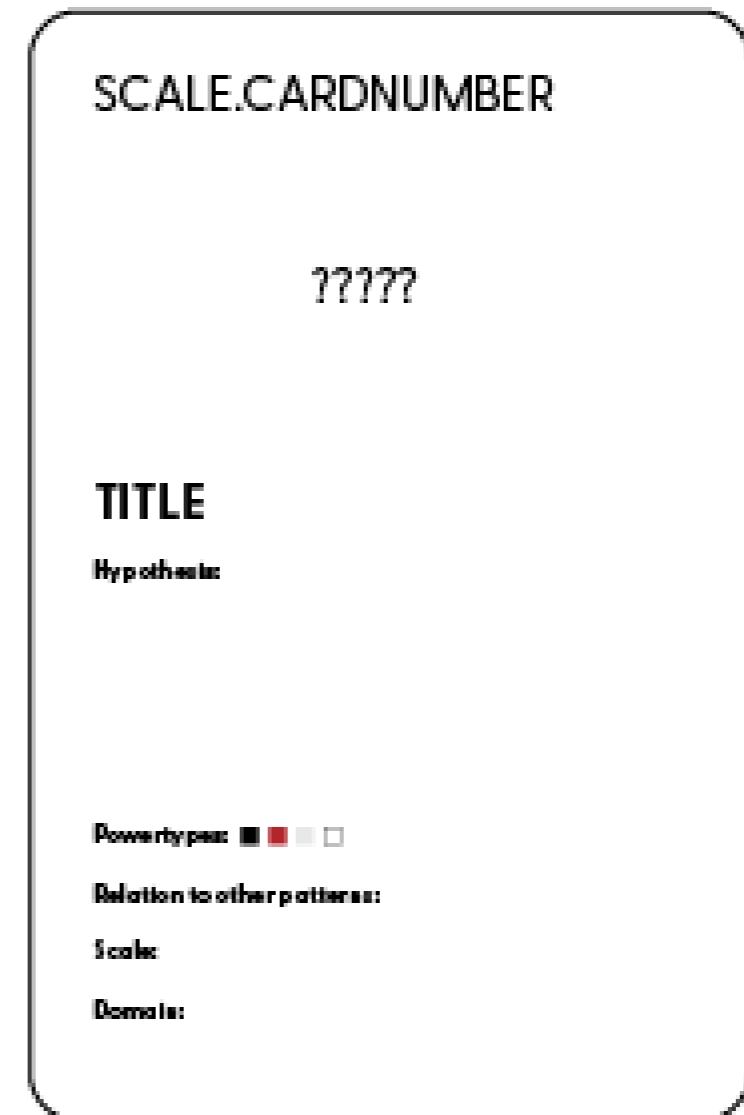


Creating the Pattern Language

Furthermore, I want to work on the Pattern Language, by integrating best-practice examples of a literary review, the interviews, and see if I can add onto those myself. This will be the base for the Research by Design phase.

Other

In order to see the entire planning of my thesis, I refer you to the 'Planning' chapter of my booklet !!



TO BE CONTINUED..

REFLECTION

1. How do you see the relation between your graduation project topic, the studio topic, your master's track (Urbanism), and your master's program (MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences)?

The project focuses on the relation of Democracy and Space, this topic fits closely with the Transitional Territories studio, because the focus of said studio is to develop radical projects that pose a critical remark on present-day systems. The project fits within the master track of Urbanism, because it focuses on both the design and the planning and strategy side of the master. The research explores spatial design methods, reflects on the role of the urban designer in Democracy and reflects on the effect of the Urban Form on social systems.

It relates to my master's programme, because it is a multi-scalar project that examines design on the architectural and urban scale. Also, the project also strongly relates to the Management in the Built Environment track, since it also explores the status-quo of management practice and relates to actor analysis and participatory design.

2. How do you see the relation between research and design in your graduation project?

There is a strong link of research and design in this project. The role of the Urban Form and Democracy is being thoroughly investigated. Conclusions on this issue are directly translated to the design methods, for example the mapping techniques that James Corner discusses in 'The Agency of Mapping' are implemented. Furthermore, the argumentation on why the design is a spatial design intervention and a pattern language, is based upon research. Also the critical urban theory of Peter Marcuse is used as a way to structure the methodology, but also the design phase.

The hypothesis of the Radical Pluralist Democracy in space, is used not only in the research, but also in the way the process is structured and as the brief for the design product.

3. What do you see as the value (and limitations) of your way of working: your approach, your used methods?

The value of my way of working is that I have a critical, spatial approach to a topic that is oftentimes explored mainly in theoretical and strategic sense. I think my attempt to translate the main idea of the research, the racial, pluralist ideal, to the thesis as a whole, is also a valuable part of my way of working. While I am not educated as a political or social scientist, I think it is valuable to explore and understand the system to its roots more than I have learned in my Academic career so far. However, this also poses one of my limitations: I have not been educated as a political scientist and do not have much knowledge on social science. I think this is why my mentors are important, to guide me and help me to find a way to explore the spatial side of the issue.

Another limitation of this research is my own identity and experience. While I also consider it an opportunity, since it is one of the reasons to initiate this research, I think that in designing for a radical, pluralist democracy, it would be beneficial to have a much larger group of researchers, with a multitude of experiences and identities involved, since the research core is on pluralism. I have to acknowledge that a certain level of bias will be limiting this research, this consideration also has to be applied to the literature and data that will be used for this thesis. Furthermore, the fact that I only speak Dutch and English will limit my ability to interview certain people in their mother tongue.

Also, I have little to no budget for the thesis. Additionally, the research will take a year, so there will be limited time to engage in a comprehensive iterative process. Also, due to ethical considerations, I will have a limited ability to engage with stakeholders. Another limitation of this research is the renovation of the buildings of the national government, 'Het Binnenhof', since this creates limited to no ability to see and interact with the space, in the way that it would if it was in function. However, there is now another building used for the same purpose.

Lastly, due to the political nature of the research, it is important to be aware and mindful of other opinions and values. Therefore, this is a strong part of the methodology. However, it should be noted that this also causes a subjective opinion, while supported by research, on what a 'solution' is, let alone a 'good' solution. I think the main goal is not to show a 'good' solution, but rather a sum of possible solutions that could serve as the base of a broader discussion.

4. What are the academic and societal value, scope and implications of your graduation project, including ethical aspects?

The academic value of my project is the fact that I attempt to link Urban Design and Political Science, by focussing on spatial interventions. Creating this link is valuable, because it bridges different disciplines. The societal value of my project is the fact that I address and research the recent trend of democratic erosion and try to implement the conclusion of research that in order to strengthen our democratic system, the 'societal democracy' or active citizenship should be further conceptualised and actualised.

The scope of the research is the context of The Netherlands, in The Central Station of The Hague. The research will take about a year and will be conducted as part of the graduation year of the second year of the master programme Urbanism of the University of Technology, Delft. The focus will be on the Urban Design field. It will not examine the political system of the Netherlands as a whole or propose a new system, rather the focus is on strengthening the current system, by researching spatial design and methods that could contribute to that goal.

The research also is based upon interviews, the data and information should be carefully managed. During the interviews, it should be communicated what the reason for the interview is. Interviews should only be conducted, if one has expressed consent.

5. How do you assess the transferability of your project results?

The transferability of the research is assessed, by clearly defining the context of the research. Furthermore, the methods, aims, scope and questions are clearly communicated. Limitations are identified and communicated. Also, the motivation, my own personal values and interests are explained.

The conceptual framework creates the base of further research and can be adjusted, if concluded necessary, by others. The theoretical framework shows what literary the research was based upon and was created with the idea that the literary list can be changed or expanded upon.

6. What are the learning objectives of the graduation?

The learning objective of this thesis is to develop skills to link social and political science to spatial sciences. The goal is to gain an understanding of methods and theory to link these fields. Furthermore, the goal is to develop design skills further, by exploring different types of mapping and drawing. Also, the aim is to develop academic writing skills and skills to critically examine the existing practice.

7. What is your motivation for this research?

Ever since I was a kid, political discussions were at the table in my family. While my parents align in their values, they have a different interpretation of them in a political sense. This created an inspiration to listen and think about these political problems from a young age and was one of the reasons why I started to master Urbanism. Urbanism, to me, is a research field where a lot of issues, also addressed in political debate, are present, the climate crisis and questions around diversity for example.

In the first year of my master's degree, my teacher showed me a book by Alexander Brodsky and Ilya Utkin, both 'paper architects', explaining that in a time of Soviet utilitarianism Brodsky and Utkin were limited in expressing their ideas, only on paper. Their goal was to create a more emotional and humane form of architecture (Viva, 2022). One of the drawings contained a bridge, made out of a city. I interpreted this drawing as a conceptualisation of the importance of the city to bridge different people together.

In deciding on a topic for my master thesis, I started with a couple of fascinations. This fascination started in my first year, when I was seeing pictures of protests in The Hague and started participating in the climate justice protests that took place on the A12 highway. I also started noticing stickers on the streetlights representing all kinds of opinions and the upside-down flags of farmers along the highways. I thought back to the paper architects and wondered what urban design means. The highway was bridging all kinds of people, from bystanders, to activists, to policemen, but also all kinds of worldviews, a bit like in the drawing of Brodsky and Utkin. This made me want to explore the role of the urban designer in relation to democracy and protest.

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