



THE LAND OF MAKING

Research Plan
Zhang Shuyu
Method of analysis and imagination

INDDEX.

I. Introduction

- 5 Introduction
- 7 Background
- 9 Problem Statement

II. Research Framework

- 13 Theoretical Framework
- 17 Methodology Framework
- 21 Bibiography



Figure 2. Revitalized Industrial Heritage, author,2024

"Unused spaces in cities are free from design's shaping hand, they become territories of discovery and refuge, places for spontaneity and the unexpected"



Figure 3. The abandoned Kopli Lines in Tallinn, AS operail, 2019

"Terrain Vague"

The space of non-space

In modern art, the ruins of decaying **industrial sites** that often lie abandoned in cities have become fertile grounds for artists to explore infinite future possibilities. These post-industrial spaces symbolize the boundless potential for creativity and innovation. Similarly, in Christopher Nolan's *Tenet*, the abandoned Kopli railway section in Tallinn becomes the protagonist's starting point for a journey into the future.

Tim Edensor (2005), argues that these modern remnants evoke positive associations by stripping away the rigid structures that typically dictate predictable, formal, and productive human behavior, and replacing them with spaces that embody chaos, imagination, and freedom. The aesthetic appeal of industrial space culture treats abandoned industrial wastelands as historical landmarks, structures that evoke aesthetic tension, and as opportunities to witness the **rewilding of urban landscapes**.

The wasteland provides residents a unique opportunity to redefine urban communities from the ground up as well, functioning as spaces of creativity, freedom, and transformation. Modern urban planning increasingly emphasizes robust **community engagement**, data-driven analysis, and a deep understanding of social and cultural history to collaboratively establish development goals and identify opportunities. This participatory approach not only empowers communities but also enriches the design process, leading to more **sustainable, equitable, and resilient** outcomes, as Jacobs (1961) advocated.



Figure 4. The Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn, author, 2024

Revitalizing Identity

"We live in an almost ironic situation where globalization makes architecture possible, but also makes it invisible."

Rem Koolhaas

Tallinn has undergone a massive urban renewal characterized by a shift toward housing privatization and a neoliberal approach to development since independence. This transformation has seen numerous high-end residential areas and upscale amenities gradually replace the abandoned industrial areas that once defined the city's landscape. Former factories and warehouses gave way to luxury waterfront apartments, state-of-the-art conference centers, and food courts that cater to affluent clients. These developments have created an image of a sophisticated urban paradise targeting the upper classes, reshaping the city's waterfront and other prime locations. Rather than creating vibrant, inclusive communities, large-scale redevelopment projects have created **exclusive enclaves** that cater to a limited population.

As Andres Sevtsuk observes, the architectural diversity brought about by Tallinn's post-industrial era is paradoxically eroding the city's social diversity. As a catalyst for gentrification, creative industries were the first to move in (Pastak et al., 2019), replacing cheap ethnic restaurants and traditional grocery stores. Having tasted the sweetness, entrepreneurs introduced a large number of homogeneous small shops.

In this context, Tallinn's urban renewal efforts confront the challenge of nurturing a distinctive urban culture to cultivate a strong sense of identity (Maroš Krivý, 2023). Recently, **urban manufacturing** has gained traction in various European cities, presenting opportunities for innovation, addressing circular economy challenges, diversifying employment, and boosting community engagement (Croxford et al., 2020). The industrial remnants of past manufacturing sectors—such as machining, shipbuilding, and weaving mills—have significantly shaped the cultural landscape of northern Tallinn. These opportunities allow the **community** to redefine and reinvigorate previously neglected spaces, transforming them into vibrant hubs of activity and creativity.



Figure 5. The Kopli Depot, Jaan Elken, 1982

Leftover Regeneration

"Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings."

Jane Jacobs

Between Kalamaja and Pelgulinn lies a 1.5-kilometer stretch of abandoned railway tracks, measuring up to 300 meters at its widest point. This railway was established in the early 20th century during a period of significant industrialization and urbanization in Tallinn. Originally, it served as a vital transportation route between the Port of Tallinn and the city's industrial zones, facilitating the movement of goods and raw materials. Freight trains connected the port with surrounding industries, playing a crucial role in transporting wood, coal, building materials, and various industrial products as Tallinn emerged as a key trade and industrial hub in the Baltic region.

However, as Tallinn's industrial landscape evolved and the transportation needs of the port and railways shifted, the significance of these railway lines for freight gradually diminished. By the late 20th century, many industrial facilities closed or relocated, leading to a substantial decline in demand for railway transport. Particularly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Tallinn's economic model transformed, further reducing the role of railway freight as a primary means of transportation, resulting in the gradual abandonment of these lines.

Today, these disused railways are often regarded as part of the city's industrial heritage. While they no longer serve any transportation purpose, they retain significant historical significance, reflecting Tallinn's industrial development. The tracks traverse the historic residential neighborhoods of Kalamaja and Pelgulinn, serving as silent witnesses to the city's evolution. At the southern end of the railway, the Telliskivi Creative City has emerged as a pioneer of urban renewal, attracting creative enthusiasts from around the world. However, the presence of abandoned warehouses surrounding the railway partially obstructs the connection between Kalamaja and Pelgulinn, highlighting the need for revitalization in this area.



Figure 6. Baltit Jaam Train Station, author,2024

Research Question

Therefore, my research question is:

How can repurposing a forgotten railway site contribute to community spaces in Tallinn?

This question will be divided into three parts:

1. Idea Shift and Manufacturing Transformation

How have shifts in urban ideology influenced the cultural transformation of Kalamaja and Pelgulinn area, especially concerning their historic manufacturing heritage? What kind of new urban manufacture could be brought back?

2. Forces Shaping the Renewal Process

In what ways do different participants—including people, materials, and ideas—interact and influence the transformation of the railway site?

3. Public Space as a Community Nexus

How can the railway site be designed as a multifunctional public space that supports social interaction and community-building?

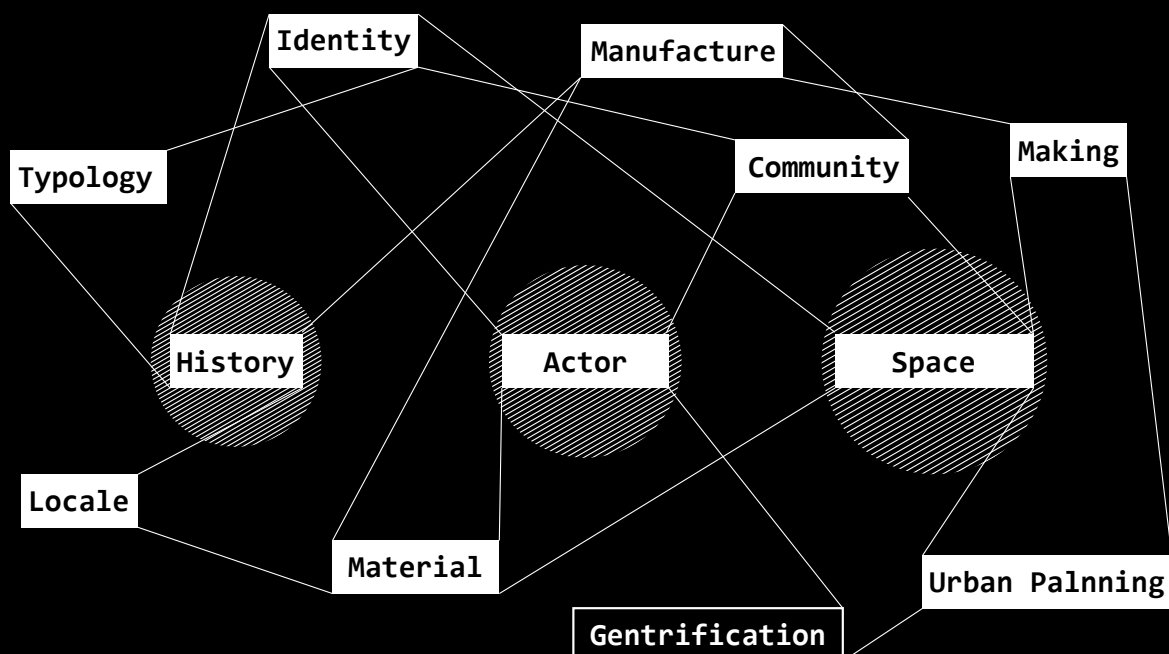


Figure 7. The progress of transforming wasteland to the public space

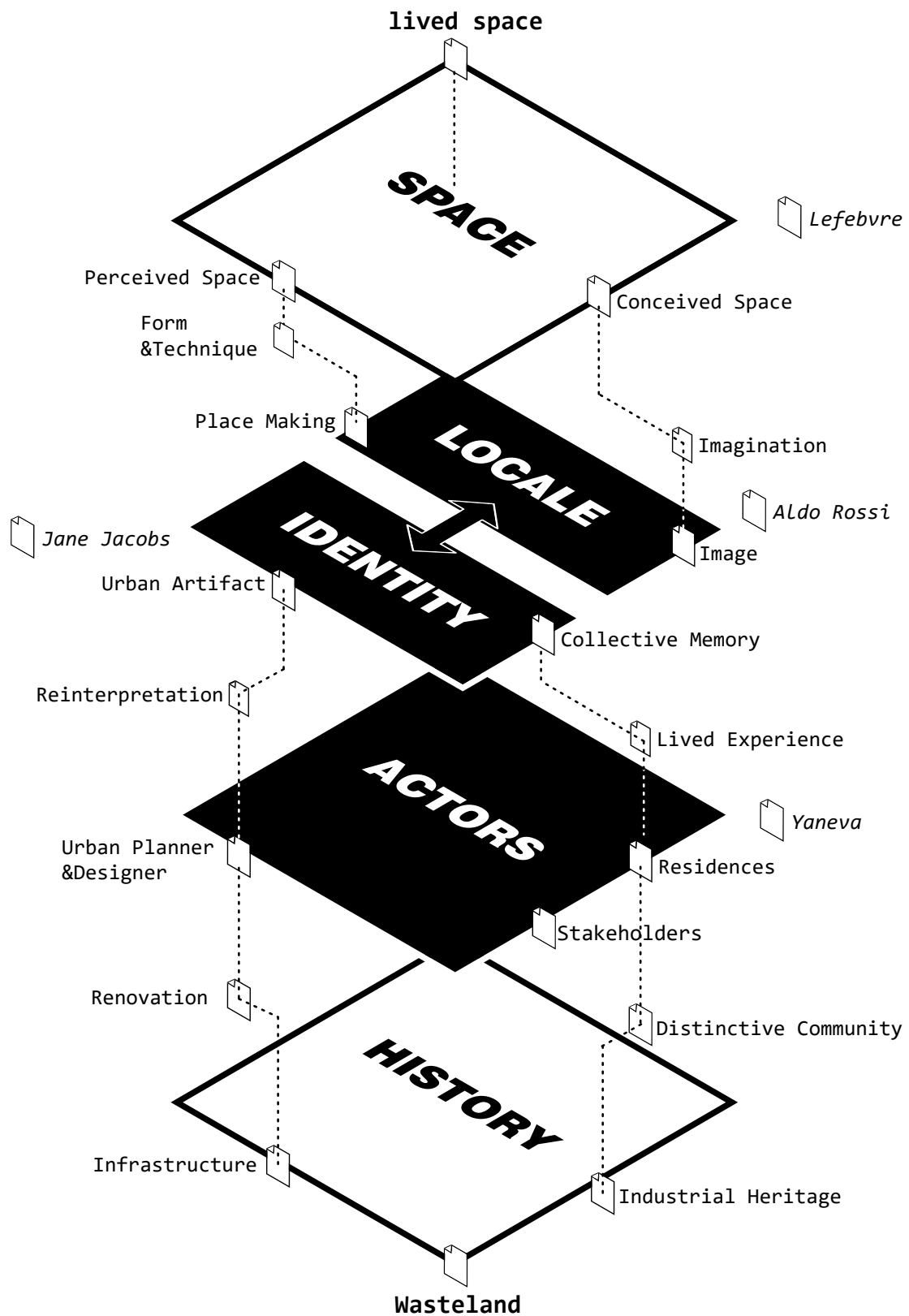


Figure 8. Theoretical Framework in layers

Theoretical Framework

From past to the future

Historical Transformation

In examining the repurposing of the abandoned railway site between Kalamaja and Pelgulinn, this theoretical framework serves as an analytical lens to understand the interplay of community involvement, urban renewal, and public spaces considerations. The framework begins by exploring the historical significance of the railway, emphasizing its role as both a physical infrastructure and a symbol of Tallinn's industrial heritage. This involves a nuanced examination of how the remnants of this railway can be transformed into a vibrant community space that reflects local identity and participation.

Actor Involvement Network

To construct this framework, it is essential to consider the diverse actors involved in the urban renewal process. Drawing on actor-network theory (Yaneva, 2022b), the study recognizes that stakeholders—including local residents, urban planners, cultural organizations, and governmental bodies—are interconnected and influential in shaping the outcomes of the railway's transformation. Each actor brings unique perspectives and interests that can either foster or hinder community participation. As explored by Callon, the dynamics between these actors reveal how power relations can shift and how collective agency can emerge through collaborative efforts in reclaiming urban spaces.



Figure 9. Traditional Kalamaja house protal, author, 2024

Place-Making Identity

The narrative surrounding the repurposing of the railway demands an exploration of cultural and social identities, where concepts of place-making are crucial. Incorporating Aldo Rossi's ideas on place-making, the framework will explore how the railway site, as part of the city's "urban artifact," carries collective memory and embodies the cultural identity of Tallinn. Rossi argues that the built environment is a repository of memory, where architecture serves as a means to narrate a city's history (1982). The remnants of the railway offer more than just a physical structure; they act as a cultural reference that can anchor the community's sense of identity and continuity. The presence of these remnants allows the past to be interwoven with contemporary urban life, providing opportunities for meaningful revitalization. Rossi's theory also emphasizes the significance of "locus," or the specific characteristics of a place that give it a unique identity. Drawing on his ideas, the study will examine how the railway site, with its particular spatial and historical attributes, can be transformed into a revitalized community space. The concept of locus suggests that the railway's history and materiality can be leveraged to create a sense of place that resonates with residents, blending historical elements with contemporary uses.

Public Space Dynamics

The concept of public space as a platform for social interaction and community-building is central to this framework. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's theory of "spatial triad" (Coleman, 2014), the study explores the redesigned railway site as a multifunctional space that encompasses three interconnected dimensions: perceived space (physical layout), conceived space (planning and design), and lived space (users' experiences and social practices). As articulated by de Certeau, everyday activities in public spaces can foster social networks and a sense of belonging, making the railway site a lived space where diverse activities enhance community ties and active participation in urban renewal.

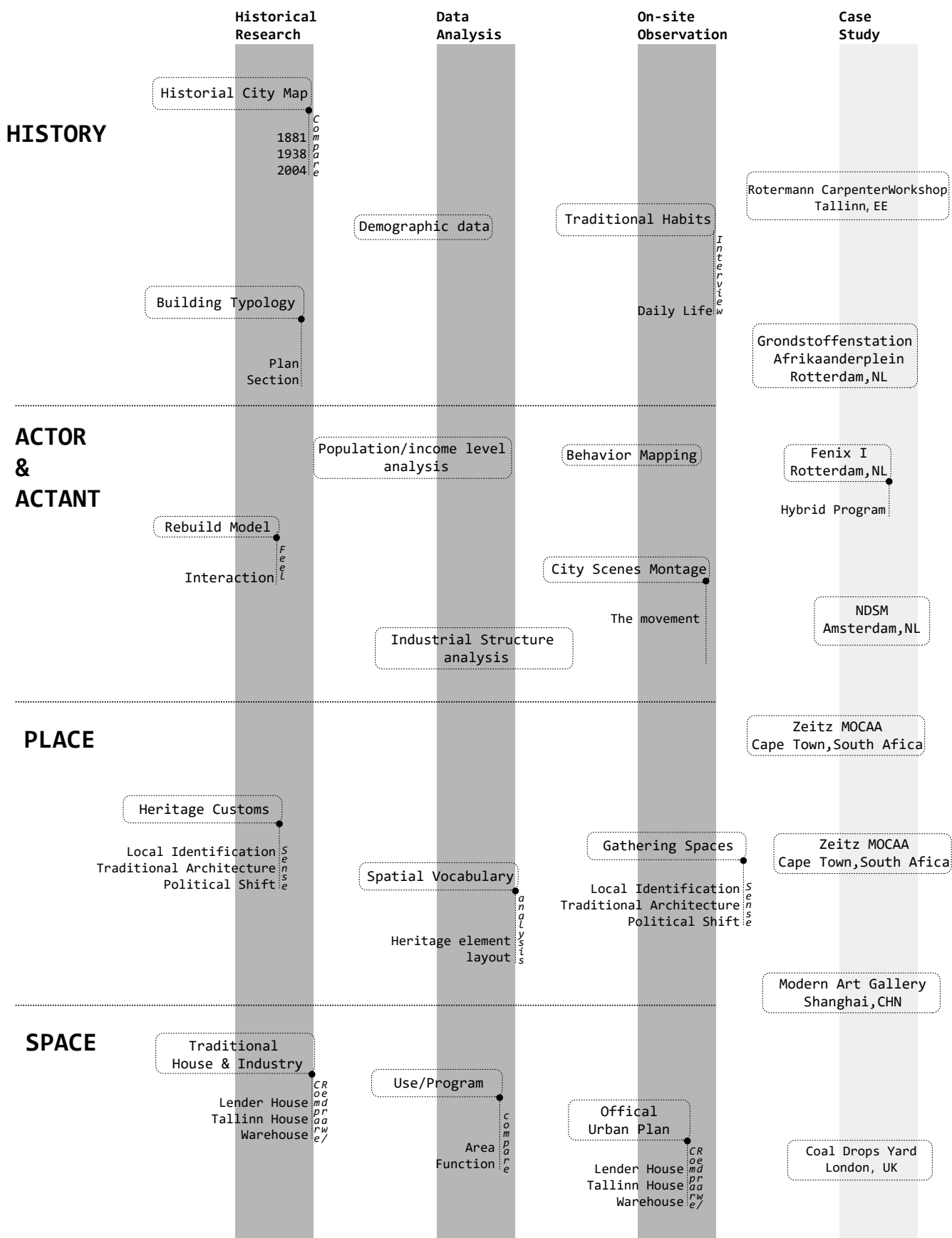


Figure 10. The Methodology Framework

Methodology Framework

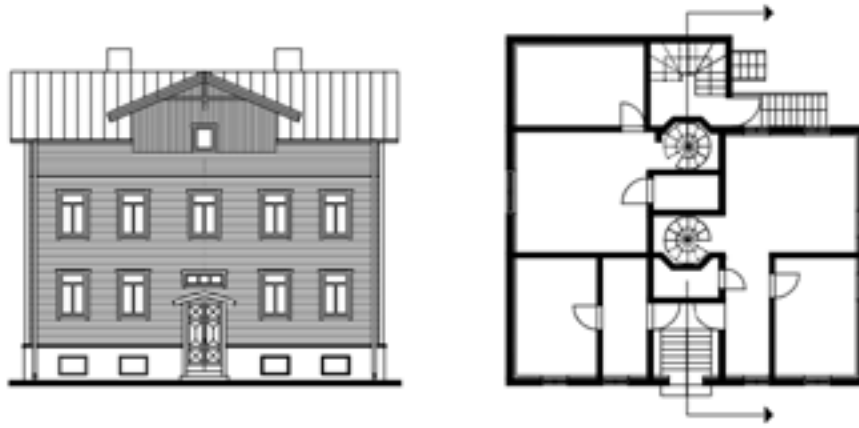


Figure 11. Salme street 49, Athina Pappa, (2023), Disicpilnary analyasis booklet

The first part of this study will delve into the historical context of the Kopli Railway District and its neighboring areas of Kalamaja and Pelgulinn, examining their traditional cultural and spiritual heritage and its ongoing impact on the local community. Initially, this section will explore the history of the railway line, analyzing its influence on the surrounding urban fabric both during its operational years and following its abandonment, while assessing the significance of preserving the railway and its remaining structures today. This analysis will involve a review of historical archives and area maps, as well as consultations of relevant urban planning materials to determine any city-level guidelines for land use and transportation. Additionally, this historical review will examine the spatial typology and unique characteristics of traditional fishermen's houses and workplaces(Figure 11), identifying both contrasts and integration possibilities to create a new mixed-use environment that incorporates housing alongside small-scale manufacturing. Standard floor plans and sections of these houses and workplaces will be redrawn at a consistent scale to facilitate direct comparisons of user trajectories and human scale within these spaces.



Figure 12. The overlapping history, author, 2024

Secondly, to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity and heterogeneity of industrial heritage spaces, I will focus on identifying their constituent elements, specifically the actor participation networks within these environments. By simulating and reconstructing historical site models, I aim to explore the specific scenarios in which people have engaged with these spaces in the past, providing valuable insights into how these environments were utilized and experienced. Additionally, I will employ mapping techniques to analyze various aspects of the surrounding environment, including functions, attributes, ownership, and current conditions. This mapping will help identify potential influencing factors that shape the usage and perception of industrial heritage spaces today. By examining these elements, I hope to uncover how historical and contemporary contexts interact to influence community engagement and spatial dynamics.

The third section will focus on studying the types of architectural elements that constitute space, which together form a collection of "events" that shape people's visual perception of their surroundings. I will emphasize observational fieldwork to analyze which specific elements and combinations can attract people to linger and explore, thereby creating rich visual experiences and interactive opportunities. These elements may include architectural compositions, landscape nodes, spatial layouts, and circulation paths, among others. By investigating these types, I aim to understand how they contribute to the overall experience of a space and foster a sense of engagement within the environment.

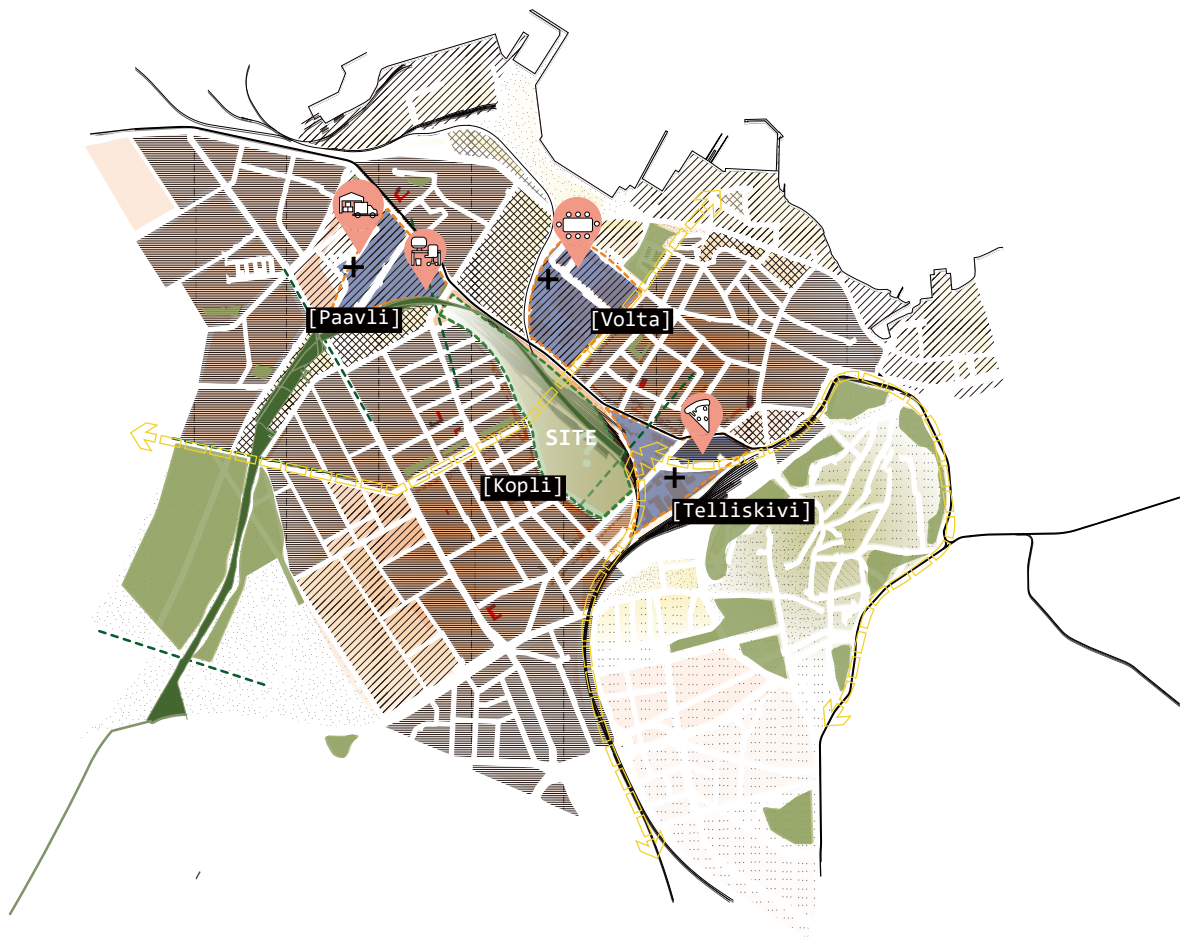


Figure 13. Mapping North Tallinn, author, 2024

Throughout this process, I have conducted extensive research on the transformation of industrial heritage and the reconstruction of manufacturing industries globally. Through comprehensive literature reviews, I have gathered detailed background information, design concepts, planning processes, and implementation outcomes for various case studies. Additionally, I have conducted online research to collect data about the locations of these cases, documenting key elements such as spatial layouts, functional facilities, and environmental atmospheres. These case studies are highly representative on a global scale, reflecting the transformation and regeneration patterns of post-industrial heritage across different regions, historical periods, and industry types. Each case features a unique historical background and transformation experience, providing a rich array of examples for our research. Furthermore, I have prioritized diversity in case selection, encompassing various types of post-industrial heritage, such as abandoned factories, mining sites, and ports, as well as the successes and challenges they faced under different transformation strategies.

Bibliography

Avidar, A., Havik, K., & Wigger, B. (2007). *Flows and Counter-Flows*. http://repository.tudelft.nl/assets/uuid:9f8b0a2c-f01c-4dcd-b3e9-60d1d9ef3377/OASE_73_001.pdf

Coleman, N. (2014). Lefebvre for Architects. In *Routledge eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315736549>

Crafting Tallinn | TU Delft Repository. (n.d.). <https://resolver.tudelft.nl/uuid:19f2d90a-edce-4834-a54f-cff06f864567>

Croxford, B., Domenech, T., Hausleitner, B., Hill, A. V., Meyer, H., Orban, A., Sanz, V. M., Vanin, F., & Warden, J. (2020). *FOUNDRIES OF THE FUTURE: A Guide for 21st Century Cities of Making*. <https://doi.org/10.47982/bookrxiv.9>

Edensor, T. (2005). Industrial Ruins. In *Bloomsbury Publishing Plc eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474214940>

Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. Random House.

Landry, C. (2012). *The creative city*. In Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781849772945>

Martínez, F. (2017). *This Place Has Potential': Trash, Culture, and Urban Regeneration in Tallinn, Estonia*, 42(3), 4–22. <https://journal.fi/suomenantropologi/article/download/60577/30841>

Pastak, I., Kindsiko, E., Tammaru, T., Kleinhans, R., & Van Ham, M. (2019). Commercial Gentrification in Post-Industrial Neighbourhoods: A Dynamic View From an Entrepreneur's Perspective. *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 110(5), 588–604. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12377>

T(h)respassing | TU Delft Repository. (n.d.). <https://resolver.tudelft.nl/uuid:96fc0a89-e543-4415-a7ba-91779a7aa312>

Pestova, A. A. (2017). Uzupis (Vilnius) and Kalamaja (Tallinn): “Cultural quarters” and the post-Soviet urban space transformation in Baltic states. <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/93093>