Research Plan

Places of non-resistance

An explorative study to the incorporation of resistance in the architectural design process to foster urban densification

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Problem statement and research question

With the demand for densification of urban areas and the limited space available in these areas, resistance is a recurring barrier that prevents the development of unused space (Farris, 2001). Citizens (united or solo) and organisations can express resistance towards initiated densification plans, by giving their opinion both in a formal manner (e.g. the submission of a notice of objection) or informally (e.g. demonstrations). Those expressions of resistance can lead to adaptations of the design, to delay in the development process, or could eventually lead to stagnation and cancellation of the project (De Architect, 2014; Haaft, 2002; Studio Hartzema, 2012). In this worst-case scenario, resistance prevents the densification of cities, while a societal need for this densification is at stake. From an architectural perspective, unused opportunities for densification are noticed. The design process, however, contains opportunities to identify and incorporate probable resistances in an early stage by using these resistances as design parameters to shape buildings. This approach could lead to a more densified city, complying with societal needs.

The subject of resistance within the built environment is a theme that could be identified, studied, and solved from a multitude of perspectives (e.g. neighbours, investor, municipality, architect). The scope of this research is the perspective of the architect towards resistance. As such, this research aims to identify strategies to design buildings without resistance, specifically to be applied in dense cities. The outcome of this research is used as a guide in the design phase of the graduation project, where one case study building will be designed that is located in the densifying city centre of Rotterdam.

The following main research question (MRQ) and corresponding sub-questions (SQ) are used to guide the research.

MRQ: *How could a designer strategically take design decisions to realise building developments, contributing to urban densification, without creating resistance?*

SQ1: *How is resistance defined in theory and building practice?*

SQ2: *How could a resistance-threshold be indicated above which resistance delays or stagnates building realisation?*

SQ3: *Which resistances are within the control of an architect?*

Definition of the theoretical framework

By defining the concept of resistance and its counterpart - *non-resistance* - in the built environment, we are positioning ourselves between social sciences, ethnography, and philosophical science and the physical practice of architecture. To define non-resistance in building developments, it is necessary to, firstly, understand the act of resistance and the manifestation of resistance. The most recurring used definition of resistance is that it is an *action* that is executed against an *opposition* (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004), the opposition being the receiver of the resistance. Non-resistance has not been defined as a counterpart of resistance in literature. The research following this research plan aims to find this definition; this theoretical framework sets out a first theoretical foundation.

Resistance itself is a process: it is temporal and personal (Baaz et al., 2018). There are multiple types of resistance, all describing ways of blocking or preventing processes to happen. Resistance is shaped by scale, the target, goal, direction, and/or level of coordination (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).
The following two elements together construct resistance.

- The first element is the visibility of resistance and the recognition of it as an act. Some say that the claim of an actor that he/she resists, could be classified as resistance (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2016; Scott, 1985). Others say that resistance can only be qualified as such when both the *opposition* and an observer recognise the (*intended*) action as resistance (Rubin, 1996).

- The second element is the *intent* of resistance. In literature, different views are present on whether just the intent is classifying as resistance, or whether an action is needed to classify as such. Scott (1985, 1989) states that the intent is a better indicator of resistance than the outcome since the act of resistance does not always lead to the desired effect. Others point out that intentions are not central while classifying something as resistance and that it is the act itself that makes something observable as resistance (Rubin, 1996). The last group of authors suggests that solely observing the intent is difficult - if not impossible - and that the act makes resistance visible (Weitz, 2001).

The definition of resistance is based on a triangle of three actors: the actor of intent, the target and the observer. The target and observer together ensure recognition. They are a strong threesome, needing each other to be able to create and recognise resistance (Rubin, 1996). The representation of resistance is diverse. It is observed on many levels: from nationally organised manifests to small unorganised everyday resistance (Baaz et al., 2018).

Dealing with resistance could be done by excluding, or aiming to exclude, one of the roles in the act of resistance. Since three different roles can be excluded, different approaches and theories are used to deal with resistance in the built environment (Baaz et al., 2018; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004).

- From the intended actor perspective, suitable approaches could be avoiding resistance in the first place, contesting, empowerment, biased processing (Fransen et al., 2015), and building on the YIMBY-principle (yes-in-my-backyard, contrasting to NIMBY or not-in-my-backyard) (Lake, 1993).

- From the power perspective, approaches which could be used are framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007), marketing (Fransen et al., 2015), nudging (Doberstein et al., 2016), and legal procedures such as notices of objections (Ewick & Silbey, 2003).

- From the observer perspective, approaches that could be adopted are totalitarianism, oppression and suppression (Scott, 1985), and the refusal to recognise resistance (Pickett, 1996).

The term non-resistance is not used as the theoretical counterpart of resistance in either theory on resistance, or in the literature on the built environment. In the scope of this research, non-resistance is stated to be the theoretical counterpart of resistance, though. Reasoning from the threesome as described above, two possible views are prevalent in the literature regarding the absence of resistance (or the presence of non-resistance). Some claim that only so-called 'overt' resistance is the only 'real' type of resistance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004; Weitz, 2001). This type of resistance could be described as a situation where all three actors recognise the act of resistance. As soon as one of these actors would not recognise the act of resistance as such, resistance would be absent (Rubin, 1996). The other perspective is resistance as defined by Scott (1985) and Johansson & Vinthagen (2016), where the intent of the '*resister*' is more important than the recognition of resistance. This type of resistance and corresponding non-resistance is more subjective, but should not be forgotten to be considered in the design process.

Methodological positioning and description of research methods

Multiple research steps and methods are needed to answer the research question, both methods based on theory and related to practice. The research should lead to academically underpinned strategies to design buildings without resistance.

Methodological positioning
This research aims to explore an alternative approach of incorporating (coping with) resistance in a building process: a shift from resistance dictating changes after the design phase, to a holistic approach incorporating probable resistance at forehand as a parameter during the design phase.

To study this novel approach, an exploratory research is executed. The research strategy that is adopted, is a combination between logical argumentation and qualitative research (Groat & Wang, 2013). Logical argumentation is explicitly chosen as a research strategy to find a definition for non-resistance, a term that is not defined in literature as such, and which could not be defined by a very concrete or specific research method. The definition of this term, that is stated to be the counterpart of resistance in this project, is deducted by understanding the definition of the concept of resistance. Qualitative research is used to understand resistance and its presence in the developing built environment. Qualitative research allows me to understand resistance (within the built environment) in a holistic and context-specific manner, based on exemplary people, events, and places and not on a baseline or average.

The research design consists of four steps, as visualised in figure 1, answering respectively sub-questions 1, 2, and 3, and the main research question. The sub questions are mainly answered by qualitative research methods, logical argumentation is primarily used to answer the main research question.

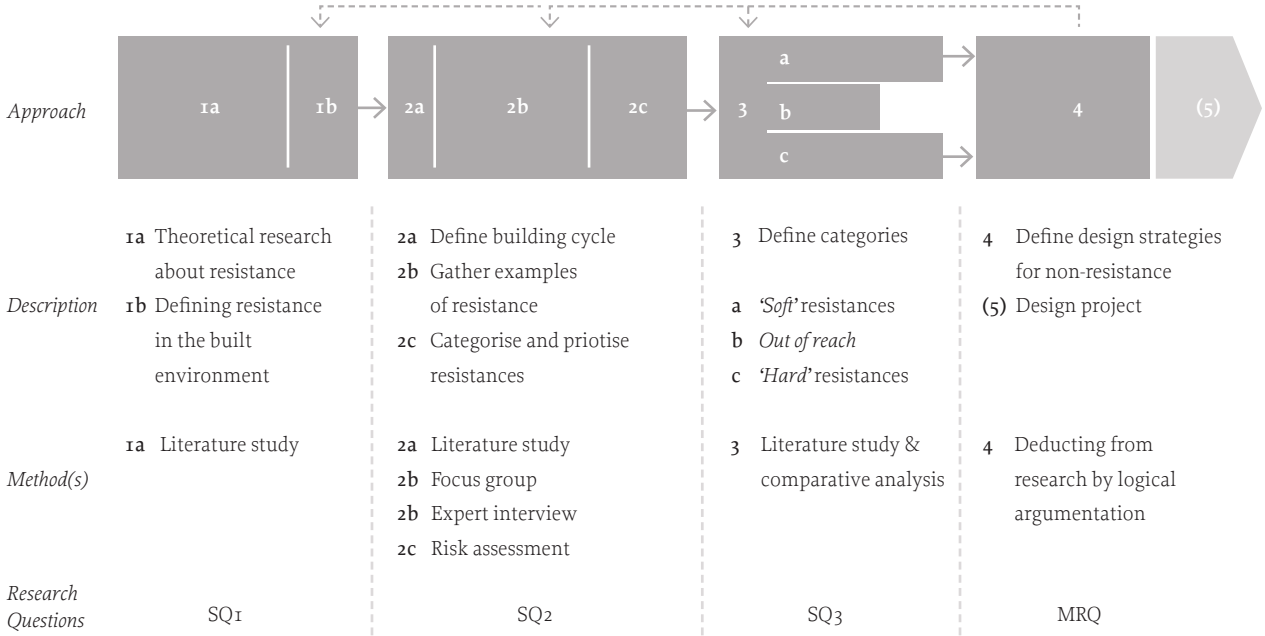

Figure 1: Diagram of the research structure. By 'Soft' in step 3a, the resistance by Scott (1985) is meant, 'out of reach' in step 3b references to the reach of the designer concerning coping with resistance, 'Hard' in step 3c, refers to the resistance as meant by Rubin (1996).

Research methods

Step 1

A **literature study** is executed to explore theoretical definitions of resistance, and to determine a specific definition of resistance which is applicable in urban building developments.

Step 2

A compact **literature study** is used to define the different phases and steps in building developments - from initiation to realisation. Subsequently, an array of resistances is explored by the creation of narratives and studying examples. Herefore, a **focus group** is organised in which a multidisciplinary group of young professionals in the spatial/design domain is asked to brainstorm on possible resistances in a context-specific case. The outcomes of this focus group are extended by a couple of **expert interviews** with professionals from the building practice. The results of the focus group and expert interviews and the literature study on building development processes are combined to study which resistance is present in which phase. As the last part of this research step, different types of resistance (in different building phases) are prioritised, to decide which ones should be explicitly incorporated in a design strategy for building with non-resistance. Prioritisation is based on **risk assessment** methods, of which the precise execution has to be determined in collaboration with third mentor Erwin Heurkens.

Step 3

Again **literature study** is used to define the design decisions an architect can take during a design process. A **comparative analysis** is made, subsequently, to identify which resistances, in which building phases, could be tackled by design decisions, and are as such within the power of an architect.

Step 4

Logical argumentation deducts the answer to the main research question from the steps above. As such, design strategies for non-resistance are found by reasoning from the understanding of resistance in the built environment, and the power of the architect to influence resistance during a development process.

Relevance of the research

In the year 2050, 70% of the world population is expected to live in urban areas, compared to just over half right now (United Nations, 2018). The same trend of urbanisation is visible in the Netherlands. The Randstad will be further densified within the upcoming decades, due to the high demand for inner-city living and a large housing shortage (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2018). The trend of densification entails a multitude of chances and opportunities to improve the current city (e.g. growth of housing stock and improvement of public facilities) (Hamers, 2020; Nabielek et al., 2012). In the process of densification, however, spatial developments have to cope with multiple barriers. One of those barriers could be named as the concerns of the surrounding community and involved actors regarding the developments (Cytron, 2004; Farris, 2001; Wheeler, 2001).

These concerns can grow to different types of resistance which can prevent further development of initiated projects (Farris, 2001). It is prevalent that in dense urban areas, the density of different opinions is just as high. Each actor has its own perspective on the design and management of the spatial realm; with the presence of many actors, conflicting interests and ideas will have a significant impact on the process of city developments. The city of the future asks for approaches to realise developments in the midst of many opinions. Participation of involved actors at the start and during developments is an approach that is becoming the norm. In line with that, a form of participation will be a requirement within the (to be implemented) Dutch '*omgevingswet*' (BZK Implementatieteam Omgevingswet, 2020). This research plan proposes a study to an alternative approach that incorporates all values and remarks of the involved actors within the design process.

Personal Glossary:

Act	The measurable representation of resistance executed by the resister.
Actor	A person, collective, or organisation that is a stakeholder in spatial developments.
Barriers	Circumstances or obstacles that prevent actors from reaching their goals.
Densification	The addition of functional square meters in the spatial realm. It is mostly spoken densification in urban areas that are already relatively dense.
Designer	In the scope of urban densification, designers are mostly architects, landscape architects, and urbanists.
Intent	The purpose of the act of resistance which originated by the resister.
Non-resistance	The counterpart of resistance. The lack/absence of intent and/or recognition, depending on the applied definition of resistance.
Observer(s)	A third actor, that recognizes the resistance from the resister towards a target.
Power	The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events.
Recognition	The acknowledgement of the existence, validity, and/or legality of the intent and/or act of resistance.
Resistance	Depending on the view on the concept of resistance that is followed, resistance can be defined as either the action with the intent of refusing to accept or comply with something (towards a target) or just the intent of refusing to accept or comply with something. It also depends on the view of resistance whether this action or intent should be recognised as such by the target and an observer.
Resister	A person, collective, or organisation, that executes the intent and/or action of resistance towards a (specific) target
Strategic	Carefully planned to achieve a particular goal or plan.
Target	The object, person, collective, or organisation, towards whom the act of resistance is directed.
Triangle of resistance	The three mainly involved actors to create and/or recognise resistance: the resister, the target, and the observer.
Urban building developments	The realisation of (new) spatial objects within dense cities.

Annotated bibliography

Baaz, M., Lilja, M., & Vinthagen, S. (2018). *Researching resistance and social change: A critical approach to theory and practice.* Rowman & Littlefield International Ltd. https://lccn.loc.gov/2017031455

▲ *This literature review describes several perspectives on the definition of resistance. The review gives an extensive insight into different definitions of resistance that are used commonly and gives a background in definition formation of resistance in research practice. A thoroughly discussed theme in this book is the relationship between resistance and power; the balance of power forms the main perspective on the study of the concept 'resistance'. Since the reference is a recently published review, the bibliography was a good starting point to deepen various cross-references to be able to define resistance to be applicable in my case.*

BZK Implementatieteam Omgevingswet. (2020). *Participatie en de Omgevingswet.*

Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. (2018). *Waar groeit of krimpt de bevolking?* [Webpagina]. Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/dossier/dossier-verstedelijking/hoofdcategorieen/waar-groeit-of-krimpt-de-bevolking

Chong, D., & Druckman, J. N. (2007). *Framing Theory. Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 103–126. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.072805.103054

Cytron, N. Y. (2004). *Putting Infill to Work as a Community Development Strategy: The Franklin-Portland Gateway.* 36.

De Architect. (2014). *Hadid past ontwerp National Stadium Tokio aan.* De Architect. https://www.dearchitect.nl/architectuur/nieuws/2014/07/hadid-past-ontwerp-national-stadium-tokio-aan-101127569

Doberstein, C., Hickey, R., & Li, E. (2016). Nudging NIMBY: Do positive messages regarding the benefits of increased housing density influence resident stated housing development preferences? *Land Use Policy*, 54, 276–289. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2016.02.025

Ewick, P., & Silbey, S. (2003). Narrating Social Structure: Stories of Resistance to Legal Authority. *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(6), 1328–1372. https://doi.org/10.1086/378035

Farris, J. T. (2001). The barriers to using urban infill development to achieve smart growth. *Housing Policy Debate*, 12(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2001.9521395

▲ *This exploratory paper describes the various barriers in the development process of infill developments, specifically in the densification of cities. An important barrier mentioned in this paper is the emergence of resistance among actors involved in initiated developments. This paper has been one of the sources that have confirmed the necessity of being able to cope with resistance as an integral part of spatial developments. This lead to my interpretation that resistance should be a design starting point instead of something that has to be solved afterwards.*

Fransen, M. L., Smit, E. G., & Verlegh, P. W. J. (2015). Strategies and motives for resistance to persuasion: An integrative framework. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01201

Groat, L. N., & Wang, D. (2013). *Architectural Research Methods* (Second). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Haaft, G. ten. (2002, July 8). *Omstreden nieuwbouw bijna af*. Trouw. https://www.trouw.nl/gs-b281e8e7

Hamers, D. (2020). *Binnen- en buitenstedelijk bouwen in Nederland: Een reflectie.*

Hollander, J. A., & Einwohner, R. L. (2004). Conceptualizing resistance. *Sociological Forum*, 19(4), 533–554.

▲ *This review paper proposes a typology for resistance, with the starting point being the absence of an unambiguous definition of resistance. A wide range and a large amount of sources has been used to study the topic of resistance, which lead to insights on academic consensus and discussion on the definition and/or elements of resistance. The overview of different perspectives on resistance has helped in positioning the own research, in which resistance is applied to the built environment.*

Johansson, A., & Vinthagen, S. (2016). Dimensions of Everyday Resistance: An Analytical Framework. *Critical Sociology*, 42(3), 417–435. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920514524604

Lake, R. W. (1993). Planners' Alchemy Transforming NIMBY to YIMBY: Rethinking NIMBY. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 91:1(87–93), 8. https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369308975847

Nabielek, K., Boschman, S., Harbers, A., Piek, M., & Vlonk, A. (2012). *Stedelijke verdichting: Een ruimtelijke verkenning van binnenstedelijk wonen en werken. Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving.* http://www.pbl.nl/sites/default/files/cms/publicaties/PBL-2012-Stedelijke-verdichting-500233001.pdf

Pickett, B. L. (1996). Foucault and the Politics of Resistance. *Polity*, 28(4), 445–466. JSTOR. https://doi.org/10.2307/3235341

Rubin, J. W. (1996). Defining resistance: Contested interpretations of everyday acts. *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society*, 15, 237–260.

▲ *This article explores resistance as an action that can only be defined, when all three involved actors (resister, the target and the observer) recognise the intent of the action. This view on resistance could help me define the opposite of resistance - non-resistance. By the absence of one of the three involved actors, resistance is not recognized as such. That creates the opportunity for me to establish non-resistance by actively excluding one of the actor groups.*

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance.* 422.

▲ *In this book, the author discusses different forms of resistance. A broadly embraced concept roots in this book as well, the concept of 'everyday resistance'. In this form of resistance, the intent of the sender cannot be fully recognised and/or acknowledged. Think of the everyday small rebellions against 'something'. This research, together with his later work, provides insight into the not so quantifiable type of resistance. This kind of resistance is subjective and asks for a conscious architect that incorporates the unmeasurable (or hardly measurable) everyday resistance into building design, leading to 'non-resistant' buildings.*

Scott, J. C. (1989). Everyday Forms of Resistance. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies*, 4, 33. https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1765

Studio Hartzema. (2012). *De stadsdoorsnede klein&fijn.*

United Nations. (2018). *World Urbanization Prospects.* https://population.un.org/wup/Download/

Weitz, R. (2001). Women and their hair: Seeking power through resistance and accommodation. *Gender & Society - GENDER SOC*, 15, 667–686. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124301015005003

Wheeler, S. M. (2001). *Infill Development in the San Francisco Bay Area.* 31.

Self-assesment

When Klaske presented the research that some of her students had done, by buying a bus and driving down a river in search of stories and insights about the river, I was on the edge of my seat. It gave me the insight that the graduation research could have many different forms, deviating from studying 'information from books' that I had in my head. The lectures that followed, on history and theory, all had the same message: surprise yourself by curiously discovering the world.

All lectures dedicated to the research plan clearly had a stimulating and inspiring purpose. How can I collect my information, how does history show itself (in all thinkable ways) around me, and what is the meaning of the idea or theoretical concept that I will base my research on?

In the architectural graduation studio *City of the Future*, it was mandatory to design and formulate your own research and design subject. That was one of the reasons for me to choose this graduation studio. The lectures and how-to workshops inspired me, to define and explore different possibilities for research set-ups.

Two main insights that have shaped the research design of my graduation project are as follows. The first one is that the research itself can be explorative. During the graduation project, it is possible to do the impossible and explore new boundaries of the architectural practice. The lectures from theory, that were about definitions and meanings of words and a variety of different architectural perspectives, opened a new world for me how to approach research issues. This made me eager to research the definition of 'non-resistance' in the built environment, which is a newly introduced theoretical concept, by studying the definition of resistance through multidisciplinary sources and lenses.

The second insight is that the proposed research forms both the starting point and guiding theme for the design process. At the beginning of the research plan and graduation process, I struggled to define how research and design should interact during the graduation project. Firstly, I focused too much on research through design, in which design was used as a means to answer the research question. The lectures and tutoring of the studio gave me the insight to shift towards a topic of research which is focused on the research for design: research as an academic tool to enrich design and the acquiring of design skills. Therefore, I focussed on searching a research topic that is highly useable in all phases of the design process during the graduation project. Specifically, the lecture that addressed the tool of problematisation, to catalyse studying a fascination, has helped to make this shift.

The process of writing the research proposal delivered an extra useful insight, namely that there are many similarities between designing a building and designing a research (proposal). Both are shaped from the foundation and structure towards the details.