

# SECOND CHANCES

Housing & Reintegration of the Disadvantaged



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ECOLOGY OF  
INCLUSION  
A R 3 A D 1 0 0

RESEARCH PLAN  
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## contents

## Research structure

- 3 Introduction
- 3 • Motivation
  - 3-5 • Situation (Rotterdam, labor opportunities, bottom-up initiatives, housing development, user groups)
  - 5-6 • Definitions (reintegration, social reproduction, architecture of care, capitalism)
  - 7 • Research question
  - 7-8 • Methodology

### Theory

- Three ecologies, instituted psychoanalysis, La Borde (Guattari)
- Praxeological method, Social reproduction, habitus, discipline (Bourdieu, Foucault)

### Praxeology

- Local, social (re)production of services and goods
- Heilige Boontjes
- Stad in de Maak
- Werkplaats Buurman Rotterdam

### Morphology

- Zwicky Süd
- Sonwendviertel
- Centre de Santé Mentale

### Combination

- Wooncoöperatie Wolphaertstraat (Superuse Studios)
- De Grote Pyr

- 8-9 Graphic Novel
- Donna Haraway
  - Chris Ware

- 9 Urban Masterplan

- 10 Research diagram

- 11 Annex

1) Image on title page derived from: De Tegenprestatie. Directed by Lesterhuis M. & Raes S. Rotterdam: HUMAN, 2015

# Introduction

## **Motivation**

Outcasts of society, the homeless, former offenders, the psychotic, the addicts, the depressed and the handicapped are being considered a problematic group of people that takes up valuable space and resources. Marginalized by their bad behavior they are often written off as useless. They are helped through the state's welfare programs to often denigrating jobs and small apartments.

My cousin has had this experience first-hand. He made some bad decisions in his life and got around with criminally inclined people. After a violent incident, he decided to try and abandon that environment. He had developed a habit of drug abuse and suffers from psychosis, but with help from his aunt, brother, mother and daughter is able to deal with it, even though he will carry this experience with him for the rest of his life. What the municipality offered him was a job in the parks department, which he said he liked doing, and a social housing apartment on the ground floor of a busy street, which occasionally triggers his psychosis.

If it wasn't for his family and the personal attention they gave him, things might have developed differently. However, a lot of people in similar situations have lost their familial or personal relations and cannot fall back on their help. Especially these people need help, however difficult they are.

I argue that because of their experiences they can share their insight on the shortcomings of society. They have more to offer than just physical labour, if the issue is not only approached from a merely profit point of view, but also from social one.

What if we can see these disillusioned people not as a problem to be solved, but as a window into the shadow side of our society? They have experienced their share of negative consequences of various exclusionary systems, from the speculative housing market to the biased labour industry. No matter how well your intentions are, if you have a haunting past then you have a disadvantage over people who have been more fortunate in their choices and social background.

## **Situation**

Rotterdam is a city of tough labour and tough love. The industrial harbor is part of the identity of Rotterdam and of its people. There is a culture of equal exchange (voor wat, hoort wat) and it is generally looked down upon to live off of state benefits. It is historically a city with a large and poor working class, although this has recently began to change. The city is now attracting middle to high income groups, which the municipality and the market is further incentivizing by building housing primarily for these middle and high income people, often to the detriment of low income social housing which are being pushed out of the center, for example in the neighbourhoods Crooswijk<sup>2)</sup> and Tweebosbuurt.

## Labour opportunities

Reintegration programs in the Netherlands works through a social program called the Participation act implemented in 2015 with the aim of decentralizing the previous welfare system so that municipalities have more control over how to manage financial distribution and organization<sup>3)</sup>. Rotterdam takes a tough

2) Crème de la Crooswijk. Directed by Charlotte Pieters. Rotterdam: POWned, 2018

3) Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (2019) Eindevaluatie van de Participatiewet.

stance and asks of anyone that wants to receive financial aid a compensation in the form of 'voluntary' labour, which consists of picking up trash from the street under supervision. Not only does this cost the municipality a lot, as the pickers are checked by a couple of clerks who have a regular salary, but it is also a denigrating experience as the pickers are clearly visible in orange vests for people passing by to see. The documentary "De Tegenprestatie" (tr. "The Compensation")<sup>4)</sup> shows the grating experience that people have to go through in order to be able to receive state benefits.

4) De Tegenprestatie.  
Directed by Lesterhuis  
M. & Raes S.  
Rotterdam: HUMAN,  
2015

These are the systems that socially disadvantaged people also have to deal with. Being told that you if you live off of benefits, that you essentially leach from regular working people, sending out hundreds of job applications only to get rejected, while dealing with the housing crisis feeling there is no place for you in the city. These are factors that can push anyone into destructive behaviour, aggression, criminality, abuse, extremism and lack of care.

### Bottom-up initiatives

Fortunately, there are also a lot of positive initiatives that provide both social and material services to the habitants of Rotterdam in a sustainable manner.

Heilige Boontjes is a café that provides reintegration for the underprivileged, often ex-criminal, youth of the city through a job their café. The working experience gives them the opportunity to have social contact with people they would otherwise never come into contact with, have influence and responsibility over their own working environment and the ability to earn a wage.



Stad in de Maak is an initiative that turns abandoned places in the city into livable areas grounded in neighbourhooedly activity. They are able to perform and test alternative forms of housing and to create common spaces for the neighbourhood as reaction to the speculative housing market.



Werkplaats Buurman Rotterdam is a workshop that provides recycled wood and the space and tools to turn the wood into something more valuable. Anyone can rent a workbench and even get help if they need to. They also teach woodworking skills to those who want to learn.



These initiatives show that alternatives are possible to the state controlled system of participation and social welfare. Part of this research looks at way of how to integrate such a program into the built environment. What spatial and urban configurations can architecture and urbanism provide to promote the use of such programs?

### Housing development

Housing development is currently dealing with a shortage of housing stock and prices that have more than doubled since 2013. The waiting list for social housing in Rotterdam has climbed to unprecedented heights, to get a chance for a social dwelling you have to be in the waiting list for at least 10 years. There is a trend of younger people establishing themselves in Rotterdam as the city can provide relatively good job opportunities in the educated sector. On top of that, Rotterdam is a university city and attracts students for whom the housing shortage is a barrier in their choice of education. Lastly, the population of the Netherlands and also Rotterdam is facing a period where an increased part of the population is elderly. New and existing buildings need

to be accommodating for these groups of people and provide a qualitative and inclusive living environment.

Starters, students and elderly are all part of a cultural development where people tend to live increasingly more solo. Better welfare, emancipation, improved mobility and digital connectedness not only make living solo less problematic, but desirable<sup>5)</sup>. The problem lies in forming personal connections and even communities in the direct environment. This is especially the case for the primary user group in this research who are also solo dwellers: the socially disadvantaged.

5) Klinenberg, E. (2012), *Going Solo: the extraordinary rise and surprising appeal of living alone*. The Penguin Press

### User groups

There are two groups of users that the research examines. The primary group are people who are socially disadvantaged by a troubled past. The demographics of this group are widely variable, although a relatively large part consists of young adult males.

The other users who are included are people operating in the normative, liberal economy and are able to sustain themselves autonomously, but may have needs elsewhere, such as the social domain. These are the starters, students and elderly described in the previous paragraph.

Both groups can be combined under the term 'solo dwellers'. In terms of space requirements they are more or less similar due to the size of the household, but differ in their social desires and rhythms of use. Important to take into account is the level of mistrust or prejudice normative dwellers can have towards the primary user group.

## **Definitions**

### Reintegration

The term (re)integration is difficult to use when talking about people who have mental and social problems. From the perspective of the aforementioned Participation act, reintegration means helping people to make and maintain an economic contribution to society, but does not truly consider social integration. Some of these disadvantaged people may have no interest at all in integrating into a normative state-controlled society, feeling that the systems of this society has caused their disadvantage in the first place. The definition of the term integration in this research therefore means integration into a direct and local social environment. Integration in the sense of 'being part of', rather than 'fitting in'.

### Social reproduction

The feminist marxist notion of reproductive labour is to this day still undervalued in relation to waged labour and commodity production. The type of care that socially disadvantaged people often lack: receiving personal attention, being listened to, but also being able to offer informal help, is created by this type of reproductive labour and can only occur on an individual basis.

In Gibson's<sup>6)</sup> example of a bamboo bridge that is being replaced by a concrete structure shows the whole ecology of labour and social relations that the maintenance of such a bridge brings. The concrete replacement, while more efficient in almost every way, makes a whole ecology of specialized labour and social relations obsolete. This is indicative of the attitude towards the production of housing as well. The efficiency of a gallery housing block makes economical and spatial sense, but loses the surplus social value that, for example, a courtyard type block offers. This is in line with the idea of generous space by Lacaton and Vassal.

6) Gibson, K. (2019). *Speculations on Architecting Care Beyond the Anthropocene*. Critical care : architecture and urbanism for a broken planet. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. p. 108-113.

Production and maintenance of supportive societal structures comes from the lower to middle income classes. The teachers, nurses, shopkeepers, car mechanics, daycare workers, provide services that the entire functioning of society depends on, yet are undervalued in the capitalist systems of commodification and gains. It is estimated that around a quarter of existing jobs in the U.S. are as good as useless to society, meaning a quarter of working people earn money producing virtually nothing of value.<sup>7)</sup>

7) Graeber, D. (August, 2013) On the Phenomenon of Bullshit Jobs. STRIKE! magazine, issue 3. retrieved from <https://web.archive.org/web/20191211140746/http://www.strike.coop/bullshit-jobs> on 31-10-2021

### Architecture of care

Modernistically, the idea of architecture has been linked to autonomy and independancy, think of Corbusier's 'Machines à habiter', instead of connectedness, social reproduction and care<sup>8)</sup>. Placing care at the center of architecture will contribute to the discourse of the role of architecture. Taking social mix as a means to find common ground between the aforementioned group and people who are socially more able but might have needs elsewhere, like elderly who have a hard time doing household tasks or starters working 50 hours a week who have no time to cook or clean.

8) Krasny, E. (2019) Architecture and Care. Architekturzentrum Wien

As solo dwellers are increasing as a household type, so does the question of the importance of a local community become more and more pressing.<sup>1)</sup> As an architect the issue becomes how to design a housing building or complex in such a way that it can facilitate the social needs of solo dwellers, especially those who need help.

Spatial configuration, according to Dias and Marcia<sup>9)</sup>, has the biggest impact on social interaction between residents within a housing scheme, where accessibility to the city is the most important factor in systems of segregation. The location posed by the studio, Walenburghof in the neighbourhood of Blijdorp, is an ideal location for the implementation of a housing scheme focused on social interaction, reproduction and inclusion. Situated in the middle of the city with direct connections to the central station diminishes the need for cars. Combined with the possibility for local labour and employment possibilities, the site offers the opportunity to develop a housing complex that provides social sustainability on communal scale as well as on urban scale.

9) Dias L.M.C. & Márcia, L. (2013), Integration of Housing Schemes, Social Interaction and Resident Well-being.

### Capitalism

As Fraser and Jaeggi have said, "*There is widespread agreement that capitalism is (again) a problem and a worthy object of political and intellectual attention.*"<sup>10)</sup>. I avoided using the term earlier in the rest of the text in order to avoid generalizing what the problems are and instead determine the characteristics and consequences of the problems. This research is nonetheless part of the discourse surrounding capitalism as a exploration into alternatives to capital centered systems architecturally and programmatically.

10) Fraser N. & Jaeggi R. (2018) Capitalism, a Conversation in Critical Theory. Polity Press, Cambridge. p. 1-12

# Research Framework

## Research

I propose to research the housing of socially disadvantaged people and in a wider sense how architecture has an influence on care, community and social relations. The research is framed by the spatial, social and juridical context of Rotterdam, which is the place where the design studio Ecology of Inclusion is situated.

The architectural aspect comes in the question how to provide both the regular residents as well as the disadvantaged residents to have the right amount of privacy - engagement balance through spatial and material interventions. How to design within a residential complex the common spaces, the dwellings and the traffic routes so that a sense of community can be promoted.

## Method

Philosopher and psychoanalyst Felix Guattari will be central to the theme of the research. I intend to use the three ecological lenses: mental, social and environmental, as described in his essay "Three Ecologies"<sup>11</sup> as a baseline for the various analyses. Furthermore, his work in the psychoanalytical field is valuable. His involvement at a psychiatric institute called 'La Borde' and his collaboration with researchers of other fields has been researched by Calo and Pereira<sup>12</sup>.

Researching social relations and architecture of care calls for real world examples. A praxeological approach will aid in the mapping of the interaction between individual agency and social structures. The concept of habitus coined by Bourdieu and discipline by Foucault<sup>13</sup> and their theories on praxeology form the basis of this approach.

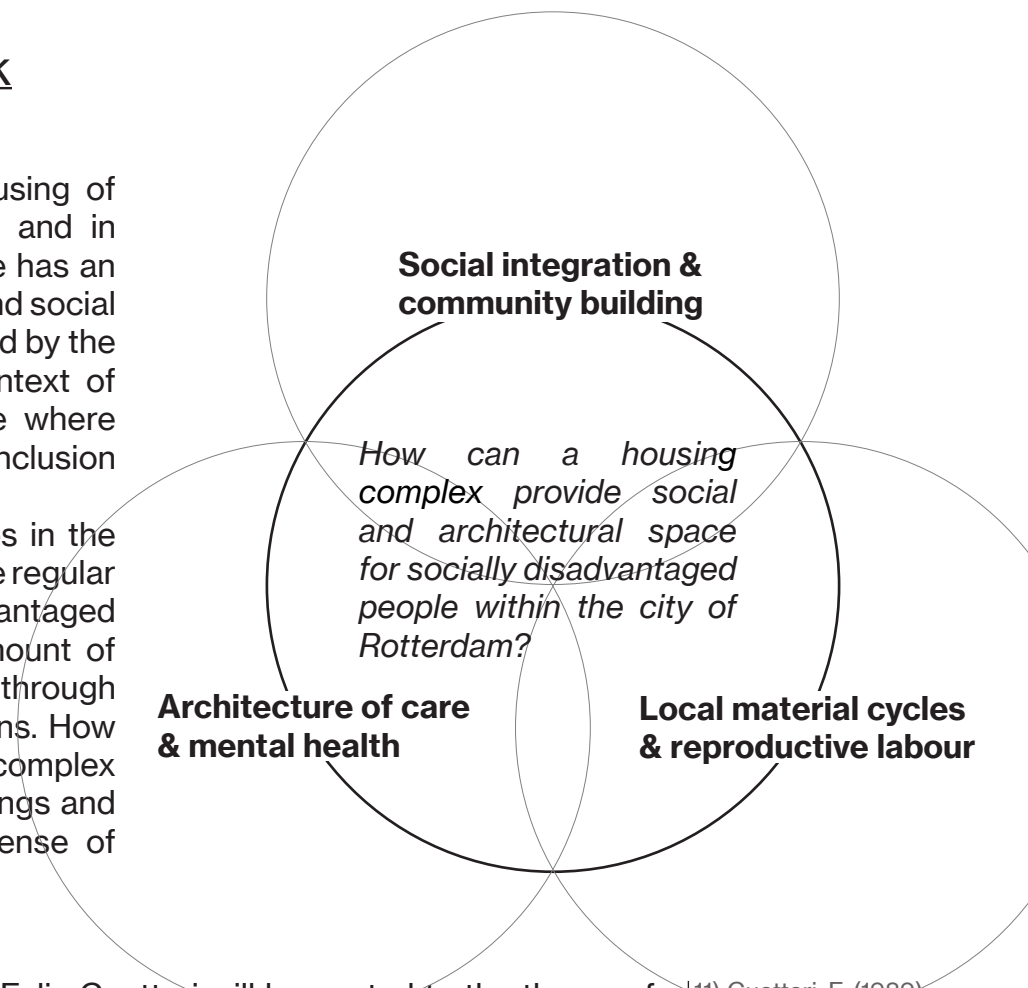
The workings of the bottom-up initiatives mentioned earlier (Heilige Boontjes, Stad in de Maak, Werkplaats Buurman) will be discerned praxeologically through interviews, literature studies and urban analysis.

## Case Studies

Morphological studies of various architectural objects provide insight into the spatial relation between different types of dwellings, public functions and communal spaces, between what is inside and what is outside and the degree to which a space is shared.

A case study of a theoretical project proposed architect Helene Sonolet "Centre de Santé Mentale" published in psychoanalytical magazine "Recherches"<sup>14</sup> shows the idea and practical proposal of mixing patients who need mental help with everyday life.

The development of Zwicky Süd and the Sonnwendviertel are case studies that apply to the specific morphology of the building block resulting from the urban masterplan specific to the location of the design studio.



<sup>11</sup> Guattari, F. (1989), *The Three Ecologies*. translated by Pindar, I. and Sutton, P. (2000) The Athlone Press, London

<sup>12</sup> Caló, S. & Pereira, G. (2017) CERFI: From the Hospital to the City. *London Journal of Critical Thought*, 1 (2). pp. 83-100

<sup>13</sup> Schlosser J.A. (2012) Bourdieu and Foucault: A Conceptual Integration Toward an Empirical Sociology of Prisons. *Crit Crim* 21: 31-46

<sup>14</sup> Sonolet, Nicole, "Un centre de santé mentale urbain: proposition d'une expérience," *Recherches*. 06 Programmation, architecture et psychiatrie (1967): 137-155.

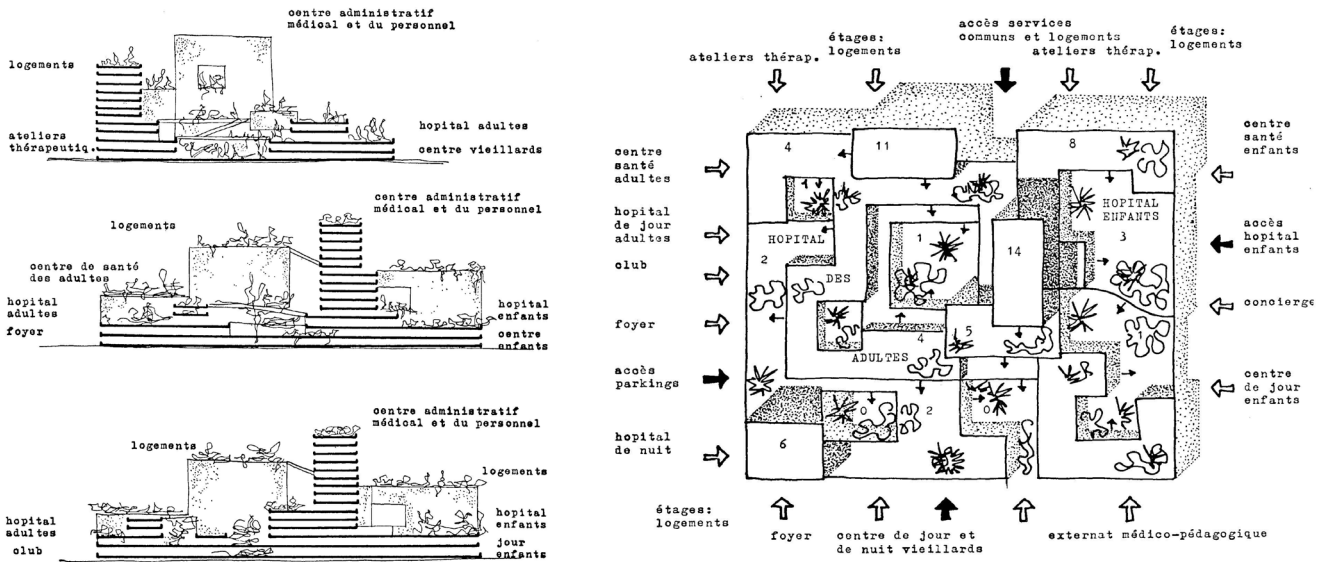


figure 1 Annotated section and plan of the Centre de Santé Mentale, Nicole Sonolet <sup>1)</sup>

Then there are two projects that benefit from a combination of morphological and praxeological methods. These are two housing complexes that grew from squatters communities and from vibrant communities providing social value to the rest of the neighbourhood by providing public and communal spaces.

“De Grote Pyr” in The Hague is an old school building that has been transformed into 25 dwellings and 15 workspaces.

Housing cooperation Wolfaertstraat is transforming a pre-war housing block into apartments with circular materials, creating 46 dwellings and 6 communal spaces. Interviews combined with morphological studies provide the relation between use and architecture.

### Graphic Novel

Lastly, the addition of storytelling in the form of a graphic novel brings a level of imagination that can not be achieved through text and diagrams. It forces the research to delve into fine spatial and behavioural details, which are necessary to keep from generalizing the user group. The graphic novel can be seen as an extension to the praxeological research. I am inspired by Donna Haraway<sup>15)</sup> and her insistence on the importance of stories. The style of comic artist Chris Ware<sup>16)</sup> is inspiring with regard to his attention to practical detail and human interaction.

15) Haraway, D. (2016) Staying with the Trouble, Making Kin in the Cthulucene. Duke University Press



16) Ware, C. (2012) Building Stories. Random House UK



The actor setting is a person who is 'in the shit'. Even though he has been offered a dwelling, has a hard time connecting with his environment, makes trouble, but also tries to be accepted. The people he lives with in the cluster dwelling are in a similar situation and he is able to find connections there, but unexpectedly also from an elderly person living in the same complex. 40 years later he lives in the same complex but a different apartment. He has made a couple of friends from the shared dwelling he lived in earlier. He supervises the workshop downstairs and has made difficult contact with a student who recently moved in. The student is failing and dealing with problems. Slowly the guy is able to earn the trust of the student.



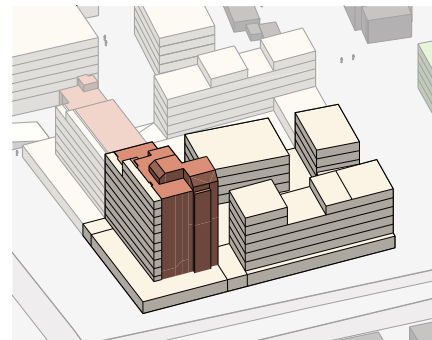
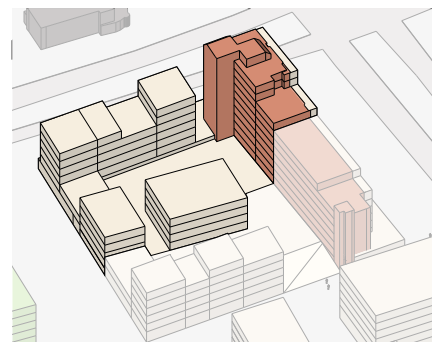
### Urban Masterplan

The plot is situated at the corner of two busy streets, visible to the rest of the neighbourhood.

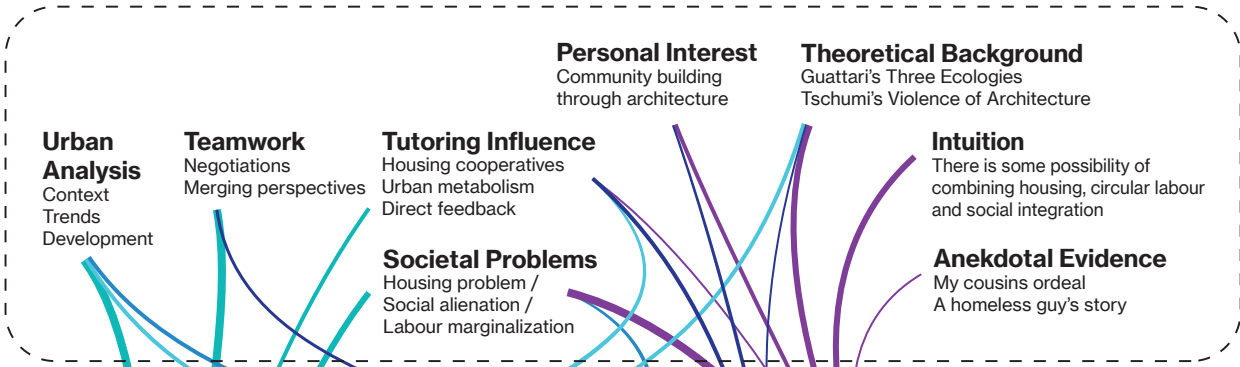
The plinth will be able to provide public functions such as the bottom-up initiatives mentioned earlier as well as common spaces.

The morphology resembles those of the case studies to achieve a building block that is semi-closed, providing socially sheltered space while keeping contact with the exterior of the block. It integrates an existing building to keep part of the identity of the plot, reduce environmental impact and play with the idea of giving second chances.

Typologically, the complex will contain a combination of portico apartments, gallery apartments and cluster dwellings.

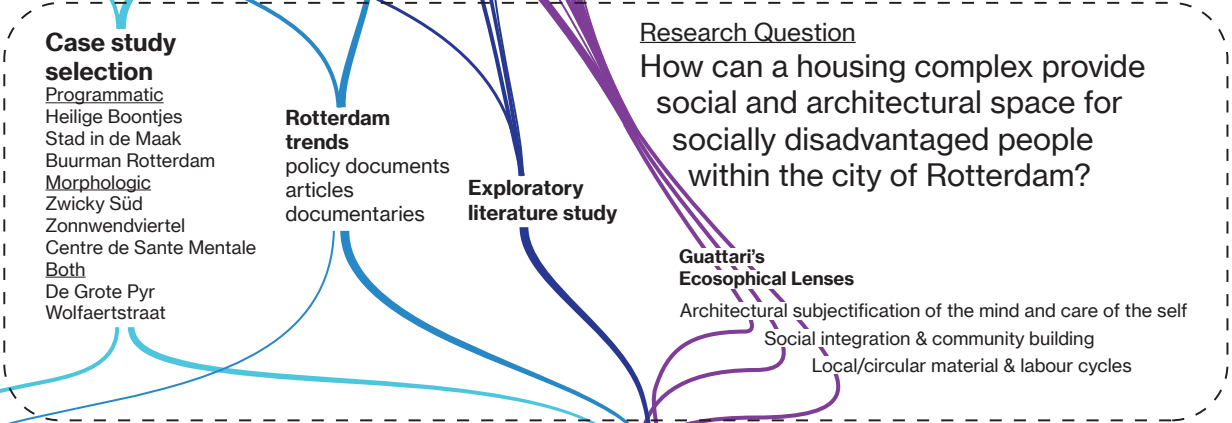


WHY



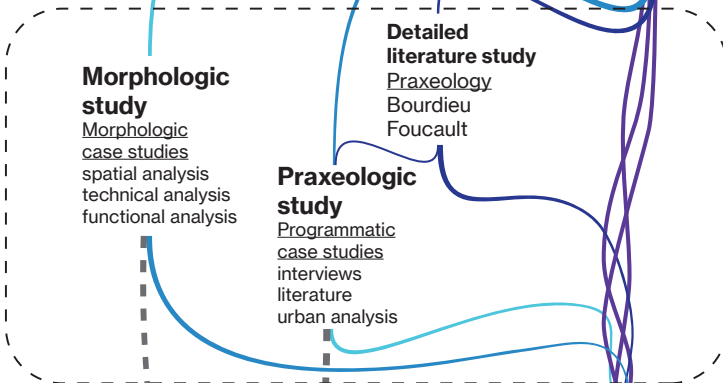
P1

WHAT



P2

HOW



URBAN MASTERPLAN

RESEARCH PROPOSAL



Design Project

RESEARCH BOOKLET

DESIGN PROPOSAL

P3-4

## **Annex**

### Literature

- Caló, S. & Pereira, G. (2017) CERFI: From the Hospital to the City. London Journal of Critical Thought, 1 (2). pp. 83-100
- Dias, L.M.C.; Márcia, L. (2013), Integration of Housing Schemes, Social Interaction and Resident Well-being.
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- Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (2019) Eindevaluatie van de Participatiewet.
- Sonolet, Nicole, "Un centre de santé mentale urbain: proposition d'une expérience," Recherches. 06 Programmation, architecture et psychiatrie (1967): 137-155.
- Ware, C. (2012) Building Stories. Random House UK

### Documentaries

- Crème de la Crooswijk. Directed by Charlotte Pieters. Rotterdam: POWned, 2018
- De Tegenprestatie. Directed by Lesterhuis M. & Raes S. Rotterdam: HUMAN, 2015

### Case studies

- Heilige Boontjes, Rodney van den Engel, Marco van den Dunnen
- Stad in de Maak
- Werkplaats Buurman
- Centre de Santé Mentale, 1967, Nicole Sonolet
- Zwicky Süd, Kraftwerk1, Schneider Studer Primas
- Sonnewendviertel, Klaus Kada
- De Grote Pyr, 1999 - 2005, Sebas Veldhuisen, Iris Schutten, Iris de Kievith
- Wolphaertstraat, Wooncoöperatie W1555, 2015 - current, Superuse Studio