



CITY IN BALANCE

*a spatial vision and strategy on the continuity
between centre and periphery in Amsterdam*

Cateau Albers
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences

YESTERDAY

a dichotomised Amsterdam

TODAY

a gentrified Amsterdam

TOMORROW

a rebalanced Amsterdam

WE ARE ALL FAMILIAR WITH THE ORGANISATION OF CENTRALITY

but perhaps you do not realise it yet ...



middle-scaled grid

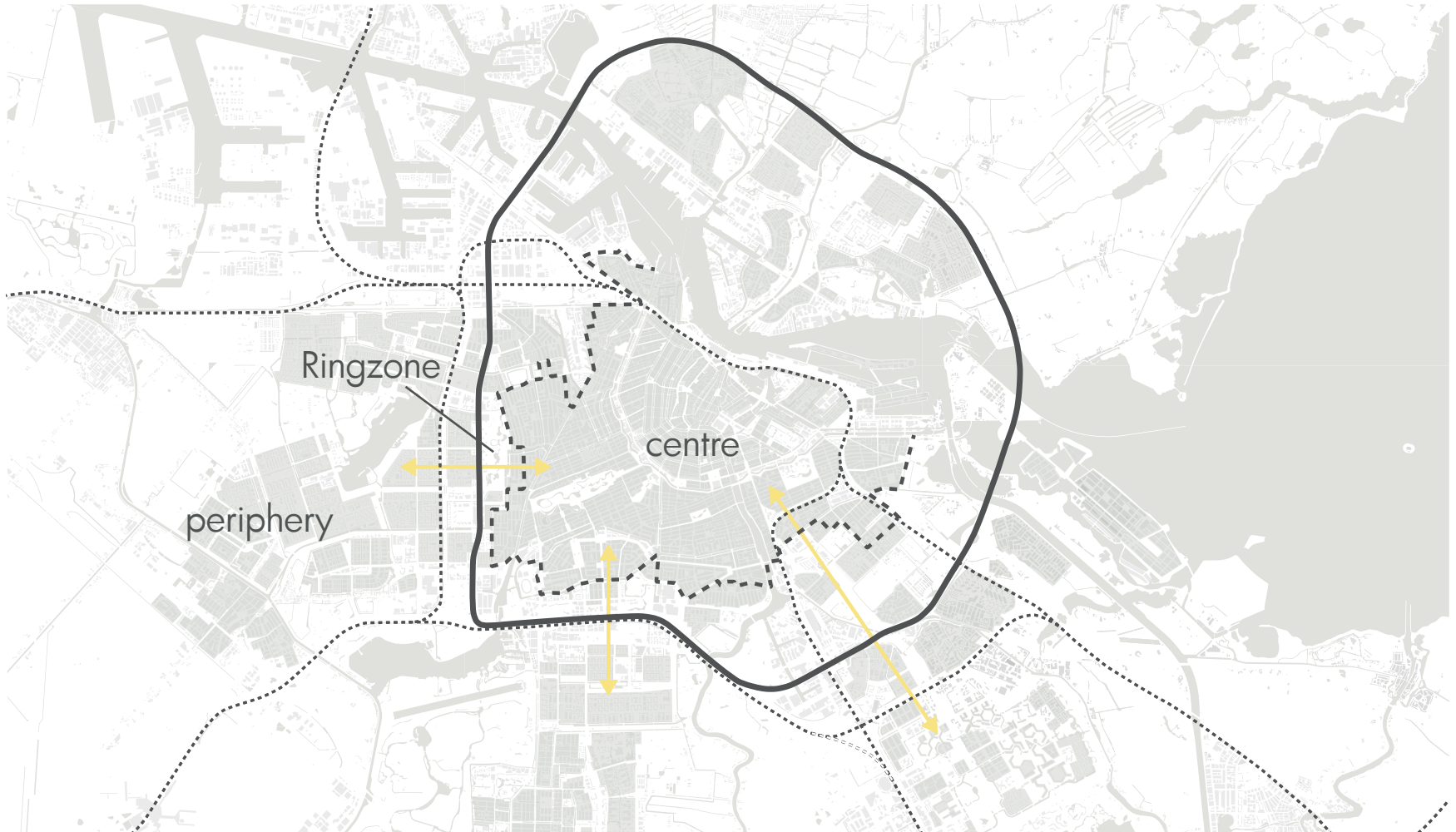


local-scaled grid



YES, WE KNOW WHERE TO GO IN THE CENTRE

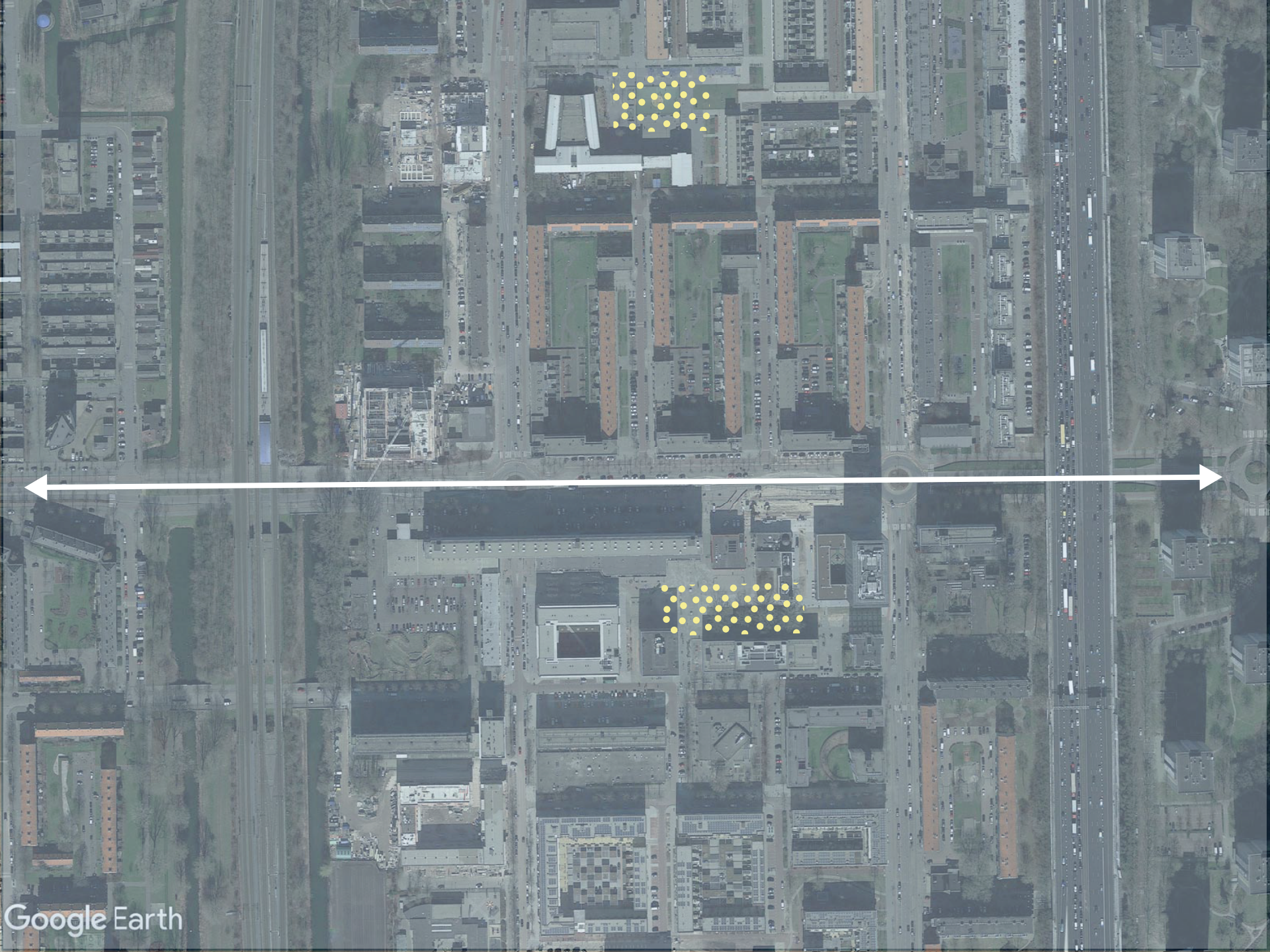
but what happens when you cross the Ring?



FOLLOWING A RADIAL: THE CONTINUITY OF STREETLIFE

the continuity between centre and periphery





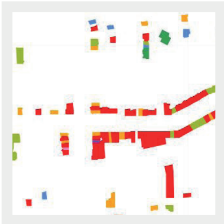
ORGANISATION OF CENTRALITY

non-residential functions: streets vs. clusters

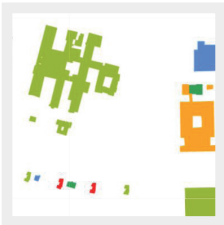
①



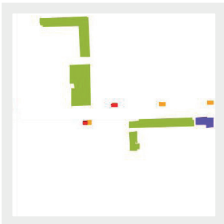
②



③



④

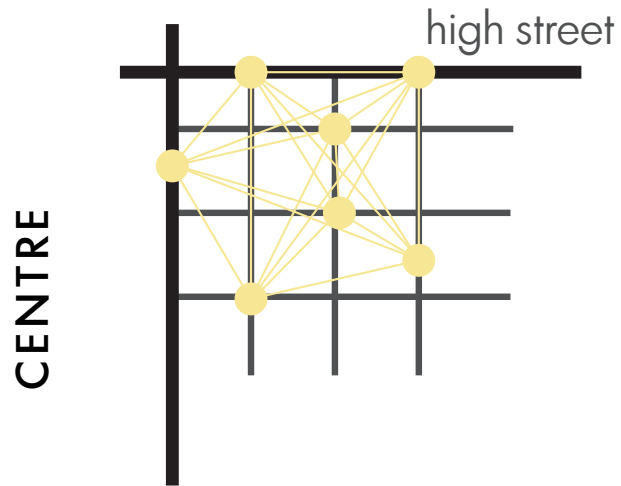


- retail
- hotels, restaurants and bars
- sport facilities, tourism, going out, activities and meeting
- care, education, religion
- offices
- enterprises
- public transport, parking
- unclear function

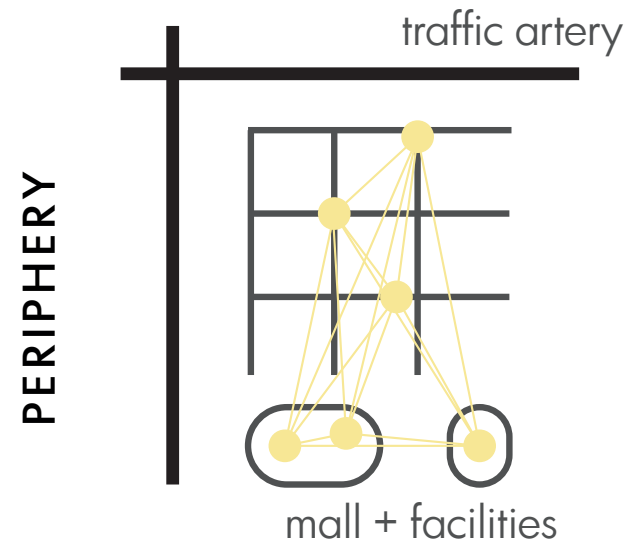
Source: Gemeente Amsterdam

A STREET WE GO TO >> A STREET WE GO THROUGH

from high street towards traffic artery



Drawing based on Read, 2001



Drawing based on Read, 2001

IN BETWEEN: DOMINANCE OF THE RING

an unattractive zone oriented towards the Ring



EVERYTHING CHANGES WHEN ENTERING THE RINGZONE

the grey zone: where discontinuity begins



AND THIS IS WHERE MY THESIS BEGINS ...

the continuity between centre and periphery in Amsterdam





1934: GENERAL EXPANSION PLAN

anticipation on expected growth + introduction of new spatial concepts

TWO SPATIAL CONCEPTS

centralisation and decentralisation in Amsterdam

CENTRE



centralisation



centrality on streets



fine grain

PERIPHERY



decentralisation



centrality next to streets



coarse grain

CONTINUITY BETWEEN CENTRE AND PERIPHERY

the impact of the infrastructural layer on the tangibles and intangibles



metropolitan-scaled grid
connection with the region



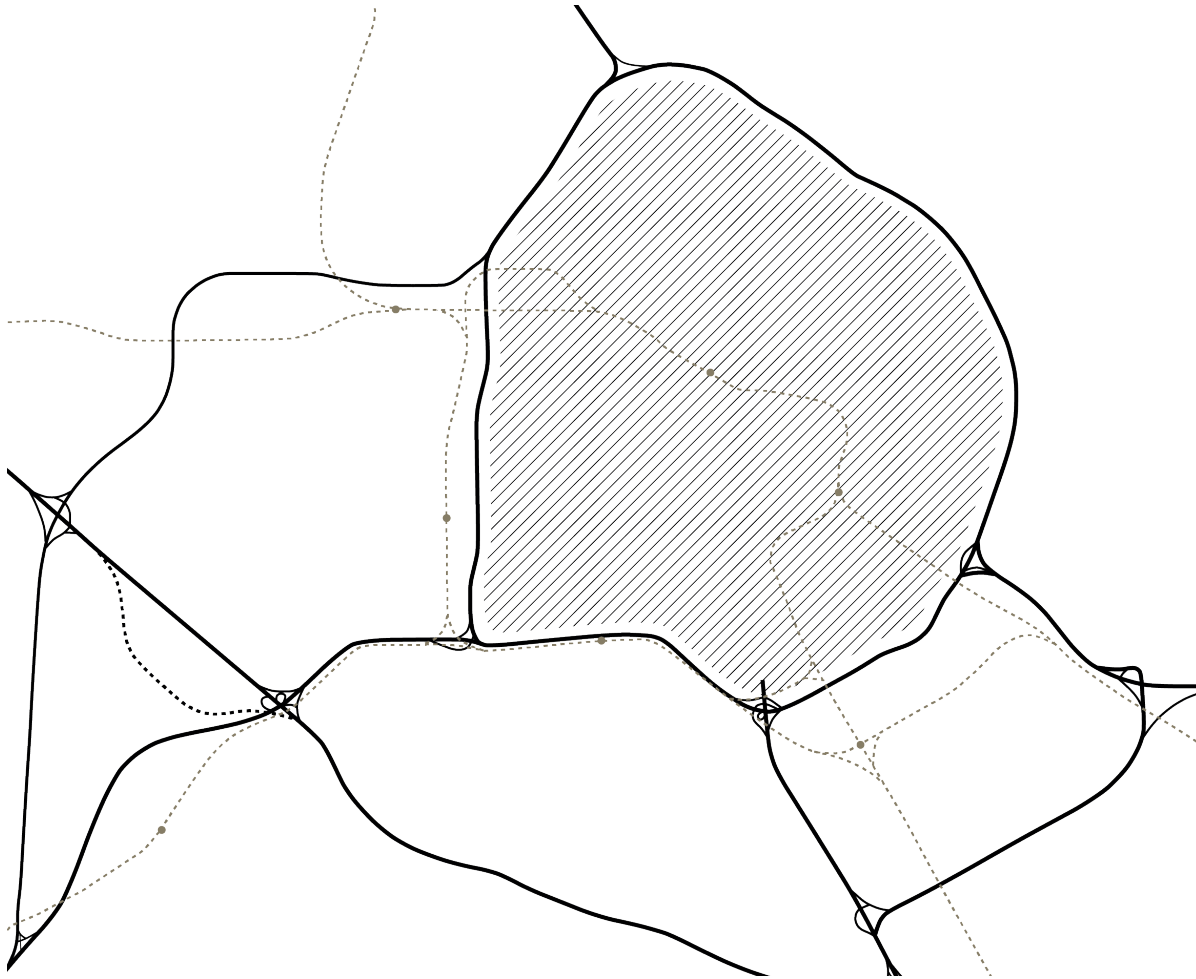
middle-scaled grid
connection with other city parts



local-scaled grid
connection with other city blocks

MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: METROPOLITAN-SCALED GRID

meant for metropolitan-scaled movement - regional network



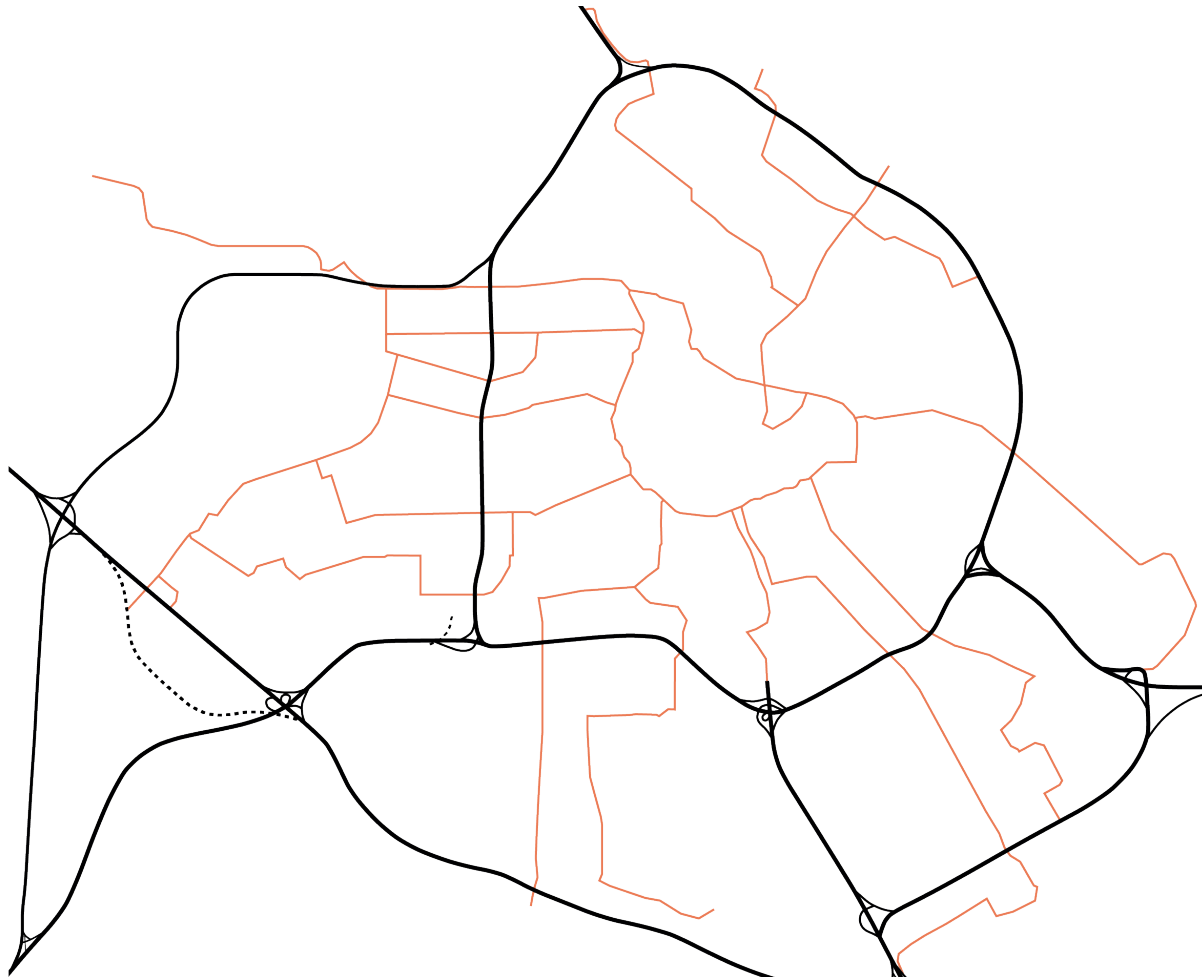
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: MIDDLE-SCALED GRID

meant for middle-scaled movement - primary network of the city



MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: MIDDLE-SCALED GRID

meant for middle-scaled movement - radials



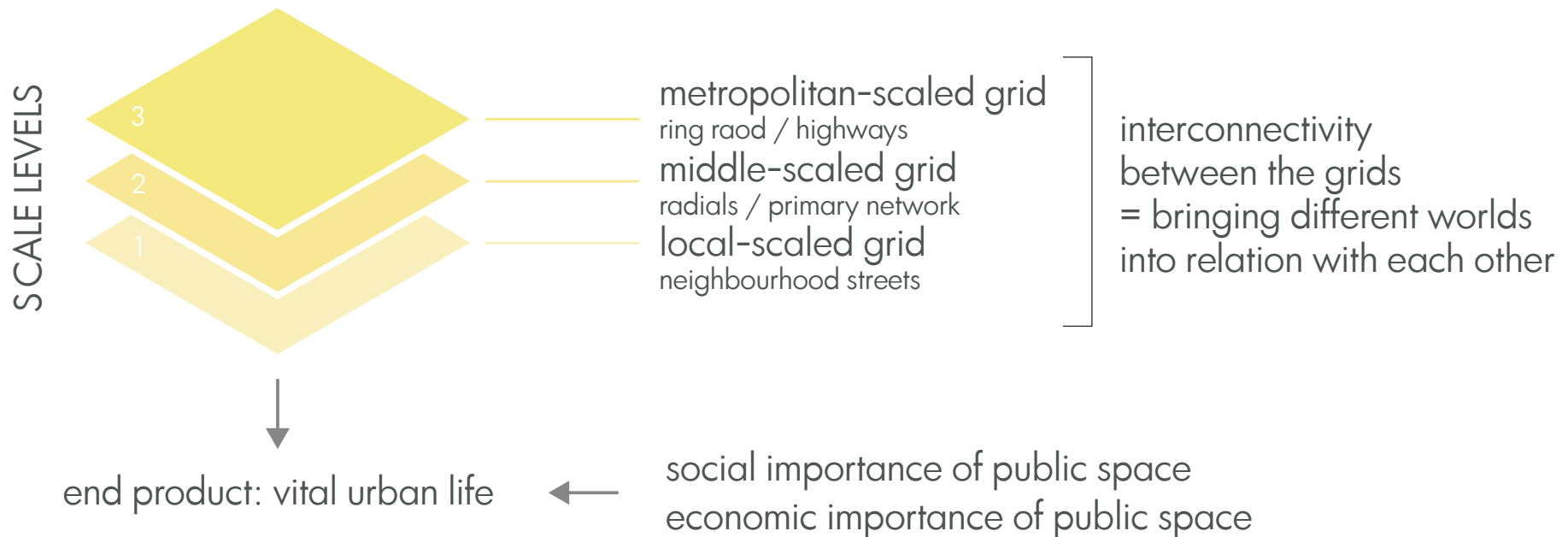
MOVEMENT CONTINUITY: LOCAL-SCALED GRID

meant for local-scaled movement - the local network



THE IMPACT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FURTHER EXPLAINED

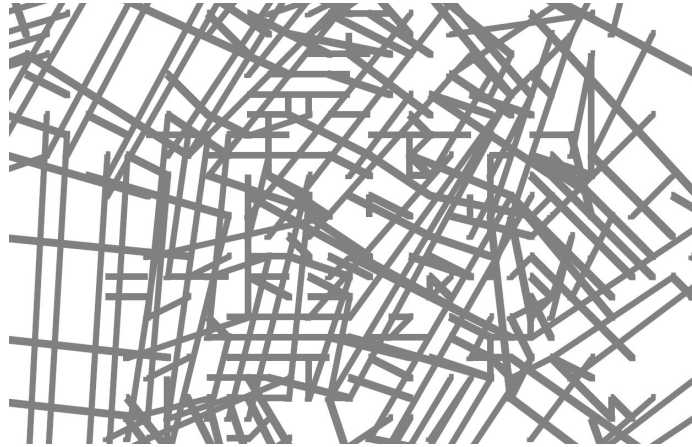
meant for local-scaled movement - the local network



LEVEL OF INTERCONNECTIVITY

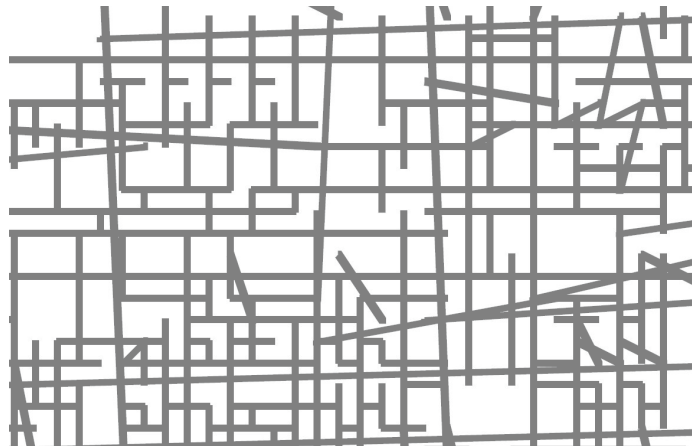
short vs. long distances

CENTRE



high interconnectivity
= short distances

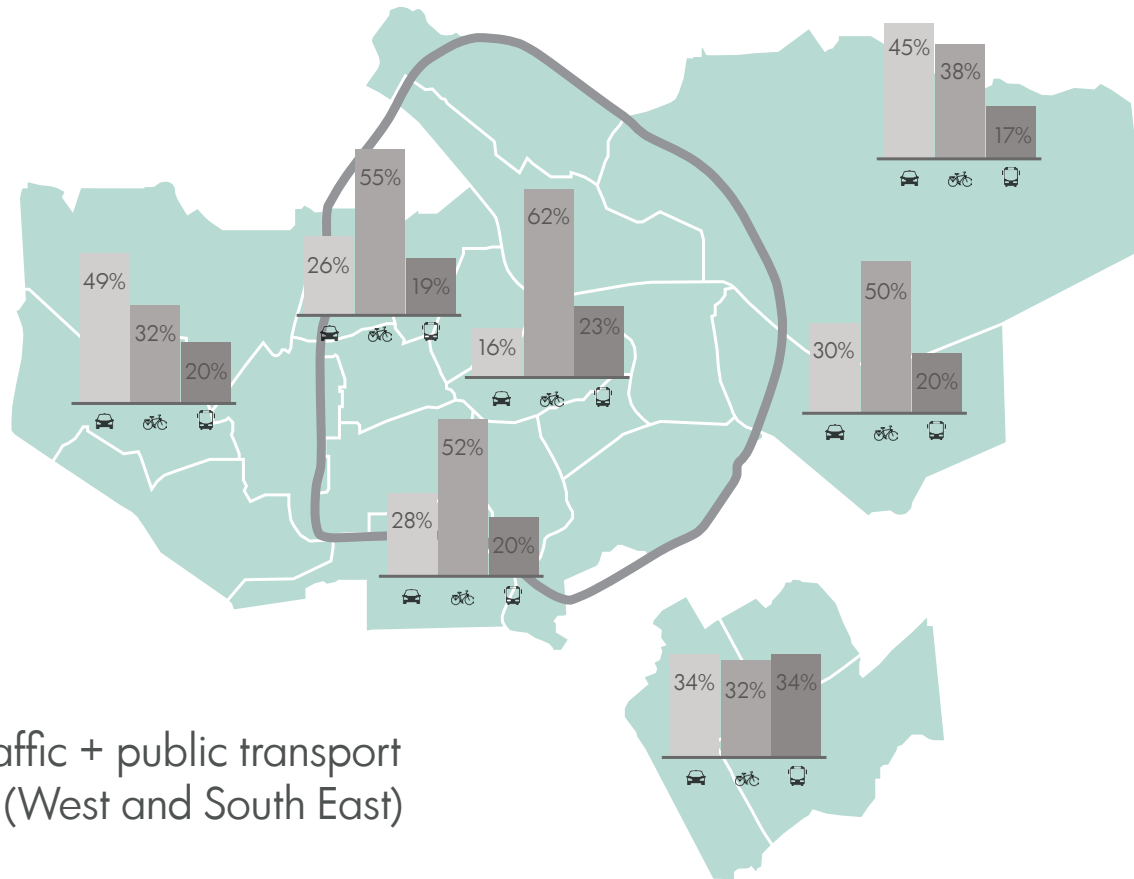
PERIPHERY



low interconnectivity
= long distances

MODAL SPLIT OF AMSTERDAM

depending on the availability of networks and distances



centre: slow traffic + public transport
periphery: car (West and South East)

FEWER LONG HIGHLY INTEGRATED SPACES IN AMSTERDAM ?

global scale reference | orientation function
integration and connection of widely separated city parts



Oxford Street, London

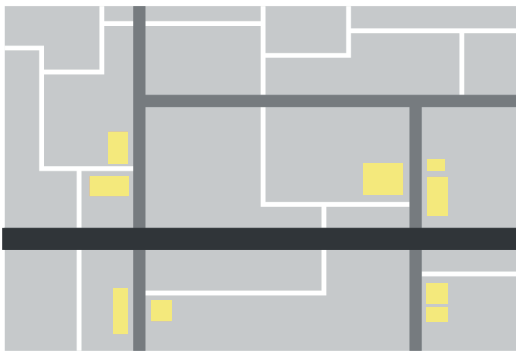


Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris

CO-RELATION MOVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PATTERNS

impact on the movement and experiential continuity

METROPOLIS

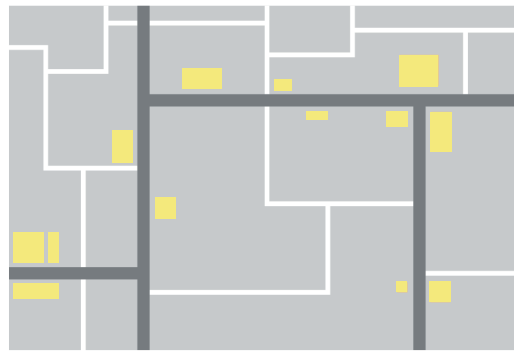


metropolitan-scaled grid:

> metropolitan-scaled functions:
head-office clusters, hospitals, industrial
parks, congress centres, stadiums, etc.

> located at middle-scaled grids /
local-scaled grids that are more or less
directly attached to metropolitan-scaled
grid

CITY

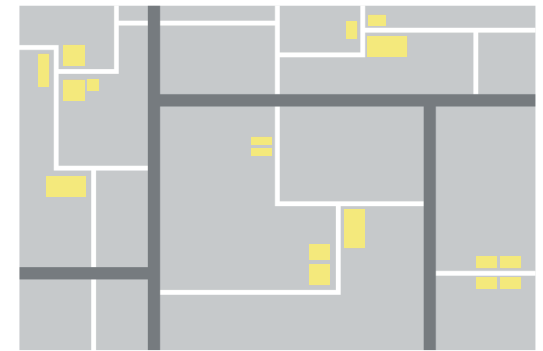


middle-scaled grid:

> middle-scaled / city-scaled functions:
employment agencies, cluster of shops,
flooring/carpet shop, etc.

> located at middle-scaled grids
> located at local-scaled grids where
that is directly attached to middle-scaled
grid

NEIGHBOURHOOD



local-scaled grid:

> local-scaled /
neighbourhood-scaled functions:
baker, supermarket, corner shops, etc.

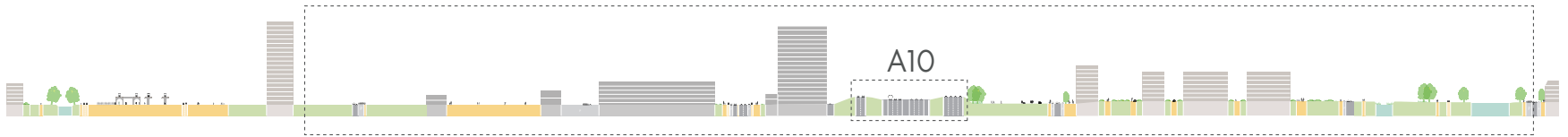
> located at local-scaled grids

RINGZONE AS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL BARRIER

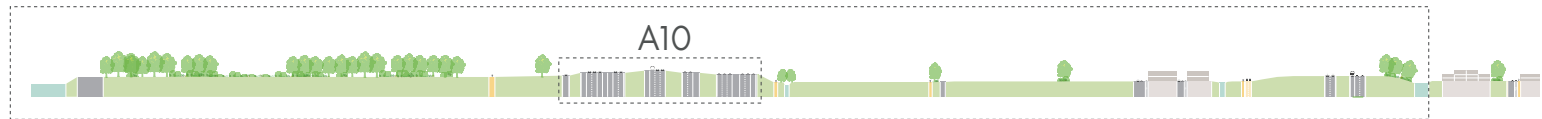
dominance of the metropolitan-scaled grid



Ring West: 828 m



Ring West: 1150 m



Ring Noord: 988 m

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Amsterdam, showing a river (the IJ) flowing through the urban landscape. The river is bordered by a mix of old and new buildings. In the foreground, several modern, multi-story office buildings are prominent, some with glass facades and others with more industrial or institutional designs. A railway line runs parallel to the river on the right side. The background shows a dense residential area with traditional European-style houses. The text "THREE SCALE-LEVELS CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN THE CITY ..." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font at the top left.

THREE SCALE-LEVELS CAN BE IDENTIFIED IN THE CITY ...

... AND EXPLAIN THE SUDDEN
CHANGES IN THE URBAN LAYOUT

IT IS NOT JUST THE TANGIBLE CITY ...

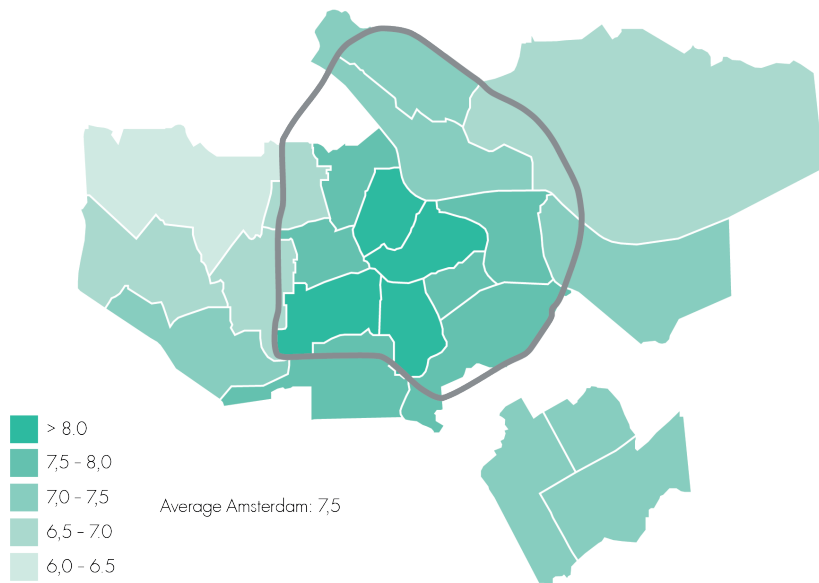
living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring



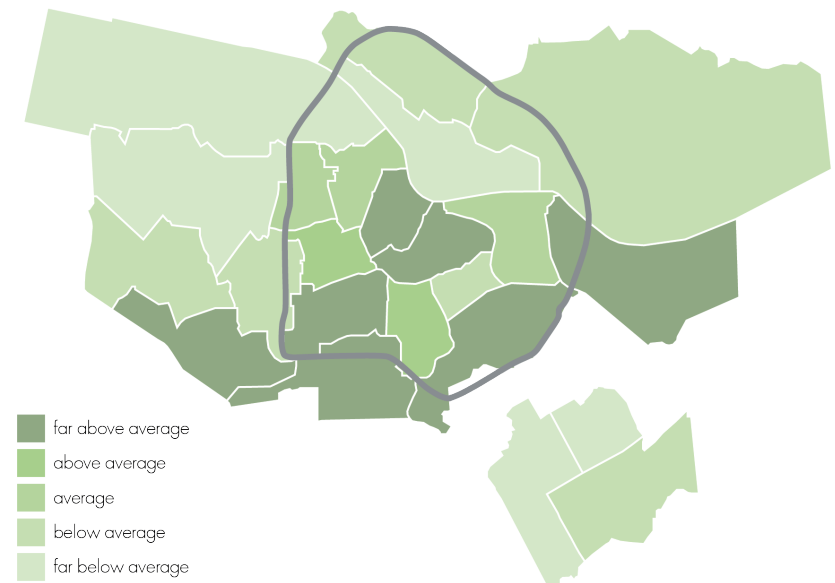
Liveability of areas in Amsterdam in 2016 (2004 = 100) (OIS Amsterdam, 2016)

THE SPATIAL FOOTPRINT OF TRENDS

living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring



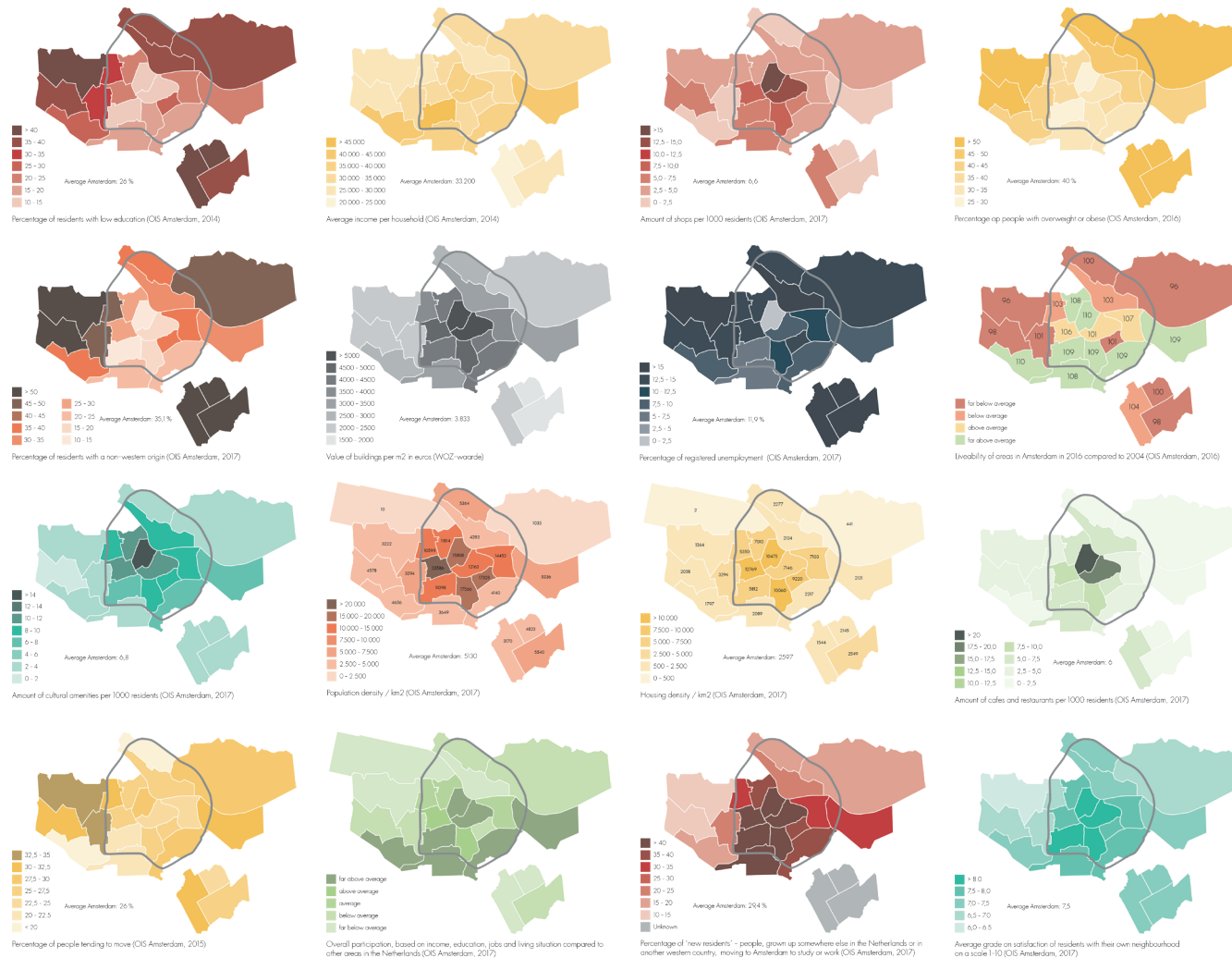
Average grade on satisfaction of residents with their own neighbourhood on a scale 1-10 (OIS Amsterdam, 2017)



Overall participation, based on income, education, jobs and living situation compared to other areas in the Netherlands (OIS Amsterdam, 2017)

DISCONTINUITY OF THE INTANGIBLE STRUCTURES

living inside the Ring vs. living outside the Ring





DICHOTOMY

CENTRALISED CENTRE | DECENTRALISED PERIPHERY

... and the Ringzone as a mental and physical barrier in between

YESTERDAY

a dichotomised Amsterdam

TODAY

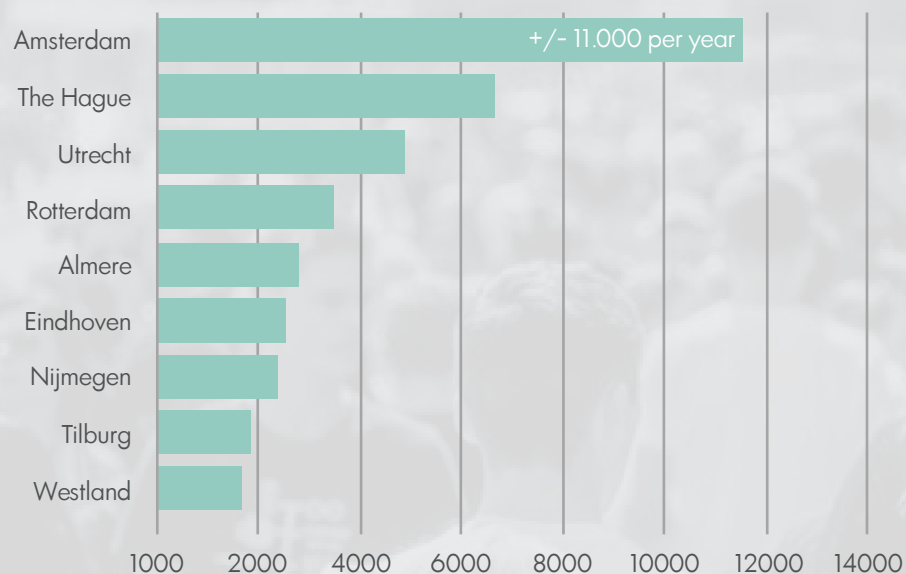
a gentrified Amsterdam

TOMORROW

a rebalanced Amsterdam

MEANWHILE IN AMSTERDAM ...

the dichotomy between centre and periphery is slowly taking over the city



Municipalities growing with + 1000 residents (comparison 2016-2017)

Source: CBS

WHAT ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY?

Structural Vision 2040: a spatial response to social issues?

> maintaining welfare of all residents

Amsterdam as a whole should be a good city for all residents

> maintaining prosperity of all residents

Amsterdam as a motor behind the national economy should stimulate the knowledge economy

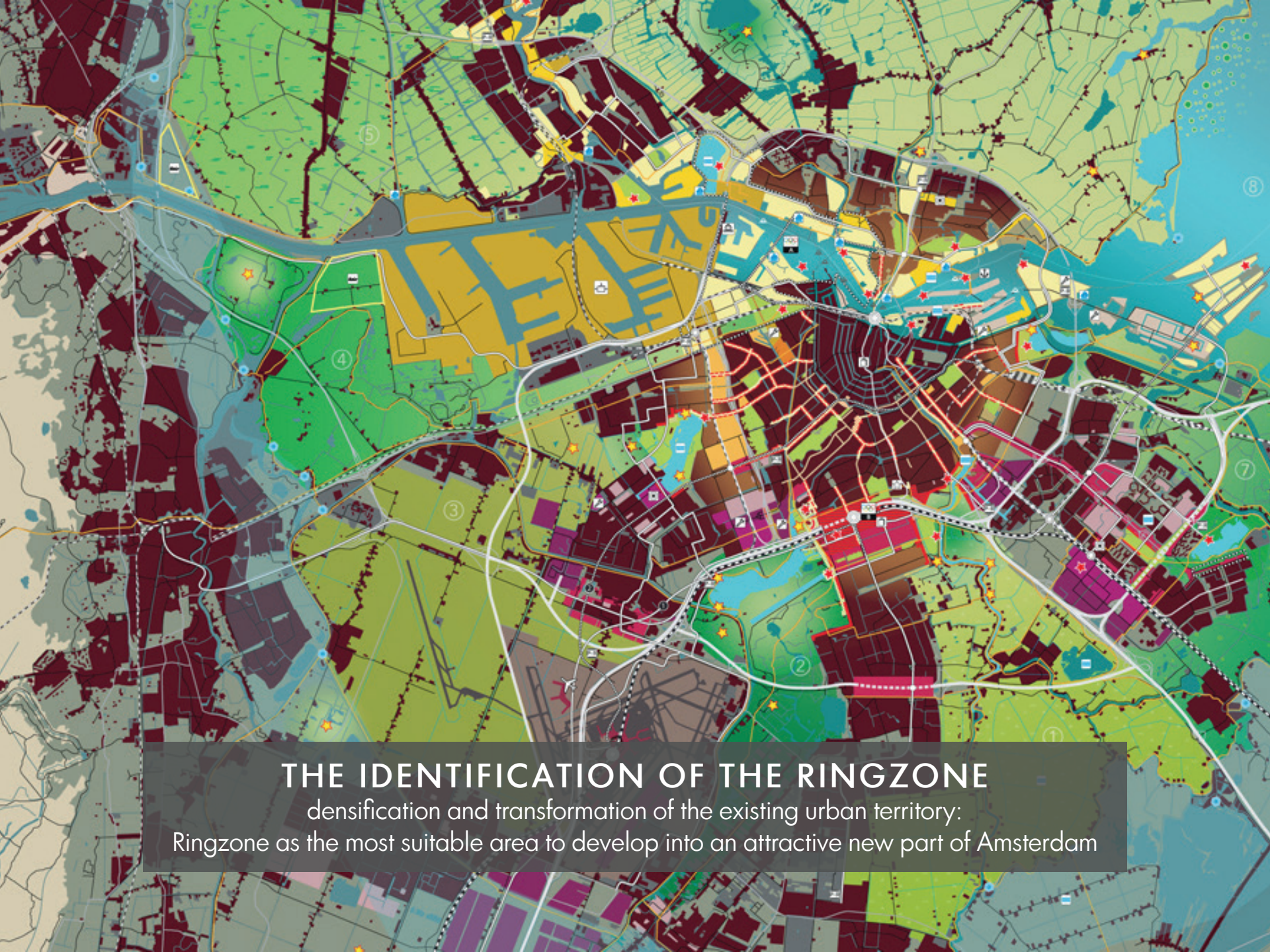
+

public space of social and economic importance



“The Amsterdam Structural Vision must seduce and convince with a coherent narrative, a story in which the social benefit of spatial interventions is explained and justified in terms that are as clear as crystal ...”

“... and a strong spatial integration between centre and periphery is crucial”

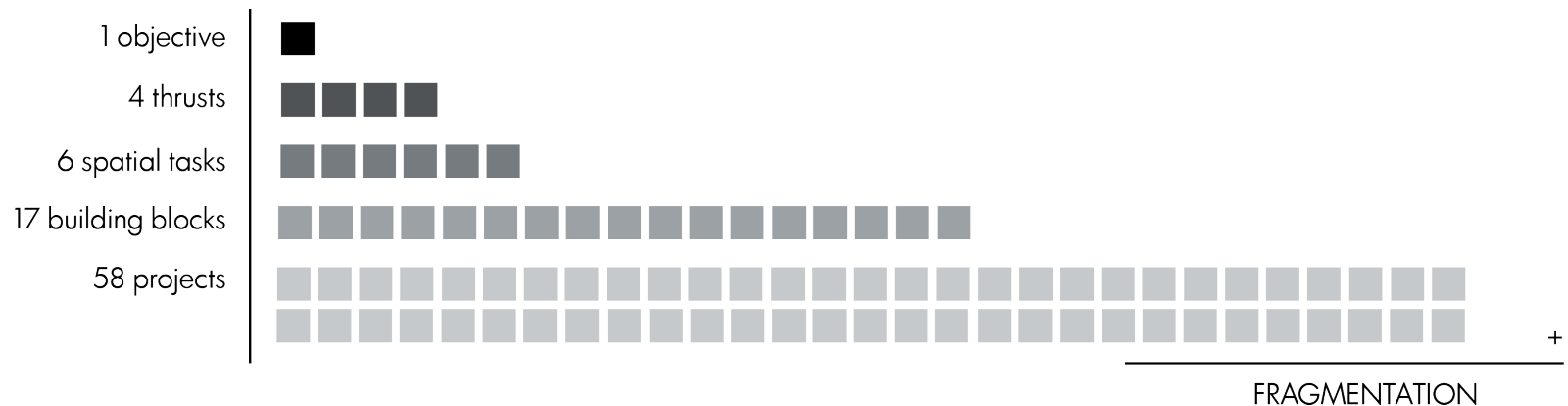


THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE RINGZONE

densification and transformation of the existing urban territory:
Ringzone as the most suitable area to develop into an attractive new part of Amsterdam

EVERYTHING STARTS WITH A DOT

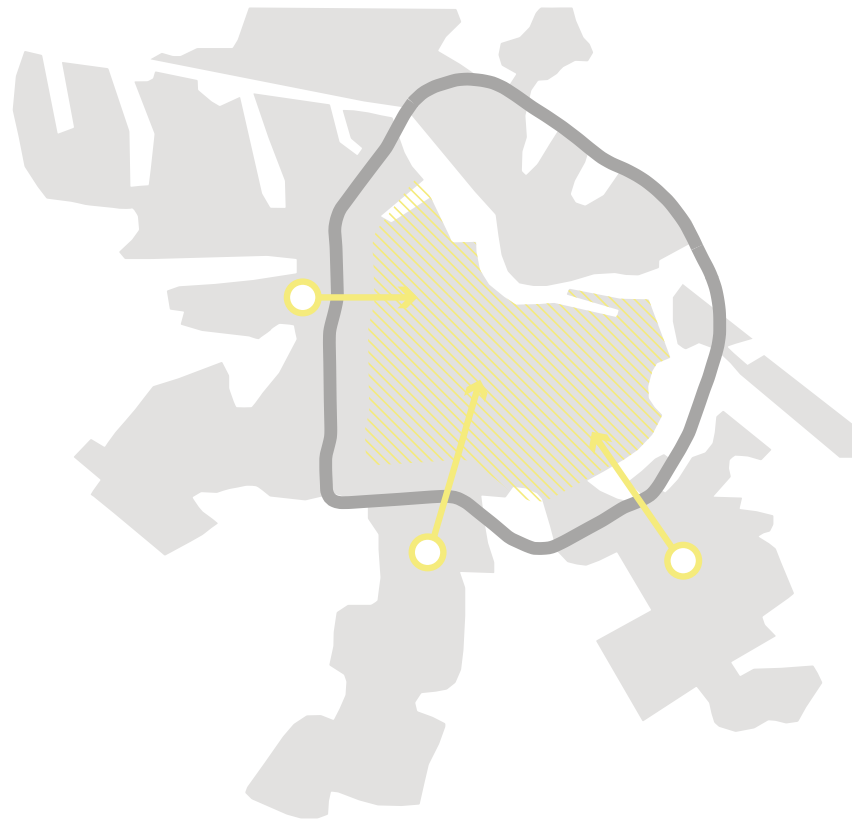
Amsterdam is organised in projects



+ a new scale and character for post-2008 urban investments

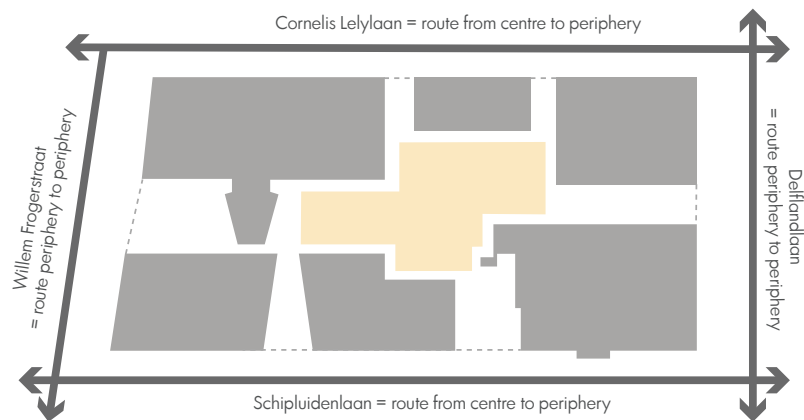
FRAGMENTATION TYPE I

inward-oriented islands - focused entirely on the city centre



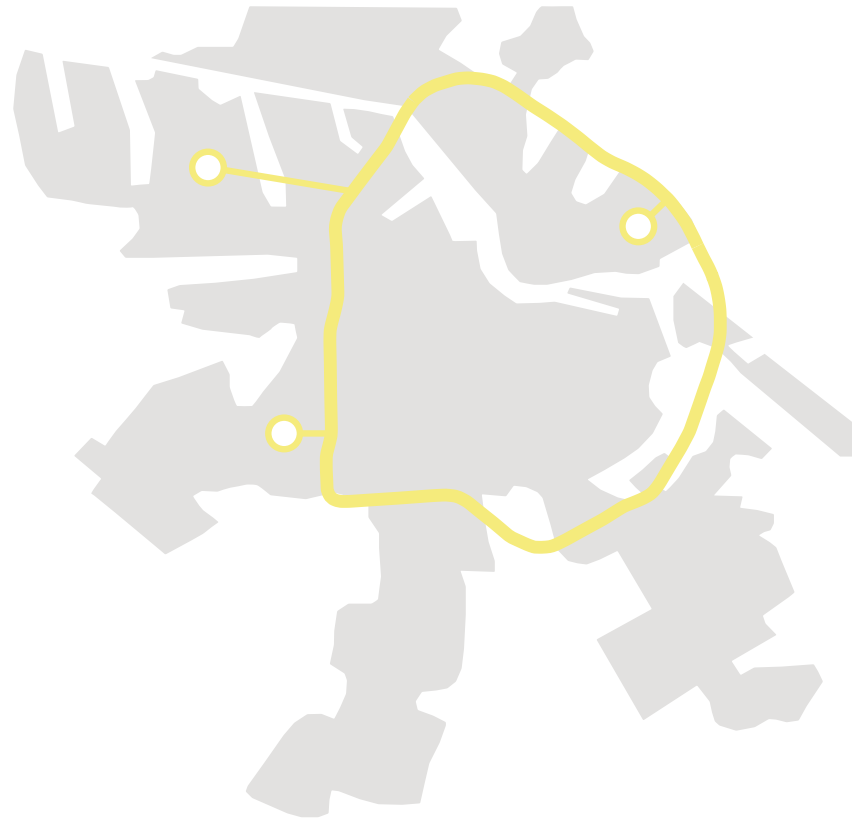
LITTLE MANHATTAN

- > inward-oriented island near Station Lelylaan
- > oriented towards centre
- > patchwork of exclusive public spaces



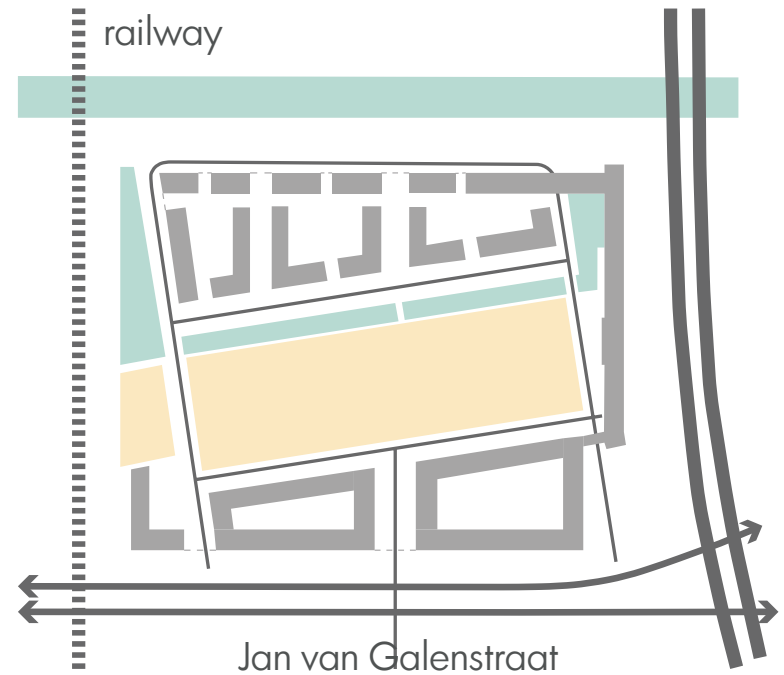
FRAGMENTATION TYPE II

inward-oriented islands - focused on the Ring and centre



LAAN VAN SPARTAAN

- > inward-oriented island near Ring A10
- > oriented towards Ring A10 (and centre)
- > patchwork of exclusive public spaces



GENTRIFICATION AS A STATE-LED PROCESS

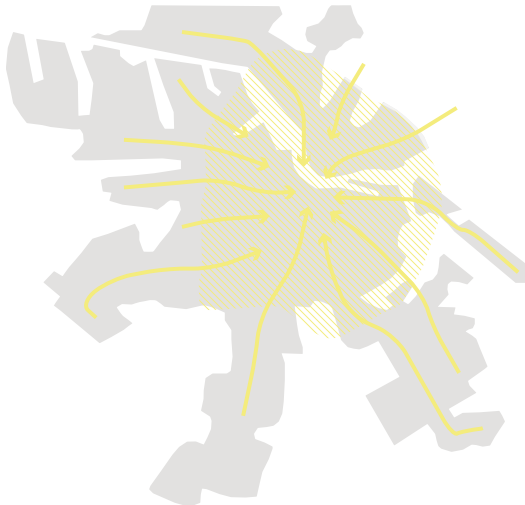
a means to drive neighbourhood change



THE TAKEOVER OF AMSTERDAM

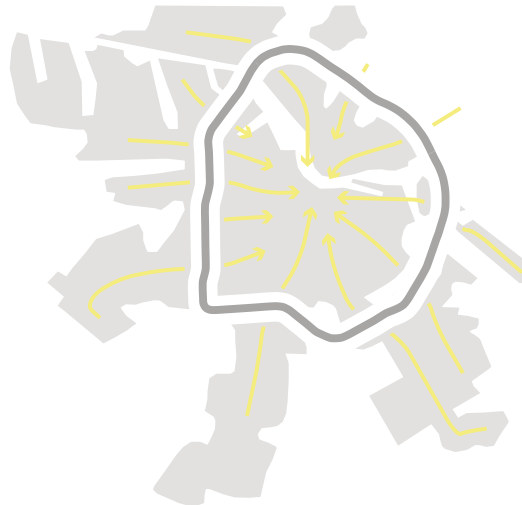
the unbalanced relationship between centre and periphery

CENTRE



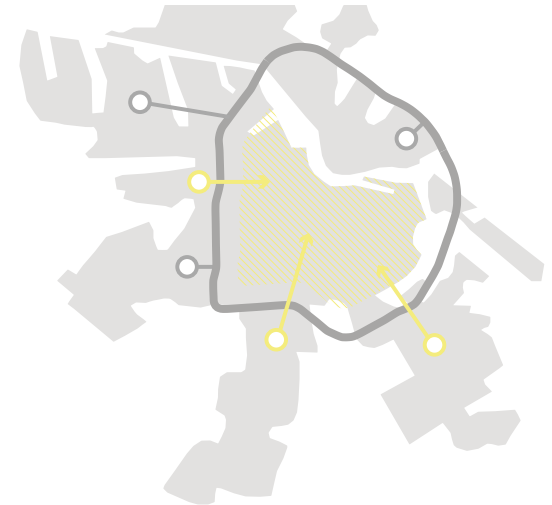
a gentrified centre

RINGZONE



a grey zone as mental
and physical barrier

PERIPHERY



a disadvantaged periphery

*... and the municipal strategy is actually reproducing
the social and spatial hierarchies it sets out to address!*

AMSTERDAM IS OUT OF BALANCE



a gentrified centre



a grey (Ring) zone



a disadvantaged periphery

AMSTERDAM IS NOT
AN URBAN VILLAGE ANYMORE ...

A long-exposure photograph of the Amsterdam harbor at night. The water is dark, reflecting the city lights and the colorful light trails from passing boats. In the background, the city skyline is visible with numerous lit-up buildings. A prominent feature is a tall, dark building with a construction crane on top. The foreground shows a large, modern structure with a green, illuminated roof. The overall scene conveys a sense of a busy, modern metropolis.

... BUT DEALING WITH
METROPOLITAN CHALLENGES



WHO OWNS THE CITY?

THE HAVES | THE HAVE NOTS

... do we want a high quality of living or a high return on investments?

YESTERDAY

a dichotomised Amsterdam

TODAY

a gentrified Amsterdam

TOMORROW

a rebalanced Amsterdam

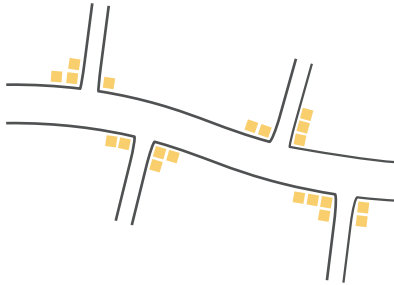
A CITY IN BALANCE - THE VISION

the unbalanced relationship between centre and periphery

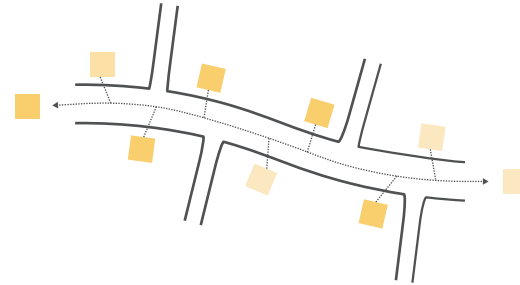


THE LINK BETWEEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND VITAL URBAN LIFE

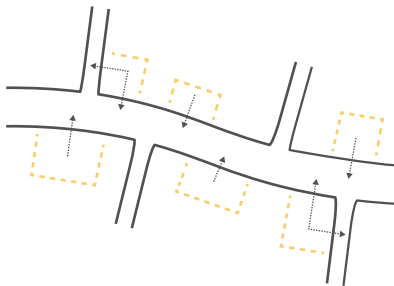
the first set of guiding principles



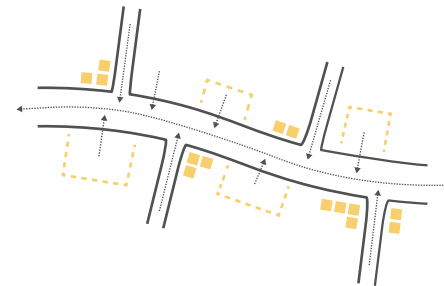
towards a
high area integration



towards a
generation of flows



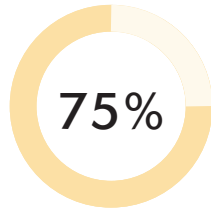
towards
local x global



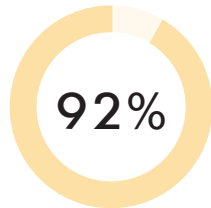
towards
a multiplicity of use

TOWARDS A SPATIAL SCOPE

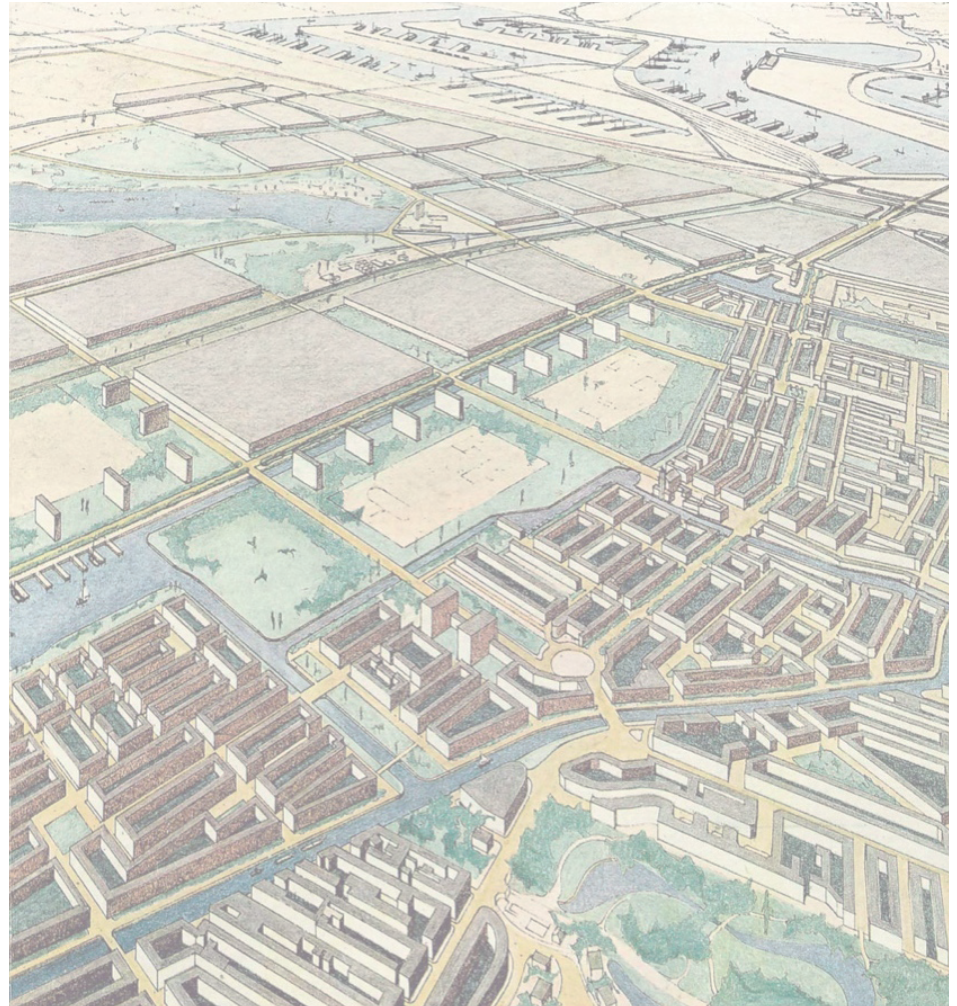
radials as arteries of public life



lives within 5 min walking
distance from a radial
(Nieuw-West)



lives within 10 min walking
distance from a radial
(Nieuw-West)



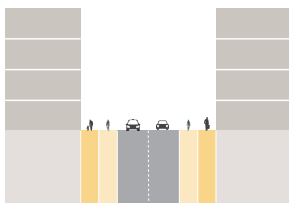
TOWARDS A SPATIAL SCOPE

radials as arteries of public life

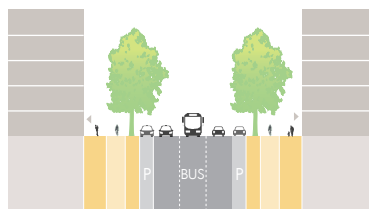


RADIALS INSIDE THE RING

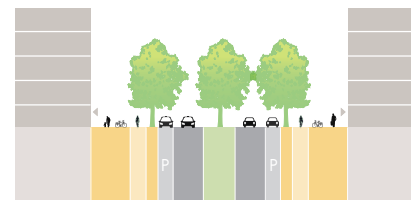
centralisation



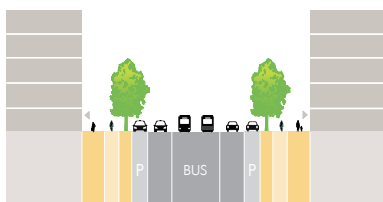
Jan van Galenstraat (S105)



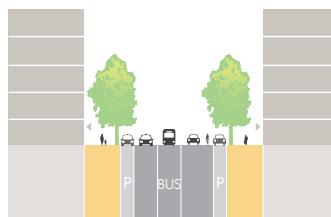
Jan Evertsenstraat



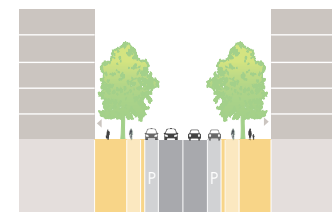
Postjesweg



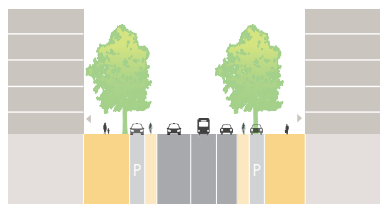
Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)



Heemstedestraat



Henk Sneevlietweg (S107)



Amstelveenseweg (S108)



Europaboulevard (S109)



A2 / S110

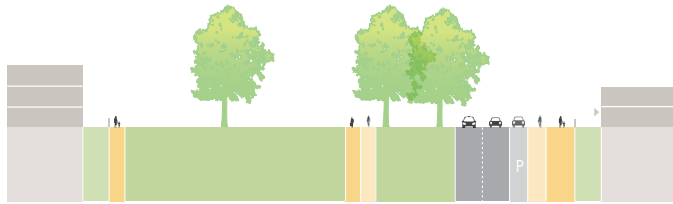
RADIALS INSIDE THE RING

centralisation



RADIALS OUTSIDE THE RING

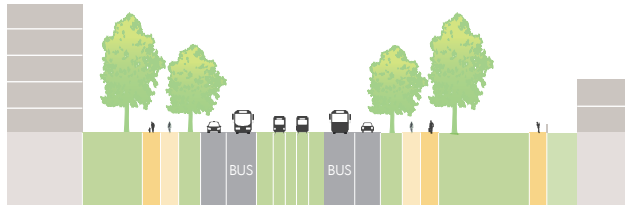
decentralisation



Witzanghlaan



Bos en Lommerweg (S104)



Jan van Galenstraat (S105)



Parnassusweg



Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)

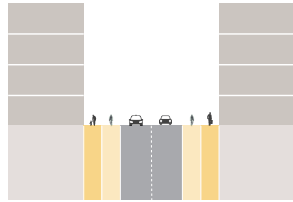
RADIALS OUTSIDE THE RING

decentralisation

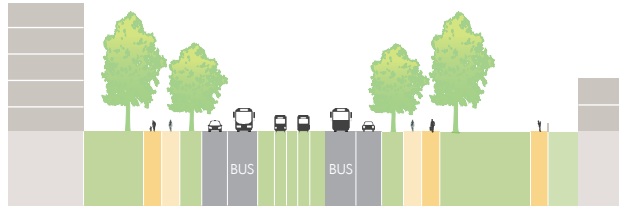


ONE STRATEGY FOR ALL RADIALS?

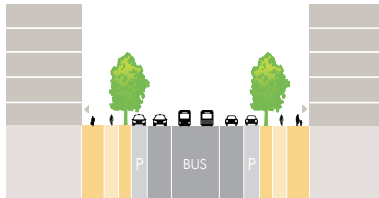
yes: length, no: depth



Jan van Galenstraat (S105)



Jan van Galenstraat (S105)



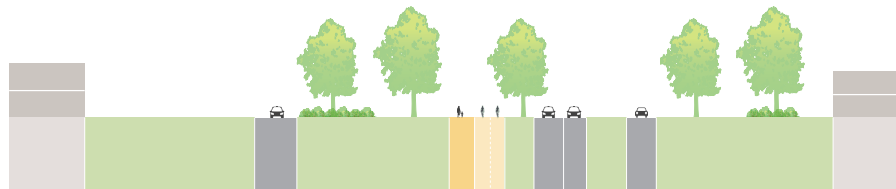
Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)



Cornelis Lelylaan (S106)



Henk Sneevlietweg (S107)



Henk Sneevlietweg (S107)

THE LENGTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

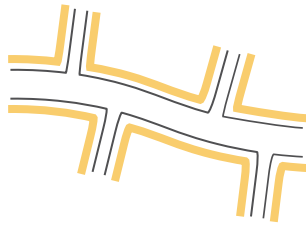
the second set of guiding principles



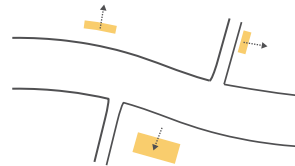
THE LENGTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the second set of guiding principles

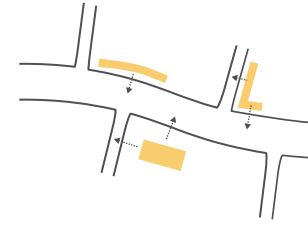
the plinths
of radials



centre

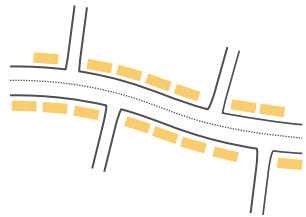


periphery



vision

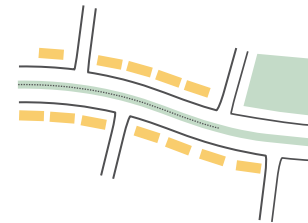
the symmetry
of radials



centre

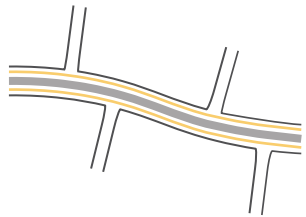


periphery

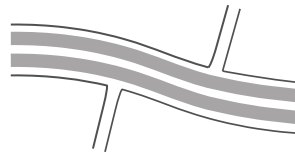


vision

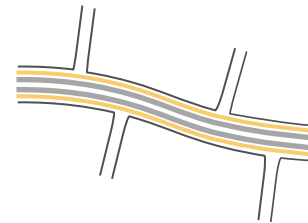
the car
dominance
of radials



centre



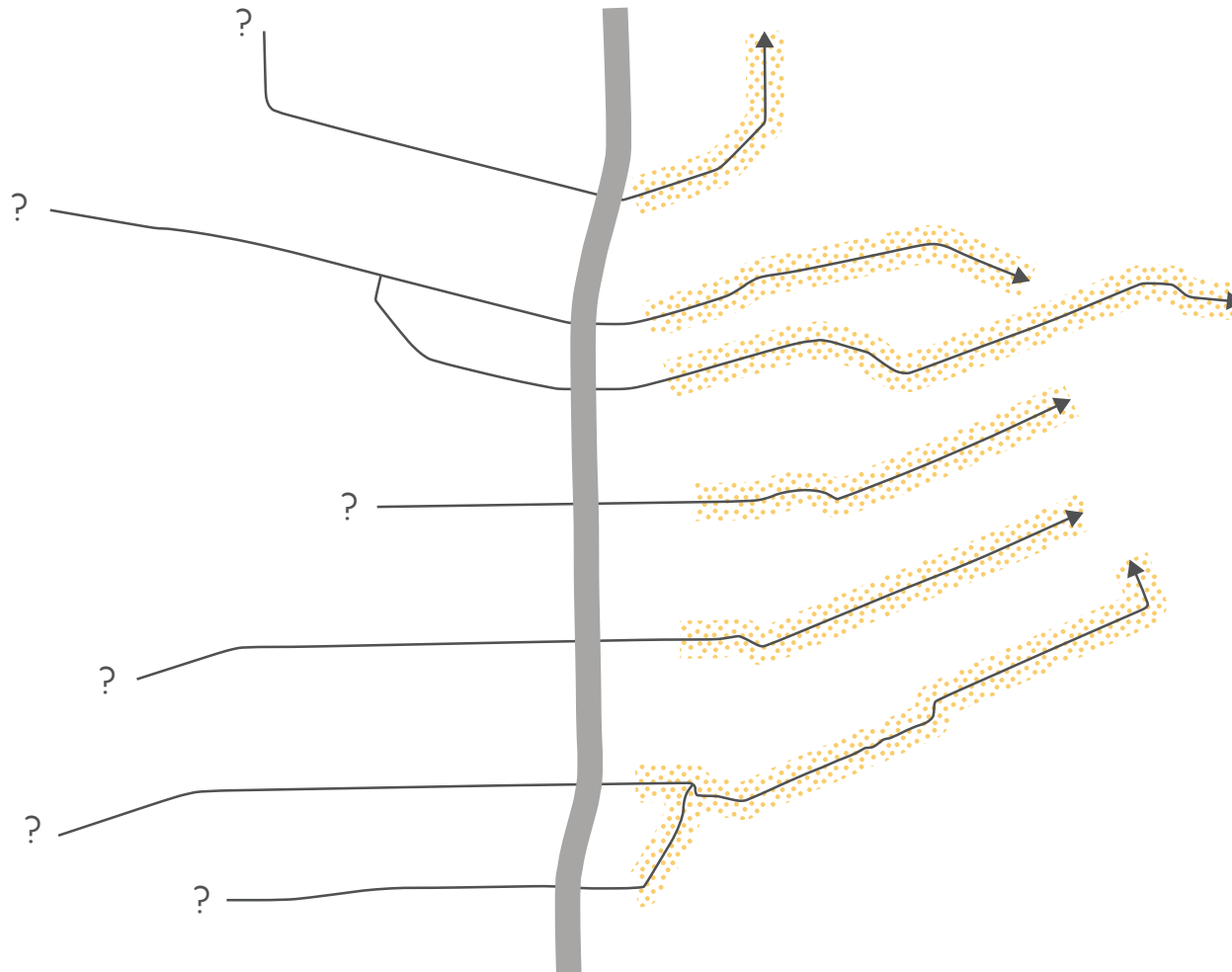
periphery



vision

RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

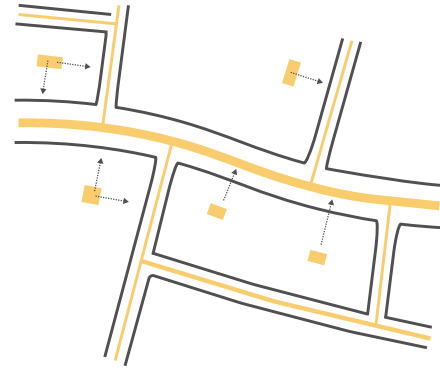
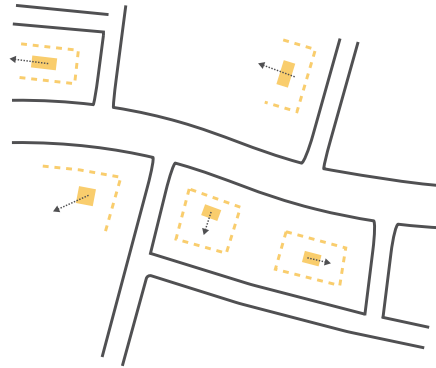
the need to focus on a specific area



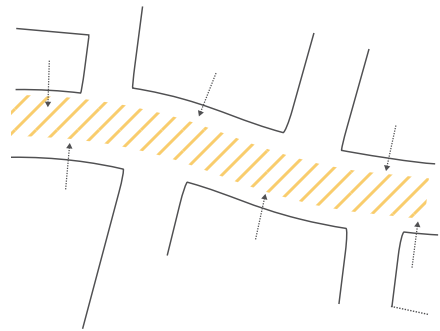
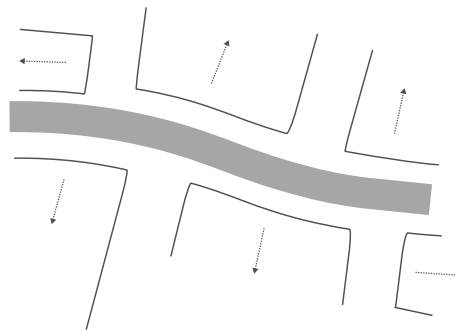
THE DEPTH OF RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

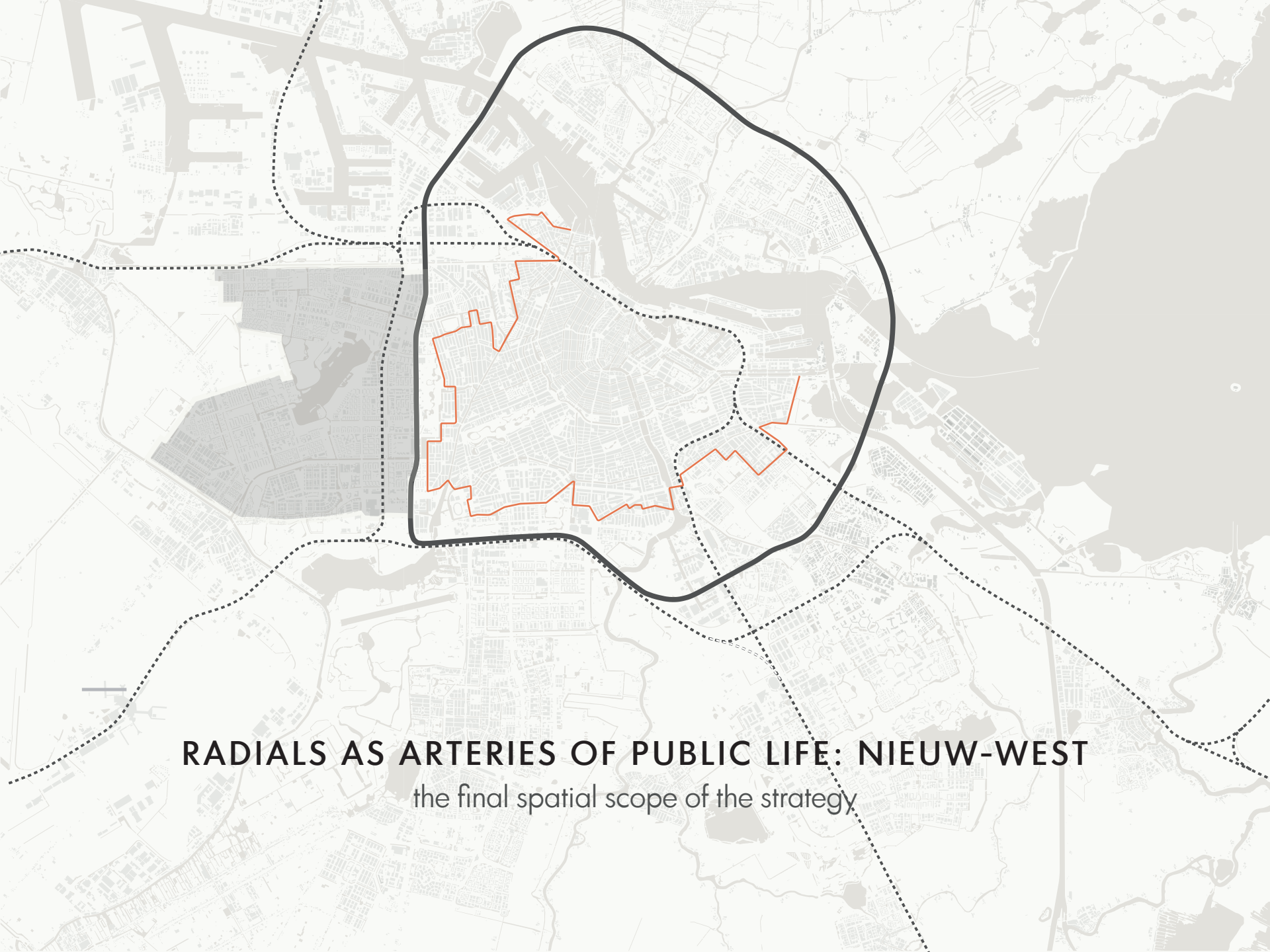
the third set of guiding principles

continuity of
public space



continuity of
decentralised
neighbourhoods



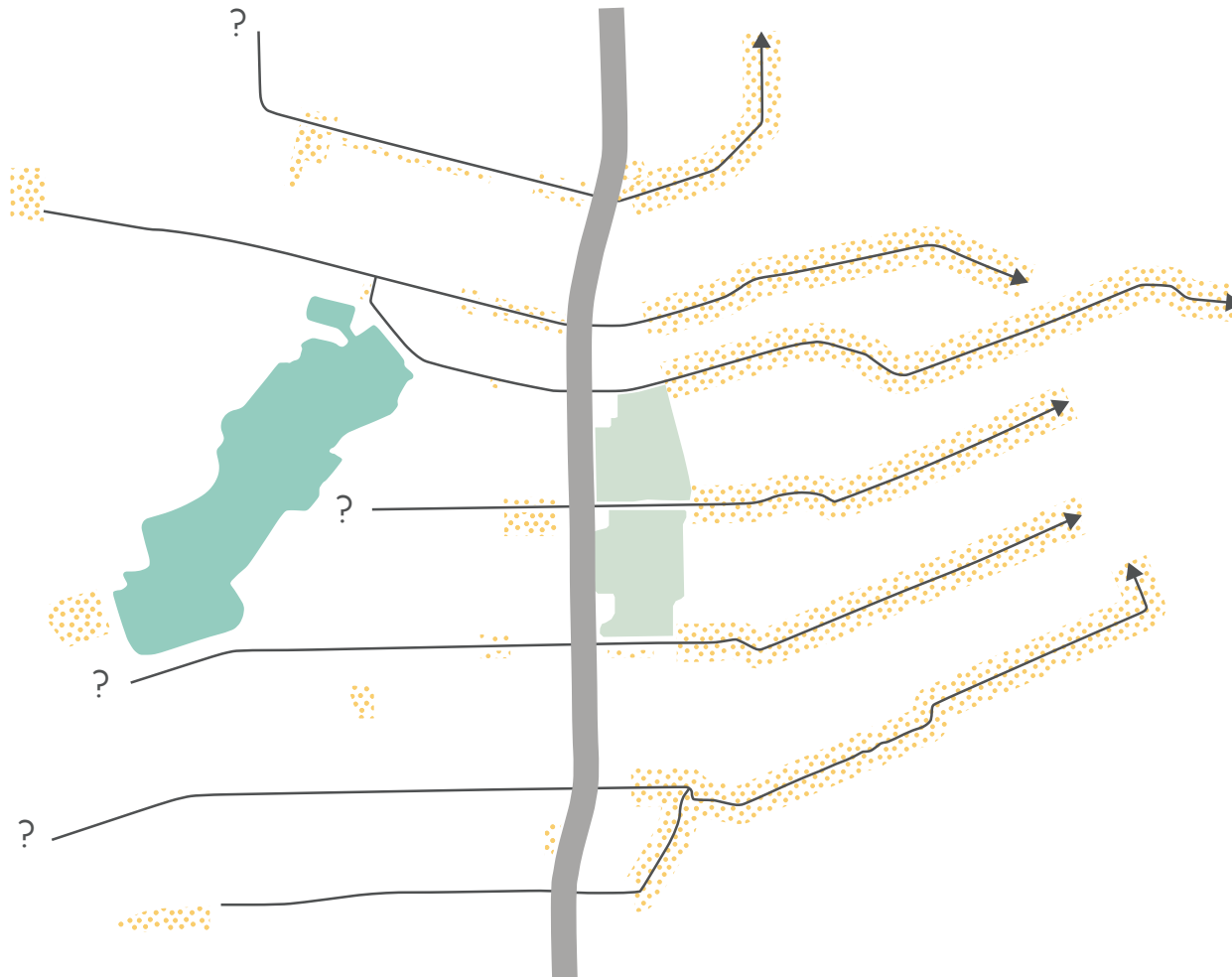


RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE: NIEUW-WEST

the final spatial scope of the strategy

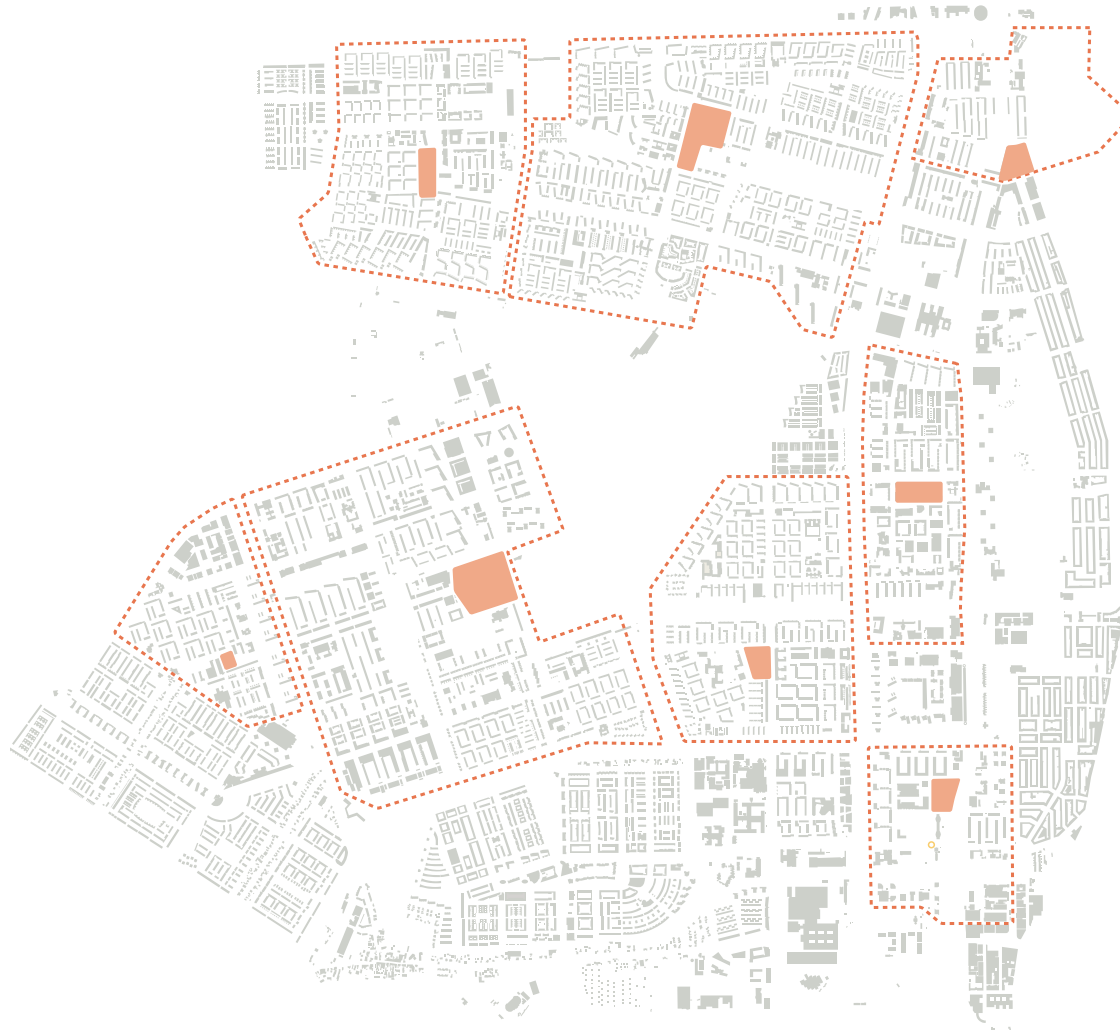
RADIALS AS ARTERIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

the existing places of vital urban life in Nieuw-West



THE GARDEN CITIES OF NIEUW-WEST

8 Garden Cities - 8 central elements



NIEUW-WEST: DIFFERENT NEIGHBOURHOODS + ETHNIC GROUPS

in a district that was designed for a homogeneous group of society



THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALISATION IN NIEUW-WEST

in a district that was designed for a homogeneous group of society



radials as traffic arteries,
cutting off neighbourhoods



hidden squares, not taking
advantage of existing flows

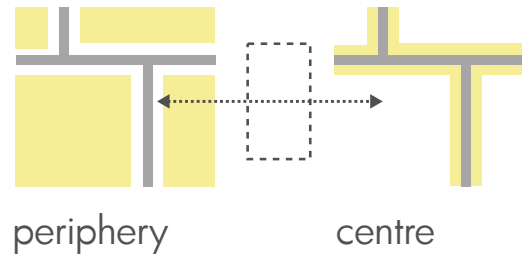


socially and culturally
homogeneous neighbourhoods

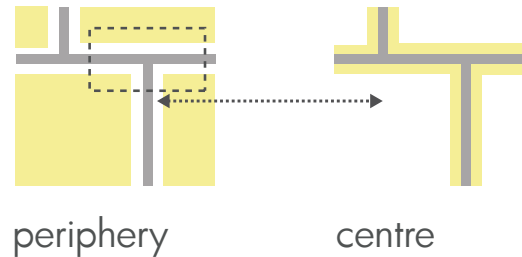
THREE CATEGORIES OF STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

of which two will be explained by designs

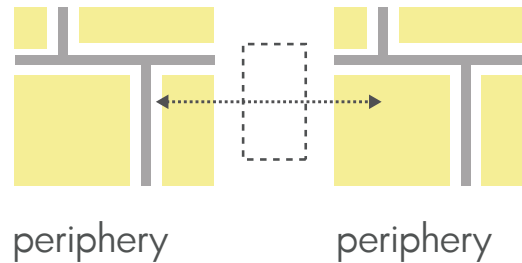
minimalisation of
the grey zone

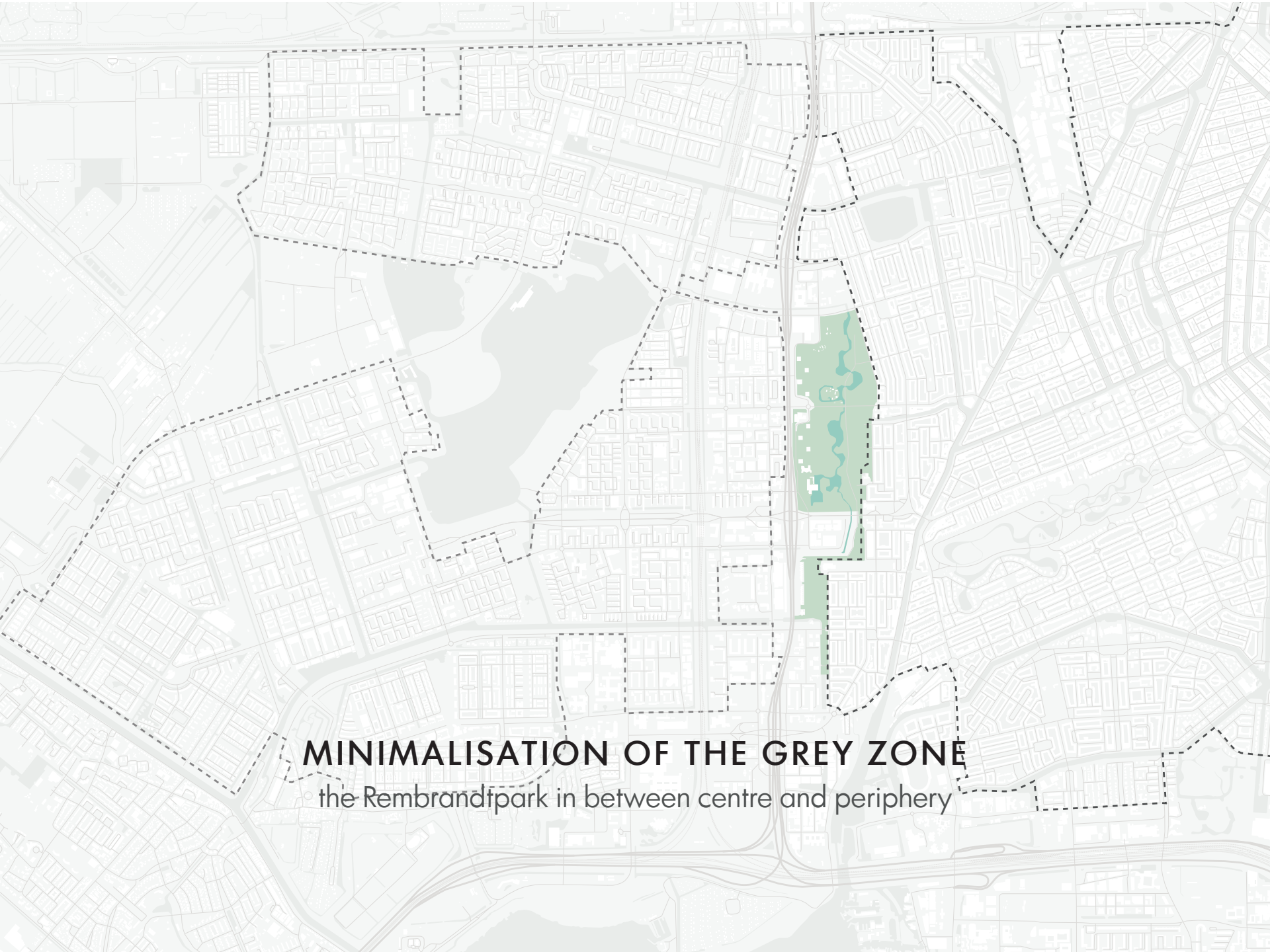


centralisation -
decentralisation



in between
decentralisation





MINIMALISATION OF THE GREY ZONE

the Rembrandtpark in between centre and periphery



A10

JAN VAN GALENSTRAAT

JAN EVERTSEN
STRAAT

CENTRE

AUGUST
ALLEBEPLEIN

VONDELPARK

STATION

SLOTERPLAS

PERIPHERY

POSTJESWEG

CORNELIS LELYLAAN

PIETER CALANDLAAN

Google Earth

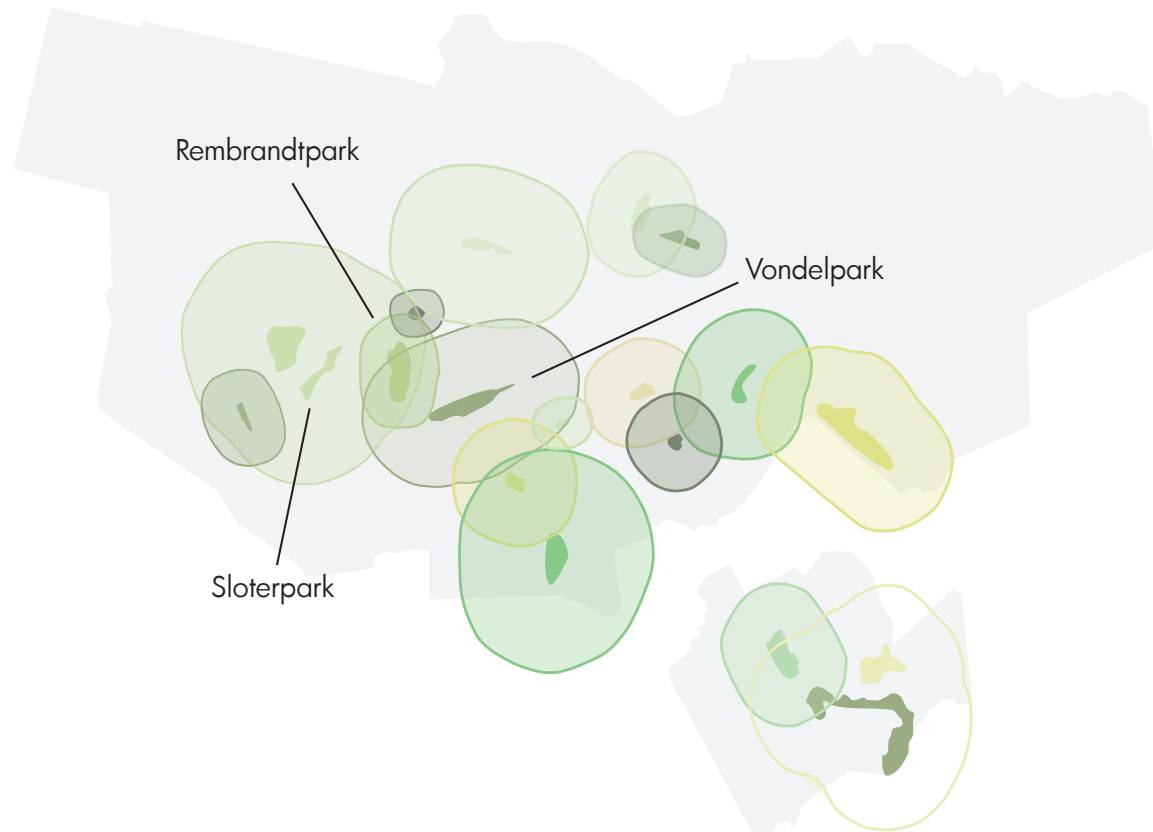
THE REMBRANDTPARK

causing a mental and physical barrier



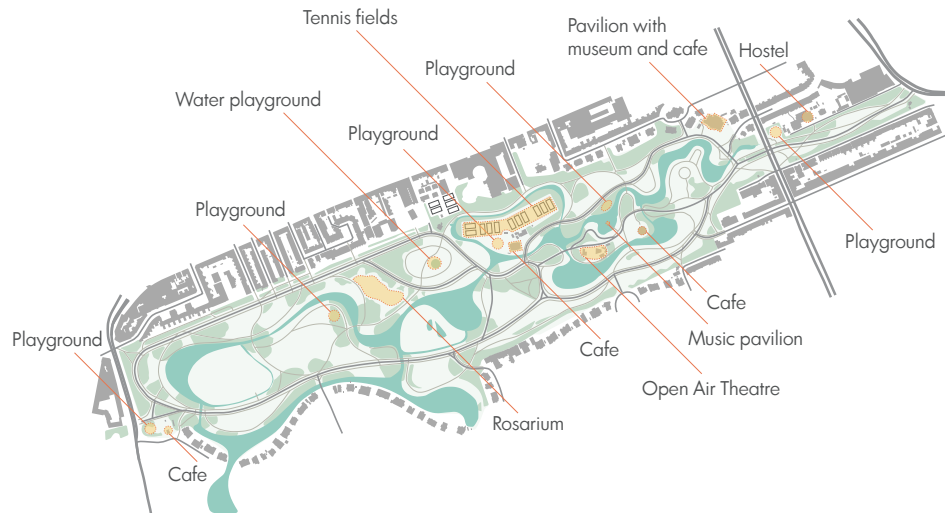
THE REMBRANDTPARK vs OTHER PARKS

metropolitan parks vs neighbourhood parks



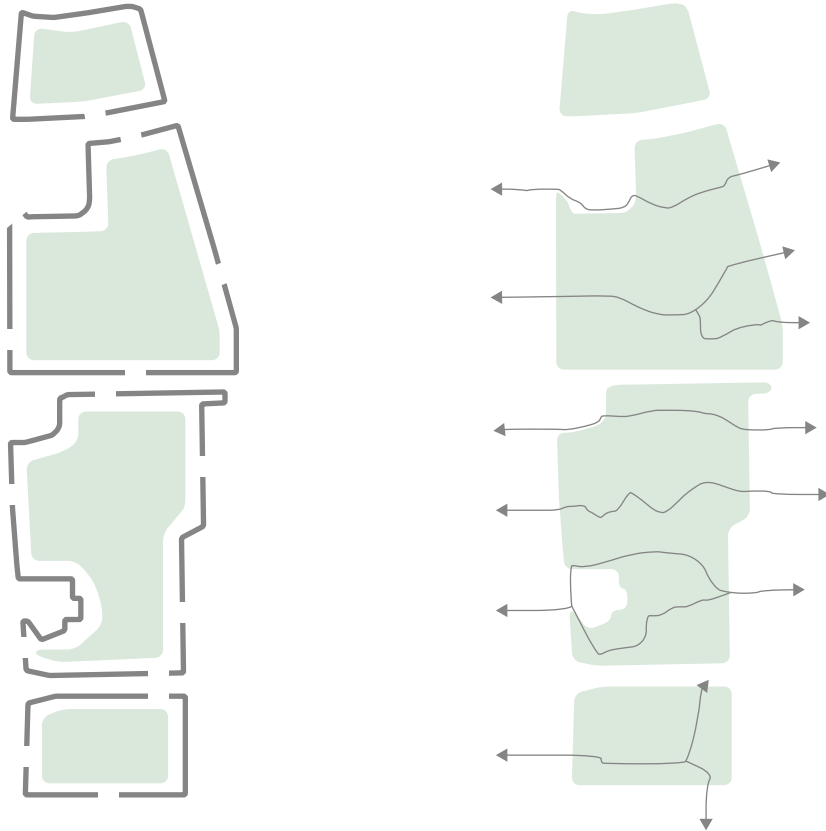
COMPARISON REMBRANDTPARK AND VONDELPARK

the amount of amenities



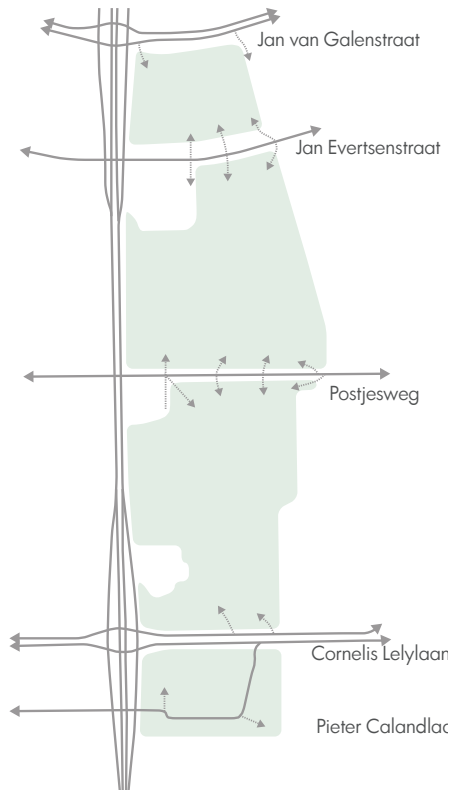
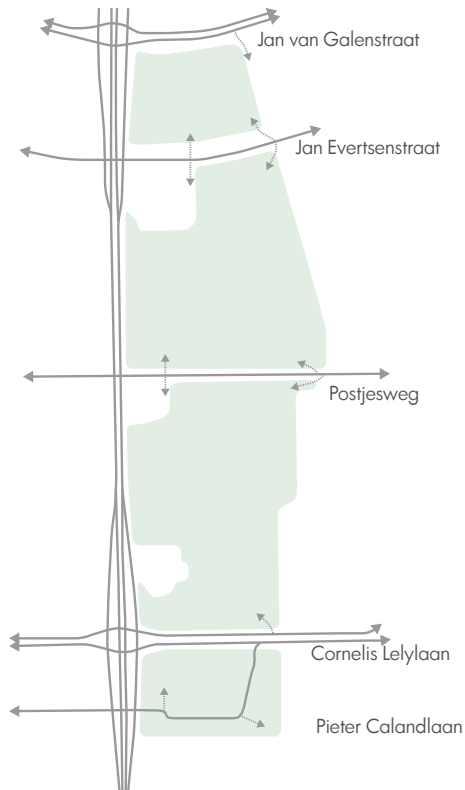
THE REMBRANDTPARK

the proposal



THE REMBRANDTPARK

the proposal





IN BETWEEN DECENTRALISATION
neighbourhoods segregated by green in-between space

SLOTTERPLAS

SDORPPLEIN

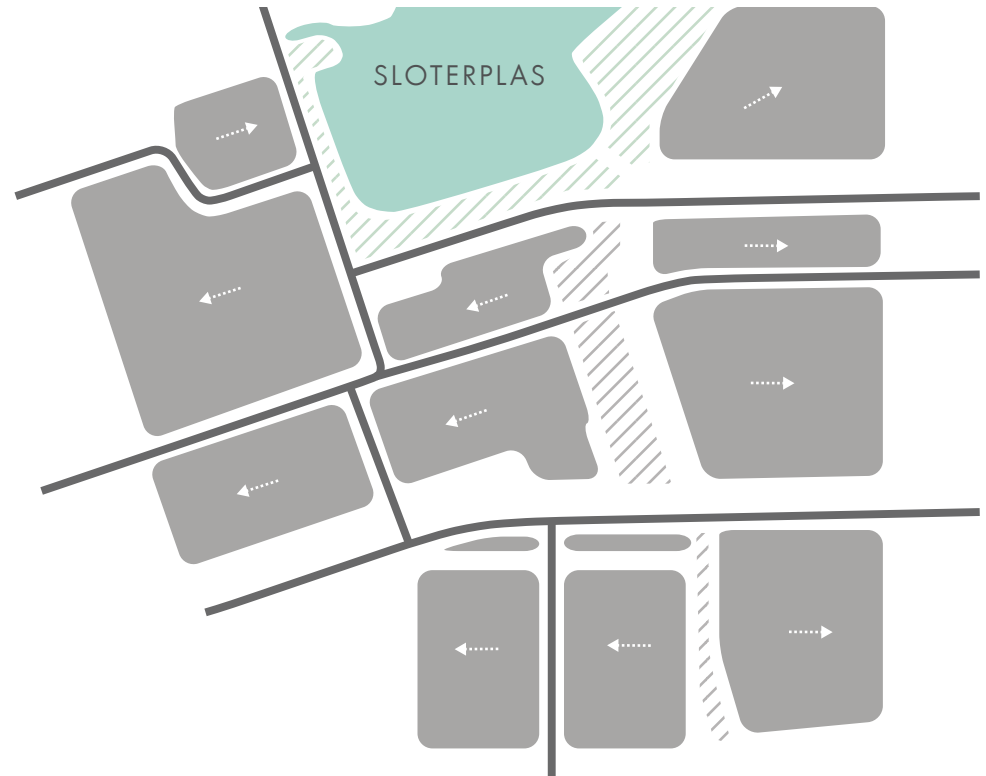
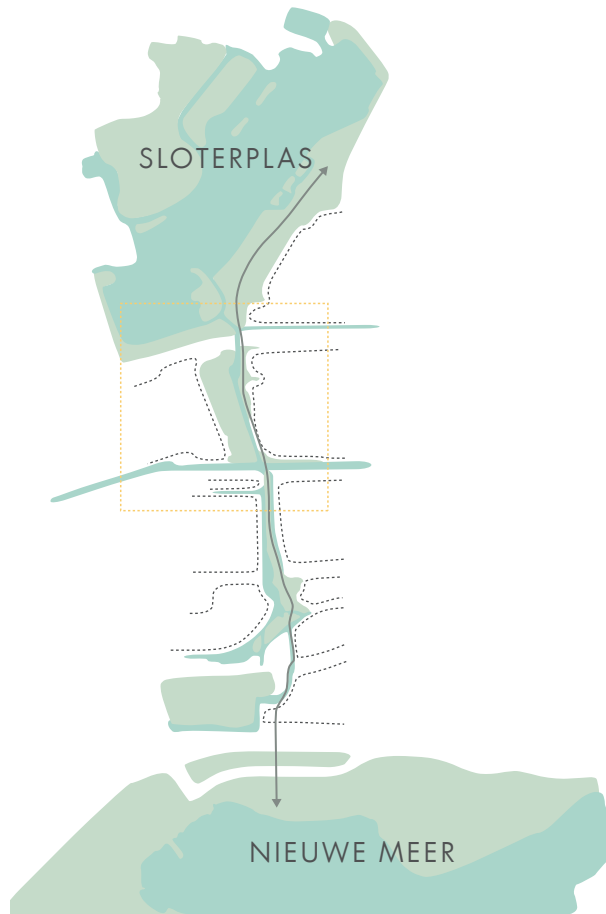
CORNELIS LELYLAAN

CENTRE

PIETER CALANDLAAN

A PARK OR IN-BETWEEN SPACE?

the local route towards the Slotterplas



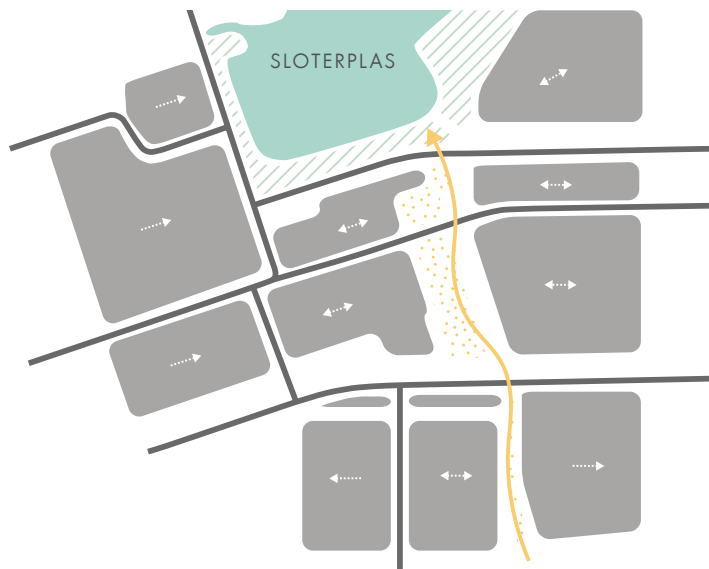
THE ENTRANCES OF THE PARK

from the middle-scaled grid and the local-scaled grid



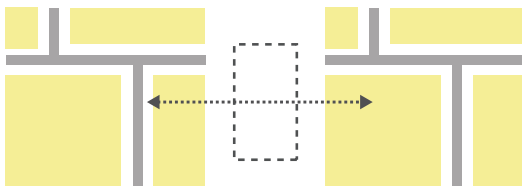
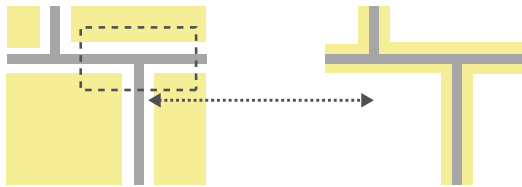
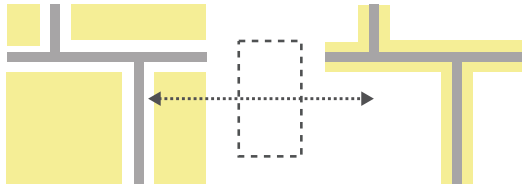
PARK ROUTE SLOTERPLAS

the proposal



A CITY IN BALANCE

towards a more equal relationship between centre and periphery in Amsterdam



EQUAL RELATIONSHIP
centre and periphery
+ Ringzone as liminal space

CONTINUITY
OF
VITAL URBAN LIFE

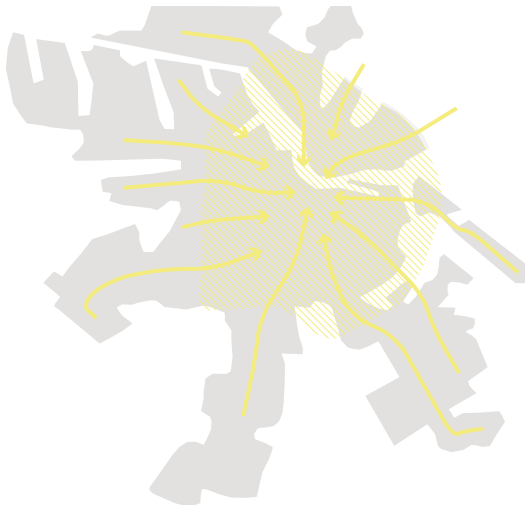
SOCIAL IMPORTANCE
OF PUBLIC SPACE
maintaining welfare

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE
OF PUBLIC SPACE
maintaining prosperity

A CITY IN BALANCE

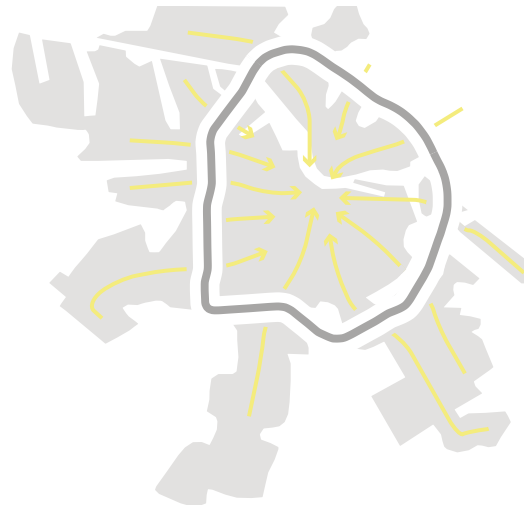
towards a more equal relationship between centre and periphery in Amsterdam

CENTRE



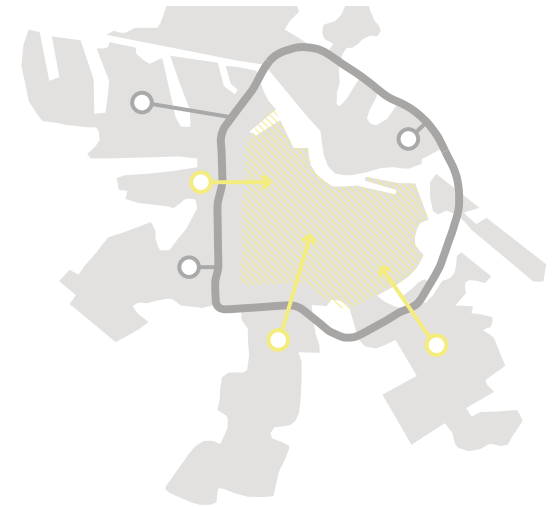
a gentrified centre

RINGZONE



a grey zone as mental
and physical barrier

PERIPHERY



a disadvantaged periphery

“Amsterdam is doing well, very well. But: not everyone in the city benefits from this. [T] the dichotomy between the rich and poor, white and black and highly educated and lower educated is growing.”

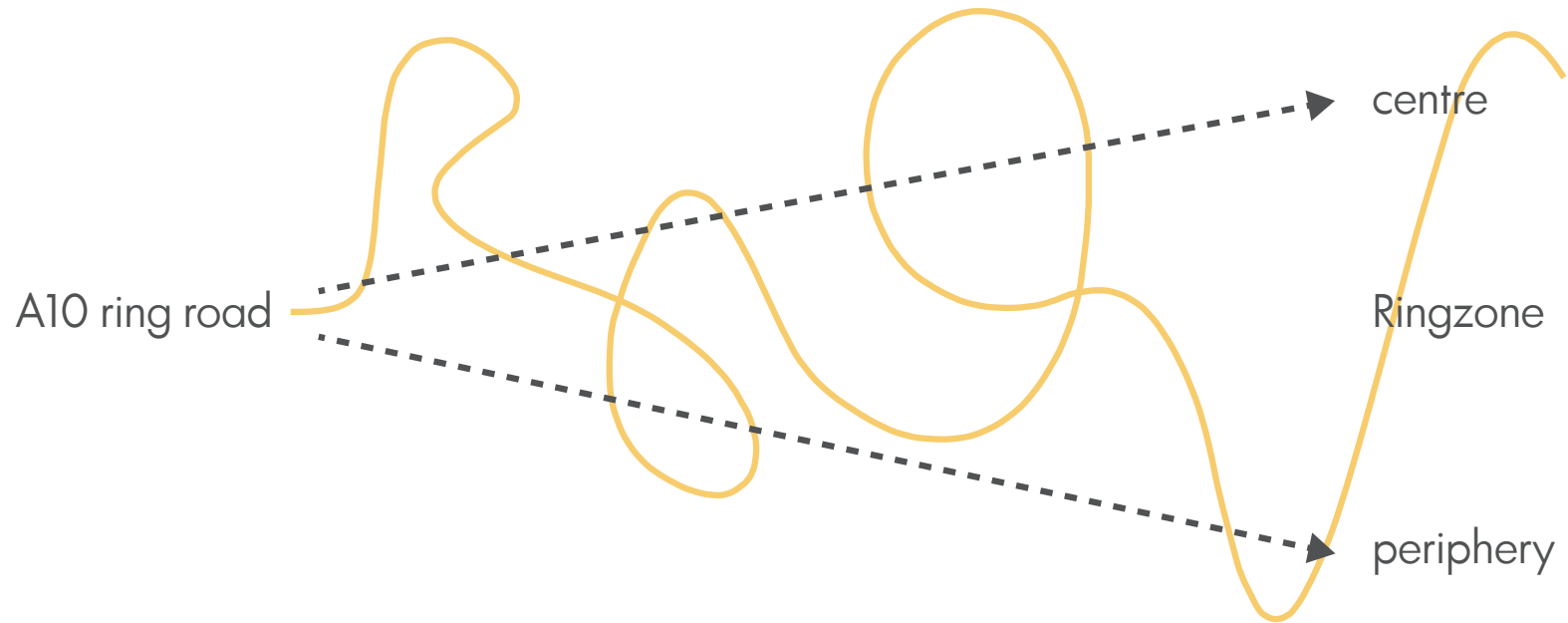
“Halsema will need to give people living outside the Ring the feeling that she is their mayor as well.”

NRC Handelsblad, 28 June 2018



MY GRADUATION YEAR

the evolution of the story





CITY IN BALANCE

Thank you!

Cateau Albers
MSc Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences