6.3 REFLECTION

6.3.1 RESEARCH METHODES
A qualitative and quantitative comparative design strategy have been used for this research, where literature, case studies and implementation are combined. The research can be divided in two parts. The theoretical part is a comprehensive literature study. This research conducts in a theoretical framework used for this research. The empirical research is done to compare this theoretical knowledge with practice. What decisions factor in practice and were those choices the right ones? The empirical research evaluates the theoretical framework and concludes about the importance of relevant factors.

THEORETICAL RESEARCH
The theoretical research can be seen as a funnel process where the result is a specification of all involved theories. The first part of the theoretical research is generic literature study. The goal of the generic part of the literature is to form base for the research. Knowledge of general principles is essential for further research. The first specification made was to investigate the basic principles of adaptive reuse. The decision to start a more comprehensive research was result of the specification. The goal of this research is to determine critical aspects in the decision-making process for transformation. These aspects are involved before this decision is made. This research resulted in the conclusion that not all vacant building could be transformed. Secondly the conclusion was made that transformation would not necessarily result a reduction of construction cost or a higher sustainability.
The goal of the research was to decrease the vacancy rate. Excluding other intervention strategy than reuse related interventions would only partly address to this goal. The current situation is a favourable situation for transformations, what explains the current pro-transformation trend. The usability of transformation is depending on several aspects; a forced transformation would result in an unfeasible project.
Amsterdam congested and the demand for real estate keeps rising. The assumption was made that the need for real estate in Amsterdam will not decrease, especially within the borders of the highway. This assumption result in the conclusion that there will be always a feasible intervention strategy that reduces the current vacancy rate.
The focus to examine reuse-related critical aspects was widening to the focus of critical aspects involved in the decision-making process of intervention strategies. The theoretical research resulted in a hypothetical list of potential critical aspects. The empirical research could test this theoretical knowledge to practical results.

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH
The criteria for the proposed cases where primarily based on the first research design. All cases where completed or nearly completed transformations. The result of the research could be more accurate by increasing the number of cases and by examination other intervention related cases. The first goal was to examine a larger amount of cases, but this goal was unrealistic due the amount of time. Not the cases but the expert interviews proved to be most valuable for this research. The over-simplified method, used by these actors, resulted in exclusion of certain potential interventions.
6.3.3 SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE
The goal of the research was to quantify the critical aspects involved in the decision-making process during the initial phase of a project. The decision for a certain intervention is based on a combination of different forces and ambitions. The research resulted in a simplified, but usable and accurate, approach for a complex decision-making process of determination of an intervention strategy. This simplified method could quickly determine the potential of a vacant office building. This would encourage actors to intervene when vacancy occurs.

Developers claim that their decision based on gut feeling can be justified because of their knowledge and experience. With constantly changing market forces a developer should reconsider the usefulness of this gut feeling. The research could help actors base their primarily decision on the most critical aspects involved. The model is primarily focused on adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, more research about other intervention strategies would result in an even more comprehensive result.

The results of this research could help students to understand the decision-making procedure concerning different intervention strategies for vacant buildings.

6.3.4 SOCIAL RELEVANCE
The social relevance is a result of the scientific relevance. The configuration of real estate and real estate itself forms spaces and contra spaces. It is safe to assume that real estate influences the liveability of our world. Real estate owners should be conscious of the effect of the real estate on society. Vacant building can lead to impoverishment, when a neighbourhood becomes impoverished, criminality may rise and people will feel unsafe resulting in a lower liveability. The result of the model should ease the decision-making process, resulting quicker decisions concerning structural vacant buildings.

The building industry is the most polluting industry. Reuse of material would decrease the amount of pollution. The model should avoid unnecessarily demolition of usable building configuration and recommend reuse when feasible. Besides the reuse of buildings or building materials, the land is reused for a new function.

6.3.5 PERSONAL PROCESS
Due to limited time the first research proposal was too short sighted. I kept too attached to this first idea, which resulted in an unnecessary amount of work in the early phase of my research. The goal of my research was to add useably and innovating knowledge. My research proposal became more realistic when I accepted that, due to lack time a thesis would not lead in ground breaking results.

I underestimated the importance of a clearly defined research proposal. My primarily focus shifted from the aimed result, to the value of the personal learning process of this research. I expected to discover the most critical knowledge during the literature study. The truth is that interviews gave for more insight in actual aspects. I overrated the value of the theoretical research and underestimated the value of the empirical research. This resulted in a delay of my research.

A lesson learned is that an alternation between the theoretical and empirical research would result in a more consistent result. Overall I gained a lot of knowledge about the decision-making process of different actors. Where business strategy and not potential solution are decisive in the decision-making process.

6.3.6 REFLECTION ON HYPOTHESES AND THEORY
Due to my shoulder injury my graduation process was delayed. During my recovery period I already started my new job. After several months I started to work on my thesis again. During this period the real estate market situation improved. The vacancy within the city of Amsterdam diminished and new projects started to develop. The idea of the decision support model for intervention strategies was to help actors to react on vacancy. The model should diminish the chance of flaws and help actors to make the right decision. The oversupply and the diminishing demand for offices let to the extreme high vacancy rate. The vacancy rate was, partly, hidden because of the acceptance of the owners. Did the financial crisis of 2008 have any impact on the current real estate market? In other words, did we learn something of this crises?

After realization most developers sell the building as an asset and try to start a new development again. After this transaction the developer is not responsible for the building nor the possible vacancy in this building. Developers should always try to achieve to develop quality. Quality for the users, owners and other involved actors. The municipality should take a steering role within this process. They should always have a clear image of all the ongoing and future developments within the municipality. The municipality of Amsterdam set up some rules to diminish the vacancy risk. (1) New developments should always be preleased for at least 70%. (2) Deserted real estate should fulfill a new purpose and could not be left vacant. (3) the reason to start a new development, and redevelop exciting real estate, should be grounded. The municipality managed to get grip on new developments within the area and thereby grip on potential the over construction of new offices.

According to some sources the vacancy rate is diminished within the municipality of Amsterdam. But what type of vacancy is diminished? Now the economy improves, companies are, again, willing to take unnecessary risks and sometimes accept vacancy within their portfolio. This will eventually lead to more hidden vacancy. The municipality tried to get grip on this movement. A new law obligates real estate owners to register vacancy within their portfolio. This is in my opinion too hard to supervise and therefore not a realistic approach. The municipality should take a more active role and team up with developers. For instance, developers could help the municipality to realize social or cultural programs, in return the municipality could help to improve the accessibility of a location.

All actors in the process should actively cooperate to achieve the common goal: Realize a qualitatively urban plan which consist out of qualitatively real estate configurations which addresses to the quality of living.