



# UNSEEN WORLDS

URBAN INTERSTICES  
FROM NO MAN'S TO EVERYONE'S LAND

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Department of Architecture Civil Engineering

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Supervision: Joaquim Tarraso, Marco Adelfio

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Master Thesis  
Urban Challenges Direction



**CHALMERS**

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Unseen Worlds  
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URBAN INTERSTICES  
FROM NO MAN'S TO EVERYONE'S LAND

To Family and Friends...

# 01 ABSTRACT

Throughout the urban fabric there are spaces that have been emerged as the remnants of an open building process. These in between, interstitial spaces amongst the built environments are the result of various processes. Either as leftovers of open spaces derived from the unregulated building construction or as the demolished products that have been brought to the surface as uncovered areas. They are part of the city's image, and yet they are standing there, humble and unnoticed.

How many times have we passed by a crevice between two buildings, or by a non occupied plot with a weird shape and we didn't even notice its existence? It is very interesting and at the same time fascinating to me the idea that these spaces are there, they exist, but they remain unseen. Even if they are appeared to be empty voids they have their own substance, given by the surrounding environment (Arnheim 2009). They have no identity considering the way they have been developed; instead, they seem to be able to accumulate a plethora of heterogeneous elements, rendering them as places capable of hosting diversities (Stavridis 2010).

As a result, the main aim of this master thesis is an attempt to read the city through the lens of the urban interstices by primarily identifying them and then to discover potential functions that those spaces can accommodate. It is more about to creating a local network of common spaces, open to heterogeneous elements, not only addressed to the neighborhood but also to the broader area.

Finally, a very essential part of this thesis is the connection with the country of my origin, Greece. This link is very important to me since Greece has been depleted by the economic crisis the past ten years and I have the chance to highlight the issues and the opportunities that crisis had caused and generated respectively to the society. For this purpose, the case study of this research takes place in Athens in order to understand the limitations and the tools being used and expressed through the spatial and the social features of the area.



(Image.01)  
The space in between

# 00 TABLE OF CONTENTS

01 ABSTRACT .....Page 5

## INTRODUCTION

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02 DISCLAIMER .....Page 9

03 PROCESS DIAGRAM .....Page 10

04 METHODS .....Page 11

05 WHY SKETCHES .....Page 12

06 STRATEGICAL IMPLICATION .....Page 13

07 FINDING A COMMON GROUND .....Page 14-15

08 RESEARCH QUESTION .....Page 16

10 DELIMITATION .....Page 17

## RESEARCH

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10 DESIGN FOR THE INTANGIBLE .....Page 19-26

11 REFERENCE PROJECTS .....Page 27-30

## CASE STUDY

---

12 CASE STUDY INTRO .....Page 32-33

13	SOCIO-SPATIAL DEVELOPEMNT .....	Page 34-35
14	ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES .....	Page 36-37
15	ACTORS AND PARTICIANTS .....	Page 38-39
16	ANALYSIS .....	Page 40-41
17	AXES AND DISTANCES .....	Page 42-43
18	URBAN BLOCK.....	Page 44
19	INTENTIONS DIAGRAM.....	Page 45
20	THE LINK IN-BETWEEN.....	Page 46
21	PROGRAMME .....	Page 47
22	SPATIAL VOCABULARY .....	Page 48-49
23	MASTERPLAN .....	Page 50-51
24	A CLOSER LOOK.....	Page 52-57
25	QUALITIES OF SPACE .....	Page 58-64

## REFLECTIONS

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26	REFLECTION MAP.....	Page 66-69
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## REFERENCES

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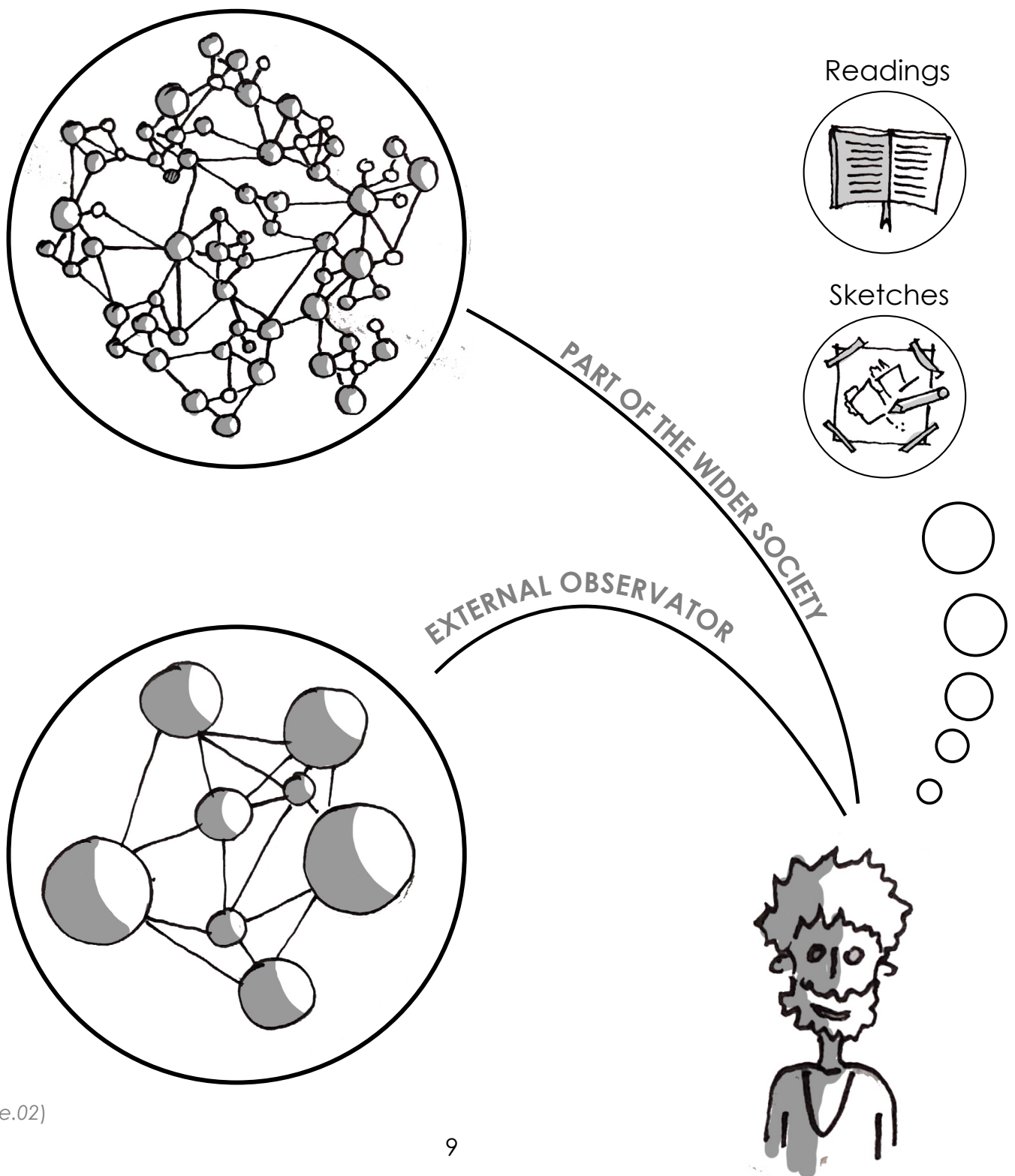
27	REFERENCES .....	Page 71-74
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# CHAPTER I

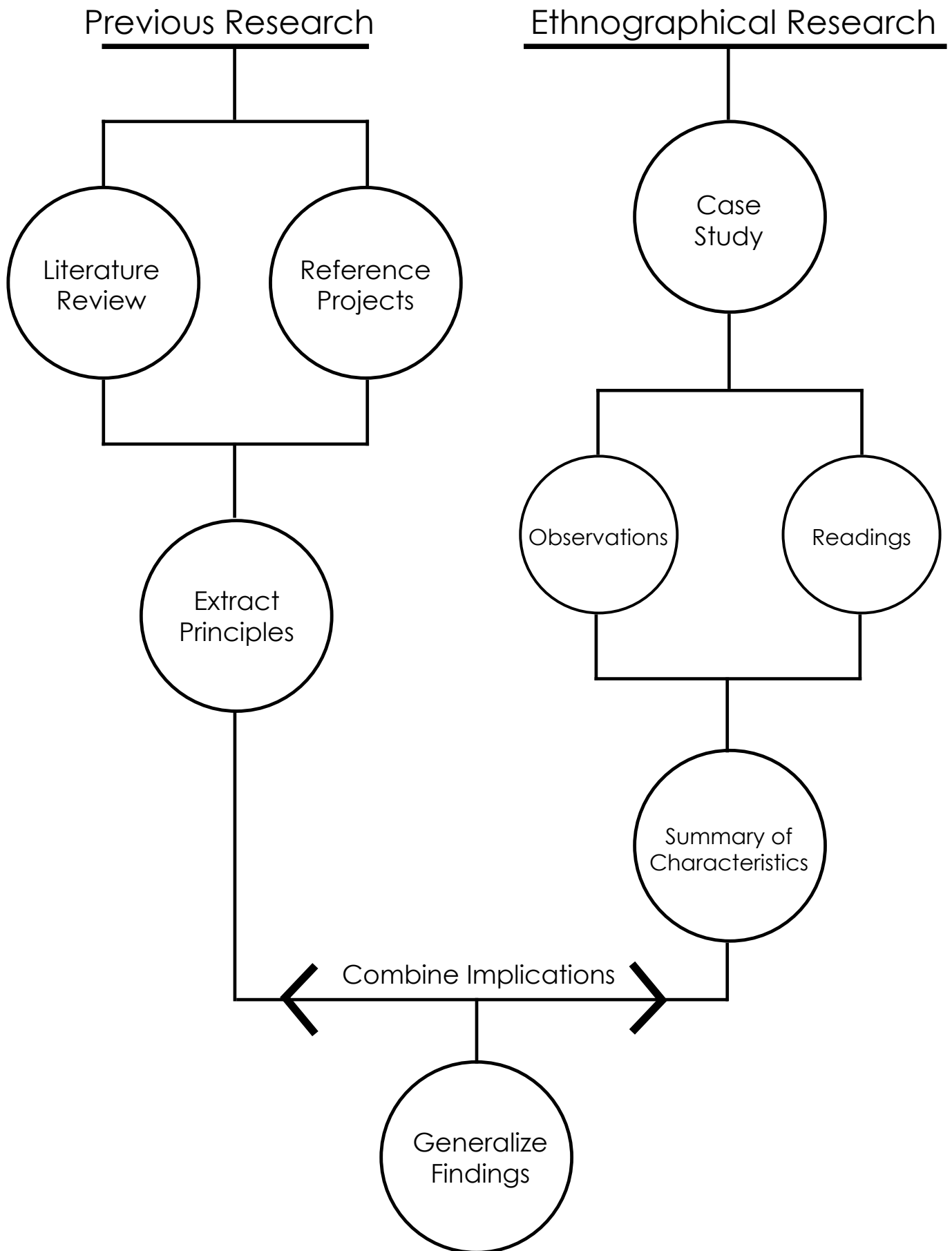
## INTRODUCTION

## 02 DISCLAIMER

This master thesis has been carried out through the lens of a person (me) who is not part of the local community of the area that is being used for the case study. Personally, I have never participated in the neighborhood activities, I haven't experienced the issues as the residents do in their everydayness or belonged in any of the collective schemes that operate in the area. For that reason my narrative is based on my current position, as an external observer who is not engaged with the neighborhood and experiences the urban space and the social forces, the issues and the possibilities in unbiased, yet sometimes intuitive way, through readings, observations and sketches.



# 03 PROCESS DIAGRAM

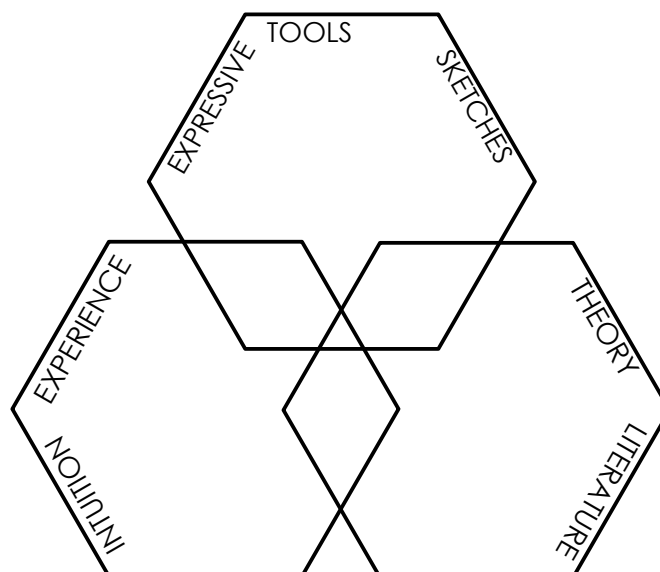


## 04 METHODS

Due to the nature of the thesis, an empirical approach is equally important with extensive literature readings. Strolling around the dense urban context of Athens is necessary in order to experience the city as it is. In this master thesis, the major tool in order to investigate things is the design process itself. Thus, research by design is an element that can be met throughout the entire body of this quest. Also, without having any intention to devalue the importance of theory in the academic practice (fills the knowledge gap that exists at the problem setting), a lot of things are based on personal observation and they are related directly to the site's characteristics.

It is the site and the experimentation through the design by taking into consideration the qualities of the place, that helps me to come to a deduction. Or, following the opposite direction, it is a concept or the principles of a theory that has been taken for granted and their implication is ready to be tested on the given area. This pragmatic approach, the constant move, from the general picture to the specific one and vice versa has been described by Morgan (Morgan 2007).

Finally, I think a combination of already existing means of research with a personal view based on the way of experiencing the space can be proved a valuable ally in this process and can be expressed through a more communicative tool. In my case a series of sketches will narrate the story of this project. In the following page there is a brief description on sketches as an expressive tool and why it has been chosen especially for this master thesis.



## 05 WHY SKETCHES ?

This master thesis is communicated through an extensive use of sketches. It is this handmade representation that gives to the final outcome the possibility to be perceived as an uncompleted process that it is still in progress and opened to future transformations. A line that has been drawn by the hand bears all the human flaws which give to the project a personal and yet sometimes a unique expressive language.

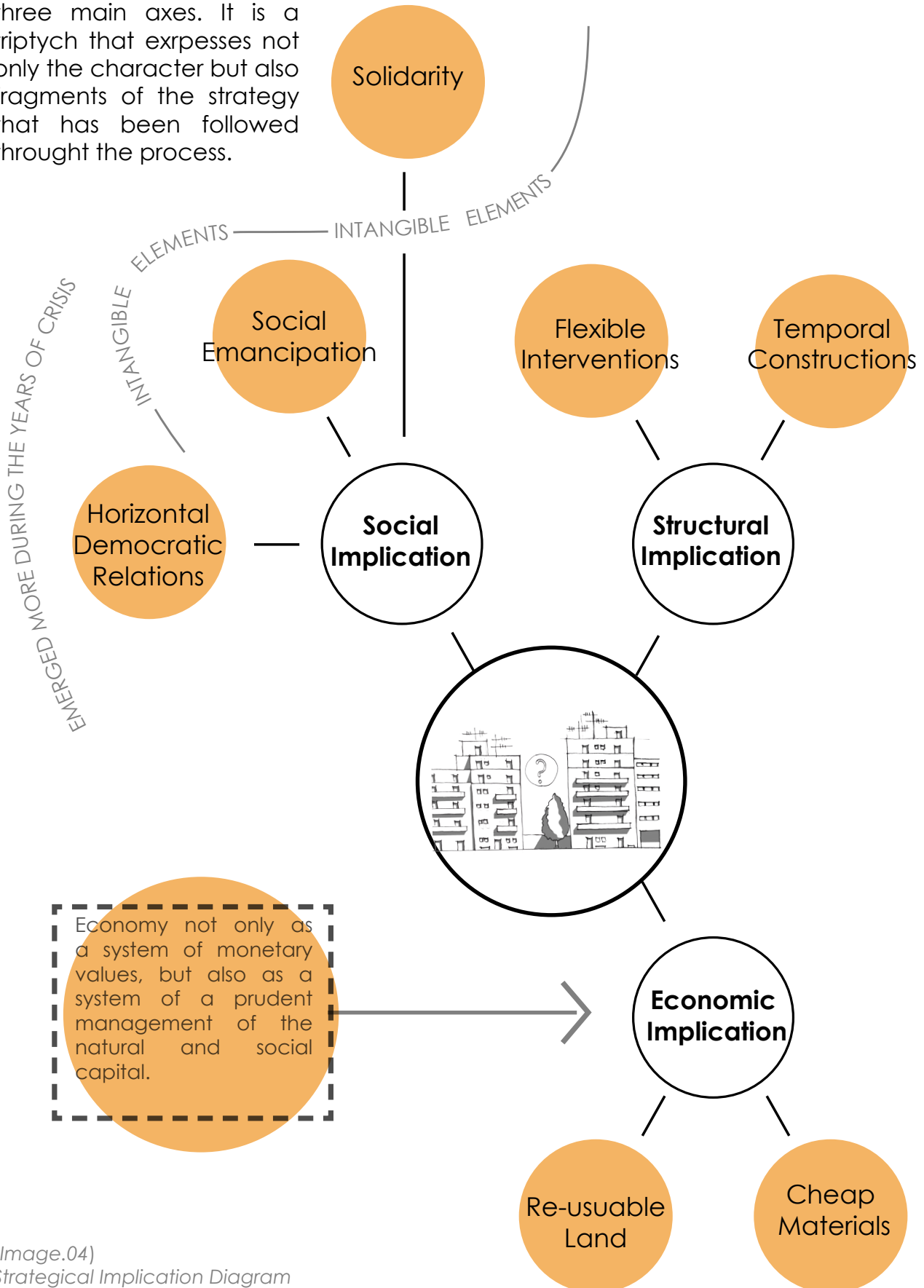
Also, the nature of the master thesis, makes the use of the selected means of representation highly relative to process and transfuse a coherent and dynamic character. Finally, this series of sketches is an endeavor of mine to describe in parallel the daily life taken place in the streets of the greek capital. These sketches don't necessarily have to depict always the proposed outcome or to give a precise representation of the surrounding context. The intention behind them is to bring to life scattered and elusive images of the city, mixed environments that incorporate architectural elements of the local neighborhoods, incidents, situations, problems and opportunities that can be met in public.



(Image.03)

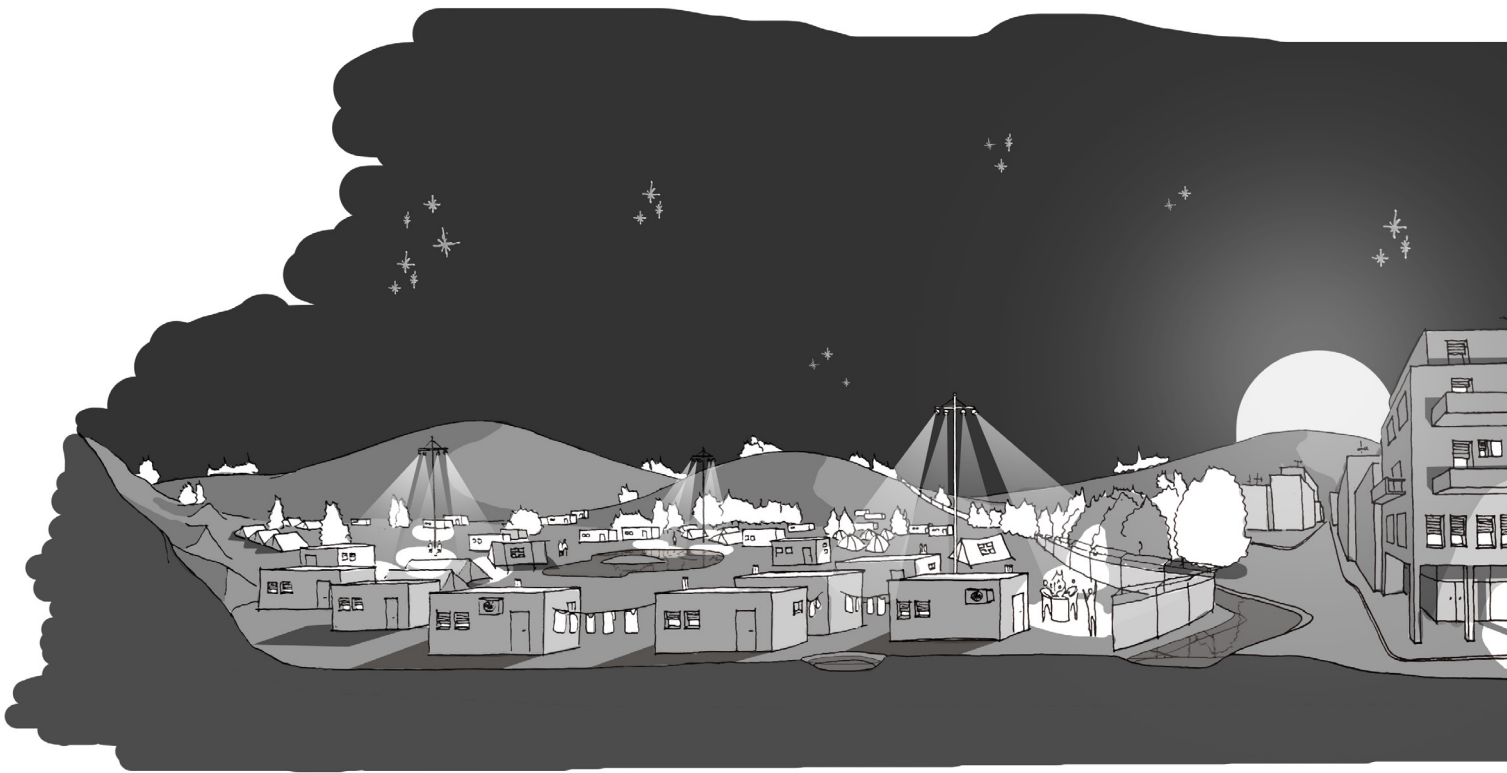
# 06 STRATEGICAL IMPLICATION

The implication of the master thesis is based on three main axes. It is a triptych that expresses not only the character but also fragments of the strategy that has been followed through the process.



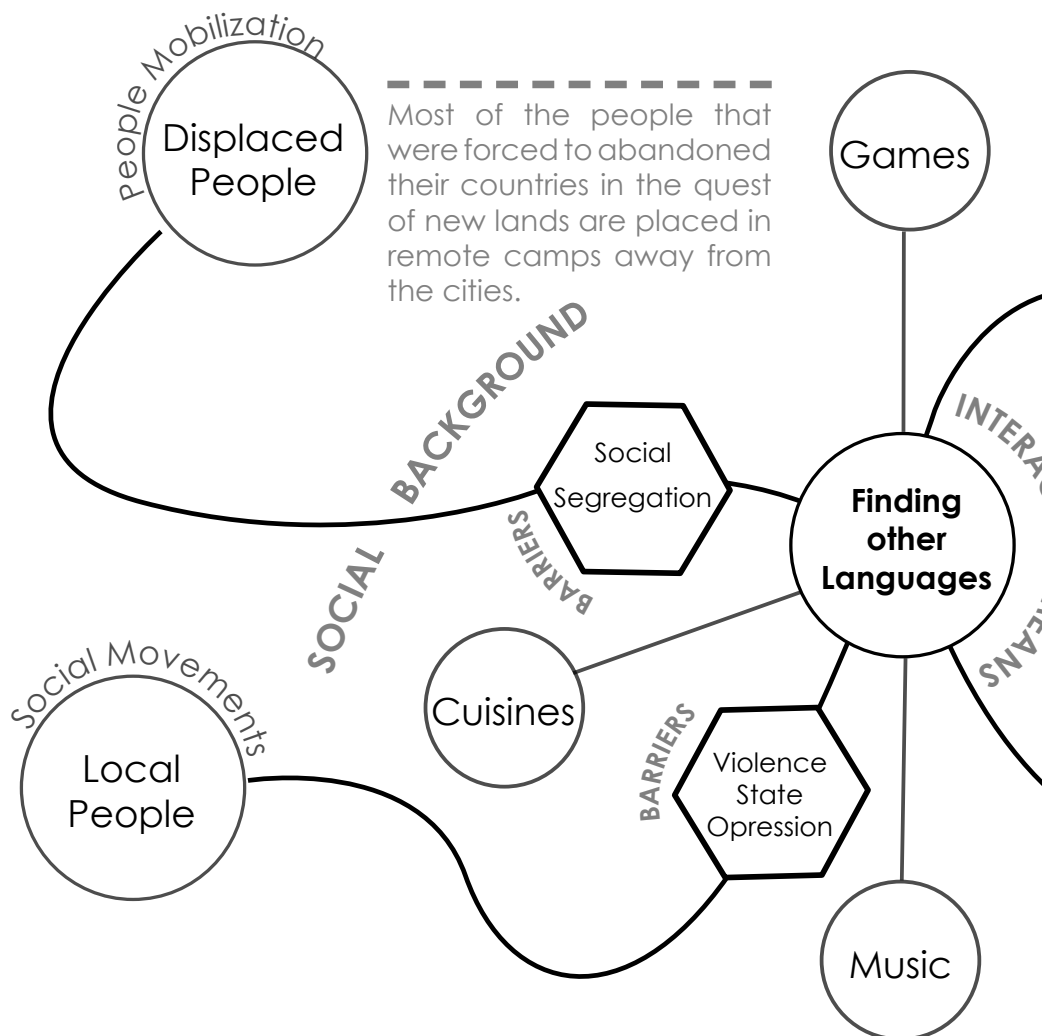
(Image.04)  
Strategical Implication Diagram

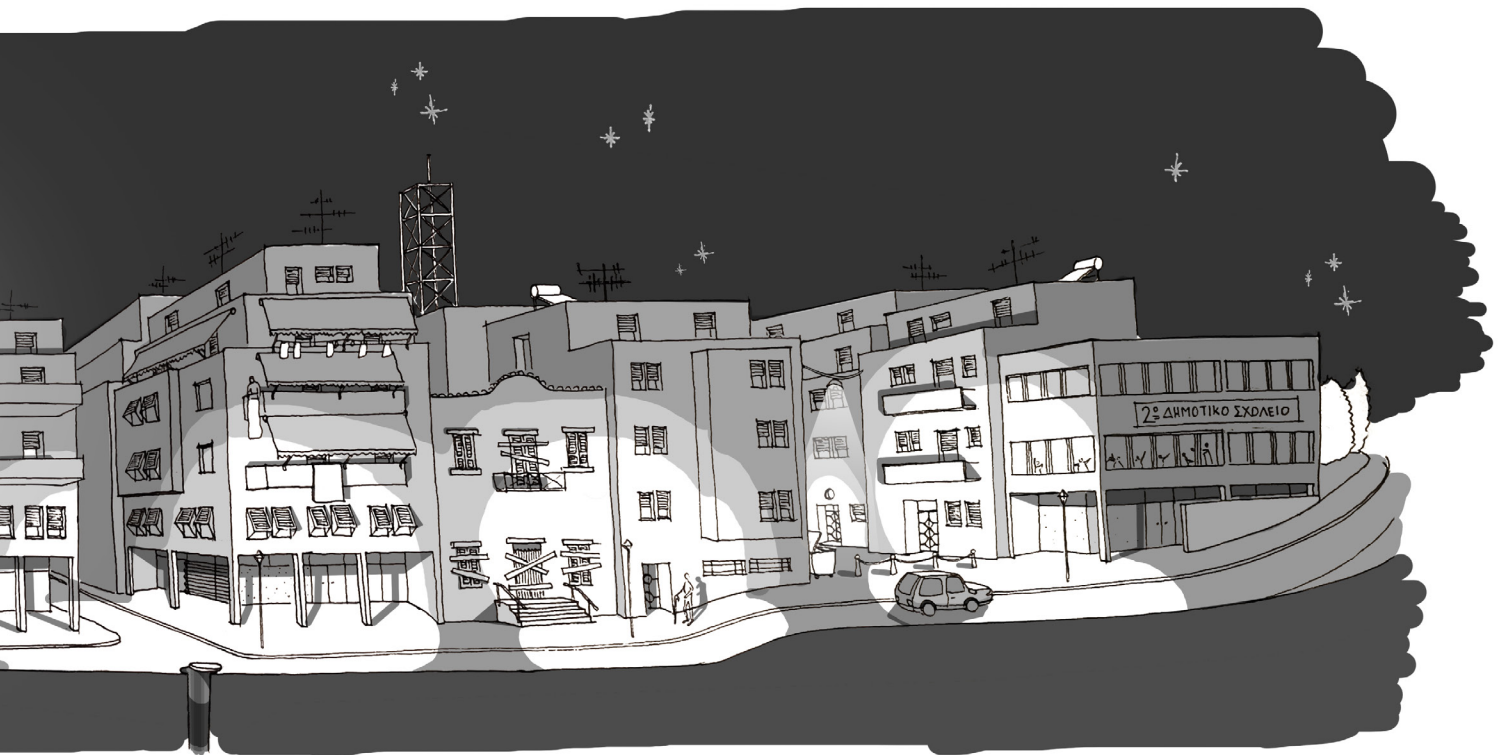
# 07 FINDING A COMMON GROUND



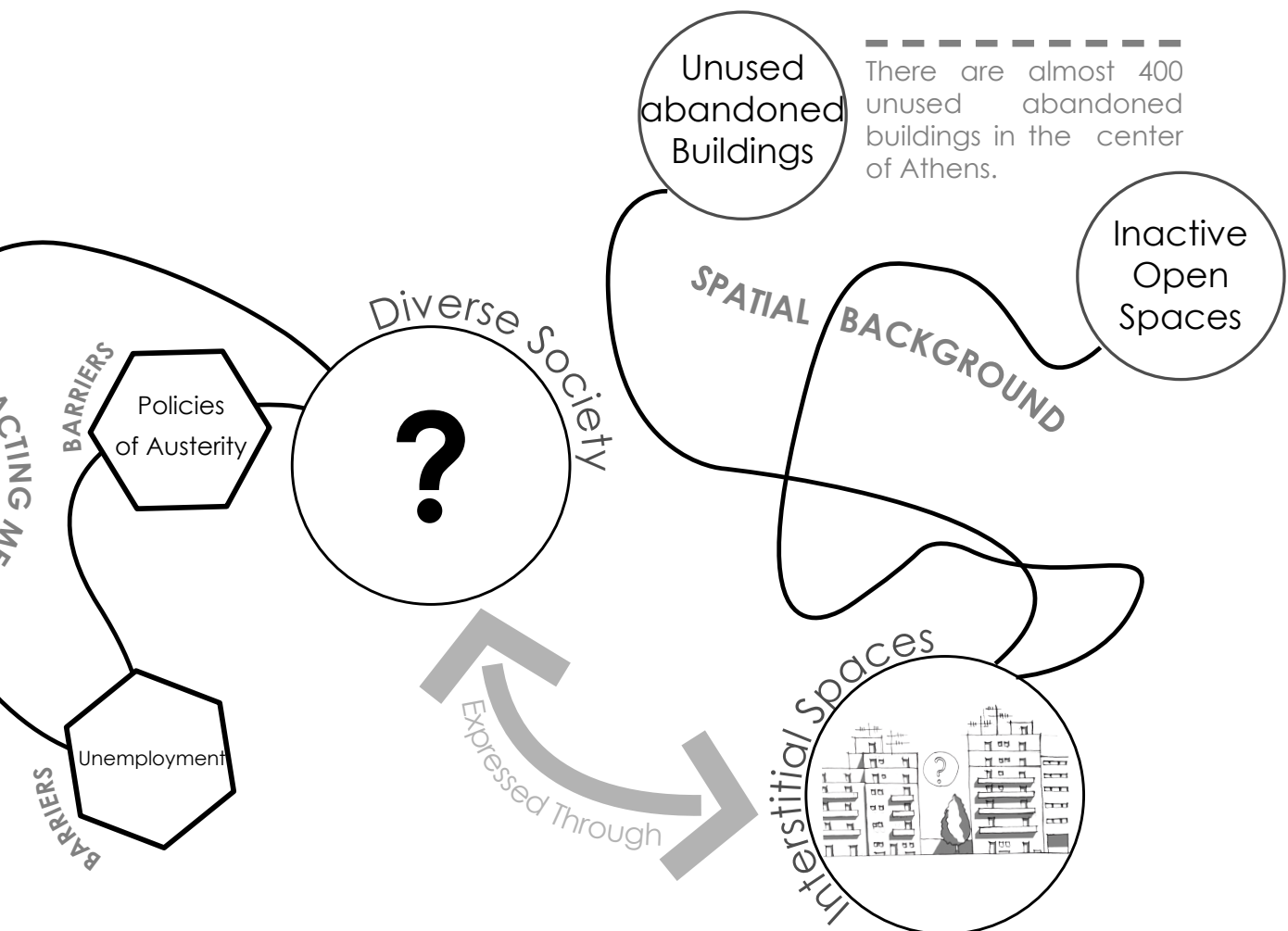
Part of the current situation in Greece is characterized by a lot of contradictory images. On one hand displaced people are living restricted in camps. Most of them are detached from the urban centers and they have a limited social life. On the other hand there is a plethora of abandoned buildings and inactive open spaces that are not being used in the cities. In this diagram it is illustrated that contrast and the very initiation of a dialogue in order to bridge those two worlds.

During the years of the crisis people organized in groups based on solidarity in order to support their living, by covering the huge gap of necessary everyday provisions that social institutions failed to do so.



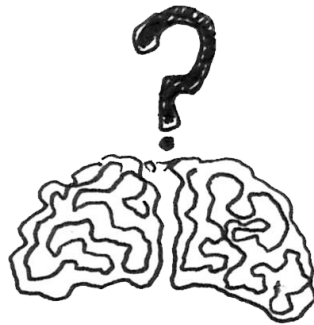


(Image.05)  
Contrasted Images



## 08 RESEARCH QUESTION

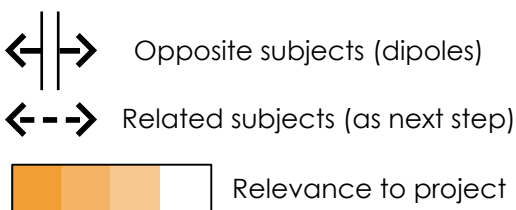
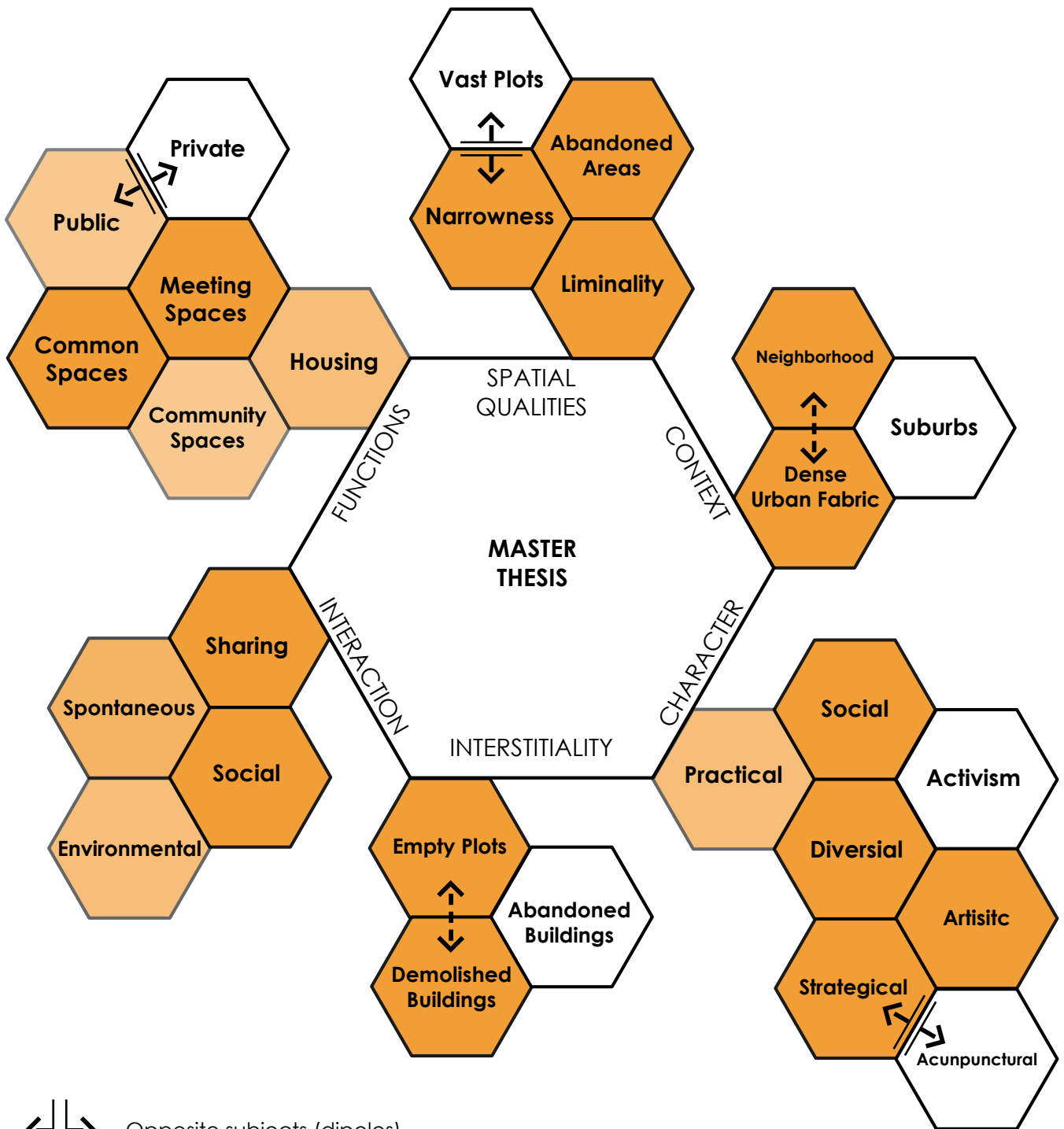
The main challenge of this master thesis is to understand how to use interstitiality as the ground for commoning, a ground that can operate as a social laboratory where the process of social reproduction can be questioned. As a result, all of the above mentioned can be summarized in the following question.



“How local **common spaces**, acting as thresholds, can be emerged from **urban interstices** and create places which promote social diversity”?

# 09 DELIMITATION

This diagram illustrates what is relative and what is not to the thesis. It gives the general orientation of the thesis and its identity.



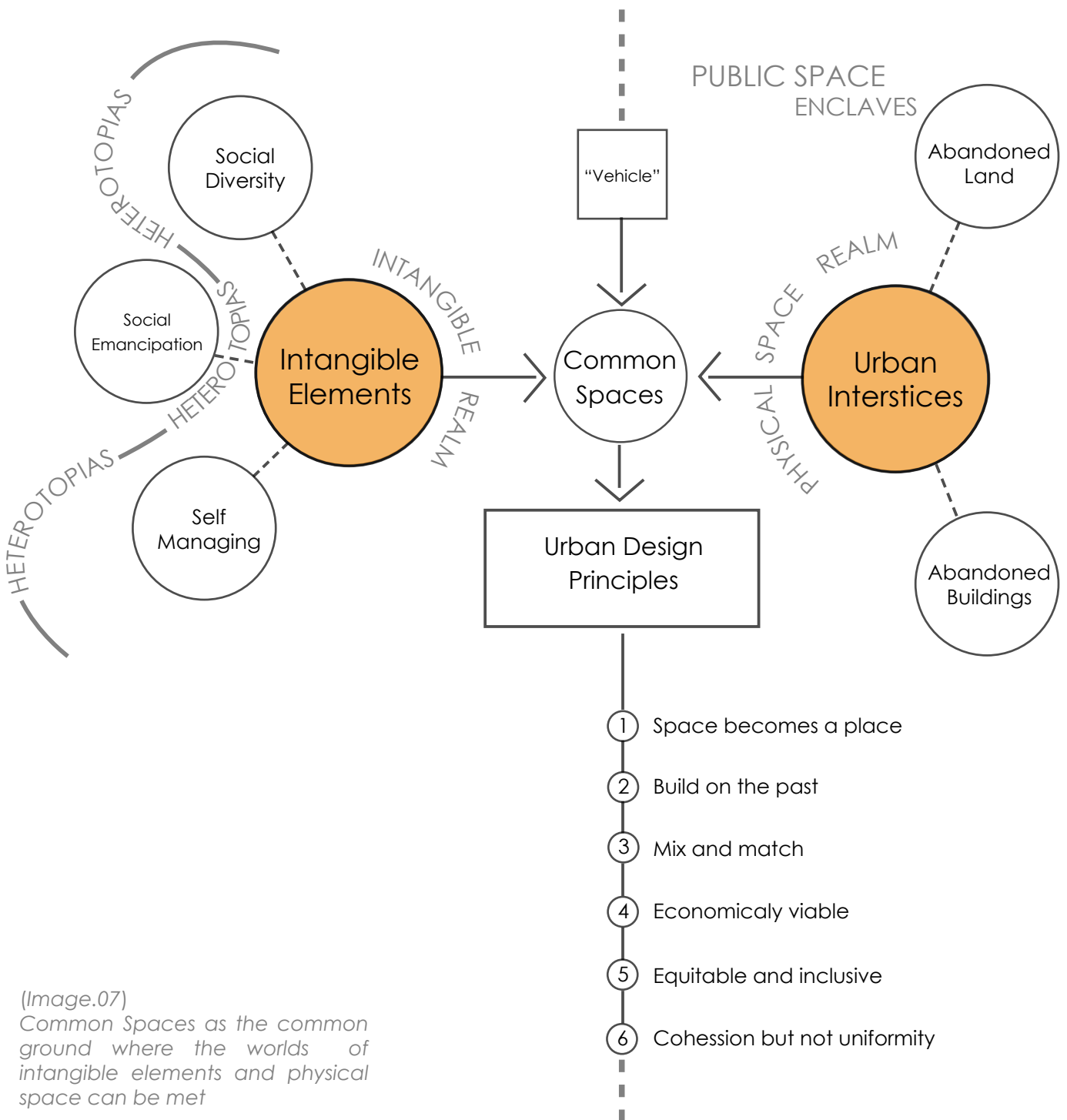
(Image.06)  
Delimitation Diagram

## CHAPTER II RESEARCH FOR

# 10 DESIGN FOR THE INTANGIBLE

In the following diagram it is presented the conceptual understanding of the theoretical elements which are lifted in this master thesis. This diagram highlights mostly the relation between the intangible qualities and the physical space and how that can be a resultant to a strategic urban design. The major two variables in this equation are on one hand the **physical space** which has as a representative example the urban interstices and on the other hand, the realm of **intangible elements** which in order to have a deeper meaning are seeking their spatial agent.

The main prerequisite for this to happen is to be found a common ground, a physical place which enables the juxtaposition of the intangible elements and constitutes the "vehicle" which is capable to bear both of them.



(Image.07)  
Common Spaces as the common ground where the worlds of intangible elements and physical space can be met

## Realm of Physical Space

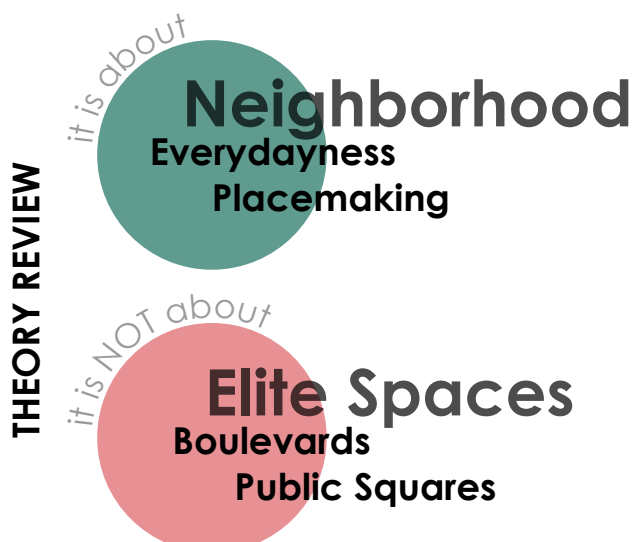
### Interstitial Spaces and the Scale of the Neighborhood

The definition for the the word interstice that the Oxford English Dictionary gives is: “an intervening space (usually empty), especially a relatively small or narrow space, between things or the parts of a body (the minute spaces between the ultimate parts of matter), a narrow opening, chink, or crevice” (interstice, 2014).

Either areas that have been abandoned, or spaces and buildings that have ceased their operation and they are no longer being used, create a suitable background for reflection towards an interstitial urban strategy, a strategy which responds to places that are hidden throughout the urban realm. It is indeed the flexibility and the openness of the in-between places comparing to the vast established areas, which render them as a hospitable terrain. It constitutes a laboratory for social experimentation capable of not only providing opportunities to bridge conflicting urban forces but also opportunities **for social participation in the commons**(Lau 2012).

According to Jane Jacobs (1941) place-making balances between the architecture as a practice and social life. In this equation, the role of interstitial sites is more related to the sites themselves in the sense that the relationships between individuals are built there as an open process in real time which makes them the best agent for place-making at the neighborhood scale (Jacobs 1941).

Henri Lefebvre's work Critique of Everyday Life (1947), describes the ordinary city as a place of romantic experience and social life. According to Lefebvre, it was the everyday areas narrating the life of the city and not the so called elite spaces. **Lefebvre was interested in those hidden features of the city like the neighborhoods. Obscured by the shadow of the main boulevards and big squares in a capitalistic world, the neighborhoods on the contrary, seemed to expose the simple daily routine by bearing all these repetitive habits and humble aspects of life**(Lefebvre 1947).



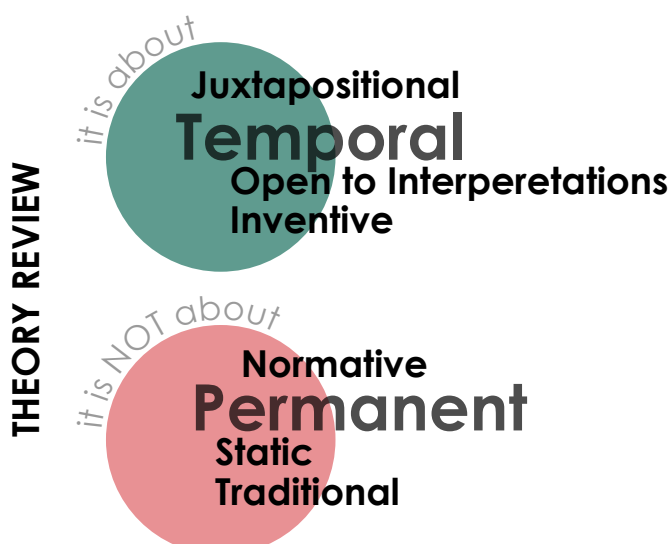
## Realm of Intangible Elements

### Seeking Spaces of multiple Identities and Spaces of emancipation

According to Stavridis a new way to understand the social experience of space emerged during the 60's by several perspectives on the daily life and everydayness. Places of otherness can be located through the urban fabric, considering that everyday life apart from being merely the generator force of social reproduction, fosters at the same time practices that make people to differ each other or encapsulates actions of individual and collective resistance, (stavridis 2019).

Social reproduction in its core, as a mechanism is responsible for the formation of fixed identities and behavioral protocols in a society. The quest for emancipation is oriented against those mechanisms, which places spaces of emancipation exactly to the opposite end. However, the main prerequisite for the space as identity is to be delineated with very explicit boundaries while on the contrary space of non-identities (non-defined identities) has to be a space of transition where its boundaries are loosely open (Stavridis 2019).

These spaces of transition that allow us to have a glimpse of spatiality of emancipation are related to liminality as the non-permanent experience of an occupied in-between piece of land. In other words, inhabiting the in-between spaces might mean the creation of spaces where various identities can be met and consequently to test their capability to co-exist (Stavridis 2019). That is summarized by using Stavridis words **“Emancipation may thus be conceived not as the establishing of a new collective identity but rather as the establishing of the means to negotiate freely between emergent identities”**. (Stavridis 2019).



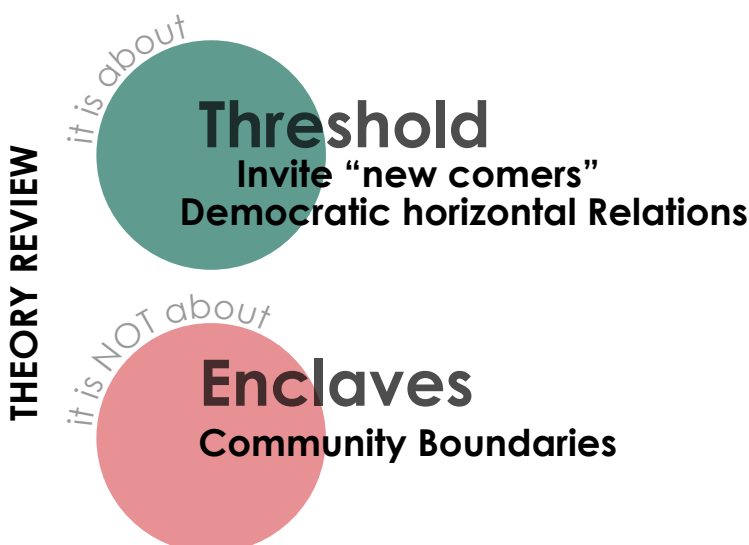
## The Bridging Mechanism Common Spaces as Thresholds

This common ground that encapsulates all these potentialities is translated into spatial characteristics through the idea of commoning and the concept of threshold. Stavros Stavridis again argues that the actual condition through which we inhabit space is always creating comparison and always experiencing passages from one place to another (Stavridis 2010).

Consequently common spaces are spaces to be crossed. They are thresholds; not in the sense of guarded passages to well defined areas, but to potential destinations open to different interpretations. The once abandoned plot can be transformed now from a no man's land to a land that can host diversities. A **"city of thresholds"** appears to be the term to express the spatial network as a living laboratory for opportunities, encounter mutual understanding and **solidarity**. Common spaces as a ground for interaction between identities encapsulate a philosophy which is opposed to the mechanisms, responsible for the transformation of the urban environment and public space as an extension of it, into a city of well defined enclaves. (Stavridis 2019).

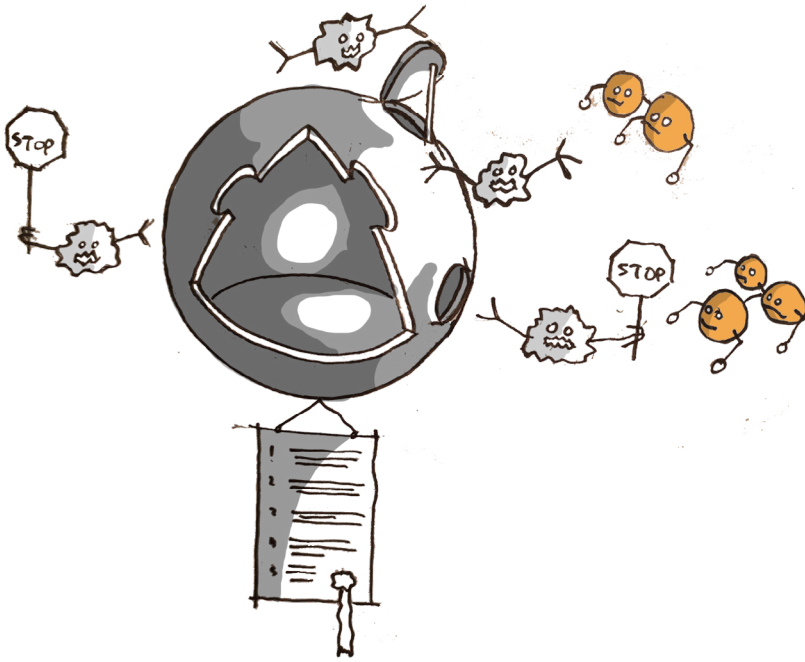
Finally, commoning in its essence is a movement against enclosure. If we see enclosure as a static condition which forms control, on the other hand, commoning, in order to distinct itself (from the enclosure) has to be always on the move and always to expand.

Stavridis argues that expansion can indeed happen through the practices of inviting **"new comers"** and practices that invite comparisons. Those practices though, opposed to a system that is marked with homogenization. In addition Stavridis continues, **"That creates a common ground as a collective process, sometimes with indirect confrontation of existing policies of public space and not as a process guaranteed by an outside authority which establishes the rules of sharing"** (Stavridis 2019). Eventually, people re-discover either implicitly through assemblies or explicitly, not only the importance of democratic horizontal relations, but also the efficiency of those relations.



## ENCLAVE

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Product of  
**Checkpoints**

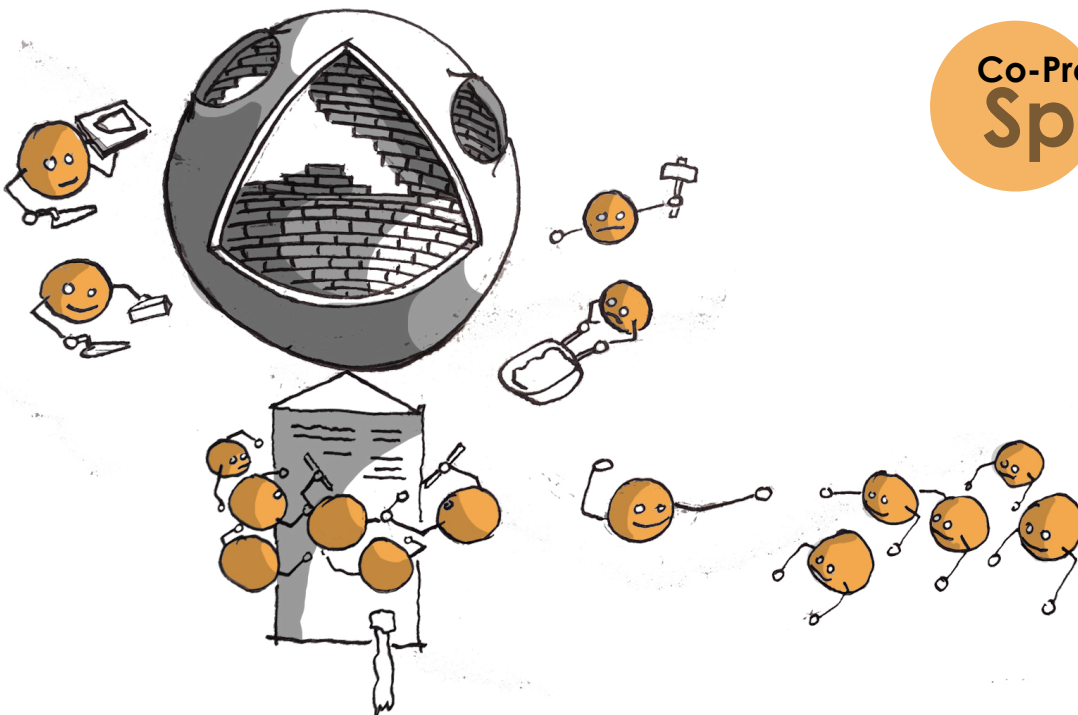
Given  
**Function**

Follow established  
**Protocols**

(Image.08)  
Enclave Definition

## COMMON SPACE

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**Process**  
in Progress

Co-Production of  
**Space**

(Image.09)  
Common Space Definition

## Product of **Collective** Process

A process where the foundations of the rules of sharing are **NOT** the result of an external policy based on formal authorities and institutions of the state.

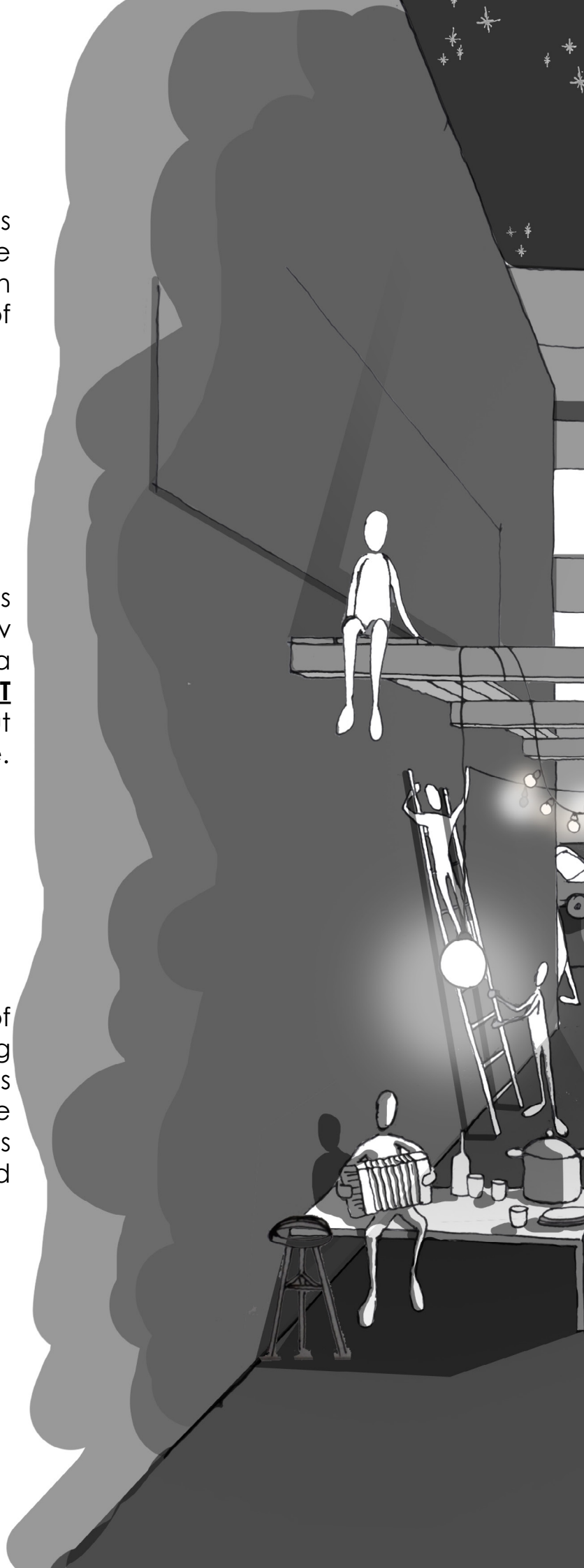
## Open to **“New Comers”**

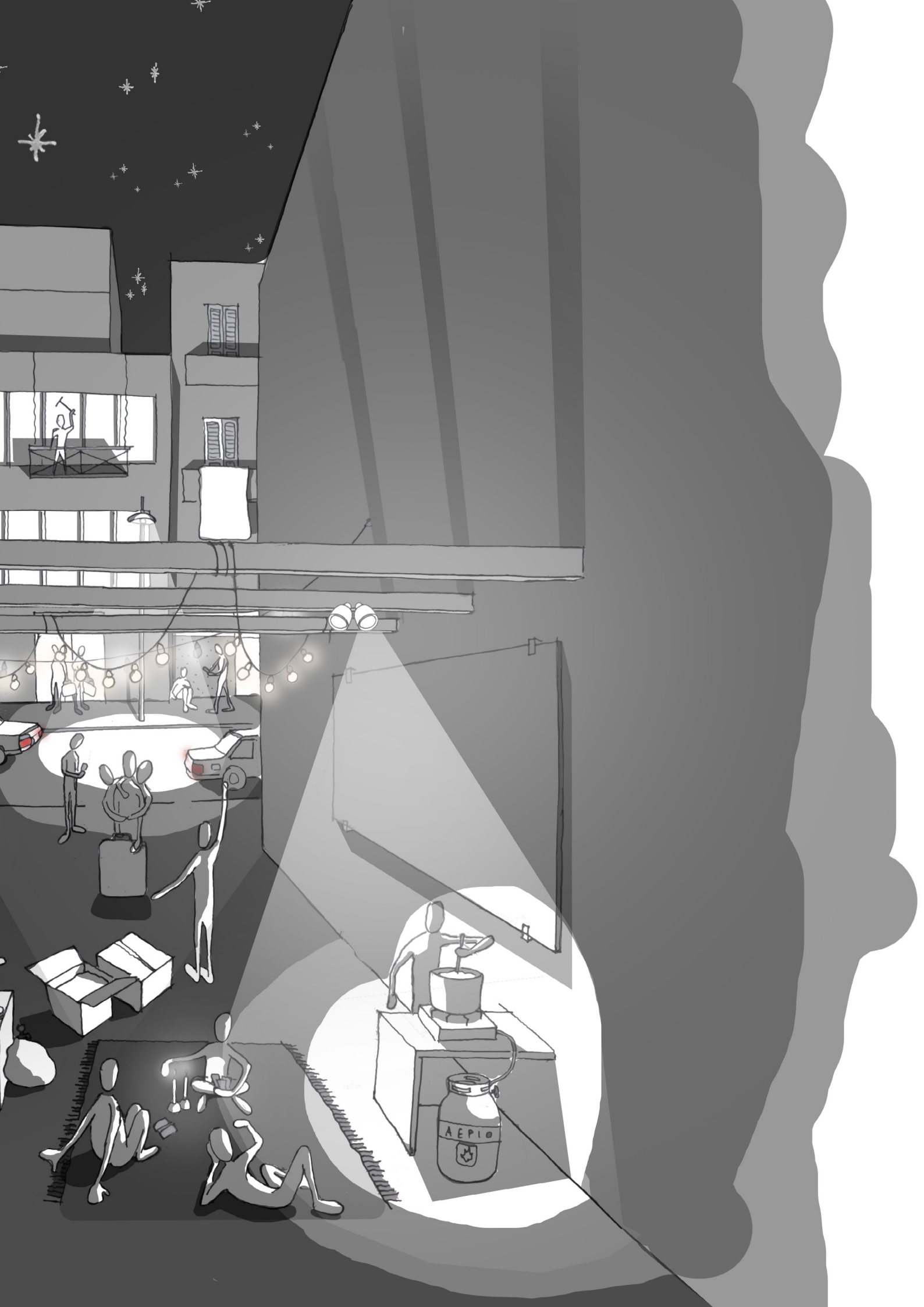
Exchange of roles creates opportunities both in inviting “new comers” and becoming yourself a new comer to a new condition. **NOT** as vulnerable receivers of charity but as co-producers of common space.

## Plethora of **Emergent ID's**

Emancipation is not a product of fixed process, a process of creating a new collective identity. Instead, it is an expanding process. It is about the quest of a common ground the tools and “languages that are being used among the different participants.

(Image.10)  
Summary of theoretical  
background



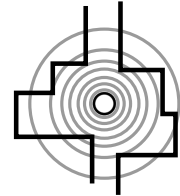


## Design Principles

The design principles (Pilat-Borcuch 2015) below will be a guideline for the intervention proposed in the following pages.

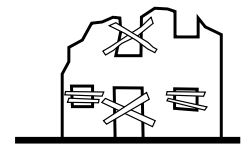
### A Space Becomes a Place

It is the caring for a space, its history, the culture, the human scale and the needs of the local community embedded in a design that transforms the space from merely a physical location to a place where people feel they are connected to.



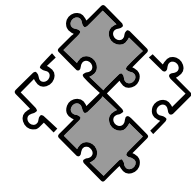
### Built on the Past

Preserving existing elements and including them as part of the synthesis, not only helps the intervention to adapt better to the landscape, but also facilitates the connection of people with the site.



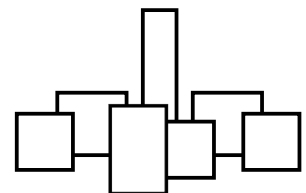
### Mix and Match

A mixed use programme (produce, socialize, educate), based on the needs of the locals, which by taking advantage of the already existing network becomes part of it, is more likely to have long-term beneficial results.



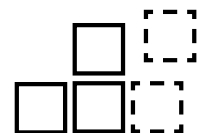
### Cohesion, Not Uniformity

An intervention should balance between a design based on simple structures that follow coherent rules and at the same time a design that is not promoting homogeneity but leave space for experimentation and expression.



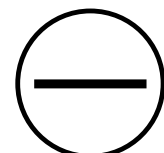
### Economically Viable

The design should convey the message of an intervention which is easily maintained and preserved. Thus, economy and viability here as factor is the result of prudent management and versatile re-usable structures.



### Equitable and Inclusive

A neutral design identity is the key factor for an intervention with a neutral character, being addressed equally to a diverse number of users. More specifically, it is about a design that uses a simple and understandable "language" to portray not the final result as a fixed package, rather than potential activities and simple structures that can be realized with the intervention.



# 11 REFERENCE PROJECTS

## A.

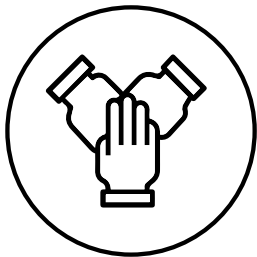
**Project Name:**  
Navarino Park

**Design Team:**  
People from the neighborhood,  
Community groups

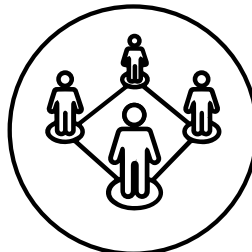
**Location:**  
Exarchia, Athens, Greece

**Objective:**  
This project is based on an initiative of the local community to prevent the construction of a parking area and claimed the site for the establishment of a small scale, self-managing park in the neighborhood.

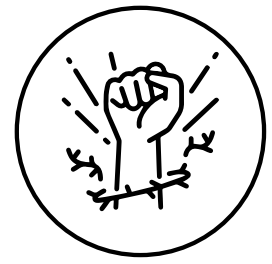
### Summary



Collaboration



Social Encounter



Activism



Photo 1

# B.

**Project Name:**

Esto No Es Un Solar (This is not a plot)

**Design Team:**

Local municipality (Zaragoza), architects (Patrizia Di Monte e Ignacio Grávalos), citizens, and community groups.

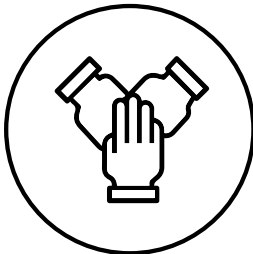
**Location:**

Zaragoza, Spain

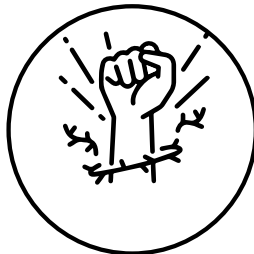
**Objective:**

Through the project it is tested a new interpretation of the relation between the social reproduction and the public space. This new type of social-spatial intervention shows the way for collective learning and set the foundation for self-sufficiency in a local scale. (Recetas Urbanas, <https://www.collaborative.city/item/zaragoza-esto-no-es-un-solar/>)

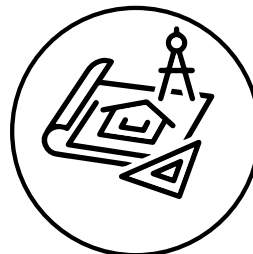
Summary



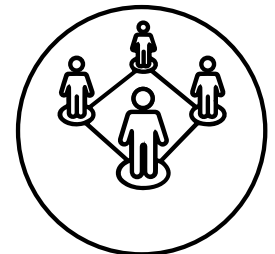
Collaboration



Activism



Architect's Participation



Social Encounter



Photo 2

# C.

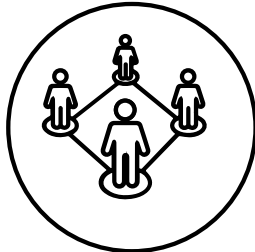
**Project Name:**  
"The Puzzle House"

**Design Team:**  
Recetas Urbanas

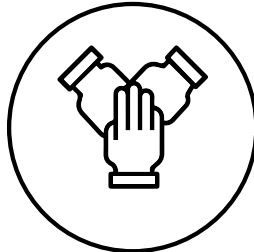
**Location:**  
Sevilla, Spain

**Objective:**  
The aim of the project is to recycle empty unused lots by proposing a versatile structure, that can be set in different locations every year. The team behind the project succeeded to interpret the law and to go around it in order to create benefit for public/social place. (<https://thefunambulist.net/architectural-projects/small-santiago-cirugeda>)

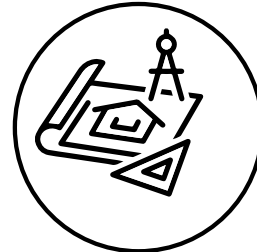
## Summary



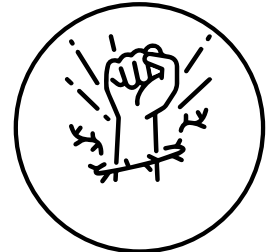
Social Encounter



Collaboration



Architect's Participation



Activism



Photo 3

# D.

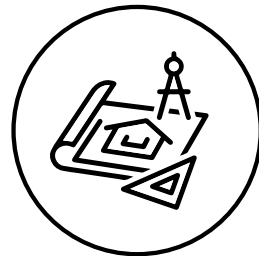
**Project Name:**  
"Fake Estates"

**Designer:**  
Gordon Matta Clark

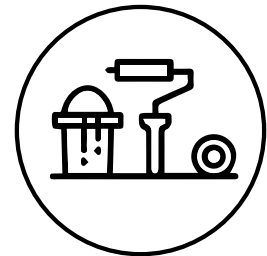
**Location:**  
New York, U.S.A

**Objective:**  
Fake Estates was begun during New York's notorious fiscal crisis of the early 1970s when MattaClark discovered that the city periodically auctioned off "gutterspace"—absurdly small slivers of land carved from the urban grid by anomalies in surveying, zoning, and municipal construction.[http://paisaje.masterproyectos.com/files/2011/11/GMC\\_fakeestates.pdf](http://paisaje.masterproyectos.com/files/2011/11/GMC_fakeestates.pdf)

## Summary



Designer's Participation



Artistic



Photo 4

# CHAPTER III

## CASE STUDY

## 12 CASE STUDY INTRO

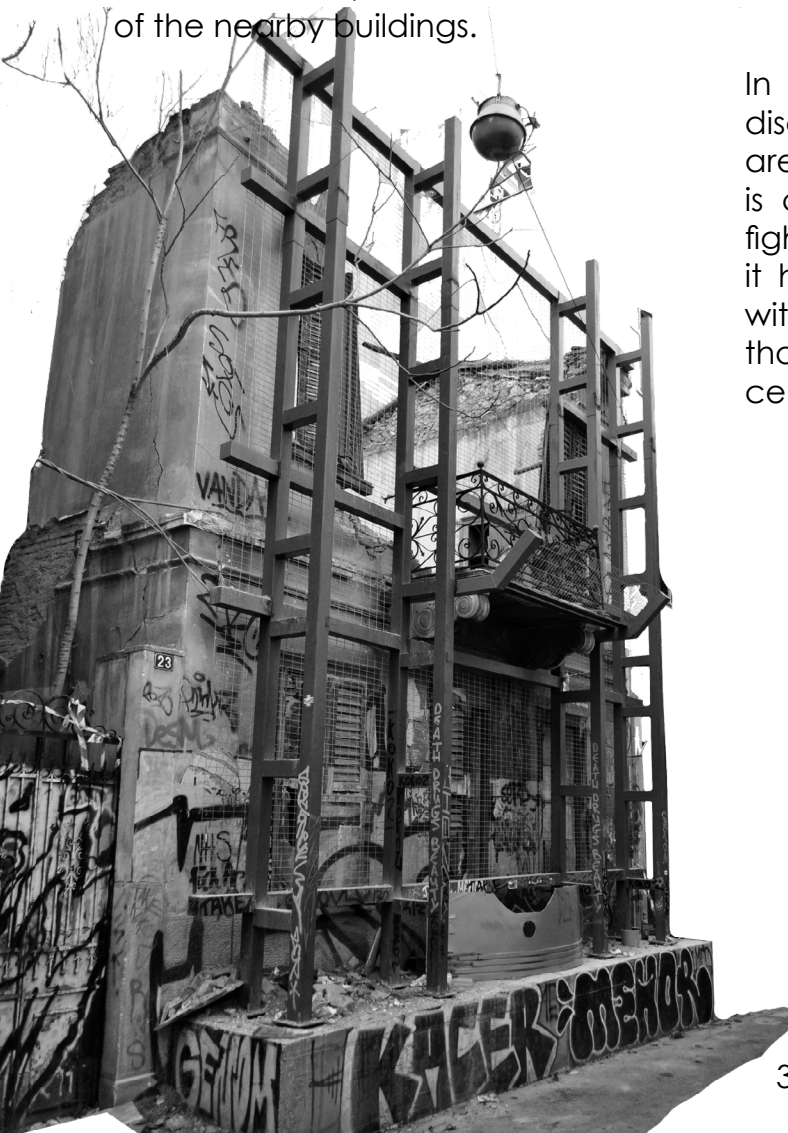
### WHERE?

Being raised in Greece, I have been exposed myself all these years in a society that has been affected by the big recession of the economical crisis. As it has been mentioned before, this crisis is pointed out as an opportunity to investigate other models of urban planning strategies. That brings us to Athens, the capital and the biggest city in Greece. The area that has been selected for the case study is called Exarchia, a neighborhood which located in the center of Athens and the main reasons for this selection can be discerned in two categories:

### WHY?

In terms of spatio-morphological characteristics, Exarchia, as many other neighborhoods of the center, is characterized by a dense grid where it can be met buildings from different eras. A narrow street network is created by the continuous facades of the buildings. Sometimes the height of the buildings in relation to the width of the street creates a scene that resembles to urban "canyons". Yet, it is quite common for this continuity to be disrupted by a gap in between, as the product of a demolished building in order to take its place a parking lot or a future contemporary block of flats. Also, this gap can be derived from some old abandoned houses that haven't been maintained and preserved throughout the years. Consequently they are facing their foregone fate by being left to become torn. The only prove of the past, declaring that there was a building there, are some remnants, old brick or stone marks on the wrecked walls that touch the outer shell of the nearby buildings.








In terms of social characteristics, as we will discuss extensively in another chapter, the area has always been politically active and it is connected with political contestation and fights against inequalities and oppression. Thus, it has been developed a diverse community with very strong bonds and in parallel initiatives that operate outside social institutions and central authorities.





(Image.11)  
Athens, the capital and  
the economic center of  
Greece



- Technical University ① 
- "Pedion Areos" Park ② 
- Archeological Museum ③ 
- National Library ④ 
- Greek Parliament ⑤ 
- National Gardens ⑥ 
- Acropolis ⑦ 

(Image.12)



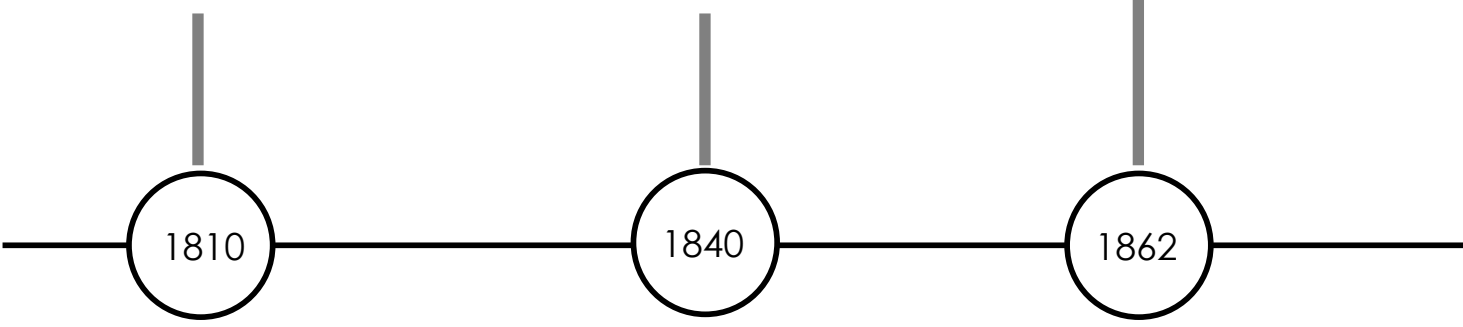
# 13 SOCIO-SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

This timeline illustrates both the urban development of the area as well as all the basic information and incidents that let their mark in this transformation, from the early years until our days.

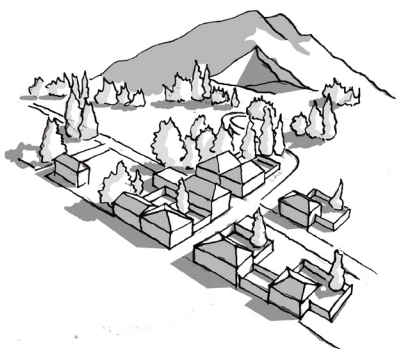
There is a tendency of expanding the city to the North East, which has also been enhanced by the construction of the University (1862-1876). The new main characteristics will be not only a mixture of different uses but also the coexistence of citizens from different layers of the society with strong presence of the university students. The division of the area into plots will attract the petty bourgeois class and other middle classes where in the meanwhile, artists, poets and intellectuals will find the area also an interesting place to live in (Linardou 2018).

The area was known as "Pitharadika" This name is a result of the high concentration of pot and urn workshops in the area, due to the clay quarry that existed in the nearby hill of Strefi. (Linardou 2018).

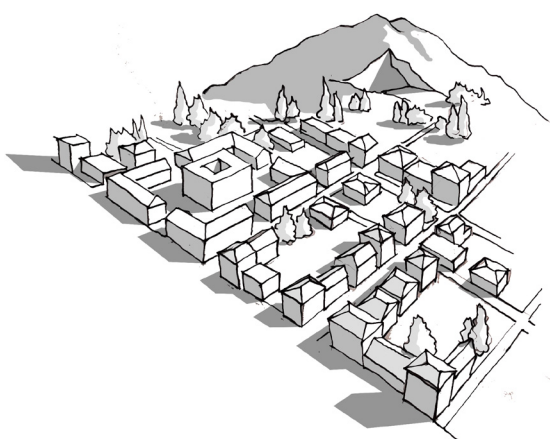
In 1840 the first informal settlement called "Proastion" (means suburb), is being developed. Craftsmen (marble sculptors, plaster painters and carpenters) from the islands settled the area where they open their stores (Linardou 2018).



(Image.13)  
1<sup>st</sup> phase of the area's development



(Image.14)  
2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the area's development



(Image.15)  
3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the area's development

In the dawn of the 20th century the neighborhood will have acquired a bohemian character and it would be compared with the Quartier Latin in Paris. In 1900 the area gets its name that has until today. In 1929 make their appearance the first blocks of flats which addressed to the middle and the high social class. This new type of housing emerged among the grassroots houses and the neoclassical buildings (Linardou 2018).



Economic Crisis strike

World War II



Restoration of Democracy



Civil War



Military Coup

Alexis Grigoropoulos get murdered by the police

1930

1940

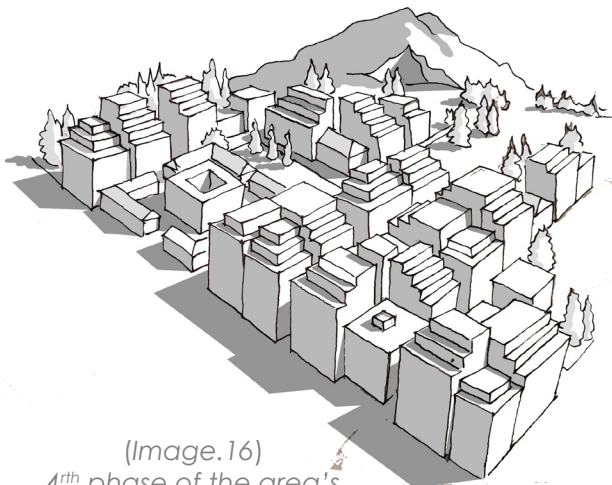
1946

1967

1974

2008

2011

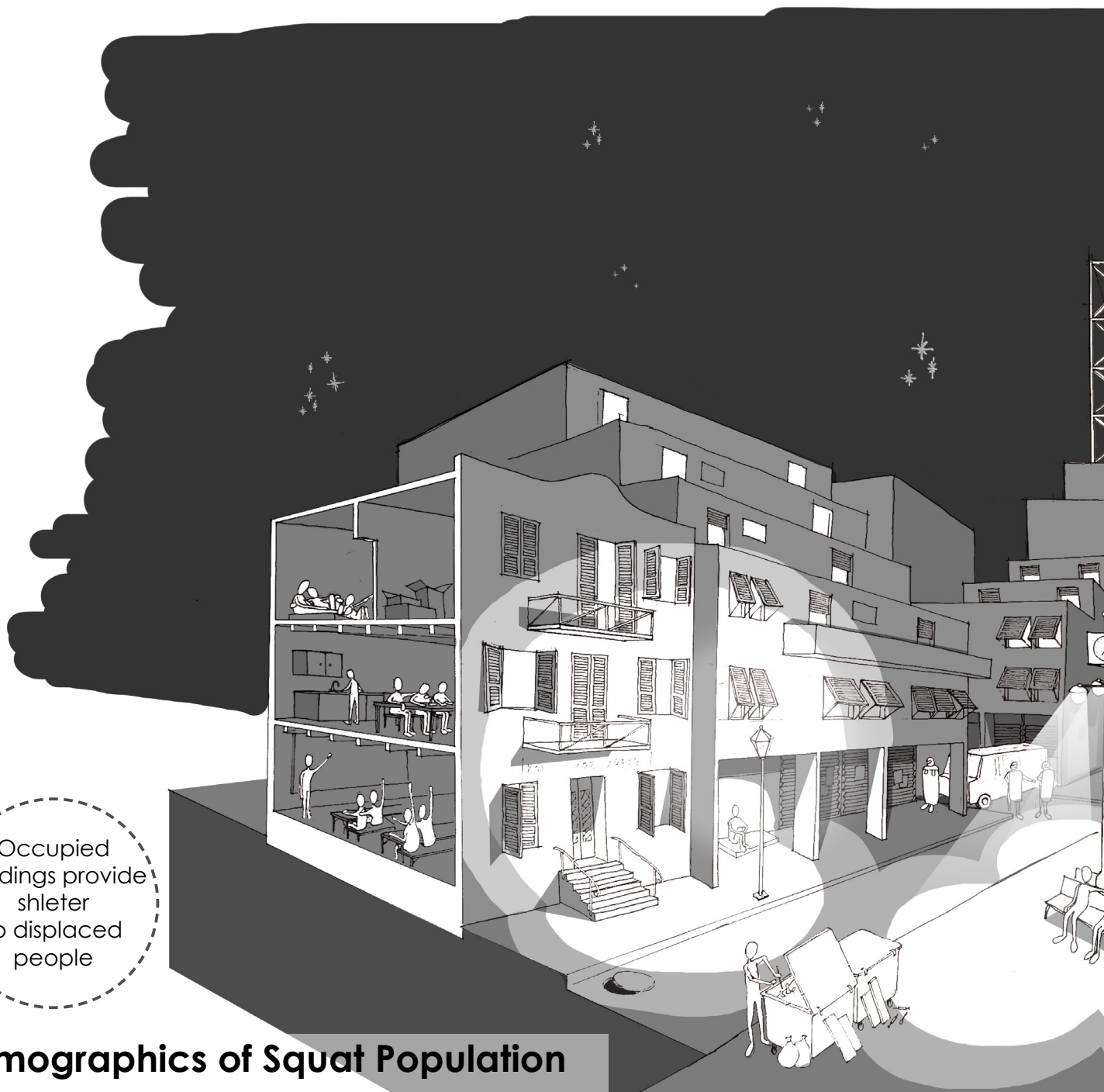


(Image.16)  
4<sup>th</sup> phase of the area's development



First Wave of Displaced People

# 14 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Occupied buildings provide shelter to displaced people

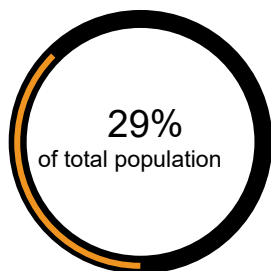
## Demographics of Squat Population

Total Reported Squat Population: 1.199  
 Estimated Overall Capacity: 1.239  
 Average Length of Stay: 7 Months

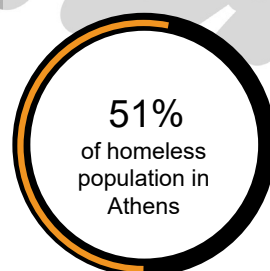
## Origins

Syria	68%	<div style="width: 68%;"></div>
Afghanistan	19%	<div style="width: 19%;"></div>
Iran	4%	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>
Iraq	4%	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>
Pakistan	3%	<div style="width: 3%;"></div>
Unknown	2%	<div style="width: 2%;"></div>

Children Living in Squats of Exarchia



**40.000**  
Homeless People in Greece



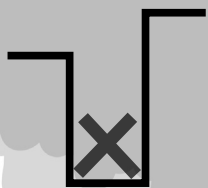
Homeless People are sleeping in the buildings' coves

(Source: REACH, Resource Center, 2017)



(Image.17)

Issues and Opportunities



**2.55 m<sup>2</sup>/person** in Athens

**23** Empty Plots in Exarchia

**1/3**



Of the population are at risk of poverty or faces social exclusion

Source: ΕΛΣΤΑΤ

**1800** Empty Buildings in the Center



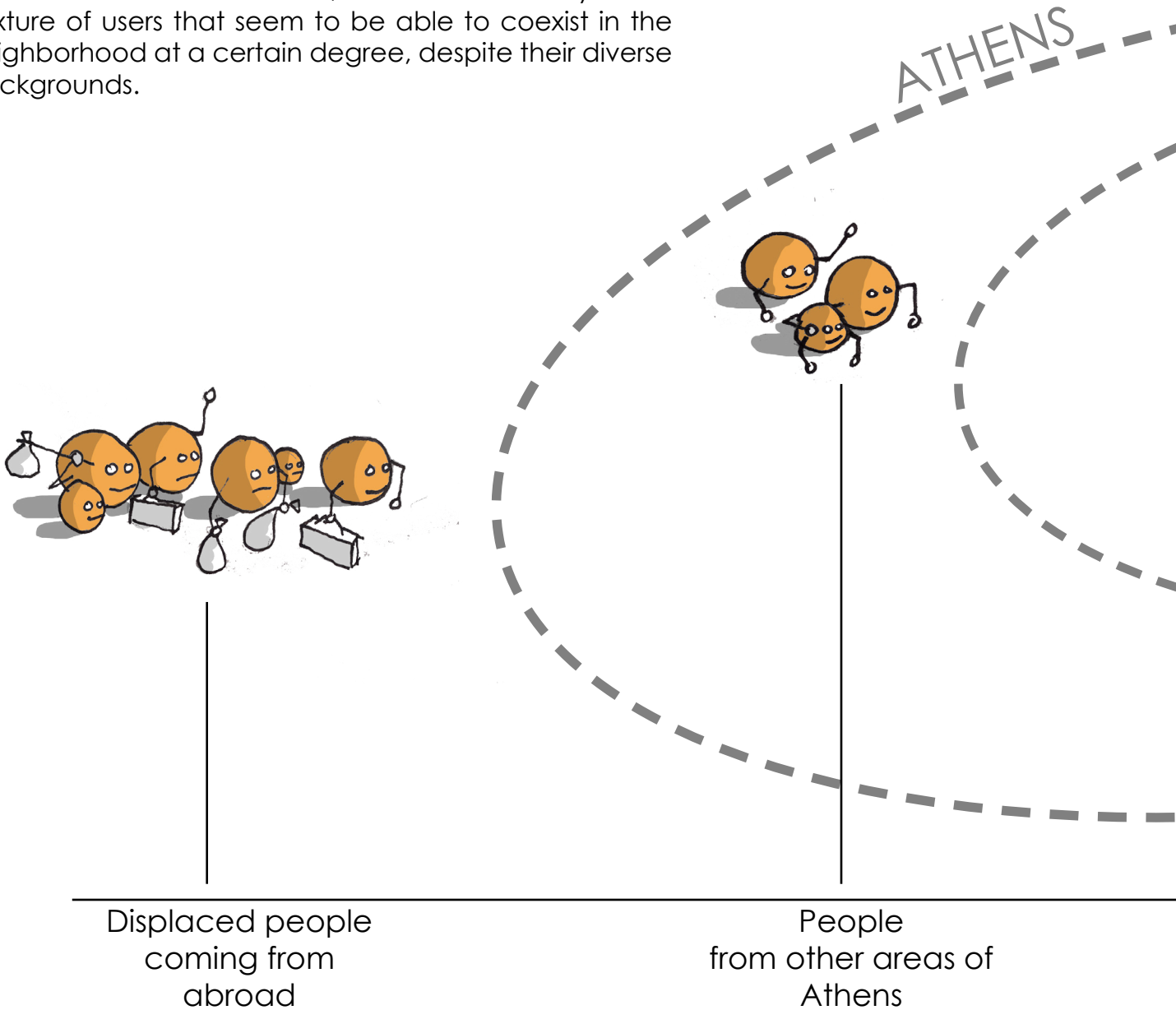
**400** Abandoned Buildings in the Center

**29** Abandoned Buildings in Exarchia

More and more people get isolated, due to the limited monthly budget

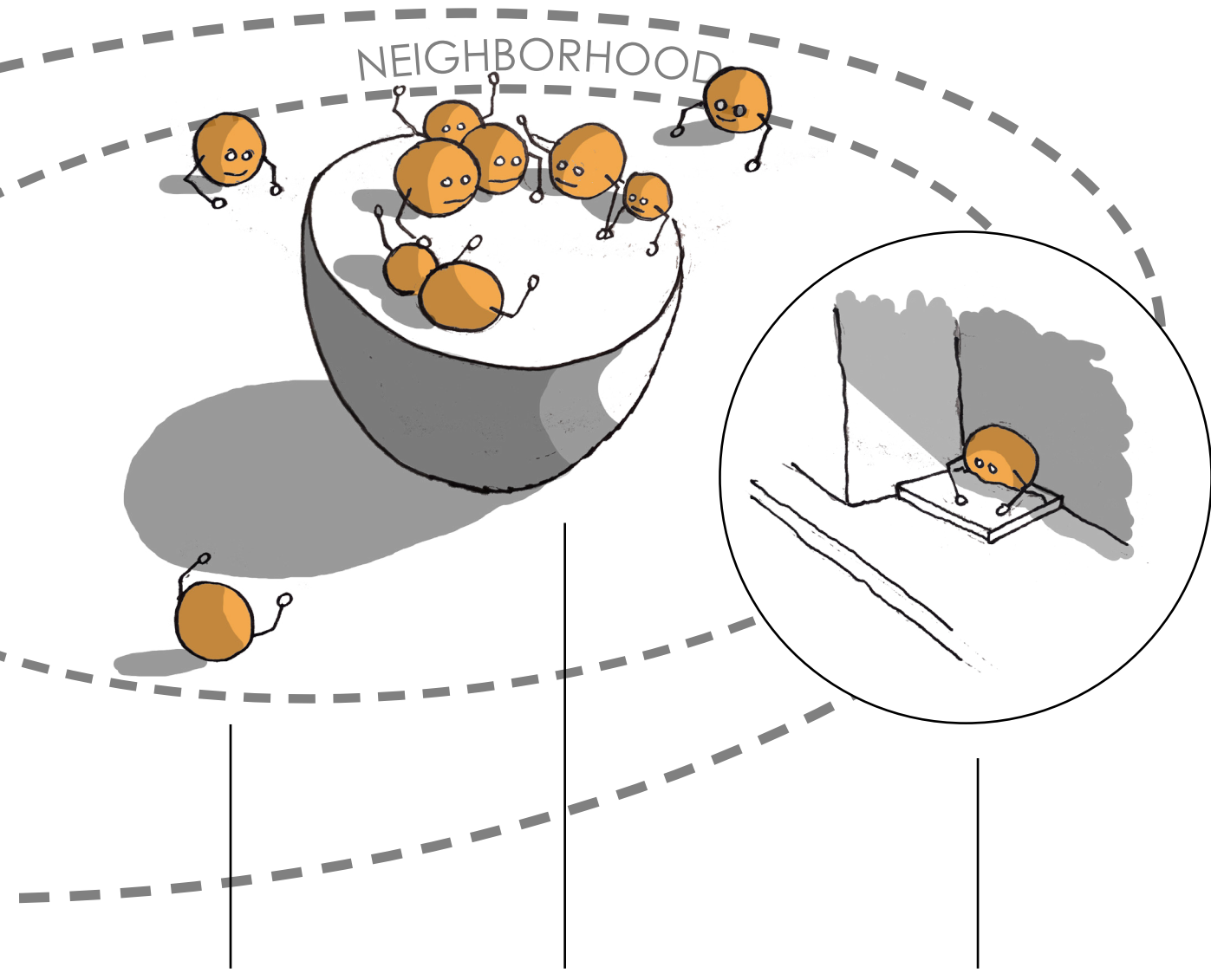
# 15 ACTORS AND PARTICIPANTS

This diagram aims to highlight the diversial social context that exists in the area. People with different profiles, needs and characteristics, constitute a dynamic mixture of users that seem to be able to coexist in the neighborhood at a certain degree, despite their diverse backgrounds.



Some of the Squats existing in the neighborhood

(Image.18)  
Actors and Participants



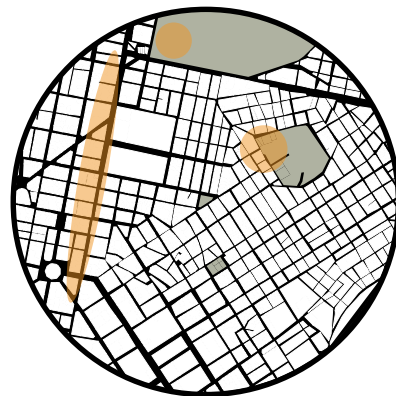
Individuals  
from the  
neighborhood

Neighborhood  
Initiatives

Homeless  
People



Local Initiatives  
and Social Groups

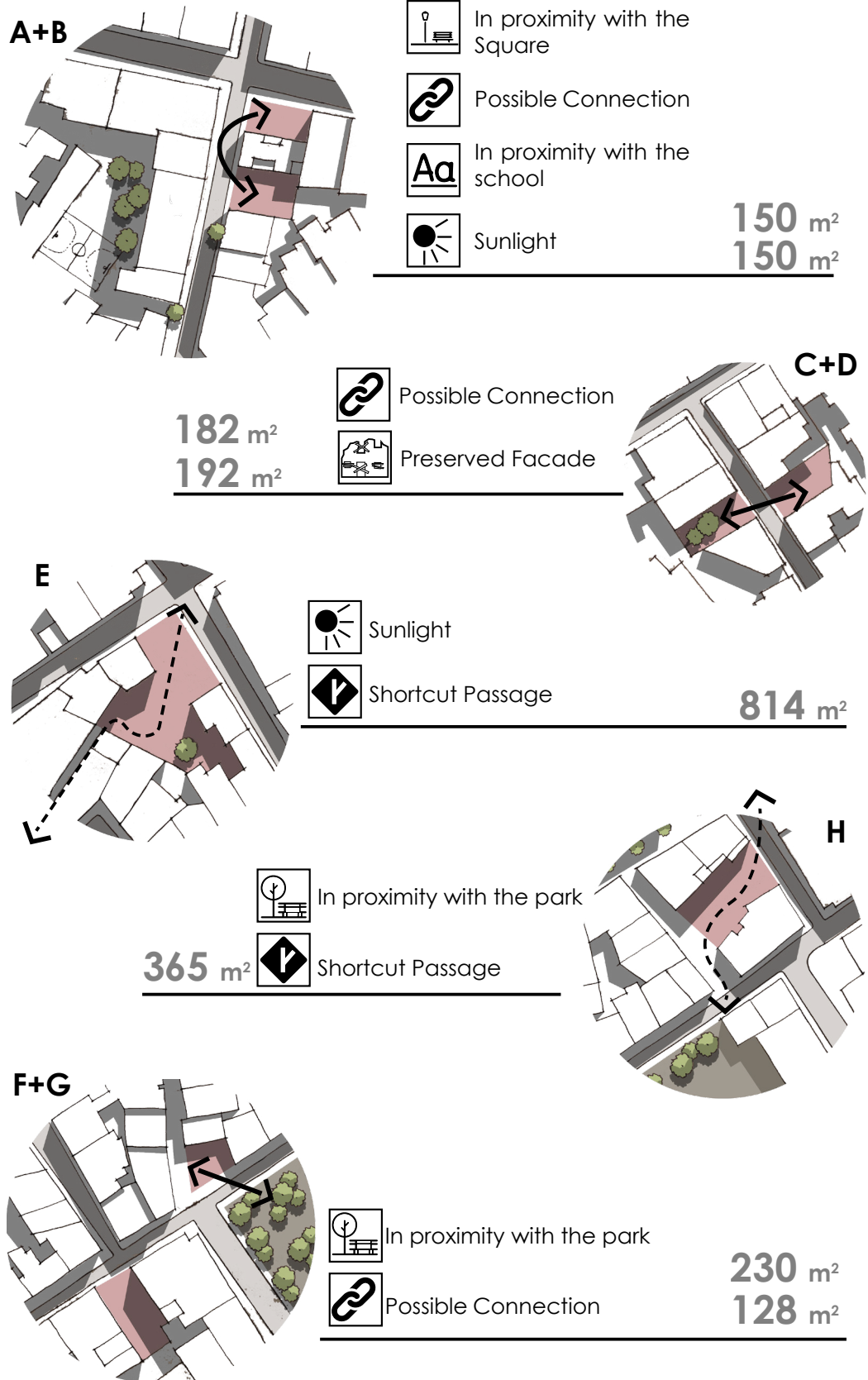


Places around the area  
where people find shelter  
and spend their night

# 16 ANALYSIS

## Mapping existing infrastructures and possible connections

Trying to identify the area's both spatial characteristics and social structures in order to come up with a master plan.



1. Neighborhood's Main Square
2. Exarchia Theater
3. The "BLue" Condominum
4. 5th High School School
5. 37th Elementary School
6. "Nosotros" Collective Space
7. "VOX" Collective Space
8. "Riviera" Outdoor Cinema
9. Refugees Social Center
10. Greek Forum of Refugees
11. "Notara" Accomodating Squat
12. Alexis Grigoropoulos Corner
13. Navarinou Self-Managing Park
14. University of Athens School of Pedagogy



(Image.19)  
Analysis

# 17 AXES AND DISTANCES



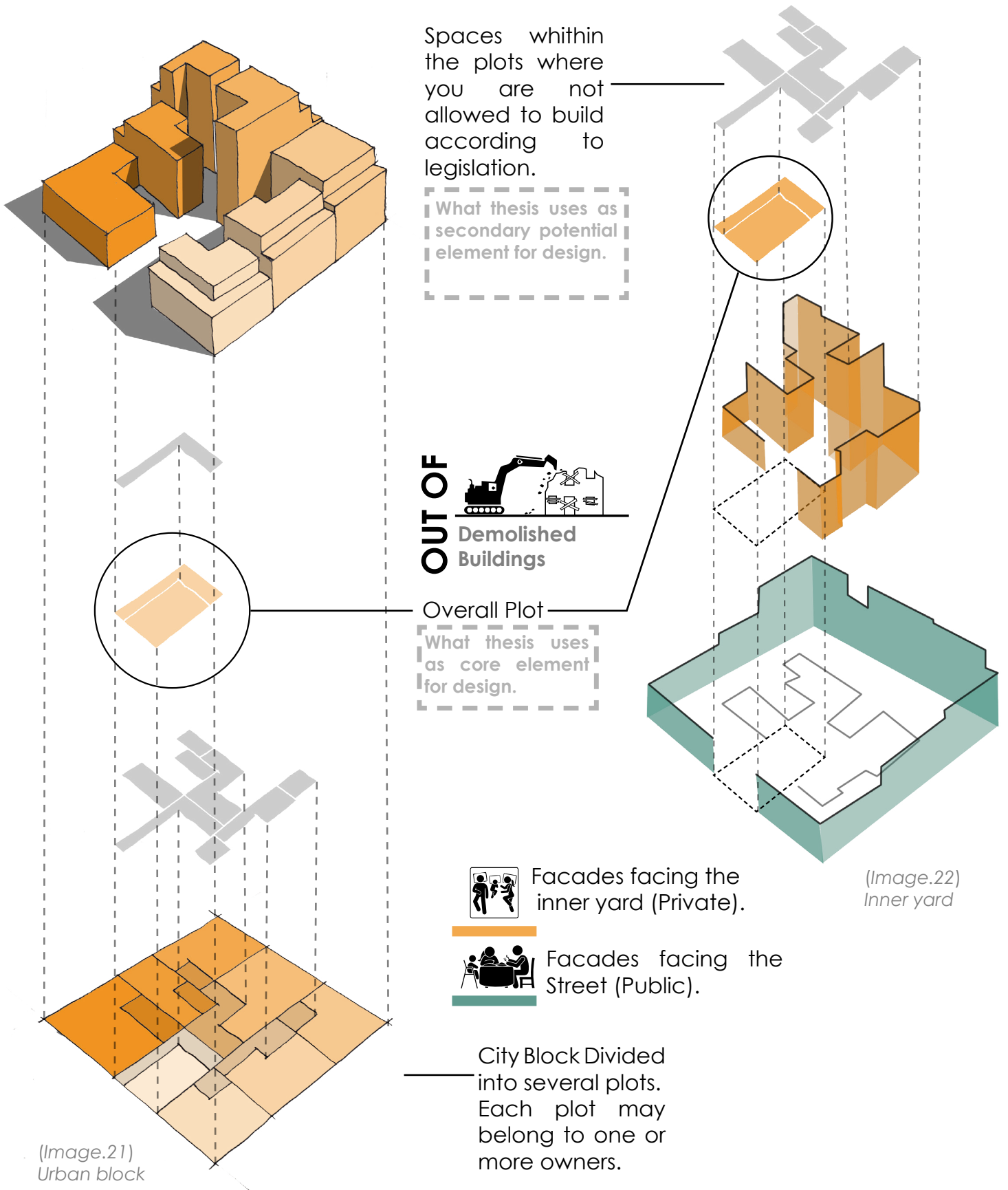
The drawing below is an attempt to portray the local area of the neighborhood in three dimensions. At the same time apart from the volumes of the buildings, the green areas and the squares, it is illustrated the main axes' network and some of the most significant crossroads that are met across them.



(Image.20)  
Axes and distances

# 18 URBAN BLOCK

In this diagram it is briefly illustrated how property ownership and the plot division works in Greece, as well as what are the restrictions in the construction according to the building legislation. This clarification will lead to a better understanding of the kind of space this master thesis focuses on.

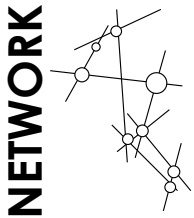


# 19 INTENTIONS' DIAGRAM

As ones can see in the next diagram common spaces can be spotted between the private and the public realms. More specifically in the chosen area, as it is illustrated in the next pages, have been located eight empty plots which have been brought forth as the products of demolished buildings.

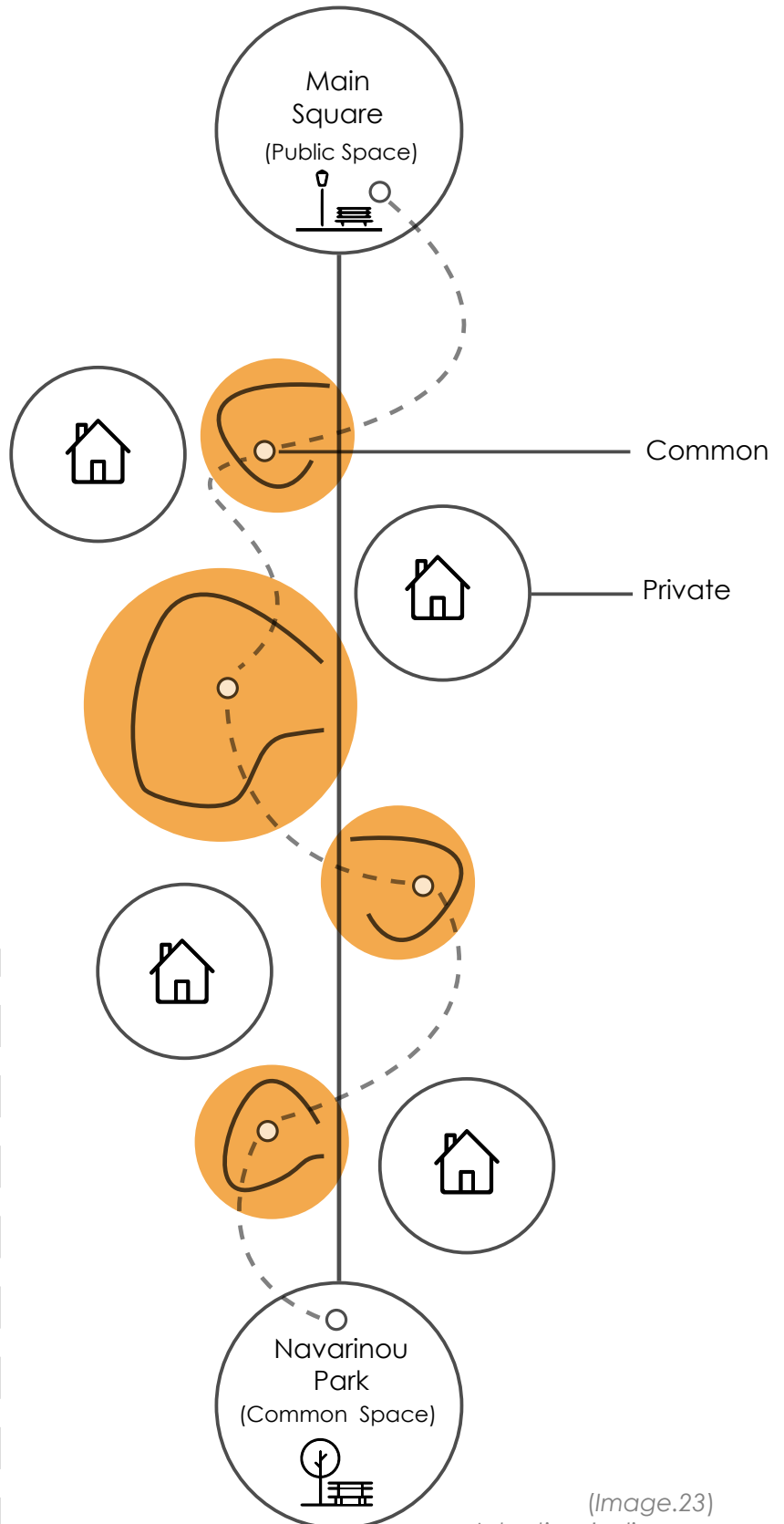
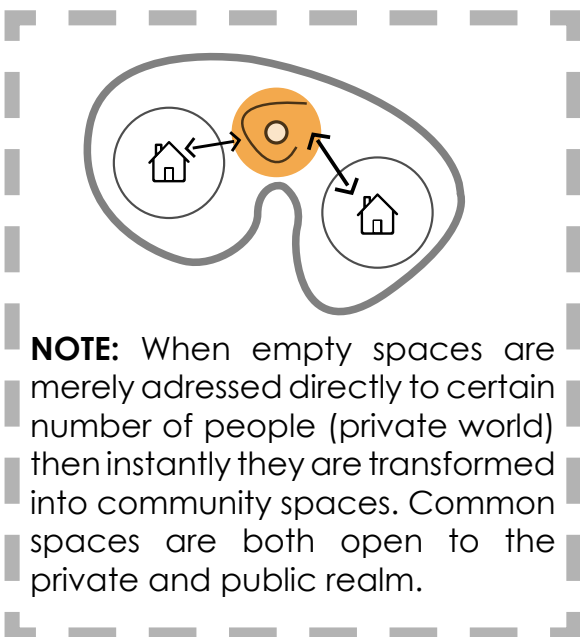
## 8 Identified Empty Plots

The main intention is to create a network of those spaces by using a "vocabulary" of design elements (color, shape, etc., in order to distinct and link visually the spaces by creating a common language.



As a next step in terms of physical linkage, the intervention is seeking an expansion outside the plots boundaries, towards the public space by taking advantage of the already existing infrastructures, (extensive pedestrian paths network in the area), but also proposing the creation of new ones.

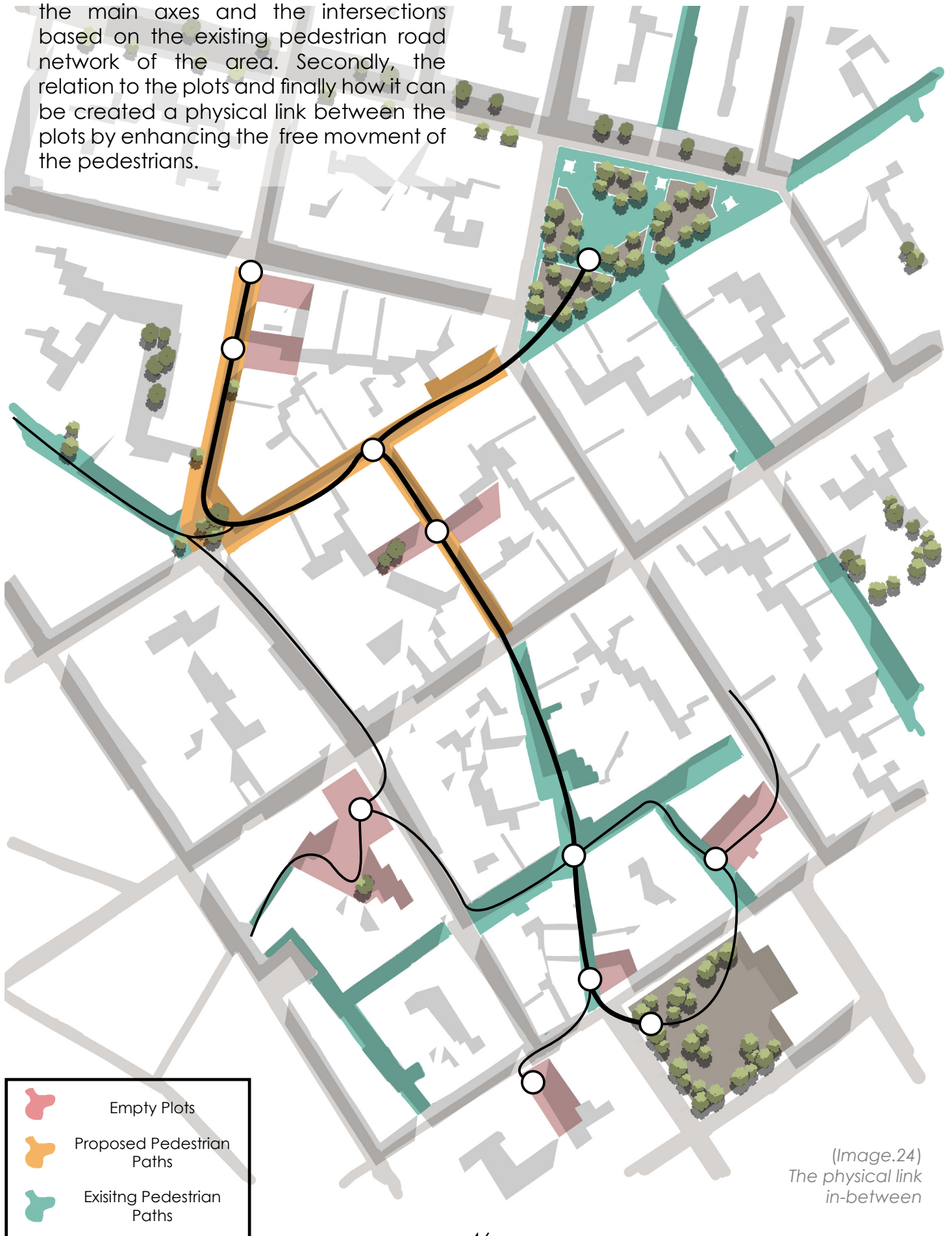
### THIS IS **NOT** ABOUT



(Image.23)  
Intentions's diagram

## 20 THE LINK IN-BETWEEN

The following diagram illustrates primarily the main axes and the intersections based on the existing pedestrian road network of the area. Secondly, the relation to the plots and finally how it can be created a physical link between the plots by enhancing the free movement of the pedestrians.



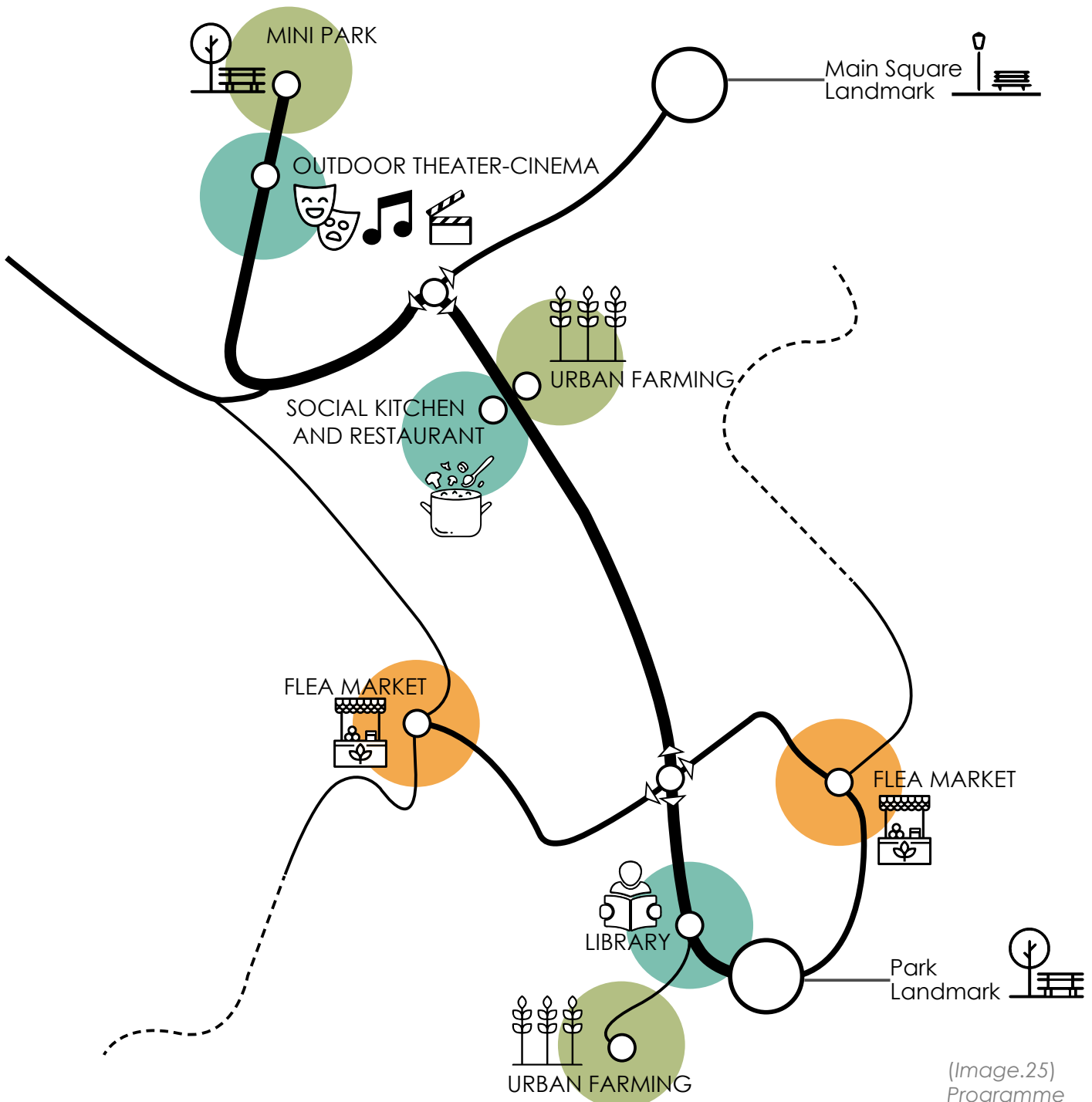
(Image.24)  
The physical link  
in-between

# 21 PROGRAMME

The functions that have been selected are related to the schemes that operate in the area and the area's philosophy. For that reason a mix of activities is suggested by having respectively a similar orientation.

## PROGRAMME ORIENTATION

- Own Production
- Self-Managing
- Creating Local Economy
- Mixed Socialization

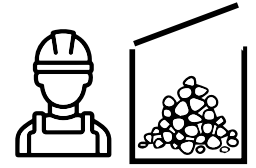


(Image.25)  
Programme

- Main Pedestrian Axis
- Secondary Pedestrian Routes
- Side Road Pedestrian Routes
- Other Paths
- Crossroad

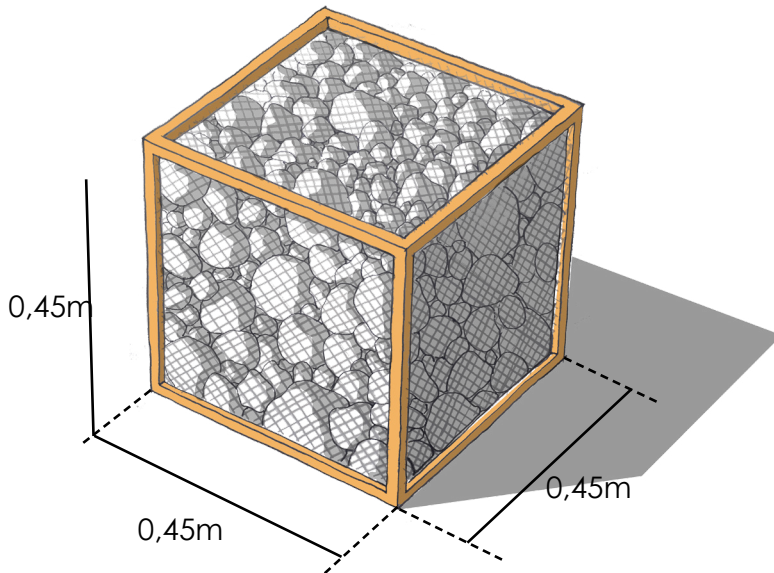
- Education-Socialize
- Trade
- Plants

## 22 A SPATIAL “VOCABULARY”



1

### Secondary Construction Unit



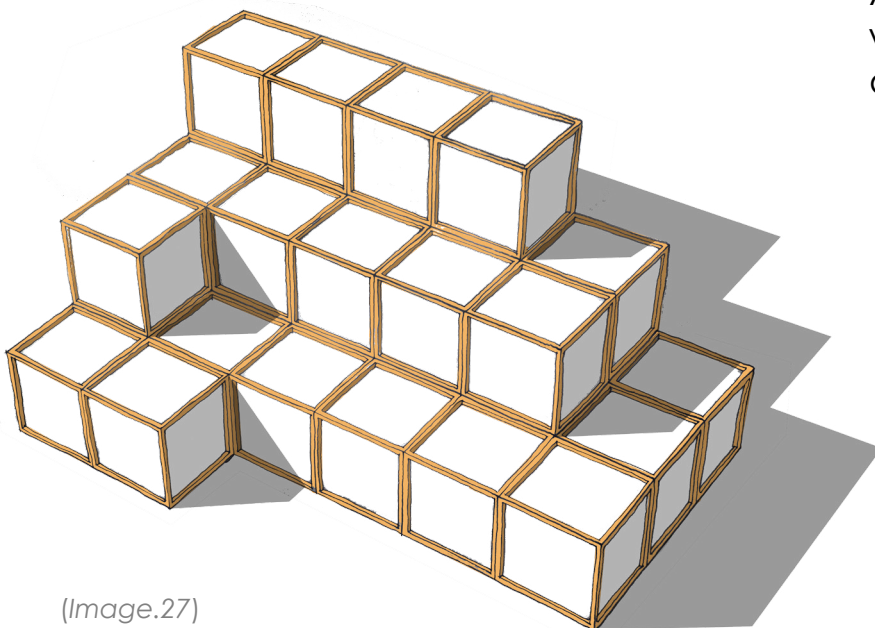
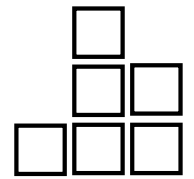
(Image.26)  
Secondary  
construction unit

Creating a metal framed cubical box surrounded by net and filled with raw materials (gravel).

Low cost and high durability in weather conditions and constant use or vandalism.

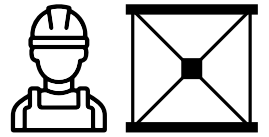
2

### Secondary Construction Synthesis



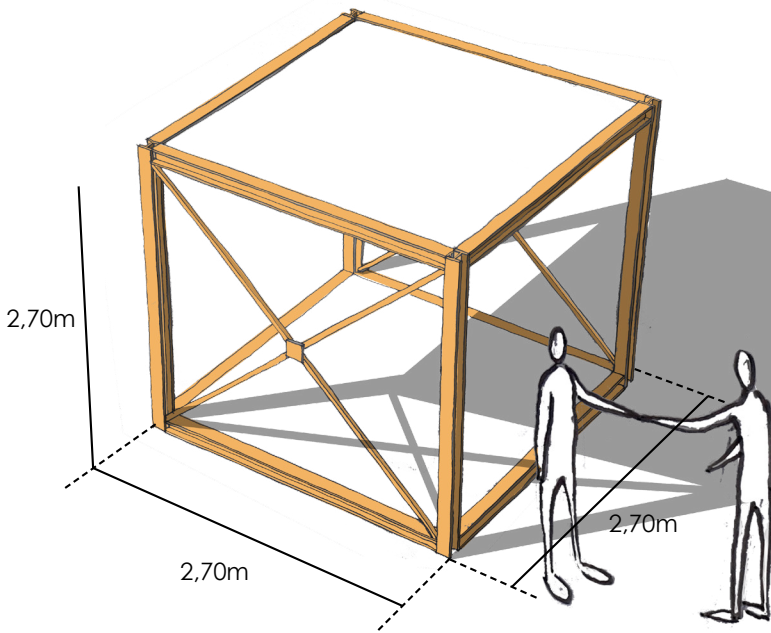
(Image.27)  
Secondary  
construction synthesis

Plethora of possibilities for various arrangements with different functions, such as Amphitheatres, small retain walls, plant craters, benches and tables.



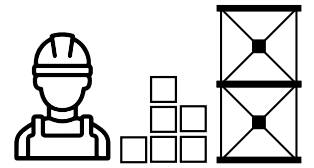
3

## Primary Construction Unit



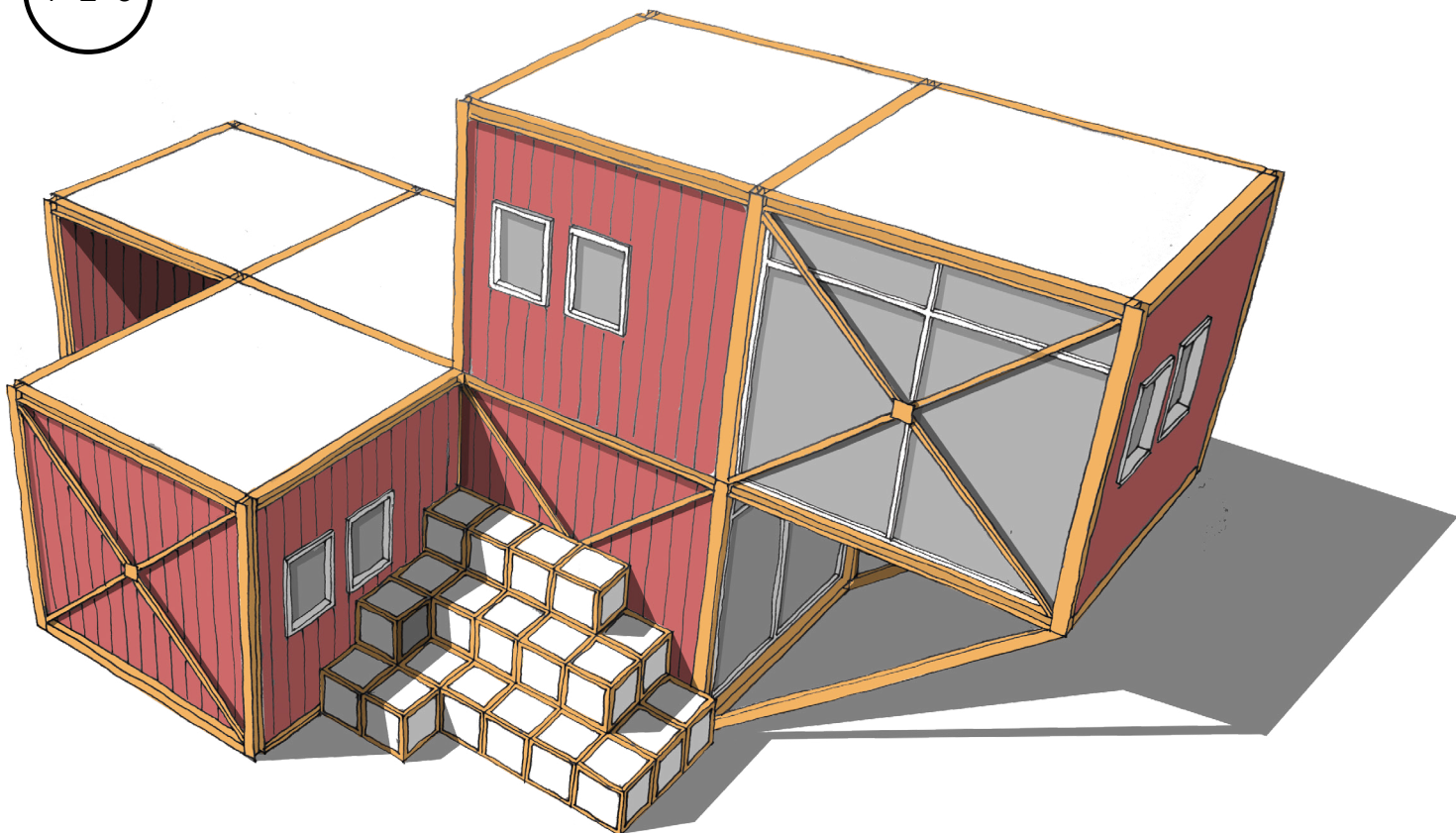
In the same spirit, a bigger metal framed boxed is proposed which might have a range of applications. It can be also easily dismantled and possible to create structures with different arrangements

(Image.28)  
Primary  
construction unit



1+2+3

## Complete Synthesis

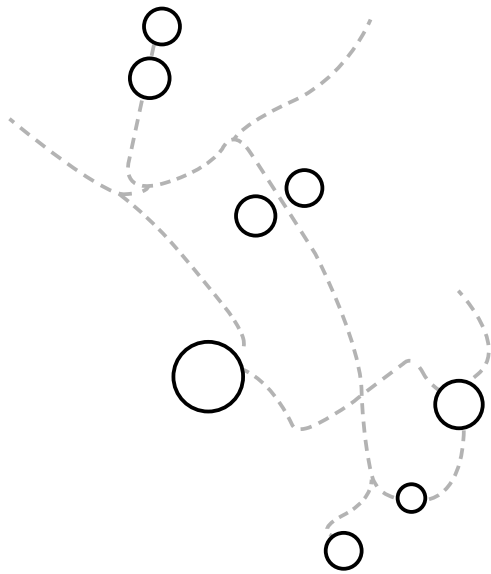


(Image.29)  
Complete synthesis

## 23 MASTERPLAN

The realization of the plan is based on a gradual development. It can be divided in two discernable construction phases.

### PHASE I Plots Interventions

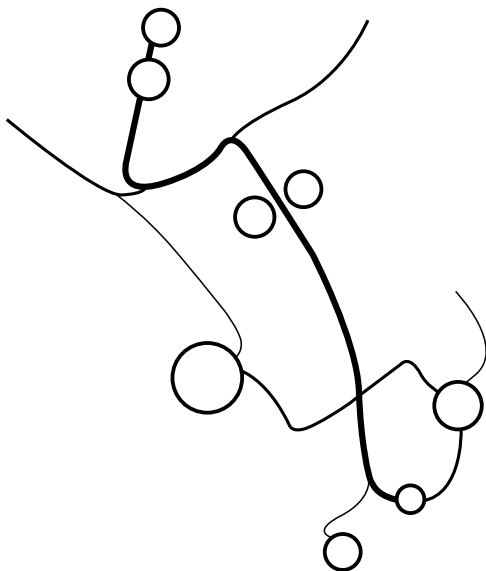


1. Create a unified intervention that uses a **common language**.

2. The plots are related to each other. They use **same Materials and Geometry** in the constructions.

3. Repetitive pattern, yet no monotonous.

### PHASE II Strengthen their Links



1. Facilitate their in between communication and eventually intervene in the public space.

2. **Strengthen their in between linkage** (visual linkage) by enhancing the unobstacled movement of the pedestrians.

3. Take advantage of the existing local **pedestrian network**.

A+B



MINI PARK

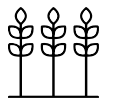


OUTDOOR  
THEATER-CINEMA

C+D



SOCIAL KITCHEN  
AND RESTAURANT



URBAN  
FARMING

E+H

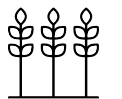


FLEA MARKET

F+G



LIBRARY



URBAN  
FARMING



(Image.30)  
Masterplan

# 24 A CLOSER LOOK

A+B

 Mini Park

 Cinema

 Theater




 Music Stage

Buffer Areas  
As a filter for the inner yard access






Inner Yard  
Potential connection with urban block's inner yard

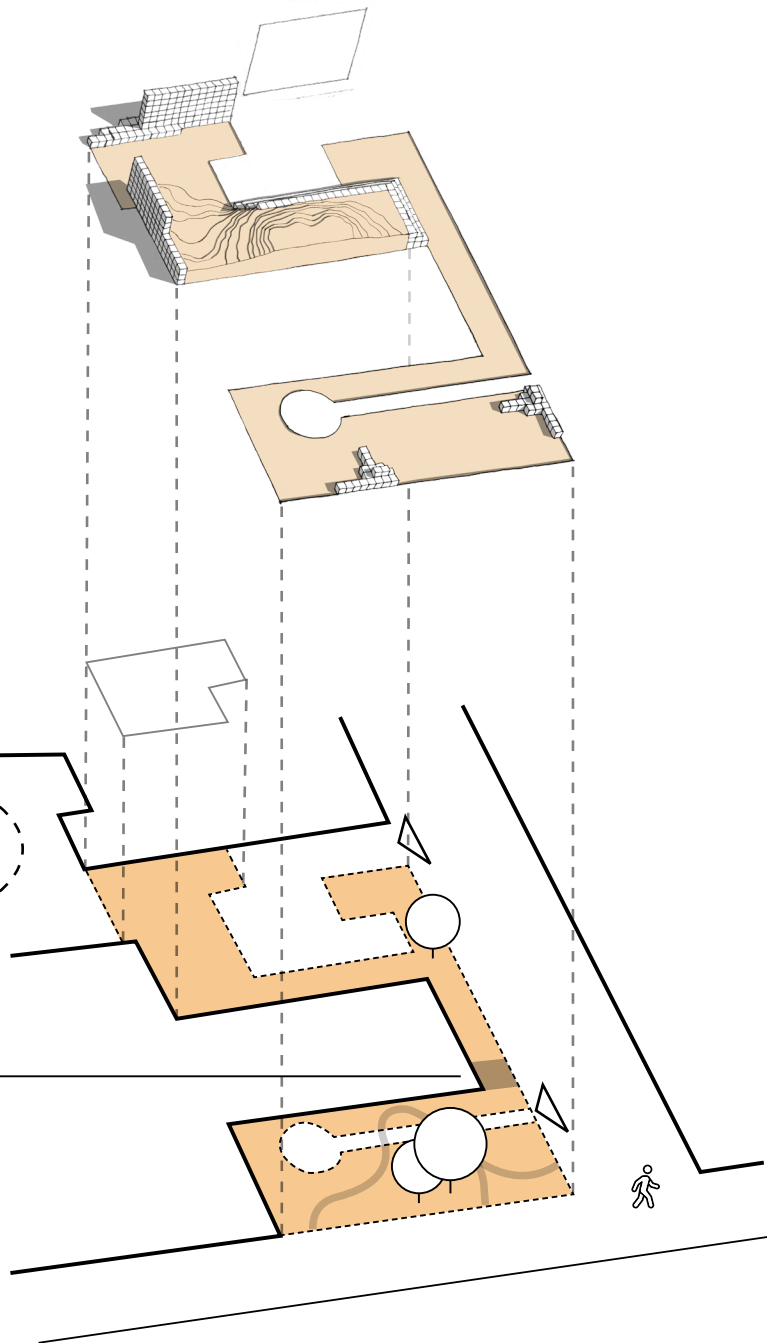
House Entrance

Ground Material Texture

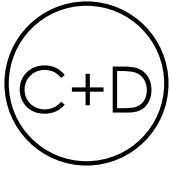
-  Hard (Concrete, Stones)
-  Medium (Stones)
-  Soft (Soil, Grass)

Ground Plan Line Description

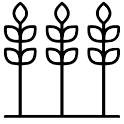
-  Main Structures Outline
-  Strict Boundaries (building facades)
-  Loose Boundaries
-  Entrance
-  Pedestrian Road



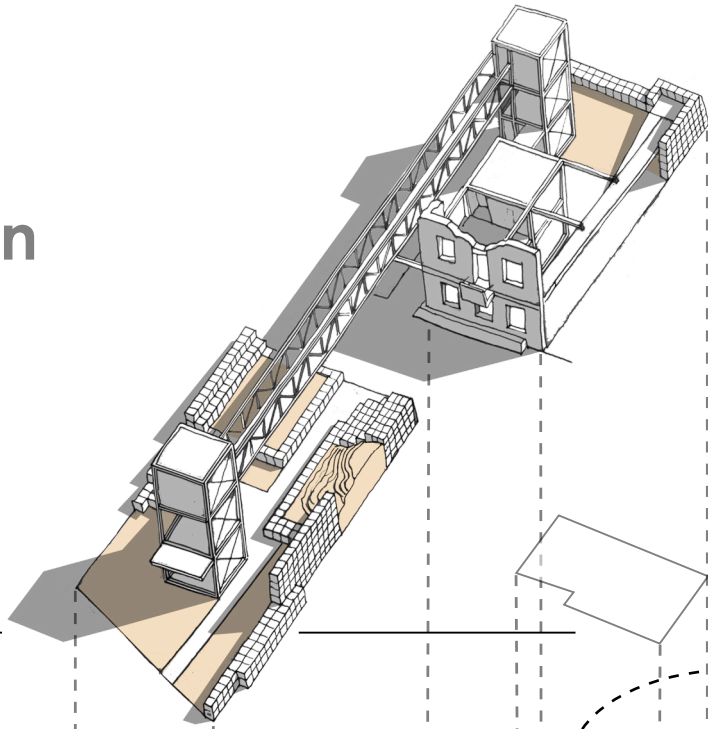
(Image.31)  
A+B plots' intervention diagram



# Social Kitchen Restaurant



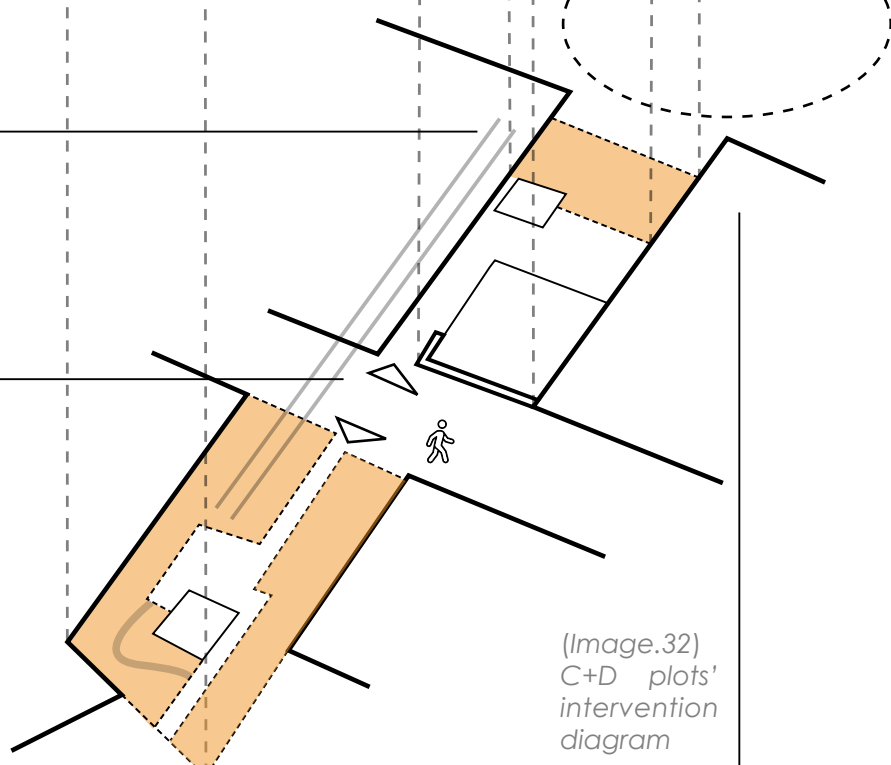
# Urban Farms



**Buffer Areas**  
As a filter for the inner yard  
access




**Aerial Connection**  
Strengthen the unity of the  
two plots  
Highlight the intervention  
from the street view

**Old Facade**  
Using existing elements of  
the plot for better intervention  
adaptation to the surrounding  
environment








(Image.32)  
C+D plots'  
intervention  
diagram

### Ground Material Texture

-  Hard (Concrete, Stones)
-  Medium (Stones)
-  Soft (Soil, Grass)

### Ground Plan Line Description

-  Main Structures Outline
-  Strict Boundaries (building facades)
-  Loose Boundaries
-  Entrance
-  Pedestrian Road

**Inner Yards**  
**Potential  
connection  
with inner yard**

E



# Marketplace

3 Small Squares

Intervention exceed the boundaries of the plot




Inner Yard

Connection with inner yard  
Use inner yard as an extension






Plot Boundaries

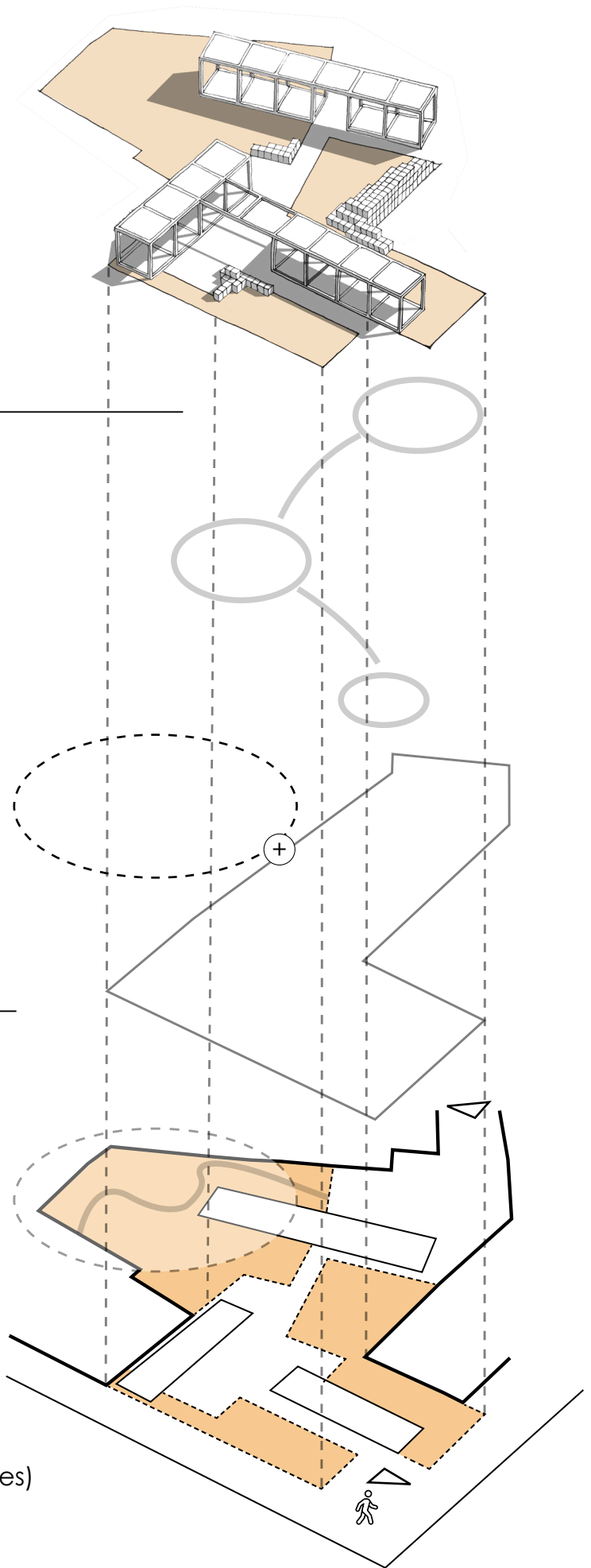
Intervention exceed the boundaries of the plot

### Ground Material Texture

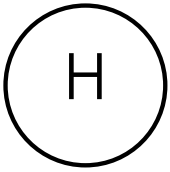
-  Hard (Concrete, Stones)
-  Medium (Stones)
-  Soft (Soil, Grass)

### Ground Plan Line Description

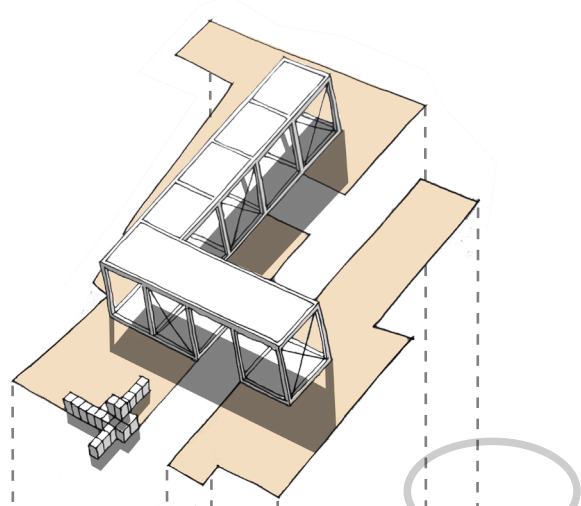
-  Main Structures Outline
-  Strict Boundaries (building facades)
-  Loose Boundaries
-  Entrance
-  Pedestrian Road



(Image.33)  
E plot intervention diagram



# Marketplace






Create a Path  
A shortcut that connects  
the two sides



2 Entering  
Points  
Small introducing  
squares

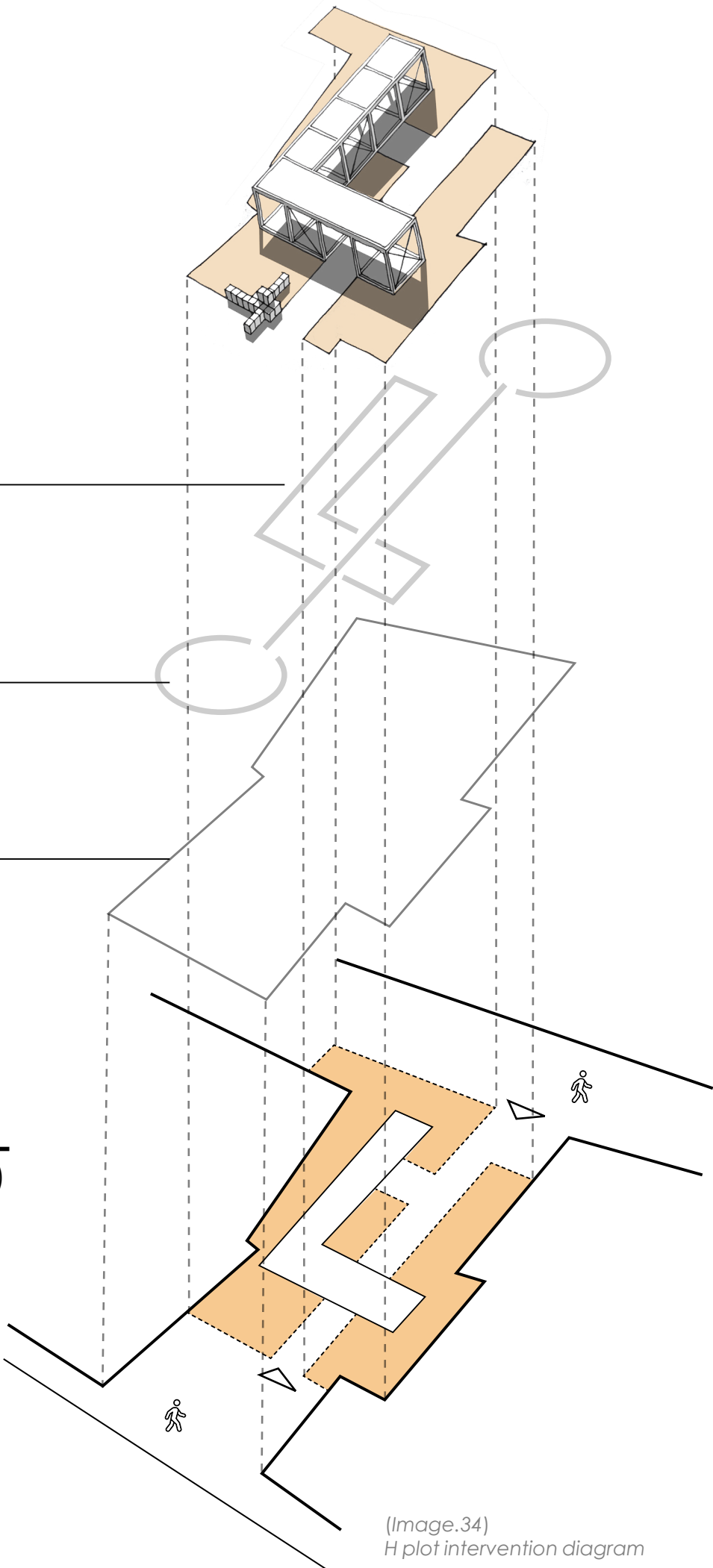
Plot Boundaries  
Intervention exceed the  
boundaries of the plot

### Ground Material Texture

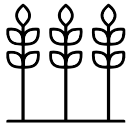
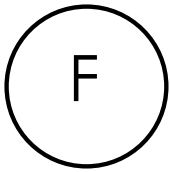
-  Hard (Concrete, Stones)
-  Medium (Stones)
-  Soft (Soil, Grass)

### Ground Plan Line Description

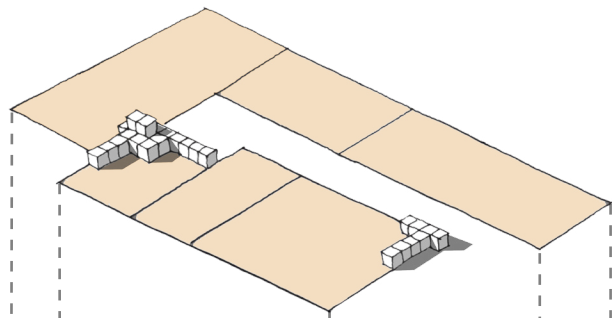
-  Main Structures Outline
-  Strict Boundaries
-  Loose Boundaries
-  Entrance
-  Pedestrian Road



(Image.34)  
H plot intervention diagram



# Urban Farms



**NON**

Negotiable boundary

Inner Yard

Potential connection with inner yard

### Ground Material Texture

- Hard (Concrete, Stones)
- Medium (Stones)
- Soft (Soil, Grass)

### Ground Plan Line Description

- Main Structures Outline
- Strict Boundaries (building facades)
- Loose Boundaries

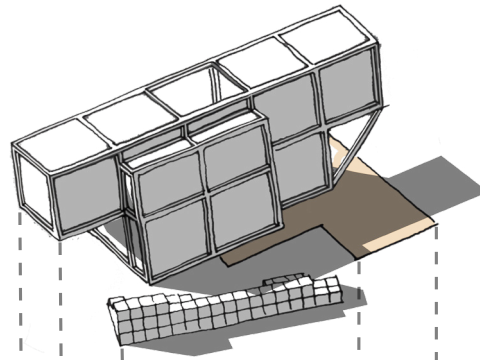
Entrance

Pedestrian Road

(Image.35)  
F plot intervention diagram



# Library



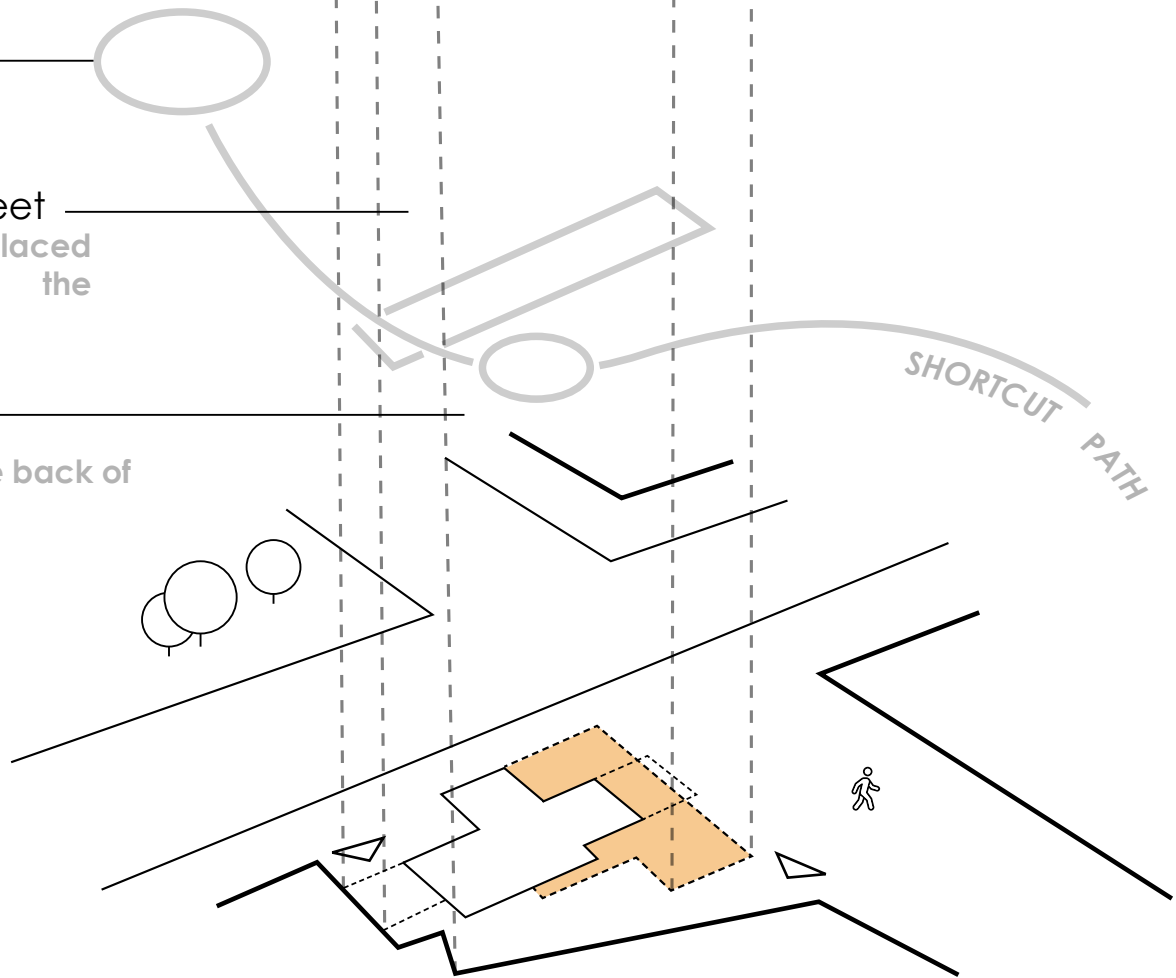
Easy Access from the Park

Filter to the Street

Structure is placed alongside with the road.

Back Yard

Entrance from the back of the building



### Ground Material Texture

- Hard (Concrete, Stones)
- Medium (Stones)
- Soft (Soil, Grass)

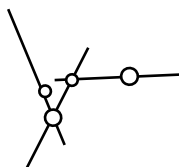
### Ground Plan Line Description

- Main Structures Outline
- Strict Boundaries (building facades)
- Loose Boundaries
- Entrance
- Pedestrian Road

(Image.36)  
G plot intervention diagram

# 25 QUALITIES OF SPACE

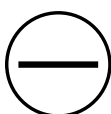
## Axis and Proximity



Axes helps give good orientation and help the navigation in the dense city fabric.

Short distances enhance the link between the plots.

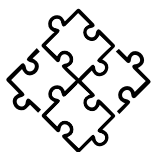
## Neutral Identity



How you can provide the design for something that you are not able to decide?

The Structures provided act as a canvas, where people can fill with a variety of materials or leaving space for more personal interventions.

## Simplicity In Synthesis



The use of NON complicate forms but simple shape formations. Everyone should be able to understand

## Transformability

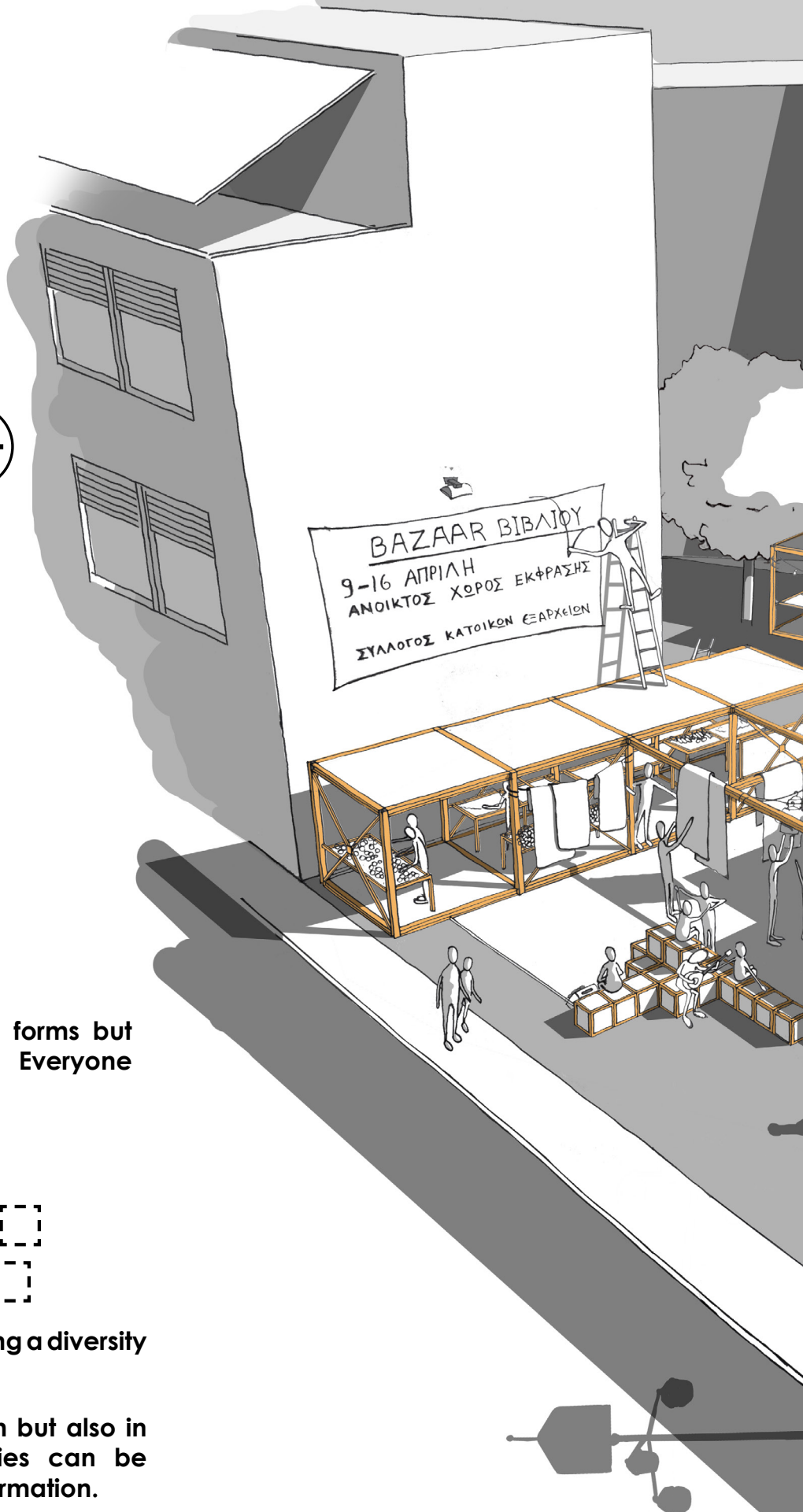


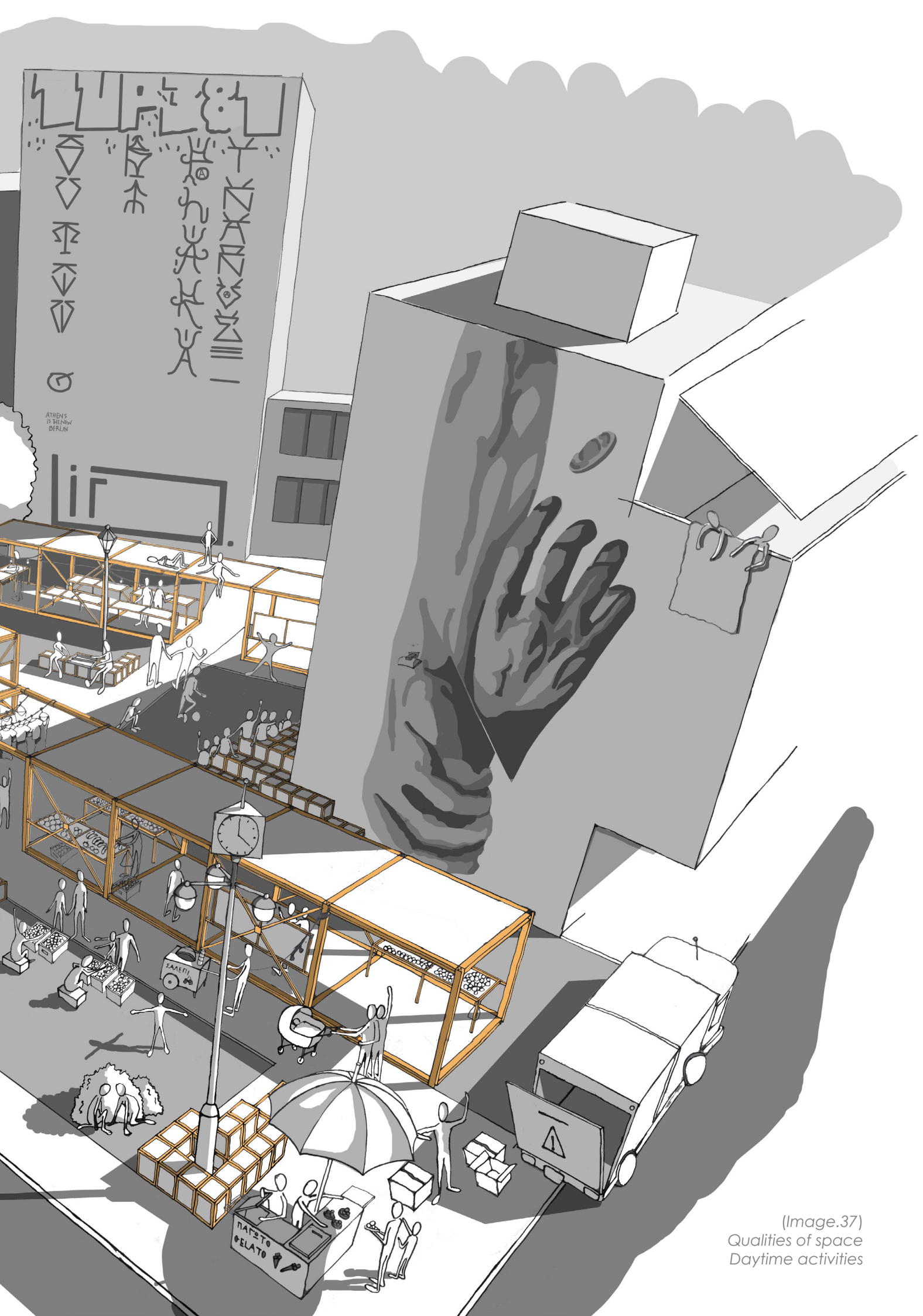
## Flexibility



Light durable structures creating a diversity different typologies.

Flexibility not only in the form but also in the function. Different activities can be accomodated in the same formation.





ATHENS  
D' 1921 NEW  
BERLIN

(Image.37)  
Qualities of space  
Daytime activities

## Highlight Landmarks



## Visibility Lightning



Artificial lightning is used in order to highlight spots within the plot.

Different types of lightning can create a warm environment.

The plot is transformed into a bright “lighthouse” during the night.

Create new landmarks or highlight existing ones.

## Portal to Peoples' PrivateWorld

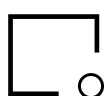
Reverse the relation between public and private.



Expose private areas of the houses to the public.

Filtering peoples' mobility and accessibility.

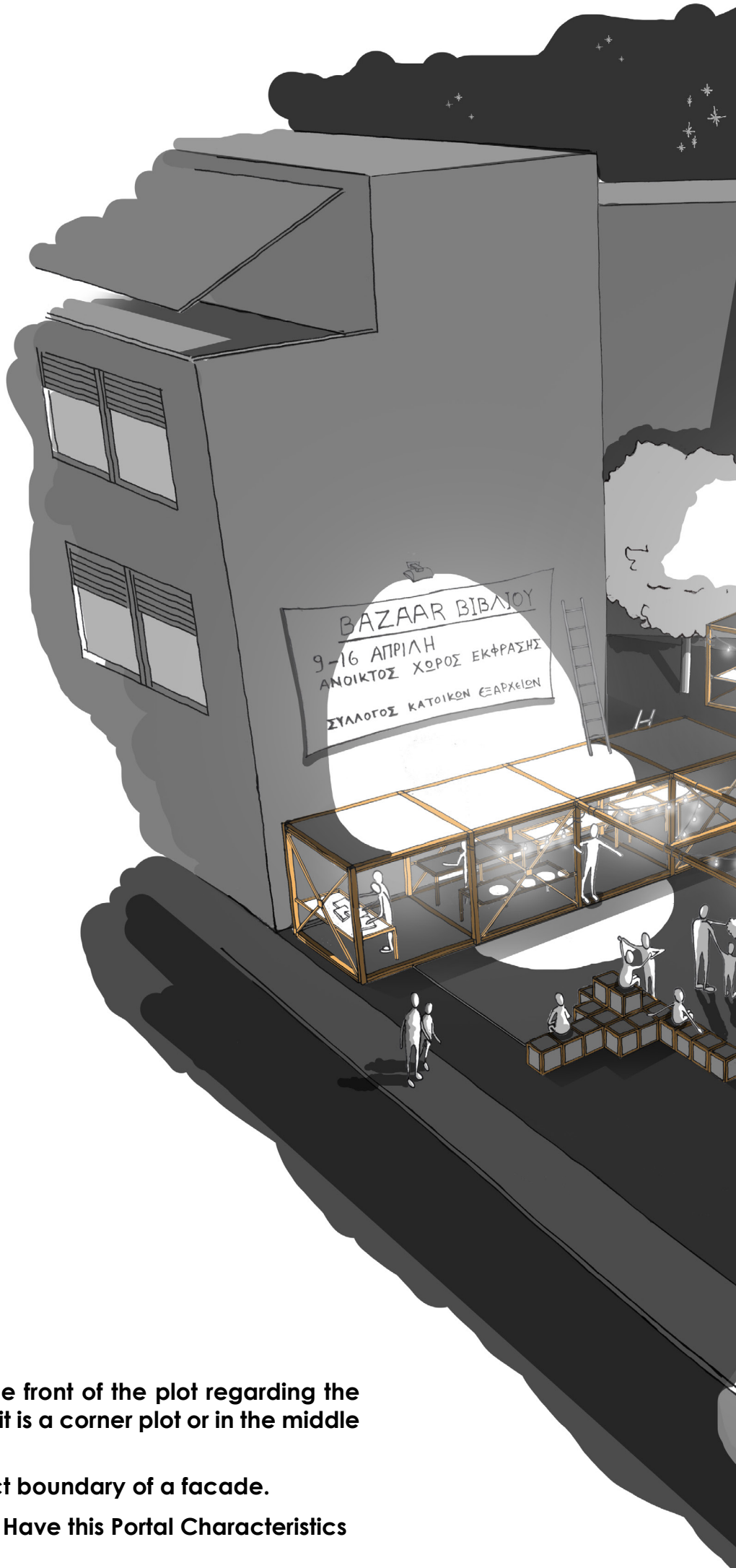
## Urban Block Continuity

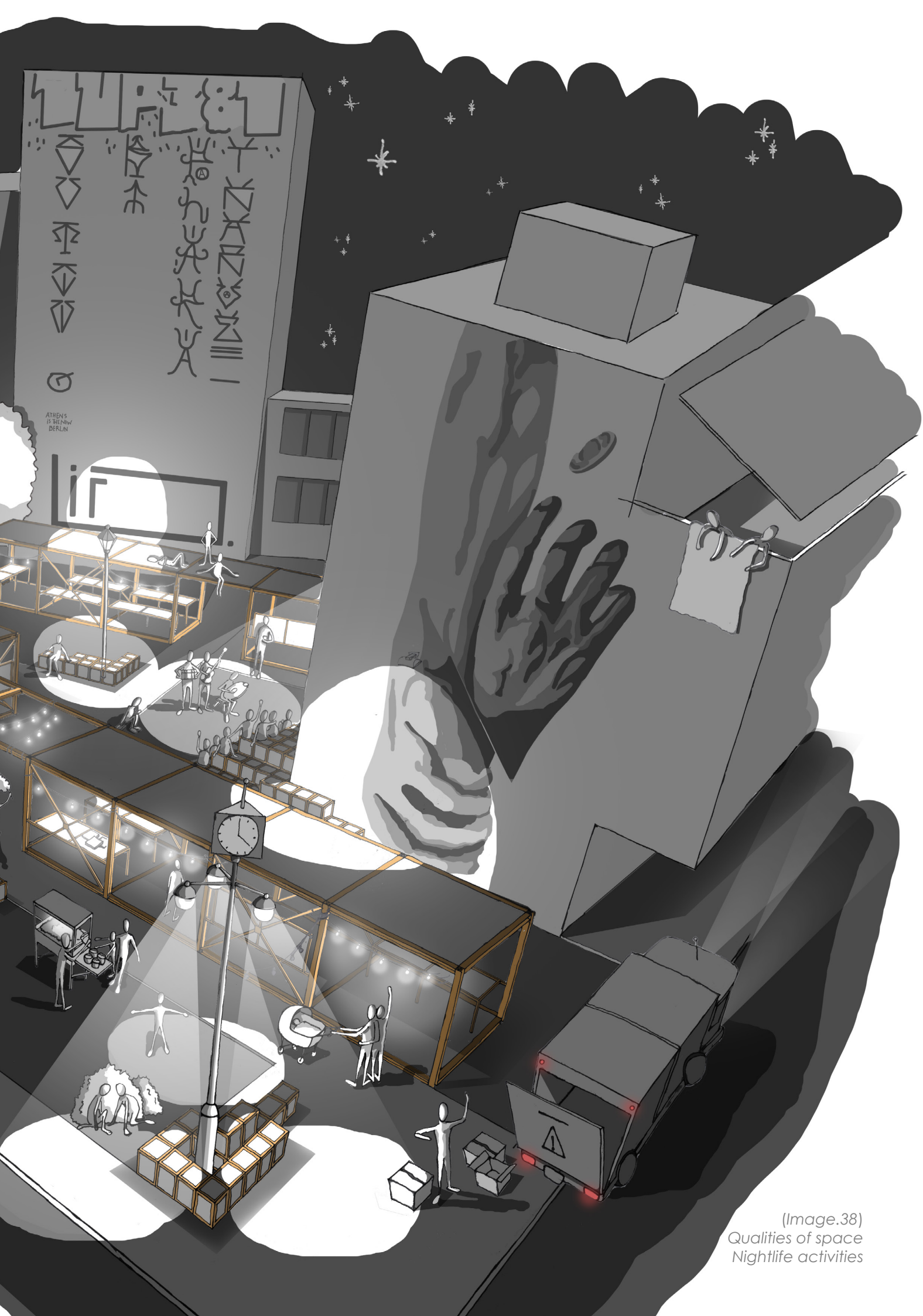


Emphasis is being given in the front of the plot regarding the volume-placing. No matter if it is a corner plot or in the middle side of the block.

Loose Boundary, NOT the strict boundary of a facade.

Complete the Urban Block // Have this Portal Characteristics

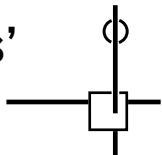




ATHENS  
D'ÉTÉ NEW  
BERLIN

(Image.38)  
Qualities of space  
Nightlife activities

## Crossing Plots' Boundaries



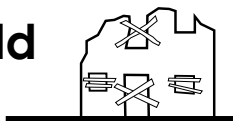
Due to the narrowness of the street network a lot of the plots hosting common spaces are not easily visible to the eye. Parts of the intervention that exceed the plot's boundaries are the best agents to expose in public the place's presence.

## Creating Pairs (of Hubs)



Where it is possible, linking adjacent plots of common spaces in a physical way strengthen also their presence in the public sphere.

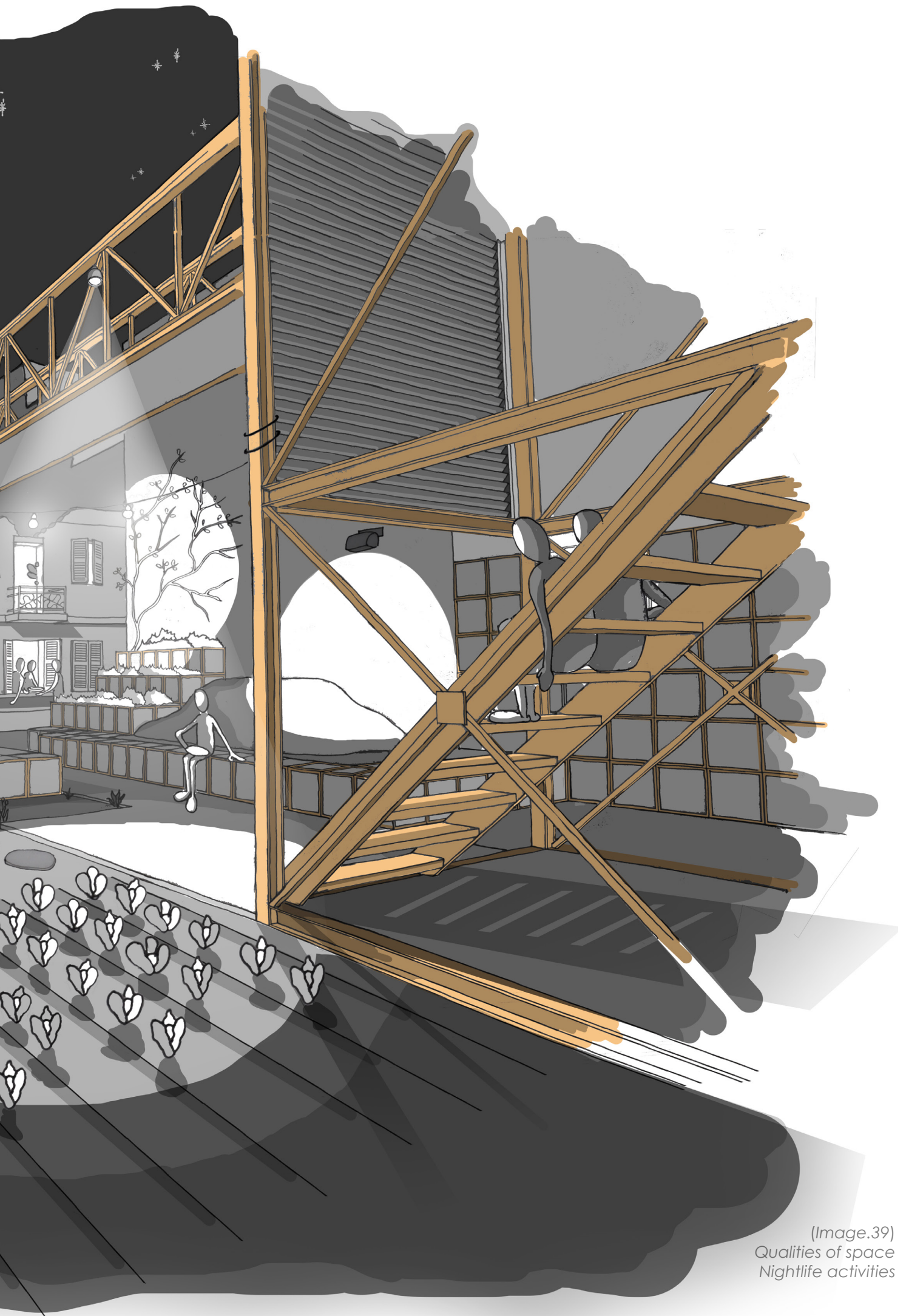
## Preserve Old Elements



By preserving older structures within the plot, the intervention respects the history of the place.

The intervention is easier adapted to the surrounding landscape.





(Image.39)  
Qualities of space  
Nightlife activities



ZZZ

ZZZ...

ZZZ...

ROAARRR

# CHAPTER IV

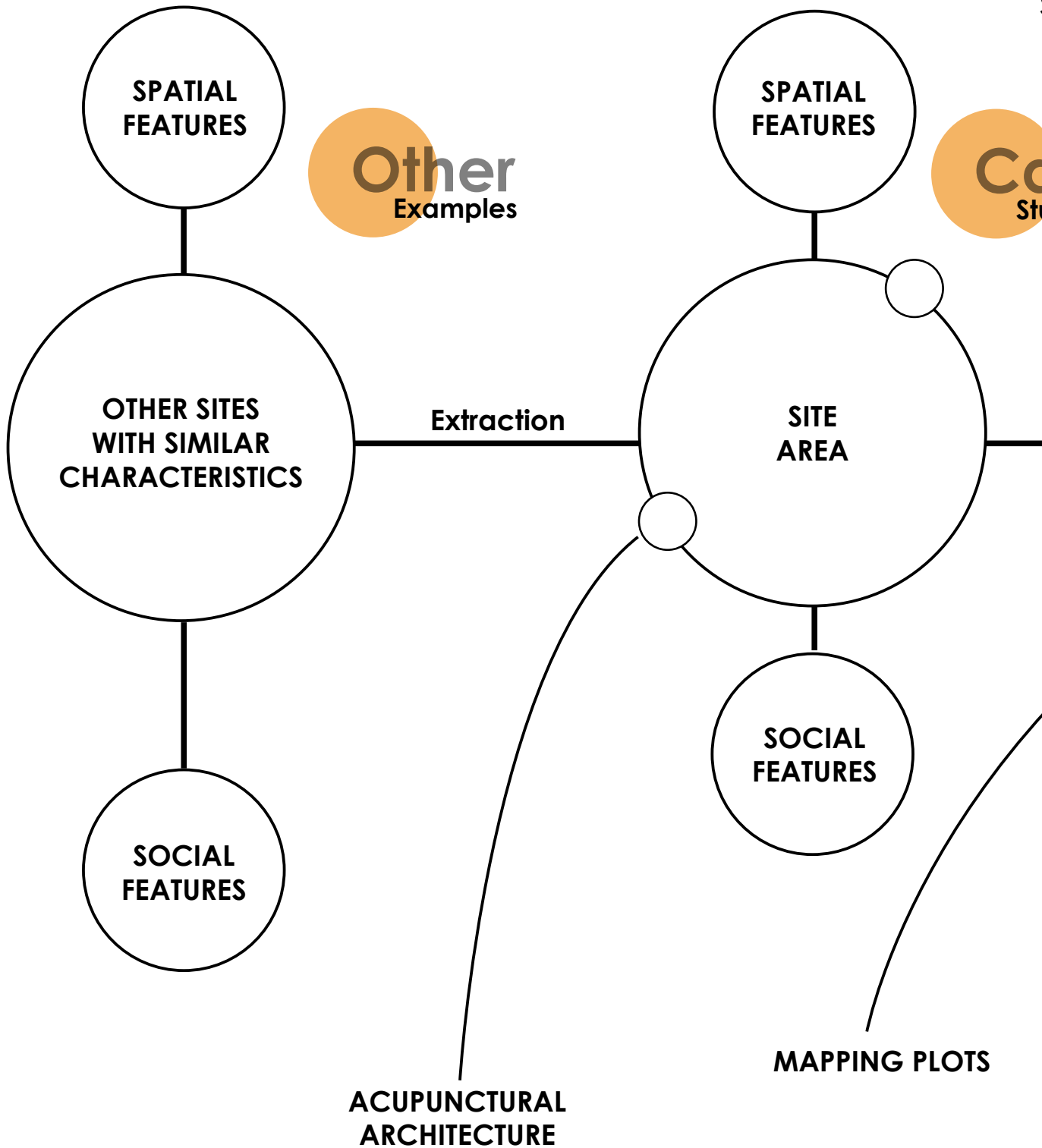
## REFLECTIONS

# 26 REFLECTION MAP



As a conclusion in the last pages of this master thesis there is a summary of reflections, self critique and concerns that are related both to its process and its final outcome.

— Answers Given — — Process Followed — — Questions Raised —



# How You can provide the Design

for something that that you cannot

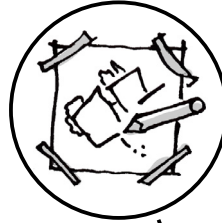
# Decide

cal  
ossible



STRATEGICAL PLAN

Sketches



**Filtering**  
Process

**Output**  
Process

ase  
udy

REPRESENTATION TOOLS



Application

Integrate Information

SPATIAL QUALITIES  
ACTIVITIES

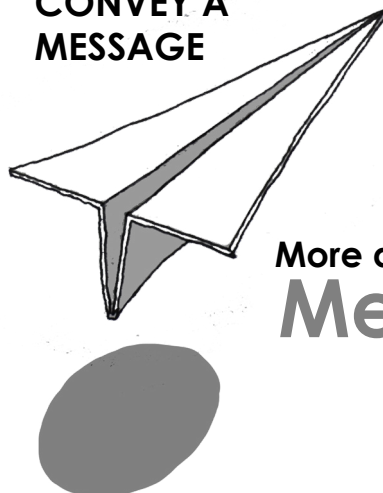
SAY A STORY  
INSPIRE

IDENTIFYING  
QUALITIES

CONVEY A  
MESSAGE



Architect  
as a **Scout**



More as a  
**Messenger**  
than as a  
**Designer**

## **Thoughts on the Process**

One of the issues that troubled me in this journey, was the continuous self questioning about my contribution in the academic (or not) knowledge. Since many similar projects have been carried out in the area, I was constantly trying to find my place amongst them (building on them) and define my own framework.

From the beginning of this master thesis, there was an intention to be related exclusively to the site of investigation. The initial thought was to explore the particularities of the plots in the specific area and delve more into them. That is reflected onto a strategic plan of interstitial urbanism addressed directly to the local neighborhood based on a very specific spatial and social background.

However, during the process, I realize that this master thesis had the potential to turn into a broader project. At that time, I figured out that my mindset towards this strategic plan should have been revised. The readings of other existing examples based on similar, backgrounds (both spatial and social), made me work with the idea of creating an intervention that can be applied also in other contexts, despite its high relevance with the case study area. Finally this shift was the departure point for a deeper understanding of my work and the potential definition of the final outcome.

## **Thoughts on the Produced Outcome**

Many times I was questioning myself how can I provide the design for something that I was not able to decide for it and that I didn't have the control of it. I think this question was partially answered by trying to define my role in this process, which is described in the following paragraphs.

First of all, there was an ethical barrier, the distance I felt between myself and the reality. I was sitting in my desk, creating my drawings and taking decisions for the "transformation" of this area without being more actively involved to this. Sometimes, I was thinking what if I had followed a process based on acupunctural intervention. Probably I would have contacted local social groups of the neighborhood where I could have worked together with them. My contribution could also have been more tangible and direct, instead of being detached while I was trying to come up with an idea for this strategic plan.

I understood though that I should not feel guilty for this choice of mine, that meant I had to find another way to structure my approach. As a result I started to see in myself not only an architect and a designer. On the contrary I wanted to become more than this. First I began as a scout and then as a recorder, by trying to map the empty plots of the area and identifying the spatial qualities of the different sites respectively. Most of the times, I also felt the need to become a messenger, or a storyteller by trying to narrate a story in an interesting way. It was clear to me finally that the output of this master thesis and what I was struggling to define all this time was not a detailed master plan based on an accurate design. It was more about the activities, the principles and the atmosphere of the space which was created behind the design.

One can say that too much attention has been given to the illustrations or it can be described as an obsession of mine to produce and explain all the information with sketches in every page of this booklet. However I think that all of them are not merely an expressive tool but part of this strategic plan. By caring so much about the activities and the atmosphere illustrated in the sketches made me caring less for the design itself as a final product, which I think is consistent and relevant with the project's development and the project's philosophy.

In the end a detailed plan was not the purpose of the master thesis. The main goal was to give an orientation, a direction based on the triptych; activities, qualities and atmospheres of space through a very specific narration, edited in a way that leaves room for doubt. What is presented as a design proposal here is just one of the many potential portrayals of this triptych expressed in the three-dimensional material world. Eventually, the most important outcome for me is the fact that there is not a prescribed final result, but like common spaces, it is open to several interpretations.



(Image.41)

*There is an expression in greek which says: "From the entire carcass of the donkey only the tail is left", underlying the last chapter of a long and laborious adventure.*

# CHAPTER V

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## REFERENCES

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## **IMAGES LIST**

Image 1, (Page 5), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 2, (Page 9), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 3, (Pages 12), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 4, (Page 13), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 5, (Page 14-15), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 6, (Pages 17), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 7, (Page 19), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 8, (Pages 23), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 9, (Pages 23), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 10, (Pages 24-25), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 11, (Page 33), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 12, (Page 33), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 13, (Page 34), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 14, (Page 34), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 15, (Page 34), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 16, (Page 35), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 17, (Page 36-37), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 18, (Page 38-39), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 19, (Page 41), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 20, (Page 42-43), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 21, (Page 44), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 22, (Page 44), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 23, (Page 45), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 24, (Page 46), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 25, (Page 47), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 26, (Page 48), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 27, (Page 48), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 28, (Pages 49), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 29, (Pages 49), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 30, (Pages 51), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 31, (Pages 52), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 32, (Pages 53), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 33, (Pages 54), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 34, (Pages 55), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 35, (Pages 56), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 36, (Pages 57), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 37, (Pages 58-59), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 38, (Pages 60-61), Source: Produced by the Author  
Image 39, (Pages 62-63), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 40, (Pages 64), Source: Produced by the Author

Image 41, (69), Source: Produced by the Author

## **PHOTOGRAPH LIST**

Photo 1, (Page 27), Source: <https://www.inexarchia.gr/events/free-street/party-gia-ayto-diaheirizomeno-parko-nayarino>

Photo 2, (Page 28), Source: <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/02-349303/esto-no-es-un-solar-reconvirtiendolo-parcelas-vacias-en-espacio-publico-parte-ii>

Photo 3, (Page 29), Source: <https://thefunambulist.net/architectural-projects/small-santiago-cirugeda>

Photo 4, (Page 30), Source: [https://eichners.github.io/finalproject\\_oddlots/StoryMap/StoryMap\\_oddlots.html](https://eichners.github.io/finalproject_oddlots/StoryMap/StoryMap_oddlots.html)

Photo 5, (Page 32), Source: Produced by the Author

Photo 6, (Page 33), Source: Produced by the Author

## APPENDIX

Product of  
**Collective**  
Process

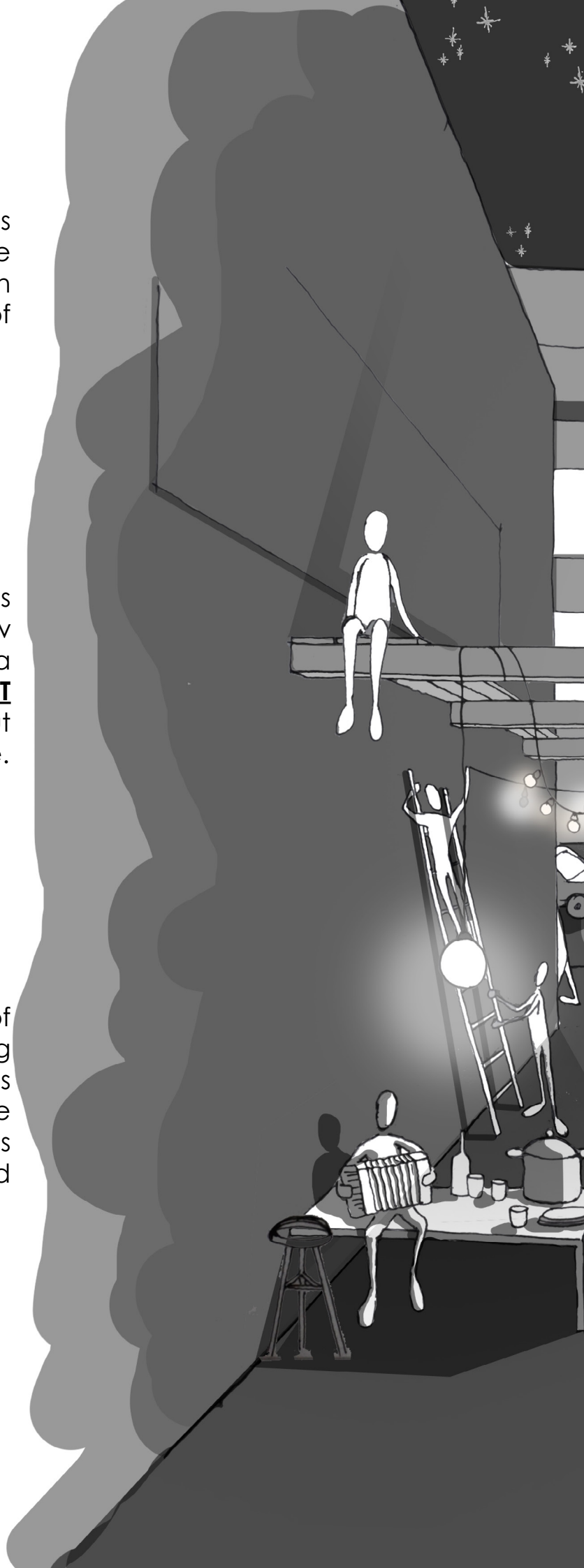
A process where the foundations of the rules of sharing are **NOT** the result of an external policy based on formal authorities and institutions of the state.

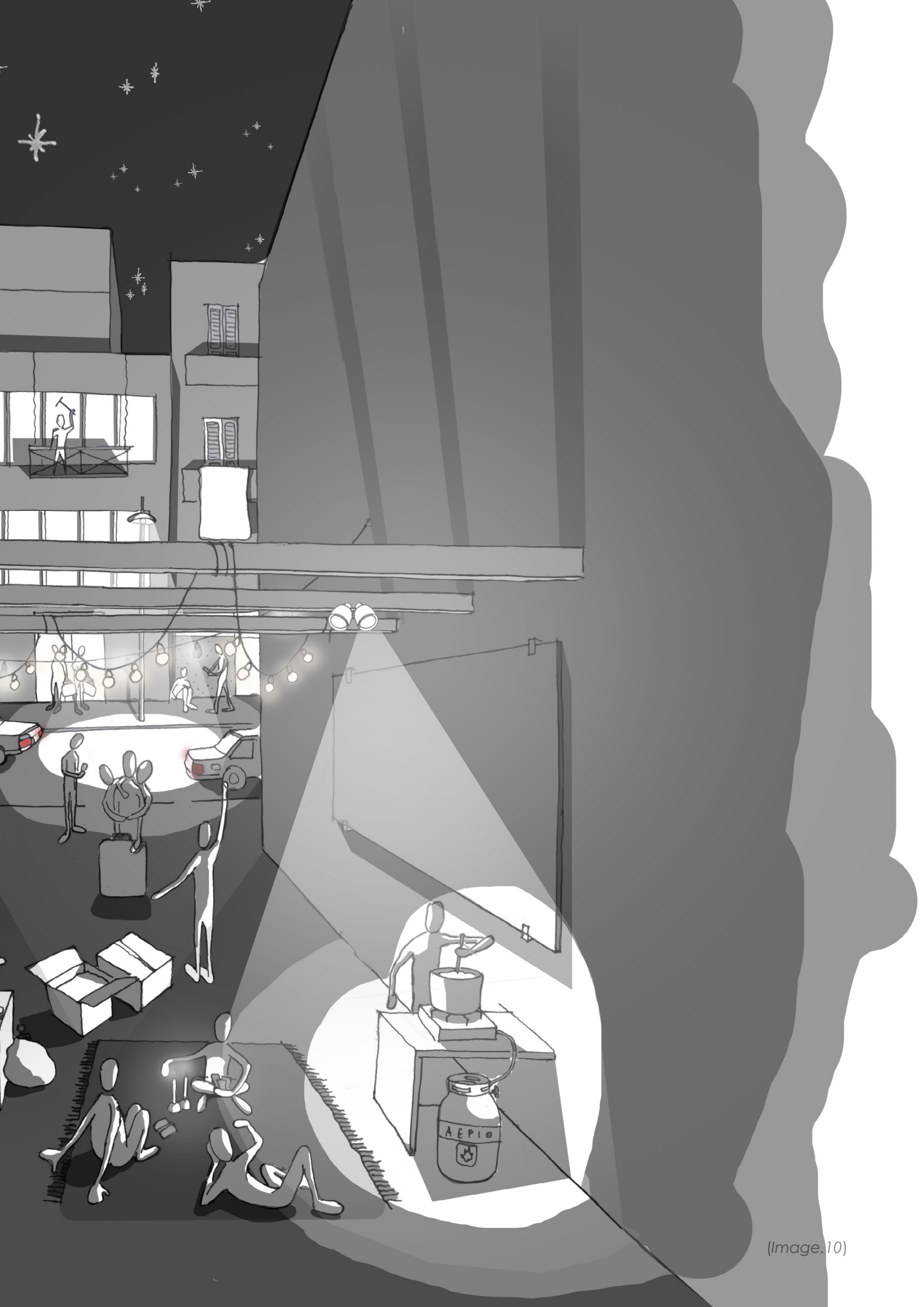
Open to  
**“New Comers”**

Exchange of roles creates opportunities both in inviting “new comers” and becoming yourself a new comer to a new condition. **NOT** as vulnerable receivers of charity but as co-producers of common space.

Plethora of  
**Emergent ID's**

Emancipation is not a product of fixed process, a process of creating a new collective identity. Instead, it is an expanding process. It is about the quest of a common ground the tools and “languages that are being used among the different participants.





(Image.10)