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THESIS DOCUMENT

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Work in Progress

Werkstadt

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Guidelines of “Play the City”

1. Define the game challenge: In our case the goal would be to create streets and spaces that are car free and offer the possibility to act within this newly resulted public space. To limit ourselves we set the Blue Zones in the city of Zurich as our playground.
2. Engage your stakeholder network: This includes people that commute by car or own a car and people that only commute by bike and use public transport systems. Furthermore there are the city planners, the neighbourhood councils, small entrepreneurs and many more that can be added or subtracted to the game. We also hope to use this step to create personas and to define the different motives of involved citizens.
3. Identify Relevant Data: Regarding the data we will have to look at two different types of data. On one hand we will incorporate the „hard“ data such as location, traffic, certain statistics that prove our game dynamic and also what rules and networks already exist. Furthermore we have the „soft“ data, such as philosophical thoughts about space but also points that we see as beneficial factors for living in the city as before mentioned in the background chapter.
4. Identify Available Resources: The resources generally influence the skills or possibilities the players have to act within the game. This would include several legal restrictions but also f.e. the possibility to own a „Blue-Zone Card“. Furthermore the financial resources should also be added into the play and administrative processes are also being taken into account.
5. Design Game Rules and Conditions: The Game Rules include the individual and collective rules. The individual rules will differ as do the skills. Citizens may have the possibility to organise cultural events and the city-players can then approve these proposals. When creating these rules we will take the Urban-Equipe handbook as a guideline.
The collective rules will apply to everyone involved and will include: sequence, respect and priority.
6. Build the Game Interface: When building the Game Interface it's again very important to define what kind of outcome we want to generate. As we don't have a lot of time within the Thesis and we aim for rapid results. This would include an easy interface that's quickly understandable and thus helps us gain fast feedback from a lot of different people. It should also be an interface that can be accessible for everyone; either in the digital or the public space.
7. Play and Record Game Sessions: When testing out the game we would like to use it as a proposal and discussion platform for people in a public space but also to have a manifestation of our ideas and have a platform that can be dynamically

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Methodology chosen for your investigation	Almost done
Motivation and Intended Contribution	Almost done
Chapter Overview (narrative of your content)	wip
Your concept (<i>ca 10000 words</i>)	
Concept and Angle	Almost done
Related Projects	Almost done
Field Research (<i>interviews, user studies, observations, // technology inquiry // etc</i>)	Almost done
Findings and Next Steps	Almost done
Project Development (<i>ca 10000 words</i>)	
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Prototypes (incl. user tests if applicable)	Almost done
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With that in mind we would also like to test the full scope of our methodologies in a different neighbourhood to see if our assumptions can be validated and reproduced in different circumstances. During our first strollological research trips we encountered a big variety of neighbourhoods and thus many different dynamics. As of now we can determine that if a given neighbourhood has a high population density and small apartments these factors play a role in the street having a much more lively character, as people tend to dwell outside. Another interesting correlation we have witnessed is that this often comes with more anonymity as there are so many people that one can easily submerge. In Wipkingen, the neighbourhood we have mainly worked in, there are a lot of cooperatives and apartment houses. This leads to a lot of different projects and initiatives but to a somewhat impersonal street as everyone is already organised in more opaque societies. Somewhat contrary is the neighbourhood in Affoltern, where the GZ is located that we are working with. There are almost no Cafés and meeting points which leads the people to concentrate themselves in their immediate surroundings and within other people. We are very curious how the interventions can act within these neighbourhoods of less diverse development. We are not sure our actions will have the same acceptance as in Wipkingen as it is even more unusual to encounter the infrastructure we imagined and created in a neighbourhood on the city's borders. It is also possible that it proves to be more successful because it fulfils a need that is ever more present, compared to more urban, mixed neighbourhoods. We hope that, after we pass on our trailer to the GZ which is located in Affoltern, we can have an exchange with the people from the GZ who have a different background in sociocultural animation. With more insights gained and perhaps more parts of the project being thoroughly tested, we would like to look at the scalability of our project and what impact it could have in different neighbourhoods or the entire city.

There were a lot of people that approached us and spent quite a long time sitting by and enjoying the interactions. May it be to discuss our concept, just to stay a little while and talk about what is bothering them, or just to meet new people. Through that, we realised that we created public infrastructure that seemed to function on its own, without a necessary connection to our matter. Our action seemed approachable in nature and did not force people to talk to us about politics or participate actively in our action. They might have had the urge to talk or to enjoy a space with public character. These encounters proved very relevant on a social level and confirmed our assumption that the street as a public sphere benefits from this interaction and personality. This aspect is something we hope to get further feedback from the GZ as they are very specialised in social work.

Getting to know the different parties involved and also becoming familiar with the different steps involved in public space was a big part of our project. After having tested a diversity of actions we have gathered a good knowledge base of what works and what doesn't. A big problem we encountered was a failure to generate "momentum" because both we and the people didn't really know where the project was heading. In the latter phase of the projects we had a confined concept but also knew that we can't provide the regularity that we have held up in our values. Adhering to this regularity in continued work would lead to more people being involved thus forming a bigger community through word of mouth and connection through interests.

After having built our trailer we will test out how the different participants react to our manual and if motivation to proceed with action remains or increases. An aspect that we haven't really touched on is the organisation of these different events. Having a plan for specific days would be something that benefits the project as it would attract a border audience through people getting used to us and it would also improve our communication efforts, as advertising every single event in the same elaborate manner would no longer be necessary. Nevertheless, we can imagine this framework being too strict for certain people and that the action may already fail at finding the right appointment. This part of the manual might be the most challenging one because it is a quite time consuming component. We will reach out to a number of people to develop this component.

“Getting into the field” and “Collecting your own data” is a common denominator in interaction-design practices. It is a way of getting into touch with different fields in a quick and efficient manner to gain an understanding of a challenge or topic one is confronted with. It is most frequently used when getting in touch with a target group and laying out a concept for a solution and the project that is being worked on. Especially during our research phase we encountered many people and were present within the ecosystem of a neighbourhood and surrounding public space. In this phase we gained important knowledge on topics that people were worried about or needs they mentioned during our dialogue. Whilst having discussions with multiple people from different neighbourhoods in Zurich we realised that these topics and needs were often circling around very specific problems such as a missing traffic mirror or small conflicts between different actors with different interests. We believe that the methods we have used and the knowledge we gained prove to be useful for the different parties involved. A civil engineering office or some other municipal institution could certainly profit from choosing an approach similar to ours. It stands to reason that every street they rebuild will come with new challenges, originating from new people with different circumstances and demographics. Around these challenges, a project has to evolve through the inclusion of surrounding influences and concerns. Circling back to the points first mentioned in this paragraph, our approach of working with user studies and cultural probes proved very successful on a small scale, and could be very beneficial for the outcome of bigger projects as it allows gathering qualitative data in a quick and applied manner. As we have realised in our research, different approaches and perspectives in studying the implementation of solutions are essential to achieve a situational overview within a city and can aid in detecting problems and prioritising different solutions in the creation of public spaces. When working with a neighbourhood and a community the personal interactions and honesty in the feedback prove to be the most effective way of collecting criteria and assessing the possible success of interventions.

1.1.1 We Have to Talk about Cars

Close your eyes and imagine an image of an ideal street in your neighbourhood.

What does this street look like? Do you see cars? Shopfronts? Street vendors? What surrounds you? How does it feel?

It's very likely that none of you who have imagined a street in the ideal city had lots and lots of cars in it or multiple lanes for the cars to travel through. There is a reason for this. We all share an intrinsic desire to feel comfortable within an urban environment. This includes community, safety, inclusion and wonder. (*Klanten & Stuhler, 2021*) As we designed our streets solely with the purpose of transit, these public spaces have turned into traffic spaces (*Bendiks & Degros, 2019*) and do not serve the needs of the public. These places don't evoke the perception of being places to stay but only places to drive through by car to get to another place. They also function as a sign of non-belonging and thus kill a space and its identity/community. We have the same problem with parking spaces. They are not only a huge waste of scarce space in a dense city (Robin Chase) but also waste the opportunities and solutions we could build for cities that are serving the mentioned needs to feel comfortable. As we are imagining our ideal street, it's a fact that cars must be a part of it because everyone has a need for mobility, and there are numerous people with disabilities dependent on cars. It's safe to say though, that streets completely lined with parking spaces are undesirable and that citizens are neither able to participate nor willing to stay here. As these are communal spaces this is something we can change and that's also where our biggest chance as a community lies. These creations can range from self organised spontaneous events to small community gardens or meeting points. The most important point is that inhabitants of streets or neighbourhoods have an active part in the creation of their public space.

Concluding this thesis, the following chapter summarises our most important learnings when working in public spaces. It looks at how our goal of enabling citizens to be more active within a street has been accomplished and how. At least it includes our future steps and how we plan to bring more visibility to our conceptual approach that can work independently from us.

Working in, around and across the street is a diverse and very complex matter. The many actors involved pose a great challenge and thus it is difficult to recognise the levers in an urban ecosystem. On one hand, we were fascinated by the multitude of actors and perceived areas of responsibilities and on the other hand by the almost endless possibilities to act, intervene and discuss. Since a city consists of a multitude of different individuals, it is just as difficult to find uniform problems as it is to find uniform solutions. We quickly realised that the possibility to act can only happen locally and directly. An approach that is to be applied to an entire neighbourhood or a city did not seem appropriate in such a situation. It would immediately lead to an exclusion of voices and needs, in which a decision-making group would be created for organisational and time reasons. This also led to the fact that we decided against a project that is to be located in service design and presents a “planned out solution” of hypothetical nature at the end. We want to show the diversity of ideas and present the system of a street as diverse as it actually is. This happens primarily when people meet and discuss. Achieving this was our main goal in the second part of our thesis project.

In the end we worked in a “semi-public” realm where we organised the actions but participation and self-initiation by other parties was allowed to thrive. We realised that this kind of work in the public sphere is stressful and working outside the comfort zone of known procedures inevitably leads to insecurities arising. We expect that a lot of people that will be part of the project who do not work on an institutional level will experience a similar “stage fright”. With time, these insecurities will diminish but still they still influence part of the process. The reassurance a community provides can be helpful in that situation because it gives a certain legitimacy and helps to boost confidence and decrease insecurities. We also realised that when we were surrounded by familiar people, there was a big decrease in the number of pedestrians that approached us. The project seemed to lose some

1.1.3 The Early History of the Swiss City

To understand how cities have developed to the lively organisms they are today, we have to look at the historical context of urbanisation and the politics involved in these processes. As we are working very locally in the city of Zurich, we will also look primarily at the developments in Switzerland.

In contrast to earlier perceptions of the city, we are now characterised by a rather positive attitude towards it. Especially during the first Industrial revolution, as cities started to grow quickly, there was a big dissent towards cities (*Bernard & Cavin, 2007*). The changes brought by the capitalistic system of mass production made these developments possible, as there was the possibility to house and work for a lot of people with minimal space. There has always been a rift between rural and urban life, especially at the time of the first critics, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He lashed out violently against big cities: 'Cities are the abyss of the human species. After a few generations, races die or degenerate. They need to be refreshed, and it is always the countryside which furnishes replenishment'. (*Rousseau, 1979, 59*)

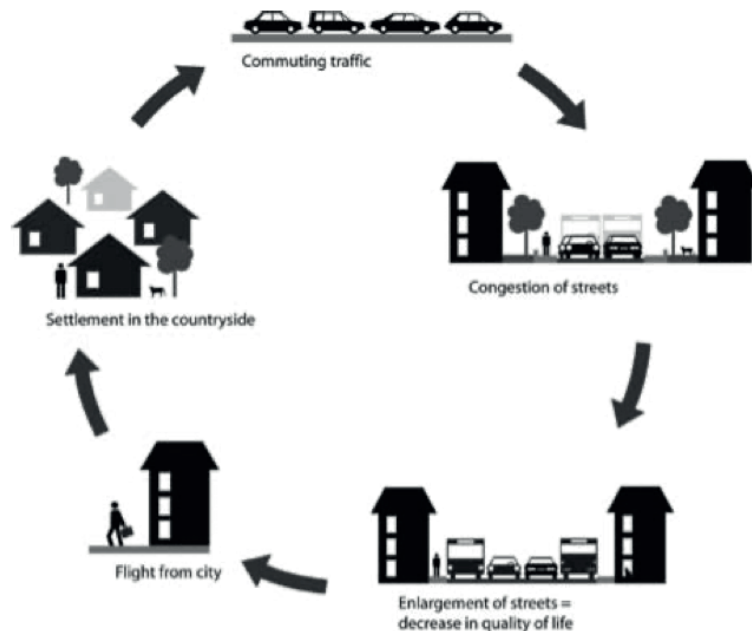
The ideologies proposed by JJR were still a big part of the later executed planning of Jean Francois Gravier and Armin Meili. They both had a big influence in city planning in France (Gravier) and Switzerland (Meili). After the Second World War and the accompanying financial upswing in Switzerland, they were both involved in the emergence of anti-urban ideologies in space planning. What is interesting to see is that a lot of their statements didn't necessarily have a practical aspect, but rather a political one. (We can still witness this notion today with a lot of prestige projects.) They saw cities as a threat to the morality of society. People who lived in cities also did not correspond to the traditional values of having a family and being a normed citizen, let alone of the established patriarchal system. There were also many other aspects involved, but the main cause of the anti-urban critique is that cities don't support the traditional and conservative lifestyle that these two men imagined. As of their political nature they would have never seen a benefit or gain an acceptance to new ideas that emerged in these urban environments. These power dynamics have mainly led to a disempowering and neglect of urban planning and thus led to a very organic and disorganised urban growth.

With the emergence of modernist ideologies, a planning hype to counteract the previous developments has started. This led to very strict and regulated forms of planning that wanted to understand the city as a whole and to include everything

1.1.4 The Consumption and Cost of Space in Zürich
Statistics / numbers on Parking Spaces / Cars in Zürich

To add some context to the claims about unproductive car infrastructure the following section outlines some of the most relevant statistics regarding parking infrastructure in the city of Zurich.

The standardised size for a parking space in Switzerland (*norm from VSS*) is 5×2.35 metres in length which equals 11.75 square metres of parking space. According to the open data tool that the city of Zürich provides, there are about 49'000 open-air, roadside car-parking spaces in Zürich. If the spaces in condensed parking infrastructure (such as park-houses) are included, this number grows to about 70 '000 spaces. This discrepancy of open-air parking spaces in relation to parking infrastructure also shows the inefficiency of space usage and therefore about 575'750 square metres (0.575 Square Kilo-



metres) of ground are covered by Parking spaces in the city of Zürich. That is roughly the size of 80 soccer fields. The total area of the city of Zürich is 87.88 square kilometres. Averaging out the density of car-parking spaces per square kilometre this equals to about 800 parking spaces per square kilometre.

Usually parking spaces in Zürich are occupied to about 90% to 97% of the entire capacity. This results in at least 44'100 cars standing on the roadside at any given time, in close proximity to a residential building. When matched with the number of households in Zürich, this results in about 1 occupied car parking space per 4 households. (GIS-Zentrum, Geomatik + Vermessung, Tiefbau- und Entsorgungsdepartement, 2021)

of “longevity” and the impact our actions have on a street in a long term manner. Although we might consider the street as a public realm and take the liberty to disrupt and change that space, our research and talking to other, similar actors has shown that the civil engineering office has a different mindset in that regard. Additions to existing public infrastructure like benches and objects that occupy paths get removed rather quickly. Any modification to the existing traffic signage on a road surface is seen as an offence, and will quickly be cleaned away. The argument of safety concerns about infrastructure on a street could be seen as a reason, but it seems to guard its sovereignty about shaping public spaces rather offensively. To install any object or signage on a street with the goal of its permanent existence in that place proved to be a difficult undertaking. This led to all our ideas for leaving behind an “impression” being deemed difficult to achieve by ourselves. Be it the painting of objects and information on the road, or the installation of miniature representations of objects anywhere. Beginning to consider other, more hybrid solutions, such as maintaining a collection of digital traces seemed to be a much more feasible option and would provide a benefit in regard to networked documentation and a less physical journey of discovery for our actions on the street. Digital mapping tools include contribution-based geotagging functionalities that allow users to create tagged information entities to represent businesses and places in reality. These data points can be rated by other users, host photos of the place and allow a linking of websites. They begin to be shown to every user, depending on the reviews they receive and other factors the algorithm considers in selecting information. Using this information framework, we were able to quickly document our action in the digital realm and incorporate a collection of text data from other visitors. Adding a QR code to our infoboard with a link to our actions entry was deemed the easiest solution for allowing people a digital contribution. These review texts could, for example, contain just that — short testimonials of people that visited us. Possibly, they could contain ideas for the locality that our action took place, or they could be used to create a more constructive and lasting discussion about the use and management of streets in the city of Zürich. They could serve as the digital equivalent to our meeting spaces on location, and develop a similar dynamic as the “bikeable” online platform that creates discourse about missing or problematic bike infrastructure. Through uploading their own action inspired by ours, an ecosystem of inspiration and reiteration could begin. To play the devil’s advocate,

1.1.5 Private, Public and communal Ownership.

Or “Who is managing whose possession?” / Wer verwaltet wessen Besitz? And why cars are, by nature, exclusive.

When talking about private, communal and public ownership, many questions arise regarding the conditions of possession, control and maintenance. The implementation of use cases only adds further complication and problems of individual consideration. To gain a better understanding of their definition the following section tries to define a framework of considerations that should aid in quickly assessing objects and their status.

In categorising a realm with one of the attributes found above, several criteria are relevant.

- I. Assessing its ownership status: is it attributed to a specific person, a group of people, or a nation? How opaque is the structure of ownership?
- II. The accessibility issue asks for its status of admission. Who is allowed “the right of use” or “the right of way” to a realm? To what amount are use cases regulated and is there an instance of control?
- III. The issue of government agency, closely connected to the ownership structure, executive power, and feedback loops are subject to the interaction of stakeholders. Who can propose and decide on use, development and adaptation?

These questions might be originating in an encounter with reality. Some inherent exclusivity in a space drew attention to it. Through imagination, a vision of how the space could be improved, or used in a more inclusive fashion, might form. But when contemplating said imagination, all the hurdles in its realisation inevitably arise. How is legitimacy for action or the call to action gained? When and how does this individual concern become a common matter? — The answer might be hidden in the term «common». From several individuals with shared interest, a community might form that tries to realise their goal through activism. The amount of space one is occupying regarding their number is also describing the scale of the common matter. The distribution of value for a broader community however is an act of empowerment that contains its own legitimation and doesn't necessarily needs a community involved.

Diving deeper into the notion of the “public realm” we can observe a shift in its understanding. In its semantic origins, the public realm was understood as the ground for the political life of a citizen. Its contrary, the private realm was designated space for the “existential” life, where basic needs were to be handled

of outside-participation. It is important to evaluate the needed requirements to take part within the activation and based on these factors. It also determines how inclusive, successful or crowd-intense it is. Furthermore one can take precautions and for more time-intensive workshops a registration may be needed. The factors we determined were:

Time: how much time do I need to spare to take part? This also determines the weekday, the framing and the announcement one can prepare. Infrastructure: What do I physically need to participate? This can be a bike to fix or a garden to set up a small herb patch that can be created. When being very infrastructure specific as e.g. the “Pop-Up” Repair station, one can also combine the different actions and offer a “Pop-Up” Repair Café to counterbalance this specificity.

Skills: What do I need to be in control of to take part? Skills are a very big part of the different actions and are the ones that vary the most from person to person. It can be a language that must be known, a basic physical requirement or also the ability to use digital devices. These skills range especially within different neighbourhoods and it is always best to provide an additional explanation if uncertain or if one wants to reach the largest diversity of people to choose a skill needed that isn’t specific. Within the idea Café e.g. we chose sketching as a tool that has the most common denominator.

The aforementioned aspects are a guideline that determines whether or not someone can even take part in an action or an infrastructure provided. However they don’t cover the means of motivation. Within this section we go more into detail about aspects of invitation, preparation and certification. These factors determine whether or not an action has the potential to be repeated but also how eager people are to participate. It’s always best to try to concentrate on these components to get as many people as possible to participate. The only thing to keep in mind are one’s resources. This can become problematic if there is a certain skill or infrastructure, such as coffee making, bike-repair stands or chairs and tables needed. When such an action arises it is best to plan a longer time-span as it allows for more flexibility for people to also come back at a time less busy. The elements we determined within this scope are:

Invitation: We have realised that it is very important to always have a component of invitation. This can either be a coffee, an offered service or a component that one can interact with. Its purpose is to serve as an easy entry point and to make it easy to start an approach and a conversation. Another part that is nice to keep in mind is the aspect of absurdity as it offers a direct topic to talk about and also catches people’s attention.

This chapter will outline the different focus points of our own research. It emphasises the importance of qualitative and local research and the agency and the impact of design within the field of urban planning. We talk about how stories are tied to objects and spaces and how the inclusion of people shapes these. Furthermore we pose different questions surrounding the aspects of digital tools and their connection to non-permanent actions.

Regarding our Research questions, we start by setting a scope of which areas of a city we want to focus on and where we can actually have the biggest impact. Urban planning is a very complex topic and there are a lot of stakeholders involved. To realise a project one must overcome numerous administrative hurdles. These processes are time consuming and often the stage in which most projects die. The “urban equipe collective” published a book regarding exactly these questions and how to act within the legal and administrative frame. (*Brückmann & Grandel, 2020*) It focusses on self-initiated projects and works as a step by step manual. This mostly includes the different municipalities to whom one must talk to and how to connect within a neighbourhood. Although not less important, this permanent direction isn’t realistic within our timeframe.

We are exploring the different interactions happening within urban traffic systems, specifically neighbourhood streets and parking spaces. Regarding data from people we target the residents of Imfeldstrasse. Considering the time and resources we have in this project, quick and qualitative feedback from a local community suffices and helps us most to further iterate our project. As we come from a design background it’s more important for us to find out how we can gain a resonance from the people and how to gain acceptance not from an official but communal standpoint. When looking at public spaces we use different locations in Zurich. The infrastructure provided is very similar and we observe and intervene in these spaces to see how the reactions differ and how it changes the affordance of such spaces.

We are aware that we are working in a legal grey-zone, as one must only park a lightly motorised vehicle in a parking space. As our research includes the perception and creation of public space and also the shift of these, we don’t see these given circumstances as limitations though.

We think that the discipline of design contributes to this very relevant topic by having the abilities to work in a very quick, local and action-based way. There are a lot of projects we could find on how designers can contribute to the surprising aspect of a

information. Even though we designed the flyer in a way that it can also serve as a poster we had much more success with the postcards. We realised that the aesthetics and the corporate identity of our project is also very important as people are more likely to take the postcards with them if they like the design. In a project that's also circling around identity, visuals always play a key role. Furthermore we realised that instagram isn't necessarily the best communication platform for such personal actions. Most people we have encountered and who took part were either pedestrians or people that we have told about the action. In this sense our digital tools didn't really work as an advertisement but more as an information platform and the advertisement happened more on a word of mouth basis.

3.3.2 *Manual/Fibel*

As we aim to have our "WerkStadt" accessible for all the residents we necessarily need a manual to accompany it. Within it there is a step by step explanation for self-initiated actions as well as examples which can be used as a guide.

The aspects of empowerment, scalability and also reproducibility are an important part of decentralised systems. The ability to act independently from infrastructure and technological or specific knowledge is crucial when wanting to achieve this dynamic. However, we are aware that only by providing the knowledge and the steps to achieve a certain product won't necessarily suffice. We are thus careful when talking about accessibility and inclusivity because one still needs the social and temporal conditions to actually act. It also doesn't ask the question if the product is actually valuable and well designed; it just provides the ability of realisation. People who follow our manual thus become the manufacturer of an idea. Once set up as a manual it isn't a product that either works or doesn't, it is a concept that is constantly evolving and thus needs to be adaptable to change for different circumstances. Our project is evolving around people and a system that's constantly changing. We can't look at it in a way of a perfect solution or even a finished working product. The way of interacting within a city is never set in stone. That's why the manual we created is seen as an additional tool to enable our concept to get tested by different people and by getting criticised, praised or discussed evolves in its nature.

Our manual consists of different steps and focuses on acting in a small and enjoyable way within one's street or parking space. The framework it provides is described later in this chapter. We knew quite early that a manual will be necessary if we

space and the distribution of it. Another part is the actions we organise and empower. They should be fun and motivating for others to join and iterate. We include different friends and people we meet during our actions to see how they react when being involved and what they like about it.

The last part we research is the manifestations of non-permanent actions. We choose a digital realm to document the different actions and couple them with physical plaquettes at the site. We tag each action on public Map-Services to enlarge the visibility next to our website and social media channels. We want to find out how the rating and visibility system on these services can help the impact of our project and if we encounter people that become aware of it through these tags. That's why we ask each participant of our action to leave us a review on these services as they work as a visibility-enhancer. The text- and rating based reviews also work as a discussion platform and feedback loop. We want to find out how this non time-based comments can add to the political and mediating aspect of the project.

appearance was reworked several times. At some point it became evident that our concept was transcending the small frame a parking-space provided, we repositioned our identity away from the “Parkwerk” with the “WerkStadt”-name and a more open, inviting and less parking-space focussed visual appearance. This was a point at which we reconsidered the whole communication. We replaced the blue with more colours, to represent several aspects of our concept. We kept the arrow as a graphic element but added some more that were related to our topic. The typeface “Univers” with a very serious and official attitude was swapped for a more neutral and slightly playful “Cinetype” that had a more individual character. In combination with these elements, the concept was to use slightly provocative questions as claims to bring the readers’ attention towards the content.

to the observations made and are followed by actual prototypes and solution oriented public brainstorming sessions. We assess the discussions and the feasibility of these different methods and change them accordingly. At least we look at how the different actions can be manifested and how a non-time based discussion can be established both in a physical and digital realm. This method aims to counteract the non-permanency and its lacking visibility of prototypes and interventions. The goal of all methods is to generate a feedback loop to get an understanding of a neighbourhood and its needs. The data collected during this time have the goal to empower people to raise their concerns and needs in action-based interventions that serve as prototypes for further solutions.

1.3.1 Data analysis

A lot of cities are offering open data tools today. They are a great approach to have quick access to very specific data such as where and how parking spaces are distributed. During the first phase we use the open data tool of the city of Zurich. The datasets we chose for the neighbourhood we decided to work in were very mobility-based. They include the number of parking spaces for cars and bikes, how many cars/bikes/pedestrians pass a certain street within an hour but also a showcase of where and when the civil engineering office is planning to do new projects. One could go much further and also look at the number of cooperatives within a neighbourhood or the accessibility that differs from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Our main goal with this data however was to get numeral evidence for the observations we have made within the streets and to start the discussion of space distribution according to the data provided.

For the Imfeldstrasse we chose a radius of 200 metres and analysed the infrastructure within this area. When looking at parking possibilities for bikes we identified 10 public two-wheeler parking spaces that equal 100 bikes and about 135 square metres of occupied space. (*GIS-Zentrum, Geomatik + Vermessung, 2023*) Comparing this to car-parking spaces we identified 204 parking spaces that are publicly available. (*GIS-Zentrum, Geomatik + Vermessung, 2021*) When calculating 11.5 square metres per parking space we get to 2346 square metres that are occupied by parking cars. That is over 17 times more space needed to have twice the possibility of parking spaces. Only this simple data analysis showcases the distributional absurdity we can find in our streets. Furthermore we would have liked to look at numbers of bike/pedes-

more the topic of commuting to work by car arose and there were immediately other solutions proposed such as commerce-only parking spaces and more possibilities to park long-term. We were very pleased to see this and again saw the potential and starting points these little conflicts offer. This negativity was an aspect we didn't really have in the last actions and we don't know if it was only because of the trailer but it certainly helped and strengthens the statement.

Following the guidelines of Play the City (*Tan, 2017*), we want to create a game that enables different parties to shape a process and have an active part within the emergence of a project and the change that is undergoing within their street. The game will first be played in a Dungeons & Dragons RPG style. This can also be explored with people who aren't specialised within the field of urban development. Another focal point will be how the different outcomes vary when changing certain responsibilities. How will the street look if the civil-engineering office is solely responsible and how would it look if no restrictions would be given? As we have a direct representation of the street at the end of the game, we can directly find out if and for whom it will generate an added value and what political motives were behind a planning process.

1.3.3 Public brainstorming

The public brainstorming session started with us being active within that space. We feel that we have gathered enough knowledge with the previous methods and it's time to enact a discussion within a public space. The framework underlying these public brainstorming sessions are very similar to the later mentioned components of working in public space because we need people to participate and thus an inviting component is necessary. We have done this either with a coffee in return or also tried to incorporate it in later actions such as the "Pop Up Repair Workshop". The public brainstorming sessions have been done 3 times on a weekday afternoon in Wipkingen. We did the same framework 2 times at the same spot at Imfeldstrasse to get a comparison on how the results differed. We have had about 10 to 30 participants during 3 hours, depending on the weather and the people around. Our age group ranged from kids (10-12 years old) to seniors (about 75 years old). All of them were residents at the street where we did the sessions. Our main goal was to have a multitude of ideas that serve as a canvas for the change needed within that street. We handed out idea cards on which one can describe and sketch an idea. (Examples can be found in the Appendix and the results will be discussed in more detail in the "Ideen-Kafi" Chapter.) These idea-based discussions have the possibility that the participants can choose the topic they want to talk about and that they want to address and evoke a certain excitement as a need suddenly seems to find a solution. However we can observe that many people struggle to come up with ideas directly and the support from our side is needed. We can also observe this on different plat-

3.2.5 *The Mobile Platform*

With several actions organised and issues in the logistics presenting themselves each time, thinking about better solutions began. Together with the learning about the “meeting points” and how furniture/infrastructure influences them we began to work on a concept for a more mobile and flexible solution that would provide the modularity and transportation capability to organise action on the street in an easier fashion. After some consideration the idea of a mobile meeting point as a metaphorical toolbox to reuse a parking space for a short time frame emerged. Research for suitable bike trailers pointed to the swiss company “Polyroly” and the german variant called “Hinterher”. The first visualisation created incorporated the Polyroly trailer, it seemed to provide the most flexibility for adding structures and we knew one of the founders personally. In further inquiries about this, the opportunity presented itself to collaborate with a GZ (Affoltern) for the creation of a customised trailer, as they were looking for a solution for the same problems we encountered. They had already decided on a Hinterher trailer and bought a big transportation box with it, but quickly realised, that this simple box was not suitable for their intended use. During the process, this trailer and its amenities were reimaged several times, adapting to the shift of priorities in the concept. Central elements to fulfil its mission are, at this point, the following:

- A sheltering element, to protect participants from weather influences and separate the space from the street and passing cars. However, this sheltering element must not impede the public character of its hosted event. A working surface, as hosted events tend to be of productive nature, having ample table space proved to be an important necessity.
- Secure and flexible storage compartments to transport all materials and utilities needed and imaginable. Furniture, as it serves as a meeting space, should be able to provide seating and placement possibilities to accommodate several people, and whatever activity they are occupied with. This furniture should be dismountable (for transportation reasons), sturdy (to accommodate many use scenarios) and weather resistant.
- Size and weight, as its intended staging area are parking spaces, it should comfortably match the shorter side of a parking space to avoid restriction of traffic and the creation of dangerous situations. The whole system has to be as light as possible to allow for easy and hassle-free logistics.
- Before building a solution from scratch, validation of the need for this product was deemed necessary. As one of our mentors

1.4 Motivation and intended contribution 40

This chapter will outline the need for change we have experienced and the frustrating everyday-life that it originated from. While not being experts within the fields of urban planning or traffic-engineering it will also look at how the aspects that make us, as inhabitants of a city, still valid experts within this realm.

Living in a densely populated neighbourhood in Zurich is both interesting, and challenging. While being at the heart of an ever-changing and quickly developing hive of people it can also cause a lot of frustration. The frustration began with us moving through this multipart system of streets and squares by bike. When riding a bicycle in Zurich many questions start to arise and the more often we are nearly run over by a car or almost hit a pedestrian, the more we ask ourselves, why is it in a city where we might have the best public transportation system in the world, everything still planned for and revolving around cars. How many people actually use that infrastructure and how should a neighbourhood be centred around the needs of its inhabitants or the needs of the people who drive through it? We realised the sheer absurdity of the space that cars and their infrastructure occupy. If focussing solely on traffic one could argue that the car serves as means of transportation and thus is needed e.g. for business and for commuting or the public transportation system. Even though it still is leading to a point where everything is, again circling around cars and one could only discuss the accessibility that is being provided to drive within a city, we started to look at another less productive and, in our opinion, more interesting part of car infrastructure, that is the parking space. When examining the blue zone parking-spaces, we realised that it is not only a strange system that allows for very cheap housing of cars, but also a big potential that this space could provide for a street and a community. We realised that we take the occupation of this space as a given, but that the ability to use it is very exclusive for car owners and does only provide a benefit for a small part of a city's population. We started to imagine what else could be built, organised and changed in that space and also how this can help to transform a street and its social factors. After our first research we started to get a grasp of the potential this semi-public space can have and what interesting solutions it can provide to shape a neighbourhood and the interactions that happen within them.

When using "our" city, we often get alienated by its nature, and depending on how we move, we feel excluded from vast spaces of its area, and many places, although accessible,

assumption that a certain infrastructure always proposes a purpose and that depending on its purpose people can act within a space. For our actions this means that the infrastructure provided also always has the perception of purpose and because it is temporary, the time-factor is ever more important. This said we realised that whenever provided, infrastructure will rarely, if ever, be used. The absurd character it has will therefore disappear, and it will lose validity. A nomadic infrastructure would help with that aspect. Furthermore the aspect of community is very hard to achieve solely by infrastructure and would not suffice to reach our goal. That's why we decided to prototype an infrastructure that would have more responsibility involved.

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bicycle problems without consulting us. This shows one of the dynamics that we aim to create with our work: not only providing the service itself, but generally a platform where people, who otherwise never would have met, can connect and help each other. Another observation of importance was the arrival of a group of our friends. After getting their bike fixed, they decided to spend some time playing card games and engaging us. Almost immediately, the nature of our action went from public to exclusive, as passing people felt the connection of our group and assumed that we were busy with them, not wanting to disturb our more intimate group dynamic. This is something that we need to manage better in future iterations, as it lessens the interactions with people we want to reach with our actions.

In the end the action was very successful. We felt like we reached a lot of people and could create a meeting space within a community. The recurring issues were the regularity and the infrastructure. This is something that can be easily improved if needed. We were also surprised with the difference of people that wanted to spend time there in comparison to the actions on parking spaces. It was the first time we really had enough space and weren't confined to a parking space. We tried to improve this aspect by creating additional shielding from the street and an extension on to the sidewalk.

With its changed strategy in regard to shaping the city centre and traffic characteristics in districts the city of Zurich has a defined goal of reducing the amount of cars present in the city. In different studies they prove that car traffic is not strictly required to the businesses' success in a neighbourhood. In their conclusion, they visualise some possible change to streets and argue that other solutions such as centralised parking-infrastructure and residents-only parking suffice to cope with the demand for parking spaces. However what we still deemed as missing in that strategy is an effective, creative and inclusive way of redeveloping the areas in question. Although projects in that manner exist with "Brings ufd Strass" and other neighbourhood-based redevelopment projects, they lack public attention and discourse around them. In our view, recent redevelopments still fail to transform transportation infrastructure towards more public spaces. (*Willi, 2021*)

Space is very scarce in Zurich. Unused areas and brownfields are disappearing ever more and there is hardly a place that hasn't been planned out yet. These spaces are however a very important part of urban development and neighbourhood identity. Having a space where one can get active, has the possibilities and mindset to change and initiate is a space where ideas can thrive and where needs can be expressed. We hope to incorporate these factors in a project that isn't based on a specific locality, but to bring this mindset to the street, or more specifically to parking spaces. With lots and lots of parking spaces being removed and having no actual supplement, we also think of these spaces as brownfields and they can be found everywhere in Zurich. This led us to the angle of changing streets and neighbourhoods through temporary conversion of parking spaces with a mobile architecture or spontaneous low-fidelity interventions.

The core of our concept lies in two simple, albeit difficult questions:

1. How can we empower people in a Neighbourhood to change / create / their "Quartierstrassen"?
2. How can streets, with the focus on parking spaces as a model, be reshaped towards a more public appearance?

Up until now the decisions regarding public spaces are mainly made from one perspective; the civil engineering office point of view. This is surely not a completely bad thing but it poses the very important question: Why do we manage public space, that, as its name suggests, is public from a single and very strict perspective? Couldn't we create a more personal, lively and resilient structure if different views would be taken into consideration? Where people are not only living passively, but

a freer approach to the topic. The feedback we received was actually exclusively positive. However, we noticed that our argumentation for the project was not as constrained as we would have needed to communicate our concept effectively. “What will your action develop into?” was a frequently asked question that was difficult for us to answer. Usually we would describe our areas of interest and our planned methodology. We realised that confronting the public with ideas is always a good “reality check” to clarify how the topic is framed and whether the concept pitch applies to non-experts. The organisation of the whole action was very time-consuming and took us at least a week, as we also had to evaluate and discuss everything.

The next step in this process was a first validation and comparison of different actions in different settings. This also helped us to analyse where there is still room for improvement and on which factors this depends. The first “Idea Café” took place on a beautiful Monday afternoon during the school holidays. The people we encountered most frequently were pensioners or parents who were out with their children. The second iteration of the “Idea Café” took place on a Tuesday afternoon in a cloudy and cold atmosphere. There were hardly any people out and about and the climate was not conducive to sitting outside for any length of time. Other changes we made were the introduction of questions and a board on which ideas could be posted. The aim of this was to try out a first form of time-independent interaction, as in a democratic discussion process not all participants can always take part at the same time. The basic idea of making this visible worked well and triggered a certain curiosity. The questions we had formulated (What do we still need the car for today? And Where can we still find space in Zurich?) were answered many times. However, the wording was very suggestive and even if many answers were good, the opinions went in the same direction and therefore didn’t really provide an explanation or serve as a basis for discussion. Another important discussion component is the location and the walk-in audience that we can address over the course of an afternoon, as otherwise we would not reach a critical size to generate an exchange. On the other hand, new participants were schoolchildren who were delighted by the absurdity of the installation on their way to school. Unfortunately, serving coffee was not a big attraction for this target group. The ideas we received were nevertheless enriching and appealing in their simplicity, as they were easy to implement. The two actions were certainly a good starting point to get a feeling for the needs and dynamics of a neighbourhood. However, there was often a

infrastructure provided.

Other aspects that every object in itself carries is a political and a historical one. We perceive everything around us in a different manner with the aesthetics and the story it provides. With current infrastructure that is used most within the streets we see that everything is regulated and looks the same. The benches or dwelling places are designed in a way that they are almost immune to vandalism and outside influences. Because of this impersonal factors it makes these places very easily replaceable as there is no personal involvement or uniqueness attributed to it. If we have taken part in the building process of a certain space or are actually cultivating it, we can experience a shift of agency and ownership. This is especially important regarding shared and common infrastructure as it automatically adds a feeling of responsibility for changes. *(If I have created a space and new changes appear, do I want my creation to be changed?)*. This is contributing to a long-term effect of a project and also to the acceptance it gains.

2.1.2 Local vs Urban

During the preparations of our concept we were confronted with the question of the scope, within the city of Zurich, we want to work in . We knew that our project would have a bigger and more enduring effect if we work locally as we are able to engage with people on a more regular basis. With a city that is so diverse though, we also wanted to get a feeling of how our approach can work within different settings and neighbourhoods. After our first actions we realised that wherever we work, we have to think in a hyperlocal way. Having streets that are directly in front of the involved actors' house, we realised that this sense of ownership is an important key to having motivated and involved people. Even public squares and schools aren't considered as personal space and thus the "right" to have an active part within shaping this space is limited. The area that interested us the most was the in-between; or a semi-public space. The advantages of these somewhat unassigned spaces are that there still is a sense of ownership but not a claim to it. This leads to a more engaged and involved audience as there is a feeling of legitimacy and responsibility, but also a willingness to cooperate with each other. We also think of parking spaces as a part of these semi-public spaces as they are a communal good that is then later used for individual purposes. During our actions we have

streets became. Interestingly, nobody wanted a completely car-free street. One aspect that was missing for us personally was that of activity. Since this component has a very strong social as well as democratic side, it is just as important for the design and resilience of a neighbourhood.*

2.1.3 Our role as designers

When working closely with a group of people, where we take inputs and ideas from the outside it is always important to be clear about one's role during the project. While enjoying organising these little neighbourhood meet-ups we stated for ourselves that we want to provide a platform for people to exchange and express themselves, but also that our task is not only to mediate between the different actors involved but rather to empower and enable people to voice and realise their ideas. We have an active part in presenting solutions and presenting insights through our research that enables residents to get involved within this movement without having to test everything out and get visible. We will mainly work on a manual of ways to become active and we will look at the ideas that are being provided as a suggestion that can be implemented and assessed as people's needs. Having the slow processes in mind that interacting with multiple actors involved brings, we would like to speak through actions and prototypes rather than having a lot of meetings that can then bring forth the best solution. In the next step it is also very important to us that our process and our methods are as transparent as possible. By providing a digital platform that documents each of our steps we hope to enable and inspire other people to reproduce our approach. We also want to provide a manual that can demonstrate how one can become active and be involved within the reshaping process. As Interaction Designers our competence is heavily based on designing processes. Through documenting our project and the interplay of the different actors in mind we hope to advertise our activism in an attractive form to create interest and contribute to the discussion in official entities. We imagine our prototypes and communication methods as active "things" to be talked about from both sides, putting us into the spotlight to have a ground for discussion.

In design, the attitude towards acquiring knowledge about problems and developing solutions is less traditional than in other subjects. (Preece *et al.*, 2019) Its prototyping methodology consists, as described by the book "Interaction Design: Beyond Human-Computer Interaction" of four stages: "discover requirements, design alternatives that meet those requirements, prototype the designs so that they can be communicated and assessed, and evaluate them." This way of prototypes informing a next generation of prototypes is inherent in all interaction design processes, and is something that is not practised by many other disciplines. To upscale this approach into the contemporary systems of city

This chapter will outline the different prototypes in a chronological way. We are explaining why we started with a game and have then evolved to ever more physical prototypes that act within the street.

We have already examined the dynamics of traffic and urban planning in our research. On the one hand, we were able to observe that insufficient transport connections, but also the displacement from the city centre to the agglomeration, causes a recurring vicious circle of commuting, congestion and lack of parking spaces. Another observation in our research was that many of the cars parked in car parks are not used 95% of the time. (Source) With these thoughts in mind, we wanted to explore the dynamics of a street. The fact that blue zones are a suboptimal solution for residents who regularly need a car (as there is no guarantee of a space and long search times are included), as well as a solution that promotes traffic. We ventured to develop a tool that was equipped with game dynamics and also provided the different actors in this ecosystem with corresponding capabilities. The core question we wanted to find out was how residents would design a street and whether the number of parking spaces would be more, less or the same.

a manual that outlines the most important clues for street-level action, and presents many different ideas that can be carried out by oneself, with varying degrees of effort.

Finally, our aim is that the actions should always have a playful aspect, people should feel that being active is not a chore.

weather conditions. Apart from its proximity to the opera house, the lake and a train station, the square lacks inviting character. These chairs seem to have tackled that issue in a very effective way. A difference we have witnessed however is that this square isn't personal and there are no residents around. Thus, there is also no infrastructure that aims to include local residents and the square is targeted towards short-term interaction.

During walks through the Oberstrass, Unterstrass and Wipkingen districts, we began to wonder whether we could find the traces of people who live there? We found hardly any, no signs, no self-initiated infrastructures or even self-planted green spaces. One reason we observed was that many houses had inaccessible courtyards and therefore not visible, but also that the street as a traffic element does not invite people to linger, since it stands for traffic, i.e. for the temporary stay as a transit zone to get to another place. Basically, the more traffic elements a space contains, the fewer people will linger there. This can also be observed in a square like the Hardplatz, which is located in the middle of various traffic axes. In another neighbourhood, Wiedikon, we also noticed how many streets were blocked. It was exciting to observe the concentration of meeting places on individual squares. The streets between Hardplatz and Lochergut are hardly used and also blocked, but Bullinger-, Ida- or Bruppacherplatz were full of life and people every day. One reason for this is that there is reduced traffic flow and many cafés also offer outdoor seating, but another is that the density of single-family homes is extremely low. The many apartment buildings, missing or desolate courtyards and small flats lead to much more interaction on the street and also to its use. Another discrepancy we saw in the streets was mainly in cooperative housing estates. Rotachstrasse, for example, is in our opinion a prime example of neighbourhood design. The many green spaces, reduced traffic, the component that residents of a cooperative flat stay on site much longer, and networking within the cooperative, lead to more personal components, such as garden beds or signs painted by children. Finally, in this exploration, we did not find a single "public" street in Zurich that was car-free or residents-only. The blue zones were all occupied, except for the more upscale neighbourhoods, and where there were gaps, we could see them closing within minutes. Furthermore, we see more life and interaction on the street in neighbourhoods that had many cooperative buildings or housing developments. As there is more shared space at hand than with everyone having their private garden, meeting points often concentrated on a few

2.2.1 *Brings uf d Strass*

“Brings uf d Strass” is a project that was initiated by the civil engineering office in the city of Zurich. In cooperation with the “Denkstatt Sarl 3” and local residents, several streets in Zurich have been closed down for car traffic during summer vacation and furnished with possibilities to play and dwell on them. Created as a reappearing project and proving ground for participative city planning processes by the Zurich civil engineering office, the annual recurrence allows for a constant assessment and improvement of its iterations. But this co-creation process with local residents seems to bring a diminished flexibility for both actors, as all decisions and plans have to be sanctioned by multiple parties. This results in big lead times and the diminishing of ideas through compromises and objections. There seems to exist a strong polarisation in the city council regarding the use, budget and right to exist for this project. Interests of the car-lobby and local commerce argue about reduced revenue, are unhappy about the implication for car traffic and accuse the organising bodies of “Gambling money on some useless gamification of valuable traffic space”. They lack understanding for the declared project goal to research and prototype spaces for recreational activities in close proximity to dense living spaces. (*Tiefbauamt Stadt Zürich, 2022*)

2.2.2 *Self Made City*

The publication “Self Made City” highlights different projects and cooperatives in Berlin. It is interesting to observe that a lot of cooperatives have started to emerge from the squatter scene that were living in abandoned buildings after the “Mauerfall”. These unused spaces have immediately started to form a community that was dependent on affordable housing and that has later in cooperation with the city founded cooperatives that still make up a large part of some neighbourhoods in Berlin.

What we really like about this story is that if there’s space that has to be talked about and that in a sense belongs to everybody, communities can form and that there’s a more personal and resilient process going on. It’s also always important to talk about ownership and the longevity that this factor can have. This means that people are much more likely to get active and be involved if they know that they are responsible and can also make decisions for a designated area. (*Ring, 2013*)

3. Project Development

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How can we convey the feeling of belonging, of having a right in a space and the security of being active ourselves? Throughout the project we were aware that many of our questions could only be tried out in the field. The creation of a concept, the value of detail and the direct feedback from different participants were the most valuable experiences that contributed to the development. We realised that public spaces are very sensitive ecosystems. Small factors often determine the success or failure of an action. Because basically, public space is a place that is highly regulated. In the Swiss system, we are not accustomed to finding non-institutionalised structures and even less so in places like car parks, which are generally understood to have been designated for one purpose only. Our main task was to transform the emerging scepticism that accompanies unexpected events into curiosity.

As already mentioned, any manifestation of infrastructure in public space is characterised by a political sphere. We, i.e. politicians and the civil engineering office, make decisions that influence the entire urban design world. This public discussion about bicycle routes, the expansion of more green spaces and the abstract talk in the media is often beyond our imagination and leaves us no option to act. Our ambition has been to make policy with things, to start discussions with direct proposals. This contributes to our vision to not only discuss the design of our streets, but also to show the possibility of taking action ourselves and to achieve a mini-democracy through the shared responsibility of a space.

2.2.5 WikiHouse

The WikiHouse is a project where different building blocks can be composed into a small liveable house that enables it to be stable, tested and easily buildable. The notion of offering tools and not products and having an open source mentality really appeals to us because it always has an empowering factor too. In a way of DIY Democracy the skills one acquires from building and being involved in the process of a small infrastructure makes an installation or an infrastructure more resilient to changes. If one understands the process of building infrastructure, repairing it should be straightforward. This leads to less resources being wasted and a longer life span. On the other hand it is also interesting how identity can be expressed with something that has been composed by oneself. Having an active part in painting or the goal of usage makes the responsibility issues of common goods less worse. Another design principle this project embraces is the one of decentralised manufacturing and management. This leads to less transportation ways and a better distribution of both power and manufacturing. (*Open Systems Lab, 2022*)

2.2.8 Bikeable

Bikeable is an online platform that allows registered users to post issues and discuss possible solutions regarding bike infrastructure in public space. Users must register and can use a map with needles or a feed to explore problematic or fixed streets that others have documented. They can up- or down-vote the posts to express approval or dissatisfaction with a spot or issue. In the comment section, an active discussion about possible solutions for the spots is taking place, with the Zurich civil engineering office seemingly taking part in the discussions and commenting on their awareness of and progress in tackling the issues. Bikeable is included here as an example for a project that connects physical space with a digital representation. Additionally it enables a discussion about its form and organises a community around an activity to which it serves as a strong voice and mediating platform to other, more influential players in the system to be improved. (*Moveable, 2019*)

The idea revolves around a meeting space and its necessary Infra-structure. When looking at existing GZs, they are always bound to knowledge and connection to some people that are already involved in the group. Their location in conventional housing, gives them a non-inviting appearance, and all action connected to them will be associated with and depending on their identity. fig 12:

When looking at existing projects to reshape streets, they lack the possibility of spontaneous interaction and creation, because their character is, through the long and bureaucratic planning and realisation process, inflexible. The more they are realised, the more static they become. They do not inspire participation in creation and empowered action.

We aim to solve these problems by providing a toolkit as a platform for flexible, independent and motivating action on the street. Through providing expandable shelter, this toolkit allows for weather-independent dwelling. By providing flexible furniture and infrastructure it enables the temporary reuse of the road surface for communal activities. To initialise, open, use, and create a community around the “toolbox” start the project with several different events on regular bases that aim to connect people from the neighbourhood and inspire them to participate with their own ideas for events.

With our working strategy consisting mainly of “researching through prototyping”, our concept is subject to iteration, influenced by needs and knowledge that we discover through our journey. (*Odom et al., 2016*)

By prototyping together with actors in the field of street development, such as The “Tiefbauamt” as official institution, the “Urban Equipe” as Activists for self-empowered Initiatives, and residents as main users, we aim to gain practical knowledge on their decision-making, processes and visions. As described in our current concept, we have several questions that need to be investigated through further prototyping. The most pressing question probably being: Is there a need for intervention? / Do people reaffirm or relate to the issues we want to tackle with our project?

2.3.1 Concept Validation

To answer that question, we developed a prototype to gather opinions from people on the street. Embedded into our first prototype of the “Idea Café” was a framework that aimed at discussing and validating our concept through confrontation with people of diverse age, origin, life circumstances and modes of mobility. Passing people were offered one coffee in exchange for one idea of possible change for the street we were located in. Through these ideas, we aimed to create a discourse with one other. Explaining this exchange of values (coffee vs. idea) always led to the same question: “But what do we pay with?” And: “Really, just an idea? But for what exactly?” As soon as they had our idea-card in their hands, the participants began to realise that ideation and this kind of “creativity on demand” is more difficult than initially imagined. We, on the other hand, did not yet have a “streamlined” answer to their last question. “Ideas for a more liveable street”, “Imagine a street without cars, what would you do?”, “Ideas for a more public street” were a few of our answers. The usual dialogue unfolded around our vision for a more liveable street with less space for car parking and more space to meet. We consciously avoided the ban/necessity discussion with respect to cars, instead trying to bring people to contemplate a “what if-scenario”, where the logistical problem of parking spaces for cars has been solved in another way than occupying half of our streets.

One phenomena we quickly discovered was the “hyper-locality” of the ideas. All ideas were strongly connected to the street our “café” was located on. Ranging from little proposed interventions to improved safety for pedestrians, to a more green

not notice a community that formed around the project, and the usage of the street seemed only passive and not very event-based. We hope to find out more about this aspect in our project and it was also a part we missed.

A similar project was the Quartieridee Wipkingen. We also sent them a multitude of questions which they offered us to answer in conjunction with their documentation website. We were impressed by their detailed and extensive documentation. It was great to see how different methods they used had different outcomes. They also worked with a digital tool and the knowledge they gained, provided great insights. Our main learnings from their process was how they documented and described their physical presence during the project. They had a multitude of events that have had a great response and helped to advertise their project. They also had a mobile bike trailer that informed about their project. This was not very successful however and it also made us realise that activities, even if small, are very beneficial to communicate and interact with people involved. The digital tool to submit ideas that they have developed also showed that there is always a discrepancy between high and low-effort submissions. On one hand it can't be too detailed because then a lot of people don't even start to submit ideas. On the other hand it can also be hindering if the ideas don't have to be concrete at all. We think that they managed to hit a sweet spot by having a sketch or a photo and a small description with a proposition about the realisation.

What we really liked about both approaches is the direct feasibility and solutions they provide. A point of criticism is the high level of financial resources and logistics to achieve a functioning street project. Furthermore, it is very interesting to note how many voices were raised against the project. With the scale and the financial resources it poses a big target for criticism. The municipal character also plays a role as it is tax money that is being used to fund the project. Another interesting observation in this context is that there was almost no media representation of the residents' opinions. On the contrary, the opinions of non-resident politicians have been portrayed. When looking at other decentralised projects such as Bikeable or Decidim we see that there is an ongoing discussion going on. This is also mainly due to the specific framework and technical challenges they pose. The distribution of responsibility is also clear. We hope to incorporate both aspects and thus have a more self-initiated and resource-friendly approach to get a broader possibility of action .

2.3.2 Collecting Data (from residents and passers)

In the first iteration of the “Park-Kafi” (more detailed description in the prototype chapter), we used the Idea-Card 1 (*fig 1*) to document the participants’ ideas for action on the street. We gave these ideas a physical form to afford some value to the effort that the participants exchanged for the coffee. The card asked specifically for the description of an imagined “Re-utilisation” for an existing parking space, be it by writing or sketching. The ideacards worked great for documenting the ideas, but seemed to intimidate some people, as writing and sketching about ideas did not feel as easy for them. After assessing the content and systematic of these idea cards, we had several learnings for the next iteration. Along with the aforementioned fixation on sole ideas being decremental in initialising a time-independent discussion, the fixation of the ideas on the parking space itself seemed restricting, as the discussions usually began to include the whole street.

fig 1: Idea-Card

For the second iteration of the “Park-Kafi”, We kept the concept of our Idea-card, but widened the scope to include more surroundings. Furthermore, we wanted to expand the discussion taking place by giving people the ability to react to other people’s ideas, and perhaps initiate thinking with Questions (*fig 2*). In hindsight, the questions asked were too suggestive, and would have profited from inviting more nuanced opinions. Moreover we tried to prototype a non-time based exchange of the ideas but also the answered questions. For this we had a board, to post answers or ideas. The people who would then later add a card could either react with a glue dot to either like or dislike the idea or with a short answer dot that was limited in space. The main reason for testing this method was to ascertain how exchange can also happen on a digital platform. The collection of ideas seemed to spark curiosity and enjoyment. The reactions (especially the answers) were difficult to provoke and only worked if we encouraged the participants to do so. Apparently the simpler application of the “like/dislike glue dots” was favoured over the more difficult “answer dots”. We can incorporate these findings in a digital platform but we aren’t quite sure yet how to deal with the visibility of the upvotes because it may also create a certain bias of the best ideas and does not treat them objectively.

fig 2: Questions on the idea-cards