

Shadows in the dark

Methodology for empowerment
of elderly through architecture



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Methodology for empowerment of elderly through architecture

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Design Activism Beyond Borders
Examiner: Marco Adelfio
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Reading instructions:

This thesis should be read like an exploration on the important for the author subject, and the attempt to change society. The discussion about it is open-ended, and should be taken as an ongoing process, where asking questions is more important, rather than finding answers.

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///Acknowledgements

When I just started working on this thesis, I had a clear idea of its structure and content. But over time, I realized that it turned out to be a journey, which I was not much in control of anymore. Some doors opened for me more widely than others, and I trusted my sources and my gut to lead me towards the original idea, which turned out to be a complex, multilayered piece.

The support and encouragement I have received from my supervisor Emilio Brandao made me feel a part of a larger discourse, which I attempt to enter with this work.

Emilio, thank you for pushing my boundaries, although it was difficult sometimes. The information and material I received from Emilio helped me to get to the essence of the subject of activism, participation, decolonization, emancipation, and many more.

A special debt of gratitude is given to Marco Adelfio, who offered a valuable help and input at putting together the concept for the thesis. Thank you for your encouragement during the whole process, and for your flexibility, patience, and academic expertise.

Shea Hagy, thank you for all your critical, honest, and always constructive feedback.

Also, it is a pleasure for me to acknowledge the assistance of several scholars, who influenced the thesis and my mindset – Doina Petrescu, Isabelle Doucet, Helene Frichot, and many more.

This thesis is dedicated to all bodies that have been continuously ignored, marginalized, abused, objectified – whether you reside in a body that is female, of color, refugee, Muslim, queer, disabled, fat – this thesis is dedicated to you.

ABSTRACT

///Abstract

The thesis discusses a multilayered subject – the potential of elderly's empowerment, and associated problems of the nowadays architectural practice.

Firstly, the thesis explores problems, connected to elderly.

There's an urge for a better environment because of an increasing ageing population. Isolation is a big problem among elderly. Elderly's health and activity level create certain requirements for design, accessibility, and puts a demand for different types of housing, and services. People see elderly mostly as a group which only demands care, and do not contribute to the society. The authors' idea is to change the youth-centered philosophy, and keep elderly as a part of a modern life, making them influential actors with the help of architecture. Architecture is a mediator between bodies and surroundings. And a well-designed space is a medicine. The goal is to change elderly from passive individuals into active and empowered participants of the society. It's important to strengthen their contact with the community, reduce ageism, provide equal access, and participation. Involvement of elderly will create a positive healthy community, and it will benefit to all of residents.

Secondly, the thesis is an attempt to rethink the modern architectural practice and education. Teaching and practicing architecture should be improved, in order to meet a changing complexity of needs of the humanity and the environment.

A drastically changed world, cities, society require an innovative approach, rather than that, which was developed a century ago, as well as it requires involving many different stakeholders. The discussion about it is open-ended, and should be taken as an ongoing process, where asking questions is more important, rather than finding answers. Through many different tools, connected to interaction with elderly and architectural practice, a design methodology for elderly's empowerment was created. The proposed methodology is a challenging step into a field of third age life improvement, and rethinking of the modern architectural practice.

With the development of this project, the author wants to promote "a culture of involvement", equality, empowerment, and social sustainability.

STUDENT BACKGROUND

///Student Background

Social sustainability has always been a major interest for the author. She was always feeling that she wants to build a profound knowledge, and practical experience in the field of social and architectural issues.

That is why the author has enrolled in the Master's program "Architecture and Planning Beyond Sustainability" at Chalmers University, with a particular focus on social dimensions of sustainability.

The author has attended the Social Inclusion Studio in 2020, where she explored participation and co-design. Lately, she took a part of Sustainable Architecture Design Studio in 2021, where she has learned more about sustainability for the built environment. This has shaped her understanding of how architecture, and an architect should be like. As well as understanding of an architects' responsibility, and a desire to develop resilient, inclusive, sustainable societies.

The importance of inclusiveness, taking community as the most valuable resource bring a vital result as participation, and equal access. It was a priceless understanding that invitation of people into a planning process brings multilayered positive changes into a society. Additionally, the author was always questioning modern architectural education, and as a consequence modern architectural practice. It became one of the inspirations for the thesis.

List of previous courses and studios:

ARK324 Design and Planning for Social Inclusion
ARK466 Sustainable architectural design
ARK350 Sustainable building: Competition
ARK590 Building Climatology for Sustainable Design
ARK415 Building design lab
ARK177 Design systems
ACE166 Sustainable building renovation

Last personal relevant experiences:

2014 Founder and teacher of fine art school for orphan children
2017 Volunteering for blind people

1.INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The aim of the thesis is to rethink the modern architectural practice, and at the same time to try bringing a change into nowadays youth-centered society, as well as to empower elderly, making them active actors.

These aspects are important because the proportion of elderly drastically increased in the population. People have a healthier lifestyle with a better food, and fewer bad habits, higher quality of a medical care, and a better working environment - it all contributed to an increased life expectancy. (WHO: Ageing and health)
The first aspect the author would like to have a closer look at is connected to elderly.

	Sweden, 2013
Population	9,555,893
Number 65+	1,828,283
Percentage 65+	19,1
Number 80+	498,148
Percentage 80+	5,2

Table 1. Total population with number and proportion aged 65+ and 80+.Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

Age group	Sweden, 2013
Age 80-84	245,180 (49%)
Age 85-89	161,736 (32%)
Age 90-94	73,675 (5%)
Age 95-99	15,721 (3%)
Age 100+	1,836 (<0%)

Table 2. Number and proportion (%) of the whole age group aged 80 and older.Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

The average life length has increased since 1990 by about 5-6 years for men and 3-4 for women in Scandinavia. Usually women live longer than men, but last decades the difference continue to reduce, and will be reducing even more in the future. Also the average life expectancy will be even longer.

	Sweden, 2012
Men	
1990	74,8
2012	79,9
Women	
1990	80,4
2012	83,5

Table 3. Average length of life, 1990 and 2012.Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

	Sweden
2010	494,385
2020	546,908
2030	812,089
2040	899,872
2050	1049,509

	Sweden
2010	5,3%
2020	5,4%
2030	7,6%
2040	8,2%
2050	9,3%

Table 4. Projected numbers and % of people aged 80 and older, 2010-2050.Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

1. INTRODUCTION

As a result, the amount of people, older than 80, will increase from just over 1.2 million today to over 3 million in 2050. The increase will be significantly larger around 2025, when the baby boomers of 1940s and 1950s reach their 80s (80+ Living in Scandinavia, 2013, <https://nordicwelfare.org/>).

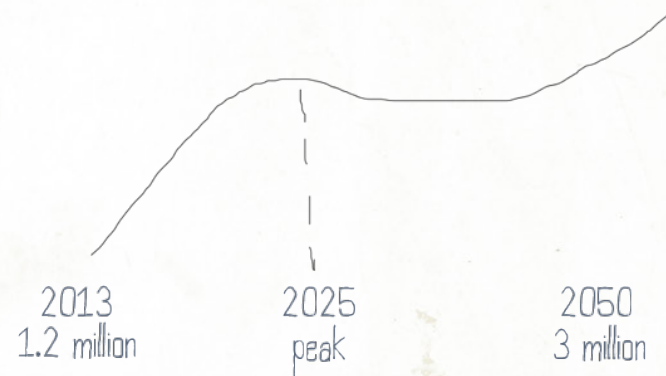


Figure 5. Increase of elderly over 80 years old. Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

Because of women's longer average life expectancy, 59—68% of people over 80 are women.

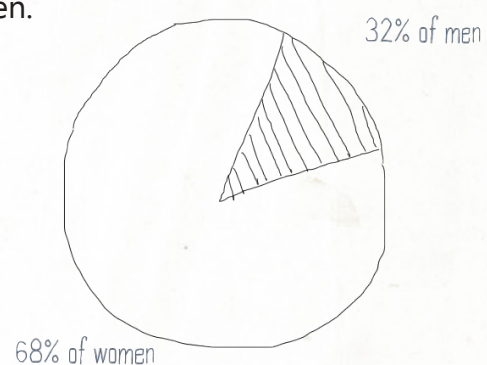


Figure 6. Percent of women over 80 years old. Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

Because one of partners has passed away - around two thirds of women live alone, and this proportion rises with age. Only 6% of women aged 90 or older are married. During recent decades the amount of people living alone has increased.

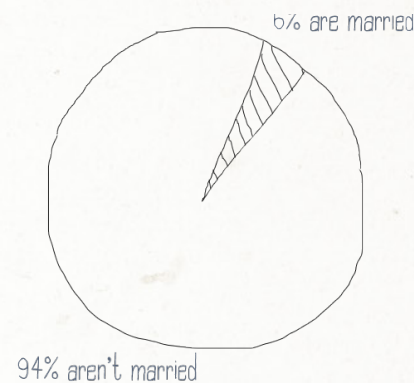


Table 7. Married women over 80 years old. Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

It also means — the longer women live, the higher is the chance they will live alone. The fact that a husband is in many cases older than a wife contributes to this tendency. This disproportion will be dropping while male life expectancy will be increasing during next decades (80+ Living in Scandinavia, 2013, <https://nordicwelfare.org/>).

	Sweden
Men	43%
Women	79%
Total	65%

Table 8. Number cohabiting (not married) in the group aged 80 and older, per cent. Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

Increased life length, and the amount of elderly in the population impact many different areas — healthcare, housing, employment, society, economy. Society is focused mostly on aspects when elderly do not provide, but rather require care. It contributed for building a negative picture of ageing. Capitalism has supported this idea by housing and cultural opportunities favoring the needs of younger professionals (Bamford, 2005).

It means if an older person retires they start to be treated as an excess baggage. Their contribution to society is ignored, which results a lower activity within society, and leads to marginalization.

Another aspect which concerns the author is how an architectural education and practice should be like. It is a constant challenge and an unstoppable changing process (Gunawan, 2018). The profession stands with one leg into 100 century BC, and with another leg into modern world. Architects are engaged into a practice which involves many different participants, schedules, activities. They work between understandable present, and undiscovered future with its threats. It means architects have no full understanding of processes' development they work with. Architecture is too rigid, straightforward, and leads outdated standards of male supremacy of Neufert, Bauhaus, etc. Those norms and suggestions do not work today, because the world has drastically changed. Professionals cannot resolve nowadays problems with tools from almost a century ago (Heynen, 1999). It is time for rethinking architectural education and professional practice.

Nowadays architecture has an open-ended nature. Although architects are still concentrated on the process of finding a problem, and then resolving it with a finite solution. But in fact, architects should constantly re-open problems, instead of closing them (Savransky 2012). Helene Frichot says "we should never believe we have arrived at an answer once and for all, but must maintain an affirmative and not a negative, not even a deconstructive, demeanor in relation to our circumscribed problems" (Frichot 2018). Instead of defining problems, limits, typologies, it is

more productive to search for fluidity of potentials of unknown. The author thinks that architecture is lacking of spontaneity and acceptance of fresh ideas. An innovation in this field quickly becomes an exnovation, and as a consequence — a standardization. The standardization violates diversity of scenarios. Often the modern architecture values aesthetics and profit more than users.

"We should never believe we have arrived at an answer once and for all, but must maintain an affirmative and not a negative, not even a deconstructive, demeanor in relation to our circumscribed problems" (Frichot 2018)."

2. DELIMITATIONS

3. EXPLORATION

Sustainability

Target group

Locals' engagement

Scale

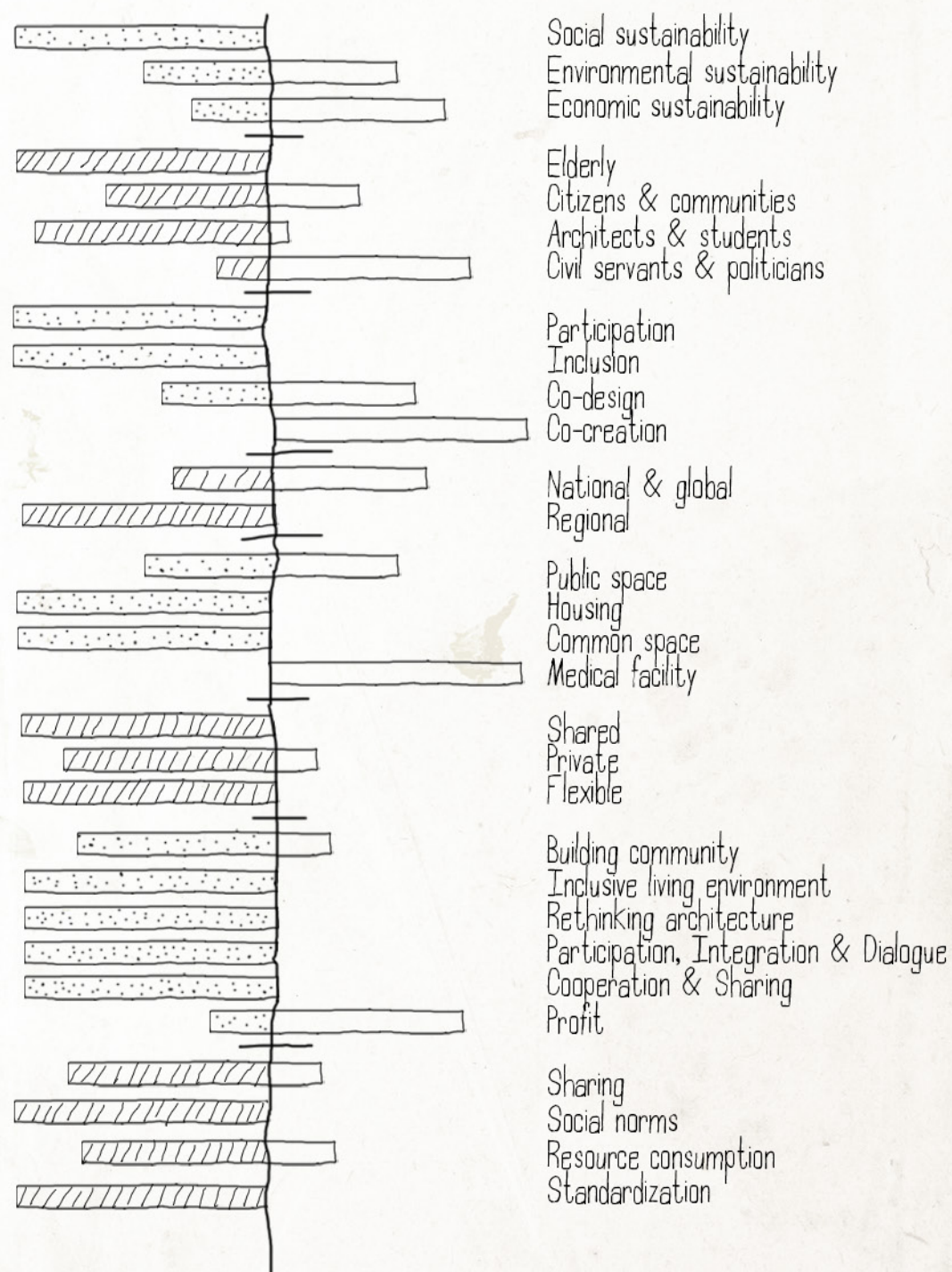
Intervention

Types of spaces

Goal

Change of mindset

About Not about



3. Exploration

In author's opinion the problem is divided into two sub problems – those connected to elderly, and those connected to architecture. This problem is multilayered, and the following are key factors the author would like to explore.

/// Problems connected to elderly

Ageism

Ageism is discrimination because of age. Active aging is prevented by large spread of ageism. It is an important public health problem. This stereotypic attitude has a negative impact on elderly. It was proved that such attitude has a direct impact on health — decrease of cognitive functions, memory troubles, lower physical activity. (WHO, Ageing: Ageism)

The ageism can be institutional and cultural, social, or individual. It can work consciously and unconsciously, and it is divided into three dimensions — discrimination, stereotypes, prejudice. Ageism can be directed onto other individuals, or to oneself ("I feel bad about my age"). It is the most well-spread form of discrimination. 78% of older people state that they experience ageism (WHO, Ageing: Ageism). Society tends to see elderly as not contributing to community, and economy anymore, but only as care-seekers. It means ageism will increase as a consequence of age expectancy rise.

Dementia

As it was stated before — the population is

is ageing, which means the more there is a percent of elderly – the more there are people with dementia. In Sweden 142,000 people suffer from dementia according to the National Board of Health and Welfare report on public health in 2009 (80+ living in Scandinavia, 2013).

Age group	Proportion with dementia, %
75-79	14
80-84	19
85-89	25
90-94	37
95+	48

Table 9. Occurrence of dementia in Sweden. Proportion (per cent.) women and men with some degree of dementia at various ages over 75. Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

There are different symptoms of dementia like: problems of memorizing, learning, reasoning, increased level of stress.

Dementia provides a drastic change in people's lifestyle. It means - the space for such people should be special in a way. For example, mobile elderly with dementia can walk around for hours without any reason, if they are closed home it would cause anxiety. (Andrews, June & Molyneux, Peter, 2012)

Due to different reasons not everyone can live at home. There might be no caregivers, or relatives who could provide, or people with dementia could have some serious health problems, which makes their life at home impossible. It often has a negative impact on health when people have to move to a nursing home. Usually, nursing homes look pretty depressive, because of a hospital-like atmosphere. It seems like a balance between shared and private space, with a comfortable

3. EXPLORATION

environment, could fix it. Because there is no treatment for dementia, probably most of tenants will live in such homes forever, so it is important to create a special environment, which helps to slow down the process, and which is adapted to specific needs of users. (Uriel, 1993)

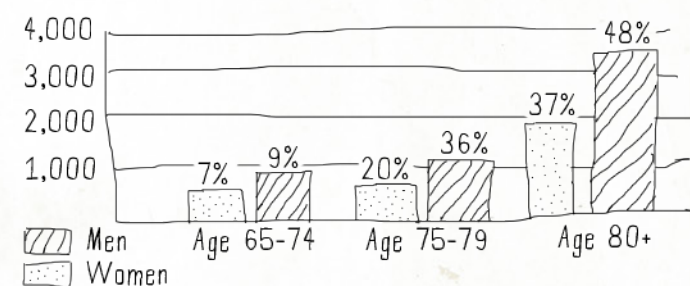


Table 10. Number and proportion of elderly people granted municipal home care in their own homes by gender and age (2011). Source: 80+ living in Scandinavia

Abuse of elderly

Elderly trust their needs and health to a care giver, and if a caregiver uses that trust in a way that harms elder, it is an abuse. Relatives or caregivers who neglect elderly's needs are abusive too.

There are some types of abuse. Physical abuse, neglect, self-neglect, abandonment, emotional abuse, taking advantage of finances. Abuse can happen to anyone, and as population is ageing it will likely become a bigger problem. People with dementia or sever health issues are more in risk for abuse. (National Institute of Ageing, www.nia.nih.gov/)

Loneliness

More than 40% of all European elderly feel lonely (Fokkema, De Jong Gierveld, Dykstra,

2012). Covid pandemic increased this number. It is a negative feeling with multiple consequences.

The higher amount of older people will be in the population - the more this feeling will be spread.

It happens because of a shrinking social network that appears during the old age, and a neglect by relatives. But also, often elderly start to voluntarily disengage from society which leads to a decreasing amount of social interactions. (Perlman & Peplau, 1981)

Less participation will result in a lower level of wellbeing, and mental and physical health problems, etc. Social isolation increases a risk of premature death, also it increases dementia risk by 50% (Fokkema, De Jong Gierveld, Dykstra, 2012).

Economic slowdown

The increased life expectancy, combined with declining birth rates, have some serious impacts on economy and society.

If the retirement age stays fixed, then more paying taxes people needed, in order to support an increased amount of elderly's needs. Also it means the young work force might have higher tax rates.

Healthcare and society should help people live longer and remain physically active, then there will be higher chance that elderly continue to work, and the impact will be less. (European Commission, The 2021 Ageing Report)

Housing shortage

As mentioned above, people live longer and lonelier, staying alone in their houses. It is a generation of baby boomers - they were successfully working the whole their life, so their

pension can allow them to live alone in big houses. It limits the number of houses for sale, as a consequence many young families are left without places to live. That could be changed if elderly had a possibility to move out into a more appropriate housing. (Lind, 2017)

Reference project 1

BloemKoolBurenBond Almere
By bureau SLA, Peter van Assche
(2020)

BloemKoolBurenBond (Cauliflower Neighbor Union) is a competition winner of "whocares" community at Almere, Netherlands. It consists of many houses for different target groups. There are studios, with a single floor for singles, and studios with 2 floors. Also there are two types of lofts. They are designed for couples who are still mobile enough to climb stairs, and those with disabilities - flats have no staircases, and are located on ground floor level. The idea is that elderly move in into a smaller housing, leaving their big houses where they feel lonely.



In the area they will be surrounded by different age groups neighbors. It supposed to straighten inclusion, and prevent ageism and loneliness.



The project lies in between both professional-informal care, and individual-collective living. Mostly because there are many options for living, there are mainly smaller apartments for individual living, but also collective rooms for residents to join each other. There are also volunteers, who live in the neighborhood, and provide care.



The streets provide clear views - it is important for the sense of safety, and wayfinding for

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elderly. All streets have lots of sitting areas. Both municipality Amsterdam and the research about dementia-friendly architecture by G. Marquardt and P. Schmiege (2009) show that it is important to have variation in architecture and clear points of recognition for elderly with mild dementia in order to find one's way.



The plans have different layouts of homes, as it is designed not only for one target group, but for diverse age groups. (Bureau SLA). The area of flats is around 36 square meters.



All homes are compact, this lowers investment cost, and makes it affordable for a majority of people. All flats, as well as area around, them are designed having in mind people with disabilities. There are some facilities in the area, like cafes, and meeting places, where elderly can work part time, or volunteer.

/// Problems connected to the modern architectural practice

Standardization

Architecture is a mediator between bodies and an environment. It exists to be in service for a body. But what is a body? As Spinoza states "we do not know what a body can do" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 283). Architects always were trying to determine bodies, as well as how they can design for those bodies. But in fact, there is a problem to describe what a body is, in order to create a design for it.

It started as an utopian idea of the standardization. The standardization was based on human measurements, and it supposed to promise good living conditions to all. 20th century capitalism and a fast growth of population made the standardization popular, because it was necessary to build a lot, and quickly, with less investments.

The first description of a "normal" body started from Leonardo Da Vinci's Vitruvian Man around 1490. It depicts a young, abled-body man. Then, the first student of Bauhaus Ernst Neufert, in 1936, conceived "Architects' Data" book, which describes a correlation between a normalized body and a space around it. male, and it represents a "norm". It helps for mass production, and offers "safe" decisions (Gunawan, 2018). Since then and till nowadays it is considered as a bible for many practitioners and student of architecture.

The introduced by him body is a male, and it represents a "norm". It helps for mass production, and offers "safe" decisions

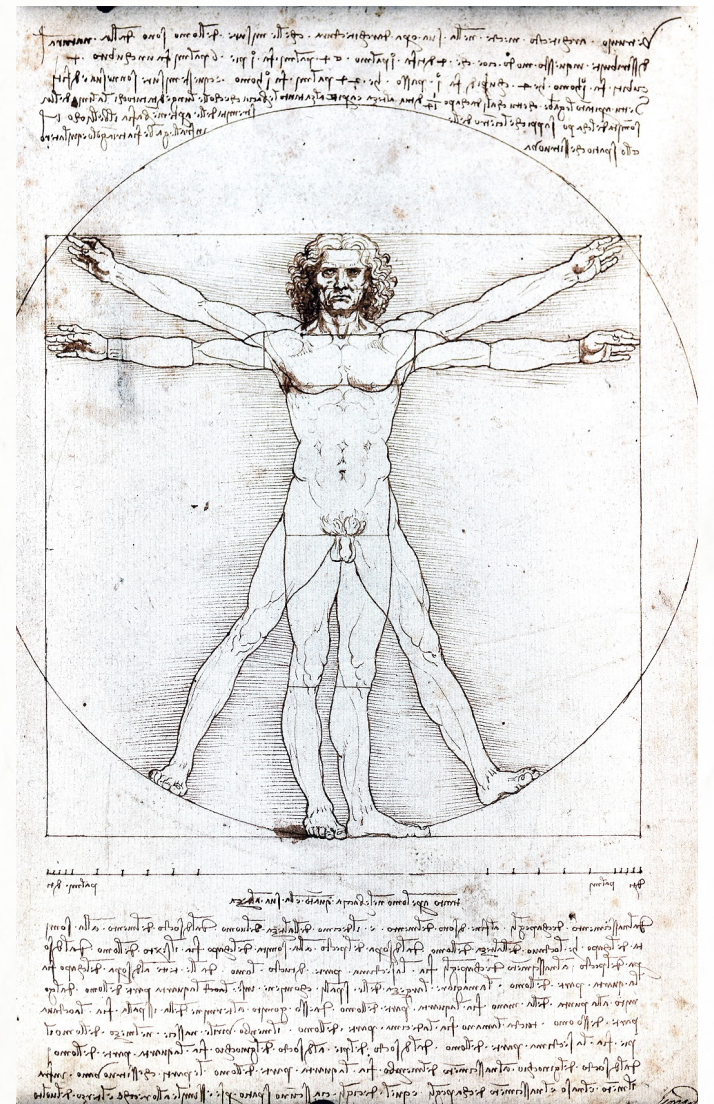


Figure 11. Leonardo Da Vinci, Vitruvian man. 1490

(Gunawan, 2018). Since then and till nowadays it is considered as a bible for many practitioners and student of architecture.

Then, it was Le Corbusier and his Modulor in 1948. His male body supposed to be a variety of harmonious human scale measurements applicable to architecture. . It is another representation of a normalized body. This body, as well as Neufert's, represents a very limited

3. EXPLORATION

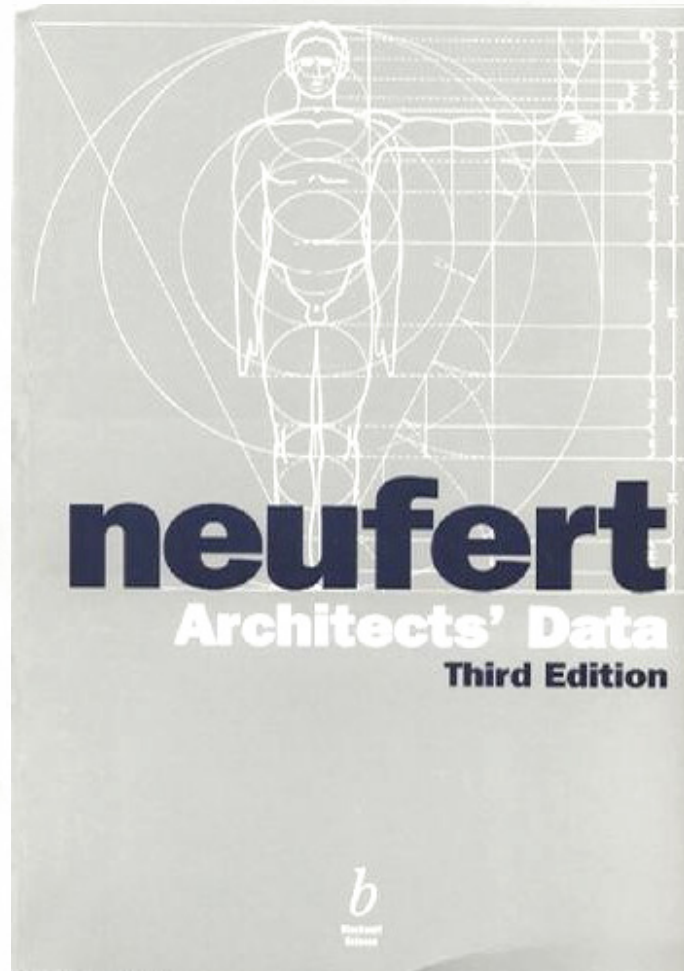


Figure 12. Ernst Neufert, Architects' Data. 1936

variety of options for bodies. It also is a "normal" body, which shows an abled, adult, white man.

The first idea which might come to one's mind is just to add other representative bodies like, women, children, old people, people with disabilities, people of color, etc.

In 1955 Henry Dreyfuss introduced this idea in his book "Designing for People". He added a woman as a representative body. On top of it he personified the bodies. The standard body of a man was called Joe, and the standard body of a woman – Josephine. Opposing Neufert's

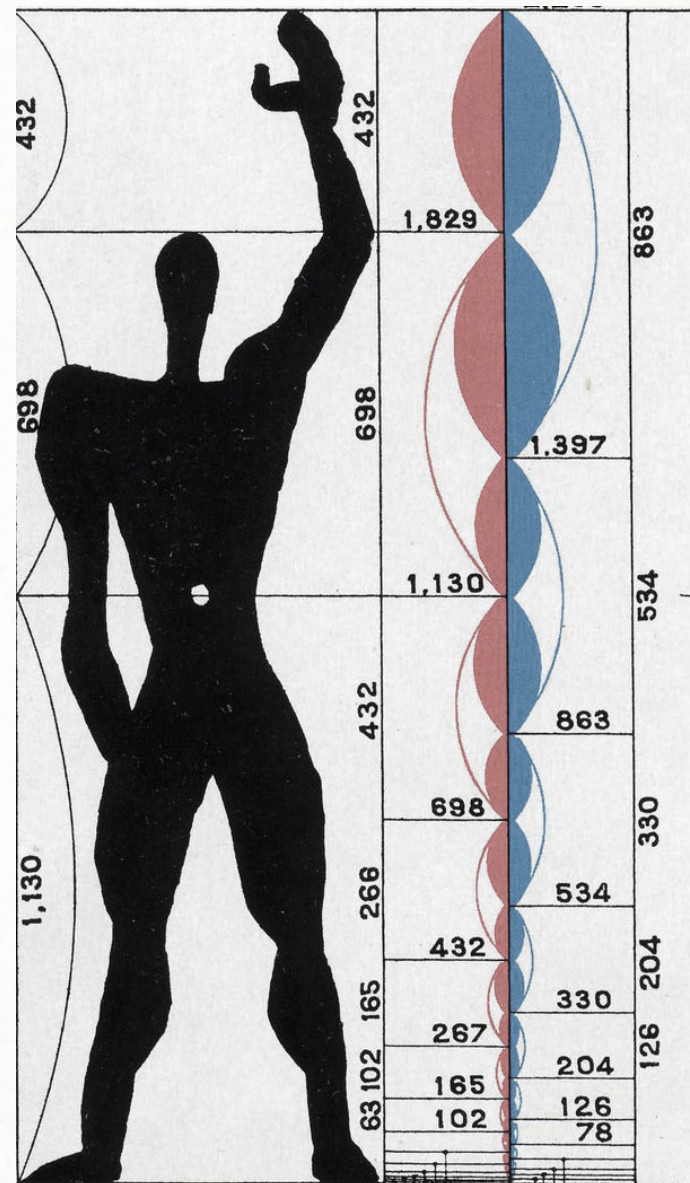


Figure 13. Ernst Neufert, Architects' Data. 1936

"Architect's Data" he tried to include an excluded body. But it did not much for diversity, and did not stop being a normalcy scenario. The following can be found in his book: "Joe enacts numerous roles. Within twenty-four hours he may determine the control positions of a linotype, be measured for an airplane

chair, be squeezed into an armored tank, or be driving a tractor; and we may prevail upon Josephine to do a day's ironing, sit at a telephone switchboard, push a vacuum cleaner around the room, type a letter." (Dreyfuss, 1955) This approach only reinforced sexism, and exclusion.

The attempt to stretch the norms, in fact, just creates more normalized dominating bodies, and discriminates those who do not fit (Haraway, 1988). It does not support the idea that bodies can change, grow, develop. This standardized normalized body becomes an ideal body, which means it doesn't exist (Lambert, 2018). Though it should be vice versa, as we all are to some extent abnormal.

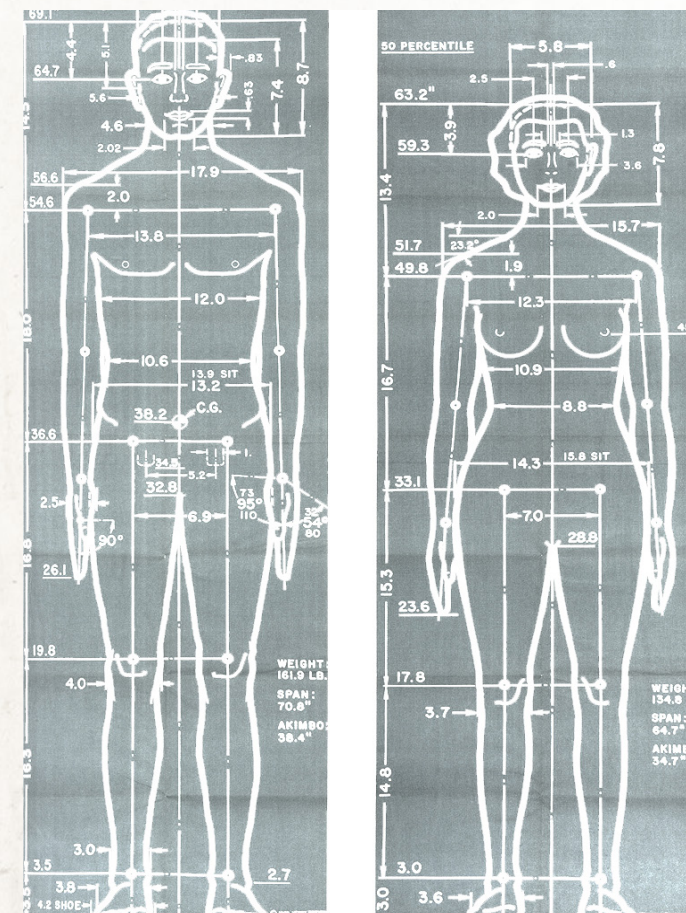


Figure 14. Henry Dreyfuss, Designing for People. 1955

Why is it a problem?

Those publications, especially "Architects' Data", are still popular and used all over the world. It means that the idea about a normalized body still shapes the environment through architecture, and by that violates all bodies which do not fit to a standard. It provides a depowerment of non-conform bodies and behaviors, by showing only standard options and scenarios, prioritizing some types over another, erasing embodied individuals. It does not resolve real problems of average users, and prevents from bodies' transformations (Lambert, 2018).

On top of it, those books promote male supremacy (Massey, 1994). The standardization of bodies prevents inclusivity, creates discrimination, and segregation (Lambert, 2018). The standardization also depicts only mere bodies. Those are the bodies without surroundings, not connected to anything. Vitruvian Man or Modulor are the brightest examples of mere bodies. They represent only some mathematical measurements, and geometrical shapes, and they try to persuade that the mere body exists. Surroundings shape people, and people shape surroundings. There are too many interconnections, relations, and possibilities. "Simply to exist as sentient beings, people must already be situated in a certain environment and committed to the relationships this entails." (Ingold, 2000, p. 25)

Embodied spaces

Embodied space is a space where experiences and consciousness are possible to embrace (Low, Lawrence-Zuniga, 2003).

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Existing in a space is possible strictly by material embodiment. So that means that the body connects things and places, because a person experiences and exists in a place through their own body (Heidegger, 1971). Physical shape of a body influences on mind, and the way a person perceives surroundings (Massey, 1994). Maybe skin is not a border between a body and an environment? Does an inhaled air, being inside of a body, becomes a part of the body? Is a wheelchair a part of its user's body? The interconnection is tight, and sometimes it is not possible to define a borderline.

The normalcy narrative

The Western society idealized the body. People are taught from childhood how to be and look "normal". It puts pressure on humans the way their body should look like. Because of normative standard abnormal bodies are perceived as wrong. There is a dominant scenario that a normal body is always a young, abled, healthy, usually a male body. Other bodies are accepted as insignificant. It means that elderly, women, disabled people are depicted as weak, helpless, dependent (Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie, 2011). It shows that no matter how strong the inclusion movement is, society still lives in a sexist, ageist, ableism world.

The normalcy narrative dictates us who we should be, but at the same time excludes and limits options for those who have different than "normal" bodies. Nowadays embodiment practices still exclude those who have unusual appearance. Being "different" is still a disadvantage. And it also brings a self-exclusion – "I'm wrong, I do not belong here". Some people cannot even do anything to control their bodies, or correspond to some standards

(Shildrick, Margrit, 2009). The normalcy narrative misleads people to an idea that it is possible to escape from ageing, being disable, or other different transformations. The normalcy narrative also brings fear of becoming old, sick, helpless, suffering and dying. It explains why abled people feel anxiety in presence of elderly or disabled people. Elderly and disabled bodies – are reminders of our own vulnerability. The easiest way to deal with this fear and anxiety is just to ignore them. That's one of the reasons elderly are not involved in society.

Modern architectural practice

The modern architectural practice reinforces belief how bodies should be like, it also supports the standardization and normalcy narrative.



Figure 15. Example of a render. Source: ARQUI9 creative agency

The simplest way is to look at renders which portray sunshine, greenery, young happy couples holding hands, laughing children. These renders create a dominating scenario of normalcy, and dictates how people should look, behave, and interact with surroundings.

The majority of modern projects value aesthetics more than existing people who don't correspond to values promoted by renders: health, happiness, wellbeing.

The Policy for Designed Living Environment (Government Offices of Sweden, 2018) mentions that it should contribute to a sustainable, equal, and less segregated society with carefully designed living environments. The Swedish Planning and Building Act introduces some requirements for accessibility for people with disability, and elderly. But some studies show that the reality the way practitioners design environment does not correspond to those policies (Degener, Theresia, 2016). It happened because some architects still ignore it (Goodman-Deane, Joy, Langdon, Clarke, Clarkson, 2008). The theory does not meet practice. This gap between theory and practice affects those, who do not belong to the standard of normalcy.

The accessibility, acceptance, and participation are the most valuable requirements for inclusion (Goodley, Dan, 2014). Creating an environment which supports only young and abled society,

means creating a society for which youth and health is a priority.

Gender studies

Elderly, women, LGBTQ+ community could have a different opinion, based on their own experiences, the way a space should be like. Straight male perspective about a space quality and function might differ from the way people occupy it (Hayden, 1980). Nowadays many of the places are dominated by men, and are not welcoming for elderly, women, disabled people (MacDowell, 1999). One of the reasons is that women and elderly do not have time and possibility to be present around, because they are busy with other responsibilities, or with nothing (Xue, McMunn, 2021).

The role of an architect is to create a new type of space for an intersection between different groups who inhabit the space, and where people's differences are cherished and supported.

Some hybrid places should be designed with a higher scale of access, and options.

Empowerment

Empowerment can be defined as a social and political act, that influences on people's behavior and interaction between each other, it gives them ability to raise their voices, be accepted, and participate (Avermaete, 2011). Architecture can empower. But in order to empower someone, it has to be defined what is empowerment.

Walls and roof of a building protects people from weather conditions, protects their belongings – it is an act of empowerment. For instance, a body's transformation due to an accident, prevents the body from using certain

3. EXPLORATION

facilities of familiar environment in the former way. It is a depowering moment. Such elements of empowerment like doors or stairs were designed according to standard bodies, and the way those bodies move. But there are too many scenarios, and constantly changing bodies which do not belong to the standard, which was in mind while designing such elements. Majority of architects think, if they lead standardization, they design something which will fit to all people. But in fact, architects consciously, or subconsciously will discriminate all types of bodies, in a bigger or smaller scale.

Reference project 2

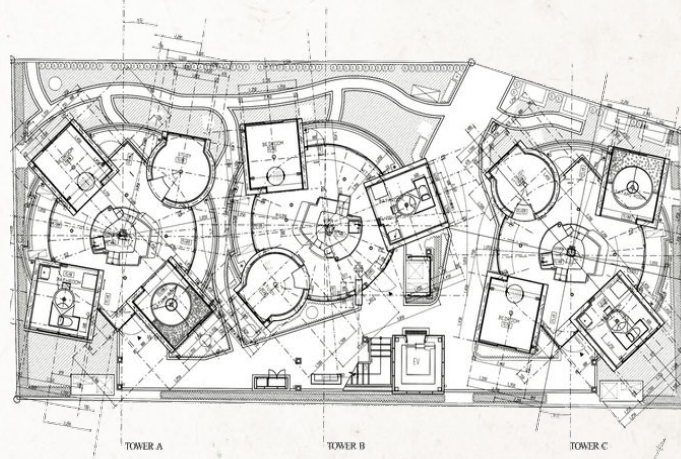
Reversible Destiny Lofts Mitaka - In Memory of Helen Keller. Japan (2005)

It is a nine-unit apartment building in a suburb of Tokyo. The architects dedicated it to Helen Keller because she lived, according to them, the ultimate Reversible Destiny life: her deafness and blindness required her to constantly re-evaluate the world.

The preface suggests a resident be "a biotopologist," defined as someone who "produces and lives within a multidimensional interactive diagram." Other directions include: "Go into this unit as someone who is at the same time both 2 or 3 years old and 100 years old" and "Every month move through your loft as a different animal (snake, deer, tortoise, elephant, giraffe, penguin, etc.)."

Arakawa and Gins' project is a great example of rejecting standardization and any knowledge about bodies, but still providing service for

bodies. Their work is focused on rejecting any standards, and mortality. Arakawa and Gins describe a body as a constantly changing organism. They believe that this organism can escape mortality. They suppose that their architecture can allow organisms to reconfigure their own bodies and work towards escaping death. They describe a body as something which required to "fend off its own demise", meaning that a body is required to escape death. They mention that architecture is in service to a body, and by that it has also to serve escaping death.



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They try to describe what "we" are, but still acknowledge situatedness and limits in precise understanding of it. "We cannot go beyond the world to find out what operates as it, because it is of our own making, it is us", "It must never be forgotten that we don't know what we are in the first place" (Gins & Arakawa, 2002). Arakawa and Gins decide not to concern themselves with defining the complexity of the world and bodies, but rather they focus on how to deal with contingency, to find value of the world in the world, through rearrangements of the world, right here in the midst of things (Gins & Arakawa, 2002). This lack of understanding is in the center of their work: "The ambition of "avoiding death" may sound rather radical as an approach to life and as an approach to

constructing architecture". Therefore, Arakawa and Gins offer another, more toned-down explanation of their idea of reversible destiny: "reversible destiny [...] as an open challenge to our species to reinvent itself and to desist from foreclosing on any possibility" (Gins & Arakawa, 2002). Which means a challenge for our bodies to constantly learn, change, and grow into our surroundings, without refuting anything as impossible. The ambitions of Arakawa and Gins are perhaps best illustrated by taking a look at some of their built projects. The project of Arakawa and Gins doesn't dictate how to use or engage with it. The structures are abstract, and reject standardization. Interaction with them is highly personal, and depends on the potentials of one's body.



4. MANIFESTO

Graphical manifesto

By the graphical manifesto, the author would like to raise the subject of inclusion, empowerment through interaction, involvement, and open access.



Figure 16. Graphical manifesto. Source: author
19

4. MANIFESTO

Written manifesto

By the written manifesto, the author would like to showcase the problem of elderly's not involvement into society, exclusion. As well as their potential and desire to be active actors. The written manifesto should work as an insirational moto, provoking to act.



We are locked in our worn out bodies
We understand importance of our voices when we are silenced
We are not invisible
We have survived
We still ask questions
We are still learning
We still crave for more
Listen to us
We have a lot to say
We are not afraid anymore
We have time only for the thruth
Life hasn't stopped
Strong relationship – stronger voice
The power of oldness

Figure 17. Graphical manifesto. Source: author
20

5. METHOD

5. Method

One of the methods were used is human-centered approach (Gee, 2006), it contained anthropological and sociological aspects (Sfintes, 2019). The author sees it as important tools, which help to understand elderly's daily challenges. The author started with a series of different exercises. All of them were done on the chosen site (will be mentioned further), which has a high amount of elderly.

The method of observations was used. It was made in order to understand daily activities and habits of elderly at the chosen site. Quantitative approach was used for understanding of amount of elderly with different impairments at that area.

Praxeology method was used in order to understand how elderly feel, and use the site having certain impairments (Rothbard, 1977).

Another used method is interviews, as a part participation. There were two types of interviews – with locals the author met at the neighborhood, and interviews with senior and dementia houses' tenants. It was one of the most productive methods to understand elderly's needs, wishes, daily routine, living environment, care, etc.

The next method was used is mapping at the chosen site. The elderly's activities and habits were mapped on the site. It gave an understanding how old people use the surroundings, whether there were any obstacles, their activities, meeting places, timing. It gave some conclusions what is lacking, why some spaces are used more than others, etc., which qualities of the space a valued more.

Other methods used by author were literature attractive for elderly, and inspire to participate.

Overall, the gained knowledge and methodologies fed the author with a lot of valuable ideas how to increase elderly's interaction with others, empower them, keep them active socially and physically.

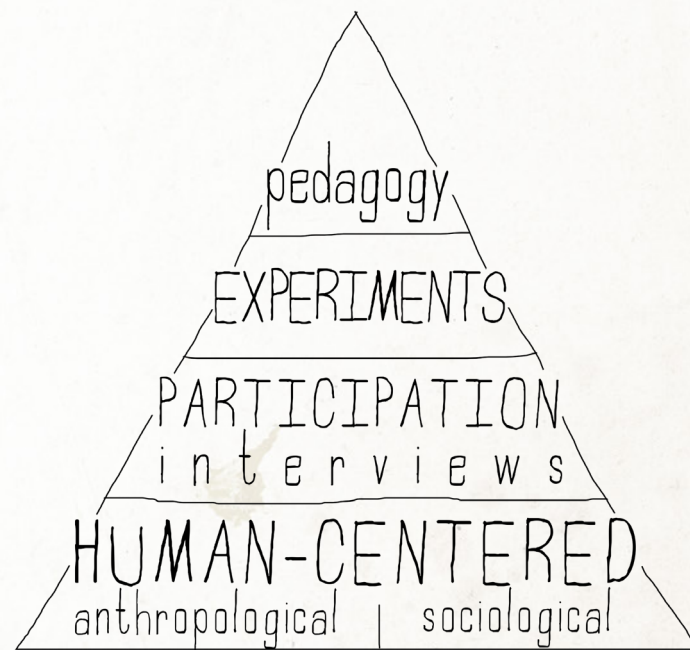


Figure 18. Method scheme. Source: author

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6. Research questions

The main question:

- How can architecture participate in making elderly a cornerstone of society?

Sub question:

- What approach should architectural practice embrace in order to empower elderly?

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

7. Methodological Experiments

Some information was obtained through observations, and documentations of certain behavior and patterns. Also many different experiments were done. The experiments were taken as a procedure carried out to support or refute a hypothesis, or determine the efficacy of subject. Experiments seek to break out of typical architectural conventions by questioning the limitations.

The collection of successful experiments led to a creation of Methodological Experiments chapter.

This chapter is divided for two parts. The first part is about experiments connected to elderly, and the second part is about experiments connected to architectural practice.

///Experiments connected to elderly

Interviewing staff and tenants of senior and dementia houses, as well as children of dementia house tenants

Sixteen interviews with many different stakeholders were conducted: staff and tenants of senior and dementia homes, and tenants' relatives, as well as elderly on the chosen site. Some of interviewed people had different disabilities, the purpose of it was to have a full

spectrum of points of views.

Interviews were having two main goals. First, to empower elderly by giving them a possibility to speak out. Second, to understand elderly's daily routines, desires, needs, expectations, and fears. (Newcomer, Hatry, Wholey, 2015).

It was made as a part of participatory, emancipatory approach, advocating human-centered design.

A rich data of experiences, perceptions of everyday life, and environment was gained by this method. Some aspects were translated into design language.

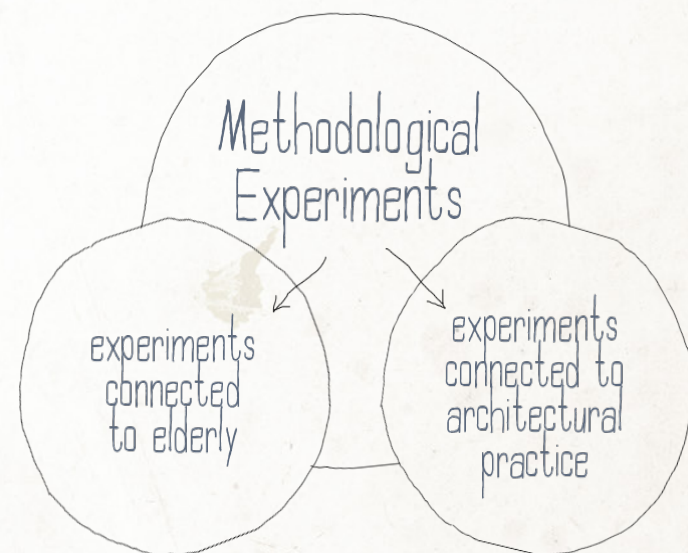


Figure 19. Methodological Experiments scheme.
Source: author

///Interviewing staff of senior and dementia houses

Interviewee 1

Professional caregiver for people with dementia
Work experience 8 years

"Elderly with dementia live in their own world, like a cocoon. This world takes place in their childhood or early adulthood. Some of our tenants can worry about their kids being late from school, although their children are already adult, and have their own children. Or people with dementia wait for their partners to come from work, but partners passed away. Explaining them reality might cause stress. Some of our tenants can tell us stories how they were going for a walk around the city, although they weren't leaving their rooms for months. We call these stories "white lies". It is a hard experience for relatives at the beginning. Before they get used to it, all of them correct their dementia relatives, trying to bring them back to reality."

Interviewee 2

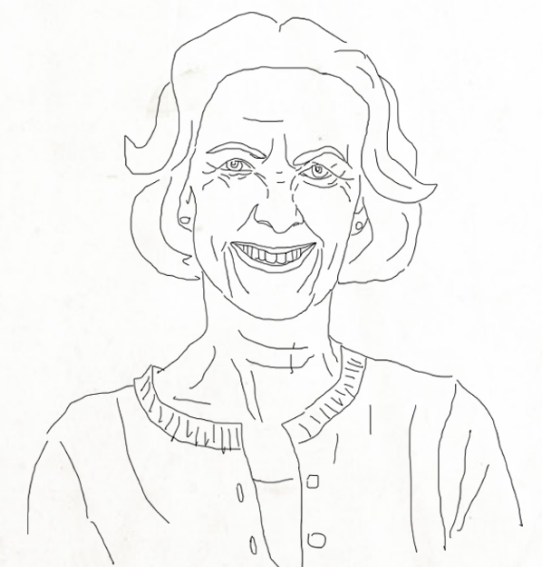
Professional caregiver for people with dementia
Work experience 14 years

"It is like a reverse journey from oldness to childhood. One of our tenants started to call me "mommy" at the end of his days, remembering early childhood stories, accepting them like recently happened.

There is a common practice when visiting relatives bring pictures from their parents' adulthood, or tell them stories about their past, providing hints to their history. Usually it brings mutual joy."



Cocoon, imaginary world



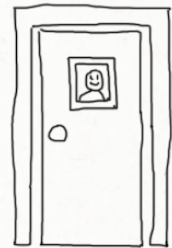
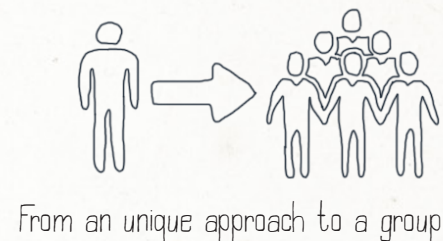
7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

"We experience a lack of caregivers last decade. I explain it with a growth of people with dementia, while the amount of caregivers is still the same. Before it we were trying to find a personal approach for every tenant. Now it is not possible. Each tenant has different personality, background, level of education, sometimes ethnicity, they all are unique. So we switched to overall facilitating comfort and positive environment"

"It is very important to keep a daily routine. Not only for staff, but mostly for elderly. It helps them to not drown in their subconscious"

"To be able to feel their own experience, demented people need stimuli like movement, sounds, colors."

"People with dementia can't remember where doors to their rooms are, so we hang on doors pictures of them being young."



Interviewee 3

Professional caregiver for people with dementia
Work experience 6 years

"All on us [staff] have a schedule when we do some activities with elderly, like playing board games, painting, doing some light fitness. Sometimes we even cook together. Our tenants like to wash and peel vegetables. I, actually, think it triggers some childhood memories when their mothers asked them to help at the kitchen. This activity activates even the most passive tenants..."

"Our policy does not allow tenants going outside alone, because of potential danger. But relatives are allowed to accompany tenants, to have a walk and enjoy some nature, have a cup of tea at the terrace, or a quick bite. Family members emphasize that it is a "precious moments, bringing them back to "normality"."

"Communication with people with dementia might be complicated. It is important to ask simple questions, without many details. Questions which require yes/no answer."

///Interviewing relatives of dementia houses

Interviewee 4

Daughter of a person with dementia

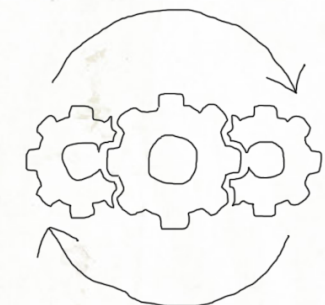
"The dementia journey begins much earlier than parents move into nursing homes. It starts with their slow deterioration. Then comes the emotionally difficult stage – accepting the official diagnose. Usually at the beginning one of relatives become an informal caregiver. The moment of mixed feelings – grief, anger, helplessness, self-blame. But with time we all learn how to deal with it, and find a new way how to communicate with our loved ones. It is important to go with the flow, allowing parents to live in their imaginary world. Another thing is to provide a decision making process to them... To allow options what they love, but at the same time keep things under control."

"I was so angry on my mother consuming too much sugar through life, but now giving her a cake on Sunday brings me the biggest pleasure."

Interviewee 5

Daughter of a person with dementia

"Those visits bring me joy and sorrow. Most of the time my mother is kind of mentally sleeping under a blanket, but sometimes she "wakes up", and it is obvious that she is present, and realizes what is going on. After 3 years, I am coping



7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

with it pretty well, but at the beginning it was devastating.
First I was her child, and now I feel like she is my child"
"Our relationship evolved from demanding and judgmental to expectation free and accepting. She never was generous to hugs, and now she became so warm, so hugging is our favorite activity nowadays. Now I feel being more connected to her. We enjoy each other's company a lot. It was like a gift which came together with dementia. Though, I understand that it is a consequence of her personality loss."

///Interviewing tenants of senior house

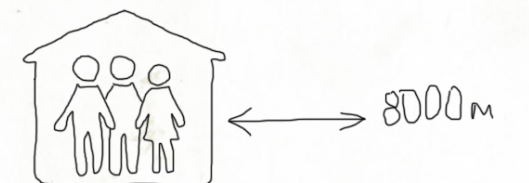
Interviewee 6
Ani
Tenant of a Senior House
78 years old
Experience living in a Senior House – 2 years
"I usually prefer to stay in my room, rather than going outside, or at a common space. It is because I am afraid to fall again. Lately I had a hip surgery. And overall I feel discomfort while walking. My daughter makes shopping for me once a week. After it we go for a small walk, and I usually use a wheelchair."
"I like my neighbors, they are nice people. Unfortunately, we don't meet much. I would like to do it more often, but our common spaces are too chaotic for me. I experience hearing problems, and when there are a lot of people speaking around it makes it even more complicated.
However, I have a friend, she lives next door, so sometimes I invite her to my room for a cup of



tea."

Interviewee 7
Peter
Tenant of a Senior House
76 years old
Experience living in a Senior House – 2 years
"I wake up at 7 in the morning every day. Get dressed. Water my plants. Then go downstairs to have a breakfast, usually it is a sandwich and a cup of coffee. After it I sit a little more at the table, reading newspaper, and discussing news with others. Then I go to the living room to watch TV, or gardening if the weather is nice. Then there is a hot lunch at 12 o'clock, I like to help cleaning afterwards, and have a nap in the living, or in my room. Often after snooze I watch football.
Sometimes I go shopping. Though it is pretty far, and the store is not big, being often overcrowded. It brings me some anxiety regarding Covid.
Before dinner I might play cards with my friend. Some days feel longer than another. Sometimes I go to bed early, around 7 pm, but usually at 10 pm."
"I can call myself one of the most socially oriented tenant. I like to communicate. But sometimes it is complicated because of different reasons. I think, life in Senior Home makes people lazier, because everything is done for tenants by others. Not making any effort makes people losing interest. With time they become that passive – so they even don't want to leave their rooms for meals."

Interviewee 8
Selma



Nearby facilities are too far away, and too crowded



No effort makes people losing interest

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Tenant of a Senior House

75 years old

Experience living in a Senior House – 3 years

"My neighbors are not very active, and there are not much activities at our place. So I enjoy going to church on Sundays. After many years visiting the same church I became friends with a couple of nice, the same age, ladies. We often go for a coffee after the Mass."

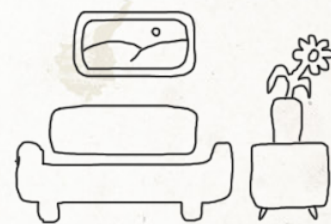
"I like to garden. Sometimes staff takes me to a flower shop. It is at the opposite site of the city. I enjoy the car ride. Seeing certain places around the city brings me beautiful memories from my past."

"Sometimes my children visit me. From time to time they take me out for a dinner. Or they invite me to their places, so I could enjoy time with my grandsons."

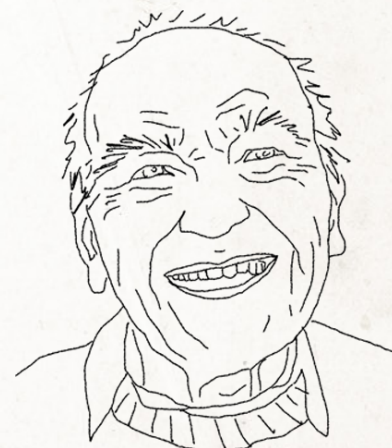
"Overall, I am happy to live in a Senior Home. My own house became too big for me. I was annoyed to go up and down the stairs. The staff allowed me to bring some of my furniture, and pictures. So now my room looks and feels like the house where I spent most of my life."



A ride around the city brings memories



Homely atmosphere



Interviewee 9

Magnus

Tenant of a Senior House

79 years old

Experience living in a Senior House – 3 years

"In summer I like to stay in the garden, just sitting in the shadow. I love listening birds singing. Sometimes I feed them."

"There is a farmers' market. During spring and summer I like to cycle there to make groceries. One of the sellers became my pal. Every time I come, he offers me fruits and berries to try, and we have some nice conversations. It is a pity

that there are no benches along the route to sit and have a rest, and the pathway is not comfortable."

"During the day my main entertainment is computer, or TV. From time to time I like to read books. My son lives in Denmark, so he visits me rarely. My wife passed away 8 years ago. There are not much things going on at our place. I try to entertain myself, but often feel lonely."



No benches
Good walk-able paths

Interviewee 10

Linnea and Mikael

Tenants of a Senior House, partners for 50 years

77 and 78 years old

Experience living in a Senior House – 2 years

"We get up at 8 am, without any alarm clock. Get ready, and go to canteen by elevator - it makes me feel safer. The breakfast is served already. We eat, clean, then I go to our room to take my pills. The rest of the day we stay in the living room to watch TV, and read newspapers or books. My husband usually falls asleep. It is quiet and boring, none makes any interactions, or initiatives. Some people live here the same amount of time as us, but I see them rarely, and don't even know their names."

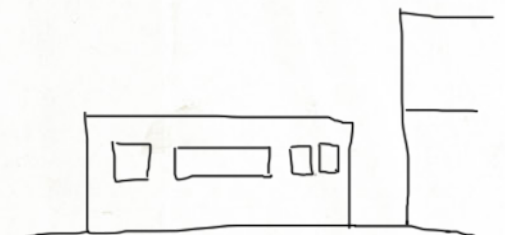
In afternoon I take a walk, though I can't walk for a long time, or sometimes I do laundry. At 6 we have dinner and watch news again."

"We rarely talk to each other. Probably because we live together for so long, so we ran out of subjects for conversations."

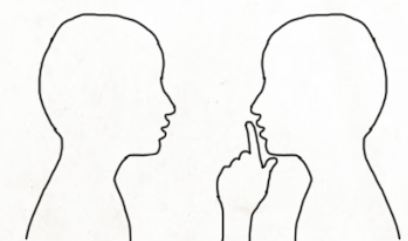
"The life here feels very monotonous."

"The world becomes so small when you get old."

"Having young staff, and a meeting place don't help – it still feels boring here. Especially during corona time, when visitors are not allowed"



Single floor plan is preferred



No interactions between tenants

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Interviewee 11

Nils

Tenant of a Senior House

78 years old

Experience living in a Senior House – 1 years

"Three days a week I babysit my daughter's dog. And once a month I volunteer at the local church. Otherwise I am bored."

"The activities at our nursing home are not in my taste. Often I have to join, even if I don't want to. Why residents can't decide what they want to do?"

"My neighbors are usually or quiet, or gossiping, so I prefer to stay on my own."

"My every day rituals are – checking mailbox, and having one cigarette after lunch, along with a cup of coffee. My doctor does not allow me more."



Lack of decision making process

///Interviewing locals

After spending a couple of days at the chosen site (the explanation will follow) some interviews with locals of the neighborhood were done.

Interviewee 12

Johanna

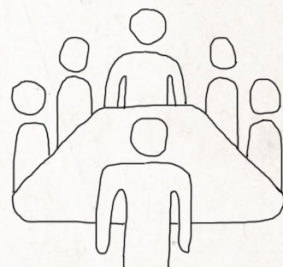
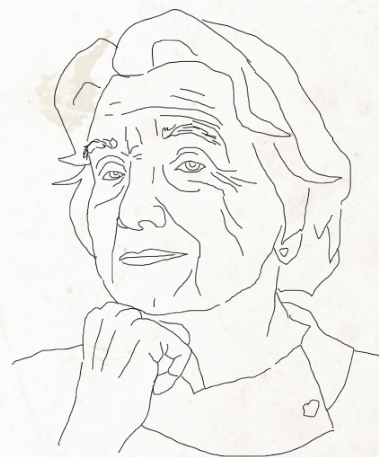
Local

72 years old

Experience living in the are – 32 years

"When you get older, you become invisible for people, especially for men. Till 55 I could quickly get a drink even at the most overcrowded bars. Now I need to call a waiter for hours, and he/she would be pretending that I am not there."

"The area is beautiful, I love to walk with my dog around the lake, but it is so boring here. There are no places to meet, except 2 cafes."



No diversity of meeting places

And no places to spend time outside, except a children's playground."

"I like to redecorate my house, just to keep myself busy."

Interviewee 13

Anton

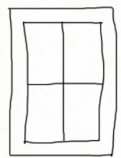
Local

68 years old

Experience living in the are – 18 years. A wheelchair user for 4 years

"After I started using a wheelchair people around me have divided for 2 categories. The first one – those who constantly want to help, even with things I can easily do myself, it is very annoying. And those, who pretend that I do not exist, those who deliberately avert their eyes."

"Using a wheelchair changes eye perspective. So many ads on buildings are not available for me. And some streets are not wheelchair friendly."



Low window sills for view
Wheelchair friendly streets

Interviewee 14

Jenny

Local

74 years old

Experience living in the are – 28 years

"I live in a big house on my own. My partner was diagnosed with dementia 4 years ago. Since then he moved to a nursing home. It could have been very lonely, but luckily my daughter lives in 2 blocks from me. She has 2 children, 16 and 9 years old. I love to spend time with them, and do it pretty often. It keeps me busy, and optimistic. Kids are a great source of positive energy."



Being together

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Interviewee 15

Ellen

Local

69 years old

Experience living in the area - 3 years

"My husband and I have lived in a big house with a garden for many decades. After he passed away 3 years ago, the house became too big for me. Then my daughter got a job in New York and moved to States. So I decide to move in to a small flat. This neighborhood is lovely, and quiet. During afternoon it becomes so vivid, streets are full of children. It's because there are 3 schools around. Sometimes we even have a small talk. I would like to have more facilities here, where people of different age can meet. In summer it is nice to have a walk around the lake, but in winter it is pretty boring here."



Interviewee 16

Hilda

Local

71 years old

Experience living in the area - 23 years

"I widowed 24 years ago, and moved out from a big house to a flat on the first floor. It feels spacious because of the garden. I like to gather my children, grandchildren, and friends there for Sunday's lunches. Otherwise, it feels pretty lonely at the area. My friends, who live at another district, have some activities around their homes - like meeting places, interests' clubs, or gatherings. I don't know why it is absent here."

"I like to look outside of my window. Watching passing by people brings me flashbacks about my life, people I met."

"I'm afraid to move into a nursing home, so stranger will be taking care of me."

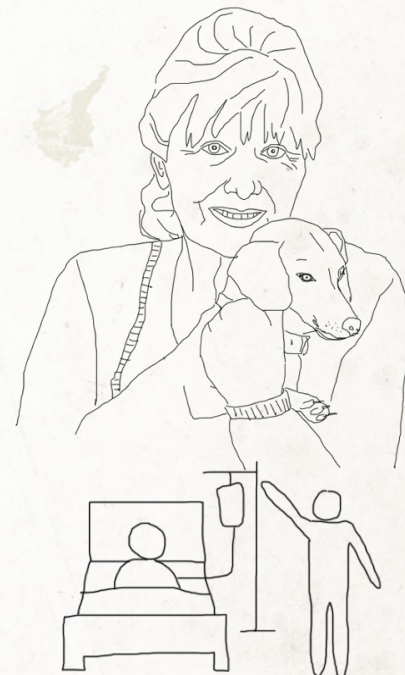


Figure 20. A compilation of sketches representing interviewed people, and their thoughts. Source: author

///Dinner in the dark The dark side of the spoon

A couple of years ago the author was volunteering for blind people, and still has some contacts with them. So they helped author to organize a "blind dinner" with a respective age target group - 5 people between 65 and 80. Blind people became mediators for sighted people.

The experience gave sighted guests, being blindfolded while eating, a new perspective on how human brain perceive things without a possibility to see them. All feelings became stronger, including taste, temperature, sound, etc. It also provided opportunities for conversation with visually disabled participants, and demonstrated real possibilities available for them.

People, as visually dominant creatures, think, reason, and imagine visually. Le Corbusier was writing that: "I exist in life only if I can see" (Le Corbusier, 1991). Juhani Pallasmaa noted that architecture is designed primarily for the eye of the beholder (Pallasmaa, 1996). It excludes people with visual impairments. Half of elderly experience problems with sight.

This experiment was a part of praxeology related exercise. It contributed to author's understanding of symbiosis of architecture and multisensory nature of the human mind, and their constant exchange. Such a multisensory approach should lead to the development of buildings that promote equal access, and inclusion.

The event became an act of empowerment for elderly participants, and visually impaired organizers.



Figure 21. A sketches representing the blind dinner. Source: author

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

///Experiments connected to architectural practice

Choosing the site

Experiments connected to architectural practice contain some exercises on a field. For this reason the eastern part of Gothenburg, between Sahlgrenska University Hospital and Härlanda tjärn, was chosen. It is a quiet neighborhood, with lots of greenery. A lot of elderly live there.

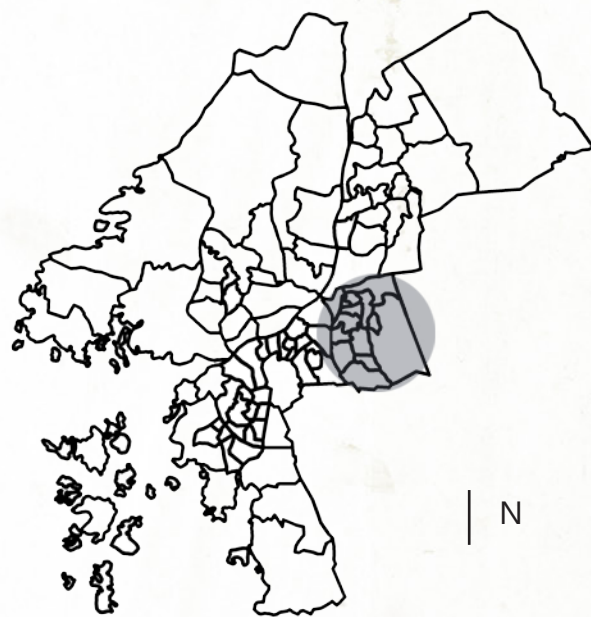
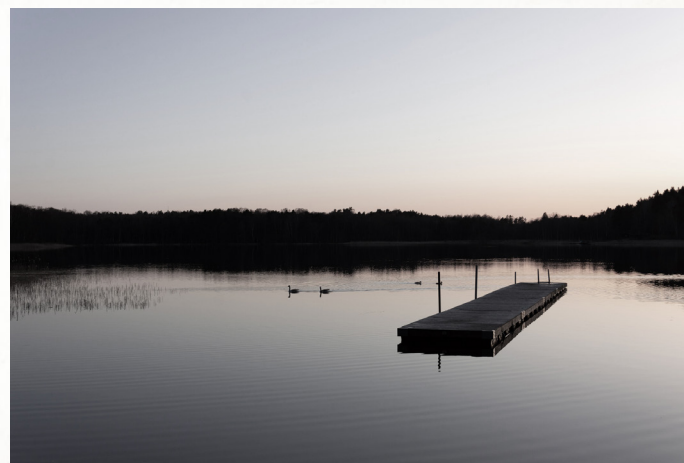


Figure 22. Map of Gothenburg, Sc 1:250000. Source: <https://geodata.chalmers.se/>

Photos of the site (Source: author)



Site analysis

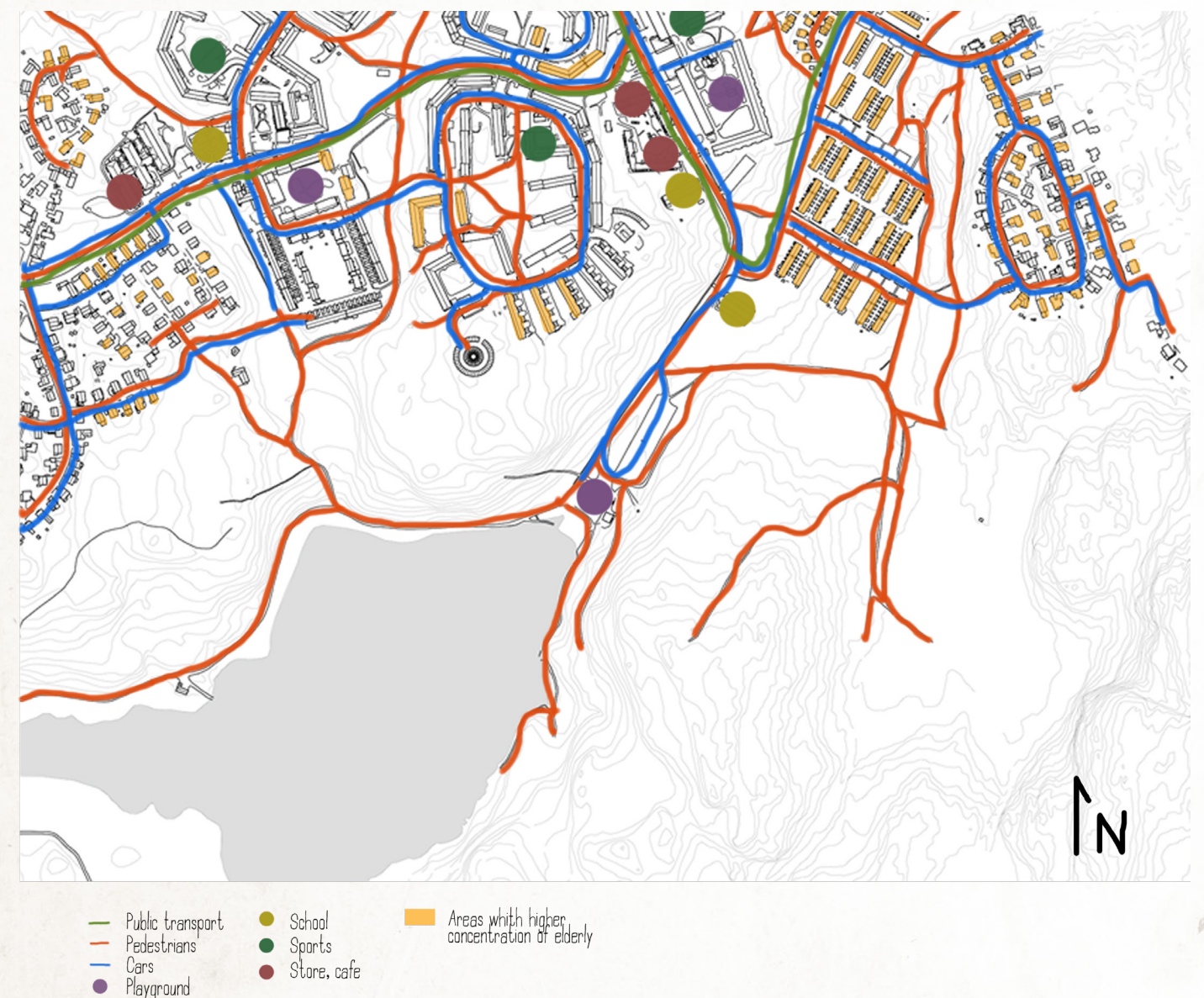


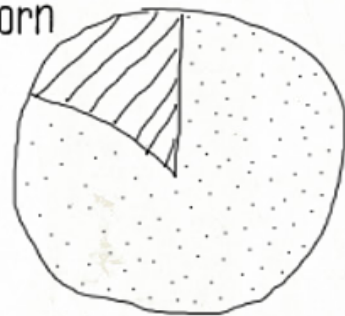
Figure 23. Map of Gothenburg, Sc 1: 5500. Source: <https://geodata.chalmers.se/>

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Stats

For a better understanding of the site it is crucial to find out the data - how many people live at the site, their age, ethnicity, and occupation. (Source: www.goteborg.se)

17.1% foreign born



82.9% local born

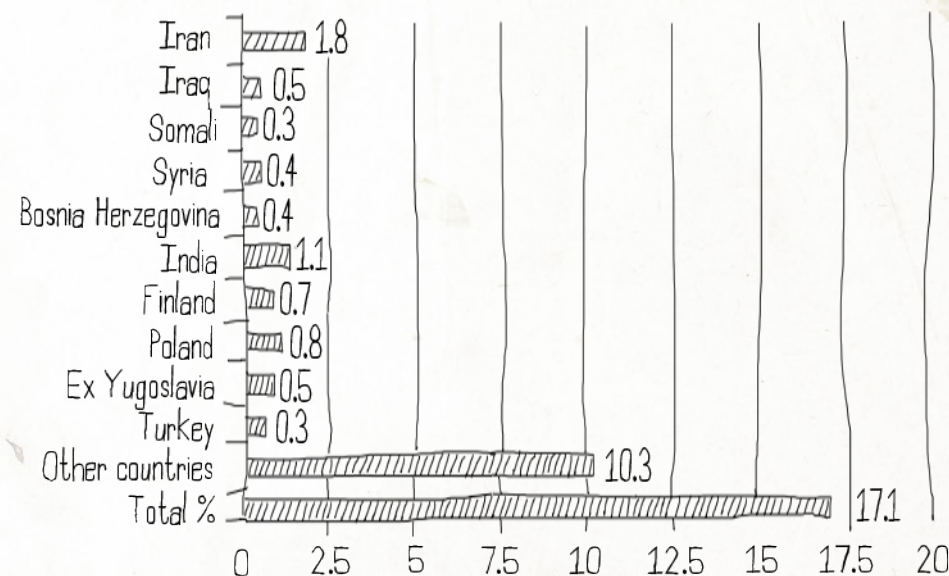


Table 24. Foreign born ethnicities %. Source: Göteborgs Stads

Örgryte-Marlanda
population 2020 - 61331 people

Age	Women	Men	%
0	381	428	1.3%
1-5	1575	1582	5.1%
6	296	233	0.9%
7-9	773	805	2.6%
10-12	742	797	2.5%
13-15	721	724	2.4%
16-18	678	712	2.3%
19-24	2372	2334	7.7%
25-29	4294	3942	13.4%
30-44	7428	7928	25.1%
45-64	6887	6560	21.9%
65-74	2656	2397	8.2%
75-84	1529	1167	4.4%
85+	988	400	2.3%
In total	31320	30011	100%

Table 25. Age groups by number and %. Source: Göteborgs Stads

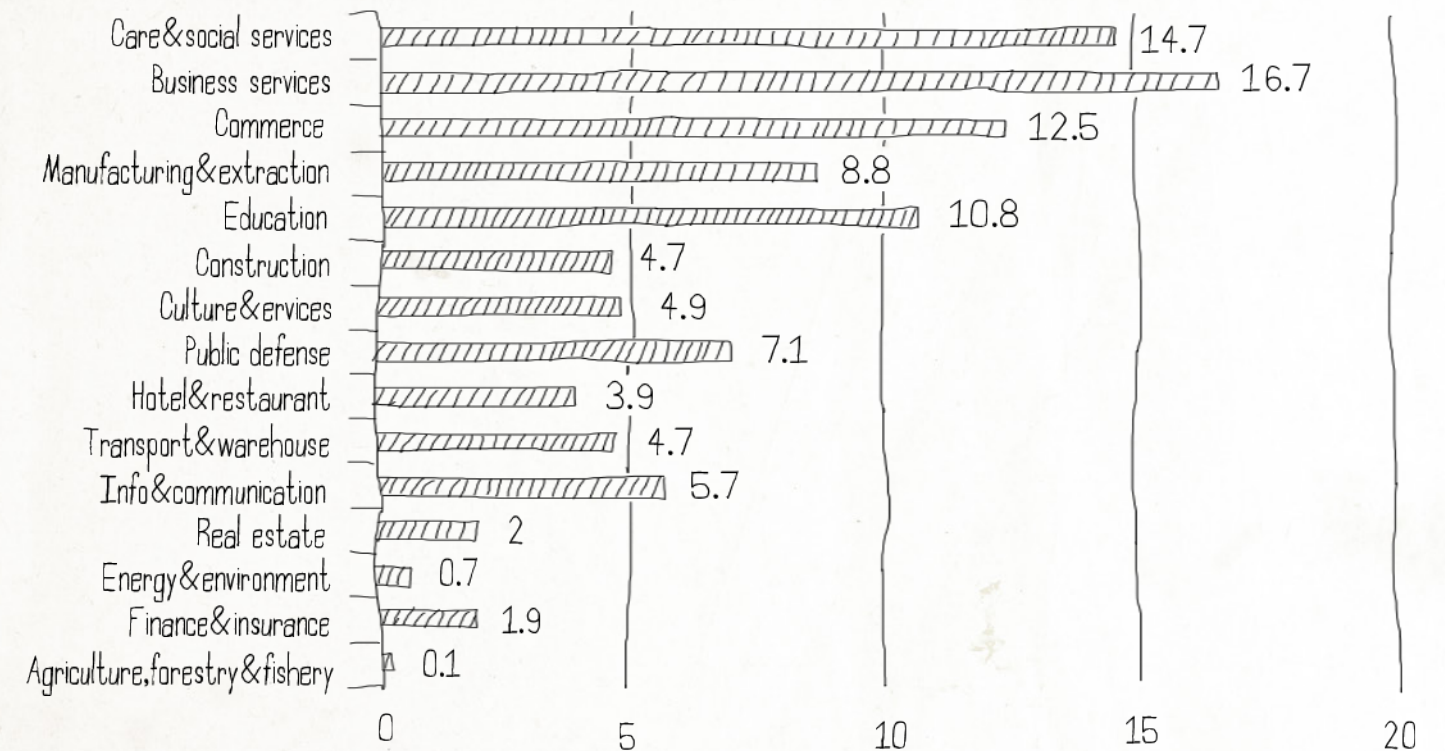


Table 26. Occupations of locals. Source: Göteborgs Stads

- Average income 344 000 kr
- Men earn 15% more
- 1095 people with paid financial assistance
- 3.6% of locals are unemployed
- 45.6% of locals have high education

Exercises

Some exercises were done on the site:

1. Feeling the site ("becoming a modest witness")

The first exercise was containing a walk in silence, with all senses on. The intention was to feel the qualities of the place. The author wanted to become "a modest witness" (Doucet, 2015). It became a productive tool, because the author was able to notice things she usually

does not notice, and it gave her more meaning of the space. Simple things like smells, sounds, colors might be invisible for some, but might cause disturbance for others. Some people experience the world differently, and it is important to take it into consideration.

The author was walking around the neighborhood during different times of the day and weather. The most interesting discovery was that all things become more visible, louder, stronger, when one pays attention to them. The site was having different qualities depending on the time of the day, and weather conditions. The correlation of time of the day and weather influenced how many people were on the streets, and what they were doing. Sometimes there was a little traffic on the roads, and it was uncomfortable. Also a lot of thresholds and unhandy pavement made

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

the author stumbling. A zone next to the lake was calm and pleasant to watch, there were lots of vegetation. During the dark time of the day there was no or a little street lightening, it brought some discomfort.

Sketches

Sketches, as a part of "becoming a modest witness", were relevant as an embodied-memory tool, and an act of a corporeal experience.

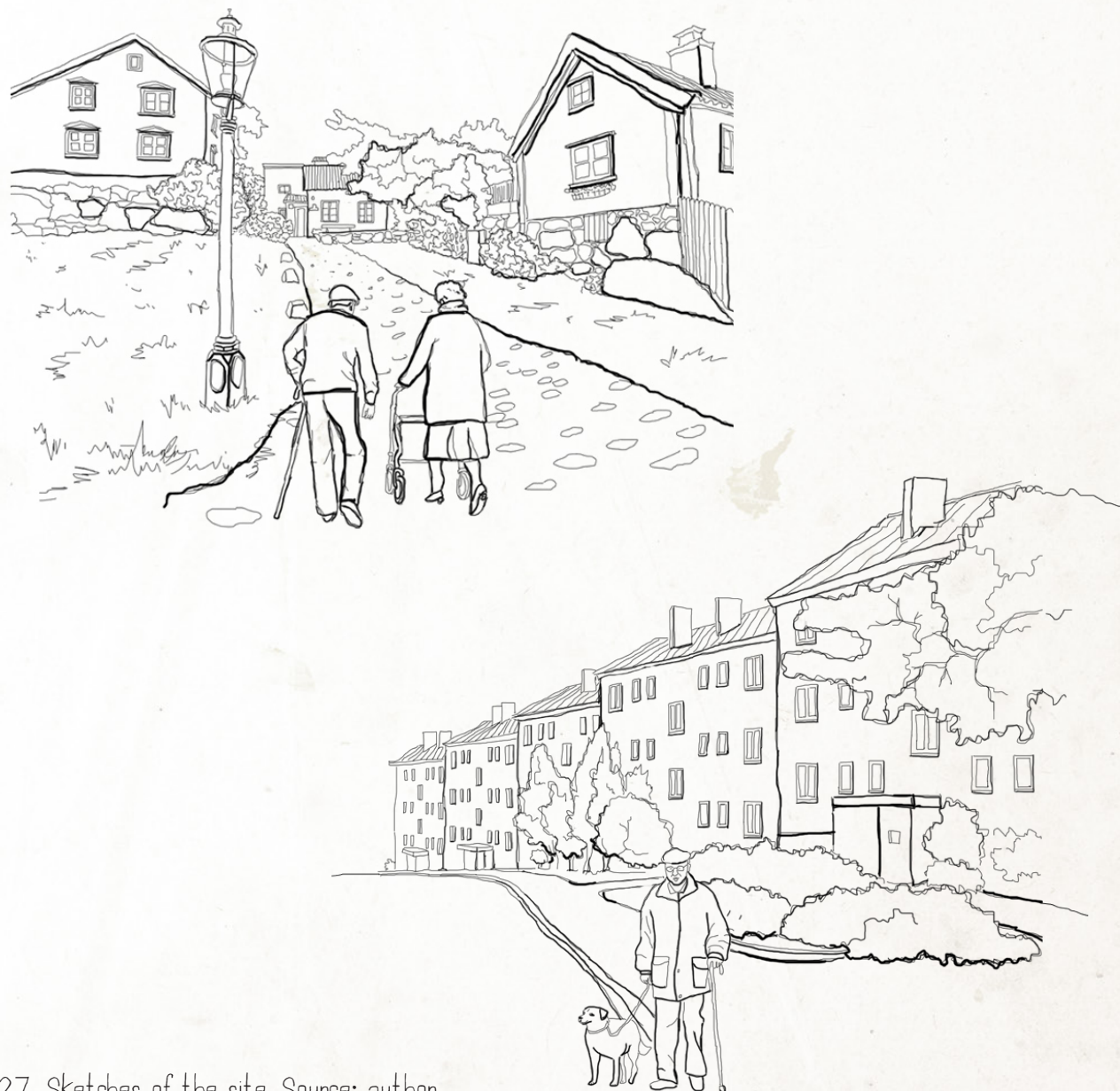


Figure 27. Sketches of the site. Source: author
39

2. Praxeology

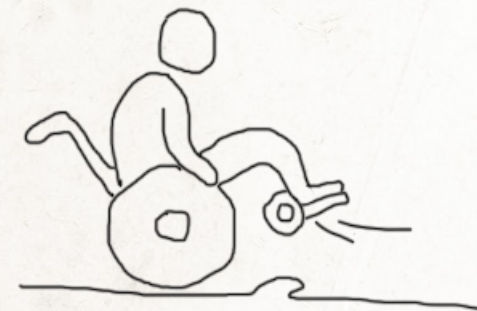
Praxeology is the study of human action and conduct (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Experiencing how does it feel to be old, inactive, slow, with some impairments is an important knowledge, showcasing challenges elderly live with on the daily basis. Things which do not bother young healthy people, can be a great challenge for elderly, especially with certain disabilities. (Rothbard, 1977)

The author spent an hour using a wheelchair, an hour walking with a walker, walking with crutches and a cast on her feet. Also the author used some special glasses to limit her vision (blurred lenses, one lens shadowed, lenses covered with yellow film [elderly's vision has more yellow tones according to the research (Hedge,2011)], no vision at all being blindfolded).

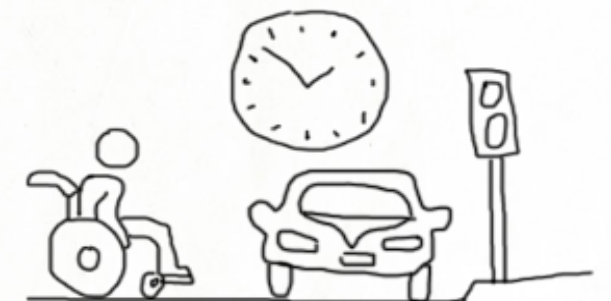
While this exercise the author experienced a lot of challenges.

Every simple thing, like crossing a road, opening a door, walking on cobblestone, climbing a small hill, became hard to achieve.

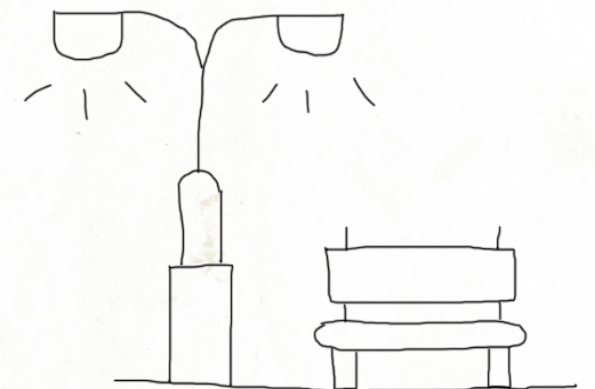
Overall impressions which can be translated into design are:



Every little obstacle becomes a big challenge



Green light is not long enough

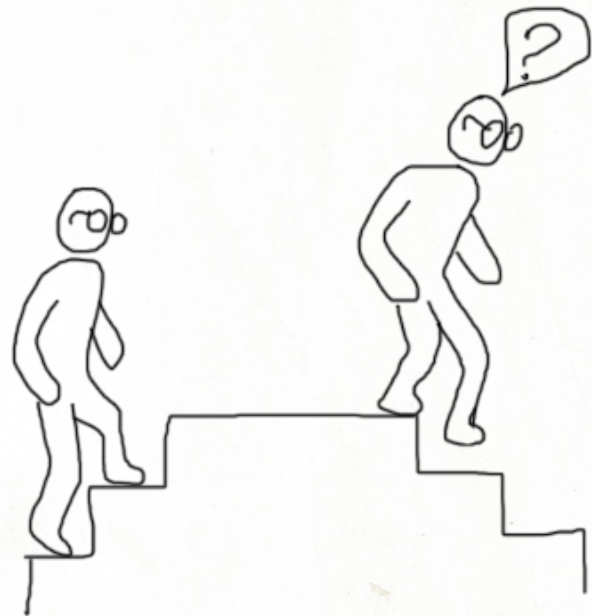


No benches. Not enough of street lightening

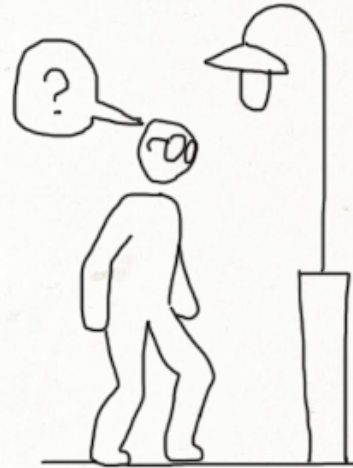


The thresholds should be removed, but some should be added (at sides of streets, so a wheelchair user will not fall into greenery)

7. METHODOLOGICAL- CAL EXPERIMENTS



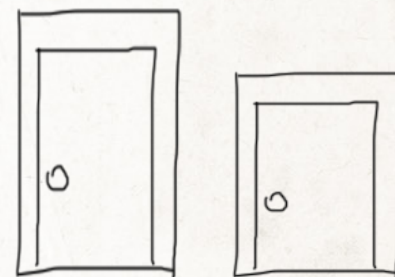
Going up is easier than going down



Feeling of walking against something



Handrails gave a securing feeling, and shown direction



Dimension of space were lost, everything feels much bigger than it is



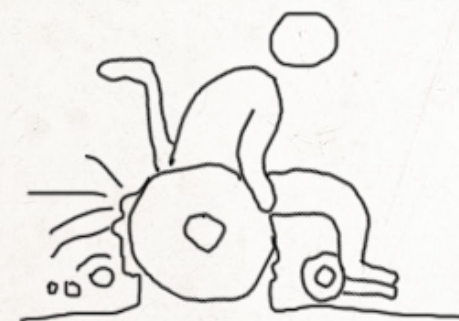
All senses become more aware. Hearing echoing helped to distinguish space around



Complicated to climb slopes



Some cobblestone is not adapted to walker or wheelchair users



Dirt sticks to wheels



Automatic door should have been more widespread



Not enough disability ramps



A problem to distinguish similar buildings, or streets' names, while wearing special glasses

Figure 28. A compilation of sketches, representing praxeology experiments' outcomes. Source: author

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

3. Field work

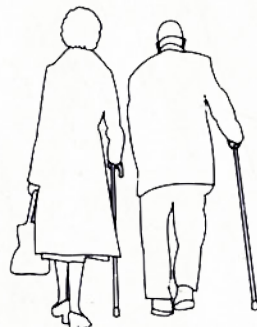
The author spent several days at the chosen site in order to meet elderly, observe how they use spaces, how many are they, their habits, etc. Also a couple of interviews were made. The outcome is following:

Total amount of elderly met - 39

Activities elderly were doing:



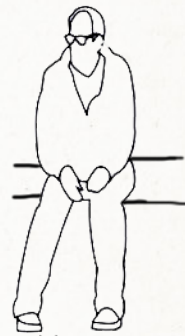
Alone - 31



Together with another old person - 8



Walking - 24



Sitting - 1

Elderly with aids

What kind of aids they were using



Stick - 5



Walker - 3



Wheelchair - 1



Taking care of a child - 1



Making shopping - 11

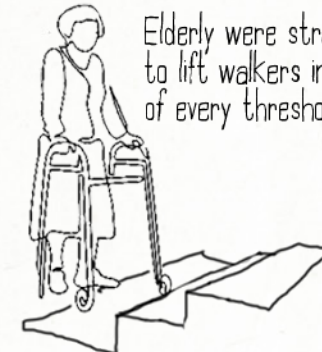


Riding a bike - 2

Many elderly didn't have any problems with walking, but they anyway were using walkers. The reason is that it was comfortable for them to put their bags in the basket, or sit on it to have a rest



Elderly were struggling to lift walkers in front of every threshold



A lot of children were noticed at the neighborhood. They were alone, or with parents. They had different age. The reason is that there are 3 schools in the neighborhood, and a couple of playgrounds



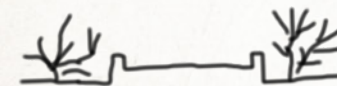
There were no benches around, so I noticed that 2 people in the middle of their walks stopped next to a trashbin and lean on it, to have a rest



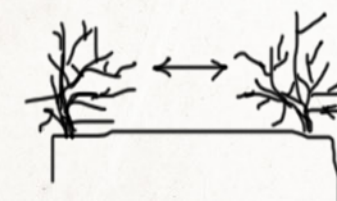
An old man was looking outside of his window for hours, because there are no meeting places in the area, and lack of benches.



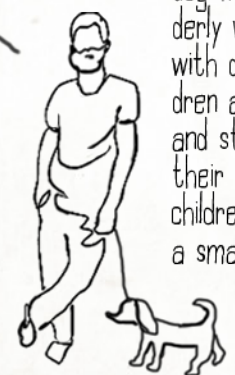
A group of elderly were doing some light sports every evening. Some of them were doing only Nordic walking



Thresholds were missing on sidewalks, so elderly were afraid to fall into greenery



Sidewalks were not elderly friendly. Lots of wide bushes made them narrow, so it was hard to walk using special aid



The area is dog-friendly. Some elderly were walking with dogs. Two children approached them, and started to pet their dogs. Lately, children and elderly had a small conversation.

Figure 29. A compilation of sketches, representing field work experiments' outcomes. Source: author

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Think-tools

With the idea of finding new interconnections and potentials as an attempt to rethink the modern architectural practice, the author used a concept of a “challenging a dogmatic status quo” (Frichot, 216). It suggests to use immaterial and material tools as concept- and think-tools. The tools should address, and actualize the situation, and they can be absolutely inappropriate to a situation, and by that challenging the norm. “Ways of acting in the environment are also ways of perceiving it” (Ingold, 2000, p. 9). It should provoke architects to think in a new way.

Think-tool “New potentials”

The author went for a walk on the site, taking an unexpected everyday tool from her place – a water can for plants. It is an everyday object, which she uses only for watering plants. Taking it for a walk was a new scenario for the object. The author was wondering how it can change water can’s purpose, and how it can interfere with the surroundings. Can this alien object become a new particle of a built surrounding, a new source, or a material? Materials usually are accepted by architects as an independent object, but in fact, they represent a potential of becoming something. What if the author had plenty of water cans? Multiplying and transforming can provide a new potential and relationship. Maybe the water can can become a structural element of surroundings? People’s habits or profound knowledge make them blind. They become too familiar with their environment, so it becomes impossible to look at it from another perspective.

Bringing a fresh unusual look to an unfit object changes normalcy focal point. The main point was to look what a new object can do, what a new state it can have, rather than thinking about its usual usage. It became a useful think-tool for finding new potentials and perspectives.

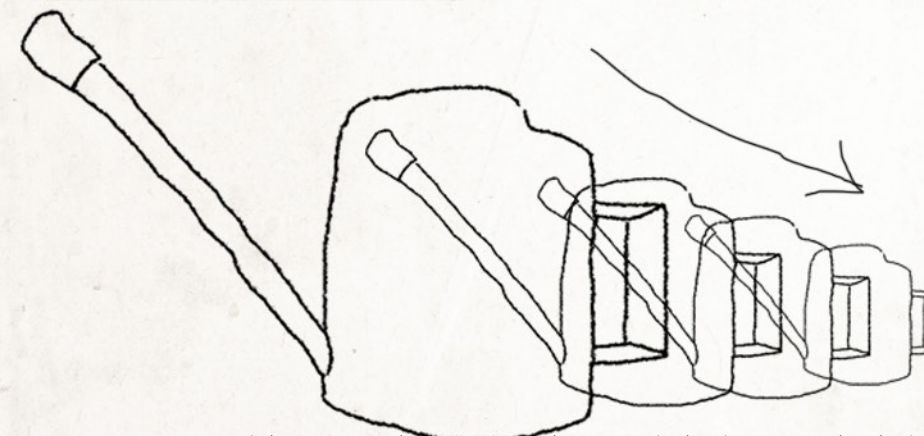
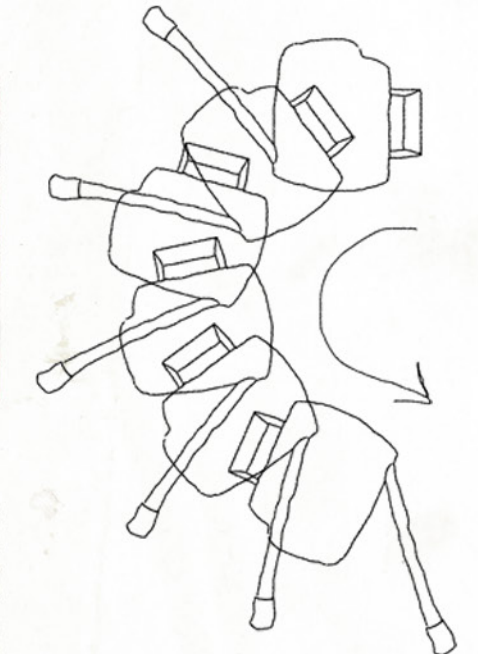
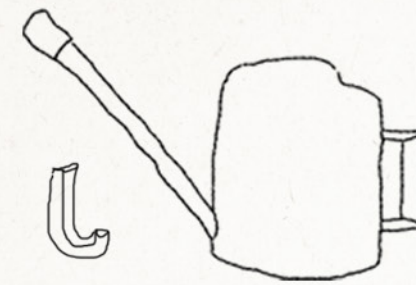
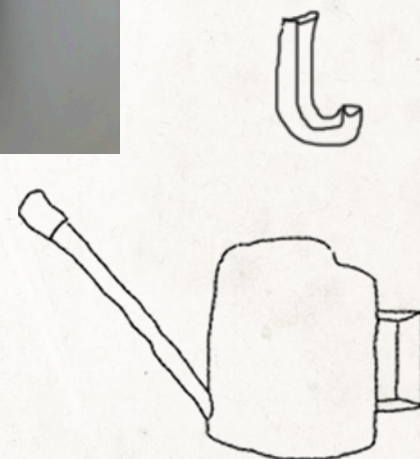


Figure 30. A compilation of photos, representing Think-tool “New potentials”. Source: author

7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Think-tool "Constant unconscious change"

The author forgot her water can for a couple of days, and it quickly has covered with dust. It brought some thoughts, that even the best design might be unfit with time, because everything is constantly changing. The solid shiny steel surface started to look mate and "soft". "Dust registers time, and changes objects undergo. Dust is "a marker of history"" (Kovar, 2014, p. 52). Zuzana Kovar states, that dust is not a product itself, rather than a sign of process. It made the author thinking about materials decaying, or fading away, which proved her previous statement, that architectural design is not be a finite result. Everything and everyone become something else with time.



Figure 31. A compilation of photos, representing Think-tool "Constant unconscious change". Source: author

Think-tool "Flexibility/adaptability"

Some solid links of components are required, when an architectural project is being built. Those links usually change the components' qualities, which means the components find their final stage. It prevents them from finding new potentials. It contradicts to author's idea about a constant change of environment and bodies. The possibility of low intrusiveness can become a potential for flexibility, adaptability, and care about environment. As well as it provokes participation, because if there are less solid links/connections, than less special interventions and tools are required, which means average people can contribute.

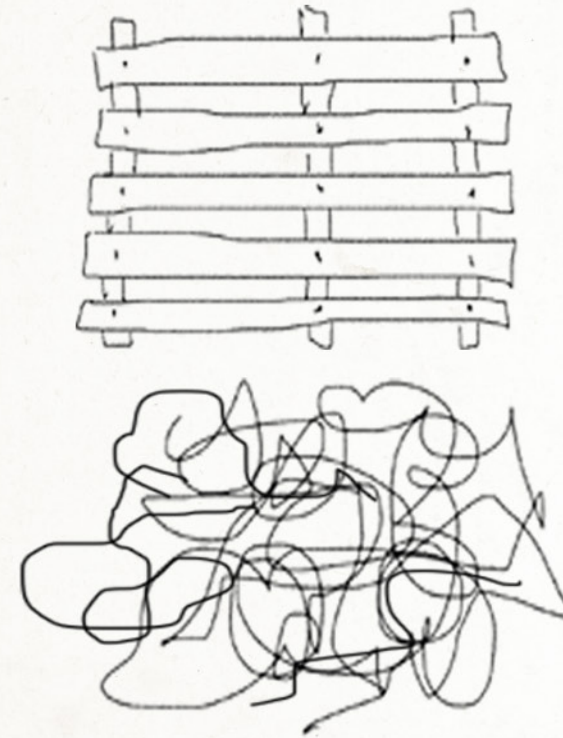


Figure 32. A compilation of photos, representing Think-tool "Flexibility/adaptability". Source: author



7. METHODOLOGICAL EXPERIMENTS

Ambiguity

It is a possibility to be open for more than one interpretation or option (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

The ambiguity provides freedom, and fights with rigidness of architecture. It explains, and helps to handle a chaotic unknown, grasping layers, which are out of architects' focus or knowledge. It is an alternative practice, which adopts flexible open ended nature of processes, individuality, difference of experiences. It answers the issues of flexibility and adaptability too.

Massumi wrote "the building would not be considered an end-form so much as a beginning of a new process. Stable forms can be designed to interact dynamically as bodies move past or through them singly or in crowds, or as sounds mute or reverberate, or as relations of surface and volume change with the time of day or season, or as materials change state with levels of moisture or temperature" (Massumi 1998, p 18).

The author consider ambiguity as an important approach for the Design Methodology.



Conclusion of the results of the experiments

Many different experiments were carried out while exploring the field of empowerment. Only effective experiments were included into the methodology.

Experiments were focused on participatory process, and aspects which help to rethink architectural practice.

As a result, a methodology, which proved to be useful, was invented. It can be taken as a self-reflective practice through engagement with

people and their processes, both in pedagogy and the profession. It can be used as a set of communicational and educational tools for interacting with users. Also it can be helpful as an aid for mutual empowerment.

The methodology might be used not only for elderly empowerment case, but also for different types of projects, which aim to empower citizens. The methodology is initially based in the Swedish context, but might fit to any developed country (a sovereign state that has a high quality of life, developed economy, and advanced technological infrastructure relative to other countries).

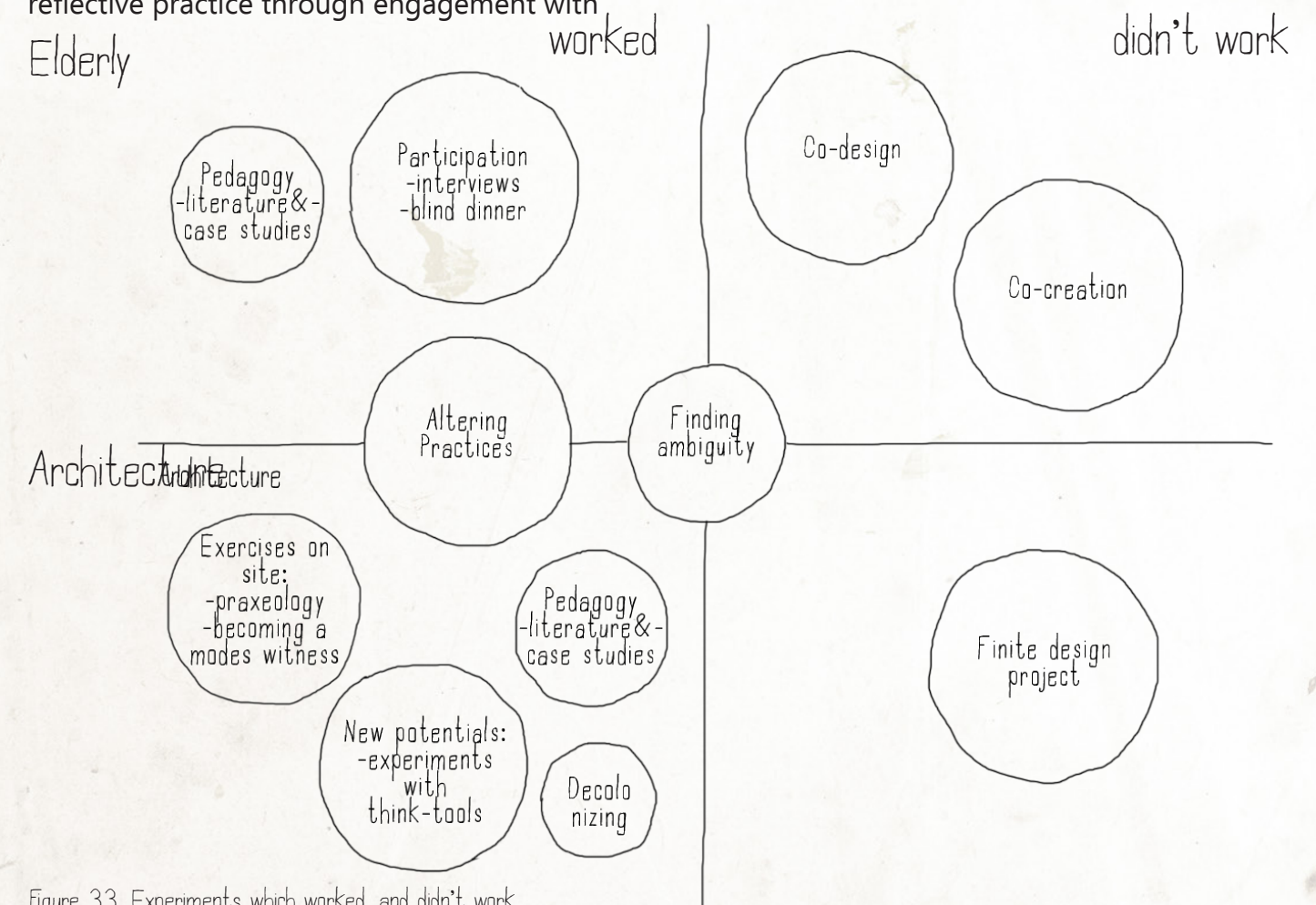


Figure 33. Experiments which worked, and didn't work

The "Body"

Overall scheme of the Design Methodology (A3 foldable)

The Design Methodology scheme is a product of Methodological Experiments. It provides a playful and critical exploration of what architects can bring to emerging debates around the creation of Age-friendly Cities. It is a compilation of experiments and methods of Age-friendly practice. It can be seen as an "interactive map", which suggests a solution of elderly empowerment. As well as ways of involving older people themselves in the process of re-imagining our cities for older age.

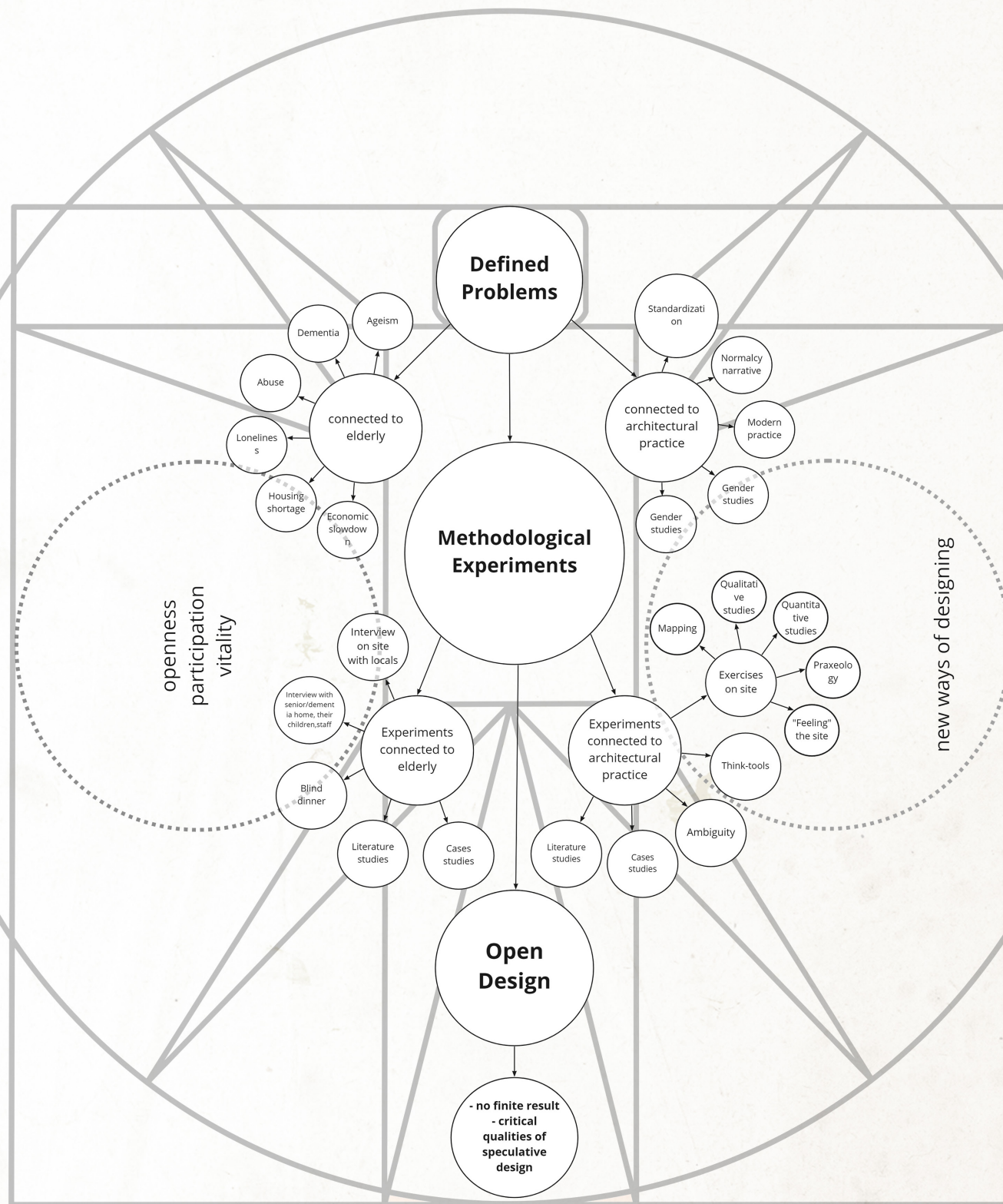


Figure 34. Scheme of elderly empowerment. Source: author

8. BRIEF FOR OPEN DESIGN

8. Brief for Open Design

Learning from feminist pedagogy, the author realized that there is no specific method that could bring a finite answer. Julia Dwyer and Anne Thorne in Evaluating Matrix were questioning whether the processes of rethinking, teaching, learning, collaborating were more important than buildings themselves. The design process is a process of "reflection-in-action", which means learning by doing, and having the ability to continuously learn during the whole process (Schön, 1987). It brings the idea that a design should not aim to give answers, but provoke new questions and ways of thinking about a challenge. It should promote the process of thinking, rather than dictate specific solutions.

By using the Methodology, an architect will not find the right answers, but will be exposed to issues, and tensions found in the intersection between participation and critical qualities of speculative design. The goal is to provoke new ways of thinking about the problem and engage architects' in reflections about the process. In addition, as Steen (2013) suggests, reflexivity is a crucial virtue in design practice. By reflecting on the process, designers can better understand power redistribution, and how criticality is approached in the process. The author goes further to suggest that one can promote reflexivity by asking questions. Provoking thinking rather than providing answers and expose possibilities rather than prescriptions.

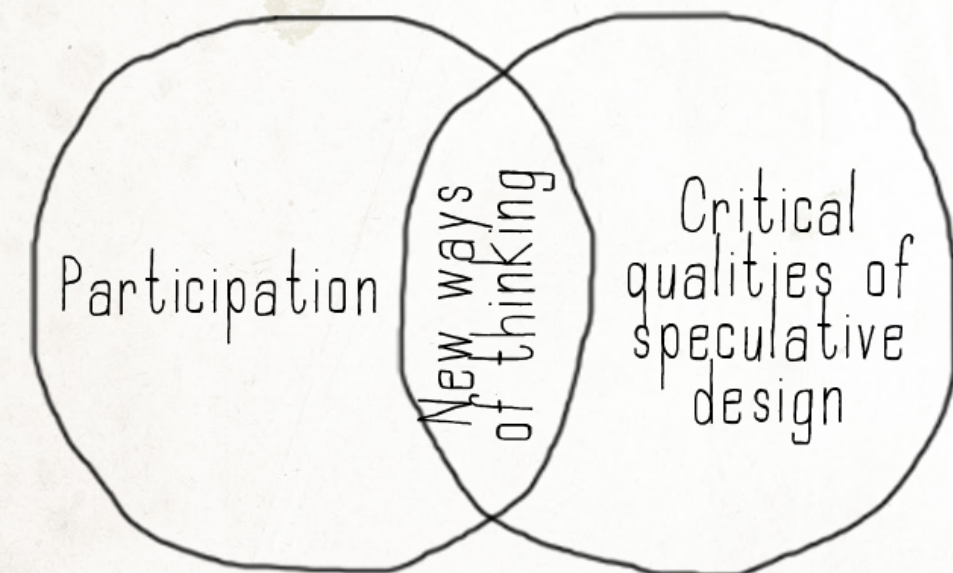


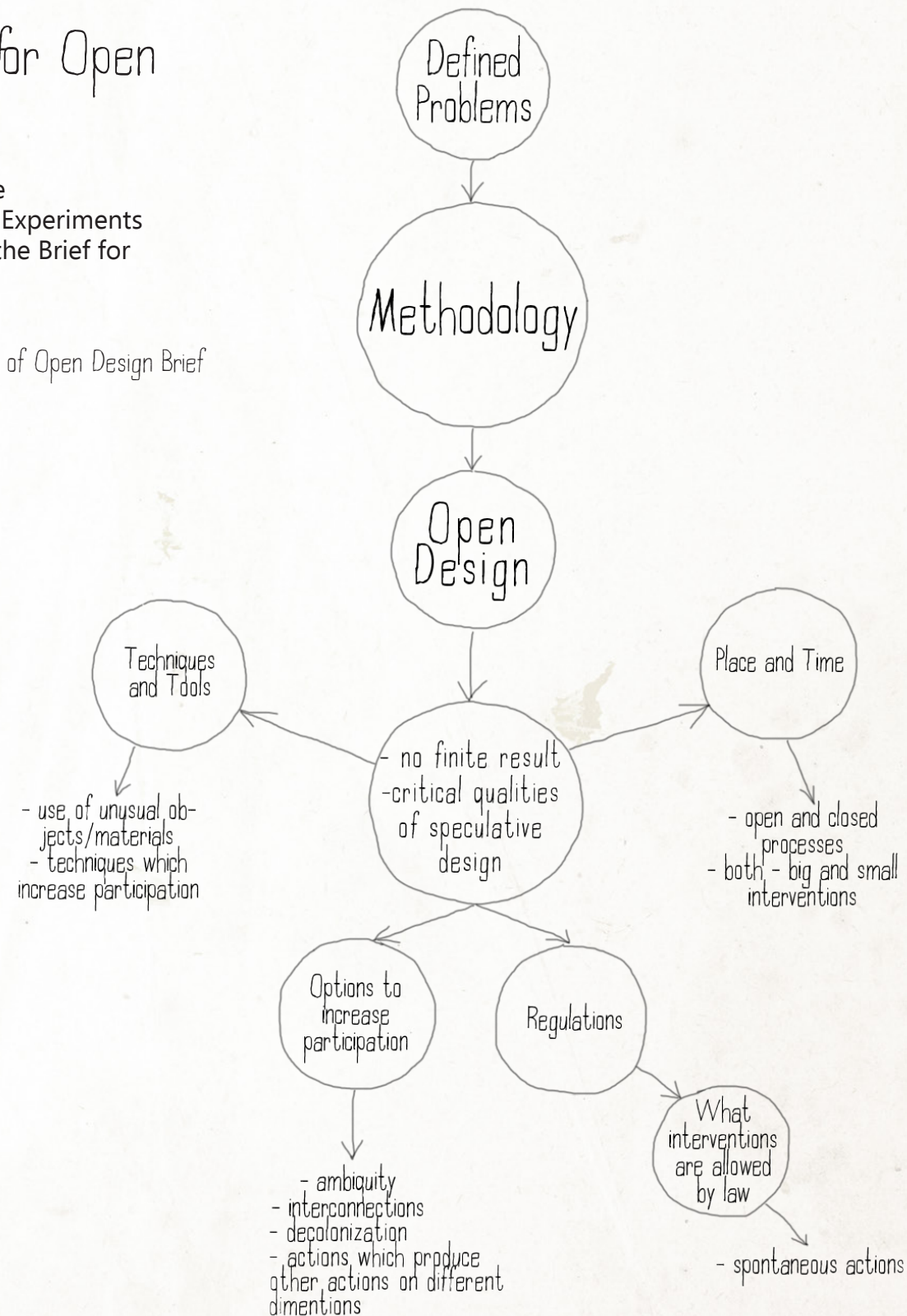
Figure 35. Diagram of Open Design Brief

8. BRIEF FOR OPEN DESIGN

8. Brief for Open Design

As the result, the Methodological Experiments developed into the Brief for Open Design

Figure 36. Diagram of Open Design Brief



The main Open Design criteria:

- no finite result
- actions which produce other actions on different dimensions



Techniques and Tools

Techniques and Tools

Usual architectural techniques and tools are not available for average people - it prevents from participation. Also, there supposed to be a fresh look on new materials' potential.

Outcome:

- use of unusual objects/materials
- techniques which increase participation and flexibility



Options to increase participation

Options to increase participation

Rethinking, decolonization, value questions more than answers

Outcome:

- ambiguity
- interconnections
- actions which produce other actions on different dimensions



Regulations

Regulations

What interventions are allowed by law.

Outcome:

- spontaneous actions for site use
- actions, which produce other actions



Place and Time

Place and Time

Is there time and place for interventions?

Outcome:

- open and closed processes
- both - big and small interventions

Figure 37. Diagram of Open Design Brief criteria

8. BRIEF FOR OPEN DESIGN

Potential proposal

After trying out Methodological Experiments the author came up with a potential proposal. The project should contain a number of buildings with different purposes. The idea is a metaphor for different stages in life (childhood, adulthood, oldness) but in a smaller scale. The architecture reflects if blocks are for independent, socially orientated elderly, or those who need care. Architectural elements should support social interaction, as well as a potential to mediate between bodies and their surroundings. The concept comes from the idea of a constant body change.

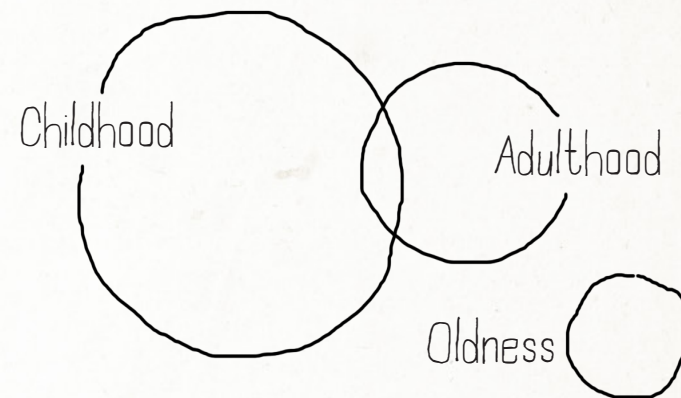


Figure 38. Diagram of Potential Proposal

How it potentially might look like on the site:

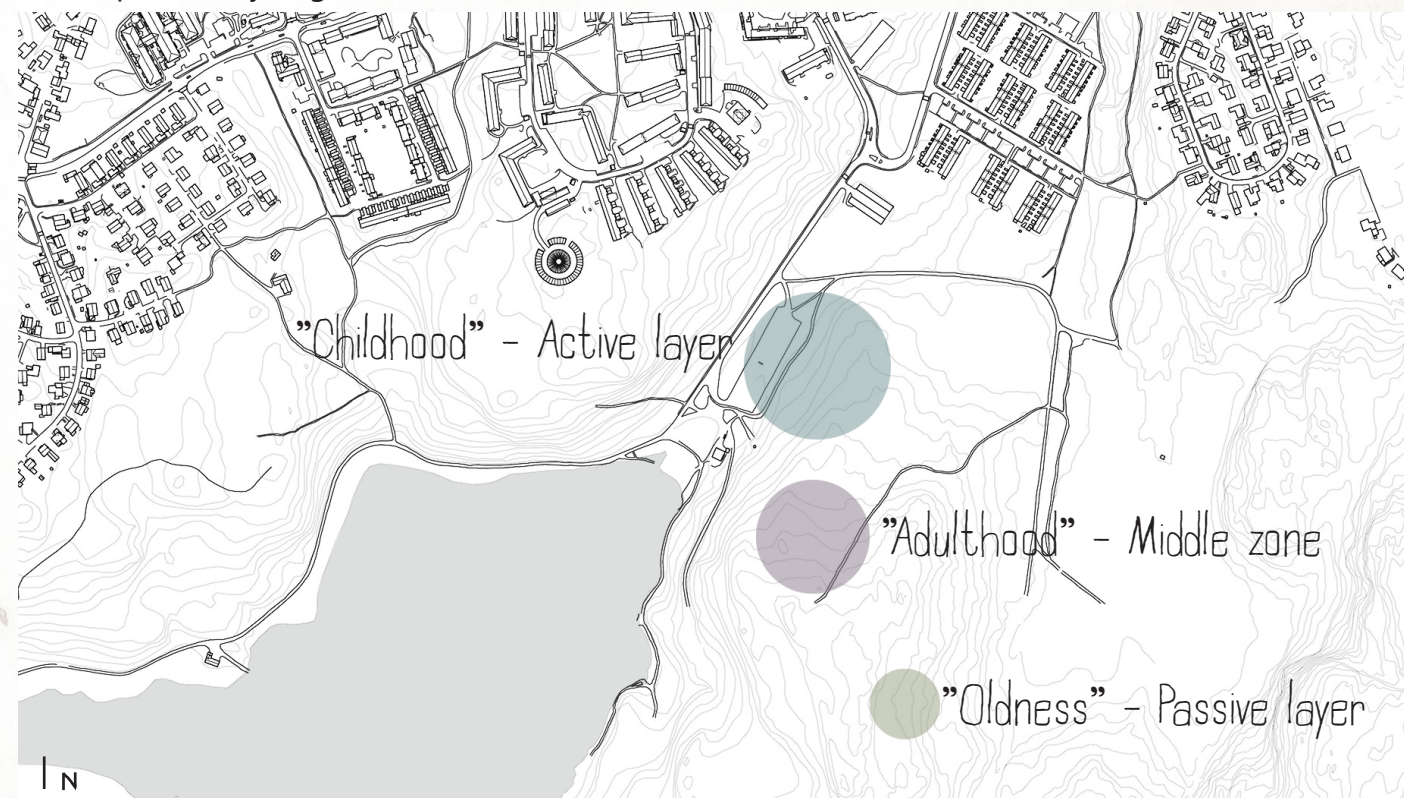


Figure 39. Potential Proposal at the chosen site. Scale random

Active layer — a Senior Home, it is a place for integration. The building is organized around a core space, which works as an anchor to the neighborhood.

The building should have a fluid open plan, being able to adapt to different scenarios.

The variety of the place's facilities should attract different age groups from the neighborhood. It will straighten inclusion, and empower elderly.

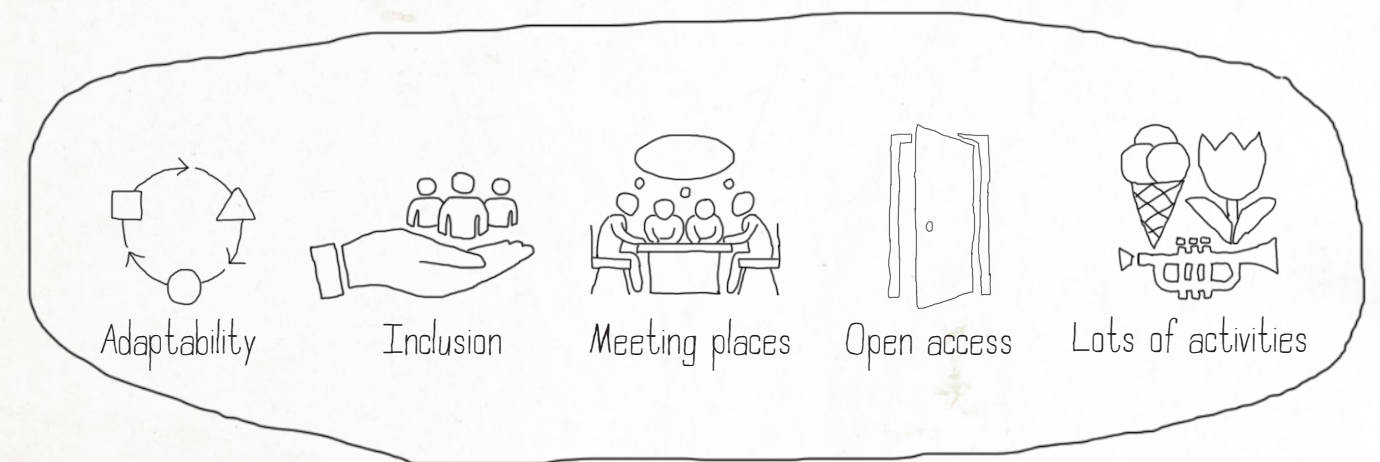


Figure 40. Graphical representation of the Active layer, including features' diagrams. Source: author

8. BRIEF FOR OPEN DESIGN

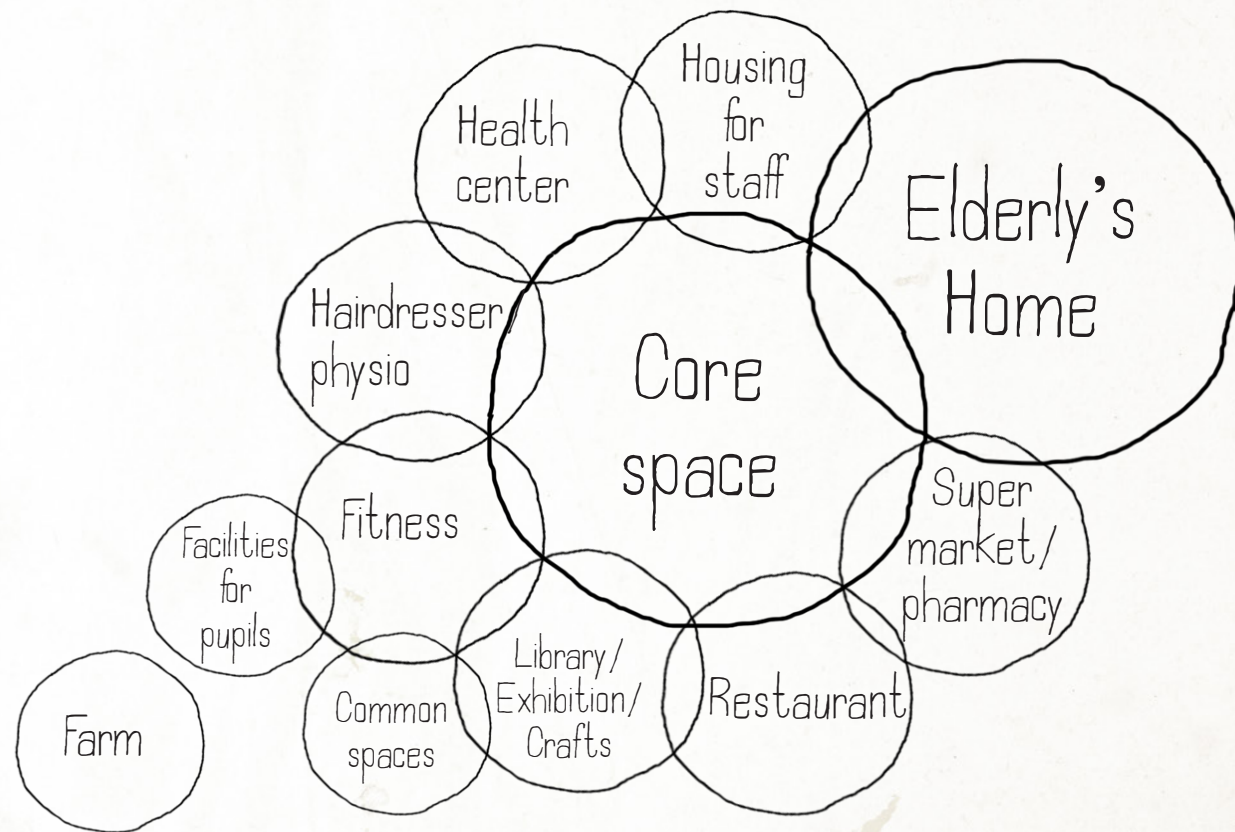


Figure 41. Potential building program of the Active layer.
Source: author

Middle zone — a Nursing Home. A place for elderly with special needs. There are different types of spaces — for people with dementia, or those who require constant medical care. There are less activities, and it is situated not in the proximity to the Active zone, but it still has connection. It has an opportunity to adjust to the dwellers' needs over time.

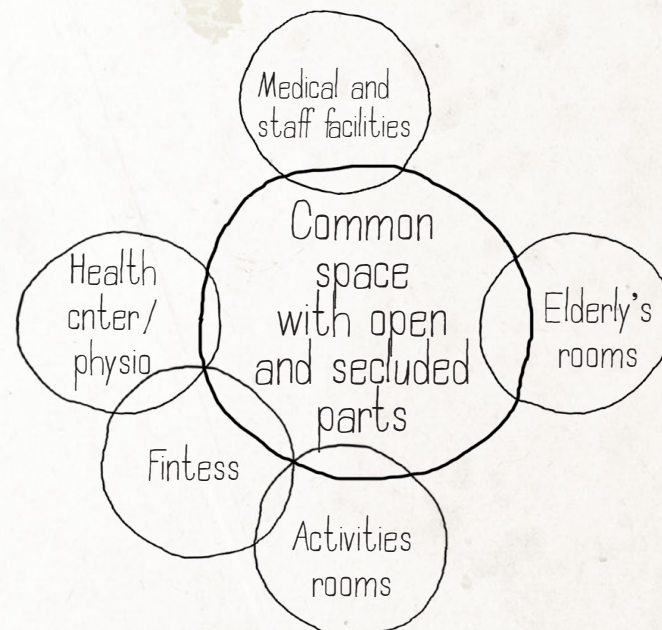


Figure 42. Potential building program of the Middle layer.
Source: author



Figure 43. Graphical representation of the Middle layer, including features' diagrams. Source: author

8. BRIEF FOR OPEN DESIGN

Passive layer — a Palliative Home. It is situated pretty far. A homely place where old people can end up their life journey with dignity, next to relatives, professional help, but not being isolated (but in privacy, when needed). The place helps relatives to reduce pressure, gives them a better memory of this period. A space offers chance to rethink life, and speak about death openly. It has a common space with vivid atmosphere, which encourages people to speak, hold activities, etc. with some intimate corners, which allow people to feel safe, release their emotions.

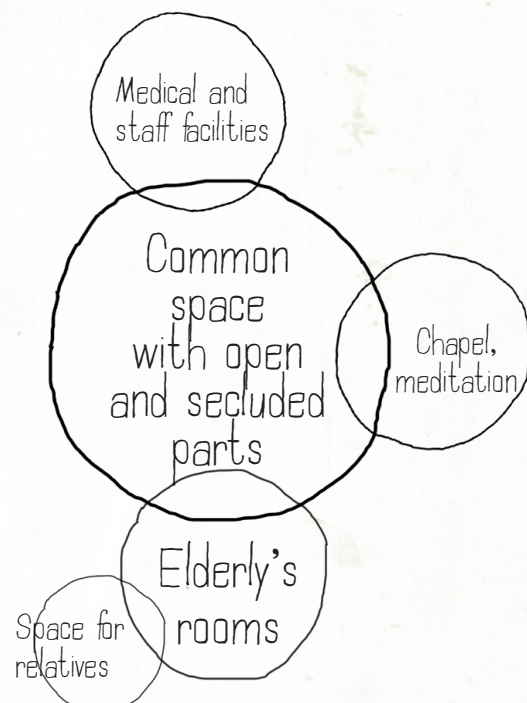


Figure 44. Potential building program of the Passive layer. Source: author
Guests will spend most of their time in private rooms - cozy, with warm light, and nice view. Their rooms should be rearranged according to guests needs, there should be a possibility to bring their "memories", and also accommodate their relatives.

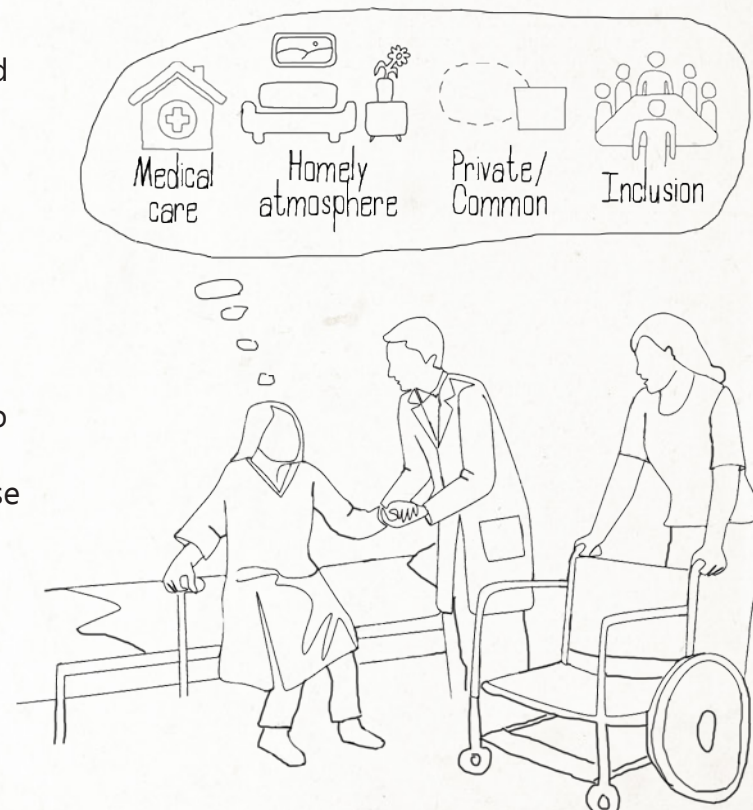


Figure 45. Graphical representation of the Passive layer, including features' diagrams. Source: author
Being still active and independent people co-live at Senior Home. If their needs change, they move into Nursing Home, in order to receive constant health care. At the end of life, if there is a need, they move into the Palliative Home. This way they can stay within the same neighborhood, being surrounded by familiar people and atmosphere.

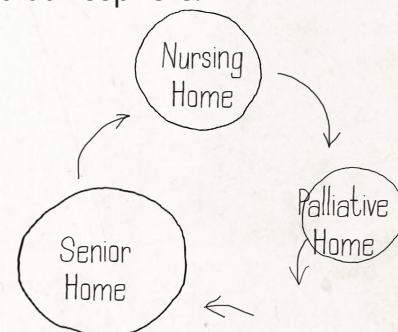


Figure 46. Diagram of moving potential. Source: author

The graphical representation of the potential design proposal. It should work as a mood board for the atmosphere of the place, showing mentioned before layers, and activities.



Figure 47. The graphical representation of the potential design proposal. Source: author

9. DISCUSSION

May 2022

Gothenburg

Hello my dear friend,

I hope you continue fearlessly fighting with injustice.

I thought, you might like to know, I have finished my thesis, and it was a beautiful adventure.

Remember, one evening in Venice we were talking about how unfair it is to get old in the modern world. Also about strange rigidity of the modern architectural education and practice. I think I was inspired to rethink those subjects, and do my humble contribution into changing the situation.

I often think, where our inspiration for work we do come from.

You say – from educational background, feelings, experiences, from people who surround us, even from childhood and memories. But as well – clichés.

Remember I told you, when I applied to my architectural studies – I've sent a motivation letter stuffed with intentions to be committed to the social and environmental sustainability, promising to make this world a better place. I bet, a professor reading it, smiled: "Oh, another one, who wants to save the world".

Despite of the gained knowledge, and losing naivety, I still believe architects should try to do it during this time of uncertainty and challenges. We can do it through designing a building, or being involved into a social, environmental, political, economic activism. The world is tired of the architecture on steroids. The epoch of the eroding toxicity should fade away. We have read a lot of books, and participated at a lot of protests. Although, we still have to learn many things.

What is clear so far – architecture is a weapon. Every line we draw, becoming a wall, which will dictate a certain scenario to certain bodies. It is pretty political. Sometimes even violent. But this is the price we pay dealing with a weapon. A weapon is dangerous, and serves for powerful ones. But at the same time, it helps to make revolutions. Architecture is not reachable for most of the people. It serves corporations, politicians, upper class. Buildings are seen as financial value – they are even called property, it makes them highly political too. Postmodern criticizes the modernistic idea "form should follow function", because nowadays the function lost its significance. Buildings are more and more becoming a storage for money.

Working class, elderly, migrants, or marginals can rarely express their word regarding architecture, or possess it, because they are not able to pay for it. Even though architects of last decades were advocating for participatory design. We should continue promoting civil rights in our field in order to get rid of discrimination, and "star-architecture".

So far, the existing practice has failed to support equality and environmental protection. Society demands for faster and more drastic changes promoting access, participation, equality, and leave behind old normative, which still shape our present. The standardization, invented in the 40s, violates nowadays abundance of narratives, and prevent bodies from changing. Having the best design while young, might be a disaster while becoming old. The majority of architects think, if they design having in mind a "standard" human, their designs will be appropriate for everyone. But in fact, a design for an average human will violate all bodies. We assume that we have a solid knowledge about bodies, and how they act. But there are unknown varieties of bodies, and they are constantly changing. This assumption prevents bodies and their relations with surroundings from change, growth, development, as well as it ignores situatedness. To avoid this, we should embrace ambiguity in our practice.

I would agree with you that the best way to develop the modern architecture is questioning everything, including our own ideas. Someone says – doubt is a lack of knowledge, but for me it is a key for a new perspective. As Richard Feynman said: "If we will only allow that doubt, as we progress, we remain unsure, we will leave opportunities for alternatives ... In order to make progress, one must leave the door to the unknown ajar."

Those thoughts were stimulating me while my thesis journey.

They inspired me for questioning architectural practice, and the way elderly are seen by society, and how they feel in the modern world. After a thorough research of the mentioned aspects, it became clear that there is a lack of actions in those fields. It encouraged me for creating Methodological Experiments. If you only knew what an adventure it was!

Some tools and exercises for it were invented. I was using a wheel chair, walking using a walker and being blindfolded. Putting myself into elderly's shoes, showed me so many obstacles, which are invisible while being young. Then I organized a "blind" dinner.

9. DISCUSSION

Remember, I was volunteering for visually impaired people, some of them are still my friends. So they kindly agreed to help me with this event. The experience was an act of empowerment, and praxeology related exercise. The outcome of the dinner proved that the modern architecture still values sighted people more, and exclude those with visual impairments. As well as it brought a clear understanding that a multisensory approach should be embraced in order to develop buildings that promote social, cognitive, and emotional development. I met many fantastic openhearted people at the stage of interviewing. I used this method as a source of looking at the elderly's problem from within. All the interviews were translated into a design language. I was "becoming a modest witness" on the chosen site, doing different types of field work, the qualitative and quantitative analyses. It gave me a multilayered understanding how elderly behave, use the site, problems they face daily, etc. Going further with creating Methodological Experiments, I decided to make an exercise using an unusual object in an unusual surroundings in order to challenge the norms. I know, you are curious where the Methodological Experiments brought me. I deliberately did not want to have a finite result. My Brief for Open Design is an open-ended story. I would like to focus on affecting surroundings' acts, which provoke other acts. And at the same time, I would like to question the normative structures. My dear friend, continue not listening anyone, there is a universe of unfulfilled dreams, and unheard voices. Do not listen those who say - everything you can imagine was already invented. It is not true, that aesthetics and social justice cannot coexist, justice equals beauty. Stay sensitive, it is the strongest strength. Look deeply, so you could notice silence.

Take care and talk more soon,
Marina

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