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# **FIELD STUDIES DETROIT**

Advocating a new paradigm

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Master's degree programme Architecture

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Supervisor  
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Institute Urban and Architectural History

Graz, September 2015





**AFFIDAVIT**

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date

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(signature)

**DANKE,**

FÜR DIE UNTERSTÜTZUNG, KORREKTUREN UND KONSTRUKTIVE KRITIK AN FRAU PROF. SIMONE HAIN VOM INSTITUT FÜR STADT- UND BAUGESCHICHTE.

AN FRAU SUSAN KRAUPP, DIE MICH ERST ZU DIESEM THEMA INSPIRIERT HAT UND MIR IN DER ERSTEN PHASE MEINER MASTERARBEIT DURCH RATSCHLÄGE UND WICHTIGE KONTAKTE ZU AMERIKA ZUR SEITE STAND.

FÜR DIE GEDULD UND UNTERSTÜTZUNG AN MEINE FAMILIE UND FREUNDE, DIE MICH DURCH HÖHEN UND TIEFEN BEGLEITET HABEN. EIN BESONDERER DANK GEBÜHRT MEINER SCHWESTER MARTINA, DIE MIR WÄHREND DES GESAMTEN STUDIUMS UNERMÜDLICH ZUR SEITE STAND UND MIR WÄHREND MEINER MASTERARBEIT IN DER EINEN ODER ANDEREN SINNKRISE DURCH IHRE EINZIGARTIGKEIT UND AUFBAUENDEN WORTE WIEDER NEUEN ANTRIEB SCHENKTE.

AN ALLE PERSONEN UND GESPRÄCHSPARTNER DIE ICH WÄHREND MEINES AUSLANDAUFENTHALTES IN DEN USA KENNEN LERNEN DURFTE. BESONDERER DANK GEHT DABEI AN DAS MICHIGAN URBAN FARMING INSTITUTE-TEAM, BESONDERS TYSON GERSH UND MOLLY HUBBELL. OHNE IHRE HILFE WÄRE DIESE ARBEIT NICHT ZU DEM GEWORDEN WAS SIE NUN IST.



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012

MISSION STATEMENT  
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# I. PREFACE

# I.I. MISSION STATEMENT

## WHY DETROIT?

For someone student the right choice for the subject of the master thesis is already clear at the beginning of the study. Others create a certain field of interest during various projects and based on that, they decide where to set their focus. Furthermore there is still the group of students who find a suitable topic for their master thesis by chance.

I belong to the latter group. I accidentally came across a newspaper article in “stadtaspekte – Erste Blicke”, edition 01, 09.03.2013 about the city of Detroit. This article describes the growth of the

city due to the automobile industry and at the same time, however, also its decay.<sup>1</sup>

The most shocking fact I read in the article was the dramatic fall of the inhabitants in the city. In the 1950th 1, 8 million people lived there. Back to that days Detroit was the fourth largest U.S. metropolis.

Representative boulevards and interstates, lined with huge skyscrapers, cinema palaces or impressive factory halls; these were the pure proud of the city.

But at the beginning of the 1970s the decline of the city started with the economic crisis and the following movement of industry. In parallel with the decline of the auto giants the population took flight. Who could afford it, moved to the surrounding settlements or completely somewhere else. Back remained people whom lacked the financial independence for a change of location and an impoverished and abandoned city centre, surrounded by well-to-do suburban settlements. Today only 688,701<sup>2</sup> people are living in Detroit.<sup>3</sup>

I couldn't imagine how this dramatic development could be possible and how the city looks like today. Hence it was clear and necessary to travel to Detroit, go on-site, explore the city with no specific planning objective. I decided to take a deeper view to the everyday life of the people who still live in Detroit.

---

1 Vgl. Kreichauf 2013, 60-67.

2 US Census 2013.

3 Vgl. Kreichauf 2013, 60-67.

## I.II. APPROACH

My approach was a personal one consisting of the awareness of eyewitness and on-site inspections. To be honest, this was a rather unusual but at the same time challenging approach for an architect. To put it simple, architects normally deal with drawn plans, discuss about urban planning decisions and create space and architecture.

Through an intensive field research in the city Detroit and an associated participation as an observer I hoped to find a new role towards city development and to explore unknown phenomena of the city Detroit. The cultural anthropological fieldwork is characterized by a variety of methods. The use of some of these methods should be an important element of my work, for example informal conversations with the people still living in the city, perception walks, field notes and experts interviews.

I structured my work into six chapters.

Chapter ONE „Preface“ describes my mission statement and the approach to the work. Chapter TWO „The Discourse“ acts about the informations taken from written sources. In Chapter THREE „The anthropological way“ I will focus on my personal way of approach, the field research in Detroit. This is the most personal part of the work with comments to own experiences and some photos to have an overview how the city looks like today. Chapter FOUR „Urban Agriculture“ is divided into three case studies of different forms of reinventing vacant land into urban farming. Chapter FIVE „The role of the architect“ gives an own contribution in the form of advocating the community. It contains a structural survey and a potential research of a Community Resource Center for the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative located in Detroit. The last Chapter SIX „Appendix“ shows an overview of the used literature and the table of figures.





018

FACTS AND FIGURES

026

THE EXISTING  
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042

CITY DEVELOPMENT  
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CONCLUSION



# II. THE DISCOURS

INFORMATIONS TAKEN FROM  
WRITTEN SOURCES





## II.I. FACTS AND FIGURES



Fig. 1: North-Amerika with the US state Michigan

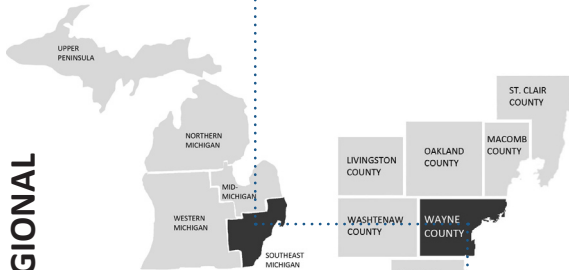


Fig. 2: The US state Michigan

Fig. 3: Southeast Michigan with its counties

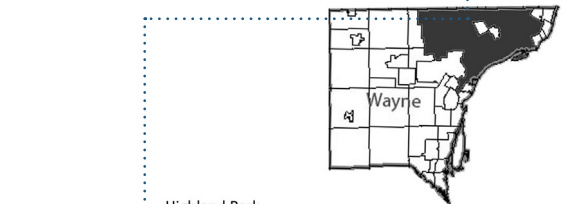


Fig. 4: Wayne County with the city Detroit



Fig. 5: The area of the city Detroit

## LOCATION | EXTENSION | AREA

Detroit is a city in the US-American state Michigan in North-America. With Michigan's official abbreviation MI, the state is divided into five big parts, as seen in Fig. 2 and furthermore divided into 83 counties.<sup>4</sup>

Detroit is located in Southeast Michigan and belongs to Wayne County; and is situated within the county in the Northern-East area. As you can see in Fig. 4, Detroit occupies a considerable space within the Wayne County.

Hamtramck and Highland Park are two independent cities located inside of the city Detroit and they are clearly recognizable as an enclave (Fig. 5).

Detroit is directly located on the Canadian border and the Detroit River, between the Lake Saint Clair and the Erie see. The city is the only one of the US cities which has a view to Canada in southern direction.

The city region of Detroit extends more than about 17 kilometers along the riverside, 10 kilometers to the east and 23 kilometers to the west. Also an 4.6 km long and 3.9 km<sup>2</sup> big island in the Detroit River belongs further to Detroit: the Belle Isle, which is located at the eastern periphery.<sup>5</sup>

According to the U.S. Census Bureau<sup>6</sup> 2010, the city has a total area of 142.87 square miles (370,03 km<sup>2</sup>), of which 138.75 square miles (359.36 km<sup>2</sup>) is land and 4.12 square miles (10,67 km<sup>2</sup>) is water.<sup>7</sup> Compared with the total area of Graz in Austria with 127,58 km<sup>2</sup> Detroit is almost three times as big.<sup>8</sup>

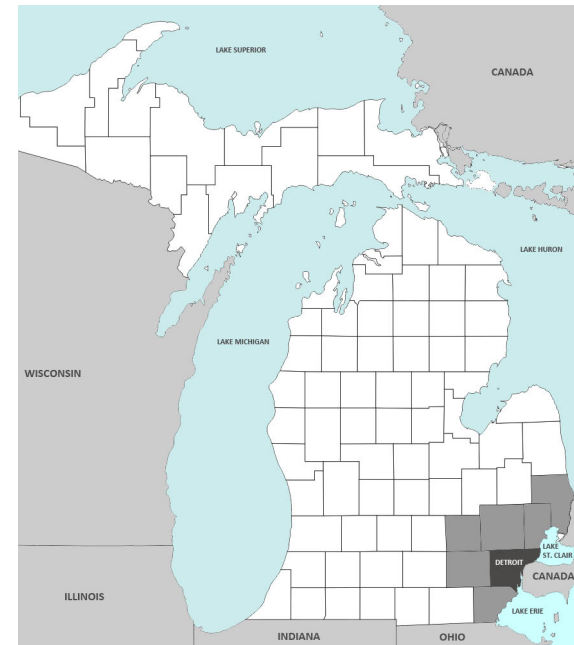


Fig. 6: The state Michigan with its 83 counties

5 US Census 2010.

6 The United States Census Bureau (USCB; officially the Bureau of the Census, as defined in Title 13 U.S.C. §11) is a principal agency of the U.S. Federal Statistical System responsible for producing data about the American people and economy. The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and takes place every 10 years. (<http://www.census.gov/2010census/about/>). Status: 23/04/2015

7 US Census 2010 (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2622000.html>). Status: 07/07/2015

8 Graz in Zahlen (<http://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10034466/606066>). Status: 23/04/2015

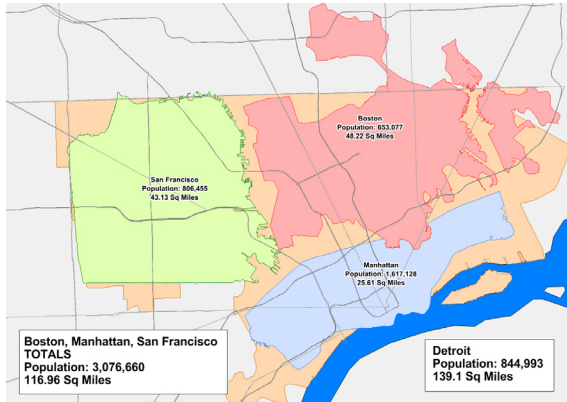


Fig. 7: Comparing Detroit to other cities

To get a feeling of the dimensions of the area of Detroit, I will illustrate in Fig. 7. The entire cities of Boston and San Francisco, as well as the city district of Manhattan can fit into the land area of the City of Detroit. These three cities record a population over 3,000,000 people, where the city of Detroit has just an estimate population of 688,701 people.<sup>9</sup>

## POPULATION

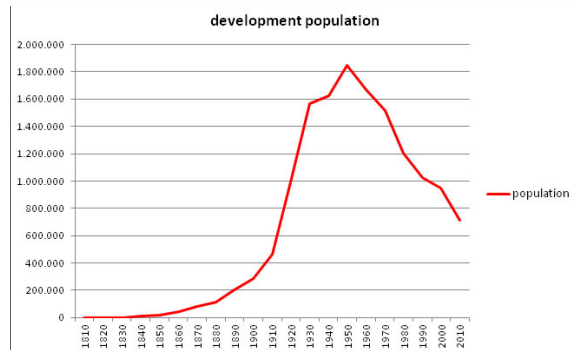


Fig. 8: development of population

The city became the 4th-largest city in the United States by population in 1940<sup>10</sup>, after only New York City, Chicago and Philadelphia. In 1950 the city Detroit reached its peak population of 1,849,568<sup>11</sup>.

According to the US Census 2010, the city had 713,777<sup>12</sup> residents, ranking it the 18th most populous city in the United States. But the city is still in shrinkage because in the year 2013 De-

<sup>9</sup> US Census 2013. (<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2622000.html>). Status: 07/07/2015

<sup>10</sup> US Census 1940.

<sup>11</sup> US Census 1950.

<sup>12</sup> US Census 2010.

troit records a population of 688,701.<sup>13</sup>

Compared to other large shrinking cities of the United States, Detroit shows the most dramatic decline in population of the past 60 years (down 1,135,791). While the decline in Detroit's population has been ongoing since 1950, the most dramatic period was the significant 25% decline between the 2000 and 2010 Census.<sup>14</sup>



Fig. 9: Decline in population

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

The diagram shows the racial composition of the city Detroit with an enormous amount of 82.7 % Black or African American people.

From the 1940s to the 1970s a wave of Black Americans from the south moved to Detroit to find a job. But with the decline of the city the population took flight and back remained people whom lacked the financial independence for a change of location, in the main Black or African American people.

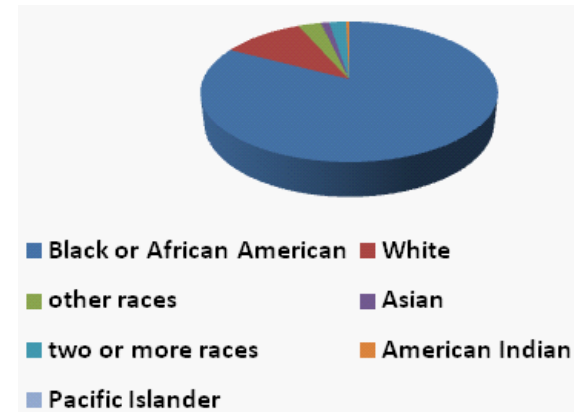


Fig. 10: Racial composition of the city Detroit

13 US Census 2010.

14 US Census 2000 and 2010.

POPULATION AND LAND UNDERUTILIZED SYSTEMS

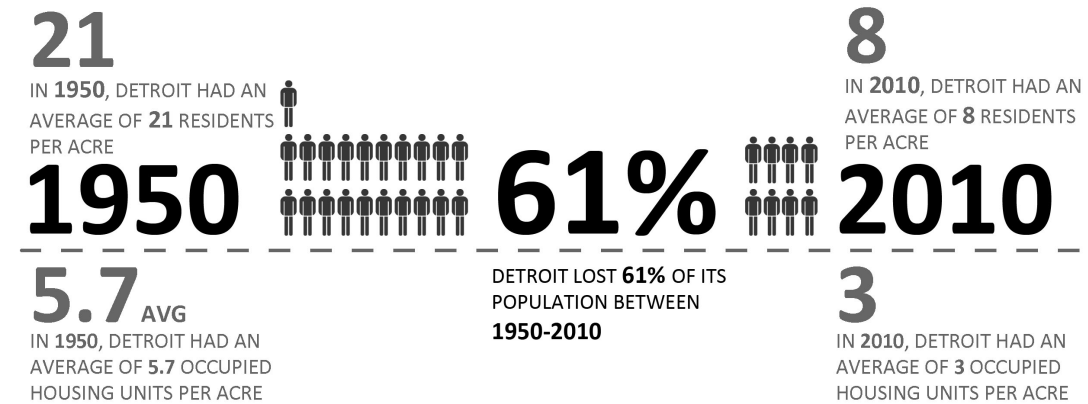
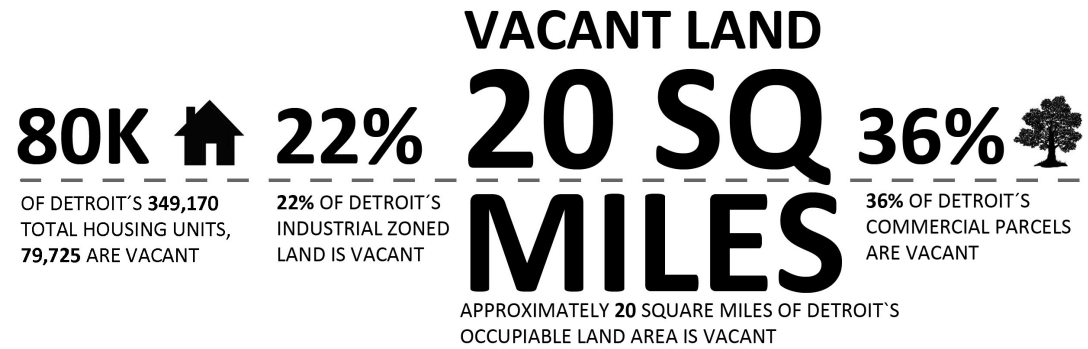


Fig. 11: Underutilized systems  
 Fig. 12: Underutilized land  
 Fig. 13: Population and land

**61%**

61% OF EMPLOYED DETROITERS WORK OUTSIDE THE CITY



**21%**

21.5% OF DETROITERS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO A PRIVATE VEHICLE

**30%**

30% OF DETROIT JOBS ARE HELD BY DETROITERS

**39%**

39% OF EMPLOYED DETROITERS WORK WITHIN THE CITY

**70%**

70% OF DETROIT JOBS ARE HELD BY COMMUTERS

21% OF DETROIT'S PARKS IN GOOD CONDITION  
**DETROIT RANKS LAST**

IN ACRES OF PARK SPACE PER RESIDENT



ONLY 21% OF DETROIT'S PARKS ARE IN GOOD CONDITION  
DETROIT IS RANKED **LAST** IN ACRES OF PARK SPACE PER RESIDENT

**33K**



33,000 DANGEROUS BUILDINGS IN DETROIT

**1.6K**



1,600 CHURCHES, BLOCK CLUBS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN DETROIT

**25% LOSS**



25% LOSS IN TOTAL NUMBERS OF DETROIT HOMEOWNERS BETWEEN 2000-2010

**29%**

29% OF CHILDREN IN DETROIT SUFFER FROM ASTHMA

**3x**

DETROIT'S CHILDHOOD ASTHMA RATE IS **THREE TIMES** HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE



**50%**

HIGHER RISK OF DEATH FROM HEART DISEASE

**69.1%**

OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT DETROITERS

**21%**

OVERWEIGHT YOUTH

69.1% OF DETROITERS ARE OBESE OR OVERWEIGHT  
DEATHS RESULTING FROM HEART DISEASE IN DETROIT ARE **50%** HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE  
21% OF DETROIT'S YOUTH ARE OVERWEIGHT

**82%**

82% OF DETROITERS HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR LESS

ONLY

**32%**

32% OF DETROITERS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ARE EMPLOYED

**60% DECLINE**

IN DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT FROM 2001-2010

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

COMMUNITY

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Fig. 14: Access and mobility

Fig. 15: Community

Fig. 16: Health and education





## II.II. THE EXISTING DETROIT

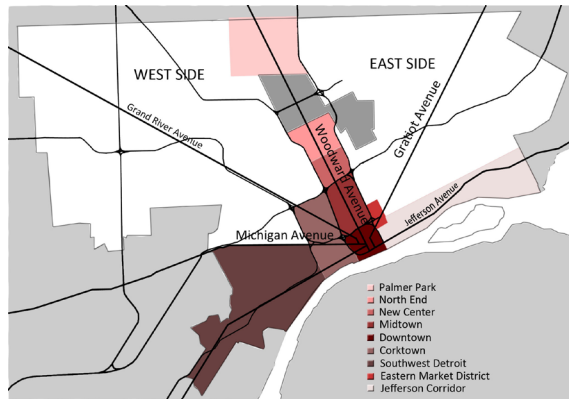


Fig. 17: City districts of Detroit

## TOWN SUBDIVISION

The city Detroit has not a firm arrangement of towns in the proper sense. Police areas, school areas or redevelopment areas exist side by side and have been changed already several times as a result of the demographic development.

As a historical important arterial highway, the Woodward Avenue plays an important part and she divides the city into West Side and East Side, running from the centre to northwestern direction.

Along this street some city districts with a strongly different image are located, beginning with Downtown, Midtown, New Center, North End and the area Palmer Park as you can see in Fig. 13. Further districts are the southwest area near to the Detroit River, Southwest Detroit, together with the Jefferson corridor along the Jefferson Avenue east of the centre.

## CULTIVATION

While the Downtown and the New Center area contain high-rise buildings, the majority of the surrounding city consists of low-rise structures and single-family homes. Outside of the city's core, residential high-rises are found in upper-class neighborhoods such as the East Riverfront extending toward Grosse Pointe and the Palmer Park neighborhood just west of Woodward.<sup>15</sup>

The closed cultivation stretches far outwards and extends over a radius of 40 to 60 kilometers at the US-American side around the centre. The biggest part of the settlement was in the era after the World War II. Till to the middle of the 1920s new existing buildings at the edge. From that time, the new suburbs emerge more and more self-confidence and so they have prevented their integration into Detroit. This is a reason for the far closed cultivation especially to the north and west, far beyond the city region of Detroit. Therefore less residential districts with a young structure and modern living comfort exist in the city.

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15 Vgl. Jones 1995, 2009-2011.

The city core marks the densely built-up inner-city at the river-front with their typical ensemble of office towers. Furthermore a mainly compartmentalized cultivation with small parcels dominates except for a corridor along the Woodward Avenue.

Through the long ongoing outflow of people, empty houses and fallow properties characterize the picture in wide parts of the city. Especially in areas immediately to the west, to the east and northeast of the inner-city, the cultivation is strongly thinned out more than several kilometers.

The industrial facilities are distributed relatively consistent over the whole metropolitan area of Detroit. They cover along the most important railway lines and often form distinctive miles-long corridors. However, many older companies lie fallow by the decline of the local industry especially in the area of Detroit or have gone run-down to ruins.

## CITYSCAPE

Detroit's waterfront shows a variety of architectural styles. The post modern neogothic spires of the One Detroit Center 1993 (Fig. 16) were designed to blend with the city's Art Deco skyscrapers. Together with the Renaissance Center (Fig. 17), they form a recognizable skyline. Examples of the Art Deco style include the Guardian Building (Fig. 18) and Penobscot Building (Fig. 19) in Downtown, as well as the Fisher Building (Fig. 20) and Cadillac Place (Fig. 21) in the New Center area near Wayne State University.

Fig. 18: Extension of the riverfront promenade in Detroit

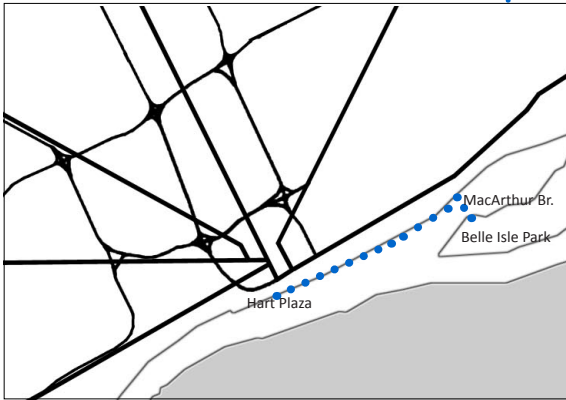
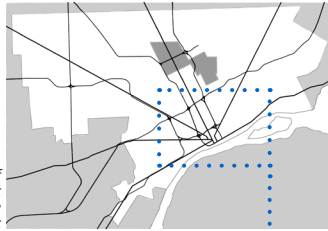


Fig. 19: Detailed view of the extension



Fig. 20: Detroit International Riverfront

The Detroit International Riverfront includes a promenade with a combination of parks, residential buildings, and commercial areas. This area is a partly completed ensemble of the different parts and in a permanent extension and improvement. It extends from Hart Plaza, located in Downtown Detroit to the MacArthur Bridge accessing Belle Isle Park, the largest island park in a U.S. city. (Fig. 13+14)

Fig. 21: Detroit International Riverfront





## ONE DETROIT CENTER

Fig. 22: One Detroit Center 1993

## RENAISSANCE CENTER

Fig. 23: Renaissance Center, Detroit

## THE GUARDIAN BUILDING

Fig. 24: The Guardian Building, Detroit

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THE EXISTING DETROIT





## THE PENOBSCOT BUILDING

Fig. 25: The Penobscot Building, Detroit

## THE FISHER BUILDING

Fig. 26: The Fisher Building, Detroit

## THE CADILLAC PLACE

Fig. 27: The Cadillac Place, Detroit





Fig. 28: Street grid of Downtown Detroit in 1896

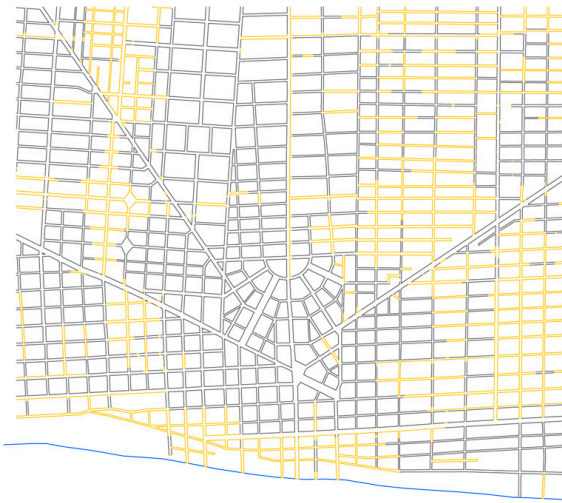


Fig. 29: Street grid of Downtown Detroit with the colored demolished block fronts

## THE RESTRUCTURING OF DETROIT

Detroit's urban planning structure fits into a combination of an early concentric city model and a homogenous city model.

In 1896, the form of downtown Detroit was a loose rectilinear street grid with remnants of an older Baroque-inspired plan at its centre. The area shown in Fig. 31 is 2 miles by 2 miles or 3.2 km by 3.2 km.<sup>16</sup>

A big part of Detroit's block frontages in Downtown were demolished during the 20th century. The centre and the area north of downtown were mostly spared.<sup>17</sup> Demolished blocks are shown in color in Fig. 32.

16 [Vgl. http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig\\_tab/udi200821f1.html#figure-title](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig_tab/udi200821f1.html#figure-title), hit: 2014/11/12

17 [Vgl. http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig\\_tab/udi200821f4.html#close](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig_tab/udi200821f4.html#close), hit: 2014/11/12

By 2002, downtown Detroit had been substantially restructured. Fig. 33 shows the street grid of Downtown in 2002 and features the many streets which were removed. The result: larger blocks, new wider streets and many of them connected to bordered limited-access freeways (auto routes). The arising new block edges are shown in color.<sup>18</sup>

Many different forces contributed to the destruction of block frontages in downtown Detroit. Different causes are shown in Fig. 34 in different colors: urban renewal (blue); highways (red); megaprojects (brown); street widening (green); and miscellaneous (orange).<sup>19</sup>

18 Vgl. [http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig\\_tab/udi200821f2.html#figure-title](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig_tab/udi200821f2.html#figure-title), hit: 2014/11/12

19 Vgl. [http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig\\_tab/udi200821f1.html#figure-title](http://www.palgrave-journals.com/udi/journal/v13/n3/fig_tab/udi200821f1.html#figure-title), hit: 2014/11/12

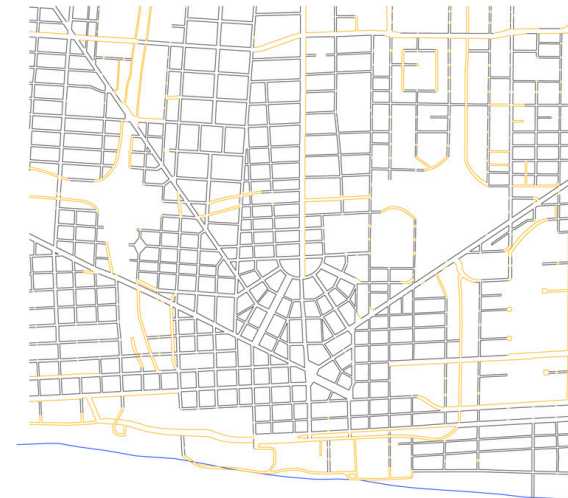


Fig. 30: Street grid of Downtown Detroit in 2002

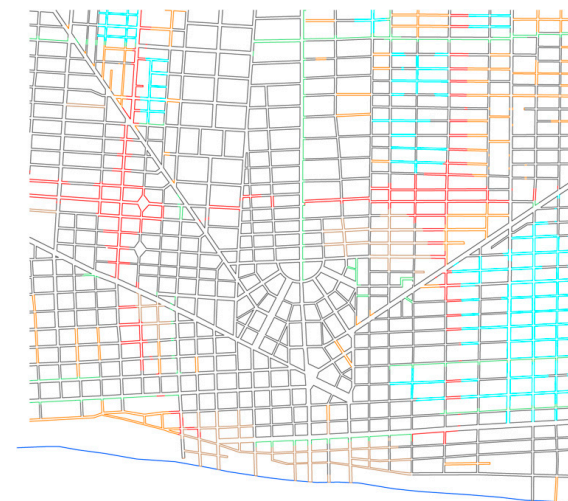


Fig. 31: Street grid of Downtown Detroit colored by different causes for the destruction of block frontages



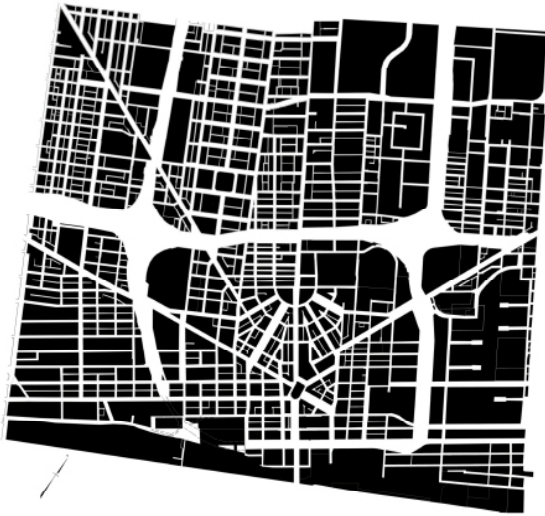


Fig. 32: Black plan of Downtown Detroit

## THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY DETROIT

Generally US-American cities are marked by a checkered, orthogonal street network. This doesn't apply to the street network of Downtown Detroit.

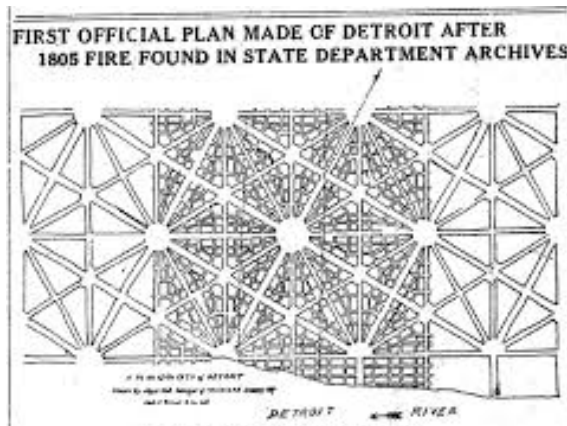


Fig. 33: First official plan made of Detroit after the fire in 1805

In 1805 Detroit was destroyed by a devastating fire. As the city expanded, a geometric street plan developed by Woodward was followed, featuring grand boulevards as in Paris.

Woodward designed a plan for the reconstruction of the city and followed in his ground plans to The L'Enfant Plan<sup>20</sup> for the city of Washington D.C. from 1791. Significant for this design are wide avenues and main streets, which lead away radial from distinctive monuments or landmarks.



Fig. 34: General principle for the Detroit Plan: Plan of the city Washington from 1791

The radial arrangement of the streets is a probably referring to the ground plan of Karlsruhe from 1739 and with it a referring to a city layout of the absolutism era. The radial arrangements of the main streets, which run up to a central square, accentuate the centre of the terrestrial world.<sup>21</sup>

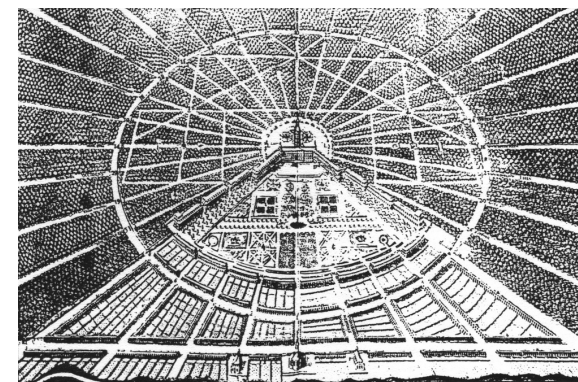


Fig. 35: General principle for the Detroit Plan: Plan of Karlsruhe from 1739

20 The L'Enfant Plan is the urban plan developed in 1791 by Major Pierre (Peter) Charles L'Enfant for George Washington, the first President of the United States.

21 Vgl. Kainrath 1997, 26.

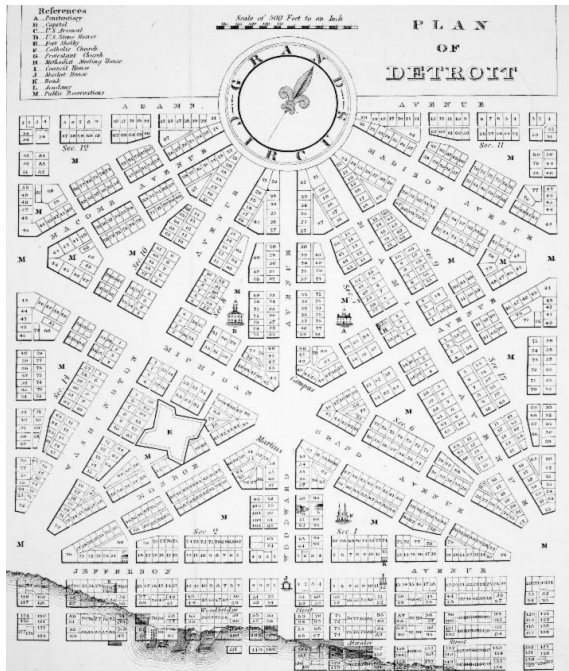


Fig. 36: Downtown Plan of Detroit

The enormous effect of this concept not remained without consequences. Over time concepts with radial axes became a preferred method to show the authority of the centre as an absolutely design element of the city.

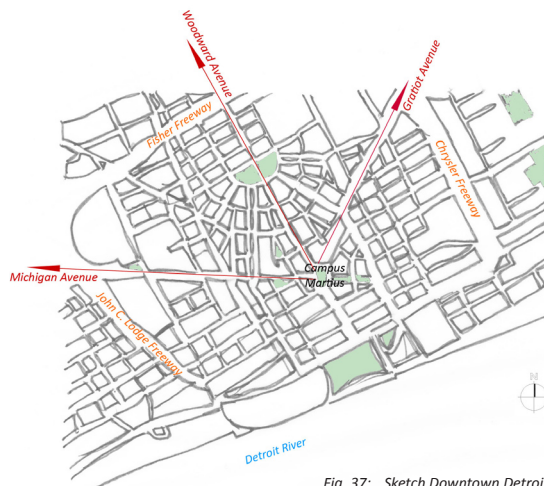


Fig. 37: Sketch Downtown Detroit

In Fig. 32 you can see that the freeways in Detroit are crossed concentric through three major axes, which come together in the heart of the Downtown at Campus Martius Park: Michigan Avenue towards west, Gratiot Avenue to the east and Woodward Avenue in the middle. Latter, once the central shopping street of the city, is today's "principles artery" through Downtown. She is named by Augustus B. Woodward.

Woodward planned the altogether five major avenues where Grand River Avenue (between Woodward and Michigan Avenue) and Jefferson Avenue belong to it. Both Avenues lead in different directions through the state Michigan.

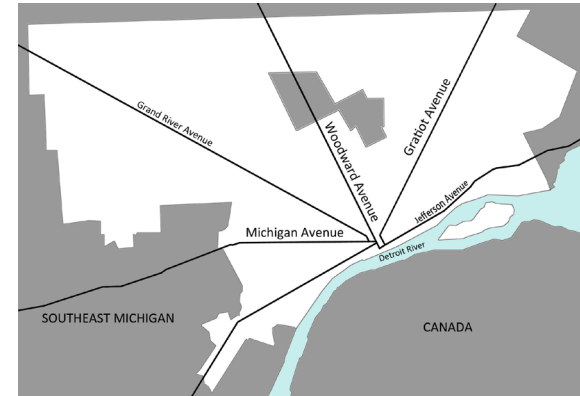


Fig. 38: Detroit with his five major avenues





## II.III. City development ZERO

### THE 3 CITY MODELS



It's very difficult to fit urban planning into a model-scheme concerning large-scale space-models. However we can agree to Gerd Albers that space-models of cities will arrange to following three main-types:

- Concentric city models (point- and satellite towns)
- Linear city models (band towns)
- Homogenous city models (grid-towns)

These three basic models and her combinations reflect the variety of possible town models. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to hold this pattern for comprehensive. It disregards for example town models which have originated organically, just as little it considers so-called spontaneous or unplanned urban developments, although such towns and areas has always exist in history.<sup>22</sup>

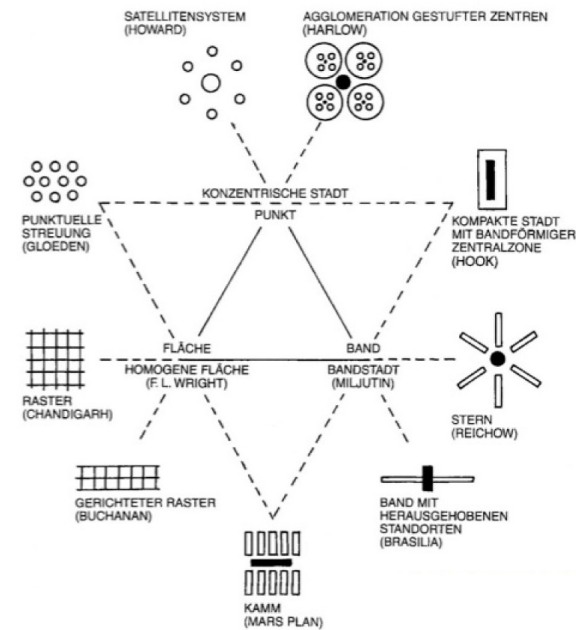


Fig. 39: Gerd Albers: Typology of city models 1992

22 Cfr. Kainrath 1997, 13-15.



## CONCENTRIC CITY MODELS

Characteristics:

- Monocentral structure
- Concentration of services in the centre
- Transport system is concentrating on this facts
- Importance and density decrease outwards

The ideal towns of the Renaissance and the Baroque are especially worth mentioning because they represent an immediate model for this type of town models till the early 20th century. The character of these in huge number appearing town models is the idealization of the town as a homogeneous, completed unity which differentiates itself from the surrounding land/environs sharply.

Perfection, balance and harmony of the unity is shown with circular and star-shaped arrangements and the streets within the town unity are led radial or, according to the model of the Antiquity of Vitruv, grid-shaped.<sup>23</sup>

The perspective arrangements are tied together with the glorification of the ruler. The spatial concentration on the imperious

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23 Cfr. Kainrath 1997, 25-26.

palace dominates road guidance and cultivation of the baroque town.

The plan of Karlsruhe 1739 is one of the most famous examples of this city model. The town is here only an appendage to the creation of the ruling castle (Fig. 24).<sup>24</sup>

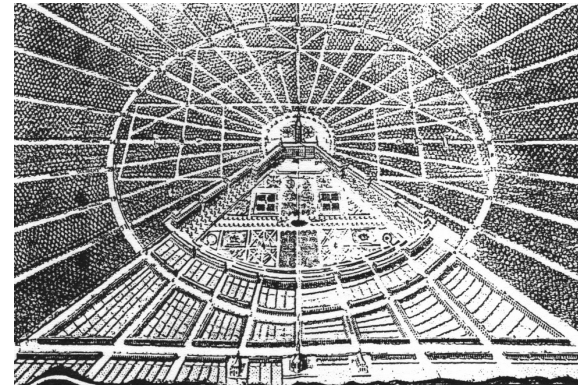
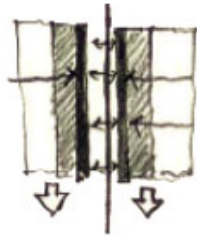


Fig. 40: Plan of Karlsruhe 1739: concentrated to a baroque-absolutistic palace

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24 Ebda, 25.

## LINEAR CITY MODELS



Characteristics:

- Linear layering
- Central facilities along the traffic path (linear centers)
- Efficient traffic path as a spine
- Density/importance decrease outwards



Fig. 41: Arturo Soria y Mata 1882, Linear city around Madrid

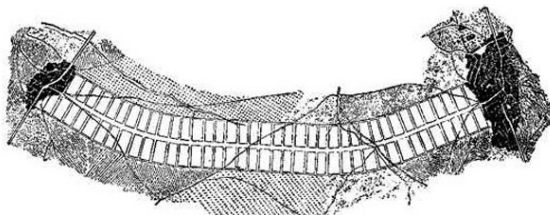


Fig. 42: Arturo Soria y Mata, linear city for the connection of existing towns

The Spaniard Arturo Soria y Mata (1844-1920) established this city model for the rapid growing metropolis Madrid in the seventies and eighties.

Starting with January 1882 Soria published his analysis and solution approaches for the town planning problems of the city through a series of articles in the paper of Madrid “El Progreso”. He sees his possibility of a realization of the town-land-balance in a linear settlement structure along an efficient traffic path, which should also involve all public and social facilities. Arturo Soria in “El Progreso” on the 6th March 1882: “A single street of 500 meters in width and unlimited length, I repeat: of unlimited length, which ends should be Cadiz and Petersburg, Peking and Brussel, this is the town of the future! (...)”<sup>25</sup>

# HOMOGENOUS CITY MODELS

Characteristics:

- Homogenous distribution of usage
- Decentralized distribution of services (NO center)
- Neutral traffic system
- Importance and density are homogeneously distributed

The city founding of the 17th and 18th century in the United States of America follows in a logical historic consequence after the grid model. This rationality leads forcibly into the quasi unlimited checkerboard as a town model.

Two examples: In 1682, so already decades before Karlsruhe, William Penn and Thomas Holme submit a grid plan for the city Philadelphia (Fig. 27), where they two integrate a pragmatic schema of rectangles between the both rivers. And also the plan for New York in 1811 shows the same model (Fig. 28).<sup>26</sup>

26 Cfr. Kainrath 1997, 26-27.

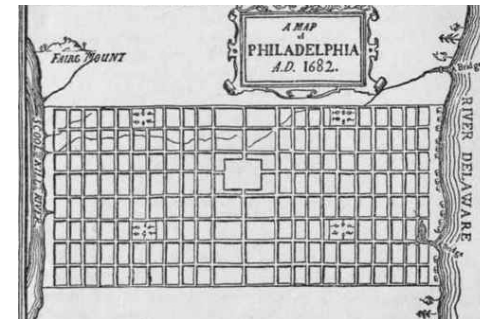
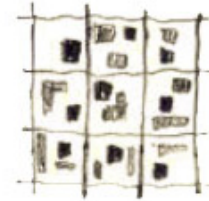


Fig. 43: William Penn and Thomas Holme, Plan for Philadelphia 1682, Grid model



Fig. 44: Plan for New York 1811, Grid model





## II.IV. City development ONE

THE GROWTH

### *The beginning of the automobile in Detroit*

Cities were essentially small-scale settlements based on a mercantile economy before the rising of capitalist economies in the eighteenth century and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century.

In 1701 Detroit was founded as a French settlement and became with approximately 2,000 inhabitants state of a city.

From 1805 to 1847, Detroit was the capital of Michigan. It was recaptured by the United States in 1813 and incorporated as a city in 1815.<sup>27</sup>

The city had grown steadily from the 1830s with the rise of shipping, shipbuilding, and manufacturing industries. Strategically located along the Great Lakes waterway, Detroit emerged as a major transportation hub.<sup>28</sup>

The history of the automobile was initiated by Henry Ford. He picked out Detroit for his location for a thriving carriage trade to build his first automobile in 1896.<sup>29</sup>

In 1903 Henry Ford established „Ford Motor Company“ as the

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27 Vgl. Oswald 2004, 228.

28 Vgl. Jones 1995, 2006-2007.

29 Vgl. Unger 1995, 1991.

second big car manufacture together with 11 investors. In 1908 Ford constructed the model T, which was one of the most sold cars of the world; till 1927 15 million pieces of this model were built in the USA. A production number only topped in 1972 by the VW Beetle. Through the production on the assembly line since 1913, Ford promoted the industrial mass production and achieved an increase in productivity. In 1940 Ford Motor Company was the second-biggest automobile producer in the world and produced 28 million compact cars and 5 million tractors.<sup>30</sup>

The jobs at „Ford Motor Company“ were desired and led to a boom of immigration. The company Ford had already introduced the 8-hours working day and the wage level was clearly above the average. Thereby Henry Ford wanted strengthen the buying power and with it the sales of mass-made goods. The growth of the auto industry was reflected by changes in businesses throughout the Midwest and nation, with the development of garages to service vehicles and gas stations, as well as factories for parts and tires.

Ford’s manufacturing—and those of automotive pioneers William C. Durant, the Dodge brothers, Packard, and Walter Chrysler—established Detroit’s status in the early 20th century as the world’s automotive capital.<sup>31</sup>

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30 Vgl. Fehl 1990, 62.

31 Ebda., 62-66.

### *The growth of the automobile industry*

### *The immigrants flow*

### *Fordism*

This highly efficient system led to a revolution in production. On the one hand, the product - the Model T car - was just what consumers wanted, being reliable and simple to drive and maintain. On the other hand, the system of production suited the labor market of American cities, which at the time were crammed with migrants from many European countries.

Thousands of people took over the jobs in the industry sector, 300,000 people from the Southern States settled down in the city.<sup>32</sup> The relatively simple jobs on the assembly line could be undertaken by immigrants since they required limited training or knowledge of English. Henry Ford's factory system resulted in a productive linking of the technical division of labor (the work tasks that need to be done) with the social division of labor (the skills of the people available to do the work). The result was an increase in both: supply of, and demand for, the product and the development of mass production.<sup>33</sup>

So Fordism can be seen as a very wide-ranging concept that can be used to analyze changes in at least three different ways: first, changes in the way people work; second, changes in the way industrial production is structured; and third, changes in the organization of society as whole.<sup>34</sup>

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32 Vgl. Oswalt 2004, 228.

33 Vgl. Knox/Pinch 2006, 24.

34 Ebda., 23.

The dramatic excess of births over deaths resulting from improvements in medical practice and public health and reinforced by massive immigration to fill the gaps in the workforce for production on war goods, lead to an increased rate of urban growth. Changes in building technology made it possible for cities to grow upwards as well as outwards. The growth of the capitalist economy with successive improvements in urban transport systems produced a sequence of growth phases with a series of suburban zones.<sup>35</sup>

In 1953 the city Detroit reached his peak of population with 1,849,568<sup>36</sup> and set on a decline since this time.

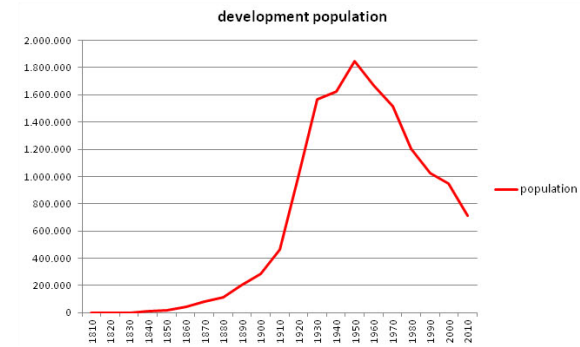


Fig. 45: Development of population in Detroit with his peak in 1953

35 Vgl. Knox/Pinch 2006, 20-23.

36 US Census 1950.



# II.V. City development TWO

## THE SHRINKAGE







*Downtown Detroit 1916*





*Downtown Detroit 1916*





*Downtown Detroit 1960*





*Downtown Detroit 1994*







*Downtown Detroit 2013*

***Garden-city movement, Ebenezer Howard***

In the history there exist a range of examples for shrinking cities. Wars, catastrophes and epidemics have decimated the population of cities or entire areas. But the urban shrinkage of the 20th century obviously differentiate oneself from the historic examples. The population decrease extended over an always longer period of time and took place at an increasing prosperity and at times of peace and not only through exterior violent influences.<sup>37</sup>

More than hundred years ago Ebenezer Howard, the pioneer of the english „garden-cities“-movement, made an unexpected prognosis. He predicated that London, in those days the biggest city of the world with 6.6 million inhabitants, would shrink to only 20 % of his population. Howard wanted to create a better life with free space, good living conditions, new parcs and public areas through his decentralized garden-citites. This utopian enthusiasm remembers that once the „shrinking city“ was considered as a positive development and as a necessary contrary movement to the overcrowding of the mega cities in the 19th century. Howard was not right with the shrinkage of London, but he definitely realized a displacement of growth from the core of

the cities to the periphery. The growth of the London region took place in those suburban areas, in which Howard wanted to settle his garden-cities.<sup>38</sup>

The urbanism of the 20th century primarily was decentralization, the process of redistributing or dispersing functions, powers, people or things away from a central location or authority. People and industry get attracted by cheap land and free space at the periphery, and so „shrinking cities“ arise in the core of the city. We also speak about suburbanization.

Detroit is an example of a shrinking city which doesn't go back to a „regional shrinkage“, where the city centre, her suburbs and the agricultural hinterland all were in shrinkage because of the decline of important industries and the following less replacement by new jobs. To the contrary, the shrinking cities are located in the core of those regions, in which population and employment figures grow, but the location of these regions is relocated from the core to the periphery. Consequently back remained poverty and fallow land in the city centre. The greater region Detroit with approximately 5 million people gain continuous more and more inhabitants and prosperity. During Detroit is the poorest city of the nation, together with New Orleans; the suburban Oakland

### ***Decentralization - suburbanization***

### ***Detroit - an extraordinary example for a shrinking city***

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38 Vgl. Ebenezer Howard 1898, 1965, 13. Kap.

County in the Northwest is the second richest county of the land. Today Detroit as a metropolitan area is an important centre of a worldwide network of the automobile production, even more important than in the year 1950. The most productive automobile factory of the world is located in a suburb of Detroit.<sup>39</sup>

The reason for the curious pattern of shrinkage and growth in Detroit is the varying destiny of the production centers which are developed between 1890 and 1930 and which reached her peak at the beginning of the fifties. Factories were organized in four to five-floor loft buildings in the near of the traditional city core and the rail line. After world war II the loft-building has been replaced by huge one-floor buildings. Such factories needed the cheap land and the open space, which was only found in the periphery. And the new factories rather were oriented to trucks and freeways than the railroad lines of the city.

Especially through the „Interstate Highway Act“ of 1956 with a new 65,600 kilometers long freeway network, a restructuring of the city began. But even more important for the restructuring of the city was the suburban housing program, initiated by the Federal Government. The desire for an own house was very popular in America and symbolized the privilege of the flight of the overcrowded and unhealthy city since the 19th century. The problem was the price for such dream-houses, even for the most part of the middle class. The Federal Housing Administration, FHA,

of the Roosevelt Government created a new funding system. So at least the white middle and working class could realized their dream of an own house. But such mortgages were not available for a purchase of a house in the city. That's the reason why the existing houses in the city began to ruinous. The movement of people to the suburbs and the associated movement of factories led to the bankruptcy of the city. The rapid growing suburbs not only took the majority of the population in a region, but also the major number of production centers and retail businesses. In the seventies they transformed into a new form of a decentralized city - an edge city.<sup>40</sup>

There exist a lot of thesis for the reason of the shrinkage of the city Detroit. One point is clear, in this case we cannot speak of a single reason for the dramatic development in Detroit.

It is a truism that Detroit's urban crisis took its beginning with the Detroit Riots of 1967 and get worse with the election of Coleman Young to the first black mayor of Detroit. But it is incontestable that the Riots of 1967 caused a racial segregation in the residential areas.<sup>41</sup>

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40 Vgl. Oswald 2004, 64-73.

41 Vgl. Oswald 2004, 232-234.

„In the violent summer of 1967, Detroit became the scene of the bloodiest uprising in a half century, and the costliest in terms of property damage in U.S. history. At the week's end, there were 41 known dead (actually 43), 347 injured, and 3,800 arrested. Some 5,000 people were homeless (the vast majority Negro), while 1,33 buildings had been reduced to mounds of ashes and bricks, and 2,700 businesses sacked. Damage estimates reached \$50 million.“<sup>42</sup>

The riots of 1967 let the white inhabitants flee in the safe suburbs what transformed the town into a ghetto with shrunken tax amount, dilapidated school system and many other social problems.

The probably most obvious factor for the decline was the shrinkage of the automobile industry. Of the 2000 companies around 1910, just the „Big Three“ - General Motors, Ford and Chrysler - back remained.<sup>43</sup> With the oil crisis of the seventies and the boom of the industrial strength of Europe and Asia particular the local automobile industry suffered a setback and had to close the fabrics. The Big Three underestimated the Japanese and European competitors who entered now the US market.

Like in Chicago, hundred thousand immigrants derived to Det-

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42 B.J. Widick, zit. n. Spreen/Holloway 2005, 1.

43 Vgl. Jones 1995, 2008.

roit between 1915 and 1960. Mostly these were the unqualified, black workers who hoped for lucrative jobs from the ambitious automobile industry. Long time the promises were also kept by the sure job.

However, already after the second world war more and more car works placed on automation, a large part of the auxiliary manpower fell victim to the red pencil. Their jobs were taken over from machines – there were no more place for thousands of blacks in the factories overnight.

Just through an analysis of the complex context of race, housing and industry in the middle of the 20th century the current state of the city and their inhabitants could be understood and explained entirely.

The plans of Detroit as you can see in Fig. 46 of the years 1916, 1950, 1960 and 1994 record how the clear visible structure slowly decomposed over the time. The blocks of buildings defiber and their edges decrease gradually till an complete disappearance. The streets lead to vacant properties till the grid of the streets itself become unrecognizable.

Detroit became the „suburb“ of its suburbs.<sup>44</sup>

44 Vgl. Plunz 1995, 2012.



1916



1950



1960



1994

Fig. 46: Process of decay 1916, 1950, 1960 and 1994



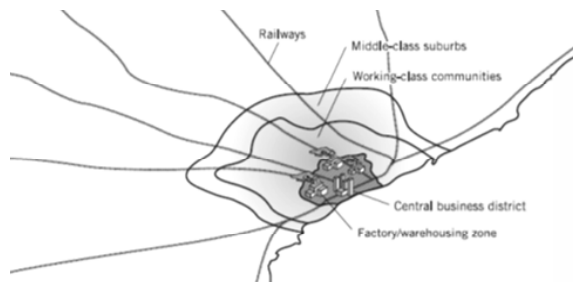


Fig. 47: The transition of the classic industrial city, circa 1850–1945

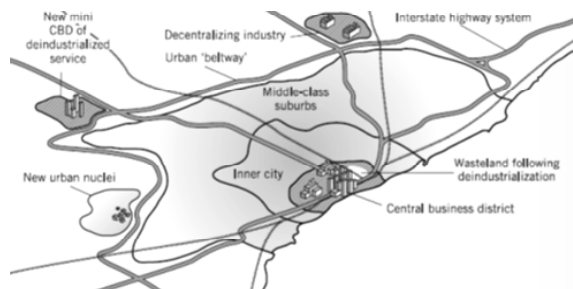


Fig. 48: To the Fordist city, circa 1945–1975

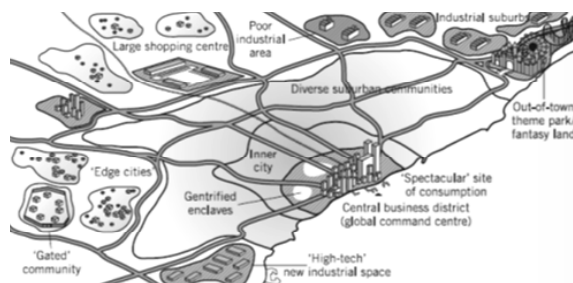


Fig. 49: To the neo-Fordist metropolis, circa 1975

The consequences for urban change have been significant. One of the main consequences of neo-Fordist technologies and working practices is that far fewer people are needed to manufacture things. In addition, the production of well-established “mature” products has often been shifted to low-cost locations outside. The result has been massive deindustrialization and the consequent transformation of the classic industrial city (Fig. 47-49).<sup>45</sup>

The decline of traditional heavy manufacturing industry has been especially appeared in the industrial heartlands of Britain – the Midlands, the North, Wales and Scotland – and in the “rustbelt” of the United States – including classic industrial cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh. Parallel with this decline has been the creation of new industrial clusters, often termed new industrial spaces.<sup>46</sup>

As in other major American cities in the postwar era, construction of an extensive highway and freeway system around Detroit and demand for new housing stimulated suburbanization. In 1956, Detroit’s last used electric streetcar line along the length of Woodward Avenue was ripped out and replaced with gas-powered buses.

45 Vgl. Knox/Pinch 2006, 29-33.

46 Vgl. Knox/Pinch 2006, 27-30.

Especially this change in the transportation system favored low density, auto-oriented development rather than high-density urban development. These were factors that contributed to transform the metro Detroit area into a becoming area of the most sprawling job market in the United States, though other major American cities also developed suburbanization. The expansion of jobs and lack of public transportation put many jobs beyond the reach of lower income workers who remained in the city.

The development population of the city indicates a serious and long running decline of Detroit's economic strength: within the last sixty years the city lost 60 percent of its residents. Detroit reached its population peak in the 1950 census. The peak population was 1.8 million people. Following suburbanization, industrial restructuring and loss of jobs lead to a number at just over 700,000 residents in the year 2010. The city has declined in population with each subsequent census since 1950.<sup>47</sup>

The one-time world's traditional automotive center suffered an enormously setback in economy, culture, cityscape, population and infrastructure.

47 U.S. Census 2010.



Fig. 50: The development population of Detroit



Fig. 53:  
*Michigan Central Station in the past*

Nothing symbolizes Detroit's grandiose rise and spectacular fall like the Michigan Central Station. No other building exemplifies just how much the automobile gave to the city of Detroit — and how much it took away.

Today, the monolith still stands as a towering, heartbreaking testament to the grandness of the time before the automobile – and the way American life changed after it.



Fig. 54:



Fig. 56:  
Michigan Central Station today

## II.VI. Conclusion

Detroit is an expressive example in both, growth and shrinkage. Already in the discourse of the written sources I was confronted with the impressive economic growth of the city through the industrial revolution and the associated boom of the automobile industry; and therefore as much more shocked about the dramatic shrinkage of the city and the decline of economy.

Already in the year 1968 a group of experts, called the „Club of Rome“, began to discuss about a variety of international political issues. The group gained public attention in 1972 with its report „The Limits to Growth“. The conclusions of the report were: „If the present increase of the world population, the industrialisation, the environmental pollution, the food production and

the exploitation of natural raw materials remain unchanged, the absolute growth limits on the earth are reached in the course of the next hundred years."<sup>48</sup>

So already at this time we knew that one day the growth of the cities has to come to a change; a paradigm change.

The word of the paradigm change already haunts for a long time the literature. Every small change is suddenly a paradigm change. The concept is a prominent term in the town rebuilding discourse. It is used to refer to the radicality of actual and expectable developments. In town planning we speak about paradigm when there is a rethinking in planning understanding, namely „from the controlled growth“ to the „organized retreat“.<sup>49</sup>

Also Detroit has to come to a rethinking in town planning. Land is Detroit's greatest liability and its greatest asset. Current different citizens' initiatives assume control about the city.

The only way to understand the acting and the behavior of the remaining inhabitants, was a participant observation in the field.

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48 [www.clubofrome.at](http://www.clubofrome.at)

49 Vgl. Grossmann 2007, 29-31.



*FIELD NOTES*

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VACANT LAND?

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The background of the slide is a red-tinted map of the Detroit metropolitan area. A semi-transparent globe is centered over the city of Detroit. The map shows major roads, highways, and city names in a light red color. The text is overlaid on the map in white.

# III. THE ANTHRO- POLOGICAL WAY

PARTICIPANT INVESTIGATION





# III.I. INTRODUCTION

## DEFINITION „ETHNOGRAPHY“

Ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. It is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study. Ethnography is a means to represent graphically and in writing the culture of a group.

The word ‚Ethnography‘ is derived from the Greek ethnós, meaning „a company, later a people, nation“ and -graphy meaning „field of study“. Ethnographic studies focus on large cultural group of people who interact over time. Ethnography is a qualitative design, where the researcher explains about shared learnt patterns of values, behavior, beliefs, and language of a culture shared by a group of people.<sup>50</sup>

## DEFINITION “FIELDWORK”

„Fieldwork is the systematic collection of academically evaluable facts about relations in the reality on location.”<sup>51</sup> The intension is the data collection with different methods and different goals.

Fieldwork is primarily descriptive; this means that detailed information about the relations in the environment is collected and examined. In addition to it, the fieldwork take care to focus the view of the investigation to the totality of the living conditions and to look at the whole connection or at the existing relations.

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51 [Http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Feldforschung](http://www.duden.de/rechtschreibung/Feldforschung).

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF FIELDWORK

AFTER ROLAND GIRTLE

1. You should live after the customs and rules which are important for the people with whom you do research. This means esteem of her rituals and holy times, in the clothes as well as with food and drinking.
2. You should be able of the generosity and impartiality to recognize values and to judge by principles which are not the own. It is obstructive if you suppose everywhere bad and underhand people.
3. You should never talk and report disparagingly about your hosts and those people with whom you have drunk beer, wine, tea or something else.
4. You should appropriate a respectable knowledge about the history and the social relations of the culture you are interested in. Therefore visit first their cemeteries, markets, pubs, churches or similar places.
5. You should make yourself a picture of the geography of the places and houses you want to investigate. Go along the concerning area by foot and rise on a steeple or a hill.
6. You should carry away the experience and report about that possibly without prejudices to distinguish yourself from the usual travelers. Therefore it is important to keep a research diary (beside the other recordings) in

- which you sign up your thoughts, problems and joys of the research, but also the annoyance. This stimulates to honest reflection about yourself and your research, but also to the self-criticism.
7. You should raise the leisure to a free conversation. That means, people may not be seen as bare data suppliers. You should speak with them in such a way that they feel respected. One must introduce himself as a person and may not force himself. This is the way to get good conversation and observation protocols.
  8. You should try to estimate your interlocutors in some degrees. Otherwise it can be happen that you are put in or are consciously lied.
  9. You should not show off as a missionary or social worker. It is not entitled to appeal „educationally“ on the putative „savages“. You are no judge, but merely witness!
  10. You must have a good constitution to feel fine in the field, in musty bars, in the church, in noble inns, in the wood, in the stable, on dusty streets and also somewhere else. To this belongs the ability to eat, to drink and to sleep any time.<sup>52</sup>

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52 Translated from Girtler, vgl. [Http://www.qualitative-forschung.de/fqs-supplement/members/Girtler/girtler-10Geb-d.html](http://www.qualitative-forschung.de/fqs-supplement/members/Girtler/girtler-10Geb-d.html).





## III.II. RESEARCH FIELD AND METHODS

The cultural anthropological fieldwork is characterized by a variety of methods: informal interviews, direct observation, participation in the life of the group, collective discussions, analyses of personal documents produced within the group, self-analysis, results from activities undertaken off- or on-line, and life-histories. Although the method is generally characterized as qualitative research, it may (and often does) include quantitative dimensions.

The combination of the methods arises from the issues and topics which are elaborate. Normally, conversations and interviews are conducted and one takes part in the everyday life of the researcher during his participant observation. First one should ask himself which methods should be applied for which subject areas, issues, hypotheses and phases of the fieldwork.

In my implementation of a field study followed methods arise as a result:

1. Participant observation
2. Informal conversation
3. Perceptions walk
4. Field notes
5. Mental map
6. Experts interview

## 1. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

The researcher is located in the field of study for a longer time and lives in a close contact with the sources. It is tried to understand the experiences of the research group. It is observed the everyday life, the material culture, the form of action, the architecture etc., and it is descriptive recorded.

You can differentiate between an open and covert observation. “Open observation” means that the observed people are clarified about the research work. “Covert observation” is not always ethically legitimate. But for example in the ethnographic observation of public squares it is impossible to lead an open observation continuous.

If you are familiar with the field of study through a direct observation you can go forward to the focused observation and concentrate on the attention of a definite detail of the study.

The aim of the participant observation is to get a view of the complexity of an appropriate detail of the lived everyday life from their point of view.<sup>53</sup>

## 2. INFORMAL CONVERSATION

These conversations accidentally arise from different social fields. They are marked by an essential input from the respondent regarding the structure of the conversation.<sup>54</sup>

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53 Vgl. Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, zit. n. Götsch/Lehmann 2007, 169-188.

54 Vgl. Raymond 2011.

### 3. PERCEPTIONS WALK

The perception walk primarily serves as collection of first impressions in the field, which are recorded in the diary. To filter own gaps of the perception it is helpful to draw the used path from the memory after doing the perception walk. All objective elements are written down and taped that one can remember. If one then commits the same way once again, so-called „white spots“ can appear. These could be objects, impressions etc. which one has not perceived the first time. Symbolic borders can be filtered out where one maybe does not dare to get in touch with or where uneasiness is felt. This uneasiness must become questionable because it makes clear unaware differences between the person of the researcher and the investigation field.<sup>55</sup>

### 4. FIELD NOTES

In the field notes intimate information about sensitivities is held on like fears, wishes, hopes, but also everything which appears as new or astonishing. Besides, the ethnographer's broad experience is never returned unfiltered, but is based on selective perception of the researched people. On the one hand all im-

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55 Vgl. Greverus 1994.

pressions can never be established and, on the other hand, the described can be formulated always differently. So it is important to consider strategies to produce notes of good quality.

Four kinds of the writing are distinguished: 1. Writing down of notes to hold on observations, 2. The holding on of stories, 3. More comprehensive descriptions of observed cultural realities and 4. The holding on of physical facts in the form of sketches or diagrams.<sup>56</sup>

A central aspect of the field notes is the need to be able to remember experienced events in the field as good as possible.

## 5. MENTAL MAP

Daily individuals are facing the issue to orientate themselves in the space and to hit behavioral decisions, e. g., as to commuting between flat and job, shopping, the choice of the leisure activities, etc. These decisions are influenced by the mode how we perceive and understand our environment, in other words how our environment is cognitive presented.

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56 Vgl. Clifford 1986.

Mental or cognitive mapping is the product of a series of psychological processes that register, code, store, then call to mind and decode all information on our everyday spatial environment. In this sense cognitive mapping is a cognitive characteristic found in our minds. When a researcher does mental mapping, he is actually interested in mapping maps; this is collecting and interpreting mental maps in our minds.<sup>57</sup>

One can differentiate between the „real environment“ and the so-called „cognitive map“ as a subjective mental representation of the environment. The cognitive map concerns here not only a (spatial) image picture of the real environment (an actual map with objects in the space), it also contains elements from the social environment (subjects in the space, social groups, events in the space, assessments, symbols etc.).<sup>58</sup>

## ANALYSIS OF COGNITIVE MAPS

To examine aspects of the environmental perception and environmental assessment of the cognitive space representation and behavior different methods can be used. Possibilities for these methods are surveys with the help of questionnaires, the use of photographs and miniature models or the making of map sketches, the query after distances and direction data of certain

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57 Vgl. Mental map.  
[Http://www.mentalmap.org/](http://www.mentalmap.org/).

58 Vgl. Ziervogel 2013, 191-192.

places, detailed verbal descriptions of places or travel routes as well as field experiments to the observation of the actual spatial behavior.

In practice drawn map sketches are often used, the so-called Mental-Maps. The way of the drawings as well as the form and details of the sketch give tips to the meaning of the elements for the test persons.

## SPACE ELEMENTS OF COGNITIVE MAPS AFTER KEVIN LYNCH

Kevin Lynch, born in 1918, was a significant contributor to city planning and city design in the twentieth century.

Lynch was able to isolate distinct features of a city, and see what specifically is making it so vibrant, and attractive to people. To understand the layout of a city, people first and foremost create a mental map.

Mental maps of a city are mental representations of what the city contains, and its layout according to the individual. These mental representations, along with the actual city, contain many unique elements, which are defined by Lynch as a network of elements. These elements can conveniently be classified into five types: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks.



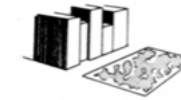
1. *Paths*. Paths are channels along which the observer occasionally moves. They could be streets, walkways, transit lines, canals or railroads. For many people, these are the predominant elements in their image.<sup>59</sup>

2. *Edges*. Edges are linear elements. They could be the boundaries between two areas, linear breaks in continuity, railroad cuts, edges of development or walls.<sup>60</sup>

3. *Districts*. Districts are the medium-to-large sections of the city. Always identifiable from the inside, they are also used for exterior reference if visible from the outside.<sup>61</sup>

4. *Nodes*. Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter or a point to and from which he is traveling. They could be junctions, places of a break in transportation, moments of shift from one structure to another.<sup>62</sup>

5. *Landmarks*. Landmarks are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external. They are usually a rather simply defined physical object: building, sign, store, or mountain.<sup>63</sup>



59 Vgl. Lynch 1960, 47.

60 Ebda., 47.

61 Ebda., 47.

62 Ebda., 47-48.

63 Ebda., 48.



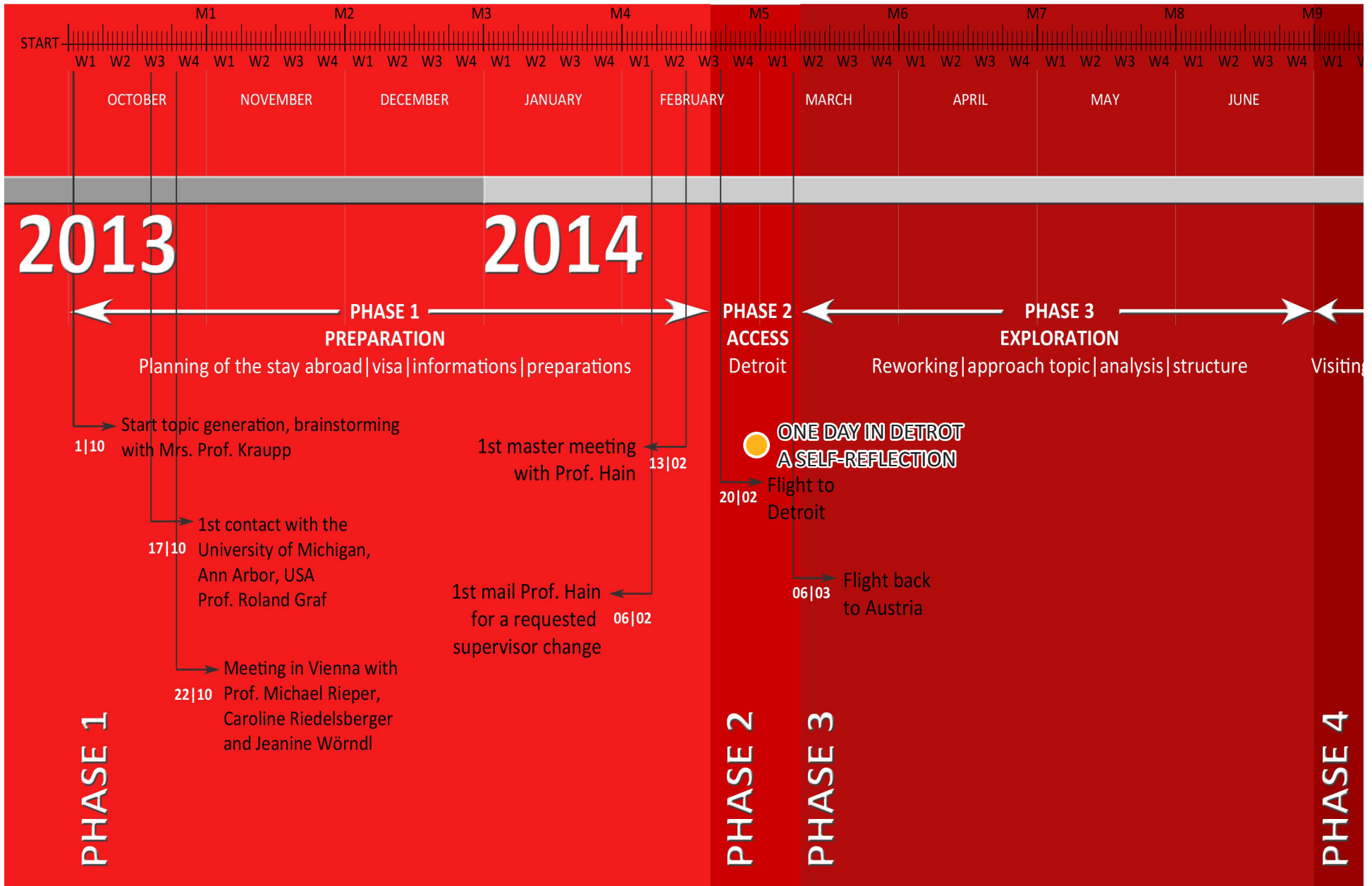
## III.III. FIELDWORK

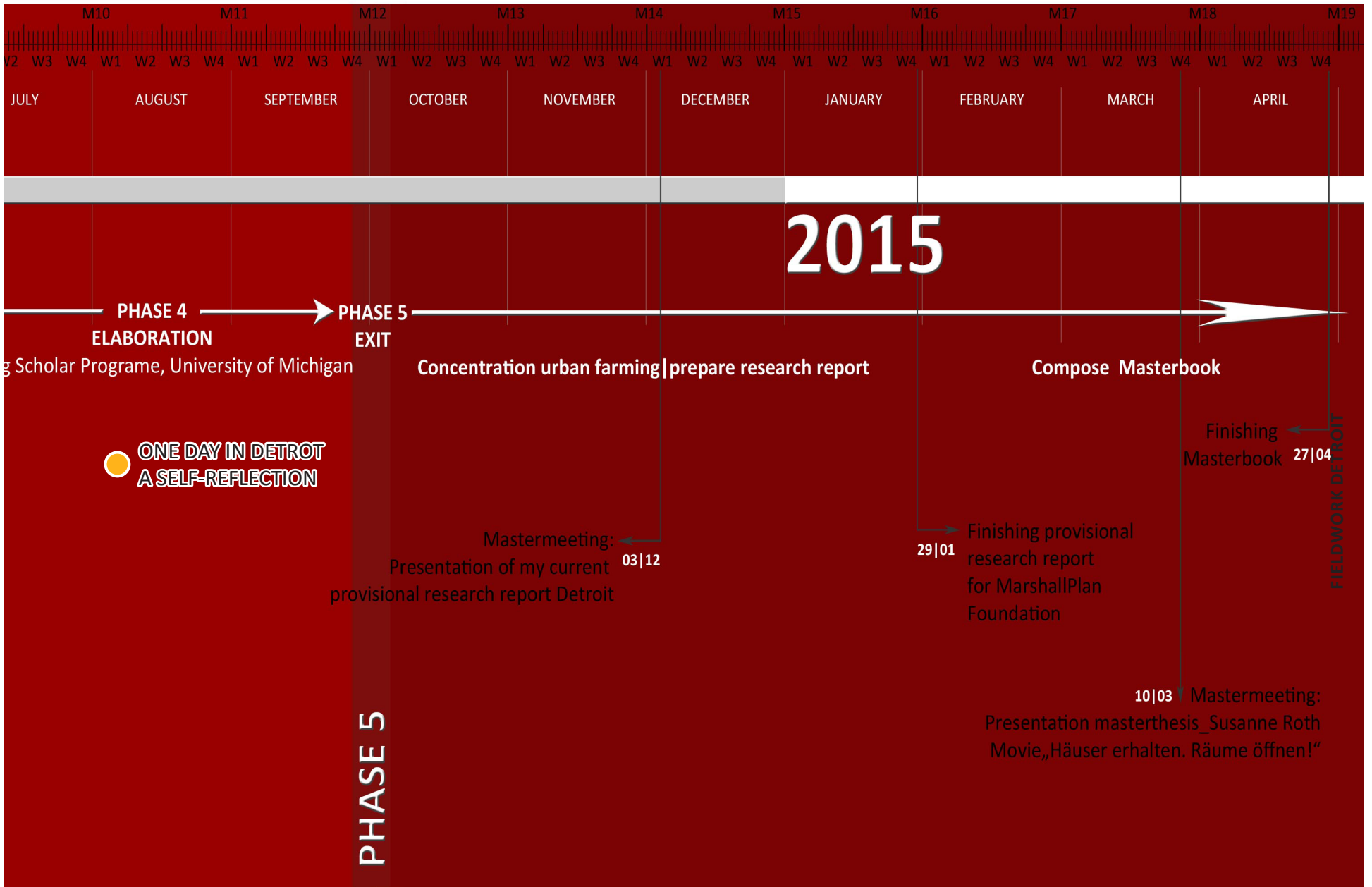


I have structured my study of field into five phases:

1. Preparation Phase
2. Access Phase
3. Exploration Phase
4. Elaboration Phase
5. Exit Phase

The second and the fourth phase are the periods, where I was on-site in the field work of Detroit to experience the everyday life of the people who still live in the city. These two phases will contain an extract of each single day of my field work with sketches and field notes.





## 1. PREPARATION PHASE

In the preparation phase a suitable question must be developed first. The choice of the investigation field (e.g. a residential district, a hospital, a family) as well as the scenes to be examined, events and people depend on the question. An important preliminary consideration concerns the accessibility of the scenes of a field. One can distinguish between open (e.g. streets, squares), half-open (e.g. shops) and closed scenes (e.g. meeting room of a concern, a living room).

It should belong to my strategy not to approach with an agreed research plan. My content questions should arise rather from the everyday experience of the city of Detroit. Nevertheless, there were main areas of interest which derived from my background knowledge:

- Places: Where does place for social life exist? Streets, shops, pubs, farms, halls, flats, ...
- Times: How does the history of the city Detroit correlate



with the biographies of the inhabitants?

- Social relations: Who knows whom, speaks with whom, to what extent social contacts are helpful or incriminating?
- Problems of everyday life and living conditions: How do the inhabitants see their problems and how do they handle them?
- Fortune, satisfaction, mental health: What do the inhabitants experience as positive, healthy, normal? What is their idea of „good life“? What gives sense to her life?
- Isolation: Under which conditions and by which actions does it come to the isolation and exclusion of single inhabitants?
- Institutions: How do the inhabitants experience the interventions of offices and experts? Which kind of institutional help do they wish?

## 2. ACCESS PHASE

The access in the field is the most difficult part of the fieldwork, particular for beginners. The first important question is: which social role should be the target of the researcher in the field. The spectrum reaches from the harmless spectator's role up to the double role of the crucial participant and researcher. The participant observation requires a back and forth commute between participant, observer or researcher. Normally this can be reached best by the fact that the researcher uses roles which are strongly linked to the field and informs openly about his research interests at the same time.

At the beginning I was scared of not getting accepted as a researcher and had troubles with contacting. Through my collected pre-information about the city of Detroit I had a lot of concerns, I was really afraid and could not trust anybody. A lot of negative articles in online papers made me feeling uncomfortable and uncertain to live in the city.

My access phase last for two weeks from the 20<sup>th</sup> February till the 6<sup>th</sup> March of 2014. During this two weeks in Detroit I lived in Corktown, the district just west of Downtown Detroit. It is the oldest neighborhood in Detroit. The house where I lived was in a good condition although this is not a typical phenomenon for the city Detroit.

My intention in the strange city Detroit was to explore the city and the everyday life of the inhabitants just by foot or by bike. I think if you're walking you can better observe the environment and notice some interesting and important facts or proceedings.



## REPORTS AND IMPRESSIONS OF OWN-EXPERIENCED MOMENTS IN DETROIT IN THE WINTERTIME

*„Simply in such a way, from curiosity?“ The man beside me in the airplane shakes the head. He has never heard that somebody visits Detroit because of the supposedly incredible culture. Earlier, 30 or 40 years ago maybe. Today only people come to Detroit if they live there or want to look a football game. The man puts his seat just. „Are you an artist?“, he asked. It sounds such as „are you still quite thick?“ The landing approach to the industrial town, the most important once of the world, begins. From above the city looks like a huge single-family dwelling settlement. Square timber houses with roofed porches, as far as the eye reaches. The streets before it with gigantic cars.*

*It is only early evening and the highway which leads with his eight lanes to downtown is already as empty as an avenue after midnight in Graz. This was the place where till the sixties nine of ten American cars went off the assembly line and the place where a production line worker earned more than a German engineer, which is why he, according to the logic of the Fordismus, no reason had to rebel.*

*Fifty years later Detroit does not make the appearance as if America has won the cold war. As soon as you has passed the suburbs the decay jumps out: Industrial ruins and exploited filling stations, half burnt-out residential districts and areas in which no more house stands.*

## FIRST STAY IN DETROIT FOR 2 WEEKS

20/02/2014 - 06/03/2014



*... huge cars - mostly pickups*

*... no numberplate in the front of the cars*

*... abandoned streets and areas*

*... windy and freezing*

*... crosswalks not clearly evident*

*... traffic lights are bad fixed*

*... skyscrapers are often just half occupied*





*... street conditions in a very bad condition*

*... sparsely to barely cars on the streets*

*... you can walk if the traffic lights are turned „red“ because there are no cars*

*... from the outside you cannot say if a building is occupied or not*





*... wide streets*



*... bike lane on the highway is used as a sidewalk*

*... dead city*

*... buildings in a very bad condition*

*... no children on the streets*

*... mostly black people on the streets*

*... sidewalks are not cleared of snow*



*... partly no street lights*

*... borders very close - you can walk from a well-lit street to an abandoned area*

*... hardly any shops for groceries in downtown*

*... only public transportation: Detroit Pe-po-le Mover, just run a loop in Downtown and connects the most important buildings*

*... housing units step by step like a link in a chain*







*... buildings in a very bad condition*

*... you really need a car in Detroit!*

*... seen a lot of different police cars, you  
can not trust anyone because a lot of  
them are corrupt*

*... a lot of old churches*

*... area around Wayne State University in  
midtown is more busy, more young people*



Source: own photos from page 96-102  
Andrea Korber, February 2014



*I began my first day in a strange city with exploring the neighborhood where I lived and was looking for a grocery store. Maybe it sounds strange for an European, but I was looking for a store for some hours. You can not imagine because in Austria - Graz, you can find such store nearly at every turn.*

*Finally after sighted a Family Dollar store I could make the next unusal and even more shocking discovery. The grocery store just had a selection of canned goods, no fruits and vegetables and horrible high prices! After buying some of these expensive groceries I started out for a discovery and perception walk.*

*I walked to Downtown and checked out the only public transportation, the Detroit People Mover. The Detroit People Mover (DPM) is a 2.9-mile (4.7 km) automated people mover system which operates on a single track, encircles Downtown Detroit and connects the most important business buildings there. I was driving seven times with the People Mover and there were hardly any people inside. Compared to the public transportation in Austria, for example the „Bim“ in Graz, it was a big difference for me and I thought that the DPM can not really make any profits.*

*In the sketch in Fig. 57 I have highlighted the loop of the DPM with the bold black lines and my daily walk from the house where I lived in Corktown towards Downtown to the Renaissance Center, where I could warm up myself because of the freezing temperatures. The Renaissance Center became a special node*

**Saturday, 22/02/2014**

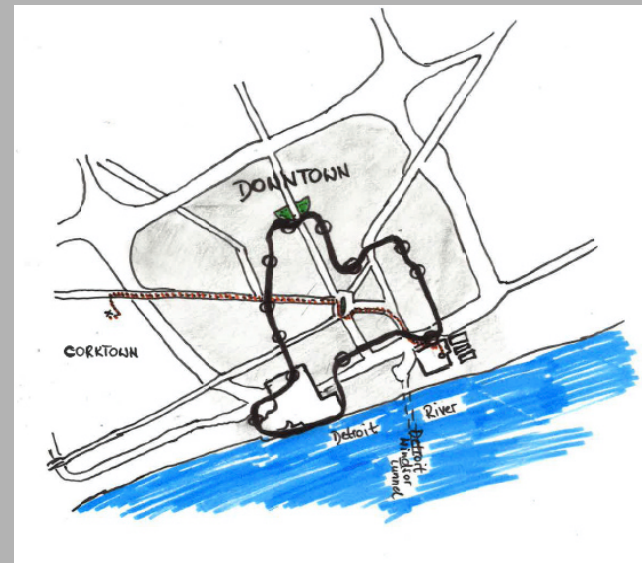


Fig. 57: Daily walking route, DPM loop

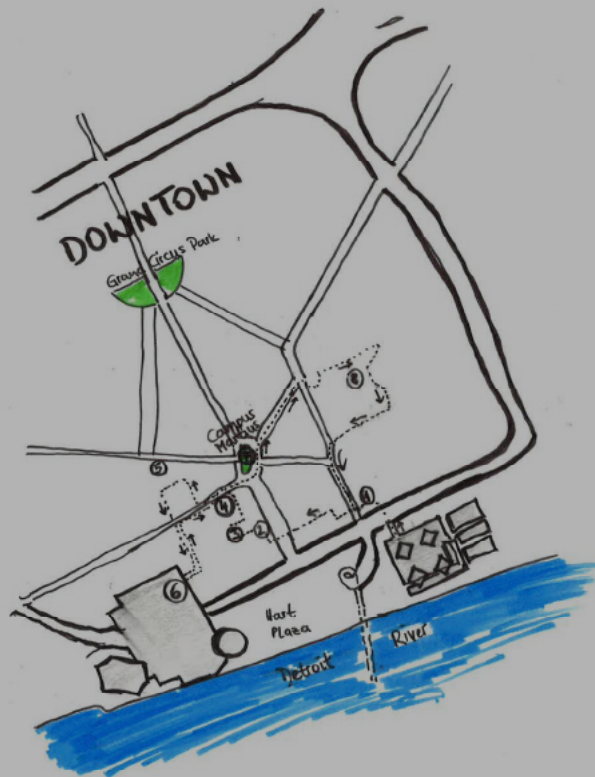


Fig. 58: Sketch guide tour through Downtown Detroit

during my field work. There I was just sitting in an open public room, drinking some hot coffee, watching people and relaxing. This building was a very important point, like a safe haven during my time in Detroit.

Tuesday, 25/02/2014

On that day I was just sitting once again in the Renaissance Center, when suddenly an old man head my way. He was very interested in my intention about the city Detroit. The man was very friendly and gave me a privat city tour through Downtown. I marked in Fig. 58 the guided tour with some special architectural buildings. Talking to the man and walking side by side to him gave me a very safe feeling on the street. The man explained me that all the skyscrapers in Downtown Detroit are half of empty. The lights inside these buildings at night are partly just for the tourists, to give them a sign of life in the city. During the conversation with him, I snapped the chance to ask the question: „If you could change something here in Detroit, what would it be?“ And the answer was a very clear statement: „The Government“.

During this two weeks I received two warnings from inhabitants. The first was in a shop in Washington Boulevard. The cashier was sitting in an extra zoned space, separated through a grid for her protection and just a little window to handle the payment. The woman gave me the hint to go home immediately and to look into nobody's eyes.

*The second warning took place on a street near Grand Circus Park. A black man was explaining to me that the area is very dangerous and I should go home, home to Austria. If he could swim, he would leave Detroit, jump into the river and swim to Austria.*

*I was very shocked to hear such things and starting from that time I was negatively affected to my field work in Detroit. I felt uncomfortable and afraid to go out alone at night. There were also times where I thought it would be the best to cancel the stay abroad and return back to my lovely home in Austria.*

### 3. EXPLORATION PHASE

My exploration phase serves the specification of questions and the choice of especially important informants or scenes.

Due to informal contacts on the street, in small shops or at the farm I got known to different people. Some of them were content to tell their story or events of my interest.

My observations and meetings I recorded in detailed field notes. The writing of a field note required a lot of time in contrast to the described event. But it was an important instrument to reflect the experiences in the field. At the beginning the self-imposed obligation to record every encounter was a nagging work. Over time the reports got more specific and shorter.

## 4. ELABORATION PHASE

In my elaboration phase I concentrated on detailed informations whereby structured methods of observation and survey are used.

This phase took place during my second stay in Detroit in summer 2014. For two weeks, I have been living in a house in the area North End. In this case, the house was not in a good condition and the neighborhood was one of the dangerous ones. This was also the reason why I spent just two weeks in Detroit. The rest of my time I was accommodated in the city Ann Arbor, which is located about 60 km northwest of Detroit.

Now I appeared as somebody who was in the city to collect material for my research of Detroit. This role enabled me to inform single inhabitants in greater detail about the purpose of my investigation.

During this intensive work with different people I was attracted by the topic „Urban Farming“. I got the chance to work in a community garden to help hopeless people to handle their life and make the area a lot nicer and healthier.

## REPORTS AND IMPRESSIONS OF OWN-EXPERIENCED MOMENTS IN DETROIT IN THE SUMMERTIME

*On my second trip to Detroit I was looking for the future of the city. In Detroit, I have read, hundreds of artists and other creative people have moved during the past years in search of new possibilities in the capital rust belt.*

*One of them is Jason, my host for the two weeks in Detroit. When I arrived in Detroit he picked me up from the airport. The next day we are arranged at the Eastern Market, one of the Hotspots of new Detroit, as the people say. It's only a walk away from the house where I lived, but there are no footpaths to use. In Detroit one takes the highway.*

*From outside the Eastern Market looks like the remaining town. Windowless fire walls, closed warehouses, barricades at the gate entrances. However, after a few hundred metres, in the old cast-iron covered markets, thousands of people hurry through the corridors in which fruits, vegetables and meat stacked to pyramids. On Saturday, Jason said, the market is a meeting place of the whole town. Even the Detroit-hater from the suburbs make purchases here for weekend. At three o'clock if the standes close, they drive back to the suburbs. Then the steps resound again about the asphalt.*



*„Are you an artist?“, again a man asked me when I was riding my bike through the abandoned streets. But at that moment it does not sound as irritated as the first time in the airplane, rather than he welcomes me as a new neighbour.*

*During my second trip to Detroit I got the chance to collaborate in an urban farm. Urban farming is the new trend in Detroit, the new phenomena to make the city again more attractive and use the abandoned areas and houses for a sensible way.*

*Every saturday the farm arranged a „Volunteer day“ at the farm. Everybody could come and help harvesting for some hours. I rarely saw such a good community and solidarity. People are coming from all over, some were from the suburbs, some from the area around and some from different organisations. Children, women and men are working together to transform blight into beauty. We had such a lot of fun and it was such a good felling to make a positive contribution to the city and her still living people.*

Just now I saw Detroit from a different angle. There exist not only bad things, abandoned areas, demolished houses, ... but also a strong community, people who want to change the current situation, young artists who see Detroit as a white screen and the phenomenon „Urban Farming“ which is spread out all over the city of Detroit. If you allow it, you can experience great things in Detroit

SECOND STAY IN DETROIT FOR 2 WEEKS

08/09/2014 - 22/09/2014

122

FIELDWORK DETROIT



Michigan Urban Farming Initiative (MUFI)



The becoming community center of MUFI





It`s time for harvesting!



Hard work in the garden without any machines.





A strong community and a lot of fun!



The beginning of producing own honey and using rainwater for the garden.

*Source: own photos from page 112-117  
Andrea Korber, September 2014*

## 5. EXIT PHASE

The received connections normally end with the exit of the field. My exit was preprogrammed by the return to the university in Austria by the end of the summer 2014.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With my first stay in Detroit I hoped to receive already a worthy first concept of approach with the study of Berlin of O. M. Ungers and Rem Koolhaas in 1977 “A green archipelago”, but it turned out wrong at the first day I spent in the city. To be sure some aspects of the study could be adapted to my own research work of Detroit, but after spend more and more time in the once fourth-largest city in the United States I became aware of the fact that I absolutely can identify and differentiate the malfunctioning parts of the present city but I cannot “weed out” those parts of the city that are now substandard.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 142.87 square miles (370.03 km<sup>2</sup>) and the today’s population is scattered over this whole huge area, also over the malfunctioning parts of the city. Questions in classical terms of property (Economy) and power (Policy) rushed into my mind:

Who has the right to decide on the people in the desolate areas?

Who can demand that these people abandon her home?  
Which parts of the city does work/which are abandon?  
How does the city work?  
To whom belongs the city?  
Who plans the city?  
Who are the users of the city?  
To whom belongs the abandoned land?  
Where do the new come from?  
How does the future look like?

The very close contact with misery, dilapidation, suffering, violence and hopelessness was very difficult and emotional demanding for me. My determined openness for questions which should arise from the work in the field, offered the problem to spread oneself too thin. On the one hand, I wanted to understand the life of the city Detroit as a whole; on the other hand I wanted to investigate the single problems very detailed. Indeed I was aware that I got lost in the shuffle of dates and information if I didn't decided myself upon a limited range. Nevertheless I couldn't specify. This was a certain disadvantage for my research project, not yet for my own experience.

I have learned that much from the people who still live in the abandoned and desolate areas of the city Detroit and I know that Detroit is a city of vacancy and ruins, of poverty and un-

employment. But some people don't accept this situation, they want to change their future life and take an active part in transforming the city. They pick the positive aspects out of the negative overall situation and try to benefit from the crisis. Unlike other cities, Detroit still offers a fertile ground for self expression and creative business ideas.



III.IV. What happens with  
VACANT LAND?

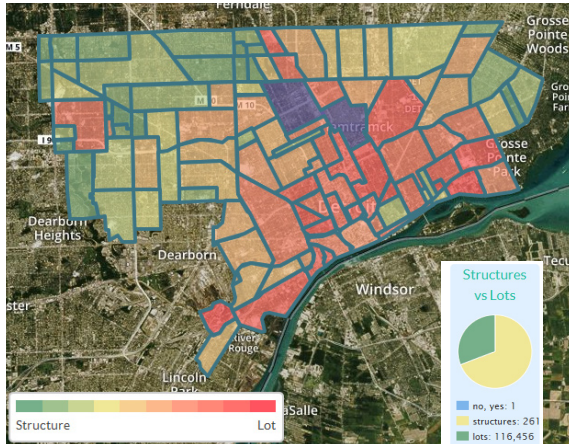


Fig. 59: Structures vs. Lots

Through the beginning decline of the 1970s the population of the city Detroit started to vacate her home and took the flight to the surrounding settlements or completely somewhere else. Back remained abandoned buildings and people whom lacked the financial independence for a change of location and an impoverished city centre.

According to a survey of Motor City Mapping (MCM)<sup>64</sup> 116,456 of the 375,149 surveyed properties are lots, 261,000 are structures.<sup>65</sup>

As you can see in Fig. 57 the east side of Detroit is more hit hard by lots than the west side. The reason for this irregular distribution is the separation of Detroit in only east and west side along the main avenue Woodward in the past. The west side was „the white side“ and the buildings in this area are in better conditions.

64 Motor City Mapping (MCM) is a comprehensive effort to digitize Detroit's property information and create clear communication channels back and forth between the public, the government, and city service providers.  
(<https://www.motorcitymapping.org/about>)

65 <https://www.motorcitymapping.org/#t=overview&s=detroit&f=all&x=preset2>, last access: 20/09/2015.

# LOWER EASTSIDE ACTION PLAN

The Lower Eastside Action Plan (LEAP) is a project to help people and advocate people in the process of transforming vacant land and property into uses that improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

## PROJECT GOALS

- Generate a plan that addresses the vacant land crisis on the lower eastside of Detroit
- Create strategies that adapts vacant land for more efficient uses
- Issue recommendations for best uses of vacant land based on the needs and assets of the surrounding community
- Affect policy changes to support vacant land adaptation<sup>66</sup>

A LEAP Future Direction Survey<sup>67</sup> of the year 2011 shows that approximately 60 % of Detroit's residents would stay at their home or just move to a neighborhood close to where they live now. Only 13 % of Detroit's residents want to move outside of Detroit.

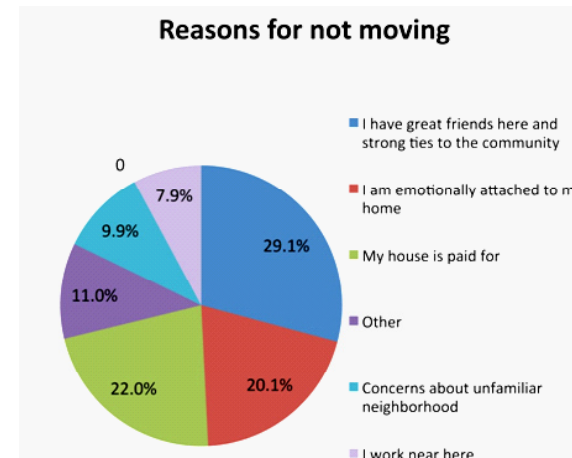


Fig. 60: LEAP Future Direction Survey Analysis (2011)  
Prepared by Nathan Brown, University of Michigan; and Michelle Boyd, University of Chicago

66 Vgl. <https://sites.google.com/site/leapdetroit/>.

67 Brown/Boyd 2012.

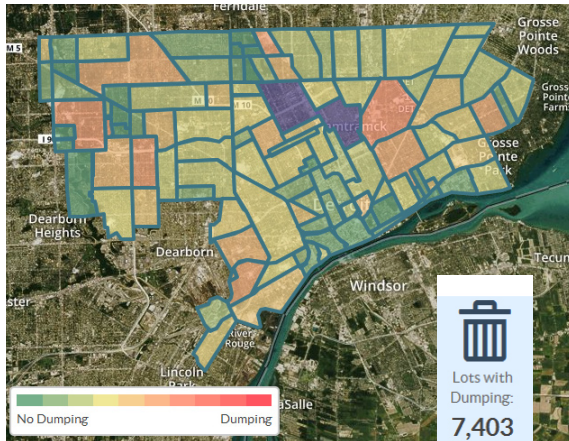


Fig. 61: Lots with dumping, according to Motor City Mapping, last access: 20/09/2015



Fig. 62: Illegal dumping

## ILLEGAL USE

### DUMPING AND PARKING

Because of the absence of important city services in Detroit and a bad infrastructure people tend to act with illegal use of the abandoned land and structures in Detroit. The current fundings of the city can not guarantee working city services through police, garbage disposal, policy, supply of water and supply of streetlights. And in the few instances among them the city can not provide the whole huge area of Detroit with these important services.

According to a survey of Motor City Mapping (MCM) 7,403 lots with dumping are recorded.<sup>68</sup>

Even though the hills have made their mark on the city's topography for more than a decade, many of them are in sparsely occupied neighborhoods which are rarely visited by outsiders.

68 <https://www.motorcitymapping.org/#t=overview&s=detroit&f=all&x=preset2>, last access: 20/09/2015.



Ron Brundidge, director of the city's Department of Public Works discovered them in 2007, when he drove all of the approximately 2,100 streets in the city while working on a project for the Detroit Free Press. He saw as many as ten hills each week during the 4½ months that he drove around the city, but he didn't realize they were dump sites until he noticed new ones with debris still visible under the slowly spreading vegetation.<sup>69</sup>

Fig. 63 shows an illegal dump site at the edge of an abandoned neighborhood along Huber Avenue in the middle of Detroit.

The Huber Avenue hill is among the biggest of hundreds of dump sites across Detroit reverting to nature.<sup>70</sup>

The hills are the result of the decline of the city Detroit. As the population fell from about two million resident to about 700,000 today, people took the flight and remained abandoned structures which began to transform into dump sites and vegetation.

Also illegal parking is a current very often problem in the city. People break the law and use unpaved parking sites which are not codes as a parking lot.



Fig. 63: This mound, located on a vacant lot that once was part of a densely packed working-class neighborhood near Huber Avenue, is shown in 2009. The mound's vegetation is now much more developed.

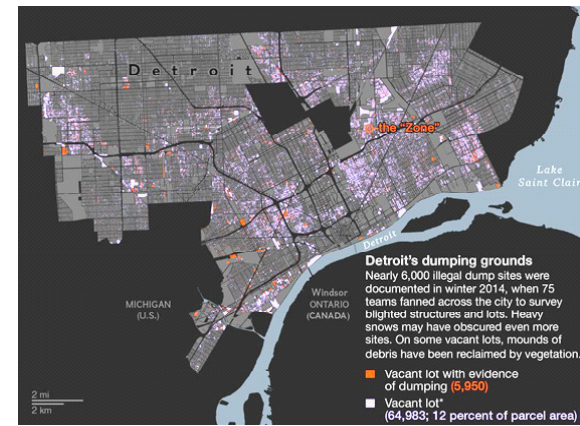


Fig. 64: Vacant lots are parcels that are unmaintained, not for public use and without structures, numbers as of September 2014



Fig. 65: Illegal parking, unpaved and no parking stripes

69 Vgl. McGraw 2014.

70 Vgl. McGraw 2014.

## SQUATTERS

Squatting is a political issue, therefore also a statement or rather a response to the political systems causing it.

Squatting consists of occupying an abandoned or unoccupied area of land and/or a building that the squatter does not own, rent or otherwise have lawful permission to use.

In the areas of Detroit, which is most hit by the abandonment and decline of structures, squatters have taken over hundreds of single-family homes lost due to foreclosure. Devoting law enforcement resources to removing them is out of the question, so the squatters stay. They steal electricity by illegally hooking up to the grid or some are drug dealers who use the homes as crack houses.

But what happens when a citizen buys a property and tries to evict the squatter? I have heard about a lot of crazy stories about squatters and the „squatters rights“ movement that seeks to give them as much a right to possess a house as someone who owns the deed. It is a particularly bad problem in Detroit.

In the following I will show two articles of squatting in Detroit:

Source:

Article 1: Charlie LeDuff in my FOX Detroit, 05.11.2014

Article 2: Ronnie Dahl in wxyz news, 28.11.2014

## ARTICLE 1

*„Sarah Hamilton owns a home in Detroit and was planning to sell it. That is, until she ran into a problem: Lynn Williams, a squatter, had moved into the home. Sarah says she’s been threatened with a knife and the police were even called on her after an altercation. Lynn says Sarah tried running her down with a car. Later that night, Sarah was cuffed. As she was booked in, Lynn moved back in to the home.*

*When a reporter man, after getting permission and the keys from the landlord Sarah, planned to move into the house himself, the squatter Lynn explain oneself as followed:*

*“This is Lynn William’s house. Sarah took all my paper work and everybody else knows it. I`m not the only one that is squatting, there are a lot of other people on the block. And I put a lot of work in the house and I spent a lot of money.”*

*Her only argument is a letter stating that she moved into this house, and this was from the postal service which doesn`*

*account. The reporter man found out that Lynn Williams was known in the penal system as Arthur Williams, which is on probation for a felony assault conviction. The police came and took her with them.”<sup>71</sup>*

## ARTICLE 2

*„What started as a squatter showdown, ended in a heart-breaking discovery for a Detroit homeowner. It’s happened again. A Detroit home has been house-jacked.*

*„I have squatters.“ said Traci Jones. „I have people living in my house. I don’t know who they are, or where they came from. They won’t leave!“*

*Jones and her husband put a lot of money and pride into renovating the house. Worried about damage, Jones says she alerted Detroit Police but got no help getting the squatters kicked out. Desperate for help, she called Action News Reporter Ronnie Dahl. It was her last hope.*

*„If they don’t get out, I kid you not, I will go down to the county building and I’m signing my name off the house. Goodbye, you can have this problem“ said Jones.*

*With Traci and her husband’s permission, Action News stopped by the home. The squatters were already gone, but the*

*condition Traci's childhood home left her in tears. The house was destroyed. The kitchen had been gutted, the doors missing and water gushing in the basement. In the backyard, remnants of a suspected chop shop. For Traci, it was too much. She says she is done with Detroit, and the house she grew up in.*

*„I'm walking away. I have to. There is no way I can rebuild this, there is no way.“*

*A spokesperson for the Detroit Police Department says the incident will be investigated and Michigan's new squatter laws are not crystal clear when it comes to police. Law enforcement agencies are still trying to figure out their role.”<sup>72</sup>*

Squatter are a real problem in Detroit because this illegal action is holding the Motor City's recovery effort back. While squatters are living in the home, at the same time the property is not being properly cared for. As the city declines, property values in the neighborhood shrink and led to a slowing recovery of Detroit.

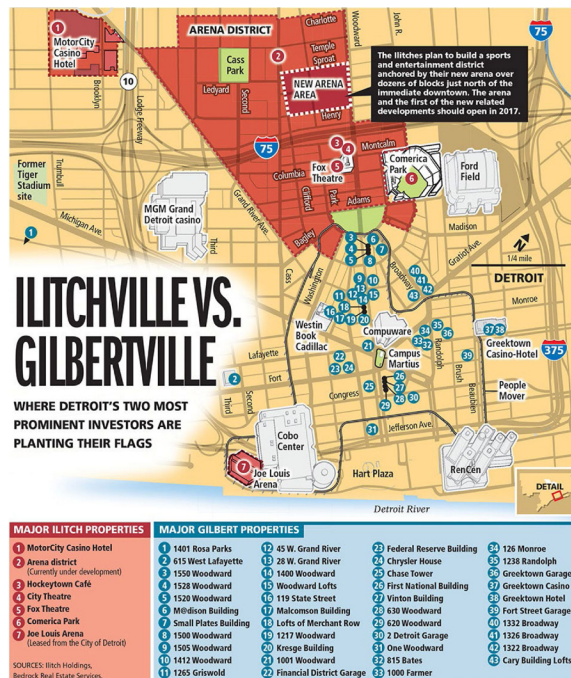


Fig. 66: Ilitchville vs. Gilbertville

## INVESTORS

Because of Detroit's outflow of people and the associated vacancy of properties, the city turned into a profitable centre of attraction for investors.

Many corporate leaders have helped revitalize the city over the decades — Henry Ford II built the Renaissance Center, Peter Stroh a riverfront complex, Peter Karmanos Jr. the Compuware Building near Campus Martius, and Roger Penske delivered a super Super Bowl and helped clean up downtown.<sup>73</sup>

But since of the late 20th and early 21st Century only two names will likely stand out on the top: the Ilitch family and Dan Gilbert. Downtown is being reshaped by these two self-made billionaires who keep adding to their vast land holdings but take starkly different approaches in executing their grand designs.

Already Detroiters and Michiganders are talking about "Gilbertville" and "Ilitchville," reflecting the outsized influence of the two main players reshaping greater downtown Detroit.

In Figure 64 you can see where these two most prominent investors are planting their flags, red for Ilitch, blue for Gilbert.



## MIKE ILITCH

Michael „Mike“ Ilitch, Sr. (born July 20, 1929) is an American entrepreneur, founder and owner of the international fast food franchise Little Caesars Pizza.

Mike and his wife Marian Ilitch moved their Little Caesars pizza company downtown Detroit in the late '80s, the first big firm to buck the trend of leaving downtown for suburbia.<sup>74</sup>

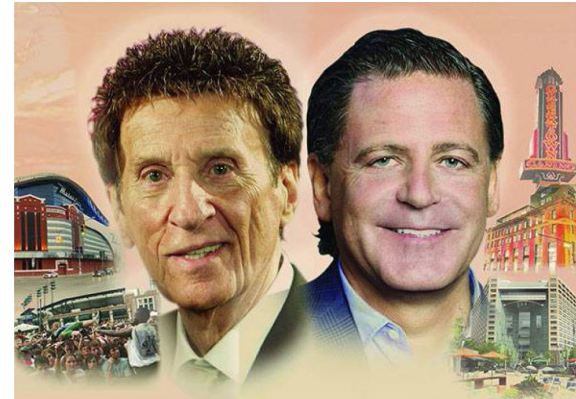


Fig. 67: Mike Ilitch, left, and Dan Gilbert,

## DAN GILBERT

Daniel „Dan“ Gilbert (born January 17, 1962) is the chairman and founder of Rock Ventures and Quicken Loans Inc.<sup>75</sup>

He recognized that the real potential was in originating mortgages and not in selling homes, founded Rock Financial in 1985, along with Ron Berman, Lindsay Gross and his younger brother, Gary Gilbert. The company grew into one of the largest independent mortgage lenders in the country and in the late 1990s, launched its Internet strategy and quickly positioned itself as the fastest growing direct mortgage lender on the Internet.

After renaming into Quicken Loans, the company moved its head-

74 Vgl. Aguilar 2014, 12A.

75 Ebda.



quarters and 1,700 of its employees to downtown Detroit.<sup>76</sup>

Next pages shows the comparison between the two entrepreneurs and their impact on the city Detroit.

*Source:*

*Article: John Gallagher in the Detroit Free Press, 27.07.2014*

#### SOURCE OF WEALTH

- Pizza and sports: Starting with one pizza shop in 1959, Mike and Marian Ilitch built their Little Caesars pizza business into one of the nation's biggest, then branched out into sports and entertainment.
- Online mortgages: Beginning with a small real estate firm, Gilbert began offering online mortgages in the late '90s and built Quicken Loans into the nation's third biggest mortgage lender as of early 2014.

#### WHO'S THE RICHER BILLIONAIRE?

- Gilbert: Forbes magazine estimates Dan Gilbert is worth \$3.9 billion, ranking him 118th on its list of the 400 wealthiest Americans.
- The Ilitch family: Forbes estimates Mike and Marian Ilitch and their family are worth \$3.2 billion, ranking

them 157 on the list.

#### MEDIA STYLES

- The Ilitches: They rarely give interviews.
- Dan Gilbert: He frequently talks — and tweets — on many issues, sometimes to his later chagrin.

#### WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT EACH OTHER

- Christopher Ilitch, the son of Mike, on Dan Gilbert: “We love what Dan Gilbert is doing and we try to collaborate wherever we can. It’s really important what everybody’s doing — not just Dan but all the stakeholders.”
- Dan Gilbert on the Ilitches: “We are thrilled about the more than exciting arena district plans revealed by the Ilitch family yesterday. The thoughtful and impressive design will be transformative for downtown. This tops a lifetime of Detroit accomplishments for Mike and Marian, which Chris is carrying out with passion and diligence.”

#### WHERE THEY COMPETE HEAD-TO-HEAD

- One place — casino gaming. Marian Ilitch owns MotorCity Casino Hotel. Dan Gilbert owns Greektown Casino-Hotel.

#### SINGLES AND DOUBLES VS. HOME RUNS

- Lots of buildings: Dan Gilbert now owns or controls

about 60 properties in downtown Detroit, including retail storefronts, older office buildings, renovated skyscrapers and Greektown Casino-Hotel. It's a singles-and-doubles approach with an occasional big wallop.

- Landmarks and lots: The Ilitches own or control a handful of major landmarks: the Fox Theatre, Comerica Park, MotorCity Casino and, soon, the new arena — a few home runs as opposed to lots of singles and doubles.

#### DEVELOPMENT STYLES

- Dan Gilbert buys existing buildings and fills them with workers from Quicken and its spin-off firms. He tends to act aggressively, seizing opportunities and buying dozens of buildings in a short time. Gilbert has chosen to preserve the iconic architecture that he buys and work within its historic framework but his developments have required few taxpayer subsidies.
- The Ilitches renovated the Fox Theatre but mostly build new stuff like Comerica Park or the planned new arena. They are much more deliberative, taking years of study before moving ahead with a plan like the arena and entertainment district. The Ilitches restored the Fox Theatre but mostly have relied on clearance and new construction, which has drawn some criticism over the years. Nearly everything that the Ilitch organization has developed has involved public funding of some sort, some-

times in large amounts, as with the arena project.”<sup>77</sup>

John Mogk, a Wayne State University law professor who closely follows Detroit development said: „It is unprecedented. There is really no period of history where major parts of downtown are in the hands of one, two entities. This is planning on such a major scale; it’s aimed at reviving downtown, and also changing how it functions.”<sup>78</sup>

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77 Gallagher 2014.

78 Aguilar 2014, 12A.



Fig. 68: Demolition of a house in Detroit, North End

## DEMOLITION

The Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environmental Department (BSEED) of the city Detroit provides for the safety, health, welfare and improvement of quality of life of the general public relative to buildings and their environments in an efficient, cost effective, user-friendly and professional manner.<sup>79</sup>

The Dangerous Buildings Division responds to complaints of dangerous buildings, inspects dangerous properties and prepares cases to obtain a demolition order from City Council.

On my second trip to Detroit in summer 2014 I could witness a live demolition before my very eyes. A lot of inhabitants were very angry about such actings of the BSEED. After talking with some people of the neighborhood I could understand why. The people are angry because the city also demolished buildings in a good condition in order to give homeless people the chance to renovate it or to set the building to the auction list. Many of the young people I got to know are looking to buy a own house.

On the one hand I can understand the people who live next to a house which is in a poorer condition compared to the demolished buildings. They have the desire to live in such a building

79 Vgl. <http://www.detroitmi.gov/DepartmentsandAgencies/BuildingsSafetyEngineeringEnvironmental/AboutUs.aspx>.

and can only look on the demolition. On the other hand the city Detroit wants to gain control of problems like drug dealing in abandoned structures, squatting, vandalism in vacant houses and ensure a safe, health, welfare and improvement of quality of Detroit's future life.

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban Farming as the last but not least point of actions to deal with vacant land will be more exactly looked in my work in the following pages after sum up the collected and experienced happenings of my anthropological way of approach.

## III.V. Conclusion

My field research was connected with a multiple exit: loss of the familiar neighborhood, quit of the usual everyday life at home, quit of my present academically identity and associated the loss or relaxation of more importantly relationships. The result was a longer lasting depression and identity crisis which hindered me to my fieldwork. I think it's very important to recognize such crisis as a risk of the fieldwork and if possible to prevent them, e.g. through a gently dosage of the field contacts. But in my mind the extent of such crisis depends on the person of the field researcher, his present living environment and the stresses and deprivations of his field.

Through the intensive field research and the use of different research methods it was possible for me to take an active part in the everyday life of the city Detroit. The personal approach and the experiences within the field changed my perspective from a top-down planners view to a bottom-up users view.

I began to understand the different actings and behaviors of



the still living inhabitants in Detroit, and that was just possible through my important participant observations.

As explained in the notes of my field research is finding a normal grocery store with sensible prices a real handicap in the city Detroit. Therefore it is even more urgent to create a new economy through food production in urban farming and fill the gap in this sector. Not only the economy and the therefore associated creating of new jobs can take a profit of the new urban paradigm. It is also a great impact for a healthier life, an improvement of the abandoned areas, a strength of the communities and there is a way of a new educational society.

Detroiters recognize the value of the vacant land in the city. Residents have turned “abandoned” lots into productive agricultural resources. Farmers markets are springing up citywide providing Detroiters with fresh, organic food grown right in the neighborhood.

And the time is ripe to explore how we can expand this network of local food options to meet the growing demand of consumers by bringing agriculture back into our cities.

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CONCLUSION





**IV. URBAN  
AGRICULTURE**  
A STUDY IN 3 CASES



# IV.I. OVERVIEW

Land is Detroit's greatest liability and its greatest asset.

Detroit has a history of gardening that goes back decades. African-Americans, who left southern states to provide for their families through factory jobs in the Detroit area, brought their knowledge of how to grow vegetables and flowers.<sup>80</sup>

Today, there is an urban agriculture movement in Detroit that is recognized throughout the U.S., Canada and Europe. Farms currently exist within the city, as well as over 100 community and school gardens as well as hundreds of family gardens.

The chapter starts with a consideration of the garden city movement in the past and followed with a selection of three farms in Detroit, every with a own contribution to urban farming in Detroit.

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80 Vgl. <http://detroitblackfoodsecurity.org/policy.html>.



## IV.II. THEORY



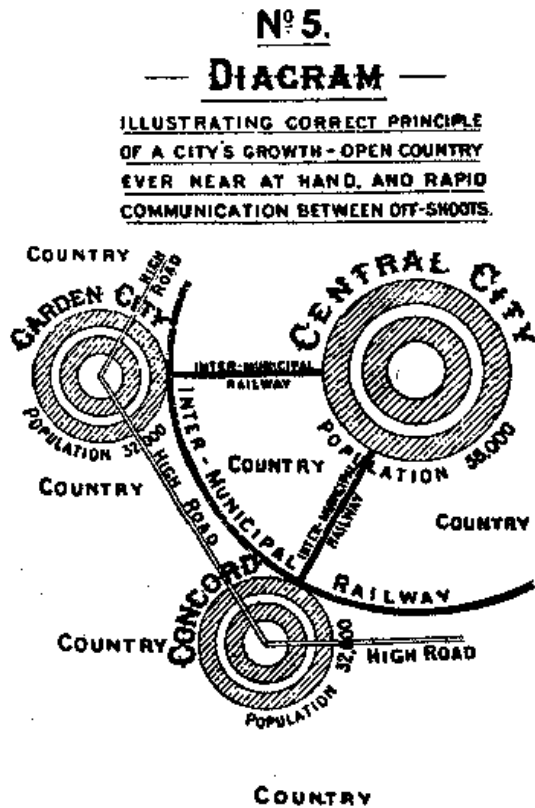


Fig. 69: Correct principle of a city's growth after E. Howard

## GARDEN CITY MOVEMENT

The garden city movement became the most successful and the so far best known reform effort in modern town planning.

It is a method of urban planning that was initiated in 1898 by Sir Ebenezer Howard in the United Kingdom. Garden cities were intended to be planned, self-contained communities surrounded by „greenbelts“, containing proportionate areas of residences, industry and agriculture.

Howard published his book “To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform” in 1898, which was reissued in 1902 as Garden Cities of To-morrow. The book introduced the concept of the locally-based agency to manage community estate, the harmonizing of development with the natural environment and the need for society to maximize its resources through planning.

## CONCEPTS OF GARDEN CITIES, NEW TOWNS – FIRST GENERATION

In Howard's book "To-morrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform" in 1898 he build on different social planning models of pioneers. Here we can recognize indirect influences of the utopian socialists Robert Owen and Francois Fourier. These utopians propagate coexistence in communities within a cooperatively organized state with collective served land- and factory work. The spatial conditions for this communal life they reached with Owen's "Village of Unity" (Fig. 70) and Fourier's community "Phalange" with the building "Phalanstère" (Fig. 71).<sup>81</sup>

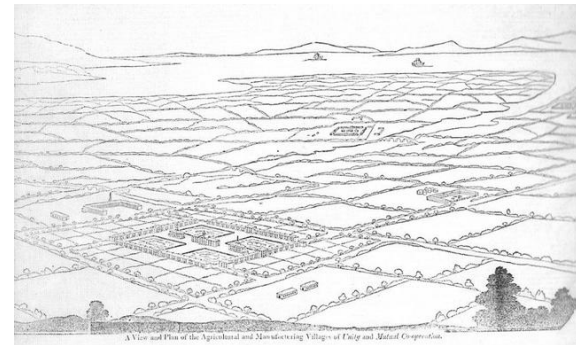


Fig. 70: Robert Owen, Village of Unity, 1817



Fig. 71: Francois Fourier, Phalanstère, 1830

81 Vgl. Kainrath 1997, 40-41.

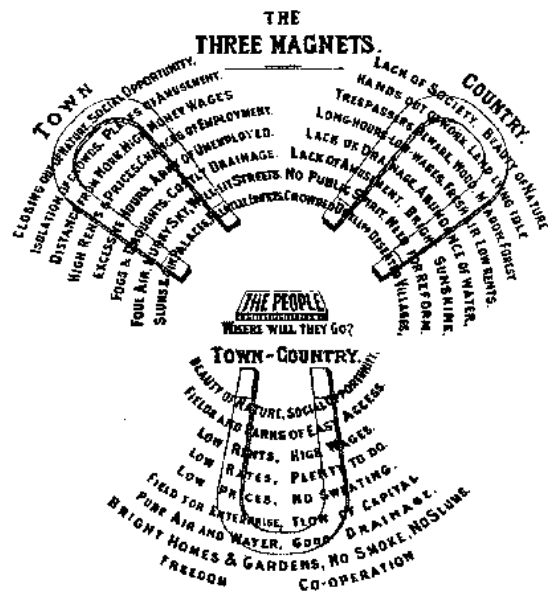


Fig. 72: The Three Magnets diagram by E. Howard

For Howard there exist not only a town life and a country life. He thought of a third alternative which should connect all the advantages of the most energetic and active town life with all the beauty and delight of the country town in a perfect match. Howard's diagram "The Three Magnets" illustrate this interaction between the three alternatives.<sup>82</sup>

But neither the Town magnet nor the Country magnet represents the full plan and purpose of nature. Human society and the beauty of nature are meant to be enjoyed together. The town magnets must be made one. Town and country must be married, and out of this joyous union will spring a new hope, a new life and a new civilization.<sup>83</sup>

82 Vgl. Howard 1902, 8-10.

83 Vgl. Howard 1902, 11.

The garden city movement became the most successful and the so far best known reform effort in modern town planning and also the garden city movement is not a current city trend. Already the educational study group of Franz Heinrich Ziegenhagen strove cheerful housings of self-sufficiency and pleasure instead of glorious palaces and sad covers of misery in 1792.



Fig. 73: Educational study group of Franz Heinrich Ziegenhagen 1792



# IV.III. CASE STUDY 1

## EARTHWORKS URBAN FARM

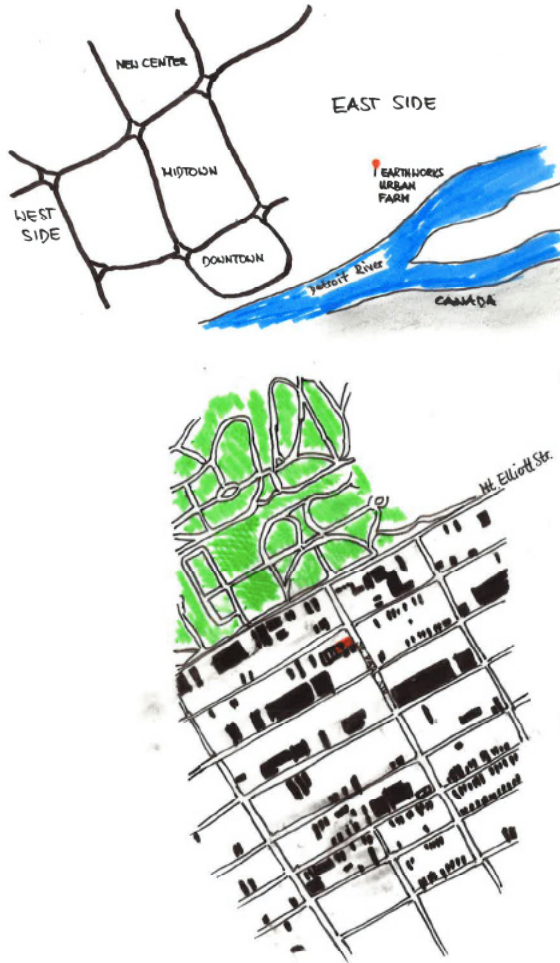


Fig. 74: Location of Earthworks Urban Farm

## HISTORY

The beginning of this garden was in 1997, where Brother Rick Samyn starts a garden at his workplace, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. The response was overwhelming and positive. So Earthworks began on a very small plot of land on the corner of Meldrum and St. Paul Street and expanded with every year onto lots at the new site for the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.<sup>84</sup>

Earthworks began to promote the consumption of fresh vegetables among low income families with children. Project FRESH was a special program for women, infants and childrens, where participants receive coupons for fresh, locally grown Michigan produce purchased directly from the farmer. But the poor families often find it difficult to get to famers because of transportation limitations. Earthworks suggested that instead of having families come to the market, have the market come to the families! The farm began to host weekly markets.



Earthworks formed further partnerships and offers special programs for the youth with a positive impact on the lives of children and families with healthy nutrition.

In 2004, Earthworks expanded its work even further by adding a 1,300 square foot greenhouse for the production of vegetable seedlings. Today, Earthworks grows over one hundred thousand seedlings each season, both for the own gardens and for the hundreds of local family, community and school gardens participating in the Garden Resource Program Collaborative.

## SIZE/SPREAD

Today Earthwork's gardens consist of approximately 7 gardens spread over 20 city lots spread within a 2 block radius of the headquarters. They don't garden outside of that space.

## WHERE DOES THE PRODUCE GO?

Earthwork provides produce to a number of different outlets. Some produce is provided to the Capuchin Soup Kitchen which they are a part of, some goes to markets at health clinics, and some is marketed at a small farmers market they run out of their



Fig. 75: Logo of the Earthworks Urban Farm, Detroit



Fig. 76: Earthworks Capuchin Soup Kitchen



Fig. 77: Earthworks gardens at the headquarters



workspace at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. They also use most of their berries harvested for making jams they sell as a fundraiser. Earthwork's approach to distributing and marketing their produce is always changing and growing. They are working to develop effective strategies to build a just food system. They say: „By buying locally grown food, you are creating a more just, healthy food system for all.“<sup>85</sup>



Fig. 78: Earthwork garden located near the headquarter



Fig. 79: The Greenhouse at Earthworks Urban Farm

85 Vgl. [http://www.cskdetroit.org/earthworks/market/other\\_local\\_ag\\_groups/](http://www.cskdetroit.org/earthworks/market/other_local_ag_groups/).



IV.IV. CASE STUDY 2  
HANTZ WOODLANDS

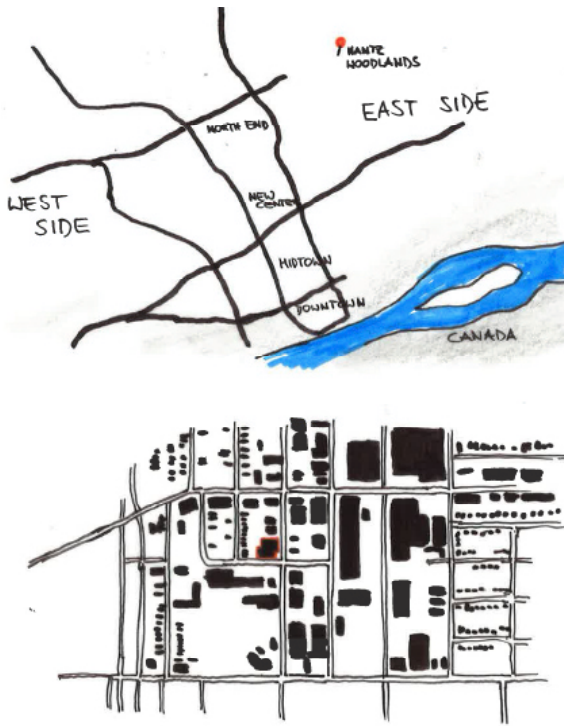


Fig. 80: Location of Hantz Woodlands

Hantz Woodlands is transforming blight into beauty. Vacant, abandoned properties are converted to fields for new agricultural production.

Hantz subscribes a different philosophy contrary to the urban farm movement. Mike Score, the president of Hantz Woodland says that there's nothing inherently wrong with those small community gardens and family vegetable plots, but he believes the city's huge land surplus requires a radical shift in scale. So he has taken the concept of urban farming and super-sized it.

Picture oaks, maples, and other high value trees planted in straight, evenly spaced rows. Grass between rows of trees will be mowed regularly, and flowering trees will be planted between streets and sidewalks to create a breathtaking place of beauty each spring and fall season.

## HISTORY

The Hantz Group, a billion-dollar investment group, was established about fifteen years ago. Over the last twenty years Detroit is going through a transition. Houses started to be vacated, somebody lose their house, damaged houses and some houses set on fire. They all spread over the neighborhoods of Detroit. Hantz Woodlands has bought thousands of blighted city lots, and has



purchased tens of thousands of hardwood saplings. Hantz Woodlands begun paying property taxes for their purchased land, take part over the maintain costs and create jobs with the revaluation of them.

On December 10th 2014 Hantz Woodlands, one of the nation's largest urban reforestation projects, received its Certificate of Completion from the City of Detroit. The Certificate recognizes the sweeping effort, which met and exceeded the tenets of its agreement with the City by planting more than 15,500 trees, maintaining more than 2,000 lots and engaging residents in an effort to create Detroit neighborhoods where people want to live, work and play in just one year. The agreement provided a two-year timeline for completion.

Hantz Woodlands is available to participate in education and consulting work that assists leaders in expanding and improving urban agriculture as a new commercial sector within urban economies.

In the photos on next page (Fig. 83) I will show the change of vacated lots after taking care of them through Hantz Woodlands.



Fig. 81: Hantz Woodlands: volunteers planting trees







Fig. 82: Photos of before & after, 04/06/2013

Last but not least I will expand on The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative, which gave me the opportunity to work on site with the community and to learn to understand better the hopeless people in the city Detroit.

# IV.V. CASE STUDY 3

MICHIGAN URBAN FARMING INITIATIVE (MUFI)



Fig. 83: Location of Michigan Urban Farming Initiative

The Michigan Urban Farming Initiative is a nonprofit organization that seeks to engage members of the Michigan community in sustainable agriculture. The organization uses agriculture as a platform to promote education, sustainability, and community and thereby they hope to empower urban communities.

## SOME CHALLENGES THEY HOPE TO TARGET

### VACANT LAND

Abandoned buildings and houses, unkempt land, and other poorly used spaces are the current situation in the city Detroit. Redeveloping these locations into food producing plots would be transforming them into valuable assets to any community.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

With the current state of Michigan's economy, a large community of unemployed people exists. These people have enough time available to participate in community service projects. Community farming can support a healthy lifestyle, especially in times of limited income.



## ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Urban areas have particular difficulties in providing consistent access to nutritious food and fresh produce. Such circumstances are particularly acute in low-income neighborhoods, where people may not have access to transportation. Local urban gardens and farms provide a source of fresh, affordable produce available to the whole community.

## FOOD MILES AND NUTRITION INFORMATION

Many people are disconnected from their food and where it comes from. MUFI intends to provide ongoing educational opportunities for the community concerning the growing and harvesting of produce, in addition to its nutritional value. The initiative wants to develop a certain consciousness about where their food comes from and their role in the process.<sup>86</sup>



Fig. 84: Community Garden of MUFI, volunteers at work



Fig. 85: MUFI site on Brush Street

## COMMUNITY GARDEN

Using the 1-5 acres of vacant land surrounding the 7432 Brush Street property (Fig. 86), MUFI will build approximately 150 raised community garden beds to facilitate community engagement in agriculture. The gardens will serve as a resource for the public to plant their own plants, grow their own food, learn the skills from knowledgeable individuals living on-site at the farm, and partake in the community gardening process. Each bed would be rented out seasonally at cost, and would include the service of individuals living in the house, who would be available to help with any aspect of gardening.

## DEMONSTRATION URBAN FARM

Using the remaining vacant land surrounding the 7432 Brush St. Property, MUFI will have a variety of agriculture-specific methods, strategies, technologies, and infrastructure on display. The idea is to showcase some of the many different ways that agriculture can be used to build communities, increase sustainability, and promote education. While they are currently putting the final touches on their grand proposal, some features of the demonstration urban farm will include: a sensory garden, green-

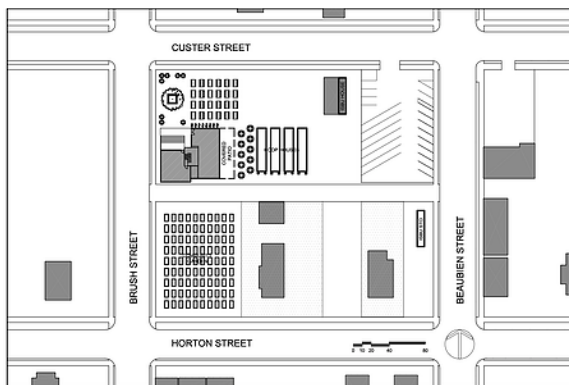


Fig. 86: 7432 Brush Street, Demonstration Farm MUFI



house, hoop houses, hydroponics, composting, aquaponics, livestock, honey bees, espalier orchards, and so much more.

The main focus of MUFI is currently on the development of 7432 Brush Street and its surrounding area.

7432 Brush Street is a distressed property in Detroit that was purchased by MUFI in October of 2011. The building on this plot stands empty and lifeless. So MUFI's intention is to renovate the building, upgrade his image and give the structure a new usage: a Community Recource Center.



# IV.VI. Conclusion

In summary it can be said, that Detroit is a city with great opportunities to create a „new Detroit“. The enthusiasm of the citizens already is available and they have now reached a point, where they have accepted the current situation and rethink of a new way of revitalizing the city -> urban farming, the new paradigma.

If we compare the three case studies, different ways of transforming vacant land/houses could be identified:

- the one more in a social & educational way,
- the other more in a commercial & economical way and
- the other more in a sustainable & nutrition-conscious way.

And that are the best and essential conditions for a future-oriented way of the city Detroit.



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THE COMMUNITY  
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FUTURE PERSPECTIVES



The background features a large, stylized orange sun with a dotted texture. Around the sun are several orange silhouettes of human figures in various poses, some appearing to be climbing or interacting with the sun. The background is a black and white checkerboard pattern. On the left side, there is a vertical orange bar with a textured, grainy appearance.

# V. THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECT

ADVOCATING A NEW PARADIGMA



Because of the already enormous number of existing structures and empty houses, the role of the architect in Detroit is not a role as usual. In this sense the architect has to take a part of advocating the community how to reuse the old and abandoned structures and lots.

My own contribution for the city Detroit therefore was a structural survey and a proposal for a new usage of an empty house, purchased from the Michigan Urban Farming Initiative. It is a matter of the becoming community center for the farm.





V.I. THE COMMUNITY  
CENTER

Community centers are public locations where members of a community tend to gather for group activities, social support, public information, and other purposes. They may sometimes be open for the whole community or for a specialized group within the greater community.<sup>87</sup>

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87

Vgl. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_centre).

## HISTORY

Early forms of community centers in the United States were based in schools providing facilities to inner city communities out of school hours. An early celebrated example of this is to be found in Rochester, New York from 1907. By 1911 they organized a country-wide conference on schools as social centers. Despite concerns expressed by politicians and public officials that they might provide a focus for alternative political and social activity, the idea was successful. In 1916, with the foundation of the National Community Center Association, the term Community Center was generally used in the US. By 1918 there were community centers in 107 US cities, and in 240 cities by 1924. By 1930 there were nearly 500 centers with more than four million people regularly attending.<sup>88</sup>

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88 Vgl. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community\\_centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_centre).



# V.II. EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

## STRUCTURAL SURVEY



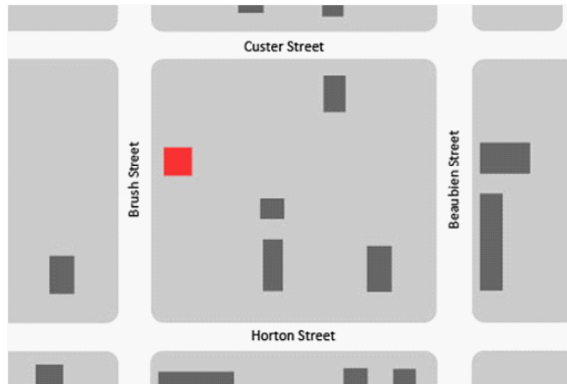
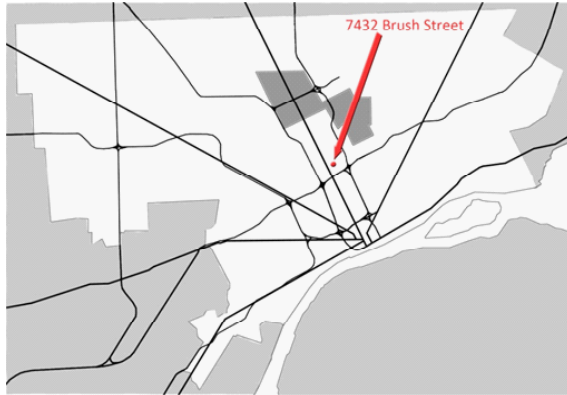


Fig. 87: Location of the becoming community center for MUFI

## 7432 BRUSH STREET, DETROIT

The structure on 7432 Brush Street was built in 1915 and used continuously until circa 2009. The building is a three story, six unit apartment complex, which has become uninhabitable since then. MUFI's goal is to restore the structure to multi-unit residence that would serve as a model of sustainability and urban renewal.

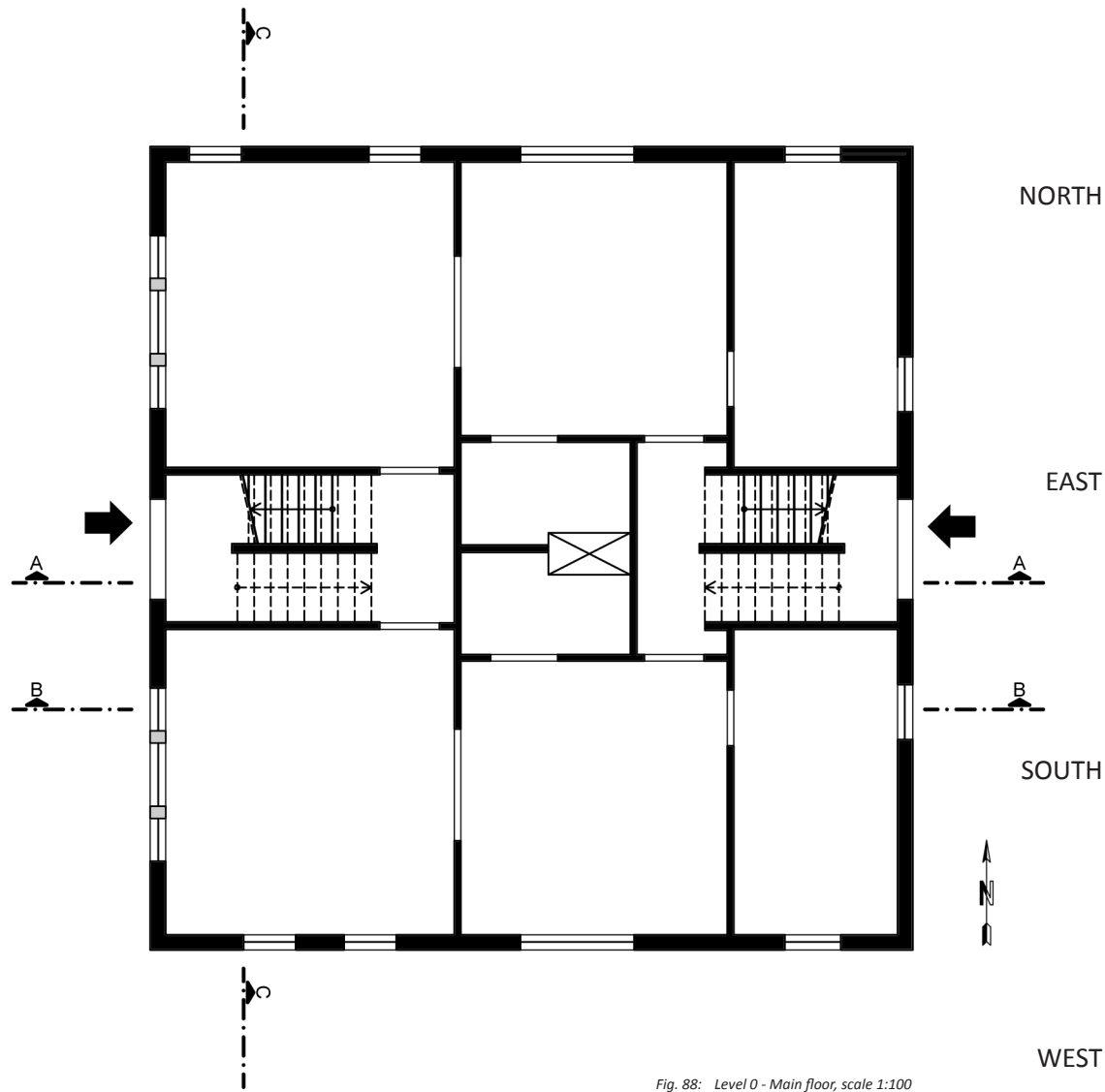


Fig. 88: Level 0 - Main floor, scale 1:100



NORTH



EAST



SOUTH



WEST

Fig. 89: Views North, East, South, West



2 Fig. 91: View from staircase main entrance to the room structure



1 Fig. 92: View staircase secondary entrance

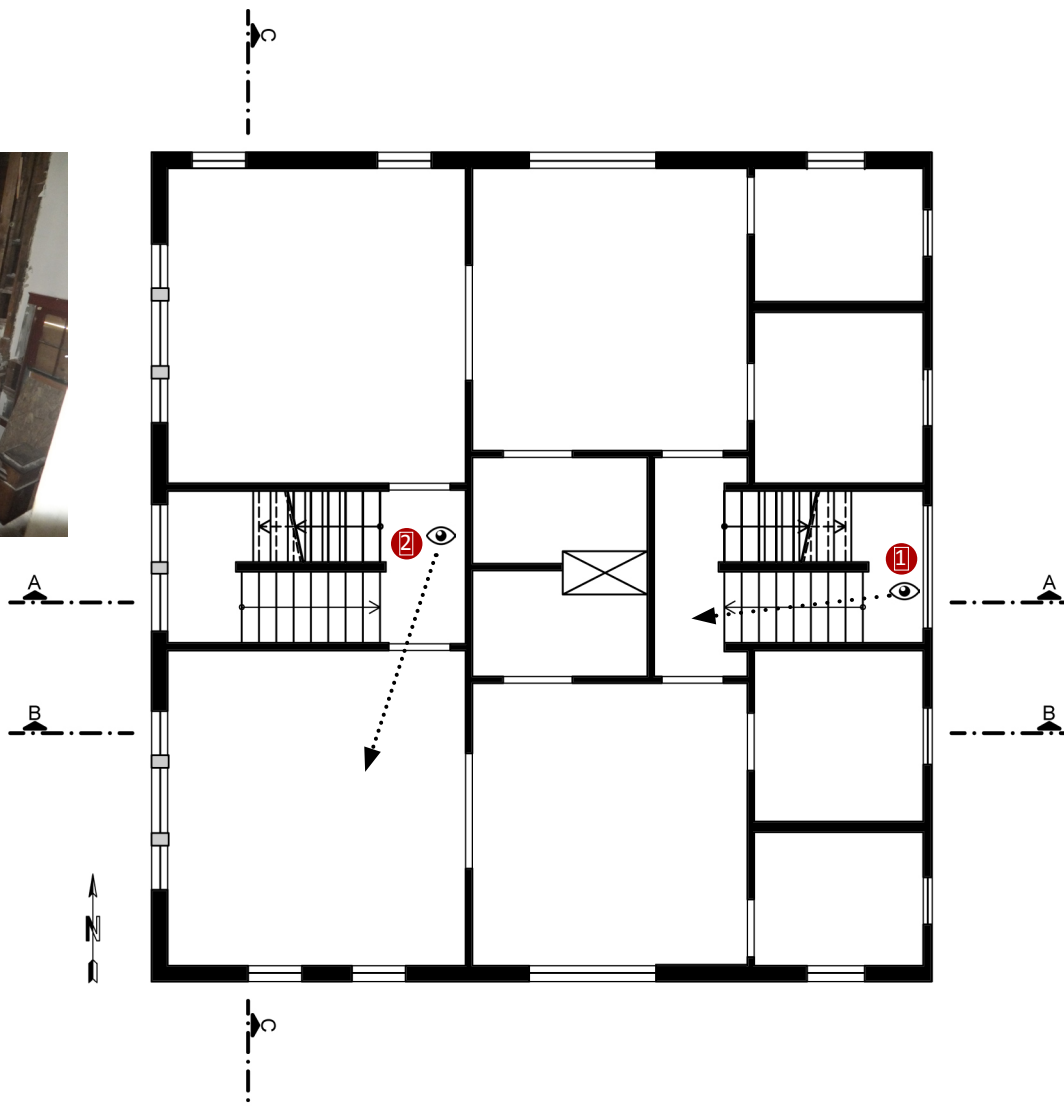


Fig. 90: Level 1 - Upper floor 1, scale 1:100

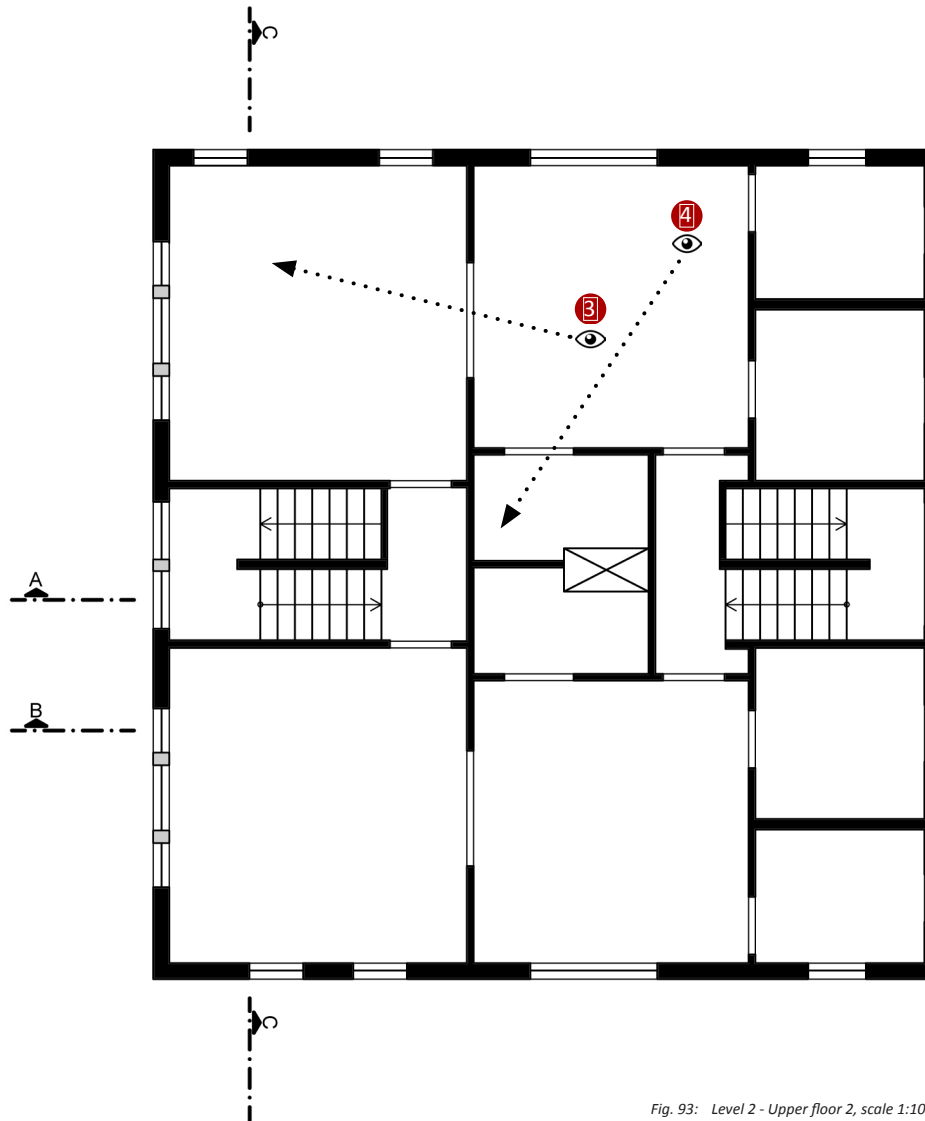


Fig. 93: Level 2 - Upper floor 2, scale 1:100



Fig. 94: View room structure 3



Fig. 95: View from room to staircase main entrance 4





Fig. 97: Community Center - old structure  
The beginning of the restoration

For the room schedule two planning premises are constituted:

1. User-survey
2. History, examples of existing community centers

So the planning program should work as a mix of these two premises, so it should arise from the desires of the users and the examples of existing community center in the history.



Fig. 96: Community Center today

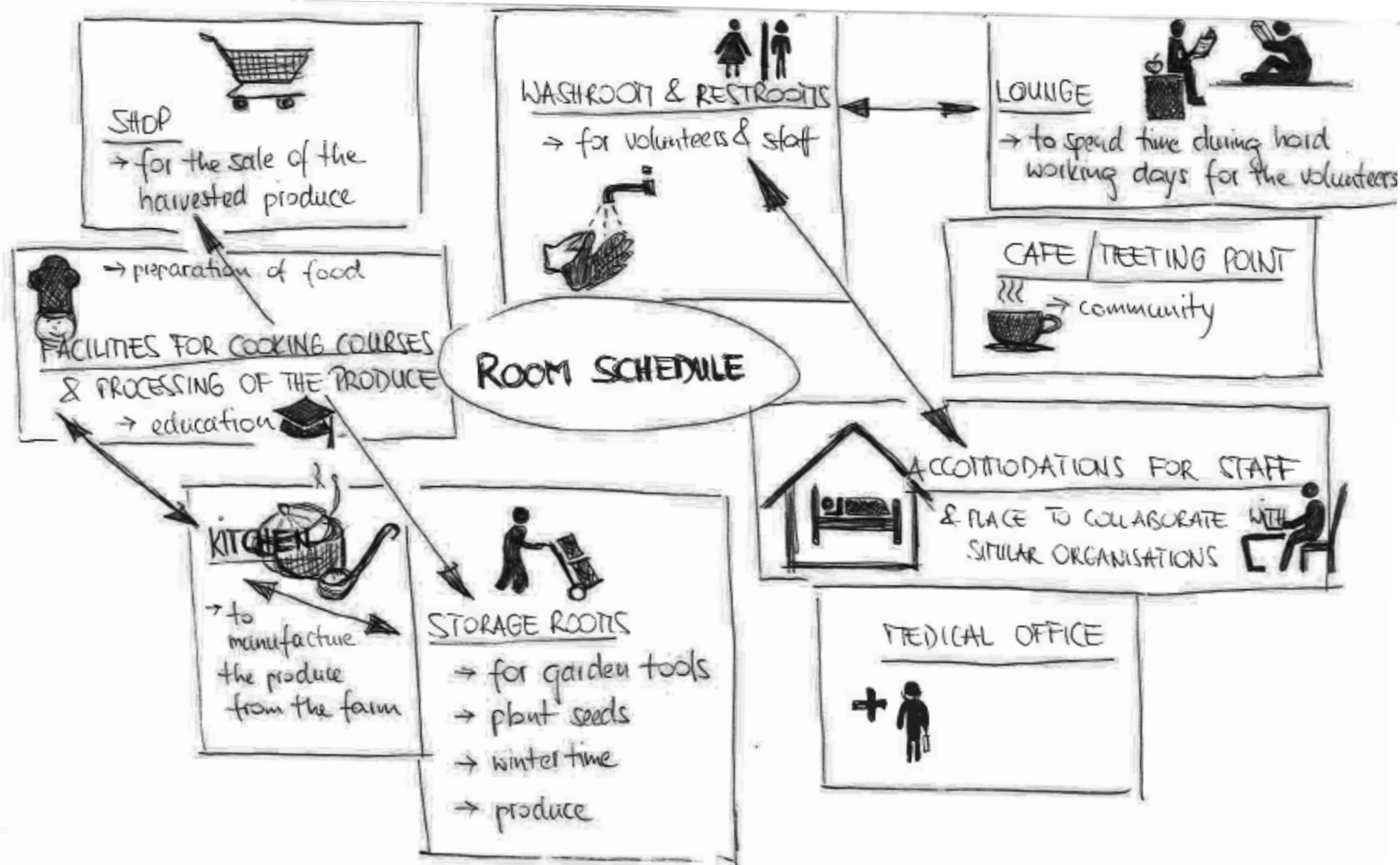
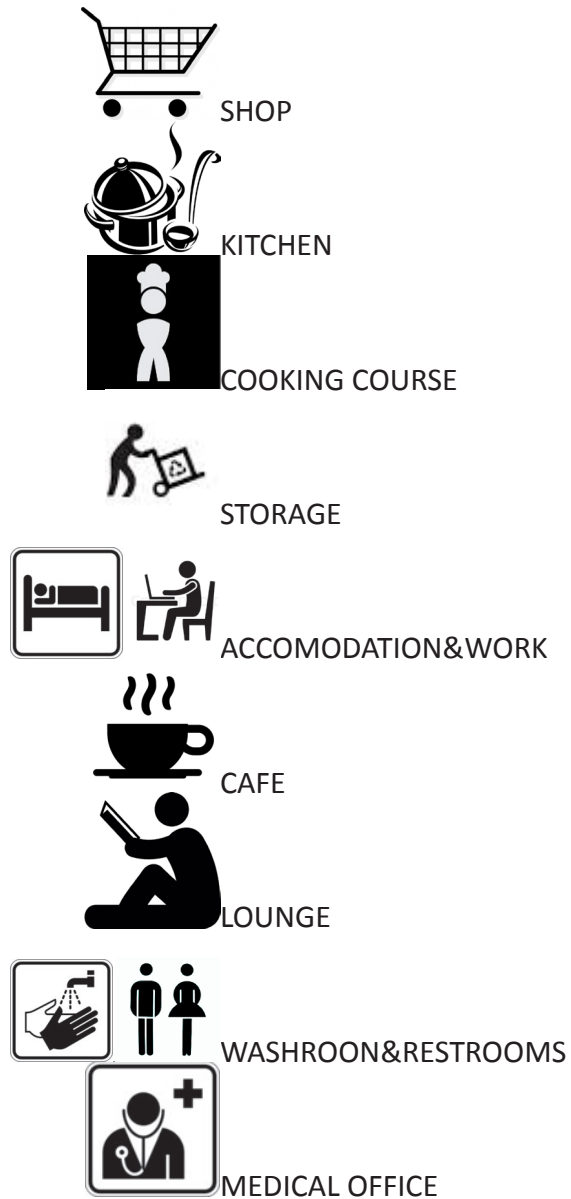


Fig. 98: Brainstorming room schedule for the community center



## PROPOSAL FOR THE NEW FUNCTIONS

### MAIN FLOOR

The main floor of the community center will be designed to supply the community with a shop where the fresh produce of the farm is available and a cafe to meet other members of similar organisations. Especially for the staff of the farm and the volunteers this floor will also contain washing facilities & restrooms. Another important part of this floor are different storage rooms for example garden tools, plant seeds and of course the fresh produce.

### UPPER FLOOR1

The upper floor1 will designed as a multi-purpose room which will facilitate workshops and cooking courses oriented to engage citizens in sustainable agriculture. More specifically, the initiative plans on providing a hands-on experience to interested parties centered on growing food, providing an educational foundation, regarding the nutritional value of food, and the preparation of food. The space will also feature an industrial kitchen in which community members can manufacture goods for selling at markets. An extra lounge to spend time during hard working days for the volunteers and a medical office are also part of the upper floor 1.



## UPPER FLOOR2

The upper floor2 of the community center will be designed to accommodate new small scale non-profit organizations that seek to advance sustainability, community, and/or education in the Detroit community. This will be a place where organizations with similar missions can collaborate, pool resources, engage in relevant dialogue, and ultimately have a physical space that is economically accessible.

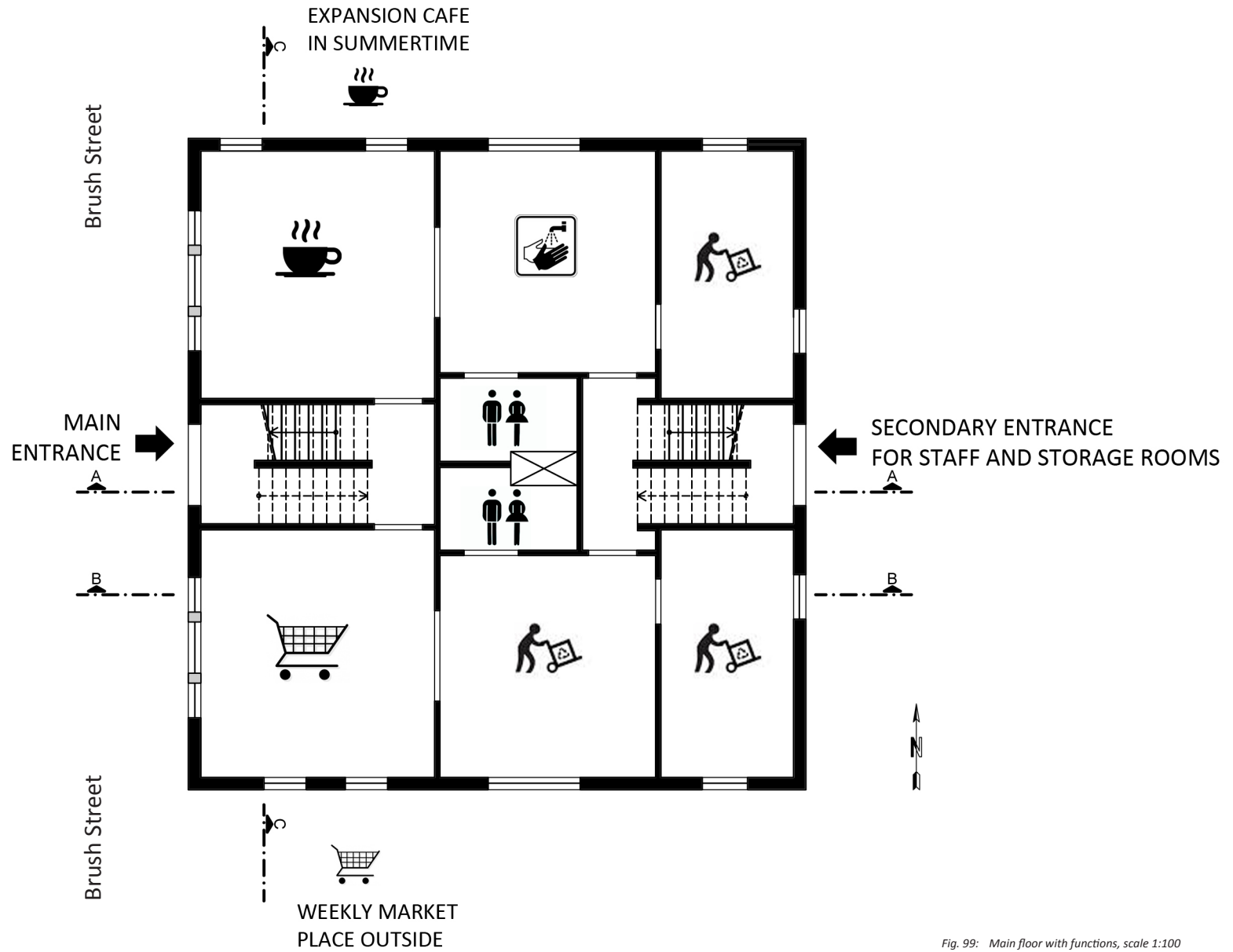


Fig. 99: Main floor with functions, scale 1:100

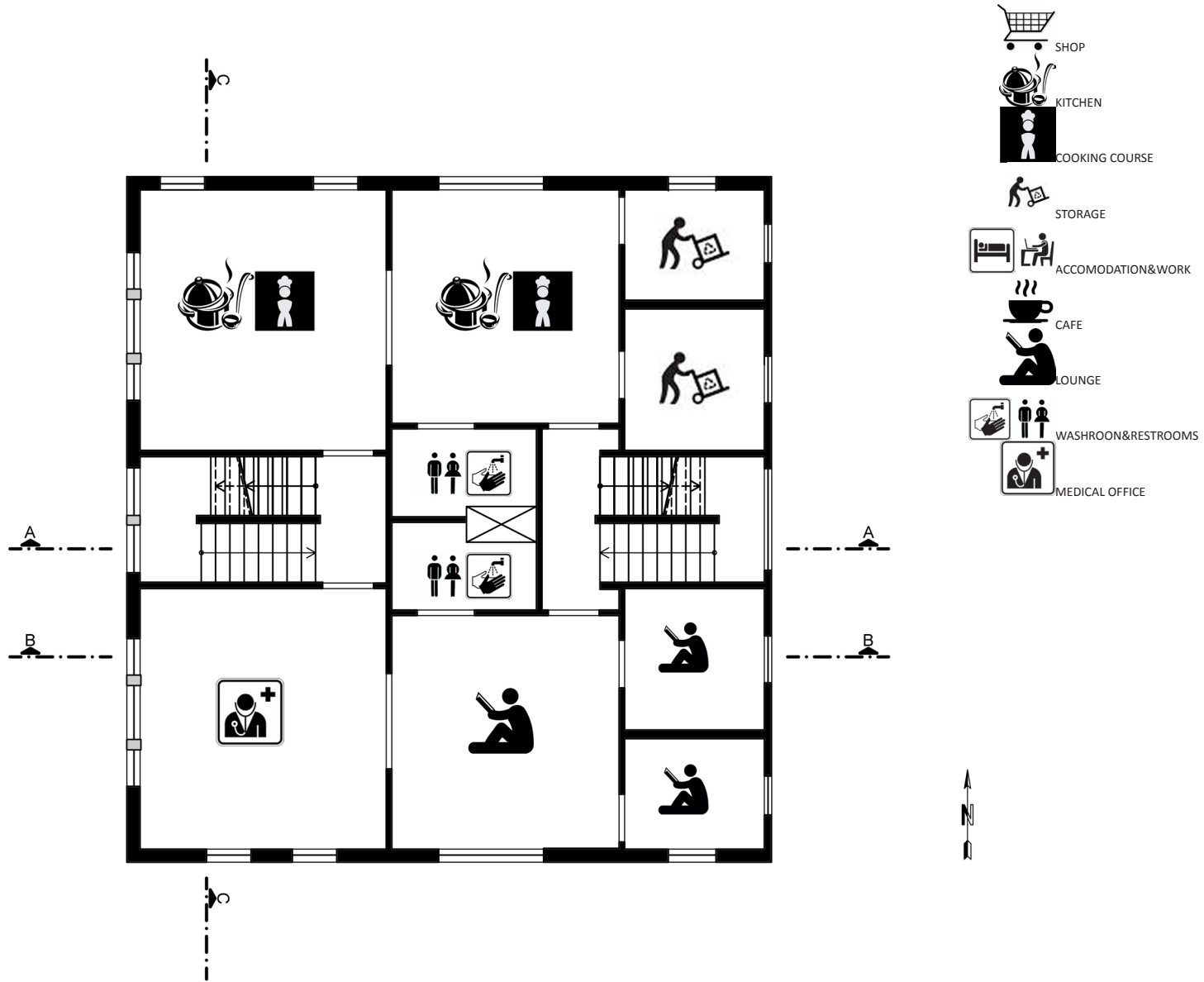


Fig. 100: Upper floor1 with functions, scale 1:100

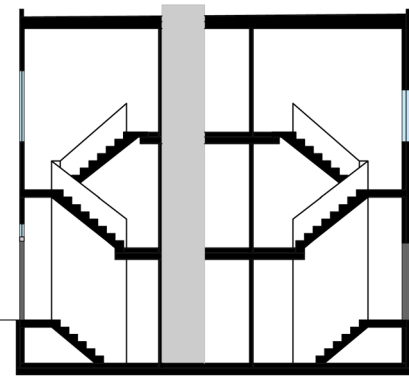


Fig. 101: Section A-A, scale 1:200

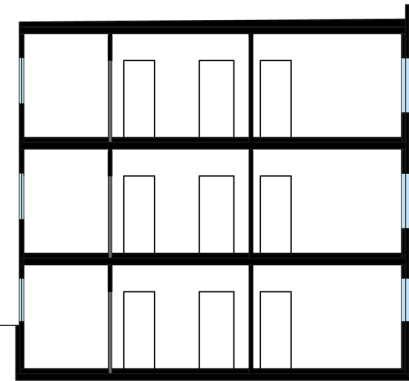


Fig. 102: Section B-B, scale 1:200

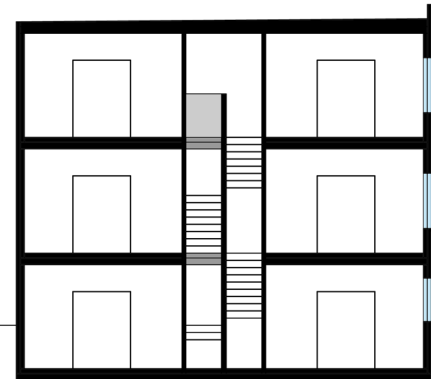


Fig. 103: Section C-C, scale 1:200

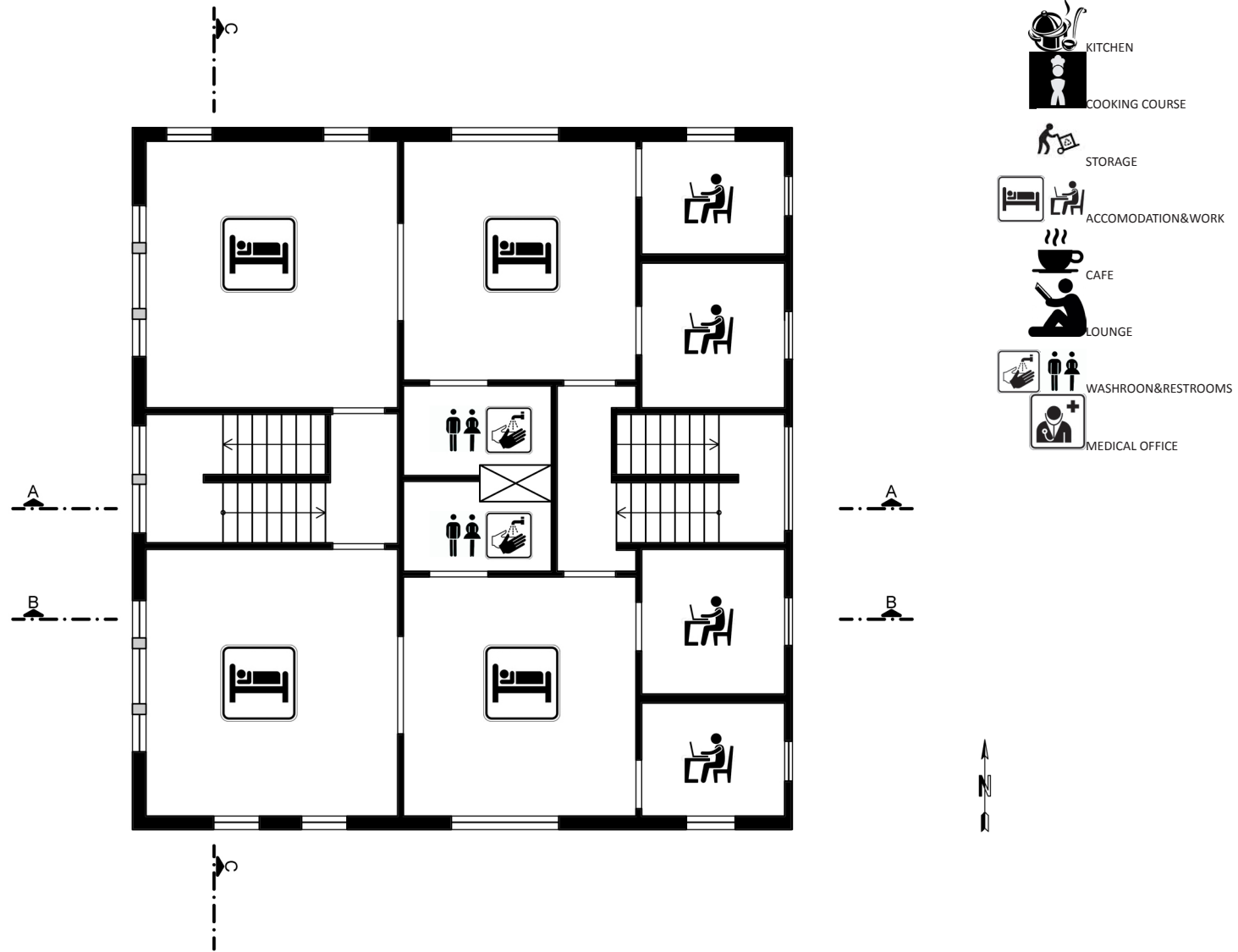


Fig. 104: Upper floor2 with functions, scale 1:100



V.III.COMMUNITY  
SUPPORTED  
AGRICULTURE (CSA)



*How can we ensure the survival of small-scale sustainable farming that maintains our ecosystems and our cultural landscape while also treating other living things with respect?*

*Where can children and adults go to see for themselves where their food comes from and to connect with animals, plants and the earth?<sup>89</sup>*

Small-scale farms could actually meet all these needs. Under current conditions, farmers are often faced with the “choice” of exploiting either nature or themselves. They are dependent for their survival as farmers on subsidies, (world) market prices and on weather conditions – all of them outside their influence. The constant pressure on prices for agricultural produce often forces them to go beyond their personal stress limits, to exploit the soil and animals they work with – and in many cases to get out of farming completely.<sup>90</sup>

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89 Vgl. [http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische\\_%C3%9Cbersetzung\\_SoLawi\\_Flyer\\_2014.pdf](http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische_%C3%9Cbersetzung_SoLawi_Flyer_2014.pdf).

90 Ebda.

The question: How could a sustainable form of agriculture look like that simultaneously safeguards the well-being of the people who work within it?

One answer: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) or, in German, Solidarische Landwirtschaft (often abbreviated to SoLawi), which means “solidarity-based farming”. In this model, a relationship based on solidarity is formed between a farmer and a group of people to whom she/he provides food from the farm in return for covering the costs of food production. In addition, solidarity is built up within the group in order to enable those on lower incomes to gain access to fresh, healthy food.

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA; sometimes known as community-shared agriculture) is therefore an alternative, locally-based economic model of agriculture and food distribution.<sup>91</sup>

Today Community-supported agriculture farms in the United States share three common characteristics: an emphasis on community and/or local produce, share or subscriptions sold prior to season, and weekly deliveries to members/subscribers.

The CSA-Model is a fantastic way for people who care about local food, sustainable agriculture and revitalizing the local economy to get directly involved in making it a reality.

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91 Vgl. [http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische\\_%C3%9Cbersetzung\\_SoLawi\\_Flyer\\_2014.pdf](http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische_%C3%9Cbersetzung_SoLawi_Flyer_2014.pdf).

## THE CSA-BUSINESS IN AUSTRIA

The term CSA was characterized by the concept in the USA in the 1980s as described before. Nevertheless, the philosophy which stands behind the development of this concept comes from Europe. Jan Vandertuin brought his knowledge about these ideas from Switzerland to America where he implemented it on the CSA Indian Line farm in Massachusetts. At the same time and no matter, but based on the same thoughts, the CSA draughts developed in the USA in a circle around the organic farmer Trauger Groh and in Germany on the Demeter company “Buschberghof”.

Up to now in Germany and Austria the term “Community Supported Agriculture” is little familiar. The CSA courts here are called economic-supporter, self-supporter or provider’s community. In 2011 the first CSA court was established in Austria: The gardener’s court “Ochsenherz” near Vienna began together with his consumers a united agriculture. Already in 2012 two other courts arrived in Styria and in Upper Austria. Actually (February, 2015) already 20 functioning CSA companies and initiatives exist

in Austria, some projects are in the forming.<sup>92</sup>

## PROCESS

CSA members or subscribers pay at the onset of the growing season for a share of the anticipated harvest. Once harvesting begins, they weekly receive shares of vegetables and fruits in a vegetable box scheme. Often, CSAs also include herbs, honey, eggs, dairy products and meat, in addition to conventional produce offerings.

SoLawi works like this:

*Producers (farmers / growers)*  
*+ consumers (members of the SoLawi group)*  
*+ annual contractual agreement*

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*= solidarity-based farming ... and much more<sup>93</sup>*

At the heart of this relationship is the mutual contract: the farmer feeds the people, he produces for and all of them together share the harvest – as well as the responsibility, risks and costs associated with producing it. In other words, the members of the SoLawi group finance the farming process as a whole and not

92 Vgl. Kraiß/Van Elsen 2008, S. 44-47.

93 Vgl. [http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische\\_%C3%9Cbersetzung\\_SoLawi\\_Flyer\\_2014.pdf](http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische_%C3%9Cbersetzung_SoLawi_Flyer_2014.pdf).

just the farm produce itself (vegetables, meat, milk, grains etc.). All the extra costs associated with marketing and transportation no longer arise – and far less food is thrown away.<sup>94</sup>

*“When food no longer comes with a price tag attached, it acquires its true value once more.”<sup>95</sup>*

Wolfgang Stränz, Buschberghof

#### THE MEMBERS

- get high quality, fresh seasonal food
- know where their food comes from and how it has been produced
- support regional food production and safeguard arable land in the region
- learn about growing vegetables and producing food and can participate in the process as they wish
- can expand their social network while simultaneously connecting to the earth, the land and the processes that support our daily living

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94 Vgl. [http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische\\_%C3%9Cbersetzung\\_SoLawi\\_Flyer\\_2014.pdf](http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/fileadmin/media/solidarische-landwirtschaft.org/pdf/material/Englische_%C3%9Cbersetzung_SoLawi_Flyer_2014.pdf).

95 Ebda.

## THE PRODUCERS

- can plan ahead with certainty and know that their income is guaranteed
- know who they are producing food for
- can grow diverse food crops and engage in responsible livestock keeping
- are part of a community that supports them

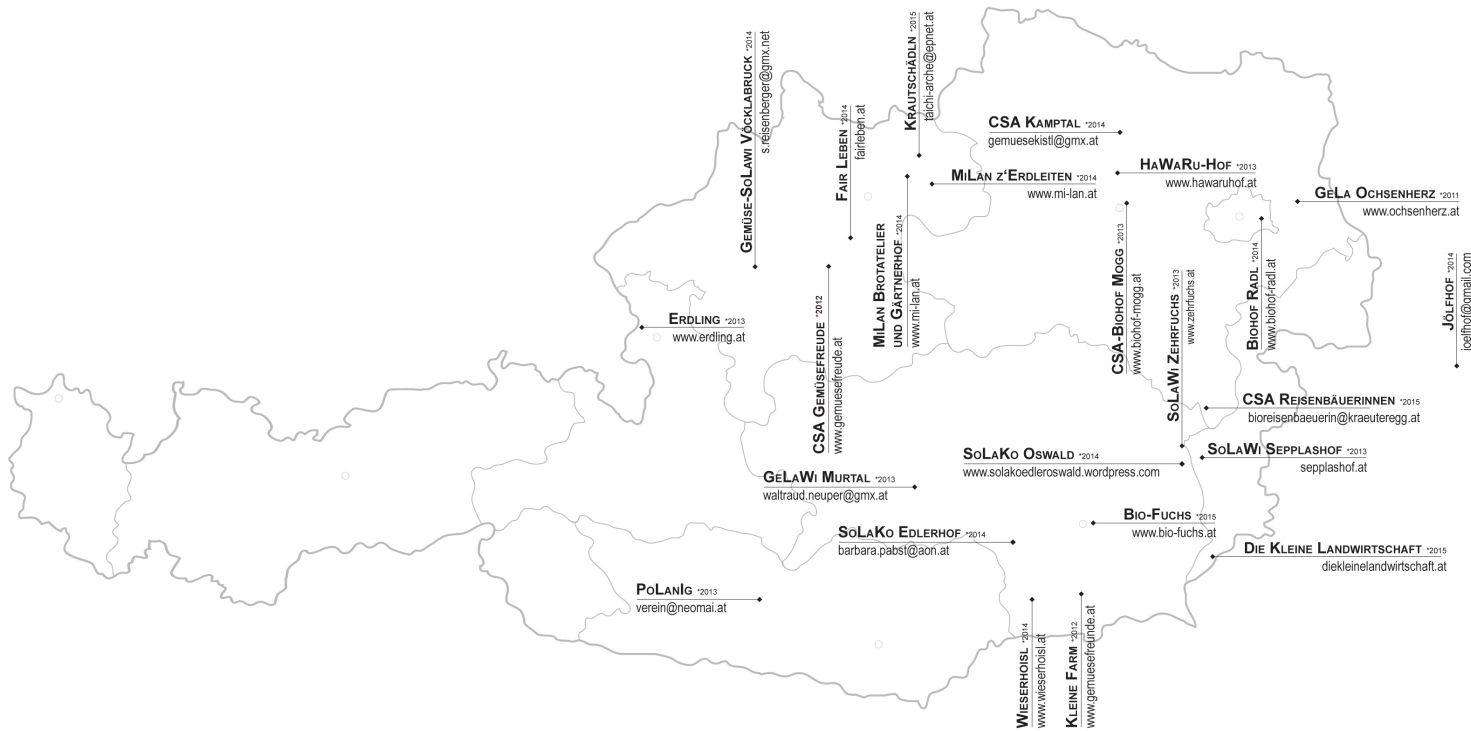


Fig. 105: Plan of the CSA-initiatives in Austria, 20.02.2015.

# V.IV. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

Although Detroit suffered a setback in economy and population we could see that the people still living in the city take an active part to change the current situation.

I think Community Supported Agriculture is an innovative marketing approach which could work well in Detroit. The city would benefit from lower direct marketing costs and the ability to spread risk. The citizens and consumers benefit because they receive locally grown, organic produce. Noncommercial benefits include reduced impact on the environment as a result of sustainable production, the integration of the farm with the local community, providing educational opportunities to the local community, and providing surplus food to local food banks.



Detroit's greatest richness is the available land. If the city pursue the concept of the CSA-model, Detroit has the best chances to become a sustainable and healthy city, where all produce is grown at market gardens located throughout the city of Detroit. In the best case, they form a new network of farming and export their own produce to other countries. The farms contribute to a better looking environment and attract attention to people to move back to the city Detroit. The community centers could become a platform for all the farms spreading over the vacated land of Detroit for an innovative marketing approach. Detroit as a parade example for other shrinking cities in the world.

*Creating opportunity from abandonment!*

We need more citizens' initiatives, more experiments, more mistakes, more failures and more successes. I hope that my work will inspire urban communities to rise to the challenge of transition. Living well in urban communities is an incredibly complex undertaking, and we need to aim for more flexible, adaptable and resilient ways of fulfilling our many needs.



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