Actor-Relational-Approach (ARA) in Housing

A Multi-Stakeholder Model of Collaborative Planning
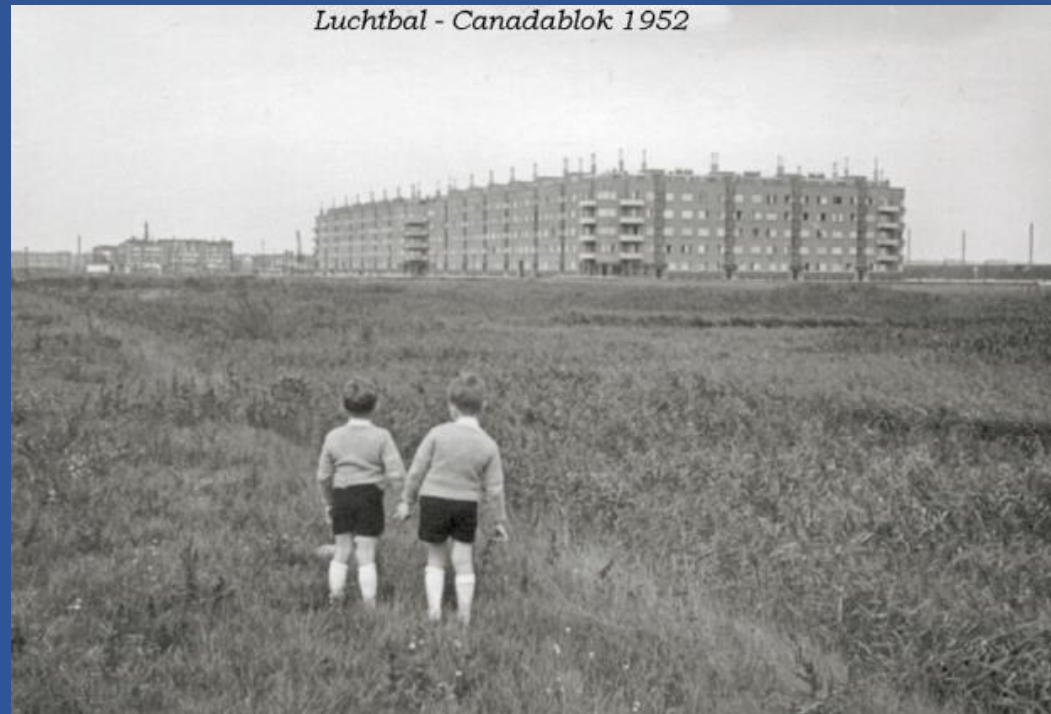
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Lutchbal Orientation

The Context

- Problematic high-rise modernist social dwelling area

- About 2,500 families in the northern fringe of Antwerp

- Physical decay, growing social unrest, and the lack of an economic base

- Urged the city to set up a regeneration project for the area

Luchtbal - Canadablok 1952
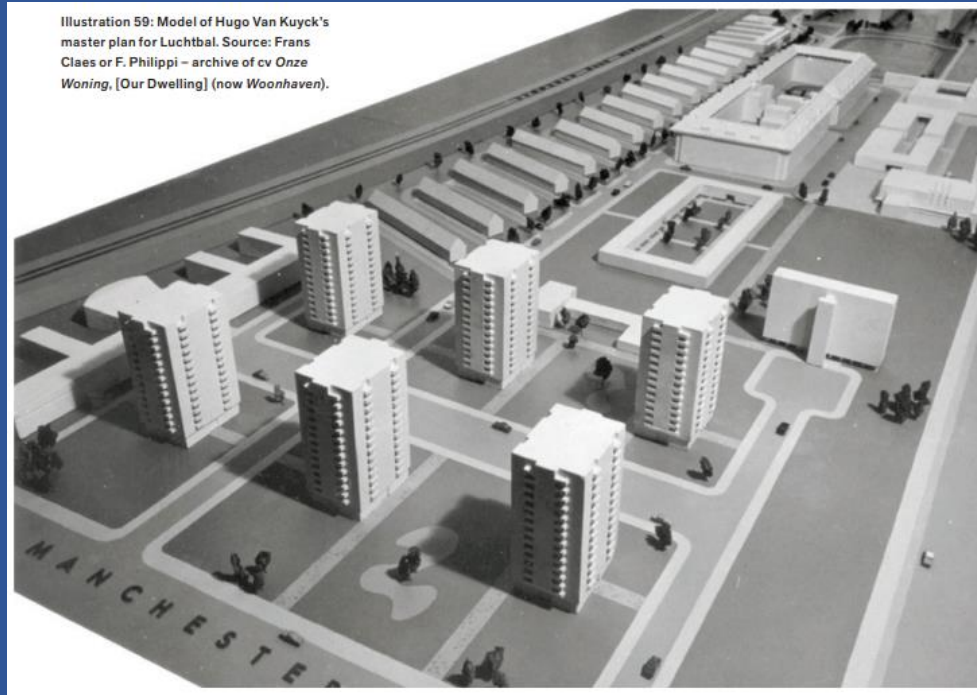
A 100 Years of Lutchbal

Timeline

Illustration 59: Model of Hugo Van Kuyck's master plan for Luchtbal. Source: Frans Claes or F. Philippi – archive of cv *Onze Woning*, [Our Dwelling] (now *Woonhaven*).

Hugo Van Kuyck designs a master plan for a modernist residential area in Luchtbal Zuid, responding to the modernisation of society, focising on social housing

A few houses grouped around an inn named 'De Luchtbal' and the stop for a steam tram transporting day labourers from the surrounding polders to the port since 1800s

The establishment of the Ford Motor Company and the General Motors Company in the port, raising employment rate, and a growing demand for workers 1920s

Urbanisation, sprawling, and the first plans appear to expand the city into this area in 1940s

Overpopulation, unhealthy living environments, polluting industries, lack of light, air and space and social inequality 1950s

The large-scale government investments focusing on social housing provided Luchtbal as a six-towers of modern apartment entitled 'Live here, live longer' (offering the first American-style Supermarket and amenities) 1960s

The development of Luchtbal after the Second World War into a modern neighbourhood of 10,000 residents, in new buildings, a stable social fabric, a rich community life 1970s

The social changes of the area, the arrival of migrants in alongside the local, high density, englarged into 443 apartments, and the beginning of social unrests, crimes, and deprivation, '*the forgotten Luchtbal*' 1990s

A physical masterplan was made for the area to attract affluent middle-class families to dilute its social and economic problems, but failed at the stake of dissenting opinions 2000s
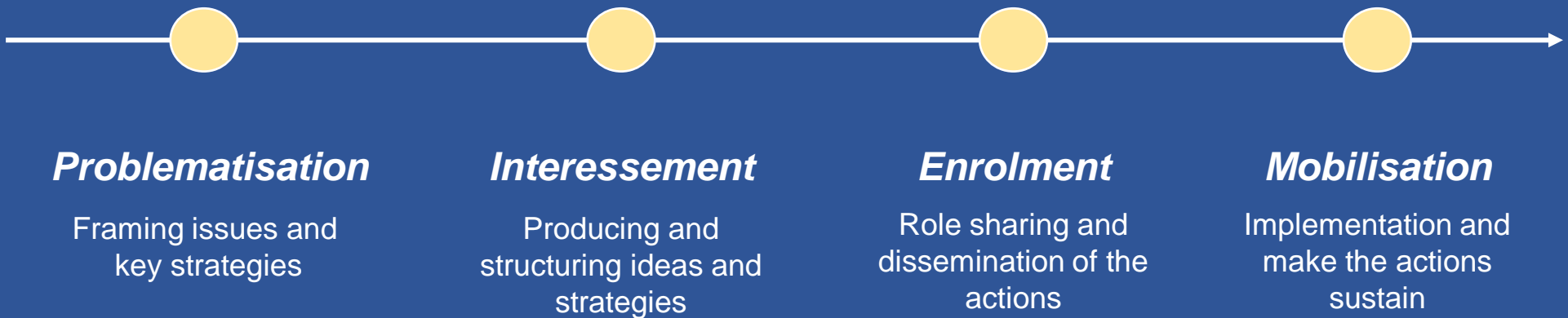
Actor-Relational-Approach (ARA) was firstly invented and exercised to deal with the conflicts around area planning and management
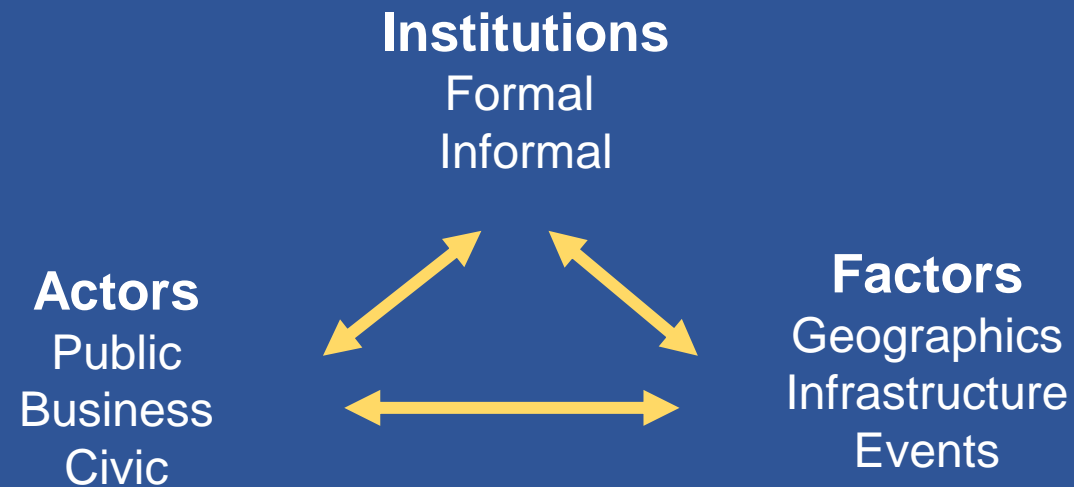
Basic Assumptions of ARA

- Space is made of heterogenic entities and contingent processes, which combine in relations; thus space is in essence relational

- Discrete spaces and places are only temporal stabilizations of those relations; these relations are therefore only stabilized provisionally and must be continually remade

- Growing relations encourage conflicts as sets of relations jostle for supremacy; equally there can be consensus as alliances are build and alignments forced

- Spaces are dynamic, rather than static, and always in a process of 'becoming'.

Actor Network Theories (ANT) of Callon (1986), Law (1986, 2004) and Latour (2004, 2005) is the theoretical foundation of the ARA
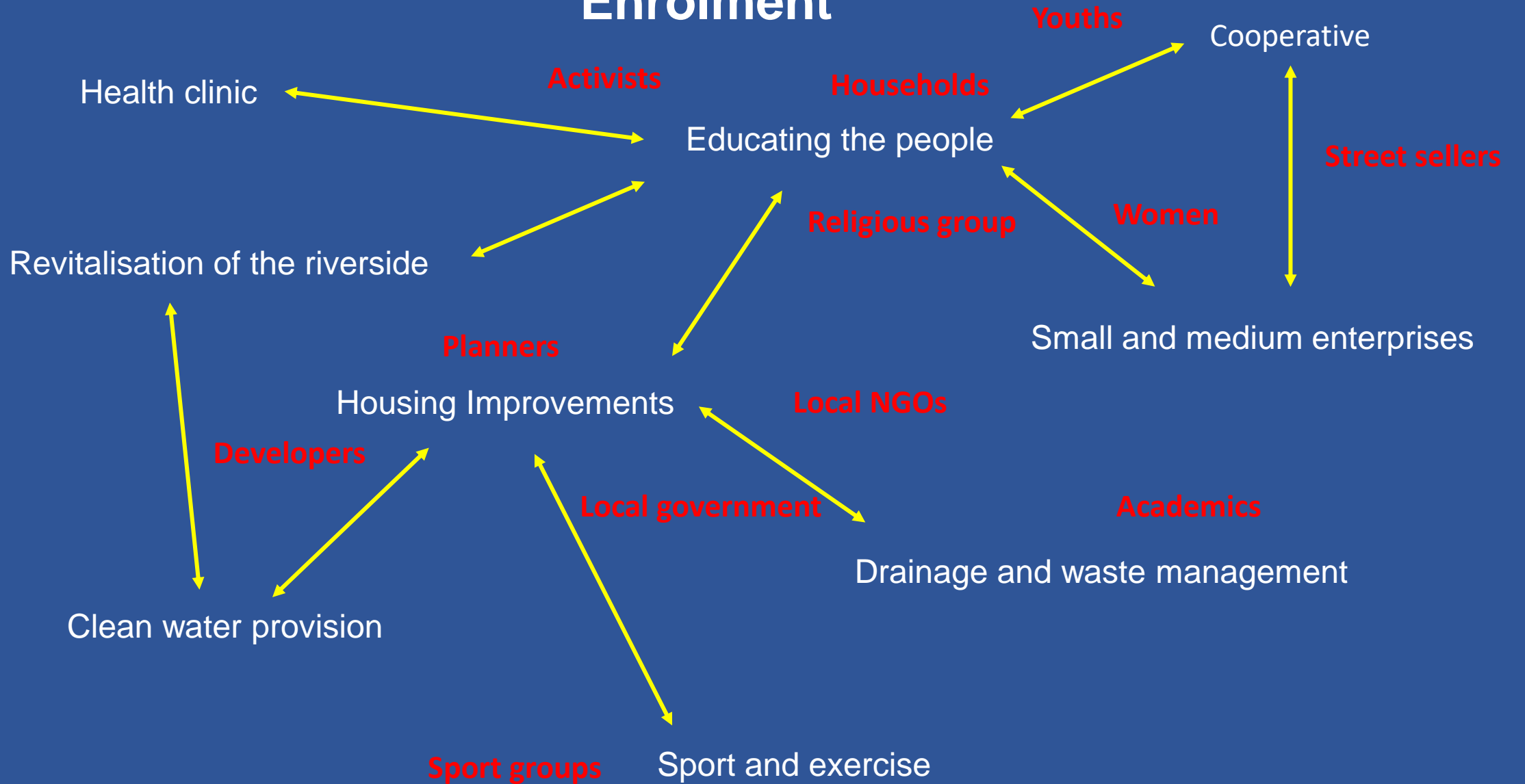
Problematisation

Framing issues and key strategies

Interessement

Producing and structuring ideas and strategies

Enrolment

Role sharing and dissemination of the actions

Mobilisation

Implementation and make the actions sustain

Problematisation

Interessement

Cooperative

Health clinic ←→ Educating the people

Revitalisation of the riverside

Small and medium enterprises

Housing Improvements

Clean water provision

Drainage and waste management

Sport and exercise

How did Actor Network Theories (ANT) logic reshape the practice of the Actor-Relational-Approach (ARA)

- **Tracing**, as a kind of Joint Fact Finding, by jointly interpreting matters how it has come this way, through systematically following the tracks to the origin of an area, problem, challenge or existing association, in proportion to the framework of the task.

- **Mapping**, as a kind of Joint Opportunity Seeking, by jointly looking for new arrangements or possible translations that the traced socio-place assemblages can live up to; open enough to be adapted to new actors, precise enough to genuinely make a resilient match.

- **Diagramming**, as a kind of Joint Transformation of the Action fields, by jointly looking for mutual matches of interest and possible added values in changing circumstances, contributing to several solutions for the mapped challenges or opportunities.

- **Agencying**, as a kind of Joint Institutionalisation of becoming, by jointly developing formal and informal agencies to facilitate resilient coevolutions, through procedures of self-repairing, which are able to change and adapt itself to complex and altering settings.

Actor-Relational-Approach of Planning

Seven planning steps

1. Identification of Unique Selling Points
What are the unique characteristics of the region, theme or question?

2. Actor-analyses
Which actors could be involved (outside-in) and what are their driving motives?

3. Development of Opportunity Maps
Which windows of opportunities could be defined from the interaction between 1) and 2)?

4. Round Tables
Trying to seduce (leading and pushing) actors and intermediates in new promising associations.

5. Business Cases
Elaboration of the promising associations in concrete pilots of mutual value

6. Regime Initiatives
Development of resilient and endurable actant-network assmeblages.

7. Associative democracy
Organisation of special distircts in embedded and focussed democratic associaitions.

Actor-Network-Theory

Four moments of translation-the collective

1. Problematization - Wonderment

2. Interessement - Consultation

3. Enrollment - Hierarchy

4. Mobilization of Allies - Institutionalization

How did ARA work in the Lutchbal?

- **Identification** of potentials and challenges and the unique characteristics of the area

- **Actor-analysis;** which actors should be involved and what are their driving motives?

- **Development of opportunity maps;** Which windows of opportunity could be prospected with regards to point (1) & (2)

- **Roundtables;** Provide arenas for actors to work together towards the opportunity maps

- **Business cases;** Elaborating and bring the outcomes of roundtables into pilot project

- **Regime initiatives;** Development of role and resource sharing and organisations to sustain the activities

- **Associative democracy;** Establishing the rules of the game (rules, norms, values, practices, and the overall governance processes

Stage-1 – Identification of the Unique Characteristics of the Area

Luchtbal is a peri-urban (hinterland area) with a mixture of natural and urban characteristics

There are many schools, including a sports and a swimming school, a community and cultural center, a child day-care center, a home for the elderly, a sports hall, and sport fields

Luchtbal is surrounded by large infrastructures, especially transport (the legendary tramway)

The vast amount of green public spaces in Luchtbal

Luchtbal owns its existence to the port, as the large scale and labor intensive port production activities needed laborers nearby

Stage-2 – Actor-Analysis

Public actors
the Housing department, the Economic and Shopping department, Mobility and Infrastructure, Youth and Education, Sports and the department of the Public Domain

Business actors
Retailers, hotel owners, transport operators, general services (banking, private schools, etc)

Civic actors
Some residents lived there from the beginning for more than 50 or even 60 years; migrants; port-workers

Stage-3 – Development of Opportunity Maps

(A) The Social Green Carpet Luchtbal opportunity map concentrated on a reuse and a collective appropriation of the public space in the area, to initiate a new dynamic outdoor daily live in the neighborhood again

(B) Luchtbal FOYER concentrated on the existing, but down run athletic course in the South of Luchtbal, in cooperation with the Sports retailer Decathlon, Kinepolis, the Luchtbal Theater, and the International Seaman House. We intended to revitalize and upgrade the athletic course for multipurpose sport activities for the neighborhood, but also as a test-zone for the customers of Decathlon

(C) Luchtbal Central opportunity map focused on the development of new retail functions and low-cost space for the informal economy. New retail functions were sought that are adapted to local needs, such as a thrift shop, a fresh market and a low cost supermarket.

(D) The Luchtbal School campus grouped a set of opportunities that aimed to share space between schools, public, and private actors in order to stimulate a multifunctional use of existing infrastructure.
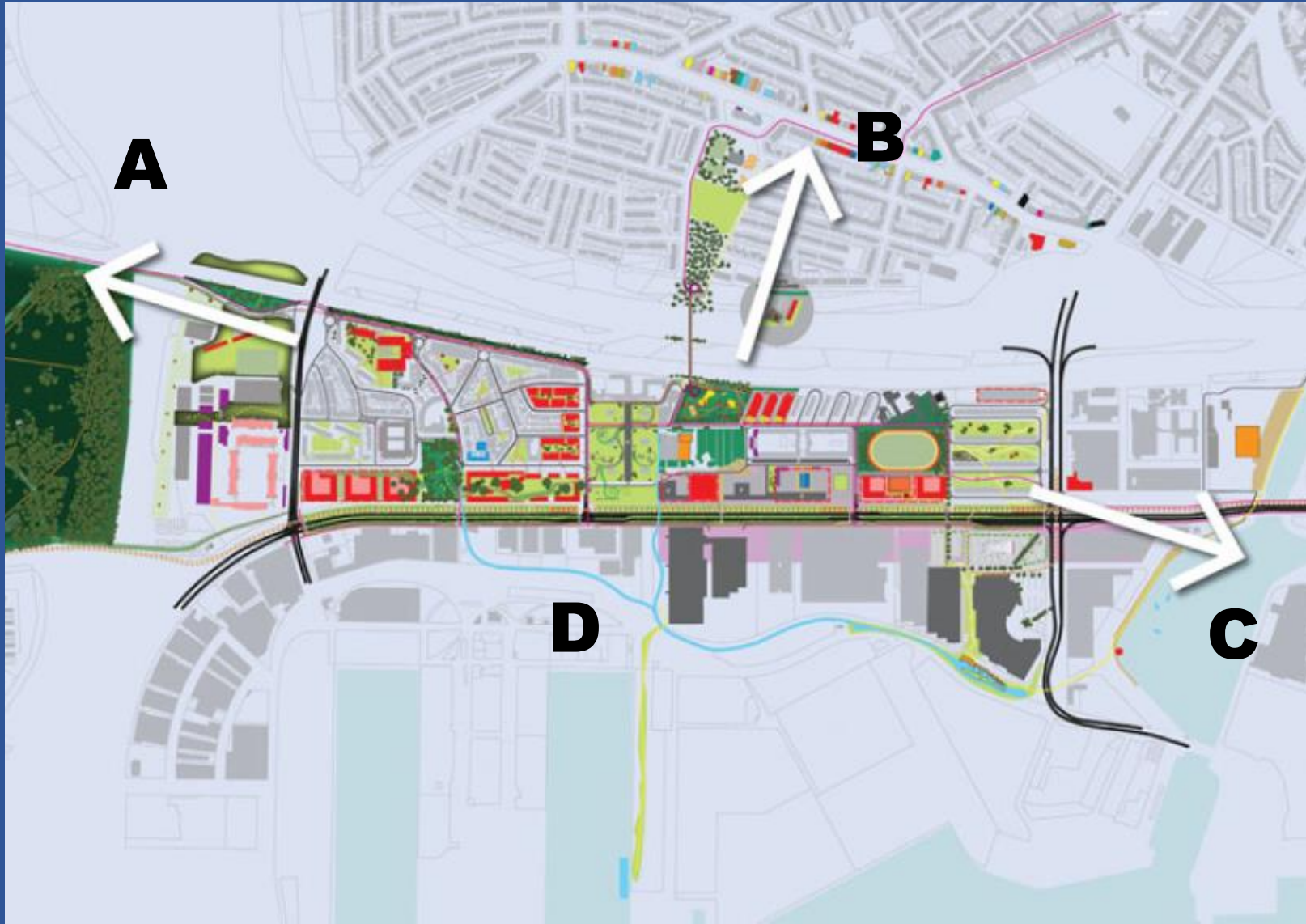
Stage-4 – Roundtables

City government of Antwerp, port representatives, Agency of Social Housing, Community Representatives engaged in a series of discussion to draw the overall Vision and Missions of the area

Local artists, activists, academics, youths, women, and community leaders and planners worked together to initiate creative urbanism-based plan-making and design, focusing on attractive space for social, sports, education, and a multiracial living

Business entities from the large to the smallest engaged in a business and investment networking to help and embrace each other to promote the local economic activities (cooperative, self-funding, community-loan, etc)

Stage-4 – Roundtables

Stage-5 – Business Case

"Starting-point is the wish of the City of Antwerp to create mixed neighbourhoods, not through the displacement of social rental homes but through densification with owner occupancy or private homes. The idea is mixing through densification. […] New residents will have to be tempted to opt for Luchtbal." (De Nijl architects, 2007, p 5 and p 7).

The SPINDUS Project aimed at promoting creative urbanism ideas through inclusive-based approaches and mobile facilitators

// MOBILE_Action research

De LUCHTBUS

wat ... de !UCHT BUS

Potentials

Visibility
Promotion
Deposition of the food products
Ecological awareness
Meeting point

Stage-6 – Regime Initiatives

Huisvesting Antwerpen enters into **partnership** with the City of Antwerp, Onze Woning and the Afdeling Gesubsidieerde Infrastructuur [Department of Subsidised Infrastructure] (AGI) of the Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Sociaal Wonen [Flemish Agency for Social Housing] (VMSW) to draw up the vision

Plan-making and design through a steering group made up of representatives from the VMSW, the City of Antwerp (planning unit, city architect, neighbourhood coordinator, cabinet of the alderman for social affairs, etc.), Huisvesting Antwerpen, Onze Woning and the Flemish spatial planning department (RO Vlaanderen)

The city's semi-autonomous development corporation AG Vespa, which renovates and offers these premises for sale on the private market as 'affordable housing'

the Bench of Aldermen provides estate managerial services of the area comprising of community leaders, cooperative, business associations, ward councillors, and planners

References

- Luuk Boelens & Tom Coppens (2015) Actor-Relational Planning in Deprived Areas: Challenges and Opportunities in Luchtbal Antwerpen, Belgium, Planning Practice & Research, 30:4, 410-423, DOI: 10.1080/02697459.2015.1060051

- Van der Broeck, Pieter (2016) The SPINDUS handbook for spatial quality. A relational approach. Publisher: Academic & Scientific Publishers (ASP). Editors: Ruth Segers, Pieter Van den Broeck, Ahmed Z. Khan, Frank Moulaert, Jan Schreurs, Bruno De Meulder, Konrad Miciukiewicz, Geoff Vigar, Ali Madanipour

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