



# REIMAGINE CHURCHES

Fostering neighborhood  
participation in urban  
church reuse

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## Foreword

The journey of this thesis was sparked by a simple observation. The once vibrant church buildings, once the heart of our community, are now receding into the shadows, their space may be underused or abandoned. The buildings, once familiar, now seemed distant, and my family and I only frequented them on festive occasions. However, when my father took on a project for a sacred space as an architect, and I witnessed the social discourse surrounding the space, I knew I have found my topic, though this social relevance.

As a resident of Zurich, where all kinds of spaces are becoming scarce, I was inspired by the idea of repurposing churches and reshaping, or helping to reshape, contemporary urban life. The spatial resource of church buildings is, therefore, seen as an opportunity to reshape our urban coexistence as citizens.

As the topic requires diverse inputs of people, I got support from diverse disciplines on my research journey. I received excellent support from various church experts. I am grateful for the different, honest perspectives I was able to experience and the continuous support of these experts. I especially thank Thomas Oczipka, who provided a whole network of people for me and answered all my questions. My thanks also go to the experts outside the church who made a diversity of disciplines possible and supported me with methodological approaches. I also want to thank the citizens who participated in the surveys and supported me with their creative ideas and personal insights.

Additionally, I would like to thank my mentor, Hans Kaspar Hugentobler, for listening to me, giving me new perspectives and helping me with fitting materials for my thesis. I am grateful for the company of my fellow students in the mentoring group, who have guided me with their opinions and ideas.

My work invites all interested people to consider church buildings as a resource for future generations. The results will inspire further research and practical applications in adaptive reuse.

(This thesis was supported by artificial intelligence in the form of transcription (Turboscribe), inspiration (ChatGPT) and spelling (Grammarly).)

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the **integration of neighborhoods** in **church reuse processes** through **participation**. The study focuses on the research question of **how neighborhood residents are currently involved** in the reuse processes of churches and **how this integration can happen successfully**. The research shows that the neighborhood's current participation can occur in different ways. Some neighborhood's are already integrated into the process of church reuse, while other church communities are less committed to the participation of outsiders as initiators. This lack of commitment can lead to a lack of utilization or unmet local needs for repurposing the building.

The research underscores the transformative power of genuine community involvement in church reuse projects. This approach not only breathes **new life into underused church spaces** but also fosters the **development of a local community**. Moreover, it paves the way for **sustainable urban development** through the active participation of city residents.

However, implementing a church reuse process remains complex. This **complexity** underlines the need for **clear communication** through a **framework** to be developed, **continuous engagement** of the neighborhood, and **flexible project management** to adapt to society's changing, **also secular, needs and expectations**.

As part of this study, a **set of cards** was developed to provide a **structure for greater neighborhood involvement**. This intervention is intended not only to bring structure to the process for the initiating parish but, above all, to address **local needs and aspirations**. This tool **supports different process phases**, makes the process more **inclusive** and allows for a **broader range of ideas and solutions** that **reflect the different perspectives within the community**.

Finally, the research confirms the **essential role of the neighborhood in a church reuse process**. As these processes provide a framework through which communities can **actively shape their surroundings**, leading to more **sustainable** and **community-orientated outcomes**.

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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

In many cases, citizens are considered as **external stakeholders** of an organization. Usually, organizations gather feedback from citizens after a product or service has been designed for them. However, what if citizens were **involved in the process** of creating the product or service, such as in the case of the **neighborhood** participating with the **church** as an organization? In my thesis, I will investigate this approach to **church reuse** as an example of **adaptive reuse** and **participation** in a complex process.

## 1.1 Description of the systemic area

The practice of adapting old churches for new uses is not a new concept in Switzerland. Over the past three decades, approximately **200 Swiss churches have been repurposed** for different functions, according to SRF (2023). One of the primary reasons for this trend is the direct correlation with **secularization**, which has resulted in a **decrease in the number of church members** and has led to a **lack of financial support** for these buildings in their original form.

According to Ecoplan (2022), the church expects a **further financial setback** due to the new reduced tax regime for legal entities. In addition, tax revenue from natural persons is also likely to fall by around 15% until 2045. At the same time, church buildings are **underused or vacant** due to the loss of members, which conflicts with the **high maintenance costs** of these spaces.

Therefore, the church is faced with the **challenge of dealing with complex reuse processes**. Although examples of existing conversions are available, these projects are **difficult to transfer due to a lack of**

**abstraction** (Benke, 2019). The parishes are left to their own devices and are **overwhelmed by the lack of guidance** in their search for efficient alternative uses. It is not only the parishes themselves that find it challenging to find new uses, but also the **local neighborhood who is concerned with new uses**, as the church **shapes the cityscape** and often stands in an **emotional relationship** with the citizens.

Neighborhood residents may also be interested in **preserving the church building for other reasons**. According to Stückelberger (2016), church conversions are an expression of changes in society. One can lament the change, but seeing it as an **opportunity** to expand the use of churches as **public buildings** makes more sense. Even with a **profane use**, the symbolic content of a church is generally retained. It could, therefore, be argued that church reuse could offer an **opportunity for our society** while supporting the church parishes as neighborhood and therefore as a new stakeholder in their complex process of finding alternative use.

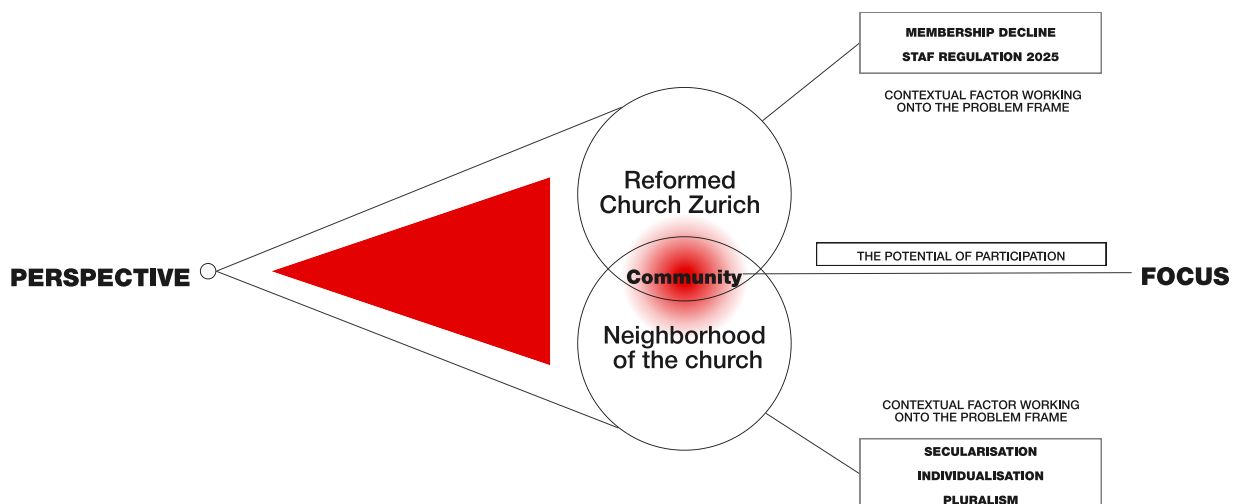


Figure1:Thesis Perspective Model (Own Creation, 2024)

## 1.2 Research Question

Based on the systematic area, this thesis focuses on the **participatory process** of church reuse between **churches** and their **neighborhoods**. The content addresses **Humanity-Centered Design**, an entire ecosystem, and **beyond the existing people of the organization**. Humanity-centered Design means community-based solutions where designs are done through participatory co-design: **by and with communities** (Norman, 2023).

Due to the excessive demands on the responsibility of church communities about these alternative uses, new organizational models that "compel improved **connections among businesses, societies and communities**" are being called for (Benavides & Ehrenhard, 2021). It examines the **current state of integration** of residents in such processes and what **potential** could unfold between the parties through collaboration. From this background emerged the following overarching research question that will be explored from a design management perspective: **To what extent are neighborhood residents involved in the process of church reuse, and how could this integration take place successfully?**

## 1.3 Thesis Structure

This thesis deals with the **design of church reuse processes** while **informing about practical approaches to integrating participatory processes** and **experimenting** with them through an **intervention**. The research question is examined based on the organization of the **Reformed Church of Zurich** (Reformierte Kirche Zürich<sup>1</sup>) and its **neighborhood** as an **urban context**.

The structure of this thesis consists of **secondary research, primary research**, and an **exemplary intervention**. Finally, findings are summarized to **apply the topic of adaptive reuse processes** for different kinds of organizations.

## 1.4 Methods

The following research methods were used in the process of this thesis: a literature review, a system map to understand the organization's context, stakeholder identification, semi-structured interviews with various experts in the field of the church, observations of church reuse events, semi-structured interviews with experts in the field of participation, and a survey with neighborhood residents. These methods are discussed and presented in the following chapters.



## CHAPTER 2

# S econdary Research

Specialist literature from the fields of **theology**, **sociology** and **urban planning** was examined primarily. This secondary research included three main topics: **urban development**, **participation**, and **community**. These three themes are all presented in this chapter to support the research question in the following chapters and to understand the system in more detail.

## 2.1 Definition of church reuse

Church reuse refer to **reusing** or **redesigning** existing church buildings that were initially built for religious purposes to use them for **other functional or cultural purposes**. These buildings are usually reused due to **underutilization** or **lack of funding**. The church owns many different properties, such as parsonages or residential buildings. This thesis **focuses exclusively on the process on the church as a building** due to the unique difficulties described in the introduction.

The parish is the initiator of this church reuse process. The **word parish** is used in an **organizational context**, not a general one. This organizational context means that only the organizational forces of the church congregation are meant by the word church parish with the **exclusion of regular church visitors**.

The word **adaptive reuse**, occasionally replaces the term of church reuse to **abstract the findings** and make them **accessible to a broader range of projects**.

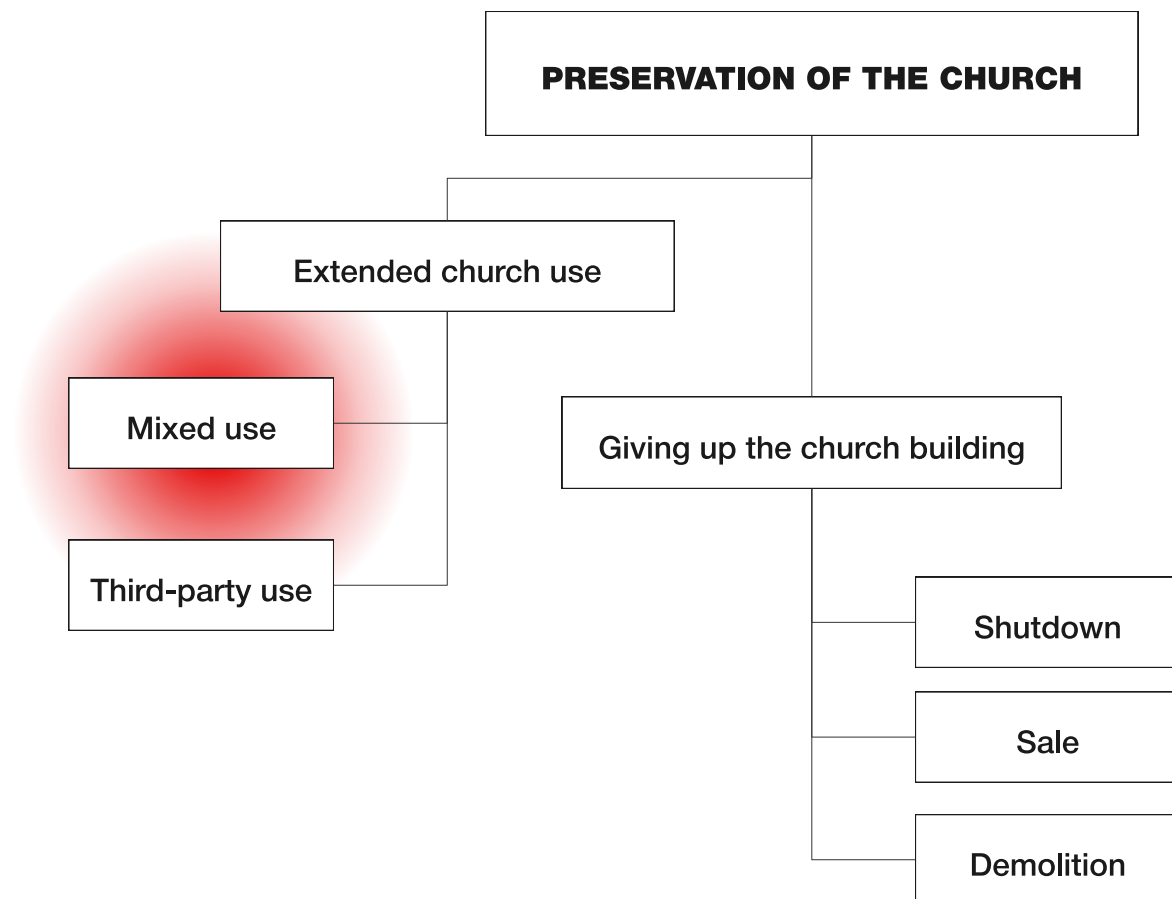


Figure 2: Options of church building preservation (Keller 2016: 42)

## 2.2 Difficulties of the church in an adaptive reuse process

**Churches as part of cultural heritage** can be referred to as an adaptive reuse building. To conserve cultural heritage, adaptive reuse is an acknowledged strategy (ICOMOS, 1964). “Adaptive reuse” here refers to the process that extends the heritage useful life by **providing it with a (new) use, hence conserving it** (Conejos et al., 2016; Pintossi et al., 2023).

In the first chapter, it was noted that the reuse of churches into other types of buildings is a **reflection of a societal shift** (Stückelberger, 2016). In the adaptive reuse context of the church this is due to **changes in the religious landscape**, such as decreasing numbers of people who identify with organized religion, these structures are **no longer used exclusively for religious purposes** and are **utilized less frequently than in the past**.

Until the middle of the last century, the Swiss religious landscape was predominantly characterized by the Protestant Reformed and Roman Catholic Churches. They **shaped the cultural and social context** of the country. From the 1960s, Switzerland, like other Western European countries, was

characterized by cultural, religious, and social changes, which are in research referred to as **secularization, individualization, and (religious) pluralization** (cf. Stolz and Ballif 2012: 57).

These three mega-trends have led to a general **distancing of society from the Reformed Church Zürich**. Pluralization shows that people are **less willing to commit** to various relationships, such as lifelong church membership in this context. As a result, churches may try to realize **flexible offers for individuals** in reused buildings. They try to offer the building to the public for a **secular use** and **satisfy social interests** while being able to **maintain their buildings**.

However, since **many stakeholders must be involved** in this process due to church and state regulations, there are challenges. In addition to the general **overburdening of the church parishes**, which alone initiate the project and bear a lot of responsibility, experts also speak of **absent or limited participatory processes** and **implementation of participatory practices** (Pintossi et al., 2023).



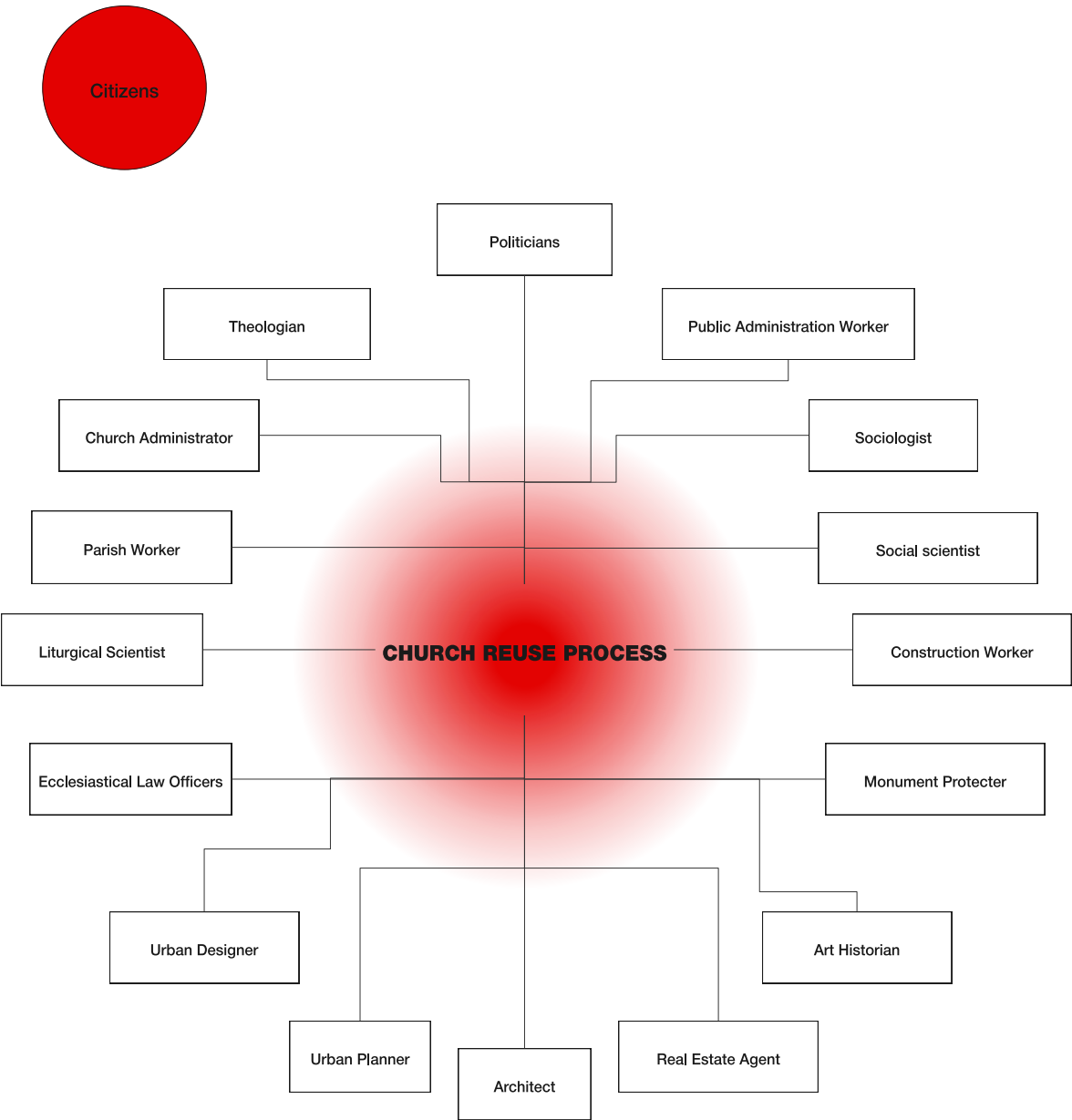


Figure 3: Involved Stakeholders and the exclusion of citizens (Own Creation, Inspired by Jörg Beste<sup>2</sup>)

## 2.3 The loss of local communities in urban areas

Community can be defined as „**a unified body of individuals**“ (Melé, 2011). What unifies individuals are common interests, geographic proximity, common history, common characteristics, common beliefs, and common values, which come with certain **social cohesion** (Melé, 2011). The three classic communities are the **religious community**, which is united by a common faith; the **family**, which shares a common ancestry; and the **local communities**, defined by place of residence or neighborhood (Wies, 2019).

Due to the process of **urbanization** in society, there is an ongoing change in **social relationships** and, therefore, in **communities** (Gardiner et al., 2018). In urban areas worldwide, the decline of local communities is accompanied by various problems that **affect neighborhood residents'** social, psychological, and cultural well-being (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017).

Traditionally, scholars such as Popenoe (2017) have looked into how the **physical environment affects social ties** on a smaller scale than a city, **focusing on relationships within a community or neighborhood**. However, these local social ties appear to be less important for **highly mobile, specialized, and educated people** (Popenoe, 2017). Kawachi and Subramanian (2007) state that these elements are **still valuable for residential well-being** (Kawachi & Subramanian, 2007).

Additionally, the decline in the importance of churches as centers of social connection can be seen as a **threat to community building**. The historical role of churches in **creating and sustaining communities** was linked to **fostering social relationships, sharing values, and supporting the local community**.

## 2.4 The potential of local communities and church buildings

Fostering communities in urban areas as a counter movement, means to foster the social network that promotes **trust** and **cohesion**. These communities can provide a sense of safety, support, and connection, thereby positively influence mental health, well-being, and quality of life (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017). In addition, communities play an essential role in tackling common challenges and **promoting collective solutions to local problems**. Strengthening communities in urban areas can help improve **social resilience** and help them cope with crises by creating a **supportive environment for cooperation, solidarity, and mutual aid** in a neighborhood.

To be a community, there needs to be a starting point with **near spatial structures** so that the community can develop around it (Wies, 2019). The church building can thus be seen as an opportunity; after all, there is a church in each of Zurich's neighborhoods, which could positively influence local communities. Their **symbolic meaning** of a sense of **stability, tradition** and **identity** can be conveyed through the buildings. The buildings are a **spatial resource** for communities due to their generous space and outdoor areas. However, it is also seen as an **oasis of calm** and can be of value to many people, regardless of their religious affiliation (Ahlfeldt, 2010).

## 2.5 Participation between neighborhood and church

Citizen participation has enhanced the effectiveness of community-based social work strategies by **strengthening resident participation in democratic processes**, assisting groups in advocating for their needs, and building organizational and community problem-solving resources and capacities (Chaskin, et al., 2001; Johnson, 1998; Weil, 1996).

Since the Reformed Church describes itself as **democratic** and regards its **buildings as open to the public**, this participatory integration of neighborhood residents could represent an opportunity for the complex process of church conversion as well as the citizens which traditionally are being held outside of the process.

The EU supports this statement with the aspect of sustainability. **SDG number 11** states: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable." (United Nations, 2024). Creating inclusive, safe, and sustainable cities requires good local governance and democratic institutions supporting it. Citizen **participation mechanisms** must be created, involving **all groups of local residents: dialogue** is a crucial tool to avoid social fragmentation, promote a **culture of living together** and build **harmonious relationships** within the city and the society overall (COE, 2023).

By embracing **participation as a fundamental principle** of church conversions, neighborhoods, and churches can work together to create **inclusive** and **sustainable spaces** that enrich their neighborhood's **social and cultural aspects**.

COE (2023) includes the quote of Tabea Michels: "**Participation is a back and forth between top-down and bottom-up, between planning and everyday life.**", which in a great way summarizes the importance of participation.

## 2.6 Principles for designing participative processes

Different **political** and **social contexts**, **existing power relations** and **particular forms of citizen engagement** make it difficult to construct a recipe that can be reproduced anywhere as it may produce different outcomes. The question that arises then is: Under which conditions can inclusive citizen participation thrive and produce the greatest gains (The Hague Academy, 2018)?

Based on Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, **meaningful participation** involves **more than just tokenistic involvement** and requires citizens to have **real power and influence over decision-making processes** (Arnstein, 1969). Arnstein's framework emphasizes the importance citizen participation as a means to achieve **social justice, equity, and democracy**. She calls for a shift from tokenistic forms of participation to **genuine partnership and collaboration** between citizens and decision-makers.

She highlighted the following principles of citizen participation (OpenAI., 2024):

### **Influence:**

Citizens should have the opportunity to influence decisions that affect them directly. This includes having a seat at the table during discussions, providing input, and having their perspectives considered in decision-making processes.

### **Power-Sharing:**

Participation should involve sharing power and decision-making authority between citizens and decision-makers. Citizens should have the ability to co-create policies, programs, and projects alongside government officials and other stakeholders.

### **Empowerment:**

Participation should empower citizens by giving them the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to actively engage in decision-making processes. This includes providing education, training, and support to help citizens effectively advocate for their interests.

### **Transparency:**

Participation processes should be transparent and open to all stakeholders. Citizens should have access to information about decision-making processes, including agendas, minutes, and relevant documents, to ensure accountability and trust.

### **Accountability:**

Decision-makers should be accountable to citizens for their actions and decisions. This involves establishing mechanisms for feedback, oversight, and evaluation to ensure that decisions reflect the interests and priorities of the community.

As the neighborhood's participation in church reuse seems new, no literature could be found for the specific context. For these principles, there would probably, have to be a **new hierarchy** in such processes, which, on the one hand, could support the parish of responsible decisions. On the other hand, the parish would have to **design a suitable process** to make the participation successful (OpenAI, 2024).

## 2.7 Conclusion

This secondary research has gathered information mainly from the disciplines of **theology**, **sociology**, and **urban planning**. The themes of **urban development**, **participation**, and **community** were the primary focus of the desk research and demonstrated what neighborhood participation could mean. This chapter explains why church conversions are an expression of a **changing society** and why church buildings should be **preserved**. The **decline of local communities in urban areas** is also described as a social challenge. The **potential of the spatial resource** of the church and a **new community** is then documented. This should lead to **sustainability** through the participation of the neighborhood in the conversion process. According to Arnstein (1969), **partnership** and **collaboration** are essential for democracy in such processes.



## CHAPTER 3

# P rimary Research

This chapter presents the data collected from the primary research using an **ethnographic approach**. This information is intended to support the secondary research in the **local context** of Switzerland and expand it with new findings. On the one hand, the **expert interviews** are presented; on the other hand, the **neighborhood as a potential participating group** is looked at.



## 3.1 General Notes

### Data handling and privacy

Before the interviews, the participants signed a consent form promising **anonymity of names** and agreeing to be recorded. This means that the identity of the participants remains confidential, and only background information about the person may be mentioned.

### Thematic analysis

The interviews were **transcribed** with the turbo scribe program, **coded** and finally **interpreted**. This data analysis was an **interactive process**, with new groupings constantly emerging to provide a broader **contextual awareness** of relationships in the system of church reuse. As the transcribed interviews have a content of over 100 pages, only parts of them have been included in the appendix.

## 3.2 Interviews with Experts

### Objective

This interview research with six experts aimed to find out their **experience in reuse processes**. A distinction must be made between **internal church experts** and **external experts**. The church experts were interviewed to identify **changes within the church**, **examples of church reuse approaches**, and **problems in the church reuse process**. The focus for external experts was on **participation**. Due to their **experience in adaptive reuse**, they aimed to transfer these findings to church reuse through a degree of abstraction.

### Participants

This study's participants included experts in **theology, sociology, communication, real estate, and art history**. Almost all of them worked or worked in the Reformed Churches or contributed to the institution through projects. One participant is an external expert but has already moderated several **adaptive reuse projects**, which is crucial to **learn about participation processes**.

Their knowledge contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the research by **representing different stakeholders** of a church conversion and, some of whom could be involved in potential decision-making processes of church reuse. This **diversity of experts** allows to better understand the challenge of a conversion process through **different perspectives** and to approach the process with an **open mind**.

## Location

All participants were interviewed in **Switzerland**. The meetings mostly took place at the experts' **work place** and could therefore also provide insight into their organization.

## Time

March 12 - April 21, 2024

Figure 4 shows which **areas** (social, religious, historical, or economic) are critical to the expert participant's work.

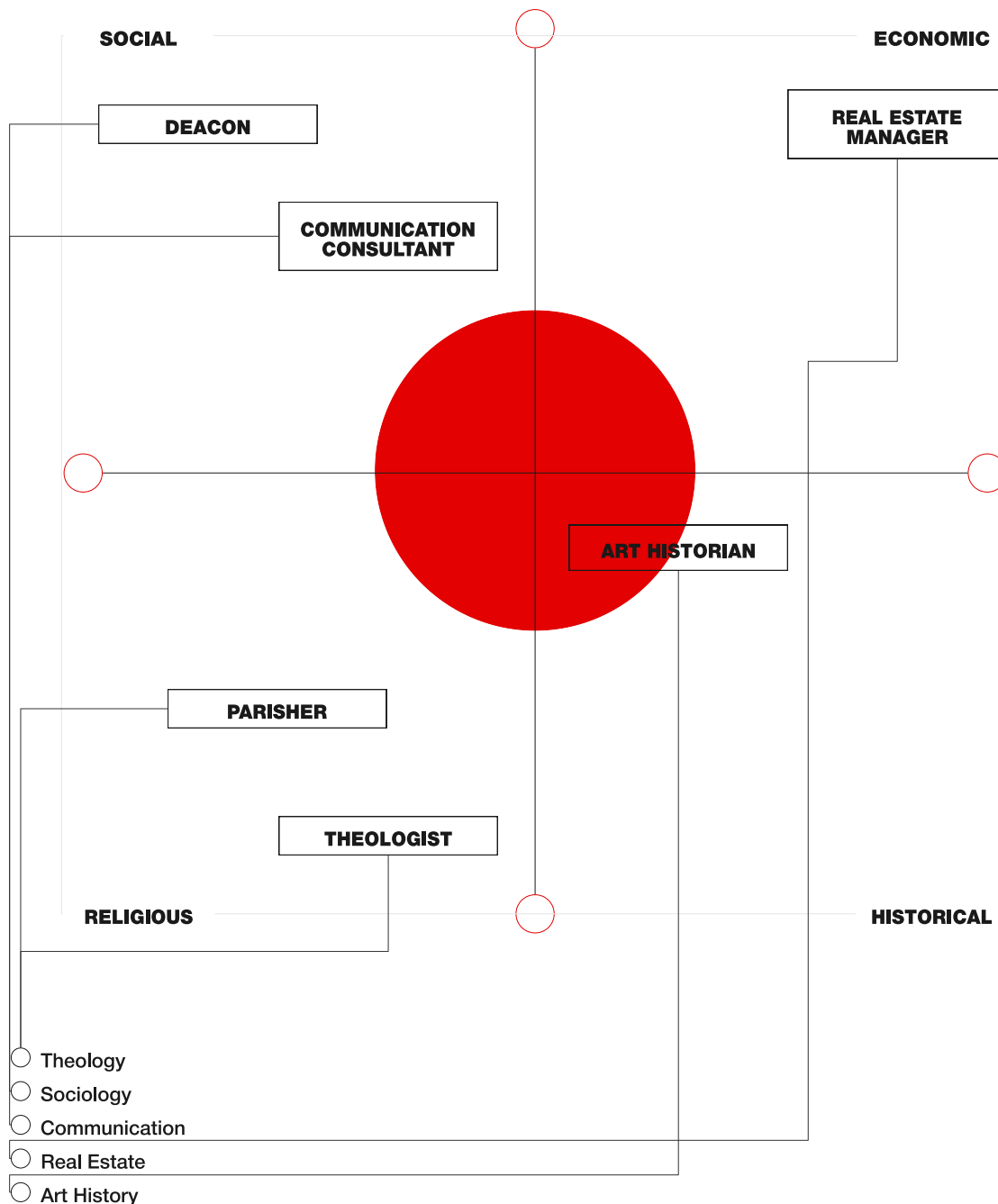


Figure 4: Involved expert participants and their alignment (Own Creation, 2024)

### 3.3 Expert Interviews: Themes and Findings

#### Theme 1: Change of the Church

The topic of **internal and external changes** in the churches **over the last twenty years** revealed findings important for understanding the phenomenon of church reuse. The **decline in membership** continues to be a focus of attention. This decline requires the church to **open up their buildings** and can, therefore, be seen as an opportunity. The two trends of **secularization** and **pluralization** are repeatedly mentioned in direct connection with the **underuse of church buildings**. Churches should **reinvent** themselves as a result of this social change. **Multifunctional spaces** are to be made attractive for diverse users. The focus of the new use is still on the **community building**, which, according to the experts, sees itself as suitable through the church building, even for non-denominational residents.

Quote	Finding
<b>E2:</b> "The conversion to the Kunstklangkirche in Wollishofen was received positively by the congregation of older members, as it remained something close to the church and left the option of holding worship services open."	<b>Existing church members appreciate it when the option of traditional church rituals is left open.</b>
<b>E2:</b> "Social diversification requires flexible utilization concepts." <b>E2:</b> "It is time to take a fresh look at the church's core. The identity has to find out who we are in the first place and what we are, we also have no creed." <b>E5:</b> "Churches must reinvent themselves to remain relevant." <b>E2:</b> "It is time to take a fresh look at the church's core. The identity has to find out who we are in the first place and what we are, we also have no creed."	<b>Churches may reinvent themselves to stay relevant to society.</b>
<b>E1:</b> "Then they started building church community centers. These parish halls haven't been around for long. At some point, people realized that you can't do everything in the church, and people don't always want to go to church." <b>E1:</b> "Pluralization has more to do with the entire social space. If you had to repurpose the church, you would also have to put pluralization at the center so that you involve the people who live or work there." <b>E6:</b> "But as a social space, the Church has almost no meaning anymore in contrast to the parish houses. This has to do with the fact that pastoral life in churches occurred 100 years ago. The Ecclesiastical life naturally took place in the Church."	<b>Church community centers can be more popular as people are allowed to use them for more diverse activities.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "The churches that want to approach it as a participatory process do so against the background of their understanding of the church. In other words understanding churches as a community space, not churches as religious buildings."	<b>The church as a building can be a facilitation of communities.</b>

Table 1: Expert quotes on the topic of: Change of the church

## Theme 2: Church reuse stakeholders

The interviews conducted with experts highlighted the **various stakeholders** involved in the conversion process. The **parish** is responsible for initiating the project and has **decision-making authority** over the church building. The parish consists, amongst others of **volunteer workers** who are not process management experts and are often tackling such a project for the first time. Apart from the stakeholders discussed in Chapter 2, **stakeholders who are frequently excluded from the process** also play a significant role. They can support the parish with their **ideas** and **perspectives** or even participate in **partnerships**. **External process management experts** are recommended to ensure **neutrality and expertise between multiple stakeholders**.

Quote	Finding
<b>E1:</b> "The church council of the Canton of Zurich then started to stop renting properties and instead took care of its own properties, and so on. And then they looked at how these properties could be put to better use."	<b>The church council initiates the reuse process.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "Conversions are successful where various players are involved who contribute to the church being used to a high degree and who can spread the financial burden across various shoulders."	<b>Finding stakeholders who share the financial responsibility is attractive to the church.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "It is voluntary work that someone does on a parish council. And such voluntary work also has its limits. Especially when it comes to processes that go on for 10, 15 years, commissions and authorities naturally also change."  <b>E6:</b> "The church district commissions are heavily staffed with volunteer workers, who quickly exhaust themselves with ideas about what they can do with the church in their circle."	<b>The church council sometimes works voluntarily.</b>
<b>E1:</b> "They would undoubtedly have to be involved with members, but also with people who are not Catholic or something completely different or who have appeared. It would have to be broadly diversified."	<b>A diverse group of participants should take part in the process in order to open up the perspective of the church.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "Churches should get support from professionals who know how to manage or accompany such a process—someone who has everything in view and who has this as their profession."  <b>E4:</b> "And if they want to realize their potential, they need someone who has the methodological expertise and socio-cultural skills."  <b>E4:</b> "It helps if someone moderates externally and really brings in the methodological expertise from outside and then designs, schedules and calculates such a process together with the participants. Because this also involves a certain neutrality."	<b>Neutral, external can help in guiding the process helps the parish, which is not an expert in process management.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "Based on this overall social mission, the parish is also responsible for considering what makes sense, what we see from our perspective and what the neighborhood might need."	<b>The parish tries to design for their neighborhood, which is often not an active stakeholder.</b>

Table 2: Expert quotes on the topic of: Church reuse stakeholders

### Theme 3: The process of church reuse

Experts suggest that a parish should have a **clear understanding of the possibilities and limitations** of the church to communicate it to the outside world. **Feedback** must be taken positively from outsiders, and **transparent communication** should occur with everyone involved in the process. A **multifunctional spatial solution** can be an advantage to **appeal to a broader society**. **External specialists** should be involved in the process to handle **stakeholders, process goals, and timetables**.

Quote	Finding
<b>E3:</b> "That's part of the process. You try something and realize that there is resistance. Then you can react to it and say, maybe it's better if there is so much commitment in this neighborhood."	<b>Resistance is often part of a process and can be understood as feedback.</b>
<b>E2:</b> "Church conversions are well received if they are designed to be cultural and community-oriented. The trend towards multifunctional use shows the need for flexible church spaces".	<b>Multifunctional uses can be popular, as they are more flexible.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "The best solutions are those where there is not only the either/or, but the both/and as well, where the building is not either used as a sacred building or then profaned."	
<b>E3:</b> "But a big issue is that it takes a long time for something like this to grow and come together has grown and come together. And until the public goes along with it and sees it as convincing."	<b>Extending the process through participation can be a time consuming problem for the initiators.</b>
<b>E6:</b> "Reuse processes are very demanding in the church community. There are a lot of people who have a say and want to have a say."	
<b>E1:</b> "Of course, if you involve the people, it takes even longer, and it's been ten years or so until something happens."	
<b>E3:</b> "And it also makes sense for a parish to be forced to formulate what they actually want to an external contractor."	<b>The parish must always be the first to realize what could be possible for them.</b>
<b>E4:</b> "The conditions for participation simply always have to be clarified very well. And you really have to be open to the outcome as the initiator of the church."	
<b>E6:</b> "We think the place should work for the whole neighborhood, not just the Parish. That's why it's essential to address concerns right from the start."	
<b>E4:</b> "For the process to be carried out really well, you need content-related skills for the participation process. And it simply needs professionals. With that, it works."	<b>Churches on their own can be overwhelmed by the lack of skilled labour in the reuse process.</b>
<b>E4:</b> "It is important, and this is why external people are also important, especially in a church that is very set in its ways emotionally, that you really want to address people in a tender way."	
<b>E6:</b> "The church district commissions are heavily staffed with volunteer workers, who quickly exhaust themselves with ideas about what they can do with the church in their circle."	
<b>E3:</b> "Based on this overall social mission, the parish is also responsible for considering what makes sense, what we see from our perspective and what the neighborhood might need."	<b>The parish often figures out the potential user group of the future, reused church.</b>

Table 3: Expert quotes on the topic of: The process of church reuse

## Theme 4: Opportunities and risks of church reuse processes

During discussions about **best-** and **worst-practices**, opportunities and risks in church conversions came to light. The risks associated with church conversion include the fact that the initiating **parish often lacks the necessary expertise** and can therefore be overwhelmed by the conversion process. The role of the parish should be to **communicate restrictions and opportunities** to **minimize the risk of failure in the potential participation process**. The informations in the conversion process should be **transparent** to all stakeholders, and participants should **not be seen as potential paying users** of the reused building. This is why experts recommend involving **neutral specialists**. However, the result of the reuse should **not be predetermined**, as this could **hinder the opening up** of the building to outsiders. This opening up is seen as an opportunity and could **attract a broader group of people** through various activities that can take place in the church building.

Quote	Finding
<b>E3:</b> "Take Wollishofen church, for example The parish initiated an ideas competition for a change of use. They opted for the Kunstklangkirche. They worked on a pilot project for three years. Then, they realized that it wasn't financially viable. And now they are something else again."	<b>Without specialists, the financing of the conversion sometimes takes second place.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "The best solutions are those where there is not only the either/or, but the both/and as well, where the building is not either used as a sacred building or then profaned. Profane, but I find the most exciting projects to be those with room for both to have a place next to each other."	<b>Offering multifunctional activities can attract a greater diversity of people.</b>
<b>E3:</b> "I think it's a great solution because it also conveys a different image of the church to the public image of the church. People perceive that a room like this can also be used for this. This can also be explained by the fact that these rooms have always fulfilled various functions."	<b>Church reuses allow the church to open up more to society.</b>
<b>E6:</b> "A reusing process is a very inspiring one. I also think it's an excellent opportunity for the church community to rediscover its position towards society."	
<b>E4:</b> "If you already have a plan for the outcome, this is not suitable for a participatory process. There is then a great risk that the process will not be sustainable."	<b>The initiators must not have a concrete idea of the implementation, otherwise there is a risk that it will not be sustainable.</b>
<b>E4:</b> "The initial big ideas end up being small again. Actually, when you start the process, you actually have to know what we can realize and how much money can we invest."	<b>Restrictions should be clear and communicated from the start in order to give participants realistic instructions.</b>
<b>E5:</b> "I think the opening is a risk of taking away something that doesn't suit you religiously."	
<b>E6:</b> "The new use for the Wollishofen church then turned out to be complicated. Mostly it had purely technical problems."	
<b>E4:</b> "But the question is, how does it bring you put the money in? Not the people. And if the church has a hidden agenda, meaning they make a participatory process, but actually, the point is that in the end they have people finance church buildings; this is a no-go."	<b>Participants should not be perceived as financially contributing users.</b>

Table 4: Expert quotes on the topic of: Opportunities and risks of church reuse processes

## Theme 5: Participation in reuse processes

The interviews with experts have revealed that **involving external stakeholders** in the process of utilizing church buildings is recommended. This approach is useful because outsiders often have a **relationship with the church building** or even **objections to its future use**. There are currently several methods being used to facilitate participation in church utilization processes, such as **stakeholder analyses, workshops, idea competitions**, and **"look over the shoulder" discussions**. **Clear communication with the public** and an open approach are essential to open up the building to the public. It is also crucial not only to collaborate superficially but also to incorporate participation into the **decision-making process**.

Quote	Finding
<p><b>E1:</b> "It was always noticeable that there were two places where all kinds of people met. One is when there is Brot für Alle. Suddenly, completely different people came who otherwise had nothing to do with the church. They are upbeat people. They are simply interested in the third world."</p> <p><b>E1:</b> "And then there are the outside people who always went on the trip. They were members but otherwise didn't come to church very often. But when you travelled to Israel or Turkey or went swimming somehow. That also creates a certain cohesion."</p>	<p><b>There have been active church members who mainly attend church services, but there are also inactive members who are not interested in the traditional faith activities but in the church program outside of worship.</b></p>
<p><b>E3:</b> "Also, until 40 years ago, 90% of the population was a member of a religious community, and virtually the public erected these buildings. That is why I think these buildings do not belong to the church community alone but to the public."</p>	<p><b>Because in the past almost the entire population was religious and build these buildings, one could argue that today the buildings still belong to the public and therefore should be open for participation.</b></p>
<p><b>E3:</b> "There is this situation where people who are far away from the church, are campaigning for the preservation and even the religious use of a church. They never attend Sunday services. Why do they stand up for this church? For me, this is also a sign that churches don't just have a church function but also a function for society as a whole."</p>	<p><b>Increased criticism from the public towards a new use of the church can be understood as feedback to involve them in the reuse.</b></p>
<p><b>E4:</b> "...But then they take it easy and ask participators to simply fill out a stretch sheet or something; this is not participation, participation is how you create open thinking spaces where everything is still allowed and possible, and only in the next step will it be possible to establish boundaries.."</p>	<p><b>Participation must be organized openly.</b></p>
<p><b>E4:</b> "Participation is only participation only if it is really about being able to co-decide at the end."</p> <p><b>E5:</b> "It is always crucial that participants are really able to participate in decision-making. Whoever runs this group doesn't tell them what to do."</p>	<p><b>Participation is not only the search for ideas, but above all the decision-making of ideas.</b></p>
<p><b>E5:</b> "Frauenfeld as a project workshop is effective so that you bring your ideas. Afterwards Let's see together how we can do that. You can do that in these rooms, if the project needs it."</p>	<p><b>Temporary projects can facilitate smaller group participations.</b></p>
<p><b>E6:</b> "In addition to the procedure, there is a "look over the shoulder". We invite stakeholders there. That is an insight into the jury and architectural office discussion. They can provide feedback on their concerns."</p>	<p><b>Participants in some projects are only involved in one part of the process.</b></p>

Table 5: Expert quotes on the topic of: Participation in reuse processes

## Theme 6: The neighborhood as a participant

After conducting the first two expert interviews, the thesis included the neighborhoods interest in church reuse. Neighborhood residents are **significant potential stakeholders** because churches tend to **focus on their residents** after the church fusion. Traditionally, the parish **responds to the residents' requests** and customizes its services to **meet their needs**. Although neighborhoods are **often not active stakeholders** in the conversion process, they interact by providing **informal criticism** of church reuse. This **feedback** indicates that the church building is crucial for residents, **despite their denomination**.

Quote	Finding
<p><b>E1:</b> "We thought we could use the Oberstrass church as a concert venue because it is acoustically perfect. Some people thought it wouldn't work at all. It was a church that had to be used as a church. These non-denominational residents thought it was a church space. Then, it couldn't just be used for music."</p> <p><b>E3:</b>"That is part of the process. You try something and realize that there is resistance. Then you can react to it and say it's better to change if there is so much commitment in this neighborhood."</p> <p><b>E6:</b> "What surprised me were voices from the neighborhood. Voices from people who are no longer very active in the church. But they still had demands for the new use of the church."</p>	<p><b>Neighborhood residents often interact in the process through their criticism of the reuse.</b></p>
<p><b>E1:</b> , 'The church in District 12 found that we have so much else as a place to live, but we have no place to be. There is no there is nothing, so we will make a restaurant outside of our church."</p> <p><b>E5:</b>"A social space analysis can be an excellent way to learn about the neighborhood as a reuse initiator."</p>	<p><b>Reuse ideas should be based on what the neighborhood needs.</b></p>
<p><b>E3:</b> "To this day, the church is generally organized so that anyone who lives in the village simply belongs to the church in the town, and those who live in the city belong to that neighborhood. From this perspective, I think it makes more sense to use that which is implemented or developed in a participatory way with the local people."</p>	<p><b>The local focus for reuse makes sense because of the local needs to which the church is orientated.</b></p>
<p><b>E3:</b> "Residents are somewhat reserved. The reason for participation is that they see churches as another vital place. With a centre function, with a reminder function of religion, of the importance of religion, which still means something to them, even if they no longer use it. I often say that the church also has a compensatory character."</p>	<p><b>The local church can be important to residents even if they don't actively interact with it, knowing it is there can mean stability for them.</b></p>

Table 6: Expert quotes on the topic of: The neighborhood as a participant





### 3.4 Survey with citizens

#### Objektive

This research aimed to understand the **attitudes of neighborhood residents** towards the church as an **institution** and the church **building**. The survey was deliberately designed to begin with general questions about the community and turn to questions about churches towards the end so that respondents could start the study without preconceptions.

#### Participants

A survey of **citizens** representing a **wide range of backgrounds** was conducted. As the church conversion is seen as an opportunity for society as a whole in this context, no criteria were applied to residents except of the **urban residence criteria**. People living in rural areas were questioned but finally not included in the work, due to the urban context. In Total 28 people were questioned from all over Switzerland and the responses of 17 citizens were analyzed. The citizens perspective contributes to the **understanding of community** and **interest in church buildings**.

#### Location

All participants were from Switzerland, only the answers of the 17 urban residents were analyzed, as rural areas reflect a different context. The survey was completed online and supported by communication via chat, if participants had questions about the survey.

#### Time

April 9 - 16, 2024

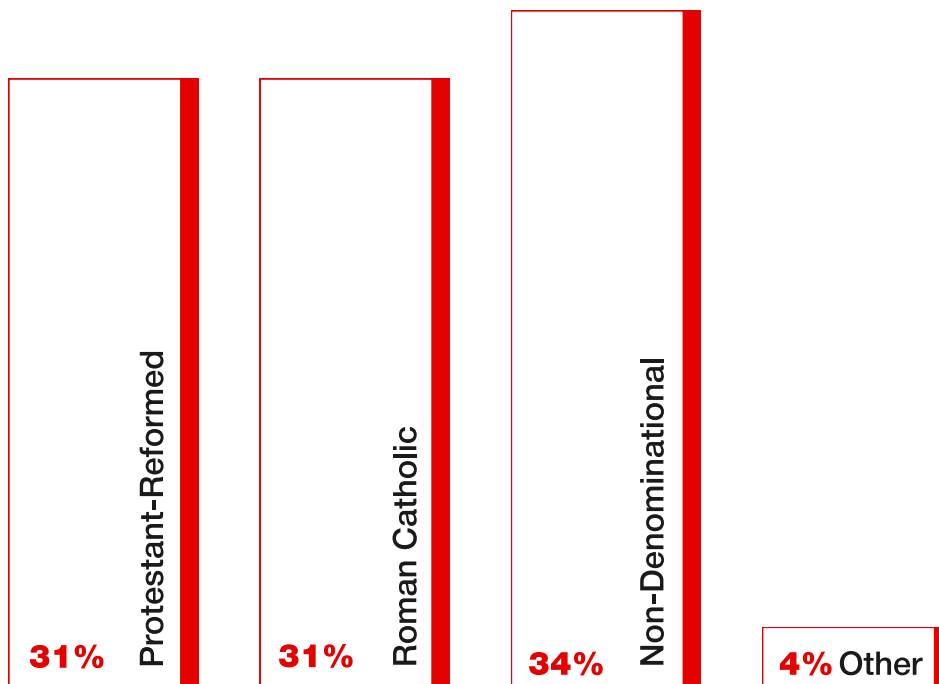


Figure 5: The survey-participating citizens and their denominations (Own Creation, 2024)

### 3.5 Citizen Survey: Themes and Findings

The following text describes themes, tendencies the author discovered by clustering and summarizing the responses, that emerged from the survey with citizens:

#### **Finding communities**

The first part of the survey was about **community in general** to get a feedback for the findings in the secondary research. All respondents to the survey said they found community in their **own families**. Nearly 90% answered that they see their **circle of friends** as their community. Additionally, the **workplace** is a vital community place. In addition to communities at **schools**, **clubs**, and **online communities**, the **neighborhood** is considered an essential community for the participants, as 50% of the participants indicated.

## Theme 1 : The attitude of citizens towards their local community

The analysis of the residents' survey shows the differences and similarities in attitudes towards their **local communities**. Many citizens feel **lonely** when communities decline; many also feel **freer** or even **both simultaneously**. Some respondents rated community as **security** or **stability** in life. For example, the advantages of a **network within a community** were mentioned, which could be beneficial in all life situations. The importance of the local community in the form of **feeling at home** was frequently mentioned. The answers revealed that, depending on the participants, they associate a **commitment** with communities or see the function of a community as doing something similar **without being tied to one another**.

Quote	Finding
<p><b>C3:</b> "The decline in communities sometimes makes me feel lonely but sometimes also free."</p> <p><b>C16:</b> "The decline in the community makes me feel lonely but also free. What I appreciate about my local neighborhood is the inspiration, a sense of security, shared responsibility, structure, stability and support."</p> <p><b>C21:</b> "Family is important to me because it makes me feel comfortable and part of the community. The same goes for making music, for example, simply whenever we do something together. However, I feel a decline in socializing and feel lonelier as a result."</p> <p><b>C23:</b> "When communities go back, it's certainly difficult for many people; it makes you lonelier. A local community in the neighborhood is essential, even if it's just a quick chat or a greeting."</p>	<p><b>F1: The declining communities can mean loneliness for residents.</b></p>
<p><b>C3:</b> "The decline in communities sometimes makes me feel lonely but sometimes also free. I do not need close contacts in the neighborhood because I'll only stay in my place for a while. "</p> <p><b>C11:</b> "On the one hand, losing the communities means I no longer have to adapt, which is practical. On the other hand, you are more alone and often bored. In emergencies, however, the neighborhood is essential; it gives me security. "</p> <p><b>C18:</b> "The decline in the community has made me feel freer, but I'm sure communities are coming back! Neighborhoods are vital for people over 30; I would love to live in a neighborhood with a lot of community."</p>	
<p><b>C4:</b> "I am unsure where I can even find community; at the moment, the absence of my local community bothers me less as I am young. However, as a child or with children, I think having a good relationship with the neighborhood is very important."</p>	<p><b>F3: Urban residents may be unaware of existing communities in general.</b></p>

Table 7: Citizen quotes on the topic of: The attitude of citizens towards their local community

## Theme 2 : Religion and values of citizens

The analysis of attitudes towards religions was analyzed in this category. Around a third of respondents belonged to the Roman Catholic religious community, another third to the Protestant Reformed Church and the final third were non-denominational. However, more than half stated that they were **not religious**. Findings in this section were that the **family's faith tradition** is often linked to religious membership or non-denominationalism. Many residents **disagree with public statements** made by churches or avoid the institution because of their **badly perceived image**. Paying **church taxes** or **not identifying** with the denomination also speak against religious membership for residents. However, for others, the church is an important **emotional support without faith taking center stage**.

Quote	Quote
<p><b>C2:</b> "I am non-denominational and grew up without the strong presence of religion and never developed the need to belong to it."</p> <p><b>C14:</b> "I am non-denominational because I grew up that way, and religion was never a topic."</p> <p><b>C18:</b> "I'm non-denominational. My parents didn't place a significant value on it, so neither do I, and I don't believe in anything greater, either."</p> <p><b>C26:</b> "I'm Protestant, according to the paper, but I wouldn't call myself a Christian. I'm still part of it because of my family."</p>	<p><b>F1: Residents may see the reason in their non-denominationality, in the absence of faith in their childhood.</b></p>
<p><b>C3:</b> "I cannot identify with the religious context and am, therefore, non-denominational."</p> <p><b>C7:</b> "I don't belong to any religious community because religions are superfluous. If you believe in God, you don't have to belong to a religion."</p> <p><b>C12:</b> "I belong to the roman catholic church, but I see myself as non-denominational. All religions contain aspects that I can't entirely agree with."</p> <p><b>C18:</b> "I'm non-denominational. My parents didn't place a significant value on it, so neither do I, and I don't believe in anything greater, either."</p>	<p><b>F2: Residents may not identify with religious values and are therefore non-denominational.</b></p>
<p><b>C15:</b> "I am Protestant because of the religious values I agree with. "</p> <p><b>C16:</b> "I am Roman Catholic. The feeling that something is still there is not answered with religiosity, but it is confirmed by not negating it. This openness suits me. Then there's sticking together, the philosophy that everyone has a place, no matter how they are. Then, there is the belief that there is justice that we cannot grasp in our present existence. Then, there is help to endure suffering. And many other things."</p>	<p><b>F5: Religious values can be a reason for church membership.</b></p>

Table 8: Citizen quotes on the topic of: Religion and values of citizens

### Theme 3 : Image and offers of the church as institution

In this section the image of the church and their offers is being analyzed with the answers of citizens. This should allow to get an understanding of citizens **interests in church activities** and bring their ideas in for a **future scenario of the church**.

#### Getting in touch with church offerings

A graphic in the survey revealed how citizens hear of church offerings or how they interact with them. Nearly 40% obtain information about **word-of-mouth propaganda**. In addition, the **community newsletter**, **social media**, and **church websites** are popular information resources. However, 40% of the inhabitants do not interact with church offer informations.

#### Popular church offers for residents

When the inhabitants participate in church services, the **family is in the foreground** in most cases. **Festivities** such as funerals, weddings, Christmas, and baptisms are among the most frequently mentioned activities in the church. However, **activities not directly related to religion** were also mentioned, among them were candle making, art exhibitions, cultural events, flea markets, and spring markets. This table shows the **diverse opinions** about what the church nowadays should offer and be:

Quote	Finding
<b>C1:</b> "Today, the church is supposed to be a gathering place. Even though I'm not religious, I participate in the church's candle-making activity." <b>C2:</b> "The church should be a place of security and gathering, a shelter for those who need it."	<b>F1: The church should be a place where people come together.</b>
<b>C3:</b> "The church should provide a community for the people who need it (as long as it doesn't hurt, exploit or discriminate against other people)." <b>C11:</b> "The church should be an open place to give people a sense of security and not exclude them." <b>C14:</b> "The church should be a modern place where community exists without prejudice." <b>C19:</b> "The church should be a low-threshold space that is accessible to everyone and where everything that people want is possible."	<b>F3: The church should be a place for people in need.</b>  <b>F4: the church should be open to all people.</b>
<b>C16:</b> "The church should help people see themselves in life, where they stand, whether they live according to their ideals, what they can do to ensure that others are also doing well, and to strengthen compassion for others." <b>C21:</b> "The church should be where participants feel comfortable, understood, and taken seriously regarding their concerns. The church helps to solve problems in everyday life, provides space for discussion, and creates opportunities for realization." <b>C22:</b> "The church provides support (in cultural terms) and comfort for many. It keeps the principle of 'humility' alive."	<b>F6: The Church should give support to people though their life.</b>

Table 9: Citizen quotes on the topic of: Image and offers of the church as institution

## Theme 4: Participation in church reuse

### Motivations and principles for participation

This table shows why citizens would be interested in participating in a church reuse project. Most of the time, it is essential for participants to **be creative**, conceptualize **social use**, and **realize their interests**. This includes having different expectations of the process and **having fun**, getting an **understandable process**, **collaborating with neighbors**, taking **responsibility** or working on a **secular use**. Two participants cited the reasons for the church's **poor image** and the **preservation of religious activity** as reasons for not participating.

Quotes	Findings
<p><b>C2:</b> "I would be interested in participating if could benefit from it, and then I would be motivated to help"</p> <p><b>C11:</b> "My motivation for taking part in the process would be to be able to use the space for free and for others to join in."</p> <p><b>C21:</b> "My motivation for participating in a conversion would be as an architect, to discover the spatial possibilities of a building, i.e. to privately investigate the possibility and be able to solve any needs with the conversion."</p> <p><b>C28:</b> "I think I would only participate if affordable housing was created for young and old. Otherwise I think I'm the wrong person."</p>	<p><b>F2: The reason for taking part in a church reuse process could be a own interest or benefit.</b></p>
<p><b>C2:</b> "if it was volunteer work, then I would be happy the process would promote a community, events would take place."</p> <p><b>C4:</b> "To participate in a reuse project, I would have to be very interested in the project that is to take place."</p> <p><b>C16:</b> "I want to be part of the process when something that contributes to peace can be lived. My motivation would be to organize something for other people whose impact convinces me."</p> <p><b>C19:</b> "I would participate in the process of organizing an event. It would have to be a social project."</p>	<p><b>F3: A principle for taking part in a church reuse project can be that it would have a social outcome.</b></p>
<p><b>C4:</b> "What also counts for me is the responsibility and the feeling that I can make a social difference."</p> <p><b>C26:</b> "It would be essential for me to get exciting people involved, be supported and take on some responsibility."</p>	<p><b>F6: A motivation for participating in a church reuse can be responsibility.</b></p>
<p><b>C10:</b> "It would be exciting to participate in the process when it comes to public use: dance, games, music, raves, and workshops. You mustn't have to act in the image of the church."</p> <p><b>C15:</b> "I want to participate in collecting ideas for the conversion. My motivation would be to turn the church into a space for exhibitions and a market."</p>	<p><b>F8: A Motivation for the participation in a church reuse can be a secular outcome.</b></p>
<p><b>C12:</b> "I would only participate in the process if I had a specific idea for the conversion."</p> <p><b>C18:</b> "I could come up with an idea for the conversion. I would also like to vote on the conversion."</p>	<p><b>F9: A motivation for participating in a church reuse project can be, being creative.</b></p>

Table 10: Citizen quotes on the topic of: Participation in church reuse

## Theme 5: The relationship of the residents to their local church

### Interest in the Preservation of the local church

If the local churches of the survey participants were no longer there, many called the **missing of the building itself**. Elements from aesthetic art architecture, such as the giant clock, the tall towers as a meeting point, and the changed landscape, would be considered. **Emotional ties** were also mentioned, such as the relationship to hope, the history of our culture, and the lack of a community space. Four participants replied that they would **not miss anything**.

Quote	Finding
<p><b>C4:</b> "I think it's nice that the church is a place without being tied to consumption but which is covered, and you can visit in bad weather."</p> <p><b>C15:</b> "My local church is a meeting place and a place of rest for me."</p>	<p><b>F5: The church building can be perceived as a refuge from the outside world.</b></p>
<p><b>C11:</b> "I associate my local church with childhood memories. If it were gone, I would miss the building but not its religious content."</p> <p><b>C12:</b> "Churches are similar all over the world, and that creates cohesion. My local church is part of my 'childhood' as I attended it often. It gives me a specific stability."</p> <p><b>C21:</b> "My church is my place of peace, memories of my youth, contemplation and gives me a sense of security."</p>	<p><b>F6: The church building can be tied to memories.</b></p>
<p><b>C12:</b> "Churches are similar all over the world, and that creates cohesion. My local church is part of my 'childhood' as I attended it often. It gives me a specific stability."</p> <p><b>C16:</b> "The church is there, and I can always go there, and someone would have an open ear; that means something to me even if I don't take advantage of it."</p> <p><b>C18:</b> "The church is a huge room where you are safe and can find peace."</p> <p><b>C21:</b> "My church is my place of peace, memories of my youth, contemplation and gives me a sense of security."</p>	<p><b>F7: The church building can create stability just for being there, in case it is needed.</b></p>
<p><b>C19:</b> "My church means a place of togetherness and reflection for me."</p> <p><b>C23:</b> "For me, my local church means celebrating events: baptism, confirmation, etc."</p>	<p><b>F8: The church building can be connected to togetherness/ community.</b></p>
<p><b>C22:</b> "The ringing of the bells in my local church is homely."</p> <p><b>C26:</b> "My church is my local orientation when I explain to others where I live. The bells (temporal orientation) There is a beautiful viewpoint outside."</p>	<p><b>F9: The church can be a reference of being at home.</b></p>

Table 11: Citizen quotes on the topic of: The relationship of the residents to their local church





## CHAPTER 4

# Synthesis and Interpretation

New insights into the participation in church reuse processes were uncovered through an **iterative process** of primary and secondary research. Although the **original research question remained relevant**, the synthesis of primary and secondary research allowed for a more **detailed understanding** of the process and its **potential effects**. This new understanding supports the question of successful participation processes. In this chapter, we discuss the **evolution of the initial assumptions** during the research process, which led to a **focus on the problem area** and **design criteria** for the **intervention**.

## 4.1 Assumptions

Secondary research has determined that parishes are often left to handle long-term reuse processes **independently**, which can be **overwhelming** and carry a great **responsibility towards society**, while **still wanting to preserve** their church. Meanwhile, it was assumed that non-religious people are not interested in church activities due to **secularization**. Nevertheless, residents of the church district can be **concerned** about reusing their church building but are **excluded from the process**. The limited or absent participation processes fail to **support** or **relieve the burden on the parish** and represent a **missed opportunity**.

## 4.2 Reframed Problem Area

Although the assumptions made about parishes were partially confirmed by qualitative interviews with experts and city residents, primary research revealed that parishes are overburdened by a **lack of expertise in process management**. However, they can **use external specialists** to help them. It was also found that **volunteer workers** often comprise the initiating parishes as members, who can quickly become exhausted. This clashes with the long-term process of church conversion.

Contrary to initial assumptions, parishes are **not always driven by fears of unsuccessful preservation** of their church buildings. Instead, they are **embracing a more open approach** and seeking to adapt the use of their buildings to **meet society's evolving needs**.

Experts highlight the **potential of participatory processes** in supporting neighborhood development. However, it's important to note that this is **not intended to relieve the parish** in the church reuse process. Rather, it should be a **collaborative effort with neighbors**, aiming to make the new use of church buildings more **sustainable** through their active participation.

Although the secondary research revealed a **lack of interest in church activities** due to secularization, primary research with citizens showed that also **non-denominational people** are **already taking part in church activities**. Citizens also **feel emotionally connected** to their local church buildings and demonstrate this by **criticizing plans** to reuse them.

The assumption that neighborhoods **almost never take part in participation**, which emerged from the secondary research, is probably outdated. Neighborhood **residents** or **other volunteers** have been invited to collaborate in some processes through **idea competitions**, **workshops**, and „**look over the shoulder**“ **discussions**, in **some** church reuse processes.

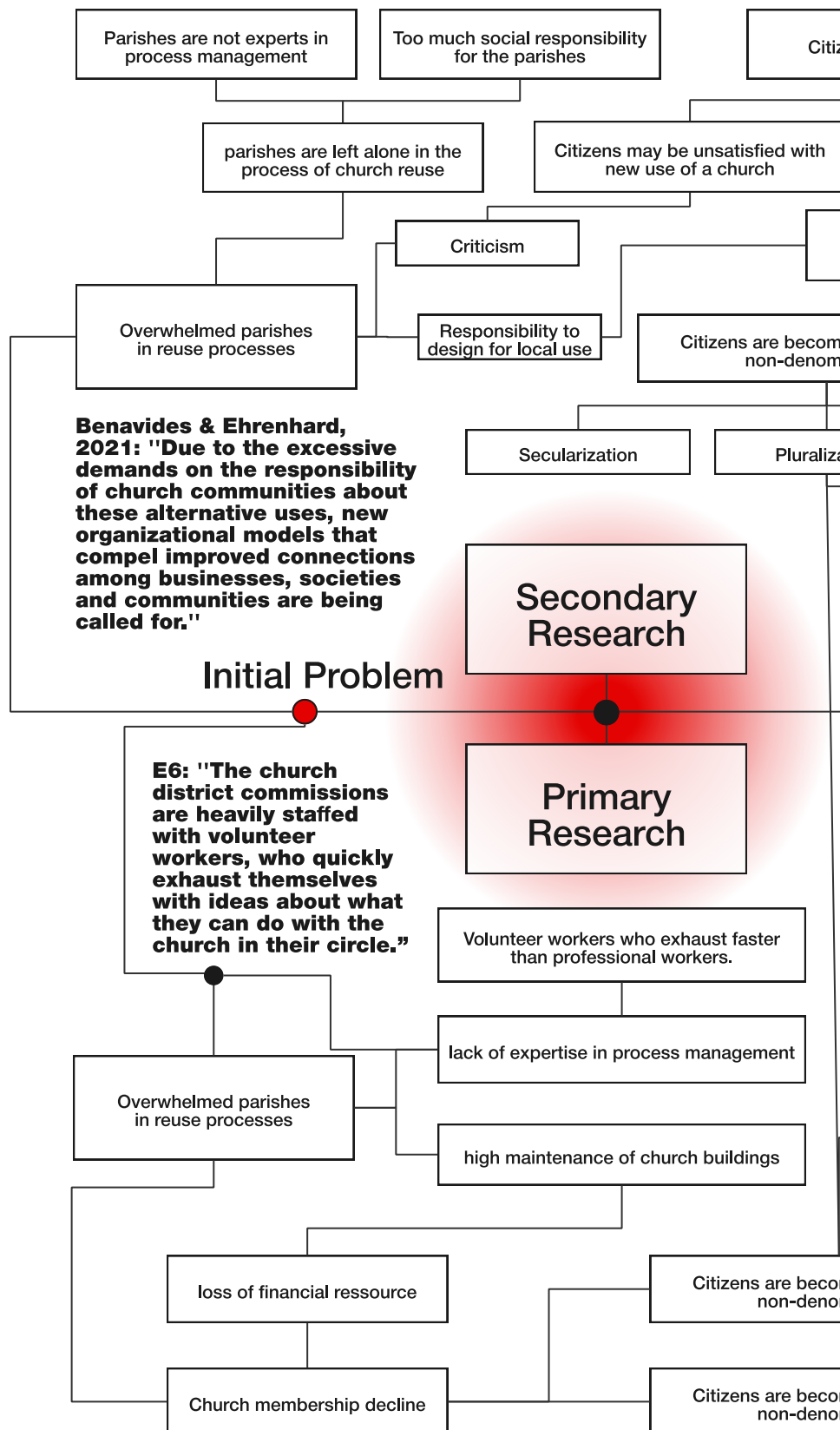
### 4.3 Design Criteria

Based on the findings from primary and secondary research, the following design criteria for the participation in a reuse project of a church have emerged:

Quote	Theme	Finding	Criteria
<p><b>E2:</b> "The conversion to the Kunstklangkirche in Wollishofen was received positively by the congregation of older members, as it remained something close to the church and left the option of holding worship services open."</p> <p><b>C19:</b> "The church should be a low-threshold space that is accessible to everyone and where everything that people want is possible."</p>	<p>Expert Interviews, Theme 1: Change of the church</p> <p>Citizen Survey, Theme 3 : Image and offers of the church as institution</p>	<p>Existing church members appreciate it when the option of traditional church rituals is left open.</p>	<p>Design Criteria 1: <b>GIVING A VOICE</b></p> <p>The intervention should allow the existing church community, if any, to have a say,</p>
<p><b>E3:</b> "Based on this overall social mission, the parish is also responsible for considering what makes sense, what we see from our perspective and what the neighborhood might need."</p>	<p>Expert Interviews, Theme 2: Church reuse stakeholders</p>	<p>The parish tries to design for their neighborhood, which is often not an active stakeholder.</p>	<p>Design Criteria 2: <b>FOCUS ON LOCAL NEEDS</b></p> <p>The intervention should help to clarify the needs of the local neighborhood.</p>
<p><b>E4:</b> "If you already have a plan for the outcome, this is not suitable for a participatory process. There is then a great risk that the process will not be sustainable."</p>	<p>Expert Interviews, Theme 4: Opportunities and risks of church reuse processes</p>	<p>The initiators must not have a concrete idea of the implementation, otherwise there is a risk that it will not be sustainable.</p>	<p>Design Criteria 3: <b>OPENNESS TO THE OUTCOME</b></p> <p>The intervention should make it possible to approach the reuse process with an open mind for a sustainable outcome, not a preconceived solution.</p>
<p><b>E4:</b> "Participation is only participation only if it is really about being able to co-decide at the end."</p> <p><b>C26:</b> "It would be essential for me to get exciting people involved, be supported and take on some responsibility."</p>	<p>Expert Interviews, Theme 5: Participation in reuse processes</p>	<p>Participation is not only the search for ideas, but above all the decision-making of ideas.</p>	<p>Design Criteria 4: <b>ABILITY TO DECIDE</b></p> <p>The intervention is intended to enable a democratic vote among church members and non-church members on the change of use.</p>
<p><b>Arnstein 1969:</b> "Participation processes should be transparent and open to all stakeholders. Citizens should have access to information about decision-making processes, including agendas, minutes, and relevant documents, to ensure accountability and trust."</p>	<p>Secondary Research, Chapter 2.6: Principles for designing participative processes</p>	<p>Restrictions and opportunities should be clear and communicated from the start and be transparent during the process in order to give participants realistic instructions.</p>	<p>Design Criteria 5: <b>TRANSPARENCY FOR EVERYONE</b></p> <p>The intervention should help to keep the process transparent for all participants.</p>

Table 12: The Design Criteria





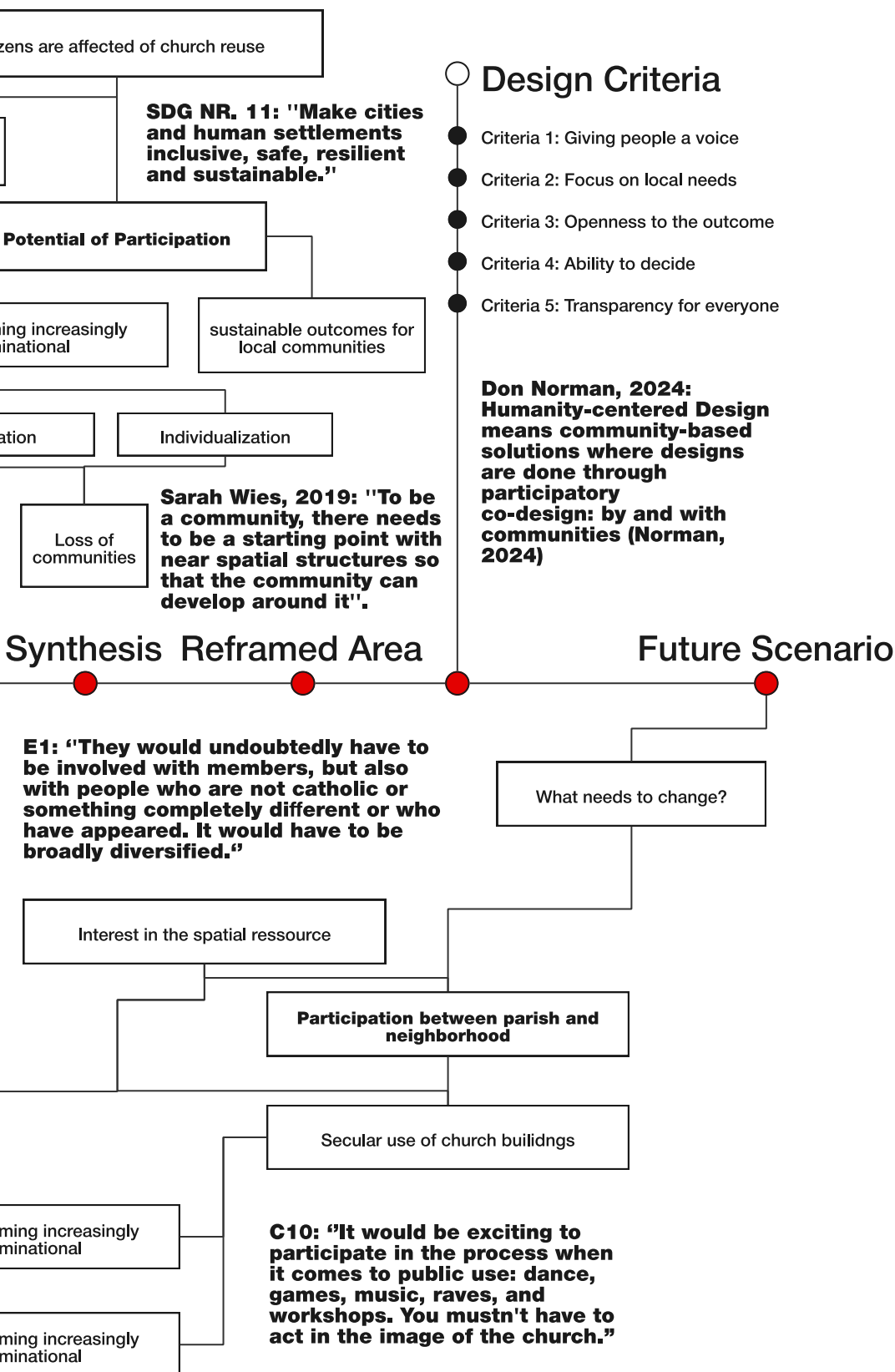


Figure 6: Problem Map of the reframed area (Own creation, 2024)

## CHAPTER 5

# Intervention

This section focuses on **participatory design processes** in the adaptive reuse of church buildings, guided by primary and secondary research findings. Experts have emphasized the need for **churches to reinvent themselves and maintain relevance in today's society** by forming communities, even in a pluralistic setting that **mixes religious and secular individuals**.

The intervention aims to **structure participation** within church reutilization to promote such communities, increasing the relevance and usefulness of these spaces in urban areas. Primary and secondary research syntheses have demonstrated that **structured participation processes** have the potential to **support the church's reuse processes**, making **use of the spatial resources** that church buildings offer to neighborhood residents. This participation can potentially transform underused church spaces into **vibrant community hubs**. However, adapting these processes to the **unique contexts of different church parishes** presents significant challenges. The secondary research indicated that parishes are often challenged through the **lack of abstraction of existing reuse processes** (Benke, 2019), making it challenging to apply a solution based on their **individual needs**.

Therefore the proposed intervention should allow **flexibility**, an **openness to the outcome** and be tailored to the **needs of individual parishes**. It should **empower participants, ensuring their voices are heard**. By **fostering transparency and allowing for diverse solutions**, this tool should adapt to the dynamic nature of church reutilization, ensuring that each project is **uniquely suited to its community and spatial context**.



## 5.1 Ideation

To generate ideas, an **observation of a current reuse process** was carried out. As no events on participation in church reuse processes were found in the time frame of this bachelor's thesis, this observation focused on an **information event for the neighborhood** of a **church community centre** in an urban area.

Significantly, this observation revealed the **active role of neighborhood** members in shaping the use of their local church. Their interests were primarily directed towards the **external changes** of the church community centre and the **future of existing uses**.

As the driving force behind the reuse, the parish demonstrated a **comprehensive understanding** of the project. At this meeting, they addressed questions about the **financing of the new use**, **legal restrictions**, **stakeholders**, **historical** and **cultural preservation**, and the **construction site**. The parish's **extensive preparation** and the **involvement of various disciplines** in this neighborhood meeting demonstrated its **ability to answer all questions** coming from the neighborhood.

In addition, this intervention includes **information from citizens** on their participation in the church reuse process. The primary research survey revealed the **needs of potential participants**. **Own interests**, **responsibility**, **ideation**, and **voting**, motivates citizens to participate in such a process.

### Citizen survey quotes relating to participation

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**C2:** "I would be interested in participating if could benefit from it, and then I would be motivated to help"

---

**C4:** "What also counts for me is the responsibility and the feeling that I can make a social difference."

---

**C2:** "if it was volunteer work, then I would be happy the process would promote a community, events would take place."

---

**C15:** "I want to participate in collecting ideas for the conversion. My motivation would be to turn the church into a space for exhibitions and a market."

---

**C18:** "I could come up with an idea for the conversion. I would also like to vote on the conversion."

---

Table 13: Citizen survey quotes relating to participation

## 5.2 Participation Concept

With these thoughts in mind, a concept was developed to **answer the research question** in the context of a church in an urban context and to **provide a practical approach**. This approach is intended to **strengthen the church reuse process's potential** and **help neighborhoods actively participate** in the conversion.

This intervention should **guide the parish and the neighborhood** through the process. As the fourth expert reported on **superficial participation**, such as through a survey form, this intervention should **help to create open thinking spaces** while offering participants the opportunity to **take on responsibility, realize their own interests, find ideas, and have the option to vote**.

**E4:** "...But then they take it easy and ask participators to simply fill out a stretch sheet or something; this is not participation, participation is how you create open thinking spaces where everything is still allowed and possible, and only in the next step will it be possible to establish boundaries.."

Due to the **design criteria** of giving all stakeholders a voice, promoting transparency, focusing on local needs, decision participation, and ensuring openness to the outcome, this intervention deals with the **Co-Design approach** as it allows for these criteria.

### 5.3 Co-Design

This decision is based on the **assessment of several participation methods**. Among these, the **design charette** is a prevalent method. **Design charrettes**, which are typically **the standard in participatory processes**, are intense, short-term workshops that swiftly gather stakeholders to brainstorm and agree on solutions, which can be perceived as tokenistic (Arnstein, 1969).

However, **Co-Designs**, an alternative method, extends beyond these temporary engagements by involving stakeholders continuously **throughout the project's lifecycle**. This method enhances **flexibility** and **depth in collaboration**, ensuring solutions are more **adaptable** and have **enduring community support**. Thus, the Co-Design presents a **more effective alternative** to the traditional, time-constrained approach of design charrettes. This argumentation is grounded in a commitment to **ensuring long-term community engagement** and **sustainability**, drawing on insights from **Ezio Manzini**, a leading figure in participatory design (Manzini, 2015).

#### Sustained engagement

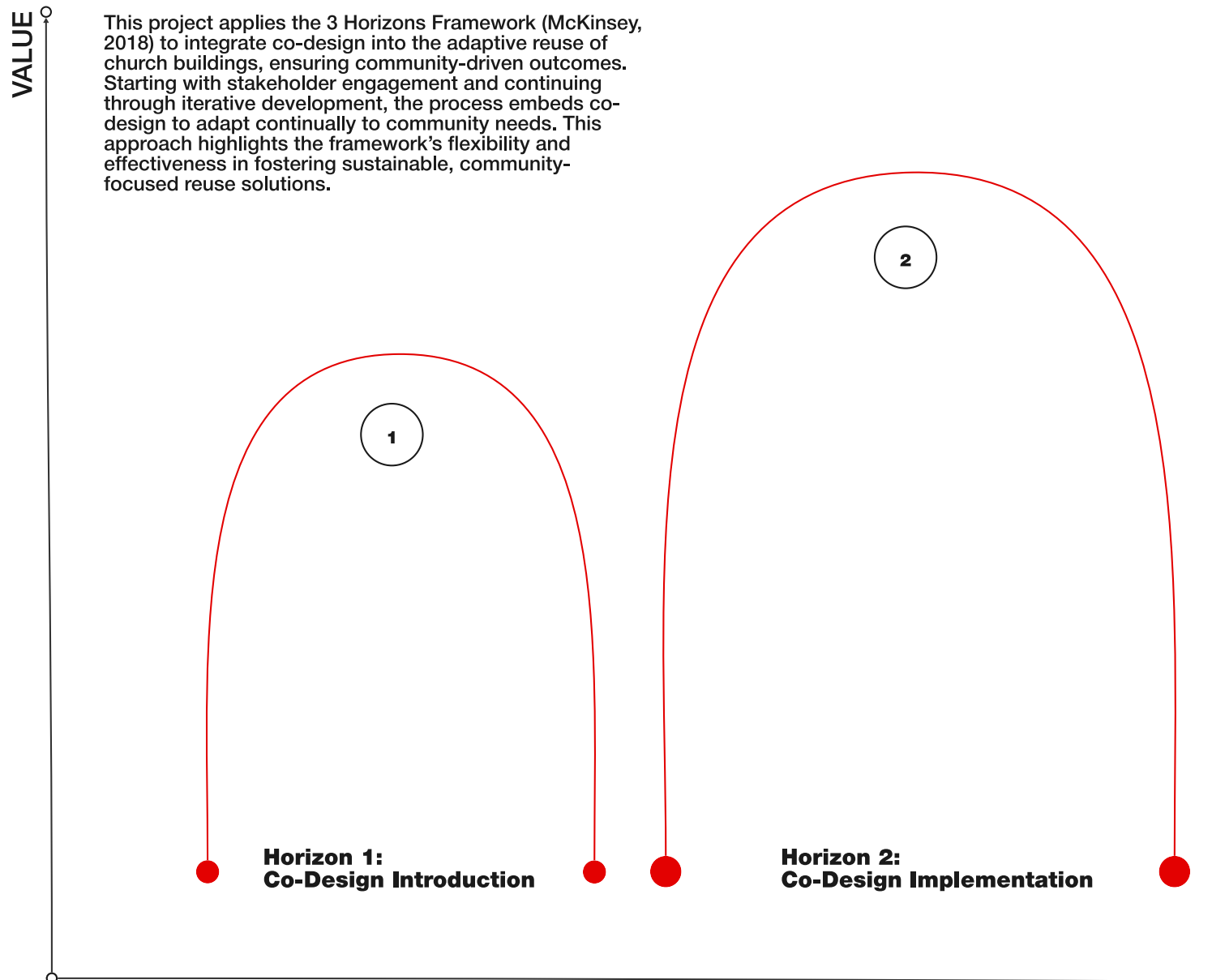
While design charrettes are effective for quick, intensive idea generation, they often **lack continuity and sustained engagement**. Co-design, by contrast, **involves stakeholders continuously throughout the process** and more meaningful contributions through a **longer accompaniment**. This ongoing involvement ensures that the adaptive reuse of church buildings genuinely **reflects and serves community needs**, enhancing the project's **long-term viability**.

#### Empowering Communities

Co-design empowers local communities by elevating them from mere participants to **active co-creators** in the design process. According to Manzini, this empowerment is crucial for **nurturing ownership and responsibility**, which are essential for the **sustainability** of the solutions developed (Manzini, 2015). The ownership and responsibility approach also makes sense; in the best-case scenario, the **participants become end users** of the reused church.

#### Flexibility and Adaptation

The adaptive reuse of church buildings requires **flexible solutions** as shown in the primary research analysis, that can evolve based on **community feedback**. Co-design accommodates this **need for adaptability**, allowing for **iterative adjustments** that are responsive to the **community's evolving preferences and needs**.



## INITIATIVES

### Focus 1: Community Engagement

Begin by mapping community stakeholders and interests using co-design tools to ensure diverse and inclusive participation.

### Focus 2: Co-Design Workshops Initiation

Launch initial co-design workshops to engage stakeholders in discussing their visions and expectations for the church's reuse, ensuring their input shapes the project's direction from the start.

### Focus 1: Iterative Co-Design Cycles

Conduct continuous co-design cycles, where community feedback from one session informs the activities and focus of the next, fostering a responsive and adaptive planning process.

### Focus 2: Pilot and Prototype Testing

Implement pilot projects based on ideas generated in co-design workshops to test their viability and impact, using community feedback to refine and adjust the proposals.

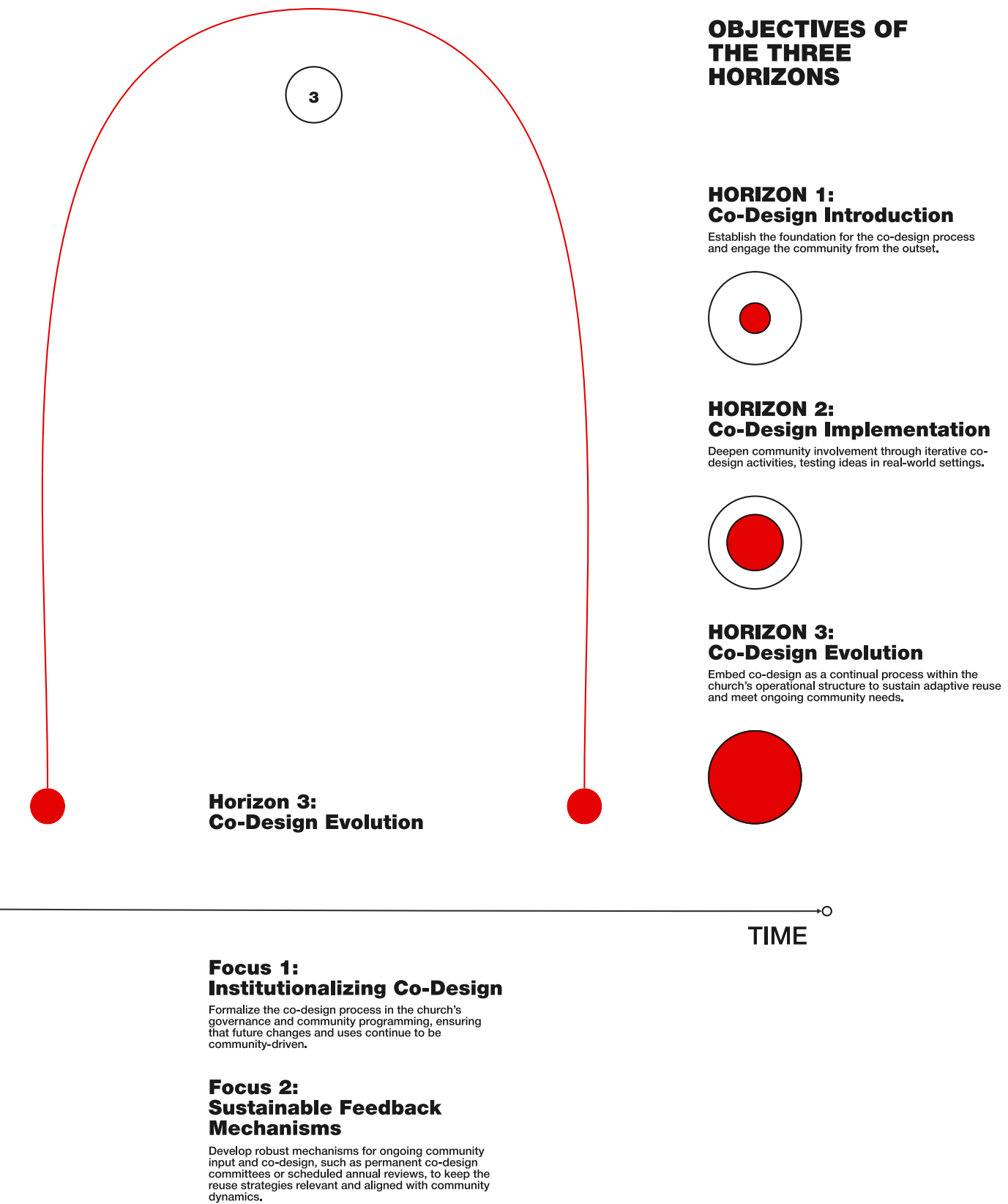


Figure 7: Mc Kinsey's 3 Horizons Framework (Own creation, 2024)

## 5.4 Intervention Concept

The co-design method, ideally incorporated over long processes, is a **dynamic** and **iterative approach**. It accommodates the **inclusion** or **departure of stakeholders** at **different phases** of the reuse process. This intervention, designed for collaboration between the church community and the neighborhood, is a testament to the **adaptability** and **flexibility** of co-design.

### Guiding Questions

As mentioned in expert interviews, the parish often **misses to answer essential questions** in the reuse process. Therefore, this intervention generates **guiding questions** for **different phases** of the process. Guiding questions provide **structure** through a clear starting point and ensure a **discussion** where many stakeholders are represented. Guiding questions can additionally promote critical issues by **ensuring that specific topics are addressed**. An advantage of existing guiding questions is that they **help avoid missing essential matters** and **apply them iteratively**. The name of this product is **CommunityKIT**, Kit is a german word for glue and is therefore symbolic for fostering **community cohesion**. It can also be understood as a set of articles, in this **case a set of cards**, and therefore has a double meaning.

### Cards as a Medium

The medium of the **paper card** is used here. Each card belongs to a **process phase** or a **design activity**. Using cards with guiding questions offers advantages: Cards encourage **active participation** by being **easy to handle** and **enabling dynamic group work**. This **physical approach** makes it easier to **structure discussions**, which is helpful for complex topics. In particular, they can also help to **make a co-design process easy to understand**, which would probably be new to most participants.

### Procedure of the Card Use

The guiding question cards are designed for the **parish** and **external stakeholders**. However, as the initiator of church reuse, the parish must develop certain **phases** and associated vital questions **independently**. This is essential, as **participants are dependent on structure and transparency**. Prior internal is essential, which concerns the phases of **financial and legal assessment, resource inventory, and communication strategy**.

Some cards may only be issued to the neighborhood. This option is left open, as parishioners are often occupied with many other clarifications relating to the change of use and could, therefore, be relieved. However, the **best option** is for some **parish members to participate and not just lead the process**. The cards aimed at the participation of neighborhoods are **linked to design activities**. This function is because design activities are part of a co-design process. These activities help co-design participants get a **visual overview of opinions and ideas**. The selected activities in this intervention are **participatory mapping, scenario planning, idea board, evaluation circles** and **feedback loops**.

The following visualization shows the process with **numbered steps**. This serves as a guideline for the process, but the steps can be **iterative** and **repeated** though the whole process.

The **red circles** represent steps that are organized by the **parish**, the **blue circles** focus on the **participation with the neighborhood**, and the purple steps require **collaboration from both parties**.

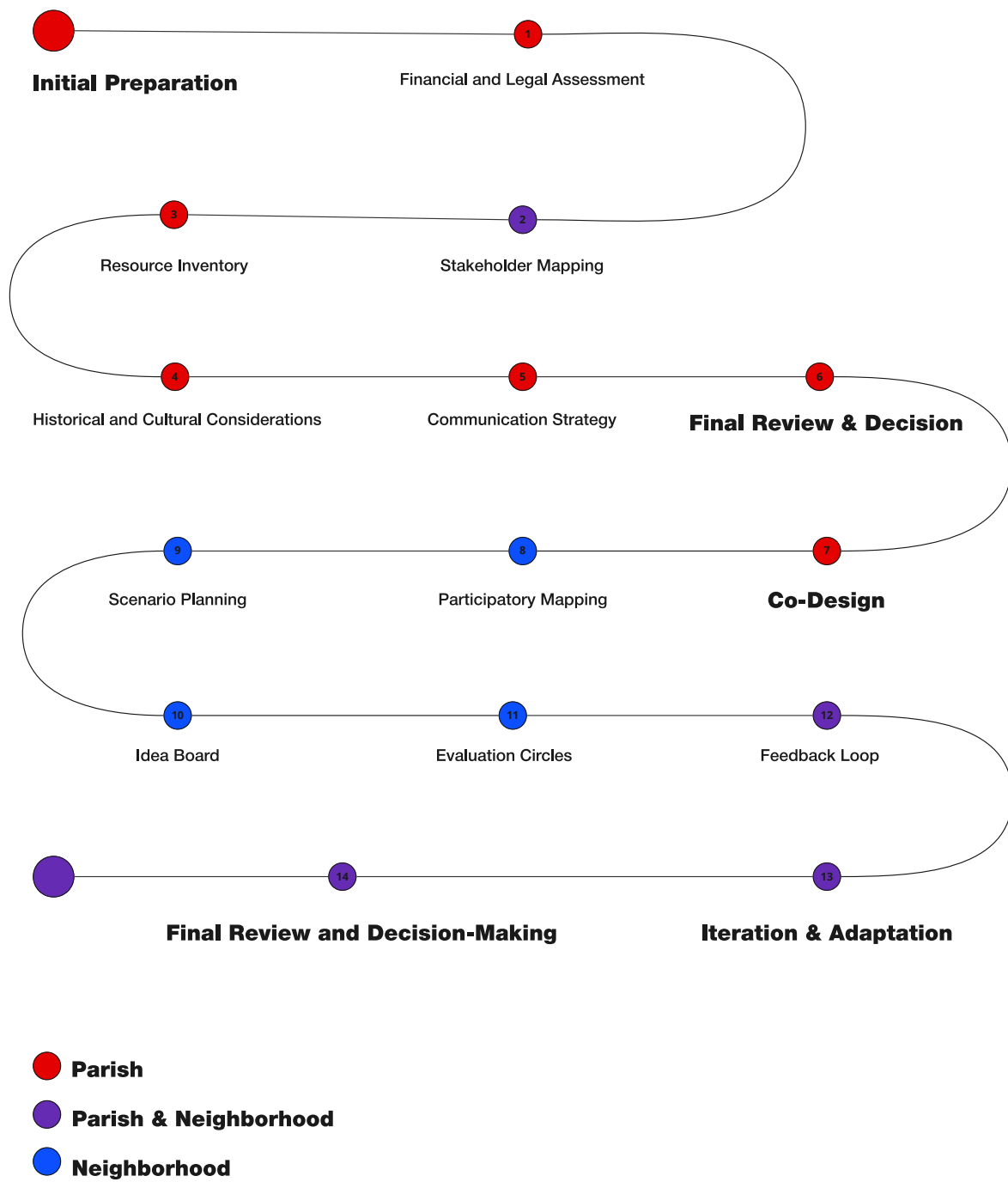


Figure 8: The Process Lifecycle of CommunityKIT (Own creation, 2024)

## 5.5 The Use of the cards

For each step, **five different questions** deal with the adaptive reuse. These are **asked abstractly** so that the **individual needs of church buildings** are perceived in their **unique neighborhood context**. The questions **leave results open** and **allow participants to decide on specific activities**.

In this way, the five **design criteria** can be fulfilled. The **result is left open**, and the parish is **bound to external proposals by the questions** that arise in the provided cards. By confronting the parish with questions, **addressing all interested parties** and **acting inclusively** in the stakeholder analysis, this participation process should be open to all voices. Transparency for participants should be made possible through the **questions answered in previous steps**, regarding the possibilities and restrictions in financing, resources, history and culture of the building. Through the questions in the communication strategy step, consideration should be given to providing transparency to participants (e.g. through a community platform). The local needs of the neighborhood are discussed in the **participation process with the neighborhood** itself as they are considered **experts of their environment**. The **decision-making process should be decided jointly by all participants**; evaluation circles require a **critical assessment of practicability, sustainability and impact on the community**.

### The Questions on the Cards

The same principle applies to the shaped questions in this intervention as in the process lifecycle visualization on the previous page. **Red cards** indicate the **organization of the church parish** based on the given Co-Design questions. **Blue questions cards** are addressed in the **participation process with the neighborhood**, and **purple cards** must be **discussed in collaboration** between the church congregation and the neighborhood.

The guiding questions for these co-design cards were crafted based on **key values** such as **participation, transparency, sustainability, and inclusivity**, essential for the adaptive reuse of church buildings. Each question is designed to draw out **diverse community perspectives** and **encourage creative solutions**, ensuring the **process is democratic** and connected to the **community's needs and values**. This approach aims to foster a **sense of ownership** and ensure the project's outcomes are both **meaningful** and **sustainable**.



Financial and Legal Assessment	Stakeholder Mapping	Resource Inventory	Historical & Cultural Considerations	Communication Strategy
<b>Objective:</b> To assess the financial feasibility and legal constraints of adaptive reuse options.	<b>Objective:</b> To identify and understand the roles and interests of all stakeholders.	<b>Objective:</b> To determine the resources available for the project, including space, materials, and human resources.	<b>Objective:</b> To respect and integrate the historical and cultural significance of the church into the planning process.	<b>Objective:</b> To establish clear, transparent, and ongoing communication with all stakeholders.
"What is our budget for this project, including potential future maintenance costs?" Are there existing financial incentives or grants available for projects like this?	Who are the key stakeholders involved in this project, both within and outside the existing community? What potential conflicts of interest exist among stakeholders?	What physical resources do we currently have at our disposal for this project? Do we have access to (also external) experts who can assist?	What historical aspects of the church must be preserved? How can we honor the cultural and emotional significance of the space for the community?	What communication channels will be most effective for engaging with the community? How can we provide regular updates and feedback loops that keep stakeholders informed?
What legal restrictions apply to the reuse of church properties in our area? How might zoning laws affect potential reuse options?	How can we ensure all relevant voices are heard in the co-design process? What are the expectations of the local community regarding the church's reuse?	What internal capabilities do we need to develop or outsource? Are there community groups or local businesses we can collaborate with to include our identified stakeholders?	Are there sensitive issues related to the building's past use that need to be addressed? How can the building's history be leveraged to enhance its new role?	What are the best practices for dealing with public relations and media regarding the project? What is our goal of the adaptive reuse as initiator(s)?
What insurance requirements will we need to address?	How can we reach our stakeholders?	What are the technological needs for the co-design sessions, and how can we fulfill them?	What are the potential cultural impacts of the proposed changes on the community?	How can we make sure that transparency for all participants is provided?

Participatory mapping	Scenario Planning	Idea Board	Evaluation Circles	Feedback Loop
<b>Objective:</b> To visually capture and discuss the current uses and potential of the church space by community members.	<b>Objective:</b> To explore the practical implications of potential reuse ideas through enactment and discussion.	<b>Objective:</b> To brainstorm potential uses of the church space that reflect community desires and needs.	<b>Objective:</b> To critically assess and refine proposed solutions based on practicality, community impact, and sustainability.	<b>Objective:</b> To continuously refine ideas based on community feedback and evolving needs.
What memories do you associate with this space? How do you see this space evolving to meet community needs?	Imagine this space is now a community center. What typical day activities would occur? If we convert this part of the church into a public workspace, what conflicts might arise, and how could we address them?	What activities would you like to see in this space that are not currently available? Which of these ideas do you think best preserves the church's heritage while adding value to the community?	What are the strengths and weaknesses of this proposed use? How does this solution align with what we've identified as community priorities?	What feedback have we received about this idea from the broader community? How have our objectives shifted based on recent community input?
What areas of this church are most important to preserve? Where can we incorporate new functions without disrupting the existing structure?	How would converting this area affect your regular community activities? What compromises might be necessary to ensure multiple community groups can use this space?	How can these ideas be implemented to reflect our community's values and history? What are the potential obstacles to implementing these ideas, and how might we overcome them?	What might be the long-term community impact of implementing this solution? Who will be most affected by this change, and how can we mitigate any negative impacts?	What modifications can we make to this proposal to better meet your expectations? Are there any new needs or concerns that have emerged that we need to consider in our planning?
How can this space better serve the entire community?	How do we ensure that these changes respect everyone's views and beliefs?	Which of these ideas do you feel most passionately about, and why?	How can we adjust this solution to make it more effective and beneficial for all?	How can we better communicate the benefits of this project to those who are skeptical or opposed?

Figure 9: Questions on Co-Design Cards (Own creation, 2024)

## CHAPTER 6

# T esting

The card set was tested twice with **experts** on the designed intervention approach. Both tests took place in person and were documented with notes. The aim of this test was to gain insights into the intervention's **methodological** and **conceptual skills** and evaluate its **practical use**. The card set was then adapted based on feedback from the two experts.

## 6.1 First Testing and Iteration

The first test person is considered an expert as she is part of several working groups of **cooperatives** and, therefore, has **experience in participation**. She is referred to as expert A. She lives in an urban area and is **part of a cooperative** there but has also worked with **adaptive reuse** in rural areas. Her **methodical** and **conceptual thinking** enabled her to evaluate the designed intervention.

The concept was explained and shown digitally, including the **process lifecycle**, the **first card design** and the **questions on the cards**. The expert quickly understood the idea and gave the following feedback, which is summarized here:

1.0	"This intervention does not mention any events for outsiders to the process (people who are not participating). However, this public relations work is vital to receive feedback from outside and draw attention to the project."
2.0	"The communication strategy does not specify exactly which channels are intended for whom. Both internal and external channels should be addressed. As already mentioned at the events, external channels are important for raising external awareness of the project."
3.0	"The distribution of roles in the parish must be precise, including responsibilities towards managing the project, moderation in participation and the role of taking protocol. But that is self-explanatory for initiators; I don't know whether a card is needed to ask about these roles."
4.0	"Cards are a very linguistic medium. Only some people can be reached by the cards alone. It is essential that people with limited language skills, such as children or non-language speakers, can be supported by other participants."
5.0	"I find it difficult to see the colors on the process lifecycle. The colors are an essential tool in a medium like this. The color scheme should be clear, bold and consistent throughout the entire concept."
6.0	"Examples in card questions can limit creativity, so the questions should remain abstract. This is also an advantage for applications with a wide range of adaptive reuses."

Table 14: Quotes from the first Expert Testing

In addition, the expert stated that cards are a **suitable medium** to accompany an adaptive reuse process. By allowing participants to **come back again and again**, **repeat card questions**, and **reflect on them**, the intervention can provide a **shared understanding of the structure**.

The iteration of the intervention changed **specific questions**, the **color coding** and the **design of the cards**. Less important **questions disappeared**, and **new cards were added** on the **distribution of roles and responsibilities** within the church community, **external and internal communication channels**, **events for public relations work**, and the **inclusion of linguistically limited participants**. The **colors were made more evident** in the design and **consistently aligned** in the process lifecycle and the question cards.

## 6.2 Second Testing and Iteration

The second test person, also known as expert B, is considered an expert due to his **experience in adaptive reuse processes**. As an **architect**, he has already undertaken **feasibility studies for churches** in the city and once created **plans for a monastery renovation** which was a subject of **social discourse**. He has never dealt with the process of a church conversion himself but has only been involved in one step of the whole process. His **practical experience** and **perception as an external stakeholder** enables him to evaluate the planned intervention.

The concept was explained and shown digitally, including the **process life cycle**, the **second card design**, and the **questions on the cards**. The expert gave the following feedback on this intervention, which is summarized here:

1.0	"In these questions, I see no information about the hierarchies between the parish and the neighborhood in the decision-making process, but each parish must decide how the final decision should be made."
2.0	"Due to their time limits, I think it's realistic if the church community is not always involved in every step of the process. Still, it would make sense for them to constantly engage in the co-design, as their ideas are also valuable, and they might want to steer the process a little."
3.0	"To remain realistic, legal elements may also have to reappear in the decision-making phase, i.e., in the evaluation circles."
4.0	"It is positive that this intervention involves so much participation to mobilize a community through a new building. The process itself also activates the people in the neighborhood if they meet regularly; just by participating in the process, a community can be created."

Table 15: Quotes from the second Expert Testing

In addition, the expert noted that participation, the **coming together** that can lead to a **new, even secular community**, corresponds to the **basic idea of the church** and considers this to be meaningful. For him, it is essential in such long processes that the **basis of the initiators has a clear frame**. Also, there is a risk that no **democratic decision** can occur if **restrictions are not clearly explained** to participants, as ideas from participants could otherwise be unrealistic in the final phase. He, therefore, evaluates the **catalogue of questions that form the basis of the process** (financing, legal situation, historical and cultural elements and so on) as an **opportunity for democratic decisions**.

After the feedback on the intervention, **questions were deleted** as in the first iteration, while essential, **structural questions were added**. The added questions concern the **hierarchy in decision making and legal elements** in the decision-making phase. In addition, the process lifecycle and the cards were changed **from three to two colors to mark the collaboration clearly in the Co-Design phase**. This decision is because the **parish should be involved in every step** of the process and the Co-Design. If this seems unrealistic for the congregation due to time pressure, they can make their **own rules**. **Purple** now stands for the **parish** and **red** indicates the **collaboration between parish and neighborhood**.

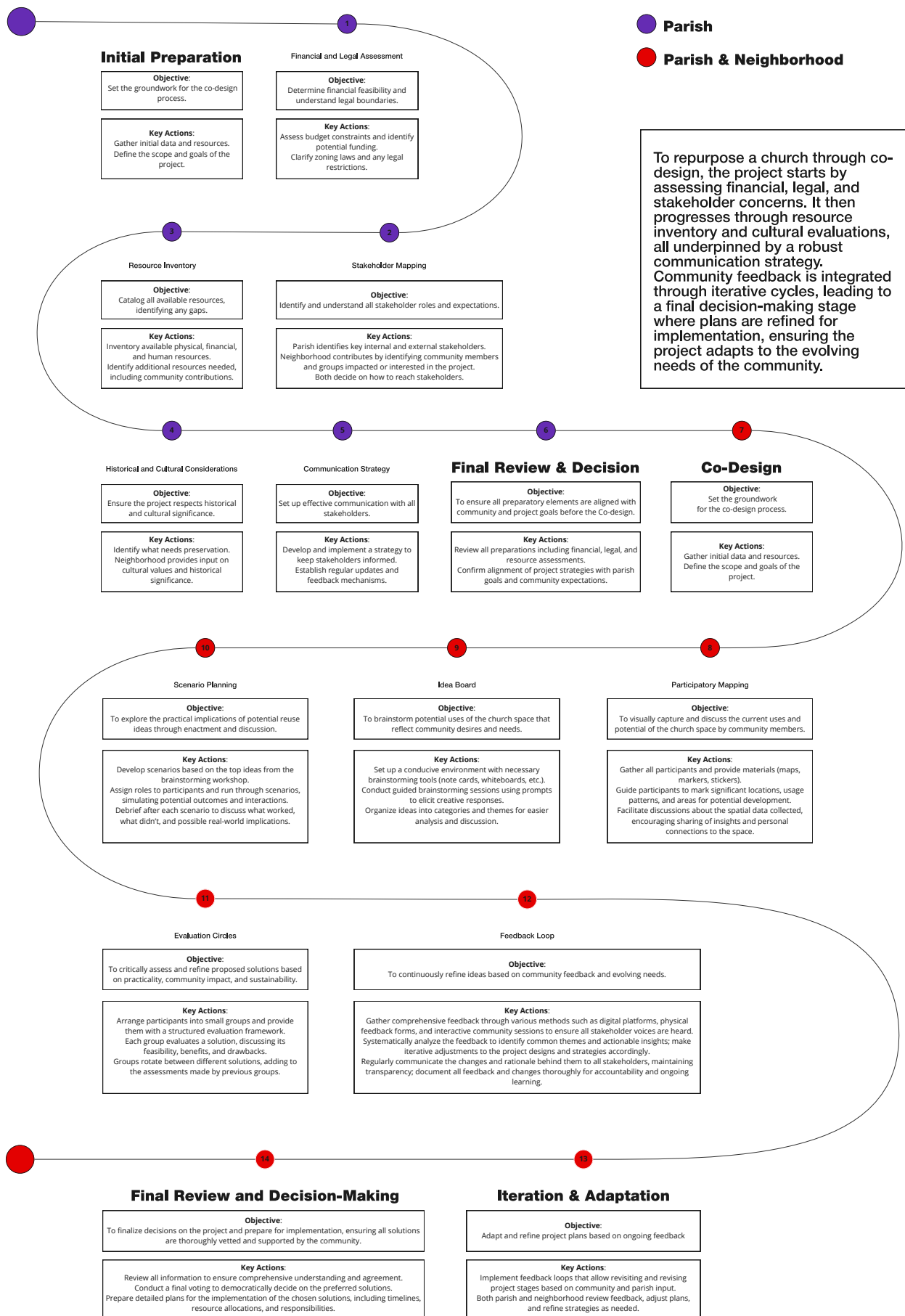


Figure 10: The iterated Process Lifecycle of CommunityKIT (Own creation, 2024)

Financial and Legal Assessment	Stakeholder Mapping	Resource Inventory	Historical & Cultural Considerations	Communication Strategy
<b>Objective:</b> To assess the financial feasibility and legal constraints of adaptive reuse options.	<b>Objective:</b> To identify and understand the roles and interests of all stakeholders.	<b>Objective:</b> To determine the resources available for the project, including space, materials, and human resources.	<b>Objective:</b> To respect and integrate the historical and cultural significance of the church into the planning process.	<b>Objective:</b> To establish clear, transparent, and ongoing communication with all stakeholders.
What is our budget for this project, including potential future maintenance costs? Are there existing financial incentives or grants available for projects like this?	Who are the key stakeholders involved in this project, both within and outside the community? What potential conflicts of interest exist among stakeholders?	What roles do we have to fulfill as initiators and who takes on these roles? Do we have access to (also external) experts who can assist?	What historical aspects of the building must be preserved? How can we honor the cultural and emotional significance of the space for the community?	What kind of internal and external channels do we need for this process? How can we communicate inclusively?
What legal restrictions apply to the reuse of church properties in our area? How might zoning laws affect potential reuse options?	How can we ensure all relevant voices are heard in the co-design process? What are the expectations of the local community regarding the adaptive reuse?	What internal capabilities do we need to develop or outsource? Are there community groups or local businesses we can collaborate with to include our identified stakeholders?	Are there sensitive issues related to the building's past use that need to be addressed? How can the building's history be leveraged to enhance its new role?	What are the best practices for dealing with public relations, such as events regarding the project? How do we communicate our goal as initiators?
What insurance requirements will we need to address?	How can we reach our stakeholders?	What physical resources do we currently have at our disposal for this project?	What are the potential cultural impacts of the proposed changes on the existing community?	How can we make sure that transparency for all participants is provided?
<b>Argumentation:</b> Financial constraints and legal complexities are critical in church reuse processes, necessitating sound financial planning and understanding of legal boundaries.  <b>Reference:</b> "Next year, the church expects a further financial setback due to the new reduced tax regime for legal entities." (E1)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Inclusive and broad stakeholder engagement is crucial for church reuse projects to ensure relevance and community acceptance.  <b>Reference:</b> "Involving external stakeholders in the process of utilizing church buildings is recommended. This approach is useful because outsiders often have a relationship with the church building or even objections to its future use." (E1)	<b>Argumentation:</b> A comprehensive assessment of available resources and identification of gaps aligns with the need for efficient alternative uses for church buildings.  <b>Reference:</b> "The parishes are left to their own devices and are overwhelmed by the lack of guidance in their search for efficient alternative uses." (C7)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Respecting the cultural and historical significance of church spaces is important to maintain heritage value and community support.  <b>Reference:</b> "There is this situation where people who are far away from the church, are campaigning for the preservation and even the religious use of a church. They never attend Sunday services. Why do they stand up for this church? For me, this is also a sign that churches don't just have a church function but also a function for society as a whole." (E3)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Transparent and effective communication strategies are necessary to manage community expectations and foster trust.  <b>Reference:</b> "The initial big ideas end up being small again. Actually, when you start the process, you actually have to know what we can realize and how much money we can invest." (E4)
Participatory mapping	Scenario Planning	Idea Board	Evaluation Circles	Feedback Loop
<b>Objective:</b> To visually capture and discuss the current uses and potential of the church space by community members.	<b>Objective:</b> To explore the practical implications of potential reuse ideas through enactment and discussion.	<b>Objective:</b> To brainstorm potential uses of the church space that reflect community desires and needs.	<b>Objective:</b> To critically assess and refine proposed solutions based on practicality, community impact, and sustainability.	<b>Objective:</b> To continuously refine ideas based on community feedback and evolving needs.
What memories do you associate with this space? How do you see this space evolving to meet local needs?	Imagine this space is now a _____ What typical day activities would occur? If we reuse this part of the building into a _____, what conflicts might arise, and how could we address them?	What activities would you like to see in this space that are not currently available? Which of these ideas do you think best preserves the building's heritage while adding value to the neighborhood?	What are the strengths and weaknesses of this proposed use? How does this solution align with what we've identified as neighborhood priorities?	What feedback have we received about this idea from the broader community? How have our objectives shifted based on recent community input?
What areas of this building are most important to preserve? Where can we incorporate new functions without disrupting the existing structure?	How would reusing this area affect your regular community activities? What compromises might be necessary to ensure multiple community groups can use this space?	How can these ideas be implemented to reflect our neighborhood's values and history? What are the potential obstacles to implementing these ideas, and how can we overcome them?	What might be the long-term community impact of implementing this solution? What method would we like to use to democratically decide on future use of the building and who should be invited for the decision making?	What modifications can we make to this proposal to better meet your expectations? Are there any new needs or concerns that have emerged that we need to consider in our planning?
How can this space better serve the entire neighborhood?	How do we ensure that these changes respect everyone's views and beliefs?	Which of these ideas do you feel most passionately about, and why?	Are there any legal restrictions that need to be incorporated into the proposed idea before a decision can be made?	How can we better communicate the benefits of this project to those who are skeptical or opposed?
<b>Argumentation:</b> Engaging community members in mapping out current and potential uses of church space facilitates participation and open communication.  <b>Reference:</b> "It is time to take a fresh look at the church's core. The identity has to find out who we are in the first place and what we are, we also have no creed." (E2)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Using visual and physical boards to organize and refine ideas gathers community feedback and integrates participatory tools.  <b>Reference:</b> "This collaboration helps in harnessing local knowledge and insights which are vital for the project's success." (Ezio Manzini)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Exploring practical implications of ideas through scenario planning evaluates different future outcomes.  <b>Reference:</b> "I want to participate in collecting ideas for the conversion. My motivation would be to turn the church into a space for exhibitions and a market." (C15)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Critical assessment of proposed solutions based on practicality and community impact, reflecting the need for adjustments based on feedback.  <b>Reference:</b> "Participation is only participation only if it is really about being able to co-decide at the end." (E4)	<b>Argumentation:</b> Implementing feedback loops that allow revisiting and revising project stages based on community responses maintains relevance and effectiveness.  <b>Reference:</b> "That's part of the process. You try something and realize that there is resistance. Then you can react to it and say, maybe it's better if there is so much commitment in this neighborhood." (E3)

Figure 11: The iterated Questions for the CommunityKIT (Own creation, 2024)



## CHAPTER 7

# E valuation and Implementation

“Real change occurs from the bottom up; it occurs person to person, and it almost always occurs in small groups and locales and then bubbles up and aggregates to larger vectors of change.”

– Paul Hawken, author & founder, of Project Drawdown



In light of this quote, on a general level, how the designed intervention relates to the “**climate checklist**” questions from Paul Hawken's book, *Ending the Climate Crisis in a Generation*, is evaluated. This “climate checklist” created by **Paul Hawken** is helpful for an evaluation because, in his opinion, it is **applicable at “any level of action”**, including businesses and **communities** (Hawken, 2021).

The following questions from this checklist are particularly relevant to the present work. A brief assessment is dedicated to each of them:

Question 1

**Does the action create more life or reduce it?**

The adaptive reuse of church buildings as community spaces creates more life by activating these underused structures and fostering community engagement also through the participatory process itself, thereby enhancing the local community of the area.

Question 2

**Does it heal the future or steal the future?**

The intervention heals the future by sustainably reusing otherwise underused or abandoned church buildings, transforming them into local community spaces for everyone. This not only prevents the wasteful neglect of valuable spatial resources but also enhances the social infrastructure by meeting community needs through participatory engagement. By doing so, it ensures these historical structures continue to serve present and future generations, integrating heritage preservation with modern community uses, which aligns with sustainable development goals. In addition, churches can reinvent themselves as organizations and move with the times.

Question 5

**Does it create livelihoods or eliminate them?**

The intervention creates livelihoods by enabling local residents to influence the reuse, it potentially opens up opportunities for new businesses, social enterprises, and community services to emerge.

Question 8

**Does it serve human needs or manufacture human wants?**

The intervention serves fundamental human needs for space, community, and cultural continuity. It transforms churches into places where local needs for gathering, socializing, and cultural activities are met.

Question 10

**Does it promote fundamental human rights or deny them?**

The participatory approach of the intervention promotes fundamental human rights by involving local residents in the decision-making process, thus respecting their right to shape their communal spaces and cultural environment, while being inclusive.

Additionally, open thinking spaces in which people are allowed to say what they think fulfill an element of human rights.

Question 11

**12. In short, is the activity extractive or regenerative?**

The intervention is regenerative, as it facilitates structured participatory processes within church reuse projects. By engaging community members through the card set tool, it ensures that the transformation of church spaces is driven by the needs and ideas of the local population, fostering a sense of ownership. This approach not only reuses underutilized buildings but also promotes community resilience and sustainability by embedding local values and priorities into the reuse process.

In addition to this general evaluation, the following table lists the conditions required to implement the design intervention:

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Responsible persons</b>
<b>Clear Framework for Co-Design</b>	The parish provides a structured outline and goals for the co-design process to begin.	Parish
<b>Resource Allocation</b>	Providing necessary resources such as time, space, and materials.	Parish
<b>Facilitator Presence</b>	Leading discussions and managing group dynamics.	Parish
<b>Facilitators as Neutral Guides</b>	Utilizing facilitators to ensure the process remains unbiased and focused on productive dialogue.	Parish
<b>Community Members as Design Participants</b>	Engaging community members not just as feedback providers but as active co-designers.	Parish
<b>Expert Support for the Parish</b>	Involving external experts to provide guidance and neutrality in the participatory process.	Parish
<b>Participant availability</b>	Participants need to have the time and opportunity to engage in the process without it conflicting significantly with their daily routines and responsibilities.	Neighborhood
<b>Use of Card Set in the Co-Design</b>	Leveraging card sets during workshops to facilitate discussion and gather diverse input.	Parish & Neighborhood
<b>Transparent Communication</b>	Building trust between the parish, external experts, and the neighborhood is crucial for a collaborative environment. Transparency from both sides about the process is key.	Parish & Neighborhood

Table 16: Requirement list for the CommunityKIT





Figure 12:CommunityKIT Cards Mockup (Own creation, 2024)



## CHAPTER 8

# Discussion

This thesis deals with the **adaptive reuse of church buildings** through **participatory processes**. It describes **how communities change** and why they should be **preserved**. To this end, the church building is seen as a **resource for building and maintaining local communities**. The research on church reuses shows that the **process from initiation to the final reuse** of the building can strongly **influence its subsequent use**. Because the church directs its use to **local needs**, the **involvement of neighborhoods** makes sense in this context. Until 40 years ago, 90% of the Swiss population belonged to a religious community. At that time, these buildings were **built virtually by this population**; therefore, it can be argued that they **still belong to the public** today, **even in a secular community** (E3, Primary Research - Participation). Neighborhood participation in this context is seen as citizen participation, which has enhanced the effectiveness of community-based social work strategies by **strengthening neighborhood participation in democratic processes**, **assisting groups in advocating for their needs**, and **building organizational and community problem-solving resources and capacities** (Chaskin et al., 2001; Johnson, 1998; Schorr, 1997; Well, 1996). Such participation is therefore essential not only for the process of reusing information but also for **ensuring the sustainability of adaptive reuses**.

The **effects** of these processes are of great importance for **urban development**, **cultural preservation** and the building of a **contemporary community**. The intervention which is designed for this, is an **opportunity for other adaptive reuse projects** by providing a **level of abstraction**, which can be implemented for **other environments**. In these processes, neighborhood participation can also be applied to **meet local needs**. This approach can lead to **dynamic** and **inclusive urban developments** that **improve community life**.

**Recommendations for future research** underscore the importance of **long-term studies**, which provide valuable insights into the **lasting impact of participatory approaches** in the context of adaptive reuse projects. These studies, which would be conducted across different geographical and cultural settings, would aim to **validate** and **extend existing findings**. Additionally, a thorough **examination of the impact** of these projects on local communities could enhance our **understanding of their benefits and challenges**, thereby **advocating for the wider adoption of community-led urban development strategies**.

## CHAPTER 9

# C onclusion



This thesis examined participatory processes within the **neighborhood, including non-denominational residents**, in the context of church reuse.

The focus was on the following research question:

**To what extent are neighborhood residents involved in the process of church reuse, and how could this integration take place successfully?**

The research of this thesis demonstrates that the integration of the neighborhood in church conversion processes is not just a **possibility**, but a **valuable approach**. Several methods are currently being used in projects of the reformed church Zurich to facilitate participation in church reuse processes, such as **stakeholder analyses, workshops, idea competitions**, and **"look over the shoulder" discussions**. Through these activities, the outside world is currently involved in church reuse processes. The organization of a neighborhood information event showed that external stakeholders are often **only integrated into individual phases of a process**. In addition, parishes are usually faced with difficulties due to a **lack of process structure or expertise**, which can lead, among other things, to an **unsatisfactory orientation of the reused building for the local community**.

While participation in church reuse processes can be **demanding**, the benefits are significant. This thesis underscores that **in-depth involvement** can **enhance the church's relevance**, foster **sustainability in urban development**, and **promote acceptance of new uses**. Residents' active involvement, including in **decision-making**, can lead to more **effective use of spatial resources** and, ideally, **community building**.

The **process's complexity** must be considered for a successful integration of the neighborhood in a participation process. This complexity emphasizes the **need for clear communication** through a **clear framework, continuous engagement** and **flexible process management**. These needs include the five design criteria crucial for successful participation: **transparent communication, open rather than results-orientated processes, inclusive action in participation, democratic decision-making** and a **focus on local needs**.

As intervention of this research, a **set of cards** was introduced to successfully integrate the neighborhood into the church reuse process and **create a clear framework** for a final **successful decision of the reuse**. This intervention aims to **support the parish in its process**, while the participation of the neighborhood in the process should be fulfilled to **satisfy local needs and aspirations**. This **participation** alone has the **potential to form communities** that emerge during the process.

In summary, this work confirms that participatory processes can be **feasible** and **support the adaptive reuse** of church buildings. They provide a framework through which **communities can actively shape their environment, leading to more sustainable outcomes** that **better reflect the community's values and needs**.

## CHAPTER 10

# Limitations

The thesis focuses on church reuse in a **specific urban setting** within Switzerland, which might not reflect the conditions or outcomes in other regions with **different cultural or socio-economic backgrounds**. While it investigates participatory processes, the **actual influence of community engagement on the long-term sustainability** of church reuse is not thoroughly examined due to the short duration of the study. The conclusions are drawn from a **limited number of interviews**, which may **not fully represent the broader spectrum of community opinions and experiences**. Moreover, the methodologies employed, particularly surveys and interviews, are **susceptible to participant bias** and may **not adequately capture the intricate dynamics** within the community or the full impact of the reuse projects on all stakeholders. Although the research question was answered in the setting, it could be **expanded to include further suggestions** for successfully integrating neighborhoods in church reuse processes. These factors necessitate a careful interpretation of the findings and highlight areas for further, more detailed research.

CHAPTER 11

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## CHAPTER 12

# A ppendix

Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews  
Appendix B: Given Citizen Survey  
Appendix C: Visualizations



## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 1

#### Personal background

The expert interviewed has many years of experience as a deacon and has worked for the Reformed Church for over 20 years. He experienced the fusion of the churches at the time and thus witnessed many changes in the Reformed Church. The interviewee was able to support this work by describing the church system, describing changes, and also listing the church's services.

#### **Question: Why do you think there are increasing repurposing in the Reformed Church?**

E1: "The population has indeed increased, but the members of the Reformed Church have decreased. This means that these properties are also less used. And then you have to look at how these properties are going to be used, in what way they are utilized."

#### **Question: The church council of the Canton of Zurich then began to stop renting properties and instead take care of their own properties. Can you elaborate on that?**

E1: "The Church Council of the Canton of Zurich started to focus on not just renting out their properties but actively managing them themselves. They looked at how these properties could be better utilized, and there is a strategy paper regulating this, indicating it should be utilized in such and such a way. But it's mainly about community-oriented use, not necessarily private use."

#### **Question: So would you say that private uses are becoming more common?**

E1: "Yes, particularly for the properties. For instance, the House of Deacon costed about 28 million, which is exorbitant. During this repurposing project, the original apartments within the building are preserved. They'll likely try to create more living spaces, which I find interesting but also challenging to finance. A church building by itself doesn't really pay for itself."

#### **Question: You mentioned people actually want to go to church, but they distance themselves from the church. Could you describe that in more detail?**

E1: "Yes, this was something particularly noticeable in the 2010s and 2020s. Perhaps it's also about the diaconal aspect—that people no longer felt everything had to be done within the church. I'm not sure if it was a cultural shift specific to that time."

#### **Question: How do you explain that the importance of the church has diminished?**

E1: "One reason is that many people have left the church anyway, or new arrivals who do not have access to the church. Among the newcomers, maybe only 10-12% are Reformed, some are Catholic, the others are either none or something else. If the church's direction is good, more people are interested in it again. They are more active. However, I don't feel that people are less religious. I feel that religiosity is quite present, but the connection to the church is missing. I often think that the space is no longer so important in this context."

#### **Question: Now you've said that the premises are no longer so important to people. Why can the church still be important for the whole society or not?**

E1: "The church is inclusive. It accepts everyone. And especially when you are in trouble, you have the church there, even if you are not a member. In a totally utopian sense, if the church simply no longer existed, then the state would have to take over much of what the church provides in terms of social welfare, which naturally wouldn't include the voluntary work like that of the church."

## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 2

#### Personal Background

The expert works for the Reformed Church and studied theology. She has written a supporting study on the topic of church reuse and has carried out case studies on the subject. She was able to support this thesis through experience, context and communities.

**Question: If someone were to use your doctoral thesis for practical work, what would you say is important? Where should one be careful in repurposing processes?**

E2: "For example, the project of the Art Sound Church was very positively received by the church community, where the members are also somewhat older and very closely connected to the church. That's why they liked the idea that it remains something very church-related. And this is nice within the church area, but for outsiders, who are a bit more distant from the church, it is no longer so attractive. Either you say, okay, it remains something church-related and you open up the space for outsiders, or it is supported by higher authorities and you say, okay, we are going to do something completely new there, we are now making a graffiti hall or whatever, or a skate hall and so forth. But then there is the conflict that people in the church, who are still very closely connected, and one might want to maintain their image of the church."

**Question: Despite the decline, why are church buildings relevant or even socially relevant?**

E2: "Many are attached to the cityscape. It's something emotional, it is seen as a landmark, if it's a beautiful church, if it's not a beautiful one, people don't care. So if the church just has a high tower and you see, it's a beautiful building, then many just want it to exist as it is. They are certainly relevant for the communities. It is important for these people that the building is not simply torn down and that the church can still be seen. I believe it would be important for the church that they can keep and present their buildings here and only repurpose them through an interim solution."

**Question: What role does the neighborhood play in repurposing a church?**

E2: "There is usually a neighborhood association that also wants to have a say, or simply wants something to be done for the neighborhood and not, for example, a nightclub in an area where it would not be suitable. I do not know how much it still needs to be something church-related for the neighborhood, but the associations definitely want something that fits the location, where many families live something for children could emerge, or in a hipster neighborhood, something that suits young people."

**Question: Despite the decline, why are church buildings relevant or even socially relevant?**

E2: "Many are attached to the cityscape. It is something emotional, they are seen as landmarks, if it is a beautiful church, if it is not a beautiful one, it does not matter to people. So if the church just has a high tower and you see that it is a beautiful building, then many people simply want it to continue to exist as such. They are certainly relevant for the communities. It is important for these people that the building is not simply demolished and that the church can still be seen. I believe it would be important for the church to be able to keep and display their buildings here and only repurpose them through an interim solution."

## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 3

#### Personal Background

The expert has been dealing with church reuse for years. His topics include church aesthetics, church construction, modernity, and art history. As a support person in church reuse processes and organizer of conferences in this field, he has been able to answer some big questions of this work and contribute a great deal through his practical experience and his network.

**Question: Considering the processes of secularization, how do you see the future of church repurposing?**

E3: "The premise that these should remain public buildings means that church communities must collaborate with public institutions and players who have a public mandate. Church communities cannot just look internally and think they can continue using the buildings solely for their religious missions because they are shrinking, and that applies to all religious communities, they need to step out."

**Question: What role does the neighborhood play in reusing a church?**

E3: "There's usually a neighborhood association that also wants to have a say, or just wants something that fits the location—something appropriate for a neighborhood where many families live might include facilities for children, or in a hipster neighborhood, something that suits young people."

**Question: Why is it important to involve the local community in these repurposing efforts?**

E3: "Church buildings and especially the sacred buildings have a public character, partly because of their position and placement in a village or city landscape. They are built on public-law parcels, meaning the public has a stake in them. Considering that until about 40 years ago, 90% of the population were members of a religious community, it's almost the public that has erected these buildings."

**Question: What challenges do church communities face in managing their properties?**

E3: "The main challenge lies in the significant decrease in congregation members, which in turn reduces the financial resources available to manage these properties effectively. Furthermore, as communities shrink, the requirement for extensive physical spaces diminishes, creating a surplus of unused or underutilized properties."

**Question: How do external factors influence church repurposing efforts?**

E3: "External consultants often become necessary in repurposing efforts. However, there are many projects that seem to be abandoned mid-way without a clear understanding from the outside on what causes these disruptions. It is complex and involves navigating through numerous societal, structural, and financial challenges."

**Question: In your opinion, what is the future of church buildings in the context of secularization and changing community needs?**

E3: "In the context of ongoing secularization and the evolving needs of communities, it becomes crucial for church buildings to adapt. They must transition from being solely places of worship to multi-functional spaces that serve broader community purposes, thus reflecting a shift towards more inclusive and versatile use."

**Question: What is the significance of church buildings in the public eye?**

E3: "Church buildings often hold a symbolic status in both village and city landscapes due to their historical and architectural significance. They are not only places of worship but also landmarks and community hubs, necessitating their preservation and adaptive reuse in the face of declining religious affiliation."

## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 4

#### Personal Background

The expert is self-employed in the field of organization and moderation. She has many years of experience participating and has completed several adaptive reuse projects. She supported this work through her many years of experience, discussing best-case and worst-case practices and tools for participation.

**Question: What role does the church play in the community, particularly in a neighborhood?**

E4: "As an institution, it still has community houses, which play a significant role. Why? Because these are generally quite open houses and they also offer many socio-cultural activities. They serve as meeting points and places for eating, for example. Our church, where we had a community assembly, was used for the assembly itself. It is often one of the largest spaces available for events."

**Question: What are the innovative uses of church spaces you've observed?**

E4: "There's the example of the Sankt-Jakob Church, which has opened up tremendously. It also provides space for refugees and generally for people with marginalized status. For them, there are fewer barriers. I mean, in our circles, which are more culturally active and not so involved in the church, there might still be some barriers to the church."

**Question: How does the church respond to the needs of different cultural contexts?**

E4: "People from different countries living in different cultural contexts may find the church foreign or irrelevant because the religion is not present or has a different significance in their culture. That's where the challenge lies, especially when the church tries to adapt to these diverse backgrounds."

**Question: What is the potential for participatory processes in church repurposing?**

E4: "The potential really is there if you can provide the manpower, or if they are properly set up and guided through the process. Then they can also exhaust this potential if they are capable of handling the methodological competence and also have socio-cultural competence. Because that is something I've observed, and everyone does it a bit differently."

**Question: How do you involve people who might not want to participate in church-related activities or repurposing processes?**

E4: "For example, in the cultural factory where we were supposed to have about fifty volunteers, only about twenty to thirty would show up consistently. The topmost thing in such processes, especially in large group events like future workshops or open space formats, is that those who are there are the right ones. You shouldn't shout after those who aren't there, but work with those who are."

**Question: What challenges are there when churches attempt to repurpose their spaces?**

E4: "If repurposing processes happen, they might have a construction aspect, or maybe the big challenge is financial, or you might consider installing something entirely different, like a skateboard ramp. Yes, that's also a question. Is it happening elsewhere? In Spain, too? Okay. Interesting. Indoor climbing with that height is really interesting in these spaces. Yes, that's true."

**Question: How do you view the future of church spaces in terms of community involvement and cultural shifts?**

E4: "Churches still play a vital role due to their often central location in neighborhoods and their ability to host large events. However, with the current trends of secularization and individualization, it's essential for churches to open up their spaces more and make them relevant not just to their immediate congregations but to the broader public. The more open these spaces become, the better for the community."

## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 5

#### Personal Background

The expert has been working for the Methodist Church for many years. He is a pastor and responsible for church development. His heart beats, especially for start-up projects that try to organize the church differently. His contribution to this work was to describe alternative approaches to church development, describe his experience with people far removed from the church, and share his religious perspective.

**Question: Can you explain how you came to think that it's essential to go out to the people instead of waiting for them to come to you?**

E5: "People don't come by themselves, so you have to go to them. Fundamentally, it's about relationships. You can't create a relationship by just waiting for someone to show up. Nothing happens then. This is even less so in today's society than before. In the early church and throughout church history, it was always about being with people or going to them. It's simply human. This is not a strategy; it's just human nature."

**Question: You mentioned that the parson Sigrist said that sometimes they work without faith, just communally. Do you support this idea or not?**

E5: "Yes, I would support that. I would say we have that experience too. The question really only arises when you ask whether they are churches or not. When do you define something as a church? Because football clubs, children's song breeders clubs, florists' associations also meet just like that. But I would never think that they are churches. Then there is the question of when you tell something as a church and when not."

**Question: What does 'church' mean to you?**

E5: "For me, church is broadly where there is community, where it is about faith, of course about Christian faith, but where there is also a social component. So these three things. Community, spirituality, Christian spirituality. And social components."

**Question: What role does the local community play in the process of repurposing church spaces?**

E5: "The local community often plays a critical role because they have a vested interest in the sustainable use of church properties. Engaging with them not only helps in understanding their needs but also in integrating the church's efforts with the community's expectations. This ensures that the repurposing efforts are not just inclusive but also beneficial to both the church and the community at large."

**Question: Can you share an example of a successful repurposing project you are familiar with?**

E5: "One successful example I can think of involves the transformation of a church space into a community center that now hosts various cultural and social activities. This has not only revitalized the building but also reconnected the church with its community by serving as a hub for local gatherings and services. It's a testament to how adaptive reuse can breathe new life into church properties."

**Question: How do you handle the resistance that might come from traditional churchgoers when it comes to repurposing church spaces?**

E5: "Handling resistance requires a sensitive approach. We try to communicate the benefits and the necessity of repurposing due to changing times and declining congregations. It's about showing how these changes can actually help us adhere more closely to our core mission of serving the community, even if it means changing the way the church spaces are used."

## Appendix A: Context of Expert Interviews

### Expert 6

#### Personal Background

The expert is responsible for the property sector of the Protestant church. He has accompanied several projects in church reuse and is familiar with the internal processes of these changes. He supported this work by outlining plans, showing internal processes and explaining the organization of reuses.

**Question: What role does the church play in the community, particularly in a neighborhood?**

E6: "The church used to be a central point for gatherings and community life, especially in the past. Nowadays, the church building still holds a place in community life but in different ways. It could serve as a community center, a venue for local events, or as a historical building that contributes to the local identity and landscape."

**Question: What are the innovative uses of church spaces you've observed?**

E6: "Church spaces are increasingly being used for a wide variety of activities beyond the traditional religious functions. These include cultural events, social gatherings, and even community support activities like food banks or temporary shelters, which help to meet the practical needs of the surrounding community."

**Question: How does the church respond to the needs of different cultural contexts?**

E6: "The church is learning to adapt to the diverse cultural contexts of its community members. This includes providing services and programs that are relevant to people from various backgrounds, which might mean hosting multicultural events or offering support services that cater to specific community groups."

**Question: What's the tricky part of making church buildings more universally accessible?**

E6: "One of the main challenges is balancing the respect for the church's historical and spiritual significance with the need to make these spaces functional and welcoming to a broader audience. This might involve architectural changes to improve accessibility, or programming shifts to include non-religious community activities."

**Question: What challenges do church communities face in managing their properties?**

E6: "The primary challenge is the decreasing church attendance and membership, which reduces the financial resources available for maintaining and utilizing church properties. There's also the challenge of finding relevant uses for these spaces that align with the community's current needs while respecting the historical and cultural significance of the properties."

**Question: Can you share an example of a successful repurposing project you are familiar with?**

E6: "One successful example is a church that was converted into a multi-use community center, which now hosts events, workshops, and even small businesses. This repurposing has not only preserved the church as a landmark but also revitalized its role in the community, making it a bustling hub of daily activity."

**Question: How do you handle the resistance that might come from traditional churchgoers when it comes to repurposing church spaces?**

E6: "Handling resistance involves a lot of communication and community engagement. We try to involve all stakeholders early in the planning process to gather input and address concerns. It's about showing how these changes can enhance the church's mission and service to the community, not detract from its spiritual goals."

Appendix B: Given Citizen Survey

## **BA Thesis Suon participation**

My thesis focusses on church conversions in Switzerland and the participation of society in this process.

### **Meaning of church conversions:**

Church reuse refers to the process in which a former church is converted for purposes other than religious activities. This happens for reasons such as a decline in religiosity, financial considerations, changes in community development and the preservation of the historic building. Examples of conversions are cultural centers, schools or restaurants.

**1.**

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**2.**

How old are you? (To mark)

20-25

25-30

30-40

40-50

50-60

60-70

70-100

**3.**

Where do you live?(To mark)

In the city

On the country side

Other:

**4.**

Where do you live?(To write in)

\_\_\_\_\_

**5.**

In which areas do you personally experience community? (To mark)

Religious communities

Neighborhoods

Clubs

Workplace

Online communities

Family

Circle of friends

Other:

**6.**

Communities have declined in recent years, how does that feel? (To write in)

\_\_\_\_\_

**7.**

What would you wish for in terms of communities? (To write in)

\_\_\_\_\_

**8.**

Is a local community (in your neighborhood) important to you, if so, why? (To write in)

---

**9.**

How would you describe your role in your neighborhood? (To mark)

Resident

Business owner

Community member

Other:

**10.**

Which religious community do you belong to? (To mark)

Protestant-Reformed

Roman Catholic

Islamic denominations

Jewish denominations

Other Christian denominations

Other religious communities

Non-denominational

Other:

**11.**

If you are religious, what are the reasons for this? (To write in)

---

**12.**

If you are non-denominational, what are the reasons for this? (To write in)

---

**13.**

What do you like about the church (as a building)? (To write in)

---

**14.**

What should the church be as an institution today? (To write in)

---

**15.**

When you imagine the church in your neighborhood, what does it mean to you? (To write in)

---

**16.**

If this church were suddenly gone, what would you miss? (To write in)

---

**17.**

What should become of an unused church in your neighborhood? Describe your idea  
(To write in)

---

**18.**

What would be your motives for participating in the church reuse process of your local church?  
(To write in)

---



**19.**

Under what conditions would you participate in a church reuse process? (To write in)

---

**20.**

Do you know of any church programs? (To mark)

Yes

No

Partly

**21.**

How do you find out about church programs? (To mark)

Visit church events

Church websites

Social media

Church newsletter

Word of mouth

Other:

**22.**

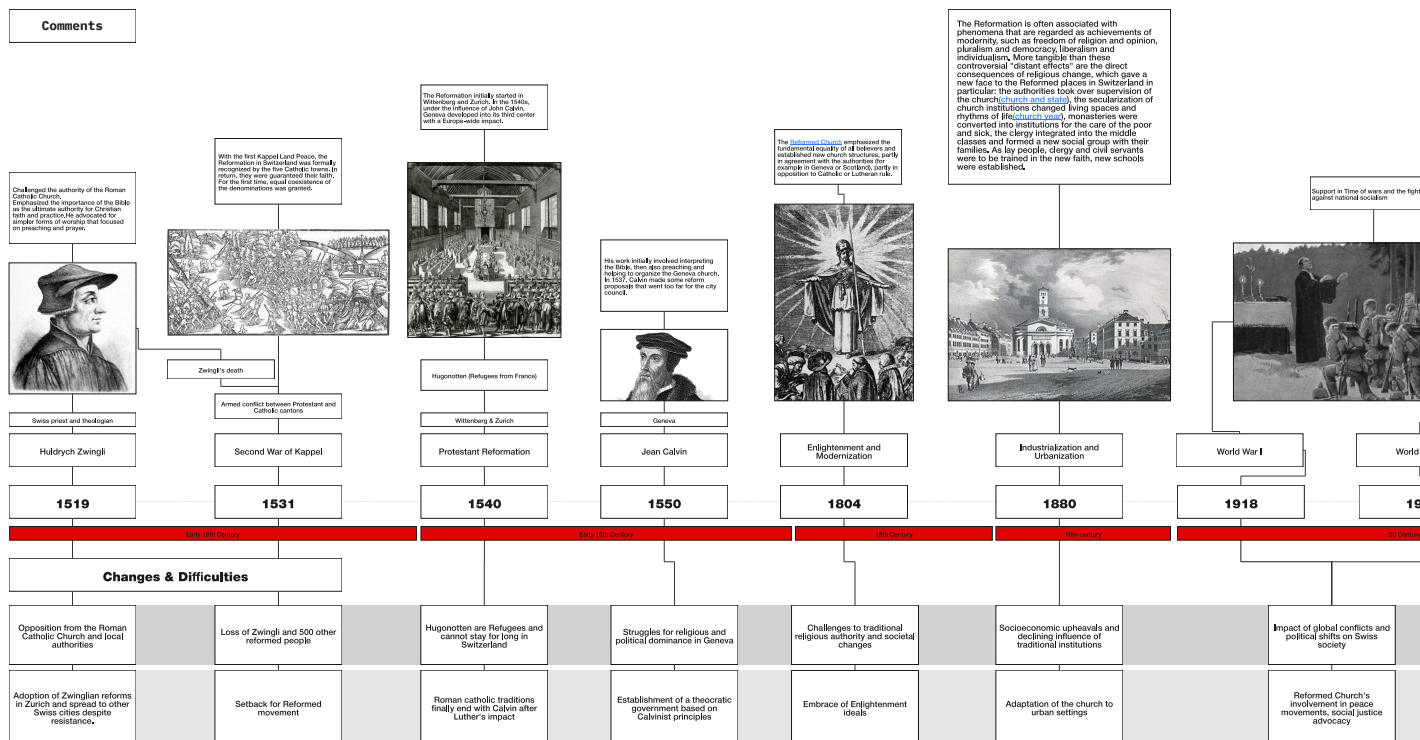
Which church programs do you take part in and what are your reasons for participating?  
(To write in)

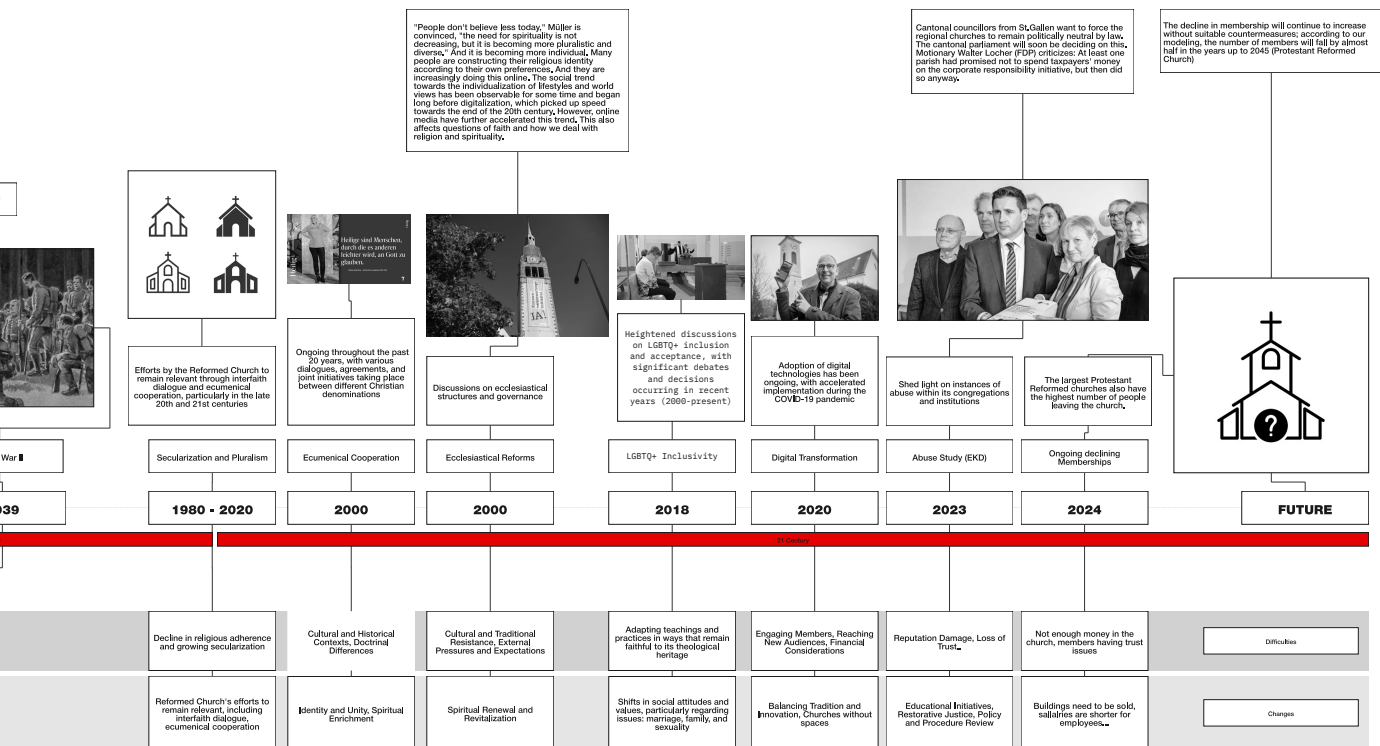
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# Appendix C: Visualizations

## Appendix C: Visualizations

### The History Map














Appendix C: Visualizations

# The Finance Topips

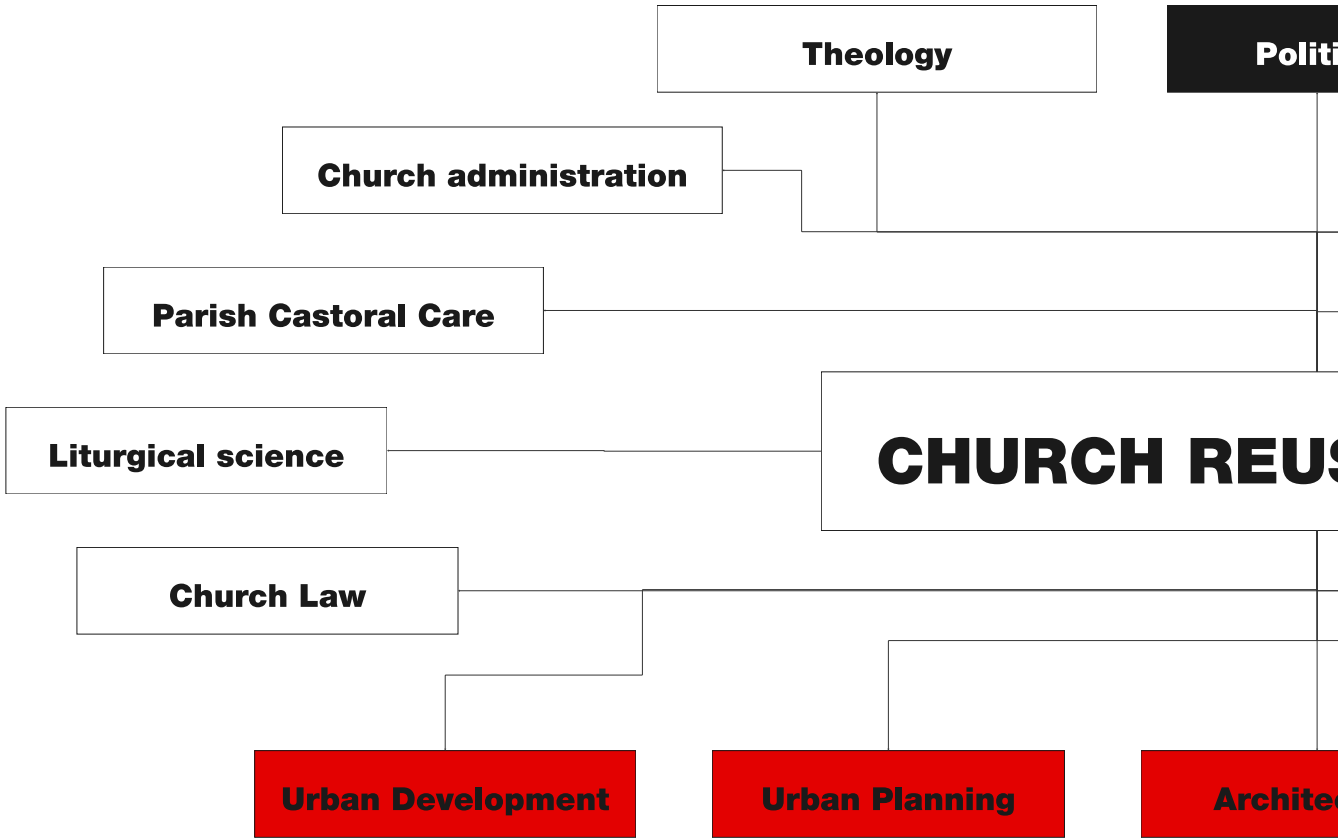
(Financial Changes of the Reformed Church Zurich)

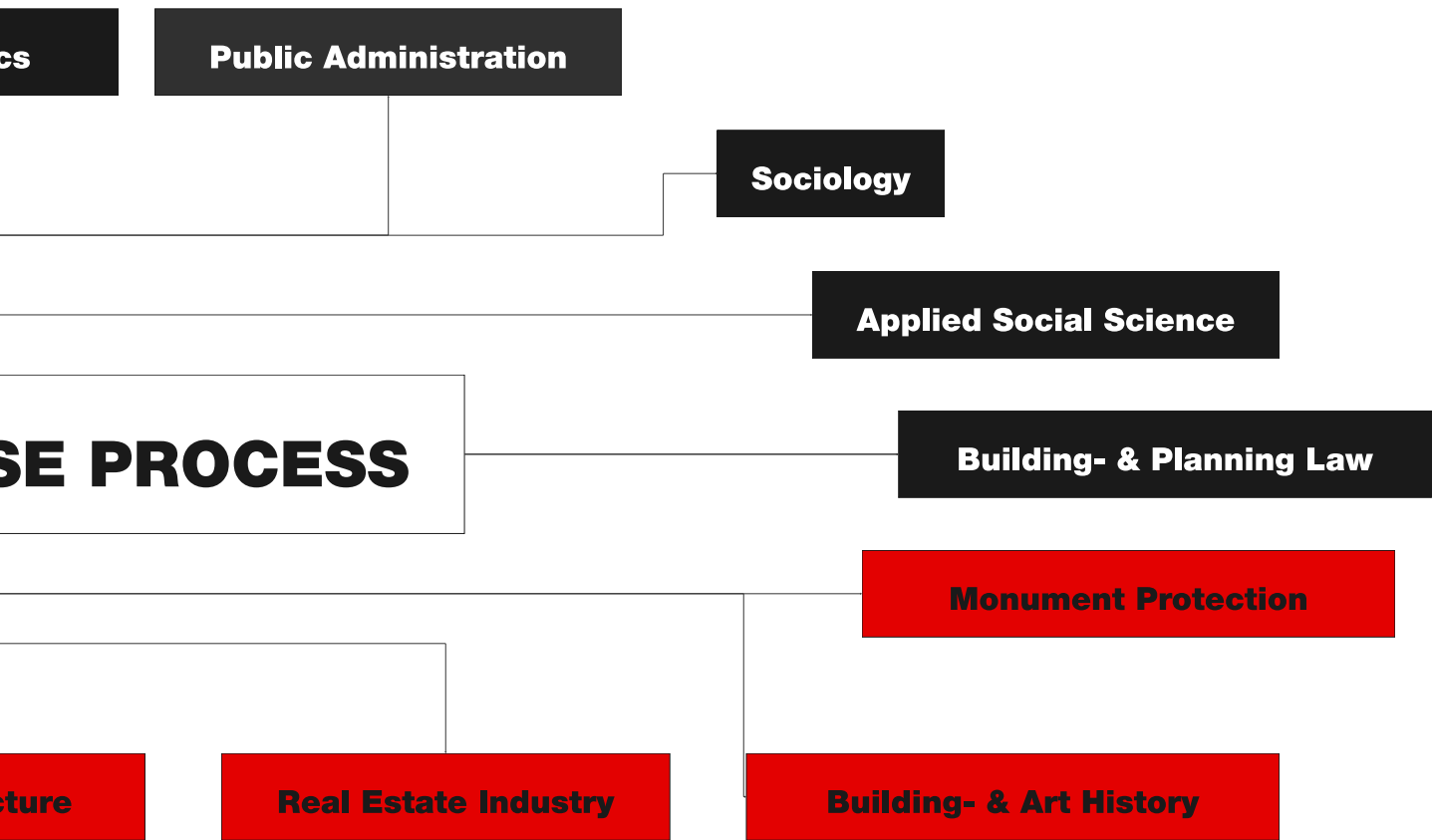
  <p>The recognized religious communities in Zurich receive financial contributions from the canton totalling CHF 50 million per year for services that they provide to society as a whole independently of their religious beliefs - for example in the areas of youth work, social counselling or education.</p>	  <p>The 2022 <a href="#">annual financial statements</a> close better than planned: Instead of a budgeted deficit of around CHF 1.1 million, there is an <b>income surplus of CHF 1.6 million</b>. Personnel expenses, the largest expenditure item, were reduced by a good CHF 0.5 million against a budget of CHF 82.4 million. In terms of operating expenses (CHF 9.1 million), <b>lower expenditure on building maintenance</b>, IT services and consultancy fees, among other things, led to an improved result. <b>Equity now amounts to CHF 70.9 million</b>.</p>	 <p><b>Funding from the canton:</b> Contributions to the Protestant, Catholic Church and the CH of importance to society as "education, social affairs and Act). Financial support is provided based on church activity per Cantonal Council for a period 2020-2025, the cantonal contribution is CHF 25.7 million per year, which is CHF 25.7 million (CHF 25.7 million) according to the</p>
  <p>The ref. church Zurich is <b>subject to supervision by the canton</b>. The Church Act of 2007 regulates the main features of its organization, the authority to levy taxes, the state benefits to the national church as well as the responsibility and procedure for the election of pastors and their term of office.</p>	 <p><b>Democratic structures:</b> The democratic structures of the Protestant Re as the transparency of its public budgets, allow monitored. All voting members of the parish ha assembly approves the budget. The church ad money, is elected by the members of the parish</p>	
 <p><b>Responsibilities:</b> <b>Church care:</b> The <b>church administration</b> carries out the business of the parish entrusted to it. It manages the administration of the parish <b>budgets and annual accounts for the parish</b> assembly and is responsible for <b>issuing and updating the financial plan</b> the annual accounts. <b>Church Synod:</b> As the <b>parliament elected</b> by the Reformed electorate, the Church Synod has <b>legislative power in the national church</b> Church Council and adopts the annual report (Art. 214 of the Church Ordinance). It is responsible for <b>setting the budget of treasury</b> and the <b>central treasury contribution rate for the parishes</b>, as well as for auditing and approving the accounts of the national church and its funds (Art. 215 of the Church Ordinance). <b>The Church Synod also elects the n</b> <b>Church Council:</b> As the <b>executive body</b>, the Church Council is responsible for managing the central treasury and <b>preparing the annual ac</b> legal principles. It defines the following <b>key financial policy principles</b>: balanced accounts in the medium term, increased moderate setting of the central treasury contribution rate. These form the <b>basis for the financial management of the ce</b> planning and budgeting.</p>		

<p><b>a:</b> The Canton of Zurich makes cost tant Reformed Church, the Roman ristian Catholic parish for their activities a whole, particularly in the areas of nd culture" (§19 para. 2 of the Church rovided in the form of global budgets ograms and is determined by the od of six years. For the period st contribution amounts to CHF 50 ainly divided between the <b>Reformed n)</b> and the Catholic Body (CHF 23.4 umber of members.</p>	<p>There are basically two levels of financial flows: the local parishes and the cantonal church. <b>The parishes are mainly financed by the taxes of their members.</b></p>	<p><b>Parishes</b> The taxpayers of the parishes consist of two groups, <b>natural persons (CHF 162 million)</b> and <b>legal entities (CHF 71 million)</b>. The corporate taxes of legal entities may only be used for <b>non-cultural purposes</b> and are therefore subject to negative earmarking. Each year, the parishes transfer a contribution from their tax income to the central fund, which is determined annually by the church synod. In 2018, the central fund contribution amounted to around CHF 67 million. The parishes use their income to pay the <b>salaries of their employees, such as catechists and social deacons.</b></p>
<p>Reformed Church and its parishes, as well w the use of funds to be closely ave a say in the use of funds. The parish ministration, which manages the tax h.</p>		
<p>h and exercises supervision, <b>approves n.</b> The Audit Committee (RPK) audits n. It supervises the management of the <b>f the national church's central</b> ts of the national church and its funds. <b>members of the Church Council.</b> counts on the basis of the applicable equity in the central treasury and <b>entral fund</b>, in particular for financial</p>		<p>The Zurich <b>cantonal government supports the church tax obligation for companies:</b> These funds would not be used for cultic purposes, but for social and cultural tasks. <b>Without churches, the state would have to organize these to a large extent at great expense and pay more for them.</b></p>

**The Discipline Map**

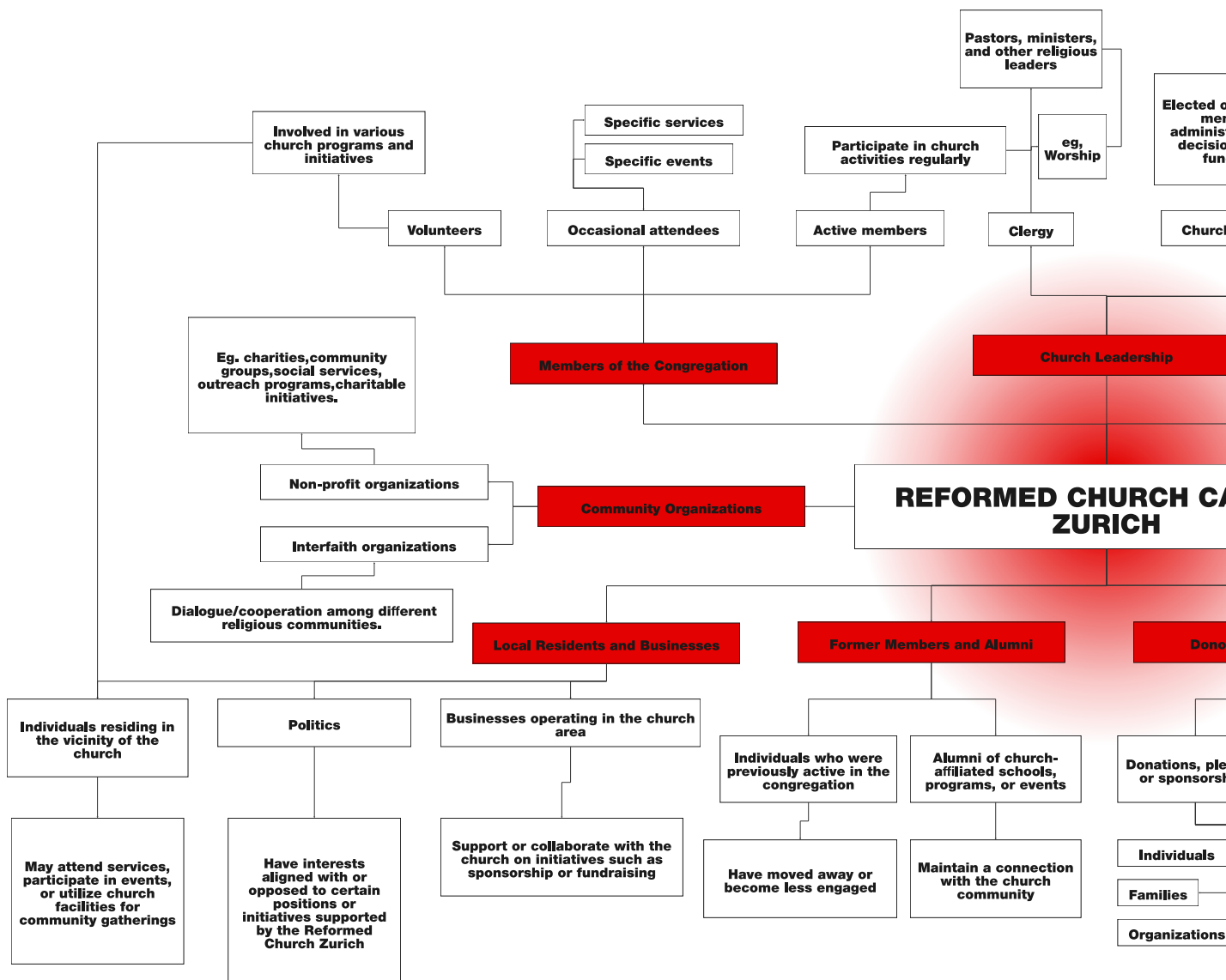
By Jörg Beste Synergon



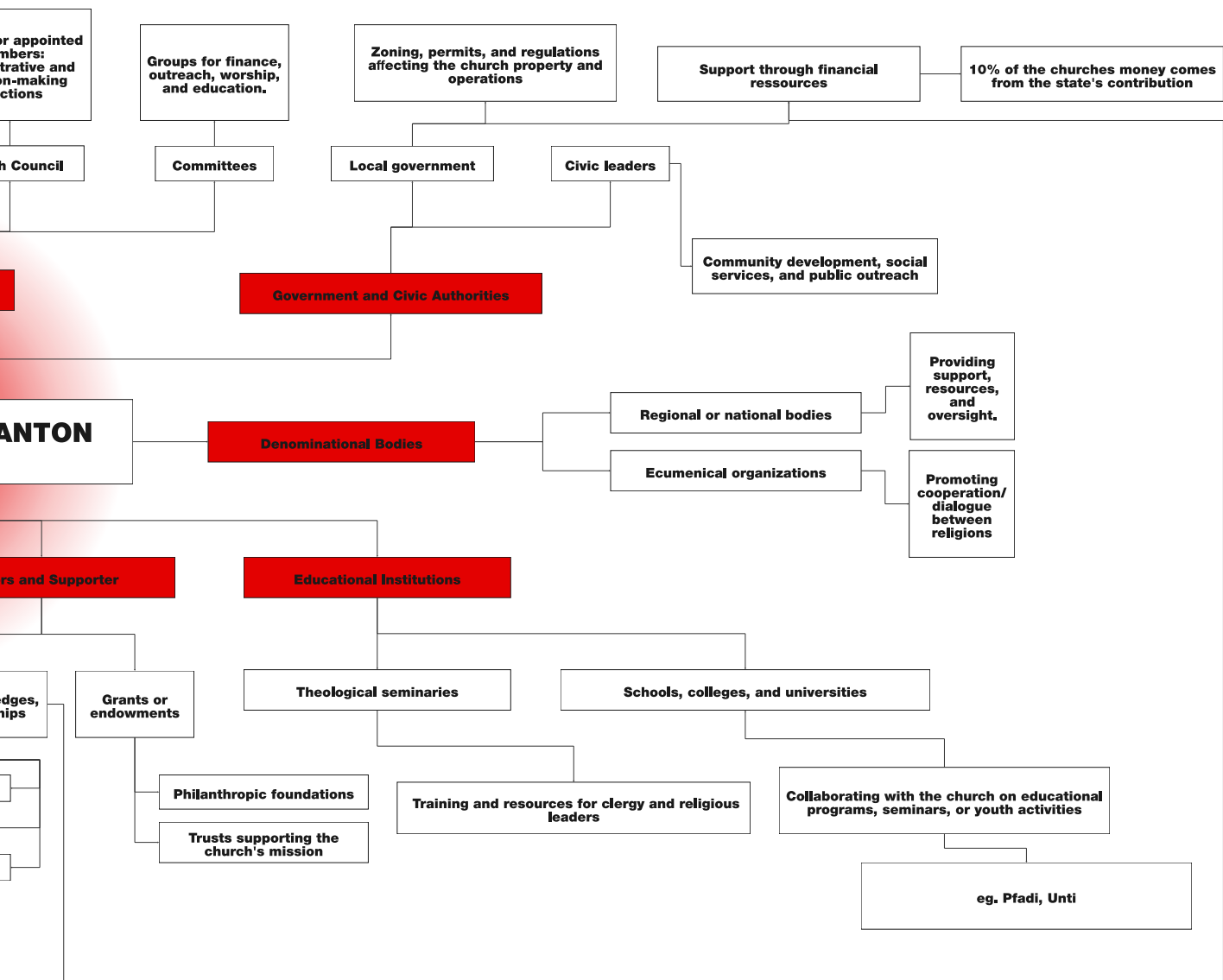


## Appendix C: Visualizations

## The detailed Stakeholder Map

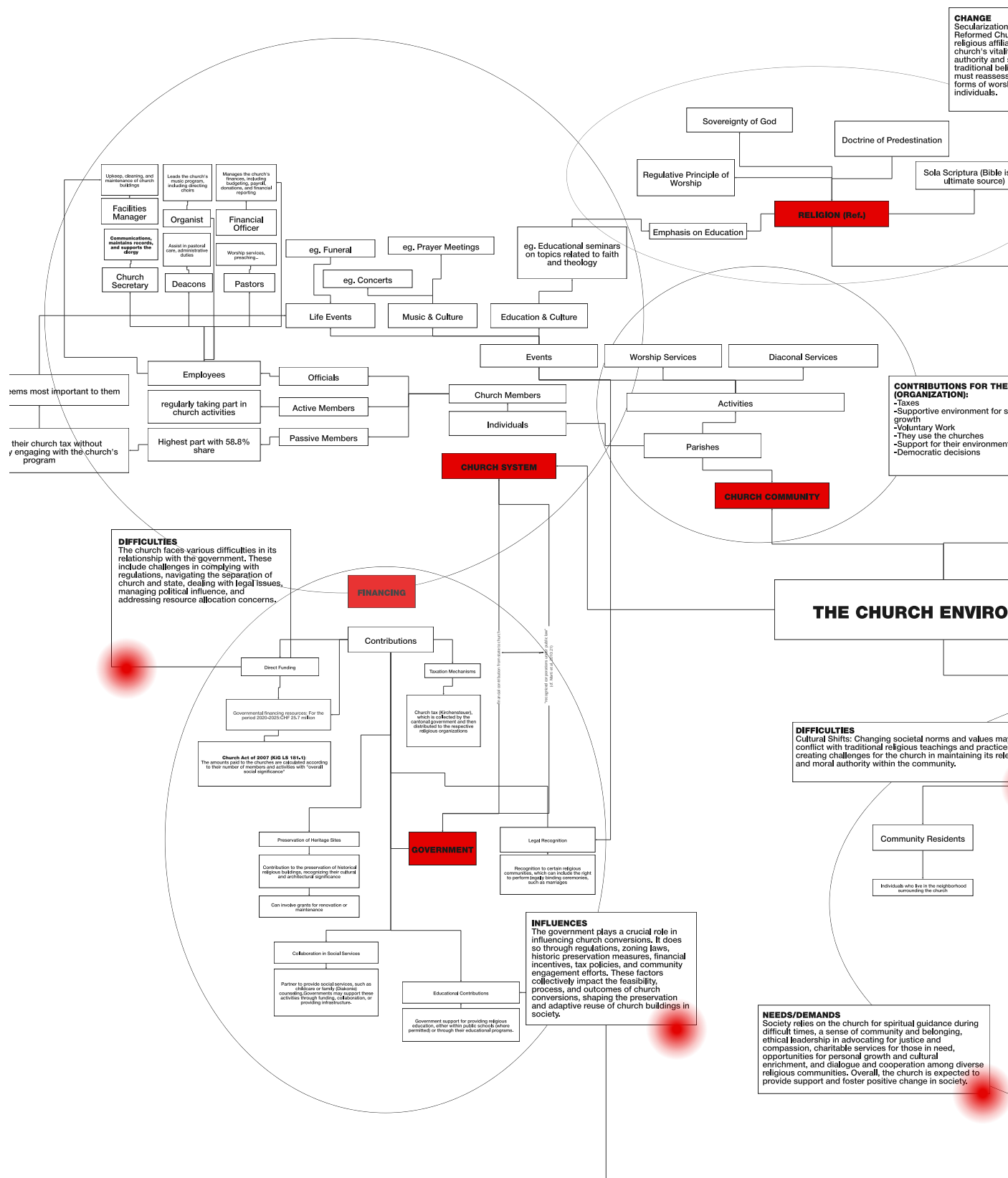


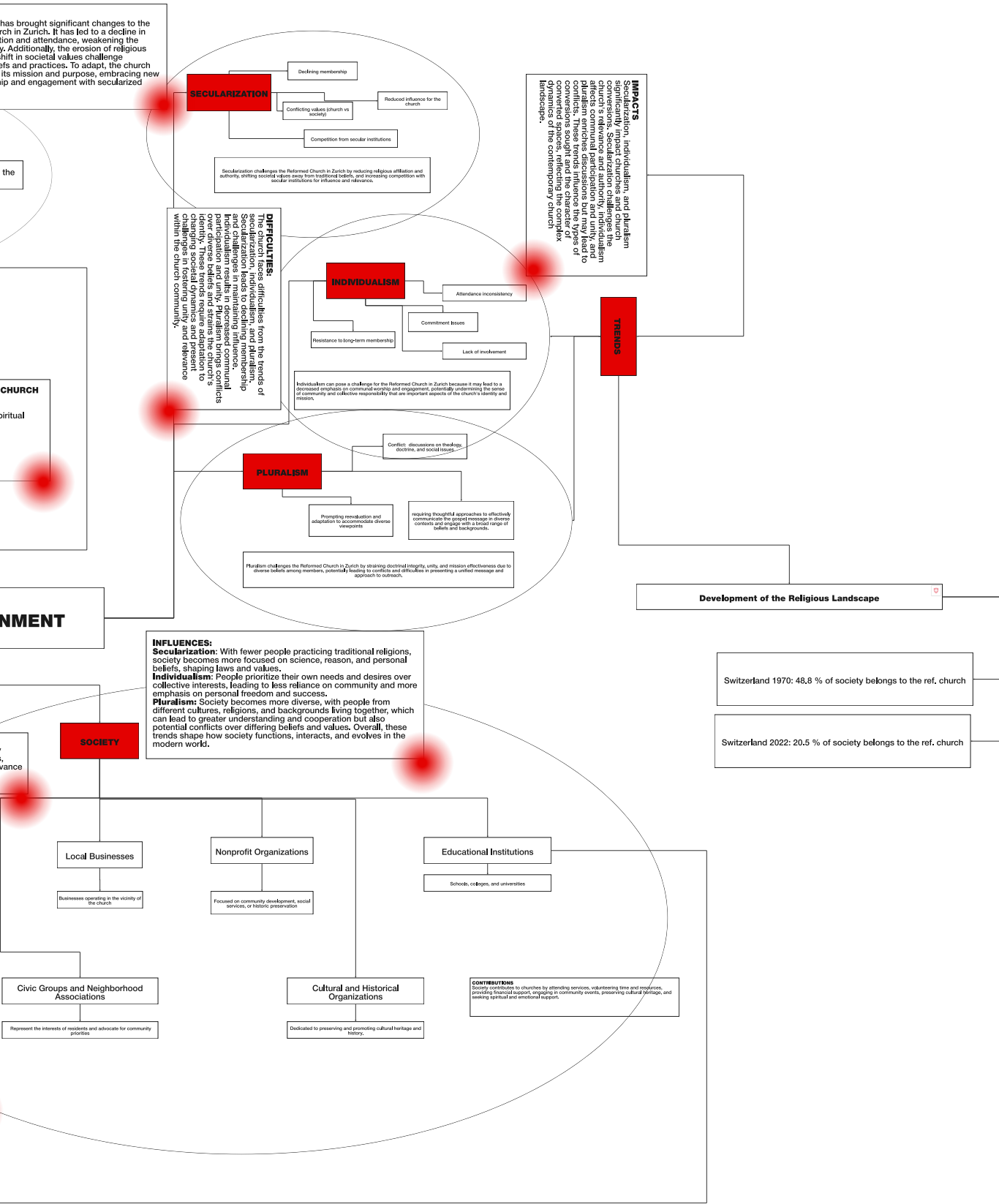




## Appendix C: Visualizations

# The Environment Map





## CHAPTER 13

# Affidavit

I, Luisa Koster, hereby certify that the attached Bachelor Thesis, REIMAGINE CHURCHES - Fostering neighborhood participation in urban church reuse consisting of 9,898 words as defined in the DMI Bachelor's Thesis Guidelines, is entirely my own and that I have indicated all sources (printed, electronic, personal, etc.) that have been consulted. Any sections quoted from these sources are clearly declared and indicated and the sources are explicitly given. I further declare that I have anonymized the names of all persons I have questioned during the writing of the bachelor thesis. Unless explicitly stated, no parts of this work have been published before submission.

Zurich, May 22, 2024



Luisa Koster

