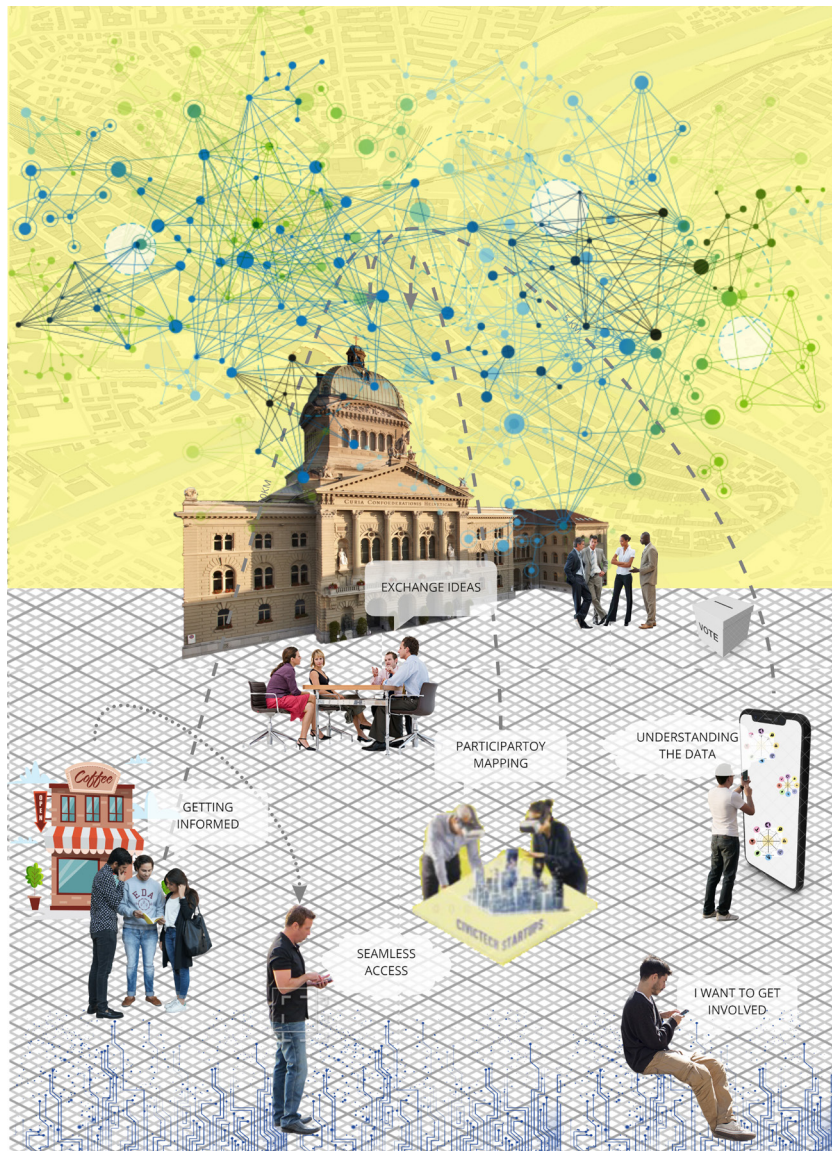


A CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR BERN The Future of Government

Carolyn Hinnekeuser
Heloïse Lauret

Politics & People
Bern & its political spaces
A guide on political engagement
Citizen hubs: many instances
The component kit in action!
References

Politics & People

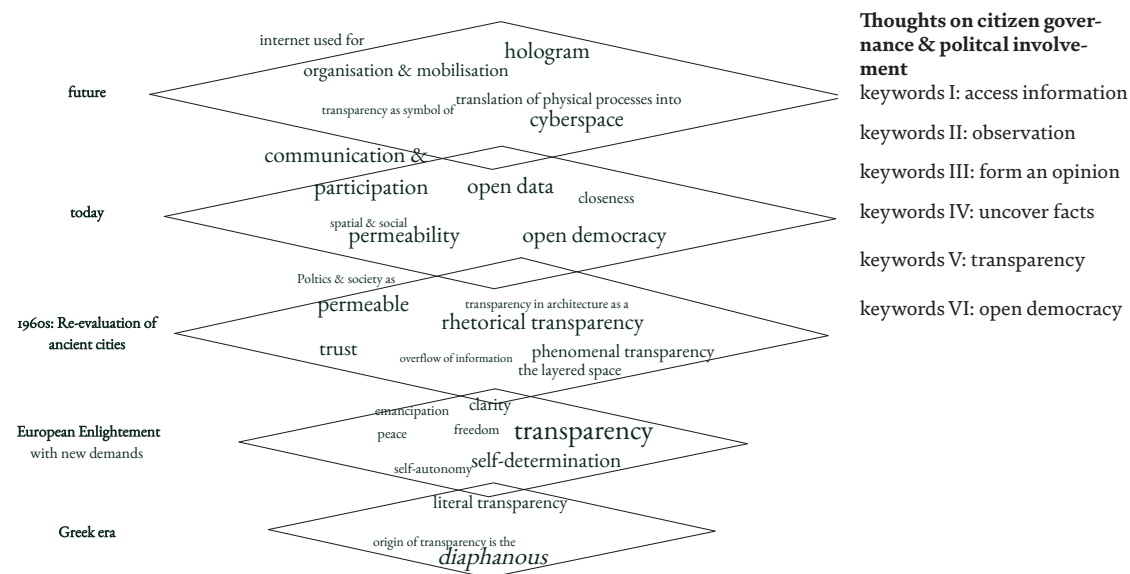


Open democracy through
citizen engagement

"lets go to this
new political
space, lets get
involved!"

CITY STATEGY: PLATFORM OF PHYSICAL HUBS AND SPATIAL COMPONENTS

“The Disclosure of Data **Manifesto**” rethinks how democratic voting processes are showcased and being made transparent to the massive public through a close look on a typically Swiss voting procedure, the **referendum**. It also analyzes the relationship between politics and people. It aims to make current information concerning voting procedures more accessible for the voter to be able to form an **unbiased** opinion. Their voice should be made heard and countable either in favour or against a change in the democratic apparatus. Through a close observation on current procedures, the manifesto suggests further ways of providing info to the massive public. This can be implemented through **immediate exchange** between the voters and the involved parties and through conversations and educational measures such as public meeting and information points.

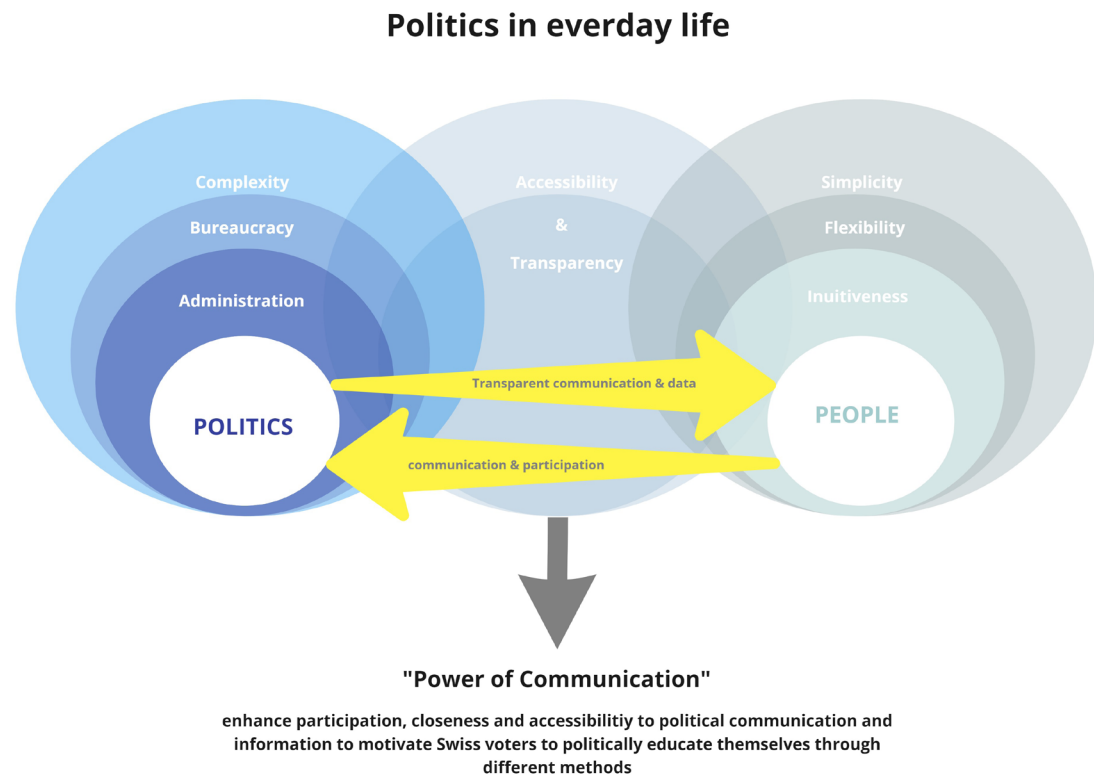


For politics in everyday life, the bridge between **complex political affairs** and the **intuitive perception** of the people is evident. The **"Communication Power"** (Castells: 2009) commands constant, direct engagement of all players involved to communicate and coordinate on eye level. Castells hints at a split between politics and society.

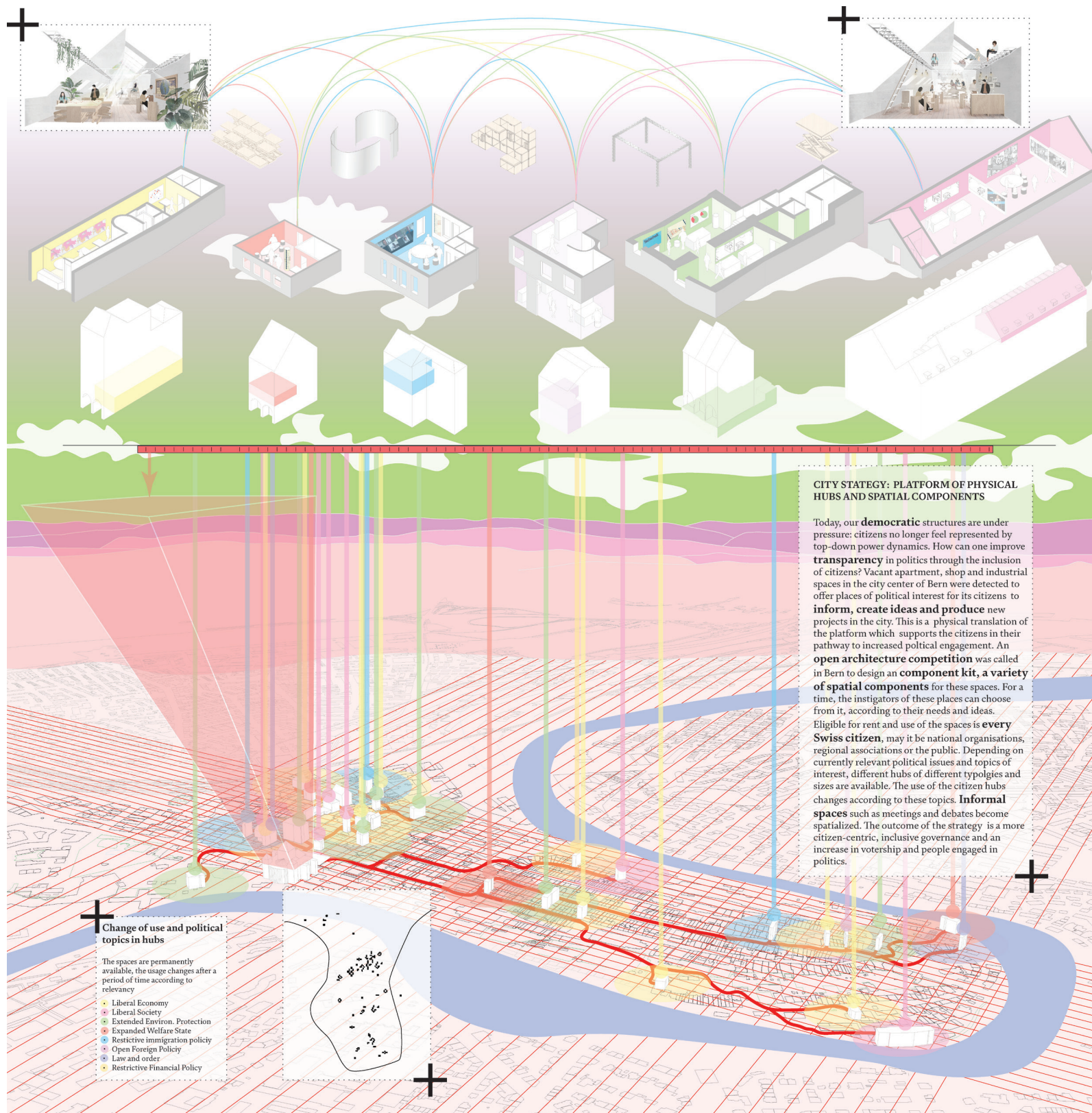
The institutions take on a life of their own; this is called bureaucracy. [This] is managed by people who we cannot control. Overwhelming bureaucracy and the more simple, flexible approach of people can be connected through methods that result in absolute transparency of the voting process. The enhancement of the accessibility to political information and exchange lead to an **increased motivation** by Swiss voters to politically educate themselves.

"Citizens become consumers of politics in the markets of elections every four years" (Castells: 2014). Opposed to this statement, voters should be perceived as **autonomous people**, capable of collecting necessary information and organizing their thoughts on important issues.

Transparency is an essential part of democracy and fundamental for free will formation and well-founded voting decisions. It enables citizens to learn and discuss suggestions for improvement and to communicate these.



Accessibility of information



The field of research covers a more citizen-centric government and through our investigations we asked ourselves: How to **improve transparency** in politics through inclusion of citizens in politics? How can cities be more community-based?

We thought of future ways of a citizen-centric government, to reshape and extend the interaction between government and citizens. **Enhancing citizen centrism** in political involvement is the priority aim of this project. The separation of the **two spheres** that are politics and people has been discovered as a problematic, they function fundamentally different. How do we make these two terms tangible, and how do we reshape the interaction between government and citizens? Our goal is to understand the existing bridges between those two spheres in order to enhance its power for the future of politics.

Our democratic structures are under pressure: Citizens no longer feel represented by outdated top-down power dynamics. According to "**The Future of Government: A complete citizen participation program**", it is time to start engaging citizens and to co-creating policies to build transparent, stronger, healthier, and more democratic communities.

Network of activated citizen hubs
Detected vacant apartment spaces are given a new life

The Citizen Engagement program focuses on informing, engaging and connecting citizens with their government, as well as the citizen with each other to improve the public good. In direct proximity to existing spaces of political engagement, we introduce a **network** of additional spaces in the city, used as political hubs for the citizens. These spaces represent different **instances** of the parliament with different degrees and ways of political involvement. This goes from a public participation to decision making, by sending back the collected information of these hubs to the parliament.

Vacant apartment, shop and industrial spaces in the city center of Bern were detected to offer places of political interest for its citizens to **inform, create ideas and produce** new projects in the city. This is a physical translation of the **platform** which supports the citizens in their pathway to increased political engagement. An **open architecture competition** was called in Bern to design an component kit, a variety of spatial components for these spaces. For a time, the instigators of these places can choose from it, according to their needs and ideas. Eligible for use of the spaces is every Swiss citizen, may it be national organisations, regional associations or the public. Depending on currently relevant political issues and topics of interest, different hubs of different typologies and sizes are available.



A Citizen Centric Perspective on new government models.



A Citizen Centric Perspective on new government models.

Swiss empty apartments <https://www.swissinfo.ch>

Two phenomena explain why the **housing vacancy** level is relatively high in Switzerland.

Firstly, people move away from economically poor peripheral regions in search of jobs, and in the more extreme of such cases, homes remain empty for so long that they become ruins.



▲ A run-down old house in Chironico, canton Ticino Sophie Stieger

The use of the citizen hubs changes according to these topics. **Informal spaces** such as meetings and debates become spatialized. The outcome of the strategy is a more citizen-centric, inclusive governance and an increase in votership and people engaged in politics. The outcome of the strategy is a more **citizen-centric, inclusive governance** and an increase in votership and people engaged in politics.

Engagement ladder



The "**Citizen lab**: An e-democracy platform for stronger communities- CitizenGov2.0" is a community **engagement platform** used by local governments to connect with residents, engage them in decision-making, and build trust through dialogue. The idea is to reach more of the residents, engage with their ideas efficiently, and make decisions based on real-time data.

Through digital technology and new hubs, the government enables citizens to participate in **decision making**. As there is an intense interaction with the majority of citizens in policy making, there is less discomfort with the decisions; these can be applied and adapted to the local needs as the local interests are already taken up. Government is the **emanation** of the people as the interests of the citizens are well expressed.

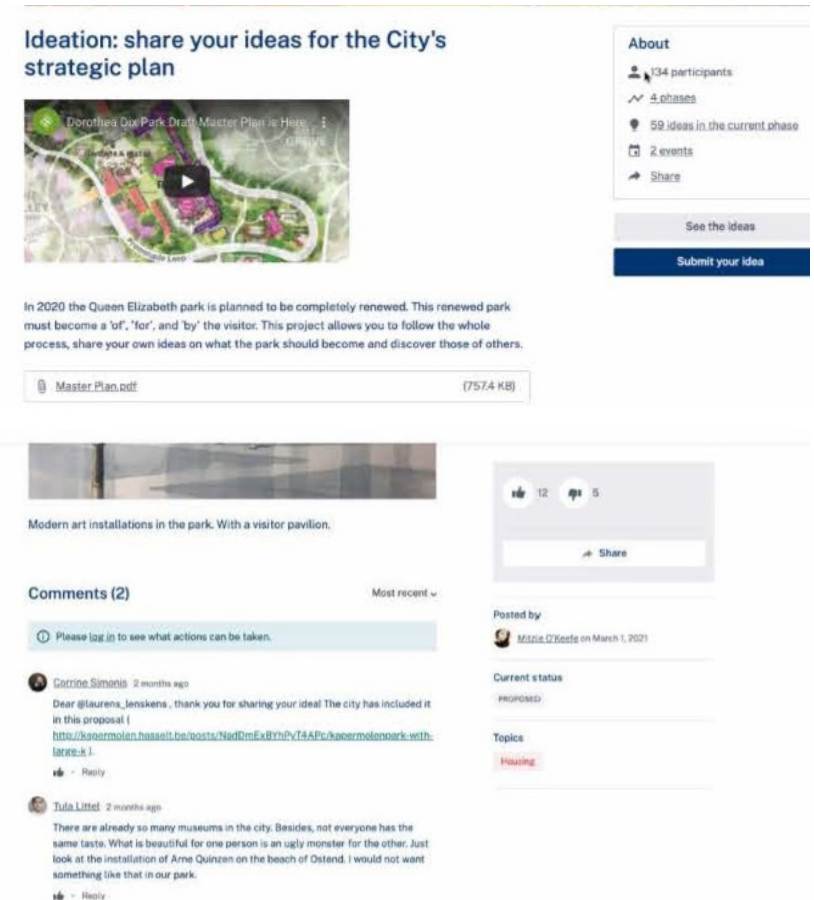
<https://www.citizenlab.com>



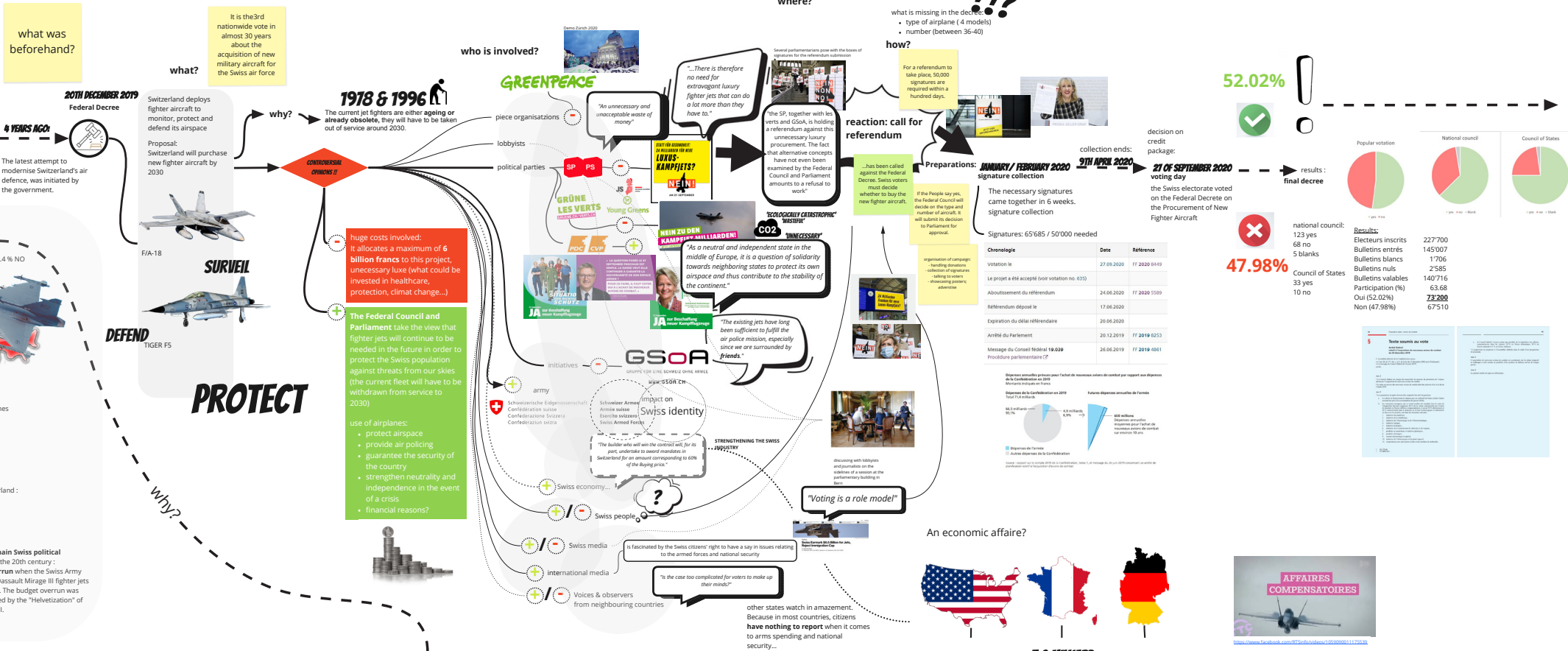
Toolbox of methods



<https://www.citizenlab.com>



Federal Decree on the Procurement of New Fighter Aircraft
(20th dec. 2019 --> referendum : 27 sep. 2020)



TO UNCOVER:
DEMOCRATIC VOTING
PROCESSES

Making transparent the voting process of the referendum and the provision of info for the massive public

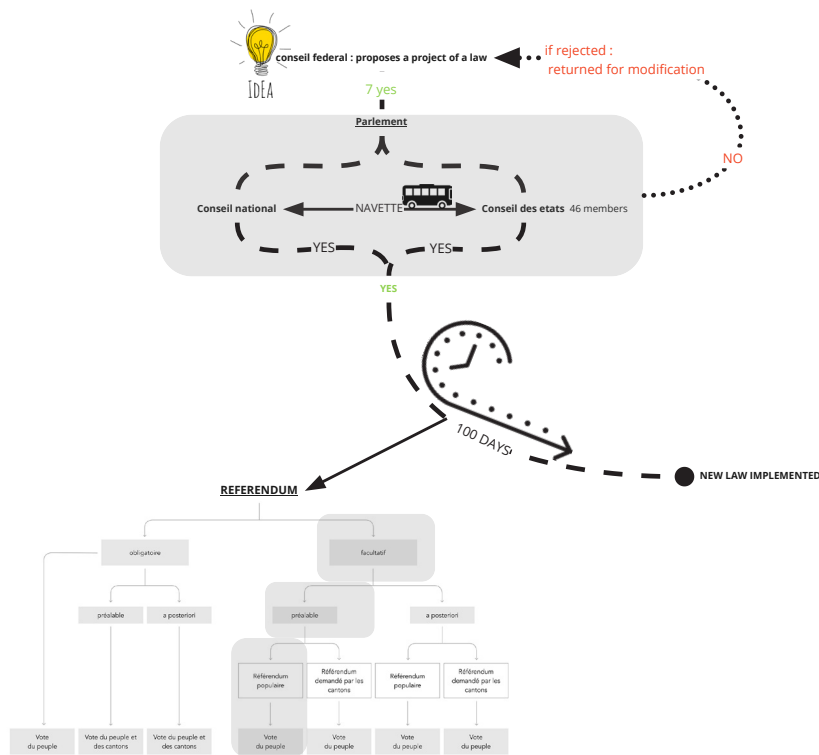
a report mysteriously, but conveniently leaked from the Ministry of Defense: ArmaSuisse's detailed assessment of the three contenders did not simply reveal that the Gripen was worse than its other two competitors (Eurofighter and Rafale), but that it did not even meet the operational minima demanded by the military.



For many, the failure of this vote for the proGripen is above all a political setback, but also a huge communication failure. Because the needs are there and the Gripen E is not a bad plane, far from it. Especially when we see the tendentious line of attack of the antiGripen, sometimes bordering on intellectual dishonesty

The number of Swiss Air Force planes has shrunk so much that today it is no longer a question of ground attack missions, intelligence or otherwise. To the popular subconscious, a conflict on the borders of a country right in the middle of a peaceful Europe seems unrealistic. However, there is a sovereign mission which no state capable of affording the service should do without. This mission is the sky police. Switzerland is certainly a small country, but one of the most overflown in the world. An episode like the hijacking of an Ethiopian Airlines flight should have raised awareness. But if the pilot's non-belligerent intentions have diluted the existence of a threat in the collective mind, it is very real. Apart from the terrorist risks, there are also take-offs on alert that end in an assistance mission. Switzerland does have agreements with its border countries, but its self-isolation runs counter to independence from its neighbors.

The referendum under review



Legislative process to referendum

January 2020

"The bidder who will win the contract will, for its part, undertake to award mandates in Switzerland for an amount corresponding to 60% of the buying price."

What? Switzerland proposes to purchase new fighter aircrafts by 2030. It is the third nationwide vote in almost 30 years about the acquisition of new military aircraft for the Swiss air force. The state proclaimed their driving force is to **protect** and defend its airspace- but a lot of people speculated on **financial interests** through credit package deals with other European countries.

January/ february 2020

"The SP, together with les verts and GSoA, is holding a referendum against this unnecessary luxury procurement. The fact that alternative concepts have not even been examined by the Federal Council and Parliament amounts to a refusal to work"

Who is involved? Peace organizations, lobbyists, political parties, initiatives, the Swiss economic market, Swiss people, Swiss media, international media and voices & observers from neighbouring countries all form part of the controversial debate and **influence** Swiss voters.

A Swiss voting process, the referendum, is made transparent. A specific case, the Federal Decree on the Procurement of New Fighter Aircraft, caused a lot of **controversial opinions**. It resulted in a vote about the acquisition of new military aircrafts for the Swiss air force. The debate lasted from the 20th december 2019 to the voting day of the referendum on the 27 september 2020.

20th december 2019

"The existing jets have long been sufficient to fulfill the air police mission, especially since we are surrounded by friends."



Contradictory opinions on the new federal decree on the Procurement of New Fighter Aircrafts 2019-2020

Why? All important background information that the people need, all the actors and procedural steps are revealed in order to be capable to form an unbiased opinion and to make clear decisions for themselves- to eliminate **confusion**.

The debate on the decree led to a call for referendum 21 september 2020



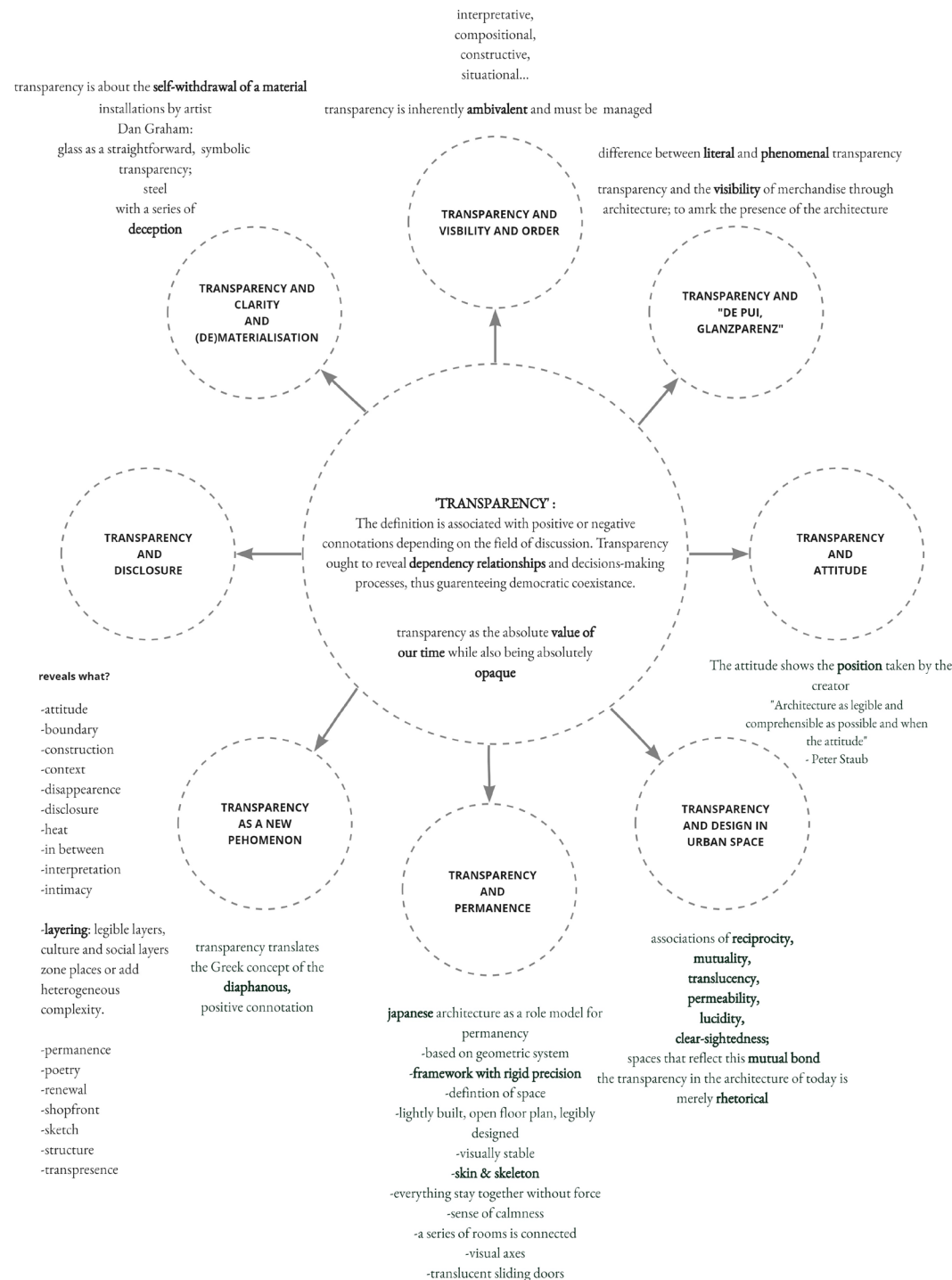
Where? Various spaces around Switzerland were being temporarily occupied: for sessions at the parliament, political party offices, open public spaces

What was the outcome? The majority of the people voted against the plea of the referendum.

final decree

YES 52% **NO** 48%

A homage to Transparency



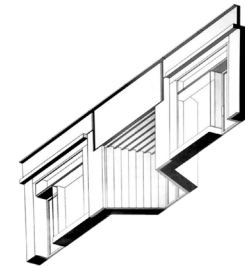
Transparency and Architecture



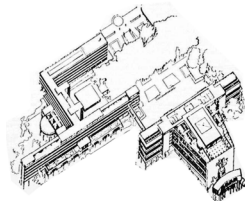
origin of transparency
diaphanous



literal transparency
Bauhaus, Dessau



"Glanzparenz"
Shopfront: de Pui

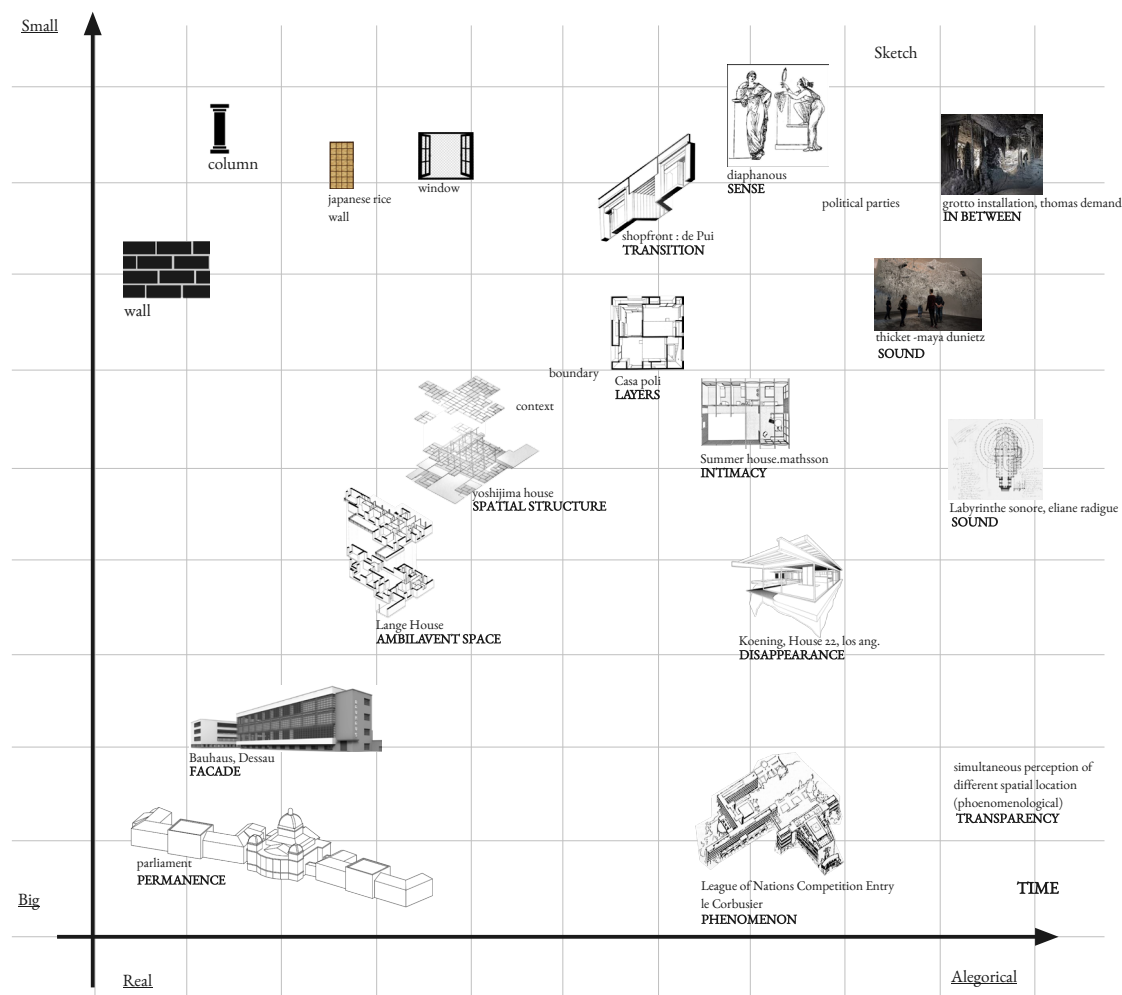


"Glanzparenz"
League of Nations Competition Entry

Transparency is an essential part of democracy and fundamental for free will formation and well-founded voting decisions. Optical transparency serves as a **metaphor**: a transparent object can be seen through. Further examples of objects, either on the spectrum of reality or allegory and in their appearance transparent or opaque, are spatially arranged.

The result is an **ensemble** of different typologies of objects that visualize transparency and enhance the accessibility to political information. The aim is to **transfer** the concept of transparency from politics **back** to the **spatial**, to test the extent to which we can use it as a dialogue between the government and the people. Transparency has something to do with the legibility of architecture and its designers.

Transparency serves as a **lens** or visual aid to understand complex and multi-layered spaces or concepts: in the spatial architecture transparency will become a **visible interpretation** of culture, construction, materiality, and processes. Emphasizing the perceptual properties of the term, transparency is less a material property than a **perceptual experience**.



"In the context of urban design, a society can only be permeable, (...) if there are spaces that reflect this **mutual bond**, and we are always already bound by the fact that we share a space that exposes us to others. We cannot see without **being seen**. This idea of an **open democracy** is dependent on reflecting these mutual bonding processes." (Alloa in Bowels, Hamilton: 2018)

"Transparency is a simultaneous perception of **different spatial locations**" (György Kepes).

Transparency and Architecture
Coordinate system

layered spaces:
thresholds,
loggias, trasion
spaces,
colonnades

Layering : legible layers,
culture and social layers
zone places or add
heterogeneous complexity.

- attitude
- construction
- disappearance
- disclosure
- heat
- in between
- interpretation
- intimacy
- permanence
- poetry
- renewal
- shopfront
- structure

What does transparency mean to you?

"Architecture fascinates me when it is legible and **comprehensible** and when the attitude of the creator is embodied in a coherent manner" (Peter Staub). Architecture should be as transparent as possible. On the other hand, we disclose more and more information each and every day, making us transparent to the point of dissolution. Thus, transparency is inherently ambivalent and must be contained, controled, managed.

Tranparency plays with deception and the boundaries between **inside** and **outside** space are blurred. Are you looking in or are you looking out? There are mirror effects and transparency effects that can deploy visibilty traps in our everyday habits. According to Emmanuel Alloa (Bowels, Hamilton: 2018), there are no sensuous qualities to transparency, because it is about something clear and with this **clarity** we look past sensual aspects to the content, the object that this transparency is intended to indicate. Transparency is about the self-withdrawal of a material. There is a difference between literal and phenomenal transparency, which is the layered space (Rowe, Slutzky: 1997).



Skin & Skeleton: Yoshijima House

Japanese architecture had a vehement influence on new architecture. The rigid, light structure frameworks enable openness and are a role model for **permanency**.

The **Federal Assembly**, as Switzerland's federal legislature, meets in Bern in the Federal Palace. The capital is known as the political heartland of Switzerland, not least since **the biggest political parties**, with their often contradictory views, are present in the city centre in **close proximity**, mostly located in the old town. Besides the party offices, (temporary) political participation can also be observed in the outside spaces. Political engagement, such as demonstrations and the collection of signatures, is organized through additional initiatives and movements. One meets up on the public space in front of the train station and the "Bundesplatz Bern" in front of the Parliament Building.

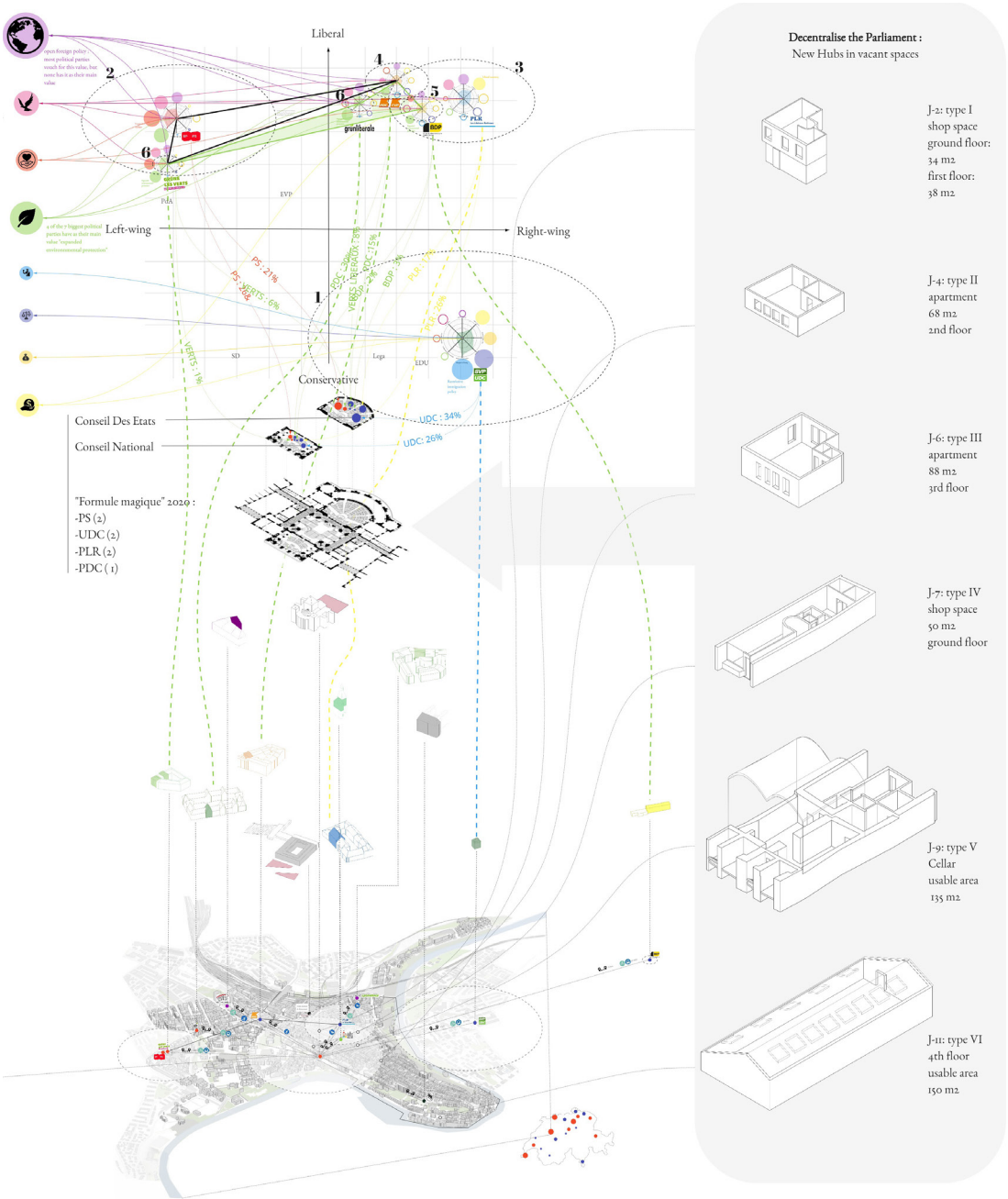
Taking a look at the spatial configuration of the council of states and the national council of the Parliament, it is evident that the **seats** of the left and right parties are also distributed according to their **political orientation**.

The positions of the Swiss political parties can be categorised and **laid out** based on their referendum. These generated datasets , such as the voting recommendations, can then be **made public** to the people.

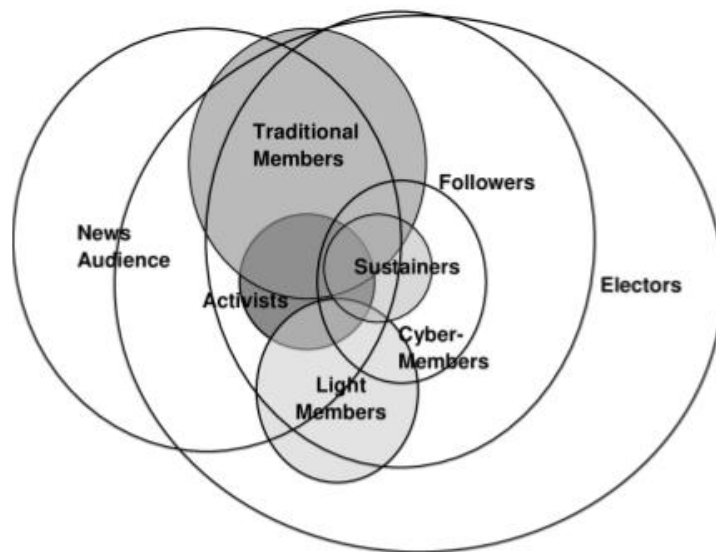


Political network in Bern

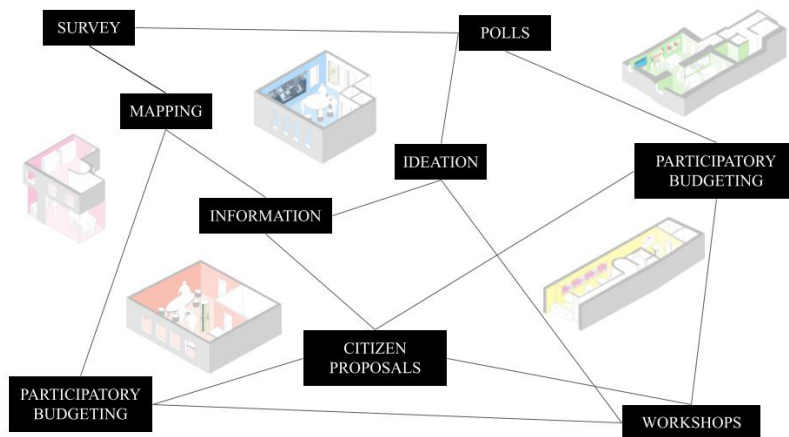
Focus on Bern: Spaces of political engagement



A guide on how to politically engage



Ways of participation



Degree of political involvement



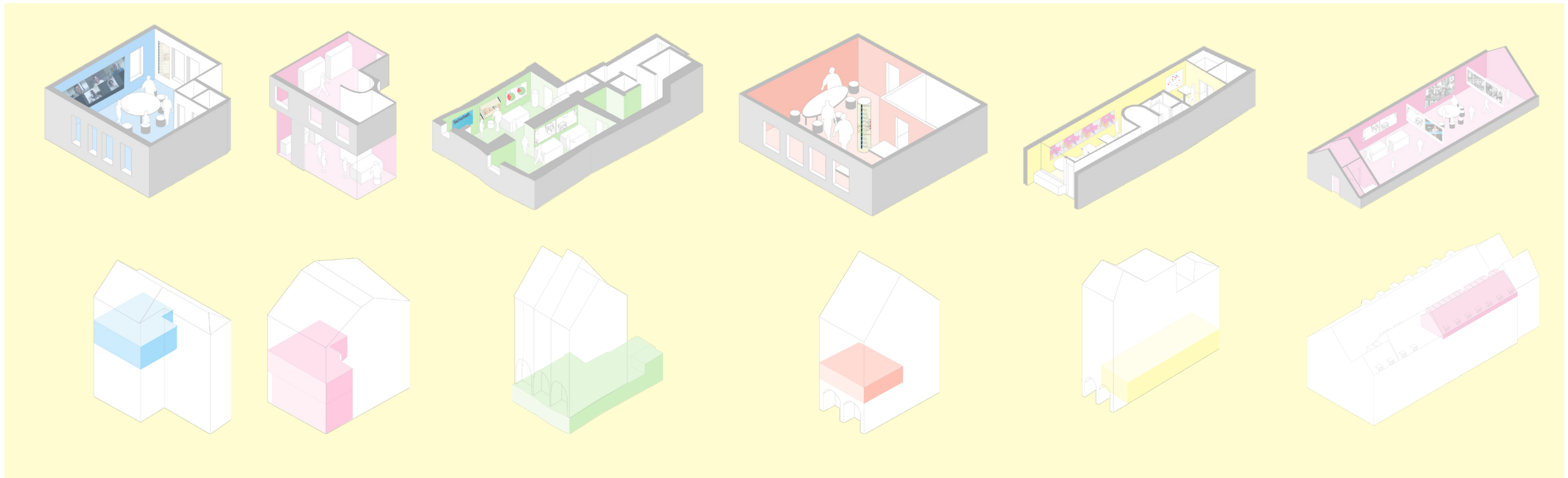
Changing reactivated hubs in Bern

Governments around the world are increasingly experimenting with initiatives in transparency or **‘open government’**. These involve a variety of **measures** including the announcement of more user-friendly government websites, greater access to government data, the extension of freedom of information legislation and broader attempts to **involve** the public in government decision making.

To this day, the Swiss people acknowledge the presence of a **physical parliament** and the political parties in Bern. "It is the nature of human beings to be in places, touch each other, and share with one another," (Castells: 2009). The "Bundesplatz" in front of the Parliament building serves the public to gather and politically engage, if the occasion allows it, with politicians. "This combination of urban space and public space is what I call the **space of autonomy**," (Castells: 2009).



Humboldt Forum Berlin
Inside-Outside



Waaghausgasse 3
apartment
2nd floor
68 m2



Waaghaus-Passage 8
apartment
3rd floor
88 m2



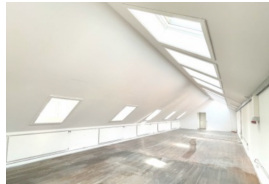
Marktgasse 55
vaulted cellar
underground
135 m2



Waisenhausplatz 22
office space
4th floor
50 m2



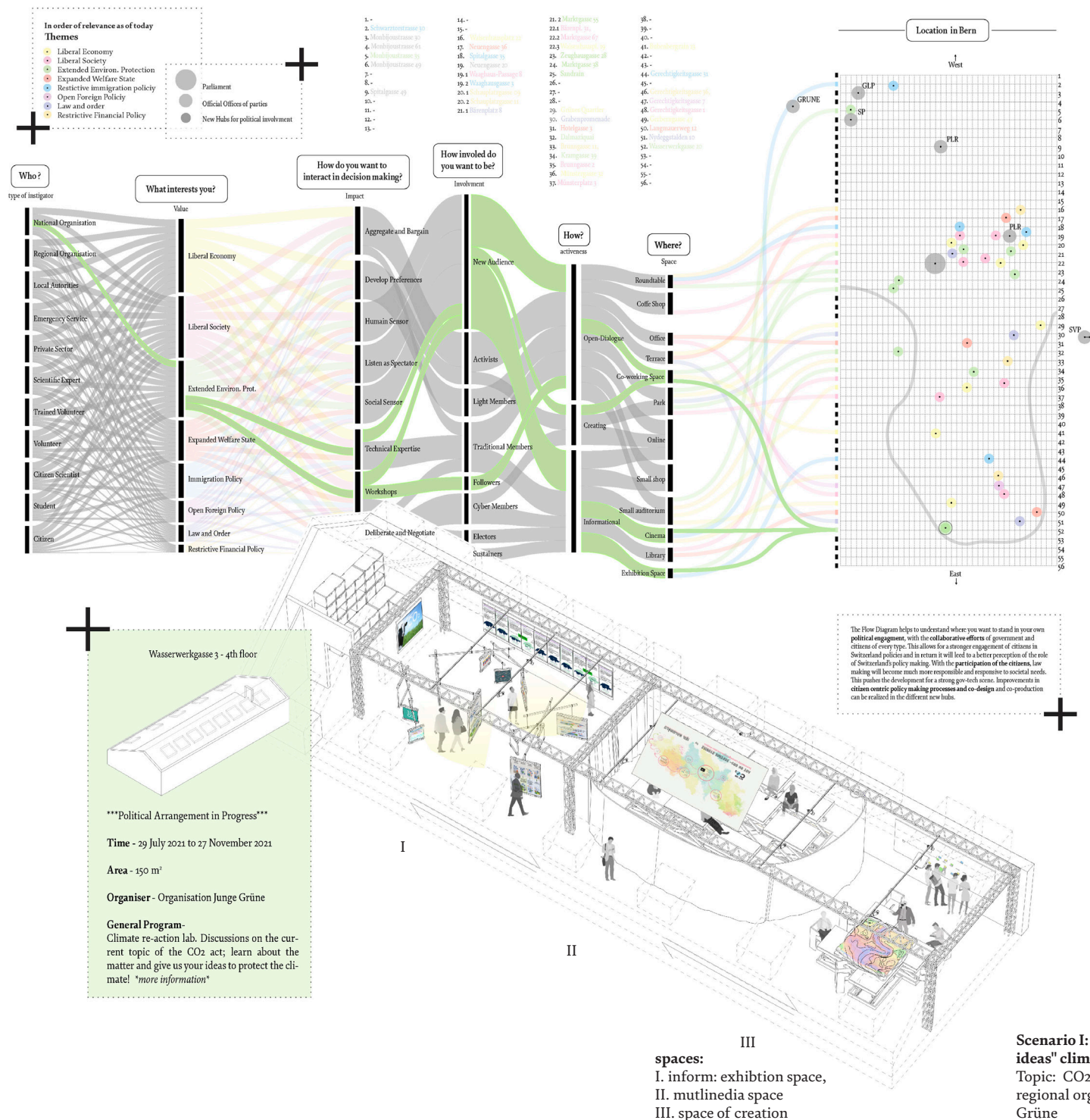
Schauplatzgasse 9
shop space
ground floor
50 m2



Wasserwerksgasse 20 Bern
industrial space
4th floor
150 m2

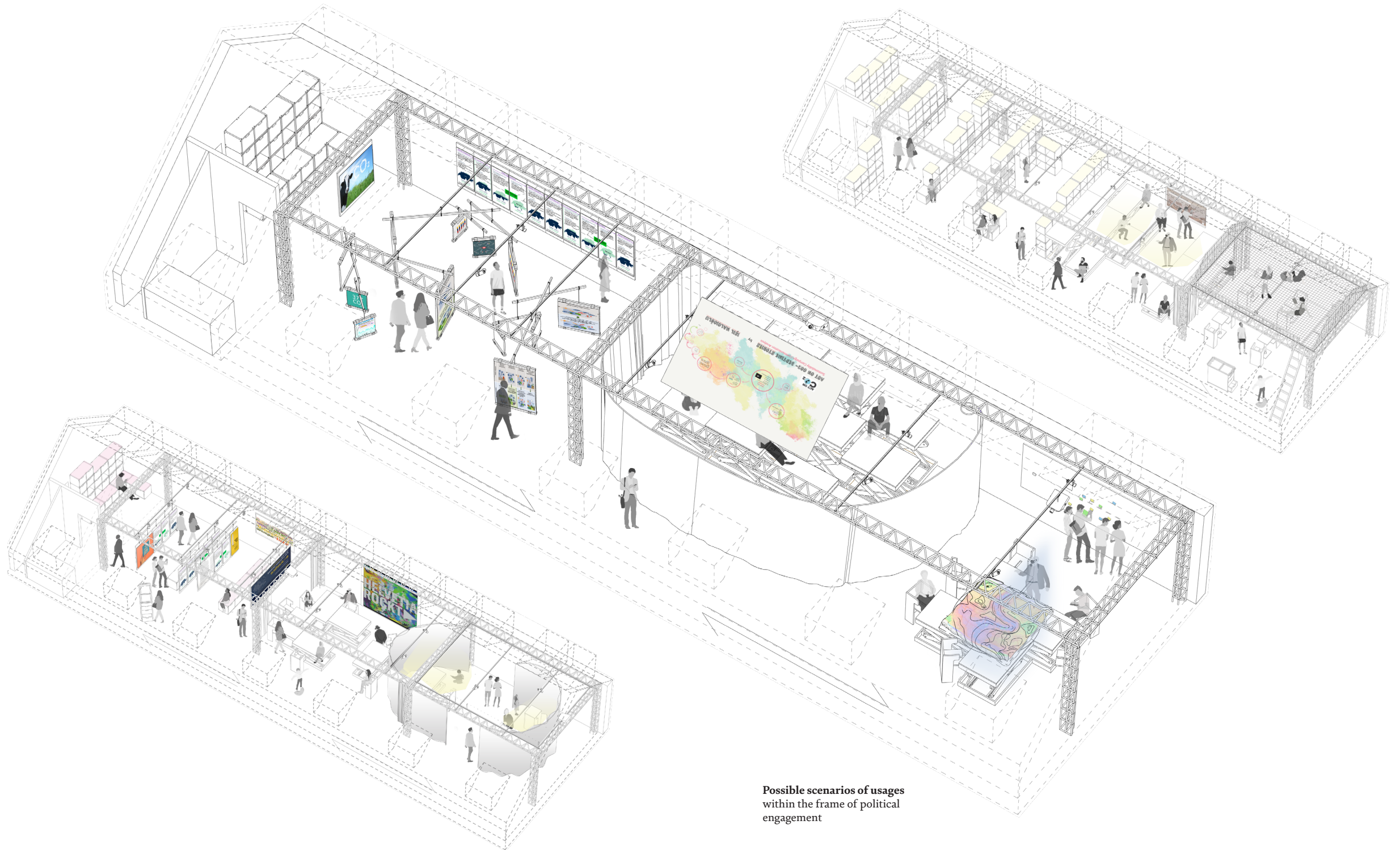
Sample of Places

Citizen hubs: many instances



For the virtual aspect, we introduce a **virtual platform** as a device to locate the new physical spaces or hubs in the city with their different political involvement and events. The e-platform asks the **necessary questions** and shows the way of how you can find the right hubs you are looking for as a user and how the app could be structured. Every day, this app will update the current political events going on in the hubs and the ability to book work slots.

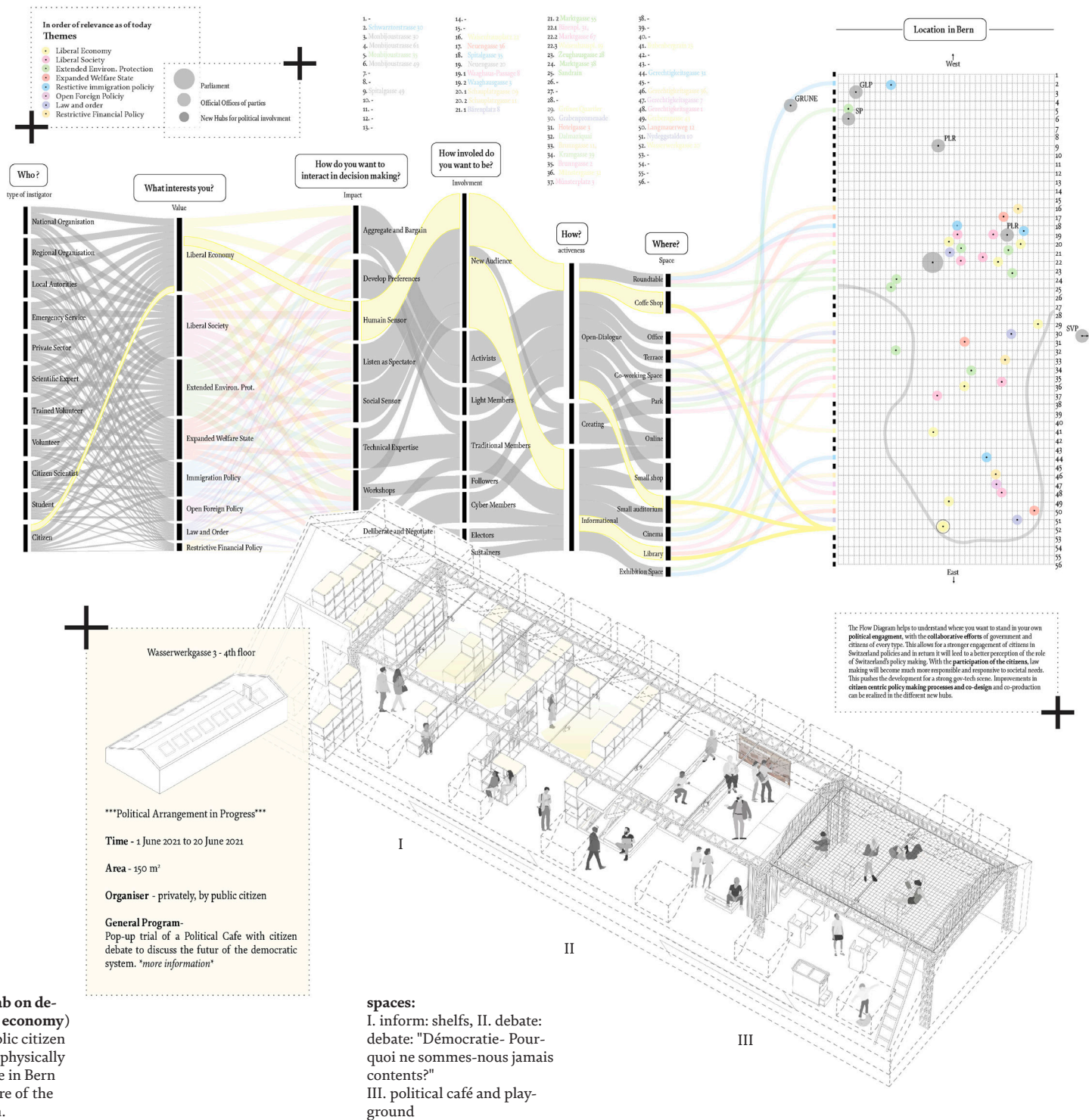
The platform also helps to understand where you want to **stand** in your own political engagement, based on **who** you are, and **how** involved you want to be. This allows for a stronger engagement of citizens in Swiss politics and in return it will lead to a better perception of the role of Switzerland's **policy making**. Citizens can therefore be well informed about political developments. Digital media allow for balanced information and for a vibrant online public sphere, with high participation. There are many different topics tackled in politics, and of course their importance changes in time. They are placed in relevance to today's societal topics. Citizens can easily understand where their interests lay and can also, and most importantly, easily adjust it depending on their situation in life.

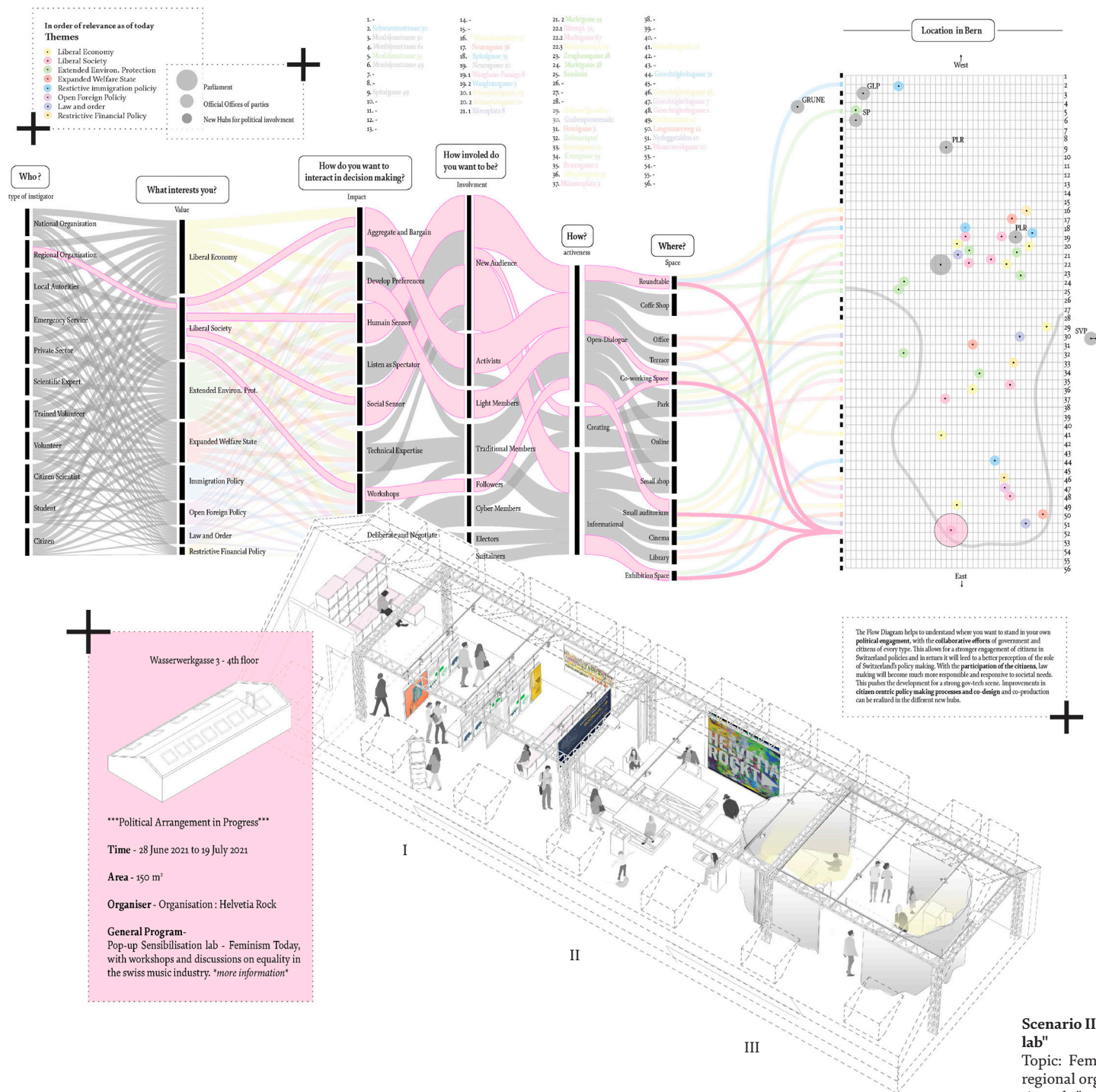


Possible scenarios of usages
within the frame of political
engagement

Society is diverse, but you may also have diverse thoughts and ideas which are **not fixed in time**. Individuals follow their own desires, but they have a strong sense of solidarity, social responsibility and usefulness. The sharing culture and environmental **awareness** is high. We want to make politics accessible to everyone. In many forms, in order to end the fear of how we see politics today and let people get involved at their own paces, in their own way, because everything is political.

You can then decide how involved you are in your political engagement, because not only traditional members should be able to decide for the people. This then helps to **categorize** your intentions in three ways: **more involved** with open dialogue, **role playing** to better understand the staks, or **informational** as a simple viewer. As a result you then get a **proposal** of located hubs in Bern, each with different level of involvment and different topics to tackle. you may prefer to inform yourself first, by going to an exhibition on a specific topic, get a coffee and debat with people sharing the same interests, or participate to a project using participatory mapping methods in a coworking area.





One instance imagines a **"Creation of ideas"** climate re-action lab. The space **encourages** citizens to discuss on the currently very relevant topic, the CO2 Act and related themes in the framework of expanded environmental protection. The space is reserved until the 13th of June by the organisers of this creation hub, a national organisation, the "Junge Grüne", the young party participants in Bern to offer a space to citizens to ;and was open to the public as a hub to raise awareness on environmental protection for three months. On the 13 June 2021, the Swiss electorate will vote on the Federal Act on the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (CO2 Act). The hub provides space to form new ideas on climate protection and **produce** new citizen projects.

Citizen Participation Labs Bern

A complete citizen participation program for Bern

Component Kit in Action!

A Design Competition for Spatial Components in Berns' new Citizen Labs

In short- A Design Competition

Vacant apartment, shop and industrial spaces in the city center of Bern were detected to offer places of political interest for the citizens of Bern to inform, create ideas and produce new projects in the city centre. As part of an open architectural competition, Bern calls for the design of a set of spatial arrangements as part of a component kit for these spaces. One is able to choose from a virtual warehouse of components for both immediate knowledge of the current state of the physical spaces, and to allow for any level of booking, oversight and management. With this design competition, we hope to inspire people interested in design to explore ways of how to create and inhabit arrangement and spaces of political engagement.

Component Kit

Modularity is generated via the use of a standard module size for objects that form spatial components of 0.5x [X]. This is then linked to an app controlled booking and feedback service, creating a new offer of digital user interface and control for dynamic re-scheduling of uses over a number of potential time scales from daily to annual shifts. Technology is integrated for management and planning. This ease of control and feedback is essential for allowing the user to get the right mix of interchangeable programs in order to optimise the use of any space to their demands.

The Entry Pack

Additionally to this design competition, there is an entry pack available through the e-platform, Citizen Participation Labs Bern' and the website www.citizenparticipationlabsbern.ch.

This resource pack will provide you with:

- A short introduction to the rental platform as part of the citizen participation program for Bern
- Explanation about available vacant spaces as hubs in Bern through architecture plans, elevations, scales, models etc.
- Reference case studies of spatial arrangements
- Suggestions to further help explore architecture linked to politics and to use it as a tool to politically engage and encourage people to politically participate

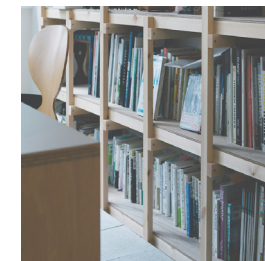
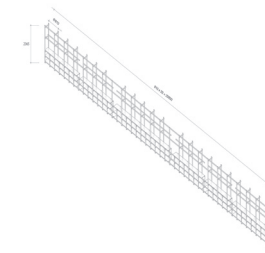
Submission Requirements

- A design statement
- A plan drawing 1:20
- Three images of a model scale 1:20
- Two sketches or images of the design development
- Two images showing the intended atmosphere and materiality of your object, the spatial possibilities of rearranging through modularity and ideas of how the object sets can act as a catalisator to create informal spaces of political engagement

Sample of vacant spaces of physical hubs Bern



The component kit in action- Modularity in detail



Tamotsuito office-mui-lab



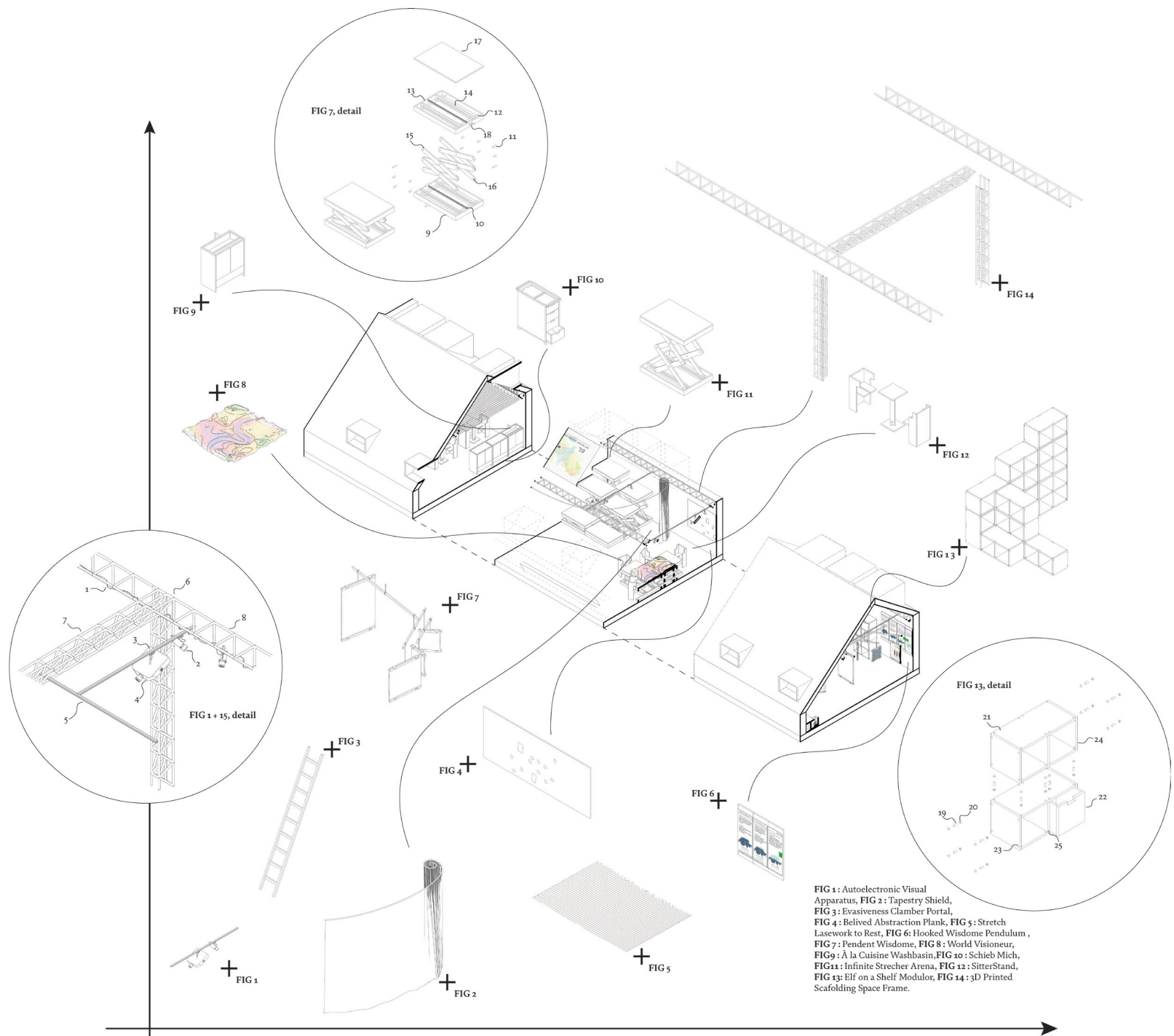
Inside- Outside

As part of an open **architectural competition**, Bern calls for the design of a set of spatial arrangements as part of a component kit for these spaces through **various designers**.

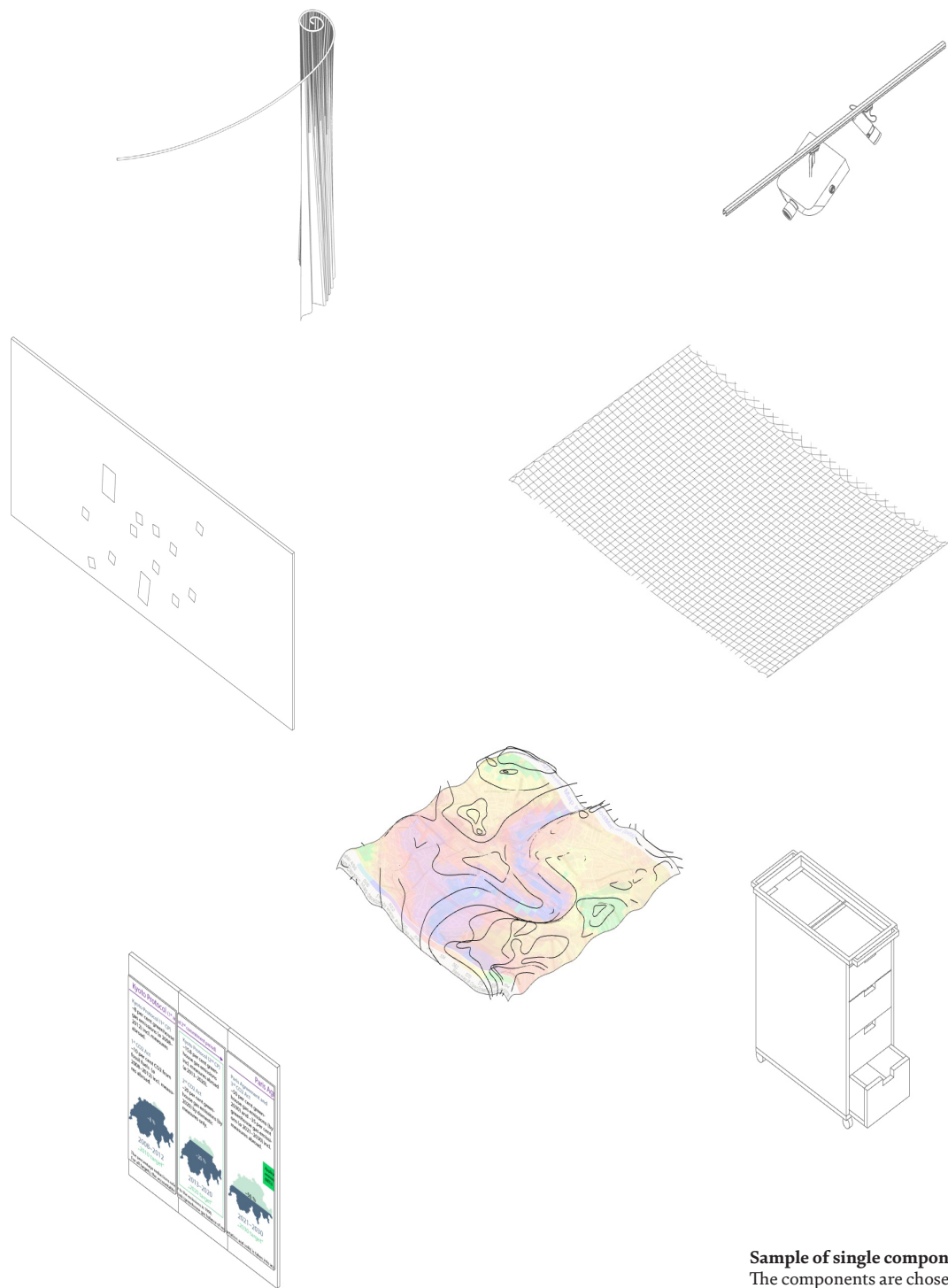
One is able to choose from a **virtual warehouse of components** for both immediate knowledge of the current state of the physical spaces, and to allow for any level of booking, oversight and management. With this design competition, people interested in design can get inspired to explore ways of how to create and inhabit arrangement and spaces of political engagement. One is able to choose from a **virtual warehouse of components** for both **immediate knowledge** of the current state of the physical spaces, and to allow for any level of booking, oversight and management. Displayed are the spatial possibilities of **rearranging** through modularity and ideas of how the object sets can act as a catalisator to create informal spaces of political engagement. Modularity is generated via the use of a **standard module size** for objects that form interior arrangements of 0.5x [X].

This is then linked to an **app** controlled booking and feedback service, creating a new offer of digital user interface and control for dynamic re-scheduling of uses over a number of potential timescales from daily to annual shifts. Technology is integrated for management and planning. This ease of **control and feedback** is essential for allowing the user to get the right mix of interchangeable programs in order to optimise the **use of any space** to their demands. A digital user interface plays this critical role in this; this is an app based system for the scheduling of spatial arrangements and ordering of components. This **facilitates** an immediate uptake for users given the ubiquitous use of smart phone and tablet based devices that are now the norm.

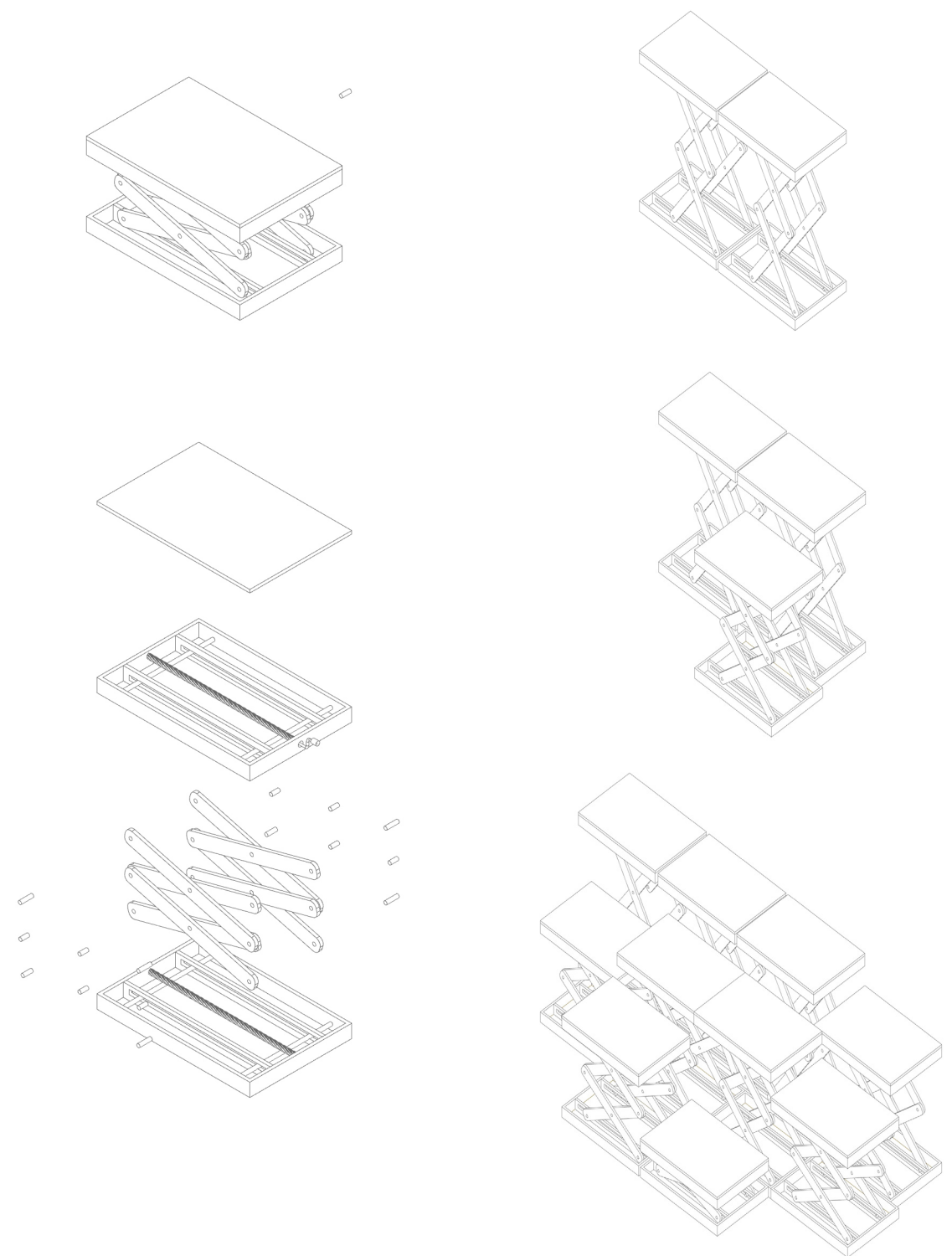
There are multiple benefits from this easy configuring of a final development for any functional use mix that is desired: It helps to maximise the useful **economic life of a space**. Also, the digital control and virtual warehouse approach facilitates a closed-loop system with on demand manufacture, lightweight and compact delivery, easy assembly, easy disassembly, storage and recycling. Another gain is the **social value** from serving **diverse** groups of people and increasing a sense of community and communication. Finally, this use of reconfiguring space can bring **vibrancy** to the immediate surroundings, making a positive impact on the **democracy**.



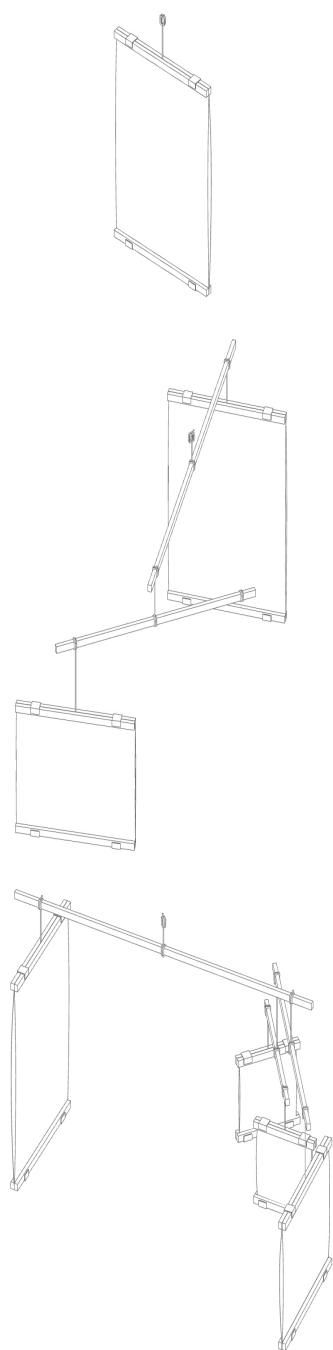
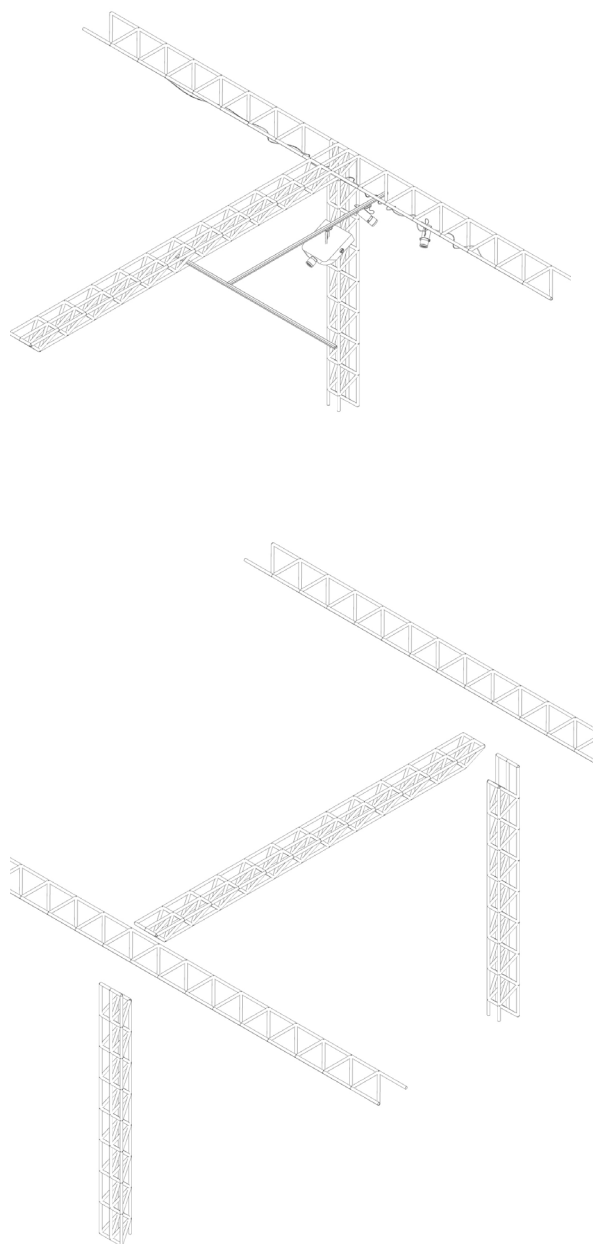
A sample of components from the kit
The components are chosen by the occupier of the space



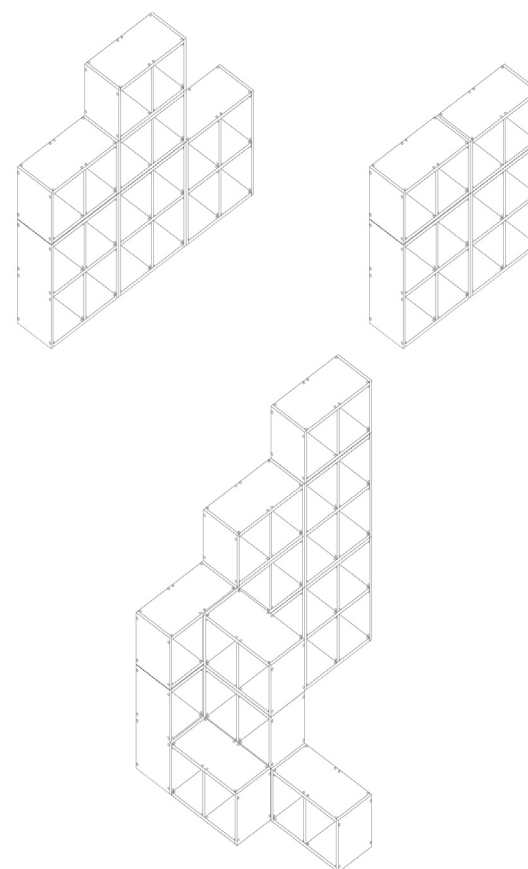
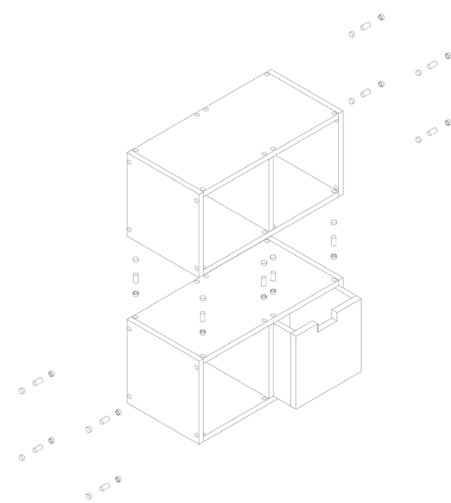
Sample of single components
The components are chosen by
the occupier of the space



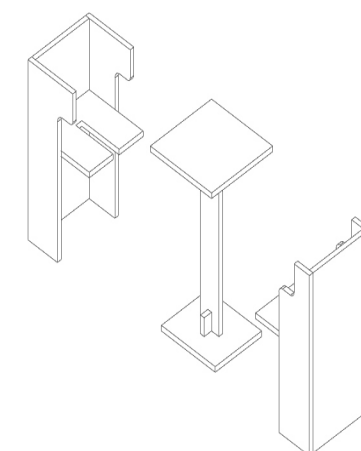
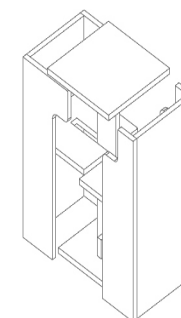
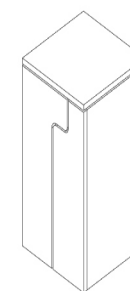
Modularity
Infinite Stretcher



Modularity
I. Scaffolding Space Frame
II. Pendant Wisdome Pen-
dulum



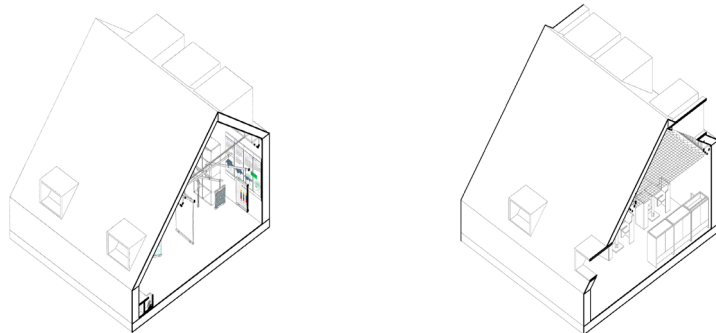
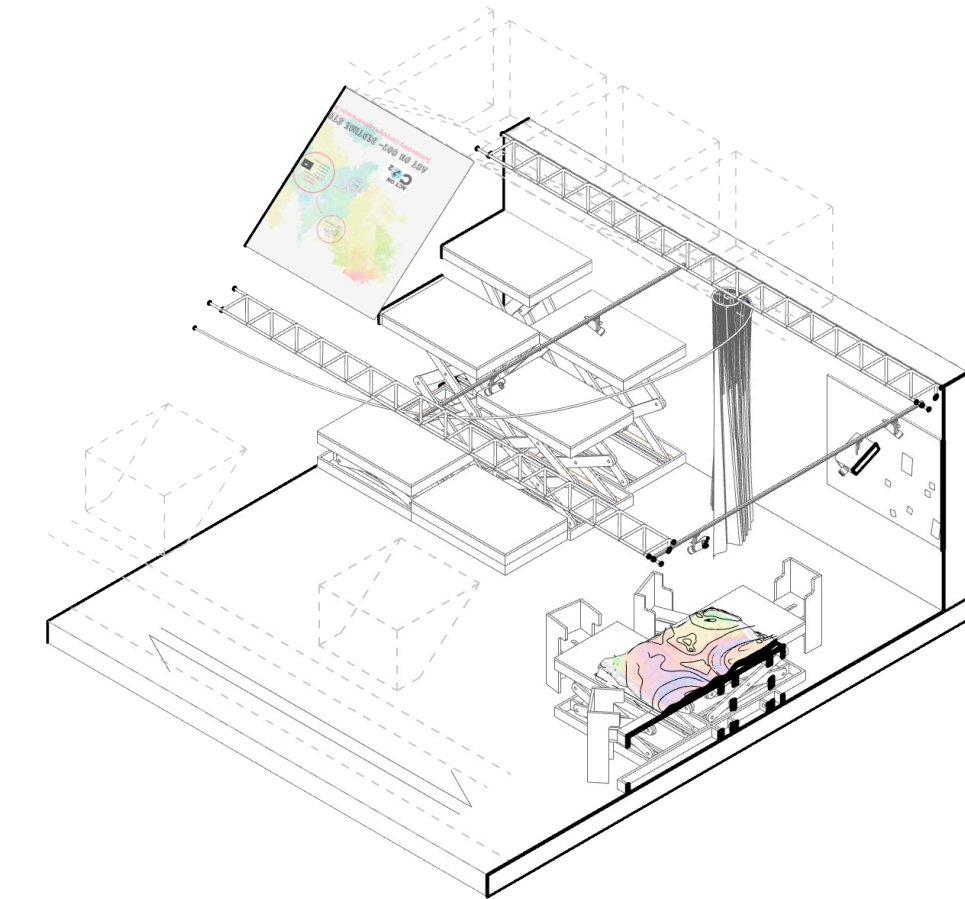
Modularity
III. Modulor
IV. Sitter Stand







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Possible scenarios of usage
The components were chosen
by the occupier of the space

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