



SHRINKING REGIONS GROWING DEMOCRACY

SHRINKING REGIONS

GROWING DEMOCRACY

UNIVERSITY DESIGN STUDIO

Design & Politics: the next phase #9.

Exploring Resilience and Democracy: Urban Regions Under Stress

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Frontpage photo: abandoned monument in the Prignitz area by Bert Oostdijk (2012).

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SHRINKAGE

During the 10-day workshop we focused on the future of the Prignitz area. This area, like many others in the east of Germany, deals with heavy shrinkage and economic decline. The goal of this workshop was develop a way to democratically decide on a future scenario for the area.

The method we used was 'the matrix', following a research method of Maxwan/Crimson for a study they did on Hoogvliet. The matrix consists of a number of parameters, which can either be turned on (1) or off (0). With this mathematical tool we tried all possible extreme future scenarios of the area. If you take (x) parameters, you end up with $2^{(x)}$ scenarios. This tool has already proven success in dialogues between inhabitants, planners and politicians to show the possibilities of the area and consequences of certain decisions. We chose to use this tool to be able to work out a democratic future scenario for the Prignitz region.

For the success of the matrix, it is crucial to research the area and deliberately choose the most important drivers of the location to become the parameters of the matrix. The first part of the process was therefore focused on finding these parameters.

When the parameters were decided on, the future scenarios needed to be worked out in a way that we could clearly communicate the feasibility of the outcome with each other. The question that remained after having visualized all the possible outcomes was however: who decides about which scenario to choose?

For this choice we used two methods. The first one, a choice based on representative democratic, using the electoral geography of the area. The second one, a direct democratic choice, based on the individual ideologies of the inhabitants.

What each of these steps means for the Prignitz area, will be further described in this report.



The first step we took in this project was concentrate on the current situation on the site. What is going on right now? It is shrinking, but why? Who stays, and why?

During a day of preparation for the site visit each group member focused on a certain theme; 'a lens through which we would study the area'. While one focused on monumentality, another focused on housing, or agriculture, demolition, etc.

PRIGNITZ

Prignitz is a Landkreis, or greater municipal area, northeast in the province of Brandenburg. It is located halfway between Berlin and Hamburg, both approximately 140 kilometers away. Because the area is quite large, we only focused on Wittenberge and the cities and villages around it.

We found out that in Wittenberge, a former industrial city, almost one third of the houses is empty. Most of the people left because after the reunification of Germany, when the artificial Soviet industry came to an end and factories throughout the region closed. An example is the sewing machine factory with thousands employees that had to close shortly after the reunification in 1990. The former factory workers had to leave to find jobs elsewhere, while the shop owners and smaller businesses tried to stay and keep in practice. Currently the population is still declining but while talking to residents of the area, we learned that many inhabitants return after for example studying or working in a big city like Hamburg and Berlin. Some of the reasons to come back is the quietness of the surroundings and -as one man boldly stated- not to work together with immigrants.

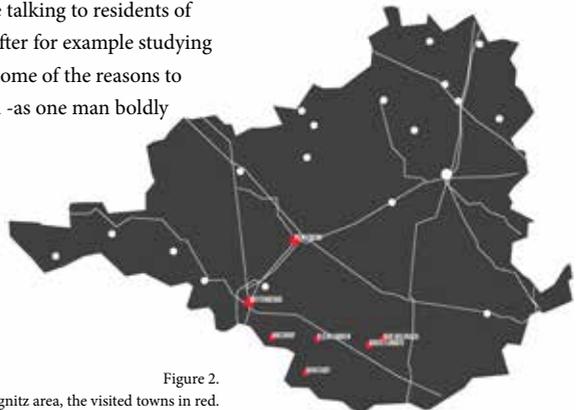


Figure 2.
Prignitz area, the visited towns in red.



Figure 3-10. Pictures taken during the site visit.

With one third of the buildings empty, demography is a key factor to take into account. Contradictory to reality, the local planners still plan on (and hope for) growth, slowing down demolition through a difficult bureaucratic process and leaving thousands of houses in the area empty. Physically, the landscape is either agricultural or rough 'fluslandschaft' giving room to the high tides of the Elbe. Economically the Prignitz region is a weak region and relies heavily on subsidy streams of the western part of the country. For example a high number of people rely on income support. Politically there most remarkable difference compared to the rest of Germany, is the large amount of people voting for 'Die Linke', the strong left and anti-capitalist party. In addition to this, the newspapers of this week also reports on an increasing extreme-right thinking in the East of Germany. The extreme-left and extreme-right thinking can be interpreted as a reaction on the declining economic situation of the area or a nostalgia to the 'better days' in the past: ostalgia.

PARAMETERS

The previously mentioned issues, described in the site analysis, were used as the parameters of the matrix. In this case we used the two extremes to illustrate the differences as big as possible. For example when taking in account the nature, the choice will be either production or wilderness. The glossary with which we described the different parameters was translated into infographics to communicate what their effect on the region will be. For example the first parameter, demographics, is translated into either shrinkage or growth. Shrinkage means that the vacancy rises, real estate and land prices drop, roads decay and services move to bigger cities. Growth would mean that the villages can service themselves again, restoration and revitalization of the building stock can be accomplished and new estate and infrastructure can be built.

On the next pages, the infographics and the effects of the driver in section are shown.

Figure 12.
Close-up of the visual essay, showing physical spatial characteristics as well as research on the local issues of the area.

Fast jeder sechste Ostdeutsche denkt rechtsextrem

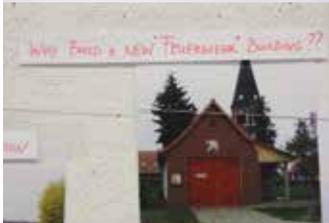
Immer mehr Deutsche haben laut einer Studie ein geschlossenes rechtsextremes Weltbild. Besonders stark gestiegen ist die Ausländerfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland.

(ZEIT ONLINE)

© Uwe Merten/epic



Bild: Eine Demonstration in Dresden im Frühjahr dieses Jahres



LANDSCAPE

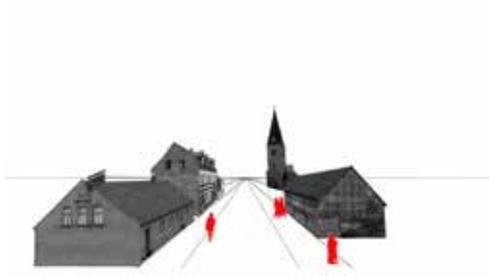


PROTECTION



FLUSSLANDSCHAFT WITH SHEEP

DEMOGRAPHY



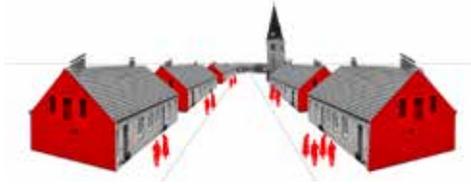
SHRINKAGE

NATURE



WILDERNESS

ECONOMY

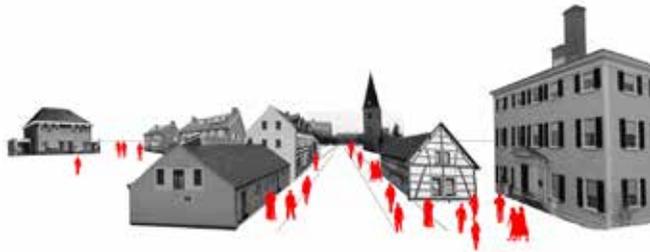


COLLECTIVISM

POLITICS



AUTARKY



GROWTH



PRODUCTION

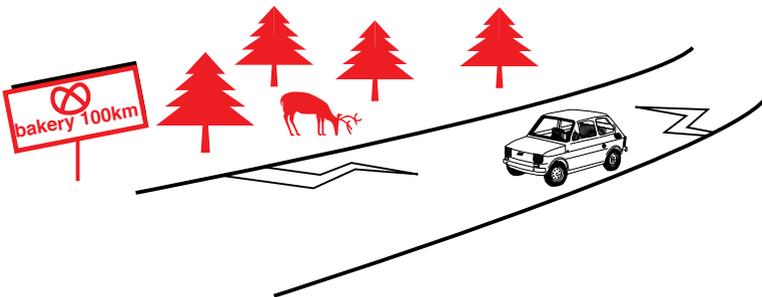
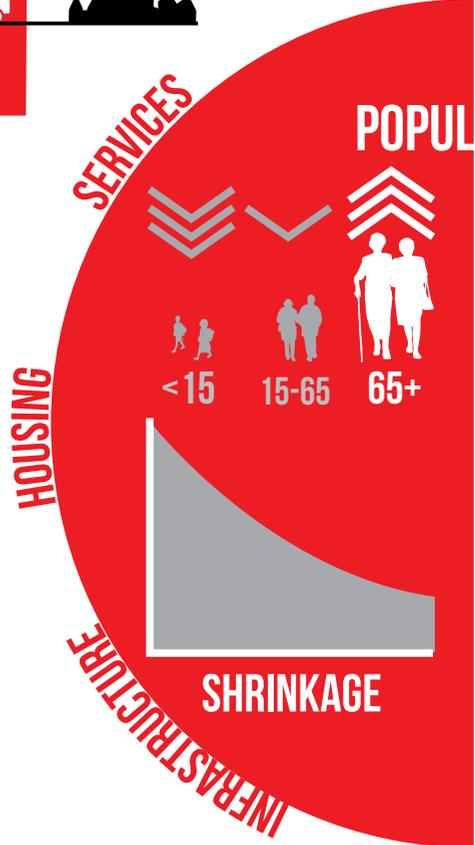
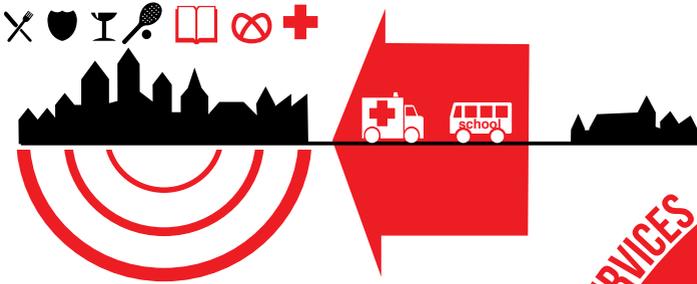


NEOLIBERALISM

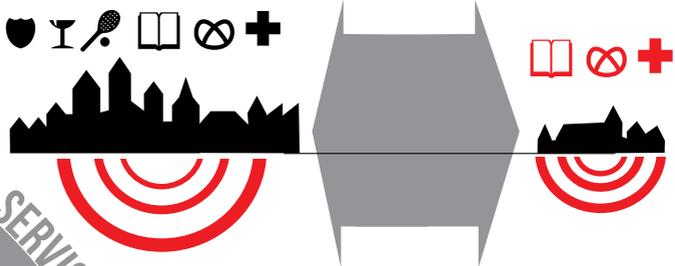


DEPENDENCE

INFOGRAPHIC ECONOMY: SHRINKAGE VS. GROWTH



ATION

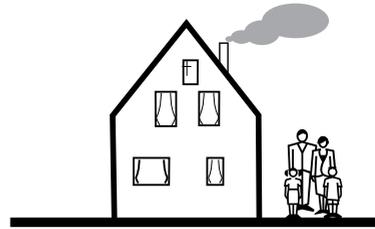


SERVICES

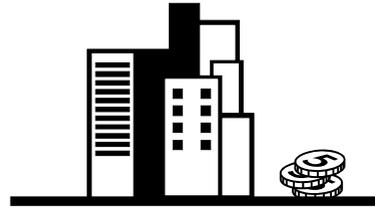


<15 15-65 65+

HOUSING



REVITALIZATION

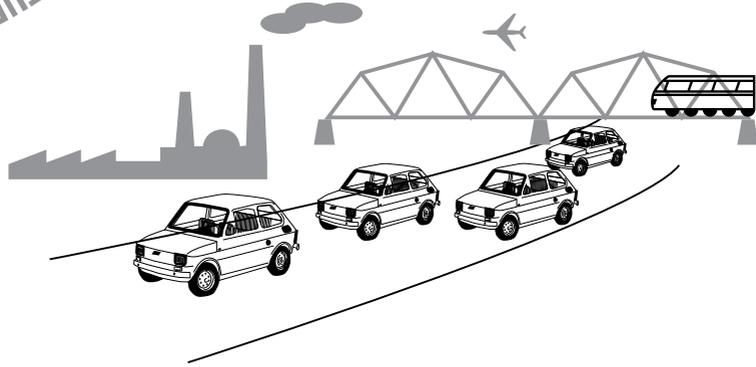


NEW REAL ESTATE

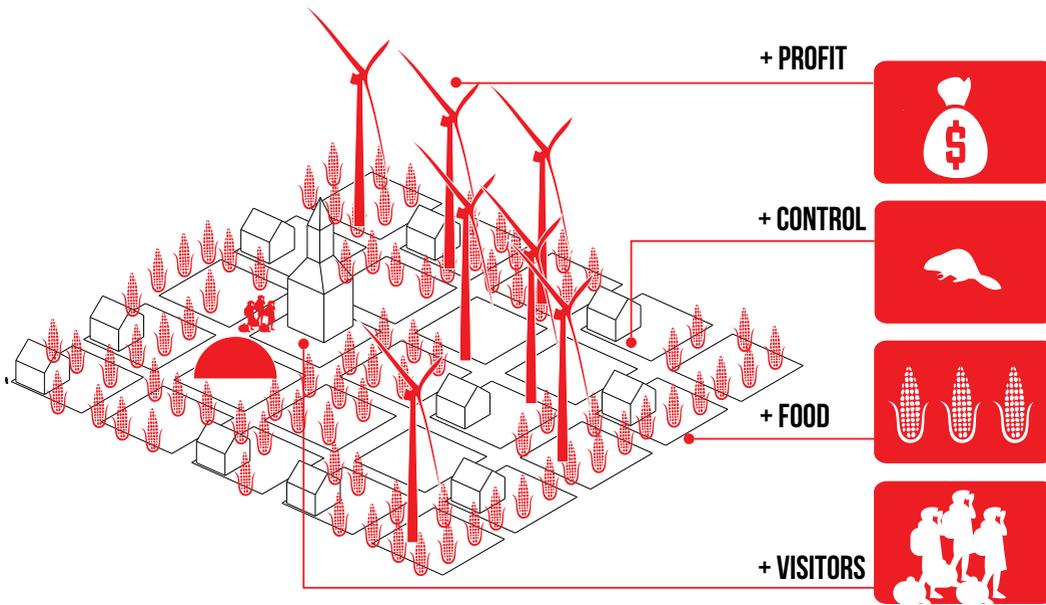
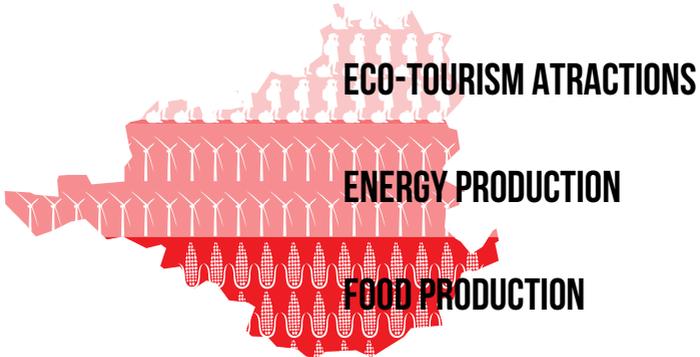


GROWTH

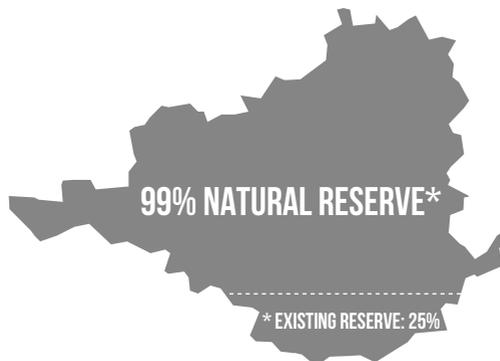
INFRASTRUCTURE



PRIGNITZ AS A PRODUCTIVE CORE



PRIGNITZ AS A NATURAL PARADISE



+ HEALTH



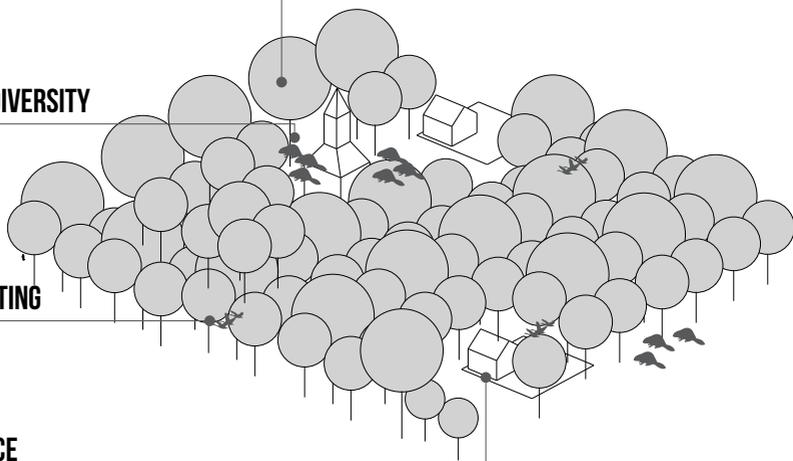
+ BIODIVERSITY



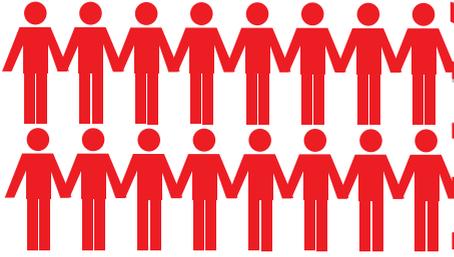
+ HUNTING



+ PEACE

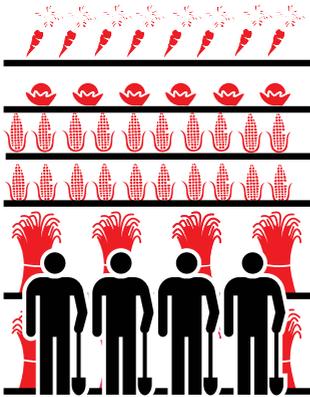


INFOGRAPHIC ECONOMY: COLLECTIVISM VS. NEOLIBERALISM



COLLECTIVE > INDIVIDUAL

- SELF-RELIANCE
- OSTALGIA
- LOCAL ECONOMY
- STRONG SOCIAL IDENTITY



DANGER!
LOCALISM

COMMUNAL CONTROL



- Collective dining
Collective living
- Focus on public transport
Development of centers

CAPITALISM

DE-CENTRALIZED OWNERSHIP

FREEDOM



INDIVIDUAL > COLLECTIVE



CO-OPERATION

MULTICULTURAL TOLERANCE

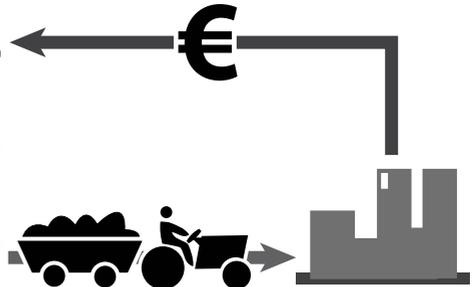
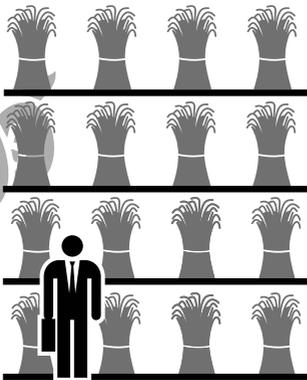
ECONOMIES OF SCALE

WEAK SENSE OF BELONGING



GLOBALIZATION

FREE-MARKET



Individual transport cars
Suburbanization / Sprawl

Private houses and yards

**SELF-SUFFICIENCY;
FREEDOM FROM CONTROL OR INFLUENCE OF ANOTHER OR OTHERS**



self-reliant
cyclical flows
nature
individual choice
regional culture
accountability
social cohesion
hard work
simple life



exciting life
infrastructure
anonymity
public amenities
global products
linear flows
strict rules
little nature
taxation
dependent

**THE QUALITY OR STATE OF BEING INFLUENCED
OR DETERMINED BY OR SUBJECT TO ANOTHER**

LEGAL SYSTEM

INVESTMENT

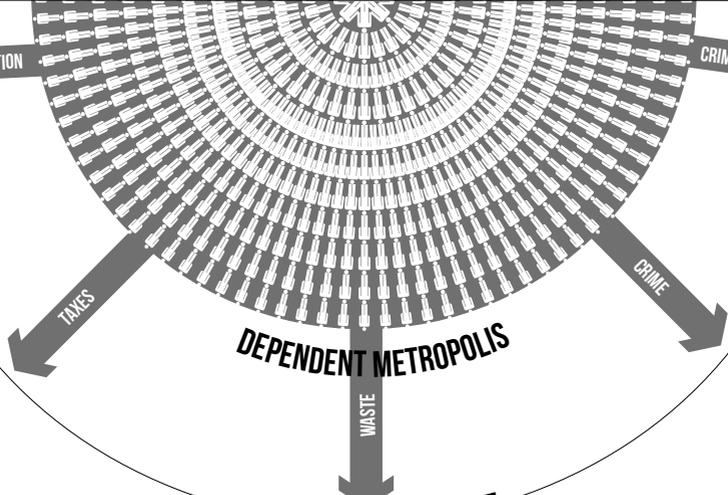
GRID ENERGY

GRID ENERGY

IMPORTED FOOD



LESS ← POLLUTION → **CRIME** → **MORE**



DEPENDENT METROPOLIS

DEGREE OF DEPENDENCE

A SCENARIO MACHINE

Like explained in the introduction, the parameters are now put together in a matrix in which the outcome can either be 0 or 1. On or off. Shrinkage or growth; wilderness or production; collectivism or neo-liberalism and autarky or dependence.

When each variable is combined with each other variable, we have a matrix with sixteen possible future scenarios. An overview of the matrix is shown on the right where it will be clear how the matrix is composed. This method is projected over the region of Prignitz, and all possible outcomes were illustrated by sketches. This is visualized on the next page.

Some outcomes are very unlikely and funny, for example if the combination growth, wilderness, neo-liberalism and autarky would be made. An apparently unfeasible combination produces a very lively image where wilderness takes over a town where people are living in tree-huts and still try to make money out of everything.

Figure 13.
General appearance of the matrix with the
chosen drivers.

CHOOSING A SCENARIO

The next step was to make a democratic choice with all these different scenario's possible. In order to make this choice we used two methods: the representative democracy where the choice is based on the voting behavior of the people, and the direct democracy where the choice is based on individual wishes of the inhabitants.



Collective, Autarky

Neoliberalism, Autarky

Shrinkage, Wilderness

DO, NO, EO, SO

Drawn: Shrinkage, Wilderness, Collective, Autarky

#01

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

Growth, Wilderness

D1, NO, EO, SO

Drawn: Growth, Wilderness, Collective, Autarky

#05

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

Shrinkage, Productive

DO, N1, EO, SO

Drawn: Shrinkage, Productive, Collective, Autarky

#08

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

Growth, Productive

D1, N1, EO, SO

Drawn: Growth, Productive, Collective, Autarky

#13

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

DO, NO, E1, SO

Drawn: Shrinkage, Wilderness, Neo Liberalism, Autarky

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

D1, NO, E1, SO

Drawn: Growth, Wilderness, Neo Liberalism, Autarky

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

DO, N1, E1, SO

Drawn: Shrinkage, Productive, Neo Liberalism, Autarky

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

D1, N1, E1, SO

Drawn: Growth, Productive, Neo Liberalism, Autarky

10

5

0

FEASIBILITY



Drawn by: David

Collectivism, Dependence

DO, NO, EO, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

D1, NO, EO, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

DO, N1, EO, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

D1, N1, EO, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

Neoliberalism, Dependence

DO, NO, E1, S1: ECO TOURIST RESERVE
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Non-Collectivism, Dependence

#04

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

D1, NO, E1, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Non-Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

DO, N1, E1, S1
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Non-Collectivism, Dependence

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

D1, N1, E1, S1: THE AMERICAN MODEL
Drawn: Working, Middleclass, Non-Collectivism, Dependence

#16

10



FEASIBILITY



Drawing by Stefan

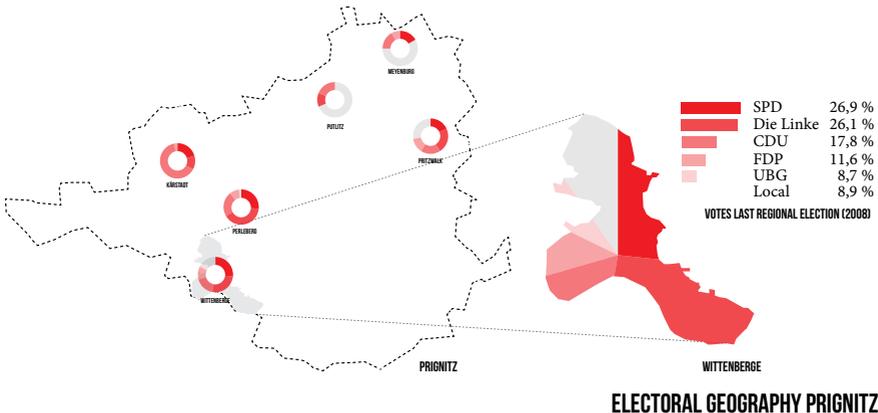
REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

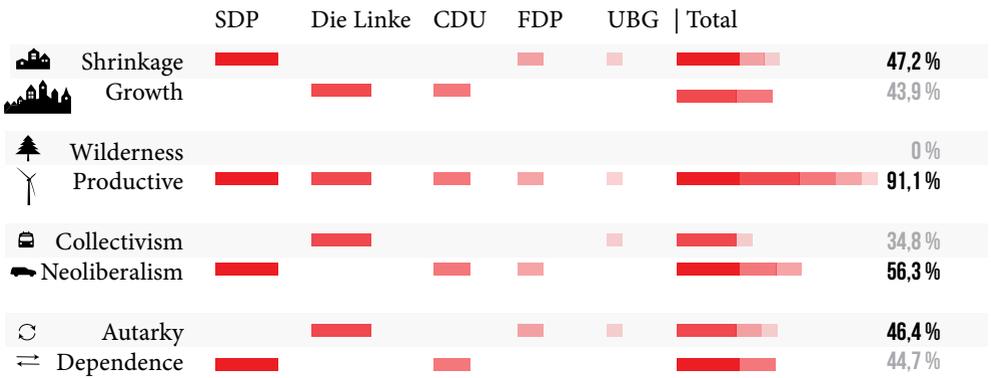
Studying the voting behavior of the region, we were able to 'weigh' the party programs of the different parties. Every party has a regional program in which they describe their future vision. These were analyzed and the future scenarios of the parties were visualized in sections. To make sure we interpreted these programs correctly, we elaborated with the representatives of the parties themselves.

To give an example of one of the political parties: CDU. In their party program they promotes growth, productive landscape, neoliberalism and dependence. We weighed these choices with the 17,8% that voted for this party. Adding up the percentages per party per driver, the democratic choice could be made.

Because it was such a close finish on demography (47% pro-shrinkage and 44% pro-growth) and political system (46% pro-autarky and 45% pro-dependence) we decided also to formulate an alternative scenario, taking these drivers into account.

To illustrate both choices, we made an organogram (organogram + panorama) of the bigger scale and a Photoshop collage showing a zoom-in on street level.





DEMOCRATIC CHOICE

COLLECTIVISM / AUTARKY NEOLIBERALISM / AUTARKY COLLECTIVISM / DEPENDENCE NEOLIBERALISM / DEPENDENCE

SHRINKAGE / WILDERNESS



GROWTH / WILDERNESS



SHRINKAGE / PRODUCTION

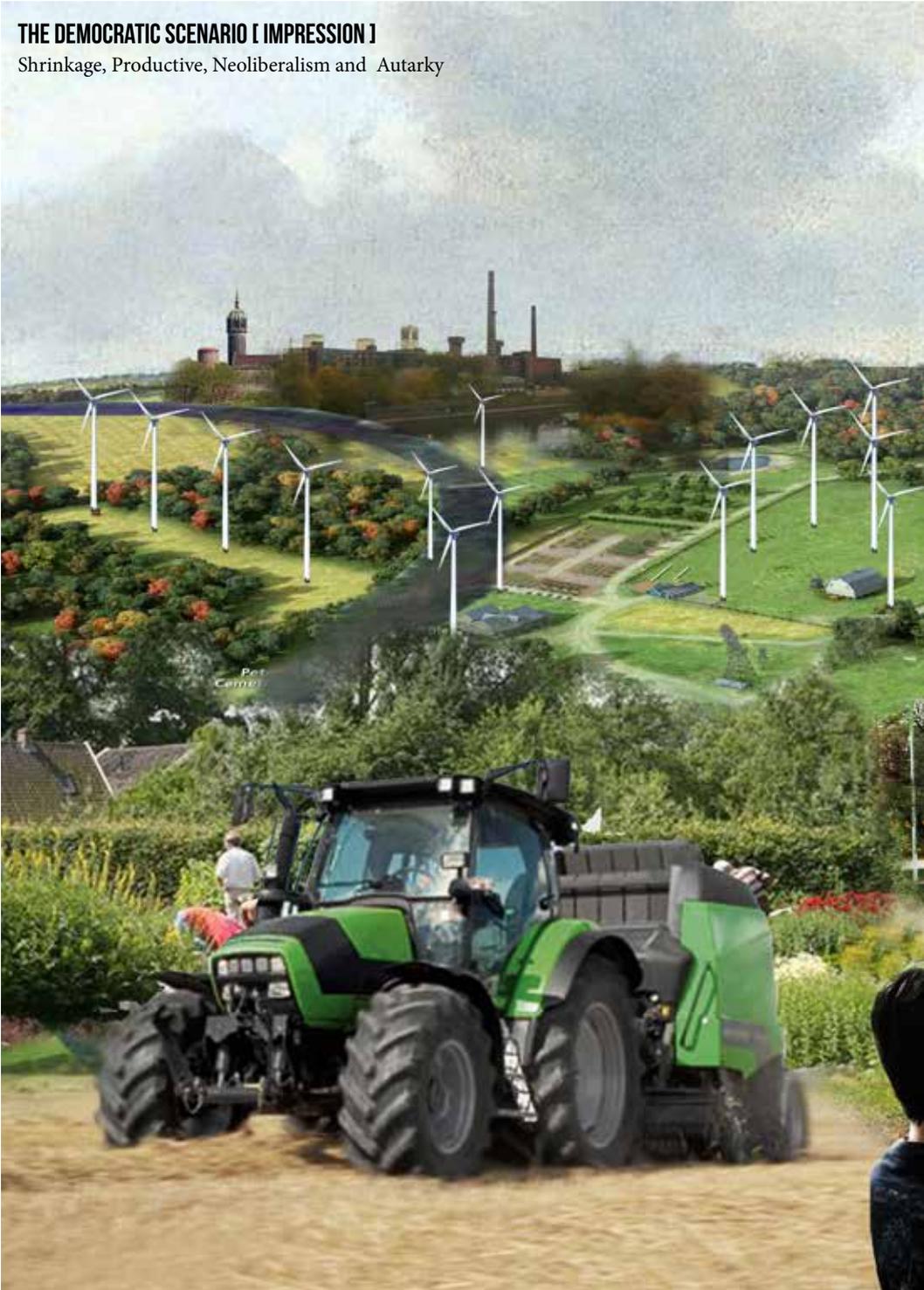


GROWTH / PRODUCTION



THE DEMOCRATIC SCENARIO [IMPRESSION]

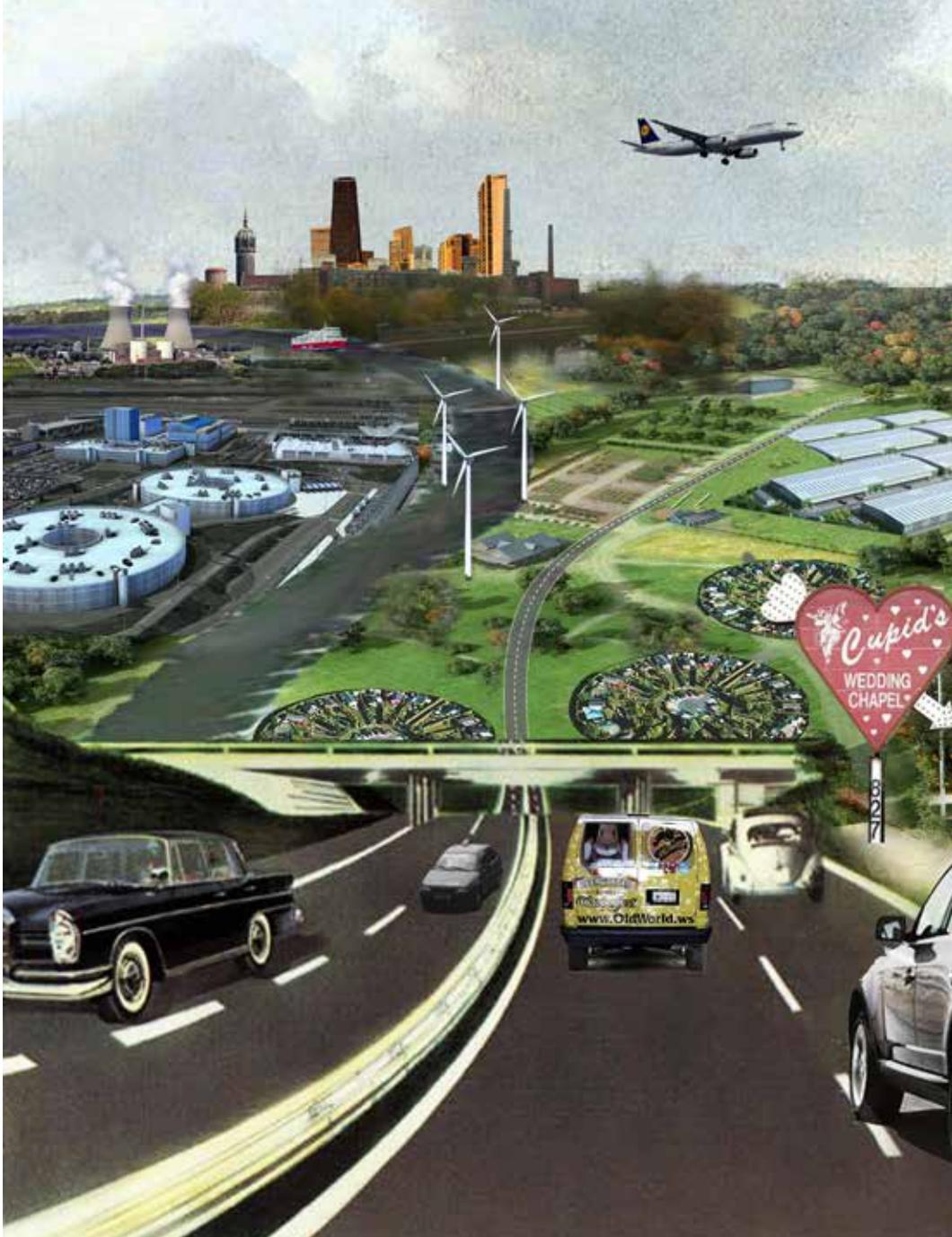
Shrinkage, Productive, Neoliberalism and Autarky





THE AMERICAN DREAM [IMPRESSION]

Growth, Productive, Neoliberalism and Dependence





With the previous method of choosing, and the information of the site research in the back of our mind, we asked ourselves: do people vote differently than they think? Looking at the local issues, the rising right- and left-extreme thinking and nostalgia are not taken into account in the party programs studied before. We therefore developed a tool to make a direct individual choice possible: the wahl-o-mat. In this wahl-o-mat the participant is asked to react on certain statements, with which he or she chooses for a certain extreme of the driver. To illustrate the use of this wahl-o-mat, we hypothetically asked a famous singer from the Wittenberge region: Ronny Dietrich. He was very clear in his opinion about certain statements, for example: he connected growth of the population with immigrants and was therefore pro-shrinkage. As he reacted 'I don't want more foreigners in Prignitz'. He also was very fond of the current quietness and anti-western influences and influence from the government. Based on his opinion, the Wahl-o-mat generated the 'zero-scenario' where shrinkage, wilderness, collectivism and autarky were combined.

Ronnie is subsequently only confronted with the outcome of his choices, but also with the consequences of it. For example, if he chooses autarky, which may seem tempting if he doesn't have to pay taxes, he also chooses to let go of the governmental income support which many of the Prignitzers still rely on. After this confrontation with the consequences of his choices, Ronny can redo the Wahl-o-mat. This 'educational loop' in the tool can be used to give the inhabitant an insight in the political choices and deliberations.

ORGANORAMA

Among the already shown hand drawings, photoshop images, infographics and photo's, we also used a technique called the 'organorama'. An organorama is a panorama with a organogram projected on it to show the power relations on a certain scale. The organorama of 'Ronny's choice' is shown on the next page.

Figure 14.
Selection of screen shots from the Wahl-o-Mat website, a tool to make people from the region aware of the spatial and physical results of their more general 'opinions'

WAHL-O-MAT



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Intro

Theorem

Matrix

NO. I DON'T WANT MORE FOREIGNERS IN PRIGNITZ.

1 2 3 4

Theorem 1

In the future, Prignitz should attract more people.

I AGREE

SKIP THIS QUESTION

I DISAGREE

WELCOME,
Ronny Dietrich
(Wittenberge)

TIP

Explanation

Why does a party agree or disagree with a theorem. Refer to the explanation of the parties.

? PARTY EXPLANATION
(new window)

WAHL-O-MAT



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Intro

Theorem

Matrix

Results

Effects

Consequences of the chosen scenario

D0: Shrinkage
- less people
- no support
- less jobs
- longer distances

N0: Wilderness
- less activity
- no services
- abandonment of buildings

E0: Collectivism
- regulated system
- collective ownership
- closed market

S0: Autarky
- self-sufficient
- economical autonomy
- no taxes
- no income support



REDO THE WAHL-O-MAT

WELCOME,
Ronny Dietrich
(Wittenberge)

TIP

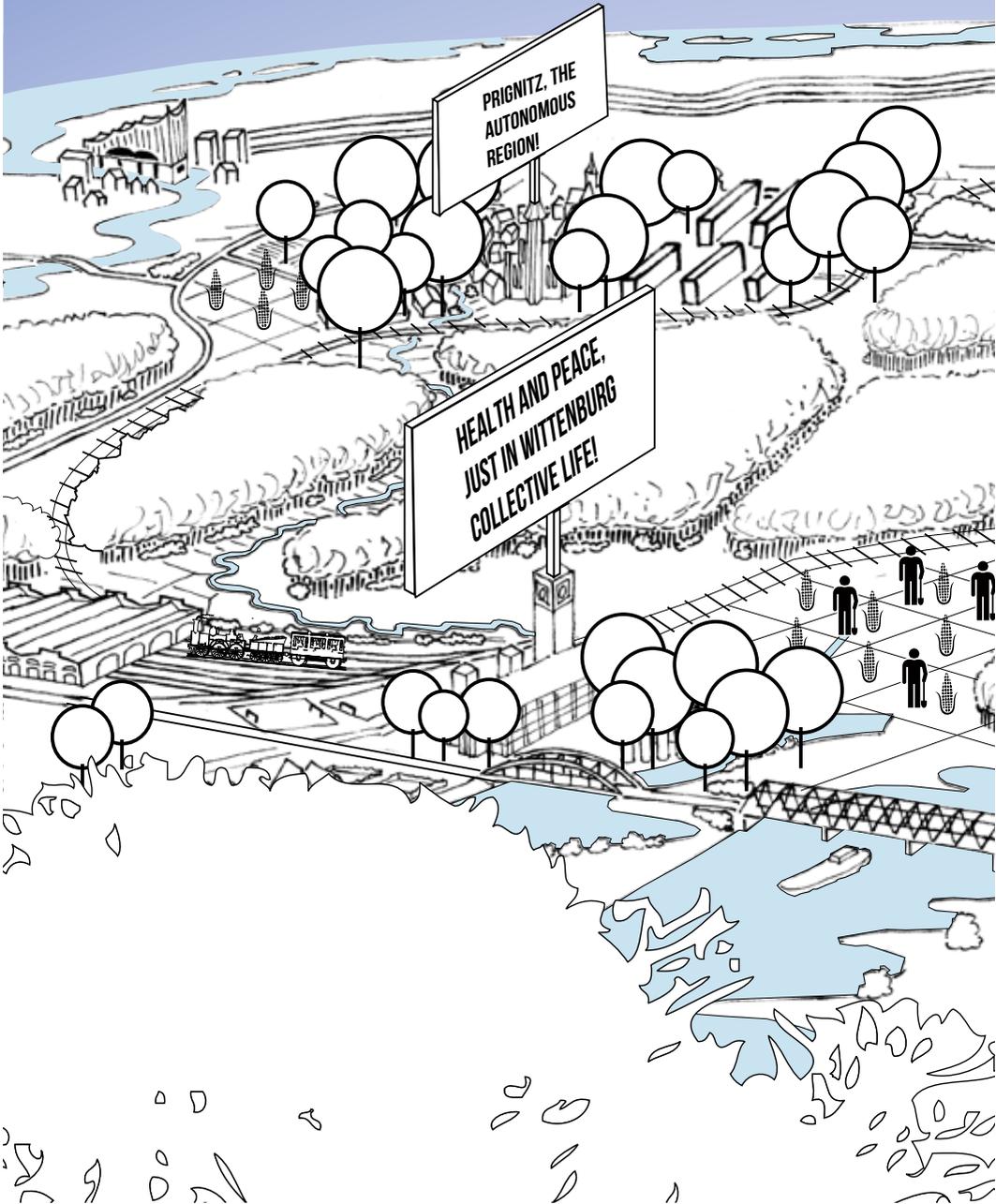
Explanation

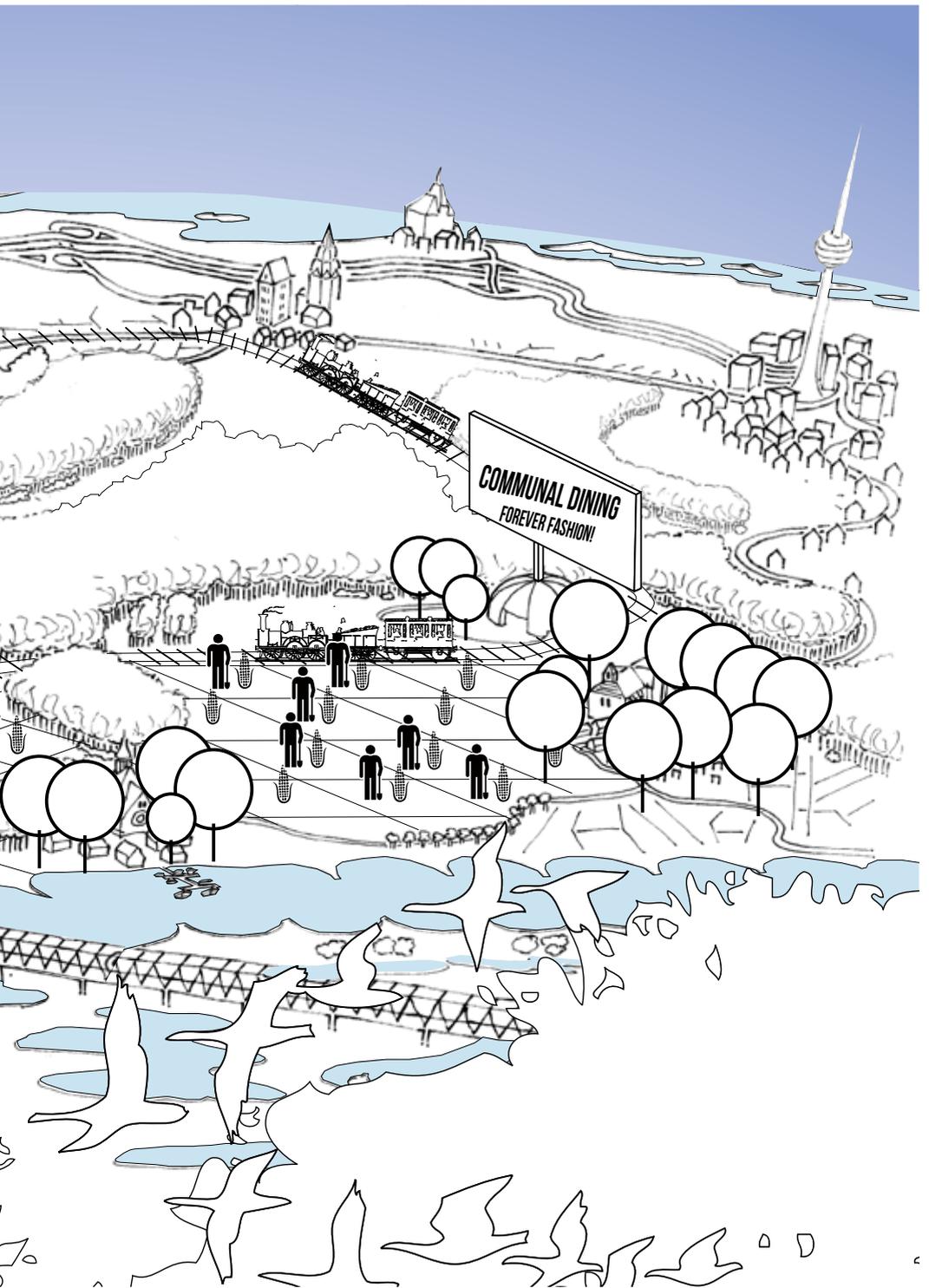
Why does a party agree or disagree with a theorem. Refer to the explanation of the parties.

? PARTY EXPLANATION
(new window)

RONNIE'S WAHL-O-MAT SCENARIO [ORGANORAMA]

Shrinkage, Wilderness, Collectivism and Autarky





RONNIE'S WAHL-O-MAT SCENARIO [IMPRESSION]

shrinkage, wilderness, collectivism and autarky





In order to use this tools for next possible next steps, the machine should be tuned further. We therefore asked the input of the critics during the final presentation. The main reaction was that people have to be involved from the beginning, and not only at choosing between scenario's. Also the limitedness of only four factors was discussed. Of course, this was a workshop of only ten days, but the potential of the matrix is there.

STUDENT REACTIONS



NATE WEEMS

It was hardworking and quite intense. We expected a little bit more free time, but it was worth it. I learned a lot and made new friends. A nice experience never to forget!

The workshop was a great teambuilding and groupwork exercise in which all opinions were taken into account and I feel proud about what we achieved in the given timeframe.



CHARJAN STEENHUIS



XIAYU WU

As a non-European student, the workshop was a valuable opportunity to learn strategies for regional planning in a complex society with a rich history that shapes it.

On public debate day, the audience are too quiet for discussion. I want more participation from them!



JOHNNY TASCÓN VALENCIA



EVELIEN VAN WINSEN

Thanks for the great workshop. Working in one place for one week fulltime really made it feel like a professional assignment to me.

The workshop at Aedes was a great chance to increase my graphic skills and dive into to subject of shrinkage - which is also very important in NL right now.



BERT OOSTDIJK

Working in an shrinkage area like Brandenburg need a different way of thinking and representation, therefore the workshop was a great opportunity to test new graphic and democratic tools.



STEF BOGAERTS

