

UUtopia: Towards a model for place-based learning

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What is UUtopia?

UUtopia is an ideal, a place where education, research and societal impact come together in and with the city:

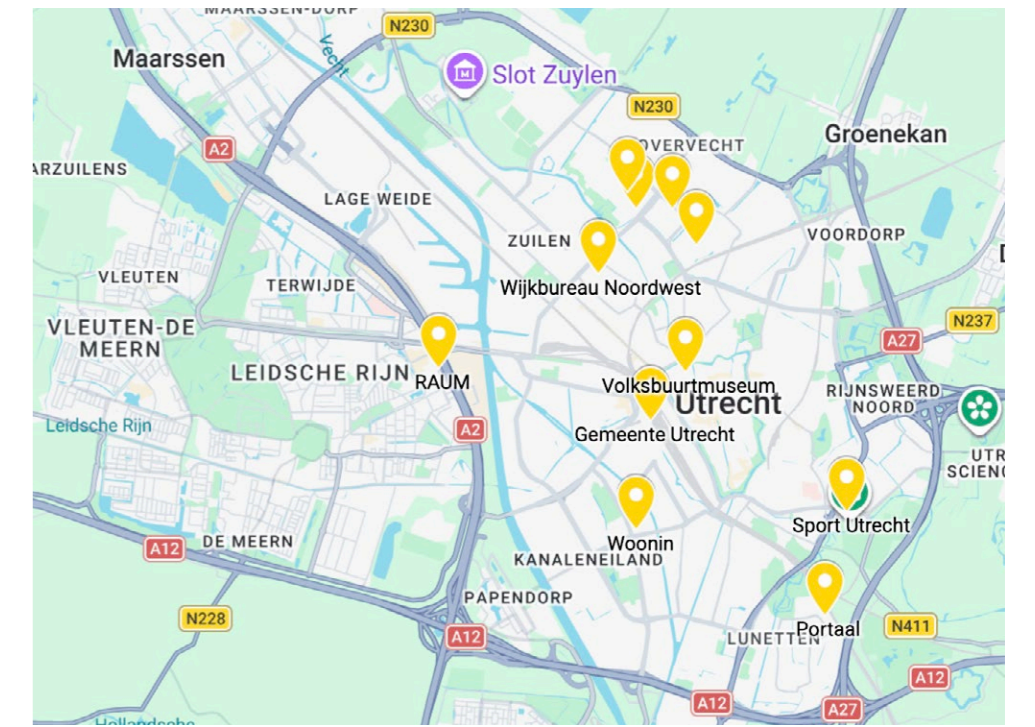
"Een plek voor samen stadmaken"

What is the goal of UUtopia?

We aim to facilitate co-creation and co-learning to address local societal issues by creating places for transdisciplinary education, research and impact in Utrecht

Why a place-based approach?

- Geographic knowledge production typically requires direct experience, social interaction and reflection in a specific place
- Reciprocal relations between residents, students, researchers and societal partners
- Physical presence in neighborhoods to develop trust and do impactful research on urban topics



<https://uutopia.sites.uu.nl/>

The Dutch geographical tradition and the science-society interface



Strong applied tradition:
Research for governments and business



First forms of 'science shops' in university cities:
Citizens and societal partners propose topics

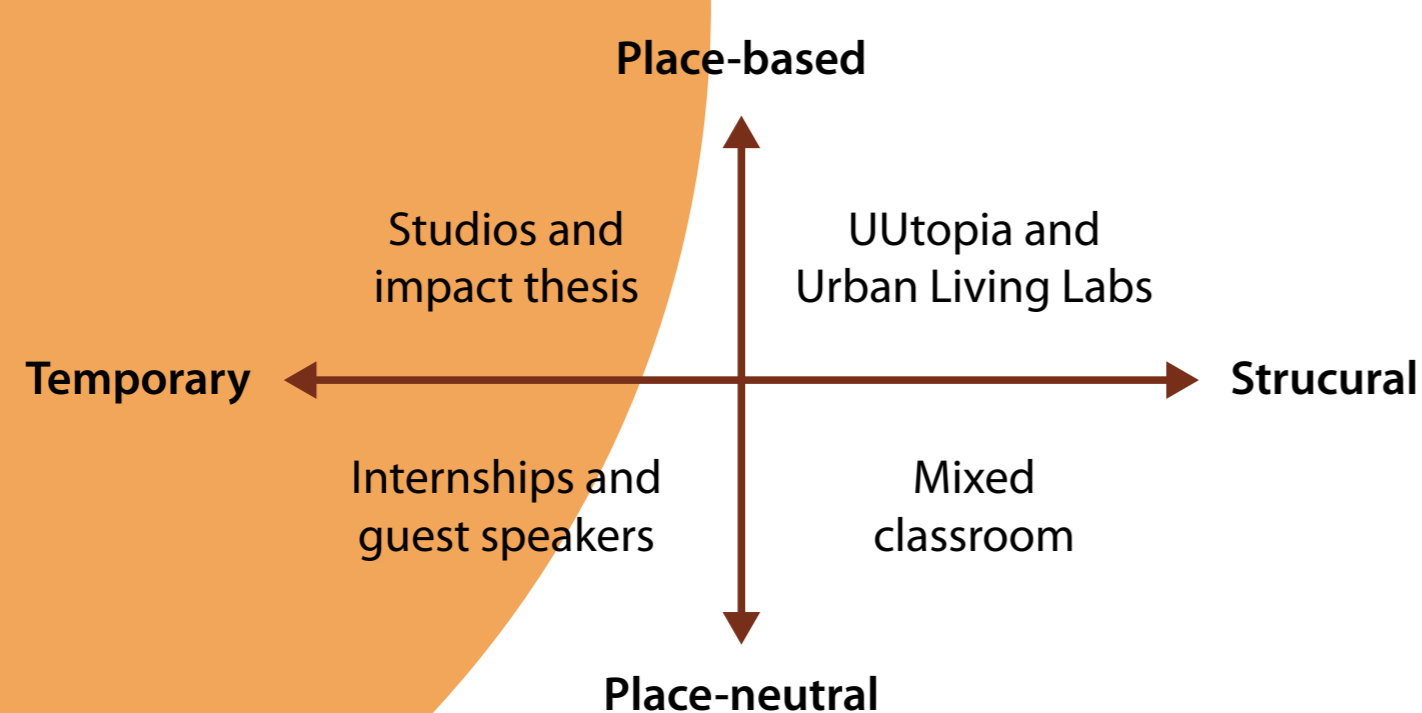


Homogeneity of geographers and planners:
Did not reflect societal diversity of the time, e.g. in terms of gender or ethnicity



Science-society relationship characterized by hierarchy:
Despite cities and urban relations being 'classic' topics of research, the focus was on extracting knowledge from the city instead of making knowledge with the city

Positioning UUtopia along temporal and spatial dimensions of transdisciplinary education approaches



Current projects

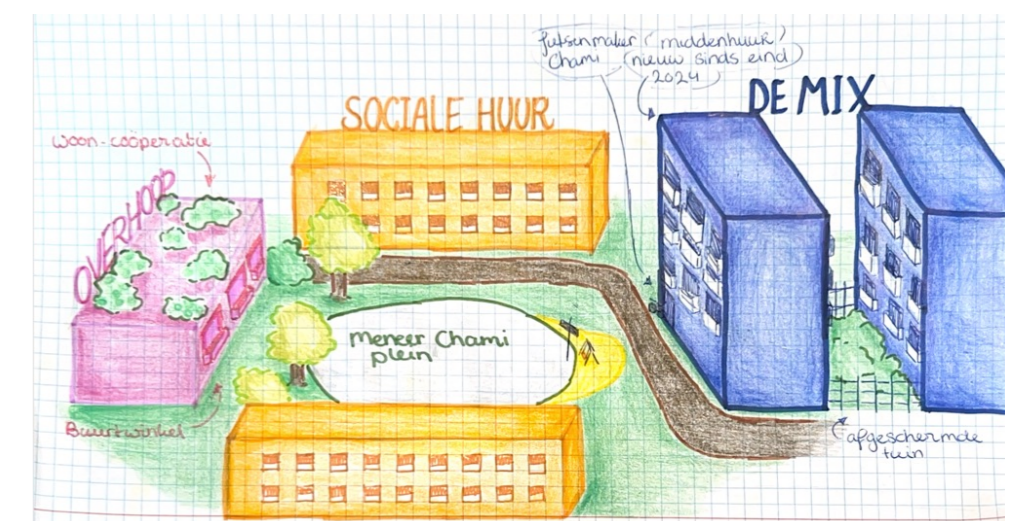
Community-engaged learning



Planning atelier



City studio



Discussion

How can place-based learning institutionalize in the university and along what dimensions?

