As a global society, we have passed the pivotal point and more than half of the earth's population now live in cities, with more and more people making the choice to live in cities each day. Though the large urban communities resulting from this population migration come with many advantages, the growing cities of Europe as well as the world face numerous challenges. An essential one is that the population redistribution can make it difficult to provide adequate space for the population, since people moving to cities means an increased population that needs a myriad of different facilities, and spaces to accommodate these functions to make city-life work. Urban development and development of new city profiles has traditionally been focused on building new, but with increasing populations, urban space for new buildings will inevitably become increasingly scarce and expensive. So, with physical constraints and still challenging economic circumstances, just building new is not always an option – or desirable. We must therefore start rethinking the city, and this is where shared space has the potential to play a role.

Shared space is a collective term for space and facilities that are shared between individuals or groups from different organisational contexts, and this PhD investigates the intricate processes concerning shared space in a facilities management context. The overall aim is divided in a theoretical and a practical part, with the theoretical focused on contributing with new knowledge of shared space, building towards a new method for efficient and sustainable facilities management operation of buildings and properties. The practical part is focused on connecting this new knowledge to practical applications and developing tools that can be used to work with shared spaces in a practice.

Grounded in literature from a variety of fields stretching from facilities management to urban planning and development, this PhD adopts a qualitative approach to the study of the intricate processes involved in working in, and with, shared space. The study employs case studies as the method of choice for answering the research question set forth, backed by empirical data collected through interviews, observations, workshops and surveys, and supported by literature and case relevant documents.

Overall this dissertation and the PhD project behind it offer several contributions to both academia and practice. With base in literature, the empirical data and through thorough analysis of the many different cases studied throughout the PhD, a typology of shared use of space and facilities and a guide to shared space in municipalities have been developed. The typology categorises shared spaces in three main categories according to degree of sharing, and lists a number of characteristics of shared spaces to provide a starting point for discussing, developing and working with shared space in both academia and practice. The guide on the other hand synthesises the theoretical knowledge resulting from the study in general, as well as the work having gone in to the development of the typology, and combines it with a number of practical steps to be taken co-created with practitioners. Through this combination it presents a complete guide to working with shared space in a municipal real-estate portfolio, from identifying potential on a portfolio level to evaluating the final result after the space has been taken into use.

Through the process of identifying these key aspects of shared space and the study of the intricate processes involved, three themes, territoriality, involvement and practicalities, were identified as essential when working with shared space, and these in combination with the typology and the guide described, are the final result of the study. The work conducted throughout the PhD is published in five scientific papers and are summarised in this dissertation. The research contributes to both theory and practice, and adds to the so far very limited knowledge on the topic.