TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING

CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

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CHAPTER

1

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Linda Carton
Melika Levelt
Ferry Van Kann

Introduction

In the 21st century, is 'spatial planning' in need of a rethinking and redefinition?

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>> Introduction of the book Transitions in Planning

Challenges of the 21th century for Dutch spatial planning research and education

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SUMMARY

>> In the 21st century, is 'spatial planning' in need of a rethinking and redefinition? This question has been the starting point for this book. Cities and urban regions are growing into urban networks where more than half of the human population lives, occupying more landscape than ever before. Meanwhile, climate change requires an energy transition and adaptation of the urban and regional fabric. What does this mean for spatial planning? How can or should we, as planning professionals, navigate in this new reality? What research is needed, and what planning education is needed to understand the changes and their consequences? This book, consisting of a series of essays, is an attempt to shed light on these issues. We do so by focusing on the Netherlands. The main question of the book is: How do the challenges of today's world manifest in the transitions occurring within Dutch spatial planning, and what are the implications of these transitions for Dutch planning education, research, and practice?

The introduction chapter introduces the concept of transitions and gives a brief description how this concept developed in academic literature. A few resonating lines of thinking between transitions theory and spatial planning theory are identified. Both transition and spatial planning researchers aim for the same goals: both are working towards purposive, systemic, long-term, vision-led change. Both fields have been criticised for having a technical-analytic bias. Three levels of transition research are distinguished, to provide structure how the various 'transitions in planning' are studied by spatial planning scholars. The separate book chapters illustrate a diversity of transitions, in physical domains such as water, housing, and energy, in the legal domain with the implementation of the Dutch Environment and Spatial Planning Act ('Omgevingswet'), but also in 'softer' aspects of spatial planning, such as the cultural heterogeneity of neighbourhoods in cities, or the development of 'participation' in Dutch urban planning, or developments in planning education. In the 21st century, is 'spatial planning' in need of a rethinking and redefinition? We hope that this book offers part of an answer.

Key words: transitions research, spatial planning, the Netherlands, planning education, cities, urban regions

1 INTRODUCTION: TUMULTUOUS TIMES FOR SPATIAL PLANNING

>> In the 21st century, is 'spatial planning' in need of a rethinking and redefinition? This question has been the starting point for this book. The question has been inspired by changes in the context, object, and process of planning (Witte & Hartmann, 2022) that are now taking place. Artificial intelligence (AI), high-tech and social media change the way people live, work, and meet each other; the dynamics and growth of cities and urbanising regions on a global scale are unprecedented in terms of population, territory, resource flows, and capital accumulation. Cities and urban regions have grown into urban networks where more than half of the human population lives and works, occupying more landscape than ever before (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015). Climate change requires an energy transition and adaptation to climatic changes. Environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, and degradation of agricultural lands further alter the landscape. It seems as if cities are getting busier and bigger, while the countryside is becoming emptier and seen as more peripheral. The challenges are not entirely new, nor is the thinking about planning practice (Nadin et al., 2020). However, as the effects of all these challenges are now filling our news channels, the institutions and procedures to solve these problems, such as democratic decision making, consensus building, the rule of law, and state autonomy, are more than ever under pressure. What does this mean for spatial planning? How can or should we, as planning professionals, navigate in this new reality? What research is needed, and what planning education is needed to understand the changes and their consequences? What new perspectives for planning practice are provided? In this area of big challenges and changes in context, object, and process of planning, how does spatial planning as a field renew itself? What does 'spatial planning' as a field of expertise have to offer for the exploration, design, development, governance, and protection of collective values of 'quality of living' in cities, regions, and territories, for housing in particular and landscape quality in general? How can communities, municipalities, and provinces make future plans and care for their "commons" in a healthy, safe, sustainable environment? This book, consisting of a series of essays, is an attempt to shed light on these issues and spark a discussion among researchers and educators. We do so by focusing on the Netherlands.

The main question of the book is:
How do the challenges of today's world manifest in the transitions occurring within Dutch spatial planning, and what are the implications of these transitions for Dutch planning education, research, and practice?

The assumption underlying this book is the following. In this period of sudden shocks and rapid shifts, which appear more characteristics of 'radical change' and 'revolutionary developments' than 'evolutionary growth', we need to have

ongoing debates about spatial planning not only in a descriptive sense, that is, about the changes that take place (e.g., Haghani et al., 2023; Nadin et al., 2020) or about what the best solution is for a certain challenge (e.g., Klinenberg, 2018; Monocle, 2024; Moreno, 2024) – although these discussions are necessary and useful. We also need discussions about what these changes and insights mean for our activities as planning professionals, planning teachers, and planning researchers. We need to ask ourselves questions to rethink what spatial planning means in a changed context.

A definition of spatial planning

In this book, we use the term spatial planning to refer to our field of research. According to Baker (2014), spatial planning is a term commonly used to cover public policy intervention related to the ordering and regulation of land use in an efficient, sustainable, and ethical way. There are numerous academic- and practice-based definitions of spatial planning, and these are, to some extent, context-specific, varying between different countries and jurisdictions, with several synonymous terms, e.g., land use planning, physical planning, urban planning, town and country planning, and regional planning. Spatial planning is usually seen as a broad concept, integrating the spatial aspects and consequences of a wide range of economic, social, and environmental factors at different spatial scales. We define spatial planning as: "purposive strategic activities to align individual and collective actions, this way governing and coordinating the development, building, renovation and improvement of landscapes and physical infrastructures, built-up areas, neighbourhoods, cities, regions and urban/rural places on various spatial scales." The type of activities include, for instance: agenda-setting; vision-making; strategy formation; imagining, designing and anticipating alternative future scenarios; visualisation of pathways for change with a territorial dimension; ex-ante evaluation of impacts and consequences; deliberating and communicating alternative spatial plans; and forming strategic coalitions around specific discourses that advocate a particular policy or spatial decision, often a desired or resisted public policy intervention. The goal of spatial planning is "to explore, design, develop, maintain and protect collective values of living quality – especially by housing – and landscape quality in cities, regions and territories in general, within a healthy, safe, sustainable environment" (based on Carton, 2018). While editing this book, we have discussed whether we would use the term 'spatial planning' or 'urban and regional planning,' a term more common in the United Kingdom. We have decided to use 'spatial planning' in this book, as this is most literally translated from the Dutch term "planologie" (see also Witte & Hartmann, 2022).

Case studies focusing on the Netherlands

The Netherlands, as a small and highly densely populated country, serves as a backdrop for the changes we see. The country is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, lying in a flood-prone area with regard to climate

change, and dealing with dynamics in Europe and the rest of the world through an open trade economy with its large port connections. Many of the contemporary challenges faced by cities in the world today have been felt as pressing issues in the low-lying country of the Netherlands for some time. The history of large-scale challenges and determined collaboration has given the planning culture in the Netherlands a certain mentality and a known reputation in the rest of the world. There is a saying, "God created the earth, but the Dutch created the Netherlands." As its 'spatial planning' is recognized in the world as a guiding beacon during the post-World-War-II period (Faludi & Van der Valk, 1994), it is interesting to see how 'Dutch spatial planning' is transforming in the twenty-first century. With a new Environment and Planning Act that integrates many old regulations into one new, coherent legal framework in 2024, the Dutch planners are trying to make the country more flexible and robust in facing and dealing with future planning challenges. Could spatial planning, as it is practised and struggled with at present, still serve as an example for other parts of the world? Or is it losing itself in lock-in processes, deadlock situations, and endless deliberations? Is the current profession of planners working in practice paralysed by the proportionality of current challenges? We aim to address a number of Dutch case studies in this book, to reflect on the current professional, educational, and academic practices of spatial planning at Dutch universities. We want to share the current advancements, new ideas, innovative practices, and empirical observations with interested spatial planning scholars, both in and outside the Netherlands. This book takes the Netherlands as an example and starting point for a reflection on how the challenges of today's world manifest in spatial planning and the implications of these transitions for planning education, research, and practice.

Reading guide

In Section 1.2, the concept of transitions is explained from academic theory. A definition of 'transitions' and a description of 'transition management' is given, and a few key-concepts are explained with reference to well-known scholars on this topic. Resonant lines of thought between transition theory and the way planners think are identified, for example that both planning and transition researchers are inherently focused on (people creating) a sustainable future.

In Section 1.3, we look in more detail at how the field of spatial planning overlaps with ideas of transition management. Many ideas are not new but have existed in spatial planning as the field has always been centred around changes and interventions in using land, and planning for the long-term future. Vision-making and participatory approaches are profound techniques in the repertoire of spatial planners that have been embraced by transition researchers. Both spatial planning and transition theory have received academic criticism that notions of power, politics, justice, and situated judgement should be

taken into account fully, as opposed to a bias towards a mere technical-analytic rationale.

In Section 1.4, we introduce the three directions in which we have solicited papers for this book, to describe the current state of affairs in spatial planning with various transitions in mind: (1) Transition research that looks at what drives change: what drives change to what extent, why, and how? (2) Transitions research observing what is happening in practice in planning domains, via gradual or more radical patterns of change, and (3) Transitions research reflecting on changes developing in planning systems.

In Section 1.5, we introduce the chapters of this book. Each chapter has its own topic. Chapter 2 focuses on water management and 'water heritage', knowledge of how landscapes have been formed historically. Chapter 3 focuses on housing and the meaning and role of participation in city planning. Chapter 4 focuses on the multiculturalist character of today's urban neighbourhoods and its consequences for planning. Chapter 5 describes the energy transition and emergence of community energy cooperatives and compares this phenomenon among the Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK. Chapter 6 focuses on the new Environment and Spatial Planning Act ('Omgevingswet') that has come into force in the Netherlands since January 2024. Chapter 7 discusses the phenomenon of teaching planning to the next generation of planners, reflecting on 25 years of experience with organized 'planning studios'. Chapter 8 concludes the book with a discussion among Dutch planning professors and a reflection on the various challenges and ends with implications for planning research, education, and practice.

2 THE CONCEPT OF TRANSITIONS

>> Simply put, a transition is "a process of fundamental change in a society's culture, structures and practices, taking around 25 to 50 years to complete" (Dutch Research Institute for Transitions (DRIFT), 2024). The concept of societal transitions has been studied intensively by Dutch researchers. The ideas of transitions and transition management, or in ecology-oriented fields also called 'transformative governance,' are not new. Transition management is described as 'forward-looking, adaptive, multi-actor governance aimed at long-term transformation processes that offer sustainability benefits.' In the words of Kemp and Loorbach (2006, p.103):

> *"Transition management could be viewed as 'evolutionary governance' as it is concerned with the functioning of the variation-, selection- and reproduction process at the societal level: creating variety informed by visions of and experiments for sustainability, shaping new pathways and reflexively adapting existing institutional frameworks and regimes. It is a model for*

> *escaping lock-in and moving towards solutions that offer multiple benefits, not just for users but also for society as a whole. It is not an attempt to control the future but an attempt to incorporate normative goals into evolutionary processes in a reflexive manner. Learning, maintaining variety (through portfolio management) and institutional change are important policy aims [of transition management].*"

Kemp and Loorbach call transition management 'not an instrument as such, but a new perspective for decision-making and governance.' Transitions come into being by a collaborative sum of small-scale interactions in society, as a form of 'evolutionary governance' in complex adaptive systems. These adaptive systems should be understood in a nested way, with the system being dependent on the self-governing adaptations of its internal agents or elements in response to changes from its context, and vice versa, the overall structure of the 'whole' influences the system behaviour of its parts. Interactions in such complex adaptive systems, as studied in social sciences and life sciences, take place in multi-actor settings on multiple scales, with humans, things and environments being in constant interaction with each other. The multi-actor character makes these systems inherently complex, with limited predictability. The system usually adapts as being in a certain stable state before and after a transition, with an unstable state in between, a so-called *tipping point* (Scheffer, 2009; Haasnoot et al., 2013). In societal transitions, a tipping point might be reached that potentially flips the whole societal, physical or intertwined social-ecological system into a new stable state. Cities are typically seen as complex adaptive systems, with their 'internal dynamics' not only defined by strategic planners but also by the sum of daily behaviours of businesses, citizens, NGO's and so on. In this regard, Judge et al. (2024) speak of social tipping points. Patterns are formed both by (semi-) autonomous decisions of individuals and partly 'steered' by strategies decided upon by planners and policy makers. This creates dynamics both top-down and bottom-up. Theorizing the concept of transition management, a figure with an 'S-curve' is presented (Rotmans, Kemp and van Asselt, 2001) with a change process predominantly visualised as a bottom-up social learning and societal innovation process (for a later extension into an X-curve framework, see Hebinck et al., 2022). According to Rotmans and Verheijden (2021), transitions do not occur when a majority of more than fifty percent has changed their views, attitudes and behavior; twenty-five percent of a population is enough to get things moving; transition processes are typically non-linear. When a new practice is being adopted by a critical mass, laggards of the old vested order or outdated ideas may see themselves pushed into defence.

Transitions theory that builds on systems theory and related theories on 'resilience' have been critiqued for dedicating attention towards finding a 'managerial fix' to problems (Ernstson, 2021) without addressing deeper causes, downplaying struggles of politics and power, dominance of

neoliberalism ideas and deep-seated conflicts about land, knowledge, and decision-making. Ernstson (2021, p.1643): "In a highly unequal world the attention to situated knowledges and comparative thought helps to foreground the long environmental legacies of colonialization, class- and gender-based forms of exploitation, and how scientific ways of knowing have their own biases not easily separated from social and political processes." As a consequence, Ernstson turned away from systems theory, transitions and resilience theory and draws from disciplines such as environmental history, political ecology, and postcolonial urbanism in his studies of cities and urbanization. According to Ernstson, this shift in approach requires a commitment to relate scientific ways of knowing to place-based struggles and politics, drawing conclusions based on 'situated ways of knowing' from the places that are studied.

Resonating lines of thinking between transitions theory and the way planners think

In the period from 2001 to now, many case studies have been described using an evolving and growing body of literature with expanding theory on how transition management and transformative governance can be put in practice. Many transition-oriented researchers have used case studies, focus groups, living labs, have executed participatory observation, or have done action research, and gathered data in various real-world and community settings. It goes too far to present a literature overview here of practical studies where many cases are being studied with a transition lens. Literature reviews, responses to criticism, and research agendas can be found, amongst others, in Geels (2011), Loorbach et al. (2017), Köhler et al. (2019), von Wirth et al. (2019), and many more. What we distill from the various sources are a few common concepts and lines of thinking that resonate well with the way planners think. The goal orientation towards a more sustainable future and emphasis on the need to adapt to new circumstances is something planners often also do: it is a future thinking discipline (Oomen et al., 2021), it resonates with the object of planning. Next, the focus on systems and relations at multiple levels and how they interact in a non-linear, multi-actor process is also familiar to planners. They are part of how planners think about, respectively, the context and process of planning. Tipping points as part of the process are an idea that can also help planners to understand how things may change slowly or not at all at first, and then take off very rapidly (Judge et al., 2024). Overall, we see two predominant lines of thinking with respect to transitions: a normative approach, providing insights to enable better governance, and a descriptive approach, emphasizing unexpected turns, non-linearity, and limited influence by governing arrangements. If we look at spatial planning, then a lot of theory on long-term change has already been present before the topic of transitions became popular. In the next section, we discuss this in more detail.

3 SPATIAL PLANNING AND TRANSITIONS THINKING: WORKING TOWARDS PURPOSIVE, SYSTEMIC, LONG-TERM, VISION-LED CHANGE

>> Spatial planning researchers aim to explore, study, and assess interventions on the scale of cities and regions. On these scales, the international trade flows and national policies finally materialize on a spatial scale that people experience in their homes and workplaces. As cities (and densely populated regions) serve as knowledge hubs where the number of inventions and innovations is high, and as the places where the 'metabolism' of the majority of human populations is concentrated, this may also be the place where solutions to the problems can be expected. Climate governance research calls the horizontal diffusion of good practices between communities, cities and regions, and the phenomenon of accelerating transitions from the bottom up, 'polycentric governance', in which multiple local actors play a leading role in charting their path to the future, ahead of international and state-led top-down climate policy processes (Jordan et al., 2018; Ostrom, 2010). However, it proves difficult at the level of a city to prioritize issues such as climate and sustainability measures in relation to urgent needs experienced in the short term, like affordable housing. Bulkeley and Betsill (2005) have described how climate policy fails to get off the ground at the city level if it is not supported by forms of multilevel governance. Using case studies of Newcastle upon Tyne and Cambridgeshire in the UK, they analysed 'the politics of urban sustainability' and illustrated the importance of relationships between nested tiers of government and 'spheres of authority', coalitions that advocated specific discourses and interpreted how (local) objectives could be linked to the interests, policy priorities and funding opportunities of broader networks.

In transition literature, attention for self-organisation, emergence, social-technical innovation, diffusion of good practices, multilevel governance, and (re-) configuration of strategic alliances are common threads. These ideas and discourses on transitions have influenced the academic and practical thinking of spatial planning. Spatial planning theory nowadays speaks of the 'bottom-up' character of how new developments emerge and are innovated and improved in niches before a possible scale-up takes place. It is a question for municipalities how to deal with initiatives coming from civil society. This emphasis on the 'bottom-up' aspect in planning, originally coming from innovation sciences, has grown after decades of 'classic' spatial planning theory typically had a dominant focus on how top-down policy objectives, formulated by nation-states, could be made operational and be implemented in regions and cities by regional and local governments. Following De Roo (2012), the ideas of complexity and non-linear complex-adaptive systems, having originated in other disciplines, could be translated to spatial planning, with a role for self-organizing processes, emergence, resilience, and transitions, and with planners as transition managers of change. Complexity and complex adaptive system theory in spatial planning

have been a core topic of one of the thematic working groups within the Association of European Planning Schools (AESOP).

Many case studies and projects executed as action research or in 'urban living labs' have been reported in the field, where the previous theories of transition management or transformative governance are used to observe, understand, explain, and evaluate attempts in local experiments as part of the wider development of societal transition. For example, Ernst et al. (2016) have defined the term 'sustainable urban transformation' as a specific subset of transitions that is specifically relevant for spatial planning. We summarize their definition here to clarify the relevant elements concerning *spatial planning transitions* in cities or regions. Ernst et al. (2016, p. 2988-2989) define sustainable urban transformations as: "**Purposive, systemic, long-term** and **vision-led** economic, social, cultural, organizational, governmental and physical change that *leads to sustainable urban structures and environments.*" This change also leads to "corresponding technologies, markets and institutions, that determine patterns of production and consumption of resources, by long-term oriented governance approaches and flexible, adaptive and reflexive policy designs." Thus, the transitions in planning are accompanied by or create "sustainable market transformations" (Simons & Nijhof, 2020) that take place as a result of purposeful interaction between government, communities, businesses, citizens, NGO's, advocacy groups, knowledge institutes and planners.

How does it work, then, this process of bringing about purposive, systemic, long-term, vision-led change? For working on solutions and inventing new solutions to big societal problems, people need to work together. According to Ernst et al. (2016, p. 2991, Table 3), transition management theory shows that governance steering and the formation of new regimes of governance and adaptive policy designs is best stimulated in open and participatory ways, in "a culture of open participation, co-creation, communication and collaboration by regime and niche actors, local communities and future owners and users." There should be room for experimentation with different solutions and approaches. Residents, as well as key local stakeholders, like universities, businesses, and community groups, should be engaged. The culture should invite key players into a learning process, and should have open character, "not being part of the dominant regime of large companies and (governmental) institutions, but also not being trapped by a counter culture driven niche of grassroots/ bottom-up actors that are not willing and able to leverage on their efforts" (Ernst et al., 2016, p. 2991, Table 3). An interactive process needs to be facilitated purposefully to identify and achieve new constellations and regimes, and co-create visions and strategize transformation pathways.

In the process of transition, dialogue, interaction, learning, adoption, and adaptation are key, with an important role for **vision-making**. Strategy-

making and vision projects offer opportunities to include participants in this transformative pathway to a better future. This role for strategic vision-making, to communicate and imagine a shared idea of a desired (long-term) future, is central in many academic schools of planning. Dixon and Tewdwr-Jones (2021) emphasize the importance of **participatory methods** in transitions or transformative change processes, and point to visions as the vehicle to shape the future of cities (and regions):

> *"Visions provide us with the means to see the critical issues and challenges that lie ahead, to help fight complacency, and to see how things might be different. As Louis Albrechts (2010: 1123) wrote: 'Visions provide actors with views of the future that can be shared: a clear sense of direction, a mobilisation of energy, and a sense of being engaged in something important'. This is important in the context of transformative change in cities and how we manage and plan for future change. However, visions need to be a shared view of the future and rely on participatory methods to underpin them."*

For spatial planners, the theory on transitions and sustainable urban transformations thus has many familiar elements. Both fields, transition theory and spatial planning, are inherently interdisciplinary in nature; they draw from various disciplines for frameworks and guiding concepts. They focus on the long term, and to make long-term futures tangible, both fields work with participatory methods and instruments of vision-making to imagine, explore, and assess possible futures, organized in settings of facilitated dialogue with multiple actors. Both fields aim to support the process of governance by providing and triangulating views, ideas, understandings, and experiments, and both fields have the tendency to focus on processes of collaborative governance.

Both fields have been criticised for having a technical-analytic bias. In spatial planning theory, such criticism has been voiced by authors like Campbell (2006), Healey (2006), Fainstein (2010), and Kaika (2017). They have advocated for the inclusion in spatial planning studies of notions of **power, politics, justice, and situated judgmen**t, and they have warned against considering any dominant discourse as "given" or as the only possible rationale for considering possible actions. They have also warned against superficial "fixes" that can be the result of consensus-building in spatial planning, especially when "the usual suspects" gather around the tables where decision-making takes place. Kaika (2017) has argued that underlying structural inequalities and reinforcing mechanisms that reproduce the dominance of the 'status quo' can be better addressed in processes of dissensus, contestation, and resistance than in consensus-building processes. She has called upon researchers not to stick to the existing toolbox of 'policy, economic, institutional and techno-managerial frameworks' regarding issues of 'sustainability' and 'resilience' but to conduct research in practice, to ask different sets of questions, and to learn from citizens

who make 'painstaking efforts' to bring about new ownership of commons in the city, with social innovations emerging "when needs are so urgent that citizens are compelled to take on new roles in order to take matters into their own hands" (Kaika, 2017, p.99).

A point where the fields of transitions and planning differ is in their emphasis on either the emergence of bottom-up processes of innovation for transition theory, or the emphasis on the forces of top-down processes in spatial planning. Historically, spatial planning has its roots in theories of governments as the authoritative institutions to make decisions on land and land use. With transition thinking influencing the field of spatial planning, this tendency in spatial planning to look mostly at processes of top-down coordination may now be open for change. In the next section, we describe how we have solicited papers to explore how transitions have influenced spatial planning. We have aimed to collect a variety of papers that together give an idea of the current way of thinking about transitions in planning.

4 THREE DIRECTIONS IN TRANSITION RESEARCH REGARDING SPATIAL PLANNING

>> As editors of InPlanning, we have sent out a call for essays on the topic of 'transitions in planning' to collect contributions that represent the current state of affairs in spatial planning with various transitions in mind. To structure this, we have pre-structured three directions in transition research.

(1) Transition research that looks at what drives change: what drives change to what extent, why, and how?

These forces fuel societal change. We see at least five different categories of driving forces:

- **Environmental:** A major driving force is climate change. Also, many other forms of pollution nowadays impact the living environment, signalling overexploitation of natural and fossil resources, overproduction of chemical substances, and 'dumping' of residuals and emissions in soils, water, and air.
- **Demographic:** Since the field of spatial planning exists, demographic forecasting has been a relevant dimension to plan ahead for investments in housing, infrastructure, and services. New developments in demographics arise with an increased level of international migration.
- **Technological:** Technological innovation has its consequences in daily life. Online platforms provide commercial services, especially in cities, and allocate food, mobility services, apartments for short stays, etc., everywhere, anytime, with examples such as 'digital twins' being developed by technology providers for local governments, shared cars/

bikes/ mobility services for just-in-time arranging transport on demand or working online from home or far away (digital nomads).

- **Economic:** In a globalized world, tensions arise between globalization and localization of resources of production in terms of capital, labour, goods, and services. Discussions about 'free markets', 'neoliberalism', 'no growth', 'ecological economics', and 'spatial justice' reflect different perspectives on access to resources, of which land is an important one. Discourses that emphasize the virtues of justice and ecological integrity challenge the dominant economic paradigm, stressing that basic needs such as housing, food, healthcare and a healthy environment, education, nature, time, and community are not 'commodities' and should not be treated as market products. New social movements have risen around themes like climate action, inequity, housing, land tenure, energy, and agriculture. Self-organising in community cooperatives is seen as a solution. How is spatial planning influenced by these changes in society?
- **Democratic:** Democratic elections have become more polarised by the rise of populism and the rise of 'far-left or right' parties in politics, with social media as a new channel for amplifying ideas outside the mainstream media, with fewer guarantees of checks and balances. At the same time, successive national governments in the Netherlands have 'delegated' the power to make policy to regional and local levels, as a result of which the mandate has de facto been decentralised from the national level to the regional and local level. What does this mean for spatial planning?

(2) Transitions research observing what is happening in practice in planning domains, via gradual or more radical patterns of change

In each sectoral domain, we can distinguish between smaller developments that can be referred to as *optimisations* (step-by-step improvements) or more *radical alternatives* (e.g., post-growth cities and regions, transformative approaches, third-order loop learning). Here are three examples of gradual or more radical types of transitions:

- In terms of **housing** construction and **energy** for heating homes (important in the Dutch winters), a step-by-step improvement of the existing housing stock would be to insulate houses so that they consume less gas, a radical alternative would be to remove the gas connection and renovate the houses to be heated and cooled by other, renewable technologies, such as 'all-electric' solutions using solar panels, boilers and heat pumps; Or to implement a collective solution such as a heat network.
- In the areas of **mobility, transport, and infrastructure**, smaller optimizations would be the expansion of existing infrastructure, a more radical change would be to shift investments from the construction of new car infrastructure to the creation of a new type of mobility, such as the construction of an interurban network of high-speed cycle paths.

- In **public space**, a moderate step towards more sustainable living would be to convert some parking spaces into greenery so that trees provide more shade and cooling, while a more radical alternative would be to make the roads car-free throughout the district and use the freed-up space to provide space for cyclists, pedestrians, 'urban green-blue infrastructure' (green corridors) and as a playground for young and old.

(3) Transitions research reflecting on changes developing in planning systems

This type of transition research is more procedural and institutional, at a more theoretical or fundamental level. It focuses on the regime level and what is called the 'landscape level' of societies in transition management, rather than on the 'niches' in which experiments are applied. Legal structures and institutionalized cultural practices can be compared across cases, countries, and planning systems. Research at this level often seeks to bridge macro and micro perspectives, with the aim of unravelling fundamental dilemmas and seemingly paradoxical contrasts. Examples of such research into transitions are:

- The implementation of a new legislative framework with the **'Environment and Spatial Planning Act'** *(Omgevingswet)* in the Netherlands. The implementation of this new legal framework, which replaces many older laws, marks a fusion between planning and environmental law and policy.
- The need for **strategic, fundamental change** (long-term goals) versus a political reality and government culture that stimulates an urban management approach (short-term goals).
- Hegemonic neoliberal structures that create **fragmented systems of governance** (Taşan-Kok & Özogul, 2021), and reliance of governments on the private sector for implementing their policies.
- Changes in discourses are perhaps signals that other than liberal values and market dominated thinking gain importance in the societal debates, with emphasis on terms like **community, civil society actors**, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, transformative governance (Hölscher et al., 2019; Brings et al., 2025) and experimental governance (Potjer, 2019; Hölscher and Frantzeskaki, 2021).

On these three levels of transitions research, we have solicited essays to describe and analyse the status of affairs in spatial planning in the Netherlands, from 2023 to 2025. In addition to essays that reflect research on transitions, we have included a chapter that specifically discusses developments in academic education. In the final chapter, special attention is also paid to the implications for spatial planning education at our academic institutes united in InPlanning. In the next section, we will briefly introduce each chapter.

5 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK CHAPTERS

>> The chapters with real-life cases focus on different sectors and facets of planning, ranging from water and cultural heritage to housing and energy. In each chapter, the content of the transition assignment is introduced, the relevant planning process is described, and the case and context are explained. Unfortunately, we were not able to include all the topics and transitions we had in mind. Examples include coastal flood risk and pluvial flooding, manure overload in agricultural and natural areas, or redevelopment of business parks. These are topics we would have liked to address, as they are important issues in the Netherlands. We also did not receive contributions on technological innovations, such as the role of social media in participatory processes, the rise of artificial intelligence (AI), E-planning, advances in geospatial data analysis, data-driven automation and decision-making in smart cities, and other technological shifts impacting spatial planning. As editors, we acknowledge this oversight. Realizing it is impossible to address all dimensions of transitions in a single book, we proudly present here the collection of topics we were able to include. Every chapter in this book has been peer-reviewed by at least two reviewers. Each chapter is briefly discussed below.

Chapter 2 by Joks Janssen and Marijn van Asseldonk focuses on the history of **water management** and transitions in it as a result of transitions in land-use planning. Historically, land-use and water management mainly followed the natural conditions of watercourses and flooding. For example, flooding was used as a way to fertilise arable land. However, after World War Two, land-use became 'rationalised'. From then on, water management was expected to enable the desired use of land, which was not always in line with the local water conditions. Climate change, resulting in more flood risk of rivers and an increase in droughts, makes it necessary to rethink the rationality of this way of land use and water management. The chapter shows how knowledge of the past, i.e., water heritage, can help us to find solutions for current challenges. This is not a one-size-fits-all approach to finding solutions for current issues in water management. This demands a place-specific approach and connections between heritage professionals and water managers, which demands, as the chapter explains, also a transition of heritage professionals from a more static to a more dynamic conceptualisation of water heritage. Thus, water heritage in this chapter might be seen as a tool for vision making, finding keys to long-term solutions by looking back in time.

Chapter 3 by Melika Levelt and Wendy Tan focuses on **housing** while linking it to relevant questions about the meaning and role of **participation** in the process of planning and the capacity of planning to serve the goals of sustainable and just development. The development of 'citizen participation' is described over the last decades, and three illustrative cases in Amsterdam, Almere, and Groningen are used to make the argument that although formally,

citizens have a say in Dutch planning, in practice, it seems like the participation process is often being undermined. This helps to understand what is referred to as a simultaneous increased inclusion and exclusion of citizens in spatial development for housing. A key question is raised: What do we mean by citizen participation? This question is addressed by a reflection on three recent phases in Dutch housing history. The first phase (1945-1970) remembers that technocratic planning is about data and predictions of population growth and considers participation as a way to gather this data and make people accept plans. The second, fundamentally different, phase introduces the crucial role of market forces and citizens as consumers, especially in the domain of housing developments. Although participation in a very light form became a right, the authors clearly illustrate that participation turns into something that is only based on tastes and likes at the end of the process. Finally, the third phase (post-economic crisis in 2008) introduces the clear paradoxical transition of citizen participation in housing developments. This is illustrated with cases in three cities showing that inclusion and (later) exclusion can happen in the same, long run time in which housing developments take place in housing markets where prices and capital keep on playing a strong role. Professional parties with large influence are dominant, and in the warm relations between local governments and project developers, informally, decisions have been shaped behind the scenes before formal participation is started. Therefore, the authors remain critical about how much citizen participation, or maybe only a new tone in citizen participation, has actually removed barriers to housing developments and access to housing.

Chapter 4 by Lennert Werner, Pascal Beckers, and Eva Jongsma focuses on the **multiculturalist character** of today's **urban neighbourhoods** and its consequences for planning. This chapter is critical of the process of planning that fails to cooperate with various minority groups in society in the process of urban transformation. The authors state that despite a growing interest among spatial planning scholars in participatory approaches, these approaches fail to account for the growing urban reality of multicultural societies; they seem to be 'culturally blind'. The essay discusses a case study of urban regeneration in the Bijlmer neighbourhood in Amsterdam. Amsterdam is one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world, housing 172 different nationalities in 2021 (OIS Amsterdam, n.d.a.). Dealing with residents with such a variety of nationalities and backgrounds signifies a new challenge for civil servants when they prepare for urban regeneration. In Dutch planning, it is required to do a participatory planning process when urban transformation processes are carried out with a change in the legal local zoning plans. At present, the literature on intercultural planning is thin, especially regarding decision-making processes of planning. The changed cultural setting in many cities is the basis for a transition needed in participatory planning towards 'intercultural planning', according to the authors. They explore what 'intercultural planning' could look like for the local

government process of preparing an urban regeneration plan. The authors plead for more and better attempts to get to know the opinions of people living in a neighbourhood, especially those who are 'unreachable' at the moment. This could be achieved, for instance, with the help of neighbourhood ambassadors. Furthermore, the authors plead for applying an 'asset-based community development approach', a theoretical approach that emphasises the existing skills, capacities, ideas, knowledge, know-how, creativity, and other 'assets' present in the local community. This chapter shows an example of one of the drivers for change, that of demographics and migration, the emergence of multicultural neighbourhoods, and the need for spatial planners to respond to this altered situation in Dutch cities.

Chapter 5 by Lummina Horlings, Ferry van Kann, and Diogo Soares da Silva describes the **energy transition** and emergence of **community energy cooperatives** (CECs) that are seen as tools for increased awareness of the need for the energy transition and all kinds of benefits for the local community. It examines the spatial planning conditions for energy transitions driven by CECs in different institutional contexts through a comparison of CECs in the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. The essay illustrates how the energy transition entails a transition in the geography and timing of energy production and distribution that results in dilemmas and socio-spatial (mis) matches. Although sustainable energy production offers the potential of decentralised (co-)production and autonomy at the regional and local level, the existing power structures in energy production and distribution and dilemmas ensure that strategic spatial planning remains necessary if renewable energy targets are to be achieved. This planning must consider stakeholders and timing across multiple spatial scales, balancing strategically solving the mismatches with a responsiveness to local characteristics and spatial planning conditions, and creating a supportive institutional context for CECs, including backing from umbrella organisations, expertise, and access to publicly owned land. This chapter, then, is a clear illustration of the importance of the context of planning, multi-scalar processes, and dynamics of competition and cooperation in understanding transitions.

Chapter 6 by Sander van Schagen and Patrick Witte provides a commentary on the new **Environment and Spatial Planning Act** *('Omgevingswet')* that has come into force in the Netherlands since January 2024. At least on paper, this new law marks a fundamental shift regarding the legal part of the Dutch planning system. Their commentary is one of the first ex-post reflections on the planning transitions incorporated into it. Starting with the basics, and a presentation of the six core instruments, distinguishing between 'the decentralized rules' with the Environmental Plan *('Omgevingsplan')* as the central element, and five other core instruments. The authors refer to it as a 'Swiss pocket knife' that is sometimes considered to improve the toolbox of

planners to accelerate, simplify, and improve spatial development procedures. However, the authors critically question this. The introduction of the principle of 'Balanced Allocation of Functions (ETFAL: *Evenwichtige Toedeling van Functies Aan Locaties*) is new, and explicates the goal of getting towards a more holistic decision-making on spatial functions and environmental assessment. Will this indeed lead to more holistic planning? The authors describe how, on a procedural level, the way of working for employees changes with the application of new rules and instruments. But on a fundamental level, the considerations for deciding on a balanced allocation of functions to locations remain a key challenge. In this reflection, one year after the new Act came into force, the authors describe in more detail how the planning system has shifted in a legal and procedural way. This new Act facilitates a stronger emphasis on the human factor, stakeholders, and participation in spatial development processes.

Chapter 7 by Patrick Witte, Marlies Meijer, Peter Pelzer, Iris Veenvliet, and Lieke Vermeulen discusses the phenomenon of **teaching planning** to the next generation of planners with the help of organized **'planning studios'**. Over 25 years of teaching 'planning studios' at Utrecht University is reflected upon. The concept of using a planning studio or related 'atelier courses' is compared with other educational programs in spatial planning at 5 other universities. First, the theoretical background and didactical philosophy are explained, as well as learning objectives for educating planners as outlined by the Association of European Schools of Planning (2022). The value of teaching to 'think of the long-term future' is emphasized. Next, the history of how the planning studio courses in the Utrecht bachelor's and master's educational programs are taught is reflected upon, with the help of student and teacher evaluations. The authors look back on why and how the planning studios have been altered over the years. Contextual developments such as the financial crisis of 2008 and the influx of international students have influenced the set-up of the planning studio courses. A comparison is made with other studios in Dutch Planning Schools, resulting in an overview of the 'planning studio' courses at Utrecht University, Wageningen University, Radboud University, University of Groningen, University of Amsterdam, and Delft University of Technology. Two planning studio courses are highlighted and discussed, a course in Wageningen and in Nijmegen. The authors suggest, reflecting on the studios and their embedding in curricula, that "the biggest challenge to fostering long-term thinking is not so much the potential of studios as such but rather their decreasing importance as an integrative course in the curriculum design". The authors advocate for the relevance of planning studios because studios (also called ateliers or future labs) provide a space for 'experiential learning experiences' with a mixture of using academic knowledge on theories and methods, and training professional skills. As they offer the ability to solve complex planning problems in a real-world setting, forcing the students to create visions for the future and shape their current actions accordingly, studios

need a place in planning curricula as they are a valuable means to train 'the futures literacy' of spatial planning students.

Chapter 8 by Jannes Willems, Barbara Tempels and Caroline Newton concludes this book with a reflection on the implications of the transitions in planning for Dutch planning schools. The chapters on transitions are discussed in a **reflective workshop** held together with the Professors of Planning (POP) network. A central concern was the question what can be done to prepare the next generation of planners for the future, similar to a reflection of the AESOP's 'young academics' as described by Varış Husar et al. (2023). This concluding chapter gives an evaluative overview of where the planning schools stand with regard to the role and responsibilities of planning schools in today's society. How do we see, at the moment of the workshop in 2024, the influence of transitions in planning research, in planning education, and in practice and creating impact?

6 CLOSING REMARKS

>> In the 21st century, is 'spatial planning' in need of a **rethinking** and redefinition? This question has been the starting point for this book. We hope that this book offers part of an answer. The separate book chapters illustrate various transitions, in physical domains such as water, housing, and energy, but also in 'softer' aspects of planning, such as the cultural heterogeneity of neighbourhoods in cities, and in processes regarding participation. Two cross-cutting developments are discussed: the legal system of planning with the new Environment and Spatial Planning Act, and education in spatial planning. We evaluate that these developments 'out there' have invited us to look 'inside' at our own responsibility and possibilities as planning schools in the Netherlands. Therefore, as editors, we decided to keep the structure of the concluding chapter structured along the three core responsibilities of school planning, namely research, education, and practice/creating impact. That is where 'we', as planning schools united in this collective pursuit to write a book about transitions in planning, can make a difference.

CHAPTER

2

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Joks Janssen
Marijn van Asseldonk

From Fast Forward to Past Forward

The importance of a heritage-based planning approach in tackling drought and water scarcity in the sandy areas of the Netherlands

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>> From Fast Forward to Past Forward

The importance of a heritage-based planning approach in tackling drought and water scarcity in the sandy areas of the Netherlands

Joks Janssen
Marijn van Asseldonk

SUMMARY

>> Climate change requires that the Dutch planning community rethinks its prevailing approach to water management. One impulse for this is that the Netherlands is increasingly confronted with drought. This is a growing problem, particularly on the elevated sandy soils in the eastern and southern parts of the country. There, regional water authorities, farmers and estate owners are confronted with extremely dry conditions during the growing season. As a result, active measures need to be taken to hold all water. Sending water is impossible, but the available precipitation can be put to much better use. This essay argues that pre-industrial land use and historical water structures, systems and practices can be helpful to do so. Based on the revitalization of a medieval watermill landscape in Noord-Brabant and the Lankheet Estate in Overijssel, the essay illustrates how to link these structures, systems and practices of the past to a future which is more drought resilient. Both cases show that climate adaptation planning can benefit from cultural heritage. Consequently, the essay makes a plea for a heritage-based planning approach in tackling drought and water scarcity. For that approach to succeed, a closer cooperation between the separate disciplinary and professional fields of water management and heritage conservation will be needed.

Key words: drought, water scarcity, sandy soils, cultural heritage, the Netherlands.

1 INTRODUCTION

>> It is July 2018. The Netherlands are facing an exceptionally dry summer. It has not rained for over six weeks in the village of Soerendonk in the (southern) province of Noord-Brabant. Precipitation deficit is a great threat to the crops of potato farmer Twan van der Heijden. When inspecting his land, he discovers an unusual phenomenon: thin, dark-green lines run through his barren, sallow fields.

In the national newspaper *Het Algemeen Dagblad*, Van der Heijden said that at first, he could not figure out what those lines were (Boere, 2018). The farmer then took out his drone and filmed his land from above. On the drone images, the dark-green lines on his land were clearly visible (Figure 1). The farmer's father immediately noted that the lines corresponded with where once ditches used to run. Those ditches were filled in during the land consolidation in the 1970s. Apparently, the conditions in those ditches were still more humid than elsewhere on the land. Old maps of the sandy landscape showed the father to be right. It is the finely grained and water-rich landscape from before the land consolidation that is coming to the surface because of the drought.

FIGURE 1
Landscape history revealed through drought on fields farmer van der Heijden
Source: Van der Heijden

Farmer Van der Heijden was not the only one making such a historic discovery in 2018. The drought brought to light old landscape structures in various places in the Netherlands that would normally have remained largely hidden. The contours of old, vanished structures, such as farms, cemeteries, and castles, became clearly visible in the landscape. On top of such ruins, plants have less soil available, which becomes visible when there is a shortage of water. The fields of farmer Van der Heijden however showed that it also works the other way round: filled-in ditches can, with their deeper soil, lead to larger, greener plants: they thus leave 'positive' traces in the landscape.

This raises the question whether we can learn from those old traces in our landscape. Do they only have a historical significance, or are they also relevant to the current task of tackling drought? That is the question at the heart of this essay. We explore the possible contribution of water heritage to a drought resilient sandy soil landscape in the east and southern provinces of the Netherlands. In these sandy areas, the social, ecological, and economic consequences of droughts are considerable. Regional stakeholders are looking for ways to better mitigate the impacts of drought, thereby preventing water shortages that could harm nature, farmers, industries, and citizens. A transition in water management is needed, from rapid drainage to retaining as much water as possible.

In search of landscape structures that offer long term, drought resilient solutions, it is our opinion that the past, written in the landscape, offers a way forward in this challenging planning transition. In fact, the pre-modern landscape traces on the images of farmer Van der Heijden show planners and water engineers the way to a (more) water-rich and drought resilient landscape. The thesis we develop in this essay is that both tangible and intangible water heritage is a relevant source of knowledge and inspiration for tackling drought on the sandy soils. We discuss the idea that water heritage can serve as a platform for drought resilient landscape planning. By using historical knowledge and reusing old water structures, systems, and practices, it is possible not only to preserve heritage and its surrounding landscape but also to counter the shortage of water during dry periods.

To substantiate this thesis, we will first consider the complex problem of drought in the Dutch delta. We focus on the consequences of drought on the elevated sandy soils in the Netherlands, and the possible solutions that are being explored. Second, we describe the current search for so-called 'nature-based solutions' to tackle drought and show that history can serve as a source to spatially contextualize these solutions. Third, we show that the water systems and accompanied customs and practices of the pre-modern sandy soil landscape offer starting points for drought resilient landscape planning. We illustrate this with the analysis of the revitalization of a medieval watermill landscape in the

province of Noord-Brabant and the Lankheet Estate in the province of Overijssel. Our case study approach draws on different sources (historical maps, policy documents and plans) to investigate the role water heritage plays in planning for drought resilient landscapes. Fourth and finally, we discuss the findings of the case studies, and make a plea for a strategy of heritage-based planning in tackling drought on the sandy soils. For such a strategy to be successful, a closer cooperation between the largely separate disciplines and professions of heritage and water management is needed.

2 DROUGHT IN THE DUTCH DELTA

2.1 Challenging traditional water management

The Netherlands have a long tradition of urban and regional planning, which is largely based on dealing with water. It is the fight against water ('keeping dry feet') that has had a considerable influence on the way towns and landscape have been shaped, particularly in the western part of the country (De Klerk & Van der Wouden, 2021). Combating the excess of water in the Dutch delta is part of the planning culture and expressed in (historical) institutions and programs, such as Room for the River, that seek to increase the capacity of rivers to cope with high water levels (Meyer, 2016). The Dutch live in a delta where the landscape is designed to discharge water as quickly and efficiently as possible. However, climate change is currently putting this form of water management to the test.

The dry and hot summer of 2018, when farmer Van der Heijden discovered the written history on his land, showed that not only the excess but also the shortage of water is emerging as a problem. This was unexpected for many. With a lot of engineering and quick fixes, the Dutch waterboards kept the 'water machine' running in 2018, but some areas took a long time to recover from the drought (De Louw et.al.,2022). It is very likely that albeit those efforts, there is permanent damage to nature, urban contexts, and agricultural areas. The year 2018 demonstrated how much economic damage extreme drought can cause, particularly in the agriculture and horticulture sectors. It also had a negative impact on nature and on water quality in nature reserves and brooks. Moreover, 2018 was not an isolated event but was followed by the equally dry years of 2019 and 2020, and more recently 2022.

Drought, in this essay defined as 'a below normal water availability', confronts the Dutch with the limits of the 'makeability' of the current water system.[1] For decades, the Dutch landscape has been adapted to the needs of an expanding society and economy by means of technology and large-scale planning interventions, such as land consolidation and the implementation of drainage systems (Metz & Van den Heuvel, 2012; Meyer, 2016). The importance of the substratum and its eco-hydrological systems as a foundation for spatial planning gave way to technical feasibility (PBL, 2021). Interventions were geared to eliminating excess water, creating the perfect conditions for modern agriculture and urbanization. That is how the Dutch managed water, which seemingly did not cause any visible problems, since there was sufficient rainfall during the (drier) summer period.

In recent years, however, the drier periods have increased in duration and intensity. Scenario analyses for the Netherlands predict that due to climate change, prolonged periods of drought (alternating with periods of extreme rainfall) will occur more often in the (near) future (Klein Tank et.al., 2014). As a result, the relatively new problem of drought and (related) freshwater shortage rises on the Dutch spatial planning agenda. Several authorities, most notably the Delta Commissioner and the Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, acknowledge that water boards, drinking water companies and farmers need to improve their ability to cope with (longer) periods of drought (Ministerie van IenW, 2022). Traditional water management, based on drainage and fast discharge of water, might no longer be effective in a changing climate.

2.2 Elevated sandy soils under pressure

The growing ineffectiveness of traditional water management certainly holds true for the elevated sandy soils in the eastern and southern provinces of the Netherlands. These areas are more prone to be impacted by drought. During the recent consecutive dry years, major rainfall deficits occurred throughout the country, but the elevated sandy soils had to deal with larger precipitation shortfall and the most intense drought. Groundwater levels dropped

1 Though a precise definition of drought is contested, it generally indicates a shortage of water at a certain point within the so-called hydrological cycle, often during a prolonged period. Depending on the impact of water shortage on the water-cycle, society, and nature, there are different types of droughts, such as meteorological drought and hydrological drought. The first type of drought is generally defined as a prolonged lack of precipitation. When prolonged rainfall deficit persists, most notably during the summer season, it can develop into other types of droughts, such as hydrological drought. This type of drought occurs when rainfall deficit and temperature deficiencies have such an impact on the hydrological cycle in a certain area that the balance is negatively impacted. This manifests itself, for example, in falling groundwater levels.

considerably and brook streams and fens fell dry, with negative effects for both nature and agriculture. Crops and wet nature reserves, with their exceptional flora and fauna, were damaged.

The sandy soils' vulnerability to drought is the result of several factors. First and foremost, is their (sole) dependency on rainwater. In contrast to the western lowlands, which can be supplied with fresh water from rivers and other freshwater sources, such as Lake IJsselmeer, the elevated sandy soils have no direct access to rivers. Hence, they are dependent on precipitation and groundwater for their freshwater supply, making these landscapes especially vulnerable for summer droughts and precipitation deficits. Consequently, drinking water companies, industries, and farmers use deep and shallow groundwater for their operational processes.

Second, and related to the extraction of large quantities of deep and shallow groundwater, is the intensive land-use and the design (and management) of the related water system. Traditionally, the logic of the sandy soils depends on a hydrological connection between upper and dry sand ridges ('recharge area') and lower and wetter courses of the brooks ('discharge area') through groundwater flows. Rainwater that falls on the sand ridges infiltrates, and flows through aquifers towards the brook, where it wells up, resulting in wetlands. From the late nineteenth century onwards, this gradient landscape, with its alternating surface sand ridges, plains, meandering brooks, and a predominantly small-scale mosaic of extensive farmland, was radically altered (Deltares, 2021).

Both above and below the ground, the water system was adjusted to a more intensified agricultural use, including the construction of ditches and the normalization of brook valley streams. Deep drainage systems were constructed to dewater the lower wet areas and to drop the groundwater table in the upper sand ridges, thereby facilitating intensive farming systems, maximizing crop yields by high fertilization and ample water supply (Bieleman, 2000). Furthermore, deep groundwater was extracted for drinking water and industrial use and shallow groundwater for irrigation of agricultural land. With the construction of canals, ditches, the drainage of agricultural plots and the extraction of large volumes of groundwater, the once water-rich sandy landscapes turned into a highly effective 'drainage machine'.

This machine had (and has) but one goal: directing the water as quickly as possible to the (canalized) streams and via canals and rivers to the North Sea. As a result, the precipitation surplus during fall and winter periods is drained with high speed and can no longer be of use in the dryer months. Moreover, the combination of dewatering, drainage and groundwater extraction for drinking water and industrial use lead to the structural lowering of groundwater levels.

Since the 1950s, the groundwater table in the sandy soil regions has dropped by 0,5 to 1 meter, and in some areas even by 1,5 meters (Witte et al., 2019). The structurally lowered groundwater levels result in a water system under continuous stress, particularly during prolonged periods of drought. Then, groundwater levels drop even further, and water availability for wet biotopes, soil subsidence in peatlands, agricultural use and drinking water production comes under pressure.

2.3 Water as a limiting factor

Intensive agriculture, drought-sensitive nature reserves, and groundwater use for drinking water supply at close proximity to each other not only leads to a water system under pressure, but also to ever greater conflicts in land-use and spatial planning on the sandy soils. For example, lowering groundwater tables, using shallow groundwater for irrigation of crops as well as the extraction of deep groundwater for drinking water supply, complicates the preservation of nearby situated wet nature reserves that benefit from a high groundwater level in a wide zone around the protected area. The preservation of these fragile, protected nature reserves is becoming an increasing problem.

Governments are less and less likely to be able to meet the legally defined conservation goals, as mentioned in the (European) Birds and Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive (Bastmeijer et al., 2021). It is expected that - in the absence of a change of policy – pressures on the water system and resulting land-use conflicts will intensify. In the years to come, water demand will increase because of expected economic and population growth. And as the current trend of increasing annual temperature continues, the sandy soil regions will face even longer and more extreme periods of drought in the (near) future (Philip et al., 2020). The process of lowering the groundwater level is further reinforced by an increase in water consumption by farmers, industries, and citizens.

During dry periods, farmers use sprinkler irrigation from shallow groundwater to keep their crops alive. In the province of Noord-Brabant, for example, registrations show an increase of groundwater use by the agricultural sector from 40 to 100 million cubic meters during the very dry year of 2018 (Adviescommissie Droogte, 2022: 44). The same holds true for the (seasonal) increase in drinking water supply because of citizens who want to water their gardens or fill their swimming pools. Already in 2020, several drinking water companies operating in the sandy soils, called on people to stop watering their garden, washing their car, and filling their pools. On hot days, drinking water consumption increased by 30 to 50 percent, and put such a strain on groundwater resources that the supply of drinking water was jeopardized (Vitens, 2021).

With the expected increasing water demand and intensifying droughts because of accelerating climate change, we are rapidly reaching the limits of the 'drainage machine' that the sandy soil landscape has become. The landscape is already barely able to cope with prolonged periods of drought and expected developments will exacerbate rather than alleviate this situation. Many hydrological experts believe that if current trends progress, water availability becomes a significant limiting factor for both the natural environment and many economic sectors on the elevated sandy soils. To prevent (future) water shortage and drought damage on the sandy soils, a radical transition in the lay-out and governance of the water system is needed (De Louw et.al., 2022).

3 REVITALIZING WATER HERITAGE FOR DROUGHT-RESILIENT LANDSCAPES

3.1 Reversing the trend of 'engineering the landscape'

Over the past century and a half, humans have adapted the sandy soil landscape to accommodate an increasingly intensive exploitation. It is not too much to say that many of the current problems caused by drought are the result of modern land-use. Successive rounds of land consolidation have engineered the sandy soil landscape to accommodate any function in any place, regardless of the conditions of soil and water. This resulted, for example, in agricultural use of the once wet, low-lying parts of the landscape, with farming up to the edge of the valley stream. Function dictates the (ground)water level, rather than the other way around.

Climate change sets pressure on this already over-tightened water system on the sandy soils. The current system lacks the necessary resilience to cope with weather extremes. Even after relatively short periods of drought various ecological and economic functions suffer from water shortages. Contemporary technological solutions, such as subirrigation, might contribute to improved soil moisture conditions, but the water volume needed for sub-irrigation can be large and potentially puts (even more) pressure on the regional water sources (De Wit et.al., 2022). If the sandy soil landscape wants to regain its resilience, water needs to be retained, stored, and buffered much longer, so that reserves are built up that can be used in times of drought. Consequently, the groundwater levels must be raised in order to 'feed' ecosystems, agricultural land, and urban use.

According to many experts, the challenge lies in designing and developing a water system that stores as much water as possible (in the subsoil) during the (wet) winter months and can retain as much water as possible during the (dryer) summer months, with sufficient capacity to drain off excess precipitation water during peak downpours (De Louw et.al, 2022). In other words, the sandy

soil landscape must become a 'sponge' again, which is better able to retain the water and release it (gradually) when weather conditions require it. Recent government reports on drought resilience therefore stress the need of adapting the land use to the possibilities the soil and landscape offer, instead of adapting the soil and landscape to the desired land use (Deltares, 2021; Adviescommissie Droogte, 2022).

It is against this background, that more and more planners, hydrologists and water managers want to reverse the trend of engineering the sandy soil landscape with man-made, technological solutions to meet economic needs. To make the sandy soils more drought resilient, they instead opt for adaptation planning, based on so-called 'nature-based solutions' (Baptist et al., 2019). Many are searching for a sandy soil landscape where there is (more) room for natural, ecological, and hydrological processes. That seemingly is a great idea, but how can this be done properly? What is the route towards a climate resilient sandy soil landscape that is better suited to deal with more intense and longer periods of drought? Is, in this case, the way back perhaps also the way forward?

3.2 Heritage as an inspiration for designing drought-resilient landscapes

Of course, we cannot literally go back to the past. The past is a foreign land, 'they do things differently there', as L.P. Hartley once stated (Hartley, 2015). Today's sandy soil landscapes are more densely occupied and used than one and a half centuries ago. But if we strive for 'nature-based' solutions, the largely forgotten, neglected, and sometimes even lost past of pre-industrial land use and its water heritage can be a source of inspiration for a drought resilient future (Bakels & Elpers, 2021). Indeed, historical water systems, interwoven with past land use practices, provide a rich reservoir of solutions that seem better adapted to dealing with drought than current technology-driven ones (Willems & Van Schaijk, 2015).

The historic resources of the pre-industrial sandy soil landscape could point the way towards a situation in which natural processes were still dominant and the soil characteristics and hydrological conditions largely determined (agricultural) land use, instead of the other way round. Their low(er)-tech solutions for the use of water are not 'frozen' heritage but can also be helpful for designing the future. In a reflection on the major challenges the Dutch rural areas face, landscape architect Dirk Sijmons also hints at the pro-active role water heritage can play in 'healing, reconnecting, undoing and de-engineering what technology-driven water management has disturbed over the past one and a half century' (Sijmons, 2020: 21).

Sijmons' suggestion to reuse pre-industrial wisdom as an important tool in managing water resources comes as no surprise. Over the last decades heritage

management in the Netherlands has shifted from being a separate sector in society, run by experts and focused on the conservation of individual buildings, to a 'vector' in which many stakeholders transform heritage to make and shape the living environments of the future (Janssen et al., 2017). The intertwinement of heritage and spatial planning is closely related to the idea that heritage can be used as a resource to achieve certain local development goals, such as making places attractive to residents and tourists, strengthening people's attachment to places, and branding and promoting places (Holtorf and Fairclough, 2013). Dutch heritage management tries to move from the idea that the consequences of climate change are 'a threat to heritage', to heritage being part of climate mitigation and adaptation (Fatoric & Egberts, 2020). Subsequently, it is argued that the past matters when we design new relationships with water in the wake of climate change: 'Water related heritage preserves and transmits forgotten best practices and catastrophic events. It harbors the long histories of water systems and safeguards our cultural memory for generations to come' (Hein & Kolen, 2020: 4). Water heritage is relevant to the redevelopment, redesign, or reuse of existing and ancient water systems as well as to the design of new systems that are more adapted to the consequences of climate change.

3.3 Putting tangible and intangible water heritage 'at work'

Over millennia, people have created immensely rich and varied, often interconnected systems to manage water. Today, the tangible, material remains of these systems are called 'water heritage'. Linked to that tangible heritage is often an immaterial history of intangible (forgotten) management systems, customs, practices, and behavior. That intangible heritage encompasses local knowledge and skills and regional traditions in water engineering, closely related to the specific soil and hydrological conditions of the area in question. The concept of 'water heritage' thus refers to the inherited tangible landscape and their associated intangible practices and management systems, which are believed to have much to teach us about sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change (Willems & Van Schaijk, 2015).

In contemporary heritage management it is possible to learn 'sustainability out of the past' by analyzing the evolution of water systems, their use, and alterations in time with digitalized historical sources (RCE, 2018; Vreenegoor & Kosian, 2022). The historical knowledge thus provided, can act as a basis for 'retro-innovation' in (adaptation) planning, which can be understood as an active rediscovery of marginalized and often forgotten knowledge and expertise that combines elements and practices from the past and configures these elements for new and future purposes (Zagata et al., 2020). Building on this notion, Hein & Kolen (2020) point out that new investigations of water heritage (both tangible and intangible) can serve as a source of (1) knowledge, (2) inspiration, and (3) identity-building, and therefore cooperation, in contemporary water management and climate adaptation planning.

In the next sections, we highlight how these (three) different sources of water heritage can be put 'at work' in the sandy soil landscape. We do so by means of two cases which offer a comparative perspective, namely the revitalization of a medieval watermill landscape in Noord-Brabant and the Lankheet Estate in Overijssel. Both cases are situated near a brook valley stream and aim at increasing the water retention capacity of the sandy soil landscape (Figure 2). Whereas in Noord-Brabant the largely forgotten past of pre-industrial water (mill) *structures* are put forward to counter drought and water scarcity, in Overijssel the focus is on revitalizing old water (management) *systems*, and their associated practices.

In what follows, we first describe the case of watermill landscapes in Noord-Brabant. The tangible heritage of the Venbergen, Opwetten and Spoordonk watermills and their surrounding landscape is rediscovered and redeveloped in order to increase the sponge function of De Dommel and Beerze valley streams. Second, we highlight the case of the Lankheet Estate, situated near the village of Haaksbergen in Overijssel. On this old estate, the intangible heritage of irrigation by means of flood meadows is combined with contemporary crop knowledge to revitalize the brook valley landscape of De Buurserbeek.

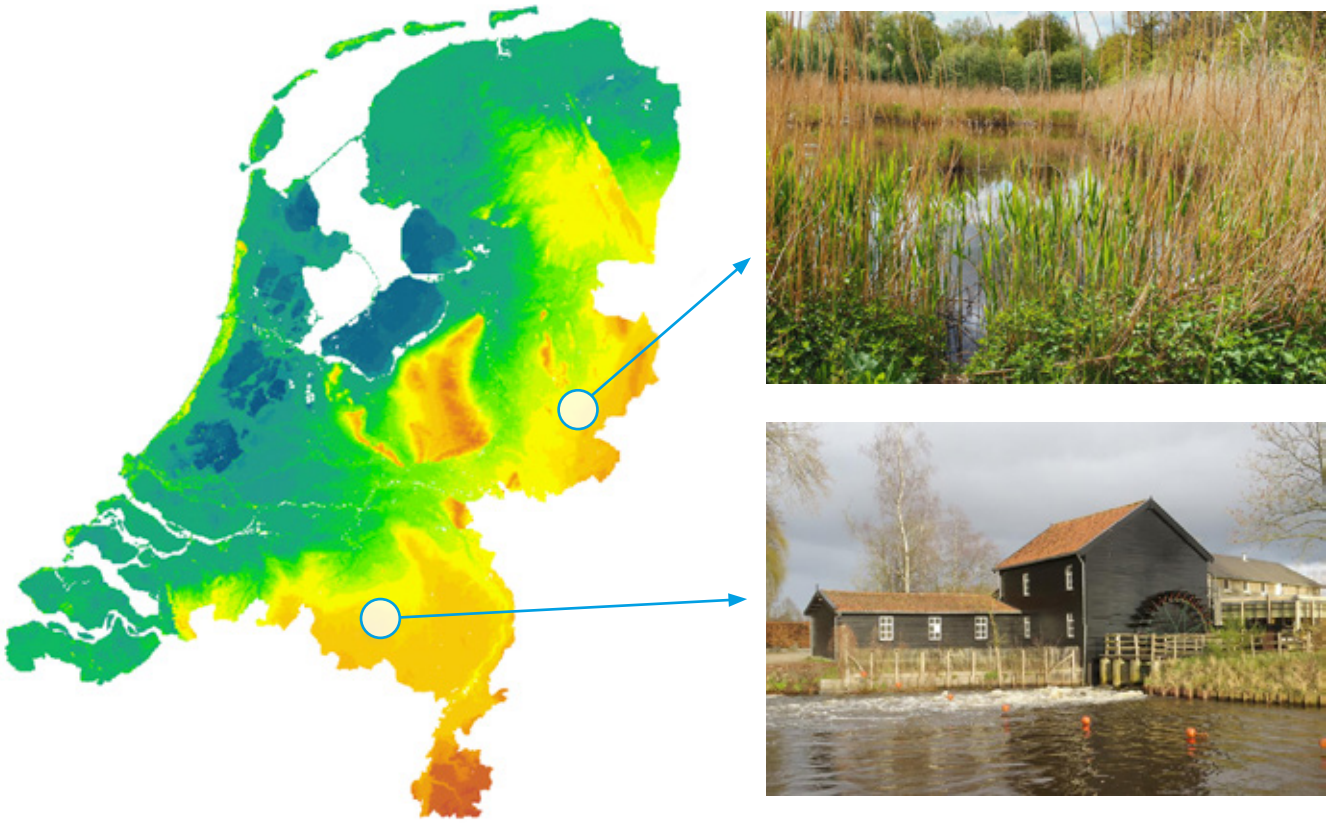

FIGURE 2
Lankheet Estate and watermill landscapes situated on the sandy soils in the Netherlands
Source: Actueel Hoogtebestand Nederland

4 PAST FORWARD IN NOORD-BRABANT AND OVERIJSSEL

4.1 Case 1: Rediscovering and redeveloping watermill landscapes

The Venbergen, Opwetten and Spoordonk watermills are situated in the middle course of De Dommel and Beerze valley streams in Noord-Brabant. Although these watermills were mentioned first in official documents around 1200, it is estimated that some have been operational for about 800 to 1000 years, starting around 900. They were part of a network of in total 83 watermills in Noord-Brabant, of which only 12 watermills remain.

Watermills were pivotal in pre-industrial water management on the sandy soils, as they provided a means of working with the (peak) flows of the brook valley streams. They could arguably be called the first hydropower plants, making use of the water current to process wheat, saw logs or press oil from seeds. Mills were built on strategic places, where water was abundant, with enough gradient, and where building a mill was easy and the brooks were relatively small. The surroundings of the mill provided fertile grounds, suitable for working the land. Hence, those places saw a lot of activity. This makes watermills palimpsestic places where a lot of history is 'stored' in the landscape.

Although the solitary structures of the watermills were designed to cooperate with the land, they also started to alter their surrounding landscape and became a defining factor in the ecological development and shaping of the sandy soil landscape (RHDHV, 2013). Over time watermills created so called 'watermill landscapes'. These landscapes had specific characteristics because of the functioning of the watermill and can roughly be divided in two parts. The first, upstream part was wet, due to a dam that was constructed to raise water levels in the brook in order to set the mill in motion. The landscape 'behind' the mill got wetter over time. Those backstream, wet landscapes became host to a specific array of aquatic nature, such as peat grounds, 'brookforests', sedge-marches and wet grasslands.

The second, downstream part of the watermill landscape, is often called 'millbrook', and also developed specific characteristics. It provided space to store water and the often-silty rich waters provided a natural fertilizer for the so-called 'beemden'; grasslands in the brook valleys. This part of the landscape also provided a migration and living area to all kinds of plant and animal species, among which are a variety of (currently endangered) brookfish.
For centuries, watermill landscapes thus acted as water storage areas. Running water was slowed down and halted at the dam, creating the specific landscape upstream, but also keeping the water from 'being lost' downstream. In times of downpour, running water was slowed down and gradually passed the mill, preventing flash floods downstream. In times of drought, the dam kept water available in the upstream landscape, making sure it provided the much-needed

water and preventing the damage to nature and crop. As watermills lost their function because of the mechanization of water management, so did the (surrounding) watermill landscapes. Whereas some (iconic) watermills became designated as monuments, the surrounding landscapes (and their use as water storage) were largely forgotten. The heritage of those landscapes is, however, often still visible. In places where the landscape is levelled out, but human activity is minimal, the stream valleys are still dominated by 'brookforests' and marches. In places with more human activity, there is more variety in the landscape, ranging from peat marches to forest marches, combined with wet grasslands, often bordered by wooded banks.

FIGURE 3
The Venbergse watermill
Source: Molendatabase
Photo: Gerard Sturkenboom

Until recently, the potential of historic watermills for climate solutions was hardly taken into account in planning processes to reconstruct stream valleys. Water managers and heritage professionals regarded them merely as individual and solitary monuments to be preserved, without regard for their function in the landscape and possible water storage potential. The rediscovery of the functioning of the lost landscape heritage of the watermills began with the commitment of the residents of the mills. Some of them were interested in not only restoring their watermill but also making them run again, and they began to decipher how these mills functioned in the early days (Van Paassen, 2022).

If they ever wanted to grind grain again, it was important that they could dam the water behind the mill in order to create the necessary waterflow to get the wheels running (Figure 3). They then slowly but gradually found out that by damming the water, the landscape behind the mill changed. Running the mill impacted the dynamics of the stream and the backwater areas. Based on existing historical eco-hydrological studies of water mills, they found out that their mills

appeared to be part of a large and coherent watermill landscape that extended for miles upstream and resulted in a specific flora and fauna.

The newly acquired knowledge about watermill landscapes was initially met with disinterest from governments. However, the extremely dry years of 2018 and 2019 brought about a turnaround. The province of Noord-Brabant and waterboard De Dommel became more receptive for unorthodox solutions to combat drought. The potential of the (network of) watermill landscapes for climate adaptation became acknowledged, and new heritage programs at the national and provincial level created the (financial) opportunity to explore and exploit this potential. Subsequently, civic society and government organizations, like the Mill Foundation Noord-Brabant, the province of Noord-Brabant and waterboard De Dommel, joined forces to work on the redevelopment of watermill landscapes.

Currently, the water retention potential of the watermill landscapes of Venbergen, Opwetten and Spoordonk is investigated. Research shows that the capacity for water storage can greatly increase by reinvigorating the old landscape elements and structures. It is estimated that the revitalization of (old) watermill landscapes in Noord-Brabant could lead to 300 to 400 acres of extra brook valley stream landscape. In wet periods additional space is created for water storage. In dry periods, the watermill landscapes retain water longer, which prevents natural and agricultural land from drying out. By storing and buffering water, watermills also contribute to the prevention of flooding downstream (RHDHV, 2022b).

Reinstating old landscape structures in Venbergen, Opwetten and Spoordonk can meet several ecological goals, from enabling fish to migrate, to restoring aquatic nature. Revitalizing the functioning of the mills, and its accompanying dams, would make an end to the 'unnatural water-level regime' whilst enabling buffering of water during peak flows (RHDHV, 2022b). Additionally, the potential of watermills also shows that reinstating the watermill landscape contributes to the recognizability of the local landscape and increases its amenity value (RHDHV, 2022a).

The government-funded research into the potential of the watermill landscapes for contemporary, drought resilient purposes, not only results in new knowledge about the functioning of these landscapes, which can then be used for their redevelopment, but also supports a process of (regional) identity building. The organizations involved in the project also use the research to increase awareness for the special history of the watermill landscape among a wider audience. Building on the legacy of Van Gogh's famous painting of the (nearby) Collen watermill (1884), the iconic status and value of these heritage structures is being exploited to enhance the connection between urban society and the landscape.

4.2 Case 2: Revaluing and reapplying old irrigation techniques

The Lankheet Estate is situated on the banks of the Buurserbeek, a small river that springs from several streams, among which is the German Aa near Ahaus. Eventually, the Buurserbeek becomes the Schipbeek and ends in the river Ijssel near Deventer. The river played an important role in the shaping of the landscape; as a life support for the region, from grain mills, dewatering to agriculture and shipping. Haaksbergen, the small village along the Buurserbeek, proclaims that 'the Buurserbeek has always been important to Haaksbergen'.[2]

The Buurserbeek allowed famers to fertilize their land using the mineral rich water; a historical agricultural form of so called 'flood meadows'. These flood meadows were pivotal to pre-modern agriculture. For centuries, farmers used to fertilize their grasslands using local mineral rich groundwater and brookwater. The process involved flooding the grasslands, after which the mineral rich water would fertilize the land. Flooding the grasslands this way had several other benefits. Flooded grasslands are protected from freezing in winter, resulting in farmers being able to start growing crop again early in the growing season. Furthermore, insects and animals that normally would damage the crop were prevented from reaching the ground, increasing the yield of the land. In the dry months of the summer, an ingenious irrigation system, consisting of small (human made) brooks, reservoirs and canals was used to irrigate the land. The methods to create this nutrient rich landscape became suitable to growing a variety of crop, with a yield that is comparable to modern day agricultural methods. (based on three harvests a year).

These flood meadows disappeared however, when artificial fertilization made pre-modern ways of fertilizing redundant (Baaijens et.al., 2011). The earlier mentioned agricultural modernization had a large impact on the surroundings of the Buurserbeek. And starting in the 19th century, roads, waterways and residential areas further altered the flow of the Buurserbeek. Where it once took water from the Buurserbeek around 16,5 days to reach Deventer, it currently is about 9 hours. Brookforests and fens used to slow down the water, allowing it to saturate the surrounding landscape. Where previously all the small brooks used to be connected, everything got segregated. The ingenious, small scale brooksystem, once used by farmers in the region, was destroyed. Eric Brinkmann, steward of the Lankheet Estate, explains that they wanted 'to restore that system to its old glory' (Het Oversticht, n.d.).

The idea started when a brewery was looking for a new source of water. The search resulted in researching the old flood meadow system of the Lankheet

2 'Veur Hoksebarge hef benaamd de Buurserbek aait belangriek west'. Translated from regional dialect to the Buurserbeek has always been important to Haaksbergen' (Haaksbergen Natuurlijk, n.d.)

Estate. Although the brewery choose another location, the idea to restore the flood meadows remained. The process of drawing up the development of the restoration plans, resulted in consulting old maps of the estate. Those maps showed the old flood meadows of the family Van Heek, who used to own the estate. 'But we didn't know what those where', explains Eric (Het Oversticht, n.d.). An expert from the university researched the maps, and discovered that it contained not only 19th century flood meadows. Landscape elements, like the small scale brooksystem, consisting of reservoirs, wallets and a distribution system visible on the map, indicated that the map also contained a medieval flood meadow system. A historical find. These old landscape elements formed the basis of the reconstruction of this historical watersystem. (Het Oversticht. n.d.) Not to yield crop, but to combat drought, restore nature, store water and to (re)create the heritage for recreation.

At first, the local groundwater conditions proved to be too enriched[3] to meet the nature restoration goals. In tandem with the Wageningen University (WUR) and Plant Research International, the estate came up with a plan in which the water of Buurserbeek is used to irrigate the meadows (Het Landschap Van Het Lankheet, 2022). Those meadows are filled with reed (Figure 4). The reed 'purifies' the water of the high amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus, after which the water is returned to the Buurserbeek, using the old waterways. To make sure the stored nitrogen and phosphorus in the reed does not unnecessarily enrich the ground, the reed has to be mowed and taken of the land. The reed however, has a high caloric value, making it a suitable as biofuel. Working the reed filtration system this way, prevents it from having to be cleared and replanted after a couple of years (Het Landschap Van Het Lankheet, 2022).

FIGURE 4

The Lankheet 'Reedfilter'
Source: Shutterstock

3 Eutrophication: the process in which water becomes progressively enriched with minerals and nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus

With the restoration of the Buurserbeek, local brook forests and brook specific ecosystems are being developed and the flood meadows are reinvigorated using purified water. These meadows are now flower rich grasslands. And, the soil is restored to a more vital, healthy form resulting in an increased CO_2 intake and more water storage. This also reduces the risk of floods downstream, as the stream valley of the Buurserbeek is designed to store water and serves as flooding area in times of (extreme) downpour.

The intangible heritage of flood meadows might be used to create a water rich landscape, in another interview Eric expresses the relationship people develop with such places. He notes that 'what we do, is move with the landscape. We follow the water'. And their involvement in the restoration of biodiversity and creation of a robust landscape stimulates the volunteers to 'be emotional co-owners of the landscape' (Bakels & Elpers, 2021: 39). Henri, one of the volunteers working on the flooding of the meadows explains: 'everything is connected and the stories of the history of the estate is part of the identity of region' (Het Oversticht. n.d.).

Present day, 'historical functions and traditional practices are combined with a modern twist' to create a climate robust landscape. The use of (in)tangbile heritage results in a modern estate, based on the 800 year old history of the landscape. The estate consists of several landscape elements, from historical property to 14th century wet grasslands. Those wet grasslands offer an innovative way of creating a landscape able to withstand both wet and dry conditions, and at the same time create a biodiverse landscape with heritage elements for recreational purposes (Het Landschap Van Het Lankheet, 2022).

4.3 The past as a present for the future

Increasing the hydrological sponge function of the landscape is one of the cornerstones of building more drought resilient sandy soils. Both the revitalization of the heritage of watermill landscapes and the former irrigation systems on the Lankheet Estate are focused on restoring that function by means of a partial convalescence of the historical situation. It is believed that by re-using old water structures and systems, the negative effects of drought on the current water system can be counteracted.

Table 1 shows a synthesis of the case-study results and how water heritage can be used in a contemporary planning context: as a source of knowledge, inspiration, and identity-building respectively. Both cases have many similarities in the way in which the past is (re)discovered and (re)used for contemporary purposes in the face of climate change and extensive periods of drought. The systemic approach with which the water heritage is approached is striking; it is not conceptualized as a static object, but as a dynamic and evolving process, and as part of a broader, eco-hydrological system. A better understanding of

the functioning of the system of water retention and irrigation respectively, is used as inspiration for re-introducing nature-based and more resilient water landscapes. These landscapes, in turn, act as sources for local and regional identity-building.

TABLE 1
Comparing the revitalization of watermill landscapes and the Lankheet Estate.

Water heritage as....	Watermill landscapes Noord-Brabant, De Dommel	Lankheet Estate Overijssel, Buurserbeek
Knowledge	Rediscovering the functioning of the cultural heritage of medieval water mills as part of a wider eco-hydrological system of backstream and downstream landscapes.	Rediscovering the cultural heritage of a medieval estate and its pre-modern agricultural system of irrigation (and fertilization) by means of flood meadows.
Inspiration	Functioning of watermill landscapes and their capacity for water retention is (re)used to create wetter brook valley landscapes and combat drought.	Flood meadow irrigation system is (re)introduced on the estate to purify local brookwater and to create a more biodiverse and waterrich landscape, which better withstands periods of droughts.
Identity-building	The iconic status of the watermill landscapes is exploited by the Van Gogh National Park to enhance the social connection between urban and rural society.	The estate is positioned as a laboratory to experiment with old water management methods, to tell stories of the region's history and to make local people co-owners of the landscape.

In addition to the above-mentioned conditions, the unwavering commitment of the owners of and involved individuals with the heritage estates should be highlighted as an important part of the success. Their perseverance made it possible to overcome initial opposition or indifference on the part of governments, water boards and heritage organizations. They saw the past landscape as a present for a drought resilient future. And they recognized the potential of the water heritage, and related stories, as a means to connect people and places in times of climate change. The many volunteers currently involved show how much cultural history and heritage are unifying factors for local communities to being active in and relate to nature and landscape.

Both the watermill landscapes and Lankheet Estate are not standing practice in water management and heritage conservation. One could best position them as experimental and innovative spaces, in which heritage owners, governments and civic organizations work together and discover what works when revitalizing old water heritage structures and systems for future purposes.

The experimental status of these spaces is confirmed and perpetuated by attention from provincial, national, and international programs. In Noord-Brabant, the revitalization of the water retention function of watermill landscapes is part of a broader regional development of the Van Gogh National Park and, the flood meadows on the Lankheet Estate are being nominated by the national government as UNESCO World Intangible Heritage. However relevant and deserved this recognition is to both initiatives, the interesting question is how their results and experiences can be translated into wider practice on the sandy soils. In the following, final paragraph of this essay we will reflect on this question.

5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

>> In this essay, we have argued that in the search for solutions for a drought-resilient landscape on the sandy soils, water heritage can play a stimulating role. Those who follow the old traces in the landscape soon come across interesting water structures and systems that offer inspiration for the future. A future, in which scarce water is retained longer through an enlarged sponge effect of the landscape. A future, too, in which water management does not work against nature but actively cooperates with eco-hydrological processes.

Both the medieval watermill landscapes in Noord-Brabant and the Lankheet Estate in Overijssel show that knowledge about the landscape before the twentieth century large-scale interventions and land consolidation projects can contribute to a better understanding of how to adapt to periods of drought and water scarcity. The low(er)-tech and natural principles by which the hydrological dynamics of the brook valley landscape were dealt with in those days, most notably through creating backstream water storage and flood meadows, offer ideas for contemporary solutions to increase the water retention capacity of the sandy soil landscape. Indeed, these ideas have topical value. They can even be reapplied in present-day situations.

The cases of the watermill landscapes and the Lankheet Estate show that water heritage is not only a rich source of knowledge and inspiration, but also of adaptation planning potential. When we explore the (in)tangible heritage of waterways in the Dutch sandy soil landscape, we can touch upon how currently underused or vacant structures and systems can be reused. This is not only relevant for an increased understanding of the landscape and climate change, but as well as for practical, retro-innovative applications like water retention, irrigation, and outlets for peak supplies. Looking at the eco-hydrological history of the landscape gives water managers and landscape planners an idea of the nature of the landscape; how it changed over time and how the interaction of ecological processes and land use influences processes in the present-day landscape (Bas, Pedroli & Borger, 1990).

Historical knowledge is essential to unravel the logics of old water structures and systems and thus clearly identify opportunities for climate change adaptation. Of course, questions may be raised about the extent of the contribution that the revitalization of old water structures and systems can make to solving the drought issue. Set against the quantitative size of the need for water retention on the sandy soils, the contribution of both the watermill landscapes and the Lankheet Estate is negligible. However, from a more qualitative perspective, we would argue that both cases offer valuable contributions to the challenging task ahead. Following Vallerani and Visentin (2021: 126) in their discussion of new uses of old waterways, we too want to stress that water heritage like watermills and estates can act as 'cultural corridors'. These corridors connect past and future, natural base and anthropic intervention, old water management principles and new climate challenges.

Because of its rich history, water heritage can act as steppingstones for climate adaptation planning. Large groups in (local) society can relate to their history and built on that history to make the shift from 'fast forward' to 'past forward'. Many people long for a legible landscape, in which the new is embedded in the old (Drenthen, 2018). As water heritage can link contemporary challenges to the history of place, involving it in water management could smooth the interactive planning process of making the sandy soils more drought resilient (Alkemade in Monter, 2022). However, to do so more effectively, the barriers between the largely separate disciplinary and professional fields of water management and heritage conservation must be broken down. Both the process of the revitalization of the watermill landscapes and the Lankheet Estate show that it is not evident that the potential of water heritage is (re)used in contemporary water management and adaptation planning.

A world can be won when water managers recognize the value of water heritage for contemporary adaptation planning on the sandy soils and heritage professionals think and act beyond the traditional conservation reflex. When water heritage is conceptualized not as static objects, but as dynamic (re)source of systemic knowledge about the functioning of the past landscape and innovative, low-tech, and nature-based solutions to deal with drought, a whole new field of possibilities is unlocked. Building on the pioneering work for the watermill landscapes and the Lankheet Estate, provincial governments, water boards and heritage organizations should work together more intensively in the coming years to actively exploit those possibilities. Solitary experiments should be made part of a wider-range, area-based approach. Ultimately, we need to get to the point where even in the fields of a farmer like Van der Heijden, the old water structures and systems are revived and revitalized to retain more water. Only then do we stand a good chance of being more resilient to increasing drought.

CHAPTER

3

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Melika Levelt
Wendy Tan

A paradoxical transition of citizen participation in housing developments

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>> A paradoxical transition of citizen participation in housing developments

Levelt, Melika
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SUMMARY

>> Current planning policies place great expectations on citizen participation to resolve complex societal and spatial challenges such as urban renewal and housing development. This essay explores what transitions in citizen participation have taken place on this issue in the Netherlands and to what extent citizen participation in its current form can address the complex socio-spatial challenge of providing affordable housing in cities.

The essay introduces a paradox of the transition in participation in housing development in the Netherlands as part of broader transformations in Dutch spatial planning and development: in spite of increased institutionalization of participation, the actual citizens seem to have been served less and less. There is potential for the inclusion of citizen participation in the planning processes to encourage acceptance where resource distribution creates conflicts (i.e. affordable housing markets and lack of supply) for more effective cooperation during implementation. However, giving citizens more say in small parcels of spatial development does not disguise and overrule the structural forces in policy and real estate market trends that have grown in the last decades and push out lower and middle income groups from the city.

This essay reviews state-of-the-art literature on the evolution of citizen participation, co-creation, and decision-making structures and processes in spatial planning and housing, and discusses participation trajectories in urban developments with housing functions in Amsterdam (Havenstraatterrein, Marineterrein) and Groningen (Suikerunie, Ebbinge), and Almere (Oosterwold) to showcase the paradoxical transition.

Key words: spatial planning, co-creation, citizen participation, housing, The Netherlands

Summary in Dutch

Participatie krijgt een steeds prominentere rol in het oplossen van complexe maatschappelijke en ruimtelijke uitdagingen, zoals stedelijke vernieuwing en de ontwikkeling van woningen. Dit essay verkent welke veranderingen zich hebben voorgedaan in de rol die burgers spelen in woningontwikkeling in Nederland en in hoeverre participatie in de huidige vorm helpt om voldoende betaalbare woonruimte te ontwikkelen in de stad.

Het essay schetst een paradoxale transitie op het gebied van participatie in de woningbouw in Nederland. De transitie is onderdeel is van grotere veranderingen in ruimtelijke ordening en ruimtelijke ontwikkeling in Nederland. Ondanks toenemende aandacht voor en institutionalisering van participatie in plan- en ontwikkelingsprocessen, lijkt het erop dat de burger die het meest de hulp van de overheid nodig heeft om passende woonruimte te vinden, steeds meer het nakijken heeft gekregen. Burgers een grotere rol geven in de planprocesen en planuitvoering kan helpen de acceptatie van plannen waarin schaarse middelen worden verdeeld, te vergroten. Tot nu toe echter blijft de inspraak van burgers beperkt tot kleine, specifieke gebieden. Deze uitzonderingen bieden onvoldoende tegenwicht aan de structurele krachten in beleid, grond- en vastgoedmarkten die midden- en lagere inkomens de afgelopen jaren steeds verder de stad uit hebben gedreven.

Dit essay schetst op basis van literatuurstudie de grote lijnen in de ontwikkeling van woningontwikkeling en participatie sinds de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Op basis daarvan beschouwt het essay de ontwikkeling van participatie, co-creatie en besluitvorming in gebiedsontwikkeling in Amsterdam (Havenstraatterrein, Marineterrein), Groningen (Suikerunie, Ebbinge) en Almere (Oosterwold) om de paradoxale transitie die plaatsvindt in participatie in gebiedsontwikkeling en woningbouw te illustreren.

Sleutelwoorden: **ruimtelijke ordening, co-creatie, burgerparticipatie, inspraak, woningbouw, Nederland**

1 INTRODUCTION

>> The affordability and accessibility of housing, especially in cities, for middle and lower income groups has become a key area of societal and political concern over the last decades (Nijskens e.a. 2019; Boelhouwer, 2020; Huisman, 2020). It is seen as a consequence of larger economic and political trends that have severely and negatively impacted democracy (Sassen, 2014; Guilluy 2019). As market forces drive high-end housing developments to provide safe investment harbors for international capital flows, housing in the larger cities in the Netherlands has grown out of the reach of large groups of society. Across the country, starters on the housing market particularly those from families with lower and middle social economic status, find it increasingly difficult to start their housing trajectories (Milikowski, 2018; Nijskens e.a. 2019). Similarly, older adults looking to downsize are also restricted by the affordability of their next housing option. There are spatial consequences as well. Finding an affordable place to live in the four major cities is an insurmountable challenge for those with lower to middle incomes and those who are without fixed contracts, stable incomes and parental support (Jonkman, 2015/2019; Arundel & Hochstenbach, 2020; Nijskens et al., 2019). Key service workers, police officers, teachers and nurses experience difficulty to find housing which reduces the provision of skilled essential labor force in these major cities (AD, 2021). Just as artists, entrepreneurs and younger adults who were studying or just started working were pushed to the periphery two decades ago, this is now a widespread issue (Novy and Colomb, 2013).

The global financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent economic crisis provided a window of opportunity for the less wealthy to find a place in these cities through bottom-up initiatives and DIY-urbanism. In the aftermath of the crisis, citizen participation in urban developments remained a high priority on the agenda of national and local governments. On hindsight, the authors critically question to what extent has citizen participation in these projects during the crisis fundamentally improved urban transformation to provide a sufficient supply of affordable housing? In addition, did the increase of citizen participation make the process more inclusive? Last but not least, how should we position these developments in light of the larger historical context of post-war housing development and the changing governance structures for spatial planning in the Netherlands?

The production of housing has taken a considerable leap from addressing overcrowding and deteriorating public health standards in the early 1900s, towards a full-fledged system with a strong social component via social housing corporations and affordable housing quotas enforced by municipalities. The privatization of the housing market has seen changes beyond the wave of post-war rebuild and the urban expansions in the early 2000s. New actors and expertise entered the scene and developers have experimented with new

forms and typologies of housing in various mixes of social and private housing quality and price points (van Kempen and Primus, 2002). Parallel to this, citizen participation has also been observed to go through multiple iterations in the past five decades. Each policy period embraced a different term or activated a different facet of involving citizens from co-production to consent and back to co-creation. Generally, there is a tendency in the Netherlands to at least in spirit, improve how citizens are involved in decision-making processes that affect their environment (Tan et al., 2019).

We will argue that on the surface, new forms for collaboration with citizens have emerged. However as long as systemic errors in the housing market remain, increased segregation and inequalities can be expected from the current path of urban transformation and housing development. To understand the paradoxical transition of simultaneous increased inclusion and exclusion of citizens in spatial development for housing, this essay will discuss how citizen participation has manifested itself in relation to housing development throughout three phases in history: 1945-1970s; 1980s-2008; 2008-present. The first two phases are based on a literature review and serve as a historical background for the third phase for which the paradox of participation is illustrated with cases from Amsterdam, Almere and Groningen. We start with a short introduction into the provision of housing and participation.

2 WHOSE CITY IS IT ANYWAYS?

>> Cities are centers of attraction for housing, work and leisure for a diverse population. Demands for space in the city are always multiple and often conflicting. Governments mitigate these demands by zoning and planning. Where, how and which functions get allocated or distributed results from a political process that is fundamentally asking for whom the city is meant for. This is not only a question about which activities may or may not take place – the zoning, but also about which socio-economic groups (people and business) are able to remain in the city or should gain (better) access to the city as a place to live, work and visit.

Enshrined in Dutch Constitution is the promotion of sufficient housing (Article 22, paragraph 2). It is seen as a primary necessity of live which concerns not only a sufficient number of dwellings but also of sufficient quality. This does not mean the provision of housing is a governmental task. Housing development and distribution in the Netherlands is susceptible to market forces, demographic trends, and planning processes at the national, provincial and local level (Jonkman, 2019; Levelt & Metze, 2014). The government however, in the Netherlands, generally is not the developer of housing. At national level, the constitution asks the local government to provide a certain quality of environment. Regional government can make agreements about housing

demand and supply allocation. Local governments who zone and plan, can assert influence in the process via the infill of the sites and the land prices. Developers and housing corporations play a key role in defining the type, tenure and pricing of housing developments. Individuals can also play a role as private commissioners. The roles of each of these players and institutions in the provision of housing have changed over time. If we want to understand the question of who has access to the city and the role citizen participation plays, we have to look at how the planning system has changed and the changing roles of Dutch government, housing corporations, semi-governmental actors and the market in spatial planning and the provision of housing. Changes in the system took place to overcome some failures of the system and thus have enabled some and disabled others to play a role or have a position in the provision of housing.

Citizen participation can allow individuals to gain some influence on the outcomes of the process of housing development beyond the voting of their democratic representative. As the definition and understanding of citizen participation is fluid and not clearly defined in Dutch planning law (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koningsrijksrelaties, 2021), it is important to specify what we mean by citizen participation and what our lens for assessment will be. Is participation only used as an input for a planning process outside of the view of citizens or have citizens a true say on what will happen to their neighborhoods and a choice on how their neighborhood will evolve? Are citizens only subject to housing development and improvement or do they actively participate as developer or investor? It is of relevance to understand at what phase in policy and plan making participation takes place, what form it takes and its degree of influence in each phase. For example, when typical citizen consultation moments mandated by law takes place usually at the end of a plan process, it could already be at a point where scenarios and alternatives have been thought off and presented instead of engaging in discussion about what the actual issue at hand is. Participation then serves to legitimize the output, not the input and throughput of the planning process (see Schmidt 2010 and Hoppe e.a., 2016 for discussion on input, throughput and output of policy(making)). This might lead to mismatched expectations or disappointments for participants. Furthermore, it matters *who* is allowed to participate in the different phases of plan making and who is left-out.

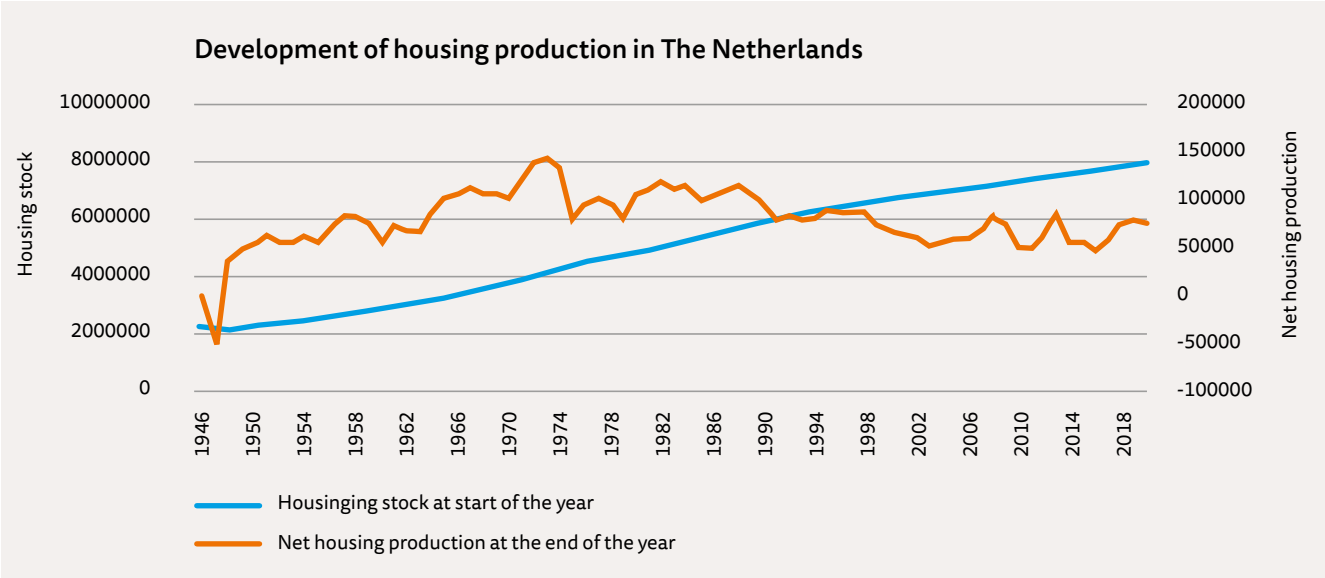
3 1945–1970: TECHNOCRATIC PLANNING INVOKING A STRONG CIVIL MOVEMENT

>> The Netherlands has a long tradition of steering by the national and provincial governments on the where and how much of housing developments. This stemmed from the Housing Law of 1901 where the production of housing was crucial for maintaining control on population growth and public health

(van der Kammen en De Klerk, 1996). During the post-war period, this was ramped up and official city and housing development was the domain of professional urban planners and architects from both governmental and project developers (Verlaan, 2017). Based on data and predictions of population growth and an expected increase in office work, welfare, car-ownership and leisure time, they concluded that inner cities were at risk of decline. People would like to move out of cities and be able to take a car to work and leisure (shopping centers) in cities (Verlaan, 2017). Planning for housing was a matter of processing and making sense of data and facts. Cities had to be redeveloped in a functional way in order to accommodate increased car use and demand for shopping centers and office space. Selection and specialization of inner-city (tertiary) functions would lead to maximalization of land productivity and strengthen the urban economy (van der Kammen en De Klerk, 1996). Old neighborhoods were demolished for new developments. Plans such as Hoogcatharijne in Utrecht or the Wibautstraat and the neighborhood around Waterlooplein in Amsterdam were made in a rationalistic way and in close cooperation between the aldermen, civic servants and project developers. New extensions in existing cities were created such as the Westelijke Tuinsteden in Amsterdam and Ommoord in Rotterdam. Municipal housing companies and housing associations worked together in the development of these areas, backed by national funding for public housing (van der Wouden, 2015)

Despite the new Law on Spatial Planning (WRO 1965) that gave citizens the right to object to zoning plans, participation was primarily seen as a way to gather data and make people accept plans (Verlaan, 2017). Despite the lack of participation, this did result in a very large production of (affordable) housing (see Figure 1). The government took the responsibility to cater for enough housing stock very seriously.

FIGURE 1
The development of the housing stock and housing production in the Netherlands.
Source: based on CBS (2021)



However, this technocratic approach saw strong resistance in the 1960s as a civic movement developed in the cities from a growing student population. This resistance put new knowledge into the planning debate: not so much factual data on housing shortages and car use but data on vacant buildings and, more importantly, regulative knowledge on what made a city livable. In the 1970s, housing shortages remained while many units were deliberately kept vacant by real estate dealers as objects for speculation. Squatters took hold of many of these houses in the city and later received the rights to buy them (Milikowsky, 2018). Public resistance to the demolition of old neighborhoods showed a different perspective on the future city – embracing street life, diversity, small scale and a mix of housing, leisure, and work. Although this resistance could not stop every planned demolition, a new civic movement was effective in putting a stop to the demolishing of some of the old buildings and streets as policy makers and planners began to accepted arguments from the citizens. Thus, new projects were developed to improve the city but kept room for affordable housing (Christof & Majoor, 2021). Examples of these are the renewal of the Jordaan and the Waterlooplein neighborhood in Amsterdam. Civic resistance in the 1960s and 1970s operated within a very centralized and technocratic planning doctrine but had a real effect on city development. It gave new input to and had effects on the outputs of the planning for housing in cities. Squatters were legally enabled to buy appropriated vacant properties which can be seen as a very strong influence on future developments. However, although the initiative for policy action came from the citizens and permanently changed the city's development, the planning process itself remained accessible only to professional planners.

4 1980–2008: THE AGE OF VINEX, MARKET FORCES AND CITIZENS AS CONSUMERS

>> The civic resistance against technocratic planning in the 1970s and economic stagnation led to further changes in Dutch planning. Although national planning doctrine remained strong in the Fourth National Spatial Plan of 1988, negotiations with the lower tiers of spatial planning (provincial, larger cities) ensured that the national plan reflected their wishes for internationalization, economic development, and the compact city (Van der Kammen & De Klerk, 1996). From the end of the 1980s until the financial crisis of 2008, three changes occurred that reshaped housing developments.

The first change is perhaps the most tangible in the form of large new city extensions or VINEX-extensions, planned top-down by the central government named after the policy extension of 1991 on the Fourth Spatial Planning Memorandum (*Vierde Nota Extra*). VINEX-extensions were seen as the answer to large-scale demand for affordable housing. Building for these large suburban

locations for housing at the fringe of larger cities started halfway the 1990s. Completed in the late 2000s, they took a long time to develop, but once developed these locations expanded the housing stock considerably (Jókövi e.a., 2006) (see also Fig. 1).

The second change saw the increased importance of the market and withdrawal of government in the provision of housing. Whereas during the post-war period the provision of housing was mainly seen as a matter of public care, this changed during the 1980s where neo-liberal deregulation occurred (Van der Wouden, 2015). This is similar to other sectors such as energy, postal services and public transport, where public efforts were passed over to (semi) market players who were supposed to operate more efficiently, more service oriented and at lower costs. In 1995 housing associations and corporations who were tasked to develop affordable rental housing became legally and financially independent of government as part of a neo-liberal strategy. Although they still received subsidies via *' below market rate leasehold and land costs"* (Jonkman, 2019, p. 36) they now had to finance affordable housing through a revolving fund-model (Jonkman, 2019). Also, market parties, mainly large project developers, gained importance. They strategically bought land that matched VINEX plans. At the same time, municipalities, lacking the substantial financial support of the national government of the previous period, became active buyers of land that they prepared for building and sold off with a profit. This money was necessary to develop more expensive inner-city locations (Tennekes e.a. 2015). Furthermore, in the 2000s, housing associations were forced to focus their activities only on low-income groups. Middle income groups were seen as not requiring help to find affordable housing and were shuffled to the private market sector. They were subsequently priced out of social rental housing. Considering affordability, the newly built housing projects from the VINEX era were attractive to this segment allowing them to choose the aesthetics or form of their house. However, the locational choices were made at local, regional and national policies and usually took residents away from the center of cities towards the fringes.

The third change is substantially less tangible but signaled an institutional shift. As a reaction to this new phase, stakeholders and coalition building between stakeholders became more important in the making of spatial policy. This started in the 1990s and the extent of it depended on the municipality in which the developments took place. At the institutional level 'inspraak' (to have a say in policy which is a nuanced term for a light form of participation in Dutch) became part of formal procedures (WRO, 1985, article 6a) for zoning and structure plans. However, 'inspraak' was also seen as an obstruction to making quick decisions even though it was meant to improving decision making and to give a channel for civil protests (Coenen et al., 2001). In spirit the process tried to incorporate the different political and personal views of individual stakeholders.

However, formally the citizens often came onboard too late in the process and did not have a real say. Thus, they are not representational of true participation. The VINEX plans strongly steered where new housing development took place enabled through direct steering of national legal instruments while the development costs and (financial) risks were left to coalitions of municipalities and large project developers. The Tracé Law (Tracéwet) and NIMBY-law are examples of these direct legal instruments that enabled the national government to enforce the development of roads and other building projects of national importance against local opposition (Tennekes e.a., 2015).

Thus, although participation in a very light form (*inspraak*) became a right, it did not change the housing landscape much (Coenen e.a., 2001). More substantial change came in the form of market forces changing the tenure of housing stocks and the national housing developments changing where housing stock could be found. Market forces gained importance in other coalition building for city development. Cities needed commercial partners to attract international talent and become international business networks hubs. Only small pockets of space in the larger cities were reserved for the creative elite.

The regeneration and renewal of urban centers became a worldwide phenomenon in the late 1990s. Brown-field development areas became attractive as cities welcomed international business and tourists without engaging in sprawl. In the Netherlands local governments, housing corporations and market parties looked for inner-city redevelopment opportunities such as around the Northern shores of the IJ in Amsterdam and in the old harbor areas or the Ebbinge quarter in Groningen. Although more costly and more difficult to develop than greenfield sites, these areas fit the ideals of a compact and vivid city that attracts a *creative class* and catalyses an economic boom (Florida, 2002). Project developers and local governments cooperated to develop brownfield sites with most of them planned for demolition and being replaced by high-rise office buildings (Christof & Majoor, 2021). The reuse of industrial-era or historical buildings became common to retain pockets of spaces for the creative class. Places like Pakhuis de Zwijger in Amsterdam and Het Paleis in Groningen were developed in cooperation with creatives as places for cultural activities. This was made possible as part of a creative incubator policy. Contrary to the squatters in the 1980s, the creatives that sometimes took hold of empty buildings before an area was developed, now got *temporary* lease contracts but not the right to buy. These locations then became a victim of their own success as the creatives they attracted made them livable but also more and more unaffordable for these same creatives.

Parallel to the development of the creative class as catalyst of economic development and city renewal, a strong coalition of municipality and housing corporations developed a "*bureaucratic routine*" for the renewal of existing

housing blocks through a process of "*displacement through participation*" (Huisman, 2014/2020, p. 138-139). Huisman describes how a phase of disinvestment by the housing corporation of ten years or so, is followed by presentation of plans for "*demolition or total overhaul of the block*" to the tenants "*as the only viable option*" given the "*poor technical state of the houses*" (Huisman, 2014/2020, p. 140)). In this process "*all parties have come to understand participation as tenants obtaining some influence of how they will be displaced, not whether. When tenants on the other hand do not accept this framed reality, they find out that participation does not grant them any power.*" (Huisman, 2014/2020, p. 140). Participation then is only on tastes and likes at the end of a process when input and throughput phases are already passed and output and outcome are already decided upon. The fundamental and very likely irreconcilable political question on access to the city and whose city it is anyways, remains untouched. This way, as Huisman puts it, citizen participation is better seen as a "*specific form of governmentality (Blakely 2010), steering the population to think and behave in specific ways.*" (Huisman 2014/2020, p. 144). The idea to attract or exclude certain groups from neighborhoods in order to improve the local situation is not unique to Amsterdam. In 2002, The Act on Extraordinary Measures for Urban Problems was developed to enable cities to reduce the influx of poor newcomers in certain neighborhoods in order to improve liveability (Van Gent e.a., 2017). In 2016 the act had been used in the cities of Rotterdam, Nijmegen and Capelle aan de IJssel to exclude certain groups (idem, 2017).

5 2008-PRESENT: CO-PRODUCTION AND EXCLUSION – THREE CASE STUDIES

>> With the economic crisis of 2008 a new area of housing development and participation started. The crisis put a stop to many spatial redevelopment projects in the cities, as costs rise and investors dropped out. This section represents a case study of city development in co-production with citizens during that time period and afterwards.

The first case is the Ciboga-area in the Ebbinge quarter in Groningen (see Figure 2 & 3). This former industrial site was allocated for a large housing development by the city, a developer, and a bank, but the development had to stop due to lack of funds. The area was initially known for crime and deterioration but was 'rescued' by an alternative plan from local entrepreneurs. They eventually got institutional commitment from the municipality to develop it as a temporary creative spot for artists and the creative class. The area became a cultural hot-spot due to its central location. The rebound of the housing market in 2014 saw the continuation of the construction of permanent buildings (mostly housing) and the removal of most of the temporary creative uses. Ebbinge became a one-sided plan for housing including high-end student housing in the form of

a hotel, mid to high range housing units and some space for the local university (von Schönfeld et al., 2019). In essence, the new stakeholders (entrepreneurs and creatives) were allowed to program the area temporarily but were not involved in how the restart of development would be. Inspired by the success of the Ebbinge quarter, the city of Groningen proceeded to incorporate the same strategy for the Suikerunie brown-field location as the next housing expansion location in the city. Again, temporary use of the location was granted to creative entrepreneurs, and it seems likely their input will not affect new development outputs and outcomes (De Nijs et al., 2020).

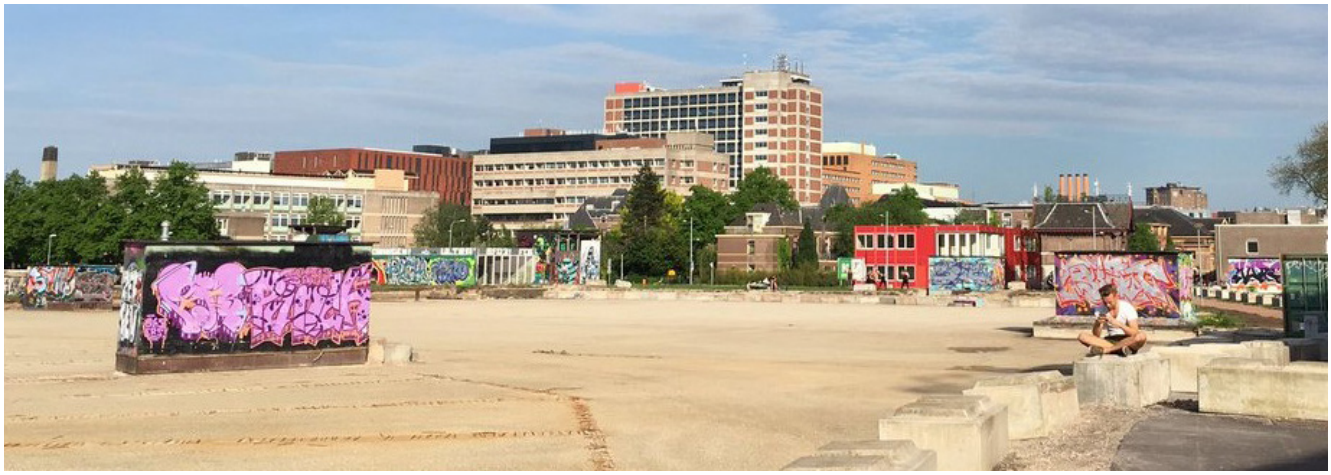


FIGURE 2
The Ebbingekwartier (Groningen) in 2018 while it was awaiting construction.
photo: R-LINK SURF project

FIGURE 3
Temporary users of the Ebbingekwartier in 2017: sea containers housed creative entrepreneurs.
photo: R-LINK SURF project

Similar changes took place in Amsterdam in the Havenstraatterrein (figure 4). There residents saw their neighborhoods change due to market pressure for housing. In 1989, the city of Amsterdam bought this area from the national railways and rented out the land to creatives under temporary lease contracts. It developed into an area with small industries, artisanal firms, auto garages, and traders at the fringe of the very popular and wealthy neighborhood in the older southern quarter of Amsterdam. In 2010, increasing pressure for housing space turned developmental focus to the area and a strategy was determined. The ambition is to keep the 'unpolished character of the area' and its historical buildings. This did not include retaining the local community of entrepreneurs who were forced to move out to places outside of Amsterdam to be able to continue their activities. They were only informed of the plans after the plans were decided and even though some consultation took place, most perceived it as being confronted with and not having a real stake in the process. The tenants managed to take the plan to court to retain the historic tram line in 2018. However, current expectations are that by 2026 the area will see 500 new dwellings, a school, and some places for new businesses and not for existing ones.

At the Marineterrein in Amsterdam (figure 5) things went differently. This inner city land came free for redevelopment after the Dutch army decided to leave the area step by step. Because of the central location and the increasing housing shortage in Amsterdam, a strong pressure to develop quickly was present. But it was decided not to quickly make a master plan but to develop this area step

FIGURE 4
The Havenstraat area in 2017. An area with small trades and industries and a cycle route from popular Amsterdam South to the Amsterdamse Bos (one of the largest city parks of Europe at the border of Amsterdam and Amstelveen)
photo's: Melika Levelt

by step to be able to connect the development to its surroundings and the needs of the broader city. Land was temporary rented out by the specially installed Bureau Marineterrein that was responsible for programming and development of the area. It is yet to be seen how the area will develop but already it is clear that it is difficult to keep the surrounding area involved in its development. Because of the very long run time in which development of a plan for the area takes place, it becomes unclear for stakeholders where in the process they are and what is done with their ideas they put into the plan-making for the development of the area (van Karnebeek and Janssen-Jansen, 2017). Thus, although input is collected and the process is more open, the throughput, the process of plan making, stays with the professional planners and the role of the temporary renters, who now function as place makers, once the area gets its more final or permanent development, is yet to be seen but likely to end.

FIGURE 5
The Marineterrein in Amsterdam, a 27 ha military domain close to the Central Station that partly is left by the military and will be redeveloped with an incremental or adaptive strategy into a new neighborhood.
Photo: R-LINK project)

Another version of this step-by-step development does exist. In Almere, the area of Oosterwold (figure 6) was given over to DIY-urbanism whereby citizens can buy plots at lower than market rates but would have to plan, design and build in collaboration with each other. There is unfortunately growing criticism about the threat to public health due to lack of coordination in determining basic infrastructures (sewage treatment, waste management and transport) (van Karnenbeek et al., 2021). In addition, an initial observation of the area sees that certain population groups with high social capital and technological know-how are attracted to the area and can thrive. These forms of bottom-up processes demands so much of participants that it remains accessible only for

those with high financial, cultural, or creative capital (Nio, 2021) This does not bode well for diversity and inclusion. In practical terms, being able to design a plot and build on your own, requires capacity or time, or failing that, at least the funds to engage experts (van Karnenbeek and Tan, 2019). There is therefore self-selection of potential residents. Thus, bottom-up led housing development by future residents do not necessarily counter the current trend of increased social inequalities created through the unaffordable housing market nor do they democratize housing developments.

FIGURE 6

Future inhabitants of Almere Oosterwold not only develop their own houses but have also been responsible for the development of their own wastewater treatment and the development of roads. .
Photo's: R-LINK project)

Place-making through the creative class seems to have become the norm in many – often inner-city and industrial – redevelopment sites from Groningen to Deventer, Utrecht and Amsterdam (see for examples Van der Westen e.a. 2017). However, it is questionable if the temporary role and the influence creatives have on the formation of ideas for spatial development have fundamentally changed their actual positions on the market for housing and working space. Despite their contribution to the spatial and social quality of urban redevelopment sites, creatives eventually must leave as they are priced out. Two criticisms to the participation process can be identified here. It seems that as participation becomes formalized the position of creatives within the city worsened as many industrial creative spots become used for redevelopment and they too are left with no place to go in an expensive city. In addition, the creative class was not a very diverse population to start with. Also for all others with lower, middle or uncertain incomes, finding a place to live in the city becomes increasingly difficult as the market deregulates, and globalization brings in foreign capital to compete with on the housing market.

6 CONCLUSION: THE PARADOX OF PARTICIPATION

>> The paradox of citizen participation in housing developments in the Netherlands is that the more institutionalized the citizen participation process seems to be, the less the actual citizens are being served.

Jane Jacobs has emphasized the importance of the users of cities in city development (1961) – they make or break the city. Large, technocratic and top-down planned transformations in the cities of the 1950s and 1960s broke many of these desirable processes and did not result in the livable cities that planners had expected. The large suburban extensions following this line of thought did result in a lot of affordable housing, but it also displaced communities and future residents of the cities. Demonstrations and civic actions have changed the technocratic view on city development and have improved it as a place to live for all. Bottom-up actions by creatives made areas vibrant but at times too interesting for investment. The creative class were first seen as a counterbalance to market forces but have been subsumed and incorporated in official planning strategies, but not on their own terms. Temporary uses as a part of place making by creatives before actual land development is present in almost every Dutch city. On the surface, these creatives can be seen as very influential in city development , as co-creators who decide what happens at a location. They help to incrementally form ideas on the activities that might be given a permanent position in a plan. They are visually and culturally present, contributing to city development with more than mere data and facts. They have changed the role of citizens beyond only participating in the input before plan making to be involved in throughput activities seen in the incremental development of the plan itself. However, the market forces are so strong that at the end of the

day, only certain exceptions remain as temporary uses give way to mid to high priced housing. This effectively prices out those who made and can make a development interesting as part of the gentrification process. Moreover, those with lower and middle incomes with no creative background certainly did not gain any more influence over the last decades.

In this essay we have described the history of participation in the Netherlands in different periods. The start of a new period as described does not necessarily mean that the characteristics of participation in the planning process for housing in a prior period disappeared completely. The development of participation can better be understood as new ways of doing and thinking, or parties or coalitions that enter the planning process which together result in a new tone in citizen participation in the planning for housing. Changes also should be understood as part of larger societal and economic changes. As people have become more highly educated, people have become more critical about expert knowledge. With the entrance of social media, the relation between citizens and government had become even more tenous. The old ways of doing things in the planning and development of housing no longer serves this cultural epoch.

Over the last fifty years, three important transitions in citizen participation in planning for housing development in the Netherlands can be identified. First, a transition has taken place since the technocratic, top-down planning of the post-war period where participation, in the form of *inspraak* (to have a say), has become a right in planning law. Planning officials must motivate how they have consulted stakeholders and what they have done with the result of the consultation. This does not imply technocratic elements have totally disappeared in the planning for housing. On the contrary, during the big crisis of 2008, the national and provincial governments – based on models for the prognosis of housing supply needs – strongly steered the supplies of land for housing development that municipalities have in stock (Levelt & Metze, 2014). Second, a bottom-up transition has taken place from protest and squatting and eventual instrumentalization into plan development. Counter cultures have thus become part of the planning process they once opposed. Of course, this only holds true for the creative class with enough cultural and professional capital to be able to be an equal partner in planning processes and is mostly temporary. Once fully developed, most projects become too expensive even for them. It is only in the case of Almere Oosterwold, that we see a small exception for individuals to develop there their own house and land as landowners. Third, an institutional transition has taken place in spatial planning and development of housing as part of larger reforms in society in which government and semi-governmental institutions have reduced prominence in the provision of public services. As a result, citizens with middle incomes have become more dependent on the private sector for housing provision. Although for

some this has been a good thing as they have been able to buy a house, for many others and especially for those with middle and lower incomes, it has become more difficult to find affordable and secure housing. Thus, for the less financially, culturally, or socially adept populations, the planning for housing and development of the city has become a deception. Gentrification and liberalization of the housing market have pushed them even more than before out of the city. They have hardly any say in the larger picture of housing development in their cities. They can only turn to protest (NOS, 2021a; 2021b), and hopefully this may trigger change on the city's housing development and rules for access to it.

The authors remain critical as to how much citizen participation has removed barriers to housing developments and access to housing in the last five decades. The transition from centralized, large-scale and non-participation in the process of planning for housing to incorporation of certain citizens in the process is a good direction. However, actual substantial say in decision and plan making of larger groups with less financial, social and creative capital still has a long way to go. For this to change, larger institutional changes seem to be necessary on how we plan and develop space for housing.

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CHAPTER

4

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Lennert M. Werner
Pascal J. Beckers
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Involving Local Residents in Decision-Making Processes: Urban regeneration in multi-cultural neighbourhoods

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>> Involving Local Residents in Decision-Making Processes: Urban regeneration in multicultural neighbourhoods

Lennert M. Werner
Pascal J. Beckers
Eva D. Jongsma

SUMMARY

>> Participatory spatial planning approaches aimed to empower local communities in multicultural neighbourhoods tend to fall short due to their cultural blindness. Thinking along the lines of Hall and Hickman's (2011) theory on citizen participation, migrant participation in neighbourhood spatial planning decisions remains notably at best reaching the consultation level, but being far off from actually achieving citizen empowerment. These approaches fall short as they lack to capitalize on the locally present assets of the migrant community (capacities of inhabitants, such as knowledge and skills). Instead, most government initiatives focus on a particular service question, a particular 'need' to be able to meet a specific 'demand'. With this needs-based approach to community development, the community actually tends to become dependent on government institutions, rather than gaining empowerment from within. A promising alternative towards community empowerment is the asset-based approach to community development, which fosters self-sufficiency of the community.

This essay discusses local resident participation in the context of the redevelopment process of a multicultural urban neighbourhood, highlighting the relevance of intercultural literacy and community empowerment. The highly culturally-diverse setting in urban neighbourhoods of large cities brings the chance of intercultural misunderstandings, which is why an intense and ongoing dialogue between local stakeholders is essential to achieve community empowerment and participation. This essay also reflects on the *intercultural planning perspective* (e.g. Qadeer 1997), applied to a specific neighbourhood in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam, called G-buurt Noord. Through interviews with local stakeholders, varying from residents to government officials and other relevant actors, an encompassing picture of the actual situation in this neighbourhood emerges. The accompanying central research question is: *How can intercultural planning contribute to equity-based, participatory urban planning approaches that enable community empowerment in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam?*

Key words: resident participation, community building, empowerment, urban redevelopment, decision-making processes, planning policy, multicultural neighbourhoods, cultural diversity, globalization, cities

Summary in Dutch

Participatieve benaderingen op het gebied van ruimtelijke ontwikkeling die gericht zijn op empowerment van lokale gemeenschappen in multiculturele wijken, schieten vaak tekort vanwege hun culturele blindheid. Als we denken volgens Hall en Hickmann (2011) over burgerparticipatie, dan is de participatie van migranten bij beslissingen over ruimtelijke ontwikkelingen in de wijk hoogstens van consultatieve aard, maar ver verwijderd van daadwerkelijke empowerment van de burger. Deze benaderingen schieten tekort omdat ze de lokaal aanwezige krachten en hulpbronnen van de gemeenschap, de assets, niet benutten. In plaats daarvan richten de meeste overheidsinitiatieven zich op een bepaalde servicevraag, een bepaalde 'behoefte' om aan een specifieke 'vraag' te kunnen voldoen. Met deze op behoeften gebaseerde benadering van gemeenschapsontwikkeling heeft de gemeenschap de neiging om afhankelijk te worden van de overheid en diens regelingen, in plaats van dat het mensen in staat stelt om meer zeggenschap te krijgen over de eigen situatie. Een veelbelovend alternatief voor empowerment van de gemeenschap is de Asset-Based Community Development benadering, die de zelforganisatie van de gemeenschap kan bevorderen.
Dit essay bediscussieert de participatie van lokale bewoners in de context van het herontwikkelingsproces van een multiculturele stadswijk, en benadrukt de relevantie van interculturele geletterdheid en empowerment van de gemeenschap. De zeer cultureel diverse omgeving in grootstedelijke buurten brengt de kans op interculturele misverstanden met zich mee. Daarom is een intense en voortdurende dialoog tussen lokale belanghebbenden essentieel om empowerment en participatie van de gemeenschap te bereiken. Dit essay reflecteert ook op het interculturele planningsperspectief (bijv. Qadeer 1997), toegepast op een specifieke wijk in de Bijlmer, Amsterdam, genaamd G-buurt Noord. Door interviews met lokale stakeholders, variërend van bewoners tot ambtenaren en andere relevante actoren, ontstaat een overkoepelend beeld van de actuele situatie in deze wijk. De bijbehorende onderzoeksvraag luidt: *Hoe kan interculturele planning bijdragen aan participatieve benaderingen in de ruimtelijke ontwikkeling die zorgen voor gemeenschappelijke empowerment van de burgers in de Bijlmer, Amsterdam?*

1 INTRODUCTION

>> Amsterdam has always profiled itself as a tolerant, inclusive and diverse city. The city has been a refuge ever since the 17th century and halfway through the last century it became a real migration city. This shows in numbers: at the end of 2021 Amsterdam housed 172 different nationalities, which makes the city one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world (OIS Amsterdam, n.d.a). The Bijlmer, part of city district Zuidoost, houses a mostly low-income population. When zooming in on the neighbourhood of the case study, it can be seen that G-buurt Noord has a large share of inhabitants with a 'non-Western' migration background at 86.1 per cent (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2021a) and consists for 38.8 per cent low-income households (OIS Amsterdam, n.d.b).

In the past decades, the neighbourhood has experienced a process of urban decline, in which spatial degradation coincided with increasing socio-economic and ethnic segregation. Through the years a large share of the more affluent native population has left the neighbourhood and was replaced by migrant households from lower socio-economic backgrounds, an urban segregation trend that is commonly seen across European cities (Tammaru, Musterd, Van Ham & Marcinczak, 2016). Even though socio-economic and ethnic segregation are notably different, Andersen (2019) points out that different social and ethnic groups tend to live in separate parts of cities as groups or communities. This often results in large groups of migrants with lower socio-economic background residing in the more decayed urban neighbourhoods of a city, those that have a particular need for urban regeneration.

Urban regeneration measures aim to upgrade the spatial environment of the area in order to counter the downward spiral of urban decay. The role of the municipal government in this is to adjudicate in these plans by designing an overall spatial plan and allocating building permits accordingly. Through urban regeneration measures, it is argued that segregation can be reduced, so that differences between neighbourhoods or cities do not further increase because of migration patterns – as neighbourhoods become more attractive to live in for people from all backgrounds and socio-economic levels (Wassenberg, 2013).

This, however, is easier said than done, since representing all backgrounds in urban regeneration processes is a challenge. As the European Commission (2020) recently pointed out, acknowledging the particular struggle of migrants to participate in community life and local decision-making is key in order to understand and develop ways of how to include residents in regeneration of neighbourhoods – so that a particular neighbourhood becomes more attractive and accessible to a wider 'audience'. The concept of inclusive planning is relevant here, and is defined as: *"plan-making and implementation processes where all community members feel welcome to participate and are confident that their participation can positively affect outcomes"* (Morley, 2019, p.2).

Inclusive intercultural planning is still in its infant stages, particularly in less-developed countries where social exclusion is even more prevalent than in the Netherlands. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2017), Common Basic Principle No. 9 states that the participation of immigrants in decision-making processes and policies that affect them enhances their sense of belonging. When that is the case, their involvement in public participation processes can increase.

In Dutch cities, the share of non-Dutch residents has steadily been rising over the past decades and by now, multiculturalist urban living has become the norm rather than the exception in most Dutch cities. This paper uses the definition of Ivison (2015) and defines multiculturalism as *"the state of a society or the world in which numerous distinct ethnic and cultural groups are seen"* (p. 22). For the neighbourhood of study, the challenge is large; how to achieve resident participation in the multicultural neighbourhood Bijlmer-Oost that counts 179 nationalities?

From participating in social neighbourhood events to public citizens' platforms, resident participation is a growing concern of municipal planners worldwide (Paardekam, 2019; Plekkenpol & Simmelink, 2019; Puttens Weekblad, 2019). The struggle in this ambition lies in shaping the participation process. For decades already, there have been official options for residents to speak up when it comes to problems and opportunities in neighbourhoods, however these options are only used by a small segment of the local population. These are residents, who are willing to do so, feel able to do so and furthermore are well-aware of the relevant procedures of the municipality. The major problem for municipal planners lies in reaching those who are (seemingly) unreachable for municipal officers, due to for example a language barrier, cultural difference, or negative experiences with government officials in the past. The aim of equity-based participation (see e.g. Thompson & Arceneaux, 2019) is a bottom-up, community-led and people-centred approach to citizen participation that aims to activate all neighbourhood residents to participate in decision-making processes, so that improvements not only concern residents who are either more involved, have a better understanding of (Dutch) language and/or culture, or other factors.

Furthermore, it still often comes down to the political will in the final steps of the decision-making process (Yung & Chan, 2011). According to Yung and Chan's research in Hong Kong, a lack of effective public participation mechanisms and a supportive government framework leads to power disparities. These disparities can trigger the feeling of being powerless among residents, resulting in their absence in future decision-making processes. Especially among (young) migrants, socio-economic exclusion leads to decreased engagement and participation (Eurofound, 2015).

The large share of population with a migration background and the many low-income households in the Bijlmer have not only created a stigma for the neighbourhood, but also have influenced life chances for its inhabitants because of that – which is of course a societal problem. The aforementioned neighbourhood composition of low-income households in the Bijlmer relates to high levels of unemployment, and residents living on assistance benefits. It furthermore relates to social problems, with the neighbourhood lacking social cohesion. Through processes of resident participation, the municipality tries to involve the residents more in their planning processes regarding urban regeneration, but they are struggling to reach all residents – especially harder-to-reach groups such as the youth or the illiterate (Jongsma, 2019). This essay tries to understand the level of actual power that residents have in the case study of this research, and how this could be altered through policy and practice.

This study contributes to the scientific body of knowledge in several ways. First, it adds to the study of Permentier, Kullberg and van Noije (2013), who evaluated the Bijlmer regeneration approach for problematic urban neighbourhoods implemented under former Dutch minister Vogelaar (the so-called Vogelaar neighbourhoods approach). The authors concluded that this approach was only partially successful in enhancing the local living situation of residents in the Bijlmer and in particular this approach failed to involve residents who are difficult to reach in participatory planning processes. The findings in this essay will also reveal the complexity of municipal planners' challenge to involve this multicultural population in processes of neighbourhood regeneration.

Our study furthermore applies the concept of citizen participation to the context of urban regeneration in multicultural neighbourhoods. In this way, the study promotes the asset-based community development approach (Nel, 2018) that to date is scarcely implemented in participatory planning trajectories for urban regeneration initiatives. This approach, often dubbed as ABCD, stresses that sufficiently working communities can only be formed when they are built on the strengths of local people. These residents in turn acquire a certain feeling of empowerment through their participation, realized in their willingness to contribute to change.
Finally, the authors try to offer a novel theoretical framework connecting theories on participatory planning and community building to theory on an intercultural approach to policy-making and participation.

In relation to the essay series Transitions in Planning, this essay focuses and elaborates on process-related themes for planning. It shines light on aspects such as renewed citizen engagement, democracy, culture and creativity, social (in)justice, divides and inequality, as well as governance on multiple levels. In this way, the essay covers transitions in the area of participation, socio-cultural transitions, and roles in planning. More specifically, the present study aims to

bring the concept of asset-based community development (ABCD) more to the forefront, a perspective in which the residents – in this case in a multicultural neighbourhood – are more actively partaking in decision-making processes. When residents feel they are being heard and seen, the appreciation for the municipality's efforts is more likely to increase, thereby facilitating easier communication and cooperation or support (Spierings et al., 2021).

This signifies a transition in the field of planning, as this approach requires more input from local residents, based on their capacities, interests, ideas and desires. Joint effort developments and initiatives in the neighbourhood are more likely to happen because of that. As a result, urban regeneration processes can become more accessible to a wider public through this ABCD approach, potentially decreasing the need for people to move elsewhere - limiting the extent of segregation in a neighbourhood or city.

Through delving into ways how local residents can be reached more effectively, and at the same time become more included in participation processes, this essay aims to elaborate on the possibility of intercultural planning to contribute to more equal participation opportunities among residents, leading to developments that are jointly accomplished. The idea is that participatory processes in urban planning approaches enable community empowerment in neighbourhoods, such as in the Bijlmer in Amsterdam, with a special focus on cultural literacy and the intercultural approach.
The central research question of this essay relates to this: *How can intercultural planning contribute to equity-based, participatory urban planning approaches that enable community empowerment in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam*?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Resident participation in urban regeneration of multicultural neighbourhoods

In light of the often disadvantaged socio-economic position of migrants and their underrepresentation in important institutions, the present incapability to successfully incorporate migrants in local communities increases the risk of social uprisings – as previously experienced in other European cities in recent years (e.g. Birmingham riots, Paris riots in banlieues, and to a lesser extent in the Bijlmer, Amsterdam). The large share of population with a migration background and the many low-income households in the Bijlmer have not only created a stigma of the neighbourhood, but have influenced life chances for its inhabitants as well.

The urban policy and planning regarding the regeneration of Bijlmer-Oost is an approach to create more spaces for all Amsterdam residents to live, to give everyone a place in society, both poor and rich. This is for example done by building 7.500 dwellings per year, of which 2.500 have to be social housing corporation dwellings (Coalition Groenlinks et al., 2018, p. 32).

The challenge is to include migrant communities in a better way in processes of urban regeneration. This can be seen as a form of citizen participation, and at the same time integration. According to the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2017), ways of stimulating this participation and generating mutual understanding could be reached through structured dialogue between migrant groups and governments.

Participation of both individuals and communities or collectives furthermore relates to a sense of efficacy and empowerment, on multiple levels. Direct needs of citizens can be addressed in a more effective way, while assets of people who previously might have been absent from participating in their neighbourhood (or in society) come to the forefront as well. Examples of these assets are education, skills, knowledge, personality, (work) experiences, amongst others, and can be seen as an advantage or resource (Nel, 2018).

Participation and consultation of residents is required in making new urban plans in Amsterdam (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2018). Every new plan must have a separate section on how the participation of the residents was secured. However, as there are many levels of participation that can be envisaged here, this risks remain a paper exercise without having much bearing upon the everyday reality of residents; without the intrinsic motivation to make a change in the neighbourhood, this exercise can actually result in low levels of collective efficacy and empowerment for the residents.

2.2 Community building and empowerment

The concept of efficacy is coined due to the fact that both individual and collective efficacy are required to successfully include people in planning processes and eventual community development. Self-efficacy is conceptualised as the perception of how an individual can reach his or her goals and how (s) he can do so independently: it is linked to personal capabilities. High levels of self-efficacy are noticeable when people sense they can change a situation themselves, without necessarily needing much support from others or a governmental body (Bandura, 1997, 477, cited in Watson, Chemers & Preiser, 2001).

Collective efficacy "represents a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments" (Bandura, 1997, 477, cited in Watson, Chemers & Preiser,

2001). This means that the feeling of being capable of achieving change as a group are important in making the change itself. Self-efficacy therefore plays an important role in achieving collective efficacy as a community. In the present paper, community is defined as a group of people, living in a particular geographically bounded area, with similar characteristics – for example in terms of background, education, income, attitudes or interests. It is possible that multiple communities exist within a certain neighbourhood (Awan & Blakemore, 2013).

In order to understand how communities are build, it is necessary to grasp the concept of community development. In this essay, the definition of Schenck, Nel, and Louw (2010, p. 6) is used: *"a people-centred change process facilitated with a community of people to take action to increasingly actualise their fundamental human needs to enhance the quality of their own lives and those of the wider community that they are part of"*. We make a distinction here between two approaches to community development or building, the needs-based and the asset-based approach (Nel, 2018, 35). Where the former focuses on the power of institutions that help citizens who are in need, the latter focuses on the actual strengths that are already present in a particular community. Asset-based community development (or ABCD) is seen by Mathie and Cunningham (2003) as an alternative to needs-based approaches of development. Solving the problems is not with institutions, but within the residents' power and perseverance to change and help each other. The preference of the authors is expressed in the following: *"ABCD rests on the principle that a recognition of strengths and assets is more likely to inspire positive action for change in a community than is an exclusive focus on needs and problems"* (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003, p.477).

The common approach to resident participation in processes of urban regeneration is the needs-based approach, which entails that the municipality supports and funds people in need instead of focusing on their assets, thereby only asking for their participation in planning processes based on consultations – as many decisions have already been made in this stadium (Hall & Hickman, 2011). According to Hall and Hickman (2011), this can be seen for example when buildings are being upgraded in the neighbourhood. The downside of this approach is that local residents are not really involved in decision-making – as the municipality tends to focus on what residents need instead of what they can contribute. This approach does not support empowerment, on either an individual or collective basis, which is also an indicator for lower levels of participation in a neighbourhood. With this needs-based approach to community development, the community actually tends to become (more) dependent on the government institutions, rather than gaining empowerment from within. With the aim to empower migrant communities, applying an asset-based approach fostering on the community's self-sufficiency would seem a more promising alternative.

Community development programmes are planned to end poverty, create employment and satisfy the basic needs of all people so that their living conditions improve and they can live in a self-sustaining way. This is in line with the definition of empowerment, since the latter is in this research defined as: an increase in power so that individuals or collectives can improve their lives in terms of meeting basic needs, generating income and participation in society through increased agency. Developing communities through improving the residents' capabilities, social capital - including improved networking skills and business partnerships - and bargaining position is one of the targets of community empowerment (Muljono, 2011).

Through ABCD, the community becomes a more self-sufficient community and works more using its own strengths. ABCD is however harder to implement since its success is critically dependent on people's willingness to make a change and help others in their community, so their collective efficacy must be higher. With a strong community present, the participation process can be substantially influenced by the residents. This mostly has to do with the fact that socially disadvantaged people do not feel their voices are heard in society; participatory action is a helpful instrument in identifying common problems and finding appropriate solutions, because in this way people feel they can make a difference because of collective power, leading to increased belief in successful contribution to local developments (Muljono, 2011).

According to Khan (2012), *"poor people's involvement in local associations and intercommunity cooperation mechanisms can contribute to social empowerment by improving their skills, knowledge and self-perception"* (p. 27). Local associations are said to act as self-help mechanisms through which poor people organize their economic activities and potentially upgrade their entrepreneurial skills. This is something that would certainly appeal to government officials and planners, besides the benefits that local residents and communities could gain.

2.3 Intercultural competences/approaches of urban planners

The Multicultural or intercultural planning is part of a long tradition of normative ideas on ethnic diversity and the city. We use here the definition of Qadeer (2008, p.13): "it is not a distinct genre of urban planning, instead it is a strategy of making reasonable accommodations for the culturally defined needs of ethno-racial minorities on the one hand, and reconstructing the common ground that underlies policies and programmes on the other. A set of policies is recommended for making urban planning more inclusive".

It is therefore hard to disentangle the analysis of actual multicultural planning experiences from its close embrace with such normative ideas, especially those indicated with the label multiculturalism (Van der Horst and Ouwehand, 2011). Much research has been carried out on issues related to multiculturalism and

accompanying migrant participation in society, looking at various domains as work, education, political representation and from various perspectives such as socio-cultural and structural integration. For example, Duxbury, Hosagrahar and Pascual (2016, p.13-14) wrote that *"within a sustainable development context, local cultural policies put community development at the core: culture is both a key tool and a core aspect of the social fabric, promoting cohesion, conviviality, and citizenship."* They describe that culturally informed urban development is able to inspire more participatory processes, as cultures provide knowledge about our existence as inhabitants of our cities and as citizens of the world. In particular, a culturally sensitive and gendered approach can empower marginalized individuals and communities to participate in cultural and political life.

With regard to migrant participation in the neighbourhoods they inhabit, most research has taken an 'action' perspective, studying various cultural and leisure activities and collective efforts to improve the quality of life and neighbourhood management (Hall & Hickman, 2011). However, the migrant participation literature is rather thin on the 'decision' perspective, defined as 'the group of actions organised and financed with the goal of linking the persons most directly affected to the conception of realisation of a complex project'. (Hall & Hickman 2011, p.828). In other words, there appears to be an omission in the literature related to the role that migrants have in the actual decision-making on processes of neighbourhood spatial transformations within the urban spatial planning system. Despite a growing interest among spatial planning scholars in participatory approaches of spatial planning, it seems that these participatory approaches are culturally blind and lacking to account for the growing urban reality of multicultural societies. Multiculturalist, targeted policies popular in the past century have been replaced by universalist, mainstreaming policies that disregard intergroup differences (ibid.). Due to cultural difference and language barriers, people feel largely left out by planners. As a result, spatial planning decisions remain disconnected to the persons most directly affected by these spatial changes in multicultural neighbourhoods, as standard Dutch perspectives are universally applied on a country-wide scale in The Netherlands.

There is a growing need for making the use of space more democratic and culturally inclusive. Because ethnic groups use space in different ways, Sandercock (2010) suggests the best way to incorporate this difference into urban design is through a participatory design approach. This can be accomplished by incorporating collaborative planning and alternative dispute resolution into the local planning process as part of the greater goal of establishing a multicultural vision for the city (Sandercock, 2010). Where in the past, policy was targeted towards different groups in society, this is "not done" in current policy, since people cannot to be captured under a single label. Also, civil servants might be personally biased, not adequately taking the residents' opinions and experiences into account.

As the Amsterdam Bijlmer neighbourhood is a highly multicultural neighbourhood, cultural literacy is key in the understanding and realization of local developments, mediated by civil servants of the municipality. The theory of interculturality by Wood and Landry (2008) is used here as the underlying framework. When the municipality would be more culturally literate, aware of diversity in the local population and open to innovative ways of participation, more improvements might be possible for both residents and the neighbourhood as a whole. The assumption here is that the intercultural approach is a prerequisite for actual resident participation, which in turn has to be facilitated and integrated by the municipality, its officials and other stakeholders. Of course, this is something that cannot be changed overnight, but the mindset of learning to understand each other comes first, after which concrete developments or change are more likely to follow.

To adequately form policy in cities with high cultural diversity, cultural literacy is required (Wood & Landry, 2008). People filter any information coming in through their own cultural filters and cultural literacy is "the ability to read, understand and find the significance of diverse cultures and, as a consequence, to be able to evaluate, compare and decode the varied cultures that are interwoven in a place" (Wood & Landry, 2008, 250). The social construction of reality varies between different people but is partly grouped in communities of belonging. When the community of belonging for residents is different than that of the civil servants, this can lead to misunderstanding. In case of ignorance of other cultures (a lack of cultural literacy), resident participation will not reach its targets.

For civil servants, it is harder to reach residents who seemingly do not want to be reached. The residents might not care what happens to their building in terms of restructuring, as long as they can remain living in their residence. When the civil servants also do not speak the language of the residents, literally and figuratively, this leads to friction at both sides. A lack of contact between residents and civil servants can also be the result of negative past experiences. Having no or little connections with civil servants can reinforce feelings of low individual and collective efficacy among residents.

In this regard, it is highly beneficial for a professional to speak the language of the migrant or that (s)he is familiar with the cultural background of migrant residents; this is not only a necessary condition for effective communication, but also for mutual understanding, for instance about local problems. For these residents, it is key that the society they live in also bridges these gaps, such as through policies and professionals (Fahham, Beckers & Muller-Dugic, 2020). Also important is the diversity of planners' backgrounds; it ensures appreciation of cultural and racial differences. In the same vein, representation of minorities among elected and nominated executives at local and provincial

levels is a necessary condition for bringing a multicultural perspective to public decision-making bodies (Qadeer, 1997). People's diverse cultures are beginning to be acknowledged at the procedural level, and their concerns are being aired as a part of the planning process. (ibid.). To conclude, multiculturalism in planning is pre-eminently a matter of awareness of ethnic diversity and culture among planners and public officials.

3 METHODOLOGY

>> This section elaborates on the methodological grounds of the research, on which the fieldwork in this essay is based. It not only shines light on the research approach, also the data collection and analysis are elaborated upon in terms of how the research was conducted and the data has been analysed.

3.1 Research approach

This research focuses on *"exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"* (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). Meaning and construction of meaning cannot be measured as accurately by means of quantitative research compared to conducting qualitative research, since they require more in-depth exploration of people's subjective and nuanced experiences. Qualitative research also has a better potential in capturing complexity and processes (Beeson, 1997, p.22). Therefore, the preferred strategy in the present study is that of qualitative research, using in-depth face-to-face interviews with diverse local stakeholders.

3.2 Selection, collection and analysis

Case selection

Present research entails a single case study: G-buurt Noord, a neighbourhood located in Bijlmer-Oost in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The right side of figure 1 illustrates the placement of Bijlmer-Oost on a city-wide map, whereas the left side illustrates the location of the neighbourhood within Bijlmer-Oost; the green marking is G-buurt Noord. The neighbourhood holds the only two remaining traditional honeycomb flats of the Bijlmer.

FIGURE 1
Geographical location of G-buurt Noord.
Jongsma (2019)

The Bijlmer was newly built in the 1960's and imagined as a place for large numbers of people to live together within an abundance of green space (Wassenberg, 2013). Because the high-rise buildings are all social renting houses, the neighbourhood is accessible for (almost) everyone. However, in the past native Dutch people often did not want to live in the district since many immigrants lived there, criminality rates were high, and the liveability was low (Kuiper, 2016).

Nowadays, according to Dutch news channel AT5 (2018), resident participation in Bijlmer-Oost is not satisfactory for either municipality nor residents at this point; residents feel too little involved in decision-making processes, especially people with a migration background. For example, efforts in the adjacent K-buurt have led to a public uprising of residents against the local government in which they demanded a re-doing of the participation process. A main reason was the municipal plans for the public square in the neighbourhood, which conflicted with the ideas of the residents, who were not given a voice in this process (AT5, 2018).

The G-buurt Noord used to be known as the flats Gliphoeve I and Gliphoeve II. However, the municipality changed the name to Gravestein and Geldershoofd in 1984 due to image problems and a low socio-economic resident composition. The neighbourhood consists of these two flats, the petting zoo and a district centre (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2018). Important for the neighbourhood is the development of small-scale shopping area Ganzenpoort. In terms of urban development and living, most data from OIS Amsterdam (n.d.a & n.d.b) is available for 2021, providing mostly percentages instead of concrete numbers. In this particular year, the residents of G-buurt Noord gave the neighbourhood a 6.4 on a scale of 1-10. The appreciation for the dwellings in the neighbourhood was higher; a 6.7 on a scale of 1-10. This ranks the G-buurt Noord at the 297th place of 315 neighbourhoods in Amsterdam. All the housing is corporation-owned, and the neighbourhood has 952 dwellings.

The Municipality of Amsterdam's database shows that 1.774 people live in G-buurt Noord in 2021 (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2021a&b). The online databank (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2021b) shows that in this year 24.6 per cent of the residents was under the age of 18 and 7.1 per cent was over the age of 65. The percentage of under 18 is higher than the city's average of 16 per cent, and the percentage of over-65 is lower in G-buurt Noord (Amsterdam-wide percentage: 13 per cent). There are considerable disparities in terms of household composition. Furthermore, the number of residents has stayed rather stable since 2008, which is likely due to the absence of interventions in the buildings. In G-buurt Noord, 90.1 per cent of the inhabitants has a migration background, of which 4.5 per cent originates from 'Western' countries. The dominant migrant groups in the resident population are of Surinamese

(34.6 per cent) and Antillean (7.3 per cent) origin, signalling much ethnic diversity, as their accumulated share in the neighbourhood population accounts for 41.9% (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2021a). The category of 'other non-Western migrants' accounts for 41.9% of the population of G-buurt Noord as well, consisting of one more person than the sum of residents from Surinamese and Antillean origin. The names of categories 'Western' and 'non-Western' were chosen by the municipality.

There is a large share of social housing in Bijlmer-Oost, also in the case at hand, G-buurt Noord. This type of housing gives a home to people who are not earning enough money to rent privately and need government funding to support their livelihoods. In Bijlmer-Oost, large regeneration projects have started to make it a more lively, liveable and integral part of the city, whilst not pricing out current inhabitants. In 2017, the municipality of Amsterdam appointed 32 "development neighbourhoods" (NL: *ontwikkelbuurten*) requiring more attention and budget for their regeneration. Here the municipality works together with resident platforms and housing associations to create a safer and more liveable city (Municipality Amsterdam, n.d.).

Data collection

Our aim was to understand which theories of participatory planning, community building and intercultural planning are applicable in the case study. The empirical research included a qualitative analysis of literature and (policy) documents and 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews. The results of this content analysis can be found in the following section. The respondents were found through contacts at the city district's office and were then emailed or called about participation with a brief explanation about the research. Initially, 20 people were approached, of whom 15 persons were interviewed in May 2019.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with (1) six civil servants of Zuidoost and (2) six active residents of the neighbourhoods while (3) three employees of related institutions were interviewed as well. The positions of civil servants within the municipal organisation differed: assistant project manager, project manager, neighbourhood broker, communication advisor, area manager and programme manager of democratisation. The selection of resident respondents was done through the contacts co-workers at the municipality had. The ages of the respondents differed, as well as the gender and their household mix. Unfortunately, no so-called 'invisible' residents were reached, people that remain off the radar when it comes to participation; only the more active residents were interviewed. Besides these respondents, three other relevant stakeholders in the participation process were interviewed.

For the content analysis, policy documents and data about the cases were thoroughly analysed. Policy documents on the social domain, diversity and

(neighbourhood) development plans were used, as well as statistics from the central city (Municipality of Amsterdam) and data from 'OIS': research, data and statistics (Dutch: onderzoek, data en statistiek) Amsterdam. In the databases of the OIS, we searched for numbers and figures on the living situation of the residents of the neighbourhoods. The policy documents were studied to find out how the democratisation and participation was supposed to be put into practice. The historical analysis was supplemented by analysing literature about the construction of the Bijlmermeer and the problems the neighbourhood faced in later years.

Data analysis

The programme Atlas.TI was used to implement open and axial coding of the transcribed interviews. Where open codes function as labels for all data analysed, axial coding is used to categorize the set of codes (Allen, 2017). Axial coding furthermore reveals insight into causal conditions, context, strategies, and consequences, foundational for the arguments that are made. The data was analysed using the theoretical concepts discussed in the above literature section as guidance towards answering the research question. Discovering patterns in the way questions were answered by respondents led to the categorization of codes during the analysis. In total, 28 codes were uses for the analysis, categorized in five code groups: 'Characteristics neighbourhood', 'Community building', 'Intercultural approach', 'Municipal organisation' and 'Participation'. The authors do not opt for generalizability in this paper. Instead, the aim is to capture different perspectives of stakeholders involved.

4 ANALYSIS

>> In order to determine how intercultural planning can contribute to equity-based, participatory urban planning approaches that enable community empowerment, in this case in Amsterdam, but potentially on a wider scale, this section sheds light on the connection between practice and analytical framework. It connects the main concepts in present study through thoroughly analysing the perceptions of interviewed respondents, categorized in three sub-sections: 'urban regeneration and resident participation', 'community building', and 'intercultural planning'. Every sub-section contains information shared by three particular groups of respondents: 'residents', 'civil servants' and 'other stakeholders'. Furthermore, every sub-section contains a discussion on these different perspectives, which are then connected to the analytical framework.

4.1 Urban regeneration and resident participation

During the interviews with residents concerning their participation, local residents explained the different ways of their participation in planning processes. There is an active neighbourhood platform (NL: *bewonersplatform*),

concerned with the entire G-buurt and there is a core team consisting of four people, as part of this platform. Both blocks of single flats have a resident committee, the one of Geldershoofd being in existence for a longer period than the other one, Gravestein. Besides these ways of grouping, there are also multiple WhatsApp groups in which residents share events or concerns about their living environment or neighbours.

The bond between the municipality and residents is seen as one in which the municipality approaches the residents in times of trouble, signalling the step of consultation on the participation ladder. For example, one respondent said: *"I'm being approached 80 per cent of the time, 20 per cent is the other way around"*. Platforms to participate are mainly organized by the municipality, but there are also examples where the initiative comes from the residents, and where residents and civil servants work together. Such activities are financed through the neighbourhood budget or separate grants are requested for organizing events such as the celebration of Mother's Day or a neighbourhood cook-out.

The civil servants working at city district Zuidoost signal that the residents of G-buurt Noord have a dependent attitude towards the municipality. The general sentiment of the civil servants is that people actually do not want to live in G-buurt Noord, but are living there since they cannot afford better quality housing and have no other choice – something that is not correct according to residents.
Reality and perception are two separate issues as shown in this neighbourhood. Some civil servants felt the need to enlarge the influence of residents on local developments, where others did not see the need for this. This perception of particular civil servants indicates that it is hard for residents to move beyond the phase of consultation and become more included in decision-making instantly, as they are only consulted at a late stage in urban regeneration projects. This also has to do with the assumption of civil servants that local residents in G-buurt Noord do not possess the skills and capacities that are needed, but that is uncertain. This claim is supported by Van Der Hulst (2021), who writes that it is hard to get rid of stigmas, something that is applicable to almost every (migrant) nationality that is present in the Bijlmer.

Opinions from other stakeholders differed substantially; two respondents working for social foundations and one person working for a social housing company were interviewed. The former two were predominantly positive about the residents and their assets. The latter, employee of the social housing company, was more outspoken about the negative aspects of the resident group living in the neighbourhood. This clearly shows that perceptions about local residents vary quite a lot, due to biases among stakeholders involved, or based on experiences in dealing and communicating with these residents.

There also seems to be a mismatch between the perception of local residents of G-buurt Noord about their living environment and those of non-residents. Residents of G-buurt Noord said to be content living there, though some improvements to their environment could be made. Most non-residents on the other hand reflected the sentiment that the residents would like to move elsewhere. The civil servants who were interviewed frequently stressed the low qualities of the neighbourhood instead of its richness in possibilities, contributing to the predominantly negative image of the neighbourhood.
The municipality is currently failing in fulfilling their basic role of serving the residents in their needs and desires. Respondents said that the municipal organization works inefficiently and is not effective and that the residents are not sufficiently listened to. The municipal system is mostly blamed for this, while in fact the distance between residents and civil servants might be more important.
In relation to the main concept of resident participation, the current status quo of how and when plans are presented to residents on the one hand, and the intended outcomes on the other hand, the following conclusion can be drawn. Residents of G-buurt Noord are not really included in decision-making processes, since they are consulted from time to time, not directly leading to concrete neighbourhood improvements. An illustrating quote from one the residents was: *"I would like to be informed, but I'm not sure if I can join in on everything. I'm not 20 anymore"*, referring to her actual willingness to actively participate even though she is ageing; however her voice remains absent from decision-making processes most of the time.

This irregular consultation, rather than structural participation, is a seemingly clear example of a needs-based approach. This is also in line with Hall and Hickman's (2011) claim that the needs-based approach is more commonly used in processes of urban regeneration. Often residents are only involved in planning processes via consultation, in a stage when many plans and decisions have already been made. This relates to lower levels of empowerment among residents, as well as lower levels of participation (Hall & Hickman, 2011).

4.2 Community building

When it comes to a needs-based or an asset-based approach to community development, residents did not specifically favour one of the two approaches over the other. Some residents signalled a clear needs-based approach, where the focus is on help of the municipality when problems arise.
Generally, the resident respondents felt uncertain about the ability to create change as a single individual in the planning processes. Residents felt more confident about their collective efficacy, probably due to the existing resident committees that speak up for the majority. One respondent particularly focussed on the successes of the resident platform, committee and core group; *"we were approached to write the action plan, we were free in that. We wrote it, people*

thought it was a great piece". This example was often cited when the respondents were asked about their collective efficacy. They felt that as a group they were more likely to induce change, but that this effectiveness was still dependent on the influence allowed by the municipality – and thus by institutions.

Civil servants characterise their attitude towards residents as predominantly asset-based. Residents would ideally take action to organize events or write plans, and the municipality would assist them where necessary. One respondent, a district manager stated: *"that's how many people think: the civil servants are good. They have expertise. For living and physical you have to have expertise. What residents can signal is that they want more room to manoeuvre, and you can take this into account"*. "Living and physical" refer to the two different domains within the municipality. Another respondent said: *"they do not know how to get from idea to plan, but they do have ideas. In that we, as a city district, have to take initiative and organize it for them"*. This illustrates the civil servants' opinions about the lack of abilities of the residents to execute ideas themselves, indicating a needs-based approach.
Residents were seen to be more reliant on institutions because of their dependency on what the municipality would offer them, in terms of their representation in development plans as well as the offered funding. According to the civil servants, this was seen as the unwillingness of residents to organize activities themselves, but in fact it was mostly due to the residents' opinion that the procedures of planning processes take too long before concrete actions happen. This led to frustration among them, especially when residents are only asked to react on pre-made plans that are not in line with their ideas, preventing them from active participation. Examples of resident initiatives are a football pitch between flat buildings and the organization of a yearly winter activity for the neighbourhood, but these plans were put aside at the time of this research.

Though civil servants claim to adhere to an asset-based approach to community building, focussing on the strengths of local residents, the resident respondents experienced the opposite, and signalled a needs-based approach focussing on problems. There is a difference between the ideology within policies and the reality in terms of citizen participation. A large dependency of institutions is present, caused by the existing institutional mechanisms, since high levels of collective efficacy are noted as well. The self-efficacy of residents in G-buurt Noord may not be that high, but people are actually contributing to change in the neighbourhood as a collective as much as possible.

Through their collective efforts and conversations, residents potentially can successfully contribute to local developments, when they see concrete change based on collaboration. According to Muljono (2011), this is a powerful indicator for empowerment, both individual and collective, and could bring residents of a neighbourhood closer to each other. More collective efforts, e.g. neighbourhood

activities, and conversations could occur more frequently in G-buurt Noord, as they are beneficial for connecting residents, which makes residents more self-sufficient – two things that the municipality would definitely appreciate.

4.3 Intercultural approach

Many interviewed residents indicate that the ignorance of the civil servants about their living situation and cultural backgrounds stood in the way of equal relations. Even though residents are generally positive about the awareness of municipal officers of different cultural backgrounds in the local area, they are dissatisfied about with how this affects municipal activities. In particular, civil servants do not sufficiently connect to their world and are lacking cultural literacy skills, in their opinion. One of the respondents mentioned: "*They have a distorted image of the people from the Bijlmer, especially people of colour from the Bijlmer. [...] People seriously have the idea that, we as black people don't work, don't go to school, that we're all single parents, drop-outs, and who knows more negativity. While that is simply not the case*". This critique was directed more towards the municipality as such, rather than to individual civil servants working on the ground at the neighbourhood level.

The majority of the interviewed civil servants was prone to thinking in target-groups and they were in most cases aware of doing this themselves. For example, one of the respondents mentioned: "*Dutch people think in boxes, we have it in us*". Another respondent, while acknowledging target-group thinking among civil servants, saw this as the right approach and as a signal of awareness of different cultural groups. This statement shows existing ignorance of diversity in cultural backgrounds and the presence of target-group thinking, therewith assuming all people from a particular broad ethnic group are the same, wanting and needing the same things in life.

Other interviewed respondents, those who work for social foundations, were positive about the direction the municipality is heading with regard to its residents. These respondents acknowledge that there are difficulties, but say that civil servants try their best to fix them. The respondent for the social housing company for example mentioned the need for target-group policy. He recommended that the municipality should install a local civil servant of Surinamese or Antillean background – the largest resident groups in G-buurt Noord, which signals a current lack of cultural literacy on the side of the municipality. This might have a negative impact on residents' participation in the future as well, because again, people from different backgrounds have different needs and desires.

Overall, we conclude civil servants lack cultural literacy. Though they have a general and basic awareness of cultural diversity present in the neighbourhood, there is a lack of expertise in how to deal with this in policies and practices.

There is indeed a mismatch between the world of residents and how civil servants perceive this. Even though the municipality claims to be open to all cultures, this is not experienced by the interviewed residents of G-buurt Noord. In order to include all residents in planning processes, there should be more and better attempts to get to know the opinions of people living there – especially the ones who are labelled as 'unreachable' now. This is inherently linked to a shift to intercultural planning where civil servants are more aware and understanding of the diversity and cultures that are present in a particular area. A condition to accomplish this is better communication between residents and municipality and more involvement of civil servants, being physically present in the neighbourhood, but also mentally – connecting with the reality of local residents.
The challenge here especially lies in reaching out to the seemingly 'unreachable' – people with whom the civil servants have no contact and whose wishes and needs are unknown to the municipality. One way to reach out to them is through so-called neighbourhood ambassadors, who are other residents of the same neighbourhood that represent the majority of people. Since these ambassadors are less formally linked to the unreachable residents, this might remove the obstacle for the latter to participate or share their ideas – for example when the ambassadors have different cultural backgrounds, similar to those who are currently unreachable. Another possible solution for civil servants to connect with the 'unreachable' is through visiting organised events in the neighbourhood. Examples can be found in low-threshold activities, such as a bingo game for the neighbourhood, or activities at a church or mosque. Such examples can strengthen the connection between civil servants and residents, and eventually lead to a more sustainable bond in which both parties are more willing to cooperate and support each other.
Relating this to the claim of Duxbury, Hosagrahar and Pascual (2016) that culturally informed urban development is able to inspire more participatory processes, more effort should be put in acknowledging cultural diversity in G-buurt Noord since it can benefit the utilization of assets of the neighbourhood's residents. Such an approach can empower marginalized individuals and communities to participate in cultural and political life, which should be the aim of asset-based community development (Mathie & Cunningham, 2003).

Through increased self-sufficiency and a more sustainable bond between residents and civil servants, residents become less dependent on the municipality and are more likely to participate. The capacities and willingness to contribute to change are mostly there, but according to both residents and civil servants, the municipality can facilitate the use of their skills and assets more and better supporting the practical implementation of plans. Only then, people are more willing to participate. Seeing actual change is important in this process, as well as getting involved, two things that Muljono (2011) also

described as powerful indicators for achieving community empowerment. Following Sandercock's line of thinking (2010), this collective form of empowerment can be seen and used as a foundation for conversation and cooperation, which will benefit the greater goal of establishing a multicultural vision for the city, representing the wishes, ideas and plans of a culturally diverse population.

5 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

>> This research was conducted to provide an answer on how intercultural planning can contribute to equity-based, participatory urban planning that enables community building and empowerment in the Bijlmer neighbourhood of Amsterdam. Through analysing to what extent local residents with a multicultural background are participating in planning processes related to urban regeneration of Bijlmer-Oost, specifically G-buurt Noord, different perceptions were found which have to be taken into account in order to improve the current status quo.
This section reflects on the central research findings in light of the aforementioned research question, and furthermore formulates recommendations for practitioners and follow-up research on this theme.

5.1 Discussion

Urban regeneration and resident participation

As was described in the previous section, civil servants of the municipality of Amsterdam are in touch with local residents in G-buurt Noord, the Bijlmer, as part of the ongoing neighbourhood regeneration process. Despite this, the municipality is currently failing to fulfil its basic role of serving its residents in this context.When it comes to the involvement of residents in local decision-making processes, or more concretely their participation in neighbourhood developments, we learned that most of the time, pre-made plans were presented to them. This indicates that participative power of residents is still limited to consultation instead of being able to articulate their preferences in an earlier planning phase. This is also in line with the claim made by Hall and Hickman (2011) that local governments often disguise consultation as participation.

Community building

Following the approach of asset-based community development (ABCD), it became clear that perceptions on (the outcomes of) this approach differed strongly among the stakeholders interviewed. The previously mentioned mismatch regarding the difference between the actual lives of residents and the perceptions of civil servants is therefore also relevant here. While the intentions of the municipality to focus on participatory democracy might look good on

paper, the practice is far behind. Overall, on the side of the municipality, cultural literacy is lacking in terms of communication and information provision to residents, which in turn also effects how participation happens in practice. On the other hand, high levels of collective efficacy are noted in the neighbourhood as well, for instance through a resident platform. The self-efficacy of residents in G-buurt Noord may not be that high, but they are actually contributing to change in the neighbourhood as a collective – as much as possible. Because of the complexity of regulations and procedures within Dutch planning, there also is a relatively large dependency on institutions amongst migrant residents.

Intercultural planning

It was noticed that cultural diversity among residents is indeed acknowledged among civil servants, however, they often still think in target groups, thereby generalizing residents. In order to actually accomplish resident participation in processes of urban regeneration, it is necessary that (1) residents are more involved in earlier stages of planning processes, and that (2) the quality of the relationship between residents and civil servants improves. The latter was a specific point stressed in the interviews with residents; especially the distance (both physical and mental) between residents and the municipality makes them feel unheard.

An increased cultural literacy or sensitivity can support better relations between residents and municipality. Mutual understanding is a key condition here, when involving residents into decision-making processes, in order to reach more people than before. As Duxbury et al. (2016) wrote, training in cultural sensitivity can make planners more culturally competent and planning more culturally effective. When planners become culturally competent, they learn the principles that help them understand the beliefs and customs of cultural groups. This understanding in turn capacitates planners to provide plans that reflect these beliefs and customs in practice.

In order to include all residents in planning processes, there should be more and better attempts to get to know the (opinions of) people living there – especially those who are 'unreachable' at the moment, such as through neighbourhood ambassadors. This is inherently linked to a shift to intercultural planning where civil servants are more aware and understanding of the diversity and cultures that are present in a particular place, and act accordingly. Key conditions here are a better communication between residents and municipality, and more involvement and presence of civil servants in the neighbourhood. This entails not just physical presence, but also empathy towards the reality of local residents, and an ability to imagine themselves in the position of the residents. As a first step, it is very important for civil servants to become aware of their own cultural biases, though these might be unconscious.

Furthermore, the space which local residents have to manoeuvre, should be enlarged, probably consolidating a foundation on which the community can build as a whole. In this sense, it can be argued that the ABCD approach seems a (more) successful way to support residents, and brings about more positive effects than a needs-based approach which is more commonly used so far. Especially multicultural neighbourhoods call for this approach. This echoes Hall and Hickman's (2011) critique that multiculturalist, targeted policies have been replaced by universalist, mainstreaming policies that disregard intergroup differences, apparently negatively influencing the participation of local residents.

This more general critique is relevant for other neighbourhoods as well as for the case in Amsterdam, it is also relevant for the wider international debate of participation, multiculturalism, community building and intercultural planning. Through connecting residents with policy-makers, mutual understanding and respect are more easily established, since people learn more about each other's perspectives and backgrounds. This includes cultural differences, which can be bridged between different individuals and groups and that can contribute to decrease in formal as well as informal power disparities within urban settings.

5.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

In this essay, we have argued that an asset-based approach towards community development can foster the empowerment of local residents on the individual as well as the collective level, conditioned by the level of residents' dependence on institutions, the level of residents' individual self-efficacy and collective efficacy. This research furthermore shows that the municipality of Amsterdam applies a needs-based approach to community building, in which residents are mostly dependent on the municipality when it comes to participation.
The empowerment and confidence often needed for strong leadership roles – ascribed to self-efficacy – were lacking for the majority of residents in G-buurt Noord, whilst this is an important prerequisite for effectuating change. A suggestion for future research would be to see how increasing levels of self-efficacy influence collective efficacy, and also participation. Another suggestion would be to compare different case studies in this field, so that differences between municipalities or countries can become visible, related to their approach.

It would furthermore be interesting for the municipality of Amsterdam to set up trajectories for residents to boost their self-efficacy. One step has already been taken by making a neighbourhood budget available to fund small-scale projects, such as the cook-out and the open-air cinema. This of course can be extended to other ideas as well, for instance a football tournament for the entire community or an urban farming initiative, where people can learn from each other while growing their own food.

In the case of Amsterdam the distance between civil servants and residents turned out to be the most important obstacle in the participation process in G-buurt Noord. Most residents want to be involved in the planning processes affecting their living environment; they wish to have their say in smaller projects such as gardens between flats, but also in larger developments that are taking place – since these changes have a strong impact on their lives. Expertise on urban planning may be present at the municipality, but the entire process and trajectory of planning should not be established as pre-packed plans; all voices of stakeholders should be included, especially those whose lives are most affected by change.

As the nature of this study is rather exploratory, introducing the intercultural approach to participation in planning processes of urban regeneration, it would be valuable to initiate a more encompassing, in-depth research agenda to further explore this theme more thoroughly in the context of spatial planning research. This would also yield more fine-tuned solutions for municipal planners as to how to manage this multicultural planning challenge. One of the possible research directions could be a more quantitative research set-up to enable the study of causalities between variables such as degree of residents' self-efficacy, collective efficacy and resident participation. Learning about what people value and their sense of place could be interesting and relevant variables, providing information on their place attachments and willingness to contribute to local developments. Through collecting large scale data on resident participation in multicultural neighbourhoods, this would provide more generalizable findings that could inform policy decisions in other parts of the Netherlands and beyond.

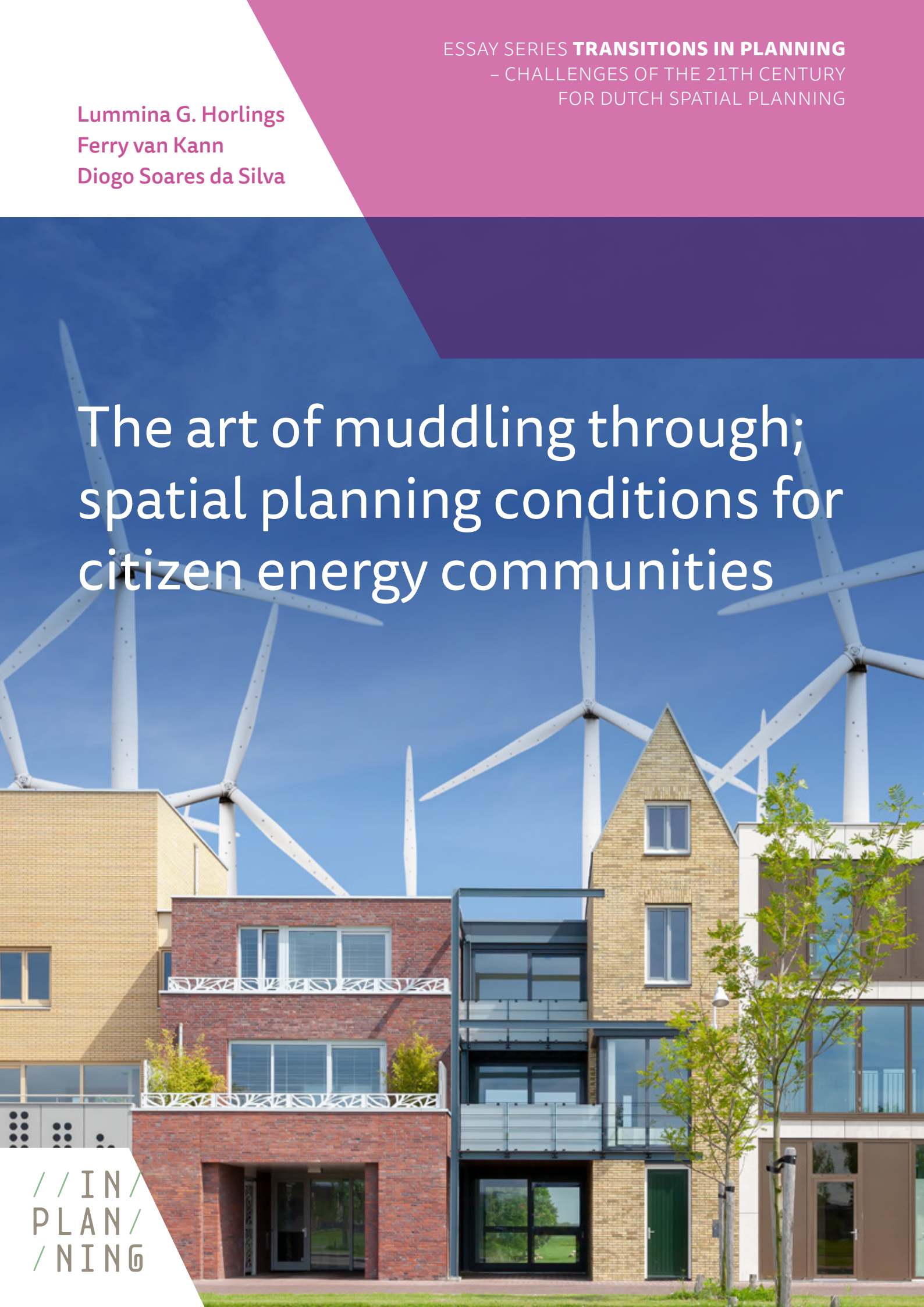
CHAPTER

5

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Lummina G. Horlings
Ferry van Kann
Diogo Soares da Silva

The art of muddling through; spatial planning conditions for citizen energy communities



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>> The art of muddling through; spatial planning conditions for citizen energy communities

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SUMMARY

>> This essay focuses on the energy transition as a relevant issue for spatial planning as it has large spatial implications. Particularly against the background of climate change, there is an urgent call for a fundamental change of our energy system. Part of this change is a growing role for citizen initiatives that collectively focus on renewable energy, referred to in this paper as citizen energy communities (CECs). While the role of citizens in energy transition has been discussed in different disciplines, and regional scientists have reflected on citizen participation in community energy production, the role of spatial planning in supporting these bottom-up processes deserves more scholarly attention.

We aim to answer the key question: What are spatial planning conditions for energy transition driven by CECs in different institutional contexts? To understand and illustrate these conditions, we use a comparative study of three case studies in three different countries, the Netherlands, Wales (UK), and Portugal. Based on an empirical study and a literature review, which include an analysis of the dilemmas and socio-spatial (mis)matches in the field of energy, we provide recommendations for favourable planning conditions supporting CECs. The results show that CECs build new institutional arrangements and coalitions. The analysis of the cases underpins that the specific geography, the institutional context and involvement of relevant stakeholders are key factors to take into account. Finally, we conclude that in order CECs to flourish, spatial planning should 1) balance top-down goals and area-specific implementation, 2) consider temporality (including long-term visioning and short-term incrementalism or 'muddling through') and 3) pay attention to the impact of the energy transition on multiple spatial scales.

Key words: energy transition; energy initiatives; community; decentralisation; area-specific planning

1 INTRODUCTION

>> The impacts of climate change are occurring faster than previously predicted and will affect all places and regions in the world (IPCC, 2021). Global temperatures will continue to rise for generations to come, largely due to greenhouse gases (GHG) which have been and continue to be emitted into the atmosphere as a result of human activity. Currently about two-thirds of the enhanced greenhouse effect is caused by CO2 and one-third by other gases, of which about half by methane. Adaptive governance strategies so far have failed to stay below the Paris agreement goal, thus increasing the risk of societal collapse (Bendell and Read, 2021). To keep climate warming below 1.5 degrees temperature rise as agreed during the global Paris agreement, CO2 emissions have to be cut back by 50% before 2030 and the zero emission target has to be reached before 2050 (IPCC, 2021). One of the dominant forces triggering GHG emissions is the burning of fossil fuels to fulfil energy needs (Ripple et al., 2020). Climate change thus urgently calls for a fundamental change in our energy system referred to as energy transition (Rotmans et al., 2001). Markard et al. (2012, p.956) define energy transition as the '...long-term, multi-dimensional, and fundamental transformation processes through which established socio-technical systems shift to more sustainable modes of production and consumption'.
In November 2018, the European Commission (EC) unveiled its strategic, long-term plan that aims for a climate-neutral economy by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement goal (European Commission, 2018). In this strategy, the energy sector is expected to be "nearly decarbonised" by 2050, fueled by nuclear energy and a "strong penetration of renewable energy sources" that is facilitated by system optimization.

Energy transition is a relevant issue for spatial planning as it has large spatial implications; renewable based infrastructure of solar panels, wind turbines, hydropower stations and biomass production is - in contrast to fossil fuels - located above the surface and highly visible (Van Kann, 2015). Integrating such infrastructure into landscapes will therefore not go unnoticed, especially in urban regions (Zuidema and De Boer, 2017).
The decarbonisation of society is a multi-actor and complex process, involving energy suppliers, businesses involved in energy transport, households, and regulatory multi-level governments. It has been suggested that new actors can anticipate alternative scenarios and strategies in the face of an energy transition (Sarrica et al., 2016). Recently we see the emergence of collective energy initiatives, initiated as civic bottom-up processes focusing on renewable energy issues. However, civic engagement not just takes place in the field of energy transition, but also in the wider context of sustainability and transformations (Walker and Devine-Wright, 2008; Seyfang and Haxeltine, 2012; Smith and Seyfang, 2013; Hoppe and van Bueren, 2015; Bauwens et al., 2016; Berka and Creamer, 2018; de Boer et al., 2018).

Energy initiatives have been referred to with different terms such as citizen initiatives (Schoor and Scholtens, 2015; Hoppe and van Bueren, 2015; Soares da Silva et al., 2018), local energy initiatives (Van Aalderen and Horlings, 2020), community energy (Bauwens, 2016), citizen energy (Blanchet, 2015), citizen participation in the energy sector (Yildiz et al., 2015) and renewable energy communities (Dóci et al., 2015). The reasons for citizen energy communities (CECs) to engage in energy transition include environmental, economic and social motivations (Brummer, 2018; Seyfang et al. 2013). CECs contribute to energy savings of households, a reduction in CO_2 emissions and the production of renewable solar and wind energy. It has been suggested that their wider societal impact also includes more autonomy (or self-governance/ independency), an increased awareness of the need for energy transition among citizens and more liveability, social cohesion or other benefits for the wider community (Berka & Creamer, 2018; Brummer, 2018; Mulugetta and Urban, 2010).

The European Union's recognition of the importance of these new energy actors is well stated in its current legislation. The Clean Energy for all Europeans package (EU, 2019) defines in legal terms what constitutes a "renewable energy community" (REC) and a "citizen energy community" (CEC). We will use the term citizen energy community here which is according to the EU: a legal entity based on a) voluntary and open participation, controlled by its members and shareholders and b) which has as its purpose to provide environmental, economic or social community benefits to its members or shareholders or to the local areas where it operates rather than to generate financial profits; and (c) may engage in generation, including from renewable sources, distribution, supply, consumption, aggregation, energy storage, energy efficiency services or charging services for electric vehicles or provide other energy services to its members or shareholders (Roberts et al., 2019).

The role of citizens in energy transition has been discussed in different disciplines such as Law, Psychology and Environmental Sciences (Germes et al., 2021; Sloot et al., 2018; Stroink et al., 2022). Furthermore, spatial scientists have reflected on the role of public engagement in energy projects and policies (Devine-Wright, 2011), community wind energy (Baxter et al., 2020), community energy participation (Bauwens and Devine-Wright, 2018) and aspects such as equity, justice and vulnerability (Hall, Hards & Bulkeley, 2013). However, we would argue that spatial planning conditions that support citizen engagement from the bottom-up, deserve more scholarly attention. Specifically more insight is needed on how to reach national energy targets via decentralised and area-specific planning and how this might differ in varied institutional contexts. This calls for an international comparative perspective. We have selected CECs in three countries (Netherlands, Portugal and Wales), all initiated by citizens, independently from third parties (both companies and public institutions),

which operate locally, to illustrate how spatial planning conditions play a role in supporting or hindering these CECs. Our key question in this essay is: What are spatial planning conditions for energy transition driven by CECs in different institutional contexts? With spatial planning conditions we refer to the physical, social and institutional context in which CECs operate, including policy rules, regulations and financial instruments.

The structure of the paper is as follows. First we will describe some theoretical background on energy transition from a spatial planning perspective and argue that the energy system can be characterised by dilemmas and existing socio-spatial mismatches. This results in an analytical framework used as a lens to analyse our empirical cases. By comparing CECs in the Netherlands, Wales and Portugal, we will illustrate how such communities are supported or constrained by institutions and spatial planning contexts and how decentralised and place-based policies play a role therein. In the discussion and conclusions, we provide recommendations on favourable planning conditions supporting CECs.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW: SPATIAL PLANNING AND SOCIO-SPATIAL MISMATCHES IN ENERGY TRANSITION

>> Before introducing our analytical framework in section 3, a further explanation of the context on spatial planning and the energy sector is needed to understand the socio-spatial complexity in this field and how area-specific planning and co-production between governments and citizens might play a role here. We will also analyse the socio-spatial dilemmas and mismatches which occur in the context of energy transition.

Trends in spatial planning

Especially in north-west Europe spatial planning has shifted towards more deregulation and decentralisation. While on the one hand we have witnessed a retreat of the State, devolving responsibilities to the EU level, tasks and responsibilities have also been decentralised to the sub-national (regional) level and local level. Decentralisation is understood as "a process, the aim of which is to transfer tasks and power from a higher to a lower echelon in an organisation, whereby the lower echelon both performs the task an assumes responsibility for it" (Elzinga and Hagelstein, 1998, p.111). Decentralisation has been considered as a potential pathway for developing area-specific planning that can effectively bring collaboration and competing stakeholders together in a locally-grounded governance network, taking into account local circumstances (Wu, 2021, p.43).

The shifting of rules and roles from government to governance in the last decades (Innes, 1996; Healey, 1997; Rhodes, 1997), has raised new opportunities for the production of renewable energies but also resulted in dilemmas and

socio-spatial mismatches as we will show below. The planning context of energy transition has become more dynamic, more diverse, more interconnected, more fluid and, hence, more complex. Due to an increased social fragmentation and complexity, we also see an increased plurality of governance approaches (Zuidema, 2011). Actors have become less capable of realising their ambitions independently, therefore we witness an increased collaboration between private, civic and governmental actors within the energy system.

The amount of space needed and the choice of location requires serious area-specific planning, seeking a balance between local opportunities for producing energy, and the risks of facing spatial constraints and societal resistance (Wu, 2021). Planning needs to be adapted to local and regional circumstances and communities while balancing the varied interests and perceptions of stakeholders (Fuchs and Hinderer, 2014; Wiehe et al., 2020). Though initially research didn't sufficiently pay attention to the spatial context (Coenen et al., 2012), the socio-spatial aspects of transformation processes have recently gained more attention in academic literature (Calvert, 2015; Hansen and Coenen, 2015; Truffer et al., 2015). Coenen et al (2021, p.220) for example witnessed a sharp increase in research outputs that recognize local- and regional- level processes contributing to energy system transitions in different parts of the world (Coenen et al., 2021, p.220; Mattes et al., 2015; Ruggiero et al., 2021; Yu and Gibbs, 2018).

Area-specific planning (Wu, 2021) also termed as place-based policies (Barca, 2009) has gained more governmental interest in the last decade to build on local knowledge, mobilise regional assets and exploit synergies and to strengthen a comparative advantage in places (Barca et al., 2012). Attention to the specific (perceived) characteristics of places has also been advocated as a means for sustainable place-shaping, 'connecting people and communities to place' (Horlings, 2016, 2018).

Area-specific planning has been advocated in the context of energy transition to develop tailor-made solutions which are more sensitive to local circumstances and local and stakeholder interests (Van Kann, 2015; Zuidema and De Boer, 2017).

A decentralisation of policies can support tailor-made solutions, handing over tasks, roles and responsibilities to local energy initiatives in a way that acknowledges the specificities of particular places and institutional settings. However, there are also legitimate concerns about decentralisation as this depends on the willingness and capabilities of local and regional governments and thus does not guarantee that national targets are met (Wu, 2021). This raises questions how conditions for successful decentralisation and co-production between CECs and other organisations might differ in varied institutional contexts.

Dilemmas and mismatches in energy transition

An institutional context of decentralisation and collaboration between various actors, as can be witnessed in the Netherlands, potentially offers the space for co-production on the regional and local level and CEC to emerge. Co-production, as defined by Ostrom (1996: 1079), is "the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not in the same organisation". This can generate synergy between the actions of governments and citizens, with citizens taking an active role, not a merely a consultative one (Soares da Silva and Horlings (2020, p. 366). However, this also brings obstacles, and mismatches to the surface. We have identified here the following three main socio-spatial mismatches.

First, in terms of actors involved, the market of energy production is still dominated by large companies internationally, while renewable energy produced by local CECs is growing. This limits the possibilities for a further decentralisation of energy production. The question raised by Hisschemoller (2012, p.123) "can ordinary citizens … make a significant contribution …", might still be answered with "no, unless" if we talk about numbers. The European Association Energy Cities is however emphasising other contributions in terms of provision of technical expertise and acting as a partner to support local economic and social objectives (Energy Cities, 2018).

Secondly, energy sources such as wind power require large plots of land, which makes peripheral rural areas with low population density most suited for production. However, the spatial lay-out of energy infrastructure, the cables which transport electricity, is less dense in rural areas at the end of the energy grid. Grid capacity is a serious problem in for example the Netherlands, calling for organised action at a central level. Figure 2 clearly illustrates this, as less densely populated provinces are completely marked as areas with a (near future) lack of grid capacity. This is even more problematic as the demand of energy is especially high in densely populated urban and industrial areas. This results in logistic challenges for the transport of energy, as well as a demand for innovative energy storage solutions. Also internationally we see mismatches as the countries which have the space and opportunity to provide renewable energy, such as water powered renewable energy in Norway, are not the countries with the highest demand, due to low population densities.

Third, the factor time plays a role here as well. The production of renewable solar, tidal and wind energy is fluctuating with the seasons, weather and day-night rhythm. The peaks in energy production most often don't run parallel in time with the demand for energy. To provide just a simple example, on the household level, most solar energy is produced in summer, while energy for heating is needed in the winter. And even on a sunny winter day, most heat might be needed during long and dark nights, illustrating that time and timing

(over longer and shorter periods) are critical factors. This calls for energy storage solutions which require space as well.

To deal with these mismatches, coordination beyond geographical and administrative borders is needed, which might require a directive role of the state. This raises the question if decentralised place-based approaches will be an obstacle or an opportunity in dealing with these challenges, and how this might differ between countries.

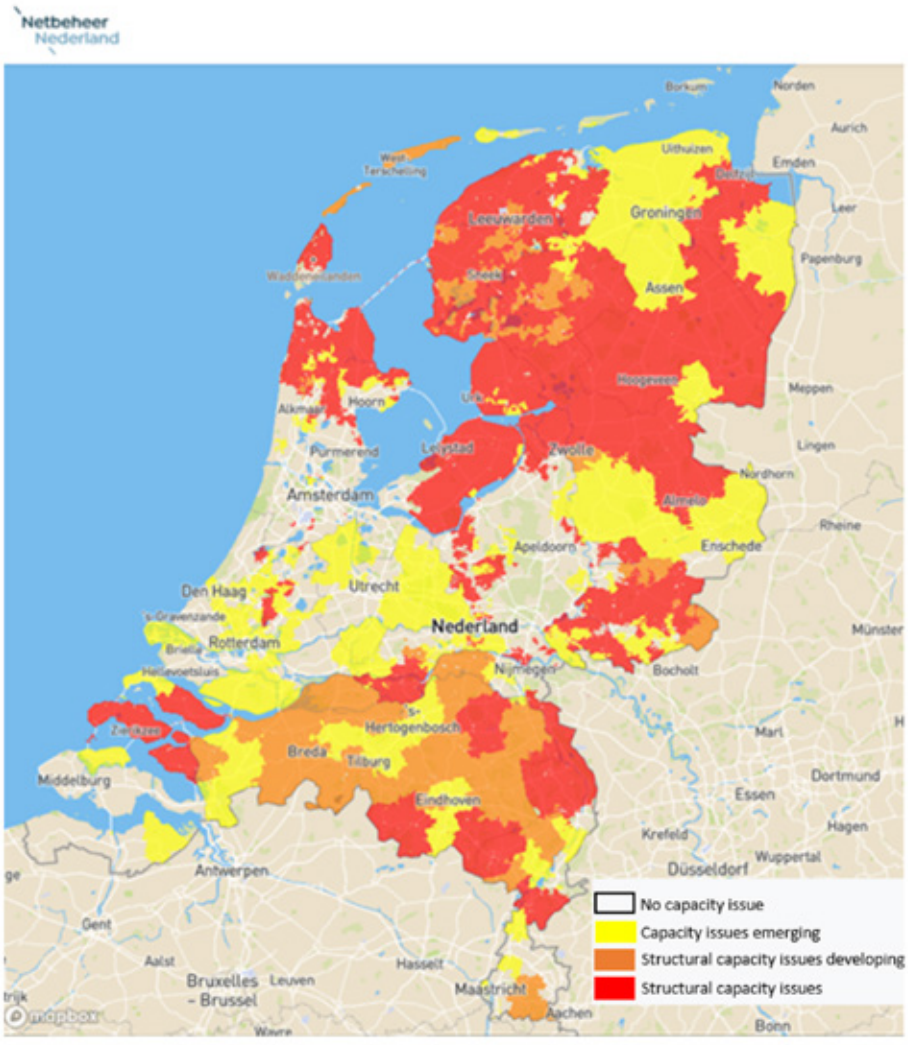

FIGURE 1
Grid capacity issues in the Netherlands (orange and red zones are already problematic).
Source: Netbeheer Nederland, 2021 – translation by authors)

3 ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

>> The theoretical framework we use summarises the trends described before. First we assume that in the national context of spatial planning and energy transition differences between countries with regard to aspects of (de) centralisation, area-specific planning and co-production between civic, private and governmental actors all play a role in providing a more or less favourable institutional setting for energy transition and CECs.

We also assume that not just the national context influences CECs but also the local and regional context. Our aim is to derive insights from the cases how spatial planning conditions play a role in supporting or hindering CECs in different countries. With spatial planning conditons we refer tro the physical, social and institutional context in which CECs operate, including rules, regulations and financial instruments. Furthermore we will reflect on how these spatial planning conditions might influence the existing socio-spatial mismatches described in the previous section. Figure 2 provides an analytical model which includes spatial policies and place-based characteristics, the role of the CEC itself, such as the organisation form and actors involved in the community, and how these influence the described dilemmas and (mis)matches. This framework will serve as a lens to analyse the Dutch context and two international satellite cases which offer a comparative perspective.

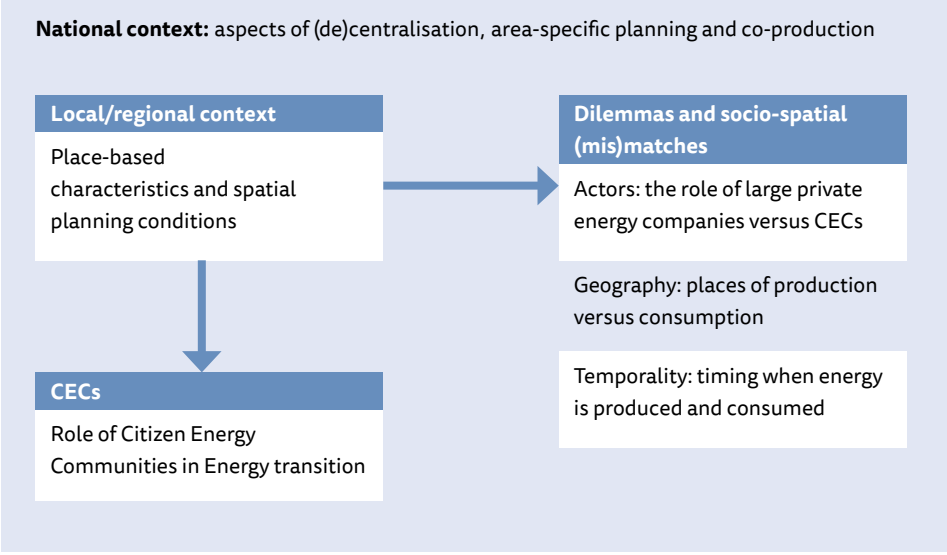

FIGURE 2
Analytical framework.

4 METHODS

>> While the focus in this essay is on the Dutch planning context, an international comparative perspective offers the opportunity to illustrate how institutional differences, including the degree of decentralisation, play a role in the governance of CECs. The analysed CECs, located in three countries, have a different relationship with the EU: The Netherlands is a founding member, Wales is part of the UK, which has left the EU in 2020, and Portugal has been a member state since 1986. These countries have distinct welfare systems (Esping-Andersen 1990; Ferrera 1996), governance and planning practices, culture and traditions, different shares of renewable energy production and consumption, and, although they share(d) a common EU strategy, the implementation of legislation regarding CECs in these countries is in a different phase.

The CECs selected in these countries are all initiated by citizens, independently from third parties (both companies and public institutions), and operate locally. Data collection consisted of policy documents, reports, news articles, documentation provided by the CEC, and in-depth interviews with some of the main actors of the initiatives. Respondents were selected via the contact person of each initiative. These interviews were supported by semi-structured interview guides, following the same structure for all three cases. The interview guides contained open-ended questions about the interviewees' backgrounds, their motivations to set up the CEC, their history, interactions with other actors (including residents), and about the energy sectors in their countries/regions. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, their audio recorded, and posteriorly transcribed for analysis. The analysis was based on codes derived from the elements of the conceptual framework.

In the following sections we first briefly describe the Dutch context on energy transition based on policy documents on the national and regional level, followed by a description of the cases of Awel Aman Tawe/Egni, Coopérnico and WindpowerNijmegen. We will then analyse the cases based on the elements of our framework and draw conclusions on the spatial planning conditions for successful co-production between CECs and other organisations within these different institutional environments.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Dutch spatial planning and energy transition

Although Dutch national renewable energy ambitions are in place for more than twenty years already, a significant acceleration in the energy transition is only recognised recently. In line with Rotmans et al. (2001), it is clear that the first phase of the energy transition took quite some time. This can be explained by

the abundance of natural gas in the Netherlands, connected to well-developed infrastructures and institutions, which resulted in a lock-in situation. This changed due to a growing public awareness, protests and political debates after earthquakes which occurred in the gas mining area in the North of the Netherlands. As a consequence, policies aiming to transition to a 'gas free' society became even more concrete and strict than in other parts of Europe, where natural gas from Norway, Russia, or Algeria was still considered a clean resource.

A second reason for slow implementation of renewable energy infrastructure in the Netherlands is the density of land-use where every single square metre of land is contested and various spatial interests and functions compete. Spatial policy to integrate renewable energy in landscapes was almost lacking, until recently when regional energy strategies were developed, while national policies are mainly focused on providing subsidies (SDE, SDE+) for renewable energy techniques which cannot compete with cheap fossil fuels. However, there is still an uneven economic playing field between fossil fuels and renewable energy, as not all societal and environmental costs have been included in the price (ECN, 2014-2017).

Next to subsidies in the late 2000's, the national government did allocate large onshore wind turbine parks as part of their spatial policies. The style of governance used in these plans was very much a top-down one, mainly considering technical aspects such as available land, wind speed, and energy infrastructure. However, several of these nationally (top-down) enforced projects have resulted in significant local and regional resistance.

Partly as a consequence of this failed process of planning large windparks, and partly resulting from the "Nationaal Klimaatakkoord", a joint agreement between governments, companies and NGOs on the national level, a new more decentralised governance strategy has emerged. This strategy, the so-called Regional Energy Strategies (RES), combines (inter)national set goals regarding greenhouse gas emissions and therefore renewable energy targets (like a share of 70% renewables in the electricity generation in 2030) with a decentralised planning approach. Thirty regions have been asked to develop their own regional energy strategies, making use of area-specific capacities to limit the demand for energy, to generate electricity based on wind and solar power, and develop ideas to replace natural gas in the heating sector. The aim of these regional energy strategies is not just to suggest technical solutions and locations, but regional authorities should, according to the national government, take citizen involvement, participation and co-ownership seriously in renewable energy projects. Together with the idea that such projects should be 'smartly' integrated in the physical environment, the socio-spatial dimension of the energy transition is now firmly on the political agenda. Though the

regional energy strategies illustrate a shift towards more area-specific energy planning and place-based policies, and aim to build coalitions between actors on the local and regional level, it is not clear if and how CECs benefit from this process of decentralisation.

5.2 Case study 1 – WindpowerNijmegen, The Netherlands

Coöperatie WindpowerNijmegen (WPN) is a citizen-owned energy cooperative based in Nijmegen, a city in the east of the Netherlands. Established in 2013, WPN completed the building of a wind farm three years later. It was funded with the help of over a thousand residents who have purchased shares. On May 22th Zonnepark de Grift was opened, a solar park located on the same site as Windpark Nijmegen-Betuwe. Together, the energy generated by the four turbines and 11000 solar panels will be able to supply 1.475 huishoudens per year with sustainable energy.

A strong societal, institutional, and financial support for citizen-led initiatives has contributed to WPN's success story. WPN has faced some local opposition, but an agreement with concerned residents was soon reached. This includes an environmental fund, tied to the amount of energy produced in the wind farm, that is used to finance projects that can benefit local citizens. As citizens in the city of Nijmegen can become shareholders in this peri-urban project in a village outside the administrative borders of their city, this stimulated a dialogue between urban and peri-urban citizens; also locals became more aware of energy and sustainability issues, as one of the respondents mentioned.

Nationally, the Social Support Act has effectively transferred some roles and responsibilities to citizens that were once part of the core functions of the State. As central and local public institutions retreat from said roles, they empower civic society to take matters in their own hands. With regard to initiatives that aim at producing green energy, this discourse is complemented by incentive schemes and financial support from all layers of government. The municipality of Nijmegen was already interested in producing wind energy in the area where the wind farm was built, and owned the plots of land where the wind farm was built. It also financed its environmental impact assessment, and provided a small loan. The local political context has also benefited WPN, as the municipality is committed to sustainability efforts — it was chosen as 2018's European Green Capital — and citizens support the environmental politics in this traditionally politically left wing city. On the regional and national level some stimulating funds were available. For example, a national incentive scheme ensures WPN is compensated for a period of 15 years, to cover the difference between the cost price of the energy it produces and its sale price. This safeguards the profitability of the operation of the windfarm for the foreseeable future, making citizens more eager to invest in their shares.

Although there was no previous collaboration between the initiators of WPN and local stakeholders, the initiative has benefitted from the know-how of two of its initiators. One was already a wind power developer, and another had worked for a regional NGO, the Foundation for Nature and Environment of Gelderland (GNMF).

CECs can be part of networks and 'umbrella' organisations on different levels who lobby, exchange knowledge between CEC and communicate best practices. On the provincial level associations such as the Vereniging Energie Coöperaties Gelderland (VECG) are active while on the national level ODE Decentraal supports CECs. REScoop, is the European network of CEC acting as an umbrella organisation. WPN in Nijmegen is linked to the provincial umbrella organisation and therefore connected to other CECs in the area.

5.3 Case study 2 – Coopérnico, Portugal

Coopérnico is the first CEC operating in Portugal. It was founded in Lisbon in 2013 by a group of 16 citizens. Since our first interview with one of the initiators of Coopérnico took place in October 2017, the membership base has doubled from just over 700 in 2017 to 1447 members in the first two years. These members, spread throughout the country, have invested over €1,5 million funding a total of 22 solar PV projects in partnership with nonprofits, other cooperatives, and municipal entities, 19 of them active. Just like its membership base, this CEC has a national scope, however with projects installed in ten different regions. Often, Coopérnico itself contacts their prospective partners, offering to finance the investment of solar panels to be installed on top of their buildings. Other times, a network of Coopérnico members identifies opportunities for collaboration with local institutions. Coopérnico submits the project for a feasibility and profitability study, which is then shared with the local partner in order to decide if they are able to proceed with a crowdfunding round amongst its members. The partners are then compensated through the payment of a yearly rent and the offer of energy efficiency services; after the first 15 years of operation, the solar panels are offered, free of cost, to the partner. For this reason, Coopérnico prioritises working with non-profit organisations and social enterprises in order to provide them with additional sources of income.

Institutional support for citizen-led initiatives was nonexistent when Coopérnico was formed, and so was legislation regarding community energy. One of the respondents cited the fact that most decision makers in the Portuguese energy sector were trained while working in (formerly) state-owned, monopolist energy companies, which is one of the reasons that they have a vision of citizen participation that is mostly passive, viewing individuals as mere consumers. Thus, energy production is still seen in the country as a responsibility of the state and/or large energy companies. Despite the recent liberalisation of the energy sector, market conditions are still seen as not

ideal for the appearance of small players such as Coopérnico, especially due to the high fees that need to be paid upfront in order to enter the market as an electricity supplier and distribution, something that has been in the works for Coopérnico since 2017. In the words of the respondent, "it's a whole system that is set up not to facilitate citizen participation".

More recently, the national commitment to reaching EU decarbonization goals was made visible through Portugal's National Energy-Climate Plan 2030. This plan recognises the existence and the role CECs can have in reaching those goals, especially through solar PV. One of the lines of action in the document is "to promote the dissemination of decentralised energy production from renewable sources" (Direção-Geral de Energia e Geologia 2019:87). This is to be done not through the attribution of grants or subsidies, but through changes in the legislative framework that remove obstacles to the growth of the sector. In October 2019, legislation that sets the legal scheme applicable to self-consumption of renewables was finally approved, partially transposing the EU directive 2018/2011 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources. It recognises, for the first time, the existence of renewable energy communities and their right to produce, consume, share, store, and sell the energy they produce; it also states that this should be done "without public subsidies", hinting that this legislation will not be combined with further subsidies for energy production. Coopérnico did not receive any public funding or subsidy. Coopérnico's first projects were funded through loans from bigger and more established European CECs. From then on, a pool of members, who pay €60 for the purchase of a minimum of three titles of share capital, had opportunities to invest and crowdfund each of the individual projects, receiving dividends.

None of the initiators had previous experience working in cooperatives. Only one of the initiators used to work in the energy sector, first at a major electrical utilities company, then as the owner of a small company that sold energy solutions. Every project Coopérnico develops involves an entirely new partnership with a different entity, so there was no prior collaboration between partners. However, the know-how gathered through negotiating and funding each project provides Coopérnico with additional experience when establishing new partnerships with other organisations. Some proactive members of the cooperative can also serve as gateways to new partnerships, as they are also members of other associations or institutions that could be prospective partners.

Coopérnico's projects are subject to feasibility and profitability studies prior to any crowdfunding round. The solar panels are installed on top of buildings owned by the partners. That keeps costs with land quite low. Coopérnico pays an annual rent to the partner for the installation of the panels on top of their

buildings, which is, on average, equivalent to one month's worth of electricity paid by the institution. On the downside, a respondent mentioned this as one of the reasons some contracts fall apart, as prospective partners expect to have much bigger financial gains from the partnership. Another constraint is that each project ends up being limited with regard to the size of the buildings where panels are installed, in order to avoid a much larger land use.

Coopérnico is a member of the European network REScoopand is an active member of its project REScoop Plus, a project that aims at sharing knowledge and best practices from well-established energy cooperatives at the European level to new CECs established in countries with little to no tradition in community energy, and/or legislative framework that supports them. It is also involved as a partner in research projects such as COMPILE, Medsol, and PEARLS.

5.4 Case study 3 – Awel Aman Tawe/Awel/Egni, Wales, UK

Awel Aman Tawe (AAT) is a CEC established in 1998 in the village of Cwmllynfell, South Wales. The initial idea behind the initiative was to build a wind park that would not only produce clean energy but also generate profits to fund local community projects, raise awareness about renewable energy, and provide employment opportunities in a region hit hard by the shutting down of the coal mine industry. In February 2017, seventeen years after the CEC received its first grant, the wind park was finally built. Due to a long, morose, and complicated planning process, only two wind turbines ended up being built, although the original plan included the construction of five turbines. This wind energy venture is managed by a distinct entity set up under the umbrella of AAT, Awel Co-op. The £3 million raised through a share offer ensured Awel could pay back the loans it was granted through the planning process, and the cooperative has since been able to pay full interest back to the investors after the first year of operation of the wind park that generates an average of 12,404 MWh/year, with an installed capacity of 4.7MW. Besides producing clean energy, AAT has also engaged residents through an arts and climate change programme that included, among others, poetry workshops and competitions, a theatre project and a film festival.

In 2014, AAT also set up Egni, the first solar PV cooperative of Wales. It operates similarly to Coopérnico, and it has since installed 179kW of solar power on top of seven community buildings and schools in South Wales, generating 163,376 kWh of power over the year 2018. At the time of the data-collection, Egni was aiming to scale up and install solar panels in up to 250 buildings all over the Welsh territory, from schools and community centres to breweries and rugby clubs.

The establishment of Awel predates discourses of decentralisation promoted by recent British governments. The initiative has its roots in a Local Agenda 21 meeting that took place in the Welsh village of Gwaun Cae Gurwen in September 1998. Through A21 meetings, local communities were encouraged to think of sustainable ways of dealing with local and global issues. The idea for a non-commercial, community-led wind park was the first of its kind in the UK. Being pioneers ensured the initiative had some initial governmental support from the now-defunct British Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which agreed to fund the consultation process.

On the downside, it also meant planning authorities were not totally aware of the benefits brought by such initiatives, and the inflexibility of planning procedures created numerous setbacks to the building of the wind park. By the end of the 1990s, almost 70% of projects for wind parks in Britain failed to get the necessary planning permissions to go ahead (Elliott, 2003). AAT's wind farm planning permission was rejected in 2005, 2007 and 2008 on the grounds of landscape and visual impact, before finally being accepted in 2009—after reducing the number of turbines from five to two. The respondent mentions AAT faced opposition from local authorities for political reasons, as they were "against Welsh government planning policy, which allocates lots of wind turbines to this area". When AAT was granted all the needed licensing to start building the wind park, in late 2015, UK policies regarding renewables had changed, with subsidies and tax relief for the co-op share offers being withdrawn. By this time, and due to concerns with this policy changes, UK's then government-owned Green Investment Bank (GIB) abstained from financing the rest of the project.

Simultaneously, a wave of protests surrounding wind parks were being held across the country. Although attitudes towards renewable energy were generally positive, new wind park developments often faced opposition not only from concerned local citizens but also through non-local organised groups like Country Guardian (Owens and Driffill, 2008, Devine-Wright, 2011) in a way that somewhat resembles opposition to nuclear power. During the lengthy consultation process with residents of surrounding villages, AAT found fierce opposition from an organised group in one of the villages. Although a local referendum promoted by the initiative showed a majority of residents were in favour of the project, AAT ended up facing opposition at every step of the planning process, which translated into a long process of years to obtain common land consent applications. This included building cycles and riding tracks in order to ensure public access to the area.

A respondent mentioned that with the advent of new community schemes in Wales, there now seems to be a better understanding of what community energy can bring to the table, leading to more aware and more interested planning

authorities. The Welsh Government is cited by the respondent as being AAT's major ally during all the process. It ultimately provided the last £3.55 million loan that allowed AAT to ensure the project's financial viability; during the planning process, it also provided technical support and advice through the Ynni'r Fro and Local Energy Services programmes.

There was no past collaboration between the initiators of AAT and other stakeholders in the area. The respondent refers that even their partnership with major stakeholder Welsh Government "doesn't feel like a partnership as such" as they feel WG would not perceive the agreements between the two parties as a partnership per se. As in Coopérnico's case, AAT's solar energy cooperative Egni establishes a new partnership with each new developed project; just like its Portuguese counterpart, it had some support from older, more established solar co-ops, especially from England.

Summarising, compared to the other two analysed initiatives in Wales and Portugal the Dutch Cooperative WindpowerNijmegen has benefitted from a favourable institutional environment. In the next sections, we show an overview of the three case studies, along with a discussion of the results and conclusion to answer the central research question.

6 SYNTHESIS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Spatial planning and CECs

Table 1 shows a synthesis of the case-study results and how renewable energy provided by CECs can be described along the spatial planning conditions (social, physical and institutional). We identified the following set of conditions that more or less play a role in supporting or hindering CECs.

The CECs perform varied *practices*. This includes building new relations with collaborating actors, the participation in research projects and networking on higher scales for example via membership of an umbrella organisation. The organisational characteristics of CECs themselves play a role here as well, responding to local and regional challenges while also adapting to spatial policies on multiple levels. The results also show that a *social context* which favours civic engagement or sustainable development supports CECs. *Co-production* was organised differently; *physical characteristics* of the place didn't play a major role in the processes of co-production in these cases. While horizontal collaboration between a variety of actors could be observed in all cases, vertical multi-level collaboration was more explicit in Portugal, due the role of Coopérnico which seems to function both as a CEC and as an intermediary umbrella organisation. The CECs were not clearly rooted in a

TABLE 1

Overview case-study results and spatial planning conditions.

Informed by...	Coopérnico	Awel Aman Tawe	Windpower Nijmegen
Practices	Active membership in REScoop. Participation in multiple research projects.	Development of an arts and climate change project. Collaboration with established English solar PV co-ops.	Benefits of having initiators with past experience developing wind projects. Membership in a regional cooperative network. Participation in networking events. New links between citizens, and rural-urban relations
CEC characteristics	Pioneers of decentralised energy in the country. National commitment to decarbonization and recognition of the role of CEC.	Pioneers of community wind energy in the UK. Planning authorities and civil servants were initially not aware of the potential for community energy.	Nijmegen was the European Green Capital of 2018. Widespread citizen support for green politics and green initiatives in the city.
Co-production and history of past collaboration	No previous collaboration. One of the initiators used to work in an energy company. Network of proactive members as gateways to new partnerships.	No previous collaboration; even the current agreement "doesn't feel like a partnership".	No previous collaboration (new cooperative). One of the initiators works for a regional environmental foundation.
Social context	No support for citizen-led initiatives when the initiative was started. Very centralised energy market. No local opposition to projects.	Support for sustainable development solutions (Agenda 21) Access to grants. Some local opposition, widespread anti-wind activism.	Strong institutional support for citizen participation at the national level. No significant local opposition to the wind park.
Local physical conditions	Projects are developed in buildings owned by local partners. Size of buildings is a constraint to installed capacity.	Due to negative environmental assessments the number of turbines was reduced from 5 to 2. Long process for obtaining common land consent applications. Necessity to build access and cycle tracks as part of the project.	Plans for the area included wind energy since the mid-90s. The land where the wind turbines are on is owned by the municipality.
Institutional support via Rules, policies, arrangements	No public funding. Funded almost exclusively by members. National decision makers trained under a highly centralised model. Very recent legislation on community energy.	Difficult, morose, and costly planning process. Diminishing incentives and unstable policy for renewable schemes at the national level. Pivotal material, technical support and advice from the Welsh government.	Institutional and financial support from all layers of government: municipal, regional and national.

history of past collaboration, indicating that path-dependency in this sense didn't play a role here. In Wales, environmental assessments had an influence on decreasing the number of windmills. In settings where common or publicly owned land is available, this offers opportunities for community owned wind energy projects as the case of Nijmegen shows.

Institutional support via decentralised policies was offered especially in the Netherlands and the UK. Especially regulatory and financial incentives turned out to be crucial for the start and development of the CECs.

Based on the results, we come back to our main question about spatial planning conditions for energy transition driven by CECs in different institutional contexts. CECs are local, place-based initiatives that can contribute to dealing with the three identified dilemmas and mismatches, though many of them are still in a pioneering phase. In general, it can be argued that these initiatives potentially reduce the vulnerability of the system by including more actors on different governance levels and geographical scales. By implementing concrete practices such as installing urban roofs for solar panels and dedicating peri-urban sites for wind energy, they expand the spaces for renewable energy production, though their energy performance is still limited and should not be overestimated. The results also showed that CECs build new institutional arrangements and coalitions.

As mentioned before, energy transition requires a careful balancing between centralised goals to address climate challenges and decentralised area-specific implementation of renewable energy production via CECs (Van Aalderen and Horlings, 2020; Wu, 2021). Decentralisation of policies and governance styles adaptive to the local situation can support co-production and the building of tailor-made coalitions between actors. Top-down planning and centrally determined targets on renewable energy and the planning of large wind parks often result in implementation problems at the local and regional scale. However community ownership (Walker, 2008) can result in more awareness and less resistance as local citizens become shareholders. Not just (co-) ownership but also citizen participation plays a crucial role in the acceptance as the analysis of community-owned wind parks has shown (Sperling, 2017).

Socio-spatial mismatches in energy transition

With regard to the socio-spatial mismatches identified earlier, the comparison of the three different cases underpins that the specific geography and involvement of relevant stakeholders is key. The first mismatch deals with the power imbalances between large private energy companies and CECs. Although the role and power of large private companies should not be underestimated in terms of agenda-setting or their influence on national debates, in our cases training and know-how seem to have been more relevant for CECs. Especially

in the Portuguese case it was emphasised that some local decision makers were trained during previous jobs while working in (formerly) state-owned, monopolist energy companies, which has contributed to a more passive attitude towards citizen participation. On the contrary, in the development of Coopérnico projects participation didn't seem to be an obstacle, and former experiences were built on when establishing new partnerships. Both Coopérnico and the Welsh organisation AAT are also working as an umbrella organisation stimulating exchange of expertise and therefore supporting CECs. Finally, the Nijmegen case illustrates that local initiators benefited from existing know-how, by connecting their initiative to umbrella organisations on higher geographical scales. Thus considering conditions for energy transition driven by CECs, the availability of know-how on how to start and implement energy projects in general is crucial. With supportive local policies, citizen participation and land-ownership, the development of a wind farm and a solar park is a realistic option for a CEC.

The support of umbrella organisations benefited all three CECs. Intermediary organisations between public, civic and private actors play a crucial role by positioning and professionalising local initiatives, supporting them with resources, and representing these by playing an advocacy role towards governments. The relevance of such organisations has also been acknowledged in the wider context of rural spatial development, connecting grassroots initiatives, public actors, knowledge institutes, and entrepreneurs (Wellbrock, 2013), and contributing to a further professionalisation and upscaling of best practices in nature and landscape care (Runhaar et al., 2016),

The second mismatch, the geographical disconnection between places of production and consumption, can be better understood based on the illustrative cases. A distinction can be made between small-scale investments like solar panels on roofs and solar windmills built by farms on the one hand, and on the other hand, large-scale solar-fields, wind turbine parks that function on a higher spatial level, both in terms of planning process, and energy delivery. CECs that focus on the use of solar energy, like in the Portuguese case, can implement more or less stand-alone projects. The local energy grid most of the time matches production and consumption on the spot and in time. This allows citizens to participate in projects contributing to their own energy demand in their own area. In contrast, large projects are more dependent on the regional or even (inter)national electricity grid. If the local demand for renewable energy is large enough, like in Nijmegen, then the geographical mismatch is limited. However, if demand –for electricity is a bit more distant, a lack of grid capacity can be an obstacle, which cannot be solved on the local scale.

In the Welsh case, getting planning permissions seemed impossible, until the project was resized from five to two turbines. Here an institutional regime on

a higher governance level was hindering the CEC, while simultaneously on UK level ambitious goals existed regarding energy transition. This example highlights again the relevance of a better understanding of this spatial mismatch, as the national demand for space for renewable energy infrastructure is high, while the acceptance of plans is locally dependent on significant public participation or own local initiatives and ownership.

Finally, the third mismatch regarding temporality potentially emphasises again a role for spatial planners. First there is the relevance of periodicity in demand and supply of energy. The availability of sun and wind varies not only on a daily basis (day and night), but also at least seasonally (summer and winter). This results in a need for diversification of the energy system on an (inter)national level while simultaneously including more local storage or buffer capacity. CECs can play a role in experimenting with new local storage innovations, however they often face resistance from more powerful energy companies or restricting rules and regulations.

Today, the (inter)national grid with the connected centralised power facilities are used to balance energy production and supply. However, this becomes less of a suitable option in a future system that is fuelled by CECs. This brings significant infrastructure challenges on the table, where it is unclear on what governmental level this should be solved, let alone who should be in the lead. It also creates questions with regard to timing, such as what kind of energy will be available, when and produced by whom?

These issues emphasise the need for strategic planning on the regional level, co-production and coordination between producing energy actors especially in situations where grid capacity is low. Grid access is now largely determined by whoever applies first, which doesn't not create an optimal balance between demand and supply. In congruence with the water sector in the Netherlands, where waterboards are responsible for the quality and quantity of water supply, 'energy boards' or broader 'climate boards', might be an interesting type of organisation to further explore.

The developments described before increase the already existing complexity of and uncertainty within the energy system. Uncertainty itself is not unfamiliar to spatial planning. Van Dijk et al. (2019-17) recall three fundamental uncertainties with regard to the environment, choices, and political value judgement, as essential to planning. In the face of unpredictable energy developments (such as the reduced supply of gas from Russia after the war in Ukraine started) and climate change and the risks of large-scale disruptions, these uncertainties will become even more pregnant. This means that in order for CECs to flourish, strategic spatial planning should carefully a) balance ambitious top-down targets with area-specific implementation in multi-

stakeholder arenas b) consider temporality (including long-term visioning and short-term incrementalism) c) and include attention for the impact of energy transition on multiple spatial scales to deal with geographical tensions and mismatches.

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CHAPTER

6

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Sander Van Schagen
Patrick Witte

The New Dutch Land Use Law "Omgevingswet"

Is it the Promised Paradigm Shift?

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>> The New Dutch Land Use Law "Omgevingswet"

Is it the Promised Paradigm Shift?

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SUMMARY

>> This essay reflects on the new Dutch land use law, the Environment and Spatial Planning Act (Omgevingswet), which integrates 26 sectoral laws into one comprehensive law. After outlining the 'basics' of this new law, the article reflects on what the Omgevingswet is actually trying to integrate. Also, the article provides some practical tools for the future uptake of the new law in planning practice. Finally, we conclude that the promised 'paradigm shift' is not yet happening, at least not as a single change event, but rather the new law has set in motion a process of structural change that Dutch municipal officers will be working on and embracing in their planning practices in the years to come.

Key words: planning law; land use; integration; instruments; Omgevingswet

1 INTRODUCTION

>> As of January 2024, the new Dutch Environment and Spatial Planning Act ('Omgevingswet') has been officially implemented, which, at least on paper, marks a fundamental shift in the formal (re-)organization of the Dutch planning system. Up until now, however, there has been only little scholarly reflection on this new land use law and its implications for spatial planning practice. The existing literature was written 'in anticipation of' the new law or is treating mostly the law's technical, legal, or judicial aspects (e.g., Backes et al., 2024; Van Karnenbeek, 2023). So far, a more applied overview of the purpose, content, and potential implications of the Omgevingswet for spatial planning practice is missing.

Therefore, this commentary provides a broad overview of the new Dutch planning law, including its purpose and general content (Section 2), and a reflection on the planning transitions incorporated into it (Section 3). We also offer a vision of how this might be implemented in everyday practice (Section 4) before arriving at some conclusions in Section 5.

2 THE BASICS OF THE NEW DUTCH LAND USE LAW "OMGEVINGSWET"

>> The new Dutch land use law mostly centers around integrated land use, which starkly contrasts the previous system, consisting of a rather general Spatial Planning Act and many sectoral laws (on water, infrastructure, nature, etc.). The new law's focus is more comprehensive, which also means increasing the use of less easily quantifiable parameters to guide spatial decisions. The Dutch term 'Omgeving' ('environment') represents an integration of all parameters in a more holistic way, including the 'human factor' and a new land allocation approach ('ETFAL'; 'balanced allocation of functions to locations'), which will be elaborated upon later. The whole was presented and titled as a paradigm shift.

The new law emphasizes a safe and healthy physical environment (Omgevingswet, Article 1.3a) and consolidates 26 existing, by and large, more sectoral, laws into this new land use law (Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment, 2016). This does not mark a real substantive change from the previous legal system but rather an integration of existing laws and practices. Like previous spatial planning laws in the Netherlands, this new law is a framework legislation law rather than a detailed and prescriptive one, offering the different layers of government considerable flexibility to formulate their policies and rules within the wider legal framework (Van Gestel and Vleugel, 2008, p. 4). Lastly, the new Dutch land use law comprises six core instruments (Informatiepunt Leefomgeving, 2024). We first focus on the instrument related to decentralization in more detail, and after that, we will discuss the other five

instruments more briefly.

2.1 Core instrument: decentralized rules and the zoning plan

All spatial regulations are consolidated in the local land use zoning plan, called *'Omgevingsplan'* ('environmental plan'). This is the key component of the core instrument of 'decentralized rules' *('decentrale regels')*. Incorporating the former 26 separate laws into one plan makes this an extensive, complex plan and procedure, far more so than was the case in the previous land use zoning plan under the old law. However, nearly all relevant information is now collected in one place or document ('one stop shop'). Previously, for any kind of spatial intervention, one had to review policies and regulations from multiple sources to get a complete overview of what was (im-)possible at a specific location, a task manageable only with quite some planning experience. In other words, the new law provides better opportunities for a broader variety of stakeholders to inform themselves about spatial development opportunities in their direct living environment and to participate herein.

The zoning plan will simplify the search for rules and policies, as most information is captured in one document. However, so far, only a few municipalities have fully implemented it. This transition regulation allows old zoning plans to be converted into 'environmental' ones. Municipalities have until the first of January 2032 to implement complete Environmental Plans according to the new law (Kerklingh, 2024). Over the coming years, many municipalities are expected to gradually expand their Environmental Plans by adding thematic additions (e.g., water, monuments, etc.) to the old zoning plans.

The zoning plan still governs all rights for building and use, although the traditional terms like 'residential,' 'social,' or 'industrial' are now referred to more generally as 'functions.' Under the new law, multiple functions can be 'stacked' or layered as 'operational areas' *('werkingsgebieden')* on a specific location. Where municipalities previously had a patchwork of different zoning plans, each municipality will eventually have a single zoning plan for its entire jurisdiction. Some former national regulations, known as the 'dowry' *('bruidsschat')* will also be incorporated in the zoning plan. Municipalities may tailor part of these rules to local conditions, such as stricter ground rules for a municipality like Gouda with soft soil, while for municipalities in parts of the east of the Netherlands, the standard rules are enough because of their mostly sandy soil.

2.2 Brief overview of the other core instruments

So, the decentralized rules, with the Environmental Plan as the central element, can be considered the main instrument of the new law. In addition, five other core instruments will be briefly mentioned here (IPLO, 2024a). The first is the Environmental Strategy ('Omgevingsvisie'), which, like the former structural

vision ('structuurvisie'), establishes long-term spatial policy and is self-binding to the level of government that formulates such a vision. Second, the Land Use Programs ('programma's') bridge the Environmental Strategy with the concrete Environmental Plan. A program can focus on thematic or area-specific goals or be hybrid.

Third, the 'national comprehensive rules' component also issues what may be locally implemented without requiring further permits. However, the subsidiarity principle remains unchanged, meaning municipalities are primarily responsible for creating their own rules and policies unless provincial, water authority, or national policies with overriding interests dictate otherwise. This is then specified in, for instance, the 'Provincial Environmental Ordinance' *('provinciale omgevingsverordening')* or the 'Water Authority Regulations' *('waterschapsverordening')*. Fourth, the core instrument 'project decision' *('projectbesluit')*, enables a single spatial decision, for example for infrastructure. Think, for instance, of dike reinforcement that can be implemented at once over a full route rather than stipulating what must be done in separate zoning plans for each involved municipality.

Fifth, the Environmental Permit *('Omgevingsvergunning')* encompasses the issuing of permits for all small-scale activities like building, demolishing, tree cutting, and so on. This operational instrument also existed under the previous planning law but under a different name: building permit *('bouwvergunning')*. The new zoning plan and the other five core instrument are viewed as a 'Swiss pocket knife' with six tools that can improve the 'toolbox' of governmental officers to accelerate, simplify, and improve spatial development procedures that were perceived as a complicated and time-consuming under the old law (Ministry BZK, 2018). The next section will reflect on whether the law can achieve its goals and the promised and self-acclaimed paradigm shift.

3 REFLECTION: WHAT ARE WE INTEGRATING?

>> The Environment and Spatial Planning Act aims to make spatial planning 'simpler, faster, and better' by consolidating all information into one law (Tweede Kamer, 2014, Chapter 2). This ambition is questionable and might be unrealistic, as this is considered the largest legislative operation in the Netherlands since World War II (Van der Ven, 2023, p. 656). We offer some procedural reflections on the current implementation of the new law before putting this in a historical perspective of changes in the substantial or procedural focus of planning legislation in the Netherlands over time. This highlights what we aim to integrate with the new Environment and Spatial Planning Act.

3.1 Some procedural reflections on 'simpler' and 'faster'

It should be noted that combining 26 laws into one comprehensive law does not immediately or substantially alter existing procedures or laws. We offer three examples of this more slow change. First, all area investigations, depending on the spatial context, need to establish a land use plan. For example, the sometimes necessary but time-consuming bat survey will continue as an essential basis for spatial decisions. Second, procedures like the initial project environmental impact assessment *('vormvrije mer')* remain mandatory, although it is now incorporated into the whole procedure of the Environmental Permit (IPLO, 2024b). This procedure does not always yield new intended insights regarding the environment, but it adds time and costs to the project. Third, appeal and objection procedures remain as they were, offering no acceleration.

The promised speedup of the procedures also has some other sidenotes. First, behind the scenes of municipal planning practices, it can be observed that combining laws and creating a single zoning plan necessitates a substantial adjustment of local government bureaucracies. Second, a significant part of the planning process now occurs before the formal procedure begins, in the informal planning phase. This phase existed under the previous law (Wro), but the distinction between the informal and formal phases is now more pronounced. This makes the formal procedure time shorter, but it is a displacement to a different phase. These examples suggest that the promised simplification, acceleration, and improvement have some caveats and may not always deliver the anticipated effects.

3.2 Waves of law integration and separation over the decades

Throughout the decades, unifying and separating legislation trends have recurred in Dutch spatial planning. This manifests in waves: initial integration of laws, followed by new, separate, and shortened procedures and rules. For instance, the 1965 planning law (WRO) was augmented by accelerated procedures under Article 19 and the later exemption list *('kruimellijst')* for 'small impact projects.' After the subsequent planning law of 2008 (Wro), there was another modification in the form of the Crisis and Recovery Act (2010) for more procedural speed. Now, with the new Dutch land use law, all spatial procedures for projects that are not aligned with the zoning plan are unified in one of three paths: 1) a zoning plan amendment; 2) the Extra Zoning Plan Activity ('*Buitenplanse OmgevingsPlan Activiteit,*' or BOPA) and 3) occasionally, a project decision.

The new Dutch land use law thus sits at the peak of the trend towards consolidating various regulations into a single framework. The question is where the next wave pattern is headed. We already see some early signs in the language used internally by municipalities. The 'BOPA' procedure is a container

process for amendments to the zoning plan. This can range from small plans (e.g., Dedding, 2024) to larger ones. During the municipalities' review of these BOPA plans, classifications such as large or small BOPAs have already emerged (also Schelven et al., 2024). Looking at the wave patterns from the past, the authors believe it is only a matter of time before different levels of justification are required for large and small BOPAs, a priority by the Council of State for certain plans, and so on. In the past, new, shortened procedures emerged alongside the original law in a similar manner.

3.3 Land Use Laws Integrating Previous Trends in Land Use: Existing Patterns Remain

Over the decades, we have observed waves of regulatory trends and shifts in substantive focus within spatial planning (see e.g., Witte & Hartmann, 2022, and the first and last chapters of this edited book). Legislation has followed these trends. We illustrate the emergence of new legislation with two examples before exploring the emerging themes embraced by the new Dutch land use law.

First, the Housing Act of 1901 *('Woningwet')* and its later successors were partly a response to the issues of housing shortages, health and hygiene problems in large cities, and quality within spatial planning. More recently, legislation has responded to the issue of affordable housing. For example, the Affordable Rental Act (2024) has been introduced, and municipalities and provinces are setting their regulations concerning the balance between social, mid-range rental/ purchase, and private sector development (Ministry BZK, 2024; Municipality of Gouda, 2021 & 2023; Province of South Holland, 2024, p. 9).

Second, the more sectoral theme of water follows a similar pattern. Water has always been essential to spatial planning in the Netherlands. Over time, water-related considerations have gradually become embedded in the law itself. Water became part of the Spatial Planning Decree by introducing the water test (Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, 2003), and the Water Act of 2009 consolidated eight existing laws (Dutch Water Authorities, 2024). The Water Act is now part of the new Dutch land use law.

If the law has always tended to incorporate and reflect societal changes, what themes does the new Environmental Planning Act aim to integrate?

3.4 What is the New Dutch Land Use Law Combining and Integrating?

In the authors' view, the new focus of the Dutch land use law lies in two key aspects: the so-called 'human factor' and a different approach to making spatial choices through the principle of a 'balanced allocation of functions to locations' (i.e., 'ETFAL'or *'Evenwichtige Toedeling van Functies Aan Locaties'*).

First, the human factor is now more prominent in the law. Participation is now even mandatory in some cases, although this cannot be legally enforced on content. Furthermore, a safe and healthy living environment (Omgevingswet, Article 1.3 under a) is explicitly included, giving people a stronger legal position in spatial decision-making. The human factor, in a broader way, has previously emerged in the discipline and practice with the rise of communicative planning in the 1960s and 1970s and environmental impact assessments in the 1980s. Still, now it is explicitly included in the law itself (Van Schagen, 2024, pp. 25-26). It also offers civil society or private institutions the opportunity to initiate new spatial development processes, which could be considered a new dimension to the principle of subsidiarity.

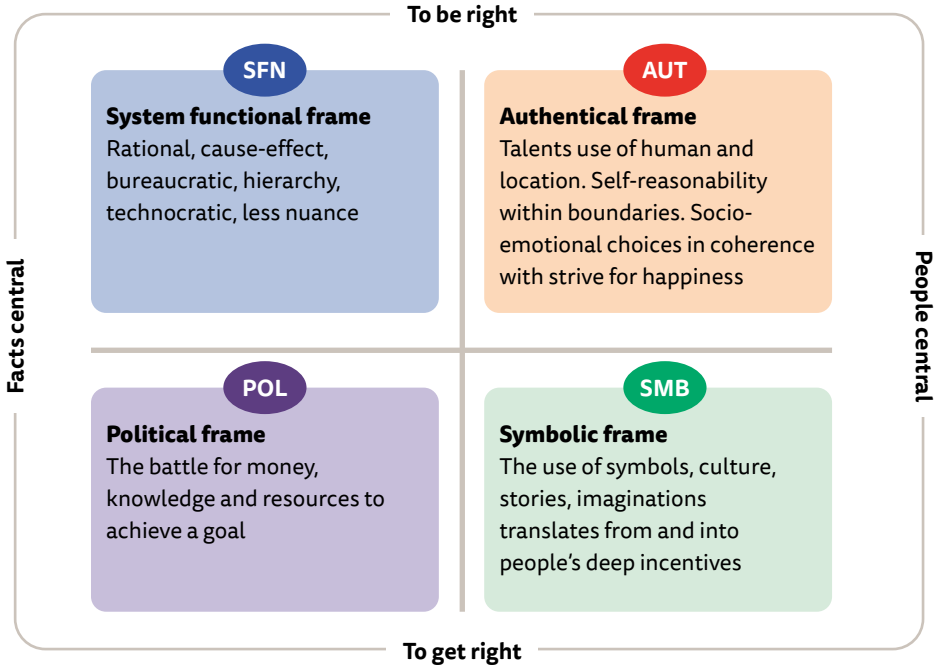
Second, the law's new focus on broader spatial considerations is embodied in the term 'ETFAL', which can be translated as a 'Balanced Allocation of Functions to Locations.' The human factor plays a more significant role here, as it is part of this broader assessment. With ETFAL, spatial decision-making shifts towards broad environmental impact. This relates to considering all relevant elements (including non-monetary) rather than just the more or somewhat measurable facts affecting the surrounding areas. This legal approach attempts to align spatially and legally with what the discipline and profession have been working towards for decades (Van Schagen, 2024, pp. 37, 48).

4 HOW TO HANDLE IN PRACTICE? A PRACTICAL FRAMEWORK AND TOOLS

>> Incorporating the human factor and broad environmental impact in practice leads to a more integrated spatial assessment, but not necessarily an easier one. The framing model by Van Schagen (2024) aims to give this complete assessment a practical structure (Figure 1). The frames in the model represent four approaches that can be combined in spatial planning processes. Here, the human factor and ETFAL also appear. The horizontal axis of the framing model distinguishes between focusing on people versus facts, and the vertical axis distinguishes factual correctness from gaining agreement through influence and persuasion. This results in four quadrants, based on the framing model of Bolman and Deal (2003), adapted and developed for spatial planning processes under the new Dutch land use law.

With the addition of peoples' drivers as a component of the symbolic frame, the full range of spatial decision-making elements becomes visible at a glance. Van Schagen (2024) enriches this with a selection of tools, making spatial decision-making methods directly applicable for each frame through established and scientifically substantiated methods. Van Schagen (2024) also presents milestone moments in the planning process timeline and a framing approach structure for a more promising planning process. This approach also starts from the human factor.

FIGURE 1
Four approaches to spatial planning processes



Source: Van Schagen (2024)

5 CONCLUSIONS

>> The new Dutch land use law, the Environment and Spatial Planning Act (Omgevingswet), is not the promised simplification and acceleration of spatial legislation that was anticipated with the implementation of this law. Integrating 26 sectoral laws into one comprehensive law is not without its implementation problems, and neither does it necessarily lead to quicker procedures. Nor is the inception of the new law bringing about the anticipated 'paradigm shift' because spatial planning legislation has always sought to incorporate ongoing societal developments, as is the case with this new law. For many municipal officers working with this new framework legislation in their local bureaucracies, it may represent a significant shift in working as of January 2024.

Nonetheless, the new law is not without its changes. It demonstrates a greater focus on the informal part of the planning process. It allows a broader variety of stakeholders to be involved in spatial decision-making processes from the outset. Still, a well-developed plan with flexibility, evolving from broad to detailed over time, with early participation and room for more than one party's interests, has the best chance in the eventual formal legal planning process. This has always been the case, but such a plan can count on more support from the new Dutch land use law. In that sense, the Dutch planning paradigm is switching from facilitating 'good spatial planning' to a broad environmental assessment, considering a balanced allocation of functions to locations (ETFAL) and more strongly considering the human factor in spatial development processes.

Overall, we argue one cannot speak (yet) of a paradigm shift, but on the other hand, you could argue whether one needs a one-moment-revolution for a structural change? Alternatively, it could be the beginning of a gradual breaking though patterns buildup in decades of Dutch planning culture. The new law, and later the jurisprudence, can help and force to push planners in the needed direction. The paradigm shift might be more alike to a change of course of a giant maritime vessel. If it turns out to be more like this, the steps towards fundamental changes might all start with gradually incorporating small practices by acting and weighing different options in the planning process as described in this article.

CHAPTER

7

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ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Without vision no transition: exploring the potential of planning design studios

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>> Without vision no transition: exploring the potential of planning design studios

Patrick Witte
Marlies Meijer
Peter Pelzer
Iris Veenvliet
Lieke Vermeulen

SUMMARY

>> Representations of the future – plans, visions, scenarios – guide us in taking complex decisions in the present. In our current day and age, we face multiple societal challenges, for example, climate, ecology, and social exclusion. This makes long-term thinking more relevant than ever. However, this core idea of spatial planning as a future-oriented discipline seems to have been eroding over the years. We teach our students to critically assess what is and not so much what could be or should be. The educational format of planning design studios trains long-term thinking and students' imaginative capabilities in an experiential, real-life setting. In this contribution, we evaluate 25 years of planning studios at Utrecht University. This essay reviews the history and discusses adaptations in course design and -objectives, student involvement and -experience, and teachers' evaluations over the years. We position these empirical impressions against a brief comparison of the 'Utrecht model' with studio exercises at planning schools of other Dutch universities. We discuss whether planning studios as a form of real-life, experiential learning still succeed in triggering the long-term thinking abilities of students. We scrutinize to what extent students are still capable of thinking so far ahead and summarize both the bottlenecks and enablers for an educational environment in which long-term thinking can flourish. We suggest that the biggest challenge to fostering long-term thinking is not so much the potential of studios but rather their decreasing importance as an integrative course in the curriculum design, which may limit the efficiency of training the futures literacy of planning students.

Key words: long-term thinking, futuring, planning studio, real-life teaching, experiential learning

Summary in Dutch

Nadenken over de verre toekomst – in plannen, visies en scenario's – helpt bij complexe besluitvorming in het hier en nu. Juist in de huidige context van klimaat-, mobiliteit- en energietransities is dit broodnodig. Toch is het idee van planologie als een toekomstgerichte discipline aan erosie onderhevig. We leren onze studenten vooral om te analyseren wat er is, en niet zozeer wat er zou kunnen, of misschien wel zou moeten zijn. Planologische ateliers zijn een voorbeeld van een cursus waarin het verre-toekomst-denken nog centraal staat. In dit essay nemen we daarom vijfentwintig jaar ervaring met atelieronderwijs aan de Universiteit Utrecht onder de loep. We bekijken de geschiedenis en transities van deze module door de jaren heen, in termen van cursusontwerp, beoogde leerdoelen en ervaringen van studenten en docenten. Dit wordt in een breder perspectief geplaatst door een beknopte vergelijking te maken met de andere planologieopleidingen in Nederland. We bediscussiëren in hoeverre deze vormen van levensecht onderwijs en ervaringsgericht leren nog van deze tijd zijn, of juist hun beste tijd gehad hebben. In hoeverre slagen onze studenten er nog in om na te denken over de verre toekomst en wat betekent dit voor het vormgeven van de toekomstige onderwijspraktijk? Onze impressie is dat het steeds uitdagender wordt om toekomstdenken onder planologiestudenten te stimuleren nu planologische ateliers als integratiecursus in het curriculum een steeds minder prominente plek krijgen.

1 INTRODUCTION

>> *"They are ill discoverers that think there is no land when they can see nothing but sea."* This quote by Francis Bacon used to be the leitmotif for novice undergraduate students in spatial planning at Utrecht University. Although the future is largely unknown, we can still imagine at least one and potentially more possible futures (Witte and Hartmann, 2022). Such representations of the future – plans, visions, scenarios – help to make complex decisions in the present. We face multiple societal transitions, including a climate and ecological crisis, rendering long-term thinking more relevant than ever (Pelzer, 2021). Nevertheless, the core idea of spatial planning as a future-oriented discipline seems to be subject to erosion in recent years. This questions whether or not Dutch spatial planning education still succeeds in facilitating students to apply long-term thinking and articulate desirable and possible futures (Rosier et al., 2016). Several reasons exist for this burgeoning short-termism in our society and within spatial planning (e.g., Caney, 2019; Couclelis, 2005). Our planning education is not free of blame, partly due to our love affair with the disciplinary neighbors of policy science and human geography and our separation from landscape architecture and urban design disciplines. As a result, we teach our students to assess what is (present-tense) critically and not so much what could be or should be (future-tense, analytically or normatively).

Notwithstanding this overall development, some courses try to train planning students' futures literacy as they trigger their imaginative capabilities in real-life, experiential settings. Also, AESOP (the Association of European Schools of Planning) still emphasizes "anticipating future needs of society, including the appreciation of new trends and emerging issues in planning" and points to the requirement of "regular exposure to and interaction with planning practice." It states that "project work-, confrontation with real-life planning problems, [...] multiple laboratory exercises in developing planning solutions, [...] and "learning-by-doing" are distinguishing marks of a fully-fledged planning education." (AESOP, 2022). A special way to encourage long-term thinking is by planning design studios, which can be found in different curricula in the Netherlands and beyond.

In this contribution, we focus on a critical evaluation of twenty-five years of teaching experience with planning studios in the 'Utrecht school' of spatial planning. This essay reviews the history of the planning studios in Utrecht, discusses adaptations in course design and -objectives, student involvement and -experiences, and teachers' evaluations over the years. The 'Utrecht Model' is positioned against a brief comparison with studio exercises at planning schools of other Dutch universities. We will discuss whether planning studios as a form of real-life, experiential learning still manages to trigger the long-term thinking abilities of students (cf. Hoffman et al., 2021). As such, we scrutinize to what extent students can think far ahead and summarize both the bottlenecks

and enablers for an educational environment where long-term thinking can flourish. In this, we will also consider the position of studio modules in the broader design of planning curricula.

2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHING SPATIAL PLANNING

>> In this section, we briefly outline some theoretical notions on teaching spatial planning. We consider the confrontation and integration between the academic and professional realms in studio teaching, the experiential learning element of planning design studios, and the notion of long-term thinking and imaginative approaches. From this, we aim to distill some key considerations regarding the position of studios in planning curricula and their function in training the futures literacy of planning students.

We first look at the course design and the studios' position in the curriculum. Studios are 'real-life projects' that students perform on behalf of a client from practice (usually a local governmental body). Such experiential learning involves active and purposeful processes contextualized in direct or stimulated 'real world' activities in which students have the opportunity to construct and regulate their own personal and professional learning (Rosier et al., 2016). The assignments revolve around urban design issues at various spatial scales yet also consider the governance dimension.

Studios are not lecture-based. Instead, studios include tutorials, workshops, fieldwork, and interaction with practitioners or related communities (Higgins et al., 2009). According to Kolb and Kolb (2009), experiential learning shifts the learning design from being teacher-centered to a semi-structured approach requiring students to collaborate, interact and learn from one another through direct experiences connected to real-world problems. The teacher is a facilitator instead of directing the student's progress. Studios provide the opportunity to integrate and apply learning from numerous previous courses and basic spatial planning concepts, such as planning theories, planning methods, and knowledge of the legal aspects of planning systems. Planning studios facilitate students' creativity and engagement in collaborative problem-solving (Higgins et al., 2009). They stimulate the development of professional competencies, such as negotiating, leadership, teamwork, public engagement, planning and policy-making, urban design, oral and graphic communication, and management of time, self, and others. Skills such as collaboration, negotiation, teamwork, and interaction, can be acquired during the studios (Table 1). Studios enable teaching and learning new skills and knowledge in informal and flexible ways. They facilitate iterative learning: students get the possibility for feedback to improve their work during the lifetime of the studio (Kolb and Kolb, 2009).

TABLE 1
Skill development in the planning studios
Source: Higgins et al., 2009

Learning outcomes	Pedagogical approach	Learning and teaching methods	Assesment methods	Skills commonly development
Application of theory and knowledge to a practical problem	Experienial learning	Project-based, often in groups	Individual or group or a combination	Urban design
Development of professional skills emulating practice	Problem-based learning	Informal and flexible, not lecture based: may include tutorials, workshops, field work, interaction with practitio-ners and communities	Formative assessment: feedback informs final outcome	Plan and policy making
Emphasis on both process and product and inter-relationship between te two	Student centred, active engagement		May include oral presentation	Teamwork
	Reflective learning		Not exam-based	Negotiation
				Managament: time, self, others
				Public engagement
				Oral and graphic presentation, including IT
				Critical analyses
				Creative thinking

Planning studios train the 'reflective practitioners' who have experience with issues like community development, citizen participation, or conflict resolution that contemporary urban and regional planning practices demand (e.g., Kotval, 2003). They help students familiarize themselves with the increased changes and complexity within the planning field (e.g., societal sustainability transitions) and develop *"skills and capacity to work with change, to confront it and to shape it to achieve better futures"* (Budge, 2009, p. 9). As such, planning studios have the potential to develop precisely the skills and capacities that are important. Such as a more profound understanding of the needs of the private sector, urban design skills, and knowledge of specialized areas of planning, such as environmental planning (Slade et al., 2014); time management, independent learning, problem-solving and effectively working with others (Baldwin and Rosier, 2017; Kotval, 2003).

Long-term thinking in planning contains several institutionalized practices, such as scenario planning and visioning (e.g., Goodspeed, 2019), which can stimulate students to investigate daily manifestations of the future in the present. A reflective engagement with future-oriented practices helps students to understand how the future is already present in the "here and now" and to imagine radically different futures. Long-term thinking entails the risk of not

being taken seriously and of being called fictitious. However, the added value of planning studios is to connect the imagination of a possible future to real-world engagements, for instance, materializing in an active interaction between students, policymakers, and other societal stakeholders. Students must be aware of their contribution to societal and policy debates potentially influencing an actual future course of action. They do not just deliver a university assignment.

In summary, we argue that planning studios provide the opportunity to integrate and apply knowledge and skills from numerous previous courses offered in the curriculum to a real-life context. Studios offer a combination of integrative, problem-based projects and an emphasis on professional skill development through creativity and teamwork. Studios happen in an experiential setting that requires students to collaborate, interact and learn from one another through direct experiences connected to real-world problems. Imaging solutions to such problems in a planning studio is, by definition, aimed at fostering an environment of long-term thinking for students. Once having gained the necessary knowledge and skills throughout their studies, the real-life projects in the studios should be the 'proof of the pudding' of the futures literacy of planning students.

3 PLANNING DESIGN STUDIOS AT UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

3.1 Learning objectives, course design, and student involvement

The planning design studio courses ('Planning Studio 1' and 'Planning Studio 2') at Utrecht University in many aspects resemble the typical studio characteristics described above. Students make a real plan for an actual client and think creatively about the long-term future. The planning horizon of their assignments often spans from 10-15 (Studio 2) up to 20-30 years (Studio 1) in the future. Clients (municipalities) typically ask students to think 'out of the box.' The studios provide for the integration of previously acquired knowledge and a challenging assignment concerning content (i.e., creating a desirable, long-term vision for a municipality) as well as the process in terms of teamwork and group dynamics. In line with this, training soft and transferable skills are explicit learning outcomes of the courses. Within the curriculum, the studios follow the modules *'Introduction to Spatial Planning', 'Legal aspects of Planning,' 'Planning Theory,'* and *'Planning Methods.'*

Even though some minor changes in learning objectives are visible over time, the studio exercises have typical characteristics and scopes consistent throughout the years (Table 2).

TABLE 2
Scope of the studio exercises
Source: authors' work based on the planning studios' course manuals

Planning Studio 1	Planning Studio 2
Strategic	Problem solving
Local/regional level	Local project with regional importance
Long term (20-30 years)	Short or medium term (5-15 years)
Focus on analysis and integration	Focus on the process, and public support
Conceptual/visionary/imaginative	Partly strategic, partly operational
Process is given, the product is open	Process is open, the product is 'given'

The key learning objective for both studios is the application and integration of previously acquired knowledge in a practical setting to stimulate an in-depth internalization of that knowledge. Next, there are additional learning objectives for mastering teamwork and group dynamics and further familiarizing students with the discipline and practice of spatial planning. In addition, each studio also has specific learning objectives. For Planning Studio 1, this is the ability to convert a spatial analysis into a strategic plan for the long-term future at the local scale, with particular attention to the use of spatial concepts and visions that support the integration of diverse (stakeholder and sectoral) interests in the problem analysis and proposed solution. For Planning Studio 2, this is the development of a (re-)development plan at the local scale, but with regional importance, with a strong focus on the operational characteristics and feasibility (administrative, political, societal, financial) of the proposed solutions and governance approaches.

The Utrecht planning studios are a clear example of real-life projects. In planning studios, conditions are as realistic as possible. Students work in project teams with professional names, and the tutors address them as if they are professionals. Moreover, a plan is developed and presented, considering its public support, political feasibility, and financial viability. Teams of 7-9 students start their own 'consultancy firm' with a name, a logo, and sometimes even a website. A medium-sized municipality in the Netherlands gives each 'firm' a real assignment with conditions and sometimes a small budget to compensate for material costs. Ten weeks after the start of the course, each firm presents the highlights of their plan in the form of a pitch presentation, usually in the city hall in the presence of a mayor or alderman, a jury, administrative officers of the municipality, their fellow students (i.e., the competing 'firms') and the university group supervisors. The jury, consisting of academic and professional panel members, selects a winner and the hosting municipality offers a real prize to the winning team.

Also, from the perspective of experiential learning, some elements are integrated into the course design of the studios. Students have a minimum of guidance from the university supervisors. The assignments of the studio projects typically are cases for which there are no simple or standard solutions.

So, the students must use their knowledge and insights into planning theory and methods to create a unique solution for a unique situation. Even though the intended learning outcomes are more or less similar over time, the actual learning experience is always unique to the particular local context studied. The university supervisor, usually one dedicated person per team, mainly controls the process, time planning, and group dynamics within the team. Concerning (inside) local knowledge, students can use a special supervisor from the hosting municipality who occasionally is available for a quick 'reality check.' Students can spend half of their time a week (20 hours) on a studio project; with eight students in a team and ten weeks, this translates into 1,600 hours (=1,0 fte) invested in one single plan. The competition effect and the real practical experience usually stimulate the students to do their utmost.

TABLE 3
Student involvement in the planning studios (2004-now)
Source: authors' work

Cohort	BSc students	Planning students	% Planning students	Studio 1 students	% Studio 1	Studio 2 students	% Studio 2	Studio location
2004-2005	145	72	50%	45	n/a	33	n/a	Deventer
2005-2006	199	153	77%	51	71%	39	87%	Ede
2006-2007	254	126	50%	93	61%	46	90%	Enschede/Hengelo
2007-2008	212	112	53%	78	62%	99	100%	Almere
2008-2009	206	109	53%	53	47%	75	96%	Lelystad
2009-2010	256	107	42%	62	57%	49	92%	Amstelveen
2010-2011	284	84	30%	47	44%	49	79%	Alkmaar
2011-2012	193	80	41%	49	58%	53	100%	Amersfoort
2012-2013	197	45	23%	52	65%	44	90%	Nieuwegein
2013-2014	186	67	36%	37	82%	48	92%	Hilversum
2014-2015	190	73	38%	46	69%	36	97%	Gouda
2015-2016	173	44	25%	42	58%	42	91%	Den Bosch
2016-2017	178	59	33%	26	59%	35	83%	Utrecht (municipality)
2017-2018	199	82	41%	45	76%	28	100%	Haarlemmermeer
2018-2019	190	72	38%	53	65%	37	82%	Utrecht (province)
2019-2020	194	106	55%	40	56%	36	68%	Apeldoorn
2020-2021	238	90	38%	55	52%	36	90%	Netherlands (national)
Total	**3494**	**1481**	**42%**	**874**	**59%**	**785**	**90%**	
Average	**206**	**87**	**42%**	**51**	**61%**	**46**	**90%**	

As an integrative, experiential exercise in long-term thinking and real-life application, the planning studios have consistently attracted high numbers of students over their existence (Table 3). We could only use data from 2004-2005 onwards (roughly since the introduction of the Bachelor/Master structure in the Utrecht planning curriculum). In the first five years (1996-2000), the studios, on average, attracted 20-30 students per studio per year. This number increased

to 40-60 students per studio per year in the 2000-2004 period. The studios in these years were hosted by, chronologically, the municipalities of Hilversum (twice), Amersfoort, Zwolle, Breda, Den Bosch, Eindhoven, and Apeldoorn. Table 3 reveals that through the studio exercises, students become increasingly engaged with the discipline of spatial planning. Generally, about 1/3rd of a cohort continues in the planning curriculum. More than half of these 80-100 students per year participate in the first planning studio. On average, 9 out of 10 students also follow the second planning studio the year after. This repetition within the curriculum has a strong learning effect and is also appreciated by the students.

3.2 Course development over time

The planning design studios at Utrecht University date as far back as the mid-1990s (Zoete et al., 2005) when they were introduced as an experiment to integrate practical knowledge into the planning education curriculum. The studios were established following Kolb's learning cycle and the core curriculum requirements (AESOP, 2022).

For the first five years (the mid-1990s to early 2000s), the planning studios have been characterized by trial and error. Lecturers identified several points for improvement: the oral language and length of the final presentations, the size, and composition of the groups, the choice of the hosting municipality and agreements about their involvement, and the expectations and level of coaching of the university supervisors. In short, students discussed minor details of a plan at length during presentations that lasted over 45 minutes each. The course language (English) was at the expense of the plan's quality since students were unfamiliar with the jargon in English.

In contrast, the early 2000s to the mid-2000s are characterized as a period of professionalization. For instance, the budget for material costs and the real prizes were introduced, the jury was extended with an academic panel member, and the groups were offered a professional workshop on oral presentation skills. After ten years, in 2006, a structural change in the curriculum led to some practical problems in the size and scope of the studios; the course attracted too many students for municipalities to host them properly. Also, the choice of municipalities shifted to a newer generation of municipalities (e.g., Almere and Lelystad, see Figure 1). This trend of selecting 'young' municipalities continued for several years and is reported as a purposeful intervention to synchronize the assignments of the planning studios with urgent real-life challenges in planning practice. In light of the economic collapse of 2008, the assignments focused more intensely on the management and redevelopment of neighborhoods instead of 'building for growth.' From the students' perspective, this was experienced as complex, as the rest of the curriculum prior to the studios did not offer them much guidance on approaching this new reality. Alignment is

a continuous bottleneck: it proves challenging to adapt an entire curriculum to a changing societal context flexibly. Substantial change can only be done incidentally through a structural and systematic curriculum renewal, as is currently happening at the Human Geography and Planning teaching institute of Utrecht University.

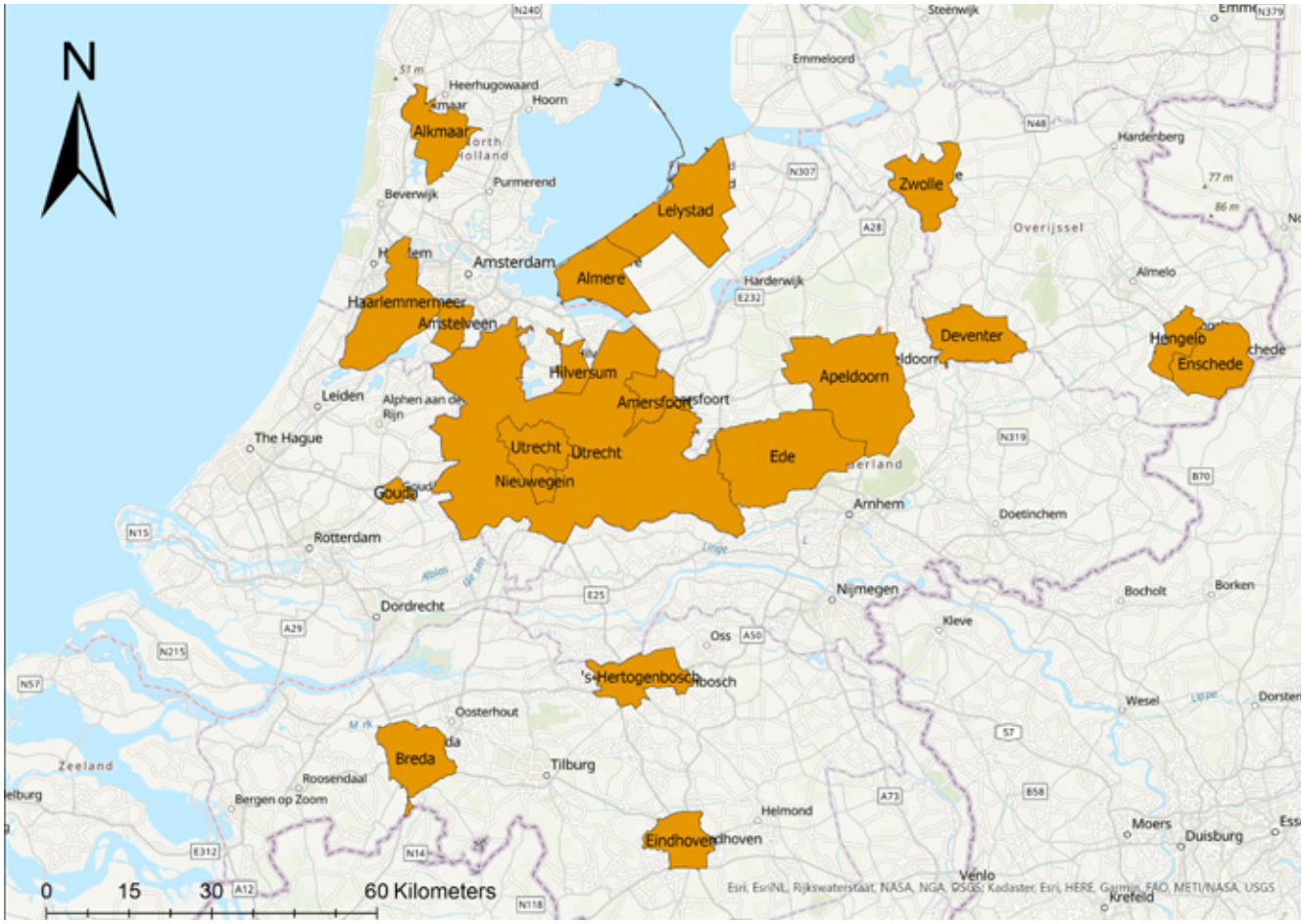

FIGURE 1
Hosting municipalities of the Utrecht planning studios
Source: authors' work

During the early 2010s until roughly 2015-2016, two other essential developments emerged that led to new challenges. Hosting municipalities called for new land use planning (inner-city densification, temporary rezoning). They were concerned about how to position themselves as actors in wider governance networks relative to other private and civil stakeholders. We conceive this as a reorientation of the client's perspective, from a desire for long-term visions towards more short-term managerial concerns. Students, in turn, devoted less and less time and attention to site visits and stakeholder interviews and became less aware of and familiar with the particularities of the local context. This is an undesirable development from the perspective of long-term thinking and urban management.

The gap between a growing call for innovative forms of land use planning and modes of governance and a declining students' investment in contextualization is also manifest in the most recent years of the planning studios. This has resulted in two particular challenges for the course design and learning experiences. First, students are tempted to repeat or reiterate the hosting municipalities' more tactical and operational desires rather than think creatively about inspirational, long-term future visions and concepts that could benefit this municipality. Second, students become less sensitive and less eager to investigate whether and to what extent societal transitions (e.g., sustainable development, climate adaptation) apply to the particular context they study.

In response to these challenges, some specific interventions have been implemented. First, to move beyond the tendency to formulate solutions at the tactical or operational level, more attention is paid to notions of visioning and futuring to challenge students' creative and imaginative capabilities. This is more prominently stressed in the course design of the planning studios. Moreover, it is more specifically trained in the curriculum through courses such as planning methods or new electives such as 'Futuring for Sustainability.' For instance, in the Planning Methods course, ample attention was devoted to planning concepts (metaphors). Second, to make students more aware of the scalar issue and the importance of contextualization, for some editions, the scale was shifted to the provincial or even national level to force the students to consider the areas they plan for in the broader setting. The combination of both interventions was not always successful. Students had more difficulty articulating desirable long-term futures in the editions with assignments on a larger spatial scale, as the scale was too abstract to properly contextualize their strategic visions on themes such as sustainability, revitalization, or greening of the city.

3.3 Teachers' and students' evaluations of the planning studios

In 2005, a systematic evaluation was made of the experiences of students, teachers, and planners who acted as clients (Zoete et al. 2005). The evaluative survey on the 2000-2005 period reported a teachers' self-assessment, an assessment by the practitioners involved, and a students' assessment. Teachers evaluated the relevance with an average mark of 8,7. They praise the function of the studios as a motivator for the entire program. From a practitioner's perspective, the modules were evaluated with a 9,3 mark. They highlight the relevance of the module as a synthesis between academia and practice. A sample of 55 students evaluated the modules with a mark of 8,6. They appreciate the relevance of the studios in terms of real practical experience and teamwork. The studios act as a motivator for the entire program.

In 2012, a critical evaluation of the course design and intended learning outcomes was made, with suggestions for future improvements. This evaluation revealed that even though the studios continued to be successful elements of the curriculum, some structural trends should be considered to ensure that the modules would remain relevant. First, it is noticed that over the years, students tend to neglect or less prominently integrate methods and techniques they have learned earlier in the curriculum in the final products of the studio. These are methods like problem - and contextual analysis or visioning. Second, it is acknowledged that the nature and complexity of planning challenges structurally change and that this needs to be incorporated and addressed in the curriculum.

Qualitative information in the comments sections in student evaluations sheds light on the enablers and bottlenecks for a stimulating educational environment for the studios. The enablers include the practical orientation of the assignments, freedom, independence in learning, guidance and feedback by the university supervisors, challenging real-life assignments, collaborating in teams, thinking about the long-term future, and stimulating creativity. The bottlenecks include increased clarity of the assignments in terms of structure, guidelines and conditions, a reconsideration of the group size, and more attention to professional competencies and skill development related to graphical design and layout (e.g., GIS, InDesign) through tutorials. Many students stress the learning effect of a repetitive studio exercise (i.e., doing Planning Studio 2 the year after doing Planning Studio 1). Even though the learning objectives of the second studio exercise are different, students indicate that the cumulative build-up of the curriculum allows them to finally properly understand what exactly they are doing in the second studio exercise. This learning effect is also visible in the high-quality products in Planning Studio 2, which are often indistinguishable from commercial consultancy products.

4 COMPARISON OF STUDIOS IN DUTCH PLANNING SCHOOLS

4.1 Overview of planning studio exercises

The Utrecht model of teaching planning in a studio setting is not unique. Most bachelor or master programs in spatial planning in the Netherlands include studio-like courses (Table 4). These courses have a common focus on developing future-oriented plans in a real-life setting, often with governmental bodies as real clients. Also, the planning studios are generally considered flagships of planning education, integrating skills taught in other courses (problem analysis, visioning, group dynamics, report writing), following Kolb's learning cycle. Nevertheless, different teaching programs put different accents in their studios, depending on the position within the curriculum, theoretical and thematical

foci of other courses, and the number of studios within a curriculum. We compare the Utrecht model with two other schools of planning: Wageningen University (offering five studio courses) and Radboud University (that recently transformed their studio course into an Urban Futures lab). Table 4 summarizes the different courses, including the University of Amsterdam, the University of Groningen, and Delft University of Technology.

University/study	Studio courses Bachelor level	Studio courses Master level
Utrecht University Human Geography and Spatial Planning	1. Planning Studio 1 2. Planning Studio 2	1. Techniques of Futuring (mixed classroom)
Wageningen University Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning	1. Studio Planning Basics 2. Studio Participative Planning 3. Studio Strategic Planning	1. Atelier Landscape Architecture and Planning 2. Foodscapes, Urban Lifestyle, and Transition (optional) 3. Planning for Urban Quality of Life (optional)
Radboud University Geography, Planning, and Environment	-	1. Urban Futures Lab. Vision and Strategy Building for Cities and Regions
University of Groningen Spatial Planning and Design Master Society, Sustainability and Planning	1. Spatial Design Atelier 2. Urbanism Atelier	1. Living Lab Sustainable Places
University of Amsterdam Human Geography and Spatial Planning Master Urban and Regional Planning	1. Spatial Programming and Design	1. Master Studio of Future Cities
Delft University of Technology Master City Developer TU Delft Master Management and Built Environment TU Delft	-	1. Redesign of Complex Projects 2. Urban and Infrastructure (Re)development Game

TABLE 4
Overview of planning studio exercises at Dutch planning schools
authors' work based on course guides and interviews

4.2 Wageningen University: a cascade of design-oriented studios

Wageningen University offers a cascade of planning studios. During the first year, students get a glimpse of the field of spatial planning, not so much focused on practicing specific planning methods but on experiencing planning in a real-life context through experiential learning. The studio assignments became more complicated and less guided in the following years. At the same time, students acquire more skills regarding problem and landscape analysis and visioning in aligned courses that need to be applied during the studio courses. The Wageningen approach to spatial planning is characterized by design thinking (i.e., the long-term vision essentially is a map accompanied by a policy document) and a strong emphasis on the physical landscape. In the second year, *'Studio Participative Planning': "the students are confronted with a vision for the long-term future of the area, which consistently has to be operationalized in the successive*

phases of the course" (course manual Studio Participative Planning, 2021). In the third year, emphasis is put on developing a strategic vision at the regional scale and for a more distant future. The aim is to integrate theory and planning methods for scenario development and strategic decision-making. Over the years, the studios have offered more guidance in structuring group dynamics and delivering products.

Though Wageningen attracts a substantial number of international students, like in Utrecht, the bachelor studios are only offered in Dutch. This is due to practical constraints: the assignment is focused on Dutch planning practice and developed in consultation with Dutch municipalities. For the studios taught in the Master's program, students work in mixed groups with Dutch and international students. Knowledge concerning Dutch regions, policies, and spatial plans are increasingly available for non-Dutch speakers. Language is not necessarily an obstacle as long as Dutch students take up the responsibility to translate or contextualize specific Dutch planning aspects. Here, course coordinators experience that the quality of products that mixed groups of students deliver does not differ much from Dutch groups, but the diversity of outcomes has significantly increased: international students bring different types of knowledge. In contrast, the Dutch students are forced to reflect and explain Dutch planning from an outsider's perspective.

Since Wageningen offers a two-year master's program, there is ample room to deepen either professional or academic competencies. Nevertheless, students doing a bachelor's and master's program at Wageningen University sometimes experience repetition in the planning studios (similar to the Utrecht experience). The experimental learning environment studios offer is open and renowned for practicing many soft skills and acquired methods within one course. At the same time, it is difficult to differentiate and diversify skill development between the diverse studio settings: Kolb's learning cycle is repeated for every studio course. While studios focus on specific elements (e.g., level of autonomy, group dynamics, presentation skills, or strategic visioning), integrating all elements is also one of the key characteristics of studio learning. Therefore, in a recent renewal of the master's program, students are offered more options for specialization, including a (rarely chosen) research track without studios.

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4.3 Radboud University: reflective practitioners in a technology-supported urban living lab

Other than Wageningen and Utrecht, until 2021, Radboud University offered an integrated bachelor program for Geography, Planning and Environmental Studies. Students could only opt for the specialization of spatial planning in a one-year Master's program. Until 2018, this MSc curriculum also offered a traditional planning studio in which students would develop a long-term vision for the redevelopment of a pre-selected area. Nevertheless, the coordinators chose a living lab set-up in a course renewal, offering specific skills, theoretical deepening, and room for experimentation in one course. Students are free to choose their case study area and problem definition but have to complete a series of subsequent assignments. These group assignments include serious gaming, agent-based modeling, and mapping. The assignment also includes individual reflection, in which students are challenged: *"to act as 'Reflective Practitioners,' who are not afraid to experiment with new instruments and to speak and report openly about sensitive issues, in the tradition of educational objectives for 'reflective' planning professionals."* (course manual Urban Futures Lab. Vision and Strategy Building for Cities and Regions, 2021).

Though the Urban Lab approach no longer fits the criteria of a classical planning studio, experiential learning still lies at the heart of this course. Also, in an in-depth interview, one of the course teachers indicated that it was necessary to make choices concerning the efficiency of teaching planning. In the master's program, only 30 study credits (ECTS) can be spent on instructive courses. Combining problem-oriented assignments with new methods reflecting state-of-the-art digital planning techniques made it possible to achieve all desired learning outcomes in one course. Another reason for renewing this course was the increasing influx of international students: acquiring specific knowledge for developing a plan within a particular Dutch context no longer matched the objectives of the master curriculum. The cases students choose now range from post-Katrina New Orleans to applying floating infrastructures in Nijmegen.

5 THE FUTURE OF LONG-TERM THINKING THROUGH PLANNING STUDIOS

>> This essay has considered transitions in teaching spatial planning from the perspective and experiences of planning design studios offered at different Dutch planning schools. We discussed the history and transitions of 25 years of studio teaching at Utrecht University. The 'Utrecht model' of planning studio teaching highlights many aspects of studio teaching that are also central to academic literature. This includes a clear emphasis on studios as integrative courses of cumulatively build-up knowledge throughout a planning curriculum. It also includes studios functioning as real-life projects, focusing on experiential learning following Kolb's learning cycle and fostering long-term thinking through triggering the imaginative capabilities of students (i.e., 'futuring'). This model, albeit in somewhat different forms, is also practiced at other Dutch universities in their planning curricula. We questioned whether the studios could create an environment for long-term thinking and to what extent the teaching approaches of experiential learning and futuring approaches contribute to that. In this final section, we present some conclusions and points of concern.

First, there is a strong acknowledgment of the continued relevance of studio teaching. Studios offer the ability to solve complex planning problems in a real-world setting and force the students to create visions for the future and shape their current actions accordingly. Such experiential learning requires a mixture and integration of academic knowledge and professional skills. Second, studios are one of the few remaining elements of planning curricula that still offer experiential learning experiences. Students actively develop and practice soft and transferable skills, and reflection is directly stimulated through formative assessment (Higgins et al., 2009). This way, they can adapt to increasing changes and complexities within planning practices, including the many transitionary challenges our society currently faces. Third, we have seen that studios' goal is *"problem-based, collaborative learning by design in a real-life context with public and private components"* (Zoete et al., 2005).

The goals described above are not something that students can learn overnight. Students need to use insights and knowledge of earlier subjects and modules, such as planning theory or methods, to re-engage theory to practice and to develop professional skills and behavior. However, when looking at the developments in curriculum design at Utrecht University and incorporating the experiences of the other programs, there is cause for concern here. Transferring theory, methods, and professional skills related to long-term thinking in the planning studios is not always done well. Long-term thinking skills are less present in the rest of the curriculum, making transferring such knowledge and skills increasingly problematic. Repetition in the curriculum is important, as was also stressed by the students' experiences in the studios. Studios cannot

work as stand-alone parts of a curriculum. They will become less effective in long-term thinking when the connection to other parts of the curriculum is not safeguarded.

Concerns regarding the future of planning studios mostly relate to the question of whether studios can embrace the transitions that planning curricula are currently in, while at the same time staying true to the initial goal of fostering long-term thinking in an experiential, real-life setting. There are three points worth mentioning. First is the question of to what extent the latest innovations in planning practices can be fully incorporated. For instance, planning schools already have attempts at introducing 'games' to practice new digital spatial planning skills such as agent-based modeling and processing big data. The question is whether this is necessary or even desirable. One of a planner's core characteristics is the ability to internalize knowledge from other disciplines in the planning process. Should not synthesis between different knowledges and between what is and what *ought to be,* be at the heart of planning? (cf. Campbell, 2012; Rydin, 2007).

Second and related is the question of to what extent practicing skills through 'learning-by-doing' (such as imaginative techniques) can still be properly accommodated in planning curricula. Studios are integrative exercises of previously taught knowledge and techniques. Through this repetition, learning is improved. However, due to curricula renewals, this is often no longer possible. The connection between bachelor and master programs is becoming less fixed, and studios tend to move from the bachelor to the master programs. In several programs, the studios have been replaced by more focused assignments and integrating specific types of knowledge, such as planning methods or theoretical lenses. We value the integrated and deepening learning experiences that multiple studios within one curriculum offer. Nevertheless, the position, learning objectives, and necessity of sequential studios also deserve careful consideration within the planning curricula to preserve this unique learning experience. The learning benefits of a repetitive studio exercise should not be underestimated.

A third concern is the ongoing internationalization of teaching practices at Dutch universities. Studios focus on Dutch planning practices and often require local engagement with Dutch municipalities and their stakeholders. Alternatively, experiences in the international and intercultural classroom can stimulate creativity and bring new visions and perspectives, as experiences from Wageningen and Nijmegen point out.

The transitions mentioned above are forcing planning design studios to also apply long-term thinking to themselves. The future spatial realities we are planning for, the future planners that we are educating, and the wider university

teaching environment are in constant transition. Planning teaching, like the discipline of spatial planning itself, should mirror these societal developments (see Witte and Hartmann, 2022). Planning teaching should proactively develop normative frameworks in light of these new challenges (Gergen, 2015) and be reflective enough to adapt teaching practices to the new realities it is facing. This implies educating a generation of practitioners about the long-term challenges we currently do not completely grasp ourselves (see Pelzer, 2021). This includes, for instance, a revision of the learning objectives of planning studios that is more sensitive to and explicit about fostering and rewarding creativity in thinking about the long term. Learning objectives should also explicate taking responsibility in collaboration and teamwork, triggering imaginative capabilities and techniques of futuring, and dealing with the complex and integral nature of current and future planning challenges. It should also consider the studios' position in the curriculum and a cumulative build-up of the program. We suggest that the biggest challenge to fostering long-term thinking is not so much the potential of studios as such but rather their decreasing importance as an integrative course in the curriculum design, which may limit the efficiency of training the futures literacy of planning students. At the same time, spatial planning should also not forsake its roots; as long as we can still inspire and fascinate students about the spot on the horizon, the future of teaching spatial planning is not lost.

CHAPTER

8

ESSAY SERIES **TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING**
– CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY
FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING

Jannes Willems
Barbara Tempels
Caroline Newton

Conclusion

Transitions in planning: implications for Dutch planning schools

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>> Transitions in planning: implications for Dutch planning schools

Concluding chapter InPlanning – Transitions in Planning essay series

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SUMMARY

>> This concluding chapter reflects on the implications of the transitions in planning covered in this book for Dutch planning schools. Input for this reflection was gathered during a workshop organized in collaboration with the Professors of Planning (POP) network, representing senior planning staff from the six Dutch planning schools. The transitions covered in this book concern the changing objects (e.g. mobility, energy, water) and subjects of planning (e.g. participation), as well as the planning conditions that enable these transitions and the impacts on planning education. This chapter explores the implications of these transitions on planning research (section 3), planning education (section 4), and planning's impact on practice (section 5). Subsequently, we provide a new typology of planning researchers and planning lecturers.

We conclude that Dutch planning schools will play a dual role in contemporary social and environmental transitions: on the one hand, facilitating and supporting professionals and communities with practical concepts, tools, and methods; and, on the other hand, reflecting upon (approaches to) these transitions and their underlying values through rigorous scientific work. Both roles could often work as complementary to each other, but may equally be conflicting at some points. Hence, we propose a diversification of researcher and lecturer profiles that not only accounts for the heterogeneous roles present in Dutch planning schools but also keeps the planning schools relevant for research, education, and practice.

Key words: **planning education; planning research; researcher and lecturer profiles; transdisciplinarity; transitions; impact for practice**

INTRODUCTION

>> In this concluding chapter, we reflect on the implications of the transitions in planning covered in this book for Dutch planning schools. Input for this reflection was gathered at a workshop we organized together with the Professors of Planning (POP) network. The workshop participants included senior planning staff from the six Dutch planning schools[1]. The workshop focused on the role of Dutch planning schools vis-à-vis the transitions in planning. More precisely, the discussions addressed what the transitions in planning mean for Dutch planning research, education and the impact on practice, and how Dutch planning schools can contribute to these transitions.

The structure of this chapter is organized around key areas of inquiry that emerge from the transitions discussed throughout the book. Section 2 synthesises how transitions have been explored in the different essays in this book series. The next three sections explore the transitions in planning research (section 3), planning education (section 4) and planning's impact in practice (section 5), also discussing how planning schools can influence practice and foster reciprocal relationships with practitioners. The concluding section brings reflections on the dual role of planning schools in societal transitions: facilitating practical solutions while critically interrogating the values and frameworks underpinning these changes, underscoring the need for planning schools to balance innovation with continuity, and preparing students and researchers to navigate the complexities of a rapidly evolving discipline.

TRANSITIONS

>> The essays collected in this series cover transitions in different ways, recognizing that different aspects of the planning domain might be in transition.

Three essays focus on a transition in a specific planning domain: i.e. housing, energy, and water. Levelt and Tan discuss the restructuration of the housing market in the Netherlands, and the opportunities for participation during each period. The essay by Horlings et al. is about the transition from a fossil-fuel energy system towards a renewable energy system, more specifically solar and wind energy. Janssen and Van Asseldonk consider the transition in Dutch water management, in particular the growing importance of (dealing with) periods of droughts. Together, these essays demonstrate how the **object of planning** is changing and requires new approaches.

1 The workshop took place at TUDelft on May 27th 2024. Participants were Tuna Tasan-Kok (University of Amsterdam), David Evers (University of Amsterdam), Jochen Monstadt (Utrecht University), Patrick Witte (Utrecht University), Sander Lenferink (Radboud University), Jos Arts (University of Groningen) and the authors of this chapter.

Most essays argue that more importance should be given to citizens, and their knowledges, needs and practices. According to Beckers et al., this new outlook on participation can be regarded as a transition in planning as well (the **subject of planning**). In their essay, they cover the role of (super)diversity and multiculturalism in urban regeneration in the City of Amsterdam. Beckers et al. propose the asset-based community development approach in which residents are more in the lead. This resonates with the co-production considered in the essay by Levelt and Tan. In their essay, they describe how participation in the housing domain has shifted from technocratic government (non-participation) towards more market-based approaches since the 1980s/1990s. In the aftermath of the economic crisis in 2008, we see a framing of citizens as co-producers in urban and regional development, highlighting the capacities of citizens in driving urban and regional development (see also the essay by Horlings et al. on Citizen Energy Communities).

Regarding co-production, both Beckers et al. and Levelt and Tan stress that such perspectives assign more responsibilities to citizens which they may not always be willing to take up. Neither they may be able to take up this responsibility, because of different reasons (Beckers et al.). This claim resonates with critiques on the current Environment and Planning Act (*Omgevingswet*) that also promotes participation and co-production: participation is increasingly seen as a duty rather than a right (e.g. Korthals Altes, 2017; Stapper et al., 2020). Citizens with more resources tend to be more favourable towards taking up this duty, which could reproduce or even increase existing spatial inequalities. Consequently, in the words of Levelt and Tan, "in spite of increased institutionalization of participation, the actual citizens seem to have been served less and less."

The essays by Horlings et al. and Janssen and Van Asseldonk discuss similar developments in their respective planning domains, but are more concerned with **setting the planning conditions right** to enable the potentials of citizens' initiatives and knowledges. In the context of the energy transition, Horlings et al. argue that spatial planning should be able to work across spatial, temporal and administrative scales: "balance top-down goals and area-specific implementation", bridge "long-term visioning and short-term incrementalism", and consider "spatial impacts on multiple spatial scales". For water management, Janssen and Van Asseldonk argue in favour of a return to historical water systems and the related "pre-industrial wisdom" that is often still present among communities ("past forward"). They propose to see heritage as an inspiration to re-develop regions in order to make them more climate-proof, while simultaneously contributing to identity-building.

The essay by Witte et al. covers **the impacts of the transitions on planning education**. In their essay, they discuss how planning studios – as one specific

form of education – can help to train students to develop more "forward-looking" and "long-term" skills and capacities, which can be used to anticipate the transitions. Witte et al. argue for the need for visioning, a skill that has been increasingly neglected in planning education. Through planning studios, students train to rethink how cities and regions *ought* to be.

TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING RESEARCH

>> This section discusses how the transitions in the object and subject of planning challenge planning schools to change their research, and what kind of knowledge production is needed to face these transitions. While new challenges in different planning domains require knowledge on domain-specific innovations and their spatial implications (object of planning), knowledge is also needed about how to deal with these challenges in a society that is increasingly complex due to changes such as diversification, increased citizen involvement, and political polarization (subject of planning). In this context, we consider a more "needs-based" research approach (involving communities and practitioners) and a "place-based" research approach (rooted in specific planning systems) crucial. In what follows, we discuss the importance of going back to the core principles of planning, the need to understand what planners do (the agency of planners), the link between planning research and practice, innovations in research methodologies and the importance of knowledge exchange.

Reinvigorating core principles

While we celebrate the innovations and new topics that have emerged over recent years, there is a need to return to the fundamental principles that underpin effective spatial planning. There is a call to embrace the core elements of planning – land-use (change), functions and systems, and their development, regulation and coordination through norms, zoning, etc., across multiple planning domains, such as mobility, housing and energy. Planning is an instrument in the redistribution of resources and capital, and should be approached as such in research. The essay by Witte et al. also reflects this sentiment but extends it by stating that the future-oriented nature of the planning discipline seems to have been eroding over the years. While Witte et al. problematize this in the context of education, we could also ask the question to what extent our research produces insights and knowledge that allow us to critically assess what could and should be.

Understanding the agency of planners

Equally important is the recognition of the diverse roles that planners play in shaping our environments. Planners work in different domains, for different parties (public, private or civic) (Tasan-Kok et al., 2016) and often combine and balance different planner roles according to the planning situation (Ferreira,

Sykes & Batey, 2009; Olesen, 2018). The workshop participants emphasized the need to examine the agency of planners – who they are, what they do, and how their varied backgrounds influence their approaches to problem-solving. This is especially relevant considering that planning practices are highly place-based, as planning practices are rooted in specific planning systems, with their own local history and institutional embedding.

Similarly, Janssen and Van Asseldonk made a call in their chapter for re-valuing pre-industrial land use and historical water structures as a means to cope with a changing climate. These historic structures are now often considered cultural heritage, and came with a set of specific planning practices. Fostering exchanges between the fields of planning and cultural heritage could trace these practices, and, subsequently, they can be (re-)introduced for current planning challenges.

Bridging research and practice

Historically, planning research has emerged from planning practice. As Salet (2014, p. 294) puts it: "The close relation between theory and practice is not evident in the domain of sciences but for spatial planning studies it is an essential and characteristic feature." But as planning has matured as a scientific discipline, planning research has become its own 'world', with a focus on the wishes of funding bodies and specialized research groups and niches across Dutch universities. As such, planning research might have lost its mutual relationship with practice. Workshop participants, argue for an explicit link with practice through practice-oriented research and toolsets. Involvement of communities and practitioners could support a closer connection to the needs of society. As highlighted by scholars such as Patsy Healey, the future of planning research lies in its ability to be practice-oriented, developing tool sets that can be directly applied to the challenges faced by planners in the field. One way this ambition has materialised is through the growing number of academic projects organised as 'urban living labs', where researchers collaborate with practitioners. While these initiatives demonstrate promising forms of co-production, they also bring challenges, such as administrative and coordination burdens. Another well-documented limitation is the 'pilot paradox': living labs seldom scale up and often remain ad-hoc initiatives.

Embracing interdisciplinarity and new methodologies

To effectively address the complexities of urban environments, planners must draw from diverse disciplines – environmental sciences, economics, design, and engineering. By incorporating a range of theories and methodologies, we can create a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing spatial dynamics.

The interdisciplinary nature of planning endeavors also implies that different methodologies are needed to understand them. First, quantitative research

should be reinstated to provide overarching insights into spatial dynamics. At the same time, artistic and creative methods, storytelling, and participatory design can provide fresh insights and foster deeper community engagement. The integration of these diverse methodologies can enrich planning research, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of urban development.

Reaching out to practitioners

Finally, the workshop participants emphasized the necessity of involving practitioners through new academic platforms that facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange. By creating spaces where academics and practitioners can engage in dialogue, we can ensure that planning research remains relevant and responsive to real-world challenges.

We see a paradox here: on the one hand, to go back to the core of planning, while at the same time reaching out to others. However, the call to return to the fundamentals of spatial planning is not merely a nostalgic longing for the past. By recommitting to core principles, fostering agency among planners, bridging research with practice, embracing interdisciplinarity, and actively involving practitioners, planning research can provide insights that support a better spatial organization to deal with the most pressing current and future challenges. At the same time, this combination of expectations places considerable demands on researchers, as they are asked to navigate multiple responsibilities. One way to respond to this challenge is by adopting different roles depending on the context, ranging from observing and reflecting on ongoing planning processes to developing and testing new tools to engage more directly with ongoing planning processes.

4 TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING EDUCATION

>> As societal challenges evolve, so too must the education systems that prepare planners to navigate these complexities. In recent years, planning education has undergone significant shifts in both its structure and pedagogical approaches, reflecting the need to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for addressing increasingly urgent urban and regional issues. These changes are driven by the demand to balance long-standing disciplinary knowledge with new and emerging methodologies, all while adapting to broader societal, economic, and environmental challenges.

In this section the key transitions in planning education are explored, clustered around four aspects. First, we examine the shifts within studio education and curriculum content, where the integration of 'futuring' and 'visioning' exercises marks a return to the substantive roots of planning while also posing challenges for one-year master's programs. Second, we discuss cultural and methodological preparedness, emphasizing the importance of cultural literacy

and the expansion of methodological training to better equip students for working in diverse and complex planning environments. Third, we consider the interdisciplinary and international dimensions of planning education, recognising the value of cross-disciplinary collaboration and the inclusion of global perspectives, while also addressing the challenges of integrating these into localised planning contexts. Finally, we discuss the influence of external factors, such as market demands and educational policies, which shape curricula and create tension between fostering critical thinkers and preparing students for immediate professional roles.

Increased attention for visioning in studio education and changing curriculum content

One of the most notable shifts in planning education is the growing emphasis on 'futuring' and 'visioning' exercises in planning studios. These exercises encourage students to envision long-term possibilities and strategise responses to uncertain futures. This trend may signal a departure from the 'communicative turn', which emphasised dialogue and participation, and a re-emphasis on the substantive roots of planning, where visioning exercises focus on shaping future urban and regional environments in response to pressing societal challenges like climate change, housing shortages, and migration. In their essay in this volume, Witte et al. emphasise the critical role of studios in cultivating future literacy and imaginative capabilities among students, which are essential for addressing these transitions effectively.

These forward-looking methodologies have been well-established in planning education programs at technical universities, who offer two-year master's programs. Schools with longer, more technically oriented curricula have traditionally incorporated comprehensive future and scenario planning exercises, leveraging their expertise in interdisciplinary approaches and design thinking. Students in these programs are often immersed in a curriculum that allows for a deeper engagement with visioning practices, given the extended time to explore both theoretical frameworks and practical applications.

The integration of foresight and visioning into studios is putting considerable pressure on one-year master's programmes in planning, where essential planning skills also need to be developed within a limited time frame. This challenge is compounded by the reduction of more specialised courses, such as legal aspects and planning methods, in favour of more general or integrative approaches. Witte et al. (p. 13-14) caution against this trend, noting that the erosion of long-term visioning risks compromising the ability of students to engage deeply with critical and future-oriented planning methodologies. While a broad curriculum may offer flexibility, it risks reducing the expertise students need, especially for professional positions that require specialised knowledge.

The main challenge for planning education is to strike a balance between offering a comprehensive, integrative education and equally ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the technical requirements of their future jobs.

In addition, planning education often prioritises practical applications at the expense of a strong theoretical foundation, leaving students insufficiently prepared for the complexity of real-world challenges. A more balanced approach is needed - one that integrates theoretical insights with practical experience. By embedding practice in theory and having theory tested through application, students can develop the critical thinking and problem-solving skills needed in the planning profession with its rapidly changing and multifaceted demands.

Cultural and methodological preparedness

Planning education must address both the gap in cultural literacy and the limitations in methodological training that leave students underprepared for the complexities of modern urban challenges. Planners increasingly work in diverse communities, yet their education often lacks the social-cultural insight needed to engage effectively with different social groups. Introducing content that enhances social-cultural literacy is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable planning practices. In their essay, Werner et al. stress the importance of intercultural competence, particularly in multicultural neighbourhoods, where planners must negotiate/overcome cultural differences and facilitate meaningful engagement. Using the example of involving residents in decision-making during redevelopment projects in the Bijlmer, they demonstrate how cultural literacy plays a central role in fostering effective participation.

If power, politics, and social-cultural biases are not explicitly addressed, or if the contestation of knowledge is depoliticized, there is a risk that unequal power relations are reinforced rather than mitigated (Turnhout et al., 2020). As Levelt and Tan show in their essay, large groups with below-average financial, social and creative capital still lack a voice in decision- and plan-making in cities like Amsterdam or Groningen. For these groups the term ‘participatory planning’ feels paradoxical, as wider societal dynamics like gentrification and housing market liberalization have pushed them out of the city. Therefore, educating future planners should go beyond teaching participatory methods in a technical sense; it should also cultivate awareness of power, interests, socio-cultural differences, and the deeper roots of marginalization or empowerment within transformative change. Planning schools remain key places for critical reflection in training, thinking and writing.

At the same time, expanding the methodological repertoire to include both quantitative and qualitative approaches, as well as newer, more innovative

techniques (such as participatory action research or storytelling), will better prepare students to tackle the multifaceted challenges of urban and regional planning.

Interdisciplinary and international perspectives

Interdisciplinarity is a well-established feature of planning education, yet its potential remains underutilised. Integrating knowledge from environmental science, economics, design, and engineering can better equip planners to address urban environments' spatial, social, and economic complexities. Additionally the integration of international perspectives in planning education is crucial, especially in light of the growing diversity of cities around the world. Drawing on experiences from around the globe enriches planning practices by offering alternative approaches to addressing issues like rapid urbanisation, social inequality, and environmental degradation. These perspectives are relevant in global contexts and increasingly crucial for addressing the complex realities of our own diverse urban environments. Incorporating such international viewpoints ensures that planners are equipped to engage with a broad range of cultural and socioeconomic challenges, making their work more inclusive and globally informed. For instance, comparative work, such as the chapter by Horlings et al. who reviewed citizen energy initiatives in Portugal, The Netherlands and Wales, could benefit planning education: students learn about experiences elsewhere and can relate them back to what they witness in their home country.

At the same time, the rising number of international students brings both opportunities and challenges to planning education. International students often enter with a high level of ambition and strong academic preparation, contributing fresh ideas and perspectives. However, integrating these students fully into the learning environment can be hindered by language barriers and difficulties in adapting to local planning contexts.

Influence of external factors

Finally, planning education does not exist in a vacuum – it is shaped by broader educational policies and market demands. There is an ongoing debate about the extent to which planning curricula should be oriented towards practical, market-relevant skills. While there is a need for graduates to be employable and responsive to market needs, it is equally important to ensure that education remains rigorous, backed with theory and comprehensive, equipping students with the critical thinking skills necessary to challenge existing structures and propose innovative solutions, not merely meet existing demands. The challenge, as Witte et al. (p. 21) highlight, lies in maintaining the integrative role of studio education within the curriculum while ensuring students remain knowledgeable of societal needs and transitions and are encouraged to explore how to address these.

5 TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING IMPACT / PRACTICE

>> This section will discuss how planning schools can create impact for and with planning practitioners. Echoing the historic close ties between planning theory and planning practice, we argue for an ongoing mutual relationship between planning schools and planning practice. Accordingly, knowledge transfer becomes a mutual responsibility of academics, practitioners and students, requiring a close involvement between the three (Van Karnenbeek et al., 2022). We would like to emphasise that this does not simply mean that planning schools operate purely at the service of society. Instead, we argue that planning schools can influence society by educating agents of change (see section 4) and initiating critical, groundbreaking research that questions the status quo (see section 3).

We will first explore the relationships between academics and practitioners, for which the NWO-led 'Recognition and Rewards'-scheme (Erkennen en Waarderen) is valuable. This scheme was embraced by all Dutch universities and proposes to diversify academic career paths, of which one concerns 'impact'. However, most universities have not (yet) defined a separate impact profile, because they argue that "academics should always generate impact in the domains of teaching and research" (e-magazine Recognition and Rewards, 2023). Some universities, though, have already developed distinct impact profiles for researchers and lecturers, which Dutch planning schools can use for inspiration. To illustrate, the Utrecht UMC typology makes a distinction between three types of researchers on a theory-practice continuum. The first type is a researcher that "addresses fundamental, translational or clinical questions in the field and is mainly curiosity-driven", seen in a strong track record of international academic publications and both individual and collaborative research grants. These researchers generate new theories, concepts and methodologies. The second type systematically studies the application of this knowledge, bringing knowledge into policy and practice domains: how do these fundamental theories, concepts and methodologies work in "real life conditions"? This researcher typically works more in collaborative research consortia with a transdisciplinary element. This type advances and refines theories, concepts and methodologies. The third type is concerned with the validation of knowledge, i.e. "to utilize the results in society at large" and provide reflections, evaluation and inspiration. This work is transdisciplinary by nature and involves a close alignment with the public and private sector, and civil society.

The typology developed above is used in the remainder of this chapter and translated to define three types of researchers and lecturers that could be adopted by Dutch planning schools.

For the relationship between planning researchers and planning practitioners, we can translate the three types of researchers to the planning domain (Table 1).

The first category are **exploratory researchers** who are working on "blue sky" research projects, developing new planning theories, concepts and methodologies. These researchers are firmly embedded in either the social sciences, design and architecture, or the environmental sciences, or a combination of them, depending on their affiliation. They manage larger research groups of junior and senior researchers, for which they obtain individual or collaborative research grants coming from, for instance, ERC, Horizon Europe and NWO. They have a strong track record of single-authored (or as first author) academic publications and books, and are considered leading voices in planning research (e.g. seen in conferences such as AESOP and RSA, or journals such as *Planning Theory and Environment and Planning*).

The second category are **implementation researchers** who apply the insights from the first category to "real life settings". Here the mutual relationship between theory and practice prominently returns: theories, concepts and methodologies are used to understand, explain and support practice, while practice can refine theories, concepts and methodologies - or in some cases even debunk them. Such relationships are typically established in collaborative research consortia in which practitioners from the public and private sector participate, such as Horizon Europe, the EU DUT-partnership and NWO-KIC projects. Through this mutual relationship, new knowledge is advanced and validated. This type of researchers publish often in collaboration with others in high-quality academic publications.

The third category are **valorisation researchers**. Valorisation researchers are more embedded in practice, and they feed planning research into practice. They often start with questions from planning practice, either because they are (part-time) practitioners themselves, or because they have close ties with practitioners (public sector, private sectors, and/or community initiatives). In this category, planning research must have a direct value for further planning practice. As a consequence, valorisation researchers work on an equal basis together with practitioners in settings such as Urban Living Labs or related experimentation spaces. Valorisation researchers could also be involved in (formal) evaluations and advisory work. Instead of aiming at academic publications, this type of researcher is more likely to publish policy briefs, plan proposals, reports and evaluations that target a specific professional audience.

TABLE 1
Three types of planning researchers.

	Exploratory researcher	**Implementation researcher**	**Valorisation researcher**
Profile	Fundamental, curiosity-driven planning research	Application of planning research to "real world settings"	Feeding planning research findings into planning practice
Relationship with practice	Practitioners at a distance, although research can be informed by planning challenges and practitioners	Practitioners collaborate with and inform research projects	Practitioners and researchers work as equal partners
Examples	Individual and collaborative research projects funded through ERC, NWO, Horizon Europe	Collaborative research projects funded through Horizon Europe, DUT Partnership (JPI Urban Europe), NWO-KIC, and EU Interreg	Urban Living Labs, consultation and advisory work, evaluations

For the relationship between planning educators and practitioners, planning schools should educate (public) planners that – following Tasan-Kok et al. (2016) – "float like a butterfly [and] sting like a bee", who are "change makers, ideologists, community heroes, justice advocates, deliberative or reflective practitioners, dreamers" but equally "well-equipped bureaucrats or technocrats of some sort". Similar to research, we make a distinction between three types of planning lecturers that promote different forms of impact (Table 2). This distinction is based on a continuum between more research-informed and practice-informed teaching.

First, **research-informed lecturers** help students to acquire theoretical and analytical concepts, as well as methodological skills that are required for the planning discipline (compare Alexander, 2001). Although Fainstein and DeFilippis (2016) observe that planning practitioners typically do not see the merits of planning theories, theory-heavy courses develop a critical and constructive attitude among students that helps them to scrutinise underlying assumptions, values and needs in planning practitioners. Furthermore, methodology-heavy courses help students to independently conduct scientific research and either explain or understand contemporary planning phenomena. Lecturers who provide these research-informed courses are generally speaking firmly embedded in research, therefore well-able to share theoretical concepts and methodologies first-hand.

Second, students learn to employ theoretical and methodological concepts, tools and competences in real-life settings, for which **theory-practice lecturers** are crucial. These lecturers are able to link the theoretical and methodological debates with the grand societal challenges. In their courses on contemporary issues such as climate change, rising inequalities and the housing crisis, students learn to relate and apply those concepts to real-life cases and challenges. At the same time, students learn in these courses about existing planning frameworks that condition the sphere of action. Accordingly, they develop a better understanding of planning implementation and they develop competences that allow them to operate in complex, sometimes contradictory legal settings (Buitelaar, 2024). For instance, the most notable current example entails the execution of the Dutch Environment and Planning Act, which has been formally enforced since January 2024. Developing this 'implementation competence' cannot simply be achieved through desk research, but requires close involvement between students and practitioners to let students experience the problems first-hand. Finally, as the essay by Joks Jansen and Van Asseldonk underscores, planners have to be aware of the historical morphological and institutional structures that have led to the current situation (in their case the Dutch water management system).

Third, **practice-informed lecturers** help students to gain direct planning practice experience in various ways, as demonstrated with current studio work conducted by students at different Dutch planning schools (see the essay by Witte et al. for an overview). This form of education can be agenda-setting: new visions or plans developed by students can raise attention to certain issues and underscore the urgency. As research-by-design projects have shown, sometimes only years later such exercises return in actual planning projects of governments and consultancies. Furthermore, students can produce support to both 'planning-literate' and planning-illiterate communities. To illustrate, communities and NGOs that lack planning skills can gain from interacting with planning students, who can provide legal support and write plans. Another example are thesis hubs, in which master theses are brought together and translated into concrete advice for (local) actors. By doing projects such as master thesis research in collaboration with professionals in practice, students can also create new relationships between stakeholders that may be continued after the project has ended.

Taken together, the three types of planning lecturers help planning schools to deliver students that are able to navigate fragmented governance landscapes and apply deliberative and communicative planning skills. Planners do not merely strive for consensus, but act as agents of change. Consequently, the new generation of planners should have mastered the skills of good judgement (*phronesis*), i.e. the thoughtfulness and ability to express the collective interest (Alexander, 2001). More specifically, they should be able to do so with a clear

future orientation (a long-term, strategic outlook) in which future developments are taken into account, most notably climate change (Pelzer, 2021; essay Witte et al). For this, several authors have pleaded for more visioning exercises (e.g. Hemel, 2021; Buitelaar, 2024; and see section 4).

TABLE 2
Three types of planning lecturers.

	Research-informed education	**'Theory-practice' education**	**Practice-informed education**
Focus in planning education	Theoretical and analytical concepts; methodological tools and skills	Courses on societal challenges (e.g. climate change, mobility, energy, housing); courses on planning frameworks and practical settings	Learning that is based in practice (also referred to as 'Society-based education', 'challenge-based learning')
Relationship with practice	Showcasing how theories, concepts and methodologies help to understand planning practice	Mutual relationship between theory and practice: application of theory, and practice informing theory	Real-life examples; commissioned work; production of visions, plans etc
Examples	Planning theory courses, methodology courses.	Domain-specific courses on e.g. mobility, housing, infrastructure, climate, participation	Studio work; Projects commissioned by external 'clients' (public or private parties, community groups, NGOs, etc); Assignments (visioning, plan-making)

6 CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS

The aim of this final chapter was to synthesise insights from the essays in this series, which explored the role of planning in societal and environmental transitions, alongside reflections gathered during a workshop with planning professors from the planning schools in the Netherlands. Together, they revealed three shared themes that not only frame the current state of the discipline but also present some takeaways and directions for its future.

The essays collectively emphasise the **interplay between continuity and change**, underscoring the need for planning to innovate while retaining its core competencies. Innovation is essential to tackle pressing challenges such as climate adaptation, housing crises, and energy transitions. At the same time, planning must preserve fundamental skills like spatial coordination, stakeholder engagement, and strategic visioning. Planning is traditionally

concerned about the spatial redistribution of resources and risks. Nowadays, the foregrounding of values such as equity, inclusivity, and sustainability is increasingly important in both planning practice, research and education. Planning schools are uniquely positioned to operate at the intersection of technical expertise and value-driven decision-making.

However, this balancing act is challenging. Transitions are not merely procedural or technical adjustments; they demand a fundamental rethinking of societal values and readiness for change, which underscores the inherent political nature of planning. Similarly, these transitions demonstrate the critical need for long-term visioning (see also the essay by Witte et al.). Long-term perspectives ensure that planning does not merely react to immediate crises but instead anticipates and prepares for systemic change. Embedding long-term visioning into education requires planners to critically interrogate values – such as justice, equity, and sustainability – and align these with strategies for a future that is resilient and inclusive. Without such visioning, transitions risk being reduced to short-term fixes that neglect the deeper societal transformations required.

A second recurring theme is the **importance of looking beyond borders** in the broadest sense. Geographically, international perspectives in education enrich planning practices, exposing students to diverse approaches and methodologies. Interdisciplinary collaboration fosters a more holistic understanding of complex urban and regional challenges. Yet, in a political climate marked by inward-looking tendencies, maintaining an outward orientation becomes increasingly difficult – and even more essential. Additionally, integrating community and local knowledge, as well as working with people from various backgrounds, challenges the traditional boundaries of (technical) planning expertise. This requires planners to adopt participatory approaches that co-define sources of knowledge and expertise, and subsequently co-create solutions with communities. These (again) value-driven approaches may be politically uncomfortable but are indispensable for fostering inclusive and transformative planning.

A third observation is the ongoing call to **bridge the divide between practice, research, and education**. While practice often demands actionable solutions, academic research takes a more critical and reflective stance, offering the necessary space to explore values and question established paradigms. Planning schools must embrace this dual role: facilitating transitions in practice while simultaneously reflecting upon and challenging the status quo. Education serves as a crucial link in this ecosystem. It not only prepares planners to address immediate practical challenges but also integrates new insights from research to ensure relevance and innovation. Collaborative approaches that engage communities and practitioners strengthen this link, ensuring education

remains grounded in societal needs while retaining its academic responsibility to the long-term.

These three observations lead to two broader reflections on the state and future of the planning discipline:

The evolution of planning reflects its **maturity as a discipline**. In its early stages, planning was predominantly practice-driven, with a focus on immediate applications. Over time, incorporating academic and critical debates has allowed the discipline to broaden, reflected in the diverse profiles among educators and researchers we find today (cf. Table 1 and 2). This diversity reflects the discipline's capacity to address both practical transitions and critical scientific inquiry. Dutch planning schools now have the opportunity to define their unique approaches, balancing these roles and demonstrating the discipline's adaptability and relevance to address the challenges brought forward by the transitions. Yet, after the abandonment of the Dutch Ministry of Spatial Planning in 2010, we have seen a lot of "soul searching" among planning researchers and practitioners. What makes spatial planning a distinct discipline from other professional and academic disciplines that work on the built environment is the integrative character of linking land-use claims with each other, combining substantive knowledge and procedural expertise. We consider it especially important to highlight this position and by doing so, claiming back a seat at the table. This is especially important now that also politically, the role of planning and the spatial future of the Netherlands is again a priority, illustrated by the re-establishment of the Ministry.

A final reflection relates to the concept of **"transitions"**, which risks becoming a buzzword, detached from the complexities it embodies. True transitions are not linear or reducible to simple steps; they also demand engagement with societal values and an ongoing dialogue about how to prepare for systemic change. Not every change qualifies as a transition: it requires shifts that challenge existing structures, practices, or norms. We must be careful with labelling all forms of change and developments as a transition. Overusing the term can dilute its meaning and create unrealistic expectations. By reserving the label for changes with significant societal, institutional, or relational implications, planners can maintain clarity about the extent and implications of changes and how to respond to them.

We conclude that the Dutch planning schools will play a dual role in contemporary social and environmental transitions: on the one hand, facilitating and supporting professionals and communities with practical concepts, tools and methods; and, on the other hand, reflecting upon (approaches to) these transitions and their underlying values through rigorous scientific work. Both roles could often work as complementary to each other,

but may equally be conflicting at some points. Hence, we have proposed a diversification of researcher and lecturer profiles which does not only account for the heterogeneous roles present in Dutch planning schools, but also keeps the planning schools relevant for research, education and practice.

Considering the variety of transitions in the Netherlands presented in this book, we can conclude that transitions require investment in planners' way of knowing and working, looking back and looking forward, in a context where long term change is necessary and inevitable. Whether this investment in knowledge and capabilities is done in planning schools or in practice through learning-by-doing, the field of spatial planning continues to adapt to the new challenges our society faces. The case studies in this book illustrate that the Netherlands is not in a "final planned stage," but a dynamic system where people and the landscape interact continuously, (re)shaping, managing, and adapting it over time.

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>> TRANSITIONS IN PLANNING

CHALLENGES OF THE 21TH CENTURY FOR DUTCH SPATIAL PLANNING RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

In the 21st century, amid many environmental and social crises, spatial planning is in need of a rethinking and redefinition. This premise serves as the foundation for this book. Therefore, this book invited planning researchers, lecturers and professionals from the Netherlands to reflect upon the following question: How do the challenges of today's world manifest in the transitions occurring within Dutch spatial planning, and what are the implications of these transitions for Dutch planning education, research, and practice?

The book is an edited volume consisting of a series of (online-first) essays with real-life cases that focus on different sectors and facets of planning, ranging from water and cultural heritage to housing and energy. The Netherlands, as a small and highly densely populated country, serves as the main backdrop for the changes we see, occasionally accompanied with an international comparison. Together, the essays provide a snapshot of the contemporary challenges spatial planning is facing in the Netherlands, and the potential and actual implications for planning education, research and practice.

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