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EDITORIAL

This issue of Transactions of AESOP brings together papers that address key contemporary planning themes and agendas with a particular emphasis on appreciating the importance of time and space in shaping the substantive matters planning addresses and the manner in which it responds to these.

The first paper by Kai Böhme Kai Böhme addresses the temporal dimension of planning thought and action. It argues that future-orientated thinking needs to be strengthened in planning and policy making to respond to the risk of 'presentism'. It explores the notion of the 'tragedy of the time horizon' which draws attention to the negative effects of short-term thinking as regards planning goals relating to the environment, economic stability, and social equity. The paper argues that the resultant neglect of long-term consequences requires greater 'future literacy' and fostering of the capacity to imagine, read, and use the future, both at the individual and societal levels. This, it is argued, will aid with the navigation of uncertainty, strategic decision-making, innovation, enhancing social resilience, and promoting sustainable development. It is suggested that there is a need for a collective effort to improve future literacy skills, foster imagination and creativity, and overcome the challenges of 'the tyranny of now'. Envisioning positive futures, the paper concludes, is crucial for inspiring hope, collaboration, and informed decision-making, particularly in a rapidly changing world.

The second paper by Basak Akarsu, Imge Akcakaya Waite, and Cansu Ozmen develops a novel insight into Hannah Arendt's socio-political theories in order to explore the socio-spatial exclusion of the vulnerable in society. It utilises Arendt's classification of the terms 'communal' and 'irrelevant' as a pair of opposing concepts in which the state of 'vulnerability' is associated with being deemed to be 'irrelevant' within society. The paper addresses the exclusionary qualities of public spaces by focusing on the complex relationships observed between these concepts in Turkey through a content analysis of national satire magazines and YouTube channels that reflect on various states and perceptions of vulnerability in Turkish society and culture. The paper argues that space is only democratic to the extent that different social groups can use it equally and fairly without feeling, or being assumed to be, 'communal' or 'irrelevant'. Therefore, in the practice of urban democracy, communities must realise the socio-spatial inclusion of their vulnerable members that are deemed irrelevant and enhance vulnerable individuals' urban rights.

The third paper by Pelin Işık, Christa Reicher, and Ceren Sezer conceives of public spaces as the 'sensory system' of urban life and sees them as being crucial for interconnecting individuals, ideas, and cultures within the fabric of cities. The paper provides a fresh interpretation of public spaces by examining people's activities from a new perspective. By applying play theory to public space analysis, the study uncovers spontaneous and unplanned activities and the novel relationships which exist between users and their environments. Focussing on the city of Aachen as a place of play, the paper develops urban design tools that take into account users' leisure time activities. By recognizing the unique relationships that play can create between individuals and their surroundings in terms of perceptions, intentions, actions, and uses of space, the paper encourages a fresh perspective on urban design tools. Its findings offer a new design approach for creating public spaces that are more participative, inclusive, and user-centred.

The fourth paper from Klaas Veenma, Wim Leendertse and Jos Arts explores infrastructure planning from the perspective of 'certainification, arguing that attempts by decision makers to strive for more certainty can in fact produce the opposite effect with impacts on planning and project timescales. The planning of three infrastructure projects in the Netherlands – a road upgrade, an airport runway redevelopment, and a river bypass– is explored over a period of 20 years. This reveals that while decision makers continuously strive for 'certainification' by deploying authority-based instruments, this can generate a reaction of 'decertainification' from project opponents. Yet when decision makers adopt an adaptive approach to create room for uncertainties, other actors often demand less uncertainty, driving decision makers back to their first predilection for 'certainification'. To overcome this continuous loop, the paper argues that an arena and institutional setting should be created in which actors from different advocacy coalitions are involved in open dialogue to better balance the perceived uncertainties of all stakeholders.

The final paper from Marta De Marchi and Maria Chiara Tosi explores the nexus between public health, food systems and city region governance. It conceptualises food as a territorial system that is closely linked to public health, social equity, and land policies. It notes how eating habits are at the root of both the incidence of cardiovascular disease and the phenomenon of malnutrition. Food often entails social inequity and is acquiring, ever greater relevance in the tools of territorial governance. Informed by this context, the paper reports on the Cities2030 project which is being developed and financed by the European Horizon 2020 programme. This envisages the involvement of all interest groups and actors within the food system arena through the creation of Urban Policy and Living Labs. The paper reports on the work of the Università Iuav di Venezia (Iuav - University of Venice) which is involved in the development of two labs in the Veneto region in the city of Vicenza and in the Venice lagoon.

Collectively the papers provide a timely reminder that planning as an activity has both a temporal and spatial dimension. It is enmeshed in temporal and spatial processes with material effects and must be cognisant of different temporal and spatial scales as it seeks to shape territories which maximise human flourishing within safe environmental limits. We would like to thank all the authors and reviewers who have contributed to this issue of the Journal.

The Editors of Transactions are also delighted to be able to announce that the journal has been accepted for listing by Scopus. In reviewing the Journal's application and approving it for indexing, the Scopus Content Selection & Advisory Board (CSAB) noted that "The journal consistently includes articles that are academically sound and relevant to an international academic or professional audience in the field". The Scopus listing means that articles published in Transactions are now indexed and searchable in Scopus which is excellent news for the Journal and its past and future authors!

We would also remind readers that the journal is open to submissions from all those who would like to share their research in the planning discipline. Submission to the journal is now through the new dedicated Transactions of AESOP Open Journal Systems (OJS) website.

Dr. Olivier Sykes

Editor in Chief of Transactions of AESOP
Liverpool, October 2023

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THE TRAGEDY OF THE TIME HORIZON: NAVIGATING SHORT-TERMISM FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Kai Böhme[1]

Abstract

Future-orientated thinking needs to be strengthened in planning and policy making to respond to the challenges posed by 'presentism'. Despite the inherent uncertainty of the future, effective planning and policy making require the ability to envision potential future developments and implications of today´s decisions. The 'tragedy of the time horizon' emphasises the detrimental effects of short-term thinking on various domains, including the environment, economic stability, and social equity. It encompasses the multifaceted challenges posed by short-term thinking and the neglect of long-term consequences. To combat this, we must boost our future literacy, i.e. the capacity to imagine, read, and use the future, both at the individual and societal levels. Future literacy is vital for navigating uncertainty, making strategic decisions, embracing innovation, enhancing social resilience, and promoting sustainable development. This requires a collective effort to improve future literacy skills, foster imagination and creativity, and overcome the challenges of 'the tyranny of now'. Envisioning positive futures is crucial for inspiring hope, collaboration, and informed decision-making, particularly in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords

Presentism, foresight, future literacy, myopia, imaginary crisis

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Introduction

The future exists only in our imagination. Nevertheless, we must not neglect it, not at least because policy making and planning are about shaping the future.

The future is uncertain and cannot be predicted. New trends, poor policy implementation or unexpected responses by citizens and enterprises might influence the outcome and have unforeseen consequences. Furthermore, sudden incidents and disruptions might change the game rapidly or even entirely plough up the playing field. The COVID-19 pandemic and Russia´s invasion of Ukraine are examples for such disruptions.

Still, good policy making and planning require the capacity to imagine the general shape of the future in a way that allows for proper planning in the present and offers an antidote to widespread 'presentism'. Strengthening the future dimension already in the analysis and preparation stages of policy and planning processes can be done through future-orientated approaches enriching and complementing data analysis. This may involve more foresight-orientated work, strengthening critical and lateral forward thinking in a structured and constructive way. Furthermore, considering extreme impacts of possible wild cards may lead to the discovery of new opportunities and risks, and the establishment of early warning systems of their potential arrival. (Böhme et al., 2020; Böhme and Lüer, 2016; ESPON, 2018, 2022; Steinmüller and Steinmüller, 2003)

At the same time planners often have only limited resources and capacities to imagine, assess and consider the full range of possible future pathways. Such 'policy myopia' (Nair and Howlett, 2017) cannot be solved even with more and better data and information. This leads us to the 'tragedy of the time horizon' and the need for future literacy, two topics which I have explored in previous blog posts.[2]

The tragedy of the time horizon

In today's fast-paced world, instant gratification and quick results dominate our lives. We are rather impatient and want it all and want it now. This attitude towards the future can be described as 'tempus nullius', 'nobody's time' as our views are clouded by political and social myopia (ESPON, 2022; Krznaric, 2020). This 'presentism' threatens our ability to make decisions with long-term benefits. It often results in short-sighted political decisions that prioritise immediate gains and current generations over future ones, which are more affected by current decisions.

That is when one talks about the 'tragedy of the time horizon' (Skovgaard Petersen, 2023), which can be understood as the little cousin of the 'tragedy of the commons'. The widely known concept of the 'tragedy of the commons' refers to a situation where individuals, acting in their own self-interest, deplete or exploit a shared resource, leading to its degradation, despite the negative consequences for everyone involved. It highlights the conflict between individual and collective interests when managing common resources. Adding a temporal component to this concept to reflect our responsibilities for the future or even for future generations, we arrive at the 'tragedy of the time horizon'. It refers to a situation where entrenched short-termism undermines our ability to make decisions with long-term-benefits.

In such a political and social myopia short-sighted, decision-making and thinking risk making decisions in favour of short-term results – rather than long-term changes – and neglecting potential long-term consequences of our actions, impeding progress in various areas. It prioritises current generations over future ones, who will be more affected by current decisions, as illustrated by a few examples (Böhme, 2023b):

[2] Blog post on the tragedy of the time horizon (June 2023) https://steadyhq.com/en/spatialforesight/posts/f0ba83bd-9bd7-4753-8f26-8d5b138f05b3
Blog post on future literacy (August 2023) https://steadyhq.com/en/spatialforesight/posts/ca9c4162-4682-462e-8302-dd6f1243dbbe

Environmental implications of transient decision-making. Nowhere is the grave peril of short-term thinking more pronounced than in the realm of environmental degradation. The exigency of addressing issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss necessitates an unwavering commitment to long-term considerations. Yet, time and again, the allure of immediate gains eclipses the far-reaching consequences of resource depletion, pollution, and climate change. The refusal to adequately address these concerns not only exacerbates the likelihood of resource scarcity, biodiversity loss, and an increasingly unstable climate but also threatens to irrevocably undermine the prospects of future generations.

Fragility of long-term economic stability. The ripples of short-term thinking extend to the economic landscape, where they can manifest as profound instability. The relentless pursuit of immediate gains, at the expense of investments in research, innovation, and development, undermines the foundations of sustained growth and dynamism. This approach leaves economies woefully unprepared for the shocks, market downturns, and financial crises that inevitably emerge. The imperative to strike a balance between short-term success and long-term resilience becomes self-evident.

Social equity in balance. Confronting the challenge of social inequality demands a commitment to sustained efforts and far-sighted visions. Regrettably, the predilection for short-term gains frequently perpetuates disparities, favouring immediate advantages for a select few while relegating investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure that yield broader societal benefits. The confluence of short-term thinking and inequity undermines social cohesion, stalling the momentum of long-term societal progress and engendering an environment ripe for discontent.

Navigating the shoals – strategies for overcoming short-termism. The imperative to counteract short-termism begins with an unflinching acknowledgment of its existence. Embracing the discipline of future thinking and foresight processes offers a mechanism to explore myriad potential futures and proactively prepare for uncertainty. Methodologies such as scenario planning not only inform decision-making burdened by significant time lags but also facilitate nuanced understanding of the intricacies of complex social-ecological systems. As societies grapple with the fatigue of past crises and mounting divisions, rekindling discussions about Europe's societal landscape becomes paramount, birthing a collective vision that subdues short-termism in favour of enduring progress.

Fostering a collective vision for a resilient tomorrow. Central to the endeavour of overcoming short-termism is the cultivation of a shared vision for the future. The 'tragedy of the time horizon' accentuates the urgency of collectively envisioning positive trajectories. Against the backdrop of societal strife and uncertainty, nurturing dialogues about the fabric of Europe's society and spatial patterns emerges as an imperative. By stimulating imaginative engagement, a shared vision can serve as an antidote to short-termism, fostering a transformational shift toward long-term benefits that resonate across generations.

Countering short-termism for long-term benefits

Recognising the importance of combating short-termism is the first step towards overcoming the 'tragedy of the time horizon'.

The intricacies of the 'tragedy of the time horizon' underline the multifaceted nature of short-term thinking across domains as diverse as planning, regional development, environmental stewardship, economic stability, and social equity. As an antidote to this 'tyranny of now', future thinking and foresight processes allow exploring different possible and plausible futures. Although we cannot predict the future, we can definitely prepare for it.

Thinking about how to increase resilience and account for future uncertainties supports planning and decision-making in which costs and benefits are separated by very long time-lags. Furthermore, it is about addressing intrinsically complex coupled social–ecological systems, and producing wide-ranging collective goods that go beyond the scope of unilateral 'single-best efforts' of any player. (Duit et al., 2010)

The need to counteract this pervasive issue is rooted in the acknowledgment of its existence, the cultivation of future-thinking, and the nurturing of shared visions that bridge temporal chasms. By embracing these principles, societies can navigate away from the precipice of short-termism, forging a sustainable, inclusive, and ecologically responsible trajectory towards a brighter tomorrow.

To achieve this, we need to become better at thinking about the future. Most of all, we must avoid 'future fatigue' in society. After a decade of crises in which social divisions have become stronger, it is increasingly difficult to establish a shared vision of what a positive future might look like. The future, it seems, is itself in crisis, and the 'tragedy of the time horizon' is just one sign of this.

Future literacy

The issues and themes explored above imply that we need to boost our future literacy. This is more than just an abstract concept. It is a critical skill that helps individuals and societies to actively shape their destinies and to 'use the future' more effectively and efficiently. (Mangnus et al., 2021; Miller, 2018)

Future literacy mimics the idea of literacy, referring to the ability to read and write as basic skills. As for future literacy, it is about becoming more skilled in imagining, reading and using the future. Essentially, it is the capacity to rigorously imagine possible futures, while avoiding the traps of 'presentism' and dystopian or wishful thinking. It allows us to better understand the role of the future in what we see and do. At a personal level, it is a skill that builds on our capacity to imagine the future. In that sense, it empowers our imagination, enhances our ability to prepare, recover and invent as changes occur. At a societal level, it helps to improve social and public imagination and to overcome the 'imaginary crisis' (Mulgan, 2020), i.e. our societal struggle to imagine positive alternatives. As it opens up wider menus of possibilities for our societal futures, it can help to navigate through uncertainties and towards desirable futures.

This is important for various reasons (Böhme, 2023a):

- **Navigating uncertainty.** Dealing with unpredictability in the future is becoming more crucial. Being future literate empowers individuals to envisage potential outcomes, prepare for uncertain situations, and effectively handle unexpected challenges.
- **Strategic decision-making.** Future literacy enables individuals and organisations to make well-informed strategic decisions that align with their long-term objectives and avoid making short-sighted choices driven solely by immediate benefits.
- **Embracing innovation and change.** In our fast-paced world, embracing innovation plays a pivotal role in progress. Future literacy nurtures a mindset that embraces innovation and encourages the adoption of new technologies and concepts.
- **Social resilience.** As societies grapple with global issues such as climate change and economic shifts, future literacy plays a vital role in developing resilience and adaptability, enabling communities to thrive in the face of adversity.
- **Sustainable development.** Future literacy is an essential component of sustainable development. It equips individuals with the capacity to comprehend the consequences of their actions and make choices that support environmental, social, and economic sustainability for this and future generations.

Embarking on the journey of improving the own future literacy requires dedication, open-mindedness, curiosity and willingness to embrace uncertainty. Fostering imagination and creativity, developing foresight thinking, engaging in critical discussions are first steps to boost one´s own future literacy. Often, these first steps imply engaging in 'what-if' discussions and imagining how different factors could shape future realities. As Hopkins (2019) points out, moving from 'what is' to 'what if', is the starting point of unleashing the power of imagination to create the futures we want.

Conclusions

What we do today and how we live today affects our future and even more importantly future generations, i.e. all people who will come after us. Nevertheless, a lot of our planning, policy and decision-making is characterised by high degrees of 'presentism'. Indeed, there is an overhanging risk, that decisions are either driven by fears and reactions to implicit threats, or that they focus merely on the here and now. To avoid dystopian thinking and the 'tragedy of the time horizon', we need to nourish our future literacy skills.

Future literacy can help to understand and navigate complex futures, anticipate emerging trends, and adapt proactively to change. This is of particular importance in a world of rapid technological advancements and constantly evolving societies, in which making good decisions becomes ever more complex. To master this complexity and the uncertainty of what the future might hold, it is essential to think critically about the future and make informed decisions, harnessing imagination and creativity to envision various scenarios, and developing the capacity to navigate uncertainties confidently. This requires personal and societal imagination which can open up creativity and learning, for exploring possible futures in order to shape the present better. It requires radical thinking and radical decisions to develop desirable futures for the next generations (Toptsidou, 2022). Imagination is important, as without the ability to image possible futures that inspire hope and foster collaboration, there is a high risk of resignation and despair.

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"DON'T DESPISE US!": ADDRESSING THE IRRELEVANCE OF THE VULNERABLE IN PUBLIC SPACE

Basak Akarsu[1], Imge Akcakaya Waite[2], and Cansu Ozmen[3]

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Abstract

This paper attempts to develop a novel insight into Hannah Arendt's socio-political theories in order to examine and alleviate the socio-spatial exclusion of the vulnerable by greater society. It utilises Arendt's classification of the terms 'communal' and 'irrelevant' as a pair of opposing concepts in which the state of 'vulnerability' is associated with being deemed to be 'irrelevant' within society. The study addresses the exclusionary qualities of public spaces by focusing on the complex relationships observed between these concepts in Turkey through a content analysis of 35 national satire magazines and 30 YouTube channels that reflect on various states and perceptions of vulnerability in Turkish society and culture. It concludes with a series of recommendations by which to close the gap within the communal-irrelevant duality that could enhance vulnerable individuals' urban rights.

Keywords

vulnerability, public space, social exclusion, urban democracy, media review

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> Without a doubt, Hannah Arendt is the central political thinker of this century whose work has reminded us with great poignancy of the lost treasures of our tradition of political thought, and specifically of the loss of public space, of der *öffentliche Raum*, under conditions of modernity (Benhabib, 1992, p. 74).

1. Introduction: Vulnerability, the Public Sphere, and Hannah Arendt

Vulnerability was defined as "a matter of being under threat of harm" by Goodin (1985, p. 110). This definition argues for the protection of those under threat and incorporates the assumption that harm can be prevented. From Arendt's (1998) point of view, vulnerability stems from human nature and permeates every aspect of human life. There are two immediate propositions which stem from these points. First, those who are under threat of harm and have been deemed vulnerable through their condition of inhabiting a city include not only people but also non-human members of society existing in public spaces. Second, it is important to recognise that there are states of vulnerability that are not the result of human nature, but shaped by the environmental factors in which humans and non-humans exist. In this complex web of realities, the existence of individuals and society in urban spaces requires individuals to be able to benefit from the rights offered by space (Soja, 2010a). Consequently, circumstances in which an individual's right to the city is violated create socio-spatial conditions that put them in vulnerable situations (Mitchell, 2003). This is one of the states of vulnerability that does not originate from human nature, contrary to Arendt's arguments, but emerged later in the public sphere due to external factors.

Arendt's view of the public sphere necessitates a review of her counterpart, the public sphere theory of Jürgen Habermas. Habermas' theory is based on an analysis of the structure and dynamics of capitalist societies and is dominated by concepts of ideology and hegemony revolving around capitalism (Habermas, 1989 [1962]). Since its initiation in the early 1960s, the theory has received numerous criticisms, most of which were accepted by Habermas himself (Calhoun, 1992; Thompson, 1993; Susen, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the most crucial criticism targets Habermas' suggestion of the public sphere as a mediator between society and state where the public organises itself as the bearer of public opinion (Habermas, Lennox, and Lennox, 1974). However, the society-state emphasis overlooks the fine details of the dualities and conflicts that exist within society in everyday life, whereas the latter assumption pertaining to public opinion undermines the different expectations and needs of members of society. Arendt acknowledges and attempts to understand these conflicts and the variety of aspirations related to them:

> By "the rise of the social" Arendt means the institutional differentiation of modern societies into the narrowly political realm on the one hand and the economic market and the family on the other. . . Arendt sees in this process the occluding of the political by the social and the transformation of the public space of politics into a pseudospace of interaction in which individuals no longer "act" but "merely behave" as economic producers, consumers, and urban city dwellers (Benhabib, 1992, pp. 74-75).

This study critically engages with several different states and addressees of vulnerability and the social and spatial conditions that trigger their so-called state. In so doing, it adopts Hannah Arendt's analyses and other relevant works as a basis of discussion. The emphasis on vulnerability sheds light on the overarching realities of today's society in that it reveals the conflicts and power imbalances that result in the socio-spatial exclusion of vulnerable individuals and groups. Among others, Arendt's major theoretical work, *The Human Condition*, and her antimodernist arguments around existentialism in the public sphere are central to the arguments of this study as they offer a seminal philosophical basis for the discussion of dualities taking place in the public realm. For the purposes of this study, this is translated into public space as the physical ground that hosts the communal existence and dualities of society.

Ali Madanipour (2010) opens his book, *Whose Public Space*, with the following sentence: "Public spaces mirror the complexities of urban societies" (p. 1). The public sphere is, in a way, made up of the existence, relations, and reflections of the things and people that constitute it. However, not all members and relationships within this sphere are equally reflected and represented socio-spatially. In the public sphere, the presence of a person allows them to question the reality between themselves and the world and to ensure the reality of the world. Arendt (1998) defined the public realm as the common world; however, there are also emotions, expressions,

and even individuals and social groups that cannot find a place within it. She associated an individual's ability to relate to the common nature of the world, that is, the state of being prudent, with the ability of the concrete and subjective senses to relate to the objective world and thus to others, and described this state as "common sense" (Arendt, 1961, p. 221). It follows that the diversity in question includes vulnerable groups and individuals that sometimes cannot get their share of this common sense or find a place in the public sphere. On the inclusivity of the public realm, Arendt (1998) speaks of the great danger that arises from the existence of people who are forced to live outside the common world, and the exclusion of the imperfect from the public realm; such imperfection automatically becomes a private matter. In Arendt's approach, imperfection, which had become a private matter and was excluded from the commonality of the public sphere, was expressed as *irrelevant*. In contrast, the state of being accepted and existing in the public sphere, which is not a private but a common issue, embodied by Arendt's definition of the *common world*, is expressed with the *communal*. This study brings together the concepts of *communal* and *irrelevant*, as distinctively coined by Arendt as a pair of binary concepts, and examines them with reference to their exposure in Turkish media in which public space is discussed.

In a broad sense, this paper attempts to engage in a discussion of the ways in which society can or cannot claim its collective rights and satisfy its needs in urban space while at the same time maintaining democracy by allowing both diversity and the inclusion of members with various needs and vulnerabilities. More specifically, it aims to understand the extent of, and reasons for, the hardships that vulnerable individuals tackle in their everyday lives. Another objective is to suggest a direction by which to alleviate these hardships through filling the gap of a deserved emphasis on the vulnerable populations in the urban democracy literature. To this end, the following section provides a literature review of urban democracy with an emphasis on the right to the city and the other main socio-spatial debates that exist around it. The discussion ties into the communal-irrelevant binary by addressing the vulnerabilities experienced within greater society in public spaces. Next, the study delivers an in-depth analysis of the vulnerabilities experienced in the public sphere—in public spaces in particular—in order to understand the extent and conditions of *irrelevance* of the vulnerable as opposed to *communal* over the case of Turkey through a review of select online and print media. Turkey is an interesting case study as the politics of vulnerability in Turkish society is claimed to be increasingly antagonising over vulnerable populations due to national and global politics (Tambar, 2014; Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay, 2016; Sözer, 2021). The paper ends with further discussion that offers research and policy recommendations to address the irrelevance of the vulnerable in the public sphere and space, whilst also offering an alternative insight into the urban justice and democracy discourse.

2. Democracy and Space: A Brief Review

In its simplest expression, democracy, whose precise meaning depends on whether an observer focuses on the individual or the collective, is a form of political control. Since increases in the population of a city gradually increases the complexity of its economic and political life, the purest form of democracy is only possible with a small social population (Mumford, 1961). It follows that, as population increases, limitations specific to democracy arise. In representative democracies that have moved away from the pure and essential form of democracy, the most prevalent form of government today, equality between citizens before the law and the sovereignty of the people are essential. In democratic forms of government, political control and direction lies is either in the hands of the people or is provided by representatives elected by them. The idea of the sovereignty of the people brings together concepts such as equality, justice, freedom, and independence, which together define and complement democracy in ways that transcend mere representation.

Individuals in modern democracies, in addition to their normal civic responsibilities, are also candidates for leadership. Aristotle (1999), who in his *Politics* developed his definition of democracy from the perspective of individual citizens, associated the conditions of being a good citizen in society with both being governed and having the political ability to govern. Another discourse that prioritises the responsibilities of individuals in democracy comes from Popper (1947), who emphasised that individuals, i.e. the citizens of a democratic state, should be blamed rather than democracy for the political inadequacies in their (respective) state. Democracy not only shapes individuals and therefore society with the responsibilities that it imposes, but also takes its shape from the society in which it functions. The knowledge, abilities, and good citizenship of the members of a given community shape a society and thus its democracy. Although many philosophers have emphasised

the uniqueness of the social aspects of human existence, whether individual or collective terms, Aristotle and Plato did not consider the inability to live outside of a community a human-specific behaviour; on the contrary, they argued that human life shared a collective nature with animal life, and that our social nature is thus far from peculiar (Arendt, 1998). Whether unique to our species or not, communal existence requires existence in a concrete place.

The interactions and relationships which are established with the space in which we live in or with any other concrete place, and in Arendt's approach, with the *common world* in the public sphere, has infiltrated every aspect of life, bringing with it various expectations and discussions. Madanipour (2003) explains, "the spaces around us everywhere, from the spaces in which we take shelter to those which we cut across and travel through, are part of our everyday social reality" (p. 144). The state of social reality which Madanipour describes is formed by an aggregation of social existence and spatial behaviour. Thus, he relates an understanding of all social components in life to that of space and relationships in space. Individual spatial behaviours, which are defined by surrounding spaces in various ways, are an integral part of social existence, and people's understanding of space and spatial relations is the same as an understanding of all other components of social life. Such forms of understanding also bring along various subject expectations and searches. The spatial response of the continuous and ongoing social life that exists in urban contexts has brought along a search for rights in various forms in urban affairs. The relationship that democracy establishes with space, as well as issues of individual and collective rights arising from this relationship, which are the focus of this study, emerges at this point.

The idea of collective rights in urban affairs calls for justice, democracy, and inhabitants' rights by emphasising the need of populations that are negatively affected by urban conditions. One of the most influential and elaborated upon urban collective rights' concepts of the last half a century, the right to the city, is a right to change the means of socio-spatial life by changing the city according to society's will. It is far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies; it is a collective right because changing the city actually requires a collective and organised power over the processes of urbanisation and a resultant restructuring of public space.

The right to the city originated as a response to the individualistic world of capitalism as a collective right. It was Henri Lefebvre who introduced the concept in the 1960s in relation to the movement of 1968 in France. Lefebvre (1991), who defined space as a product of history, described the right to the city as a requirement of democracy and directly associated it with humanism. Space, in addition to being described as a historical production by Lefebvre, is also classified and defined according to the ways of production and existence. According to his approach, *lived space* is a kind of combination of *perceived space*, which is objective and materialistic, and *conceived space*, which is an internalised subjective representation, that brightens up experiences of everyday life. It follows that they are in a state of coexistence and reproduction of each other for all residents of urban life (Waite, 2023). Harvey (1993) highlighted the dynamic relationship of space with society in his exploration of the subject, and touched upon the dynamics of societal and spatial relationships, and claimed that spatial form is created at society's discretion. He emphasised different human behaviours and experiences and suggested that instead of asking what space is, we should instead investigate how it is that different human practices create and make use of distinctive conceptualisations of space (Harvey, 1993). Harvey additionally associated the right to the city with living in it, and argued that those living in the city directly or indirectly contribute to the production of urban space and that these contributions are associated with the claim of a right to the city which one inhabits (Harvey, 1993). The right to the city differs from conventional enfranchisement, which came with democracy, in that it empowers the residents of the city, because it is a right gained by living the routines of daily life in the city and is for its inhabitants (Purcell, 2002). In this case, in addition to human practices, the practices of non-humans who are residents of and shape the city should share this claim. The comprehensiveness of the definition of the right to the city should be examined from this perspective, and the subjects of the practices that constitute that right should be taken into consideration. Democracy and its participants, which restructure and reproduce public space in modern societies, redefine urbanisation processes with the collective and organised power that it requires.

Harvey (2003) points out that the organised collective power necessary to claim the city through its alteration is quite beyond the capacity of individuals or individual rights: the realisation of the right to the city demands

claiming such a shaping power in an essential and radical way. Likewise, Lefebvre claims that the right to the city should involve a continual and active process of appropriation (in the sense of use rather than ownership) of city spaces (McCann, 2002). According to Lefebvre, it is a right to be claimed from privileged masters in order to democratise the city's spaces (Lefebvre, 1996). The underprivileged inhabitants of the city who must claim this right in large part comprise vulnerable individuals and groups; in other words-and as borrowed from Arendt-the *irrelevant* members of the society. These demographics, often especially underprivileged, deserve the particular interest they receive in this study.

3. Seeking Vulnerabilities in Public Space: An Investigation of Print and Social Media in Turkey

This study explores the relationship that exists between democracy and space and the communal-irrelevant binary as it pertains to vulnerability in society through a content analysis of print and social media in Turkey. Various states of vulnerability within the public sphere across Turkey were compiled based on the typology of the main vulnerability groups in social sciences literature (Turner, 2021), with each group being well represented in the literature and in the Turkish context. 12 vulnerable groups were examined in this study: women, LGBTQI+, children (aged below 18), the elderly (aged 65 and over), the disabled, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, immigrants, refugees, the poor, the homeless, and non-humans.

3.1. Methodology

In order to reveal the communal-irrelevant binaries in Turkish society, this study's investigation involved in-depth interviews with vulnerable individuals published online, and critical humorous perspectives, mainly satirical, published online and in print form. The interviews were retrieved from several channels of YouTube, which is a major social media organ that serves as a widespread reflection of contemporary critical thinking, while the satire particularly focused on caricature magazines which have been an important print tool of a centuries-old tradition of satire in Turkish society (see, for example Brummett, 1995). In order to enable a thorough review of recent coverage, the research focused on matter from the last ten years; 2012-2022.

The YouTube search consisted of two stages: a preliminary search with the Turkish equivalents of the words for the 12 abovementioned vulnerability categories to identify all channels associated with vulnerabilities, and an overview of the interviews published in channels relevant to the research topic. In the search for relevant satire works, a Google search was conducted which combined the Turkish equivalents of the same vulnerability keywords and the word "caricature," followed by a preliminary screening of the search results until they were exhausted. From this, 15 channels and 30 interviews were identified on YouTube, whilst a total of 35 print and online satire magazines were identified and examined within the specified date range. In the content analysis conducted on these sources, YouTube broadcasts discuss the experiences and perceptions of vulnerability at the individual level through interviews and documentaries, while the caricatures analysed address the socio-political aspects of the vulnerability phenomenon through the lens of vulnerable groups. Out of these, the focus lay on the cases in which various challenges for the abovementioned *irrelevant* vulnerable groups arise in relation to the rest of the society, or in other words, the *communal* public sphere. As such, priority was given to narratives taking place in public space, while all encounters analysed took place in different urban settings within Turkey.

3.2. Findings

The following vulnerability-based findings are relayed in no categorical order; however, associative vulnerability categories of gender, age, and socio-economic status are listed to consolidate associations and intersectionality across different vulnerabilities. The accounts with disclosed full names are the self-declared names of the interviewees in their overt participation in public YouTube contents, while the vulnerabilities they are categorised in are self-identified states and types of vulnerability.

3.2.1. Women

The media review started with the different states of vulnerability that women encounter in their daily lives. On one YouTube channel which was comprised of a series of interviews held in Istanbul's Kadıköy district revealed that, when asked about their conditions in Turkey, women generally complained that they do not have equal rights with men in their families, social environments, and work lives, or in the public sphere (DW Türkçe, 2019). In the words of one interviewee examining the vulnerability of women in Turkish society, "it is difficult to work and live in this country, where even laughing is difficult." In the work titled "I'm afraid of Istanbul – Woman," a young woman described the anxieties, threats, and fears she experiences in the public spaces of Istanbul and posed the question, "Have you ever calculated every step of your daily life just to feel more secure?", referring to the bothersome experiences she has undergone simply because of her gender (140 Journal, 2017). In one example pertaining to the exclusion, discrimination and bullying experienced by women featured in caricatures, the women-exclusive 'pink bus' service in Malatya was criticised from a male perspective (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Cover of Uykusuz Magazine, dated 25 May, 2017
In Malatya, a special pink bus for women was established.
Man 1: If she gets on this bus instead of the pink one, she's definitely a slut.
Man 2: Why would she get on the mixed bus otherwise? She knows what she's doing…

3.2.2. LGBTQI+

The documentary entitled "Don't look at me that way" discussed LGBTQI+ individuals' inability to be and act like themselves and live fearlessly, as well as the human rights violations that they had been exposed to (Karataş, 2013). In this work, LGBTQI+ individuals stated that the main problems they experienced in public spaces were their exclusion and lack of fundamental rights that result from being seen as abnormal. They also complained that these issues prevent them from even voicing their concerns effectively. The LGBTQI+ individuals interviewed also stated that they wanted to be able to be open about their love wherever they are and whenever they feel like it, and that they wish to experience their feelings freely, and not be seen as different or inappropriate. One transgender woman described the involuntary life she leads because of the treatment she had received in the public sphere as being "alive but walking around dead."

Another piece of content examined was the documentary entitled "To be of my partner's gender" about the life of an LGBTI+ individual in his twenties (Pamuk, 2014). Speaking on the difficulties he experienced in Gaziantep due to being LGBTI+ and his reluctance to go to school because of peer bullying, İbrahim Aksoy mentioned that he was excluded from public space by society, and that any assertion that LGBTI+ individuals exist and are a part of larger society was seen as inappropriate. In another documentary entitled "Beyoğlu's stepson: Tarlabaşı," which was filmed in Istanbul's Tarlabaşı quarter, the vulnerability of LGBTQI+ individuals is dealt with by examining their lives alongside the spatial transformation that Tarlabaşı has undergone (Tatlıcan, 2012). According to this work, while LGBTQI+ individuals were excluded from most public spaces in the 90s, it was possible for them to live and survive in Tarlabaşı. When evaluated with reference to terms of inclusiveness, Tarlabaşı has become a more inclusive place than most for LGBTQI+ individuals, and is somewhere where diversity is more easily accepted. The social and physical changes that this urban space has undergone in subsequent years has also deeply touched the lives of these individuals.

3.2.3. Children

According to the media review, the main issues associated with children in the public sphere that were mentioned are the fears that children feel and their perceived and actual lack of security, including risks of kidnapping, sexual abuse, and peer bullying (CNN Türk, 2018). These fears are amplified in children when combined with other vulnerabilities such as homelessness or underage labour. One of the examples examined in this context was a set of interviews with children living on the streets waiting at traffic lights in Kağıthane, Istanbul (CNN Türk, 2018). Berfin, who is only 6 years old and lives a life with little feeling of safety as a result of the vulnerability of being a child in an urban public space, earns money on the streets by selling napkins and sundries. When asked about her life on the streets, she mentioned her fears of theft and kidnapping. She argued that the money she earns could be taken by force, and that she is therefore ready to run away at any moment. Another remarkable media sample examined was a documentary about street children addicted to drugs; addiction being an additional vulnerability experienced by those persons in addition to their being children (Öztürk, 2020). One child who began to live on the streets after the disintegration of his family stated that he could use drugs in hidden areas and therefore lived away from the public. He did not establish relations with larger society and this had led to a completely isolated life. Child labourers, whose existing vulnerabilities are exacerbated by dire social, economic, and political conditions, have also found their place in various caricatures (for example, see Figure 2).

Figure 2. A caricature by Sefer Selvi in Evrensel Newspaper, dated 20 November, 2020
Woman: If you were reincarnated, what would you like to be?
Boy: A child…

3.2.4. The Elderly

It has been observed that the vulnerability of the elderly in relation to society and public space is very similar to that of children; they are viewed as emotional and naïve, in addition to their relative physical frailty and generally more limited capacity for movement. One news report related the story of a couple aged between 65 and 70 living in Antalya who were defrauded of their money by a swindler who exploited their guilt and religious beliefs (Sözcü Gazetesi, 2020). The unconscious attitudes and vulnerabilities of these elderly individuals in public spaces were perceived and used as an opportunity for deception.

In another example, a 65-year-old woman living in Istanbul was swindled when a woman approached her while she was out shopping in an open public space, asserted that she knew her, and offered her help and money (Show Ana Haber, 2020). Instead of giving aid, the fraudster stole money from the elderly woman's home. This report is just one of countless examples of elderly individuals who have their money being stolen through the exploitation of their religious feelings, and/or the abuse of their goodwill.

3.2.5. The Disabled

In the documentary "The connected" filmed in Yalova, interviews examined the social and physical difficulties that disabled individuals experienced in public spaces (Özyurt, 2020). One interviewee, 70-year-old Şerife Şahin, was orthopedically disabled. Despite her age and disability, she worked a job that required physical ability, and met all her needs by herself. She spoke of her love for the nature and people of the place where she lives, as well as how she still felt marginalised due to her vulnerability. Her statement, "People should not look at the disabled with pity," reflected on the state of inconvenience she felt in public spaces when two parties share the commons of life. Another interviewee, Yasin Sabri Şenyüz, a 27-year-old mentally disabled man, had never had a job due to his condition, so he helped his mother at home. He states that he is uncomfortable with

the pitying glances he received in public spaces and defined his condition not as being a disabled person but, rather, a "special" individual. Seben Ayşe Dayı, a 30-year-old woman featured in a different documentary, was born with cerebral palsy (+90, 2019a). A trained journalist and an educational anthropologist, she expressed her vulnerability and exclusion in the following terms: "Actually, we want common sense and respect, for everything to become ordinary and be accepted as it is." Instead of escaping public spaces, she wanted to be within them and to be seen by society. She also wanted to feel as though she lived in the public space as well. To this end, she emphasised the importance of public spaces when it comes to their enabling communication between the disabled and larger society (also see Figure 3). However, she also noted with regard to the inconvenience of the physical conditions of public spaces that, "roads are like a minefield!" As a result of such inconveniences, public spaces are not her preferred place to socialise, and she usually have to spend more time at home or in shopping malls.

Figure 3. A caricature by Önder Önerbay, awarded at the Barrier-Free Izmir 2018 National Caricature Contest: Let's Remove the Barriers (left); and a caricature exhibited in "Accessible Caricatures" in 2013 in cooperation with the Manisa Municipality in Turkey and the Caricaturists Association of Turkey (right)

3.2.6. Ethnic Minorities

In a documentary series called "Roma Tunes in Beyoğlu" that focused on the Roma people's neighbourhood and social life in the vibrant district of Beyoğlu, Istanbul (Municipality of Beyoğlu, 2013), Bülent Altınbaş, a 40-year-old clarinet player, exemplified social exclusion in his not having been admitted to a musical conservatory solely because he was a member of the Roma community: "Am I not a human? [There should be] no discrimination, as everyone is an equal servant of Allah." In addition to being excluded from public spaces, he highlighted several social rights violations such as being deprived of education that the *communal* can vastly benefit from.

Despite their relatively large numbers, estimated to be between 15-20 percent of the total national population, Kurds have historically been subject to ethnic, social, economic, and spatial exclusion within Turkey (Gambetti and Jongerden, 2015). In an interview published on YouTube, Heja, a Kurdish journalist from Diyarbakır, discussed the prejudices and difficulties that she had faced as a Kurd and expressed her fear of the comments that might be left on the video's page (321GO, 2020). She stated that she was perceived as ignorant in Istanbul when she moved there from Diyarbakır in her childhood. Among the biased questions she faced were "Is there a tailor in Diyarbakır?" and "Do you Kurds eat pasta?" In her collage years, she claimed to have been exposed to nationalist rhetoric by some professors simply because she was Kurdish. Heja noted that she hoped for an associative democracy in Turkey: "I think that the more people embrace, the more dialogue they can have, the happier they can be, and that peace can be achieved in this way." She added: "I have learned over the years that people are afraid of what they do not know, and this brings along those racist thoughts and prejudice." She referred to the manifestations of social exclusion that had emerged as a result of the *communal*'s fears and prejudices that have accumulated over several years and generations and how these were reflected in public space.

3.2.7. Religious Minorities

In an interview on Jewish youth living in Istanbul, lawyer Betsi Penso expressed her thoughts on the attacks that had occurred on Jewish synagogues: "We have experienced bombings here. Maybe White Turks have the same feeling right now, but we have been living this for a very long time, so it is not something new" (+90, 2020a). Considering the synagogues as well as open public spaces of the city in general, she noted that she saw Istanbul as her home but increasingly considered leaving, like others of her generation, due to the experiences she had suffered with regard to antagonism and polarisation.

The largest religious minority within the mostly Muslim Turkish population is that of the Alawites, an ethnoreligious group that emerged from Shia Islam and recently numbered between 25 and 30 million persons in Turkey, according to Professor İzzettin Doğan, the President of the most prominent Alawite foundation in the country (Independent Türkçe, 2021). Speaking about her late husband, the prominent Alawite folk poet Nesimi Çimen, who was killed in an arson attack in 1993, the Sivas Madımak massacre, Makbule Çimen said in an interview: "The fire in my heart never goes out. That flame is still burning" (Bana Göre TV, 2020). When asked how she perceived being an Alawite in Turkey, she referred to the words of her husband: "Let a human be a human. Burning people for religious reasons is not being Muslim. As an Alawite, loving people is what I worship." Attacks on the homes of the Alawite have also been a recurring theme in Turkish history and the subject of satire magazines (for example, see Figure 4). In Çimen's interview, in addition to the marginalisation and exclusion of this religious minority group in their social lives in public spaces; an emphasis was also placed on the attacks extending to the Alawites' homes and the extent of the hostility displayed.

Figure 4. Cover of Penguen Magazine, dated 2 August, 2012
The house of an Alawite family was stoned and its barns burned following a quarrel over a loud midnight Ramadan drummer in Malatya. Man: What are we burning?

3.2.8. Immigrants

Immigrants, another vulnerable group, were examined in a YouTube video about families who immigrated from the Ottoman periphery to Turkey (+90, 2021). In this series of interviews, Professor Pınar Uyan Semerci, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Bilgi University, described the founding of the Turkish Republic as "a story of establishment through immigration." Descendants of the members of the state-sponsored population exchanges of the early 20th century, who largely define today's Turkey's immigrant profile, were also interviewed in the series. One such person, Esat Halil Ergelen, President of the Lausanne Emigrants Association, described the multi-faceted exclusion that immigrants have faced in Turkey and added: "The reason behind this othering is the political resistance of the immigrants to the desired new order." Ayşe Kulin, one of the prominent authors of modern Turkish literature who was also born of an immigrant family, emphasised the importance of recognising the supposedly lost former identity of immigrants: "Most of the time, people leave their homes, homeland, and lands unwillingly. That is why it hurts me a lot to see people look down on immigrants. It is necessary to accept a person who settles in a country and becomes a citizen as a child of that homeland."

In another series of interviews about African immigrants trying to survive in Turkey (DW Türkçe, 2020), Muhammed Sierra Lioneli described the exclusion he experienced in public spaces and argued that he was publicly called "black" by some people, seen as vulnerable by others, and has even been exposed to threats and violence. A Nigerian man named Pascal, who wanted to earn his living playing football, stated that although he was very successful in the trial games of several different football clubs, he was not accepted only because he was "different" as an immigrant marginalised by and segregated from other segments of society. According to these accounts, which reveal various aspects and reasons as to the exclusion of immigrants, the places where exclusions are embodied have included public spaces throughout history.

3.2.9. Refugees

The issue of refugees, which has been an important issue in Turkey since the early 2010s, has been a topic of particular concern for the country's larger cities. In a YouTube video that discusses controversial opinions about Syrians in Hatay, a city in southern Turkey with a high concentration of Syrian refugees (DW Türkçe, 2022), Syrian Mustafa Ekreme responded to the negative image of his community by local people: "Not all the fingers of a hand are the same size. Let's not assume that all Syrians are bad. Everyone is different." In this video, in which all Syrians interviewed on the streets of Hatay gave similar answers, the city's mayor appeared worried about the supposed change in the demographic structure of the city. Şahap Fansa, a local tradesman in the historic Hatay bazaar, expressed a different view: "France could not conquer Hatay; how can three or five Syrians?" He viewed these concerns as "mere provocation."

Another story that narrated the post-war migration process from Afghanistan to Europe included interviews with immigrants who had come to or were passing through Turkey on their way to the west (BBC News Türkçe, 2021a). One of these immigrants, an Afghani named Yunus, linked his decision to his treatment in his home country: "There is no respect for people in Afghanistan. In Europe, people are respected. That's why we want to go to Europe." However, in another video, an Afghan immigrant woman's words contrasted with this view concerning immigrants in Turkey: "I came here with these kids. They need to get an education. [The government or people of Turkey] didn't even give us a place to live" (BBC News Türkçe, 2021b). While comparing the countries they left as refugees and migrated to, the interviewees emphasised their peaceful approaches in their social lives and how this contrasts with the treatment they received as human beings.

3.2.10. The Poor

Socio-economic differences have generally been understood to directly bring about exclusion in public spaces and exacerbate individual vulnerabilities. The media scan undertaken for this paper suggests that the impoverished lack a relationship to such spaces because a certain amount of disposable wealth is necessary to experience these areas.

In one documentary, Mehmet Suat Doğan, a sanitation worker in his 40s, described it in an interview as a miracle that he could survive in Istanbul, adding: "Many of my friends around me are families that are broken or in distress, just like me. I can't sit down and chat with someone, because I see myself as inadequate due to my financial hardships" (BBC News Türkçe, 2019; also see Figure 5). Another YouTube video contained an interview about being a *hammal* (porter) in the wholesale marketplace in Istanbul's Bayrampaşa neighbourhood (+90, 2020b). A 40-year-old man explained that being a porter is equivalent to being nothing and complained that he was not able to make any connections in public due to his outlook. He responded to the contempt of members of society with the words "We are human beings, we have rights, but no one extends to us these rights, they oppress us." In both examples, individuals attributed the reasons for their inability to exist in public space to be a consequence of the inadequacies caused by their financial situation and, therefore, to the othering that they were subjected to by other people.

Figure 5. Cover of Uykusuz Magazine, dated 12 March, 2015
Man 1: In the last year, we have become twenty percent poorer.
Man 2: Brother, I am okay… I can't get poorer than this.

3.2.11. The Homeless

The scanned media demonstrated that while the homeless are often the primary occupiers of public spaces at night, they are excluded, looked down upon, and marginalised during the day. Moreover, while the homeless are much more vulnerable to the dangers of living constantly on the streets than other segments of society, they are ironically perceived as stained individuals to be feared and avoided.

An interview with 62-year-old Alaaddin Arslan, who lived in the streets of Tophane, Istanbul, revealed that he had been homeless for 35 years (+90, 2019b). In Arslan's words, "society is disgusted by people lying on the street, and this is one of the biggest things that hurt us in our hearts." He also emphasised the dangers that the homeless experience in public spaces, stating that when confronted by drug addicts, they are even more vulnerable and at times even in mortal danger. He added that the homeless cannot benefit from public health

services, to which every member of society should have access. The documentary "Being Homeless: Life on the Street" about the life of a 51-year-old dweller of the streets of Alanya named Sinan reminds the greater society: "Don't despise us people living outside! There are good people among them. Try to support them" (Beta Video, 2020).

3.2.12. Non-Humans

Reflecting on stray dogs and cats, the most prominent animal species within the vulnerable non-humans category in Turkey, Banu Aydın, an animal rights activist and owner of a dog shelter in Istanbul, warned about stray dogs in Turkish cities: "These [animals] also deserve good families, animals that have already suffered a lot, stray dogs, abandoned animals, most of them traumatised. This one was either beaten or tortured (pointing at a dog). For example, there is a dog in the middle that I will show you. She was raped many times, it's proven. But the man paid 300 Lira, got out of jail, and left" (BBC News Türkçe, 2020).

In this study, significant elements of the built and natural environments facing extinction were also analysed as being non-human. In a post concerning interviews with activists defending the Validebağ Grove in Istanbul, which is subject to a planning amendment in favour of mixed-use development (DW Türkçe, 2021), Arif Belgin, one of the volunteer advocates, called for the grove's preservation: "A wide variety of animals, from turtles to hedgehogs, from lizards to grasshoppers, from squirrels to snakes, lives here. It has a natural ecosystem. This is a rare blessing for Istanbul. It is very important to preserve it in this way. It is extremely wrong to build facilities here." Another activist, photographer Ahmet Dayıoğlu, expressed his sadness over the now lost oak trees of the grove which had resulted from current developments in the area: "There used to be a squirrel family in every oak tree living here, now there is only one family left."

The built environment, and in particular the historical and architectural heritage it holds in cities, is another non-human element that has become vulnerable because of the contemptuous approach of interventions such as some of the urban transformation and renewal projects in major Turkish cities. It follows, that there is also a need for them to be scrutinised. In a post in which the urban transformation of the city of Bursa, often referred to as "Green Bursa," was described as "a mortar stuck in the heart of Bursa," a local and urban planner, Gizem Kıygı, stated that the transformation that the city had undergone lay far outside Turkey's sustainable redevelopment agenda (+90, 2020c). Referring to the old Central Bank building, which is located in Bursa's historic core and is being demolished as part of the Çarşıbaşı Square Renewal Project, Kıygı stressed the defencelessness of built heritage against political power: "This building was built in the 1960s and reflects the character of its modernist period very well. To this effect, it received the National Architecture Award of the Chamber of Architects and is also in the conservation cultural assets inventory of Bursa."

4. Research and Policy Implications

Research has indicated that a relationship with society in public spaces subjects the vulnerable to social exclusion, invisibility, fear, insecurity, and uneasiness due to pressures from the non-vulnerable counterpart. These conditions worsen depending on the type and combinations of vulnerability and, in the case of children, the depth of vulnerability often increases alongside physical fragility; worsening experiences of harm and victimisation in the social environment. This brings to mind Goodin's (1985) aforementioned definition of vulnerability, which associates the term with harm and threat. Relating such conditions to Arendt's depiction of the terms *communal* and *irrelevant*, these reflections equate vulnerability with being deemed unaccepted, or *irrelevant*, by society, while *communal* refers to the majority who are accepted by society and have power over their counterparts. However, defining the *communal* based on its population size compared to that of the vulnerable should be a secondary focus. Arendt's words regarding this point offer valuable insight: "What makes mass society so difficult to bear is not the number of people involved, at least not primarily, but the fact that the world between them has lost its power to gather them together, to relate and to separate them" (Arendt, 1998, pp. 52-53). Consequently, what leads to the exclusion of vulnerable minority groups from public space is not their quantity, but the attitudes and behaviours of other individuals with whom they share the public space towards them. The media review suggests this to be the case for the women, immigrants, and stray animals analysed; vulnerable groups that are greater in number than many other vulnerable groups observed in several Turkish cities (Butler, Gambetti and Sabsay, 2016; Wolf; 2015).

The spaces encountered during the media review were actually *lived spaces* according to Lefebvre's definition (Soja, 2010b). While living—whether actually residing, working, or just passing through or running daily errands—in an urban space, the dynamics that emerge as a result of social relations have the power to transform a designed street, a square, or a park through perception. In turn, these dynamics reform space with aspects that trigger the perception of each individual (Soja, 2010a; 2010b). It follows, that social exclusion is translated into spatial exclusion over time and is exercised by both the communal and the irrelevant—the vulnerable—in public space as long as the vulnerable refrain from claiming their right to the spaces from which they have been excluded (also see Mitchell, 2003). The question then is, is the right to the city, which Lefebvre (1991) refers to as central to both humanity and democracy, not a right of vulnerable individuals in fragile situations, as well as every individual living in the city?

From a theoretical point of view, this question has been addressed rather indirectly by Harvey: Those who live there, that is, those who contribute to the living spaces of the city and the experiences lived in the city, are the legitimate owners of the right to the city and can claim the production of urban space and life (Harvey, 1993). However, the broad categorisation of urban inhabitants that Harvey frames lacks a necessary emphasis on vulnerable individuals and groups. It is undeniable that the *irrelevant* contribute as much to the production of urban life and ongoing social relationships in the socio-spatial sphere as the *communal*. Therefore, in urban policy-making, vulnerable individuals and groups must be specifically emphasised as legitimate owners of the right to the city, regardless of the type and severity of their vulnerability.

In order to address the question above, it is also necessary to investigate the specific needs and expectations of vulnerable individuals. One common theme that arises from this research is that no matter where their vulnerability stems from, all the vulnerable individuals analysed wanted to be accepted and loved and, in turn, to positively contribute to the rest of society without being seen as different because of their so-called peculiarities. This was the case with the LGBTQI+ individuals, the ethnic minorities, the migrants, the poor, and the homeless in particular. Arendt's statement that "the presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves" helps to illuminate why vulnerable groups tend to take to the streets and persist despite all the exclusionary elements of public spaces (Arendt, 1998, p. 50). The concrete existence of individuals is expressed through their presence and visibility in these spaces (Madanipour, 2010), so it is imperative that they are maintained through policies that restructure public spaces. Provided that every human and non-human is accepted by society as is, including their strengths and weaknesses, and that this diversity becomes common and accepted, then the duality between the *communal* and the *irrelevant*, as well as their reflections in social relationships, can be unravelled in public space. Under such conditions, the vulnerable will be less likely to feel isolated, insecure, or under threat in the process of realising themselves in public spaces.

5. Conclusion

Keeping in mind the framework of spatial relations in democracy in relevant literature and the principles of relevant theories as well as the appropriation of vulnerabilities within this framework, this study investigated the socio-spatial relations that different social groups and non-human members of society establish within public space. In order to understand the extent of, and the reasons for, the hardships that vulnerable individuals face and tackle in their daily lives and to suggest directions to alleviate these hardships, this study bridges Arendt's *communal* and *irrelevant* as a binary system and ties it to vulnerability and public space, offering alternative insights to existent urban justice discourses.

The relevant media review made it clear that, in Turkish society, vulnerable groups are not only viewed but also treated as *irrelevant* by the *communal* in the public sphere. As such, vulnerable individuals and groups perceive themselves as *irrelevant* through society's lens. Although their locations and types of vulnerability differ, their experiences and relationships with and in the public sphere show significant indications of social and spatial exclusion. Whether they bear an innate vulnerability or environmental factors and rights violations have made them vulnerable over time, vulnerable groups members coming into contact with larger society in public spaces can be strongly associated with the former's exclusion. In contrast, the un-labelled remainder of society acts as a monolith that claims power over the public sphere and spaces through collectivity. The communal-irrelevant

pair is a binary of opposite and conflicting elements in this sense. On the one hand, the generally assumed ways in which democracy manifests itself in space are that space provides opportunities and convenience for each individual to realise themselves, both as individuals and as members of any group co-inhabiting society, and that space has the capacity to include each without any spatial or social discrimination. On the other hand, space is only democratic to the extent that different social groups can use it equally and fairly without feeling or being assumed to be communal or irrelevant. It is also required that these groups should be able to relate to the space in different, free, and unique but consented ways. This study has demonstrated that vulnerable groups are associated with the production and reproduction of urban life from both perspectives; thus, they can legitimately claim their right to the city. Ensuring social and spatial justice to all legitimate owners of this right—human and non-human—is a requisite for urban democracy to exist and to enable society to claim its collective rights and needs. Therefore, in the practice of urban democracy, communities must realise the socio-spatial inclusion of their vulnerable members that are deemed *irrelevant*. As long as the vulnerable exist in public space—and they will exist—, there is reason to hope that both they and their legitimate rights will be recognised, deemed relevant, and ensured for the sake of social and spatial justice.

Note

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PUBLIC SPACE AND PLAY THEORY, READING AACHEN THROUGH PLAY THEORY

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Abstract

Public spaces serve as the sensory system of urban life, and are crucial for interconnecting individuals, ideas, and cultures within the fabric of cities. This study provides a fresh interpretation of public spaces by examining people's activities from a new perspective. By applying play theory to public space analysis, the study uncovers spontaneous and unplanned activities and the novel relationships which exist between users and their environments. In so doing it paves the way for a new approach to public space design.

With a focus on Aachen as a place of play, this study seeks to develop urban design tools that take into account users' leisure time activities. By recognizing the unique relationships that play can create between individuals and their surroundings in terms of perceptions, intentions, actions, and uses of space, the research encourages a fresh perspective on urban design tools. Ultimately, the findings of this study offer a new design approach for creating public spaces that are more participating, inclusive, and user-centred.

Keywords

public space, social life, play theory, urban design tools, relationship user-space

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1. Introduction

Public spaces serve as areas of freedom and social interaction, where individuals gather to express themselves and establish social relations (Arendt, 1998; Mitchell, 1996). Individuals construct their own self-existence and produce their own public spaces by encountering distinctions and varieties in public space (Sennett, 1977;1994). Through their behaviours, actions, and communications, individuals establish different relationships with the environment and shape the relationships that exist between people who use these spaces (Lefebvre, 1991;1992).

Lefebvre's discourse emphasizes that space is a social production, and that everyday life provides important data for examining public space (Lefebvre, 1991;1992). The continuous re-interpretation and production of spaces by individuals highlights the dynamic nature of public space, as well as the need to incorporate users' perspectives in the design of public spaces. By recognizing the role of individuals in shaping public spaces, urban designers and policymakers can create more inclusive and user-centred public spaces that better meet the needs of citizens.

Interpreting public space through everyday life behaviours and actions, and the relationships between spaces and users is a vital issue in contemporary society (Stevens, 2007). By investigating public space through everyday life, we can discover play theory, which enables us to both integrate cities and their users' lives, and embrace urban diversity (Stevens, 2007). This approach encourages the development of public spaces that meet the new needs of users whilst also creating new forms of spaces and life.

When examining public spaces in a city, it is necessary to consider their social characteristics in addition to their physical condition and any regulations that govern them (Madanipour, 2003). Viewing public space from a play perspective allows us to see a city as an organism in which citizens participate in shaping and evolving the city through their everyday interactions and use of spaces (Stevens, 2007). This organic relationship between users and public spaces creates a dynamic and responsive environment that better meets the needs of citizens and encourages their participation in shaping the (given) city's future (Madanipour, 2003).

Public spaces possess disparate characteristics due to their physical, social, and demographic structures. These, in turn, influence people's everyday lives and their relationships with space. The important point here, is to look at where people want to spend their time, where they feel safe and relaxed, and what kinds of public spaces can be used in various ways and by different types of people. This study compares two different open public areas in the city of Aachen using play theory and determines the diverse ways in which people utilize public space. The research areas are Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark - both of which are close to the city centre, and open public spaces in the Driescher Hof neighbourhood which is located on the city's periphery. By comparing public spaces, the study examines how people can produce play and use the space according to its qualities. Additionally, this research focuses on observing which features of public space allow playful activities. The study is based on acquiring social and physical information about the areas studied and was also informed by performing fieldwork on how people use public spaces; specifically focusing on playful activities.

2. Public space, sociality, and everyday life

Public spaces are defined as areas that are independent of state authority and capital sovereignty, where thoughts, discourses, and actions are produced to identify and develop the relationships and behaviours of society. Hannah Arendt considers public space as providing individuals with "the widest possible publicity" and the possibility to "be seen and heard by everybody," creating mutual recognition which leads to common communication and cooperation between individuals. Arendt further describes public space as a field that produces plurality, where people come together in an unplanned manner to try and answer the question of "how to live together?" (Arendt, 1958; 50). Sennett notes that public space is a free space where there are no strict and unalterable standards of behaviour, and strangers encounter the unknown quantities of the (given) city (1974: 49). It provides a setting for various modes of relationships between friends, strangers, spectators, and performers. By participating in the opportunities of social behaviour and reactions, individuals gain the ability to explore new platforms of social and space settings (Learnard and Learnard 1984: 18).

Public spaces acquire their social characteristics through the everyday life activities that take place within them. Everyday life encompasses all the activities, conflicts, and experiences that create space as a meeting place, bond, and common ground. There are three aspects to the relationship that exists between people and space in everyday life: representational spaces, physical space, and representations of space. Representations of space are conceptualized spaces which are constructed and defined by scientists, planners, urbanists, and social engineers, and have common social codes. Physical space refers to the physical features of a space, without social conditions. Representational spaces, on the other hand, are defined by their inhabitants and users through complex associations, and make symbolic use of physical objects. This space is an underground and alternative space that emerges in everyday life activities, particularly in play (Lefebvre, 1991). Representational spaces, whether they have a material existence or not, are symbols, and allude to ideas of sociability. Social practices in public spaces are critical to understanding the dynamic tensions that shape everyday life in public spaces, especially through the role of play (Stevens, 2007).

3. Definitions of Play

The topic of play in urban areas has gained increasing attention across various fields of study. Play is viewed as a crucial element of life in disciplines such as history, architecture, urban theory, and design methodology. In addition to existent literature on children's play and digital game theories, adult play and playful spaces have also become the subject of research. It has been argued that play provides the historical social order of people as well as meaning to their existence. Furthermore, play is a subject that allows people to create new spaces by engaging in different actions in everyday life. Some scholars also conceptualize public spaces as a playground; emphasizing the limitless possibilities of public life and usage.

When people think about play, they associate it with childhood activities, leisure time actions, sports activities, and other activities that are separate from work. However, playing is more than just these activities. It is also an act of understanding the world and oneself, as well as a way of engaging with others. Play is a mode of constructing one's personality, experiencing the world, and exploring one's capabilities (Sicart, 2014). It frees people from moral conventions and allows them to understand their existence and importance. Play is an ambiguous concept that can encompass all occupations and activities, as everyone engages in playfulness in their everyday lives, even if they do not realize it (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

Play is an activity that appears to have a diverse range of uses and is intertwined with various aspects of everyday life. Lefebvre (1992) suggests that urban play is an essential part of a broadened understanding of human needs. The functions of cities are crucial for their social value, but they are also diverse and evolve with play. Social behaviour in public spaces is not solely functional, but is rather the center of possibilities and unfamiliar constructions. Play enables the creation of new, unconventional relationships that can challenge power systems, such as representations of space. The play of adults is often characterized by unexpected, non-instrumental, active, and risky behaviours that deviate from practical models (Stevens, 2007:17).

According to some theorists, play has a historical significance in cities. Huizinga (1995) argues that human society is permeated by play from the start, and that the formation of culture can be understood through play theory. Primitive people gave their lives significance and organization by playing, and it enabled them to produce their truths, actions, rules, orders, rhythms, and aesthetic qualities. In contrast, Giorgio Agamben (2007) describes the historical development of cities and sees play as an important layer in the transition between the concepts of religion, profanation, and play. Religion is a sacred thought system that removes things, places, animals, or people from common use and transfers them to a separate, unchangeable sphere. Profanation, on the other hand, involves reusing objects and reorganizing politics, laws, and spaces. The passage from the sacred to the profane comes about through entirely inappropriate use (or, rather, reuse) of the sacred, ie. play.

Van Eyck (2008) suggests that play is an activity that can transform public spaces and sociability. Van Eyck argues against urban planning designs that are divided into functions, such as living, working, entertainment, and green space, and claiming that cities are more than just a collection of functions. Instead, they must be designed to enable people to perform their activities and build sociability (Grabow and Spreckelmeyer, 2015). By emphasizing the importance of playful activities, play is considered to be social communication system

that allows people to understand that the conditions of public life are changeable and shaped by human actions (Sennett, 2010). Social behaviour in public is not just functional but can also be an active, informative, and critical response (Stevens, 2007). Playful activities that occur in public spaces often arise as a dialectical critique of the stability and rationality of sociability. These activities are usually spontaneous, voluntary, or creative, and provide a way to challenge social norms and conventions (Bourdieu, 1977).

4. Study Areas

The study areas comprise two public spaces in Aachen: Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark, and open public spaces in the Neighborhood of Driescher Hof. Before delving into the research spaces, let us take a glimpse of Aachen. It is a city located in the administrative region of North Rhine-Westphalia, and sited on the border with two of its neighbours. More than half of the city's 85-kilometer border runs along Belgium and the Netherlands. The city's economic development department is responsible for stimulating activities that compensate for and exploit its border location. Aachen is an historic city renowned for its young population and its technological universities. It is a vibrant and dynamic city with a cosmopolitan structure that includes people from different nations.

Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark are situated in Frankenbergerviertel neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is named after Frankenberg Castle, a former water castle which is now used as a museum, a place of culture, and an activity centre. It is located in the middle of Frankenberg Park. Frankenbergerviertel is located next to the Aachen ring, and middle-class people and students predominantly live in this area. In addition to housing, the neighbourhood includes buildings with different functions. Frankenberger Park offers various spaces in terms of the effect of the cultural, entertainment, and educational structures around the park. Additionally, the park is surrounded by schools, bookstores, a large indoor concert hall, and music workshops (Figure 1).

Over the past few centuries, the city of Aachen and subsequently Driescher Hof have evolved from being primarily agricultural areas to a more urbanized, built-up city. In the 18th century, Central Aachen developed as a prominent town in the area, while Driescher Hof remained largely undeveloped as a peripheral area. Driescher Hof has experienced significant growth over the last two decades, and has a current population of 5,300 inhabitants who reside within an area of 1.1 km2. This neighbourhood has a high proportion of foreign persons and immigrants who face challenges in their social interaction with the city centre. The neighbourhood's weak network and social ties are its primary problems. The research area comprises two different locations: a playground in the middle of the neighbourhood and a store area that is home to small stores, offices, cafes, and a market (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Map of Frankenbergerviertel neighbourhood and research areas; Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark

Figure 2: Map of the Driescher Hof neighbourhood and the research areas.

5. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study was designed to capture the dynamics of spontaneous, risky activities. To achieve this, the tools of environment-behaviour research were adopted; specifically, behavioural mapping and photography. Behavioural mapping involves associating the design features of setting or location with behaviour in both time and space, and allows for the examination of which spaces people use for unplanned activities (Bechtel and Zeisel, 1987).

Structured visual observations and other quantitative techniques were utilized to collect data, which could be analysed in the style of public open space. The methods integrated behaviour observations with GIS mapping to create empirical databases of environment-behaviour interactions that were directly linked to the kind of activities being undertaken and the space (Golicnik and Thompson, 2010).

To ensure sufficient observation, a time limitation was imposed. Each public area observation was ten minutes long, after which the research team moved to the next area. Detailed data collection for each open public space involved systematic observations of all parts of each space on several different occasions in April, May, and June 2021. Data was collected between 3 pm and 5 pm, spread out over both weekdays and weekends. The three months for the observations were chosen as a time when the weather was likely to be warm, and outdoor activities in open public spaces would be likely to be pleasant.

The observations collected information on the type of activities being undertaken; enabling the preparation of detailed data collection codes and symbols. The activities observed included sitting, chatting, standing, lying, eating/drinking, reading, shopping, window-shopping, people-watching, performing, talking, panhandling, smoking, walking pets, pushing strollers, vending, and so on. It is important to note that people passing by or entering a premises without stopping were not recorded in the walk-by observations. The aim was to learn and comment on the numerous new and unfamiliar people, customs, behaviours, and activities observed during the study.

In summary, the methodology used in this study was designed to capture the dynamics of spontaneous, risky activities using the tools of environment-behaviour research; specifically behavioural mapping and photography. The observations collected information on the type of activities, and allowed for the preparation of detailed data collection codes and symbols. The integration of behaviour observations with GIS mapping created empirical databases of environment-behaviour interactions that were directly linked to

the kind of activities being undertaken and the space. This approach provided a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the relationships that exist between the temporal and spatial forms of the physical setting and people's behaviour in public open spaces.

6. Framework

6.1. Case 1: Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark

The daily observations of individuals sitting in Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark on a warm and sunny early afternoon revealed that a substantial number of people chose to rest on the grass, stones, and benches. The visual representation of the data in Figure 3 indicates that the areas and activities that attracted the greatest number of participants varied between different age groups, with certain locations being popular among both groups and individuals.

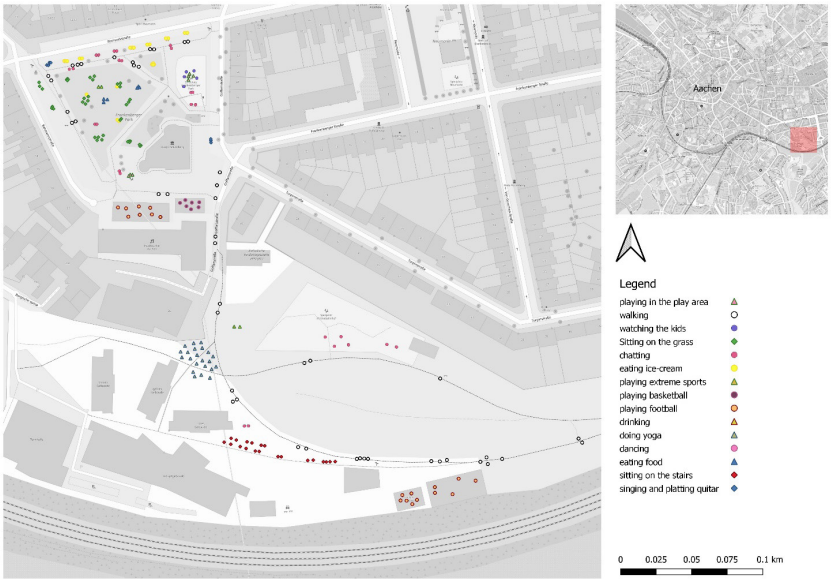

Figure 3: The GIS behavior map of Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark, 12.6.22, 4-4.30 pm.

The green areas surrounding the castle, and the seating units used as flower beds at the edge of the park serve as suitable locations for various activities, such as singing, playing guitars, sitting, eating, and playing with balls; as illustrated in Figures 4 and 5. These areas enable individuals to engage in a range of leisure activities and may provide a sense of comfort and relaxation to visitors.

Figure 4: Young people are playing guitars and singing

Figure 5: Adjacent attractions; different activities

Figure 6: People practicing yoga

Figure 7: A young man engaged in extreme sports

Within Bürgerpark, a green area in front of the school building at the park's entrance allows for collective activities, such as yoga and gymnastics (Figures 6 and 7). The stairs next to the school building provide a convenient place for sitting and resting (Figure 8). The park also features a football court surrounded by graffiti-painted walls; this area attracts people of diverse ethnicities and heterogeneous populations who enjoy playing football together (Figure 9).

As one continues through the park, a walking path emerges, enveloped by trees and following a railroad track. Along this path, some areas feature colorful graffiti paintings, as well as various writings and pictures on the walls and floors (Figures 10 and11). These artistic expressions serve to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the park and may contribute to senses cultural inclusivity and diversity.

Figure 8: People sitting on the stairs and chatting

Figure 9: Football field by graffiti wall

Figure 10: Graffiti and informal space products

Figure 11: Graffiti and playground elements

6.2. Case 2: Driescher Hof neighbourhood

Observations revealed that the Driescher Hof neighborhood lacks suitable areas for play activities. The behavioural map of the neighbuorhood, based on 10-minute observations of selected areas illustrates the activities recorded during the observation period, while the GIS map highlights the collective actions observed throughout the entire observation period in specific locations. These maps provide valuable insights into the use and availability of play areas in the Driescher Hof neighbourhood; potentially informing future interventions designed to improve the provision and quality of play opportunities for residents (Figure 12).

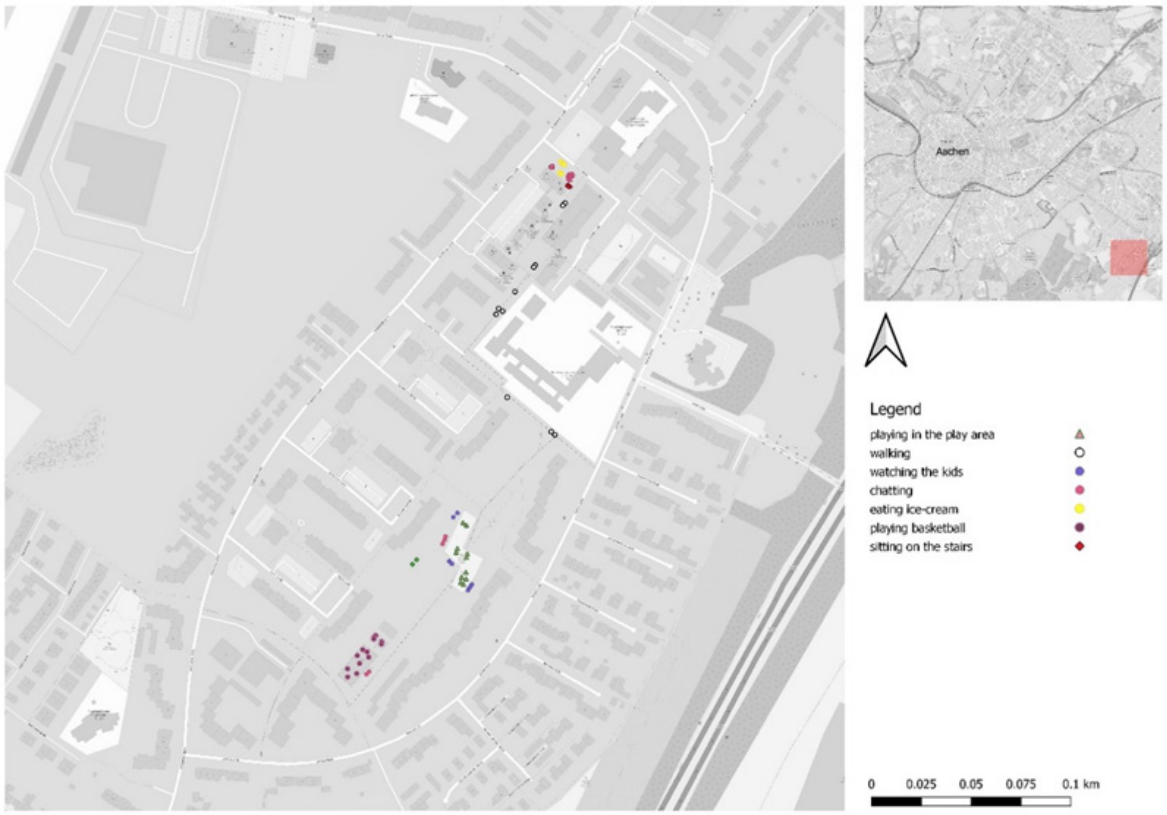

Figure 12: The GIS behavior map of Driescher Hof neighborhood 4.6.22, 4-4.30 pm.

The playground situated at the heart of the neighbourhood is exclusively accessible to residents and serves as a primary play area for children while adults supervise their activities (Figures 13 and14).

Figure 13: Families sitting on the grass.

Figure 14: Families watching their kids.

The primary space where children and adults engage in play activities together is situated in front of the restaurant and cafe. While this space is often utilized for the purpose of purchasing food and beverages, it also serves as a communal area where individuals frequently spend a considerable amount of time conversing. The area encourages spontaneous interactions and a range of activities such as enjoying ice creams, resting by sitting on the stairs, and cycling. Notably, this space is located distantly from the residential zones, and the restaurant and cafe only provide outdoor seating arrangements when the weather is favourable (Figures 15 and 16).

Figure 15: Spontaneous encounters

Figure 16: Diverse actions

In the center of the neighbourhood lies a commercial district that comprises a large shopping centre, a store, a hair salon, and official spaces surrounded by several school buildings. Unlike the area in front of the restaurants and cafes, this district is relatively isolated and limited in terms of social activities (Figures 17 and18).

Figure 17: Parking area between stores and the main street.

Figure 18: The wide area surrounded by stores and the market.

7. Findings

Frankenberger Park is perceived as a playful and interactive public space that encourages the use of the space. Lynch (1960) emphasized the impact of education and art functions on people's perceptions of the environment and the quality of a space's image. In line with Gibson's affordance theory, objects and elements in the park have positive qualities that enable people to use the space as they wish (Spencer, 2013). For instance, a chair provides opportunities for sitting, whilst a piano provides opportunities to either listen to or perform music. Such offerings encourage people to interact with the park's environment in playful and creative ways.

Bürgerpark provides spaces for unexpected and spontaneous activities, thereby allowing people to experience differences and a sense of personal control over their experiences and tactics with the space. De Certeau (1998) defines such social relations that people establish with objects in a space as 'tactics', and further suggests that

they are spontaneous and indeterminable actions that produce new relations between space and users. The park also enables creative possibilities such as art, and graffiti, thereby showing that the space can be used for different functions, as well as informal uses that may encourage chance encounters, social mixing, exploration of the unfamiliar, and risk-taking (Stevens, 2007). In summary, the park's design and its offerings support diverse and playful uses of the space therein, and through so doing promote , social interaction, creativity, and individual expression.

Public spaces located near commercial destinations, such as restaurants, churches, and hair salons, have been found to increase the diversity of activities and social interactions that occur within the same (Nathan et al., 2012). In the Driescher Hof neighbourhood, the public space in front of the cafe and restaurant provides an alternative and interactive type of space use, enabling temporary playing and meeting places for adults and kids. This small space creates the perception of a neighbourhood centre in which residents gather together through their diverse uses of the space. Moreover, different activity repetitions in a place may create new memories of space perceptions and increase the frequency of various uses (Caillois, 1961). It follows, that public spaces that encourage diverse and playful activities and social interaction contribute to the vitality and liveliness of neighbourhoods.

8. Discussion: Environmental characteristics of play areas: comparing the centre with the periphery

Table 1 compares the public space of the central and peripheral areas of Aachen with regards to the features of spaces which give opportunities for play activities . The environment features that provide opportunities for playing activities include attractiveness, safety, security, mobility, opportunities for socializing, and space qualities (Mahdjoubi and Spencer, 2015).

Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark were observed to have more potential with regards to making people feel; both places and people are diverse, and they allow for different encounters. In contrast, the Drescher Hof neighbourhood permits children's activities by observation of their parents, and parents' on-site supervision is associated with their perceptions of neighbourhood safety (Mahdjoubi, Spencer, 2015). Burghardt identifies play areas such as a 'relaxed field' where more survival and security needs have been met and had physical and social affordances (Burghardt, 2005).

According to Lester and Russell (2010), people need to feel that they have a right to public space. The playgrounds, both around the castle in Frankenberger Park and the Burgerpark, are not distinguished from other areas by the use of different materials or give the impression of just being for children's use. They do not give the impression of being only for persons of a set age and are located next to informal spaces. There are some, however, who in contrast argue that there are benefits from the separation of children's play area from adults (Tranter, 2011).

Finally, in terms of the different potential attributes of play space, Frankenberger Park and Burgerpark have more options than the Driescher Hof neighbourhood. The qualities of play provision include flexibility of physical elements which may enhance play experiences. These elements include different natural elements such as sensory experiences for sight, touch, and smell; as noted by Coffin and Williams (1989).

TABLE: ASPECTS OF THE PUBLIC SPACE WHICH ENABLE AND ENCOURAGE TO PLAY		
Research Areas **Features of Places**	**Driescher Hof Neighborhood; Peripheral area**	**Frankenberger Park and Bürgerpark**
Attractive Environment	Cleanliness Green space Trees/Plants	Cleanliness Green space Trees/Plants Lack of Noise Well maintained Welcoming and relaxing
Opportunities for socialising	Far from City Centre Only Residents Food/Drink (very limited) Suitable for children play Neighbourliness	Close to city Centre Multiplicity Diversity (Age, ethnicity) Benches/Seating Food and Drink(good enough) Events and Activities Suitable for Adults to chat Suitable for children play Neighbourliness
Involvement in design	Playground spaces	Playground spaces Informal design (drawing ground, graffiti walls) Informal uses (seating on the stairs, eating in the playground)
Things to watch	Car parks Residental Area	View Other People Castle Railway track
Security	Feeling safe from attack/Robbery/assault	Feeling safe from attack/Robbery/assault Street lighting Visible police/staff presence
Safety and Comfort	Good paths (smooth, flat, wellmaintained) Safety from traffic (for only park area) Little air pollution	Good paths (smooth, flat, wellmaintained) Safety from traffic Nearby toilets (open, informal design) Cafe /food vending Little air pollution
Mobility	Proximity to home Existence and quality of footpaths Walkable	Ease of access to facilities/ amenities and open space Proximity to home Existence and quality of footpaths Walkable
Activities	Sitting, chatting, cycling, eating ice-cream, playing in the playground, pushing a pram	Sitting on the stairs, Sitting on the grass, chatting, playing music, Dancing, meeting, eating food, drinking, painting the walls, painting the floors, Playing football, basketball, doing extreme sports

Table 1: Comparison of the features of public spaces in the centre and the periphery of xxxx Source: Mahdjoubi, Spencer, (2015); Spencer, Williams, Mahdjoubi, and Sara, (2013).

9. Conclusion

In recent years, the topic of public open spaces has gained significant attention due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The primary aim of this study was to analyse public space through the lens of play theory so as to understand the kind of space that fosters diverse actions and relationships between users and spaces. While play theory was initially considered only for children, it has now been expanded to include adults. However, studies involving adults are limited to designing playgrounds for them. Thus, this study aimed to view an entire

city as a playground and to explore possibilities beyond playground design. In the city of Aachen, selecting areas in both the centre and periphery was a useful tool by which to understand the playfulness of public open spaces.

With Aachen, the centre of the city is generally more conducive to spontaneous and creative actions than the periphery, owing to the former's environmental qualities, its social life, and perceptions of spaces. Spaces such as restaurants, cafes, museums, schools, and cultural venues provide comfort zones for the active use of public spaces. Compared to public open spaces in the periphery, the city's central parks offer new activities and actions that enable people to undertake riskier activities. Perceptions of playful actions expand with previous experiences and informal productions such as graffiti, seating stairs, and using spaces in different ways. While issues of security and comfort in parks located in the city's peripheral areas are better, the density of people, the diversity of actions, and the nature and number of informal productions make the central parks more playful as a consequence of the residential areas' proximity to them.

Play is not limited to swings and roundabouts for children (Children's Play Council, 2001) or games such as bowling, card playing, or chess for older people (Mahdjoubi and Spencer, 2015). When comparing central and periphery areas, we are not only comparing playgrounds but also public open spaces with diverse actions and various age scales. Identifying playful spaces provides a critique of instrumentally rational perceptions of public space design, and also opens up new niches for urban design principles which can address new needs and forms of social life (Stevens, 2007).

Acknowledgment

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ROOM FOR UNCERTAINTY IN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

HOW CONTINUOUS CERTAINIFICATION BY DECISION MAKERS RESULTS IN MORE UNCERTAINTY

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Abstract

An increasingly dynamic environment and engaged society necessitates decision makers in infrastructure planning to adopt adaptive and participative planning approaches and give room to uncertainty in planning and decision making. In planning, individual actors belonging to a group of like-minded actors may attempt to influence decision-making about planning proposals. They do so by using a mix of instruments such as research, participation, agreements, and so on. To gain greater insight into the processes of interactions between decision makers and other relevant actors in planning, the planning of three infrastructure cases – a road upgrade, an airport runway redevelopment, and a river bypass in the Netherlands – was studied in-depth each covering a period of 20 years. Interestingly, a couple of overarching patterns regarding dealing with uncertainty in planning and decision-making appeared from the study. Decision makers continuously strive for 'certainification', and do so by deploying authority-based instruments. Indeed, they keep doing so, even if the the result obtained is opposite of that which was desired. Certainification i.e., decision makers striving for reducing uncertainties, often results in a reaction of 'decertainification' from opponents. It seems as if decision makers strengthen the latter's own opposition. And when decision makers actually do give room for uncertainties through adopting an adaptive approach, other actors often demand less uncertainty; driving decision makers back to their thirst for certainification. To overcome this continuous loop, an arena and institutional setting should be created in which actors from different advocacy coalitions are involved in open dialogue to better balance the perceived uncertainties of all stakeholders.

Keywords

infrastructure planning, decision making, advocacy coalition, policy belief, certainification, participation , uncertainty

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Dealing with uncertainty: a struggle for decision makers

Decision makers in infrastructure planning have to deal with an increasingly dynamic environment and engaged society, which necessitates them to adopt adaptive, collaborative, and participative planning approaches such as combined infrastructure and (organic) area development (De Roo et al., 2020). Interacting with multiple stakeholders and taking unforeseen developments into account, however, implies giving room to uncertainty in planning and decision making. Within current infrastructure planning, decision makers seem to struggle to give both room to uncertainty and keep the decision-making process manageable. In practice, decision makers seem to strive to reduce uncertainties – 'certainification' (Van Asselt et al., 2007; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). However, this focus on certainification seems at odds with the more adaptive and participative approaches needed in current planning practices (Hajer et al., 2010; Albrechts, 2012).

This paper is based on a recent study (Veenma, 2021) and aims to provide a better understanding of how decision makers deal in practice with uncertainty in their interactions with other actors. The term 'decision makers' refers to elected administrators as well as policy officers who support those elected administrators in the preparation and implementation of policies. This paper focuses specifically on area-orientated infrastructure planning – i.e., infrastructure projects which have been explicitly designed to improve the quality of a local area (Arts et al., 2016; Heeres et al., 2012). By studying the in-practice planning and decision-making process in area-orientated infrastructure projects over a long period, i.e. 20 years, insight is gained into the processes that take place with regard to the interactions between relevant actors in decision making. Based on this, the research provides recommendations on how to achieve a better embedding of adaptive and participative planning approaches – and thus more 'room' for uncertainty – in planning practice.

Influencing decision making by dragging the policy problem

In our study, uncertainty is about the extent to which actors involved in a decision-making process *perceive* uncertainties. Following Friend and Hickling (2005), three forms of uncertainty are distinguished – cognitive, normative, and strategic uncertainty, i.e.: uncertainties about the working environment; uncertainties about guiding values; and uncertainties about related decisions. For practical reasons, we assumed in the study that individual actors belonged to a group of like-minded actors, *advocacy coalitions* (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993), and that these coalitions attempt to influence decision-making based on their *policy beliefs* – i.e., on their shared values, causal assumptions, and problem perceptions, (Howlett et al., 2009; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). The advocacy coalitions can influence decision-making: by reducing uncertainties (*certainification*); by increasing uncertainties (*decertainification*); or by accepting uncertainties. These coalitions may use one or more instruments available (their *policy mix*, Howlett et al., 2009) including, for instance: 'substantive instruments' (e.g., research); or 'procedural instruments' (e.g., participation); or, after Howlett (2018), 'authority-based instruments' (e.g., political-administrative agreements) and 'organizational instruments' (e.g., area development). In this study, it was assumed that the policy style and policy mix of an advocacy coalition are determined by the policy beliefs and *resources* (available instruments) of that advocacy coalition. After Howlett et al.'s (2009) concept of 'policy regime' and Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's (1993) 'Advocacy Coalition Framework', the combined total of policy beliefs, resources, policy mixes and policy styles of all advocacy coalitions in a policy area is called the *policy regime* as shown in the top part of Figure 1.

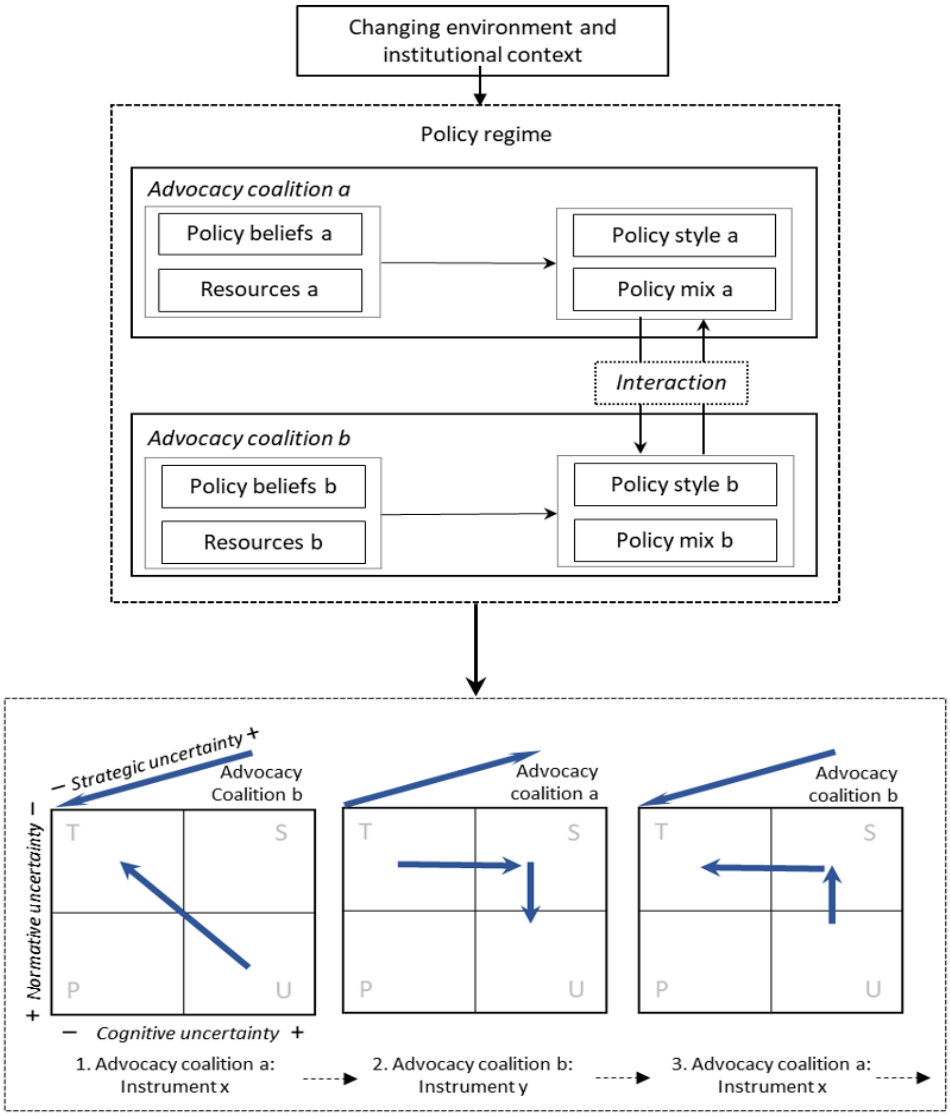

Figure 1: The theoretical perspective and the dynamics of the decision-making process using an example with two advocacy coalitions. (T, S, P and U respectively represent a technical, scientific, political and untamed policy problem)

To analyse the dynamics in the decision-making process, a 2x2-matrix of four types of policy problems was used. In line with Klijn and Koppenjan (2016) and Veenman and Leroy (2016), cognitive and normative (un)certainty were both used as dimensions (axes). To also place strategic uncertainty, a third dimension to the matrix was added. Actors (and their advocacy coalitions) can present their perspective on a policy issue as technical (T), scientific (S), political (P) or untamed (U) by using specific instruments and thereby (try to) steer the issue away from the perspective of another actor (or advocacy coalition) as shown in the lower part of Figure 1 (Turnhout et al., 2008). In Figure 1, the upper part of the figure thus shows the theoretical perspective and the lower part shows the dynamics of the decision making process through an example.

Our frame of analysis was based on a combination of the above-mentioned theories (see Figure 1, upper part). During the (often) lengthy decision-making processes that are involved in infrastructure planning, the environment will often change. This may involve *external developments*, such as an economic recession, or a changing *institutional context*, such as changing policy rules or an altered political environment . Such changing environments may lead to different approaches being used by the actors and their advocacy coalitions when it comes to dealing with issues of uncertainty. The actual dealing with uncertainty is materialized through the employment of instruments – i.e., the policy mix. The type of instruments that advocacy coalitions employ depends on their policy style. Both the policy style and the policy mix of an advocacy coalition are determined by their policy

beliefs and available instruments. Through the ways in which they deploy their policy mix, advocacy coalitions can increase, decrease, or accept perceived uncertainties by presenting the policy issue at hand as technical, scientific, political or untamed. In this way an advocacy coalition can move or 'drag' a policy issue within the 2x2 matrix (see for an example the lower part of Figure 1) and thus influence decision making based on their perceived uncertainty.

A multi-case research approach

To gain insight into the process of interactions between relevant actors and how they deal with uncertainty in decision making in infrastructure planning, the planning process of three cases was studied in-depth. According to Flyvbjerg (2001), the essence of social scientific research is to consider practice within the context in which it takes place. To this end, different perspectives – 'narratives' – on practice must be collected with an open mind through interaction and dialogue with those involved. This has been achieved in this study through the undertaking of a large number of stakeholder interviews (130) and validating focus group discussions. The interviews and discussions were complemented by in-depth analysis of reports and recordings, policy documents, research reports and newspaper articles related to the cases.

To enable the generalization of research findings based on a limited number of cases, Flyvbjerg (2001, p. 77) recommends the study of 'critical cases'. Based on his critical criteria 'information-oriented selection' and 'maximum variation cases' (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 78-79), three cases in the province of Overijssel in the Netherlands were selected because they all involve infrastructure planning, though from different perspectives (road, airport runway and river). The three cases evidence unique decision-making information over a period of 20 years and offer, therefore, the possibility to study the evolution of the planning and decision-making process over a long time and across different infrastructures. The three selected cases are (see Figure 2):

1. The upgrade of the provincial road N340 between Zwolle and Ommen. In 1998, the Provincial Council of Overijssel decided that the provincial road between Zwolle and Ommen in the region Vechtdal should be upgraded to a 100 km/h road as part of the national Sustainable Safety program ('Duurzaam Veilig'). Right from the beginning there was much debate about the desirability of this upgrade, especially when variants with four lanes and new routes came into play. Later on, the upgrade of the N340 was presented as part of the Vechtdal Connection ('Vechtdalverbinding'), which also includes public transport and cycle paths. In 2018 the actual realization of the upgrade of the N340 was started. The total investment in the upgrade of the N340 was around 200 million euro.

2. The redevelopment of an airport runway and site as part of the area development Airport Twente. When the Dutch Ministry of Defence announced the departure of its military airbase in the region of Twente in 2003, decision makers from the province of Overijssel and the municipality of Enschede wanted to repurpose the site as a civil airport. There has been much debate about the desirability and feasibility of the restart. The redevelopment initially focused on civil aviation but later shifted to realising a high-tech business park called 'Technology Base Twente'. Total investment in the area development Airport Twente has been around 100 million euro.

3. The bypass of the river IJssel near Kampen. In 1996 the Dutch government decided that rivers in the Netherlands should be given more space, resulting in the Room for the River program ('Ruimte voor de Rivier'). A bypass near Kampen was one of the options to improve water safety in the IJsseldelta as part of the national Room for the River program, as well as part of the area development of IJsseldelta-South, which also included nature development and housing. There has been much debate about the necessity of the bypass for the water safety of the IJsseldelta and about how plans could be combined with nature development and housing. The total investment ran to around 400 million euro.

To analyse the cases, we followed the frame of analysis presented in the previous section. The decision-making process for the three area-orientated infrastructure projects was studied over a protracted period of 20 years, between 2000 and 2020. To analyse the interactions between decision makers and other actors in their dealings

with uncertainty, the decision-making process was 'split' into a number of phases and steps according to the 'rounds model' presented by Teisman, Klijn and Koppenjan (Teisman, 2000; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Each phase marked a move in dealing with the policy issue (major decision) due to a change in the environment or an institutional change. For each step we studied how actors (and their advocacy coalition) attempted to increase, decrease or accept perceived uncertainties using a policy mix. By comparing the results of the three cases overall patterns in dealing with uncertainty could be discerned.

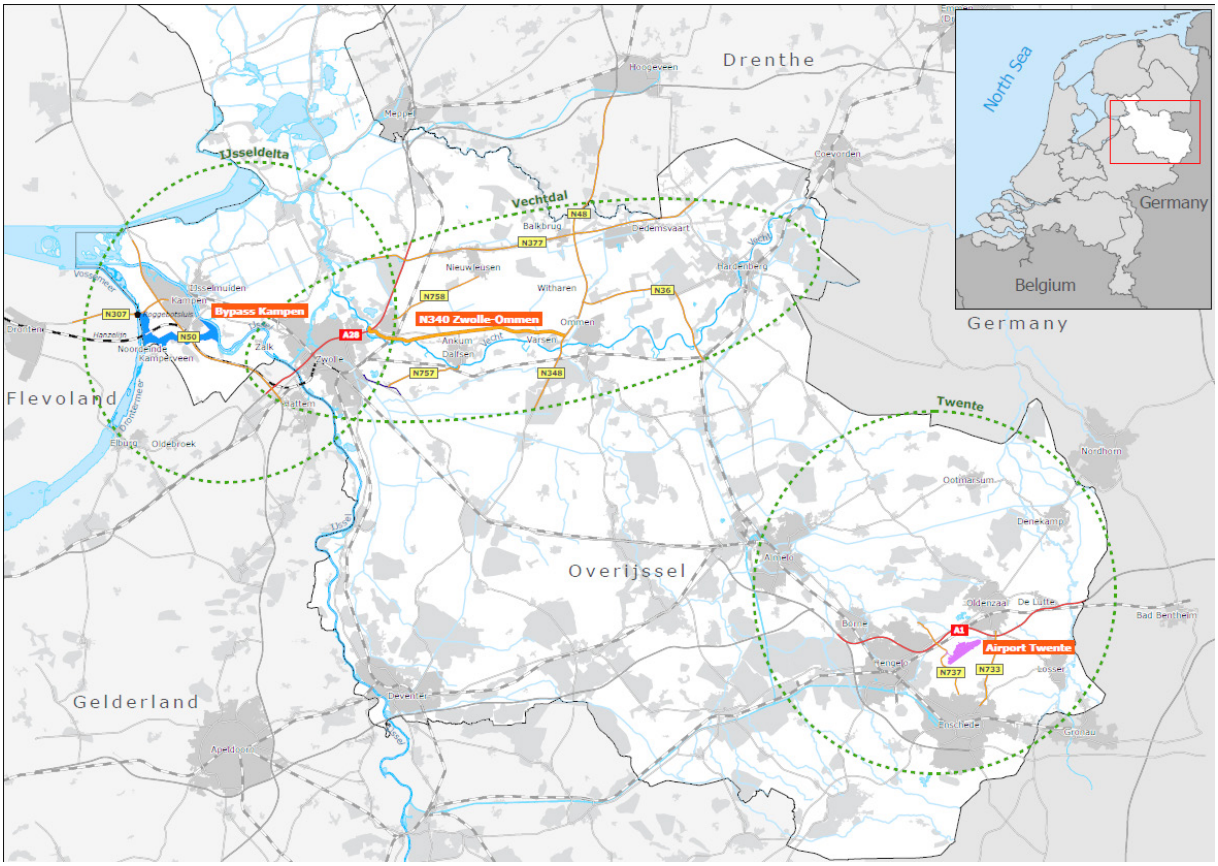

Figure 2 Overview map of the cases Bypass Kampen, N340 Zwolle-Ommen and Airport Twente

Cross-case patterns in dealing with uncertainty

In the decision-making processes of all cases studied, three distinctive advocacy coalitions were distinguished: an 'economic' advocacy coalition with decision makers who focused on economy and employment; a 'green' advocacy coalition of actors opposed to the proposed plans because of their environmental impact ('opponents'); and an 'ambivalent' advocacy coalition of actors seeking a balance between economy and environment. In all cases, no agreement between these advocacy coalitions about the implementation of the infrastructure plans existed. As such, they all formed a *contested community* (Howlett et al., 2009). In this contested community actors and their advocacy coalitions attempted to steer the decision-making process in the direction they wanted by using a dedicated mix of instruments. The study reveals that there were four main patterns which were present in all three cases in the interaction between decision makers and other actors (and their advocacy coalitions), despite their differences in terms of content and context.

1. Certainification leads to decertainification

Decision makers continuously strived for certainification during the (protracted) decision-making process, and did so in particular by deploying authority-based, substantive instruments, such as institutionalized research. By so doing actors in the economic advocacy coalition especially intended to influence (public) representatives

in the ambivalent advocacy coalition to support their initial decision. From our review of literature, however, it was expected that decision makers would also use process instruments, such as participation (see e.g. Howlett, 2018), but in practice that was hardly ever the case. As a reaction to the policy mix used by decision makers, actors in the green advocacy coalition ('opponents') attempted to increase the uncertainties that decision makers had reduced, in order to allow (their) alternatives to emerge. From this it can be seen that the action of certainification by decision makers resulted in a reaction of decertainification. The more the decision makers tried to reduce uncertainties; the more the opponents tried to increase those uncertainties again. This was true in all three cases. Various scholars have observed similar action-reaction mechanisms (see, for example, Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

Parallel to the decision makers, the green coalition also focused on public representatives in the ambivalent advocacy coalition for support. In the studied cases both the economic and green advocacy coalitions competed for the favour of the ambivalent coalition to strengthen their respective positions.

Interestingly, in this process of action and reaction, opponents tended to use the same instruments as decision makers to increase uncertainties. In their reactions, they respectively 'mirrored' the policy mixes. This 'mirroring' of instruments occurred for all types of instruments, including area development (see point 2 below) and lobbying. In each case, decision makers did not seem to be aware of the consequences of this. For example, the choice to use further research to reduce uncertainties tended to lead to more severe reactions about figures and to further polarization (a 'report war', Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016).

2. Longer and problematic decision-making as a consequence of a boomerang effect

Our study shows that decision makers in their pursuit of certainification sometimes achieved the opposite – i.e., uncertainty increased: a 'boomerang effect'. For example, when decision makers initially included a restricted number of alternatives in the decision-making process (such as only 100km/h-variants for the provincial road N340), the public representatives or the Netherlands' Commission for Environmental Assessment decided that *the scope was narrowed too soon*. Through this, a widening in the scope was forced, however, the arena of supporters and opponents of alternatives had already been set. As a result, uncertainty increased, the decision-making process took extra time, and it also became more problematic.

In using research as an instrument to reduce uncertainty (see point 1 above), decision makers were also confronted with a boomerang effect. As stated in point 1, polarization was reinforced by the fact that more research led to the generation of more opposing research and to further discussions about data. In this way, makers failed to take sufficient account of the *interrelatedness that exists between the different kinds of uncertainty*. For example in the case of the airport Twente, decision makers tried to reduce cognitive uncertainty by focussing their research on the economic viability of an airport in Twente, underestimating the strong dependence with the strategic uncertainty about the willingness of market parties to settle on the airport which was essential for economic viability of the airport.

Not only the interrelatedness between different kinds of uncertainty, but also the *interrelatedness between plan components* created a boomerang effect. In all three cases, decision makers tried to increase support for their infrastructure plans – and thus to reduce uncertainties – by means of combining the infrastructure plans with area development. As Woltjer (2002) argued, they used area development as a 'public support machine'. However, the addition of area development considerations increased the complexity of the decision-making process, and thus also increased uncertainty. For example, in the area development IJsseldelta-South opponents tried to prevent the bypass from becoming navigable by using nature regulations to prevent a planned housing development.

3. Decision makers keep striving for certainification

When decision makers encountered difficulties with the use of authority-based instruments in their attempts to reduce uncertainty (see points 1 and 2), they started to deploy more 'open' instruments, in particular organization-based instruments such as participation, area development, and more adaptive approaches. By deploying these 'open' instruments it appeared that more room for uncertainty was created. However, in practice, decision makers seemed to use these instruments to reduce uncertainties. For example, when stakeholders were allowed to have their say through participation in the cases, this always occurred within an environment that had strict conditions. With regard to IJsseldelta-South, participants were allowed to contribute about *variants to* the location of the bypass, but they were not allowed to introduce their own (new) *alternatives* (such as higher dikes). Conditions were set to control the participation process and to prevent further uncertainties arising. It seemed that participation was more focused on 'reaching consensus' instead of 'mapping out diversity' (Van Asselt & Rijkens-Klomp, 2002).

Similarly, the concept of 'area development' was not really used for an open planning process involving all relevant stakeholders, but instead added to the infrastructure plans as a means by which to reach a package deal in the political arena (see point 2 above). As a result, the use of area development as an instrument led to an 'area-oriented infrastructure plan' instead of an '(integrated) area development' (Leendertse, 2020). This made the decision-making process in all three cases more difficult because of the existence of disappointed stakeholders and public representatives.

Even when decision makers explicitly incorporated uncertainties into their plans through adaptive approaches, this appeared more to be a means to just start the realization of (parts) the plan and less by the underlying philosophy of adaptive planning. As an example, decision makers presented the bypass near Kampen as a 'robust, no-regret measure' in order to *directly* realize the bypass as part of the area development IJsseldelta-South.

4. Certainification in reaction to an adaptive approach by decision makers

Interestingly, when decision makers actually gave room for uncertainties through an adaptive approach, *other* actors demanded more clarity and, as a result, less uncertainty. Using adaptive approaches, decision makers created leeway to respond to uncertain developments. Other actors were not always content with that leeway and preferred to have more clarity on the plan. An example was the 'organic' area development of Technology Base Twente (an adaptive approach). Local residents wanted more clarity in advance about the type of companies that would be attracted because of the consequences (such as noise pollution) that some companies might bring, whilst surrounding municipalities wanted more clarity in advance because of the possibility of potential competition with their own business parks.

These findings are in line with Van der Pas et al. (2012), who stated, that "adaptive policy is less transparent, vaguer, and harder to explain to all stakeholders" (p. 321). The reaction of other actors to the use of adaptive approaches often resulted in decision makers once again opting for certainification (see also points 1 and 3 above).

Discussion: finding a balance in perceived uncertainties of all stakeholders

In all three cases decision makers strived – and kept striving – for certainification throughout the decision-making process of the individual infrastructure projects, despite the attempts of others (and especially the green coalition), to increase uncertainty by rephrasing the policy issue or dragging it away from the decision makers' frame. The persistent preference of the decision makers to use authority-based instruments (a consistent policy mix), such as (institutionalized) research and political-administrative agreements was remarkable. Indeed, despite current infrastructure planning being discussed in terms of participative and communicative planning approaches (De Roo et al., 2020), the practice in infrastructure planning encountered in the cases herein analysed strongly resembled a more traditional rational planning approach with an underlying technical planning paradigm (De Roo et al., 2020).

We studied the decision and planning process over a long-protracted period in three different (infrastructure) cases. The environment in which decision makers operated changed during the decision-making processes, and this forced them to adapt their planning approaches. This became clear in the different rounds of the decision-making processes in all three cases. Although decision makers adapted to changing environments – for example by using more 'open' instruments such as participation – they only did so gradually and mostly when they were forced to do so or to get round an impasse. Even when there appeared to be more room for uncertainty in the processes through the use of more 'open' instruments, decision makers still opted for control and certainification. In practice, using more 'open' instruments meant that the decision makers *added* elements of the communicative planning paradigm and the complexity planning paradigm to the technical planning paradigm. However, they did not really shift to a collaborative or complexity paradigm. For instance, when decision makers choose stakeholder participation, there was still a predominant role for research in the participation process, and participation was only allowed within a framework of strict conditions.

In all three cases we distinguished three main advocacy coalitions, economic, green, and ambivalent. Especially interesting was the interaction between the economic and green advocacy coalitions. In their striving for continuous certainification, decision makers awoke a reaction of decertainification by the green coalition. Thus certainification created decertainification by opponents. However, in the studied cases, the decision makers seemed not to be aware of the action-reaction phenomenon and continued to strive for certainification. Another explanation for this may be their strong beliefs in the strength of authority-based instruments. Remarkably, most opponents increased uncertainty by mirroring their use of instruments on those of the decision makers. The same instruments were used differently by both decision makers and opponents. This was particularly evident when research was used, and prompted discussions on data or a 'war of reports'. In all three cases the pursuit of certainification by decision makers led to polarization, and the creation of a more cumbersome and protracted decision-making process. A possible explanation for the ongoing and persistent attempts of decision makers to pursue certainification, even when it led to a more problematic decision-making process, is that the decision makers felt able and confident that they could reduce uncertainties, and underestimated the ability of opponents to increase those uncertainties once again.

Conclusion

To conclude, we argue that decision makers need to get out of their uncertainty reduction reflex, because not doing so will cause a reaction by opponents which may increase uncertainties and result in more problematic planning and decision-making processes. Decision makers should give more room to uncertainty by embedding adaptive and participative approaches in their planning practices. The challenge is to create an arena and institutional setting in which actors from different advocacy coalitions are involved in open dialogue, that also possesses enough leeway to bring in a range of points of view and ideas. For this to be achieved, decision makers should not too rapidly reduce the leeway given to stakeholders – and therefore uncertainties – in the planning process. They need to seek a balance between certainty and uncertainty in stakeholder participation. This balance should be a result of that participation, not a condition placed in advance. This means that decision makers should be open to alternatives, ideas and plans of other actors, and should not 'funnel' too quickly towards only their own alternatives. Given the differing views of stakeholders and different perspectives on uncertainty about (for example) future developments (such as economic growth or political-social priorities), participation should include a process of joint fact finding. A stronger 'fact base' may result in enhanced trust and support, and may also help to overcome the observed certainification-decertainification loop. Only then can a better balance between the perceived uncertainties of all stakeholders be achieved.

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HEALTHY URBAN FOOD. THE NEXUS BETWEEN PUBLIC HEALTH, FOOD SYSTEMS, AND CITY-REGION GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Food is a territorial system that is closely linked to public health, social equity, and land policies. Eating habits are at the root of both incidence of cardiovascular disease and the phenomenon of malnutrition. Food often entails social inequity and is acquiring, directly and indirectly, ever greater relevance in the tools of territorial governance. The Cities2030 project is being developed and financed by the European Horizon 2020 programme. The methodology agreed upon by the partners envisages the involvement of all interest groups and actors within the food system arena through the installation of urban Policy and Living Labs. The University Iuav of Venice is involved in the development of two labs in the Veneto region: one in the city of Vicenza, the other in the Venice lagoon. Working in these two labs will make it possible to reflect on two food systems which are very different even though they are geographically close.

Keywords

city-region food systems, local development, public policies, Venice lagoon, living lab

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1. Introduction

Food is a complex territorial system, the result of socio-economic practices and territorial policies that are aimed at different sectors and stages of supply chains. In addition to investing in a social and environmental dimension, the food system unfolds in places, spaces and landscapes. Through so doing it adapts to existing contexts whilst also building and transforming territories (Manganelli, De Marchi, 2019). Food forces us, using multi-level approaches, to think about pressing urban issues, such as public health, social equity, and ongoing transition processes in territories. Food habits are at the root of opposing effects, from incidences of cardiovascular disease (especially frequent in Western contexts, and more generally within social spheres characterised by economic well-being) to the phenomenon of malnutrition (which still persist in the world's most fragile social groups). The food system also has indirect impacts on people's health along entire supply chains: air, water, and soil pollution, as well as being directly responsible for the production of considerable amounts of waste which can be difficult to dispose of. In addition, food and its value chains often lead to social inequalities. This manifests itself in terms of food injustices which may result from difficult issues pertaining to accessibility to healthy and fresh food, and often goes hand in hand with inadequate or limited education about nutrition and associated aspects. Inequality also occurs with regards to the power disparities that exist between actors who interface within the different stages of supply chains such as the power that large-scale distribution actors can exert on producers, with the latter crushed by a market that offers end consumers prices that cannot, and do not, cover production costs at origin. Food can also be seen to intersect with the processes of transition that affect territories. This is why it is acquiring, directly and indirectly, ever-increasing relevance in the tools of territorial governance: programmes for reorienting agricultural production models, urban food policies, as well as objectives relating to land consumption and waste management are growing in importance in the urban agendas of cities.

The food system is made up of a set of practices and processes that are capable of revealing unprecedented geographies of places and flows. These, in turn, are useful for deciphering the nature of territory, whose logics we are increasingly struggling to understand. Food is therefore a possible lens through which to look at the processes of transition presently underway, a transcalar tool that may manage to hold together everyday practices with global processes, as well as local micro-geographies and international macro-geographies. Observing territories through the lens of food allows us to detect the multiple intersections of flows and uses that characterise each specific space and, by forcing us to observe human and non-human, brings us closer to understand the numerous contradictions that the juxtaposition of these two dimensions – human and non-human – implies.

2. Cities2030. Co-creating resilient and sustainable food systems towards FOOD2030.

The considerations above explain why the European Union (EU) has recognised food-related issues as urgent urban matters and, in addition to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), has in recent years promoted further programmes to make food systems more compatible with the environment, more resilient to climate change, and more equitable in terms of the relationships that exist between actors and between territories.

The new CAP 2023-2027 supports, even more strongly than the previous seven-year period, a sustainable future for Europe's primary producers. Rural areas and agriculture are central not only in this, but also in other important European policies. As part of the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork strategy aims to accelerate the continent's transition to a sustainable food system that should have a neutral or positive environmental impact, and that will adapt to and mitigate climate change, as well as counteracting loss of biodiversity, whilst ensuring safe, healthy and accessible food for all, and guaranteeing justice for all workers in related economic sectors.

As a complement to community policies, the EU has always promoted scientific research in all disciplinary fields and, with regard to issues related to food systems, the Food 2030 programme is currently active - a specific European policy to guide research in all fields of knowledge that deal in various ways with food systems.

It is against this background that the Cities2030[2] project is being developed, financed by the European Horizon 2020 programme for the period 2021-2024. It brings together 40 European partners involved in various ways in the food system: research bodies, local and regional administrations, companies in the sector, and professional and civic associations. The main objective of the project is to develop, in the eight cities and two regions that serve as case studies, new food policies which are capable of reorienting existing systems towards more sustainable, resilient, and equitable models. The methodology agreed upon by the partners envisages the involvement of all interest groups and actors involved in the food system arena (Figure 1), through the creation of an urban Policy Lab (PL) and a Living Lab (LL) (Almirall et al., 2012; Bergvall-Kåreborn, 2009).

	FOOD JOURNEY STAKEHOLDERS' MAP					
	PRODUCTION	**PROCESSING**	**LOGISTIC**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**CONSUMPTION**	**WASTE/REUSE**
Policy Lab (PL)	(State, Ministry of Agriculture), Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, water reclamation consortia, CAP funds management national and local agencies, professional sector associations	(State), Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, professional sector associations, chambers of commerce	(State, Ministry of Transports), Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, professional sector associations, chambers of commerce	Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, professional sector associations, chambers of commerce	(State), Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, consumer protection associations	(State), Region, City, City-Region, Metropolitan City, Municipalities, professional sector associations,
Living Lab (LL)	**PL** + producers, farmers, fishermen, agri-tourism sector workers, agronomy experts, scholars and researchers	**PL** + producers, transformation SME, agro-food enterprises, local and niche brands, big national brands, packaging sector workers, manufacture experts, scholars and researchers	**PL** + transport SME, transporters, local logistiv enterprises, national and international big players, logistic platform and inter-hub management, logistic experts, scholars and researchers	**PL** + farmers/fisherman, large-scale retail trade players, distribution sector associations, Alternative Food Networks actors, direct sellers, farmer's market, neighborhood shops, fair trade purchasing groups, distribution experts, scholars and researchers	**PL** + consumers, ho. re.ca. workers and enterprises, schools, hospitals, care services, charitable associations, fair trade purchasing groups, consumption experts, scholars and researchers	**PL** + waste management enterprises, producers, consumers, ho.re.ca. workers and enterprises, schools, hospitals, care services, charitable associations, fair trade purchasing groups, energy producers, packaging producers, waste management experts, scholars and researchers

Figure 1. The possible composition of the Policy and Living Labs and stakeholders for each stage of food supply chains. Starting from the composition of the Policy Lab, which is mainly made up of institutions, public authorities, local government bodies and trade associations, the Living Lab includes a wider range of social and professional groups that are involved in various ways in food systems. Source: De Marchi for Cities2030, 2021.

The territorial context that partners will take into account is the city-region (Blay-Palmer et al., 2018), and it is envisaged that they will take into account all of the dynamics related to food supply chains; from places of production to ones of consumption. With these premises, partners will develop local City Region Food System Labs (CRFS Labs, Figure 2) and, during the funding period, will work on the construction of new urban policies and pilot projects that are capable of activating innovation processes in relevant food systems.

[2] More information is available from the project website at https://cities2030.eu/

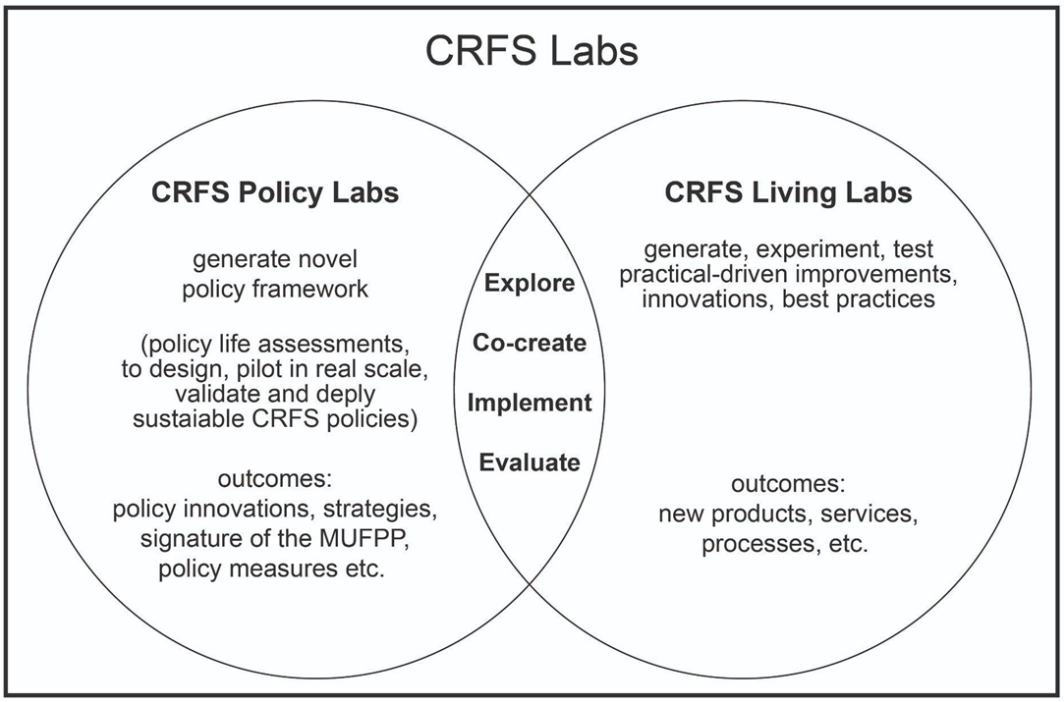

Figure 2. The aims of the City Region Food System (CRFS) Labs, as defined by the Cities2030 project partners. The CRFS Labs may consist of Policy and/or Living labs in the different case studies. They will have different compositions and objectives but will develop their work through the same methodology which will be undertaken in four phases: exploration, co-creation, implementation, and evaluation.
Source: Cities2030, 2021.

Cities2030 proposes that consumers should be at the centre of thinking about how to deal with imminent challenges: population growth, rapid urbanisation, large-scale migration, climate change, and resource scarcity. The project assumes that without action to transition to a sustainable CRFS, the environment will continue to be degraded and the world's capacity to produce quality food for all will diminish. The scale of CRFS is, therefore, a challenge that Cities2030 tries to address at both a local and regional level, to generate incremental, systemic and actionable solutions that are transferable and sustainable. To this end, Cities2030 partners aim to work towards transforming and restructuring the ways in which systems produce, transport, deliver, recycle and reuse food.

3. The Veneto case studies: Vicenza and Venice

The Italian universities, Ca' Foscari University and Università Iuav di Venezia, both based in Venice, are involved in the development of two CRFS Labs in the Veneto region: one in the city of Vicenza, the other in the Venice lagoon. Working in these two case study labs makes it possible to reflect on two food systems that are very different despite their geographical proximity: Vicenza is a city traditionally devoted to the production of fodder and meat, that also possesses a significant food processing manufacturing sector. In contrast, Venice, a city on the water, is characterised by significant consumption and production of seafood and lagoon fish, with small agricultural producers on the islands and large land reclamation plots devoted to cereal cultivation upon the immediate mainland. In Veneto there are 382 food quality labels and the revenues from agri-food products amount to €390 million per year. In Veneto, more than 25,000 hectares are dedicated to organic crops. In addition, 15 of the 40 organic aquaculture companies that exist in Italy operate in the area, while 64% of agri-food exports are made up of products that, according to a methodology that has been consolidated for several years, incorporate a high level of quality (De Marchi, 2019; Veneto Agricoltura, 2021).

3.1 The CRFS Lab in the city-region of Vicenza

In recent years, the city of Vicenza has launched numerous initiatives to promote healthy eating and a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable food supply chain. This commitment is further strengthened by the contribution of civil society organisations, trade associations, and individual businesses and entrepreneurs that all promote various actions at a local level.

The Municipality of Vicenza aims to establish a new Food Policy Office, and to sign the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP)[3] . However, this public and formal moment has not been followed by processes of building integrated urban food policies, nor real medium, or long-term, visions. To date, some city councils launch initiatives and activities in an autonomous and uncoordinated manner, mainly orientated towards supporting the most fragile members of society.

Against this backdrop, the objectives of the Vicenza CRFS Lab are twofold: to systematise and valorise what is already in place in order to bring isolated public initiatives together in a unified and coordinated vision, and to promote political, socio-cultural and economic experimentation and innovation and empower the local community with new knowledge, experiences, and opportunities. The ambitions, which will be further implemented through an open participatory process, can be summed up in the desire for the laboratory to become a laboratory for the food of the future; the main objective of which is to ensure better food for all. In light of this, Vicenza has decided to prioritise a number of themes of particular relevance:

- food, sustainability and health, with a particular attention to the female perspective
- 'growing healthy', guaranteeing permanent food education
- sustainable food supply chain in urban areas
- food and sustainability, between ethics, legality and transparency

As of 2023, the Municipality of Vicenza has already set up an organisational model based on three bodies with different but integrated functions that work together in the construction and implementation of food policy. This new organisational model is constituted by three bodies, the:

- Food Policy Office, which involves the municipal councillors and provides political direction and coordination
- Technical Working Group, which involves the experts/practitioners of the Municipality's territorial services and provides support and coordination for the activities to be implemented at a local level
- Stakeholder Working Group, which involves local stakeholders

The topics to be addressed by the Vicenza Policy Labs are aligned with the MUFPP and have been adapted to the urban context and its potential. The topics include governance, sustainable diets, social and economic justice, food production, food distribution; and food waste.

The Living Lab set up at the La Vigna International Library and called Ortobook, is a place where stakeholders cooperate to improve knowledge of the CRFS and the food ecosystem, and share thoughts and ideas in order to co-define a path towards innovation. It is also a place where initiatives take place which aim to raise consumer awareness towards more sustainable choices. It is also somewhere where experts meet and promote training events for food industry stakeholders and the general public.

The proposed areas of intervention for the Ortobook LL, as identified during the first meetings of the operational team are: raising awareness and educating consumers, developing research and knowledge sharing, stimulating creativity and innovation, and promoting CRFS initiatives. The intent of the Lab is to give life to a network of stakeholders engaged in the implementation of sustainable food policies and practices, and to enable the exchange of ideas and suggestions on how to concretely face current global sustainability challenges.

[3] Details on this project can be found on the following web page -https://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org/

3.2 The CRFS Lab of the Venice Lagoon

The City of Venice signed the MUFPP in 2015, but the formal act was not followed by a real programmatic agenda of activities for the food system. However, some sectoral initiatives and programmes have been launched since then, especially in terms of supporting young people and fragile social groups.

Until the 19th century, the Venice lagoon was an almost self-sufficient territory in terms of its food supply, except for cereals, which were produced inland (Pitteri, 2015; Keates, 2022).Today, the high demand for products from restaurants and hotels mean that many foodstuffs have to be imported. These can often be bought in bulk with considerable reductions in cost which may result in local producers struggling to stay in the market. They can offer high quality products from a unique environment; however, high production costs and the limited size of their production sites reduce their competitiveness. Moreover, lagoon production is strictly dependent on environmental conditions which are characterised by a delicate ecological balance which is presently under considerable strain because of the impacts of climate change and some particularly impactful anthropic uses (Vianello, 2021), such as mass tourism.

Iuav University proposed Venice as a case study in the project for several reasons: it is an MUFPP signatory, it is an area of unique production, it possesses high demand for fresh produce, it presents risky environmental conditions, it has potential in terms of food transition, and it is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Such territorial and urban complexity requires innovative approaches to drive change. It follows, that a deep understanding of how the food system works is needed. A first objective of the CRFS Labs is to develop a Food Atlas of the Venice Lagoon. This will be an open and interactive tool that is not only capable of collecting data on the food system, but also of highlighting innovative bottom-up experiences and promoting new local food policies; in other words, it will be a fundamental tool to collect information and promote innovation.

To achieve these goals, Iuav has involved other researchers and scholars active in the lagoon on food-related topics, and has set up a multidisciplinary group capable of offering experience and knowledge. In particular, Iuav has entered into an agreement with the Centre of Environmental Humanities of the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and with the doctoral programme in Historical, Geographical and Anthropological Studies at the University of Padua. In collaboration with these scholars, Iuav is defining a knowledge document which will be shared with local administrations to inform them about the Cities2030 project, its objectives, and its methodologies. Starting from bilateral meetings with local authorities, the multidisciplinary group intends to start working on the setting up of the CRFS Lab in Venice.

The Iuav working group is also, in collaboration with the Museo del Novecento M9 in Mestre, organising a workshop for students on the theme of food in the lagoon and an exhibition entitled 'Gusto' is going to be held. The workshop intends to investigate the complex food system of the Venice Lagoon and seeks to define places, spaces, actors and circularity of flows. The workshop foresees the active participation of actors from the food arena in two moments of discussion and confrontation that will also provide foundations of the two CRFS labs; the Policy Lab and the Living Lab. The results of the workshop will contribute to launching the work of the CRFS Labs and provide indications for the development of the Food Atlas mentioned above as an operational tool for knowledge and innovation.

The Iuav working group can count on the expertise it has gained from working on the Venice Lagoon over recent years, through a range of research and teaching projects that have explored many socio-economic and environmental issues within this complex and fragile territory. These previous experiences include:

- The EU Interreg Italy-Croatia funded project "CREW-Coordinated wetland management in Italy-Croatia cross border region" (2018-2020). This work enabled a deeper understanding of the highly articulated ways in which territory has become a support for productive and resource-generating practices and processes for society, rather than being just a place for consumption and value extraction (Cantaluppi et al., 2023).
- The "FoodSpace" Urban Design course which was held in the third year of the Master's Degree Course in Architecture (2021). During this, students undertook a critical spatial reading of a fragment of

the Veneto plain, and developed a future scenario for the food system, capable of supporting the transition of the lagoon communities towards more sustainable and resilient food systems.

- The "Circular City Studio" Design course which was held in the first year of the Master's degree course in Planning for Transition (2021), in which multidisciplinary groups of students debated the issues of circularity in the Venice lagoon, with particular attention to the food-water nexus.

The wealth of data, reports, information, and readings that this plural set of experiences has enabled us to collect will form the basis for the development of the Food Atlas of the Venice lagoon, which aspires to integrate different knowledge and experiences. This rich set of prior knowledge includes: quantitative data on the flows of people and resources in the lagoon; qualitative data linked to social innovation and institutional and non-institutional initiatives; and micro-stories of people, products and places that have to do with the food system. The experiences described above offered the opportunity to spatialise all this information, and resulted in the production of maps capable of describing unprecedented geography of the ways in which the territory, in different ways, is involved in the system of food production, marketing, consumption, waste and recycling.

4. Working perspectives

The two contexts, united by government instruments and regional regulations, will be explored in the funded period with similar methodologies, but with different objectives.

The Living Labs, constitute the platform within which to experiment innovation for the supply chain and will certainly differ in the phases and aspects to be explored: they are more concentrated on training, education and awareness-raising of the citizenship in Vicenza; and more focused on the relationship between local producers and consumers and the impact of strong tourist flows in the Venice lagoon.

The Policy Labs are intended as spaces and instruments for the construction of urban food policies and the two territories will benefit from the mutual exchange and comparison of experiments with the same aim. The common ambition is that of an ongoing collaboration to explore innovative forms of tools for integrating food as a system within local urban agendas with the overall goal being to pioneer experiences in Veneto - a region which, despite the economic importance of food-related sectors (in particular production, processing, export and tourism) has never equipped itself with specific governance tools for the agrifood system. A further outcome of the Cities2030 project, therefore, could be to identify some guidelines for a regional-scale coordination of new urban food policies.

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