URBAN ISSUES



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PREFACE

We: Mirte, Amber, Veronica, Karima, Mikael and Noor recently spent a full year researching an urban issue. To see patterns beyond a single context, our research was comparative and conducted in two different countries. At first sight, that's about as far as the resemblances between our studies go. From co-housing to anti-speeding tools, from participative planning to digital nomads and from historic architectural landscapes to solo-living women, our studies span the gamut of urban issues.

But then we realised that our studies do tell a similar story. They show how knowledge is embedded in space, and challenge us to take note of the geographies around us. Urban issues reflect social tensions and can thereby teach us about alternatives, of looking at the world, of shaping the world, of being and becoming. And, might we just be in need of some alternatives in our current world order?

Understandably, no one has time to read our extensive research reports. We therefore decided to rewrite our studies as six more accessible essays. We hope they inspire you to look around you and to tell new stories, via whichever medium suits you.

Conducting our research and writing these essays would not have been possible without the input of the people at our research sites and the help of our teachers from the master's degree in Urban Studies at the University of Amsterdam. We also thank AJSS for giving us the opportunity to play around with different ways of presenting our research.

Enjoy the read and contact us if you have any questions. We can assure you that we're ALWAYS happy to talk about our research.

VOORWOORD

Onlangs onderzochten wij: Mirte, Amber, Veronica, Karima, Mikael en Noor, een jaar lang een stedelijk vraagstuk. Onze studies waren vergelijkend, tussen twee steden. Op het eerste gezicht is dat ook de enige overeenkomst. Van co-housing tot anti-speeding tools, van participatief plannen tot digital nomads, van historische architectuur tot alleenwonende vrouwen, onze onderzoeken reflecteren hoeveel verschillende stedelijke vraagstukken er bestaan.

Maar toen realiseerden we ons dat er een grote gemene deler is tussen onze onderzoeken. De studies laten zien hoe kennis is ingebed in ruimte en dagen ons uit om nog eens goed na te denken over de wereld om ons heen. Stedelijke vraagstukken weerspiegelen maatschappelijke spanningen. Ze kunnen ons daardoor ook leren over alternatieven: om naar de wereld kijken, de wereld vorm te geven, om te zijn en worden wie we willen.

En, is de wereld niet gebaat bij een paar alternatieven?
We begrijpen dat niemand tijd heeft om onze uitgebreide onderzoeksrapporten te lezen. Daarom besloten we onze studies te herschrijven tot zes essays. We hopen dat ze je inspireren om om je heen te kijken en om nieuwe verhalen te vertellen, via een medium dat bij je past.

Het uitvoeren van ons onderzoek en het schrijven van deze essays zou niet mogelijk zijn geweest zonder de input van de mensen op onze onderzoekslocaties en de hulp van onze docenten van de master Urban Studies aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Ook bedanken we AJSS voor de mogelijkheid om dit zine te maken.

Veel leesplezier en neem contact met ons op als je vragen hebt. We kunnen je verzekeren dat we het ALTIJD leuk vinden om over ons onderzoek te praten.

HUISHOUD ZORGEN VAN EEN ALLEEN WONENDE VROUW IN BRUSSEL

Noor Vet

INTRODUCTIE

In november 2022 ga ik op bezoek bij Caroline. Caroline bewoont een oude fabriek in het centrum van Brussel. Ze heeft beschikking tot een kleine studio met keukentje en deelt een badkamer met verschillende huisgenoten. De studio heeft geen centrale verwarming, maar wel een houtkacheltje. Als ik binnenkom pookt ze het vuur nog een beetje verder op.

Buiten is het koud en de ramen zijn beslagen. Caroline zet thee. Ze vindt het leuk dat ik langskom om haar te interviewen. Ik ben geïnteresseerd in haar huisvestingspad: haar biografie aan de hand van de plekken die ze heeft bewoond. Dat zijn er veel. Caroline heeft sinds haar studententijd een avontuurlijk leven geleid. Van Brussel tot New York, van een typische vrije sector huurwoning zonder karakter (aldus Caroline) tot kraakpanden, Caroline heeft er gewoond.

En nu? Nu is ze eind dertig. Nu beginnen vrienden haar te vragen wanneer ze eindelijk eens met iemand gaat samenwonen en kinderen krijgt. Nu dringt de bank aan op het vinden van een partner, voordat ze een hypotheek aanvraagt. Volgens de maatschappij loopt Carolines biologische klok nu wel echt af.

Caroline is daarom begonnen met schilderen. De fabriek waarin ze woont heeft ook een verdieping met kunstenaarsateliers, waar ze haar eigen hoekje heeft ingericht. Schilderen kan haar in de toekomst wellicht een beetje financiële zekerheid bieden. Het is fysiek minder zwaar dan werken in de theaterproductie, wat ze tot nu toe veel heeft gedaan. Belangrijk, want ze rekent niet op veel pensioen, al helemaal niet omdat ze nog niet heeft kunnen investeren in een koopwoning. En zoals ze zegt, schilderen is ook “een goed ding om te doen, als oude vrouw alleen met je katten".

DE SPINSTER

De spinster trope die Caroline gekscherend aanhaalt, kent een geschiedenis. Hoewel vrouwen al sinds mensenheugenis alleenwonen, werden ze lange tijd buiten de maatschappij geplaatst. In veel steden in Europa bestaan sinds de middeleeuwen bijvoorbeeld hofjes waar alleenwonende vrouwen samenwonen, maar wel enkel in ruil voor een verklaring van vroomheid. Tijdens de industriële revolutie werden vrouwelijke arbeiders die alleen naar de stad kwamen, opgevangen in pensions met strenge leefregels. Zo waren ze, was het idee, buiten werktijd beschermd tegen de grote, boze buitenwereld.

Tegenwoordig kijken de meeste mensen niet meteen op van een alleenwonende vrouw. Het voortbestaan van de spinster karikatuur, verraadt echter hoe het niet zijn of willen worden van moeder of partner nog steeds gelijkstaat aan een maatschappelijk falen.

De spinster: een norse, oude vrouw die naar de buurtkinderen schreeuwt als ze buiten spelen, is geen gezellig type.

MAATSCHAPPELIJKE VERWACHTINGEN

Carolines situatie is niet uitzonderlijk. Het aantal alleenwoners rijst de laatste decennia snel, vooral in grote steden. Sociale wetenschappers noteren zelfs een demografische transitie. Maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen zoals verbeterde toegang tot anticonceptiemiddelen, secularisatie en groeiende gendergelijkheid, zorgen ervoor dat steeds minder mensen in een kerngezin wonen. De manier waarop de samenleving georganiseerd is, verandert echter niet op hetzelfde tempo mee.

Los van iemands genderidentiteit, is samenwonen met een partner bijvoorbeeld vaak financieel voordeliger. Netflix maakt het steeds moeilijker om een abonnement te delen over verschillende adressen. Boodschappen voor twee zijn, per persoon, goedkoper dan boodschappen voor één. En twee inkomens die een slaapkamer delen hebben over het algemeen meer opties op de huizenmarkt dan ander huishoudformaties.

Maatschappelijke verwachtingen van een levensloop zijn echter wel gendergebonden. Zoals gesteld, vragen Carolines vrienden zich af wanneer ze nu eens kinderen krijgt. Het stichten van een kerngezin en het bijbehorende koophuis; Carolines tijd loopt af om aan het standaard maatschappelijke beeld te voldoen. Anders wacht haar dus een leven als arme spinster met katten. Van dat beeld bestaat geen mannelijke equivalent.

Begijnhof (1931) | Stadsarchief Amsterdam / Nico Swaager



ZORGEN OP DE HUIZENMARKT

Voor Caroline is alleen wonen een bevrijding. Ze heeft weleens samengewoond met een partner, maar is het zat om voor een man te zorgen. In haar studio kan ze zelf bepalen wat ze doet. Tijdens ons gesprek vertelt ze geanimeerd over de vrienden die haar aansporen om een gezin te starten. Caroline ziet ze door het leven rennen, altijd klagend en moe. Zó, wil ze dus precies niet leven.

Haar huidige woonsituatie is echter ook verre van ideaal. De huur is laag, maar haar bovenbuurman is een ex-partner en het koppel dat naast haar woont, maakt constant ruzie. Nog een voorbeeld van twee mensen die op een ongezonde manier aan elkaar vastzitten vanwege woonruimte, volgens Caroline.

De fabriek waar Caroline woont, is daarnaast niet officieel aangemerkt als woonruimte. Ze heeft daarom weinig huurdersrechten en kan zich er ook niet registeren.

Officieel woont ze in het huis van haar zus, dat leegstaat. In Brussel komt de politie aangekondigd controleren of je daadwerkelijk woont waar je zegt dat je woont. Toen Caroline zich net had geregistreerd bij haar zus, sleepte ze een paar meubels heen en weer om het huis er een beetje bewoond uit te laten zien. De politie begreep niet helemaal hoe ze daar woonde met zo weinig spullen, maar keurde de registratie uiteindelijk wel goed. Toch is Caroline nog altijd licht gestrest over haar liegen tegen de autoriteiten.

DE WAARDE VAN EEN KOOPWONING

Het huisvestingssysteem van België is gebaseerd op eigen woningbezit. Al sinds de eerste woningwet eind 19e eeuw stimuleert de Belgische overheid het hebben van een koopwoning. Omdat een koopwoning leidt tot de opbouw van eigen vermogen, is het sociale vangnet in tandem grotendeels geprivatiseerd.



Hobby's tijdens het scriptie schrijven/opzoek naar een huis (2023)

Het standaard staatspensioen is voor de meeste mensen bijvoorbeeld niet genoeg om van rond te komen.

Carolines situatie laat daarmee een interessante paradox zien. Haar benadering van eigen woonruimte kan, op het eerste gezicht, gezien worden als individualistisch. Caroline wil een woning voor zichzelf, en het liefst koop. Toch kan ze dit volgens de bank pas krijgen als ze een partner heeft met wie ze wil samenwonen. Ze snapt zelf niet waarom en vraagt zich af “wat is meer stabiel: een vrouw die altijd haar huur heeft kunnen betalen, of een koppel dat over een paar jaar misschien uit elkaar gaat?”.

Caroline is daarom op zoek naar een “feministische bank", zegt ze lachend. Omdat ze geen schulden heeft en een erfenis van haar moeder, acht ze de kans aanwezig dat ze een keer iets kan kopen. Het liefst koopt ze een woning met meerdere kamers, die ze kan verhuren aan andere vrouwen.

Niet vanuit een winstoogmerk, maar om hen een fijne plek voor zichzelf te kunnen bieden. Zo biedt een koopwoning haar niet alleen meer financiële zekerheid, maar ook een gemeenschap. Eentje die minder individualistisch is ingesteld dan een gestandaardiseerd kerngezin.

VELDWERK

Mijn onderzoek bestond uit analyses van interviews met 28 vrouwen over hun huisvestingspaden. Naast Caroline waren dat Dora, Lola, Nora, Elizabeth, Antoinette, Anita, Shirley, Lexi, Anna, Sardine, Lily, Saki, Stella, Clémence en Sophie in Brussel, en Emilie, Petra, Maria, Mila, Rosa, Elin, Emma, Marjolein, Julia, Lynn, Lara en Melissa in Amsterdam. Ik ben ze erg dankbaar en heb veel van hen geleerd, zowel op academisch als persoonlijk vlak.

EEN KAMER VOOR HAARZELF

Caroline wil haar toekomstige woning comfortabel in te richten. Met goed geïsoleerde muren, benadrukt ze meermaals. Zo kunnen de huisgenoten in een veilige gemeenschap wonen, en toch vrij zijn om hun eigen levens te leiden.

Haar idee resoneert daarmee Woolfs A Room of One's Own (1929). In dit essay beargumenteert Woolf de waarde van een eigen ruimte om creatief te kunnen zijn. Ze legt uit dat een eigen, veilige, fysieke ruimte cruciaal is om de mentale ruimte te voelen om na te kunnen denken.

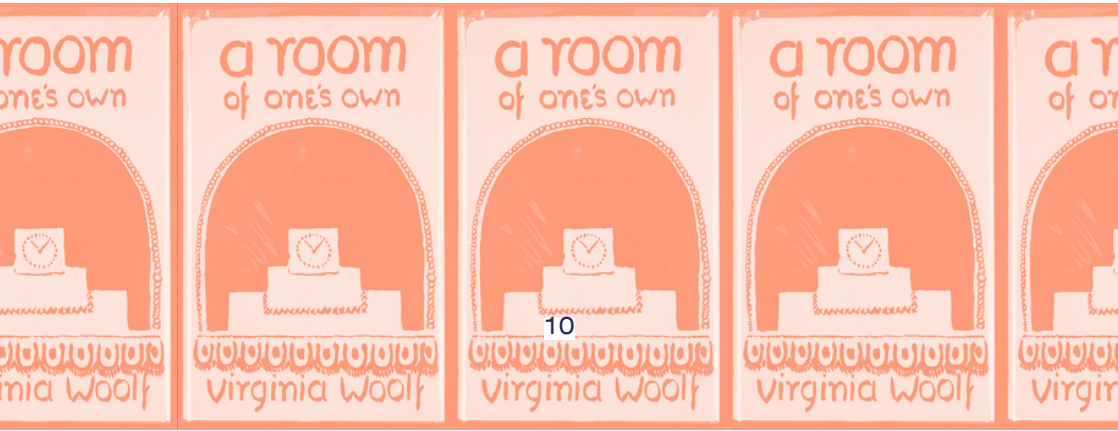
Volgens Woolf is dit al helemaal belangrijk voor vrouwen, omdat van hen constant wordt verwacht dat zij voor anderen zorgen.

Caroline hoopt deze ruimte binnenkort aan een groep vrouwen te kunnen bieden. Als het lukt, draagt ze de woongemeenschap op aan haar moeder. Mooi meegenomen dat ze later als oude vrouw dan ook minder schilderijen hoeft te verkopen. Een matrimonium.

LEES MEER

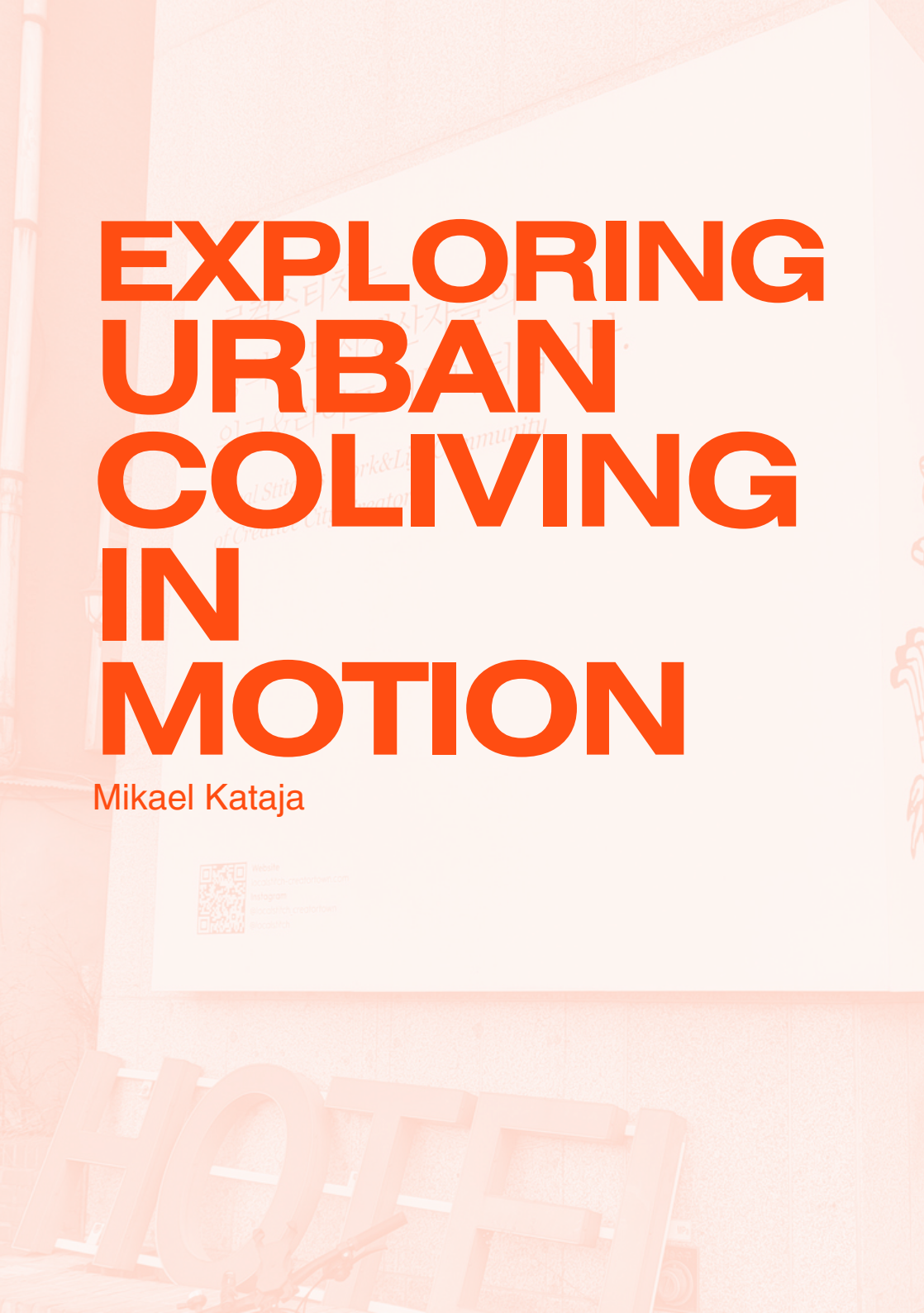
Meer lezen over dit onderzoek?
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A Room of One's Own, omslag eerste druk (1929) | Vanessa Bell



EXPLORING URBAN COLIVING IN MOTION

Mikael Kataja



INTRODUCTION

Picture the following: a world where work is no longer confined to cubicles, where your office is wherever your laptop opens, and your backyard stretches from bustling metropolises to serene beach towns. Welcome to the realm of digital nomadism, where freedom meets flexibility, and the only constant is change.

In this ever-shifting landscape, one trend stands out: coliving. Casually it's described like a mashup of dorm life and boutique hotels, where strangers become friends and discover new places as a community of individual travellers. Coliving spaces are popping up in urban jungles worldwide, offering digital nomads a home away from home—a place to plug in, chill out, and soak in the local vibe. But behind the Instagram-worthy photos and hashtags lies a deeper story—a tale of community, connection, and wellbeing. That's where our journey begins.

In this text, we're diving headfirst into the world of urban consumption and its impact on the wellbeing of digital nomads. We'll unpack the magic of coliving providers, explore the highs and lows of life on the road, and maybe even uncover a few secrets to finding well-being in the chaos of modern nomadism.

Why does this matter? Well, consider this: as more of us trade office desks for hammocks and WiFi hotspots, understanding how to thrive in this brave new world becomes crucial. Whether you're a seasoned nomad, a curious urbanite, or just someone dreaming of a life less ordinary, the insights we uncover here could change the way you see the world—and maybe even how you live in it.

THE FUTURE OF WORK: DIGITALIZATION AND THE RISE OF NOMADIC LIVING

As the digital revolution reshapes the global economy, the traditional nine-to-five grind is giving way to a new era of remote work and location independence. Thanks to advancements in technology, from cloud computing to video conferencing, the office is no longer a physical space but a digital realm accessible from anywhere with an internet connection.

Enter the digital nomad—a breed of worker unbound by office walls or geographical constraints. Armed with a laptop and a sense of adventure, these modern-day wanderers traverse the globe in search of inspiration, opportunity, and community. But while the allure of remote work is undeniable, the practicalities of nomadic living present their own set of challenges.

That's where coliving comes in. By providing fully furnished accommodations, shared amenities, and a built-in network of like-minded individuals, coliving spaces offer digital nomads a sense of stability and community amidst the uncertainty of life on the road. From rooftop coworking spaces to weekly social events, these spaces are designed to foster collaboration, creativity, and personal growth—all essential ingredients for success in the digital age.

But coliving is just one piece of the puzzle. In recent years, the rise of coworking spaces has transformed the way we work, blurring the lines between office and leisure, work and play. In cities around the world, from Amsterdam and Seoul, coworking spaces have become hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship, attracting freelancers, startups, and remote teams alike.




AMSTERDAM
HOTEL
JANSEN
NOT FOR
TOURISTS



Together, coliving and coworking represent a new paradigm of work and living—one where flexibility, community, and wellbeing take centre stage. As the digital nomad lifestyle continues to gain traction, these trends are reshaping urban landscapes and challenging traditional notions of work and consumption.

Whether you're a freelancer building your empire from a beachside bungalow or a remote team collaborating across continents, the future of work is here—and it's anything but ordinary.

FIELDWORK

This text represents a piece of a broader thesis project researching the landscape of coliving providers through the lens of comprehensive wellbeing of a particular group of users, i.e. transnational online professionals, more commonly called digital nomads. The research comprised in-depth interviews with these residents of coliving locations in Seoul, South Korea, and Amsterdam, the Netherlands. In addition, the coliving providers were studied through their online marketing of well-being related resources, with supporting data collected from interviews with employees of the coliving providers. Overall, the thesis included four coliving locations from Seoul and three from Amsterdam, with a total of nine and six resident interviews respectively. For this piece, I have chosen to highlight the results from one exceptional case that differed from the rest of the coliving spaces.

SEOUL: CULTURAL EXPERIENCES BETWEEN SKYSCRAPERS

Fast-paced, futuristic, and endlessly fascinating—welcome to Seoul, South Korea's bustling capital and a digital nomad's playground. In a city where tradition meets technology, coliving spaces offer nomads a glimpse into the heart of Korean culture, one kimchi pancake at a time.

Seoul is a city of contrasts—a place where ancient palaces coexist with sleek skyscrapers and traditional teahouses share sidewalks with trendy coffee shops. And such is its coliving scene: newcomers can choose from high-rise apartment buildings like the Mangrove and Local Stitch focusing on working life, all the way down to boutique, single-family home living experiences at Seoul Nooks, offering a true touch of Korean everyday life.

For digital nomads seeking a taste of Seoul's vibrant energy, these coliving spaces offer a home base amidst the chaos. Imagine waking up to the scent of freshly brewed green tea, stepping out onto your balcony to take in the city skyline, and joining fellow nomads for a day of coworking and exploration.

But navigating Seoul's fast-paced lifestyle isn't always easy. The language barrier, cultural differences, and sheer scale of the city can be overwhelming, especially for newcomers. That's where coliving communities come in, providing support, guidance, and a sense of belonging in a city where everyone's a stranger until they're not.

WELL-BEING WHILE BEING AWAY

For these digital nomads, coliving locations represent one type of solutions to the longing for having a home away from home, providing potentially more than simply shelter for their needs while travelling in a foreign country.

For any form of shelter to feel like home, it, among many things, needs to contribute to the wellbeing of its residents. Wellbeing can be understood to comprise three categories of resources, physical, psychological, and social ones.

The specific wellbeing resources in these categories certainly differ depending on the person and their circumstances, but for digital nomads in particular, Jennifer von Zumbush and Lidija Lalicic (2020) developed a model highlighting particularly those resources that (should) exists for digital nomads dwelling in coliving spaces. The physical resources include having a sense of structure in the space, through the creation of work-leisure boundaries, private and communal spaces, and community managers.

For psychological and social resources certain ones have a more blurred line between the categories, but generally psychological resources relate to abilities for self-actualization and self-awareness, as well as having a sense of belonging in the space through an experienced support system. Social resources are further highlighted here due to their elevated role within coliving spaces compared to alternative modes of dwelling abroad. These include the sense of community, connection and social interactions, as well as establishing good habits and accountability, and being subjected to new perspectives through one's fellow residents.

In the dynamic realm of digital nomadism, coliving services vary widely, spanning from commercialised, hotel-like accommodations to intimate share-house experiences. Each offering provides a unique blend of community and comfort, shaping the nomadic lifestyle in distinct ways.

While most coliving providers lean towards the commercial end of the spectrum, offering hotel-like amenities alongside long-term room rentals, the essence of coliving goes beyond mere cohabitation—it embodies the experience of being abroad yet together. This uniformity is evident across locations, from the bustling streets of Seoul to the vibrant cityscape of Amsterdam.

While physical resources are readily available and acknowledged, the impact on social and psychological well-being varies. For some, the coliving experience may even detract from these aspects. However, nestled in the quiet hillside neighbourhood of Huam-dong, Seoul Nooks offers a contrasting experience—a haven where residents find solace and connection amidst the chaos of nomadic life.

OUR NOUK IN SEOUL

Let’s then enter this quiet neighbourhood of Seoul, to discover what makes this former US military family home a sensational coliving space for digital nomads. Seoul Nooks is inhabited by digital nomad travellers from around the world, brought together by a shared yearning for community while discovering Seoul and Korea more broadly. Step into the vibrant community of Seoul Nooks, where residents find more than just a place to stay – they find a home away from home.

Here, social interaction is at the heart of the experience, as residents collaborate and connect in ways that go beyond typical accommodation. As one resident enthusiastically shares, "Actually, so fun it was probably one of the like, best places I've stayed while traveling." Working together around the coworking table residents share ideas and inspiration, fostering a sense of camaraderie and collaboration.

But it's not all about work; it's about exploring the city and immersing oneself in the local culture. From discovering hidden gems to indulging in the best Korean BBQ joints, residents embrace the opportunity to experience Seoul in all its glory.

Another resident paints a vivid picture, stating, "It’s very social... we can sit here and work at the same table on our separate things. Then we can go to a karaoke bar together, and we can get drunk together." Amidst the hustle and bustle of city life, friendships are forged and bonds are strengthened, creating a sense of community that transcends borders.


TO SEE THE WORLD,
THINGS DANGEROUS
TO COME TO, TO SEE
BEHIND WALLS, DRAW
CLOSER, TO FIND EACH
OTHER AND TO FEEL
THAT IS THE PURPOSE
OF



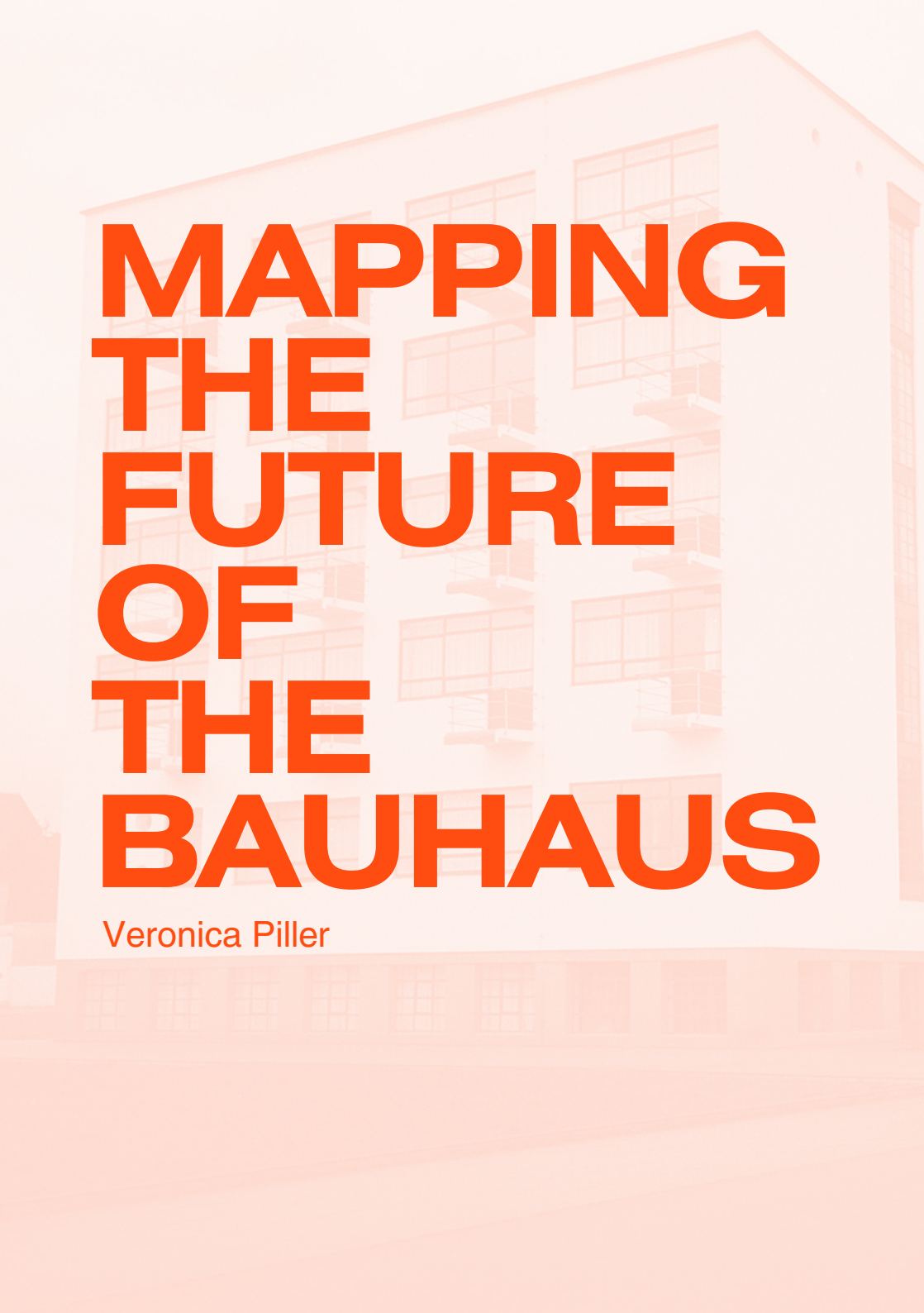


At Seoul Nooks, residents discover the true meaning of nomadic living – a journey filled with adventure, connection, and endless possibilities.

Amidst the bustling streets of Seoul lies a deeper quest for well-being – one that transcends mere financial stability. Through the lens of physical, psychological, and social dimensions, we uncover a rich tapestry of resources that shape the nomadic experience. In the realm of physical well-being, residents find solace in the communal spaces that offer respite from the frenetic pace of urban life.

Psychologically, the journey of the digital nomad is marked by resilience and adaptability. As they navigate the challenges of remote work and constant change, individuals find strength in the camaraderie of their fellow nomads. Within the walls of coliving spaces, support networks emerge, offering a lifeline in moments of uncertainty. Whether through shared experiences or heartfelt conversations, residents discover the transformative power of human connection.

Socially, coliving spaces serve as vibrant hubs of interaction and collaboration. From impromptu gatherings to structured events, these communities foster a sense of camaraderie that transcends geographical boundaries. Through shared meals and collaborative projects, residents forge bonds that extend far beyond the confines of their temporary homes. It is within these moments of connection that the true essence of nomadic living is revealed – a journey marked by shared experiences and meaningful relationships. In navigating the labyrinth of nomadic living, we can be reminded of the profound impact of the spaces we live in and the well-being resources they provide have on our experience at a foreign place. From financial stability to social connection, these resources serve as pillars of support, guiding individuals on their journey towards fulfilment and growth. In the bustling metropolises like Seoul, the quest for well-being is not merely a destination but a journey – one shaped by resilience, connection, and the boundless drive for exploration.



MAPPING THE FUTURE OF THE BAUHAUS

Veronica Piller

THE PROJECT

As an urban planner, I have often found myself obsessed with details. From sifting through budgets and architectural plans to pouring over public records and legal code, hyper specificity reigns. However, I worry that people in our field lose a broader perspective. Worse yet, we become incomprehensible to a broader public, and lose the potential for democratic design interventions to better the world. We must convince people to care.

Urban heritage stories help by translating bureaucratic minutiae into creative visions. They also draw a throughline from our past into our future. Although based in historical facts, these stories are shaped by the inherent bias of individual experience and contextual framing. In particular, the geographic scale of the narrative matters.

The message of a story about a singular city, country or continent differs greatly from one about a systemically intertwined world. Thus, we again encounter the challenge of threading between the specific and the universal.

My research centers on this tension in how people use urban heritage stories to link across time and space. Heritage differs from history by invoking a more personal sense of lineage and rootedness in place. So, I selected a story originating in a place where I have lived; the Bauhaus movement in Weimar, Germany. I wanted an interview process that invites the imagination and complexity that this story embodies, so I developed a scalar “mental mapping” exercise.

I provided participants with the four local-to-global template maps and asked them to draw their own geography in black colored pencil layered with the Bauhaus movement's past to present in blue, power hierarchies in red, and potential future in green. The resulting images often surprised both of us, so thank you again to everyone who met and reflected with me. In the following sections, I will provide a brief look at the Bauhaus context as well as the project participants and findings

THE BAUHAUS

This 20th century avant-garde school is a niche topic in popular culture, but an absolute juggernaut in design circles. The Bauhaus Museum in Weimar calls it, “the world’s most influential school of art and design of the 20th century.”

That claim makes sense if you view Bauhaus as the source of “modern” and “International Style” architecture, which remains relevant to new building projects today.

Nonetheless, the Bauhaus did not emerge from a cultural vacuum and tracing the school’s sources reveals colonial entanglements and erasures.

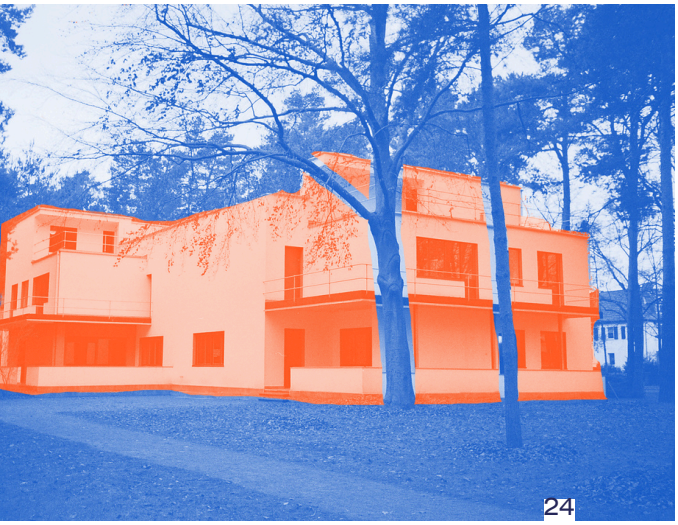
Recent exhibitions like “Bauhaus Imaginista” showcased for the first time how the original Bauhaus architects appropriated artistic forms from Africa, Asia, and the Americas. These cross-border connections have been obscured for the last century by colonial discourse, which falsely presents Europe as separate and superior.



New narratives invoking cultural hybridity and political solidarity offer an opportunity to repair the historical record in our present and move into a better future. In support of this evolution, my mapping exercise encouraged participants to share the personal meaning that they found in (re)mapping this architecture heritage movement.

THE FIELDWORK

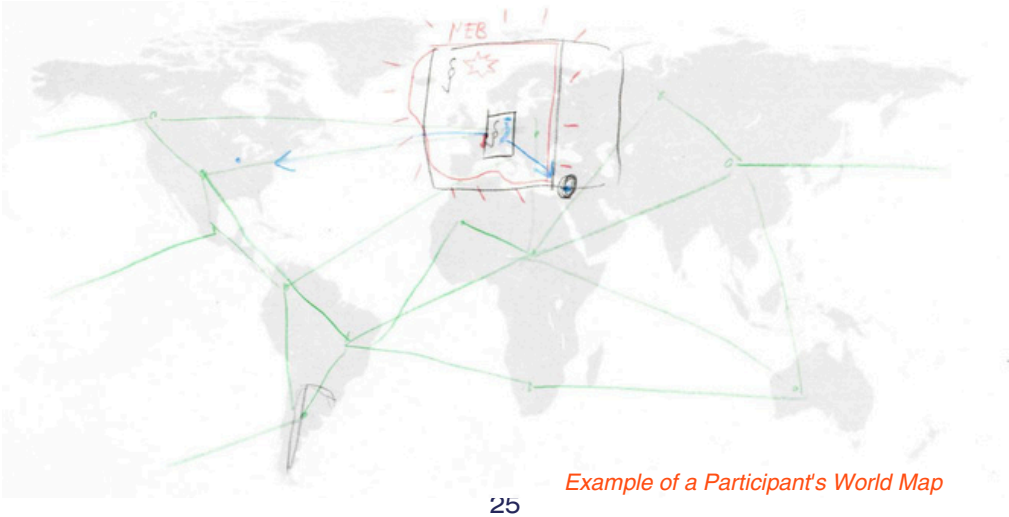
My analysis is indebted to the 23 people in Weimar who collectively created 74 maps and 31 hours of recorded interview audio. A majority of them were connected to the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, where I was an exchange student for a semester. In seeking out interviews, I needed people with at least a basic knowledge and curiosity in the Bauhaus.



Secondarily, they had to fit into one of two expertise groups: public stewards, and international or exchange students. I ended up with a 60/40 split between the two groups and participants with geographic origin in 15 countries. This diverse representation is essential in conceptualizing Bauhaus' international scale.

The interviews showed me that people are not static or uniform in their understanding of the Bauhaus. Their map drawings reflect the geographies of their evolving life stories.

As a result, the process brought many participants a new awareness of their own knowledge and blind spots. Given no single person can hold the entire story, I view the maps as complementary to each other rather than competing. I also do not believe certain interpretations are right or wrong, but that they have different consequences. Above all, I believe that connections beyond Europe have been erased for far too long. My goal is to serve as a mediator rather than judge in putting these differing perspectives in conversation.



Example of a Participant's World Map

PARTICIPANT MAP



THE FINDINGS

In the spirit of the Bauhaus' futurist ambitions, I focused my analysis on the final section of participants' interview transcripts. This includes the green colored pencil prompt, "How will these maps change in the future? And do you also see an alternative possibility? An alternative future?" For most participants, this section served as a culmination of their thoughts on the Bauhaus story. In the spirit of the Bauhaus' universal ambitions, I have also paid special attention to the world map drawings. The findings are divided between Future Narrative Themes and Worldviews.

FUTURE NARRATIVE THEMES

In considering Bauhaus' future, participants focused on the 12 themes below. They are ordered by frequency, with the major themes mentioned by 9 to 16 participants, and the minor themes by 4 to 8 participants.

Within the major themes, the top three can be summarized as "progress" narratives. Participants discussed Bauhaus' legacy as a creative revolution that strived for utopian society through art and technology.

MAJOR THEMES

1. Utopian Society
2. Artistic Expression
3. Industrialization & Technology
4. Colonialism & Racism
5. Climate & Environment
   Cultural Hierarchy

MINOR THEMES

1. Visual Brand
2. The National Socialists
3. Futurism
4. Digital World
5. Feminism
6. The Soviet Union

Conversely, the second set of major themes can be summarized as “critique” narratives. Participants noted how the Bauhaus was defined by its social context, including Europe’s position as a colonial power. This created an insidious racial hierarchy that labeled colonizer cultures as superior to those of the colonized. Participants grappled with the continuing legacy of that system and the Bauhaus’ complicity within it. Lastly, participants lamented the Bauhaus’ lack of environmental awareness, as shown by their role in popularizing high-emission concrete construction.

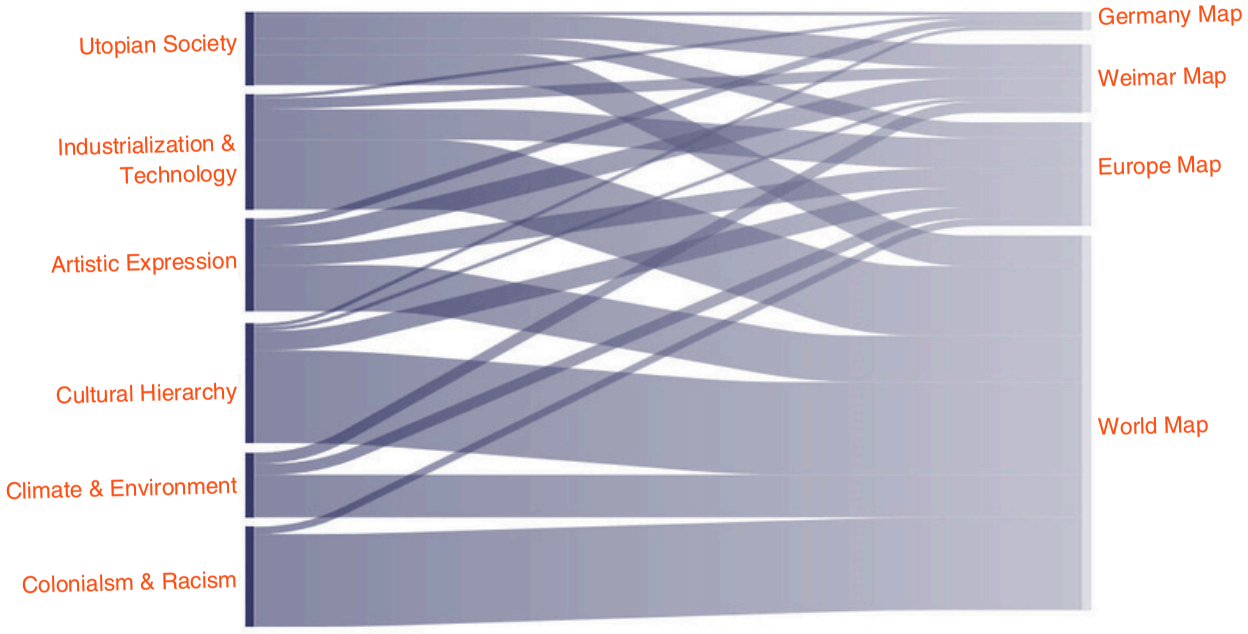
The “progress” and “critique” narratives differ in their frequency at different scales. The chart below shows which map drawing a participant was talking about when they mentioned different major themes. The “progress” narratives are mentioned somewhat evenly between the world map and lower-scale maps.

Meanwhile, the “critique” narratives are predominantly mentioned at the world map scale. If the narrative is not elevated to that geography, the “critique narratives” appear to have a much lower relevancy to Bauhaus’ future. In this way, the opportunity is lost to link across time and space, and address our most pressing problems.

FUTURE WORLDVIEWS

In folding together progress and critique, I pushed participants to draw their thoughts. The maps required them to be geographically specific, which was challenging in the face of potentially unknown places and cultures. I encouraged them to interpret the future as not only what they know but what they hope. What emerged were differing dreams of solidarity. Participants chose to connect certain geographies as unified in common interest.

MAJOR THEMES BY MAP SCALE



As a note of caution, these images are only in the context of the Bauhaus and do not necessarily reflect the complete worldview of all participants. Also, some participants grounded their thinking in archival evidence while others took more interpretive liberty. The images below are digital recreations of participants' world map drawings from the Bauhaus Future prompt. They are categorized into 3 Worldviews (condensed from an initial 5), which are ordered by their degree of geographic connectivity.

Notably, no one wanted the "View 0: Europe Makes the World", but many participants were responding to a version of that colonial image from either the Bauhaus Past to Present or Power interview prompts. For reference, Views A shows more geographic isolation than Views B or C while View B differs from C in keeping Europe centered. I have chosen one participant map to represent each worldview category.

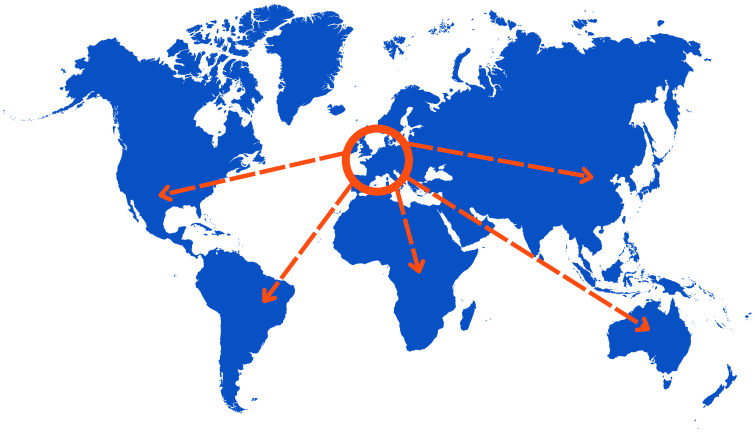
A final thanks to all of the kind and thoughtful people in Weimar who shared a part of themselves through their map drawings. I went into this project wanting to let each person share a unique story, but acknowledging the potential difficulty of piecing it all together at the end. I was then pleasantly surprised to see patterns in how each of us confronts similar challenges in our chaotic world. However, I know the Bauhaus is not (and should not be) everyone's entry point for this conversation. Perhaps it is another architectural, artistic, or cultural movement connected to your life. No matter the story, I hope this collective work makes us more mindful of our narrative ripple effects. Ultimately, our heritage is our interconnection.

READ MORE

A longer version of this piece can be found on beyondmaterialcity.com/blog

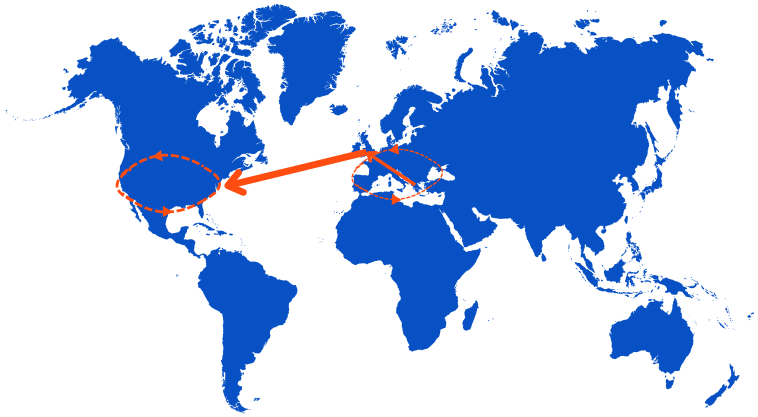
VIEW 0 0 PARTICIPANTS

EUROPE MAKES THE WORLD



VIEW 1 4 PARTICIPANTS

THE WEST OF EUROPE ALONE



Participant: It's really a circular flow around Europe. If we see Bauhaus as this intercultural discourse about architecture... I can imagine the same collaborations in the US

VIEW B

5 PARTICIPANTS

THE WORLD (RE)MAKES EUROPE



Participant: Ilt's high time that there is some kind of two-way traffic... two-way traffic which is visible. There has always been two-way traffic, but it was not very visible.

VIEW C

8 PARTICIPANTS

THE WORLD (BEYOND EUROPE)



Participant: I want to be part of a creative and curious network which is connected to all over the world, rather than just data-centered or just European-centered.

THE ABONDONED FORCE: CONSUMER-CITIZEN DUALITY

Karima Chamlal

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of new technologies like AV (automated vehicles) in the transport sector led to an increasing interest in the acceptance of these technologies. A part of these innovations are increasingly pursuing traffic safety and are developing into a prominent factor in creating a safer traffic environment. Mobility innovations focused on active safety are generally assessed by valuing safety and travel time through the consumer perspective. However, active safety innovations are not designed based on the self-interest and preferences of individuals, but instead are more focused on the collective interest and to enhance overall traffic safety for all citizens. Hence, this current approach fails to consider that these choices made in appraisal studies may not fully reflect the extent of the preferences of individuals and can therefore misinterpret and underestimate the support for mobility innovations that improve traffic safety.

Understanding and dealing with innovation resistance and acceptance is crucial for companies, governments and policymakers alike when they wish to implement mobility innovations that increase traffic safety. This study aspired to conduct an empirical research to test the diverging preferences of individuals who profess a consumer or citizen role when assessing mobility innovations that pursue traffic safety.

INTELLIGENT SPEED ADAPTATION SYSTEMS

Introducing mobility innovations into the traffic environment can effectively reduce the number of road traffic deaths and accidents by mitigating unsafe road user behavior and adjust the ‘’wrong actions” of drivers through the implementation of vehicles’ management systems such as intelligent vehicle driving systems.

One way to mitigate speeding and reduce the chance of road traffic accidents, is to implement the Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA) system. ISA can be identified as a vehicle safety feature that acts as a speed limiter. In general, ISA provides three options to provide feedback to drivers (Carsten & Tate, 2005):

(a) Advisory: Alerting the driver that they are exceeding the speed limit (warning)

(b) Voluntary: The vehicles' speed is reduced, but the driver can override it and exceed the speed limit by pressing firmly on the accelerator

(c) Mandatory: The vehicles speed is automatically reduced to the given speed limit at all times.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were used to gather data about the respondents' knowledge, attitudes and preferences towards ISA. The respondents consisted of inhabitants of Amsterdam and London.

Previous studies have shown that framing the information and exact wording of survey questions could result in a clear distinction between citizen and consumer responses. Thus, the stated preference method was used to capture the individuals' preferences by providing individuals with a hypothetical choice situation specified by the researcher.

The following hypothetical choice situation was imposed on the participants

EXAMPLE SURVEY FOR PARTICIPANTS IN AMSTERDAM

"Assume the following: This scenario's display the traffic situation at the Gustav Mahlerelaan in Amsterdam. It is around 08:00 in the morning . The road contains 2x2-lane motorway. The government is interested in general preferences. Hence, it is not made clear if you directly experience any effects (positive or negative) from implementing the innovation or not.

As a result of the ISA system that is implemented in this zone: The travel time of drivers on the road increases. The number of accidents on this road decreases. Would you advise the government to implement the advisory ISA system in the road zone?"

"Assume the following: You drive your car on the Gustav Maherleaan in Amsterdam around 08:00 in the morning . There are no other people in the car. The road contains a 2x2-lane motorway.

As a result of the ISA system that is implemented in this zone: Your travel time increases. The probability of being in an accident decreases. Would you advise the government to implement the advisory ISA system in the road zone?"

Following, statistical analysis was used to determine representativeness of the survey and significant differences between the consumers and citizens. The word clouds highlighted (see figure 1 and 2 below) important textual data points by collecting and displaying the specific words that were cited by participants.

RESULTS

As predicted by previous studies, the consumer-oriented sample is deemed to be less accepting of ISA relative to the citizen-oriented sample (Mouter et al,. 2018). There is also evidence of a consumer-citizen duality in the responses that the participants provided. The individuals who professed the consumer role raised issues like travel time increase, own safety risk and loss of enjoyability and freedom of driving in their responses. In contrast to individuals who professed the citizen role, who were more focused on the overall traffic safety of citizens and the positive effects ISA could induce.

The inconveniences they encounter with ISA outweigh this. In addition, the vast majority of the participants in the consumer perspective tend to be less accepting of the Mandatory ISA system compared to the Advisory and Voluntary ISA system.

Moreover, participants who profess the consumer role become less accepting of ISA as they are older. Additionally, participants in the consumer approach tend to be less accepting of ISA as they obtain a higher income. Interestingly, this correlation turns out positive in the citizen approach. Likewise, participants with a driver license in the citizen perspective seem more accepting of ISA compared to the participants with a driver's license in the consumer perspective.

Individuals in the consumer role are not willingly to surrender their freedom and agency during driving in exchange for a proposed decrease in safety risk. They tend to assign a relatively low value to attributes like safety and a relatively high value to attributes like travel time gain.

The personal risk of individuals in the consumer perspective is smaller, and therefore individuals in the consumer perspective tend to make more risk-averse choices (Mouter et al., 2017). The statements of the participants (see figure 1) exemplify and reinforce the reluctance towards especially the Mandatory ISA system.

Participants who completed the consumer survey stated that they were strongly focused on their own safety risks and attitudes while hypothetically driving with the ISA systems.

To provide examples, the following statements were made by the participants in the survey: "I believe it is unnecessary", "I don't want to lose my empowerment and freedom while driving", "inconveniences" (Respondent A, B and C).

Following, many participants used words such as "dangerous", "mandatory", "agency", "accelerate", "ignore", "time" and "inconvenience", to explain their choices (see figure 1)These phrases can be linked to the consumer-citizen literature (Mouter et al, 2017).

Furthermore, individuals who were given the consumer-oriented survey believe that the government reach should be limited. Note that the individuals in the consumer approach mention ''government" in a contrasting context compared to the citizen approach. These participants indicated that the government should not obtain more agency than drivers should obtain. Plus, they are concerned that the government access redundant their own agency.

A SPEECH OF THE 'CONSUMER' (LOOK THROUGH MY EYES)

Individuals in the citizen perspective are driven by altruistic interests and make their choices considering their communal, social, and environmental responsibility. Hence, these individuals are more prone to consider the overall traffic safety and protect their fellow citizens. Some studies even suggest that the willingness to accept a safety innovation is twice as high when questioned from a citizen point of view in comparison to the consumer point of view.

The statements from the participants illustrated moral responsibility and the concern for traffic safety of all citizens. A few illustrative responses by the participants: "Safety is one of the most important features to consider", "I believe that ISA can help improve traffic safety" (Respondent D and E). Additionally, the participants highlight attributes like "people", "safety", "good", "mandatory", "citizens" and "importance" in their explanations for their choices (see figure 2). Individuals in the citizen perspective believe that the government should provide safety in an active form and the government is responsible to monitor this safety.

A SPEECH OF THE 'CITIZEN'
(LOOK THROUGH MY EYES)

FIGURE 1: WORD CLOUD STATEMENTS CONSUMERS



FIGURE 2: WORDCLOUD STATEMENS CITIZENS



EXPLANATIONS

Previous studies discovered that individuals could take on multiple roles and that these various roles lead to discrepancy in preferences and that it is context dependent what role an individual possesses.

COGNITIVE EXPLANATIONS

The discrepancies between consumer and citizen preferences can be explained by several cognitive reasoning. Firstly, individuals tend to overweight their skills or take extremely unlikely events too lightly. This is explained in the prospect theory. This theory demonstrates that individuals would be expected to choose for example the fastest route by speeding, as they discard the probability of being in an accident because of it (Mouter et al,.2018). Subsequently, studies have discovered that drivers in general consider themselves to be more skillful than the average driver. This phenomenon is known as ‘’comparative optimism” (Mouter et al,.2018).

In addition, ‘’controllability” also plays a role in the consumer-citizen duality. Individuals are more likely to accept risks that they can control. The risks given in the ISA scenario are believed to be controlled risks since drivers believe that they can control their own risk during their journey.

NORMATIVE EXPLANATIONS

Decisions made in societal contexts recall the norms of individuals or social norms. Social norms stimulate risk averse decision-making when the consequences are for citizens in general and not solely for the individuals themselves (Mouter et al,. 2017). Thus, the questionnaire is focused on the consequences for all citizens, the citizen role is activated. The second normative argument derives from political philosophy. This philosophy states that individuals in the citizen perspective believe that the government should provide safety in an active form, and it is responsible to realize and guard it

CONCLUSION

Policymakers, companies and governments who desire to implement mobility innovations to improve traffic safety should consider the concept of the consumer-citizen duality in gathering public support on large scales in appraisal studies. Framing questionnaires in a particular context results in diverging responses from individuals. Thus, the citizen approach should be implemented in appraisal studies to increase public support and foster the implementation of the innovation.

COUNTER NARRATIVE

Some scholars have criticized the consumer-citizen duality as they argue that it is not as completely clear-cut as it appeared to be. Individuals may hold both perspectives simultaneously and the citizen and consumer role can be overlapping. The emphasis should also be on the diverse roles and motivations that individuals hold.

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EEN PLEK VOOR DE BUURT

Amber van Veen



GEMEENSCHAPS VASTGOED

Er wordt steeds meer aandacht besteed aan de toegevoegde waarde van de kennis en vaardigheden van lokale gemeenschappen. Stedelijke ontwikkeling is niet langer uitsluitend de taak van academisch opgeleide stedenbouwkundigen, geografen en architecten die van bovenaf dicteren hoe de stad eruit moet zien. Deze nieuwe rol voor lokale gemeenschappen biedt bewoners nieuwe mogelijkheden om hun buurt vorm te geven. Tegelijkertijd betekent dit ook dat bewoners een belangrijke rol hebben aan de besluitvormingstafel. Dit vereist niet alleen aanpassingen van gemeenten en betrokken organisaties, maar vraagt ook een zekere mate van professionalisering van gemeenschappen zelf.

Buurtorganisaties richten zich op het organiseren van kortetermijn- en praktische diensten voor de gemeenschap. Ze koken en verspreiden voedselpakketten, regelen sportactiviteiten voor buurtkinderen en zijn een support-netwerk waar buurtbewoners hun ervaringen, problemen en successen kunnen delen. Het organiseren van deze diensten vergt ruimte. Deze ruimtes worden steeds schaarser. Buurthuizen, bibliotheken, zwembaden en andere buurtvoorzieningen sluiten door stijgende huurprijzen. Dit leidt ertoe dat een toenemend aantal buurtorganisaties geïnteresseerd raakt in het kopen van vastgoed.

VERDEDIG NOORD

Verdedig Noord is een buurtorganisatie die actief is in Amsterdam-Noord. Het oude deel van Noord bestaat voornamelijk uit tuindorpen waar de arbeiders woonden die op de scheepswerven werkten. Later kwamen daar (arbeids)migranten bij die in een van de buurten een sociale huurwoning kregen toegewezen.

Door de stijgende huurprijzen in de stad wordt het stadsdeel steeds populairder. Sociale huurwoningen worden koophuizen en in de oude industrieloodsen vestigen nieuwe restaurants, musea en bedrijven.

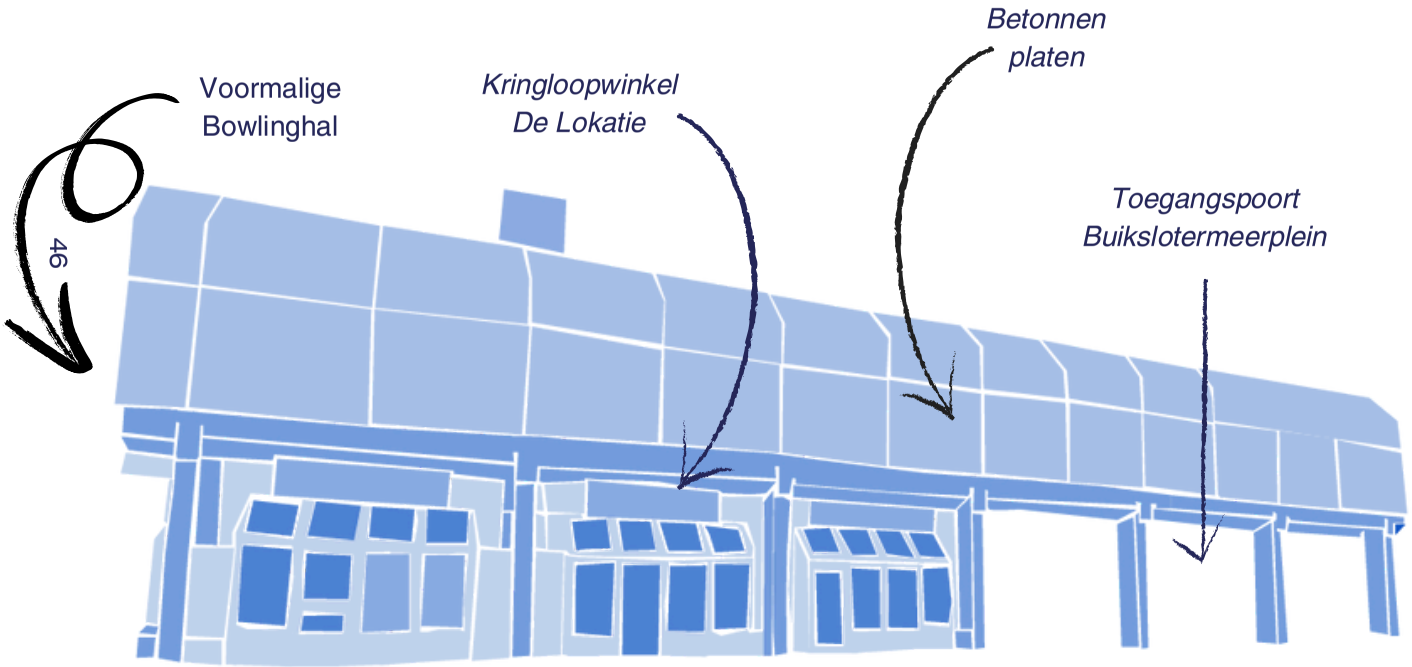
De groeiende populariteit van de buurt drijft de vastgoedprijzen op. Door middel van muziek, opiniestukken en educatie spreekt Verdedig Noord zich uit tegen gentrificatie en vóór gemeenschapsvastgoed.

De buurtorganisatie van ongeveer 60 leden komt maandelijks bij elkaar in het plaatselijke buurtcentrum. Maar deze plek wordt binnenkort gesloopt, en het niet hebben van een eigen plek beperkt hun mogelijkheden tot actievoeren en het helpen van buurtbewoners. Daarom wil de buurtorganisatie 'De Bowling' kopen, en dit verder ontwikkelen tot een buurthuis.

VELDWERK

Deze reflecties zijn gebaseerd op veldwerk dat ik heb uitgevoerd tussen 2022 en 2023 in Amsterdam en Glasgow. Gedurende tien maanden heb ik participerend onderzoek gedaan bij twee buurtorganisaties genaamd Verdedig Noord en Govanhill Baths. Ik heb geholpen in de plaatselijke buurttuin, geassisteerd bij knutselactiviteiten en een buurtfeest georganiseerd. Tussen het vrijwilligerswerk door sprak ik met buurtbewoners over hun ervaringen met gemeenschapsvastgoed.

DE BOWLING


Voormalige
Bowlinghal
46
Kringloopwinkel
De Lokatie
Betonnen
platen
Toegangspoort
Buikslotermeerplein

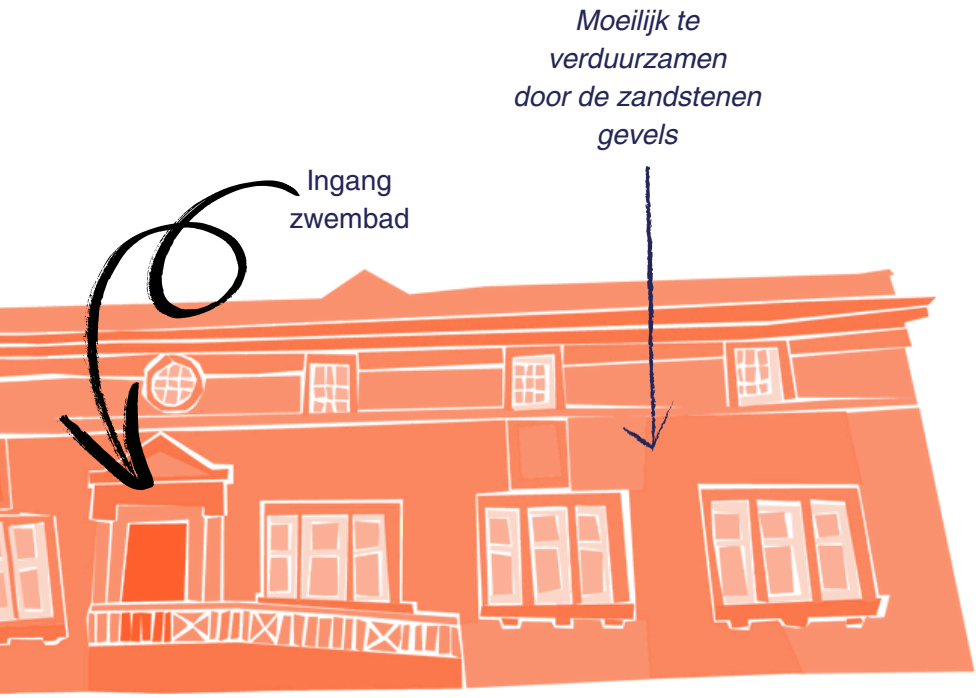
GOVANHILL BATHS

De Govanhill Baths is een buurtorganisatie in het zuiden van Glasgow. De buurt Govanhill kent veel gelijkenissen met Amsterdam Noord. Het is een wijk waar veel mensen dagelijks voor financiële uitdagingen staan en tegelijkertijd stijgen de huizenprijzen snel. Mede door deze stijgende prijzen kon de gemeente niet langer de kosten voor het plaatselijke zwembad dragen. Om sluiting te voorkomen, zijn bewoners verenigd in de buurtorganisatie Govanhill Baths.

Vanuit deze organisatie hebben ze zeven jaar geleden het zwembad opgekocht, maar vanwege hoge renovatiekosten is het zwembad tot op vandaag gesloten. De buurtorganisatie ziet het bezitten van vastgoed meer als een last dan als een zegen. Tegelijkertijd openen ze op verschillende locaties in de buurt faciliteiten zoals een voedselbank en een buurttuin omdat ze de buurtbewoners willen ondersteunen en ze het gevoel hebben dat de lokale overheid hen aan hun lot overlaat.



GOVANHILL BATHS



People's Pantry (voedselbank)

500 m

EEN VERANDERENDE ORGANISATIE

Het is 8 uur 's avonds. In een kleine ruimte in een buurthuis in Amsterdam Noord hebben ongeveer dertig mensen zich verzameld. Ze zitten op stoelen in een kring. Een tafel met pizzadozen staat in de hoek van de zaal. Mensen praten met hun buren. Nieuwkomers worden enthousiast begroet en omhelsd. Er staat een televisiescherm op een kar dat het logo van Verdedig Noord en hun verschillende projecten projecteert. Zo begint de maandelijkse vergadering van Verdedig Noord, maar vanavond is het een speciale vergadering. De afgelopen maanden zijn de leden van Verdedig Noord erg druk geweest met een breed scala aan projecten. Een van die projecten is de oprichting van Cooperative 5711, die zich richt op het verwerven en ontwikkelen van gemeenschappelijk vastgoed. Er wordt een rondgang gemaakt langs alle aanwezigen, waarbij ze worden gevraagd eerlijk te zijn over hun betrokkenheid bij Verdedig Noord.

Hoewel de meerderheid van de aanwezigen enthousiast is over de projecten die door Verdedig Noord zijn opgezet, voelen ze zich niet aangetrokken tot het idee om structureel betrokken te raken.

Sommige van hen voelen dat hun activisme botst met de meer pragmatische houding die nodig is voor samenwerking met de lokale overheid. Anderen hebben kinderen of buren die ze moeten verzorgen en kunnen zich niet committeren aan regelmatige vergaderingen en zelfeducatie. Uiteindelijk stemt slechts een handvol leden ermee in om mee te helpen om De Bowling te kopen.

STRIJDEN VOOR VASTGOED

Dit fragment laat een van de moeilijkheden zien waar buurtorganisaties mee te maken krijgen, bij de overgang naar een meer geprofessionaliseerde organisatie. Uiteindelijk wordt de koop van gemeenschapsvastgoed vaak gedreven door een paar individuen die tijd en middelen kunnen investeren in professionalisering. Met andere woorden, de horizontale buurtorganisatie wordt meer verticaal georganiseerd. Verdedig Noord bevindt zich momenteel in het midden van dit proces, waarbij elk lid van de buurtorganisatie wordt gevraagd een beslissing te nemen over wat voor soort rol ze willen hebben.

De Govanhill Baths hebben al het proces van professionalisering doorlopen. Momenteel wordt hun buurtorganisatie beheerd door een raad van 10 buurtbewoners. Het dagelijkse toezicht op het vastgoed en de projecten wordt gedaan door een algemeen manager.

Daarnaast werken er 22 mensen aan het coördineren van de verschillende projecten die worden uitgevoerd door een groep vrijwilligers. Deze structuur stelt de Govanhill Baths in staat te professionaliseren terwijl ze nauwe banden behouden met lokale bewoners. De manager legt uit hoe dit leidt tot projecten die de behoeften van de gemeenschap weerspiegelen:

"D*e meeste projecten ontstaan omdat bewoners een geweldig idee hebben. Mensen komen naar ons toe en zeggen: ik wil een buurttuin beginnen! Ik wil een boek schrijven! Vaak zijn er subsidies beschikbaar, soms klein, soms groot. We gebruiken ze om deze projecten te ontwikkelen. Het is vrij organisch, denk ik, omdat we geen bureaucratische overheidsinstantie zijn. Dat maakt dingen behoorlijk spontaan en snel" (manager buurtorganisatie, 2022).*

Terwijl de Govanhill Baths voldoende zijn geprofessionaliseerd om voldoende financiering te ontvangen voor het onderhoud van hun pand en projecten, zijn ze nog steeds afhankelijk van de beperkte fondsen beschikbaar voor buurtorganisaties. Dit leidt ertoe dat projecten niet kunnen worden uitgevoerd, moeten worden stopgezet of moeten worden ingekrompen. De manager accepteerde dat dit de manier is waarop dingen gaan, maar voor buurtbewoners lijkt het soms alsof ze beslissingen neemt op basis van persoonlijke voorkeuren.

Professionalisering creëert een afstand tussen buurtbewoners die wel en niet geprofessionaliseerd zijn. Beslissingen worden genomen op basis van ingewikkelde financieringsstructuren, lange financiële kaders en wettelijke regels.

Terwijl het voor de besluitvormers misschien heel duidelijk is dat alles ten gunste van de buurt wordt gedaan, kan een buurtbewoner het tegenovergestelde ervaren. Wanneer een buurtorganisatie zichzelf meer horizontaal gaat organiseren om te professionaliseren, kunnen er conflicten ontstaan wanneer ingewikkelde keuzes en processen niet genoeg worden gecommuniceerd naar de gemeenschap.

EIGENDOM: EEN VLOEK OF EEN ZEGEN?

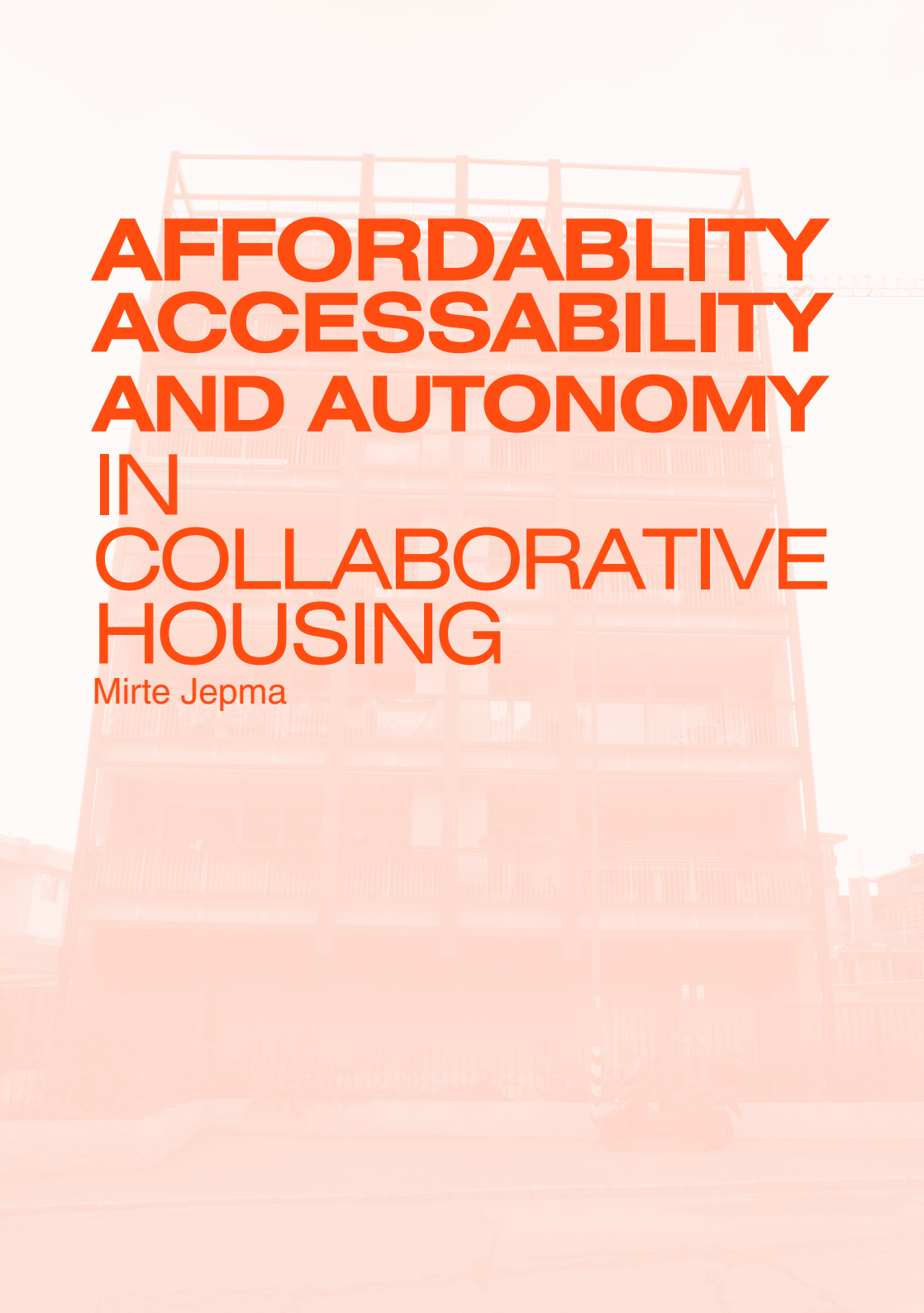
Gemeenschapsvastgoed is iets waar zowel buurtorganisaties als ambtenaren met belangstelling naar kijken. Het biedt gemeenschappen een ruimte waar ze zich kunnen organiseren, ontmoeten en de gemeenschap kunnen ondersteunen. Tegelijkertijd sluit het aan bij de toenemende inspanningen van publieke organisaties om gebruik te maken van de lokale kennis en vaardigheden van bewoners.

Echter, wanneer buurtorganisaties besluiten het proces te starten om als buurtorganisatie vastgoed te kopen, worden ze geconfronteerd met de uitdagende taak van professionalisering. Eigendom vereist nauwe samenwerking met zowel de overheid, ontwikkelaars als bedrijven. Bovendien vereist het een specifieke vaardigheden die eerder niet nodig was om activiteiten voor de buurt de organiseren. De Govanhill Baths en Verdedig Noord bevinden zich beiden in een heel ander stadium van het verkrijgen van gemeenschapsvastgoed. Toch kunt je zien dat er overeenkomsten zijn in de uitdagingen waarmee de gemeenschappen worden geconfronteerd tijdens het proces van professionalisering:

Ten eerste, kan of wil niet iedereen professionaliseren. Dit kan verschillende redenen hebben. Sommige buurtbewoners hebben niet de tijd om zich vertrouwd te maken met alle benodigde kennis voor het kopen van vastgoed. Anderen hebben het gevoel dat ze niet in staat zijn om de juiste vaardigheden te verwerven, of ze zijn er misschien gewoon niet in geïnteresseerd.

Ten tweede, creëert professionalisering een hiërarchie. De individuen die professionaliseren, hebben unieke vaardigden nodig die andere buurtbewoners niet hebben. Dit stelt hen in staat om samen te werken met ambtenaren, ontwikkelaars en bedrijven. Een plek aan de vergadertafel hebben betekent meer informatie en meer macht om beslissingen te nemen. Dit creëert een ongelijke machtsbalans binnen de buurtorganisatie.

Tot slot, kan een nieuwe hiërarchie conflicten veroorzaken. De geprofessionaliseerde individuen binnen de organisatie kunnen beslissingen nemen op basis van hun specifieke kennis die niet in het belang van de gemeenschap lijkt te zijn. Wanneer deze beslissingen niet transparant worden genomen, kan dit conflicten binnen de buurtorganisatie veroorzaken.



AFFORDABLITY ACCESSABILITY AND AUTONOMY IN COLLABORATIVE HOUSING

Mirte Jepma

FIGHTING FOR HOUSING

“Housing for people not for profit”, a chant that repeatedly filled the streets of Amsterdam on September 12th, 2021 when 18.000 people marched the streets to demand more affordable homes. It was the biggest housing protest since the housing riots of the ‘80s. In cities all around Europe, good quality housing is becoming increasingly hard to find. Where social housing still exists, it is often inaccessible due to waiting lists and homeownership has since long moved out of reach for many. Collaborative housing can form an alternative and thereby partial solution to these difficulties.

Collaborative housing can take many property and tenurial forms but the key element is a high degree of collaboration between different stakeholders. Collaborative housing is an umbrella term that encompasses housing cooperatives, community land trusts, coops, cohousing amongst others. Geographically these terms differ within Europe. To illustrate, housing cooperatives in the Netherlands are a more recent phenomenon with extensive sharing practices and common property schemes, while in Italy cooperatives were born out of the labour movements and often involve private property and limited shared spaces. These differences also depend on local institutions and legal frameworks.

While collaborative housing is often seen as future oriented housing and a (partial) solution for the expensive and inaccessible real estate market, it is important to remain aware of the large differences within collaborative practices. While some practices are intentionally aimed at decommodifying housing, others may not even provide affordable homes. Besides intention, time also plays an important role as values may change the affordability, accessibility or autonomy of a collaborative housing project over time.

Each collaborative housing project faces trade-offs between affordability, accessibility and autonomy, and navigating those trade-offs creates their character as a project. These tensions may come up at various stages during the process and I will illustrate the trade-offs with the story of Base Gaia, a cohousing initiative in Milan.

MILAN, 9 SEPTEMBER 2022

I got invited to stay with Base Gaia for one month and learn more about their project. Base Gaia started in 2014 with a group of 10 families wanting to live together. For them, sharing spaces and building community are the primary motivations to engage with collaborative housing.

One resident states that; *"I was born in a little city near Milan, about 12 km far from Milan. When I arrived in Milan and I became a mother, I was very alone in the apartment, even if we lived in a building with other young families who had children and babies but I was a lot alone".*

For her, living in Base Gaia was like living in a village in the city. To facilitate this village-like atmosphere, they co-designed the building and decided to create a common ground floor which includes a shared kitchen, co-working space, guest room and two extra spaces that can also be rented out or used for activities. They share a large garden and a rooftop terrace with extra laundry facilities. In the case of Base Gaia, all these shared spaces are additional to their private apartments where each has a kitchen and laundry facility too. Only collectivizing the guest room and co-working space has led to a direct reduction of the private spaces as no family has an extra room in their apartment but they instead use the shared one when hosting guests.

DETAILS OF COLIVING

THE ABUNDANT MATERIALITY OF SHARING







PRIVATE COMMON SPACES AS PUBLIC SPACES?

The extra common spaces are made possible by a local municipal rule, *il convenzionamento*, which provides groups like Base Gaia with a reduction of the development fees. This cuts costs and makes investments into shared spaces possible, although not easy. Base Gaia has been a pioneering project in Milan; the fight to obtain the convenzionamento took 492 days. With this procedure, private shared spaces are seen by the municipality as public spaces, hence the lower costs. Head of the housing department of the municipality explains the logic as follows:

"For example, if there are ten families with children and everybody works except one person and if this person can then take care of the children in a common space then this is good for the city of Milan because they will not use the public kindergarten. They use the space inside their building and therefore it is a good action because the municipality of Milan does not spend money for these children. It is a public service inside a private area and so it becomes a public service."



While I am happy for these ten families, it is not an accessible option for all. They are able to create shared spaces that facilitate sharing childcare and household tasks, but it also increases privatization. In fact, public money supports the creation of these private initiatives. While the municipality of Milan reasons that those common spaces can thus be seen as fulfilling public roles, there are no obligations for Base Gaia to actually fulfill such a public role.

In other words, when Base Gaia obtained the discounted price, there have been no formal requirements from their end to uphold the promise to open their private common spaces to the public. In fact, it remains disputable if the common areas of Base Gaia are really to be seen as public spaces when they are hidden behind a locked gate, only to be open to the public when the community wants.

THE REAL GOD IS AN APARTMENT

Affordability played an important role in the development and design of the building. Throughout numerous co-design sessions Base Gaia was presented with a difficult trade-off between sustainability and affordability when deciding on the building materials. While the more sustainable yet expensive wood had their preference, they eventually opted for a 'sandwich' of wood and concrete as a middle road.

Similarly, while each member would have preferred a more personalized design of their apartment, they decided to standardize some aspects - like the materials of the window frames - to keep costs low. Yet, the real point of affordability remains property ownership and the possibility to capitalize upon lease or sale of the apartment. In this regard, Base Gaia went through an affordability transition over time, starting from a relatively affordable project to unrestricted private property.

PAINTING THE WALLS

COMMON PRIVATE SPACES





At the start of their project, one of the requirements of the convenzionamento is a 30 year restriction on the possibility of sale. For this period, when a family decides to sell their apartment, they have to do so at a reduced rate and to another person or family with lower income. After 30 years, however, this restriction is lifted and each family may freely sell or lease their apartment at market rates. While the project started out as an affordable project of co-living, one resident describes that:

"In Italy the real God is an apartment, in Italy people will be more relaxed about their children if they have an apartment to live in. But yes, it is possible that our children have a different approach and that they would sell the private property without eye for what we create, without eye for the others... yet I trust these people [their children]."

For Base Gaia it was important to establish from the beginning that this project was their project, and that it should never burden the children. Property in Italy still plays an important role in social welfare. Hence, they decided from the beginning onwards that they would start with common property as a way to make the project affordable, but that after some years they would change the property arrangement to that of a classic condominium with private ownership.

THE TRADE-OFF

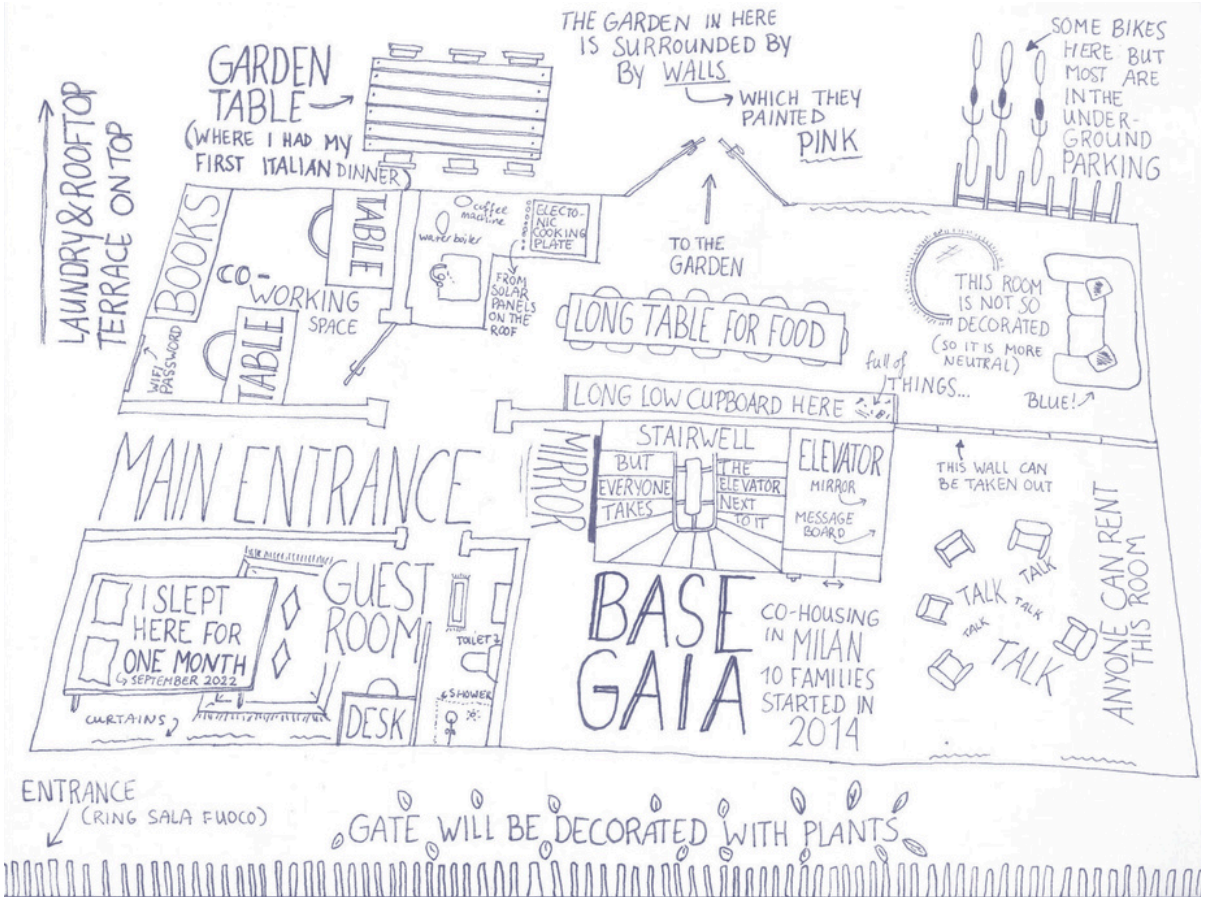
When looking at the process of Base Gaia and the affordability, accessibility and autonomy aspects of collaborative living, a tension arises between these three over time. Being autonomous means setting the rules and conditions as a group to be governed by, it may entail co-designing the shared spaces but it also entails collectively deciding for private property. The change in tenure form then in turn influences their ability to remain affordable and accessible over time.

Moreover, the autonomy of the group to decide how and when to use their common spaces limits their accessibility, as the so-called ‘public function’ of their common areas are only to become public when the community decides so. One architect of collaborative housing practices describes this tension in a clear way, according to him:

"affordability, accessibility and autonomy are concepts that are like strings attached, so you need to be careful when you pull one up the other ones are not going too much down. I think in a way keeping these three topics in mind and making conscious choices on how you run the project and what you design, it is just very important. It is crucial that as a group you are aware of what you are doing, you always need to go back to your values."

FIELDWORK

This essay has been based on a one-year research on eight collaborative housing practices in Amsterdam and Milan. I mapped the field of collaborative living in four categories: the common, self-promoted, co-managed and developer-led projects. For each project I compared their strategies for affordability, accessibility and autonomy. The conclusions are based on 32 semi-structured in-depth interviews with residents, architects, planners and experts. In this essay, I illustrate the tensions with a single case-study of Base Gaia, a self-promoted collaborative housing project, to allow for a more detailed analysis.


LAUNDRY & ROOFTOP TERRACE ON TOP
GARDEN TABLE
(WHERE I HAD MY FIRST ITALIAN DINNER)
THE GARDEN IN HERE IS SURROUNDED BY BY WALLS
WHICH THEY PAINTED PINK
SOME BIKES HERE BUT MOST ARE IN THE UNDER-GROUND PARKING
BOOKS
TABLE
CO-WORKING SPACE
TABLE
WIFI PASSWORD
coffee machine
water boiler
ELECTRONIC COOKING PLATE
FROM SOLAR PANELS ON THE ROOF
TO THE GARDEN
LONG TABLE FOR FOOD
THIS ROOM IS NOT SO DECORATED (SO IT IS MORE NEUTRAL)
full of THINGS...
BLUE!
LONG LOW CUPBOARD HERE
MAIN ENTRANCE
MIRROR
STAIRWELL
BUT EVERYONE TAKES
THE ELEVATOR NEXT TO IT
ELEVATOR
MIRROR
MESSAGE BOARD
THIS WALL CAN BE TAKEN OUT
I SLEPT HERE FOR ONE MONTH
SEPTEMBER 2022
GUEST ROOM
TOILET
SHOWER
DESK
CURTAINS
BASE GAIA
CO-HOUSING IN MILAN
10 FAMILIES STARTED IN 2014
TALK
TALK
TALK
TALK
ANYONE CAN RENT THIS ROOM
ENTRANCE
(RING SALA FUOCO)
GATE WILL BE DECORATED WITH PLANTS

VALUES AS A COMPASS

Community-identified values can function as a compass when navigating the tensions around affordability, accessibility and autonomy. Values, together with the local institutional framework, define the course of the projects and it is thus important to understand the values of new collaborative initiatives. Affordability, accessibility and autonomy are not straightforward concepts and they can be achieved, protected and changed in many ways.

For urban planners and policy makers, hoping to create more space for collaborative housing practices in cities to provide the long-term affordable, accessible and autonomous homes we need, it is crucial to understand the values of each project. Calling a project ‘collaborative’ does not necessarily imply they are also affordable.

While values may change over time, more attention should be paid to community identified values alongside the institutional context in which projects develop to understand their profile and relation to the city. In increasingly more expensive cities we are in desperate need for affordable homes, collaborative living includes interesting strategies to maintain affordability yet these may be put under pressure by other values. Merely being collaborative is not enough to guarantee affordability.

READ MORE

The full paper *"property and values: the afforability, accessability and autonomy of collaborative housing "* is published in the International Journal of Housing Policy

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