



# How Public Norms Help to Cope with Uncertainty in Complex Practices of Planning\*

Kamusal Normlar Karmaşık Planlama Uygulamalarındaki  
Belirsizlikleri Aşmada Nasıl Yardımcı Olur?

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## ABSTRACT

The article questions the contemporary dilemmas of planning by confronting the prevailing pragmatic approaches of urban and regional planning with the challenge to institutionalise public norms. The analytical framework highlights the fundamental difference between the socialisation of the normative dimension of planning (the setting of public norms that condition social interaction and policies and justify the appropriateness) and the pragmatic orientation of planning (the purposive targeting and horizontal collaboration of public and private agencies, the direct focus on problem-solving and the correction of errors). The author claims that a productive dialectic between the two dimensions is needed for the sake of legitimacy and effectiveness of planning. However, the normative institutional dimension appears to be neglected in ongoing practices of planning. The empirical investigation examines the conditions of transformational planning that aims at guiding fragmented city-regional spaces into more coherent city-regional configurations with sustainable qualities of place. Three conditions of city-regional transformation are taken into the examination: habitability, mobility, and the care for the climate.

**Keywords:** Habitability; mobility and climate sensitivity; public norms; urban planning.

## ÖZ

Bu makale, planlamanın çağdaş ikilemlerini, kentsel ve bölgesel planlamanın hâkim pragmatik yaklaşımlarını kamu normlarını kurumsallaştırma zorluğuyla karşı karşıya getirerek sorgulamaktadır. Analitik çerçeve, planlamanın normatif boyutunun toplumsallaştırılması (sosyal etkileşimi ve politikaları koşullandıran ve uygunluğu gerekçelendiren kamu normlarının belirlenmesi) ve planlamanın pragmatik yönelimi (amaca yönelik hedef belirleme ile kamu ve özel sektör arasındaki yatay iş birliğine, problem çözmeye ve hataların düzeltilmesine doğrudan odaklanma) arasındaki temel farkı vurgulamaktadır. Yazar, planlamanın meşruiyeti ve etkinliği için iki boyut arasında üretken bir diyalektığe ihtiyaç olduğunu iddia etmektedir. Ancak devam eden planlama uygulamalarında normatif kurumsal boyutun ihmal edildiği görülmektedir. Ampirik araştırma, parçalı şehir-bölge mekânlarını sürdürülebilir mekân niteliklerine sahip daha tutarlı şehir-bölgesel konfigürasyonlara yönlendirmeyi amaçlayan dönüştürücü planlamanın koşullarını incelemektedir. Şehir-bölgesel dönüşümün üç koşulu incelemeye alınmaktadır: yaşanabilirlik, hareketlilik ve iklime duyarlılık.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** yaşanabilirlik; hareketlilik ve iklime duyarlılık; kamusal normlar; kentsel planlama.

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### How to Deal with ‘Wicked Problems’?

Planning studies today have fully recognised the vulnerability and fallibility of planning processes that are caused by the mismatch of simply structured policies and planning interventions vis-à-vis the far more complex structures of the plural society in which they are supposed to bring guidance. The differences of valuation, knowledge, and control capabilities of the planning bodies and the manifold – largely unknown – self-organising forces in society are too large to legitimate and effectuate the well-intended efforts of central planning agencies. The insolvency of planning in a more complex society is evergreen in planning studies, ranging from the early recognitions by Karl Mannheim in the first part of the 20th century to the critical observations by James Scott in the late 1990s (Mannheim, 1940; Scott, 1998). Rittel and Webber deepened the insights of the fallibility of planning by fundamentally reasoning the complexity of ‘wicked problems’. The problem of wicked problems is not just in the failure to know the right answers and the possible corrections in complex situations but in the recognition that we (as planners) don’t even know what we don’t know (Rittel and Webber, 1973). Wicked problems cannot simply be solved. The suggested solutions are likely to become new parts of the problem. The crucial question is not how we might solve the insolvency of well-intended planning efforts but how to deal with the uncertainties as a fact of life.

The prevailing planning approaches of the last three decades may be considered as attempts to deal with this intriguing question. The ‘interactive’ approaches of planning emphasized various sorts of horizontal collaboration in order to replace the isolated position of hierarchical state planning; they include not only horizontal relationships between public sector agencies but also their links with businesses and social organisation (Mandelbaum et al., 1996). Some horizontal approaches even discussed planning initiatives in a flat ontology without public sector agencies or only in a secondary position (Boelens, 2018). Also the organisation of planning as a flexible and open dynamic process enriched the forms of interactive planning. These are based on a diversity of reciprocal relationships (ranging from dialogue and cooperation to negotiation, and conflict management) and include new agencies in different stages of decision-making and implementation. The ‘communicative’ approaches of planning deepened insights of interpretative knowledge in an increasingly plural society and replaced the single reliance on neutralised positive knowledge with the meaning of divergent social discourses (Fischer and Forester, 1993; Li and Wagenaar, 2019). These approaches invested in the symbolic uses of knowledge, in framing and narratives, and methods of persuasion as crucial ingredients of decision-making processes. The ‘learning approaches’ of planning focused

in particular on the planning of change in order to learn of experiences, in particular of planning failures, and to deepen the understanding of collective change.

These approaches were freshly introduced in the last decades in the theory and practice of planning although the meta-theoretical fundamentals in most cases elaborate on the classic roots of philosophical pragmatism (particularly the conceptualisation of consequentialism, situationism, experimentalism, and dialogic persuasion) (Dewey, 1927; Hoch, 2019; Salet, 2018a). Overall, the answers to the increasing fallibility of planning and its wicked problems focused on the improvement of the agility of planning pragmatism via horizontal and goal-oriented interaction in situational and experimental practices. Even the informational ‘complexity approaches’ result in promoting more direct dialoguing and experimenting when it eventually comes down to searching solutions for the complexity and uncertainty of planning (Innes and Booher, 2010; Roo et al., 2016). The pragmatic responses may have their merits but what if the unilateral focus on goal orientation, problem-solving, horizontal interaction, and experimental agility itself falls to the sides of the problems rather than the assets of planning? Then it becomes time to amplify the scope of analysis beyond pragmatism.

### Dialectic of Institutional and Pragmatic Planning

In this article, I take the institutional point of view where the process of institutionalisation is defined as *the socialisation of public norms that condition processes of social interaction*. The crucial statement is that purposive systems run off-course when not adequately sustained by public norms (Salet, 2018a, b). The challenges and problems of purposive action are immense in the complex society, a well socialised set of public norms is needed to provide guidance in these processes of uncertainty. The socialisation of public norms has a different meaning and fulfils a completely different role than pragmatic goal orientation via targeting objectives and the solving of problems. Goal orientation and problem-solving are outcome-focused, they target specific outcomes (space and time-bounded) and focus on correction in case of errors: they are performative and consequential. The normative rules, on the other hand, set general normative conditions to processes of interaction: they are conditional. The two orientations also search legitimacy in different ways. Normative judgment questions what is ‘appropriate’ and scrutinizes what people ‘may expect from you in your position’ considering the vital set of public norms and what justifies ‘the responsibility and right to act’ in a certain way. They sustain guidance at times of uncertainty. Pragmatic judgment compares the different options that might bring solutions to given problems and selects and corrects (in case of errors) the most promising trajectories in terms of effectiveness.

Both approaches are needed in a productive dialectic to underpin the mature legitimacy and effectiveness of planning. However, one of the larger problems in the 'managerial era of public policy-making' today is the neglect of the institutional dimension of planning. Most modern states focus directly on the pragmatic uses of targeting, negotiation, and problem-solving. This article suggests that the increasing fallacies of well-intended public planning efforts may be explained for a considerable part by this tendency. It would be naïve to claim that normative conditions could provide solutions from a fixed external position for the insolvency of wicked problems of planning. Institutional conditions come not from external safe heavens, they are man-made, such as the pragmatic deliberations, and for this reason, they are never fixated (Salet, 2021). Their real meaning depends on innovation and valorisation in practices of social interaction (Ostrom, 1990). Their effective meaning is not evident but depends on efforts to get their meaning settled, re-articulated, and recognised in the same processes of action where pragmatic motives are activated. It is more realistic to consider institutional conditions as a challenge than as given factualness (Savini et al., 2014; Giezen, 2018). The institutional potential fails if not recognized in processes of action; this – actually – is one of the more serious concerns today. Such as pragmatic choices, institutional conditions are changeable although the pathways of change differ. Whereas pragmatic deliberation changes rather flexibly in the targeting, problem-solving, and corrections at situ, institutional conditions usually adapt at a slower pace because their meaning evolves not only in the cases in situ but over the whole set of differently contextualised cases in which they evolve.

Summarising the analytical framework of this article, I will investigate the dialectic between the socialisation of institutional conditions and pragmatic initiatives of planning. A balanced interaction between the two is crucial. The pragmatic orientation is outcome-focused via policy aspirations and problem-solving. Its rationale is in selecting effective options and correcting failures. The analysis of institutional conditions makes a distinction between substantive norms and norms of politico-ordinance. Substantive norms may be social and cultural (Planey, 2020; Davoudi, 2018), historic- or political-economic (Sorensen, 2015), legal (Moroni, 2015). The norms of politico ordinance arrange the relationships between subjects in society in such a way that concentrations of power within the state or in the economy and society are countervailed. They set public conditions to the ordinance of interrelationships in actor constellations, such as markets (Alfasi and Portugali, 2007). The distinctions made in this framework are analytical. In practice, they often interfere and may make processes of change more gradual (Healey, 2018; Mahoney and Thelen, 2010; Granqvist et al., 2020;

Salet, 2021). Yet, it makes sense to make the analytical distinction to enable the analysis of whether the interaction between the institutional and the pragmatic dimension is mutually supportive or counterproductive.

### Making the Metropolis

The analytical format will be used to explore one of the larger issues of planning studies today: 'the making of the sustainable metropolis'. This challenge entails the multi-scalar efforts of policy-makers and civic initiators to transform the fragmented and highly commodified city-regional spaces in the contemporary stage of urbanisation into more balanced and distinctive urban constellations with 'sustainable qualities of place' (Massey, 2005; Healey, 2010, Salet, 2021). This process of transformation is taking place already some decades in many extensive urban regions but it appears very arduous to obtain distinctive social, cultural, and ecological qualities. Well-intended policy initiatives to transform the selective urban hierarchies of core cities vis-à-vis the chaotic spread-out of urban surroundings in more balanced polycentric networks often tend to regress in separate policies. The processes of commercial commodification are almost uncontrolled in the new city-regional spaces. The setting of new city-regional conditions of sustainability in this urban wilderness is not only complex but also highly conflictive and contested (Savini et al., 2014). We wonder whether and how the socialisation of public norms is made part of these struggles and how this might make a difference in the prevailing pragmatic planning processes of metropolitan transformation. The next empirical analysis will focus on three essential conditions in the city-regional itineraries toward more sustainable qualities of place:

- Conditions of Habitability;
- Conditions of Mobility;
- Conditions of Climate

### Conditions of Habitability

Habitability is one of the crucial conditions on the way towards more sustainable city-regions, such as Balducci and colleagues convincingly demonstrated in their analysis of experiences in the extensive metropolis of Milan (Balducci, Fedeli, and Pasqui, 2011). It includes far more than housing alone and focuses on the life qualities of urban settlements and their active appropriation by the residents: representing the residents' choices, nicely spaced, landscaped, well-accessible, and facilitated. It is important to socialize the public norms of civic participation and appropriation versus the economic mechanisms of commodifying the fragile spaces of city regions. The existence and practical meaning of public norms that underlie pragmatic decision-making is all but evident. Institutional work

requires effort. It is not a radical expression of extreme voluntarism to suggest that citizens constitute their own habitat but practices of planning tend to wander far beyond such a normative setting, becoming more and more dependent on managerial and professional arrangements. Making explicit the processes of normative deliberation (including its dilemmas and contested interpretations) urges city-regional planning to reach beyond the safe haven of professional expertise and technical rationalisation.

### Pragmatic Challenges Habitability

The practices of transitional planning are thorny and obdurate. They are characterized by the limits of decision-making (time limits, financial limits, limits of political opportunity, etc.) and problem-solving strategies of the most articulated urgencies, longing for solutions and effective outcomes rather than normative deliberation of the rationales of action. The prevailing practices of habitability planning are dominated by the accommodation of the housing shortages and the projected future needs. They include social and commercial projects of housing construction and focus on bottlenecks and tightened capacities. Pragmatic policies tend to reproduce the spatial hierarchy of core cities and core-centric strategies of expansion over polycentric regional configurations. The resources and professional power of core cities, central states, and commercial and social developers are bundled in effective partnerships resulting in the 'providence' of social and commercial housing at selected spaces.

### Dilemmas of Substantive Public Norms

The crucial norm of shaping and reshaping habitat is 'civic constituency', representing the right of citizens to participate and to appropriate urban spaces by the citizens (Lefebvre, 1996; Purcell, 2003). In post-war practices of habitat policies, however, the active involvement of the residents is severely neglected in prevailing managerial partnerships. Socialising the public norm of a civic constituency may enhance the commoning of place qualities, the landscaping, and the social facilities of the daily living environment. It is a matter of making the human conditions work, activating the use-values of urban spaces. It does not automatically focus on constructing new large estates but on appreciating existing habitats as living spaces that may be refitted and extended by civic responsibility. Obviously, the professionalism of well-organised developing agencies and governmental agencies will be needed in these processes of social reconstruction but civic participation and appreciation should be initiating. To give a brief example of this normative dilemma, I may refer to the actual tendencies in my home country, The Netherlands. After twenty years of liberal market dominance (that led to new biases and also stagnation of housing construction),

there are signs of resurrecting voluminous social and commercial housing programs in the current negotiations on behalf of the new cabinet in order to meet the strongly increased housing shortages. For those who criticised the dominance of neo-liberalism, this might sound like a relief, however, without socialising civic constituency it will tend to reproduce the previous partnerships at the supply-side of housing markets, at a far distance of the needs and appreciation of the residents. The device 'building, building, building...', may help to cope with quantitative housing shortages but not automatically with the appreciation of the built urban environment. The normative dilemmas about whose city is reshaped, who actually owns the city and the unfolding city-region (including the mix or segregation of different households, etc.) need explicit deliberation. Distributive norms of land, development, and finance are significant in this context (Savini et al., 2016).

### Dilemmas of Political Ordinance

Normative dilemmas of political ordinance focus on the arrangement of countervailing powers in the rights between subjects against the uncontrolled concentrations of power within the state and within the economy and society. This emphasises the crucial role of law and legislation in the arrangements of social interaction. In planning studies, the role of law and legislation is often criticized for being formal, hierarchical, and top-down but actually, the normative meaning of the law is crucial to enable fair arrangements of social interaction. When legislators delegate state power almost unconditionally to managerial administrations, such as is the prevailing tendency in most modernised states over the last decades, they do not only cast themselves out of state responsibility but also the courts and thus also the citizens. This is how the managerial partnerships of well-intended public programs almost uncontrolled build up their performances of 'providence' without knowing the real needs and appreciations of the passive 'users' at the end of the pipelines of public production. Legislation is also needed to empower citizens against the uncontrolled systemic power of lonely commercial trading the land and the built environment of expansive urban spaces. This makes it so crucial for legislation to centre the relationships of housing governance on the crucial position of civic constituency. This would not only require an active role of the residents in processes of construction and reconstruction but – as housing always occurs in interrelationships between a multitude of agencies with a divergent range of sources – also the recognition of this civic role in the attitudes of the other agencies that are involved in the (re-)shaping of the housing and the natural and built environment.

An interesting normative dilemma of political ordinance relates to the demarcation of territorial and functional spaces of housing governance. The demarcation of the

precise level of regional scale at which specific transformation of an urban organisation is a crucial condition for many following decisions that connects housing to existing patterns or of urbanization, or to their innovation. In practices of urban expansion, the differentiation of urban activities over different levels of regional scale is often dominated by hierarchic networks of the core city administration (with the larger expertise and resources) but the shift to grade up the polycentric networks in new networks of organisation requires in many cases a larger and differently structured demarcation of city-regional scale. The patterning of polycentric city-regional configurations also requires close interconnectivity of housing policies with landscaping, infrastructures, and facility policies. Defining these conditions of urbanization also presupposes inter-scalar positioning of public and private sector inter-relationships from local to national and increasingly international levels of scale. The relevance of this normative dilemma is represented in the contestation of dominant networks in core city/ state/ Europe partnerships (often including business and societal organisation) versus the profiling of new city-regional networks.

### Case: The Self-build Experience

Exemplifying an international case study on habitability, I refer to a wide empirical comparative study on self-building experiments of households with low- and moderate-incomes, recently conducted in cooperation with colleagues of cities in several continents (Salet et al., 2020). Self-building has to be understood in a wide sense. It should not be simply reduced to the self-constructed shelter of home-steaders. Internationally, self-build takes many different forms. Often it does not refer to construction by residents themselves but by a professional organisation. The land and property are usually also not owned by residents, certainly not in the case of low-income residents. The crucial indicator of self-build in our comparison is the definition of self: the active participation and appropriation of the residents in the shaping of their habitat. The control of the resident may but does not necessarily include the material property but it certainly includes the control by residents in additional property relationships, such as access, quality, and exploitation (Blomley, 2008; Bossuyt, 2021). To grow in this active role as citizens and to fulfil the mission of appropriation of your habitat, may take years of active involvement at different levels of scale (not just constructing your own home but jointly mobilising the municipal and wider conditions that rest on these practices in an often commodified context). As housing and landscaping are shaped in a complex web of relationships of subjects and agencies with a different range of resources, the challenge is to address the attention of different agencies on the involvement and appropriation of the residents.

### Outcomes Dialectical Forces of Self-build Experiences

The research included extremely different contexts of self-build experience (such as those in Sao Paulo, Istanbul, or Amsterdam) which are incomparable in the material sense but by focusing on the relationships between involved actors, more particularly on the contested inter-relationships between civic constituency and economic commodification, it was possible to compare some of the relational findings and learn of mutual experiences. Pragmatic housing approaches tend to prevail in most cases, but the contexts and mobilisation of institutional conditions differ in local contexts over time and space. Cities in North West and Mid Europe, characteristically, employ a rich history of active social housing since the early 20th century. However, the resident became a passive tailpiece in the post-war policy coalitions between cities, national states, and the producing social and commercial agencies at the supply side of housing markets. As a result, the production of housing proved professional and well-managed with relatively high volumes and functional qualities but also with changeable conditions of access, quality, and exploitation and often not strongly appropriated by the residents. The functional modernisation of Western cities is lacking in many cases the civic expression of 'habitat'. Recent initiatives of self-build and cooperatives in city-regions such as Berlin, London or Amsterdam attempt to fill this gap, but thus far tend to be rather embryonic.

At the other extreme, in the case of self-building in Latin America, the social housing experiences proved rather marginal over the twentieth century because of less developed economic welfare. However, in cities such as Quito or Sao Paulo, recent experiences also highlight a number of cases with a striking involvement of cooperative residents. The commercial pressure on land and built environment of the core cities urges low-income households to marginal sites in the urban periphery but there are fascinating initiatives of civic cooperatives to recapture central places via occupying empty building complexes or misused land, such as the spectacular ecological cleaning and re-using of a wasted ravine in Quito (Solidaridad Quitumbe) that was reconstructed to an urban place and landscape of attraction (Espinoza Riera et al., 2020). Two case studies in Sao Paulo reflect the long efforts of civic institutionalisation via the occupation of buildings and land in central areas of the city (D'Ottaviano et al., 2020). In the case of the Dandara Building (housing 120 families) it took the cooperative initiative of poor residents 17 years to refit the complex for housing, it required the mobilisation of the public opinion, the material support of governmental agencies, the professional contribution by urban and financial professionals and legal processes of litigation to make it a success. The

most impressive result was the learning process of the residents who initially did not have the experience and the capabilities to control their own habitat. The social movement did have professional knowledge but rather than taking the decisions themselves, they centred the process around the learning of the residents in order to institutionalise civic participation and appropriation. As a result, the civic cooperatives ‘own’ the complex in an immaterial sense as a product of their choices and public efforts. In this particular case, the residents also became the material owners which carry a risk for future uses, as poor proprietors may be vulnerable to sell their property to more affluent users in a market situation where the prices of land and buildings increase fast (D’Ottaviano et al., 2020). This vulnerability was also exposed in the initially very successful and voluminous self-build cases of *gecekundu* (‘squatter houses’) and *yap-sat* (‘build-and-sell’) in Istanbul (Enlil and Dinçer, 2020).

### Mobility

Mobility is one of the most critical issues in the making of sustainable and coherent city regions. It is related to all aspects of sustainability: the economic and social configurations of city regions and the spatial uses and lifestyles of residents and passers-by. One of the crucial challenges is to grade up the polycentric and fragmented decentralisation of urbanisation in guided networks of sustainable mobility by interconnecting the decentralised centres. This challenge raises the dilemma between extending the hierarchy of core-city radiation versus the grading up of polycentric networks.

### Pragmatic Challenges Mobility

In practices of decision-making in city-regions, the pragmatic challenges of mobility planning tend to be dominated by the urgencies to accommodate the growing demands of economic and civic uses. The growing demands are recorded and monitored in traffic jams, waiting times, and other bottlenecks of mobility patterns. The priorities of programming mobility projects are further underlined by projections of future needs. The observance of bottlenecks and urgencies of capacity planning tend to prevail in the pragmatic framing of mobility planning. This framing of mobility problems is often negotiated in collaborative processes of the core cities, the infrastructure bodies at the state and European level, and business and transportation agencies, where the priorities are defined in the programming of transportation projects. The existing spatial/transportation hierarchies tend to be reproduced – implicitly or explicitly – in these collaborative policies, resulting in the further core-centric expansion of transportation hierarchies in the city region.

### Dilemmas of Substantive Public Norms

The socialisation of public norms might make a difference in pragmatic mobility policies by highlighting the underlying normative conditions of public policies. There are plenty of public norms on this wide field of policy, they relate for instance in connection with the concern of climate change to the conditions that value and prioritise different modalities of transport. A frequently returning case is the resetting of priorities for walking- and bike infrastructures and public transportation above the use of cars in dense city regions, and in particular to interconnect these modalities more smartly. The crisis of the COVID pandemic provided good opportunities to reset the normative conditions of different transport modalities. Many cities are initiating ‘green’ experiments of mobility and new urban landscapes. At the city-regional level, the socialisation of public norms has to profile the dilemma of strengthening the existing hierarchies of transport and transportation or guiding towards new interconnectivities of the recently decentralised spaces of employment and residential neighbourhoods. A crucial dilemma is the choice between the conditioning of ‘capacity planning’ versus the patterning norms of ‘accessibility planning’ (Straatemeier, 2008). Capacity planning has to solve the bottlenecks and improve the efficiency of existing communication channels whereas the norms of accessibility condition the pattern chances of interaction. Last but not least, institutional socialisation may make a difference to pragmatic planning by explicating the distributive norms in planning dilemmas. Planning for who, in whose interests is mobility planning undertaken? The decision to accommodate growing demands is not a neutral decision: it advantages the position of some uses and disadvantages the other. Making the dilemma explicit and the socialisation of distributive norms really makes a difference in practices of planning.

### Dilemmas of Norms of Political Ordinance

Public norms of politico-ordinance relate to the ordinance of infrastructure utility markets, not just in the ordinary economic sense of guaranteeing economic competitiveness but also in political sense marking the role of the state and civic constituency, including issues of access and distribution. Most arrangements of mobility infrastructure require long-term financing and are established in long during interdependencies between public sector bodies and transportation agencies. The post-war economic ordinance of most public utilities has a strong bias toward the arrangement of the supply of facilities. Arrangements of different states mainly differ in the grades of involvement of the state and the private or non-governmental infrastructure agencies but the common denominator is the marginal position of civic constituency in these arrangements. The normative question is ‘whose mobility is at stake’?

With regards to city-regional urbanisation the challenge of politico-ordinance is to demarcate the level of scale of city-region and to position this demarcated city-region in the inter-scalar governmental and societal relationships. This is a complex challenge as city-regions are not formally established, the position of most city-regions is established as a form of cooperation between municipalities. The arrangement of polycentric infrastructure accessibility depends in most cases on secondary arrangements by cooperating municipalities whose first political accountabilities regard their 'own' territories. This also complicates the interrelationships with the state, the European Union, and non-governmental or private sector organisations. Next, an important normative condition concerns the establishment of city-regional transport authorities, which exist in quite a number of city-regions and often function as a catalyst of city-regional organisation. The existence of city-regional transportation authorities provides the ability and the logical 'address' for decentralisation of slow trains of the national railways. Empowering these authorities enables far-reaching improvement of city-regional services of transportation (higher frequencies, faster trains, much better arrangement of intermodal transportation connectivity). Finally, the institutional city-regional anchors may act as catalysts of interdisciplinary coordination (integrating spatial policies, housing, utilities, etc.).

### Case City-regional Light Rail

I take the example of city-regional light rail. In the patterning of the regional scope of cities, sometimes too much is expected of the transformation potential of light rail infrastructures. Rail infrastructure is not easy to adapt. It is expensive and depends on long-term investment and interdependent policy trajectories of established governmental, non-governmental, and market agencies, sticking in their own sources, interests and lobbies to get a return on investment. The path dependencies tend to reproduce the existing spatial patterns of infrastructure, in particular, the hierarchical radiants leading from and towards the core of the largest cities and to interconnect their hierarchical nodes with other modalities (such as slow trains, inter-city trains, and (inter) national fast speed trains but also airports and other major hubs that connect international cities). Whereas the actual decentralisation of housing and employment has decentralised over extensive city regions, it appears very difficult to adapt existing rail hierarchies to upgrade the networks of polycentric (often more tangential) patterns. City-regional change of light rail planning is reluctant both at the level of socialising new institutional conditions and at the level of pragmatic planning. Almost all city regions struggle with the adaptations of underlying public norms, both the substantive norms and the political ordinance.

### Outcomes Dialectic Forces Mobility

The pragmatic discourses of capacity planning and collaborative strategies of supply-side planning by state, infrastructure agencies and market, are prevailing in most city regions. A good example is the planning of a new light rail in metropolitan London. It would hardly be possible to find a larger contrast between the extreme hierarchy of the historic rail pattern of London (where all radiants are pointing at the core of the city) and the extremely decentralised and polycentric field of urbanisation (the urban housing and employment is fragmented and spread out over a very wide region). The largest recent project CrossRail (actually, Europe's largest light rail project today) goes in a straight line from Reading and Heathrow in the west through the City to Shenfield and Abbey Woods, interconnecting the major infrastructure hubs (including the airports and fast speed rail stations) and the financial centres. It is sponsored by the Transport Authority of London, the state and the (economic) city. The project enlarges the existing spatial and transportation hierarchies rather than grading up the networks of polycentrism, it enlarges the capacity of existing rail lines and stations rather than patterning new accessibilities, and it advantages the economic interests rather than shaping new mobility potential for the spread-out urban population. The London case is the role model of consolidated infrastructure planning.

Yet, empirical outcomes differ over time and place. Normative deliberation can make a difference. The case of Paris demonstrates how difference can be made. Here, the state and the core city took contradictory positions. The state plans for the Grand Paris Express resemble the hierarchical patterns of Crossrail in London. This express rail was modelled to interconnect all main infrastructure hubs and economic concentrations in metropolitan Paris, enlarging existing hierarchies, and focusing on economic interests. The expansive city of Paris, however, chose a completely different trajectory and promoted a circular tramway in the first outside ring of Paris in order to interconnect the spread city-regional residential and employment concentrations. The contestation of the two projects eventually resulted in a combination of the different plans. The combination of institutional and pragmatic tendencies of planning always leads to a sort of negotiated change but the case demonstrates that it makes a difference to explicate the public norms (hierarchical conditions versus spatially balancing), patterning new accessibility versus plane capacity planning, explicating distributional norms of who profits (social versus purely economic benefits) and to critically mark the positioning of mobility planning in intra-organisational governance. The underlying normative conditions of pragmatic mobility planning may be consolidated in interdependencies but they are not unchangeable. In

the case of metropolitan Paris, the city of Paris made the difference.

The final example highlights the actual trends of mobility planning in the Dutch Randstad today. Metropolitan Amsterdam embarks on the extension of the urban metro line to the airport Schiphol. It is the city's largest light rail project for the next decade, considering the considerable dependence on sponsoring by the state. The project will enlarge the existing spatial and transportation hierarchies. It does also not innovate the patterns of city-regional accessibility. Schiphol is already the best accessible node, certainly from Amsterdam, and there are no strong residential transportation needs on the selected trajectory in-between the city and the airport because of building restrictions in the airport zone. It is a pure choice of capacity planning. The project serves the international and national visitors to the city (tourism and economic functions) rather than the transportation needs of the urban population in the spread-out city region. The project is strongly lobbied by the economic partners of the airport and the national railways (who take profit of the extra capacities for national and international railways). None of the normative conditions mentioned above is taken into deliberation. The conditions of pragmatic planning are completely different in Randstad South. Here, the core cities Rotterdam and The Hague and some medium-sized urban networks are attempting already some decades to grade up the poly-centric network to metropolitan coherency. The first great breakthrough of mobility planning was the establishment of 'Randstadrail', a smart multi-modal metro/ tram/ bus connection between The Hague, Zoetermeer, and Delft. This project aimed to interconnect the relatively isolated new residential settlements in the fringe of the core cities to the urban networks. It was a success from the first day, waiting for additional spatial planning to use the immense potential of new stations in the inner-ring of the metropolis. The 'peripheries' residents take profit from the new pattern of accessibility and are integrated in the heart of the metropolitan network (Giezen et al., 2014). For the next decade, The Hague-Rotterdam Metropolis aims at a second network connection linking the southern and the northern part of Randstad South (Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Delft, The Hague, and Leiden). A crucial point is the empowerment of the metropolitan transport authority. Diverse slow trains of the national railways were decentralised to this authority, enabling pragmatic planning to optimise the quality, the frequency of lines, and the real integration with other modes of transportation. There is still potential to enlarge and intensify the interrelationships with other fields of policy in order to grade up the sustainable qualities of place but – undeniably – a new metropolis is in the making.

### Conditions of Climate

The urgency to care for the conditions of climate is self-evident but the theme is too large to be studied in the context of this article. Climate policies address among others the change of industrial patterns, the transformation of agriculture, the adaptations of lifestyles and the built environment, the saving and transition of energy, and the climate adaptation of water policies. I focus selectively on energy transition because of its crucial interrelationships with all these fields of activity and because of its huge impact on urban systems. This section builds on an extensive recent study into the Dutch policies of energy transition (Salet, 2021). The Odyssey from the production and use of fossil sources toward renewable sources and carriers of energy is a huge process of transformation, navigating the struggles of change through long-term interdependencies of state and economy and other obstacles of change. It includes the laborious transitions of gas and coal power to nuclear power, sources of biomass, wind/ solar power, and new carriers of energy such as hydrogen. It is a very complex process of transformation where the making of errors is unavoidable and where the occurrence of reversed outcomes of purposive planning efforts are more than likely.

### Pragmatic Challenges Energy Transition

International treaties and European accords address the challenge of climate with high aspirations to reduce greenhouse emissions by 55% in 2030 compared with the levels of 1990 and towards almost zero-emission in 2050. The national states prefer pragmatic approaches of energy transition, targeting the aspirations of change in operational programs and creating bodies of negotiation and cooperation with business and social organisations. The horizontal organisation of energy transition programming by multi-scalar governmental agencies and social and economic organisations is almost standard in most European administrations, not in the last place instigated by the European administration. The managerial adage of horizontal collaboration and purposive programming (including the reciprocal organisation of negotiating, coalition building, targeting, implementing, monitoring, correcting policies) represents the prevailing pragmatic approaches of planning for change in our time. This trajectory of the energy transition is an open-ended itinerary; it organizes a multitude of power in society by combining the interests and sources of power of the involved public- and private-sector agencies. However, the socialisation and generally binding commitment of public norms are not standard in this dominant performative approach of coalition building and targeting. Its legitimacy and effectiveness may turn out different for those who are not involved in the horizontal coalitions of policy-making and it has to be seen how far the negotiated purposive am-



bitions of those who are involved, actually lead to the aimed changes of attitude.

### **Dilemmas of Substantive Public Norms**

There are numerous normative dilemmas on such a comprehensive field as energy transition. They have different origins, their plural nature often urges to contestation. I will discuss four categories of norms. The first category of energy norms calls for the adequate future availability and reliability of energies for economic and social uses. This category is often the best socialised and internalised in decision-making bodies. The states do not automatically take the role of energy production but in all cases, they set the normative conditions for adequate and reliable availability of energies. The second category of public norms takes care of the urgencies of climate change. They include such norms as the need for parsimony or saving of the uses of energy. They also focus on the reduction of greenhouse emissions. They may also prohibit or sanction the production and use of fossil sources of energy. The third category consists of safety and protection norms (such as seismic safety in case of gas and coal extraction, or the care of biodiversity and the protection of forestry in the case of biomass energies). The fourth category of public norms is the norms of social distribution: whose energies? Who pays for the energy transition? These categories are not enumerating, there may be more. However, already these categories create arduous dilemmas in the practices of energy transition and their intensity of socialisation and internalisation differs over different actors. On behalf of the legitimacy and effectiveness of energy transition, it is important to have a balanced normative deliberation over these different sets of norms. They can make a difference in planning practices.

### **Dilemmas of Norms of Political Ordinance**

Norms of the political ordinance are crucial in the case of the energy transition. Historically, most energy markets were arranged as 'public utilities' but the European economic liberalisation urged a separation of public-led infrastructures and private-led services on these infrastructures. For this reason, the economic ordinance has been adapted rigorously, resulting in huge multi-national mergers of energy services by industries (including state-owned industries) that compete to conquer the liberalised markets. However, the changing of roles of states and industries did not change the historic bias to supply-side arrangements of the post-war energy markets. Also in the economically liberalised order states and industries (multinational companies today) negotiate about the production of energy. The aspects of the political ordinance, particularly related to the access of the services (for instance by civic cooperations) and the norms of distribution, are neglected in these norms of the ordinance. In a period of the energy transition, many

new energy markets are created, such as the heating market, the wind- and solar-power markets, and the hydrogen market. The dilemma of the ordinance is also here whether the existing economic bias to the supply-side arrangements will be reproduced in the conditions of the new markets or that also political conditions of the ordinance will be established. Considering the social and political urgency of climate policies, civic and environmental movements follow the ordinance of energy markets with Argus's eyes. The function of the political ordinance is to arrange particularly civic access and social distribution in order to countervail the concentrations of power in the economy and within the administrative government, certainly also the partnerships between these powerful entities (Salet, 2021).

The next crucial theme of political ordinance concerns the political arrangement of accountabilities in the social and economic interaction between subjects (individuals or agencies). There are various applications of the old principle of liability, claiming that the negative effects of production are fed back to those who cause the harm. In the case of energy transition, the negative effects translate into greenhouse emissions. Based on this principle, Europe introduced in 2005 the Emission Trade System (ETS) by arranging a market of emission rights within ceilings, where the market screws up the prices of emission when the ceilings are tightened. The mechanism is potentially effective but depends on tenacious political negotiation between states about the tightening. For this reason, at the level of the particular states, it is politically deliberated whether additional liability arrangements may be established. Several states decided to additional arrangements, others are reluctant to constrain large industries with extra levies in the open international competition. As a consequence, in the latter countries, the willingness of large industries to invest in clean technologies is made dependant on state subsidies in order to bridge the 'non-profitable tops' of investment.

### **The Case of Dutch Policies of Energy Transition**

I take the case of energy transition in The Netherlands (Salet, 2021). Politics of energy transition are delayed in this country because of the availability of a huge gas bulb, extracted since the 1960s. However, this stock began to waver in the new millennium (also literally because of the increasing earthquakes) and in the last decade, new policies of energy transition took off. The climate issues urged a robust transition and today the Dutch energy policies rank amongst the states with the highest policy aspirations in Europe. The planning approach of the energy transition is a prototype of planning pragmatism. In 2018, a National Climate Agreement sealed the collaboration of more than one hundred governmental, economic and environmental organisations in an accord on five tables of horizontal negotiation (the energy transition belonged to one of these

negotiation tables) (Climate Agreement, 2019). Only some social and environmental organisations did not sign the eventual agreement. Within the same year, the results of negotiation were capitalised in the Climate Law (Netherlands Climate Law, 2019). The Climate Law also followed the agreements of the Treaty of Paris and even mentioned higher aspirations (that are recently accepted Europe-wide after the recent European Green Deal) (European Commission, 2020). The Climate Law introduced a new planning fabrication over three tiers of government, cascading down the ambitious targets (reducing greenhouse emissions with 49% to 55% in 2030 and to 95% in 2050) and decentralising the implementation to regional and local government. Policy targets are set and timely programmed at each level and a system of monitoring is established. Large subsidies and other means were provided to involve the private sector in the transition program. The pragmatic style of planning was also reflected in the open managerial and flexible style of the planning process (negotiating, targeting, facilitating, monitoring, correcting).

Despite the sky-high policy aspirations, the outcomes - thus far - are disappointing. The national monitoring agency calculated that with the current speed of transition 34% reduction of greenhouse emission may be more likely in 2030 than the aimed 55% (Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2020). How to explain the gap between the ambitious and well-intended policy aspirations and these poor outcomes? It is early to draw definitive conclusions but the gap is too large to let it be. I explore the neglecting of socialising and internalising public norms as the conditional guidance of pragmatic planning policies. Despite the overwhelming policy aspirations, attention to public norms is scarce in the Dutch policy strategies and climate legislation. The legislator agreed with the ambitious policy objectives and intentions but delegated the immense policy transition almost unconditionally to the administration, in particular the economic ministry, to orchestrate the processes of horizontal negotiation.

### Outcomes Dialectic Forces Energy Transition

Table 1 illustrates, in a nutshell, the rigorous transitions of energy production over recent decades. The extraction of natural gas is recently minimised to an extreme low level following the gradual emptying of the gas stock, the rise of seismic problems, including civic protests and damage claims, and the increasing concern of greenhouse emissions. Most are replaced by import, the intentions of reduction to 2030 are considerable but apparently not yet realised. The figures of coal power production reflect the drama of installing a new cohort of coal power plants in 2015 and 2016 in order to provide future availability of energy, in the same year that successful litigation by the environmental group URGENDA (Rechtbank Den Haag,

**Table 1.** Production electricity (in Peta Joules)

	2005 realised	2019 realised	2030 aimed
Natural gas	210	256	165
Coal Power	83	63	0
Nuclear	14	14	13
Renewable	27	83	330
Biomass	19	20	10
Solar	0	19	85
Wind	7	41	235

Source: selected by author from Planbureau voor de Leefomgeving, 2020. Table 14, p.180 (Salet2021).

2015) and the Treaty of Paris called for compliance of internationally obligated climate norms. Both the enabling of the power plants and the damage claims of their closure (before 2030) are at the expense of public funds.

The most spectacular transition is the robust growth of renewable energy sources, in particular wind power. The growth of biomass is heavily contested because the burning of wooden pallets is even more harmful than coals and the compensating intake of carbons by new plantations may take decades. However, inexistent European legislation, it is counted as renewable, leaving the national ministry in doubt whether to continue its promotion of biomass or to reduce it drastically. The story of solar and wind power is a success story. The high projections of wind power in 2030 are realistic. The subsidised programming of mega wind power parks in Dutch polders and the recent mega wind parks off-shore (recently even without subsidies) may be called – internationally – a success of the Dutch energy transition (Salet, 2021). However, this energy transition does not translate to the reduction of greenhouse emissions. The wind power of the mega parks on land is not used to relieve the existing fossil uses but – largely – to attract data centres of international companies (subsidised with about 6 billion E out of public fund). Data centres are huge consumers of energy, one hyper centre needs more energy than the energy of all users in Amsterdam together. About ten centres like this are planned in the Netherlands in a strategy to become the international hub of digital flows (competing with London and Frankfurt). The wind is available only 25% of the year, the centres need energy full-time. Thus 75% energy has to be provided in a different way (in practice via fossil gas). This makes the mega wind power parks on land champions of greenhouse emission. The wind parks off-shore are mostly owned and managed by oil industries and international energy plants. Their production bears risks because all wind energy is produced in peaks, and then in abundance, pressing the prices on the market down. The park managers prefer large contracts with heavy industries to control these risks and in some

cases also to provide their own petrochemical industries (oil companies like Shell). The main use of this is to produce hydrogen. Hydrogen is a very promising carrier of energy. It can easily be stored and transported and it may produce high temperatures. However, it is expensive and needs 30% electricity to be made via electrolysis. Greening electrolysis with wind power is a productive idea but it should be planned in a balanced way. The making of it spills the direct use of wind power. Furthermore, as wind power is available only 25% of the time, it needs an additional 75% of (fossil) energy to enable continuous electrolysis. The high costs of electrolysis prohibit let it be produced only at the peak moments of overabundant wind power. To conclude, the use of hydrogen will not automatically reduce the greenhouse emissions, it may even increase them; the volumes of its production and uses should not be left to market decisions, it needs the balancing of public norms. At the moment, collaborative partnerships between market and state are made to promote trajectories of growth. At all intergovernmental tiers (from cities and regions to Europe) public sector agencies are involved in order to promote this economic growth and to bridge the non-profitable costs of private sector investment. However, at the level of public norms, the public sector is not yet much committed.

The fast overview may explain the problems when the socialisation of public norms and the well-intended planning efforts are out of balance (Salet, 2021). The decision-making bodies lacked a mature deliberation of the climate norms, the protection norms, and the distribution norms in the case of gas and coal power. The major policy shifts in these segments were enforced by the insurgent public via social protest, media strategies, research, and by litigation. The same is happening in the case of biomass. Concerns are also growing about the uncontrolled planning arrangements for wind power and electrolysis. Also, the political ordinance is highly biased to promote the production of energy sources, neglecting to mark the political and civic responsibilities. Immense public sources are used to enable large industries to invest in greening their harmful emissions rather than taxing their pollution and returning this budget in case of clean technology investment. Making greenhouse emissions more expensive would reduce the gap of non-profitable investments. Opting for 'benevolent' subsidies, however, makes the state part of the producing management of industries instead of conditioning it for the public sake. And once, when politics shifts (which happened thus far only after social turmoil and litigation) the public funds has again to carry the damage claims of disinvesting the policy failures, such as already happened with gas, coals, biomass, and probably will happen with wind and electrolysis. The climate- and distributional effects of these well-intended planning efforts are reversed to the planning aspirations. The problem is not in the new tech-

nologies, such as wind power, hydrogen, or even biomass although all sources carry some questionable elements, but in the normative conditions under which well-intended renewable energies are produced and used.

## Conclusion

In this article, I wondered whether the socialisation and internalisation of public norms might make a difference in the prevailing pragmatic policies in the transitional process of shaping places of real sustainable quality in the fragmented spaces of city regions. I intended to demonstrate these differences with regard to three crucial conditions: habitability, mobility, and climate. There is a strong need for pragmatic planning in transitional processes but, paradoxically, at the same time, there is a strong need for its normative transcendence. In all three cases, the pragmatic approaches of problem definition and problem-solving are highly dominant whereas the questioning dimension of normative deliberation is neglected in planning practices. Socialising public norms does not provide certainty, their plural nature is contested as well, but it helps to question and to explicate the conditions of planning transitions. Strikingly, the crucial substantive public norms are not questioned in these processes of change, neither are the norms of politico ordinance. In all three cases, there is a bias of managerial and professional collaboration between intergovernmental agencies, business, and interested organisations, whereas the crucial role of the civic constituency has to struggle its way through protest and litigation. Apparently, the residuals of the welfare state are not yet completely overhauled in the present conditions of post-modernity. The institutionalisation of public norms as a countervailing source of planning inspiration cannot be considered as a given but as a challenge of new experimentation.

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