



# Institutional innovation for more involving urban transformations: Comparing Danish and Dutch experiences<sup>☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

Local governments are now facing a need for societal transition to meet the challenges of climate change and lack of social cohesion. Institutional innovation in urban development is needed, especially in terms of more involving processes to achieve the UN sustainable development goals. In this article we ask how institutional innovation can ensure more involving urban transformations. We also discuss what the conditions are for such institutional innovations to increase the transformative capacity of cities. The discussion departs from the collaborative public sector innovation literature, and the collaborative planning literature, and attempts to bridge these in analyzing the cases. The analysis is based upon two qualitative case studies of new institutional practices in urban development projects – in Roskilde (Denmark) and in Enschede (the Netherlands). Both projects were a response to the local governments' subjection to a critical juncture, or crisis. Findings suggest that long-term and permanent organizational changes can be achieved when local governments implement institutional innovations to remedy the critical juncture.

## 1. Introduction

Cities today often have ambitious aims and strategies related to climate transition, sustainability, and social cohesion, frequently having the UN SDG 17 as its point of departure (UN, 2015; UN, 2019). Urban transformations, which is an important part of the climate transitions of cities, often spurs conflicts about densification, car-restrictions, and accessibility to public transport, dwellings and public space. Municipalities therefore need more transformative capacity, and collaborative public sector innovation can contribute to find new models for involvement and contributions from stakeholders and citizens (Caragliu, Del Bo, & Nijkamp, 2011; de Jong, Joss, Schraven, Zhan, & Weijnen, 2015; Hartley, Sørensen, & Torfing, 2013; Nyseth & Hamdouch, 2019). This is also stressed in UN sustainable development goal no. 17 (UN, 2015; UN, 2019), emphasizing new ways of, and platforms for, cooperation between public sector authorities and private actors.

In this article, we will present two cases of urban transformation, and illuminate how different examples of institutional innovation contributed to increase the transformative capacity of two small cities. Institutional innovation is often defined as “novel, useful and legitimate

change that disrupts, to varying degrees, the cognitive, normative, or regulative mainstays of an organizational field” (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015, p. 407). This understanding of innovation resonates well with the shift taking place in many European countries today, i.e. a shift from a hierarchical mode of governance to a more hybrid form, also consisting of market-oriented and network-driven modes of governance (e.g., Falleth, Hanssen, & Saglie, 2010; Hanssen, 2012; Nyseth, 2008; Røsnes, 2005; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). Thus, contemporary societal challenges call for institutional innovations which entail a different dynamic of the relations within society. In this article, we will examine this theme more thoroughly. We therefore ask:

How can institutional innovation ensure more involving urban transformations, and what are the conditions for such institutional innovations to increase the transformative capacity of cities?

The article is based on a qualitative case study of new institutional practices in two historical examples of urban development projects in Europe – in Denmark (Roskilde) and the Netherlands (Enschede). Both projects were a response to the local governments' subjection to a critical juncture, 20 years ago. We illustrate the before and after of the two

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cases in Figs. 1 to 3. Using two historical cases allows for us to study long-term responses, more specifically how institutional innovation in local government can result in permanent organizational changes and changes of attitudes that “stick”. Furthermore, exemplifying how changes and attitudes can be altered in long-term urban development and planning, applies to a multitude of cities world-wide. These two historical cases therefore showcase that long-term and permanent organizational changes can be the result of a crisis, or critical juncture, when local governments implement institutional innovation.

In today’s modern society, change is rapid and can be substantial, which also entails change at the local level. Consequently, the article at hand provides valuable insights into local governments’ responses when faced with a critical juncture, which is applicable to many contexts globally. The article also contributes to theoretical development through bridging the literatures of *institutional innovation* with *participatory democracy* and *collaborative planning*. Furthermore, the article aims at bridging the literature on *collaborative public sector innovation* (cf. Hartley et al., 2013) with the beforementioned theoretical traditions. These literatures all discuss the need for broad citizen and stakeholder involvement in urban development (Albrechts & Balducci, 2013; Feinstein, 2010; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Healey, 1997, 2003, 2004, 2009; Innes & Booher, 1999), and insights from these perspectives can contribute as analytical tools for understanding how wider participation can increase the transformative capacities of cities.

## 2. Theoretical point of departure

As discussed in the introduction, this article is concerned with how institutional innovation can ensure more involving urban transformations. There has been a growing tendency to apply collaborative approaches in urban planning and governance (Hartley et al., 2013; Hartmann & Geertman, 2016; Hofstad & Torfing, 2015). This is particularly true when resolving increased demands for sustainability (cf. “the planners triangle”, Campbell, 1996), and also to develop plans and governance tools to become more strategic instruments for this purpose (Albrechts & Balducci, 2013; Healey, 2003, 2009). Falleth et al. (2010, p. 743) stress that actors’ resources, among them knowledge, can be an important element “to increasing the system capacity of the planning authorities”. When urban development projects are initiated, different kinds of knowledge are necessary to move forward with the development strategies and to create ownership and legitimacy for the new developments. Strengthening the knowledge base for democratic decision-making processes is therefore important. Broad involvement to secure different types of knowledge is therefore crucial in urban development projects (Agger & Löfgren, 2008; Røiseland & Vabo, 2016, p. 128), as well as to enhance the capacity for public sector innovation.

Scholars critical towards viewing change as innovation, might argue that the newsworthiness of the innovation concept is limited (Pollitt, 2011). While this criticism might apply to some contexts, we believe that the use of innovation as an analytical tool is indeed useful in research on

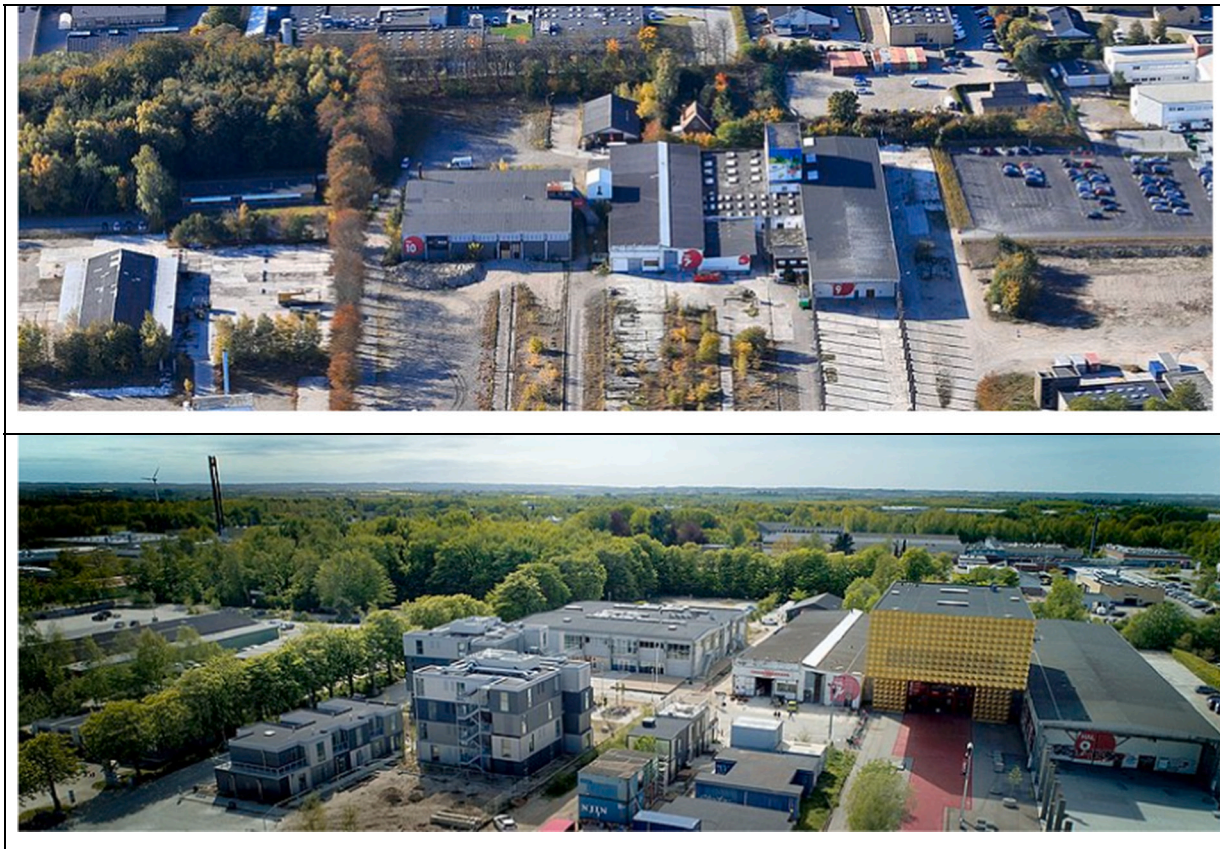
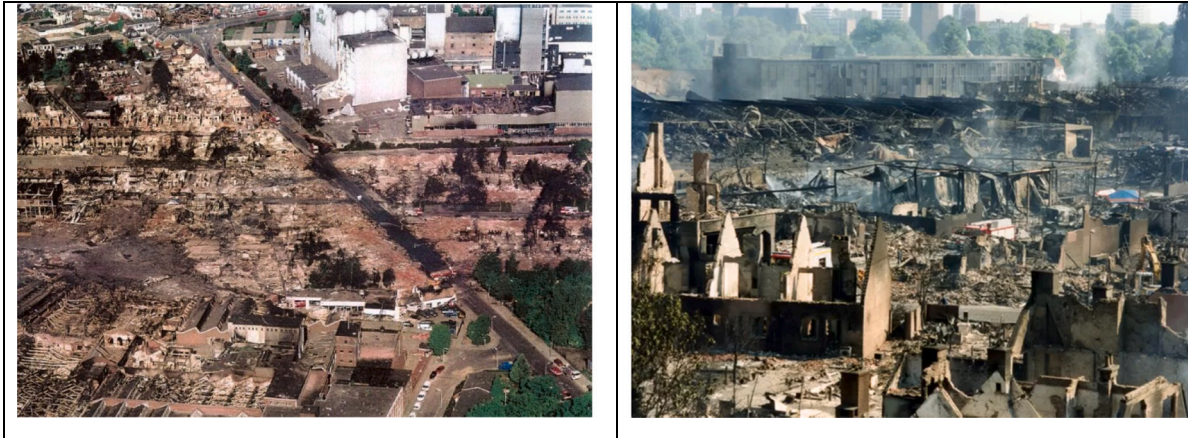


Fig. 1. Musicon, before and after transformation

First picture: Fig. 1 Musicon before transformation, 1. (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Musicon.jpg>).

Second picture: Fig. 1. Musicon after transformation, 2. ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roskilde\\_Festival\\_H%C3%B8jskole.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roskilde_Festival_H%C3%B8jskole.jpg)).





**Fig. 2.** Roombeek before transformation

**Fig. 2** Roombeek before transformation, 1. ([https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Aerial-photograph-of-Roombeek-a-few-days-after-the-disaster-Encircled-the-crater-where\\_fig12\\_330848608](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Aerial-photograph-of-Roombeek-a-few-days-after-the-disaster-Encircled-the-crater-where_fig12_330848608)).

**Fig. 2** Roombeek before transformation, 2. ([https://www.reddit.com/r/CatastrophicFailure/comments/giw4bz/today\\_20\\_years\\_ago\\_the\\_fireworks\\_disaster\\_in/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CatastrophicFailure/comments/giw4bz/today_20_years_ago_the_fireworks_disaster_in/)).



**Fig. 3.** Roombeek after transformation

**Fig. 3** Roombeek after transformation, 1. ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,\\_Enschede,\\_Netherlands\\_-\\_panoramio\\_\(72\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,_Enschede,_Netherlands_-_panoramio_(72).jpg)

**Fig. 3** Roombeek after transformation, 2. ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,\\_Enschede,\\_Netherlands\\_-\\_panoramio\\_\(71\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,_Enschede,_Netherlands_-_panoramio_(71).jpg)).

urban development, as is the case in this article. Karvonen, Evans, and van Heur (2014) stress that urban actors in both the public and private sector are looking to innovative solutions to modern urban complexities, as do Bekkers, Edelenbos, and Steijn (2011), emphasizing a growing pressure for innovation in the public sector.

Moreover, since practitioners (in addition to scholars) are looking to innovation for possible solutions to urban complexities, it also makes it an applied concept, converting ideas into practice. Studying institutional change through the lens of innovation thus provides an interdisciplinary and open approach that in itself is useful. The concept of institutional innovation is here utilized as a theoretical-analytical tool to understand the changes catalyzed by critical junctures. However, it is also important to remember that “innovation does not necessarily lead to improvement” (Moore & Hartley, 2008, p. 9). That said, contemporary organizational innovation is widely associated with the response to the increase in marketplace dynamics, and relates not only to products, but also services, operations, processes, and people (Baregheh, Rowley, & Sambrook, 2009). Thus, innovation in an urban context is both multidisciplinary and multifaceted.

The literature on *collaborative public sector innovation* (cf. de Vries, Tummers, & Bekkers, 2018; Hartley et al., 2013; Julnes & Gibson, 2015; Nilssen, 2019; Torfing & Triantafillou, 2016) builds on the notion of *institutional innovation*. Institutional innovation is often defined as “novel, useful and legitimate change that disrupts, to varying degrees, the

cognitive, normative, or regulative mainstays of an organizational field” (Raffaelli & Glynn, 2015, p. 407). Moreover, Hargrave & Van De Ven (2006, p. 866) emphasize institutional innovation as notable change in “form, quality, or state over time in an institution”. However, we want to narrow the scope and focus on two forms of institutional innovation, forms which resemble two categories of Hartley’s typology of public sector innovations. Hartley (2005) divides innovations into product innovation, service innovation, process innovation, governance innovation, strategic innovation, and rhetoric innovation. The two new institutional practices studied here can be categorized as representing both *governance innovation* and *process innovation* (cf. Hartley, 2005). Governance innovation refers to new ways of steering and co-funding to reach public aims, and in stimulating and realizing new ideas and urban qualities, i.e. a mix of public and private sector resources (Lind, 2002). Process innovation implies new ways of designing organizational processes. To understand the dynamics of these types of innovations, the approach of collaborative innovation in the public sector is relevant (Sorensen & Torfing, 2011). This approach argues that broad involvement of stakeholders and citizens is necessary to spur innovation, especially related to achieving new and innovative governance models and new process-routines. The argument for involvement is to bring in new perspectives and frictions between urban actors, and to have fruitful, disruptive processes that stimulate the development of new ideas.

Here, we want to bridge the literature on innovation in the public

sector with traditional collaborative planning arguments for citizen involvement. In these literatures, involvement of citizens and stakeholders is argued to ensure more legitimate processes (Scharpf, 1999, p. 6; Karlsson-Vinkhuyzen, 2016; Falleth et al., 2010, pp. 748–749; Knudtson, 2018), but also to improve the (local) knowledge base of local planning. Studies have found that citizen involvement channels local knowledge into the processes, which is often *tacit* local knowledge about the qualities of the living areas and how to ensure public goods (Hansen, 2012, 2019; Knudtson, 2018).

In the last decade, there has been a shift from emphasizing involvement, to putting more emphasis on co-creative processes – based on a more egalitarian relationship between the public sector and actors from the private sector and civil society. Thus, co-creation is often focused on “including relevant and sufficiently diverse knowledge in urban processes to create innovative solutions to complex problems” (Lund, 2018, p. 13). The increased attention devoted to the co-creation concept points to a change in the general notion of public participation. Consequently, an important argument for involving citizens and stakeholders through more co-creative processes, is that it contributes to *new knowledge, perspectives, and resources in planning and decision-making processes*, but also that the processes then get another dynamic – where new ideas and solutions are developed.

In the article at hand, we argue that co-creational arenas and processes are especially important in urban planning. Consequently, urban planning needs to channel the citizens’ and stakeholders’ “sense of place”, e.g. their local identity and values, into the processes of designing the city and changing the urban fabric (Stratigea, Papadopoulou, & Panagiotopoulou, 2015). It is of utter importance to grasp relevant *place narratives*, i.e. the meanings and experiences relating to place (Van Herzele, 2004), and to consider this as important local knowledge for the local development plan formulated. Only then will the planning outcome provide an optimal fit to the needs, experiences, and sense of place of the specific community context. Jones, Granzow, and Shields (2019) argue that involvement leading to a strong attention towards these ‘virtues of place’ in urban planning, can assist cities to affix the ‘innovative city’ to more socially robust articulations of the future prosperity and possibility of place. This is also important to *identify and defend the public goods* in urban planning, as planning processes are characterized by hard negotiations between city-planners and property owners (Knudtson, 2018).

### 3. Empirical case-selection and methodology

In this section, we present the methodological choices guiding the research process. This includes the qualitative case study research design, selection criteria, and analysis process. We also elaborate on how the cases were studied (though different data sources). The intent of this section is to show the what, how, and why of our research.

#### 3.1. Research strategy for studying institutional innovation for more involving urban transformations

The empirical data in this article is based on a qualitative comparative case study of two urban development projects, one in Denmark and one in the Netherlands. The urban development projects studied both consist of complex and context-specific processes, and were selected based on a most similar case-design (cf. Seawright & Gerring, 2008). In the article at hand, we have critically examined how institutional innovation can ensure more involving urban transformations, and furthermore, what the conditions for such institutional innovations to increase the transformative capacity of cities are. Our motivation for studying institutional innovation through a case study approach was guided by the purpose of contributing to knowledge; knowledge about how local governments can promote holistic societal development and mobilize resources through (institutional) innovation, and how this approach can strengthen the role of the public sector in urban

development. Thus, the cases presented here are two urban development projects, which denote urban transformations. Seawright and Gerring (2008) emphasize that choosing good cases for studies with small samples can be a challenge, since the intent of most case studies is to generalize. Generalizing is of course our intent with this case study. On that note, Flyvbjerg (2006: 242) addresses five misunderstandings in case study research, among which are generalization (drawing on Kuhn’s notion of paradigms to emphasize that case studies are necessary to produce systematic exemplars and knowledge). The cases presented in this article were therefore selected strategically, based on their subjection to a critical juncture that led to innovative institutional practices.

#### 3.2. Case selection and analysis

In a comparative case study with a small sample, case design and case selection are closely linked, and could be viewed as interrelated. We understand case study as a study of a spatially bounded phenomenon with the intent to provide knowledge about the overall class of cases to which the phenomenon belongs (cf. Gerring, 2017). In this article, the phenomenon studied has been two urban development projects catalyzed by critical junctures, while urban development has been the context within which these processes were studied. Thus, the cases were selected based on their subjection to a critical juncture, which in turn catalyzed urban development projects holding elements of new institutional practices. Even if the critical junctures worked as a catalyst for institutional change, the junctures were different in the two cases. Consequently, the changes triggered are also context-specific, and thus differ.

The commonality between the cases is therefore that they are both (*relatively small*) *local governments subjected to a critical juncture*,<sup>1</sup> even if the junctures were different in nature. In Roskilde Municipality (DK), the critical juncture was the sudden closing of a cement factory, leaving a vast hole in the southern part of the city. In Enschede Municipality (NL), the critical juncture was the fatal fireworks accident that ruined the northern city district of Roombeek. Despite these junctures being quite different in nature, they both triggered a need for change which catalyzed urban development projects with innovative institutional practices. Such context-specific processes are favorably examined through case studies, as it allows for the exploration of actors, events, and the mapping of the associations between them (Gerring, 2017).

When selecting the cases, important selection criteria were the following: 1) population size, 2) time aspect, and 3) comparability of political context. The population size of Roskilde municipality was 87,000 (Statistics Denmark, 2019), while Enschede had a population of 158,000 (Enschede Municipality, 2019). This implies that the cases are of relatively modest size, in terms of population scale in European cities. Moreover, as these historical cases date back some years, another important selection criteria was the time aspect. The Roskilde case was initiated in 2007–2008, while the case from Enschede was initiated in 2000–2001 (Blom-Hansen & Heeager, 2011; Hendriks & Schaap, 2011). Together, these three criteria give a good basis for comparison. Our case selection was both strategic and explorative, and our methods of analysis were therefore inductive, resonating well with the case selection approach of this most-similar case design.

#### 3.3. Conducting the case studies

The empirical data presented in this article consist of qualitative case-studies of the two cities, conducted through document studies of public documents (official project descriptions), as well as qualitative in-depth interviews (for details, see Table 1). The interviews were the primary

<sup>1</sup> In this context, we understand ‘critical juncture’ as “a period of significant change [...] which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies” (Collier & Collier, 2002, p. 29).



**Table 1**  
Overview of interviewees.

	Roskilde (DK)	Enschede (NL)	Total
Chief executive officer/municipal director	1	–	1
Executive officers for planning	1	1	2
Planning officers	2	1	3
Politicians (incl. the mayor)	2	–	2
Project managers/municipal executives	1	4	5
Researchers with extensive knowledge of the case	–	1	1
Representatives for local industry and commerce	3	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>

data source, while the documents (for details, see [Appendix 2](#)) included in the document analysis were used as a supplementary data source to establish a timeline and ensure data triangulation (cf. [Yin, 2014](#)) with the interview data. Furthermore, the documents consisted of municipal project descriptions and other relevant local government strategy documents (available in Danish or English). The qualitative interviews were conducted between October 2016 and November 2017. The selection of informants was based on an experimental approach, and adapted to each case, and the informants were local government officials, elected politicians (councilors), and actors from local industry and commerce. In total, 18 individuals were interviewed in the two cases, and each interview lasted for 1–2 hours. When selecting whom to interview, we had a strategic approach, choosing people who were involved in the projects and had extensive knowledge of the development processes. [Table 1](#) below provides an overview of the interviewees included in this study.

#### 4. Analysis: how do the two cases represent interesting models of institutional innovation for more involving urban transformation?

##### 4.1. The Musicon-case in Roskilde: joint vision-building and a broad partnership model

Roskilde Municipality is located around 30 minutes outside Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, and has a population of approximately 87000 people ([Statistics Denmark, 2019](#)). In the Musicon-case (DK), the critical juncture was the sudden closing of this cement factory, which left a vast hole in the southern part of the city. Local government wanted to reanimate the area where the factory had been located, and in 2003 they purchased the plot of the former cement factory with the intent to develop the former factory into a vibrant and livable city district. The municipality wanted to make it an animate urban district consisting of multiple art forms and creative industries. Furthermore, the municipality's intent was to include creative actors in the development of the area through temporary activities, while also having more permanent activities present on the development site. An example of such a permanent actor is the museum for pop, rock and youth culture, which fittingly enough was named Ragnarock. Ragnarock was designed as an impressive contemporary, gold-colored building which truly is a focal point on the plot, design-wise.

Quite interestingly, the development of this urban area was not to be guided by a master plan (which is the typical way forward for Scandinavian city developments). Rather the development was instead guided by a *process vision*, emphasizing the creative, musical city as the ideal. As part of this creative process, the local government hired a consultancy firm to prepare a recommendation for the use of the land. This happened twice, because of a Danish local government reform which occurred in the middle of the developmental process. The first consultancy report recommended that the urban development of the area should revolve around music, while the second report outlined three different scenarios for the plot: (1) to turn it into a 'music city', (2) to make it an animate

urban district with multiple art forms and creative industries, and (3) to make it a sports area. The city council at the time chose the second alternative – an animate urban area focused on creative industries and art – a present, strong industry that was already present in the city due to the renowned music festival called *the Roskilde Festival*.

As briefly indicated, local government could have chosen a traditional approach, where politicians decide what would happen with the plot, and where they then implemented the policy. However, in the Musicon project a more open and inclusive approach was chosen, where citizens and private actors were involved in the development of this urban area. The Musicon case shows a city being very concerned with *vision-building* and *strategic framing* of the project. As mentioned, the municipality adopted a *creative process vision* for the development project, which entailed having no municipal master plan for the city district's development. In general, "user-driven city development" was an important principle for the city, with the intent to attract creative actors that would contribute to the development of the urban area. In the vision-building process, a broad range of actors were involved. In Roskilde, an informant told:

What we did in Musicon in the start was to formulate a vision of what Musicon was supposed to be. Not draw the city, not describing how it was going to look like, where the roads were, the houses. But rather, the vision about where we were heading. And we invited other actors to lift the discussion about the vision.

In the actor-driven approach of Roskilde, a government official explained:

What is going to carry it through, is the vision. It is not the plan, but the vision. It is the objective that we have to sell in – to the actors who will be involved in realizing the vision. We cannot as a municipality create an exciting district, we can only do this if we have the right partners, playmates.

In Roskilde, they also stressed that the vision must be owned by many, not only by a few, key actors. It must be collectively owned, if the vision were to have the effect of getting actors to pull in the same direction. That is what they considered achieved – the formulation of a joint vision that guided the development, as actors had been loyal to it for many years. The vision about the Musicon-area in Roskilde had also been carried/continued by four different mayors. For some years, it did not have that strong political support, but in these years, influential actors in the private sector defended the vision. As a result, politicians continued to be loyal to it.

What is special about the Roskilde case, is that the vision was primarily a *process vision*, not a vision of what the city area was to look like the end. This represents a non-typical way of formulating a vision, as politicians often want to visually illustrate the built results. In developing the Musicon area, a municipal official stressed that the vision implied that "we do not know how this will be in the end, we will find out during the process, but we think it will be a good solution". The municipal official, having worked in several municipalities, had never seen this approach by process-vision before. One of the elements in the vision was the development of a musical and creative city district, based on the city's long tradition with the Roskilde Festival (as mentioned previously), which the Musicon district could benefit from, and further in its local development.

Roskilde Municipality had learned that participatory arenas must be tailor-made to each situation, and they stress that there are no "one-size-fits-all" solutions when it came to involvement processes. The design of the involvement process must therefore fit the challenge, the purpose, the situation, and the target group. In acknowledging this, Roskilde Municipality established an educational course, where they taught their employees process consultancy competencies. Here they used the "ladder of participation" by [Arnstein \(1969\)](#) actively in discussing which level they wanted to reach. What was special about Roskilde, was that the municipal actors did not know what the end-result of the innovation

process would look like, merely how the process would look. A municipal director explained: *“The municipality does not have any solution ready. We develop the solution together with the citizens. Some projects need deep and comprehensive involvement, while others do not”*.

In Roskilde, we see the tendency of formal involvement of actors from private sector, through establishing joint networks and collaborations. Furthermore, in the Musicon case, they emphasized creative businesses as important actors to involve. As the urban development of Musicon had a cultural city label, the city depended on operative cultural actors, such as skaters, the group Aaben dans (a dance theater), Ragnarock (Museum for pop, rock, and youth culture), and more. Local government also involved private actors in co-funding different types of projects and public goods. This co-funding represents a new partnership-model – sharing economic burdens.

Working on the development of the Musicon city district, the municipal actors identified the need for increased internal and cross-sector cooperation, which had resulted in new institutional arenas and routines. A common challenge for sustainable urban development, is the silo-organization of local government. Thus, new (interdisciplinary) cross-sector arenas, including highly specialized competence, have been considered necessary to create a socially good city. In Roskilde, informants stressed the need for cooperation between 5 and 7 departments in the municipal administration. The way they worked with this project contributed to a paradigm shift in how they worked, and their relations to external actors – from a regulatory regime to a proactive regime. As a local government official expressed it:

*The experiment, the innovation project, was that we were to do what was necessary, but do as little planning as possible. Our idea was, are we able to let a city district grow bottom-up, without municipal planning? We have let the actors play it out themselves, they have found the solutions. We do, however, need to have the overall steering of some things, like infrastructure, waste-water, and so on.*

What the government official is emphasizing here, is the experimental approach to planning that the municipality had adopted in the Musicon case, which entailed an atypical actor-driven approach.

There are many examples of how involvement has resulted in innovative urban solutions, i.e. new ways of using space and function in the city. An informant stated:

*“I do not think we would have had the container-buildings today if we had made a master plan. We approved it since some actors suggested to build the containers. Later we included it as a function in a city plan. They had the idea, we understood the idea, we agreed that it was good, and we realized it”*.

Another example was that the company that was to build a rainwater reservoir on 25 % of the area, only thought about this specific function in their drafts. During the planning process, being creative and involving, the municipality and other actors found that many other functions could be included. Therefore, the reservoir, meant to contain wastewater in episodes of heavy rain approximately every tenth year, was made into a skate park. The company consulted the actors who originally used the area – the skaters, an active stakeholder group, which led to the idea of combining the wastewater reservoir and a skate park. Now it is a public park, with channels and bowls that can be used by skaters in between the 10-year floods. This example shows the innovative co-funding of such projects. As the company already had set aside 25 million Danish kroner for the project, the municipality only had to contribute with 7 million DKK to realize the project – resulting in it being a combined skate park/wastewater reservoir.

Also, in other projects in the development of Musicon, municipal officials assessed that deeper involvement of citizens and user-groups had contributed to better output. The design of the “column-square”, which was located on site in Musicon, is mentioned as one of the places that was designed in a better way than what local government officials initially thought of, and where the users ended up feeling ownership

towards the place due to involvement in the design/development process. The idea of temporality had also been an important ideal behind the Musicon project, with co-creation of places and functions that did not exist before. This way of working had explicitly been considered as an innovation in urban development by the local government.

In Roskilde we also see that many of the involvement processes have created innovative ways of increasing social cohesion and ownership to the area. As a government official said:

*When we create some formal frameworks for how to cooperate in this city district, we also strengthen the community-feeling in the area. That is also the intention. So, the festival is good for attractiveness, and shows what the city is able to do, but the main intention is how the cooperation and voluntary work strengthen us as a community.*

Some of the government officials explain that the idea behind many of the formal meeting-arenas, like actor-meetings, Christmas-lunches, and summer-parties for the on-site stakeholders, had contributed to strengthening place-identity and community feelings. These initiatives are also described as a top-down way of stimulating bottom-up processes, i.e. facilitating arenas that can spur new community-initiatives.

#### 4.2. The Roombeek-case in Enschede: bridging the direct/indirect democracy divide

Enschede Municipality is located in the eastern part of the Netherlands, close to the German border, and has a population of approximately 158000 (Enschede Municipality, 2019). In May 2000, a fire broke out in the grounds of a fireworks manufacturer in a northern district called Roombeek, causing a fatal detonation of approximately 100 tons of explosives. The fireworks disaster, as it is referred to in Enschede, resulted in 23 casualties, around a thousand injured, and over four thousand people being temporarily homeless. Moreover, the fireworks disaster caused a tremendous amount of damage and destruction to the built environment in Roombeek. Additionally, it caused suffering for the people living and working in and around the Roombeek area. With its surroundings, the affected area measured 62.5 hectares, with a core area of 42.5 hectares being destroyed. This critical juncture was therefore quite the dramatic crisis in every sense, leaving local government with the complex task of rebuilding the area. At this point in time, an accident of such magnitude was unprecedented in the Netherlands. As a result, the local government was faced with a substantive reconstruction process. However, what these numbers do not show is the effects of the “after-shock”, which led to reduced trust in the local government. The local government of Enschede was therefore not only faced with a complex rebuilding process, but also restoring the trust of its inhabitants.

The work started with the local government hiring an external project director, who recommended establishing a *separate* project bureau for the rebuilding process. The project bureau represented new ways of working with urban transformation, in many ways. Surprisingly, the project director hired several external experts to work in this project bureau, and only included few civil servants from the local government of Enschede. By doing this, he ensured that his staff had the type of attitude he found necessary. Moreover, an alderman with political decision-making authority on behalf of the city council was appointed to be on the project bureau. According to interviews with government officials, this project bureau was active from 2000 to 2008 and was based on-site in the Roombeek area. The development strategy for this city district was thus relying heavily on citizen involvement, which was intended to be “by and for” the citizens. One of the motivations for choosing a citizen-centric approach for the development, was to give citizens a voice in the rebuilding process.

As previously mentioned, there was a problem with diminished trust in the local government after the fireworks accident occurred. According to one municipal executive, “there had to be found something to rebuild

the city, but also restore hope and trust and legitimate quality of decision-making, and acceptance of this decision-making". As stated earlier, the process of rebuilding Roombeek was conducted by establishing a project bureau, guiding the developmental process. The project bureau was a governance innovation, in the sense that the project bureau was separated from the rest of the local government body. In addition, it was led by a publicly appointed project director, coming from Rotterdam, in addition to other external experts. A municipal executive functioning as the clerk for the city council described the developing of the project bureau like this:

*the project leader also had this experience with the Rotterdam approach, so he could do it, really. It was a kind of shock for the organization because what he did, he got permission from the general manager to assemble his own project organization. The personnel management was also in his hands, but he could choose his own, and he only chose 3 or 4 [municipal executives]. Most of the people came from outside. And that was a kind of shock; most of the people who had to manage this process of participation and rebuilding and making the plans for this area, came from outside [the municipal organization].*

However, the really innovative character here was that the project bureau also comprised an alderman (councilor) with political decision-making authority on behalf of the city council. The project bureau could therefore make smaller political decisions on behalf of the city council on a daily basis, which was an advantage when attempting to address the urgency triggered by the fireworks disaster. Larger decisions naturally had to be passed by the city council, e.g. the resolution to pass the final developmental plan for the Roombeek area. The leader of the project bureau had a genuine participatory approach, where he decided that the district was to be planned according to the ideas of Roombeek's citizens, by means of broad involvement processes. Furthermore, the realization of rebuilding Roombeek was a partnership, a joint funding by local, regional, and national government where all levels allocated financial resources. This was also supplemented by private actors' economic resources, which was used for example in the rebuilding of tenant housing.

In Enschede, the strategic work framing the project was not as actor driven as in Roskilde. Rather, the strategic framing was part of a publicly plan-driven process. The process for developing a plan for rebuilding the area was facilitated by the local authorities, and citizen participation was used as a tool that helped create grassroot ownership for the development project. According to the informants, a factor that made the project leader choose most of his staff from outside the municipal organization, was that "he disqualified colleagues here, because they didn't have the right experience, and they came from an organization that was very used to processes from top-down planning and organizing". Thus, the leader of the project bureau had an involving approach and directed the process by defining the conditions for the participation process, while also allowing local knowledge input. As described by a civil servant:

*It was very welcome that those few years, only tree-four years, we made decisions, and so we first facilitated the process which was very new for the city, but had these very positive results. And I think it helps in the process of acceptance in the city of the local government as a, let's say, as a leader in the process of rebuilding, and also restoring daily life.*

This project director came from outside the local government organization and was appointed by the local government, as they believed having an external leader of the project bureau would create more legitimacy and trust. The organization of the rebuilding process was to a large extent managed by a group consisting of external experts, as well as some employees from the local government. A municipal employee stated that "I think a whole process came from this project bureau with a new approach", i.e. that it was seen as a strategic measure in the rebuilding process. Thus, this represents a strategic innovation, as the local

government aimed to rebuild citizens' trust in public authorities by enabling citizen participation in rebuilding of the city district – a process which was led by the project bureau. Consequently, this was transforming the traditional bureaucracy-led planning arena into an interactive, bottom-up arena.

In Enschede, other more minor arrangements for participation were also organized in cooperation with different stakeholders from the area. One example is the organization of a sub-project to developing an amenities center – to be built and operated by one of the housing corporations in Roombeek. This sub-project was organized with a user-oriented design, as a cooperation between the project bureau, the housing corporation, and the future users of the center. The process was organized in three rounds of multiple workshops with all the different actors that were to be located in the building, including representatives for the different activities that were to take place in the center. The stakeholders began by selecting the principal architect for the building process, who specialized in user-oriented design, and the starting point for the building plan was (literally) a blank piece of paper sent out by the lead architect to the stakeholders. The design of the amenities center was then developed by stakeholders through the different workshops. The outcome of this sub-project was thus a result of innovative urban solutions through network design. An example of the innovative use of urban space is found in the built room designated for the use by a religious group, where the room was oriented in the direction of Mecca. The developmental process of the amenities center thus exemplifies the categories of both process innovation and governance innovation.

The institutional innovation of the project bureau was also the solution of an internal sector-organization tension in the municipality of Enschede. As one municipal executive told, there was:

*[...] a kind of struggle between the two big institutions inside the city of Enschede, the fiscal department, and the social department. There were two, let's say mastodons, of general managers of these two departments, and they both thought they were the first appointed, the right persons to get some kind of leadership in the total process of rebuilding, but also more general in restoring daily life.*

The fact that the bureau was organized outside the sector-organization in the municipality, was a solution that hindered this kind of conflict in paralyzing the process.

The new institutional arrangement of the project bureau, with a leader representing a new approach to collaboration and involvement, thereby achieved to change a traditional, sectorized hierarchical organization. This resulted in a new energy and culture for cooperation. A civil servant illustrated this as follows:

*I think a whole process came from this project bureau with a new approach, we also planned a new museum in this area. So, and the cooperation was now a piece of cake, in fact, when you look at the years before, there came a lot of energy, so the cooperation and cultural way, the theater and the opera and the orchestra, and music school and concert hall, they also came together to cooperate. There was a lot of energy, there was, yes even outside this district area, and from a kind of belief that when we cooperate, we think on a bigger scale, and the process of participation, from bottom-up, when you bring it together. And there was a lot of initiatives, also from outside the government, of course, and it came together in these years, so we really succeeded in making a quality jump.*

## **5. Concluding discussion: how can the cases give us more insight into the conditions for how institutional innovation can ensure more involving urban transformation, and by this increase the transformative capacity of the cities?**

The progressive tension between institutional persistence and institutional innovation, or the old and the new path, if you will, spurs the need for involvement. The two cases discussed show us how these

institutional innovations, new ways of guiding and co-creating urban transformation areas, resulted in the increased transformative capacity of the two cities. Consequently, important takeaways for anyone interested in more involving urban transformations are the four aspects of (1) mobilizing actors' resources; (2) involving strategic vision building; (3) having involvement that represents real influence, not only symbolic involvement, and (4) allowing friction through an egalitarian relationship at the arenas for involvement. We will now elaborate on these four takeaways from our study.

First, the cases show that the new institutional arrangements mobilize a wide range of actors' resources, among them knowledge, which are important elements to increase the system capacity in urban transformations. It is important to secure different kinds of knowledge to move forward with the development, and to create ownership and legitimacy for the new developments, when initiating urban development projects. Hence, governance innovation, through partnerships, new cooperative arenas, and co-funding (e.g., Nordström & Wales, 2019), will not only increase system capacity through involvement, but also contribute to build consensus among citizens and stakeholders. However, earlier studies also show that new institutional arrangements (for involvement) fail to mobilize actors and might reduce rather than increase the problem-solving capacity of local government, resulting in reduced trust. Thus, we identify some common features in these two cases that worked as important conditions for the positive output being reported.

Second, a key feature seems to be to have *involving strategic vision building*, which also framed the development process. Involving strategic vision building is emphasized in the literature of strategic and collaborative planning (Albrechts, 2006; Albrechts & Balducci, 2013; Healey, 2003, 2009). In both of the cases in our study, the municipalities understood that they were not able to bear the burdens of rebuilding the city districts themselves, after the critical juncture occurred. Both the urban areas were in need for rapid transformation, which made local government more aware of their dependence upon joint effort from many actors. To be able to mobilize this effort from the private sector, cultural actors, and civil society, both municipalities chose to have involving vision-building and strategical framing of the processes from the start. One process was plan-led (Enschede) and one without an overall plan (Roskilde). Nevertheless, the important lesson learned – in both cases – was the importance of developing a joint vision. As one of the informants emphasized, what was crucial for a project of this type was that you have a vision that is so strong that it is not carried by individuals but is carried collectively. So, there are many who own the vision, and thereby follow it, pulling in the same direction. One informant told us that he, as a municipal executive, had felt responsible for maintaining the vision for some years, but later it had less attention in the City Hall. However, then there were some strong actors in the private sector who said that this vision is important, and urged them to stick to it politically. Thus, if there were problems, there was always someone who backed up the vision and kept it going. This historical case can teach us that a crucial condition for making a vision that has been maintained and followed over the elected periods of at least four mayors, is that it is carried collectively, by actors within and outside city hall.

Third, another key factor seems to be that the involvement represents real influence, not only symbolic involvement. In Enschede, the project director emphasized that in no other district in the Netherlands had private individuals had such a large say in the realization of the city district as in Roombeek. He called it an exceptional, widely supported plan where the participation of both former residents and newcomers had clearly worked well. In Roskilde, the municipal staff actively used the “ladder of participation” (Arnstein, 1969) when they considered involvement methods in different projects and processes. They were well aware that, if the goal for projects were to spur new innovative solutions in urban development, then they must enable co-creational arenas where the level of influence on the solutions developed was high (highest level in the ladder). Consequently, the cases illustrate that, if

the visions of cities are ambitious, also regarding representing active, lively urban life, local government are *more dependent* upon private sector and civil society to realize these visions. This is especially evident in Roskilde. To develop a vibrant, livable city, local governments must mobilize the civil society, cultural actors, and private sector actors in order to achieve this. Thus, a systematic, formal cooperation and sharing of responsibility with neighborhood groups, civil society organizations, etc., clearly is a requirement to achieve such goals. The informants in this study stress that involvement leads to the strengthening of local governments' ability to achieve eligible results, which again leads to solutions becoming more accurate for addressing the challenges. This is supported by Falthe et al. (2010, pp. 748–749).

Furthermore, the cases presented in this article strengthen the argument of involvement leading to greater ownership of the place, and of the processes. Stratigea et al. (2015) finds that where a variety of local actors (citizens, businesses, and decision-makers) are engaged in co-designing exercises, the actors do support planning goals and objectives of a specific urban context. Still, the structural challenges of involvement are also found in these cases. Even if the local government in the Roskilde case tried to mobilize socially deprived groups, it is often the case that these groups are not represented at the involvement arenas.

Fourth, another key condition seems to be an egalitarian relationship at the arenas for involvement, which also allow friction among the participants. The approach of collaborative innovation in the public sector (cf. Sørensen & Torfing, 2011) argues that broad involvement of stakeholders and citizens is necessary to spur innovation, as it channels new ideas and friction into the policy-processes. The friction is fruitful for challenging established procedures and traditional ways of problem-solving. These cases therefore show that institutional innovations for more involving urban transformations strengthen local government's role in urban governance by increasing the system capacity and enhancing their ability to achieve long-term goals and strategies through consensus-building. This is seldom emphasized in other studies of participatory planning, which often have a more harmonic perspective as their point of departure. Thus, our article shows that bridging the literatures of participatory planning and institutional innovation can increase our understanding of such processes.

Summing up, the historical cases analyzed here, both happening around 20 years ago, give us valuable insights into how institutional innovation can result in permanent organizational changes and changes of attitudes that “stick”. As the cases are approximately 20 years old, we also know the actual results of the processes, now being fully developed. Focusing on projects representing critical junctions for the two municipalities, we have illuminated how such policy windows can open for governance innovations that have great impact on the output of urban planning. Take-away for practice can be summed up as follows: Urban re-build-projects and regeneration are always dependent upon joint effort of municipal, private, and civil society and cultural actors. To mobilize joint effort, *involving vision-building and strategical framing* of the process from the start seems to be important – and can be replicated by other cities elsewhere. Furthermore, a key factor in our cases seems to be that involvement represents *real* influence, not only symbolic involvement. Lastly, the involvement processes must not avoid frictions, but rather develop participatory arenas *where conflicting interest meet*, as this channels important new ideas and friction into the policy-processes.

This article's examination of the Danish and Dutch cases has not focused on resource allocation among and between different stakeholders and inhabitant groups, nor the potential dominance of strong actors. Consequently, such issues need to be addressed in further research.

#### CRediT authorship contribution statement

We hereby state that all persons who meet authorship criteria are listed as authors, and all authors certify that they have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content,



including participation in the concept, design, analysis, writing, or revision of the manuscript. Furthermore, each author certifies that this material or similar material has not been and will not be submitted or published in any other publication before its appearance in *Cities*.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## Appendix A. Appendices

### Appendix 1

The critical juncture in each case.

Case	Critical juncture	Project initiation	Consequences
Roskilde, Denmark	The sudden closing of a large cement factory	2007–2008	An old factory plot leaving an inanimate hole in the city
Enschede, the Netherlands	A fire broke out in a fireworks facility, detonating tons of explosives	2000–2001	Loss of lives and homes, reduced trust in local government

### Appendix 2

Overview of the data sources.

Method	Case
Interviews with →	Roskilde: Local government officials, politicians, private actors Enschede: Local government officials
Documents	Official project descriptions (available in Danish or English, respectively)

## Appendix B. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2022.103845>.

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- Fig. 2. Roombeek before transformation, 1. URL: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Aerial-photograph-of-Roombeek-a-few-days-after-the-disaster-Encircled-the-crater-where\\_fig\\_12\\_330848608](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Aerial-photograph-of-Roombeek-a-few-days-after-the-disaster-Encircled-the-crater-where_fig_12_330848608).
- Fig. 2. Roombeek before transformation, 2. URL: [https://www.reddit.com/r/CatastrophicFailure/comments/giw4bz/today\\_20\\_years\\_ago\\_the\\_fireworks\\_disaster\\_in/](https://www.reddit.com/r/CatastrophicFailure/comments/giw4bz/today_20_years_ago_the_fireworks_disaster_in/).
- Fig. 3. Roombeek after transformation, 1. URL: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,\\_Enschede,\\_Netherlands\\_-\\_panoramio\\_\(72\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Roombeek-Roomveldje,_Enschede,_Netherlands_-_panoramio_(72).jpg).
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