Ringvorlesung „Ressourcen, Konflikte, Gestaltung. Wissenschaftliche und anwendungsorientierte Perspektiven auf Strukturwandel und Transformation“, WiSe 2024/25

14/01/2025

Professional agency: zur Handlungsmacht von bau- und planungsbezogenen Professionellen im Kontext von Transformation

Prof. Dr. Monika Grubbauer

https://urban-future-making.hcu-hamburg.de/

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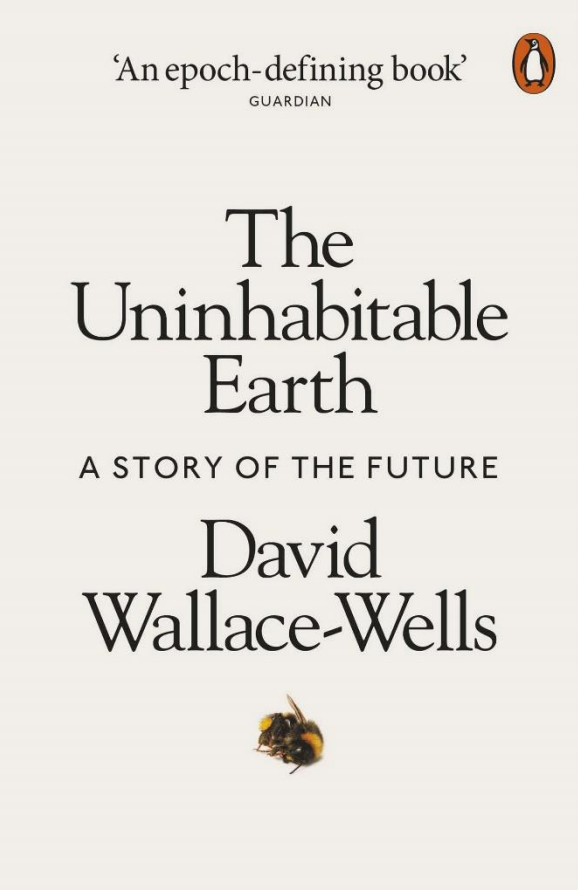


„It is worse, much worse, than you think. The slowness of climate change is a fairy tale, perhaps as pernicious as the one that says it isn't happening at all, and comes to us bundled with several others in an anthology of comforting delusions."

David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth: A Story of the Future (2019)

Wettlauf gegen die Zeit

Hitzewellen, Sturzregen, Trockenheit – die Folgen des Klimawandels bedrohen Europas Städte. Sie müssen sich radikal verändern, um lebenswert zu bleiben. Nur wie? VON ANNE HÄHNIG, HANNAH KNUTH, ANN-KATHRIN NEZIK UND KOLJA RUDZIO

Gegen die Hitze

Grüne Fassaden und Dächer kühlen Häuser ab. Vor allem Städte leiden zunehmend unter Überhitzung

Gegen den Starkregen

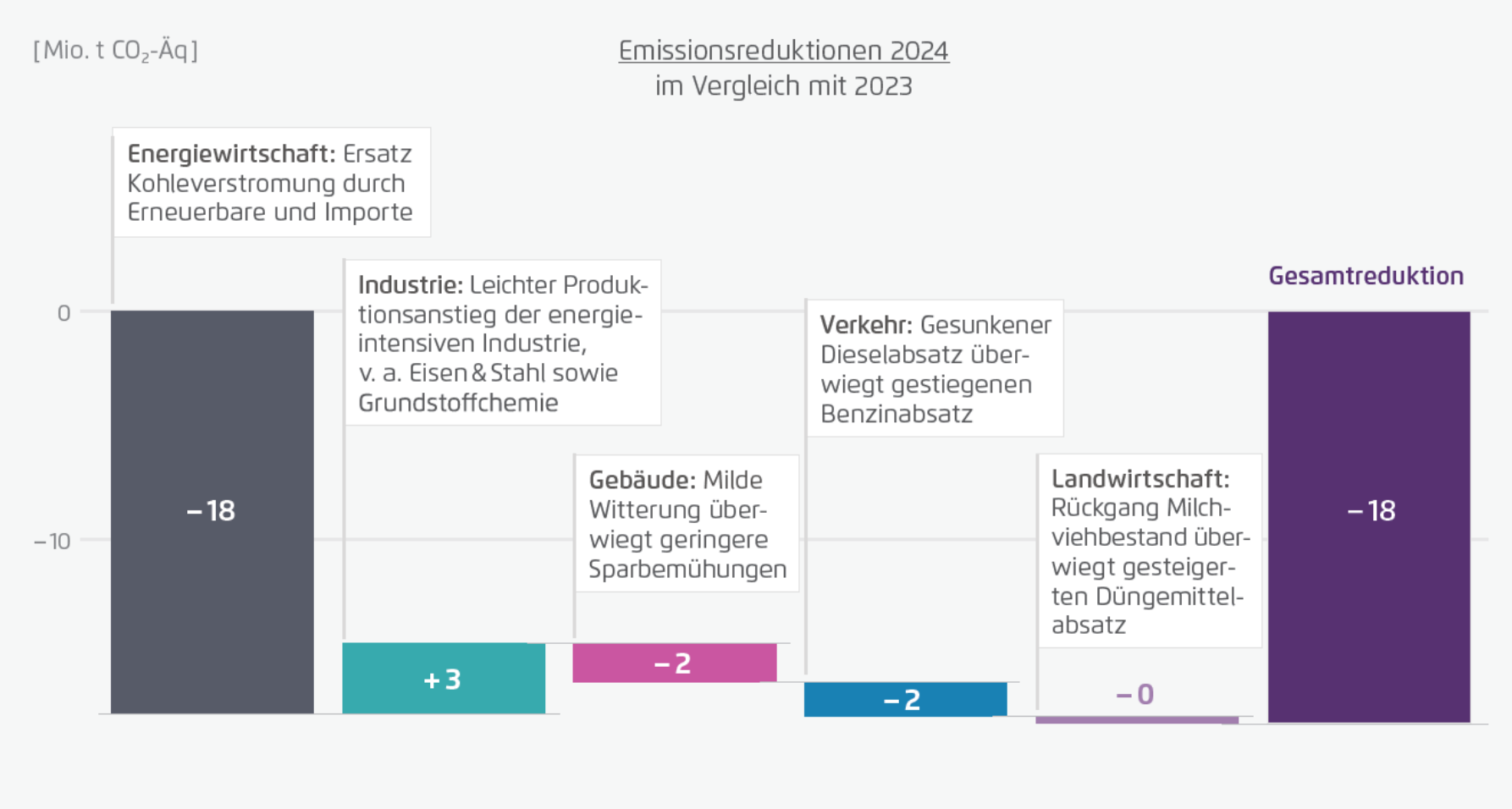
Unterirdische Becken, wie hier in Hamburg, fangen Niederschläge auf. Dirk Grünert kontrolliert sie

Gegen die Versiegelung

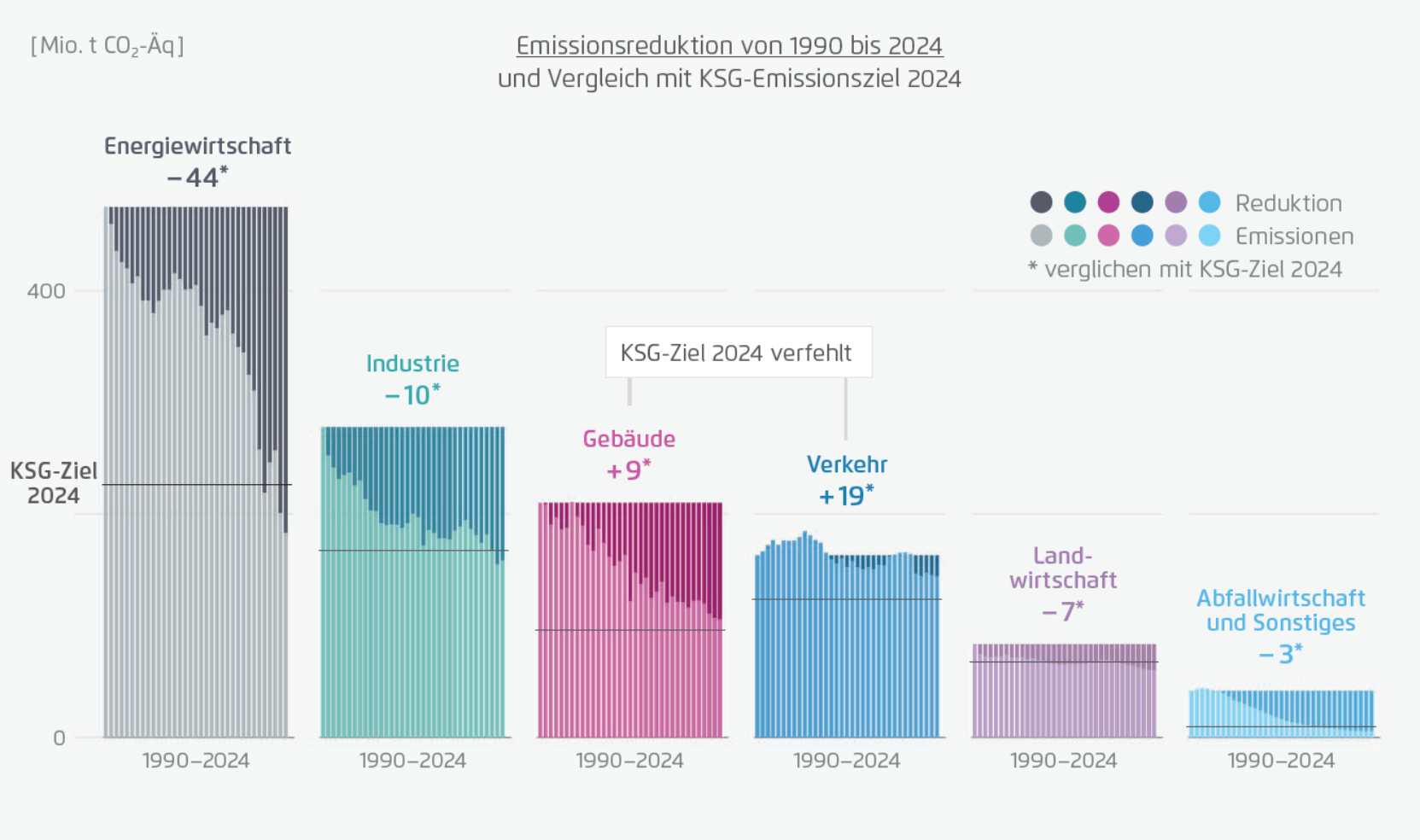
Statt Asphalt – Kies und Sand nehmen Wasser auf

Gegen die Flut

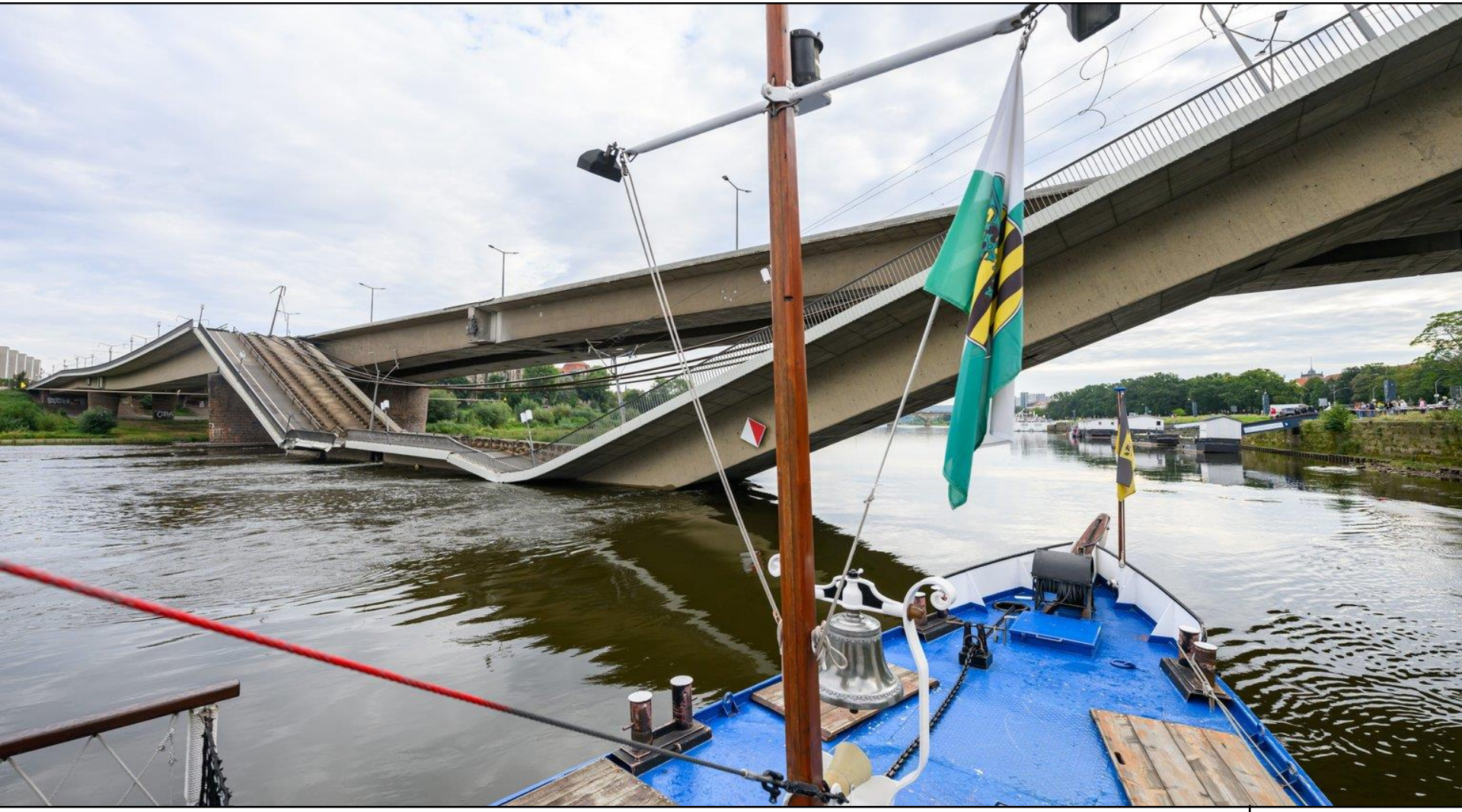
In Rotterdam schützen Parks und Deiche vor Überschwemmungen



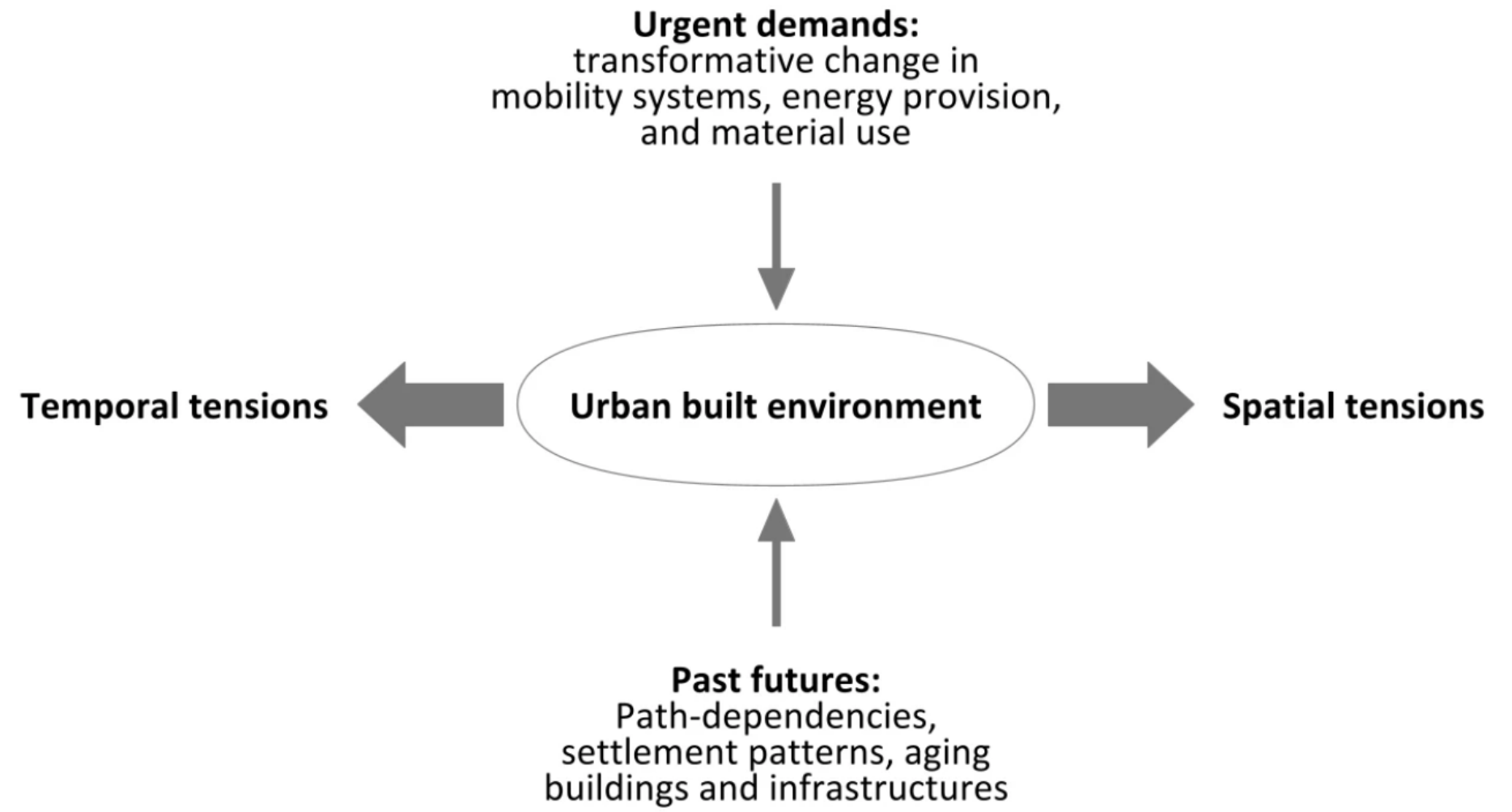
Source: Agora Energiewende (2025): Die Energiewende in Deutschland: Stand der Dinge 2024. Rückblick auf die wesentlichen Entwicklungen sowie Ausblick auf 2025.

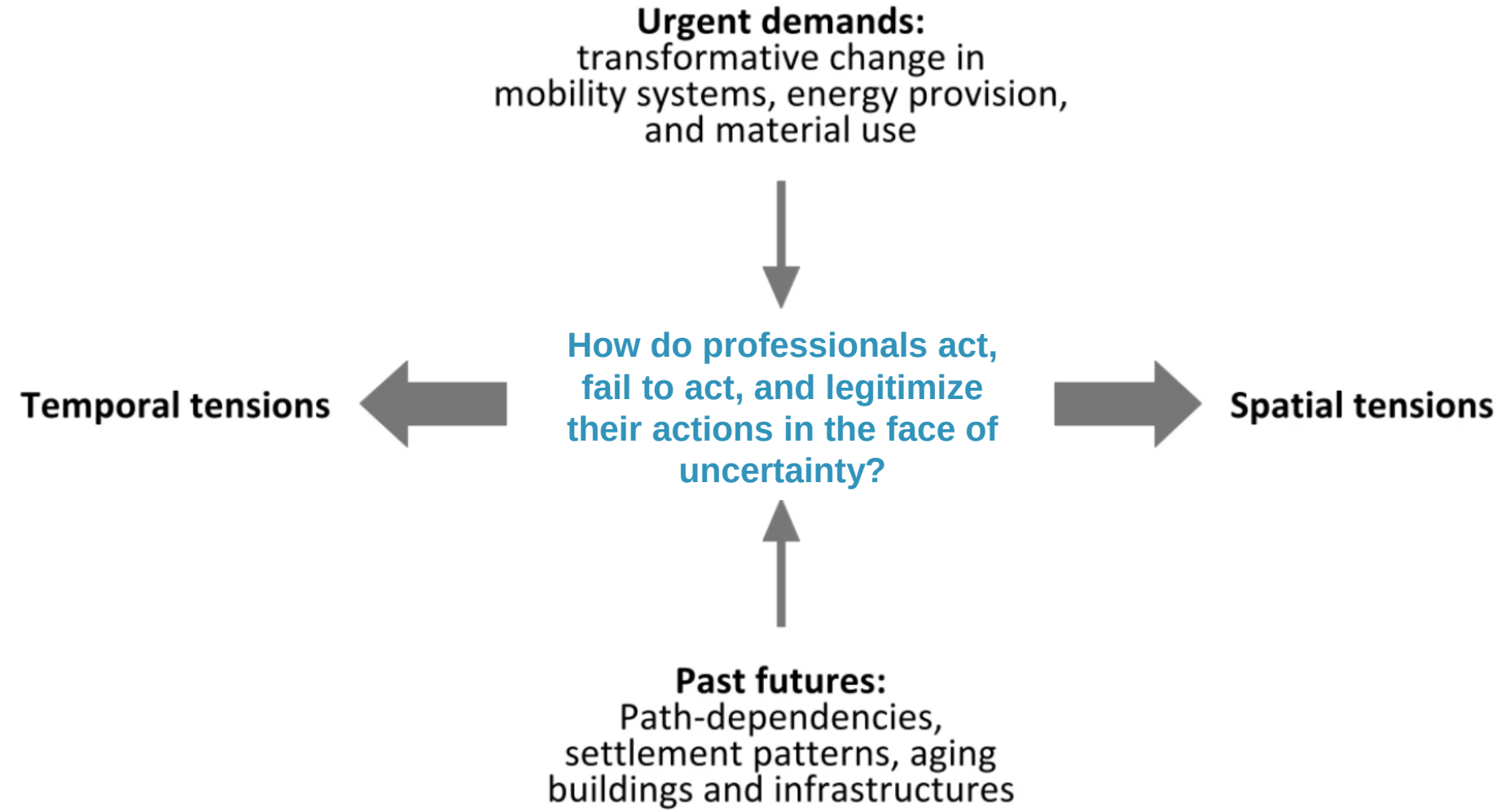


Source: Agora Energiewende (2025): Die Energiewende in Deutschland: Stand der Dinge 2024. Rückblick auf die wesentlichen Entwicklungen sowie Ausblick auf 2025.



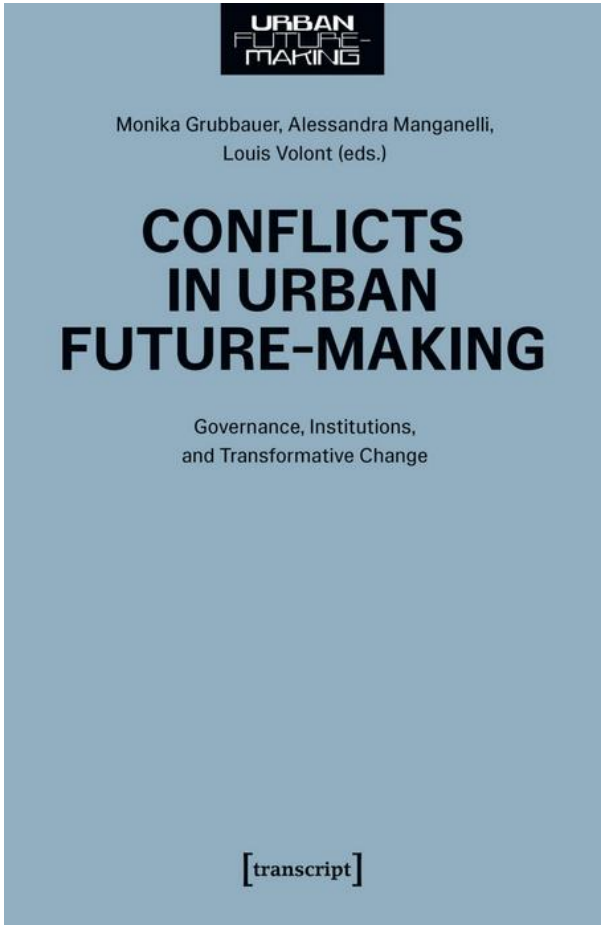
Dresden: Collapse of the Carola-Brücke on 11th September 2024
Photo: picture alliance/dpa/Robert Michael





“The human experience of the future is not a universal, self-evident feature of organizational activity. It is, instead, a rather young product of modernity […]. This ‘discovery of the future’ […] was ‘made’ through the planning practices that emerged at that time, whose greater sophistication contributed to de-problematizing the future as temporal category that could be anticipated and controlled.”

Wenzel, M., Krämer, H., Koch, J., & Reckwitz, A. (2020). Future and Organization Studies: On the rediscovery of a problematic temporal category in organizations. *Organization Studies*, *41*(10), 1441–1455. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840620912977



Monika Grubbauer / Alessandra Manganelli / Louis Volont (Eds.)

Conflicts in Urban Future-Making

Governance, Institutions, and Transformative Change

Under conditions of heightened uncertainty, cities face enormous challenges in responding to contemporary crises. The contributors to this volume explore the conflictual dynamics that arise when urban futures are imagined, negotiated, and materialized. Through the lens of urban future-making, they provide a timely analysis of the conflicts that shape planning projects, architectural interventions, and new experiments in the built environment. Their analyses show how urban future-making is conditioned by conflicting governance arrangements, actor constellations, and power dynamics – offering rich insight into the critical role of professionals as key agents of urban transformation.

Overview:

1. Challenges in urban future-making
2. Responses to uncertainty
3. Modes of negotiating conflicts
4. Conclusions

New perspectives along three avenues:

Theoretically: focusing and reflecting on the particular qualities of the built environment in shaping decisions related to the future.

Empirically: situating the actions of built environment professionals within the broader field of future-making practices.

Practical and politically: highlighting the role of professionals as agents in key conflicts in contemporary European societies.

1. Challenges in urban future-making

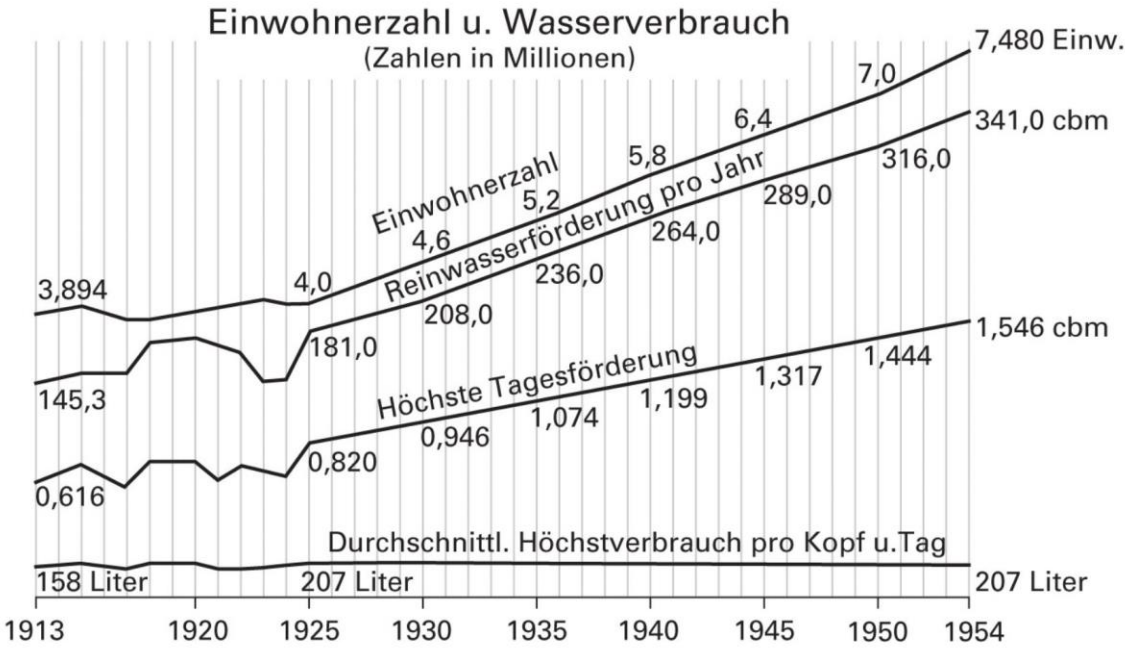
How can we understand the crucial role of built environment professionals as urban future-makers in the face of multiple crises and heightened uncertainty?

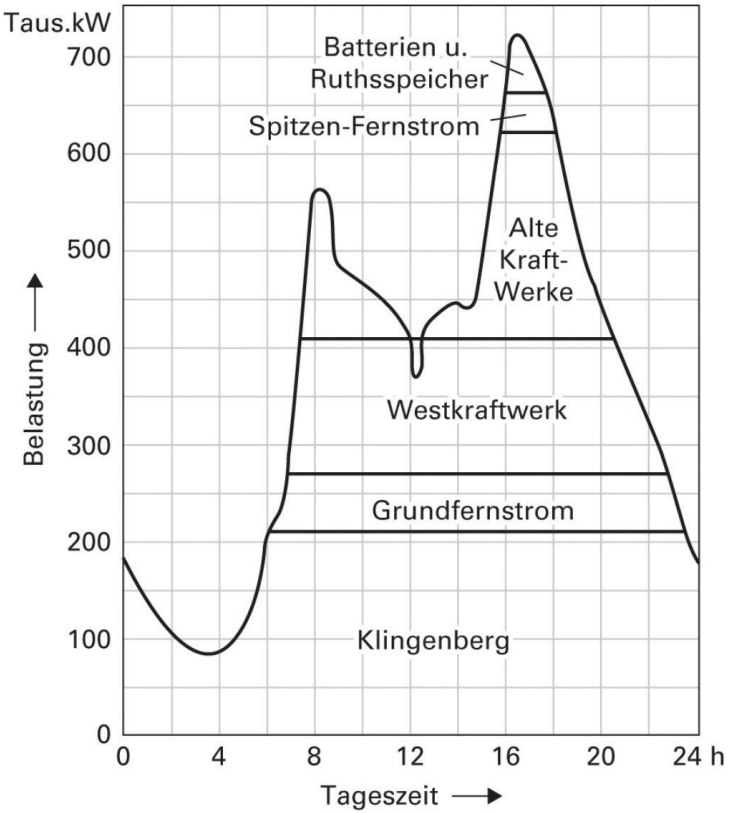
“[Uncertainty] has long preoccupied attempts to plan, build, and govern cities. Architects and urbanists of a modernist persuasion have often sought antidotes to that which cannot be known or man-aged: the ‘model’ incarnates a vision of future possibility; the ‘zone’ separates areas with ambiguous boundaries; the ‘census’ enables calculations on which to base interventions; the ‘plan’ offers an authoritative promise of the city to come.”

Zeiderman, A., S. Ahmad Kaker, J. Silver & A. Wood (2015). Uncertainty and Urban Life. *Public Culture* 27 (2 (76)): 281–304. doi: https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2841868

Promises on the future in space…

Left: Berlin, Hobrechtplan,1862 (Image: Wikimedia)
Right: Chicago, 1857 Bird's Eye View of Chicago (Image: Wikimedia)





Promises on the future in time…

Left: Forecasts as to future water consumption, Berlin, 1926
Right: Forecasts as to future use of electricity, Berlin, 1926

Source: Moss, T. (2020). *Remaking Berlin: A History of the City through Infrastructure*, 1920-2020. Cambridge/MA: MIT Press.

URBAN FUTURE-MAKING

Sources of uncertainty for built environment professionals:

- Complexity of global interdependencies beyond urban boundaries
- Difficulties in aligning distinct and unclear temporal horizons
- Shifting organizational and institutional arrangements
- Conflicting normative expectations about societal values

2. Responses to uncertainty

How do built environment professionals respond to these changing boundary conditions in order to extend or even maintain their options for agency beyond traditional modes of future-making?

Pathways to a more or less distant future

- ”Socio-technological transitions” as gradual, non-linear, and slow processes, with their own logic, facilitated through ”mediating technologies” (Furlong, 2011) and ”techniques of futuring” (Hajer & Pelzer, 2018).
- Experiments with “niche innovations” and real-life laboratories (Jahn & Keil, 2016, Evans et al. 2016), or in the form of ”disruptive urban technologies” (Kitchin, 2014)
- Learning from maintenance and from the aging of buildings and infrastructures; potentially facilitating future urban transformations (Graham & Thrift, 2007).

Pathways to aligning multi-scalar interventions

- Cities reconceptualised in “metabolic relations” stretching far beyond their administrative boundaries (Angelo & Wachsmuth 2015; Roggema 2019)
- Place-based transformations, or local experiments, potentially trigger more systemic change, and its multi-scalar articulations (Ehnert et al., 2018; Hodson & Marvin, 2010)
- Traditional approaches to planning accompanied by reflexive, adaptive and experimental modes of multi-level governance (Voß & Bornemann, 2011; Loorbach et al., 2017a;).

28. August 2020, 18:55 Uhr Architektur

Hecke der Hoffnung

Quasi Gartencenter: Der "Kö-Bogen II" mit seiner Hülle aus Hainbuchen. (Foto: HGEsch Photography)

Über grüne Stadtarchitektur wird viel geredet. Düsseldorf ist einen Schritt weiter, dort trägt in der City ein neuer Gebäudekomplex jetzt ein üppiges Blätterkleid .

Bürokomplex Kö-Bögen II in Düsseldorf
Image: © ingenhoven architects / HGEsch

Müllverbrennungsanlage CopenHill in Kopenhagen
Image: © BIG - Bjarke Ingels Groep

10. Februar 2021, 16:57 Uhr Paris

Grün ist die Hoffnung

Wie kann Paris ein Mythos bleiben, ohne am Mythos zu ersticken? Die Stadt soll vor allem grüner werden. (Foto: PCA-Stream)

Die Champs-Élysées sind alles, was Frankreich ausmacht. Leider auch alles, was nicht so gut läuft. Jetzt soll hier ein Park entstehen. Ein Spaziergang und Gespräche über die Stadt der Zukunft.

https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/paris-champs-elysees-umbau-park-1.5201264

Mobility experiments, Image: Melis Günay

Parc Henri Mattise, Lille, landscape planning Gille Clément
Photo: Matthew Gandy

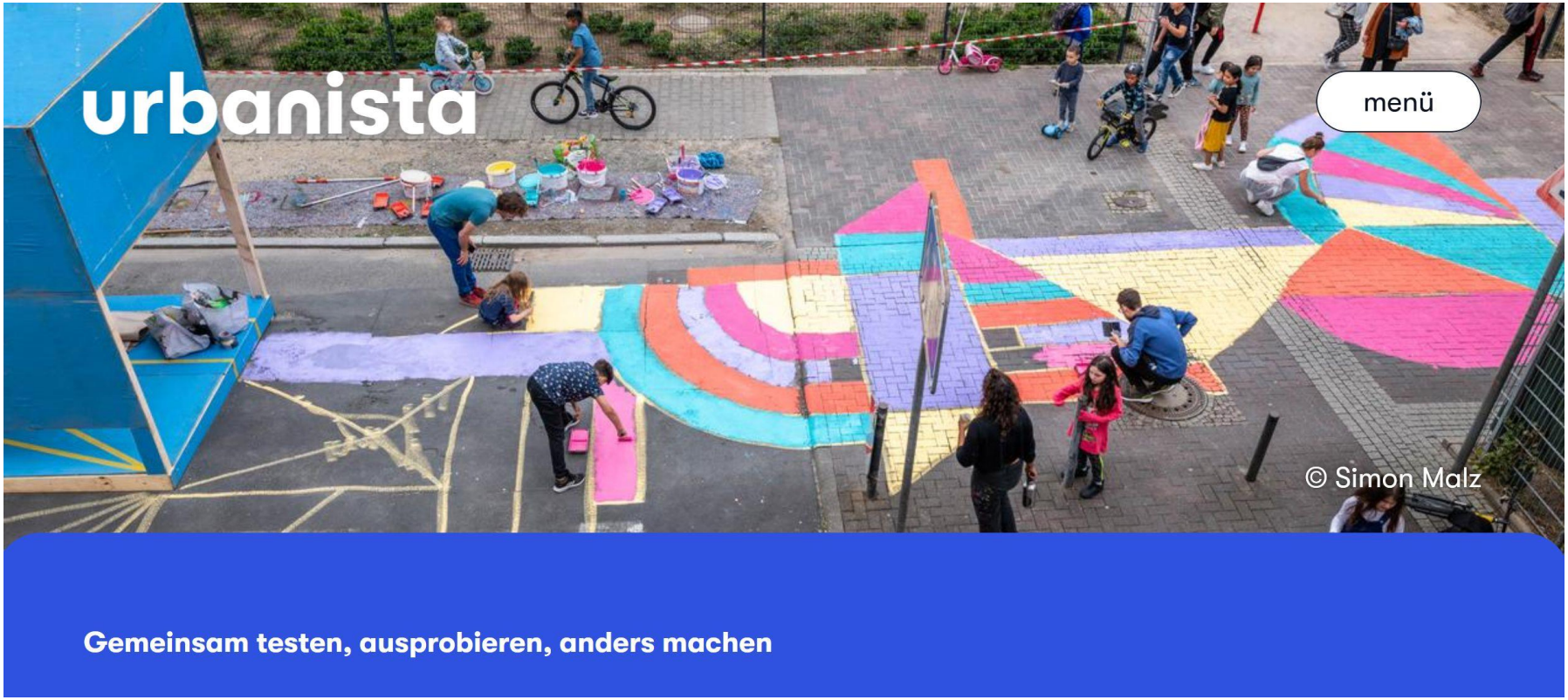


Image: https://urbanista.de/de/projekt/beweg-dein-quartier

New modes of urban future-making:

- Adoption of more experimental, adaptive, and flexible attitudes with urban spaces as testbeds
- Proactively acquiring new social roles and thereby reshaping the professional work environments
- Rethinking of traditional value systems and influencing policy-making and regulatory contexts

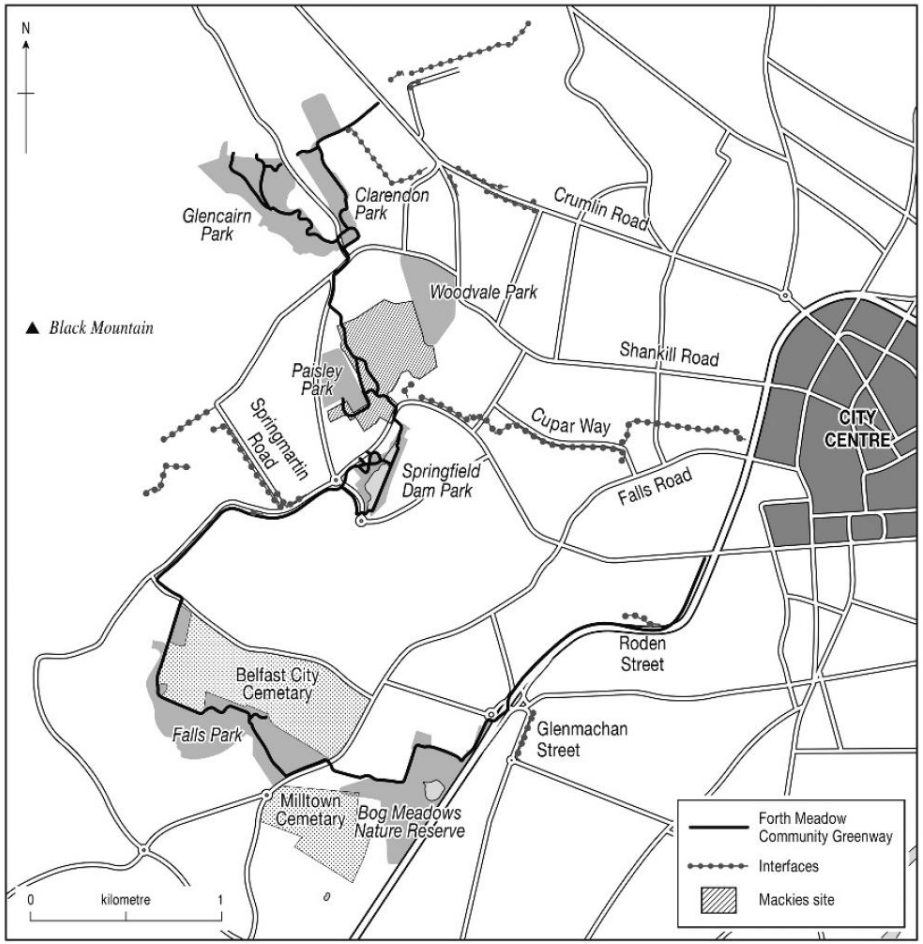
3. Modes of negotiating conflict

How do professionals in built environment disciplines contribute to mediating and solving conflicts around transformation action on various levels and within different arenas of conflict?

Need to reconcile and mediate between:

- …differing urban imaginaries;
- …differing political frames of reference;
- …and between differing temporal horizons;

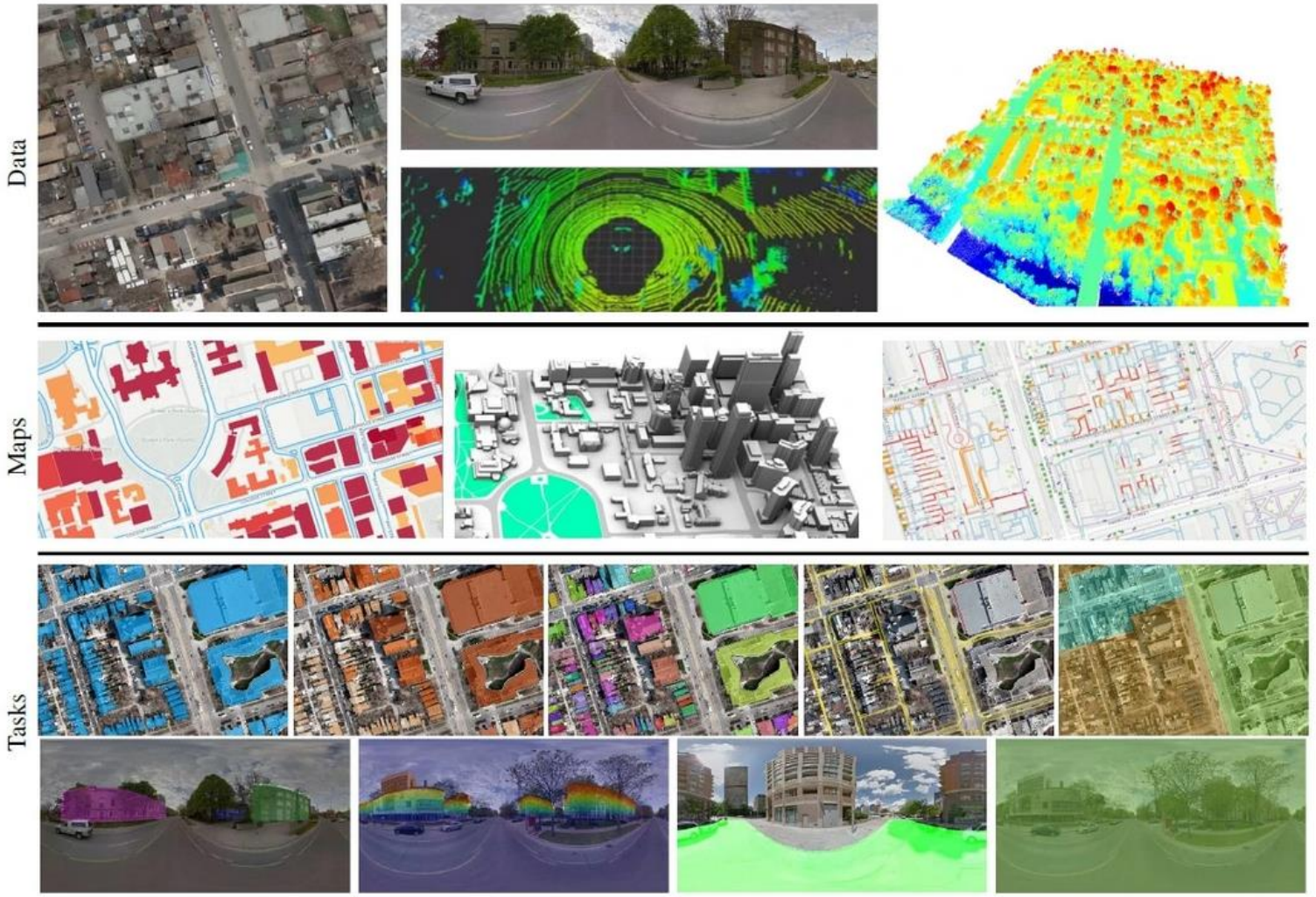
Cutting through all of these are affectivities which are triggered by the qualities of the built environment as resource of everyday life.



Robbie Gilmore: **Mobilizing the meaning of greening in a conflicted city. A case study from northwest Belfast**

Map: Author

URBAN FUTURE-MAKING



Fabian Namberger: **Towards the machine-readable city? Autonomous driving and HD mapping as latent conflicts in urban future-making**

Image: Wang et al. (2017: 3010), Graphic depiction of various data sources used by Uber ATG to create the TorontoCity benchmark: a fully three-dimensional remapping of the entire Greater Toronto Area.

Fabian Namberger: **Towards the machine-readable city? Autonomous driving and HD mapping as latent conflicts in urban future-making**

Image: Author, latest generation of the FZI's CoCar prototype, exhibited at Messe Hannover 2024. The sticker above the rear fender provides a QR code that links to the FZI's privacy policy webpage-

Alessandra Manganelli: **Spotting tensions in urban greening experiments: Insights from Barcelona**

Image: Author

Hannes Langguth: **Navigating conflictual cooperation: Temporary power coalitions in the planning and approval of large-scale Chinese green technology projects in Eastern Germany**

Image: Author

Melis Günay: **Driving change? 'Doing' conflict in traffic experiments**

Image: Author

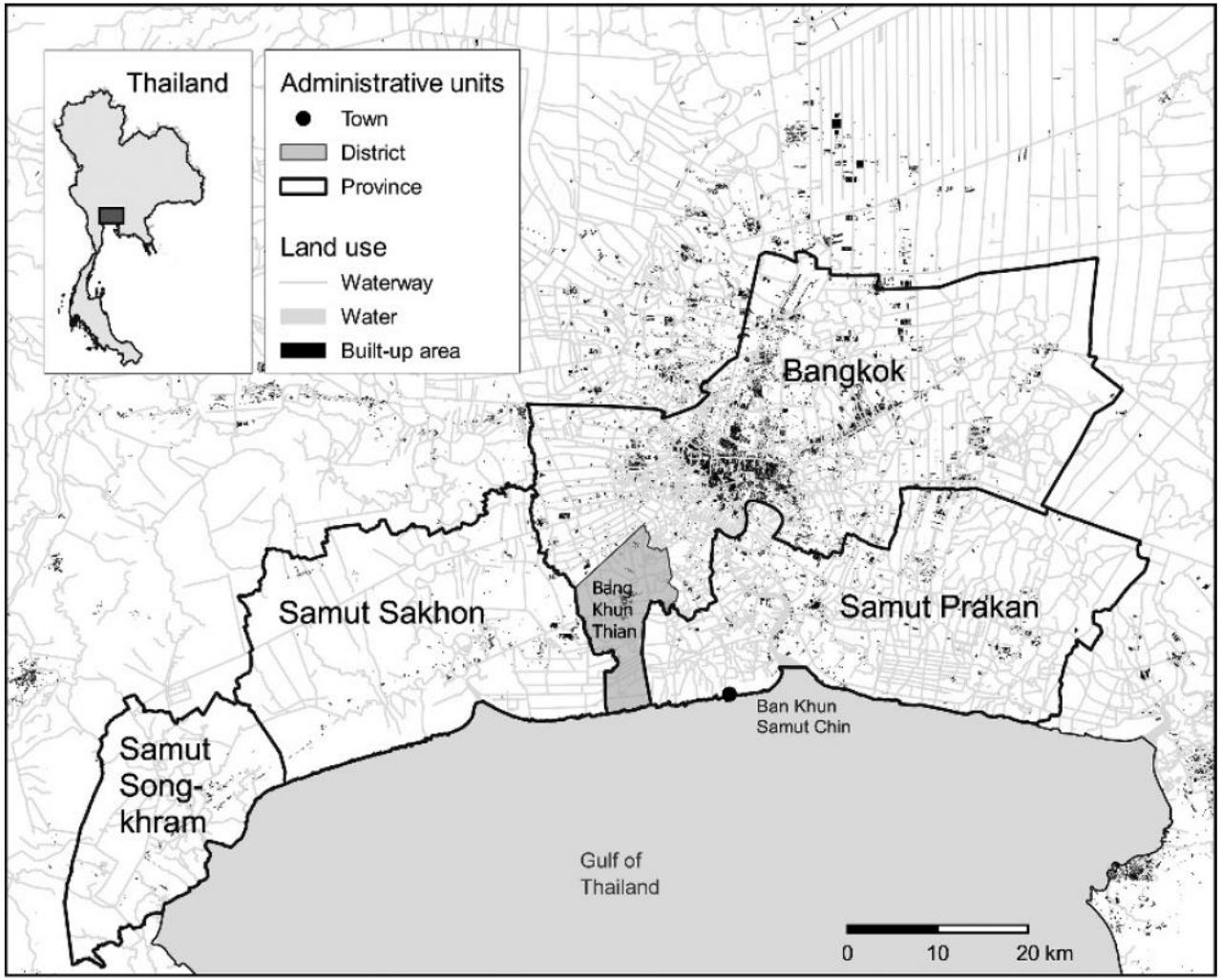
Way of 'doing' conflict	Description	Conflict reference	Associated outcome	Associated power intent
Identifying conflict	Actor recognizes and expresses conflict	Generating conflict	Mobilize people, channel resources	Gain power over sb./to do sth.
Provoking conflict	Actor exacerbates conflict to evoke strong reaction	Generating conflict	Build public pressure, shape/polarize public opinion	Gain power over sb./to do sth.
Avoiding conflict	Actor anticipates and circumvents or mitigates conflict	Preventing conflict	Avoid tensions, avoid attention	Maintain or gain power over sb./to do sth.
Resolving conflict	Actor solves conflict	Reacting to conflict	Dissolve tension, improve relationships	Maintain or gain power over sb./to do sth.
Ending conflict	Third-party actor terminates conflict	Reacting to conflict	Realize mandate, restore legal order	Enforce (judicial) power over sb./to do sth.

Melis Günay: **Driving change? 'Doing' conflict in traffic experiments**

Table: Author

Lucas Pohl: **Uneven coastal geographies: Sea level rise and contested urban future-making in Bangkok**

Image: Author



Lucas Pohl: **Uneven coastal geographies: Sea level rise and contested urban future-making in Bangkok**

Map: Author

URBAN FUTURE-MAKING

4. Conclusions

- Setting in which planners and other built environment professionals operate has become more complex
- Conflicts are fuelled by the particular quality of the built environment as a resource of everyday life
- Solving complex problems in the interest of the public good requires both reflexive and responsible agency

Thank you!

https://urban-future-making.hcu-hamburg.de/

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