

# The governance of live-work mix: Actors and instruments in Amsterdam and Brussels development projects

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**Abstract** This paper addresses the governance of the ‘live-work mix’. This concept refers to the renewed intertwining of living and working activities in new housing and urban development in the context of welfare state restructuring, development of the knowledge economy and globalisation. Implementing live-work goals can be difficult because a consensus between public and private actors is usually needed to develop such projects. In this paper, we examine the actors and instruments that assist in the implementation of live-work goals in targeted areas. We survey live-work development by analysing three illustrative projects in Brussels and Amsterdam, cities with comparable strategies but distinct planning systems. Our results indicate that state support is essential to enhance live-work mix, especially because the market remains reluctant to mix functions and focuses primarily on housing development. Flexible and tailor-made instruments are used, sometimes co-authored by public and private actors, to reach consensus. These instruments illustrate variants of strategic planning. Despite a shared interest in attracting target groups to redevelopment areas, the consensus-building process is affected by discrepancies in the nature of live-work mix.

**Keywords:** Collaborative planning; Governance; Planning instruments; Amsterdam; Brussels

## 1 Introduction

This paper addresses the governance of the ‘live-work mix’, a concept that refers to the intertwining of living and working activities (including manufacturing and service-oriented economic activities) in new urban developments. Before being separated under functionalist principles, housing and economic activities were intimately interdependent (Madden & Marcuse, 2016). With the ‘flexibilisation’ of labour markets, the distinction between the work and home spheres has once again become increasingly blurred (Bergan et al., 2020). Nowadays, various forms of live-work buildings do exist, including housing over commercial ground floors and mixed-use live-work neighbourhoods (Dolan, 2012). Live-work mix is seen as a particular form of mixed-use development that ranges from the building to the district scale (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). The demand for more flexible workplaces and housing has led to new urban developments (Healey, 1997) with governance implications that may vary across contexts. Hence, this paper focuses on the actors and instruments involved in developments that mix housing and economic activities (both industrial and service-oriented) at diverse scales in redevelopment areas of different cities.

Current forms of live-work mix were developed in the context of welfare state restructuring, development of the knowledge economy and the globalisation of cities (Sassen, 1991). Live-work mix came to be seen as instrumental to economic growth and competitiveness, and local governments soon began to advocate for

such developments (Grant & Perrott, 2011). In particular, both the creation of attractive live-work environments and the more recent emergence of ‘live-work-play’ concepts (Dolan, 2012) were promoted in obsolete office and industrial areas. Such supports were part of a strategy to attract highly skilled workers in knowledge-intensive sectors (e.g. Bontje & Musterd, 2009; Hansen & Niedomysl, 2009), especially in post-industrial cities, but it came at the expense of affordable housing (Ferm & Jones, 2016). Introducing housing into these former ‘employment lands’ has been used as a ‘regeneration catalyst’ since the 1990s (ibid.). Other approaches seek to enhance innovative forms of active production, urban manufacturing and logistics within cities, following recent planners’ discourses on the ‘productive city’, the ‘city of making’ or the ‘productive democracy’ (Baudouin, 2010; De Boeck et al., 2017; Pecqueur, 2006). Today, despite the difficulties associated with live-work developments, such approaches are becoming more widespread in urban development agendas.

Implementing live-work goals can be difficult because this involves different kinds of public and private actors—with overlapping interests—who need to build consensus. Such collaborative efforts in governance (Healey, 1997) have become increasingly complex and entail improved understanding (Tasan-Kok et al., 2019). Existing planning frameworks constrain collaborative governance. Such governance requires new roles for the actors and new planning instruments, such as tailor-made contractual arrangements (van den Hurk & Tasan-Kok, 2020). Much of the research on mixed-use development has focused on single contexts (Grant, 2002; Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005; Korthals Altes & Tambach, 2008; Mualam et al., 2019), whereas comparative case study research is needed to address variations in local governance arrangements (Bassett et al., 2002) and the influence of different institutional contexts.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the governance of live-work mix, especially the actors and instruments that promote the implementation of live-work goals in targeted areas within contrasting institutional frameworks. More specifically, we seek to answer the question: what is the impact of local institutional frameworks on live-work development? In particular, which actors and instruments make such developments possible? In what follows, we survey the development of the live-work mix in Brussels and Amsterdam. These cities have similar live-work mix strategies, but differences in implementation have produced differing housing tenures and economic activities. These differences are reflected in distinct housing and planning systems and specific development discourses. After introducing the analytical framework used to examine the governance of the ‘live-work mix’, we provide a brief background of each city’s institutional context and live-work mix strategy. Then, we introduce our comparative, embedded case study analysis, which we use to compare the actors and instruments in three illustrative live-work projects, one located in a former office area in Amsterdam, and the other two in a former industrial area in Brussels.

## **2 Governance of live-work mix**

### *2.1 Instrumentation of live-work mix*

Live-work mix and, more broadly, mixed-use developments, have become essential principles in urban policy, especially since the new charter of Athens in 1998 (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005) and the North-American ‘New Urbanism’ and ‘Smart Growth’ movements (Ferm & Jones, 2016). Mixed-use developments emphasise the efficient integration of diverse uses—especially in well-connected locations (Grant, 2002; Grant & Perrott, 2011)—as well as higher-quality built environments with improved social control (Cozens, 2008; Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005; Louw & Bruinsma, 2006; Mualam et al., 2019). Although local planners have advocated mixed-use to enhance social integration and economic development, such developments have been associated with increased segregation and little improvement of economic vitality (Grant, 2002; Novak, 2019). Residential-led mixed-use developments have been criticised for creating vacancies in other uses (Korthals Altes, 2019) and for displacing the remaining industries—seen as incompatible with housing—in post-industrial cities, hence fuelling unemployment in manufacturing (Ferm

& Jones, 2016). Moreover, the tension between ‘liveability for all’ and investment value can lead to affordability issues (Korthals Altes, 2019, p. 1153). Despite these drawbacks, live-work mix remains a central aspect of urban development strategies.

Nevertheless, the implementation of live-work goals faces numerous barriers. Cultural and economic forces promote the separation of uses and the segregation of markets, leading to separate housing and job clusters (Dolan, 2012; Grant & Perrott, 2011; Healey, 1997; Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). At the building level, public ground floors are often requested, but they involve complex joint ownership arrangements with multiple stakeholders (Mualam et al., 2019; Winston, 2007). These barriers generate planning uncertainties, especially in the case of urban regeneration (van den Hurk & Tasan-Kok, 2020). These uncertainties have been exacerbated by the global financial crisis, which has led to an emphasis on public–private partnerships and the emergence of new real estate actors (ibid).

## 2.2 An institutionalist approach to governance of live-work mix

The analytical framework we have adopted draws upon an institutionalist approach to collaborative governance (Healey, 1997). It focuses on the governance arrangements used to build consensus on live-work goals and their implementation process (Gonzalez & Healey, 2005). This approach is suitable for multi-stakeholder developments, such as live-work projects. In this approach, governance corresponds to ‘a coordination process of actors, social groups and institutions to reach goals discussed and defined collectively’ (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2012, p. 23; author’s translation). Similarly, *governance capacity* refers to the ability of institutions to operate as a collective actor (Gonzalez & Healey, 2005; Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2012). In each institutional context, we examine the roles of the actors and the instruments they use to reach consensus and implement live-work goals. The different steps of the analytical framework are illustrated in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Analytical framework for governance arrangements that foster consensus on live-work goals and their implementation.

With the restructuring of housing provision and the globalisation of cities, *new actors and roles* have arisen in the housing market (Aalbers, 2008; Fahey & Norris, 2011; Nappi-Choulet, 2012). The state is no longer a single entity, but a ‘specific institutional ensemble with multiple boundaries’ and ‘intersecting relations’ (Gonzalez & Healey, 2005, p. 2058). In this paper, the state refers to public entities that depend on the local government, which is seen as a ‘flexible institutional actor’ and an ‘active negotiating party’ (Castells, 2002; Tasan-Kok, 2010). States can alternately play steering, facilitating and entrepreneurial roles in the implementation of live-work goals, depending on their governance capacity (Tasan-Kok, 2010). The *facilitating* role consists of supporting the market with resources, such as incentives, and assisting it in development and investment decisions (Heurkens et al., 2018; Nyström et al., 2014). *Steering* expands the state’s capacity to take a guiding role through such means as interaction and persuasion (Béal et al., 2018). Beyond guiding and derisking the market, the state can also play an *entrepreneurial* role by envisioning risks and acting effectively, including investing in new specific areas or in ‘flagship projects’ (Tasan-Kok, 2010) to achieve policy goals (Korthals Altes, 2019). In the latter case, the state and market are no longer adversaries because state actions help create/support markets (Mazzucato, 2013). Irrespective of its role,

state intervention is necessary to allow markets to work efficiently (Korthals Altes, 2019). Market parties have been playing more proactive roles in urban development, including *opportunistic* and *strategic* roles (Koppenjan, 2015; Tasan-Kok, 2010; Theurillat et al., 2015), to respond to existing demand and compete with new products (Theurillat et al., 2015). In multi-actor processes such as live-work projects, states and market parties have shifting and often conflicting interests (Tasan-Kok, 2010). In addition, their roles can overlap, for example, when they both engage in opportunistic behaviours (Koppenjan & Enserink, 2009). New actors, such as ‘innovation intermediaries’, who facilitate innovation, transfer knowledge and intervene between these traditional actors, are needed as support (Nyström et al., 2014).

Thus, the actors involved in live-work projects are mutually dependent and use (*new*) *instruments* strategically throughout the implementation of live-work mix. Such strategic and collaborative planning implies consensus-building (Albrechts, 2004). At the city level, the urban development strategy or city plan is the main instrument formalising collective live-work goals. City plans have been increasingly used to enhance economic growth in dedicated areas and are often the outcome of tense negotiations between public and private actors (Pinson in Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2005). Similarly, large-scale urban projects are strategically used to build consensus among actors with conflicting visions (Bassett et al., 2002). The political goals of this ‘coalition-building’ process, built on shared visions and discourses, are nevertheless difficult to achieve (Salet, 2008). Locally, planning instruments help balance *flexibility* against legal *certainty* because they stabilise collective action, balance conflicting objectives and pressures and increase both the transparency and predictability of actors’ behaviours (Buitelaar & Sorel, 2010; Remøy & Street, 2018). The flexibility of processes and mindsets is key to successful governance (Müller et al., 2014). Instruments that are too predictable can be resistant to change (van Bueren & ten Heuvelhof, 2005). In our case, such predictability could be seen as a barrier to innovative live-work mix. Flexibility can be enhanced through ‘design-oriented’ planning, which brings together visions, concepts and designs (Tasan-Kok, 2010). However, land-use regulation retains an important role in live-work development. Live-work mix is often made possible by changing land-use plans to allow housing development. In particular, such land-use changes have contributed to housing speculation in former industrial areas (Ferm & Jones, 2016) and have been associated with industrial gentrification (De Boeck et al., 2019). Other regulatory instruments include development contracts, which formalise public–private negotiations (van den Hurk & Tasan-Kok, 2020) and allow derisking of the market while safeguarding public services (Tasan-Kok et al., 2019). Public revenues are noticeably increased by value capture instruments, whether direct (e.g. public leaseholds in the Netherlands) or indirect (e.g. urbanisation charges in Brussels) (Alterman, 2012). All of these instruments play a role in the implementation of live-work mix.

### **3 Live-work mix in Amsterdam and Brussels: local drivers and strategies**

We compare the governance arrangements of live-work mix in two contrasting institutional contexts: Amsterdam and Brussels. Historically, the Netherlands welfare state regime has been social democratic, whereas that of Belgium has been corporatist (Hoekstra, 2005). Amsterdam is an actively-planned city that is affected by the relaxation and flexibilisation of its regulations. Conversely, Brussels (referring here to the Brussels Capital Region) is a fragmented city that has long been affected by the absence of spatial planning policy (De Decker, 2008). Brussels is now committed to more active planning, but the complexity of its institutional setting and competition with peripheral areas hamper its governance capacity. In the sections below, we describe these contextual characteristics and their implications for live-work mix.

#### *3.1 Amsterdam*

Amsterdam’s live-work goals are primarily driven by the city’s desire to increase its housing supply and attract middle-income households. Amsterdam is a rapidly growing city where housing accessibility and affordability have become critical issues, especially for middle-income groups who are ineligible for social

housing (40% of the housing stock) or mortgages and cannot afford privately rented dwellings (Boelhouver, 2019; Kadi & Musterd, 2015). To address these issues, the Housing Agenda 2025 (*Woonagenda 2025*) includes recommendations for low- and middle-income households. Specifically, the so-called ‘policy 40/40/20’ (2017) for new developments sets a distribution goal of 40% social housing, 40% mid-rental housing and 20% free-market housing. In this policy, mid-rental housing refers to dwellings larger than 50 m<sup>2</sup> with a monthly rent between 725€ and 1000€ (Amsterdamse federatie van woningcorporaties [AFWC], 2018). This tenure form is emphasised in redevelopment areas.

A second important driver of the live-work mix in Amsterdam is the historical utilisation of spatial planning to foster economic growth (Terhorst & van de Ven, 2001). The city’s development has been marked by the Dutch tradition of active spatial planning and its evolution towards relaxation and flexibilisation. The city owns over 80% of the land, which is leased through a specific instrument: the land-lease contract (*erfpacht*) (Savini et al., 2016). In the early 2000s, industrial areas were opened to mixed-use development, and housing was utilised to improve the attractiveness of these areas for service-based activities (Korthals Altes & Tambach, 2008). Planning regulations were initially intended to limit property owners’ rights through detailed land-use plans, which had a steering function of encouraging the desired land uses and a safeguarding function of providing material legal certainty (Buitelaar & Sorel, 2010; Healey, 2007). However, regulatory changes since the 2008 crisis have prioritised market interests (Savini, 2016) by shortening procedures and reducing risks for the market (Remøy & Street, 2018). Further reforms were consistent with planning relaxation and flexibilisation (Heurkens et al., 2018; Savini, 2016). In particular, land-use plans have allowed new functions and increased land values (Remøy & Street, 2018). These recent developments have reduced the steering capacity of Dutch municipalities, giving local governments less room to manoeuvre (Heurkens et al., 2018).

Currently, the Structural Vision for Amsterdam (*Structuurvisie Amsterdam 2040*) advocates densification through mixed-use development with amenities. This vision was a response to land scarcity, lack of social control in sensitive areas and the need to increase the housing supply (Bontje et al., 2017; Hochstenbach, 2017; Savini, 2016). Accordingly, the Amsterdam 2025 strategy (*Koers 2025*) designates so-called ‘working-living’ milieus in former harbour, industrial and office areas. In these zones, mixed-use development is promoted, and creative/ knowledge industries are stimulated (Bontje & Musterd, 2009). Thus, live-work mix is instrumental in the redevelopment of these areas. Nevertheless, enhancing the attractiveness of redevelopment areas is challenging, especially in post-war neighbourhoods that have been physically and socially segregated (Savini et al., 2016; see project AMS1).

### 3.2 Brussels

As in Amsterdam, Brussels’ live-work vision relies on attracting middle-income households. Brussels suffers from social and economic fragmentation, which is physically marked by the Brussels Canal that runs through the city (Dessouroux et al., 2016). Despite demographic growth, outmigration—related to the shortage of affordable, good-quality housing for low- and middle-income groups—remains an issue (Casier, 2019; De Laet, 2018). Homeownership (45% of the housing stock) and the private-rented sector are substantial, but public and regulated housing is scarce, representing less than 10% of the housing stock (De Decker, 2008; Dessouroux et al., 2016; Romainville, 2017). To tackle this problem, the regional development company (*Cityden*) offers subsidised homeownership for middle-income households, implemented through public–private partnerships. This instrument is used to improve the attractiveness of the city, especially in the poor crescent of Brussels, the deprived neighbourhoods north and west of the city centre (Dessouroux et al., 2016; Romainville, 2010). Although subsidised homeownership has been criticised for its lack of effectiveness (Dessouroux & Romainville, 2011), it remains one of the main instruments of housing supply and urban development. This tool is also used in live-work projects, in combination with economic and productive activities (see the Brussels projects).

The current emphasis on the redevelopment of fragmented areas is the second main driver of the live-work mix in Brussels. The city has suffered from fragmented spatial planning, conflicting policies of various government agencies, institutional complexity related to the regional border and an inclination to serve market interests first (De Boeck et al., 2017; Groth & Corijn, 2005; Romanczyk, 2012). Brussels had no spatial planning policy until the 1960s when the land-use plan was introduced as the primary regulatory planning instrument (De Decker, 2008; Halleux et al., 2012). After a long period of urban decline, urban ‘revitalisation’ policies were developed in the mid-1990s (Uitermark & Loopmans, 2013; Van Criekingen, 2009), but these exacerbated socio-spatial polarisation and exclusion (Swyngedouw & Baeten, 2001). Currently, effective spatial planning is constrained by a lack of coordination with housing/infrastructure production, long-lasting developments and public support for opportunistic private investments (Ananian, 2016). Brussels’ ambivalent position towards the market is partly due to land scarcity, which forces the region to collaborate with multiple stakeholders on large-scale developments (Bernard et al., 2009).

Brussels’ regional development plan (*Plan Régional de Développement Durable*) promotes integrated economic growth through mixed-use development in targeted areas. The regional plan defines priority development sites, including a perimeter, the Stimulated Urban Economy Area (*Zone d’Economie Urbaine Stimulée*). This zone covers the Canal area and deprived neighbourhoods, where unemployment reaches 40% (De Boeck et al., 2017). The regional plan was influenced in part by changes in land-use regulations, which were revised in the context of a demographic boom. Housing was emphasised through the creation of a new mixed land-use zone called the Enterprise Area for Urban Development (*Zone d’Entreprises en Milieu Urbain [ZEMU]*). The ZEMU opened former industrial areas to housing development and productive activities such as light industry, mainly in the Canal area. This land-use change was consistent with Brussels’ densification and economic strategies (Ananian, 2016). Economic growth legitimised the development of pilot mixed-use projects in these areas, mostly in partnership with the regional development company (ibid.). This actor combines responsibilities for economic expansion and urban revitalisation through subsidised housing and is central to the live-work mix in Brussels.

#### **4 Data and methods**

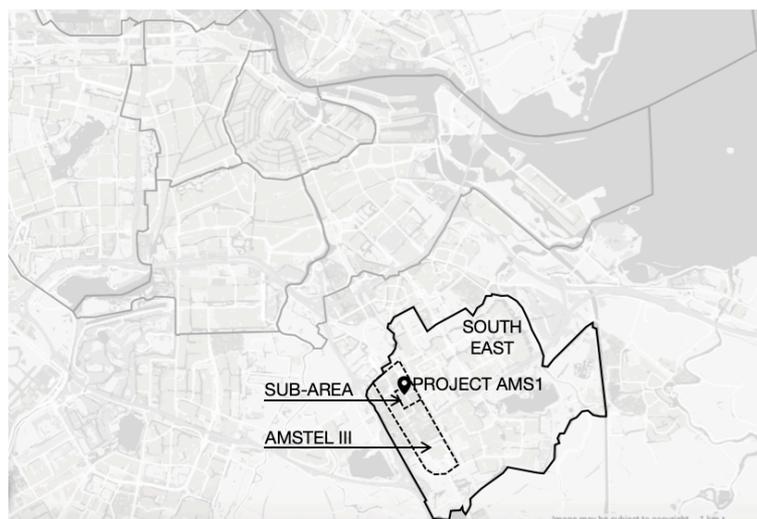
We selected three projects to explore the governance of live-work mix, one in Amsterdam and two in Brussels. The Amsterdam project (project AMS1) concerns the redevelopment of an obsolete office area constrained by existing ownership, which led to unusual governance arrangements. The two Brussels projects (project BXL1 and project BXL2) are pilot programmes, with a close mix of housing and productive activities in project BXL1, and a multi-purpose building in project BXL2. We visited each area and conducted 13 semi-structured in-depth interviews between February 2018 and 2019 (see Table 1 for the list of interviewees and their roles in the projects). Beginning with the development process, we asked the interviewees about their vision for the project, the main conflicts, compromises, interactions, biggest challenges and regulatory barriers. Although the relatively small sample of interviews limits generalisability, the choice of interviewees (each representing a different stakeholder) enabled us to discuss governance arrangements. We analysed the main instruments available for each project: local vision and strategies in Amsterdam, and local land-use plans and subdivision/building permits in Brussels. We used *NVivo* to perform qualitative coding of the research material and used these qualitative data to reconstruct the programme and development process of each project. This analysis helped us understand the decision-making process throughout the developments. We presented the findings at feedback workshops (in January 2019 in Amsterdam, and in November 2019 in Brussels), where the results were discussed and debated by civil servants and local experts. The workshops concerned a broader research project, but the participants discussed the main conclusions of this paper in small groups, where they could raise new issues and rectify certain observations. This critical feedback allowed us to sharpen our conclusions.

**Table 1.** List of interviewees<sup>1</sup>.

Amsterdam	Brussels
<i>Investor AMS1</i> – Institutional investor, project manager of project AMS1	<i>Developer BXL1</i> – Developer, director
<i>Developer AMS1</i> – Developer of another plot in the sub-area, project manager	<i>Urban planner BXL1</i> – Head of the urban development department of the municipality
<i>Urban planner AMS1</i> – Urban planner from the municipality supervising the area redevelopment	<i>Bouwmeester BXL1</i> – Project manager in the government architect’s team
<i>Supervisor AMS1</i> – Government architect	<i>Architect BXL1</i> – Architect responsible for Phase 1
<i>Architect AMS1</i> – Architect responsible for the design of project AMS1	<i>Developer BXL2</i> – Developer, project manager
<i>Process manager AMS1</i> – Consultant for the local vision	<i>Citydev BXL2</i> – Regional development company, project manager
	<i>Architect BXL2</i> – Leading architect, project manager

#### 4.1 The project programmes

Project AMS1 (2016–present, 28,500 m<sup>2</sup>) is part of the transformation of two office blocks (sub-area studied) in Amstel III, Amsterdam South-East (see **Fig. 2**). Redeveloping this area was complex because of the existing leasehold, which made the usual planning instruments unsuitable. Hence, the public and private actors co-wrote a local vision for the neighbourhood to provide guidelines for the redevelopment. Then, the municipality issued a development strategy for Amstel III and a development contract for each project. Project AMS1 consists of the demolition of an office building and the construction of two residential towers (274 dwellings) with a common ground floor (see **Fig. 3**). After negotiations about the requirements of the ‘40/40/20’ policy, the tenure mix included 60% mid-rental housing but only 10% social housing. Commercial/office units and parking facilities are located on the lower floors.



**Fig. 1.** Location of project AMS1, in Amstel III, Amsterdam South-East (map: [www.maps.amsterdam.nl](http://www.maps.amsterdam.nl); diagram: authors).

<sup>1</sup> Six interviews were conducted in English, in February–March 2018 in Amsterdam, and seven interviews were conducted in French in January–February 2019 in Brussels.

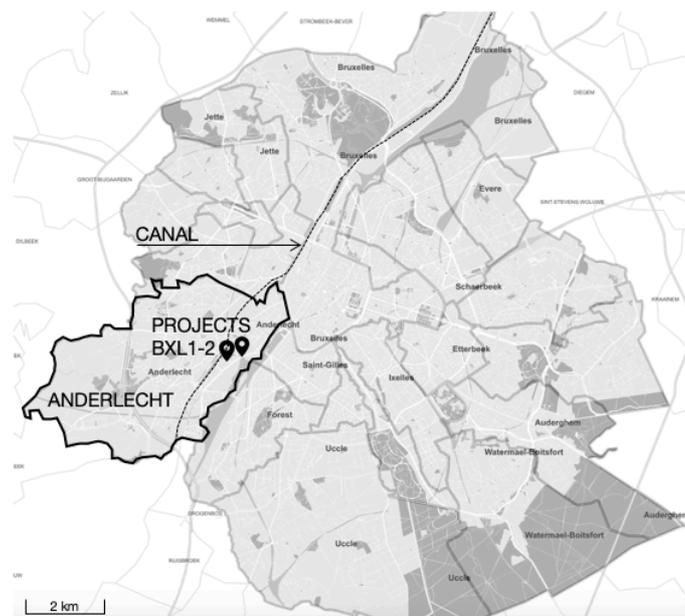
All quotations for the Brussels case were translated from French to English. Urban planner BXL1 provided information on project BXL2 as well.



**Fig. 2.** A rendering of project AMS1 (credit: OZ Architects) against the existing built environment (credit: authors).

Project BXL1 (2010–2019, 39,300 m<sup>2</sup> for Phase 1) consists of the construction of a seven-block district along the Canal in Anderlecht (see **Fig. 4**), a municipality of Brussels with an industrial past. The municipality started working on a local land-use plan for this area before regional land-use regulation opened the area to housing development. The first phase (see **Fig. 5**, left panel) combines elderly housing, 95 owner-occupied dwellings and business-to-business services. Before the local land-use plan was adopted, a thorough revision of the project was conducted to obtain planning permission. All remaining blocks were subject to a subdivision permit. The second phase (41,300 m<sup>2</sup>) includes subsidised housing (181 dwellings in total) and productive activities. The last four blocks should deliver more productive activities and public facilities. Public competitions were planned for these blocks, with the support of the government architect.

Project BXL2 (2014–2022, 24,300 m<sup>2</sup>) is located in a highly mixed area near project BXL1. The development (see **Fig. 5**, right panel) is the result of an architectural competition organised by the regional development company, which had previously applied for a subdivision permit. The development includes 103 subsidised housing units, various facilities and a multi-purpose building (*Bâtiment à Affectations Multiples*). The latter building must include a certain proportion of productive activities, services and housing, the distribution of which can be adapted over time. The first scenario for the multi-purpose building was determined before the permit request, and the design was adapted accordingly.



**Fig. 3.** Location of projects BXL1–2 along the Canal in Anderlecht (map: urbisonline.brussels; diagram: authors).



Fig. 4. View of Phase 1 completed (credit: authors) and rendering of project BXL2 (credit: A2M).

## 5 Live-work development in targeted areas

In this section, we present the results of the analysis of the three live-work projects by city. The key findings are summarised in **Table 2**, together with the main features of each city's institutional framework.

### 5.1 Transforming an office area in Amsterdam

We observed *state support* for live-work mix in project AMS1, but with limited governance capacity because the municipality's steering capacity has decreased since the 1990s and even further after the real estate crisis that followed the 2008 financial crisis (Savini, 2016). The existing ownership structure further reduced this capacity, prompting the municipality to develop new roles to attract market parties and accelerate the transformation of the area. The municipality showed greater flexibility on specific requirements:

It's very important to get started in this area, instead of thinking of all those features you have to take into place because this area won't be transformed if you put all the levels of things you have to comply to ... that, it won't happen over here. They [the municipality] realised it. Because they tried for ten years to make something else from this area and it never ... *nothing happened*. [Investor AMS1; emphasis added]

These comments reflect the *stimulating* and *facilitating* roles the municipality assigned to itself in the strategic vision for Amstel III (see below). The municipality outlined this strategy but was reported as *behind market* in the definition of the local vision for the sub-area (Project Manager AMS1). The municipality had to balance its long-term goals with the market's willingness to fulfil them (Urban planner AMS1). A recent actor in Amsterdam's spatial planning community, the government architect (*Supervisor architectuur en stedenbouw*), supervised the spatial quality of the developments during the design phase and paid particular attention to density and mixed-use design (Supervisor AMS1). The government architect's role goes beyond the usual regulatory role of planning authorities and emphasises design-oriented planning. The *market* was reluctant to adopt live-work mix and instead *opportunistically* maximised residential density. The developers justified the high-density choice by regarding themselves as 'pioneers' in the area. Cost efficiency further influenced the market's decision to demolish as opposed to convert the existing office buildings. However, the recovery of the office market after the real estate crisis and the renewed demand for offices created competition between housing and offices. Despite a strong housing market, the impact of each function on land-lease prices disturbed market choices for the development programmes (Developer AMS1). Nevertheless, for the studied plot, the investor strategically focused on its core business activity, mid-rental housing.

We examined the *new instruments* used in the planning process from the area to the plot level. The Development Strategy (*Ontwikkelstrategie Amstel III*, December 2017) sets goals for Amstel III. This legally binding document acknowledges the need for the municipality to collaborate closely with landlords, investors and developers without making new plans. The explicit mention of increased market responsibility

illustrates the emphasis on market interests. The programmatic vision (included in the tool) offers a long-term framework and specifies that the municipality is alternately required to play *facilitating*, *stimulating* and *guiding* roles. This document also lists goals to densify the area through housing development and offer workplaces that are adapted to the ‘urban knowledge economy’ to transform Amstel III into an attractive living-working city district. Somewhat uncommonly, the local vision for the development strategy. The vision formalised common goals and intentions for several topics, including the proportion of amenities and non-residential functions. The balance between guidelines and rules in the document was instrumental to the market’s commitment:

So, you could say it’s a new way of master planning, it’s not a master plan saying: ‘Ok, everything is fixed.’ No, you try to make a set of rules that make sure that you will not stop the energy of this market party that really wants to start. It’s just ... What do you really need to fix, and what can be open for a market to fill?  
[Project Manager AMS1]

The local vision was the main consensus instrument. It is a non-legally binding political agreement (Savini, 2016) that was co-authored by public and private parties with the support of external consultants. The vision helped the municipality bind small- and large-scale instruments, i.e. development contracts and the subsequent development strategy. According to Developer AMS1, helping define the vision made him feel more committed to transforming the area. Nevertheless, the local vision turned out to be too flexible for the rigid land-lease system. Although the land-lease system originally made it difficult to change rights, the local vision lacked prescriptive rules to ensure the implementation of live-work goals. At the plot level, in the absence of a tendering process before the developments, the market and municipality entered into development contracts (*Kavelpasspoort*, 2018). Each contract consisted of a private mutual agreement about specific rules, including negotiations regarding the functions allowed. In the Netherlands, development contracts have been used increasingly in land-use change situations to enhance certainty, mitigate opportunistic behaviours and facilitate adaptability (Savini, 2016; van den Hurk & Tasan-Kok, 2020).

The *consensus-building* process relied on the ‘we need them, and they need us’ rationale. Despite the complex transformation process, there was consensus on mixed-use objectives. The situation brought all parties together in a new form of governance that different interviewees variously named ‘light urbanism’, ‘organic development’ or ‘co-creation’. In the literature, such governance is built on consensus, and the active involvement of the market is referred to as ‘entrepreneurial’ (Tasan-Kok, 2010), ‘collaborative’ (Healey, 1997) or ‘strategic’ (Albrechts, 2004). Because the market parties were aware that they were needed to initiate the area’s transformation, they knew they were in a steering position. Two consultants helped the partners define their shared vision by acting as intermediaries between the actors. We gathered the thoughts of a few actors to illustrate this collaborative effort:

We were searching together to get a certain output that could be sufficient enough for the market to move forward and wouldn’t be too strict for the municipality to not fit in their bigger structure. [Project Manager AMS1]

What we’re trying to do is to minimise the amount of rules, so we can still control things are going right. So, it’s always the balance: what kind of rules do we put up, and what kind of freedom do we give to the market? (...) Within the process, we are trying to *seduce* them to make good plans together. (...) It’s always this balance, in our ambition: what we want, and what’s still feasible out of the developer. [Urban planner AMS1]

We tried to, as in a pioneers’ phase, to really understand each other and to make a plan together, which has eventually become the *Buurtvisie*, in which we made spatial agreements or rules, and also we talked about these topics, how to bring it further in the next phase, which we are actually in now. [Investor AMS1]

However, the consensus-building process was affected by the need to find a compromise between ensuring the pioneers’ commitment and preserving the long-term vision, which led the municipality to modify its goals:

In a way, we are happy with...that something is already happening there. And it's a very good... the quality of the building is ok, the programme is ok, it's not spectacular, it's not very high on ambition, but what do you expect within this area for the first project? [Urban planner AMS1]

Hence, the tenure mix was negotiated for each development and formalised in the development contract. The negotiation enabled the market to target primarily young, middle-class and expatriate residents and reduces the chances that the municipality will achieve its tenure mix goals.

## 5.2 Regenerating an industrial area in Brussels

In the two Brussels' projects, *state support* for live-work mix was conspicuous in the active roles of new actors. The three key actors advocating for live-work mix were the regional development company, the Canal team and the government architect, and they compensated for the Anderlecht municipality's weaknesses. Limited by institutional complexity and a lack of resources, the municipality had to use indirect value-capturing instruments and demand public facilities (e.g. a preschool in project BXL2) from the developers before the projects could proceed. The municipality also supported owner-occupied housing and saw the existing, well-anchored industry in the area as a barrier to attracting potential homeowners (De Boeck et al., 2017). Although the municipality was behind the regional institutions in the process for project BXL1, it had a *steering* role in project BXL2. The regional development company played an *entrepreneurial* role in initiating the multiple-purpose-building concept (project BXL2), confirming its ability to innovate live-work concepts:

It's a *pilot project* that we are developing here. So, we don't really know if it is going to work and if it will bear fruit. Because, mixed-use, having a workshop close to housing, is it something that can exist? We tend to take for granted that it cannot exist, but well, it demands another reflection, as a matter of fact. It requires to *design projects in another way*. [Citydev BXL2; emphasis added]

The Canal team (second key actor) was created to implement the Canal plan and foster collaboration between regional institutions (De Boeck et al., 2017). In project BXL1 (Phase 2), the Canal team made it possible for all regional institutions to speak with one voice in front of the developer (Bouwmeester BXL1). The team also defended a certain vision for live-work mix that smoothly integrated productive activities. The government architect (*Bouwmeester*) is in the Canal team, but his primary roles are to oversee the spatial quality of new developments (as in Amsterdam) and organise architectural competitions. The current government architect also emphasises the development of productive activities, such as fablabs and craftsmanship, based on a 'productive-city' discourse (De Boeck et al., 2017). For project BXL1, the government architect reviewed local planning instruments and the design of Phase 2. Nonetheless, this phase was adapted with only marginal changes. Again, the active role of the government architect in the design illustrates a case of design-oriented planning.

The *market* played an *opportunistic* role in the projects by focusing on its core business, at the expense of productive activities. The developers were hardly confident in the commercialisation of a function with which they had little experience:

It is a challenge to commercialise housing above productive activities. We're going to have questions; we are only about to start. We're going to have questions on 'yes, but, what are we going to have behind us, are we not going to have some' ... It's clearly not as simple as if it was a small shop or if it was ... You see, it's not ... it's still a challenge. [Developer BXL1]

Nevertheless, developing subsidised housing dwellings with a standardised programme allowed for the derisking of the developments to a certain extent, especially since the regional development company holds applications to purchase dwellings. The developers still negotiated the possibility of delivering relatively high-density housing. Moreover, in project BXL1, the new land-use regulation was captured by the market to develop housing and offices primarily (in Phase 1). Thus, productive activities were jeopardised because of competition with other functions and uncertainty about the future property management of these spaces.

Except for the subsidised dwellings, the developers had the authority to determine the target buyers (young couples and families) as long as they respected the municipality's request for mixed dwelling types (Urban planner BXL2).

The only *new instrument* in both projects was the Canal plan (2013), which was made to assess the area, draw flexible guidelines and unite the actors (including the public sector actors) about these principles. This strategic instrument illustrates incremental planning based on case-by-case solutions and soft rules, i.e. planning advocating incrementalism, mutual adjustment and negotiations in decision-making (Healey, 1997). Most importantly, the revision of land-use regulations and the strategic use of the local land-use plan (*Plan particulier d'affectation du sol*) made live-work mix possible in project BXL1. The local land-use plan was used to enhance the residential attractiveness of the area and provide for the development of productive activities. However, the period between design and implementation (2010–2017) weakened the instrument. Finally, both projects used the subdivision permit, a mainstream regulatory instrument based on a masterplan defining functions, volumes and densities. In project BXL2, the subdivision permit (2016) framed the programme for the multiple-purpose building and was used for the architectural competition (2017). This choice of instrument was criticised for being unsuitable for such a flexible and adaptive programme:

It was not mandatory, but these are the regional authorities who imposed it on us, to do a subdivision permit. But it is one block, actually. One could wonder whether it was useful or not, to limit architectural creativity in one block (...). The problem of a subdivision permit is that we state in the requirements that the proposals must respect the framework of the permit. (...) Once I saw the proposals, I figured out that this inhibits architects' creativity because I think they can come up with innovative solutions and the permit is a barrier, in this framework. [Citydev BXL2]

The subdivision permit (2018) for project BXL1 was conceived after the development of Phase 1 as a more precise complement to the local land-use plan.

We also observed *conflicting uses* of instruments that created lock-in effects. For example, the municipal authorities considered Phase 1 in project BXL1 a failure because planning permission was obtained before the local land-use plan was adopted. The municipal authorities felt 'trapped' (Urban Planner BXL1) by a process that they believed occurred too quickly under pressure from the developer. Indeed, market pressure tends to impede Brussels' spatial planning (Romanczyk, 2012). In project BXL2, inflexible building regulations hampered the inclusion of the multiple-purpose-building concept in the subdivision permit. The building permit procedure requires that the initial scenario be both compliant to the subdivision permit and financially feasible. Technical and regulatory issues thus limit the scope of possibilities. Such a limitation is a barrier to the adaptability-over-time rationale, especially as another permit would be necessary to change the functions in the project.

*Consensus-building* was fostered by aspects of the projects that created interdependencies among the actors. The location was of interest to all actors because it was a large-scale, well-connected site that was available and affordable. These site characteristics attracted public and private investment, elicited greater acceptability of the projects from local authorities and created interdependencies between public and private actors, as well as within the public sector. In project BXL1, Phase 2, the Canal team led the collaborative process to improve communication between the planning authorities and the developer (Bouwmeester BXL1). Nevertheless, the institutional complexity of the public sector negatively impacted the decision-making processes in both projects, hindering clear communication of the actors' respective visions for the projects and creating tensions during the negotiations. For example, we noticed discrepancies among visions for the live-work mix. Such differences were assumed to be related to the actors' misperceptions about what constitutes productive activities. Developer BXL1 considered the emphasis on productive activities to be symptomatic of a nostalgic vision of the city, perhaps because he had an outdated vision of urban industry:

When it comes to mixed-use, we truly believe it's an added value. But it's perhaps more complicated with productive activities than originally imagined. Because originally, I think it's much more ambitious to really keep industry. And for this, well, we are more lukewarm. One cannot mix any type of industry with housing. [Developer BXL1]

A clearer definition of this function would have improved the consensus-building process.

**Table 2.** Summary of the key findings for the two institutional frameworks, structured by actors, instruments and consensus-building.

Amsterdam	Brussels
Institutional framework	
Social-democratic welfare state regime	Corporatist welfare state regime
Active spatial planning under relaxation and flexibilisation	Fragmented spatial planning affected by institutional complexity
Emphasis on contract planning	Emphasis on incremental planning
(New) actors and their roles	
<i>Actors involved:</i> Municipality, external consultants, government architect, developers and investor	<i>Actors involved:</i> Canal team, government architect, regional development company, municipality, developers
<i>Roles:</i> Facilitating state, opportunistic/steering market	<i>Roles:</i> Steering/entrepreneurial state (project BXL2), opportunistic/steering market (project BXL1)
(New) instruments and conflicts	
<i>New instruments:</i> Local vision	<i>New instruments:</i> Canal plan
<i>New uses:</i> Development strategy, development contract	<i>New uses:</i> Subdivision permit, land-use plans
<i>Conflicts:</i> Existing leasehold versus local vision	<i>Conflicts:</i> Planning permission versus local land-use plan (project BXL1) and subdivision permit (project BXL2)
Consensus-building process	
<i>Shared interest:</i> Enhancing the residential attractiveness of a specific location	<i>Shared interest:</i> Enhancing the residential attractiveness of a specific location
<i>Discrepancies on the nature of live-work mix:</i> Competition housing-offices, market focus on housing	<i>Discrepancies on the nature of live-work mix:</i> Definition of productive activities, market focus on housing
<i>Collaboration:</i> 'Co-creation' but market dominant; balance between action and vision	<i>Collaboration:</i> Enhanced by the Canal team (project BXL1), but institutional complexity; unclear visions

## 6 Discussion and conclusion

This paper addresses governance arrangements that are used to implement live-work goals in contrasting institutional frameworks. Because live-work mix can both support economic development and enhance residential attractiveness, it has been increasingly advocated in urban agendas. The empirical research presented here regarding live-work projects in targeted areas of Amsterdam and Brussels indicates that live-work development has taken different paths in these cities. Such divergences reflect discrepancies in the overall visions of live-work mix, and more specifically, in what the ‘live’ and ‘work’ components ought to be. Amsterdam promotes mid-rental housing and working- living milieus that rely on a knowledge-city discourse, whereas Brussels emphasises subsidised homeownership and productive activities based on a productive-city discourse. However, our analysis of the live-work projects found similar governance arrangements that enabled the actors to manage complex situations throughout the planning process, e.g. with unusual joint property arrangements in Brussels and existing leaseholds in Amsterdam.

*State* support is an essential component of live-work development. However, the types of actors involved and the roles that they play vary between the cities. In the projects we examined, the Amsterdam municipality assumed an unusually *facilitating* role, given its reduced steering capacity, and in Brussels, new actors were key to the developments. The Canal team improved the collective governance capacity of the regional institutions while the regional development company played an *entrepreneurial* role. Both cities benefitted from an actor dedicated to spatial quality, the government architect, which confirms the need for design-oriented planning and the importance of high-quality design in live-work projects (Grant & Perrott, 2011). The local variations in state roles illustrated discrepancies in planning regimes. The fragmentation in Brussels required new government agencies to improve its governance capacity. In contrast, Amsterdam still centralises its resources, although it has increasingly been assisted by external consultants. In both cases, these cities used actors as ‘innovation intermediaries’ to facilitate innovation and interactions among mainstream actors (Nyström et al., 2014).

Conversely, the *market* remains reluctant to develop live-work mix. Investors and developers are still primarily interested in the ‘live’ component of live-work mix. Analysis of the Amsterdam project showed an opportunistic market focused on cost efficiency and ‘easy’ target groups that are likely to settle in an area as pioneer residents (Hochstenbach & Boterman, 2015). In Brussels, the market acted similarly and was able to mitigate risks by developing subsidised housing and offices rather than productive activities. Interestingly, no social housing providers were involved in any of the projects examined. Further research would be required to understand to what extent the shared interest of the state and the market for demographics that they consider as ‘attractive’ (e.g. young, middle class) may have influenced the absence of collaboration with a social housing provider. Not collaborating with this type of actor might lead to overlooking lower-income households. Studying further the societal impact of such collaboration would thus be relevant.

The planning *instruments* used in the projects examined in this study captured the difficult balance between strategy and regulation. Traditional planning instruments and regulations often constrain live-work goals. Hence, the actors established (and in some cases, co-authored) custom-made planning instruments consisting of local visions and used existing instruments strategically (e.g. the development contract in Amsterdam or the subdivision permit in Brussels) to enhance both flexibility and predictability. The choice of these instruments illustrates variants of strategic planning in the two cities—contract planning in Amsterdam and incremental planning in Brussels—that are consistent with their respective city planning systems. However, these instruments conflicted with existing regulations (e.g. land-lease contract, planning permission), which constrained the implementation of the projects.

Despite these planning weaknesses, early-stage collaboration triggered *consensus-building* in live-work development. We observed a shared interest in enhancing the residential attractiveness of the locations (an obsolete office area in Amsterdam and an industrial deprived area in Brussels). Such an interest legitimised

the focus of the market on delivering housing for middle-income households in each city, although with different tenure forms, under the influence of each city's past welfare state regime. Such decisions, as well as higher-density living, were supported by the 'pioneer' nature of the projects in the redevelopment of these areas and generated interdependencies, such as the 'we need them, and they need us' discourse in Amsterdam. However, discrepancies on the nature of live-work mix affected the planning process, with competition between functions in Amsterdam and misperceptions of the productive activities to be delivered in Brussels. We observed different collaborative arrangements in the two cities, each with its limitations. These arrangements suffered from the search for a balance between market commitment and state vision in Amsterdam and were affected by institutional complexity in Brussels. Although previous research may have assumed that it is easier to balance public and private interests in the Netherlands than in Belgium (Tasan-Kok, 2010), our results show that this does not especially appear to be the case for live-work projects. Both cities experienced specific difficulties that led to similar struggles in trying to balance market interests and achieve 'effective spatial planning' (Remøy & Street, 2018).

Although our comparative case study approach confirmed that live-work mix has strong local ties and requires adapted solutions, it also shed light on the emergence of unusual governance arrangements and unexpected governance capacities that led to innovative practices. More in-depth research could investigate the tendency for live-work mix to be coupled with high-density living in areas with no housing, as well as the liveability of these urban districts in the making. Investigations of the property management of live-work buildings also seem necessary, given the uncertainties we observed, e.g. in the operation of industrial workshops in Brussels due to the absence of dedicated actors. Such uncertainties threaten the planning process, especially in vertical mix situations (Mualam et al., 2019). Nevertheless, by investigating the implementation process of live-work mix in different institutional frameworks, this paper enhances knowledge about new actors and instruments that will be increasingly involved in future planning systems, given the likely increase of live-work mix in cities.

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