Endurance and implementation in small-scale bottom-up initiatives: How social learning contributes to turning points and critical junctures

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This article studies how social learning can contribute to change, by applying the concepts of Turning Points and Critical Junctures to the pre-implementation lifecycles of small-scale bottom-up initiatives. It proposes that Turning Points, which have a relatively small immediate impact, and Critical Junctures, which have larger, more visible and more immediate effects, should both be considered crucial to the pre-implementation lifecycle of such initiatives and their capacity to endure and act towards implementation. It shows how social learning contributes to Turning Points, Near Misses and Critical Junctures by, for example, turning frustrations into spite, which fuels endurance and eventually implementation; or by allowing long-term endurance to make at first rejected possibilities become acceptable. The emerging Turning Points, Near Misses and Critical Junctures each play relevant roles for endurance and implementation dynamics. These findings highlight the importance of a more differentiated approach to bottom-up initiatives (including those not yet implemented) in urban planning and urban studies, recognizing their struggles for implementation, and the potentials and hurdles that social learning processes can provide therein. To support this differentiated approach, a micro-level application of Turning Points and Critical Junctures is shown to provide a useful lens, especially when considered in conjunction.

1. Introduction

Around the world, citizens often take initiative to make improvements to their neighbourhood on their own, only seeking government support when they are met with significant financial or other barriers. This process has been studied as 'self-organization' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; Hasanov & Zuidema, 2018), 'bottom-up initiatives' and 'grassroots innovation' (Edelenbos et al., 2017; Elwood, 2002; Ross et al., 2012), among others. Both high hopes and strong criticisms have developed in relation to such initiatives, especially concerning on one hand their empowerment potential (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011; De Dreu et al., 2011; Hasanov et al., 2019; Ross et al., 2012) and on the other hand the responsibilization of citizens[1] (Bailey & Pill, 2011; Mees et al., 2019; Nederhand et al., 2016; Zandbergen & Jaffe, 2014) and the neoliberalization that can be a consequence of relying on such emergent planning (Elwood, 2002; Parker et al., 2015; Savini, 2016). Doubts are also raised regarding the legitimacy of initiatives for fair democratic representation (Connelly et al., 2020) and their reproduction of power

structures and inequalities through their reliance on social capital which is more prevalent in hyper local networks (Arneil, 2010; Kerkhoven & Bakker, 2014). Whichever evaluation is made, such initiatives emerge frequently and often have important consequences for urban development and for the involvement of citizens in urban planning and development. However, at least one remaining research gap lies in understanding how crucial events or time-periods impact these initiatives' capability to endure and break through to implementation, and how this is mediated by social learning.

Social learning is the process of gaining, confirming, disconfirming or indexing knowledge, skills or experience through interaction between two or more individuals (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). Social interaction is key in the development and implementation of all kinds of urban (and regional) initiatives – for example when inspiration is sought in verbal exchanges to identify and solve a societal problem, when work is decided upon and divided to implement ideas, and when financial, managerial and other support is sought from governmental-, land-owner- or similar stakeholders. This interaction

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invariably triggers social learning processes, which can strengthen social ties (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Mandarano, 2009), but also weaken them through emerging tensions (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019; von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019); it can create inspiration for, or dissuade from, (future) participation in the public domain, and so on. Existing literature has shown that social learning often reinforces the status quo rather than leading to change (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). Throughout the world such change is required to improve equality and well-being for sustainable cities and communities (see e.g. Tan, 2019, who discusses this for developing countries in particular; but also Geels, 2011; Pahl-Wostl, 2002; and von Schönfeld & Bertolini, 2017 who show the need and existing attempts for such transitions worldwide). However, too little is yet known about how social learning, as above-defined, does impact change in the areas of planning and urban studies.

This article seeks to address this knowledge gap by conceptually and empirically exploring the relationships between social learning and the dynamics of endurance and change (specifically, implementation versus discontinuation) in bottom-up initiatives. To do so, the article employs a psychology-based understanding of social learning and a conceptualization of change through turning points and critical junctures. Two key problem statements structure the article. First, that social learning landscapes and dynamics within initiative groups constitute an important contribution to *critical antecedents* (Rinscheid et al., 2019), which enable or constrain the occurrence of critical junctures, and the direction these take. This is insufficiently recognized in bottom-up initiatives as discussed in planning and urban studies. Second, that several small events – which can be conceptualized as turning points that do not materialize into full critical junctures – are nevertheless important for the endurance-implementation nexus dominating the lifecycle of bottom-up initiatives – much more so than planning literature on change suggests (see e.g. Buitelaar et al., 2007). Even literature - usually outside planning - which studies small-scale change (e.g. niches in transition studies (Geels, 2011; Kemp et al., 2001), or grassroots or social innovation (Bragaglia, 2020; Christmann, 2011; Dana et al., 2021; Howaldt et al., 2018; Moulaert et al., 2013)) have yet to move beyond the descriptive to provide a method to study the relationship between small and large scale changes *within* the often long-winded lifecycle of neighbourhood initiatives preceding and beyond implementation and the learning effects thereof. The increasing reliance on such initiatives for achieving the public interest (as encouraged by the King of the Netherlands (2013) and the UK government (see e.g. Bailey & Pill, 2011; Smith, 2010), much as this is also viewed critically (e.g. Hasanov & Zuidema, 2018; Savini, 2016; Zandbergen & Jaffe, 2014)) underscores to urgency to address this gap.

To address this topic, a conceptual exploration in a theoretical framework constituted by the relationship between social learning, turning points and critical junctures is provided and followed by an empirical case-study of a bottom-up initiative in Groningen, the Netherlands. The case study, Vinkmobiel, was ideated as a mobility solution for isolated older adults and other less mobile groups in a neighbourhood with a relatively large population suffering from the consequences of isolation. It is a small-scale neighbourhood initiative that emerged in 2016 and went through many phases of near- or even full discontinuation, but repeatedly returned to an endurance stand-point, and eventually pushed through to implementation. The case was followed through participant observation between 2016 and 2018; in-depth individual interviews served to deepen understanding of learning processes and perceived turning points and critical junctures. The identification and evaluation of social learning processes in this case-study can offer international readers inspiration for their own cases as discussed in the concluding section.

2. Theoretical framework

Social learning is often seen as unmissable for small-scale bottom up initiatives to succeed. However, the adaption of political science and economic concepts such as institutional change and path dependency in planning and urban studies frequently neglects important insights concerning critical junctures, near misses and turning points. In this section, we offer a conceptual framework to identify and understand these elements via psychological perspectives which are subsequently applied to the case-study in the next sections.

2.1. Social learning and small-scale bottom-up initiatives

As psychological studies highlight, humans learn continuously throughout their lives, through experience, experimentation, reading, observation and interaction. Observation and interaction require social environments, and when such social environments present themselves, learning will occur – whether consciously or unconsciously. This article focuses on the lessons people draw from such social settings: *social learning* – i.e. that which is learnt from interaction between two or more individuals or groups, which can take the shape of experience, skills or knowledge, and which can entail a gaining, confirmation, disconfirmation or 'indexation' thereof (see for more details von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). In organization studies, social learning has been studied extensively, with important contributions for instance in relation to single-, double- and triple-loop learning which indicate the levels of depth and reflexivity involved in what is learnt (see Argyris & Schön, 1978; Mäntysalo et al., 2018). Water management studies have highlighted how social learning could provide an important result of participatory processes to achieve more sustainable water management (e.g. Pahl-Wostl, 2002, 2006). The present exploration of social learning focuses on insights from psychology, highlighting micro-processes of learning from social interaction and the importance of personal and (small) group dynamics therein (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019; von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). This enables a critical reflection on the interactive processes of social learning influencing small-scale bottom-up initiatives, which has been neglected in urban and regional planning.

In planning and the shaping of urban (and regional) environments, social interaction is crucial to 'get things done' – through negotiations, for inspiration, collaboration, or even in disagreement and contestation (Allmendiger & Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Forester, 1999; Healey, 2003; Mandarano, 2009; von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). Though this might seem obvious, a number of important consequences of this process are often overlooked, namely in two areas. First, social learning landscapes, which extend in time and content beyond the particular event in which interactions are being experienced. Second, personal and group dynamics that emerge from an individual combining pre-established social learning landscapes with pre-conceptions and expectations in relation to people that individual interacts with (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). Each individual brings a personal path-dependency with them, blending consciously or subconsciously with that of others in a group to create a complex web. This web can in many ways determine the pathway that a neighbourhood initiative takes. These factors can then lead to specific consequences for future citizen engagement (e.g. encouraging or discouraging participation, or a certain type of attitude in or expectation of participation or in actions undertaken). These factors highlight tacit knowledge and intangible group dynamics, but they also apply to specific content and process knowledge crucial for citizens to be able to impact and 'co-create' their environments (see e.g. the crucial effect of entrepreneurial knowledge for acceptance and implementation in urban planning processes by Stapper and Duyvendak (2020)).

In many ways, social learning leads to the reinforcement of the status quo, and to confirming knowledge, as one is more likely to confirm one's beliefs than to challenge them. Conditions for challenging one's beliefs are not necessarily there or created in a bottom-up initiative (Rinscheid et al., 2019; von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). But change does happen, also through social learning. How? A frequent

contention is that contact between people that are very different will lead to challenging one's thinking (Forester, 1999; Johannessen & Mostert, 2020), but others show that this *can* also have opposite, detrimental or maintaining effects (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). For social learning to contribute to change, other conditions are also necessary. This article hypothesises that in the case of bottom-up initiatives, these dynamics of reinforcing and challenging the status quo through social learning can be crucial for whether an initiative endures, (dis)continues or gets implemented.[2] That is, when social learning reinforces the status quo, it can allow initiatives to be implemented quickly if their knowledge is well aligned with the formal structures within which the implementation is meant to take place. When existing knowledge among agents in an initiative is not aligned with the sought-for context, then this knowledge either needs to be gained externally, or other knowledge is needed. This is reminiscent of the concept of policy entrepreneurs pushing 'pet proposals' (Kingdon, 2014, p. 170) and sometimes these social change actors are forced to adopt 'contradictory logics' of a more entrepreneurial than purely societally motivated nature to continue operations (van Dyck, 2012, p. 118; see Alvord et al., 2016 for a detailed review). Social and political entrepreneurship are often considered a reason for success of initiatives; however, we contend that social learning effects can provide insights that may explain why this is the case, why it sometimes fails, and what might be other explanations for success. We therefore explore these processes of knowledge exchange and social learning by studying turning points and critical junctures and how these are perceived by the involved agents.

2.2. Turning points, near misses and critical junctures

Critical junctures (CJ) are "relatively short periods of time during which there is a substantially heightened probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 348). They are usually understood in relation to path dependency – a critical juncture will set into motion a relatively long period in which the relatively large amount of choices that were available before and during the critical juncture are no longer simply accessible (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Sorensen, 2015). Here, we heed Pierson's (Pierson, 2000, pp. 262–263) warning to not equate critical junctures with path dependency, as the cursory adoption of path dependency in social sciences and the tendency to focus on the 'large' outcomes and courses instead of the smaller, contingent events leading to larger consequences might lead us to overlook processes of note. Critical junctures should also not be equated with change - they could result in a re-establishment or re-enforcement of the status-quo - but refer to times when change is more likely to occur than usual (see Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007). Critical junctures are similar to policy windows, where a rare joining of the streams of problems, policies and politics occurs (Kingdon, 2014, pp. 171–179), especially in terms of containing decision-making opportunities, but we choose to refer to critical junctures also to highlight their role in relation to the larger pathway of initiatives and to turning points, as presented next.

Critical junctures have also been used synonymously with 'turning points' (see Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007), but in this article these two concepts are treated as crucially different. Turning points (TP) are understood as relatively short periods of time during which there is a high probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest, but have a relatively small impact compared to critical junctures. A CJ then is always also a TP, but a TP does not always turn into (or contribute to) a specific CJ. This differentiation highlights an important hypothesis explored in this article: from the perspective of small-scale

neighbourhood initiatives, the difference and relationship between small-impact (turning points) and big-impact (critical junctures) events or time-periods, can be very important for the dynamics of endurance and implementation. This is akin to studying 'critical antecedents' (see Rinscheid et al., 2019), but highlights a more interwoven relationship between TPs and CJs, also in terms of timing. TPs do not always precede a CJ and thus impact the CJ, but there are mutual relationships between TPs and CJs following each-other. In turn, social learning is hypothesised to have a particular relationship with whether an event or time-period is a Turning Point or Critical Juncture in this sense.

Furthermore, this article applies the differentiation between Candidate Junctures, Critical Junctures and 'Near Misses' (see Rinscheid et al., 2019). As noted by Capoccia and Kelemen (2007, p. 351), "if change was possible and plausible, considered and ultimately rejected in a situation of high uncertainty, then there is no reason to discard these cases as 'non-critical' junctures". These situations are called 'Near Misses' (NMs). Importantly, there are nevertheless time-periods which might appear to be CJs at first, but afterwards are demonstrably part of the continuation of an existing path-dependency. This highlights a differentiation between expected and unexpected TPs, NMs and CJs. This article goes on to show that it matters whether there is the perception that a particular time constitutes a CJ, in which case agents may behave differently during a 'candidate juncture' than when they perceive their position and actions to fit within 'business as usual'. A CJ identified with hindsight but unexpected as it happened can only be assessed as such after the juncture has passed. The underlying assumption is that if one expects a CJ to occur, one might act – and learn – differently from when one expressly does not. For an overview, a glossary of the key terms is provided in Annex 1.

It is important to note that this article applies the concepts of Critical Junctures and Turning Points to a somewhat unusual context: most existing literature on Critical Junctures applies it at the level of countries and emphasizes macro-level change (as in politics, policy analysis and planning (e.g. Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Hogan & Doyle, 2007; Rinscheid et al., 2019; Sorensen, 2018)); Turning Points are mainly studied in psychology to analyse life stories of individuals (e.g. Sutin et al., 2010) (see also organizational studies, e.g. Erbert et al., 2005, which also provide important input for conceptualizing Turning Points, but which need to be cosidered at yet another analytical level from that used in psychology or in political studies). In both cases, a postdictive perspective is the norm (i.e. they are identified with hindsight rather than before or during their occurrence; for a significant exception see Hogan and Doyle (2007)). Crucially, this article seeks parallels with both of these literatures, but applies the concepts to bottom-up initiatives and their path towards implementation. Underpinning this choice are two key assumptions:

- that bottom-up initiatives depend on personal and group dynamics akin to those experienced by individuals and small groups as studied in the discipline of psychology, and which allow interesting parallels with the ideas of Turning Points from psychology.
- that many of the key characteristics of Critical Junctures and path-dependency apply to bottom-up initiatives' lifecycles, especially in their phase up to implementation. Here, phases of relatively rapid change are followed by a path-dependent phase which, if it doesn't lead immediately to implementation, needs to be followed by a (nother) Critical Juncture before hopes for implementation can resurge and implementation might occur. The lifecycles of bottom-up initiatives thus oscillate between times of insecurity and (major) decision-making, and times of acting out the consequences of previous Critical Junctures without creating further deep-seated change. The time-scale is therefore *proportionally* similar to historical institutionalist analysis, although the factual time-frame is much smaller. Importantly, however, Critical Junctures are likely to occur more frequently at this smaller scale, only because what would constitute a small impact at a large scale can constitute a very

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[2] Note that bottom-up initiatives that emerge spontaneously from a perceived problem or need are intent on enduring until implementation is met, which means that usually they will not easily choose discontinuation.

significant impact in terms of path-dependency at the scale of an initiative. CJs are identified at any level, however, as by Capoccia and Kelemen (2007), in terms of their relatively large number of options for change, and their marking a 'point of no return' in which those opportunities are not simply available again.

This article hypothesises that TPs can be as important as CJs in bottom-up initiatives' struggle towards implementation. The alternative to the large-scale change commonly analysed in CJ literature is seen as 'incremental change' (see e.g. Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Hogan & Doyle, 2007; Mahoney & Thelen, 2010), which focuses on change through small steps.[3] However, it is precisely in light of large changes – i. e. CJs – that small surrounding changes are often ignored and their importance forgotten. This article thus seeks to contribute a better appreciation and conscious engagement of *both* CJs and TPs in understanding the needs and potentials of bottom-up initiatives. This goes beyond recognizing the importance of TPs (e.g. Mahoney and Thelen (2010)), by exploring them together with CJs, introducing the relationship with social learning, and applying the insights to bottom-up initiatives' emergence-lifecycles.

Furthermore, this article highlights that TPs, as opposed to CJs, may be easier to identify as key steps leading to a certain level of path-dependence, giving more (perceived) agency to initiators. CJs require hindsight to be identified because they must have *relatively* large impact, while TPs are simply based on actions that have significant impact on the future possibilities and available pathways for the initiative to follow. While Hogan and Doyle (2007) argue in the context of macro-economics that even CJs can potentially be identified a priori through the help of certain indicators (e.g. meta-data such as annual inflation rates and media perceptions of a country), this is more difficult at the micro-level of bottom-up initiatives, due for example to their relative dependence on contextual variables and factors that the agents do not control.

2.3. Conceptual relationships

The relationships between the key concepts explored in this article are presented in Fig. 1. The figure begins with the social learning cycle, in which personal and group dynamics play a crucial joint role in what individuals and groups learn through interaction (von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019; von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, & Janssen-Jansen, 2019). Note that the figure does not aim to describe social learning or the development of bottom-up initiatives as a whole, but to present the ways in which key concepts highlighted in this article relate. In that sense, then, personal and group dynamics are highlighted as key processes determining social learning. This social learning process then impacts the emergence and quality of Turning Points, Near Misses or Critical Junctures. The figure does not specify the unexpected versus expected differentiation, as this is seen as a qualifying element of the TPs, NMs and CJs. These in turn lead to an outcome for the initiative in terms of endurance, implementation or discontinuation. The outcome then feeds back into a new cycle of social learning, starting the process anew (or, in the case of definitive discontinuation, informing the learning cycle but not starting another TP or CJ for the particular initiative in question).

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[3] Note that the literature on niche-regime relationships (Kemp et al., 2001; Schot & Geels, 2008), and grassroots innovations (Boyer, 2015; Dana et al., 2021; Ross et al., 2012), for example, also studies the impact of small-scale initiatives on large-scale regimes, and how this might be optimised. In contrast, this article attempts to highlight inner-initiative lifecycles and the relationships between moments of large versus moments of small change opportunities.

3. Case presentation: Vinkmobiel, Groningen, the Netherlands

The case study of Vinkmobiel serves to explore the hypothesised conceptual relationships and to create first insights into how social learning can contribute to change in the case of small-scale bottom-up initiatives.

3.1. Context and urgencies

Vinkmobiel is a neighbourhood-based, bottom-up initiative to facilitate the mobility of less mobile persons, especially older adults, with the aim of combating the social isolation of those groups while simultaneously promoting sustainable mobility. The neighbourhood of Vinkhuizen is located in the north-west of the largest town in the north of the Netherlands, and is known for a majority of senior citizens of a mid-to-low-income level. The area has experienced a reduction of public transport services and welfare transport services due to governmental budget cuts since 2009. As a result of reduced independent mobility in their daily activities (medical appointments, grocery shopping or personal care), the vulnerable group of older adults developed physical and mental symptoms. Social workers lost sight of who needed help. Proposed in 2014 by members of the local community, namely representatives of the local community centre and of the main healthcare facility provider, the original idea of Vinkmobiel was to have at least six electric carts ferrying those who need it for daily activities at distances up to six kilometres. In addition, the initiative would recruit and train structurally unemployed persons to drive the vehicles in collaboration with the local social services.

3.2. Phases of development

The case went through five distinctly identifiable phases (i.e. ideation, initiation, conceptualisation, activation, reformation and implementation). The phases are described in detail below.

3.2.1. Phase 0: ideation

The initiators were confronted through their work (social service, community development and older adult healthcare) with the damaging effect of social isolation of the older adults in this neighbourhood. These older adults lacked social networks to rely on for transport. In extreme cases, they were found neglected in their residences. At an external event in 2014, both initiators saw a presentation in another city of a company using refurbished golf-cars to ferry older adults in the southern and eastern parts of the country. They agreed that this could be a viable solution for their neighbourhood. They approached the company for collaboration and a regional franchisee was suggested as a potential operational provider.

3.2.2. Phase 1: initiation

In phase 1, the initiators and the operational provider explored possibilities to start-up, fund and implement Vinkmobiel as a sustainable local mobility solution for older adults and the less mobile that would also benefit the structurally unemployed. They had frequent contact with the social services and healthcare departments of the local government, whom they saw as a key partner, to discuss collaboration. The local healthcare provider then promised their representative that she would be given leeway in exploring this initiative (i.e. time and resources) on the condition that they were not the sole funders or official organization involved. The representative (also the director) of the local community centre promised managerial capacities and linkages to the community to aid with implementation. The operational provider, with links to the company that had implemented such initiatives before, promised to provide know-how on the vehicles and operation, subsequent route and scheduling logistics and eventual maintenance and operation of the 'business'. A key goal was to affect 'professional' implementation, where those who were unemployed would be trained
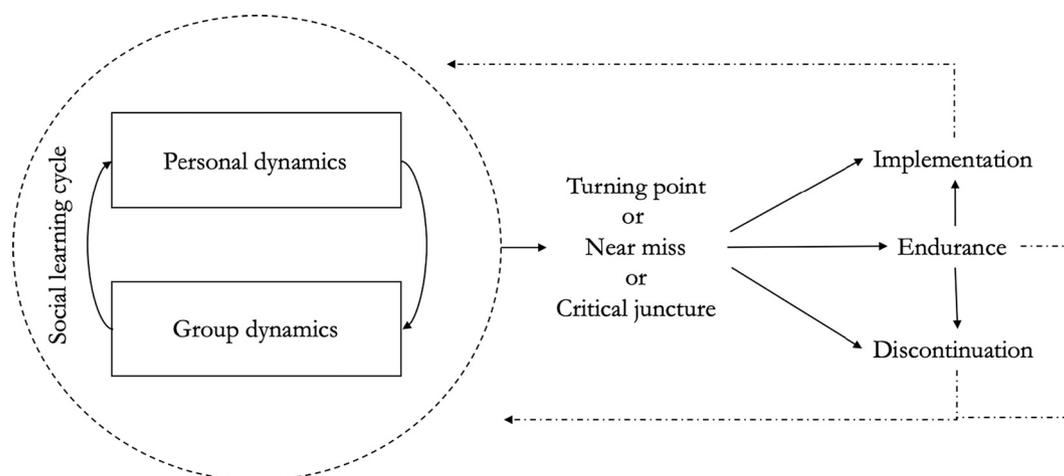
Fig. 1. Conceptual framework: social learning and change in the lifecycle of small-scale bottom-up initiatives as discussed in this article.

well in caring for the less mobile and gain driving skills.

A search was started for further funding and implementation opportunities. Via informal channels, the initiative was nominated and eventually invited to present their idea to local politicians and civil servants. They received positive feedback and pedalled their ideas to various politicians via backchannels, hopeful of receiving support when it was proposed that their idea would be discussed during the city council meetings. Unfortunately, just before the meeting, they were informed their idea was deemed unfeasible. Informally, they were told via their network that their approach of various politicians had allegedly created a political conflict. This led to great disappointment within the group and they decided to stop all activity.

3.2.3. Phase 2: conceptualisation

In phase 2, the idea was recalled and supported by a regional non-profit organization (NGO) that promoted sustainability through democratic processes in 2015. The idea was mentioned in passing during their Sustainable Mobility Table discussion with various local government, transport authorities, and knowledge institutes present. The idea was deemed interesting as a potential case for a European grant proposal. The chairperson of the NGO and the involved researcher from the local university submitted the idea with agreement from the initiators, as a potential pilot with the hope that funding could be secured to restart the idea. The grant was unfortunately rejected. Simultaneously, the researcher received a national grant and was seeking a case of a citizen-led initiative in the theme of mobility. With that in mind, the initiator group was approached for a formal meeting to discuss if part of the grant could provide funding for the initiative to restart. Part of the initiator group was reluctant as they felt they had gotten their fingers burned in the previous phases. A vote in the executive boards of their respective organization was held on formal involvement with the project consortium. All represented organisations eventually agreed to join the project and revive the initiative.

The key goal became to prepare a feasible business case for the initiative and to secure funding, preferably from the local government. The first attempt to organise and structure the initiative came in the form of a written covenant detailing the roles, responsibilities and agreements of the initiator group and the two new entrants (i.e. NGO and university). The document was then drafted by the representative of the NGO acting as facilitator, turning it from an idea into a 'project'. The document took nine months to formalise. In the meanwhile, frequent (fortnightly) meetings were held with the implicit goal of sharing possible funding avenues.

3.2.4. Phase 3: activation

After being officially inducted into the project consortium, the

involved researchers designed and implemented a workshop inviting the community, local businesses, local city officials, and transport authorities to re-launch the idea as a project. The workshop was well-attended but drew concerns from the local community who felt underrepresented. Active older adults were then invited to join the reformed initiative group. Attempts to connect with local city government via formal and informal channels remained unsuccessful. The initiative was deemed simultaneously not feasible and not innovative enough. The initiative group was disappointed and made a conscious choice to direct their attentions to other funding sources (i.e. national charities and volunteer support funds). For these grants, pro-bono research on potential demographic, demand and transport/mobility impacts were requested and carried out by the university. Three applications were made to various national and local grants. The initiative won the local grant and received a small amount towards implementation.

During the seeking of funds in mid-2017, the initiative group was (informally) tipped of a similar initiative proposed by a local civil servant being funded and implemented in an adjacent neighbourhood with subsidy from the local government and were devastated. The initiative group felt that their (continually rejected) idea was "stolen and mis-appropriated". Several rounds of complaints (official and unofficial) to civil servants and politicians in their personal network followed. This led to a meeting with the civil servant involved, in which the local government denied that the idea was stolen but agreed to explore funding options, if certain conditions were met regarding professionalising the initiative and establishing a viable business case.

3.2.5. Phase 4: reformation

After a long period of stagnation and personal setbacks, the initial operational provider left at the end of 2017. A regional car-leasing company and a locally active social entrepreneur decided to step into that vacant role at the start of 2018. The initiative was brought to their attention via the involved NGO. Their approach focused on reshaping the commercial side of the initiative, effactully transforming it from a citizen-led initiative towards a social enterprise. Disagreement followed and the original initiative group felt torn between retaining the co-op model run by volunteers or to embrace the more commercial model for upscaling to other neighbourhoods. The decision was finally taken during a vote in which, due to previous frustrations, the group decided it was better to implement the idea in any form rather than to have it disappear. A key agreement was that the price of each ride must be kept as low as possible (ideally below €2 per ride). The new model was then presented to the local government in relation to previous promises for funding. It was then rejected as too 'professional' and its legitimacy (i.e. support from the community and whether the idea originated in the community) was doubted.

3.2.6. Phase 5: implementation

Despite the unease of the initiators, the initiative went into implementation at the end of 2018 with the stipulation that it would be run as 'Stichting Welmobiel' in other areas but would always remain Vinkmobiel in Vinkhuizen in all communication and intent. As of early 2019, the first vehicles are in use and well-received. Sponsorship and one-off funding were given by local banks and volunteer groups. In mid-2019, three more vehicles were added to the fleet. The initiative has been presented at local sustainability exhibitions and at the neighbourhood open day.

4. Research methods

Vinkmobiel was formally observed and studied as an in-depth single case-study from December 2016 until June 2020. The authors were officially involved as embedded researchers with permission from the initiative group; the first author acted as a more removed observant researcher, while the second author conducted action research and thus intervened directly in the initiative. Between December 2016 and December 2018 most meetings of the initiative were attended in person by at least one of the researchers, providing participant observation including taking notes for comparison and analysis when recording was not possible. In-depth interviews with all initiative members were individually conducted in the same period. This was preceded by a structured interview containing 90 questions. For this article, the three key questions asked to the initiative's founders and members were: What can/should be learned in this initiative? What should be learned and from whom? What are the crucial moments in the development of the initiatives? The interviews were transcribed but not specifically coded for the purpose of this article. Instead, the data was used for the reconstruction of events and positioning of perspectives. After December 2018, the developments of the initiative were followed more indirectly, through a WhatsApp messaging group, internal newsletters and email chains. This included several iterations of the initiative's 'covenant', updates on the fleet progress and operational details (i.e. scheduling, complaints and financial accounting). Similarly, all correspondence and messages were analysed by both researchers to increase reliability. The information presented here is actual until September 2020. One of the authors was involved as an initiative group member since 2015 and provided background and contextual information prior to 2016.

First and throughout the data collection phase, three facets of the occurring interactions were studied: i) personal and group dynamics among the group of initiators, ii) social learning results, and iii) changes in terms of endurance, discontinuation and implementation. For the first facet, the backgrounds of involved individuals and the dynamics that occurred between them were studied, both when they were all present as a group and when some of them met or communicated only bidirectionally instead of including the entire group. The latter were necessarily studied only through the accounts of them during interviews. For the second facet under study, social learning was studied based on the approach suggested by von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, and Janssen-Jansen (2019) and von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens, Salet, and Janssen-Jansen (2019): interactions between members of the initiative were studied and changes in terms of knowledge were observed, differentiating between gaining new knowledge, confirming existing knowledge, disconfirming existing knowledge without replacing the emerging gap, and knowledge indexing. Furthermore, special attention was given to what appeared to be learnt through social learning within the initiative, outside it, or what was learned through other forms of learning such as reading or personal experience (without being based on interaction). For the third facet under study, endurance and discontinuation were chronicled and progress made in terms of implementation, and the experienced levels of hardship or strength related to endurance were recorded. In interviews, respondents were asked to report what they considered crucial moments (analytically to be determined with hindsight in terms of Turning Points, Near Misses, Critical Junctures or none

of these) in the development of the initiative and why; observations throughout were used to gain insight into the moods and expectations for change experienced by the involved agents.

Next, the data was analysed in terms of types of relations between TPs and CJs (see Section 2.2/Annex 1). This was done by assessing the relative impact a turning point (analytically identified as a moment that triggered change) had, and how intensely the path-dependency it created became rooted. Defining factors for candidate junctures include, i) does the turning point result in a limitation of choice sets and ii) is the intention of the turning point realized either at the moment itself or later? If both the first and second factors are positive, then it is a Critical Juncture. If not, it is a candidate juncture that could potentially become critical later but we classify it at time of analysis as a Near Miss.

For example, in the ideation phase of our case a key Turning Point was the decision of the initiators to adopt a similar model (project, technology and organization) from elsewhere in the country (see row 1 in the table of Annex 2). This narrowed down possible options discussed beforehand such as a car lease system, or private car hire or car-sharing. From this point forward, no other technological options or operation systems were considered, even after the initial operator stepped out of the project, although they could have been. The unexpected part of the Turning Point was that the intention was to have 'plug-and-play' operations directly transplanted from other projects. This was never realized as the initiative had to reinvent how their operation/operational partners would fit into the local socio-political situation. Although this can't be classified as a Critical Juncture, since the options were still available, it demonstrates the importance of considering Turning Points, as the members of the initiative never did consider different options in this particular regard.

The analytically identified types (Section 2.2) were also related to – but not defined fully by - which Turning Points, Near Misses or Critical Junctures had been identified by respondents. Finally, patterns were sought out in the relationships between social learning and the five types (Section 2.2). Comparisons were made between social learning that preceded and followed each type. The findings are presented below.

5. Findings & discussion

This section describes the findings of the case study, structured along the elements in Fig. 1.

5.1. Social learning, endurance and implementation

The core group of the Vinkmobiel initiative consisted of six to eight members fluctuating over time. The first initiators and most members were intimately connected to the neighbourhood in which they wanted to implement the initiative though work or by living there/nearby. Those that were not, were strongly motivated through larger work- and ideological factors (i.e. research, promoting sustainability and promoting local engagement). One member for example described her motivation in an interview as being based on how she sees through her work "*the dependence [of the older adults] and [that] the self-determination power for people is really lacking*" (Interview 2018). Besides having these strong personal motivations, however, the members had little in common in terms of their backgrounds (e.g., community centre work, older adults care management, university research, coordination and religious leadership, unemployment agency work, and so on). They also had very different (positive and negative) experiences in working with government, which created varying expectations that they did not share explicitly with each-other. While several members were hopeful, others already had cynical attitudes towards government from previous experiences. This 'social learning landscape' in which they operated meant that they had enough common ground to keep them motivated to collaborate, but made it relatively hard to read each other and manage expectations. Personal and group dynamics thus often oscillated between feelings strong companionship and of deep frustration or even

annoyance. During individual interviews some critical remarks were voiced but were considered off-limits for face-to-face discussions. The later involvement of a social entrepreneur broke through this dynamic a little by providing a predictable, though not as desirable, normative set of expectations and deliverables. This was also possible because the social entrepreneur was perceived as an outsider, who could more easily and openly be critically evaluated, allowing expectations to be discussed and managed.

Interestingly, the initiative endured several years before the social entrepreneur stepped in. In that time, a number of key social learning outcomes occurred:

- the networks and know-how some of the members shared allowed them to contact civil servants directly, and to win their approval – this did not suffice, however, and backfired due to an internal political dynamic that was not known to the initiative's members and which they were not prepared to deal with. Lack of knowledge in this case led to unexpected results. This led to a phase of (eventually temporary) discontinuation, but also developed a spiteful attitude in the initiative that turned out to be crucial for its endurance.

- expected critical junctures that turned into near misses occurred several times in the beginning and, especially when coupled with disappointing experiences with the local government, hardened the initiative's spite-based resolve to endure.

- the convivial group dynamics preferred by the members did not allow for direct confrontations, inadvertently leading to an evasive attitude regarding the sharing of practical information, which the member in question did not actually have, although expectations by others were that the member did have this information and was simply not willing to share it. This led to endurance through hopeful expectation that was continuously not fulfilled, while others sought alternative ways to procure the relevant information (through outside contacts and individual online and offline searches).

- the experiences shared by the group in their interactions with the municipality created a strong bond between them, but also led them to endure partly due to an emerging logic of spite, fuelled by confusion and frustration. In terms of social learning, a lot of confirmation of existing knowledge was sought among the members, which fed continued frustration *and* continued spite, which eventually took them far enough for implementation to occur.

- the development of self-identification of each member over time showed their gradual shift from professional distance to a group-based identification: they first saw themselves as representatives of their different employers, and later began to identify as the Vink-mobiel group, especially when they saw themselves in contrast or conflict in relation to others, such as the government or the 'copied' initiative. This also occurred in parallel to choices of terminology, which moved from 'initiative', which was understood as more of a loose and voluntary format, to 'project', which was seen more as a joint and binding format. This went hand-in-hand with more technical language, making extensive notes from meetings, writing formal documents for the project and so on.

When the social entrepreneur entered, it was mainly knowledge confirmation (i.e. recognizing regular business structures, financial expertise and an existing, though low, profit orientation) that convinced the initiative and the municipality that the initiative could be implemented although the municipality then deemed it 'too professional', and did not contribute funding, but it did recognize that the initiative was now feasible for implementation. However, it was clear that the decision to accept the entrepreneur's proposal as the way forward was not easily taken and it was the social learning landscape's evolution during the years that preceded that made it possible.

5.2. Turning points, near misses and critical junctures

Thirty-five events or actions were identified during the initiative's lifecycle up to implementation, which could be categorised as Turning Points (TP), Near Misses (NM), or Critical Junctures (CJ). A chronological account of each TP, NM and CJ is found in Annex 2. Table 1 provides an excerpt of TPs, NMs and CJs per phase, noting whether they were expected or unexpected, since this plays an important role (as mentioned in Section 2.2.).

The early phases of ideation and initiation demonstrate a typical initial lifecycle of an initiative when, as ideas develop, several turning points mark decisions, only some of which become NM or CJ. An unexpected critical juncture marks the ideation phase, where lack of information and knowledge of the franchisee created stagnation. But turning points demonstrating unexpected results based on the ease with which things could be implemented were important as well in shaping the social learning landscape described above. The subsequent disappointment through TP and a NM and the unexpectedly negative critical juncture of lack of support by the government set the initiative firmly on the path of distrust towards government and a spiteful but hardened attitude.

During conceptualisation, the frequent NM and unexpected CJ mirror the hopeful yet not always fulfilled expectations of the initiative group as alternative avenues and resources are being sought and cultivated. For example, the initiative group agreeing to be part of research proposals which carries neither guarantee of success nor funding security. Towards the end of this phase, organizational capacity (a lead facilitator) and knowledge management structures (a covenant of roles and responsibilities) helped to move the initiative towards institutionalisation as the group perceived themselves and their actions as being increasingly more professional. These events and actions have a finite quality but end up having an unexpected determination and reinforcement (i.e. type of governance structure and resource distribution) in the later phases.

The activation phase brought a rush of events and actions with very frequent NM and almost only unexpected CJs when these did occur. This was greatly due to this being a phase of pursuing funding alternatives (i. e. application for subsidies and grants) that were not realized due to grants being denied or amounts received being less than expected. The (mainly unexpected) CJ taking place here were mostly rooted in significant previous TPs. The first being the building of internal and external legitimacy as a group, a second the anger towards felt governmental injustices, and the third the engagement and reaching out to other potential stakeholders. The issue of their idea being 'copied' in another neighbourhood was an unexpected TP which they had no influence over, yet triggered further events and actions due to how the group saw this as their idea being legitimised and valuable despite previous reactions from the local government, and how it strengthened their resolve to look for other funders. This experience highlights the important combined effect of TPs and CJs.

The reformation phase saw more expected events in general and CJs in particular as compared to the earlier phases. This is also likely due to the heavy load of path-dependency inducing events that had already occurred until then, which left little room for manoeuvre or surprise. For instance, the path-dependence created by actions such as the choice of new entrant stakeholders who influenced the style of operation led eventually to the group deciding to forgo prior values (i.e. cooperative vs. commercial model of governance).

Finally, in the implementation phase, the path of non-reliance on local government due to earlier frustrations is completed as local, social entrepreneurs were fully and formally inducted into the project. They proposed to create a cooperative model with a less neighbourhood-specific name and branding. The strong identity of the project is witnessed by the TP of deciding to keep the neighbourhood identity and name specifically for the part of the project running in that neighbourhood, even though all operational and legal identity belongs to the

Table 1
Excerpt of turning points, near misses and critical junctures for vinkmobiel.

Phase	Excerpt events/actions	Type
0. Ideation	The lack of information and knowledge of the franchisee created stagnation.	Unexpected CJ
1. Initiation	Community centre board members and healthcare provider department greenlit participation. Support would be given in resources, time and hosting meetings for the group.	Expected TP
2. Conceptualisation	The formalisation through documentation and covenant was not initially seen as important, but eventually led to solidifying and legitimising the initiative from outside perspectives and to future funders.	Expected CJ
3. Activation	To the initiative group, the start-up difficulties in the 'copied' project proved the value of their idea.	Unexpected TP
4. Reformation	Although there was mistrust and control was sought, the group expected relatively minor changes due to previous experience.	Expected and Unexpected CJ
5. Implementation	The new stakeholders became unexpectedly crucial to a speedy but commercialised implementation. Weak expectation that additional funding from the local government might follow. However, operations were planned as if it would not.	Expected NM

cooperative.

By paying attention to TPs, NMs and CJs helps unravel the triggers behind endurance and implementation. It is tempting to study implemented bottom-up initiatives and look at the moment of implementation to understand how they came into being. But this neglects to important elements:

- initiatives that do not become implemented may have a long trajectory of TP and NM which can help understand what is important for such initiatives to thrive, and what are the important barriers they experience.
- the importance of less visible but crucial TP that either build up to or just slowly influence the path that leads to a CJ, or that co-determines the shape a CJ will take. This is not equal to incremental change, because CJs may still be required as well. But it is akin to recognizing the importance of 'critical antecedents' (see Rinscheid et al., 2019), and social learning outcomes, for endurance and implementation. The entrance of new stakeholders may have been an easily identifiable CJ, after which the initiative was implemented, but this would result too easily in saying that if a social entrepreneur is introduced, an initiative will have more implementation capability. In this initiative, however, a lot of social learning and NM were required for this entrance of the social entrepreneur to be accepted, and still it was done with some reluctance. Future consequences of this reluctance might still become new TPs or CJs in the post-implementation phase.

5.3. Relationships between social learning, turning points, near misses and critical junctures, and the effect on endurance and implementation

In this section, we discuss the relationships between social learning on one hand and Turning Points, Near Misses and Critical Junctures on the other in the case of Vinkmobiel, to reflect on their joint impact on endurance and implementation. We make use of certain examples, though the same exercise can be done for the entire table presented in Annex 2.

In phase 0, ideation, the members of the initiative expected to quickly implement their idea based on inspiration from others' initiatives, but the lack of information and knowledge of the involved franchisee created stagnation. In terms of social learning, new input through new collaborations was indeed gained, and inspiration was garnered from the initiatives that they had witnessed elsewhere. Simultaneously, frustration was built through the group dynamics that emerged due to stagnation. Nevertheless, this TP delivered the groundwork from which the initiative set itself up – although it had the possibility to do so, the members did not choose to revisit other options for how they could set up the initiative (e.g. a different type of car).

In phase 1, initiation, deep mistrust of local government was developed. Those who already mistrusted local government felt their knowledge confirmed, while others experienced gained or disconfirmed knowledge as they felt the disappointment in the lack of support from local government. This led to temporary frustration, but also to endurance in the shape of spite, where the general feeling was that of wanting to prove the power and value of the initiative despite the government's rejection.

In phase 2, conceptualisation, an expected critical juncture occurred as the NGO representative took on a leading role in the facilitation of the initiative, though exactly what effect this would have was still to be seen. This members' previous experience in leading a group contributed to the formalisation of the initiative into a project, including through notes, keeping an overview of progress in shared documents online and through mail and so on. This led to the organizational capacity and knowledge management structures noted above. For a few members of the initiative, this development seemed exaggeratedly complex, but overall it created a more professional feel and contributed to the identification of the members more with Vinkmobiel rather than seeing their

participation mainly as representatives of their respective organization. Knowledge was gained and confirmed by actors, though in at least one case the knowledge was rejected as too complex and contributed to frustration. Mostly, there was a greater sense of 'can-do' in the group due to this facilitative leadership, and the initiative began to be understood as a formalized project.

In phase 3, activation, the initiative's members were confronted with a project they considered a 'copy' of their idea, which was funded by government. As the anger over the 'copied' project dissipated a little, the members of Vinkmobiel could slowly see its value as an example, and even met up with representatives from the other initiative. Social learning though these sources led Vinkmobiel to strengthen its endurance resolve, as they saw the other initiative struggle being based only on volunteer work and having relatively little demand. In the end the initiators gained much knowledge, discarded some ideas and confirmed others, and were able better to endure. The idea of spite still continued to drive the endurance of the initiative as well, however, as the negative interaction with the local government had been so impactful.

In phase 4, reformation, an only partly expected TP and CJ was that the new stakeholders became crucial to a speedy but commercialised implementation of Vinkmobiel. As discussed above in Section 5.1, these stakeholders brought in some new knowledge but also some existing knowledge that had been rejected before. It could be accepted now precisely because it came from outside the group and because the initiative had gone through such a long phase of endurance that they could accept working with a type of knowledge – with a more commercial logic than before – which they had thus far explicitly rejected. This is a special example of endurance feeding into the learning loop multiple times and needing those reiterations to create the necessary workable ground for the ideas then presented to take hold. Note that the new stakeholders did not turn the initiative fully commercial, and the initiative was sure to follow negotiations for the ensuing changes closely (see also below).

In phase 5, implementation, an expected TP was that the group stipulated that any initiative within Vinkhuizen will retain the name and logo of the initial initiative. Through social interactions between the new stakeholders and the original Vinkmobiel initiative, a combination of confirming and disconfirming knowledge allowed the construction of an alternative format for the neighbourhood, in which the original initiators would still be involved and bring in a more local voice to the implemented project, that would otherwise function in a more standardized form towards other neighbourhoods. This compromise allowed implementation to occur, though it was minor in terms of generating path-dependency.

Beyond these examples, it is possible generally to note that TPs, NMs, and CJs all tended to have important consequences in terms of social learning, and for endurance and implementation. Importantly, as noted before, spite was a crucial social learning outcome that encouraged the creation of TPs and CJs forming endurance. And a long period of endurance finally allowed an implementation that in an earlier stage would not have been accepted or even thought of. The difference between social learning impacting Turning Points versus candidate junctures is not so significant as hypothesised, and yet social learning importantly contributes to both, and both are important in the creation of capacity for endurance and implementation. Thus, understanding social learning (and the personal and group dynamics that constitute it) is nevertheless demonstrated to be imperative for grasping TPs, NMs and CJs and *how* they impact endurance and implementation.[4]

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6. Conclusion

This article has contributed a number of key messages pertaining to bottom-up initiatives' capacity for endurance and implementation.

- the pre-implementation phase of bottom-up initiatives can be crucial to understand, as such initiatives can often stagnate or be discontinued despite being valuable for their neighbourhoods.
- to understand this phase, it is important not to be blinded by the large Critical Junctures that mark, for example, implementation itself, but also to give attention to both Turning Points (as defined here) and Near Misses and Critical Junctures. TPs may not always generate deep-seated path-dependencies, but they can often have important preparatory impact to enable a CJ or to facilitate endurance where otherwise an initiative would be discontinued.
- to understand TPs, NMs and CJs, in turn, we have shown the value of looking at social learning cycles driven by personal and group dynamics, which work through a feedback loop with the above to impact endurance and implementation dynamics.

These findings are increasingly relevant in view of a worldwide reliance on such initiatives to solve societal issues. The article has also contributed to social learning literature – as applied in planning, psychology, as well as water management or organizational studies, for instance – by proposing ways in which social learning crucially contributes to both maintain the status quo and to creating change, through the dynamics of confirming, disconfirming and adding knowledge. The exploration of defining TPs, NMs and CJs and identifying them from a real-life case with complex actor relationships across a given timeline contributes methodological insights that could be applied to other cases, and to the wider literature on this subject. Though these insights may be most interesting in the field of planning and urban studies, political and policy studies may also benefit from this exploration of the relations between TPs, NMs and CJs and the wide applicability of these concepts at various scales.

Overall, the article suggests that policy and planning should pay more attention to the smaller Turning Points and to Critical Junctures as they play out in the pre-implementation phases of bottom-up initiatives, and in particular to ways in which social learning cycles based on personal and group dynamics of participants shape their impact. The case study provided unique longitudinal material of the long endurance and finally implementation lifecycle of one initiative, through largely participatory observation and interviews. Further research could explore these dynamics further from the perspective of other involved stakeholders, such as the local government, whose perspective was less studied here. This article shows that studying social learning, Turning Points, Near Misses and Critical Junctures is an important field for understanding urban planning and urban development dynamics in an age in which bottom-up initiatives are increasingly responsibilized worldwide for local (and sometimes regional) well-being. The devil is truly in the details in our case and often dismissed in planning policies as being trivial or not as glamourous as large-scale socio-political events. As more cities turn towards citizen initiatives, it is worthwhile to take heed of what seems like minutiae to a policymaker as being crucial for success and failures of urban transformation and the involvement of the local community.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Kim Carlotta von Schönfeld: Conceptualization; Data curation;

Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Resources; Software; Validation; Visualization; Writing and managing - original draft; Writing - review & editing. **Wendy Tan:** Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Resources; Software; Supervision; Validation; Visualization; Writing - original draft; Writing - review & editing.

Declarations 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 1. Glossary of key concepts used

A Turning Point (TP) is a relatively short period of time during which there is a high probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest, but which have a relatively small impact compared to critical junctures. Creates path-dependency, but it is not as deep-seated (yet) as with a critical juncture.

A candidate juncture is a moment in time that is perceived as having the potential to become a CJ (critical juncture).

A Critical Juncture (CJ) is a relatively short period of time during which there is a high probability that agents' choices will affect the outcome of interest. It creates deep-seated path-dependency.

A 'Near Miss' (NM) is a candidate juncture that does not manifest as a critical juncture.

Note: A critical juncture is always also a turning point, but a turning point is not always a critical juncture.

Appendix 2. Table of empirically identified TPs, near misses and CJs for the case of Vinkmobiel

In the following table, the Turning Points, Near Misses and Critical Junctures (expected and unexpected) throughout the initiative will be described in relation to the occurred events, in chronological order.

Table Annex 1
Chronological account of turning points, and potential and realized critical junctures for Vinkmobiel.

Event/actions	Turning point	Candidate juncture	
		Near miss	Critical juncture
Phase 0: ideation			
Representatives from the community centre and the main older adults care provider in the area came together to seek solution to social isolation of older adults in Vinkhuizen. They visited a presentation on similar idea and initiatives elsewhere in the country.	Decision to adopt the same model (operation and vehicles) in Vinkhuizen. *[Unexpected]* Expectation to take structure and technology directly as 'plug and play' to Vinkhuizen did not materialize. Still, stuck to format and type of car. Franchisee (local resident) of the company running similar initiative joins as operational provider. Delegation of operational form and choices to an experienced individual.		[Unexpected] The lack of information and knowledge of the franchisee created stagnation.
Phase 1: initiation			
Representatives from the local community centre and the healthcare provider brought the matter to vote at their respective executive and management board.	Community centre board members and healthcare provider department greenlit participation. Support would be given in resources, time and hosting meetings for the group. Community centre provided resources and access to local community. Healthcare centre provided demand (clients) and place to store vehicles. Healthcare provider gave institutional support on the condition that others are involved and paying for it.		The initiative has to be supported (resources) by multiple stakeholders.
The initiative group presented the first iteration of the idea at a local neighbourhood event that was attended by local politicians to positive reactions.	Initiative group solicited various local politicians via informal channels to gain their support (i.e. financial subsidies and organizational help).	Expectations of receiving funding and support from local government for immediate implementation.	
The idea was to be feature in a local council meeting. However, prior to the meeting the initiative group were informed formally that the initiative does not fulfil the subsidy criteria and was not of interest.	The initiative group officially requested information as to why their idea was rejected.		
It was informally communicated that multiple politicians raised the subject without knowing that another was championing it. This led to internal conflicts in politics.	The initiative group is disappointed and stops all activity.		Unexpected The decision is made to stop with the initiative altogether and to not seek alternative funding. Frustrations from lack of official support and funding led first to deactivation. Later, this created a deep mistrust of local government.

Table Annex 1 (*continued*)

Event/actions	Turning point	Candidate juncture	
		Near miss	Critical juncture
Phase 2: conceptualisation			
The idea became known to a non-profit organization interested in sustainability through democratic processes. The initiative was shared with members of the Sustainable Mobility (SM) table within the organization during a formal meeting.	A researcher (local university) and member of the table suggest to adopt the initiative as a potential pilot to receive EU funding in a proposal.	Renewed interest from new potential stakeholders would lead to new potential funding and support from those avenues. Not realized as the project was not won.	
The proposal was denied but the same researcher won a national grant and was looking for a local case that showcased citizen initiatives.	The researcher suggested the initiative as a local case, eligible for research support.	[Unexpected] Official status (i.e. part of a national project) was expected to bring big returns such as direct implementation support and funding. Support received was substantially less than expected.	
The initiative group was approached again as to their interest to receive both research interest and financial support for start-up activities.	The initiative group was reluctant but proposed to vote on re-starting in their respective organization.		
Voting was conducted at the local community centre in favour of restarting.	The representative of the NGO would act as 'lead' facilitator and received resources for it. Initiative would restart as voted bearing in mind the failures from the first phase.		[Unexpected] Critical effect of this new 'leader' in documenting and institutionalising the process.
A written covenant was set up delineating the role and responsibility of the participating organization and their representatives.	The initiative formed an official initiative group. The legitimacy of the initiative is increased in the self-perception of the initiative group.	The stakeholders involved were limited to those listed in the covenant and each representative had to sign to their roles.	
After a few rounds of drafting, the covenant was confirmed and would be a living document detailing the progress of the initiative.	Knowledge management was also set up to ensure that all initiative group members had access to the documents, necessary information and data. An email list was set up for the group.		[Unexpected] Was not initially seen as important, but eventually led to solidifying and legitimising the initiative from outside perspectives and to future funders.
Phase 3: activation			
The research project council voted to adopt the initiative as an official consortium member and committed resources and research support.	Plans for a workshop to help relaunch the formalized initiative to the local community and relevant stakeholders.	[Unexpected] High expectations of relaunch to gain recognition by local council for speedy implementation of initiative. Did not materialize.	
The meeting resulted in a wider interest in the community for the initiative. Questions were raised on community involvement and commercial feasibility.	Community members indicated that they would like to be more involved. This led to the induction of a group of older adult citizens who would function as ambassadors and to give feedback on the operation.		Begin of building legitimacy within local community. [Unexpected] Legitimacy was later a key criterion when seeking external funding.
	Agreements were made to share information regarding operations and implementation of the mother company providing operational support.	Having detailed operational technical information would enable the calculation of a feasibility of the initiative. Unfortunately, the information was insufficient.	
Attempts to connect with local city government via official and informal channels were met with failure. The initiative was deemed simultaneously not feasible and not innovative enough.	The initiative group was disappointed and made a conscious choice to direct their attentions to other funding sources (i.e. national charities and volunteer support funds).	Resuming contact with the city council (as sole funder) under expectation that implementation would be imminent. Not realized.	
Frequent meetings were held between the initiative groups (i.e. once every two weeks) with the goal of establishing legitimacy in the neighbourhood, finding financial subsidy sources and cooperation from the local government, and preparing a feasibility study (prognosis on potential demand and impacts to mobility).	Proposals were submitted to local and national subsidies and competitions.		
The proposal to a national lobby/interest group was denied. Proposal to the local entrepreneurship challenge was granted.	The small sum awarded was to be used to start the initiative as much as it could stretch. The group gained knowledge that seeking (not local city) sources of funding could be a fruitful avenue forward.	Expectations that the sums applied would kickstart implementation. Not realized as sums granted were much less than required.	
The initiative group were informed via their informal networks that a similar initiative was going to be funded by the local government in the neighbourhood adjacent to theirs. That initiative seemed to them like an 'exact copy' of Vinkmobiel.	The initiative group experienced both intense disappointment and anger.		[Unexpected] The resulting anger fuelled the group in moving forward and seeking other funding sources.
	The initiative group reached out via formal (email to the local city council representatives) and informal means (backchanneling with civil servants and politicians in their own network) to	Restitution (in the form of funding the initiative) were expected and requested. However, this was not realized.	

Table Annex 1 (*continued*)

Event/actions	Turning point	Candidate juncture	
		Near miss	Critical juncture
	demand satisfaction as to 'how and why their idea was stolen' and if this meant they should now be eligible for local city funding as well. [Unexpected]		
Start of the 'copied' initiative in neighbouring area. Idea was initiated by a civil servant of the local government who had previously rejected the group's idea.	To the initiative group, this proved the value of their idea.		
The initiative group became aware that there was insufficient demand for the neighbouring initiative and were determined to not repeat the same mistake.	They reached out to local business associations and shopping centre management teams to ensure that.		[Unexpected] Engagement and reaching out to other potential stakeholders and investors.
Phase 4: reformation			
The operational provider decided to step out due to frustrations and personal issues.	The initiative group started to look for another operational provider. Decision to seek more reliable and knowledgeable partners with more immediate know-how for feasible implementation and professional operations.		
Via the sustainable mobility group, contact was made with a local car leasing company (which had been previously lightly connected with the operational provider who stepped out) and a locally active social entrepreneur. They expressed interest in joining the initiative group to bring the initiative to implementation.	The group deliberated as to how and under what conditions these new entrants could contribute to the project. The group was wary of over-commercialisation and insisted to first test out what was proposed before agreeing.		Although there was mistrust and control was sought, the group expected relatively minor changes due to previous experience. [Unexpected] These new stakeholders became crucial to a speedy but commercialised implementation.
The initiative group received an official response from the local city government requesting a meeting to resolve the conflict and the negative feelings the initiative group had about their initiative being 'stolen'.	[Unexpected] The initiative group attended the meeting but no resolution was reached. Instead, an offer was made from the local government representative that perhaps if the initiative group could refine their proposal (to more professional standards), a subsidy could be arranged.		
Working with the new entrants to the initiative group, the first business case report was drawn up and a brochure detailing implementation and operational steps was made.	Internally, the initiative group had to decide if they preferred remaining as a citizen initiative collective or to accept the more 'commercial' approach from the new entrants. The majority voted that they would rather see the initiative implemented in any form possible than to go back to the initial stagnation.		The business case report and brochure were key to get funding and support. The decision to implement at potential cost of certain values was critical to move to implementation rather than renewed stagnation.
Phase 5: implementation			
A new foundation was created and officiated. The initiative was now carried out by the foundation (initiative group + new entrants).	The group stipulated that any initiative within Vinkhuizen will retain the name and logo of the initial initiative.		
The new business case was presented to the local civil servant. The proposal was praised to be very professional, albeit too professional. The civil servant called into doubt how much the idea was still "from the community" and requested the group to prove that they had local community support from the right demographic.	The initiative group decided to proceed without the government subsidy. Preparations were made to start the service in 2019. Volunteers were being trained as drivers.	Weak expectation that additional funding from the local government might follow. However, operations were planned as if it would not.	
The first vehicles started to run in the neighbourhood. There were teething issues with the service. Some complaints were generated in the first week. In general, the service is well-received.	Vehicles (3) in operation. Rides were programmed and flyers and brochures available in locations most older adults would frequent (shops, care centre, pharmacy etc.)		Implementation is successful. Three more vehicles are added, and initial research and talks are conducted with other neighbourhoods in the region.

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