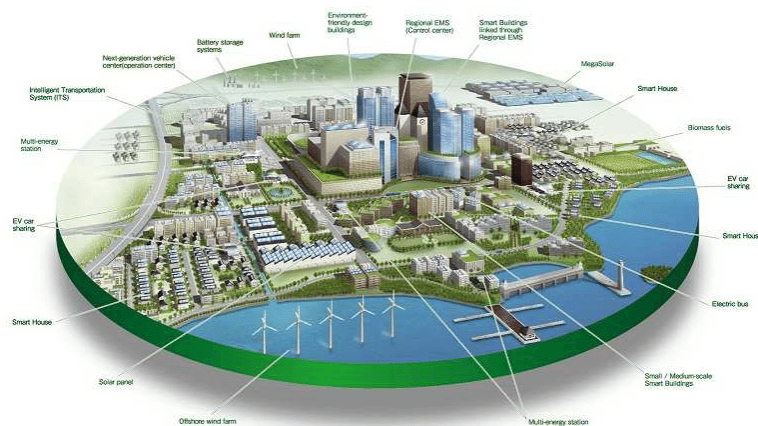


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# THE FUNCTION OF FUTURE PERSPECTIVES AS INSTRUMENTS IN SPATIAL PLANNING

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An explorative research regarding the current reforms of the Omgevingswet  
and the implementation of Omgevingsvisies



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## Summary

The Dutch planning system is undergoing a fundamental change. There is an ongoing shift from traditional governance structures to a more fragmented mode of governance with more need for integration in policy areas. Comparative planning research on planning systems and institutions needs to be taken further. There is a need to understand the new role of Spatial Planning in the social production of space and avoiding the absolute dominance of paradigms. With the implementation of the Omgevingswet in 2022, the law merges and simplifies the rules for spatial projects by bundling the laws for the living environment. As a result, an Omgevingsvisie needs to be made for every governmental body in the Netherlands. The making of this vision is a momentum for the Dutch planning system and makes it important to look at the function of the vision. Therefore, this research will answer the following research question:

*“How do planning professionals handle ‘future perspectives’ and look upon ‘visions’ and their functionality as instruments in planning, in the context of the new Omgevingswet?”*

To answer the question, first a literature study has been carried out. Herein, specific concepts regarding future perspectives that help in answering the research question have been central. The literature study resulted in an operationalised framework that has been the foundation for the analysis.

The research is of a qualitative nature, which means that it can provide rich insight into human behaviour and is useful for uncovering emic views. With this, grounded theory is used, which is a research tradition that is geared at formulating specific theories which explain a certain case that is being studied. The data has been collected by approaching all planners of the municipalities and provinces with a survey.

The analysis has been done by providing codes to the data that is relevant to a concept of the framework. By doing this, the data has been categorised and was usable for answering the sub questions and finally the main research question. A difference in answers between municipalities and provinces has also been analysed, just as for planners in different functions. The results show that implementors of the Omgevingswet and Omgevingsvisie see less change of the Omgevingsvisie relative to earlier methods, compared to spatial planners and policy advisors/officers. The most popular foresight modes are workshops and scenarios, whereby entering dialogue with others is important. The difference between province and municipalities is that the province mentions that the Omgevingsvisie needs a self-bonding character to increase the trust in the execution of it, but it is impossible to make all choices beforehand which makes the integral approach more difficult. Informing everyone of a certain development comes more clearly forward at municipalities, where collaboration and consultation of stakeholders are more present with the provinces.

The final answer on the research question is that planning professionals handle future perspectives and see visions as a steering documents that are flexible and adaptable for an uncertain future wherein ambitions and preservations need to be included for the physical living environment. The functionality as instrument is that the vision provides a framework for realising new developments where decisions and choices of a governmental body are being translated into this vision, where realizing the developments together with the society has become an important factor together with informing the involved stakeholders.

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## Abstract

This research gathers new insight about the making of spatial planning visions by spatial planners. In combination with the introduction of the Omgevingswet and Omgevingsvisie in the Dutch planning system, the look of planning professionals towards the making of visions and future perspectives are being researched. It is also important to know how planners from the different levels of the Dutch government look towards the making of a vision as an instrument in strategic spatial planning. The research will be done by using an open survey which has been done online. At least one planner from each municipality, province and the national government will be approached. The collected data will be processed and interpreted based on the grounded theory approach. By doing this, common ground will be found in the completed surveys from which conceptual insights will be developed. In addition, the research conducts new insights about vision making in context with the upcoming Omgevingswet and Omgevingsvisie.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Inducement

The Omgevingswet is a new Dutch law for spatial development that will be implemented from 2022 on. This law merges and simplifies the rules for spatial projects by bundling the laws for the living environment (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-a). With this comes an Omgevingsvisie, which is a plan for the future for an area as a whole, like a municipality. This is a new form of a vision for the future of the governmental bodies in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Albrechts, Alden & Pires (2017) mention that there is an ongoing shift from traditional governance structures to a more fragmented mode of governance with more need for integration in policy areas. This makes it interesting to have a look at what the role of futures are in this context.

According to Guell & Lopez (2016), foresight studies by themselves do not usually have a direct impact on the city, unless they are used to nurture a strategic plan or a city plan. Nordregio (2005) adds up to this, by mentioning that strategic planning instruments are the most relevant instruments for polycentric developments, wherein spatial visions play a very important role. In the 1960's and 1970's strategic spatial planning evolved towards a system of comprehensive planning at different administrative levels in a number of Western countries (Albrechts, 2004). A retreat from strategic planning came in the 1980's and there were arguments about the need to break out of strategic spatial organising ideas which were locked in the urban plans of an earlier era (Healey, 2004; Albrechts, 2004). By the end of the millennium strategic spatial plans, frameworks and perspectives were back in fashion among Europe's planning policy communities and were being promoted by European Union initiatives. According to Albrechts (2013, p. 52), the strategic spatial planning that has emerged is looked upon as "a transformative and integrative public sector-led, but co-productive, socio-spatial process through which visions or frames or reference, the justification for coherent actions, and the means for implementation are produced that shape, frame and reframe what a place is and might become.". Albrechts (2013) states that strategical spatial planning needs a contextual understanding of power and material interest, of discourses and the constraints of a more-of-the-same attitude. The public sector has always to be considered as a key actor. This does not mean that other organizations, such as NGOs or local development organisations, could not take the initiative.

According to Getimis (2012), there is a need to understand the new role of Spatial Planning in the social production of space and avoiding the absolute dominance of 'paradigms', for example a cultural or communicative turn. Planning is not only influenced by different governance modes/mixtures, but also from the different culture specific policy styles. Furthermore, Getimis (2012) mentions that comparative planning research on planning systems and institutions needs to be taken further. While problems of context heterogeneity, definitions and understandings of operationalization need further clarification, the existing comparative studies of planning cultures must not be ignored (Getimis, 2012). Furthermore, he underlines the need for a critical approach to understanding planning systems and planning cultures, focussing on actor constellation, knowledge and steering styles. The emergent strategic spatial planning is a co-productive and socio-spatial process through which visions and the means for implementation are produced that shape, frame and reframe what a place is and might become (Albrechts, 2013). So, visions become an increasingly more important factor in strategic spatial planning. Because of this, it is important to have a critical



approach towards the making of visions for in spatial planning that Getimis (2012) states. This needs to be based on a comparative hermeneutical and interpretative methodology.

### 1.2 Societal relevance

By conducting this research, a general outline emerges from the output coming from professional spatial planners. The result will be an integrated overview in how spatial planners look upon the use of future perspectives or visions. In this way, they can use this to improve the making of future outlooks in for example making the Omgevingsvisie. What is the added value of a future perspective or vision and what can planners learn from each other? To which extent do professional planners think this is a useful instrument? By answering these questions planners as a community of practice could improve their ways of working in the strategic spatial planning domain. As the Omgevingsvisie is developed for a long-term period and is specifically developed as a future reference this research can contribute to the long-term goals of the Omgevingsvisie, as it gives better insights in the view of professionals opposed to this vision and therefore could contribute to new knowledge in an integrative perspective on long term development.

### 1.3 Scientific relevance

In terms of scientific relevance, this research develops new knowledge for strategic spatial planning in a way how professional planners look upon the making of future perspective and visions and how they use them and can use them in strategic spatial planning. This corresponds to what Reimer & Blotevogel (2012, p. 8) say: "Only with an integrative approach and analysis of formal and informal institutional arrangements, and the interaction between them, reproduced repeatedly in action, it is possible to arrive at a profound and realistic understanding of the practice of spatial planning.". This research will add up with an integrative approach and analysis of the formal and informal institutions of spatial planning, which are professional planners of the governments in the Netherlands. This will be done by gathering information about how they look towards the making of visions and future perspectives in the shape of an Omgevingsvisie and the functionality of this as instrument in strategic spatial planning. Guell & Lopez (2016) conclude from their article that new planning methodologies and communication technologies should support collaborative work to enlighten urban complexity. This research could give insight in what way visions in planning, and thereby an envisioning of the future, could add up to this approachability and how to embed these visions better in governmental bodies.

### 1.4 Research problem statement

While the planning system in the Netherlands is about to change with the implementation of the Omgevingswet in 2021, the professional spatial planning community also undergoes changes in how they work. This change is a kind of a momentum. With the making of Omgevingsvisies, the council of municipalities have the obligation to determine an Omgevingsvisie that meets the substantial and digital requirements of the law within three years of the entry into force of the law (VNG, z.d.). The foundation of this can be found in the articles 3.1 and 3.2 of the Omgevingswet, which are added to the appendices, at 'Legal requirements Omgevingsvisie in Omgevingswet'. It is interesting to look at how planning professionals look upon the handling of 'future perspectives' and their ideas regarding 'visions' and the functionality of them as instruments in (strategic) spatial planning.

### 1.5 Research aim and research question

The research problem arises as a consequence of the upcoming Omgevingswet that changes the way of the Dutch planning system. The look into the future is an important factor in planning, as well as using this as a standard instrument as professional planner. The research question following from the research problem statement is as follows:

*“How do planning professionals handle ‘future perspectives’ and look upon ‘visions’ and their functionality as instruments in planning, in the context of the new Omgevingswet?”*

In order to answer the main question, sub questions need to be answered first as a process to create a structured answer to the main question. These are:

- *What is the function of future perspectives in planning literature?*
- *Which elements of current ‘strategic planning’ can be identified in the Omgevingsvisie?*
- *Which future horizons are used for the Omgevingsvisie?*
- *How do planners look upon vision making as an instrument for spatial planning?*
- *What is the discussion in the planning profession regarding the making of visions?*

## 2. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the most important theory will be discussed and used as a base for conducting the research. First, the new Omgevingswet including the Omgevingsvisie will be elaborated. After this, a critical review of relevant theories will be given. Following, the most important concepts will be discussed based on literature with an elaboration of each of these concepts and an operationalisation for each one. The used concepts are 'Future in planning', 'Strategic planning', 'Planning culture' and 'Community of practice'. At last, an operationalisation in the form of a scheme will be given which combines the separate operationalisations per concept into a framework that results into questions. Data is collected based on these questions.

### 2.1 Omgevingswet

The Omgevingswet is a new law in the Netherlands which at first was meant to be implemented from 2021 on. The implementation has been postponed to 1 January 2022, as it needed extra time and space for a good introduction of the law (Rijksoverheid, 2020). This law merges and simplifies the rules for spatial projects by bundling the laws for the living environment (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-a). The concerning laws and regulations are about building, environment, water, spatial planning and nature. With the help of one digital counter it will be easier to start spatial projects. The law provides a coherent approach of the living environment, space for local customization and better and faster decision making (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-a). Participation is also being promoted by involving the citizens and entrepreneurs by the development of the living environment.

Along with the Omgevingswet come three kinds of Omgevingsvisies, which are plans for the future for a certain area as a whole. The legal requirements for an Omgevingsvisie can be found in the appendices at 'Legal requirements Omgevingsvisie in Omgevingswet'. There will be the Nationale Omgevingsvisie (NOVI), the Provinciale Omgevingsvisie (POVI) and the Gemeentelijke Omgevingsvisie (GOVI). The NOVI for example, defines four social priorities for the Dutch society (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-a):

- Space for climate adaptation and energy transition
- Sustainable economic growth potential
- Strong and healthy cities and regions
- Future-proof development of the rural areas

The Nationale Omgevingsvisie aims to give a sustainable perspective for the living environment by anticipating to major challenges in the future (OntwerpNovi, z.d.). It has a broad scale and is more like a guideline in how to consciously arrange the country. The ambitions are being brought together into a future perspective. This National vision can be connected to the lower scale Omgevingsvisies, the POVIs and GOVIs, as some developments on national scale are overarching. It describes the national interests that the national government wants to realize. The governments on different scales are connected to each other in the way that they work on joint assignments and programs (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-b). The POVI the province captures their ambitions and policy goals for the physical environment for the long-term (Aan de slag met de Omgevingswet, z.d.-a). They also have the possibility to draw up a regional Omgevingsvisie together with other municipalities or provinces.

For municipalities, each one develops an Omgevingsvisie as a strategic long-term vision for the physical living environment as a whole (Aan de slag met de Omgevingswet, z.d.-a). This vision takes up the coherence between space, water, environment, nature, landscape, traffic and transport, infrastructure and cultural heritage. The local council determines the level of detail, areas, sectors and themes but there are legal requirements bound to the Omgevingsvisie of a municipality (Aan de slag met de Omgevingswet, z.d.-a). Because each municipality is different and the characteristics of a place or area are unique, the Omgevingsvisies of municipalities may differ quite a lot from each other. The making of an Omgevingsvisie is also a new planning strategy and is different from earlier methods, for example the Structuurvisie. This makes it also interesting for this research to look at the differences with previous methods and have a critical view on what is missing in this new method or what is actually present in this method compared to earlier strategies. Because of the implementation of this new law, this point can be seen as a momentum from which will be looked upon into the future.

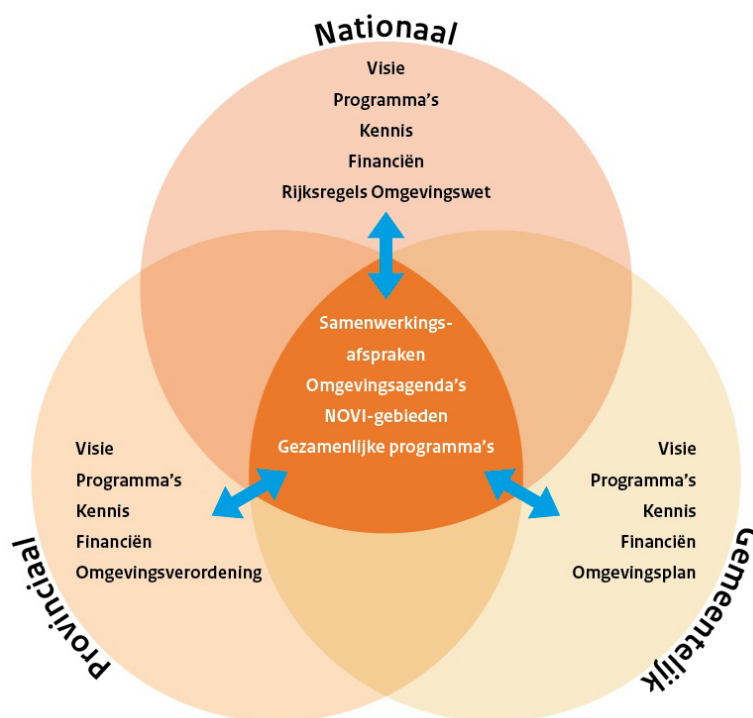


Figure 1. The interconnectedness between governments and their joint in assignments with their own instruments (Rijksoverheid, z.d.-b)

The relationship between these documents is important. The fixing of social problems can be more effective with joint policy while initiatives and challenges do not take administrative boundaries into account (Aan de slag met de Omgevingswet, z.d.-b). Decisions within one municipality can have consequences for other municipalities or provinces. This makes it essential to know the plans, challenges and responsibilities of adjacent municipalities or provinces. The Omgevingswet states that a governing body has to take the tasks of other governing bodies into account with the performance of their duties and align this together with other governing bodies if necessary. The Omgevingsvisie itself is self-binding for the governing layer which has drawn it up. 'Self-binding' means that the drawn-up document only creates obligations for the one that has made the document. The NOVI and POVI do not work directly through to the Omgevingsvisies of the municipalities (Aan de slag met de Omgevingswet, z.d.-b). The Omgevingswet has something called the carefulness and motivation

principle. The councils of the municipality and province have to show that they involved the Omgevingsvisies of other relevant governing bodies in their Omgevingsvisie. However, the law does not say exactly what 'involved' means which makes the inclusion of other Omgevingsvisies quite vague.

This Omgevingswet can be seen as the practical side of the research in the way that the making of Omgevingsvisies is the real side of making plans for the future. In this way, it can be explored in which way the Omgevingsvisie is being looked at as a vision and how it is looked upon in the making of documents for the future. For this, it is important to understand certain criteria to which the responses of the planners can be categorised. Therefore, the elements of future in planning, strategic spatial planning, the community of practice, planning culture and planning theory are essential to be operationalised. This creates a theoretical framework which will be used to process and analyse the data.

## 2.2 Critical review of relevant theories

Because places become both the text and context of new debates about fundamental socio-spatial relations and provide new kinds of practices and narratives about belonging to and being involved in the construction of a place in society at large, strategic spatial planning needs a contextual understanding of power and material interests, of discourses and the constraints of a more-of-the-same attitude (Albrechts, 2013). In this context it is not important how places are constructed in a society at large, but by (strategic) spatial planners. The idea is that a vision for the future is being documented, in the shape of an Omgevingsvisie, how places are planned to be and how they want them to be constructed. An upcoming question is what the influence of these visions made by strategic spatial planners is on places.

Foresight studies in the urban realm should use analytical methods capable of dealing with spatial issues. Physical planners should be more involved in exploring impacts on the city in terms of economic, social and technological level (Guell & Lopez, 2016). Guell & Lopez (2016) also notice that the high complexity of contemporary cities has deterred foresight practitioners from making plausible city visions. With this, they do not mention that new technologies and techniques could cover some of these complexity issues.

Albrechts, Alden & Pires (2017) state that there are critical shifts from traditional governance structures to a more fragmented mode of governance where more integration is needed between policy areas. Getimis (2012) also states that planning culture is in constant flux, like the larger social culture in which it is embedded. Public problems need to be dealt with differently and it becomes more difficult to ignore citizens demands as they want to have a voice in the design of the future of their environment. With the introduction of the Omgevingswet in the Netherlands as an adaption to the changing mode of governance, the question arises in how far it connects to the more fragmented mode of governance and the needs of the citizens. With the making of an Omgevingsvisie, it is meant to have goals in the future and to work towards them. But as these shifts in governance and planning culture are continuing, it is important to look at how far the Omgevingsvisie a relevant instrument in the future can be. In what way is it sustainable that it can adjust to a changing society with shifting modes of governance.

## 2.3 Future in planning

With the new Omgevingswet it is important to make an Omgevingsvisie by looking into future and making plans, strategies, programs, and/or agreements for it. The characteristics based on the legal requirements of the Omgevingswet can be seen in the appendices at 'Characteristics Omgevingsvisie based on Omgevingswet'.

It is important to look at what planners think that is necessarily important when they look into the future and what they think that is important for their future plans in the shape of an Omgevingsvisie. New insights could develop because of the things that planners learn from new methods of vision making. For this, the meaning of vision for planners in practice is needed. Furthermore, with the making of plans for the future it is important to keep in mind how the future goals will be reached and what kind of frameworks these plans make.

Guell & Lopez (2016, p. 454) evaluate future studies applied to cities by three major issues:

- "Have foresight practitioners understood cities complexity?
- Have urban planners used adequate tools to generate plausible future visions?
- Are city policy makers using foresight studies to limit urban uncertainty?"

The conclusions for these questions are as following. In terms of the cities complexity, they notice that few initiatives take the difficulty for understanding and displaying complex functional systems into consideration, as they give place to simple and sectoral approaches that provide biased urban visions instead of producing an integrated vision for the future of the city.

Regarding the second issue, Guell & Lopez (2016) noticed a difference between foresight practitioners and urban planners in envisioning the city. The foresight practitioners tend to ignore spatial challenges, but dominate the futures techniques and are capable of contextualizing diverse change drivers, while urban planners point out less focus to socioeconomic trends but excel in synthesizing the complexity of urban visions with the aid of graphic tools.

For the last question regarding applying foresight studies to limit urban uncertainty, the results are not conclusive as foresight methods do not usually have a direct impact on the city unless they are used to nurture a strategic plan or a city plan.

The difference with this research is that it does not look directly to city planning. However, while Guell & Lopez (2016) look in the first question or issue towards foresight practitioners, the second issue is focussed on urban planners, while in the results they make a split between the two. The third major issue relates to city policy makers and therefore also leaves open the distinction between urban planners and foresight practitioners. The same applies to why foresight methods do not have this direct impact on the city and what these foresight methods specifically are. They study different initiatives that apply different foresight methods, such as trend analysis, scenarios, visioning, Delphi-SMIC survey, Joint programming initiatives, stakeholder involvement and workshops; but they do not make a distinction between these. In conclusion, future studies should be reinvented as a field of practical knowledge for planning professionals. It is important to acknowledge that urban planners have been quite reluctant to incorporate foresight methods in their professional practice, even though these methods gain benefits according to Guell & Lopez (2016). This can be done by adapting existing foresight tools to planners needs, and new tools should be developed to determine the impact of future studies. But they leave open how these tools may look like.

In the article of Guell & Lopez (2016), it is mentioned that new planning methodologies and communication technologies should support collaborative work which can make urban complexity more approachable. Organizing multidisciplinary teams would help with this. The implementation of the new Omgevingswet could be an example of the implementation of such teams. The question is how planners look upon this new law and the additional look onto the future. Now with the coming Omgevingsvisie, municipalities are asked to make a vision for their area for the future. In this way planning is changing and the way how is looked upon the future is an important element of the new planning system. This research wants to develop insights in how these Omgevingsvisies get realized according to planners and what the important elements within the visions are.

There are collaboration opportunities on foresight initiatives. Academic initiatives have better scores on city conceptualization while corporate initiatives score better methodology and study impacts, so a mix of these approaches in collaborative projects. Guell & Lopez (2016) also make a consideration in incorporating urban complexity with scenarios and techniques for visioning the future which could improve planners' education by exposing them to the complexity and uncertainty of contemporary cities. But by incorporating urban diversity and involve of stakeholders in foresight exercise, planners could improve foresight practitioners' in understanding the cities' complex participatory processes. Foresight studies in the urban realm should use analytical methods capable of dealing with spatial issues. Physical planners should be more involved in exploring impacts on the city in terms of economic, social, and technological level.

### Visions

For this research, it is important to look at what the future means and the different thoughts of this. Shipley and Michela (2006, p. 223) state that a vision "describes a desired future and can take a simple form or can require an entire, complex document to describe.". This is a general definition and in order to get a deeper view more concepts need to be used. According to Hoch (2016), three popular concepts used to guide a purposeful response to the future for a place are utopia, scenario, and plan. They all offer imaginative advice by assessing the future as an introduction for action. If plan makers keep this continuity in mind, they are invited to integrate the demands of utopia as a part of the expectation for practical planning. In this way, it is less of an exceptional exercise that ignores the relevance of current opportunities and constraints (Hoch, 2016).



<i>Strategy as ...</i>	<i>Underpinned by...</i>	<i>Expressed through ...</i>	<i>Illustrated by ...</i>
Physical structure	Morphological analysis	Plans as maps and designs	1953 Milan PRG 1935 Amsterdam GE Plan 1985 Amsterdam <i>structuurplan</i> (in part)
Orienting goals	Socio-spatial analysis to identify threats to goals	Policy statements about programmes of action to achieve goals	1970s facet plans in Amsterdam 1980 Cambridgeshire structure plan 1980 Milan PRG
A framework of principles	Systematic technical and interactive search procedures to reduce uncertainty	Framing concepts, projects and programmes; policy criteria	Cambridgeshire structure plans 1985 Amsterdam <i>structuurplan</i> (in part)
An inspirational vision	Interactive processes to imagine futures and mobilise attention	Metaphors, storylines and manifestos	Futures exercises in Cambridge and Amsterdam in the 1990s

Figure 2. Meanings of strategy (Healey, 2007, p. 180)

While Healey (2010) and Friedmann (2011) make us believe that planning turns knowledge into action and that knowing utopian ideals will inspire ambitions for a new way of life which match these ideals, Hoch (2016) states that a pragmatic approach does not rely on this gap. From his article can be derived that a strong utopian vision to a desirable future place does not match with the line of thought of pragmatists. They reject that ideas compel consent. Some translations from knowledge towards action can be explained by Healey (2007), based on figure 2. These are translations of a visions towards action and are plans, maps, policy, programmes, goals, framing, concepts, metaphors, and storylines. These are the results of the four different kinds of strategies as they are the expressions of strategies.

Each of the three concepts described by Hoch (2016, pp. 9-13) are further elaborated below:

- **Utopia.** This concept is used by planning theorists to describe a future place which tackles current problems on a social, political, and economic level within a spatial community. The space for settlement describes current problematic relationships which are replaced with new ways of life. These are detailed relationships represented in the utopian landscape and narrative as successful and fulfilling. The utopian place has a long lineage and describe landscapes where diverse human inclinations, impulses, desires, and unfinished edges find closure and significance (Hoch, 2016, p. 9).
- **Scenario.** A scenario relies on narrative just like utopias, but the purposes reflect the expectations of scripted stakeholders for each future. Hoch (2016, p. 10) states that “Scenarios offer plausible comparable options that project and evaluate interaction effects tied to specific expectations and assumptions about a future time and place.”. The creation of scenarios arises from a combined selection of several causal attributes that frame the contours of change, for example climate change or economic prosperity, for a place. For spatial planners, scenarios offer plausible accounts for future events based on current choices about cause and purpose (Hoch, 2016, p. 11). The possible futures are not



necessarily desirable or predictable which makes it a much less morally ambitious concept for judging the future than utopia.

- **Plan.** With plans we provide options that we compose and compare how consequences might ensue for each. Planning gets stimulated by the rational tug of belief, the urgent push of desire, or any problem that disrupts habit and convention. In comparison to scenario and utopia, plans encompass a wider range of activities and a looser set of constraints. Most spatial plans prepared by professionals are characterised by describing goals and existing conditions at the outset, then it includes appraisal of these conditions. After this come alternatives that the plan audience compares before making a decision. At last, the plan concludes with a recommendation or a less decisive proposal. These conclusions may describe policies, programs, or actions that stakeholders to a plan add to make a good decision. Professional plans offer robust and useful advice. It mainly helps stakeholders assess options relative to current practice and the available competing arguments and assessments.

According to Nordregio (2005) strategic planning instruments are the most relevant instruments for polycentric development, in which spatial visions and regional economic development strategies play a major role. The main difference between these two is the scope, as spatial visions have a much broader scope that takes all kinds of spatially relevant issues into considerations. In the research, 17 of the 18 regions that claimed to pursue polycentric development as a major objective made use of spatial visions. The extent to which spatial visions include a spatial conceptualisation of the territory is one of the key indicators that expresses the role and the communicative power of them, as they influence the decisions of others. A spatial conceptualisation is an interpretation of the structure of the territory (Nordregio, 2005). This can be done in maps or words. If spatial visions are being looked at as soft instruments by being non-binding and having an informal status, they aim at generating secondary decision-making processes by a wide variety of actors. In the application of these instruments the policy process is more important than the policy document itself.

### Operationalisation

In this research it is important to distinguish certain criteria to assess responses by planning experts. With the creation of dimensions, it is easier to process the gathered data and so answer the research question. Based on the theory discussed in this paragraph, some criteria emerge for how the future in planning can be conceived. It is important to keep in mind that urban planners have been quite reluctant to incorporate foresight methods in their professional practice. Some of these foresight methods that Guell & Lopez (2016) come across in their research are trend analysis, scenarios, visioning, Delphi-SMIC survey, Joint programming initiatives, stakeholder involvement and workshops. These will be used as suggestions for what methods the planners use to gain insight in which methods are commonly being used by planners. With the making of future plans, the involvement of stakeholders could improve the understanding of complex participatory processes. It is important to use analytical methods to deal with spatial issues but also to be involved in exploring impacts on the city in terms of economic, social and technological level (Guell & Lopez, 2016). If planners focus too much on analytical methods, they need to be more involved with stakeholders and the other way around. Probably, planners nowadays use a mix of the two to reach a good balance. Furthermore, it is important to see if planners think the future is reliable. If they make the

Omgevingsvisie only because it has been asked them to do so, their opinion about the making of a future could be different.

For the term vision, the definition of Shipley and Michela (2006, p. 23) will be used, which is as following: “a vision describes a desired future and can take a simple form or can require an entire, complex document to describe”. This is a broad term and can be seen as the making of an Omgevingsvisie within this term while it stays rather vague. But the making of the future needs to be looked at differently to receive an integrated viewpoint of planners. For the assessment of how it is looked upon the Omgevingsvisie as a vision, the three terms of utopia, scenario and plan will be distinguished based on the definition of Hoch (2016). The difference between utopia and scenario is that the possible futures are not necessarily desirable or predictable for a scenario, which makes it a less morally ambitious concept for judging the future than utopia. Plans encompass a wider range of activities and a looser set of constraints than scenario or utopia. In order to recognize if these concepts are being used by planners, keywords are important. For utopia, the words are tackling problems, successful, fulfilling, long lineage, closure, significance, human desires and idealistic/out of the box. For scenario, scripted, choices, comparable options, evaluate, several causal attributes, possible futures and plausible accounts are important keywords. At last for plan, the keywords are describing goals, conditions, alternatives, advice, recommendation, belief, and decision. In plans, it is important to assess options relative to current practice and the available competing arguments and assessments.

A spatial conceptualisation is an interpretation of the structure of the territory (Nordregio, 2005). The presence of this spatial conceptualisation is one of the key indicators expressing the role and the communicative power of spatial vision, whereby the policy process is more important than the policy document itself.

## 2.4 Strategic planning

The Netherlands introduced a comprehensive planning system with strategic spatial plans at all levels of administration (Salet & Faludi, 2000). The Omgevingsvisie can be seen as such strategic spatial plan within the planning system. Spatial planning has been present in the evolution of strategic planning. This because of the need to maintain spatial harmony within a changing environment. Also, long term projects can often take ten to twenty years to complete, while afterwards the need arises to explore the context in which such projects had come about. However, long term planning perspectives commonly update this from time to time, which creates a situation of ongoing strategic perspectives (Salet & Faludi, 2000).

Albrechts (2013) states that in ‘traditional’ planning, there are different types of strategic spatial planning. It is not a single concept, procedure or tool, but a set of concepts, produces and tools that will be used dependent on the situation at hand with its desirable outcomes. Various authors and practitioners use the term differently (Albrechts, 2004). Albrechts (2013, p. 52) names a very traditional and basic definition of strategic planning: “defining and realizing a goal in the most appropriate way by using the available means.”. The emergent strategic spatial planning is more transformative and integrative public sector led. But it is also a co-productive, socio-spatial process through which visions or frames of reference and the means for implementation are produced that shape, frame and reframe what a place is and what it might become.

Furthermore, Albrechts (2013) mentions that a more complex type of strategic spatial planning seems needed to react to challenges. Albrechts (2013) presents a new approach, a more radical strategic planning, for creating and steering a better future and for a place on the basis of a more hybrid mode of democracy that is open to diversity, equity and structural change (Ogilvy, 2002). Strategic planning wants to understand the society as a continual reinvention of the socio-spatial and its mode of narrative and communication, but one cannot confront complex dynamic realities with a language designed for a static top-down approach (Senge, 1990). Because of this, there is need for ways of thinking and for tools, concepts and instruments that help governments, citizens, and planners. In this way, challenges can be handled better in an unequal, dynamic, and complex environment (Albrechts, 2013). Faludi and Altes (1994) and Faludi and Van der Valk (1994, p. 3) define project planning as the opposite of strategic planning. Whereas strategic plans are defined as frameworks for action which need to be analysed for their performance in helping with subsequent decisions, project plans are blueprint plans and form an unambiguous guide to action. Granados-Cabezas (1995) state that strategic planning anticipates new tendencies, discontinuities, and surprises and it concentrates on openings and ways of taking advantage of new opportunities.

Mintzberg et al. (1998) emphasize the fact that strategy making should be concerned with process and content, statics and dynamics, constraint and inspiration, the cognitive and the collective, the planned and the learned, and the economic and the political. Others focus on the need to gather the key stakeholders, the importance of external trends and forces, the active involvement of senior level managers, to construct a longer term vision, the need to focus on implementation, to build commitment to plans, and to be politically realistic (Albrechts, 2004).

In terms of strategy-making Healey (1997) deconstructs the mechanism of strategy-making into four components, which are: initiators, stakeholders and arenas, routines of organizing and styles of discussion, making policy discourses and maintaining consensus. According to Healey (2007, p. 180), strategies are complex social constructions that “involve difficult institutional work in drawing together sets of actors and their relational networks and creating new policy communities and networks that can act as carriers of strategic ideas across governance landscapes and through time.”. This leads to major movements in academic thought together with the practices of planning and management that results into many different meanings of strategy. Four of these are being presented by Healey in figure 2 and explained following:

- Strategy as physical structure can be underpinned by morphological analysis and be made clear in the form of plans as maps and designs.
- Strategy as orienting goals can be understood in the form of socio-spatial analysis to identify threats to goals. This can be expressed through policy statements about programmes of actions to achieve goals.
- Strategy as an inspirational vision is characterized by interactive processes to imagine futures and mobilise attention and is being expressed through metaphors, storylines, and manifestos.
- Strategy as a framework of principles on the other hand can be defined as systematic technical and interactive search procedures to reduce uncertainty. These are being depicted as framing concepts, projects and programmes, and by policy criteria.

## Operationalisation

In this research the element of strategic planning is of importance in the way how planners execute their jobs. The Omgevingsvisie can be seen as a strategic spatial plan within the Dutch planning system. While some planners may work with more specific targets in concrete agreements as a Woningdeal, other planners put more focus on the quality in terms of building houses in a smaller scale and providing only for demand for a town or village itself. For example, when there is an undersupply in houses and consequently more houses are needed in a certain area, the process about the quality of the housing could be more important rather than making quantitative targets. The definition of strategic planning for this research is the one of Albrechts (2013, p. 52): “defining and realizing a goal in the most appropriate way by using the available means.”.

As Faludi and Altes (1994) and Faludi and Van der Valk (1994, p. 3) mention, strategic plans can be seen as a framework for action in planning. These frameworks need to be analysed on their performance to help with subsequent decisions. This definition can be connected to the creation of futures by using the available tools and to come to decisions. By analysing the creation of the future by planners, their framework for action is being analysed and subsequent decisions can be improved. In finding the difference between how they want to reach their goal, the difference in strategic planning can emerge. Following is the question if because of a change in the structure, by implementing the Omgevingswet, planners are invited to develop a new culture in terms of the behaviour or the use of structures. It could also become clear if the Omgevingswet will lead to a change in strategic planning or the planning culture.

Where strategic planning faces a more complex and dynamic environment, radical strategic planning is a new approach that Albrechts (2013) suggests. The characteristics can best be described as steering towards a better future, a hybrid democracy open to structural change wherein equity and diversity are important. Strategic planning understands society as a continual reinvention of the socio-spatial and its mode of narrative and communication. The Omgevingsvisie implements its own understanding of the society and the socio-spatial. It can become clear how this change in strategic planning is being translated into the Omgevingsvisie.

Referring to Healey (2007) with his definitions and dimensions of strategy, some of the dimensions are important for the understanding of strategic spatial planning in relation to the new Omgevingsvisie. So, in order to understand how planners translate the Omgevingsvisie into a certain strategy, these dimensions can be used as an framework. The important dimensions are physical structure, orienting goals, a framework of principles and an inspirational vision. These are, as earlier said, different kinds of functions of a strategy, and therefore planners could have different kinds of ideas of the function of an Omgevingsvisie. These four definitions or functions can be deposited next to the answers to distinguish the responses towards strategic spatial planning from the survey.

## 2.5 Planning culture

An integrated perspective of planning cultures says that they are established through concrete forms of planning action within the planning system (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012). The plurality and variability within the framework of legal and administrative structures is a consequence of the specific values and orientations of the actors involved, their interests and the associated action logics, and the available resources for action to enable them to assert their interests. These manifestations are embedded in the planning cultures and are marked in a relationship by complex interdependencies (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012). The planning culture perspective also includes informal institutions. It refers to the characteristic patterns and dynamics that are expressed in the practice of planners and vary from planning contexts. In that way, it is related to the practice of planning action.

Getimis (2012) also defines planning culture. The outcome of studies are an important contribution to the planning culture debate, which are based on expert discourses, city planning cultures in developing countries and industrialized countries. The contributions address planning cultures in relation to the social and political-economic changes in each country and not as an independent variable. Planning does not reflect social forces, it redefines politics, producing new sources of power and legitimacy and changing the force field (Getimis, 2012). Sanyal (2005) talks about 'hybrid planning cultures', which says that planning culture is focussed on the continuous process of social, political and technological change. This affects the way planners conceptualize problems in different settings, and the way planners structure institutional responses to these problems. Accordingly, planning culture is in constant flux, like the larger social culture in which it is embedded. There is a consensus that planning culture refers to the mental predispositions and shared values of those involved at all stages of the planning processes. This influences their behaviour and action (Getimis, 2012). Now with the implementation of the new Omgevingswet, the question arises if the planning culture potentially could change. It is also important to notice in what way the planning culture could change or maybe already has changed.

There is a clear analytical focus on producing a descriptive account of the legal/administrative characteristics of national planning systems when considering international comparative research on spatial planning (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012). These studies often classify planning systems into aggregates homogeneous families of national planning systems. Familiarity with the diversity of the underlying legal and administrative structures is important to understand planning in varying contexts. Planning is not solely the result of the structures provided by the respective planning system. The structuralist explanations of spatial planning come up against their limitations when comparative research comments on the practice of planning action (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012). They say that "Only with an integrative approach and analysis of formal and informal institutional arrangements, and the interaction between them, reproduced repeatedly in action, it is possible to arrive at a profound and realistic understanding of the practice of spatial planning." (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012, p. 8). Planning and culture have a close relationship, which has been often referred to in the past (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012).

Planning has always been shaped primarily by the respective national context constituted by national law, the structure of public administration and the political culture; despite the exchange of ideas and experience at an international level within the professional communities of town and regional planners (the community of practice). Because of this, we can speak of a national planning system which display internal homogeneity (Reimer & Blotevogel, 2012). This study focusses on the relationship between the legal/administrative structures and the actual planning systems embedded within them instead of the initial focus exclusively on legal/administrative aspects.

These planning cultures are in a dynamic relation to social, economic, and political changes but a systematic comparison under a comprehensive framework is missing according to Getimis (2012). Comparative studies on planning cultures are mainly based on surveys referring to the different understanding of planners and experts concerning planning practices at the national or city level. Common trends emerged towards a more cooperative planning style, despite differences concerning institutional contexts and political cultures (Getimis, 2012).

### Operationalisation

For this research, the question arises if the planning culture can change or is possibly changing in terms of creating futures in planning. It is a variable depending on social and political-economic changes and is in constant flux like the larger social culture in which it is embedded (Getimis, 2012). It refers to the mental predispositions and shared values of the ones which are involved in the stages of the planning processes, what influences their behaviour and action.

The hypothesis is that there will be a connection between the element of planning culture and strategic planning. If it is noticeable that the planning culture differs between, this could lead to a different strategic planning style. While strategic planning has to do with defining a goal and realizing it by using the available means, it can be seen as working towards 'something' in the future. As already said, planning culture is in a constant flux and is changing. Because of this working over a certain time, a change in one of the concepts could lead to a change in the other concept.

### 2.6 Community of practice

As Wenger and Snyder (2000, p. 139) say, communities of practice are "groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise, engineers engaged in deep-water drilling, for example, consultants who specialize in strategic marketing, or frontline managers in charge of check processing at a large commercial bank.". Some of them meet regularly, other are for example only connected by e-mail networks. People in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge that foster new approaches to problems. These communities of practice can drive strategy, solve problems, generate new lines of business, develop people's professional skills, promote the spread of best practices and help companies recruit and retrain talent. The primary output of them is knowledge and in the past they have improved organizational performance at diverse companies among which a U.S. government agency (Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

Wenger (2011) mentions that the term 'community of practice' is of relatively new, while the phenomenon being referred has been known for centuries. He refers to them as "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly." (Wenger, 2011, p. 1). With this definition, he notes that not everything called a community is a community of practice, furthermore he notes that three characteristics are crucial:

- **The domain.** This means that a community of practice has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest, which distinguishes them from other people. The domain is also not necessarily something recognized as "expertise" outside the community.
- **The community.** Members of a community of interest do not necessarily work together on a daily basis. They engage in joint activities and discussion, share information, and help each other. It is only a community of practice if members interact and learn together.
- **The practice.** Members of a community of practice are practitioners, they have a certain repertoire of resources: experience, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems. In other words, they have a shared practice, which takes time and sustained interaction. The development of this shared practice may take place more or less self-conscious.

The combination of these three elements constitutes a community of practice and by developing these in parallel, one cultivates such a community (Wenger, 2011). The concept of communities of a practice can be applied in organizations, government, education, associations, social sector, international development, or the web.

### Knowledge

As Wenger and Snyder (2000) say, the primary output of communities of practice is knowledge, Getimis (2012) distinguished three types of knowledge based on the work of Matthiesen (2008):

- **Scientific/Professional/Expert knowledge.** This knowledge comes from a disciplinary background or certified education and training. It is not bound in a certain place.
- **Steering/Institutional knowledge.** This knowledge comes from systematic and functional logic of organizations and institutions and also from managerial and steering capacities. Steering knowledge is gained in institutional contexts or through experience and is decisive in the inclusion or exclusion of the other two forms of knowledge.
- **Local/Every Day/Milieu knowledge.** This knowledge is of common-sense relevant situations and structures and enables individuals to act and cope in everyday life. Milieu knowledge refers to a spatial environment, like nature, culture or language, or to social conceptions within a social network. This form of knowledge is underestimated while it is recognized as important only when inclusive participatory governance arrangements emerge.

## Operationalisation

The definition of community of practice that in this research will be used is the one of Wenger (2011, p. 1), which is “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.”. In order to understand it properly, it will be divided into the three concepts that Wenger (2011) uses: domain, community and practice. The community of practice for this research will reveal when each of these indicators will be identified from the planners.

- For the **domain** it is expected to be planners, but there are more types of planners. Because of this, the function of each planner will be identified to see if the researched planners are defined by a shared domain of interest.
- For the **community**, the planners need to take place in joint activities and discussion. To see if this factor is present, it is interesting to know if they learn from each other by sharing information or experiences. In this way, it will also be clear if someone has a different viewpoint than other practitioners. This will improve the generalizability of the received answers.
- For the point of **practice**, this research will look at the resources. It is important to know the experiences, stories, and tools of planners to get a proper view of how they look towards the future. It will be asked what tools planners have for thinking about the future, and which methods they use. Furthermore, in terms of experience it is useful to know how often they encounter building scenarios of thinking about futures.

For the stories side, the relevant or important stories or story lines which are used for the future in the discussion in the planning field which they connect to the making of cities for the future could add up new insights for this research.

In terms of knowledge, this research distinguished the three types which are discussed by Matthiesen (2008): Professional/Expert knowledge, Steering/Institutional knowledge and Local/Everyday knowledge. By gathering the data of the online surveys in this research, it is interesting to look at the difference between the types of knowledge they use to answer the questions. The professional knowledge comes from the disciplinary background, and therefore the background of planners and the knowledge that is required to be a planner. The Institutional knowledge emerges from the organisation and institutions in which the planners work and is the knowledge that is dependent on the institutional context. This knowledge is gained in institutional contexts or through experience. Every Day knowledge is more common-sense and structures and enables individuals to act in everyday life. Within this type of knowledge, Milieu knowledge refers to a spatial environment within a social network and can be of importance in this research because planners are dealing with participatory governance arrangements by the building of futures. By understanding what kind of knowledge is being used by planners for building the future, it can become clear if some type of knowledge is useful or other types need to be used more to optimize the building of the future.



## 2.7 Operationalisation

The operationalisation of each of these concepts leads to the questions that are essential to answer the research questions. These questions emerge from the literature and will be used in the survey that will be conducted. The list of survey questions following from the operationalisation can be found in the appendices under Questions in the survey. The operationalisation scheme is being presented in Table 1.

Element	Meaning	Suggested approach	Questions
<b>Community of practice</b>	Groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise, engineers engaged in deep-water drilling, for example, consultants who specialize in strategic marketing, or frontline managers in charge of check processing at a large commercial bank. The output of a community of practice is knowledge.	Division into: -Domain -Community -Practice By understanding the background, it becomes clear and understandable how the community of practice is present and share the same opinion. In terms of knowledge, understanding if some knowledge is dominantly used or used too less.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your current position and precise function/task?</li> <li>2. What is your academic/professional background?</li> <li>3. Do you consider your academic/professional background as essential for executing your current function? More specifically, how important is the role of professional knowledge in your function?</li> <li>4. With respect to the Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues?</li> </ol>
<b>Future in Planning</b>	Vision: Describes a desired future and can take a simple form or can require an entire, complex document to describe. More types of meaning, depending on perception of future.	-Understand the look upon the making of an Omgevingsvisie.  -And how should the Omgevingsvisie be as tool.  -Understanding what a vision should mean according to planners.  -Personal view on future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. The Omgevingsvisie includes the segment 'vision'. What should a vision in spatial planning be in your view?</li> <li>6. Compared with your view in last question (q.5), how different or similar is the Omgevingsvisie as a vision?</li> <li>7. How do you personally in your professional capacity conceive of 'the future'?</li> <li>8. Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business</li> </ol>

		<p>Make a division for perception of future between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Utopia</li> <li>-Scenario</li> <li>-Plan</li> </ul> <p>-Understanding the used methods in day to day business and seeing how useful they are for vision making and therefore how important for future in planning</p>	<p>(Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario's, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical models, Delphi rounds, Workshops, and others)?</p>
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	<p>Defining and realizing a goal in the most appropriate way by using the available means.</p> <p>Framework for action in planning. Analysing these frameworks influences the performance with subsequent decisions.</p>	<p>-Function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning.</p> <p>-Change in strategic planning: comparison of Omgevingsvisie with earlier methods.</p> <p>-Usefulness of making a vision for the future. Wanting to know if the making of a vision is realistic and helpful for strategic planning.</p>	<p>9. At your current position, are you in the process of developing a new Omgevingsvisie?</p> <p>10. According to your experience (in case you work with it), what is the actual function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?</p> <p>OR According to your expectations (in case it is still coming), what will the actual function be of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?</p> <p>11. How does the Omgevingsvisie stand in comparison to earlier methods for thinking about the future?</p> <p>12. In how far do you think that the making of a vision for the future is useful and thus can be realistic?: More specifically asked, does a vision need to be 'realistic' in the sense of very specific, in the sense of achievable, in the sense of being shared by each and every one?</p>

<b>Planning Culture</b>	<p>A variable depending on social and political-economic changes and is in constant flux like the larger social culture in which it is embedded. Referring to mental predispositions and shared values.</p>	<p>-See if the planning culture is changing or could change as a result of the implementation of the Omgevingswet.</p> <p>-Collect future ideas or stories which are encountered and form the planning culture or maybe have changed this. This helps giving insight in how the future is conceived based on language and experience.</p>	<p>13. In the field of spatial planning, a number of ideas or ‘future stories’ were quite influential over recent years, most notably the SMART city idea. Which ‘future stories’ do you personally encounter in your professional field (including the SMART city)?</p> <p>14. In your view, will the new Omgevingswet achieve changes in planning culture, as it aims to?</p>
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Table 1. Operationalisation.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Epistemology, ontology and research strategy

A research can follow different research philosophies. The ontological and epistemological way of thinking will be further elaborated in relation to this research. According to Saunders, Thornhill & Lewis (2019).

- Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality and therefore determines how you see the world of business and management and your choice of what to research for your research project.
- Epistemology refers to the assumptions about knowledge, what constitutes acceptable, valid and legitimate knowledge, and how we can communicate knowledge to others. The variety of epistemologies gives you a large choice of methods, but it is important to understand the implications of different epistemological assumptions in relation to your choice of method.

Ontology initially seems more abstract, while the relevance of epistemology is more obvious. There also needs to be made a distinction between subjectivism and objectivism to be able to distinguish between the research philosophies. Saunders et al. (2019, p. 135) elaborate them as following:

- Objectivism incorporates the assumptions of the natural sciences, arguing that the social reality that we research is external to us and others (referred to as social actors)
- Subjectivism incorporates assumptions of the arts and humanities, asserting that social reality is made from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors (people).

Within subjectivism there are more forms. Where nominalism considers that the order and structures of social phenomena are created by researchers and other social actors, social constructivism puts forward that reality is constructed through social interaction in which social actors create partially shared meanings and realities and therefore reality is constructed intersubjectively.

In this research, the goal is to gather insights in how the Dutch professional planners of the government look upon the making of future perspectives and their ideas of visions. How do they rate them as instruments and what is the functionality of them for strategic spatial planners in the context of the reforms of the Omgevingswet? This creates several different answers in which partially shared meanings are being searched. All these partial answers together create one reality, where the reality is constructed through social interactions. In this way reality is being constructed intersubjectively. This research can be seen as social constructivism and mostly using subjectivism. Saunders et al. (2019) state that as this social interaction between actors are a continual process, such social phenomena are in a constant state of flux and revision.

Assumption type	Questions	Continua with two sets of extremes		
		Objectivism	⇔	Subjectivism
Ontology	• What is the nature of reality?	Real	⇔	Nominal/decided by convention
	• What is the world like?	External	⇔	Socially constructed
	• For example:	One true reality	⇔	Multiple realities
	– What are organisations like?	(universalism)	⇔	(relativism)
	– What is it like being in organisations?	Granular (things)	⇔	Flowing (processes)
	– What is it like being a manager or being managed?	Order	⇔	Chaos
Epistemology	• How can we know what we know?	Adopt assumptions of the natural scientist	⇔	Adopt the assumptions of the arts and humanities
	• What is considered acceptable knowledge?	Facts	⇔	Opinions
	• What constitutes good-quality data?	Numbers	⇔	Written, spoken and visual accounts
		Observable phenomena	⇔	Attributed meanings
	• What kinds of contribution to knowledge can be made?	Law-like generalisations	⇔	Individuals and contexts, specifics

Table 2. Philosophical assumptions as a multidimensional set of continua (Saunders et al., 2019).

As can be derived from Table 2, for the assumptions of ontology and epistemology there are extremes in terms of objectivism and subjectivism. Ontologically speaking, with subjectivism the world is socially constructed with multiple realities and the reality is flowing as a process. Epistemologically speaking, subjectivism works with opinions and attributed meanings in terms of what is acceptable knowledge and what constitutes good-quality data (Saunders et al., 2019).

In order to receive the right information, the chief or deputy planner of each municipality needs to be approached, just like for each province and at the national government level. At last someone from the national government will be approached to gather information on the highest level. Thus, it is necessary to do empirical research. These professional planners will be asked to fill in an online open questionnaire as a survey which lasts five to ten minutes to get as much response as possible. The results of this survey will be processed and interpreted based on the grounded theory approach, which is the discovery of theory from data that is systematically obtained from social research (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). In this way, strong terms and high frequencies of language will be identified. This will be done with the program Atlas.TI, which is a program that can be used to analyse qualitative data (Frieze, 2019). With this program the received responses can be coded and by doing this, a categorisation will emerge to compare the data to the developed criteria and dimensions.

Based on this, a communal framework will emerge in how professional planners look upon the making of future perspectives and visions in context with the implementation of the Omgevingswet. There will also be looked upon the differences in response between the levels of government which could improve the tuning on different levels of scales in the Dutch governmental planning system.

In order to receive an understanding of the viewpoint of professional planners, it is necessary to work with a qualitative data and so a qualitative research strategy. Qualitative data, in comparison to quantitative data, can redress imbalance by providing contextual information (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative data also can provide rich insight into human behaviour and are useful for uncovering emic views. By collecting many of this contextual information and emic views, the quantitative data can be understood in the best way possible and as a result redress this imbalance as much as possible. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) say, theories should be qualitatively grounded to be valid. This is particularly crucial in view of the criticism of social science as failing to provide adequate accounts of nonmainstream lives. For this research, contextual information and insight into human behaviour is important. Particularly because of the present planning culture and how this could be different between municipalities and provinces, and how it could develop or change with the implementation of the Omgevingswet and the associated Omgevingsvisie. For the interpretation of the data that will be gathered, the thesis will use the following theoretical and conceptual positions: strategic planning, future in planning, communities of practice and planning culture. Through the definition of these theoretical positions, new theory can be formed by using the grounded theory approach.

The way of research creates a large volume of data and has to be analysed in an effective and meaningful way. This will be done by finding common ground and making a framework of the essence of what the data substantively means that can be used for answering the research question. The data will be categorised based on the operationalisation that has been made at '2.7 Operationalisation'. Through a process of open coding, codes have been assigned to relevant data that in the end leads to a coding scheme, which is included in the Appendices under 'Coding scheme'. The codes labelled the data that are relevant to the parts of the concepts in the theory.

### 3.2 Research methods

Grounded theory is a form of qualitative research. Van Thiel (2014, p. 139) explains grounded theory as "a research tradition that is geared at formulating specific theories which explain a certain case that is being studied.". Sometimes the inductively developed theory is not bound up with the research subject and also place- and time-specific. This means that the theory only applies to the particular situation (Van Thiel, 2014). In this research, there is one case that is being studied, namely the way professional planners look upon the making of future perspectives and their ideas about visions. It is more specific in the way that it is bound to the context of the Omgevingswet, so that only the planners of the three levels of governments in the Netherlands are being studied. Because the Omgevingswet is new and currently being implemented in the Dutch planning system, the research will be also time specific to this momentum. In this way the study is also exploratory because the way professional planners look into the future could change or be changed because of the new law. This is in line with the article of Getimis (2012) who argues that a critical approach is needed to understand planning changes on the assumption that comparative methodology should be descriptive, explanatory, interpretative and hermeneutical instead of normative.

### 3.3 Data collection

For this research information will be gathered by reaching the main planner of each municipality and asking them to fill in an online open survey about how they look upon future perspectives and visions and the functionality of them. The same thing will be done for each province and the government. At this moment, there are 355 municipalities in the Netherlands (CBS, 2019). This means that each municipality will be surveyed and there will be 355 surveys filled in. As there are 12 provinces in The Netherlands, these will form 12 different surveys. With the National government there will be one survey. For this, each main planner of the municipality, province and national government will be searched and contacted by e-mail. A reminder will be sent out after one to one and a half week to optimise the responses and to take the time management into account. The intention is that every municipality and province will respond, however there is a possibility that not every planner has time or does not want to respond to the survey.

#### Approaching the planners

In order to approach the planners of municipalities, first the general e-mail addresses need to be collected because the planners per municipality do not give their e-mail address publicly available. For this, the general e-mail address of each municipality and province has been collected in an Excel-file. If a municipality does not have such general e-mail address, then a contact form will be filled in on the website of the municipality or province. After these contact details are being collected, a standardized e-mail will be sent to all these municipalities and provinces which can be found in the appendices under Translation mail. In order to do so, the e-mail addresses first have to be imported to Outlook from Excel. Through linking each Excel value, which are the e-mail addresses, to a contact person, a new list of contact persons emerges in Outlook to which the standardized e-mail can be sent. Because there are so many e-mails to be sent, it is not possible to send an e-mail to all the contacts at once. This will be solved by dividing them into groups of 30 contact persons and then send the mail to each group. It is also not possible to send out this many mails in one day, so this will be divided into two days. When a planner responds to the sent mail, his e-mail address will be noted next to municipality he or she works for. After a few weeks, a reminder will be sent to the municipalities which have not already given an e-mail address of a planner. An exception are the municipalities that have stated that they do not want to participate in this research.

### 3.4 Survey set-up and data analysis

After the e-mail addresses of the planners are collected, the survey can be sent to them. But first, the survey needs to be created. The questions that will be asked can be seen in Table 1, but they will be asked in a different order in the survey itself as some fit better at other places. These are all open answer, except for question 5 and 8. Question 8 has been stated as following: Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business (Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario's, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical models, Delphi rounds, Workshops and others)? This question has multiple choice options and one open option if other methods are being used by respondents. Question 5 has been asked as: At your current position, are you in the process of developing a new Omgevingsvisie? This is a closed question with only yes and no as answer options. The answer to this question determines how question 6 is being asked and divides the respondents in who are already working with the Omgevingsvisie and those who are not. Question 4 has a more closed section in the form of yes/no, followed by an open answer: With respect to the

Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues? Furthermore, some questions are steering to certain answers. As question 3 steers towards professional knowledge, question 12 towards realistic, specific, achievability and being shared by others, and question 13 sets the Smart City idea as example.

For the survey software, it is important to choose the right software in terms of keeping track of the submitted, the confidential treatment of the data, a professional layout and making it not too difficult for the respondents to fill in the survey. For this, Qualtrics has been used, which is online survey software that is supported by the Radboud University. The software has a standard Radboud layout, which gives the survey a professional appearance, and is easy to use. It is also possible to keep track who responded and when someone finished the survey. Furthermore, the survey can be easily distributed through a created standardized e-mail to the planners of municipalities and provinces. If someone from a distribution has not finished it yet, it is also easy to send out a reminder to all the unfinished respondents of that distribution. So, after receiving the collected e-mail addresses from the planners, the standardized e-mail will be sent through Qualtrics including a link with the survey. This mail, without the included link, can be found in the appendix at Reminder mail. To some of the planners for which the instructions are unclear or have some questions, a personal distribution with e-mail will be created. If more people within a municipality want to answer the survey, an anonymous link will be sent to one of the concerned persons. In this way, more people can answer the survey with the same link. By asking the question for which municipality the respondent works, it is possible to keep track of the respondents of the anonymous links.

One week after sending out the survey a reminder will be sent out to the ones who did not finish or start the survey yet. After the reminder mail to the general e-mail address of the planners has been sent, some new participants will be gathered. When the survey has been distributed to these new e-mail addresses, a week later the unfinished respondents will be reminded to finish or start the survey.

The analysis will be done by first presenting the descriptive elements, followed by the analysis of both the municipalities and provinces, whereafter a comparison will be made between the municipalities and provinces and at last the differences between certain functions will be analysed. The analysis for the open questions of the survey will be done based on the wordcount and so frequencies of relevant terms that the respondents have answered to questions of the survey. Comparing this with the total amount of responses gives insight in how important the relevant terms are. The words that have been used more often in one response to a question have been left out to make a clear comparison to the amount of responses. Also, the frequencies of the words have only been included of the words that are relevant to the key code to which the data refers. So, maybe a relevant term has been used more frequently to a question, but in that context the word is not relevant to the key code. When groups are being compared with each other, the relative counts of words are being used where the frequencies will be divided by the total amount of words. The unimportant words will not be analysed, but they will be included in the total word count. This results in low percentages of the presence of relevant terms. The multiple-choice question (8) will be analysed by presenting a graph of the used methods of the respondents. The percentages do not add up to 100% as each respondent could fill in more methods that they use. Therefore, the percentages are relative of the total amount of responses.



### 3.5 Validity and reliability of the research

Validity has to do with whether your methods, approaches and techniques relate to the issues you have been exploring Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2010). As Creswell & Miller (2000) say, validity is affected by the researcher's perception of validity in the study the choice of paradigm assumption. In this way many researchers have developed their own concept of validity. For qualitative research, internal validity and external validity are important. Internal validity measures the correspondence between researchers' observations and the theoretical ideas they develop (Bryman, 2016). For this research, it means that it is important to formulate questions in the open survey that answer the sub questions and ultimately the main question. In this way, the new theoretical ideas that are developed correspond to the observations of the research. External validity is about the question if the results of the study can be generalized beyond the specific context of the research (Bryman, 2016). The Omgevingsvisie is specific to the Netherlands and needs to be made by planners of the governments in the Netherlands. The results can be generalized to this extent but can also be useful for planners as a community of practice. Beyond the context of the Omgevingsvisie, the results can be useful for the making of visions or future perspectives and using them as instruments in planning, and especially in strategic spatial planning.

Reliability has to do with the fact that if another researcher carried out the same research he or she would come up with the same results. If so, the research is reliable (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010). In order to improve the reliability, more research units need to be used. In this research, as many research units will be used, namely for every municipality one planning professional, just like for the provinces. This increases the reliability because the chance that the results are coincidence decreases. It needs to be considered that this is dependent on the response rate and therefore the focus needs to be on getting this as high as possible to get the reliability as high as possible.

## 4. Analysis

In this chapter, the analysis of the collected data will take place. First, the set-up of the survey will shortly be discussed and how the filled in survey leads to the analysis. After this, the descriptive elements of the survey will be analysed for both the responses of the municipalities and the provinces. After this, the substantive questions will be analysed, beginning with the data collected from the municipalities, followed by the provinces. After this, the analysis of the municipalities will be compared with the analysis of the provinces, followed by an analysis of the differences between certain functions of the respondents.

### 4.1 Survey

This paragraph has been divided into the survey set-up, processing the data to Atlas.ti and a coding section. This is the process of making the raw data ready for the analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Survey set-up

At first it is important to subdivide the filled in survey. From the municipality, 121 people have finished the survey. Keeping the fact in mind that the goal was to approach at least one planner per municipality, with totally 355 municipalities in the Netherlands the response rate is  $121/355 * 100\% = 34,08\%$ . From the provinces in the Netherlands, 7 of the 12 provinces have responded and filled in the survey. This makes a response rate of  $7/12 * 100\% = 58,33\%$ , which is relatively high compared to the response rate of the municipalities.

Following, the questions per element or concept of theory needs to be separated from each other. The questions have been ordered than at Table 1 in the operationalisation. The first element is 'Community of practice' and includes four questions in the survey. These are:

- What is your current position and precise function/task? (Q. 2) – open answer with 2 sections.
- What is your academic/professional background? (Q. 3) – open answer.
- Do you consider your academic/professional background as essential for executing your current function? More specifically, how important is the role of professional knowledge in your function? (Q. 4) – open answer, steering towards professional knowledge.
- With respect to the Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues? (Q. 15) – open answer with probably yes or no at first.

The second element is 'Future in planning', which includes four questions. These are:

- The Omgevingsvisie includes the segment 'vision'. What should a vision in spatial planning be in your view? (Q. 7) – open answer.
- Compared with your view in last question, how different or similar is the Omgevingsvisie as a vision? (Q. 8) – open answer.
- How do you personally in your professional capacity conceive of 'the future'? (Q. 9) – open answer.
- Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business (Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario's, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical

models, Delphi rounds, Workshops, and others)? (Q. 13) – multiple choice with an option for open answers.

For the element of ‘Strategic spatial planning’, four questions have been asked, which are:

- At your current position, are you in the process of developing a new Omgevingsvisie? (Q. 5)
- According to your experience (in case you work with it), what is the actual function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning? OR According to your expectations (in case it is still coming), what will the actual function be of an Omgevingsvisie in planning? (Q. 6) – open answer.
- How does the Omgevingsvisie stand in comparison to earlier methods for thinking about the future? (Q. 10) – open answer.
- In how far do you think that the making of a vision for the future is useful and thus can be realistic?: More specifically asked, does a vision need to be ‘realistic’ in the sense of very specific, in the sense of achievable, in the sense of being shared by each and every one? (Q. 11) – open answer, steering towards terms as realistic, specific, achievable and being shared.

The concept ‘Planning Culture’ includes two questions that have been stated as following:

- In the field of spatial planning, a number of ideas or ‘future stories’ were quite influential over recent years, most notably the Smart City idea. Which ‘future stories’ do you personally encounter in your professional field (including the Smart City)? (Q.12) – open answer, steering towards specific options like Smart City.
- In your view, will the new Omgevingswet achieve changes in planning culture, as it aims to? (Q. 14) – open answer.

These questions have not been chronologically asked because some questions better fit at other places. The responses to these questions will be combined per element or concept in order to get a fitting and unambiguously overview in how the collected data translates to the theory and what new insights there are in order to answer the sub questions and ultimately the research question.

#### 4.1.2 Qualtrics to Atlas.ti

When all the surveys have been filled in the data needs to be transferred to Atlas.ti, which is the program for analysis. By entering the project in Qualtrics with the distributed survey, and thereafter go to ‘Data and analysis’, an overview will be given of the answers. The following step is to export the data to Excel and select ‘Download all fields’ and ‘Use choice text’. Then the data will be downloaded and can be opened with Excel. With this some unnecessary information is included. These are for example ‘Status’, ‘IPAddress’, ‘Duration’, ‘RecordedDate’, ‘Responseld’, ‘RecipientLastName’, ‘RecipientFirstName’ and the location from which the survey has been filled in. All these columns have been deleted while this information was excessive. For the following step of importing the data to Atlas.ti, only the survey questions were left in the Excel file. This has been done because for the process of coding, only the survey questions themselves were necessary. After deleting these columns, the data could be imported into Atlas.ti. For this, a new project has been created in Atlas.ti and the data will be imported through the tab ‘Import & Export’ and under Import select ‘Survey’. Then the Excel file can be selected, and the surveys are imported into Atlas.ti.

The filled in surveys are added in an Extra Annex together with the explanation of the first round of open coding. So, if a respondent is being mentioned or quoted in the analysis this can be found in the Extra Annex. The respondents are numbered in the same way as in the analysis. Furthermore, the data is being elaborated more precisely per question in the Extra Annex.

#### 4.1.3 Coding

For the coding process, the program Atlas.ti has been used. After importing the data, the program automatically creates codes for each different question. At first, these codes were deleted. Then new codes could be made by using 'Open Coding'. Each question has been coded separately. In order to keep a clear overview of which codes belong to which question, code groups have been made. By doing this, codes will be categorized. When the same question of several respondents was coded, it became clear that respondents can have the same opinion regarding some questions. So, the same code was used for different respondents. This is logical looking at the fact that the goal is to receive more of the same opinion to generalize the output and analysis as much as possible. The process of coding could also be made easier. By using the function 'List Coding' it is possible to select from an already formed code in Atlas.ti. However, when more questions were already done, all these codes were visible in the section 'List Coding' while it is the essence to only choose from the codes that have been used for the same question as the one that still needs to be coded. This could be fixed by going to 'Codes' and then filter on the code group that is currently the question which is being coded. The problem with this is that when a new code has been formed, this code also needs to be connected to the code group in order to select from the 'List coding' for other respondents. The terms that have been used for the coding are based on Table 3.

Concepts	Key factors	Key Codes	Relevant terms
<b>Community of Practice</b>	-Professional Knowledge	- Professional knowledge	Academic, professional, background, belangrijk
	-Institutional Knowledge	- Experience	Work experience, developing, training, in practice
	-Local knowledge	- Weigh up interests	Interests, weighing up, tradeoff, choices
	-Community	- Shared view	Yes, partly, think so
<b>Future in Planning</b>	-Scenario	- Evaluate, possible futures	Flexible, choices, developments, trends, futures, unpredictable, could
	-Utopia	- Long lineage, fulfilling, closure	Term, image, wish, inspiring, dot on horizon
	-Plan	- Goals/conditions, recommendation, wide range	Ambitions, developments, preservations, headlines, steering, broader, integral
	-Spatial conceptualisation	- Policy process, territory	Including, cohesion, aspects, initiatives, collaboration, integrally, broader, choices, weigh up

<b>Strategic Planning</b>	-Orienting goals	- Achieve goals, socio-spatial	Goals, realistic, achievable, integrally, working together, social aspects, living environment
	-Framework of principles	- Framework, policy criteria	Framework, guidelines, choices, direction, interests, initiatives, realism, perspective
	-Inspirational vision	- Interactive processes, imagine futures	Shared, involved, society, participation, complexity, wishes, images, realistic, abstraction,
	-Radical strategic planning	- Steering	Direction, adjustments, transitions, dot on horizon,
<b>Planning culture</b>	-Hybrid planning culture	- Process of change	Changing society, inclusive society, development, result, collaboration, integral, expression
	-Involved actors	- Shared values	Climate change, Smart City, Energy transition, circularity, mobility, digitalising

Table 3. Coding scheme based on the main concepts.

## 4.2 Descriptive elements

To get a clear image of who answered the survey, some standard descriptive questions were asked to the respondents. The **first question** was: “For which municipality/province are you currently working?”. This question functions as a **control** question. By asking this question, it is easier to keep track of which municipality already has responded to the survey.

The **second question** concerns the function that the respondent has in its municipality or province. Because the function of ‘planner’ is not per definition the function that municipalities or provinces have. The name of the function ‘planner’ could be different while it is still the same function, or the function could be (slightly) different from what this research perceives as ‘planner in the professional field’ which at first are being described at municipal or provincial planners. It is mostly important that the respondent is working with future perspectives in the form of ‘visions’ or something similar. They also have to be connected to the Omgevingswet and Omgevingsvisie in the sense that they know that this change is incoming and will lead to changes in the spatial discipline. The second question is formulated as: “What is your current position and precise function/task?”. Asking this question makes it easier to see difference in responses between people with different named functions or really a different function. It could become clear that some planners with a certain function look differently upon future perspectives than others. As there were more answers possible and respondents can execute more functions at a time, the total amount of functions is higher than the total amount of responses (this is 121 for the municipalities and 7 for the provinces).

**Functions of respondents from the municipalities (multiple answers):**

- Policy advisors or policy officers (strategic or senior): 60
- Planners: 16
- Legal planners: 5
- Spatial planning/development: 59
- Urban planners: 6
- Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet: 47

**Functions of respondents from the provinces (multiple answers):**

- Policy advisors or policy officers (strategic or senior): 3
- Spatial planning/development: 2
- Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet: 6

The **third** and last **descriptive question** concerns the background of the planners. Their studies are being asked so that the academic background from the respondents can be derived. In this way it becomes clear if different functions, which are asked in question 2, require different backgrounds and could differ in difficulty. It helps understand if people with these different functions and academic backgrounds have different views regarding future perspectives and regarding a transition in the system in how they must look upon the future. It could be that some studies lay more focus on thinking about future perspectives that could lead to other views. Thus, the third question was formulated as: “What is your academic/professional background – from which uni/study program did you graduate? When (year)?” The academic backgrounds of the respondents have been placed hereunder. First, an overview of the academic level of all the 121 respondents from the municipalities is being presented. After this, the background per function within the responses of the municipalities has been presented. Following the same will be done for the provinces.

**Total amount of respondents Municipalities: (N=121)**

- WO: 50
- HBO: 28
- Master: 18
- Bachelor: 2
- MBO: 1
- Not specified: 22

**Policy Advisors: (N=60)**

- WO: 21
- HBO: 17
- Master: 10
- Bachelor: 1
- Not specified: 11

**Legal planners (N=5)**

- WO: 1
- HBO: 2
- Not specified: 2

**Planners: (N=16)**

- WO: 9
- HBO: 1
- Master: 4
- Not specified: 2

**Spatial Planners: (N=59)**

- WO: 17
- HBO: 18
- Master: 10
- Bachelor: 1
- Not specified: 12

**Urban Planners: (N=6)**

- WO: 5
- HBO: 1

**Omgevingswet: (N=47)**

- WO: 24
- HBO: 17
- Master: 2
- Bachelor: 4

**Total amount of respondent Provinces: (N=7)**

- WO: 5
- Not specified: 2

**Policy advisors or policy officers (strategic or senior): (N=3)**

- WO: 2
- Not specified: 1

**Spatial planning/development: (N=2)**

- WO: 2

**Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet: (N=6)**

- WO: 5
- Not specified: 1

These questions are of descriptive nature and all of them collect data to identify the community of practice. By identifying this and acknowledging the difference between certain criteria within the responses it becomes clear what the community of practice defines and how it differs in between the planning community. This also involves the question if certain kinds of knowledge are necessary.

#### 4.3 Survey questions municipalities

After the coding was done, the collected data needed to be analysed and tested. In total 121 surveys have been filled in by municipalities. From these respondents, 95 are developing an Omgevingsvisie in their current function, which is 78,51%. The analysis will be based on the operationalisation framework which has been made at chapter 2.7 that led to a coding scheme which emerged from the theory. This can be found in Table 10. The data has been divided based on codes from the theory. As these codes lead to the different concepts with their components, the analysis will take place per concept of the theory. First the surveys that have been filled in by the municipalities will be analysed. If respondents are being mentioned or quoted, they will be mentioned by number like 'respondent 1'. The full responses per respondent number can be found back in the Extra Annex, where all the completed surveys are included.

For the analysis of the municipalities, the word count of relevant terms has been used to make clear how important these terms are. This then can be linked back to the key codes and finally to the theory. The words that have been used more often in one response to a question have been left out to make a clear comparison to the amount of responses. Also, the frequencies of the words have only been included of the words that are relevant to the key code to which the data refers. So, maybe a relevant term has been used more frequently to a question, but in that context the word is not relevant to the key code.



#### 4.3.1 Community of practice

The concept of the community of practice will be discussed based on key codes that have been allocated to relevant data. The key codes are professional knowledge, experience, weigh up interests and shared view. Relevant terms are linked to the key codes so that the responses can be analysed based on the relevant terms that have been used. These can be found at Table 10. A more elaborate analysis of the Community of practice can be found in the Extra Annex (pp. 2-3, 31-33).

***Question 4 (N=121, open question): “Do you consider your academic/professional background as essential for executing your current function? More specifically, how important is the role of professional knowledge in your function?”***

In terms of **knowledge** for the community of practice, it has become clear that professional background knowledge is important. The code has been allocated 110 times to the collected data. As a response to the question whether or not **professional knowledge** is important for the function, ‘Belangrijk’ is an often-occurring word to the question with 49 counts referring to professional knowledge out of the 121 answers in total. The word ‘Essentieel’ has been responded 14 times, by for example respondent 81, and refers to background knowledge as being essential for executing the function of the respondents. These terms both implicate that professional background is required. ‘Professionele’ has been named 14 times as a response to professional knowledge as being important, and ‘Academische’ 16 times. This refers to academical knowledge as being important knowledge for planners.

However, **experience** is also a factor that has been identified as important for the function of planners. This key code has been used 36 times to responses of question 4. It refers to **institutional knowledge** in the theory, as this knowledge is gained through experience in a certain function. Herein, the words ‘ervaring’ and ‘werkervaring’ are noticeable with 21 counts that are relevant to experience out of the 121 responses. So, as respondent 3 mentions that “mostly experience is important”, planners see professional knowledge often as important or even essential, but institutional knowledge is also important for the function of planners and gained through experience.

Furthermore, **local knowledge** is important in the sense that **weighing up interests** of the society needs to be done as a planner, and this makes local knowledge relevant for their function. The word ‘Afweging’ and ‘afwegen’ have been counted 9 times, and ‘belangen’ 6 times. Both the words refer to the code of weighing up of interests, that has been used 12 times based on the responses of question 4. This means that weighing up interests has importance and therefore local knowledge is important.

As all the three types of knowledge are important, **professional knowledge** is the most important. A reason could be that this was the main part of the question in the survey and most respondents responded to it as important. Institutional knowledge is also important in the form of experience and local knowledge is the least important. This could be caused by underestimating local knowledge and thinking that it is common-sense (Getimis, 2012).

**Question 15 (N=121, open question): “With respect to the Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues?”**

On the question regarding other spatial planners having the same views towards the Omgevingsvisie as their expressed views in the survey, the code **shared view** has been linked 109 times to the responses. The word ‘ja’ has been mentioned 55 times and ‘wel’ 40 times relevant to a shared view, out of the 121 responses in total. Hence, most of the respondents see their answers to the survey as being shared by others. It is noticeable that words as ‘deels’ and ‘denk’ have been counted 22 times and 13 times referring to the shared view, which means that these respondents are not sure that their opinions will be shared by their colleagues. So, within the community of practice, most of the planners think that their responses are generalizable, while not every respondent is completely sure about this.

#### 4.3.2 Future in planning

The concept of future in planning will be analysed based on key codes from Table 10 that have been allocated to relevant data. These are: evaluate, possible futures, long lineage, fulfilling, closure, goals/conditions, recommendation, wide range, policy process and territory. This has been done based on relevant terms from the data which also can be found at Table 10. The more elaborated results can be found in the Extra Annex (pp. 7-16, 28-29).

**Question 7 (N=121, Open question): “The Omgevingsvisie includes the segment ‘vision’. What should a vision in spatial planning be in your view?”**

In terms of what a vision should be in spatial planning, it is important to include **goals or conditions** in it as the code has been allocated to the data 55 times. This has been formulated by respondents through the words ‘ontwikkelingen’ (15), ‘doelen’ (10) ‘ruimtelijke’ (9), ‘ambities’ (7), ‘keuzes’ (6), ‘waarden’ (5), ‘koers’(5) and ‘gewenste’ (5), which have been mentioned within this code. The term ‘behouden’ has been mentioned 6 times out of the 121 respondents, which refers to the preservation of spatial relevant matters. These are the **conditions** that will be included in a vision that protect the preservations. So, the conditions are less underlined as the goals or developments that should be included in spatial plans.

A vision should also be a **recommendation** in the form of not being a fixed goal, but more steering and on headlines. The key code has been used 46 times, in which ‘richting’ (22), ‘hoofddlijnen’ (9) and ‘gewenste’ (9) are important words that have been derived from the answers to question 7. This implies that there is no specific commitment to a vision, which makes it a recommendation as respondents say that it is steering. Noticeable is ‘moet’, which has been responded 15 times out of the 121 responses, referring to the key code recommendation as this implies an obligation. However, the Omgevingsvisie is a document that must be made by every municipality. It could also mean that a vision must be steering or must put the desires in the vision. In terms of **closure**, a vision refers to a certain point in time in the form of a dot on the horizon towards which will be worked. Therefore, this is a more solid point in the future and less of a recommendation.

For the spatial conceptualisation of the future, the **territory** is important and has been coded 43 times to question 7. Respondents say that a vision in spatial planning should include or refer to the physical living environment, as the words 'leefomgeving' and 'fysieke' have been mentioned 18 and 16 times out of the 121 responses. Furthermore, 'integraal' has been mentioned 15 times which means that this physical living environment needs to be integrally included into a vision. The term 'gebied' has been included 11 times in different ways, which once again refers to the territory as an area. This could be understood as the area that the municipality includes.

For the code of **fulfilling**, which has been used to this question 29 times, a vision in spatial planning should give an image of the future where it can be a desired image or just a future image with its spatial ambitions and developments included. The word 'beeld' has been responded 8 times to the relevant key code, but things as 'toekomstbeeld', 'eindbeeld', 'droombeeld', and 'wensbeeld' also have been mentioned. The term 'wens' and derivatives have been mentioned 11 times. This makes the vision open for ideal images but not the main focus.

**Possible futures** refer to the possibility that there are more kinds of futures possible for a vision and has been coded 26 times. Eventually choices must be made regarding the focus on certain developments and trends as there are different possibilities. This is highlighted by statements including 'ontwikkelingen' and 'trends' refer to the developments, as 'kunnen' 'bepaalde' and 'keuzes' refer to the different possibilities.

It is also important that a vision has a **long lineage** as this key code has been used 20 times. This becomes clear by the word 'lange' or derivatives from this, which have been mentioned 16 times within the code. However, the timeframe on which a vision should relate to the future has not become clear as no clear point in time came forward.

***Question 8 (N=121, Open question): "Compared with your view in last question (Q.7), how different or similar is the Omgevingsvisie as a vision?"***

In terms of the key code **territory**, the Omgevingsvisie refers to the physical living environment as a whole. The code has been used 87 times to this question. This implies that this is the difference in territory between a vision in spatial planning and the Omgevingsvisie. As respondent 12 mentions 'van ruimtelijke ordening naar fysieke leefomgeving'. As the territory in the Omgevingsvisie includes the physical living environment, it is broader than just a vision. This can also refer to the **wide range** of activities that the Omgevingsvisie includes, which is a characteristic of a plan within the theory. 'breder' has been mentioned 24 times referring to this wide range, and 'veel' (17) and 'meer' (24) also have been mentioned often out of the 121 responses. So, as the territory is broader, the range of activities could increase on which a vision could have impact. A subject that has been included in the Omgevingsvisie comparing to question 7 is health, where 'gezondheid' has been mentioned 11 times. Respondent 11 says this as "Ook zaken als gezondheid gaan integraal onderdeel uitmaken". This wider range in the physical living environment needs to be addressed integrally where all the aspects of the territory need to be included in the vision. This can be explained by the words 'integraal' and 'aspecten', which have been mentioned 31 times and 15 times. Safety could also be such a new aspect that the Omgevingsvisie includes, where 'veilig' has been mentioned 8 times.

The **policy process** refers to the spatial conceptualisation of a vision and has been coded 65 to question 8. When it was asked what the Omgevingsvisie is compared to a vision, it becomes clear that this is comparable. Again, the differences lay in the physical living environment, where the policy process is more focussed on including all the aspects of the physical living environment and connect them. With this, planners see the impact of a certain development on more or all aspects at a time. Different policy areas will be intertwined with each other. Respondent 16 describes this as that he hopes to have more cohesion between sectoral visions.

**Question 9 (N=121, Open question): “How do you personally in your professional capacity conceive of ‘the future’? “**

The future for planners in terms of the **policy process** is conceived as that it has become increasingly important that the society comes with initiatives and collaboration with everyone are important factors with this. The key code has been allocated 63 times and is related to the territory in the sense that planners see the future as something in which will be worked more integrally. So, as earlier mentioned that the **territory** is broader, the working way of planners in the future will be more integral and therefore use different policy areas in the policy processes. Certain choices need to be made to realize the drafted future based on this integral consideration. Respondent 89 indicated that the best choices will be made if all interest will be **weighed up** to each other and the choices need to be well substantiated. The word ‘meer’, which has been mentioned 18 relevant times to the code out of the 121 responses in total, implies that the respondents think or want more of certain things in the future. This has often been related to a more integral or inclusive way of working.

The key code ‘possible futures’ has been used 44 times for this question. For the **possible futures** in terms of the respondents view of the future, planners say that they want to be prepared for new developments. In order to do this, choices need to be made and many options for the future are possible. The future is also unpredictable, and this has also related to the Corona disease which makes the future even more unpredictable. This leads to a need for resilience of the municipality to certain trends and developments that are hard to predict. The term ‘toekomst’ has been named 26 times within the key code and the term ‘ontwikkelingen’ 11 times out of 121 responses. It therefore seems that planners want to be prepared for the future while the future is uncertain. So, thinking about the future and keeping certain developments in mind will help to be prepared for the future.

For the conceived future of planners, **evaluate** and **recommendation** are related to each other. As respondent 12 says: “perspectief van ca 5 jaar en continu monitoren en bijstellen”, there needs to be a perspective for the next 5 years that constantly needs to be evaluated by monitoring and adjustments. The key code ‘recommendation’ has been linked 28 times to this question. Planners indicate that they see the future as something that needs to be worked with in a flexible way and needs to be steered towards. The words ‘sturen’ and ‘sturing’ together have been mentioned 10 times relevant to this code. As the future is uncertain and unpredictable, it is better to give a direction of the future, and this can be adjusted in the meantime as it is flexible. This makes it an evaluation of the recommended direction of the future and then can be changed if the pre-conceived future has changed in a certain way.

**Question 13 (N=121, Multiple choice question): “Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business (Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario’s, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical models, Delphi rounds, Workshops and others)?”**

Following, the **foresight methods** that planners use have been identified. The answers have been processed into a table and an overview is visible in figure 3. Planners very often make use of workshops and work with scenario’s, which are present in 88% and 84% of the responses. These percentages are based on the 121 respondents, so 88% of the 121 respondents make use of these foresight methods. Standard trends and statistical analysis are also frequently used methods. In the ‘anders, namelijk’ section, some do not use any methods in their day to day business. Other use a dialogue or participation together with inhabitants, entrepreneurs, and each other. The question is if a dialogue is a real foresight method. It can be seen more as a characteristic in how to execute foresight methods or exercises, as Guell & Lopez (2016) mention that incorporating local stakeholders’ involvement in foresight exercises may improve the understanding of cities’ complex participatory processes.

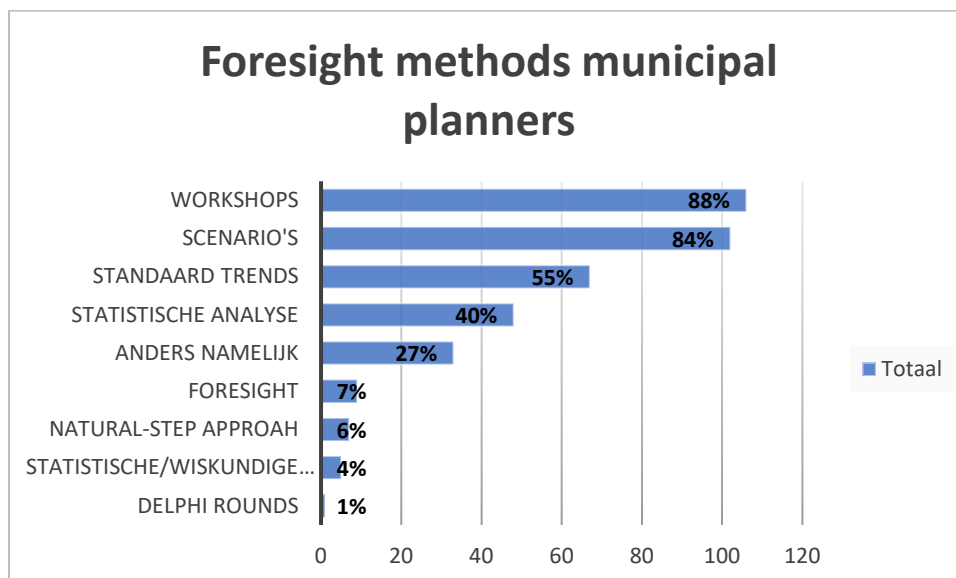


Figure 3. Foresight methods used by municipal planners (N=121).

#### 4.3.3 Strategic planning

The concept of strategic planning has been based on key codes that have come forward from the theory. These are: achieve goals, socio-spatial, framework, policy criteria, interactive processes, imagine futures and steering. These codes have been allocated to the relevant data from the survey and linked to relevant terms which can be found in Table 10. The elaborated analysis can be found in the Extra Annex (pp. 4-6, 16-24).

**Question 6 (N=121, Open question): “According to your experience (in case you work with it), what is the actual function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?” OR “According to your expectations (in case it is still coming), what will the actual function be of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?”**

In terms of expectations or experience with the making of the Omgevingsvisie, the function according to planners in terms of the **socio-spatial** factor is that it approaches the physical living environment. The code has been allocated 79 times to the data. Herein, all the policy fields are being handled integrally and spatial developments are being based on this. The word ‘integraal’ or derivatives from this have been mentioned 26 times within this code, out of the 121 responses. The making of this Omgevingsvisie results into plans and is more specifically the basis and translator of regulations in an Omgevingsplan that is more concrete.

For the **policy criteria**, a key code that has been used 62 times, the expectations or experience with the Omgevingsvisie is that it gives spatial policy for the municipality on the physical living environment. Within this, new developments will be described and recorded for the municipality. These developments are certain choices that have been made and need to be tested based on the vision whether it is desired. It gives direction towards new developments where the vision is a **framework** for these developments. This code has been allocated 45 times to this question. The word ‘kader’ has been mentioned in different form 39 times relevant to this key code, which refers to the vision as providing a framework. The vision takes partial interests into account by combining several different themes. It provides direction as the impact of new developments can be placed next to all the separate themes. There is also space left for initiatives that can be tested based on the themes that have been included in the vision. This testing based on the Omgevingsvisie implies that it is a framework. It provides guidelines for the several themes on which new developments could have impact and translates the decisions, choices, and the municipal way of thinking into the vision that creates the framework. This makes the Omgevingsvisie a **steering document** as it not directly records new developments. This key code has been linked 32 times to the responses.

For the respondents that are making an Omgevingsvisie in their current function and for those who are not, the expectations could be different than the experience as some respondents have not been working with it. From the 121 respondents, 96 have experience with the making of an Omgevingsvisie, and 26 do not. Because of this, the differences in the answers between both have been analysed. As there is a big difference in these numbers, the absolute word count of terms has not been used but they are being compared relatively in percentages. This percentage is out of the total amount of words that have been used. The word integral has been mentioned 8 times out of the 26 responses, which is relatively 0,95% of the total amount of words, while people with experience with the making of an Omgevingsvisie mentioned ‘integraal’ or derivatives from this 25 times, which is 0,75%. This is the same for ‘beleid’, which means policy, as this word has been mentioned more often by respondents who are not making an Omgevingsvisie (yet). The difference is a relative count of 1,30% compared to 1,08%. Furthermore, the word ‘ontwikkeling’ has been mentioned relatively 0,96% times by the experienced planners, where the ones with expectations mention this only in 0,47% of the times. This could mean that planners expect that the Omgevingsvisie is more integral and the focus is more on policy, while in experience more attention is being paid to certain developments in the Omgevingsvisie.

**Question 10 (N=121, Open question): “How does the Omgevingsvisie stand in comparison to earlier methods for thinking about the future?”**

The key code ‘socio-spatial’ has been allocated 71 times to question 10. By comparing the Omgevingsvisie with earlier methods, on the **socio-spatial** level the Omgevingsvisie has a more integral working way compared to for example the Structuurvisie, which is the current vision that municipalities use. Integral means working together with the society and other governments, therefore also working integral from different disciplines and together with officials, college, and council. The word ‘integraal’ has been mentioned in different forms 45 times relevant to this key code out of the 121 responses in total and refers to the integral working way of the Omgevingsvisie. Social aspects will be better implemented in the physical living environment and health is an important factor as social domain. The effects on all the disciplines are being included. The word ‘niet’ has been mentioned 14 times within the key code and refers to the statement that the Omgevingsvisie is not that different compared to earlier methods.

The Omgevingsvisie is a more **interactive process** compared to earlier visions in the way that the way of thinking is more together with the society instead of letting the society react. The code has been linked 25 times to the data. The term ‘meer’ (16) within this code refers to this interactive process as it indicates a difference compared to earlier methods. There will be offered more space to participation, outside knowledge and the complexity of the questions nowadays. With this, the Omgevingsvisie leaves spaces for initiatives from the society as inhabitants, entrepreneurs, and partners.

Compared to earlier ways for thinking about the future, the Omgevingsvisie has a less **steering** character as it is more dynamic and in consequence adaptable and actualisable. This code has been labelled 11 times to question 10. As the future is constantly changing and unpredictable, the Omgevingsvisie needs to be flexible to adapt to these changes. As it not directly records new developments, a vision has a steering character as there is no established policy that needs to be followed. New developments will be weighed up to the **framework** but as the future changes this framework can change and weigh up developments differently.

**Question 11 (N=121, Open question): “In how far do you think that the making of a vision for the future is useful and thus can be realistic? More specifically asked, does a vision need to be ‘realistic’ in the sense of very specific, in the sense of achievable, in the sense of being shared by each and every one?”**

In terms of the usability of a vision for the future, the **interactive process** comes forward. This key code has been used 75 times. The vision needs to be shared by as many that are involved as possible, but it is impossible to be shared by everyone. An important factor is that all the stakeholders need to be informed and involved as much as possible. Because of this, the vision is easier being shared by these actors. It is also important that the reasons for certain (spatial) choices of the municipality for developments are being substantiated as this makes it easier to accept for the stakeholders of a development that are not sharing the same view. It is therefore important that an open attitude must be taken from the municipality towards the society.

A vision is also usable for specifying certain **goals** and this key code has been allocated 71 times to the relevant data of the question. For the point of realism, many respondents say that a vision needs to be realistic, as this has been mentioned 34 times within this key code to this question, out of the 121 respondents in total. However, as respondent 16 says: “Een goede visie is realistisch genoeg om houvast te bieden voor ontwikkeling en spannend genoeg om wel uit te dagen tot verandering”, a vision needs to be realistic enough to give handhold for developments but also needs to be exciting enough to challenge change. Making it not too realistic leaves more space for unpredictable futures or for out of the box ideas. By leaving some space, it can grasp by going for the ideal situation and be challenging. The goals need to be achievable in the way that it explains why certain spatial developments can go through or not. It is not possible to get a full support base for a vision, but it may be unachievable in the way that it is challenging and offers a pretty perspective. It may strive for higher goals than was thought possible, but it may not lead to unreal planning.

As the vision does not necessarily has to be achievable and realistic, it leaves space for idealistic situations or out of the box ideas. Hence, the vision is usable for **imaging futures** as it may include wishes or images that afterwards have not been realistic. This key code has been linked 49 times to question 11. As the vision does not has to be worked out in concrete terms, it makes it more of a guideline for the future. Hereby, the abstraction level is important and results into a more **steering** character of a vision. The vision determines the direction that a municipality wants to go and translates their own identity into the Omgevingsvisie, resulting in a **framework** that weighs up the realisation of certain developments. These developments will be drawn up more concretely in the Omgevingsplan and makes the vision dynamic and open for adjustments.

In terms of radical strategic planning, the Omgevingsvisie is **steering** and gives direction to the municipality. This key code has been labelled 42 times to the question. As already said, by putting the ambitions in the Omgevingsvisie in the form of a **framework**, it leaves space for the new developments to come which will be weighed up in order to realize these developments or not. This means that the Omgevingsvisie steers towards certain developments that meet the conditions of the ambitions and therefore the framework that the municipality wants to work with. It can also be a dot on the horizon as the municipality records their headlines on frameworks. The new developments are the steering way to achieve this dot on the horizon.

Within the formulation of a vision, certain choices need to be made in terms of the **policy criteria**. This code has been allocated 18 times to question 11. As a vision needs to balance between feasibility and being an attractive perspective, choices need to be made to realize the drafted ambitions according to respondent 17. The government should not want to do things alone and a good vision is the base for the Omgevingsplan, in which the Omgevingsvisie needs to be concrete enough. Respondent 39 indicates the following: “er sprake moet blijven van een goede ruimtelijke ordening en daarbij belangen integraal moeten worden afgewogen”. He says that there needs to be a good spatial planning whereby interests need to be weighed up integrally. But it is important that a vision has some sort of achievability and realism, where the support must be as large as possible for the involved stakeholders by including them in the process. So, for the policy criteria, a vision should be concrete enough, weigh up interest, and include as many people as possible.



#### 4.3.4 Planning culture

For the planning culture, the key factors 'hybrid planning culture' and 'involved actors' were the most important. Based on these concepts, the codes 'process of change' and 'shared values' have been given to the data that is relevant for the planning culture. More elaborate findings can be found in the Extra Annex (pp. 24-28, 29-31).

**Question 12 (N=121, Open question): "In the field of spatial planning, a number of ideas or 'future stories' were quite influential over recent years, most notably the SMART city idea. Which 'future stories' do you personally encounter in your professional field (including the SMART city)?"**

The key code 'shared values' has been allocated 176 times to this question. The future stories (like for example Smart City) that the respondents came across have been identified and so an overview of the most frequent and daily used stories have been identified that planners use. A part of the respondents does not encounter or work with such stories that depict the future. The term 'niet' has been mentioned 25 times within this relevant key code, which refers to the respondents not encountering these stories. Interesting is that respondent number 2 mentions that these are societal influences instead of just stories. For Smart City itself, 22 respondents come across this story out of the 121 in total, but this could be influenced as the question itself mentions this as an example. It is interesting that respondents think that these ideas are offering a lot of perspective for the future. But there must be kept in mind that the citizens are often more realistic and down to earth according to respondent 27, and that is why the Smart City concept needs to be further developed into concrete plans or initiatives, as respondents 24 and 43 mention. Climate adaption is also a future story that has been present just like sustainability. Within these two particular stories, there are several variations, as circularity, energy transition, smart mobility, and sustainable agriculture. Climate change is an often-returning future story and much attention has been paid to it as the word 'klimaat' has been mentioned 21 times within this code out of the 121 responses. This makes it an important factor in the planning culture. Sustainable agriculture is a story that is more occurring in rural municipalities.

Furthermore, these future stories are important in the way that they could imply a **process of change**. This key code has been linked 17 times to this question and mostly refers to a changing society that leads to these future stories. Just as the inclusive society where the role of the society changes, governments also need to change. The function of the government is more to facilitate, the human being becomes a more central factor and stories about the increasingly stronger society that undertake and arrange themselves are increasingly present according to respondents 74, 85 and 105. Some of the respondents do not work with such future stories. With this, it is noticeable that rural municipalities may use these futures stories less as they have a less determining role for the future.

**Question 14 (N=121, Open question): "In your view, will the new Omgevingswet achieve changes in planning culture, as it aims to?"**

The question of the planning culture changes because of the Omgevingswet, leads to the **process of change**. This code has been used 98 times to this question, and it is notable that the respondents see change of planning culture only if everyone goes along with the change. The steering role from the province and national government needs to diminish. The politics should also go along with the change in terms of better collaboration and usage of the available instruments. Another interesting point is that a development only can be realized if the environment will be informed. Others say that the planning culture will not change as a result of the Omgevingswet or that the Omgevingswet is the

expression of changes in planning culture. It only provides instruments to handle the spatial planning differently, where facilitating developments from bottom-up is an essential characteristic. Besides, an integral approach is also important for the planning culture. It will need some time to integrate this change in way of thinking. With this, it is important to keep in mind that by offering an abstract and flexible vision, this could endanger the clarity and legal certainty towards the society. This integral approach could lead to faster and qualitative better plans or solutions. Hereby, it is the intention to have less rules and leave more to the process of new initiatives. The initiators need to be trusted and collaboration needs to be encouraged by the governmental body. So, participation of the society is an important factor where the society gets more space for bottom-up initiatives, together with openness to the stakeholders on which an initiative could have impact. Furthermore, it is notable that municipalities want to have a 'yes, unless' attitude, which means that new developments will be embraced by assuming that an initiative or development can be realized if it meets certain requirements. A negative effect is that if you want to include all the interest of involved ones, it makes the process more complex instead of easy.

#### 4.4 Survey questions Provinces

The data that has been collected from the provinces will be analysed in the same way as for the municipalities. This will be based on the operationalisation and the coding scheme that followed from this operationalisation, which is Table 10. The same key codes and relevant terms have been used for this analysis. For the provinces, 7 people have filled in the survey of whom 5 are developing an Omgevingsvisie in their current function, which is 71,43% of the total amount of provinces in the Netherlands. The word count has not been used for this analysis, as there were only 7 unique responses. The full answers of the respondents can be found in the Extra Annex, where all the answers of the respondents have been placed. These are numbered in the same way as in the analysis. A more elaborate analysis of the findings of the provinces can be found in the Extra Annex (pp. 34-42).

##### 4.4.1 Community of practice

***Question 4 (N=7, open question): "Do you consider your academic/professional background as essential for executing your current function? More specifically, how important is the role of professional knowledge in your function?"***

**Professional knowledge** has been allocated as key code to this question 6 times and is important in the form of having knowledge on an academic level and how development processes work. Also, the study background has added value and professional knowledge is important for knowing how spatial policy works. Furthermore, **experience** is just as important in the form of processes and collaboration in practice and has been coded 3 times. At last, substantive knowledge and skills that you learn are necessary.

**Question 15 (N=7, open question): “With respect to the Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues?”**

In terms of a **shared view**, which has been labelled 7 times to question 15, most of the views that planners have expressed are being shared by others. One respondent mentions that strategists have high expectations from the renewal of the Omgevingswet, but at the executive side of spatial planning there is more scepticism. There is more steering towards another way of working within the provincial organisation that could get planners on the same line. Two provincial planners have no idea if their view is being shared.

#### 4.4.2 Future in planning

**Question 7 (N=7, Open question): “The Omgevingsvisie includes the segment ‘vision’. What should a vision in spatial planning be in your view?”**

The key code ‘**policy process**’ has been coded 5 times to this question. In terms of this code, a vision in spatial planning should include ambitions and development **goals** on headlines but needs to take the spatial qualities of the area into account. These qualities then need to be combined with big challenges. Different policy themes need to be connected where the look is broader than only spatial planning and clear choices need to be made in the process. Furthermore, dynamics needs to be a part of the vision where flexibility needs to be taken into account and there is space for adjustments. This is a constant **evaluation** that takes place as the future changes constantly and is uncertain. The code ‘evaluation’ has been labelled 2 times.

A vision in spatial planning should include **possible futures**, which has been used as key code 2 times to this question, in the way that it contains several different scenario’s together with an inspiring perspective. It should also indicate which values are important and what they want to improve. Therefore, is also closely connected to the **goals/conditions** as it indicates what they think that is currently valuable, they want to preserve it and protect them by including conditions in the vision. This key code has been used 2 times for question 7. This makes it a description of both the current situation and a desired future situation. The goals can be written up as ambitions, development goals or having a clear overview of the challenges.

**Question 8 (N=7, Open question): “Compared with your view in last question (Q.7), how different or similar is the Omgevingsvisie as a vision?”**

Comparing with earlier visions, the Omgevingsvisie has a **wider range** of activities that it relates to, where several sectoral visions have been combined and therefore is an integration process. This key code has been connected 3 times to the relevant data of question 8. It also relates to non-spatial qualities and goals and focusses more on the physical living environment. The difference itself is not that big, as space has already been handled integrally according to a respondent.

Furthermore, in terms of **goals/conditions**, which has been coded 2 times, is that clear challenges in an area will be included that will result in a real interpretation of these challenges instead of occasional thinking. For this, it is important that the Omgevingsvisie has a certain self-bonding character so that the society and fellow governments can trust on the execution of. But it is also impossible to make all choices beforehand and accordingly full integrality is difficult to accomplish. Also, the vision has a **long lineage** as it needs to be effective on the long term. This code has been allocated 2 times to the question. The Omgevingsvisie also needs to be fulfilling as it needs to be

**inspiring** for other parties to work with, and this code has been used 2 times. Therefore, it does not need to include an end image, as actualities make such visions obsolete. An Omgevingsvisie needs to give direction and steer. This can be done by offering handhold and leave enough space in order to make a vision a **recommendation** towards an open future. This key code has been connected 2 times to the question.

**Question 9 (N=7, Open question): “How do you personally in your professional capacity conceive of ‘the future’?”**

The key codes ‘policy process’ and ‘goals/conditions’ have been allocated 4 and 2 times to question 9. The planners conceive the future in terms of the **policy process** as that it needs to steer in **goals** and ambitions and leave enough space in how you want to fill this in. With this it is also important to know what you want to preserve and where is space for development. So, new insights can be used to find solutions and adjust the pace of developments to the actualities and the availability or resources and political support base. With this, interests need to be weighed up and possibly combined as space is scarce. The government can help to support weak interest, as respondent 6 mentions. At last, a joint approach of challenges is needed for the several different themes. By leaving space, the future can be constantly **evaluated**, and the steering direction can be adjusted. This code has been used 2 times. Being open to an uncertain future and constantly changing factors creates a governmental body that is prepared in the best way for the future.

**Question 13 (N=7, Multiple choice question): “Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business (Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario’s, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical models, Delphi rounds, Workshops and others)?”**

In terms of **foresight methods**, provincial planners mostly use workshops, just as scenarios. Standard trends are also an often-used method. The methods that have not been listed but were mentioned by respondents are strategic environmental management and qualitative research.

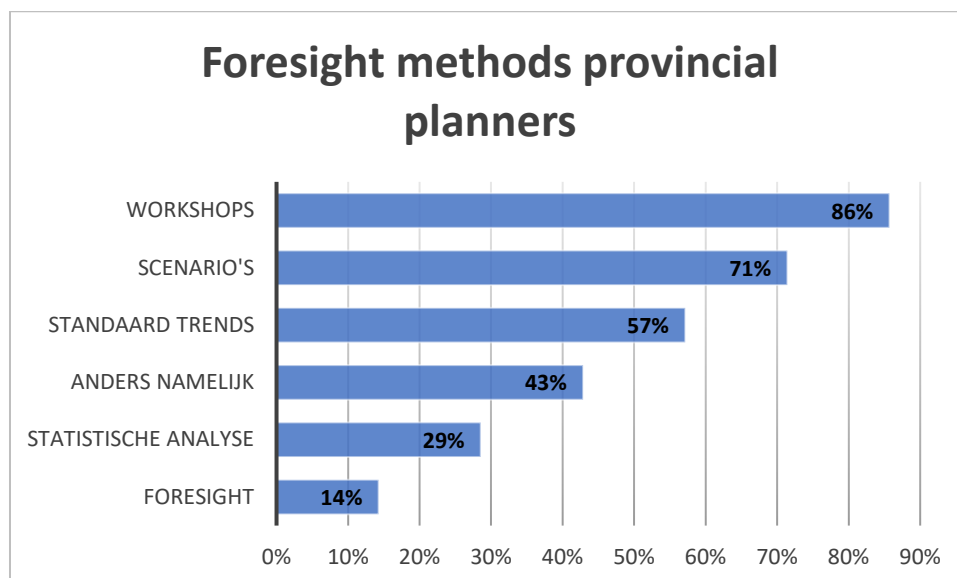


Figure 4. Foresight methods used by provincial planners (N=7).

#### 4.4.3 Strategic planning

**Question 6 (N=7, Open question):** *“According to your experience (in case you work with it), what is the actual function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?” OR “According to your expectations (in case it is still coming), what will the actual function be of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?”*

For the expectations or experience with the making of the Omgevingsvisie, one of the functions in terms of **policy criteria** is to be the guideline of the provincial spatial policy. This key code has been used 5 times for this question. It also needs to be an integration framework. By connecting the challenges that a province faces in the physical living environment into the Omgevingsvisie, it creates this integral framework, where there is left space for further elaboration. The impact on the living environment is dependent on the abstraction level of the Omgevingsvisie. Therefore, another function is to indicate a **framework**.

As the Omgevingsvisie can be seen as a guideline, it has a **steering** function towards the future and has been linked 4 times to this question as key code. With this, it is a working vision on both the short and long term as steering adjustments have an impact on the short term while challenges or transitions are present on the long term. It could include a dot on the horizon towards which will be steered towards.

For the **social-spatial** factor, which has been allocated 3 times to this question, the Omgevingsvisie is an integral view on the qualities and development goals of an area together with a strategic long-term image for the physical living environment. Within this the broader view is new, but this could lead to disappearance of elements from older forms as connecting the different themes leads to keeping each theme more concise according to respondent 2. The Omgevingsvisie is determining for the design of the physical living environment.

For the respondents that are making an Omgevingsvisie in their current function and for those who are not, the expectations could be different than the experience as some respondents have not been working with it. From the 7 respondents of the provinces, 5 have experience with the making of an Omgevingsvisie, and 2 do not. The planners that have experience with making an Omgevingsvisie lay more focus the headlines with the vision as a framework and the steering character, while the planners that have expectations of the function of the Omgevingsvisie see expect an integral approach and see it as a broader vision.

**Question 10 (N=7, Open question):** *“How does the Omgevingsvisie stand in comparison to earlier methods for thinking about the future?”*

Compared to earlier methods, on the **socio-spatial** domain, there is a transition ongoing towards adaptive planning. This has been used as key code 4 times to this question. It also distinguishes itself from earlier visions by including more social economical subjects into the integral considerations and leaving more space for developments. Hereby, more aspects and interest are being combined. The province itself does have more experience with working integrally compared to municipalities. For the **policy criteria**, societal challenges are being more interrelated to each other with more coherence by combining more aspects and interests. With this, by working on one theme the impact on other themes will be considered. Social impact is a new important element hereby. The code ‘policy criteria’ has been used 3 times to the relevant data of this question.

**Question 11 (N=7, Open question):** *“In how far do you think that the making of a vision for the future is useful and thus can be realistic? More specifically asked, does a vision need to be ‘realistic’ in the sense of very specific, in the sense of achievable, in the sense of being shared by each and every one?”*

In terms of working with a vision for the future, the usability, realism, and achievability are important factors. A vision needs to have a certain support base as it is an **interactive process**, but it cannot be shared by everyone. This code has been linked 4 times to relevant data of this question. The interactive process becomes increasingly important as including other parties is a characteristic of the Omgevingsvisie according to respondents 5 and 6. At the same time, this is an invitation for other parties to participate in realising the vision.

By **imaging futures**, a vision may not directly be realistic, but the steps in between need to be as it can be adjusted. This key code has been used 3 times. But to realize long term **goals** and ambitions, these need to be connected with the short-term ambitions and the included adjustments. The key code ‘achieve goals’ has been allocated 2 times to question 11. Furthermore, it must be usable for the future as it otherwise makes no sense to strive a made vision.

#### 4.4.4 Planning culture

**Question 12 (N=7, Open question):** *“In the field of spatial planning, a number of ideas or ‘future stories’ were quite influential over recent years, most notably the SMART city idea. Which ‘future stories’ do you personally encounter in your professional field (including the SMART city)?”*

For the planning culture, the code ‘**shared values**’ has been allocated 15 times to relevant data of question 12. In terms of future stories that are being shared by provincial planners are mostly related to the environment in the form of climate change, energy transition, and circular (economy). For the Smart City, it is more seen as a concept towards which everybody works and from which elements can be used for a vision. One respondent mentions that he or she has only come across the concept of Smart City in a spatial planning magazine, but in practice is not an often-occurring subject. However, the future story can be used indirectly by comparing the province with other regions across the world that had a certain influence. Digitalising is also a striking point, which has been accelerated because of the Corona crisis by for example working from home. At last, a change in mobility is also a present story where smart mobility could be linked to.

**Question 14 (N=7, Open question):** *“In your view, will the new Omgevingswet achieve changes in planning culture, as it aims to?”*

The changes in planning culture as a result of the Omgevingswet refers to a **process of change**. This key code has been used 9 times for this question. Respondent 2 and 3 mention that culture change will not be the result of making other laws as it is more an echo of an ongoing development in society. The instruments of the Omgevingswet need to assist in operating in a changing planning culture. But according to respondent 2, there are tendencies towards more bottom-up and policymaking together with stakeholders. With this comes more collaboration across domains and flexibility. A collaboration with stakeholders and also consultation is important to understand what is important and what to protect. The result is that interests and developments can be combined and give an overview of a more integral working way.

#### 4.5 Comparing Municipalities with Provinces

In this paragraph, the results from the municipality will be compared with the results of the province.

For the community of practice, both professional knowledge with the academical thinking and experience in the form of institutional knowledge came forward as important. For the province, local knowledge has not been mentioned as this came forward in the form of weighing up interest at the municipalities. For the shared views, the answers were comparable.

The future in planning is comparable for both the governmental levels. They both see the future as unpredictable where flexibility is needed. Including goals and ambitions is important. The province includes that the Omgevingsvisie needs a self-bonding character in order to increase the trust on the execution of it. However, it is impossible to make all choices beforehand which makes the integral approach more difficult. From the province, one respondent mentions that space is already being handled integrally.

For the foresight methods, a difference could become clear as a result of only 7 responses from the provinces which are not very representative. However, both use workshops and scenarios the most and thereafter standard trends. For the municipalities, dialogues, and participation with the society and each other are a method that has been used.

The results for strategic planning are comparable for the provinces and municipalities. Only, the vision is more related to the short and long term for the provinces, and this relates to the vision being flexible and constantly being adjusted. These adjustments influence the short term while the vision itself relates to the long term.

The future stories that municipalities also refer to a changing society that lead to the future stories which affect the governmental bodies. The human being becomes a central factor in the Omgevingsvisie. This comes forward with provinces at the change of culture that is caused by the Omgevingswet, where is being stated that the Omgevingswet is the echo of an ongoing development in society and the instruments assist in operating in a changing planning culture. Also, rural municipalities use the future stories less and focus more on for example sustainable agriculture. a change in planning culture only will come if everyone goes along with the change. The steering role of the province and national government therefore needs to decrease. Informing everyone of a certain development comes more clearly forward at municipalities, where collaboration and consultation of stakeholders are more present with the provinces.

#### 4.6 Differences based on functions

Now, the differences in answers between the different functions of municipal and provincial planners will be analysed. The functions have been categorised into six groups and there are more functions than responses because some respondents execute more functions at once. An overview of the functions of the respondents can be seen by the 4.2 Descriptive elements. As 51 of the respondents that execute the function of policy advisor or policy officer also execute the function of spatial planner, these have been combined with each other and became one function. After this, 18 respondents had both the functions of policy advisor/spatial planner and project manager/initiator Omgevingswet. Hereby the best fitting function has been chosen for each respondent and resulted in two groups: policy advisors/spatial planners with 52 respondents and project managers and initiators with the Omgevingsvisie or Omgevingswet with 46 respondents. A comparison between the two groups will be done per concept and based on a word list that can be created by Atlas.ti. Some



concepts or parts of the concepts have been analysed separately, as they had different relevant responses. The comparison has been based on the total amount of words that have been used for a question or concept. Herein also the non-relevant words, like 'en' and 'de' are included which makes the presence of key words low. The frequencies of some keywords that also came forward in the general analysis will imply differences in results. This will be done by dividing the word count of the key terms by the total amount of words used per question or concept. The functions of the respondents from the provinces have also been included in the 4.2 Descriptive elements, but these have not been analysed separately as the number of respondents is very low. Furthermore, the academic background of the divided functions within the responses of the municipalities on which this comparison will be based have been included. Herein, it is noticeable that the policy advisors/spatial planners include more respondents with a finished master's degree compared to the implementors of the Omgevingswet. But it is not clear if this is a master on HBO-level or on WO-level. Also, maybe some of the respondents who filled in WO as academic background also have a finished master's degree. At last, 8 policy advisors/spatial planners did not specify which academic level in terms of background they have.

#### **Functions of respondents from the municipalities (after correction):**

- Policy advisors/ Spatial planners: 52
- Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet: 46

#### **Academic background from the municipalities of the Policy advisors/spatial planners: (N=52)**

Master: 11

WO: 16

HBO: 17

Not specified: 8

#### **Academic background from the municipalities of the implementors of the Omgevingswet: (N=46)**

Master: 2

WO: 24

Bachelor: 4

HBO: 17

##### **4.6.1 Community of practice**

For the community of practice, knowledge and a shared opinion have been analysed. Interesting results are that policy advisors and planners using the word 'belangrijk' more often which could imply that they think that some kind of knowledge is important for executing the function. Implementors of the Omgevingsvisie and Omgevingswet place more focus on experience, just like the academic background. In terms of a shared opinion, implementors of the Omgevingsvisie or Omgevingswet are less convinced that their opinion is being shared by others. This because they use the word 'deels', which means that their expressed views are being shared partly, relatively more and the word 'ja' less.



<b>Knowledge</b>	Policy advisors + spatial planners (%)	Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)
Belangrijk	2,01	1,79
Essentieel	0,79	0,95
Ervaring/praktijk	0,72	1,37
Academisch	0,57	1,16
Total words (Q. 4)	1395	949

Table 4. Relative wordcount for knowledge per different function.

<b>Shared opinion</b>	Policy advisors + spatial planners (%)	Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)
Ja	4,08	3,36
Niet	2,04	1,87
Denk	1,68	1,53
Deels	1,87	4,10
Total words (Q. 15)	589	536

Table 5. Relative wordcount for a shared opinion per different function.

#### 4.6.2 Future in planning

For the future in planning, implementors of the Omgevingswet or Omgevingsvisie put relatively more focus on developments and choices that need to be made in a vision for the future, while they pay less attention to the steering character and the broadness of the Omgevingsvisie. Policy advisors and spatial planners are relatively more focussed on what the Omgevingsvisie has more compared to what a vision in spatial planning should include and compared to how they perceive the future.

<b>Future in planning</b>	Policy advisors + spatial planners (%)	Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)
Ontwikkeling	0,82	1,10
Richting/sturen	0,79	0,57
Beeld	0,24	0,31
Integraal	0,51	0,62
Breder	0,42	0,29
Meer	0,64	0,49
Keuzes	0,11	0,45
Total amount of words used (Q. 7-9)	4825	4447

Table 6. Wordcount for future in planning per different function.

There can be found differences in foresight methods that planners use. For every function workshops and scenarios are being used the most. But for implementors of the Omgevingswet/Omgevingsvisie, statistical analysis is being used more often compared to policy officers and spatial planners and none of them make use of mathematical models. In the 'Anders namelijk' category, no specific differences have been found.

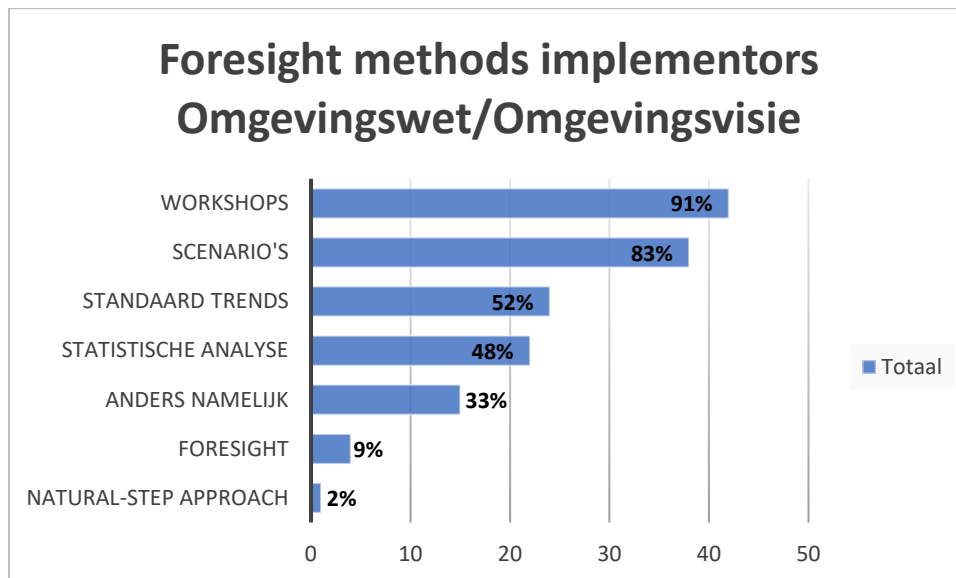


Figure 5. Foresight methods used by initiators and implementors of the Omgevingswet/Omgevingsvisie (N=46).

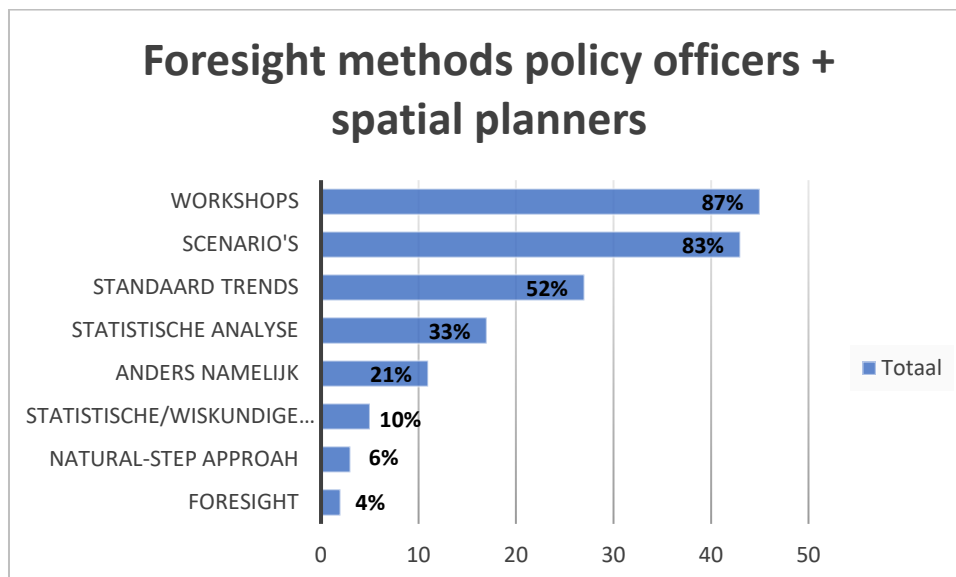


Figure 6. Foresight methods used by policy officers and spatial planners (N=52).

#### 4.6.3 Strategic planning

The differences in the strategic planning are not that big, but for the implementors of the Omgevingsvisie and Omgevingswet, they see the Omgevingsvisie less as a framework and lay less focus on the realism of the vision. The respondents with this function relatively make more use of the word 'niet', which refers to the Omgevingsvisie not being that different compared to earlier methods. Furthermore, policy advisors and spatial planners put a little less focus on the integrality of the Omgevingsvisie as a method and compared to earlier methods.

<b>Strategic planning</b>	<b>Policy advisors + spatial planners (%)</b>	<b>Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)</b>
Kader	0,56	0,43
Integraal	0,56	0,67
Meer	0,72	0,72
Niet	1,04	1,33
Richting/sturen	0,53	0,49
Dynamisch/flexibel/adaptief	0,15	0,13
Afwegen	0,20	0,21
Haalbaar	0,35	0,35
Bruikbaar	0,16	0,20
Realistisch	0,43	0,32
Moet	1,16	1,08
Gedeeld	0,25	0,39
Iedereen	0,38	0,43
Total amount of words (Q.6, 10-11)	6051	5355

Table 6. Wordcount for strategic planning per different function.

#### 4.6.4 Planning culture

The future stories are a part of the concept planning culture. Implementors of the Omgevingsvisie and Omgevingswet are working relatively less with these stories, as they make more use of the words 'niet' and 'geen'. Also, they relatively make more use of the Smart City idea and put less focus on the climate and sustainability. For the changing planning culture, implementors of the Omgevingsvisie or Omgevingswet use the word 'wel' relatively often, just like the word 'meer'. The first word refers to a change in planning culture, and the second implies that some things will be more present or focussed on within the planning culture. So, the planning culture could change or more attention is being paid to certain factors. This is more present at the initiators of the Omgevingswet compared to the policy advisors and spatial planners. Furthermore, the respondents with the function of policy advisor and spatial planner think that the planning culture will be more integral compared to the implementors of the Omgevingsvisie.

<b>Future stories</b>	Policy advisors + spatial planners (%)	Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)
Niet/geen	1,31	2,32
Smart	0,84	1,25
Klimaat	0,92	0,53
Duurzaam	1,08	0,44
Total words (Q.12)	1302	1123

Table 7. Wordcount for future stories per different function.

<b>Planning culture</b>	Policy advisors + spatial planner (%)	Project managers, initiators and implementors Omgevingsvisie/wet (%)
Meer	1,44	2,01
Wel	0,58	1,00
Participatie	0,34	0,31
Integraal	0,77	0,38
Niet/geen	1,64	1,69
Total words (Q.14)	2079	1569

Table 8. Wordcount for planning culture per different function.

#### 4.7 Final table

At last, in this paragraph a final table has been made with central tendencies of the results per question and concept resulting from the analysis. This can be seen in Table 9. The levels of relevance of the results are categorized in green, yellow and red. These refer to important results (green), reasonably relevant (yellow), and the least relevant (red).

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Yellow</b>	<b>Red</b>
<b>Community of Practice</b>	Do you consider your academic/professional background as essential for executing your current function? More specifically, how important is the role of professional knowledge in your function?	Professional knowledge and experience/ institutional knowledge are important.	Local knowledge is a less important but needed.	

	With respect to the Omgevingsvisie, do you think your views expressed here are being shared by your fellow practitioners/colleagues?	Most of the respondents think that their views are being shared by others and generalizable.		
<b>Future in planning</b>	The Omgevingsvisie includes the segment 'vision'. What should a vision in spatial planning be in your view?	A vision should include goals, be a recommendation with no commitments, choices need to be made withing possible futures and the territory should refer integrally to the physical environment.	Including conditions, giving an image of the future, and having a long lineage.	Ideal images are not the focus.
	Compared with your view in last question, how different or similar is the Omgevingsvisie as a vision?	The Omgevingsvisie includes the physical living environment integrally which has a wider range of activities, furthermore it is comparable.	Health is being included. Connecting all different aspects in Omgevingsvisie. It should include self-bonding character	Safety being included in Omgevingsvisie
	How do you personally in your professional capacity conceive of 'the future'?	Initiatives from society and collaboration with everyone. Integral working way where interests need to be weighed up. Possible futures in the sense of an unpredictable future. Resilience to trends and developments is needed.	Future is flexible and needs constant evaluation.	Recommendation towards the future less present as it is constantly being evaluated and unpredictable. Steering towards a future.

	Which of the following methods do you use in your day to day business (Foresight, Natural-step approach, Scenario's, Standard trends, Statistical analyses, Statistical/mathematical models, Delphi rounds, Workshops, and others)?	Scenario's and Workshops being used the most. Hereafter standard trends and statistical analysis.	Dialogue and participation being named as methods.	Some do not use any foresight methods.
<b>Strategic planning</b>	According to your experience (in case you work with it), what is the actual function of an Omgevingsvisie in planning? OR According to your expectations (in case it is still coming), what will the actual function be of an Omgevingsvisie in planning?	Policy fields being handled integrally and being a framework where new developments are being tested on.	Steering document and being a guideline. Planners expect Omgevingsvisie to be more integral and focus on policy.	
	How does the Omgevingsvisie stand in comparison to earlier methods for thinking about the future?	Integral working way, collaboration with society and participation. Interactive process.	Social aspects implemented. Not letting society react. Unpredictable future.	Omgevingsvisie not that different.
	In how far do you think that the making of a vision for the future is useful and thus can be realistic?: More specifically asked, does a vision need to be 'realistic' in the sense of very specific, in the sense of achievable, in the sense of being shared by each and every one?	Needs to be shared by others. Choices need to be substantiated. Realism is need, but also challenge to change. Vision needs to give direction.	Space for out of the box. Translating identity in Omgevingsvisie, resulting in a framework. For the province also include short-term ambitions.	Choices need to be made. Vision cannot be shared by everyone.
<b>Planning culture</b>	In the field of spatial planning, a number of ideas or 'future stories' were quite influential over recent years, most notably the SMART city idea. Which 'future stories' do you personally encounter in your professional field (including the SMART city)?	Smart City needs to be concretized into plans and initiatives. Climate adaption and sustainability also important future stories where climate in general is the guideline.	Some respondents do not encounter these stories. Changing society leads to these future stories. Rural municipalities use less of these stories.	Smart mobility, digitalisation.

	In your view, will the new Omgevingswet achieve changes in planning culture, as it aims to?	Change only if everyone goes along. Omgevingswet is the expression of changes in planning culture and therefore planning culture will not change because of the Omgevingswet.	Yes, unless attitude. Environment needs to be informed. Including all interests leads to more complex process. Integral approach important.	Better collaboration needed.
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Table 9. Final table with tendencies of the results.

## 5. Conclusion

With the upcoming new Omgevingswet as a momentum, the research looked towards future perspectives of spatial planners of municipalities and provinces, which leads to new insights in how they look upon visions and their functionality as instruments in spatial planning. The expressed views have been collected by carrying out a survey.

Regarding the function of future perspectives in **planning literature**, there has come forward that new planning methodologies should support collaborative work which makes urban complexity more approachable. Places become the text and context of new debates about fundamental socio-spatial relations and the construction of a place by spatial planners is important. By involving stakeholders in foresight exercises, planners could improve the understanding of cities complex participatory processes. A future perspective deals with spatial issues, just as being involved in exploring impacts on the municipality or province in terms of economic, social, and technological level.

Certain elements of the current strategic planning have been identified in this research. **Integral working** is an element that is very important in the Omgevingsvisie. Hereby, all the stakeholders need to be included. Also, different sectoral visions are being combined into the Omgevingsvisie where the physical living environment is the playground. By working on the physical living environment, social aspects as health will also be included instead of solely spatial aspects. The effects of a development will be placed next to all the different disciplines. It translates the decisions, choices and the municipal way of thinking into the vision. In this way a framework is created that leaves space for new developments which will be weighed up before realising them. After this, they will be more concretised in an Omgevingsplan. Furthermore, the Omgevingsvisie is a more dynamic and flexible vision because the future is unpredictable. This is a result of the steering character that makes it adaptable and open for adjustments. Implementors of the Omgevingswet and Omgevingsvisie see less change of the Omgevingsvisie relative to earlier methods, compared to spatial planners and policy advisors/officers.

Within this research it was the aim to identify **future horizons** that are being used for the Omgevingsvisie, as well as the look of planners upon vision making as an instrument for spatial planning. We can see that for the future horizons a vision should include goals in the form of certain developments or ambitions, but also preservations. The vision is a recommendation in the form that it has a steering character as it is not a fixed endpoint in the future as the future is uncertain. This makes the Omgevingsvisie flexible and under constant evaluation causing pre-conceived futures that can be adjusted. The vision could include ideal or wish images but that is not the main focus. In terms of the territory, the Omgevingsvisie should refer to the whole physical living environment that needs to be included integrally into a vision. Compared to earlier visions it is broader as subjects as health and safety are included. There are more futures possible in a vision as it is uncertain and choices need to be made, but the governments want to be prepared for new developments and as a result resilience is important. In terms of a timeframe, the Omgevingsvisie has a long lineage but no specific endpoint has come forward. It is also important that the society comes with initiatives and therefore collaboration is needed. The most used foresight methods are workshops and scenarios. Using dialogue and participation together with inhabitants, entrepreneurs and each other is also being used frequently but the question is if this is a method. Implementors of the Omgevingsvisie and Omgevingswet make relatively more use of statistical analysis, compared to spatial planners and policy advisors/officers. Furthermore, spatial planners put the most focus on the broadness of the Omgevingsvisie, while policy advisors do this with the steering function of the vision. Implementors of the Omgevingsvisie relatively see the developments as important.



For the discussion in the planning profession regarding visions, the **future stories** that planners come across are offering a lot of perspective for the future. But in order to be effective, these stories need to be specified into concrete plans or initiatives. Climate change is an important story for the contemporary planners. This story or problem can be tackled in various ways that leads to different sub-stories that are more specific. The idea of Smart City is also being used frequently. Planners see these stories as an outcome of a changing society where the governments adapt to these societal changes and has a more facilitating function for the society.

There is quite a division in thinking if the **planning culture** will change as a result of the Omgevingswet. While some see an increasing collaboration with the society, by keeping everyone informed of new developments or initiatives, others see no change or see the Omgevingswet as the expression of a change in planning culture. The integral working way is also a new way of thinking, where a consideration must be made as an abstract and flexible vision could endanger the clarity and legal certainty towards the society. This is the same with participation: by including all the interest of the involved ones, the process becomes more complex. Informing everyone of a certain development comes more clearly forward at municipalities, where collaboration and consultation of stakeholders are more present with the provinces. Furthermore, a result from the provinces is that the Omgevingsvisie needs a self-bonding character to increase the trust on the execution of it. However, it is impossible to make all choices beforehand which makes the integral approach more difficult. At last, implementors of the Omgevingsvisie and Omgevingswet are more divided towards a change in planning culture than planners in other functions. This could mean that respondents in this function are more polarised in their expressed views. They also work less with future stories and focus less on the environmental stories.

Finally, planning professionals handle future perspectives and see visions as steering documents that are flexible and adaptable for an uncertain future wherein ambitions and preservations need to be included for the physical living environment. The functionality as instrument is that the vision provides a framework for realising new developments where decisions and choices of a governmental body are being translated into this vision, where realizing the developments together with the society has become an important factor together with informing the involved stakeholders.

## 6. Critical reflection

The research needs to be reflected on, to encourage other researchers and research in the future to keep these things into account. For the comparing between province and municipality 7 respondents were compared to 121. This comparison is not very representative, as only 7 responses is a low in order to generalise from this data. For comparing between experience and expectation of the Omgevingsvisie only 26 respondents did not work with the Omgevingsvisie yet, which is also not very representative if the data is being compared to other data.

For the analysis, the frequencies of used words by the respondents have been used. The word counts could be influenced if some respondents have very long compared to very short answers and include the same word more times within their answer. Furthermore, there is no systematic comparison of planning cultures, and the analysis remains at the level of experiences of planners and not of other involved actors in planning processes (Getimis, 2012).

Furthermore, question 2 asks from which municipality or province the respondent works. Additional analysis could have been done based on this, but this was not possible within the timeframe of this research. Regarding this locational information of respondents, it could give certain insights in responses related to location. Some answers could be more present in certain locations. Answers could also be compared to the province in which the municipality is located. Similarities or differences between these could become clear which can lead to a gap in how different levels of institutions think about future perspectives. This can be done the same with the locations of respondents, as this has been asked in question 1. It could become clear if respondents have different opinions based on their location. Also, by asking when they did graduate or finish their study program it becomes clear how much experience in the working field the professionals have after graduation. This could also influence the view upon future perspectives.

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