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Expressing the unprecedented: Creating images of the future for Turku using a feminist utopian approach

Futures Studies
Master's thesis

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The purpose of this study is to illuminate feminist utopianism as method and to test its value for participative urban development. This research answers two questions: (1) What are the images of desirable futures for the City of Turku created a feminist utopian approach? (2) Which values, themes, and worldviews are embedded in these images?

The topic was approached through examining utopias as a multifaceted category of images of the future and inquiring into theories of participation. The study answered the research questions and met its aim through conducting a workshop that combined causal layered analysis with utopian sketching. The workshop participants were residents of the City of Turku who do not work in urban development.

The images produced in the workshop were analysed via causal layered analysis. The findings from this research show that the relationship between economy and ecology, the role of technology, and the constitution of "good citizens" and their roles constituted major themes of the images. The values contained in the images depended on underlying worldviews which informed the choice of image elements. This research provides evidence that feminist utopianism as method fosters participants systemic thinking, empathy, and cross-cultural exchange. Regarding existing urban development strategies for Turku, the study found that many similarities exist between the values and themes addressed in the images and those represented in the City's current strategy.

The main conclusions drawn from this research were that feminist utopianism as method fosters capabilities that support residents as agents of social change, and that the value of this method lies in strengthening collaboration and opening a rare space for value-based exploration and experimentation. The research argues for further participative urban development projects applying a feminist utopian approach addressing other resident groups commonly underrepresented in urban development.

Key words: utopia, feminist utopianism, participation

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1 Introduction

It is generally accepted that humankind has to commit to fundamental and brave changes in its behaviour in all aspects of life in order to respond adequately to the intensifying crises related to climate change (IPCC, 2023, 92; Meadows, Randers & Meadows, 2004, 189-190; Jackson, 2017, 66-83). Nowhere is such a fundamental transformation more urgent than in urban areas which are the home of the majority of people on Earth and responsible for 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions, while struggling also under pressure of a multitude of problems, including the rising costs of living and growing poverty (Camrass, 2022; UN Habitat, 2022, 14). Albeit the clear need for radical change, a controversial image adheres to the expression of radically different and desirable, yet unprecedented images of the future, also called utopias (Tower Sargent, 2010, 4; Polak, 1961b, 20). Believed to be mediated by single powerful individuals, exclusive, rigid, detached from reality and ultimately impossible (Bardzell, 2018), common discourse views utopian images of the future as impractical, if not dangerous, schemes in the quest for identifying alternative positive futures (Bell, 2004, 8). This appears to be even more the case in the light of the confidence we have that citizen participation, and the inclusion of disadvantaged communities are indispensable for bringing about positive futures (see Bell, 2003, 93-95; Arnstein, 2019; UN Habitat, 2022, 169-170). Consequently, it appears that participation on one hand and utopian thinking on the other are incompatible to provide a useful approach to foster citizen participation in urban development.

However, important elements related to utopias and participation remain largely unaddressed. In the case of participation, a discussion about *why* the belief in this concept is so strong and what can reasonably be expected from participation is often bypassed. Additionally, less attention has been given to the epistemological assumptions underlying many participative endeavours, particularly those based on the classic participation framework by Arnstein (2019). These questions are, however, highly relevant to open up alternative approaches to utopian thinking. Although the negative image of utopias persists in public discourse, alternative paradigms have emerged since World War II, but remain less visible despite their potential in participative action. Building up on the conceptualisation of utopias as an attitude by Bloch (1986), Levitas's framework of utopias as method (2013) and the quest of feminist and ecologist communities for unprecedented futures of equality and environmental stability, Bardzell (2018) proposes

a categorical distinction between traditional utopianism and feminist utopianism to demonstrate how the latter can help us to investigate – in consideration of our democratic values – desirable yet thus far unattained futures that lack historic models. Hudson and Rönnblom (2020) conclude that feminist utopianism in the context of participatory urban development practices can provide a safe opportunity for citizen previously excluded from urban development to challenge dominant visions and worldviews by leaving behind limiting boundaries and fear of being ridiculed. Despite a growing interest in feminist utopianism in academic literature over the past decade (Törnroth et al., 2022; Bina, Inch & Pereira, 2020; Hudson & Rönnblom, 2020; Morgan, 2015; Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015), the persisting relative unfamiliarity with feminist utopianism demands for further research on its applicability in real-life contexts.

Consequently, the current research inquires the value and usefulness of feminist utopianism as a method to foster participative urban development in the City of Turku. Turku has been chosen as the focus area for this research because it is the home of the researcher's alma mater and has set itself very ambitious climate and urban development goals (see City of Turku, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). Through conducting qualitative explorative research, the researcher of the current thesis hopes to contribute to the familiarisation with feminist utopianism as an alternative approach to utopias that orients itself along the values of collaboration, participation, and tolerance. In order to accomplish this, the researcher is conducting an adaptation of Törnroth et al.'s (2022) participative utopian sketching workshop methodology, which will give the researcher utopian images of the future of the city of Turku. By providing participants with the mental and physical space to discuss and externalise desirable futures free from creative boundaries, judgement, and other limitations, resulting images of the future allow conclusions about the themes, values, and worldviews participants connect with desirable futures.

The participants of this research are residents of the City of Turku. In this study, the researcher understands residents or citizens of Turku through the concept *of social citizenship* defined by Tritter & McCallum (2006) as the 'relationship between individuals in a population and their local institutions.' This approach makes a clear differentiation between the citizen as legal entity holding a specific citizenship, and the resident-citizen whose residence is defined by his or her relationships with the place. The implication is that, in the context of this research, citizens of Turku describe those people

who have a relationship with the city and its institutions by living in Turku, regardless of their nationality.

The insights produced by the current study are valuable to start and continue an accessible, participative discourse about the future local residents desire and fear, their critiques of the present, and their needs.

This research wants to answer the following research question and sub-question:

1. What are the images of desirable futures for the city of Turku created using a feminist utopian approach?

    a. Which values, themes, and worldviews are embedded in the created images?

The aim of the current research is not to produce rigid utopias proper, or to suggest the creation of such in real life, but to test the applicability of feminist utopianism as a workshop method that provides participants with a safe space to jointly explore, discuss, and express their visions and desires for the future of the City of Turku. This research wants to give room to the voices of those immediately affected by changing urban landscapes but commonly excluded from urban development projects. Through her research findings and the application of an unusual approach, the researcher aims at inspiring future participative projects of a similar kind that are designed to respond to the need for transformative and inclusive change. The images of the future produced by participants are intended to inspire both urban development and the imagination of participants and readers.

In order to establish an understanding and distinction of traditional and feminist utopias, the researcher will first discuss the concept of the image of the future in the context of social change. As participation is a key feature of feminist utopian thinking, the researcher will then proceed to review planning and participation theory about the benefits of participation, as well as conceptualisations of participation and their respective epistemological assumptions. Based on the reviewed material, the researcher discusses what can be feasibly expected from participative approaches. After explaining the methodological approach of the research and describing the adapted workshop framework, the findings will be presented and summarised to give answers to the research questions before being discussed with reference to previous research findings from the

literature review. Lastly, the research closes with ideas for further adaptations of the workshop framework and concluding thoughts about the value of feminist utopianism as method.

This research was supported by the Turku Urban Research Programme.

2 Theoretical Background

2.1 The image of the future

Bell and Mau (1971, 23) define an image of the future as "an expectation about the state of things to come at some future time". They can be images or drawings but may as well take shape as mental images conveyed through written stories, speech, laws, and, Bell suggests (Bell, 2003, 82), even our theories of history. Building on the work of Dunne and Raby (2013), and the Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation and Nieuwe Instituut (2023), the researcher proposes to add design to this list of instruments through which images of the future can be conveyed. Deeply rooted in the political, economic, cultural, and social circumstances of their period, developed, changed, or abandoned, images of the future can be both collectively shared and/or in conflict with other images (Rubin, 2013; Bell & Mau, 1971, 23). Since images of the future can be communicated through various mediums and formats, can be tangible or intangible, their complexity varies. They may exhibit high levels of familiarity to existing circumstances or challenge the present status quo. Likewise, images of the future can portray any future regardless of their level of (imagined or actual) possibility or impossibility, desirability or undesirability. (Bell & Mau, 1971, 23.)

The concept of the image of the future goes back to Polak (1961a) who believed that the image's time orientation toward the *future* is the one decisive characteristic that turns an image into a dynamic force for human development (Polak, 1961a, 38-39). Indispensable for the image of the future to exist, Polak (1961a, 29-30) holds, are the conception of the Other Time, and imagination. The Other Time marks a breach from the present time, in which humans act upon something that lies ahead and consequently act "outside" their own time (Polak, 1961a, 29-30). Imagination comes into play as the perception of an Other Time is in itself not sufficient to produce any images of the future; accordingly, the power of images of the future depends at large on our capability to translate our perceptions into descriptions and metaphors. (Polak, 1961a, 30.)

Bell (2003, 81-82) recognises the study of images of the future as one of the purposes of futures studies, and points out that an inquiry into their origins, elements, and consequences is indispensable for futures research because of their possible influences on human action. Building up on this statement, Rubin (2013) proposes that images of the

future may influence the actions of those who hold them in different ways: people may adapt their behaviour to the anticipated future, acting against it (if the image is an undesirable one), or towards it (if the image is desirable). In cases where people either adapt their behaviour to the future they see coming or actively work towards its realisation, the image of the future becomes one element in the process of turning that image into the present (Bell, 2003, 82). Following Bergmann (1983), Bell (2003, 82) suggests that such real-life consequences deriving from an imagined construct are probable because of the human ability to 'defer gratification' (Bergmann, 1992, 86) which enables people to align present actions with future goals to reach a state that is perceived as more rewarding than the present.

Reinforcing Bergmann's idea of 'deferred gratification', Bell (2003, 85) reminds that research indicates the positive real-life effects of positive images of the future, even if people did not believe in the possibility of them becoming real (Bell 2003 ref. Taylor 1989). However, Bell rejects Taylor's labelling of images of desirable futures as "illusions" since their real impact was measurable (Bell, 2003, 85). The researcher thinks that images of the future, especially positive and desirable ones, are at greater risk of being brushed aside as illusions because believing in the impact of a not-yet-occurred future on the present requires a different understanding of impact in relation to time, as also Bell & Mau assert (1971, 7-10). That the past impacts the present and the future is a commonly accepted viewpoint, but this is not always evident with regard to the impact of the future on the present. The fault lies in the unrealisable ontological demand to know the future as we know our past in order to allow it to be real (Bell & Mau, 1971 ref. Brumbaugh 1966). This demand is built on the false assumption that our knowledge of the past is complete, always truthful, neutral, and based on reliable sources. Present opportunities for change and alternative ways of living make the future real, and images of the future can serve as catalysts of both, enabling their discovery and motivating their adoption. (Bell & Mau, 1971, 8.)

It has been argued that positive images of the future have a positive effect on present and future. However, Polak (1961b, 20, 30) warns that the opposite holds true as well, and negative images of the future may result in negative outcomes for those who hold them. He stresses that cultures in which negative or dystopian images of the future dominate the discourse about the future to the extend at which optimistic images face collective ridicule are cultures in decline (Polak, 1961a, 456). Their disability to picture

a desirable image of where they want to stand as a society in decades ahead, Polak (1961b, 20) asserts, is symptomatic of societies at the brink of disintegration.

To explore the importance of images of the future for social change, Bell and Mau's (1971) model of cybernetic-decisional theory of social change shall be discussed. Figure 1 on the following page shows the model. Bell and Mau (1971, 22) uphold that beliefs about past, present, and cause and effect amalgamate with values into images of the future. Beliefs are defined as "given proposition[s] about any aspect of the universe which [are] accepted as true" (McKinney, 1966, 181). All three groups of beliefs have distinctive implications for the image of the future. First, beliefs about the past influence the individual's assumptions about the probability of a future, thereby setting epistemological boundaries to the range of acceptable futures (Bell & Mau, 1971, 20). Second, beliefs about the present entail 'maps of social reality' (Bell & Mau, 1971, 20) which the individual uses to make sense of their world. Lastly, beliefs about causes and effects entail an individuals' perceptions of the mechanisms on which the world operates (Bell &Mau, 1971, 22), expressed, for example, in statements such as, "In a better world, things would look different, but in the *real* world, it does not work like that." Concurring largely with Bell's and Mau's conceptualisation, Rubin (2013) adds cultural and social knowledge as elements of which images of the future are formed.

The values held by individuals and groups also constitute crucial elements for images of the future as they are strong determents of whether an image is evaluated as desirable or undesirable and can thus be connected to hopes and fears. (Bell & Mau, 1971, 22.)

The next element in Bell's and Mau's theory is the decision-making process. As Rubin (2013) points out, humans rely on self-created models of reality and the future in order to make choices. Bell and Mau (1971, 24) are fairly sure that the image of the future has an impact on the definition of our goals and the means we are willing to use to achieve them. Rubin (2013), too, asserts that images of the future influence the decision-making process by driving individuals' motivation. By drawing on the created image of the future as decision-making support and as a motivator, the individual becomes an agent of social change as her or his theoretical decision is turned into some kind of action (Rubin, 2013; Bell & Mau, 1971, 25). Although remaining inactive is also seen as one form of action because the consequences of inactivity as a performance may impact the future (Bell &

Mau, 1971, 25), Rubin (2013) points out that it is the act of making a choice that has the power to make the future appear less unpredictable, less unknowable.

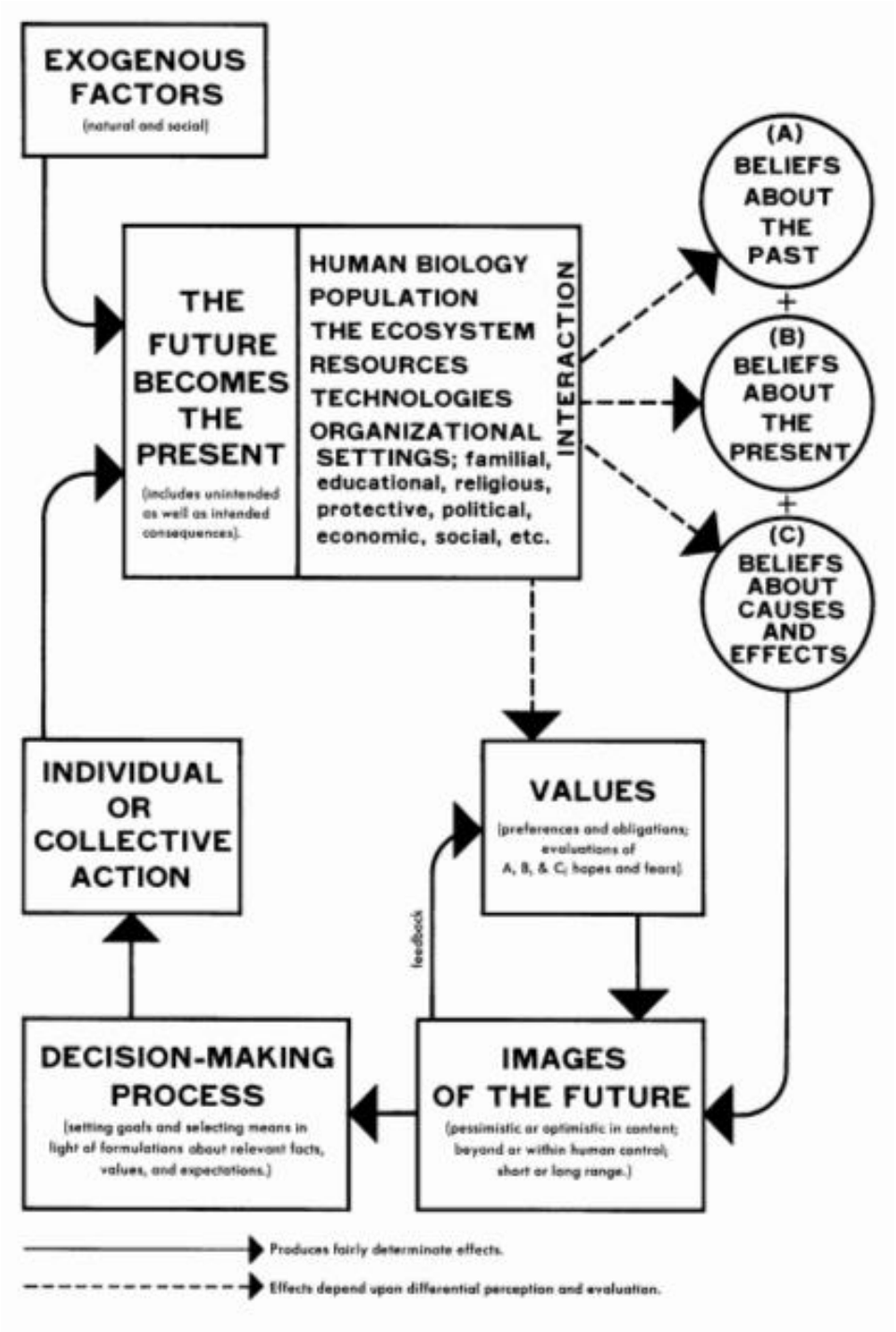

Figure 1 Model of cybernetic-decisional theory of social change (Bell & Mau, 1971)

Naturally, the impact the agent's actions have on the future may vary, not least because the beliefs about the world the agent holds may be incorrect and most certainly are incomplete, leading to ineffective actions and/or unwanted side effects (Bell & Mau,

1971, 25). Other exogenous factors that remain largely outside the agent's sphere of action include natural disasters, or complex socio-political developments (Bell & Mau, 1971, 25). Additionally, whether and to what extend an act has been consciously informed or caused by an image of the future cannot always be told; as Rubin (2013) points out, we may be consciously aware of the effect an image of the future has on our behaviour, but such an effect can also occur on a unconscious level.

The concept of the image of the future has now been discussed and its potential relevance for the process of social change has now been argued for through the model of cybernetic-decisional theory of social change by Bell and Mau (1971). Next, attention is given to utopias, one category of images of the future whose *raison d'être* is the desire for fundamental social change.

2.1.1 Utopian images of the future

Utopian images of the future are, at the most basic level, expressions of futures more desirable than the present. This is the element academic literature about utopianism agrees upon, and it marks the point at which the definitions of utopia diverge. (Polak, 1961a, 437-438; Bell, 2004, 8; Tower Sargent, 2010, 6; Neima, 2022, 7.)

Polak (1961a, 437-438) suggests that a utopia is 'an image of the future, systematically structured and synchronised with the continuous course of history, depicting a totally different, ideal society … [it] implies the optimistic faith that this ideal society is one toward which man can and should purposefully progress in time, as he is free and therefor responsible to determine his own future.' Polak does not question the aspect of unreality, as in unattainability, in relation to utopias and compares them to dream and fantasy, speculating that the difference between dream and utopia is the consistent goal-orientation and structure of the latter in contrast to the disorganised and fragmented character of dreams (Polak, 1961a, 411). Apart from these factors, Polak also discusses the anti-utopia as feature of the classic literary utopias, such as Plato's *Timaeus* and *Critias*, as mean to convince readers of the undeniable superiority of the desirable future compared to the undesirable (Polak, 1961b, 15). In this sense, the researcher hypothesizes that it can be argued that every utopia also conjures up or refers to an anti-utopia and that the inseparability of both may indicate that fear and negative emotions are as important for the image of the wanted as desire and hope. Interesting also is Polak's

connection between utopian thinking, responsibility for the future, and human self-determination.

Bell's (2004, 8) definition of utopia is fourfold: Utopia (I) does not currently exist, (II) is seen as more desirable than the present, (III) criticises the present, and through critiquing it (IV) calls for action to bring a more desirable future about. Bell implicitly assumes that utopia is a place or society; he also questions the usefulness of using utopia as a proposal for future development (Bell, 2004, 8). He further comments that perfection and ideal states of being are inherent features of utopias (Bell, 2004, 8).

Tower Sargent (2010, 6) derives his definition from the etymology of the word *utopia* and holds that a utopia is a good place that does not exist. Whereas Bell implicitly located utopias in space, Tower Sargent (2010, 6) maintains that they have a temporal dimension as well. He refers to utopias also as 'social dreaming' (Tower Sargent, 2010, 5). Tower Sargent (2010, 5), too, asserts that utopias contain some form of critique of the present. However, he follows a more structured and inclusive approach to utopianism than Bell. Utopianism, Tower Sargent (2010, 5) argues, can be divided into three categories: the literary utopia as a genre, utopian practice, and utopian social theory. Utopian practitioners, naturally, do belief in the possibility of their desired future, whereas the word *utopia* in common discourse is used more often to denounce something as preposterous. Consequently, the word *utopia* has diverse meanings depending on the speaker. (Tower Sargent, 2010, 5.)

Historian Neima (2022) conducted research about intentional communities after World War I. She largely concurs with Tower Sargent's understanding of utopianism, defining utopias as social dreaming, and adopting Tower Sargent's categorisation into literary genre, social theory, and practice (Neima, 2022, 7). Neima (2022, 7-8), too, points out that the question of impossibility is answered differently by different actors. Thomas More, the man who coined the word *utopia* and the literary genre with his novel *Utopia* (published in 1516), defined utopia as a place that is indisputably impossible to build (Tower Sargent, 2010, 6). From the mid- to late 19th century onwards, however, the assumed impossibility was converted by idealists into a demand for transformative change, challenging the status quo by proposing radically different ways of living (Neima, 2022, 7). The beginning of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City movement is such an

example of utopian thought in urban planning in the late 19th century; it aimed for the realisation of 'radical hopes for a cooperative civilisation' (Fishman, 1978, 37).

The conviction which runs like a golden thread through each of these definitions is that utopian images of the future have the potential to be tremendously powerful. However, our assumptions regarding the extent to which humans can influence the future are crucial determinants of the potency of these images As Tower Sargent explains (2010, 13), early myths telling of the creation of the world or of life after death strongly influenced people's early utopian thinking across cultures: In Western cultures, the Golden Age and paradise mark two of these early myths. The myth of the Golden Age proposes that the ancient past was of such purity that a similar state of perfection can never be reached again; it is forever inaccessible. Paradise, on the other hand, marks a place in the Judo-Christian tradition which anyone can reach – once they have died – if they have spent a lifetime living according to the rules of God. In both myths, the idea of human progress is entirely absent, and that is no coincidence. As Morgan (2015) make clear, prior to the period of the Renaissance, religious beliefs and images of creation, life, and afterlife fundamentally shaped European societies, including the belief in God's or the gods' predestination. If the course of human existence is entirely determined by God, however, there is no reason for people to see themselves as agents of social change. Polak (1961a, 28) explains that in pre-Renaissance Europe, exploring the future inherited an air of forbiddingness, or was societally recognised as an unforgivable sin equal to blasphemy. Morgan (2015) comments that the worldview of pre-modern societies may not have encompassed or accepted futures thinking, therefore the inability of early utopian images to bring about social change might not be attributed to a lack of embeddedness in their social contexts but rather to influence-pessimism and influence-proscription in society.

According to Morgan (2019), the image of the future as a pulling force capable of bringing about social change in Europe did not gain prominence until the Renaissance, when the concept of progress emerged, and the Enlightenment, when it manifested. Progress and utopian images thus became interlinked as the utopian image steers progress in a certain direction, while the belief in progress gives relevance to the image of the future (Morgan, 2015). An observation by Bell (2004, 19-23) supports this notion. Bell examined a literary utopia of the Enlightenment that is generally categorised as an adventure story, not a utopia: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), which tells the story of a man who survived shipwreck and has to survive alone on an island. Finding

himself face to face with nature, Robinson has nothing but his human abilities to stay alive. Instead of finding a perfect society on a remote island, as earlier utopias told it, the utopia in *Robinson Crusoe* is the result of man's actions as he conquers nature and enslaves people (Bell, 2004, 20). The values enabling Robinson to build his perfect place include individual liberty (for white men), belief in progress, the separation of church and state, and the reliance on and confidence in one's own capabilities (Bell, 2004, 20-21), thus resembling values promoted by the Enlightenment (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2010). Individual success is no longer predestined by God or dependent on one's faith, but the result of conscious actions. Bell (2004, 23) summarises the power of *Robinson Crusoe* by claiming that it is a 'dynamic utopia' by which he means that the Enlightenment's and capitalist values the book promotes promise self-reinforcement, making the utopia of *Robinson Crusoe* one that is not only possible but would also reinforce itself once set in motion for the benefit of humankind.

The definitions of utopia mentioned so far conceptualised utopia either as a place or as a place with a temporal component. Ernst Bloch's book *The Principle of Hope (1986)*[1], implies that the concept of utopia can be far more useful to us if approached as *attitude*. Bloch divides utopias into abstract utopias and concrete utopias, whereby abstract utopias are the traditional depictions of perfect societies (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 3). Bloch accuses abstract utopias, to which he counts More's *Utopia* and Plato's *Republic*, of failing readers in five ways (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 13-15):

I. Abstract utopias fail to motivate their readership to develop agency and change their own conditions.

II. Abstract utopias suggest that perfect societies could exist.

III. Abstract utopias imagine that the human character can be changed if political and economic systems change.

IV. Abstract utopias are often so obsessed with reconstructing political and economic systems that they neglect to account for individual desires.

V. By presenting readers with perfect societies that do not at all resemble the reader's reality, abstract utopias deny readers the opportunity of a learning experience:

[1] Originally published in German in 1959 as *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* in Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

> There are no lessons to be learned, no appliable knowledge to be obtained from a non-developing place to which readers cannot relate.

As an alternative for abstract utopias, Bloch calls attention to his concept of concrete utopias (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 3). Bammer (1991, 3) described their intention as aiding the individual to develop the ability to challenge the status quo. Rather than presenting readers with unhelpful depictions of perfection, where the emphasis is on the product, Bammer (1991, 3) argues that concrete utopias put the emphasis on an ongoing process of critically modifying our social contexts. The participation in this process is thereby seen as the incontestable right of the individual (Bammer, 1991, 3). Concrete utopias do not present ideal places but psychological journeys of inner transformation (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 3). Essential for Bloch's theory is the concrete action emerging at the end of concrete utopias as the individual becomes active but aims not only at changing their own circumstances but also at stirring transformative actions in their communities (Raphael-Hernandez., 2008, 7). The element leading to the emergence of agency is called *utopian impulse*. The *impulse* combines the theoretical component of hope with the practical element of development (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 15). Consequently, the presence of the *utopian impulse* is not exclusive to literary utopias but can be found in any form of human expression that results from the interplay of hope and development, including architecture, medicine, and technology (Raphael-Hernandez, 2008, 15-16). In doing so, Schmidt (1988, 79) announces, Bloch effectively turned the utopia from a genre into an attitude.

Following Bloch's theory, Ruth Levitas conceptualised utopia as method (Levitas, 2013). Like Morgan (2015), Levitas (2013, xi) argues that utopian thinking used as method rather than as an end in itself fosters holistic thinking because utopia's aim to reconstruct society acknowledges the systemic and complex nature of our world. In contrast, a focus on solving individual problems one-at-a-time would ignore this complexity and thus disqualifies as useful mean to counteract on problems of the twenty-first century (Levitas, 2013, xi; Morgan, 2015). Levitas further pronounces her impatience with those insisting that utopias are mere depictions of the impossible, useless at best, paths towards dystopian outcomes at worst (Levitas, 2013, xiii). She points out that such fundamental changes to our systems are unavoidable at this moment in history that the only *true* impossibility lies in a continuation of the status quo (Levitas, 2013, xii).

Polak (1961b, 17-18) argues that the intentional denouncement of utopias originated in the 18th century among those circles that profited the most from colonisation, racist ideology, and patriarchal hierarchies. The published literary contra-utopias, as Polak calls them (1961b, 17), of the time aimed at making the strive of the oppressed for more humane futures appear dangerous and ludicrous by describing utopias as inwardly rotten and against human nature (Polak, 1961b, 18). As an example of such a contra-utopia Polak mentions *The Fable of the Bees* by Bernard Mandeville, who imagined that greed, dishonesty, envy, and egoism, though in themselves undesirable, are unneglectable human traits necessary for desirable futures (Polak, 1961b, 18). Mandeville also was a supporter of letting the majority of people live in poverty and denying them access to education so as to use them as workforce for the upper classes; to him, any other utopian social order suggesting alternative societies would lead to the ruin of humankind. (Polak, 1961b, 18.)

Academics and non-academics have challenged the assumed impossibility of utopias, since the end of World War II noteworthily within feminist circles. Their line of reasoning reminds of Polak's (1961b, 17-20) analysis of contra-utopias. Cornell, for example, asserts that utopian thinking is less about imagining impossible futures than about exploring unrepresentable ones (Johnson 2002 ref. Cornell). These futures are presumably unrepresentable due to their singularity. The German noun *Beispiellosigkeit* comes to mind – a future for which there is no historic example to support the imagination is in the precarious situation of being almost unrepresentable. As discussed earlier, the capability to give shape to the Other is necessary to create images of the future (Polak, 1961a, 30). But to draw from such an unprecedented future the conclusion that is also impossible is problematic. Feminist philosopher Seyla Benhabib, for example, warns against overlooking the nuances between unrepresentable and impossible futures with regard to gender equality, stressing, '[We], as women, have much to lose by giving up the utopian hope in the wholly other' (Benhabib, 1992, 230).

Brodsky and Nalebuff (2015) collected feminist utopias, many of which were expressed by people confronted with hate or oppression, including people of colour and gender-nonconforming individuals. Their study demonstrates that utopias of underprivileged groups often deal with fundamental human rights, including freedom from discrimination, equal rights, access to education, and life in a community (Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015). Images of futures evolving around such themes are utopian in the

sense of being unprecedented and desirable from the perspective of discriminated groups but should not be considered utopian in the sense of being ridiculous and naïve.

Robinson's (2022) research of lesbian feminist intentional communities in Australia during the 1970s and 1980s describes how utopian thinking as method has supported the exploration and realisation of desirable but unprecedented futures. Australian liberation movements at the time had succeeded in enabling homosexuals unprecedented levels of access to public spaces and living models (Robinson, 2022). Testing this freedom, new communities were formed, the dominant conceptualisations of family and kinship were challenged, and new artistic expressions developed (Robinson, 2022). The explicit utopian aim of changing the world did not purely relate to questions of gender equality but followed an intersectional approach that also addressed, i.a. colonialism and racism. As Robinson discovers, feminist, postcolonial, and ecologist values shaped these communities' ideation of desirable futures. (Robinson, 2022.)

Second wave feminism's use of utopian thinking was not only expressed by these intentional communities but found representation in culture as well. Published in 1976, *Woman at the Edge* of Time by the American author Marge Piercy is a model case of feminist utopianism in literature. As pointed up by Robinson (2022), utopian thinking served as tool for feminists to imagine and try out radically different ways of living based on values that no longer take the able-bodied white man as point of departure. Piercy (1976) makes strong use of utopia as a method in her novel as the main character travels between her patriarchal present society and a radically different utopia. The moment in which the main character travels to the future for the first time and sees the utopian city is described as follows:

> "She saw … a river, little no-account buildings, strange structures like long-legged birds with sails that turned in the wind, a few large terracotta and yellow buildings and one blue dome, irregular buildings, none bigger than a supermarket of her day […] No skyscrapers, no spaceports, no traffic jam in the sky. 'You sure we went in the right direction? Into the future?'" (Piercy, 1976, p. 69)

The utopian city the main character sees breaks with many Western visions of utopian cities, most obviously because it opposes popular images of future cities with its irregular and colourful architectural design, the absence of traffic, and the smallness of everything. The feminist utopian image Piercy (1976) draws resembles in many points the real-life experimentation Robinson (2022) discusses by questioning consumerism and

gender roles, and promoting communal, sustainable, and self-sufficient forms of living. In the foreword of her novel, Piercy (1976, viii) explains that the period of the second wave of feminism produced a large number of utopias, and the true belief in the possibility of profound change and having the bravery to provoke were critical factors that enabled these literary explorations.

Bardzell (2018), in building up on the the thinking of Bloch (1986), Benhabib (1992), and Levitas (2013), compared traditional utopianism to its feminist-ecologist reconceptualization and accomplished a distinction between traditional utopianism and feminist utopianism. Table 1 below summarises the characteristics of both forms of utopianism.

Table 1 Distinguishing between feminist and traditional utopianism (adapted from Bardzell, 2018)

Traditional utopianism	***Feminist utopianism***
Product-oriented (the image is the goal)	Process-oriented (Can we improve our actions to improve the outcome?)
Narrowing down of desirable futures to "the perfect one"	An exploration of multiple possible futures (McKenna, 2001)
Legislated by single experts or elite groups	Participative
The utopia appoints an ideal philosophy, which defines all areas of society	Iterations of defining, challenging, and re-defining guiding philosophical beliefs
Totalizing	Emergent
Situated in a remote place and/or time	Situated in the familiar present to unveil chances for context-specific action
Marginalised groups dissolve with the majority society into a homogenous group; this is seen as desirable	The existence of marginalised groups is acknowledged, the inclusion of their voices is structurally promoted
Conflict is eliminated	Conflict is a motivator

Returning to the definitions of utopia at the beginning of the chapter, the researcher would propose that both Polak's (1961a, 437-438) and Bell's (2004, 8) understanding of utopias derives from traditional utopianism, whereas Tower Sargent

(2010, 5-6) and Neima (2022, 7) acknowledge that the concept of utopia has been developed by agents of social change since its first definition in 1519 by Thomas More.

Multiple studies propose that feminist utopianism as method can be applied to support citizen participation in urban development (Hudson & Rönnblom, 2020; Törnroth et al, 2022; Bina, Inch & Pereira, 2020; Sandercock, 2012). Before the researcher explains her methodological approach to such an application and presents her findings, attention is drawn to citizen participation itself.

2.2 Approaches to citizen participation

This chapter discusses the concept of citizen participation, which shall be used as an umbrella term to include related concepts such as 'user involvement' (Tritter & McCallum, 2006), 'public participation' (Innes & Booher, 2004), and 'citizen engagement' (Collins & Ison, 2009). Although the concept of participation plays a key role in feminist utopianism, in futures research, and in planning theory (see Bardzell, 2018; Bell, 2003, 93-95), underlying motivators and beliefs are seldom discussed, epistemological assumptions rarely dealt with. This chapter thus first explores different conceptualisations and their implications before reviewing the literature concerning potential advantages of citizen participation.

2.2.1 Conceptualisation and reconceptualisation of citizen participation

Glass (1979) defined citizen participation as an approach to provide citizens 'opportunities to take part in governmental decision or planning processes.' Few, Brown and Tompkins (2007), however, find that the concept of participation leaves room for interpretation as soon as theoretical considerations are to be translated into practice; Collins & Ison (2009) accentuate this observation as well. Two key issues can be identified which explain the difficulty of formulating a uniform definition of participation: Firstly, the variety of modes of engagement and their varying degrees of participation poses the question where active participation begins (Few, Brown & Tompkins, 2007). Secondly, comprehensive citizen participation is hindered by conceptual as well as practical difficulties, one of the fundamental ones being concerned with the set of criteria that should define the basis upon which participants will be selected (Few, Brown & Tompkins, 2007). Ianniello et al. (2019) therefore dismiss the notion that

participation should not be seen as a zero-sum game and instead underscore that participation is, or should be, characterised by a variety of different levels of engagement.

Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (Arnstein, 2019)[2] is one of the most recognised frameworks in approaches to participation. Since its original publication in 1969 has remained the foundation of large numbers of participatory projects, influencing their design and evaluation (Collins & Ison, 2009; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). The original standard model has been redesigned multiple times to adapt it to various contexts; for example, Botchwey et al. (2019) modified Arnstein's rungs to optimize its usability for youth participation, while Choguill (1996) adapted the framework under consideration of different stages of national development to make it applicable to underdeveloped countries as well.

While Ianniello et al. (2019) argued against participation as a zero-sum game and proposed a multi-level understanding of the concept, Arnstein's framework uses a multi-level metaphor to encourage the idea that participation in practice can only become meaningful if it is treated as a dichotomy between full citizen control or no participation. Arnstein goes as far as to define participation as 'a categorial term for citizen power … the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded … to be deliberately included in the future' (Arnstein, 2019). In its original design, Arnstein's ladder consisted of eight rungs representing eight stages of participation and non-participation: As depicted in Figure 1 on the following page, the first two rungs, (1) manipulation and (2) therapy, represent levels of non-participation, followed by the rungs (3) informing, (4) consultation, and (5) placation, which describe levels of tokenism; the three top tiers, (6) partnership, (7) delegated power, and (8) citizen control describe levels of citizen power (Arnstein, 2019). Arnstein designated the redistribution of power from policymakers to previously excluded citizens as the core requirement for successful participation. Only if participation redistributed power from the top to the bottom would participation be meaningful. All other approaches would therefore be meaningless participation merely functioning a poster child to demonstrate concern for citizen engagement but do not actually challenge underlying power dynamics. (Arnstein, 2019.)

[2] Arnstein's *A ladder of citizen participation* was originally published in 1969 in the *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 35, pp. 216-224. As the journal publication from 1969 was not available to the researcher, the republication from 2019 is used as reference.

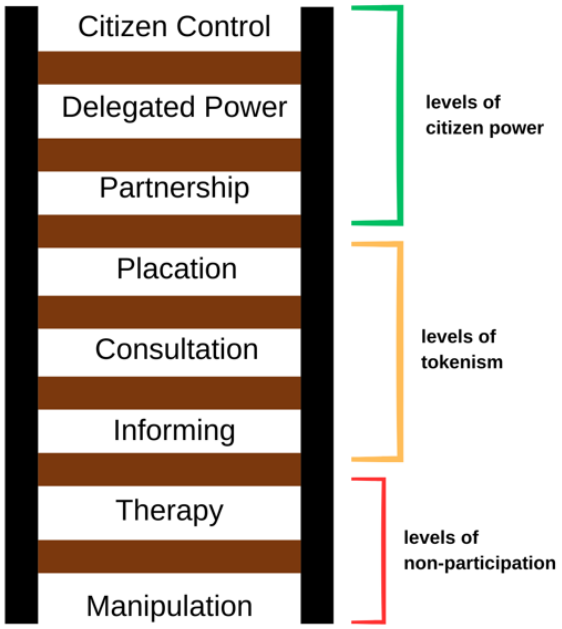

Figure 2 Ladder of citizen participation, adapted from Arnstein (2019)

As Arnstein (2019) uses *power* as sole determinant of meaningful participation, the researcher finds it useful to shortly point out possible factors which led to this conceptualisation. The first helpful contextualisation for Arnstein's ladder is given by Gaber (2019) who makes remarks on the historical setting in which Arnstein developed her framework. 1969 marked the end of a decade that was shaped by a variety of social justice movements, including the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, and the mass protests against the Vietnam War. Additionally, Arnstein, citizen of the United States, conducted her research during a time of changing legislation, such as the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 that made funding available to urban communities for the development of projects to resuscitate underdeveloped areas. (Gaber, 2019.)

Sendra and Sennett (2020, pp. 21-22) offer a second perspective to Arnstein's conceptualisation of citizen participation by pointing at the effects of monofunctional places in urban planning and development which gained popularity after World War II. Sendra and Sennett (2020, 21) problematise the 'division of labor as a model for the division of space' that is characteristic for the post-war period because it led to the diminishment of urban spaces that lacked a distinctive function, a justification to exist in a capitalist society. By promoting monofunctional places, residents find themselves

bound to use the urban space only as it was planned to be used, limiting their chances to negotiate their own sense of place through playful experiments and creative placemaking activities (Zitcer, 2020). Among citizens, this separation provokes the adoption of an image reflected by the urban design that signals residents what one is allowed to do in a certain space, and where in the city one is allowed to be (Sendra & Sennett, 2020, p. 22). Further research suggests that this evaluation is also influenced by citizens' socio-economic status, ethnicity, and gender (Navarrete-Hernandez, Vetro & Concha, 2021; Loroño-Leturiondo & Illingworth, 2021; Dunston, 2023).

Awareness for the context in which Arnstein published her framework may be helpful to comprehend the underlying epistemological assumptions regarding the relationship between citizen participation and power. Nonetheless, Arnstein's assumptions were contested. Tritter and McCallum (2006) criticise that the ladder raises the assumption that the true and only aim of citizen participation must be citizen control and power. Collins and Ison (2009) as well as Tritter and McCallum (2006) strongly object to Arnstein's "them versus us" mentality perpetuated by the ladder model and have problematised the lack of critical examination of Arnstein's epistemology in academic research that adopts the ladder uncritically.

Tritter and McCallum's (2006) critique focusses particularly on the ladder's oversimplification of a complex reality, its inability to take both theoretical concept and practical outcome into account, and its negligence of feedback systems, as citizen power within the hierarchical ladder is simply assumed to trickle down. Alternatively, Tritter and McCallum (2006) suggest a *mosaic* as metaphor for participation instead of a ladder to transcend the dichotomous view of participation and power. Instead of using the word citizen as a general term for everyone living in a given area, Tritter and McCallum (2006) propose a differentiation between the *citizen* as a legal entity, and the concept of *social citizenship* which describes the 'relationship between individuals in a population and their local institutions.' Through this approach, participatory projects and solutions can become more place-specific and responsive to local complexities instead of relying on Arnstein's rigid one-size-fits-all hierarchy (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Additionally, the researcher of the current study beliefs that approaching participation from the concept of social citizenship is a wiser choice in multinational societies, as participation through this lens is no longer dependent on holding the citizenship of one country.

Collins and Ison (2009) share Tritter and McCallum's (2006) points of critique and outline additional problematic aspects about it, for example the notion that citizens' responsibilities in Arnstein's model change only in relation to their position of power. Instead, Collins and Ison (2009) propose *social learning* as new paradigm for participation, but also maintain that to reconceptualise participation demands a simultaneous reconceptualization of adaptation. According to Collins and Ison (2009), the notion of adaptation leads almost automatically to the question of "Adaptation to what?", assuming that the situation that demands adaptation is thoroughly comprehended, even if this is unlikely regarding complex problems. They thus suggest asking, "Adaptation with *whom*?" which targets the often-neglected act of framing the issue (Collins & Ison, 2009). The researchers assert that framing is a choice, and asking for *who* will be involved in the adaptation process leads to considerations of different stakeholders' perspectives on the same issue (Collins & Ison, 2009). Roles and responsibilities across different stakeholder groups can thus be reconsidered and redistributed under consideration of the systemic characteristics of complex problems; this approach to citizen participation fosters systemic thinking and is consequently taking away the pressure to find a solution as the aim is on understanding the issue. (Collins & Ison, 2009.)

2.2.2 Reasons for participative projects

The literature on planning theory and urban development lists a number of justifications for citizen participation. Most literary sources maintain that participatory approaches may enhance the legitimacy of planning and policy decisions (Ianniello et al., 2019; Kahila-Tani et al., 2016; Innes & Booher, 2004), or uphold that citizen participation finds strong supporters in our basic democratic values and our sense of justice (Sendra & Sennett, 2020, p. 35; Kahila-Tani, 2016).

Citizen participation is referred to in the context of building a better understanding between different parties (Tritter & McCallum, 2006; Kahila-Tani, 2016) and generations (Botchwey et al., 2019). Connected to the notion of building better understanding, Sendra and Sennett (2020, pp. 34-35) and Tritter and McCallum (2006) support the view that citizen participation opens a platform for dialogue between parties that previously did not come together for this purpose, thereby giving all individuals the opportunity to deconstruct prejudice (Tritter & McCallum, 2006), develop their ability to work in teams

(Botchwey et al., 2019), and establish new alliances that may lead to a broader sharing, exchanging and acquiring of different knowledge and skills (Sendra & Sennett, 2020, p. 46).

Another advantage of citizen participation recurringly recognised in the literature is the inclusion of lay people's knowledge that offers new perspectives on a situation (Kahila-Tani, 2016; Tritter & McCallum, 2006; Törnroth et al., 2022). As 'professionals of the everyday' (Meroni, 2007, 9), non-expert citizens enter into the dialogue with the expertise of the daily user, contributing to the planning process their situated knowledges (see Haraway, 1988) that enables them to challenge experts with questions they would otherwise not consider (Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Research of the past suggests that lay people's knowledge has a positive effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of planning decisions (Corburn, 2003). Listerborn (2008) also accentuates that uncontested prejudice on the part of planners due to missing contact to the people planned for will inevitably result in ineffective outcomes that reflect the prejudice against locals. Indeed, one of the most referenced advantages of citizen participation is its ability to potentially enhance the quality of the outcomes of planning processes (Ianniello et al., 2019; Listerborn, 2008; Innes & Booher, 2004; Kahila-Tani, 2016).

The exchange of different knowledges and perspectives, while fostering understanding, may not necessarily lead to agreements, but multiple sources reject the assumption that the sole ambitions of citizen participation should be to solve or fix problems (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 160; De Lange, 2019, pp. 358, 361), especially if the problematic situations in question show the characteristics of complex systems (Collins & Ison, 2009) that can be referred to as 'wicked problems' (Rittel & Webber, 1973).

Instead of collectively finding a solution, the most valuable aims of citizen participation may instead lie pursuing other goals, of which six shall be proposed based on the reviewed literature: Firstly, participation may lead to the recognition of existing differences in value assessments between different actors (Healey, 1997; Tritter & McCallum, 2006). Secondly, participation may lead to the emergence of new knowledge and partnerships resulting from various types of knowledge and ways of knowing coming together (Kahila-Tani, 2016). Thirdly, participative project can offer participants a social learning experience that fosters systemic thinking by helping to understand the complexity of an issue (Collins & Ison, 2009; Kahila-Tani et al. ref. Friedmann, 1998).

Fourthly, participative projects can lead into a reevaluating the roles and responsibilities of lay people and experts (De Lange, 2019, p. 362). Fifthly, participative projects may give room for discussing and reconceptualising concepts such as citizenship, city life, and the factors that constitute the "good citizen" (De Lange, 2019, pp. 353-354). Lastly, participative projects may decrease the perceived powerlessness and isolation of participants by promoting community networking and responsibility, especially among youth participants, as Botchwey et al (2019) propose.

3 Research methodology

This chapter explains the methodological approach taken to answer the research questions and achieve the research aims. The current research is concerned with mainly two aims: Firstly, to test the applicability of feminist utopianism as method in a workshop context, offering participants a space to jointly explore, discuss, and externalise their visions and desires for the future of their city. Secondly, to give room to the voices of citizens as stakeholders immediately affected by urban development despite being traditionally left out of urban development projects.

This chapter is structured as follows: First, the research design is discussed. Second, details are given on the data collection methods, followed by an account of the facilitation of the workshop to provide readers with a clear idea of the execution. In the fourth step, the approach to data analysis is explained. The chapter closes with a discussion about the strategies employed by the researcher to assure the quality of the current research.

3.1 Research design

This research was designed as a multi-method qualitative exploratory research. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019, 179) describe qualitative research designs as interpretive because the researcher has to find the meaning behind participants' expressions which are themself subjective and seen as social constructions. Consequently, this research is informed by postmodernist assumptions on one hand, and interpretivist assumptions on the other hand.

At the beginning of this research stood the researcher's interest in utopian thinking and the question whether there was more to it than a dead concept. Feminist utopianism is a concept of low visibility and awareness despite a surprising number of more recent research papers concerned with it. Thus, the researcher decided to conduct exploratory research, which enables researchers to clarify their understanding of a phenomenon they are less familiar with. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 187.)

This research studies images of desirable futures created using a feminist utopian approach. Thus, an important question the researcher needed to answer was whether participants should be given a time horizon for their images. Time horizons are common in futures research, especially in strategic foresight and scenario work. They are also

widespread in urban development (see City of Turku 2024a, 2024b, 2024c). However, the researcher of this research made an active decision against a fixed time horizon. For one, this research does *not* aim at solving existing problems in the urban sphere. Neither does it inquire what will happen until a given date, or what the achievement of scheduled targets might look like. One of the underlying assumptions behind citizen participation is that more democratic participation would lead to better solutions (Ianniello et al., 2019; Listerborn, 2008; Innes & Booher, 2004; Kahila-Tani, 2016). However, the literature review also showed that contemporary problems are so complex and interrelated that a process-oriented approach to participation that aims at understanding the issues might be more fruitful than a product-oriented approach aimed at solving them (Dunne & Raby, 2013, p. 160; De Lange, 2019, pp. 358, 361; Collins & Ison, 2009). This research applied a feminist utopian approach which opposes to the notion of one ideal goal. Feminist utopianism is explorative and experimental by nature; the feminist utopia is a process and a way of applying different knowledge more than it is a place. Lastly, the researcher questions the usefulness of limiting participant's imagination to a time horizon in cases where they are asked to explore their needs and desires. The advantage of utopian thinking lies in the exploration of the unimaginable, the radical, the emotion-laden and unrepresentable. A time horizon, however, implies rationality and strategic considerations about the political, social, and economic developments between now and a fixed point in the future. The researcher was very concerned that a time horizon would lead to a hamster wheel situation in which participants would worry more about the political and economic feasibility of their ideas than engage in collective ideation about futures that are fully "theirs".

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 The CLA-PUS workshop framework

The workshop methodology used in this workshop combines causal layered analysis with participatory utopian sketching; it has thus been named the CLA-PUS workshop by the author of this research. Starting point for the CLA-PUS framework was the participatory utopian sketching methodology by Törnroth et al. (2022), which has been adapted to suit both the aims of this research and the capabilities of the researcher. Törnroth et al.'s original methodology suggested a workshop in four stages: exploring the space, sketching the utopias, sharing the utopias, and collaborative analysis. For this research, the

researcher adapted the original framework into a three-stage workshop. Table 2 below outlines the structure of the CLA-PUS workshop methodology and each part's purpose and practicalities.

Table 2 Structure of the CLA-PUS workshop

Stage No.	Purpose	Practicalities	Duration (min)
[Introduction]	Welcoming the participants, getting to know each other	Gamified introduction in groups. Researcher-facilitator shortly introduces topic with presentation.	20
PART I – Causal layered analysis (CLA), 2 iterations	Giving participants room to share and reflect on their fears (CLA-1), and their hopes and desires (CLA-2)	Each group receives 1 CLA worksheet per round, pencils & sticky notes. Researcher-facilitator guides groups through the layers. Participants are encouraged to share their written notes.	35
PART II – participatory sketching in the utopian space	In groups, participants sketch their utopias. Group participants have to explore the new space of unprecedented possibilities. They discuss joint visions and find ways of externalising them.	Each group receives sketching materials. Researcher-facilitator has prepared inspiring questions to set the process in motion, if needed.	50
PART III – sharing & reflecting	Sharing visions and reflecting on most prevalent themes; enabling empathetic learning of diverging worldviews (see Törnroth et al., 2022)	Researcher-facilitator mediates a non-threatening discussion about the most prevalent themes that came up during the workshop.	20
[ending the workshop]			

In the original framework methodology, Törnroth et al. (2022) suggest starting the workshop with a walk through the space to let participants physically experience it. In the specific context of this research, the researcher decided against this step as she had concerns regarding the impact the walk would have on the visions. Because only a small fraction of the city can be visited during such a walk, the researcher feared that the visions participants would draw would be limited to the visited area. This may lead to a distortion of the data and given a wrong impression of the areas citizens want to develop.

The suggested walk at the beginning of the workshop is substituted with an introduction to the research workshop followed by two iterations of a causal layered analysis (CLA) that precede the sketching process. CLA as method is explained in detail in chapter 3.3. In the first CLA, henceforth referred to as CLA-1, participants explore futures they fear. The second round, henceforth referred to as CLA-2, is concerned with exploring futures which participants desire. This methodological choice has three advantages. Firstly, it enables participants a space to acknowledge and share their fears early on in the workshop, prior to the envisioning of desirable futures. This order was chosen to communicate to participants that their fears are not being forgotten but are in fact indispensable for the process of envisioning desirable futures. Secondly, the filled out CLA-worksheets are helpful data sources of participants' thoughts. Because the CLA exercises are done in the same groups as the sketching exercise, the researcher can search for indications that thoughts from the CLA exercises influenced the sketching process. Lastly, an exploration of fears and hopes via CLA may bridge the gap between theorising about and visually expressing desirable visions. It must be considered that, except by coincidence, participants may not be used to think about the futures in such a way, yet alone to sketch their vision. This approach was thus designed to enable a smooth transition from reflection to expression.

The second part of this research's workshop is identical to the second part of Törnroth et al.'s framework (2022) and is dedicated to the sketching exercise. This exercise is done in groups. Each group has access to blank paper in A3 and A4, squared paper, city maps of different ratios, and satellite images of Turku, as well as to pencils, markers, and sticky notes of different colours. From these materials, the groups can freely choose which ones to use for exploring and externalising their images of desirable futures. The premise of the exercise is that there are no limitations to participants' creativity, boldness, or time horizons, which in itself may require some getting used to. Additionally,

they are working in a group context. As a result, this exercise demands an open discussion about the wishes of each individual participant, followed by a negotiation about a joint vision that represents the group. While the groups are occupied with the task, the researcher takes observatory notes on the discussion, overall progress, and prevalent discussion themes.

In the original framework by Törnroth et al. (2022), the sharing of the utopias and the reflective discussion marked separate parts of the workshop. For this research, they were combined into the third and last part of the workshop for a more effective use of time and a more organic flow of the discussion as groups can first share and explain their visions to each other before entering a discussion without further interruption. Through sharing and explaining visions, themes, and worldviews, participants may be enabled to learn from diverging views and develop empathy. This part of the workshop was audio-recorded, and the researcher took notes. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill argue (2019, 461), it is useful to do both in case the audio-recording fails and as a demonstration of interest. Furthermore, physical note taking allows the researcher to add her immediate thoughts which do not appear on the recording (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 461).

3.2.2 Finding participants

Six participants joined the workshop. One of them was a friend of the researcher, another one was an acquaintance the researcher met through mutual friends. Three of the workshop participants were first year students majoring in futures studies. The sixth participant was found through the researcher's network. The selection of candidates followed a self-selection sampling approach whereby the researcher publicised her need for volunteers to participate in her thesis workshop (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 323). The researcher of this research published her need for volunteers in different forms: Firstly, by reaching out to suitable candidates through LinkedIn. Secondly, by writing a message asking for voluntary participation into the WhatsApp chat of the future studies first year students. Thirdly, by talking about her plan for the workshop at social gatherings with the aim of identifying suitable volunteers. Fourthly, by contacting teaching personnel from other faculties via email and asking them to forward the researcher's publicity to their students. Every time the researcher sent a need to possible participants, it was disclosed that her research was supported by the Turku Urban Research Programme.

The determination of the factors that define the suitability of a participant is a matter of controversy in participation and planning theory as every requirement for suitability can either be seen as a refinement or as act of exclusion (Ianniello et al., 2019). In the selection process of this research, the following criteria were considered: The participants must be residents of Turku. The participants have to be comfortable expressing themselves in English due to the researcher's own language barriers. Because citizens who are not in administrative positions are traditionally underrepresented in or excluded from urban planning, the participants of this workshop were not to work in a division of the public administrative body concerned with urban planning. An equal amount of male and female participants was what the researcher had aimed for, however, this was not achieved because more female than male candidates responded to the researcher's publicity, thus four of the six workshop participants were female. While the nationality of a candidate was no criteria in itself, the researcher wanted to have participants of Finnish and other-than-Finnish nationality in the workshop to reflect the presence of Turku's international communities. By letting Finnish ways of thinking and knowing come together with knowledges and worldviews of residents of non-Finnish heritage, participants are enabled to view the present from a distance (Inayatullah, 1998) as dominant categories of thinking are questioned which may lead to the emergence of alternative situation framings.

3.2.3 Fostering collaboration and expressing novelty through sketching

Kavakli et al. (1998) define *sketches* as visualisations of future states which convey ideas about that future in an incomplete, vague, and approximate manner.

Multiple reasons lead to the decision against the use of digital sketching tools in this research. Research suggests that despite the availability of digital design and sketching tools, sketching still constitutes a key behaviour during the early stages of idea generation (Kavakli et al., 1998). Furthermore, pen-and-paper sketching can aid the individual wherever his or her mental process is hindered from visualising unanticipated novelty, thus supporting creative discovery (Verstijnen et al., 1998; Reed and Johnson, 1975, Kavakli et al., 1998). In contrast to digital tools, sketching does not require technical knowledge, has no limitations to the range of elements that can be drawn, and does not have to be explained (Törnroth et al., 2022). While new AI-powered tools for participatory urban planning exist, they work with existing elements of the present and

lack the unprecedented, novel features which may emerge during a sketching exercise, which is why they were consciously excluded from this research methodology.

Sketching strongly reflects democratic values which are inseparable from the feminist utopian approach and the participatory design of this research by supporting dialogue between participants and enabling them to externalise their ideas non-verbally (Törnroth et al., 2022). The latter marks a considerable benefit in overcoming language barriers and barriers to express the unknown or unprecedented. Van der Lugt (2005) and Törnroth et al. (2002) furthermore suggest that sketching in groups facilitates collaboration among participants and can foster understanding as well as effective communication between participants.

3.3 Causal layered analysis in data collection and data analysis

Causal layered analysis (CLA) was developed by Sohail Inayatullah (1998) and has its roots in critical futures studies. Slaughter (1996, 139) defines critical futures research as 'a range of methods and tools through which we may look "beneath the surface" of social reality in order to [realise] the full potential of futures work'. It thus aims for disrupting present power dynamics by fostering discourse about the ways in which dominant culture influences our assumptions and ideas regarding the future (Slaughter, 1996, 140; Inayatullah, 1998). CLA is described by Inayatullah (2004, 1) as both a method and a theory. CLA as a method is not aimed at making predictions about the future but at opening up a space for creating alternative futures by deconstructing present and past. As a theory, CLA seeks to integrate various modes of learning, including empiricist, critical, interpretive, and action learning. (Inayatullah, 2004, 1.)

CLA is influenced by Indian philosophy, particularly by the teachings of Sarkar, who maintains that the mind is composed of shells, from which Inayatullah derives the concept of a reality constructed vertically (Inayatullah, 2004, 4-5). Further influences of CLA include poststructuralism, as well as the thinkings of Michel Foucault, Johan Galtung, and to a lesser extent the typology of futures studies by Richard Slaughter (Inayatullah, 2004, 5). While CLA is clearly rooted in the poststructuralism, it transcends it by letting the problematisation and deconstruction of dominant discourse be followed by the reconstruction of new worlds (Inayatullah, 2009, 7).

CLA is organised in four layers, as shown in Figure 3: Litany, social causes, discourse/worldview, and myth/metaphor. On the shallowest of the layers, the *litany*, the issue is described in the manner of newspaper headlines, explained by the obvious and seen as detached from other events (Riedy, 2008). Emotions on this layer reach from helplessness to apathy and anger about overdue but simple solutions (Inayatullah, 1998). The second layer, *social causes*, horizontally comprises of the political, social, economic, cultural, legal, or historical bases of the issue (Inayatullah, 1998). Quantitative data and academic research often inform the understanding of the issue on this layer, and the role of important actors is discussed (Riedy, 2008). However, it is not until the third layer, *discourse/worldview*, that defining paradigms are explored which legitimate the issue and frame its discourse (Inayatullah, 1998). The horizontal movement in the layers is crucial in CLA as it allows the integration and exploration of ways of knowing, of religious, economic, and ideological beliefs (Riedy, 2008).

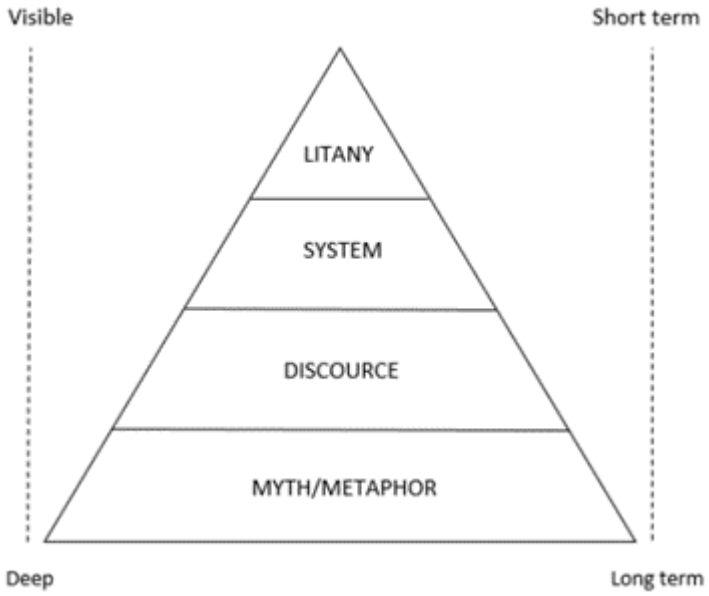

Figure 3 The CLA pyramid (Inayatullah, 2004).

The fourth layer, myth/metaphor, is the last and the deepest layer. According to Inayatullah (1998) the examination of this layer is crucial especially from a civilisational perspective as those myths and metaphors guide our images of the future (Inayatullah, 1998). Findings on this layer may comprise narrative archetypes (e.g. the hero's journey), mythological figures and stories and deep cultural believes. On this level, the emotions

nurturing the worldview are under inspection. Inayatullah (1998) informs us that words are primarily used on this level to create images and tell a captivating story.

As mentioned in chapter 3.2.1, CLA in this research was part of the workshop methodology. Whereas the original workshop framework by Törnroth et al. (2022) suggests a walk, the two iterations of CLA in the adapted workshop framework mean to create space for the emergence of alternative futures. Inayatullah argues that CLA can be used to better understand oneself (Inayatullah, 2004, 10), which is its function in this research. In this research, understanding the self exclusively relates to participants' individual fears and hopes. The function of CLA here overlaps with Abensour's call for using utopian thinking as method for educating desire (Bina, Inch & Pereira, 2020 ref. Abensour 2008). On the *litany* level, participants thus consider: What future headlines would scare me/ enthuse me? On the level of social causes, they inquire the domains which inform and potentially dominate these headlines (e.g. politics, economy, or the social domain). This is followed by the mapping out of the worldviews that are represented in these fears and hopes. On the fourth layer, participants investigate the myths and metaphors at the root of their worry or hope. Doing this in a group in which worldviews, fears and hopes can vary may stimulate (I) empathy, as each participants makes themselves vulnerable by sharing these insights, and (II) reflection of one's own worldviews as a consequence of listening to other participants.

CLA-1, concerned with feared-for futures, may thus shed light on the less visible, deeper layers of fear. Its function is thus also a psychological one as fears are directly confronted and explored vertically. CLA-2, concerned with utopian futures, operates like a staircase to the demanding task of sketching: Not only does it shift the mental focus from fear to hope, but it does so step-by-step (or layer by layer) through an exploration of the worldviews and metaphors that stimulate their positive imagination. While this process is time-consuming, the researcher argues that a thorough reflection exercise may give participants early ideas and thus prepare them appropriately for the next step, which may result in more sophisticated visions.

Assuming that the CLAs support participant's early ideation, the data generated during the CLAs may help the researcher to gain a better understanding of the generated images in cases where the images are evidently informed by thoughts from the CLAs. However, since the data analysis focusses solely on the images, the use of the data

received from the CLAs does not extend this supportive function during the image analysis.

CLA also constitutes the data analysis method in this research. While it is less common to use of CLA to analyse images, it is not unheard of as can be seen in Hurley's (2008) analysis of images of the future in contemporary science-fiction movies. However, as Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, 681-682) remind, a visual analysis demands for important considerations because it is always dependent on the subjective position of the observer. The researcher of this thesis maintains that a visual analysis cannot take place under the complete exclusion of the analyst's values. For this data analysis, it is assumed that sensemaking is an inherent part of contemplating an image, and any observer has only their own knowledge, values, and experiences at their disposal to make sense of what they see, with consequences for the analysis. This assumption follows the reasoning of Angelelli (2004, 2) who holds that interpreters, by nature of being human, perceive the world through their own lens which has been grinded by their socio-cultural backgrounds; hence, absolute objectivism cannot be achieved and should not be expected.

In the process of data analysis via CLA, Hurley's (2008) approach has informed the researcher. The images of the future created in the workshop will thus be analysed as follows:

1. *Litany*: The images will be analysed for any "codes" that inform viewers about their futuristic nature. A term originating from cinematography, Hurley (2008) defines *codes* as 'a shortcut into a film that enables filmmakers to spend less time explaining where and when the film takes place.' The researcher will also derive the most obvious, immediate demands the images express.

2. *Social causes*: The researcher investigates the political, economic, social, cultural, technological and other factors that are made subject in the images. Important questions on this layer include: How is the present criticised? Which factors enable positive change?

3. *Discourse/ worldview*: On this level, the researcher investigates the worldviews the images represent and promote.

4. *Myth/ metaphor*: Here, the researcher is searching for elements of deeper meaning, for example cultural myths and archetypes which are emotionally connected to the worldview (see Inayatullah, 1998).

3.4 Operating a CLA-PUS workshop

The workshop was conducted on 2 February 2024 between 12.00 p.m. and 03.00 p.m. at the Turku School of Economics. The researcher had prepared a PowerPoint presentation that would navigate the participants through each step of the workshop. As half of the participants had no previous contact with futures studies, the presentation also featured a slide that made participants familiar with the concept of the multiplicity of futures. Other materials that had been prepared in advance were CLA worksheets in A3 format, and printed maps and satellite pictures of Turku in different ratios. Additional materials the researcher provided where sticky notes in various colours, pens and pencils (also in various colours), erasers, lined paper in A4, as well as white paper in A3 and A4.

The workshop started with a game that combined the introduction of all participants with an early playful exercise of imagining a future. All participants were reminded that the research is supported by the Turku Urban Research Programme. The participants were split into their later groups and each participant drew a random card from a stack of Dixid© cards. In groups of three, the participants were asked to first introduce themselves to their team before jointly combining their cards into one future scenario. The researcher used this exercise not only to activate participants' creativity with regards to imagining futures, but also to observe early team dynamics and make changes to the group composition if needed. After a couple of minutes, each group shared their names and their scenario with the other group.

In the next step, the researcher officially welcomed everyone to the workshop, shortly explained her research aim, the structure of the workshop, and offered a quick introduction into the multiplicity of futures and the need for positive images of the future. The structure of the workshop was explained in simple terms to avoid confusion and questions about concrete methodological elements. Participants were also reminded that the researcher receives funding from the city of Turku.

After a short break, the two iterations of CLA followed. The participants remained in their groups and each group received one A3 CLA worksheet per round. The method

itself was neither named for explained to the participants out of concern for causing unnecessary confusion; participations were only informed of the aim of the exercise, which was explained to them as “exploring their fears” or “exploring their hopes”. For CLA-1, both groups were given pencils and sticky notes in four different shades of blue, one shade per CLA layer. For CLA-2, the researcher handed out sticky notes in four shades of pink. Before each iteration of CLA, participants were invited to close their eyes, which was followed by a quick future storyline in which the participants would wake up some day in the future, open the local news and either feel terrified by the headlines (CLA-1) or enthused and happy (CLA-2). They were then asked to write down the headlines that evoked these emotions and stick them to the topmost level of their CLA worksheets. The researcher continued to navigate the participants through each layer of the CLA. Examples had been prepared in advance to give tangible examples of the kind of content participants might write down on each layer. After each layer had been filled with notes, participants were invited to share what they had written with the other group. A short break separated CLA-1 and CLA-2.

Originally, another short break was planned between CLA-2 and the sketching exercise, however, all participants proposed to continue without a break. Having finished CLA-2 with a reflection on the myths and metaphors that might constitute the foundation of desirable futures, the researcher announced the next part of the workshop, collaborative sketching. The researcher explained the task to the participants and shared a list of open-ended questions that participants could use if they struggled to find a good starting point for their vision. The questions included: What do you really like and dislike about the city? Who is at a disadvantage? What can you currently not do but would like to do (more) in the future? What kind of activities are currently encouraged/ ignored? What makes Turku unique that you would want to keep?

Groups were then given the sketching materials: satellite pictures, maps, empty paper, sticky notes, and pencils. The researcher was happy to see that fruitful discussions began immediately in both groups; neither group required assistance in starting ideation. After a while, participants began to repurpose the sketching material according to their needs: One member of Group 2, which had begun to prepare a collage, shared his scissors and glue for everyone to use. Throughout the sketching process, the researcher took notes about remarks that were made and the topics which each group discussed.

After the sketching part, the workshop entered its final phase, sharing and reflection. Each group presented their vision of the future and explained its elements. Afterwards, each participant was given some time to reflect on their experience and share thoughts that kept them occupied. After final feedback on the overall experience, the researcher ended the workshop by stating her own gratitude for each participant's presence and the dedication and respect they have shown during the workshop.

3.5 Quality assurance strategies

Evaluating the quality of a qualitative research along the canons of scientific inquiry is partly inappropriate due to the philosophical assumptions underpinning qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 213, 216). The scientific canons of inquiry refer to the criteria of reliability and validity, which are in their full extend better applicable to quantitative research as reliability refers, inter alia, to the replicability of a research, and validity to the research findings' claim to generalisation (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 214). Neither of these criteria can be used to fairly evaluate qualitative research because the canons of scientific inquiry apply positivist standpoints whereas researchers of qualitative research projects, including the researcher of the present research, apply interpretivist philosophical assumptions which view reality as socially constructed and strongly context dependent (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 214). Judging the quality of a qualitative research by means of its replicability and claim to generalisation is unsuitable for the current research since generalisation is not seen as a feasible or desirable outcome, and replicability is problematic due to the specificity of each participant's perception of reality. Consequently, alternative criteria had to be considered to stand up to the researcher's quality aspirations.

Two strategies deployed by the researcher of the current research relate to the criterion of credibility. Credibility as quality criterion relates to the claim of representing participants' statements as they were intended by the participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 217). This strikes the researcher as crucial because image analysis as data analysis method as applied in this research is inherently subjective and value-bound because the sensemaking and interpretation of an image cannot be undertaken by the analyst without relying on his or her experiences, cultural background, and values (Angelelli, 2004, 2). Therefore, the researcher is seeking for participant validation where clarification is needed. Participant validation is defined by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill

(2019, 218) as a strategy that would ‘permit [participants] to comment on and correct’ interpretations, observations, and notes taken by the researcher. A second strategy employed by the researcher to increase the credibility of her research was the writing of a chronological reflective diary which helped the researcher to analyze her data thoroughly and under consideration of alternative explanations. The researcher wants to report on all worldviews, prevalent values and themes equally regardless of their compatibility with the researcher’s own values to maintain fairness and truthfulness to participants and readers alike, and to enable readers an undistorted learning experience. Through keeping a reflective diary, the researcher kept a close track of her thoughts and feelings, which helped to identify personal biases and the standpoint of the researcher in the research.

Another quality criterion the researcher considered was transferability. While the researcher is not suggesting that her research methodology is suitable for all social contexts and participant groups, she wants to give the reader a thorough description of her research’s context, design, philosophical assumptions, research questions and aims, methods, findings, and interpretations. This shall enable the reader to make own judgements about the transferability of the present research to other contexts. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 217.)

4 Results

4.1 Group 1

Group 1's vision was portrayed in five images – one map and four corresponding images that gave details about specific objects/areas featured in the vision. On the map, the group has marked a central area framed from west to east by Puistokatu and Helsinginkatu and Itäinen Pitkäkatu in the south (see Figure 4). Added post-its contain the slogans *Greener Market Square* and *Elevated Highways*. A third post it raises the possibility of a pedestrian centre linked to a multi modal hub. Along Pihlajaniemi, the group has drawn a *Modern Area*, an establishment of a modern development area as one aspect of a more intense utilisation of the river side.

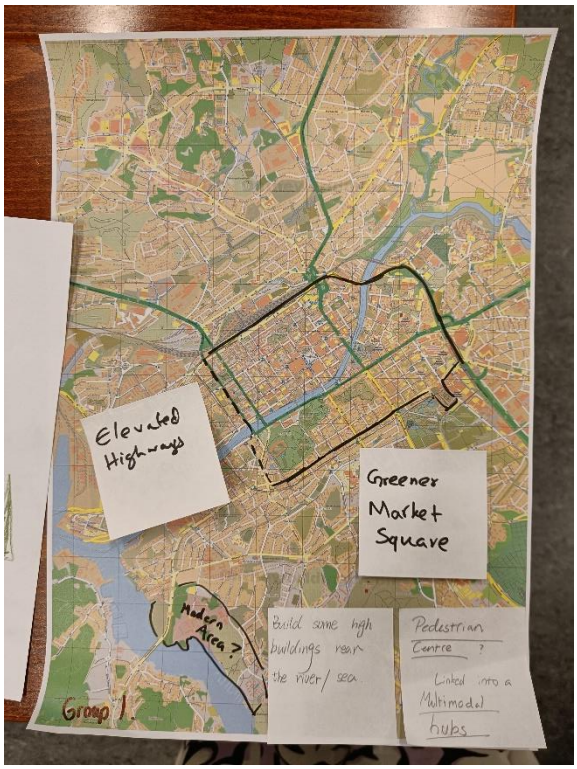

Figure 4 Map of Turku, Group 1

The image of the *Modern Area* (see Figure 5) mentioned above portrays several skyscrapers which, according to the description underneath the image, hosts a variety of entertainment activities: a cinema, a theatre, a spa, a casino, an entertainment park for children, and a shopping mall. The towers bring to mind the kind of vertical architecture that is often featured in future images of high-tech cities (Frewen Wueller, 2011). The third image is titled *Turku Eye* (see Figure 5) and shows a Ferris wheel near the water.

The London Eye was specifically mentioned as inspiration for this idea. The fourth image the group produced, named *Silence Movie* (Figure 5), shows a large screen. The *Silence Movie*, group members explained, would be a public event at the market square where citizens could come together to watch a movie silently, so people around the market square who do not wish to participate would not be disturbed.

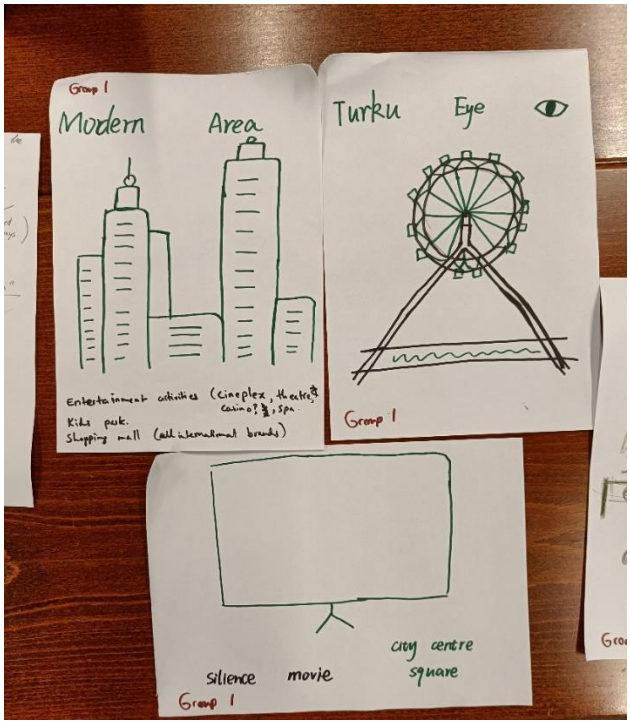

Figure 5 Modern Area, Turku Eye, and Silence Movie

The fifth image, named *Multi Modal Hub* (see Figure 6), presents a station for non-fossil fuelled vehicles near the railway station. The image shows a buss, bikes, e-scooters, electric cars at charging stations, a covered bus stop, and some small businesses. The *Hub* itself is surrounded by trees. As the group explained, in their visions, smaller *Hubs* which together build a network spanning the entire city would be found across the city and give citizens easy access to a variety of fossil-free modes of (public) transportation, making it easy to switch between different vehicles depending on traveller's personal demands and preferences. The *Hubs* would also host charging stations for electric vehicles.

Figure 6 The Multi Modal Hub

4.1.1 Litany

The codes which signify the visions' situatedness in the future include the skyscrapers of the *Modern Area*, and the smart mobility technology and infrastructure from the *Multi Modal Hub*. Furthermore, the demand for a greener market square and the depiction of nature surrounding the Hubs may be interpreted as another, albeit not "classic" futuristic code.

On the litany level, the images express the following demands:

1. The city should be greener.
2. We need a better transportation system – more flexible, more sustainable, more accessible!
3. The river estuary should become centre of modernity!

4.1.2 Social causes

Group 1's vision strongly represents the essence and the objectives of the smart city. Among the aims of smart cities are the achievement of improved living and economic conditions in the city, social inclusion, efficient resource management, and the inclusion of sustainability goals in economic decision-making to assure sustainable growth (Ojo, Curry & Janowski 2014). These aims are to be obtainable by reaching higher levels of

integration of technological innovations into existing network structures through the establishment of a centrally controlled infrastructure (Kumar et al., 2020). Proponents of the smart growth concept argue that smart cities may attract investors which would result in 'activating change' (Ojo, Curry & Janowski 2014). Group 1 allocated the responsibility in accordance with the general approach to smart city/ smart growth: The active engagement of citizens is a firm component of smart growth (Ojo, Curry & Janowksi, 2014), but it is the government's responsibility to build a centralised control and monitoring system (Kumar et al., 2020).

Smart mobility is one dimension of a smart city (Kumar et al, 2020) and constitutes the dimension represented the strongest by Group 1. It is concerned with all forms of locomotion and investigates opportunities to enhance the sustainability, convenience, and accessibility of urban mobility with the help of technology (Forum Virium Helsinki, 2024). The aims of smart mobility strongly align with the values Group 1 brought up in CLA-2 regarding urban mobility: Public transport was assignment environmental, financial, and social obligations. To fulfil not only these but also the demand for convenience and individuality, micro mobility and sharing services were added to the vision as integral features of urban mobility in a desirable future. The Group articulated the consequences of those values and demands for urban design in their vision of the *Multi Modal Hub* network. More than an expression of smart mobility, the *Hub* network is questioning current power dynamics between different traffic user groups, particularly questioning the role and space given to cars. Public transport as the most established feature of their vision can be somewhat excepted from this observation, but micro mobility and sharing services experience a substantial physical manifestation in Group 1's vision, thereby attaining a new status in the urban mobility environment.

From a planning and legal perspective, the researcher also believes that Group 1 addressed the current division of space for mobility and criticised it. As the physical manifestation the Group suggested does not currently exist, new innovations, such as electric scooters, have simply entered the public space (from the users' perspective). Parking spaces are often located on the sidewalks with consequences for pedestrians. Challenges exist to enable a seamless integration of these micro vehicles into existing traffic flows. Legislative changes have difficulties keeping up the pace, and even with the enactment of new laws to regulate the use of new mobility devices, users do not always comply with them, and this may have many reasons reaching from personal convenience

to concerns for personal safety. The representation of micro mobility and sharing services in Group 1's vision implies that members of the group belief in their long-term integration and benefit for Turku, but only under the condition that the adopters of new innovations and their needs find serious consideration in urban planning as part of a smart mobility network.

The macrosocial awareness for climate, environmental, and sustainability-related topics marks the least noticeable social cause in Group 1's vision. Instead of locating these issues solely on the level of scientists and high rank politicians, Group 2 acknowledged that climate change and all associated challenges essentially touch upon everybody's life and can no longer be excluded or ignored on the level of the individual.

4.1.3 Discourse/ Worldview

The central point of consideration in Group 1's vision is the relationship between sustainability and economic growth and the role technology plays in this liaison. Both economic prosperity and sustainability are portrayed as being equally important to ensure human prosperity. Group 1's approach to maintaining said prosperity can overall be considered technocentric: What is needed to reach a desirable, sustainable future that assures convenience and prosperity are funding for technological innovation, which is reached through economic growth. Technology is thus seen as the factor that changes the future of the individual and of the city as a whole by its ability to solve many contemporary urban and climate-related problems. Technology can save us and our way of life, is the message conveyed. Economic growth was specifically mentioned by Group 1 as a driver of sustainable development. In the images, Turku has become green at its centre and has built a number of skyscrapers along the river estuary that house both entertainment and technological innovation; elevated highways have been installed to support the transport infrastructure, but public transportation as such has become free to use and more sustainable thanks to renewable energy sources and their corresponding technologies. Group 1's images do not challenge the compatibility of economic growth and positive environmental outcomes as the decoupling of economic activities and ecological destruction has succeeded in their vision. As Calisto Friant and colleagues examined in their research, this worldview can also be extracted from multiple urban sustainability plans of cities across Europe, including Amsterdam and Copenhagen (Calisto Friant et al., 2023).

4.1.4 Myth and metaphor

Two metaphors started to crystallise already during the workshop and could be extracted from the material during the analysis. Those two metaphors are:

- The river estuary as a delta
- The *Turku Eye* as keeper and emissary of the archipelago

In the workshop, the Aura River estuary and the seaside were repeatedly referred to by Group 1 as a "delta". The group member who first proposed this title had a background in archaeology and later revealed that in suggesting the name he thought of the meaning of the Nile River and its delta in Ancient Egypt. Having been one of the oldest civilisations on Earth, Ancient Egypt fully depended upon the Nile as the only sufficient water source available in one of the driest areas on Earth (Oestigaard, 2018, p. 258, 260). Thus, the river and its delta stood for life in a general sense but also in cultural and economic terms. The metaphor of the delta in Group 1's work may thus be connoted with advanced culture, civilisation, and also fertility, if fertility is interpreted in economic terms as innovativeness and as capacity to "make the future". Group 1 located their *Modern Area* along this delta and gave it the aesthetic of steel-and-glass skyscrapers. The linkage between the delta metaphor, the concept of modernity, and vertical architecture is important to note as these three factors combined resemble the globally familiar image of present-day central business districts (CBDs) found in Shanghai, New York, or London. This internationally recognisable CBD aesthetic may have facilitated the group-internal process of finding a common language to express a shared desired future that also is in accordance with their worldviews because members of this group had no shared cultural background. Summarising the meaning of the first metaphor, the researcher suggests that Group 1's delta metaphor implies the meaning of the city as place that has the resources at its disposal to engender the future and nurture a civilisation and its culture.

The second element of deeper metaphorical meaning in Group 1's work was the *Turku Eye*. At the first glance, Turku Eye appears to be a tourist attraction by the shore. However, Group 1 described it as a landmark that would enable people to observe the

natural beauty of Turku's archipelago from a new perspective. Accordingly, the researcher suggests that the *Turku Eye* metaphor entails two parts:

1. *Turku Eye* as keeper and protector of the archipelago, keeping a sharp lookout for potential danger.

2. *Turku Eye* as emissary of the archipelago, enabling citizens a new perspective on their familiar homeland to increase their awareness of the archipelago's condition, needs, and vulnerabilities.

As discussed in the layer of social causes, individual awareness for the challenges climate change is confronting us with was valued highly by Group 1. The metaphor of the *Turku Eye* entails this value, too, as it "opens citizens' eyes" and stands as a symbol of awakening, recognition, and understanding. Of meaning may also be the location of the *Eye*; the Group did not pinpoint the exact imagined location; however, they did suggest that the *Eye* may not be too far away from the *Modern Area*. This proximity may symbolically represent what the Group's vision expressed already in their worldview and their considerations on social causes, namely that economic needs and environmental needs both must find consideration in a desirable future, and that they only go together.

4.2 Group 2

Group 2 expressed their vision in four images. Figure 7 on the following page presents the centre of Turku. It is characterised by a car-free zone delimited by Käsityöläiskatu, Läntinen Pitkäkatu, Aninkaistenkatu, and Läntinen Rantakatu. Within this zone, all parking lots were transformed into either parks or small community gardens, as can been seen in Figure 7 where all parking lots denoted on the map were tagged with tree symbols. The small star symbols on this map and on subsequent images of Group 2 mark locations reserved for small local businesses and events.

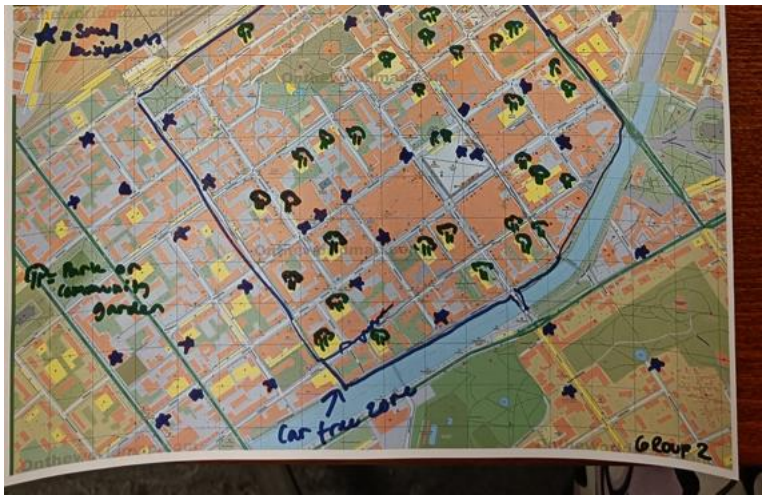

Figure 7 A map of Turku's centre, Group 2

Titled *The Market Square as a Huge Garden (also in Winter*), Figure 8 portrays a transformed market square whose centrepiece is a large greenhouse accommodating for a winter garden. Green patches and trees providing shadow, areas to sit, and a biking lane are all featured in the image. The availability of vacant space indicates that other events, including the weekly market, festivities, or demonstrations, can still take place. Surrounding houses in Figure 8 are only hinted at, allowing no conclusions about their design.

Figure 8 The market square as a huge garden (also in winter)

The image *Urban Gardens*, seen in Figure 9, presents apartment houses in Turku surrounded by community gardens that enable residents to grow their own food.

Figure 9 Urban gardens

The apartment buildings in Figure 7 resemble their counterparts in the present; the blue curtains featured in every one of the normal-sized windows of the apartment houses convey a sense of familiar cosiness associated with middle-class housing. Related to this image drawn onto a sticky-note (see Figure 10, upper right corner) titled *Rooftop Gardens*.

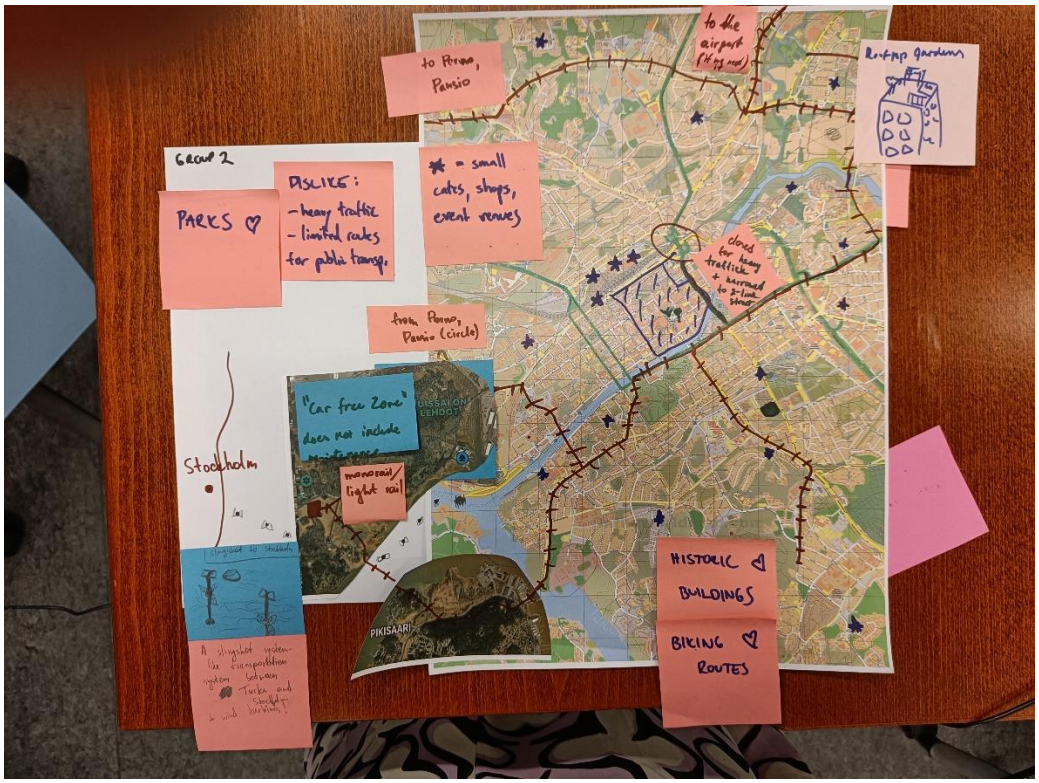

Figure 10 Group 2's collage of Turku

Figure 10 depicts Group 2's *Collage of Turku*. It features a monorail, the tracks of which both run around Turku and traverse it, depicted in the collage as struck-through red line. Figure 10 also contains Group 1's most out-of-the-box element, the *Slingshot to Stockholm* (blue sticky note on the lower lefthand side), which represents a new way and six times faster way of travelling between Turku and Stockholm via a large, wind-powered slingshot.

The collage features a number of sticky notes. Some of them clarify the meaning of individual symbols, others explain various elements in more detail. However, some sticky notes give the observer more information about the thinking of the group. For example, one of these notes reads 'Historic buildings ♥' and another one 'Biking routes ♥.'

4.2.1 Litany

Interestingly, there is only one classic futuristic code signalling viewers that they are unmistakably seeing an image of the future, and that is the *Slingshot to Stockholm* which appears futuristic through the novelty of its design that does not resemble any previous way of travelling. The other codes Group 2 used to signal the future diverge from the "classic" ones which include white and shiny technology, skyscrapers, or hyper urban spaces. Rather, Group 2 creates the feeling of being in the future by portraying a very green city that features various forms of modern experimentations with gardens (see Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023).

The four demands which can be distilled from the images are:

1. The city must become greener!
2. The city confers too much space to cars!
3. We need a way to travel to Stockholm using renewable energy!
4. Local and small businesses and events deserve support!

4.2.2 Social causes

Von Buttlar (2019, p. 12) asserts that profound shifts in the relationship between humans and nature historically not only exerted influence on the society and discourse about ethics

and morality, but also correlated with a reorientation in landscape design, a phenomenon that can be observed across all cultures and throughout history (Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023, 15). Today, trends observable on nearly all continents are pointing towards potential upcoming deep changes in the relationship between people and nature with profound possible impacts on landscape and urban design. For example, gardens and green spaces as features in and around social housing are endorsed by projects in Scotland (Edible Estates, 2024), challenging the old image of the garden as elite space by placing community interest in the front line, and promoting civic engagement and environmental stewardship through urban gardening (see Langemeyer et al., 2018). Ancient agricultural methods invented by indigenous people are being re-utilized in cities in Mexico (Floating Gardens) and the United States (e.g. Urban Foraging), aiming for higher levels of food security in cities on one hand, and the preservation of indigenous and ecological knowledge on the other (Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023, 190, 216). So-called post-plantations, for example in the Democratic Republic of Congo, operate on the interface of history and sustainability by cultivating gardens on former places of colonial oppression, turning them into places of reconciliation (Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023, 213).

The researcher proposes that Group 2's vision exhibits signs of a new emerging relationship between humans/ citizens and nature by raising new demands on urban design, such as generous space for communal gardening within the city to grow food and support urban self-sufficiency. A sticky note added to Group 2's collage furthermore hints towards the meaning of culture and history in their vision. Although not drawn, the care for historic buildings, thus for local history and memory, had high status for the group. This is pointing towards the same phenomenon that can be observed in some of the cases mentioned above, in which the green urban transition occurs simultaneously with a macrosocial return to local knowledge and history in search for an approach to live in harmony with nature.

The condition of the Baltic Sea played a pivotal role in Group 2's work and discussion. Being one of the most polluted seas on Earth with dangerously low oxygen levels (Owen, 2010), research indicates that the release of hazardous substances by humans into the Baltic Sea correlates with declining wildlife populations (Dietz et al., 2021). As Owen describes, hope for improvement is diminishing even within the

community of project leaders advocating for rapid actions to safe the Baltic Sea ecosystem (Owen, 2010). Members of Group 2 perceived this sense of growing hopelessness as well, but they did not give in on it, or, the researcher suggests, did not believe it is right to give in. The members of the group shared a sense of determination by principle. Similar to Group 1, the awareness for personal responsibility on the level of the individual played a significant role in bringing positive change about.

While Group 2 endorsed a strong connectivity between Finland and Europe, imagining *how* to do this in the least-invasive manner proofed to be a difficult endeavour. In their final approach, the *Slingshot to Stockholm*, offshore wind power generation is the foundation for new a way of travelling that opens a pathway to alternatives to cruise ships for crossing the Baltic Sea. According to Reckermann et al. (2022), shipping and transport in the Baltic Sea are direct drivers of acidification and the spread of invasive species (including algae), chemical and other contaminants, to name a few. Regarding future demand for wind power, Reckermann and his colleagues suggest that dual uses of offshore wind power production may be necessary in the future to respond to marine spatial planning problems likely to occur due to the sheer size offshore wind parks need to reach to generate the required amount of energy (Reckermann et al., 2022). In Group 2's vision, wind power production was combined with transportation. Efforts to harness wind power to reduce emissions on freight transport are being already experimented with, although they are not (yet) as speculative in their design as Group 2's invention; for example, the vessel *Pyxis Ocean* has wind sails to reduce the vessel's fuel consumption (Handley, 2023).

The distribution of local small businesses and event sites across Turku depicted in Group 2's work elicits associations with New Urbanism (NU) and the 15-minute city. The NU movement promotes human-scale neighbourhoods characterised by accessible public spaces which can be achieved through designing pedestrian-centred environments which provide mixed-use spaces for housing, shopping, and other activities as opposed to zoning practices that divide the urban space into monofunctional areas (Steuteville, 2018, 11; Sendra & Sennett, 2020, 21). These principles can be clearly identified in Group 2's work: housing areas are combined with communal gardening, event sites and small hubs for local businesses are across the city and in close proximity to residential areas, and additional third spaces have been erected.

4.2.3 Discourse/ worldview

From this level, the researcher observed the approach Group 2 took to ‘undefine’ the city (Inayatullah, 2008). Group members shared the belief that the city should be for everyone and explored in their visions the implications this belief could have for urban design. Although ideas such as rooftop gardens, car-free centres, and mixed-used environments are not unheard of, they nonetheless represent alternative ways of using and experiencing the city. Questions their vision raises include: What is the purpose of public space? What is a city centre supposed to do or resemble? And: Who is enabled, how are they enabled, and what are they enabled to do?

For Le Corbusier, one of the most influential urban designer and utopian of the twentieth century, city centres served purely as place where all major transportation axes converge to enable fast and efficient transportation between each of the monofunctional zones (Fishman, 1978, 190-191). Symbolising the concentration of power, the centre for Le Corbusier had no other value or function to fulfil (Fishman, 1978, 191). Group 2’s vision has a different view on the purpose and value of public space because the “default perspective” has been changed: The city is made sense of through the lens of the pedestrian, biker, and the resident. The idea of many small business and event hubs across the city instead of a concentration of these within the centre also constitutes a shift away from seeing the city as the totality of multiple clearly defined parts with unambiguous functions towards viewing the city as somewhat de-centralised entity with blurred boundaries. Closing off the centre for car traffic and downsizing Aninkaistenkatu into a 2-line street practically eliminates the pragmatic view on the centre as a place of commuting and turns it into the ultimate manifestation of the belief that the city is for everybody. The researcher also stresses the implicitness of the integration of nature into the notion of “everybody”.

4.2.4 Myth and metaphor

The garden is the most prominent metaphor in Group 2’s vision. Much of the concern Group 2 expressed with regard to the future was connected to biodiversity loss, the collapse of ecosystems, climate change and the loss of hope group members perceived around these topics. In times of crisis, gardens historically have been a manifestation of hope – hope made tactile, hope that can experienced with all senses, maintained and

grown through one's own hands. Throughout the 20th century to the present day, gardens and green spaces played a pivotal role in Europe – symbolically as well as practically – in times of war and displacement (Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023, 82). During both World Wars, allotment gardens where absolutely crucial to war-affected societies to somewhat tone down food shortages (Barthel & Isendahl, 2013), and growing one's own food became an act of national resistance and patriotism in many countries on both sides of the Atlantic (Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation & Nieuwe Instituut, 2023, 82-85). Symbolically, gardens are the antithesis to horrors experienced in war and to crises one is exposed to and feels helpless about, and this holds true outside the European context as well; they symbolize peace, vitality, happiness, and the ability to build something beautiful out of dust. As the Vitra Design Museum, Wüstenrot Foundation and Nieuwe Instituut (2023, 15) write, 'Every garden … has always been a place where futures were made and conceived.'

Two interesting details in Group 2's vision are the establishment of Ruissalo as a car-free island and the downsizing of the section of Aninkaistenkatu that passes through the envisioned green centre starting at the intersection of highways 9 and 1. Symbolically, both of these interventions may be understood as the creation of a portal or an entrance through which only those may pass who do not pose a danger to the green environment and the activities that lay behind these portals. Setting up a gate implies the simultaneous positioning of a gatekeeper whose position is characterised by being responsible for the care and protection of whatever he or she is guarding. In Group 2's vision, the citizens themselves constitute the ultimate protectors and carers of their green city, an image that is rooted deeply in the Christian heritage that shaped European cultures.

Table 1 on the following page summarises the findings of the CLA analysis of both groups' visions.

Table 3 Summary of the CLA analysis of both groups' visions

CLA Layer		Group 1	Group 2
Litany		The city centre should be greener! We need a better transportation system - more flexible, more sustainable, more accessible! The river estuary should become the centre of modernity!	The city should be much greener! The city confers too much space to cars! We need a way to travel to Stockholm using renewable energy! Local and small businesses and events deserve support!
(belongs to Litany)	**Futuristic Codes**	Skyscrapers, micro mobility (smart mobility) transportation network, an increase in green spaces	*Slingshot to Stockholm* as novel way of travelling, various forms of urban gardening
Social Causes		Principles of the *smart city* concept: sustainable growth, convenience, and better life quality achieved through the integration of technological innovation into existing networks. Sustainability-related topics have become unavoidable → emerging awareness for individual responsibility as driver of change.	Principles of New Urbanism (NU) & Garden City: return to human-scale neighbourhoods, pedestrian-friendly public spaces, mixed-used environments. Changing nature-human relationship gives rise to new demands on urban and landscape design (urban self-sufficiency; the reintroduction of traditional agricultural and ecological knowledge in cities). Perceived hopelessness regarding effects of human activities on climate & environment leads to determination by principle → awareness for individual responsibility as driver of change.
Discourse/ Worldview		Economic growth is a driver of sustainable development; economic prosperity and sustainability are equally important. We need technology to reach our goals.	Ecological boundaries steer development. The "default perspective" to navigate, understand and define the city has been changed to the perspective of the pedestrian, the biker, and the local.
Myth & metaphor		*Turku Eye* as keeper and protector of the archipelago, and as emissary to enable citizens to see the needs of their environment and take action.	Citizens/ residents as guards of the garden (traditional Christian image of the paradise/ Garden of Eden inhabited and cultivated by the first humans)

	The river estuary as delta symbolising innovativeness, progress, and the capacity to “make” the future.	The Garden as antithesis to hopelessness and crises → hope made tactile; hope that can be cultivated and grown. The garden as place where futures are conceived.

4.3 Similarities and differences between Group 1 and Group 2

At this point, the visions of both groups have been analysed in detail with the causal layered analysis, and the results have been presented in a condensed form in Table 1. The researcher finds it nonetheless helpful to point out to the reader the most interesting similarities and differences between the groups.

Essentially, the similarities are few in number, but their impact on the visions are so substantial that they mark the golden threads of the visions. Firstly, the visions of both groups portray societies that have become sensitised for climate change and for environmental protection on the level of the individual. Secondly, in both visions, the sensitisation for climate and environment-related matters resulted in high levels of personal/ citizen responsibility.

The role of citizens becomes evident on the level of myth and mythology. While both groups imagined a good future to be one in which citizens take responsibility for protecting their environment, a key difference shall be emphasised because it relates to deviating ontological beliefs expressed on the level of discourse and worldview. The citizen in Group 1's vision has been *made* aware of his or her responsibility by the environment; the development of awareness is seen as a process of awakening and learning. The adaptation that follows takes place at the interface of consumer/ citizen demands, ecological and climate pressure, economic demands, and government action. On the other hand, the citizen in Group 2 *inherits* responsibility; the realisation is a sudden one and comes from within the citizen, making responsible action (including protective measures) part of what constitutes a good resident.

Consequently, in Group 2's vision, the regular resident is the point of departure; how urban design can adapt to new patterns of behaviour and to a new relationship between residents and nature is the question that has been explored in this vision. The ecological boundaries are established as hard limits and orientation to development. In contrast, Group 1 portrayed a joined venture: To reach sustainability goals and protect the environment are important but, the group held, neither can this be accomplished without economic growth, nor would a future be desirable in which people have to give up on convenience and prosperity. The role technological innovation (and innovativeness as a capacity) as enabler of an eco-economic decoupling is of central importance. It would be

incorrect, however, to suggest that innovations were missing from Group 2's work, but the emphasis was stronger on the emergence of a new nature-citizen relationship.

The group members made insightful linguistic and artistic choices that may offer an insight in their overall attitude toward economic growth in relation to sustainability. A language of downscaling was used by Group 2 exclusively in a positive context: *small* businesses, *decreasing* consumption, *zero* waste, *small* schools, *communal* gardens and transformed parking *slots* were all seen as desirable features of a positive future, as members of Group 2 expressed verbally and in their images. A language of upscaling and magnification was used by Group 2 exclusively in negative contexts: *mega* schools, shopping *malls* and business *centres* owned by foreign corporations were among the fears group members revealed they worried about in CLA-1. An exception was their positive attitude to increased international cooperation and large infrastructural projects to connect Finland with central Europe through Sweden. Members of Group 2 were afraid that international study programmes at the University of Turku would end as a reaction to high rates of international students leaving Finland after graduation (Yle, 2023). In comparison, Group 1's vision portrayed several grand structures, namely the *Modern Area* and its skyscrapers, *Tuke Eye* as a huge Ferris wheel, and a large screen for the *Silent Movie*. The *Modern Area*, notably, would host international brands only. In conclusion, the researcher proposes that both groups through their linguistic and artistic choices expressed almost diametrically opposed attitudes to growth.

These ontological variations led to contrasting choices of the social causes the groups focussed on. Of particular interest to the researcher were the appearance of principles of smart growth (Group 1) and New Urbanism (NU; Group 2) as they somewhat constitute two sides of the same coin. Both urban design concepts deal with contemporary city problems, such as well-being and housing, but smart cities are looking through a technocentric lens to identify solutions (Kumar et al., 2020), which harmonises with Group 1's ontological beliefs, whereas NU adopts the perspective of the pedestrian as default, as Group 2 did. Whereas smart cities aim for a better integration of technological assets into existing networks to enhance the efficiency of an environment (Kumar et al., 2020), NU defines a desirable human-scale neighbourhood as an area in which residents have all essential destinations (e.g. home, grocery store, school, and workplace) within walking distance (Steuteville, 2018, 11). Notably, NU deploys the narrative of a journey into a more human-centred past: The Congress for the New

Urbanism (CNU) advocates for a ‘return’ to human-scale neighbourhoods (CNU, 2024). MacLeod (2013), too, defines the ‘return to “traditional” pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods’ as one of the goals of the NU approach. Thus, unsurprisingly, these values were translated by both groups into diverging aesthetics: Group 1 portrayed modernist glass-and-steel skyscrapers which herald a new chapter that tells of the future, not the past (Frewen Wuellner, 2011).

Finally, on the litany level, similarities re-appear regarding the topics that where problematised by the groups (amount of urban green spaces, transport and mobility, businesses and economic potential) but these can now be contemplated under consideration of their contrasting roots.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

By investigating the images of desirable futures for the City of Turku applying a feminist utopian approach, the aim of this research was to test the applicability of feminist utopianism as a workshop method that provides participants with a safe space to jointly explore, discuss, and express their visions and desires for the future of the City of Turku. Another aim was to give room to the voices of citizens as stakeholders which are immediately affected by urban development but traditionally lack the possibilities and means to participate in urban development processes. The participants of this research are residents of the City of Turku. In this study, the researcher understood residents or citizens of Turku through the concept *of social citizenship* defined by Tritter & McCallum (2006). Thus, a clear distinction was made between the citizen as legal entity, and the resident-citizen whose residence is defined by his or her relationships with the place. Thus, in the context of this research, people were considered citizens of Turku if they have a relationship with the city and its institutions by living in Turku, regardless of their nationality.

The concept of the image of the future within the theory of social change by Bell & Mau, (1971) was discussed. Utopias were discussed as one type of image of the future that is inherently concerned with social change, whereby feminist utopias were detangled from traditional utopias, and the utopia as a method and attitude was proposed as a more contemporary counterproposal to the traditional utopia proper. This has been accomplished by comparing the dominating academic and public discourse about utopianism with alternative approaches rooted in ecologist and feminist discourse. Because the participation of underrepresented voices is intrinsic to feminist utopianism, the multifaceted nature of participation in a literature review was thereafter explored and underlying epistemological assumptions of Arnstein's ladder of participation (see Arnstein, 2019) as the leading framework for planning and evaluation participatory projects were problematised.

A CLA-PUS workshop was conducted in which participants in groups explored their fears and hopes before expressing their joint visions of a desirable future for Turku in a participatory utopian sketching exercise. The CLA-PUS workshop framework applied in this research has been adapted from the original participatory utopian sketching methodology by Törnroth et al. (2022). The CLA-PUS workshop framework is consistent

with the principles of feminist utopian thinking as defined by Bardzell (2018): It is a process-oriented tool that investigates multiple possible future pathways; it is democratically participative; the created visions are a situated critique of the present; the workshop has been designed to promote the voices of parties commonly underrepresented in urban development; and the reality of fear and conflict were acknowledged in the workshop design to motivate ideation. A workshop was chosen as data collection method as it best represents the explorative nature and participative approach of the current research. Subsequently, the created images of the future were analysed in an image analysis via CLA to extract and analyse the different layers of meaning behind the images regarding their connection to the present, their worldviews, and collective myths and metaphors.

This chapter presents the key findings of this research and discusses their meaning. The discussion is followed by a statement regarding the limitations of the research, and the researcher's recommendations. Finally, the chapter ends with the researcher's concluding thoughts.

5.1 Answering the research questions

The research found answers to the research questions stated at the beginning:

1. What are the images of desirable futures for the city of Turku created using a feminist utopian approach?

    a. What values, themes, and worldviews are embedded in the created images?

The groups from the workshop created two very different images of the future. Group 1 presented a vision in five images. The main elements of their images included a green and car-free pedestrian central area, a *Modern Area* along the river estuary and shoreline resembling a central point for entertainment, international business, and innovation, the *Multi Modal Hub* which resembles a smart network of micro mobility solutions, the Silent Movie, and the *Eye of Turku*, a giant Ferris wheel.

The analysis of the images through CLA revealed that Group 1 had expressed the future through a steel-and-glass skyscraper aesthetic mixed with elements of the green city. The criticism of the present may be summed up thus: The city should be greener; the

transport system should be more sustainable, more accessible, and more flexible; the river estuary has a unique potential for development. Group 1's vision contains strong characteristics of a smart city, in which policymakers play a key role in enabling both citizen participation and the infrastructure. The society-wide acknowledgement of individual and collective responsibilities to ensure a positive future is the second major cause of positive change. Group 1's vision represents the worldview that economic growth can be decoupled from ecological destruction and can drive sustainable development. Environmental protection and sustainable economic growth are seen as equally important. In this worldview, technological innovation is seen as the enabler of decoupling economic activity from ecological collapse. Group 1's vision entailed two interesting metaphorical elements: the *Turku Eye* as guardian and emissary of Turku's local nature, and the river estuary as delta which may indicate an understanding of the city as place of innovation and "enabler of the future." Table 4 summarises the themes and values of Group 2's images of the future.

Table 4 Summary of Group 1's most prevalent themes and values

Themes	**What is valued?**
Roles & responsibilities of different stakeholders; constitution of 'the good citizen'	Growing individual & collective sense of responsibility to enable positive future. Consideration (for people and nature), reflected in consumer choices
Relationship between economy and ecology	Holistic approach → human prosperity is important; it can only be maintained by reconciliating economic activity with sustainability goals through technology
The urban experience	International cooperation Convenience, flexibility (in transport) Social justice and accessibility Mental health considered in urban design Encounters with nature in the city
Role of technology	Innovativeness, openness

Group 2 presented a vision in four images. The codes Group 2 used to signal the futuristic character of its vision included a wide spectre of presently existing urban gardening projects, and the *Slingshot of Sweden* as unprecedented way of travelling

between Turku and Stockholm. On the litany level, the images criticised the present Turku for not being green enough, for conveying too much space to car infrastructure, for the absence of environmentally friendly ways to travel to Stockholm, and for a lack of support for small local businesses. Three social causes denoted key factors of positive change in their vision: Firstly, a changing human-nature relationship puts new demands on urban design. Secondly, the answer to the deterioration of hope in the present is a pragmatic "determination by principle" to save the environment. Thirdly, Group 2 followed principles of New Urbanism, a back-to-human-scale approach to urban design that favours small distances and walkable neighbourhoods. Worldview-wise, the images very likely indicate that ecological boundaries should be perceived as hard limits guiding further development. Additionally, the world*view* seems to have changed quite literally in Group 2's vision as the city is navigated and seen from the perspective of the local and the pedestrian and their needs, which lead to an exploration of urban self-sufficiency and the distribution of local businesses. The most prominent metaphor in Group 2's work is the garden as a symbol of hope, the harmony between human and nature, and as a holy environment to be guarded by residents. Table 5 below summarises the most prevalent themes and values Group 2 worked on.

Table 5 Summary of Group 2's most prevalent themes and values

Themes	**What is valued?**
Roles & responsibilities; constitution of 'the good citizen'	Acknowledgement of existing individual & collective responsibility in enabling positive change. Immediate and profound action.
Relationship between economy and ecology	Ecological boundaries are valued as hard limits that guide human development.
The urban experience	Urban self-sufficiency Human-scale infrastructure (walkable, small distances) Knowledge about local edibles (reconnecting food production to residents) Protecting local cultural heritage Connection to geographic neighbour (Sweden) Encounters with nature in the city

	Support for small and local infrastructure, businesses, and events in Turku.

The main results show that both groups, despite significant differences on the worldview level, investigated nearly the same themes. The role of technology as a key theme in the work of Group 1, but not Group 2, is likely related to the differences in worldview. If the assumption is that economic activity can be decoupled from environmental destruction through technological innovation, the role of technology in a desirable future must necessarily be a key concern. Because Group 2's vision did not suggest such a decoupling, the role of technology did not play as much a role as the changes in the human-nature relationship and interaction and the consequences thereof for the design of urban space.

5.2 Discussing key results in the area of participation

The current research can make multiple valuable contributions to the benefits of participative projects. As made visible by the summary of results, the creative utopian sketching exercise had led to a discussion and exploration of the concepts of urban life, the urban experience, and "the good citizen". This is consistent with previous work done by De Lange (2019) who argued that playful and creative methodologies in urban development stimulate a discussion about the characteristics of a "good citizen" and the elements that constitute urban life.

Furthermore, based on Collins and Ison (2009) and Kahila-Tani (2016), it was argued that participative projects in urban development may foster participants' systemic thinking. The current research results indicate that the workshop methodology indeed succeeded in doing so, as reflected in some of the statements participants made during the workshop. During the sketching exercise, both groups realised the interconnectedness of problems within the urban realm. One participant from Group 2 made the following realisation during the sketching process:

> "It is so difficult. When people move to Turku they need houses, and you need to build houses for people to live in. But then, you cannot use that space anymore for other projects you want to do."

Another participant from Group 1 made the following insightful remark during the reflection part:

> "With no experience in urban development, it is fascinating to realise how many things are going into it. How do we distribute space? … How to make it work? I had all these bombastic ideas and then [my teammates] included something and said, 'Uh, that's a problem! How do we deal with that?' There is always something we have to look into. It never ends. For someone who has never done it before, it was overwhelming, and I can see that we definitely need to do this more and include more people into this because all these interesting aspects might just be ignored."

Previous research had also suggested that citizen participation may foster empathy and mutual understanding between different parties (Tritter & McCallum, 2009; Kahila-Tani, 2016). Somewhat to the surprise of the researcher, the current research can support this claim. The following statement was made by a participant from Group 1 during the reflection part and earned general agreement from all participants:

> "We often blame the policymakers when we encounter some inconvenience, but engaging in this kind of action showed how difficult it is to come up with policies and implement those. That is eye-opening."

One participant from Group 2 had a similar feeling and shared the following statement with the others:

> "It was reassuring to see that different people have the same pains and love the same [things] … and have quite common goals as well. Brings a piece of hope."

The researcher also proclaims that the CLA-PUS workshop contributed to the exchange between residents of Finnish and non-Finnish origin. One participant from Group 1 shared:

> "I feel very happy to be here today because while we are discussing or sharing our ideas, we have our different cultures … I think it was very meaningful here, today. I am from China, and I think we should learn about the Finnish lifestyle."

Two participants, one from Finland and the other one from Sri Lanka, compared their different views on Finland and the Finnish peoples' relationship to nature. While the Finnish participant perceived Turku foremost as a concrete-heavy city, the participant from Sri Lanka perceived Finland as both technologically advanced and nature friendly.

This impression of Finland in combination with her experience of the Finnish winter (which was described as ‘gloomy’) inspired her to imagine a green market square.

Overall, sketching as a method has been received positively by participants. As a group activity, the current research suggests that it fostered the dialogue between participants. The utopian approach, in which there are no creative limitations, supported participants’ ability consider their possibilities and the challenges they are facing. However, the sketching exercise only showed limited success in facilitating the emergence of novelty, the *Slingshot to Stockholm* being the exception. This was also remarked by a participant from Group 2:

> “I enjoyed [the workshop] as well. There weren’t many surprises or revelations, except the *Slingshot*. I especially liked the CLA exercise, but the sketching was interesting as well.”

One reason why more novel elements failed to emerge may be a phenomenon Lively et al. (2021) call the ‘principle of minimum departure’ which describes a heuristic that leads individuals to think of future worlds as places that are similar in appearance and structure to a world which they already familiar with. This principle is similar to the concept of anticipatory assumptions which describe those assumptions about the future that limit our ability to imagine truly alternative futures as we let elements and worldviews of the present enter our image of the future unchallenged (Ahvenharju, 2023).

Reading the workshop results of Groups 1 and 2 in the context of the City of Turku’s existing ambitious urban development plans and goals led to interesting conclusions. The city’s current climate plan, approved in 2018, upholds the goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2029 (City of Turku, 2024a). The climate actions undertaken so far include a smart chemistry park, a sustainable city district (Skanssi), and the Topinpuisto circular economy hub (City of Turku, 2024a). These measures all bear similarities to themes and values prevalent in the workshop. For example, the smart chemistry park, the sustainable development district, and the circular economy hub are not unlike the *Modern Area* Group 1 imagined, in that places are created in the city that are dedicated to research and development, collaboration, education, and most of all innovation.

Further actions related to Turku’s climate goals include the inclusion of rentable bikes into Turku’s public transport system, and the commitment to increase the number of urban parks and green infrastructure as part of the city’s Sustainable Energy and

Climate Action Plan (City of Turku, 2024a). This resonates with the values expressed in both workshop groups' visions, explicitly with the image of the preferred urban experience in the future in which residents use carbon-free ways to commute through the city and enjoy access to more urban green infrastructure and parks. Additionally, Group 2's strong emphasis on values related to food systems – including self-sufficiency, and the promotion of knowledge and opportunity to know and grow your own food in urban green areas– is represented in the city's Roadmap Toward Resource Wisdom (City of Turku, 2024c).

Whereas the city plans related to urban greenery focus on the mitigation of carbon emissions and strengthening of adaptive capacities, the researcher wants to highlight that in the workshop, the groups additionally considered urban greenery projects in the context of supporting residents' mental health, especially during the winter months. Both groups suggested the city centre as place for such interventions; Group 1 simply proposed a green market square, and Group 2 came forward with the idea of a greenhouse that would give citizens a green space to socialise in wintertime. This result may be due to an overall increased sensibility for the importance of mental health and/or to an awareness for the extent of the current mental health crisis (see European Council, 2024).

The City of Turku's participation in international networks and commitments – for example the Local governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), and the voluntary EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy commitment - may likewise resonate with the groups' desire for connectivity with local and regional governments that share similar goals for the future. Noteworthy from the researcher's perspective is the networking effort between *local* governments and initiatives in which the City of Turku participates, as this sought-for balance between international collaboration and local action is similar to the value-proposition by Group 2.

On the other hand, Turku is also a founding member of the Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) which is a network of cities from countries along the Baltic Sea coast who are united in their efforts to develop smart city solutions (City of Turku, 2024b). Their aims include the promotion of cities as drivers for smart growth that would benefit resource efficiency and sustainability efforts, and the development of cities as hubs of democracy, safety, inclusivity, and active citizen participation (City of Turku, 2024b). This in turn relates closer to values expressed in the vision of Group 1 whose attempt also

included these aims and characteristics of the smart city imaginary. While the smart city approach is popular with numerous European cities (see Calisto Friant et al., 2023), the researcher wants to stress that the image of a desirable future in which societies rely mainly on (partly not-yet existing) technologies to solve existing problems and bring about growth can be described as a tech-utopia (Bina, Inch & Pereira, 2020), whereby the utopia is not a method but a rigid image that is targeted. The researcher thus warns against forgetting that these technologies, whether they already exist or are assumed to be invented at some ill-defined point in the future, have owners in whose interest it is that a firm believe exists in the inevitability of their products and in their ability to reconciliate ongoing economic growth in its current understanding with ecological health. Proponents of tech-utopian visions often favour technocratic ways of knowing (Bina, Inch & Pereira, 2020). However, this research through its feminist utopian approach challenges precisely the notion that the designation of one way of knowing as superior to all others would lead to desirable results. On the contrary, an uncritical approach to smart growth that relies heavily on large infrastructures to function might lead to technologically determined futures that fail to keep their promises regarding diversity and inclusiveness, safety, and participation.

Lastly, one participant's disappointment about residents' current access to information about local developments strikes the researchers as important because citizen participation, education, and mobilisation are heavily emphasised in Turku's current development plans, such as the roadmap toward resource wisdom (City of Turku, 2024b). The participant's complaint went as follows:

"I hate that most local news is now behind a paywall in *Turun Sanomat*."

Participative efforts repeatedly fail to reach or appeal to eligible candidates of lower socio-economic status despite honest efforts to do so (see Törnroth et al., 2022; Pham, McClintock & Duchemin, 2022). The researcher thus argues that financial hurdles to gain access to critical analyses from reliable sources concerning local urban development may constitute one barrier to enabling more residents to inform themselves about and participate in urban development.

5.3 Ideas for alternative workshop elements and focus groups

Undertaking the current research has convinced the researcher that feminist utopian thinking as a method has the potential to foster participants' systemic thinking about complex problems and support their ideation about positive alternative futures in a groupwork context. The results of this study, the researcher believes, also constitute a good foundation for further discussions about urban development and how to find a way of creating positive futures inclusively.

However, the small number of visions created and analysed for this study constitute a limitation to its significance, and further research revealing further visions would be in the best sense of both participative action and feminist utopianism. Unconsidered perspectives may arise when conducting further research with participants of a specific underrepresented group, for example elderly people, families with young children, children and adolescents, poor people, or immigrants. Each of these groups faces specific challenges to participate, reaching from physical impediments to a lack of time, lack of consideration of individual needs, language barriers, and undervaluation. Enabling these groups to explore desirable alternative futures through utopian sketching may reveal new perspectives on contemporary problems and may unveil unconsidered opportunities for positive and more inclusive change. In order to promote empathy and understanding between different stakeholders, future research and workshops of the kind facilitated in this study may aim for a participant blend of policymakers, business owners, and citizens alike.

One of the researcher's ideas for alternative workshop elements came to her while observing the play of her nephew, nine years old, who used his box of mixed Lego© bricks to build alternative landscapes (see Figure 11). This element might be suitable alternative to the sketching exercise. While expressing an image of the future through bricks eliminates linguistic barriers and may not cause possible embarrassment about limited artistic talent, this approach would quite literally ask participants to "build the future" three-dimensionally. This proposes an interesting alternative to sketching two-dimensional drawings. However, sufficient time and a large variety of bricks and building elements would be necessary preconditions for such an exercise. Alternatively, this kind of exploration and externalisation of alternative visions may also be part of other participative projects than a workshop, for example a call to urban youth to build their

desired futures using building bricks and other materials at their disposal and take photos of them, to be exhibited in public to stimulate discussions.

Figure 11 Building alternative futures with Lego bricks (researcher's own image)

The second idea refers back to the original workshop framework by Törnroth et al. (2022) which suggests starting the workshop with a walk through the physical space. The researcher believes that this approach may be most useful in a utopian sketching workshop that concentrates on desirable futures of individual neighbourhoods or parts of the city. While the current research was analysing images of desirable futures of the entire city, the workshop methodology can be adapted to exploring alternative futures of smaller parts of the city, and in those cases a physical walk is more feasible and may lead to images of desirable future that are both well-grounded in local knowledge and are highly place specific.

5.4 Limitations of this research

The researcher of the current thesis is aware of the limitations of her work. For one, the visions produced by the participants of the workshop are very low in number and thus do not represent the full range of visions of all of Turku's residents. Also, all of the participants of the current study have or have had access to higher education, which is seen by the researcher, herself the first in her core family to attend university, as an undeniable privilege. However, the researcher suggests that these limitations should best

serve as motivation to continue participative projects of this kind, adapted to the needs and capabilities of different and less privileged groups, to investigate their visions of desirable alternative futures for Turku.

Another limitation relates to the method of data analysis. Image analysis is inherently subjective. The researcher of this thesis maintains that sensemaking is an inherent part of analysing any image, and any observer has only their own knowledge, values, and experiences at their disposal to make sense of what they see, with consequences for the further course of the analysis. This assumption follows the reasoning of Angelelli (2004, 2) who holds that interpreters, by nature of being human, perceive the world through their own lens which has been shaped by their socio-cultural backgrounds. Hence, absolute objectivism cannot be achieved and should not be expected.

Additionally, the researcher of this thesis is not Finnish and did not grow up in Finland, despite having lived here for over six years. This was a limitation in two ways: Firstly, it was a linguistic limitation since the researcher does not yet speak fluent Finnish, which had a considerable impact on the choice of possible participants. Secondly, finer nuances and codes within the images that have to do with the Finnish history, culture, and mythology may have remained unrecognised by the researcher due to a different (albeit still European) cultural background. The latter limitation can be somewhat weakened by highlighting that half of the participants had an other-than-Finnish cultural background and neither of the groups consisted entirely of either Finns or non-Finns, and thus the visions are the result of cross-cultural dialogue and compromise.

5.5 Concluding words

The current thesis due to its explorative character enabled the researcher to study the less well-known sides of utopias and utopian thinking that had little do to with the rigid images of ideal and homogenous societies created by single individuals. To ignore alternative approaches to utopianism, such as feminist utopianism, is to ignore the courage, wisdom, and wealth of thought that utopias of suppressed groups contain, not to mention the strength they gave and continue to give to the tireless efforts to end injustices inflicted upon them. The researcher believes that feminist utopian thinking as defined by Bardzell (2018) and the concept of utopia as method (Levitas, 2013) and as attitude (Bloch, 1986) opens up a unique space to imagine courageous futures both unprecedented and positive. The researcher also believes that such spaces are needed in the current time in which

positive future images are moderated by powerful industries or political entities who follow clear financial and political agendas, whilst the vast majority of people is excluded from the discussion about desirable futures and told that to voice a “utopian” idea is to voice a foolish idea of little use.

Previous to the workshop, people the researcher talked with about her study expressed their concerns that participants might come up with completely unhinged visions, if given the creative freedom to draw out their desires. The researcher herself did not share these concerns because her research of utopias from underprivileged groups during the literature review revealed that the utopias of these groups often deal with very fundamental human needs, including the absence of fear of violence in public, equality, and life in a community (Brodsky & Nalebuff, 2015). In accordance with this prior research, the results from this study were equally far from visions detached from reality. On the contrary, the participants of the current study barely used traditional futuristic codes and their images were critiques deeply rooted in the present.

It is true that not much novelty emerged from the workshop, but the researcher believes that to expect such results would disregard that half of the participants had no prior experience with futures research, and to them the task they were facing was entirely new. The researcher is therefore convinced that similar participative projects that work with creative and playful methods would benefit the collective capacity to imagine alternative futures. With regard to citizen participation, the current research thus argues that participative utopias foster a number of capabilities which support residents as agents of change in urban development: systemic thinking, tolerance for diverging values, and empathy. Participative utopian sketching does not mean to solve urban problems; its value lies in strengthening collaboration and inspiring both participants and observers.

Seyla Benhabib (1992, 229) upholds that women risk losing a lot by giving up hopes in the unprecedented. The researcher would go further and argue that this risk applies to all of us in the face of the challenges ahead.

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