



Realizing the transformative potential of street experiments

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Why experiment with city streets?

What are city street experiments?

How can city street experiments be transformative?

Multiple and evolving uses, both symbiotic and conflicting



(Photo: Koos van Zanen)

Different street arrangements / urban orders are possible

Amsterdam, Damstraat



1981

(Stadsarchief Amsterdam)



2021

(Google Streetview)

Street arrangements / urban orders can be contested



What are city street experiments?

“An intentional, temporary change of the street use, regulation and/or form, aimed at exploring systemic change in urban mobility and public space” (Bertolini, 2020)

On a ‘normal’ day



As ‘Living street’



‘Leefkade’ Hugo de Groot

(Photos: Luca Bertolini)

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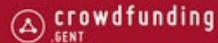
How can city street experiments be transformative?

- Street experiments must be **prefigurative**, e.g., conceived as **transition experiments**: “short-term actions through which alternative structures, cultures, and practices are explored” (Roorda et al., 2014):
 - Radical
 - Challenge driven
 - Feasible
 - Strategic
 - Communicating / mobilizing

LEEFSTRAAT

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STEUN
DIT INITIATIEF VIA
CROWDFUNDING



SCHRIJF JE IN OP ONZE
NIEUWSBRIEF

email address

SCHRIJF IN

The 'living street' ('leefstraat') in Ghent

<http://www.leefstraat.be/>



inloggen



Radical: streets for people not for cars

Challenge driven: sustainable urban mobility

Feasible: temporary, resident-initiated, government/NGO-facilitated

Strategic: experience, city-wide debate

Communicating / mobilizing: public space, website



BEKIJK ALLE LEEFSTRATEN

How can city street experiments be transformative?

- We must **link prefigurative politics** (experiments), **contentious politics** (social movements and political protests), **and institutional politics** (procedural democracy)
 - A 'multi-political approach' (Schiller-Merkens, 2022)
 - Linking = 'organizing within and between'

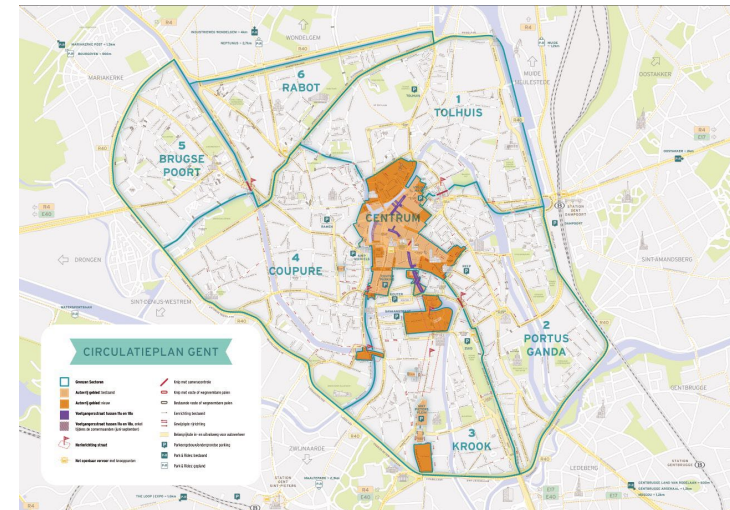
Prefigurative politics

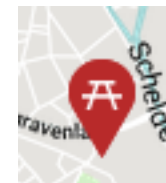
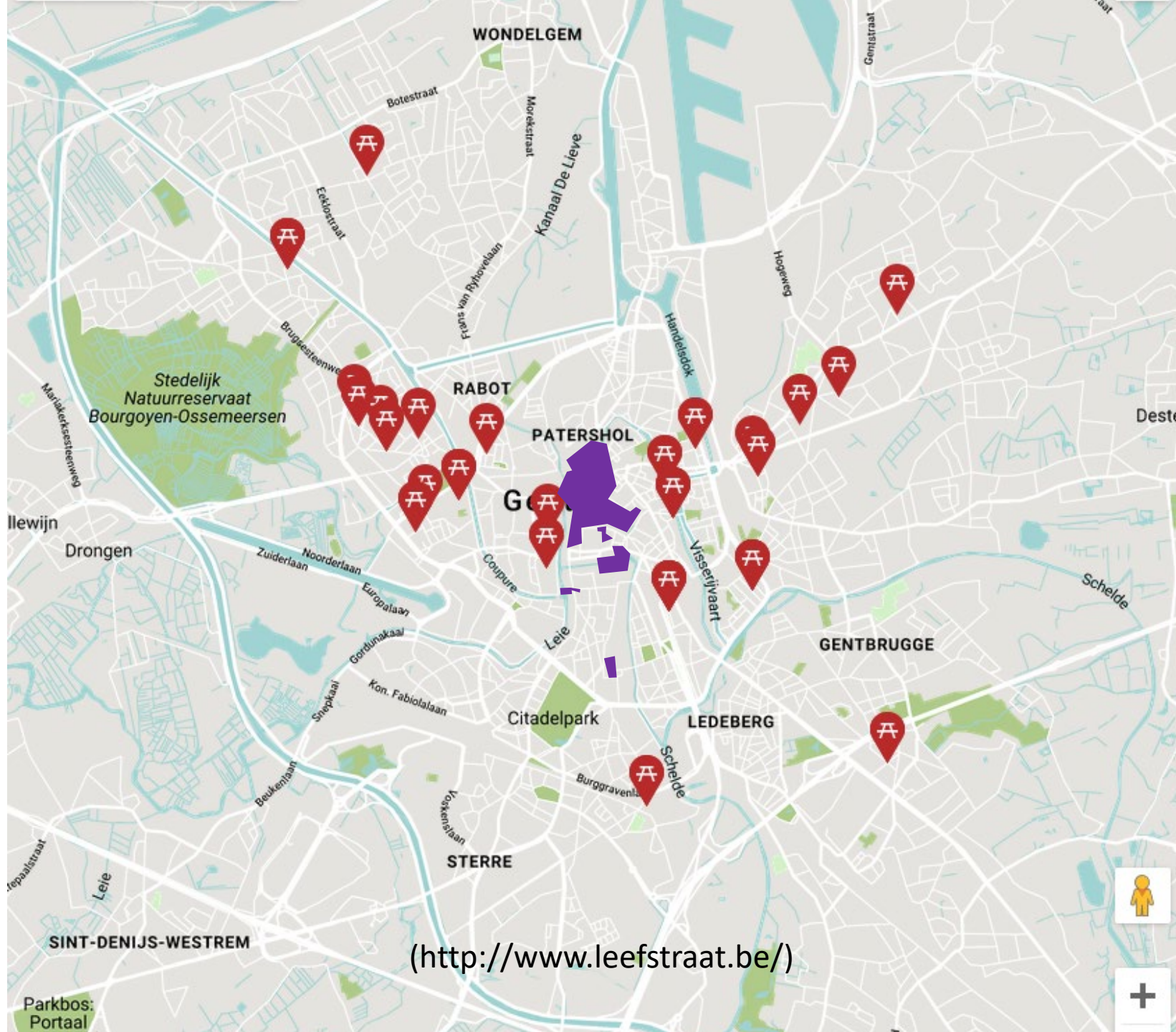


Contentious politics



Institutional politics





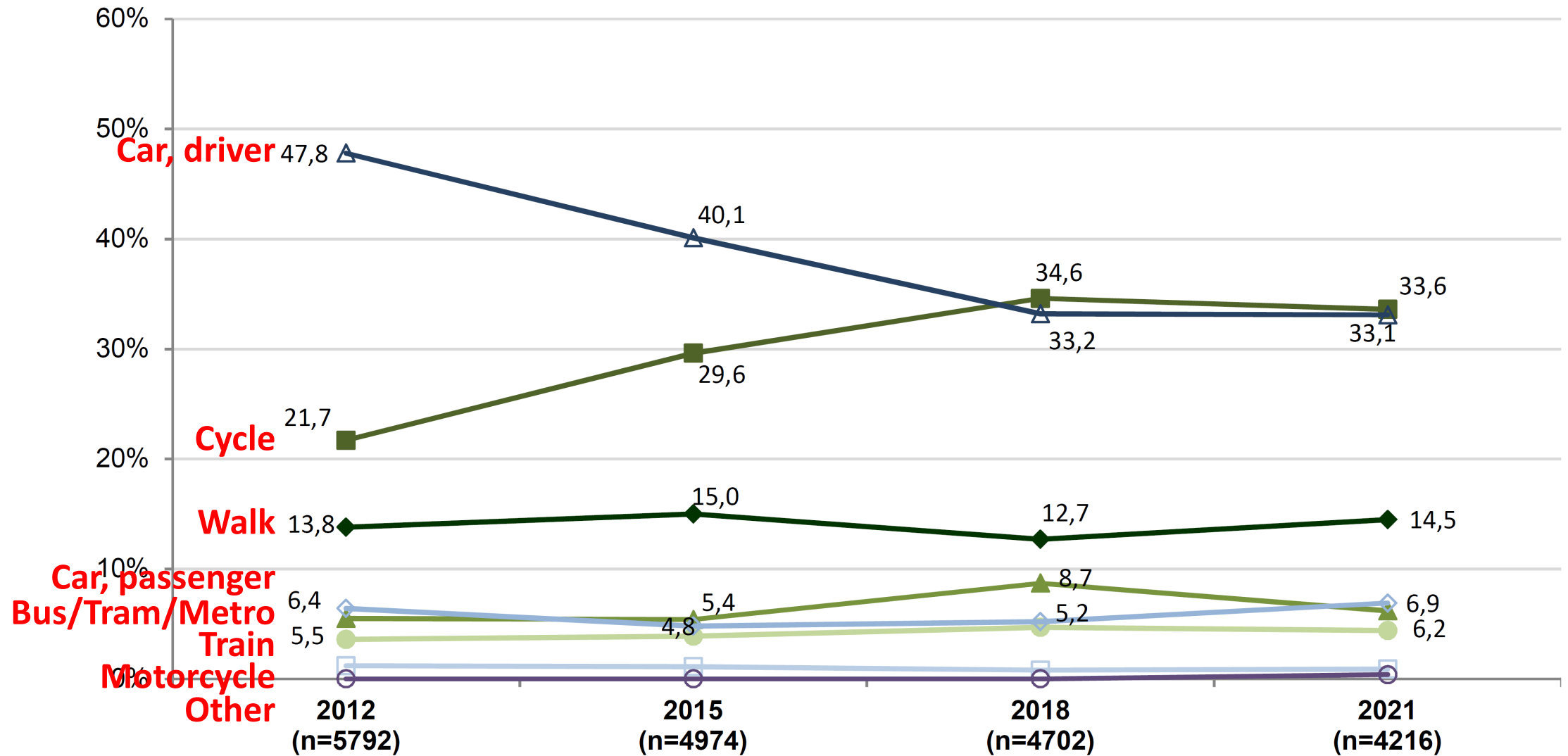
Living streets
2012-2016



Car free areas
Circulation plan
2017

(<http://www.leefstraat.be/>)

Ghent's mobility transition



Ghent, modal share, all trips, 2012-2021 (Onderzoeksbureau M.A.S., 2022)

A photograph of a school square in Bologna, Italy. In the foreground, three children are sitting on wooden crates. Two girls are on the left, one in a white jacket and one in a brown jacket, both looking towards the camera. A boy in a red jacket is sitting on a crate to the right, looking down at something in his hands. A colorful backpack is on the ground next to him. The pavement is painted with large, colorful geometric shapes in yellow, orange, and red. White text is painted on the pavement, including "SALUTE" in large letters on the right. In the background, there are several multi-story brick buildings, a white van, and other people walking. A large, leafy tree is on the left side of the frame.

Bologna, school squares ...

(Photo: Margherita Caprilli)

London, low-traffic neighbourhoods ...



(Photo: Wikimedia – CC)





RUHR.2010
Kulturhauptstadt Europas

Still-Leben
Ruhrschnellweg

40

Duisburg ↑

Still-Leben
Ruhrschnellweg

40

Let's do it!

References

- Bertolini, L. (2020). From “streets for traffic” to “streets for people”: can street experiments transform urban mobility?. *Transport reviews*, 40(6), 734-753.
- Roorda, C., J. Wittmayer, P. Henneman, F. Steenbergen, N. van, Frantzeskaki, & D. Loorbach (2014) *Transition management in the urban context: guidance manual*. Rotterdam: DRIFT, Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Schiller-Merkens, S. (2022). Social transformation through prefiguration? A multi-political approach of prefiguring alternative infrastructures. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 47(4), 66-90.