The hidden city of immigrants in Helsinki's urban leftovers

The homogenization of the city and the lost diversity

Hossam Hewidy
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Cities acknowledge the diversity of their population and consider the multicultural component a richness of their socio-cultural assets. Immigrants contribute to the reshaping of urban space in many European cities through their amenities. Such amenities, be they secular or spiritual, are a clear spatialization of multiculturalism. Ethnic retail is an emerging phenomenon in Helsinki, and it has increasingly replaced declining independent mainstream retail. Often, clusters of immigrant amenities are formed around Muslim prayer rooms activating a mosque-bazaar alliance that enjoys a dynamic footfall. Such a setting takes place spontaneously and typically at abandoned spaces, called in this dissertation urban leftovers. The leftovers are located in, or nearby, the neighbourhoods with a relative overrepresentation of immigrant population. However, these neighbourhoods are exposed to urban renewal steered by anti-segregation policy, thus facing the threat of erasure.

This dissertation examines the capacity of urban planning to plan for diversity. It further studies the characteristics that ethnic retail requires to survive and emerge. The paradigm of The Right to the City is deployed to interpret the response of urban planning to multiculturalism. The findings are numerous. First, immigrant amenities prove their capability to play a role in place making and act as catalysts for public life recovery. Second, in doing so the created places not only fulfil the socio-cultural needs of immigrants, but they also attract mainstream clientele. Third, spontaneity, improvisation and authenticity are the main characteristics empowering the emergence of ethnic retail. However, the findings also show a failure of urban planning to reflect multiculturalism in the growth of the city. Often, the retail premises used by immigrants are demolished. Furthermore, conventional planning as well as alternative planning methods, such as scenario planning and urban planning competitions, have failed to reflect immigrants in the development. The main constraint preventing planning from being multicultural is the absence of a political interest and, accordingly, a clear vision to deal with the spatialization of multiculturalism. On the contrary, the clear vision of the city is its anti-segregation policy, which is by nature a homogenizing mechanism. Thus, the dissertation concludes that immigrants’ Right to the City has been ignored.

Keywords multiculturalism, immigrant amenities, right to the city, urban planning, urban renewal
Tekijä
Hossam Hewidy

Väittöskirjan nimi
Maahan muuttaneiden kätetty kaupunki ylijäämänä - Tutkimus Helsingin kaupungin homogenisoitumisesta ja kadotetusta monimuotoisuudesta.

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Tiivistelmä

Kaupungit arvostavat nykyään väestönsä monimaisuutta ja pitävät monikulttuurisuutta rikkautena ja osana sosiokulttuuriaisia voimavaroja. Maahanmuuttajat vaikuttavat monissa Euroopan kaupungeissa kaupunkitilanteen muokkaumiseen palvelutarjonnallaan. Tällaiset palvelut, olivatpa ne sitten maallisia tai hengellisiä, edustavat monikulttuurisuuden tilallistumista. Etuinen vähittäiskauppa on nouseva ilmiö Helsingissä, ja se on enenevän määrin korvannut valtavirran taantuvaan itsenäisyyttä vähittäiskauppaan. Usein maahanmuuttajien palveluiden keskittymät muodostuvat muslimien rukoiluhaarojen ympärille luoden moskeijan ja basaarin aktiivisen liiton, joka houkuttelee paljon kävijöitä. Tällainen asetelma syntyy spontaantina ja on tyyppillistä muun väestön hylkäämille tiloille, joita tässä tutkielmassa kutsutaan termillä 'urban leftovers'. Nämä kaupungin 'tähteet' tai 'rippeet' sijaitsevat kaupunginosissa tai niiden lähiympäristöissä, joissa maahanmuuttajaväestö on suhteellisesti yleistettuna. Nämä alueet ovat kuitenkin alitti segregaation vastaisen poliittisen ohjaamalle kaupunkiudistukselle ja ovat täten vaarassa hävittää.


Avainsanat
monikulttuurisuus, maahanmuuttajien palvelut, oikeus kaupunkiin, kaupunkisuunnittelu, kaupunkiudistus

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“The perfect human being is all human beings put together, it is a collective, it is all of us together that make perfection.”

Socrates
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I became a researcher in urban planning out of a personal motivation as I love to empower, to my best, those who are not well-represented in the city making. As a practicing architect, my interest in urban planning started with my involvement in an uplift initiative of the informal housing areas of Cairo metropolitan where I was born. While working with deprived communities in Cairo, I learned that the real poverty is the absence of a certain group from the political agenda. Urban planning is an interdisciplinary field par excellence; thus, I spent a few years of my post-graduate studies reading literature in the field of urban studies and taking part in many activism events. Furthermore, I actively attended and presented papers in international and national conferences. I was personally impressed by Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century by Leonie Sandercock (2003). Moreover, I do believe in the Right to the City by Henri Lefebvre, and later David Harvey, and argue that most of the urban problems regarding equality are rooted in the lack of right to the city. This work is dedicated to the memory of architect and professor Hassan Fathy, the Egyptian pioneer who dedicated many years of his life to the poor. I have learned from his books and projects the role that should be fulfilled by an architect to serve the forgotten in the city.

The topic of this dissertation – The hidden city of immigrants in Helsinki’s urban leftovers - The homogenization of the city and the lost diversity – entered my academic life after finishing my master’s thesis (The Big Issue. The Religious Dimensions in Muslims’ Housing within Helsinki Metropolitan Area). Being an immigrant, I felt the responsibility towards the immigrant community in Helsinki and decided to study it further in my doctoral research. I discussed the topic with my supervisor Kimmo Lapintie who appreciated the idea. Since then, we enjoyed many discussion sessions through emails and zoom meetings in addition to our discussions while attending AESOP congresses in Lisbon, Gothenburg, and Venice. I particularly want to thank Kimmo for the encouragement and support to write this dissertation at a time when the city of Helsinki decided to erase immigrant amenities from two strip malls for the sake of urban renewal. I highly appreciate the advice given by my thesis advisor Kaisa Schmidt-Thomé.

The topic was extremely demanding. In practice, there is no political motivation to consider planning for diversity in Finland; thus, there were hardly any studies addressing the topic as an urban planning interest. Although such a situation did not pave my research path, it encouraged me to study the phenomenon of urban transformation by immigrant amenities in other European cities as well as in Canada and Australia. Furthermore, I had a good opportunity to read about multiculturalism in other academic disciplines where urban diversity was actively discussed and researched, for instance,
urban geography, ethnographic studies, political science, culture, theology, and sociology. As this topic was so scarce in the existing research, I imagined that this dissertation would find its niche, which increased my enthusiasm.

The articles I have published on the topic mostly studied the decisions taken by the City of Helsinki. The interviews held with ethnic retailers and immigrants on one side and the public servants, politicians and planners on the other side clearly showed that the lack of willingness is a major problem faced by multicultural planning; the planning system is not ready nor equipped to plan for a multicultural community. Furthermore, I realized similarities between the cases studied in this dissertation and my previous experience back in Cairo: some groups remain invisible in the city or in the blind spot of the planning system. Accordingly, I became highly interested in informing the practice of its shortcomings and considering the impacts on authentic places developed by immigrants in a bottom-up place making process.

I conducted this research while fulfilling the commitment of my academic position as a lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning, led by Professor Lapintie, at the Department of Architecture at Aalto University. I also appreciate the collaboration in scientific publication with post-doc Johanna Lilius. Similarly, I am thankful to Pirjo Sanaksenaho and Pekka Heikkinen who both have served as the Head of Department during my research journey. Pirjo and Pekka not only responded to my queries but both, with Kimmo as the head of research, highly acknowledge the efforts of the researchers at the department. I would like to thank my pre-examinators, Professor Dr. Zhixi C. Zhuang and Dr Ceren Sezer, for their valuable insights.

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Finally, I want to thank my family with all my love and deep appreciation to Sahar, Nahla, Nesma and Ahmed.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my parents.

_Hossam Hewidy_
Helsinki on 11 March 2022
List of original publications

This doctoral dissertation consists of a summary and the following publications that are referred to in the text by their numerals.


In addition to the above publications, the author contributed to other publications on the phenomenon of emerging ethnic retail and multiculturalism in Helsinki. These publications are not a part of this dissertation but referred to among other sources.


Author’s contribution

**Publication I: In the Blind Spot: Ethnic Retailing in Helsinki and the Spontaneous Placemaking of Abandoned Spaces.**
The author was the main contributor to this publication. Johanna Lilius contributed by attending most of the interviews and was consulted when finalizing the manuscript.

**Publication II: The Death and Life of Malmi Neighbourhood Shopping Street: Is Ethnic Retail a Catalyst for Public Life Recovery in Helsinki?**
The author was the main contributor to this publication. Johanna Lilius contributed by attending some of the interviews and writing a part of the introduction.

**Publication III: Just city planning competitions in Helsinki: between the power of image and many images of power.**
The author was the sole contributor of this publication.
1. Introduction

1.1 Background and research environment

During the last three decades, immigration has become an increasingly significant phenomenon in European cities, reshaping their societies into a more multicultural profile. As a result, many living areas are witnessing a growth of cultural diversity: people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Some urban spaces in European cities are under transformation by immigrant amenities and cultural visibility. The diversity is observed in a setting that can be described as spatialization of multiculturalism. Consequently, urban planning and planners are faced with new, and different, challenges imposed by the spatial needs of immigrants. However, European cities differ in their attitudes towards the response for the spatial needs of immigrants and the adopted policies dealing with immigration.

Compared to other European cities, Helsinki has received fewer immigrants. However, the population of immigrants in Finland during the past three decades has been rapidly rising. Currently, 16.9 per cent of the population of the capital city Helsinki are immigrants, with some neighbourhoods hosting a relatively higher population of immigrants than others. The clusters of immigrant amenities in these neighbourhoods have been spontaneously converting many abandoned spaces, leftovers, into liveable places. The City of Helsinki has adopted a preventative policy to deal with segregation. Therefore, the neighbourhoods with an overrepresentation of immigrants are currently under urban renewal, and the clusters of immigrant amenities are soon facing erasure. Interestingly, the city of Helsinki has ignored the success of the liveable urban hubs created by immigrants. This dissertation, The hidden city of immigrants in Helsinki's urban leftovers discusses immigrants’ right to the city/space in Helsinki. This ignorance towards urban transformation by immigrant amenities is reflected in the statement below where a planner admits the faults of the system:

[...] it is a shame that we will destroy a stable cluster and the ecosystem will be harmed by such action. We’ll think in the future about the representation of a juror [specialised in planning for diversity] and better public participation. We would like to keep the bazaar atmosphere. The absence of a clear criteria [for assessing inventions for multiculturalism] or a jury member, we did discuss it, but I admit it is a fault. (Interviewed planner/Article III)
An important question is then raised: why were the planners unable to save such a stable ecosystem? The demolition of places where meanings are embedded is a dramatic opposition of place making (Friedmann, 2010). Why did the city completely ignore the consequences on the ethnic retail clusters? Sandercock (2000b, pp.13-14) shares the same wonders asking:

“[...] why we might think of difference as a problem in the managing of cities, or rather, in what ways cities of difference pose a challenge to planning systems, policies and practices.”

This dissertation investigates possible answers to the above questions. The topics studied in this dissertation are interdisciplinary by nature and studied by different scholarships. The immigrants’ right to space might be observed in the studies on urban space, immigrant amenities and multicultural planning.

Urban space is among the classical topics studied by many scholars (Lynch, 1960; Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1980). The social production of space shows the relation between society and space (Lefebvre, 1991a). In The Right to the City, Lefebvre (1996) drew the attention to the effect of capitalism over the city, whereby the urban life was demoted into a commodity leading to the controlling of, or displacing, the social interaction through an inclusive governing of the urban space. According to Harvey (2003), the right to the city is not just the access to what already exists, but rather the ability to change it according to the desires of people. Scholars have also examined space as a locus full of meanings formed during the daily usage (Lefebvre 1991a; Soja, 1996). Such a relation between people and places has been further studied in place making literature and contextualised by many scholars (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974, 1977; Augé, 1995; Gustafson, 2001; Aravot, 2002; Friedmann, 2010; Lew, 2017). However, immigrants’ right to space and their visibility in European cities is faced with space politics (Piazzoni, 2020). In seeking inclusion in the cityscape, immigrants’ usage of urban space is their attempt at social participation (Babacan, 2006). Furthermore, the urban space is where a sense of identity is developed (Butcher, 2009; Miraftab, 2012).

Immigrant amenities are an obvious manifestation of multiculturalism. Ethnic retail (also called immigrants’ entrepreneurship) is an active research area in different scholarships. While some of the literature focuses on ethnic retail as a job creator, a service provider for immigrants and a sign of social cohesion (Mankekar, 2002; Hall, 2015; Kaplan, 2015; Lilius and Hewidy 2019), others examine ethnic retail in relation to urban development and gentrification (Hackworth and Rekers, 2005; Zukin et al. 2009; Shaw, 2011; Sakizlioglu and Uitermark, 2014; De Oliver, 2016). Some scholars have extended their interest in ethnic retail to areas of retrofitting suburbia (Zhuang and Chen, 2017) and its role in place making (Zhuang, 2019). Furthermore, market strategy and the capacity of ethnic retail to enter the
mainstream market have also been studied by scholars (Jones et al., 2000; Basu, 2011; Parzer and Czingon, 2013, Lilius and Hewidy, 2021). Additionally, the economic amenities of immigrants are studied as places for gathering leisure and consumption (Aytar and Rath, 2012; Oleschuk, 2017; Meneguel et al., 2019). Other scholars are interested in the authentic setting of ethnic retail (Wu et al., 2020) enabling it to resist urban homogenization (Kuppingher, 2014). Immigrant amenities also include worshipping places. In diaspora, the role played by mosques is very vital to immigrants by gathering spiritual and secular activities and acting as urban hubs (Mack, 2015; Kuppingher, 2011, 2019; Simonsen, Neergard and Koefoed, 2019).

In literature, the concepts of multicultural planning and planning for diversity have attracted many scholars and theorists (e.g. Sandercock, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2003; Fainstein, 2005; Fincher and Iveson, 2008; Qadeer, 2009; van der Horst and Ouwehand, 2012; Zhuang, 2013; Fincher et al., 2014). Many European and American cities aim to improve policies supporting the integration of immigrants (de Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016) and responding to their cultural and religious needs. Immigrants seek the belonging and attachment to a socio-cultural environment acknowledging their common interests through immigrant amenities, such as retail, eateries, and worshipping facilities (Butcher, 2009). In doing so, immigrants shape a spatial pattern of diversity that Sandercock (2003 describes as a sign of "mongrelization", examining their hosting cities as living environments in tolerating “[…] difference, otherness, fragmentation, splintering, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity [and] plurality” (p. 1). Such a spatialization of multiculturalism is, or should be, managed by urban planning and planners. Thus, it is important to highlight the role of urban planning in responding to the spatial needs of, and urban transformation by, immigrants.

However, the question of planning in a multicultural community is rather difficult considering immigrants and their spatial needs. This is due to the varying degrees of openness towards cultural diversity in the receiving societies. On the one hand, some cities adopt the city as a homogenizer where immigrants conform to the values of the dominant culture (Alba and Nee, 2003, cited in Horst and Ouwehand, 2012). On the other hand, some cities encourage urban diversity and cultural visibility and tolerate the difference (Jacobs, 1961; Florida, 2002). Accordingly, urban policies regarding immigrants are rather complex and differ between cities. In urban growth, the production of urban space is influenced by many powers. The influence of such powers varies according to the society’s openness to the other. First, there is the question of the embedded power in urban planning that may restrict some groups from urban space (Piazzoni, 2020). Second, planning can act as a social regulatory body controlling the production of space (Yiftachael, 1998). Therefore, the normalization of the built environment— the style of architecture, the culture of retailing and the accepted practices of worship—are defined through the
planning frameworks (Fincher et al., 2014, p. 36). Finally, the connection
between major retail chains and banks (Leach, 1993), neoliberal growth
strategy (Uitermark, 2003) and chain store monopoly (Home, 2011) heavily
drive urban planning towards commodification and homogenization of urban
space (e.g. Sorkin, 1992; Zukin, 1995; Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998;
Carmona, 2010). Thus, in such multidirectional approaches to multicultural
planning and the perceptions of the cities to the spatial needs of immigrants,
the question to be addressed is how all of this affects the development of
inclusive urban space?

In fact, there are several gaps in the existing research regarding the
creation of an inclusive space. First, there is ample literature on the role of
ethnic retail in transforming deprived areas and the touristification of multi-
ethnic neighbourhoods (Shaw et al., 2004; Rath, 2007; Gilli and Ferrari, 2018),
globalization and economy (Shaw, 2011; Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2013),
immigrant business improvement (Jones et al., 2000; Basu, 2011; Parzer and
Czingon, 2013), and commodification of ethnic diversity (Shaw et al., 2004;
Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017; Schmiz and Hernandez, 2019). However, there is
a need for more understanding of the dynamics of ethnic retail regarding its
spatial interaction. The research on multicultural planning calls for inclusion
(Sandercock, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2003; Fainstein, 2005; Fincher and Iveson,
2008), but the research focusing on the impacts of ethnic retail on urban space
is rather limited (Zhuang, 2013). Thus, this dissertation contributes to the
research on how such transformation, be it symbolic or physical, impacts the
urban space.

Second, in the absence of research on the spatial impacts of ethnic retail,
another gap surfaces. Commercial gentrification threatens ethnic retail (Shaw
et al., 2004; Zukin et al., 2009) and urban renewal negatively affects immigrant
amenities either by changing their characteristics or displacement (Sezer,
2018; van Eck et al., 2020). Therefore, research needs to rigorously examine
how ethnic retail may be affected by urban policies. This can reveal the blind
spot of planning and enable the considering of immigrants, in terms of ethnic
retail, as a social asset.

A third research gap in studies on multicultural planning is following the
concept of public interest. For a long time, planning has been influenced by
the values of the dominant culture, masquerading the planning process as
universal and failing to accommodate the interests of other cultures (Burayidi,
2003; Qadeer and Agrawal, 2011; Sandercock, 2003). This is where the average
person as an end-user of planning is developed. There is a need for research
informing the practice of how to systematically include the interests of people
from different backgrounds in planning, as cities already contain multiple
publics and should be developed according to diverse interests (e.g. Sandercock
and Dovey, 2002).
Finally, the research on *multicultural planning* and *planning for diversity* is scarce in Finland. The former concept focuses on cultural diversity (Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017) and the latter involves the diversity in age, gender, religion, ethnic background, and income (Fincher, 2003). Furthermore, *advocacy planning* (Harwood, 2003) can offer planners a strategy to redistribute public resources in a more equitable setting towards special-interest groups to overcome the common practice of planning oriented to satisfy the public interest, which is commonly accused of contributing to environmental racism. In the Finnish context, the research on immigrants is concentrated on the specific fields of segregation studies (Andersson, Brattbakk, and Vaattovaara, 2017), housing policy (Dhalmann and Vilkama, 2009), education and geography (Bernelius and Vaattovaara, 2016), religious and theological studies (Pauha and Konttori, 2020; Martikainen, 2013) as well as cultural studies (Saukkonen and Pyykkönen, 2008). Partly due to such focus, Finnish planners lack the understanding of the everyday lives of different groups and their experiences in urban space (Mattila et al., 2021). In Finnish research, there are hardly any studies on the spatial needs of immigrants, multicultural planning, planning for diversity or even advocacy planning. Thus, the impact of urban regeneration on immigrant amenities is simply ignored. Consequently, the ample literature on segregation in the Finnish context is extended to practice and prevents the cities from developing inclusive urban spaces.
1.2 Objectives and scope

Finland has witnessed a growth of immigrant population from 50,000 in 1991 to 444,031 in 2020 (Statistics Finland, 2020). Approximately eight per cent speak a foreign language as a mother tongue and live permanently in Finland among its total population of 5.5 million residents. According to the City of Helsinki (2020), 16.9 per cent of the municipality's residents are of an immigrant background (the distribution is shown in Fig.1). To situate this dissertation, it is important to note that the spatial pattern of immigrants in Helsinki is uneven, as some neighbourhoods have an obvious

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1 The percentage of immigrants on this map is 16% as it is dated to the year 2017. The author preferred to keep this map as it was used in all the articles. However, the areas of an obvious overrepresentation are still the same in 2022.
overrepresentation of immigrants. Furthermore, immigrants are less represented in the labour market compared to their share in the population, with a high unemployment rate in certain ethnicities. An important reason behind this is the discrimination of second-generation immigrants in the Finnish labour market, which is described as an ethnically hierarchical market (Ahmad, 2020). However, it is the first-generation immigrants that face the greatest barriers in entering the labour market, with immigrant women overrepresented in the unemployment statistics (Malmberg-Heimonen and Julkunen, 2006). Therefore, the self-employment rate is high among certain groups; for example, 27 per cent of Turks are self-employed (Aaltonen et al., 2015). As a result, ethnic retail has emerged in the Helsinki cityscape (Lilius and Hewidy, 2019). Furthermore, there is a clear gap in the immigrants’ entry to home ownership, compared to the native-born households (Kauppinen and Vilkama, 2016). Thus, it is quite common that immigrants are mostly tenants.

The uneven spatial pattern of immigrants has caused clear transformations in their living neighbourhoods. Such transformations include the recovery of public street life through immigrant amenities in Malmi neighbourhood shopping street. A similar transformation has taken place at the strip malls Puhos and Kontula. After being left abandoned, both malls have become lively hubs by the clustering of ethnic retail. These two cases are successes compared to the condition of other old stock malls in Helsinki that have been exposed to demolition due to the lack of operators and poor condition. During the last 15 years, 11 malls have already been demolished (Lehtonen, 2021). Such lack of demand accompanied with the poor condition of the malls created a rent gap (cf. Smith, 1996)2. However, thanks to ethnic retail, both strip malls Puhos and Kontula are actively functioning and full of daily life.

This dissertation explicitly focuses on multiple cases of immigrant amenities in Helsinki. Such amenities not only fulfil immigrants’ socio-cultural needs but also have the capacity to transform its vicinities and emerge spontaneously. The studied cases are exposed to major transformation through urban renewal. The dissertation examines whether urban planning has integrated these amenities into the urban renewal, or not, and the consequences of the process on immigrants. It further studies the role of ethnic retail in place making and as a catalyst for public life recovery.

1.2.1 Problem statement

Historically, many cities have witnessed multiculturalism and hosted a population with diverse, sometimes conflicting, interests. Other cities are new to such urban diversity, and multiculturalism imposes new and different

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2 “According to Smith (1996), a rent gap occurs to properties when there is an economic uncertainty or/and problems in planning (e.g. needs for planning procedures)” Article I.
challenges to their planners and planning systems. In either type of cities, some common features can easily be observed. For example, the interactive relation with or sometimes a transformation of the built environment through the spatialization of multiculturalism is such a common denominator. The notion *Right to the City* (RTC) is of high significance in research with an interest in multicultural planning, in order to understand the reactions of cities, urban planning and societies to the clusters of immigrant amenities in certain areas. The RTC can give a clarification, and a critique, on cases of unbalanced urban growth satisfying the capital surpluses and leading to urban commodification. In many European cities, the clusters of immigrant amenities are typically seen in the abandoned spaces for achieving low occupancy expenses, be they old strip malls or vacant premises of a neighbourhood's shopping street. Such abandoned spaces are signs of declining independent mainstream retail; the monopoly\(^3\) of chain stores and urban homogenization are called the *urban leftovers* in this research.

This dissertation studies the spatialization of multiculturalism in Helsinki that has created urban hubs out of abandoned spaces. To simplify the complexity of such multifaceted phenomenon, this dissertation is divided into three specific interests drawing a larger whole when combined. First, it examines whether the urban planning in Helsinki has succeeded in preserving the immigrant RTC as well as the consequences of urban policies on the liveable spaces transformed by their amenities. Second, the research studies the signs of such transformation and the characteristics of ethnic retail to resist urban homogenization and play a role in place making. Finally, the research evaluates the capacity of alternative planning tools, scenario planning and competitions, in reflecting the multicultural component of the city in their results. Thus, the research is situated as a constructive criticism of the municipal planning in Helsinki. The results contribute to informing the practice of shortcomings that can be avoided in order to improve its performance regarding the spatial needs and the RTC of immigrants. It further contributes to Finnish research that rarely deals with multiculturalism as a planning issue and focuses mostly on segregation. Last, it has a societal impact through the empowering of immigrant communities in Helsinki.

\(^3\) Although the published articles in this research have used the term "retail monopoly", the fact is that the Finnish retail market has two major local chain stores that compete and a third German chain. They, together, respond to the market demand leaving no chance for mainstream independent retail. Thus, the monopoly meant in the publications simplifies the domination of the chain stores together that has led to the decline of any independent retail seen in the largest cities in Finland. Such a setting is expressed later in this dissertation by using the term "market oligopoly".
1.2.2 Research questions

The population of immigrants in Helsinki has been rapidly increasing. In satisfying their socio-cultural needs, ethnic communities have founded clusters of their amenities at two old strip malls called Puhos and Kontula as well as in Malmi neighbourhood shopping street, converting them into lively hubs. Such spatial clustering has taken place at urban leftovers. These clusters have spontaneously created cultural visibility in their surroundings. In such a context, this research seeks to answer its first question RQ1:

**RQ 1 (main question)**

*Does urban planning in Helsinki sustain the immigrants’ right to space/city? What are the shortcomings or/and blind spots preventing urban planning from preserving the places developed by immigrants? What are the consequences of ignoring the planning impacts on immigrant amenities?*

Urban economics play an important role in city growth. Global capitalism drives the quality of urban life towards commodification; thus, cities have become platforms of consumption. In Helsinki, the oligopoly of retail through chain stores as well as the sprouting of spectacular malls have led to the decline of mainstream independent retail. Ethnic retail clusters in Helsinki have not only managed to survive such constraints but also created liveable urban hubs. In such a context, the research seeks to answer the second question RQ2:

**RQ 2**

*How has ethnic retail succeeded in resisting urban homogenization and market monopoly? How has ethnic retail enabled place making, acted as an urban catalyst of public street life recovery and what are the signs of such place making?*

City growth in Helsinki implies urban renewal steered by a policy to prevent segregation. The statutory master plan guides the detailed planning stage. The city of Helsinki accordingly witnesses urban regeneration to create new urban centers. Such urban transformation situates the urban planners as mediators in attaining city growth and responding to the spatial needs of immigrants and their RTC. However, the city of Helsinki has been challenged in two occasions on its capacity and willingness to make planning decisions in an inclusive approach. First, in 2019 the City of Helsinki deployed scenario planning to anticipate the futures of the Malmi area. Second, in 2019–2020, two planning competitions were held in response to the city objectives of forming urban centres through densification. Both competitions dealt with the malls hosting the immigrant amenities at Puhos and Kontula. Based on these cases, the research further seeks the answers for the questions in RQ3:
**RQ 3**

Does applying alternative planning methods, scenario planning and planning competitions, succeed in integrating the positive transformation of neighborhoods in which they operate? Why? Can such methods balance the concerns of functionality and aesthetic value with the integration of immigrant-led assets such as ethnic retailing?

The answers to the three questions are sought in the findings of the articles. Due to the relevance of the research questions and their shared interest in immigrant amenities, each question is answered by the results of more than one article. Table 1 shows the distribution of the research questions between the three articles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Article I</th>
<th>Article II</th>
<th>Article III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RQ1</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ2</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ3</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.3 Dissertation structure

The rest of this dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter 2, *Research methods*, presents and justifies the research methods. Chapter 3, *Theoretical Foundations*, provides the theoretical foundations through a literature review. Chapter 4, *Results*, introduces the results of the research by answering the research questions according to the findings of the articles. Chapter 5, *Discussion*, discusses the findings of the research and their scientific as well as social and practical implications. Finally, Chapter 6, *Conclusion*, draws the conclusion of the dissertation.
2. Research methods

As this dissertation is an assessment of the capacity of the municipal planning in Helsinki to reflect urban diversity in planning decisions, the research methods were solely qualitative. Table 2 shows the data sources which include document analysis and semi-structured interviews in all articles in addition to Field observation and mapping in articles I and II. This chapter comprises two sections, the first Document Analysis and Interviews discusses the literature on the used methods and the second Reliability and validity systematically introduces the methods.

Table 2. methods and data sources of all articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Focuses on</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Ethnic retail as a place-maker</td>
<td>• Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating ethnic retail in planning</td>
<td>• Document review and analysis: City Plan (Yleiskaava 2016) + maps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The capacity of immigrant amenity clusters in place making</td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews with: City of Helsinki planners N=4 Retailers N=17 NGO N=1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unstructured interviews N=10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field observation and mapping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Ethnic retail as a catalyst for public street life recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The capacity of and operative tactics to resist homogenization</td>
<td>• Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scenario planning as an alternative tool to integrate ethnic retail</td>
<td>• Reviewing planning documents: City Plan (Yleiskaava 2016) + maps Malmi futures scenarios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews with: City of Helsinki planners N=2 Scenario consultants N=4 Retailers N=17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Field observation and mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Participation in scenario planning workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>The capacity of planning competitions to plan for urban diversity</td>
<td>• Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The balance of planning competitions between the functionality and aesthetic values</td>
<td>• Reviewing planning documents: City Plan (Yleiskaava 2016) + maps Competition programmes Entries of both competitions The jury evaluation protocol Public opinions site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrating multiculturalism in planning competitions</td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews with: Planners (members of jury) N=4 Independent jurors N=2 Winning teams N=4 (11 architects and experts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Regarding the interviews held with planners in different articles: Apart from one planner who was interviewed twice (for articles I and III), all other interviews were held with different planners.
2.1 Document analysis and interviews

Document analysis, as other analytical methods in qualitative research, examines data and enables the researcher to understand, elicit meanings and form empirical knowledge (e.g. Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Rapley, 2007). The documents may contain text and/or images that were produced without any involvement of the researcher (Bowen, 2009). It is a method that is frequently used with other qualitative research methods to support the findings as a means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009). Triangulation, according to Denzin (1970), refers to combining methodologies in examining the same phenomenon. Document analysis is a research method particularly deployed in qualitative case studies to produce a comprehensive description of a phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

The interview is a flexible research instrument in qualitative research that can be deployed to study people in a wide range of interests and contexts (Qu and Dumay, 2011; Hitchings and Latham, 2020). Semi-structured interviews are widely used in urban studies, human geography, ethnographic research, and other academic disciplines (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000). Through semi-structured interviews, viewpoints are articulated in a more flexibly designed discursive setting than in a structured interview (e.g. Flick, 2009). In case that the interviewee informs the interviewer of interesting and important information, the latter can add some probes to stimulate further elaboration by the respondents (Qu and Dumay, 2011). Qu and Dumay (2011) categorize interviews in the following way: for studying facts the structured interview is deployed as a neopositivist approach, for focusing on meaning the unstructured interview is deployed as a romanticist view and for studying the social construction of situated accounts the semi-structured interview is deployed as localist perspective. The neopositivist approach (considering interview as a tool) assumes that interviewers are capable of triggering their interviewees' responses, the romanticist view (considering interview as human encounter) assumes that interviewers and interviewees are equal parties participating in the interview and both can express their feelings regarding the topic in concern, and finally the localist perspective (considering interview as empirical phenomenon) considers the understanding of the knowledge gained from interviews in a social context; thus, a social phenomenon does not merely exist by the interviewee's understanding but within a narrative (Qu and Dumay, 2011).
2.2 Reliability and validity

The qualitative research conducted in this dissertation started with a personal motivation of the researcher and a familiarity with the phenomenon. As it aims to understand the phenomenon of immigrant amenities, the methods used were qualitative. The researcher was interested in clarifying the participants’ perceptions in their different roles (planners, retailers, laypeople, architects) and tasks in the setting of the studied case. The professional body was meant to be diverse in representation. The interviewed planners were (1) public servants in the city planning body, (2) independent professional architects acting as jury members, as well as consultants for the Malmi vision, and (3) independent consultancies. The public servants typically requested the questions in advance and were contacted after the interviews to confirm their responses. The use of document analysis and semi-structured interviews sustain the triangulation of research data. By data triangulation, the research seeks the provision of “a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility” (Eisner, 1991, p. 110). Thus, by gathering the information through different methods, the impact of potential biases and the findings can be critically interpreted compared to using a single method (Bowen, 2009). The literature review is introduced and discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, Theoretical Framework.

The order of information gathering in Articles I and II is presented in Figure 2. The first step started with the initial reading of the documents and accordingly preparing the questions for the interviews. In parallel, site visits and field observation took place. The second step was holding the interviews with planners. Interviews with ethnic retailers took place during the field observation. Field observation findings were documented by drawing architectural plans and maps clarifying the current use of retail premises (Mapping). After holding all the interviews, another reading of the documents took place in the fourth step.

The field observation at both strip malls, Puhos and Kontula, was conducted by note-taking on both weekdays and weekends and at several times of the day. The documentation of the observation included both video-recordings and taking photos. The author was also interested in drawing a rough axis of flow, counting the number of visitors and understanding the footfall peaks (e.g. Gehl and Svarre, 2013). The intention was to understand the type of spatial pattern formed by users as well as retailers and their staff. In addition, it was important to examine whether some visitors are using the malls for social reasons other than shopping. Thus, the researcher focused on finding the potential spots at which lingering might be happening and creating any seeds for third places. Furthermore, rough sketches were taken for each retail premise and the services.trade taking place in order to produce architectural drawings of the malls as they were functioning at the time of the study. Similar steps were followed in the Malmi area. The Malmi area field observation took longer since
the area has a more diverse urban setting than the strip malls. However, the changes observed in the Malmi area were more rapid than at the strip malls. The researcher for example interviewed some entrepreneurs at two different premises in the Malmi area. Therefore, the produced map in Article II has changed several times after the publication of the article. Fewer changes were observed at the strip malls.

**Article I** analysed the latest master plan of Helsinki City Plan 2016 (Yleiskaava, 2016), the master plan map (Yleiskaavan kaavakartta), the two architectural competition entries of the areas hosting both malls Puhos and Kontula, and the jury statement.

**Article II** analysed Helsinki City Plan 2016 and its land-use map (Yleiskaava 2016), Malmi futures scenarios work programme (by the City of Helsinki in seeking tenders), NEW MALMI The future revised (by the consultants), and Centre of Malmi renewal paths (by the City of Helsinki). A survey prepared by a consultant on the commercial retail (unpublished 2019) was also analysed. The purpose of these documents was to guide the Malmi vision.

**Article III** analysed the Helsinki City Plan 2016 (Yleiskaava 2016), both competition programmes, the jury evaluation protocol and the entries. In addition, the online public hearing and feedback was also used as research data. In Articles II and III, *document analysis* was a long and complex process due to
the number of documents issued by different parties and the ample material of
the entries (image material)\(^5\).

In Articles I and II, all interviews with ethnic retailers were held in Arabic\(^6\),
apart from four interviews that were held in English and Finnish. I am an
Arabic immigrant from the Middle East. However, in both articles there was
a Finnish co-author who attended some of the interviews. The language of
interviews with public servants and politicians was English apart from two
interviews, which were held in Finnish. In some cases, the document analysis
was the main source of forming knowledge and thorough background to create
the interview questions. This was the specific case of Article III where the
document analysis played a very important role in shaping the interview. For
this article, the interviews were also conducted in sequential order as shown
in Figure 3. Exceptionally, Article I included Unstructured interviews which
were called in the Article casual interviews (with customers and users of prayer
rooms at Puhos mall).

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5 The competition handling the case of Puhos strip mall included 48 entries in its first phase.

6 Interestingly, when the interviewee and interviewer communicate in the same language, the used words
carry entirely different meanings as they belong to different worlds (Qu and Dumay, 2011). I confirm
that the access to the respondents (ethnic retailers and their workers) was planned and arranged by me;
being an immigrant too, it is worth to mention that there is a wide familiarity of the phenomenon. As an
immigrant, I frequently use many of the studied amenities and have witnessed their emergence.
3. Theoretical foundation

The theoretical foundation of this research is interdisciplinary as is the nature of the studied topic. The response to the spatial needs of immigrants or acknowledging the urban transformation by their amenities reflect the capacity of the planning system to include multiculturalism in urban development. The consequences of urban renewal on the spontaneously founded immigrant amenities need a theoretical foundation in several sub-areas. This chapter comprises five sections: (3.1) Whose city?, (3.2) Authentic places vs commodification, (3.3) Place making, (3.4) Is anti-segregation policy multicultural planning?, and (3.5) Immigrants' RTC and participation.

3.1 Whose city?

Lefebvre's Right to the City (RTC) (1968/1996), is a bold, complex and equally fluid notion. The right to the city suggests an idea to empower urban dwellers against the neoliberal urbanism. It is, at the same time, setting a critique of and offering an approach for the reconfigurations of the professions steering the urban development under the spatial domination of the capital (e.g. Zieleniec, 2018). This dissertation does not intend to offer meticulous restatement of Lefebvre's argument. Nonetheless, the notion is rather deployed as an extrapolation of those arguments that can assist to discursively comprehend why it is too demanding to create an inclusive city for everyone.

Lefebvre's call is radical and enduring par excellence. First, it can still remarkably explain many conflicts caused by the continuous surplus of the capital in the spatial development of cities, as will be discussed. Second, the RTC includes “[the] workers, immigrants [and] the marginal” instead of being dispersed into ghettos (Lefebvre 1991b Les illusions de la modernité cited in Writings on Cities 1996 , p. 34 emphasis in original text). Thus, it is applicable to research studying the spatial needs of immigrants and their interaction with the built environment. Third, with the current emergence of neoliberalism and the freedom of the market, many powerful entities do control the urban growth of cities. Here is where Lefebvre intersects with Harvey (2003) stating “Thirty years of neoliberalism teaches us that the freer the market the greater the inequalities and the greater the monopoly power” (p. 940). To face such power, Lefebvre's notion is a cry for a revolutionary reformation of the social, political, and economic relations in order to create an evenly shared arena of decision-making in the production of urban space. Lefebvre's RTC is in fact a call for a re-distribution of power underlying the production of space in which both the capital and the state/municipality share, even moderately, their power to inhabitants.
“The planner should be able to distinguish between sick spaces and spaces linked to mental and social health which are generators of this health.” (Lefebvre 1968/1996, p. 99)

Lefebvre thus situates planners in the forefront to assess the use value and its relation to social. This is where such a notion touches the core of this dissertation, and consequently, raises further questions. Do planners act as the sole technocrats in steering urban growth towards improving social health? How can they define social health? Whose social health? But whose city? The simple answer for the first question is self-evident; it is the political power that determines the results of planning since politicians have the power and responsibility. In seeking possible answers to the rest of the questions, Lefebvre’s space needs to be further identified and the relevant rights preserving the RTC require a further discussion.

Space according to Lefebvre comprises more than just the tangible space. Drawing on his analytical approach, he suggested his triad: the perceived, the conceived and the lived spaces. First, situated on the spatial practice Lefebvre defines the perceived space as the concrete space people encounter during the daily reality (their daily routine) and urban reality (networks linking the places aside for the private life, leisure, and work). Second, Lefebvre refers to the representations of space in defining the conceived space as its mental construction (the one conceptualized by planners, architects, urbanists, and technocratic subdividers). Finally, he refers to the representational space to define the lived space which is structured by and rooted in the actual lived experience of users. The lived space is complex and combines both the perceived and conceived spaces.

According to Soja (1996), the lived space is not merely a passive medium in which the social life unfolds, but rather represents an essential element of the social life through which the users spontaneously turn their presence and lived experience into meanings. Spontaneity is recognized in this dissertation as an equivalent to the organic (unplanned). It adopts the understanding of spontaneity in Jacobs’ works (1961, 1970); thus, the dissertation focuses on the interactive relation between the users of urban space, urban economics7 and the resultant urban transformation. The concept of spontaneity is normally interlinked to the spatial practices structured around or enabled by urban informality. Questions of urban informality are imbued with the notion of the right to the city and specifically the right over urban space (Kamalipour and Peimani, 2019). Urban informality is defined by some scholars as the activities

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7 Urban economics in this work solely focuses on the immigrants’ representation in the labor market and their self-employment entrepreneurship as an emerging niche resisting the decline of mainstream independent retail. It is also extended to the oligopoly of retail through chain stores and the sprouting of spectacular shopping malls.
taking place outside state control and normative regulations (e.g. Bunnell & Harris, 2012; Roy and Al Sayyad, 2004). However, even such informality is frequently tolerated in order to avoid social disturbance by some marginalized groups (Neuwirth, 2012). The discourse on informal activities mostly concerns the distinction between the formal and informal (e.g Kamalipour and Peimani, 2019); however, such a distinction remains vague and loosely defined (Martínez et al., 2017; Xue and Huang, 2015). Nevertheless, informality with its legal dimension is not a common practice in ethnic retailing clusters studied in this dissertation, except for a few cases observed in street vending in the Malmi area (Article II). In fact, informal urbanism— from street vending to settlements—has become a resource to manage the demanding challenges of poverty and marginalization sustaining livelihoods in the global South (Kamalipour and Peimani, 2020). Therefore, the so-called “regularization” law of informal settlements in Brazilian favelas assures that the development of urban land, in both formal and informal settlements, should be determined by the social use value not only its exchange value (Fernandes, 2006). However, the type of informality that is more relevant to the cases in this dissertation is different. It is the informality of improvisation, spontaneity and disorder that distinguishes small independent retail from mainstream retail (Hunt 2015, p. 21). This type of informality indicates less sophisticated businesses that are rooted in social capital (Hunt 2015; Article II). It is simply generated through Adhocism as in Jencks and Silver’s book Adhocism: The case for improvisation (2013). Both architectural theorists acknowledge the creativity of people in resourcefully reimagining available materials to sustain a closeness to consumers (Jencks and Silver, 2013). Such an informality, most obvious in the studied cases, has been empowered by the authenticity of both clientele and retailers enabling immigrant amenities to play a role in place making. The notion of third place (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982; Soja, 1996) is principally enabled because of such a setting of easiness and informality. For example, third places have been created by Chinese and South Asian retail clusters in Toronto offering a sense of community and place (see Zhuang, 2017). Zhuang (2017) observed such third places at many trades and businesses be they private (barbershops, cafés or restaurants) or public (shopping plazas and public spaces). These third places further extend the functionality of ethnic shopping clusters towards community-building and promoting social interactions (Zhuang, 2021). Zhuang (2021, p.119) also found that a third of the visitors to ethnic retail clusters visit them for social reasons not shopping and that 95 % of the visitors feel ‘at home’; thus, Chinese and South Asian communities have transformed the spaces to locus of new meanings and identities. The author strongly agrees with Zhuang (2021, p.120) that the retail third places play a substantial role as a social infrastructure, regardless of their poor physical conditions and improvised setting, and that such economic and
social significance in immigrant livelihood should not be ignored in the name of gentrification.

On the other hand, spontaneity is among the symptoms of urban informality. Jacob's spontaneity is typically associated with flexibility, a concept that assures the capacity of the city/space for any "evolution of emergent configurations" (Cozzolino, 2018, p. 17). According to Cozzolino (2018), flexibility is achieved through planning that sets simple and possible rules to integrate the principle of flexibility in its decisions and thus enables spontaneity. The multiple cases studied in all the articles in this dissertation provide a typical narrative of abandoned spaces that have been converted into vibrant places through such spontaneity.

The spatial practice of the users is essential in the production of a liveable space. Therefore, in his persuasive work *Place and Placeness* (1976), Relph identifies three components of place: its physical setting, users' activities, and meanings. Relph further argues that, although the most complex and demanding component to grasp is the meanings, it is of the highest significance. Consequently, when planners and architects ignore meanings of certain places to groups and individuals, there is a risk of destroying authentic places and replacing them with inauthentic ones, creating *placelessness* (e.g. Relph, 1981). Therefore, another question can be further addressed: can meanings in a space be integrated by planners in a planning process? According to Lefebvre (1996, p. 66), the city is an ‘oeuvre’ (a work) which contrasts “with the irreversible tendency towards money and commerce, towards exchange and products. Indeed, the *oeuvre* is use value and the product is exchange value.” (italics in the original text). The discussion of value may elucidate more the difficulty to integrate meanings in a certain space into the objectives of urban development.

The relation between *use value* (the city and urban life) and *exchange value* (spaces bought and sold, the consumption of products, goods, places, and signs) can inform the degree of enjoying the RTC. According to Lefebvre, the RTC mandates two essential rights: the *right to participation* and the *right to appropriation*. The former sustains a central role for the *citadins* (urban dwellers) in the making of any decision contributing to the production, or reproduction, of urban space. The latter, right to appropriation (distinct from the right to property), sustains the right to occupy and use urban space as well as its physical access. In fact, the right to appropriation allows a “full and complete usage” by inhabitants of urban space in their everyday life (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 179). The RTC paradigm generally includes two core components: a claim of the significance of the use value (opposing the capitalist exchange value) of resources and urban space; and insistence on sharing the power in the process of shaping the city that should be enjoyed equally by all inhabitants (Purcell, 2014). Similarly, Harvey (2003) calls for corresponding rights; the right of access and the right to change urban space stating “We need to be sure
we can live with our own creations (a problem for every planner, architect and utopian thinker)” (p. 939). The RTC, with both involved rights, is the core interest of scholars advocating the right of people to be physically present in the space (Jacobs, 1961; Tuan, 1974; Whyte, 1980). However, both rights to participation and appropriation can be declined under certain circumstances as this dissertation will show.

The questions above about social health and the ability of planners to define and integrate it in planning are answered in the following setting.

First, considering the conflict between use value and exchange value, almost every city in the world witnesses how the property rights dominate the use rights of inhabitants; thus, the exchange value of properties controls their usage neglecting the use value (Purcell, 2014). Similarly, Canelas (2019) argues that property ownership is an image of socio-economic power that can control urban development, users and their activities. Second, the consequence of the domination of the exchange value is rooted in the valorisation of urban space (Harvey, 1981). Thus, the capitalist firms gain a free sovereignty to develop the kind of urban space that contributes to the maximising of exchange value (Purcell, 2014). Third, in his book Land of Desire (1993), Leach compares the connection between major retail entrepreneurs to large banks as the circuits of power that dominate economy and culture. The consequence of the circuits of power is the commodification and homogenisation of urban space (e.g. Harvey, 1981; Sorkin, 1992; Zukin, 1995; Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998; Carmona, 2010). Fourth, Yiftachel (1998) defines planning as a social controlling device regulating “[...] the public production of space” (p. 395). Such social control takes place through several dimensions ” [...] the territorial dimension (containment, surveillance, and segregation), the procedural dimension (exclusion and marginalization), the socioeconomic dimension (deprivation and dependence), and the cultural dimension (homogenization, alienation, and delegitimation)” (Yiftachel, 1998, p.403). This, according to Yiftachel, enables the facilitating of elite domination in planning and the “control of the societal resources: space, power, wealth, and identity” (ibid). Later in his book, The Power of Planning, Yiftachel (2001) further described the planning practice as “not just a progressive arm of government, but also has the potential for oppressing subordinate groups” (pp. 117–118). Furthermore, the global economic trends consider public space as a valuable commercial commodity; thus, the global partnerships with local governments tend to produce new forms of urban space attracting consumers who can afford to consume (Carmona, 2010). Correspondingly, Fincher et al. (2016) argue that urban central areas are currently branded in order to lure new investors and people.

Under such setting, it seems that planners struggle to attain a balanced development respecting social health, which in principle is a component of the use value. Satisfying the surplus of the capital, i.e. exchange value, may meet
the social health of inhabitants who can afford to consume. This may clarify
the importance of addressing the question whose city is to be considered in
urban development; it is clearly not the city of poor. Thus, it is logical that both
rights to participation and appropriation of immigrants, who typically have
low average income, can interrupt the development targeting the middle and
upper classes. In fact, this rationally situates the anti-segregation policy under
a critique. Anti-segregation policy per se does not support the immigrants’
RTC; it is mainly oriented to attract the well-off new households; those who can
afford to consume. This criticism continues in section 3.4.

Interestingly, the UN-HABITAT has considered the RTC concept as an
equivalent to human rights in the city (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009). The role
of public space is crucial in defining the right to the city (Brown, 2006). The
right to urban space is practiced and preserved by appropriation, which is the
right to use, occupy and access the space, through which citizens can create the
place that fulfils their needs (Harvey, 2003; Lefebvre, 1996). As the urban space
is under continuous transformation, which is the nature of cities, the right to
participation enables the involving of citizens in the decisions steering such
transformation (Lefebvre, 1996; Harvey, 2003). The UN-HABITAT deploys
Lefebvre’s paradigm RTC for the improvement of the performance of urban
policies regarding multicultural cities, social inclusion, dignified existence
for marginalized groups, migration, ethnicity, religious freedom and cultural
diversity (Brown and Kristiansen, 2009). Although the RTC was conceived as
a right that is to be enjoyed by all inhabitants, it is demanding in practice, and
needs to be further explored regarding the cities’ responsibilities, governance
and urban policies (ibid), not to ignore the influence of many circuits of power
involved in the city making, which may explain the difficulty of creating an
inclusive city.

3.2 Authentic places vs. commodification

It is not a strange consequence that due to driving the quality of urban life
towards commodification the city became a platform where consumerism,
tourism and knowledge-based industries appear as the major features of
urban political economy (Harvey, 2008). However, immigrants challenge
commodification and contribute to the creation of authentic places through
their amenities. This section highlights one of the research gaps in literature
about the understanding of the dynamics of ethnic retail regarding its spatial
interaction with urban space.

Symbolic messages through eateries, ethnically branded goods, and
ethnic shopfronts representing ethnicity and cultural diversity, are signs of
struggling against the place homogenization, resisting the commodification
and the ability to transform urban spaces into distinctive places of meanings
Such places can be destroyed and replaced by placelessness when ignored in urban planning (Relph, 1981). The transformation of the urban landscape by the presence of immigrants and their amenities, which are not conforming to the mainstream culture, are representations of the ‘Other’ (Fincher et al., 2014).

In such transformation process, places become authentic by the actual lived experience of users and the meanings they make their daily reality.

The gastro-attraction, for example, is studied as “a cultural practice” in which the experienced exotic cuisine acts as a "sensory and experiential heritage” (Meneguel et al., 2019, p. 221). Thus, it is not only co-ethnic groups who are attracted to ethnic cuisines, but also a segment of mainstream clientele or the so-called foodies seeking to experience culture through taste (Lilius and Hewidy, 2021). Foodies, via gastronomy experience, show their openness for classed culinary practices whenever framed as authentic and exotic (Oleschuk, 2017). The gastro-attraction by hipsters and foodies is a bi-directional relation. Such authentic settings resist urban homogenization (Kuppinger, 2014) and bring immigrants a feeling of belonging through objects brought to diaspora (Savaş, 2014). Popular examples of neighbourhoods where the immigrant infrastructure has reshaped deprived urban areas through attracting visitors to enjoy the existential authenticity include Brunnenmarkt in Vienna, Brick Lane in London, Oranienstraße in Berlin, Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis in Paris, and Bennets Bazaar in Malmö (see Savaş, 2014; Parker and Madureira, 2016; Parzer and Huber, 2015).

Thus, in addition to co-ethnic clientele, the multi-ethnic hubs have also become destinations for other visitors seeking authenticity (Wang, 1999) and exoticism (Shaw et al., 2004). Such a trend enables immigrants to play a role in major urban changes by uplifting neighbourhoods that formerly faced the stigma of being dangerous and deprived pockets to be new destinations as ethnic places (Zukin, 1995). Aytar and Rath (2012) state that in the neighborhoods with an overrepresentation of immigrants, economic amenities raise the attractiveness of the neighbourhoods as places of leisure and consumption. The richness of social capital in such neighbourhoods is represented in the existence of street markets, ethnic restaurants, prayer rooms, and a varied pattern of opening hours (e.g. Sezer, 2018; Galbraith et al., 2007; Lilius and Hewidy, 2021), increasing and activating the area’s vitality, diversity, and footfall (Article I).

Vitality, diversity and footfall are correlated and can gradually transform the public life of some streets to be livelier than others (Mehta, 2007, p. 166; also in Parker et al., 2017). Ethnic retail can play a role in urban development and gentrification (Hackworth and Rekers, 2005; Zukin et al., 2009; Shaw, 2011; Sakizlioglu and Uitermark, 2014; De Oliver, 2016; Lilius and Hewidy, 2021). Thus, ethnic retail is seen as an urban catalyst in areas suffering from business decline (Zhuang and Chen, 2017). Consequently, public life on
many streets can recover through the arrival of immigrant entrepreneurs (De Koning, 2015; van Eck et al., 2020, Article II). In fact, such a potential of superdiverse neighbourhoods needs further research regarding the spatial interaction of immigrant amenities with their vicinities.

### 3.3 Place making

The literature on place making can clarify the dynamics of converting an urban space into an authentic place. Place making is the process of the making of meanings in spaces. However, it is not a new concept, and it has already been reflected in human-centred urban design by Lynch (1960), the order and disorder by Jacobs (1961), and urban design as a response to human desire by Whyte (1980). Place making has been conceptualized in literature by many scholars and disciplines (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1974, 1977; Lefebvre, 1991a; Augé, 1995; Aravot, 2002; Friedmann, 2010). Place quality is embedded in both its physical experiencing and inventive assemblies that are produced by its users’ activities and their satisfaction (Healey, 2010). Therefore, studies of public life and its relation to space quality and activities examine the potential of an urban space to enable place making (e.g. Gehl and Svarre, 2013; Carmona, 2010). In an inclusive sense, place making is associated with the experience of places and the way a culture group embeds memories, perceptions and values to give a meaning to a certain space (e.g. Rose-Redwood and Alderman, 2011). Thus, the creation of meanings during the daily reality is a sign of the mental and social health of immigrants; people vote with their feet regarding their attraction to places. Although place making is in the interest of several scholarships, this dissertation adopts the classification of Lew (2017) to the phenomenon. Lew (2017)\(^8\) distinguishes between place-making, placemaking and place making.

**Place-making** is organic (called spontaneous in Article I), bottom-up when places are merely created as a result of social activities and developed through their frequent usage (Pink, 2008). As such, it is observed in the way ethnic/immigrant cultures can in short time transform the spaces in their living neighbourhoods into distinct places (Main and Sandoval, 2015). Associated with such cultural visibility, this type of place-making allows third places to appear. Third places commonly are not conforming to the dominant culture and do tolerate the representations of diverse ethnic cultures (e.g. Oldenburg

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\(^8\) The problem with Lew’s trichotomy (2017) is that it does not correspond to the meanings that are given to these concepts. They are commonly used as synonyms. However, it is the core meanings of each type that this dissertation is mostly interested in. There is organic place making (by users), planned place making (by eligible planning bodies) and place making (as an abstract of the process of changing a space into a place).
and Brissett, 1982; Soja, 1996). When diversity is tolerated in a superdiverse neighbourhood, places are beyond being third places and become liminal in which no dominant neighbourhood identity is embedded (Pemberton and Phillimore, 2018). In such type of place making, diverse stakeholders contribute to the constructing of meanings (Lew, 2017) if the making of meaning is enabled (Gustafson, 2001). There is no doubt that the making of meanings necessitates enjoying both rights of appropriation and participation. Typically, in place making the visual marking of space indicates the presence of immigrants or a declaration of identity (Jaffe and De Koning 2016). The visual marking of spaces through the shopfronts creates “translocal geographies” and sets “a medium for individuals to negotiate differences” (Hall and Datta 2010, p. 69). Furthermore, Lew (2017) states that ethnic cuisines are essential factors in organic place-making, but it includes also clothing, religious art and crafts, which may also draw tourists’ attraction (e.g. Everett, 2012).

Placemaking, on the other hand, is planned and most frequently a top-down process through urban design, intending to shape the perception of users of places (Lew, 2017). Thus, in planned placemaking it is in the hands of the entitled authorities to decide the land designation. Such a process of placemaking has been the core of the disciplines of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture (Lew, 2017). Historical examples of planned placemaking include movements such as The City Beautiful (Lew, 2017). Currently, planned placemaking includes trends such as entertainment venues and pedestrian-oriented shopping streets, which are typical attractions for tourists (Paradis, 2004; Lew, 2017). Both the organic bottom-up placemaking and the planned top-down placemaking are the opposite ends of the continuum place making (Lew, 2017).

One may ask which place making should be deployed in the city making? The question is complex due to the interrelated factors steering the place making process. First, to preserve organic place-making in urban development, planned placemaking requires assessing the social impacts of the intended changes (Lew, 2017). Thus, organic place-making can be integrated in development only through enabling robust local influence over development decisions and by public participation and community-led approaches (Lew, 2017). Accordingly, such development should achieve a balance between the use value and the exchange value (cf. Lefebvre, 1991a). Unfortunately, public participation is rarely effective and far from being influential, especially when the surplus of the development compromises the use value. Second, planned placemaking has commonly received negative critique for being in reality a part of a larger process of gentrification (Richards, 2014). Third, the authenticity of ethnic places makes them multivocal, a setting that can be widely interpreted (Wang, 1999; Zukin, 2010). Therefore, Collins et al. (2020) argue that the role of urban design is essential in steering the urban renewal in authentic and super-diverse areas. Fourth, when the municipality is in need of the land that
ordinary people use, their stake in the city is simply ignored and their RTC is declined (Friedmann, 2010). Fifth, the clustering of ethnic retail is not commonly welcomed by municipalities in their urban renewal policies. It is claimed that it is a low-quality business that causes negative consequences on the renewed neighbourhood due to congestion, traffic problems, or informal practices claims (Rath et al., 2018). Finally, Fincher et al. (2016) argue that in most of the literature on place-making, the political questions inherent in place-making are “sidestepped in favour of ploughing on” and that the process is merely a “contest over whose vision dominates, who has the resources to influence and who speaks, finances, designs and implements.” (p. 521).

Remarkably, Kuppinger (2019) observed an important role for the mosque in place making. For instance, the mosque situated in an industrial district in Stuttgart, is a complex called the Salam Mosque. It has positively contributed to the improvement of the vitality and safety of the district. A similar effect in place making has also been observed in Sweden through multicultural centres of Muslim community; thus, the City of Stockholm planned three mosques in the Järva Lift plan. Such centres are complex buildings combining praying facilities with many secular services and function as community spaces in Denmark (Simonsen et al., 2019) and Britain (McLoughlin, 2005). Thus, Mack (2020) urged founding such community hubs, located far from geographical centres of cities, as a way to create new urban centres. Mosques in European cities are “more than places for praying” (Mack, 2015, p. 410) and, consequently, a potential to retrofit the neighbourhoods (Mack, 2020). Articles I, II and III discuss the strong alliance between prayer rooms and other amenities in a similar setting.

3.4 Is anti-segregation policy multicultural planning?

Simplifying the role of planning towards urban diversity solely in the dispersal and social-mix policies does not acknowledge urban diversity. On many occasions, the implementation of such policies compromises the relation of immigrants to places for which they have developed meanings (Articles I, II, III). Accordingly, it ignores the immigrants’ full use of urban space, thus declining their right to appropriation. This section discusses such a dilemma first by discussing multicultural planning as well as the challenges facing it and, secondly, it raises the debate on the sole use of anti-segregation policy in the absence of multicultural planning, and the consequences on the immigrant communities.

In recent decades, European and American cities have been developing policies and practices for successful integration of immigrants and to accommodate their needs (de Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016). Therefore, the multicultural planning approach has been an interest for many scholars
Other studies have used the concept planning for diversity (Fainstein, 2005; Fincher and Iveson, 2008; Fincher et al., 2014; Sandercock, 1998). The former concept focuses on cultural diversity (Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017) and the latter one involves the diversity in age, gender, religion, ethnic background, and income (Fincher, 2003). Both concepts have received criticism for possibly initiating neoliberal entrepreneurial ideas of city growth (Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017) and for essentializing immigrant cultures while masking structural injustices (Bissoondath, 1994). One example of this is the branding based on ethno-cultural initiatives, e.g. Little India or Chinatown (Rath, 2005; Sales et al., 2008). However, the main problem with multicultural planning and/or planning for diversity is that neither are clearly defined (Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017).

In many European cities, the spatialization of multiculturalism through the appearance of clusters of immigrant amenities stimulates questions about spatial justice and imposes new challenges on municipalities and their planning bodies. The spatialization of multiculturalism is exposed to varied levels of acknowledgment allowing spatial justice to be assessed through its acceptance or the challenges it may face. The conceptualization of the spatiality of (in)justice, the right to the city, the territorial justice, the geography of social justice as well as urbanization of justice are all contribute to the term of and the discourse on spatial justice (Soja, 2010 p. 83). Soja (2010) considers cultural imperialism a form of dominance where one culture can be made nearly invisible by another group and lose its distinctive differences. Soja (2010) further counts the exclusion of participation, the prevention of political power and even the capacity for self-expression as an act of powerlessness (p. 79). Both planning theorists Young (1990) and Sandercock (1997) consider urban diversity as the basis for a just city. Young (1990) clearly defines such justice in the city as the absence of any form of domination. Therefore, planning bodies face challenges that include, among others, the immigrant amenities and the transformation they cause to their vicinities.

Ethnic retail, a clear manifestation of multiculturalism, is in the interest of a considerable body of literature. Some scholars are concerned with the description of immigrant entrepreneurship (Waldinger et al., 1990; Kloosterman and Rath, 2003). Others analyse their role in supporting migrant communities and networks (Zhou, 2007; Lilius and Hewidy, 2021), while some studies focus on the reasons leading to an overrepresentation of immigrants in entrepreneurship and higher self-employment rates than in the native population (e.g. Nee and Wong, 1985; Razin, 2002). These reasons are categorized into structural constraints and cultural factors. The former is caused by the rigidity of the labour market in the receiving societies to accept the newcomers; thus, such constraints are called external obstacles as an immigrant has no influence on them (e.g. Nee and Wong, 1985; Barrett et al.,
The cultural factors, on the other hand, are related to certain ethnic groups who brought the motivation for self-employment with them from their home country, thus described as internal factors (Nee and Wong, 1985; Masurel et al., 2004). In the case of ethnic retail in Helsinki, the motivation for self-employment combines both reasons (Lilius and Hewidy, 2019).

The question then is why multicultural planning is a challenge for planners. The major constraint facing multicultural planning is the domination and resistance of the values of the mainstream culture. Such values are embedded in the legislative framework of planning and even rooted in the “attitudes, behaviour, and practices of actual flesh and blood planners” (Sandercock, 2000b, p. 16). Therefore, the planning system is an expression of the culturally dominant majority norms. For example, Sandercock (2000b) states that planning systems in certain occasions, such as deciding a location for a mosque, act as an outlet for the deep-seated fears and anxieties of the society. Subsequently, Fincher et al. (2014) raise a few substantial questions about planning for diversity: “What styles of architecture, what cultures of retailing, what practices of worship, what habits of public sociality, are considered “normal” in existing planning frameworks” (p. 36). In the case of ethnic retail, the planners and municipal authorities lack the tools tailored to deal with it (Zhuang, 2008; Articles I, II, III).

Van der Horst and Ouwehand (2012) simplify the theories on multicultural planning into two strands. The earlier strand started with the Chicago School writings. In such a strand, the city acts as a homogenizer where different culture groups are swallowed up by the mainstream. Obviously, such a strand assumes that assimilation is essential for integration and social coherence. The second strand, on the contrary, considers ethnic diversity a valuable attribute in the cultural cityscape. Such a strand is politically structured by the scholarship of Jacobs (1961) and later the creative climates in cities suggested by Florida (2002).

In the Finnish context, multicultural planning is ignored and the dealing with immigrants is mostly observed in, but also simplified by, controlling their spatial patterns through an anti-segregation policy (unconsciously adopting the city as a homogenizer model). Residential ethnic segregation in Helsinki is specified as a major social challenge (cf. Andersson et al., 2017). Appropriately, the social-mixing housing policies in Helsinki are of a preventive nature (cf. Dhalmann and Vilkama, 2009). Simply, this considers the overrepresentation of ethnic groups/immigrants at a neighbourhood as a threat (Article I). Lapintie (2015) explains absence of multiculturalism from Finnish planners’ ideas and discourse with biopolitics and functionalism. On the one hand, biopolitics determines that only the biological features (e.g., age, sex, health) are taken into account and considered legitimate criteria in planning (e.g. Foucault, 2006). Consequently, the law and statistics follow this implicit form of governance, leaving no room for cultural considerations. On the other hand, the dictum form
follows function, coined by Sullivan (1947), is taken for granted, and architects have the freedom to create their concepts based merely on functionalist metaphysics. Thus, their aesthetic choices are seemingly rationally justified. Such a dictum in fact ignores the realm of users and legitimizes designers’ choices; thus, explaining the superiority of architects. Consequently, planning is mainly concerned with “land use but not land users” (cf. Zhuang, 2013, p. 94), a setting that provides an equal treatment for everyone, notwithstanding ethnicity, religion or culture. Obviously, this is where planners find support for the assumption that planning is neutral to culture.

Finally, anti-segregation policy cannot perceptibly replace the absence of multicultural planning for several reasons. First, the shortcoming of the social-mix policies, in treating the problems related to segregation, lies in its assumption that the segregation of ethnic minorities from the mainstream has a deleterious impact per se (Fincher et al., 2014). On the contrary, it is argued that not all ethnic/racial segregation is associated with negative effects for the hosting society and its population (Peach, 1996, 2009). In the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, there are still purely white neighbourhoods, but this does not disturb the social mixing policies. Second, immigrants find safe and protective spaces in neighbourhoods where they no longer need to fear for their cultural visibility and/or the religious upbringing of their children (van Liempt, 2011). Thus, van Liempt (2011) argues that the pressure of the dispersal policies on immigrants to conform to the mainstream cultural norms, while most immigrants are economically excluded, negatively affects their sociocultural integration. Third, the adopted social-mix planning, for example in the Netherlands, is not a poverty alleviation; rather, such a policy is a part of a wider neoliberal urban growth strategy (Uitermark, 2003). Furthermore, Lees (2008) argues that the social-mix planning is in fact a gentrification covering “a hidden social cleansing agenda” (p. 2451) by issuing a moralistic discourse introducing it as a support for the deprived groups. Thus, any potential criticism on gentrification is avoided: “who would oppose ‘social mixing’” helping the poor (Lees, 2008 p. 2452). Similarly, Uitermark (2003) states that such policies are promoted, by both planners and politicians, as strengthening of “the social tissue of a disadvantaged neighbourhood” (p. 531). On the contrary, in gentrified areas, immigrants may lose social networks and retailers can lose affordable business premises, especially when public policies incline towards such an outcome (Newman and Wyly, 2006; Zukin et al., 2009). Therefore, in this type of urban renewal the social equity is not considered a priority, and there is no involvement of expertise in social matters; instead,

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9 Interestingly, van Liempt (2011) shows in his studies that the Somali families that moved from the Netherlands to the UK preferred living in the ethnic enclaves, with co-ethnic groups, to their previous experience in the Netherlands under the dispersal policies.
planning and design-driven place making are “masking the place of the lowest-income existing residents” (Fincher et al., 2016, p. 529).

Such gentrification, according to van Eck et al. (2020), causes displacement of the original residents and their businesses. Similarly, Sezer (2018) argues that immigrant amenities in the Javastraat area in Amsterdam have been changing their characteristics several times with the urban renewal. According to Parzer and Huber (2015), urban renewal has the following impacts on ethnic retail: (1) running the business becomes expensive and thus it may be displaced, (2) some retailers may lose their customers with the change of the area profile, and (3) entrepreneurs may themselves face residential displacement in case of living close by their premises. Therefore, Zukin et al. (2009) urge the protection of the local shops and residents in gentrified areas and protecting them from the impacts of such urban policy.

Despite the sensitivity of the anti-segregation policy in Helsinki and its consequent social mixing, immigrants are already overrepresented in certain areas, with a clear clustering in only three out of the eight major districts; roughly 70 per cent of immigrants live in these three areas (see Hewidy and Schmidt-Thomé, 2022). Finally, in studying the city of Stockholm, Rokem and Vaughan (2019) address an interesting question: assuming that spatial segregation is bad, what is the evidence that social mixing policies are necessarily good? According to all these reasons, there is a need to rigorously study how immigrants’ relations to spaces and their amenities may be affected by urban policies.

3.5 Immigrants’ RTC and participation

RTC has been a fundamental concept for challenging the injustices and inequalities in cities. On the one hand, immigrants’ needs are fulfilled by their amenities, making clusters of such amenities essential in their daily reality. On the other hand, their relation with such spaces needs to be communicated to the planning practice. The information of immigrants’ interests, which represents their right to appropriation as a use value, should be ideally reflected in the participation process. Thus, this section addresses the question of immigrants’ RTC and participation with a focus on the Finnish context.

Lefebvre (1991a) and Soja (1996) describe the urban space as the locus of meanings that are shaped by everyday social practices. Urbanists urge observing and founding a systematic understanding of the relation between people and spaces (Jacobs, 1961; Whyte, 1980). The emotional bond between places and their users, coined by Tuan (1974) as ‘topophilia’ or space-love, creates a place-based identity, a concept that is rooted in place and explains the feeling of belonging (Jaffe and De Koning, 2016). Spaces where place-based identity can be formed enable place attachment, which is an established tie
merging culture and everyday communication language (Low and Altman, 1992). Other scholars recognize the transformation by immigrants in reshaping the urban spaces as a form of resistance of rejection and racism (Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Miraftab, 2012).

Immigrants create a space of identity and a sense of belonging through developing power dynamics (Butcher, 2009; Miraftab, 2012). These dynamics include the appropriation of space which is a mechanism rooted in the psychological attachment to places; lingering in a certain space is a sign of appropriation (e.g. Rioux, Scrima and Werner, 2017). The contribution of immigrants to the cityscape is an attempt at social participation seeking an inclusion in the public space through its access, usage and control (Babacan, 2006). When cultural diversity is visible in a certain space, a sense of inclusion is enabled, particularly for those who might not be welcomed elsewhere (cf. Wessendorf, 2019). However, when such places become the locus of meanings, they are threatened by gentrification that dramatically changes their cultural visibility and identity, and the minority becomes invisible (Saha, 2022). In many cities, the homogenization of planning discourses and practices are caused by the tendency towards market-oriented solutions in the areas of marginalized minorities (Fincher et al., 2014).

This leads to the question: how can the practice then be informed of citizens’ opinions? The ideal answer is through participation. The appropriation, through living, creates people interests; such interests are to be integrated in the participation process of any urban development. Thus, the Finnish planning law links together participation and impact assessment in Participation and Impact Assessment Schemes; therefore, the planning is mainly informed of the local knowledge through participation (Mattila et al., 2021). However, a few shortcomings prevent participation from being a real reflection of the diverse opinions and values of people. The reasons leading to such shortcomings are discussed in the Finnish context. In Finland, there is an ongoing process for replacing the rational planning approach by communicative planning (Eräranta et al., 2015). However, in the Finnish context communicative planning concerns mostly the negotiation with landowners and investors; thus, there is a risk of ignoring the users’ demands. In its ideal form, communicative planning should prevent the domination of one social group from influencing plans in its favour upon other parties (e.g. Sager, 2009). Furthermore, communicative planning considers some consensus in planning objectives. Nevertheless, participation in Finland is not inclusive and not all groups participate in the planning process; thus, planning is informed by knowledge that is usually unrepresentative of the community’s diverse opinions (Mattila et al., 2021). Furthermore, the planning culture in Helsinki is a mixture of rationalist planning and collaborative planning (Bäcklund and Mäntysalo, 2010). Therefore, influential participation mainly remains an intention, being faced by power relations and weak communication.
Moreover, embeddedness of the dominance of expert knowledge over citizen knowledge perceptibly situates the laypeople as an object of planning, not an active participating subject (Niitamo, 2020). Furthermore, municipal planning bodies lack the resources enabling the enhancement of participatory planning (Mattila, 2018; Niitamo, 2020). Mattila et al. (2021) argue that there is a gap between participatory methods and scientific knowledge in Finnish planning.

Sandercock (2000a) recommends that planners should be able to communicate in different ways to understand and respond to the complexities in multicultural cities. The national origin of immigrants as well as their socio-economic status, religion and ethnicity are significant dimensions in finding solutions to fulfil their needs (Bloemraad, 2007). Similarly, Mattila et al. (2021) suggest deploying ethnographic methods in the informal planning phase to provide decision-makers and planners a comprehensive understanding of people’s cultures and identities as well as a thorough narrative of their interactions with places. In cases of deploying alternative planning tools, such as scenario planning and planning competitions, participation is even weaker than in the conventional planning, as further discussed below.

In the process of creating scenarios (the focus of Article II), participation is essential as a source of information. Scenario planning, in its ideal form, is a creative platform for brainstorming that combines participatory planning and technical knowledge (e.g. Chakraborty and McMillan, 2015). This type of participatory setting in the scenario making process offers room for stakeholders that are not normally represented in planning (e.g. Chakraborty, 2011). However, when scenario planning has strong policy objectives, or planning agenda, the process leaves no chance for public participation (Bartholomew, 2007). Zapata and Kaza (2015) note that most frequently scenario planning is derived towards a wide participation, not a deep one. Klosterman (2013) further argues that efficient participation in scenario creation is too demanding. Furthermore, urban planners typically ignore the involvement of diverse stakeholders when deploying scenario planning (e.g. Zapata and Kaza, 2015).

Participation in architectural and planning competitions (the focus of Article III) is not obligatory (Finnish Land Use and Building Act, 1999). The practical setting of architectural competitions typically has open procedures and closed ones (Rönn, 2009). Conventionally, the latter excludes the public from participation and the former enables public involvement through public display of the entries. Typically, the closed procedures are top-down including mainly the judgement, the programme contents, the public organizer’s choice of its members to the jury and the role of politicians in jury work (Rönn 2009, p. 60). The very slim chance for consulting the public in competitions makes participation less important than in any conventional planning process (Erärinta et al., 2015). Furthermore, the political agenda influences the
planning/design alternatives in competitions (Sagalyn 2006, p. 26). Thus, Kazemian and Rönn (2009) call for further research on participation in planning competitions.

To conclude, both rights to appropriation and participation of immigrants are faced by (1) gentrification that threatens appropriation and cultural visibility, (2) superiority of expert knowledge, (3) lack of significance given to participation, (4) shortage of resources for participatory planning, (5) strong agenda for planning, and (6) rigid practicalities and/or shortcomings in the arrangements of alternative planning methods.
4. Results

This chapter introduces the results of the articles to answer the research questions and comprises four sections. The first three sections are: A blind spot or an absence of political will?, Ethnic Retail: an urban catalyst and a place maker and The lost diversity. The fourth section The hidden city of immigrants sums the results.

4.1 RQ1: A blind spot or an absence of political will?

Does urban planning in Helsinki sustain the immigrants’ right to space? What are the shortcomings or/and blind spots preventing urban planning from preserving the developed places by immigrants? What are the consequences of ignoring the planning impacts on immigrant amenities?

The blind spot is the short title of Article I (In the blind spot). As the research progressed, an increasing number of blind spots were observed. Thus, an important question to start with is: was it a blind spot that has prevented the municipality from preserving the immigrants’ right to the city or an absence of political will10? Or both? In this section, the results of the articles regarding the first question are discussed as well as the shortcomings and their consequences on immigrant amenities.

According to Articles I, II, III, the major shortcomings were anti-segregation policy and the lack of influential participation. There were a few objectives steering the urban renewal of Helsinki, and among them was the high sensitivity towards segregation. Ethnic retailers and immigrants were entirely absent in the process. Other shortcomings were also found in the practical arrangements of deploying scenario planning studied in Article II and planning competitions studied in Article III; those are separately presented in the section The lost diversity.

The analysed documents in Article I showed a gap between the city master plan and the detailed local plan. The master plan is comprehensive by nature and typically draws the main lines of the city growth. However, the city plan (Yleiskaava, 2016) was more detailed in issues such as urban space quality and walkability but remained vague in suggesting the methods of implementation. This has created a problematic situation. On the one hand, the city plan states that some of the old strip malls are to be demolished and

10 In this dissertation, ‘political will’ represents all actions rooted in and structured by the commitment and firm intention that are clearly reflected in the urban policy or any of relevant document.
others are to be renovated, without defining which of them are the ones to be preserved. Furthermore, there was no criteria to evaluate which strip malls deserve to be preserved. Therefore, the property shareholding companies were allowed to play a significant role in driving the renovation of the malls towards a partial demolition in the Puhos case and an entire demolition in the Kontula case. On the other hand, none of the words ‘immigrants, multicultural, multiculturalism’ or ‘ethnic retailing’ were found in the city plan. Instead, there was a strange sentence stating that “Efforts are being made to promote labour migration” (Yleiskaava, 2016, p.169). The sentence indicates that the planning system, and the city, have not considered ethnic retail worth a promotion and aimed to attract other profile of labour migration. Furthermore, both the city plan (Yleiskaava, 2016) and the programme of Kontula strip mall competition mentioned the word ‘culture’ only in a singular form (in Article III); thus, even the very imprecise term Monikulttuurinen suunnittelu (multicultural planning) was not found. Considering the involvement of the local community, all interviewed ethnic retailers reported that they were hardly involved in the planning process, and that it was demanding to receive information about the future of their businesses.

**Article II**, which studied the deploying of scenario planning to anticipate the Malmi area future, also showed a lack of ethnic retailers’ participation. Moreover, due to the shortage of time there was no cross-sectoral coordination between different stakeholders, especially with the property leasing companies and landlords. The private land ownership in the Malmi area is relatively high and such coordination is essential. Thus, the main complaints by ethnic retailers were the durations and the stability of their tenant contracts as well as the response to their operational requests, as they reported during the interviews. Considering such a strong influence by landlords and the absence of ethnic retailers in participation, the Article concluded that the right to the city is also questionable in this case due to the unbalanced evaluation of exchange value and use value.

Finally, the results of **Article III** show that the competition programme of Kontula strip mall was not politically approved by the municipality and it was solely written by the shareholding companies. The interviewed city planners admitted such shortcomings of the programme. Thus, the dissertation addresses another question: on which basis can such a free hand be given to a profit accumulation entity in deciding the conversion of a strip mall into a large residential area of a mixed use? The shareholding companies have no socio-economic commitments; instead, they are after the accumulation of their profit. Such an action has led to the empowerment of the companies, who did not mention any other operators of the mall in the programme than the chain stores.

Participation in both competitions was weak, which the city planners admitted. They referred to the lack of resources and time to organize an effective participation process (be it in translating the material to immigrants’
spoken languages or/and holding workshops with the local community before the competition). Furthermore, an interviewed, independent juror reported that, participation is a problem with the municipal monopoly of planning; it hardly affects the decisions. There was no clear vision about considering the mall as a locus of meanings or political will to preserve them. The lack of political will is thoroughly discussed in section 4.3 *The lost diversity*. Immigrants’ rights to appropriation and participation were not considered. Simply, this was the result of anti-segregation policy—with the absence of multicultural planning—that targets the attraction of new households without considering the consequences of withdrawing a place from its current users.

### 4.2 RQ2: Ethnic retail: an urban catalyst and a place maker

How has ethnic retail succeeded at resisting urban homogenization and market monopoly? How has ethnic retail enabled place making, acted as an urban catalyst of public street life recovery and what are the signs of such place making?

The results of *Articles I & II* highlight the main features of ethnic retail to resist the market constraints and act as an urban catalyst for public street life recovery. Such constraints are represented in the oligopoly of retail through chain stores and the sprouting of spectacular shopping malls. This section also discusses the findings concerning the signs of place making and the public street life recovery.

*Article I* showed that both clusters of immigrant amenities at strip malls Puhos and Kontula have enabled a spontaneous bottom-up place making process to convert abandoned spaces into liveable distinct places full of meanings. The cases are typical production of spaces through the everyday practice (cf. Lefebvre, 1991a; Soja, 1996). The cluster of amenities has raised the attraction to both strip malls as destinations, not only to the local communities in their vicinities but also for clientele from farther areas. Such an activation of the footfall towards both abandoned malls has increased the vitality of the areas. The signs of the place making were clear in the cultural visibility that enabled immigrants to linger and enjoy safe and warm place attachment. Visual marking of the space was an obvious indication of active place making. This was perceived in the shop fronts carrying Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic names, multilingual menus at eateries, the oriental interior of grocery stores and restaurants, the smell of the food as well as the group of users hanging and communicating in different languages and colourful customs. Moreover, artistic and cultural festivals were frequently held and attracted both co-ethnic groups and mainstream (see Fig. 4). Visual markers described the declaration of identity in both strip malls.
Figure 4. Artistic and cultural festivals at Puhos, photo by Ramon Maronier for Lähiöfest (Article I)
Article II found similar visual marking observed in Malmi area in the translocal geographies of the signscape on many shop fronts. Interestingly, both Articles I and II showed another sign of place making: there were community gathering places, or ‘third places’, at barber shops in Malmi and eateries as well as prayer rooms at Puhos strip mall (cf. Zhuang, 2017; 2021). Article II further showed that ethnic retail functioned as a catalyst in the Malmi area for public street life recovery by bringing into life many retail premises left vacant before the arrival of immigrant entrepreneurs, thus activating the footfall in the area. Another factor that contributed to the flourishing of these two malls and enabling place making were the Muslim prayer rooms. Currently, all the Muslims prayer rooms in Helsinki are recycled spaces (musallas), and the satisfaction of their users is low due to overcrowding, poor condition and the availability of rooms for women (Hewidy, 2017). However, with their varied pattern of opening hours, the musallas play a dynamic role in activating the footfall and shaping a dynamic market for ethnic retailers (similar to the cases studied by Sezer in Amsterdam, 2018). This is evident in the Puhos mall with its two musallas, the Kontula mall with one musalla, and the Malmi neighbourhoods with three musallas (Articles I and II).

Both Articles I & II showed interesting characteristics of ethnic retail as well as operative tactics by entrepreneurs to overcome the retail homogenisation and market monopoly. The ability of ethnic retail to resist these is embedded in its spontaneity, improvisation, diversity, and social capital. Spontaneity was observed in the clustering process without the formal involvement of planning. It was also reflected in the erratic arbitrary setting of the display stalls in front of the grocery stores at Puhos and Kontula malls as well as in the Malmi area. Spontaneity and improvisation were also reflected in the uniqueness of goods, their displaying, and the layout of the retail premises by using objects brought to diaspora not only showing the immigrant feeling of belonging (cf. Savaş, 2014) but also creating distinctive places (see Fig. 5). Informality was noticeable in the creation of less sophisticated businesses based on the commodification of ethnocultural diversity (cf. Jencks and Silver, 2013; Hunt 2015).
The operative tactics by retailers have been realized through the co-tenancy of two or more trades sharing the same retail premises. Such a practice is not only for sharing rent, but for the integration of diverse services. An example of this is a grocery store at Puhos mall that has founded a bakery and a halal butcher, each of which has been operated by a different entrepreneur. The clustering of immigrant amenities, as a typical agglomeration effect, has provided operational rewards for all trades at both strip malls as well as in the Malmi area through the support of social capital (cf. Galbraith et al., 2007). In the Malmi area, some retailers have decided to relocate their premises closer to hypermarkets in order to have free parking for their clientele. Interestingly, in Malmi, a variation of market strategy regarding the targeted clientele showed that some ethnic retailers were mostly oriented to attract mainstream customers. Thus, the activated footfall was diverse comprising both co-ethnic groups and mainstream.

To conclude, the commodification of ethnic diversity, uniqueness of goods, improvised fashion of display, social capital, clustering, and attraction to authentic places were the factors equipping ethnic retail to resist market oligopoly and make a clear positive transformation for their vicinities. In addition to satisfying the socio-economic needs of immigrants and enabling...
cultural visibility, ethnic retail created an ideal setting of leisure and consumption (as described in similar cases by Aytar and Rath, 2012).

### 4.3 RQ3: The lost diversity

Does applying alternative planning methods, scenario planning and planning competitions, succeed in integrating the positive transformation of neighborhoods in which they operate? Why? Can such methods balance the concerns of functionality and aesthetic value with the integration of immigrant-led assets such as ethnic retailing?

This section presents the results of Articles II & III to assess the application of alternative planning methods: scenario planning and planning competitions. First, it presents the results from Article II about deploying scenario planning to anticipate the futures of Malmi area. Second, it shows the results of Article III about the capacity of planning competitions to integrate immigrant-led assets in their results.

The deploying of scenario planning, studied in Article II, is a positive sign that the City of Helsinki intended to integrate the ethnic diversity transformation of Malmi into the scenario making process. However, the results of the article revealed a few shortcomings. First, the scenario planning process was outsourced to a joint venture of two consultants. The consultants did not contribute to the preparation of the questionnaire used in collecting public opinion via an online survey, nor did they decide the formation of the scenario team. When asked about such an absence during the interviews, they answered "we jumped on a speedy train" and that "It would've been more effective if we had been included in the preparation of the questions distributed to the public". Second, the participation was found to be very weak regarding ethnic retail entrepreneurs. Only one entrepreneur attended one workshop in the entire process. Third, the output of the process was limited. There should have been a balance between the possible futures by defining the trends and local constraints from one side, and the desired futures from the other side by referring to all stakeholders and their values. However, the city, and accordingly the consultants, ignored such a balance (Article II, see Fig. 6).
Figure 6. Malmi scenario process based on Avin’s 12-Step Model (2007) (Article II)

Such a shortcoming\(^{11}\) will affect the implementation stage and may lead to ignoring the cross-sectoral coordination. Fourth, by reviewing all the relevant documents, it was demanding to grasp the foundation of selecting the drivers for change, the trends, and constraints. These three elements are essential in structuring a normative scenario (i.e. with clear goal(s) and a defined period of time). Finally, there was no mention of the regressive implementation method, the backcasting plan; thus, the process did not answer the questions ‘Who can influence change?’ and ‘How can change be achieved?’.

The results of Article III studying the planning competition showed that there were shortcomings in the practical arrangements, an ignorance of the importance of participation, no clear intentions to preserve the liveable transformation by immigrant amenities and most importantly no willingness from the city to enable the reformation of such clusters after the implementation of the ideas in the winning entries. However, the interviewed entrants showed proficiency and deep understanding of the importance to

\(^{11}\) In the ideal setting of the structuring of scenarios, a regulative ‘mechanism’ enables the process to be open to multiple results of “possible” and “desired” futures. The possible futures are the ones that can be predicted through critical defining of “all” trends and local constraints. It is possible because if such trends and constraints exist in the future, they would logically lead to certain results. Trends and constraints can include zero carbon agenda, major brownfield development such as Malmi airport, segregation problems, or a high share of private land ownership. On the contrary, desired futures are transformative in nature and they are referred to through a clear setting of the values and intentions of all stakeholders (municipality, local citizens, mainstream retail, ethnic retail, nature activists etc.).
integrate immigrants’ social capital as an asset in their proposals. Surprisingly, their creative proposals were rejected as discussed below. The rest of this section introduces the major shortcomings of both competitions. It also discusses the rejected ideas of the winning teams that would have enabled a better integration of immigrant amenities rather than completely erasing them.

The Itäkeskus competition programme, where the Puhos mall is located, admitted the cultural diversity at the mall and in the surrounding vicinities but included no clear criteria about assessing the inclusion of such diversity in the entries. Nor did the jury committee include an expert on the subject. Interestingly, the interviewed entrants and the independent juror reported that there was an impression that the current trades taking place at Puhos were temporary and should be changed. Therefore, the jury process had no room for multiculturalism. This was obvious in the statement below:

*Between the jurors there was a discussion. We asked ourselves whom to consult about things relevant to multiculturalism. How we can enrol immigrants in the jury process. We couldn’t find a solution. It was not taken as a specific expert dimension in the jury process, like traffic […] In the jury process multiculturalism didn’t play any role.*

(Independent juror/Article III)

Strangely, the programme was also incorrect in describing the occupiers of Puhos strip mall and the activities running at its premises, as it states:

*“tenants with immigrant backgrounds are concentrated in the oldest part of the mall (thus) the intention is to demolish the newer parts of the mall”*  
(Competition program, p.60/Article III)

However, the newer part of the mall has been occupied by grocery stores and a restaurant for almost 10 years; this was also confirmed by the conducted fieldwork. One planner explained this with the description being a generalization stating:

*The description was a generalization, no intention to cover up anything. I’m sorry that the generalization was partly incorrect!*  
(Planner/Article III)

Participation and the involvement of immigrants were entirely absent. The interviewed entrants, who showed a deep understanding of the operative dynamics at Puhos, admitted that the participation was superficial. Furthermore, the immigrants were not reached through their language
according to their complaints. The Kontula competition programme entirely ignored multiculturalism and the positive transformation of the mall by ethnic retail. Such ignorance confirmed the findings of Article I that ethnic retail was treated as interim use or an occupier of a transitional era in the rent gap period of both strip malls due to the decline of independent mainstream retail. It is strange that the competition programme had no mention of ethnic retail, nor did it mention any weight for multiculturalism in its assessment criteria. Nevertheless, the jury still criticized the absence of the multicultural output in the competition results wondering:

“How could the area’s multiculturalism be better employed and integrated, and its different nationalities encouraged to engage in the life of the place, this applies to all the entries? ”

(Competition Jury’s evaluation protocol, p.43/Article III)

The jury’s criticism was not surprising considering the setting where the organizers, as discussed above, were private entities of shareholding companies who showed a clear preference for the chain stores and even mentioned them by names in the programme12. Another significant note found in the programme was that it requested a high volume of gross floor area, but, at the same time, confirmed the importance of preserving the milieu gained by retail. However, such a high volume could not be achieved without proposing an entire demolition, as the winning team suggested. Despite the inadequacies of the competition programme, the entrants showed a good analysis of the situation at both malls, even if these ideas were rejected. For example, in the Puhos case, one of the two winning entries had proposed a mosque. The entry of that team was nominated to be the basis for the local detailed plan of the mall sector, but the city requested the removal of the mosque (Fig. 7).

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12 A competition programme typically mentions the spaces of retail premises in square meters; it can further describe the logistics for catering and operational circulation (uploading docks/waste management/vertical and horizontal circulation of goods etc.). However, the competition programme for Kontula is questionable as the commercial brands of the stores were mentioned.
The interviewed planner, who was also a jury member, explained the situation stating that “We dealt with the mosque as a “building mass” regardless of its function” (Article III). The other winning team had suggested a two-floor, raw-space market-hall. The proposal suggested the implementation of the market hall prior to the demolition and renovation of the strip mall to assure a smooth continuity of ethnic retail. The hall was especially intended to cater to all the amenities clustered at the Puhos mall. The city, again, requested cancellation of the market-hall idea, which was introduced in the first phase of the competition. In the Kontula competition, one entry proposed a full preservation of the mall. The entry had situated the area’s diversity in a very careful fashion; the team won an honourable mention with positive feedback.

A few points need to be further highlighted in order to situate the studied competitions within the public sphere created by the media and adopted by city planners.

*Mylypuro's profile began to rise in the 21st century as a result of several reforms. The turning point was the demolishing of the old [strip] mall and the erection of a new one.*  
(Färding, 2021)

The above quotation was published in a newspaper about the demolition of a strip mall located in the Mylypuro neighbourhood close to the Puhos mall. The interviewed city planners recalled this demolition several times.
as a good reference to the recovery of Kontula area’s stigma. The planners also referred to the importance of the malls according to their architectural value as set by the Helsinki City Museum\textsuperscript{13}. Although such a setting has shaped a convincing ground for the city planners and the city, it has led to the overlooking of the value of the malls to immigrants as well as ignoring the positive transformation achieved by their amenities. The interviewed entrants, who proposed the full preservation of Kontula strip mall, strongly disagreed with taking the demolition of Myllypuro neighbourhood mall as a best practice reference and stated that this was a process of replacing a place full of meanings with a nondistinctive place; “we cannot be part of this.”

Concerning the formation of the entrant teams, both competition programmes recommended that entrant teams should be formed of diverse expertise, but with no mention of experts in multicultural planning. One entrant team in each competition voluntarily included an expert in multicultural planning, but their ideas were rejected. As the findings show, none of the alternative planning tools were successful in integrating multiculturalism in the results and thus diversity, and accordingly the right to the city, are lost.

### 4.4 The hidden city of immigrants

The city of Helsinki is under major urban development. The local master plan is bold and built around three main ideas: (1) the conversion of motorways within the ring road into boulevards of mixed use, (2) enabling the formation of urban centres further from the inner city through densification, and (3) developing urban infill in areas of the trunk lines (Yleiskaava, 2016). The urban densification around transportation nodes aims to create critical passenger mass further from the centre, including Itäkeskus where the Puhos strip mall is located (Yleiskaava 2016, pp. 16–17). Such densification targets certain neighbourhoods in order to prevent segregation (Yleiskaava 2016, p. 71, p. 120). Kontula and Malmi neighbourhoods are mentioned among the suburbs to be densified for anti-segregation purposes (Yleiskaava, 2016). However, the articles showed a failure to preserve multiculturalism at both strip malls (Articles I and III) and a shortcoming in the application of alternative planning

\textsuperscript{13} In the book [Ostari – lähöön sydän] The strip mall – Suburbia heart (Saresto et al; 2004), the Helsinki City Museum has divided Helsinki’s malls into three categories according to their historical construction value and preservation:

- **Category 1**: Includes shopping malls that are highly thought out and finished, well-preserved or of high environmental value. The part of Puhos to be restored is in this category.
- **Category 2**: Includes shopping centers that are well thought out and finished, fairly-well preserved or have significant environmental value.
- **Category 3**: The architectural, environmental or preservation values of the shopping centers are not significant. The Kontula mall is under this category as well as Myllypuro’s ‘demolished’ mall.
methods (Articles II and III). The entries in both competitions proposed creative ideas enabling the continuity of immigrant amenities as placemakers at both malls. However, there was no willingness to allow a future remaking of the place making and the results of the competitions were rather directed towards the unmaking of the place making.

Participation was found superficial in both competitions and the results were steered towards an entire erasure of both liveable hubs. Similarly, the absence of ethnic retailers’ participation was evident in the scenario building of the Malmi area (Article II). Although the scenario planning was outsourced to consultants, the city of Helsinki did not consider involving them at the right time. It seems that the political agenda of the city was obviously stronger than the contribution of the consultants. Thus, the metaphor of the hidden city of immigrants includes two meanings. On the one hand, the immigrant amenities have spontaneously clustered at places that were abandoned and less favoured by mainstream retail, which is also clearly declining. Such clustering caused positive urban transformation and created places full of meanings. On the other hand, the city treated the clusters with ignorance and prevented their continuation; immigrant amenities were simply invisible to the city or had no significance. The rejected mosque is another sign of such invisibility, or simply hiding the visibility, thus leading to the erasure of the hidden city of immigrants from Helsinki’s urban leftovers.
5. Discussion

5.1 Scientific implications

In this section, the results will be discussed in two contexts. **First**, the results are reflected against the literature presented in the Theoretical Foundation. **Second**, the key contradictions with previous research are discussed.

**First**, as stated in the Theoretical Foundation chapter, this dissertation has no intention to offer a meticulous restatement of Lefebvre’s argument. The notion of the RTC is quite fluid and general but it can still clarify most of the results of this dissertation. The notion is employed to situate the multiple cases into a discursive understanding of the difficulty to create an inclusive city satisfying the spatial needs of different groups. Simply, it is referred to as an umbrella term in studying the spatial needs of immigrants and the response to planning them. This dissertation focuses on the daily urban reality of immigrants in Helsinki. The articles showed that immigrant amenities have a capacity to play a role in the lived space of immigrants and form a locus of meanings (cf. Lefebvre, 1991a; Soja, 1996). Such meanings, developed by the users of spaces, have created emotional ties with certain spaces (cf. Tuan, 1974) and thus allowed the formation of a place-based identity that may strengthen the immigrants’ feeling of belonging (cf. Jaffe and De Koning, 2016). This has encouraged a setting that permits the visibility of cultural diversity and, accordingly, spaces have become inclusive welcoming those who might not be welcomed elsewhere (cf. Wessendorf, 2019).

Furthermore, the results show that immigrants have not only created space of identity and sense of belonging (cf. Butcher, 2009; Miraftab, 2012) through their appropriation of spaces, but also the process was typical organic bottom-up place-making created through daily social activities (cf. Pink, 2008). Lefebvre (1996) has referred to such **spatial practice** in defining the perceived space where people encounter each other. In doing so, immigrants through their amenities in Helsinki proved that they have the ability to transform the spaces they use or live into distinct places. This is similar to the findings of Main and Sandoval (2015) in their studies on public space transformation by a Mexican immigrant community in Los Angeles.

In addition to the capacity of ethnic retail to play a role in place making, it has also proved to have potential to resist retail homogenization and act as an urban catalyst for public street life recovery through its authentic setting (cf. Kuppinger, 2014; Oleschuk, 2017) and its spontaneity, improvisation, diversity, and social capital (Articles I and II). Similar to Kuppinger’s (2019) observation
on the Stuttgart mosque, Muslims prayer rooms have played a role in the place-making process in all the studied cases (cf. Mack, 2020). Recalling the literature on place-making by Lew (2017), the findings show that the organic bottom-up place-making by immigrants was not considered of any value and that the planned top-down placemaking erased the places full of meanings. Overlooking the organic place-making was a logical result for the absence of any robust local influence on urban decisions, ignoring immigrants in participation through the lack of community-led approaches (cf. Lew, 2017).

Recalling Jacobs’ spontaneity (1961, 1970), it is evident from the articles that the interactive relation between the immigrants and the urban leftovers, stimulated by the economic constraints facing them—their marginalization in the labour market—has led to urban transformation of the abandoned spaces into liveable places, which is a typical evolution of an emergent configuration (e.g. Cozzolino, 2018). Immigrants have used their socio-cultural capital to perform spontaneously. Interestingly, the transformation created liminal places with no dominant culture in any of the studied cases (cf. Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018). Furthermore, the economic amenities not only proved an uplift of the leftovers, but also created places combining leisure and consumption (cf. Aytar and Rath, 2012). As a spillover of such a process, they created places full of meanings and, most importantly, introduced themselves as socio-cultural capital. In fact, if Lefebvre’s RTC passes through the working class, immigrants impose themselves as an asset, despite their marginalization in the labour market. However, planning decisions failed to integrate flexibility in order to preserve such a configuration (cf. Cozzolino, 2018), leading the entire development process towards destroying authentic places and replacing them with placelessness (cf. Relph, 1981).

In the case of Kontula competition, the absence of multicultural planning, or the willingness to preserve its manifestation, and the control of the circuits of power (cf. Leach, 1993) steered the results towards the satisfaction of capital surpluses (cf. Purcell, 2014). Such circuits of power were represented in an alliance between shareholding companies, retail chains who own banks, and the city as the landowner. This led the development towards the commodification and homogenization of the “new” urban space (see Harvey, 1981; Sorkin, 1992; Zukin, 1995; Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998; Carmona, 2010). The shareholding companies have acted as a form of domination, thus driving the development of the city further from justice (cf. Young, 1990). Accordingly, the exchange value was the winner at the cost of erasing a vibrant place. This is why supporting ethnic retail to cope with the consequences of urban renewal is called for by scholars (Newman and Wyly, 2006; Zukin et al., 2009). However, the political agenda is very strong, and immigrants are not considered an asset. The right to appropriation is thus declined. The research draws on Friedmann (2010) to state that the stake of immigrants is ignored when the municipality needs the land. On the other
hand, immigrants were not involved in the urban regeneration process; they were not granted the right to participation.

Second, the rest of this section discusses the problematic results of employing social-mix policy, the core of anti-segregation policy, in dealing with immigrant’s spatial needs without a well-defined image of a multicultural city. The discussion of the absence of political will towards multicultural planning is opened further in the Conclusion chapter.

This research demonstrates that anti-segregation policy is an assimilative mechanism. The dispersal housing policy, in principle, contradicts with the principles of multicultural manifestation. This makes the overrepresentation of ethnic groups in a neighbourhood a threat, not a potential (Article I). However, even with the preventive nature of the social-mixing housing policy in Helsinki (Dhalmann and Vilkama, 2009), it fails to achieve even spatial distribution (Hewidy and Schmidt-Thomé, 2022). Thus, the dissertation raises a question: why was such information not the basis for the development of these areas?

The dissertation draws on Peach (1996, 2009) to argue that not all ethnic segregation is associated with destructive consequences for the mainstream society. The segregation is not a problem in itself (e.g. Fincher et al., 2014); the immigrant amenities have shown their capability in urban transformation, converting a few urban leftovers into liveable places. Furthermore, many immigrants find protective spaces in areas where they face no fear from their cultural visibility and/or religious backgrounds (cf. van Liempt, 2011). This was evident in all the studied cases. Thus, the full erasure of places full of meanings by immigrants is a violent action that has negative impacts on the integration of immigrants, especially if they are economically excluded. In reality, the social-mix is not of any help to a deprived household of an immigrant background nor can it contribute to a healthy integration process; rather, it is oriented towards developing new areas attracting the well-off middle class and, accordingly, changing the urban spaces to satisfy the newcomers. The dissertation thus draws on Lees (2008) to argue that the adopted social-mix objective of the anti-segregation policy can be understood as social cleansing. The results and practical arrangements of the Kontula competition showed that a free hand was given to companies in steering urban renewal. In such a process, social equity is not a priority, as shown in Article III with the absence of any expertise in multicultural planning in the jury committee; thus, the results of the competitions merely contributed to cover the places used by low-income immigrants through the intended dramatic gentrification (e.g. Fincher et al., 2016). Therefore, the normal consequence in such situations is that the immigrants lose their amenities, be they secular or spiritual, lose their social networks, and retailers lose affordable premises; thus, it seems that the public policies even aim at such an outcome (cf. Newman and Wyly, 2006; Zukin et al., 2009).
This scientific implication section is concluded by discussing the consequences of urban development on immigrant amenities in the absence of participation and socio-economic impact assessment. The anti-segregation policy contributes to the erasure of cultural visibility and replaces places improved by immigrant amenities by placelessness. In such a setting, it is the exchange value that matters, and the use value is ignored. Recalling the RTC, it is essential to drive urban growth in a balance between the use value and the exchange value (see Fig. 8). The former is very essential in the spatial integration of immigrants and allows, among many other meanings, cultural visibility, place attachment, place-identity, belonging, and place making. The latter, which normally satisfies the capital surpluses, is oriented towards the valorization of space, homogenization, consumerism, and gentrification, thus creating placelessness or nondistinctive spaces.

The research shows the high influence of the shareholding companies in favour of chain stores in steering an urban competition towards maximizing the exchange value and ignoring the use value. Thus, the research concludes that in seeking the creation of a just city, the power of the profit accumulating entities should be controlled. Furthermore, the dissertation argues that it is essential to achieve urban development that reduces the consequences of urban

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**Figure 8. The contradictory setting between the use value and the exchange value**

The research shows the high influence of the shareholding companies in favour of chain stores in steering an urban competition towards maximizing the exchange value and ignoring the use value. Thus, the research concludes that in seeking the creation of a just city, the power of the profit accumulating entities should be controlled. Furthermore, the dissertation argues that it is essential to achieve urban development that reduces the consequences of urban
regeneration on immigrant amenities, as a placemaker, located in the renewed
neighbourhoods. The arrival of the new well-off residents may lead to the
recovery of the average income in the renewed areas. However, the hidden city
of immigrants is erased, their average income will not increase, and their right
to the city is withdrawn if they have ever even enjoyed it.

5.2 Social and practical implications

The social and practical implications discussed in this section make a few
recommendations based on the results of this research. The actions are
addressed to different stakeholders: First, the City of Helsinki and planners,
Second, architectural and planning education, Third, The Finnish Association
of Architects (SAFA), Fourth, immigrant community, and Finally, the section
introduces a suggestion to improve the existing knowledge on multicultural
planning in general and specifically on immigrant amenities.

First, regarding the City of Helsinki and the planners, the dissertation strongly
argues that the outcome of the urban renewal causing an entire erasure of
immigrant amenities was not a coincidence. In its master plan (Yleiskaava), the
City of Helsinki had an announced intention to deal with segregation. However,
in doing so the impacts on immigrant amenities were harmful. In Finnish
planning, the participation and impact assessments are linked in Participation
and Impact Assessment Schemes. Therefore, the local knowledge informs
planning through participation (Mattila et al., 2021). Thus, the question to
be addressed to the planners is: was the impact of the local master plan on
immigrant amenities ever discussed or assessed? If not, which seems to be
the case, then immigrants and their businesses are entirely excluded from the
process, and they are not seen as a social asset.

To consider immigrants as a social asset, it is essential to take some actions.
First and most importantly, it is necessary to apply an agenda of multicultural
planning in parallel with the blind anti-segregation policy with its dramatic
consequences. The growth of immigrant population is rapid, and Helsinki
is a desirable city for immigrants residing in other municipalities; thus, in a
short interval the anti-segregation policy will not be efficient alone. Second,
the participation process suffers from poor communication and uneven
power relations (Kahila, 2013); thus, the city should consider outsourcing
the entire participation process to external consulting bodies. Superficial
participation or lacking an adequate resource to activate an effective and
inclusive participation process lead to the same results: the practice is not
correctly informed. In both cases, the results of the research show a failure in
participation. Third, recalling Harvey’s (2003) and Lefebvre’s (1996) right to
participation, it is essential to consider participation as an informative way
of communicating people’s interests and needs in space under development. Regrettably, participation in its current condition is applied as makeup for legitimizing political decisions. Furthermore, the absence of immigrants in the participation process may lead to communicating knowledge that is unrepresentative of the community’s varied views (cf. Mattila et al., 2021). Fourth, in case that the outsourcing of the participation process is not feasible, the alternative can be the developing of the communication skills of planners to understand the complexities of a multicultural city (cf. Sandercock, 2000a). Information about the immigrants, such as national origin, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic status are crucial to understanding their spatial needs (e.g. Bloemraad, 2007). Thus, deploying ethnographic methods in the informal planning phase might be of high value in informing decision-makers of questions about culture and identity as well as a narrative of the immigrants’ interaction with places (Mattila et al., 2021). Furthermore, the city as the landowner needs to reduce the power of shareholding companies in urban competitions and to carefully review the competition programmes, especially when the organizers are private developers. Fifth, ethnic retail as an emerging phenomenon is a creative solution invented by immigrants to cope with their low representation in the labour market. The failure of socio-economic integration cannot be solved by an anti-segregation policy alone. Moreover, there are many good examples in European cities where the immigrant amenities have transformed deprived urban areas and converted them into urban hubs and destinations for tourists and mainstream clientele, not only the co-ethnic groups. Therefore, the dissertation further encourages the city to study best practices and benchmarks which are usually used as sources of information in urban planning and can lead to mutual learning from other cities.

Finally, it is challenging to assign multiculturalism only to municipal planning, at least in its current structure and commitments. On the one hand, spatial planning is not structured to deal with property ownership and its consequences on a phenomenon such as ethnic retail. On the other hand, it is a fact that Helsinki and other municipalities in Finland witness an era of the spectacular shopping malls, retail monopoly, global capitalism and the boutiquing of stores (e.g. Zukin et al., 2009) pushing towards urban homogenization (Kuppinger, 2014). Thus, the dissertation calls for an integrated approach of planning that strives towards the preservation of the current ethnic retail clusters and reduces the impacts of urban regeneration on them. To conclude, drawing on Yiftachel (2001), this dissertation regretfully argues that immigrants were fully oppressed in municipal planning in the multiple cases studied in all the articles.
Second, being an educator of urban planning involved in the educational process of the future planners, the author calls for the integration of many forgotten topics in education. The questions of spatial marginalization, space unjust and inequality should be in the objectives of courses and studies. The planning approach towards areas with an overrepresentation of immigrants needs to be changed. A student of architecture who intends to build a career in urban planning or urban design should develop basic communication skills and master ethnographic research methods to approach groups of different ethnic backgrounds and interests. Furthermore, the question of public interest should be revisited in planning education. Communities increasingly comprise publics with different needs and values which widens the end user for planners and equally challenges universalities and homogenization. In response to such diverse needs, flexibility is required to enable spontaneity. The assumption of planning being neutral towards cultural visibility needs to be confronted. The results of this research have shown such neutrality to be false. On the contrary, urban renewal has been used as a cleansing mechanism to sanitize the urban places from cultural visibility.

Third, the Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA) plays an important role in organizing many architectural and planning competitions. Competition organizers frequently invite SAFA for the practicalities of arranging the competitions in order to attain credibility for their competitions. Accordingly, in competitions developing super-diverse areas, SAFA needs to reconsider the roles of the competitions in four main aspects, namely when multiculturalism is a desired objective of development. First, the competitions typically produce ideas focusing on functionality, and they are communicated through images. Integrating multiculturalism in competitions needs a redefinition of what can be recognized as an inclusive and functioning city. Second, when multiculturalism is sought for through competitions, the formation of the jury should reflect it by including experts in multicultural planning. Third, the competition programme encouraging a multicultural output needs to request that the formation of the potential entrant teams represents different fields of expertise, including planning for diversity. Finally, there is a problem concerning participation in competitions. The competition programme is the doctrine steering its entrants. Thus, SAFA and the organizer should consider publicly sharing the programme before its approval.

Fourth, the immigrant community needs to be ready for a long political conflict in order to claim their RTC. The cases studied in this dissertation showed that the immigrant community is dispossessed; thus, they need to resist in order to take back what they have been denied: their Right to the City (Harvey, 2008). Furthermore, considering the weakness of immigrants’ participation in the planning decision, activism can be an alternative solution.
The ethnic retailers and the local community affected by the consequences of the urban renewal need to consider cooperation with NGOs and activists, some of whom are architects and artists who oppose the displacement of ethnic retail from the malls. This would preserve their right to appropriation or at least extend their opposition to the city. To do so, ethnic retailers may consider the formation of a union representing them in negotiations and claiming recognition.

Finally, the current knowledge supporting multicultural planning in general and in particular the immigrant amenities, needs to be widened. The response of planning to the spatial needs of immigrants can only be enhanced if such knowledge is improved and enabled to contribute to urban policy. According to the findings of the articles, it is evident that multiculturalism is absent from the planning discourse and actions in Finland (see Lapintie, 2015). The problem of multicultural planning is that it is not clearly defined (cf. Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017) and on many occasions the planning system acts as an expression of the dominant culture (Sandercock, 2000b). For example, in both competitions the results were steered towards the sanitization of both locations from the cultural visibility, and the rejection of the suggested mosque in one of the competitions as well as the market-hall were obvious decisions to allow what is considered normal (Fincher et al., 2014). The Finnish research shows no interest in multicultural planning; instead, urban studies on immigrants situate them into the segregation research, which is a sign of a social challenge (cf. Andersson et al., 2017). Thus, there is a need to improve the research interpreting and defining "what is multicultural planning" and inform the practice as well as urban policies on "how to deal with immigrants beyond anti-segregation policies".

The capacity of immigrants and their amenities to transform their environments and convert them into liveable destinations is evident from the articles and literature. Through their amenities, immigrants manifest themselves as the ‘Other’ (cf. Fincher et al. 2014) using several visual markers (cf. Jaffe and De Koning, 2016). Such transformation in the built environment is a sign of marginalization to the receiving society, leading to rejection and racism (cf. Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Miraftab, 2012). In the Finnish context, ethnic retail is a creative alternative invented by immigrants in their struggle against their low representation in the labour market with its rigid and ethnically hierarchical standards (Ahmad, 2020). Thus, this research argues that the preservation of ethnic retail is also an inclusive action for immigrants’ innovation in coping with the failures of integration. Therefore, there is a need to improve the knowledge of such a phenomenon as a creative action where immigrants are considered a socio-capital asset.

Another question to be addressed is: what can be done when minorities’ RTC is rejected? The question is demanding. On the one hand, Lefebvre’s RTC...
is a cry for right, but right sounds like a legal construct, i.e. it means that one/group can claim it against another. Lefebvre's RTC is descriptive (explaining things as they are) and normative (suggesting how they should be). However, in reality no one can claim an RTC by law; thus, it remains utopian. On the other hand, who can define the RTC? For example, in his book Rebel Cities (2012), Harvey states that “the definition of the right to the city is itself an object of struggle, and that struggle has to proceed concomitantly with the struggle to materialize it.” (p. xv). Harvey further continues stating that the RTC may become “an empty signifier: everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning. The financiers and developers can claim it and have every right to do so.” (page xv). If the financiers and developers can claim it and define it, their surplus will be given a priority in favour of exchange value. Laypeople, on the contrary, are mostly concerned with their lived experience, which is rooted in their use value. Thus, the questions to be further addressed are: How could such conflict of interests be regulated? The right on what exactly and the right for how long? To situate the studied cases in such a context, permanency should be discussed. The entrepreneurs have complained of the unstable tenancy contracts, or their short durations. Thus, in the context of immigrants’ right to appropriation, it seems that the property ownership plays a main role in the continuity of a business; ownership logically favours the exchange value. For sure, the property owners also have all the right in giving a priority to the exchange value. Furthermore, permanency played a role in the flourishing of place making at both strip malls. The situation of both malls was constant for almost two decades: they were ignored, abandoned and even the shareholding companies as well as facility managers reduced their operating expense to the minimum, i.e. cleaning and maintenance. During that period, clustering started. Thus, it is evident that immigrants need, first, to call their neighbourhoods homes and feel the attachment to the spaces in which they start to form meanings. The dilemma is that permanency of immigrants creates a motivation for other immigrants to cluster (to live or found a business) and such overrepresentation of immigrants is the enemy of anti-segregation policy, not to ignore that permanency is not an acknowledged mode of neoliberal urban policies. Simply put, the continuous surplus of the capital needs, on the contrary, unceasing urban mobility.

This dissertation suggests that an alternative may be found in Harvey’s conception of RTC (2008) calling the dispossessed to struggle to take the control of what they have been denied in order to materialize it (also Harvey, 2012). Another alternative can be sought in advocacy planning (cf. Harwood, 2003) to support the redistribution of planners’ resources for creating an equitable setting towards the dispossessed. Therefore, there is a need to improve the knowledge of urban growth that sustains a margin of urban permanency according to the use value and deals with special-interest groups who are faced with the continuous desire for mobility.
This research demonstrates that ethnic retail enjoys unique characteristics through the commodification of ethnic diversity (cf. Shaw et al., 2004; Schmiz and Kitzmann, 2017; Schmiz and Hernandez, 2019) in its marketing strategy, informality (cf. Jencks and Silver, 2013; Hunt 2015), operative tactics, and the display of goods (Articles I and II). Accordingly, such features enable ethnic retail, and immigrant amenities in general, to symbolically shape their vicinity and resist retail monopoly and homogenization. This research shows that some eateries aim to customize exotic cuisines to attract mainstream foodies and others were after the satisfaction of co-ethnic clientele. Such rich and authentic scenery draws the attraction of mainstream clientele and tourists (cf. Everett, 2012). Furthermore, in their operative tactics, retailers adopt the setting of a department store operated internally by several entrepreneurs. Thus, ethnic retail cannot merely be referred to as a humble category of migrant business, but the knowledge of such a phenomenon needs to be improved in order to imagine the symbolic transformation it can make. Thus, this research draws on Zhuang (2013) and calls for in-depth understanding of such dynamics regarding the capacity of ethnic retail to shape urban spaces.

The urban transformation through ethnic retail is affected by the urban renewal process. As the results have shown, clustering is essential for the operation of the retail, but urban regeneration leads to their erasure. Furthermore, urban regeneration is accompanied by commercial gentrification that threatens ethnic retail (cf. Shaw et al., 2004; Zukin et al., 2009). Such a threat disturbs the existence of immigrant amenities and they face the displacement or the mandatory change in their features to deal with the new market (cf. Sezer, 2018; van Eck et al., 2020). Recalling the notions of spatial justice (Soja, 2010) and just city (Young, 1990; Sandercock, 1997), the author argues that urban policies have excluded ethnic retail clusters from the intended future of urban spaces in Helsinki. Furthermore, in line with Zhuang’s findings in Toronto (2017; 2021) the ethnic retail clusters in Helsinki proved the same capacity in the creation of third places and the sense of community. However, the research findings showed a complete ignorance of their significance in the urban renewal. Urban regeneration also increases the rents of retail premises, making them less affordable. The complexity of the impacts on ethnic retail is that they are mostly beyond urban planning decisions. The impacts are distributed between and caused by different stakeholders, not only the policymakers. Chain stores, shareholding companies, municipality, landlords, media, and marketing have substantial roles in the process. For such complexity, research needs to focus on and rigorously examine how ethnic retail may be affected by urban policies.
6. Conclusion

This dissertation, discussing the immigrant amenities in Helsinki as place makers and the capacity of planning to integrate these amenities into the urban planning process, started with the understanding that multiculturalism is a complex term in planning discourse. However, the research was also motivated by the belief that multicultural planning should not be a voluntary action by cities but rather an obligation. Thus, the dissertation deployed The Right to the City notion as a medium to examine whether immigrants can be allowed to create places in which they satisfy their needs and celebrate their differences. Nevertheless, the further this research developed, the more complexity was discovered in the situation. When the ethnic retailers were listened to, the spatial constraints became obvious. When the planners were interviewed, the absence of a clear vision for multicultural planning was evident, as well as their need for relevant experience; thus, the spatial needs of immigrants were largely ignored. Furthermore, the analysis of the planning documents, the interviews with planners, and the results of urban renewal proved that political will is absent in multicultural planning. Nor did the alternative planning methods, scenario planning and competitions, contribute to satisfy the spatial needs of immigrants. The dissertation concludes that multicultural planning is largely absent from the Finnish planning discourse. Achieving it would require relevant knowledge, commitment of the political regime and a corresponding vision.

The field observation showed the potential of immigrant amenities to transform their surroundings and raise their vitality in many urban leftovers in Helsinki. Such a transformation took place at the time of an obvious retail monopoly and urban homogenization. However, due to the unique characteristics of ethnic retail, it could resist and emerge. The dissertation further concludes that immigrant amenities not only contribute to fulfill social, religious and cultural needs of immigrants, but their clusters play a role in place making and act as catalysts for public street life recovery.

On the contrary to such potential, the Finnish research pays no attention to multiculturalism as an urban planning phenomenon of a spatial dimension. Instead, the Finnish research, unconsciously, creates a negative perception of multiculturalism by focusing solely on segregation. The municipal planning, accordingly, adopts an anti-segregation dispersal policy seeking even socio-economic distribution. However, the anti-segregation policy proved to be inefficient in achieving an even distribution of immigrants. Thus, the question to be raised is, why are immigrant amenities erased from the neighbourhoods of their overrepresentation? It seems that the erasure of these amenities was intended to avoid the attraction of more immigrants to reside in these areas, thus strengthening segregation. If this was the case, there is an essential
demand for a balanced solution less dramatic than demolishing the malls and disturbing the livelihood of immigrants. The anti-segregation policy is mainly concerned with engineering the socio-economic profile of the neighbourhoods in the renewed areas by attracting new middle-class households, but such a process solves nothing. Immigrants remain poor and the ethnification of poverty continues: the places that they enjoy and that provide livelihood to them are demolished and replaced with other spaces flattering the newcomers. Another conclusion is thus that research on segregation is important but further research on the impacts of urban renewal on immigrants is crucial. Similarly, planning policy should work on spatial planning that acknowledges the manifestation of multiculturalism.

The question is, thus, was the hidden city an intentional result? Is it hidden or has it been hid? I would answer both. On the one hand, it is intentional in a city fighting against segregation and working heavily through dispersal policy to eliminate, or minimize, the spatial differences. In doing so, the city is oriented to attract and flatter the middle class in deprived neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the influences of circuits of power, retail oligopoly, and a municipality seeking to maximize the profits through its land ownership are factors contributing to such intended creation of the hidden city, which is in reality the hiding of the immigrants’ city. With the municipal monopoly of planning, municipal land ownership and the strong tendencies towards gentrification, the results of urban development are not coincidences. On the other hand, it is partly unintentional, but a result of a structural shortage of resources, knowledge, and experience as well as the lack of a clear vision for a multicultural city. Thus, the short answer is that the city has intentionally created its own blind spot by narrowing its perspective.

This leads to an important conclusion phrased in a further final question: Why was the immigrants’ city hidden? By whom? Recalling the section A blind spot or an absence of the political will, it is obvious that planning development results are intentional, not accidents. One should look behind such a will to see its metaphorical power. Having been elected, the politicians decide about policies by reflecting their political parties’ wills as well as their own. The formation of all the sub-wills shape at the end the collective political will, steering the negotiation of strategies and policy programmes. Thus, such metaphorical power can be reflected through the intentionality and commitment shown in the policies. This shapes the priorities in drawing the city objectives and the distribution of the budget. This dissertation argues that the absence of the political will to integrate multiculturalism in the growth of Helsinki is based on the existing political regimes that are committed, and have been for a long time, to anti-segregation policy. Thus, a struggle is needed by minority groups who are in the margin, in fact the enemy of anti-segregation policy. Accordingly, knowledge, including this dissertation, can be one of the tools used in speaking truth to power. The space recognizing its users’ needs
and demands is not the space of mobility between destinations but one that allows new possibilities and alternatives, as Lapintie (2022) states below:

“Staying somewhere and moving along a path like a machine or stream is not yet space, at least not for us human beings. The crucial thing in the logic of modalities is that reality does not consist of only things in stasis or movement but also of possibilities and alternatives, in addition to what is or will ever be actualized.” (p.35)

The RTC involves both the right to appropriation and the right to participation. Urban renewal declines immigrants’ right to appropriation by the erasure of their amenities. The results further show that the right to participation of immigrants was denied, none of the studied cases have shown successful participation in the planning process. The vitality and the recovery of the public life of abandoned spaces through the spatialization of multiculturalism were entirely ignored, exactly as described by Lefebvre (1991a):

“lived experience is crushed, vanquished by what is 'conceived of' ” and that "whatever traces of vitality remained would have a wasteland as their only refuge.” (pp. 51-52)

Thus, finally the dissertation concludes that neglecting immigrants in planning is the logical consequence when a city fears multiculturalism, even when hidden in its leftovers.
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The pressure of urban homogenization, the fear of segregation, and the lack of a vision dealing with immigrant amenities as a potential are all factors steering urban growth towards losing cultural diversity. This doctoral dissertation opens the debate on multicultural planning through the assessment of recent urban development in Helsinki and uses literature review, interviews, site observation and documents analysis to discuss the impacts of planning on immigrant amenities. Immigrant amenities have succeeded in transforming abandoned strip malls and neighbourhood shopping streets into liveable hubs. However, it seems that there is a missing political will to support such transformation. On the contrary, the immigrant amenities in Helsinki’s urban leftovers are threatened by erasure due to a planning system that simplifies dealing with immigrants solely via anti-segregation dispersal policy. Will this continue? Why?