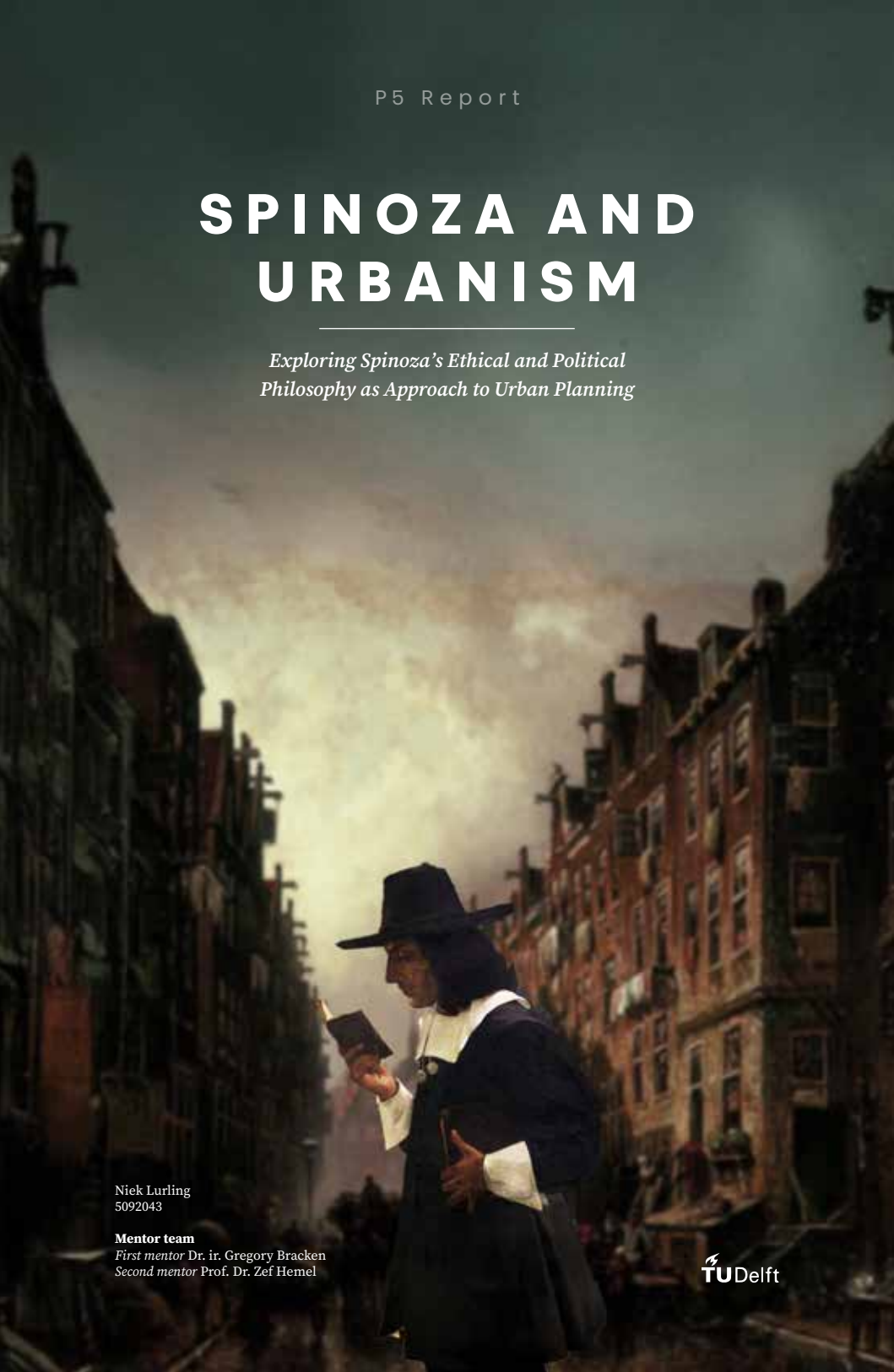
P5 Report

SPINOZA AND URBANISM

Exploring Spinoza's Ethical and Political Philosophy as Approach to Urban Planning



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Abstract

Against the backdrop of ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning, this research project investigates the philosophy of a historically radical yet increasingly canonical ethical-political thinker: Spinoza. There has not been an investigation into the spatialisation of Spinoza yet, or into the insights Spinoza's thinking might offer urban planning, especially in relation to ethical-political issues. The main research question of this project is: how can Spinoza's ethical-political philosophy inform a theory of urban space and become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning? The full extent of Spinoza's ethical-political works has been mapped structurally, resulting in a cartography of Spinoza's works. The *philosophical concepts* in this cartography have been assessed on their prospects for spatialisation, resulting in an estimation regarding the relevance of certain key concepts for urban planning. By examining these concepts through urban theories of agglomeration and the urban land nexus, it has been found that a Spinoza-informed urban theory might take the shape of a model of the city, aimed at mapping ethical-political situations in urban planning. Building on this, it has been found that this model can become instrumentalised as to form an urban planning approach. The action that an urban planner can take by virtue of the profession, through the Spinozist lens, has been determined. Similarly, the aim of urban planning (the planner's "own agenda"), through the Spinozist lens, has been determined. The model can be used to reveal or 'map' ethical-political dilemmatic urban planning situations. Further areas of research could be testing this model further, and relating the findings on Spinoza's philosophy and to urban planning to similar fields of research in architecture, ecology, economics, or political science.

Key terms: Spinoza, Urban planning, Ethics, Power, Model

DISCLAIMER

This thesis engages with a radical, far-reaching - and maybe even heretical - thinker and his philosophy. Spinoza lived more than threehundred years ago, but his writings can to this day rile up the emotions. On three points do I want to warn the reader:

1. Religious terminology

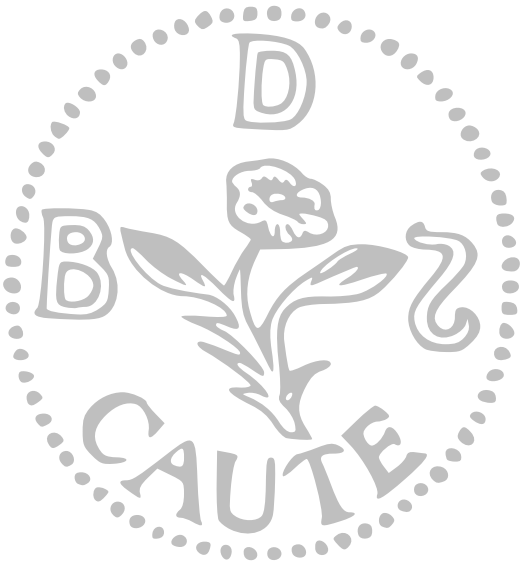
Spinoza's works are embedded with religious terminology. He drew on many different schools of thought available to him at the time, such as the ancient Greeks, scholastics, Hebrew thinkers, and philosophers of the (early modern) enlightenment, (re)defining many concepts and ideas. It is important to keep in mind that Spinoza has its own distinct definitions of these terms, the most famous being his definition of 'God' (or nature; see also E1 D6 and E4 pref).

2. Gendered language

Prejudices and views of the early modern era are present in Spinoza's works. I have chosen to follow Sharp (2011: 19) to "preserve Spinoza's sexist language when citing him and referring to his own claims in order to avoid giving a false and anachronistic impression of gender inclusiveness." Spinoza's sexist views do not make much sense when held up against his own philosophy (which can be truly inclusive), however. See Sharp (2021) and Lord (2011).

3. Religious ban on Spinoza

Spinoza was excommunicated from the Amsterdam Sephardic Jewish community in 1656 with a ban (*herem*) that is still in force. Among other things, is it not allowed to read anything Spinoza has written.



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Spinoza's seal with his initials *B.D.S* (for *Benedictus de Spinoza*) and his motto: '*Caute*' (caution).

About this report...

This report forms the accompanying document to my P5-presentation. In this document, I present the research project I have conducted in the past year on bringing Spinoza and Urbanism together. This research project has resulted, among other things, in a systematic study of Spinoza's philosophy, the development of a Spinoza-informed urban theory and in tandem with this, a "Spinozist" Model of the City. This model constitues a distinctive Spinozist approach to urban planning, and forms the design assignment that is part of this project. In short, this research results in heuristics for a distinct approach to urban planning, thinking alongside Spinoza.

The the context of this research is discussed in chapter I, and the set-up of the research project is discussed in chapter II. Then, working through the research project itself, findings and results are detailed step by step in chapter III to V. The conclusions following from the project are then collected and discussed in chapter VI. Finally, a reflection has been added as distinct part of the report. This is chapter VII. In this reflection, I look back at the research process and reflect critically on the approach. Lastly, aforementioned heuristics are collected in a coda (added just before the appendices).

I hope this report can provide a clear overview of my research project, and can engage the reader through an urbanist's view of the remarkable world that is Spinoza's philosophy. I look forward to presenting the research project and its findings, and discussing this all, in person next week.

Niek Lurling
Delft, January 9th, 2025

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Portrait of Spinoza, probably created circa 1665/1666.
Unkown author. (wikimedia commons, 2020)

Content

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 The Ethical-Political Problem

Ethics are being placed increasingly at the forefront of urban planning. The pursuit of social justice or the just city are key themes in urban planning practice and academia. This latest surge of ethical thinking in urban planning can be ascribed largely to the efforts of scholars like Fainstein (2010; 2013) and Soja (2010) (Uitermark and Nicholls, 2017; Moroni, 2020). Fainstein (2014) argues fervently for placing justice in a central place of planning (as opposed to competitiveness) based on universal governing principles of democracy, diversity, and equity. Soja (2010) advances a 'spatial turn' in justice-thinking, arguing for the spatiality or geographical dimension of (in)justice. Of course, historical notions of justice and ethical issues related to urban environments can be found already in seminal works such as by Jane Jacobs (1961) or David Harvey (1973). In the words of Friedman (2008: 1): "That planning is not a value-free activity has been widely acknowledged for some time".

Questions of ethics bring forth questions of power (McClymont, 2023). In (co-) creating urban environments that are just, ethical or 'good', it is a fundamental question how just, ethical or 'good' are defined; and more importantly, whose definition is realised. Again, the question of power in relation to urban planning is not a novelty in itself. To give but one illustrative example, it was the key reason for Robert Caro, then a student of land use and urban planning, to write *The Power Broker* (1974; Robert Caro in McGrath, 2012):

> *"They were talking one day about highways and where they got built, (…) and here were these mathematical formulas about traffic density and population density and so on, and all of a sudden I said to myself: 'This is completely wrong. This isn't why highways get built. Highways get built because Robert Moses wants them built there. If you don't find out and explain to people where Robert Moses gets his power, then everything else you do is going to be dishonest.' "*

►

One of the most famous examples of the ethical-political problem in urban planning was undoubtedly the (public) conflict of philosophies (and execution of those philosophies) between Robert Moses (shown on top; image via *Getty*), subject of *The Power-Broker* (Caro, 1974), and Jane Jacobs (shown below; image via *wikimedia commons*).

Khakee (2020: 175) states: "Planning is nearly always dilemmatic." There are interests, values, and power-positions to take into account. Uitermark and Nicholls (2017) identify a "power of representation dilemma" within urban planning for (social) justice. This dilemma entails the inherent power-imbalance of planners and the planned subjects, despite the best intentions. They state that "the power of representation dilemma can be handled in different ways but it cannot be fully resolved. It is a genuine dilemma because status, knowledge, and skills are necessary in struggles for equality but the unequal distribution of these resources produces new hierarchies during the process of achieving equality. While their status, knowledge, and professional skills make planners into effective *agents of social justice* (...), their control over these resources puts them in a position of power in relation to the very communities they represent and serve". As there are multiple approaches aimed at easing this problem, each with different trade-offs and up- and downsides, Uitermark and Nicholls (2017) recommend a *realpolitik of social justice*, looking whatever fits the situation best, acknowledging no solution is perfect.

We might call summarize the situation as sketched above under the single term of **the ethical-political dilemma of urban planning**. It is the dilemma of ethics in what Forester (1982) famously called "planning in the face of power". This is currently a highly relevant problem for urbanists. Lauria and Long (2019: 393) find based on semi structured qualitative interviews with planning practitioners (n = 61) in the USA that "most practicing planners regularly face ethical dilemmas in their professional practice". They find ethical dilemmas arising from the commitment to planner's scientific (technical) legitimacy versus the democratic legitimacy of political decision maker's; as well as "ethical conflicts between their private ethics and those they use in their professional practice". Khakee (2020: 180) concludes his analysis on ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning:

> *"Environmental deterioration and climate crises, the impending danger posed by algorithms replacing human judgment in smart cities, and xenophobic nationalism disrupting globalization and migration all imply a fundamental overhaul of the premises governing urban planning. (...) Planning practice has, under these circumstances, become extremely dilemmatic..."*

◀

The Lower Manhattan Expressway, in the end never realised, was one example of an urban planning subject where Moses and Jacobs went head to head (image via the *New York City Municipal Archives*).

To sum up, questions of ethics bring forth questions of power, and therefore of politics. These questions result in ethical-political problems in the practice of urban planning. Despite the urgency of this issue, the current status quo is a 'realpolitik of social justice'. There is a open space for a system or philosophy to ground the ethics of urban planning in. Friedman (2008: 249) expresses the ethical-political problem in the following way:

> *"So the question for us is this: can planners evolve a value-based philosophy as a foundation for their own practices in the world? My personal view is that this is perhaps the major challenge before us in a world that, despite protestations to the contrary, is increasingly materialist, individualist, and largely indifferent to humans' impacts on the natural environment. In the absence of a human-centered philosophy or some other defensible construct, we will merely drift with the mainstream, helping to build cities that are neither supportive of life nor ecologically sustainable."*

Portrait of Spinoza, probably created circa 1665.
(Unkown author via *wikimedia commons*, 2015)

1.2 The Ethical-Political Thinker

Against the backdrop of these ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning, this thesis proposes to investigate the philosophy of a radical yet increasingly canonical ethical-political thinker: **Spinoza**. There has not been an investigation into the spatialisation of Spinoza yet, or into the insights Spinoza's thinking might offer urban planning, especially in relation to ethical-political issues [1]. This lack of engagement can be contrasted with the fruitful exchanges that have taken place between the philosophical systems of thinkers like Foucault, Heidegger, Marx and various Marxist thinkers (e.g. Lefebvre, Harvey, Castells), and Deleuze. Exchanges of this kind have enriched the discipline of urbanism with a wealth of new concepts, such as the heterotopia, the rhizome, the production of space, and the notion of a right to the city; it has enriched the discipline with new critical perspectives, and with other conceptual tools for understanding urban space - and planning with it.

With regards to 350-years of ignoring Spinoza within architecture (and by extension, urbanism), Kodalak (2018: 89) writes:

> *"We may ascribe this missed opportunity to architects' incidental neglect, or perhaps even deliberate disregard, of Spinoza's philosophy for denying them the privilege of situating themselves as hegemonic shapers of the built environment; or to Spinoza's multi-layered language and convoluted conceptual framework that resist easy translation; or even to Spinoza's controversial reception as a heretical figure and a subterranean philosopher throughout modernity."*

Nonetheless, in recent years a Spinoza revival is taking place [2]. Steenbakkers (2018: 20) notes that there is a "current flourishing of Spinoza studies all over the world" and Carlisle and Melamed (2020: 9) state in a similar fashion that "in many ways, Spinoza is now replacing Kant and Descartes as both the compass and the watershed of modern thought". Chua (2021:17) adds to these statements: "there are probably more people interested in Spinoza now than any other time in history."

1 Kodalak (2020: 239) writes in his dissertation (the first ever!) on Spinoza and architecture looking at onto-epistemological and ethico-aesthetic dimensions, that the political and ecological dimensions of Spinoza's philosophy in relation to architecture offer greatly interesting prospects for future research.

In anglophone **political theory**, Spinoza is slowly emerging from Hobbes' shadow as "Anglophone political philosophers may begin to appreciate the richness, originality, and systematicity of Spinoza's political philosophy, and the ways in which it might illuminate theories of democracy, toleration, authority, social ontology, the relationship between civil institutions and social affects, and much more" (Steinberg, 2019), which is demonstrated, for instance, in the works by Sharp (2011; 2018), Ruddick (2020) and LeBuffe (2020; 2021). Lord has consistently worked on bringing Spinoza into **architecture** from a starting point in philosophy, with the publication of a paper on "*Spinoza and Architectural Thinking*" (2020) and two edited books (2012; 2018). Architectural scholars Rawes and Kodalak have contributed on facilitating an encounter between architecture and Spinoza: Rawes contributed two chapters to the books by Lord (2012; 2018) and co-produced a short film entitled 'Equal by Design' with Lord (2016); Kodalak has written extensively on the subject (2015; 2018; 2019; 2021) and his research has culminated in a dissertation framed as a first-ever monograph on Spinoza and Architecture (2020) in 350 years. Moreover, Thomas (2020: 91) writes: "since there are no extended discussions of things such as painting, poetry, or architecture in Spinoza's works, we are left to speculate, based on certain key doctrines of his philosophy, along what lines Spinoza's thoughts might have travelled regarding these subjects. In order to do this, certain theorists of art and culture have turned to Spinoza through a reading of the work of Gilles Deleuze." Mediated via Deleuze, authors like, Frichot (2018), White (2018) and Gatens (2015; 2020) have written on Spinoza and **art theory**. Lastly, within **environmental studies**, Spinoza is becoming increasingly relevant again too, especially in the context of climate change (Ruddick, 2020). Spinoza has a history in the environmental movement (see Devall & Session, 1985; Naess, 1977; see also the preface to Deleuze, 1988 by Robert Hurley) that was in dire need of some nuancing. Spinoza was hailed as a "paterfamilias of all nature-lovers and tree-huggers," as "Spinoza made pronouncements seemingly tailor-made for modern environmentalist sloganeering" (Chua, 2021), but this was a selective reading: other statements by Spinoza are even "uncharacteristically cruel" (Rogers 2021). Nonetheless, a very distinctive kind of environmental philosophy can be constructed from Spinoza's thinking – one that, combined with his ethical and political works, can become quite ground-breaking in a time of climate crises.

2 Adding to the relevance of this project!

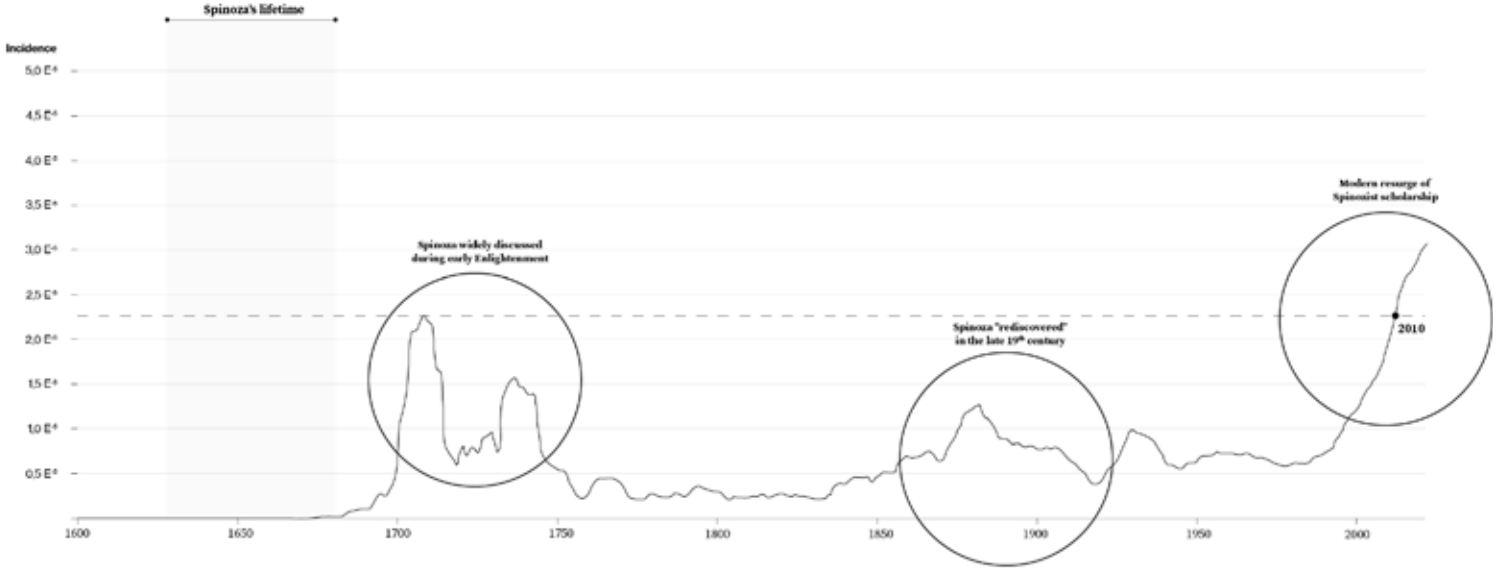
The Spinoza revival is visible in wider society too. The incidence by which Spinoza is mentioned in all English-language works, for one, is higher than it has ever been, and only since 2010 it is higher than its previous peak in the 17th century (figure 1.1).

As for the reasons behind this revival, they are probably many, interrelated and complex. The Spinoza-revival itself must be slightly nuanced also, as other early modern thinkers such as Descartes, Leibniz and Hobbes experience a similar revival (see appendix I). So, in fact, it is some strands of early modern philosophy in general that is taking up steam. Why might this be the case? Some reasons can be outlined. For one, the topics Spinoza addresses in his ethical and political thinking are eerily similar to the questions we have on these matters (see Gatens et al. 2020). How to deal with faltering democratic institutions, irrational mass-emotions that cause instability, democratic backsliding and social upheaval? What is our place in an interconnected social and natural environment that is plagued by great man-made crises, in which everything seems to affect everything? How to retain individual liberty, hope, peace of mind amidst all these incredible forces pushing us around? Spinoza analyses, theorizes, and answers. Early modern philosophers are well-suited for addressing these issues, for their thinking is historically placed right at the foundational moment of modern society, modern states, institutions, and ways of thinking. As Kodalak (2020: 11) summarizes:

> *"the primary problems Spinoza addressed have never become obsolete. He lay the foundations of an open philosophical system infused with new worlds to come, provoking further refinements and anomalous offshoots in each generation. His critical stance against problematic foundations of modernity and defiant conceptual inventions in pertinent questions of being and thinking, ethics and aesthetics, political and ecological thinking have continued to influence ever new thinkers and makers up until today. Spinoza did not only produce a philosophy of life, but also a living philosophy."*

▶

figure 1.1: Incidence of mentions of 'Spinoza' in all English-language works (data via *Google Ngram viewer*, 2024).


Spinoza's lifetime
Incidence
5.0 E⁻⁶
4.5 E⁻⁶
4.0 E⁻⁶
3.5 E⁻⁶
3.0 E⁻⁶
2.5 E⁻⁶
2.0 E⁻⁶
1.5 E⁻⁶
1.0 E⁻⁶
0.5 E⁻⁶
Spinoza widely discussed during early Enlightenment
Spinoza "rediscovered" in the late 19th century
Modern resurge of Spinozist scholarship
2010
1600
1650
1700
1750
1800
1850
1900
1950
2000

Spinoza holds a unique place in the philosophical canon. Unlike his early-modern contemporaries, Spinoza ends up advocating for radical ideas like democracy, freedom of expression, and secular rule (all in the TTP); democratisation and institutional governance (TP, see Steinberg 2010); and an ethics that, taken to its conclusion, results in empowerment, reason, virtue and liberty for everyone, but without some transcendent standard or forceful subjection to an equal standard (i.e. in favour of diversification, also morally). (Ethics). Therefore, Spinoza's philosophy specifically offers great prospects for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning (and beyond).

Chua (2021) notes that what was true for most of history, namely that Spinoza was far too heretical to seriously, openly study and publish about, is no longer true. "Perhaps this is one practical matter that explains the burgeoning of Spinoza: we can now all admit it. Meaning there's never been a better time to study Spinoza" (Chua 2021: 17). We have now come to understand that the historical accusations levelled against Spinoza are not only false, but that precisely these characteristics that were denounced can actually hold great advantages.

Deleuze finds three major historical accusations: materialism, immoralism, atheism (1988: 17-29). Spinoza was denounced as materialist, for he not only denies "any real causality between the mind and the body," Spinoza also "rejects any primacy of one over the other" (Deleuze 1988: 18). What this means, is that mind and body are of parallel importance on a fundamental level. A Spinozist urban theory will therefore never resort to some list of material circumstances that, if only superimposed by higher powers on everyone, will somehow result in happiness; nor does it resort to vague value-based idle-talk (or Stoic asceticism).

Spinoza was denounced as immoral, for in his thought "the opposition of values (Good-Evil) is supplanted by the qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad)" (Deleuze 1988: 20). As Nietzsche would later say: "Beyond Good and Evil, at least this does not mean: beyond good and bad" (Nietzsche as quoted in Deleuze 1988: 22). Good and bad is gradual, based on strength, compositions, understanding. Therefore, Spinoza's ethics does not contain any "you must," it is not dogmatic. Spinoza's ethics is about finding a good, empowering compositions – combined with the great promise that we can do so.

Lastly, Spinoza was denounced as atheist, for he denounces the sad passions. What is virtuous is empowerment, the expression of who someone truly is. As Deleuze (1988: 26) writes:

> *"There is, then, a philosophy of "life" in Spinoza; it consists precisely in denouncing all that separates us from life, all these transcendent values that are turned against life (…) Life is poisoned by the categories of Good and Evil, of blame and merit, of sin and redemption. What poisons life is hatred, including the hatred that is turned back against oneself in the form of guilt. (…) Spinoza is not among those who think that a sad passion has something good about it."*

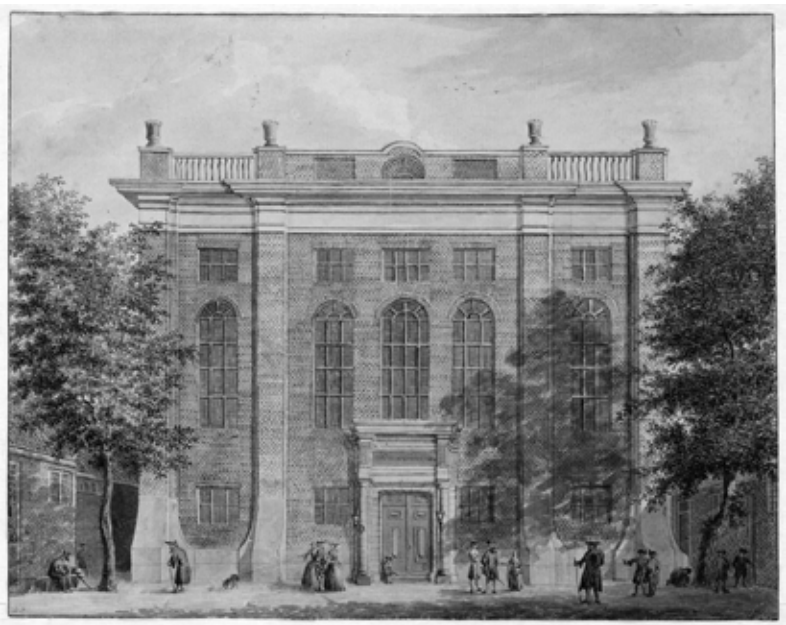
In other words, Spinoza's philosophy is a positive philosophy, one of human flourishing, joy and empowerment. This is a great prospect for an encounter with urban planning.

1.3 Spinoza: Short Biography

Spinoza's lifetime (1632-1677) can be divided into two parts: the first period encompassing his life in Amsterdam as a member of the Jewish and merchant communities, where he was known as "Bento", up until his banishment from the Jewish congregation in 1656; the second period encompassing his life from 1660 in Rijnsburg, Voorburg and The Hague as a philosopher, 'man of letters', and lens-grinder, when he was known as "Benedictus". Each of these biographical periods contains some urban-historical aspects from Spinoza's life that can at least indicate why Spinoza dedicated his life's work to addressing ethical-political problems. The set-up of this subchapter is, therefore, a (far-from exhaustive) listing of the most prominent urban-historical aspects per period. (see appendix II for a timeline).

Amsterdam period, "Bento"
1632 - 1656

1st Aspect: Jewish roots.
Spinoza was born in 1632 in the Portuguese-Jewish community of Amsterdam. The city was known as "Dutch Jerusalem" or "Jerusalem of the West" for its large Jewish immigrant community and relatively liberal attitude towards them. The Sephardic community was mainly concentrated on Vlooienburg for practical reasons (there were no legal restrictions on where Jews could live – unlike most European cities, see Nadler, 1999/2018: 29-31), and some richer members even lived on the wealthy Herengracht. Nadler (1999/2018: 31) writes: "To all appearances, the Portuguese-Jewish quarter into which Spinoza was born was practically indistinguishable from any other part of the city." It was a hustling and bustling urban quarter of merchants and citizens, "rich and cosmopolitan but [with a] distinctly Jewish culture". Intellectually, Spinoza's Jewish background, and especially his study at the Talmud Torah, is often credited with his skill in extensive textual study; and his mastery of Hebrew allowed Spinoza to draw on sources from eastern philosophy. There is a distinct Hebrew-Arabic influence in Spinoza's philosophy (see, for instance, Kodalak 2020) – and some authors have even argued that Spinoza could actually just as well be canonised as part of the eastern enlightenment (Van Rijen, 2018).



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The Portuguese-Israelite synagogue of Amsterdam. It was built in Spinoza's old neighbourhood, and consecrated when Spinoza was visiting Amsterdam (August 5th, 1675), so he might have been present at the ceremony. Nadler (1999/2018: 388) writes: "It was a magnificent affair for a complex that had cost almost 165,000 guilders. (…) *le tout Amsterdam* was in attendance, including members of prominent regent families. One astonished spectator remarked that he could not believe he was witnessing the inauguration of a synagogue by a people technically still in exile." Gravure by Herman Schouten (1765).

2nd Aspect: Merchant connections.

Probably right after the death of Spinoza's oldest borther Isaac in 1649, Spinoza joined his father's trading business (Nadler, 1999/2018: 92-96). The 1650's were an "emotionally and materially unsteady time in the Spinoza household" (1999/2018: 98). Both of Spinoza's parents died in 1654 and left a heavily indebted estate to him; Spinoza and his other brother struggled to keep the firm '*Bento y Gabriel Despinoza*' running (1999/2018: 98-103). Nonetheless, Spinoza might have heard the news of the world at the *Amsterdam Stock Exchange* (established 1611), encountering many new ideas and the most recent developments, and has surely met a large part of his circle of free-thinking protestant friends in merchant circles (see Nadler, 1999/2018: 198-205). Besides, Spinoza might have first experienced here how the passions can form

inflating bubbles of desire, economically, as demonstrated by the infamous *Tulip Bulb mania*, the effects of which could still be felt when Spinoza entered the trading business (Lord, 2017: 298; Douglas, 2018: 1218-1219).

◄

The *Tulip Mania* is one of the most famous examples of a speculative bubble in economic history. The tulip shown in the image (Pieter Cos, 1637, via *wikimedia commons*), was sold for more than 10 times a skilled worker's year-salary. The bubble burst in 1637, when Spinoza was an infant. Still, Douglas (2018: 1218-1219) notes how the effects could still be felt years after, the psychological damage trumping the financial.

3rd Aspect: Urban society.

The region that would become the Dutch Republic had already been a most urbanised region from medieval times, but during the Eighty Years' war the urbanisation levels exploded as result of the influx of southern refugees (Prak, 2023: 15-17; other immigrant groups contributed as well, among which, of course, the Sephardic jews). Prak (2023: 17) writes:

> *"By 1700, two-thirds of Holland's population was reckoned to live in towns, while the national average for the Dutch Republic was one-third. This latter figure was already very high by European and indeed world standards, but Holland's urbanization was truly exceptional. The urban population in Holland was distributed over a dozen medium-sized towns, but with their combined populations in the order of half a million in 1650 these added up to more than London (400,000) or Paris (430,000), the largest European cities at the time."*

◄

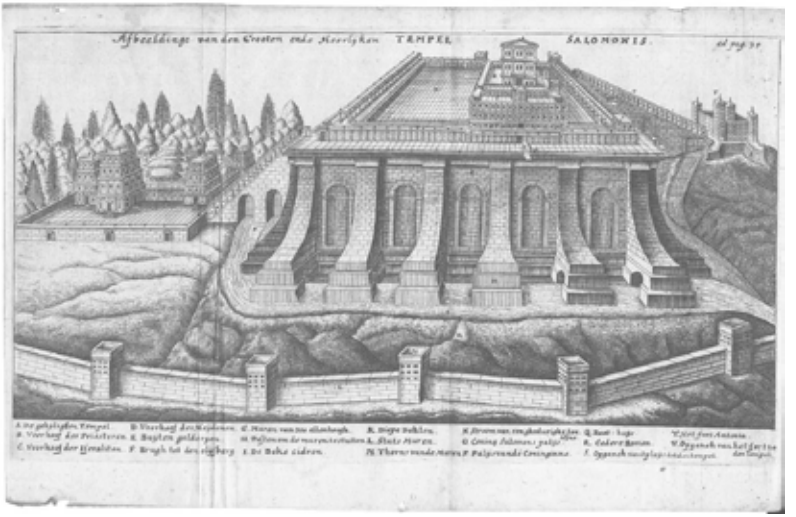
The Amsterdam Stock Exchange, opened 1611. A great example of a new institution that characterised the society of the Dutch Republic. This painting (by Emanual de Witte, 1653 via *Museum Boijmans van Beuningen*) shows the "world trade centre" of the 17th century. Spinoza has likely met many of his life-long friends here.

As a result, "urban institutions shaped the Dutch Republic on all levels of its society" (2023: 20). Complex political, institutional and civic groups and "a dense web of local associations" (2023: 21) governed the republic. Prak (2023: 20-22) gives a detailed view of these associations: from guilds, civic militias (Nachtwacht), neighbourhood organisations, to welfare organisations. This is the society Spinoza grew up in. It is then no surprise to find the critical importance Spinoza would later attribute to community-building, first mainly in E4 App.; then, in his political treatises. On the question of how Spinoza came into contact with radical ideas, Nadler (1999/2018: 173) writes:

> *"Politically radical ex-Jesuits, Collegiants with Socinian tendencies, apostate Jews, possible even Quakers and freethinking libertines – if one must search for the "corruptor" of Spinoza, then, in a sense the real culprit is Amsterdam itself. Heterodox ideas flourished in that comparatively liberal and tolerant city."*

4th Aspect: Theological-Political conflict

The 17th century Dutch Republic was deeply divided on religious and political grounds; chiefly between the statist faction, favouring free trade, peace, urban autonomy and (religious) tolerance, and the Orangist faction who wished to establish autocratic rule under the House of Orange, continuation of war, and a strictly Calvinist state. The conflict would flare up from time to time, sometimes violently (see below). So too in 1650, with the Eighty Year's war just finished, when William II staged a *coup d'état*, marching armies on the republican stronghold of Amsterdam. As the fourth expansion of Amsterdam was not yet planned, the Vlooienburg quarter was located right at the edge of the city, close to the "weak link" between the old city wall and the modern fortifications laid out during the third expansion (Mostert, 2014). The attack on Amsterdam failed, and so did the coup of William II eventually. Nonetheless, the threat of cannon-bombardments on the city wall next to the Jewish quarter, containing Spinoza (18 years old at the time) and his entire family and community, by a populist tyrant wishing to overthrow the republican, relatively free and tolerant order must have had a lasting impression. Spinoza's political works contain a consistent defence of republican and democratic forms of state (see Steinberg, 2010), and the TTP has the explicit aim of defending the freedom of (philosophical) expression (TTP 20).



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Engraving of Judah Jacob Leon's temple of Solomon. He published multiple works on his reconstruction, and travelled far and wide with his demontable temple model. (Engraving entiteld "*Afbeeldinge van den Grooten ende Heerlijken Tempel Solomonis*," unkown author, 1665, via *wikimedia commons*).

5th Aspect: Model of the Temple of Solomon

A relatively unknown contemporary of Spinoza, Judah Jacob Leao, is of a special interest to the urban-historical background of Spinoza's life. He had a senior position at the Talmud Torah whilst Spinoza was studying there, and he was known as "Templo" for "his almost fanatical devotion to building a scale model of Solomon's Temple" (Nadler, 1999/2018: 92). Offenberg (1992) describes how Judah Jacob and his scale model travelled to the courts of the Oranges and the English kings; and how they found their way to Christopher Wren. A young Spinoza might have admired the temple model more than once. Spinoza would later use the Temple of Solomon repeatedly in his political works (see, for instance, TTP 17.19), and would use the idea of a 'model' in the Ethics (last propositions of part 4) and the Political Treatise ("designs" following TP 5).

6th Aspect: *Herem*, banishment

In 1656, a watershed moment in Spinoza's life took place: his banishment from the Jewish community. It was a harsh punishment, and the text exceeds all others from the time period in 'vehemence and fury' (Nadler 1999/2018: 149). This text was read from the front the ark of the synagogue (Nadler 1999/2018: 140-141):

> *"With the judgment of the angels and with that of the saints, we put under herem, ostracize, and curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza (…). Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not forgive him. The fury and zeal of the Lord will burn against this man and bring upon him all the curses that are written in this book of the law. And may the Lord erase his name from under the heavens…"*

Concluding with:

> *"no one should communicate with him orally or in writing, no provide him any favor, not be with him under the same roof, nor be within four cubits of him, nor read any paper composed or written by him."*

In short, Spinoza was totally excommunicated from his community. At this point, he is 23 years old, without parents, and with a failing, indebted merchant business as only inheritance. Why would such an extreme banishment be laid upon him? The herem itself states "evil opinions and acts *[más opinioins e obras]*", "abominable heresies *[horrendas heregias]*", and "monstrous deeds *[ynormes obras]*", but what these are is not specified (Nadler 1999/2018: 151). Spinoza has not published a single book or treatise, and would never revisit this episode in writings, so the reasons are probably lost to time (see Nadler 1999/2018: 151-182 for a detailed account). Spinoza, nonetheless, "seems to have departed without any regrets," and an early biographer attributes the following to Spinoza: "I enter gladly on the path that is opened to me, with the consolation that my departure will be more innocent than was the exodus of the early Hebrews from Egypt" (Nadler 1999/2018: 181-182).

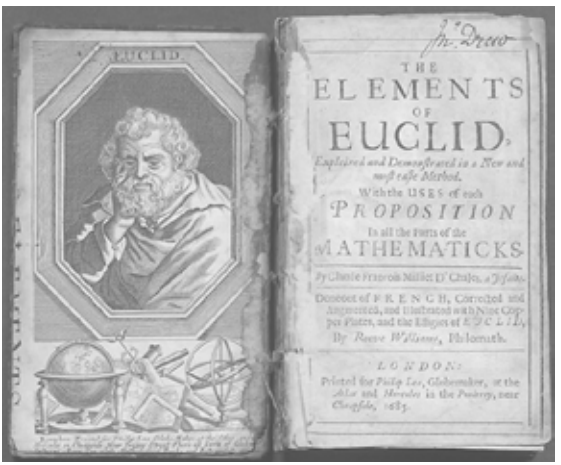
Philosopher period, "Benedictus"
1660 - 1677

1st Aspect: Lenses

Spinoza famously earned a living for the rest of his life by grinding lenses, although this occupation arose probably primarily from scientific interest, rather than from financial necessity (Nadler 1999/2018: 216). Through this occupation, Spinoza became acquainted with mathematicians Huygens and Hudde. Huygens claimed Spinoza's lenses to be "very excellent," and the German philosopher-scientist Leibniz called Spinoza "an outstanding optician, a maker of rather famous peeptubes" and as having "remarkable skill in optics" (all as cited in Nadler 1999/2018: 217). Spinoza's philosophy can be said to offer a new lens to look at the world, too.

2nd Aspect: Geometry

Geometry was, in 17th century Europe, the method for 'true' explanation (Nadler 1999/2018: 235). Spinoza even credits mathematics from saving humanity from the superstition of teleology which "would have been sufficient to keep the human race in darkness to all eternity, if mathematics (…) had not placed before us another rule of truth" (E1 app). Structuring arguments like Euclid's *Elements* was the exciting



◂ The mathematical treatise 'Elements' by Euclid. From just five postulates, Euclid derives books and books of mathematical formulas and proofs (shown: print from 1685, London, image via *Smithsonian Libraries*).

model of the time. Descartes dreamed of maximum certainty in the sciences based on this model, and "Spinoza went beyond anything Descartes himself had envisioned" (Nadler 1999/2018: 236). The Ethics, detailing philosophy and human psychology, is structured fully in "geometrical method". The difficult or even intimidating "Euclidian architecture" is not just a superficial shell, however, "besides being methodologically essential (and perhaps rhetorically and pedagogically useful) (...) the geometrical method bears an intimate relationship to the content of Spinoza's metaphysics and epistemology. The structure of the universe, with its causally necessary connections, is mirrored by the structure of ideas, with their logically necessary connections" (Nadler 1999/2018: 265).

3rd Aspect: Urbanised Landscape

"The impact of the towns was visible everywhere," writes Prak (2023: 17). When it came to the economy (trade, industry), politics, international trade, or the land itself, which we would now describe as an urbanised (or urbanising) landscape. The social structure became embedded in the landscape as "[e]xtensions of the city walls and the urban space also created a spatial separation between the residential areas of the super-rich and the middle class" (Prak, 2023: 19). Furthermore, "The integration of Holland's towns received a further boost from the construction of special waterways on which regular tow-boat (trekschuit) services operated, offering comfortable and reliable passenger transport between towns" (Prak, 2023: 17). This inter-urban network was frequented by Spinoza, who travelled often between the cities in Holland. When he lived in Rijnsburg, he travelled often to Leiden; when in Voorburg, to The Hague and probably Delft. And most notably, of course, is Spinoza's life-long connection and frequent travels to Amsterdam, where many of his friends resided and he printed (or planned to print) his books and treatises.

◄

The world's first reliable (including timetables!) inter-urban public transportation network: the *trekschuit* system, constructed during Spinoza's time. (Painting from Jan van Goyen, 1650-1651, *Haags Historisch Museum*).

4th Aspect: The Dutch Republic

The urbanisation also lead to a distinct social composition and prestige of classes, in which nobility was largely absent. "The real power-brokers, economically and financially, but also culturally and socially, were the so-called regent families, who had grown rich in trade and industry and combined this with a place on one or another town council" (Prak, 2023: 19). The Dutch republic was a multi-city aristocracy. Spinoza would later examine multiple models of government, based on the classical monarchy, aristocracy, democracy triptych (TP). Nonetheless, Spinoza splits aristocracy into two models: one-city aristocracy versus multi-city aristocracy, defending the superiority of the latter (TP 10). Spinoza was well-connected to the regent-class, corresponding with, among others, the Hudde family (mathematicians and mayors of Amsterdam), Huygens (a co-resident of Voorburg), and possibly even Johan de Witt (although the arguments in favour are circumstantial and thin, see Nadler 1999/2018: 301-303).

5th Aspect: Fourth Expansion of Amsterdam

The failed coup of 1650 drew new attention to the extension of the defences, and the city of Amsterdam continued growing rapidly (demographically, economically) so a new need for urban expansion arose (Mostert, 2014). The fourth expansion was planned and drawn up with many still-existing maps and imagery; underlining the power of plans and collective images. Spinoza saw first-hand how a city grows via collective imaginations, driven by desires and (political) power. Only when the desires of a powerful enough part of the city aligned, could the expansion be turned from plan into reality; the desire for housing and commercial space from the population, and the desires from the economically-militarily minded political elite. In other words, Amsterdam did not grow relative to population or 'gross domestic product' – but following collective imaginations (based on desires) and plans. Moreover, as positive, affective images are prone to be excessive (see E4 app.30),

Map of the fourth expansion of Amsterdam, with an allotment-plan for the expansion that was never realised. The plan for the fourth expansion was created by city-archiect Daniel Stalpaert, this map drawn by either N. Visscher or Johan Blaeu for the city council. Notice also the institutions in the corners: not churches or palaces, but the city hall and stock exchange. *(on pages 38-39; image via wikimedia commons)*

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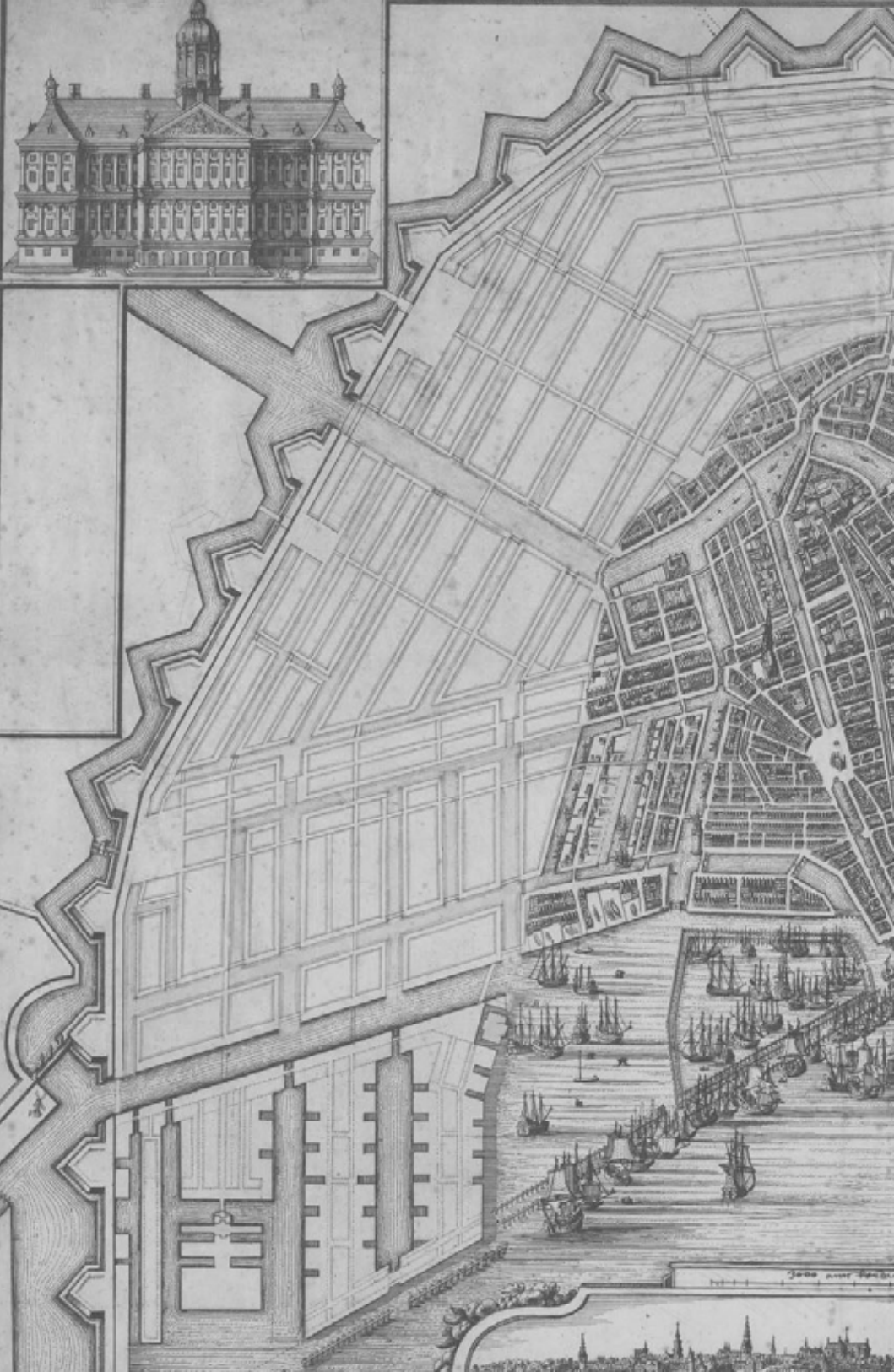
The Province of Holland, which was by far the largest, wealthiest, most populous and most influential state of the confederated Dutch Republic. Spinoza hardly ever left Holland, and most likely never travelled abroad. (Map by N. Visscher via *Sanderusmaps.com*)


HOLLANDIÆ
COMITATUS
SUBJACENTES DITIONES;
TOTO ULTRAJECTINO DOMINIO
GELDRIÆ DUCATUS,
FRISIÆ COMITATUS,
VICINARUM PROVINCIARUM
FOEDERATARUM:
Per NICOLAUM VISSCHER
MARE GERMANICUM
Vulgo
DE NOORD
ZEE.
DE ZUYDER ZEE
HET MEER BEZUYDEN WIERINGEN
HAARLEMMER MEER



Spinoza might not have been surprised to hear the fate of the fourth expansion: after the 'Disaster Year' of 1672, the economic situation worsened and the sale of property in the fourth expansion halted. A large green area of excessive space, the 'Plantage', formed, where up to the late 19th century no buildings stood, pigs where held and gin was distilled (Mostert, 2014).

6th Aspect: Public passions, *caute*

Spinoza's seal contains a thorny rose ('*espinosa*' means thorny in Spanish) and the Latin word '*caute*', caution. Spinoza was famously cautious with his words and writings. The TTP was printed under a false name and location; the publication of the Ethics was halted by Spinoza in 1675 (Nadler 1999/2018: 389-390). The reason was, chiefly, public backlash. In the 17th century, this was a matter of life and death. Spinoza had enjoyed considerable freedom and a tolerant intellectual atmosphere during the first stadtholderless period under Johan de Witt and his policy of "*True Freedom*" (1650-1672), but this period came to a violent end in the 'Disaster year' of 1672, when the Republic was attacked and the brothers De Witt brutally murdered by an angry mob. Spinoza evidently was stopped by his landlord from confronting the mob with a banner reading '*ultimi barbarorum*', for otherwise Spinoza himself would also be torn to pieces (Nadler 1999/2018: 356). His entire life, and centuries after, Spinoza would be the object of highly emotional public backlash by the powerful and superstitious. Spinoza probably would not mind, however, and he died peacefully and had a solid network of friends to disseminate his unpublished, posthumous works. "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death but upon life" (E4 P67).

▶

The house Spinoza lived in in the last years of his life, and where he completed the Ethics. The house is a modern reconstruction.
(on pages 44; image via wikimedia commons)

In a particularly violent act of public outrage, Johan de Witt and his brother were lynched and cannibalised by a mob, incited by the soon to-be autocratic ruler William III, in 1672 ('Disaster Year'). Spinoza lived just blocks away.
(Painting by Jan de Baen, 1672-75, *Rijksmuseum*)

▼

A Note on Referencing Spinoza

In Spinoza scholarship, citations to works by Spinoza have their own referencing system. References are located by chapter and paragraph number with a fixed set of abbreviations and numbering. There are no page numbers, translators, or years such (as in APA) mentioned. Spinoza's works are highly systematic and intricately designed as hypertext, and Spinoza uses a system similar to this one himself when referencing in the *Ethics* and the *Political Treatise.* There exist small differences between authors and publishers, but the general structure of this specific referencing system is always the same. Below, the referencing system that is used throughout this thesis report is given.

Works by Spinoza as a whole are given in English and italics or abbreviated with:

E = Ethics [*Ethica*]
TTP = Theological-Political Treatise [*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*]
TP = Political Treatise [*Tractatus Politicus*]

For each of the works above, the complete reference system works as follows.

For the **Political Treatise** (TP):

- Reference structure: *TP* + [chapter number] + [paragraph number]
- Example: *TP 1.4 = Political Treatise, chapter 1, paragraph 4. ("Therefore, on applying my mind to politics...")*

For the **Theological-Political Treatise** (TTP):

- Reference structure: *TTP* + [chapter number] + [paragraph number]
- Example: *TP 16.1 = Theological-Political Treatise, chapter 16, paragraph 1. ("Hitherto, our care has been to separate philosophy from theology...")*

And for the **Ethics** (E):

- Basic Reference structure: E + [part number] + P + [proposition number]
- Example: E1 P20 = *Ethics, part 1, proposition 20 ("The existence of God and His essence are one and the same thing").*

The reference structure for the Ethics is extended if more elements are given by Spinoza detailing the structure. Then the paragraph type(s) and, if necessary, paragraph number(s) are also given.

- Example: E5 P42S = *Ethics, part 5, proposition 42, scholium* (*"I have finished everything I wished to explain..."*)
- Another example: E2 P13L2 = *Ethics, part 5, proposition 13, Lemma 2* ("*All bodies agree in ome respects*").

The paragraph types in the *Ethics* are abbreviated as follows:

A	= Axiom
App	= Appendix
C	= Corrolary *[corrolarium]*
D	= Definition *[definitio]*
Dem	= Demonstration *[demonstratio]*
L	= Lemma
Post	= Postulate *[postula]*
Pref	= Preface *[praefatio]*
S	= Scholium (sometimes translated as "commentary")

Lastly, translations of Spinoza's works used in this project are:

Ethics (in print): *Ethics*, 2001 translation by W. H. White, revised by A. H. Stirling. Wordsworth Editions. Original work published posthumously in 1677.
TTP and TP (digital): *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated from the Latin, with an Introduction, by R.H.M. Elwes, vol. 1 *Tractatus-Theologico-Politicus, Tractatus Politicus*. Revised edition (London: George Bell and Sons, 1891). Published online by *Liberty Fund* (2011). Original works published 1670 and 1677 resp.


HIER WOONDE
SPINOZA

CHAPTER II

RESEARCH PROJECT

▲

Spinoza and his philosophy (left; paiting by Samuel Hirszenberg, 1907) and the Geographer (right; painting by Vermeer, 1668-1669). This thesis aims to bring Spinoza's philosophy and urban planning together.

This chapter details the structure and process of the research project presented with this thesis report. The research topic and its societal and scientific relevance have been discussed in the introduction (chapter 1), so they will not be extended upon greatly in this chapter again. The research project is laid out below in four parts. First, the **research aim (2.1)** is briefly stated. Two key concepts related to this aim are explained: exploration (via heuristic research) and spatialisation. Secondly, the **approach (2.2)** of this project is determined, together with its scope, already inferring some insights regarding the methodology. Then, the research topic is translated into a **research framework (2.3)** with accompanying research questions, namely one main research question and three research sub questions. These three research sub questions form the pillars of the project overall. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis report each deal with one of these research sub questions. Thereafter, the **research methodology (2.4)** of this projects is explained, linking the research question(s) to certain research methods. In sum, this chapter gives a total overview of the structure of this research project.

Chapter 2.1

Research Aim

In the introduction (chapter 1), Spinoza is presented as an *ethical-political thinker* whose philosophy might harbour solutions, insights or new ideas to address *ethical-political issues* in urban planning. The knowledge gap here is clear: we do not know what Spinoza can mean for urbanism (nor do we now what urbanism can mean for Spinoza). The underlying hypothesis is that Spinoza's unique ethical system combined with his intricate political thought can, when applied to the discipline of urban planning, generate these new ideas, insights and approaches to (classical) problems related to urban phenomena. So, the overarching aim of this research project to bring Spinoza and urbanism together; to investigate an "encounter" between Spinoza and urbanism.

An encounter is a two-way street. On one hand, the goal is to **explore** Spinoza's "vast philosophical habitat," looking for the "untapped potentials germinating" between Spinoza's thought and urbanism (borrowing Kodalak's (2020: 1) terminology). On the other hand, the aim is to **spatialise** Spinoza's philosophy, to transform Spinoza's thinking into spatial thinking. In short: exploration and spatialisation. This, of course, cannot possibly be done to it's complete possible extent in a single master's thesis. The actual aim of this specific research project, therefore, is to contribute a

▲
figure 2.1: research aim: exploration, spatialisation

small part towards this larger goal of bringing Spinoza and the built environment closer together. Thereby this project aims to play a small part in addressing "the overlooked encounter between Spinoza's philosophy and architecture [and the built environment in general] (...) a three-and-a-half-centuries-long silence, which is only recently in the process of being broken" (Kodalak 2020: 3).

> The premisse as described in the introduction also results in a specific **design assignment**. The issue that has been singled out for this project is the lack of a system and general troubles with ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning situations. There are tools that can help urban planners in these situations, such as stakeholder diagrams (or power-interest matrix) or ethical codes of conduct. However, the cited literature clearly indicates a still-lacking ethical foundation (Friedmann (2008) and , for example), urbanism as greatly dilemmatic activity (Khakee 2021) or bluntly advocate resorting to a 'realpolitik of social justice' (e.g. Uitermark and Nichols (2017)). The hypothesis of this design assignment is then that Spinoza's philosophy, with its rigid structure, famous ethical system and intricate political thought, can provide a proper foundation that urban planners can build on in these situations. Accordingly, the specific design assignment of this project is to develop a Spinozist view of the city, a model, that can be applied to situations with ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning.

The two components of the research aim, exploration and spatialisation, are explained in some more depth below. Together, they also structure the scope of this project (2.2). The further research framework and methodology, including the design assignment, are explained thereafter, beginning with subchapter 2.3.

▲
figure 2.2: research aim and design assignment

2.1.1 Exploration

The aim of this research is to explore a vastly different field than urbanism, and bring useful aspects back from it. Exploration can also be seen as an analogy for the research project: one can prepare for an exploration, and hypothesize on findings, but never 'know' for certain what lies in the terra incognita. This approach - aimed at exploration, not extensive in-depth study of one single aspect or property of an object - is a heuristic approach.

Heuristic approaches are well known in urban and spatial planning. Blazy and Lysien (2021) write: "Heuristics (from Greek word ευρίσκω—heuriskō—which means "find") is the ability to detect new facts and relationships between them (...). In spatial planning, this is usually done by graphical analysis, which is an instrument for mapping and codifying three-dimensional reality". Where research and design are connected, heuristics are also part of the TU Delft curriculum. "During this process of research through design, the designer uses heuristics, a relatively simple procedure for a complex decision. These heuristics might consist of examples, patterns, analogies, shape grammars or typologies consisting of various elements" (Rowe, 1982, as cited in Nijhuis, Stolk and Hoekstra, 2016). In short, this research can be characterized as exploration, using a heuristic approach.

On a sidenote: some characteristic methods for heuristic research are mentioned by the authors above, such as graphical analysis (mapping) or elements-typologies research (diagramming). These methods could thus be well-suited for this research project.

2.1.2 Spatialisation

What does it mean to spatialise a philosophy? At face-value, the answer seems clear: relate the philosophy to space, places, cities, and the like. Find all the aspects and concepts that explain space, and summarize them. This is a basic method, and in line with the heuristics of the project, surely one to be used. Nonetheless, this creates a new problem. What is space? What is a place? What is the nature of this physical world we live in, we can experience, we can map? Clearly, spatialisation

itself quickly turns into a philosophical problem in the domains of ontology and epistemology.

Within urbanism, the dominant thinker on spatialisation is Lefebvre, especially regarding his seminal work *the production of space* (1975/1991). For Lefebvre, spatialisation is the process of producing space. Space is something created socially – not a container, something just existing in itself, or Cartesian plan. His distinction of this produced space into perceived space, conceived space and lived space is still widely used in architectural and urban analysis and theorizing.

Interestingly, Lefebvre was well schooled in Spinoza's philosophy (Harvey 1991: 426, in Lefebvre 1974/1991), and Spinoza is mentioned right away on the first page of the production of space (albeit "in Descartes' wake", 1974/1991: 1). Although Lefebvre appears quite dismissive of Spinoza's onto-epistemological views[1] (1974/1991: 1, 73, 169-172), he lauds Spinoza's ethical views of virtue and joy (1974/1991: 177) and his ontological view of continuous creation, which is the foundation that Hegel and Marx can build on (1974/1991: 283). In total, Spinoza is discussed 7 times – on par with Leibniz (6 times), but far less than Descartes (22 times) or Nietzsche (53 times), Hegel (79 times), and Marx (228 times).

Formulating a Spinozist critique of (or reply to) Lefebvre's theory of space would go far beyond the scope of this project. So would a comparative analysis or extensive literature review. Important for now is the key difference between Lefebvre and Spinoza, since this most easily explains how to approach spatialisation for Spinoza. Lefebvre poignantly states this difference when he writes the following (1974/1991: 73):

> *Social space implies a great diversity of knowledge. What then is its exact status? And what is the nature of its relationship to production? (…) 'To produce space': This combination of words would have meant strictly nothing when the philosophers exercised all power over concepts. The space of the philosophers could be created only by God, as his first*

1 The most extensive dismissal is found at the beginning of Lefebvre's third chapter (on spatial architectonics; 1974/1991: 169): *Having assigned ontological status by speculative diktat to the most extreme degree of formal abstraction, classical philosophical (or metaphysical) thought posits a substantial space, a space 'in itself'. From the beginning of the Ethics, Spinoza treats this absolute space as an attribute or mode of absolute being - that is, of God. Now space*

> *work; [this is] true for the God of the Cartesians (Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz)…*

For Lefebvre, space is socially produced. For Spinoza, this means nothing. Space is one of two lenses we use to look at the world (Spinoza calls them attributes of God; thought and extension) [2]. It is not an object with a size or a form in itself, it is an infinite and formless lens. We look at the world through space, but we have no say in this spatiality itself – space is the result of other processes. Ruddick similarly remarks that "interestingly, Spinoza speaks a great deal of bodies and extension in the Ethics, but uses the term "space" rather sparingly" (2021: 29). She explains: "Space, for Spinoza, is a secondary function of [powers] - the expression of the composition of forces" (2021: 29).

So what does spatialising Spinoza mean? It does not mean: searching for a Spinozist theory of the production of space. Space, for Spinoza, is not produced, it is an expression of other forces. So, how to relate Spinoza to space, places, the city, or the urban? To answer this question we must develop a method for describing those forces expressing themselves through space, and how. That is spatialising Spinoza.

in itself, defined as infinite, has no shape in that it has no content. It may be assigned neither form, nor orientation, nor direction.

2 The question why Spinoza states we only know of two attributes (thought and extension) is a major point of discussion in Spinozist scholarship. God has an infinite amount of attributes, why do humans only know two? Why not three? Or one? See Shein (2023) for an overview; "*it is astonishing how little agreement there is among scholars as to some of the most basic features of Spinoza's theory of attributes*".

Chapter 2.2

Approach

Before delving into any specifics of the research project, the scope of this project must be determined. This scope delineates the approach that will be worked out further in this chapter. For this, we need to ask some basic questions regarding the aim of an "encounter" of Spinoza and urbanism. For each of the components of this aim - exploration and spatialisation - we can hypothesize as to the "difficulty" by which it is addressed.

For **Exploration**: how applicable is Spinoza's philosophy to urban phenomena?
For **Spatialisation**: how well can Spinoza's philosophy be spatialised?

The estimated degree to which Spinoza's philosophy is urban (i.e. relates to urban topics, such as architecture, the built environment, planning, etc.) determines the difficulty of exploring this philosophy from Spinoza's works alone. In other words; *how harsh is the terrain?* For spatialisation, the same with regards on the possibility

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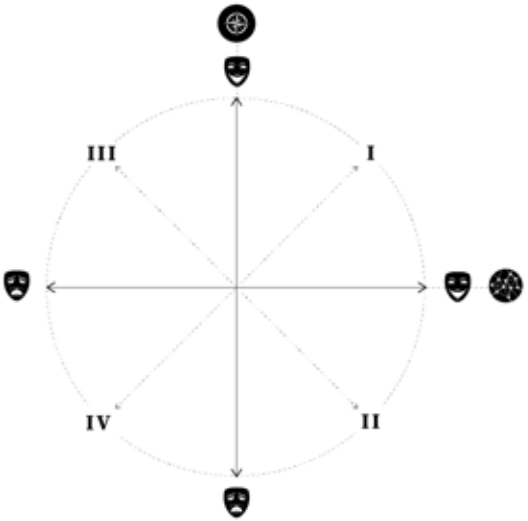
figure 2.3: estimating axes on exploration and spatialisation



▲
figure 2.4: conceptual framework: exploration and spatialisation

of spatialisation of Spinoza on Spinoza's account only. When placing both these axes in a matrix, the graph appears as shown in figure 2.4. Depending on the answers to the questions above, four extreme scenarios, i.e. approaches to this project, exist:

I. Exploration and spatialisation are both well-doable on Spinoza's account only. This would mean for the research project: simple analysis (summary) of all data, then testing on the design assignment. It would be a very surprising finding to uncover a latent urbanist treatise in a 350-year old philosophical oeuvre!

II. Exploration is difficult but spatialisation is well-doable on Spinoza's account only. This would mean for the research project: largely *inferring* a Spinozist account of urban phenomena; analysing this via spatialisation; then testing on the design.

III. Exploration is well-doable but spatialisation is difficult on Spinoza's account only. This would mean exactly the opposite from scenario II for the research project: *inferring* a Spinozist account of spatialisation; analysing this on Spinoza's urban phenomena; then testing on the design.

IV. Exploration and spatialisation are both extremely difficult. This would mean there is no research project (at least not within the limited scope of a MSc-thesis).

▲
figure 2.5: estimating axes on exploration and spatialisation

Considering the fact that Spinoza wrote little to nothing on urban(-related) phenomena [1], we can estimate the aim of exploration to be quite difficult on Spinoza's account only. Thomas (2020: 91) states: "since there are no extended discussions of things such as painting, poetry, or architecture in Spinoza's works, we are left to speculate, based on certain key doctrines of his philosophy, along what lines Spinoza's thoughts might have travelled regarding these subjects." Then, as evidenced by the discussion under spatialisation (2.1.2) we can estimate the aim of spatialisation to be well-doable on Spinoza's account only, as all forces he describes express themselves spatially (Ruddick 2021; see also the works by architecture scholars such as Lord (2018; 2020), Kodalak (2018; 2020) and Rawes (2018)). Thus, the direction and scope for this research project is given by scenario **II** (figure 2.4; figure 2.5).

3 See 3.2 Mapping the Urban (page 61).

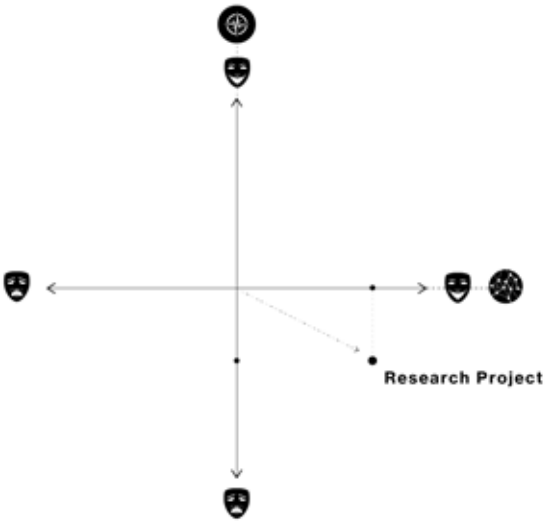


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figure 2.6: conceptual framework: exploration and spatialisation

The approach of this research project is thereby: largely *inferring* a Spinozist account of urban phenomena; analysing this via spatialisation; then testing on the design assignment. It is limited on the exploration-part, so this defines the scope of the project.

A Note on the Analysed Works

Following the research aim and general definition of the topic of this research, the hypothesized *fertile grounds* of Spinoza's philosophy are his **ethical-political works**.

For this research project, the following works are therefore used:

- The *Ethics* (fully)
- The *Political Treatise* (fully)
- The political part of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, i.e. chapter XVI – XX.

The primary reason for limiting the research to these primary sources is simply that Spinoza regards these works as containing his ethical-political philosophy (hence the names). He references the *Ethics* and the political part of the *TTP* (and no other works) in the *TP*, his last work, explicitly linking them together (chiefly *TP* 2.1, also 1.5, 2.24, 7.6) . Surely, as Spinoza restates the main doctrines of the *TTP* in the *TP*, the *Ethics* and *Political Treatise* alone can be read back-to-back as one narrative.

Therefore, it can be reasonably assumed that by assessing these works, the general philosophical structure can be fully determined.

Moreover, this limitation is also based on the (limited) time and manpower for this project. Obviously, this is a limitation of the entire work and at various points it will become clear that assessing other works (notably: the theological part of the *TTP* and the *Short Treatise*) might also contain interesting insights. However, fundamental changes to the philosophical doctrines are not to be expected. See the reflective discussion under chapter 6.2.2.

Chapter 2.3

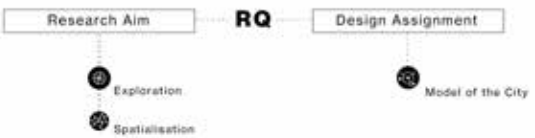
Research Framework

The main research question (RQ) of this research project is the following:

How can Spinoza's ethical-political philosophy inform a theory of urban space and become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning?

With this research question the following aspects are covered (figure 2.7):

- the scope of Spinoza's philosophy is delineated (ethical-political works);
- the research aim (exploration-spatialisation) is directed to in the first part, "inform a theory of urban space";
- the design assignment is direct to in the second part, "become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning".



▲
figure 2.7: research aim, question, and design assignment

Furthermore, this question is a "how can"-question; making it open-ended and not exclusive. The findings and answers that result from this research showcase one pathway in addressing the knowledge-gap, not the *only* way.

Under approach (2.2) it has been determined that the way to address this research

question is through (1) collecting, analysing and inferring urban phenomena in Spinoza's philosophy (the limiting factor); (2) spatialising these findings; and (3) instrumentalising this with help of the design assignment. These three parts of the approach translate to three subquestions (SQ):

SQ 1: *How is Spinoza's philosophy structured and which aspects of this structure offer the best prospects for spatialisation?*

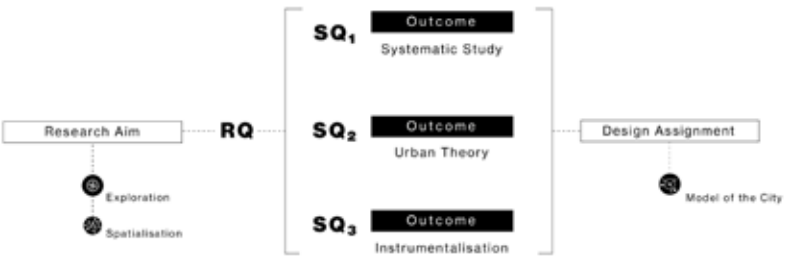
SQ 2: *How might Spinoza's philosophy inform urban theory?*

SQ 3: *What form might an urban planning approach inspired by Spinoza's philosophy take?*

With related outcomes:

Outcome SQ 1: *a systematic study of Spinoza's works on urban(-related) phenomena*
Outcome SQ 2: *a Spinoza-informed urban theory*
Outcome SQ 3: *an instrumentalisation of this Spinoza-informed urban theory*

Together with the research aim, question, and design assignment, these subquestions form the research framework (figure 2.8). These three subquestions



▲
figure 2.8: research framework

form the pillars of the research project overall, and are taken up as distinct phases. Together, they form the main body of the research (and of this report) in three parts (figure 2.9). For ease of use, we might call these three parts the **explorative part** (SQ1), the **interpretative part** (SQ2), and the **extrapolative part** (SQ3) respectively, for this research basically (1) *explores* Spinoza's philosophy on urban phenomena, (2) *interprets* these findings into something spatial; (3) *extrapolates* these findings into an approach (for addressing the design assignment) [2].

▲
figure 2.9: research framework in phases

Together with the orientation and project preparation phase (phase 1 and 2 in figure 2.9) and the finalising phase (phase 5 in figure 2.9), the entire project is constituted. Note: the orientation and project preparation phase had been finished at the P2 moment, so they will not be discussed further. The same goes for the finalising phase, which is sketched in the preface and discussed under the reflection (chapter 7). The rest of this report details phase 3 to 5; the **research project** (figure 2.9).

4 The terms 'interpretative' and 'extrapolative part' are borrowed from Lord (2020).

Chapter 2.4

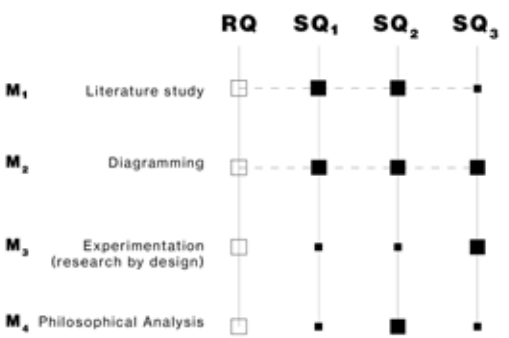
Methodology

This research project employs four methods to answer the SQ's and RQ:

1. Literature review (M1)
2. Diagramming (M2)
3. Experimentation in the form of research by design (M3)
4. Philosophical analysis (M4)

The relationship between methods and research questions is given in figure 2.10:

figure 2.10: method used per SQ



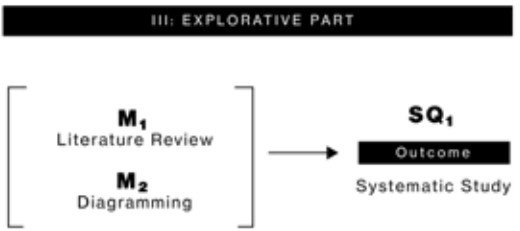
Explanation

■ : main method

▪ : not used or secondary method

The main methods are given and explained below per part of the research. Expected outcomes and deliverables are also stated per part.

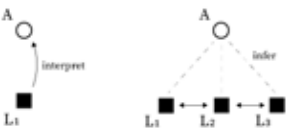
Part III: Explorative part



▲
figure 2.11: method used in the explorative part (III)

The systematic study of Spinoza's philosophy in part III is conducted via literature review (M1) and diagramming (M2; see figure 2.11).

Literature review entails collecting, summarizing, comparing and interpreting primary sources and secondary sources. How to gain knowledge of an object of research ("A") via literature review ("L") in this way is given in figure 2.12.



▲
figure 2.12: methods of investigating of A with literature (L): interpretative or comparative

In this part, the entirety of Spinoza's ethical-political oevre is assessed on its structure and concepts. Secondary sources are used to explain findings. Secondary sources are also used to estimate the prospects of spatialisation per key concept.

Considering the outcome of this part of the research, the deliverables from M1 are:

- overview of key concepts related to urban phenomena;
- explanations of the workings of key concepts related to urban phenomena;
- overview of secondary authors on Spinoza and disciplines related to urbanism, estmating the importance of these key concepts

▲

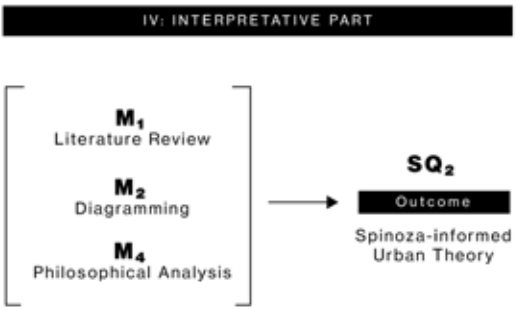
figure 2.13: method of analysing of A with Diagramming.

Diagramming is viewed as research method in itself for this project - not just as method of extra illustration. Via diagramming, complex ideas, concepts and processes can be visualised and analysed (figure 2.13) in ways that are not possible, or very difficult, via textual representation. In this sense, diagramming is very similar to research by design. Furthermore, this distinctly urban method has not extensively been applied to Spinoza's works (see 3.1.1 Mapping *E, TTP, TP*, page 48). The produced diagrammes are primarily aimed at clarification and crystallizing thought, so a style is used without colours and art-related "designs".

In this part, both the structure of Spinoza's works as a whole, as well as key concepts related to the urban are investigated via this method. Considering the outcome of this part of the research, the deliverables from M2 are:

- structural mapping (analysis) of Spinoza's ethical-political works;
- structural mapping (analysis) of urban-related mentions in these works;
- visualisations (experimentation) of key concepts and processes of Spinoza's philosophy.

Part IV: Interpretative part



▲
figure 2.15: method used in the interpretative part (IV)

The interpretative study of urban phenomena following Spinoza's philosophy in part IV is conducted via literature review (M1), diagramming (M2) and philosophical analysis (M4; see figure 2.15).

Literature review has been explained under part III. Deliverables for this part are:
- secondary sources on what constitutes an urban theory
- overview of aspects within Spinoza's works (aided by secondary sources on Spinoza) on these aspects that constitute an urban theory

Diagramming has been explained under part III. Deliverables for this part are:
- visualisations (experimentation) of key concepts and processes of elements of a Spinoza-informed urban theory.

The material of this thesis warrants a method that originates outside the conventional toolkit of urbanism, which for the purposes of this project can be called **philosophical analysis**. This is a philosophical method, or a *metaphysical* method. Just as urbanists in general casually borrow methods from the domain of geography, such as mapping (cartography), we now have to borrow a method from the field of philosophy. The necessity of this method is given by the scope of this project. Just the tools of urbanism will not suffice, since we not only have to

visualise or summarize, but actually have to interpret what lies "underneath" the conceptual framework of Spinoza's philosophy. It is necessary to derive concepts from concepts – in abstraction (figure 2.16).

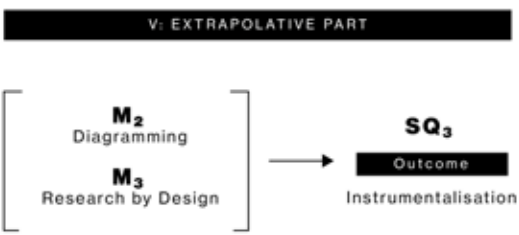
▲
figure 2.16: method of deriving concept A' from A.

Lefebvre already mentioned *concepts* ("...when the philosophers exercised all power over concepts", see page 28). For Deleuze, philosophy is nothing but the production of concepts (see What is philosophy? Deleuze & Guattari: 1991). Spinoza himself gives a great deal of substance to this method. He repeatedly stresses that the method of inquiry related to metaphysics is almost mathematical, "just as if [one is] considering lines, planes or bodies" (E3 pref). So, how to do philosophical analysis? One "derives" concept from other concepts: the creation of new terminology to fit the outcome of this part of the research.

The deliverables from this method, considering the outcome of a "Spinoza-informed urban theory," are:

- a new "language" (concepts), based on Spinoza's works, for describing urban aspects.

Part V: Extrapolative part

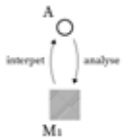


▲
figure 2.17: method used in the extrapolative part (V)

The extrapolative study of urban phenomena following Spinoza's philosophy in part V is conducted via diagramming (M2) and research by design (M3; see figure 2.18). In this part, the Spinozist approach to urban planning and ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning is developed.

Diagramming has been explained under part III. Deliverables for this part are:

- visualisations (experimentation) of key elements of a Spinozist approach to tackling ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning.



▲ **figure 2.19**: method of reserch by design (M) investigating A

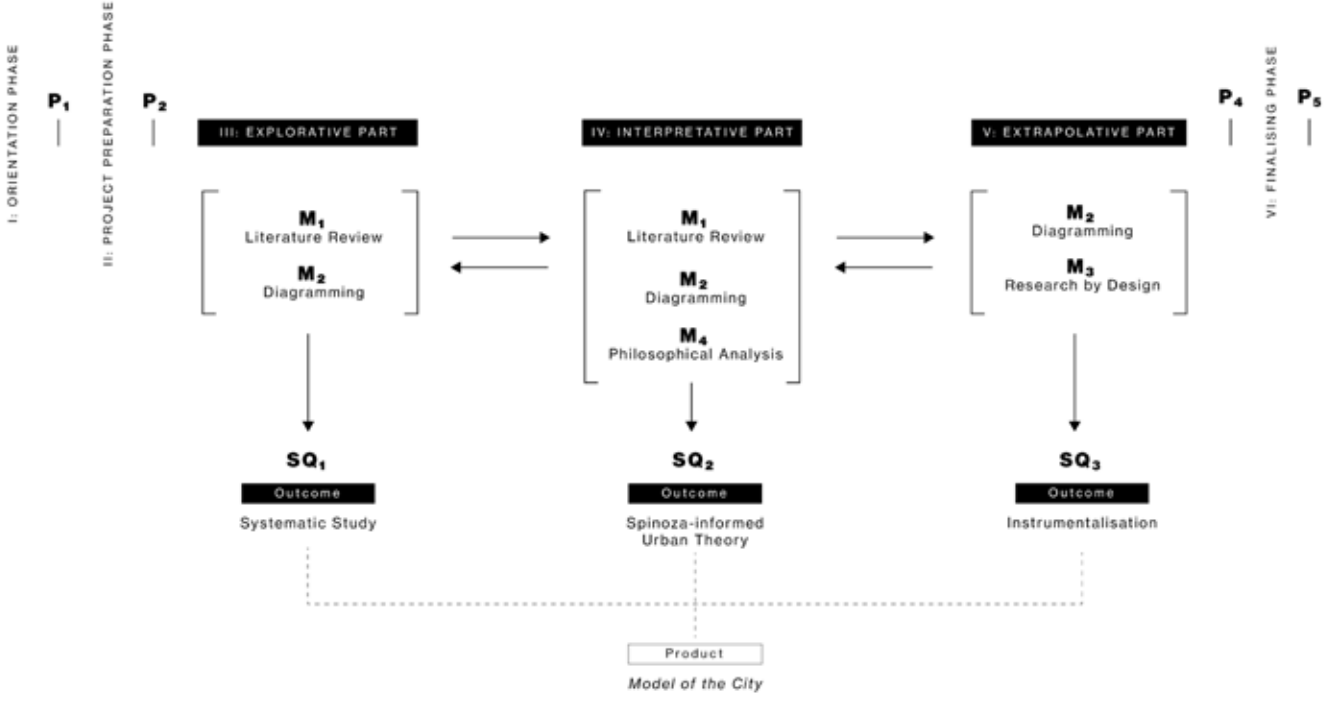
Research by design, in fact, comes down to applying the method and model developed in the previous parts to conveible urban planning situations. This application then results in design results that can be studied. Reflecting on findings, new designs can be made in a feedback loop. Deliverables of research by design for this part are:

- a designed case study applying the model (and reflections).

Combining these diagrammes and methods gives the total methodological framework for this research project (see figure 2.20). Each part results in its own findings following the deliverables. Moreover, the parts build on eachother's findings in an iterative "feedback loop" as well (figure 2.19). Analysing all these findings together, "zooming out," the research question can be answered. These final results are presented in chapter 6 and reflected on in chapter 7.

◄ **figure 2.19**
research as iterative process in "loops"

figure 2.20 ►
methodological framework (*full page*)


I: ORIENTATION PHASE
P1
II: PROJECT PREPARATION PHASE
P2
III: EXPLORATIVE PART
M1 Literature Review
M2 Diagramming
SQ1
Outcome
Systematic Study
IV: INTERPRETATIVE PART
M1 Literature Review
M2 Diagramming
M4 Philosophical Analysis
SQ2
Outcome
Spinoza-informed Urban Theory
V: EXTRAPOLATIVE PART
M2 Diagramming
M3 Research by Design
SQ3
Outcome
Instrumentalisation
P4
VI: FINALISING PHASE
P5
Product
Model of the City

CHAPTER III

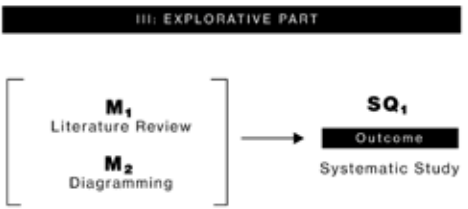
MAPPING SPINOZA

Explorative part

Mapping Spinoza forms the first part of the research project (and the third phase of the overall project, see figure 3.1). In this part, classical methods of urban planning (literature study, diagramming; figure 3.2) are employed to study Spinoza's philosophy. The aim of this part of the research is to conduct a **systematic study** of Spinoza's philosophy through an urban lens. The produced outcome of this study is a systematic overview of Spinoza's works through (1) a cartography of Spinoza's thinking, i.e. a structural overview ('map'); and (2) an estimation regarding the relevance of certain key concepts for urban planning. Other results and findings are summarized at the end of this chapter. These outcomes also feed into the next parts of the research project (see figure 3.3).

figure 3.1: explorative part of the research as third phase
▼

figure 3.2: explorative part of the research: methods + outcome
▼



In this chapter, the conducted research related to this first part is presented. The findings are structured in subchapters answering the following questions:

- **chapter 3.1**: How is Spinoza's philosophy structured?
- **chapter 3.2**: How '*urban*' is Spinoza's thinking?
- **chapter 3.3**: What are key concepts for urban planning of Spinoza's philosophy?

On a sidenote: the findings under chapter 3.2 confirm the scope that was determined under 2.2 approach.

▲
figure 3.3: explorative part of the research highlighted on the methodological framework

Chapter 3.1

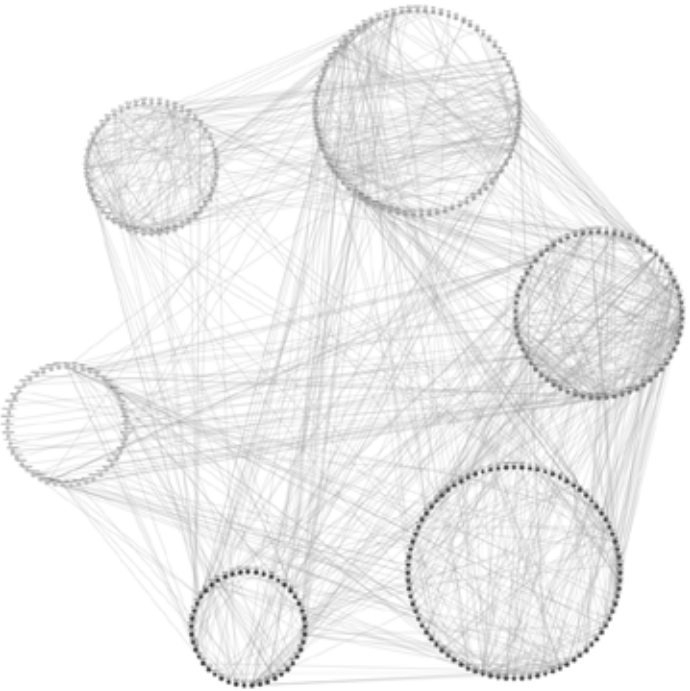
Mapping E, TTP, TP

In exploring how Spinoza's philosophy is structured, this research relies on the methods of mapping and primary literature review, supplemented by secondary literature. This way, the risk of missing an aspect of the philosophical framework is minimized. Structural overviews in secondary written sources are more-often artistic or interpretative in nature (and therefore limited in topics discussed), rather than comprehensive [1]. One example would be the following structural interpretation by Deleuze (1993: 151):

> *"The Ethics of the definitions, axioms and postulates, demonstrations and corollaries is a river-book that develops its course. But the Ethics of the scholia is a subterranean book of fire. The Ethics of Book V is an aerial book of light, which proceeds by flashes. (…) Each of the three Ethics coexists with the others and is taken up in the others, despite their differences in kind. It is one and the same world. Each of them sends out bridges in order to cross the emptiness that separates them."*

Clearly, this "mapping" is more artistic than useful. At last, only the Ethics has been subject to structural interpretation [2]. The task here, therefore, is to create a comprehensive map of the Ethics, the political part of the TTP, and TP. They form one sequential philosophical framework, as also noted by Spinoza himself (chiefly *TP* 2.1, also 1.5, 2.24, 7.6).

1 One notable exception is *Spinoza's Ethics: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Lord, 2010). This guide – to be read side-by-side with the original Ethics – gives an illustrated and comprehensive overview of the entire work.
2 As far as I could find. One commentator explicitly calls the lack of a structural overview as a great omission in his review of *Spinoza's Theological-Political Treatise: A Critical Guide* (Melamed and Rosenthal (eds.), 2010), and something that would greatly benefit further Spinoza scholarship (Verbeek, 2012).

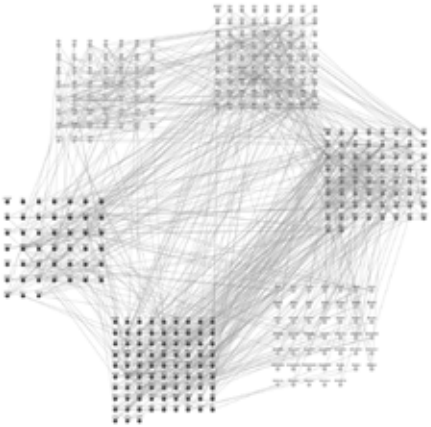


▲

figure 3.4: hyptertextual map of all 'elements' (propositions, definitions and axioms) of the Ethics parts I-V and the overview of affects (E3 App.) in circles; proofs and linkages between elements shown with lines (Bagby et al., 2024).

A first finding is that Spinoza's writing is uniquely fitted for this task. Especially the Ethics with its 'Euclidian' writing in a geometrical manner *[de ordine geometrico]* lends itself for diagrammatic or cartographic visualisation. This holds true both content-wise as well as structurally. The philosophical ideas expounded via *propositions, definitions, axioms,* etc. follow clear lines of cause and effect (A leads to B, etc.) or subsets (A is part of B, etc.) and so does the structure in which they are written, with proofs and hypertextual linkages [3]. Since the writing is so well-suited

3 This writing technique is also used in *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* (Alexander et al.,



▲

figure 3.5: hyptertextual map of all 'elements' (propositions, definitions and axioms) of the Ethics parts I-V and the overview of affects (E3 App.) in squares; proofs and linkages between elements shown with lines (Bagby et al., 2024).

for visualisation, this has been done before. The project *Digitizing Spinoza's Ethics* by Bagby et al. (2024) has mapped the Ethics structurally in various ways (figure 3.4, 3.5). And, content-wise, the famous diagram from Spinoza's entry into the *Jewish Encyclopedia* neatly showcases Spinoza's metaphysical views (figure 3.6).

▲

figure 3.6: diagram of Spinoza's metaphysical system (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, 2024)

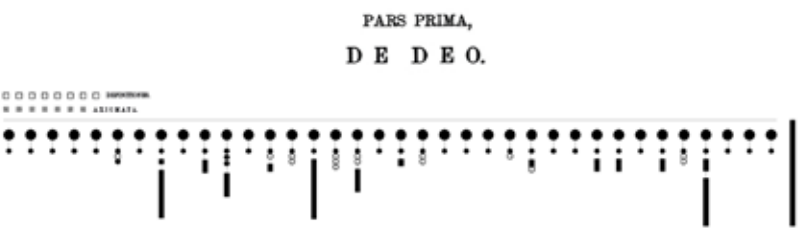
1977) and pattern languages more generally. In a highly personal essay on God and architecture Christopher Alexander confirms to have been inspired by Spinoza (Alexander, 2016).

3.1.1 Mapping the *Ethics*

The Ethics can be visualised in another way, looking at the structure of all the elements defined by Spinoza himself: five *parts* with *prefaces* and *appendices*, and *propositions* with accompanying *proofs, corollaries, scholia, postulates*, etc. For the TTP and TP, similarly, chapter and numbered paragraphs are the basic elements. By collecting and mapping each of these elements, a full overview of the structure of the works can be created. This elemental approach is also reflected in the conventions regarding referencing Spinoza's works – underlining the comprehensiveness of this method.

Starting with the *Ethics*, part 1, the elements can be visualised as follows (figure 3.4). Each of the five parts of the *Ethics* forms one coherent unit, starting with definitions and axioms (grouped in the left part of figure 3.7) from which propositions follow. The propositions are the main statements of Spinoza's philosophy (shown as large circles). Under each proposition, Spinoza adds a *proof* (or *demonstration*; shown as small circles) in which the statement of the proposition is derived from aforementioned definitions, axioms and other propositions (the lines of derivation are also shown in figures 3.4 and 3. 5). Furthermore, Spinoza adds *corollaries* (shown as small open circles) under some propositions - secondary statements that follow from the same reasoning - and *scholia* (or *commentaries*; shown as box with a length roughly corresponding to the length of the scholium) in which Spinoza reflects on the narrative. Deleuze famously considers the storyline of these scholia a second or subterranean Ethics, developing in parallel to the main book (Deleuze, 1993; also 1970/1988; 1968/1990). Finally, Spinoza reflects on the entire part in the appendix (shown as large bar at the right of figure 3.7).

figure 3.7: mapping of all elements of part 1 of the Ethics.
▼



ETHICA

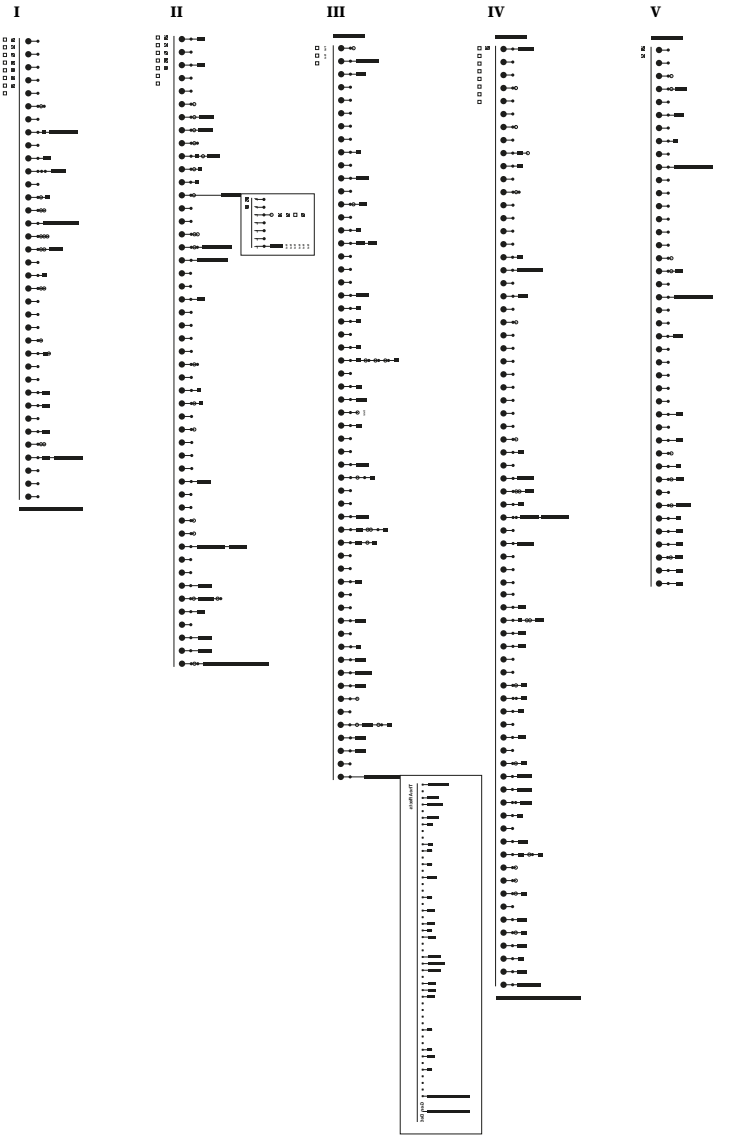
Ordine Geometrico demonſtrata,

E-T

In quinque Partes diſtincta,
in quibus agitur,

I. De Deo.
II. De Naturâ & Origine Mentis.
III. De Origine & Naturâ Affectuum.
IV. De Servitute Humanâ, ſeu de Affectuum Viribus.
V. De Potentia Intellectus, ſeu de Libertate Humanâ.

figure 3.8: mapping of all elements of the Ethics. NB: image turned 90° in comparison to figure 3.4.
▼



When all five parts of the *Ethics* are considered via this structural-elemental approach (figure 3.8), some aspects might be analysed. Firstly, Deleuze's poetic "mapping" is reflected here: the scholia ("second Ethics") form a distinct own pattern, and Book V ("third Ethics") does not quite follow the overall chapter structure indeed (shorter, no definitions). Two meta-structures also appear: the scholium to E2P13 contains a structure of definitions, propositions (called postulates) in itself; the scholium to E3P59 contains a catalogue of categorized affects, almost like a dictionary.

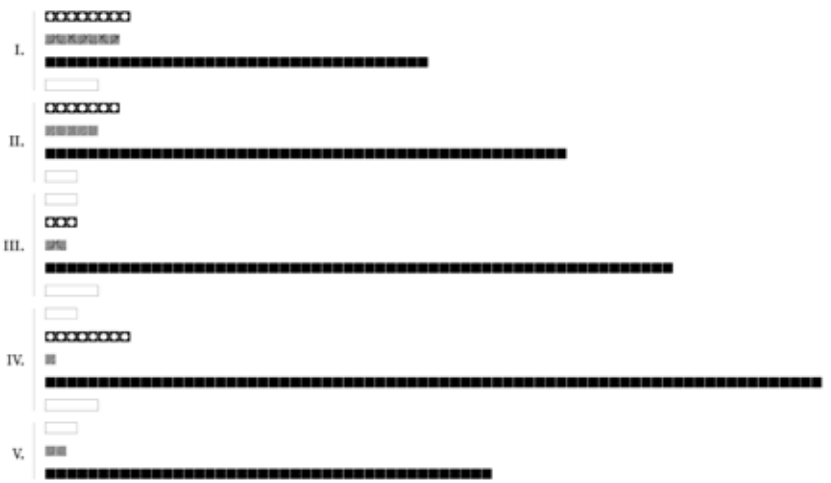
Let us re-arrange all these elements in another way. In the figure below (table 3.10) all the elements are collected for the Ethics by part.

table 3.9: Elements in the Ethics by part.
▼

I	II	III	IV	V
▫ 8 definitions ▪ 7 axioms ▪ 36 propositions □ appendix	▫ 7 definitions ▪ 5 axioms ▪ 49 propositions □ the "*physical digression*" (P13)	□ preface ▫ 3 definitions ▪ 2 postulates ▪ 59 propositions □ the "*overview of affects*" (P59S)	□ preface ▫ 8 definitions ▪ 1 axiom ▪ 73 propositions □ appendix	□ preface ▪ 2 axioms ▪ 42 propositions

In the figure below (figure 3.4), these elements are catalogued visually.

figure 3.10: "catalogue" of elements in the Ethics.
▼

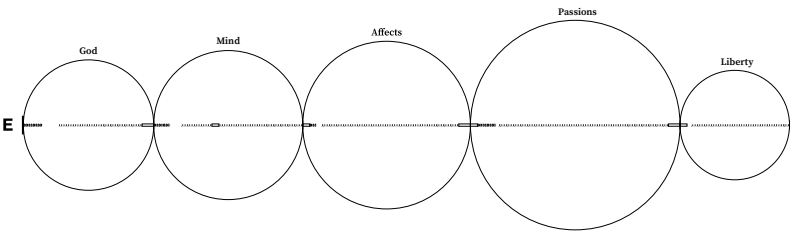


From this inventory of elements, we can start building the narrative line Spinoza's sets out. First, by placing the elements in correct order by part (figure 3.11).

figure 3.11: structural sequence of elements in the Ethics by part

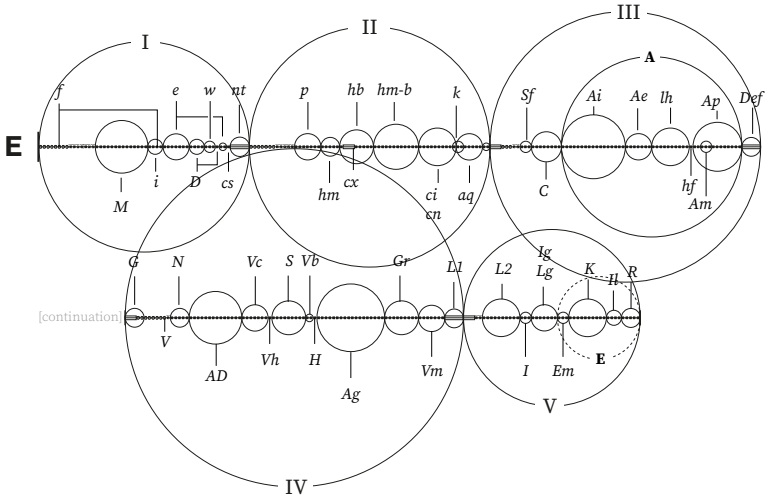
Then, by placing the entire parts in their correct order, we can "map" the entire Ethics as one structural line – a map of a *narrative*, like a timeline or even a section. With the structure visualised as such, we can turn to the philosophical content. In the figure below, the topic of each part as stated by Spinoza is shown as a circle around the structural part (figure 3.12).

figure 3.12: narrative line of the Ethics, including main topic by part



This method of locating the philosophical content in the map can be extended to the topics discussed within the chapters, i.e. the topics discussed "on a smaller scale". For instance, the propositions 30 to 32 of part 1 contain Spinoza's discussion on free will, which he ultimately denies in favour of a *necessary will*, the location of which can thus be circled and labelled as such ("*w*" in figure 3.13). Propositions x to x (including the "physical digression" (E2P13S)) of part 2 contain Spinoza's discussion of the *human body*, which can also be circled and labelled ("*b*" in figure 3.13). In this way, the entire content of the Ethics can be visualised on the map of the narrative (figure 3.13).

figure 3.13: narrative line of the Ethics, key topics mapped (overview image)



Legend

I. part on **God**
II. part on the nature and origin of **the Mind**
III. part on the origin and nature of **the Affects**
IV. part on human bondage, i.e **the Passions**
V. part on the power of the intellect, on **Liberty**

A **Theory of Affects (ToA)**. General rules concerning the affects, i.e. how they are caused, composed, changed.
E **After-life**. Highly experimental and contentious part of the Ethics on "matters wich appertain to the duration of the mind without relation to the body" (i.e. after death; E5P20S).

PART I

f freedom, necessity (E1D7), God = free (E1P17).
M monism / discussion of substance(s), attributes
i immanence / *everything in God, by God*
e discussion of essence & existence
D determinism
w the will / denial of free will, only necessary will
cs causality / everything causes effects
nt non-teleology / *prejudice of final causes*

PART II

P parallellism
hm discussion of the human mind
hb discussion of the human body
hm-b relationship of the human mind and body
cx complex bodies
ci confused ideas
cn common notions
k theory of three kinds of knowledge
aq adequate ideas

PART III

Sf ideas + action (acting), passion, suffering
C conatus-doctrine / *striving to exist*
Ai ToA: individual mind/affects
Ae ToA: affects related to other people
lh ToA: affects of love/hate
hf ToA: affects of hope/fear
Ap ToA: interpersonal affects (imitation)
Am ToA: the mind considers itself + affects
Def Definitions of the affects (48 affects)

PART IV

G discussion of good - evil / perfect - imperfect
V virtue = power

(legend continues on the next page)

(continuation of the legend of figure 3.7)

N	discussion of naturalism
AD	mechanics of affects - desires
Vc	virtue = self-preservation from reason
Vh	highest virtue = knowing God
S	sociability
Vb	taking care of the body
H	harmony/state
Ag	which affects are good - evil
Gr	discussion of the guidance of reason
Vm	model of the free/virtuous man
L1	"true method of life" (E4 app.)

PART V

L2	Restatement: power over affects/passions
I	Images
Ig	Idea of God
Lg	Love of God
Em	the Eternal Mind
K	Third kind of knowledge
Il	Intellectual love of God
R	Final reflections

3.1.2 Mapping the *Political Treatises*

For the TTP [4] and TP, a similar strategy can be pursued. The collection of elements is more straight-forward, since the texts consist of numbered paragraphs only. Just the final paragraphs of TP might be shaded differently, since this chapter is unfinished.

figure 3.14: elements in the TTP by chapter.

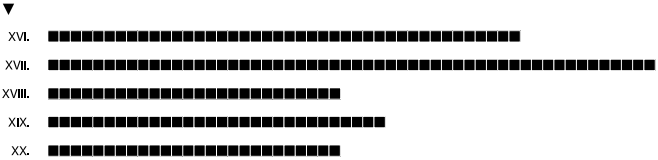
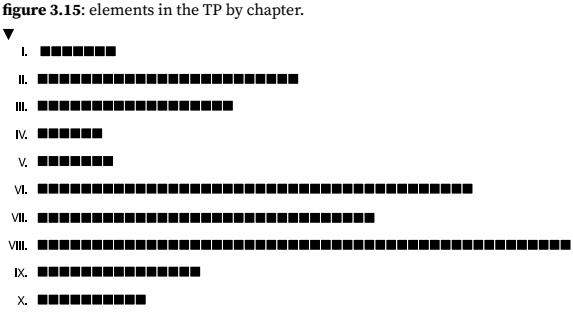


figure 3.15: elements in the TP by chapter.



4 Only the *political part* of the TTP is considered in this project (chapters XVI - XX). See **2.2 Scope**, page 34.

TRACTATUS THEOLOGICO-POLITICUS

Continens

Diſſertationes aliquot,

Quibus oſtenditur Libertatem Philoſophandi non tantum ſalva Pietate, & Reipublicæ Pace poſſe concedi: ſed eandem niſi cum Pace Reipublicæ, ipſaque Pietate tolli non poſſe.

Auctore Benedicto de Spinoza.

Johann: Epiſt: I. Cap: IV. verſ: XIII.

Per hoc cognoſcimus quod in Deo manemus, & Deus manet in nobis, quod de Spiritu ſuo dedit nobis.

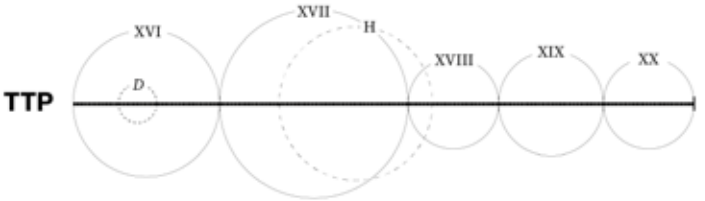
HAMBURGI,
Apud *Henricum Künrabt.* CIↃ IↃ CLXX.

TRACTATUS POLITICUS;

In quo demonſtratur, quomodò Societas, ubi Imperium Monarchicum locum habet, ſicut & ea, ubi Optimi imperant, debet inſtitui, ne in Tyrannidem labatur, & ut Pax, Libertasque civium inviolata maneat.

And similarly, by placing all chapters of the entire TTP and TP in their correct order, we can "map" the entire body of political works as one structural line. With the structure visualised as such, we can turn again to the philosophical content. The topic of each chapter as stated by Spinoza is shown as a circle around the structural part (figure 3.16 and figure 3.17).

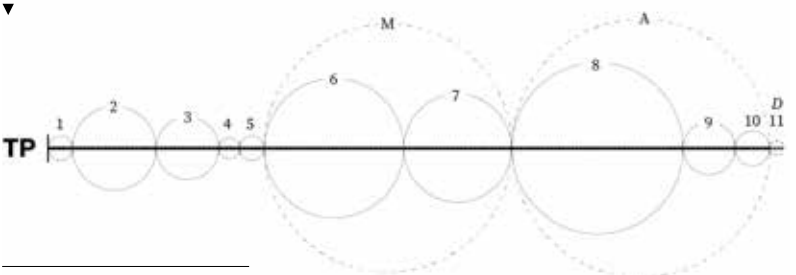
figure 3.16: elements in the TTP by chapter.



Legend

XVI	chapter on foundations of a state / natural and civil rights of individuals / of the sovereign power
XVII	chapter on (the fall of) the Hebrew Republic
XVIII	chapter on political doctrines (via the Hebrew Republic)
XIX	chapter on sovereign rights over spiritual matters
XX	chapter on the freedom of expression
H	theocracy (Hebrew Republic)
D	democracy

figure 3.17: elements in the TP by chapter.

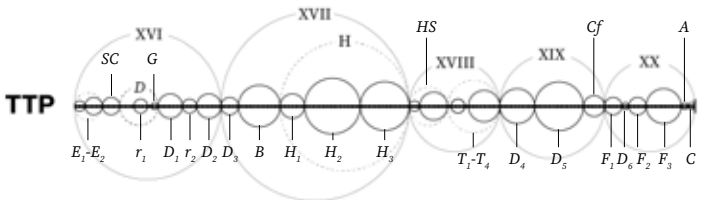


Legend

1	introductory chapter
2	chapter on natural right
3	chapter on supreme authorities: rights
4	chapter on supreme authorities: functions
5	chapter on the best state
6	chapter on monarchy (design)
7	chapter on monarchy (design)
8	chapter on monocentric aristocracy (design)
9	chapter on pluricentric aristocracy (design)
10	chapter on pluricentric aristocracy (design)
11	chapter on democracy (design; unfinished)
M	monarchy
A	aristocracy

Finally, as with the *Ethics*, this method of locating the philosophical content in the map can be extended to the topics discussed within the chapters, i.e. the topics discussed "on a smaller scale" (figures 3.18 and 3.19).

figure 3.18: narrative line of the Theological-Political Treatise, key topics mapped (overview image)
▼



Legend

D democracy
H theocracy (Hebrew Republic)

CHAPTER XVI

***E*$_1$** restatement of the Ethics: God/Nature's power, freedom (TP)
***E*$_2$** restatement of the Ethics: conatus, passions, reason, liberty. Also: natural right (TP)
SC Social contract theory
***r*$_1$** Refutation: absolute obedience/slavery
TP other forms of government (*see TP*)
***D*$_1$** Dominion and wrong-doing, justice, injustice, praise, blame, religion, sin (TP)
***r*$_2$** Refutation: liberality
***D*$_2$** Dominion: state realism, private virtue (TP)

CHAPTER XVII

***D*$_3$** Dominion: natural right, sovereign right (TP)
B Balance of power: dominion vs. citizens
***H*$_1$** Hebrew state: Societal structure (design)
***H*$_2$** Hebrew state: institutional design
***H*$_3$** Hebrew state: institutional failure

CHAPTER XVIII

HS Hebrew state as model, and history
***T*$_1$** I. Danger of religious rule
***T*$_2$** II. Danger of oppressing opinions
***T*$_3$** III. Necessity of secular rule on (in)justice
***T*$_4$** IV. Danger of changing government-form

CHAPTER XIX

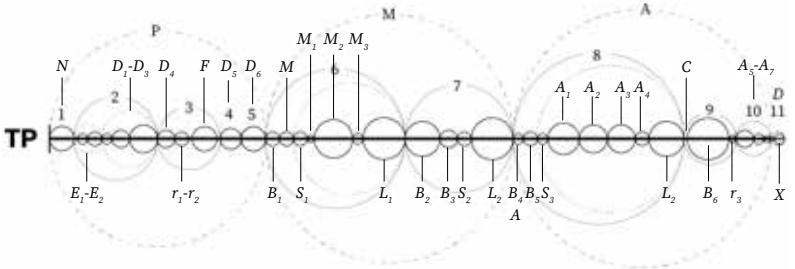
***D*$_4$** Dominion: religious power, outward practice (sovereign right) vs. inward practice (private)
***D*$_5$** Only secular rule of divine (natural) right
Cf Cause of spiritual/sovereign right confusion

CHAPTER XX

***F*$_1$** Freedom of expression as natural right
***D*$_6$** Foundations of a state (TP)
***F*$_2$** Freedom of expression (and not action)
***F*$_3$** Danger of oppressing opinions
A Contemporary examples (Amsterdam)
C Conclusions (listed)

(TP) = also discussed in *TP*.

figure 3.19: narrative line of the Political Treatise, key topics mapped (overview image)



Legend

P political theory
M monarchy (design)
A aristocracy (design)
***D* (11)** democracy (unfinished design)

CHAPTER 1 - 5

***N* (1)** Spinoza advocates naturalism/political theory

***E*$_1$ (2)** restatement of the Ethics: God/Nature's power, freedom (TTP)
***E*$_2$** restatement of the Ethics: conatus, passions, reason, liberty. Also: natural right (TTP)
***D*$_1$** Authority (TTP)
***D*$_2$** Dominion
***D*$_3$** Dominion and wrong-doing, justice, injustice, praise, blame, religion, sin (TTP)

***D*$_4$ (3)** Dominion and *rights/powers* (TTP)
***r*$_1$** Refutation: state contrary to reason/liberty
***r*$_2$** Refutation: state contrary to religion
F Diplomacy, foreign states

***D*$_5$ (4)** Realism: discussion of ethics, powers, functions of supreme authorities (TTP)

***D*$_6$ (5)** Virtue of state: peace, stability vs virtue of citizen: nobility, reason, freedom (TTP)

CHAPTER 6 - 7

***B*$_1$ (6)** Balance of power: dominion vs. citizens (TTP)
M Definition of monarchy (and impossibility)
***S*$_1$** Societal structure of a monarchy 1/2
***M*$_1$** King and royal family
***M*$_2$** Parliament
***M*$_3$** Judiciary

***L*$_1$** Laws and regulations 1/2 (see in text)

***B*$_2$ (7)** Balance of power: aligning interests, concord
***B*$_3$** Safety of dominion vs. citizens
***S*$_2$** Societal structure 2/2
***L*$_2$** Laws and regulations 2/2

CHAPTER 8 - 10

***A* (8)** Definition of aristocracy
***B*$_4$** Balance of power: numbers game
***B*$_5$** Balance of power: dominion vs. citizens
***S*$_3$** Societal structure of an aristocracy
***A*$_1$** Parliament
***A*$_2$** Syndics
***A*$_3$** Senate
***A*$_4$** Judiciary
***L*$_3$** Laws and regulations

***C* (9)** Superior model: multiple cities
***B*$_6$** Balance of power between cities
***r*$_3$** refutation: *Saguntum is lost*

***A*$_5$ (10)** Failure of aristocracies, remedies
***A*$_6$** Indirect approach: "as if by reason"
***A*$_7$** Constitution based on reason and common passions

CHAPTER 11

***D* (11)** Definition of democracy
X Exclusion of legally dependent people

(TTP) = also discussed in *TTP*.

3.1.3 General Narrative

Analysing the topics in the mapping above, we can see that Spinoza's works contain a certain rhythm of repeating elements and topics. In the political treatises, for instance, recurring instances of discussions on rights/powers in dominions are followed by institutional designs. Also, the sequence restating key doctrines from the Ethics, i.e. God (which Spinoza equals to nature) and its powers, and then a discussion of the 'passions' and human power/liberty, are often followed by a discussion on rights and powers of the individual, and then the dominion (state) is found both in the TP as the TTP. In the Ethics at-large, the same structure is adhered to: first God and properties, then the human individual, and within E3 and E4 this is "scaled up" to interpersonal statements.

In general, it can therefore be said that Spinoza's works, considered as a whole, consistently hold a narrative line of (1) onto-epistemology (cosmology; the universe), (2) human (psychology) and (3) state and society. Content-wise, arguments are almost always structured in this sequence: universe – human – state and society. This rhythm is repeated on different "scales", so the works at-large show this pattern, but sometimes (parts of) chapters do, and sometimes single passages do (see, for instance, the beginning of TP chapter 2).

Interestingly, Spinoza also shows himself a certain designer of sorts, using models and images, and creating institutional "designs". In E4 P67-73, he presents the *model of the free man* to explain how to act 'under the guidance of reason' in society (see Lord 2017: 290-294). In his political works, Spinoza presents images or models of institutional design for various types of states.

Chapter 3.2

Mapping the Urban

In the introduction to *Spinoza: Theological-Political Treatise* Israel and Silverthorne describe Spinoza's new type of political theory as "distinctively urban" (2007: 9), later stressing the importance of Spinoza's "urban, commercial, egalitarian democratic republicanism" (2007: 30). So what makes Spinoza's thinking *urban*? The authors, no doubt, use the term here in a cocktail of terms to describe a society as envisioned by Spinoza. This cocktail of terms is familiar to us: urban, commercial, egalitarian, (liberal)... this is a Manhattan, or an Amsterdam. We get a clear sense of how this society looks.

That being said, it is highly important for this research to determine how urban Spinoza's philosophy is in itself, structurally and to its full extent. The answers given in chapter 2.2 on the questions determining approach and scope, i.e. the hypothesis, are confirmed by the findings in this part of the research.

All urban(-related) phenomena can be found by mapping all locations where Spinoza discusses (any topic related to) the city. We get the following picture (figure 3.20). Spinoza mentions the city or the built environment only in the following manners:

1. In E4 Pref Spinoza uses the building of a house as example to illustrate his views on the relativism of perfection and imperfection, reality, and by extension, good and evil.
2. In E4 P37S1 Spinoza discusses the '*foundations of the City*'. City, here, means state or any institutionalised society in general. Spinoza is not talking about the morphological design of a city or any of these matters.
3. In TP 6-7, Spinoza mentions the city a few times as element of "*the foundations of a monarchical dominion*" (TP 6.8). These appear to be rather inconsequential mentions like "Let there be in every city other subordinate councils," (TP

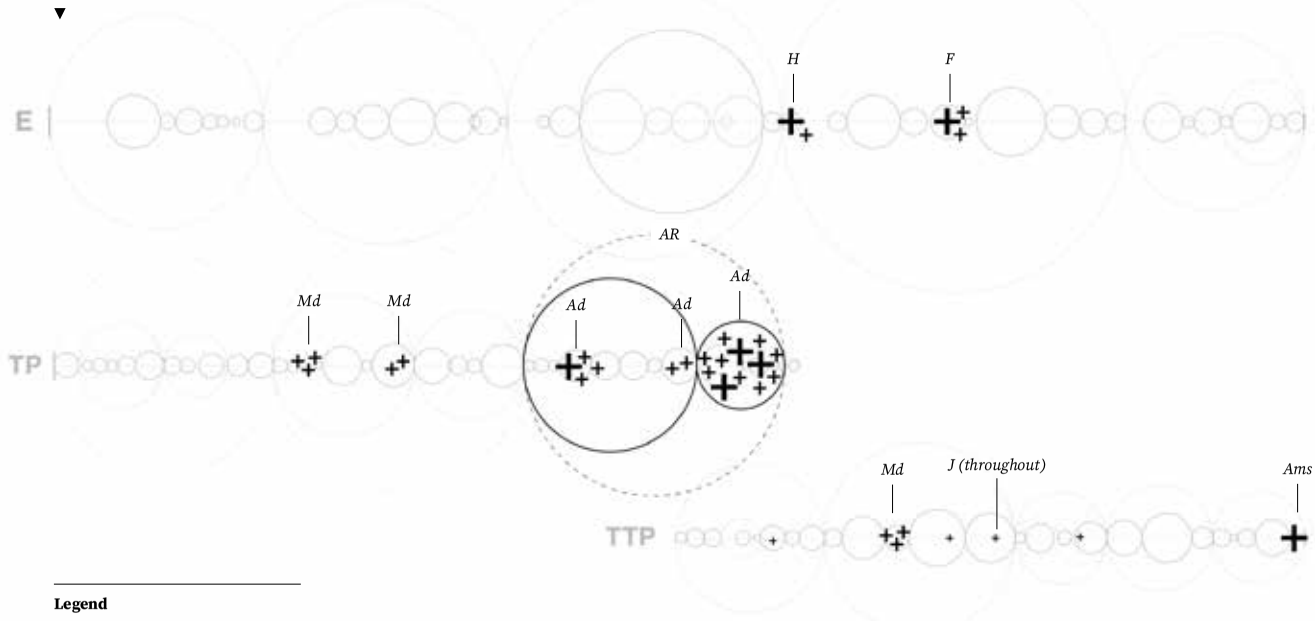
6.30) or "the citizens of the king's city, (…) should take turns to keep guard at court before the king's door" (TP 7.34). Similar mentions are made in Spinoza's description of the Hebrew Republic (TTP 17.19-25).

4. In TP 8-10, Spinoza distinguishes between two types of aristocracy based on their urban structure: monocentric systems with one central city, like (the Republic of) Venice or the Roman Empire, or polycentric systems with multiple powerful cities, like the Dutch Republic (see TP 8.3). Spinoza clearly indicates the latter is more preferable (TP 9.1, also TP 10 passim)
5. In TP 9-10, Spinoza mentions the city oftentimes as he describes aristocratic societies; looking at urban, economic and military affairs. (Spinoza mentions 'the city' over 50 times in these two chapters).
6. Throughout the TTP, the City of Jerusalem is mentioned as metaphor for the Hebrew state in biblical references; the tabernacle or Temple (of Solomon) is mentioned as expression of sovereign authority (TTP 17).
7. At the end of the TTP, Amsterdam is given as an example of a city-state that "*reaps the fruit of this freedom [of expression] in its own great prosperity and in the admiration of all other people. For in this most flourishing state, and most splendid city, men of every nation and religion live together in the greatest harmony…*" (TTP 20.23).

Spinoza has not written a treatise on architectural or urban matters, and his discussions of these topics are rare, though not unimportant. The ways in which Spinoza uses the built environment as examples, understood in the wider philosophical framework, indicate a special type of thinking done by architects, and by extension, urban planners (Lord 2020: 489). In the political works, when Spinoza sketches the make-up of a society, he considers urban structure, military affairs, and land-based economics (property) as the important aspects to highlight. This too indicates that the work of urban planners might not be trivial for Spinoza. "First," Spinoza begins his description of the Hebrew Republic "the people were commanded to build a tabernacle [temple], which should be, as it were, the dwelling of God—that is, of the sovereign authority of the state" (TTP 17.19). It is clear that these discussions always confer some power relation. Spinoza is a political thinker, after all: "The cities, then, which enjoy the right of citizenship, must be so built and fortified, that, on the one hand, each city by itself may be unable to subsist without the rest, and that yet, on the other hand, it cannot desert the rest without

figure 3.20: Spinoza discusses the built environment (*the city*).

▼



Legend

H	1.	Example: building a house
F	2.	Foundations of the city
Md	3.	Describing a monarchical and theocratic society
AR	4.	Difference between a monocentric and polycentric aristorcracy (urban structure)
Ad	5.	Describing an aristocratic society
J	6.	Mentions of the City of Jerusalem
Ams	7.	Example: Amsterdam


Stadt
IERUS
ALEM

great harm to the whole dominion. For thus they will always remain united" (TP 9.2). Related to economic aspects, Spinoza considers property/land the important characteristic (the economy related to money and commerce is discussed elsewhere, for example in Part IV of the Ethics) to mention. As Matheron and Del Lucchese (2020: 224) describe: *"Spinoza clearly did not say much about the problem of property, quantitatively speaking: (...) But it is also clear that, each time he speaks of it, it is always at decisive strategic points, and that, consequently, he accords great importance to it. Why is this? What is at stake here?"* We can conclude that Spinoza alludes to the built environment throughout his ethical and political works. Is it then possible to extract a fully-fledged urban theory from it? Not from these allusion only. However, as the question above by Matheron and del Lucchese rightly implies: there are some deeper processes at play here. This is the conclusion that supports the approach (under 2.2).

The next question is then: can Spinoza's thinking "extend" to cover other fields of study than ethics and politics, such as urban planning? The answer to this question is decidedly yes. Spinoza takes a firm stand against thinkers who do not write for the general public to understand or practice his work (TP 1.1), and aims to write "consistent with experience or practice" (TP 1.2). He states: "I have laboured carefully, not to mock, lament, or execrate, but to understand human actions" (TP 1.3). The aim is to demystify and be of practical use. Repeatedly, Spinoza urges his readers to continue his thinking. An example is found at the end of Part I of the Ethics, where Spinoza refutes the prejudice of teleology; "These are the prejudices which I undertook to notice here. If any others of a similar character remain, they can easily be rectified with a little thought by anyone" (E1 app). Sometimes, Spinoza recollects his own words into a practical list so "they can be seen at a glance" (E4 appendix is a good example; E5P20S gives a useful five-step plan to improve mental health; TTP 18 and 20 contain numbered lists on statecraft). Deleuze gives his monograph on Spinoza the subtitle 'practical philosophy', not without reason.

Thus, for the next part of this research, we need to find out exactly which parts of Spinoza's philosophy are of practical use for urbanism. This is the final step in creating a systematic study of Spinoza's ethical and political thinking, tuned for urbanist's use.

Chapter 3.3

Key Concepts

From the preceding subchapters we can gather (A) a general structure of Spinoza's philosophy, and therefore a general overview of key topics; and (B) the fact that, in order to prepare Spinoza's philosophy for spatialisation, we must delve a little deeper into these key topics, determining which ones are of use and which ones are not. That is, paraphrasing Ruddick (2021), finding out which concepts are indispensable in explaining *the composition of forces that expresses itself through the urban*. The question for each concept is: what are the prospects for spatialisation?

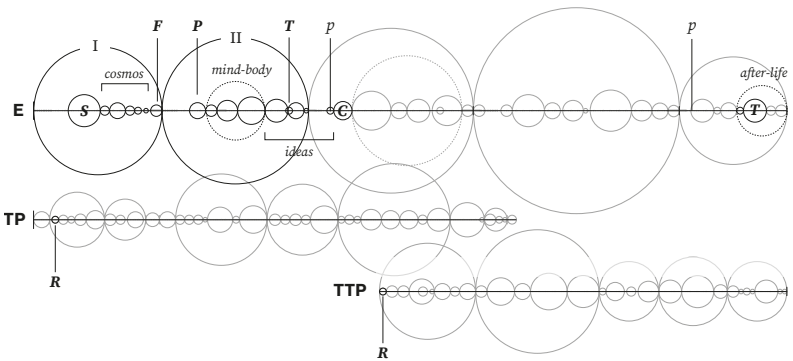
As a first assessment, we can build on the work by architectural and philosophical scholars who have started the process of investigating how this expression works related to architecture, economics, ecological planning, and political theory. These fields are closely related to urbanism, so the prospects for spatialisation can therefore be inferred with some degree of accuracy. The method is simple: for each concept, it is assessed in the literature whether the concept is discussed (see tables 3.22, 3.32 and 3.40). This means: whether the literature engages with the concept, mere mentioning is not enough. For instance, Wagener (1998: 480) mentions *envy* in a sentence: "from which 'passions' like envy derive". Envy is just an example here, so envy is not checked for Wagener (1998) in figure 3.32. By combining this comparative literature study with the mappings from 3.1 Mapping *E, TTP, TP* and 3.2 Mapping *the Urban*, a reasonable assessment can be made on the prospects of spatialisation of several key concepts and the structural parts of Spinoza's philosophy. The approach here takes a bundle of concepts per major part of the narrative: first **Spinoza's Universe (3.3.1)**, then **Spinoza's Human (3.3.2)**, then **Spinoza's State & Society (3.3.3)**.

3.3.2 *Mapping* Spinoza's Universe

> *"This cosmos, the same for all, neither gods nor men did create, but it always was and is and shall be: an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and in measures going out. / Listening not to me but to the Logos it is wise to agree that all things are one."*
>
> — Heraclitus

Spinoza sets out his view of the universe mainly in the first two parts of the Ethics, stretching into part 3 (figure 3.21). The aspects left undiscussed there are then taken up in the final part (part 5). Also, Spinoza grounds his ethical and political theories in his view of the universe, so they are densely (re)stated in the TTP (16.2-16.3) and TP (2.2-2.3). All these theories together form what Kodalak (2020; 2021) calls Spinoza's *onto-epistemology*, or his *cosmology*. In a highly Deleuzian phrasing, we might say that Spinoza constructs his *plane of immanence* here Deleuze (1988: 122), from which his ethics and politics can rise.

figure 3.21: Key concepts of Spinoza's Universe (*onto-epistemological part*) mapped
▼



Legend

S E1 P1-P14: Spinoza's discussion of substances, attributes, etc. - culminating in his monistic worldview
F E1 App: Spinoza's discussion of the *prejudice of final causes*, "the mother of all prejudices"
P (p) E2 P ; restated at the beginning of E3 and E5: Spinoza's discussion of mind-body parallellism.
T E2 P; cont. E5 Px: Spinoza's theory of three kinds of knowledge (imagination, reason, intuition)
C E3 Px-x: Conatus Doctrine
R TP 2.3 and TTP 16: Spinoza restates the main doctrines of his worldview (God, power, natural right).

table 3.22: Key concepts of Spinoza's Universe (*onto-epistemological part*) assessed
▼

literature ►	Architecture						Economics					Ecology			Political theory				
 **Concept** ▼	Rawes 2018	Lord 2018	Lord 2020	Kodalak 2018	Kodalak 2020	Kodalak 2021	Matheron 2020	Wagener 1998	Lord 2014	Lord 2017	Douglas 2018	Gatens et al. 2020	Ruddick 2020	Ruddick 2021	James 2008	Steinberg 2009	Steinberg 2010	Sharp 2018	LeBuffe 2020
God	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Monism	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Essence Existence	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■
Freedom Necessity	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	■
Will	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Immanence	□	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Determinism	□	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Causality	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	■
Non-teleology	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Parallellism	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Complex bodies	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	□	□	■
Adequate ideas Confused ideas	□	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Common notions	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□
First kind of knowledge (Imagination)	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	□
Second kind of knowledge (Reason)	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	■
Conatus-doctrine	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	■

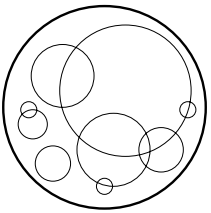
Explanation

The table above shows whether a secondary author (named at the top; categorized into four disciplines: architecture, economics, ecology, political theory), engages with a concept (listed at the left)in the cited work with a coloured box (■). If a concept is highlighted (*like so*), it indicates high prospects for spatialisation.

The concepts related to Spinoza's universe, as mapped in figure 3.21, are given in table 3.22. The concepts are assessed via the literature in the manner described above. From the table (3.22) it can be seen that:

- The core-ontological concepts (roughly E1, from God to non-teleology in the table) are mostly of interest to architectural scholars, and not so much for the other fields. This is interesting, since Spinoza makes no mentions of anything related to the build environment in these parts.
- Despite their prominence in public discourse on Spinoza, his views on God, monism (see the quote by Heraclitus above, poignantly describing the key doctrine of monism), free will and (human) agency are not that prominent in these fields of scholarship.
- Concepts mentioned in the literature from all four disciplines are complex bodies, conatus-doctrine, the two kinds of knowledge (imagination and reason), and freedom/necessity.
- Concepts oft-mentioned are Spinoza's discussion of essence(s) and existence, complex bodies, common notions, the second kind of knowledge (reason), and the conatus-doctrine.

Following this overview, the concepts with the highest prospect for spatialisation are (1) complex bodies, (2) the conatus-doctrine, and (3) the two kinds of knowledge (imagination and reason). Let us now take a closer look at these key concepts, supplemented with the others whenever necessary for clarification.



▲
figure 3.23: a complex body

Key Concept 1: Complex Bodies

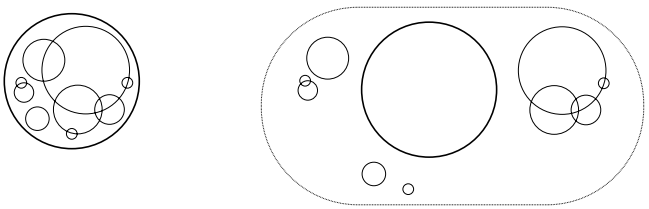
Spinoza's world is a *complex chaotic system* (to borrow a mathematical term). It consists of an infinite amount of bodies that interact with eachother. This is not just an atomic universe, however, since these bodies are **complex bodies** (also: composite bodies or compositions) with a certain cohesion-power, composed of many parts that are complex bodies themselves, enmeshed in other complex bodies; "every individual, through corporeal interlocking, is wrapped in other bodies that are in turn wrapped in other bodies *ad infinitum* [E2L7S]" (Kodalak (2018: 96). Furthermore, they interact according to complex laws. "When a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts," as Deleuze puts it (1970/1988: 19).

This system arises from Spinoza's discussion of God [*De Deo*] (E1) and the so-called "physical digression" (E2 P13S). The first few propositions (E1 P1-P14) of the former, Spinoza employs the scholastic[7] concepts of substances, essences and attributes to arrive deductively at the conclusion: there can exist only one Substance, consisting of infinite attributes expressing eternal and infinite essence – which he infers must be God. Thus, Spinoza concludes, God is equal to the universe, everything in it and the force(s) propelling it. This view is expressed in the oft-quoted *Deus sive Natura*, 'God or Nature', found later in the Ethics (part IV). God = Nature = Universe.

As a consequence, everything in the universe is "in" this substance, "*in God*" (E1 P15). Every individual thing is just a modification, a *mode [modus]*, of God

7 Medieval Christian philosophy.

(E1 D5). Kodalak (2018: 95) points out that 'mode' in Latin can also mean modality, manner, way, mood or rhythm: "[w]e are all different rhythms, unique ways of life." God (or Nature) is the creative force creating all these individual modes: "from the necessity of the divine nature infinite numbers of things in infinite ways (…) must follow" (E1 P16). And: "God is the immanent[8], not transcendent, cause of all things" (E1 P18). Spinoza's universe is therefore a dynamic system, with continuously altering rhythms, since "nothing exists from whose nature an effect does not follow "(E1 P36). The rhythms, or modes, form interlocked compositions: complex bodies. These compositions are formed in many ways: as bodies become parts of other composite bodies, or relate to these bodies, or cause them any alterations (figure 3.24).



▲
figure 3.24: a complex body is composed of parts (left), and of relations (right). This is a matter of graphic representation, both compositions function in the same way!

Key Concept 2: *Conatus*-doctrine

The aforementioned 'cohesion-power' refers to what Spinoza calls the ***conatus*** (Latin for *striving*). "Each thing, as far as it can by its own power, endeavours to persevere in its being" (E3 P6), says Spinoza. "The effort by which each thing endeavours to persevere in its own being [conatus] is nothing but the actual essence of the things itself" (E3 P7). The conatus is Spinoza's fundamental principle that motivates any (complex) body to do what it does. As such, it is "the key ingredient in Spinoza's psychology and ethics" (Viljanen, 2011: 89).

The conatus is the striving to persevere in existence. The conatus is therefore a dynamic degree of power [9]; the amount of power needed to retain a composition. This degree of power follows from Spinoza's discussion on essences

8 For an extensive discussion on immanence versus transcendence, see Kodalak 2020: 13-66.
9 Deleuze links Spinoza's conatus with Nietzsche's striving to "become what you are". See [source].

and existence. Spinoza considers existence the essence of God (E1 P20) which is equal to (His) power (E1 P34). And since the universe is infinite and eternal, this power is infinite. The essence of things (modes; complex bodies) created by the universe (God) is not existence, however (E1 P24). Therefore, the power of existence, i.e. the conatus, is only a degree of power.

Furthermore, since "[i]t is impossible that a finite mode [i.e. complex body] could exist by the content and power of its actual essence alone" (because existence is not its essence!), "it follows from (and is sustained by) a complex of external causes in nature." The conatus is thus also the power of forming new compositions, making causal relations with the aim of even further empowerment for perseverance. Lord states: "Actual essence [i.e. conatus] is the power to go on being what the thing formally is; to pursue what causes it to persist, and to resist what destroys it. (...) [Complex bodies] do this in the midst of a complex causal world of other actual essences striving to do the same" (2014: 12) [10].

We might visualise the conatus of a complex body as a degree of power, reaching from none to infinity (figure 3.25). No complex body has infinite power, except the universe as a whole (God), of course (figure 3.26).

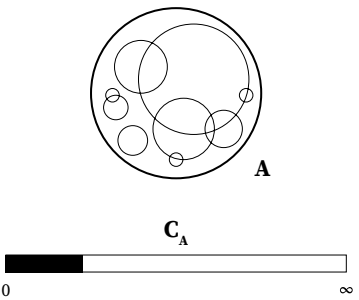


figure 3.25: a complex body (A) + conatus (C_A)

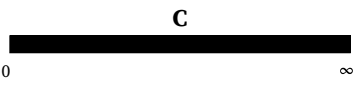
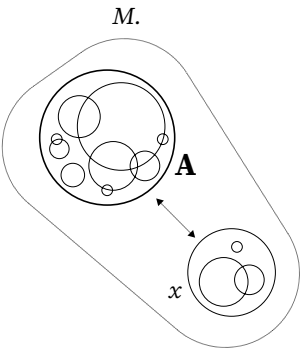


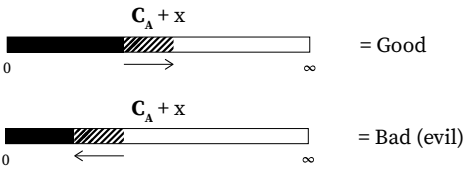
figure 3.26: infinite power = God's essence

10 Spinoza also remarks that "[t]here is no individual thing in nature which is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing, but any individual thing being given, another and a stronger is also given, by which the former can be destroyed" (E4 Axiom). In other words: there is always a bigger fish. So in the end everything is overcome by these very external causes (except God, whose essence is existence).



▲
figure 3.27: body A encounters body *x*, forming composition *M*

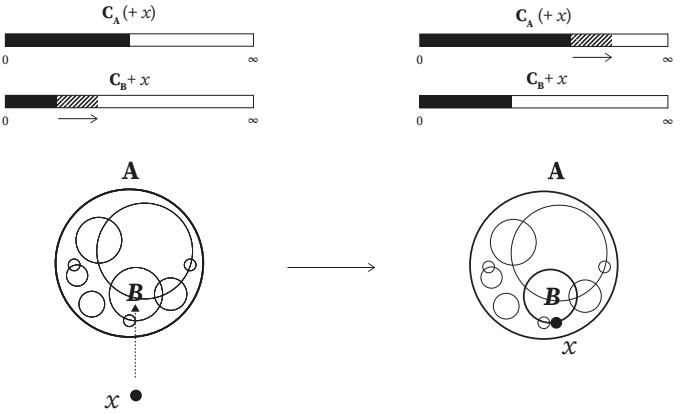
Via the conatus, it is easy to determine the laws of composition and decomposing (see the citation of Deleuze above). When one complex body encounters another complex body (figure 3.27: A encounters *x*), they form a composition (*M*). From the viewpoint of A, this encounter either increases or decreases the conatus of A (figure 3.29). The former is good for A, the latter is bad. And for *x* the same.



▲
figure 3.29: increase/decrease in conatus: good/bad

Since A is a compex body, it can also happen that *x* forms a composition with a part of A, called B in figure 3.29. In this case, the composition B forms with x is beneficial to B (increase in the conatus-bar on the left) and to the complex body A as a whole (conatus-bar on the right). The opposite can of course also be true.

As each complex body is unique and consists of many ever-changing parts (see E2P13S), each conatus is a unique striving. Each unique conatus is the actual,



▲
figure 3.29: body A encounters body *x*, forming composition *M*

unique essence of each complex body. Lord (2014: 4-12) highlights that Spinoza's distinguishes 'actual essence' from 'formal essence' here.

> **Actual essence** is you, your individual, specific striving in an interconnected world, the way you are (becoming), and the effects you produce (from your own striving). E.g. an individual person in a place and time.
> **Formal essence** is the infinite and eternal idea of your composition (in God). E.g. the idea of a human being.

This means that, despite the unique and contingent strivings of all complex bodies, general rules of composition still can be determined. This will be important when considering Spinoza's ethical system. The "rules" Spinoza sets out in his *Ethics* apply equally to all humans, so despite our unique differences, all humans 'agree in nature' in the sense that all humans have the capacity for reasoning, for example.

Key Concept 3 and 4: *Reason* and *Imagination*

In E2 P40S and E2 P41-43, Spinoza sets out his theory of knowledge, deducing from the properties of the mind that there are three kinds of knowledge.

The **first kind of knowledge**: ***imagination***. This is the ability of perceiving many things and forming universal ideas from "individual things represented by the senses to us in a mutilated and confused manner (...) knowledge from vague experience" or "from signs" (E2 P40S2). Imaginative knowledge is inexact (or "inadequate") understanding of what composes or decomposes a complex body.

The **second kind of knowledge**: ***reason***. This is knowledge from "common notions and adequate ideas of the properties of things" (E2 P40S2). Rational knowledge is exact (or adequate) understanding of what composes or decomposes a complex body.

"Besides these two kinds of knowledge, there is a third..." Spinoza remarks. This third kind of knowledge is explained only at the very end of the Ethics, in the "experimental" fifth part, and is somewhat of a mystic process. The main theory Spinoza sets out in the Ethics and political works concerns only the first and second kind, so these are the only two of concern for this project. By comparing table 3.22 and 3.32, it is clear that the secondary authors follow this assessment.

Considering the causes of complex bodies, we can visualise the first and second kind of knowledge in the follow manner (figure 3.30). On the left, called 2, is the second kind of knowledge: it is clear that *x* is the cause. The increase or decrease in conatus can be related exactly to *x*, thus providing exact knowledge whether *x* composes or decomposes *B*. On the right, called 1, is the first kind: it is unclear whatever is the cause and therefore what causes an increase or decrease in conatus.

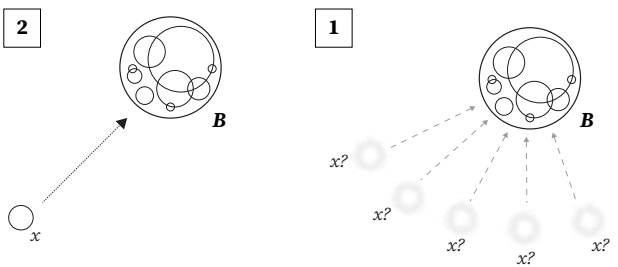


figure 3.30: first and second kind of knowledge

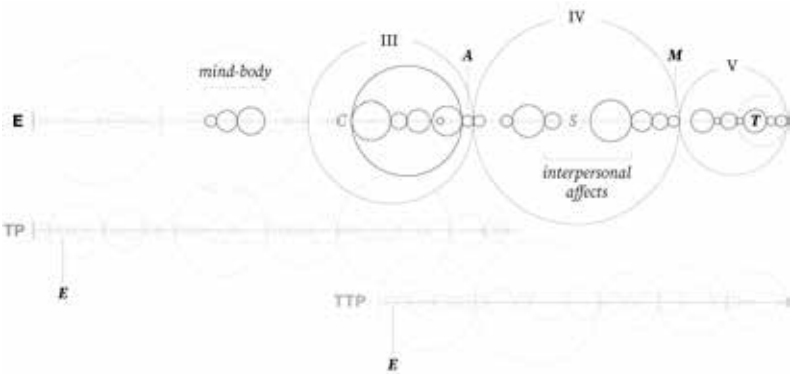
3.3.2 *Mapping* Spinoza's Human

"Spinoza is the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers.
Intellectually, some others have surpassed him, but ethically, he is supreme."

— Bertrand Russell (1946)

Spinoza's *Ethics* is aimed at building a human ethical system. He considers "those things only which may conduct us as it were by the hand to a knowledge of the human mind and its highest happiness" (E2 pref). The parts related to Spinoza's Human are mapped in figure 3.31. The chief explanations of Spinoza's ethical theory are located in the second half of the Ethics. Note how part 2 and 3 are interwoven: the mind and body are already covered in part 2, whereas the conatus - despite being the fundamental principle for Spinoza's cosmology - is covered in the beginning of

figure 3.31: Key concepts of Spinoza's Human (*ethical part*) mapped
▼



Legend

A	Overview of Affects following E3 P59S. Spinoza defines 48 affects, from *desire* and *joy* to *avarice* and *lust.*
M	Appendix to E4, containing the "true method of life" (ethical doctrine) as handy list.
T	Aforementioned third kind of knowledge.
E	Restatement of the ethical doctrines covered in the Ethics in the political treatises
C	Conatus-doctrine. Covered in the previous part (3.3.1 Spinoza's universe)
S	Sociability and harmony. Covered in the next part (3.3.3 Spinoza's State and Society)

part 3. The affects are treated in various ways: from a mechanical-technical point of view in part 3, and more related to human ethics in part 4, and finally as method towards blessedness in part 5. Each part ends with a neat summary or method (E3 Def.Aff.; E4 app; the "method or way which leads to liberty" (E5 pref.) in E5; called 'Method' in figure 3.31), see also E5 P20S). Lastly, as Spinoza grounds his ethical and political theories in these theories (similar to Spinoza's Universe), they are densely (re)stated in the TTP (16.2-16.8) and TP (2.5-2.8).

Again, we can collect all concepts from these parts of the works and assess their usage in secondary literature (see table 3.32). From the table it can be seen that

1. Two core theories of Spinoza are of vital importance and are mentioned by almost all authors: his **theory of affects** and his theory of **virtue = power** (concepts: *affects, passions, virtue and power*).
2. The concepts related to the general mechanics of Spinoza's theory of affects are also mentioned by almost all authors (concepts *joy/sorrow*, *desire*); the actual affects and their workings (*love* to *ambition* in the table) are of interest to economics and political theory but not architecture and ecology.
3. For the concepts related to the last part of the Ethics (the "experimental" part on the after-life; *images* to *blessedness*) the opposite is true: these concepts, and especially eternity, are only of some interest to architecture scholars.
4. Concepts mentioned in the literature from all four disciplines are *naturalism, passions, affects, power, joy/sorrow, desire,* and *images*.

Following this overview and the mapping of urban related aspects (see 3.2), the concepts with the highest prospect for spatialisation are (numbering continues from key concepts under Spinoza's universe, so 5) naturalism, (6) the theory of affects, including, joy, sorrow and desire, (7-9) virtue, power and the passions, and (10) images. Let us now take a closer look at these key concepts, supplemented with the others whenever necessary for clarification.

table 3.32: Key concepts of Spinoza's Human (*ethical part*) assessed
▼

literature ►	Architecture						Economics					Ecology			Political theory				
 **Concept** ▼	Rawes 2018	Lord 2018	Lord 2020	Kodalak 2018	Kodalak 2020	Kodalak 2021	Matheron 2020	Wagener 1998	Lord 2014	Lord 2017	Douglas 2018	Gatens et al. 2020	Ruddick 2020	Ruddick 2021	James 2008	Steinberg 2009	Steinberg 2010	Sharp 2018	LeBuffe 2020
Naturalism	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	■	■	■	□	■	□	□	□
Passions	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	□	■	■
Affects (theory of…)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	■
Good-evil	□	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□
Perfection	■	□	■	□	■	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□
Virtue	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	■	□
Power	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Joy, sorrow	□	□	□	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	□	■
Desire	■	□	■	□	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	■
Love, hate	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	□
Hope, fear	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	□	■	□	□	■	■	□	■	■
Envy	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□
Ambition	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	□
Images	□	□	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	■	□	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□
Eternity	□	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□
Third kind of knowledge (intuition)	□	□	■	□	■	■	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□
Blessedness	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□

Explanation

The table above (table 3.32) shows whether a secondary author on Spinoza (named at the top; categorized into four disciplines: architecture, economics, ecology, political theory), engages with a concept (listed at the left)in the cited work with a coloured box (■). If a concept is highlighted (*like so*), it indicates selection for spatialisation in the project. This selection is based on the arguments in the text, but also on testing via design (part III of the research). See [methodology].

Key Concept 5: naturalism

Spinoza applies the same method in explaining human psychology as in his discussion about God and the mind: "I shall consider human actions and appetites just as if I were considering lines, planes, or bodies" (E3 pref). He contrasts his method with "[m]ost persons who have written about the affects and man's conduct of life." He notices how "[t]hey seem indeed to consider man in nature as a *kingdom within a kingdom*. For they believe that man disturbs rather than follows her [i.e. nature's] order; that he has an absolute power over his own actions; and that he is altogether self-determined" (emphasis added; see also TP 2.1 and 2.6). For Spinoza, "everything in the world plays by the same rules," (Della Rocca, 2008: 5), a view that is commonly referred to as Spinoza's **naturalism**. The idea that humans somehow have a special status is just absurd – or plain self-aggrandising. Spinoza's naturalism entails, as Sharp (2011: 2) concisely puts it:

> *"Humanity receives no special metaphysical value and no privileged place in nature. Spinoza's naturalism denies human exceptionalism in any form. Like any other thing in nature, humans are corporeal and ideal, ineluctably immersed in a system of cause and effect, and each of us comprises a power that is infinitely surpassed by the totality of other beings."*

This means that the rules and concepts addressed under Spinoza's Universe apply to humans without any alteration. Humans are complex bodies with a striving for existence (conatus) immersed in a system of the same, "the eternal order of nature, wherein man is but a speck" (TTP 16.7). Conversely, this also means that as Spinoza considers *natural right* "the very laws or rules of nature, in accordance with which everything takes place, in other words, the power of nature itself" (TP 2.4) everyone has a natural right to do whatever is in their power (TTP 16.2):

> *""The power of nature is the power of God, which has sovereign right over all things; and, inasmuch as the power of nature is simply the aggregate of the powers of all her individual components, it follows that every individual has sovereign right to do all that he can; in other words, the rights of an individual extend to the utmost limits of his power as it has been conditioned."*

Key Concept 6: theory of affects

Lord states that, building on Spinoza's naturalism (2018: 61, emphasis added): "The highly composite and affective human body has a high degree of relatability, both internally, in terms of the interrelation of its constituent parts, and externally, in terms of its relations to other things. As our bodies are constantly exchanging affects with other bodies, and our minds are constantly exchanging ideas with other minds, we are constituted by these relations." What are these affective relations, these **affects**? Spinoza defines affect as follows (E3 App. Gen.Def.):

> *"Affect, which is called animi pathema, is a confused idea by which the mind affirms of its body, or any part of it, a greater or lesser power of existence than before; and this increase of power being given, the mind itself is determined to one particular thought rather than another."*

In the next part (E4), Spinoza states more concisely that affect is "an idea by which the mind affirms of its body a greater or lesser force of existing than before" (E4 P14D). Simply put, a change in our striving power (our conatus) is registered in the mind as an affect. The (external) cause of this change in our conatus might then properly be called an *affection*. Kodalak (2018: 98) observes that "[w]hereas affection is the connective line that puts modalities into interaction, affect is the individual passage from one mode of existence to another for a lived duration, resulting in an increase or decrease in that individual's power to be or to act – which are one and the same thing for Spinoza [i.e conatus]."

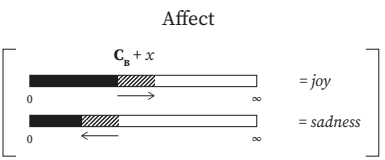


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figure 3.33: a change in conatus is registered as *affect*

A positive change in our conatus is registered in the mind as joy, a decrease as sadness (E3 P11S). The striving or conatus itself (the composing or decomposing) is registered as desire or appetite (E3 P12S), which always accompanies these changes. As Wagener (1998: 477) puts: "affects are subjective ideas about a higher (pleasure) or lower (pain) existential power [conatus] of the individual which then result in desires (...) In modern parlance we would say: the affects result in individual preferences." Desire therefore follows the basic rule of the conatus: "we strive to promote the occurrence of whatever we imagine will lead to joy [composing], and to avert or destroy what we imagine is contrary to it [decomposing], or will lead to sadness" (E3 P28). Thus, "desire," concludes Spinoza (E3 Aff.1), "is the essence itself of man in so far as it is conceived as determined to any action by any one of his affections."

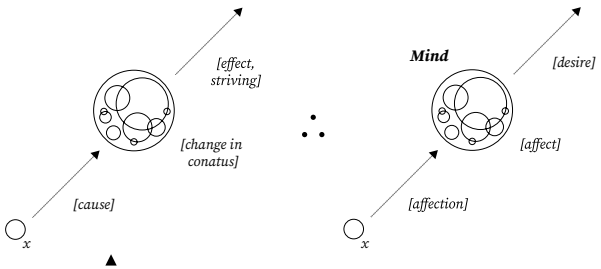


figure 3.33: cause and effect; affection, affect and desire

From these three basic affects (desire, sadness, joy), many others are compounded based on their affections. Actually, "there are as many species of joy, sadness and desire, and consequently of each affect composed of these (like *vacillation of mind)* or derived from them (like *love, hate, hope, fear,* etc.), as there are objects by which we are affected," (E3 P56) which is thus an infinite amount, different for each composition (E3P51). Spinoza derives numerous affects in E3 in a mathematical fashion, and lists them in the appendix (overview of affects). *Love,* for example, is "nothing but joy accompanied with the idea of an external cause [i.e. an affection]" (E3 P13S), and *hate* is "nothing but sorrow with the accompanying idea of an external cause [i.e. an affection]" (E3 P13S). *Hope* is "an inconstant joy which has arisen from the image of a future or past thing whose outcome we doubt" (E3 P18S2) and, similarly, *fear* is "inconstant sadness, which has arisen from a doubtful thing"

(E3 P18S). Historically, affects where translated as 'emotions' as they borrow their names from what we conventionally call emotions. But importantly, "affects are not strictly emotions, but pre-conscious fluctuations of our capacity of action as a result of modal interactions, Spinoza prefers to use conventional terms such as joy and sadness, by redefining them as transitions of power" Kodalak (2018: 98).

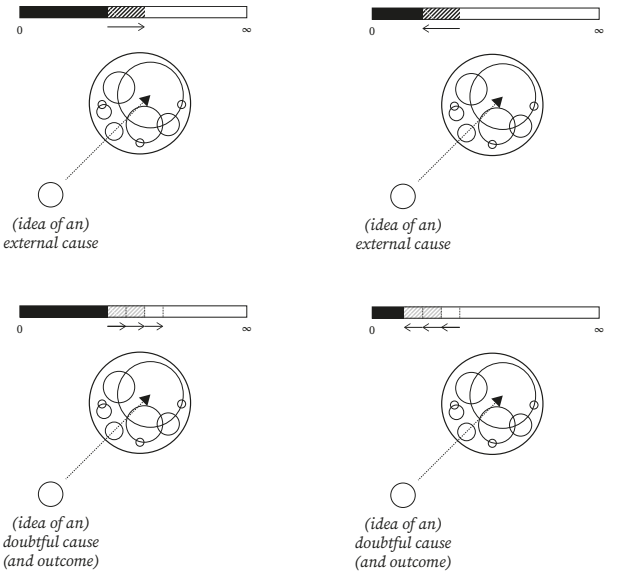


figure 3.35: cause and effect; affects of love, hate, hope, and fear

Key Concept 7, 8, and 9: virtue, power, and the passions

E4 contains, then, the fully-fledged ethical system: definitions of good and bad and how to become more virtuous. "*By virtue and power, I understand the same thing*," says Spinoza (E4 D8). "By good I mean that which we certainly know to be useful to us" (E4 D1), and "[b]y evil I mean that which we certainly know to be a hindrance to

us in the attainment of any good" (E4 D2) [11]. Lord rephrases the ethical doctrine as (2017: 287): "Anything that we know helps to preserve our being and enhance our capacities is good; that which we know to hinder the preservation of our being and diminish our capacities is evil." Spinoza stresses this link to preserve our being (i.e. the conatus) in the strongest terms in E4 P22: "No virtue can be conceived as prior to this endeavour to preserve one's own being" and its corollary (E4 P22C): "The effort for self-preservation is the first and only foundation of virtue. For prior to this principle nothing can be conceived, and without it no virtue can be conceived." In short, Spinoza's ethics comes down to (E4 P20):

> *"The more each person strives and is able to seek his own profit, that is to say, to preserve his being, the more virtue does he possess; on the other hand, in so far as each person neglects his own profit, that is to say, neglects to preserve his own being, is he impotent."*

So why would anyone 'neglect to preserve his own being'? Here, the affects come into play (E4 pref):

> *"The impotence of man to govern or restrain the affects I call bondage, for a man who is under their control is not his own master, but is mastered by fortune, in whose power he is, so that he is often forced to follow the worse, although he sees the better before him."* [12]

Already at E3D3, Spinoza defines the desires or efforts that follow from affects as **passions** (cf. 'passive', also suffering). It is due to the affects, Spinoza states, "that we are disturbed by external causes [affections] in a number of ways, and that, like the waves of the sea agitated by contrary winds, we fluctuate in our ignorance of our future and destiny" (E3 P59S). Why? Because affects arise from confused images:

---

11 Spinoza rephrases certain Christian ethical doctrines or stories with his definitions of good and evil, that of course do away with any God-given transcendental doctrines or universal Good and Evils. For instance, as Deleuze (1988: 31) explains: "*God does not prohibit anything, but he informs Adam that the fruit, by virtue of its composition, will decompose Adam's body. The fruit will act like arsenic. At the outset, then, we find Spinoza's basic thesis: what is bad should be conceived of as an intoxication, a poisoning, an indigestion – or even, taking account of individuating factors, as an intolerance or an allergy.*"

12 As Lord (2017: 287) describes, this situation occurs when someone's power to act is overcome by passions caused by something more powerful in nature; thus displacing the desire for something good with something passionate (which can be good and bad).

from a cause which is not exactly known, i.e. from the first kind of knowledge. This cause can therefore be a good or bad for us, we cannot be certain. Kodalak (2018: 100): "We become subject to bondage if we surrender ourselves to the fluctuation of affective interactions". However, here also lies the solution: we can be certain about causes we know from the second kind of knowledge (because they are exact). Lord (2017: 286): "Rational understanding of ourselves is crucial to ethical judgment: what is good is what we certainly know to be useful." Spinoza defines the desires or efforts that follow from reason as **actions** (E3D3) and he states (E4 App.3):

> *"Our actions, that is to say, those desires which are determined by man's power or reason, are always good; the others [i.e. following from the passions] may be good as well as evil."*

This, then, is our "ethical journey in life" (Kodalak 2018: 100): "to transform passivizing affects into activating ones, to evade and endure bad encounters while increasing and sustaining good ones, to affirm our power up to its very limits…". In Spinoza's words: "To act absolutely in conformity with virtue is, in us, nothing but acting, living, and preserving our being (these three things have the same meaning) by the guidance of reason" (E4 P24). The rest of the Ethics (mainly E4 and E5) contain Spinoza's method of doing precisely this, giving a "true method of life" (E4app), and "a method or way which leads to liberty" [13] by demonstrating "the power of reason, showing how much reason itself can control the affects" (E5 pref.).

Virtue from empowerment is a self-reinforcing process: someone who is more empowered has more exact (rational) knowledge and can create more empowering (as well as affective) compositions, thereby becoming more empowered and virtuous, etc. This happens by transforming our own complex body (and mind) into an even more powerful complex body (and mind) that has more affective and

13 Spinoza gives, via this ethical system, a completely new definition to *freedom*: someone is free, empowered and virtuous when someone knows exactly (i.e. by rationally) what to do. "I am altogether for calling a man so far free, as he is led by reason; because so far he is determined to action by such causes, as can be adequately understood by his unassisted nature, although by these causes he be necessarily determined to action. For liberty (…) does not take away the necessity of acting, but supposes it" (TP 2.11).

rational capacity (E2P14; also E4P38-39 and E5P39). Spinoza concludes his last proposition on this self-reinforcement (E5 P42): "Blessedness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself; nor do we delight in blessedness because we restrain our lusts; but, on the contrary, because we delight in it, therefore are we able to restrain them" [14]. Steinberg (2019: 42) summarizes:

> *"Spinoza's ethical project can thus be fruitfully viewed as a brand of perfectionism, with a graduated conception of human flourishing,*[15] *wherein one's level of power is mirrored by one's level of joy or happiness. The affective zenith is blessedness (beatitude), or one's greatest happiness. Short of full blessedness, we want at least to be able to steel ourselves against external forces that diminish our power so that we may be as content as possible. From this we can see that anything that reliably promotes a thing's overall joy or protects a thing from suffering ought to be regarded as liberating or empowering (with respect to that thing)."*

Key Concept 10: Images

Gatens et al. (2020: 201) make the following claim:

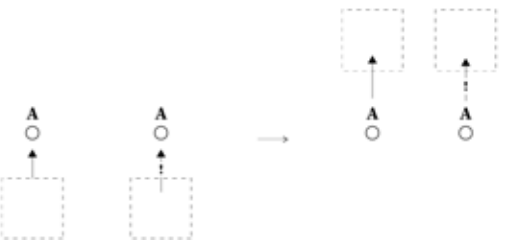
> *"untrustworthy accounts of the nature of the things that we have come into contact with, and of the world in general. Our impressions and narratives involve systemic distortions and tell us more about the experiencing bodies – their specific compositions, dispositions, and desires – than about the nature of the causes of those experiences. In the Ethics, and elsewhere, Spinoza explains that we have a natural disposition to invert causes and effects, that is, our usual attitude is to experience an effect as if it were a cause. He refers to this as turning nature 'upside down' ".*

---

14 This is the very opposite of Stoicism, of Christian asceticism, and modern variants (notably Schopenhauer's thinking). Spinoza's philosophy is a philosophy of *life,* strength and joy (see also Deleuze 1988: 25-29). Kodalak (2018: 100): "Spinoza suggests actively pursuing and constructing empowering compositions ourselves, by dwelling on active affects that spring from our own affective capabilities, by extracting joyful and empowering potentials from each encounter, and by doing justice to what life brings at every turn. This is an ethos of converting passions into actions."

15 Friedmann (2008) expresses the hope that urban planning can find a theory that encapsulates human flourishing at its core (see introduction, page 14). Here we have a philosophy with human flourishing, or blessedness, at its zenith!

The last citation originates in Spinoza's discussion of the prejudice of *final causes* in E1 app: "this doctrine concerning an end [i.e. final causes] altogether overturns nature. For that which is in truth the cause it considers as the effect, and vice versa." Spinoza notes this overturning throughout his works [16]. We imagine desires to be aims, projecting causes into the worlds as imagined effects. Inexact causes of affects might then appear before us as *images* (figure 3.37). Lord (2017: 285) notices how images linked to passions can obstruct the way to human flourishing. She gives money as clear example. "In a market society, money is a persistent part of everyone's experience, so frequently used that its image is constantly present to mind. Since money is needed to meet the majority of needs, its image is connected to every desire and every imagined satisfaction. This leads people to imagine that money is the principal cause of joy, and since love is joy with the accompanying idea of an external cause, money becomes the universal object of desire and love." Means become ends, causes blurry and inexact, and people get entrapped by the passions [17].



▲

figure 3.37: 'overturning nature': confusing causes for effects (aims, images)

Spinoza does not "mock, lament, or execrate" this (TP 1.4). His strong naturalism forces one, even though images do not result from reason and are therefore confused, to accept the projection of these images as a fact of life. In fact, a typically

16 e.g., E2 P35S: "people are conscious of their actions and ignorant of the causes by which they are determined. This, then, is their idea of freedom – that they do not know the cause of their actions."
17 Lord (2017: 298) gives a Spinozist account of the famous Dutch tulip mania of 1636-1637. Note that Spinoza was only very young when this bubble collapsed, but he must have certainly known of the (long-lasting) effects.

Spinozist fashion, Spinoza then puts images to use [18]. Spinoza finds some general rules regarding images in E4 P9-13 on which images are stronger than other (i.e. cause a stronger affect) [19]. Since images are models of sorts, they can influence thinking from these fictions into reason. Thus, an image or model, despite the fact that it is not the real thing, can still convey some rational (exact) information. This comes as no surprise for urban designers and planners.

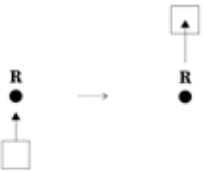


figure 3.38: a 'rational image': exact knowledge of cause-effect (can move like a mathematical vector).

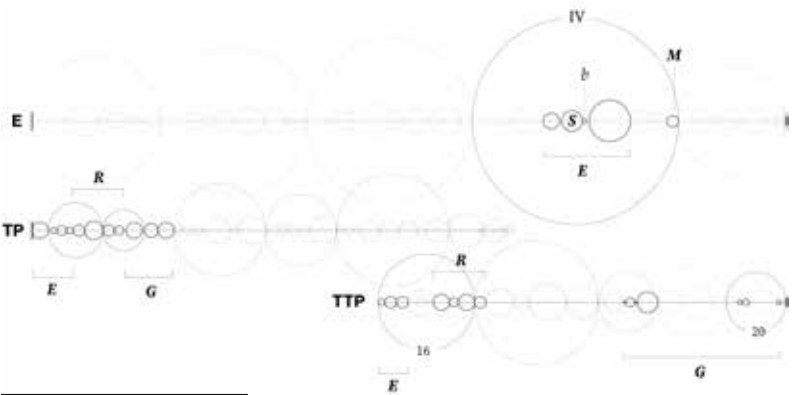
Spinoza puts quite some *images* or *models* in front of his readers. For instance, in E4 P67-73 he presents the *model of the free man* to explain how to act 'under the guidance of reason' in society (see Lord 2017: 290-294). In his political works, Spinoza presents images or models of institutional design for various types of states. Neither the *free man* nor these states are really possible or achievable or preferable. As he states on the Hebrew Republic (TTP 18.1): "it would be impossible to imitate it at the present day, nor would it be advisable to do so," then listing some arguments against copying this state-form (TTP 18.2). "Nevertheless," Spinoza says (TTP 18.3), "though it could not be copied in its entirety, it possessed many features which might be brought to our notice, and perhaps imitated with advantage." In a similar fashion, Spinoza also redefines good and evil with an image (E4 pref.): "By good, therefore, I understand in the following pages everything which we are certain is a means by which we may approach nearer and nearer to the model of human nature we set before us. By evil, on the contrary, I understand everything which we are certain hinders us from reaching that model." This model of human nature is a confused amalgam, nonetheless, it explains neatly how Spinoza's redefines good and evil.

18 In the end, Spinoza even finds a practical use for images in his personal psychological guide (E5 P11-14; point 3 under E5 P20S): by creating strong images that can be tied to "the idea of God".
19 Images are stronger (i.e. cause a stronger affect) when: (1) they depict something present (E4P9. See E4P9S for the relation with E3P18); (2) they depict something to be present soon or close in memory (time-difference; E4P10); (3) they depict something we imagine necessary (E4 P11), as opposed to something contingent; and (4) they depict something non-existent but possible, as opposed to something contingent (E4 P12. The image of something contingent that is non-existent is also weaker than something that is in the past: E4 P13).

3.3.3 *Mapping* Spinoza's State and Society

Spinoza concludes most narrative lines by "scaling up" to the interpersonal or societal (or even national) level. In E5, Spinoza aims to show only "how much reason itself can control the affects," (E5 pref), which is therefore what an *individual* can do to control the affects (see E5P20S). As his method is very difficult (E5 P42S "All noble things are as difficult as they are rare"), this means that in all discussions on wider society we have to work chiefly with people and their *passions* – and not with rational minds. Moreover, "[a]s the wise man has sovereign right to do all that reason dictates, or to live according to the laws of reason, so also the ignorant and foolish man has sovereign right to do all that desire dictates, or to live according to the laws of desire" [20] (TTP 16.3). Spinoza's strong naturalism holds that everyone is

figure 3.39: Key concepts of Spinoza's State and Society (*socio-political part*) mapped
▼



Legend

S	Sociability: interpersonal affects and the foundation of the state
b	taking care of the body
E	Key ethical doctrines related to power and interpersonal relations (restated in TP and TTP)
M	"True method of life" (E4 app). Contains many notions on how to act virtuously in society.
R	Discussions on rights and powers (of indiviuals and states)
G	Discussions on statecraft, general design of states

20 Also: "they [i.e. people under the spell of the passions] are no more bound to live by the dictates of an enlightened mind, than a cat is bound to live by the laws of the nature of a lion" (TTP 16.4).

table 3.40: Key concepts of Spinoza's State & Society (*political part*) assessed

literature ▶	Architecture						Economics					Ecology			Political theory				
 **Concept** ▼	Rawes 2018	Lord 2018	Lord 2020	Kodalak 2018	Kodalak 2020	Kodalak 2021	Matheron 2020	Wagener 1998	Lord 2014	Lord 2017	Douglas 2018	Gatens et al. 2020	Ruddick 2020	Ruddick 2021	James 2008	Steinberg 2009	Steinberg 2010	Sharp 2018	LeBuffe 2020
State of Nature	□	■	□	□	■	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	□	■	■
Sociability Community	■	■	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Harmony	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Natural Right	□	□	□	■	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	■	■
Sovereign Power, Authority	□	□	■	□	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	□	■	■	■
Dominion, State	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	□	■	□	■	■	■
Realism	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	■
Social Contract	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■
The Multitude	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
Liberty	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Peace	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	□
Stability	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	□	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	□
Monarchy	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	■	■
Aristocracy	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	■	□
Democracy	□	■	□	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	□	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	□
Theocracy	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	■
Religion	□	□	■	□	■	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	□	□	■	■	□	□	□

Explanation

The table above (table 3.40) shows whether a secondary author on Spinoza (named at the top; categorized into four disciplines: architecture, economics, ecology, political theory), engages with a concept (listed at the left)in the cited work with a coloured box (■). If a concept is highlighted (*like so*), it indicates selection for spatialisation in the project. This selection is based on the arguments in the text, but also on testing via design (part III of the research). See [methodology].

naturally entitled to do as they please, including to ignore the 'guidance of reason'. Therefore: "The natural right of the individual man is thus determined, not by sound reason, but by *desire and power*" (TTP 16.4). In the map (figure 3.39), it can be seen that the aspects on state and society are chiefly located in E4, and at the beginning of the political works. Note also how the TP and TTP follow a remarkably similar structure: First, Spinoza explains a political theory following from human nature (i.e., the theory of affects, passions, etc.), which he then develops in a discussion of rights and powers; which then inform general theories on statecraft. Subsequently, Spinoza gives designs of various states in an institutional manner: monarchy and aristocracy in the TP, democracy[21] and theocracy (styled as the Hebrew Republic) in the TTP.

From the table (3.40) it can be seen that

1. Unsurprisingly, scholars of political theory mention almost all concepts extensively, albeit with some differentiation. Exceptions are theocracy and religion, and realism, which feature prominently only in Spinoza's works (TTP) or some secondary literature (LeBuffe 2020) respectively.
2. Spinoza's discussions of rights/powers, communities, states and state-power (state of nature to realism) are of interest to all disciplines.
3. The arithmetic of different government-types (monarchy to theocracy) and values (liberty, peace, stability) are of interest to scholars of economics and political theory, but not so much to architecture and ecology.
4. Concepts mentioned in the literature from all four disciplines are state of nature, sociability, harmony, sovereign power, dominion, the multitude, stability, democracy and religion.

Following this overview and the mapping of urban related aspects (see 3.2), the concepts with the highest prospect for spatialisation are (11) sociability, or interpersonal affects, (12) and (13) sovereign power and the state (dominion) and (14) democracy. Let us now take a closer look at these key concepts, supplemented with the others whenever necessary for clarification.

20 The case of democracy is unfortunate: Spinoza died before he could fully state its institutional design in the TP, and in the TTP he only briefly glances over its institutions, for the TTP is not aimed at rigorous political explanation of governmental structures (TTP 18.3: "My intention, however, is not to write a treatise on forms of government, so I will pass over most of such points in silence, and will only touch on those which bear upon my purpose.")

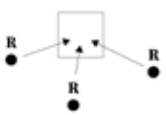
Key Concept 11: sociability (or: interpersonal affects)

Under key concepts virtue, power and passions, we saw that Spinoza's ethics can be seen a "brand of perfectionism, with a graduated conception of human flourishing" (Steinberg, 2009: 42) with the aim of become more empowered, and thereby more virtuous, by entering into empowering compositions with (and being affected by) our surroundings. "It is impossible that a man should not be a part of nature and follow her common order; but if he be placed amongst individuals who agree with his nature, his power of action will by that very fact be assisted and supported" (E4 app.7). Therefore, Spinoza claims (E4 app.9):

> *"[T]here is nothing more profitable to man for the preservation of his being and the enjoyment of a rational life than a man who is guided by reason. Again, since there is no single thing we know which is more excellent than a man who is guided by reason, it follows that there is nothing by which a person can better show how much skill and talent he posses than by so educating men that at last they will live under the direct authority of reason."*

Spinoza, in other words, reverts Hobbes' assessment that man is a wolf to man, *homo homini lupus*, when he states: *homo homini deus*, man is a God to man (E4 P35S1). People who live under the 'guidance' of reason agree in nature (E4 P35)

table 3.41: Summary of interpersonal relations of people "by the guidance of reason."
▼

Source	Description (citation)	Diagrammatic visualisation
E3 P35	*So far as men live in conformity with the guidance of reason, in so far only do they always necessarily agree in nature.* *E3 P35S: Homo homini Deus [man is a God to man]*	
E3 P36-37	*The highest good of those who follow after virtue is common to all, and all may equally enjoy it / The good which everyone who follows after virtue seeks for himself he will desire for other men; and his desire ont ehi behalf will be greater in proportion as he has a greater knoweldge of God.*	

and thus live in harmony; furthermore, "the highest good of those who follow after virtue is common to all, and all may equally enjoy it" (E4 P36) and "the good which everyone who follows after virtue seeks for himself he will desire for other men; and his desire on their behalf will be greater in proportion as he has a greater knowledge of God" (E4 P37). In short: the most useful 'thing' to form a composition with, with the virtuous goal of self-preservation in mind, is another rational person (who understands this, has the same goal, etc.), and will aide in the attainment of that goal since it empowers another rational person, etc.

Wagener (1998: 478) points out that Spinoza's view of rational harmony is quite opposed to our conventional view of rational self-interest:

> *"[T]his is not a plea for rivalry and should not be equated without qualification to Adam Smith's almost identical proposition. Rivalry does not derive from reason, but is the result of passions not maximizing the vital power. The desire for a scarce good, for instance, must be a passion creating pleasure with the owner and pain with the non-owner. A man guided by reason will not strive for a thing which he cannot wish at the same time for all others (...) Spinoza's principle of harmony lies at the foundation of a market society. But, unlike later pragmatic English ideas, it is radical in the sense that it implies a principle of generalization: maximum utility (and peace) will be reached when people restrict their desires to those which potentially can be fulfilled for everybody."*

Spinoza poignantly states: "In so far as men are subject to passions, they cannot be said to agree in nature" (E4 P32), thus "in so far as men are agitated by affects which are passions can they be contrary to one another" (E4 P34). Other people's passions may form the most difficult obstacle in ethical behaviour. In the bulk of E4 (building further on the affects described in E3), Spinoza describes how the affects work interpersonally. He describes how people imitate affects of others, how ambition and envy arise, and how affects can form self-reinforcing bubbles of desire. "Skill and watchfulness are required," Spinoza states (E4 App.13). Luckily, the affects "follow from the same necessity and virtue of nature as other individual things; they have therefore certain causes through which they are to be understood, and certain properties..." (E3 pref). The behavioural rules of the affects are reasonably

predictable and can thus be navigated – E3 and E4 form Spinoza's handbook in doing so. Spinoza, in the end, urges one to remain optimistic (E4 App.14):

> *"Although, therefore, men generally determine everything by their pleasure, many more advantages than disadvantages arise from their common union. It is better, therefore, to endure with equanimity the injuries inflicted by them, and to apply our minds to those things which subserve concord and the establishment of friendship."*

Key Concept 12 and 13: state and sovereign power

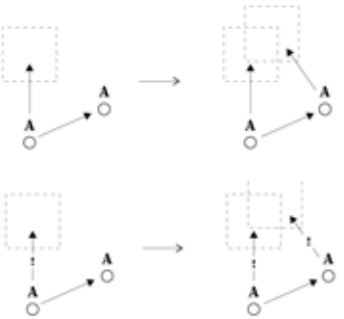
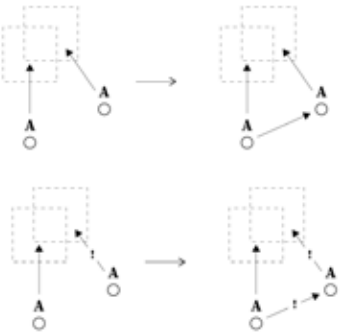
One of the most important ways in which humans form communities is in the way humans structure power, in other words, in the way of structuring politics. It is no surprise, then, that Spinoza wrote two treatises on political theory.

Considering the nature of interpersonal affects above, one might expect Spinoza to emphasize 'good', rational leadership. But no, Spinoza is quick to remark that "the road, which reason herself points out, is very steep" (referring to E5 P42S), sneering that everyone thinking "that the multitude or men distracted by politics can ever be induced to live according to the bare dictate of reason, must be dreaming of the poetic golden age, or of a stage-play" (TP 1.4). Spinoza states (TP 1.6):

> *"A dominion then, whose well-being depends on any man's good faith, and whose affairs cannot be properly administered, unless those who are engaged in them will act honestly, will be very unstable. On the contrary, to insure its permanence, its public affairs should be so ordered, that those who administer them, whether guided by reason or passion, cannot be led to act treacherously or basely. Nor does it matter to the security of a dominion, in what spirit men are led to rightly administer its affairs. For liberality of spirit, or courage, is a private virtue; but the virtue of a state is its security."*

In other words, Spinoza's political theory says that a state must be structured rationally in such a way that it does not matter whether people in power act from reason or under the spell of the passions. A well-organised state will ensure the

table 3.42: Summary of interpersonal affects (inexhaustive; furthermore, many others can be derived).
▼

Source	Textual mechanics	Diagrammatic visualisation
E3 P31S (also E3 P29)	**Ambition** *It follows (...) that everyone endeavours as much as possible to make others love what he loves and hate what he hates.* *This effort (...) is in truth ambition.*	
E3 P22	**Approval** *If we imagine that a person affects with joy a thing which we love, we shall be affected with love towards him...* *...If, on the contrary, we imagine that he affects it with sorrow, we shall also be affected with hatred towards him.* **Indignation**	
E3 P35	**Envy (Jealousy)** *If I imagine that an object beloved by me is united to another person by the same, or by a closer bond of friendship than that by which I myself alone held the object, I shall be affected with hatred towards the boved object itself, and shall envy that other person.*	

security of life, peace, and the freedom and possibility of living a virtuous existence (see TP 5), even when its rulers are not rational or virtuous. The parts of the TP following chapter 5 contain various mechanisms and designs for political structures that do so, aligning the inevitable passions and powers with the rational interest of the state.

The account of Spinoza's view on the "best kind of state" is derived from TP 5.2, where Spinoza says:

> *"Now the quality of the state of any dominion is easily perceived from the end of the civil state, which end is nothing else but peace and security of life. And therefore that dominion is the best, where men pass their lives in unity, and the laws are kept unbroken. For it is certain, that seditions, wars, and contempt or breach of the laws are not so much to be imputed to the wickedness of the subjects, as to the bad state of a dominion. For men are not born fit for citizenship, but must be made so. Besides, men's natural passions are everywhere the same; and if wickedness more prevails, and more offences are committed in one commonwealth than in another, it is certain that the former has not enough pursued the end of unity, nor framed its laws with sufficient forethought; and that, therefore, it has failed in making quite good its right as a commonwealth."*

Sharp (2018: 105) notices that as the text of the Political Treatise progresses, the distinction between the virtue of the state and the private virtue of liberty becomes more and more blurred. Building on the statement above (TP 5.2), Spinoza argues that the virtue of a largely virtuous population can be attributed to the state (5.3-5.4). How so? Steinberg (2009: 36) analyses that "the state can promote liberty by influencing the behavioral patterns and affective dispositions of its citizens."

"The most far-reaching way in which the state can bring about the liberation of its citizens," Steinberg (2009: 47) explains, "is by helping to reorient their emotions or affective dispositions. This is what distinguishes good states from merely enduring states. A good state will not only limit destructive behavior, it will also promote (positive) civic harmony and individual tranquillity of mind, thereby playing a very significant role in the moral development or liberation of its citizen-subjects."

A famous example is Spinoza's reversal of the Hobbesian view that peace is the absence of war. "Peace," states Spinoza, "is not mere absence of war, but is a virtue that springs from force of character", and "that commonwealth, whose peace depends on the sluggishness of its subjects, that are led about like sheep, to learn but slavery, may more properly be called a desert than a commonwealth" (TP 5.4). "Obedience," similarly, "is the constant will to execute what, by the general decree of the commonwealth, ought to be done." Spinoza turns around these virtues into positive powers, depending on the population and the way they are governed. Steinberg (2009: 49) adds: "Peace, or a close approximation thereof, is possible only if citizens are motivated primarily by stable, sociable affects, that is, only if they are generally joyful or powerful. In short, a state will be peaceful or free to the extent that its members are themselves relatively peaceable or free."

Key Concept 14: democracy

Considering the state and sovereign power above, the question arises: how to design such a state? What mechanisms to build that ensure (1) peace and stability by neutralising the need for rulers to lead solely based on reason (which is impossible) and (2) make the general population more free, empowered and virtuous (or follow affects that they behave as-if so)? Spinoza asks this question in TP 5.7. Three models of government have been examined by Spinoza in the TP (monarchy, centralised aristocracy and multi-city aristocracy; Spinoza died before he could finish his chapters on democracy), and one in the TTP (theocracy; including some remarks on democracy in TP 17).

Sharp collects some general features of a virtuous commonwealth (2018: 106):

1. It is structured by the dictates of reason;
2. It will be so organized that the subjects will fear the solitude that follows from the absence of the state rather than the state's own isolating policies; it will encourage respect for the laws; and it will attach people to it through the shared benefits (corporeal and mental) it provides.

3. It will involve the widest possible distribution of rights and responsibilities among free men. Such a broad distribution minimizes possibilities for corruption and optimizes the kind of advice available to the sovereign power and maximizes the appearance of equality.
4. It will encourage rather than suppress disputes, even bitter ones.

Sharp remarks (2018: 106): "It is the fourth characteristic of political virtue that surprises, given Spinoza's assertions that reason follows from what we have in common and expresses our agreement in nature, or power." Nonetheless, it is foundational to understand Spinoza's thorough defence of democracy. Spinoza states (TP 9.14): "For men's natural abilities are too dull to see through everything at once; but by consulting, listening, and debating, they grow more acute, and while they are trying all means, they at last discover those which they want, which all approve, but no one would have thought of in the first instance." In other words: different points of view, debates, and collective reasoning make legislation better. Sharp (2018: 109): "The human intellect is such that we cannot reason independently of others. Reason, power, and authority are not delivered from the hilltops of the virtuous to the valleys of the vulgar. Rather, in opposing and being opposed, we develop the powers of our minds and bodies."

Steinberg calls this argument in favour of democracy an instrumental defence, arguing that Spinoza favours democratic procedures because they work better than not-democratic ones, "because they tend to result in better decisions" (Steinberg, 2010: 145). For instance, adding to the above, Steinberg analyses that "while Spinoza recognizes that deliberative decision-making bodies may be inefficient, he concludes that this downside is more than offset by the improvement in the quality of decisions that follow vigorous debate." Steinberg (2010: 145) analyses Spinoza as consistent, epistemic democrat, and finds "striking anticipations of contemporary arguments but also largely neglected lines of argumentation that reveal both the potential epistemic advantages of democracy and the ways in which these advantages can be undermined."

However, as demonstrated through Spinoza's designs of other forms of government, "democratic procedures are neither necessary nor sufficient for securing political liberty." They may be rationally the best way, but not the only one, or even guarantee

success. As always, the nature of the affects mean they are just as much a force to be reckoned with in democratic institutions as in other aspects of life. Steinberg concludes (2010: 158) on this point:

> *"Spinoza's defense of democracy, then, is at once promising and sobering. On the one hand, he gives us reason to suppose that large, transparent deliberative bodies constrained by accountability mechanisms are likely to make better judgments than other systems of governance. However, he also suggests that this advantage is quite tenuous, depending heavily on institutions and practices that foster good cognitive conditions. One of the most important lessons, then, that we may take away from Spinoza's account is that, in the absence of good cognitive conditions, an otherwise rational populace may well be reduced to a muddled mob."*

SUMMARY

The aim of this part of the research was to conduct a s**ystematic study** (outcome to SQ 1, see page 36) of Spinoza's philosophy through an urban lens. This part of the research has been conducted in several steps: (1) mapping the primary works on structure and topics (*E, TTP, TP*); (2) mapping urban(-related) topics following the structural analysis; (3) assessing these topics, or concepts, on their applicability for spatialisation. The methods used were literature review and diagramming. These methods have been employed in tandem at every point of research. The results and accompanying findings of this part of the research are the following (see also deliverables on page 40).

Following the research under *Mapping E, TTP, TP* (3.1):

Result 1: A cartography of the Ethics, Theological-Political Treatise, and Political Treatise has been created. This amounts to a full structural analysis of Spinoza's thinking on elements and topics.

> **Accompanying finding 1: Spinoza's works (and philosophy) are especially well-suited for structural analysis**. The theories are consistently explained in a geometrical method, structured with elements and interlinkages. The language itself is quite 'mathematical' and visual, and therefore hypothetically well-understandable for urban thinkers.
>
> **Accompanying finding 2: Spinoza's works, considered as a whole, consistently hold a narrative line of (1) onto-epistemology (cosmology; the universe), (2) human (psychology) and (3) state and society.** Spinoza's works contain a certain rhythm of repeating elements and topics. Content-wise, arguments are almost always structured in the sequence: universe – human – state and society. This rhythm is repeated on different "scales", so the works at-large show this pattern, but sometimes (parts of) chapters do, and sometimes single passages do (see, for instance, the beginning of TP chapter 2).
>
> **Accompanying finding 3: Spinoza uses various techniques of a designer: models and images (E, TTP, TP), and actual (political) designs (TTP and TP).**

Following the research under *Mapping the urban* (3.2):

Result 2: All instances of Spinoza discussing the built environment have been catalogued.

Accompanying finding 1: Spinoza scarcely mentions the built environment.

Accompanying finding 2: Each time Spinoza discusses the built environment it is to highlight an important underlying process. Ergo, it is "at decisive strategic points, and that, consequently, he accords great importance to it" (Matheron and Del Lucchese, 2020: 224). These accompanying findings confirms the hypothesis as given under approach (2.2, page 25): the exploration-part of the research aim is the limiting factor, as there is barely any mention of urban-related phenomena, but spatialisation is ubiquitous as the forces/processes Spinoza describes express themselves spatially.

Accompanying finding 3: Spinoza's philosophy can be "extended" to cover topics not discussed by Spinoza. This is a specific aim of Spinoza's works, being a 'practical philosophy.'

And following the research under *Mapping Key Concepts* (3.3):

Result 3: An interdisciplinary overview of key concepts has been created. In this report, the findings have been presented in three tables (using the triptych universe-human-state and society again).

Accompanying finding 1: different disciplines have distinct sets of concepts they engage (more) with. For instance, architectural scholars are more engaged with Spinoza's cosmology (table 3.22), whereas political thinkers engage more with Spinoza's arithmetic of different government types (table 3.40). This finding at-large is not that surprising, but the actual disciplinary differences are sometimes quite surprising: architecture engages with the after-life and eternity more than other disciplines; but way less with actual human psychology.

Accompanying finding 2: certain concepts are engaged with in all disciplines.

Result 4: An estimation has been made as to which key concepts offer the highest prospects for spatialisation. Regarding Spinoza's universe this comes down to the concepts of (1) complex bodies, (2) the conatus-doctrine, (3) and (4) the workings of rational and imaginative knowledge; for Spinoza's human this comes down to (5) naturalism, (6) the theory of affects, (7) to (9) theory of virtue, power and passions, and (10) images; and for Spinoza's state and society this comes down to (11) sociability, or interpersonal affects, (12) and (13) sovereign power and the state (dominion) and (14) democracy.

Result 5: Key concepts of Spinoza's philosophy with the highest prospects for spatialisation have been examined. A detailed explanation of each concepts (albeit still in a brief manner; each concept can be the object of a lifetime of philosophical study) has been given under 3.3.

Accompanying finding 1: the concepts of Spinoza's philosophy are dynamic, containing behaviour-patterns and relational characteristics. Spinoza describes processes and his philosophy constitues a "relational ontology" (Gatens et al. 2020: 202) [21].

Accompanying finding 2: the concepts of Spinoza's ethical philosophy and of Spinoza's political philosophy form a single conceptual framework. It is not a menu: selecting one dimension (ethical or political) and ignoring the other. As Steinberg (2010) notes, this can lead to very misleading interpretations of Spinoza. Concepts must be seen in the total picture, that is ethical and political.

21 Interestingly, in a work outside the scope of this project, the *compendium on Hebrew grammar*, Spinoza sets out a theory that treats the noun in an *active* way, almost like a verb. Linguistically, this is nonsense, but it reveals how, for Spinoza, everything follows the same grammar of forces, power, and being. The grammatical theory Spinoza writes is strikingly parallel to part I of the Ethics. For further reading, see Harvey (2002).

Taking account of all these results and findings, the research sub question posed for this part of the research can be answered.

> **SQ 1** How is Spinoza's philosophy structured and which aspects of this structure offer the best prospects for spatialisation?
> **Outcome to SQ 1**: a systematic study of Spinoza's works on urban(-related) phenomena.

We can conclude that:

- Structurally, the ethical-political works have been completely mapped, resulting in **(1) a cartography of Spinoza's works**; and
- All concepts residing in this structure have been examined on their prospects for spatialisation, resulting in an estimation regarding the relevance of certain **(2) key concepts for urban planning**.

These outcomes feed into the next parts of the research project (Part IV and V). Hereby, this part of the research is completed. *Sed de his satis.*

CHAPTER IV

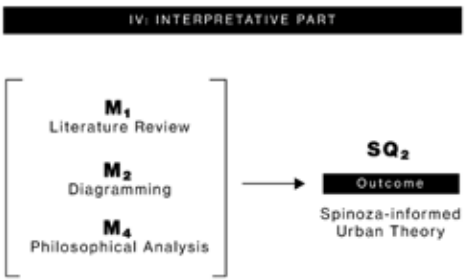
TURNING URBAN

Interpretative Part

In this chapter, the results of the interpretative part (phase IV; figure 4.1) of the research are presented. The *spatialisation* of Spinoza is constructed here as *interpretation* of the urban(-related) phenomena and key concepts found in the last chapter. First, the ground-work of this interpretation is prepared with a short research of urban theories aimed at finding the essential elements of any urban theory, settling on the concepts of agglomeration and an urban land nexus. Then, using the key concepts from the last chapter as building blocks, a **Spinozist urban theory** can be constructed. Hereby we can answer the research (sub)question: *How might Spinoza's philosophy inform urban theory?* The concrete outcome of this part of the research is a distinct model of the city through Spinoza's lens.

figure 4.1: interpretative part of the research as fourth phase
▼

figure 4.2: interpretative part of the research: methods + outcome



This chapter is divided into four parts. First, the aforementioned (literature) study on urban theory is presented under **4.1 Urban Theory**, which includes a historical overview, the two concepts of agglomeration and the urban land nexus, and some critical notes. Then, both concepts are treated back-to-back, as **4.2 Agglomeration via Spinoza** explains the genesis of the city and **4.3 Urban Land Nexus via Spinoza** explains some key components of the city. Parallel to this construction in theory, we also build up the model. Lastly, under **4.4 A Model of the City**, this model is presented in its totality, thereby concluding this part of the research.

figure 4.3: interpretative part of the research highlighted on the methodological framework

Chapter 4.1

Urban Theory

Distinguishing what is *urban* and what it outside the scope of urban theory is a notoriously difficult problem. There is always the critique that urban theory is, in fact, a mirage – a dress-up for phenomena and processes properly covered in other fields. One can think of the critique that Castells (1968; 1972) levelled against the Chicago school, arguing that urban sociology did not fundamentally differ from sociology in general, and later, that is was nothing but an ideological cloak for capitalism. Or, more recently, of Rem Koolhaas's pronouncement that urbanism is dead (1995) [1].

Indeed, the theoretical approaches of the discipline of urbanism vary radically throughout the past century, as Scott and Storper summarize (2015: 2-4). Starting from the Chicago school "orthodoxy" [2]; then, in de 60's, the Marxist approaches following Castells, Lefebvre and Harvey; the new theoretical movements in the 80's of urban feminism, the study of globalization in an urban context, and the study of urban governance (and the neoliberal dominance therein). Current debates revolve around postcolonial approaches, assemblage theory, or planetary urbanism, and give, again, widely different methodologies and theoretical frameworks, leading to

◀

What is urban and what is not is not as clear-cut as the divide in this photograph. (image by Prabhakar, 2016, via *wikimedia commons*).

1 Although, one can argue, that in stating "The city no longer exists. As the concept of city is distorted and stretched beyond precedent, each insistence on its primordial condition – in terms of images, rules, fabrication – irrevocably leads via nostalgia to irrelevance" (1995: 1) Koolhaas finds precisely, although expressed in a somewhat populist manner, the fundamental problem of demarcating what is urban and what is not.
2 This historical overview lists the academic theorizing of urbanism. The field itself (as practice) and especially urban design and writing stretch far further into the past.

a rather disjunctive discipline (Scott and Storper, 2016). Scott and Storper critique these approaches via this problem, arguing that postcolonial theory overreaches in is particularism and intense view of separateness of the "Global South"; that assemblage theory is unable to clearly distinguish trivial from important or necessary relations; and that planetary urbanism conceptualizes the entire world as urban, a move without much added-value that nonetheless dissolves the entire meaning of urban and non-urban (see Scott and Storper, 2016). They (2015: 4) conclude that "[a]t least some of the cacophony in the urban studies literature can in part be traced back to the failure of researchers to be clear about these matters of definition and demarcation."

Scott and Storper (2015), in addressing this problem, propose a theoretical model themselves that understands all cities through a combination of two processes: agglomeration and the urban land nexus. Their main argument for this conceptual model rests in its power to truly distinguish urban phenomena from surrounding or related phenomena, yet in the universality of these processes throughout time and place (backed by historical analysis). Thereby they also claim to cut through the "Gordian knot" that is the "enormous variations in the empirical makeup of cities that result from (…) differing contextual circumstances" which then might "warrant a plurality of different concepts of the urban" (2015: 10). In short, their two-process model provides a "coherent concept of the city as an object of theoretical inquiry" (2015: 10).

This view on urban theory and its model are well-suited for the aims of this (part of the) research project for three reasons. Firstly, it is a universal model that does not differentiate different regions or historical periods. Secondly, it is a dynamic (and somewhat mechanical) model built on processes. This is properly fits the Spinozist universe. Lastly, the aim of providing a coherent concept of the city as object of theoretical inquiry is exactly what is needed in this research. All that being said, some critical notes regarding this model will be given under 4.1.3 (see page 104). Let us now take a look at these processes: agglomeration and the unfolding urban land nexus.

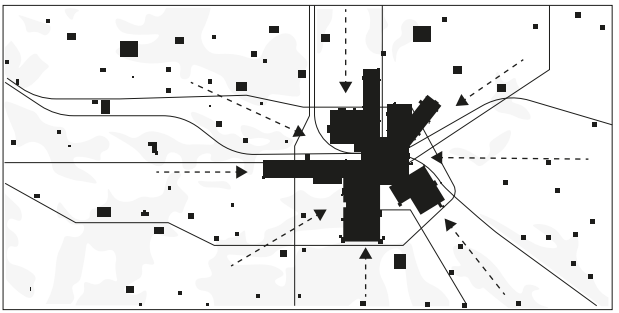


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figure 4.4: Agglomeration

4.1.1 Agglomeration

The process of agglomeration is already defined at early historical forms of urbanisation (Scott and Storper, 2015: 4):

> *"All cities consist of dense agglomerations of people and economic activities (...). Agglomeration occurs because activities like these entail divisions of labor and other interdependencies as expressed in transactional relationships whose costs are distance dependent and because they can reap functional synergies by clustering together in geographic space. Various types of infrastructure help to consolidate the resulting dynamic process of agglomeration. In other words, one of the central features of urbanization has always been its efficiency generating qualities via agglomeration."*

Scott and Storper make several remarks regarding this process. The first is the evident relation of agglomeration and economic prosperity, as urbanization is one of the – if not the – driving force of economic progress. Secondly, they note the enormous amount of existing literature on agglomeration in urban studies. Then, they counter the claim that the city (via agglomeration) "is not a place of meaningful proximate links." They state that agglomeration is the driving force of the city as place of proximate links, but in a broad sense: "[a]gglomeration touches many social, cultural and political/administrative dimensions of human life; and

as a result, it has powerful feedback effects not only on economic development, but also on society as a whole." (2015: 12). This also relates to trade, especially long-distance, since specialization and the national to global shifts have well-described effects related to agglomeration. A remark on this links to the urban land nexus, as globalization increases internal urban processes; local trade increases as long-distance trade increases. A final remark regards circumscribing individual agglomerations. Does distinguishing urban from non-urban involves some delineating, some literal demarcation; drawing a line around the city dividing the urban from the non-urban? Scott and Storper state that this is not at all necessary, and the city can better be understood as radiating, weakening in force. Or, "just as the fact that the seasons fade gradually and unevenly into one another does not mean that they do not exist as identifiable phenomena in their own right." (2016: 1130). We will return to the topic of circumscribing individual agglomerations or delineating cities later, and especially to the idea of radiating outwards (like a composition of forces…), as Ruddick (2021) finds decisive answers on the matter in Spinozist thought regarding composite bodies.

4.1.2 The Unfolding Urban Land Nexus

Following from the agglomeration process is an emergent characteristic of urban land, compared to non-urban land (Scott and Storper, 2015: 8):

> *"We refer to this feature as the urban land nexus, meaning an interacting set of land uses expressing the ways in which the social and economic activities of the city condense out into a differentiated, polarized, locational mosaic (…). The urban land nexus, in other words, corresponds to the essential fabric of intra-urban space."*

Scott and Storper primarily relate this process to the behaviour of firms and households as the "foundational elements", next to a third space of circulation, in their search for production space and living space respectively [3]. However, the urban land nexus is defined as "the extensive expression of agglomeration,"

3 The critique of a too-economistic model (Mould, 2016) probably relates to this explanation of the concept.

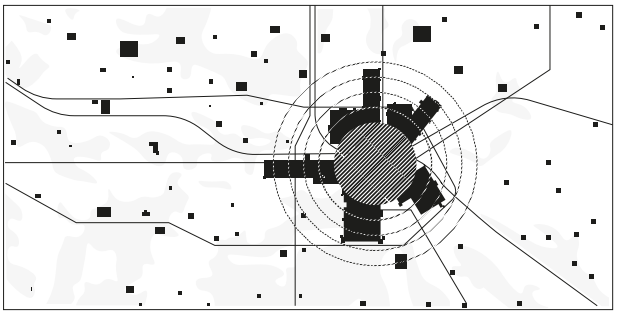

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figure 4.5: Unfolding Urban Land Nexus

which happens to be molded by these two elements in modern society – not as definition nor by necessity. They also remark how there is an "endless empirical diversity and interpenetration, giving rise (...) to the high levels of idiosyncrasy that characterize individual cities" (2015: 8). Another important remark contains the link to institutionalised planning and governance, since "in the absence of effective mechanisms of collective coordination, [the urban land nexus] is subject to numerous kinds of disfunctionalities ranging from infrastructure breakdowns to locational conflicts, and from deteriorating neighborhoods to environmental pollution" (2015: 8). The urban land nexus, in short, refers to the essential difference of urban land, i.e. the 'nature of a city', compared to non-urban land. A city might have the same population as 10 villages, but the nature of this city will obviously be vastly different than that of 10 villages, even of these 10 villages placed right next to each-other. This emergent set of characteristics is the urban land nexus.

On a sidenote: a relational definition like this one is quite Spinozist already: "[t]hings (e.g. body and city) do not come together in a relationship in which they pre-exist, or rather, put more precisely, they become differently in relation—as any resident of a suburb who moves to a dense urban area understands immediately" (Ruddick, 2021: 25).

4.1.3 Critical Notes

The model provided by Scott and Storper (2015) has been criticised on various grounds. They have rebutted some of these criticisms (Scott and Storper: 2016), yet it is beneficial for this project to investigate some of these criticisms as they either sharpen the framework provided above or reveal crucial caveats in its usage for this project.

An early critic was Mould (2016) who negatively assesses the model for being too instrumental, deterministic and economistic [4]. For this project, however, a mechanical and deterministic model is no problem, as this is exactly Spinoza's universe. The criticism of being economistic is something to address, however. Indeed, the model by Scott and Storper relies quite heavily on economic terminology. As we will see below, the economy is thoroughly subservient to other processes for Spinoza (political, societal, affective...), so in this sense this economistic aspect of the model is negated by the Spinozist lens. On a different level, Mould argues that "[i]f we are to embrace a unified urban theory (...) it should be one which views cities as differing intensities of an urbanization process, and does not try to draw arbitrary boundaries about what is and what is not a city. (...) [I]t would be far more beneficial to champion an ontology of an urbanization process with varying degrees of (de) intensification" (2016: 1). This is an important discussion, but not one of importance to this research. The aim of this part is finding the essential elements of any urban theory; whether they now result in a theory of different intensities of urbanisation (Mould) or distinguishing urban from non-urban (Scott and Storper) is not relevant, since the outcome of this part of the research is a whole new model in itself.

Walker (2016) takes a different direction in criticising the framework: he thinks it is not wrong, but incomplete. He argues that there are two more processes involved, apart from agglomeration and the unfolding urban land nexus: "[1] the spatial concentration of economic surplus by ruling classes and states and [2] the creation of a built environment or urban landscape" (2016: 2). We can regard these two aspects as corollaries to the overall model: taking special notice of the power-structure and the built environment. Of course, we already know that via Spinoza's

4 Scott and Storper respond that Mould poorly defines this term, see Scott and Storper 2016: 1126.

lens this will happen anyway, as Spinoza's philosophy is thoroughly embedded with power-structures and affective relationships with our surroundings.

In conclusion, to write an urban theory is to account for two processes: the process of agglomeration and the process of the unfolding urban land nexus (emerging from it). Thus, we return to Spinoza. How and in what way can Spinoza's philosophy, as distilled in chapter III, account for these processes?

►

The city as state: the *polis*.
(painting by Leo von Klenze, 1846, *Neue Pinakothek* via *wikimedia commons*).

Chapter 4.2

Agglomeration via Spinoza

Where to look for a Spinozist explanation of the gravitational force that is agglomeration? For this research project, three approaches have been investigated.

A logical starting point for addressing agglomeration is to investigate the origin of the city itself. This is also the method taken by Scott and Storper (2016: 1116). Spinoza, in fact, mentions "the foundations of the city" in E4 P37S. Importantly, in philosophical history and political science, the "city" is often taken to represent established society, the state, or any institutionalised community in general. An example would be *The City of God* by Augustine [5], for instance, in which the *Cities of Earth* and *of Heaven* must be interpreted in the broadest possible sense: earthly civilization and organised life beyond earthly affairs. However, the city is not necessarily just a metaphor. The *polis* was the city and the state, after all. Moreover, in many languages, including English, French, Dutch[6], and Latin, words like city, citizen, civic, and even state are clear cognates. So, when Spinoza discusses the "city," this can actually refer to an urban settlement, such as the case when he discusses Amsterdam, "this most flourishing state [!], and most splendid city" (TTP 20.23), but also to a more general notion of the State or institutionalised community. So, firstly investigating the civic process of the state/city-genesis might reveal a Spinozist conception of agglomeration.

5 Kodalak (2020: 32) points out that Spinoza explicitly denounces the transcendental views espoused by Augustine in this work, based on Platonic forms and transcendental ideas, and cites Spinoza arguing that scholastic philosophers such as Augustine, by building on Plato and Aristotle, have gone "insane with the Greeks" (TTP pref).

6 This etymological state of affairs has resulted in an interesting mix-up in Dutch related to the discipline of urban planning. The word *Stede(n)bouw* (urbanism) is seemingly composed of the words *steden* (meaning cities) and *bouw* (meaning building): *stedenbouw* = city building. However, originally the '*stede'* part (without -n) comes from the word *stede*, meaning place – as in the word Stadtholder, who does not hold a city (stad) but holds a place (as the Kings' representative). *Stedebouw* = placemaking. Urbanism is technically constructing objects/cities for some, and a societal construction process creating places for others.

Secondly, agglomeration has a clear economic dimension. Spinoza discusses several aspects related to the economy: how desires arise and how money and people (and their passions) function in a market economy in the Ethics, and how the wider economy can best be organised in the political treatises. These discussions might harbour some insight into a Spinozist view on agglomeration as well.

Thirdly, on a larger scale, agglomeration can be seen as the clustering that happens throughout living systems. Spinoza's distinct cosmology, in which all things are "alive" in a certain sense, might offer a more organic, or ecological, viewpoint of agglomeration.

4.2.1 The City as State

"The good which every man, who follows after virtue, desires for himself he will also desire for other men, and so much the more, in proportion as he has a greater knowledge of God"
E4 P37

Balibar (1998: 78-88, also 109-113) traces the entire derivation of "*the foundation of the city*", hidden in the *scholia* of E4 P37, through the *Ethics*. He notes how, unusually, proposition E4 P37 has two demonstrations and two scholia. Thus, in order to understand the foundations of the city, he claims, "it is clear we must examine how these two demonstration are both *distinct* from one another and yet express the *same necessity*" (1998: 81). He names the two different lines of argument the **rational genesis** of the City, and the **affective genesis** of the City (1998: 110). They work in tandem, as a dialectic: "we must therefore understand that these two antithetical narratives of the genesis of the City do not correspond to two types of City, and even less to some opposition between an ideal city (which is, in some sense, "celestial") and real cities (which are irremediably "earthly"). They represent two aspects of a single complex process" (Balibar, 1998: 112). Interestingly, in TP 2.13 and 2.14, Spinoza makes a similar distinction, with a clearly empowering rational process in TP 2.13 and an affective one in TP 2.14 (and further).

Starting with the **rational genesis of the city**, Balibar (1998: 110) summarizes: "Men who are guided by reason seek what is useful to them. What is most useful to any man is other men, whose strength, combined with his own, will provide him with greater security, prosperity, and knowledge. The desire for

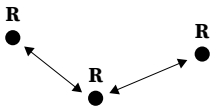

figure 4.6: E4 P35 *Homo homini Deus*

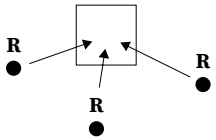

figure 4.7: E4 P36 *The highest good of those who follow virtue is common to all, and therefore all can equally rejoice therein / see also* E4 P37

self-preservation therefore rationally implies for each man, that he should desire what is good for others and want to form stable association with them." This stable association, then, is the city. In other words, the mechanics we already saw under the interpersonal affects related to reason, especially E4 P35-37 (see figures 4.6 and 4.7 above), cause rational people to *agglomerate*. Like a chemical reaction, the more people live under the guidance of reason, the more they cluster together in a community (figure 4.8). They have more power collectively than each would separately (TP 2.13).

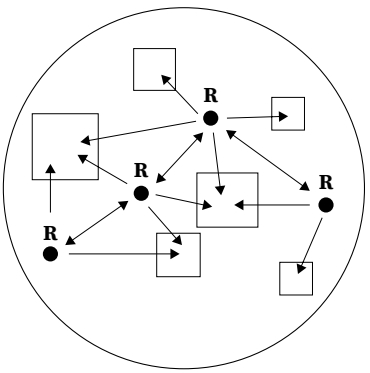

figure 4.8: A rational community

Nevertheless, this rational process is not the only – or even most important – process: "as Spinoza is constantly at pains to point out, human nature is defined both by reason and by ignorance, imagination and passion…" (Balibar, 1998: 83). The second

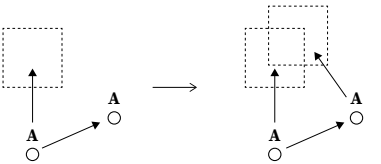

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figure 4.9: E3 P31 *Ambition (love)*

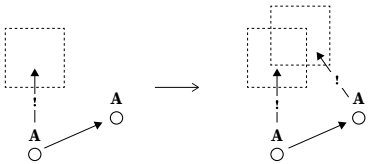

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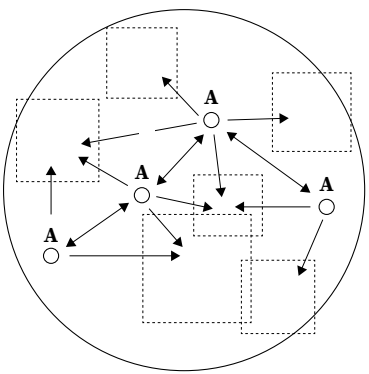
figure 4.10: E3 P31 *Ambition (hate)*

process, the **affective genesis of the City**, builds on the theory of affects. Especially important, Balibar argues (1998: 86), is E3 P31 and its corollary. This proposition explains (1) that the affects of love, desire or hate are strengthened if we imagine others to agree with our object of love, desire or hate; (2) that we suffer if we imagine some to hate what we love, and vice versa; and (3) how we therefore strive to make everyone agree with our objects of love, desire or hate – a desire which Spinoza calls ambition. So, following the passions, (1) we cluster together with those we imagine align in our objects of love, hate and desire; (2) we move away from those we imagine to love what we hate and vice versa; and (3) we strive to make everyone align in these passions (figure 4.9 an 4.10). This process creates social bonds around these affects; an affective community-building. And so emerges the second city: the affective City (figure 4.11).



▲
figure 4.11: An affectionate community

Following the mechanics of ambition (figure 4.9 and 4.10) these affective bonds can form around bonds of *love* or *hope*, but just as steadily around *hate* or *fear*.

Balibar (1998: 110-111) makes two observations regarding the affective City. Firstly, the word *imagine* is key here. These processes are caused by the passions, i.e. confused thinking, so people are imagining this alignment. Their love, desire or hate does not follow from reason, and their objects of desire, love or hate are not necessarily reasonable objects of desire that actually strengthen them or help their self-preservation. The affective city can actually result in the opposite. And so, people are "often compelled, while seeing that which is better, to follow that which is worse" (E4 pref) or even "fight for their slavery as they would for their salvation" (TTP pref). Secondly, since opposite affects can turn into each other, love can change to hate, and fear and hope can never be separate (E4 P50S), people will fluctuate constantly between these opposite affects. Balibar calls this fluctuating of affects the "psychic economy" (1998: 111). Add to this the fact that people imitate the affects of others (emulation, ambition, envy), and that affects become more powerful the more others there are involved (source), and it is clear why Balibar (1998: 112) concludes that the affective city is very powerful, as the affects are very powerful, yet extremely unstable. At any point, the convergence on affects can turn around, pitting all against all and thereby destroying the community-building efforts (figure 4.12).

figure 4.12: Affective relationship turned sour, destroying the community (disempowering its members)
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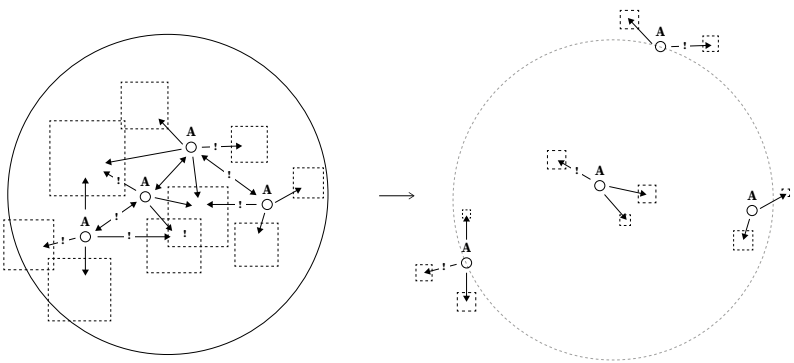


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4.2.2 The City as Marketplace

Scott and Storper (2015: 6-8) describe how agglomeration and economic prosperity, economic dynamics and trade-flows are heavily interlinked. Fittingly, Lord (2017: 285) finds that "money and economics are not just of marginal interest to Spinoza: they constitute a key part of his thinking about how to live with others" [7]. Spinoza makes several remarks on money and economics in the *TP* (7-9), in the *TTP* (17), and in the *Ethics* (E4) [8]. Lord (2017: 286) suggests that Spinoza "address[es] the question of how to live virtuously in a market society" in Ethics IV. Moreover, Lordon and Orléon state that "the political order and the monetary order are declined by one and the same grammar" (2010: 204) [9]. What might this grammar be?

It follows from reason to act for self-preservation (our conatus) and therefore to take care of our mental and bodily needs. The human body is a complex body with many parts (E2 P13S), that all require sustenance, and it is good to increase the power of the body (to be affected; E4 P38) and retain its composition (E4 P39). Spinoza thus writes (E4 P45S; under E4 A27 he makes a similar statement):

> *It is the part of a wise man, I say, to refresh and invigorate himself with moderate and pleasant eating and drinking, with sweet scents and the beauty of green plants, with ornament, with music, with sports, with the theatre, and with all things of this kind which one man can enjoy without hurting another* [10]. *For the human body is composed of a great number of parts of diverse nature, which constantly need new and varied nourishment, in order that the whole of the body may be equally fit for everything which can follow from its nature, and consequently that the mind may be equally fit to understand many things at once.*

Nonetheless, "the strength of one man would scarcely suffice to obtain these things if men did not mutually assist one another" (E4 app.28). In short, here we see the rational genesis again; *homo homini deus* (E4 P35). True commerce has the

7 See also Matheron and Del Lucchese (2020: 224). Cited on page 40.
8 From locating these discussions on economics in Spinoza's major works we can already infer some general characteristics: economics originate from the theory of affects (E4), but can also be used institutionally to mitigate the passions and create a more stable society (TP 7-9).
9 Lordon and Orléon (2010) mention only the "Treatises" and especially the TP as their source for this grammar, whereas the other authors (Lord 2017; Douglas 2018; also Balibar 1998) draw more focus to the Ethics.
10 Only goods that "one man can enjoy without hurting another" can possibly be mentioned here, see E4 P36.

possibility of uniting people in a rational pursuit of meeting their needs. In this light, Wagener (1998: 478) states that "Spinoza's principle of harmony lies at the foundation of a market society." As the marketplace can be a place to exchange mutual aid, exchanging money for goods and services, it can be an opportunity for rational agreement (Lord 2017: 295) and thus contribute to a stable agglomeration of goods and people in the city. Lord (2017: 295) summarizes:

> *"Commerce is good not only for one's personal advantage, but for the common advantage too, for the marketplace is an opportunity to develop more rational interactions with others. Economic exchange is a key part of the fabric of sociability, and congenial transactions help to build a harmonious society."*

When considering the affects in the economy, Douglas (2018) points, like Balibar (1998: 86), to E3 P31. He explains how the ambition and imitating affects can foster each other in a feedback loop (Douglas, 2018: 1212-1214). We emulate the affects and desires of others (*emulation*), and also desire that others emulate our affects and desires (*ambition*). Douglas (2018) calls this dynamic 'mimetic desire'. This process works like Balibar's "psychic economy": very powerful, but highly unstable. Take the following rules for interpersonal affects, for instance: "If we imagine that a person enjoys a thing which only one can possess, we do all we can to prevent his possessing it" (E3 P32) and "we see, therefore, that the nature of man is generally constituted so as to pity those who are in adversity and envy those who are in prosperity" (E3 P32S). Or: "If I imagine that an object beloved by me is united to another person by the same, or by a closer bond of friendship than that by which I myself alone held the object, I shall be affected with hatred towards the beloved object itself, and shall envy that other person" (E3 P35).

Images play a special role in these economic behaviours. Spinoza specifically explains how the image of money "above every other [image] usually occupies the mind of the multitude, because they can imagine hardly any kind of joy without the accompanying idea of money as its cause" (E4app28) [11]. Images related to goods,

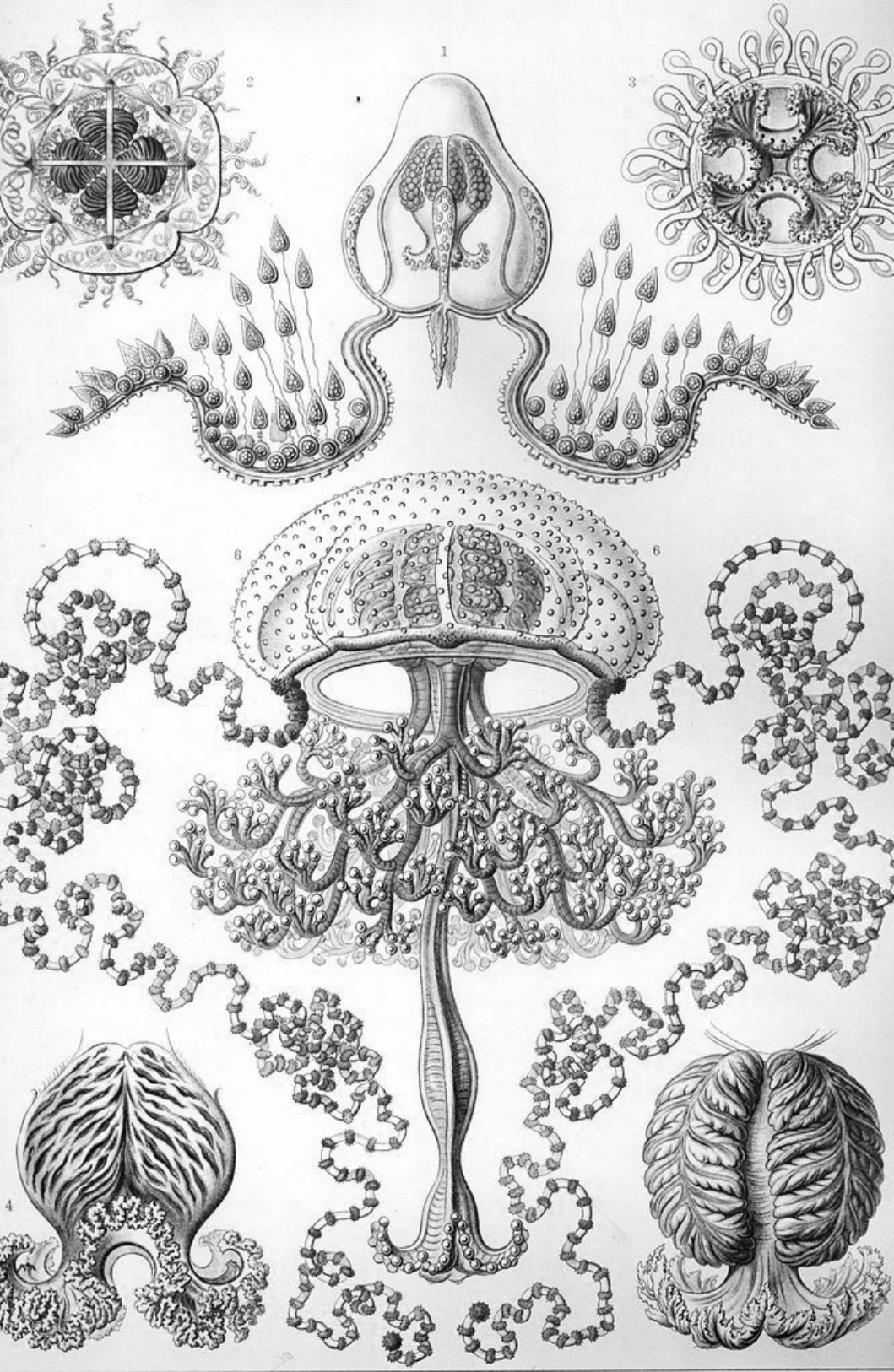
11 This is a crystal-clear example of confusing causes for effects, see page x on images. Spinoza proceeds to critique those who "seek money not from poverty or necessity, but because they have learnt the arts of gain, by which they keep up a grand appearance," and remarks that "those, however, who know the true use of money, and regulate the measure of wealth according to their needs, live contented with few things" (E4app29). Spinoza himself was keen to follow this doctrine, as evidences by his few possessions at his death (Nadler 2018, 408-409).

caused by the affects of joy, are almost always inflated, Spinoza says, and "the desires [images] which are begotten from them (…) excessive" (E4 app.30). This can be dangerous, as in an economically unequal society these images related to goods and possessions will cause the poor to hate and envy the rich, and the rich to pity (a sad passions which is "evil in itself and useless" E4P50) and hate the poor (Lord 2017: 298). The higher the perceived images[12] of economic inequality, the more intense these passions. Spinozas economic designs in the TP are aimed chiefly at this: preventing envy between groups (by aligning their economic interests) that would cause the dominion to fall apart. Lord (2017: 298) summarizes again:

> *"Individuals' affects build on those of others, which are increased in turn, causing rapidly inflating bubbles of desire. When desire is for rational understanding, which everyone may enjoy equally, our natures agree. But when desire is for a lesser good that cannot be enjoyed by all alike, our natures are pulled apart in a frenzy of passions. This explains the behavior recorded, for example, in the Dutch tulip mania of 1636–1637. The upwardly spiraling desire for money led people to speculate on the market in the future price of bulbs. Trade, prices, and imagined profits increased until the system collapsed, leading to unfulfilled desires, financial ruin, and the call for increased regulation. (…) Economic inequality is bad not only for the poor, but across the whole society, causing affects that diminish harmony, stability, and individual flourishing."*

So, from an Spinozist-economic perspective, the gravitational force creating economic nodes and agglomeration of goods and services is none other than the general force agglomerating people: a rational process of reciprocal self-interest and a process of affective images. The rational process pushes people to create, share and trade according to their needs; the affective process makes this economy excessive, and oftentimes rivalrous.

12 Important to note is that these affective images are what matters - the *perceived* economic inequality - not the actual economic data. If a state with a through-the-roof Gini-coefficient somehow manages to convince its citizens that inequality is not that bad, these passions will not cause great destruction. On the other hand, if one convinces a population of a relatively wealthy and equal society that economic inequality is rampant, the passions will flare up, creating great (political) instability. A Spinozist account of many recent populist upsets in relatively equal societies could very well be constructed on this premisses.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4.2.3 The City as Complex Body

A distinct school of urbanism sees the city as a *living organism* that is dynamic and can best be approached in terms of health and vital or sickly parts. One can think of organic city planning or urban metabolism, or the works by Patrick Geddes, in this regard. Spinoza's distinct cosmology (see especially E2 P13S) might offer a more organic, or ecological, viewpoint of agglomeration. We might recall the doctrine of naturalism here: everything, for Spinoza, plays by the same rules. Or we might recall Spinoza's physical theory (especially the *physical digression* after E2 P13S), that states that all things have a *conatus*, and are degrees of power, and therefore can be said to be "alive" in a certain sense. "Nothing is inert or passive: all modalities [i.e. complex bodies] are animate albeit in different degrees" (Kodalak 2018: 93, also cited below).

LeBuffe (2020) argues that, by comparing the state to the human individual in the *Ethics* and *TP*, Spinoza holds that the state is a complex 'individual' itself. If the state is one, then the city might be seen as one too. Following LeBuffe's line of thinking, this would mean that, similar to the state or a human individual, the city is (1) a singular thing (a mode) with a conatus, (2) a complex body whose parts (including people) also have a conatus, and (3) the strength of those parts (incl. people) separately does not necessarily create a stronger whole (or vice versa; see LeBuffe 2020: 810-811). Ruddick (2021) too takes this approach, examining the urban environment as a "composite body" or complex body. She builds on Spinoza's relational ontology and the idea that the city and humans are "always already in a state of composition" (2021: 21) and states (2021: 25):

> *"Things (e.g. body and city) do not come together in a relationship in which they pre-exist, or rather, put more precisely, they become differently in relation—as any resident of a suburb who moves to a dense urban area understands immediately. Relationships constitute things, not in terms of their physicality per se but rather in the way these relations enhance or constrain capacity to act."*

So, if we can regard the city as complex body, or even as a living organism, the question arises: what is our relationship with non-human complex bodies?

A great deal of scholarship has been written on Spinoza and environmentalism, especially related to animal rights (see Chua 2021: 10-13 for an introductory overview). In E3 P57S, Spinoza discusses the "affects of animals". There are two claims: (1) animals do have affects, but (2) animal-affects differ from human-affects the same way that animals differ in nature from humans (and from one-another, and from other complex bodies [13]). The rest of Spinoza's views on animal (or other non-human) rights seem less progressive, and have even be called "uncharacteristically cruel" (Rogers 2021). Spinoza concisely and bluntly states in E4 App.26:

> *"Excepting man, we know no individual thing in nature in whose mind we can take pleasure, nor anything which we can unite with ourselves by friendship or any kind of intercourse, and therefore regard to our own profit does not demand that we should preserve anything which exists in nature excepting men, but teaches us to preserve it or destroy it in accordance with its varied uses, or to adapt it to our own service in any way whatever."*

In short, "anyone who looks to the *Ethics* for a viable, coherent metaphysical system to ground a belief in the rights of the non-human will look in vain" (Lloyd 1980: 294). Nonetheless, Spinoza's theory of virtue and sociability give a radical twist to these statements. Yes, it is our *natural right* to shape the environment, i.e other complex bodies, in the way that benefits and empowers us. But importantly, humans are enmeshed affectively and causally in a global complex bodies and structures, such as ecosystems (Ruddick 2021, *passim*). A rational approach is one that does not destroy these ecosystems that empower ourselves and fellow humans (e.g. via ecosystem services). Therefore, Spinozist environmental ethics comes down to moulding natural bodies in such a way that they contribute as much as possible to human flourishing. A similar thing can be said of States. Spinoza clearly states that the virtue of the state is not the same as the virtue of a human (TP, 2.1). LeBuffe (2020: 820 - 828) clearly explains why: a stronger state does not mean a better state. It is not in our rational interest to empower non-human complex bodies if it has no benefit for humanity[14] (see also E4 P25). What benefits humanity, is stable and

13 E3 P57S "the horse is swayed by an equine lust and the man by that which is human. The lusts and appetites of insects, fishes, and birds must vary in the same way..."
14 Chua (2021: 11) explains how ecocentrism, for Spinoza, is "blind-alley thinking" with a simple thought-experiment: "Contra the idea of "saving" all of Nature by preventing anthropogenic climate change, in fact some

peaceful states, so that is how humans – depending on how rational they are – mould these complex bodies.

Finally, a question remains that is especially relevant for urbanism. "How do we—or must we?—draw spatial boundaries around the composite body? Where does it begin and end?" How do we 'map' a non-human complex body? Ruddick answers: "In Spinoza's thought, the composite body extends itself not to a predefined boundary but to the limits of its powers" (2021: 28). She illustrates this statement with a citation from Deleuze which is worth quoting in full (Deleuze, 1981 as cited in and translated by Ruddick 2021: 28):

> *"The edge of the forest is a limit. [Is] that the forest [...] defined by its outline? It's a limit of what? Is it a limit to the form of the forest? [No] It's a limit to the action of the forest [...] the forest that had so much power arrives at the limit of its power, it can no longer lie over the terrain, it thins out [...]. The forest is not defined by a form: it is defined by a power: power to make the trees continue up to the moment at which it can no longer do so. The only question that I have to ask of the forest is: what is your power? That is to say, how far will you go?"*

▶

One of the most prominent buildings of an institution of Spinoza's time: the Amsterdam City Hall (now Royal Palace). (Painting by Gerrit Berckheyde, 1668, *Koninklijk Museum voor de Schone Kunsten Antwerpen* via *wikimedia commons*).

parts of nonhuman nature—jellyfish, mosquitoes, warmth-loving algae—will likely thrive if global temperatures keep rising (...). Now if I were really an "environmentalist" who truly cares for the "intrinsic value" of Nature, I'd have to care about the intrinsic rights of jelly¬fish (jellyfish are part of nonhuman nature). Consequently I'd have to promote greater global warming, not less. I'd have to defer to the thriving of jellyfish at the expense of the thriving of humans. In this case, "ecocentrism" turns us into cheerleaders for, rather than preventers of, global warming."

Chapter 4.3

Urban Land Nexus via Spinoza

What processes underlie the emergence of distinctly "urban" phenomena once cities form? In the past subchapter, a Spinozist account for agglomeration has been investigated. Similarly, we can now look at the second component of any urban theory (see subchapter 4.1): the urban land nexus. Four elements of the urban land nexus have been investigated as part of this research: institutions, architecture, communities and property. For each element, its origins and mechanics are investigated in Spinoza's works, which, combined with secondary literature, informs a diagrammatic account of its nature.

4.3.1 Institutions

Spinoza talks a great deal of institutions and laboriously sketches institutional designs in his political works. In the designs for good and stable monarchies (*TP* 6-7) and aristocracies (*TP* 8-10), Spinoza elaborately details the structures of various councils (parliaments, a "council of syndics", senate) and other political institutions (most notably: a judiciary), and some more practical institutions, like religious buildings, the status of laws and property, traditions, an oath of office, and even "academies" [6]. In the *TTP*, Spinoza details the founding of the theocratic "Hebrew Republic" in an institutional manner as well, detailing political institutions and their workings in *TTP* 17. "First," says Spinoza, "the people were commanded to

6 Spinoza promises to expand his thoughts on academies later-on: "Academies, that are founded at the public expense, are instituted not so much to cultivate men's natural abilities as to restrain them. But in a free commonwealth arts and sciences will be best cultivated to the full, if everyone that asks leave is allowed to teach publicly, and that at his own cost and risk. *But these and the like points I reserve for another place*" (TP 8.49, emphasis added). Spinoza died before he could fulfil this promise.

build a tabernacle, which should be, as it were, the dwelling of God – that is, of the sovereign authority" (TTP 17.19). Furthermore, Steinberg (2019: 148) argues that for Spinoza "[t]he way in which the state is organized is more important than regime type," noting the vital importance of institutions in Spinoza's advocacy of democratisation (Steinberg 2019: 148-149, also 158).

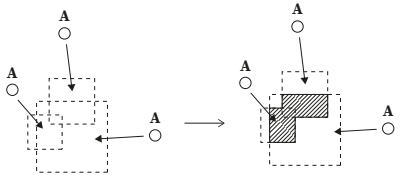

figure 4.13: Formation of an institution (affects)

So, what is an institution? Perhaps the clearest explanation is found in the aforementioned passage on institutions such as the temple in the Hebrew state. Gatens et al. (2020: 202) find that "[i]n the *Theologico-Political Treatise*, Spinoza offers an incisive account of how Moses used narrative, song, prayer, and law to bind the Hebrews, recently freed from slavery, into a unified affective community, now motivated by shared loves, fears, and hopes materialised through sanctioned images, enforced rituals, and socially authorised attachments". In other words, Moses unifies a people based on their *collective imagining*. These collective images, when they acquire a certain strength, we might call *institutions*, in a broad sense of the word (figure 4.13). The sanctioned images, enforced rituals, socially authorised attachments are institutions. Importantly, "it is not only theological polities that rely on the collective imagination. All complex bodies engage in collective imaginings – democratic bodies no less than theocracies" (Gatens et al. 2020: 202). Institutions thus emerge from all societal formations – the process of urban agglomeration included – as certain collective imaginings gain more strength and become "institutionalised".

Why institutionalise (some of) these collective imaginings? For one, it unifies the people, creating stability which is the prime virtue of the state (see TP 1.6). It binds people to the state, even if they are under the sway of the passions (figure 4.13). As Lord (2020: 492) explains: "The tabernacle, and later, the temple,

figure 4.14: Formation of an institution (rational)
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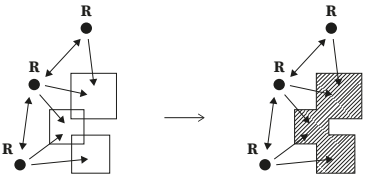

were constructed as sites of the divine and civic authority held by God. As the place in which God's laws were received, interpreted, and sometimes enacted, the temple was the site of "the continual practice of obedience" that was key to the state's success and stability. It was by virtue of the temple that the diverse tribes were fellow citizens, joined together by a social contract under a unified religious and political sovereign." Furthermore, affective and collective imaginations follow from (human) nature, so they always exist anyways. It is better to employ them for the good. "Powerful leaders must learn how to engage and galvanise the constructive collective affects and hopes of the people they aim to govern. The social imagination is a powerful force that may be recruited to encourage certain actions and discourage others. (...) Affects are a permanent and necessary part of the human condition and because we are imitative creatures, they are also highly contagious (E3p27). Politics must acknowledge, and work with, this powerful collective political force" (Gatens et al. 2020: 202). Lastly, rational people will want to form "stable bonds" with their fellow citizens, also desiring institutionalisation (E4 P37S1; figure 4.14). Institutions 'capture' collective images or desires, oft-occurring hopes or dreams or other ideas, and link them to a well-established body. In this way, we can see what a good institution for a private person is: an affective images is connected to the

figure 4.15: possible functioning of an institution
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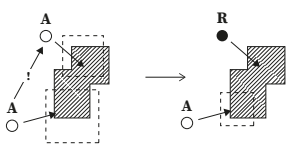

other images that constitute the institution, transforming the affective image into a more virtuous or even rational one (figure 4.15), for instance by connecting it to the doctrine of "true religion" to "love one's neighbour" (TTP 12).

How do some collective images gain this "strength" to become an institution? Thomas (2020: 100) explains:

> *"cultural objects [or institutions] come to be differentiated from other objects through their specific use-relations with human individuals, through their specific historical relation to a people. This can occur through relations with single individuals or through a multiplicity of individuals that compose a larger individual, such as a culture or society. (…)*
> *[F]or Spinoza the articulateness of a religious or cultural object [or institution] arises out of the use-relations of bodies and the workings of the imagination. The meaning and articulateness of an object, whether temple or word, arises out of the affects that a body has on external bodies and the way that those affects are committed to memory and communicated amongst a group of individuals. Once a body is invested with what might be described as an "affective excess," then it stands out, by virtue of this excess, from the everyday background of less articulate, less active bodies."*

So, as institutions and other cultural objects are collections of images, they are dependent on a specific people, time and location. There is no blueprint, virtuous leadership is required (Lord 2010: 499) to figure out what the (affective) images are that the people collectively have or likely have, and link them to these

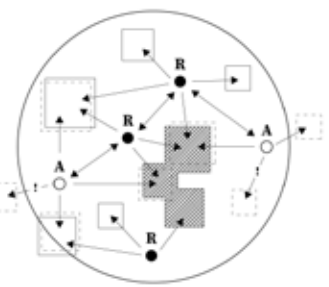

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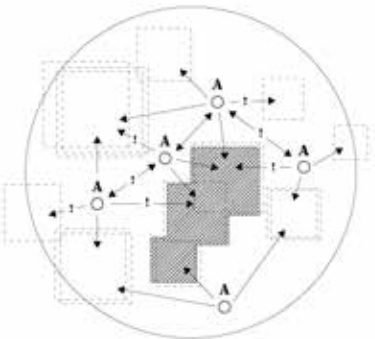
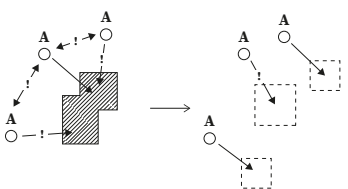
figure 4.16: largely rational institutionalisation

figure 4.17: largely affective institutionalisation



institutions. A state that is good for its citizens has strong institutions, in the sense that its institutions have been constituted virtuously, linking common affective images to well-established ones (the institution), thereby empowering the citizens and safeguarding the stability of the state. And vice versa: the loss of strength of institutions, a demise in their affective-to-rational powers, indicates a weaker state. Lord (2020: 492): "The disruption of this unity [of affective binding and political sovereignty] by the assertion of the arbitrary power of a monarch and the replacement of the temple with a royal palace – a mere symbol of authority, rather than the site of practicing obedience – characterized the demise of the Hebrew state." As an institution is composed of images, it might become the image of hate or disgust also, which, in a severely weakened state, might lead to its destruction (figure 4.18).

figure 4.18: destruction of an institution



4.3.2 Architecture

One of the most obvious elements of the urban land nexus is architecture, as built structures form quite literally "the essential fabric of intra-urban space" or "the extensive expression of agglomeration" (Scott and Storper, 2015: 8). Some might even hold that a city is nothing more than a lot of buildings, packed together. Spinoza occasionally uses architecture as metaphor or example for some part of his philosophy, which reveals the architect to be "a distinctive kind of human thinker" (Lord 2020: 489), or even "a latent architectural treatise underlying Spinoza's entire oeuvre" (Kodalak 2018: 89). Spinoza specifically invokes the example of a building when relating the prejudices of teleology to perfection and imperfection in E4 preface:

> *"For example, if someone sees a work (which I suppose to be not yet completed), and he knows that the purpose of the author of that work is to build a house, he will say that it is imperfect. On the other hand, he will call it perfect as soon as he sees that the work has been carried through to the end which its author had decided to give it. But if someone sees a work whose like he has never seen, and does not know the mind of its maker, he will, of course, not be able to know whether that work is perfect or imperfect. And this seems to have been the first meaning of these words.*
>
> *But after men began to form universal ideas, and devise models of houses, buildings, towers, and the like, and to prefer some models of things to others, it came about that each one called perfect what he saw agreed with the universal idea he had formed of this kind of thing, and imperfect, what he saw agreed less with the model he had conceived, even though its maker thought he had entirely finished it."*

So, thinking of buildings as fulfilling some sort of type or typology is confused thinking. Each building is a unique expression of some (combination of) desires. "When we say that being a place of habitation was the final cause of this or that house, we surely mean no more than this, that a man, from thinking of the advantages of domestic life, had an urge to build a house" (E4 pref). As Lord (2020: 498) says: "Appetites, desires, and imagined benefits, when held up in the

light of one's rational knowledge of physical properties, can provide the impetus for realizing a building." This all simply means that architecture is the result of collective imagination just as well as institutions. Architecture is the process of institutionalisation, in the Spinozist sense, crystallised into material space.

Kodalak (2018) considers how Spinoza's view of complex bodies as consisting of "not solely its characteristic rhythm [conatus], but also its affective capacities to interact with its environment [theory of affects]," leads to a radically different view of architecture. The built environment forms many affective relations with us, which Kodalak calls "affective coupling" (2018: 99), and these transformations are of a vital importance to our health and wellbeing, i.e. to our capacity of becoming rational and free. This is not a radical insight – the relationship between our (physical) surroundings and mental and physical health is well documented – but the underlying theory is. Furthermore, the findings above on institutions as collective imaginations with affective capabilities is hereby expressed in brick and stone. He states (Kodalak 2018: 101):

> *"[I]t is the entire cosmos, not just a selected few, that expresses itself via affections or interactions, via affects or fluctuations of power. This implies that architectural modalities [such as buildings] have singular affective capacities of their own. Such recognition prevents us from reducing buildings to passive backgrounds and neutral containers. From Spinoza's perspective, each architectural encounter becomes an engagement with vibrant modalities, with affective interactions that traverse us, with affects that increase or decrease our power, with experiences that take us over and transform us."*

The virtue of the profession of architecture is therefore the capacity to create architectural modalities that, via affective coupling, transform passions into actions and constitute empowering compositions "insofar as we discover an accordant rhythm, compose a common notion with their affective traces enveloped in our own bodies (E IIP37–9; E VP2–3)" (Kodalak 2018: 101). The built-environment is "alive," not in an anthropomorphic way, but in the empowering compositions that we can discover. Architecture, like institutions, embeds us (and itself) with increases or decreases in power via affective coupling.

4.3.3 Communities

The processes defined under agglomeration, and especially the organic account of Spinozist agglomeration, imply that cities are composed of parts that can be individual humans, but also structures larger than human individuals. Since "every individual [complex body], through corporeal interlocking, is wrapped in other bodies that are in turn wrapped in other bodies *ad infinitum*" (Kodalak (2018: 96), the processes of agglomeration cause these parts to exist. Furthermore, as noted by LeBuffe (2020; see also organic agglomeration) these parts can strengthen or weaken the whole. For the purposes of this projects, let us call the smaller structures within the city of people agglomerating – both via rational reciprocal self-interest as well as affective collective imagining – communities. A community is then, in fact, a "micro-city" within the city.

Gatens et al. (2020: 205) explains how community-building fits within the normative project of a city on Spinozist terms:

> *"[The] Spinozistic realisation of what our genuine powers and vulnerabilities are, would compel us, through an inborn impulse to preserve ourselves (conatus), to select, to build, and to maintain joyful networks of active affects and to form connections between affirmative and non-reactive powers, all supported and enhanced, ideally, by reasonable collective bodies. This would amount to embodying, expressing, and nurturing that type of power that understands itself as enabled by connection and interdependence – rather than opting for a reactive and instrumentalist power that reckons its worth by what it can use, abuse, or dominate."*

The situation sketched above works in a feedback loop: our 'inborn impulse' (conatus) i.e. our power pushes us to create these affective networks, i.e. communities, that can become more rational as collective body as our power increases, which leads us to create even more networks, etc. So, a more rational and virtuous city will contain many (overlapping) communities.

◀

A community with a great history of collective imagination: *The South Sea Bubble, a Scene in 'Change Alley in 1720'*. Painting by E.M. Ward, 1847, *Tate* via *wikimedia commons*.

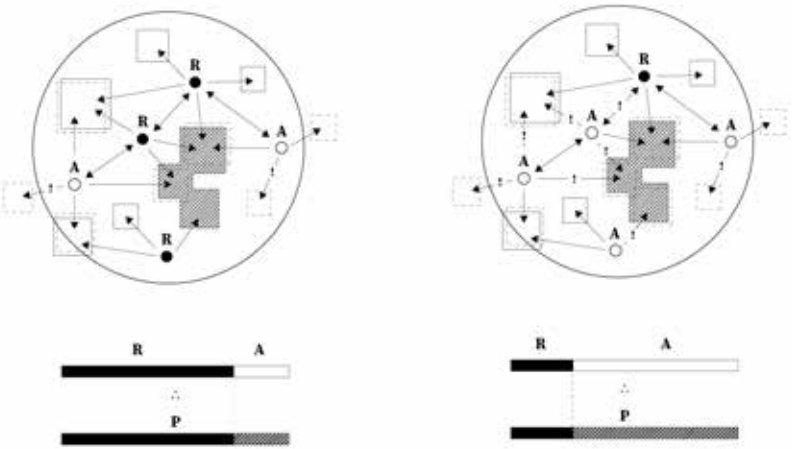


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figure 4.19: a more rational and thus more powerful versus a more affective and thus more volatile community.

Balibar (1998: 110-111) notices an emergent characteristic of (political) organisation related to community-building in general: diversification. The rational genesis of the city causes us to "desire that [all] should be different, develop their own powers and know what is of use to them more and more adequately" (1998: 110), which he later calls "difference in similarity": different because specialists in their own strength are useful for everyone, similar because we agree in our nature of our striving for maximal reciprocal usefulness (E4 P35). The affective genesis of the city creates a reciprocal strengthening of affects (a self-strengthening loop), which causes people to develop mechanisms of *identification*, an imaginary *excess* of similarity as they imitate the affects of others. This process is actually the same as the creation of institutions via "affective excess". In other words, paraphrasing Spinoza: diversification (individual differentiation) following from reason is good, diversification following from the affects (self-identifications of nation, class, religion, etc.) can be good or bad. The city, as far as it empower its citizens, pushes both forward.

Finally, Lord (2018: 72) relates the community to a Spinozist view of the "equal society," which is obviously "not premised upon the moral equivalence and political equality of individuals". Spinoza would argue: "For he who seeks equality between unequals, seeks an absurdity" (TP 9.4). "Instead," Lord (2018: 72) says, "it is based on geometry, which gives rise to the kind of equality Spinoza thought most important: the equality of flourishing. (…) Spinoza's philosophy of *ratio* does not apply only to mathematics, physics, and metaphysics, but also to our thoughts about how to constitute workable social and political wholes of individuals whose equality consists in their simultaneous difference and sameness." So, a more virtuous city, in which as most people as possible can flourish (i.e. be empowered, rational, free, etc.) is one with many and diverse communities.

This all means that, when considering the city, composite actors (communities) are of great importance. A more powerful and virtuous city will contain many overlapping communities. More powerful communities based on reason are more diverse; more powerful communities based on affects consists of more imagined similarity (images!). Herein is also a danger, for more powerful parts do not necessarily translate into a more powerful whole. These communities then, can in their dissimilarity actually provide a most important virtue of the city: equality of flourishing.

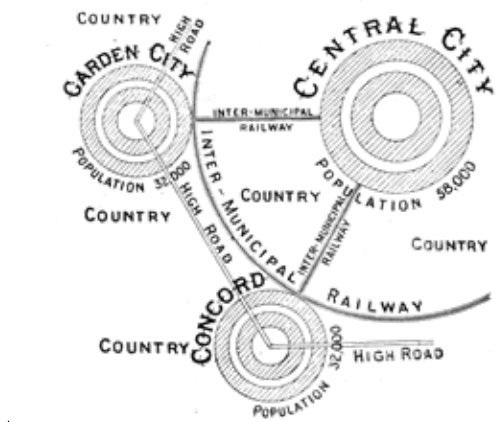

figure 4.20: Model (*Diagram °5*) illustrating the Garden City model (Howard, 1898)

Chapter 4.4

A Model of the City

The creation of a model is not only a distinctly urbanist technique, it is also a distinctly Spinozist one. We have seen how Spinoza develops a "model of the free/virtuous man" in E4 P67-72, or a model society (TTP, TP) and several models of institutional government designs in the *TP*. Deleuze takes this one step further, arguing that the entire concept of the body, in Spinoza's works, is a model. Deleuze (1970/1988: 17-18):

> *"Spinoza offers philosophers a new model: the body. He proposes to establish the body as a model: "we do not know what the body can do…" This declaration of ignorance is a provocation. We speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and its effects, of the thousand was of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions – but we do not even know what a body can do…"*

We have now developed another model: the city. *How might Spinoza's philosophy inform urban theory?* We might answer, in a Spinozist-Urbanist fashion; by proposing a new model of the city. And similar to Spinoza's model of the body, we on beforehand do not yet know what the city can do. It is not a blueprint that can be applied from above on every situation. In this sense, it is quite the opposite of an urbanist model like that of the *Garden city* (figure 4.20), which sketched out a design to be applied into the world, morphologically. A Spinozist model is the opposite; looking at underlying processes that are then expressed morphologically. It is a model for understanding first, then taking action. In this sense it is more like an urbanist model from the type of the central place theory (figure 4.21). This urbanist model too explains urban phenomena via underlying processes (in this case: centrality). This is no surprise, as Spinoza's theories do not engage with aspects of urbanism like morphology and place such an emphasis on understanding (which leads to action).

Related to this is the fact taht this model of the city does not map a territory per se, rather a *situation***.** This follows as logical conclusion from the findings above. Actors and their power-positions, and their images, are essential for this model. Therefore, it does not map a morphological or physical situation alone, there have to be actors: thus, a situation, not a territory. Spinoza's view of the city is actor-based and represents relative power-positions, modalities, and images. These actors can be composite actors. Modalities can be institutions or architectural, or a combination, and they are complex bodies themselves. However, non-human actors, like the natural environment, cannot be presented as actor with a (relative) power-position. This follows from the discussion on moudling complex bodies (see above under 4.2.3).

So, what does this model of the city reveal? Primarily, it can be used to 'map' the elements above. These are the elements ethical-political dilemmatic situations in urban planning. Naturally, this design assignment asks for this model to be tested. As conclusion, we can call this a model of open-ended mapping.
We do not even know what the city can do…

figure 4.21: Model (*karte 4*) illustrating the Central Place Theory (Christaller, 1933)
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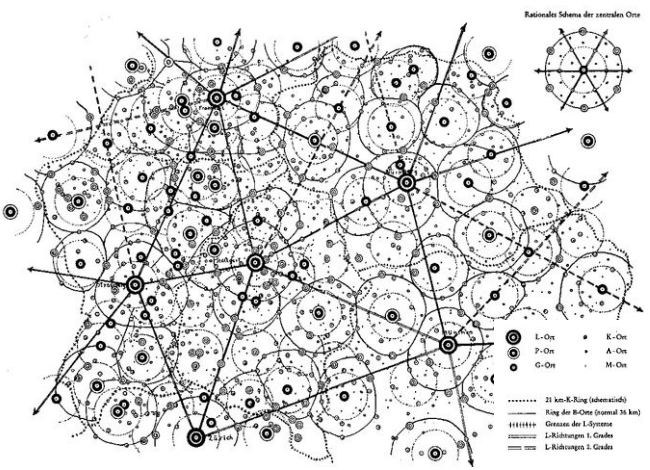

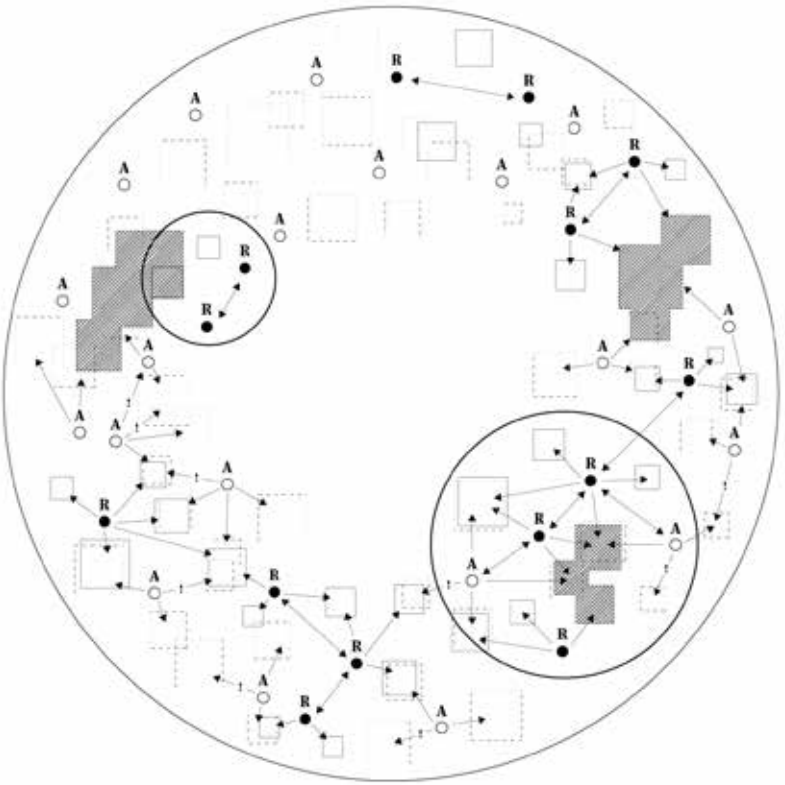

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figure 4.22: a spinozist view of the city

SUMMARY

The aim of this part of the research was to construct a **Spinoza-informed urban theory** (SQ 2: outcome, see page 36). This part of the research has been conducted in several steps: (1) the essential elements of any urban theory have been discerned using secondary literature; (2) building on this, key concepts of Spinoza's philosophy have been related to the process of agglomeration; and (3) the unfolding urban land nexus; and lastly (4) the specific outcome of this research is presented in the form of a distinct model of the city through Spinoza's lens. The methods used were literature review, diagramming, and philosophical analysis. These methods have been in various compositions: chiefly literature review for step 4.1; a combination of all three for 4.2-4.3, and a combination of diagramming and philosophical analysis in 4.4. The results and findings of this part of the research are the following (see also deliverables on page 41).

Following the research under *Urban Theory* (4.1):

Result 1: The essential elements of any urban theory have been determined using secondary literature. Taking into account several caveats and the knowledge that the secondary theory used is well-suited for Spinoza's thought, the determined elements are: agglomeration and the urban land nexus.

> **Accompanying finding: critiques on this model are largely offset by using Spinoza's philosophy.** Aspects on which the model by Scott and Storper (2015; 2016) is critiqued are negated by Spinoza's distinct philosophical framework. For instance, the economic focus of the model is more than negated by Spinoza's view on the economy, which is redirected immediately to discussions of human psychology (the affects) and imagination.

Following the research under *Agglomeration via Spinoza* (4.2):

Result 1: A Spinozist account of agglomeration has been constructed. For this account three approaches towards the city have been examined through a Spinozist lens: civic, economic, organic.

Accompanying finding 1: Spinoza's theorizing on the *genesis of the city*, based on interpersonal affects, lends itself well for a theory of urban agglomeration. This underlying theory can be applied to both a civic account of the city, and an economic one, chiefly based on the theory of affects and imagination.

Accompanying finding 2: Spinoza's account of complex bodies explains how cities form (and change) as they are moulded by human and non-human actors. A Spinozist view of the wider environment (related to environmentalism) can be derived from this finding also.

Result 2: A method has been developed to 'map' aspects related to agglomeration in a diagrammatic way. This follows from combining the diagrams from the explorative (chapter 3) and new diagrams from interpretative part (this chapter). Accompanying this method, are certain terms that have been derived from key concepts specifically for this purpose.

Following the research under *Urban Land Nexus via Spinoza* (4.3):

Result 1: A Spinozist account of the unfolding urban land nexus has been constructed. Several aspects of the urban land nexus have been investigated, such as institutions, temples, buildings and architecture more general, communities, and more.

Accompanying finding 1: Institutions form as collective imaginations achieve a capacity of "affective excess". This process is relative to a specific time, place, and location. The "powers" and possible capacities of institutions have also been examined.

Accompanying finding 2: Architectural modalities form as institutions crystallised into space, and have the capacity for "affective coupling".

Accompanying finding 3: Communities form within the city as micro-cities, following all the rules of complex bodies themselves. Moreover, the more rational a community, the more diverse, and vice versa.

Result 2: A method has been developed to 'map' aspects related to the urban land nexus in a diagrammatic way. This follows from combining the diagrams from the explorative (chapter 3) and new diagrams from interpretative part (this chapter). Accompanying this method, are certain terms that have been derived from key concepts specifically for this purpose.

And finally, following the research under A Model of the City (4.4):

Result 1: A Model of the City through a Spinozist lens has been constructed. This model is constructed by combining all theories and diagrams from previous parts.

> **Accompanying finding 1: Spinoza's view of the city is actor-based and represents relative power-positions, modalities, and images.** These actors can be composite actors. Modalities can be institutions or architectural, or a combination. They are complex bodies themselves. Non-human actors, like the natural environment, cannot be presented as actor with a (relative) power-position.
>
> **Accompanying finding 2: Spinoza's theories do not engage with aspects of urbanism like morphology, nor is it a "technical model".** Meaning: it is always actor-based and cannot be applied neutrally or from above on any situation.
>
> **Accompanying finding 3: This model of the city does not map a territory per se, rather a *situation*.** This follows as logical conclusion from the findings above. Actors and their power-positions, and their images, are essential for this model. Therefore, it does not map a morphological or physical situation alone, there have to be actors: thus, a situation, not a territory.
>
> **Accompanying finding 4: This model of the city can be used to reveal (or 'map') ethical-political dilemmatic situations.** This was the aim of the model, and will be tested further in the case study following from the design assignment (see below under 5.3).

Taking account of all these results and findings, the research sub question posed for this part of the research can be answered.

> **SQ 2**: How might Spinoza's philosophy inform urban theory?
> **Outcome to SQ 2**: a Spinoza-informed urban theory.

In this part of the research it has been found that a Spinoza-informed urban theory might take the shape of a **model of the city,** aimed at mapping ethical-political situations in urban planning. The model as developed in this chapter is a major part of the design assignment.

This outcome feeds into the next and last part of the research (Part V).
Hereby, this part of the research is completed. *Sed de his satis.*

▶

The astronomer (cf. the geographer, page 46).
Painting by Vermeer, 1668, *Louvre* via *wikimedia commons*.

CHAPTER V

SPINOZIST URBAN PLANNING

Extrapolative part

In this chapter, the results of the final part of the research are presented. This is the extrapolative part of the project. Here, the research subquestion *What form might an urban planning approach inspired by Spinoza's philosophy take?* is answered. By now, we might methodologically rephrase this question. How can the model, developed from the systematic study in part 3 and the interpretative study of part 4, be put to use? First, the role of the urban planner within this model needs to be determined. What can a planner do? Where and how to intervene in the modelled situation? These and similar questions are covered under **5.1 the role of the urban planner.** Then, the model in its entirety is restated. What are the elements to map? What symbol references what process? How do actions work? These and similar questions are covered under **5.2 A Spinozist model**.

figure 5.1: extrapolative part of the research as fifth phase
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figure 5.2: extrapolative part of the research: methods + outcome
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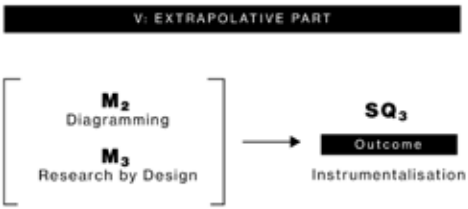

Then, considering that the aim of this thesis is to address ethical-political dilemmas that urban planners might encounter, the model is tested against two cases that are representative of such dilemmas. Khakee (2019: 175) finds three "new key challenges" for planning. He lists (1) environmental issues, climate crises, (2) digitalisation and its effects, and (3) migration and the accompanying rise of xenophobic nationalism in this regard. He argues: "These issues existed before, but they have not only quantitatively intensified, but also qualitatively changed." In short, according to Khakee (2019), these are currently some of the, if not *the*, main

▲
figure 5.3: extrapolative part of the research highlighted on the methodological framework

ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning. We test the model developed in this thesis against a fictional 'case', inspired by one of these key challenges. The *Case* investigates a situation in which a local government wishes to integrate a new (migrant) community in the midst of public backlash against the newcomers – and tasks an urban planner with coming up with spatial solutions. The model, implications and findings are described under **5.3 *Case*: Integrating a New Community**.[1]

Chapter 5.1

The Role of the Urban Planner

What is the role of the urban planner, viewed through the Spinozist lens? Surely, like all human beings, is the urban planner an actor with a limited amount of power, virtue and capacity for reason. The urban planner is enmeshed in a network of compositions and power-relations too, subject to the affects, imaginative projections, affective coupling, and the passions. Nonetheless, the urban planner has a special skillset related to thinking about the built environment. Lord (2020: 493) asks a similar question to the one above of a related profession: "What is it to have architectural expertise, in Spinoza's view?" She finds that "The skilled architect evidently does not begin with an image, ideal, or description of a building. Rather, the architect has a true idea of a building that has not been built yet. All thinkers grasp some true ideas, but Spinoza indicates that the architect is unusual in having true ideas of non-existent things." She cites a passage from Spinoza's *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* [1] on the architect's skill:

> *"For if some architect conceives a building in orderly fashion, then although such a building never existed, and even never will exist, still the thought of it is true, and the thought is the same, whether the building exists or not."*

In other words, by virtue of their profession, architects and planners can make images of non-real things, that still are highly rational. We might call these images *plans*. Architects and urban planners make *plans* that are not real, yet could very well become reality. This includes construction plans, urban designs, or urban masterplans. We can now see how the profession of the urban planner works within

1 Work outside the scope of this thesis project. See 2.2 Scope on page 56.

the modelled framework. A planner makes an image that has *more reality* than the affective images the planner starts with. This we can visualise in the following way (figure 5.1):

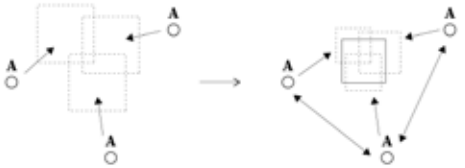

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figure 5.1: a spatial designer places an image (plan) with more reality in collective affective imaginations

In this situation, the three actors have largely affective images. These might be images of hope, gain, or a general desire to make a building. Then, the planner can insert an image with more reality. This decreases the affects, but increases the rationality of all actors. If an especially well-designed plan is made, the following situation can occur (figure 5.2):

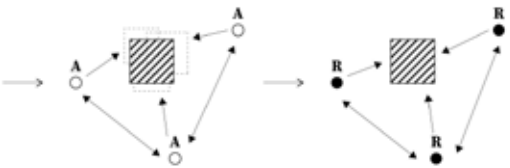

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figure 5.2: the image with more reality from a spatial designer can become an architectural modality

The collective images has become institutional, in this case perhaps turned into an actual building (in durational existence) with its own affective capabilities. If, then, this is a particularly virtuous design, the building might even push all actors towards an even more empowered state (A becomes R). Note the generality of this process: the affective actors can be real estate developers having images of money ("dollar-signs") who become more rational, just as well as a homeless person who has great (affective) hope vested in a housing project.

This capacity of turning collective imaginiations into durational modalities (institutions or architectural modalities) is exactly the same skill that Spinoza ascribes to Moses in his discussions of institutions of the Hebrew State in the TTP. "[T]he architect resembles the virtuous political leader more closely than he does the artist," claims Lord (2020: 500-501). She explains:

> *"It is no accident that Solomon is both the temple architect and a leader who "excelled all others in wisdom" [TTP 2]. Societies, like buildings, must be designed, and the idea of community transformed to fit the particular circumstances: there is no blueprint of the best society that can be realized in all places and times. The virtuous political leader develops structures that meet the needs, mitigate the passions, and further the freedom of a specific people. The virtuous architect, similarly, develops structures that are well-adapted to the requirements of their human inhabitants."*

The above is perfectly in line with the theory on institutions discussed above. So, what makes a virtuous urban planner by this definition? A virtuous planner creates plans - that unlike the architect do not necessarily have to be just buildings - using material (affective!) conditions that create empowering modalities. This way, structures can be planned that "meet the needs, mitigate the passions, and further the freedom of a specific people" (Lord 2020: 501). The aspects of good political leadership listed by Gatens et al. (2020: 202) apply fully to urban planners and their profession. This also means, knowing the capabilities i.e. (affective) powers that these (institutional) modalities can have. And, it means being empowering by rational oneself, having true knowledge of cause and effect, and whishing to share it with others (for instance, the inhabitants of the planned place). This means, acting by the guidance of reason (see especially: E4 P35-37). "Every building that follows from adequate understanding is a temple, motivated by true understanding of God and the desire to promote that understanding in others" (Lord 2020: 501).

This is, then, the art of the urban planner: transforming highly affective, speculative images (from clients) into images, or better: *plans*, that contain a high degree of "reality" (figure 5.3). This is the **action** that an urban planner undertakes. The urban planner, by virtue of their profession, has the rational knowledge to embed images with this reality. That being said, the more virtuous the planner, the more of this knowledge, and the greater the wish to share it (E4 P). Such a plan, if done well, mitigates the passions as it gives actors a more rational understanding. Moreover, such a plan empowers the holders of the affective images. In some cases, it empowers to such an extent that they can realise an actual (architectural) modality, in the case of a building plan "transform[ing] the eternal idea of the building into the idea of a durational thing that will take its place in a world of interacting finite modes" (Lord 2020: 499).

There is one additional level to this profession. The virtuous planner does not blindly turn the affective images from whatever client(s) into reality. This would be highly unethical, bad leadership; this would entice the population (or client(s)) to let the affects run wild, creating a highly dangerous frenzy of passions. [quote]. It is the duty of the virtuous planner to navigate the passions, mitigate them if necessary, and use the passions of *love* and *hope* to bring actors to a more rational (empowered) state. In short, the virtuous planner does not lose sight of overall human flourishing, and therefore, aims to empower all actors via affective coupling or rational plan-making. The aim – despite its rarity (or impossibility) of occurrence – is shown in figure 5.3. This is the planner's "own agenda", or **aim**: the development of structures that furthers the freedom, virtue, and empowerment of all actors.

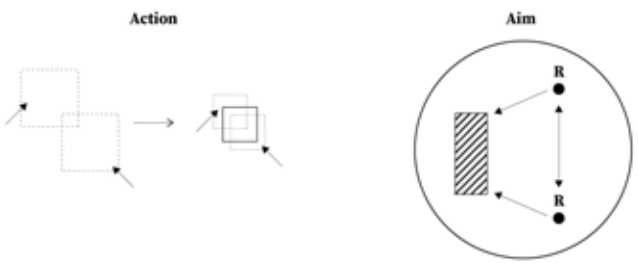

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figure 5.3: the action that an urban planner can undertake, and the aim an ethical urban planner always has

To summarize:

- Like the architect, the urban planner has "rare cognitive powers" (Lord 2020: 498) allowing them to create rational images of not (yet) real things;
- Like the (virtuous) political leader, the urban planner develops structures that mitigate the passions, empower the inhabitants and bring them to a more free and rational state;
- The **action** the urban planner undertakes is creating images, or plans, with a high degree of reality, that transform highly affective images into more rational ones (figure 5.3);
- The **aim** that the urban planner always keeps in mind (the planner's "own agenda") is overall human flourishing, in other words, the creation of a situation as illustrated in figure 5.3.

As a final note, we can consider not a virtuous planner, but a highly unvirtuous one. This means, on the one hand, that this planner is far less capable in creating rational images. On the other hand, this means that the aim a planner might have will be highly affective (inexact), so the actual result of their actors will be the opposite of the rational aim (figure 5.3). This action and result in shown in figure 5.4 below.

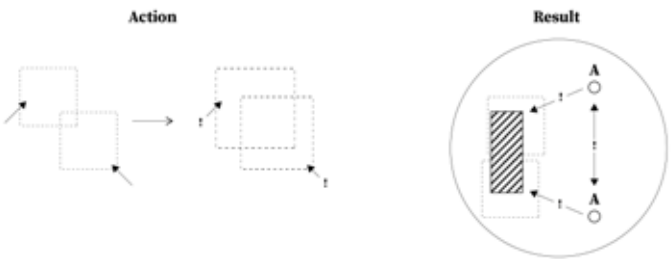

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figure 5.4: the action and result of an unvirtuous planner

Chapter 5.2

A Spinozist Model

Parallel to the interpretative part of this research project (see chapter 4), a model for ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning situations has been developed. Much like part 4 of the Ethics, the aspects of this model have "not been arranged so that they could be seen at a glance, but have been demonstrated here and there according as I could more easily deduce one from another" (E4 app). So, similar to the appendix to part 4, the aspects of this model are collected in this subchapter, "reduced under principal heads" (E4 app). Here, all elements of the model are summarized and briefly explained. Aspects we already saw in previous chapters are collected and listed here as well. Furthermore, "for it is one thing to till a field by right, and another to till it in the best way" (TP 5.1), not only the way of describing situations, but also the actions that the urban planner can undertake and its aims are stated. This subchapter can be seen as a complete manual to the Spinozist Model for addressing ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning.

As this model is tailored for depicting situations, "compositions", that contain ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning, let us first take a look at the *elements considered* in this model (table 5.5).

Then, let us take a look at some aspects of the model, point by point:

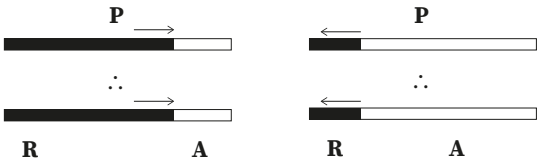
- In this model (as Spinoza's philosophy in general), the terms rational and affective are used often. *Rational* means: having a more accurate or exact understanding of a situation and self-interest. *Affective* means: a less accurate or more inexact understanding of a situation and self-interest. Note that it is almost never a situation of *either-or*, all actors are rational and affective to a certain extent (so an R-actor can "flip" to an A-actor, see [2] in the table).
- Most actors on the urban scale are composite actors. In fact, all actors

table 5.5: Summary of elements in the model
▼

Element	Description	Model (map)
Actor	Actors are depicted in the model with a circular symbol that is either open or filled in, depending on their relative power position. A more powerful actor is a more rational actor (filled circle, "R"); a less empowered actor is a more affective actor (open circle, "A").	[1]  [2] 
Composite actor	Communities, companies, government agencies and virtually all groups of people are complex bodies that are best depicted as composite actors. The gradualism of rational-affective behaviour is clearly shown in these composites.	
Architectural modality (institution)	Non-human elements that are the objects of images (affective or rational) are depicted as modalities. This includes architecture, physical structures, buildings, etc. but also immaterial institutions or planned buildings (see the hotel example).	
Rational ideas (*plan*)	The understanding or vision (images or plans) an actor has of a certain situation is depicted via *images*. Rational actors have a clearer or more exact understanding of a situation. By definition, rational "images" are always good and empowering. Thus, a R-image shows an exact plan or idea, which is always a positive relation.	
Affective images (*and attitudes*)	The understanding or vision (images or plans) an actor has of a certain situation is depicted via *images*. Affective actors have a less clear understanding of a situation. By definition, affective images can be either good or bad (E4 App). Thus, an A-image shows an imagination of something loved or hated by the actor; or projection of hope or fear. The (!) indicates a negative composition, i.e. a negative attitude (hate, fear, etc.).	

figure 5.6: Relationship between relative power-position (P) and rational/affective behaviour of an actor

▼



- considered in the cases are composite actors.
- The way actors are depicted in the model does not say anything about the individual nature or characteristics of the actors. If an actor is depicted as highly rational, this does not mean that the individuals involved are somehow intrinsically smarter or more powerful people (and vice versa for highly affective actors). The model depicts the *relative* power-position in a certain situation by which behaviour of actors can reasonably be predicted. This means that in a different situation with other actors and their relative power-positions, an actor that in one case is highly rational, is suddenly highly affective. Take a small city, for example. In a composition that investigates the dilemmas around the building of, say, a theatre, the municipal government is probably a relatively powerful actor, and therefore, highly rational. In a composition that investigates the dilemmas around large-scale infrastructure in a metropolitan area, the small city is probably a relatively less powerful actor (trumped by larges cities and governments). In the latter case, the very same municipal government will now behave based on highly affective images.
- As the affects and interpersonal relations of actors build on eachother, the "behaviour-patterns" of the affects (as covered under 3.3.3) are especially

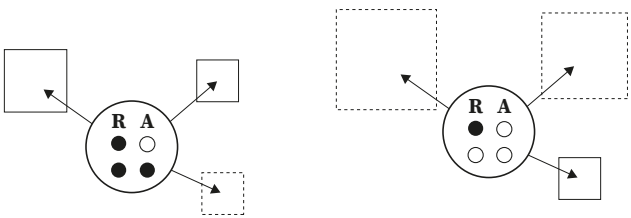


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figure 5.7: Comparison between images or *plans* of a rational actor versus an affective actor

table 5.8: Summary of interpersonal affects (inexhaustive; furthermore, many others can be derived).
▼

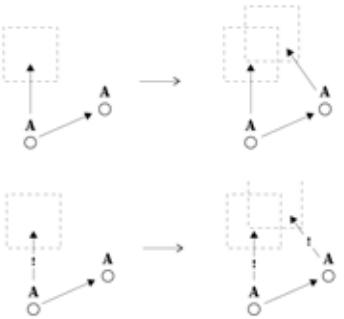
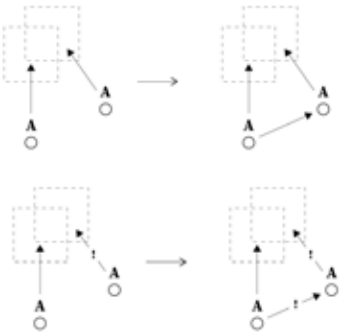
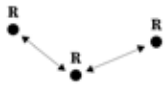
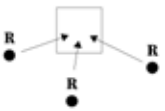
Source	Textual mechanics	Diagrammatic visualisation
E3 P31S (also E3 P29)	**Ambition** *It follows (...) that everyone endeavours as much as possible to make others love what he loves and hate what he hates.* *This effort (...) is in truth ambition.*	
E3 P22	**Approval** *If we imagine that a person affects with joy a thing which we love, we shall be affected with love towards him...* *...If, on the contrary, we imagine that he affects it with sorrow, we shall also be affected with hatred towards him.* **Indignation**	
E3 P35	**Envy (Jealousy)** *If I imagine that an object beloved by me is united to another person by the same, or by a closer bond of friendship than that by which I myself alone held the object, I shall be affected with hatred towards the boved object itself, and shall envy that other person.*	

table 5.9: Summary of interpersonal relations of people "by the guidance of reason."
▼

Source	Description (citation)	Diagrammatic visualisation
E3 P35	*So far as men live in conformity with the guidance of reason, in so far only do they always necessarily agree in nature.* *E3 P35S: Homo homini Deus [man is a God to man]*	
E3 P36-37	*The highest good of those who follow after virtue is common to all, and all may equally enjoy it / The good which everyone who follows after virtue seeks for himself he will desire for other men; and his desire ont ehi behalf will be greater in proportion as he has a greater knoweldge of God.*	

- important. See table 5.8 for some of the most influential interpersonal affects (note also how they can transition into eachother: ambition can give rise to envy, etc.). Moreover, the interpersonal relations of more rational actors is also restated (5.9).
- The action and aim of the urban planner are restated below (figure 5.10). Considering the model, it is clear that the aim is to use this action to move further towards the aim. In short, to move towards a more rational, empowered state (see figure 5.11).

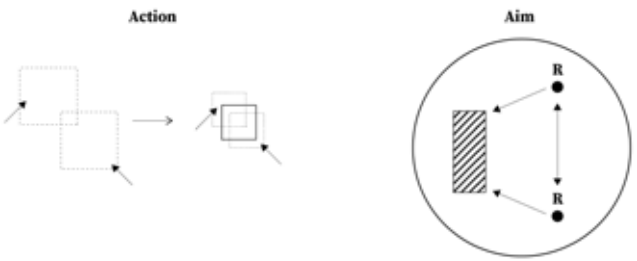


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figure 5.10: the action that an urban planner can undertake, and the aim an ethical urban planner always has

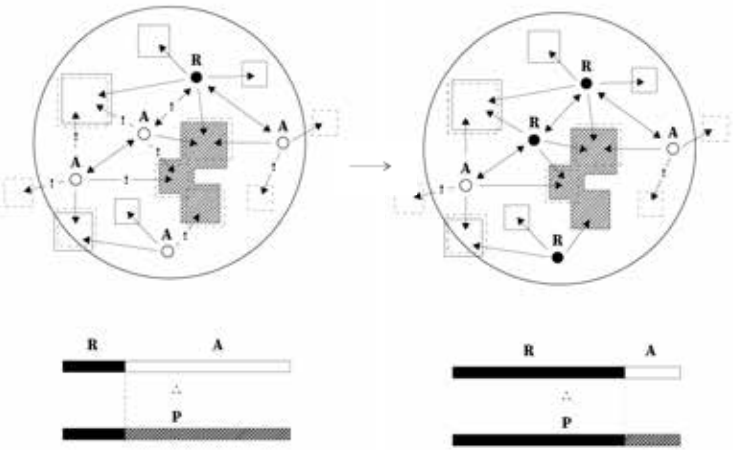

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figure 5.11: moving from an affective situation towards a more rational situation

Now that all aspects and elements of this model have been catalogued, we can illustrate its workings with an example. Furthermore, the design assignment calls for experimentation via a case design. So, in the next part of this research, a case study will be conducted using the *guide* as given in this subchapter.

Chapter 5.3

Case Study: Integrating a New Community

Khakee (2020: 179) notes how globalisation and migration, despite not being new phenomena, have increased the pressure on urban planning tremendously. There are many dilemmas at play. Khakee (2020) mentions that "one of the major dilemmas is how to create appropriate conditions for attracting global capitaland highly skilled labor, but at the same time providing for local populations plus incoming refugees," and another with regards to the dilemma of sustainbility planning versus equity planning. In short, he states (2020: 179):

> *"[P]lanners have to 'tidy up' the fragmentation of space and marginalization of minority communities.Complicating this situation is the increased use by populists and anti-globalists of social media for fake news, intimidation and spreading of xenophobic hatred. Planning has so far had limited successin mediating conflicting interests and will encounter further challenges in the face of inter-racial andinter-cultural dynamics and tensions."*

Considering all of the above, let us take a look at the following case.

CASE STUDY

A new (migrant) community arrives at the city. The local responsible government wishes to integrate this new (migrant) community into the societal fabric. However, "concerned citizens" are opposed to any of these developments. The local government then tasks an urban planner with coming up with spatial solutions as to integrate a new (migrant) community - in the midst of public backlash against the newcomers.

In this case study (which is obivously a simplification of a real situation) we are dealing with three actors: local government, migrant communtiy, concerned citizens. We can reasonably estimate their relative power positions to be decreasing in that respective order. The spatial conditions of the part of the city in the case (for which the urban planner is tasked to find solutions) forms an architectural modality. Following the model, the actors and this modality can be visualised as such (figure 5.12):

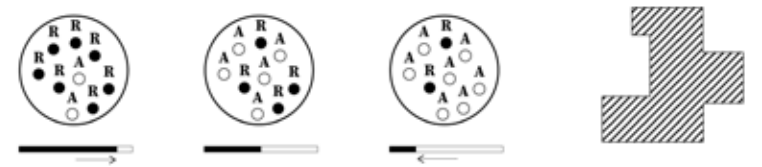

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figure 5.12: elements of the case: actors and relative power positions, and arch. modality

And following the model, these elements of the case can then be put into a composition, "mapped," as such (figure 5.13):

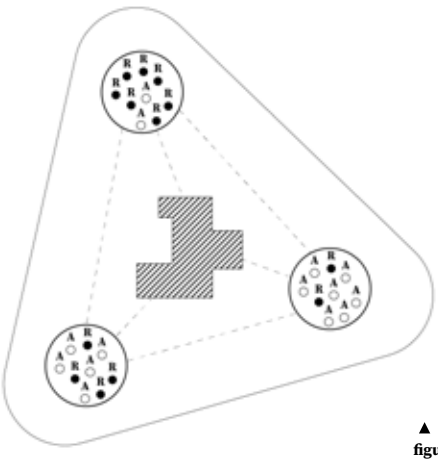

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figure 5.13: composition of case 1 (only elements)

Now that the composition is mapped, we can estimate the interrelationship of the actors in the model. Starting with the least empowered one (and most affective): the migrant community. The projected images will not be exact, but highly affective. In this case, we can - since this community moves to the city - assume that this is a positive affective image. One of *hope* (of a better life), for instance (figure 5.14).

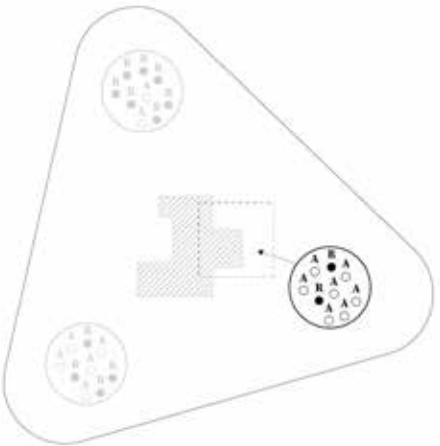

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figure 5.14: building the case, image 1 (see text)

Then, looking at the most empowered actor - the local government - it can be estimated that the images of this actor are mostly rational and exact. The local government in this case likely has rational knowledge of the neighbourhood and the assignment. A probable (albeit small) affective image might be the hope/fear of being in this predicament. The rational images can be projected on the model as given in figure 5.15.

A result of the projected images of both actors is a situation in which two actors have a positive image of the same thing. Therefore (see the table on interpersonal affects, page 147), the most affective actor (the new community) will likely have a positive attitude (in Spinoza's terms: "love towards") to the local government (figure 5.16).

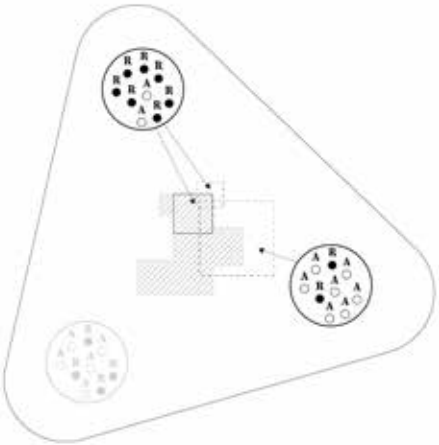

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figure 5.15: building the case, image 2 (see text).

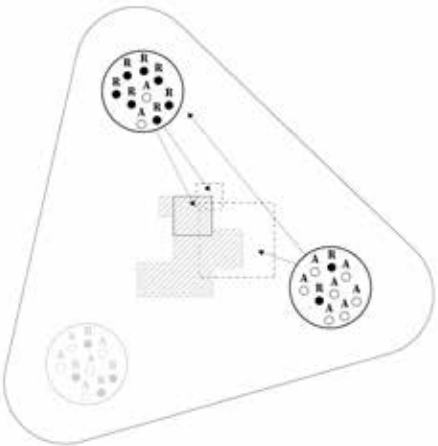

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figure 5.16: building the case, image 3 (see text).

Then, taking the final actor into account, which will show a somewhat rational and somewhat affective behaviour, it can be estimated that both rational and affective images are projected on the city. Looking at the case study, a large affective image (hate) with a negative attitude will be projected on the situation, as well as a large positive affective image (love) of "their own" neighbourhood, as well as a rational image (exact knowledge) of this neighbourhood (see figure 5.17).

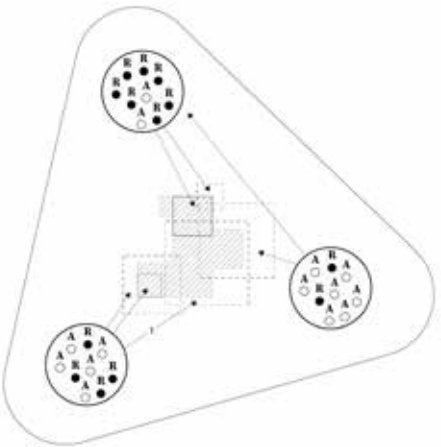

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figure 5.17: building the case, image 4 (see text).

Looking at interpersonal affects again, we can see that there is now a situation in which one actor has a negative attitude (*hates*) towards an image another actor sees positively (*loves*): the concerned citizens *hate* the image of the new (migrant) community in the city. The concerned citizens also hate the (albeit small) image of the local government and, more importantly, the new community towards which the concerned citizens have a negative attitude has a positive attitude towards the local government (see table on interpersonal affects on page 147), so the concerned citizens will adopt a negative stance towards the local government as well. Taking into account these interpersonal affects, the total situation with its ethical-political dilemma is mapped (see figure 5.18).

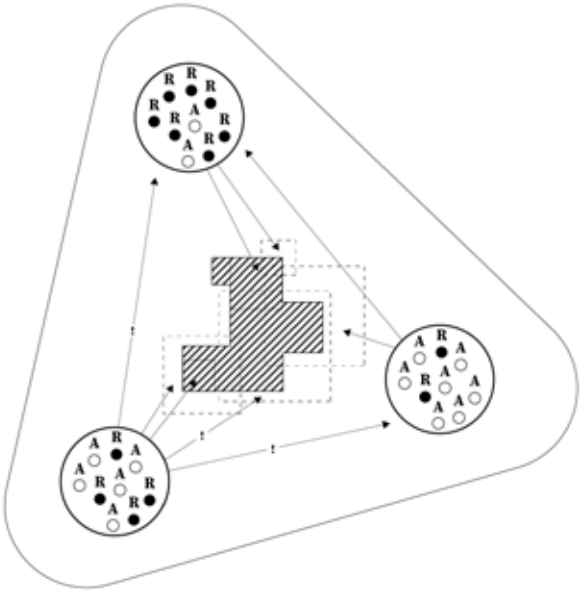

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figure 5.18: case study: ethical-political dilemma in urban planning of integrating a new community

Now, with this modelled situation, there are multiple possible courses of action that an urban planner can undertake. That is: each combination of inexact (affective) imaged can be brought to a more exact and empowering state (and the actors with it), as by the virtue of the profession of the urban planner more rational images can be inserted. Of course, in the ideal situation - the best case scenario - one *plan* can be created that has an (extremely) high degree of reality, mitigates all the passions, empowers all actors and turns them into positive relationships - nothing short of the aim of the planner (figure 5.4 and 5.19).

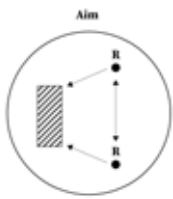

figure 5.19:
aim of the urban planner (ideal) ▶

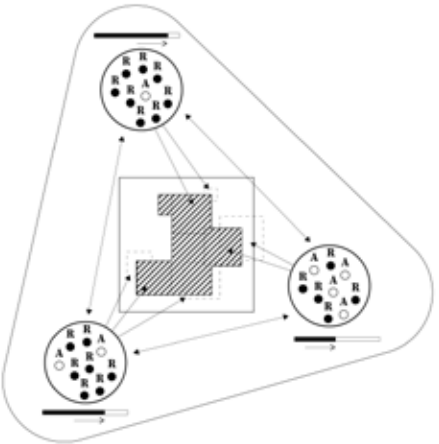

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figure 5.20: best case scenario: a plan that empowers all (bars), mitigates the passions + positive relations

Short of this *ideal* situation, several actions can be taken that intervene on different portions of this mapped composition.

A **first action** that planner can take is to create an urban plan by taking into account the (largely) rational images of the local government, i.e. its aims and interests, only. We might call this the "technocratic approach". This is the easiest action, since the images are largely rational already (so even a not-very virtuous urban planner can take this action). Direct results of this action are:

- the local government as actor becomes more empowered; and
- the chance of realisation of the plan increases.

Indirectly, this results in:

- the most powerful actor becoming even more empowerd, thus the other actors become (relatively!) more affective;
- the affective images of the concerned citizens and of the migrant community increase, and new affective images might appear; and
- new affective images can be both good and bad: there is a risk of new images of hate (also from the migrant community!).

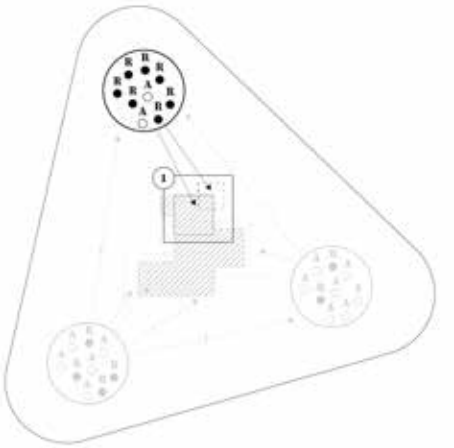

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figure 5.21: planning approach: action 1 (technocratic)

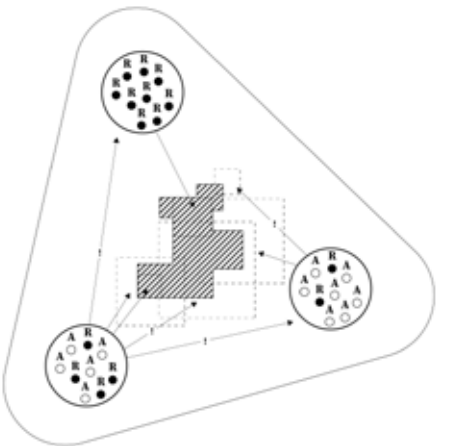

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figure 5.22: planning approach: considerations of action 1 (technocratic)

As this action clearly moves the situation further away from the model of ethical planning set (figure 5.22), can this finding be interpreted as a critique on technocratic planning. Yes, this approach increases the possiblity of realisation, but also moves other actors to a relatively more affective state for the "technocratic" actor is often the most empowered already (in this case: the local government). And more affective imagination is ambivalent: these new images can be of love, but also of hate (risk). There is thus a mechanic here that can result in social upheaval.

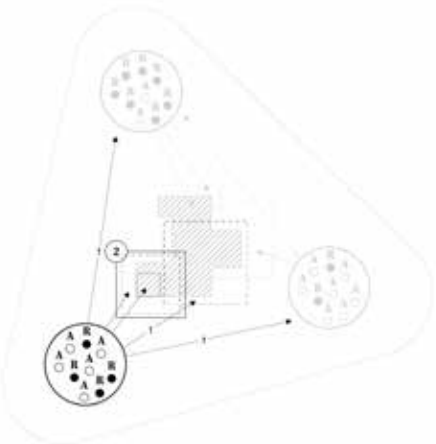

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figure 5.23: planning approach: action 2 (political)

A **second action** that planner can take is to generate more exact knowledge, via a plan, social-historical (ethnographic) study, etc. with regards to the community of concerned citizens. This is a politically savvy approach. Also, this is the hardest action, since this community has both positive and negative attitudes and rational ideas. The form if this plan can, just to name some examples, be an exposition on the history of the neighbourhood.

Direct results of this action are:

- the concerned citizens become more empowered, thereby mitigating the

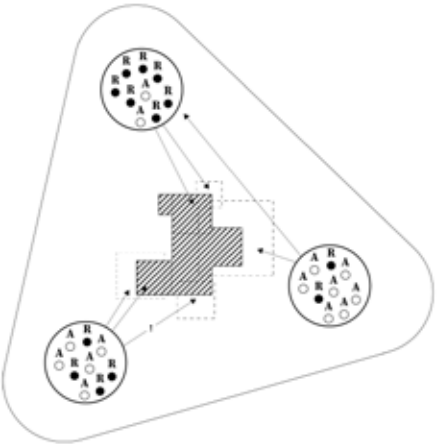

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figure 5.24: planning approach: considerations of action 2 (political)

passions (if done well). The concerned citizens become more rational and gain exact knowledge of the situation.

Indirectly, this results possibly in a situation in which the affective images with negative attitudes decrease to such an extent that the negative attitude towards the new community also largely disappears. This would mean that the passions are mitigated. Hence, why this is a politically savvy action if it succeeds (indirectly mitigating the passions). Nevertheless, as this empowers the actor with the most negative images, it can also result in the opposite: the extra strength gained from this rational knowledge is used to increase the image of hate. (example: more knowledge of the history of the neighbourhood leads to increased calls for "protecting their heritage").

A **third action** that planner can take is to create more exact images or plans for the new community. For instance, by creating imaginations with show a new, integrated city (and a more virtuous planner even uses the affective cultural images and institutions). Or, by exactly presenting the causes of migration. We might call this approach that of the "advocacy planner".

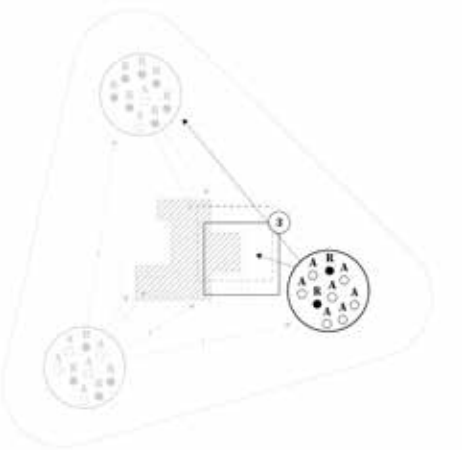

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figure 5.25: planning approach: action 3 (advocacy)

Direct results of this action are:

- the least powerful actor (new community) is empowered; and
- increases the chances of affectively and rationally binding the new community to the architectural modality.

Indirect results of this action are:

- it might bring the local government and the new community closer together (as they share a positive affect);
- it might increase the affectiveness of the concerned citizens. Therefore, both the affects with a positive attitude (love for their architectural modality) and negative attiude (hate for this plan) can increase. Thus giving rise to "xenophobic nationalism" (Khakee 2020: 117. See also the theory of Balibar (1998) under 4.3.3 Communities).

Clearly, this is the action of the advocate planner. For one, as it empowers the most disempowered actor, it is (on a personal level) the most satisfying one. Moreover, as the hate of the concerned citizens might actually be turned to the planner (by association, see table 5.8 on the workings of interpersonal affects), so the planner is "in the field".

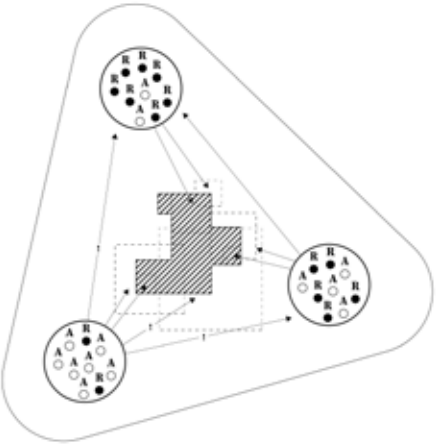

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figure 5.26: planning approach: considerations of action 3 (advocacy)

Note that this does not mean that any of these actions (e.g. ethnographic reseach into communities as the most empowering) is always the best approach! In the end, the aim is to work towards the situation as given in figure 5.20, in which all actors become more rational and empowered, including the already most powerful ones. Moreover, their rational knowledge and therefore interest in the situation, and subsequently their available means, are, in a situation of concord between actors, of great importance for actual realisation of a plan in durational existence.

In the end, the aim is to be the "technocratic" planner, the "political" planner and the "advocacy" planner all at once. But since everyone's 'virtue' is limited (E4 axiom), a distinctive approach has to be taken. This model has helped to crystallise which approaches can be taken, and what the ethical-political considerations are. Furthermore, the exact same action of the urban planner can clearly have various different effects. This demonstrates the relative ontology underlying this model again. There are no universal or one-fits-all solutions: it is relative to the composition.

SUMMARY

The aim of this part of the research was to **instrumentalise** (SQ 3: outcome, see page 36) the findings from the previous parts of the research. This part of the research has been conducted in several steps: (1) the role of the urban planner with regards to this model has been investigated; (2) a summary or full 'guide' of the model (collecting all aspects from previous parts) has been created; and (3) this model has been testing on a design case related to ethical-political dilemmas in urban planning. Hereby, the design assignment is also completed. The methods used were diagramming and research by design. These methods have been used in tandem at all points. Literature review is not marked as method, since the only literature that has been reviewed is from the thesis itself (collecting elements for the summary of the model; 5.2). The results and findings of this part of the research are the following (see also deliverables on page 43).

Following the research under T*he Role of the Urban Planner* (5.1):

Result 1: The aim of an urban planner and the actions an urban planner can undertake in ethical-political dilemmas has been determined. Thus, the model has been given possibilities of intervention (actions of the urban planner) and an aim to work towards, in short; the model has been instrumentalised for urban planning.

> **Accompanying finding 1: the action that the urban planner can undertake is to insert a more rational image into a collective imagination**. This way, an image with more "reality" is created in the situation. A more virtuous urban planner might actually insert an image (or plan) that can be turned into an institution or architectural modality, that is: into durational existence.

> **Accompanying finding 2: the aim of the virtuous urban planner, the urbanist's "own agenda," is working towards a situation of rational, empowered actors who are in a composition of agreement of mutual self-interest.** This follows from the comparison of the urban planner to the virtuous (political) leader and the general statements on virtue in E4 P35-37.

Following the research under *A Spinozist Model* (5.2):

Result 1: A guide to the Model of the City through a Spinozist lens has been created. For this, the findings of previous chapters have been combined with the actions and aims found in 5.1 (urban planner).

And lastly, following the research under *Case Nº 1 Integrating a New Community* (5.3):

Result 1: The Model of the City has been tested with a case design containing an ethical-political dilemma related to urban migration. This case design forms a major part of the design assignment of this research project. The model has been applied and this application is examined step by step.

> **Accompanying finding 1: The case study has illustrated how a "technocratic approach" might be the least ethical solution and can result in social upheaval.** For the "technocratic" actor is often the most empowered already; so inserting a more rational image might, yes, increase the possiblity of realisation, but also moves other actors to a relatively more affective state. And more affective imagination is ambivalent: these new images can be of love, but also of hate (risk).
>
> **Accompanying finding 2: The case study has illustrated how the work of an Urban Planner can *indirectly* address planning problems by mitigating the passions.** As the behaviour of actors based on their relative power-position can be reasonably predicted, it is possible to indirectly address issues. This requires, however, enough exact knowledge (!) of a situation to know the relevant lines of cause and effect. In short: a (very) virtuous planner is required.
>
> **Accompanying finding 3: The case study has illustrated how the exact same action by the Urban Planner can in one composition move the situation further towards the ethical aim, and in another situation further away.** In other words, it has demonstrated the relative ontology underlying this model again. There are no universal or one-fits-all solutions: it is relative to the composition.

Accompanying finding 4: The case study has illustrated how the Urban Planner can itself become *"forced to follow the worse, although he sees the better before him"* (E4 pref). As a relatively disempowered actor, especially compared to a large corporate or governmental organisation, the urban planner can also become entangled in affective imagination in their relationship with this actor - which, moreover, can also be a financial one (image of money!). Thus, the Urban Planner can still be "forced" by this larger, more rational actor, or by their own passions, to "follow the worse…".

Taking account of all these results and findings, the research sub question posed for this part of the research can be answered.

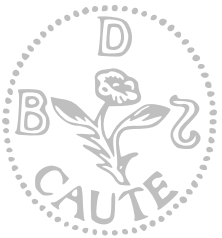
> **SQ 3** What form might an urban planning approach inspired by Spinoza's philosophy take?
> **Outcome to SQ 3**: an instrumentalisation of the Spinoza-informed urban theory (chapter 4).

We can conclude that the model of the city (as developed in part IV) can become instrumentalised as to form an **urban planning approach**. For this, the action that an urban planner can take (by virtue of the profession) has been determined, added to which is the aim of urban planning (the planner's "own agenda"). This also concludes the design assignment.

Hereby, this part of the research is completed. *Sed de his satis.*

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION



This chapter form the conclusion on the research project as presented in this thesis report. In Chapter 2, the research framework, including research questions, phases and methodology was explained. Then, in chapters 3 to 5, the different phases of the research project have been explained. This chapter, then, "looks back" at these phases of the research, and summarises the results and findings from the research project. By looking at cross-cutting outcomes, the subquestions can be answered together, and thereby an answer to the main research question can be formulated. This includes a review of the design assignment. This is all stated in **6.1 Results and findings**.

Under **6.2 Discussion**, the limitations of this research are discussed, giving rise to prospects for further research. The limitations of the research related to the design assignment (i.e. the model) and to the methodology are treated separately.

Chapter 6.1

Results and findings

The overarching aim of this research project has been to bring Spinoza and urbanism together; to investigate an "encounter" between Spinoza and urbanism. As this cannot possibly be done to it's complete possible extent in a single master's thesis, the actual aim of this specific research project, therefore, has been to contribute a small part towards this larger goal of bringing Spinoza and the built environment closer together. A research framework based on exploration and spatialisation has been followed, guided by the research question:

How can Spinoza's ethical-political philosophy inform a theory of urban space and become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning?

This question already indicates that, in addition to addressing this aim ("inform a theory of urban space") a design assignment has been pursued (become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning). During

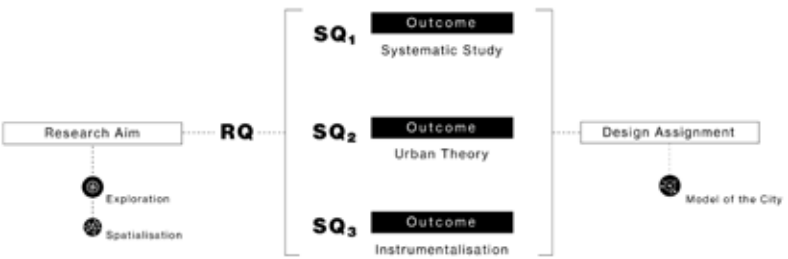


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figure 6.1: research framework

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figure 6.2: research framework in phases

the research, this design assignment had taken the form of creating a model of the city, on Spinoza's account, and testing this model via a case study.

The research question above has been separated into three underlying research subquestions, each corresponding to a phase of the research (and a chapter in this report). Each phase also had a distinct outcome (see figure 6.1 below), which was then divided further into deliverables per research method (see 2.4 methodology).

During the explanation of the research project in the past chapters (3-5), results have been separated from findings. Results follow from the set-up of the research, and were aimed for already considering the deliverables. Accompanying findings are the findings that have been generated by following the methodology, but that were not necessarily aimed for from the beginning. They have been "found" along the way.

The different parts of the research have generated various results. Below, the specific results have been collected per part.

Results following from the explorative part (chapter 3) are:

1. A cartography of the *Ethics, Theological-Political Treatise*, and *Political Treatise* has been created.
2. All instances of Spinoza discussing the built environment have been catalogued.
3. An interdisciplinary overview of key concepts has been created.
4. An estimation has been made as to which key concepts offer the highest prospects for spatialisation.

Results following from the interpretative part (chapter 4) are:

1. The essential elements of any urban theory have been determined using secondary literature.
2. A Spinozist account of agglomeration has been constructed.
3. A method has been developed to 'map' aspects related to agglomeration in a diagrammatic way.
4. A Spinozist account of the unfolding urban land nexus has been constructed..
5. A method has been developed to 'map' aspects related to the urban land nexus in a diagrammatic way.
6. A *Model of the City* through a Spinozist lens has been constructed.

And lastly, **results following from the extrapolative part** (chapter 5) are:

1. The aim of an urban planner and the actions an urban planner can undertake in ethical-political dilemmas has been determined.
2. A guide to the *Model of the City* through a Spinozist lens has been created.
3. The *Model of the City* has been tested with a case design containing an ethical-political dilemma related to urban migration.

Accompanying these results, various other findings have been discovered during this research. They are collected below (from the summaries after each part) and rephrased as to form one "accompanying discoveries" section per part.

Following from the explorative part (chapter 3) **it has been found** that Spinoza's works (and philosophy) are especially well-suited for structural analysis. Content-wise adhere these works consistently to a narrative line of (1) onto-epistemology (cosmology; the universe), (2) human (psychology) and (3) state and society.

Moreover, Spinoza uses various techniques of a designer: models and images (E, TTP, TP), and actual (political) designs (TTP and TP). Despite this, Spinoza scarcely mentions the built environment. Yet each time Spinoza does discuss the built environment it is to high-light an important underlying process. Spinoza's philosophy can, logically following from this, be "extended" to cover topics not discussed by Spinoza**.** In this regard, it has been found that in secondary literature engaging with Spinoza's philosophy different disciplines have distinct sets of concepts they engage (more) with compared to others, but that certain concepts are engaged with in all disciplines. These concepts of Spinoza's philosophy are dynamic, containing behaviour-patterns and relational characteristics; andthe concepts from Spinoza's ethical philosophy and of Spinoza's political philosophy form a single conceptual framework.

Following from the interpretative part (chapter 4) **it has been found** that critiques on the urban model of agglomeration and the urban land nexus by Scott and Storper (2015) are largely offset by using Spinoza's philosophy. Spinoza's theorizing on the genesis of the city, based on interpersonal affects, lends itself well for a theory of urban *agglomeration*. Spinoza's account of complex bodies and explains how cities form (and change) as they are moulded by human and non-human actors. With regard to the urban nexus, it has been found that institutions form as collective imaginations achieve a capacity of "affective excess". Architectural modalities form as institutions crystallised into space, and have the capacity for "affective coupling". Lastly, communities form within the city as micro-cities, following all the rules of complex bodies themselves. Considering a model of the city, it has been found that Spinoza's view of the city is actor-based and represents relative power-positions, modalities, and images. Spinoza's theories do not engage with aspects of urbanism like morphology, nor is it a "technical model"; this model of the city does not map a territory per se, rather a situation. The model can be used to reveal (or 'map') ethical-political dilemmatic situations.

And lastly, following from the extrapolative part (chapter 5) **it has been found** that the action that the urban planner can undertake is to insert a more rational image into a collective imagination. The aim of the virtuous urban planner, the urbanist's "own agenda," is working towards a situation of rational, empowered actors who are in a composition of agreement of mutual self-interest. The case study has illustrated

how a "technocratic approach" might be the least ethical solution and can result in social upheaval. It has also illustrated how the work of an Urban Planner can indirectly address planning problems by mitigating the passions; and how the exact same action by the Urban Planner can in one composition move the situation further towards the ethical aim, and in another situation further away. Finally, the case study has revealed how the Urban Planner can itself become "*forced to follow the worse, although he sees the better before him"* (E4 pref).

At-large, with the results and findings in mind, each of the subquestions has been answered and related to the outcomes. They are given below as one narrative. So we can return to the main research question, *how can Spinoza's ethical-political philosophy inform a theory of urban space and become operationalised for addressing ethical-political issues in urban planning?*

[SQ1] Structurally, the ethical-political works have been completely mapped, resulting in (1) a cartography of Spinoza's works; an content-wise, all concepts residing in this structure have been examined on their prospects for spatialisation, resulting in an estimation regarding the relevance of certain (2) key concepts for urban planning. [SQ2] It has been found that a Spinoza-informed urban theory might take the shape of a model of the city, aimed at mapping ethical-political situations in urban planning. The model as developed in this chapter is a major part of the design assignment. [SQ3] Building on this, it has been found that this model can become instrumentalised as to form an urban planning approach. For this, the action that an urban planner can take (by virtue of the profession) has been determined, added to which is the aim of urban planning (the planner's "own agenda"). This has also concluded the design assignment.

Chapter 6.2

Discussion

In this discussion, we will take a critical look at (1) the design product – the model – following the design assignment and (2) the methodology that has been followed for this research. Then, (3) some prospects for further research are stated.

6.2.1 Limitations of the *design product*

The design assignment of this thesis project has resulted in the creation of a model. This model consists of a distinct Spinozist view of the city with elements to map and certain fixed behaviours, which indicate (reveal) possible courses of action. The model also comprises a distinct aim of the urban planner.

The model as presented, however, can be critiqued on various grounds.

1. The model does not indicate what to map. Moreover, a situation is in reality always far more complicated and dynamic than any modelled situation can capture. This means that the selection of actors, modalities, etc. that are considered is really up to the user. A Spinozist defence would be: the more virtuous the urban planner, the better the modelled situation reflects reality, thus the more useful it is. But then again, the more virtuous urban planner would not really need a *confused image* i.e. any model.
2. The model gives a more philosophical grounding to situations (such as the one in the case study), but most of these actions can be considered logical, or 'common knowledge'. It can be expected that the Realpolitik of social justice (Uitermark and Nicholls, 2017) comes down to the same approach as that which will result from the model most of the time.
3. The model uses a philosophy in which many terms are used that have a slightly

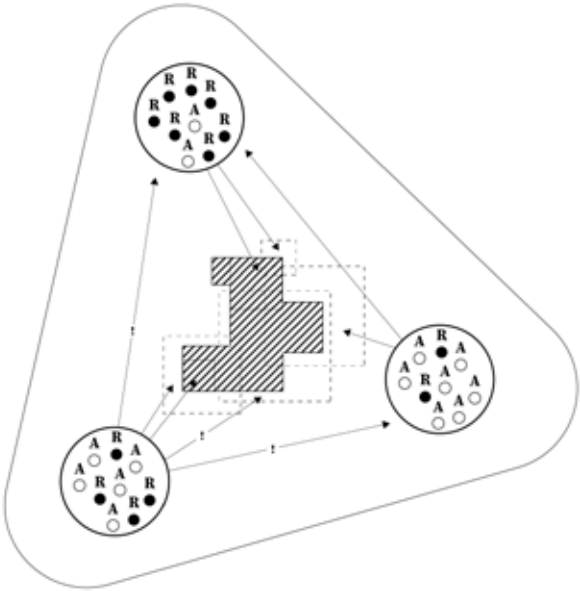

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figure 6.3: modelled situation from the case study (design assignment)

different meaning in daily use (rational, affective image, body), raising the bar for its usage and ease of use.

4. The 2D-visualisation can become messy when there are many actors or modalities involved.

6.2.2 Limitations of the methodology

On several counts, the methodological framework that has been put to use in this research project has its limitations. The most pressing ones are listed below (figure 6.4). For each limitation, it is also stated how it is mitigated in the research (to a certain extent); and how future research might hypothetically address it even more.

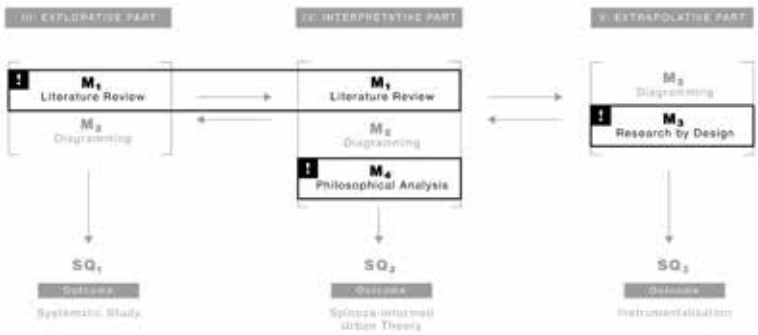

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figure 6.4: limitations of the research methodology mapped on the methodological framework

1. Personal bias in philosophical interpretation

The risk of personal bias in analysing philosophy is greatest when selecting which concepts to investigate and use. As noted by Steinberg (2010), "cherrypicking" concepts has historically led to gross misinterpretations of Spinoza. For this research, it was important to investigate those concepts of relevance for urbanism – not the most famous ones, or most interesting (subjectively speaking). This bias has been mitigated by using a selection matrix via secondary sources and the objective locations of the concepts. In future research, this bias can be mitigated by cross-checking the philosophical analyses with other sources even more; for instance, by qualitative interviews with Spinoza experts. This, by the way, would also form a quality check on the correctness of interpretation. A further mitigation could address the selection of the selection criteria: using some sort of objective mechanism to determine the list of concepts on the one hand, and the secondary authors on the other hand. A big data analysis could be used here.

2. Limitations of the scope of literature

The scope of literature assessed in this research project (under M1, figure 6.4) can be critiqued on two counts. First, on the scope of primary literature, i.e. Spinoza's works. Not Spinoza's entire oeuvre has been assessed, nor has it been analysed in its original language (Latin). For this research, English-language translations of a selection of Spinoza's works has been used. Under 2.2 Scope it has been argued that investigating the Ethics, Political Treatise and the political part of the TTP, as

they are generally considered Spinoza's "major works," suffices for the purposes of this thesis; and that major alterations to Spinoza's philosophy are not to be expected (thereby mitigating this limitation). Nonetheless, during this research it has been revealed that multiple works, like the Short Treatise and the Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect, as well as some letters, contain some insights and examples or illustrations on the built environment (Lord 2020). Considering the otherwise surmise amount of references to the built environment found in the works assessed, it might be illustrative to include these works. The language aspect is mitigated by relying on multiple secondary sources and using recent translations. This aspect could be further mitigated by using the latest translations in volumes published for academic use (e.g. collected works by Curley (1985)).

Second, the scope of literature assessed in this research project can be critiqued with relation to secondary literature. Again, only English-language works have been assessed, and the selection on secondary sources has been made based on relevance and citation by other secondary sources ("snowball method": tracing all cited works). Since the 'Spinoza revival' is relatively recent, it can be reasonably estimated that Spinoza scholars are aware of most other research on the topic, especially related to their own field, so that a strand of sources does not miss out in this project. Nonetheless, time and capacity also prevent all available sources (via this "snowball method") from getting an equal treatment (then again, based on relevance this is not entirely necessary). For instance, the tables in chapter 3 discuss only a limited amount of secondary literature. By selecting multiple sources from different disciplines, the chance of 'missing' a certain aspect is mitigated, but this limitation could hypothetically be even more thoroughly mitigated by assessing all available literature in this specific part of the research.

3. Limitations of testing via design

The testing of the model via a design-case study reveals its applicability and ease of use in one situation only. Hereby it is demonstrated that it works, but in a specific case only. To truthfully investigate the ease of use, applicability, transferability, scalability, etc. of this model, testing would also need to be conducted (1) by many other persons and (2) in many different cases. This limitation is somewhat mitigated by using a secondary source for case-selection.

6.2.3 Prospects of future research

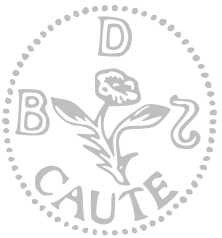
The limitations of the model and of the methodology have already inferred some prospects for further research. When also taking into account some of the findings presented under 6.1 results and findings, the following inexhaustive list of possible future directions of research can be made:

- The second critique of the model (it is no different than realpolitik of social justice) could be tested as hypothesis. For instance, by conducting qualitative research with two groups of designers (one with and one without using the model).
- Further research could be done regarding the applicability. This might result in different visualisation or terminology that is more accessible.
- Research can be done regarding 3D modelling.
- The research could be expanded with regards to the scope of literature assessed. Although not many new findings are to be expected.
- The research could be expanded with regards to the concepts and secondary literature assessed.
- The model can be tested further.

And on a more general note: the findings on Spinoza's philosophy in relation to urban planning can be related to similar finings in architecture, ecology, economics, or political science giving rise to new lines of scientific inquiry.

CHAPTER VII

Reflections



This reflection chapter forms an appendix to the research project. The structure of this chapter follows the structure as outlined in the graduation manual. First, a "a short substantiated explanation to account for the preliminary results of the research and design in the graduation phase (product, process, planning)" is given. This means: looking back at the **approach and process (7.1)**. Then, the **academic and societal value (7.2)** of the project is assessed, structured via the 5 questions given in the graduation manual. To these 5, two more questions are added that are specific to this research project: (1) what is the value of philosophy for urban planning, and (2) is *Spinoza* the answer to the question posed by Friedman (2008: 249) on the need for a value-based philosophy for urban planning? In the latter reflection, I also reflect briefly on personal developments and takeaways from conducting this research.

Reflections on the approach and process

Early on in the process, Zef shared with me that he saw three possible directions for a project on bringing Spinoza and Urbanism together:

1. *Urban design* approach. This would mean filtering Spinoza's philosophy for design recommendations, and developing urban designs on locations (in the Netherlands) with these recommendations.
2. *Urban methods* approach. This would mean developing a distinctive method towards urban planning, based on Spinoza's philosophy.
3. *Urban Ecology* approach. This would move the project towards a philosophical-artistic-ecological work.

This was in the phase of determining the **scope** of this project (before P2). These directions can be retrospectively projected on the diagram determining the scope of the project (figure 7.1). The urban design approach would mean no difficulty

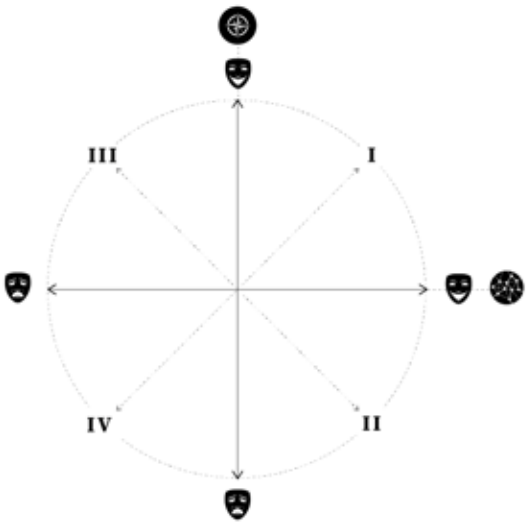


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figure 7.1: conceptual framework: exploration and spatialisation

in exploration and spatialisation, so that would be scenario I. If there is little on exploration but a lot on spatialisation, that would mean an urban method approach would suit the project best (scenario II). And vice versa would suit an Urban ecology approach best (scenario III).

In the run-up to my P2 I found, to my surprise (I remember the excitement), a wealth of secondary literature on Spinoza and disciplines like ecology, architecture, political science. In the Ethics, I found architecture being used as example. In the political treatises, I found these many passages on cities. In short, I figured the best estimated for the scope, with regards to exploration would be quite good. So I thought I would be able to synthesize all these works in an acceptable amount of time, and then do some designing with it. The urban designer approach. In the P2-report, this can be seen (with two phases called developing this theory, and then testing via design).

In preparation of this designing phase, I was already testing some cases (biodiversity planning on a national level, neighbourhood level design on the Stad van de Zon project in Heerhugowaard (NL), creating maps, images, diagrammes, etc.
Notwithstanding, three aspects that slowly revealed themselves during this process had me realise this initial error of judgment.

1. Synthesizing the secondary works took way longer than expected, for the interpretations that secondary authors presented, and the concepts they drew on, varied oftentimes to such a great extent that it felt like they were dealing with a completely different philosopher and philosophy altogether. It happened more than once that after I'd analysed and understood one article fully, upon turning to the next I had to start again from zero understanding. No conceptual overlap, no hold on the material. The result of this was, that I had to investigate the entire source material (i.e. the entirety of the Ethics and the political treatises) myself. Making a total overview, gather all the concepts, interpret them all myself... This meant, in short, that I was already moving towards an "explorative" phase.

2. I had estimated the number of references to material conditions, architecture, cities and the like to be limited; but still greatly overestimated this number.

In fact, these topics are barely mentioned at all. I had not just found "an" architectural example in the Ethics, it is the only one. Most of the mentions of a city in the political works, actually referred to the state or some historical example (such as Jerusalem), but not to any distinctly urban phenomenon.

3. The few allusions to architecture or material conditions in the Ethics, and the urban conditions in the political treatises, proved difficult to bridge. They are situated truly on two ends of Spinoza's philosophical system, so I had to work my way all the way through it before I could connect, for example, the non-teleology of architecture (the example of the house in E4 pref, building on the theories of E1app) to, say, the superiority of a polycentric urban system in *TP* 9.

4. Spinoza's writing truly contains an overkill of concepts and definitions. The Ethics may start with a neat summary of defiinitions – this is not at all sufficient for the entire philosophical project. The geometrical writings style and the greatly structured works camouflage a headache-inducing process of reconceptualising virtually everything.

The estimation that the explorative part of Spinoza would be rather *smooth sailing*, was wrong. The terrain proved to be more difficult (figure 7.2). This meant that, during the process, I moved from scenario I to scenario II – from an urban design approach to an urban methods approach (figure 7.3).

This shift had the most profound effects on the design assignment. Initially, the design amounted to a more classical urban design task: maps and plans and

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figure 7.2: adjusting the initial assessment (hypothesis)

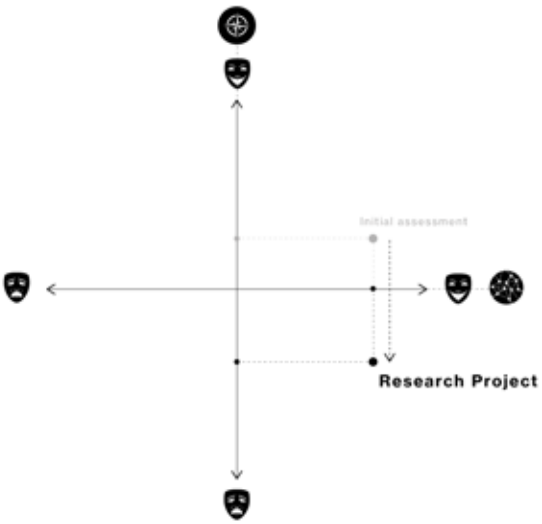

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figure 7.3: adjusting the approach

descriptions of territorial space. I had already called the bundle of design outcomes a *Nota Spinoza*. Reorienting towards an urban methods approach meant that the design was not such a classical urban design anymore. In the end, the design became a model nonetheless.

In conclusion, on the one hand, this reflection shows that my initial assessment (and hypothesis) was wrong – so the approach did not work. On the other hand, it shows that this research project had been structured in such a way that this necessary action did not mean the end of the project (and starting anew). This would have been a scenario IV-type situation (figure 7.1). Instead, the method pushed towards laying different accents and readjusting. This, I think, shows the strength of the methodology. Of course, during the course of this project as I was developing this approach, I was assisted by my mentor team, who kept an especial interest in keeping the scope clear and concise.

A second aspect to reflect on relates to the methodology on a smaller scale: the **methods**. Two methods in particular, I wish to reflect on, namely the method of philosophical analysis, and the method of expert dialogue (via semi structured interviews). These methods have shown the most interesting trajectory during this research project.

At the P2, I had not yet taken into account ***philosophical analysis***. Simply, because I did not regard it as separate method from literature review. However, during the process it became more clear and clear that I was doing something that I had not put down in the plan yet. During mentor meetings, for instance, I noticed that we were not looking down at paperwork. This project had been conceptual from the beginning, but could the treatment of concepts itself be regarded as method . Here, the design assignment influenced the research trajectory. In making the model and testing it (quick and dirty on a small scale, not like the worked-out case study), I designed the fluffy philosophical language away. Rational actors became R. Complex affective interpersonal relationships and their composite ontology became squares and little arrows. This all in tandem with the research as not to oversimplify. This feedback loop continued: Spinoza actually uses models with conceptual development like this as well. In fact, I discovered, philosophy can be regarded as nothing but the art of creating concepts (Deleuze, 1991).

Originally, this approach included another method: ***expert dialogue***. This method fell through for practical reasons at first (few replies on my mails, and the ones that did reply were all too busy). However, later on in the project, especially with regards to the shifting approach reflected on above, did this become less and less of an issue. The need for external knowledge of Spinozas philosophy and secondary works, i.e. interpretations and explanations that would have been gathered via this method, decreased as the study of these works become more prominently part of this research project following this shift. Thus the need for external checks on the use of Spinozas philosophy decreased, as I analysed, read and interpreted all of it myself. No training wheels required. My mentor team actually pushed me towards this from the beginning. *You become an expert on Spinoza…*

Reflections on the academic and societal value

In this reflection, the following questions will be answered with regards to the academic and societal value of this research process (note: the questions above have been rephrased slightly in comparison to the graduation manual to fit this specific research and MSc-track):

1. What is the relation between the topic of Spinoza+Urbanism, and the master track Urbanism within the master programme (MSc AUBS)?
2. How did the research influence the design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?
3. How do I assess the value of the way of working pursued during this project (approach, used methods, used methodology)?
4. How do I assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of the graduation project, including ethical aspects?
5. How do I assess the value of the transferability of the project results?

To this list, two more questions are added which are specific for this research:

6. How do I asses the value of philosophy for urban planning?
7. Is *Spinoza* the answer to the question posed by Friedman (2008: 249) on the need for a value-based philosophy for urban planning?

[1] ***Question 1: What is the relation between the topic of Spinoza+Urbanism and the master track Urbanism within the master programme (MSc AUBS)?***

The research project on the topic of 'Spinoza+Urbanism' is quite unconventional in the sense that is is a largely *theoretic research project*, and one that is *not location based*. Rather, the research can be viewed as philosophy-based. Nonetheless, all the 'classic' tools of urbanism (mapping, diagramming, etc.) have been employed - albeit not to a physical, geographical location but to a onceptual one. Content-wise, the topic of Spinoza's ethical and political philosophy fits well with the societal direction that the master track and general programme take, emphasizing spatial justice and the societal embeddedness of technological research. By bringing Spinoza's view back to urbanism (with the creation of a spinozist model of the city; and a model on planner's decision making) the research contributes to this direction of the master track and programme.

[2] ***Question 2: How did the research influence the design/recommendations and how did the design/recommendations influence your research?***

As mentioned above under the reflection on the approach and scope, the research influenced the design assignment in a quite radical fashion: the initial assessment on the approach was incorrect, so the design assignment had to change from an actual designed plan into a method-design. The other way around, the method-design showed that this was the right direction (it suddenly "worked"). Of course, during the research process it was a continuous feedback loop and not as clear-cut as I can now reflect on it afterwards.

[3] ***Question 3: How do I assess the value of the way of working pursued during this project (approach, used methods, used methodology)?***

The systemic and "technical" approach to Spinoza's philosophy worked well. Considering the 'mathematical' structure of his works, this might not be all-too surprising. Nonetheless, it could have been a false hypothesis, so actually being able to produce maps and tables etc. indicates a positive assessment on this part of the method.

The set-up of the research was quite open-ended. This was necessary, as the research project was an exploration and the initial hypothesis (or scope-assessment) could very well be wrong. As mentioned above, this proved to be the case. In this research project, I found the cross-fertilisation of Spinoza and urbanism to be leading towards a distinct view on urban planning methods, and not necessarily on a specific design assignment. A different methodological set up might have spotted this wrong assessment sooner.

(See also the reflection above for a reflaction on the used methods, especially regarding a 'new' method of philosophical analysis and a method that fell through (expert dialogue).)

[4] ***Question 4: How do I assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of the graduation project, including ethical aspects?***

The ethical aspects of this research project are almost self-evident, as it is all about ethics. In this research, (1) a distinct view on what an ethical urban planner is (and does) has been developed, and (2) a distinction view on the ethical aims of urbanism have been found. A virtuous urban planner creates clear, exact plans (the more virtuous, the better) that transform the unclear, affective imaginations of certain actors into more realistic ones, thereby empowering them and leading them in their own way to a more virtuous position. The Spinozist ethical aim, blessedness for everyone, is precisely in this: empowering everyone which leads to a more virtuous existence for everyone. There is a sort of "promise" by Spinoza: there is always a situation or composition to be found which 'works for everyone'. If anything, I think this hopeful and positive message, arising from a mathematically rigid and sometimes even "harsh" or cold-blooded starting point, can truely be of value for wider academic and societal circles.

[5] ***Question 5: How do I assess the value of the transferability of the project results?***

In line with the answer to question 4 (above), I think this "Spinoza tuned for technical audiences" is a result that has a high value of transferability. As mentioned under my research aim, below the surface is this research also a sort of advocacy piece that aims to posit Spinoza as key thinker for urban planing and building sciences (e.g. architecture) in general. Moreover, interestingly, Spinoza has a reputation of being a difficult philosophy to read. Personally, I have more difficulty reading large swathes of conceptual, abstract texts (for instance from other philosophers or policy-makers) than Spinoza's rigidly 'euclidian' writings. As I suspect this is due to the technical background I have been given from studying at the TU Delft for 5 years, I suspect this is not only true personally, but for most people with a technical background. There are possibilities of bridging two worlds: the technical and straight-to-the-point buildings sciences and the humanities that we encounter anyway, such as policy-making, political theory and philosophy.

[6] ***Question 6: How do I assess the academic and societal value, scope and implication of the graduation project, including ethical aspects?***

In a context of increasing pressure on urban planners related to ethical, socio-environmental, political and other issues, which have to be addressed all at once, a firm understanding of the ethical and political philosophies that have been developed over the centuries can be beneficial as a theoretical framework to fit it all in. There are, however, some issues, in my view. Firstly, many philosophical doctrines are - like urban planning itself - products of their time and it is therefore unwise to copy-paste without second thought. Not all philosophy is Spinoza's - and some thinkers advocate precisely opposite positions, enforcing hierarchies of power and advancing views of intolerance. (not to forget that Spinoza himself held precisely such positions inconsistent with his own main doctrines). Secondly, philosophy can be difficult and abstract, prone to misinterpretation and, in general, not that user-friendly. It is not written with the urban planner as reader in mind. Thus investigating a philosophy asks quite some investment in terms of time, energy and brain-power from anyone; so it can rightly be doubted whether the benefits are worth the investment. Nonetheless, some teamwork can be initiated here. Combining the knowledge of scholars in the humanities with the theoretical needs of urban planners (and architects, policy-makers, etc.) to "translate" philosophy into workable concepts and frameworks can, I think, turn many conventions and customs on its head.

[7] ***Question 7: Is 'Spinoza' the one-word answer to the question posed by Friedman (2008: 249) on the need for a value-based philosophy for urban planning?***

Friedman (2008: 249) states in his biographical essay on planning theory:

"So the question for us is this: can planners evolve a value-based philosophy as a foundation for their own practices in the world? My personal view is that this is perhaps the major challenge before us in a world that, despite protestations to the contrary, is increasingly materialist, individualist, and largely indifferent to humans' impacts on the natural environment. In the absence of a human-centered philosophy or some other defensible construct, we will merely drift with the mainstream, helping to build cities that are neither supportive of life nor ecologically sustainable."

Are Spinoza's ethical and political works the value-based philosophy to be used as theoretical foundation for urban planning practice? In my view, there are certain arguments in favour. As stated during my P4 presentation, three neatly correspond to the historical accusations levelled against Spinoza (as analysed by Deleuze, 1998).

1. Spinoza values material and mental well-being as equally important. There will never be a certain list of material conditions that, if only imposed on a population from above, will be ethical. And it is also not some Stoic philosophy that regards mental well-being as something personal that the material surroundings have no influence on (and planners do not have to take into account). It is not materialist, nor naively idealistic.
2. Ethics are relative for Spinoza, not dogmatic. It is a question of creating good compositions and not of imposing rules. Despite its rejections of transcendental concepts, it does have universal mechanics to make these compositions. And, creating spatial compositions is precisely the art of urban planning.
3. Spinoza's philosophy is a positive philosophy. The aim is human flourishing, which is within reach for everyone (despite the difficulty of attaining it). As Spinoza regards humans as intrinsically linked with their (natural) environment, the built environment can play a decisive role in this attainment.

There are also some difficulties with Spinoza:

1. Spinoza's philosophy is not tailor-made for urban planning.
2. The 'spinoza revival' is recent. Many misinterpretations have been filtered out, but it is not inconceivable that more are to be found.
3. Spinoza's philosophy can collide with personal views, especially the source-material. Furthermore, the (historical) reputation is a factor that still haunts Spinoza scholarship.
4. Friedman (2008) advocates a *model of limits*. Spinoza's philosophy has no limits. There is an infinity of self-expression, virtue and blessedness possible.

extra material

Coda

HEURISTICS

Thinking alongside Spinoza for planning better cities

1. Aim to discover the composition that works for everyone.
2. Act by making a plan (or image, or model), using the empowering, rational* effects of plans.
3. Plan without reservation to mould the non-human world to the rational* advantage.
4. Beware of human psychology (desires, power) as the driving force behind ethics and politics.
5. Use the rules of interpersonal affects to the rational* advantage.
6. Be tolerant of the passions of others.
7. Beware of the affective image of money.
8. Beware that positive affects are fact excessive.
9. Beware of your limitations as planner.
10. Use democratic deliberation as source of information and accountability.
11. Beware of your own vulnerabilities as planner.
12. Keep working on yourself as ethical project - a more virtuous person is a more virtuous planner.

extra material

Appendix I

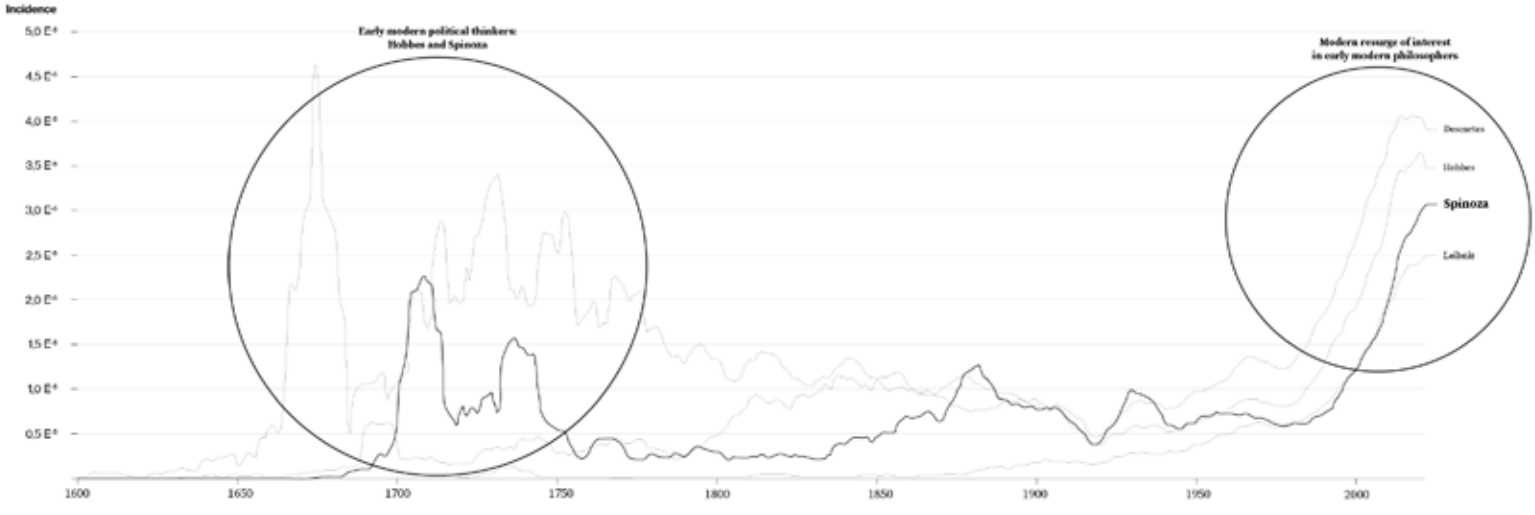
APPENDIX I

INCIDENCE ANALYSIS VIA GOOGLE NGRAM

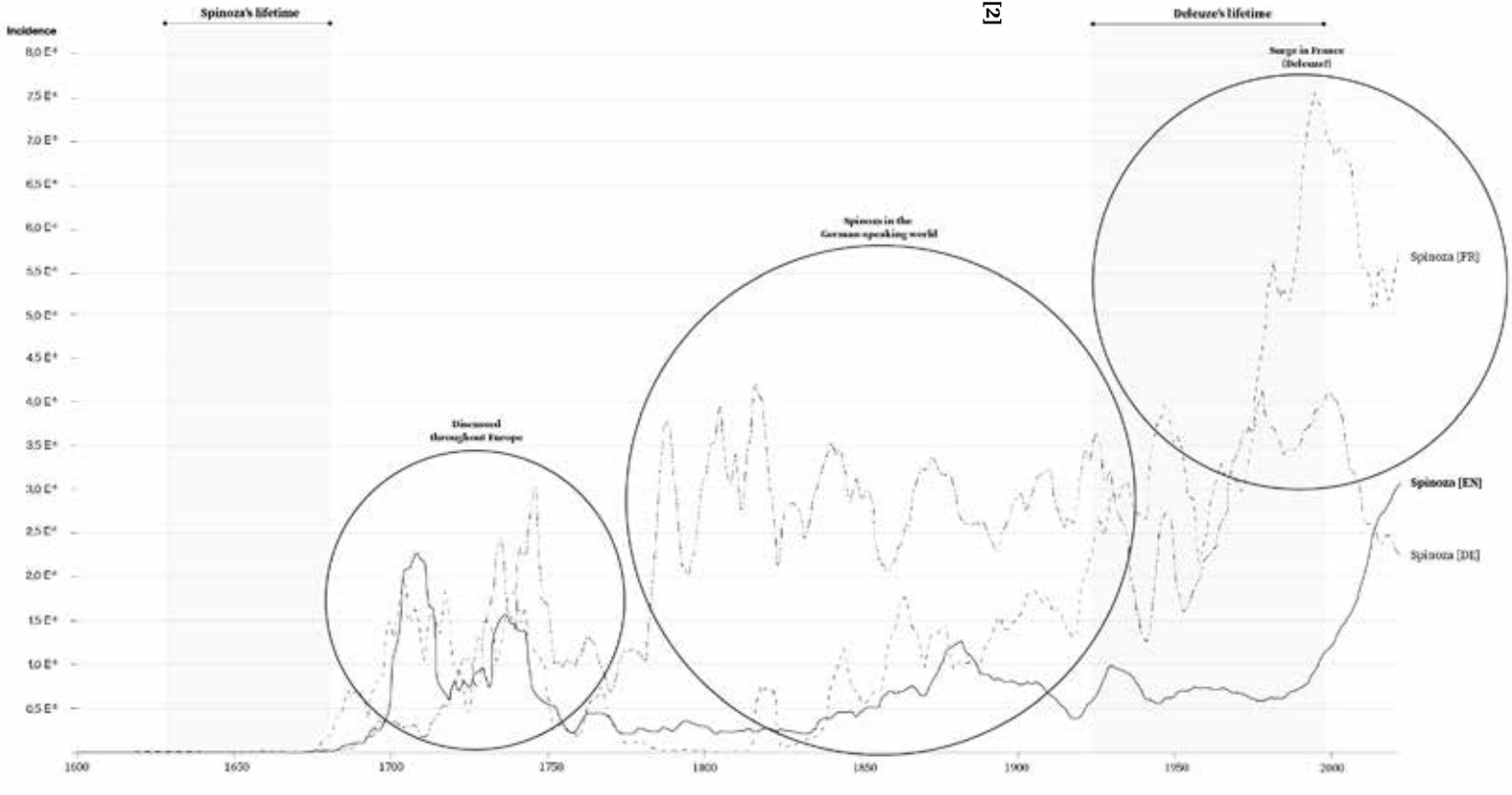
The statement on the 'Spinoza revival' in wider society (page x), based on the incidence of the word 'Spinoza' in all english-language works (at least, all works that can be accessed via Google (*Google Ngram*)) can be nuanced on two counts.

First, looking at figure [1] (next page) we can see that this revival is not just occuring to Spinoza: it is early modern philosophers in general. From this graph it can be seen that Spinoza and Hobbes were widely discussed in the 17th and early 18th centuries, and are both truly 'reviving' today; added to which are philosophers that previously never were so engaged with: Descartes and Leibniz.

Second, looking at figure [2] (showing Spinoza in German, French and English language areas) we can see that the English language area is "catching up". Moreover, the historical pattern of Spinoza studies neatly shows up: in the 19th century, Spinoza-scholarship was chiefly located in German speaking areas; in the 20th, and most likely under the influence of Deleuze, in French speaking areas.


Incidence
5.0 E⁻⁶
4.5 E⁻⁶
4.0 E⁻⁶
3.5 E⁻⁶
3.0 E⁻⁶
2.5 E⁻⁶
2.0 E⁻⁶
1.5 E⁻⁶
1.0 E⁻⁶
0.5 E⁻⁶
1600
1650
1700
1750
1800
1850
1900
1950
2000
Early modern political thinkers: Hobbes and Spinoza
Modern resurge of interest in early modern philosophers
Descartes
Hobbes
Spinoza
Leibniz

[2]

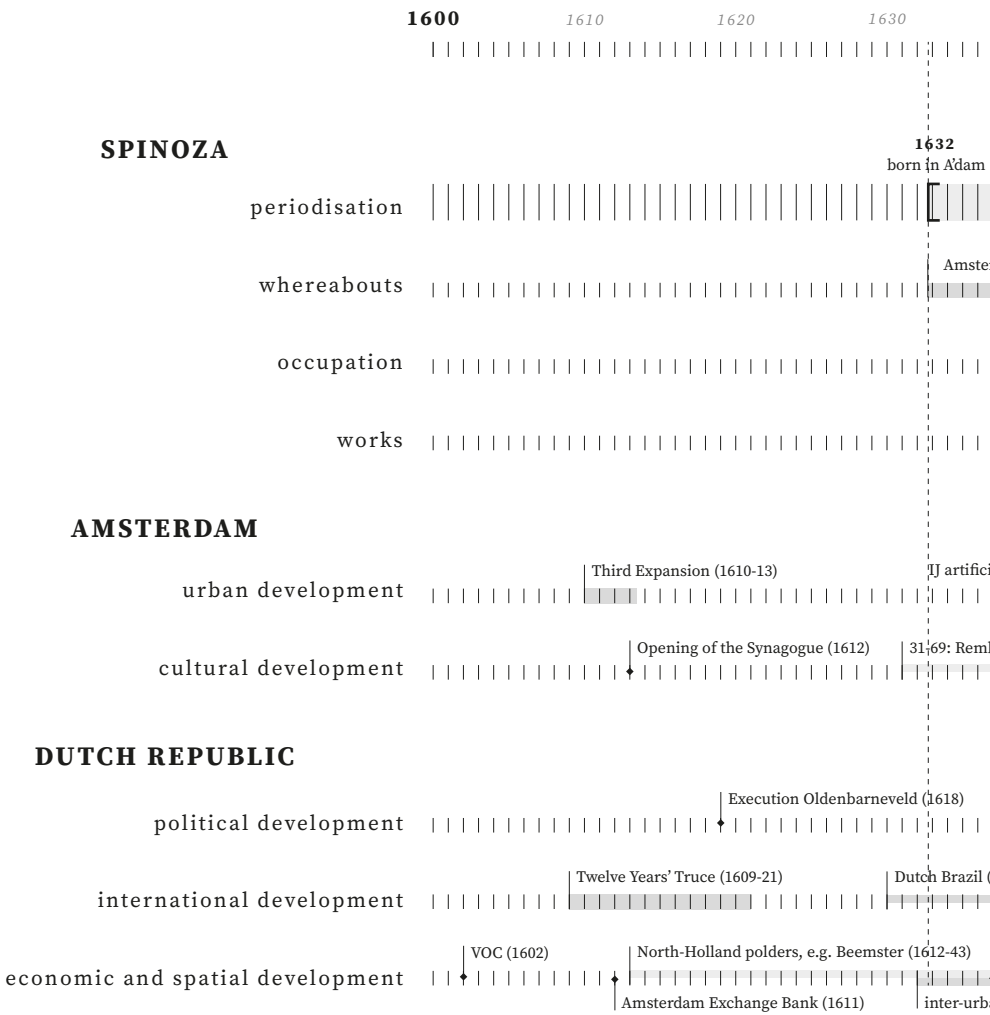

Spinoza's lifetime
Deleuze's lifetime
Incidence
8.0 E⁻⁴
7.5 E⁻⁴
7.0 E⁻⁴
6.5 E⁻⁴
6.0 E⁻⁴
5.5 E⁻⁴
5.0 E⁻⁴
4.5 E⁻⁴
4.0 E⁻⁴
3.5 E⁻⁴
3.0 E⁻⁴
2.5 E⁻⁴
2.0 E⁻⁴
1.5 E⁻⁴
1.0 E⁻⁴
0.5 E⁻⁴
1600
1650
1700
1750
1800
1850
1900
1950
2000
Discussed throughout Europe
Spinoza in the German-speaking world
Surge in France (Deleuze!)
Spinoza [FR]
Spinoza [EN]
Spinoza [DE]

extra material

Appendix II

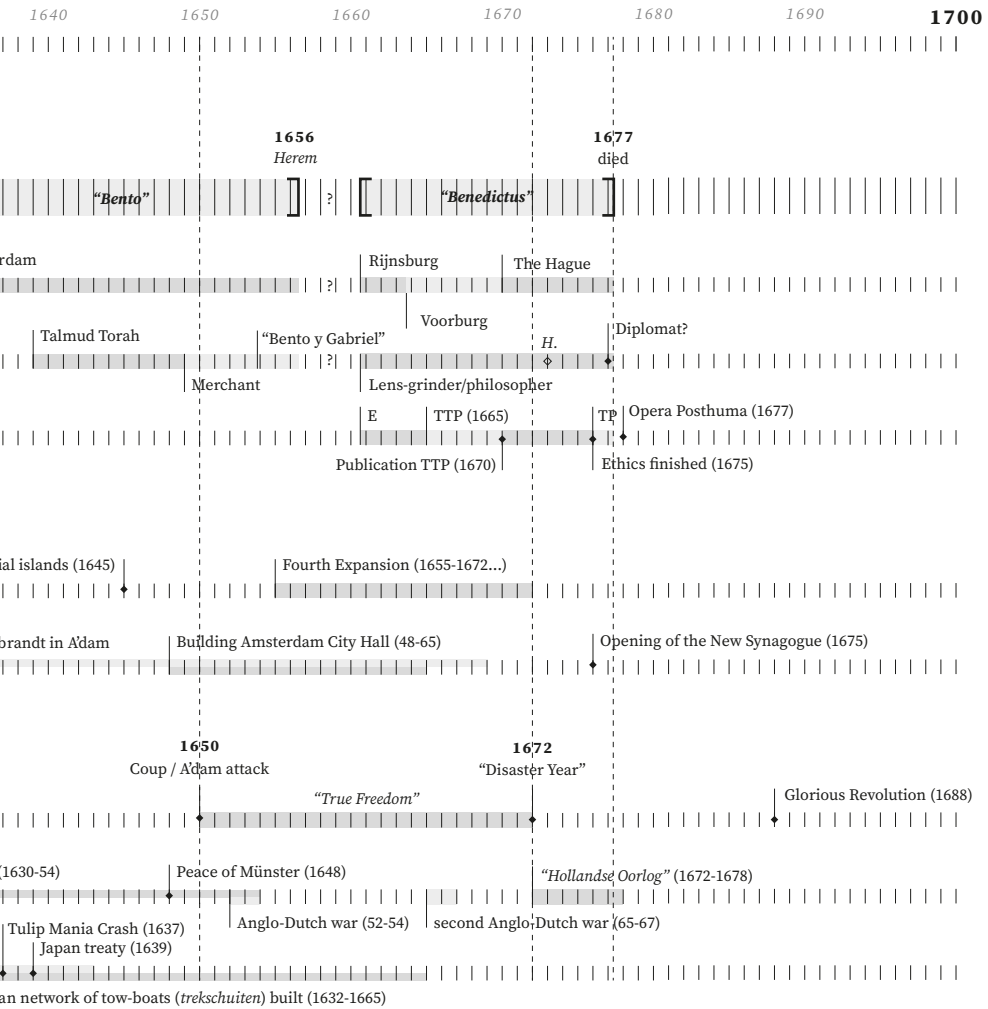
SPINOZA IN THE

A TIM



DUTCH REPUBLIC

IELINE



COVER IMAGE

Paintings used to create the cover image:

Hirszenberg, S. (1907). *Excommunicated Spinoza* [painting]. Wikimedia Commons. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hirszenberg,_Spinoza_wykl%C3%AAty_(Excommunicated_Spinoza),_1907.jpg

Hilverdink, E.A. (1889). *Jodenbuurt in Amsterdam* [painting]. Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eduard_Alexander_Hilverdink_-_Jodenbuurt_in_Amsterdam.jpg

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