

Minisymposium

TAKING ACTION ON PLANETARY HEALTH

case studies

Tuesday Oct., 17th, 2023

Honours course UvA and VU

19:00 - 21:00 Lecture hall in 'De Volharding' in ARTIS, Amsterdam.

Hosted by prof dr Remco Kort & dr Hans C Ossebaard

(1) 19:05 – 19:15 **A microbial metropole**

by Line Lange (Political Communication, UvA), Eveline Soetens (Medicine, VU)
& Robert Cornelis (Social and Cultural Anthropology, VU)

The short documentary “A microbial metropole” explores how Amsterdam's microbiotic diversity can be improved upon through urban planning. In a series of interviews, the makers explain the importance of microbiotic diversity, and showcase solutions that are proposed and implemented by both academic and private stakeholders. What kind of impact will these plans have on the cities of the future? And what will the Amsterdam of tomorrow look like on a microscopic scale?

(2) 19:20 – 19:30 **TATA Steel and its impact on planetary and human health**

by Sara Böhm (Media & Information, UvA)

Air pollution, rising rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, and criminal investigations. All these are consequences of TATA Steel's factory at its location in IJmuiden.



For years now, negative news has been circulating around the world's geographically most diversified steel producer. But what exactly are the consequences? How can they be proven and what can we do to counteract them? To get to the bottom of it all, this case study is a comprehensive examination of the impact of TATA Steel's operations on planetary and human health with special reference to air pollution.

(3) 19:35 – 19:45 **Microbial Impact on Immune System and Human Health**

by Salma Mohamadi (Medicine, VU) , Meryem Aydođan (Medicine, VU) & Takehiro Tsurumi (Artificial Intelligence, VU)

The modern lifestyle in urban areas restricts the opportunity to train an immune system because people can only interact with limited kinds of microbes, such as human skin



microbiota, in the indoor environment. This trend initiates the uneducated immune system, meaning it did not have enough data to learn how to control its activation. Consequently, a relentless active immune system causes chronic inflammatory diseases. The aim of this research is to empirically investigate and untangle the complex link between a less diverse microbiome and its impacts on the immune system and human health and to provide possible ideal suggestions in daily life to improve the preceding conditions. \

(4) 19:50 – 20:00 **Reviving Amsterdam’s Urban Biodiversity: A Planetary Health Approach to Rewilding**

by Emilia Hofmann (Psychology, VU), Joāo Maria Castela Simāo (Computer Science, VU), Zazie van den Hurk (Psychology, VU)

The loss of biodiversity in its urban surroundings is a huge challenge for Amsterdam, a city renowned for its beautiful canals and active urban life. The city’s expansion and development have harmed its inhabitants and the ecology by causing habitat loss, pollution, and reduced green space. By concentrating on a specific issue connected to the reduction of urban biodiversity and offering creative and practical solutions, this case study project on Planetary Health and Rewilding in Amsterdam seeks to address this issue. The ecological balance of the



city, the welfare of its citizens, and the health of the world as a whole are at risk due to the reduction in urban biodiversity in Amsterdam, which is made worse by elements like urbanization, habitat fragmentation, and pollution. The problem identified within this case study is the dwindling population of pollinators, such as bees, within Amsterdam's urban areas. In response to this question, we propose a comprehensive solution involving the following key elements: public awareness, rewilding initiatives, and community engagement. We present our “bee wild” rewilding bag containing essential products and materials needed to establish a rewilding spot. These tool bags are designed to be accessible to residents of all backgrounds, including beginners with no experience in rewilding. This initiative empowers individuals to actively participate in rewilding and contribute to a healthier and more biodiverse urban environment.

(5) 20:00 – 20:10 **Destination Plan Lutkemeerpolder**

by Mohamed Jama (Medicine), Stef Rutte (Sociology), Dominique Adriaanse (Law)

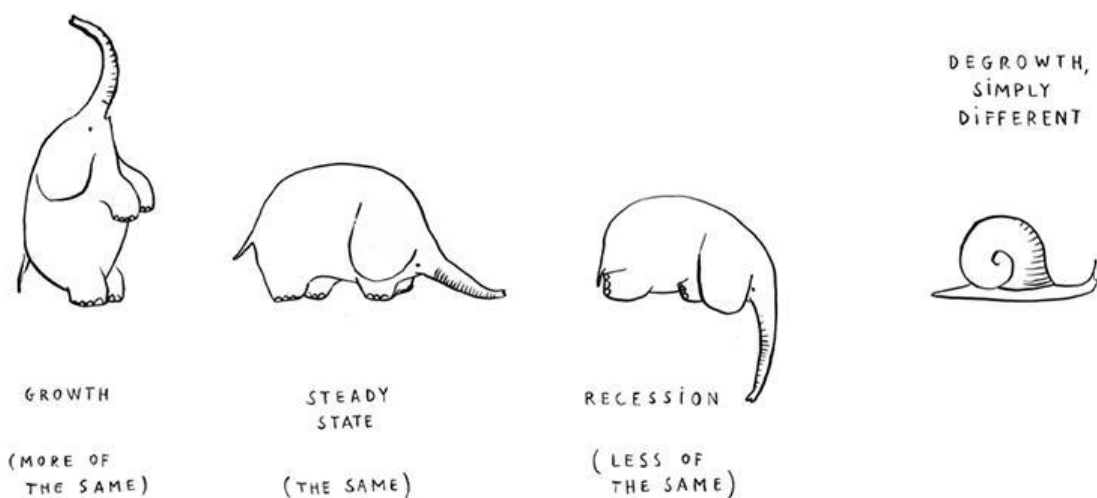
With the city of Amsterdam quickly expanding, space is getting more scarce. The question that arises is how should space be used. While everybody has got their own idea of what has to be done with the space that is left, we are focussing on the ideas of the government of Amsterdam. Our focus lays on the Lutkemeerpolder. This case is especially interesting because there is a conflict between a group that is in favour of keeping the Lutkemeerpolder as agricultural land and a more commercially orientated group SADC, which aims to develop the land as a distribution centre. This conflict between immediate economic gain and protection of nature, which provides benefits that are not specifically economic, is exemplary of the conflict we face in making decisions on the climate crisis. We are gonna research which of the two plans fits the best within the policy as stated by the government of Amsterdam, to finish off the research we are going to give an advisory opinion.

20:10 – 20:20 BREAK

(6) 20:20 – 20:30 **Degrowth and planetary boundaries**

by Bartosz Belina-Prazmowski

With the rising severity of environmental degradation and urgency of reducing it, the world is desperately trying to find a solution to this crisis. As for 2023, humanity has crossed 6 out of 9 of planetary boundaries. To be able to prevent the transgression of these limits the world needs drastic, systemic changes. The failure of the idea of green growth pushed humanity to explore new ways of containing planetary boundaries in systemic terms. Economics of post-growth, although confronted with many obstacles of economic, social and political nature, offer an impactful solution to the problem of bringing human activity within its safe operating space. Considering, however, that the climate crisis requires an answer to issues such as society's destructive mindset of consumerism and productivism, degrowth has a considerable impediment in front of it.



(7) 20:30 – 20:40 **The power of visualisation: casus Earth Overshoot Day**

by Dovydas Vadišius (Computer Science, VU) & Melissa Vlasblom (Human Movement Sciences, VU)

Earth Overshoot Day is the day in the year in which the number of natural resources that Earth can generate within a year - biocapacity is used up by humanity. Throughout the years, Earth Overshoot Day has fallen earlier and earlier, indicating that we, as the human species, are depleting the Earth's resources faster than Earth can recover. Such a fact provides a



powerful message that we need to address environmental issues to move Earth Overshoot Day back to the end of the year. One way of raising awareness is providing visualizations to the public that encourage sustainable living, and this can be done in many different creative ways. The aim of our work is to compare different existing visualizations in terms of objective measures, suggest a list of guidelines to create an objectively good visualization and present an original visualization of Earth Overshoot Day which adheres to these criteria.

(8) 20:40 – 20:50 **Filmmaking in the Anthropocene**

by Justas Baranauskas (Mathematics, VU Faculty of Science)

The case study is on the duality of the influence film has on the climate crisis. Viewing this influence first through the lens of effect on society – everything from informing the public to inspiring action – and then through the lens of impact on the environment with respect to the carbon footprints of film productions – approximating a specific case of the film *Weathering with you* with the use of the calculation of *Wall-E* done by Robyn Ludwig in 2016.

Throughout the duality the topics of importance of films on climate crisis and responsibility of filmmakers are brought to the surface. Noting the steps being taken by the industry to reduce the environmental impact, the study emphasises the importance of further minimizing this impact in order to maximize the positive influence films have on society.

(9) 20:50 – 21:00 **Comparing ‘green cities’: renewable energy policies in Amsterdam and Stockholm**

by Rachel Berghuijs (Economics, VU) & Djura Plakman (Psychology, VU)

This century a lot of awareness regarding environmental challenges has prompted global environmental concerns. This has given rise to the concept of “green cities” or also known as sustainable cities. These green cities are urban environments designed to balance the needs of residents with environmental preservation. While looking at a list of the greenest cities in the world established by CorporateKnights, we found that Amsterdam did not score well on the factor of the policy of renewable energy. Stockholm, the greenest city on the list, did well on that factor. That is the reason, we chose to compare the policies of Amsterdam and Stockholm about renewable energy. While diving into the policies we found that Amsterdam has already implemented policies for transitioning to renewable energy, such as increasing solar energy



use and usage of wind turbines. Stockholm’s policy goes beyond and includes energy reduction measures such as energy-efficient buildings and carbon taxation, making it a frontrunner in renewable energy policies. In conclusion, Amsterdam should and could learn from Stockholm’s approach regarding renewable energy policies, particularly in energy reduction and renewable energy creation. By adopting these policies Amsterdam can become a greener and more environmentally friendly city.