

Social Lighting

Research into aging in urban public space

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CONFIGURING LIGHT

staging the social

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- How light is socially shaped
- How social research and lighting design can work together
- Light is a socially significant material...
- ... and a strategy for researching wider social assemblages

Academic research

Consultancy

Public engagement

Policy



ENLIGHTENme - Horizon 2020

PROJECTS / RESEARCH



'Publicness' in Elephant Park

CONSULTANCY / RESEARCH



Lighting Brandon 3

CONSULTANCY / RESEARCH



Disconnected Infrastructures

RESEARCH



Pathways to 'Smart' Lighting

RESEARCH



Barking: Light and Safety

RESEARCH



Inequalities in Public Lighting

RESEARCH / SEMINARS



Place des Fêtes, Paris

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New Lights for Whitecross

CONSULTANCY



Smart Night-time Design

RESEARCH



Project Resist, LSE

PROJECTS



Derby After Dark

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Social Lighting

- Connect lighting to the needs, practices and understandings of *diverse* users (and potential users) of city spaces
- Pro-actively identify, engage and research different users using creative social research methods
- Understanding different user's relationship both to the city space – and to each other
- Connecting lighting to the overall function and feel of the space – for different users



Social Lighting

- **Diversity:** identify and understand the different types of social actors that make up *this* space.
- **Practices:** what are all these people *doing* – or want to do? Can we map the diverse movements, activities and events going on in this space
- **Places:** what kind of space is this for its different stakeholders? How does it work for them?
- **Connections:** how does this place *connect* to rest of city, to its history, to wider movements and social processes outwards





ENLIGHTENme

Innovative policies for improving citizens' health and wellbeing addressing indoor and outdoor lighting



ENLIGHTENme has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement No. 945238

ENLIGHTENme

- To develop evidence-based understandings and guidelines for using lighting to enhance the health and well-being of urban older people
- **Research** the practices and experiences of diverse elderly citizens in order to see what impacts lighting might have on their health and well-being in public and private space
- Co-design **lighting interventions** that address the ways in which ageing is socially, materially and politically *organized* in each city
- **Mixed methodology** of qualitative research, participatory engagement and design intervention

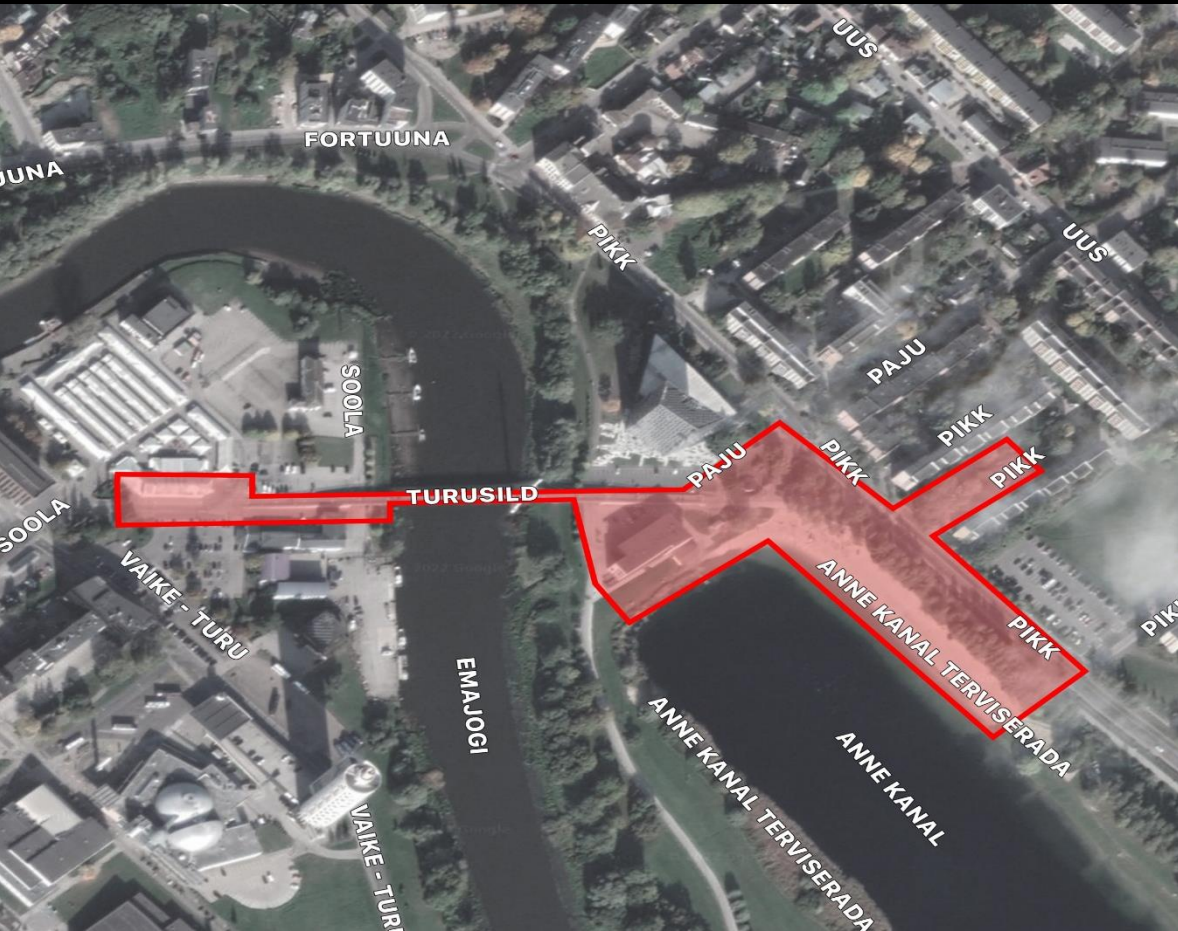


Lighting intervention sites – Amsterdam – Wildeman pedestrian bridge



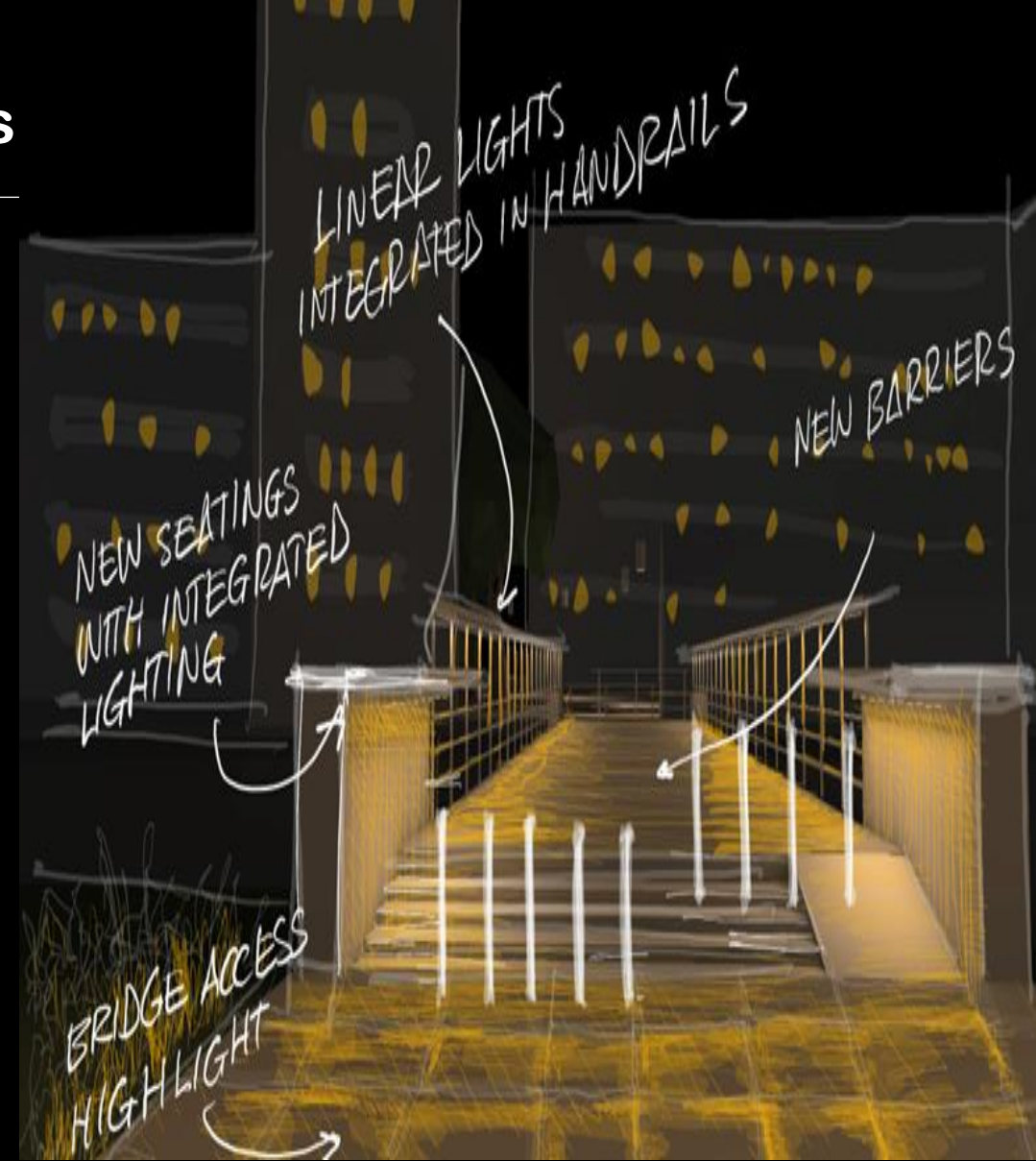


Lighting intervention sites – Tartu – The Beach and the bridge



Social lighting for older people: three issues

- How does social difference impact lighting design?
 - Understanding the scale and complexity of **differences** within and between cities: what do cities *need to know* about older people so they can use lighting to improve quality of life?
- How can we assess strategic lighting interventions in the quality of life of older people (or *anyone*)?
- What should city lighting guidelines, standards and policies *look like*?



How does social difference impact lighting design?

- There is no such thing as *the elderly*
 - 'being older' is organized and experienced very differently both between and within cities
 - Lighting therefore needs to address radically different – and often *opposed*
 - *Everyday practices*
 - *Functional needs*
 - *Fears, insecurities and desires*
 - *Understandings of city spaces, histories, citizenship*
 - *Social relationships such as family, friendship, gender, ethnicity*
- *Social difference analysis:*
 - Being active/active ageing
 - Public space
 - Social connection
 - Social value
 - Care and citizenship
 - Sharing space – identity and ownership



How does social difference impact lighting design? Active ageing and city lighting

- **Bologna**

- 'Being active' means continued participation in informal social contact, including on the Piazza
- Piazza Lambrakis as meeting space, integrating different generations and activities at different times of day
- Older people generally well networked with each other, family and community
- *Informal* networks and self-organization are most valued
- Strong interest in lighting and other provision in Lambrakis to facilitate sociality, activity, interaction.
- Huge enthusiasm for *atmosphere*



How does social difference impact lighting design? Active ageing and city lighting

- Tartu

- Focus on independent activity, self-reliance
- Huge value placed on being active (exercise, hobbies, gardening, being in nature) – but activities are not *social* activities. **Doing** not **connecting**.
- High levels of social isolation post-retirement
- Very low level of civic participation and organization
- Public space valued if it supports solitary activities, including simply being outside. Lighting and design linked almost exclusively to functionality and safety



How does social difference impact lighting design? Active ageing and city lighting

• Amsterdam

• 'Being active'

- White ethnic Dutch: stress 'being active' in organized groups, sports clubs, civic participation and volunteering
- Turkish and Moroccan elderly: 'being active' defined in terms of family, mosque and immediate community, and not wider neighbourhood

• Public space

- White ethnic Dutch: city spaces as signs of historical decline and danger; nostalgia for lost civic life
- Turkish/Moroccan: public space is not a relevant concept, as opposed to 'meeting places'.



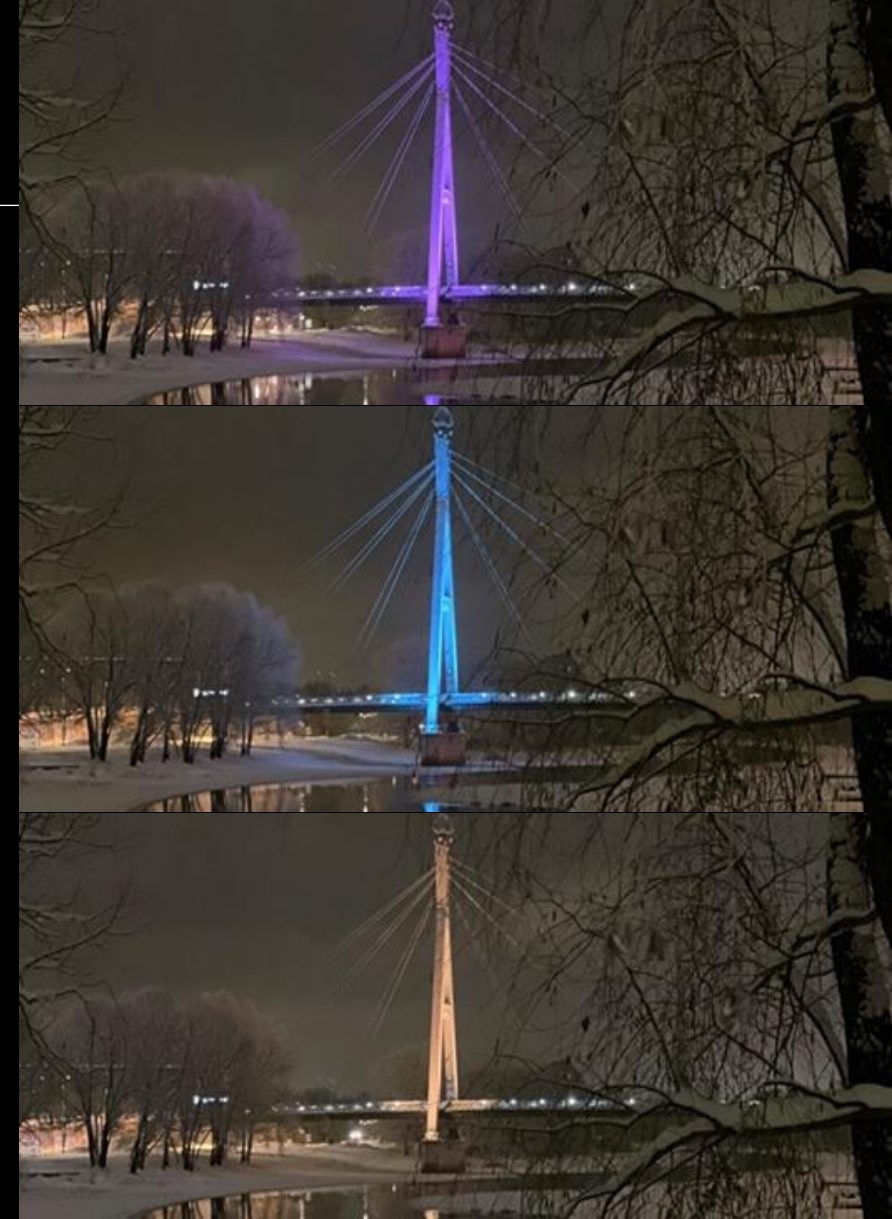
Assessing lighting interventions in the quality of life of older people

- 1. People know and care very little about lighting:
 - Isolated measures and questions produce nonsensical results
 - Process of learning, engagement, discussion required to reach minimum levels of 'validity'
- 2. Light is a *relational* material, not an isolatable 'independent variable' with impacts
 - Need to research light as one element within larger material assemblage, wider material cultures, strategies of spatial design
- 3. Units of analysis
 - City professionals generally frame lighting in terms of fixed *lighting points*
 - For older people, the important framework was always *journeys* (or paths and practices)



Social lighting: guidelines, standards and policies

- Demand for single numerical measures of optimal lighting to be rolled out via city guidelines, international standards, urban policy
- Simply not possible given both *diversity* and *relationality*
 - Universal standards ignore the issues, they don't solve them
 - Conversely, new lighting technologies, design approaches and city engagement make possible more flexible and responsive city lighting
- ENLIGHTENme Guidelines –a 'strategic approach', not technical recommendations
 - Generating knowledge of diverse social groups should be central to urban design policy, planning, design and post installation refinement. Requires both proactive social research and teams of all relevant professionals and community groups
 - Urban lighting/design should be framed as an iterative, experimental learning process with multiple responses and assessments over time
 - Researchers and designers as mediators of a process not producers of conclusions or solutions



Guidelines

<https://www.enlightenme-project.eu/>

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