

THE PARTICIPATORY TURN IN URBANISM

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Introduction: The Participatory Turn in Urbanism

Maroš Krivý and Tahl Kaminer, editors

Aporia of Participatory Planning: Framing Local Action in the Entrepreneurial City

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An Anthropology of Urbanism:**How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)**

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Cooperatives, Control or Compromise?**The Changing Role of Participation in Norwegian Housing**

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Review Articles by Eva Maria Hierzer and Philipp Markus Schörkhuber; Monika Grubbauer; Jenny Stenberg, Socrates Stratis, Henriette Bier and Yeekee Ku, and Maroš Krivý

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Introduction: The Participatory Turn in Urbanism

Maroš Krivý and Tahl Kaminer, editors

In the last decade, a 'participatory culture' has evolved and expanded dramatically, advocating participation as a radical form of direct democracy and demanding its implementation outside the traditional territory of institutional politics. Fuelled by innovations in the field of information technology, such as Web 2.0 or social networks, within the fine arts this emergent movement has brought about a 'participatory turn'. The new aesthetics related to this turn have been enthusiastically theorised and endorsed as 'relational' (Nicholas Bourriaud), 'dialogical' (Grant Kester), 'collaborative' (Maria Lind), or simply 'social' (Lars Bang Larsen).¹ This participatory turn has also been subjected to a critical examination. Claire Bishop, in particular, showed that the promise of equality between the artist and the audience is problematised by the outsourcing of authenticity from the author to the audience, and by the excessive deployment of ethical, non-aesthetic categories such as 'demonstrable impact' as a means of critical evaluation.²

The participatory turn can also be identified in urban planning, urban design and architecture. In these fields, as in others, the 'turn' is necessarily also a 'return' of sorts to the ideas and ideologies of the 1960s, an era in which participatory demands were backed by influential and radical political movements. The origins of participatory planning can be thus traced back to concepts of advocacy (Paul Davidoff), equity (Norman Krumholz), and transactive (John Friedmann) planning.³ In various ways, the notion of public participation was central

to ideas as diverse as the 'Non-Plan' of Reyner Banham et al, Giancarlo di Carlo's 'Urbino', or Jane Jacobs's 'diverse city'.⁴

Whereas participatory planning remained important in much of Latin America, in Western Europe it has been integrated into planning policies in diluted forms such as 'public consultation'. In the United States, many of the Community Design Centres established in the late 1960s and early 70s ended up by the late 1980s as low-profile and limited-impact neighbourhood organisations. The realisation of the Non-Plan in the development of free enterprise zones, such as the London Docklands, has been acknowledged by Paul Barker, one of the authors of the original proposal;⁵ the lessons learnt at Urbino have been mostly forgotten, overwhelmed by individualist-consumerist forms of participation, such as the 'shopping list' consultation process of the WIMBY project in Hoogvliet, whereas the 'diverse city' has fostered gentrification and mutated into the 'creative city'.

The explicit demands for inclusive, legitimate forms of sovereignty and for the decentralisation of power, which are at the core of the political demands for participation, infer an ideal of freedom – from the state, from top-down power structures and from institutions. The recent Occupy and Tea Party movements, for example, manifest two forms of systematic dissatisfaction with the state and with representative democracy that have emerged in the wake of the recent financial crisis. In spite of

their contrasting political orientation, the critique of state politics and emphasis on citizens' direct power lie at the core of both movements. Yet, as this radical freedom posits autonomous subjects as its end, the idea of collectivity is weakened, relegated to the state of a contingent, fleeting, social grouping, valued primarily as a counter-force to that of government.

Also bypassed is one of the original arguments for participation: giving voice to the subaltern and expanding political equality by expanding social and economic equality. As Boris Buden recently argued, a concern for 'community' and 'culture' has replaced 'society' as the horizon of contemporary politics.⁶ This is evident in urban practices. Related to the 1990s concern with programme, the dominant model for activism and experimental (albeit increasingly mainstream) practice has become the participatory platform, focused on community consolidation and on facilitating cultural expression and identity formation. Yet such platforms tend to have a fleeting existence, and consequently also a limited impact. Where, when, by whom, for whom, for what (and whether) they are implemented is rather arbitrary; often, the creation of participatory platforms reproduces the inequalities against which they were tailored. The vulnerability of communities, the themes of grant programmes, architects' idiosyncratic interests or the presence of 'enlightened' clients is decisive for shaping the structure of participatory practices in today's cities.

Many of the urbanists and architects currently involved in participatory practices, such as Atelier d'architecture autogérée, Stalker, or raumlabor, react to contingent conditions and tailor their projects and methodologies to the situations they encounter, yet the specific practices deployed have significant ramifications, which are rarely considered beyond their immediate impact. Diverse forms of participation, different types of representative or participatory institutions, disparate protocols for

deliberation, will-formation and decision-making, necessarily correspond to diverse democratic political theories. Among these are associative democracy (Paul Hirst, Joshua Cohen), communitarianism or 'neo-corporatism', republicanism (Hardt and Negri), direct democracy, deliberative democracy (Habermas, Dryzek, Benhabib), and agonistic pluralism (Mouffe, Barber),⁷ to name but a few. Each of these theories tends to privilege different social configurations and different processes of democratisation, and therefore participatory practices require more than a reaction to visible, existing conditions in situ. Theories mediating between political theory and urban practices are few, and often limited in their scope and rigour. By strengthening such theories, by articulating a socio-historical perspective which contextualises the specific tactics of participatory practices, the latter's efficacy and larger societal role can be properly and fully assessed.

To place 'the participatory turn' in a socio-historical context illuminates its underlying logic. While the 1960s call for participation certainly embodied a commitment to equality, to empowering the subaltern, it already clearly expressed an anti-statist position, with the centralised and powerful welfare state as the major adversary. Empowered by state retrenchment, in the ensuing decades, many of the original 1960s critical advocacy groups were, in fact, invited to participate and take responsibility. Planning bureaucracies, as mentioned above, responded to the discontent by incorporating participatory processes into their protocols.

Forty years later, national and local governments have retreated from many of the territories they had previously occupied, including managing urban development and constructing social housing. In this process, the empowerment of the 1960s advocacy groups has also allowed their co-optation: they are required to compete for funding and, in effect, function as private-market entities.⁸ A broadening of freedom may be discernible in all this, yet the

weakening of the state has strengthened citizens *qua* entrepreneurs (of themselves) rather than strengthening them *qua* political actors. The state, the sole power capable of keeping market power at bay, thus appears to be a bogus enemy of many contemporary participatory movements. At the end of the day, anti-statism can instead be held suspect of primarily aiding the expansion of the market in the name of empowering 'the people'.

The co-opting of participatory processes by planning departments, the systematic disregard of inequalities, and the empowering of the market resulting from 'anti-statism' call for a rigorous evaluation of the participatory turn. Does it necessarily leave inequalities intact? Is it a means of achieving 'quietism' by placating the lower middle classes? The objective of this issue of *Footprint* is to critically examine the recent participatory turn in urban planning and urban design. While the 'right to the city' has an important strategic value in fighting social and urban exclusion, it is less capable of responding to contradictions resulting from urban policies of inclusion. What does the advocacy of popular participation by planning authorities, urban policy strategists and international urban consultants mean? Why is participation encouraged, and who is giving the encouragement? What do different social actors understand by participation? Can the notion be opened up by asking: participation by whom, where, and to do what? And how should we respond to a frustrating awareness that the promises of equality implicit in every participatory act are recurrently compromised by inequality between those who stage the participatory process and those who are invited to participate?

This issue of *Footprint* opens with Ryan Love's critique of the institutionalisation of participation, a synoptic overview that addresses issues ranging from culture to power. Though quality (of life) is now decidedly among the key objectives considered by planners, it is also something to be assessed and

evaluated by disinterested experts and professional consultants. Top-down, state-led bureaucracy has been replaced by market-driven bureaucracy and horizontally dispersed management models, in which citizens, private corporations and public bodies are considered as mere 'stakeholders' of the same order.

Brooke Wortham-Galvin broadens the territory and discusses the unfolding of participation, including the related questions of freedom, autonomy and self-organisation, through a number of projects and initiatives from the past and present. The particular focus of her paper is on the Occupy movement and on homesteading practices in their historical and contemporary variations. When she asks 'For whom is the extra café seating in Portland?', she queries everyday urbanism and its assumptions.

Camillo Boano and Emily Kelling study the *Baan Mankong*, an ambitious housing project in Thailand. They deploy Jacques Rancière's work as an explanatory theoretical framework, albeit inferring, though refraining from explicitly arguing, its reversibility: namely, that Rancière's theories can also become the point of departure for concrete projects. Focusing on the phenomenon of community architecture, the authors see its political role at two levels: firstly, the residents' involvement in the actual design challenges the standardised bleakness of 'housing for the poor', and secondly, repositions them as active partners in design expertise.

Julia Udall and Anna Holder raise important questions regarding the real-estate market, power, and participatory initiatives, by reviewing a project in which they took part. The authors draw on J.K. Gibson-Graham's concept of 'diverse economies' to analyse how participatory practices tend to be evaluated in terms of their market-related economic value and, consequently, how practices that cannot be evaluated in these terms are made 'invisible'.

Karin Hansson, Love Ekenberg, Göran Cars, and Mats Danielson provide an overview of participation that interweaves questions of deliberative democracy with cultural and artistic production. They outline fieldwork carried out in Husby, a suburb of Stockholm, in which questions of community-building, local pride and image overlap issues such as employment, housing quality and availability, and education. The authors identify 'recognition' as one of the key prerequisites for successful participation and analyse how it is shaped by media representation.

Eli Hatleskog presents four housing development projects in Norway and analyses participatory urban design and policies as a means of revealing the transforming characteristics and logic of participation. Hatleskog traces how early egalitarian impulses were exhausted in the stigmatisation of housing cooperatives during 1980s-90s and in the associated emergence of private home ownership as a new promise of individual liberty. Questioning the association of participation with the practice of collecting individual 'wish lists', as manifested in the most recent case study, Hatleskog asks how participation can become relevant today.

The review article section begins with a paper by Eva Maria Hierzer and Philipp Markus Schörkhuber, which uses Foucault's argument to discuss participation. Taking the Berlin IBA 84/87 project as its focus point, the paper studies municipal strategy towards squatting and urban regeneration. During the 1980s, uncooperative squatters, labelled as 'bad', were separated from 'good' squatters, who were included in the planning process and were later instrumental in the IBA's subtle approach to urban renewal. The case study exemplifies the authors' assertion that critique is the very infrastructure through which spaces and populations are governed.

Monika Grubbauer studies BMW Guggenheim Lab's Berlin 'residency', unfolding the debate and controversy surrounding the project, and using it as a means of identifying the co-optation and institutionalisation of participatory and interventionist projects. Grubbauer analyses how the project promoted DIY practices and staged the city as an experimental laboratory, yet the implemented forms of participation failed to challenge the social divide in any significant way.

Jenny Stenberg's discussion of two projects in Hammarkullen in Gothenburg focuses on the intertwining of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches in the planning of this disadvantaged neighbourhood. The planning profession is conceived in the tradition of advocacy and action planners, and the active role of citizens' participation in progressive institutional change is identified. Stenberg frames participative planning as complementary to representative democracy and as a potentially successful channel for voicing dissatisfactions in districts with low electoral turnouts.

Socrates Stratis outlines a project in Nicosia that underlines the importance of context: the manner in which operations and practices that might seem benign in one condition are actually conflictual and provocative in another. Although the project in question failed to realise its desired objectives, Stratis asks whether this 'failure' has nevertheless produced merits and values in the course of its unfolding.

Henriette Bier and Yeekee Ku introduce digital urbanism and its participatory promise via a critical review of a number of recent projects in the field. Fully versed in debates on parametric and generative design processes, Bier and Ku nonetheless raise the question of the contrasting technocratic and democratic tendencies of these methods.

Maroš Krivý closes this issue with a review of the 2013 Tallinn Architecture Biennale, highlighting the debates and discussions surrounding the question of architecture as politics, which suggest that the 'aesthetic' understanding of 'good' architecture as autonomous of external constraints still has a hold on some scholars and architects. Here, Tallin's specific condition as a 'Westernised', historic post-socialist city served to bring to the fore contradictory notions of 'participation'.

This issue of *Footprint* thus seeks to expand the discussion of the 'participatory turn' and strengthen its auto-critical and reflective dimension. Considering the dissipation of the earlier participatory movement, whether as a result of co-optation, failure, or loss of interest, and noting the significance and urgency of the questions that the ideal of participation posits to urban designers and planners, this issue and its articles are an attempt to steer this loose movement in a direction that would benefit cities, their residents and society at large.

Notes

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2. *Participation*, ed. by Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel, 2006); Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012).
3. Paul Davidoff, 'Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 31, 4 (November 1965), pp. 331-38; Norman Krumholz, 'A Retrospective View of Equity Planning. Cleveland 1969-1979', *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 48, 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 163-74; John Friedman, *Retracking America: A Theory of Transactive Planning* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1973).
4. Reyner Banham, Paul Barker, Peter Hall, Cedric Price, 'Non-plan: An Experiment in Freedom', *New Society*, 13, 338 (20 March 1969), pp. 435-43; Giancarlo De Carlo, 'Architecture's Public', in *Architecture and Participation*, ed. by Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till (London: Spon Press, 2005 [1969]), pp. 3-22; Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1993 [1961]).
5. Paul Barker, 'Non-Plan Revisited: or the Real Way Cities Grow. The Tenth Reyner Banham Memorial Lecture', *Journal of Design History*, 12, 2 (1999), pp. 95-110.
6. Boris Buden, *Konec postkomunismu: Od společnosti bez naděje k naději bez společnosti* (Praha: Rybka, 2013) [orig. Boris Buden, *Zone des Übergangs: vom Ende des Postkommunismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009)].
7. April Carter, 'Associative Democracy', in *Democratic Theory Today: Challenges for the 21st Century*, ed. by April Carter and Geoffrey Stokes (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp.228-48; Paul Hirst, *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994); Joshua Cohen and Joel Rogers, 'Secondary Associations and Democratic Governance', *Politics & Society*, 20, 4 (December 1992); Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, ed. by Sayla Benhabib (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996); Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993); Chantal Mouffe, 'For an Agonistic Model of Democracy' [2000], in *Hegemony, Radical Democracy and the Political*, ed. by James Martin

(Oxon: Routledge, 2013), p. 191-206 ; Chantal Mouffe, 'Radical Democracy or Liberal Democracy?', in *Radical Democracy: Identity, Citizenship, and the State*, ed. by David Trend (New York; London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 19-26.

8. Margit Mayer, 'Neoliberal Urbanization and the Politics of Contestation', in *Urban Asymmetries: Studies and Projects on Neoliberal Urbanization*, ed. by T. Kaminer, H. Sohn & M. R. Duran (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2011), pp. 46-61.

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Aporia of Participatory Planning: Framing Local Action in the Entrepreneurial City

Ryan Love

Since the 1970s, planning reforms have on the whole been responsive to local demands for greater citizen involvement in politics, following decades of contentious renewal programmes that had effectively ousted community voices from citywide decision-making processes. No longer, in consequence, are the affairs of municipalities unilaterally brokered by that same circle of paternalists and highwaymen Jane Jacobs famously railed against a half century ago. On the other hand, never has the project of urban planning been so fractious as it is today, as a result of the growing tensions and inefficiencies caused by greater fragmentation of the political process. As more actors make their way onto the political stage, consensus becomes all the more difficult to achieve. Further contributing to this complexity has been a sharp concentration of capital investment in cities, which, over time, has led to a veritable shift in the way local governments both orient and orchestrate themselves. Today's answer to top-down, state-led bureaucracy, it would seem, is side-to-side, market-driven bureaucracy; which of course begs the question as to how effective such horizontally dispersed management models can be in an environment marked simultaneously by the rapid retrenchment of central government and the aggressive rebounding of private finance. What the localist element in politics has no doubt won over the years in terms of achieving greater representation, democracy and transparency in matters of governance, it has also arguably lost in terms of its capacity to protect these achievements in the face of an increasingly pervasive economic sector, which

has by now all but reduced the managerial role of the city to that of its entrepreneurial partner.¹

While there continue to remain notable variations in terms of the actual content and implementation of urban policy frameworks worldwide, there can be little doubt on the whole that decentralist and partnership strategies over the last three decades have disproportionately set the tone of local leadership mandates - most noticeably in the Western territories.² That the sovereignty of city-regional governments has generally foundered due to a chronic persistence of budgetary deficits, structural unemployment and diminishing state support - to say nothing of the recent waves of economic stagnation imparted by still ongoing financial crises in Europe and the US - is surely a reflection of the long-standing (read: post-Keynesian) liberties enjoyed by speculative capital and its reckless, unpredictable and uncontrollable path-trajectories. In such a context, indeed, it matters little whether local policy makers *actively choose* to articulate market-based ideologies in order to solve current fiscal and regulatory dilemmas, so far as in all cases they will still be confronted by a deeply entrenched, ultracompetitive and crisis-prone operating environment.³ Cut off from all other conceivable revenue paths, the only way forward would appear to consist on the one hand in a differential rolling-back of various public initiatives (i.e., collective redistribution and social welfare provision models) and on the other hand in a rolling-out of new, capital-intensive growth strategies geared towards the total marketisation of

city space and privatisation of municipal resources.⁴

A word on generalities

That a certain degree of abstraction is needed to chart the vast institutional landscape in which cities operate, testifies to the extreme global exposure local policy networks are now compelled to face. No less compulsory for theory, alternatively, is the need to anticipate the constantly shifting character of this landscape - whose contours vary precisely to the degree that they are historically, geographically and culturally embedded. In truth, it is no longer possible or desirable to adopt a single, monolithic concept of 'the city', nor for that matter of 'city planning'. Rather, in enlisting such terms it is understood that we are here working less with ideal types than with distinct varieties of a pervasive and enduring global phenomenon - namely, the rationalised projection and institutionalised management of social and urban infrastructures. While the idea of planning does suggest a certain ubiquity to the extent that it deploys a largely *disciplinary* narrative of the city, it is nonetheless significant that the 'actually existing' territorialised manifestations of this narrative are unevenly constituted across space and in time. Accordingly the real historical-material base of planning will differ depending on whether one is addressing North American, Western European or Asian contexts.⁵

To the extent that modern planning regimes work toward an ideal of undistorted communication, some form of rationalism must be said to inhere in each of its localised versions. Such a general rational insistence, so far from being anything like a sovereign spirit or omnipresent *logos*, is what makes possible in practice the coming together of a loose group of city-specific agencies - formed of various elected officials, urban planners, policy makers, legal practitioners, advisory experts, administrators and so on - as well as what enables a broad set of spatially dispersed practical acts, occurring at multiple territorial levels and reflective of a wide variety of

interests, to converge in more or less concentrated fashion. It follows that the full remit of planning's agency, while directly *inclusive* of local leadership structures, is not by any means *exclusive* of other, openly formative influences. This means, crucially, that in addressing questions of consensus-building and decision-making in local city contexts one must also examine how these dominant discursive processes intersect with existing hegemonic institutions and power configurations. To speak of the agency of planning is thus also to speak of the wider set of agencies that play a direct facilitating role in shaping current valuations of urban space. In many cities of the industrialised West, for example, one finds a greater significance accorded to the notion of the 'stakeholder' as an effective category in local development approval formats. Hence a large corporation that owns property in the city centre, while legally barred from participating as a citizen in the planning process, is still considered a major stakeholder and so obtains a higher, even privileged, standing under that rubric.⁶

This distinction, between the contingent relativity of cities and the confluence of hegemonic logics that bind them, stands in our view as paramount. For only at this juncture is it possible to ask whether the more salient features of what we are here calling *urban entrepreneurialism* - understood as the natural extension of market ideals, partnerships and competitive discipline to regimes of urban management - do not owe themselves precisely to this deep collusion of political and economic imperatives at the rational-justificatory level. In what follows we shall try to examine what becomes of local citizenship practices in such a context, beginning from the standpoint of real structural factors intrinsic to modern regulatory forms and institutions - which, as we shall see, tend to project a permanent 'blind spot' with respect to certain valuations and points of view - and ending with a summary of the new challenges facing localism in an era in which City Hall has all but lost its capacity to project a coherent

path for communities in the face of prevailing market forces.

Incompatible discourses

It is necessary to emphasize, in the first place, the role of legality in directing the terms of meaningful, that is to say consequential, engagement in cities. To the extent that the system of law lays the legislative framework for processes of urban governance and development to take place, every localised act, in order to achieve political efficacy, must be carried out in strict conformity with this framework. Thus a factor of formality is immediately implied by the notion of civic participation, *vis-à-vis* its subordination to instituted legal norms. This formalism ensures that legal accountability, not to say risk, is evenly and manageably spread across all sectors of urban life, such that every act, every decision, can be accounted for. The essence of planning lies precisely in this transfer of formality from one level, the rational-judicial, to another level, the daily concrete interactions of the city. Only to the extent that rational ends can be successfully translated into material reality by way of their formalisation into discrete, administrative steps, can their actuality as ends be secured. This suggests likewise that any individual form of conduct carried out in the public sphere can be equally legitimised or de-legitimised depending on its degree of compatibility with the various legal mechanisms, that is to say, on its potential for rational-judicial integration, which in turn demands that an overall adjustment of forms of conduct take place - so as to meet the criteria for compliance. Whatever end is to be expressed must bow to the predetermined categories that cover it; no expression outside of these categories is permitted, if indeed the mandate of total accountability is to be fulfilled. What counts above all are those aspects of everyday existence that can, in the final analysis, be called to account. In this way planning aspires to a complete, determinate reflection of the built environment *vis-à-vis* its socio-legal projection.

Contemporary affirmations owing to the flexibility and dynamism of new planning regimes do not make the rule of their supervising bureaucracies any less strict. This holds especially true where so-called subjective descriptions of the metropolis are concerned, in other words those accounts of everyday urbanity in which the contingency of identities is held as central. Examples of such a discursive orientation range from local phenomenologies of place to ideologies of cultural heritage; from notions of performance and place-based art practices, to discourses of urban flanerier or psychogeography. Each of these specific modalities speaks to what Ben Highmore calls 'the traces [or] remainders of the overflowing unmanageability of the everyday', or again what John Roberts has defined as 'the space where non-instrumental possibilities can be tested and defended.'⁷ Invariably such a trace/remainder must elude the myopic outlook of planning, whose predilection for procedure leaves it quite unable to broach let alone comprehend such an epistemological stance. Indeed whatever exists in the mode of the qualitative or experiential can carry but little weight in the rational schematisations of planning. That such questions should resist any easy identification with the categories of management is no doubt due to the impossibility of their being framed in strictly manageable terms.

This positivistic slant, and the one-sided evaluation it leads to, cannot but severely impede the efficacy of local politics, if that politics is not already disposed in advance to planning's rational-administrative outlook. Rather, the value of citizenship practices can only be undermined where institutional norms and procedures are found to set the terms of the discussion before it even starts. Already we have seen that the essence of participatory action - which is tied intrinsically to values of self-determination, place-bound identity and direct democracy - is ever at odds with the heteronomous, already-instituted character of planning. As a result, the integration of forms of participation demands

that action conduce to reaction, that is, to passive, procedural compliance. This, too, suggests that the desire for autonomy at the local level is already crucially compromised by its reflection at the instituted level, a reflection that invariably entails a distortion. Owing to the explicit abstraction at work in every planning decision, participatory motives must find themselves not only practically subordinated to this logic, but tailored in advance to its expectations. What is local, if it is to be communicated at all, is compelled to be general. This 'presumption of equality,' Peter Berger explains, is not simply a technical requirement of planning, but a basic axiom of bureaucratic ethics; strictly speaking it is the basis of its claim to legitimacy.⁸ By its own nature planning tends towards the production of abstract generalities, even where it points to particularities.

While it is true to say that recent reforms to planning have afforded greater protection to localism, such efforts must find themselves systematically disappointed as a result of the enduring universalism inscribed within planning's objective-procedural outlook. That planning seeks above all to streamline the totality of events occurring within its jurisdiction, that is, to formalise them, so as to guarantee for each and every instance a maximum of certainty and a minimum of risk - this inborn tendency is itself seldom recognised as a potential source of tension within the field of city-community interactions, even where consultation with the public is expressly encouraged. On the contrary, forms of concrete individuality are always tacitly expected to be translated into and made compatible with the anonymous terms deemed appropriate for the bureaucratic universe.⁹ The practical effectiveness of planning is thus consolidated by the extent to which the totality of means and ends that it oversees is freed in advance of all subjective, qualitative and contingent factors, thus paving the way for general consensus at the political level - and more importantly, a path for development which has the

appearance of being decidedly non-controversial.

Counterculture as index of immediacy

We have just seen that questions involving subjective concerns do not figure easily into the official deliberations of planning, on account of the latter's misapprehension of the former as a result of a deep, discursive divide. Instead, we find that there is a tendency on the part of planning to construe culture in terms of the official, organised event, whose controlled and pre-programmed character, to be sure, stands a world apart from the spontaneous and improvisational practices of everyday, so-called vernacular cultures. What's more, the increasing focus on business and tourist users in many of these administered events tends to diminish any local sense of ownership or involvement in them. As such they tend to give off the air of a highly mediated proceeding, passively attended and actively supervised. One may well be concerned, indeed, that culture's consolidation at the official policy level threatens to erode what is in truth cultivated about culture, so much as even the slightest determination *ex supra* should signal the transposition of local customs into lawful conventions, of rituals into rules. Such a contradictory result is in fact found to obtain wherever culture and its administration come to a head. One readily observes, for example, how the diversity inscribed in multiculturalism is continually checked by the singularity of the liberal politico-institutional model that contains it,¹⁰ or again how local valuations of cultural heritage tend to belie the 'rooted cosmopolitanism' endorsed by global conservation mandates and doctrinal charters.¹¹ Such familiar frictions testify to what Paul Ricoeur has called 'the unfolding of a single experience of mankind,' which makes necessary, on the one hand, the administration of local experiences 'in order to make a decision possible,' and on the other hand the organisation of discussions 'in order that the largest possible number of men can take part in this decision.'¹² Bureaucracy, or the

rationalisation of power, for Ricoeur, is inextricably tied to the universalisation of democracy. 'No kind of criticism of technics will be able to counterbalance the absolutely positive benefit of the freedom from want and of the massive access to comfort.'¹³ And yet this rationalising tendency, at the same time, would seem to betray a contrary development, insofar as 'the phenomenon of universalisation, while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes a sort of subtle destruction.'¹⁴ Even Ricoeur does not deny the double-edged significance of rationalisation as it pertains to the organisation and institutionalisation of the cultural. What Marcuse calls the 'irrational rest' does well to epitomise what is at stake in this overreaching of regulations into previously non-regulated sectors of social life.¹⁵ That there is in fact a manifest disconnect between the real spaces of culture and the rational space of planning, again points back to the supposition, stated earlier, that there is something intrinsic to cultural experience that leads the latter to reject, unequivocally, the 'one-dimensional' logic of its organisation; that its very affinity with the manifold textures of everyday life should demand a strict partition be installed at their terminus, safeguarding them as it were from being smoothed over.

In his essay 'Culture and Administration', Theodor Adorno speaks of the aporia that must constantly prevail between the absolute purpose of the cultural and the absolute rationality of administration.¹⁶ Culture's institutionalisation, for Adorno, merely represents an 'external affair by which it is subsumed rather than comprehended'.¹⁷ For culture to fend off the ever-present threat of subsumption, rather, it must continually adopt an oppositional stance with respect to the status quo. As legitimate culture is unable to fully capture what is specific to culture, so must there always be a remainder, as the index of individuality - or in Adorno's language, the nonidentical - which escapes all organised attempts to assimilate it. Seemingly arising, then, as a general expression of nonconformity with administered

forms of life - owing ostensibly to the inadequacy of the latter's offerings, which in any case usually carry a price tag - such a residuum or 'alternative' culture, far from being a noncommittal set of diversions from the real world, indeed appears, at least prior to its recuperation by the mainstream, to have much in common with the participatory ethos. Whereas the former assigns centrality to the idea of *self-expression*, the latter posits a need for *self-determination*. Both dispositions, however, are effectively allied in terms of their refusal to accede to the equalising presumptions demanded by the dominant discourse. For what is called 'alternative' with respect to culture is no less than culture's vital protest against compulsory integration, just as the autonomous strand in localism opposes its own incorporation via planning's community engagement protocols. The relentlessness with which planning pursues the subsumption of both culture and community is thus matched by an equal and opposite counterthrust to such initiatives.

Quality assurance

Quality from the standpoint of culture is something that must be opposed to all forms of standardisation, for standardisation is what denies any possibility for distinction. Yet this is precisely what the system of planning calls for, namely, that the notion of quality be recast as something that approaches a universal checklist of equivalences. Quality thus conceived is to bow strictly to the order of technical criteria, which last encompasses everything from design and production specifications, to performance-based protocols targeting areas of utility, efficiency, and more recently, sustainability. Here, too, planning aspires to a complete determination of the practical field in order to gain a maximum return on certainty. As concern for quality resolves increasingly into the one-to-one fulfilling of technical demands, however, questions aimed at raising a more profound awareness of quality become decidedly rare. Indeed the official disinterest met by citizens wherever they would aspire

in a public setting to challenge this kind of managerial outlook, suffices to ensure that such efforts, where they cannot otherwise be reconciled with the practico-technical paradigm, are either quietly dismissed or quickly brought back into the realm of the expedient. The resultant frustration of citizens in having their opinions systematically dismantled by a discourse geared to the demands of disinterested experts and/or interested speculators - who again, by virtue of the eminent reasonableness of their respective positions, find themselves automatically privileged by the pre-established platforms - means essentially that other avenues for activism must be sought, lest 'consultation' become a euphemism for NIMBY-networking, and 'quality' synonymous with the simple raising of averages.

It is clear that the ambiguity surrounding extra-rational categories like 'quality' and 'character' does not sit well with the bureaucratic imperative for complete, conceptual transparency. That planning should sooner be prompted to omit such language from its ambit than attempt to redefine it on its own terms, is naturally to be expected. One outcome of such efforts to secure a 'subjective fix', as it were, is the design guideline, whose function as a quasi-legal planning tool is to open a path to qualitative questions - without, that is, endangering the empirical foundation on which the whole apparatus rests. As such the guideline serves as a vehicle for the grounding and legitimating of planning decisions where these cannot otherwise claim an evidential or justificatory basis for themselves. Here the underlying intention, above all, is to constitute a flexible, discretionary strategy that provides a space for the reconciliation of local interests with larger functional and economic objectives. Scale, height, setbacks, massing, proportions, materials, frontages, finishes, signage elements, sightlines, shadows, sun exposure, etc. - all such localised, area-based indicators are cited by planning as constitutive of the general character of a particular locale or neighbourhood, its 'charm' and 'sense of identity'. Taken together

such details should combine to produce a set of place-specific norms, in the spirit of which, it is suggested, new development will willingly partake. By way of compliance with these norms comes the expectation that within this manageable space the sustainability of communities should be guaranteed for the long haul.

From this perspective, what makes a place evidently boils down to its capacity to be recorded, described and classified, that is, on the basis of its manifest observable properties. Indeed, on closer inspection we find that such a strategy bases itself on that same, positivist presumption that should see in *names* the perfect analogues of the *things* for which they stand. Thus in place of a haptic understanding of specific spatial and/or material qualities, one finds a closed constellation of well-sounding statements, predicated unilaterally on the assumption that concrete things-in-themselves should be fully compatible with the descriptive codes that contain them. Through this distillation of objectivity into highly-ordered taxonomies, it follows that whatever resists being made to order in this way is *a fortiori* cast out, that is, by the self-styling strictures of thought - which should call into existence only what can be safely assimilated to its concept. Consequently only those place-features which may be systematically isolated, tagged and filed away, are finally registered as character-defining - while those least amenable to formal designation are deemed unworthy of official recognition. What is encouraged is not so much a direct, spontaneous dialogue with the city as rather a mechanical recitation of its forms and surfaces. Doubtless this explains the overwhelming presence of visual or image-based descriptors in the design guidelines.- as opposed to, say, tactile, emotive or experiential qualifications, which should prove difficult if not impossible to pin down categorically. Anything that is found to elude the fixity of the definition should rather be hard pressed to find a spot on the bureaucrat's checklist. That planning should ever deign to accommodate

such unruliness, is a prospect whose first condition would be to sacrifice the safety of a sign for the indeterminacy of an impression - a compromise surely none of its representatives should be willing to entertain.

On this point Bernardo Secchi offers the counter-speculation, presumably playing devil's advocate, that 'perhaps there is something which links this effort to speak of the multiplicity of the real, preventing it from being illuminated by a rule of order, a theory, a narrative, to the idea of social fragmentation in which we are immersed.'¹⁸ But if to *speak* for the real means in actuality *abbreviating* it, that is, insulating or bracketing the concrete from all of its sensory and material richness, just for the sake of rendering it intelligible - this effort would then be, at best, wishful thinking; at worst, self-conscious deceit. As it stands, recent attempts to enrich the techniques of planning by introducing *still more* classifications, *more* fine-grained analyses, *more* detailed descriptions - far from steering us out of the dilemma, can only lead to our further entrapment.¹⁹ As Secchi later clarifies:

Few are aware of the gaps which a map, a table, a drawing, a regulatory text, no matter how they are constructed, leave between the intentions and practices of those administrators or citizens who observe them; of the difficulties involved in filling a space with words or images which are inevitably ambiguous and charged with preconceived judgments.²⁰

While one is advised never to stand in the way of progress, one is also all too painfully aware that not all change constitutes an advance. To the extent that the singularity of place is nullified by its reflection in description, so too does the ideology of growth come to reflect little more than an accumulation of stereotypes. Any attempt to thus foster growth 'in the spirit of' a place, can only miss the mark of that place so long as the inner motivation for change remains squarely at the mercy of abstract analytics. What

planning today, on the contrary, proffers in the name of placemaking seldom amounts to anything more than a declaration of goodwill, one that is filled to the brim with enthusiasm but only infrequently lives up to the language. Here the logic of the guideline fundamentally misguides by insisting that compatibility with context can be achieved via a simple and faithful reshuffling of 'built form elements' - as if, paraphrasing Secchi, the mere intention to stay true to a place were proof positive of its practical effect.

Legitimacy outsourced

As to the perceived quality of the built environment - quite apart from its practico-technical aspect - neither the policy statements nor the guidelines, it is true, can be said to offer much in the way of driving meaningful dialogue on the subject. Thus in view of these limitations planning must look to other sources for *prima facie* justificatory support. Here we meet the figure of the design advisor-expert, whose role in the development process is to provide an authoritative voice for planning where it is otherwise not qualified to speak. That the rationalistic tenor of planning should preclude it from having a say where non-rational questions persist, does not stop it from deferring to the expertise of those who have special currency in such matters. To this end the advisory panel (which itself stands as a quasi-authoritative body comprised of architects and other institutionally recognised professionals) is tasked with mediating, among other things, the disorderly divide between aesthetics and technics. As planning's proxy in this regard, the panel proceeds from an aesthetic point of view to assess the merits and/or demerits of a given design proposal in purportedly qualitative terms. Evidently, questions concerning the transformation of the public realm are here offered a place in which to be raised and recognised in an official capacity.

The ideological basis of this strategy is clear enough: by way of affiliation with the discourse of trained expertise, aesthetic judgements are not only

given to assume an air of authority, but the matter-of-factness of a technical appraisal. As Pierre Bourdieu remarks, the most disinterested gaze 'has the privilege of appearing to be the natural one.'²¹ Through this subtle slant, official debate over quality translates into more manageable considerations of 'appropriateness' - supervised by those select few who would purport to stand above the commons while speaking in its name. Far from enacting a mediation of aesthetics and technics, the advisory panel rather ensures their proper conflation. This insight is confirmed by the panel's disavowal of anything that deviates from mainstream practice, ostensibly to show its allegiance with the public interest. By canonising the status quo in this way, it follows that any practice running contrary or peripheral to the official line must not only find itself deprioritised as regards its status, but barred *in toto* from recognition. This structural oversight guarantees that the possibility of establishing a counterposition with respect to the prevailing standard is safely managed at the source.²² Only those attributes that can rather be assimilated to the accepted canons, for which the panel stands as impartial arbiter, are supposed in the final analysis to be valid. This, too, has the effect of inhibiting critique from the outset - 'criticism' having been strictly identified as an internal affair for the panellists to sort out. Popular protest, where it fails to abide by the higher standards of the professional, is by pain of contrast made to look frivolous - dismissed either as ill-informed, laypersons' opinion, or else as subjective, irrational bias. The aesthetic authority of the panel, whose 'quasi-feudal' status (Bourdieu) is secured solely and effortlessly through the force of its credentials, is as such beyond scrutiny; irrational protest cannot win so long as it is pitted against the rationality of experts. On the contrary, it is by virtue of the professional qualification that a single point of view is rightfully elevated to the status of an absolute reference point. Shorn of any air of arbitrariness, of mere opinion, the panel's frame of reference is *per se* identified with pure competence. Thus to challenge

prevailing attitudes from inside the system is to find one's efforts consistently blocked by the *tacit code of expectations* that should maintain the existence of the status quo at any cost. This expectation to adjust one's values, merely for the sake of passing the test of the panel, leads to a state of affairs in which the lowest common denominator in culture - the aesthetic average, as it were - is ironically declared its most advanced representative. 'By producing for a stereotype, one ends up [...] fabricating a stereotype, which explains the rampant academicism of contemporary work, dissimulated as it is behind apparent formal diversity' (Buren).²³ At the same time the manifest partiality concealed beneath the veil of professionalism is never itself put to the test. For the critical voice of the commons cannot but fall on deaf ears if it, lacking all manner of credentials, should ever deign to advise the advisors.

Returning to Adorno's analysis, we learn that 'the judgement of an expert remains a judgement for experts and as such ignores the community from which [...] public institutions receive their mandate'.²⁴ This statement rings no less true for qualitative judgements than it does for quantitative ones. The presumption of equality alluded to earlier here returns in a subjectively mediated form: what counts as valid from the prized standpoint of the advisory panel is, simply by virtue of its authoritative weight, made valid for one and all. Just as the dealer's function in art circles is to commodify the work of art, thus priming it for exchange, so too is the design expert's prime function to generate the conditions for consensus in matters potentially fraught with contention, to wit, aesthetics. Where the practical inconvenience posed by a plurality of voices would otherwise threaten to hinder the smooth course of progress, experts must be brought in to bridge the gap. From the recognition, therefore, that taste is still in need of general management - if only for the sake of streamlining efficiency - it becomes something of an open question whether today what we are seeing in the form of the design advisory panel,

by whose vested authority a spectacularly shallow vision of building culture is touted as if it were the pinnacle of urban placemaking, is not in fact simply a *soft* version of the *hard* paternalism of previous planning regimes.

It is as significant as it is telling that the cultural pretensions of the design expert are not open to examination in the context of public discussions. On the contrary, it remains something of an unsaid premise that the standpoint of the design expert shall enjoy an instant and irreproachable authority over the ordinary perceptions of those actually residing and labouring in communities. To turn such authority on its head, however, would be in effect to liquidate the stock from which the design expert draws her currency, so far as this last proceeds always from a 'specially delimited territory in which everything goes without saying and nothing needs to be justified.'²⁵ Rather, the naturalness with which the design expert operates testifies to the internalisation of her received ideas and attitudes. Far from rewarding innovation, she merely reinforces orthodoxy by turning to self-sustaining, tried-and-tested formulae for success. Such formulae stand, as it were, 'as instances of a legitimation that has congealed and become unobtrusive'. As such the expert is 'able to forgo external justifications and thus give off the heavy scent of immanence, in which the business of art is so fond of steeping.'²⁶ Just as the technicians of planning seek practical reasons for their recommendations, so do design experts take to blogs and glossy magazines for theirs. That the appraisal of the expert should ever itself become the object of public scrutiny, however, is not something that one would expect to find on the advisory meeting agenda anytime soon, lest the arbitrariness announced by the prognosis immediately cast suspicion on the whole affair.

Insider city

We have seen that the project of participatory politics has seldom enjoyed an existence free of

contradiction. To be sure, the grassroots uprisings in the 1960s and 1970s, on which the present-day ideology of participation is founded, had always proceeded in step with a radical critique of institutions, the reasons for which we have attempted to flesh out in the preceding sections of this essay. Once formally integrated into the system, however, the original anti-establishment imperative could no longer be sustained in practice, insofar as the bureaucratic element in society had by no means withered away, as was the revolutionary expectation, but had actually expanded and intensified. As it stands currently, the reality of civic participation finds itself caught in a tangle of paradoxes as a result of its status as an unfinished project. Urban activists in the 1960s and 1970s could hardly in retrospect have anticipated the later cycles of institutional recuperation that were to follow the earlier reformist victories, nor could they have readily foreseen the long period of political and economic retrenchment that, culminating in neoliberalism, would eventually lead to the undermining of local political platforms by the turn of the century.

No longer as a result do the old mantras of self-liberation and self-management carry an effective purchase on the municipal stage, for in recent years the socioeconomic status of the participatory class has gone through a veritable sea-change. In place of an idealism foregrounded by those the likes of Jane Jacobs, we now find the exigencies of a micro-local reactionary politics, or so-called NIMBYism, vying for centre spot on the community consultation platform. That resistance to change should now come to be defined just as much by shared prejudices and mutual concern for property, than by, let us say, an emotional attachment to place, is one of the key consequences of this gradual overturning of participatory motives since the 1970s. While commitment to place still constitutes one of the major reasons for local opposition, this sentiment remains but a faint echo of earlier grassroots movements, whose group solidarity and

coherence in protest, it is true, owed just as much to the historical failure of past planning models as it did to the personal resilience of its heroes. (Indeed the capacity of an out-of-touch modernist planning ideology to serve as a negative rallying point for communities should not be underestimated in this context.) Nevertheless, the potential for said place-values to galvanise opposition by way of emotional resonance seems in recent years to have lost much of its political stock. Where such stimulus does gain ground, it is generally short-lived on account of its ill-fated subjectiveness, a problem we have already discussed at length. The charge of idealism that today is frequently ascribed to such motives - that is, on account of their apparent lack of rational or practical incentives - is of course what leads to their current ideological sidelining as ill-informed, knee-jerk reactions, legally irrelevant and hence unworthy of serious consideration. Consequently the divided status of public participation today - divided, that is, between a protectionist politics on the one hand and a progressive social activism on the other - leaves very little middle ground for alternative notions of collective resistance, particularly as they stand to bear on aesthetic and cultural concerns. Indeed, one of the greatest merits of the 1960s and 1970s critique was its ability to incorporate subjective, qualitative and contingent demands into an overall revolutionary-utopian perspective. By contrast, the ideological dislocation of the meaning of public participation that we are witnessing today should ostensibly pose serious challenges for those seeking to defend a notion of quality in the face of culture's current capitulation to market mechanisms under an increasingly cash-strapped and overburdened City Hall. At the same time, the partial recuperation of the participatory model by an ultra-conservative constituency of homeowners at once signals a turnaround of its earlier status as a radical rallying point for local liberators - to such an extent, indeed, that in place of promoting the public consultation platform as a vehicle for grassroots innovations of all kinds, we now find it increasingly coopted as a tool

for the further consolidation of the local status quo.

There can be little doubt that the systematic incorporation of radical forms of participatory action since the 1970s owes itself, at least in part, to the equally pervasive phenomenon of urban gentrification, through which the gradual buying up and pricing out of low-rent, low-density urban lands has, over time, reconstituted the very social and political fabric of cities. Here, too, we find that existing micro-cultures operating at a subaltern level are constantly under threat of being ousted by their own incubating activities. Recent sociological and geographic studies confirming the steady polarisation of income levels in so-called world cities would appear to corroborate this general, city-wide tipping of the scales, insofar as an uneven distribution of wealth across the territory should mean that individual participatory motives - that is, the personal incentives for becoming politically engaged - should, too, find themselves unevenly represented across the map, as a result of sizeable disparities in the socioeconomic landscape.²⁷ That the field of action in municipal politics should become less tied to public-emancipatory concerns and more to the preservation of private interests, is not in itself surprising, however, if one takes pause to consider the general postwar tendency that would see the old interventionist system of checks and balances eroded in direct proportion as state executive powers over commerce and industry start to wane. In this sense it becomes possible to see the recent private recoupment of participatory action as the local, concrete expression of a more general and diffuse realignment of political-economic forces. Subsequently the structure of citizen engagement under the current neoliberal arrangement must presuppose nothing short of a total systemwide reset, in which local lobbyists are encouraged to exchange old notions of self-initiation for new notions of self-interest. Less a civil disobedient than a committed stakeholder, today's participant finds himself ever ironically in league

with the totalising presumptions of planning - to such an unprecedented degree, in fact, that what once proved an absolute hindrance to the expression of singular values now stands as their perfect ideological complement.

Local action as nonintegrative praxis

The current entrepreneurial climate in cities has made it clear that the discursive terrain on which the formation of local identities is given to play out is, in actuality, far from neutral. Likewise it has been shown that the official celebration of pluralism in 'world-class' city economies is by no means free of hegemonic influence. We have argued that it is not just the perpetual unevenness of social relations on the playing field but the active restrictions arising from the 'rules of the game,' that continue to impede the formation of an alternative participatory politics, not to say public sphere, which would stay true to itself only to the degree that it pursues 'its own autonomous line of force, its own specific trajectory, which is also its meaning.'²⁸ Extending the democratic reach of these rules, on the contrary, should prove purposeful only where greater social or economic integration is seen in the first place as a worthy political pursuit - where localist arguments, in other words, find themselves perfectly amenable to discursive translation so far as they are practically and positively intended at their core.²⁹ Such a positive expansion of the existing lines of communication between distinct political subjectivities, however, can be of little use where notions of *nonintegration* and *noninstrumentality* are in fact the intended objects of a given social subject - objects formed, that is, in a spirit of wilful spontaneity and critical contestation (on the part of a counterculture towards a hegemonic order, for example). Here institutional integration can no more serve as an end for this subjectivity than open dialogue can reconcile the contradictions that *ab ovo* gave rise to it. For a radical participatory politics to remain viable, on the contrary, such a moment of integration or recuperation by a dominant exteriority must perpetually be

held at bay. What we have earlier described as a counterposition, meanwhile, readily acknowledges the alterity that keeps it from comfortably being other within the system, and resets itself accordingly. Far from surrendering itself to the presumption of equality that should compromise its source of identity - such a position strives instead to actuate its own *presumption of singularity*, that is, on the very ground of its adversary. By way of an oppositional incursion into the dominant discursive space of the city,³⁰ participatory praxis conceived as counterposition aims at nothing less than the constitution of a *new* institution, a *new* hegemony - one that indeed fixes the centre of agency nowhere but in itself. Where the current orthodoxy should preclude by way of arbitrary self-privilege the appearance of any radical alternative envisioning of the city, it behoves such praxis to challenge this standard by continually heeding the critical-oppositional element within itself.

** Editors' comment: Against our standard editorial practice and grammatical revision suggestions to the author, the paper has been retained precisely as submitted due to insistence of the author.*

Notes

1. David Harvey, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation of Urban Governance in Late Capitalism,' in *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography*, 71, 1 (1989), pp. 3-17. For a more recent discussion on the subject see Kevin Ward, 'Entrepreneurial Urbanism, Policy Tourism and the Making Mobile of Policies,' in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, eds. Bridge & Watson (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 726-34; and Tim Hall & Bob Jessop, *The Entrepreneurial City: Geographies of Politics, Regime and Representation* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons: 1998), esp. pp. 77-102.
2. Paul Kantor, 'City Futures: Politics, Economic Crisis,

- and the American Model,' in *Urban Research and Practice*, 3, 1 (2010), esp. p. 2.
3. Nik Theodore, Jamie Peck and Neil Brenner, 'Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets,' in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, eds. (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), esp. pp. 16-24. See also Kantor, Op. cit., p. 6.
 4. Relevant here are the North American case studies found in Stefan Kipfer & Roger Keil, 'Toronto, Inc? Planning the Competitive City in the New Toronto,' in *Antipode*, 34, 2 (2002), pp. 227-64; Tim Chapin, 'Beyond the Entrepreneurial City: Municipal Capitalism in San Diego,' in *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24, 5 (2002), pp. 565-81; and Nik Theodore and Neil Brenner, eds., *Spaces of Neoliberalism* (London: Blackwell, 2002). For Western European examples see Philip Booth, 'Partnerships and Networks: The Governance of Urban Regeneration in Britain,' in *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 20 (2005), pp. 257-69; and Falleth, Hanssen & Saglie, 'Challenges to Democracy in Market-Oriented Urban Planning in Norway,' in *European Planning Studies*, 18, 5 (2010), pp. 737-53. See also Paul Kantor & H.V. Savitch, *Cities in the International Marketplace: The Political Economy of Urban Development in North America and Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 2002). For exemplary case studies of the Asian experience see Shenjing He, 'China's Emerging Neoliberal Urbanism: Perspectives from Urban Redevelopment,' in *Antipode*, 41, 2 (2009), pp. 282-304; Bob Jessop & Ngai-Ling Sum, 'An entrepreneurial city in action: Hong Kong's emerging strategies in and for (inter) urban competition,' in *Urban Studies*, 12 (2000), pp. 287-313; and T.C. Chang, 'Renaissance Revisited: Singapore as a Global City for the Arts,' in *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24, 4 (2000), pp. 818-31.
 5. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson, 'Reflections on Materialities,' in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, eds. (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 8.
 6. Mark Purcell, 'Resisting Neoliberalization: Communicative Planning or Counter-Hegemonic Movements?' in *Planning Theory* 8, 2 (2009), p. 157.
 7. Ben Highmore, in *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 26, cited in John Roberts, *Philosophizing the Everyday* (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2006), p. 2.
 8. Peter Berger, *The Homeless Mind* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p. 53.
 9. Ibid., p. 48.
 10. Brian Barry, 'The Muddles of Multiculturalism,' in *New Left Review* 8 (Mar/Apr 2001), pp. 49-71. See also Bhikhu Parekh, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (London/Cambridge, MA 2000).
 11. Rob Lennox, *A Charter for Cultural Internationalism: What are the Limits of a Cosmopolitan Approach to UNESCO's World Heritage* (University of London/ York, MA 2011), pp. 15-28.
 12. Paul Ricoeur, 'Universal Civilization and National Cultures,' in *History and Truth* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 273.
 13. Ibid., p. 275.
 14. Ibid., pp. 276-77.
 15. Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 1964), p. 99.
 16. Theodor Adorno, 'Culture and Administration,' in *The Culture Industry*, trans. by Wes Blomster (London, New York: Routledge, 2004 [1978]), p. 113.
 17. Ibid., p. 112.
 18. Bernardo Secchi, 'Urbanistica Descrittiva,' in *Casabella* 588 (Mar 1992), p. 61.
 19. The irony of the present situation is well captured by the phrase 'flexible standard,' which, inasmuch as it allows a certain element of personal discretion into planning, pushes the bureaucratic imperative of impersonality to its breaking point. Interestingly, however, it also points to the essential arbitrariness of the (law-like) standard. If a degree of variation turns out to have been possible all along, one is able to then question the relevance of that regulation, and perhaps even test its cultural-ideological assumptions.
 20. Theodor Adorno, 'Culture and Administration', p. 62.
 21. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Harvard

- University Press, 1984), p. 56.
22. One thinks in particular of so-called alternative spaces, or the spaces of everyday urbanism, in which the sphere of the banal or outmoded, for example, is appropriated in a deliberate spirit of contestation. It is significant that this conferral of aesthetic status onto sites or objects presumed ordinary or worthless should stand in conscious opposition to the sphere of the novel and extraordinary, in other words to the dominant logic of the official public realm. If, as Bourdieu suggests, all taste 'classifies the classifier,' then the various symbolic struggles effecting between disparate positions and identities cannot possibly find a non-partisan forum in planning, where the institution of privilege decides in advance which values are to be emphasised and which are to be overlooked.
 23. Daniel Buren, 'The Function of the Studio,' in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings*, eds. Alberro and Stinson (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011), p. 115.
 24. Op. cit., p. 128.
 25. Diedrich Diederichsen, *On (Surplus) Value in Art* (Berlin: Steinberg Press, 2008), p. 29.
 26. Ibid.
 27. See, for example, Alexander J. Reichl, 'Rethinking the Dual City,' in *Urban Affairs Review*, 42, 5 (2007), pp. 659-87. See also Hamnett & Cross, 'Social Polarisation in Global Cities: Theory and Evidence,' in *Urban Studies*, 21 (1994), pp. 389-405. For a wider perspective see Sasia Sassen, *The Global City* (Princeton University Press, 1991), esp. pp. 193-320.
 28. Frederic Jameson, 'On Negt and Kluge,' in *October* 46 (Autumn, 1988), p. 159.
 29. The deliberative or communicative planning paradigm, which in many respects is indebted to the Habermasian theory of communicative action, stands as a perfect example of such a fully integrative, dialogue-based planning approach. In recent years this model has rightly come under scrutiny for its inability to effectively withstand and counter neoliberal hegemonic incursions in the public sphere. See for example Mark Purcell, Op cit., pp. 140-165; and Margo Huxley, 'The Limits of Communicative Planning' in *Journal of Planning and Education Research* 19, 4 (2000), pp. 369-77.
 30. Most pertinent to this idea are James Holston's notes on 'insurgent citizenship' in the context of the global south; see his *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), esp. pp. 309-13. Similar notions of the political as counter-hegemonic struggle may also be found in Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2010); and in Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, 'Preface to the Second Edition,' in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (New York: Verso, 2000), vii-xix.

Biography

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An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)

Brooke D. Wortham-Galvin

When subject matter is forced to fit into preconceived patterns, there can be no freshness of vision.

(Edward Weston)

Introduction

The July 2013 edition of *Architect* magazine featured an article entitled 'Newest Urbanism'. In their word play on what design praxis might succeed the popular, late twentieth-century New Urbanism movement in the United States, *Architect* introduced to the uninitiated the concept of tactical urbanism. Their narrative rooted the contemporary origins of tactical urbanism in 2005, with the transformation of a parking space into a small park in San Francisco by the firm Rebar. Defining tactical urbanism as 'temporary, cheap, and usually grassroots interventions – including so-called guerilla gardens, pop-up parks, food carts, and 'open streets' projects – that are designed to improve city life on a block-by-block, street-by-street basis', the article claims that it took this approach to shaping the city less than a decade to mainstream into the practices of U.S. cities and firms alike.¹

While *Architect* used the term 'tactical urbanism' to characterise this effort (borrowing it from the Street Plans Collaborative and their guidebook *Tactical Urbanism 2: Short-Term Action, Long Term Change*), other terms abound: participatory urbanism, open-source urbanism, pop-up urbanism, minor urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, city repair, or DIY urbanism.² The elision of these terms and their definitions does contain overlap, but they

are not exact synonyms. This essay will use the term 'participatory urbanism' to discuss how ordinary people are engaged in making place, and how designers and planners might learn from it.

This discussion of participatory urbanism will describe the context from which it emerged in the United States, define the term and its current manifestation, and describe an early example of participatory urbanism seeded by digital tools, in order to raise questions about the role of participatory urbanism in the making of place in the twenty-first century.

The city by design

At the start of the twentieth century in the United States, urban design, under the aegis of the City Beautiful movement, focused its efforts on the city's aesthetics and infrastructure. Daniel Burnham's *Plan of Chicago* (1909) memorialised his rallying cry 'make no little plans' as it undertook to provide a monumental core framework for Chicago. The graphics of the *Plan* revealed his interest: the drawings focused their detail and energy on significant landmarks, whether boulevards or civic buildings. The rest of the city, where people spend most of their time living and working, was rendered in poche, disappearing into a subtly muted background. In fact, in the case of the Burnham-influenced McMillan Commission Plan for Washington D.C. (1901), the drawings cropped out the extent of the city, focusing solely on the monumental core. It was the federal and symbolic city they were designing: an urban

monument to democracy. Left out of the drawings was the metropolitan city: the District of Columbia as a lived experience.

In the post-World War II environment, concerned by the modernist-influenced *tabula rasa* approach to urban renewal, urban design scholars and architects, such as Colin Rowe, Fred Koetter, Léon Krier and Rob Krier, argued for a form-driven methodology that would shape the city into a sequence of public forms and spaces that were distinct and memorable when set in contrast to the private realm.³ Conventions such as figure/ground, developed from Giambattista Nolli's *La Pianta Grande di Roma* (1748), were used to render the legibility of the public space as a figure in the ground, and the interconnectedness of this space with the streets.⁴ Such conventions became the architect's criteria of well-conceived public space. This plan-based approach, while representing a radical rethinking of city design during the 1960s-70s American renewal-cum-destruction period, has now become a part of the canon. Its ubiquity among urban design firms no longer represents a hypothesis or theoretical speculation about the use of normative types and the figure/ground, but has been codified into contemporary practice and amplified by such phrases and practices as design guidelines, urban and architectural regulations and pattern books.⁵

Douglas Kelbaugh's adroit analysis of later twentieth and early twenty-first century urban praxis in the United States (and as exported globally) assesses New Urbanism as 'an explicit combination of noble ends and practical means' in contrast to Post Urbanism's 'argument that shared values or metanarratives are no longer possible in a world increasingly fragmented [...]'.⁶ The former engages historical precedents, employs typology, and is stylistically neo-traditional (despite protestations of stylistic inclusion, this is the as-built reality of New Urbanism), while the latter manipulates topology 'without formal orthodoxies or principles', with a

resultant focus on surface and skin, in the name of newer freedoms for the twenty-first century global city.⁷ Despite their varied aims and methodologies, both focus primarily on formal and spatial manipulations in order to create (or dismantle) the public realm that we understand as the city.

Despite the conviction of both New and Post Urbanism in their formally-driven design methodologies, it is difficult to ascertain what 'public' really means in the context of the increasing privatisation, globalisation, digitisation and commercialisation of urban space. The term 'public' is invoked often and easily within the design disciplines, and has been naturalised to assume that its definition is universal. The designed city is assumed to be a public space, but what precisely does that mean? It is certainly more than the mere spatial circumscription of a town square or piazza. By defining space as 'public', what are we referring to? Ownership? If so, how does a place like Times Square fit this definition? Even though most of the land that constitutes the space of Times Square is, indeed, owned by the city and is therefore 'public' terrain, the space is not publicly managed. All the structures that define the space are controlled by private interests, and the space itself is dominated by commercial messages and corporate slogans rather than a socio-cultural identity. In this context, it is difficult to distinguish Times Square, the Vegas Strip or Piazza della Rotonda from the shopping mall, which is completely privately owned and controlled. Does 'public' refer to activities? Ironically, in many (sub)urban places it is the shopping mall that has become the new forum, playing host to a myriad of 'public' activities that include senior citizens taking group walks in the morning, girl scout sing-alongs, flu shot clinics, job fairs, and teenagers working hard at doing nothing. Is the public to be found, then, not only in a physical circumscription but also in a set of activities that reinforce community and civic identity, and are therefore culturally conceived as public?⁸

Given that the physical and socio-cultural have

become inextricably intertwined in defining the public, participatory urbanism is useful in unravelling that knot. Even more so, since what is missing from synoptic accounts of the plurality of urban design mythologies in action at the turn of the twenty-first century in the United States, is a discussion of participatory urbanism.⁹

Participatory Urbanism

Conversations about participatory urbanism in the past decade are often framed by unsanctioned efforts and/or by the temporary. Tactical urbanism, as defined by the Street Plans Collaborative, features short-term realistic actions, the development of social capital, a focus on the local, and a phased approach to permanent change. As Mike Lydon notes:

When you're yard bombing something, it's a really cool and interesting piece of public art and it can have some social and political commentary that goes along with it, but the intent generally is not to create a longer-term physical change. Most of the things that we include in the guide generally are aiming at doing something larger. They're not just for the sake of doing it. And of course in a lot of ways, to make that work, you need to have whatever you're doing to become sanctioned or supported, either with funding or with being allowed by the municipality.¹⁰

The distinction Lydon makes is an important parsing of the various participatory urbanism efforts. Activities such as guerrilla gardening, weed bombing, chair bombing, yarn bombing, ad busting, camps, food trucks, pop-up town halls, Depave, PARK(ing) Day, parklets, Street Seats, Open Streets, Build a Better Block and Parkways get merged together with no distinction. To wit, the Seattle chapter of the AIA held an exhibition in Winter 2013 that featured parklets, guerrilla gardens, yarn bombs, temporary infill, retail housed in shipping containers, sticker bombing and more besides, all curated as falling under the rubric of creative urban inventions.¹¹

Many of these activities involve revising or reinterpreting existing infrastructures for alternative purposes, with a sense of socio-political agency underlying the action. They operate outside officially sanctioned structures as they temporarily claim public or private infrastructures for protest or other cultural practices. While these projects are communal, hands-on and sometimes critical, they are ephemeral additions to the built environment, not permanent ones. They eschew the slow moving and often costly bureaucracies of professionalised urbanism (proffered by planners, architects, landscape architects, preservationists and their ilk), for flexibility, rapidity, dynamisms, and what Kelli Anderson terms 'disruptive wonder' or I call 'making the familiar strange'.¹² They seek to disrupt naturalised assumptions and defy conventions about how and/or where we live. In this version of participatory urbanism, the city is seen as a (public) democratic process, not a (private) consumable product.

The difference, as Lydon notes, is that some of these activities, such as yarn, chair or weed bombing, ad busting, and guerrilla gardening, fall more into the vein of performance art and provocation than occurring with an eye to permanence.¹³ These often illegal works are proffered to provoke conversation for a day, but once out of sight are often out of mind. At the other end of the spectrum, food trucks, pop-up retail, and Street Seats are ways for commercial enterprises to make private, entrepreneurial incursions into the city (whether selling food or jewellery for personal profit, or designing outside café seating in a former parking space as Portland's Street Seats process encourages). Somewhere in the middle of these examples are those activities that started as temporary – often political – stagings, which then became codified processes. PARK(ing) Day is one such example. It began as 'Portable Architecture', a performance art piece by Bonnie Ora Sherk in 1970, in which she began converting pavements into parks in San Francisco. This action re-emerged in 2005, again in

San Francisco, with the transformation of a parking space into a public park. Within six years this transformation became reified as PARK(ing) Day and had spread globally: thirty-five countries across six continents reclaimed 975 parking spaces.¹⁴ The ultimate codification came in 2013 when the city of Portland established its Street Seats programme, which permits businesses to build small 'parklets' in current, on-street parking spaces. In the trajectory described above, municipal resources in the form of parking spaces are first transformed into an artist's provocation, challenging the use of those resources (should city rights-of-way be for cars or for people?); second, into small public spaces for people to use and share at will; and, finally, for private interests to expand their resources (café seating, while enlivening the pedestrian experience, is still privately managed and restricted in its inhabitation). Thus, while participatory urbanism in the media is often characterised as interventions within the city, instigated by activists who want to provoke the allocation of space and resources, it is also happening via government-sanctioned, private investment transforming city resources. The shift in the actors staging this urbanism has consequences regarding the actions themselves. While parking spaces turned into places for people to sit may superficially all seem alike, ownership of those parklets affects how public these spaces truly are. For whom are these Street Seats?

Participatory urbanism is therefore not only a subaltern cultural movement, but also a mainstream one. The 'who', or actors, of participatory urbanism range from those on the outside to those who are in power. Participatory urbanists are activists, neighbours, groups, non-profits, developers, businesses *and* city governments. The variety of actors represents a continuum of action, from the illegal and unsanctioned to those codified into regulatory processes and laws, with the former often prompting the latter, such as PARK(ing) Day, Build A Better Block, Depave and Open Streets. Moreover, these actions

take place on both public and private sites, often merging and/or conflicting the two interests.

Participatory urbanism as defined in this essay affirms much of what Lydon parses. It is urban action that is small and/or incremental, it responds to immediate needs that engage discourses of publicness, it stewards change that is wanted (defined by a specific group of people), and it can be implemented relatively quickly with low initial investment. Participatory urbanism is not defined by who is leading it (ordinary citizens, activists or professional experts), but by the actions taken (small, but tangible), how they are taken (quickly), and their tangible impact. Participatory urbanism is *not* professionally led charrettes stewarding large-scale development projects (often masquerading as community-based design).

The activism of the 1960s-70s in the United States prompted professionals interested in community-based design to co-opt the term charrette in order to promote a more public-oriented design process. The charrette has re-emerged with new strength from its 1960s-70s launching, in large part due to the success of the New Urbanism movement and, most recently, from a post-Katrina desire to help revive the Gulf Coast region. In the New Urbanists' desire to establish strong neighbourhoods, both formally and socially, they use the charrette as one of their formidable tools, alongside form- and typology-based codes. Within their paradigm, the charrette becomes a way to facilitate change in participants' perceptions and positions, with the end goal being the acceptance of a given design. But what does consensus mean when the desire is to change people's minds in order to have them agree to a design? Do the plan and its support derive from the charrette, or are they preconceived? And if the latter is the case, then for whose benefit are the review, critique and refinement that takes place during the charrette: only the participants and not the designers? Has the charrette become a

mode for defusing implementation disputes rather than one for collaborating on critical questions and seeking potential answers within a community? If public space and urban design are to be embedded in the cultural construction of place, then residents should not be seen merely as an audience to receive the wise wisdom of the expert, but as experts in their own right who bring a large body of local and social capital to the process.

This is why the charrette does not appear on the list of participatory urbanism activities; its use as a community-based tool is too broad in its implementation, too dependent on who is using it and, more importantly, to what purpose. Some design professionals who work intensively with communities seek alternatives to the charrette in order to design *with* not *for* communities. The work of designers like Teddy Cruz, Walter Hood, Bryan Bell and Maurice Cox in projects such as Crown Heights (initiated by architect Manuel Avila) engage alternative practices that elevate residents to experts and give them significant roles in the decision-making process of design.¹⁵ While laudable, this approach does not meet our present definition of participatory urbanism, in which incremental, tangible, immediate action are paramount over (en)visioning and conceptual speculation.

Nevertheless, the critique of the charrette as an expert-driven, value-laden process can be applied to participatory urban activities as well. Certainly this is easiest to observe when the activities are supported by government sanctioned regulations and codes, such as the Street Seats programme. For whom is the extra café seating in Portland? People who can afford to frequent such upper middle-class establishments are the ones whose cultural values and assumptions are now literally expanding into the streets. These café parklets are certainly not mega-projects like Bilbao, and yet, because they belong to the same taste culture, it needs to be acknowledged that this type of urbanism often replaces existing

urbanism with the 'latest and greatest', leveraging the development of this kind of architecture in order to attract the accoutrements of a cosmopolitan experience: fine cuisine, global brand stores, and a thriving nightlight scene predicated on a new sense of 'safety'. And while this constituency has a right to lay claim to one of the city's cultures, this does not mean it should be reified into representing the city's dominant culture under the assumption that this is how all citizens would like to see the individual, 200-square-foot parcels put to use. And, in turn, this does not mean that activist-led urban actions are free from bias either. Activists, non-profits, community groups and similar organisations privilege their own value systems in their desire to transform the city according to their vision.

What also distinguishes participatory urbanism in the United States in the early twenty-first century from other community-based/public interest design is the socio-economic and technological contexts that have fostered its current surge: the economic recession and the emergence of accessible, portable, digital technology. The economic downturn abruptly interrupted big development projects, both public and private. The disappearance of these large-scale projects left communities with a bevy of vacant and abandoned properties, which was further compounded by the demise of smaller businesses caught in the wake of the big money disaster. This made it easier for insurgent intervention to take hold for two main reasons: projects with a small budget could make an impact now that big money was no longer available to overwhelm them, and municipalities were more forgiving of the unsanctioned because these undertakings filled a void of inaction and/or displaced, negative, crime-related activities.

While the economy took a precipitous downturn after 2008, the increase in the proliferation of social media orientated platforms, and the ubiquity of portable devices on which to access them, meant it was easier to mobilise people and resources. As

quickly as one can tweet, one can gather people and resources for action. Facebook was founded in 2004, Twitter in 2006. San Francisco's first renewed interest in turning parking spaces into parks began in 2005 and has reached global proportions in less than a decade. These are not coincidences. This is the foundation for the twenty-first century version of participatory urbanism, which mobilises quickly and disseminates its actions digitally for easy replication – with the Occupy movement as the highest profile example.

Jonathan Massey and Brett Snyder rename participatory urbanism under the moniker 'open-source urbanism' because of how mobile devices and their applications allow 'non-experts' to become authors of how urban spaces are enacted and how public dialogues are shaped.¹⁶ Open-source urbanism takes place in both physical and digital spaces and, as the Occupy movement demonstrated, often a simultaneous dialogue and overlapping between the two creates the participatory realm in which people actively engage their cities, neighbourhoods, and physical public spaces through collecting and sharing data and ideas via digital methods. Massey and Snyder note that the Occupy movement existed virtually before it did physically:

In the months leading up to the first occupation [...] Occupy established an online presence unmatched in the history of social action, leveraging multiple online spaces to stage protests and to generate a distinctive counter-public and alternative polity. [...] In the summer of 2011, before the first protesters had set foot in Liberty Plaza, the Occupy movement was evolving toward a model of General Assembly that hybridized online and offline discourse. While street activists in New York were practicing consensus decision-making in public parks, online participants were responding to a poll Adbusters created using Facebook's 'question' function [...] Through this asynchronous online polling, Facebook supported a weak form of political

discussion that prefigured the stronger and more interactive deliberations that filled Liberty Plaza.¹⁷

The Occupy movement created physical civic infrastructures (temporarily permanent) entirely generated by the participants. What arose across the United States was 'complex, open-source, user-generated urban infrastructure, where creative participation, collaboration, generosity and self-reliance are privileged over the more traditional urban imperatives of commerce and efficiency'.¹⁸ But can Occupy offer a method for bridging the gap between the ephemerality of some participatory urbanism and the desire for *permanent* change in the city? And can these bottom-up approaches ultimately situate everyday people as equal authors in the design of the built environment, alongside architects, landscape architects, planners and preservationists? What really happens when citizens take the shaping of the city into their own hands? And are these citizens just as guilty of leaving people out or behind?

Starting in fall 2011, the mythologies of whether or not the Occupy movement represented 'the 99%' in its entirety gained traction. Two surveys taken that fall were widely reported in the press and opposed some of the myths (the former involving 1619 people responding online and the latter involving 198 people responding in person).¹⁹ Both surveys determined that the Occupy Wall Street participants constituted a mix of ages, wealth, employment and history of activism, and that no one group dominated in any of these categories. Two categories, however, had clear majority constituencies: firstly, on the issue of political identification, 70% claimed to be politically independent; and secondly, 92% were highly educated – defined as having at least a college degree. Not reported in these surveys were gender, race/ethnicities, or place-based identifiers. The purpose here is not to parse the reality of the Occupy constituency, but to acknowledge that the Occupy leadership and 'citizenry' had its own value systems that were physically manifest

in the camps: having libraries, community gardens, and/or day-care in a camp were considered value-laden choices. It is the recognition of value bias in the implementation of city-making processes that is key. Perhaps participatory urbanism is more transparent because its decisions are made out of doors and in view of all, whereas top-down processes opaquely embed values in dense codes, regulations, and Byzantine elisions between public and private ownership and occupation.

Participatory urbanism as currently described, and particularly as framed by the Occupy movement, focuses on actions that impact the perceived publicness of space. But if one follows Léon Krier's formulation, healthy urbanism relies upon a symbiotic relationship between both the *res publica* and *res privata*.²⁰ In other words, the physical fabric of the places where we live and work are just as significant in supporting the physical voids where the public unfolds. It is in the private sphere of urbanism that the nascent intersection between digital and physical participation in enacting the city has also developed – through the reinvention of urban homesteading at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Homesteading in the city

In his 15 September 2005 speech in response to the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina, George W. Bush, president at the time, made a series of proposals that included an urban homesteading initiative. He asserted:

Under this approach, we will identify property in the region owned by the federal government, and provide building sites to low-income citizens free of charge, through a lottery. In return, they would pledge to build on the lot [...] Home ownership is one of the greatest strengths of any community, and it must be a central part of our vision for the revival of this region.²¹

When President Bush proposed that Congress pass an Urban Homesteading Act (that was

ultimately abandoned), he was implicitly invoking a tradition of the homestead as the gateway to community building in the United States. But did Bush understand this intersection and its historical underpinnings and policy implications when he suggested homesteading as a possible means by which residents could participate in the rebuilding of the Gulf Region?

President Bush's homesteading proposal was built on the historical precedent set by President Abraham Lincoln.²² In the face of a socially and economically conflicted nation on the brink of dissolution, Lincoln dramatically altered American domestic development policy by signing the Homestead Act on 20 May 1862.²³ The Act allowed any head of a family aged twenty-one or older to receive a 160-acre parcel of undeveloped land to farm in the American West.²⁴ The first successful applicant was a farmer named Daniel Freeman, who took his family to the Nebraska plains.²⁵ In order to own his homestead outright under the Act, Freeman had to build a home, dig a well, plant crops and live on the land for the next five years.²⁶ Out of over two million homestead claims filed in the 123 years of the programme, more than three-quarters of a million were successful. By the time the Federal Land Policy and Management Act ended homesteading in 1976 (with the exception of Alaska, where homesteading continued until 1986), the Homesteading Act had provided for the settlement of over 270 million acres and affected public lands in thirty states. It also represented the first instance of the U.S. government transferring large tracts of the public domain to individuals. In initiating a homesteading programme, the government staged a participatory process wherein homesteaders ultimately, and probably unwittingly, fulfilled a government driven political agenda about how citizenship would be defined in the United States in terms of both who would own land and what would happen on it.

What began as a political agenda aimed at populating the western territories with settlers who might spread the influence of the Union and contain slavery and secession, ended up dramatically shifting settlement demographics in the United States, and concomitant conceptions of home and community. The Act led to more than the cultivation of crops unsuited to the east, such as corn and wheat, it contributed to the political and regional development of the nation. Homesteaders were a more diverse property-owning constituency than was present in the original colonies, with single women, former slaves and newly arrived immigrants among those filing claims.²⁷

The Act also reinforced American mythologies of manifest destiny and home ownership. It represented a *tabula rasa* attempt to make America not only a geographical reality but also a conceptual one.²⁸ The Act may have attracted a relatively diverse set of people for mid-nineteenth-century America, but its purpose was to mainstream them into a cohesive American polity. It was a way of populating a nation with a fiction more real than the historically available reality: Americans would make communities based on individual stakes. Community would be derived not through physical proximity and socially established and locally based ritual, but through a collectively held identity: the farming pioneer.

When Thomas Jefferson envisioned a thousand-year expansion of America's yeomen farmers cultivating a pastoral landscape (via the Louisiana Purchase), he still feared the influence of mills and factories, not just in their potential urbanisation of America, but also for what it would mean for the polity of the nation. Jefferson's vision for America was expansive in geography but static in spatial form and cultural implication, and actively excluded the urban in the establishment of an American community made up of individual homesteaders. But Jefferson's exclusions would not

matter: modernisation came quickly in the nineteenth century, and this meant that the city became an active site for cultivating the idea of home. As America modernised and the Western frontier closed, issues of home and community moved back to the *urban* frontier. Buzz words such as 'city beautiful' and 'garden city' surrounded these early twentieth-century conversations on how to define home and community in the city, with the discussion reaching its peak after World War II and invoking a new nomenclature: urban renewal.

Urban Homesteading programmes were established in 1973 in the east coast cities of Wilmington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York as one of the myriad responses to urban blight and destabilised neighbourhoods. The basic idea of urban homesteading was to infill city-owned vacant lots and/or fill abandoned homes with families. A year after the programmes started in these east-coast cities, the federal government passed the Housing and Community Development Act, which allowed the stockpile of federally owned homes to join the numbers of municipally owned, tax delinquent buildings populating the homesteading programmes. By 1975, programmes had expanded to twenty-three cities around the country.²⁹

As opposed to the bureaucratically sponsored response to urban renewal, which demolished neighbourhoods in order to build anew, New York's Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB), founded in 1973 by young architects, urban planners, and activists living and working in lower Harlem, supported self-help housing. Formed in the midst of housing abandonment and neighbourhood deterioration, the UHAB set out to help low-income community residents gain control over abandoned, city-owned housing and become cooperative homeowners with a long-term stake in their neighbourhoods. Through UHAB's efforts, New York City now boasts the largest community of affordable housing co-ops in the country, with 1,200 buildings

housing approximately 100,000 low-income people.

In this configuration of home and community, home was a means for social and economic empowerment. Instead of a top-down vision of how to make place in the United States, it was a bottom-up effort that focused more narrowly on making neighbourhoods. Here, home and community did not serve as tools to cohere a broader polity and/or to define what it meant to be American. Instead, community meant a specific group of people whose common bond was their relationship to a specific, physical place. Home was the means by which they would not only *not* be displaced from that specific place, but could, in fact, reinforce and solidify their previously tenuous relationship to place. This configuration of the home-community dialogue took those who dwelled precariously on the margins and reinforced their patterns of culture into ones that were legitimised and stable. Here, a public-private partnership (where publicly owned property has been transferred to private ownership with the assistance of a professional class of experts), achieves parity in the staging of the participatory process by determining who owns the property and what they want to happen on it.

Like New York, Baltimore has been praised for successfully piloting urban homesteading programmes in the 1970s. The Baltimore experience was more typical of city-based programmes than New York's community-based approach, which was less common. In 1975, Baltimore's mayor William Donald Schaefer helped stay the impending destruction of the Otterbein neighbourhood by establishing a homesteading programme. Winners of the August 1975 lottery were able to purchase one of the 110 dwellings for one dollar. Otterbein became America's largest one-dollar homesteading community at the time. Originally home to thriving immigrant families of newly arrived Italians, Greeks, Germans and Poles working on the waterfront, Otterbein is now an upper middle-class

neighbourhood, having pushed out these lower-class residents. In 2002, U.S. Congressman Elijah E. Cummings wrote in the Baltimore *Afro American* newspaper that urban renewal in Otterbein had 'displaced these original, South Baltimore residents [...] with little compensation and almost without a trace that they had ever lived there.'³⁰

Baltimore's engagement with homesteading provided a different penetration of the home-community dialectic, and a different relationship between those staging the participation and those invited to participate. In fact, Cummings' concerns about the changes in Otterbein are not unique to that neighbourhood, with many east coast cities concocting a similar recipe of existing nineteenth-century housing stock and imported twentieth-century residents, now served up as a twenty-first century, upper middle-class enclave. This type of revitalisation was, and no doubt is, good for Baltimore's economy, but what does it mean for the way people participate in the making of community? In Baltimore home(steading) became a vehicle for displacement. Whereas in New York a sense of physical and cultural sustainability was woven into the implementation of homesteading, in Baltimore (and in other places), homesteading was a mechanism for the creation of a *new* community rather than the re-establishment of an existing one. The participants are not from the place but relocate there in order to create a new place more acceptable to the public sector's vision of the city. For a community in the process of becoming rather than surviving, home was the mechanism by which a *new* Baltimore (as envisioned by city leaders) could come into being.

Virtual homesteading

The new Baltimore at the turn of the twenty-first century, however, retained many of the problems of the 1960s and 70s city. Beset by drugs and concomitant crime problems, which began in the 1980s with crack cocaine and have continued unabated,

Baltimore's historic fabric remained largely intact while its social tapestry was unravelling. Areas around the inner harbour thrived with a limited revitalisation from the 1990s, but those beyond walking distance from the harbour remained impoverished. With Baltimore ranking second in the U.S. for abandoned buildings at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the city needed a revised approach to its thirty-year-old homesteading programme in order to continue to reinvest in both the city's social and physical capital. This twenty-first century version of urban homesteading came to Baltimore not from the city government, but as a grassroots effort that demonstrates an early intersection of physical and digital participatory urbanism.

Adam Meister, a native of Reistertown (a Baltimore suburb), had grown up watching Baltimore's constant struggle against urban decline.³¹ A young professional, he decided to do something about it by posting his thoughts on the web:

There is an old saying that goes a little something like this: 'You can't choose your neighbours'. Most of the time when a person or a couple moves into a neighbourhood they do not bring along a friend to move next door. But what if you could do this? Not only would you and a friend move in at the same time, but there would be 15 other friends moving in also. I have been thinking and I realized that Baltimore is the perfect city for such an event to take place ... If 15 to 30 other people just like me, people who were willing to take chances and work hard, bought some of these cheap homes at the same time then we could change the area right away. The fact that somebody with the same goals in mind as you is right next-door will provide an immediate sense of security. Once people heard of these pioneers who resurrected these dead blocks then others would move in and fix up properties.³²

What Meister proposed was urban homesteading, but instead of the homesteaders buying vacant

properties one by one in various locations, he envisioned a collective move into abandoned properties within the same neighbourhood. The project, which garnered the moniker 'buy-a-block' began in the spring of 2002 and was publicised through online forums, in local papers, fliers and through word of mouth. Meister received an immediate response by people intrigued with a collective rehabilitation effort and who felt that the approach would offer safety in numbers as they moved into a blighted neighbourhood. The majority of those attracted to Meister's vision were young, white, urban-oriented professionals looking to live closer to the urban core of Baltimore. Meister coined the term 'rybbie' – risk-taking, young, Baltimorean – to describe the members of his homesteading project. The rybbies focused on location as their project got off the ground. The location issue included not only what was literally available for purchase, but also what they deemed was appropriate and desirable. The group decided on Reservoir Hill, a thirty-two block, residential neighbourhood with little new development, but plenty of vacancy and abandonment since 1940. On the positive side was the architecture. On the negative side, rampant drug dealing and the perilousness of walking to a nearby grocery store.

Despite the deterioration of the neighbourhood, the rybbies were concerned that real estate speculation might drive up the costs if their plans became too public and attracted developers, so they operated as a virtual community with an invitation-only mailing list. Meister believed they distinguished themselves from ordinary real estate investors by their desire to live in the neighbourhood. They were not interested in flipping the properties for profit, but in creating a community with shared values and a liveable environment. To turn their virtual community into a physical one, the rybbies made an offer on the 2200 block of Linden Avenue. All properties but one in this initial phase were abandoned or vacant.

During their physical renovations, the rybbies also formed a block group that actively engaged with existing residents, and sponsored regular neighbourhood 'clean-ups'. Without many years of hindsight it is hard to know whether this homesteading effort will displace the current residents, as occurred in Otterbein, or weave new threads into the old, creating a revised social tapestry. However, because these homesteaders formed their community online it is possible to follow their discussions on the type of urbanism they were trying to create.

Virtually a community

What exactly did Meister's homesteaders mean by community? And how could that fit into the existing neighbourhood in Reservoir Hill? The on-line discussions often focused on common urban amenities like walkability, proximity to recreational open space, ease of commute, retention of the architectural character of Baltimore and proximity to retail establishments. As it became a physical reality, discussions of what they wanted for their virtual community often invoked the brand of Starbucks as a way of circling around issues of gentrification.

mmm...I don't want 'a Starbucks on the corner' I want a community. Proximity to chain restaurants and coffee shops is not a concern of mine at all when it comes to picking my future home. As for commercial businesses in Bevedere Square they are not next door to residential areas the way that Laundromats, Bail Bondsman, check cashing places and the like were in SoWeBo. I do not wish to live next door to a business that is open 24 hrs a day! I can't imagine many people do when there are so many other choices available...The whole idea behind this project is that we are building a community, not a business venture. I want to live in a neighbourhood where I can take advantage of all it offers and quite frankly if being near a Starbucks is your first concern, Baltimore might not be the best place for you to live. I look forward to becoming a member of one of these communities and continuing to do my part to patronize locally

owned businesses and I would hope you want to do the same.³³

While there was a clear dislike associating chain stores and the commercial enterprises with the Baltimore suburbs, it was less clear where the group stood on the issue of gentrification. Although most expressed a disdain for it when directly posed the question, some still expressed a desire for a boutique commercial culture associated with upper middle-class urbanism. In other words, what appealed to some of the group was the type of neighbourhood Otterbein had become. Other postings were more vocal and pointed out the distinction between revitalisation and gentrification.

I think there needs to be a better understanding of what true 'urban living' is before some of you decide to make this life alternating move. Urban living is a mixture of homes, parks, retail (both chains and local) as well as dogs and 24 hour stores. Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't the goal to revitalize a city?? I ask because diversity is the key to doing this and trying to build something Walt Disney would of [sic.] been proud of will never work.³⁴

This poster recognised that 'chain' versus 'locally owned' was still being framed from a suburban, upper middle-class sensibility. The poster's notion of urban living meant an inclusion of chain stores, 24 hour stores, and locally owned business that would support existing needs as well as the growth of those needs. In other words, his/her notion of urbanity was less about a community of shared values than about a heterogeneous civility. In the end, the poster represented what the homesteaders would advocate: an arresting of the potential cultural co-opting of the neighbourhood before it began.

The homesteaders were aware and concerned about their role in the displacement of an already established community. Since the premise of the project was the collective move of an online

'community' formed in cyberspace into real-life geographic proximity, there was a distinct sense of 'us' (the online community) and 'them' (the existing residents). For many, the notion of a collective move into a neighbourhood smacked of a 'white invasion' or neighbourhood coup. Opinions about the legitimacy of such concerns, the quality of the existing culture, and assumptions about how they might be perceived by residents varied greatly, with most agreeing that gentrification was not the goal, even though some viewed it as inevitable. Nevertheless, as the online community discussed their future neighbours, they qualified whom they would be willing (and, perhaps, eager) to have displaced from Reservoir Hill: those who did not own homes.

One thing that must be considered if we're gonna move [...] is NOT trying to get those who own and live there to move out. I have met and talked to a few of them, and they hate living amongst that scene as much as any of us would. [...] My point is that the owners should be thought of as our future neighbours, not those that we need out of the way so we can move in. But of course the renters must go, or be encouraged to join us, so they can own their own home.

The biggest and most effective solution is, was and always will be home ownership... Home ownership is the only way to have a population invested in its city. 20%-30% aint gonna do it. Look at neighbourhood clean ups, get out to vote drives, community gardens, neighbourhood policing. Who is it that participates? Home owners [...] not landlords, not those who rent from them. Are the problems caused by the homeowner/resident? No, of course not [...] property value and quality of life is too important. Landlords, land bankers, low quality renters [...] now, therein lies the problem [...] too many people just passing through.

I will say this, and this is me being frank and honest but some of the comments made about 'lower class' or 'section 8' or 'those people' that you guys in here

refer to is a bit disheartening, teetering on the verge of classism and I'd dare say ra ... you get my point. Not all of 'those' people are lazy, crack dealing, thieving, polluting, section eight receiving, eyesores that some of us tend to describe them as. Just like all of 'you' people aren't really contributing to the upliftment of the community through blindly pointing the finger ... yeah, you see that word, COMMUNITY. A group of people living in the same locality and under the same government. Sharing, participation, and fellowship. PEOPLE make the community, all PEOPLE ... poor, middle class, and upper class.³⁵

The distinction that many online members made between owner-occupants and renters carried value-laden assumptions about who would be an asset to their enterprise, all centring around the notion of home as conveying legitimate membership to a community. Their perception of the existing community relative to their homesteading project is not unique. As Sean Zielenbach notes:

Americans desire to help the less fortunate members of society, yet they also hold strong beliefs in the primacy of the private sector and the importance of individual autonomy and responsibility. Public opinion surveys continually illustrate a widespread belief in hard work as a predictor of success and unyielding faith in the free market as the best means for promoting economic gain.³⁶

In the us-vs-them paradigm, American society makes distinctions between the deserving and undeserving, as evidenced by the commentary surrounding the Hurricane Katrina disaster. Hence the deserving poor of Reservoir Hill are those who demonstrate their worthiness via homeownership, given that forces outside their control have caused the decay of their neighbourhood. The undeserving poor of Reservoir Hill are renters, who are often associated with a culture of crime, seen as causing neighbourhood deterioration and perceived

as lazy and/or morally weak because they have failed to accumulate the wealth necessary for homeownership.

The original homesteading act was about changing the nature of the cultural landscape of America via publicly owned land on which *citizens* would take government sanctioned action. The first *urban* homesteading initiatives of the 1970s vacillated between changing who and what contributed to community in the city and stabilising the extant communities – with the former taking precedence over the latter. Primarily, the twentieth-century urban form of homesteading was a response to the middle, upper, and primarily white, class flight to the suburbs. In order to lure people back into the downtown neighbourhoods, publicly owned property was made available for next to nothing. But the people who invisibly occupied this world of the next to nothing were not a factor in (re)building the city's communities (with the notable exception of UHAB) and were not allowed to participate in their own urbanism. Instead, new participants constructed a government-sponsored vision of urbane living. In the twenty-first century, Meister and the rybbies changed the homesteading paradigm away from publicly sponsored programmes to a citizen-generated shaping of the city. Yet this private effort did not come from the existing urban dwellers but from a group of self-declared 'pioneers', who struggled with issues of inequality among their digitally formed community and the neighbourhood's residents. Although their aim is to create an urban place of heterogeneous civility, their methods and tactics have yet to engage others outside their cultural group.

An anthropological urbanism

The physical deterioration of many of America's cities is not only due to unique circumstances fashioned by natural disasters, but also to an ongoing series of systemic problems: poverty, gentrification,

population decline, vacancy and abandonment, and conflicts in cultural values.³⁷ And although neighbourhood revitalisation usually focuses on physical improvements, it clearly has a social impact. Physical interventions do indeed transform the built environment but they do not necessarily eliminate poverty, nor do they address the socio-economic disparities prevalent in many major (and minor) American cities and suburbs.

The politics of culture are just as important as aesthetic considerations in the complex efforts to revitalise cities. As Roberta Gratz notes: 'No one should want to protect the status quo of a deteriorated neighbourhood. If all change is mislabelled as gentrification without distinctions, the problem of gentrification is not addressed, just ignored'.³⁸ It is important to be aware that many physically deteriorated neighbourhoods can, in fact, be vital as communities if they 'possess viable social networks that function to meet the needs of their populations'.³⁹ Is there a way to balance the micro and macro effects of revitalisation? Is there a middle ground between whole cloth demographic change of the community and stopping the continued deterioration of blighted neighbourhoods? How can cities address these issues to encourage good subcultural networks without exacerbating the segregation of economic classes or discouraging private investment? The answers to these questions need to be made manifest not only through the physical rebuilding of homes, but also through the rebuilding of institutions (both from the top-down and bottom-up), and adjusting public policies and other governmental frameworks to reinforce the viability of subcultural groups within the mainstream polity.

As in 1862, but under very different circumstances, American municipalities today have large tracts of land that are underutilised: primarily, vacant or abandoned ones. Sites in the public

domain could be activated by hosting a variety of groups to stage 'urbanisms', supported by the use of digital and traditional mechanisms to create feedback loops on uses and practices. Privately held sites could be incentivised beyond the current regulations that make lot parking the most profitable use, to promote instead temporary and tactical physical installations that might catalyse more permanent vitality. Participatory urbanism's ability to supplant the few with the many, both in terms of who makes the city and how it gets made, might provide a guiding methodology as long as it is critically assessed: firstly, to understand who the actors are and for whom the actions take place; and secondly, in the case of officially sanctioned provocations, to determine if issues of public and private ownership and the right to inhabitation are being lost in the translation to regulation. Participatory urbanism can promote an anthropologically rich city, a city with a plurality of rituals and dwellings, when it transparently acknowledges who owns the land, who acts on it, whose values are being preferred and how these factors correlate to the physical publicness and occupation of the city.

What participatory urbanism ultimately highlights is the disparity between professionalised discussions of place and those that derive from its inhabitants. Occupy Wall Street was too preoccupied with its agenda – which Kenneth Stahl argues persuasively was the occupation of place itself, not an ambiguously undefined socio-political or economic aim – to worry about how Zuccotti Park would be writ large with stereotypes, good and bad.⁴⁰ If, as Edward Weston says, participatory urban groups achieve a 'freshness of vision', it is when they are not forced to fit into preconceived patterns. The Occupy movement did not reify its creation of an urban realm (or its digital discussions of that creation) into The Paradigm for the built environment; instead, the environments that were made, mapped or recorded revealed the patterns of lived and built culture in their urbanisms.⁴¹ And

perhaps to the frustration of the professionalised built environment disciplines, what they produced, during the conscious participation and documentation of their everyday lives, is often more compelling than the over-planned downtowns or the fictionalised 'new' urbanisms being designed and built all over the United States in the context of local and global development pressures.

In his essay 'The Stranger's Path', J.B. Jackson parses both the elements of distinctiveness and ubiquity in discussing mid-twentieth-century American cities. In this piece he notes the fondness of planners for using Italian public spaces as exemplars for how America should be designed:

I am growing a little weary of the Piazza San Marco. I yield to no one in my admiration of its beauty and social utility, but it seems to me that those who hold it up as the prototype of all civic (traffic-free) centres are not always aware of what makes it what it is.⁴²

Jackson's message is that one can admire the Piazza San Marco, but the reason it works physically, economically, and socio-culturally is because it is deeply embedded in Venetian patterns of living, and that when transported to another locale it loses its deeper meanings and *raison d'être*. It becomes lost in translation when mimicked in various socio-cultural milieux. Like Jackson, we too should be weary of the spread of an American-influenced global approach to urban design, whether within or beyond the borders of the United States. The danger of predetermined formal paradigms, or charrettes that masquerade as community-building exercises, is that place becomes disconnected from people. This disconnect can be seen most vividly in the empty town squares that have littered the New Urbanism, or in the newly branded old urbanism of Quebec, London and Rome, all with their Starbucks, Barnes and Noble and McDonald's. In this context, the space is rendered neutral and devoid of place-ness; it is the global brand that leads to similar

experiences across continents and cultures – as well as prompting the ire of the Occupy movement. In the twenty-first century, public places have become both privatised and commercialised to the detriment of the people who occupy them (the very point made, ironically, by those who encamped in Zuccotti Park). This approach belies that the people are the place. Participatory urbanism demonstrates that urbanism can and needs to be fabricated on more than form alone: it requires transformation rather than imitation, a synthesis of local practices and global economics. And most importantly, it does not need to use consensus building as a means of resolving potential development obstacles, but should instead elevate all involved to the simultaneous roles of expert and audience. In this way place will thrive because it will be derived from an extensive collaboration that raises process over product.⁴³ It is these contemporary examples of place conceived as product rather than process that served as a core rallying point for the Occupy movement, and they also serve to illustrate the disconnect that emerges when designers and planners focus exclusively on the physical.

If we assume that cities are a cultural construct and not a just a physical fact, then what is it that we are trying to make when we place-make? And are there people, buildings, landscapes, sites or other aspects being left out or left behind in the construct of place making? In other words, for whom are we engaging in urban design?⁴⁴ Although those engaged in urban design may believe their values are ‘objectively right’, place-making judgements can be neither objective nor universal because the designers themselves are ‘part of a class group with its own distinct values’,⁴⁵ as are the activists engaged in participatory urbanism. An anthropological urbanism calls for self-awareness by all parties participating in the politics of urban design. In other words, what is the nature of the knowledge base that informs what we mean by place making? What are the assumed values in this knowledge base and

how can we sharpen our skill in recognising potential bias? What are the unintended consequences of expertise-driven design decisions, of grass-roots urbanism that becomes codified, and of issues of equity in the process and products of both top-down and bottom-up urban methodologies? How do we challenge cultural assumptions to ensure the ‘universal’ is not being imposed on the local? And how do we learn to think beyond the replication of a paradigm in order to embrace the particular and let the peculiar thrive? These questions should not be aimed solely at the New Urbanists, Post Urbanists, planners and other professional designers, but also at those who frame and therefore reify participatory urbanism as an alternative, for they also participate with their own preferred set of values in the production of a value-biased city. As Matthew Passmore notes:

[...] technocratic and participatory approaches to urbanism, when combined, offer an extraordinary range of tools for improving the social and ecological health of the city. [...] as San Francisco prepares to spend billions of dollars to upgrade its combined sewer system, it may consider funding—for a scan fraction of the larger project—community groups to build neighbourhood gardens, pocket parks and other landscapes that reduce the flow of rainwater into the water treatment system. The strain on this major infrastructural project could be reduced by some well-planned, small-scale urban interventions.⁴⁶

If place offers a realm of conflicting simultaneity between ideal forms and performative tactics, then an anthropological urbanism offers the ability to understand how people enact places to reveal the politics of context, both to instil and destabilise beliefs and values, and to rebel against tradition. Understanding participatory urbanism as an anthropology of urbanism has the potential to allow a plurality of people to become equal partners with form and space in the making of place, instead of being subservient or non-existent. In establishing

an anthropology of urbanism, participatory urbanism acknowledges that the role of architecture extends beyond object making and puts the maker inside the place rather than removed from it, thus inverting the customary primacy of product over process. The methodology is to make the familiar strange: to allow us to recognise ourselves, our ways of living, our conflicts and our traditions by rendering them legible, neither hidden nor – as is even more often the case – assumed and generalised. As long as participatory urbanism honestly and openly acknowledges the issues involved in who makes places, who occupies them, and the potential contestation that may occur between and within these groups, then, by asserting an anthropology of urbanism, participatory urbanism offers a way of ‘broadening good design practice into good cultural practice’.⁴⁷

Notes

1. Kim O’Connell, ‘Newest Urbanism’, *Architect*, July 2013, <www.architectmagazine.com/architects/newest-urbanism.aspx> [accessed 11 July 2013].
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3. Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1984). Rob Krier, *Urban space = Stadtraum* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1979). *Leon Krier: architecture and urban design, 1967-1992*, ed. by Richard Economakis, (London: Academy Editions, 1992).
4. Thomas Schumacher, ‘Contextualism: Urban Ideals and Deformations’, in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995*, ed. by Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), pp. 294-307. Wayne Copper, ‘The Figure/Grounds’, M.Arch Thesis, Cornell University, 1967. Wayne Copper, ‘The Figure/Grounds’, in *Cornell Journal of Architecture*, no. 2 (1983).
5. A lengthier discussion on this topic can be found in B.D. Wortham-Galvin and Isaac Williams, ‘Walking the City: The Physical and Social Urban Form Made Public’, in *Proceedings from the ASCA 96th Annual Conference* (Houston: University of Houston, 2008).
6. Douglas Kelbaugh, ‘Toward an Integrated Paradigm: Further Thoughts on Three Urbanisms’, in *Places* 19, 2 (2007), pp. 13, 15.
7. Ibid.
8. An in-depth discussion of both the notion of the public and of place can be found in: B.D. Wortham-Galvin and Isaac Williams, ‘The Stranger’s Path: The Cultural Landscape of Urban Form’, in *Instant Cities* (Sharjah: the Center for the Study of Architecture in the Arab Region, American University of Sharjah, UAE, 2008), pp. 365-80.
9. Doug Kelbaugh’s ‘Toward an Integrated Paradigm: Further Thoughts on the Three Urbanisms’, and Harrison Fraker’s ‘Where is the Urban Design Discourse?’, *Places* 19, 3 (2007), pp. 61-63, are examples of such synoptic accounts.
10. Nate Berg, ‘The Official Guide to Tactical Urbanism’, *The Atlantic Cities Place Matters*, 2 (March 2012), <www.theatlanticcities.com/neighborhoods/2012/03/guide-tactical-urbanism/1387/> [accessed 5 August 2013].
11. Lindsey M. Roberts, ‘Design Intervenes to Save Our Cities’, *Architect* (exhibition review), <<http://www.architectmagazine.com/exhibitions/examples-of-city-saving-design-shown-in-aia-seattle-exhibition.aspx>> [accessed 5 August 2013].
12. Kelli Anderson’s ideas about ‘disruptive wonder’ can be found in her TedTalk <www.ted.com/speakers/kelli_anderson.html> [accessed 29 January 2013]. For a discussion of the concept of ‘making the familiar strange’ see B. D. Wortham-Galvin, ‘Making the Familiar Strange: Understanding Design Practice as Cultural Practice’, in *The Urban Wisdom of Jane Jacobs*, ed. by Sonia Hirt (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 229-44.

13. A discussion of participatory urbanism as performance art in San Francisco can be found in Matthew Passmore, 'Participatory Urbanism. Taking action by taking space', *Urbanist* (February 2010), <www.spur.org/publicatoin/library/article/participatoryurbanism/> [accessed 15 February 2013].
14. Lydon (n.d.), *Tactical Urbanism 2*, p. 15.
15. All information about the Crown Heights Participatory Urbanism project can be found on its website, <<http://participatoryurbanism.blogspot.com/>> [accessed 23 January 2013].
16. Jonathan Massey & Brett Snyder, 'Occupying Wall Street: Places and Spaces of Political Action', *The Design Observer Group*, posted 17 September 2012, <www.places.designobserver.com/feature/occupy-wall-street-places-and-spaces-of-political-action/35938/> [accessed 20 February 2013].
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. The first survey was published by Hector Cordero-Guzman, PhD, a sociology professor at the City University of New York and included 1619 online respondents. The second survey took place in person with 198 people present in Zuccotti Park (the site of Occupy Wall Street) conducted by Fox news analyst Douglas Schoen's polling outfit. Press coverage of these surveys can be found at the following websites [accessed 5 August 2013]: <<http://gawker.com/5851376/the-demographics-of-occupy-wall-street/>>, <<http://www.fastcompany.com/1789018/demographics-occupy-wall-street/>>, <<http://theweek.com/article/index/220529/the-demographics-of-occupy-wall-street-by-the-numbers>>, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/29/occupy-wall-street-report_n_2574788.html>, <<http://www.statisticbrain.com/occupy-wall-street-statistics-and-demographics/>>, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/13/opinion/sunday/who-is-occupy-wall-street.html?_r=0>, <<http://idealab.talkingpointsmemo.com/2011/10/occupy-wall-street-demographic-survey-results-will-surprise-you.php>>.
20. Both of Léon Krier's books, *The Architecture of Community* and *Architecture: Choice or Fate* deal with his concepts of urbanism.
21. President Bush addressed the nation on 15 September 2005. The transcript of this speech was released by the Office of the Press Secretary, entitled 'President Discusses Hurricane Relief in Address to Nation' and can be found at <www.whitehouse.gov> [accessed 5 January 2006].
22. For a broader historical discussion of homesteading and its relationship to the Katrina disaster see, B.D. Wortham, 'Home Sweet Homestead: Remaking the Gulf Coast After Katrina', in *Battleground States: Scholarship in Contemporary America*, ed. by Stephen Swanson et al., (Newcastle, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007), pp. 160-82.
23. By the time Daniel Freeman filed the first claim under the Act in 1863, eleven states had seceded from the nation. Good references on the Homestead Act include: Everett Dick, *The Lure of the Land: A Social History of the Public Lands from the Articles of the Confederation to the New Deal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1970); Paul Gates, *The Jeffersonian Dream: Studies in the History of American Land Policy and Development* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996); Harold Hyman, *American Singularity: The 1787 Northwest Ordinance, the 1862 Homestead and Morrill Acts, and the 1944 G.I. Bill* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), and Roy Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776-1936* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1942).
24. The 160 acres (ca. 65 hectares) was equivalent to one quarter of a section of a township. The unit of the township became relevant in the settlement of land in the United States with the Land Ordinance of 1785, which implemented a standardised system of Federal land surveys that eased boundary conflicts. Prior to settlement, territories were divided into 6-mile squares called a township. The township was subdivided into 36 sections, each measuring 1 square mile or 640 acres. At the time, the sale of public land was viewed more as a means of generating revenue for the government than as a means for encouraging settlement. With the cost of a section set at \$1 per

- acre for 640 acres, the price was often inaccessible. It should also be noted that in the 1860s the West began in what today would be considered the Midwest (i.e., the American West began to the west of the original colonies).
25. Daniel Freeman made the first claim under the Homestead Act on 1 January 1863.
 26. Other homesteaders were permitted live on the land for just six months if they paid a \$1.25 per acre fee. The Act was later modified to make it easier for Civil War soldiers and former slaves to qualify. The number of acres on which a family could homestead was also increased.
 27. More famous claimants included inventor/educator George Washington Carver, the parents of author Willa Cather, author Laura Ingalls Wilder, musician Lawrence Welk, and the grandparents of contemporary musician Jewel Kilcher.
 28. This blank slate approach of the United States government toward land development was accomplished by ignoring the existing Native American settlements already populating the land.
 29. *Mother Earth News*, Issue 65, September/October 1980.
 30. Elijah Cummings, 'Baltimore's Urban Renewal', in *Baltimore AFRO American*, February 2002. <<http://www.afro.com/afroblackhistoryarchives/>> [accessed via AFRO Black History digital archives 17 January 2006].
 31. Baltimore exemplifies many of the social and economic problems that plague American cities. It has been affected by the nation's trend towards increased suburbanisation and a severe decline in city population. According to the 2003 Census, the population has dropped from a 1950 all-time high of almost 950,000 to 628,670, more than a 30% population decline. The racial composition of the city has also changed dramatically since 1950, when it was composed of 76.2% white, 23.7% black and 0.1% other. In 2000 it was 31.6% white, 64.3% black and 4.1% other. The population decline has resulted in the widespread abandonment of housing units. Baltimore currently has around 16,000 vacant properties and 14,000 vacant lots. There is a 7.2 vacancy rate for residential properties.
 32. Yahoo Groups, 'TechBalt Yahoo Group'. (Restricted Access, invitation only), <<http://groups.yahoo.com>> [accessed September-December 2005].
 33. Ibid.
 34. Ibid.
 35. Ibid.
 36. Sean Zielenbach, *The Art of Revitalization: Improving Conditions in Distressed Inner-City Neighborhoods* (Cleveland: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), pp. 7-8.
 37. In its 20 March 2000 issue, *USA Today* published a list of American cities with the most abandoned buildings. Topping the list of the cities that provided data were Philadelphia (27,000), Baltimore (15,000), Houston (8000), Detroit (7500), Kansas City (5000), Indianapolis (3400), San Antonio (3000), Jacksonville (2800), Louisville (2200), Mobile (2009) and Los Angeles (1800)
 38. *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization*, ed. by Bruce London and J. John Palen (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), p. 7.
 39. Ibid, p. 10.
 40. Kenneth Stahl, 'How the Occupy Movement Changed Urban Government', *The Atlantic Cities*, 6 February 2012, <www.theatlanticcities.com/politics/2012/02/how-occupy-movement-changed-urban-government/1130> [accessed 20 January 2013].
 41. The term 'enacted environment' is borrowed from James Rojas' work.
 42. J.B. Jackson, 'The Stranger's Path' in *Landscapes: Selected Writings of J.B. Jackson*, ed. by Ervin H. Zube (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1970), p. 92-106.
 43. A broader discussion of this topic can be found in: B.D. Wortham-Galvin, 'Mythologies of Placemaking', *Places* 20, 1 (2008), pp. 32-39.
 44. I address the 'for whom' question from another point of view in: B.D. Wortham, 'Cultural Sustainability and Architecture', *Design Science in Architecture*, GAM.02 (2005), pp. 62-77.
 45. Catherine Bisher, 'Yuppies, Bubbas, and the Politics

- of Culture', *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, III, ed. by Thomas Carter and Bernard Herman (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1989).
46. Passmore, 'Participatory Urbanism. Taking action by taking space' (2010).
47. B.D. Wortham-Galvin, 'Making the Familiar Strange: Understanding Design Practice as Cultural Practice' (2012).

Biography

Brooke D. Wortham-Galvin is an assistant professor in the School of Architecture, Portland State University and director of the non-profit Urban Dialogues. She teaches a variety of subjects including history and theory, adaptive reuse, urban design, and community engaged design. Her scholarship focuses on how theories of the everyday can be applied to the design and stewardship of the built environment.

Towards an Architecture of *Dissensus*: Participatory Urbanism in South-East Asia

Camillo Boano and Emily Kelling

Introduction

This paper offers a novel series of reflections on the relationship between design and politics in the context of participatory practices, slum upgrading and wider participatory urbanisms. It critically discusses the specific material and political conditions of a South-East Asian case of slum upgrading, which aims at an 'alternative development process in which the people [...] are at the centre of a process of transforming their lives, settlements and position in the city'.¹ The paper draws on Jacques Rancière's work, in particular his principles of equality, his conception of the *partition of the sensible* and his reflections on the *politics of aesthetics* as an intellectual reference for an interrogation of the aesthetic regimes and spatial coordinates that have animated the debate about urban poverty eradication, slum upgrading and participatory design. The empirical material observed in South-East Asia does not touch simplistically on the discourse of sustainability,² upgrading and informality, but instead it offers readers an unapologetically political reflection, in that it lives up to a call for perpetual democratisation in which active citizens – who commit to managing themselves and their spaces autonomously – are continuously struggling to become active and participate in the city.³

The reasons for adopting Rancière's work as an intellectual toolbox for this exercise in thinking about the political potential of design and participatory urbanism are multiple, and can be found in his material, sensorial and concrete formulation of

politics and political emancipation, which illuminates opportunities for the act of design to either reforge connections or further disintegrate architecture with its political and social function. Part of a 'new French generation' of contemporary thinkers, such as Jean-Luc Nancy, Bernard Stiegler, Catherine Malabou and Alain Badiou, Rancière has turned from language to materiality as his core concern. This is particularly useful in our attempt to approach egalitarian political practice in the urban reality since he addresses the mechanisms through which the domain of sensual experience is parcelled out: a division which serves to maintain a perceived separation of capacities regarding who can and who cannot legitimately speak. Here, politics becomes a matter of individuals contesting their subordinate position through an act of disrupting the division of sensible experience. This triad relationship of (in) equality, politics, and sensible experience is why Rancière's work is so relevant to this essay, which aims to explore the way in which design and architecture can become relevant to egalitarian politics.

Central to such discussion is what authors like Žižek and Mouffe define as post-democratic or post-political; in other words, the current political condition in which the spaces of public reflection are voided of dispute and disagreement⁴ and replaced instead by a consensually established frame within which participation serves to uphold an image of democracy.⁵ What is discussed on the political agenda in the post-political condition is pre-ordained on the basis of unquestioned and unquestionable axioms

concerning social relationships, how the economy should be organised or a city built. By governing the boundaries of what is – and what is not – the subject of debate from the outset, participation functions to demonstrate ‘that the people are part of the political process’.⁶ Here, however, the scope of politics, opposed to negotiating conflict, is reduced to identifying consensus within a given, and mostly economically determined, frame.⁷ Although such a shallow form of (usually localised) participation can address the manifestation of local ‘wrongs’, it hardly challenges root causes.⁸ While we adopt this post-political approach, the argument at hand is that participation can take a multiplicity of forms, from pacifying critique to politicising action. In the case of Baan Mankong and the Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA), we see a paradigmatic case of participatory urbanism transgressing consensus politics. Though not entirely free of pacifying elements, the programmes are located to an exceptional degree on the politicising side.

This paradigm is not limited to the debate over participation and politics but has also entered architectural discourse under the disguise of a suspicious ‘discontent’ with criticality,⁹ abandoning the project of radical critique as a blanket negation of the political;¹⁰ moreover, it has also entered the urban discourse in a broader reflection on democracy and inclusion.¹¹ However, as architecture is slowly re-engaging in a new critical project that allows the political and social natures of the practice to be reclaimed, it is crucial to expand such rediscovery to include the inherently political nature of space, which is – contrary to the dominant discourse on participation, which treats it as fundamentally consensual and homogenises differences – necessarily produced in contestation and dissensus.

When applied to the current debate on urban and architectural design, this essay fits into a renewed reflection on the expansion of architectural disciplinary boundaries,¹² which deliberately contests the

overt pragmatism and rigidity of the discipline in the form of the so-called autonomous project.¹³ While a discussion of the concept of autonomy exceeds the scope of this article, an understanding of architecture as non-autonomous and, as Fischer presents it,¹⁴ existing in contiguity with society and culture as a reflection of societal conditions, is a precondition for utilising Rancière’s *spatiality of equality*. Echoing a call from the current debate on participatory urbanism¹⁵ – whether in its form of Do-It-Yourself¹⁶ urban activism¹⁷ or seen as the struggle over democracy and the right to the city¹⁸ – we understand architecture not merely as form or object, but as a complex and contingent condition that both enables and constrains thinking and actions; a gesture that involves both reflective and projective modes, contemplating critique and active intervention. Importantly, by understanding design as an act, it immediately becomes politically charged because it is actively seeking out uncharted areas, and new horizons and modalities of sensory experiences.¹⁹

Acknowledging the recent shift in the debate on design practice toward ethical considerations, the deliberate choice of using and developing Rancière’s *spatiality of equality* aims to highlight the political dimension of design and architecture, which to date has not been sufficiently elaborated,²⁰ and also to elucidate how questions regarding the politics of aesthetics and the aesthetics of politics can be framed, with reference to what Rancière called *le partage du sensible*. This concept describes the many procedures by which forms of experience – broadly understood as the domains of what can be thought, said, felt or perceived – are divided up and shared among legitimate and illegitimate persons and forms of activity. Similarly, aesthetics is defined as ‘a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise’,²¹ while politics is seen as never static and pure but instead characterised by division, conflict and polemics that allow the invention of the new, the unauthorised and the disordered. In this light, artistic practices

(thus including architecture and space) are forms of visibility that can themselves serve as interruptions of the given partition of the sensible. For this reason, work on aesthetics is work on politics since it embraces a set of exclusions, a set of items that are not simply unsaid, unseen and unheard as such, but instead withdrawn from appearing because they are implicitly deemed unworthy or not entitled to appear. Rancière's theorisation is relevant here because it allows for a material, sensorial and concrete formulation of politics, political participation and emancipation. Even though Rancière did not discuss architecture per se, he was greatly inspired by Aristotle's and Plato's reflection on the *polis* and its central reference to a political space as a reconfiguration 'where parties, parts, or lack of parts have been defined.' His claim that '[p]olitical activity [...] makes visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise'²² remains heavily illustrative for architecture and urban design. Moreover, by illustrating a *spatiality of equality*, we show that Rancière's basic assumption, the equality of intelligence, (borrowing Hallward's summary 'everyone thinks, everyone speaks [...], but the prevailing division of labour and configuration of society ensures that only certain classes of people are *authorized to think*'²³) is pertinently enlightening in the debate over participation on a wider urban scale and in the struggle for democracy. Together, these two dimensions of Rancière's work make him an indispensable reference in the discussion of participatory urbanism, which is why we have employed it as the theoretical backdrop that guides our search for a more socially just design practice. To use Rancière's words:

[M]y concern with 'space' is the same as my concern with 'aesthetics'. [...] My work on politics was an attempt to show politics as an 'aesthetic affair'. What I mean by this term has nothing to do with the 'aesthetization of politics' that Benjamin opposed to the 'politicization of art'. What I mean is that politics, rather

than the exercise of power or the struggle for power, is the configuration of a specific world, a specific form of experience in which some things appear to be political objects, some questions political issues or argumentations and some agents political subjects.²⁴

Consequently, choosing the case study Baan Mankong and Asian Coalition for Community Action (ACCA), comes very naturally. For Rancière, political struggle occurs when the excluded seek to establish their identity by speaking for themselves and striving to get their voices heard and recognised as legitimate, thus disrupting the specific horizon and modalities of sensory experience. A struggle of this kind is evident in some of the marginalised communities in Bangkok and other South-East Asian cities, which have leveraged collective resources as bargaining power to claim politically legitimate participation in their development. The case of Baan Mankong/ACCA is truly novel; it approximates Rancière's idea of equality because the group locates the agency of change with the excluded, thus enacting a fundamental break with conventional participatory development practice.²⁵ In addition, the programmes are experimenting with a novel and potentially radical version of an older architectural concept: community architecture, which is crucially reforming the role of the design practitioner, and therefore provides the ideal empirical reality from which we can attempt to elucidate the critical relationship between the *presupposition of equality* and design, and therefore between participatory urbanism and the politics of recognition.

Rancière's ontology and dissensus

Rancière's fundamental political concern is the denial of recognition experienced by the dominated. Rancière criticised structuralist Marxists for upholding the elitist intellectual superiority of the philosopher over the worker instead of arguing for the need not to interpret, but to listen to the voice of the excluded as equals.²⁶ Rejecting the

Habermasian liberal idea that politics consists of a rational debate between diverse interests, and the Arendtian idea of a specific political sphere and political way of life, in the 1980s Rancière defined what constitutes the essential aspect of politics: the affirmation of the principle of equality of speech for people who are supposed to be equal but not treated as such by the established police order of the democratic community.²⁷ For Rancière, 'proper' order will always be interrupted by impropriety, and this notion, despite being focused on critical writing and 'literality', served to set the stage for his provocative conception of politics, and his constant and insistent defence of democracy as *dissensus*, as scandalous.²⁸ Rancière's innovative thoughts can be understood as a redefinition or recalibration of politics, grounded in those of Arendt and Foucault. Although the limited space available here and the thrust of this essay do not allow for further reflections on the legacy of the Arendtian and Foucaultian projects,²⁹ it should be acknowledged that Rancière's analysis of the *police* relies on Foucault's definition of power as 'a complex strategic situation in a given society' and his work on governmentality.³⁰ Here Rancière refers not to the 'petty police' and simple system of domination or inequality, but to 'an order of bodies'³¹ making the police a particular '(ac)counting of the community'.³² In maintaining the possibility of emancipation and a partitioning of such positioning in space, Rancière builds his new, some say utopian,³³ notion of politics upon Foucault's critical reflection on modern power.³⁴

What is important for Rancière, and for our argument, is not to overlook the fact that an explicit focus on the excluded, on the part that does not fit in or participate, implies an assumption about the whole, which could be considered the norm: a meaningful and peculiar idea of society and its representation as a symbolic whole.³⁵ Rancière called this *police*, not referring to repressive forces

but rather to the order of things, to the order of the *polis*, and therefore to the established social order within a process of governing. Since the *demos* is included by nature in the *polis*, the political problem is drastically reduced to assigning individuals their place/position through the administration of conflicts between different parties by a government founded on juridical and technical competences.³⁶ In other words, a 'society is [...] divided into functions, into places where these functions are exercised, into groups which are, by virtue of their places, bound for exercising this or that function'.³⁷ In contrast, *politics* in its very essence is constituted by disagreement/*dissensus*, by disruptions of the police order through the dispute over the common space of the polis and the common use of language.

To name a phenomenon and assign it its 'proper' place is to establish order – thereby an act of depoliticisation.³⁸ This is exactly the detrimental but interesting use of Rancière's thought in the debate over urban poverty, marginalisation and participatory practices. Slums, marginal areas, low-income communities, barrios and so forth are included in the police order by their exclusion. Their territories, their histories and their societal features, although neither homogeneous nor reducible to the same categories, legitimise – participatory – interventions. Such co-option of the participatory process to merely replicate and strengthen the established order is made easier through the marginal communities that significantly differ from formal areas of the city. In Rancière's approach, this is not a question of politics but of alterations in a police order. *The inclusion of the excluded*, which somehow epitomised the mantra of the participation debate, is the wrong way of thinking politically about the issue, for even exclusion from formal power is a form of inclusion in the police order, (for example, women and slaves in the Greek *polis*). Politics, therefore, is not about identifying the 'excluded' and trying to 'include' them. The logic of identification belongs to

the police. Politics proper is to question the 'given' order of the police that seems to be the natural order of things, to question the whole and its partitioned spaces, and to verify the equality of any speaking being to any other speaking being.

The notion of inclusion, central to the debate on participation, is rendered as working from the inside-out, emanating from the position of those who are already considered to be democratic, which reveals the underlying assumption that democracy can and should become a de facto political reality. As such, we begin to see this trajectory as the construction of a particular police order, becoming a teleological trajectory toward an already known end-state in which inclusion becomes an entirely numerical operation. In contrast:

a political moment would not merely entail the inclusion of excluded groups, but rather an inclusion that, through such including, reconfigures the landscape in such ways as to change the conditions under which arguments can be understood, speakers can be acknowledged, claims can be made, and rights can be exercised.³⁹

As such, a more democratic production of housing and cities appears to be a practical test of the assumption of equality between any and every speaking being. For Rancière, equality is not an end-state but a starting point that requires constant verification in an open, experimental and non-teleological logic that operates from the outside-in. If the *police* is a set of implicit rules and conventions which determine the distribution of roles in a community and the forms of exclusion which operate within it, then genuine political acts do not simply reorder relations of power (a different order, but an order per se) but disrupt this order, tearing bodies from their assigned places. This happens when 'the traditional mechanisms of what are usually called politics are put into question'.⁴⁰ This is *dissensus*, since it introduces new subjects and heterogeneous objects into

the fields of *perception*.

One of Rancière's most suggestive and fruitful concepts is *le partage du sensible*. It refers to the way in which roles and modes of participation in a social world are determined by establishing possible modes of perception. The partition of the sensible sets the divisions between what is visible and invisible, speakable and unspeakable – in Rancière's words, audible and inaudible. As Rancière explains, such a partition is the system of a priori forms determining what will present itself to sense experience. It is a 'delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience'.⁴¹ Such a definition is useful to our discourse since distribution implies both inclusion and exclusion in a sensorial manner. 'Sensible' is therefore both that which can be perceived by the senses and that which 'makes sense to think or to do'.⁴² In this sense:

Political activity is always a mode of expression that undoes the perceptible divisions of the police order by implementing a basically heterogeneous assumption, that of a part of those who have no part, an assumption that, at the end of the day, itself demonstrates the sheer contingency of the other, the equality of any other speaking being.⁴³

Equally important for a theorisation of the relation between political struggle and design is Rancière's work on *aesthetics*, which he has focused on increasingly since the early 1990s. He has written a series of works on film and literature in which he stresses the political dimension of aesthetics, and a number of works of political theory in which he argues that an aesthetic dimension is inherent in politics. Just as the concept of the partition of the sensible serves to draw together Rancière's political-philosophical apparatus, so it also acts as the lynchpin of his interest in aesthetics when he states that 'aesthetics is at the core of politics',⁴⁴

especially as aesthetics for him is another name for the partition of the sensible. For him, artistic practices (despite his direct reference to literature, film and fine art, we can extend it to architecture) are forms of visibility that can themselves serve as interruptions of the given partition of the sensible. Therefore, work on aesthetics is work on politics. The sensible is a field over which political agreements and disagreements occur; it is where power is held and lost. As such, speaking of the distribution of the sensible is Rancière's way of speaking about the material conditions of political life in their epistemic and communicative salience.⁴⁵ Central to this is the *process* of becoming a political subject, in which those who have no recognised part in the social order, who are invisible or inaudible in political terms, assert their egalitarian claim – a collective claim to exist as political subjects. Such a process has three different dimensions. First, it is an *argumentative demonstration*; second, it is a *heterologic disidentification*; and third, and most relevant to this paper, it is a *theatrical and spectacular dramatisation*. Space is crucial to this since it becomes the creative and dramatic stage for visibility. This process is *theatrocratic* because it is creative and constructive and involves not only the manifestation of a new subject but also the construction of common space or *scenes* of relationality, which did not previously exist.⁴⁶ Thus, this dimension of theatrical dramatisation goes beyond the single perception of visibility/audibility in that it constructs new ways in which parts of society relate to each other, and reconfigures the way in which subjects are heard and seen. 'Space [...] becomes an integral element of the interruption of the "natural" (or, better yet, naturalized) order of domination through the constitution of a place of encounter by those that have no part in that order'.⁴⁷ Here, design becomes relevant, as this conception of politics ascribes to design the potential of instigating 'the invention of sensible forms and material structures for a life to come'.⁴⁸ Aesthetics rethought as the invention of new forms of life – as a critical break

with common sense – opens up possibilities for new commonalities of sense. In order for the sensible to be extricated from its usual circuits of meaning and significance, changing from and *disagreeing* with the typical operation of identifying, classifying and organising need to happen. Works of art are thus the material mechanisms through which 'the mind can suspend its own constitutive function, thereby allowing the sensible object to be emancipated from the implicit police order of the modern age'.⁴⁹ The emergence of such an event takes shape as a disagreement because it becomes necessary to think *ex novo* about the rules of a judgement 'in order to reconfigure the identities, relations, and arrangements through which positions and arguments make sense'.⁵⁰

The above theoretical artillery, although sketched and partial, is illuminating when examining the Baan Mankong/ACCA case and the ways in which it promotes the creation of new commonalities of sense in the name of equality, including the role of design, since it allows us to rethink how architecture and design are used and to consider the aesthetic dimensions of our social world in a political way.

Baan Mankong and the Asian Coalition for Community Action

Part of the network of the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), Thailand's Baan Mankong Collective Housing Programme, aims to create the conditions for the people who have previously been excluded from secure housing to take the lead in the process of providing their own secure housing, and thus it shifts the emphasis from a supply-driven to a demand-driven housing development, based on the experience that neither the private nor the public sector has proven capable of meeting the need for housing in an affordable way. It is premised that the people in need have a massive potential force for taking their housing into their own hands since they have demonstrated this in the past by constructing their houses informally.⁵¹ Contrary to the last

decades, however, this time they are supported to acquire secure tenure through technical and, more importantly, financial assistance from the state (in the form of an accessible loan), which enables them to negotiate for land and services on their own behalf with the backup of a national government programme. With the core objective of addressing the societal misrepresentation of the urban poor as helpless and untrustworthy, this programme reframes the question of poverty alleviation from 'how to *train* the urban poor or *change* their behaviour [...] to *identify* how development interventions can nurture and develop the strength that already exists, letting people make change'.⁵²

Baan Mankong has emerged from a decade-long experience of community savings, upgrading, and networking in the face of evictions in Thailand. In addition, it has benefitted from and contributed to a long learning trajectory in Asia through ACHR, which has been running a programme called ACCA (Asian Coalition for Community Action) since 2009 that shares the principles of Baan Mankong. These two programmes should be seen as a cross-regional mobilisation, which 'is trying to unlock that force at scale, opening up new space, new collaborations and new possibilities that are beginning to resolve these problems'.⁵³ Nevertheless, Baan Mankong is unique in that the institution that directly coordinates and promotes it, the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), is 'a well financed, national institution with an official policy mandate to secure land tenure for the urban poor'.⁵⁴ While building on its predecessor's work (Urban Communities Development Office), this historical precedent of high investment into the scaling-up and institutionalisation of such a people-centred process to national relevance can be contextualised to a change in public opinion during the last decades towards self-sufficiency and greater participation by civil society.⁵⁵ Intensified by the financial crisis of 1997, part of this greater change was the founding of CODI as an independent public organisation in

2000. After the election of a populist government in 2001, Baan Mankong was announced in 2003, with a target of creating 300,000 houses as part of a one million home scheme for low-income households.⁵⁶ By 2011, Baan Mankong had involved 90,813 households in 1546 communities (CODI website, 2011). Even though initially less resourced, by January 2013 ACCA had managed to gather 274,000 savers with collective savings totalling US\$ 22.5 million, and had reached 165 cities/districts in nineteen countries through 1,185 approved small upgrading projects, each costing US\$ 3000, and 111 large housing projects, each worth US\$ 40,000. The ACCA budget itself constitutes only six per cent of the total project values, with US\$ 75.7 million of land, infrastructure and cash leveraged from governments.⁵⁷

The working principles of demand-driven housing development in Baan Mankong

The basis on which a community forms can vary from a group of people living in the same informal settlement who want to upgrade collectively, to a collection of people from the same area looking for new land to purchase. It may also happen that extended family members join a group. This is the moment when the notion of *community* becomes relevant to the housing programme. In this region, *community* is normally an administrative term; however, while keeping the administrative connotation that refers to a territorially connected settlement, the meaning of *community* here takes on a second dimension, namely that of denoting a social relationship that includes working together toward a shared aim. A central premise behind the programme is that practical motives can give rise to a community that is defined by solidarity and reciprocity. This assumption is closely related to one of the cornerstones of the programme's emancipatory potential: improving the financial capacity of a group and recognising it as a financial agent. A central mechanism geared toward this objective is the establishment of savings groups and a financial

organisation. A group of individuals can only apply to the programme and become a Baan Mankong community once they have begun to save collectively. Although a minimum of organisational support is given from the start, the group can only receive a collective loan once they have saved ten per cent of the total amount. The loan can be used for the acquisition of collective tenure – whether through land purchase or lease – or for house building or upgrading purposes. In addition, each community receives a grant for infrastructure. The loan system works as a revolving fund, which means that repayments can be lent on to other communities; this makes the system emancipatory rather than remaining simply instrumental. '[G]roups that can demonstrate the ability to accumulate finance can also claim the right to be recognized. Such recognition is important in multiple ways [...] it increases the likelihood of tenure recognition and access to services, and it results in political inclusion as the state is more interested in making deals with those holding financial resources'.⁵⁸

With regard to land, it is important to note that each community has to negotiate for land itself. In Bangkok, the vast majority of slums are informal structures erected without observing architectural or planning standards and regulations, on land rented from a third-party owner of which 'a significant portion [...] approximately 47%, [...] is owned by the national government'.⁵⁹ Different types of landowners pose different challenges, and any negotiation is usually based on an initial citywide, and in Bangkok, district-wide survey, to collect critical household and land information and identify stakeholders. This action usually involves local authority agents and functions as the first official recognition of the slum dwellers, which in turn stimulates their own networking and understanding of shared problems and their place in the city: 'Poverty isolates, geographically and socially [...]. The survey is the first step in developing a larger and more structural understanding of the city and the various problems

faced by the urban poor'.⁶⁰ The theatrical manifestation of the peoples' emancipatory potential through city-wide action remains central, connecting Baan Mankong participants with many different kinds of actors, such as the local authorities, service deliverers, landowners, as well as NGOs and academia. 'Instead of the city being a vertical unit of control, these smaller units – people-based and local – can be a system of self-control for a more creative, more meaningful development'.⁶¹

The city-wide survey is also the first step in which communities are supported by *community architects*, a movement that started in Thailand and then expanded throughout South-East Asia, becoming even more central in the ACCA programme. Their presence expresses the paramount role of design in Baan Mankong. This movement guides communities through the critical spatial components of the process of collectively negotiating secure tenure and eventually building homes that are tailored to the needs and aspirations of each, unique community. By not requiring specific physical outputs, the programme allows community organisations to take the lead in their own development. As a consequence, strengthened social infrastructures and systems of management are key outputs. The flexibility in the mechanism allows dwellers to design their own pathways at their own pace. The principle of self-directed and flexible design thus refers not only to the houses and physical communities but also to the process itself, including financial regulation. CODI facilitates much of the process and has a crucial role to play, but the decisions and actions eventually taken depend entirely on the people involved, not only the people in the community, but also on other stakeholders in their local context. In this way, the process is people-centred, not only nominally or in principle, but in reality. Baan Mankong's complex process requires, and is purposefully designed to build many bridges and paths for negotiation between communities and other actors involved, and so can lead to

institutional learning. The metaphor of learning to 'dance together' illustrates the beauty and challenges implied.⁶²

The logic of physical change: from object to subject

In Baan Mankong/ACCA, physical change is conceived and practised as a vehicle for social change. This gives the physical upgrading of informal houses and sites a twofold function: firstly, to improve the material reality of the urban poor and, beyond that, to foster confidence in the individual and collective skills and capacities of this historically marginalised group. Such concrete, visible action manifests and materialises the idea that people-led development is possible. It shows alternative possibilities and transformative potentials to its creators and to others, encouraging those in similar situations to follow. Moreover, setting this kind of precedent has the power to stimulate local government agencies to engage and collaborate in *co-production*.⁶³ This is an iterative process in which, over time, material improvements reinforce the terms of engagement with different actors and vice versa, building up the strength and power in and of the communities. Mr. Prapart Sangpradap, the community leader of Bangkok's Bang Bua canal community, which has functioned as a positive example in a number of respects, illustrates these dynamics:

In Thailand, we have been fighting for a slum law for 10 years. We mobilized all the communities to support this bill [...] But we never got those rights and we never got that bill. The way we got our land and housing and security only happened when we made concrete change and showed the possibility by people, showed a new way. We are the ones who have to make that change, according to our way. And that change becomes its own law.⁶⁴

Boonyabantha and Mitlin summarise the programme's ambition as having 'two underlying

dimensions: first, the creation of institutions based on relations of reciprocity (with communities); and second, the strengthening of relations between low-income community organizations such that they can create a synergy with the state'.⁶⁵ Hence, what is seen as crucial for sustainable synergies with the state is the collective mobilisation of poor women and men on scale: from community networking at the city level, to national and even trans-national levels. While the idea of branching out cross-scale is imprinted on the programme - 'as new relationships with city governments are established, larger-scale activities are possible'⁶⁶ - different institutional scales are considered very strategically. On a city scale, the aim is to activate local government resources (in the form of land, services and other resources), and on a national scale it is to push for policy change and wider political recognition.

These actions thereby reposition the city as a political entity at the centre of an otherwise de-politicised urban transformation. In other words, they are an account of Rancière's ethics and politics of recognition. Baan Mankong's way of conceptualising people as the subjects and not the objects of development, and of putting them, their energy, capacity and desires at the centre of the process, certainly constitutes a novel way of thinking, planning and acting in larger city development processes. Contrary to conventional strategies of simply providing physical houses – where housing is treated as a technical rather than political issue – and claiming to engage in participatory processes, the programme's ambition goes beyond the individual house because it is about generating power on the side of historically marginalised people through their collective organisation, in order for them to freely exercise and expand their rights in the city and become *legitimate development agents*.⁶⁷ When this ethos is scaled up through the promotion of collective partnerships or citywide platforms of sharing and collaboration between the urban poor and different stakeholders, it serves the educational

and emancipatory purpose of cultivating productive working partnerships with local governments, moving poor people from simply being participant-‘stakeholders’, to becoming ‘with their savings and the power of large numbers, viable development partners’.⁶⁸ The ambition to create a ‘new financial system for development’,⁶⁹ in which poor people have access to private funding, is truly being advanced through ACCA and Baan Mankong in that ‘it’s not just a few projects here and there or a few solved problems – it is now a system’⁷⁰ reaching several hundred thousand households throughout Asia. Furthermore, the financial potential embraces more than replicability and the coverage of quantities; this is because the finance that comes from the people in their everyday struggle to secure housing, ‘creates its own legitimacy, and the financial systems poor people create represent an institutionalization of that power that comes from the ground’.⁷¹

Participatory design in practice

Despite its vast potential, CODI’s spatial discourse, whereby communities drive design, has not reached a consistent response at an urban scale beyond the mere provision of houses. The design solutions implemented as a result of the preceding processes are usually based on typologies. While the ownership and planning of the site are collective and community-based, once tenure is secured, the design and aesthetics of the houses are more individualistic. Depending on ability, financial capacity and time constraints, the design of the communities and houses take different forms, sometimes one typology is decided upon for a whole community, and sometimes the house typologies differ. Yet, the predominant focus centres on typologies rather than on developing and questioning design outcomes. Although ‘fluctuation of resources across various CODI sites suggests a range of house sizes, design standards and overall planning, some communities simply seem to be benefiting from greater attention’⁷² and others simply copy. This standardisation, however, implies serious problems

for the accommodation of diverse needs.

Some of the reasons for the limited typologies can be related to satisfying planning regulations because it reduces the risk of being refused permission when only housing design is submitted.⁷³ As Boonyabancha says, ‘the art of doing poor people’s housing is the art of getting governments to agree with your plans, which are always below standard’.⁷⁴ In the past, non-compliance has sometimes led to imprisonment of community leaders. Different experiences, however, show that collective action, for instance in form of inviting ministers to visit communities, sending letters and staging demonstrations has also led to changes in Thai standards, for example the minimum road width and minimum plot size were changed. Cost considerations appear as the second great reason for limitations in terms of typology. However, our research indicates that savings and improvements could be made during construction through better coordination, sequencing and pooling, and also if community members had a better understanding of design and implementation and were more involved in the process. Illustratively, several site-briefs that were issued by the communities during fieldwork addressed issues in the construction stage (cost saving/recycling/use of common space/continuous engagement of all members). Similar responses have been given to Archer, who researched the post-construction opinions of Baan Mankong’s participants and found that even though perceptions differed between and even within communities, many problems rested on the built environment: ‘problems remain with infrastructure and the environment, with garbage and smells from the canal and drains’.⁷⁶ Furthermore, individual perceptions of problems range from ‘insufficient outside lighting’, the loss of the natural environment, and ‘it’s better and neater, but before there was more privacy’, to ‘the culture of helping has decreased’.⁷⁷ In general, cost and time are often mentioned as limiting conditions, or even as severe problems, for several reasons, the major one being

that the process is so time and energy consuming that even without an in-depth design process many people drop out, or that those who are in urgent need of housing after incidents such as fire have to accept that the 'housing design is flawed' because they were limited by the budget.⁷⁸ Yet the ACCA experience tells that 'paradoxically, the lower the budget, the more seems to get done'⁷⁹ insofar as it pushes people to focus less on money and more on structural problems, enabling them to become active and to begin working together, so that ACCA now follows a logic of 'de-emphasiz[ing] the budget aspect'.⁸⁰

Another important reason why communities often choose only one typology is to show their strength and community cohesion through visual integration with the wider city. In line with the research findings of Wissink et al.,⁸¹ which show that regardless of income group, Bangkok's residents appear to want to live in gated communities, the choice of a single typology can be interpreted as a desire for the community to be '*orderly and beautiful*, much like a *moobarn jatsan* (gated estate), reflecting their new legal status as city residents. Thus, they favour identical facades and equal plot sizes, to meet the *standard of social acceptability*'.⁸² Archer counters that equal plot sizes minimise resentment among community members and that row houses in contexts of land limitations are the most effective form of land use.⁸³ This issue recalls a well-established debate in the fields of architecture and urban design, in which authors have always challenged the physical determinism and utilitarian, functionalist perspectives embedded in a particular definition of design: the materiality of space as a social healing machine, a panacea for society's ills.

Community architects: a transformative potential

What is the potential role of design in moving toward a process and product in which spatial dimensions are not merely by-products of social and institutional

decisions, but ones that open up a dialogue, challenging the current system and becoming a driver of change? The critical reflection on design that the programme is prompting also involves the role of the designer. In the Baan Mankong process, community architects provide the knowledge needed to make decisions and guide the conversation, thereby presenting possibilities. The combined factors of high densities, complex savings, and pre-construction preparation (while avoiding temporary housing solutions for cost reasons) require complex sequencing and coordination. Currently, the key role of the design professional in Baan Mankong seems to be the translation of aspirations and negotiations between households into a site master plan. This lays out the critical path for communities to upgrade or build anew. Yet, due to the sheer number of sites in the programme, the involvement of the community architect is greatly reduced after this stage, with, at times, not even a yearly visit. More often than not, the building typology and design product are based on prototypes and the quality is uneven across different communities. Since the architect is often unable to identify and present the full spectrum of possible options so that the community can determine its priorities, the choice of available housing typologies made available is detrimental to the urban design scale and densities on site. It seems that design in this context is restrictive rather than revelatory of new spatial interpretations. Working with prototypes and the very limited involvement of designers/architects is a potential block to the transformative potential of the Baan Mankong programme, because it narrows down a process and thereby renders it unnecessarily static. Seldom are bespoke solutions developed, usually only on sites with particular constraints, such as very high density. If communities were more engaged in the design process this would produce knowledge, create additional communication and place designers as facilitators in the decision-making process.

Another challenge posed by real-life practicality is to find a productive balance in community negotiations, decision-making and actions. There are certain stages in the programme in which *consensus* is reached, which plays an important role as a practical benchmark from which to move forward: moments such as closing site negotiations for shared ownership or 'being ready' to start construction, based on an agreed design and plan. These are moments when capabilities, support and power are acquired through the strength of the community members acting together. The more frequently this includes all members, the more it represents the solidarity with which to move forward. This is evident, for instance, when communities put mechanisms in place to support those struggling to meet the targets. To use Rancièrian vocabulary, the political actions are 'organised like a proof, a system of reasons'.⁸⁴ Verifications take place by transforming the words of universal equality into the form of logical proof, not simply through a transformation of words into actions but by the creation of a visible and audible set of arguments.⁸⁵ The reality that communities are not homogeneous groups but are necessarily defined by internal diversity, means that a continuous process of argumentation is required. While conflicts between individuals can be considered as something that needs to be settled, in our view conflict within a group can and should be reframed as something fruitful if used as a catalyst for polemical verification. Conceptualising consensus as only temporary, based on joint visions at a particular moment in time,⁸⁶ enables us to consider conflict and *dissensus* as something natural that society or groups of people need to learn to deal with and use productively. It is therefore necessary to move from *consensus* back into *dissensus*, especially in the realm of design and spatialities, thus increasing the potential for innovation. Although the experience of community architects identifies the positioning of the self in such an internal conflict as one of the big challenges, a positive reframing of conflictive situations might generate benefits.⁸⁷

While the question remains whether the design process has more to offer than has been explored so far, without doubt:

The community architects have opened up a whole new world of community planning [...] Before, the only picture people had in their minds when you said 'housing for the poor' was the standard government box, [...] But when the community architects come ... that process is so important in expanding people's ideas of what is possible with housing – even very low-cost housing.⁸⁸

As the community architects Luansang, Boonmahathanakorn and Domingo-Price have identified, '[w]here communities sometimes have set notions of how development can be undertaken conventionally (for instance by bulldozing trees and flattening out the area in order to develop a housing site), community architects could help demonstrate new approaches, with people-centred and environmentally friendly aspects'.⁸⁹ However, this dimension of influencing community ideas is very delicate, since Baan Mankong/ACCA's highest principle is not to overly determine community decision-making processes. In this light, they have identified substantial challenges in creating community architecture because, on the one hand, they have to strike a balance between a visionary approach that increases the knowledge of what is possible, while on the other hand, the professionals have to relinquish their belief in their superior knowledge and, in its place, humbly learn to appreciate local knowledge, which is not always an easy or straightforward process. An interesting observation is that young architects appear to have fewer difficulties in assuming the facilitative role and are also more readily accepted by communities. This resonates with our belief in the centrality of a reconfigured design methodology:

If the demand for trained architects is increasing, methods of support for architects practicing 'participation' are essential. [...] Furthermore, it becomes essential how they can better define their identity and roles so as to not be marginalised or misappropriated by lesser convicted and qualified practitioners. Herein, there still exists a critical responsibility to cross-check even the most genuine of practices. If this is done so, strategically with internal vigour, the program can grow to maximize the potentials and efforts of all those involved.⁹⁰

Baan Mankong/ACCA's approach of involving universities and their curricula into their work is advancing this notion considerably. This policy led to the formation of the Asian Community Architect Network (CAN) in 2010. Today, CAN links twenty-seven groups of young community architects in eighteen countries, and thirty-three universities in ten countries. In doing so, it has reached out to about one thousand students and young professionals.⁹¹ A promising potential for design facilitation would be a debate on housing – a debate out of which an understanding of the context-specific relationship of housing to other aspects of life could collectively emerge: one in which housing could become more than 'houses', approximating Turner's 'housing as a verb'.⁹² 'With only words, people won't get the picture; the actual design process drives the community to think and take actions, and eventually makes them understand not only the housing matter but also living and livelihood'.⁹³ It has already been recognised that 'The architects may also create tools to help the people see the bigger picture of their community, in the context of the surrounding environment and the city as a whole, so that they develop solutions that are complementary to and not isolated from this big picture'.⁹⁴ At the moment this appears to be a side-concern within the programme, even though the relationships of the site to the city are crucial for reaching scale. There seems to be space within the practical steps of the programme to do so, given

that initial mapping activities are already used to instigate more holistic concerns: 'The process of mapping itself also provides a good starting point for all community members to reflect on how they live in the community, how things relate to one another both socially and physically, and to identify the common community problems'.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the focus of design guidelines could be diversified to go beyond the issue of re-blocking and embrace principles concerning the site in the city, addressing dimensions of connectivity, public spaces, inclusivity and diversity. While such aspects are occasionally considered, a more explicit, consistent and detailed concern for the identification of context-specific needs as well as opportunities could yield more adequate spatial representations of this impressively flexible and open process.

What struck us as researchers was the great need for rental accommodation that exists for various reasons, mainly related to rural-urban labour migration. For instance, in the case of Bang Prong, a district in the province of Samutprakan, but within the Bangkok Metropolitan Region, informal housing mostly consists of informal renting. Many people there cannot, or do not want to join Baan Mankong, mainly because they do not want to own a house or cannot manage to save enough. At the same time, many landowners are present and prepared to negotiate, and the local mayor is supportive of Baan Mankong. Innovative design solutions here could be exemplary in adapting Baan Mankong to the reality of renting, taking advantage of the relative ease of collaboration between landowners, local government and informal dwellers to design inclusive developments of shared investment and mutual benefit. While an awareness of urban dynamics and their effect on land value is present, this could be addressed strategically in synergistic collaboration with different stakeholders.

Such considerations could bring the city to the community and open up the community to the city.

The built environment should not follow the logic of the currently dominant development; it should not become an *inclusion* into mainstream building forms but be transformative of these, visibly representing the values, principles and guidelines fundamental to Baan Mankong processes, and thus give visible validation to those ways of life that are finally finding acknowledgement through Baan Mankong. What if community design were to propose new ways of building in terms of density, quality, sustainability, affordability, productivity, flexibility, contingency and scale beyond the property lines of the site, and in doing so question predominant forms of city development? Innovative spatial development could establish the previously excluded/poor in their new position as legitimate actors in development, and present their informal survival practices as legitimate practices in the city. Synergistic development could happen, not only in terms of relationships with government agencies but also in terms of territories within a city. The programme could then affect a qualitative change in the production and appropriation of the city in the name of those newly legitimised development agents. Such steps would require additional methods for the analysis of conditions and opportunities on the territorial and institutional neighbourhood scale, and for thinking *ex novo* about planning and design - moments in which the broad, knowledge-sharing network of Baan Mankong and ACCA could bear additional fruits. In this way, politics would be enacted in a very emancipatory moment in which, based on the axiomatic assumption of general equality, the 'part of no parts', the urban poor in this case, dissensionally claim to be part of the whole. Even though rarely emphasised, this logic lies very much within the possibilities of the programme: 'As people tape together house models, push around pieces of coloured paper representing scaled house plots on a plan and make decisions about the size and allocation of plots and open spaces, they are giving physical form to that new social system',⁹⁶ which is nothing other than a transformation of a sensory

fabric of being together.⁹⁷

Not-a-conclusion but a starting point toward an architecture of *dissensus*

Corresponding to the innovation in community finance, which grants groups of urban poor recognition as legitimate development agents, community architecture has the potential to add another dimension to this legitimacy by endorsing previously 'unheard' ways of doing things. The two strategies are intertwined in multiple ways, not least through the consolidation of ideology and desired forms of life, and therefore reinforce each other. *Architecture as dissensus* offers opportunities to manifest this emerging alternative development in society through artistic and design practices that appeal to our perception and alter our sense-making faculties, stimulating contestation over how we live and how our cities develop. Architecture not only provides space in which to live but can also offer new perspectives and open up new horizons on how to live. The possibility of living itself can be inscribed in space. Thus, allegorically speaking, life can be found in spaces due to their usability. Although it may not necessarily do so, architecture, as any art form, can give clues about the time in which we live. If art reflects an experience of life, it can create a feeling of recognition, of finding a previously unexpressed feeling or experience finally expressed, manifested, and by doing so, illuminate certain societal relations.

It is important to distinguish here between two dimensions of what *architecture of dissensus* can mean in this context. On the one hand, it refers to the way in which community members reposition themselves as viable development partners, thereby interrupting the dominant – fundamentally exclusive – way in which urban development happens. On the other hand, the spatial and aesthetic form that the development takes, and the values that it represents, can in themselves represent dissensus architecture. While the first alone already constitutes

much of the process of becoming a political subject, the second can add a critical edge, becoming an act of *giving* the poor a voice, which for Rancière is not the same as *assigning* them a voice through the expert or the literate point of view, but instead *inventing* them in order to ascribe them a voice.

The question here is how much the built environment perpetuates an established aesthetic regime or, in turn, disrupts it. The process of *dissensus* design can take different forms: from a conscious decision not to intervene physically in the built environment, to the production of spaces that explicitly challenge dominant, ideological perspectives. To become evident, then, requires a *partage du sensible*, which is not a new spatial ordering, but rather a new ordering of *logos*, as a way to define who can speak and participate in the affairs of the *polis* and who cannot. If aesthetics is defined as 'delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise' then political design, or emancipation through design, is a visualised and audible questioning of these delimitations. Whereas 'design consensus uproots the foundational political impulses that centre on disagreement',⁹⁸ design dissensus is the enlivening of these impulses that put forward different urban possibilities. If the lived experiences derived from the informal settlement, from the position of multiple socio-spatial marginalisation, were to inform the design and extrapolate themselves, then the result would be exactly this way of life, the way of life of the 'excluded' from the police order, an unprecedented presence that would add yet another dimension to the politics of recognition. We are not in a position here to offer a recipe for creating dissensus architecture, instead we argue for the need to continuously explore and elaborate a methodology.

The urban poor in Baan Mankong/ACCA are emerging as actors in their own development, their own history, through an act of decomposition and re-composition of the relationship between ways

of doing, being and speaking. Their equality is becoming possible only because they are nominated as equals and not simply invited to participate.⁹⁹ This *becoming central* to the urban development of a city is a political act because it 'perturbs the order of things [...] creating a new political identity that did not exist in the existing order'.¹⁰⁰ Becoming present in the agenda and in the reality of urban development positions the urban poor – individually and collectively – in a different place from the one assigned to them by mainstream development practice. It thus constitutes a critique of numerical teleology, offering a political space, or a reconfiguration of a space 'where parties, parts or lack of parts have been defined [...] making] visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise'.¹⁰¹ The emancipatory logic of the Baan Mankong/ACCA programme repositions space and design away from an instrumental way of urban upgrading and towards a process that offers a renewed capacity to speak, to have an audience, and to overcome social barriers, and in doing so to 'conjure the community of equals by declaring its presence, assuming equality and thus forcing politics to occur'.¹⁰²

Baan Mankong/ACCA is not a simple, participatory, design-centred programme. The design idea is being constructed through a more political reflection on design, revealing *dissensus*, in a Rancièrian sense, as a mechanism for generating strategic coalitions present in a momentary time and context. This addresses the causes of marginality, revealed through a process where 'design consensus uproots the foundational political impulses that centre on disagreement' and 'struggles over the real or different urban possibilities'.¹⁰³ Jacques Rancière's reflections offer a theoretical reconfiguration of design and architecture, laying bare their impurities and non-neutrality while also exposing the inherently political nature of participation, together with its political potential as contestation and dissensus in the production of urban form. Ultimately, such a

reconfiguration offers to reveal the lines of power and agency that are written and rewritten in cities, and to contest the spatial ordering that assigns everyone and everything its proper place.

Notes

1. Somsook Boonyabancha, Fr. Norberto Carcellar and Thomas Kerr, 'How Poor Communities are Paving their own Pathways to Freedom', in *Environment and Urbanization*, 24, 2 (Autumn 2012), pp. 441-62 (p. 461).
2. This paper is based on a research collaboration between the Development Planning Unit (DPU) and the Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI), the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR), and the Community Architect Networks (CAN). In particular, it is the result of reflections on the Baan Mankong Housing Programme that have emerged in the course of three research projects by two of the DPU's Masters programmes (MSc Building and Urban Design in Development and MSc Urban Development Planning), which took place in 2011, 2012 and 2013 in Bangkok, where several communities at different stages of implementation were involved.
3. Mark Purcell, *The Down-Deep Delight of Democracy* (London: Blackwell-Wiley, 2013).
4. Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, (London: Verso, 1999); Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political* (London: Routledge, 2005).
5. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, (London; New York: Zed Books Ltd, 2001); Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation* (Berlin: Sternberg, 2010); Ronan Paddison, 'Some Reflections on the Limitations to Public Participation in the Post-Political City', *L'Espace Politique*, 8, 2 (2009), < <http://espacepolitique.revues.org/1393> > [accessed 01 August 2013]; Gui Bonsiepe, 'Design and democracy', *Design Issue*, 21, 2 (2006), pp. 3-12.
6. Paddison, 'Some Reflections on the Limitations to Public Participation in the Post-Political City'.
7. Ibid.
8. Alexandre Apsan Frediani and Camillo Boano, 'Processes for Just Products: The Capability Space of Participatory Design', in *The Capability Approach, Technology and Design*, ed. by Ilse Oosterlaken and Jeroen van den Hoven (= *Philosophy of Engineering and Technology*, 5 (2012)), pp. 203-22.
9. Bechir Kenzari, *Architecture and violence* (Barcelona: Actar, 2011).
10. Nadir Lahiji, 'Is Building the Practice of Dissensus? Architecture between Aesthetics and Politics'. Paper presented at Architecture and the Political, Fourth International Symposium on Architectural Theory, Beirut, Lebanon, 10-12 November 2011, <<http://www.lau.edu.lb/news-events/conferences/architecture-political/docs/lahiji.pdf>> [accessed 04 March 2013].
11. Mustafa Dikeç, 'Politics is Sublime', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30 (2012), pp. 262-79; Mustafa Dikeç, 'Immigrants, *Banlieues*, and Dangerous Things: Ideology as an Aesthetic Affair', *Antipode*, 45, 1 (2013), pp. 23-42; Purcell, *The Down-Deep Delight of Democracy*.
12. C. Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen, 'Introduction', in *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*, ed. by C. Greig Crysler, Stephen Cairns and Hilde Heynen (Cornwell: SAGE Publications, 2012), pp. 1-38.
13. Reinhold Martin, *Utopia's Ghost* (Minneapolis; London: Minnesota University Press, 2005); Jeremy Till, *Architecture Depends* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2009).
14. Ole W. Fischer, 'Architecture, Capitalism and Criticality', in *The SAGE Handbook of Architectural Theory*, ed. by C. Greig Crysler and others, pp. 56-69.
15. Henry Sanoff, *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* (New York: Wiley, 2000); Henry Sanoff, 'Multiple Views on Participatory Design', *International Journal of Architectural Research*, 2, 1 (2007), pp. 57-69; Jaime Hernandez-Garcia, 'Slum Tourism, City Branding and Social Urbanism: the Case of Medellin, Colombia', *Journal of Place Management and Development*, 6, 1 (2013), pp. 43 – 51.16. Kurt Iveson, 'Cities Within the City: Do It Yourself Urbanism and the Right to the City', in *International Journal of*

- Urban Research*, 37, 3 (2013), pp. 941-56.
17. Margit Mayer, 'First World Urban Activism: Beyond Austerity Urbanism and Creative City Politics', *City*, 7, 1 (2013), pp. 5–19.
 18. Purcell, *The Down-Deep Delight of Democracy*.
 19. As Ettore Sottsass eloquently commented in the late 1960s, 'design is a way of discussing life...of discussing society, politics, eroticism, food and even design. At the end, it is a way of building up a possible figurative utopia or metaphor about life' (Paola Antonelli, 'States of Design 04: Critical Design', *Domus*, <<http://www.domusweb.it/en/design/states-of-design-04-critical-design/>> [Accessed 21 February 2013]). Hence, design becomes a condition of possibility in which excess rudely intrudes into otherwise ontologically and politically stable orders, allowing what was previously invisible or unheeded to emerge within a societal and political realm.
 20. This recent shift in architectural, design and development debates seems to have two angles. On one side, design practitioners are searching for a specific ethical role by investigating the complexities of architecture and urbanism. This shift comprises designing spaces, places and interventions that enable socially just development, produce alternative means of engagement, and reconsider citizenship and participation (see Ann Thorpe, 'Design as Activism: A Conceptual Tool' presented at the Changing the Change, Turin, Italy, 2010; Carl DiSalvo, 'Design, Democracy and Agonistic Pluralism', in *Proceedings of the Design Research Society Conference*, Montreal, (2010), <<http://www.designresearchsociety.org/docs-procs/DRS2010/PDF/031.pdf>> [accessed 06 August 2013]; Alastair Fuad-Luke, *Design Activism, Beautiful Strangeness for a Sustainable World* (London: Earthscan, 2009); Thomas Markussen, 'The Disruptive Aesthetics of Design Activism: Enacting Design Between Art and Politics', in *Making Design Matter*, Nordes, the 4th Nordic Design Research Conference, 29-31 May 2011, School of Art and Design, Aalto University, Helsinki, pp. 1-9; <<http://ocs.sfu.ca/nordes/index.php/nordes/2011/paper/view/406>> [accessed 07 August 2013]; Nadir Lahiji, *The Political Unconscious of Architecture. Re-opening Jameson's Narrative* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011). On the other side, development practitioners have gone through a reflexive, critical rediscovery of architecture and design, experimenting with a new pragmatic radicalism oriented toward more sophisticated outcomes achieved with an emphasis on design (see Pierluigi Nicolini, 'Architecture Meets People', *Lotus International*, 145 (2011), pp. 12-14; *Beyond Shelter. Architecture and Human Dignity*, ed. by Marie Aquilino (New York; Los Angeles: Metropolis Book, 2011). Yet, despite interesting methodological innovations and a clear emphasis on agency, the political dimension remains unquestioned.
 21. Jacques Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*, (London: Verso, 2006), p. 13.
 22. Jacques Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. by Julie Rose, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 30.
 23. Peter Hallward, 'Jacques Rancière and the Subversion of Mastery', in *Jacques Rancière: Aesthetics, Politics, Philosophy*, ed. by Mark Robson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 26-45 (p. 26).
 24. Jacques Rancière, 'The Thinking of Dissensus: Politics and Aesthetics', in *Reading Rancière: Critical Dissensus*, ed. by Paul Bowman and Richard Stamp (London; New York: Continuum, 2011), pp. 1-17 (p. 7).
 25. The Community Organisations Development Institute (CODI) was established in July 2000 as a public organisation under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in Thailand following the merge between the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) and the Rural Development Fund (see Somsook Boonyabancha, 'A Decade of Change: From the Urban Community Development Office (UCDO) to the Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI) in Thailand: Increasing Community Options Through a National Government Development Programme' *IIED Working Paper 12 on Poverty Reduction in Urban Areas* (2003), pp. i-36). CODI is the outcome of a long-standing public commitment to urban and rural development by the national Thai government, which preceded the United Nations

Millennium Development Goals Declaration and their associated targets. Set up in 1992 with a nationwide government initiative and its implementing and coordinating agency, UCDO had the explicit aim to address urban poverty after Thailand's economic success during the 1980s and early 1990s had brought little benefit to the poorest groups. It is dedicated to the transformation of the living conditions of the urban poor, and their relationships with the state and the private sector through 'build[ing] a strong societal base using the collective power of civil groups and community organizations' (CODI website, 'CODI Results: Statistics January 2011')

< <http://www.codi.or.th/housing/results.html> > [accessed 26 February 2013]. Guided by the premises of 'unlocking people energy' (Somsook Boonyabancha, 'Unlocking People Energy', in *Our Planet: The magazine of the United Nations Environment Programme*, 16, 1 (2005), pp. 22-3) and placing people as subjects, rather than objects, of development, it supports and empowers urban and rural community organisations through financial assistance and skills training in the process of housing development. In addition, ACHR was formed in 1988 as the first platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience by different urban activist organisations in the Asian region. They aimed to advance housing rights and tackle urban poverty in a context of increasing forced evictions. While initially focused on forced evictions, a DFID grant allowed for capacity-development towards a regional intervention process. Since 2000, ACHR has been working with community savings and the model of the Community Development Fund. In some countries, ACHR receives support from governments whereas in others it has managed to up-scale its programmes independently. The Asian Coalition for Community Action Programme (ACCA) is the culmination of ACHR's efforts and in the three years it has been running, 2010 – 2013, it has reached 165 cities in 19 countries (ACHR website: 'About ACHR', < <http://www.achr.net/> > [accessed 18 July 2013]).

26. Though Rancière shares some common ground with other Left-leaning thinkers who sought an

alternative to Marxism, especially after his break with Althusserian structuralism and philosophy due to its elitism. He rejected the rigid and hierarchical distinction between science and ideology that this philosophy presupposed, accusing it of distrusting spontaneous popular movements. Refusing the Althusserian approach, he turned instead to the archive in the form of an intellectual history of labour. This was an attempt to recover the virtue of 'the worker' by showing that workers resist not merely the hardship of work but the very system that confines them to the role of worker in the first place (Samuel A. Chambers, 'Jacques Rancière and the Problem of Pure Politics', *European Journal of Political Theory*, 10, 3 (2010), pp. 303-26). In this, he discovered the 'disorder' of the nineteenth-century French workers and their refusal to play the part they had been assigned to, thus breaking down the Platonic legacy and centrality of 'order.' In this respect, Rancière believes that the role of the philosopher is not to give his/her voice to the silent aspirations of the dominated, but to add his/her voice to theirs, therefore, to hear their voices, rather than interpret them. These notions were further developed in works like *The Philosopher and his Poor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

27. Jacques Rancière, 'Ten Theses on Politics' *Theory & Event*, 5, 3 (2001) < http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theory_and_event/v005/5.3ranciere.html > [accessed 05 January 2013].

28. Samuel A. Chambers, 'Jacques Rancière and the Problem of Pure Politics'.

29. Andrew Schaap, 'Hannah Arendt and the Philosophical Repression of Politics' in *Jacques Rancière and the Contemporary Scene. The Philosophy of Radical Equality*, Jean-Philippe Deranty and Alison Ross (London: Continuum, 2012), pp. 145-166; *Reading Rancière*, ed. by Bowman and Stamp.

30. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1980), p. 93.

31. Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, p. 29.

32. Rancière, 'Ten Theses on Politics'.

33. Maria Muhle, 'Politics, Police and Power: From Foucault and Rancière' (unpublished paper presented at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht, 8th November 2007); *Reading Rancière*, ed. by Bowman and Stamp.
34. Not surprisingly, like many other postwar French speaking intellectuals who worked on language as a place where 'perilous crossings of epistemic thresholds leave their material traces (Rey Chow and Julian Rohrer, 'On Captivation: a Remainder from the Indistinction of Art and Nonart' in *Reading Rancière*, ed. by Bowman and Stamp, pp. 44-72 (p. 33)), one of the major influences on Rancière is Foucault's *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Rancière seems to continue with the Foucaultian explorations of the subterranean discursive strata that underline knowledge formations, stressing the silent witness of history whose anonymity and wordless speech continue as a form of participation and partaking. Rancière also continues with Foucault's politics and ethic through his focus on equality, justice and disagreement.
35. Mustafa Dikeç, 'Police, Politics, and the Right to the City', *GeoJournal*, 58, 2-3 (2002), pp. 91-8.
36. Giuseppina Mecchia, 'The Classics and Critical Theory in Postmodern France: The case of Jacques Rancière' in *Jacques Rancière: History, Politics, Aesthetics*, ed. by Gabriel Rockhill and Philip Watts (Duke University Press, 2009), p. 77.
37. Jacques Rancière, 'Xénophobie et politique, entretien avec Jacques Rancière' [Xenophobia and politics, talks with Jacques Rancière], in *La xénophobie en banlieue, effets et expressions*, ed. By Florence Haegel, Henri Rey and Yves Sintomer (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), p. 215, cited in English from Mark Angélil and Cary Siress, 'The Paris *Banlieue*: Peripheries of Inequity', *Journal of International Affairs*, 65, 2 (Spring/Summer 2012), pp. 57-67 (p. 64).
38. Dikeç, 'Police, Politics, and the Right to the City'.
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The 'Diverse Economies' of Participation

Julia Udall and Anna Holder

Introduction: practices and economies of participation

This paper critically examines the relationship between the practices of participation and participation as economy. In recent years, and particularly in response to the global market failure of 2008 and subsequent global recession, the UK government, in line with those of the US and many in Europe, has told citizens that resources are scarce in order to pursue the neoliberal policy of 'austerity'.¹ In this context, where we, as citizens, must 'do more with less', rather than address the unequal distribution of resources, participation becomes a way to 'make do and mend' the urban fabric, both spatial and social. Participation is diverted from its development as a radical 'redistribution of power'.²

The authors of this paper are two women trained in architecture and planning, who write, teach and practice in Sheffield, a post-industrial city in the north of England. Currently, as part of two doctoral research projects, we are following separate lines of enquiry into the 'how and why' of participation in the production and appropriation of the built environment in the UK. In this paper, we draw on and explore the resultant empirical work.³

Participation, understood as citizen power in the processes of decision-making moving towards 'significant social reform ... [enabling those currently excluded] to share in the benefits of the affluent society' is still as diverse in its methods,⁴ means and outcomes as when Arnstein first categorised

her 'ladder' of levels of participation in 1969. We are concerned with 'participation' as a means for citizens to have real power to shape their environment, recognising that, depending on each specific case, this may be through citizen control, through delegated power, or through working in partnership with local government. We seek to practice participation with the stated political and ethical aim of striving for justice and equity. Drawing on the recent 'Spatial Agency' project,⁵ and discussions of the 'production of desires' by Petrescu,⁶ we consider participation in its diverse forms to be an empowering, transformative force. Participation, in this conception, is a set of practices that seeks to develop and explore the desires of communities as well as address diverse needs, and through this process to contribute to the productive and reproductive work of spatial justice. It therefore includes such varied activities as brief writing, creating networks, protesting, claiming, disputing, proposing, repairing, managing, co-researching, governing, caring and building (to name but a few).

In accounting for participation according to the logic of austerity, with the imperative to 'create something out of nothing', representations are made where on the 'cost' side the only thing that is accounted for is the 'real work' of waged labour. The outcomes that are considered to be of value are those things that contribute to the market economy, perhaps in the form of gentrification, vision report, or local service. The authors of this paper contend that this framing obscures the actions, knowledge

and social relations of participation which generate resources and transformation, and are operating within other forms of economy, such as care, gifts, co-operatives, volunteering, exchange, lending, borrowing and gathering.

We draw on JK Gibson-Graham's critique of the stabilising effect of representations of the capitalist economy as singular, homogeneous and enveloping, in order to focus attention on the performative effects of representing participatory practices as being part of the market economy.⁷ In this paper, by looking at both the shift over time in policies and trends in the UK, and closely examining two current instances of participation, we propose to represent participation as a constituent of a heterogeneous landscape of diverse economies. Through exploring this 'landscape of diverse economies', we aim to draw out the complex relational position of the unrepresented economies of participation. These run counter to the market economy, but are also interdependent within it.

In this paper we ask: What are the marginalised, hidden and alternative economic activities taking place, constituted by participatory practices? How have these practices evolved in relation to the Participatory Turn in Urbanism, and how are they accounted for as economic activity? How might accounting for participatory practices as constitutive of a diverse economy empower people to fight against their co-option or exploitation and make these practices more real and credible as objects of policy and activism?

In asking these questions, we seek to address some of the challenges posed by JK Gibson-Graham in their 2006 book, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It)*,⁸ which, in order to imagine a world beyond capitalism, invites us to engage in the process of articulation (making links between activities and enterprises of a diverse economy),

and re-signification (convening activities under the signifier of community economies).

Methodology and structure of the paper

This paper consists of five parts. Firstly, we position ourselves as researchers and practitioners, and define participation according to this experience and positionality. Secondly, we outline an understanding of practice theory as a model for understanding participation as an element of human action, and as an impetus for social change. Thirdly, we explore the economies constituted by the production of the built environment, questioning how participation is accounted for, and what is marginalised or hidden in relation to Gibson-Graham's conception of a diverse economy. The subsequent section looks at the evolution of the practices of the Participatory Turn in architecture and urban design, and how they are accounted for as economic activity, drawing attention to the inequalities inherent in how participation is practised. Finally, we detail participatory practices, observed in two cases of contemporary participation, as constitutive of a diverse economy. By answering the questions regarding participation, by whom, where, and to do what in these instances, we draw attention to the shifting inequalities and the possibilities for equality that these participatory practices, represented otherwise, can offer.

The collective voice, the 'we' used in this paper, is a reflection of our collaborative process, a culmination of spoken and written conversations. Throughout this paper, we deliberately choose to express different forms of our voices. Inspired by JK Gibson-Graham, we write to tell stories of other ways of acting, of other economies coexisting within and alongside dominant practices and economy. We write as a performative action, naming and drawing attention to these economies, not as alternatives but as part of multiple, heterogeneous economic ways of acting and interacting that make up the built environment.

In presenting the cases, in which our understanding of theories of practice and economy are played out, we speak in the singular first person. 'I, Anna' and 'I, Julia', our personal voices that reflect the engaged and situated role we take as researchers personally involved with projects and people, and constructing knowledge relationally through this involvement. By 'telling the story' in the first person, we present the role of the researcher as an influence, a voice and a prompt, and in Julia's case, as an actor and catalyst in the project being studied. Allowing ourselves to have both individual and collective voices in the paper reflects a view of knowledge which incorporates reflective storytelling as an aid to learning through practise, but one which also wishes to query the researcher role as the dominant voice, the storyteller, and so we move to a dialogical position, where separate voices can be raised, together and independently.

In the concluding section of this paper, the use of 'we' positions us within a community of practitioners and activists, who resist the co-option of participative work or exploitation and working towards goals of social justice. 'We' add our voices to a conversation about collective responsibility and ethical practice.

Conceptualising participation as practices

'This economy is not simply an ideological concept, susceptible to intellectual debunking, but a materialization that participates in organizing the practices and processes that surround it.'⁹

Economies shape, but are also shaped by participatory practices. Economies are not abstract entities where money flows as numbers separate from the 'real world', but are instead interrelationships between materials, relations and concepts that govern production, exchange, transactions and distribution. The intention, therefore, in conceptualising participation as constituted of various and

interconnected practices is threefold. Firstly, to couple actions and activities that make up routine ways of 'participating' with the types of knowledge that enable them, such as motivations, know-how and understanding. Secondly, to disassociate actions and activities from being understood only in terms of individual actors or projects, and instead see the repetition of 'performances' as practices which, through their multiple instances perpetuate the practice across time and space. Thirdly, to recognise that many of the practices that constitute ways of participating politically in decision-making and the production of built environment are routine, and are repetitious within and across projects.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, De Certeau draws attention to 'everyday practices', 'ways of operating' or 'doing things' in order that they 'no longer appear as merely the obscure background of social activity' but are instead articulated.¹⁰ In relation to participation, our aim in articulating practices is to move away from a discussion of levels of participation and legitimacy within individual projects and towards an understanding of the organising, productive and reproductive work that is done when participating in the production of the built environment as part of an ongoing process of social change. We wish to attend to the 'obscure background' of participation: the objects, motivations, spaces, skills and access to resources that make up participatory practices.

Practice theory, according to Bourdieu, offers us a way of seeing human activity that pays attention to everyday, individual and collective action. It suggests an understanding of structure and agency, not as the dualism of social norms and free will, but as interconnected and recursively reproduced. In Bourdieu's conception, the objects of knowledge are constructed through an active engagement and 'practical relation to the world'.¹¹ Elements of human activity are bundled with knowledge in terms of

ways of operating, reasons for acting, and particular 'know-how' which relate to interacting with people, objects, and spaces – these are practices.

All practices have an economic logic and are constitutive of an economy in the way that they enact and maintain both social relations and the circulation and redistribution of goods.¹² A 'second wave' of practice theory emphasises its use as a model for better understanding the everyday processes through which social change occurs¹³ as practices emerge, are perpetuated, or disappear. Our purpose in looking at practices as a way to better understand participation is to recognise the possibilities of participation as a force for social change towards the democratic and equitable distribution of resources, and access to social, spatial, and economic goods. Recognising a 'participatory turn' in urban planning as a return to the post-WWII efforts towards democracy and the redistribution of wealth carries with it a realisation that change has been slow in coming. Conceptualising participation through practices gives us a way of understanding processes of change, not as individual intentions or social norms, but as enacted social and economic relations.

'Participatory practices' may overlap with many other practices, but at their core is citizen involvement in some form of influence over common goods or resources that were not previously under citizen control. Participatory practices operate at and between different spatial scales and timescales, from the family home, through places of education and work, to the neighbourhood and the state. They exist in many times, from daily life, through to the life of a project, and through political and generational cycles. We contend that these often-diverse practices of citizen action constitute the 'participatory turn'. Our next step is to articulate the economic concern in relation to these participatory practices.

Economies: what is the concern?

We speculate that diverse participatory practices can be seen to constitute diverse economic systems. At present, however, because space itself is increasingly considered primarily as a financial 'asset', the practices that seek to shape them are also conceived as being part of the market economy. The dominance of this intertwined understanding of capitalist economic policies in the production of the built environment is emphasised by Schneider and Till:

Today, building activity in modern capitalist societies, along with the labour of architects and building workers are either transformed into, or are produced as commodities. That is, they become things that are created primarily to be bought and sold in the marketplace. This produces a fundamental shift in the functional and social objectives of building production.¹⁴

This is a value system based on market growth as an unquestionable good, espousing the idea that promoting capitalist enterprise will bring economic dividends to the whole community. As the built environment becomes predominantly viewed as quantity, not quality or relation, and is represented in terms of its ability to make money for banks, land developers and construction companies, the desires and needs of those who use the built environment are understood only in terms of how they contribute to this market value. The result of this is that buildings become discussed and valued in terms of finance, cost, wage labour and financial return on investment, and those resources and practices that fall outside of this framework become invisible.

Post-2008 financial crisis accounts and representations of architecture and urbanism that rely heavily on participation emphasise its 'value' determined by an equation of what is spent in monetary terms divided by what is produced as market value,

yet say little, almost nothing, of the people, practices and resources these projects depend upon. Participatory work is often framed as a way to draw 'something out of nothing', and operate in times of scarcity, or in places where budgets are minimal.

What is a 'diverse economies' way of seeing?

In their 2006 book, *A Postcapitalist Politics*, economic geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham argue that the way in which we represent the economy has tangible effects on our own ability and that of others to act ethically.¹⁵ Drawing on Latour, they warn that we must be more careful about how we multiply, populate, stabilise and discipline the world.

By presenting Bill Philip's Monetary National Income Analogue Computer as one of the most familiar and powerful of these representations, Gibson-Graham show that capitalism here is hegemonic: a closed-loop perpetual motion machine in which people are positioned primarily as consumers, growth is the driving force and the market is an all-encompassing force. These and other familiar representations portray economic relations as generalisable, and define citizens as having little or no agency. In Gibson-Graham's alternative representation, the diverse economies are represented as an iceberg, with capitalism, wage labour and the market sitting above the waterline, highly visible, yet representing only a fraction of what constitutes the ways in which we sustain ourselves and how society is reproduced:

Over the past 20 years, feminist analysts have demonstrated that non-market transactions and unpaid household work (both by definition, non-capitalist) constitute 30–50% of economic activity in both rich and poor countries. [...] Such quantitative representations exposed the discursive violence entailed in speaking of 'capitalist' economies, and lent credibility to projects of representing economy differently.¹⁶

If, drawing on feminist and Marxist critiques, we define 'work' as 'the social process of shaping and transforming the material and social worlds, creating people as social beings as they create value',¹⁷ we can start to cut the 'market economy' down to size. The policies of austerity are revealed as being possible only by relying on hidden work and the value that this creates in terms of the needs of society. The powerful implication of Gibson-Graham's alternative 'iceberg' representation of economies is that the market economy is 'kept afloat' by many other forms of economy: black market, emotional work, slave labour, care, childbirth, photosynthesis, volunteerism and gifts. Though perhaps not consciously conceived as economic activities by their everyday practitioners, if we reflect, we find we can recognise ourselves taking part in many of these 'diverse economies' on a regular basis in order to sustain our lives. We can start to ask questions about who carries out this work, how they meet our needs, how surplus is distributed, and therefore create opportunities to act. Through an ontological reframing of economies as diverse, and our roles and relations within them as multiple, JK Gibson-Graham propose that we multiply our opportunities and the potential for ethical actions and transformation.

Enclosure and capitalism

What one person has done becomes the precondition of the doing of others [...] there are no clear dividing lines. What happens then, under capitalism, is that this flow of doing is broken, because the capitalist comes along and says, 'That which you have done is mine, I appropriate that, that is my property.'¹⁸

In his entreaty to 'change the world without taking power', philosopher John Holloway reminds us of the affect on enclosure and co-option on our practices. We too, do not claim that the co-option of work produced through participatory practices is a unique occurrence; its roots lie in the types of enclosure that have dogged other forms of common



Fig. 1: Illustration of the economic iceberg. Illustration: author.

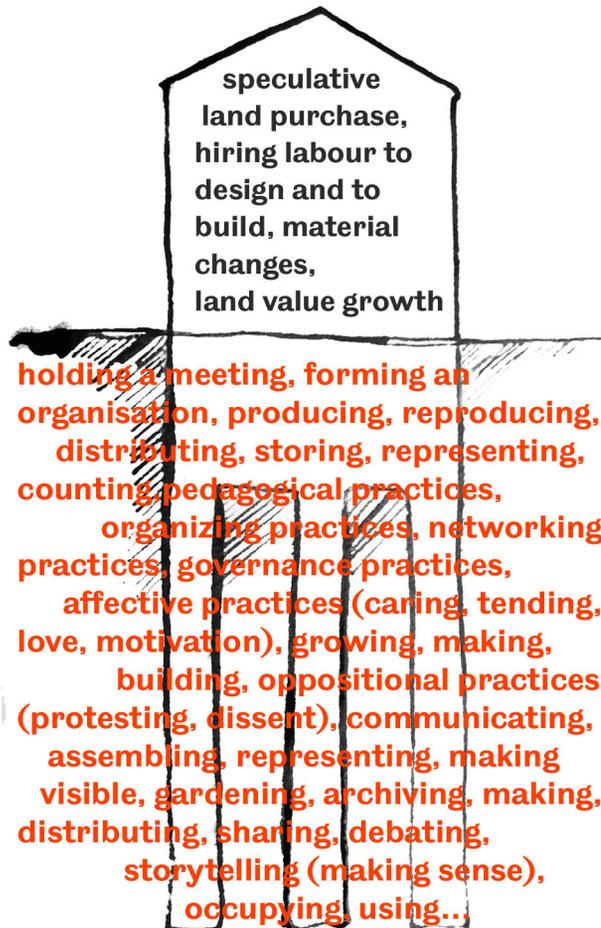


Fig. 2: Illustration of practices of participation as the hidden supports of building as capitalist accumulation. Illustration: author.

resources. Historically, in England, Commons were private spaces over which 'the commoner' had certain rights and access to resources: to gather wood, to fish, to harvest fruit and to graze animals. This enabled human survival and regulated relationships between the community and nature. The rules of the commons evolved from a form of collective self-governance and management based on regular meetings where knowledge and experience of using the resources of a place were shared. This was to ensure sustainability of resources, because if too much was taken, or it was taken at the wrong time of year, the resource would become scarce and there would be nothing to eat the following year. The enclosure of much of this shared land, and resultant control of resources led to poverty and the criminalisation of people who had previously relied on what was enclosed for food, fuel or other resources. In his discussions of 'commoning', Massimo Angelis attests that this process of enclosure of the commons is not limited to the period of the 'birth of capitalism' but happens repeatedly.¹⁹ He states that this is because people keep working to reweave the social fabric, (destroyed by the enclosure of shared resources), thus capital, which relies on perpetual growth, must find new things to enclose.

The evolution of participatory practices in architecture and urban planning

In addressing the current state of the participatory turn in architecture and planning, we recognise a legacy of the reproduction of participatory practices throughout the fifty or so years since participation first became a concern in the built environment disciplines. This brief account of the period from post-WWII to the present day shows the ways in which participatory practices have been introduced, how they are 'performed' within contemporary processes of production in the built environment, and how their meanings change through repetitions across time and space, or through 'enclosure' by the market economy. Our account is partial, but we propose it as a starting place for elucidating the

different kinds of practices that make-up the way participation is performed. This account concerns the fields of architecture and planning, particularly professional and citizen forms of action. This reflects our interests as engaged professionals and active citizens. We understand these to be loosely gathered as *communicative practices, organisational practices, and productive practices*.

Communicative participatory practices

With the development and introduction in 1947 of a comprehensive system for planning in the UK, the possibility for members of the public to participate in decision-making processes that affect the built environment (beyond their own private property) was initially offered through official Planning Inquiries and Public Meetings organised by Local Authorities.²⁰ They typically occurred late in the process of developing plans or projects, and were designed to facilitate information provision through one-way communication or limited and controlled consultation.²¹ The planning professionals who orchestrated these opportunities for participation in decision-making operated within a rationalist epistemology: local authority planning could not favour the interests of any specific group, but should advise those in power to make decisions based on impartial, reasoned analysis of overall public interest. The practices of public meetings and planning enquiries have clearly defined roles for participants, including rules of conduct regarding who can speak and when, and what type of evidence may be allowed to influence proceedings. As Arnstein notes, when informing and consultation are 'proffered by power-holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard, but under these conditions they lack the power to ensure that their views will be heeded by the powerful'.²² Participation is invited according to the terms of the professionals acting on behalf of the state, and communicative practices of attending inquiries or public meetings are restricted in the way they may be creatively or productively used by the participants.²³ Inequality is

inherent in the limitations that govern discussions and processes, which members of the public are either permitted or not permitted to access.

Organisational participatory practices

The 1969 'Skeffington Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning' drew critical attention to how much of decision-making in planning procedures went on 'behind closed doors' and pointed out the inequalities inherent in who could participate in decision-making and how.²⁴

In the US in the late 1960s, an alternative model for participation in built environment decision-making was developing through advocacy organisations set up in inner cities (which later became the Community Design Centers or CDCs).²⁵ This non-state, non-profit model provided a locus for tenants of poor-quality housing, or housing threatened with demolition for new development, where citizens could access the professional knowledge necessary to exert influence through legal channels, or work with professionals to organise and communicate in order to effect change through consciousness-raising and resistance.²⁶ Participating in this form of organisation had creative and productive potential, which involved developing consciousness-raising politics through meetings not controlled by state actors and, importantly, organisational practices that established articulated forms of social relations with which to act collectively, and forms which were able to be propagated by participants. These practices spread across Europe during the early 1970s, predominantly through networks of professional knowledge. The sites of participation shifted away from the established locus of decision-making, such as the town hall or government offices, and instead occupied either the locations in contention for development or change, or locations more easily accessible to those participating, where advice was provided about how to operate from within and influence the planning system.²⁷

Productive participatory practices

These established, communicative and organisational participatory practices were supplemented by actions that moved into productive work.²⁸ By the end of the 1970s there was increased local authority recognition within the UK of citizens' capacity for self-supported action, and attempts were made to support this – either financially, through the funding of many small schemes, or bureaucratically, through the beginnings of devolved, decision-making power.²⁹

The self-supported action first established as an effective model for addressing spatial inequalities has, under a neo-liberal political regime, been co-opted with an onus on 'co-production', led by creative consultants commissioned by local authorities or development bodies. The resources produced through these productive participatory practices, such as mapping and storytelling, are enclosed through the reporting process required from the consultants. The activities are edited and re-presented according to the requirements of the consultants for their commission. These enclosing practices can fix the identities of communities by solidifying a moment in time and identifying a small number of people as being representative of what might actually be a very diverse community.

Limitations, inequalities

Critically, the shift from participating through practices of deliberation and communication to undertaking productive practices at the local neighbourhood level (from involvement in design work on urban schemes and individual projects, through to constructing and mending practices) leaves in place clear inequalities. Design consultants invite and organise participation according to the terms dictated by their commissioning bodies, to produce legitimacy, local ownership or market-valued activity. The work of those participating (producers of unwaged work) is limited in terms of the replication or growth of productive practices, reliant as it is

on the in-built relations of consultants and commissioners. The move from localised and area-based participatory practices to a widespread adaptation of the practices of decision-making, organisation, and the production of the built environment, has been limited. Although public participation 'exercises' became legally required as part of local plan preparation in the 1980s, it became colonised by NIMBYist oppositional practices motivated in defence of the value of private property. The legal requirements for an element of citizen participation, without changes in social relations or a distribution of resources, made participation ' [...] another box among many to tick in order to get approval and funding [...] an organised (and potentially manipulated) part of any regeneration project, in which users are meant to be given a voice, but the process stifles the sound coming out'.³⁰

By the late 1990s and early 2000s participation was accepted as another commodified element of the consultant's work package, as a legitimisation of design decisions, or as a demonstration of 'procedural probity' on behalf of a developer or local authority.³¹ In England, much participation 'work' was done as part of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme, targeting localised deprivation through thirty-nine, area-based regeneration initiatives. One element of the programme was the funding of activities to build 'community'. Alongside involvement in neighbourhood decision-making fora, art and design consultants were contracted to involve local participants in creative exercises focusing on identity, branding, and public art projects. This approach was predicated on an understanding of areas acting in competition to be more 'vibrant', so as to offer greater opportunities for market transactions.

A diverse economies account of the practices of participation

In trying to understand what kinds of practices might occur in these diverse economies, we wish to look

more closely at two current cases of participatory action in the UK. Our intention in doing so is to try to represent in more detail some of the participatory practices in terms of their social, material and spatial form.

Participation as practised (at home, in the park, in the city)

The interview on which this account is based is part of a wider case study taken from Anna Holder's 'Initiating Architecture' doctoral research project into processes of conceiving, commissioning, organising and funding participative spatial projects. The study uses a multiple-case methodology to describe and learn from four instances of user-initiated spatial change across the UK.

The following account details the practices undertaken by one citizen participating in a park improvement scheme.³² The improvement work for the park, Lordship Rec, was catalysed by a self-organised user group, 'The Friends of Lordship Rec', which developed the project in partnership with the local authority, the London Borough of Haringey:

The photocopier sits to one side of the small, low window. The sort of photocopier you have in an office. It takes up space. The pale, wan gleams of daylight filter in through the curtains, partly blocked by the large computer monitor. This, along with the keyboard, and piles of paperwork, occupies much of the small dining table-cum-desk. To one side, a plate of toast and beans balances: Dave is eating lunch while telling me about the Lordship Rec project. Over a decade ago, Dave organised a meeting that led to the founding of a 'Friends of' group in his local park.³³ He describes the recent changes they have undertaken: a skatepark built, a hard court for ball games laid out, the construction of a building housing a café and space for community groups, weeds and overgrown plants pulled out from around the lake, trees thinned from the woodland, earth moved to expose the

underground river.

My dictaphone is balanced on the arm of the sofa where I sit; Dave's cat has curled up on my knees. When I arranged this interview, I had planned to talk to Dave in the local community centre: now I am in his home, which is also his office, the centre of the organising and communicating work he does with the Friends group. The domestic space of Dave's home is encroached on, by participating. His living space is shared with documents that would not be out of place in the offices of the Local Authority Planning Department, or in an architect's project folder.

A grid of rectangular wooden storage 'pigeon-holes' takes over one wall of the room. Opposite is a sort of display-stand for brochures, of the type you might see in a public library. Each storage structure is filled with papers, neatly categorised. Newsletters produced by the Friends group to keep local residents informed of the decisions and processes surrounding the works to the park and the public events – these will be delivered by hand to flats and terraces, as well as pinned on the dedicated noticeboard in the park. Printed copies of the surveys done by the Friends – a visual survey, with annotated photographs of the dilapidation of the park, recorded during their first years of trying to care for it; a written survey of wildlife species seen in the woodland, undertaken by a knowledgeable amateur; photocopied flyers of other volunteer-built environment projects in the area; a campaign to save a local shopping arcade from residential development – all these opened channels for the learning and knowledge exchange of participative practices.

My exhaustive interest in how this work happens, coupled with Dave's deep knowledge and enthusiasm for what he and others are doing, means that we talk for over an hour. Feeling I have trespassed too much on Dave's time, I wind up the interview, but ask, finally, if there is anything important that my questions have not covered.

'The photocopier'.

It is important to the work of the Friends that they can keep people informed, that they extend the knowledge and opportunities to participate in the politics of the local environment, that a piece of paper goes through as many doors as possible. So the photocopier takes up a lot of space.

The above account describes an interview undertaken as research into a particular project involving a self-constituted user group working collaboratively with a local authority department to initiate, raise funds and undertake a range of environmental improvements and building projects. The organisations and enterprises Dave is involved in, although requiring initial catalysing and organising, exist through a rhythm of meetings, minute-taking, agreeing on actions, forming subgroups, and reporting back. These participative practices are not confined to one time and space, one 'project', but exist at different scales within the neighbourhood and the city, and are 'carried' by practitioners between different contexts. The know-how, physical activities, mental activities, understanding, motivational and emotional knowledge involved in the practice of 'chairing a meeting', for example, is performed weekly in meetings of the 'Friends' park user group. Elements will be learned and passed on from observing other performances of 'chairing a meeting'; for instance, from experiences on a Tenants and Residents Association committee. Other elements again will inform how this practice is performed within the wider group of stakeholders in the park. When chairing a meeting with the city-wide network of 'Friends' groups involved in working with/caring for green spaces, the practice will inform and be informed by performances of the same practice in other contexts.

By paying attention to a specific practice Dave performs in one spatial location and as a single actor, we can look at the paperwork storage relating to the Friends group, the Users Forum, and the

citywide Green Spaces Friends Groups network. This practice is a key part of Dave's participation in the decision-making process for the production of the built environment. Although located in a domestic setting, the material elements involved in the practice of storing paperwork – the pigeonholes and leaflet display stand – suggest the performance of this practice 'crossing over' from other locations, the office or the library. Again, this practice is related to participation in more than one project: storing minutes from the various organisations and materials produced by them, such as surveys and newsletters, but also flyers or information about other projects similar in terms of spatial area or type of enterprise.

Some of the work of participating lies in the recording of knowledge and the use of know-how that emerge from day-to-day practices. For example, the 'knowledgeable amateur' who produces the wildlife survey gains his understanding and know-how about where and how to look for wildlife, and with what equipment (binoculars, camouflaged clothing, reference books) through the regular performance of practices such as bird watching or nature spotting, undertaken for enjoyment. In undertaking a wildlife survey for the Friends of the Park, this practice becomes productive and involves dedicating time, codifying knowledge and recording it. The wildlife survey is used as a resource, as evidence of a certain use value of the park.

The critical point we wish to make from this detailed representation of participative practices, is that the physical and mental activities, equipment and know-how involved in participating are often indistinguishable from practices people undertake in their leisure time, or practices people undertake as waged labour. The difference lies in undertaking the practices as participation, as time dedicated to building resources for common goals, as tending or caring for space that is not private property, or as domestic and personal space given over to work for

common goals. Participants do not receive a wage for their time, nor rent for their space. The practices of participation are undertaken outside the market economy. The purpose, therefore, of representing Dave's activities as part of a landscape of diverse economies is to draw attention to the opportunities for ethical choices, especially around the distribution of surplus. Dave is situated in his home, surrounded by the reports and products of the project he has produced. Because of this unique access, he can choose to share these resources with others, through taking part in other meetings and offering advice.

Dave's motivation seems to combine both a love for and interest in his environment: a desire to improve it for himself and others, together with broader desires to change the structures of local decision-making in order to make them more equitable and reflective of the society he wants to produce. His contribution raises question for practitioners and researchers alike, such as how to value contributions that are not officially remunerated? And what kinds of representations we need to help conceptualise other value systems and acknowledge other people?

Valuing Portland Works

Portland Works, the subject of Udall's PhD study,³⁴ is a Grade II* listed metalwork factory, home to a range of craftsmen, artists and musicians. Under threat from closure and conversion into residential accommodation, campaigners sought to retain it as a place of making and to develop it for wider community benefit. In early 2013, over 500 people came together to become shareholders and enable the purchase of the Works. Portland Works Industrial and Provident Society (PW IPS) is managed by the shareholders through the election of a Board of Directors.

This account is a sense-making description of events, thoughts, conversations and activities that

happened over the period of a few days, collaged together as a 'recollection' of a single day and place:

I walk into the courtyard of Portland Works, stepping over an oily puddle forming as Richard jet-washes motors on the threshold of his workshop, falling into step with the rhythmic bass of Andy working the nineteenth-century drop hammer as he makes tools in the forge, and expertly avoiding the sheets of metal lying over a hole in the ground: I've been here before. Today we are meeting the surveyor to get a valuation of this Grade II* listed cutlery works building. This figure will then be our target: the finance we need to raise in order to purchase the building and have enough to run it and make the most urgent of urgent repairs. [Not enough, we are sure, to replace the dangerous wiring, or fix the leaky roof, but we hope for a little bit more than the capital costs – perhaps enough to cover propping up a dangerous column, or reconnecting the fire alarm.]

Stu, a knife maker and shareholder [in the community enterprise we have founded for the purchase], appears around a corner. He is pointing up at a dislodged gutter with buddleia sprouting from it, drawing the gaze of a man with a clipboard. What he is saying is drowned out by the tinkle of windowpanes rattling and electric guitars grinding into the first bars of a well-rehearsed line. This man with the clipboard, now nodding his head, must be the surveyor, soon to pronounce a value for this place. I hesitate before I go over: what he has to say will determine how many evenings and weekends I have to invest over the next year. Each pound of the valuation price means work for our group of volunteers: selling shares, applying for loans and grants. Hundreds of hours at meetings and filling-in forms instead of being out in the sunshine, walking in the Peaks.

We are introduced to Mark, the surveyor, and we guide him round, warning him to take care on the wobbly step, not to grab that handrail as it hasn't been connected for years, pointing out the bowed walls

and the leaks. We talk about the project, our aim to fix the factory up and to keep it as a place of making for another 100 years, and he tells us how great this is and wishes us luck. We all smile.

At the end of our tour, Stu invites us all into the workshop he rents, and over filter-coffee, Mark tells us, '... Well, by one measure, this building is worth zero. It's in such poor condition...'

'Yes,' we say, 'our conditional survey says there is over £800,000 of urgent work...'

'But by another, the rental income, well... it's a 10x multiplier... so, £450,000.'

'But,' (I almost shout), 'that income, surely it's dependent on the building not collapsing, not setting on fire, that we can keep tenants in here? Without urgent repairs, replacing felt and slates before the damp roof structure gives up, these workshops won't be in rentable condition much longer.'

'Yes,' he says, 'but your business plan shows that you have a waiting list of tenants, that as a community benefit organisation you can put together good, solid, funding bids for money to make it wind and watertight, you can manage it for a reasonable sum of money... It's convincing as a viable business... So it's reasonable to suppose the value is around £450,000...'

We say our goodbyes, and I head back to work, drifting through the housing estate opposite the Works, thinking about the next steps. As I walk, nagging away at the back of my mind is a thought, one I first hold in, but then can't help but let burst forth, texting as I go: 'Without us doing all this work, the building would be worth zero! This is work we haven't even done yet, but each bit we do makes us have to pay more, and then work more to pay more. Can't we just offer him [the owner] £200k and say that's fair enough?'

In my head, more belligerent thoughts keep coming.

Why should the owner gain financially from the hard work of tens of volunteers? But with this comes the dawning realisation that he could just hold onto it, keep collecting rents, let the holes in the roof get bigger, see the tenants slowly leave until the only answer is flats or demolition ...

How to resist exploitation?

To understand that our practices of giving our time freely in order to learn together and develop resources such as business plans, proposals for bringing out-of-use workshops into use and increasing the demand for space, could be used purely in terms of the value they created for the landlord, was momentarily paralysing. Each practice, including the thinking, the emotional output and the work itself, was likely to tie us into more work and more hours of fund-raising in the future: our care was giving value to a building the owner had neglected. Should we then stop our practices of care and creativity as the only way of avoiding exploitation and the co-opting of this value into the market? Yet, as Manuela Zechner suggests in her essay 'Caring for the Network Creatively', although we cannot ignore capital, we can understand these self-organised, often informal practices as creating other kinds of relationships and adding positively to our lives:

[...] care and creativity keep us from being bored, hungry, uninspired, depressed, lonely and sick. They help sustain our life and make it meaningful [...] if we take it in our hands to organise them. Networks of informal labour may be the worst for exploitation, yet they may also be the most exciting for inventing ways of sustaining life collectively.³⁵

The question is how to take control of the way surpluses are distributed in these participatory ways of working. Although the landlord could make a profit from the many hours of voluntary work, which had inadvertently driven up the market value of the building, the Portland Works Industrial and

Provident Society had also actively made decisions about how we would share what we were doing in ways that were outside the market. The most critical of these actions was that when the purchase of the building went through, an asset lock was implemented, which prevented it being 'demutualised' and took the building out of the market as a commodity. Future plans also actively engage with questions of surplus and the production and reproduction of the site; co-learning in 'repair cafes' and open days will be given freely for community benefit, and programmes of education and training will follow social enterprise models. The organisation will work within the city towards frameworks for setting up other similar organisations as collaborators rather than competitors.

The project could not have existed without non-capitalist transactions: often one person would offer a gift, (frequently of time) to the project as a whole, and reciprocity would be indirect. Someone from within the group would also 'give back', sometimes as part of another activist commitment, but also by contributing to people's businesses (within the market) or their personal lives (non-capitalist). Then again, a gift given outside the project might result in a reciprocal action of time contributed towards the collective goals of the Portland Works team. Our work contributed to developing 'bonds' between one another,³⁶ and in doing so, created a community around a concern.

Conclusions

Articulating (as a practice of reformulating) the multiple, heterogeneous sites of struggle, (we) could re-signify all economic transactions and relations, capitalist and non-capitalist, in terms of their *sociality and interdependence, and their ethical participation in being-in-common as part of a 'community economy'*.³⁷

As participation has become a more common part of urban design, architecture and planning

processes, many different kinds of practice have evolved. These include organising practices, productive practices and reproductive practices. Though often hidden, we contend that they constitute work, and the outputs these practices produce are frequently represented as contributing to the capitalist economy. This 're-presenting' is carried out by developers, landowners and councils in order to produce greater 'outputs' for smaller financial investment.

Through representing our practices of participation as part of a diverse landscape of economies, we can draw attention to the diverse participatory practices that happen in people's homes as a 'second' or 'third shift' after a working day – by drawing on personal and emotional resources and by using networks built through years of care. We can question their role as inevitably being a support for scarcity (constructed by the market and policies of austerity), and propose instead that they can be a space for making an ethical choice to create different ways of being together.

There is a complex, relational position between economies of participation and the market economy, as they have an interdependent relationship, yet hold the promise of being counter, or non-capitalist. We therefore carry out this re-presenting work to try to produce new economic realities, not to claim that this landscape already 'exists' out there, but rather to try to understand the potential for joining in and developing these other 'non-capitalist' economies. By reframing the capacity of individuals, communities and collectives to contribute to our needs as a society, we can begin to find potential opportunities for resisting, or developing and proposing alternatives. This reframing enables us to proceed from an assumption of plenitude not scarcity, asking the question how we can distribute these resources, not how much we have and can accumulate. However, in order to do so, we must understand that this is an active process and not something to be taken

for granted. How we use our resources must be constantly renegotiated. The question might be how to articulate individual interests in such a way as to constitute common interests.

Notes

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3. The doctoral research projects referred to here are Julia Udall's 'Tools to Create Agency', 2010-14, funded by the University of Sheffield, and Anna Holder's 'Initiating Architecture', 2009-13, funded by The Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK.
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18. John Holloway, 'Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today' (Transcription of a video by O. Ressler, recorded in Vienna, Austria, 23 min., 2004)
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Dan Bloomfield, Kevin Collins, Charlotte Fry and Richard Munton, 'Deliberation and Inclusion: Vehicles for Increasing Trust in UK Public Governance?', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 19, 4 (2001), pp. 501-13.
22. Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', p. 217.
23. This account refers to the common performance of communicative practices as participation at a late stage in planning processes and within the adversarial atmosphere of the Public Inquiry. Forester demonstrates that communicative and deliberative practices at earlier stages and in different forms can be effective and transformational in planning processes.
24. Dan Bloomfield, Kevin Collins, Charlotte Fry and Richard Munton, 'Deliberation and inclusion: vehicles for increasing trust in UK public governance?', pp. 501-13.
25. Graham Towers, *Building Democracy: Community Architecture in the Inner Cities* (London: UCL Press, 1995), pp. 103-4.
26. Ibid.
27. In 1979, the Town and Country Planning Association founded Community Technical Aid in Manchester, the beginning of the 'Planning Aid' approach, which made professional knowledge available to citizens regarding how to challenge or work with the planning system.
28. Examples of this include the Lewisham Borough Council, Walter Segal's self-build scheme, and the GLC Primary Support Housing Assembly Kit.
29. Graham Towers, *Building Democracy*, pp. 110-11.
30. Peter Blundell Jones, Doina Petrescu and Jeremy Till, 'Introduction', in *Architecture & Participation*, pp. xiii – xiv.
31. Dan Bloomfield, Kevin Collins, Charlotte Fry and Richard Munton, 'Deliberation and Inclusion: Vehicles for Increasing Trust in UK Public Governance?', pp. 501-13.
32. See note 3 above.
33. Dave is chairperson of the Friends group, a founding member of the Users Forum and former secretary for the Tenants and Residents Association of the estate where he lives.
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Biographies

Anna Holder holds qualifications in architecture and planning and has practised in the UK and the Netherlands. She is completing her doctoral research on ways in which architecture and spatial projects are initiated, focusing on designer and community-led processes. She is a director of the social-enterprise architectural practice, Studio Polpo, and a member of the Sheffield School of Architecture (SSoA) research centre 'Agency'.

Julia Udall studied architecture in Glasgow and Sheffield and is a Design Tutor at Sheffield School of Architecture, where she is completing her doctoral research. She has worked in architectural and community organisations, researching and acting with people to create change in the urban landscape. She is a director of the social-enterprise architectural practice, Studio Polpo, and a member of the SSoA research centre 'Agency'.

The Importance of Recognition for Equal Representation in Participatory Processes: Lessons from Husby

Karin Hansson, Göran Cars, Love Ekenberg, and Mats Danielson

Introduction

In urban planning, ideas regarding the involvement of the public in planning processes have been present since the 1960s and 1970s, when popular, radical, democratic ideology emphasised public involvement.¹ In the discourse from that period, the word *participation* implied a process in which people could influence the decisions that affected them, or as Arnstein expressed it in 1969: '[Participation] is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future'.²

In the 1990s, an interest in participatory processes reappeared, while the issues of redistribution and power shifted to matters of recognition and identity construction, influenced by post-structuralism and third-wave feminism, with its focus on the politics of identity and diversity. Generally since then, the dominant planning discourse has undergone a major change towards more collaborative and communicative planning. There are many terms for this approach: communicative planning, collaborative planning, participatory planning, or planning through debate.³ These terms have been used in the literature of planning theory to describe and transform the concepts of Habermasian critical theory into the planning process.⁴ Furthermore, the potential of information and communication technologies (ICT) to engage more people in collective processes was also seen as an opportunity to reform the system of representative democracy,

not only by enabling better services for citizens but also by introducing various ways of involving them in dialogue processes. Projects such as the Blacksburg Electronic Village in Virginia, USA, and the Digital City in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, explored the Internet as a means of developing a more deliberative democracy in local communities.⁵ Thus, public participation in urban planning can take on many different forms. Activities may range from clear-cut discussions about public art projects organised by various authorities with a formalised structure and a predefined agenda, to spontaneous revolts. Participatory forms may range from basic questionnaires to different kinds of more or less developed dialogues with stakeholders and citizens, such as public meetings, charettes or participatory design methods.

Needless to say, the participatory paradigm in urban planning has not been without its critics. In the 1960s, Arnstein was critical of many attempts to use participatory methods in planning, referring to them as 'manipulations' and 'therapy', and claiming that initiatives of this kind had nothing to do with sharing power but were instead used as a means to justify the plans. Furthermore, dialogue in urban planning is restricted in scope since the important decisions are mostly made elsewhere. Lack of transparency in participatory processes limits an understanding of the urban planning issues involved, and thus fails to meet modern society's need for effectiveness and social cohesion.⁶ Some commentators focus their critique on the deliberative 'ideal speech' condition

suggested by Habermas, which ignores hegemonic discourses and antagonistic interests, and does not position the public discourse in relation to the state and the economy.⁷ The lack of equal representation is common in extended, deliberative forms of democracy in which citizens participate more actively in planning and decision-making procedures, as these forms tend to give disproportionate power to people who have the means, time and opportunity to participate – a situation that undermines the widely held concept of representative democracy. In addition, citizens are too frequently conceived of as a homogenous group, so that differences both between and within various groups are seldom recognised.

Furthermore, from the 1960s onwards there has been a proliferation of various ICT tools for supporting democratic decision-making, and the field of e-participation has also struggled with similar problems of representation. The relationships among those who participate in Internet discussions are no more egalitarian than in other forums. Gender research into new media indicates that gender, race, and ethnicity as grounds for discrimination are just as prominent online as in other social contexts,⁸ and, once again, only certain groups participate in political activities via the Internet. The digital differentiation increases the gap between different social groups.⁹ In a comparison of research on the digital divide and research on community satisfaction, Dutta-Bergman demonstrated that the relationship between involvement in local political life and greater use of the Internet involves dividing people into many fragmented groups based on their identity and common interests rather than bringing together different groups and perspectives.¹⁰ At the same time, ICT and more globalised societies have changed the understanding of concepts such as 'common' and 'public'. The process of defining common problems and whom they involve remains unclear and controversial. Hence, both planning and decision-making processes often give rise to

conflict, are excessively time-consuming, and regularly end up in an impasse.

Given the many facets involved, the issue of representation in planning processes calls for a cross-disciplinary approach. We therefore established a joint research project involving the School of Architecture and the Built Environment at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, the Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, and the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences at Stockholm University. The research project team is exploring communicative structures on site, using various methods ranging from media analyses, interviews and participatory observations, to public seminars and more exploratory art projects in the public space. [fig. 1]

One area of research under focus is the lack of equal representation in participatory processes, which we consider by investigating and using the concept of *recognition* as a fundamental aspect of participatory urban planning. Below, we discuss one of our case studies and relate it to democratic theory and the critique of participatory practices in urban planning we presented above. The case is quite typical in the sphere of urban planning, but particularly interesting as it clearly demonstrates the impact of changing information structures on participatory processes. We conclude by arguing that the insights gained can help identify strategies for solving the problem of a lack of equal representation in the participatory process.

Urban planning in Husby

Car fires and riots have put Husby and other parts of suburban Stockholm on the global map. The events of May 2013, in which 76 cars and 21 schools and kindergartens were set on fire, and where youths threw stones at the police, is described in the media as symptomatic of a growing alienation in suburbs marked by immigration, social problems and unemployment. The media account



Fig. 1: Open Space by Anna Hasselberg (2012) is part of the art project in Husby. © Martin Hultén.

is dramatised and aestheticised, and presents a picture that is in sharp contrast to the normal, quiet, everyday life in Husby, a suburban idyll surrounded by extensive green areas. Husby was built in the 1970s as part of a ten-year national programme (1965-75) to combat inner city slums and simultaneously construct new, prefabricated, multi-storey housing in the suburbs. The construction of these suburbs was one of the core pillars of the Swedish welfare model. The inhabitants were offered clean and functional homes according to the ideals of the time. In 2012 there were about 12,000 people living in Husby, mostly in rented apartments, in an area built for a small-scale community. Husby is located along a subway line about 15 kilometres north of Stockholm's city centre. The area is home to many immigrants: 86.4% of Husby's population were born outside Sweden or had both parents born outside Sweden, compared with 33% in Stockholm as a whole.¹¹ The unemployment rate in the area is 8.8% (Stockholm, 3.3%), and the percentage of people in work is 55% (Stockholm, 77%). Voter turnout is similarly low: 55% (Stockholm, 81%).

Public opinion regards Husby as a problem area. Furthermore, the buildings have aged and there is a substantial need for renovation. In the light of these issues, there is a broad public consensus that Husby is in need of substantial redevelopment, including housing rehabilitation, social upgrading, and densification. Stockholm is also growing at a fast pace, and the municipality of Stockholm has developed strategic plans for new developments as well as for densification of existing suburbs to host this growth. Densification plans include Husby. A first planning proposal was presented in 2007, but has been frozen for the time being due to protests by local residents.

Both the redevelopment plans and the municipality's definition of the problems differ from the ideas and opinions held by Husby's residents. The plans coincide with cuts and changes in the delivery of

public services, and there are political controversies surrounding many of the initiatives included in the planned investments. The dilemma facing Husby is not only that the stakeholders cannot agree on how to solve the local problems but also that they cannot agree on defining them. This lack of a shared viewpoint makes it extremely challenging to find a solution that will satisfy the interests of the various stakeholders. As a consequence, the process of agenda setting is submerged in conflict. From a representative-democratic perspective, it is the region's long-term interests that should be the starting point for development strategies for Husby. 'Citizens' from this perspective are not only those directly affected – those living in Husby today – but also a wider group of stakeholders, given that Stockholm is an important economic node for the whole of Sweden.

From a deliberative-democratic perspective, all those who are affected by the decision should participate equally in the public discussion and, where there is a preparatory discussion, should ultimately reach a decision on rational grounds. From this perspective it is important to prepare and formulate the political issues by public debate with all the affected parties. In practice, the values at stake are too large to realistically reach a consensus decision. From the municipality's perspective, the growth of Husby is an objective, since the neighbourhood is strategically located between the city centre and the international airport, with a good communication network and recreational surroundings. From the perspective of Husby's actual residents, the municipal authorities' development plans imply that people who have lived in the area all their lives might be forced to move because they will be unable to afford the anticipated increased living costs.

According to the citizens of Husby, the mediated public sphere is dominated by a group of people who are not located in Husby and who acquire their information from police sources and press

releases. However, the dominant discourse in the public sphere maintains that Husby is an area suffering from high crime rates and social problems due to poor education, cultural differences and poor anchorage in civil society.

This negative image of Husby has created a local backlash. The inhabitants do not recognise the picture painted by the media and shared by public officials. In local public spheres, the discourses are different. Husby's residents feel comparatively safe and confident, and thrive in their community. They consider problems related to the recent influx of immigrants with low incomes and education levels to be small and mainly caused by cuts and deficits in services such as schooling, day care and welfare services.

Unlike the scenario related to problems in the 1960s, when a radical democratic ideology was central, the controversies are not just about the unequal distribution of resources among different stakeholders or the perception of planners as collaborating with powerful economic interests, but also about *recognition*: the residents feel that their perceptions of the situation do not coincide with how they are framed in the media or expressed by public opinion.

According to Husby's residents, planners should focus on social problems and not primarily on the physical environment. Various local organisations have therefore taken matters into their own hands and are working against the dominant discourse by creating their own. These interest groups have developed a strong common identity, where the self-defined values of 'Husby' are important common denominators.

The youth organisation Megafonen serves as one example of such interest groups. [fig. 2] Founded with the goal of creating an alternative view of Stockholm's northern suburbs, here,

young people in the community come together, positing their own conceptions of the neighbourhood. The founders were seeking a more nuanced picture of young people and Husby than the dominant Swedish media sphere allowed and wanted to launch a debate on their own terms through an online forum and organised discussion evenings.

Megafonen and its representatives have quickly gained attention in the dominant media, and the group is currently an informal representative for both the young people and their parents when an issue is to be debated; for example, when police shot a sixty-nine-year-old man in Husby, Megafonen organised demonstrations against police violence, and again, when the local meeting place, Husby Träff, was occupied as a protest against relocation plans.

Thanks to the use of social media such as blogs, Facebook, and Twitter, local people in Husby have established information channels which manage to influence the dominant discourse, and have developed relationships with other groups with similar interests.¹² The network Järva's Future has organised opposition to proposed gentrification plans. Politically independent and not a formal association, the network is organised by means of a mailing list comprising people from different parties and associations in the area.

But even within groups of people with a broad consensus, power structures that limit participation still exist. The association *Street Gårds*, which uses a Facebook group as a meeting place, was founded as a reaction to male dominance in contexts such as youth centres, and school classrooms and corridors.

In Husby's urban planning process, the municipal authorities actively tried to establish a dialogue with the residents to encourage them to accept the development plans. In the course of just a few days

spent collecting opinions and discussing plans with the citizens, the municipality were able to reach a much larger group than dialogue meetings in Sweden's urban planning process usually attract. Residents responded to questions concerning where they felt safe and where they felt insecure, and were asked to suggest proposals for improvements to the physical space. This result was achieved by using young people from Megafonen as ambassadors. Their local knowledge and multilingualism were exploited in order to reach groups of adults who otherwise would not have participated because of language problems or their unwillingness to expose their views. There was therefore a strong degree of recognition between those who organised the dialogue sessions and the participants. The issues were also important to the residents since their immediate environment was at stake. Consequently, both the level of participation and expectations were high. The youth organisations also had great expectations that their accrued time and the capital built on their reputation would make a difference.

However, the municipal authorities never saw the citizen dialogue as anything more than a way of obtaining information. They had no intention of involving the participants in the actual decision-making. For their part, the urban planners were focused on a restricted field that concerned roads and buildings and avoided issues that the citizens found more urgent, such as the provision of social services in the area. Accordingly, reactions were strong when the final proposal did not meet the local activists' expectations. The municipal authorities took more account of the Stockholm region as a whole. Therefore, although the participatory approach created considerable expectations for direct influence in the decision-making process, these were never realised. Instead, the documentation of the dialogues, including quotes from citizens and their images, were used to justify a new plan that was almost identical to the one that had initially

been criticised.

One of the major conflicts in Husby developed from a change in the structure of local communication. The neighbourhood was built to create many venues for social interaction. There is no main square but several small ones, as well as a library, community centre, medical centre, grocery stores, restaurants, small shops etc. Pedestrian walkways avoid road traffic and connect the various parts of Husby, which means that children can play in safety. When the area was built in the 1970s it was designed for community life. Each apartment block had a meeting room, and each district had a recreational centre. There were management staff who assumed an informal role as 'information channels' between residents and public agencies. One community centre built adjoining one of the squares had a restaurant, and a stage that could be used for debates and parties. Over time, public services in Husby deteriorated due to changes in the Swedish welfare system and dominant political ideologies. The neighbourhood managers disappeared, as did other service personnel. Recently, the privatisation and closure of public housing, together with plans to remove the pedestrian/traffic separation, have provoked substantial local protests and illegal squats.

In parallel with the decline in publicly supported common spaces, the common domains in semi-commercial spaces online are widening. An important source of information among Persian speakers in Husby and other parts of the world is *Radio Peyvan*, a community radio based in Husby. The role of the Iranian Culture Association, which operates the radio, is to strengthen a sense of self and thus promote integration and participation in Swedish society. One of the more popular programmes has explained the activities of parliament and the government. The use of Persian has made it easier for the elderly (whose knowledge of Swedish is limited) to follow and therefore to



Fig. 2: Bana Bisrat from Megafonen at demonstration against Swedish migration policy in Stockholm 2013.
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understand and participate in the community. *Radio Peyvan* also presents and discusses Swedish news. The radio channel works rather like a bulletin board, advertising events and hosting call-in programmes that discuss a range of urgent issues. The radio is also available on the Internet and, according to its producer Bahman Motaei, has about 8,000 online listeners, an estimated 90% of whom live in Iran. For Bahman, it is important that people who contact the channel are given space and can control the content. His aim is to act more as a moderator, listening and making sure that everyone has a chance to talk.

The Iraq Art Association is another active community in the area, and official Iraqi media comment on exhibitions at the art gallery. Although these organisations do not have much influence in the official Swedish cultural sphere, they are part of other global communities. This is an example of how globalisation has reshaped the foundations of the shared local sphere and how residents of Husby act in various public arenas not shared by the officials of the Stockholm municipality. Neither does the municipality see Husby's current residents as its main 'citizens'. Instead, the municipal authorities consider how they think Stockholm should evolve over time from a global perspective and, consequently, place importance on attracting financially strong partners to invest locally. 'Global' connections in this context are of a different kind from those represented by Husby's residents, many of whom have Swedish as their second or third language.

What is most interesting with regard to Husby is the gap in worldviews between the decision-makers from the city council and the residents. This can be explained by examining how Husby is presented in the dominant media. Ekberg shows how Swedish journalists are not only concentrated in the major cities, but also reside in a small number of neighbourhoods in the inner city.¹³

Our media study shows that Husby is often portrayed as a problem area in news articles.¹⁴ Half the articles and notices about Husby describe some kind of problem, and the majority of individuals selected as subjects or spokespersons in the articles – the ones who are portrayed or interviewed and whose opinions occupy a central role in the press – are middle-aged and have typical, ethnic, Swedish names. In general, they tend to be people with a position in society, usually working for a government or municipal authority, whereas the majority of 'objectified' individuals in the articles, those mentioned and discussed but not directly interviewed, are 'young people'. The positions presented in the articles are far from an equal or fair representation of the diversity found in Husby, or elsewhere for that matter. One can see the public sphere as a mirror in which some people can recognise themselves more than others. 'Young people' feature extensively in the reporting, but mainly as objects of concern. The people showing concern and doing the talking are middle-aged and are often representatives of public authorities: politicians, civil servants and police officers.

There is, however, one exception that counters this media approach: the local journal *Norra Sidan* has taken a more constructive attitude. It was founded as late as 2012 as a reaction to the discrediting style of journalism in other media. Its strategy is to conduct so-called citizen journalism by reaching out to residents and seeking to formulate problems and solutions together with its readers. Although the paper is only issued monthly, it has rapidly become an important local source of information.

In the newspaper *Norra Sidan* it is the local people who write, which makes it different, creating a different feeling. Crime is not the only thing that occurs in the area. The [other] media give a false image. The image has consequences. A while ago, the kids played with the image by making fun of it. They harassed those who came here they did not recognise, just to confirm

the prejudices. (Amir Marjai, aged 45).

For Rouzbeh Djalai, editor of *Norra Sidan*, the point of the local newspaper is not to change other people's image of a place – the most important thing is to change the self-image of the people themselves.

If the local newspaper constantly stresses that you live in a crappy area, then you have to, as a reaction, either move away or it's you who are the problem, and you make the problem your identity. (Rouzbeh Djalai, aged 47)

The uneven distribution of visibility for different groups in the media is not unique to reporting about Husby, but it clearly shows that the public sphere is a highly unequal place in terms of its representation and recognition of identity. Given that the media offers an important place for deliberative dialogue and democratic agenda setting, media discourses are fundamental to the way politicians and urban planners define and frame the problems that urban renewal is supposed to solve.

Participation, democracy and globalisation

As we discussed above, conflicts have arisen regarding the way in which Husby's problems are formulated and presented. The Municipality of Stockholm wants to develop and rebuild the area while the residents want better social services, and would prefer lower rents to renovations. An important part of defining the problem takes place in a public sphere that is dominated by restricted discourses.

The 1960s and 70s marked a period in which American urban planners were engaged in the civil rights movement and the struggles against the displacement of low-income communities. The rapid transformation of Western city centres provoked people to raise their voices and protest about insensitive rebuilding schemes and gentrification projects

determined by power elites who held no dialogue with residents in the local communities. A planning profession that only focused on the physical environment was questioned, and a view of the city as a total social, economic, and cultural system was emphasised. The critique was also strongly against an overly rational attitude towards urban renewal, which saw planners aligning themselves with powerful real-estate interests. At that time, new, more inclusive, planning paradigms appeared, such as transactive and advocacy planning. Advocacy planning, for instance, emphasises the conflicts and diversity of interests in the planning process, and maintains that the planner should not represent only one public interest, but acknowledge the presence of many and conflicting ones. One of its leading proponents, Paul Davidoff, has also criticised the fact that most so-called public participation programmes are reactions to government proposals rather than initiated by residents presenting their own proposals:

Intelligent choice about public policy would be aided if different political, social, and economic interests produced city plans. Plural plans rather than a single agency plan should be presented to the public. Politicizing the planning process requires that the planning function be located in either or both the executive and legislative branches and the scope of planning be broadened to include all areas of interest to the public.¹⁵

In this model, a radical democratic notion of public participation is a central tenet, and a multitude of public interests are assumed and respected. The formal planner is merely a facilitator who is supposed to stimulate primarily underrepresented groups to actively participate in the processes. The model also emphasises the political aspects of planning and the importance of recognising unequal economic conditions and power differences.

This model is interesting in relation to development plans for Husby. As with the urban planning Davidoff criticised in the 1960s, it is not primarily the

residents' interests that are being taken into account. The planners represent the one and only 'general best': there is no attempt to present multiple plans that include the standpoints of different groups of stakeholders. There is a clash of interests between the officials who want to change Husby and the residents of Husby who may have to relocate as a result of these changes. This conflict seems to be reinforced by the fact that the planning officials and politicians in charge, who do not live in the area, are also of a different class and ethnicity from the residents of Husby who are directly affected by the planning decisions. The gap between the conflicting interests and worldviews is simply too large. In addition, the agenda and discussion are governed by a hegemonic discourse in the public sphere, which reproduces discriminatory *structures*. *Ideally, we would like to see efficient means of enlightened reasoning taking place, much advocated by proponents of deliberative democracy. But as Mouffe, for one, has noted, this is only possible if no major conflicts exist between the different groups, which is not the case in Husby.*¹⁶

Consequently, the public sphere in which political issues are considered can be a profoundly undemocratic and unequal place, governed by ideologies very different from the ideal model of democracy in the deliberative participatory paradigm. Inequalities may also multiply when information and communication technology reinforce dominant norms about what questions are political, thus increasing the tension between different groups in society: those whose questions count as political and those whose issues are not even discussed. On the other hand, the increased use of social media, where the focus is on friends and family, has transformed what were once private social spaces into public spheres with a global reach. The development of public spheres on the internet can be regarded as an opportunity to create more alternative sources of information, and a way of breaking information monopolies. Fraser suggested the term *subaltern counter publics* for

these types of alternative public spheres, where contested identities, such as minority groups, can develop their own discourses without constant questioning from hegemonic worldviews.¹⁷

It should be noted, however, that minority groups also tend to be structured within certain parameters – age or gender for example – and are no more democratic than the dominant sphere: members of the same group may well have different, conflicting interests. In Husby, for example, *Street Gärås* was founded as a reaction against male dominance in local public spheres,¹⁸ and may serve to illustrate what John Dryzek calls a 'discursive democracy'. In this model, just as in a deliberative democracy, the agenda is defined by the dominant discourse; however, by creating places where alternative discourses can be developed, these can grow strong and influence the discourse of the dominant public sphere.¹⁹ In this context, the group's identity and interests may not necessarily be uniform. In contrast, a political practice that emphasises the antagonism between different groups underestimates the contradictions and unequal power relations within these groups. Identity-based groups held together by common norms and cultures can be composed of individuals with a variety of interests. In this respect, new media can enable individuals from different groups to gather more easily around specific interests (such as feminism), regardless of their identity-group affiliation (such as being young or from Somalia), which may loosen the links between interest and identity. Dryzek further argues that in order to reduce the significance of antagonism between different groups, we need public meeting rooms far from the hot political locations where decisions are made. Within these micro-public spheres more creative discussions can take place between people with similar interests, and thus enable the development of arguments and ideas strong enough to influence a larger public sphere.

To sum up: since the 1960s, participatory practices have become a norm in many areas, but the underlying ideology has changed towards a notion of democracy that focuses less on redistribution and more on recognition and representation. Furthermore, ICT is changing the concept of the common sphere; for instance, local issues (such as the action of Husby's young girls against male dominance) can easily become part of a global movement (the feminist movement, for example), while questions about who is affected by changes in a given situation become more difficult to answer as economies increasingly intertwine. Participation in urban planning therefore not only entails being part of the decision-making process, but also being part of the agenda-setting process, which evolves from discourses developed in the dominant public sphere: discourses that are also influenced by subaltern counter-publics formed from communities of interests. In Husby, the interest organisation Megafonen and the network Järva's Future are both examples of subaltern counter-publics that have managed to develop their own powerful discourses, which in turn have influenced general public opinion. Therefore the next question to ask is what motivates the individual to participate in a community of interest and to develop alternative public spheres?

The importance of recognition for participation

In the 1970s, Davidoff emphasised that redistribution was the ultimate goal for urban planners, and that equal representation in the planning process was the condition for this.²⁰ Representation is increasingly relevant today given that the perception of the nation state as the basis of institutionalised democracy is being questioned by the rise of global movements dealing with issues – from human rights to the environment – that involve globally scattered stakeholders. Participation is not just about taking part in decision-making processes, but also entails defining who is a legitimate, representative 'citizen' in these processes.

In addition to redistribution and representation, Fraser also adds *recognition* of one's identity as important for democratic justice.²¹ Particularly in a global perspective where the participant is not clearly defined, recognition of one's worldview and identity is important for developing the incentive to participate in the deliberative process. As one of our informants remarked in the interview: 'The satellite dishes are illustrative. Many people do not experience what is around them as real. What is here is not your truth, so you turn away, maybe to your home country, to get information from outside'. (Amir Marjai, aged 45)

Information technology facilitates parallel public spheres. If one's identity is not confirmed in one forum, involvement is reduced, but it might increase in other forums. If representation is considered from a perspective where the motivation for engaging in a community is not (only) based on national and geographic boundaries but also involves relationships between participants in dynamically-created global communities of interest, recognition both motivates and structures representation. According to urban network theory, participation in informal networks is organised along parameters such as class, gender or ethnicity, verifying the assumption that equals seek equals.²² People with similar interests or similar problems are attracted to each other as they acknowledge each other's perspectives, codes, and rituals. In this perspective, community is about *recognition* and shared cultural norms and values, developed through interaction between individuals over time.

Thus, recognition and closeness in time and space seem to be reasons for participating in a community. An individual's relationship with other people in terms of recognition is then determined by the amount of shared common ground, with parameters such as gender and class assuming importance, together with time and physical location. The significant contribution of information

technology in this context is to reduce the importance of time and physical location, making it easier to tie common bonds with peers at a distance. In practice, this means that the common domain shifts from one based on time and geographical proximity, to one where interests do not depend on time or physical location. For instance, instead of having a conversation with people in your physical vicinity whom you might not know very well, the mobile phone allows conversation with friends at a distance, with whom you may prefer to talk. To understand the individual's motivation for participating in the shaping of common, local spaces, it is important to understand how interests arising from shared geographical space intersect with other communities of interest. The individual here can be seen as more or less fragmented into various communities of interest that can be shared by people in the same geographical space, or in a completely different geographical areas. ICT can lead to fragmentation, but by facilitating involvement in local affairs, it can also be used to reconnect people who share the same physical location.

Iris Young refers to individuals who share common denominators as belonging to 'series' rather than 'groups' – a belonging that does not necessarily imply awareness.²³ This interpretation makes it possible to consider individuals as passive members of a variety of interest groups, even ones with conflicting interests. Figure 3 illustrates the difference between a series, a loosely tied interest group, and a community with shared cultural values:

- *Series*: A series of people, who are unaware of each other, share a common denominator. There are no channels of communication.

- *Interest Group*: A group of people who share a common interest and create a public sphere. The individual has a communication channel to the group, be it a shared space, a mailing list, or a similar forum that makes communication with the group possible.

- *Community*: A group of people who share interests, values, goals and practices, and where people often know each other. The culture is mediated in a public sphere.

This chart should be viewed as a scale where the individual may be simultaneously part of several different series, interest groups and communities.

Linking this perspective to Dryzek's concept of discursive democracy, communication tools such as shared meeting rooms, publications, or discussion groups online can develop greater antagonism between different interest groups by strengthening their separate culture and particularity. Yet the same tools can also reduce culture-based antagonism by making it easier for people to contact other groups with whom they share an interest, regardless of any culturally conditioned identity. The feminist movement is an example of this. People from different classes and cultures can form an interest group – on the issue of women's suffrage, for example – and thus change the rules that govern the scope for action of the whole series of women. Husby itself provides another example. The area has many organisations built on common values such as culture or religion. Although these organisations share premises, they otherwise have little in common. However, when the premises were threatened with closure, Järva's Future network was created as an interest group that drew its members from a variety of organisations. Their joint action resulted in a general improvement of the local community.

To conclude: the motivation to participate in the public sphere can be understood as a combination of shared interests and shared values; for example, recognition. The individual takes part in several, more or less coherent, communities of interest, all of which can be seen as bases for public spheres. A social space, such as a restaurant or discussion group online, does not automatically increase

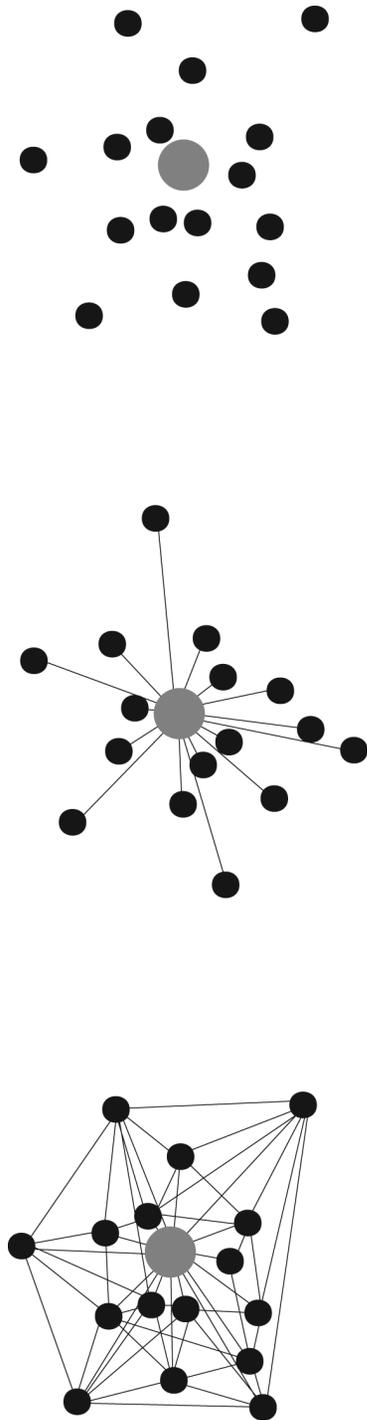


Fig. 3: Illustration of: A *series* of people with a common denominator; a loosely-knit *interest group*; a tightly-knit *community*. Black dots denote individuals; grey dots signify what they have in common; lines indicate that they know each other. The length of the lines has no significance. Illustration: Karin Hansson.

participation but it improves the conditions for participation. Globalisation causes a fragmentation of the local public sphere, but may also strengthen minority groups locally.

Concluding remarks: recognition and community

Today, participation is the norm in urban planning, but the underlying ideology has changed from a radically democratic ideology that emphasised the significance of unequal economic conditions and power differences, to a liberal ideology that emphasises access to information and the importance of participation for a more creative and efficient society. Differences in the ability to participate in planning processes are increased by a media landscape that is fragmented and ever more difficult to survey. This situation has also transferred interest from the economic inequalities between groups to the unequal influence certain groups have on the dominant discourse.

From this perspective, participation is as much about recognising one's personal identity, and how one's concept of reality is reflected in the media, as it is about the redistribution of the means to participate. Recognition is connected to representation. If the individual's self-image is not recognised in the public discourse, it is not represented in the decision-makers' image of the situation. The incentive to engage in the common also decreases if the individual is not acknowledged as a part of this community. Participation is about reciprocity: if the individual does not feel that the engagement is mutual, the incentive to participate is reduced. For most citizens, the personal benefit of becoming involved in planning activities is usually low and the cost of participation high.

In order to create greater engagement in local issues, a community seems to be required where the participants are seen and acknowledged in light of the diversity of the multiple communities they

belong to. Here, common spaces play an important role in helping transform common local interests into common identities. This includes such contexts as public squares, community centres, newspapers, TV channels, or websites that confirm individual self-images and encourage interaction and the collective development of knowledge.

Communities of this kind are not conflict-free. Participation is not a means of getting everyone to take part in a joint creative urban design process. Instead, broad public participation helps to promote more critical perspectives and as diverse a picture of the situation as possible.

For instance, Husby's residents were used as informants in the municipal authority's survey of the area, and their comments were submitted as part of the data that informed the municipal planners. The starting point was that Husby needed improvements. The solutions decided upon were aspects the city planners could control, such as buildings, roads, and repainting houses. The agenda had been decided in advance, and solutions to the problems were already defined. The authorities had already established the framework for discussion. Just as in the type of participatory art where the artist creates the framework and then invites participants to fill in the 'content', people are assumed to be bearers of 'data' that can be extracted, rather than acknowledged as critical discussion partners.

Figure 4 illustrates an individual's participation in diverse interest groups, to which he or she belongs to a greater or lesser extent. People who live in the same area tend to have more common interests than people who do not, but forums such as books, magazines, art, websites and social media loosen the link with geographical proximity. The individual may actually have more in common with people in other locations, and the incentive to engage in issues related to the common location decreases.

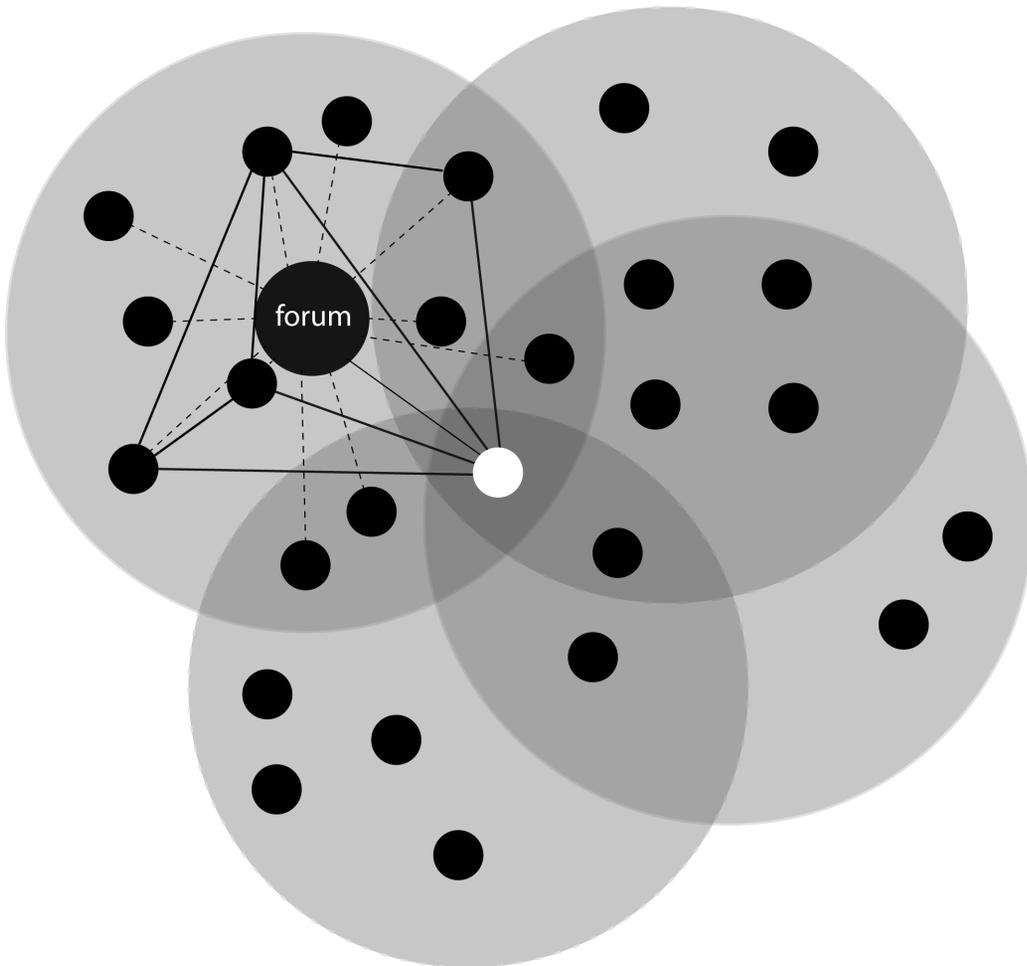


Fig. 4: Illustration of how the individual (represented by the white dot) is included in various interest groups (grey spheres), where such a group also provides a social network as several individuals (represented by black dots) in the interest group share and develop information together through a forum that can be a physical meeting place or ICT. A communication forum (big dot) provides potential contact (dotted lines) between members of the interest group and enables community in the group to develop (solid lines). Illustration: Karin Hansson.

But as Dryzek suggests, communication can also be actively used to strengthen the ties between those who share or are affected by the location: firstly, by bringing visibility to an issue, and secondly, by creating space for dialogue between those affected by the issue. In a discussion forum, the discussion starts when someone puts forward an issue and is interested in developing it with the help of the group. In order to get others interested in participating in the call, it is important to recognise and treat them as equals. In a long-term reciprocal interaction, fellowship and a common culture are developed that will further strengthen the relationship between interest and identity.

None of this is new, but Husby is an example of how globalisation and ICT have gained a significant role in shaping local issues, and thus contains important indicators with regard to reinforcing incentives to participate in urban planning.

To improve the equal representation of participants in urban planning processes requires the creation of a long-term engagement in local affairs rather than in single events. It involves creating spaces and forums for a variety of public spheres where different political agendas can be launched and given time to develop. Common domains such as public squares, libraries, schools, local papers, art galleries and online forums are important settings for communication. A participatory methodology for urban planning should thus be aimed at supporting and acknowledging a variety of communication flows in order to reduce the differences between those with more and those with less influence over the political agenda.

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Cooperatives, Control or Compromise? The Changing Role of Participation in Norwegian Housing

Eli Hatleskog

Introduction

What does it mean to participate and how is it relevant today? Participation used to be a democratic pursuit, conducted for the greater good of society; today, however, the motives and intentions behind it are not necessarily so simple. This paper will present examples of community participation in Norwegian housing, through which early egalitarian impulses can be seen to clash with the more recent intentions of private developers and a public desire for detached family homes.

In Norway, there is a proud history of participatory design. Following the First World War, reformers sought to improve society through informing the public about the importance of housing for health. By the 1970s, the reasons for participation changed from simply educating the public to actively seeking its approval. This gave rise to experiments in collective design, resulting in both flexible and communal solutions. The development of greater flexibility was seen to represent a democratic society and eventually led to bespoke flexibility, whereby individual families could participate directly in the design of their new homes without the necessity of sharing the services of an architect or a plot with others. Since the 1980s, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of private developers, which has seen the intentions behind public participation change. In turn, there have been mutterings, in both professional and academic circles, as to the advantages of participation. Questions have been raised regarding whom it benefits,¹ what difference

it makes,² and whether people actually want to take part.³

Early attempts at participatory design took inspiration from 'The Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969).⁴ In this seminal paper, Sherry Arnstein graded levels of participation hierarchically. At the lowest rung of the ladder was manipulation, and at the top, full citizen control. It implied that participation should give decision-making and managerial power to the public. As such, whilst Arnstein's Ladder sought social equality, ideal participation would most likely be time-consuming for those involved. Participation could seem like a daunting prospect for anyone considering whether or not to take part, and the perceived intensity might subsequently lead those who invest their time to expect benefits such as full decision-making control. However, if everyone who participates expects control then there is little room for compromise.

In Scandinavia, there have long been efforts to realise liberated and egalitarian societies. As a result, local communities in Norway are encouraged to take part in discussions regarding the development of their local neighbourhoods. This does not, however, mean that they contribute directly to decision-making. There is also a tradition of staging community volunteering events to assist with construction, gardening or repair work. These events are called *dugnads* and generally involve a group of people painting or building something together over a day or two.

Whilst there is a tradition encouraging participation, which is fully supported by egalitarian and open governance, and demonstrated in the prevalence of volunteering events, Norway remains an extremely individualistic society. The country has an overwhelmingly rural tradition and a low population density, which means that, except for town centres, neighbours have rarely been a problem. The situation is, however, changing; desirable development land is diminishing as the population grows. As further densification takes place, agreement and compromises will need to be sought. This leads to questions relating to how a highly individualised society can participate now and into the future.

As of today, the few lines dedicated to participation in Norwegian planning legislation are vague, stating simply that provision ought to be made.⁵ Given the brevity of the text, it is perhaps curious that it instructs that children and those less able to participate directly are already accommodated for, inferring by their omission that it is not something that the general public needs be involved in.

In this paper, the history of participation in Norwegian housing design will be traced through a number of examples. The story begins with informing and consulting the public (Risvollan), then explores idealistic participation in shaping a community (Selegrend), before communal aspirations were put to one side in favour of customising and building individual family houses (Bromstad), which was followed by a trend of 'building your own home'. More recently, in the hands of developers, participation has become a tool for market canvassing and propaganda (Elvehavn Brygge). With the pressures of this period of growth comes the risk that participation may be used as a tool to convince people about issues that have already been decided.

Participation

'Participation' is a word that has been used a lot lately. What does this word mean today after it has been turned into a cliché so many times? How can people participate?⁶

(Hans Ulrich Obrist)

When discussing degrees of participation, Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation' is a key text.⁷ The ladder describes a hierarchy of eight rungs of participation, ranging from manipulation at the bottom, to therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership and delegated power to citizen control at the top.

Arnstein's ladder was developed in an attempt to redress the power imbalance between those in power and the 'have-nots': those who 'have become so offended and embittered by their powerlessness to deal with the profound inequities in their daily lives.'⁸ The solution proffered by Arnstein was to give the 'majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power' to the have-not citizens.⁹

The rungs on the ladder symbolise the range between non-participation, tokenism and citizen power; it is a linear, hierarchical model. The higher the rung on the ladder, the better the participation. Whilst relevant in its time, this approach does not necessarily ring true today, since notions of hierarchy have been superseded by the emergence of networks. Problems are no longer necessarily understood to be predictable, controllable or indeed linear. With regard to the ladder, this suggests that consulting or informing the public need not be tokenistic. In turn, wholesale citizen power is not the only desirable form of participation. However, as the public negotiate their work-life balance, participation might not seem like a valuable use of time. This, in turn, may lead to those who do participate to expect to get back something of perceived value from the process.

Naturally, Arnstein was working within the scope of her day, when committees held power; she had no way of knowing how advances in technology would break down the established hierarchy and enable individuals to seize greater power. Since the 1990s, the public has been empowered through the free availability of affordable media technologies and online information. As Meissen and Basar discuss in *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, this empowerment has seen in turn 'an explosion of self-initiated cultural production'.¹⁰ For those wishing to design their dream home, the Internet provides instruction, inspiration, tools and software,¹¹ negating the need for an architect, or equivalent professional. Experts are no longer needed and, as such, no single point of view is necessarily the best. The growing availability of information and media technologies has, in many ways, levelled the field between people, the public and experts.

The Norwegian 'build your own home' trend (which will be discussed later in this paper) may be seen as a precursor of this levelling. It gave decision-making control to the house buyer (or builder). In some ways it may be viewed as a logical outcome of participation in that it gave the public control. This control, ironically perhaps, led to a desire for less interaction between neighbours and communities. In turn, more recent attempts at participation regarding denser, urban sites may be seen to have subverted the early earnest intentions of participation and to have turned it into a means of gaining political leverage.

Scepticism may continue to grow toward public participation in Norway if it is seen primarily as a means of gaining control and exerting influence. There is, however, a potential for thinking about participation in a different way. By transporting Nicolas Bourriaud's ideas from largely art-world related aesthetics to the domain of urban/architectural practice, today's participatory turn can take an

alternate approach. Instead of allocating control, participation can allow for the exploration of relationships and context within the city. Bourriaud has described the aesthetics surrounding these new forms of participation as relational.¹² His writings, heavily influenced by Felix Guattari, posit that relational aesthetics operates in and between human interactions and social context. Thus, instead of aiming to construct the world according to preconceived ideals, participation now gives us a chance to learn how to occupy the world in a different way.

Bourriaud's approach does not seek to alienate the public by being directly critical of current society. As he writes, 'any stance that is 'directly' critical of society is futile, if based on the illusion of a marginality that is nowadays impossible, not to say regressive'.¹³ This suggests that neutrality is an important feature; knowledge is not achieved through critiquing the existing situation with a view to changing it, but by accepting context and history and developing relationships therein.

Participation in Norwegian housing

In the years following the First World War, a great amount of new housing was constructed in Norway. These large-scale works were, in part, instigated by the Norwegian Association for Housing Reform (Norskforening for boligreformer 1913-35), who sought to remedy what they saw as a proliferation of low quality, overcrowded, dense housing. In order to effectively communicate their ideals, they staged public exhibitions, published books and conducted lecture tours.¹⁴

The housing cooperative movement, which began towards the end of the 1920s, continued to gain strength in the 1930s, and in the years following the Second World War the Norwegian State Housing Bank was established. It supported share-owning cooperatives, *boligbyggelag*, where each resident was an indirect (or part) owner. As discussed by the Norwegian economist Mary Ann Stamsø, it acted

as an 'alternative to outright homeownership and tenancy as it gave tenants an individual right of use and a collective property right'.¹⁵

Since the establishment of the bank in 1946, over a million Norwegians have been or are customers, with a little over half of the nation's homes financed by the housing bank. Hence it has played a defining role in day-to-day life.¹⁶

In the 1970s, Norway constructed the largest number of new residential units in its history; moreover, new forms of planning and community participation were being tested through the formation of cooperative building and housing associations, *kooperative boligbyggelag*.¹⁷ These cooperatives were formed by groups of like-minded individuals who teamed together to seek funding and architectural services for communal housing projects. In some cases, future residents later on became involved in the process. The democratic ideals which encouraged residents to be involved in shaping their own homes led to a number of Norwegian housing experiments in the 1970s, where the problem of participation was addressed in various ways.

Deregulation of the housing market in the 1980s saw a general shift away from community participation toward individual aspiration. This new mind-set was, in turn, exploited by developers, who responded to the market with build-to-order business models.¹⁸ More recently, participation has at times taken the form of market canvassing and been used to gain political leverage.¹⁹

The 1970s, democratising design

Planners, architects and advisors must re-evaluate their protective attitude and entrust important decisions to the public [...] new principles must be developed [...] A residential area should reflect the different residents interests, wishes and hopes, and

not be dominated by the authorities, manufacturers and planners.²⁰

(Tryggve Mjøset and Tore Brantenberg)

In the early 1970s, public participation in housing design became a hot topic in Norway. Swedish experiments in participation, such as Experimenthuseti Järnbrott, Gothenburg (1953),²¹ where residents were assisted in designing their own apartments; Eksperimenthusi Kvarteret Diset, Uppsala (1964),²² featuring a free plan and moveable walls, and Konvaljen, Kalmar (1967),²³ where questionnaires and catalogues gave choice and information to residents, all proved inspirational, as did the works of other Europeans, such as Ralph Erskine and his approach to participatory planning at Byker Wall Estate (1968)²⁴ in Newcastle. Participation was seen as a vibrant, inclusive ideal to strive toward. Stimulated by the events and politics of the day, a number of Norwegian architects began to discuss and explore local possibilities, taking as their reference vernacular models of development in which people had planned and built their own communities, often without expert help. The issue of participation was discussed locally by Mjøset and Brantenberg in a 1974 report which stated that 'It is a logical consequence [that] everyone who is affected by a decision ought to be able to influence it, if we are to reach a full and vibrant democracy'.²⁵

Risvollan, Trondheim. 1970-74

Norway's largest housing cooperative was realised as the result of a competition staged by the municipality of Trondheim in 1966.²⁶ [fig. 1] The winning designs for the site at Risvollan were developed with reference to Garden City principles by Brantenberg, Cold & Hiorthøy. The site was divided into eight zones, each with a children's play area, and totalled 1118 units. The project aimed to create a whole community, not just houses, since the designs included a community centre, shops and other services.²⁷



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Risvollan, Trondheim, 1974 by Brantenberg, Cold & Hiorthøy. © Brigit Cold

Fig. 2: Hagtussa Borettslag, Tjensvoll, Stavanger, 1976 by Brantenberg, Cold & Hiorthøy. © Brigit Cold

Since the project was the result of a competition staged by the municipality and not designed directly for the eventual occupants, questions were raised as to how the development could meet the individual needs and aspirations of its inhabitants. The architects began to address these concerns by putting their designs out to public consultation.

In the summer of 1969, an exhibition was staged to both inform the public about the proposed designs for Risvollan and to gather their reactions to the project by means of a questionnaire.²⁸ In order for visitors to have a better understanding of the spaces provided in the new housing, one floor of a terrace was built full scale. This 1:1 model included a kitchen, living room, bathroom and two bedrooms, which the public was free to walk around in and experience before submitting their answers to a detailed questionnaire.

In total, 40,000 people visited the exhibition, which aimed at establishing lines of contact with future residents. The completed questionnaires were studied by the Institute for Psychology and Social Sciences at Norges Tekniske Høgskole, NTH.²⁹ It was documented that a large number of the visitors to the exhibition agreed in principle with the proposed site configuration, flexibility and traffic solutions.

Following Risvollan, the same architects designed 282 residential units at Haugtussa in Stavanger.³⁰ [fig. 2] Here they assumed that building adaptability into a standardised unit would allow future residents to take control over their spaces themselves, as and when required in the future.

Whilst both Risvollen and Haugtussa were designed with an awareness of their future residents and with intentions for built-in adaptability, they were both developer-led projects initiated by local municipalities.

Selegrend, Bergen. 1974-81

In contrast to the works of Brantenberg, Cold & Hiorthøy, the future residents of Selegrend 1 in Bergen directly shaped the design of their new homes and community. The Selegrend Housing Cooperative, established in 1970, was based on a number of ideological objectives. The members of the cooperative believed that individuals ought to have the power to influence their own living situation, and that a neighbourhood should reflect a diverse social mix and be designed in such a way that cooperation was encouraged. This was done in the belief that it would give residents an increased sense of belonging. Alongside a desire for resident participation in the design process was a greater communal objective that people support each other: the Cooperative believed that the average person with enough resources had a responsibility to assist those with less.³¹

The design for Selegrend 1 was determined in the course of a number of meetings between the cooperative and the architects, Cubus. Not only were the future residents required to participate, they were also in charge of decision-making.³² The project aimed at social inclusion, therefore the development tried to accommodate a broad social mix, which was one of the key themes discussed at the Cooperative-architect meetings. Through these meetings it was also decided that dense, small housing best suited the site and their joint intentions. The architects drew plans for two suggested proposals and the cooperative voted for their favourite. Although each house adhered to standard dimensions, residents were free to design the internal layout of their future house with help from the architect, as long as it met with the State Housing Bank's rules. The doors, stairs and windows had to be chosen from a range, but could be arranged as desired.³³ [fig. 3] In addition to their input during the planning stages, residents were also required to help with the upkeep, improvement and care of the whole development, not only their



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Selegrend, Hesthaugen, Bergen, 1974 by CUBUS A/L. © Brigit Cold
Fig. 4: Nordås, Bergen, 1977 by CUBUS A/L. © Helse Bergen

own home. This work took the form of community volunteering events.

The second phase at Selegrend, Nordås, was built in 1981. [fig. 4] Here, many of the residents contributed their time and labour in the construction of the scheme, and today residents still invest time in the improvement of their communal spaces. Each family was required to contribute eighty hours of work per year; if they did not, then they had to pay for the missing time.³⁴

The developments at Selegrend demonstrated a fairly intense participatory requirement, which was perhaps an attitude very much suited to the times, with a strong egalitarian identity. There were potential advantages for inhabitants, such as a heightened sense of community spirit; however, there were also many expectations placed upon them, including the time they were required to dedicate to the scheme.

Bromstad B, Trondheim. 1972-74

Whereas Selegrend expected inhabitants to be active members of a community, Bromstad B, in Trondheim, required them to become developers responsible for the construction of their new homes.³⁵ The project tested how 'hands-on' people were willing to become in order to gain their dream home. The focus of the project was not on the communal aspects of the finished scheme but rather upon giving people the power to directly influence the design of their own homes.

The site layout for Bromstad B was designed by Drageset, Røe and Skarland and comprised thirty-nine units of terraced housing. The intention to undertake a participation process was advertised in the local press. Twenty-three families registered to take part and founded the housing cooperative. Since the overall site layout had already been determined, participation was limited to influencing a single house. The families received a questionnaire and a written description of the project.

The architects designed the houses in relation to the completed questionnaires and each family agreed that they would bear the responsibility for construction.³⁶

The project had a number of broad goals: each family was to have a degree of influence over the design of their house in direct collaboration with the architect, and each should construct (self-build) part of the house themselves but could employ contractors if needed. To ensure a degree of cohesion across the designs, standard plan types, construction systems, materials and detailing were used.

The architects showed the families plans with images of built examples and the families chose the ideas they liked. This, combined with the information about space and family size, financing, individual input, and other design issues gathered by the questionnaires, assisted the design of individual sketch proposals for each family. These proposals were shown and discussed during an open meeting for all the families. The architects held one to one discussions with each family to decide upon the details of each house. Finally, another open meeting was held to discuss technical details, logistics and contracts before construction began.

At Bromstad B, each family decided how much or how little of their new home they were going to build themselves. In the end, three families did very little, three built the whole thing from scratch, while the majority of residents took the middle ground and made a fair contribution to the construction.

The 1980s onwards, a deregulated market

Prior to the 1980s, Norwegian housing policy was social democratic in character, as Stamsø reports. This meant that 'universal housing goals were implemented by regulating rents, prices and interest rates, combined with widespread object subsidies that affected a largely owner-occupied sector'.³⁷ However, in 1981, when the conservative

party (Høyre) came to power, moves were made toward developing a private, market-driven housing sector. Subsidies were cut and the market took the dominant position. In turn, as discussed by another economist, Orderud, homebuilders became market players, 'irrespective of whether they were organised as co-operative housing associations, privately owned companies or stock companies.'³⁸

The discovery of oil in Norwegian territory led to new wealth amongst the people of a previously poor country, and the timing of this new affluence allowed the public to dive wholeheartedly into the excesses of the 1980s. The shift, as described below by the journalist Erling Læg Reid, was profound:

That a sober farming people like the Norwegians would go off the rails more than anyone else is almost unbelievable, but it is true. We bought the most expensive cars, the most expensive watches, the fanciest clothes, we cancelled all credit checks, we bought apartments of one hundred and eight square meters with one bedroom and three bathrooms, including a jacuzzi, but no sauna. We built ourselves up to a life of eternal youth and partying, completely without responsibility.³⁹

Læg Reid also satirically observed that the Norwegian excesses of the 80s can be compared to an awkward phase of national puberty.⁴⁰ The analogy may well be fitting: it was, after all, the time that saw the nation begin to rapidly outgrow her big brother, Sweden. However, puberty is also the time that tastes and identity develop, so it would not be surprising if those years proved to be formative.

Build your own home

It would be fair to say that in the course of the 1980s Norway underwent a cultural revolution.⁴¹ A new mind-set evolved, which rejected housing cooperatives as embarrassing reminders of a less moneyed past and promoted the idea of personal liberty achieved through private home ownership.

Legislation was developed which supported the rights of the individual to build what they wanted on their own land. The Building and Planning Act of 1985 (dubbed by some the 'yes law') made it difficult for plans to be refused and set no standard for participation.⁴² Development did not generally occur within a considered template or framework, which led, at times, to haphazard suburban sprawl.

The growing economy and relaxed legislation of the 1980s gave homebuyers greater opportunities to get the exact house they wanted. In response to this demand, property developers built homes to order. Homebuyers could participate in choosing their ideal home and take part in the actual construction or finishing. Their new wealth meant that they were no longer bound to housing cooperatives and subsidies, and consequently they were not bound by the rules of the State Housing Bank either.

When deciding upon how to get a house built, future homebuyers had three options: standard, catalogue or bespoke. For a standard house (Typehus), the homebuyer could buy a site in a planned development. Here they would either be bound to a design or could choose from a limited range offered by the developer. They would not be able to alter the main structure, but would have the freedom to influence certain aspects of the plan and choose windows and fittings.

If this was too restrictive, the homebuyer could choose instead to build a catalogue house (kataloghus). [fig. 5] This required the purchase of their own site, then the selection of a model from the developers' catalogues which they could customise to their own taste. Since this option meant they were not tied to a larger development, they could regulate the building process themselves. A further option was to buy a site and then hire an architect to draw a house, or draw it themselves based on examples from the catalogues. Of the three options, this brought the greatest freedom but also the

greatest responsibility.

Typically, the residents of these suburban detached homes had little interest in community; indeed, researchers discovered that, on the whole, residents preferred to distance themselves from their neighbours.⁴⁴ The main interaction that did occur was through the children, their friends, and after school activities.

In 1995, a study conducted by Eli Støa examined the views of the inhabitants of fourteen different 1980s suburban homes and their notions of the ideal home.⁴⁵ The home owners interviewed were asked about why and how they had participated in the development of their homes. The research concluded that they associated their homes with 'freedom, privacy, control and a happy family life'.⁴⁶ They also felt that by customising their homes to their taste they had participated actively and produced a home which represented them more than if they had bought something ready built.

Thus, deregulation of the housing market and a new found wealth in the 1980s saw cooperative housing fall out of favour. Instead, it became popular to seek freedom, privacy and profit, with many aspiring to the ownership of a large, detached, built-to-order suburban home. Although participation was not encouraged amongst communities, developers realised that their customers wanted some degree of control over their surroundings and so allowed them to customise their properties to varying degrees.

Elvehavn Brygge, Trondheim. 2002

Deregulation of the housing market saw a change in housing policy in Norway. The housing sector shifted from publicly subsidised owner occupation to a private, market-driven sector.⁴⁷ This resulted in dramatic increases in house prices, and also a change in how homes were procured, financed and constructed. In what may seem a logical

progression, developers soon became involved in participation strategies. Upon recent questioning about this policy, a third of the developers involved in the study responded that it gave a better final result, whereas 45% believed that it gave them strategic leverage to assist in gaining political backing.⁴⁸

As an example of developer involvement in a public participation project, Elvehavn Brygge in Trondheim reveals how the differing agendas of key actors can combine. Nedre Elvehavn is an area of recent development in Trondheim. [fig. 6] It consists of high-density, new build housing blocks, refurbished industrial spaces transformed into shops and cafes, and a new office block and hotel. The development is in a central location that appeals primarily to young adults.

In response to a competition that was staged for the development plan, a research project was set up in 2002. It took the form of a collaboration project aimed at future users with young families and was called *Barn I Byen* (Children in the City). Collaboration involved architects, developers, estate agents, Sintef, NTNU, Husbanken and the local municipality.⁴⁹

The participation project was designed so that potential future homebuyers could be involved in the development of the design of their homes. At the same time, it was intended to give confidence to the developers who, as yet, were unsure as to whether there was a market for new family homes in the city centre.

A group of future users were gathered through responses to adverts in various local media channels. The level to which they could participate was limited to the later stages of the design. The density, infrastructure, footprint, construction system, material use and aesthetic had already been decided upon. The participation process comprised five workshops, one group discussion regarding design,



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Fig. 5: A popular catalogue house in the 1980s: Block 99 by Block Watne. © Kjell Ove Storvik
Fig. 6: Elvehavn Brygge, Trondheim, 2002. Masterplan by Skibnes Arkitekter AS. © author

to which the architect responded in a later session, a questionnaire, and a final meeting and exhibition open to the public. During the process, the future residents wrote wish lists of what they wanted for their homes, the outdoor spaces, the common areas and the neighbourhood. The resultant lists were extensive. On many issues, the group had differing views and so their input was treated as individual and not collective and the architect designed with that in mind.

At the last workshop, nine of the families were present to give their ideas and requests as to how the development ought to be designed. These included their views on mix, layout of common areas, provision of a nursery school, outdoor spaces, parking and ownership.

The future users were generally pleased with the process; they felt that they had been listened and responded to. The participation process was deemed a success in the summary report written upon its completion. It transpired, however, that for many of the families involved in the process, cost was the defining factor, whereas for others, the time scale of the project did not suit their immediate requirements for accommodation. In the end, none of the group purchased an apartment in the new development that was constructed.

The participation project gave young families the chance to discuss how they would like to live, and politically, the participation project was perceived as having been a positive initiative. As a consequence, a dense and valuable development got a family-friendly edge. The researchers collected a lot of field data, and the participants got the 'services of an architect to design a home (for free)'.⁵⁰

The information provided by the Elvehavn Brygge participation project can perhaps be considered as a form of market canvassing; after all, most of the key decisions, such as form, density and aesthetic,

had already been taken. However, it may also be regarded as an attempt to gain political leverage for the developer, a subsidiary company that funded 40% of the research.⁵¹ It is unlikely that such an amount would have been financed solely out of curiosity.

How can participation become relevant today?

From the examples given in this paper, it would appear that the agenda governing participation in Norway has changed over the years. Following World War I, exhibitions and lectures were used to inform the public about the benefits of good housing on health. Through education, the general public were encouraged to take an interest in their environment.

At Risvollan, an exhibition and 1:1 model was used to give members of the public the opportunity to experience the housing units before they were built. They were, however, not only informed about the development but also consulted on their opinion of it. The questionnaires that the visitors filled in did not impact the design directly, they came too late in the process for that, but they did show a willingness to listen; fortunately, the public agreed, in principle, with the questions they were asked.

At Selegrend, the actions of a highly driven housing cooperative saw participation leap up the ladder from informing and consulting to citizen control. A strong group of like-minded individuals received financial support from the State Housing Bank and worked together with architects to make their ideal community. The overall concept and site layout was discussed and decided upon as a group, which meant the architects could initially treat the group as their client. Subsequently, small deviations were made from the standard modules, thereby giving each family in the cooperative a degree of freedom. Everyone who chose to live at Selegrend signed up to become part of an active community; they took pride not just in their individual homes but

also in their neighbourhood. The founding objective of the cooperative – that those with resources should assist those without – plus the requirement for participation in voluntary work, most likely helped to ensure that those who joined the scheme shared a similar view of the world, which was not, however, necessarily appealing to everyone.

As previously mentioned, Norway has an individualistic society. So, whilst a project like Selegrend can demonstrate a vibrant community spirit and shared citizen control, it is perhaps not the way that most people would choose to live. This is where the appeal of a project like Bromstad B becomes clear. Since the overall site layout had been designed before the public became involved, participation was limited to influencing a single house. Whilst those who signed up were all part of a participation process, there was no pressure put on them to shape a community, or indeed to agree. They did, however, need to take responsibility for themselves and make sure their respective homes got built.

Selegrend and Bromstad may be seen to represent two very different types of housing cooperatives. The funding that both projects received from the State Housing Bank set the standard for the quality of the housing, but it did not set any specific requirement for participation. This was decided upon by the cooperatives themselves. At Selegrend, there was a holistic community vision, whereas at Bromstad, there appeared to be a more practical arrangement, whereby the sharing of a common plan, plus individual input, made the prospect of homeownership more affordable.

Through the establishment of the State Housing Bank, the Norwegian government not only subsidised housing but also promoted the ideal of homeownership for all citizens. In this way, the public came to aspire to own their home. The deregulation of the market in the 1980s created a financial incentive to become a homeowner. In turn,

as wealth began to filter down through society as a result of the discovery of oil, it is hardly surprising that people went out and bought new homes.

Since these new homes were largely self-funded, the rules devised by the State Housing Bank no longer applied. There were opportunities to build whatever one liked or could afford. There was no longer a requirement to seek group funding from the State Housing Bank, or to establish or join a cooperative if there was no real need to participate in one.

For those who wanted to join a cooperative, for financial, social or ideological reasons, this was still possible. However, the tide of general public aspiration had moved toward the 'self-built' suburban home. Since homebuyers could customise their homes, many felt as though they had actively participated in the building process. In turn, these homes were associated with freedom, privacy and happiness. Whilst this may not be what most people associate with participation, it can be argued that these citizens were at the top of Arnstein's Ladder.

If housing production had remained at this scale, no doubt suburban sprawl would still have continued, for as long as there were plots of land available, homeowners felt empowered by customising their own homes. However, deregulation of the housing market also saw the rise of the private developer and a leap in scale.

It is this change in scale, in conjunction with developers assuming the role of middlemen, which has seen participation used as a means of gaining leverage. The example at Elvehavn Brygge demonstrates how a participation project can be used politically to add a family-friendly edge without necessarily giving any decision-making powers to the participants.

As Norwegian cities grow and densify, there

is an issue of power and scale. While it may be considered reasonable for an individual to influence a small project (like their own home), how can every individual voice be accommodated in larger developments? How people want to live cannot be dictated by the state, and private developers do not necessarily have the public's best interests in mind. So, whilst in theory participation may sound like a good idea, finding effective techniques and subjects for participation across scales is, in practice, more of a challenge.

Perhaps part of the problem is that participation has been understood as a method for getting what we want. At Risvollan, questionnaires were used to establish whether the public approved of the scheme. At Selegrend, future residents participated in an ideologically driven attempt to shape the sort of homes and community they collectively wanted. At Bromstad, participants were tested to see how hard they were willing to work to get what they wanted – would they build it all themselves? The subsequent success of the 'build to order' housing models from the 80s onwards derived from offering customers a framework of options from which to choose exactly what they wanted, restricted only by what they could afford. It is therefore not surprising that in the more recent project at Elvehavn Brygge, the participation process was conducted in such a way that everyone who took part got something out of it: families gained free professional advice, researchers gathered data, politicians received positive press reports, and the developers most likely saw a good return on their investment. Nevertheless, the dialogue, which took place at a number of levels, operated at cross-purposes. A further issue in the participation process at Elvehavn Brygge was the lack of consensus: even among the families there was no willingness to compromise on their respective 'wish lists'.

From these examples it would seem that participatory design has moved from seeking common threads to generating individual specifications. If no pressure existed on land use and there was no need to share, then no problem might arise. However, the densification of our cities generates varied points of view and agendas. How can any sort of agreement be reached if we do not participate at least to some degree?

A major impulse of the modern Norwegian era was toward goals of equality, democracy and fairness in the city and at home. However, to assume that we can achieve unity through talking, especially when there is now so much money at stake, is unrealistic to say the least. This does not mean that participation processes cannot be useful – simply that we cannot assume that they are good; it is redundant to think of them as being imbued with any set of values or ideals, that tide has turned. Relevance is not to be found in educating or swaying participants, but may instead be developed through fostering discussion, negotiating compromises and even generating new, perhaps unexpected, knowledge.

Notes

1. A series of interviews with developers and planners has revealed imbalances in power and participation in urban planning in Norway. Inger-Lise Saglieog, Eva Falleth, 'Makt og medvirkning i urbanreguleringsplanlegging', *PLAN: Tidsskrift for samfunnsplanlegging, bolig og byplan og regional utbygging* (2010: Nr1), pp. 64 - 67. In Norwegian.
2. A report was published in 2007 by a Norwegian architects/consultancy called Asplan Viak. The title of the report can be translated as, 'Does Participation Actually Work?': Arthur Wøhni, *Virker medvirkning virkelig?: evaluering av planmedvirkning i storbyene: sluttrapport* (Sandvika: Asplan Viak, 2007). In Norwegian.
3. In February 2011, a debate was published by the national journal for Norwegian architecture,

- Arkitektnytt*, highlighting an ongoing discussion amongst the country's architects. It was titled, 'Does Participation Work?' The premise of the argument that it did not, was outlined by a social anthropologist, who stated that 'to think that people want to engage actively is little more than a naive notion'. Some architects were quick to respond, claiming that interest in city planning was growing and a belief in participation ought not to be lost. They did admit, however, that the perfect solution or method for participation had not yet been found. See: <<http://www.arkitektnytt.no/virker-medvirkning>> [accessed 01 January 2013]. In Norwegian.
4. Sherry R. Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35, 4 (July 1969), pp. 216–24.
 5. The legislation discussed is § 5-1. Medvirkning, <<http://www.lovdatab.no/all/tl-20080627-071-008.html#5-1>> [accessed 01 July 2013]. In Norwegian.
 6. Hans Ulrich Obrist, 'Participation Lasts Forever', in *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, ed. by M. Miessen & S. Basar, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), p. 18.
 7. Sherry Arnstein, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation', pp. 216-224.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
 10. Markus Miessen, Shumon Basar, 'Introduction: Did We Mean Participate or Did We Mean Something Else?', in *Did Someone Say Participate? An Atlas of Spatial Practice*, eds. Miessen and Basar (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006), p. 23.
 11. An interesting recent example is the Wikihouse by 00:/ Architects, <<http://www.wikihouse.cc/library/users/14003>> [accessed 01 July 2013].
 12. Nicolas Bourriand, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002), p. 70.
 13. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
 14. Elsa Reiersen & Elisabeth Thue, *De tusenhjem: Den norske stats husbank 1946-96* (Oslo: Ad notam Gyldendal, 1996), p. 30. In Norwegian.
 15. Mary Ann Stamsø, 'Housing and the Welfare State in Norway', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 32, 2 (June 2009), p. 207.
 16. Elsa Reiersen & Elisabeth Thue, *De tusenhjem: Den norske stats husbank 1946-96*, p. 12.
 17. For a more comprehensive account of the history of housing associations, <<http://www.nbbl.no/Om-NBBL/Boligsamvirkets-historie>> [accessed 01 July 2013]. In Norwegian.
 18. An example of a house menu can be found here: <<http://www.norgeshus.no/hus/>> [accessed 01 January 2013]. In Norwegian.
 19. Inger-Lise Saglieog and Eva Falleth, 'Makt og medvirkning i urbanreguleringsplanlegging', pp. 64-67.
 20. Tryggve Mjøset and Tore Brantenberg, *Brukerog Bolig: Om påvirkningogmedvirkningipraksis* (Oslo/Trondheim: Norcem Seminaretved Bygg Reis Deg, 1974), p. 32, [translation by author].
 21. Tage and Anders William-Olsson, 'Eksperimenthuseti Göteborg', *Byggmästaren*, 1945, pp. 52-61. In Swedish.
 22. Marianne Dahlbäck, 'Erik Fribergeselementhus, Våningstomthusi Kallebäck', *Arkitektur* (s) 7, 8 (1971), pp. 3-16. In Swedish.
 23. Bertil Olsson and Rolf Nilsson, *Anpassbara Bostäder Flerfamiljshus – undersökning av experimethusikv. Diset, Uppsala, ochjämförelser med liknandeprojekt* (Stockholm: Statensinstitutförbyggnadsforskning, 1970). In Swedish.
 24. Peter Blundell Jones and Eamonn Canniffe, *Modern Architecture Through Case Studies 1945 to 1990* (London: Elsevier, 2007), pp. 139-52.
 25. Tryggve Mjøset and Tore Brantenberg, *Brukerog Bolig: Om påvirkningogmedvirkningipraksis*, p. 9, [translation by author].
 26. Risvollan Borettslag - Byggesaken 7 beslutning-sprosessen, <http://www.risvollan-borettslag.no/public_files/docs/Infohandbok%20kap%202.1.pdf> [accessed 01 January 2013]. In Norwegian.
 27. Tore Brantenberg, *Hus ihage: privatlivogfelleskapsmåog store boligområder* (Oslo: Den Norske Stats Husbank, 2002), pp. 119-25. In Norwegian.
 28. Risvollan Borettslag - Byggesaken 7 beslutning-sprosessen, <<http://www.risvollan-borettslag.no/>>

- public_files/docs/Infohandbok%20kap%202.1.pdf> [accessed 01 January 2013].
29. Ibid.
30. Haugtussa Borettslag, Tjensvoll, <<http://apps.husbanken.no/boligbasen/050d.htm>> [accessed 01 January 2013]. In Norwegian.
31. Tore Brantenberg, *Hus ihage: privatlivogfelleskapsmåog store boligområder*, pp. 135-39.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Nordås Selegreng Borettslag, <<http://www.nordasgrenda.no/>> [accessed 01 January 2013]. In Norwegian.
35. Sidsel Laupstad, *Boligprosjektering som åpen prosess: Et forsøk på å belyse prosjekteringsprosessen ut fra forutsetning om brukermedvirkning Del VI Eksempelsamling* (Trondheim: NTH PhD Thesis, 1990) §33. In Norwegian.
36. Ibid.
37. Mary Ann Stamsø, 'Housing and the Welfare State in Norway', *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 32, 2 (June 2009), pp. 204-05.
38. Geir Inge Orderud, 'Finance, Home Building and Urban Residential Structuring', *Antipode*, 43, 4 (September 2011), p. 1224.
39. Erling Lægreid, *Då Noreg gjekk av skaffet. Hogg i 80 åras elleville historie* (Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1993), p. 14.
40. Ibid.
41. As discussed by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, 'Norway Went Crazy. Åttitalls kulturrevolusjon' in *Typisk Norsk Essays om kulturen i Norge* (Oslo: C.Huitfeldt forlag AS, 1993) (Oslo: C.Huitfeldtforlag AS, 1993).
42. The 1985 legislation can be found at <<http://www.lovddata.no/o11/n1-19850614-077.html>> [accessed 01 July 2013]. In Norwegian.
43. Eli Støa, 'Boliger og kultur. Norske boligfelt på 1980-tallet sett i lys av beboernes boligidealer' (Trondheim: NTH PhD Thesis, 1996), p. 188.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid., p. v.
46. Ibid., p. vii.
47. Geir Inge Orderud, 'Finance, Home Building 46. and Urban Residential Structuring', pp.1215-49.
48. Inger-Lise Saglieog and Eva Falleth, 'Makt og medvirkning i urbanreguleringsplanlegging', p. 65.
49. Eli Støa, *Familieboliger på Elvehavn Brygge - Medvirkningsprosjekt*. (Trondheim: Sintef Bygg og Miljø, August 2003). In Norwegian.
50. Ibid., p. 27, [translation by author].
51. On page 9 of the report, KaibbyggAS is listed as financing 40% of the research. A business search of Kaibbygg reveals that they have the same contact address as Skanska Bolig AS, the private developers. See <<http://www.proff.no/selskap/kaibbygg-i-nedre-elvehavn-as/oslo/-/880897152/>> [accessed 01 July 2013]. Subsidiary companies with no employees can be established by developers in order to limit liability.

Biography

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Infrastructural Critique. The Upside Down of the Bottom-Up: A Case Study of the IBA Berlin 84/87

Eva Maria Hierzer and Philipp Markus Schörkhuber

In 1980, the Berlin administration introduced the programme IBA 84/87 (Internationale Bauausstellung – International Building Exhibition), a development that was meant to shift architectural and urbanistic planning practices in a way that was as silent as it was substantial. Divided into the *IBA-Old*, which took care of neglected and dilapidated city structures, and the *IBA-New*, which dealt with the most contemporary forms of architecture at that time - it was the very dawn of what was to be called postmodernist architecture. In the following article, our concern is the IBA-Old, which aimed to indicate a new way of planning urban and architectural spaces that would both deny and radicalise modern planning strategies. In fact, it turned the urban planning process upside down by incorporating resistance to the redevelopment of whole districts into the body of administrative power. This resistance was fed by the harsh critique from both residents and anarchistic squatters occupying the historic building structures scheduled for demolition. Instead of continuing to battle with the protesters, the Berlin administration began to integrate them into the planning process. This had a double advantage: it brought an end to protests that had lasted for almost two decades, and it provided an easier and cheaper way of refurbishing the city than rebuilding from scratch.

In the following essay, we will try to separate some of the threads that interweave architecture and power – threads that became tighter and more insidious as administrative forces began to unite

opposing viewpoints to their cause. Our case study is the IBA 84/87, when the critique of the dominating practices of modern power inscribed itself into urban space and so lost its role as a counter-strategy.

Apparatuses of critique

To understand how this spatialised critique could be used for the purposes of existing power structures, we first have to clarify the history of power structures as a spatial phenomenon. Modern power structures are both the consequence of modern urbanism as a project of critique and the condition for it. These modern power structures were analysed during the 1970s by a circle of theoreticians around Michel Foucault. The structures were regarded as mechanisms for the reorganisation of life on the one hand, and of space on the other – later to be called ‘biopower’.

In the 1970s, Foucault and his colleagues turned their attention to the period between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth century in order to analyse, among other subjects, the constituents of the modern city alongside ‘population’ as a newly emerging term. Both were investigated as a problem of and a solution to the increasing demand to improve the circumstances of life,¹ and both implied a certain shift in the rationalities embodied by economic, biological and medical knowledge. These bodies of knowledge are a product of critical investigation, generating an *infrastructure of critique* that is both affirmative (since it stabilises the established structures of power) and transformative

(in that it provides alternatives to those structures). The apparatus of critique, however, is the infrastructure of modernism; it is a practice of defining and refining the relations of the infrastructure of critique in space. Thus, space becomes a key issue in that it represents the precondition for analytical science, interpreted as a reciprocity between collecting human data and the immediate environment.² This spatialisation of scientific knowledge effectuated spatialised control as a spatial technique for governing people. According to Foucault, space simultaneously emerged as one of the 'new' problems and one of the 'new' regulatory techniques.³ Space itself was considered as the principal presupposition of the modern sciences that emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Foucault emphasises that the sciences themselves are basically spatialising practices.

These critical investigations on rationality and its implications with regard to spatial organisation also incorporate the notion of the *machine*: the healing machine of the human subject as the healing machine of urban space and vice versa – illustrated by Foucault and his colleagues in *Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l'hôpital moderne* (1976).⁴ The term *machine* allows us to investigate the relations between space and power by revealing the organisation of space itself as a mechanism of power inscribed in the human subject (like die casting moulds). As Foucault's example illustrates, the hospital as a machine in itself and in its urban context becomes a laboratory to transform space by scientific practices as much as a project for transforming society.⁵

The project of transformation that took place from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century was based on demographic developments brought about by the Industrial Revolution. As a reaction to contemporary understandings of hygiene and epidemiological knowledge, the transformation of urban space was a matter of regulating the circulation of

air, fluids, people, goods and capital. As a consequence, European cities were adjusted to provide fresh air, fresh water and an efficient disposal system for wastewater. New technologies such as electricity, gas conduits and transportation systems were installed in response to the growing urban population and scientific developments. All of these new urban resources were tantamount to a genuine capitalist infrastructure, necessitated and facilitated by the parallel, emerging ideology of liberalism, which held that things should develop naturally, free from influences that were regarded unnatural. Since the natural sciences claimed to reveal the secrets of nature, the state of things could supposedly be improved by providing the most natural environment; in other words, an environment of unimpeded circulation.

At its very core, however, modern urbanism is a project of critical analyses and a reaction to their results by means of contemporary techniques. The requirement is to modify a city's established guidelines to allow administrative planning for healthy living. The results interfere with the mechanisms of the disciplinary machine and the machine of control, which regulate the population via the human subject. In fact, urban politics provide a parallel process of adjusting the population by adjusting the city. Critique is the very infrastructure of the transformation of the population and the city in order to optimise and stabilise demographic developments and thus the modern state.

Berlin on its way down to bottom up

One of the most remarkable examples of these changing methods of governing population by reforming the techniques of urban planning can be found in West Berlin during the IBA 84/87 process, which lasted for two decades.

After World War II, West Berlin in particular was confronted with a massive lack of housing due to a general increase in migration into the city rather than

to the wartime destruction. Both sides of the Berlin Wall tried to cope by erecting mass housing districts on the fields on the outskirts of the city (such as the *Märkisches Viertel*). As they extended toward the inner city core, these urban developments increasingly affected the 'organic' urban morphology and with it, the residents themselves. From the perspective of West Berlin's authorities, the 'problem' lay with the so-called *Mietskasernen*. It was argued that these tenement houses failed to conform to any contemporary housing standard: they were too densely built, did not correspond to any zoning plan and, overall, were a hotbed for social misbehaviour and epitomised problems such as crime, immigration and unemployment.

In June 1971, the West German government passed a law providing for state-funded urban development that would privilege the funding of redevelopment areas within the cities. This law was later incorporated as *special urban planning legislation* into the national German *Baugesetzbuch* (Town and Country Planning Code),⁶ which enabled city councils to gain massive funding for inner-city redevelopment. However, this law did not determine clearly how this redevelopment should be carried out.

In West Berlin, the declared redevelopment areas were mainly situated within the districts of Wedding, Charlottenburg, Schöneberg and Kreuzberg (which later became the site of the IBA-Old). The enactment of new zoning plans and the declaration of redevelopment areas was followed by considerable neglect of the buildings located in those areas by both public and private owners. Residential buildings and nineteenth-century tenement housing blocks owned by public housing associations such as *Neue Heimat* or the GSW (both non-profit housing associations) were left to deteriorate.⁷ As a consequence, people moved out voluntarily, or were relocated or even evicted when construction work began or the infrastructure was cut off.⁸

In 1968, Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, the new Professor for Building Design at the Berlin Academy for Fine Arts (now Berlin University of the Arts), was commissioned to work on an urban renewal pilot project in the redevelopment area of Wedding.⁹ His architectural office was asked to redevelop three blocks which the authorities believed should be destroyed, given the poor state of their construction. After examining their supporting structure, Hämer declared that 80% of it was safe and the rest was retrievable.¹⁰ Despite the resistance of the housing developer and the planning authorities, he rejected the notion of irreparably dilapidated historic city buildings. He demonstrated that the expenditure required for refurbishing the old structure and renovating the apartments in line with modern standards would be lower than the actual cost of demolition and the ensuing construction of new buildings.¹¹

In the early 1970s, Hämer was commissioned for another pilot project for urban renewal, this time in Charlottenburg. On this occasion, he was supported by West Berlin's first tenant initiative, the *Klausenerplatz e.V.*¹² A long-standing, democratically participatory planning process supplemented the project's goal of renovation, and emphasised Hämer's critique of the politics of construction and urban renewal. The actions conducted both by this 'human force of nature' (as people later referred to him),¹³ and his office, qualify as 'spatialised criticism immanent to the paternalistic planning system'.

Nevertheless, the architect remains the expert and director of a planning process. Although democratically participatory, it does not necessarily hand over the responsibility to the residents. Critique, here, is no longer a force acting upon a system, but becomes a force acting *within* a system. This form of critique can be called *system-immanent criticism*.¹⁴

At about the same time that Hämer was attempting to establish a form of democratically participatory planning in Charlottenburg, another kind of critique emerged in another neglected part of the city. Surrounded on three sides by the Berlin Wall, the former inner city district of Berlin Kreuzberg suddenly became a neglected fringe district, yet one within its very centre. Declared an area of redevelopment in 1971, Kreuzberg, like Wedding, Charlottenburg and Schönefeld, became a potential residential area in need of being cleared of its old, shabby buildings (and social structures).¹⁵

But in Kreuzberg, the tenants' resistance and their strategies proved more persistent. A whole generation of young entrepreneurs, students, adolescents and dropouts, supported by a wide range of other residents (retirees, immigrants and the poor), refused to submit to urban development planning. They practised their critique as an action within the urban space, establishing spatialised alternatives to the contemporary planning doctrine. They squatted abandoned buildings, organised refurbishments and reused these buildings to establish their utopian ideas, economies, neighbourhoods and societies.

The resistance began in 1971, with loose groups of abandoned adolescents and rebellious students squatting the former Bathanien Hospital.¹⁶ A series of further squats in the late 1970s and early 1980s formed a citywide network and a new social movement emerged. The growing number of oppositional groups networking and acting within West Berlin prompted the administration to respond. It actively sought public relations in order to avert the Senate's plan for reconstruction and to appease the emerging opposition.

In 1977, two years before the IBA officially began, the Berlin Senate¹⁷ decided on a *Model for the co-operation of concerned inhabitants* to be initiated as a pilot scheme for conflict resolution.¹⁸ A significant result of this new participatory model

was the competition 'Strategies for Kreuzberg', which involved the association SO36 e.V. (named after Kreuzberg's postal code) as a representative of Kreuzberg's residents. It established a flow of information between the administration and the residents and, moreover, helped to develop suggestions for improvement.¹⁹ The SO36 e.V. was the first step toward the institutionalisation of urban opposition as a process of mediation. Instead of fighting for participation in the various decision-making processes, its aim was to involve the residents into actively designing the district as their own habitat.

Nevertheless, the attempts to self-organise in the wake of the squatting movement did not meet with much approval from the Berlin Senate. On the contrary, most of the occupants of the squatted houses were evicted and the buildings demolished shortly afterwards. Although squatters began to be criminalised by the authorities, they were still widely supported by the local residents, who agreed with their criticism of the Senate's politics and the new urban development, the large quantity of vacant housing despite the high number of residence seekers, and the ineffective renovation advisory board.²⁰

The upside down of bottom-up - infrastructural critique

In actual fact, in 1980 about 10,000 apartments (800-900 buildings) in West Berlin were vacant: they were either in the process of refurbishment or a change of ownership.²¹ By the end of 1981, around one hundred of these buildings were actively being squatted.²² The variety of the squatters' social backgrounds corresponded to the variety of uses the buildings were squatted for, ranging from communal centres, women's housing and kindergartens to cinemas and workshops. What these squatters had in common, however, was their real-life application of utopian ideas of alternative economies, societies, education, culture and politics.

In 1979, as the IBA approached, a socially established group of fifty people entered abandoned buildings to squat several apartments in Görlitzerstraße and Lübbenerstraße in the south-east of Kreuzberg.²³ They squatted these apartments in order to refurbish them within one night. By calling their action *Instandbesetzung*²⁴ they tried to counteract the administration's arguments (for example, that refurbishing dilapidated structures is time-consuming and cost-intensive) by proposing a different and more effective approach.²⁵ What Hardt-Walther Hämer proved through a rather tedious process, *Instandbesetzer* accomplished in broad public view and within a single night. Yielding to public pressure, the 'non-profit' owner association BEWOGÉ negotiated forty new lease contracts for vacant and squatted apartments.²⁶ *Instandbesetzer* was not only one of the first squatter groups but also one of the first movements to question the spatial politics of the authorities by implementing a spatialised critique.

In the course of the next two years, the district of Kreuzberg was witness to a troubled time of urban riots and housing conflicts. At the peak of the squatter movement in 1981, the political climate changed and so did the direction of the IBA. In 1982, Josef Paul Kleihues and Hardt-Walther Hämer became directors of planning for the IBA-New and IBA-Old respectively, replacing Oswald Mathias Ungers and Thomas Sievert after a long period of organisational struggle.²⁷ At the same time, the international political shift from left to right reached West Berlin.²⁸ After elections in that same year, the Christian Democrats enforced an alternative approach to the 'squatter problem'. Squatters who were willing to co-operate with the Senate in order to become legal were defined as the 'good' squatters, whereas the radical groups of the former united squatter network were labelled as criminals, an obstacle to the 'positive' participatory process, and subsequently evicted en bloc.²⁹ The decision by some of the squatter groups, such as

Instandbesetzer (together with tenant initiatives and other associations) to cooperate with the Senate not only dispersed the new social movement but also made the IBA 84/87 into what it is known as today: a gentle, urban renewal movement that preserved, stabilised and refined the existing social and functional urban structures.

Hämer became a key figure in the IBA work of incorporating the squatter movement into the urban development process. Enabled by the Christian Democratic Senate, the left-liberal architect sought the cooperation of SO36 e.V. and *Instandbesetzer*. The IBA was responsible for renovating in total about 10,000 apartments³⁰ in a self-organised construction and participatory process. Hämer and his IBA team were inspired by the squatter movement and its self-managed 'urban repairs', a few of which were even realized in cooperation with the IBA.

The spatialised criticism practised by the squatter movement can thus be qualified as a form of *system-immanent critique* of the entire hierarchical political structure and its paternalistic urban planning strategies. Hämer opened the doors to the institutionalisation of the squatters' *participatory urban development process*. The twelve principles for a 'gentle urban renewal', devised via the IBA, later became the basis for the official urban planning programme supported by the Berlin Senate.

In the main, this process is based on the concept of *Autogestion*. The French term originates from the libertarian theory of organisation, meaning a self-managing-and-taking-charge of situations by organising into small groups to actively change and improve unsatisfying situations on behalf of individual interests. *Autogestion* is a critical tool that aims to detect weaknesses in the state and the existing society, and at the same time operates to provide an (illegal) alternative to the existing power structures of the state. Henri Lefebvre explains

that the stability of the state is based on what he calls 'strong points' in between which there are to be found 'zones of weakness or even lacunae. This is where things happen. Initiatives and social forces act on and intervene in these lacunae, occupying and transforming them into strong points or, on the contrary, into 'something other than what has a stable existence'.³¹ The squatter movement employs these weak zones as their stage of action as well as for their spatialised criticism.

Spatial criticism as spatialised critique is both system-immanent and self-critical, and therefore a genuine consequence of the historical genesis of modern power structures. Translated into the historical development of Berlin urbanism from the 1960s to the 1980s – as in the case of the IBA 84/87 – spatial organisation changed from being controlled by a regulative and hierarchical system into being controlled by a self-regulating system based on critical action and reaction (*Autogestion*), carried out by its individual members in the form of a critique, which can be qualified as infrastructural, whereas formerly, spatial control had been enforced by a hierarchical system, an administrative body, in fact. After the shift in administrative techniques, spatial control was established by every individual subject and element within the city, linked by the urban 'apparatus' of critique. The notion of 'apparatus' 'is the system of relations that can be established between these elements', characterised by Foucault as 'a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions; in short: as much the said as the unsaid, these are the elements of the apparatus'.³² Regarding the modern apparatus of critique, *self-criticism becomes a self-controlling infrastructural critique*.

So the key issue is how to participate critically in the processes of governing without being exploited

in the stabilisation of the status quo. This question is becoming increasingly relevant since governing, and reacting to governmental power, are part of the same process. Being affirmatively critical, in other words, is impossible without being affirmative toward the established structures of power. Given the actual, so-called neoliberal order of the world, these are matters that cannot be underestimated. The interesting question, therefore, is how can we participate critically in the processes of creatively configuring the shape of the world by knowing the construction of its infrastructural framework?

Notes

1. In his article 'La politique de la santé au XVIIIe siècle', Foucault argues that a changing understanding of medicine and medical practices leads to a new form of what he calls 'medico-administrative knowledge [*savoir 'medico-administratif'*] (p. 14), which invents new health politics. These politics are a question of risk-management, and a consequence of economic necessity since the reorganisation of charity institutions in the 17th and 18th centuries. Furthermore, a crucial purpose is the preservation of labour power and military force. These properties of a population are the result of collected data, leading to statistics that make the need for intervention visible and are a technique of control. Michel Foucault, 'La politique de la santé au XVIIIe siècle', in Michel Foucault et al., *Les Machines à guérir. Aux origines de l'hôpital moderne* (Bruxelles/Liège: Pierre Mardaga, 1979), pp. 7-18.
2. For instance, scientific research about the outbreak of epidemics that results from the relationship between population and space becomes the basis for epidemic control methods as interventions within the urban space (establishing infrastructure, reducing urban density, inserting planning guidelines and rules).
3. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-78*, trans. by Graham Burchell (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 27.
4. Michel Foucault et al., *Les Machines à guérir. Aux*

- origins de l'hôpital moderne.*
5. Sven-Olov Wallenstein, *Biopolitics and the Emergence of Modern Architecture* (New York: The Princeton Architectural Press, 2009), pp. 30-36.
 6. Anonymous author, 'Flächensanierung', Wikipedia, 2013, <<http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flächensanierung>> [accessed 18 August 2013].
 7. Andreas Suttner, *Beton brennt. Hausbesetzer und Selbstverwaltung im Berlin, Wien und Zürich der 80er* (Berlin-Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2011), p. 112.
 8. Sabine Rosenblatt, 'Die "Legalos" von Kreuzberg', in *Hausbesetzer. wofür die kämpfen. wie sie leben und wie sie leben wollen*, ed. by Stefan Aust and Sabine Rosenblatt, (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1981).
 9. Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, interviewed in 2008 by young artists from Berlin University of the Arts, *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*, <<http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/deutsche-geschichte/68er-bewegung/52075/hardt-waltherr-haemer>> [accessed 08 August 2013].
 10. Ibid.
 11. Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, Jürgen Rosemann, Alfredo Grazoli and Urs Kohlbrenner, *Kostenanalyse der Modellmodernisierung von Altbauten* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg: Bundesministerium für Raumordnung, Bauwesen und Städtebau, 1976).
 12. Suttner, *Beton brennt*, p. 112.
 13. Gerd Conradt, *Menschen und Steine. Fünf Geschichten zur behutsamen Stadterneuerung 1973-1984-1998*, Documentary, Germany, 1998 (DVD: ZDF, 1998).
 14. Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).
 15. Suttner, *Beton brennt*, p. 111.
 16. Ibid., p. 115.
 17. Most influential to the political formation of the IBA were the governing parties of the West Berlin Senate (the Social Democratic Party and the Free Democracy Party) and the Director of Urban Planning (Harry Ristock), who remained until the political transition in 1981. See Estefania Briglia, Katja Schober and Nina Stache, 'Die Entstehung der IBA', *F-IBA*, <<http://f-iba.de/die-entstehung-der-iba/>> [accessed 10 October 2013]
 18. Suttner, *Beton brennt*, p. 113.
 19. Ibid.
 20. Sabine Rosenblatt, 'Die "Legalos" von Kreuzberg', p. 28.
 21. Suttner, *Beton brennt*, p. 121.
 22. Ibid., p. 137.
 23. Ibid., p. 122.
 24. Instandbesetzung' consists of 'Instand' (maintenance) and 'Besetzung' (squatting), a play on words between 'squatting to maintain' and 'repair'. Most of the movement's activists worked within the political system as representatives of alternative political parties, in the construction senate, as social workers, within tenant initiatives, or as scientists - in short, they were representatives of the educated bourgeoisie with left-wing or anarchistic ideologies. Ibid., p. 116.
 25. Ibid., p. 118.
 26. Ibid., p. 122.
 27. *Estefania Briglia, Katja Schober and Nina Stache*, 'Die Entstehung der IBA'.
 28. Suttner, *Beton brennt*, p. 135.
 29. Ibid., p. 173.
 30. Hardt-Waltherr Hämer, interviewed by Gerd Conradt in *Menschen und Steine. Fünf Geschichten zur behutsamen Stadterneuerung 1973-1984-1998*.
 31. Henri Lefebvre, 'Theoretical Problems of Autogestion', in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays of Henri Lefebvre*, ed. by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p. 144.
 32. Michel Foucault, 'The Game of Michel Foucault', in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 194-95. Quotes from Hervé Dumez and Alain Jeunemaître, in 'Michel Callon, Michel Foucault and the "dispositive". When economics fails to be performative: A case study', *Le Libellio d'AGEIS*, 4, 6 (2010), p. 30.

Biographies

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Mainstreaming Urban Interventionist Practices: the Case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin

Monika Grubbauer

Introduction

Through a discussion of the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab, this paper examines how artistic intervention practices in public spaces, design activism and the spontaneous appropriation of urban spaces have entered the mainstream. The Lab project is financed by the German BMW group, one of the largest car manufacturers in the world, and realised by the Solomon Guggenheim Foundation.¹ It is meant to address issues of contemporary urban life in the form of a 'mobile laboratory travelling to cities worldwide' and, at the same time, to constitute an 'urban think tank community center and public gathering space'.² Since 2011, the BMW Guggenheim Lab has taken up temporary residence in New York, Berlin and Mumbai. The concluding exhibition 'Participatory City' is to be presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in autumn/winter 2013.³

In the summer of 2012, the Lab was stationed for six weeks in Berlin. The initial location for the Lab had been a site in Berlin Kreuzberg, the city's hub of political and social activism. However, the announcement of the Lab's location had met with fierce protests from residents and local activist groups, who feared that the project would reinforce gentrification tendencies in the quarter and who criticised the BMW group sponsoring. After several weeks of intense public debate, the organisers finally renounced this plan and took refuge in a less contentious site in Prenzlauer Berg. Ultimately, the actual programme turned out to be much less

controversial than the prelude and stirred comparatively little debate. It entailed lectures, debates and a range of workshops with an overall emphasis on participatory and activating formats and forms of intervention in urban spaces.

The BMW Guggenheim Lab, as high-profile cultural sponsorship, testifies in an exemplary way to the attention that is currently being paid to participatory and interventionist practices in architecture and urban design, and to the promises that these approaches hold, not only for institutionalised urban planning but also for major cultural institutions involved in culture-led regeneration strategies. At the same time, the case is highly relevant because it very clearly reveals the limits of both mainstreaming participatory urban interventionist practices, and transferring concepts and formats from one place to the other and staging them in temporary, short-term form.

To argue these points, I will first revisit the public debates surrounding the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin and discuss the impact they had on the project. Secondly, drawing on several in-depth interviews with people who organised workshops and events at the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin, I will examine the various notions of participation underlying these projects.⁴ The focus here is on those workshops and events that worked with and in diverse urban spaces beyond the limits of the Lab's venue and intervened in public and private spaces in various ways. Thirdly, I will discuss the limits of

participation that were manifested in the case of the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin.

The public debate

According to the initial plans, the BMW Guggenheim Lab was to be stationed in Berlin from May until July 2012 on a derelict site in Berlin Kreuzberg. Choosing Berlin as the second location for the Lab was a concession to the sponsoring German BMW group but also in the interest of the city of Berlin, which publicly expressed its support for the project and was instrumental in securing the site. However, the organisers and curators had not anticipated the fierce protests that their plans would arouse and were taken by surprise by the ensuing media coverage of the dispute. The arguments raised against the Lab by leftist groups and local initiatives were that the project would further facilitate the upgrading of the quarter and the displacement of working-class residents. They pointed out how in recent years a number of bottom-up cultural initiatives had had to close down or move out of their premises due to rising rents in the quarter and developer-driven investment in the renovation of existing housing stock.⁵ Critics also argued that the debates about urban life which the Lab was meant to target had been in progress for years, and that citizens were not in need of new ideas but rather a local government willing to renounce its property-led, investor-friendly, urban development policies. Thus, they blamed the BMW Guggenheim Lab for instrumentalising social struggles for the sake of polishing the image of the Guggenheim Foundation and sharpening the brand profile of the BMW group. In fact, the BMW Guggenheim Lab project found itself tapping into a highly politicised debate that has culminated over the last two years. With its cheap prices, relaxed atmosphere and lively cultural scene, the city is highly attractive to creatives and tourists alike. However, rents have recently been rising dramatically (which is highly significant in a city where 85% of the population live in rented property). At the same time, the city's

planning department has been pursuing a decidedly investor-friendly policy, selling off public land to the highest bidder and privatising large parts of the social housing stock to pay off debts. Working-class and migrant residents of trendy but poor areas, such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln, where rents have risen by 40% in the past three years, have been particularly affected by these processes.

On the 20 March 2012, the Guggenheim Foundation announced its withdrawal from the plans, stating that it would not take the risk of violent assaults on organisers and audience. Leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties denounced the protests, and the organisers of the Lab finally took refuge in a venue in Prenzlauer Berg – the Pfefferberg – where the Lab was held for six weeks in June and July 2012. The Pfefferberg complex is located on the premises of a nineteenth-century brewery that has been gradually renovated and transformed into a social and cultural centre over the past two decades and is now a protected monument. The complex houses a number of by now well-established cultural institutions, such as the architecture forum, Aedes, and various galleries and artists' studios. The surrounding quarter of Prenzlauer Berg has been transformed into an affluent locality over the past two decades and, in the German context, probably figures as *the* epitome of gentrification with many of its negative consequences.⁶

Sensing the city, making communities

As a result of the public debates and the pressure to justify the project, the team of curators responsible for the Berlin Lab included some discussions and panels dedicated to topics such as the sell-off of the city's property, and also sought to establish a dialogue with the protesting groups and initiatives. This plan didn't quite succeed, as these groups were obviously not too keen on playing a part in the official programme, and politicians also pulled back from participating in public discussions. Nonetheless, the

team was clear about their refusal 'to let those that cry out the loudest dominate the programme', as one of the interviewees commented. What remained unchanged was the idea of 'learning by doing' as the overall guideline for the Berlin programme, as opposed to the Lab's activities in New York with their more theoretical focus. Emphasis was placed 'on the importance of "doing and making" to activate change'.⁷ This is a radical move away from an object-centred approach to architecture – which the Guggenheim Foundation represents more than any other institution, given its strategy of branding through iconic buildings – toward a process and practice-oriented approach. Besides some conventional lectures and panel discussions, the curators deliberately employed participatory, experimental and activating forms of workshops, as well as walks, performances, field trips and mobile labs, in order to extend the activities into the neighbouring streets and have the participants move through the city in various ways. Altogether, about 300 events took place during the six weeks the Lab was present. The 'making' workshops on site introduced various do-it-yourself technologies that allowed participants to create, for example, personalised mobility devices, robots that respond to the environment, environmental sensors, and health devices such as glucose meters and biosensors. Off-site events included the weekly 'Field Trips', the tours to the 'C-Zone', the 'Mobile University' workshops, and the 'ReciproCity' project (all of which will be discussed below). There was also a series of participatory walking tours in which participants took the role of 'researchers' gathering evidence about the psychological and physiological effects of public space. In all of this, the discursive production of knowledge was not only removed from traditional, cultural and educational institutions and enclosed spaces and taken out into public and private spaces, but it could be largely said that, in fact, action and material change *substituted* discourse. This kind of focus is as much practical as it is programmatic. It has been very consciously employed by the Guggenheim Lab

and the young curator responsible for the Berlin Lab, Maria Nicanor, and is surely inspired by contemporary, bottom-up, urban interventionist practices, which are characterised by two things in particular: a creative engagement with the materiality of objects and urban spaces, and a refusal to locate expertise and responsibility for this engagement solely with legitimate experts.⁸ Although cultural institutions that engage in museum-community partnerships, and educational institutions that experiment with creative and performative methods are no longer new, the Lab's adoption of DIY urbanist practices went a step further. Not only were these practices used to reach out to people and bring them into the museum, they had actually been designed as the very essence of the Berlin Lab in the first place. Furthermore, the forms of participation employed in the 'making' workshops and off-site events were aimed at the dissolution of the experts vs. laymen dichotomy. These events were characterised by a blurring of boundaries and shifting roles: people were meant to be involved as active producers rather than mere consumers of the events, participating both as professionals and urbanites, producers as well as users of public spaces.

The Mobile University of Berlin (MUB) organised by Karsten Michael Drohsel, Stefan Höffken and Tobias Meier, all members of the bloggers network 'urbanophil', was one of the key projects of the Lab, exemplifying its conceptual approach as 'a small lab within the Lab' (KMD). The MUB consists of a basic set of infrastructure mounted on a cargo-bicycle that is brought to the location of each workshop and collectively assembled by participants. Emphasis is placed on collaborative action and a playful and creative engagement with the materiality of urban spaces, which gives participants the opportunity to explore the diverse perceptions that exist about a particular place and the different claims and suggestions that can be made to improve it. In testing how these diverse perceptions and claims can be made to co-exist, a planning process is

simulated on a very basic level that reflects the difficulties of planners to 'find solutions for places they don't really know, for people who live in those places and use those spaces' (KMD). This experience is meant to offer participation that precedes formal planning processes 'to enable people to understand what happens in participation' (KMD). Importantly, the organisers see themselves as catalysts in initiating a process and suggesting a topic, but not as experts, consultants or service providers. A key feature of their participatory experimentation with urban space is the emphasis on physical intervention and bodily movement. For instance, in a workshop that problematised the residual space under the Jannowitz Bridge, colourful tapes were used to either mark things that seemed important or to suggest changes. In experiments like these, the emotions, experiences and knowledge of participants, who have no professional background in planning or design disciplines, are explicitly seen as resources that need to be made fruitful for formalised planning processes; residents are seen as those 'who, in the end, tell us [planners], how a place functions' (KMD). The ReciproCity project by Andrea Respondek and Kyra Porada, an interdisciplinary planner-designer team, was conceived in a similar way. Participants were invited to explore the neighbourhood of the Pfefferberg individually, noting down their thoughts and observations and leaving notes for other people who, in turn, could react to these notes and comment on them. Here, the constant switching between immersion into the urban space, and conscious reflection through formulating and noting down observations, is meant to be instrumental in allowing non-professionals to generate knowledge about urban spaces and to pose questions that remain unasked when using and moving through the built environment on a daily basis.

The Lab's other two projects, which were explicitly aimed at a participatory exploration of public and private spaces at the (physical and social)

peripheries of the city, were both organised and conceived by artists rather than planners. 'Field Trips', organised by young American art student William Schwartz, took participants on cycling tours to diverse and mostly peripheral places in each of Berlin's boroughs, with stops at private homes. The seven tours were loosely organised around generic topics such as 'Homes', 'Jobs' or 'Food' and described in the programme as 'a platform for collective exploration and knowledge-sharing that physically engages the city'.⁹ At the heart of the project stood the idea of everyone being an 'expert of some kind' and having something to share with others. The crucial part in preparing the tours was to virtually knock on private doors and ask people whether they would be willing to invite a group of strangers into their home and give short lectures on topics that they were knowledgeable about. Of those who agreed, none was professionally concerned with urban issues and many had never given a talk before. For William Schwartz, the lasting value of these tours mostly lies in the intimate encounters generated between strangers, 'the immediate experience of being in these places' and 'a widened view of the city and urban life' (WS).

The project 'C-Zone' by German artist Maurice de Martin had a similar approach. It gave 'peripheral spaces and their residents for a short while a platform and a voice' (MdM) by organising two bus tours to the working-class districts of Lichtenberg, Marzahn-Hellersdorf and Treptow-Köpenick on the eastern outskirts of the city.¹⁰ 'Local experts' (*Kiez-Experten*) were invited to join the group while visiting, for instance, derelict industrial premises, a Vietnamese residents' community centre, or the defunct theatre of the German community of re-settlers from Russia. The sites, itineraries and protagonists of each tour were carefully selected so as to produce constellations in which these real life places and people would, for a few moments, appear 'in a different light' and 'in a different context' (MdM). Maurice de Martin stresses how locals were

sceptical about the BMW Guggenheim Lab and in fear of being exploited or exoticised. If he had not worked in the Marzahn district as a music teacher for five years, he is sure that he would not have gained the trust and cooperation of the locals. At the same time, he was also aware that only through the Lab had he been able to gain the interest of participants from the 'gentrified context' of Berlin-Mitte. Nevertheless, he took care to put together a diverse audience from different professional and social backgrounds when accepting registrations for the tours. Indeed, all the interviewees agreed that the audiences were relatively diverse, and according to Lutz Henke, the Lab programme manager, the accompanying survey conducted by the organisers during the six weeks of the Lab suggested similar things. Participants came in part from the neighbouring quarter, but also from other districts. Paradoxically, the media coverage had aroused the interest of a broader public, motivating people to visit the Lab who would not usually engage in political debates about architecture and urban planning issues: they simply wanted 'to see what all the fuss is about' (LH). In addition, part of the audience was made up of tourists, some of whom had come to Berlin specifically for the Lab. Nevertheless, there were people participating in some of the events who had no knowledge of the overall concept and preceding debates. This was the case, for example, with the participants of 'Field Trips': some of the people who came along for the tours were ones the organisers had spoken to while preparing the project.

Clearly, the BMW Guggenheim Lab in Berlin, with its participatory technology, design-centred experiments and various forms of off-site 'field-work', offered plenty of attractions and experiences. Drawing on observations made during the Lab, Karsten Michael Drohsel sees the value of these activities for the participants as helping them to solve individual problems and have them understand 'that with their own hands, a bit of instructions,

a bit of community and a bit of material, which is not so expensive, one is able to do something himself' (KMD). Interviews with the planners and performers who organised the trips and tours in the neighbourhood and in Berlin's boroughs also revealed how the value of these experiences largely lay in the shared experience: 'that in a particular place a group of people meets and relates to each other who would normally never meet' (Mdm). On the individual level, the Lab was surely an experience that participants will remember, and one which, in some cases, might also prompt action.¹¹ Such a concept within the context of the BMW Guggenheim Lab holds subversive qualities, as William Schwartz does not fail to notice when reflecting on one of his fieldtrips: 'If we think about how much time, money and energy the Lab, and myself included, invested just so that seven people could share a moment of total intimacy... this is pretty interesting' (WS). Yet, when envisioning participation that goes beyond inclusion to promote empowerment and to confront the inequalities, displacements and enclosures that characterise neoliberal urbanism, the limits of a temporary, albeit high-profile type of intervention like the Berlin BMW Guggenheim Lab become clearly visible.

The limits to participation

The BMW Guggenheim Lab is, without doubt, a high-profile type of cultural sponsorship. It is meant to both sharpen the brand profile of BMW in terms of innovation and to reach out to new markets. Interviewees and curators claim they did not encounter any interference by BMW in the programming. Still, this is clearly no bottom-up type of initiative characterised by self-organisation and improvisation: projects were commissioned for the Lab and did not originate from work done by participants of the Lab.

Participation was therefore limited: firstly, due to the short-term, temporary nature of the Lab, most projects and ideas were ready-made, either

imported from elsewhere (such as the walks by urban experimentalist Charles Montgomery), or pre-existing in Berlin. Only a small number of the projects were developed specifically for the Lab, which was due – rather surprisingly – to the fact that despite BMW’s sponsorship, the budget was not sufficient to finance the development of a greater number of projects from scratch. Nonetheless, many of the projects developed for the Lab would not have been realised without it, either because of a lack of funding (as in the case of the Mobile University) or a lack of publicity (as with the ‘C-Zone’ tours).

Secondly, the Lab’s venue in affluent Prenzlauer Berg certainly did not encourage the inclusion of working-class and migrant communities from Kreuzberg or Neukölln, for example, or from the districts on the eastern outskirts of the city with their mass housing. The interviewees agreed that holding the Lab at the site in Kreuzberg would have helped to bring in these groups, which, after all, the Lab was targeting with its hands-on approach and focus on empowerment-technologies. Still, it is doubtful whether people who do not have the skills and competencies to adapt to the shifting roles of being ‘producers’, ‘explorers’ or ‘researchers’ would be likely to take part in these experiments. The tours described above, which brought participants into contact with peripheries of all sorts, were successful, but limited in terms of the number of people who could participate. Also, the fact that the Lab’s working language was English meant that participation was severely limited. Most Lab events were held in English with translation available. Tours and fieldtrips were conducted in either English or German, but the Lab’s extensive use of website and social media was restricted to English.¹² The choice of language suggests that the prime target audience for the Lab were the young and creative local elites, tourists and global citizens, rather than the excluded and marginalised.

Thirdly, the transfer of concepts and best practices from elsewhere did not turn out as expected. The curators had not been aware of the political debates they were tapping into and were taken aback by the ‘German hypercritical attitude’ they encountered (MdM). Press commentators agreed that the idea of activating inhabitants who had already been engaged for two decades in debates over the transformation of the Pfefferberg complex and the adjacent Prenzlauer Berg neighbourhood was somehow misplaced, as was the concept of holding workshops that featured hands-on experiments in a city that already lives off its creative milieu and its cultural producers.¹³ In a recent statement, curator Maria Nicanor acknowledged that the Lab might have learned more from Berlin than Berlin did from the Lab.¹⁴

However, we need to accept that grassroots initiatives that intervene in the built environment and appropriate urban spaces for common uses are not necessarily inclusive, empowering or egalitarian, as Hillary Silver, Alan Scott and Yuri Kazepov have pointed out.¹⁵ These kinds of semi-failures have also been observed in neighbourhood programmes in Berlin, such as the citizens’ budgets, which were part of the *Soziale Stadt* programme, yet the extent of bottom-up involvement varied considerably, and less educated and migrant citizens were hardly involved.¹⁶ Or again, the community gardens project in low-income areas, which despite ambitions for social inclusion are led by middle-class residents living in those districts.¹⁷ Moreover, as Margit Mayer points out when reflecting on, amongst others, the case of Berlin: creative city politics tend to ‘hijack movement practices for purposes of urban restructuring and enclosure’.¹⁸ In contexts of state withdrawal and austerity urbanism, the principles of self-management, entrepreneurialism and flexibility have long become normalised and ‘usurped as essential ingredients of sub-local regeneration programmes’.¹⁹

Conscious of the danger that design-activism and informal interventions in derelict or disregarded urban spaces spearhead more conventional forms of rent-seeking urban development, Fran Tonkiss, in a recent paper in *City*, offers suggestions about the political impact of what she terms 'interstitial urbanism'.²⁰ In her view, these participatory, informal, improvised and temporary urban interventions and occupations challenge the 'orthodoxies' of urban development: 'the temporalities given by urban investment cycles, conventional built lifespans and messianic end-users'.²¹ By 'exploiting powers of delay and embedding habitudes of use' these spaces and practices 'are characterized less by "temporary" use than by persistent and regular use'.²² Tonkiss concludes that urban interventions as critical practice 'might better be understood not as utopian but *anti*-utopian projects, given their commitments to making actual places in the void spaces of grand designs, and their readiness to live with urban imperfection'.²³ The BMW Guggenheim Lab very consciously made use of this appeal of the 'anti-utopian' by relying on the aesthetics of the temporary in the architectural design of the Lab's venue and its short-term concept, as well as in the practical, hands-on approach, the focus on empowerment-technologies, and the use of activating formats and forms of intervention in urban spaces. Faced with the dilemma that in participation there is always the 'need to overcome biased deliberations in which some voices count more than others',²⁴ deliberation was meant to be evaded altogether.

However, the issues of inequality, gentrification and displacement came up very clearly in the public debate that preceded the BMW Guggenheim Lab. Paradoxically, it was particularly the Lab's concept of a temporary, though highly visible, occupancy of a leftover space in the city's hub of urban activism that triggered these debates. Critics feared that despite the idea of a 'minimally invasive' intervention, the site and the quarter would be left changed and prepared for a further influx of

capital. The organisers of the BMW Guggenheim Lab were neither prepared nor willing to really engage in these political issues. Neither were they able to create practices and spaces that would last beyond the timespan of the event. The Lab generated encounters and individual experiences that were unexpected and rewarding. However, informal urban interventions that acquire durability and have a political impact only come into being through 'situated social action',²⁵ which needs a site and time to unfold, neither of which was provided. Instead, the Lab gathered an impressive array of ideas on how to improve urban life in various ways. This show of socially engaged experiments and interventions in urban space is documented in a glossary of '100 Urban Trends' for each of the three cities. It is available from the Lab's website and will be the basis for the concluding exhibition in New York. In terms of solving any of Berlin's real problems, the debates and experiments held at the BMW Guggenheim Lab were too general, too exclusive and too short-lived to be of lasting relevance.

Notes

1. 'What is the Lab?', BMW Guggenheim Lab, <<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/what-is-the-lab>> [accessed 01 August 2013].
2. Ibid.
3. Initially, the Lab was meant to take temporary residence in altogether nine cities around the world over a span of five years. In early 2013 these plans were dropped without explanation and the concluding exhibition was scheduled for the end of 2013.
4. Five in-depth interviews with people involved in the program were conducted. The interviewees were Lutz Henke, a cultural scientist and artist who served as the local programme manager of the Berlin BMW Guggenheim Lab, Karsten Michael Drohsel, planner and member of 'urbanophil' (a German blog on urban issues), Maurice de Martin, a Berlin-based artist, William Schwartz, an American artist currently living in Hamburg, and Andrea Respondek, a Berlin-based

- planner. I wish to express my gratitude to the interviewees for sharing their experiences and knowledge with me so generously.
5. <<http://bmwlabverhindern.blogspot.de/>> [accessed 01 August 2013].
 6. Andrej Holm, *Die Restrukturierung des Raumes. Machtverhältnisse in der Stadterneuerung der 90er Jahre in Ostberlin* (Bielefeld, Transcript, 2006).
 7. 'Berlin Lab', BMW Guggenheim Lab, <<http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/where-is-the-lab/berlin-lab>> [accessed 01 August 2013].
 8. For example, *Insurgent Public Space. Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*, ed. by Jeffrey Hou (London: Routledge, 2010); Robert Klanten and Matthias Huebner, *Urban Interventions: Personal Projects in Public Spaces* (Berlin: Gestalten Verlag, 2010).
 9. 'Field Trips: Homes', BMW Guggenheim Lab, <http://www.bmwguggenheimlab.org/where-is-the-lab/berlin-lab/berlin-lab-events/event/field-trips-f?instance_id=770> [accessed 01 August 2013].
 10. These districts are usually perceived as being on the outmost periphery of the city, and therefore (mostly falsely) considered by the middle- and upper-class residents of Berlin Mitte to belong to the C-Zone, the most distant fare zone for public transportation services.
 11. Maurice de Martin reported how some participants of 'C-Zone' had returned to the Vietnamese community centre later on.
 12. It is important to note that 'Field Trips' by William Schwartz was held exclusively in German.
 13. For example, 'Guggenheim Lab brachte viel Lärm um Nichts', *Berliner Morgenpost* 29 July 2012; N. Bernau, 'Guggenheim Lab: Es war den Streit nicht wert', *Berliner Zeitung* 27 July 2012; C. Meixner, 'Das Guggenheim Lab und die Strategie der Umarmung. Eine Bilanz', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 26 July 2012.
 14. 'The BMW Guggenheim Lab. An urban experiment that nearly failed', *The Economist*, 8 August 2012.
 15. Hillary Silver, Alan Scott and Yuri Kazepov, 'Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, 3 (2010), pp. 453-77.
 16. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
 17. Marit Rosol, 'Public Participation in Post-Fordist Urban Green Space Governance: The Case of Community Gardens in Berlin', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, 3 (2010), pp. 548-63.
 18. Margit Mayer, 'First World Urban Activism', *City* 17, 1 (2013), p. 12.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. Fran Tonkiss, 'Austerity Urbanism and the Makeshift City', *City* 17, 3 (2013), pp. 312-24.
 21. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 321.
 24. Hillary Silver, Alan Scott and Yuri Kazepov, 'Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation', p. 472.
 25. Fran Tonkiss, 'Austerity Urbanism and the Makeshift City', p. 322.
 26. *Ibid.*

Biography

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Citizens as Knowledge Producers in Urban Change: Can Participation Change Procedures and Systems?

Jenny Stenberg

Introduction

After a fairly long period of disinterest following the 1960s and 1970s, the idea of increased citizen participation in planning has now developed into a significant movement in Europe.¹ Reasons for this include the rapid global, social, and environmental changes taking place,² the reconsideration of power-relations,³ and issues related to justice and resilience.⁴ The role of civil society has been discussed extensively in Europe during recent years, yet because there is no consensus on why civil society should play a prominent role in planning –indeed scholars have presented contradictory logics about citizen involvement – no development concerning citizen participation in planning takes place.⁵ In Sweden, where the present author is based, the government established a commission in 1997 to combat the weakening legitimacy of democracy.⁶ This resulted in a major investigatory report suggesting that ‘deliberative qualities’ be included as a complement to representative democracy.⁷ Precisely how this should be put into practice was not made clear, therefore contradictory logics concerning the participatory turn are still prevalent in Sweden. This article presents a Swedish study that allows us to consider the topic empirically.

Case study in Sweden

The study was conducted as part of a research project entitled ‘The interplay between citizen initiatives and invited participation in urban planning’, funded by Formas, the Swedish Research Council, from 2011 to 2013. The project involved

a group of twelve participants, half of whom were PhD researchers, while the other half were public employees or entrepreneurs. The aim was to increase knowledge about the ‘interplace’; i.e., to learn how invitations from authorities to dialogue, and initiatives undertaken by inhabitants to satisfy their needs and demands, can meet in order to employ these activities in urban change.⁸ A further, partial aim was to apply this knowledge to ordinary planning systems and procedures.

The approach taken for the project was to participate in the various kinds of local interactive activities taking place.⁹ It also included case-based participant observation and key informant interviews.¹⁰ The project participants came from different disciplines and realms, and the project results were equally varied (see www.mellanplats.se). The two cases presented below – ‘The Meeting Place’ and ‘The Patio’ – represent only part of the project.¹¹

The case study area of Hammarkullen

Before describing the cases, a brief description of the study area is required. This article focuses on empowerment issues in a specific context: the stigmatised outskirts of metropolitan areas. Hammarkullen,¹² the case study area, has a population of 8,000 and is situated in Angered in the north of Gothenburg, Sweden’s second largest city. Nearly half of Angered’s (48,000) inhabitants were born abroad, compared with one-fifth of the population for the whole of Gothenburg, and the unemployment rate is high. Most of the area was built during

1968-70 as part of the 'million programme', when one million homes were constructed in ten years to overcome the housing shortage and deprivation in city centres. Over the years, many refugees have settled in the area, initially Latin American immigrants, who have had a strong cultural influence. Hammarkullen hosts Sweden's biggest carnival and is characterised by staunch political commitment and many vibrant associations. Since 2010 there has also been a university Urban Studies Centre in Hammarkullen, which combines higher education and research with community outreach activities.

Like most areas from this period, Hammarkullen's structural design includes high-rise buildings in the centre, surrounded by lower apartment buildings forming large courtyards, outside of which are semi-detached and detached houses. [fig. 1] Public transportation to the inner city is available by tram and takes about 15 minutes. Hammarkullen is often attributed a 'territorial stigma'.¹³ Today, Sweden is suffering from a severe educational problem related to housing segregation: a significantly larger proportion of lower-secondary school pupils in stigmatised suburban centres in Sweden (sometimes as high as 70%) fail to pass maths, English or Swedish, which means that they do not meet the requirements for entering upper secondary school.¹⁴ Moreover, the socioeconomic and educational gaps are increasing at an alarming rate. Connected to these difficulties, rapid changes in society have weakened the public sector, which now has problems dealing with the complex challenges posed by the current organisation and strained economic circumstances.

The Meeting Place

The Meeting Place was a grassroots initiative that existed between 2010 and 2012 and was situated in the local square in Hammarkullen. [fig. 2] It was a non-profit organisation, religiously and politically independent, with about one hundred members from different cultural backgrounds. The Meeting

Place originated from a network formed to protest against heavy cutbacks in schools and youth care. After a period of quite successful demonstrations, some members of the network formed the Meeting Place to contribute to local development through constructive dialogue. Meeting Place members reached out to a large number of the residents with their many different activities, their aim being to increase confidence in the future of Hammarkullen, combat prejudice, exchange knowledge and skills between groups, and create meaningful opportunities for employment. Their activities took place during afternoons, evenings and weekends throughout the year and included courses in computer use, sewing, cooking, aerobics and gardening. Many of the visitors were women and children, but there were also men, as well as a mixture of cultural backgrounds. Members hosted many different kinds of meetings where residents could talk with public representatives. They also acted as a voice for residents at meetings held by the city district administration: such meetings were generally not attended by residents participating in the courses mentioned above – partly because of language problems but also due to social exclusion mechanisms. The Meeting Place initiative was financed mainly through support from employment services, but they also received minor contributions from local housing associations and other sources. However, lack of adequate funding was a constant major problem.

Our role as researchers in the Meeting Place project involved supporting its development without interfering in the formulation of its mission. We discussed with the participants how the work was proceeding, made suggestions about the kind of actions they might take, took part in meetings when public authorities were present, and interacted in various ways on topics of interest to the residents, such as mini-lectures on democracy, entrepreneurship and urban gardening. Activities were documented and a number of participants were also



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1: The structural design of Hammarkullen, built as part of the 'million programme', can be described as including high-rise buildings in the centre, surrounded by lower apartment buildings forming large courtyards, outside of which semi-detached and detached houses are located. © Albert Holmgren.
Fig. 2: The premises of the Meeting Place seen from Hammarpark. © author.

interviewed afterwards.

The Meeting Place initiative initially experienced a 'boom' and the red cottage on the square was often filled with people. The members also had a good relationship with the higher education centre in the area and with some local and municipal politicians. In general, however, their relationship with the city district administration was strained from the start, and, in the long run, the authorities did not adequately support the Meeting Place. On the contrary, the residents felt the authorities had worked against it. There were obvious signs of this. It was unclear for a long time whether they had really been given the premises despite having a key, the rental periods were short, the written contract did not arrive until the rental periods ended, and, perhaps the most serious problem, some civil servants spread negative rumours. One claimed that the association had religious affiliations, even though the statutes stated the opposite, and these purported affiliations were used as an argument for not supporting the initiative because it did not 'represent all residents'. For an initial support period, the employment services provided a salary for two of the residents involved; when this period came to an end and the two members asked for salary support from the city district administration in exchange for agreed-upon services, they did not receive a response. When they turned in frustration to local politicians, referring to the written policy document on urban empowerment, civil servants accused them of not following the policy line. They waited for a long period and were ultimately denied any salary.

Nonetheless, the Meeting Place did receive a great deal of support from other local authorities. One of the residents eventually received a 25% salary from the authorities for a limited period, and some civil servants actively supported the group. However, the above-mentioned problems resulted in sick leave due to burnout for two of the residents involved, and when the situation did not improve

in any permanent way, the association decided to close down the Meeting Place. After December 2012, the enthusiasts dispersed. The cottage has since been used sporadically by the district administration and lent to other associations. Some civil servants argue that the cottage should be demolished, while others feel it should once again be used for local activities to populate the square.

The Patio

The Patio was a participation project. It had a total budget of 220,000 euros and took place in 2012 and 2013. Its scope was to design a stage or a similar structure in the central park next to the square as an outdoor counterpart of the Meeting Place. The project was carried out as part of an extensive municipal initiative called 'Development Northeast', funded by the European Union. A project leader who specialised in both architecture and social work was appointed. She collaborated closely with residents from the Meeting Place and often used the red cottage for citizen dialogue. Her task was not only to implement the stage project, but also to inform city district staff about what had been learnt about citizen participation in earlier research (see note 12). Her goal was therefore twofold: she was to carry out the Patio project by 'co-designing' it with residents, and she was to learn from it, not only in terms of her own involvement, but also on behalf of her colleagues in the city district administration.

As the project had already been funded when the outreach activities began in spring 2012, it had considerable limitations, and these circumstances turned out to be detrimental. The square had been chosen as the designated place when the funding was sought in 2011, and it was said that a 'covered meeting place' would be designed in the form of a removable, open tent. When this idea was discussed locally in 2012, the common response was 'it will burn – don't do it!'. This was a reaction to the recent heavy cutbacks in the local elementary schools, and many inhabitants were frustrated and furious. The

design process therefore needed to reconsider the actual structure to be built. This was done in collaboration with local stakeholders and included a shared discussion as to whether something should be built at all at that moment, or whether the funding should perhaps be returned. Finally, the funding agency approved a change of plan: building a permanent structure was to be permitted. The location also had to be changed to the park due to property ownership issues in the square. At that point in time, a stage was already being discussed as a possible outcome of the design process, but the project was named 'the Patio' so as not to limit the imagination of the participants at the beginning of the process.

Next, the project leader commissioned two part-time architects skilled in co-design to lead the Patio design process [fig. 3], which began in May and ended in October 2012. The aim was to co-design the Patio, thus the whole process was to be capacity building, to empower the actors involved and improve the urban space of the park. The design process consisted of a number of selected tools. In open meetings held outdoors, several hundred residents were involved to some extent, while the four design workshops attracted around 15 residents on each occasion.¹⁵

Our role in the research project was to simultaneously support the design process and learn from it. We therefore documented the activities and interviewed participants afterwards. The process of building the stage took place during the summer of 2013, and the inauguration was held in September; in other words, after the research project had been completed, which meant the research team was unable to document and analyse that part of the process. However, since we are still active in the area as part of the higher-education centre, we have paid it some attention. In contrast, the entire co-design phase has been analysed. It was largely considered a positive experience in terms of its democratic aspects and results. Nevertheless,

some people, mainly civil servants, felt it was quite time-consuming. The two architects in charge spent approximately 700 hours on the project, the major part spent in communication with the residents. Another criticism, mainly voiced by scholars and residents, was whether society should engage local residents in the design of such a limited structure when there are other problems, presumably larger in scale and more serious, that they can and wish to engage in.

Developing planning procedures and professions

To a large extent, the conclusions drawn from research on citizen participation in planning, in which citizens are involved in a new role in democracy, have been negative.¹⁶ Many researchers stress the danger of uncritical attitudes towards institutional responsibility and accountability and argue that there is a risk that citizen participation will lead to social exclusion.¹⁷ There are three types of literature that present more positive outcomes or conclusions: firstly, handbooks and instructions; secondly, methodological considerations also focusing on the role of researchers, and thirdly, forward-looking learning processes intended to find new ways of developing professions and planning procedures.

The third type of literature offers critical reflection on citizen participation, based on research that focuses to a great extent on institutional changes and roles.¹⁸ In this kind of literature, citizen participation processes are considered 'arenas of hope' that have the potential to create new power relations and influence institutional procedures and systems.¹⁹ The pros and cons of citizen participation will be considered here by comparing the two cases described above, and discussing how the dialogue was carried out.

This reasoning brings us back to the discussion of results, and the question of whether and how to involve citizens in small-scale design projects. Quite

a few researchers have focused on the outcome of citizen participation, asking what society can gain from dialogue and citizen participation in the periods between elections. Supporters claim that participation may not only be a vehicle of empowerment,²⁰ but may also enhance the quality of our cities and make them more human,²¹ develop new aesthetic ideals,²² reduce housing prices,²³ and lead to actual future building development initiatives in which 'the market' shows disinterest.²⁴ As we have seen clearly in our case studies, if handled well, we agree with research emphasising that participation may help to develop democracy and work as a vehicle for equity and efficiency in promoting the representative system.²⁵ Moreover, such participation may result in municipal bodies being influenced by real community needs and neighbourhood demands.²⁶ The Meeting Place not only organised highly appreciated activities that populated the square (which had a positive security and safety outcome for residents in the area), but its initiators also brought to the table ideas and demands concerning the schools, youth care and the physical environment when they met with civil servants, politicians, researchers, teachers and students in different types of discussions. Hence, they functioned as knowledge bearers and spokespersons for other residents they saw regularly at the various organised activities – people who for various reasons (language difficulties or feelings of exclusion) never attended the participatory meetings they had been invited to. In this way, initiatives such as the Meeting Place may be considered a complement to the representative system, because in stigmatised areas such as Hammarkullen, voter participation is low, as is the voicing of complaints in formal planning processes.

In the Patio project, however, it was not common for inhabitants to explicitly, and on their own initiative, function as spokespersons for others. It is interesting to note that the success of such a process was instead *dependent* on the Meeting Place initiators, who served as links and knowledge

bearers. Could it be that for top-down invitations to work well, they must have access to these kinds of bottom-up citizen initiatives? If this is the case, then the authorities need to reconsider how this initiative was received. Clearly, because the Meeting Place no longer exists, the approaches cannot be considered fruitful. We will look more closely at this question below.

Conflicts often give rise to stalled processes, although many researchers and local activists agree on a reversed logic, according to which opposition and disagreements should be considered relevant indications of what the community needs and wants,²⁷ and used as triggers for learning.²⁸ This perspective has been prevalent in quite a few studies on community engagement. The following set of guidelines for planning and implementing local development work is one such example.²⁹ Indeed, the following four guidelines could easily have been used when the Meeting Place was set up, as a way for the authorities to prepare for institutional change by asking themselves:

1. How can we find new ways to support citizen initiatives with monetary, personnel and technical resources?
2. How can we promote more demand-driven local development work that grows out of grassroots organisation and is not initiated by civil servants?
3. How can we enable grassroots leaders to build and preserve external ties with other community organisations and with public authorities at higher levels (technical, legal, economical experts)?
4. When collaborating, how can we help grassroots organisations and civil servants maintain a 'creative tension' between one another – one that is neither too friendly nor too hostile?

Perhaps the Meeting Place would still exist had such an attitude towards the exercising of public authority taken place. Naturally, cooperation implies teamwork, and both parties would have required



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Full-scale model of the codesigned stage in Hammarpark, to be further discussed with involved inhabitants. © author.

Fig 4: The builder who got the contract employed two youths from Hammarkullen full-time for 3.5 months, giving them a union salary based on their ages: 17 and 22 years. © José Romero.

shared values, especially with regard to the fourth guideline. Nonetheless, judging from the outcome, we may well claim that the successful development of the Patio project benefitted from the Meeting Place, but the benefits were not sufficiently reciprocal for the latter to survive.

Let us return to the Patio project. Once the collaborative design process employed in the Patio had been completed, the park and nature administration was made responsible for public procurement for building the stage. The person in charge had followed the design process on site, collaborating closely with the project leader. In this way, she was both informed and influenced, which resulted in an extension of the project in order to make major improvements to the neglected park. Local residents had been demanding improvements for several years, and achieving their goal constitutes another example of how citizen participation in small-scale design projects may inadvertently influence a larger context. The major challenge for the person in charge was to succeed with a form of 'socially responsible public procurement' that would meet the demands the residents had expressed³⁰ – a procurement that allowed several youths from the area, 'the good guys', to be involved in building the stage and the park, a requirement that had been stressed by the youth and youth workers involved in the design process. Such involvement was considered crucial if the younger residents were to make it *their* place, rather than have it fall into the hands of drug dealers and other criminal elements that threaten any residents who report crimes. Other local stakeholders, among them a group of artists, also stressed the need for social tenure to occur in a new and innovative way. Otherwise, they claimed, building the stage would not contribute to positive social development.

The procurement went well. The builder who won the contract employed two youths from Hammarkullen full-time for 3.5 months, paying them

a union salary based on their ages: seventeen and twenty-two [fig. 4, 5 and 6]. Five other younger youths from Hammarkullen were also involved and received some payment for their work, which was to design, under the supervision of an artist, a mosaic border for the stage. One of them, who does not attend school, was also given the chance to observe and learn from the professional tiler who laid the mosaic tiles.

Although based on limited empirical material, the two case studies outlined above clearly show that citizen participation in design and planning *can* influence systems and procedures. The key difference between the Meeting Place and the Patio was that one was a bottom-up citizen initiative and the other a top-down invitation to participate from the authorities. Had only one approach been adopted, then the effect on procedures and systems would presumably not have occurred, since neither approach alone had access to everything that was needed. The Meeting Place initiative, well rooted in civil society, and the Patio invitation, well connected to the public authorities, seem to have merged into something that is potentially able to change the municipal system of social procurement. Although the process could have been better handled, the combined strategies imply that politicians and civil servants at higher levels were informed about what citizens wanted and about their ideas for further developing the community. Moreover, the strategies used imply that *knowledge* from the residents was used to change procedures and systems. They believed their knowledge informed the authorities about *how* the social tenure of building projects needs to be carried out in order to meet local needs and develop the community, instead of worsening an already difficult situation. Hence, as a result of invitations for citizen participation in a design project, invitations that led from an earlier citizen initiative, knowledge was developed that has the potential to improve the entire municipal procurement system. Nevertheless, although the above-mentioned



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Fig 5: The stage has almost taken shape. Five youths from Hammarkullen were paid for three weeks during the summer to design the mosaic that will cover the edge of the stage. © José Romero.

Fig. 6: This photograph, taken after the completion of the article, shows the opening party of the stage. © author.

process has indeed taken place, there is as yet no proof of *systematic* change: the process has not resulted in revised written documents or instructions for how social tenure should be conducted within the municipality. Moreover, sufficient time has not elapsed to determine whether more informal procedures in the municipality or city district have been affected by a learning process that involved both civil servants and residents.

Conclusions

What can these two cases teach us about the 'inter-place' between top-down invitations and bottom-up initiatives in planning?³⁰ Probably the most interesting result of this research is the indication that an institutional and systematic change (of tenure) can take place as a result of citizen participation in planning. It is institutional change that makes a difference in the long run – because change of this kind does not depend on enthusiasts whose commitment may only be temporary. Yet neither can planning be understood merely as a technical process that anyone with access to a checklist can undertake – it is clearly a social process requiring skilled staff. A great risk occurs when citizen initiatives such as the Meeting Place receive the kind of treatment it did, because the frustration and fatigue of the residents involved may well create a ripple effect locally, thus undermining future opportunities for collaboration. Planners active in communities need specific knowledge and skills to guide them. In suburbs like Hammarkullen, where many people have limited confidence in official government representatives, the trust capital is scarce – and there is little room for mistakes. This brings us to a discussion of the role of the planner. Several researchers have maintained that a new role for planners is evolving, designating titles such as *action planner*,³¹ *advocacy planner*,³² or *reverse planner*.³³ What these perspectives on planning all have in common, apart from being based in neighbourhoods or communities, is an awareness of the need to work at all levels: 'The rationality of action planning, the

workshop, street work and plan-making, lies in the proposition that once sufficient work is done at the neighbourhood level, pressure begins to build up to act at city level and emergence to take place'.³⁴ If we wish to promote the kind of social responsibility that has been discussed here, some kind of extra support for planning is needed in the socially exposed and stigmatised neighbourhoods of the million programme suburbs of Sweden today.

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Biography

Jenny Stenberg is Associate Professor in urban design and planning at the Department of Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden. Her action-oriented research deals with social aspects of sustainable development, and particularly with citizen participation in planning the physical urban environment – especially stigmatised areas of the 'million programme' built in the 1960s and 1970s.

Learning from Failures: Architectures of Emergency in Contested Spaces (Pyla, Cyprus)

Socrates Stratis

A successful moment of publicness in a contested space

- Get a van.
- Park it in the main square during a late summer afternoon.
- Use it as a reference point for the community and as a critical volume for the workshop.
- Project a video inside the van about Siamese girls trying to wear a coat with background music of a piano lesson performed by a child. (Visual artist: M. Loizidou).
- Put chairs and tables close to the van.
- Send invitations to all the local inhabitants, ten days in advance.
- Invite people to try on a real size Siamese coat and walk around the square and in the coffee shops.
- Invite people to fill in questionnaires and draw mental maps of their community's possible future.
- Spread the workshop to the coffee shops around the square, encouraging people (who will probably be suspicious) to participate.

(Excerpt from the 'Architectures of Emergency' project text)

This is a discussion about a mobile workshop set up by the 'Architectures of Emergency' initiative in the central public space of the community of Pyla, Cyprus. [figs. 1 and 2] The square is actually a parking lot, with the Turkish Cypriot coffee shop located on the west side, in front of a mosque. The Greek Cypriot, right-wing political supporters' coffee shop is situated at the north edge of the square,

in front of a Greek Orthodox church. The left-wing supporters' coffee shop is located further north, just off the square. On the ground floor on the east side of the square are some restaurants, with the United Nations (UN) observation tower on top.

In fact, nothing has changed here for the last thirty-nine years, ever since the 1974 Turkish invasion. [fig. 3] Pyla's inhabitants, Greek Cypriots (GCs) and Turkish Cypriots (TCs), do not share much in public, not even their coffee. They live in a comfort-conflict zone, waiting for a general resolution of the Cyprus problem to take place, having already rejected all plans for the community initiated by the UN.

The mobile workshop held a successful afternoon of publicness in Pyla's main square back in the summer of 2007, when a significant part of the square had been reclaimed and the parked cars displaced. It was one of those rare moments in which the main square had been animated by the participation of both GCs and TCs. The mobile workshop was the first tactic of an informal project introduced by the 'Architectures of Emergency' initiative to assist in making the Pyla Master Plan.¹ The author participated in both projects.² The initiative successfully managed to bypass all formal representation procedures in order to get information directly from the local inhabitants. Many of them joined the event, offering the study team the opportunity to access valuable information. It became apparent that people from both communities were very concerned

about health and exercise in their daily lives, especially the younger ones.³ Surprisingly, in contrast to prevailing official narratives from both communities, they did not mind the idea of sharing an internet café, a gym, or even a kindergarten for their children. Thus, it became evident that both GCs and TCs did not share the opinions of their elected representatives. In addition, although both the TC and GC youth had different points of view from the adults about the use of public facilities for everyday life, their views were sometimes similar to those of the youth of the other community.

What is unique about the community of Pyla is that it is one of the very few inhabited communities within the demilitarised cease-fire zone separating the north from the south, controlled by the UN since 1974. What is even rarer is that Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots live together. In 1973, the GCs in Pyla numbered 586 and the TCs 488. By 2007, the GCs were around 1,000 and the TCs 500.⁴ Despite their physical coexistence, there are no institutions that enable joint decision-making for community issues; they do not even share a coffee shop. The reason is that the GCs' local authority operates under the Republic of Cyprus and the TCs' operates under the non-recognised (except by Turkey) Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In addition, the state of exception caused by the community's geographic location in the demilitarised zone has contributed to the stasis of community public issues.

In societies where contestation of ethno-religious basis prevails, as it does in the case of Cyprus, the absence of a common institutional framework that could assist the co-existence of the communities in conflict should be addressed.⁵ In the case of Cyprus, this absence has meant an enduring, ethnically geographic segregation between the majority of Greek Cypriots (GCs) in the southern part of the island, and the minority of Turkish Cypriots (TCs) in the northern part, an effect of the 1974 Turkish

invasion when 200,000 Greek Cypriot refugees were forced to flee to the southern part of the island and 65,000 Turkish Cypriots (TC) to the north.⁶ In fact, this segregation had already started during the 1963 inter-communal conflicts, which led the TCs to take refuge in enclaves, mostly located in the island's major cities. Consequently, one of the main disputes is about the properties the refugees left behind. So far, the unwillingness to share any common vision for the island has kept the members of each ethnic community entrenched in their own unwelcoming spheres, profiting from the comfort zone of the actual non-violent conflict.

In spite of all these difficulties, it is urgent that architectural and planning practices contribute to the process of reconciliation between the two communities, even with a high risk of failure. One way is by encouraging publicness as a useful tool for creating frameworks for co-existence between the two communities in conflict. Such publicness could be engendered by creating shared imaginaries about the future and devising the means for communicating these ideas amongst the members of both communities, encouraging them to leave their private spheres and face the 'other' community in public, even if they do not agree with each other.⁷ More precisely, an increase of shared reality within a micro-context could become momentarily possible, demonstrating the basis for a negotiable public domain.⁸ The initiative taken by the 'Architectures of Emergency' has introduced moments of success in a formal and an informal way by generating the kinds of publicness that took place during the making of the Pyla Master Plan. However, the master plan was bound to fail as a tool for reconciliation, as we shall see further on.

Architectural and planning practices in a divided Cypriot context

It is true that architectural and planning practices do not have the power to significantly change the

status quo in Cyprus. The sovereignty of contested spaces, coupled with the total ethnic segregation of the island between a Turkish Cypriot north and a Greek Cypriot south, diminishes the possibilities for a joint effort among practitioners in the two communities, especially in architecture and planning, which are directly linked to territory and property, the already-mentioned heart of the conflict. It is also true that any stance taken by such practices is extremely political, even if this is not made explicit.⁹

Another difficulty to overcome in Cyprus is the absence of a highly developed civil society, which would be an ally to architectural and planning practices willing to contribute to reconciliation processes. As a result, the empowerment of citizens is rather limited, restricting their decision-making regarding their future. This is the case in both ethnic groups across the divide. In other words, people are entrenched in their own ethno-religious based territories. This entrenchment is determined by an implicit political position: that the best position to take is to do nothing but wait for the overall political resolution to take place first. The advantage of this attitude is that nobody risks getting caught on the other side of the trench. The disadvantages are, however, alarming, since no preparation is allowed to take place for any kind of reconciliation between the two ethnic groups.

Nevertheless, a recent and increasing number of architectural and planning practices can be witnessed that contribute to the process of reconciliation. These adopt a spatial agency approach to doing architecture.¹⁰ Such practices aim to infiltrate and change, even partially or momentarily, the status-quo created by the prevailing inactivity.

One such practice is the Nicosia Master Plan, which is about the development of the city of Nicosia across the divide. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the GCs from the southern part of the city and the TCs from the northern part

have reassembled to form a planning body that excludes any state representation. Such exemplary reassembly has its advantages since it allows collaborations to address Nicosia as a whole. Possibilities for unified visions were already permitted to emerge during the 1990s. However, there are also disadvantages: the adoption of a twin project approach, where each side separately implements similar projects, does not embrace the possibility of joint ventures or of increasing collaboration on common projects, which in any case would be difficult to orchestrate.¹¹ However, this difficulty seems to have been overcome by a recent inter-communal initiative by historians who are working on rewriting the history textbooks on Cyprus in both communities. With the assistance of a group of architects, and funded by international aid, they have succeeded in renovating a run-down building located in the Nicosia UN buffer zone.¹²

Another characteristic of an architectural reconciliation practice is to operate below the radar of official narratives, encouraging meetings across the divide between associations of practitioners and interest groups on specific subjects, such as architectural heritage. In this case, the physical meeting itself becomes equally important. In some cases, initiatives have succeeded in going even further, especially after border crossing was enabled in 2003. One example is the Kontea Cultural Heritage Foundation project, on which the GC refugees from a community located in the northern part of the island decided to work together with the actual TC inhabitants of the community, in order to restore the mosque, the church and the main square, despite the fact that the GC refugees could not regain their homes. An architect from each ethnic group, Charalambos Pericleous and Fevzi Ozersay, were the successful facilitators. Another ongoing project aims to reconcile the inhabitants of Karpasia, comprising mainly Turkish settlers and Greek Cypriots, through a joint cultural website for tourists, facilitated by Archis Interventions Cyprus.¹³

Returning to the 'Architectures of Emergency' initiative, we can see similar objectives to those of the above-mentioned cases, but also an additional layer of contribution to the reconciliation process. This layer addresses the question of how actual official planning tools that sustain the status quo – such as a master plan that does not respond to contested spaces, as in the case of the Nicosia plan – can be urged to address reconciliation. The 'Architectures of Emergency' project was inserted as a parallel project of an informal character into the process of developing the official one. As a result, some stages of the Pyla Master Plan process were affected by 'friction genes', a concept coined by the study team, referring to an increased shared reality between the project actors.¹⁴

In this case, the field of operation was unfortunately neither as friendly as that of the Kontea project, nor as official as in the Nicosia Master Plan. Because of this, the survival of such initiatives depends on their 'emergency' character, and employing 'first-aid' modalities of action. Introducing tactics becomes a valuable practice, knowing that it is impossible to overcome dominant hostile conditions.¹⁵ Similarities in approach can be found between 'first aid' architecture and 'Architectures Sans Frontières', but also with a kind of guerrilla architecture.¹⁶

Further on we will see how the study team succeeded in inserting this informal project into the process of making the Pyla Master Plan, thus encouraging the emergence of moments of publicness, and demonstrating to the master plan client, albeit with the risk of failing, how to work bi-communally in order to create possibilities for envisioning a common future for the island.

A project within a project: 'Architectures of Emergency' during the making of a master plan

The Pyla Master Plan's terms of reference, as initiated by the Republic of Cyprus, which is under the

control of the GCs, ignored the location of Pyla within the UN buffer zone. Moreover, the unresolved Cypriot political problem, together with the persistence of Pyla's Turkish Cypriots in operating under the internationally unrecognised 'Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus', controlled by Turkey, prevented TC involvement.

With that in mind, the master plan study team introduced its informal project within the actual official one. The informal project, consisting of a series of 'friction genes', was able, in fact, to augment the awareness of the presence of the 'other' within the process of making the master plan. Suffice it to say that the study team were well aware that the power to take any final decisions rested with the GC community council and the representatives from the Republic of Cyprus. It was also clear that the minority TCs had the power to prevent the implementation of any of the proposals formulated by the master plan, given that these had been tailored for inter-communal collaboration.

The informal project was based on two tactics: the first was to enrich the project actors' pool with those left out of the process because they belonged to the other ethno-religious group; the second tactic aimed to bypass the narratives of the representatives from both ethnic groups. The first tactic took the form of the mobile workshop mentioned above, set up to symbolically activate the dormant central square, and to be used as a 'base' for the project volunteers to access Pyla's inhabitants. The second tactic included a series of informal meetings with TC representatives, such as the TC local authority and those responsible for the Muslim property located around the mosque near the square.

The creation of an inter-communal study team decisively helped such tactics. Munevver was the Turkish Cypriot architect of the master plan study team, and Fevzi, her husband, effectively supported the rest of the team at some crucial moments,

especially during the mobile workshop. Munevver and her assistants were some of the 'friction genes' inserted into the process of making the project.¹⁷ 'Who are they? Who do they represent?' were the first wary comments the Greek Cypriot local council members addressed to the study team [fig. 4]. Luckily, things settled down over dinner when they understood that the inter-ethnicity of the study team might open up the potential for collaboration between the two communities for the sake of Pyla. Unfortunately, this did not last until the end of the project.

The inter-ethnicity of the study team was decisive in applying the second tactic – that of informally introducing left-out project actors from the Turkish Cypriot side into the process. The informal meetings that took place with both the TC Muslim Land Administrators (Evkaf) and the TC local authority, allowed the study team to readjust some of the master plan's priorities, especially regarding the property around the mosque. Unfortunately, the meetings with the TC local authority were not as fruitful as those with Evkaf; altering its members' entrenched views about Pyla's future proved impossible. [fig. 5]

Successful moments of reconciliation in a story of failure, or broadening the role of architectural practice as a spatial agency

The content of the Pyla Master Plan was relatively rich in proposals promoting reconciliation.¹⁸ In fact, there were ten such proposals at different levels; for example, sharing neighbourhood public space reclaimed from cars to use as children's playgrounds, holding an open-air market in the main square, and creating a space that would link the two ethnically segregated elementary schools. Other proposals dealt with shared athletic infrastructures and a memorial museum, and finally a large-scale project concerned ways of co-managing an ecological park to be created on a natural rift that

surrounds the community. Information gathered at the meetings with the 'left-out' project actors, and from residents who had participated in the mobile workshop, aided the study team to work towards these goals. Nevertheless, the proposals failed to be implemented for two major reasons. The first has already been mentioned and concerned the overall, unresolved political problem and the refusal of any kind of collaboration between the two ethnic groups, who were, in fact, fearful of being disempowered by their adversaries. The second reason was the inability of the study team to access any of the community actors' networks and gain alliances, which the Kontea project and the 'Home for Cooperation' in Nicosia had succeeded in doing. In fact, as was said before, the absence of a developed civil society played a decisive role in the failure.

Almost six years have passed since the Pyla initiative took place. In retrospect, one can link the failure of the operation to a question of implementation. Each ethnic group persists in implementing their own segregated projects in the absence of an overall political resolution. Admittedly, this effort failed to achieve the desirable results of reconciliation, in contrast with some of the examples mentioned above. However, the challenge in this case did seem to be wider: firstly, it attempted to resist an official, urban modus operandi and to shift its objectives towards reconciliation, though without success. The second challenge was to maximise gains from the process of making the Pyla Master Plan in order to assist the creation of a sense of publicness: in other words, to increase the shared reality among the inhabitants of the communities in conflict. Such publicness did occur between members of the temporarily formed groups; for instance, during the mobile workshop in the central square, which allowed some reconciliation to take place.



Fig. 4



Fig. 5

Fig. 4: The initial meeting between the study team and the members of the Greek Cypriot Community Council.
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Fig. 5: The discussion between the study team and the members of the Turkish Cypriot local authority. © author.

One moment of reconciliation occurred among the members of the study team by allowing the possibility of envisioning a common future through architectural and planning practice. By creating images of the possible, the team members were urged to listen to the other side's reality and readjust theirs. As a result, a strong bond was created, which has allowed them to continue with similar projects.¹⁹ In fact, the Pyla Master Plan process has become a reference for architectural practice in contested areas such as Cyprus.²⁰

The initial acceptance of an inter-communal study team by the project actors from both communities can be considered a success. The study team provided them with the opportunity to place on the table concerns common to both communities. For example, the Evkaf administration entrusted some of their ideas to the master plan proposals, which were not rejected by the rest of the actors, even though they were never implemented.

Another moment of reconciliation occurred among the volunteers during the mobile workshop. Young students of architecture from both ethnic groups had the rare chance to collaborate, as well as to mingle with Pyla's TC and GC inhabitants, both old and young, encouraging them to fill in the questionnaires. Their access to information about the inhabitants' everydayness, which seemed to contradict official narratives, was an accomplishment.

A further moment of reconciliation was the symbolic activation of the main square with the mobile workshop, and the interaction with some of the local inhabitants. For the study team, it already represented a success just to persuade all the actors involved that such a workshop was possible in the first place. Moreover, through the mobile workshop the participants had the chance to dream, though very briefly, of possible future scenarios for their community. The fruitless discussion between the study team and the TC local authority was

considered a success by the Turkish Cypriot team members because TCs and GCs had sat around a table and had enabled the discussion of some common concerns – a very rare occasion indeed in the divided Cypriot context.

It is evident from this article that architectural and planning practices in contested spaces have an important role to play by readjusting their tools, as well as their approach, within their field of operation. By broadening the role of architecture as a spatial agency, the political dimension of space becomes a priority, contributing to change in the status quo, while always bearing in mind the limited power available. Such practices need to manage citizens' conflictual priorities, which are not limited to contested spaces created by ethno-religious division, but expand to any kind of divided territory in contemporary urban environments.²¹ Through the making of the Pyla Master Plan, the 'Architectures of Emergency' initiative has introduced a useful design tool; namely, inserting alternative practices into official *modus operandi* that designate the urban.²² Such tools increase the strength of the public domain in order to emphasise its role as a platform for bridging differences and providing possibilities for negotiating conflictual priorities. Although it failed to engage Pyla's inhabitants in terms of implementing the master plan proposals, Architectures of Emergency has shown how to create moments of increased shared reality through certain practices, despite the inability of these to confront ongoing segregation.

Notes

1. The author coined the concept 'Architectures of Emergency' in a project presented at the 2006 Venice Biennale of Architecture. The project involved the design of an escort device for assisting both Greek and Turkish Cypriot refugees. It was a critique of the absence of any institutional support during the refugees' return trip in April 2003 to visit their homes after

- twenty-nine years. Project Team: AA & U (Stratis, Loizidou).
2. The client was the Department of Planning and Housing of the Republic of Cyprus and the Pyla community council consisting of Greek Cypriots (GCs). Study Team members: Stratis, Ozgur, Ozersay, Loizidou, Urbano, Caramondani. Mobile workshop volunteers: Acar, Angelidou, Ari, Michaelidou, Ozgur, Pasadakis, Theodosiou.
 3. Issues about health were introduced in the questionnaires after a discussion between the study team and Papadakis, an anthropologist who worked on the Pyla case. Yiannis Papadakis, *Echoes from the Dead Zone - Across the Cyprus Divide* (London; New York: I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2005).
 4. Source: Department of Statistics, Republic of Cyprus.
 5. Frank Gaffikin, Mike Morissey, *Planning in Divided Cities* (UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), p. 3.
 6. Source: UNHCR.
 7. Socrates Stratis, 'Architectures of Encouraging Publicness', *Journal of Urban Planning and Design* 01 (2011), pp. 104-19.
 8. Richard Sennett, 'The Sense of Touch: Tracing Architecture', *Architectural Design Review* (1998).
 9. *A Civilian Occupation*, ed. by Eyal Weizman and Rafi Segal (Israel, London: Babel, Verso, 2003).
 10. Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, Jeremy Till, *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2011).
 11. Socrates Stratis, 'Nicosia Master Plan', in *Bauwelt*, 43, 10 (2010), pp. 51-4.
 12. Chara Makriyianni, 'H4C - Home For Cooperation', in *SEE! Urban Transformation in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Kai Vockler (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2012), pp. 90-4.
 13. Esra Can Akbil, Giorgos Psaltis, 'Sebnem Hoskara, Towards a Third Space: Dipkarpaz / Rizokarpaso', in *SEE! Urban Transformation in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Kai Vockler (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2012), pp. 108-13.
 14. Munevver Ozgur, Socrates Stratis, 'The Pyla Master Plan Project', in *SEE! Urban Transformation in Southeastern Europe*, ed. by Kai Vockler (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2012), pp. 84-9.
 15. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
 16. Roemer Van Toorn, 'The Architect as Public Intellectual', in *Visionary Power, Producing the Contemporary City* (Rotterdam: Nai Publishers, 2007), pp. 272-78.
 17. The names of the Turkish Cypriot architects: Munevver Ozgur and Fevzi Ozersay, assistants: Avi and Acar.
 18. For details on the content of the Pyla Master Plan, see Ozgur, Stratis, 'The Pyla Master Plan Project', p. 86.
 19. 'Imaginary Famagusta' is an initiative consisting of GCs and TCs and the author, which aims to create a common ground between the two ethnic groups regarding the future of Famagusta, Cyprus.
 20. MunevverOzgur, Socrates Stratis, 'The Pyla Master Plan Project'.
 21. Markus Miessen, *The Nightmare of Participation: Crossbench Praxis as a Mode of Criticality* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), p. 70.
 22. Socrates Stratis, 'Process Paths Alterations', in *Public Spheres*, ed. by Kaye Geipel (Berlin, European, 2008), pp. 52-5.

Biography

Socrates Stratis is Tenure Track Professor in the Department of Architecture, University of Cyprus. He has a doctorate degree in Urban Studies-Planning from the University of Paris 8, France, and a Bachelor and Master Degree in Architecture (Urban Design) from Cornell University, USA. He is one of the founders of the agency AA & U For Architecture, Art and Urbanism. His work has been exhibited and published internationally, including the Venice Architecture Biennales in 2004, 2006 and 2008.

Generative and Participatory Parametric Frameworks for Multi-Player Design Games

Henriette Bier, Yeekee Ku

Introduction

Generative design processes have been the focus of current architectural research and practice largely due to the exploration of the phenomenon of emergence within self-organisation, generative grammars and evolutionary techniques. These techniques have been informing participatory urban design modalities, which are investigated in this paper by critically reviewing theories, practices, and (software) applications that explore multi-player online urban games, not only with respect to their capacity to facilitate online, trans-disciplinary, expert collaboration and user participation, but also to support the implementation of democratic ideals in design practice.

Emergent and generative design processes

Generative design processes based on self-organisation increasingly replace the exclusive, top-down control of the designer. Self-organising swarms, for instance, are employed in generative design processes, which deal with large amounts of data that sometimes feature conflicting attributes and characteristics.¹ These attributes and characteristics are incorporated in behaviours where design components, such as programmatic units, swarm towards targeted spatial configurations. In this context, architectural and urban design become procedural instead of object-oriented, while architectural and urban form emerge in a process of interaction between all parts of the system. Thus, the architect becomes the designer of a process and only

indirectly of a result.

Such swarms operate as multi-agent systems and consist of simple agents that interact locally with one another and with their environment, based on simple rules that lead to the emergence of complex, global configurations.² Their use in design is of relevance because of their ability to embody both natural (human) and artificial, (design-related) aspects. In the context of urban and architectural design, swarms of agents do not consist of similar or identical agents, as both natural (human) and artificial (software) agents may interact with each other and the environment in a bottom-up, self-organised manner. Such swarms are set up as parametric models incorporating characteristics and behaviours that represent the natural and artificial systems themselves, whereas simulations of behaviours show the operation of such systems in time.

Simulations are of interest in this context, not so much for their ability to represent and confirm assumptions or even improve (optimise) design solutions, but for their generative potential, based on emergence. This implies that the design emerges from a process of self-organisation in which the dynamics of all parts of the system (agents and environment) generate the result. Such generative processes implemented in simulations are extensively discussed inter al. by De Landa³ in relation to the Deleuzian understanding that matter itself has

the capacity to generate form through immanent, material, morphogenetic processes.⁴ Thus, design as the production of representations of artefacts (by means of drawing, modelling, and simulation) implies systemic interaction between (human and non-human) system components, while authorship increasingly becomes hybrid, collective and diffuse.

Agents, experts (collaboration) and users (participation)

Generative design strategies based on multi-agent systems are employed in computer games and are suited for online inter- and trans-disciplinary expert collaboration as well as for user participation. They are being increasingly explored as a means for exchanging knowledge among experts and integrating bottom-up user feedback into the design process.⁵ In this context, users are defined as human agents who use the online computer-based design system without necessarily understanding the system. In general, users participating concurrently in the design process are either experts in urban design or laymen. However, for the sake of simplification in this paper, laymen are referred to as users since they are not only users of computer-based design systems but also users of the urban space resulting from the participatory design process.

Whereas experts establish the parametric framework (as meta-design) that allows, within certain constraints, the exploration of multiple designs by experts and users, the interaction between artificial agents contained within the framework, and human agents, needs further definition. The question concerns, for instance, how agents are defined. In a humanistic sense, agents (natural or artificial) have the capacity to act upon an environment, and, like natural agents, intelligent (artificial) agents in computer science are conceived as entities that are able to perceive through sensors and act autonomously.⁶ Both natural (human) and artificial agents direct their activity towards achieving goals

according to preliminarily defined preferences.

Interactions between human and artificial agents may follow principles as described in Actor-Network Theory (ANT), implying that material-semiotic networks are acting as a whole, whereas the clusters of actors involved in creating meaning are both material and semiotic.⁷ ANT, therefore, does not differentiate between human and non-human actors, since differences between them are generated in the network of relations, implying the agency of both humans and non-humans, whereas agency is neither located in human subjects nor in non-human objects, but in the heterogeneous associations between the two. This understanding is extensively discussed in De Landa's new- or neo-materialist cultural theory, which rejects the dualism between nature and culture, matter and mind, natural and artificial, wherein reality is considered to reveal itself in material, self-organised processes.⁸

Interactions based on the collaboration and participation of human and non-human agents in the urban design process follow specialised interaction patterns. Experts such as policy makers, planners and professionals involved in making design frameworks, and users such as property owners, tenants, or visitors and guests, establish a rather inhomogeneous population within which potential conflicts of interest may emerge. Such conflicts may be addressed through techniques based on mathematical models for conflict and cooperation described in game theory.⁹ As soon as participants, such as experts and users, engage concurrently in decision-making processes from which multiple alternative designs may emerge, the interactive, multi-agent simulation needs to be extended towards incorporating cooperation and conflict strategies¹⁰ and regulating interactions between multiple players (experts and users) and the design environment.¹¹

Multi-agent simulation and multi-player online urban gaming

Multi-agent simulation and multi-player online gaming enable collaborative design on the one hand, while on the other, they facilitate participatory design based on the assumption that (expert) agents and (user) players interact with each other in the virtual design environment with the aim of achieving design decisions. Within certain limits and constraints predefined by experts, this design process offers opportunities for spatial reconfiguration according to the needs of users, while potential conflicts between users may be addressed through game-based conflict management that employs negotiation strategies such as bargaining, mediation or arbitration aimed at finding a compromise.¹² However, conflict resolution neither really adds nor detracts from democratic participation because negotiation is implemented by enabling users to choose preferred solutions from a set of possible ones within the given parametric framework, while the amplitude of choice stays within the scientifically sound and valid field of solutions, framed parametrically by experts. This means that users cannot arbitrarily generate solutions, but have instead to contribute to and choose from a set of scientifically valid, possible solutions. Parametric constraints for possible solutions are defined, for example, according to functional, formal, material and structural requirements, identified as such within the architectural, engineering, and building sciences, thus excluding any possibility of generating scientifically invalid solutions. For instance, spatial dimensioning is numerically constrained in relation to min-max occupancy and use requirements; access opportunities are defined in relation to the shortest connection to infrastructure, and so forth.

In this context, games are simulations of design for the purpose of analysis, the exploration of multiple scenarios and the prediction of potential consequences. The question is, therefore, if such

online participatory urban design processes simply serve and help implement pre-existing ideals (such as democratic participation in decision-making), or do they also determine and shape political aims, or the specifics of the ideals in question?

Considering, for instance, that political positions representing values such as egalitarianism are easily facilitated by multi-player online design games because these include minorities and disadvantaged groups in decision-making processes, and also promote the freedom to make decisions remotely by means of electronic device(s) in the absence of top-down control, then online gaming may not shape new political ideals, but it does offer a platform for exploring and choosing not only between possible design solutions, but also mechanisms for practising democracy by establishing an interactive interface between experts such as politicians, urban planners, designers and users.¹³ And even though the ANT notion of agency, which incorporates both human and non-human aspects, seems – in theory – to contradict the idea of a democracy focused on human agency (via participation), in practice, non-human agency is conditioned to operate exclusively through interaction with human agency, and thus procedurally facilitates human decision-making by compensating where human decision-making might be limited or overextended.

Urban design simulations like Kaisersrot, for instance, generate spatial configurations based on swarm intelligence while taking into account users' preferences, so that urban components, such as housing units, infrastructure and so forth, organise themselves towards configurations that aim to satisfy preliminarily defined requirements with respect to size, distribution and placement within an urban plot, and in relation to neighbours, accessibility, and density constraints.¹⁴ [fig. 1] Users indicate their preferences with respect to placement within urban plots (in relation to parameters such as proximity or distance to public functions, access

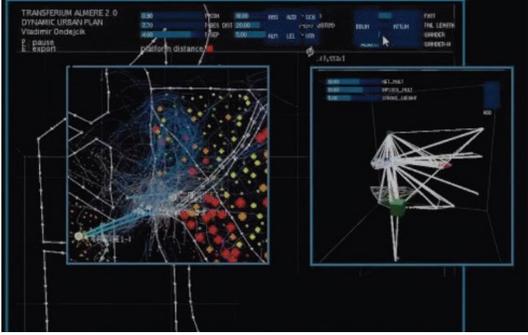


Fig. 2: Urban simulation presenting layout of functional distribution by Hyperbody MSc student Ondejcik (2011)

roads and transportation, etc.), spatial orientation, type (single, double or row-units), size, etc. and the design tool – operating as a parametric framework predefined by experts – generates and optimises neighbourhood configurations as well as negotiating conflicts.

Following a similar set-up, interactive urban design tools developed at Hyperbody in the last decade also employ swarm intelligence. They consist of software agents implemented as functional units that interact locally with one another and with their environment in the following way. Programmatic units pertaining to a neighbourhood are defined as flocking agents striving to achieve a preferred spatial layout. In this context, spatial relations between programmatic units can be described as rules, according to which all units organise themselves. Although the designer might find it difficult to have an overview of all functions and their attributed volume and preferential location, functional units can easily *swarm* towards locally optimal configurations.

Whereas programmatic layout deals with the placement of functions in 3D-space, software prototypes developed within Hyperbody rely on a simple strategy: spatial units establish relationships with other spatial units by determining their distance from each other and automatically adjust their width, length, and height in order to prevent potential misplacements, overlaps, and collisions. [fig. 2] In this context, programmatic units adjust themselves to their surroundings and link with other units, thus creating spatial relations that are defined and simulated by taking a programme of requirements (the number of specific functions, their volume and occupancy numbers, etc.) and translating them into organised spatial layouts. Such layouts are achieved by defining min-max distances between objects, such as units and surroundings, based on rules of attraction and repulsion.

These self-organisation mechanisms are complemented by interactivity, since the layout process takes place within the influence of experts and users, who can directly select and move objects or adjust parameters while the simulation re-adjusts to the new input values. In this way, interacting artificial and natural (experts and users) agents search for preferred programmatic configurations, whereas the users' choice is limited to a range of high and low density, high- and low-rise typologies, and diverse-hybrid or mono-homogeneous programmatic functionality predefined by experts.

Such generative, interactive design tools continuously receive and send data via a database, which contains all the information regarding programmatic units. These are defined by type, function, scale, and position, 24/7 use, etc. Other design-related sub-tools running in parallel might use these values or combinations of values in order to allow experts to investigate structural, formal or environmental implications. These tools are therefore used interactively and in combination with other software, in order to achieve locally optimised designs; and even though diagrammatic, these applications demonstrate an obvious capability to support the functional layout of large and complex architectural and urban environments based on emergent swarm principles.

Similarly, Space Fighter developed by MVRDV/DSD aims at addressing urban design issues at neighbourhood, city, and regional scale.¹⁵ [fig. 3] It consists of components such as (mobile) agents, building blocks (pixels) and programmatic functions represented in different colours, whereas agents may take on the role of users (such as technocrat, ecologist, developer or activist), and seek suitable sites where they could start building additional layers of building blocks. In this case, the amplitude of choice is reduced to the attributes of predefined roles: for instance, the developer may focus on financial gain, whereas the ecologist may choose the sustainable management of resources.

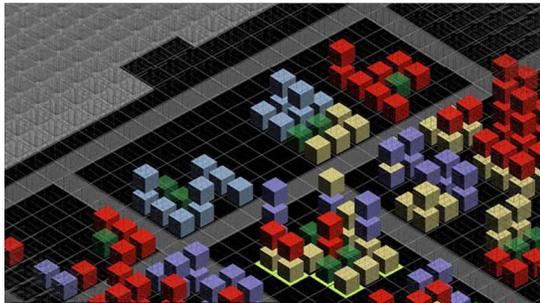
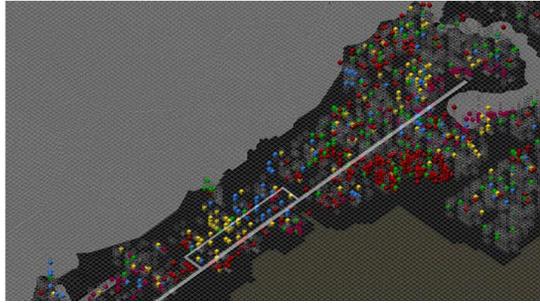


Fig. 3: Urban simulation presenting layout of functional distribution in Space Fighter (2007)

Conflicting positions can be resolved by comparing how close the design solutions are to achieving the set aims.

While the range of choices varies among the reviewed software, neither Space Fighter nor the other software applications reviewed are addressing the important issues of specificity and differentiation in relation to representation and generation, or the manipulation of designs. This is firstly because these prototypes use a rather abstract representation that seems to address expert requirements more than regular (layman) user needs; and, secondly, because these simulations have not been implemented and tested as participatory online games, and therefore have no cooperation and conflict mechanisms. Also, they have only addressed issues of social stratification and inequity in generic terms. Users are not only players of the game but also end-users of the physically built environment after the game has been played and the environment has been built; experts, however, are planners, architects, engineers, managers and manufacturers, all of whom are only involved in the process until the product is delivered to users. For this reason, both require different design and manipulation agencies. This differentiation between users and experts calls for specific rules of interaction between (natural and artificial) agents and the environment, which, at present, has only been addressed sketchily and neither tested nor implemented on a large scale.

Discussion and future perspectives

This review of some of the existing theories, practices, and software applications has yielded the following results. Generative design processes developed from agent-based simulations may involve natural (human) or artificial (non-human) agents, whereas agency is located in the heterogeneous associations between them. Such agent-based simulations enable interaction between natural and artificial agents (experts,

users, and design components) participating in multi-player online games. The games support the implementation of equality and democratic principles in decision-making design processes because they include, for instance, minorities and disadvantaged groups, and also facilitate individual freedom to make decisions, even anonymously, through electronic devices.

In this context, relations between players mainly imply collaboration between experts and the participation of users in the design process, whereas conflicts may be addressed through negotiation and conflict management techniques that could be implemented directly in the multi-player online urban games.¹⁶ However, participatory design decision-making features of the environments reviewed here seem rather sketchy and abstract. This means that while users may indicate their preferences, due to representational shortcomings they lack the relevant insight and comprehension in relation to the implications of their decisions. Also, negotiation between global (neighbourhood, infrastructure, etc.) and local (plot, house, etc.) constraints is implemented within a parametric framework predefined by experts, which implies that certain solution fields may be either excluded or only marginally addressed due to cultural or cognitive preferences.

Although in the last decade such generative and participatory design tools have been developed and tested mainly in academic environments; more recently, similar platforms supported by governmental institutions such as Future Melbourne and VirtuoCity Rotterdam are operating online. Future Melbourne,¹⁷ for instance, offers an Internet-based platform that encourages citizens to voice their opinions and make suggestions regarding the future of the city, whereas VirtuoCity Rotterdam presents a visual platform that allows users, logged in as avatars, to navigate fragments of the city represented as a 3D virtual model.¹⁸ However, neither platform is used for collaborative or participatory

design decision-making activities.

Therefore, in response to the insight that the aim to create equality is mainly compromised by the actual inequality between experts and users, the immediate goal would seem to be for experts to set up parametric frameworks (meta-designs) which, within certain constraints, enable the exploration of multiple designs, taking into account the users' lack of expertise in computer science and urban design and, therefore, testing and improving the frameworks to address users' needs. Furthermore, advancing generative and participatory design requires that computer-based environments such as these are not only accessible to users and easily operated by them, but that game rules and strategies established by experts are transparent and comprehensible to users.

Also, given that in software development the distinction between users and software developers has started to blur more and more as users who are not professional developers are enabled to create or modify software artefacts (descriptions of automated behaviour) and complex data objects without significant knowledge of a programming language, the conflict between users and experts, at least at the software application level, seems to be increasingly addressed. For instance, in the Programming by Example (PbE) approach, the user introduces some examples of the desired results and/or operations that should be performed and the system generates abstractions as required.¹⁹ This could be a model for experts such as urban designers and computer scientists to consider when aiming to improve expert-user relations in the further development of parametric frameworks for generative and participatory urban design.

The question is, however, not only about the interaction between expert and layman, but also about the relationship between democratic and technocratic aspects. For instance, the more recent

application of democratic principles to areas outside politics – for example, entertainment, education and urban planning – implies amongst other things that unpopular ideas, even if innovative and valuable to society, may be rendered unsuccessful. In contrast, technocratic principles promote the replacement of politicians and business people with scientists and engineers who have the necessary expertise to promote values such as sustainability rather than financial profitability. From this perspective, urban design games, as discussed in this paper, exclude the possibility of deriving conclusions by means of voting in general terms, and instead apply scientific methods to urban problems. Voting is thus reserved for choosing between solutions with similar degrees of relevance and validity. Hence, the parametric model establishes a technocratic framework, employing scientific rather than populist criteria. This means that even if generative and participatory parametric frameworks for multi-player design games may not replace politics, they may reduce the bureaucratic apparatus supporting government by establishing a direct interface between experts such as politicians, urban planners, designers and users.

In this context, participation in virtual space becomes not only a model for participation in physical space but also the means to affect physical space directly, because decisions in the virtual eventually take effect in the physical. While users may not always be well informed or knowledgeable about the issues at stake, and the scientific approaches employed by human and non-human experts may be fallible, parametric frameworks exploit expert and user involvement as a playground for challenging the production-consumption gap that followed industrialism. They do this by addressing users' potentially conflicting priorities, and different, or even divergent, expert opinions, through the open exchange of data, information, and knowledge via interactive software-hardware networks.

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Biographies

Henriette Bier graduated from the University of Karlsruhe in Germany and worked with Morphosis (1999-2001) on internationally relevant projects in the US and Europe. She has taught computer-driven architectural design (2002-2003) at universities in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. Since 2004 she has been a teacher and researcher at TU Delft, where in 2008 she completed her PhD and became assistant professor.

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Participation, Housing, and the Question of 'Good Architecture'

Maroš Krivý

The Tallinn Architecture Biennale (TAB) was held in September 2013. Following the first TAB, 'Landscape Urbanism' (2011), the recent edition offered a more ambitious theme of 'Recycling Socialism'. The event was organised and curated by young female architects from the Tallinn-based b210 office. Some of Tallinn's most representative buildings of the state socialist period were carefully selected for hosting the Biennale's two-day symposium, curators' exhibition, vision competition, and an exhibition of school projects (plus a number of satellite events, organised within TAB's participatory platform). In contrast, TAB's headquarters was located in a pop-up café on one of Tallinn's main thoroughfares.

I would like to identify a number of themes and contradictions that crystallised during the event. First of all, let us notice the ambiguity of the event title. What is meant by socialism? And what is to be recycled? Is it the architecture from the 'era of socialism' or is it the idea/ideology that underpinned this architecture? This ambiguity was articulated early on in the symposium. In his opening speech, Raul Järg, the Chairman of the Estonian Centre of Architecture, dressed in white from head to toe, referred to the ongoing municipal election campaign in Estonia in a Krierian manner: 'If you look on the streets, there is no politics, only architecture'. To which Andres Kurg, Head of the Art History Institute at the Estonian Academy of Arts and the first speaker, retorted: 'In fact, it is all about politics'.

The 'Soviet' and the 'socialist' are often assumed to be identical, as in the well-worn phrase which implies that 'Estonia gained independence' from both. Referring to the work of anthropologist Alexei Yurchak, Kurg challenged such interpretations. The ironic distance from the official discourse of the Soviet state in the activities and drawings of architects from the 1970s and 1980s – the topic of his research – cannot be automatically equated with the abandonment of the idea of collectivity.

Such an approach, which seeks a more politically-nuanced interpretation of parallel architectural practices, contrasts with attempts to locate the qualities of architecture outside politics. Lukasz Wojciechowski from the Polish studio VROA stated that in Poland, one talks about modernist rather than socialist architecture. He further dissociated 'good' architecture from its political context: 'If it is good architecture, it doesn't matter if it is Nazi or anything else'.

However, what are the assessment criteria for architectural objects? This is clearly a historical and political question. Wojciechowski's claim can also be challenged within the Polish context. In their discussion of the future of Oskar Hansen's housing estate in Warsaw, Aleksandra Kędziorek and Łukasz Stanek argued that its 'preservation [...] needs to be conceived as ensuring [...] continuation along [...] theoretical principles and social ambitions'.¹

The question of *good architecture* resonated among other speakers, too. In a more promising way, Petra Čeferin, a professor in the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Ljubljana, related good architecture to its universality; that is, its capacity to interrupt the dominant social order. But questions remain: is it enough that such an 'interruption' takes place when the building is built? How is this interruptive capacity transformed over time? How is it recuperated, reinterpreted and repurposed in shifting political contexts? How can we talk about 'good architecture' in a historical retrospective? How is its 'heritage' value constituted in the long run? In contrast to technical and phenomenological approaches, which would like to see heritage located inside the architectural object, we should highlight the historicity of heritage; in other words, the historically changing criteria that underpin what is considered as heritage.

In a classical argument, Alois Riegl discussed the role of *age value* in the modern practice of elevating architectural objects to the status of monuments.² In their book *The Tourist-Historic City* (1994), Ashworth and Tunbridge wrote that the chance of an architectural object becoming recognised as heritage increases significantly after its first 50 to 100 years.³ This assessment itself is a historical observation. The Tallinn Biennale, which brought into focus buildings from the 1970s and 1980s, well exemplified the acceleration of heritage production.

The vision competition took as its target Väike-Õismäe, Tallinn's third largest housing estate (architects Mart Port and Malle Meelak, built 1974-77, population 27,172). [fig. 1] The brief was to 'diversify Väike-Õismäe's urban space and create an enjoyable living environment'.⁴ In their winning entry 'The Assembled Ground: How to Wake Up the Sleeping District of Väike-Õismäe?', the international team Dynamo (with several alumnus of the Strelka Institute) gave a nod to the nearby Estonian Open Air Museum and proposed reserving one

quarter of Väike-Õismäe for a similar endeavour to showcase how people lived in the 1970s (the project does not inform us whether residents will be asked to perform the past, or whether they will be replaced with trained actors). Luckily, post-socialist nostalgia and culturalisation of state socialism is a rather minor aspect of the project; the core of the proposal lies in improving public spaces. What is offered? The panels of the first two floors are removed and reassembled at a distance. [fig. 2] This achieves a double effect: the activation of the ground floor (for cafés, small businesses, services, studios, etc.) and the creation of a flexible stage for changing community programmes.

In the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the 1980s marked a period of important debate about the humanisation and diversification of housing estates.⁵ Largely forgotten during the 1990s and 2000s, a revival of this debate has taken place in recent years. This is clearly manifested in Dynamo's winning proposal, as well as in a majority of the submissions for the vision competition and in the TAB event as a whole.

Vertical and horizontal cutting has become a popular strategy when addressing the 'revitalisation' of socialist housing estates – realised in parts of rapidly shrinking cities of eastern Germany, but purely speculative elsewhere. The strategy was used in number of submissions for the TAB vision competition, and also in a number of projects shown at the LASN exhibition (the first curatorial exhibition of the Union of Estonian Architects, held in Tallinn in 2011), which addressed the future of Tallinn's largest housing estate, Lasnamäe.⁶ What many projects employing such a strategy ignore is the ownership structure. The majority of the housing stock, erected during the period of state socialism in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, was municipalised, and subsequently privatised, during the 1990s. An average prefabricated apartment building now operates as a condominium.⁷ The maintenance of



Fig. 1

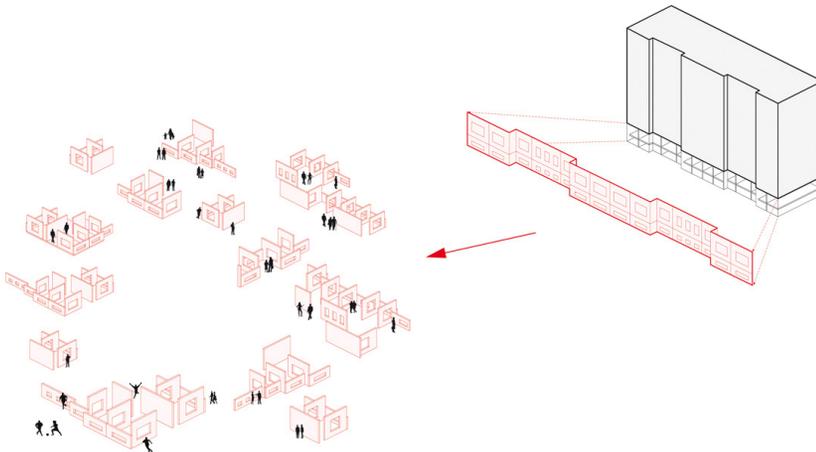


Fig. 2

Fig. 1: Väike-Õismäe, Tallinn. © Arne Maasik.

Fig. 2: Dynamo, The Assembled Ground, 2013. Courtesy of Dynamo.

this or that building is often arbitrary and depends on the dynamics of the respective associations of homeowners. A coordinated action is quite difficult to imagine – urban planning relies on incentives and bans. So, returning once more to ‘The Assembled Ground’: how do the authors imagine the process of disassembling the lower levels? Are the owners going to be expropriated in order to improve the communal life of Väike-Õismäe? Is the municipality going to buy out the owners? The project is silent on these questions, and the jury’s assessment, although it mentions the technical complexity of the proposal, says nothing about property relations either.

In spite of the rather extensive nature of the intervention, its participatory approach captures something of the essence of the majority of the eighty-six competition submissions. These characterise Väike-Õismäe as a sleeping district, a rigid and lifeless neighbourhood, a desolate bedroom suburb, or as a grey place where nothing happens. Such discursive strategy amplifies the competition brief (the very curatorial act of calling for *visions* subtly characterises Väike-Õismäe as a stigmatised district) and sets the stage for the act of intervention. This could be summarised as follows: work with cheap materials and mostly with what is found at the site. Assemble DIY and temporary structures. Fix the broken modernist space. Use it as a platform to involve local residents. Imagine the social in terms of a community. Bring the people together. Fix the broken communal spirit.

A similar practice is also characteristic of the Berlin-based office, raumlabor, represented by Olga Maria Hungar, who shared the symposium stage with the presenters mentioned above. The office’s work lies at the intersection of art, architecture and urbanism and is characterised by an affection for temporary uses.⁸ It strongly resonates with Tallinn-based Linnalabor (Urban Lab), which utilises a similar cross-disciplinary approach and

identifies urban activism and the promotion of grass-roots participation as its field of operation. On behalf of raumlabor, Hungar stated that they admire modernist megastructures, yet it is clear to them we have to say ‘Bye-Bye Utopia’ (as one of their projects is named), and this is where their work starts.

Hungar presented two raumlabor projects, *Eichbaumoper* and *The Kitchen Monument*. *Eichbaumoper* stages an opera performance in the Eichbaum metro station of a Ruhr Valley metropolis. The station was built in the 1970s at a highway interchange. [fig. 3] The opera’s plot was supplied by the local residents, who also performed in it. The architects describe it as ‘a theatre in which there were no spectators, only actors’.⁹ Though *Eichbaumoper* was temporary, raumlabor believes that ‘a process of change was activated’.¹⁰ Raumlabor encountered a problem during the project: local youngsters were not interested in the opera. ‘So what are you interested in?’, the architects asked. They were interested in boxing. So a boxing match was organised - and this time there were even spectators.

The Kitchen Monument is an inflatable sculpture that can be expanded to cover up to 200 square metres. [fig. 4] It is relatively easy to transport and can be used to create temporary semi-public spaces for eating, dancing, film screening or steam-bathing. In a modified version and under the name *Spacebuster*, the sculpture was recently used in New York City.

Three aspects of raumlabor’s strategy are of particular interest here. Firstly, their agenda always starts from ‘dead’ modernist spaces – an elevated highway being perhaps the most vilified concrete example. The role of the architect is understood as that of an agent who brings unconventional temporary uses to these spaces. In some ways their actions resemble those of the critical spatial practices of Jane Rendell and Markus Miessen,¹¹ but



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3: Raumlabor, Eichbaumoper, 2009. Courtesy of raumlabor.

Fig. 4: Raumlabor, The Kitchen Monument, 2006. Courtesy of raumlabor, © Marco Canevacci.

raumlabor largely strip theirs of any wider political ambitions. They are characterised by conviviality and (smart) consumption, and follow the design/policy strategies of urban catalysts¹² and urban acupuncture.¹³

The second premise is the assumption that users can clearly articulate their needs and desires if only they have a chance to do so. The task of the architect is therefore twofold: firstly, to create a situation in which these needs and desires can be articulated (a sort of Habermasian, ideal speech situation); and secondly, to provide a participatory platform where the needs and desires can be (temporarily) realised (What do you like? Boxing? Then here's the boxing ring).

Thirdly, an event is always conceived of as more than it is. As already mentioned, the ephemerality of architectural/urbanistic practice of this type is justified by its after-effects and its capacity to initiate a wider change (spatial or temporal). But what kind of change? Often, it is conceived of as more of the same: more conviviality or more (smart) consumption. I do not want to deny that practices such as raumlabor's generate happy moments, authentic experiences and nice little spaces; they certainly do. But it is important to see – and I am not claiming that raumlabor does not see it – that the question is what to do about the fact that such well-intended acts are not unrelated to the processes of gentrification, displacement, and the emergence of new social conflicts. Not to mention that these practices are being increasingly used by private developers to raise real-estate values, and by municipalities to proceed with their place-making and creative-city strategies.¹⁴

Raumlabor's presentation was preceded by a talk by Pier Vittorio Aureli from DOGMA. In his talk, Aureli elaborated on the proposal for a central railway station in Tallinn, which DOGMA prepared

for the TAB curator's exhibition. The office was one of twelve participants, including raumlabor, who were invited to reinterpret key buildings and spaces of state socialism in Tallinn.

We could say that Aureli/DOGMA starts where raumlabor stops. Conviviality and sociability are not the final answers to the modernist-Fordist city, but the point to begin interrogating the post-Fordist city. Firstly, there is an aesthetic challenge: 'the city doesn't always have to be cute and full of things'. The question of the ubiquity of design is then linked with the social question of 'creative industries' (as their visionaries call them), or post-Fordist labour (as Aureli calls it). Aureli develops the concept of the social around two issues, both sidelined in raumlabor's approach and in most participatory urbanism: the question of labour/production and the question of domesticity/interiority.

Aureli draws on his earlier discussion of Italian *operaismo*¹⁵ and of the problems of limiting and separation in architecture,¹⁶ but relates them to the question of new, immaterial labour and its reproduction in the post-Fordist era. The proposal *The Return of the Factory* harks back to the history of the spatial typology of domesticity (11th-century monasteries, Fourier's phalanx, constructivist debates on communal living, Warhol's Silver Factory) and connects it to contemporary concerns with the post-Fordist social factory.¹⁷ [fig. 5] It reinvents the factory as a domestic space. The project consists of a long, thin, eight-storey wall of housing block, elevated on Miesian plinths.¹⁸ Conceived for 1600 inhabitants, it is situated parallel to railway tracks at the south-east edge of Kalamaja, Tallinn's bohemian and gentrified district full of 'cute little spaces'. The basic unit is a single cell measuring 6x6 metres. Living space can be extended by the horizontal and/or vertical merging of cells. The separation between private, semi-private and public space is flexible, reflecting new, non-standard forms of family organisation.

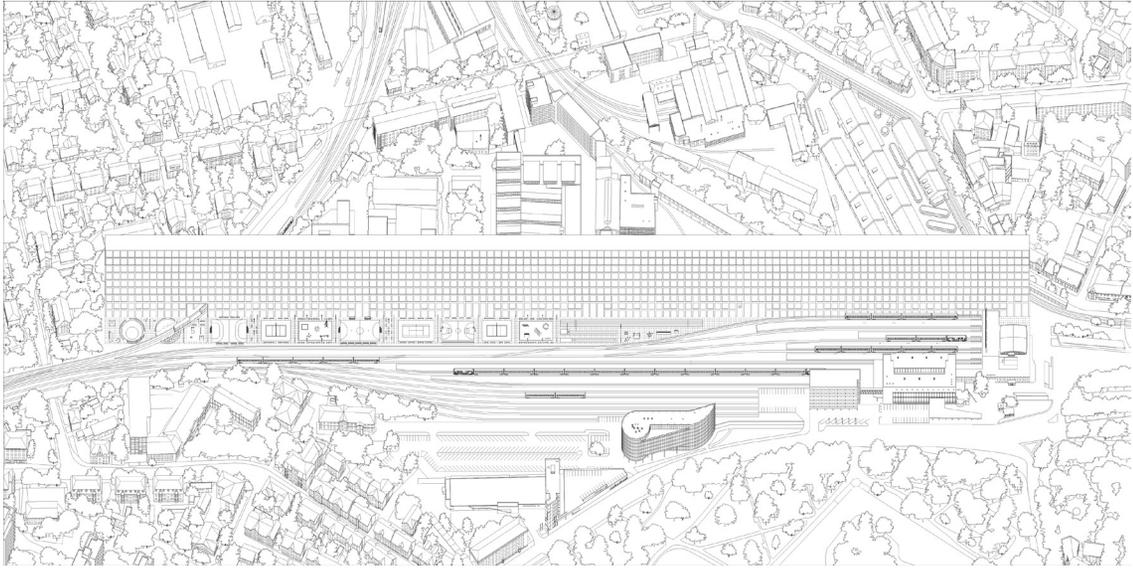


Fig. 5

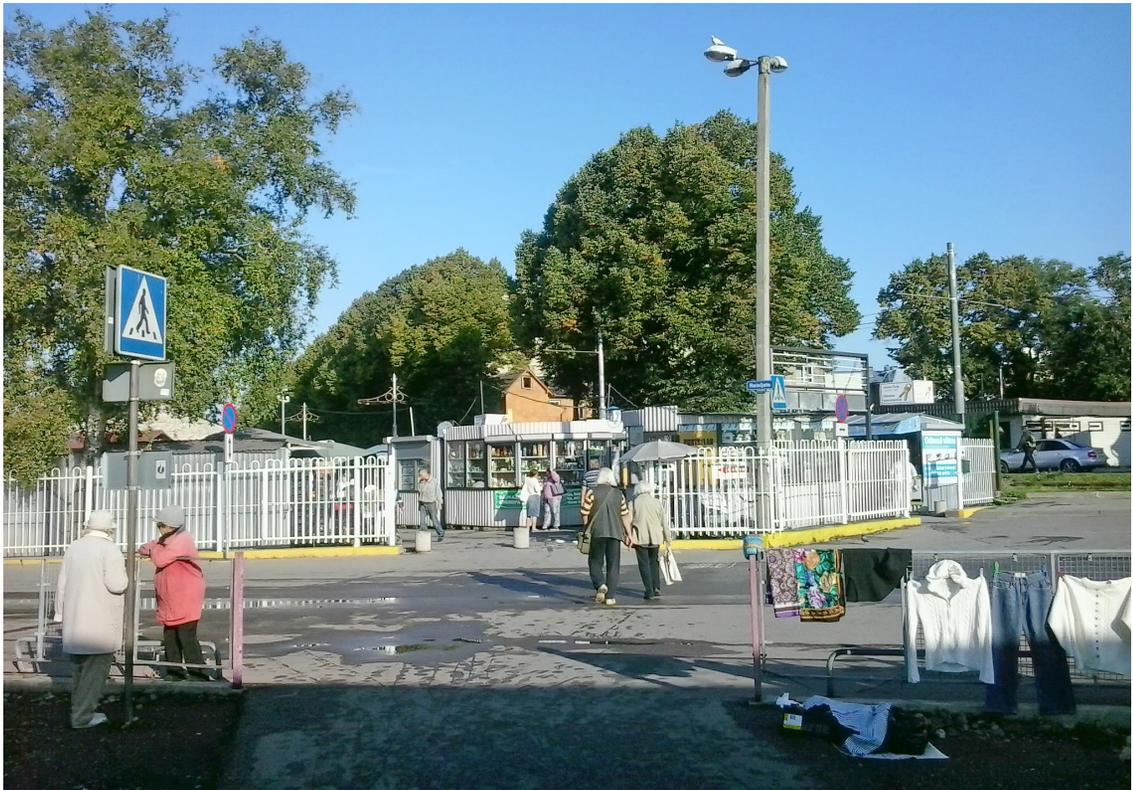


Fig. 6

Fig. 5: DOGMA, The Return of The Factory, 2013. Courtesy of DOGMA.

Fig. 6: Balti Railway Station market. © author.

This echoes Aureli's assessment of Plattenbau architecture: it is not its monotonousness (to call it this already amounts to a judgement) or large scale, but the rigidity of its domestic forms that is the most fundamental problem.

Rather than situating participation on the side of conviviality, free time, consumption or life-style preferences, *The Return of the Factory* starts from the premise that we already participate enough, propelled by soft strategies of control. Such a premise perhaps refers to Deleuze's notion of 'control society', in which power relations operate inclusively rather than exclusively, assuming forms of perpetual training and continuous assessment.¹⁹ So the question is not how to stimulate more participation, but how to meaningfully (re)organise it on the basis of a series of divisions: inside/outside, privacy/publicness, individuality/collectivity, working time/free time, production/consumption.

And here comes perhaps the most challenging and debatable aspect of DOGMA's approach. Starting from the premise that post-Fordist workers are unorganised, the ambition is to give visibility to their social situation, to make explicit the precarious underside of glamorous creativity and perhaps contribute to their possible collective organisation. This strategy repeatedly appears in Aureli's/DOGMA's work. The Miesian plinth is justified because 'the forces of urbanization are made explicit and are made to define their own position as agonistic forms [...] The plinth introduces a stoppage into the smoothness of urban space'.²⁰ In a similar way, DOGMA's project *Simple Heart*, which rethinks Cedric Price's *Potteries Thinkbelt* for a post-Fordist era, is characterised as 'the utmost embodiment of this condition [of precariousness of life], and at the same time the frame holding it. The aim of the project is not to eliminate the ethos of the social factory, but to make it explicit'.²¹ Though admirable, one would like to see Aureli more explicit about what *making explicit* means. A question from

the audience challenged him as to whether the proposal is not simply a standard industrial loft. To what extent is the success of making social contradictions of the day explicit dependent on how the architecture is read and used? And can this issue be resolved on architecture's terrain? – noticing, in particular, that Aureli expressed reservations about prescribing spatial programmes, and that the project does not really engage with the question of property relations.

It is encouraging that Aureli does not succumb to standard cynicism about hipsters, but the question remains: who are the intended users of the building? Interventions from the audience brought into debate the notion of a 'creative class', but the unglamorous 'service class' and industrial workers, many now unemployed, were considered neither in the proposal nor in the debate. I understand that the task of a single project is not to solve all social contradictions, yet these social groups represent the majority of the site's current users, and of the nearby Balti Railway Station market in particular, where old ladies sell garlic, marinated beetroot and woollen socks, and people with little money to spare come to purchase cheap clothes and expired groceries [fig. 6]. In Tallinn, this question also has a strong ethnic dimension, since many residents belong to the Russian-speaking population, relocated to Tallinn as part of Soviet industrialisation policies and made redundant in the 1990s.

Just as the Soviet is blurred with the socialist, so the socialist is blurred in itself: do we have in mind architectural objects or practices? In one way or another, most of the strategies for 'recycling socialism' presented during the Tallinn Architecture Biennale, relied on (a return to) participation. In Powerpoint presentations and exhibition posters, images of empty buildings were usually described as 'not working', while those which depicted a large number of people in convivial mood were accompanied by 'you see, it can work'. Though most of the

participants disavowed universal solutions associated with modernism, the cultural programmes and tactics of community revival they offered seem like today's universal strategy for the modernist architecture of Soviet state socialism.

Yet another approach crystallised during the Biennale. In the proposal by DOGMA in particular, recycling – or 'reconstruction', as Aureli suggested – was conceived as being more than just a question of what to do with buildings from the period of state socialism. Here, participation is grasped as a social question. Rather than conceived in relation to community regeneration, architectural practice is bound up with the question of overall social organisation; rather than being limited to cultural consumption, it touches on the whole sphere of economic production and distribution; and rather than stimulating conviviality, its task is seen as negotiating the borders between exteriority and interiority. Consequently, the forgotten housing question poses a challenge for the participatory turn.

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14. See, for example, Claire Colomb, 'Pushing the Urban Frontier: Temporary Uses of Space, City Marketing and the Creative City Discourse in 2000s Berlin'; Stephan Lanz, 'Be Berlin! Governing the City through Freedom', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37, 4 (2012), pp. 1305-24; Maroš Krivý, 'Don't Plan! The Use of the Notion of 'Culture' in Transforming Obsolete Industrial Space', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37, 5

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Biography

Maroš Krivý is currently Invited Professor of Urban Studies at the Faculty of Architecture, Estonian Academy of Arts. In 2012 he obtained a PhD in Urban Studies from the University of Helsinki. Among his publications are 'Don't Plan! The Use of the Notion of 'Culture' in Transforming Obsolete Industrial Space' (*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2013) and 'Industrial Architecture and Negativity: the Aesthetics of Architecture in the Works of Gordon Matta-Clark, Robert Smithson and Bernd and Hilla Becher' (*Journal of Architecture*, 2010). Maroš is also a visual artist and researcher. His project *New Coat of Paint* was exhibited at the Hobusepea Gallery in Tallinn (2013), and was included in the Alternativa festival organised by IS Wyspa in Gdańsk (2013). He was the winner of the Sittcomm award (2011).

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In this issue, the following papers were peer-reviewed:

'Aporia of Participatory Planning: Framing Local Action in the Entrepreneurial City'; 'An Anthropology of Urbanism: How People Make Places (and What Designers and Planners Might Learn from It)'; 'Toward an Architecture of Dissensus: Participatory Urbanism in South-East Asia'; 'The "Diverse Economies" of Participation'; 'The Importance of Recognition for Equal Representation in Participatory Processes: Lessons from Husby'; 'Cooperatives, Control or Compromise? The Changing Role of Participation in Norwegian Housing'.

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