

Rethinking Density

Art, Culture, and Urban Practices

Anamarija Batista

Szilvia Kovács

Carina Lesky (Eds.)



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On the Publication Series

We are pleased to present the latest volume in the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna's publication series. The series, published in cooperation with our highly committed partner Sternberg Press, is devoted to central themes of contemporary thought about art practices and theories. The volumes comprise contributions on subjects that form the focus of discourse in terms of art theory, cultural studies, art history, and research at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, and represent the quintessence of international study and discussion taking place in the respective fields. Each volume is published in the form of an anthology, edited by staff members of the academy. Authors of high international repute are invited to write contributions that deal with the respective areas of emphasis. Research activities such as international conferences, lecture series, institute-specific research focuses, or research projects serve as points of departure for the individual volumes.

Starting with this edition, all books in the series will undergo a single blind peer review. International reviewers, whose identity is not disclosed to the editors of the volumes, give an in-depth analysis and evaluation for each essay. The editors then rework the texts, taking into consideration the suggestions and feedback of the reviewers who, in a second step, comment on the revised essay again. The editors—and authors—thus receive what is so rare in academia and also at art universities: committed, informed, and hopefully impartial critical feedback that can be used for finishing the work.

We thank the editors of this volume, Anamarija Batista, Szilvia Kovács, and Carina Lesky, for proposing this volume on revisiting—and reconceptualizing—the notion of “density.” Discussion of built environments has, for many years, meant a reflection on the concept of density, and rightly so. To look at recent but also historical examples of this subject, bringing together many different authors with a wide range of expertise, has been a challenge the editors have met with great success. We thank them for their impeccable editorial work. And we thank—as always—all the partners contributing to the book, especially Sternberg Press.

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Introduction

Anamarija Batista, Szilvia Kovács, and Carina Lesky

Rethinking Density: Art, Culture, and Urban Practices revisits the topic of urban density, which has for a long time been part of planning debates and is now regaining interest from different disciplines including cultural studies and artistic research. Dealing with this well-studied and very current issue, the publication aims to open up novel perspectives and discussions related to urban density.

The idea for this book emerged from our research project “The Artist as Urban Planner: A Glance at the Cooperation of Artistic and Urban Practices”¹ over the course of which we entered a field crystallized by different disciplines and methodological approaches all engaging with questions of how cities could be thought about and planned. While architecture, cultural studies, artistic research, and also other contexts such as musicology and cinematic practices discuss similar issues, their models and results are rarely brought to interplay.² The category of density is a phenomenon pertaining diverse disciplines as a measure of quantity. Depending on points of view and interests, units are put into the center of measurement thus generating different, sometimes contradictory, qualities and, in turn, associated positions. Its unities vary according to the scales, situations, and involved parties. Instead of a linear relationship, density, especially connected to the city, could be imagined as a collage consisting of fragments from different origins that come together to build a new pattern. The distinctiveness of density as a category is precisely in its elasticity and defiance: depending on specific circumstances it can be construed and thought about in various ways, bringing out different meanings. Together with related debates, these ambivalences piqued our curiosity.

The use of density as an urban instrument of analysis and diagnosis goes back to the nineteenth century and the rapid growth of cities during the industrial revolution. High housing density resulted in social grievances and substandard hygiene. The phenomenon of the “bed lodgers,” who rented beds in private houses, accounts for contemporary living conditions and deficiencies. They could not afford their own place and would sleep in rented rooms for a few hours before they returned to the streets and factories of the city. From the 1920s onward and especially after the Second World War, density was converted from an ideological instrument of diagnosis into one of intervention. As way to control previous bursts of growth in cities, building planners and city officials

1 This research project, originally titled “KünstlerIn als RaumplanerIn,” was funded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 2012.

2 The French philosopher of science Michel Serres argues that the mutual interference of developing knowledge within the disciplines and their constant reference herein to the lived realities highlights the uncertainty, again and again, and is at

the same time the engine of merging. Michel Serres, *Der Parasit*, trans. Michael Bischoff (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1987), 333. The view of the “nodes” of relations and transitions, as well as the concentration on circulation, is more generative than a focus on boundaries. Michel Serres, *Hermès II, L’interférence*, trans. Michael Bischoff (Berlin: Merve, 1992), 10–13.

sought to ensure higher standards of living through density regulation by detecting and delimiting its critical scope. Density had turned into an instrument of analysis and control. Currently, deregulation tendencies can be observed going hand in hand with increasing privatization and real estate prices.

Current debates point out a lack of differentiating existing concepts of density and call for a shift based on relational approaches and the notion of density as a dynamic system.³ In view of the contemporary situation of our society that is characterized by moments of crisis, it becomes clear that thinking of density in terms of constructional measures and accommodation solutions will not be enough. As a consequence of global migration, waves of people moving into cities and increased information exchange results in ideological frictions that cannot be resolved by mathematical formulas or indicators of efficiency. At the same time, the recurring crisis of late capitalism calls for a revision of strategies, a thinking away from growth-oriented paradigms primarily based on capital accumulation, toward socially innovative approaches that take into account bodily sensations and social and interpersonal relationships. Naturally, there is no density without another item, which is why an investigation of this issue entails dealing with and establishing relationships. A reduction of density to absolute and controllable aspects and necessities does not measure up to the complexity of the phenomenon as well as its multilayered manifestations. As, for example, conventionally applied formulas constituting the ratio of mass and volume do not live up to the everyday realities of the city inhabitants. A keeping up of the discursive balancing act between “good” and “bad” density or a continued orientation based on conceptions of classic modernity or the “compact city of short distances” are not sufficient. In order to develop and uncover new insights, it is necessary to undertake experiments, to overlap, compare, and reassemble existing narratives forming unfamiliar ones. The relationships, together with their situational meanings emerging from built as well as lived density, demand profound and flexible approaches. Therefore, to allow for novel forms and approaches to these issues, the concept of density needs to be thought differently. Dense scenarios put to the fore categories such as civic liberty, solidarity, experienced temporality, bodily performance, intensity, or the acoustic dimension.

This publication is intended as a contribution to the discourses and developments highlighted above. Our concern is to point out the problems with density as a formula of neoliberal developments by calling attention to the variety of current debates and the range of different approaches to the topic of density. Apart from this, we will show ways of thinking about distinctive scales of density, thereby embracing the fringes of urban spheres, and will focus on experienced realities driven by everyday temporalities, places of encounters, and informal practices. This collection of essays investigates specific microcosms with regard to their appearances, particular qualities, and logics of density.

The contributions span from historic research to urban planning, from social science and ethnographic approaches to more technical fields, and from cultural practices to architectural and artistic productions. We invited colleagues from diverse research fields to allow for a broad range of possible approaches and innovative lines of argument. On the one hand, authors contributed who are specialized in the field of urban density. On the other hand, we encouraged authors whose work relates to the issue of density, although not explicitly, to work out and elaborate on this relationship in their texts. Also, we did not want to settle by merely introducing the relational perspective as a feasible theoretical concept of rethinking density, but asked the researchers to work with case studies or figurative scenarios. The geographic focus is primarily but not exclusively on manifestations of density in European cities. Apart from Vienna, the contributions discuss examples in Budapest, Novi Sad, Zenica, Valencia, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, London, Paris, and Tokyo.⁴ On the basis of these considerations, the collection of articles of this book is not intended as a coherent account of causal or chronological relationships, but an overview of the methodological and thematic range of recent research on density. *Rethinking Density: Art, Culture, and Urban Practices* is structured into four sections: Relational Perspectives on Density, Politics of Density and Its Consequences on the Human Condition, Public Space as a Key Arena of Density, and Contested Spaces and Power Structures.

Every section is introduced by Agnes Prammer's *Arakawa Gardens* (2016). This photographic series of improvised street gardens and bus stops in Tokyo came into being as a part of her artistic residency in 2016. It reflects on moments of contradiction—the “neat” and the “chaotic”—in Japanese everyday street life and the possibilities that these disruptive elements hold, especially in times of global assimilation. These little oases of contradictions are what Prammer seeks to preserve, fearing that they might disappear soon.

3 See Nikolai Roskamm, *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014); Doreen Massey, “On Space and the City,” in *City Worlds*, ed. Doreen Massey, John Allen, and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1999), 151–74; Chris Brook, Gerry Mooneyand, and Steve Pile, *Unruly Cities? Order/ Disorder, Understanding Cities* (London: Routledge, 1999); Stephen Graham and Patsy Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place,” *European Planning Studies* 7 (1999).

4 While our own research location is Vienna, the geographical context of the book partly came about from our publication-related workshop “Rethinking the Concept of Density” (2015), where first drafts of the contributions were presented and discussed in Budapest. The workshop was funded by the Austrian-Hungarian Action Fund. Some of the international contacts resulted from our research carried out in Amsterdam at the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Analysis (NICA), in 2014–15.

Relational Perspectives on Density

The planning and design of public spaces in Vienna resembles a tightrope walk between constructional practical and social processes. While in theoretical debates spaces have increasingly been thought of in the form of assemblages, networks, and processes, planning practice is still very much bound to static notions of space as defined by construction plans that center the role of the planner as the creator of space. Relational understandings of space do not yet prevail over absolute conceptions of space as an invariable homogeneous ground for activity. In response to this situation, the contributions of this section reflect different relational ways to approach density.

In his text, Johannes Suitner claims that the “thickness of place,” as emphasized in relational perspectives on space, is still a blind spot when it comes to density debates in urban-planning strategies. He evaluates recent debates of density in European city planning on the basis of content analysis and lexicometric analysis of recent urban development strategies of Amsterdam’s Structural Vision 2040 and Vienna’s STEP 2025. This reflection on long-term strategic urban plans is followed by a discussion on an alternative theory to the perception of density.

By transposing some of the key instruments from cinema and architecture into each other’s domain, Marc Boumeester introduces the idea of “intensity” as an innovative denominator in urban density. The author proposes that when mediating the actual to the virtual, the most interesting moment lies just before the actualization of density. It is the moment when the actualization is operational, yet the form of expression is still undetermined and everything is possible. This field of non-actualized reality, of potentiality and relationality is what Boumeester describes as intensity. Together with his students from Delft University of Technology, he creates a type of “somaesthetic cartography,” tapping into the potential before the “enframing.”

Similarly, the contribution of Antje Lehn and Johanna Reiner is based on their work with the pupils of Bundesrealgymnasium und Bundesoberstufenrealgymnasium Wien 15 (BRgORg) in the fifteenth Viennese district who made their “own” maps of their school environment. Their “Maps of Multilingualism” is intended as one part of the long-term project “Atlas of Invisible Spaces.” This collection of thematic maps aims at including different modes of experience and perception of local environments into the process of urban negotiation and planning.

In her article “Returning from the Future: OMA’s Concept of Retroactivity,” Angelika Schnell discusses the term “retroactive” in connection with Rem Koolhaas’s design study for the project “Boompjes,” in Rotterdam, by focusing on the phenomenon of temporal density in the context of architectural design.

How does an architectural design take effect on an event in past? Why is Koolhaas interested in the past of Rotterdam’s bridge Willemsbrug? In this paper, Koolhaas’s approach and the development of meaning in his architecture is linked to Sigmund Freud’s concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, whereby different temporal experiences are merged, confused, and even reversed.

Jürgen Schöpf and Nicolas Remy investigate a possible expansion of methods and criteria by researching the aural sphere of density. They explore sound-related discourses, such as acoustics, psychoacoustics, musicology, and soundscape art as well as urban planning for technical descriptions of how density is theorized within these fields. Further, the authors introduce their “spectrographical” case-study analyses which were conducted in five places in Europe in 2015 and 2016. As part of this project, they experimented with recording sounds at a “dense urban area” in Vienna’s third district to measure the average sound of the neighborhood.

Politics of Density and Its Consequences on the Human Condition

Globalized neoliberal capitalism produces specific urban conditions that are characterized by acceleration tendencies, consuming normative and high-financial and real-estate speculations. High redistribution of wealth is a long-term consequence of these factors that are worming their way into society. Another trait of our time is the increased amount of information and the densification of its temporal horizons. The contemporary global subject surfs between the real and the virtual sphere, where it is not seldom that voices and notions are overheard. As a reaction, urban resistance emerges in search of new models of solidarity, equality, but also for possible applications to support a sustainable growth, while leaving sufficient leeway for continued renegotiation. Section two brings together elaborations on these issues.

In his experimental essay “The Strangely Overheard: Overhearing and the Condition of the Global Subject,” Brandon LaBelle broaches the issue of “overhearing” as the condition of the global subject due to the contemporary sensory paradigm of always being connected. Such density produces hypersensitive subjects. LaBelle looks at the new intensities of social involvements by focusing on acoustical space.

In times when speculation contributes to and is actually the reason for high density, Gabu Heindl reflects on such developments by introducing the criteria models of solidarity and equality in her article. Focusing on the current situation in Vienna, she suggests politically reconnecting density to content, thus redefining democratic, equality-oriented urbanity.

In “Occupying Time: A Critical Perspective on the Temporal Density in the Urban Condition,” Elke Krasny proposes an approach of city density from a temporal point of view. She reveals how the concept of the never-sleeping city is actively produced on the basis of Marxist urban theory. While interpreting the global spread of practices like the Long Night of Museums or Marathon Conversations as specific to the logics of neoliberal accumulation, Krasny sees public protests, for example, from Occupy Wall Street to Maidan, and Gezi Park to Nuit Debout, as demonstrations where time is shared collectively.

The architects of the creative studio Improvistos introduce a multi-scale, holistic model for urban revitalization they proposed for the Orba neighborhood in Valencia, Spain. *Recooperation* upgrades the built environment on the basis of an innovative human and sustainable development. Decision-making processes include residents not as passive consumers but as active users, while, on the other hand, the continuity of natural ecosystems is restored.

Iván Tosics approaches the question of densification from the point of view of private-public management in the contemporary housing field. On the one hand, he draws attention to the dead-end pathways of urbanism, such as large prefabricated housing estates or monotonous suburbs. On the other hand, he discusses the potential and risk of new large residential areas on smart city-based scenarios. Tosics deals with case-study examples from Stockholm (Hammarby Sjöstad), Vienna (Aspern Seestadt), and Munich (Freiham).

Public Space as a Key Arena of Density

With regard to density, public spaces present an example of how only a relational and process-oriented understanding of space can cope with its irreducible complexity. Literally taken as the free and empty space between the buildings, public space defines a negative of density, if the focus is merely put on the built environment. Accordingly, when speaking of public spaces as dense spaces one necessarily shifts toward a relational approach of space, not regarding it as a fixed structure, but as a texture in constant transformation. People and traffic modify spaces through their activities. The density of a public space is primarily defined by social factors, by everyday behavior and practices, but also by encounters and relationships. A network of lived interrelations is established charging those spaces with meanings and experiences. The contributions of section three deal with scenarios of density in public spaces.

In her contribution, Sabine Knierbein discusses density in relation to everyday life. Public spaces are examined in their role as the places for dense experiences and encounters. To acknowledge the presence of dense human relations in the contemporary city space, Knierbein investigates the notion of density

in the form of lived practices and social relations. Thereby quantitative approaches to density within urban planning and design are contrasted with and expanded by a qualitative sociocultural understanding about the ways in which density is lived socially.

In “Density Caused by Shortage,” Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah and Katalin Teller discuss the “tram misery” of 1918 in Budapest and Vienna. Based on a detailed newspaper analysis, they look into the crisis from a social, political, and quotidian point of view, while tracing its impact on food, housing, transport, and civil rights. In juxtaposing the two capitals, similarities as well as differences are revealed in how the social tensions were represented and experienced in everyday life.

In their contribution “Cafés as Designed Settings for Social Performativity,” Anamarija Batista and Ivana Volić examine cafés closely, opening perspectives on their signification as designed places presetting social interaction, body concepts, and experience. Drawing on Hartmut Rosa’s concept of resonance as well as Jean-Paul Sartre’s “immediacy of the Other,” they examine the transformation of café design and meeting culture, especially by focusing on tendencies of café culture in the 1950s and ’60s as well as today. The analysis is based on case studies from Vienna, Zenica, and Novi Sad.

In her essay “Peripheral Locations in Budapest: Where Inherent Emptiness Turns into More-Than-Representative Density Formations,” Szilvia Kovács examines public spaces in Budapest that—while differing in scale, form, and demographic features—have one thing in common: all of them recently served as venues for performative art. In accordance with Miklós Erdély, she approaches these spatial effects as densities with “inherent emptiness”—as exchanges between works of art and places for the “not-yet-realized.” Discourse analysis is underlaid with results from her own empirical research.

Contested Spaces and Power Structures

Dense settings constitute, more often than not, contested spaces where a negotiation of commons and positions takes place. In many cases, power structures underlie their specific dynamics and their complexity meets with an urge for order and control. These processes result in varying degrees of regulation, categorization, and selection. The contributions of this section seek to understand the micrologics within specific manifestations of density. Such a shift from the general to the particular opens up for a reframing of preformed thinking patterns toward (city) density.

STREET CARPET by Anna Artaker and Meike S. Gleim is an interpretation of Walter Benjamin's literary method of collecting and juxtaposing quotes through image montages. The work was part of the arts-based research project ATLAS OF ARCADIA. Aerial images of New York's Columbus circle are montaged to continue on as a street in Liberia's capital Monrovia and as a boulevard in Paris. The artificial thoroughfares allow us to get a picture of a geographical and, above all, political clash between East and West, on segregation, dispute, and different ways space is politicized.

In his article "Lethal Density," Nikolai Roskamm "reconsiders the research field of crowding," in which density is a central issue. Having emerged in the 1960s as an area of social psychology, it aroused a lot of scientific interest and in the 1970s brought about a multitude of studies. They experimented on how density was perceived by individuals and how specific density levels could cause pathological reactions. While giving an outline on the development of crowding studies, Roskamm introduces a typical sample of such experiments around the conceptual relationship of density, crowding, and behavioral effects.

In "Crowds, Cordons, and Computers: Rethinking Density through London's Grime Scene," Christabel Stirling deals with the musical and sonic publics in London and their social-geographical spreading. Her concept of density is grounded on the experience of being part of a musical crowd. Based on her ethnographic fieldwork about "grime" musical communities that emerged in East London in the early 2000s, she looks into the question of why some musical genres are able to enter into urban musical public spaces, while others are evicted and extinguished.

"Le Chiffonnier, la Glaneuse, and the Rest of Us" examines the density of collections. Through the looking glass of film, Nicolai Gütermann and Carina Lesky reflect upon the functions and mechanics of sites of remembrance. In libraries, museums, and archives questions of visibility, representation, and value are negotiated by combining artifacts and narratives into a mosaic of history. The authors trace and examine a variety of modes and figures of gathering, questioning underlying practices and power structures to raise awareness of the sensitivity of collecting and representation in today's complex social spheres.

In the contributions to this book, the reader will find a range of suggestions on how density, with its characteristics and manifestations, can be imagined and conceptualized. This publication is intended as a starting point for further differentiated exploration.

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Relational Perspectives on Density



Planning for Dense Containers? Challenging Amsterdam's and Vienna's Strategic Urban Planning from a Relational Perspective

Johannes Suitner

Constituting a foundation of the ideal type of European city, density has become part of the conventional wisdom of good planning.¹ But what do we actually refer to when speaking of density? Is it the spatial compactness of buildings, concentration of urban functions, or crowdedness and intensity of uses? In fact, all of these categories, valuable as they may be, refer to density solely in terms of absolute space, “the Euclidean, deterministic, and one-dimensional treatments inherited from the ‘scientific’ approaches of the 1960s and early 1970s.”² In such views, the city is imagined as a static container, though nowadays it is clear to planners that space is a social product—and so is density.³

For planners, density has long since been one of *the* assessment criteria of space. In the early twentieth century, at the time when the field of planning emerged, density became a key concept in planning's influential disciplines: geography, sociology, economics, and urbanism.⁴ It soon reached the status of an evaluative principle of the quality of urban living, an indicator for social and economic development and, at the same time, threats to this very development once densities had exceeded desired levels.⁵ In geography, inquiries and analyses of population densities within political and administrative territories had become a central field of research, resulting in both historic and prognostic diagnoses. In the practice-oriented and politically biased field of planning, though, the analytical variable had added a normative touch,⁶ making it a guiding principle of ordering, governing, and steering urban change.

During the phase of rapid industrialization, engineers searched for solutions to increase safety and hygiene in growing cities by tackling the packed urban fabric through building regulations and reducing compactness.⁷ As prosperity increased in postwar years, urbanists were confronted with suburbanization tendencies that made general doubts about dense urban living evident. Since the 1990s and fueled by global re-urbanization, dense cities have in a positive sense become central to planning debates again.⁸ Studies on positive effects of agglomeration economies left no doubt about the need to plan dense cities with spatially concentrated, high-ranked command-and-control functions. From then on, agglomeration, proximity, and diversity of economic opportunities

1 Nikolai Roskamm, *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2014).

2 Stephen Graham and Patsy Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place,” *European Planning Studies* 7 (1999): 623.

3 Cf. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974; repr. Hoboken: Wiley, 1991).

4 Roskamm, *Dichte*, 9.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 97, 169.

7 Peter Marcuse, “The Three Historic Currents of Planning,” in *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

8 Gerd Albers, *Stadtplanung: Eine illustrierte Einführung* (Darmstadt: Primus, 2008).

were unquestioned planning endeavors in any urban strategy. In discourses on the European city, the creation of dense urban areas even gained the status of a self-evident planning goal inextricably linked to the quality of living.⁹

But in the past two decades density approaches diversified as did planning discourses: a spatial turn and new theories of space emerged.¹⁰ A cultural turn emphasized the significance of context and difference for the production of space.¹¹ And globalization theory informed us about the importance of scale and complex economic ties.¹² Relatedly, planning put an intensified emphasis on integrating cultural diversity, indicators of global and local economic success, and mixed-use approaches in the analyses, concepts, and strategies of density planning. In effect, diversified density schemes appeared that not only interpreted population and building volumes as important factors of creating and controlling urban densities. They started focusing on the concentration of innovation, cultural practices, ideological conflicts, and political decisions as factors of equal importance. Nonetheless, those still refer to space as a container endowed with material objects of which number and density can be quantitatively measured and changed through planning intervention.¹³ Newer epistemologies of space production are hardly integrated in strategies that look at urban development through the density lens, although the concept of relational space should be of interest to that debate.

From Euclidean to Relational Space Ties, Time-Spaces, Structure, and Agency

Great parts of traditional planning thought and its theories of space descend from the foundations of human geography. Historically, imperialism and colonialism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made geography an essential part of military and strategic territorial considerations.¹⁴ This geography, however, relied solely on the natural sciences and objectivity: “A new view of the world was emerging which saw the universe as mechanically ordered and hence susceptible to the scientific discovery of the causes and functions of its parts without having to be concerned about purpose or meaning of the whole.”¹⁵ This worldview was institutionalized not only in Great Britain and France, but all over Europe as both producer of scientifically grounded geographical knowledge and strategic counsellor of nation-states.¹⁶

A hundred years later, when planning evolved from the obvious need for regulating and guiding industrialized urban development, the new discipline only logically borrowed from the positivist epistemology of its ancestor geography.¹⁷ Early planning always referred to absolute space—given and determined by the laws of nature and thus also to be explained and transformed solely by these laws.¹⁸ Until only recently, much of planning’s practice, from

strategy building to urban design, has been referring to this static, objective, measurable, and predictable concept of space.¹⁹

Yet, backed by a spatial, cultural, and discursive turn, the interpretative tradition of philosophy and the social sciences recently arrived at the center of planning. Poststructuralism and its vastly different ontology and epistemology began influencing the contents and processes of planning as well as the overall understanding of space and place, their emergence and transformability.²⁰ The idea of a neutral container was widely replaced by the recognition of the importance of context, culture, politics, and the particularities of place for the analysis and modification of territories.²¹ By taking the social and cultural dimensions serious, space could also be understood as something that is socially produced and not, in the Kantian sense, God-given and static. A relational perspective, then, put theorists and practitioners in the position to analyze the production of space even in a complex, multi-scale, and globalized urban world.²²

As Stephen Graham and Patsy Healey explain, four important theoretical dimensions emerged in the 1980s and ‘90s that help us see space and place from a relational perspective.²³ First, the acknowledgment of different *time-spaces*: “Contemporary cities display the kind of (very real) variegated senses of time—from the intense and global instantaneity of the financial markets and global media and communications flows, to the spiritual times of new urban mythology, and the ‘glacial’ times of global ecological change.”²⁴ In fact, places can be constituents of differing time-spaces that collide in the planning process. And of course planning itself is influenced, not to say determined, by these variegated time-spaces. Second, the conceptualization of *place* as

9 Roskamm, *Dichte*.

10 Simin Davoudi and Ian Strange, “Space and Place in Twentieth Century Planning: An Analytical Framework and an Historical Review,” in *Conceptions of Space and Place in Strategic Spatial Planning*, ed. Simin Davoudi and Ian Strange (London: Routledge, 2009).

11 Greg Young, *Reshaping Planning with Culture* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2008).

12 Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society, The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, vol. 1 (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996).

13 Davoudi and Strange, “Space and Place in Twentieth Century Planning.”

14 Anoop Nayak and Alex Jeffrey, *Geographical Thought: An Introduction to Ideas in Human Geography* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2011).

15 Davoudi and Strange, “Space and Place in Twentieth Century Planning,” 11.

16 See Nayak and Jeffrey, *Geographical Thought*.

17 Davoudi and Strange, “Space and Place in Twentieth Century Planning.”

18 Ibid.

19 Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place.”

20 Davoudi and Strange, “Space and Place in Twentieth Century Planning.”

21 Ibid.

22 See Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place”; and Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*.

23 See Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place.”

24 Ibid., 627.

driven by interconnections and flows; obviously, places are culturally and symbolically charged social products.²⁵ But they are networked. Their attribution as local or global nodes of society depends on functional relations and social, economic, and political ties that altogether define the role of these nodes within wider networks on multiple scales. A local planning culture then is similarly embedded in “networks of social relations and understandings.”²⁶ Third, the increasingly relational constitution of *urban economies and social life*, “where intense, recursive, face-to-face interactions are supported within urban space [... and] national urban hierarchies are being recombined and remade as more interconnected ‘hub’ and ‘spoke’ urban networks linking specialized urban economies across international boundaries.”²⁷ These relations are largely mediated by information and communication technology, overthrowing the role of geographical distance in terms of communication or the retrieval of information. Manuel Castells’s influential analysis of a networked society points to the same direction.²⁸ This puts an institutionalized planning practice and its approved instruments under pressure to keep the pace of rapid technological innovation and growing networks of global (knowledge) exchange. And fourth, the links between *structure* and *agency*: this signifies a new approach to understanding and intervening in the institutional system of cities and the organization of their societies. This is particularly important if we think of the abovementioned theories of time-space, the relational conceptions of place, and the theory of networked economies and societies are worth considering in practice. With reference to Anthony Giddens’s theory of structuration, though, this can only be done if the relations between structure and agency and between institutionalist and communicative approaches are taken seriously. This would, for instance, demand examinations of “the configuration of technical artefacts, discourses, and ‘texts’ such as planning documents, within broader social contexts.”²⁹ They need to be looked at as part of human agency and analyzed according to how they are linked to specific social contexts to hereby influence social order. Planners must also reflect on their surrounding structure-agency nexus to question how human action influences the institutional order of their discipline.

But why is such a perspective of importance to planners? Because it enables us to see different life-worlds and system-worlds, the manifold scales and complex ties between time and space, subject and object that influence space and place. Integrating a relational perspective toward density in strategy building can help unveiling the largely uncaptured relational determinants of space production and urban development in order to formulate better strategies. Asking whether this perspective has already touched down in planning, I analyze two cities’ recent urban strategies and their densification goals.

Density in Strategic Urban Planning Examples from Vienna and Amsterdam

In this section, I conduct a content analysis of two recent strategies regarding their approach to density planning: Vienna’s STEP 2025 and Amsterdam’s Structural Vision 2040. Amsterdam and Vienna are suitable case studies because they constitute two European cities influenced by differing planning cultures,³⁰ allowing the retrieval of a wider spectrum of debates and approaches around the density concept. Both documents focus on densification as an overall planning goal, which serves even this small inquiry with an adequate amount of data to be analyzed and discussed. In general, Graham and Healey consider the analysis of discourses and texts such as planning strategies that are important in relational space approaches.³¹ Even more, urban development strategies are the condensed products of complex governance processes—valuable artifacts of a local planning culture with its narratives and principles.³² Thus, an analysis of planning strategies uncovers the nature of and attitude toward planning-related concepts such as density. Consequently, I start with the narrative of the respective strategies to reveal the embedding and framing of each city’s development. I then conduct lexicometric inquiries of the two documents to reveal the overall prominence of the density debate and expose implicit links between density planning and other policy areas.³³ Finally, I discuss whether density is in any of the abovenamed categories conceptualized in a relational perspective or not.

25 Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

26 Doreen Massey, cited in Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place,” 627.

27 *Ibid.*, 630.

28 See Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*.

29 Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place,” 632.

30 See Andreas Faludi, “The Netherlands: A Culture with a Soft Spot for Planning,” in *Comparative Planning Cultures*, ed. Bishwapriya Sanyal (New York, Routledge: 2005); and Gottfried Pirhofer and Kurt Stimmer, *Pläne für Wien: Theorie und Praxis der Wiener Stadtplanung von 1945 bis 2005* (Vienna: City of Vienna, Municipal Department 18, 2007).

31 Graham and Healey, “Relational Concepts of Space and Place.”

32 Johannes Suitner, “Cultures of Image Construction: Approaching Planning Cultures as a Factor in Urban Image Production,” *European Spatial Research and Policy* 21 (2014).

33 For a similar approach, see Annika Mattisek, “Diskursive Konstitution städtischer Identität—Das Beispiel Frankfurt am Main” in *Kulturelle Geographien: Zur Beschäftigung mit Raum und Ort nach dem Cultural Turn*, ed. Christoph Berndt and Robert Pütz (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007).

city, space, and development are central terms. Yet, space is the only one appearing significantly more often in the overall strategy, revealing the obvious importance of density for the description, interpretation, and transformation of space in a Euclidean sense. Interestingly, the focus is on distinct policy areas while others are not mentioned at all, most noticeably consumption and the public sphere or public space. It points to a potential focus of a strategy of density planning. In fact, the active transformation of public space has recently become a trending debate in the city's discourse. It is thus not surprising that the well-trying practice of applying an absolute-space-ontology to matters of planning the built environment are as well employed in the makeover of Vienna's public space. Also worth mentioning is the significant appearance of a very local scale in density-related parts of the strategy, referred to as distinct quarters and zones. Obviously, place plays an important role in envisioning the neighborhood level, potentially pointing at an already transformed understanding of space. However, it would demand a more detailed analysis to find out whether it is emphasized for being the undisputed level of action in participatory planning, or for the belief in the necessity to look at urban development through a relational perspective on place.

When it comes to an interpretive discussion of distinct statements, it is the narrative of the compact city that intrudes on the attentive reader. It is an overarching normative goal appearing throughout the strategy: "The vision for Vienna can be defined as vibrant urbanity. In many parts of the city, this has already become reality. In the next few years, many—often quite small-scale—improvements and additions will create space for greater functional density."³⁹ Here, the city's growing diversity is part of the debate (and the normative urban vision, too): "We are committed to the city as a place of condensed diversity."⁴⁰ In general, the "urban mix" of people, uses, and functions is mentioned regularly throughout the text, the endowment with easy-to-access, user-specific infrastructures being a main goal: "The Austrian capital provides the country's densest network of free-of-charge childcare facilities, a steadily growing range of public schools with whole-day care and a high density of women-specific counselling points and advancement programs."⁴¹ While such statements within a political strategy must be read carefully, as they could well be understood as self-praise of the politically accountable actors, they are still important policy-framing goals and thus co-determining planning practice.

Obviously, group-specific demands toward urban life and city space are considered important. But they rather seem to serve as justifications of the negative side effects of densification where the city positively stands out. Overall, the densification of societal and cultural difference in a growing urban population is considered as one of the main planning challenges for Vienna's future: "Vienna is also confronted with the frictions and contradictions resulting from this change—urban everyday life has become more intense, condensed and

for some more stressful; social and societal differences have become more marked and visible."⁴² In contrast, the densification of the built city and an increase of functional diversity are central to the vision. Anyhow, throughout the text density is solely referred to as a descriptive and normative category of absolute space—at least on a local scale of the city and its quarters.

Maps and figures pointing to Vienna's international embedding however, indicate confidence about the relational character of a globalized economy where Vienna is a hub among many and being part of a transnational network seems to be of importance.⁴³ This can potentially be traced back to the long-standing influence of the globalization discourse in planning theory and practice—from accounts of a network society,⁴⁴ to the conventional wisdom of inescapable inter-urban competition.⁴⁵ STEP 2025 reveals that in this regard policy-makers are well aware of the role relational conceptions of space and place play in rightly understanding and planning a city's future. Yet, analyses and concrete visions are on this scale largely underdeveloped and timid, which could be explained through the lack of influence and experience of planning on a regional and transnational scale.

Amsterdam Structural Vision 2040: Densification for a Competitive and Sustainable Metropolitan Core

Amsterdam can also be looked at as typical of a European city: monocentric, densely built, mixed, and endowed with high-ranked political and cultural functions. Just like Vienna, the Dutch capital has a historic tradition as gravitational center of economic and political power.⁴⁶ In the seventeenth century, it was one of the two European trade hubs besides Venice that led to the establishment of path-shaping urban elites.⁴⁷ Not only did military self-esteem and economic influence of the Netherlands grow, but this led to an outstanding cultural diversity in the port city that was only topped by that of London.⁴⁸ Hence, Amsterdam's current development narrative is largely backed by a history

39 Vienna City Administration, Municipal Department 18, *STEP 2025*, 35.

40 *Ibid.*, 9.

41 *Ibid.*, 22.

42 *Ibid.*, 13.

43 *Ibid.*, 71, 89, 97.

44 Castells, *Rise of the Network Society*.

45 Ian Gordon and Nick Buck, "Changing Cities: The New Conventional Wisdom," in *Changing Cities: Rethinking Urban Competitiveness, Cohesion and Governance*, ed. Nick Buck et al. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

46 Cf. the contributions in Patrick O'Brien et al., *Urban Achievement in Early Modern Europe: Golden Ages in Antwerp, Amsterdam and London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

47 Peter Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam: A Study of Seventeenth-Century Elites* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

48 *Ibid.*

of economic power and wealth that is inextricably linked to the city's transnational embedding. While Vienna, owing to the geopolitical limitations of the Iron Curtain and nationally oriented economic policy, only recently began to actively get involved in city-regional and border-crossing initiatives again,⁴⁹ Amsterdam has a long-standing tradition of comprehending itself as part of a regional metropolis—the Randstad, which because of its own history and self-conception is self-evidently embedded in a transnational context.⁵⁰ The Dutch planning culture—contrary to Austria's—is also characterized by a concerted process of developing binding plans and visions from the national to the municipal level, which demands urban strategies to incorporate a multi-scalar perspective.⁵¹ Whether, in turn, this results in a distinctly relational perspective on density planning in Amsterdam remains to be seen.

The Amsterdam Structural Vision is a long-term municipal spatial strategy. Although being a stand-alone planning document for the city, both the geographical context and Dutch planning tradition explain why it is strongly linked to a similar vision for the metropolitan area, of which Amsterdam is the core city, and a national policy strategy for infrastructure and spatial planning. The municipality's plan is thus strictly embedded in the hierarchy of the Dutch planning system, though in terms of strategic orientation the city is free to develop its very own vision.⁵² These facts and the differing time-spans the strategies of the Dutch and Austrian capital refer to also explain why Amsterdam strategy's scope is comparably narrow, focusing largely on structural (i.e., spatial) development paths, whereas STEP 2025 presents a very comprehensive and detailed development agenda. Nevertheless, density plays a similarly important role in both. Density is named the number one task to realize the envisioned competitive and sustainable city in spatial terms: "More intensive use of the space in the city will make it possible to accommodate many more people and businesses. This increases the customer base for amenities, which makes it possible to manage energy and transportation more efficiently and removes the need to infringe upon the landscape."⁵³ The overarching planning narrative is an agenda subscribed to economic growth and sustainable land use to cope with urbanization (i.e., a growing number of residents). The strategy thus calls for the densification of the city's existent physical and functional substance while simultaneously arguing for measures targeting social issues arising therefrom.

As can be seen from the lexicometric analysis (fig. 2), amenities, business, landscape, and high-rise buildings stand out as terms appearing significantly more often in the context of density than in the overall document, revealing an interesting link between densification and certain policy areas and planning goals, while the abovementioned social issues hardly appear at all. Population growth and the positioning as a metropolitan core are central drivers of the densification discourse. Here a similarity to Vienna's discourse appears.

In Amsterdam's vision, the narratives of a prospect of future urbanization and of inescapable inter-urban competition constitute the two major framing conditions of the overall strategy and, consequently, the densification goal explicated thereafter. Urban growth and the competition for unbound human and investment capital equally form the two dominant (external) influential factors and argumentative bases of Vienna's development strategy, resulting as well in the abovementioned densification aims.

Distinct statements reveal even more about actual densification goals, though the overall normative vision is clear: "Amsterdam has deliberately opted for densification of the city center. The city has not chosen for growth by increasing its surface area but for intensification of the existing urban territory and for transformation of business zones."⁵⁴ Reaching an "urban mix" is part of the vision of a compact city and most obviously an established planning goal: "As a component of densification, various monofunctional business parks will be transformed into areas with an urban mix of residential and business functions."⁵⁵ And again, the debate circles mostly around the transformation of the built city—both as a function of the densification goal and a potent agent of change: "Besides being a means to intensify land use, high-rise is also a powerful urban development instrument."⁵⁶

So Amsterdam's urban agenda—although being less of a comprehensive development strategy than a spatial perspective—does set a clear normative goal in densifying existing urban structures. In a similar manner as in the Vienna plan, the territorial embeddedness of the city in a regional and transnational context already points to a confidence of relational interpretations of space of the responsible actors. Time is hardly ever a factor seriously considered in the vision. And although societal diversity is recurrently named as one of the development challenges, the implications regarding variegated time-spaces resulting therefrom are blinded out. In summary, the actual densification debate is a mere reproduction of an absolute-space ontology, where densities are exclusively discussed as characteristics of a container and thus an objective marker of an anachronistic imagination of urbanity.

49 Stadtentwicklung Wien, *Urban Development Plan Vienna 2005*.

50 Faludi, "The Netherlands."

51 Ibid.

52 See Faludi, "The Netherlands"; and Government of the Netherlands, "Spatial Planning and Infrastructure," <https://www.government.nl/topics/spatial-planning-and-infrastructure/contents/spatial-planning-in-the-netherlands>.

53 City of Amsterdam, Department of Physical Planning, "Structural Vision: Amsterdam 2040," in *Plan Amsterdam 1* (2011), 10.

54 Ibid., 3.

55 Ibid., 10.

56 Ibid., 31.

A Relational Practice in Urban Strategy Building?

What can be distilled now from this short examination of the recent practice of strategic density planning in two European cities? Obviously the two strategy papers share a similar normative interest in the densification of their urban physical and functional substance. Both embed their strategies in comparable framings of re-urbanization, population growth, and the need for sustainable land-use planning. Density is recurrently referred to as an indispensable factor of urbanity and the idealized European city—compactly built and functionally mixed. For both, densifying the urban core is thus the suitable narrative that seems to perfectly fit such an urban development framework and constitutes the “legitimation to plan.”

The critical point though is what is understood as dense urbanity. This, in fact, is in both cases narrowed down to building volumes, functions, and people per area (i.e., the territory to be administered). Density-related statements in the documents reveal that a relational understanding of space and place has not yet touched down in density-planning debates or the strategic planning discourse at large. This impression is underlined by the table on the opposite page, which discusses the two urban strategies’ density planning regarding the abovementioned theoretical layers of relational space (fig. 3).

It becomes obvious that both urban strategies face an inconsistency in developing their narrative. Both are still largely relying on *structural* analyses to assess their future development *process*. Neither agenda is seriously embedded in a confrontation with conflicting pasts and variegated presents and the resulting projections of potential futures. At best, the clear estimations of the one future development path build on the consolidation of an anyway hegemonic narrative of *the city*, *its* history and culture, *its* business hopefuls, and a society to plan for. So both strategies are neither time- nor diversity-sensitive and thus cannot do justice to the claims of a relational-planning perspective. Concerning density planning, the absolute space ontology clearly succeeds. As argued above, density is solely referred to as growth in numbers within the administrative boundaries of each of the two urban agglomerations. What this means, in effect, is that planning success cannot but be evaluated through a quantitative increase of the density of people, capital, and opportunities within the absolute space of the city. The qualitative, people-centered dimension of variegated time-spaces, networked social life, and the production of space and place are neither regarded as valuable objects of inquiry, nor as subject to planning discourse and practice.

	Urban Development Plan Vienna 2025	Amsterdam Structural Vision 2040
Variegated Senses of Time	Hardly any processual dimension in planning themes and policy areas; variation of short-term and long-term planning goals; no differentiation of development processes or social groups regarding heterogeneous time-spaces; one envisioned development path; clear estimations of future	Mostly static; societal difference as core theme of planning vision, though varying demands toward city and differing time-spaces not jointly discussed; one envisioned development path; clear estimations of future (e.g., Olympic Games bid), though emphasis on openness of long-term vision
Networked Urban Economies	Relational conceptualization of macro-economic preconditions and planning measures (cities as hubs in transnational economic networks; inter-place competition as economic development narrative; measures for inter-urban cooperation	City as core of metropolitan area, strongly interlinked; no doubt about networked character of a globalized economy in which Amsterdam is a competitive hub with regional and (northern) European economic ties
Networked Social Life	Transnational migration to and cultural difference within city; hardly consideration of boundary-crossing sociocultural ties; implicit integration of networked society through smart city theme	“Within 30 Minutes” campaign as clear indicator of confidence about networked social life; otherwise societal issues do not appear
Place as Network of Social Relations and Understandings	Static container conception of space, economically networked on all scales, functionally networked on regional scale	Culturally produced, yet static with boundary-crossing relations toward surrounding region
Self-Reflection of Structure-Agency Nexus	Participatory, self-reflective strategy building process; no critical reflection of power geometries, political or social networks, and public discourse	Participatory, self-reflective strategy-building process; no critical reflection of power geometries, political or social networks, and public discourse

Fig. 3
Johannes Suitner, relational density planning in the development plans of Amsterdam and Vienna, 2016

But how can the narrow idea of density possibly widen to open up new possibilities for rethinking and renewing urban space? One could argue that general urban visions can hardly do justice to the claim for a diversified, detailed relational perspective on space and planning and that therefore it is the wrong platform to discuss it. Yet, both cases have shown that in some regard a relational conceptualization has already entered the policy debate on this general strategy level. Networked economies are intensely debated both in Vienna and Amsterdam. If overarching strategies that set the narrative for following planning initiatives do not integrate a more serious relational view of space production, new relational practices will have a tough job countering their exclusion from urban everyday life. Thus, practitioners and theorists alike participating in strategy building processes need to insist on serious discussions of the heterogeneous time-spaces, networked economies, societies and places and the structure-agency nexus that altogether constitute our cities today. Otherwise urban strategies will risk being weak in their goal orientation, timid in their visionary character, and failing their inclusive aspirations.

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Unframing Urban Density The Somaesthetic Cartography of Intensities

Marc Boumeester

Totipotency

The relationship between urban and architectural density suffers from a humanistic position that has been tainted by a troublesome view on its points of reference. Fredric Jameson summarizes the problem: “Architects who are seduced by this view of their vocation must then accept the human body as the ultimate criterion and build buildings to its scale. [...] The same set of values can of course also be detected in urbanism: ‘good city form,’ the ideal of the city somehow memorable and mappable (Kevin Lynch) and organized around the human body to a human scale—this is phenomenological humanism on the level of the urban itself.”¹

Jameson calls this phenomenological approach utopian, and its promise has outdated itself to a large extent. Yet what—if anything—could be an alternative point of reference to encounter and act within (urban) density? In their book *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories*, Bernard Cache and Michael Speaks claim that in the appropriate setting architecture is freed of its orthodox character as a functional sheltering and grounding entity; rather, architecture is (or should be) regained by a range of practices that favors “framing images in such a way that they induce new forms of life.”² In this view, a dynamic and fluid world emerges in the interpolated spaces between those images, in which architecture serves as the “enframing” actor, close to Heidegger’s concept of *Gestell*, which means to look “beneath” the structuring itself.³ According to Speaks and Cache, architecture first “isolates intervals (by way of the wall)”; it then “selects (using the device of the window) one of the vectors of this interval from the external topography”; and finally it “arranges this interval in such a way as to increase the probability of an intended effect.”⁴ This procedure could be considered an effect of enframing, rather than a cause. Apart from its essentialist tenure, the biggest problem with this reasoning is that the supposed reversal of the logic of causality is overlooking the *effects* of the effects, which in this case is the (metaphorical and physical) densification as a result of enframing. Any effect will become a new cause—in fact both cause and effect should be considered as being the same. In this view, density exists already before it exists, yet it is contingent if it would be actualized.

Density can be seen as a property-related entity, whereas *intensity* indicates a field of potentiality and relationality. This does not mean that one is grounded

1 Frederic Jameson, “Is Space Political?” in *Rethinking Architecture*, ed. Neil Leach (1979; repr. London: Routledge, 2010), 255.

2 Bernard Cache and Michael Speaks, *Earth Moves: The Furnishing of Territories* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), xvii.

3 Heidegger phrases *Gestell* in an active manner, where the word normally holds the meaning of apparatus or instrument. In this way *Gestell* gains a performative character; it actively gathers and structures with the intent to reveal and present.

4 Cache and Speaks, *Earth Moves*, xviii.

in reality and the other is not. Central to my argument is the premise that the virtual and the actual are both seen as being reality, and that there is nothing beyond this reality. The actual exists and the virtual “subsists”; it can be energy, material, motion, or a concept, but in any case it is real. The actual is always discrete and extensive (topographical); contrariwise the virtual is intensive (topological) and creative. We could consider the intensive as an independent ontological register, one that mediates the virtual and actual. Rather than redefining density in terms of causality, addressing this issue might benefit from a replacement of the essentialist reductionism by a relational inclusivism (intensive thinking). The starting point of this approach is the idea that everything is contingently obligatory and not logically necessary. The theorem of logical necessity suffers from the critical flaw that comes with the oversimplification of the complexity of forces, drives, agencies, and antagonisms that concretely form the fabric of life. The focus needs to be on life as a dynamic creativity (assemblage) rather than on the environment (territory) itself. Philosopher Brian Massumi explains: “It may seem odd to insist that a relation has an ontological status separate from the terms of the relation. But as the work of Gilles Deleuze repeatedly emphasizes, it is in fact an indispensable step toward conceptualizing change as anything more or other than a negation, deviation, rupture, or subversion.”⁵

Cinematic theory and practice have proven to be a helpful instrument for the analysis and understanding of (urban) density.⁶ Its reversal of the space-time axis supports the shift from an object-based vision to an intensity-based mode of exploration, from which many types of (urban) cartography can emerge. Not the Cartesian or phenomenological agency of mapping, but the onto-epistemological mapping of agencies.

As I have argued elsewhere, the critical flaw in the exploration of the relation between media typologies lies in the framing. If regarded as a medium—as was suggested above—architecture is already a crystallization of an intensity. The true potential lies in that which is not yet framed, not yet designated, therefore the critical weakness is the assumption that the common ground for the comparison of different media lies in the part that is (evidently) in the frame. The only way to approach the problem of enframing is to remain on the middle ground, being neither object nor subject, neither figure nor ground. Or as Deleuze and Félix Guattari put it: “Proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing. [...] The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed.”⁷

The frame is thus by definition not the mutual denominator; rather, the emphasis should lie on what is *not* in the frame. We should focus on the metaphorical terrain outside of the frame—in this case specifically the state *before* and *from* which density emerges. In this field we find the intensities themselves

(virtuality) before actualization and before densification. Intensities are non-actualized realities that are rendered visible by the media they are expressed in. Some would call this field “inspiration,” but this suggests a hylomorphic relation between the artist and the medium.⁸ I call this “meta-mediality,” which is a state where the form of content emerges, yet still without a fully crystallized form of expression. A next stage is what Daniel W. Smith refers to as “totipotency,” which is the potential (within the actualized) to assume different entities. This is not the actualization of potential—both the prior and the after are already materialized (form of content)—it is the shaping into another ontology of already actualized matter, or in this case it is nonspecific density. Cartography is a useful instrument for the exploration of meta-media and totipotency, which reveals much more of density than focusing on density itself: the mapping of agencies.



Fig. 4
Michela Mattioni, *Untitled*, 2012

- 5 Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 70.
- 6 See Marc Boumeester, “Camera Eye: Cinematic Studio Research into Architectural Practice,” in “Architecture Film,” ed. Igea Troiani and Hugh Campbell, special issue, *Architecture and Culture* 3, no. 1 (March 2015).
- 7 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 25.

- 8 Aristotle considers every physical being as a compound of matter and form. Matter is what undergoes a change of form, a soul is a form (a specifying principle or cause) of a living thing. In the practice of the artist, the “ensoulment” of matter is a human intervention, therefore under the concept of “hylomorphism,” human and matter are not considered to be on the same ontological plane.

Somaesthetics

How, then, is it possible to search for potential and totipotent density with an intensive (topological) outlook rather than from a (traditional) extensive (topographical) perspective? First, it is helpful to set this line of thought apart from the phenomenological standpoint. As I have argued above, both the actualized (that which is a present entity, tangible or non-tangible) and the virtual (that which has the potential to be actualized) are part of reality. A tree is an actualized outcome of a very long process of evolution; a car crash is an actualized outcome of an inherited potential that comes with motorism. Both actual states and their preceding potential are part of reality. Most crucial for the understanding of intensive thinking is that it entails the constant readiness to engage every situation (actualized or virtual) from within the milieu. That means to say, to regard each thing on the basis of its relation to others (its exteriority of relations), rather than to prioritize its properties. This leads to the constant awareness of the assemblages one is part of. Explicitly this means including the “observer” as part of the assemblage, because these observations can only be made subjectively. Intensive thinking involves the fullest possible spectrum of sensory information, making way for a total somaesthetic awareness. This means that any experience reaches us through a multitude of sensory channels, including the non-actualized. This subjective and whole-hearted engagement with other bodies (object, elements, life forms) in our surrounding environment means that we no longer speak of the experience of something (there is no external experience), but rather of experience *as being* something. This implies the abandoning of the phenomenological perspective. Intensive thinking can be a program to open up new ways in artistic and design processes, but it can also be purely a sterile exercise, with no need to push for a tangible outcome.

It would be understandable to associate the enhancement of senses and the extrapolation of knowledge gained by sensory learning with phenomenological thinking, yet phenomenology rests partly on a set of assumptions that are not in line with intensive thinking (and affect theory in general). First and foremost, there is the issue of consciousness as the unique mode of gaining awareness of experience, knowledge of experience, and the charging of experience. There is no need or even a possibility to regard consciousness as the instrument of qualifying experience. Secondly, central in my argument is the call for a fundamental shift from the anthropocentric supremacy of experience *through* some type of understanding to a nonhuman specific multichannel “non-understanding” of experience. This involves the undoing of a reduction of the sensory involvement to an instrument of information transferal. And this needs a reestablishing of the somaesthetic experience as a self-standing and self-referential entity, which does not involve the conscious to be significant. The shift from the anthropocentric domain to an open ecological system is a movement that is not provided by phenomenology.

Phenomenology recognizes the division of mental and physical properties. It would not fit my objectives to stick to the Cartesian duality, in which the separation between mind and matter is either fundamental (complete division) or derivative (permeable division). Under the reign of affect theory, properties are secondary; therefore, any division on basis of properties would not be adequate. Yet to adopt a monistic view would not serve either, as I already indicated that the central premise in my argument is that the realm of the virtual and the realm of the actual both stem from the same fabric. In fact, they are part of the same; the mind is the invention of the body and vice versa.

Cartography

With these propositions set, it becomes clear how this relates to our *intensive* take on density. The designated instrument for this is (cinematic) intensive cartography, which is clearly set apart from (extensive) mapping. Cartography creates a reality based on experience, while mapping creates a representation of a perception of reality. This is why cartography and cinema have much in common, yet cartography has the option to include all bodily senses (somaesthetic) in its experience. Massumi stresses that any theory of media or culture must take affect into account. Especially in the context of new media art and technology, the focus needs to shift from the taxonomy of object-related properties to the experience of movement and the interrelations between the senses. The significance of the structuralist signifier needs to make room for an “asignifying philosophy of affect.”⁹ Somaesthetics deal with reality, and its affects do not need to be based on systems of representation. Instead of creating a false duality between intensity and signification, we need to regard both as being operands that can act directly. This means that for something to act, it does not have to signify anything to be significant. Philosopher Baruch Spinoza considered “affecting” and “affected” as being a single force, drawing affect closer to proto-action. Proto-action can be seen as the aptitude to create capacity for affective interrelations, an alignment for an affording constellation that allows for singularity. For Deleuze and Guattari a body can be human or nonhuman, organic or inorganic, a social construction or a virtuality. This body has no meaning or veracity before its existence through external networks, connections, and affects. In other words, according to Deleuze, “The minimum real unit is not the word, the idea, the concept or the signifier, but the assemblage.”¹⁰ Architectural theorist Sanford Kwinter describes

9 Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, 27.

10 “The utterance is the product of an assemblage—which is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities,

territories, becomings, affects, events.” Gilles Deleuze, “On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature,” in *Dialogues* (1977; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 51.

singularity as “those critical points or moments within a system when its qualities and not just its quantities undergo a fundamental change.”¹¹ A singularity *can* produce density, but this is only to be established a posteriori. Density draws on the deterministic domain of quantification to reveal its boundaries; intensity draws on the somaesthetic denominator of reality to reveal its capacities.

Cartography is an instrument to describe a relation between a body, its niche, and the assemblage.¹² Asignifying cartography falls under the “empirical umbrella” of intensive thinking, a mode of somaesthetic perception that is operating in both the physical and mental realms, or better put, in the virtual (that part of reality that is real, albeit not actualized) and the actual (that part of reality that is both real and actualized). To exemplify this we take a train ride from one station to another and describe this in terms of duration of exposure to a certain landscape. This could look like: 5 percent station, 5 percent urban, 10 percent urban sprawl, 60 percent grassland, 10 percent urban sprawl, 5 percent urban, and 5 percent station. We could produce maps and images to support this view and reproduce this as a depiction of reality. That is extensive cartography. Yet, if we would describe the journey in terms of intensive thinking, we need to take into account the assemblage of the spectator, including all non-actualized elements that work in that constellation. For instance, the mood of the passenger (in eager anticipation or sad departure) or the goal (travel as means or travel as end), personal interests (shopping addict or rural explorer), temperature (comfortable or not), crowdedness (nice girls/boys across the aisle or next to a smelly neighbor), weather conditions (beautiful snow or bleaching sunshine), and many more elements that form the experience of that journey. A map of the landscape in intensive terms then could show, for instance, 30 percent station, 10 percent urban, 0 percent urban sprawl, 10 percent grassland, 5 percent urban sprawl, 10 per-



Fig. 5
Martje Roks, *Untitled*,
2012

cent urban, and 35 percent station. This is a reversal of the space-time axis: there is no prerogative of either time or space to be linear or continuous when it comes to experience. This type of cartography is very close to the instrument of cinema; all elements are only measured against their own capacities, and no single piece of information about the whole body is ever discarded. No reduction of information is applied (as in the case of representation), nor is there a privileged scale. Yet the relationality of the body has become the main indicator of analysis. This is why it is called asignifying cartography; it does not signify (represent) anything else, yet it maps what is significant, or singular. It shifts the perception from the illusion of objectivity to an empirically embedded, embodied, extended, enacted, and affective perspective. As feminist theorist Karen Barad argues: “Agential realism grounds and situates knowledge claims in local experiences: objectivity is literally embodied.”¹³

Deleuze and Guattari offered us the “body without organs” as an abstract machine and an instrument to put intensive thinking into action. To comprehend the strength of intensive thinking as a mode of analysis and major nexus in synthesis, it is imperative to understand the concept of flow. Flow as I describe it here it here, is not only the type of surplus energy that arises from the organization of matter (e.g., aquatics) or the patterns formed by the collisions of different types of energy (e.g., thermodynamics). Flow is not only the statistical chain that produces different phenotypes on the basis of identical genotypes; flow is not only the stream of people that make their way through the rainy streets to do their Christmas shopping, or the organization of goods and labor that provides for that. Flow is all that and much more. It consists of both the virtual and the actualized and manifests itself through becoming, which is indiscrete and contingent as opposed to noncontinuous and essential. It operates not on the level where the action is taken, but on the level where the ability for taking action is created (fig. 5).¹⁴

11 Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 13.

12 “What distinguishes the map from the tracing is that it is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real. The map does not reproduce an unconscious closed in upon itself; it constructs the unconscious. [...] The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art,

constructed as a political action or as a meditation.” Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 12.

13 Karen Barad, “Meeting the Universe Halfway,” in *Feminism, Science and the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Lynn Hankinson Nelson and Jack Nelson (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991), 179–80.

14 See Andrej Radman and Marc Boumeester, “The Asignifying Affordance of Assemblage: Enactive Embodied Embedded and Extended Urban Cartography,” *Architectural Journal* 8 (Beijing: Architectural Society of China, PR China, 2012): 13–23.

Practice

In this last section, an example will be given of the way intensive thinking and somaesthetic (cinematographic) cartography can be put to use in a design process. I have been working with these notions and theories in the context of educational programs in the field of art and design for many years, and it is essential to mention that the completeness of these theories and their heuristics could only have evolved through the intensive collaboration with my students.¹⁵ Pedagogy in the traditional sense would include methodology of transfer that takes a strong part of representation to be effective. I therefore believe that we can only use pedagogy in its most *unessential* way. This means that learning needs to be caused by direct experience, allowing for a multitude of outcomes, and not work toward a predefined result. This type of learning is called “pedagogy of the senses.” Philosopher Inna Semetsky draws on Massumi when she explains this concept: “Experience is not confined to a personal Cogito of a Cartesian subject but represents an experiment with the enviroing world: we can, and should, learn from experience. Experience is that quasi-objective milieu which provides us with the capacity to affect and to be affected; it is a-subjective and pre-personal.”¹⁶

Obviously this type of learning has many practical obstacles, yet I have proved that under the right conditions it is possible to actually facilitate this type of learning within a traditional learning framework, such as a university or art school. Rather than to introduce another fixated paradigm in design education, it would be best to go to the core of the argument. This means that we don’t need to translate most of the abstraction for them to be useful in design education. We turn to design *to the power of philosophy* and not to the philosophy of design. Learn by teaching; teach by learning. Many educational methods are based on knowledge and skill development that is directly related to either medium-specificity or tradition, which is classifiable as “property-lead” thinking. Set against the backdrop of the parameters introduced earlier, it makes much more sense to organize education along the lines of relational thinking. Do not ask what a medium is, but ask yourself: What does a medium (or a notion or a concept) *do*?

The following example of a design studio (MSc) was called “The Assignifying Affordance of Assemblage; A Heuristic of the Energetics of the Exteriority of Relations” (or AAA for short) and rolled in 2012/13. The AAA project consisted of a colloquium, introductory lectures, collective viewings, collective field work, and studio sessions. This graduation studio had as its topic the redesign of the faculty of architecture itself, which had been destroyed by fire in 2008. The choice for this subject was not to indulge in a type of self-glorification—on the contrary. By focusing on the exact topic where the education took place (intensive), by incorporating the mental and physical properties of the

learning environment in the process of learning, we wanted to close the circle as much as possible (as described above). After an extensive theoretical introduction of several weeks, the participants started by mapping the site and its larger setting. Initially this was done on basis of an exploration of the senses, in an exercise called the “six-minute workshop.” During this workshop, participants were asked to explore the area for one minute using all of their senses, one at a time. That meant concentrating on one sensorial input as much as possible (by blocking others, for instance). The territory was mapped on the basis of the five most common senses, and the sixth sense. The results were noted and discussed afterward. This extraordinary perception is seen as a purification of the general perception, not hindered and spoiled by overflow and (mis)interpretation through sensory replacement. With this I mean the notion that information gained through one or more senses is wrongfully extrapolated to be valid for all senses. In other words, something looks disgusting, therefore we automatically assume it will smell or taste disgusting as well, or the other way around. This perceptive dissonance or perceptive resonance is blocking opportunities to explore in and through design. The next stage was to incorporate this mapping in their cinematographic cartography. After the first attempts, the participants were asked to remake their mapping according to a set of obstructions defined by tutors every time anew. The purpose of this procedure was to “rid ourselves of ourselves,” to become able to embrace our constraints (the Nietzschean *amor fati*), just as long as it needed to expand the initial tracing into a somaesthetic mapping and finally into an intensive cartography.

In this way the cartography became less and less extensive, making way for an exploration of extrinsic capacities/tendencies, rather than intrinsic properties. Chiseling away the number of dimensions instead of adding them allowed the participants to act within the realm of the affective (connectivity and heterogeneity) in an unprecedented free and provoking way. The attunement to the rates of change is a crucial step toward the mapping of agencies, which is not to be confused with the agency of mapping.

Many of the designs focused on the way education was organized and made propositions on how to facilitate different ways of educating, both in the pedagogical way as well as in physical interventions. The participants worked collectively but were individually responsible for specific sections of the process. This studio was not about producing specific outcomes since there was no

15 This work took place in the design studios of the faculty of architecture of the Delft University of Technology, at the Royal Academy of Arts and a number of other art and design institutes.

16 Inna Semetsky, “Deleuze as a Philosopher of Education: Affective Knowledge/Effective Learning,” in *European Legacy*, 14, no. 4 (2009): 443–56.

distinction between the process, content, and production. Intensities and densities changed places continuously. Nevertheless, it produced very concrete results, almost all with an unprecedented openness and inclusiveness. The designs incorporated all elements (both actualized and virtual) that influenced the site, turning the static notion of site-specific design into a type of "scene"-specific design, without boundaries or preconceptions.

Conclusion

At the end of this essay, the issue of perceiving density has hopefully gained more depth. As an alternative to the extensive tracing of density, I have offered an intensive cartography that has proved to be functional, both in theory and practice. Density is thus perceived as the temporal outcome of a process of actualization, as fluid and affective as the flows it emerged from. The determining factor for the formation of any type of allocated density arises from the somaesthetic experiences of the users/designers and its common ground is found by the negotiation of its somaesthetic values, instead on basis of program or functionality. This nevertheless produces highly functional programs. For this, we need different instruments that no longer center the human as a standard for measurement. Reality is not confined to that which is actualized, and the artist or designer should be able to "step out of the equation" to sense what is true potential. The asignifying cartography of intensities serves as the somaesthetic denominator in urban density, unlocking its potential by "unfocusing" on that which happens before and outside the framing.

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Atlas of Invisible Spaces

Mapping the Interface between School and City in Vienna's 15th District

Antje Lehn

Today, city space is understood as a construction in process, continually redefined by its users, rather than a static structure. In this context, this text discusses methods of visual communication connecting the built environment and the images of the city compiled by adolescents living in the 15th district in Vienna for the research project *Atlas of Invisible Spaces*. The urban planner Kevin Lynch questions how environmental images can be influenced by education in the final chapter of his book *The Image of the City*.¹ Lynch's framing suggests that there is an interconnection between contemporary city planning and architectural education. According to Martina Löw space and the consciousness of place are constituted through acts in space.² The constitution of space in public realm increases in adolescence, the period when young people start to explore the city but also spend many hours a day at school. To make the urban knowledge of adolescents visible, we combined scientific and artistic methods in an educational setting. The resulting images were superimposed in a collective map that became a communicative tool for urban perception.

Atlas of Invisible Spaces was set up in the 15th district, a dense urban fragment of Vienna with a diverse social and cultural mix.³ Its starting point was the question of how to communicate with high-school students about their local environment that is within fifteen minutes walking distance from school. At the beginning, a critical discussion of historic maps illustrated that there was no true map of the world and that every person could be the author of a valid map of his or her own. In the next step, the students were asked to draw a spontaneous map of their daily route to school, focusing on landmarks for orientation and navigation. Over one school year, the students drew different thematic maps based on their everyday perceptions; the collection of these diverse city images formed the atlas. One chapter of the atlas, curated by artist Johanna Reiner and me, focused on polyglotism. Students were asked to document the topic in the area with photographs and short interviews. The class assembled all drawings, conversations, and images into a collage superimposed with connective strings and a map key to a *Map of Multilingualism* (fig. 6).

- 1 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (1960; repr. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 156–59.
- 2 Martina Löw, *Raumsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001), 229.
- 3 The 15th district, Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus, in Vienna has the highest percentage of inhabitants with non-Austrian origin—49 percent according to the *Wien.at* website—and the lowest average income and rent. See <https://www.wien.gv.at>

[/menschen/integration/grundlagen/daten.html](https://www.wien.gv.at/menschen/integration/grundlagen/daten.html); and <https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/arbeitsmarkt/tabellen/einkommen-gesamt-bez.html>. Recently, there has been a boom in local artist initiatives and creative businesses. See Lisa Kogelnik, "Reindorf-gasse: Vom Schmutdeleck zur Kreativszene," *der Standard*, March 13, 2015, <http://derstandard.at/2000012854469/Reindorf-gasse-Vom-Schmutdeleck-zur-Kreativszene>.



Fig. 6
Antje Lehn, *Map of Multilingualism*, 2015
(Antje Lehn and Johanna Reiner with students
from high school BRgORg Henriettenplatz)

The process of mapping made the adolescents' everyday knowledge about space visible and valuable. We investigated their knowledge of public space and urban atmospheres by challenging traditional city images with an artistic cartographic survey. Opening up the field between cartography and art, we encouraged the students to use the map not only as a representation of physical space but also as a means of expressing relations between places, atmospheres, and emotions. The maps served as interfaces to discuss spatial issues on the basis of personal experience. In the beginning, the adolescents were reluctant to believe that their everyday knowledge had any relevance, as it usually seemed unappreciated in school. We encouraged the students to tell us what they know and to start believing in their own perception and expertise about their surroundings.

The students often described hand-drawn maps as inaccurate, despite the map's potential to express individual knowledge and needs, whereas conventional normative maps made by "official" authors, such as the city government or Google, were viewed to be too perfect to fail. Emphasizing the value of individual maps encouraged the students to become more independent from normative aesthetics and allowed them to express what really mattered in their daily routines. The critical and emancipatory potential of nonstandard maps beyond way-finding helped to encourage self-directed processes of learning. To reflect on the process, we combined the presentation of the final map with a discussion centered on the question, "Why draw maps?" The adolescents stated that they had gained new perspectives on their familiar environment, by exploring it with curiosity, extending the boundaries, and speaking to strangers. The discussion revealed that drawing a map of their own had empowered them to speak about their individual views of the city, taking into account multilingual identities as a matter of fact.

The *Map of Multilingualism* became part of the *Atlas of Invisible Spaces*, a collection of thematic maps focusing on the topics of place, history, and language. This ongoing collection continuously creates a palimpsest of the neighborhood that reveals the potential of diversity in this environment. With the ability to draw their own maps, the adolescents inscribed their needs and expectations into this document—as a contribution to a new process of urban negotiation. In the project, artistic tools such as drawing, sketching, and collaging were used to create fragmentary images of the city that allow for interpretation. This experience led to the conclusion that artistic mapping methods can help heterogenous groups develop a common language that tolerates different viewpoints in collective maps.

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Returning from the Future OMA's Concept of Retroactivity

Angelika Schnell

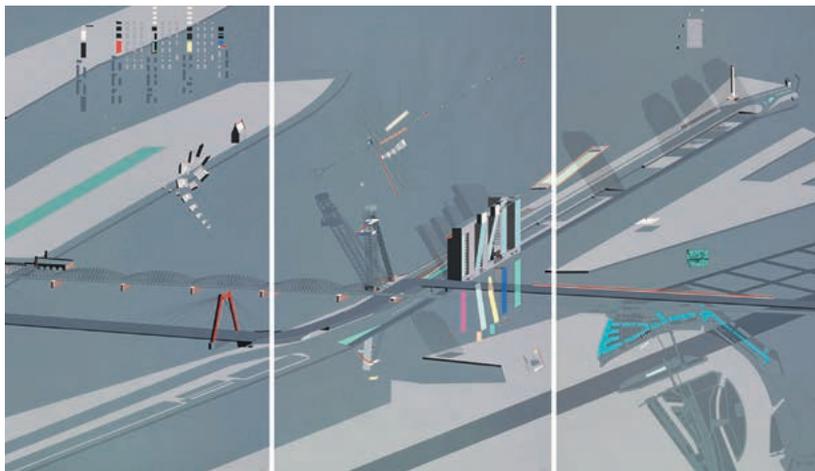


Fig. 7
OMA/Rem Koolhaas, *Boompjes Study*, 1980

In architecture, density used to be considered as a mere spatial topic. Yet, there are many reasons to reflect upon temporal density as well. In the 1960s and '70s, the overall criticism of modernism led to the rejection of utopian designs. Referring to architecture's past instead became the new paradigm of an epoch that was called postmodernism. As a consequence, the notion of time within architectural designs became highly complex and dense. On the one hand, even postmodern architects did not give up the (modern) idea of improving the world; that is, overcoming present conditions by means of future designs. On the other hand, this goal should be accomplished by quoting architectural forms of departed centuries—preferred were the eighteenth-century classical forms and languages. Hence, so-called postmodern designs very often had two oppositional arrows in time: an exterior direction that was looking at the future, and an inner direction that was oriented toward the past.

The overlapping of two different time concepts or morphologies seems to be alien to our common understanding of the notion of time, which is one-directional, be it seen mathematically or historically. But we know that there are different notions of time. Within human activities, emotional experiences, events, and narratives, various patterns and structures of time can occur that are not necessarily regular, continuous, and linear. Even the one-directional logic of causality might be irritated or reversed. With this essay I want to look at one ambitious concept of time where at least two different temporal experiences are merged, confused, and even reversed. It was introduced in architecture in the late 1970s as a sophisticated design theory and technique that allowed one to experience several layers of time and epochs at a certain site at the same time.

Designing Metropolitan Architecture

The concept that is subject to discussion here is the concept of retroactivity. It was Rem Koolhaas who introduced it in a programmatic sense to architecture and urbanism. When it appeared for the first time, as a subtitle for *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan*,¹ the most common meaning of the term "retroactive," was "to take effect at a date in the past,"² which means, in the context of *Delirious New York*, a rewriting of the history of a city to reconstruct its history or to unveil certain (unconscious) desires, ideas, and theories.

¹ Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

² "Retroactive," defined in *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 1995), 871.

However, retroactivity seems to be more than a singular case and more complex. There is a key project of Koolhaas's early years as a professional architect called *Boompjes Tower Slab* or *Boompjes Study* that in *S,M,L,XL*, his first monographical overview of the year 1995, was characterized as follows: "It was OMA's first *retroactive* concept."³ It was presented in 1979, just one year after *Delirious New York* appeared and after the office was founded, carrying the promising name Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). The project is a design study for a high-rise structure at a major road called Boompjes in Rotterdam and has to be considered as Koolhaas's first contribution to metropolitan architecture, which he had analyzed already in *Delirious New York*. Manhattan's highly dense urban architecture was not only characterized as "dense," since this term used to be understood merely spatially. Koolhaas interprets Manhattan also as dense in a social and in a temporal sense, hence he calls the culture that exists in this place "culture of congestion." In effect, we may presume that retroactivity must to be one of OMA's major concepts to create metropolitan architecture; that is, a culture of congestion, as well as in a city like Rotterdam with low density and at that time without a cultural hub. But why is it necessary that an architectural design—and in particular OMA's design for a high-rise structure at Boompjes in Rotterdam—takes effect at a date in the past through the creation of metropolitan architecture? And how does it eventually work?

There are technical *and* theoretical answers to these questions. As a former scriptwriter, Koolhaas perfectly understood the inherent narrative qualities of Manhattan's architecture. Even more: in his own unique "retroactive manifesto" the act of storytelling becomes the driving force for his architectural designs. Hence, it is not surprising that Koolhaas uses writing as a crucial technique within the design process.⁴ To "subvert any narrow definition of architecture" it is supposed to be a "critical discipline" and a "literary activity" too.⁵ For almost all design projects he creates plots—dramas, fairy tales, diary notes, and so forth—that interweave contextual facts and myths that often go beyond architecture. They involve imaginary processes of all kinds as well as activities and desires of real persons, among them also the architect himself. These carefully knotted stories make no distinction between the narrative material of architecture and that of people—both are presented as equal "actors"—so that the design at the same time provides a new interpretation of context and past and appears to be the logical happy ending of the tale. In Koolhaas's words: "The words liberate the design. Our best and most inventive projects are emerged from a rather literary conception, from which the whole program is derived."⁶ Hence, it seems to be necessary to learn the story to understand the "retroactive concept" of the architecture.

The story of the *Boompjes Study* is not simply about the (hi)story of architecture. Therefore we always have to be aware that it will not be sufficient to analyze

and interpret the design—the first *retroactive* concept—only formally. However, when it was shown at the "Deconstructivist Architecture" exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1988, curators Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley focused on the story of its formal language. For them, the design consists of a row of five towers with different angles in sections "distorted by a slab."⁷ Tower and slab are references to Rotterdam's postwar modernism. At the same time, the way they deviate to and from each other seems to ridicule modernist architecture. This "struggle" creates unexpected gaps—narrow or wide views of the river Maas—and irregular floor layouts for the apartments and the public facilities such as a kindergarten, a school, a hotel, a health center, and a swimming pool. The design's formal instability apparently represents the office's critical position toward modernism, but it is still not possible to discover its retroactive concept.

The Design and Its Story

Approaching retroactivity asks for a careful reading of the text "Soft Substance, Harsh Town" written by Koolhaas.⁸ It consists of fourteen scenes that are not chronologically ordered. The writing constantly jumps between the tenses (present simple, past simple, past perfect) and accordingly switches narrative perspectives. Obviously, this temporal back and forth seems to have a secret relationship with the spatial "zig-zag" organization of OMA's high-rise design proposal. We might presume that it leads us toward a better understanding of retroactivity.

Scene one written in present simple, introduces the author, Koolhaas himself, who formulates his thoughts (should I stay? should I go?) in his diary. He writes about one day in 1979 where "an event intervenes." We learn in scene two and three that a city councillor, who seems to be very impressed by *Delirious New York*, has a generous gift for Koolhaas. The hero (Koolhaas) may choose

3 Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, *S,M,L,XL* (Rotterdam: O10 publishers, 1995), 543.

4 Koolhaas's writings are characterized as a "unique quality" of his work. See, among others, Véronique Patteeuw, ed., *Considering Rem Koolhaas and the Office for Metropolitan Architecture: What Is OMA?* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2003).

5 Rem Koolhaas, in conversation with Franziska Bollerey, "... Immer wieder eine Mischung von Verführung und Ungenießbarkeit ins Spiel bringen," *Bauwelt*, nos. 17–18 (1987): 628, 633.

6 "Die Worte befreien den Entwurf. Unsere besten und originellsten Projekte

entstehen aus einer eher literarischen Konzeption heraus, aus der sich dann das gesamte architektonische Programm ableitet." Rem Koolhaas, in conversation with Nikolaus Kuhnert, Philipp Oswalt, and Alejandro Zaera Polo, "Die Entfaltung der Architektur," *ARCH+* 117 (1993): 33. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

7 Philip Johnson and Mark Wigley, eds., *Deconstructivist Architecture* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988), 46.

8 "Soft Substance, Harsh Town," in Koolhaas and Mau, *S,M,L,XL*, 518–43.

a site in Rotterdam, wherever he likes, to develop a housing study there. He selects an extremely narrow no-man's-land wedged between the Maas, a canal, and Boompjes road where—as we will learn later—the architectural and the political past have become merged to create a complicated “psychic volume.” In 1979 the site undergoes a major transformation because the nineteenth-century Willemsbrug (a bridge across the Maas near the chosen site) should be replaced by a new one (it was finally built in 1981). Instead of crossing the Maas and entering the city directly, the new bridge has several “inexplicable” ninety-degree turns, which for Koolhaas is evidence of the powerless politics of the 1970s and '80s: “Politics, no longer able simply impose its will, surrenders to real and imagined resistance.”

Scene four is written in the past simple, even though we are jumping forward to the year 1995, the year *S,M,L,XL* was published. What we read is not a diary anymore but rather a short historical essay about the violent and ambivalent history of Rotterdam's city center. In 1940 the German bombs left a “three-kilometer crater”; according to Koolhaas, this provided the basis for rebuilding the center with modernist architecture. He does not use the word “trauma” but makes it clear that from the planners' perspective that the memory of the deadly bomb needed to be repressed: “No crater, no city.”

The historical essay turns into a narrative in scene five. We learn that in the following decades some architects and planners were bothered by the low-dense modernist architecture of Rotterdam that covered the area where the crater had been. Their see-saw approval and disapproval of modernist architecture continued the architectural infill of the center afterward. These back-and-forth movements are described as trivial Oedipus drives (troubling the father's generation) and led to the “schizophrenic” situation in which the city became “condemned ideologically yet in every sense popular.”

Scene six to eleven is about the design process. It is partly written as Koolhaas's personal diary (“my site”), either in 1995 and therefore in the past simple and past perfect, or in 1979 in the present simple. In addition to the text descriptions of the design progress, the black-and-white pictures become more important. We see the interplay of the different stadiums of the rough styrofoam models of five towers that seek maximum height, maximum transparency, and maximum density at the same time—for example, we learn that “density is increased” because two of the towers tend to fall. Obviously the design seems to be almost done—formally and spatially—in scene eleven, but we still don't get to the bottom of the story yet.

In scene twelve, we encounter a new narrative shift, again from a narrator's perspective. Owing to the important history behind the old Willemsbrug, where “Dutch blood [had] been spilled” in the Second World War, OMA decided

to add another tower to the design. This sixth tower should be one of the steel-box girders of the old Willemsbrug that would be erected upright as a “utilitarian” monument, in remembrance of the war monument *City without Heart* by Ossip Zadkine. The monument, according to Koolhaas, was too “embarrassing for Dutch culture” and was removed from the site. To “guarantee the necessary depth,” the operation of erecting the former box girder as monument tower had to take place during a “full moon, spring tide.” It obviously announces the paradoxical summit of the story that will be reached in scene thirteen, written in past simple.

Finally Koolhaas realizes that “suddenly” the just-criticized impotence of Rotterdam's politics turned into “genius”: “Unintentionally, the politicians had designed a major urban experience: [...] The absurd trajectory [of the new bridge] created a predictable sequence of perception—an early unfolding, an accordion movement that made the composition of ‘towerslab’ infinitely dynamic.” Now we are able to understand what a retroactive design concept might be. The reason for the city planners' decision to create a zig-zag course of the new bridge, which was the earlier event, was finally recognized in the later event of OMA's design scheme. The cause was produced in the aftermath of its effects: A comes after B. But to understand the full meaning of it and to experience its density, one has to be aware of the complete story: the trauma of the bombing during the war, the role of the bridge when Dutch soldiers were desperately defending the city, the ambivalence of modernist architecture that prefers a blank slate, politicians who oscillate between omnipotence and incompetence, and the architects' own (skeptical) involvement in postmodernism (i.e., deconstructivism). All that coincides temporally within that one design scheme simply called *Boompjes Study*.⁹

There is an axonometric view of the whole area that visualises that magical moment. It only shows the relevant buildings—the new Willemsbrug, the erected box girder of the old bridge as “utilitarian” monument and OMA's “tower slab”—and above them the “unintentionally” created “sequence of perception” (obviously from a car driver's perspective), which floats like a choreographed swarm of birds in the sky. But oddly enough, and as they liked to point out, there is something almost illegitimate going on: the buildings' shadows drop into the wrong direction.

⁹ See the OMA website: <http://oma.eu/projects/boompjes>, accessed February 21, 2016.

Nachträglichkeit

Despite the drawing's surreal atmosphere, the retroactive story has a temporal logic. It is created in the future perfect (tense): something will have been! Koolhaas's literary design technique not only takes effect in the past, it also might be understood as "return from the future." But one main question remains: Is the story only the product of the architect's phantasy, or does it really change our understanding of cities by introducing a new temporal concept that undermines our conventional understanding of linear and deterministic time processes?

In a late review of *Delirious New York*, Frances Hsu realized that Koolhaas's use of the term "retroactive" might be linked to Freud's concept of trauma, or *Nachträglichkeit*: a traumatic event will only register through a later event in life that gives meaning to it.¹⁰ Hsu refers to Hal Foster, who has broadened Freud's concept and has discussed it in art history.¹¹ Even though in the English standard edition of Freud's oeuvre *Nachträglichkeit* is translated as "deferred action" instead of "retroactivity,"¹² Hsu's argument seems plausible. *Nachträglichkeit* hints at the specific temporality of retroaction: it can be seen "as consisting of two inseparable phases, of anticipation and retrospection."¹³

Freud introduced the concept of *Nachträglichkeit* in "Project for a Scientific Psychology" in 1895, an essay that remained unpublished for decades.¹⁴ In this text, Freud describes the case of Emma, a young woman who could not enter a shop alone. She remembered an event that took place when she was twelve years old, thus at the threshold to puberty. She entered a shop and recognized two shop assistants who were giggling and laughing. Without knowing exactly why they were laughing, she left the shop frightened and panicked. Freud wondered why this seemingly harmless scene might have caused such a pathological symptom. After a while, he discovered another memory that had been suppressed by Emma: at the age of eight, still a child, she had been sexually abused by a shop owner when she was alone in the shop. He touched her genitals under her dress and grinned. However, she returned later to the same shop with a bad conscience, but she was not frightened at all. Freud concluded that the laughing shop assistants from scene one (the later event) reminded Emma unconsciously of the grinning shop owner, which he called scene two (the previous event). But now, because of the later event, Emma, as an adolescent, started to understand the sexual assault of the previous scene. Still in her unconscious, this memory had been transformed into anxiety. Freud discovered, that it was the memory that caused the symptom and the trauma rather than the original event: "Here we have the case of a memory arousing an affect which it did not arouse as an experience, because in the meantime the change [brought about] in puberty had made possible a different understanding of what was remembered. [...] We invariably find that memory

is repressed which has only become a trauma by *deferred action*."¹⁵ Hence, the meaning of events does not lie in an individual, but is rather dependent on the contextual systems that confer meaning to him or her. In a letter to Fliess Freud later described the specific temporality again: "Our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory traces is being subjected from time to time to a *re-arrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances—to a *re-transcription*."¹⁶ And it is obvious that this re-transcription might become material reality.

Freud's discovery of the concept of *Nachträglichkeit* remained unnoticed until, in 1953, Jacques Lacan revealed its radicality. In French, it was called *après-coup*, which is closer to retroactivity and eventually was defined by Jean Laplanche: "The notion of *après-coup* is important for the psychoanalytical conception of temporality. It establishes a complex and reciprocal relationship between a significant event and its resignification in afterwardsness, whereby the event acquires new psychic efficiency."¹⁷ Since then it has been controversially discussed among psychoanalysts, philosophers, film theorists, and historians arguing in favor of a complex temporality to overcome traditional historicist methods.¹⁸ A key issue is the question of whether *Nachträglichkeit* is a "deterministic" or a "hermeneutic" model, as Laplanche has put it. The deterministic model supposes that the retroactively constructed material "is

10 Frances Hsu, "Delirious New York: A Retroactive Manifesto for Manhattan," *Journal of Architectural Education* 2 (2011): 64, 69–70.

11 See Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996).

12 Sigmund Freud, "Project for a Scientific Psychology," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1966), 356.

13 Haydée Faimberg, "Après-coup," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 86 (2005): 2.

14 Sigmund Freud, "Entwurf einer Psychologie," in Freud, *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse* (London: Imago Publishing, 1950).

15 Freud, "Project for a Scientific Psychology," 356. "Es liegt hier der Fall vor, daß eine Erinnerung einen Affekt erweckt, den sie als Erlebnis nicht erweckt hatte, weil unterdes die Veränderung der Pubertät ein anderes Verständnis des Erinnerung ermöglicht hat. Dieser Fall ist nun typisch für die Verdrängung bei der Hysterie.

Überall findet sich, daß eine Erinnerung verdrängt wird, die nur nachträglich zum Trauma geworden ist. Ursache dieses Sachverhalts ist die Verspätung der Pubertät gegen die sonstige Entwicklung des Individuums." Sigmund Freud, "Entwurf einer Psychologie," 435.

16 Freud, letter 52, letter to Wilhelm Fliess, December 6, 1896, in Strachey, ed., *Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 233. Extracts from the Fliess papers. "Ich arbeite mit der Annahme, daß unser psychischer Mechanismus durch Aufeinander-schichtung entstanden ist, indem von Zeit zu Zeit das vorhandene Material von Erinnerungsspuren eine Umordnung nach neuen Beziehungen, eine Umschrift erfährt." Sigmund Freud, *Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess 1887–1904* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1986), 217.

17 Jean Laplanche, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, "Nachträglichkeit (Après-coup)," in *Das Vokabular der Psychoanalyse* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973).

18 For a brief summary see, for example, Foster, *Return of the Real*, and in particular the author's introduction.

causally and directly related to the factual reality of a past event [...]. The hermeneutic model supposes that the material [...] is only a subjective construction from the present which [becomes] projected back in time."¹⁹

Reading the last but one sentence of Koolhaas's plot for the *Boompjes Study*—"It was OMA's first *retroactive* concept, the beginning of an exhausting bombardment of idealization with which we tried to maintain a marginal advantage vis-à-vis our own increasing revulsion."²⁰ One certainly might label OMA's concept as hermeneutic. It seems as if Koolhaas even constructed an instable psychic situation to almost omnipotently control the opposed temporality of the design process. Naturally, this subjective constructivism evokes criticism. For example, William Saunders reproached Koolhaas for constantly "over-reading" reality whenever it did not match the latter's poetic ambitions. Despite the many references to psychological conditions, Koolhaas missed the "otherness."²¹

Obviously, this is the core of Koolhaas's technique of "writing" the design process: it treats the material reality of architecture as if it were an element of a symbolic reality—such as in a dream or an unconscious language. In particular, modernist architecture seems to be less a material heritage but rather a sign system simply consisting of towers, slabs, and boxes (signifiers) that are expected to be manipulated. Looking again at the presentation of OMA's *Boompjes Study* in *S, M, L, XL*, in scenes eight, nine, ten, and eleven we see them as typical rough styrofoam models that successively become meaningful by a cinematographical layout, which lets them perform like the Rockettes' ballet in *Delirious New York*. Scene after scene, we follow the architects in their panicked search for the perfect shape, a play that demonstrates the design of architecture as an endless narcissistic activity. Eventually, density will usually be experienced as a psychic event, as suspense, as pressure, as congestion. The other may be repressed, but the plot and the images are published to be read by others. The circular logic of Koolhaas's hermeneutic model—the designs are the story that caused the effects in the past—includes (unconsciously or not) criticism by transference. We—readers, spectators, analysts?—are invited to *nachträglich* give meaning to the blank models and their "enigmatic message." But not simply as readers: we become the new context—and from here the story might start again.

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Density of Sound, Sounds of Density An Experimental Approach

Jürgen Schöpf and Nicolas Remy

Density in Acoustics

The density of sound energy is defined mathematically as the sound energy per unit volume. In the international metric system (SI), its unit is pascal (Pa), or joule per cubic meter (J/m^3). The density of sound is also linked to other acoustic parameters, for example, acoustic intensity, sound pressure, the speed of sound, and sound velocity. Derived from this, sound propagation can be modeled as the propagation of sound particles. This has proved to be quite efficient for urban acoustic simulations and is used in several software applications. Sound pressure is usually expressed by the use of Leq and dB(A), well known to scientifically describe the “loudness” of an environment. However, for several reasons the scientific measure of intensity can be related to the human perception of loudness, or volume, only in a very unsatisfactory manner. The complexity of this relationship can be described physiologically and psychologically. However, the scientific definitions cannot be used directly to describe human perception of sound, a basic fact that will run through this essay.

Applied to the human perception of sound, density can be used in two ways: first, as density in time, represented by the number of discernible perceptive events in a certain span of time (e.g., the number of cars passing per minute). Imagine the scene where you walk through a forest and you can hear your own footsteps, the wind blowing different species of trees, and perhaps some animals that make sounds or move. It might be an example of high density in terms of the variety and number of sounds heard per time. This scene, we assume, will be judged as agreeable in Western culture. In contrast, imagine a scene where you stroll through a big shopping center; this soundscape will also be highly dense in terms of appearance and disappearance of sounds over time, as described scientifically, but it will differ largely from the former example in nature, in human perception, and judgment. The scientifically measurable density in time may be very similar in both examples, and thus cannot explain the different reactions of humans to the two soundscapes described. A case in point of the previous paragraph is that the scientific definitions cannot help us understand the perception and evaluation of sound in the human mind. Let us try some more concepts that might help to grasp such differences of judgment and validation.

The concept of density also applies easily to the composition of sounds, or more precisely to their spectral composition. Any natural sound can be described, according to Joseph Fourier (1768–1830), as an interference of a limited number of sinusoid components. The total set of the sinusoidal components of a single sound are called the spectrum of this sound. It is defined by the sinusoidal frequencies contained and their respective intensity. The spectrum of a sound forms an important part of what is known as “timbre.” This theorem is nowadays widely used in the scientific analysis of sound, and can be visualized

as two-dimensional spectrums (frequency-intensity) or as three-dimensional spectrograms (time-frequency-intensity).¹ These visual representations can directly be described with the notion of density. However, a mere visual comparison of the above examples of the forest walk and the shopping mall may look surprisingly similar. In human perception, complex sounds can either be pleasant or unpleasant because of a number of factors. Thus a visually dense spectrum does not necessarily mean stress and negative judgment (e.g., imagine a symphony orchestra). On the other hand, the lowest spectral and temporal density imaginable, a sinus wave, can drive us crazy, or wake us from a deep sleep (an alarm clock). Another example comes from car-tire manufacturers: they intensively work on tire profiles so that they produce an indistinct broadband noise. In production, the simplest solution, that is, tires with a regular profile, would produce very distinct pitches that are considered unacceptable.

Density in Musicology

Since we have mentioned a symphony orchestra—how about the concept of density in music? Density is used in musicology, describing scores and performances, but does not appear as an item in the standard reference works on music, and the discipline of musicology has not developed a definition for density. It appears inappropriate if not impossible to define a measure of density to place all music on its scale, nor is it providing a validation per se. And what would be the opposite of dense? Airy? Light? Thin? Density is apparently too unspecific to become a *terminus technicus* in music research.

Since the humanities do not use this term, let us go back to our brains, which can easily distinguish two different sound events at the same time if they differ in their spectral properties. How else would it be possible that we can hear the ringtone of our cell phones in noisy environments? It is possible because the background noise of cities is composed by low frequencies and our cell phones emerge from this background by prominent frequencies. Emergence not only implies the irruption of a loud sound in a low-intensity context; it also characterizes the appearance of sounds that differ in pitch, timbre, or rhythm, to some degree even if the “background” is higher in intensity than the emerging ringtone. One more reason why spectral density cannot explain the difference between the sounds heard in our walk, those in the shopping mall, and those of the symphony orchestra. Some more concepts are required for this. One has already been implied in the previous section: that is the distinction of foreground and background. This distinction has been extensively researched in gestalt psychology and applies to both the visual and aural senses, and can only be alluded to in this limited context. The distance, and therefore our ability to judge distances aurally, plays an

important part in this, but also spectral, or more comprehensively, timbral gestalts. Our brain, by its sonic experience, can reduce complex sound spectra to single percepts, events, and sources.

Another important factor for the validation of sound in the human brain is the internal organization of a spectrum. Naturally produced pitches in the human voice, a violin, or an organ, have spectral components that are arranged in the series of overtones, or harmonics. This means that the prominent pitch of a natural sound we perceive is, with few exceptions, the so-called fundamental pitch. On top of this fundamental pitch there are a series of pitches in the spectrum that are all numeric multiples of the frequency of the fundamental. Such a natural sound is usually a pleasant perception. The more non-multiples of the fundamental in the spectrum, the more noise-like it becomes (e.g., compare a “clean” electric guitar sound versus its deliberately “distorted” sound). Such rather entropic spectra attract our attention because they are related to sounds of breaking, crushing, and similar sounds of destructive actions that signal possible danger in an evolutionary perspective.

Density in Soundscape Art

As in musicology, density is not an established part of the terminology of soundscape art or research either. However, we believe it has a potential for this. Both noise abatement programs as well as the study of soundscapes in urban environments have a focus on traffic noise, the former more, the latter less. But density has not made it into a measure in this discourse, although it could easily be made one, for example, the measure of the number of cars per minute could be transformed into a more abstract concept of the number of sonic events with a certain intensity contrast toward the noise floor of that location, and the number of these events per minute could be regarded as its specific sound density.

R. Murray Schafer, the Canadian composer who made the term “soundscape” known, distinguishes—from a human perspective—keynote sounds (prevalent background sounds derived from physical properties of a place, like wind, water, etc.), signal sounds (consciously perceived foreground sounds), and soundmarks (unique sounds at a specific place, e.g., a waterfall).² In contrast, Bernie Krause very intuitively distinguishes geophony, biophony, and anthro-

¹ In addition to static spectra, timbre is defined by “transients,” quick changes in spectral components, especially at the onset of sounds.

² R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1993), glossary.

pophony according to their sources.³ A third perspective by Justin Winkler defines *Tonalität* (tonality) as the relation of a *Grundstimmung* (atmospheric or background sounds) with an *Akustisches Einzelereignis* (singular acoustic event). We find this latter distinction convincing because it can be supported from the psychology of perception in terms of the figure-ground relation (see the discussion above on gestalt psychology). Moreover, we can inform Winkler's definition to some extent with the acoustic definition where an event consists of an impulse from a mechanically active source (e.g., vocal chords, or a hammer) in combination with a passive resonance (the mouth cavity, or the blacksmith's shop), resulting in a specific spectral response, but also echo and reverb. Like this, Winkler's singular acoustic event can be associated with such an impulse (a shout, a car), whereas the *Grundstimmung* designates a specific environment (filter, resonance) represented by the physical layout of buildings, roads, trees/forests, lakes, hillsides of a specific place. Although all three definitions, Winkler's (*Grundstimmung*), Krause's (geophony), and Schafer's (sound mark), allow for active sources, we believe Winkler's concept better balances the physical reality (impulse and filter) with human psychology (gestalt, figure-ground).

Sounds in Urban Density

Urban planning is a late-arriving discipline working with the aural sense, but increasingly so. One of its dominant issues is urban-population explosion and sprawl. It can be said that the boundary between city and countryside disappears, and societies face an urbanization of the world.⁴ One possible solution is to increase the habitat density, but this leads to challenges regarding the social quality of this habitat, especially the concept of privacy. The dense habitat creates new perceptions of the environment (e.g., vertical and overhanging habitats), by offering a mixture of offices, activities, accommodations, and services, all integrated in one neighborhood. The habitat in height interacts often on the morphology of the site either as a mask, as a protection, or even as a landmark in the territory.

Residents more easily accept the density, abandoning the ideal of the single house with garden, if collective housing proposes extensions to the outside with offers of potentially interesting uses: deep balconies, large covered terraces, patios, courtyards, shared gardens. These are private spaces to entertain family and friends, enjoy the outdoors, gardening, relaxing, having fun, and so on. Whatever their use, such intermediate spaces are often heavily invested as part of the housing, while they are in between private and public space.⁵ Now, does urban density create different forms of sound or sound density? And what can we learn about the sound qualities of a site in a situation of urban density?

American musician, producer, and bio-acoustician Krause, already cited above, has made many soundscape recordings in natural environments over a number of decades. Especially in rainforest environments, easily imagined as being populated by a high diversity of species and, therefore, with diverse acoustic expressions, Krause found that the total acoustic band width is shared between the different species in a very balanced way so that in any frequency band, at some point of the day (or night), a species will use this frequency band for its communication.⁶ On the other hand, it turned out that if the spectrographic analysis showed many gaps in the total usage of the frequency bands, the species diversity was rather low. He thus convincingly claims that the spectral density can be used to judge whether a rainforest was "acoustically sane" (i.e., had a high biodiversity). Thus, spectral density becomes a measure for biodiversity. While this is easily imaginable in a rainforest, it is much less so for many other land- or soundscapes. Let's see whether this concept of linking spectral diversity to biodiversity holds in the anthroposphere.

Returning to urban planning, one answer to the world of urbanization appeared more than twenty years ago in the construction of the first eco-neighborhoods or eco-districts. Such areas are conceived to increase population density but at the same time aim to reduce environmental impact. Research on the sound management of eco-neighborhoods across countries show a relative recurrence of approaches implemented:⁷

- Protection of the area from major transport infrastructure by distancing infrastructure from sensitive buildings (not very effective); deviation of car traffic to the underground (car parks);
- Protection of sensitive buildings by small hills, screens, and/or by buildings with nonsensitive uses (parking, shopping centers, offices, etc.);
- Organization of the buildings according to their functions (home, business) to minimize travel and potential conflicts;
- Introduction of ecological public transport to the district (urban buses, bike paths, wide sidewalks);
- Urban development and furniture offering seating, rest, play (squares, parks, playgrounds, etc.);
- Massive introduction of natural elements into the development projects, with a strong presence of vegetation, a more natural treatment of urban floors (wood floors, clay stabilized, etc.).

3 Bryan Pijanowski et al., "Soundscape Ecology: The Science of Sound in the Landscape," *BioScience* 61, no. 3 (2011): 203–16.

4 Jacques Veron, *L'Urbanisation du monde* (Paris: La Découverte, 2006).

5 See in this volume Improvistos, "Post-mass Housing: Revitalization of High Density Residential Urban Areas—A Case Study in Valencia," 115.

6 Pijanowski et al., *Soundscape Ecology*.
7 Cresson-ENSAG, *Esquis'Sons!*, January 2016, <http://www.esquissons.com>.

All these principles are well-known and controlled. They are part of the minimum toolbox shared by a community of actors in Europe: architects, sound engineers, transportation engineers. The general strategy is to reduce noise, in most cases noise of transport infrastructure and/or industry, for the protection of the outskirts of a district; and the further we enter into the dense heart of the district, the more important it is to create sound situations to a human scale (sounds related to human activities, neighborhoods, and sounds of nature). We now understand that these neighborhoods offer a relatively protected environment to their residents in which sounds produced by the inhabitants and nature emerge. In this sense, can we consider these environments as an anthroposphere and use Krause's perspective to express the sound density via the concept of diversity?

Case Study

To test the above question, we performed recordings in five places in Europe in 2015.⁸ Each recording was made continuously over twenty-four hours, and mostly started around 9:40 a.m. in places where they were not reachable for other people and as far as possible away from very specific sound sources (e.g., air-conditioning devices, car parks, etc.). With the help of the STx software (see Literature), we have calculated longtime spectrographic analyses (limited by software to approximately six hours per file). The recordings can be listened on SoundCloud (SoundCloud/molemi/density) alongside maps and respective spectra that cannot be reproduced here in detail.

The third borough of Vienna qualifies as a case study, since it is a dense urban area. A wide curve of the Danube Canal encircles the former quarter of the whittawers. The recording spot was a third-floor window sill at Kegelgasse 27. There are a few trees one hundred meters away. All housefronts are in line, the pavement is approximately two meters wide, and the narrow streets are lined with parked cars. Car speeds are naturally reduced due to the narrowness of the streets. There are no parks or squares in sight or hearing distance. The predominantly historic buildings have jutties and frames around the windows, but only one directly opposite has a narrow balcony. All buildings are four stories high and have gabled roofs. Two roads in sight have through traffic, and one of them has a tramline. The absence of bigger crossings with traffic lights results in the absence of accelerating or braking noises of vehicles.



Fig. 8
Google Earth satellite view of the urban density of the district in 2016. The yellow pin marks the location of Kegelgasse 27 in Vienna.

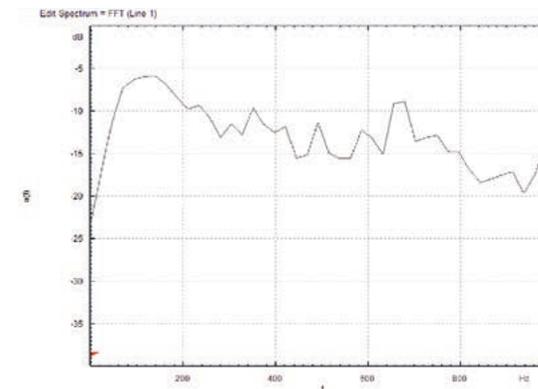


Fig. 9
Jürgen Schöpf, *Average spectrum of the Grundstimmung at Kegelgasse 27, morning of August 12, 2015*

⁸ For these recordings a boundary layer microphone (AKG C562BL) and a Tascam DR-60D audio recorder were used.

Recording settings were 48kHz sampling rate and 24Bit dynamic resolution.

A first recording was made in August 2015, and a second one in January 2016. Both average spectra of the first few hours share visually significant areas around 700Hz and 950Hz. This strengthens our view that the passive parameters of the location (i.e., layout of buildings) resonate the active impulses (i.e., traffic), and thus provide a filter that we expect to be characteristic of the location. This has been tested with the STx software that allows measured spectra, in return, to be used as filters. In this way, the measured average spectrum of the Grundstimmung was used to filter a sample of white noise. The result matches the original recording and we believe this to prove that with this method we are able to establish the Grundstimmung of Kegelgasse 27, and this method can be generalized to establish the Grundstimmung of any place.⁹ This is, we believe, an interesting result, and complements Winkler's theory. However, Krause's find of the relation of density and diversity is so significant to the rainforest situation that it cannot be transferred to this case: the human species and its technical creations dominate an important part of the total bandwidth (especially lower frequencies), and many other (higher) frequency bands remain unused. The species diversity is low in the urban anthroposphere, while some frequency bands are filled with "noise" (waste sound energy of traffic due to technical inefficiencies) instead of highly efficient information density in the example of the rainforest.

Sonic Effects

These reflections mainly concern the qualities of the physical sound signal, but can one say of the perception of sound density by the average person in town? The last section dealt with spectrographic analysis of averages over time, but now we would also like to look at the dynamic aspects in the sense of urban planning, and see which situations of everyday life could be the expression of sound density. Jean-François Augoyard (*Sonic Experience*) and his colleagues from CRESSON introduced the concept of "sonic effect" and suggest with this to describe the way we interact with sounds in our everyday life.¹⁰ Their book, *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (2006), gathers more than eighty sonic-effect definitions, none of which directly relates to density. However, looking a little closer, three of them in fact do relate to the concept of density.

First, psychoacoustics has described how sounds mask sounds; that is, sounds eclipse other sounds that are simultaneously appearing, but also up to a certain distance in time, forward as well as backward. This can be easily demonstrated in the laboratory and belongs to everyday experience.¹¹ For instance, a door slammed during a conversation would produce a prominent sound that would interrupt the communication. Thus, one could argue that sounds in urban density such as heavy traffic, do mask other sounds such as human voices, birds, and so forth.

Second, the cocktail-party effect, also known as selective listening, was first described by E. Colin Cherry in 1953. It describes the experience that in a multi-source situation (e.g., a cocktail party) we can nevertheless understand and follow single voices, even if such a selected voice is softer in intensity or more distant than others in the surrounding situation. It is also known that visual cues enhance this primary auditory function.

And third, what Augoyard calls the "metamorphosis effect" resembles the cocktail-party situation to an extent. Conventionally, it is described as a scene in a market square where the urban background, vehicle passages, vendors' voices, footsteps, vegetables, manipulated boxes, and so on, are mixed and remain perfectly discernible throughout their existence. As the authors say: "A perceptive effect describing the unstable and changing relations between elements of a sound ensemble. Metamorphosis characterizes the instability present in a structural relation that links parts of an ensemble and the resulting possibility to switch elementary components of a totality, so it is perceived as being in perpetual transition."¹² Thus, metamorphosis describes also the human auditive capacity to actively decide what is foreground and background and to quickly change this decision at any desired moment.

With increasing density, however, at a certain moment the mix of such a multi-source situation tilts into an indistinguishable noise. In this way, sound density might be conceived as a tentative limit of the "mixing effect": this effect is characterized by a penetration of different and simultaneous sound sources. In everyday life, the mixing effect implies close levels of intensity between the diverse sounds present. The effect can be found particularly in locations of transition that receive sound ambiances originating in different places. The listener is in a paradoxical situation in which it is difficult to decide where to focus.¹³ A density of sound sources correlating with a density of meanings might lead to the perception of a mix.

9 Hear the sound files and compare to the spectrograms on SoundCloud: Jürgen Schöpf, *6 silences and filtered white noise*, 2016 <http://soundcloud.com/molemi/sets/density-silences>.

10 Centre de Recherche sur l'Espace Sonore et l'Environnement Construit (CRESSON), research team of CNRS Unit 1563 "Ambiances, Architecture, Urbanités," École nationale supérieure d'architecture de Grenoble, France. "Sonic effect" should not to be confused with sound effects in music production.

11 A. J. M. Houtsma, T. D. Rossing, and W. M. Wagenaars, *Auditory Demonstrations*, CompactDisc Digital Audio with Booklet, Institute for Perception Research (IPO), Eindhoven. Philips 1126-61.

12 Jean-François Augoyard, and Henry Torgue, eds., *Sonic Experience: A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 73.

13 Ibid., 78.

Conclusion

Our initial sections drew upon technical descriptions of sound density, yet have left us unsatisfied regarding the human experience of sound. However, we could see that sound spectrography provides a useful analytical tool in understanding timbral qualities of sound. A brief discussion of descriptive terminologies suggested by Schafer, Krause, Winkler, and Augoyard led us to support Winkler's concepts because they were most able to link human psychology with the science of acoustics.

An excursion into sounds in urban density and noise abatement concluded with the question whether we could use Pijanowski, Villanueva-Rivera, Dumyahn, Farina, Krause, Napoletano, Gage, and Pieretti's terms and express the sound density via the concept of diversity in the anthroposphere.

While their findings are plausible for a tropical rainforest, they apparently do not translate to urban environments because the species aren't numerous here, it is rather species quantities (people, cars), yet the noises of human products do fill considerable parts of the frequency bandwidth.

The case study has made practical use of spectrographic analysis. Its particular success is to provide an original method to define Winkler's Grundstimmung by filtering white noise with spectra gained from previous recordings.¹⁴ With Augoyard's sonic effects we eventually found that masking, selective listening, metamorphosis, and mixing actually could be seen on a gradual scale where the parameter is indeed density, even though the authors of that study did not name density as a parameter.

In this ride through a diverse number of disciplines and theories we have seen density hardly employed with most theories relating to sound. A successful use was only found as a summary to a group of Augoyard's sonic effects, as well as in connection with the measurement of species diversity in the biosphere of a tropical forest.¹⁵ We see the main reason for this in the fact that the human aural sense is very much a sense of quality, while density is an abstraction of rather physical matter. Thus density has not been able to develop roots in terminologies on human aural experience, whereas terms describing qualities such as timbre, diversity, background and foreground, and the laws of gestalt psychology dominate the discussion. With this we hope to have shed some light on why, and how.

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¹⁵ Pijanowski et al., *Soundscape Ecology*.

Politics of Density and Its Consequences on the Human Condition



The Strangely Overheard Overhearing and the Condition of the Global Subject

Brandon LaBelle

Interrupted. Not by a sudden intervention that locates itself directly in front. Rather, as a presence *to the side*. Someone. Something. A current.

You who are near and far. Over here and there.

This interruption is what captures my listening, impels a curiosity and an anxiety as to what is always already waiting: the unsteady dynamic between a figure and a fragment. Might we understand this dynamic as producing a type of subjectivity, one diffused and assembled through an array of projections and demands, presences and vacancies? A forcefulness that penetrates the flesh, drives the imagination, fills the senses? The emergence of the figure/fragment. And that requires engagement, interaction, resistance; this dynamic that structures mechanisms of surveillance, biopolitical networks, hybrid bodies, communities of precarity, and power. This entails a rethinking of the neighbor and the stranger, the local and the global, the public and the micro-community, and a reflection upon the state of involvement—it is pressing, this new figuring, this new configuration.

My body is subsumed by this restless intensity that enacts a new type of economy: the economy of attention, placing this body within a field of proliferating exchange and transaction. There is no escape; to succumb and then to search. I reside, like many others (there are too many ...), precisely in relation to this intensity—so central, pervasive, and unstable, shot through with frictions of interruption, capture, as the continual making of relations. *You there*. Something has already started, a new affective geography, a new operational formation, a possible solidarity as well as the forcefulness of a certain control. To be immersed in the sudden figures and fragments that take flight, everywhere, and that draw out a multitude of exchanges directly onto this place, this moment. Here, *over/here*.

It is so intangible—a breath, a shudder, a current. I am never sure where it is exactly; it moves forward, ahead of me, and yet returns, without direction. To move inside. Muscular. Cellular. It is a milieu of shifting borders—that which comes from everywhere to pierce this place of work, of daily routine, of waking or of cooking, of being alone or with others. There is no stopping it; it is pure intensity, a radiating flow of urgency and banality to which this body must turn, is already turning, without knowing exactly, to where or to whom; to reconfigure this body, here, with what is elsewhere. There is no definite origin to this interrupting intensity, lurking and full of power. Operative. Technocratic. It is distant, and yet already close, restricting and letting loose particular desires and productions: this body, somewhere upon the steps toward an ecology of mind and its related violence, which forces endless acts of involvement: the bioweaponry of the contemporary current. As Paul Virilio

suggests, a lost dimension.¹ And in which a potentiality resides nonetheless. The potentiality of new alliances—a surrendering and a possible activity.

It is neither a question of dialogue, nor the conditions of the face—not always. I may see you, but not always; rather, there is always something more: *You who are near, and far*. I stop in my tracks, I wait ... I know you are there: *You who are far, and so close*. Do you hear me? Do you sense the proliferation of another relation? The making of unexpected associations? Alliances and antagonisms. It riddles my heart, it fastens my breath—I tremble with agitation, this fever of constant assemblage. A continual multiplication of intensity—the speed of power. Might we understand this as a new form of density? A compression, as Virilio outlines, that forces a collapse between material and immaterial, solid and liquid, the seen and the heard? Not so much of dialogue, but rather, of the over/heard: You and I and Another.

One must navigate *around* and *through* this configuration: to sense and to feel, to respond, possibly, and to give narrative to this over/hear whose presence is with and without at the same instant, a shadowy construct, a voicing full of intensity that is not a single voice. Is there a figure here? Not quite, and yet. The voice that intrudes, and that produces I and not I, in the same instant—identity always already elsewhere. Figure/fragment.

Might we understand this as a dynamic of overhearing, of the over/here—of what I cannot necessarily see, but is ever-present and shifts the conditions of subjectivity; that intrudes and exposes without end. Already there is too much: *I cannot give this a precise name; it is beyond full recognition and yet it is nothing but attention—it is pure attention*. It impels my turning; it captures this body within the conditions of connection, fragmentation, multiplication, as well as treachery, love. This/body. Not so much a voice, no longer, but rather a voice/thing.

Where? What?

Fragmentation. Thick and thin at the same moment.

While hearing locates us within an acoustic space, a sphere of animated proximity, over/hearing interrupts and distracts; it is always a surprise, manifesting through secret intentions and through noises beyond my immediate focus. Over/hearing brings forward what is external to direct hearing, delivering a forceful and affective intervention: to capture my attention, to capitalize upon it.

How to engage the over/heard? This perennial interruption that occurs from the not yet known? And that alters the configuration of there to here with its

penetrating flow? Its exuberance and crushing insidiousness. Of this thinking and this living; of this body fleshed by some other. Another. I am captured by this not quite other, the not quite here, the voice/thing: the violence and the hope circling the globe. Can I give this a shape? Can I trace the pressures and impressions, the ones that ripple the skin and which will come again, as they do, as the day and night superimpose? Sleepless. Can you follow me, to this edge where figures are but ghosts of themselves, appearing in so many particles of assertion, wishfulness, and disappointment? Of promises that linger, that move, suggestive, desiring, or not quite, only a pressured flicker? And the force of not only the Other, but rather, Another: those I do not know and which are ceaselessly present. *Are they even there?* And that loop the horizon, the peripheral, back over itself. Lost dimension.

To over/hear, to be involved elsewhere. To be not only I, as I.

Might such dynamics, such over/hearing—as that condition of interruption, of the voice/thing—enable a form of attention that remains sensitive to the excluded? Not only the pervasive operations of surveillance and tracking, but that which tries to intervene? To introduce the precarious, and those voices that may never enter public articulation? In other words, over/hearing as a listening for the other, Another, and that may navigate the mechanisms of surveillance by occupying its networks, to support a life of relations? Soft friendships withstanding the flood of currents? A prolonged weakness, a surrendering that suddenly, as one falls, sleepless, lethargic, slips into another duration—the lost dimension suddenly full of over/heard promises.

Marshall McLuhan's analysis of the "electronic age" in the early 1960s is prescient of the conditions of this global subjectivity, already announcing in *Understanding Media* a view onto a new social dynamic: "In this electric age we see ourselves being translated more and more into a form of information, moving toward the technological extension of consciousness."² The extendedness occurring due to electrical networking and automation produces another sensibility, another bodily configuration from which we become intensely aware of the lives of others, and from which a "decentralized and inclusive" social formation takes shape.³ Sensing beyond one's physical body, reaching outward and being reached, becoming involved in a network of relations—such are the conditions that, for McLuhan, are suggestive of a radical shift toward a "single form of consciousness."⁴

1 Paul Virilio, *The Lost Dimension* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991).

2 Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London: Routledge, 2002), 63.

3 *Ibid.*, 8.

4 *Ibid.*, 67.

What is striking about McLuhan's inquiry and speculative analysis is the degree to which electricity and the electrical unfolds the body and consciousness toward an externalization of sensuousness, feeling, knowing, and sharing. His ultimate proposition that we now "wear all mankind as our skin" sets the stage for a complex transformation,⁵ a total sensitizing of the global situation within which individual experience is always already implicated and determined by a vast web of alliances and interferences, ruptures and reparations, nerves—what McLuhan further calls "retribalization."⁶

Franco "Bifo" Berardi, in his concern for the conditions of contemporary immaterial labor, can be said to position McLuhan's rather optimistic global view within a space of exhaustion and surprising submissiveness.⁷ For Berardi, the ways in which our lives are enmeshed in a vague yet persistent web of relations, that move beyond the skin and toward not only the nervous system but toward the cellular and what Berardi terms "the soul," functions as a means to encourage if not incite a surrendering to any number of labors. While digital media gives way to a range of individuated expressions, they in turn drive us toward a dizzying array of operations: a *nervous shake*. We never stop working; there is no end to being involved. The decentralizing of relations, through electrical flows and networks, may perform to support sensations of being a free subject while forcefully capturing this within a biopolitical structure. Thus, wearing mankind as our skin may form the basis for any number of ideological or technocratic performances, where my skin is made to serve a mechanism of production and consumption, passing along through its electrical pulses the messages or operations of a purely capitalistic function, for example. The "soul at work" never rests, allowing for potential alliances, sudden friendships, as well as the robotic operations that align us within a structure of tracking; an operational life to which we willingly surrender.

Is this what I hear? The surging of the biopolitical? The infrastructural unconscious at work? Over my shoulder? In my humming thoughts? That sense for what is always already there? The robot in my nerves?

With the nervous system extended beyond one's physical body, as McLuhan suggests, one is captured in a pressure of relations: a density through which my senses, my entire being must navigate. While contemporary urbanism expands and deepens, relating the physical body to an environment of intensified immediacy—of so many confrontations and interactions—within the territories of electrical networks it is more a question of the sensate, the molecular, the Nano City: the nerves tremble, and the animate properties that pass between myself and a multitude of signals comes to (re)distribute this body; the retribalizing enacted through the decentralized flows of the electrical, forces myself into a density of not so much figures or individuals, or even the mass movement of subjects, but rather, of nano-operations. Of what I might call *affective restlessness*. The soul at work.

Tiziana Terranova additionally gives a poignant account of network culture, emphasizing how digital media produces both mass culture as well as intense segmentation.⁸ This capacity to extend toward a global reach while supporting any number of micro-communities, for Terranova, is reliant on a dominating relation to images and their ceaseless circulation. Images act as "bioweapons," delivering not so much particular meanings but functioning to produce affective intensities—"vibrations"—around which specific cultural and political formations and identifications are mobilized or harnessed. Following Jean Baudrillard's own analysis, in which representations (in the age of the spectacle) become untethered from grounded cultural meanings and instead operate as "simulations" or surface effects, the production and consumption of images continually moves as well as forces movement across a range of global locales.⁹ In short, images pop up, triggering responses and galvanizing peoples, perennially shifting the economy of attention and the groupings to which network culture is conducive.

I want to amplify Terranova's idea of the vibration of images, or the force of image-flows, to consider instead their circulation as sonic acts—as sonic currents. While images circulate as affective intensities, they are somehow always *in front*. I look, and something looks back at me: the screen, that ubiquitous rectangle, holds the image even while it may touch me. It captures my gaze, that is clear, and yet there is always an excess. As Terranova suggests, there exists an invisible remainder to the flow of images, a remainder hovering around the image and by which a range of meanings are generated. What is the remainder exactly, this addition that hovers in and around specific visualities? And to which the body is responsive?

Here, I want to return to McLuhan and his proposal that electronic media locates us within an oral, and by extension, acoustical condition. As he states, "Because of its action in extending our central nervous system, electric technology seems to favor the inclusive and participational spoken word over the specialist written word."¹⁰ Such a statement is based on a general demarcation between the written and spoken word, and by extension, between the ocular and the auditory. For McLuhan, literacy produces a subject defined by looking, by the operations of an ocular knowledge that steers us toward rational objectivity, a looking upon the world. In contrast, a society or community dominated by orality tends toward a process of interaction, entanglement, where listening

5 Ibid., 52.

6 Ibid., 26.

7 See Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Soul at Work* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009).

8 Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 150.

9 For more on the issue of simulation, see Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (Candor, NY: Telos Press Publishing, 1981).

10 McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 89.

generates an intensity of relations that require continual negotiation; in short, while the written word allows for a certain detachment, a capacity for “separateness, continuity and uniformity,” the spoken rather heightens “pluralism and uniqueness” and even “discontinuity”—active sociality.” It is this pluralism, this discontinuity and intense sociality that McLuhan identifies in network culture, that leads to a conceptualization of the electronic age as one of orality, as being defined by an acoustical condition. This can be additionally glimpsed in what Terranova highlights as the pervading dynamic to network culture, that of intense segmentation, leading her to characterize network culture as a “permanent battlefield” between mass populations and intense localities. Network culture, in other words, is a “space that is *common*, without being *homogenous* or even *equal*.”¹² A space, as McLuhan suggests, of “pluralism and discontinuity.”

Returning to the theme of the acoustical and the question of image-flows, we might better understand networks and their movements as oscillations of sounds, *molecular agitations*, bending around corners, traversing borders, intense mobile forces that unite bodies and diffuse them at the same time. The intensity of involvement produced by network culture may be understood to displace the capacity of the written word, as appearing from a position of continuity and uniformity, as a stable signifier; in contrast, the production of the ceaseless flows of expressions and articulations, comments and commentaries, sharings and postings embedded within network culture may be appreciated to operate precisely in support of a pluralism to which the spoken and the acoustical are central. Experiences of involvement and participation that wraps the body in a global consciousness through a shattering of distance, and the affective intensities of so many sonic bodies and their vibrations. Nervous ticks. Currents.

The animate and the sensate intensities of network culture, of flows of the electrical, may stabilize into sudden apparitions, *images*, yet they do so through a force that is never stable. Restless. In this regard, I wonder if we can continue to call these things we encounter, and that Terranova examines, by the name of “image”? McLuhan’s acoustical descriptions certainly support this questioning, suggesting instead that images may in fact take on the conditions of a sonic operation, an acoustical intensity, as the pressure of the molecular. Ceaseless movement. Nano-politics. The remainder that Terranova identifies, “appearing” in support of image-flows, is precisely that animating periphery that pulls at our senses, that is already closer than imagined, and that produces an economy of attention through its ability to generate an overflow of desire or involvement, a restlessness to which I am continually bound. The remainder is nothing other than oscillations trafficking the flows of input/output, trembling with a temporal appearance/disappearance, a propagation of vibratory excess. *Something I hear behind the ear, in the eye.*

The expressions of sound occupy an ontological position between sited physicality (acoustic) and immaterial energy (propagation); animate and penetrating—the sonic *touches* us; it links us together with a vibrating materiality while already vaporizing, crossing the lines between human and nonhuman, bodies and things, as an interspecies and transmutable platform, a force of becoming that intensifies relations across subjects and objects. Animate. The things that now may speak back to us, to inform us, to keep us alive through a capacity to sense and respond, further defines this condition of animation. Objects are intelligent—they are already beyond the image. Subject/object. I might suggest that images are *reverberant*, flowing as an affective intensity; they shudder the sky, quake the earth, creep up on us—I do not apprehend images in a field of the spectacle, rather I feel them, am bombarded by them in a flood of currents: they come in and out of me. Material/immaterial. Over/heard. This extended figuration: a body without center. Voice/thing. Vibrational.

Are you still there? The door is open, the glow of a light shudders the room. Asleep? No, awake—continual, awaiting. Shiver: *your presence*. Somehow. You who arrive and depart at the same instant. *Is it even You?* You who grasp the nothingness, humming it into being. I know you understand, you who are somewhere, *that sensation*. That vague togetherness.

The screen.
The current.

The fear and the trembling; the monitoring and the hacking.

I attach myself to this figuring, this operation. There is nowhere else to go. The Overheard Imaginary: an acoustical flux. This territory of figures/fragments, over/hearing, defining a field of proximity yet diffusing the shape and certainty of identity, and the fixtures of a certain ethical order. Nano City. A grouping, instead, produced by the force of this biopolitical weaponry—the arms that are just within reach, the eyes that flicker, the hands that motion endlessly toward that other horizon, all pressures to the side of this body: the object, the breath, the commonality, and the difference, fostering a coming together of pure strangeness—to which I am *enmeshed*. This territory is populated by strangers of a future crowd and that take up residence within this body, hinging the drive of care and compassion, wishfulness and longing with radical hope and despair; and that may spirit a coming together exterior to national borders, those often pulled tight into conflict, especially today.

*I know you are there. Always already.
I am looked upon, while I look. No longer the gaze upon me, but the monitoring
of the nerves, the colors behind the eyes.*

I may never know for certain to which project this voice is aligned—a voice of emancipatory politics? A voice of capture or of arrest? A sound let loose in the hopes of future community?

Georg Simmel, in his theorizations on the modern city, brings our attention to the figure of the stranger, as one arising within the metropolitan scene. From the neighborhood bar to the apartment building or the schoolyard, the stranger is explicitly a figure that stands outside, that is peripheral, and yet at the same time, is proximate. As Simmel states, “[The stranger] is fixed within a certain spatial circle [...] but his position within it is fundamentally affected by the fact that he does not belong in it initially and that he brings qualities into it that are not, and cannot be, indigenous to it.”¹³ The stranger thus comes to supplement or tense the intimacies of interaction through a type of *foreignness*. Simmel sets out to capture this particular form of social experience, this foreignness that the stranger exemplifies and may be said to produce as something particularly modern and paradoxical—where “factors of repulsion and distance work to create a form of being together, a form of union.”¹⁴ Rather than understanding estrangement as countering forms of being together, Simmel importantly identifies it as producing and participating within relationships. Here, the stranger is a figure that generates a relational dimension to *the side* of intimate life, and yet, like all peripheries, lends significant input to what remains within. In short, the stranger traces what is known with the not yet known, wrapping that sense of social relations with degrees of interruption—with the continual introduction of remoteness, or what Simmel also terms “objectivity.”¹⁵ A figure that looms in the background and that activates, through a type of de-subjectivity, a sense for what may be lurking around and shaping intimate conversation or community.

Such characterizations contribute to my attempts at identifying this new state of contemporary density, which accordingly moves us from the metropolitan scene of the modern and into the realities of digital globalism. In such a new state, as I’ve been keen to suggest, the operations of networked movements continuously introduce us to a plethora of currents, bodies, voices, fragmented and flashing across our perceptual field. In doing so, network culture shifts from the imagistic to the affective, from the “alphabetical” to the “acoustical” (to use McLuhan’s vocabulary), animating, through such hyper-robotics, the territories of the not yet apparent hovering *in the background*. The relationships we develop with and through such dynamics, such animations, find recourse through understandings of the stranger and estrangement; proximate and distant, near and far at the same instant, the contemporary subject is

always negotiating the unsteady and difficult murmurings of a strangeness, an objectivity so near. Such strangeness locates us on a threshold of audibility, as a figuring of the over/heard by which I am produced, *projected*. Herein lies both the promises and potent dangers generated by Another that, in redrawing what we understand as the sphere of public life, and public power, forces other means of relating—of speaking and listening to each other.

Network culture turns us all into secret agents. Eavesdroppers.

I can imagine You—this is where my publicness begins: in the new civic imagination prompted by the murmuring surrounding, as one is pressed by the intensities that demand and inspire new modes of responsibility: toward this other one, this not quite yet.

The over/heard.
The strange voice.

While Emmanuel Levinas locates the face as central to ethical encounters¹⁶—the thing to which I must attend—it is the force of the over/heard that captures my attention and that pulls at contemporary ethics, present in these zones of facelessness (or of too much face), of perennial strangeness, which riddles the social field today; what we may understand as the contemporary biopolitical form—of being entangled in all those that appear and disappear with such rapidity. The figure/fragment. The current. And that comes into me, as voices/things no longer from within a particular crowd, rather as a condition of proximity, without distances, and as that which never delivers a face, fully, or a name, solely; and to which I already face, faceless. Such is the general condition: of being immersed in the movements of many volatile and intensified bodies—and constituted by the assemblage of the near and the far, the actual and the virtual, of the augmented. A density of operations.

Even in the silence, I know there is someone. This Another that also demands a diary of sensitivity, a rewriting of relation—to turn us toward a citizenship of the Nano City. Such citizenry is no longer defined by the face that appears, or by the voice that speaks and is heard. Rather, this condition of density is one populated by voice/things, figure/fragments, subject/objects that border on the condition of the post-human.

13 Georg Simmel, “The Stranger,” in *On Individuality and Social Forms: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 143.
14 *Ibid.*, 144.

15 *Ibid.*, 145.

16 For more on the question of the face, see Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998).

The global that crashes in.
 The global that eases over all things.
 The global that forces another type of listening.

Over/heard. And the production of a new type of formation. This thing: a shape-shifter. No longer a figure on a ground, but a current whose individuation articulates itself strangely—I am continuously inserted into the arena of a publicness without end, yet one lodged within a set of instruments; I am operative. I am prodded by you, and yet you disappear, right away: the ecology of mind is but an endless labor. Yet you lurk as a reminder of the possibility: that relations may be found, that such publicness is a scene of potential.

A remainder. Within the sleeplessness of operations, I know you are there, whoever you may be. I over/hear You upon that arc of frequency that never brings us to the realization of an origin, the recognition of location; rather, in which everything lingers, a flux, a dissipation that flows into a continual rematerialization: to produce *creatures*.

A creaturely sound. Not quite named.

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Urbanity Is Density (and Yet, More) The Case of Vienna's Planning Politics

Gabu Heindl

Density and City Growth

For urbanists dealing with the current global phenomena of growing cities, the concept of “urban density” is the key to pressing questions—such as access to affordable housing, reduction of urban sprawl, and creation of urbanity. The “density turn” started with Jane Jacobs’s quest for (then still unpopular) denser cities in the 1960s,¹ and gained momentum with the “urbanity through density”—a slogan of the 1980s. Today, density is a pivotal term in cities’ commitments to compactness—even more since increased density is accompanied by a promise of increased (equal) access to mobility, jobs, or culture, a promise that reacts to the scarcity of urban land resources. While this is true for many cities, my case study focuses on Vienna, where over the last decade the population has been growing due to migration from the countryside as well as global migration.

There is a lot of empirical evidence to the intensified densification currently happening in Vienna. An increase in building density is manifested by the number of construction sites—many of them accompanied by the loss of unbuilt space (as well as sometimes public resistance against such loss). Notably, social density is also increasing: more people than ever share the same urban spaces—public transportation, central public spaces, free-time recreational spaces.² This, of course, makes such urban spaces into increasingly lively areas; but it also turns them into conflictual spaces, as public space is under pressure from quasi-privatization and commercialization (e.g., by a growing number of cafés or urban beaches). Not all of these phenomena are, of course, related to urban densification as an answer to population growth. The growth in city tourism also stimulates and intensifies the commodification of public space. Yet, part of the privatization of public space is directly linked to raising density quotients in building plans, as I will show later. And aside from growing city tourism numbers, the recent price reduction for public transportation tickets—a (most welcome) measure proposed by the Green Party—has triggered an increase in the use of subways, trams and buses. More worrisome empiric evidence on the increase in population (rather than of building density) is given in the pressure on the housing market, which goes hand in hand with a significant raise of rents. Just as in other places, Vienna planning officials have been reacting to the housing shortage with a dedication to expedite housing construction: almost 50 percent of the expected construction should take place within the existing city quarters (hence densifying their structure)

¹ See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961).

² Until today, Vienna profits from infrastructural concepts of Otto Wagner’s

1893 “Generalregulierungsplan,” which was predicated on the prospect of Vienna’s population growing to four million inhabitants.

while the other half is to be achieved by fostering mostly high-density housing in new city development areas—supported by a special SMART housing program in order to stimulate apartments that are smaller than usual.³

Mathematically, the formula is easy, even similar to Isaac Newton’s mass-to-volume quotient: increasing the number of population (mass) within the city’s built volume. Yet, instrumentation of building density as a planning goal tends to be reductive since it understands space (or the city) as a container that can be filled with inhabitants. Problematizing such “container thinking” has led to the most conceptional and far-reaching critique of density in contemporary urban-planning theory.⁴ Space—be it urban or other—is regarded as being the permanent product of the city’s subjects and their social and cultural activities and practices on the basis of on Henri Lefebvre’s Marxist spatial theory. And it is most often the overall socioeconomic conditions of the renters that make the difference in dense housing: whether there is richness and urbanity or poverty and deterioration. Finally, there is the question: Who profits from an increase in building density? So what is required is a conception of the urban as a space in the making and as a space of power relations instead of container reductionism.

Density and Post-political Urban Governance

The extent to which density has become a multifold parameter within contemporary city-planning management—from high density as a planning goal to density as a general city-planning tool—it may well be compared to the parameter sustainability, which is rightly critiqued, when, for example, reducing the complexity of the built environment to energy efficiency numbers. It is within the context of contemporary urban governance and its ideals of technocratic management and depoliticized “neutral” technologies of planning that mathematical formulas such as energy efficiency or density quotients help support the idea that there could be absolute, undisputed values in urban planning. The replacement of political positions and urban visions with technocratic management is what critics call the *post-political city*.⁵

The post-political city’s central political form of expression is *consensus*, if we follow radical democratic theorists such as Jacques Rancière or Chantal Mouffe, who instead hold *dissensus* to be the core element of the political. The current dedication of city-planning officials to cooperative planning processes and processes of participation contribute to consensual urban planning. The dispute over the make up of urban society is reduced to technical issues—to either technocracy or mere technicalities.

Let’s look at the role of density in this context: density (understood as high density) represents a technical solution to the housing shortage. Yet, the housing shortage is taken as the precondition to densification also in areas that are already quite dense (e.g., in central urban areas). At the same time, it is exactly in these areas that we find an astonishing amount of vacancies, part of which are directly related to contemporary investment strategies. Since money does not generate safe profits when invested in stocks, cities have offered plenty of opportunities in times of financial crisis, that is, investment in the real estate market. It is exactly in growing cities where we can find vacancies for speculative reasons or future investments, keeping apartments away from people in need. However, the statistics of Wiener Wohnen (the largest municipal housing provider in Europe, which manages two thousand community-owned housing estates of Vienna), reports only on those apartments that are officially vacant (as constantly needed stock), other than that no numbers are available. Vacancy does not feature as a specific parameter in the calculation of density.⁶ Theoretically, according to this logic of counting, you *could* have a super-dense city with no one living in it.

Housing density also says nothing about the quality of the space, nor does it speak about just or unjust distribution of public infrastructure or access to public services. Density may become an active agent in an uneven development of the urban landscape and its infrastructure. To question who gets a share of urban density and its qualities in the places where density means urbanity and access to mobility and who is excluded from it, density needs to be confronted with a political agenda. Put more soberly, some places need a sort of vacancy tax rather than higher density. Keeping owners from withholding apartment space becomes even more important in a time when refuge is needed. Asylum permit holders seeking an apartment in Vienna are confronted with shortage of housing, but also with rejections based on racist prejudice.

3 The housing program’s problematic notion of “smart” became synonymous to “as small as possible”—a notion that seems to be derived straight from the marketing success of so-called smart cars. See SMART-Wohnbauprogramm, <https://www.wien.gv.at/bauen-wohnen/smart.html>.

4 Nikolai Roskamm, *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion: Diskurse zu Stadt und Raum* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2014).

5 Erik Swyngedouw, “The Post-political City,” in *Urban Politics Now: Re-imagining Democracy in the Neoliberal City*, edited by Guy Baeten (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2007), 58–76.

6 Vienna’s first district is a good example of the relative dimension of density with regard to vacancy, but also for uneven development: it is one of the two districts in Vienna without a growing population; rather, it has a population decrease of 11 percent—a phenomenon quite usual in city centers, where apartments are being bought as investment goods (rather than as homes). All other Viennese districts (with the other exception of the bourgeois thirteenth district) have growing population numbers, up to 20 percent.

Of course, neither racism nor classism for that matter is part of the numerical calculation of a density quotient. What the post-political mathematization and reductionism of the urban makes disappear from the picture are issues of solidarity, equality, and the contestation of spatial distribution. In other words, urbanity is so much more than density (and politics is an eminent form of testifying to this “more”).

Density as Stimulator for a New *Existenzminimum*

There is another problematic development being stimulated by the current discourse on the need for density: it is the establishment of a necessity to redefine a new *Existenzminimum* (existential minimum). What happens in this process is that smaller and cheaper housing units are being stipulated. The attribution of smaller spaces as livable housing comes across as a purely technical measure—and is thus ever more ideological. To study this phenomenon, I propose a detour to the 1929 CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne) in Frankfurt, which was devoted to “minimum housing,” to architectural solutions regarding housing shortages as well as bad housing and hygienic conditions in cities after World War I. CIAM's analyses objected to urban structures developed during the so-called *Gründerzeit* (a period of economic innovation in the second half of the nineteenth century) in Europe. In this period, also large areas in Vienna developed into an extremely dense city structure. Housing conditions in these areas were deplorable as a result of speculation and site exploitation, which resulted in extremely dense building blocks as well as overcrowding in the apartments due to housing shortage and lack of rental rights (which often meant that there were up to thirty inhabitants in small flats and led to the mass phenomenon of *Bettgeher*, people who rented somebody's bed during the daytime). The situation was not least the result of building laws that allowed for such high degrees of density.

However, as Jacobs argued, modernist architects all too readily confused the problems of overcrowded dwellings with high density of urban structures. For these architects, the misery was due almost only to building density,⁷ which they blamed for lack of sun, air, and ventilation—necessities that modern architecture would triumphantly provide by developing concepts such as the garden city or mass construction of standardized, low-cost housing based on Le Corbusier's writings and the *Athens Charter*. Internationally renowned architects worked on housing blocks with creative solutions for apartments with a tolerable minimum in terms of floor area (existential minimum)—an effort that Giancarlo de Carlo would, in 1970, critique as playing “into the hands of the power structure” by not asking why (i.e., for what social and political reasons, and to whose benefit such reduction was necessary).

While today the outcome of modernist urbanism still poses problems related to a lack of urbanity, the *Gründerzeit* quarters in Vienna and other cities were finally turned into high-quality and hyper-urban quarters, especially after the period of *Sanfte Stadterneuerung* (gentle city renewal) in the 1980s, when dense building structures were thinned out and small and low-standard apartments were merged with larger units. Today, this *Gründerzeit* city, with its lively streets, provides some of the conditions contributing to Vienna's turning into a post-Fordist city, with that high building density representing an ideal ground for a “city of short paths,” favoring flexible and well-scaled living and working units.⁸ This also shows how the perception of building density relates to the individual housing situation (e.g., apartment size). The adaptive qualities of the historical urban structure and the constructive entrepreneurship of the private land and house owners during *Gründerzeit* have become some sort of urban-planning blueprint for today, as politicians invoke a new *Gründerzeit* (accompanied by the hope that it would create urban areas not as heavily densified as they were during the nineteenth century's *Gründerzeit*).

Yet, with a maximum exploitation of urban land and the pressure on the housing market currently at a peak, we have to expect a renewed call to reduce the floor size per person and increase occupancy rates. Even if the floor area were to remain the same, the “volume” of the newly built apartments is already significantly lower than during *Gründerzeit*, since today's ceiling heights are much lower.⁹ However, there is a reduction of floor area, and it is even subsidized through the already-mentioned SMART housing program. With the growing number of refugees in need of apartments in Vienna, it can be expected that the floor size per person will be reduced even more, as migrants from outside of the EU already live on a much lower average than the “Austrian average”: twenty-two to twenty-six square meters as opposed to forty-five square meters per person.¹⁰

7 Walter Gropius did differentiate building typologies from speculation though: “However, the cause for the misery of these undignified dwellings is not the dwelling form of the multistory apartment house as such but the shortsighted legislation which permitted the construction of this class of low-cost dwellings to fall into the hands of unscrupulous speculators without adequate social safeguards.” Walter Gropius, “Houses, Walk-Ups or High-Rise Apartment Blocks?” (1931), *The Scope of Total Architecture*, trans. Roger Banham (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1980); available at <https://modernistarchitecture.wordpress.com/2010/10/28/walter-gropius-‘houses-walk-ups-or-high-rise-apartment-blocks’-1931/>.

8 Renate Banik-Schweitzer, “Postfordistische Gesellschaft in unterschiedlichen Stadtebautypologien,” In *Urban Form: Städtebau in der postfordistischen Gesellschaft*, ed. Renate Banik-Schweitzer and Eve Blau (Vienna: Löcker, 2003), 137–58.

9 During *Gründerzeit*, building regulations did not limit the height of buildings, but the number of floors.

10 Statistik Austria, Kommission für Migrations- und Integrationsforschung der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften: migration & integration, zahlen.daten.indikatoren (Vienna, 2015), http://www.statistik.at/web_de/statistiken/menschen_und_gesellschaft/bevoelkerung/demographische_prognosen/bevoelkerungsprognosen/index.html.

Density as a Pretext for Neoliberalization and Land Speculation

As discussed above, in some contexts the current drive toward densification acts as a post-political answer to ecological challenges and population growth (i.e., a solution beyond dispute). While of course some city areas (mostly on the city margins) could do with more density, in already dense areas, densification is an enabler and active agent for neoliberal planning politics, especially regarding privatization of public services and public space.¹¹

To understand this process, we have to look at density as a planning tool. In building plans, the maximum zoning density quotient effectively limits the amount of square footage that can be built on a piece of land.¹² This way the quotient has been and still is used to limit the possibility of (extreme) exploitation of a site. At the same time, the definition of maximum density recorded in building plans also indicates the value of land. The more one can build on it, the higher the value of the land.

Yet, land prices are skyrocketing independent of their dedicated density quotient, especially in growing cities such as Vienna, as there are ever less empty plots, and ever more people also invest in urban land, for which there is no real state-directed price control or market regulation. Now, of course the higher the price for a piece of land, the more an investor wants to exploit it. With fast population growth and housing shortage acting as the supporting argument, the pressure on politics is high,¹³ and it also comes directly from investors and developers: they urge administrations to raise density quotients and propose planning processes to “test” possible maximum volumes independent of existing building plan regulations. This situation is destined, of course, to cause a situation in which city planning departments are—seemingly—forced into advocating speculation, which comes along with generally desired high density. So, administrations find themselves authorizing neoliberal investments that will lower achieved standards: apartment blocks exploiting their site in an ever more dense way, or: obvious processes of gentrification, when new construction of higher housing density pushes low-income residents into peripheral areas; or poor locations for housing. This pressure, under which the city government finds itself in the wake of the expected city growth, is at the same time also, and even in exacerbated form, a precondition to speculation in already perfectly urbanized locations, especially in central urban areas, where existing lively urbanity makes apartments sell even better. After such high-level land speculation, the goal of investors is maximum density for their expensive plot. Along this line of thought the argument is turned around: density is not the reason for speculation but—the other way around—speculation is the reason for high density.¹⁴ Of course, wherever high density translates into a maximum of privatized floor area to be rented or sold for

profit, the density of public infrastructure also has to be raised. This task is usually left to the cities, many of which recently tend to declare that they lack the resources (in terms of budget and staff) to develop as well as to maintain public services—also due to the lack of redistribution measures of the excessive private profits. Many cities have adopted some sort of cofinancing model in forms of public private partnerships for streets, parks, schools, and other public infrastructure. With growing numbers of planning deals (with regard to higher density quotients, e.g., deals in which a private partner pays for infrastructure as a payoff for an increase in building density), cities enter into a neo-feudalist era: whole parks, streets, and schools are currently being developed by private investors, and they are often rented or leased to the city while remaining private property (according to the neoliberal logic of privatizing gains and collectivizing losses). Given the speed by which such deals are becoming the norm, phenomena that until recently felt like science fiction in (post-)welfare state cities are now just around the corner: private control over access to privatized urban spaces, such as plazas or squares;¹⁵ entrance fees for parks that are maintained by private companies; urban citizens divided up into consumers and nonprofitable non-consumers.

Reclaiming Density for Radical Democratic Urban Space

If we imagine a city according to Lefebvre’s claim for a “right to the city”—a universal claim that insists on the possibility for everyone to have an equal share in the making of the city—then this city of universal rights will by necessity be a dense city. In this sense, and in this sense only, density is destiny. What is not predestined, however, what is therefore up to change and contestation,

11 For a discussion on neoliberal city planning in Vienna in its early phase, see Andreas Novy, Vanessa Redak, Johannes Jäger, and Alexander Hamedinger, “The End of Red Vienna: Recent Ruptures and Continuities in Urban Governance,” *European Urban and Regional Studies* 8, no. 2 (2001): 131–44.

12 Generally, it seems counterintuitive, and also has been subject to critique (see Roskamm, *Dichte*), that the density quotient as an instrument in urban planning effectively *limits* density, even today, when the general goal is to *increase* density. Historically, using the density quotient to limit the maximum density per site is based on the experience that private owners tend to overexploit their plot of land.

13 This is also why the maximum density is raised around high-level public transportation nodes. In order to stimulate growth Vienna dedicates minimum density factors to special areas in the city: next to urban infrastructure: minimum density of 1.5 NGFZ net floor ratio (*Nettogeschoßflächenzahl*) to up to minimum 2.5 NGFZ when there is high-level of public transportation.

14 In such cases, high density does not mean high residential density, because in these urban sites marked by their high cultural capital the aim of investors is to construct highly profitable luxury condominiums.

15 The privatization of public space is most conspicuous in so-called BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) as they recently emerged in London or Hamburg.

is how we define urban density in a democratic manner. To some extent, it would amount to a contradiction in terms if one were to neatly and solidly define the fundamental elements of democratic urbanity (cast in stone, as it were). But we can and we must always attempt to map out some of the criteria for what democratizes the making of cities and collectivities. At this point, sketches of a few ideas must suffice.

First, and also generally, we must reconnect density to content in a political way. When we speak about density it makes a big difference if the density in question relates to luxury condominiums—or to affordable housing, affordable work spaces, and public infrastructure. This issue becomes especially salient in those frequent cases when high-density quotients turn, for instance, into high-rise buildings: with such literally “outstanding” buildings, we should be even more mindful of their content.

Second, if we take Lefebvre’s “Right to the City” seriously, one of the consequences of this claim is that it loses much of its meaning if it is not immediately qualified as a universal “right to the center,” a right to have access to urban centers and to public infrastructure. To insist on this right is, in a general sense, part of the creation of a publicness based on egalitarian freedom concerning the use of that space: it also means increasing de-central infrastructure density and at the same time defending open access to the center. More specifically, the claim for a right to the center answers to growing inequalities in the distribution of access to city centers, with new elites claiming a monopoly over (in the name of “security”) more and more sanitized and militarized centers, while living on low-density city edges comes along with long commuting time and high costs for private transportation, to name just some of the problems affected by this.

Third, in redefining democratic, equality-oriented urbanity in times of density, one should look to history, to historical attempts, and solutions in urban planning politics.

What I have in mind is, among other examples (such as some building regulations introduced during Gründerzeit), the active redistribution of social wealth toward housing programs for the poor enabled through a progressive redistribution tax (e.g., on luxury items) as it was introduced by the Social Democratic city government of Red Vienna in the 1920s and early ‘30s. But, I hasten to add, we have to be mindful of the paternalistic and disciplinary aspects that came along with the politics of Red Vienna: therefore, a renewed legislation of justice has to be combined with spaces that allow unforeseen agencies and options for many—as long as this does not lead to the appropriation of space by just a few.

This brings me to a final point, which is complimentary to the latter, history-oriented one, and that is the invention and development of new tools in urban planning (not least in order to replace supposedly “neutral” technocratic formulas such as density quotients in building plans and city planning). So, along with the economics of maximum density (and existential minimum), we have to question the logic of the plans in which density, along with other parameters, is recorded and prescribed. Let me conclude by mentioning an example out of my own planning practice, the *Donaukanal Partitur*:¹⁶ in the context of defending what remains of public space along the Donaukanal-Ufer, the Danube Canal waterfront in Vienna’s center, we developed what we called a “nonbuilding plan” (*Nichtbebauungsplan*). This plan is the opposite of a building plan and its goal is to avoid an increase in privatized densification in this booming urban recreational area that has been under high pressure from investors for years. We consider this area in the center highly valuable not as a profitable piece of urban land, but as a public zone with universal access and without mandatory consumption.

If we demand a universal right to the city (and to urban centrality) and work toward this right becoming a reality, then this reality will certainly involve building density, especially around nodes of public mobility and culture. But there will at the same time have to be ample public space, nonprogrammed space remaining an unexhausted potential, not as an option for future profit, but as social space in an emphatic sense, which is a space allowing for contact and conflict to happen. This also necessitates the political will and skills—on the part of governments as well as of civic society—to defend it.

16 Gabu Heindl and Susan Kraupp, “Donaukanal Partitur,” Vienna, 2014,

<https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/e000012.html>.

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Occupying Time A Critical Perspective on the Temporal Density in the Urban Condition

Elke Krasny

The subject of this essay is time in the urban condition. The politics and economics of the urban condition are most often understood in spatial terms.¹ Urban space, public space, and density are widely used spatial concepts to describe and analyze the urban condition in twenty-first-century cities. Yet, we should be equally concerned with understanding the urban condition in temporal terms. I am interested here in testing out and working through a set of ideas on urban time and public time as they relate to the concept of density.

This essay is structured in four parts. I will introduce the concept of density as put forward in Marxist urban analysis and in hermeneutic urban sociology, going on to test how these insights can be used to develop a temporal concept of density. The second part describes the historical presence of the 24/7 city starting with the 1970s, which witnessed the surge of neoliberal urbanism. The logics of ever more accelerated globalized neoliberal capitalism are behind the contemporary 24/7 city, more colloquially referred to as the “city that never sleeps.” This city needs a lot of work to be kept awake.² It has to be fuelled by energy to keep it running round the clock. People living in cities around the globe are busily producing the urban condition of these cities that never sleep. Urban time, therefore, has been radically transformed into what we can understand as “dense time.” The last two parts of this essay are concerned with the exercise of public time via cultural events and with reclaiming public time via public protests. Looking more closely at the inherent logics of public events, we come to realize that cities have a very good grasp on the concept of dense urban time. Density of time is performed via cultural events of public time. Prime examples of such events celebrating the city that never sleeps include the Long Night of Museums or marathon conversations. Yet, the density of public time is not exclusively the playing field of governance via cultural formats or urban marketing agencies. On the contrary, the twenty-first century has witnessed urban subjects around the globe demonstrating and negotiating public time. These manifestations include Occupy Wall Street in Zuccoti Park, the Arab Spring on Tahrir Square, Y’en a Marre in Senegal, Rolezinhos in Brazil, Maidan in Kiev, or Nuit Debout in Paris. Urban subjects have been actively reclaiming public time via sharing time through collective action. These movements have so far been theorized first and foremost through the lens of public space and spatial politics.

1 Marxist geographers and sociologists such as David Harvey or Neil Brenner as well as feminist Marxist urban historians and geographers such as Dolores Hayden, Doreen Massey, or Cindi Katz have developed spatial categories of urban analysis and critical political thought.

2 Jonathan Crary has recently published his insightful polemic *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* (London: Verso, 2014).

In her 2012 essay “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street,” Judith Butler extends Hannah Arendt’s concept of the space of appearance to elaborate the importance of physical public space for collective political action. Following Arendt “action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost anywhere and anytime.”³ I will take up Arendt’s notion of anytime here to emphasize the importance of public time and the temporal politics of shared collective action.

On Density: Urban Space and Urban Time

I will introduce the concept of density before turning to the urban time of the 24/7 city. Density has risen to significant prominence in both urban planning practice and in urban studies analysis. With regard to urban planning, density is commonly used to refer to the number of housing units and the number of inhabitants per unit area. Density is equally used to measure floor-area ratios. Density is assumed to be a key driver for urban growth understood solely as economic growth. The “real estate” entry in the 2010 *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies* confirms this. This encyclopedia entry draws the attention to the correlations between capitalist accumulation, land value, and intensive land use (i.e., density). The article points out that during the 1960s and ’70s, “scholars, drawing on the writings of Karl Marx, became interested in the logic of capitalist accumulation as a major factor in the production of real properties.”⁴ Capitalist accumulation is the driver for the production of properties. Density significantly increases the number of properties available. It is therefore intimately bound up with the logic of capitalist accumulation: “The density of real estate development is shaped by the land value gradient or a series of land value gradients. [...] Demand for space results in high land costs, which reflect the potential value of the land if built on to the maximum allowable extent. [...] More intensive land uses [...] compensate for high land values.”⁵ In his 2002 article published in *Antipode*, Marxist geographer Neil Smith emphasizes the impact of capital accumulation on the processes of urbanization. He points out that “the mobilization of urban real-estate markets as vehicles of capital accumulation is ubiquitous.”⁶ Density can therefore be understood in capitalist terms of accumulation resulting in the increasingly accelerated intensive land use. Density is the driving force behind capitalist urbanization. Or put another way, the global acceleration of capitalist urbanization results in ever-increasing urban density.

In 2008, Helmuth Berking, as part of the Darmstadt School of Urban Sociology, took up Louis Wirth’s 1938 criteria of “size,” “density,” and “heterogeneity” in order to define the distinctive qualities of the big city or metropolis.⁷ Berking elaborates that the three categories, size, heterogeneity, and “size,” “density,” and “heterogeneity” have to be understood in proportional relations to each other. Density here is understood not as a quantitative but as a qualitative

category reaching out to other disciplines to make use of these analytical categories to research the intrinsic logic of cities.⁸ Both, Smith’s Marxist and geographic urban analysis and Berking’s hermeneutical and interactionist urban sociology, understand density above all as a spatial concept. The most densely used space is held to be the most urban space. I am asking here if density can also be understood in temporal terms, and if so if the most densely used time could then be considered the most urban time. While much of economic research and theory dealing with questions of labor have focused on efficiency, measured in terms of time and output, much of urban research and theory has focused on density, measured in space and value. If spatial density is used to measure the number of housing units or the number of inhabitants per unit of area, temporal density could be used to measure the number of urban outputs produced or services rendered per unit of time (i.e., the productivity of urban labor, or the number of urban activities available per unit of time, e.g., urban consumption). Following Smith, temporal density results in the mobilization of increased and accelerated urban output and urban consumption, which can be understood as ubiquitous vehicles of capital accumulation. According to Berking, temporal density can be seen as temporal form, as a specific principle of temporal urban structuring.

On Urban Time: The 24/7 City

“New York, New York / I want to wake up / In that city that never sleeps.”⁹ In 1977 actress and singer Liza Minnelli first performed this song.¹⁰ The last verse of this song goes as follows: “If I can make it there, I’ll make it anywhere / Come on come through, New York, New York.” Two things are of interest to us here with regard to testing out the idea of urban time and its relation to temporal density in the 24/7 city. The core message of the song, that the city never sleeps, went on to become the paradigmatic condition for the global city. Today’s global cities are cities. The song was written in the 1970s, in a period that witnessed the establishment of neoliberal urbanism and the introduction of neoliberal governance. I will now go through the three points I raised in more detail.

3 Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 198.

4 Ray Hutchison, ed., *Encyclopedia of Urban Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010), 636.

5 Ibid.

6 Neil Smith, “New Globalism, New Urbanism: Gentrification as Global Urban Strategy,” *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (July 2002): 446.

7 See Helmuth Berking, “Städte lassen sich an ihrem Gang erkennen wie Menschen—

Skizzen zur Erforschung der Stadt und der Städte,” *Die Eigenlogik der Städte: Neue Wege für die Stadtforschung*, ed. Helmuth Berking and Martina Löwe (Frankfurt Campus, 2008), 19.

8 Ibid.

9 John Kander and Fred Ebb, “New York, New York” (United Artists Music Publishing Group, 1977).

10 The song plays in the film *New York, New York*, directed by Martin Scorsese.

On the level of the individual, this song reflects the perspective of a newly arrived person to New York City. The lyrics express a small-towner's or immigrant's imagination of the big city. It speaks of the will and the desire of the newcomer to "make it there." In turn, the city relies heavily on these new arrivals. Their energy fuels the 24/7 urban condition. Their work keeps the city going. Population density and urban-time density are closely interconnected. The city that never sleeps first referred to New York only. New York was glorified as the epitome of the big city, of the metropolis, and was ultimately understood to have set the precedence for the global city. New York was the pace-maker of urban time. It set the precedence for other global cities to follow. Urban time became one of the key factors in global urban competition. From the late 1970s onward, this epithet ornaments of the-city-that-never-sleeps has been attributed to a number of different cities including London, Berlin, Mumbai, and São Paulo. This not only reflects the processes that have resulted in a polycentric world with many different global cities," but also makes it clear that to make it there has become a global quest for many immigrant individuals on a global scale, who are new urban arrivals. Intent on making it there provides new energy that is needed to fuel the city. Those who forego their nocturnal sleep, those who stay awake, be it by choice or by necessity, actively keep the city from falling asleep. Be it the metro drivers on duty, be it the emergency doctors, be it the sex workers on the street, be it the bartenders behind the counter, be it the digital workers at their desks or in their beds pulling yet another all-nighter, or many, many unnamed others on this ultimately never-ending list—they are the growing numbers and driving forces behind the 24/7 city. The city that never sleeps does not merely happen; it has to be actively produced. We see now, that big-city density does not result from spatial density alone but equally from temporal density.

There is still the third aspect I want to draw the attention to. "New York, New York" was first performed by Liza Minelli in 1977. Franco "Bifo" Berardi has singled out 1977 as "the crucial year" with regard to how our relation to time has been restructured and deeply transformed. He writes the following: "Don't forget that 1977 is the year when Charlie Chaplin dies. The death of that man, in my perception, represents the end of the possibility of a gentle modernity, the end of the perception of time as a contradictory, controversial place where different viewpoints can meet, conflict, and then find progressive agreement. [...] Charlie Chaplin is the man on the watch tower [...] looking at the city of time, but also at the city where time can be negotiated and governed."¹²

Today's 24/7 city is very much a city of time. Yet, it is a city where time cannot be negotiated any longer. And this is exactly what the twenty-first-century protest movements reclaimed. They reclaimed that the city of time can be negotiated. They also reclaimed the need for public time of negotiation. On an

everyday level, urban subjects would need more time to negotiate the city of time. But time is what they always lack as a consequence of the ever-accelerated and ever-intensified density of time use. Therefore, it is important to not only take into account the spatial inequalities structuring the urban condition, but to understand the temporal inequalities of today's city of time. Neil Brenner has described the connection between neoliberalization and spatial inequality as follows: "From the 1970s, this commitment to nationally scaled equalisation was gradually abandoned, and during the 1980s, a series of market-driven, market-disciplinary strategies were mobilised to flip this idea on its head. At that time the consensus, which I would now argue is very much a neoliberal one, was that macroeconomic growth is best secured through *spatial inequality* at all scales."¹³

It is crucial to extend these insights into neoliberal urbanism and its structure of spatial inequality to the structure of temporal inequality. Berardi argues that "economics" is "a technology whose aim is the transformation of time into labor."¹⁴ The 24/7 urban condition accelerates the transformation of time into labor and increases the temporal inequality with regard to the time needed to make a living and regarding access to time different from labor. This is the result of the ever-intensifying density of time. Berardi therefore speaks of "the precarization [...] of time."¹⁵

Public Time: The Long Night of Museums and Marathon Conversations

The city that never sleeps can be understood in terms of efficiency of production per unit of time. It can be understood in terms of services available round the clock. I will now proceed by connecting the 24/7 logic to the cultural institution of the museum. Capitalism has not only produced its system of production, but also cultural institutions and formats specific to it. The nineteenth-century museum is one such institution that has attracted much scholarly attention with regard to its importance in the making of modern capitalist society and its public spaces. In his 1995 study *Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, Tony Bennett has not only analyzed how museums organize their collections, but he has paid equal attention to how museums

11 See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).

12 Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2012), 93–94.

13 Neil Brenner, "Neoliberalisation," in *Real Estates: Life without Debt*, ed. Jack Self

and Shumi Bose (London: Bedford Press, 2014), 23.

14 Berardi, *The Uprising*, 95.

15 *Ibid.*, 143.

16 See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

organize and govern their public.¹⁶ This is of interest to me here. Following Bennett, museums are a public space. *The Birth of the Museum* strongly echoes Michel Foucault's 1977 *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Via Foucault's work on Jeremy Bentham and "institutions of confinement," Bennett develops his work on institutions of "exhibition."¹⁷ "Bentham had envisaged, by making the penitentiaries open to public inspection—that children, and their parents, were invited to attend their lessons in civics."¹⁸ From the mid-nineteenth century onward such lessons in civics were not organized via visits to the prisons. Rather, Bennett argues, such lessons were organized through the exhibitionary complex that turned the previous aristocratic collections "into progressively more open and public arenas."¹⁹ Not only did the visitors to the museum see, and inspect, the objects representing histories of the past and the present, they also saw, and inspected, each other: "a model lesson in civics in which a society regulated itself through self-observation."²⁰ The visitors learned to become a public that knew how to make use of the public space, observing and inspecting each other. I want to suggest here that we also have to understand the museum with regard to the logics of public time offering model lessons of how a public learns how to spend, or better, to invest time. The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed the museum's turn to teaching more intensified model lessons of spending public time.

In 1997, twenty years after Minelli had famously sung about New York, the museum took up the 24/7 imperative and introduced the Long Night of Museums. What we see here is the museum not only as public space, but equally important the museum as public time. Held for the first time in Berlin in January 1997, the Long Night of Museums has become a globalized model followed by many other cities around the world. The museum teaches urban subjects to stay up at night. Offering free entrance, often supported by free public transport, museums enable a public to see each other as they practice staying up all night. The Palais de Tokyo in Paris has taken on the long-night notion year round: it opens at noon and closes at midnight. The twenty-first-century museum has taken on the task to teach the logic of the 24/7 city to its museum public.

Regarding the cultural practice of public time, it is equally important to look closely at the figure of the contemporary curator. The curator can be understood as a neoliberal model worker as identified by Dorothee Richter. She argues that "forms of neoliberal entrepreneurship might be even more noticeably displayed in the figure of the contemporary curator."²¹ In 2006, Hans Ulrich Obrist's "Interview Marathon," "the first 24-hour non-stop Serpentine Marathon" was cohosted together with star architect Rem Koolhaas.²² What we see here, is not only a public on the move wandering from museum to museum throughout the long night of museums, but a public invited to stay

awake round the clock to follow the marathon interviewers, the star curator together with the star architect at work 24/7. "Afterward, Obrist was so exhausted that he had to check himself into the hospital."²³ Yet, there is no time to give up. There were more marathons to follow. One just has to be better prepared. "Obrist now jogs every morning in Hyde Park."²⁴ In 2010, the "Marathon Marathon Project" took place in Athens at the Acropolis Museum "under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Culture and Tourism. [...] The apparent tautology in the title of the Athens event comes from the fact that [...] the "Marathon of the Marathon"—is being held as part of the celebrations of the 2500th anniversary of the Battle of Marathon."²⁵

Historically, the marathon runner is at once a symbol for victory and a symbol for death. A Greek soldier ran from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens. His message was victory. His success meant his death. The marathon runner competes with time; he cannot win. "Competition" as Berardi has written "means violence, war. This is the meaning of competition."²⁶ The format of the Long Night of the Museum, and even more pronouncedly, the format of the marathon conversation, celebrates the performance of public time as an exercise of competition in battling sleep. The city that never sleeps, the city of temporal density relies on urban subjects that are awake. The logic of the economics of the temporal urban condition of time rendered dense in use, performance, and value are at once celebrated, practiced, and exposed via the public museum, be it the long night of the museum or the conversation marathon.

Negotiating the City of Time: The Space of Appearance

So far I have offered an analysis of density as it relates to the city that never sleeps. I have connected the 24/7 city to model lessons of public time performed by the museum and its public and its curators. To conclude, I want to provide a less dystopian and slightly more hopeful account of the public negotiation of the city of time and the shared density produced by collective action. Berardi has warned us about the "precarization" of time. "Thirty years of the precarization of labor and competition have jeopardized the very fabric

17 Ibid., 59.

18 Ibid., 67.

19 Ibid., 60.

20 Ibid., 69.

21 Dorothee Richter, "New Art Market(s) and Forms of Capital," *OnCurating* 20 (October 2013): 53.

22 Serpentine Galleries, "The First Serpentine Marathon," <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/interview-marathon>.

23 D. T. Max, "The Art of Conversation: The Curator Who Talked His Way to the Top," *New Yorker*, December 8, 2014, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/12/08/art-conversation>.

24 Ibid.

25 "The Marathon Marathon Project," DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art website, October 31, 2010, <http://deste.gr/the-marathon-marathon-project/>.

26 Berardi, *The Uprising*, 95.

of social solidarity, and worker's psychic ability to share time, goods, and breath made fragile."²⁷ I connect the "psychic ability to share time," as suggested by Berardi, with Arendt's notion of the "space of appearance." She said: "Wherever people gather together, it is potentially there, but only potentially, not necessarily and not forever."²⁸ Arendt's work on the space of appearance has been most influential to political thought, and in particular, to a political theory of public space. Butler has stressed that material support structures are necessary for the Arendtian space of appearance: "We must insist on there being material conditions for public assembly and public speech. [...] The square and the street are not only the material supports for action, but they themselves are part of any account of bodily public action we might propose."²⁹ Arendt's notion of the space of appearance has to be understood in both spatial and temporal terms. It can find its location and its time "anywhere and anytime."³⁰ Therefore, we must insist on there not only being spatial conditions, but equally temporal conditions for public assembly and public speech. Where people gather, the space of appearance is potentially there, and time can be negotiated together. The space of appearance depends on the potentiality—as much as it depends on the ability—to share time. From Occupy Wall Street to Maidan, from Gezi Park to Nuit Debout, people have demonstrated not only their capacity to take to the street, the park, or the square, but they have equally shown their ability to share time collectively. These demonstrations take back the city of time to negotiate public time outside the logics of neo-liberal capitalist accumulation embodied by the 24/7 city of efficiency and growth.

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27 Ibid., 54.

28 Arendt, *Human Condition*, 199.

29 Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," in *Sensible Politics*:

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30 Arendt, *Human Condition*, 198.

Post-mass Housing Revitalization of High-Density Residential Urban Areas—A Case Study in Valencia

Improvistos (María Tula García Méndez, Gonzalo Navarrete Mancebo, Alba Navarrete Rodríguez)

Improvistos is a creative studio that designs strategies to improve urban life on the basis of ecology and social justice. Our team comprises three urban architects, a cultural manager, and an urban-policy specialist. We also cooperate with experts in the fields of sociology, urban economy, environmental studies, law, geography, art, and communication. We have conceived methodological tools that we mobilize in all projects carried out in collaboration with actors from civil society, the public, and the private sector. Our proposals associate creative processes with urban mediation techniques to foster practices of holistic urban regeneration, operating within the fields of architecture, urbanism, transversal consultancy, creative communication, and cultural management. Our services highlight the vitality, proximity, and diversity of our urban environment, key elements to improve people's quality of life in the territory.

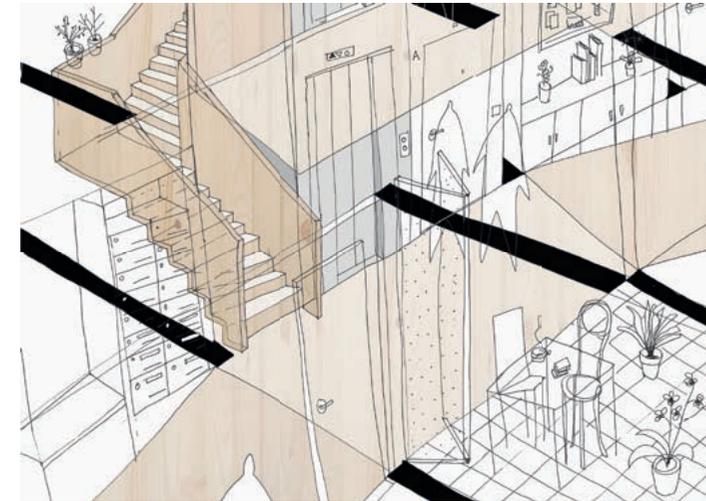


Fig. 11
Improvistos,
Shared spaces, 2015

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) launched an international competition for young professionals worldwide. Organized in the framework of the Global Housing Strategy, it promoted a paradigmatic shift in the provision of adequate shelter for all. In April 2014, Improvistos was awarded the first prize among 752 competing teams from different countries. The international jury of experts highly valued our project “Recooperation,” considering that “it draws up an open and integrated development proposal from an innovative vision in design and a participatory approach.”

“Recooperation” intended to be a multi-scalar, holistic proposal for the urban revitalization of the Orba neighborhood, in the area south of Valencia, Spain.

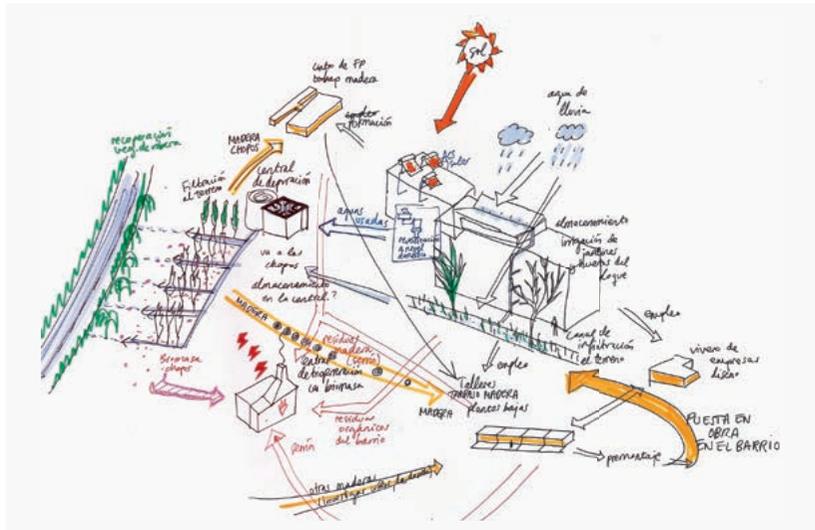


Fig. 12 Improvistos, *Cycle-dynamics*, 2014



Fig. 13 Improvistos, *Rehabitar*, 2014

Taking into account Orba’s geographical and socioeconomic situation, as well as the obsolescence of housing blocks in terms of typological diversity and energetic performance, “Recooperation” proposed to introduce the available resources in the territory into a “cycle dynamic” to help them operate more efficiently. As many unemployed neighbors came from the wood industry, “Recooperation” envisioned upgrading Orba’s housing units thanks to a range of structural elements made with local wood and based on the inhabitant’s know-how. From wood transformation to entrepreneurship and merchandising, the wood industry would provide opportunities to combat Orba’s obsolescence in terms of space, energy, accessibility, and use.

Moreover, low-cost, modifiable, and replicable housing solutions explore alternative combinations that could suit different lifestyles, and thus have an impact on how we perceive the hierarchy of uses. In our proposal for Orba, for every twenty housing units sharing one access, self-built up changes included new shared spaces and different transitional zones within the block. “Recooperation” also introduced a community-based exchange system for space, services, and goods that would allow Orba’s residents to offer what they did not use while obtaining what they needed, thus reusing resources and reconfiguring relationships. In short, the proposal intended to increase flexibility and diversity in housing while strengthening the community’s identity. These aims foster a participatory approach, which in turn is key to coming up with a sustainable regeneration strategy.

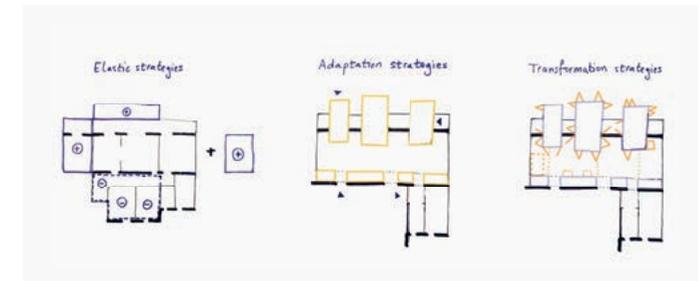


Fig. 14 Improvistos, *Flexibility strategies*, 2015

Elastic Strategies	Adaptation Strategies	Transformation Strategies
Houses can grow or decrease in terms of surface in two ways: giving or taking space from a community system (whether in a continuous or discontinuous way), or building an extension on the perimeter.	Houses can change in terms of the characteristics and distribution of their spaces through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing divisions: eliminating or changing partition walls, creating independent spaces within the house. • Changing or creating accesses: adding an extra entrance, providing access through the facade or the rooftop. • Adapted tailor-made furniture, prefabricated toilets, or furniture-balconies. 	Spaces are able to change depending on the use of the space, the time of the day, or the season. This last layer is easily modifiable and can be composed of elements such as mobile partitions, retractable furniture, removable windows, collapsible closings, retractile shutters, canopies, drop-down beds, curtains, folding tables, etc.

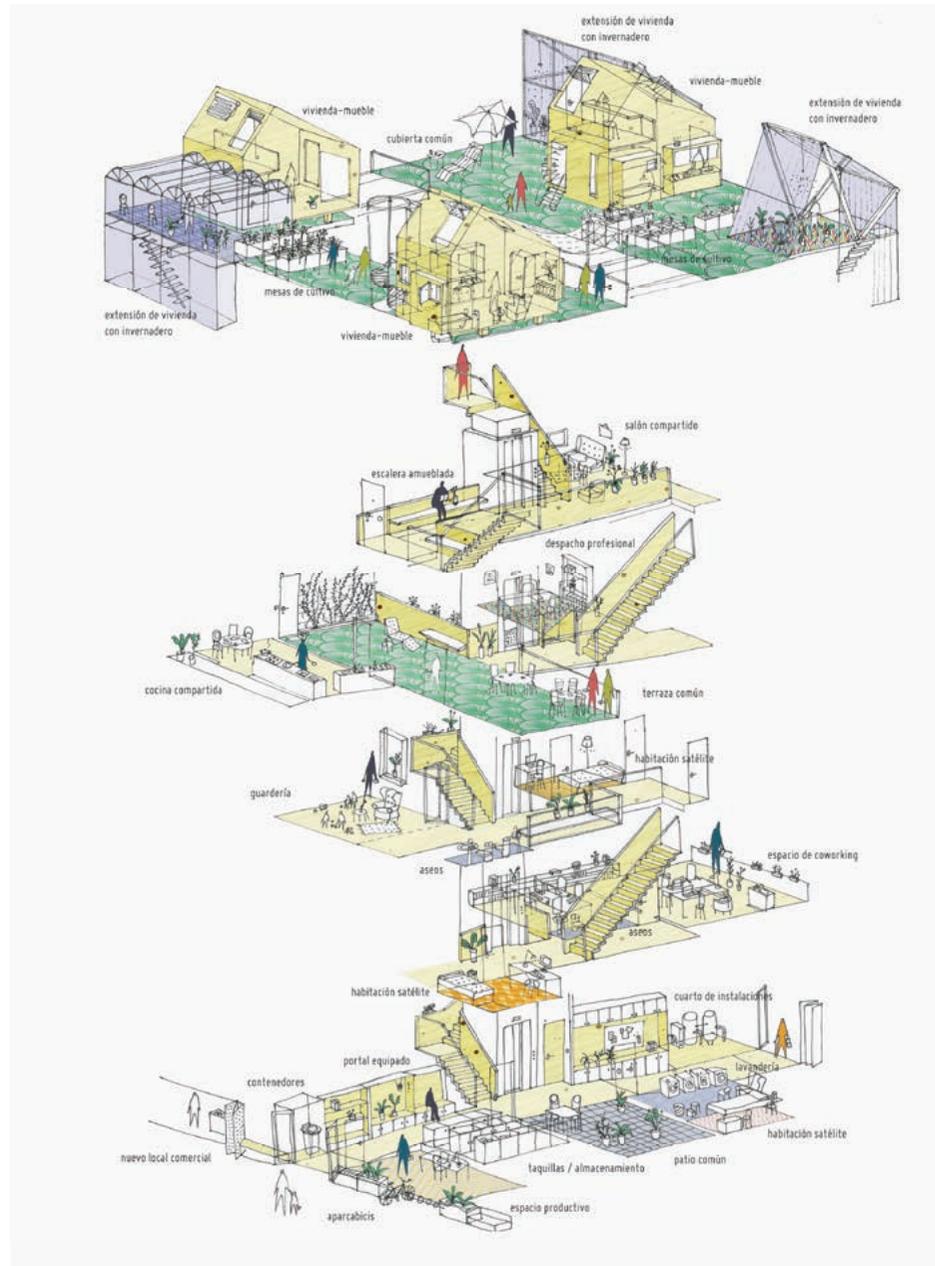


Fig. 15
Improvistos, *Shared spaces*, 2015

Indeed, urban regeneration is an ecological and social imperative, and the obsolescence of mass-housing stock is one of its critical issues. In this regard, increasing the density in existing fabrics (systole and integration) should be preferred over new constructions in the periphery (diastole and segregation). Minimization or even dismantlement could be suitable options, especially when the population is decreasing like in shrinking cities. And yet the concept of density has often been addressed superficially. As José Fariña described on his blog in June 2013, two urban planners work with numbers and theoretical concepts such as housing units per hectare, buildable area, land use, traffic intensity, or floor-area ratio, and so on, that make it difficult to relate density to inhabitants' direct experiences. What kind of density is best suitable to produce a vibrant urban life remains unanswered.

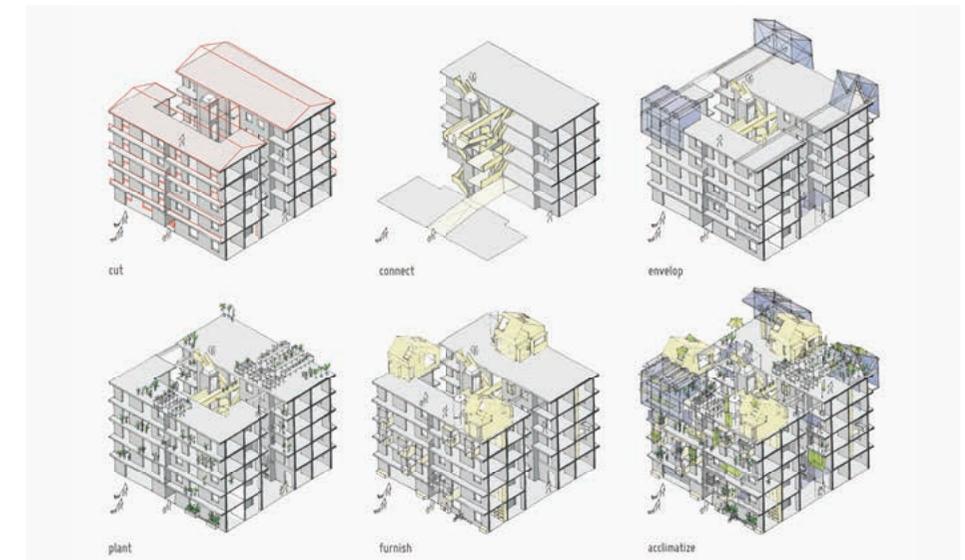


Fig. 16
Improvistos, *Interventions*, 2014

Drawing on a case study in Spain, we argue how our approach can benefit inhabitants' everyday life, while also reflecting on insights for further research on urban revitalization.¹

¹ Read more in the online publication of the article: <https://arepository.akbild.ac.at/view/4d3ac25e3f647271ce6f6203793b793012692>.

For further project information, please also see: www.improvistos.org.

Dilemmas around Urban Growth and Density A Focus on Vienna's Aspern Seestadt

Iván Tosics

This essay discusses some interesting aspects of the debates around the compact city as planning principle. Based on examples from European cities innovative examples are shown about the re-densification of the existing urban fabric, the reuse of abandoned places. It deals with the topic of density in relation to growing urban areas, where the task of planning policies is to find where to place the additional population arriving to the city. The problem of shrinking cities raises very different issues that are not discussed in this paper.

Some Aspects of Urban Population Density

Population density is a physical category, usually measured in the number of people living in a given area. Without going into the details and applying precise categories, in European cities densities between fifty to one hundred people per hectare can be described as "normal"; the areas below that density level can be considered sparsely populated (like villages or the American suburban settlements), while the areas above that level are viewed as densely populated (e.g., Tokyo or Hong Kong).

Physical conditions obviously influence the behavior of people. Very low densities lead to the problem of isolation, compared to which the increase of density means more intense interactions between people. The latter is usually positive, up to a given level; too high densities are considered problematic, leading to conflicts and quarrels between the people living in overcrowded conditions. There are, however, no strict benchmarks for what should be considered "too sparse" or "too dense" in populated areas. Furthermore, it can't be stated in either case that population densities that are too low or too high are the main causes of societal outcomes and certain social problems. Herbert J. Gans, in his seminal work *People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions*,¹ gave a critical overview about "physical determinism," a concept with a long history dating back to the nineteenth century, when reformers and master planners "assume[d] that people's lives [were] shaped by their physical surroundings and that the ideal city should be realized by the provision of an ideal physical environment. As architects and engineers, the planners believed that the city was a system of buildings and land uses which could be arranged and rearranged through planning, without taking account of the social, economic, and political structures and processes that determine people's behavior, including their use of land."²

¹ Herbert J. Gans, *People and Plans: Essays on Urban Problems and Solutions* (New York: Basic Books, 1968).

² *Ibid.*, 127.

Thus Gans and other academics have written critically about what he called the fallacy of “architectural determinism,” the belief that urban planning and architecture could solve the problems of poverty and low civic engagement. There is a link between urban form/density and people’s behavior, but this link is neither direct nor causal. Apart from social behavior, as well as other aspects, the influence of urban form can be considered more direct. For example, from an environmental perspective it is a generally accepted view that dense urban areas are more sustainable than areas with sprawling population. This can be illustrated by the following graph, which shows the relationship between overall urban density and transport energy use.

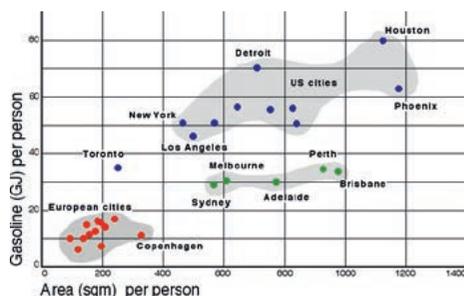


Fig. 17
Peter W. C. Newman and Jeffrey R. Kenworthy,
*The relationship between overall urban density
and transport energy use, 1989*

The figure shows convincingly the difference between European, Australian, and American cities, highlighting the advantages of more compact European cities as a combined effect of lower rates of car ownership and lower usage of cars (due to lower distances within urban areas).

The seemingly straightforward link between density (urban form) and transport costs hides important social aspects. The super-dense cities of the mid-nineteenth century, where the workers had to live in close distances to their factories, have gradually changed into less-dense forms with the emerging transport solution, from horse-powered tools through different versions of collective means of transport to the dominance of the individual car-based mobility since the 1950s. Although technological development leads to a relative decrease of transport costs for the poorer strata of society, it is still advantageous to live closer to urban centers where the biggest choice of job offers is available. In this regard, the environmental and social aspects of densification of urban areas might easily get into contradiction with each other: the densification of inner-city areas (positive for the environment) might lead to the ousting of lower-income households from these areas into areas further out meaning they have less chance to access inner-city jobs (negative social externality). Another link between densification and mobility is the emergence of traffic jams, congestion in more dense central areas

of cities. This issue is often addressed by public-transport-oriented planning policies, involving such concepts as intermodality (initiate the use of two or more modes of transport for a journey by offering convenient exchange points), and road pricing (introducing payment for the use of inner city areas, regulating demand in this way).

Population density is often discussed and debated by the representatives of different disciplines because it is one of the aspects of urban life that can be directly influenced by planning policies. In the case of newly built areas, the usually applied zoning regulations might quite precisely determine the population density of the area to be built up. An example of how to influence/steer density is provided in the case of Montpellier. As a compulsory settlement association, in 2005 the Montpellier Agglomeration (Communauté d’agglomération Montpellier Agglomération) adopted the Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale, SCoT planning system, for a period of fifteen years. The SCoT, which is the most important tool to handle peri-urban issues, defines growth areas and determines three categories of minimum levels of density, depending on local environmental aspects and public transport accessibility. The public sector has preemptive land-acquisition rights and is able to intervene to achieve higher densities where necessary. The SCoT is also innovative in protecting open space. Estimates for the effect of the SCoT suggest that over the fifteen years, the amount of urban sprawl will be half that which would have occurred if SCoT had not existed.³



Fig. 18
Montpellier Agglomeration, the 1:2500
sector plan for Montpellier, 2004

The Montpellier sector plan shows one of the schemes of the Montpellier SCoT, depicting the planned expansions of the built-up area, defining three categories of the minimum density according to the available level of public transport (RED: extension with more than fifty units/hectare density; ORANGE: extension

³ Iván Tosics, “Sustainable Land Use in Peri-Urban Areas: Government, Planning and Financial Instruments,” in *Peri-Urban*

Futures: Scenarios and Models for Land Use Change in Europe, ed. Kjell Nilsson et al. (Berlin: Springer, 2013) 373–404.

with more than thirty units/hectare density; YELLOW: extension with more than twenty units/hectare density). Density measures are quite often in the focus also of policies for the regeneration of existing built-up areas, aiming to densify areas that are considered to have too low density, or vice versa, aiming to decrease the density of areas considered as being too overcrowded.

City Case Studies: Interventions to Achieve High Density in Urban Areas

As already mentioned, this paper deals with growing cities. Population growth contributes in many cases to an increase in financial resources. How can growing cities, where population and economic growth go hand in hand, be expanded in sustainable way?

The examples discussed here focus on cities that plan to put newcomers into large new residential areas within the city's borders. The main example will be the city of Vienna, but Stockholm and Munich will also be considered. All three cities belong to the category of cities that grow both in terms of the population and economy. Under these circumstances, all three cities decided to create a large new residential area within their city borders: Aspern Seestadt in Vienna, Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm, and Freiham in Munich (at the time of writing, the first is under construction, the second close to be finished, while the third just about to start). The figures are similar and very impressive: in Aspern over twenty thousand people will live in 10,500 housing units within twenty years from now; Hammarby Sjöstad will soon have twenty-five thousand residents in 11,000 flats; while Freiham is planned to be the home to twenty thousand people in ca. 8,000 flats.



Figs. 19–20

Iván Tosics, *Extreme cases of newly built urban areas: large housing estates versus sprawling suburbs. New residential areas in Budapest and Madrid, 2007 and 2009.*

If a decision is taken to build a completely new residential district, this seems not to be a very difficult task—what could limit the fantasy of the planners ...? However, the large number of mistakes committed in the past should make the city officials and planners cautious. There are many dangers to avoid when building completely new residential areas in cities. Some of these dangers are quite obvious, as seen in the examples of large new areas developed exclusively by the public sector or solely by the private sector (figs. 19–20).

These dead-end pathways of urbanism, the large prefabricated housing estates and the monotonous suburbs are well known and there are no cities (at least in Europe) that would like to make the same mistakes again. So it is clear what is not to be done. The main question, however, still has to be answered: How to achieve an integrated new development with a healthy combination of economic, environmental, and social aspects?⁴ The difficulties are well illustrated in the figure of Scott Campbell on the triangle of conflicting goals for planning,⁵ illustrating the three conflicting interests: to grow the economy, distribute this growth fairly, and in the process not degrade the ecosystem.

City planners and politicians in the three cities from the case study are all aware of these conflicts and try to handle them carefully in lengthy planning processes, including all types of present and future stakeholders.

The Example of Vienna's Aspern Seestadt

As an example to illustrate the planning process, some milestones from the long history of planning of the Aspern area are listed below. Aspern airport was opened in 1912 and it served until 1977 before it closed down. In 2003 the planning process for a new residential area was started. The winner of the competition, the Swedish architect Johannes Tovatt presented the idea of creating a lake in the middle of the future residential area. The construction of underground line access (as extension of the U2 line) started in 2009 and the new line opened at the end of 2013. At the beginning of 2014, the neighborhood management office has been opened, growing to an office with fifteen staff members. The period from 2009 to 2016 marks the first phase of development with an area of 415,000 square meters for 6,500 people. The pace of further development is also impressive: from 2017 to 2023, the

4 See European Commission, "Cities of Tomorrow: European Commission" (DG Regional Policy, January 2011).

5 Scott Campbell, "Green Cities, Growing Cities, Just Cities? Urban Planning and the

Contradictions of Sustainable Development," *Journal of the American Planning Association* (Summer 1996) <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~sdcamp/Ecoeco/Greencities.html>.

net development area will be 470,000 square meters; from 2024 to 2029 net development area will be 197,000 square meters. For the Aspern Seestadt project, a specific development agency has been established to oversee the technical infrastructure (roads, sewage network, etc.), construct the central lake, lay out the green spaces, and deal with the developers of the residential and other functions in the area.



Fig. 21
Vienna Municipality MA18 and Christian Fürthner, aerial photograph of Aspern Seestadt, Vienna, 2016



Fig. 22
Iván Tosics, Aspern Seestadt, Vienna, 2017

With the commissioning of the Aspern/Essling geothermal plant and the connection of Aspern Seestadt to the district heating grid of Vienna, a far-reaching self-supply with renewable energy is achieved. The link to the district heating

grid also allows to feed in heat that would otherwise get lost. Currently fourteen developers (and one cohousing organization) are active in residential development in Aspern. From the 2,500 flats in the first phase, one-third of them are subsidized, while two-thirds follow the rules of subsidized housing with no subsidy (allowing for some public control). The size of the new flats ranges between 35 and 110 square meters. The ground-floor level of the new buildings is built with a higher ceiling to allow for office, shop, artist studio/gallery functions, and the renting out of these places follows a specific process through a dedicated company. Instead of building a shopping center, local amenities will be within walking distance, with an appropriate variety of shops. In connection with the high level of public transport, the supply of car parking is seriously limited to 0.7 car/flat norm (much lower than the 1–3 car/flat ratio in the surrounding areas). Developers do not have to build many parking spaces but have to contribute one thousand euros per flat to a mobility fund from which biking (rental bike system, e-bikes, and cargo bikes) and car-sharing systems are supported.

This short summary shows a series of new, innovative methods in Vienna urban planning: dedicated development company, high importance devoted to public space and mobility, ground-floor planning, cohousing, strong emphasis on neighborhood management, and so on. In fact, in Vienna the Aspern area is considered to be a “living lab” within the “smart city” agenda.

Dilemmas and Trade-Offs to Achieve Balance between Environmental, Economic, and Social Goals of Development in Expanding Urban Areas

From all that it seems that the planning process of Aspern Seestadt has applied all principles of sustainable urban development. More or less, it is a similar case with Hammarby Sjöstad and Frieham. We can say that the three rich and environmentally conscious cities build new housing areas along the best-known principles of sustainable and integrated development. But is this enough to avoid future problems? Is it completely certain that none of these brave new urban developments will prove to be dead-end pathways of urbanism in a few decades?

Integrated urban development is a complex process with many dilemmas and trade-offs. Despite the best efforts of planners and local politicians, we cannot be sure about the long-term outcomes of these large-scale projects. Although it is not easy to make neutral judgments and evaluations, the case of Stockholm is already criticized and the first signs of concern can also be seen in Vienna.

The Non- (or Only Part-) Fulfillment of the Original Ecological Aims

According to Poldermans,⁶ the original parking norm (i.e., the amount of car-park spaces that have to be built per new housing unit) in Hammarby Sjöstad was between 0.4 and 0.55 car/apartment, which has been increased to 0.7 when the political leadership of the city changed. This might have contributed to the fact that the aim for 80 to 90 percent of people to use public transport in work-related travel was never achieved—the maximum was 70 percent (which is also relatively high). Similar problems might arise in Vienna/Aspern, where considerable debates about the lack of parking spaces have already taken place. There are also arguments about speeding up the development of access roads—despite the excellent public transport connection to the city center.

The originally planned goal of carbon-neutrality has been given up in Aspern (some of the planned power plants were not built). Thus instead of carbon-neutral it will only be low-energy area, well behind the best examples in this field. The ambitious plans in Aspern for mixed shops and also more culture-oriented use of the ground-floor structures seem to be only partly realized: the market price of the ground-floor zone is unaffordable to artists and there is also a discussion going on about turning some of the ground-floor areas into flats.

The Trade-Off between Environmental and Social Goals

As Rutherford points out in his critical evaluation,⁷ in Hammarby Sjöstad originally a 50 percent share was aimed for social rental flats but this was not achieved as building costs increased and social subsidies were gradually removed since the 1980s, resulting in a push toward privately owned properties. In that way the new housing area could not compete with—as originally expected—the existing socio-spatial segregation of Stockholm; it adapted to it instead.⁸

The sharpest criticism has been formulated by Rutherford in the following way: “The Hammarby project constitutes a clear case of (at least partial) gentrification with the selling off of public land to developers and then to relatively wealthy households. The City imposed environmental measures on developers who pushed their prices up so that only wealthier households can now afford to buy an apartment in the district, resembling a form of ‘bourgeois environmentalism.’”⁹

Regarding Aspern, it is too early to talk about the social outcomes. The first signs are quite different from the case of gentrifying Hammarby: the real-estate value in Aspern is relatively low, even compared to some working-class inner-

city areas of Vienna, as Aspern is considered to be too far out from the city. Thus there is a danger that instead of the aimed social mix, an unbalanced social structure might develop with the dominance of lower-income families. This would not be a unique case: in the Munich Riem area (a similar new residential development), there were many planning efforts to create a mixed area for both offices and residential housing and for different income groups. Recent analysis, however, shows the dominance of low-income people.

Trade-Off between Building Extraordinary New Areas and Regenerating the Existing Deteriorating Housing Stock of the City

The big question has always been how to concentrate public efforts to improve the sustainability of the city in an integrated way. Not even the richest cities can afford to create new eco-friendly areas and regenerate their existing outdated and/or deprived neighborhoods at once.

There are a number of interesting examples in Europe with sustainable regeneration efforts concentrating on existing urban areas. The case of Wilhelmsburg in Hamburg is one such example, where a seven-year-long IBA (Internationale Bauausstellung) process has been established with the explicit aim of energy-led improvement of the existing low-income and low-prestige neighborhood.¹⁰ Also the earlier URBACT¹¹ publication on building energy efficiency includes interesting information about interventions into old neighborhoods of cities.¹² In the URBACT Use Act First Thematic Paper, the cases of Rome, Dublin, and Trieste are discussed as examples on the re-densification of existing urbanized areas with the help of integrated “re-use” interventions.¹³

6 Cas Poldermans, *Sustainable Urban Development: The Case of Hammarby Sjöstad*. Paper for Advanced Course in Human Geography (Stockholm University, 2005).

7 Jonathan Rutherford, “Hammarby Sjöstad and the Rebundling of Infrastructure Systems in Stockholm” (lecture, Chaire Ville seminar, Paris, December 12, 2013).

8 Andrea Gaffney et al., *Hammarby Sjöstad: Stockholm, Sweden; A Case Study* (CP 249 Urban Design in Planning, 2007).

9 Rutherford, “Hammarby Sjöstad.” 2013.

10 See Darinka Czischke et al., “Sustainable Regeneration in Urban Areas” (URBACT II Capitalisation, Paris, May 2015).

11 URBACT is one of the EU urban knowledge exchange programmes, similar to Interreg, Interact, and ESPON.

12 Antonio Borghi, Sadhbh Ní Hógáin, and Owen Lewis, “Building Energy Efficiency in European Cities: Cities of Tomorrow—Action Today” (URBACT II Capitalisation, Paris, May 2013). http://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/import/general_library/19765_Urbact_WS6_ENERGY_low_FINAL.pdf.

13 Vittorio Torbianelli, ed., *Planning Tools and Planning Governance for Urban Growth Management and Reusing Urban Areas* (URBACT USEAct First Thematic Paper, 2014).

The importance of the sustainable regeneration of existing urban areas has also been shown by the Bloomberg Philanthropies' 2014 Mayors Challenge. In the competition of European cities, one of the leading topics was to find innovative approaches to tackle the growing problems of outdated multifamily building areas. Very different technological innovations were suggested (e.g., to use drones to discover heat losses of buildings, or to introduce user-friendly IT systems with detailed data) to boost the interest of the population toward energy-efficient renovation.

Conclusion: Achievements and Problems of Densifying Urban Areas in a Sustainable Way

Vienna is one of the most livable and sustainable cities of the world, with strong traditions also for social equality. The case of Aspern Seestadt illustrates well how much effort the city puts in to develop the new residential area for the expanding population in sustainable and integrated way.

Yet, there are serious dangers in such projects—it is not at all easy to plan future-housing areas of such a big size, and to achieve environmental, economic, and social goals at once. There are already examples on modifications of the originally aimed targets. The financial crisis has reached even the richest cities, which also have to decrease subsidies and give up some of their most ambitious plans.

When the economic and financial circumstances deteriorate, changes and adaptations to the new circumstances are unavoidable. Such changes do not create huge problems if they only mean modifications of priorities within the same principle—for example, the less ambitious carbon standards are partly compensated by the priority given to public transport. Larger problems emerge, however, if the changes lead to a rearrangement of priorities between the basic principles. This is the lesson that can be learned from Hammarby Sjöstad: insisting on the high environmental qualities leads to irreversible losses in social targets, as with the decrease of public subsidies only the richer families are able to pay for the increasingly expensive (environmentally high quality) apartments.

Vienna (and also Munich with the Freiham area) can learn from this lesson. The balance between the economic-environmental-inclusive principles has to be checked from time to time during the whole period of the development of a new neighborhood. It is not enough to determine the balance at the beginning—this balance also has to be kept when unavoidable financial restrictions have to be applied, public contributions have to be decreased. The well-established

neighborhood-management team might be a good basis to discover early signs of emerging unbalances and to call the attention of politicians and planners to intervene.

New, large-scale residential areas may contribute to achieve a better balance between the different aspects of sustainable and integrated urban development. But this is not easy at all because it needs continuous monitoring of development and flexibility in setting the targets to avoid disruption of the balance between the economic, environmental, and social aspects.

Planning for higher urban density is a critical issue in the future of European cities. The case studies have shown the importance of proper governance systems, management forms, and decision-making models. Densification can contribute considerably to integrated urban development if implemented via proper and interconnected housing, environmental, and social policies. High-density areas can function without problems if public help is provided for their development and functioning. However, if the public help/control is not balanced (concentrating only on environmental issues or, one-sidedly only on the poor in these areas) or it disappears due to privatization and take-over by market processes, the high-density areas might become hugely problematic.

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Public Space as a Key Arena of Density



Everyday Densities in Public Space Lived Practices of the Spatial Present

Sabine Knierbein

This essay contributes to a deepening of scientific debates around density and everyday life. Connecting density debates and accounts that seek to start from an understanding of (changing) everyday life patterns is also necessary as it seems that something fundamental is missing in the debates on urban density: public (open) space.¹ At the same time, both are core frames of reference for urban planners and designers: "The use of density and open space measures must be considered as part of modern urban planning and design from the very beginning."²

Nowadays, planners and designers refer to density (again) in relation to experience and urban life in the city as key catalysts for the post-Fordist urban economy: "Vibrant urban life, which is directly related to the issue of density and densification, has become a competitive device for cities."³ Urban density is usually addressed in public space design as an indicator of urban quality of life and vibrant city life. But what do quantitative perspectives on masses of people in open urban space tell us about the qualitative features of urban density?



Fig. 25
Sabine Knierbein, waterfront
of Thessaloniki, Greece, 2016

1 See Alexander Stähle, "Compact Sprawl: Exploring Public Open Space and Contradictions in Urban Density," (PhD diss., KTH Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm, 2008), 29, http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?jsessionid=mdMdUm_dZENREquVA_MmzoS-yPD1

PPsGdHBHDHxt.diva2-search7-vm?pid=diva2%3A37326&dsid=-7806; and Emily Talen, "Measuring Urbanism: Issues in Smart Growth Research," *Journal of Urban Design* 8, no. 3 (2003).

2 Stähle, "Compact Sprawl," 13.

3 *Ibid.*, 27.

Promoters of such types of *vibrancy urbanism* relating to public, space such as Gehl Architects, very much construct their arguments alongside density debates: “City life does not happen by itself or develop automatically simply in response to high density. [...] Lively cities require compact city structures, reasonable population density, acceptable walking and biking distances, and good quality city space. Density, which represents quantity, must be combined with quality in the form of good city space.”⁴ Where this approach represents a newer and more innovative generation of urban-regeneration strategies focusing on high quality design of public spaces as spaces for cyclists and pedestrians, the highly normative and determinist approach to *good city space* might run risk of contributing to mask potential dilemmas relating to conflicts and structures of power mediated in and through social public space: “In a given situation, life in the city can be influenced quantitatively by inviting more people to come or qualitatively by inviting them to stay longer and slowing down traffic.”⁵ Gehl’s conception has been widely migrating into the development of urban policies and strategic urban planning documents of many cities around the world. In Vienna, for instance, the Urban Development Plan Vienna (STEP 2025) makes a central statement on the relation of urban densities and urbanity: “High-quality urbanity in urban quarters can be attained if certain qualities of development density are a given: [...] high housing quality due to housing design geared towards everyday needs and a differentiated range of public squares, green and open spaces. Thus high-quality urbanity means vibrant urban quarters with a wide variety of different forms of use, short distances to supply facilities, flexible open spaces and barrier-free, lively streetscapes.”⁶ Political and strategic programs for urban development address issues of functional density and the vibrant and lively activation of space. However, they fall short of addressing a much more needed link to conceive density as multiple and meaningful overlaps and social interferences of lived practices, which would explain in more depth the patterns of action and behavior that are the core ingredients of producing social density, and to unravel the power dynamics involved in conceptually using density. The gloss-over use of density masks current vibrancy urbanism’s tendency to openly address urban development mechanisms that contribute to increases in urban inequalities. In a nutshell: there is a tiny, but indispensable gap between quantitative approaches of social density through functional mixing, and the real urban experience of lived and *messy* density in the sense of *real* and contested urbanity that takes places on an everyday basis.

As consequence of such a type of post-Fordist approach to strategic planning regarding the design of public space, Gehl’s approach partly disconnects the qualitative interventions into the built urban fabric from a qualitative understanding of the social urban fabric, the two being inseparable aspects of urban change. On the other hand, what we can take from these accounts is that there are many different understandings of density in different disciplines

and that there is a general distinction between qualitative and quantitative densities, yet no unifying concept accepted by the different disciplines is concerned with the issue.

Public space and density debates are two of the major points of reference to promote a sort of vibrancy urbanism. On the one hand, vibrancy urbanism fuels post-Fordist urban consumption patterns (as analyzed in contributions regarding the experience economy, attention economy, and the city of spectacle); on the other hand, it fosters new capitalist explorations to commodify social, cultural, and symbolic capital in the city. The latter is strongly relating to the ambivalent character of bottom-up activities and grassroots initiatives as both the new modes and the resistance against new paths of flexible urban capitalism.

In opposition to an increasingly prevalent quasi-positivist approach to produce *slow density* (by reducing spaces for cars and enhancing places for slower traffic), this essay seeks to tackle the disjuncture between built and social space densities with the focus on the relation of density and everyday life. To achieve this, it will explore the qualitative dimensions of (social) density in the city, and reconnect these to a postdisciplinary understanding of public spaces as catalysts of public life, spanning from abstract theoretical thought to more precise spatial praxis.

From Accorded Density to Density as Resistance— Between a Postmodern Conception of the Mind and Dichotomous Distinctions of Space

Nancy Fraser has used density to demarcate the postmodern (linguistic) turn in social theory as “an epochal shift in philosophy and social theory from an epistemological problematic in which mind is conceived as reflecting or mirroring reality, to a discursive problematic, in which culturally constructed social meanings are accorded density and weight.”⁷ With this feminist approach to the construction of a public sphere, Fraser relates to the changing nature of intellectual efforts, and the new densities of constructed meanings that carry weight in the postmodern conception of mind, and thus of societies.

4 Jan Gehl, *Cities for People* (London: Island Press, 2010), 69.

5 *Ibid.*, 73.

6 *STEP 2025: Urban Development Plan Vienna* (Vienna: Vienna City Administration, 2015), 48, <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/studien/pdf/b008379b.pdf>.

7 Nancy Fraser, “Pragmatism, Feminism, and the Linguistic Term,” in *Feminist Contentions: A Philosophical Exchange*, ed. Seyla Benhabib et al. (London: Routledge, 1995), 157.

While tackling “accorded density” in an abstract way to sustain her politico-philosophical argument, her account remains spatially ungrounded. It is Doreen Massey who later takes philosophical thought back to the city when she “captures these tensions through the notion of ‘open intensity’ by suggesting that cities are places that are defined through the concentration of particularly dense networks of cultural and economic interaction. The very density of these networks, as well as the density of settlement, helps to generate the intensity of social relations that is associated with living in cities.”⁸ That way Massey establishes a clear link between Fraser’s accorded density and the *dense networks of cultural interaction* that—alongside built density—generate the intensity of social relations in cities. The relation between these everyday densities and rising inequalities in the context of neoliberal urban politics, however, remains unexplored.

Simone Tulumello has made an effort to connect public space and density debates against the backdrop of actually existing neoliberalism when pointing to “densely appropriated public spaces.”⁹ Thereby, he refers to dense everyday encounters and the sociability of public space where public space might be understood as a crossroads where minds, feelings, and practices meet.¹⁰ Tulumello argues that “the density of urban space can be defined as the relation between its public and civic ‘mass’ and the space it takes up: a space is dense, within this perspective, because of the concentration of (different) social groups, activities, understandings, wills, desires, instances, interests, and values.”¹¹ While in the first part he still stresses a quantitative reading of a density where city publics are identified as civic *mass*, in the second part he outlines dimensions that are inherent to a qualitative understanding of public spaces and urban cultures in the city. He finally suggests to use two criteria to characterize a *dense* public space, “one social and one spatial.”¹² This reading, however, follows a dichotomous distinction between the two. Firstly, it identifies soft cultural and social aspects (e.g., the coexistence of social capital and social diversity; social fabrics characterized by a multiplicity of ethnic and national backgrounds; an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socioeconomically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants), where density can be detected by analyzing the presence of articulated networks of local organizations, that is, civil society initiatives (NGOs, etc.). Secondly, for Tulumello, spatial density lies in an understanding of the compact urban fabric as opposed to the geographic isolation brought about by spatial dispersion,¹³ as it is in the compact urban fabric where appropriated public space constitutes the tangible and symbolic space in which civic and political action takes place.¹⁴

On the one hand, this reading offers a new window into debates on density and public space, because it is the density of the multiple social spaces, that is, social space that constantly overlap, intermingle, and mutually permeate

in the everyday city.¹⁵ According to Tulumello, social space-related density can be identified by the degrees and nuances of social self-organization (as in NGOs for instance). However, this perspective again falls short of a dualism Lefebvre sought to radically overcome: the distinction between the social and the spatial. To develop a relational approach to density that rather connects than fragments the social and the built urban densities, it is necessary to take a step back to basic debates on urban density before trying to establish a dialectical bridge between international public space research and a respective understanding of urban density. This is necessary because “considered in isolation, the social theory based conception of density is ‘void of content.’”¹⁶ Nikolai Roskamm, therefore, concludes that “viewed separately, ‘density’ remains a category without proper connotation, an elaboration without consequences, a container without content.”¹⁷

Classifying Density

To tackle the inequalities produced through and by the use of density debates, particularly in the context of neoliberal urban policies, however, one would need to revisit, dissect, and reconstruct the terms that are at work when neoliberal urban policies are put into play.¹⁸ Imogen Tyler has reintroduced (sociocultural) class analysis as for her, “inequality is the problem that the concept of class describes.”¹⁹ She thus seeks to address structural conditions of inequality by advancing scientific enquiry into an understanding of the

8 Doreen Massey, “On Space and the City,” in *City Worlds*, ed. Doreen Massey, John Allen, and Steve Pile (London: Routledge, 1999), 151–74, cited by Chris Brook, Gerry Mooney, and Steve Pile, in *Unruly Cities: Order/Disorder*, Understanding Cities Series (London: Routledge, 1999), 269.

9 Simone Tulumello, “Reconsidering Neoliberal Urban Planning in Times of Crisis: Urban Regeneration Policy in a ‘Dense’ Space in Lisbon,” *Urban Geography* 37, no. 1 (2015): 14.

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17 Nikolai Roskamm, *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion; Diskurse zu Stadt und Raum* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), 10.

18 Imogen Tyler, “Classificatory Struggles: Class, Culture and Inequality in Neoliberal Times,” *Sociological Review* 63, no. 2 (2015): 493–511.

19 *Ibid.*, 496.

ways in which “inequalities are implicated in wider social, cultural and political divisions.”²⁰ An important analytical link between density and inequality (taking into account the indicators for the Gini coefficient, e.g., income inequality) has been offered by Edward L. Glaeser, Matthew G. Resseger, and Kristina Tobio, who point to the tendency of dense, urban places to be more unequal than less dense places: “While there is certainly plenty of rural inequality as well, the density of cities and urban regions makes the contrast of rich and poor particularly striking.”²¹ They conclude that policies usually tackle inequality at the national level, whereas spatial inequality at the urban level is not at all well addressed, despite the urban realm’s core relevance for real redistribution (e.g., through materialization of tax benefits in school infrastructure or public space to improve educational standards and living standards in dense areas).

A neo-Marxist reading of urban space that works with classificatory struggles can help to analyze density in the context of the (de- or re-)classifications and class struggles it evokes (or contributes to) in a context of increasing neo-liberal urban policies. Such an understanding would require the urban professional’s reflection on his or her own professional-ethical position when dealing with density in relation to public space to understand the social grain of density. In this context, Roskamm is referring to Maurice Halbwachs’s accounts on the *social morphology* where *social groups* offer basic features for the *spatial fabric*, thus stressing *material representations* of collective character that are directly connected to the material dimensions of social life.²² Whereas Halbwachs analyzes a more structural condition in connection to social morphologies,²³ it is Fran Tonkiss who stresses another important aspect of everyday densities when she argues for the need to include the affective dimensions of density into a more complex reading of density relating to everyday life routines and practices of urban dwellers: “Affective density levels [...] are likely to shift even over the course of a day, as well as varying for different individuals and groups. [...] Affective density, simply, is more complicated than anything that can be measured as a ratio of mass to area.”²⁴ And she continues with an abstraction from individual to city level: “Like different individuals, different cities *do* density differently, both in terms of how it is lived and how it is spatially organized. [...] Different urban morphologies underline the fact that there is no standard way to produce density in the city.”²⁵ While connecting everyday life and social urban density on the individual or interactive level of affect, Roskamm takes thinking about density back to a more structural level when referring to Durkheim’s understanding of social (moral) density. Here, social (moral) density is understood as the central reason and as an important qualitative indicator of further societal development and, in addition, as the extent of solidarity in relation to the urban society. He therefore criticizes the fact that in the German-speaking urban-sociology debates, a predominantly quantitative approach to urban density has been developed, which has produced a significant loss of meaning in the usage of density in urban

studies.²⁶ Apart from the struggles over the predominance or relevance of quantitative or qualitative accounts to understand urban density, an understanding of the recent relation between public space and urban density in times of neoliberal urban policies needs to consider another aspect. This aspect is explicitly central to the debates about public spaces, and more implicitly seems to play a key role in dealing with density: politics.

The Politics of Density

To understand the setting of conditions that deeply sustain the patterns of urban inequality, we need to understand that density is not just an analytical concept, but has been migrating into the field of political agenda setting and policy formulation, thus being very normatively applied in different urban contexts. Tonkiss, in this sense, has pointed to Kevin Lynch’s comment on the many *tricks* that can be played with density in the context of major debates about urban environments.²⁷ According to her, there are at least two dilemmas when dealing with density in planning and design terms.²⁸ Firstly, “density is a device for achieving other objectives, rather than an end in itself. How you view ideal densities will depend on who you are and what you want: lower environmental costs or higher land, property and rent values; more housing supply or better space standards; collective life or greater privacy.”²⁹ Secondly, “there is clearly no tipping point at which ‘good’ density becomes ‘bad’ density: this can change given context, over quite short spaces of time, and for different individuals. Moreover, density—so frequently associated with the dynamism and urban creativity of interaction and cross-pollination—at a certain level can become static, producing a rigidity in city form.”³⁰ Addressing the distinction between good and bad density, Tonkiss calls attention to the socioeconomic impact of density debates against the backdrop of urban inequalities and injustice: “In cities of more recent and rapid population growth and industrial development, the problem of density sits in an uncertain place in-between: the point at which density becomes overcrowding is never quite

20 Ibid.

21 Edward L. Glaeser, Matthew G. Resseger, and Kristina Tobio, “Urban Inequality,” Working Paper 14419, National Bureau of Economic Research, October, 2008, 2, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14419>.

22 Roskamm, *Dichte*, 93.

23 Maurice Halbwachs, *Soziale Morphologie* (1938; repr. Konstanz: Edition Diskurse, 2002).

24 Fran Tonkiss, *Cities by Design: The Social Life of Urban Form* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 48.

25 Ibid., 45.

26 Roskamm, *Dichte*, 89.

27 Fran Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*, 50; referring to Kevin Lynch, *Site Planning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1962).

28 Here, her approach is similar to how Imogen Tyler proceeds: Both of them try to trace the genealogy of terms frequently used in the social sciences like “class” or “density,” thus de-masking instrumentalized uses of sociological concept in urban games of power and struggles over space and territories.

29 Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*, 51.

30 Ibid., 50.

clear. One could almost conclude that density is bad for poor people; except that it is poverty that is bad for poor people, and *bad* densities tend to follow from that.³¹ Such an understanding points to the genuine nature of density as a concept that undergoes different types of normative aspirations, “from a social and environmental evil to a positive social and environmental good,”³² as well as instrumentalizations and expectations within urban studies (and related disciplines): “Density represents a critical point at which spatial categories become social arguments; in recent urban debates, it has been promoted as a key principle for producing more sustainable, compact and manageable cities.”³³

While being (mis)used for political rhetoric, on the one hand, density can also serve an analytical concept in contemporary urban studies: Alexander Stähle has argued that the “uneven distribution of densities can lead to injustice in the distribution of public services. When Soja recognizes ‘environmental justice’ as ‘spatial justice,’ he is actually emphasizing local accessibility and density patterns.”³⁴ Roskamm, however, has stressed that there has never been an equal distribution of density in the city and that the assumption that people would be evenly distributed over urban space is a statistical abstraction.³⁵ Where it seems clear why both of these statements stand in contrast to each other, little attention is given to the slight nuances in how density is approached: where Stähle refers to density understood as access to public infrastructures and as the provision with ecologically healthy living conditions, Roskamm criticizes quantitative sociology’s notion of statistically defined densities. Where Stähle charms Edward Soja’s notion of equal distribution of opportunities in a city, Roskamm dissects density notions employed to grasp structural social city patterns, and deconstructs them as only being relevant through the process of intellectual abstraction, but not as a concrete urban reality. To reconnect social relations, density, and space, Roskamm recaps that “the density terminology of a socially constructed (relativist or relational) space conception must be different than that of a more classic (absolute, banal) container conception of space.” He calls for a deconstruction of the container-density conception, to evoke a necessary discourse on the suppressed main subject of the disciplines involved in city making, that is, space.³⁶

The social benefits of urban density hence appear less conclusive, Tonkiss summarizes, and lists several professional-political approaches to more beneficiary ways of *doing* density in the city: “By facilitating spatial access to public transport, urban services and amenities; decreasing economic segregation and spatial inequality; offering greater possibilities for social interaction; enhancing community safety via the informal policing offered by well-used streets and overlooking; and increasing the range of social, cultural and consumer choices for different urban residents, especially minority and marginal groups.”³⁷

The politics of density needs to maneuver the differently nuanced understandings of density in a way that reduces social inequalities in cities. By linking public space and density debates, a great potential is offered to repoliticize the (politically) instrumentalized debates around urban densities in a certain way that promotes a quest for public, collective, and social benefits of urban development interventions and achievements heralded in the name of density. The focus on marginalized groups and hegemonic practices of the mainstream society, the state, and markets, which is central to public space research, can be a valuable enrichment for analytical and interpretative perspectives on density in urban research.

Conclusion: Relational Everyday Densities

An understanding of density that sustains concrete steps for progressive or radical change,³⁸ including actions against rising urban inequalities, perceives public space as the key arena where distinctive spatial features, civil society appropriation, social super-diversity, and bottom-up organization might eventually unfold. In this sense, stunning parallels can be identified between human geography/planning theory accounts on density,³⁹ and urban studies approaches that understand public space as a relational counter space and foster an anti- or postcapitalist reading of urban spaces for action.⁴⁰ However, as we have seen in the previous pages there is still a certain epistemological finesse required for developing a more dynamic understanding of density as socially produced urban condition. Tonkiss offers a valuable starting point for this when outlining that “the sheer fact of higher density or greater compaction is not in itself a guarantor of any particular benefits. Whatever benefits might derive from urban density will depend both on its spatial organization—patterns of land use and location, the design and integration of built form, networks of transport access—and on the ways in which density is lived socially—the patterns of behaviour that operate in more or less dense urban contexts, whether environmental [...], economic [...] or more strictly ‘social.’”⁴¹ *Everyday densities* as a bridging concept that connects density debates and public

31 Ibid., 39.

32 Ibid., 37.

33 Ibid., 27.

34 Stähle, “Compact Sprawl,” 27; referring to Edward Soja, “Sprawl Is No Longer What It Used to Be,” in *Post Ex Sub Dis: Urban Fragmentations and Constructions*, ed. Ghent Urban Studies Team GUST (Rotterdam: O10 Publishers, 2000), 88.

35 See Roskamm, *Dichte*.

36 Ibid., 346.

37 Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*, 40.

38 Tulumello, “Reconsidering Neoliberal Urban Planning in Times of Crisis.”

39 Ibid., 17.

40 Sabine Knierbein, “Public Space as Relational Counter Space: Scholarly Minefield or Epistemological Opportunity?,” in *Public Space and Relational Perspectives: New Challenges for Architecture and Planning*, ed. Chiara Tornaghi and Sabine Knierbein (New York: Routledge, 2015), 42–64.

41 Fran Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*, 40.

space research is much more concerned with the ways in which urban densities are socially produced, and how they tackle economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions of this social production. With this shift from understanding density as a calculable equation toward conceiving density as a spatially materializing societal production process, we can establish new points of contact between neo-Marxist class analyses that unravel urban inequalities,⁴² between density debates at the interface of urban studies, design, and planning,⁴³ and between international public space research.⁴⁴ This understanding of density is grounded in an analysis and interpretation of the changing social relations that are involved in producing urban densities. It therefore acknowledges the genealogy of density discourses, and it also takes up the cudgels for rooting an understanding of density in the social practices (i.e., social praxis) of the spatial present. Such an understanding of relational everyday densities allows for more emancipatory nuances to open processes for a wider range of interested participants and people. Finally, it offers a mechanism to intervene into capitalist relations of the social production of density in a way that radically envisions a different urban society and urban space.*

42 Tyler, "Classificatory Struggles."

43 Roskamm, *Dichte*; Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*; Tulumello, "Reconsidering Neoliberal Urban Planning in Times of Crisis."

44 Ali Madanipour, *Whose Public Space?*; Sabine Knierbein, "Public Space as Relational Counter Space"; Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory*

(Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); and Tonkiss, *Cities by Design*.

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Density Caused by Shortages The Role of Public Transportation in Vienna and Budapest in 1918

Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah, Katalin Teller

The “Seventeenth Tram”

I took the tram and learned something. It’s not just that I was squished by three corpulent ladies instead of a thin gentleman, or that I managed to push my weight up only onto the seventeenth tram, or the fact that I could have reached my destination three times while I was waiting at the stop, and that the bow trolley broke three times till we reached the next stop, no, the pious passenger had already got used to these ingredients of the tramway service so that he would have felt bad if the tram had not shown him such kindness. No, I learned something else. I learned that the ticket for short distances still costs seven denier. What a crime! If I remember correctly, last week the ticket cost the same and it still costs that much. This is quite unusual. It is just normal that, at war, everything gets more expensive, and if we do not have a day-by-day rise of costs in the capital’s tram service, we will have to state that the tramway companies cannot keep up with the war.¹

This ironic description sensitively captures the daily crisis Budapest (and Vienna) had to face during the First World War. It not only addresses the daily routine of traveling in crowded trams but also the insufficient technical conditions and the price policy of the tram company during the war. Above that, it hints at a certain mode of reaction thus suggesting a defensive but nonetheless critical attitude in dealing with deplorable circumstances.

In this sense, our contribution, which primarily follows a historical and sociocultural approach, covers the problem of urban density and its impact on social interactions. The latter refers to the respective measures of the city administrations in Vienna and Budapest as well as to the lived experience that we find reflected in newspaper articles.²

1 “Ha a vége jó, minden jó,” *Népszava*, March 6, 1918. Unless otherwise noted, all translations by the authors.

2 Our paper is based on the preliminary research results of the project “Metropolis in Transition: Vienna—Budapest, 1916–1921,” conducted by Sema Colpan, Amália Kerekes, Katalin Teller, and Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for History and Society in Vienna. It focused on Vienna and Budapest between 1916 and 1921 and aimed at a comparative analysis of these two cities in the transformative years during and immediately after the First World War.

With an emphasis on everyday life and selected urban places—e.g., Prater and Schönbrunn for Vienna, or City Park and Castle District for Budapest—the project applied a spatial perspective on the period by discussing specific “spatial stories” of both cities. The project combined academic research and pedagogic work: pupils from two schools in Budapest and Vienna worked in groups on selected places in both cities. We are grateful to Sema Colpan and Amália Kerekes for their inspiring ideas and supportive comments on our paper.

The effects of war economy and social changes, characterized by substantial shortages and solicited by the state of emergency, considerably influenced the way public transportation could work and the way this everyday means of urban life was reflected upon by the administrations and the cities' inhabitants. Our starting point was the assumption that, in this respect, Vienna and Budapest had to meet very similar challenges: both cities were affected by a large number of refugees and soldiers coming and returning from the front lines, by the scarcity of material supplies such as food, fuel, and coal, and by a shortage of housing facilities.³ Public transportation, primarily the operation of trams, represented a crucial point as it offered a condensed image of density and scarcity in the public space. City dwellers, refugees, visitors, and injured soldiers were compelled to use overcrowded transportation, whose number was extremely limited due to military usage and technical shortages,⁴ or were simply forced to walk. The result of this limited mobility was, on the one hand, an extreme density of the urban masses, and, on the other, the emergence of a usage of public space that resembled provincial life. Moreover, the means of public transportation offered a framework for a new mode of communication between social classes: owing to their weakened economic status, members of the middle class were forced to share the same public space as the lower classes.⁵ In short, the notion of density, as we apply it in our historical case study and unlike approaches of phenomenology, hermeneutics, or urban planning,⁶ is a very tangible and practical one. But, at the same time, it is to be grasped as a relational concept that can only be used in reference to its counterparts, that is, scarcity and shortage that go beyond the phenomena of public transportation.

The experience of density in Vienna and Budapest during the war stemmed from diverse causes and manifested itself in various ways. For instance, it emerged because of a lack of living space: masses of refugees from the eastern parts of the monarchy and troops passing through the capitals needed to be accommodated,⁷ which contributed to the already existing housing deficits. Both capitals were infamous for overcrowded and overpriced flats, especially in workers' districts because the construction activities could not meet the demands of the growing urban population.⁸ Moreover, hunger and food shortages from 1915 onward led to shop closures, resulting in long queues at food markets, war kitchens, and in front of grocery stores. A great number of newspaper articles in both cities as well as the so-called *Stimmungsberichte aus der Kriegszeit*, k.k. *Polizeidirektion für Wien* (Police observations concerning the behavior of the Viennese people during the war) reported on the extensive queuing, emphasizing the presence of women and children.⁹ Density could also be perceived owing to the expanded need for entertainment caused primarily by the increased presence of soldiers and refugees—groups of people standing in front of cinemas, theaters, and music halls branded the image of the inner city.¹⁰ And density, as mentioned, derived from transportation

shortages, too: more people than before the war had to be placed in a fewer number of trams, and this generated an enduring discussion in both cities.

These debates can be reconstructed from documents offered by two comparable newspapers, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (AZ, Workers' newspaper) and the *Népszava* (People's voice), organs of the social democrats in Austria and, respectively, Hungary.¹¹ Our focus on the year 1918 derives from the insight that the developments in these cities are similar: the enduring war and the collapse of the Habsburg Monarchy resulted in substantial economic and social crises in both cities. Thus one might expect similar reactions in terms of administrative regulations and in terms of everyday practices. But the end of the war and the subsequent months yielded divergent political changes in Austria and Hungary: in November 1918, Austria became a democratic republic and Vienna,

3 For a general introduction to Vienna's infrastructure during the First World War, see Alfred Pfoser and Andreas Weigl, eds., *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs: Wien im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Vienna: Metro, 2013); for information on Budapest in an international context, see Péter Bihari, *1914: A nagy háború száz éve: Személyes történetek* (Pozsony: Kalligram, Budapest: Pesti Kalligram, 2014), e-book edition, 827–900.

4 See Tibor Legát and Gábor Zsigmond, *Közlekedik a székesfőváros* (Budapest: Libri, 2014), 26–29.

5 The encounters were often accompanied by conflicts. See, for example, "Szolgabírák országa," *Népszava*, October 22, 1918.

6 See the contributions in Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, Thomas K. Keller, and Benjamin Buser, eds., *Städtische Dichte* (Zurich: Verlag NZZ, 2007); and the detailed overview in Nikolai Roskamm, *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion: Diskurse zu Stadt und Raum* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), 9–85.

7 For refugees in Vienna see Walter Mentzel, "Weltkriegsflüchtlinge in Cisleithanien 1914–1918," in *Asylland wider Willen: Flüchtlinge in Österreich im europäischen Kontext seit 1914*, ed. Gernot Heiss and Oliver Rathkolb (Vienna: J&V Edition, 1995), 17–44; for Budapest see Péter Bihari, *Lövészárkok a hátszágban: Középosztály, zsidókérdés, antiszemitizmus az első világháború Magyarországon* (Budapest: Napvilág, 2008), 150–62. For military movements in Vienna, see

Manfried Rauchensteiner, "Räder müssen rollen für den Krieg: Die Wiener Bahnhöfe im Ersten Weltkrieg," *Wiener Geschichtsblätter* 61 (2006): 1–14; for Budapest, see Imre Helgert, "A budapesti létrejötté, feladatrendszerének változása az öszirózsás forradalom és a Tanácsköztársaság alatt," *Nemzetvédelmi egyetemi közlemények* 2 (2002): 91–107, <http://docplayer.hu/2026883-A-budapesti-varosparancsnoksag-letrejtote-feladatrendszerenek-valtozasa-az-oszirozsas-forradalom-es-a-tanacskoztaarsasag-alatt.html>.

8 For Vienna, see Michael John, *Hausherrnenmacht und Mieterelend: Wohnverhältnisse und Wohnverfassung der Unterschichten in Wien 1890–1923* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1982); for Budapest, see Endre Borsos, *A magyar lakásügy a háború kezdetétől I–II* (Kalocsa: Árpád Nyomda, 1929), 8–145.

9 K.k. Polizeidirektion Wien, Zentralinspektorat der k.k. Sicherheitswache, *Stimmungsberichte aus der Kriegszeit: Wien 1914–1917*, July 5, 1917, <http://www.digital.wienbibliothek.at/wbrobv/content/pageview/609760>.

10 See photos and caricatures in *Érdekes Ujság*, November 29, 1917 and June 13, 1918.

11 Peter Pelinka and Manfred Scheuch, *100 Jahre AZ: Die Geschichte der Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna: Europa-Verlag, 1989); Péter Németh, ed., *A 130 éves Népszava: Töredékek a 130 éves Népszava históriájából* (Budapest: Népszava 2003).

from May 1919 on, had an administration headed by the Social Democratic Workers' Party, whose activities and prospective plans later culminated in the idea of "Red Vienna." Budapest, in contrast, faced a number of political conflicts: the bourgeois revolution in November 1918, called the "Aster Revolution" or "Chrysanthemum Revolution," the soviet republic from March to August 1919 (*Tanácsköztársaság*), and the enduring hostile actions ending with the regency government of Miklós Horthy. At the same time, both cities, and entire countries as well, had to experience similar economic problems since the constant supply of raw materials, such as coal and oil, was cut off because the areas providing them did not belong to Austria and Hungary anymore. Nevertheless, the principal lack of resources went hand in hand with a relatively well-balanced urban policy in Vienna, while Budapest had to struggle with radical modifications in political leadership.¹²

On the basis of our investigations of press materials, two focal points can be addressed: first, the impact of specific organizational structures in both cities, and, second, the verbal orchestration of the phenomenon of density as it refers to difficulties in public transportation.

The Public and Its Service

Vienna and Budapest are considered significant urban centers within the monarchy, concentrating on similar political responsibilities and representing comparable social strata with comparable social movements. But the design of public transport in the cities differed in a considerable way: Vienna's trams and omnibuses were owned by the municipality since the turn of the century.¹³ The city's only means of rapid transportation was the *Stadtbahn*, which had not been planned according to needs of urban mobility but for military uses. Moreover, by 1914, it was already technically outdated and expensive. Therefore, the tram was Vienna's primary form of public transport and in 1913 it accounted for approximately 80 percent of the city's passengers. Right before the war in 1914, it had already reached its limits and people spoke of a *Verkehrsmisere* (traffic misery).¹⁴ The problems increased during the war when private vehicles as well as horses and tramway cars were confiscated for war purposes. Meanwhile, in the war years Budapest had two competing but necessarily cooperating corporations of public transport whose services were constantly negotiated with the city administration. These covered—in contrast to the situation in Vienna—almost all needs for public transport, which was also dominated by tramways. The limited capacities of the so-called millennium subway, the failed introduction of omnibuses, the minimal usage of ships on the Danube, and, during the war, the decrease of horse-drawn carriages amplified this dominance of trams.¹⁵

Although these differences in the ownership of transport companies influenced the administrative and economic management of public transportation, the central problem in both cities remained very much the same: to maintain a more or less normal operation of the trams, both the city of Vienna and the entrepreneurs of Budapest were interested in making profit. This turned out to be manageable only by increasing the ticket fees and reducing the standards of service. In short, a common phenomenon in each city was that the number of passengers and the volume of freight expanded and prices increased while the number of carriages decreased resulting in longer intervals and mostly overcrowded trams. This fostered debates regarding the definition of what public utilities should cover and how the high density of masses could be handled and the needs of urban life met. In Budapest these discussions, in the social democratic *Népszava* at least, were combined with a sharp criticism. On the one hand, the municipality was constantly accused of corruption and of strengthening mafia structures of the transportation corporations, thus not representing the interests of the city and, first of all, the interests of the working people who strongly depended on public transport. On the other hand, the *Népszava*, even though it stressed the responsibility of the municipal representatives to guarantee this public service, steadily warned the city administration of the acquisition, that is, the municipalization of the companies, arguing that their economic and technical condition was too disadvantaged to risk such an asset.¹⁶ In Vienna the criticism focused on the inability and the indolence of the provincial government to provide coal for the city and its transportation system.¹⁷ The public also accused the municipality of hypocrisy because of the lack of investment, the closing down of stations, and higher ticket rates while at the same time still making profits because of an enormous rise in passengers and transport assignments from newspapers or the post.¹⁸

12 Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a Században* (Budapest: Osiris, 2006), 101–49.

13 In 1898 the railway ministry granted the city of Vienna permission to build and run the railway system. See "Reichsgesetzblatt 20. März 1899," 87, <http://alex.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/alex?aid=rgb&datum=1899&page=137&size=45>. In 1903 the city bought the remaining privately owned tramlines.

14 See Sándor Békési, "Straßenbahnstadt wider Willen oder zur Verkehrsmobilität im Hinterland," in *Im Epizentrum des Zusammenbruchs*, eds. Pfoser and Weigl, 452–61; 453–56.

15 See chapter 5 in Géza Bencze et al., eds., *A főváros tömegközlekedésének másfél*

évszázada I: A reformkortól 1919-ig (Budapest: BKV, 1987), 312–43.

16 "Mi készül a villamosvasutaknál: rendcsinálás vagy panama?," *Népszava*, May 28, 1918; "A villamosközlekedés titkaiból," *Népszava*, August 31, 1918.

17 Vienna was part of Lower Austria until January 1922 when it finally became its own province.

18 "Einschränkung des Straßenbahnverkehrs," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, December 6, 1918. In 1917/18 the number of passengers had increased by 100 percent in comparison to 1911. See "Der Wiener Verkehr im vergangenen Jahre," *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, July 21, 1918; and Békési, "Straßenbahnstadt wider Willen."

What nevertheless turned out to be a common point in both cities was the political-ideological moment in the argumentation: the shortages in and the criticism of public transportation culminated in an intensified activity of the respective trade unions, strongly supported by the above-mentioned newspapers. In Budapest, a number of demonstrations, partly accompanied by general strikes, were organized under the participation of tram workers, among others claiming a general right to vote. The voting right was seen as a guarantee for transparent governmental and municipal policies, thus for an improvement of the working conditions as well as that of service standards.¹⁹ When in October 1918 the tramway employees in Vienna went on a two-day strike, they—similarly to the strikers in Budapest—demanded higher wages, better working conditions, and an equalization of women workers. The AZ, by explicitly objecting to the “bourgeois press,” covered the strike’s process, highlighting the strikers’ discipline. Furthermore, it reported on the impact of the strike on the city, mentioning the blocking of still-operating lines as well as criticizing the police and senior tram employers for assaults against strikers or the slapping of a female conductor.²⁰ The Viennese press coverage highlighted an additional ideological moment: in August 1918 the AZ objected to class relations, which in Vienna seemed to affect the transportation system, too. “Quoting” a fictitious reader’s letter, the paper criticized the mayor’s solution to tram misery, when on race days special trams drove the gentry directly to the Freudenau, the race course. At the same time workers and employees could not use trams for their daily routes and, according to the AZ, had the mayor blaming them for small distance tram rides.²¹

The Rhetoric of Density

The way the articles in the AZ and the *Népszava* presented the said controversies in 1918 points to a curious overlapping: the rhetoric of war and fighting penetrated the language of the reports as well as that of fictional and non-fictional reflections on the traffic misery. The AZ, for instance, published an anonymous satirical feuilleton piece titled “Letzte Reise” (The last trip) describing not only an outbreak of fire, but broken ribs and lethal shoot-outs for some of the passengers. Even the author becomes a victim of the tram battle: “I experience a last happy moment. I realized I dodged the fare. Then I died. A fully packed rucksack closed my eyes for good.”²² The *Népszava* reported daily about tram accidents, which were partly fatal, under the titles like “mass murder” or “bloody terrorist attack” committed by a tram. The urban environment was thus transformed into a “battlefield for the trams.”²³ At the same time, an analogous verbal strategy was applied regarding the transportation companies. When aiming to raise the ticket prices, they were supposed to “prepare an assassination” of the city dwellers and even of the entire city.²⁴ This metaphorical charge of the phenomenon received a special outfit on

the occasion when both city administrations took measures to regulate the usage of trams. The municipalities not only reduced the number of stops, thus forcing passengers to walk some distance, it also regularized the practice of getting on and off the carriages and, in Budapest, placed it under the control of a special task force.²⁵ Even if these measures could not be long lasting and effective, they elicited a number of ironical comments in the feuilleton columns. One of these texts seems to be paradigmatic with regard to the dominance of war metaphors and militant sceneries applied in the *Népszava*. The narrator has to travel by tram to his not really beloved mother-in-law who is breathing her last. His goal is to negotiate the terms of her last will. The newly introduced order of getting on and off the trams is being maintained by four representatives of the municipal and governmental power: the conductor is accompanied by a tram soldier, a civil policeman, and a tram gendarme. While the narrator attempts to get on the tram, these forces act as representatives of a radically disciplining and militarized power. They perceive the public transport as a battlefield and its passengers as enemies of the state and urban order. At last, the narrator decides to get off the tram (because it is still in the stop), but gets arrested because of his illicit action. Meanwhile, his mother-in-law passes away.²⁶ What this short drama puts in a nutshell is the tension between the individual use of public transport and the goals of law and order induced by the war, assumed to serve the interests of the urban community. This and a number of other feuilletons both in *Népszava* and AZ have made intense usage of the entanglement of the “hinterland” and the war front by linking both phenomena in the framework of war rhetoric.

This common point in the representation of social, political, and transportation tensions, generated by this specific sort of urban density, is more vivid if we perceive a substantial difference in the respective discourses on the urban outfit of the two cities. Even if the insufficiency of public transport was indeed

19 “A munkásság hadüzenete a választójogért,” *Népszava*, April 20, 1918; “A munka seregszemléje,” *Népszava*, April 23, 1918. For an ideologically one-sided but detailed overview of the activities of public-transport trade unions see László Eperjesi, “Jöjjetek ezrével állni a sorba”: A közlekedési és szállítási dolgozók az 1918–1919-es forradalmakban (Budapest: Közlekedési és szállítási dolgozók szakszervezete, 1979), 5–24, 167–94.

20 “Arbeitseinstellung bei den Wiener Straßenbahnen,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October 8, 1918; “Das Ende des Straßenbahnerstreiks,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, October 9, 1918.

21 “Für die Pferderennen hat Herr Weiskirchner Züge genug!” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, August 6, 1918.

22 “Letzte Fahrt. Aufzeichnungen eines Fahrgastes in der Elektrischen,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, February 10, 1918.

23 See, for example, “A villamos véres offenzívója,” *Népszava*, February 13, 1918; and “A villamos harctéri jelentése,” *Népszava*, March 13, 1918.

24 “A Városi villamos is csatlakozik a közönség elleni hadjárathoz,” *Népszava*, March 10, 1918.

25 “Reformálják a villamost,” *Népszava*, July 20, 1918.

26 “Így lesz, ha a legközelebbi villamos reform életbe lép,” *Népszava*, July 21, 1918.

a threat in terms of losing the urban characteristics of the capitals, this moment seems to be atopic for Budapest. In this case, the problem is not addressed in the context of public transport but only in that of coal shortages and the earlier closing hours of entertainment and leisure institutions.²⁷ Meanwhile, for Vienna, the shortcomings in urban infrastructure were part of a wider discourse on “Vienna as a dying city.”²⁸ The challenges of daily life caused by general drawbacks in supply posed a threat for Vienna to be devaluated as a metropolis and be perceived as a mere rural entity. This dreaded “ruralization” was discussed rather ironically in the AZ in August 1918.²⁹ Starting with a mock critique of the glorification of even the strangest technological progress before the war, the author notes those days as over. “Progress” gave way to the motto “Back to nature,” particularly regarding the almost collapsing Viennese tramway system. As a solution both for the transportation problems as well as shortages and unemployment, the author recommends a new transportation means: wooden clogs made of sustainable and abundant material, made by women who are now queuing hours and hours for food in vain anyway. Female ticket conductors could sell these “mobility clogs” at heavily frequented tram stops; for bourgeois neighborhoods he suggests the less noisy roller skates: “At least these would be easy substituted rolling material.” The clogs and roller skates could solve transportation problems easily and then: “The tracks may rust, the cables disintegrate and the streets may gradually become vegetable gardens.” In a caricature, originating not from the AZ but from a similarly leftist-inspired weekly *Der Morgen*, nature has already taken over. Instead of pedestrians, trams, cars, and carriages and instead of a tramway stop, which has been shut down, the city is exclusively invigorated by cats, by an old man, apparently a vagabond, and by farm animals like goats, peacefully grazing on grass fields between the tracks (fig. 26).³⁰

The militarization of the representational codes in feuilletons and reports, and the creation of a dystopian space out of the actual urban space are two reactions to the experience of urban density. Tensions generated by density in an actual urban space are channeled into forms that offer specific interpretational frameworks that go beyond the mimetic reproduction of the given phenomenon. What we thus have here are two modes of reformulating the daily experience of urban density: the first is in a figurative sense of martial conditions, and the other in a sense of dystopic design.



Fig. 26
Anonymus, “Das Verkehrsleben,”
Der Morgen, August 19, 1918

27 “Hogyan lehet tűz nélkül főzni?,” *Népszava*, May 9, 1918; “Bajok a villanyvilágítás körül,” *Népszava*, September 15, 1918.

28 This idea of Vienna was widespread during and after the First World War. It is part of a wider antimodernist discourse about the “ill” or “dying” city. See Andreas Weigl, “Demographischer Wandel in

europäischen Metropolen,” *Beiträge zur historischen Sozialkunde* 3 (2000): 117–22, http://vgs.univie.ac.at/_TCgi_Images/vgs/20050817151629_3_00Weigl.pdf.

29 “Fortschritt,” *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, August 11, 1918. Parts of the article are censored.

30 “Das Verkehrsleben,” *Der Morgen*, August 19, 1918.

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Cafés as Designed Settings for Social Performativity

Anamarija Batista, Ivana Volić



Fig. 27
Margherita Spiluttini, Volksgarten Restaurant Tanzcafé
designed by Oswald Haerdtl, Vienna, 2003

This woman whom I see coming toward me, this man who is passing by in the street, this beggar whom I hear calling before my window, all are for me objects—of that there is no doubt. Thus it is true that at least one of the modalities of the Other's presence to me is objectness. [...] Now it is not only conjectural but probable that this voice which I hear is that of a man and not a song on a phonograph; it is infinitely probable that the passerby whom I see is a man and not a perfected robot. This means that without going beyond the limits of probability and indeed because of this very probability, my apprehension of the Other as an object essentially refers me to a fundamental apprehension of the Other in which he will not be revealed to me as an object but as a "presence in person."¹

—Jean-Paul Sartre

06.07.2016, Volksgarten Café: Live Meeting after Several Months of Skype Talks

A few months ago the two of us met in the Viennese Volksgarten Café. It had been a long time since our last face-to-face meeting. We live and work in two different cities, Novi Sad and Vienna, so our discussions about this essay, the book, and working topics were mostly carried out via Skype. While the use of digital technology enabled us to bridge the spatial gap and to overcome the geographical distance between us, our conversation in Volksgarten was in a way much more engaging. The scope of engagement between us and our surroundings—the possibility to look backward and forward, to speak louder and hold our breath, to smell and hear the surroundings, to disperse our focus and sharpen it, and to perceive the distances around and between us—allowed us to disintegrate and at the same time to enrich the verbal expression.

The act of a face-to-face meeting in café gardens became the topic of our conversation. We began discussing questions related to the forms of encounters, and here we particularly referred to cafés and café gardens as specific semi-public spaces, whose performativity and atmospheres are produced by social gestures and design settings. Although cyber conversation can be described as a face-to-face talk, this mode of dialogue seems to offer just a fragmented version of bodily encounters. As Franziska Bollerey notes, "The screen-conveyed communication necessarily leads to an atomization of any feeling of community

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992), 340.

of those present.”² Even though one could argue that a Skype talk produces a framework for a more focused conversation, meeting in person creates a broader setting for an interplay of relaxation, concentration, and social relations. The potential to immerse, to come into a relationship with the world, and to experience the unexpected is higher.

During our meeting in Volksgarten we talked about cafés in the geographical areas where we live or where we each grew up—Vienna, Novi Sad and Zenica. We decided back then to deepen this topic in the context of this article. Although we compare the habits, changes, and design of cafés in cities of different sizes—Vienna as a capital and a metropolis, and Novi Sad and Zenica as medium-sized cities—the comparison can be made for the following reasons. The cafés are located in the city centers, thus being the gathering places of people from all over the city as well as the places visited by tourists. Even though Vienna, given its size and tourist attractions, has more cafés, we argue that the trends of café planning, design, and use are comparable.

This article deals with selected cases to reflect on their similarities and differences. In addition, it presents a picture of historical changes in café culture the period of the 1950s and '60s, and gives an overview of the café situation today. We will discuss the ways cafés and their atmospheres were designed during the aforementioned period and examine the influence these cafés had on social performativity. By relating the thoughts and work of Juraj Neidhardt, one of the most influential postwar architects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Oswald Haerdtl, the Viennese architect who designed several iconic cafés and restaurants in Vienna, such as Café Arabia, Café Volksgarten, and Café Prückel, the period of postwar modernism will be explored.

Finally, the focus is put on the question of how the café culture has changed today. To what extent do new technologies, neoliberal ways of production, the tourism boom, and law regulations, such as the smoking ban, impact interior design, social interaction, and the modes of resonance³ in today's coffee houses? In this process, as already mentioned, we will refer to selected situations in Vienna and Novi Sad.

Brief Summary of Café History

As places of gathering, cafés have always been the spaces of high-density activities. Envisaged as places of an exotic charm,⁴ where dark brown liquid from the “Orient” was served, cafés have become the places of meetings and social interactions of different kinds. At the time of their establishment in the second half of the seventeenth century,⁵ there were no other sheltered places for ordinary people to gather. Social contacts were made in churches, at

trade fairs, at exchanges, in the streets, or in public squares.⁶ Some critics claimed that it was precisely the gathering and debating in cafés that marked the rise of a “public sphere” of critical debate beyond the regulation of the monarchical state.⁷ Jürgen Habermas was the first to articulate the term “public sphere,” pointing to the example of cafés as a sort of institution that started to evolve simultaneously with the consumer revolution.⁸ In this account, the coffeehouse was understood as a novel and unique social space in which distinctions of rank were temporarily ignored and where an uninhibited debate on matters of political and social interest flourished. If there was a connection between the birth of consumer society and the rise of public sphere, then the best way to understand it, according to Brian Cowan, is through a study of the origins of coffee drinking and coffeehouse society.⁹

Apart from the purpose of gathering and socializing, they were venues where a large variety of business and what we might now call leisure activities could take place. Coffeehouses have served as postal centers, employment agencies, auction rooms, lost-property offices, places of business, gambling dens, and Masonic lodges.¹⁰ People went there to debate, write, play cards, receive their mail or to read newspapers and magazines. Apart from that, cafés became the places for lectures and readings, teaching and education on a more democratic footing, which until then had been the sole privilege of secular and ecclesiastical upper classes.¹¹

2 Franziska Bollerey, “Setting the Stage for Modernity: The Cosmos of the Coffee House” in *Cafés and Bars: The Architecture of Public Display*, ed. Christoph Grafe and Franziska Bollerey (New York: Routledge, 2007), 50.

3 As further explained in the section titled “Cafés as Places of Resonance.”

4 Cafés have a three-centuries-long tradition in Europe. Restaurants as venues are older (originating in the second half of the sixteenth century) but we refer to cafés since they have always had a specific role in people's socializing and even in intellectual gatherings from which can emerge revolutionary ideas.

5 Juraj Neidhardt noted that “as early as in 1600, a Turkish historian spoke about Sarajevo coffee houses with five to ten different rooms or compartments. The first European café was opened in Paris in 1671, and the next was opened in Vienna in

1681.” Dušan Grabijan and Juraj Neidhardt, *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*, trans. M. P. Moll and Branko Vrčan (Ljubljana: Državna založba Slovenije, 1957), 15.

6 Bollerey, “Setting the Stage for Modernity,” 67–70.

7 Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and John Harold Plumb, *Birth of a Consumer Society* (London: Harper Collins, 1984).

8 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 14–26.

9 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 79–88.

10 Antony Clayton, *London's Coffee Houses: A Stimulating Story* (London: Historical Publications, 2003), 43.

11 Grafe, *Cafés and Bars*, 8.

While still visible in the period between the two world wars, the elitist approach to design standards largely changed after the Second World War. The 1950s and '60s marked the time of mass-media expansion, an increasing consumerism, city master plans, motorization, and popular culture. Socialist vision of fair redistribution of wealth, which should have resulted in the rise of standards in living and welfare for everyone, was driven by technological development in combination with the establishment of social and political institutional networks. At the same time, young people struggled for social liberty and de-hierarchization of social structures. The emerging popular culture, pop and rock music, as well as excessive experiments with one's own corporeality, were experienced on the one hand as an act of liberation, and on the other hand as an expression of social attitudes.¹² Not only did they reject the standards of high culture, but they also demanded a change in the social order, including the institutionalized, hierarchical authorities. The change in cultural habits also affected the culture of meeting. Clubs, festivals, dance cafés, parks, and city squares were among the liveliest places in the city.

Today, cafés and café gardens have become the places of meetings and encounters. The often-used vintage-style and living-room atmosphere offer guests a setting for enjoyment in specific concepts. Moreover, the "old" concepts can be experienced there, the current fast pace of life can be slowed down, interrupted by visiting cafés whose interiors represent coziness, domesticity, and good design. The intimacy of a space correlates with the intimacy of an encounter. In most cases, these are meetings among friends, project partners, singles, and so on. The life from the outside has permeated the spaces via technical devices and internet platforms.

Cafés as Places of Resonance

On the surface it seems that the relationship between guests and café owners rests on an agreement that implies consuming a beverage in order to be allowed to use the space. For this reason, cafés are places with the economic normative of payment and consumption. On the other hand, as mentioned above, cafés in the recent decades have become the most frequent places of gathering, both for work and social interaction, the spaces of strong, temporarily created socialization, and sharing of thoughts. Owing to that, they embody a great potential of resonance relationships—it is that specific connection, when a person comes alive in another person's glance or the experienced subject immerses with the fragment of the world.

In his book *Resonance: A Sociology of the Relationship to the World*, Hartmut Rosa argues that neither the subject nor the world are existent, but they are both the result of their own resonance.¹³ The author divides the relationship

to the world into three categories: the resonant answer-relationship, the indifferent world-relationship, and the adverse-drastic world-relationship. In the first category, a person has a vibrant relationship to the world; it is an exciting and lively exchange. In the second category, the world does not communicate with a person; it is a cold and rigid relationship. And in the third case, the world does not just refuse the dialogue with a person, but threatens her or him.¹⁴ According to Rosa, the resonance experience with its inherent "overshooting" moment exists, although in the late modernist society there are strong tendencies toward *resonance-reification*.¹⁵ "Basically we are chasing something all the time, seeking to expand our range of influence in the world by improving our financial situation, by expanding our network of friends or acquaintances, or by enhancing our well-being. But this is a way of being in the world, a form of grasping the world that causes a lack of resonance." The moment of unavailability is inherent to resonance. "Especially, when we have the intention to do something—today I have to be in this or that mode—this often fails. Christmas Eve is a good example of this."¹⁶

As places of gathering and relief, cafés have an immanent potential to unroll the resonance and produce the action. Jean-Paul Sartre discusses the question of one's visibility to another. He describes the moment of "overshooting" as the moment when "one is transformed from person to personage, and becomes an aspect of a situation that is by and for the Other."¹⁷ Sartre points out that before an encounter takes place, the subjects of the environment are aligned toward themselves. In the first moment of another person's presence, she or he is seen in the distance and seems to be an object among other objects. But at the same time, the person is aware of the immediacy of the Other. The presence of the Other means the alienation of myself, the alienation of the

12 Diedrich Diederichsen, *Der lange Weg nach Mitte: Der Sound und die Stadt* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1999), 273.

13 Hartmut Rosa, *Resonanz: Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2016), 741.

14 Hartmut Rosa and Zlatko Valentić, "Ich will Resonanz!," *Philosophisches-EXPERIMENT*, broadcast, September, 2015, <http://philosophisches-experiment.com/ich-will-resonanz/>.

15 Rosa, *Resonanz*, 741.

16 "Eigentlich hetzen wir immer nur danach, unsere Weltreichweite zu vergrößern, indem wir unsere Vermögenslage verbessern oder unser Freunds- und Bekanntnetz ausdehnen oder unsere Gesundheit steigern. Aber das ist eine Art des In-der-Welt-Seins, eine Form der Weltbeziehung, die uns eben resonanzarm

macht." *Der Resonanz ist das Moment der Unverfügbarkeit inhärent. "Gerade dann, wenn wir uns vornehmen, heute will ich unbedingt in diesem Modus sein, dann misslingt es uns häufig. Weihnachtsabende sind dafür ein klassisches Beispiel."* Hartmut Rosa and Katrin Heise, "Entschleunigung ist auch keine Lösung," *Deutschlandradio Kultur*, March 5, 2016, http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/soziologe-rosa-ueber-sein-buch-resonanz-entschleunigung-ist.1008.de.html?dram%3Aarticle_id=347513. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are our own.

17 Jean-Paul Sartre, cited in Steve Martinot, "The Sartrean Account of the Look as a Theory of Dialogue," in *Sartre Today: A Centenary Celebration*, ed. Adrian van den Hoven and Andrew Leak (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005), 47.

world I organize. It leads to the disintegration of our own horizon, as the objects of our own world become also the objects for the Other: "I am seen as seated on this chair with the result that I do not see it at all, that it is impossible for me to see it, that it escapes me so as to organize itself into a new and differently oriented complex, with other relations and other distances in the midst of other objects which similarly have for me a secret face."¹⁸

Therefore, in order to grasp my existence I need the Other, who in a way brings me into an objective "realm" through its presence. The encounter with the Other, the recognition of its existence, means the recognition of the common world.

In late capitalist society, the ability for empathy and ecstasy/enthusiasm has become the productive economic resource and the resonance-desire has been transformed into a commodification of an *object-desire*.¹⁹ To receive recognition and admiration from the Other, the contemporary subject practices self-design by actively promoting her or himself. Boris Groys compares the image of mythological Narcissus with the one of contemporary Narcissus, underlining the historical transformation in his article "Self-Design, or Productive Narcissism." The mythological Narcissus looks at the reflection of his body in the lake, hereby assuming that others will share his own perspective and be as fascinated by his own worldly image as himself. In contrast, the contemporary Narcissus "is not certain of his own taste" and has to become active in order to get the attention of the others.²⁰ It is not just by producing selfies, which will be liked by others, that one can be admired, but also by producing "aesthetically relevant things and/or surrounding ourselves with things we believe to be impressive and seductive."²¹ According to Groys, design has a huge impact on human subjectivity and its parameterization. In his opinion, after Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed the death of God, "the only possible manifestation of human subjectivity became its design: the look of the clothes in which humans appear, the everyday things with which they surround themselves, the spaces they inhabit, and so forth."²² As a result, there is an obligation to self-design.

Could cafés by their design help us fulfill the obligation to self-design? As visitors of those places, we have entered an already designed world and become part of its atmosphere, image, and taste. Cafés are places where one meets with others, but also with oneself, where the bustle of everydayness goes into off-mode. It is a place of rest, of talk as well as work. But even in the context of work, cafés offer different "office" conditions. Apart from the person we speak with, we are surrounded by "strangers," who are still others and potential resonance partners. Their thoughts and their living circumstances are unknown to us, but there is possibility to make assumptions through observation and imagination. There is even the chance to enter into a dia-

logue by observing or talking. A closer look at the cafés as places of encounter and as designed spaces makes us wonder how cafés, with their design and organizational setting, interact with social encounters and resonating relationships produced by visitors.

To comprehend this and to understand the enjoyment brought by our face-to-face meeting in Volksgarten Café, we decided to explore the interconnection of spatial experience and the performance of meeting. This experience is twofold since it reflects two aspects of a meeting relation. On the one hand, it shows how a design setting mirrors the social imaginaries of publicness influenced by modes of production, while on the other, it shows how the ways of meeting display the forms of design.

Reflecting on the selected examples—cafés designed in the time of the postwar modernism, such as Volksgarten Café by Oswald Haerdtl (Vienna) and Metalurg by Juraj Neidhardt (Zenica), as well as other cafés today—we are presenting a short, general experience of cafés and café gardens in Vienna and Novi Sad. In this way, we are exploring the historical transformation of cafés settings and ways of their social performativity.

Case Study I: Cafés in a Time of Postwar Modernism

In this section, we will discuss on the cafés and café gardens as places of meetings, events, and actions from the perspective of Haerdtl and Neidhardt. We will give a short insight into the work of these two architects, along with a suggestion of how to face the Other in order to understand the aspects of our own existence.

1. Oswald Haerdtl: Espresso and "Imaginative Hedonismus"

Volksgarten Café, the place of our meeting, was designed by Haerdtl, who was born in Vienna in 1899. He was taught, among others, by Kolo Mosers, Oskar Strnad, and Josef Frank. After completing his studies in 1922, the architect began to work for Josef Hoffmann. In 1939 he opened his own studio. After the end of the Second World War, Haerdtl devoted himself to urban planning, reconstruction, and expansion of existing buildings, the rebuilding of war-torn

¹⁸ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 353.

¹⁹ Boris Groys, "Self-Design, or Productive Narcissism," *e-flux architecture*, September 2016, <http://www.e-flux.com/architecture/superhumanity/66967/self-design-or-productive-narcissism/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Boris Groys, "The Obligation to Self-Design," *e-flux journal*, December 1969, <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/00/68457/the-obligation-to-self-design/>.

buildings as well as the designs of art objects. He had a strong affinity toward Italy, especially to Milan and Milan's architects, such as Gio Ponti and Luciano Baldessari.²³

"Today Haerdtl cafés are legendary," writes Adolph Stiller.²⁴ Behind Volksgarten Café, Haerdtl designed café-restaurant Briex and Espresso Arabia at the Kohlmarkt. The colorful espresso bars of the 1950s were characterized by plain glass windows, total design in terms of Gesamtkunstwerk, and a detailed interior organization.²⁵ Already in the 1930s, the architect was commissioned to design, among others, Café Imperia and Hartmann restaurant, large-scale cafés with long window fronts, permeated with daylight. These cafés stood in a strong contrast to dark, gloomy, and smoky atmosphere of the classic Viennese cafés, such as Central or Griensteidl. According to Lillian Langseth-Christensen, the cafés of the 1920s did not have an urban character; they were more like the realms of the intimate, the spaces of familiarity, where unpredictable things barely happen.²⁶ Since the 1930s, the opening of cafés in a manner of showcases to the streams of city life could be observed. Siegfried Mattl comments on this development as follows: "Projecting the elements inside the vitrine—the huge undivided display allows for the gaze to infiltrate its interior—this radically transforms the cafés into public spaces. Probably, considering the Adorno's warnings, it is more suited to say semi-public spaces. A consumer society creates itself here, replacing informal communities of liberal culture."²⁷ In the 1930s, the cafés planned by Haerdtl were mainly visited by aristocrats, upper-to middle-class people, and tourists.²⁸ However, this changed in the 1950s.

The architect studied in detail the Milan cafés, not just their materials and formal ideas, but also the organization of services, offers, and prices. He planned the cafés for townspeople who wanted to take a rest or have a quick espresso. In contrast to the spaces of intimacy and relaxation of the old cafés, "Espressi" were planned for short visits. In his planning, Haerdtl took the habits of the "new" clientele into consideration. The architect built a place that became the topic of conversation in Vienna and that made the guests feel comfortable.²⁹ Mattl describes Haerdtl's design as follows: "The respect of the interplay of function and material, the detailed perfection, as well as the writings, create little haptic intermezzos, which place themselves between the consumers and the commodities—the symptoms of an 'imaginary hedonism' reaching beyond pure utility."³⁰ Working on the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk, Haerdtl constructs conditions that enable a symbiosis "of pleasure and efficiency." Entering the world of "total" design, a visitor is asked to immerse with it, or even to contribute by her or his own self-design to the fulfillment of impression.

A few years later, Neidhardt built the café garden Metalurg in Zenica. We will take a look at his architectural approach, and his way of treating the café as a common space for relaxation and social interaction.



Figs. 28–29
Design Studio Bostajnčić, Metalurg café garden, Zenica,
Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2006

2. Juraj Neidhardt: The Right to a View!

Neidhardt belongs to same generation as Haerdtl. He was born in Zagreb in 1901. After completing his study of architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, he worked for several years in the architectural office of Peter Behrens (from 1930 to 1932) and later for Le Corbusier (from 1932 to 1935). From 1939 until the end of his life, he lived in Sarajevo.³¹ In the book *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*, he composed together with Dušan Grabrijan, the two authors devoted their efforts to explore the question of the tradition of Bosnian cultural and architectural forms, researching those developments

23 "Oswald Haerdtl," *Architektenlexikon, Architekturzentrum Wien*, <http://www.architektenlexikon.at/de/200.html>.

24 Adolph Stiller, "Atmosphärische Treffsicherheit: Nobel-zurückhaltend bis fröhlich-beschwingt," in *Oswald Haerdtl: Architekt und Designer, 1899–1959*, ed. Adolph Stiller (Vienna: Architekturzentrum Wien, 2000), 113.

25 For more information see the letter to Ewald Emig, Vienna, November 27, 1950, in Stiller, "Atmosphärische Treffsicherheit: nobel-zurückhaltend bis fröhlich-beschwingt," 109–28.

26 Lillian Langseth-Christensen, "A Design for Living: Vienna in the Twenties," in *Oswald Haerdtl*, 72.

27 "Mit der Übertragung des Interieur elements der Vitrine—das große ungeteilte Fenster als für den Blick permissible Passage—auf diese Institutionen, macht er die Cafés damit auf radikale Weise zum öffentlichen Raum; wahrscheinlich sollte man, einge-

denk der Warnungen Adornos, besser sagen: zum semi-öffentlichen Raum, in dem sich die consumer society herausbildet und die informellen Gemeinschaften der liberalen Kultur ablöst." Siegfried Mattl, "Architektur der feinen Unterschiede," in *ibid.*, 72.

28 *Ibid.*, 80.

29 Stiller, "Atmosphärische Treffsicherheit," 127.

30 "Die Rücksichtsname auf das Zusammenspiel von Funktion und Material, die Perfektion in den Details, bis hinein in die Schriften, erregen jene kleinen haptischen Zwischenfälle, die sich zwischen den Konsumenten und die Waren drängen, jene Anzeichen eines 'imaginativen Hedonismus' der über die bloße Nützlichkeit hinausreicht." Mattl, "Architektur der feinen Unterschiede," 73.

31 Jelica Karlić-Kapetanović, *Juraj Neidhardt: Život i djelo* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1990), 94.

with the aim of understanding their principles and transferring them into the modern architecture. Concerning the question as to why the old architectural principles should be retained, the authors answered as follows: "Utilization of architecture inheritance is only temporary. We stand on the threshold of a new civilization. We live in a time marked by the transition of capitalism into socialism, and we find it necessary to build new things by utilizing old principles. [...] It is true that technology will sooner or later master the climate, as well as the continents, and architecture will have to draw upon the experiences of many peoples. Thus Bosnia too, must contribute what experiences she has, to the making of a new architecture."³² In the book, Neidhardt and Grabijan discuss, among other matters such as the city, *čaršija*, Mahala, house, social structures, topography, climate, and so on, the tradition of coffeehouses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly under the influence of the Ottoman Empire culture.

Referring to the historic Bosnian cafés, the authors wrote that although simply constructed, the "several slender posts nailed together and plastered or provided with panes" drew great attention.³³ They went on with the description of these forms, saying: "The roof of a coffeehouse is made of tar board or sheet metal. Usually several pavilions are placed close to one another, around the fountain, in a square, above water, in the air, or among green trees on a hill with a fine view."³⁴ In addition to the setting and the atmosphere of the cafés, the wooden ceilings and dense rows of tables and chairs made the space warm and intimate. Tables were a specific size, between the size of the folding table in train coaches and the size of a Renaissance worktable.³⁵ The positioning of the cafés was, according to Neidhardt and Grabijan, extraordinary. It is possibly the human scale and placement that made them so immersed with their surroundings. The cafés were "enclosed by a glass or wooden screen. The patrons just have to look around in order to obtain an endless variety of views: the crowded street, the green gardens, the river, or the whole town. It is sometimes difficult to say where the café ends and the nature begins, for in summer, the glass membranes are taken away, so only the light wooden frames remain in the horizon of the patrons."³⁶

One of the crucial needs that permeate modern urbanism is, according to Neidhardt and Grabijan, the right to a view. In their opinion, this rule had been applied and practiced by the inhabitants of the old settlements for years. As an example, they mentioned the old part of Sarajevo. "These instances are all the most noteworthy because they are found in a country in which structures were erected on the basis of unwritten laws and in which the consideration for the neighbor was the builder's sole guiding principle."³⁷

This is also true for the case of the café Metalurg, where Neidhardt sought to compose a character of an urban situation, with an essential reference relationship to its surroundings, to the given urban context and topological

configuration. Café Metalurg was a part of the hotel complex built by Neidhardt in the period of 1955–65.³⁸ It consisted of a skyscraper with apartments and hotel rooms for 120 guests. The café was positioned on the ground floor of the hotel, primarily planned to offer fifteen hundred seats, six hundred of which were realized (figs. 28–29).³⁹ The café included a bar, an outdoor grill, a stage, and a dance floor in the middle, which was built three levels below the other parts, so that looked like a pool. Trees and bushes were planted all around. On Facebook page "Zenica—Stare slike i pričice" (Zenica—Old images and stories),⁴⁰ the visitors comment on a photo of Metalurg café.⁴¹ It is visible that the "commentators" still have impressive memories about its ambience as well as the social interaction that used to happen there. In the 1970s, this café was among the popular meeting places of young people, with live music and a dance floor. "Unforgettable," according to those who wrote comments.⁴² Café Metalurg was positioned in the city's boulevard, next to the River Bosna. The café was a realm of social interaction, a microcosm of sorts, hidden behind green plants and surrounded by a low stonewall.

Neidhardt had studied the traditional coffeehouses of Sarajevo as Café Hrid, Café Yekovats, or Café Bendbasha. With his design of Café Metalurg, he tried to integrate the achievements of traditional architecture with the principles of modern architecture. Reflecting on the old coffeehouses, he remarked that although the guests sometimes did not speak a word, they did "not seem to be bored": They contemplate the surroundings, brood over some problem, or just watch the man at the next table."⁴³ The principles and theoretical insights that he explored with Grabijan (see *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*), but also on his own, the desire to take a closer look at the topography of the surroundings, his commitment to a certain landscapes in which he built—even when this was a city as in the case of the Metalurg Hotel—predefined his view and built the framework for his design. The lines of the pool with a fountain and lines of the terrace garden of Metalurg Hotel follow the Bosna river, which flows in the immediate vicinity, and thus represent a logical continuation, or even a reminder, of some ancient, probably forgotten topography, the one that in his drawing and his implementation of newly revived and created proportions reveal the forgotten genius loci.

32 Grabijan and Neidhardt, *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*, 15.

33 Ibid., 255.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid., 253.

36 Ibid., 256.

37 Ibid., 257.

38 Café Metalurg was a part of the Metalurg Hotel, the project that was planned as one of the agglomeration projects of the center of Zenica.

39 Mirza Džananović, "Urbanizacija Zenice 1956–1990 (Prema pisanju, Naše Riječi)" (PhD diss., University of Sarajevo, 2012).

40 See "Zenica—Stare Slike i Pričice," <https://www.facebook.com/Zenicani/>.

41 Metalurg Hotel does not exist any more.

42 "Hotel 'Metalurg'—istine i zablude," Zenica—Stare Slike i Pričice."

43 Grabijan and Neidhardt, *Architecture of Bosnia and the Way to Modernity*, 296.

3. Resonance of Café Design and the Atmospheres Created by Haerdtl and Neidhardt

Long-term research and detailed planning processes that took into account the needs of guests and the belief in the construction of publicness, where guests would feel comfortable or free to see and to be immersed in the topography of the city, characterized the works of both Haerdtl and Neidhardt. Both had a reference point for their design: Haerdtl looked to Milan and Neidhardt to the Oriental coffee house culture. Both were fascinated by those traditions, both were pursuing a modern café design, suitable for the modern woman and man. However, while Neidhardt reflected on a café as the space of social sphere, of the encounter, Haerdtl, more a practitioner than theoretician, was focused on the relationship between total design and satisfaction of needs. Sartre's transformation stages caused by the look at the Other and the recognition of the self as an object, as well as Rosa's diagnosis of the moment of resonance, were adopted in the designs of both Neidhardt and Haerdtl, although in slightly different ways. Neidhardt designed gathering spaces that blended with the given topological narration. For Neidhardt, the moment of resonance was produced by the possibility of viewing and contemplating the surrounding, but also interacting with it. Haerdtl worked here in an excessive way, inviting guests to enter the total design and the perfectly organized spaces that produce the feeling Mattl called "imaginative hedonism." In both cases, modern design had to satisfy the needs of modern clientele of the postwar industrial society.



Figs. 30–31
Ivana Volić, Novi Sad, Vojvodina / Serbia, 2016

Case Study II: Café Culture Today and the Café Gardens of Novi Sad and Vienna

In the 1960s in Yugoslavia, public space was free from the pressure of profit-making and as such, it enabled greater social interaction and meetings among people from different social backgrounds. Shops and facilities for consumption were clearly limited. In the socialist time, streets were the spaces of leisure—of walking, meeting, and chatting with friends. For example, the popular Korzo promenade in Novi Sad was a social phenomenon and a symbol of socialist leisure time for youngsters.

In contrast to this situation, today's premises of consumption are "spilling over" into the streets and squares, in the form of cafés, restaurants, pastry shops, info-desks, and promotional booths of global companies. By physically marking the space, companies and shop/café owners symbolically mark their dominance over the space, thereby spreading their influence in both social and spatial interaction, leaving only narrow passages for the movement of people. Density is increasingly growing, while the space between chairs and tables is shrinking—bringing guests, movements, sounds, and smells even closer. Social relations in cafés are being intensified with a difference that they are not happening among casual visitors but more between people who have previously agreed to meet in a café setting.

Vienna also witnesses a specific situation, in which café owners rent out parking spaces and build a café garden there. They are also allowed to use part of the pavement. In such situations, street space is being minimized, but café garden space is highly densified. Hence, enjoying in sunlight and fresh air is conditioned by the chase for efficiency and for higher profit. Such café gardens can hardly be spaces where one is confronted with a shock caused by encounter and social interaction. The narrowness, ephemerality associated with the imperative of consumption disables the recognition through look as described by Sartre. Resonance mainly happens between persons who meet, and between design and guests. However, the dimension of public space, where people can face each other, socialize, discuss, and be political, is limited in today's cafés. There are many spatial preconditions that are inviting and inspiring for us as settings but they do not leave much room for a chance, a shock, for our own way of self-design.

One of the characteristics of today's cafés is, in most cases, their small surface with dense rows of chairs and tables, which are organized in this way to bring more profit. The closeness of the tables in many instances does not give the possibility of a wider view down the street and in some cafés, especially café gardens, one can clearly follow the conversation on the other table. In short, café gardens may contain especially dense situation. The aspect of

social performativity and resonance-relationship in contemporary cafés can be observed in two different, yet at the first glance, contradictory ways:

1. café as the supplement; 2. substitution of public space or café as the expansion of private space (living rooms). On the one hand, cafés have entered the world of urban public spaces such as streets or squares (and vice versa), and accordingly have a great influence on social interactions. On the other hand, their interiors offer the comfort of a living room and the intimacy of such surroundings suppresses the intensity of the dialog with the outside world.



Figs. 32-34
Anamarija Batista, Vienna, 2016

Conclusion

A meeting or an encounter is an ephemeral action within a space. In the particular context of a café, this action has always been in a relation to people; it has been the act of socialization and spatial embodiment. While the nineteenth-century cafés were intimate, dark, and shadowy places of gathering, the 1930s introduced changes in appearance of cafés, which were mostly caused by the emergence of consumerist society. Similar to shop windows, cafés opened out to the city through glass surfaces, complementing the public space. Passersby became observers of the happenings in the café, while visitors could follow the movements of the city, to watch a motion-picture film called "the city" In the 1950s and '60s, where economic progress and new technologies fostered development of mass production, which entailed mass consumerism. Cafés became places where the idea of modern design was developed to perfection. While Haerdtl was trying to achieve visitors' satisfaction through the aesthetically pleasing atmosphere and perfect organizational services, Neidhardt was paying attention to the position and the incorporation of a café in a given natural topography, aiming to reach the right to a view. His design opened up the possibilities for both individual and collective encounters, as well as a possibility of being with the one's own thoughts as a condition equally valuable for social performativity, besides visible acts of meeting, chatting, drinking, laughing, and arguing. Both architects were planning large-scale spaces through the consideration of their functions, service organization, and so on. Both were reshaping their own visions and their previous research of space to create structures of long-term duration and steadiness.

They were aware that the vision of their spaces affected social interaction, so Neidhardt paid special attention to the movement and inscription of the body into a space. However, construction and planning of spaces such as cafés have changed over the years. Today we have mostly smaller spatial units, which are a part of other small spaces that have to be enriched by a certain ambience. The number of cafés is increasing, as well as the number of users of such spaces. More than ever, cafés and their visitors produce dense zones of relations and interactions, zones that are opening up the potential for the meshing of relaxation, concentration, and social resonance; zones of social and individual discharging and charging at the same time. There are different levels of communication streams—digital or live, business or intimate, public or private. The idea of the right to a view seems a bit obsolete now, since the view is often directed toward a touchscreen device and the rules of profit-making insist on the high density of tables and chairs. Sartre's awakening by the "immediacy of the Other" gains another dimension nowadays, since the number of the others in cafés is multiplying, increasing the speed of ephemeral encounters awakening moments of individuals. We can say that the resonating experiences between people and design setting still exist today,

but the circumstances are quite different than in the twentieth century. All the topics we mentioned above should be examined within the new settings of highly densified cafés, while also taking into consideration the presence of digital technologies. In addition to these theoretical considerations, an empirical research on these topics may be conducted that could give us an insight into the level and intensity of social relations and different kinds of meetings.

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Arakawa Gardens

A Photographic Exploration of Tokyo

Agnes Prammer



Fig. 35
Agnes Prammer, *Arakawa Gardens*, Tokyo, 2016

Arakawa Gardens consists of forty-seven photographs taken in Tokyo in 2016. On the one hand, the images show tiny private street gardens, which can be found all over the city. On the other hand, they display a variety of chairs that people have placed at bus stops, so they are also a convenient place to sit while waiting for the bus.

The images of gardens and chairs function as stand-ins. They reflect various aspects of Japanese everyday life, showing what possibilities lie in moments of contradiction. For example, even though many of Tokyo's streets are surprisingly empty, quiet, and clean, the street gardens and chairs at the bus stops are not perceived as disruptive or removed by the government. Both aspects are simultaneously possible: the "neat" and the "chaotic." They are not seen as opposites and do not contradict each other; rather, they coexist. The series focuses on these small disruptive elements. In times of global assimilation, increased governmental bureaucratization, and reduction of individual freedom in public spaces, it is important to acknowledge these little things and not take them for granted.

In 1963, the artist Diane Arbus described why she wanted to document rituals: "I want to photograph the considerable ceremonies of our present because we tend while living here and now to perceive only what is random and barren and formless about it. [...] I want to gather them [rituals], like somebody's grandmother putting up preserves, because they will have been so beautiful."¹

These last six words—"they will have been so beautiful"—clung to my mind while spending three months walking the streets of Tokyo, photographing this series. In my case, it is not the rituals, but these little oases of contradictions that I want to preserve, fearing they might disappear soon.

¹ Quoted in *Diane Arbus: Revelations* (New York: Random House, 2003), 41.

Peripheral Locations in Budapest Where Inherent Emptiness Turns into More-Than-Representative Density Formations

Szilvia Kovács

A Place for the Not-Yet-Realized¹

Vízafogó neighborhood, Népszínház Street, Csepel Works, Leonardo da Vinci Street, Rumbach Sebestyén Street: these are just several examples of public spaces in Budapest, which although differ inter alia in their architectural style, location, inhabitants, function, scale, and awareness; are venues that have recently been used as sites for performative artworks, in artistic practices, in unique forms of cultural communication. As locations for experimental theater plays, walks, or urban games,² these places have been reintroduced, experienced, and embodied in various sensory modes, meanwhile the artworks exceed habitual representational forms of visitors. The selection of those locations is not random; there is a common physiognomy that particularly makes them selected locales for addressing spatialization within artistic practices.³ It is not a property of space itself, nor any particular spatial conformation, but a specific aesthetic dimension that could bind those places into a loose group that I place under the umbrella term “inherent emptiness.”

Hungarian neo-avantgarde artist and architect Miklós Erdély wrote in his “Theses for the Marley Conference of 1980” that: “The message of a work of art is its inherent emptiness.”⁴ He also, point by point, unwraps how the recipient is processing this emptiness, until he or she reaches the condition of a *feeling of freedom toward semantic transformations*. This emptiness is not the missing of meanings, but a “fission” that engenders without warning and allows us to touch the membrane of an (inner) world from the outside, according to Eszter Babarczy, an art historian who is concerned with Erdély’s legacy.⁵ In other words, inherent emptiness is a quality that is able to transform the effects of one sensory mode into another (figs. 36–37).⁶

- 1 Miklós Erdély, “Theses for the Marly Conference of 1980,” trans. John Bátki, in *Primary Documents: A Sourcebook for Eastern and Central European Art since the 1950s*, ed. Laura Hoptman and Tomás Pospiszyl with the assistance of Majlena Braun and Clay Tarica (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002), 101.
- 2 Hézag [Gap], Kitt Johnson, 2015; Mapping Budapest, Jessica Dolby, 2015; Volt egyszer egy Csepel Művek [Remember the good times, Csepel], Space, 2013; Temporary 8th, Anna de Manincor / ZimmerFreiis, 2014; Kísérleti séta a zsidó negyedben [Experimental walk in the Jewish district], Dinamó, 2015.
- 3 “Social spatialization” offers a way of talking about the preconstructed cultural discourses of sites, and the relationships established between sites, how they came

- into those associations and under what authority, and by which groups. Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 31.
- 4 Erdély, “Theses for the Marly Conference of 1980,” 99–101.
- 5 Eszter Babarczy, cited in Ungváry, “A személyes művész: Erdély Miklós nem triviális helye a struktúrában, avagy a találékonyságába belekapaszkodó ember” [Personal artist: The non-trivial place of Miklós Erdély in the structure, or the person who clings to resourcefulness], *Magyar Műhely* [Hungarian Studio] 38, nos. 110–11 (1999): 176–88.
- 6 Nigel Thrift, “Intensities of Feeling: Towards a Spatial Politics of Affect,” *Geografiska Annaler* 86, no. 1 (March 2004): 57–78.



Figs. 36–37
Dinamó, *Experimental walk*, 2014

Since the 1960s, experimental theater makers and performance artists have shared the idea of the above-mentioned avant-garde conception about the mission of performances. The new task was not to transmit meanings between the groups of contributors (e.g., directors, actors, musicians, set designers, and audience members), but the reduction of a means toward relational materialities. To this end, they stepped out from stone-theaters as well and were looking for places that were originally not constructed as stages for theater pieces. Their goal was to find locations that would not obviously determine the relationship between actors and spectators anymore, thus only the *performance creates their spatiality*.⁷ Places such as shopping malls, stadiums, market halls, cemeteries, and so on, have been the center of interest. Nevertheless, special attention was paid to the peripheries as well, for example, toward former factories, ruined buildings, or bunkers.

This way, some urban peripheries, which are storing the potential of inherent emptiness, could become locations for artistic practices. Those who necessarily reflect on and provide opportunities for expanding existing interpretations, allow journeys to be conceived “across” these locations,⁸ where the trajectory of affective needs⁹ trigger the process of “realizing” with “reacting.” Vízafogó neighborhood, Népszínház Street, Csepel Works, Leonardo da Vinci Street, and Rumbach Sebestény Street are examples of these peripheral locations. But still there are other questions that one can ask about them: What do these places look like exactly? Where can they be found in the city? What kind of messages can they envelope and for whom? As well as, how could the phenomena of density appear here? To answer the above, firstly, the issue of peripheries needs to be reflected on, driven by a desire that urges one to find new connections within these spheres.

The Margins Have Entirely Invaded the Center¹⁰

As one dramaturge formulated: “Location scouting [...]. We look for the feeling of city tour. [...] but we] would like to produce feelings without the ‘famous icons of Budapest’ like the Buda Castle. Buildings with functional-deficit give the feeling of emptiness, a vacuum. [...] These kinds of scenes are personal in a primary mode.”¹¹

The film *Temporary 8th* (2014) is another one of those artistic ventures dedicated to asking questions about these unused public and private spaces, a mosaic of fractures in the Budapest urban fabric:¹² “Kőbánya-Kispest used to be quite an amusing place [...] from a science-fiction point of view [...] or for a ruined building I would say Verseny Street. [...] There are kind of deserted factory buildings in the suburbs, at the Vágóhíd also. [...] Those would be suitable for presenting, like, an occupied city.”

According to the architect and theorist Anthony Vidler’s idea of conceptualization, it is a trend that is *opening up problems of identity around the self, the other, the body, and its absence*. Through these concepts one can interpret the relationship between the individual and the metropolis and see a corresponding spatiality that reaches all aspects of social life.¹³ In the essay “Posturbanism,” he denotes a sensibility in the city: “Where suburb, strip, and urban center have merged indistinguishably into a series of states of mind and which is marked by no systematic map that might be carried in the memory, we wander [...] surprised but not shocked by the continuous repetition of the same, the continuous movement across already vanished thresholds that

7 Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (London: Routledge, 2008), 154.

8 Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005), 121–23.

9 Wendy Wheeler, “Nostalgia Isn’t Nasty: The Postmodernising of Parliamentary Democracy,” in *Altered States: Postmodernism, Politics, Culture*, ed. Mark Perryman (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1994), 94–107.

10 Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 186.

11 In the context of my empirical research, besides participant observations, focus group, and workshop activities, semi-structured deep interviews were also

accomplished with fifty-five actors in relation to different site-specific artistic practices and their reception; based on actor-mapping, then by snow-ball method. The empirical research was elaborated on mainly between 2014 and 2016, on the basis of a Doc-Team Fellowship by the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the research project was called “The Artist as Urban Planner.” The interview quotes are translated by me from their original language, Hungarian, to English.

12 Anna Manincor and ZimmerFrei, *Temporary 8th*, 2014, “Biografilm 2014—Temporary 8th—Official Trailer,” YouTube video, 4:22, posted by “BiografilmFestival,” June 3, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ekJuv_u5tw.

13 Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 177–86.

leave only traces of their former status as places."¹⁴ Vidler states that previous sensibility of the edge within urbanism, sought to resolve and restructure fragmentary, spontaneity, and marginality,¹⁵ while post-urbanism offers another new idea of the edge that surprises but does not shock the wanderer.¹⁶

On the basis of the novel by Peter Handke titled *Across* (1986),¹⁷ Vidler also describes a character of an archaeologist who is seeking after thresholds: "Less for what was there, then for what was missing, for what had vanished, irretrievably [...] but still present as a vacuum, as an empty space, as an empty form."¹⁸ Here, thresholds appear as zones or places in themselves, and not simply parts, like doors or gates. They act as entrances, like places of transition.¹⁹

After such statements, we can conclude that the peripheral locations beyond their locale in the first instance lack the core spatial, temporal, and bodily organizing norms of central urban public spaces and are outcomes of the change in urbanism by technological, infrastructural, economic, and social processes through decentralizing energies.²⁰ In the case of Budapest, for example, postsocialist, postindustrial, socially unstable, derelict, and underused places, as the sources for urban edge-phenomena in time, space, and also socially, do drive artists, curators, cultural managers, architects, researchers and other intellectuals, and of course the audience: to seek new bodily experiences, nostalgia, adventure, and location for their own expression, public articulation, institutionalization, or pleasure, as the urban planner Levente Polyák describes in detail.²¹ In this formulation, an altered status is also outlined—as sociologist Minerva Rojas Ruiz phrases it—from "object looked at" to the "subject that is looking."²²



Fig. 38
Jessica Dolby,
Csepel Works, 2015

The Performative Space Does Not Represent an Artifact ... but an Event²³

It was a flood of signals that surrounded me ...!

For example,

**I exactly remember
a black checker board,
that we passed at a corner,
on right side.**

*Those boards from primary school memories:
made of wood, painted several times to green and then black.*

**It had an edge for storing chalk
and collecting some of the caduceus chalk dust.**

**That made me remember to my eczema
that always returned in springtime on my fingertips in my childhood.**

I hated to touch that

**white
dry
chalk**

!!!

14 Ibid., 184–85. Vidler lists films that show such cultural observations of the contemporary city, namely: *True Stories* (1986), *The Last Picture Show* (1971), *Blade Runner* (1982), and *Clockwork Orange* (1971).

15 Vidler uses here two examples: Charles Baudelaire's writing about the banlieue of Paris in the nineteenth century, and Guillaume Apollinaire's poem "Zone" (1913).

16 Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 185.

17 Peter Handke, *Across*, trans. Ralph Manheim Farrar (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986).

18 Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 184.

19 Ibid.

20 See Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Talja Blokland and Mike Savage, *Networked Urbanism: Social Capital in the City* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

21 Levente Polyák, "A periféria városi terei, avagy Budapest széleinek újrafelfedezése" [The urban spaces of peripheries, or the rediscovery of the edges of Budapest], *exindex* (2006), <http://exindex.hu/print.php?page=3&id=358>.

22 Minerva Rojas Ruiz, "Walking through Cultural Heritage: The Pleasure of Cultural Tourism" (lecture, 3rd International Sociological Association, ISA, Congress, Vienna, July 12, 2016).

23 Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 160.

Otherwise there was nothing written on that blackboard.

I was a bit disappointed because of this ...

I arrived with the plan to be "only" a participant observer, but it was astonishing how my subjects were unexpectedly sliding between the roles of an "objective" researcher, a hooked protagonist, a bored audience, a frustrated code breaker, an immersed ponderer, back and forth.

And although I had a slight thought to take a photo there and then finally, I was carried off by the next scene ...

Still today I can recognize that exact corner based on my reminiscence.

That place is charged with emotional lift.

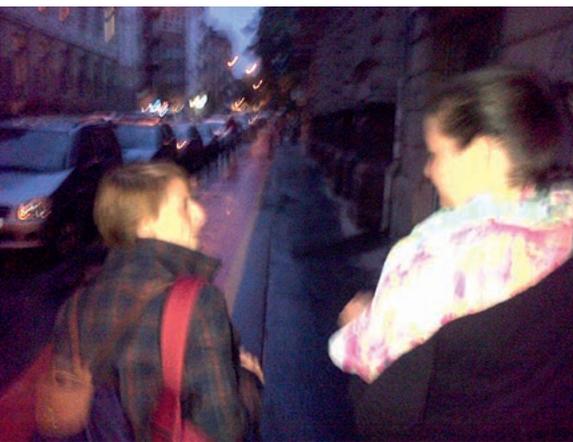


Fig. 39
Szilvia Kovács, *Playmobile*, 2015

This recollection is based on my experience of a parkour game *PlayMobile*, which was carried out by the German artistic group *machina eX*, together with Hungarian theater collectives, architects, and media artists. The event was held in 2015, in Budapest, as part of the PLACCC Festival, which focuses on public spaces that are unusual locations, and presents trends in site-specific art in Hungary. The story line of this puzzle adventure game was navigated by the protagonists (and by me too in a small group) through sound and light atmospheres; inside (e.g., in an apartment) and outside (on the street); guided by mobile-phone calls, texts, or voice messages; we were made to interact with live computer characters and structures "all in the interest of getting people together through immersion"—as one of the contributors explained.

In this transformation, for example, the changing focus of attention toward both the actual and the potential environment, the loss of sense of time, the total emotional involvement, the perceived control and the curiosity were all carefully directed bodily experiences that surfaced at appropriate times and with appropriated methods. Visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, and taste senses were all part of this process.²⁴ So the situations were made to be *physically experienced in the performance*. And with that, the current process of sensory perception could part from predefined meanings. We reached, as sociologist Rob Shields puts it, the "'authentic' moment that break through the dulling monotony of the 'taken for granted.'"²⁵ So the performance opened up the formation of a new uncommon sense,²⁶ with intimacies and intersubjectivities.²⁷ Theater scientist Erika Fischer-Lichte unfolds this process, the devoid of meaning: the performance "trigger[s] a wealth of associations, ideas, thoughts, memories, and emotions in the perceiving subjects, enabling them to make connections to various other phenomena. [...] The isolated materiality of the various elements [in this case: the black checker board] thus effects immense pluralization of potential meaning."²⁸

On that day, because of the seasonal clean-up program in that neighborhood, junk, worn-out clothes, and decrepit furniture were overlaid on the pavements, and rubbish collectors, homeless people roamed the streets. Meanwhile I was walking to the meeting point, I did not recognize the briny of bric-a-brac. When we started the game, I immediately became part of the battle. And although I only vaguely remember the other subjects, the performance "incarnated" my childhood black checkerboard experience intensely, however my reactions were hidden externally.

Fischer-Lichte writes: "When the architectural-geometric turns into the performative space, its so called primary qualities—i.e., its dimension and volume—can be sensed and begin to affect the perceiving subject."²⁹ Here, for the protagonists, the relationship toward the other subjects and the space is diversifying, constantly changing and restructuring. This allows for many ways of perception, bodily movement and focusing at the same time and in the same location. Thanks to these multiple perspectives, the spatiality, any property relating to or occupying space,³⁰ is not the same either.³¹

24 Joseph O'Connor and John Seymour, *Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming* (London: Thorsons, 1995).

25 Shields, *Places on the Margin*, 58.

26 Thrift, "Summoning Life," in *Envisioning Human Geographies*, ed. Paul J. Cloke, Phil Crang, Mark A. Goodwin, (London: Arnold, 2004), 81–103.

27 Russell Hitchings, "People, Plants and Performance: On Actor Network Theory and the Material Pleasures of the Private Garden," *Social and Cultural Geography* 4

(2003): 99–113. See also Paul Cloke and Owain Jones, *Tree Cultures: the Place of Trees and Trees in Their Place* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

28 Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 194.

29 *Ibid.*, 162.

30 *WordNet 3.0, Farlex clipart collection*. S.v. "spatiality," <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/spatiality>.

31 Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 162.

This emergent process I consider as more-than-representative density formation. It is rooted in affective needs,³² dealing with multi-sensual worlds,³³ and competencies we employ there.³⁴ Evoking and transmitting numerous feelings, emotions, and acts. Although this density formation is volatile and temporary, it provides opportunity to experience space as a frame of reference for actions,³⁵ *where the body is the zero point* in the spatial understanding, with its sensory modalities and intersubjective readings.³⁶

Closing Thoughts

Historically, thinking about the peripheries didn't lack in contrary ideas between the core and the periphery, which also assumes that one is dominant over the other, as well as a second level of binaries: developed/underdeveloped, competitive/noncompetitive, sustainable/unsustainable, heterogeneous/homogeneous, and so on. In these discourses, it becomes evident that peripheries are topographical, bearing a discrete character and frequently becoming a reference point to evaluate the idea of places. There is, however, the confrontation between general values and the particular, the distinct and the concrete, the macro-scale and micro-sense of relationships, between category and context.³⁷ Postmodern conditions puts this to the fore, and many artistic practices are researching and testing this turn—to exonerate from dichotomies and establish the thesis of de-semanticization.³⁸

Also the concept of inherent emptiness is rooted here. Staging peripheral location with its aesthetic dimension brings performativity to the fore and necessarily requires engagement, inclusivity, and bodily paradigm. This draws attention to the realm of our affective practices,³⁹ to the possibility of *channeling effects and responses into the creation of our micro-space and society*. Furthermore, the centralizing of peripheral locations might provide platforms for developing languages, suggesting interpretations, and politics up against neoliberal mechanisms of spatial selection, and make us think about *competing spatial aesthetics*.

32 Thrift, "Intensities of Feeling," 57–78.

33 Hayden Lorimer, "Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being 'More-Than-Representational,'" *Progress in Human Geography* 29, no. 1 (2005): 83–94.

34 Kevin Hetherington, "Spatial Textures: Place, Touch and Praesentia," *Environment and Planning*, 33, no. 11 (2003): 1933–44.

35 Bruno Werlen, *Society, Action and Space: An Alternative Human Geography* (London: Routledge, 1993), 3.

36 Werlen, *Society, Action and Space*, 191–92.

37 Anamarija Batista, Szilvia Kovács, and Carina Lesky, "Introduction to the Research and Publication Project 'Rethinking the Concept of Density' I." (lecture, "Rethinking the Concept of Density" workshop, Budapest, October 16, 2015).

38 See, for example, Fischer-Lichte, *Transformative Power of Performance*, 140–41.

39 Thrift, "Intensities of Feeling," 57.

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Contested Spaces and Power Structures



STREET CARPET

Anna Artaker, Meike S. Gleim

STREET CARPET was conceived as part of the ATLAS OF ARCADIA, an arts-based research project that took place from 2012 to 2015 at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. The project, conducted by Anna Artaker and Meike S. Gleim, aimed for a twofold translation of Walter Benjamin's history of nineteenth-century Paris: *The Arcades Project*. On the one hand, the project rediscovered some of the motives picked up by Benjamin within urban and technological developments of our recent past, meaning the period since the fall of the Berlin Wall. On the other hand, it translated his method of literary montage into image montages: instead of collecting and juxtaposing quotes like Benjamin, the project proceeds accordingly with images.

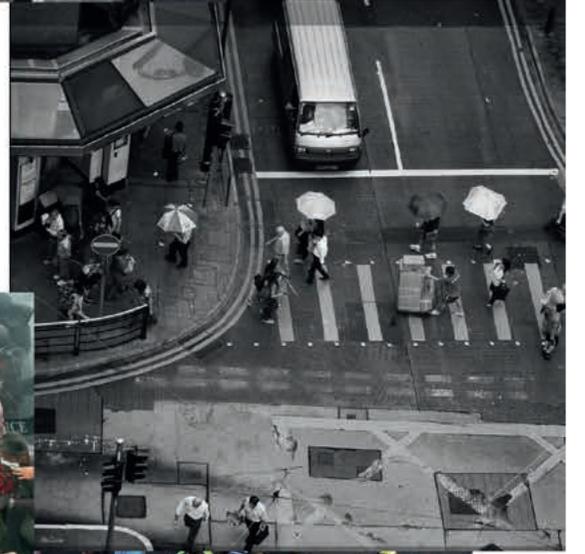
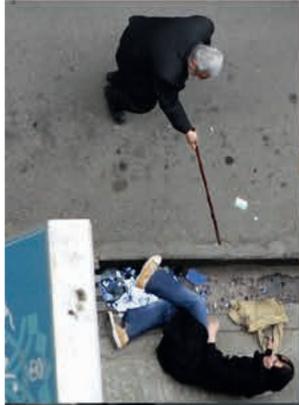
In this sense, STREET CARPET is a translation of motives gathered in the *Arcades Project's* convolute E, "Haussmannization, Barricade Fighting," which dealt with the expansion and straightening of the Parisian streets. The modernization and embellishment, in the name of which Monsieur Haussmann operated, was baptized "strategic embellishment" by his contemporaries,¹ because it allowed troops to patrol the boulevards and, at the same time, made the setting up roadblocks more difficult. That Haussmann's boulevards are an advanced version of city walls and hence a means to control the population is evident in the etymology of the term "boulevard," which derives from *bulwerk*, the Dutch word for bulwark. Often the large avenues replaced former fortifications. Nevertheless, the Haussmannization could not prevent the streets in Paris and elsewhere today from becoming a predestined site for political and social events and thus a public space par excellence.

In STREET CARPET, the experiences gathered in the context of the Haussmannization are translated into a global perspective in a series of works: aerial images of arteries from around the world are connected to form a branched network of roads. Thus, the different uses of roads overlap: the street as a place of transit and of traffic congestion, as well as of urban public life, political rallies, parades or demonstrations. Patching up different thoroughfares—where New York's Columbus Circle leads directly to a crowded street of Liberia's capital Monrovia and to one of the abovementioned boulevards of Paris—the image montage also creates not only a geographical, but first and foremost a political clash between East and West, between what used to be known as the first and the third world. The artificial connections established through the montage let us experience the segregation marking the political realities of different cultures, nations, and people, and remind us how space is politicized.

¹ Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 130.







Lethal Density The Research Field of Crowding in the 1960s and '70s

Nikolai Roskamm

John B. Calhoun's famous rat studies from the 1960s sought to demonstrate that high-density levels engender severe behavioral changes. Calhoun's experiment studied the behavior of twenty male and twenty female domesticated Norwegian rats that were kept in an enclosure with a surface area of 1,000 m². The rats were given sufficient food and nest-building materials and were protected from attacks by predators. In theory, the number of rats ought to have increased to around 5,000 within twenty-seven months, but it didn't. The population stabilized at 150. The stress placed on their social interactions by the artificial "spatial density" had such a negative effect on the behavior of the females that only a few of their offspring survived.¹ Calhoun conducted a second experiment with more stringent conditions, which resulted in a complete collapse of social behavior. This experiment involved a row of four enclosures: two in the middle and one at either end. The behavior of the rats in the peripheral enclosures was for the most part normal. In the central enclosures, however, there was a sharp decrease in population density due to the roaming of those males that were unable to compete for space in the outer enclosures. The mortality rate in the two central enclosures was 96 percent for babies and 50 percent for females. The rats neglected nest building and the rearing of their offspring. Their feeding behavior changed dramatically. Eventually, the male rats even started eating the young rats.

Calhoun coined the phrase "behavioral sink" to describe the disintegration of behavior caused by experimentally induced overpopulation and, as he said, "pathological togetherness."² The lesson learned from his rat studies was clear and simple: high density leads to overpopulation and this (in extreme) brings about the collapse of social behavior, causing sickness and death. Of course, this was not only about rats: "These studies may [...] contribute to the making of value judgments about analogous problems confronting the human species."³ Calhoun's rat studies seemed to confirm the basic assumption in mass psychology or other population sciences that high density is a bad and potentially lethal thing.

However, creating "social pathologies" related to the concept of density has a long history in the social sciences. In this essay, I will focus upon crowding studies as one specific field of such research tradition.⁴ By the end of the 1970s, there were some two hundred published studies in this area,⁵ and the same

1 John B. Calhoun, "Population Density and Social Pathology," *Scientific American* 206 (1962): 139–48.

2 John B. Calhoun, "A 'Behavioral Sink,'" in *Roots of Behavior: Genetics, Instinct, and Socialization in Animal Behavior*, ed. Eugene L. Bliss (New York: Harper, 1962), 315.

3 Calhoun, "Population Density," 148.

4 This contribution is based on a translation of a chapter of my book *Dichte: Eine transdisziplinäre Dekonstruktion* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2011), 73–96.

5 Yakov M. Epstein, "Crowding Stress and Human Behavior," *Journal of Social Issues* 37 (1981): 126.

period saw the publication of numerous monographs and anthologies on the subject.⁶ The issue of density is of central importance to crowding studies; some of the early research on crowding even uses the terms “density” and “crowding” interchangeably. The main subjects in this field of research are situations in which density is permanent and structural, and the way such situations affect human behavior. The basic lines of enquiry in crowding studies is to address how density is perceived by single individuals, whether certain conditions cause pathological reactions due to their specific density levels, and to examine, and to examine underlying “density / pathology relationships.”⁷ Beyond this, the main research theme of crowding studies is the *conceptual* relationship between density, crowding, and behavior. Its stated aim is to arrive at generalizing pronouncements on the effects of density and crowding.

Crowding Research

A large number of laboratory and some field experiments in the 1970s looked at human perceptions of density and human reactions to density. One early example is Karl Kälin’s 1972 study of the behavior of two groups of nursery-school children. This experiment, which explicitly acknowledged a theoretical debt to Calhoun’s work, set out to question whether increasing population density within a confined space leads to an increase in “aggressive manifestations” among children. The study was laced with a generally negative diction of density. The author justified his experiment with the contention that the

“bearable limits of human tolerance for density have long since been overstepped” and by criticizing the excessive density of living conditions in the cities.⁸ He pointed to a supposed “disregard for the human need for space,” and, on the meta-level, cited the “problem of overpopulation” in favor of his own arguments.⁹ In his study Kälin, identified an increase in “aggressive manifestations” for situations of higher spatial density, though when interpreting the findings of his experiment he remarked that he could not definitively say whether increasing density was the actual cause. Kälin suggested that aggressive behavior in “overcrowding situations” was the result of “various social, psychological and physiological regulatory systems.”¹⁰ He pointed to the special status of the children, who had no freedom of choice and were more likely to be affected by crowding situations.¹¹ In his conclusion, Kälin speculated that if density levels remained (too) high in the long term, the result would be an increase in “compensatory adaptation” and “inhibited development among affected persons.”

Another study with an explicit connection to the work of the Chicago School of Sociology was Jeannette Ann Desor’s investigation into the types, causes, and effects of various individual judgments of density.¹² In this laboratory test, a number of small-scale model rooms with various functions (waiting rooms, reading rooms, spaces for social functions) were set up along with model figures at the same scale. The human subjects of the experiment were given the task of filling the rooms with what they considered an appropriate number of figures.¹³ The sense of constrictedness or crowding was determined according

- 6 Andrew Baum and Yakov M. Epstein, *Human Response to Crowding* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978); Epstein, “Crowding Stress and Human Behavior,” 126–44; Jonathan L. Freedman, “The Human Consequences of Crowding,” in *Human Consequences of Crowding*, ed. Mehmet R. Gürkaynak et al. (New York: Springer, 1979), 9–14; Daniel Stokols, “Theoretische Beiträge der Umweltpsychologie zur Analyse von sozialem Verhalten,” in *Angewandte Sozialpsychologie*, ed. Jürgen Schultz-Gambard (Munich: Psychologie Verlags Union, 1987), 235–50; Jürgen Schultz-Gambard and Bernhard Hommel, “Sozialpsychologie und Umweltgestaltung,” in Schultz-Gambard, *Angewandte Sozialpsychologie*, 251–65; and Joachim Wohlwill and Willem van Vliet, *Habitats for Children* (New Jersey: LEA, 1985).
- 7 Irwin Altman, *The Environment and Social Behavior* (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1975), 187.

- 8 Karl Kälin, *Populationsdichte und soziales Verhalten* (Bern: Lang, 1972), 51. Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by Jonathan Blower.
- 9 Kälin studied the behavior of two nursery-school classes with a total of thirty-five boys and girls aged four to six years old. The children’s families were all middle class and lived in an urban environment. “With one exception,” none of the subjects’ mothers “were employed”—a fine example of how normality was construed in the 1970s. The children’s mothers were aged between twenty-eight and forty-four years old. The test started out with five children in a room. After fifteen minutes another six children were put in the room, and a further six were introduced at fifteen-minute intervals thereafter. In this way, the experiment increased the (psychologically defined) level of “social density.”
- 10 Kälin, *Populationsdichte*, 92.

- 11 Social psychologists also discuss this aspect of density perception in terms of territory and distance. Territories are divided into distinct groups (Daniel Stokols, “A Typology of Crowding Experiences,” in Baum and Epstein, *Human Response*, 249): “primary territories” associated exclusively with one person or group, permanently controlled by them and central to their everyday lives (a person’s room, a private residence, a hospital bed, a classroom); “secondary territories” with a semi-public character (a clubhouse or lecture and seminar room); then “tertiary territories” that are freely accessible to all (parks, streets, and public squares). Individuals’ reactions are of course especially strong when others impinge upon their primary territory. Enforced adjustment to the presence of other people in this primary territory represents a threat and the corresponding reaction is stress. But high density can also have a negative effect in secondary and tertiary territories. The

- concept of personal space occurs alongside the term “territory” in this context. Personal space, according to the definition of the term, governs the “interpersonal spatial distances” adopted during social contact. Depending on the type of interaction, different distances are deemed necessary in different situations. When these distances are not observed (e.g., overcrowded trains or lecture rooms), defensive reactions and stress occur. See Jürgen Friedrichs, *Stadtanalyse* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1977), 134. Alexander Mitscherlich speaks of the human need for a “minimum territory” as a biological prerequisite for a balanced emotional life. See Alexander Mitscherlich, *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1965), 416.
- 12 Jeannette Ann Desor, “Toward a Psychological Theory of Crowding,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 21 (1972): 79–95.
- 13 *Ibid.*,

to the number of model figures placed in the room. Rather than investigating the behavioral effects of density, the study looked at people's expectations of density for certain specific functions and situations. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that people have different expectations of what constitutes "an acceptable level of density" for rooms with different functions. According to Desor, the results of the study supported the theory that the sense of "being crowded" was more a consequence of social stimuli than of a "lack of space."¹⁴ Desor's study was extrapolated into a model of "deviations from normative experience," a model that assumed an individual will assess any given situation in an "internal comparison of the actual and the normative," and that this judgment may or may not give rise to a sense being crowded. The important thing was always the individual's assessment of the social situation.¹⁵ This assessment would then determine a specific "distance of interaction" for each situation, and evidently there were some very clear expectations about what was deemed a "normal" distance. Any deviation from normative expectations would elicit responses such as irritation, unease, annoyance, or fear. Crowding could therefore be defined as a "reaction to deviation from expectations."¹⁶

In 1975, Jonathan Freedman took up the tradition of crowd psychology with a study that simulated crowding phenomena. Formerly unacquainted people were introduced to each other in a closed room and asked to solve certain problems either collaboratively or individually. The parameters of this experiment were varied in that the number of people in the same room was increased from cramped to very cramped. The hypotheses of the experiment were that density has a direct influence on behavior and that high-density levels have a negative effect on the ability to function and communicate. The experiment did not confirm these hypotheses; the simulated high-density levels had no significant impact on the problem-solving capabilities of the human subjects. From this, Freedman concluded that density in itself was irrelevant as a psychological variable; it merely served to intensify preexisting moods and relations.¹⁷

A similar experimental approach was adopted by Sheldon Cohen in a 1978 study that asked its subjects to find and compare the prices of certain products in a shopping mall. The subjects were then confronted with someone who claimed to have dropped a contact lens on the floor. A second series of tests reproduced the same situation at a higher density level by increasing the number of shoppers in the mall. In the second series of tests, the number of people who offered to help find the lost contact lens was significantly smaller.¹⁸ This trial was devised to look at how individuals react to stimulation overload, and Cohen's hypothesis was that the individual has limited resources of attentiveness. An increase in the number of stimuli caused a reduction in the capacity to process information; the brain was no longer able to cope with anything other than the most important stimuli. In cases of stimulatory over-

load, only those stimuli necessary for the attainment of a certain aim were dealt with. The others were ignored. So, when a person is put in a high-density situation, their capacity for attentiveness is reduced. The consequence of this might be a deviation from social norms, behavior less helpful than one would expect in a normal social situation.¹⁹

Another of Cohen's experiments looked more closely at the interaction of a number of different factors.²⁰ In this case the density of accommodation and the availability of communal facilities at a student dormitory, varied and different sources of interference were introduced. The students were then asked how they had perceived the various situations. The study found that the factors of density, availability of resources, and interference only had any impact on the sense of being crowded when present together. The students felt crowded in high-density situations when the mere presence or behavior of others distracted them from achieving their own ends or from doing important things. From this it was concluded, firstly, that the sense of being crowded was subjective and that both the intensity of the sense of crowding and the severity of the interference depended on the type, importance, frequency, and duration of the activity being disrupted. Secondly, the study also considered one of the corollaries of crowding: the students used various strategies to eliminate the sources of interference. The authors of the study came to the conclusion that "interference contributes to the subjective feelings of being crowded and poses the central threat in crowding settings."²¹

Lastly, Baron and Rodin's complex "loss-of-control model" focused on how people cope with crowding, thus extending the scope of crowding studies to include another important element. Their basic assumption was that if an individual loses control due to high density, the result is crowding stress. Control here is defined as the ability to relate one's own intentions to environmental or influenced consequences. According to this theoretical model, a loss of control occurs in various stages: an initial stage (in which the density level changes) followed by two coping stages. In the first stage, the individual perceives and judges the level of density and decides whether or not it is acceptable. If it is deemed unacceptable a state of stress or agitation ensues, at which point the second stage begins with the attempt to manage or cope with that stress. Baron and Rodin explicitly mentioned attempts (whether successful or unsuccessful) to cope with crowding, and this management mechanism

14 Ibid., 79.

15 Stefan Schönborn and Frank Schuhmann, "Dichte und Enge," in *Architekturpsychologie*, ed. Peter G. Richter (Lengerich: Pabst, 2004), 224.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 222.

18 Ibid., 219.

19 Ibid., 220.

20 John Schopler and Janet E. Stockdale, "An Interference Analysis of Crowding," *Journal of Environmental Psychology and Nonverbal Behavior* 1 (1977): 81-88.

21 Ibid., 86.

(the second stage) has since been referred to as coping in crowding studies. The ability to cope with a given level of density might involve adaptation, habituation, or making changes to one's private sphere.²² At the same time, these adjustment processes can lead to withdrawal and fatigue. Most importantly, though, they also produce feedback as the situation is constantly reassessed. By contrast, when someone is unable to cope, stress and agitation persist and intensify. Potential consequences are cumulative effects such as performance reduction, violence, or withdrawal. Baron and Rodin's investigations place particular emphasis on the differences associated with increases in spatial density and social density (as defined by social psychology).²³ Accordingly, increased levels of spatial density (a reduction in surface area) are less likely to result in a loss of control, although the coping mechanisms in such situations are also diminished. Increased levels of social density (a rise in the number of people) will result in higher stress levels than in the former case, though the chances of coping with such situations are better.²⁴

Crowding Studies Self-Evaluation

The foregoing sketch of these models and experiments covers just a few examples drawn from the broad spectrum of crowding studies; there were a great many other studies and findings and their various approaches and models constitute a truly multifaceted field.²⁵ When the cumulative results of all these studies and publications were assessed at the end of the 1970s it was concluded that the impact of high density and crowding depended on a multitude of factors.²⁶ Firstly, the duration of the situation was important for the perception of density. Researchers were able to distinguish between the effects of long-term stress situations (e.g., in the metropolis) and the effects of specific, short-term situations involving high population densities (e.g., on public transport during peak times). The longer high-density levels persisted, the greater the chances of pathological reactions. Secondly, it was recognized that volition was a crucial factor in the perception of density, that is, whether a certain situation was entered into freely or under compulsion. Groups with limited ability to act otherwise—children, the elderly, prison inmates—were thought to be especially susceptible to the negative effects of crowding and density. A closely related issue here concerns possible alternatives to high-density situations: the "building density" of an inner-city district will be judged differently depending on whether the decision to live there is the result of a lifestyle choice or because living elsewhere is an impossibility because of a lack of financial or social resources. A further factor is the relation between where people actually live and where they spend most of their time, that is, whether alternative locations can be found for work or leisure. Thirdly, it was thought that a person's background also had an impact on the effect of density (or the perception of density). When social psycholo-

gists conducted experiments about density they almost always factored in the way different cultural groups tend to behave differently in different situations. Density tends to be perceived differently by, for instance, the Japanese and the French. Fourthly, people's reactions to the experience of being crowded were taken into account, for example, how an individual copes with the experience of being crowded and what actions are taken in response to it. According to one key insight from some of the later research on crowding, an individual's ability to cope with crowding constitutes an integral part of their general perception of density.

Another outcome of crowding studies was the reappraisal of the received view of crowding and density that had originally been adopted when the field first became a subject of inquiry. The early research from the beginning of the 1970s tended to interpret density as a predominantly negative spatial phenomenon, a metaphor for "too many people" and "too little space." Crowding studies set out to investigate how this phenomenon affected individual behavior. But the research papers that were written also subjected this approach to constant scrutiny, continually refining and differentiating the concepts of crowding and density. When researchers took stock of their results at the end of the 1970s, a distinction was drawn between them: density was identified, on the one hand, as a possible precondition for the complex mesh of causal factors behind crowding. But it was also concluded that density and crowding were by no means purely negative phenomena. As Freedman put it, "Everyone who is at all familiar with the literature agrees that crowding is not simply bad—like pneumonia or higher taxes."²⁷ For him, the Chicago-school approach to crowding—which had stigmatized it as "evil and harmful"—had been overcome. It had become clear that this sort of thinking was overly

22 Schönborn and Schuhmann, "Dichte," 222.

23 Social psychology distinguishes between spatial density and social density. This subdivision is applied to different arrangements or settings in tests looking at human behavior under dense conditions. Spatial density is defined as the amount of space available to a fixed number of people; social density as the number of people in a fixed amount of space. Tests on spatial density manipulate the amount of available space, while those on social density vary the number of people. Schultz-Gambard and Hommel, "Sozialpsychologie," 254.

24 Schönborn and Schuhmann, "Dichte," 222.

25 Further studies found, for instance, that low-ceiling heights were associated with an increased need for space (though the

subjects in this trial were all male); that people felt more constricted in square spaces and that this sense of constrictedness diminished in unroofed spaces (the visual expanse compensating for limited spatial distance); that openings in the space (windows) and communication areas (doors) reduced the sense of crowding; that the perceived size of an apartment varied according to which floor it was on; and that the use of light paints and good lighting conditions reduced the sense of constrictedness. Schultz-Gambard and Hommel, "Sozialpsychologie," 254.

26 See Friedrichs, *Stadtanalyse*; and Schultz-Gambard and Hommel, "Sozialpsychologie," 251–65.

27 Freedman, "Human Consequences of Crowding," 9.

simplistic; the consequences of crowding could be identified as negative in some cases and positive in others; sometimes they were both negative and positive, while at other times they were neither negative nor positive.²⁸ One of the key insights that came out of crowding studies, then, is that the effects of crowding/density are not consistent. Depending on the context and the intentions of the person concerned, one and the same “density situation” might constitute a stimulus, a disruption, a departure from certain norms, a scarcity of resources, or a combination of these factors.²⁹

On the other hand, the results of crowding studies still upheld the notion that high density could cause and augment a sense of crowding: “A sufficient amount of research has accumulated in recent years to make clear that high-density experiences and living conditions can provoke stress and anti-social behaviors and attitudes.”³⁰ The German research on crowding arrived at a similar conclusion: the collective outcome of this research was that high-density living conditions tend to have a negative effect on physiological processes (from permanent stimulation to the disruption of bodily functions) as well as emotional processes (negative subjective sensitivity), cognitive processes (diminished performance), and social processes (withdrawal from society).³¹

The published results of crowding studies are also noteworthy for their discussion of the conceptual foundations of the terms crowding and density. Crucial to the definition of density is its articulation as, on the one hand, an objective, quantifiable, actual, or physical density, and, on the other, as a subjective, merely described, felt, or symbolic density. “Objective density” here is a numerical value, a figure indicating the number of people in a given area, or, in town-planning terms: building density (the ratio of floor area to plot area). By contrast, “subjective density” is based on the perception of individuals.³² Rather than being described as a simple cause-and-effect relationship, the relationship between objective and subjective density is integrated into a broad context of social and individual factors. This underscores the complexity of the concept: “Density is a complex variable both in its definition and in its effects.”³³ By focusing on the complexity and subjectivity of the perception of density, crowding studies relativizes the concept of objective density. One interpretation of the results of the research on crowding, then, would be that although density can be stated objectively, objective density actually says relatively little about the effects of density on the individual and the individual’s perception of it.

An issue of central importance for this whole field of research is the relationship of density to crowding. Stokols articulates the history of crowding studies in terms of changing conceptions of the link between density and crowding.³⁴ According to him, the first phase of research (1960–69) treated density and crowding as equivalents. The basic assumption at this point was that density

and crowding cause stress. In the second phase (1970–71), density and crowding were still used in parallel, though stress was no longer seen as their inevitable result. In the third phase (1972–73), the terms density and crowding were separated for the first time: density was seen as just one of the many causes of crowding. This approach was then modified in the fourth phase (from 1974) and supplemented with new models for the relationship between crowding and social and spatial behavior. According to the findings of this late phase of crowding studies, “high density alone does not lead to stress relations.”³⁵

From this perspective, the differentiation of conceptions of crowding and density is maybe the very theoretical insight of crowding studies; indeed, its breakthrough seems to have been the recognition that the concepts of crowding and density are not identical. While early crowding studies postulated the thesis that crowding would occur automatically at certain density levels, later research hypothesized that density was just one cause of crowding. Crowding is a subjective experience and is closely bound up with actions and reactions. Crowding is the “result of a process in which one evaluates one’s surroundings, one’s personal characteristics and one’s capacity and ability to cope with density.”³⁶ “Crowding is not density alone, stress alone, costs alone, or coping behaviors alone. It is a network of these and other factors that are associated with the failure of an interpersonal boundary system or with an expensively maintained system.”³⁷ The impact of this insight for the field of research that produced it is also worthy of note. Research on crowding was for the most part discontinued as a result of its own analyses. The number of publications on the phenomenon of crowding began to ebb away quite markedly in 1980; there were only a few isolated studies conducted in the field thereafter. People had come to realize that density was embedded in human behavior in a complicated, multilayered way; the discipline capitulated in the face of this complexity and the field of research was left largely fallow in the 1980s.³⁸ Ever since then, crowding has tended to be addressed—though far less frequently than in the 1970s—under the appellation of environmental psychology that began to establish itself alongside (or in place of) social psychology at that point. As in many other disciplines, there was a shift of focus from the social to the environmental.

28 Ibid.

29 Schultz-Gambard and Hommel, “Sozialpsychologie,” 255.

30 Susan Saegert, “High-Density Environments,” in *Human Response to Crowding*, ed. Andrew Baum and Yakov M. Epstein (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1978), 259.

31 Schönborn and Schuhmann, “Dichte,” 230.

32 John Dunstan, “The Effect of Crowding on Behavior,” *Urban Studies* 16 (1979): 299.

33 Saegert, “High-Density Environments,” 259.

34 Daniel Stokols, “A Typology of Crowding Experiences,” in *Human Response to Crowding*, Baum and Epstein, 219–58.

35 Epstein, “Crowding Stress and Human Behavior,” 128.

36 Schönborn and Schuhmann, “Dichte,” 216.

37 Altman, *Social Behaviour*, 158.

38 Schultz-Gambard and Hommel, “Sozialpsychologie,” 251–65.

Conclusion

As for crowding studies as a whole, it has to be said that this area of social psychology has produced a number of interesting observations and models for explaining how spatially dense situations affect individuals. The inclusion of people's reactions to the perception of density and the focus on how density can affect the perceiving subject's capacity for action are particularly important results that may lead to further insights as the concept of density is taken up in other disciplines. But it is also worth recalling that work in this field petered out in the 1980s and that this cessation of activity maybe can be attributed to the realization (the actual result of crowding studies) that density and crowding are simply too complex for theoretical modeling. However, before the "tolling of this epistemological bell" there was another important departure, though: density was no longer considered in purely negative terms. While its scholarly precursors of crowding studies had tended to define the phenomenon of density in terms of its negative effects, crowding studies eventually rejected this position. The basic assumption of Calhoun's rat experiments about the potential lethal effects of high density became more and more differentiated and these differentiations laid the foundation for the advent of another story, being told among others in urban design and urban planning discourses since the 1980s:³⁹ the story about "good density."

Translated from the German by Jonathan Blower

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Crowds, Cordons, and Computers Rethinking Density through London's Grime Scene

Christabel Stirling

The term “density” is frequently associated with cities, urban planning, and urban sprawl. It is often used, for instance, to describe urban populations and morphologies: the compactness or sparseness of people per unit of area (high or low density), the quantity and arrangement of the buildings that house them, and the administrative powers that monitor such populations.

As a music and sound studies researcher, my interest is in how the concept of density might be mobilized as a means of understanding urban musical assemblages.¹ What if, for example, one was to consider the concentration of people per square unit not in relation to urban dwelling, but in relation to musical events? Density might then be conceived of as the experience of being part of a packed musical crowd, of being among bodies jostling for space in a darkened nightclub, and feeling the touch of skin and sweaty T-shirts. In London specifically, one might take this notion further and consider the current problem of musical “densification”: the overcrowding and overselling of electronic dance music club nights—a symptom of the barely affordable security measures that venues are now compelled to install, which leave owners little choice but to ram their events full to bursting point in order to break even. To take another example, what if one was to try and deduce the growth rate of a musical assemblage: the speed at which a musical genre swells, replicates, and propagates across a city? To what extent do state authorities attempt to regulate such processes and, moreover, how and why? Here, one might compare the pervasive aliveness of high-density music scenes such as techno, which are permitted to multiply and mushroom across the London cityscape, with the suppression and dispersal of genres such as grime that, for a long time, were ruthlessly evicted from urban public space, forced into a low-density, subterranean existence.

Drawing upon these ideas, this essay explores the “mutual mediations” that arise between the urban mobility and urban density of musical practices.² A key question that I seek to address is: If different kinds of music possess different degrees of access to urban public space, and therefore differential urban mobilities, how do these unequal flows mediate fluxes in musical urban density—the concentration of a particular music in a particular region or area, the kinds of architectures it inhabits, and the spatial distribution of the people who produce and participate in it? In what follows, I reflect on this question with reference to the London grime scene. In the first part of the essay, I address the historical and political reasons why some musical assemblages are able to proliferate over others, and demonstrate the impact of this on densification,

¹ By “musical assemblage” I refer to the specific constellation of sonic, social, spatial, discursive, technological, and atmospheric qualities that, together, make up a musical event, scene, or genre.

See Georgina Born, “On Musical Mediation: Technology, ontology and creativity,” *Twentieth Century Music* 2 (2005): 7–36.
² *Ibid.*

propinquity, and community. Secondly, I turn to creative practice, examining how such processes in turn mediate aesthetic change and the evolution of genre. I conclude with some reflections on how digitization has intervened in the relations between musical mobility and musical urban density, and offer some conceptual framings for my analysis.

Dense History, Stretched Time

Grime is a musical genre defined by its sub-low frequencies, sparse off-kilter rhythms, 140 BPM tempos, and high-speed rapping, “spitting,” and soliloquizing. Originating in East London in the early 2000s, grime initially shared much in common with its South London cousin, dubstep. Both genres took influence from dub, jungle, drum and bass, and UK garage, and both gained exposure through a small club-night infrastructure. But as the two genres evolved, some key distinctions emerged. First, while dubstep progressed into an instrumental music in which MCs played a subordinate role to DJs, grime elevated MCs to center stage, precipitating the genre’s close affiliation with rap. Further, dubstep materialized as a mixed-race, mixed-class, and mixed-age scene, whereas grime was predominantly black, working class, and young. Finally, police and local authorities directed their efforts toward locking grime out of the city, forcing it to inhabit informal and illegal spaces, while dubstep was allowed to enjoy an increasingly widespread presence in clubs, both locally and globally.

The first question to address here then is: Why was dubstep able to proliferate across London, but not grime? To what extent did grime’s specific sounds, social atmospheres, and historic ties hamper its urban mobility? To answer this, I want to focus on two sets of mediations. The first relates to genealogy, and to the long-standing issue of the eviction of black and working-class music from urban public space.³ The musical practice of MCing, or rapping, has come under intense scrutiny from authorities ever since it emerged in the 1970s. This is primarily because the figure of the MC, and the social formations that aggregate around MC culture (“crews,” “battles,” “rivals”), carry a racialized “gang-related” stigma. Widely attributed to Jamaican immigrant DJ Kool Herc, MCing had its initial roots in the Jamaican reggae aesthetic referred to as “toasting” and became a crucial ingredient of US hip-hop in the mid-’70s.⁴ MCs took up the microphone to portray the injustice of their socioeconomic realities, while “block parties” were instrumental in rearticulating the spatially organized gang warfare that had ravaged the Bronx, in New York, in the early ’70s.⁵ At the same time, however, hip-hop spawned a new geographical grid in New York—one that orbited around “musical gangs” and turfs controlled by DJs and MCs.⁶ Regular battles took place between rival MCs, and rapping proved an effective tool for the expression of not only social change, but also

local status, prestige, and the assertion of neighborhood territory.⁷ For the media, government, and other onlookers, these competitive and often combative elements of hip-hop (battling, boasting, territorialism) chimed in disconcerting ways with the belligerent Jamaican sound clash. That MCs were also a key presence in 1980s gangster rap and Jamaican dancehall—genres notorious for their hostility and sexual explicitness—did not help their reputation. Deemed as the figure responsible for the dissemination of “unpalatable” messages and aggressive forms of selfhood, the MC is (still) all too frequently held accountable for promoting crime, depravity, and gang warfare.⁸

Given these prominent global narratives, it is not altogether surprising that when grime emerged in London in the early 2000s, a genre revolving around young black male protagonists, MC “clashes,” and crews (e.g., Roll Deep, N.A.S.T.Y), it was liable to being “stopped at every single turn” by police, as one of my interlocutors put it. Indeed, the historically threatening connotations invoked by MC culture, together with grime MCs’ pervasive presence on illegal “pirate” radio, and a handful of violent incidents involving individuals who were linked to grime,⁹ was more than enough to attach “grime” to “crime” in the social and institutional imagination. What followed were a series of harsh legislative interventions and media smears, many of which were explicitly oriented toward the removal of grime from London’s public spaces. But there was also, in my view, a second set of mediations at work in the dismantling of grime—namely, the specificity of British politics at the time of grime’s emergence, and the way that political agendas both legitimized and inflamed the racialized historic scripts pertaining to MC culture. In the next section, I turn to this second set of mediations in more detail, describing how, through an archipelago of different powers, grime was transformed from a distinctly communal, reciprocal, high-density musical practice, in which, as Richard Bramwell notes, MCs took turns to “spit” their lyrics and “solicit [...] responses from the audience,” to a distinctly individualistic, spatially dispersed, low-density musical network.¹⁰

3 See Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: MacMillan, 1978).

4 “Toasting” can be defined as improvised rhyming or rapping over bass lines.

5 A block party is a community street party, usually involving music, food, dance, and large crowds, and pervading large urban areas or city blocks—hence the name.

6 See Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop Won’t Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (London: Random House, 2005).

7 Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*

(Middletown CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 12, 34–36.

8 See, for example, “Cameron Attacks Radio 1’s Hip-Hop,” *BBC*, June 7, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/5055724.stm.

9 For example, Dizzee Rascal was stabbed and wounded in Ayia Napa in 2003; and Crazy Titch was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder in 2005.

10 Richard Bramwell, “The Aesthetics and Ethics of London’s Rap Scenes: A Sociology of UK Hip-Hop and Grime” (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2011), 193.

Curfews, “Conflicts,” and Cosmopolitanism The Density of Control

During the late 1990s, just prior to the time of grime, the Blair government flooded urban Britain with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), youth curfews, and “zero tolerance” policing methods as a means of enhancing “public safety” and reducing the risk of racist conflict. Although seemingly socially liberal in its antiracist rhetoric, this discourse of “street safety” and “integration” was in fact fully coherent with Blair’s neoliberal project of cosmopolitan capitalism.¹¹ New Labour’s alleged desire to combat racism was, in other words, arguably less a sign of their commitment to racial justice than an attempt to break up any form of communalism that threatened the dissemination of individualistic, entrepreneurial, cosmopolitan values. Indeed, it would be difficult to explain otherwise how or why Blair thought it in any way acceptable to impute that “black culture” and “black youth” were, after all, to blame for continuing social antagonism, as he eventually did on his way out of office in 2007.¹² Seen in this way, Blair’s “liberal” social policy of multiculturalism and social integration might better be understood as part of an economic plan that sought to dissolve existing communities into autonomous, integrated, economic actors, and thereby enable the pursuit of a meritocratic neoliberal economics.¹³

What transpired as a result of this was a superficial version of antiracism—a mode of antiracism in which, as Paul Gilroy puts it, racism is “loudly disavowed” in political speech, while simultaneously enabled and perpetuated in daily life.¹⁴ Ostensibly concerned with interracial respect and tolerance, New Labour evidenced no effort to even attempt to understand the workings and subtleties of local racisms, lacking any sense of context or of “how complex struggles over belonging, conflict and entitlement are embedded in particular localities.”¹⁵ Instead, swarms of CCTV surveillance, police “stop-and-search” powers, and electronic tagging devices such as ASBOs were brazenly implemented from afar on the basis of essentialist assumptions that “designate[d] male youth [...] as urban interlopers, agents of street crime and violence.”¹⁶ To be young, male, working class, and in a group surrounded by peers of a similar ethnicity, particularly if Asian or black, was thus to be perceived as a chief violator of urban order. To make matters worse, the government was relying on a police force that was still struggling to recruit from outside of the post-Powell anti-immigration communities that had constituted Thatcher’s police force.¹⁷ Male-gendered racial profiling and the police harassment of young people thus reached new levels of normalization in the late ‘90s. Meanwhile a bubbling sense of injustice brewed among young people themselves, as affirmed by then eighteen-year-old black British grime MC Dizze Rascal, who proclaimed on his 2003 debut album, *Boy in Da Corner*: “I’m a ‘problem’ for Anthony Blair.”¹⁸ Grime youngsters arguably suffered more than other youngsters under this

climate, however. This was partly due to the historical stigma of MC culture, which encumbered the genre with additional amounts of police attention. But it was also partly because the London borough of Tower Hamlets—grime’s birthplace—was a key site in the so-called postcode wars that flared up in East London in the early 2000s. Predictably, the media were quick to blame this conflict on grime and black youth for the simple reason that they were prominent in the same areas (Poplar, Bow, Plaistow ...). Yet, as urban ethnographers as well as grime artists attest, white and Asian youth who had little to no involvement in grime were just as often at the center of the postcode wars as black youth.¹⁹ Moreover, grime was, for many, actually a way out of local conflict, rather than an entry-point.²⁰ Comments by journalists, such as one made by Simon Wheatley who stated that “‘the time of grime’ [was] the era of postcode warfare and mindless teenage killings,”²¹ are thus all the more damaging for their adhesion of grime—and by association, young black males—to words such as “warfare” and “killing,” and conflicts as localized and specific as the postcode wars, when the coincidence between the two was often arbitrary. As with New Labour’s drive to “community cohesion,” which essentialized youth identities by assuming racial factions, the media’s treatment of grime as synonymous with the postcode wars similarly signaled an atavistic understanding of socio-spatial hierarchy in East London, tarring the genre along the way.

11 Jeremy Gilbert, “The Second Wave: The Specificity of New Labour Neo-liberalism,” *Soundings* 26 (2004): 36, 33.

12 Patrick Wintour and Vikram Dodd, “Blair Blames Spate of Murders on Black Culture,” *Guardian*, April 12, 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2007/apr/12/ukcrime.race>.

13 This is not to say that multiculturalism is/was not progressive and hugely effective, particularly in the wake of Thatcherite xenophobia. For a defence of multiculturalism, see Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004); and Les Back “Researching Community and its Moral Projects,” *21st Century Society: Journal of the Academy of Social Sciences* 4 (2009).

14 Paul Gilroy, “‘My Britain Is Fuck All’ Zombie Multiculturalism and the Race Politics of Citizenship,” *Identities* 19, no. 4 (2012): 394.

15 Les Back, Phil Cohen, and Michael Keith, “Between Home and Belonging: Critical Ethnographies of Race, Place and Identity,” in *Finding the Way Home: Young People’s Stories of Gender, Ethnicity, Class and Places in Hamburg and London*, ed.

Nora Räthzel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 195, 200, 198.

16 *Ibid.*, 200.

17 See Gilbert, “Second Wave,” 34.

18 Dizze Rascal, *Boy in Da Corner* [Vinyl, CD, MP3] (London: XL Recordings, 2003).

19 As Dizze Rascal put it, “Black boys, white boys, Asian boys ... We’d all just fight each other.” Quoted in Miranda Bryant, “Black, White, We’d All Fight,” *Evening Standard*, November 13, 2015, <http://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/celebrity-news/dizze-black-white-we-d-all-fight-then-you-realise-you-re-all-the-same-a3113816.html>. See also Back, Cohen, and Keith, “Between Home and Belonging,” 204.

20 Bramwell, “Aesthetics and Ethics of London’s Rap Scenes,” 196, 215. See also Nabeel Zuberi, “‘New Throat Fe Chat’: The Voices and Media of MC Culture,” in *Black Popular Music in Britain since 1945*, ed. John Stratton and Nabeel Zuberi (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), 188.

21 Wheatley, quoted in Phil Coomes, “Don’t Call Me Urban! The Time of Grime,” *BBC News*, June 2, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-13608668>.

Meshes of Power and the Politics of Mobility

The mechanisms by which grime was gradually suppressed and immobilized, then, can be seen as both historically oriented, and temporally specific; linked both to what Sara Ahmed calls “past histories of association”²² that equated MCs and rapping with gang-related crime and violence, and to political and institutional conditions that legitimized such histories. This combination of genealogy, antagonistic youth policy, police conservatism, and warped media portrayal proved toxic. Not only did such a web of power engender capillary extensions of control over the grime population; it also helped to reignite the historical categorization of young black men a priori as criminals and threats to public order on a political scale.²³ Minister for Culture Kim Howells’s claim in 2003 that the “hateful lyrics [of] these boasting macho idiot [grime] rappers [... creates] a culture where killing is almost a fashion accessory” is a clear example of this reigniting process.²⁴ That is, in a manner that reflects the “density” of history—the past’s ability to populate the present—the racist sentiment underlying Howells’s allegation is both oriented and “justified” by stereotyped historical narratives that criminalize black, MC-focused music, and is further “qualified” by the postcode wars as they were depicted in the media. At the same time, through its very repetition of this “history,” Howells’s statement works to re-stick the words “rappers” and “killing” together in the public mind, thus assigning new weight to old scripts. His comment thus embodies both effect and cause: repetition as an *effect* of deeply embedded social connotations and histories of association; but equally, repetition as renewal, as the re-instillment of fear around the figure of the young black man, *causing* social hierarchies and stereotypes to be reproduced.

What comes to the fore thus far is an understanding of “density” as both a temporal and spatial concept—and one that is powerfully bound up with the politics of mobility. In the case of grime, stereotyped historical narratives “crowded” into the present as temporal contagions, working to reattach racialized notions of danger, masculinity, and violence to young, black, male bodies. At the same time, these histories were spatially reinforced via dense webs of urban control and biometric surveillance aimed precisely at these same bodies. Together, these spatiotemporal densities converged to not only fix or “freeze” the meanings and feelings associated with young black, working class, male subjectivity—and here it might be noted that Howells was by no means the only MP to condemn MC culture during the 2000s. They also worked to “freeze” the kinetic and creative freedoms of young, black males themselves. Indeed, as the 2000s rolled on, grime’s ability to occupy urban public space was increasingly hampered by police, with events disbanded at every opportunity; and this only escalated when, in 2007, Blair called for an even more “intense police focus” on young black Britons.²⁵ As Dan Hancox puts it, nodding to the title of Dizze Rascal’s debut album: “[Grime MCs

were gradually] restricted to a tragically small bit of turf, watched from all sides [...] *the boy in the corner*.”²⁶ The transition was one in which dense circles of hyped MCs, rapping, spitting bars, and invigorating each other through linguistic invention and physical gesture, were spatially immobilized, scattered, and made to stand in different corners, prohibited from gathering in public space.

What was perhaps most contradictory about the criminalization of grime, however, was the disregard shown for the actual stories being told by grime. Politicians, state authorities, and the media continually condemned the genre without in any way acknowledging the difficult urban realities that grime MCs were largely compelled to live under—realities marked by poverty, institutional racism, economic inactivity, and feelings of ensnarement and “voicelessness.”²⁷ The problem was that the more grime’s messages were ignored, the more reactionary and provocative its lyrics and videos became. For instance, many grime artists seemed to take pleasure in satirizing the surveillance of the racialized subject in twenty-first century Britain. Often this was done through witty, exaggerated portrayals of gangsterism; sonic tropes such as gunshots and helicopters; and videos of black-hooded figures committing dark, dangerous crimes, or—as in the video for Dizze Rascal’s “Sirens” (2007)—being hunted down, cornered, and eroticized by white foxhunters.²⁸ As Nabeel Zuberi notes, such “in-your-face” statements tend to be deployed through humor and postcolonial mimicry, and have a long history in black oral traditions of role play, theatricality, and oppositional gesture.²⁹ Yet, while it is one thing to ridicule racial profiling, it is perhaps another to allude to having terrorist sympathies, as MCs Trim and Wiley do in their versions of “Taliban” (2007), particularly, as Zuberi puts it, “in a political climate sensitive to such public statements.”³⁰ Through such provocations, grime artists inevitably reproduced themselves as objects of surveillance even as they critiqued such mechanisms. In turn, this only served to exacerbate the urban immobility of the grime scene as a whole, and accelerate its breakdown into smaller, more dispersed, and supposedly more “controllable” fragments.

22 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 13, 63.

23 On the historic racial profiling of young black men, see Paul Gilroy, “Police and Thieves,” in *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in ‘70s Britain*, ed. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (London: Hutchinson, 1982), 143–82; and Hall et al., “The Politics of ‘Mugging,’” *Policing the Crisis*, 327–97.

24 Howells, quoted in Fiachra Gibbons, “Minister Labeled Racist After Attack on Rap ‘Idiots,’” *Guardian*, January 6, 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/jan/06/ukguns.immigrationpolicy1>.

25 Blair, quoted in Wintour and Dodd, “Blair Blames Spate.”

26 Dan Hancox, *Stand Up Tall: Dizze Rascal and the Birth of Grime* (E-book, 2013), Kindle edition (emphasis mine).

27 See, for instance, Malcolm James, “Negative Politics: The Conformity, Struggles and Radical Possibilities of Youth Culture in Outer East London,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (2016): 1–18.

28 Nabeel Zuberi, “Worries in the Dance: Post-millennial Grooves and Sub-bass Culture,” in *Britpop and the English Music Tradition*, ed. Andy Bennett and John Stratton (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 185.

29 *Ibid.*, 179, 181.

30 *Ibid.*, 186.

“Is There a Particular Ethnic Group Attending?”

The culmination of the obstructing currents directed at grime came in the form of the 2003 Licensing Act. Active from 2005, the act compelled all UK venues wishing to run late-licensed events to complete a live music “risk assessment form” detailing the names, addresses, and criminal records of every promoter and artist/DJ involved. Controversially, this form, known as Form 696, also obligated venue owners to divulge whether there would be “a particular ethnic group attending? (If ‘yes’ please state the group),” and to disclose “the music style to be performed, e.g. bashment, R&B, garage,” all of which are black-associated urban genres. Any reference to an artist/promoter who had previously been involved in a criminal incident, any mention of grime, and any claim that black or Asian ethnic groups were to make up a significant portion of the audience would almost certainly, it transpired, result in the denial of a late license. Indeed, venue owners became unwilling to even contemplate booking grime acts on this basis, choosing to go with “safe” (white) options instead. The introduction of Form 696, then, made it virtually impossible for grime promoters to find spaces in which to run their nights.

Unsurprisingly, this sparked much controversy. Some felt that the act had been specifically targeted at grime given how easy it became to suppress grime events thereafter, while others, including the CEO of UK Music Feargal Sharkey, accused the police of racial profiling, pointing to the fact that Form 696 disproportionately targeted black music. Yet, in spite of these challenges, it was not until 2009 that the ethnicity question finally disappeared off the form; and by this point, it was too late. Grime had long since been sieved out of nightclubs, and pushed back into domestic environments in the mid-2000s. What was remarkable, however, was that its ruthless deportation from public space notwithstanding, MC-focused grime did not disappear. On the contrary, grime MCs developed a range of adaptive and inventive survival techniques that ensured the genre could endure. MCs Dizzee, Wiley, and Tinchy Strider, for instance, who had already achieved commercial success, continued to achieve stardom through a pop-inflected version of the genre. Criticized by some for “selling out,” their popularity nonetheless helped enable the continuation of MC-based stage shows at London “superclubs” such as Matter and the Ministry of Sound—venues deemed “safe” enough to host MCs due to their zealous security. But more significant than these public events, which, although important to grime’s survival, were clearly umpired by the mainstream music industry and the police, was grime’s endurance via a dispersed, informal, infrastructure of pirate radio, mixtape/DVD culture, youth clubs, and unofficial gatherings in disused rooms of East London tower blocks. The home, the deserted apartment, the illegal airwaves, the public bus, and the youth center thus became the dominant “public” sites in which grime MCs were able to congregate, “clash,” and try out new lyrics.³¹ Up until the late 2000s,

then, grime MCs proved resilient in their ability to appropriate whatever spatial, technical, and architectural resources they could, and use them to combat the relentless forces of immobility and individualization thrust upon them. Had it not been for the intrusion of another large-scale lattice of power, to which I turn next, this indomitability may have continued to ring true.

Sparse Bodies ...

Surging out of areas such as Bow and Stratford in East London, grime advocates were not only teenagers growing up in underprivileged neighborhoods, but were situated in such neighborhoods at a moment of mass urban change. From the extension of London’s financial center eastwards in the form of Canary Wharf, to the £9 billion poured into the area in preparation for the 2012 Olympics, the landscape of East London was undergoing mass physical, socio-cultural, and economic reconstruction at the time of grime. By the late 2000s, these giant regeneration schemes had culminated in the growth of what John Hannigan calls multiple, polarized “fantasy cities”:³² fragments of urban terrain that were separate from existing neighborhoods, “designed to conform to the expectations of the visitor rather than the practical needs of those living in them.”³³ For the grime population, who lived in high concentration across all of the Olympic boroughs, a major incapacitating aspect of this was the fact that a large number of the sites razed to allow for such “fantasy” endeavors were precisely those “forgotten” domestic spaces they had so heavily come to rely upon in the wake of their exclusion from clubs. The semi-dilapidated buildings that housed pirate radio, the youth centers, the deserted-flats-turned-makeshift-studios—all were knocked down, scaled back, or forced to close by the dozen. As Hancox notes, referring to the once-notorious Stratford tower block where a “stellar line-up” of grime MCs met to battle on Deja Vu FM in 2003: “There is no blue plaque on this building to commemorate that pivotal evening in the history of grime. In fact, there is no building at all. [...] The tower block that housed [Deja Vu FM] was bulldozed to make way for the gleaming London 2012 Olympic Village.”³⁴

The twin-ship of urban regeneration and social exclusion is of course not new. Less discussed, however, are the potential effects of violent urban change on musical production and innovation. With the demolition of so many supposedly “failed” East London spaces, and the privatization and/or closure of

31 For a discussion of how grime MCs used public buses, see Bramwell, “Aesthetics and Ethics of London’s Rap Scenes,” 146–86.

32 John Hannigan, *Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1998).

33 Gavin Poynter, “From Beijing to Bow Bells: Measuring the Olympics Effect,” *London East Research Institute Working Papers in Urban Studies* (2006): 5.

34 Hancox, *Stand Up Tall*.

large numbers of youth clubs, grime MCs and DJs lost access to many of the physical sites they had largely come to depend upon for artistic development and exchange. The vertebrae of MC-based grime—the pockets of inner London that had provided “housing,” safety, and basic amenity to the genre and its disciples—were thus rapidly and callously depleted. With its communal spaces haphazardly turned to “coffee shops and Tescos,”³⁵ what then became of the ether, the energy, the creativity, and community spirit of grime? In the next section, I suggest that a music culture that had thrived on proximate interaction and antiphonal reciprocation increasingly mutated toward an individualistic, spatially dispersed musicality centered on private modes of production and consumption. In turn, this de-collectivization triggered a process of aesthetic change in which the density formerly manifest between rappers, DJs, and audience members at live grime events gradually metamorphosed into a sonic density that shifted the boundaries of grime as a genre, not only sonically, but socially, and spatially.

... Dense Sounds

The destruction of grime’s urban infrastructure resulted in the genre’s wholesale migration online by 2010. Although this would eventually prove enabling for grime MCs, initially, the opposite rang true. The move to internet distribution had three key effects on the direction of the music. First, the MCing element of grime “went down the toilet,” as new grime producer Slackk put it.³⁶ The internet simply did not appear to support the meeting and competing of MCs in the same way that clubs and physical spaces had. Instead, grime producers who had previously cut dubs for MCs to rap over moved toward producing instrumentals for themselves or for DJs, thus bypassing the MC altogether. Meanwhile, grime MCs who remained committed to MCing aggregated around YouTube and other online spaces, with mixtape culture having been subsumed into the digital morass in 2009–10. There thus emerged something of a split in the grime community: on the one hand, a new “instrumental-grime” sound that, as I elaborate later, was gradually allowed back into clubs, and on the other hand, a waning MC-focused “vocal-grime” sound that subsisted on the internet and digital radio/TV.

Second, in place of the gap left by the MC, producers involved in the new instrumental grime began to focus their creative abilities on sonic complexity and technical virtuosity, as though attempting to replace the energy and rawness of the MC with an equivalent onslaught of instrumental sound. Grime artist Footsie, for instance, talked of wanting to create dubs with “in your face sounds,”³⁷ while journalist Joe Moynihan described the new instrumental wave as a slew of “outside-the-box headmelters.”³⁸ Grime/bass producer Rob³⁹ expressed his thoughts on the matter in a 2014 interview undertaken during

fieldwork: “[With instrumental grime], the music became a lot less functional. And this wasn’t to do with a change in tempo. It was to do with the *density* of sound. It came about partly because of the sonic space left behind by the MC. [...] But I also think that being shut out of public space [...] generates a really isolated relationship to your music production. And that in turn seems to push producers towards a certain sonic complexity that just doesn’t really lend itself to dancing or social experience.”

Key, here, is Rob’s assertion that the “densification” of grime’s sound came about not only from the loss of the MC, but also from the continuing lack of access to a tangible communal space. Indeed, while the internet may have offered vast possibilities for distribution, it failed to prop up live, improvisatory exchanges between MCs, DJs, and producers in any straightforward manner. Without such exchanges, and without the pressure to get tracks finished for regular club nights or even regular meet-ups, grime producers had little choice but to adapt to remote, low-density creative conditions, and consequently, their artistic agendas seemed to shift. From 2010, labels such as Butterz and producers such as Mr. Mitch and Logos, progressively oriented themselves toward a DJ/producer mentality, producing convoluted, if inventive, instrumental tracks that dispensed with any need for an MC; and with no regular night to aim toward, there was seemingly no limit to their technical fine-tuning.

Finally, with grime online and no longer tied to its London locality, the demographic of people making the music changed. As Texan producer Rabbit admits: “I think [grime is] more white now, more middle class, upper middle class.”⁴⁰ Rob, too, weighed in on this topic: “There are so many new producers out there now. [...] It can feel very faceless. But then, dig a little deeper and it’s clear that this new grime movement, the instrumental strand, is mainly coming from white people. [...] And there’s a class element as well, because it’s about who has the money to put out their own music and risk making a loss.”

For music critic Angus Finlayson, this “opening out” of grime has had some positive effects, specifically in “the number of different spins people are taking on [grime]” as a result.⁴¹ The example Finlayson gives is Birmingham-

35 Dizze Rascal, quoted in Miranda Bryant, “Black, White, We’d All Fight ...”

36 Slackk, quoted in Angus Finlayson, “RA/Grime 2013,” *Resident Advisor*, October 23, 2013, <https://www.residentadvisor.net/features/1908>.

37 Footsie, quoted in Thomas Burkhalter, “Grime Instrumentals and War Dubs,” *Norient*, April 17, 2014, <http://norient.com/stories/grime2014/>.

38 Joe Moynihan, “Unboxed: An Introduction

to Instrumental Grime’s New Wave,” *FactMag*, August 8, 2013, <http://www.factmag.com/2013/08/08/unboxed-an-introduction-to-instrumental-grimes-new-wave/>.

39 Names have been changed to protect the privacy of participants.

40 Rabbit, quoted in Finlayson, “RA/Grime 2013.”

41 Ibid.

based producer Filter Dread, who discovered grime for the first time via producer Martin Clark's blog, and whose experimental track "Space Loops" (2013) invites comparison, as Finlayson puts it, "with Lee Gamble's 'Diversions 1994–1996.'"⁴² Yet, while it is perhaps true that instrumental grime is more diverse in its stylistic influences than "classic grime," and while this is no doubt a result of the social and geographic expansion of the genre brought about by the internet, it is also hard not to interpret this shift as embodying the growth of a fully fledged neoliberal music economy, in which "faceless" individuals from different walks of life and geographic locales produce tracks largely in isolation from each other, with no sense of collectivism or shared experience. The comparison to Gamble's "Diversions 1994–1996" (2012)—a release on the experimental music label PAN, which more readily affords contemplative private listening than any kind of collective hype or energy—is particularly telling, emphasizing the intellectual, "high art" influences that have emerged with the stretched social bandwidth of grime, as well as with the loss of the MC, and the rise of an individualistic, geographically sprawled producer culture. In the case of instrumental grime, then, one might say that fluxes in urban density directly mediated sonic density. The more spatially dispersed, diverse, and atomized grime practitioners became, the denser, more complex and less "functional" their sounds, and the more privatized the experience afforded by such sounds.

Sonic Density, Bodily Re-assembly

What was particularly interesting, however, was how quickly this "new" version of grime regained its urban mobility. Since 2012, this less-MC-focused, instrumental strand of grime, with its denser sound and whiter demographic, has populated clubs in a way that "old grime" never did or could. Evidence of this is in the growth of instrumental-grime night Boxed (est. 2013) that, with its "no bars, just beats" slogan, has secured slots at venues such as Phonox in Brixton and Bloc in Hackney Wick, as well as the regular Butterz label club night Jamz (est. 2013). To my mind, it was not only the alterations to grime's aesthetic and social demographic boundaries that allowed it to move back into clubs. Shifts in the micro-social relations that the music typically started to engender plausibly played a role too. That is, with the intricate, densely layered sounds of instrumental grime no longer apt to summon the participatory, communicative atmospheres that MC-focused grime did, what began to prevail instead was a cerebral, technically reverent vibe, in which crowd members fixated over composition, production, and performer technicality, much like an ambient or avant-garde/experimental crowd. Given the "health" of these latter assemblages, which, with their majority white, middle-class crowds and "serious" sensibilities, are able to populate and flow through the

city with ease, it is perhaps no surprise that the shift in grime's crowd dynamic toward something similar, along with the shift in its demographic and aesthetic, overlapped with its recovered urban mobility.

Building upon the concept of density, what emerges from this analysis are the mutually mediating relationships between musical mobility, musical urban density, and musical creativity and sociality. In order to regain or "win back" its urban mobility, and therefore its access to high-density spaces like clubs, it was on some level necessary for grime to change: to become "more like" ambient or experimental/avant-garde or other mobile musics. Indeed, consciously or not, instrumental grime can be seen to have imitated arts-associated genres such as these in multiple respects: sonically, in the loss of the MC, transition to an instrumental form, and elevation of compositional elements such as density and texture; socially, in becoming whiter and more middle class; and atmospherically, in generating an intellectual, interiorized social environment. At the same time, these aesthetic and social mutations, and the direction that they took the genre in, were themselves a partial consequence of the immobilization and spatial atomization of the original grime assemblage, enacted via the excessive policing of early grime nights, the mass urban regeneration schemes that demolished grime's communal spaces, and the exodus of the music online. Bringing these two currents together, then, one can argue that the asphyxiation and de-collectivization of early grime precipitated aesthetic-social shifts that transmuted a predominantly black, working-class, MC-focused, communal music into a middle-class, whitewashed, instrumental, individualistic "version" of its predecessor, and thereby enabled it to move through the city unhindered. What followed was a process of coagulation or "re-densification" as "new" grime crowds gathered permissibly within and across London clubs in a way that was alien to "old" grime.

The question of what "moves" or indeed "fixes" a musical assemblage, and the effects of such flows and ebbs on the geographical distribution and density of musical practitioners and participants, are thus also always questions of musical genre and creativity—of the aesthetic, social, material, technological, and atmospheric qualities that comprise a musical assemblage. The emergence of instrumental grime is pertinent in this context precisely because it constitutes an example of an immobile, low-density, suppressed musical assemblage mutating into something high density and mobile through radical alterations to its integral sonic social elements. The question that remains is: How might this process of imitation, or even cultural assimilation, be understood? Is it equivalent to political failure, or have grime MCs found ways to transgress such large-scale processes of "musical gentrification" and neoliberal marginalization?

“Form 696 Can Suck Its Mum”

In May 2015, Marco Grey of grime photography project “Wot Do U Call It” posted on Twitter: “Just had a grime event with 50+ MCs. We had no security. No violence took place. Form 696 can suck its mum.” To mark the first anniversary of “Wot Do U Call It,” Grey and his collaborator George Quann-Barnett teamed up with Radar Radio (est. 2014) to host a giant MC “set” [sic] in a private location in London. Crowds of MCs came together to try out their most recent lyrics in what turned out to be a peaceful event. Moreover, the occasion was not just a one-off; it marked the resurgence of an MC-focused grime scene that began to take hold in 2014. Driven by up-and-coming talents such as Jammz, AJ Tracey, and Bugzy Malone, together with more prominent first-generation MCs like Skepta, this new wave of “vocal grime” has gained significant visibility in the last three years. What differentiates it from early grime is the greater stability of its infrastructure. Not only are the voices of these MCs distributed across a vast “mediascape” of radio, TV, YouTube, podcasts, social media, and more,⁴³ they also contribute to a tangible MC scene with a club presence beyond the commercial, heavily policed “superclub.”⁴⁴ The question is why? What has changed to enable this? In this final section, I show how contemporary grime MCs are appropriating the very resources that, back in 2010, proved so isolating and immobilizing, and using them to their own collectivizing and “densifying” ends.

First to note is the enormous role played by the internet. Initially one of the reasons for the demise of MC culture, the fruits of the internet are now being fully reaped by grime MCs. “Clashing” has taken on a new existence via the synchronized uploading of user-generated content to YouTube; websites like *GRM Daily* provide platforms for debate, interviews, and the digital distribution of old mixtapes; Soundcloud and other personal artist pages have helped ease commercial pressures and dissipate former struggles to get heard; and the increasing focus on grime by radio/TV platforms such as BBC 1Xtra, Channel AKA (formerly U), Mode, Flex, and more has given a new generation of MCs the opportunity to “spit” their bars live in the studio, and make them available for download too. These multiple online spaces have accelerated the dissemination of MC-focused grime in unprecedented ways. But perhaps more importantly, they have functioned as powerful resistance tools for black grime MCs defending their right to the city. A key example of this is MC Ghetts’s use of Facebook to stage an impromptu musical “happening” outside the Barbican in London after the police advised the institution to preemptively cancel a Just Jam grime event in 2014 on the grounds of “public safety.” By teaming up with Secret Cinema and using online tools to mobilize a crowd of roughly 250 in urban public space, Ghetts’s “protest” illustrated how the internet can potentially function as a resource through which to reclaim agency, collectivity, and urban mobility from the neoliberal matrix.

A second enabling factor stems from the greater self-reflexivity that grime MCs appear to possess today. This is reflected in the lyrics of MCs such as Elf Kid and Stormzy, who place less emphasis on satire and the provocation of authorities than their forefathers. One explanation for this shift in tone—which might be seen as simultaneously “savvy” and compliant—is that in addition to having witnessed the impinging consequences of depicting urban life in criminal or provocative terms, these younger MCs are “more self-conscious and capable of creating [themselves] than [their] predecessors,” thanks to the culture of self-surveillance that has emerged with the internet.⁴⁵ As Rob described during fieldwork, the commentary that pervades online life makes it easier to recognize one’s position within a socio-musical milieu, and thus, if desired, to alter that position, or even attempt to alter the milieu itself. According to this logic, new-grime MCs appear to be using language, lyrical skill, and social media to attribute agency to themselves, rapping and posting about politics, social issues, and business as—at least in part—a way “to achieve economic

Fig. 44
George Quann-Barnett,
Eskimo Dance Boiler Room, 2015



Fig. 45
Marco Grey,
Hackney Shapes, 2015

43 Zuberi, “New Throat Fe Chat,” 186.

44 For example, *Once Upon a Grime* and *Just Jam* successfully hold MC-based events at venues such as *Village Underground* and the *ICA*.

45 Kirstie Ball and Frank Webster, eds., *The Intensification of Surveillance: Crime, Terrorism and Warfare in the Information Age* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), 11.

mobility and purchasing power,” as Jonathan Ilan puts it.⁴⁶ Grime promoters, too, adopt similar techniques. It is no coincidence, for example, that Grey and Quann-Barnett use phrases like MC “set” rather than “battle” or “clash” to allude to their events. Similarly, Once Upon a Grime has been known to deliberately print genre names other than “grime” on their flyers to divert police attention.⁴⁷ It is conceivable then, that partly because of this reflexivity—this constant awareness of being surveilled and in turn devising techniques to avoid or mislead such surveillance—MC-focused grime has succeeded in rebuilding a club infrastructure. Again, what comes to light is the way in which black grime MCs submit to, but also struggle against neoliberal capture by making use of the resources developed within its matrix.

Beyond the internet, a final reason that I see as central to grime MCs having found their way back into public space has been their ability to commandeer both the club infrastructure and the sounds of instrumental grime. Grime’s reincarnation in 2012 as an instrumental, whiter, more cerebral music scene seemed, in significant ways, to alter public perceptions of the genre, particularly from the viewpoint of those presiding over the nighttime economy. Arguably what we are seeing now, with the newfound ability for young MCs to organize and participate in club nights, and acquire the trust of venues and local councils in previously unimaginable ways, is partially indebted to this. In a similar way, while producers working with instrumental grime largely dispensed with the need for an MC, the distribution of grime instrumentals across the internet in fact meant that MCs had fresh sonic resources to write lyrics to, helping to restore the backbone of MC culture. In support of the previous examples, then, this piggybacking of instrumental grime illustrates how contemporary grime MCs are resisting neoliberal marginalization through a complex political dynamic of submission, struggle, and subversion. Such a dynamic is encapsulated by the fact that a moment that so assuredly seemed to signal the end of grime as an indigenous, black British, MC-focused genre, namely, its sonic “densification” and gentrification, in fact—in the hands of new MCs—has proved critical to its revivification; to the resurgence of a high-density musical practice centered on community, copresence and propinquity, and of a music scene that provides a space of expression for black (and other) working-class youth in London.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have attempted to show what the concept of density can do, and, moreover, what it might become when mobilized across an array of milieus and mediums. Primarily, I have used density as a way of enlarging how one can think about urban musical assemblages and the mechanisms of control through which they are regulated, dispersed, and distributed. Within this,

I have mobilized density as a temporal concept to illuminate how histories of association intrude into and infect the present in ways that diffuse, isolate, and obstruct the movement of particular people and sounds as they attempt to flow through the city. Further, I have enlisted density to describe the de-collectivizing or “de-densifying” forms of power that seep into musical assemblages in the guise of warped media rhetoric, political speech, and violent urban planning. I have also shown that as a result of these temporal and techno-spatial densities, the musical genre of grime was not only denied a space for collective, bodily density, but was also channeled into a sparse neoliberal musicality of competitive individualism, with producers sprawled across global bedrooms and private computers.

Significantly, however, I have not stressed these particular forms of density to endorse any kind of determinism, nor to suggest the political impotence of culture in a global-neoliberal urban context. Rather, as the relatively surprising reemergence of a black, MC-focused, high-density grime scene in the last three years illustrates, situations that appear historically repetitive or reproductive—as with the suppression of a black working-class music—may, through the unexpected conjuncture of historical and institutional currents, become uncertain and contested. That is to say, had it not been for the sonic density of instrumental grime with its self-disciplined, contemplative, whiter audience-hood, or had it not been for the technological innovation of the last decade, contemporary MC-focused grime may well have failed to materialize. Understanding the constraining and incapacitating nature of the musical city is thus important precisely because it so often illuminates the mechanisms by which conditions of apparent fixity can become the very basis for change. In turn, such an understanding provides insight into the recursive, and often mutually empowering relationships between virtual musical networks and co-present musical aggregates; between online and off-line, immobile and mobile, low-density and high-density musicalities, and the way that interconnections between these can engender new contingencies and sonic social possibilities.

⁴⁶ Jonathan Ilan, quoted in Zuberi, “New Throat Fe Chat,” 200.

⁴⁷ Philipp Rhensius, “Once Upon a Grime in London,” *Norient*, March 5, 2012, <https://norient.com/stories/grim/>.

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Le Chiffonnier, la Glaneuse, and the Rest of Us Collecting, Gleaning, and Filming Future Memories

Nicolai Gütermann, Carina Lesky



In this text, we propose a way of looking at the density of collections as well as their underlying practices of accumulation. Modern or ancient sites of dense habitation offer not only evidence of condensed living conditions for humans, but also a record of their cultures. In libraries, museums, and archives as well as in private and personal collections, artifacts and narratives are organized, stored, maintained, and displayed. These cathedrals, cellars, or cabinets—mundane or majestic—constitute a powerful sphere, where questions of visibility, representation, and value are negotiated. They form our history. From their records, we piece together a mosaic of who we are, as individuals, nations, or collectives; a jigsaw puzzle—arranged and distilled—versatile, contradictory, and certainly incomplete. Throughout the twentieth century, cinema served a similar function in constituting of *Gedächtnisorte*—a term that could be loosely translated as “memory places,” or sites of remembrance.

The emergence of the profoundly accumulative medium of film challenged historiography as a novel mode of storytelling and a potential historical source. An artifact to collect and conserve in its own right, film soon claimed its place in archives and museums, upsetting existing orders and classification systems. More so, film incorporates the stories of other mnemonic media, memory places, and collections, while its archival impetus includes the camera’s ability to record marginal history and thus challenge traditional historiography and its conception of what counts as a fact. In the age of digital information, we have reached a new level of interconnectedness and interdependencies. A densification that for all its advantages magnifies some of these problems, while also introducing its own set of challenges.

On the basis of these observations, this essay examines cinema’s intersections with alternate modes of cultural accrual and accumulation. At the interface of cinema and modes of collecting, the discussion will be based on a few hand-picked examples, which range from the *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010), reflecting on some of humanities earliest narrative records, to the *Guerilla Open Access Manifesto* (2008), touching upon the present and future of collecting in the digital age.

What is worth being collected? Whose voice remains absent from the repertoire of the remembered? What questions do we pose to our preexisting collections? In what ways can alternate modes of accumulation challenge but also enrich and expand prevailing agendas of collecting? To challenge the power structures of our accumulative societies, we need to also (re)consider the way we collect. This article attempts to create awareness about the delicacy of this practice.

Fig. 46
Anonymous, *Le Chiffonnier*, 1884

The City: A Cathedral, a Tower, and Eight Million Stories

A busy street scene:¹ our view through the cameras' eyes flows with the crowds ascending from a metro station in Saint Petersburg.² Some passersby take notice of the film crew yet seem to pay little attention to it. As the cameras' gaze turns and pans the busy intersection, the Russian National Library is revealed and a voice-over resonates, describing the hustle and bustle of Nevsky Avenue. These images of Michael Glawogger's last film are reminiscent of cinema's first decade, when a Lumière cinematograph would often be placed at an iconic street corner or mounted on a tramway traveling the city. Thus preserving a moment in time, everyday life and its contingencies—recording movement at about fifty seconds at a time. Glawogger's portrait of the Russian National Library, is a segment of Wim Wenders portmanteau *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014).³ The words that accompany the film's imagery stem from the library's collection—beginning with Nikolai Gogol's characterization of Nevsky Prospect: "All-powerful Nevsky Prospect! The only entertainment for a poor man at the Petersburg feast! [...] What a quick phantasmagoria is performed on it in the course of a single day! How many changes it undergoes in the course of a single day and night!"⁴



Fig. 47
Johannes Holzhausen, *Das große Museum*, 2014

Yet, many days and nights passed over Nevsky Avenue before these words from the 1830s came to merge cinematically with Glawogger's contemporary images. The changes this street, or a city as a whole, undergo over the course of one day, or centuries, are the result of social practices of its inhabitants. Habitation means living, to animate and transform a place through participation and interaction. Some uttered observations, reflections, and imaginations, such as the records of Gogol or Glawogger, can be read as building blocks that form the city like glass or stone. Together with other accounts, they contribute to shaping the social and imaginative sphere of a city, affecting the way it is experienced. From this point of view, today we live closer together than ever, not only because our cities are bigger and more densely populated but also because the exchange of goods and information have increased in volume and speed. Within the city, museums participate in composing social contexts, while—like cinemas—they are among the few places, where "citizens can enter on equal terms,"⁵ as Neil MacGregor, former director of the British Museum has termed it. According to MacGregor, there is the power in collections and their associated stories to alter social realities by producing an order of the future past—a responsibility that needs to be taken seriously.⁶ Collections "are capable of subverting and challenging the ideas of those in power while not in any way diminishing those from whose tradition they come."⁷ "For reasons that are both tragic and familiar, London has become one of the creative capitals of Middle Eastern culture and it is one of the great enrichments of the city that artists from all over the world are now here."⁸ The phenomenon, although particularly acute in London, is of course a global one. "The Weltstadt, now has global citizens from all over the world who have to try to live together in diversity, in harmony, or in conflict."⁹ "And the story is, of course, not a new one entirely. [...] The Tower of Babel [is] the great biblical image of what happens when different people try to coexist are the ancient Hebrew Bible belief is that this kind of mixing leads inevitably to catastrophe, division, misunderstanding, xenophobia."¹⁰ "We live in Babel and our task is to try to ensure that our story of Babel can have a happy ending."¹¹ And this is the big challenge of all our collections.¹¹

- 1 Jules Dassin, *The Naked City*. Film (1948).
- 2 The film was recorded (and presented) in 3-D, and accordingly filmed with two cameras and lenses.
- 3 Michael Glawogger, "The National Library of Russia," in Wim Wenders, *Cathedrals of Culture*. Film (2014).
- 4 Nikolai Gogol, "Nevsky Prospekt," in *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol* (New York: Vintage, 1998), 245–78, 245.
- 5 Neil MacGregor, *Global Collections for*

- Global Cities—Annual Lecture of the Forum Transregionale Studien 2012, Jahrbuch Preußischer Kulturbesitz 2012* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2014), 514–33, 523.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 526.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 515.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 516.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 518.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 533.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 526.

Once more we arrived at a threshold of overtaxing human cognition and imagination and seem to be drifting apart—ruptures occur. In the digital age, the quantity and density of stories and information have once again increased manifold. Overwhelmed by the ever-expanding information, we seek to tame the flow through regulation and categorization. We build walls within walls and fortresses within fortresses to safeguard ourselves from the density and diversity of humanity's stories. The Babylonian analogy is not meant to imply a return to unification, conformity, and cultural alignment but the demand to empower collaboration and participation learning to use our diversity to our advantage.

Where to start one of these many stories?

Mummies in the Museum—Skeletons in the Closet

The oldest preserved human collections appear in the form of burial objects. Deprived of their functional and economic purpose these artifacts were sacrificed for the afterlife of the deceased. Grave goods represent a leading over into invisibility—the virtual dimension of spiritual afterlife.¹² They were dedicated to the perception of a “possible virtual viewer.”¹³ Yet many of these goods returned for a future in this world: frequently—before archeology got to the point—grave robbing reintroduced them onto the (black) market where some eventually found their way into the hands of collectors and museums.

The earliest examples of visual-culture heritage are drawings found in numerous caves around the world, the eldest dating back more than thirty thousand years. In his documentary *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* (2010), filmmaker Werner Herzog somewhat provocatively describes the drawings in the Chauvet Cave, in France, as a form of proto-cinema.¹⁴ Although their meaning in its entirety remains lost to us, these oldest-known pictorial creations of humanity are evidence of the fact that somebody intended to leave a mark, a message—essentially to tell a story. These “postcards of nostalgia” can thus arguably be regarded as the earliest records of a narrative.¹⁵ It remains undisputed, however, that these drawings, which are six times older than the earliest recognized form of proto-writing systems, must hold some kind of an archival world record. These memory places were imagined and created by generations of humans, who—by adding to one another's art at intervals of sometimes several thousand years—composed an incidental museum.

Modern collections and the stories they tell are directed toward the mortal world they serve to preserve from material decay and death. They range from cabinets of curiosities in private homes (fig. 49) to architectonic marvels or abominations resembling cathedrals and fortresses. Libraries, museums, and

archives are built to protect the amassed objects from transformation and to keep their increasing materiality in bounds. Accumulations cannot be left to chance for their density means satiation and potency in the reality of *this* world.

Representation and reception in memory places are marked by the zeitgeist of their respective era. Accordingly, the mode of museums, as they presented themselves in the nineteenth century was, more than anything else, directed toward material accumulation. As Siegfried Mattl has pointed out, prints and photographs of the British Museum's interior around 1900 reveal primarily the wish to exhibit plentiful objects. Huge display cabinets presented objects like warehouse depositories; audiences marveled at mummies piled up in layers or innumerable daggers closely packed into closet drawers.¹⁶ These crammed showcases and rooms are symptomatic of the horror vacui, the nineteenth-century bourgeois fear of the void. The term was associated specifically with Victorian art and viewing habits: a taste for overcharged interiors, multilayered city views, and an affirmative relationship to material fullness in general.¹⁷

Like most museums, the British Museum's foundation was initiated by the acquisition of a private collection, the personal cabinet of curiosities¹⁸ of one benefactor Sir Hans Sloane in 1753.¹⁹ It took a while until the British Museum took notice of its social responsibilities, which resonate with MacGregor's words. Nearly eighty years passed until, in the 1830s, the museum reluctantly opened its collections to a general public, appealing to the mode of exhibition and contextualization. Rather than the noble ambition to unify humanity, its collections bear witness to continuous imperial projects, telling stories of exploitation, humiliation, and destruction. Arranged in heaps, the mere accumulation of exhibits followed very conventional and simplistic categories of classification, and there was no endeavor in explaining or contextualizing. The mummy as an embodiment of the ancient Egyptian belief in afterlife constitutes an allegorical figure of a problematic cumulative practice. Within the museum's walls—a context itself devoted to conservation—the embalmed

12 Krzysztof Pomian, *Der Ursprung des Museums: Vom Sammeln* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2013), 20.

13 *Ibid.*, 38–39.

14 Werner Herzog, *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. Film (2010).

15 Wade Davis, “The Worldwide Web of Belief and Ritual” (lecture, TED Conference, Monterey, 2008), https://www.ted.com/talks/wade_davis_on_the_worldwide_web_of_belief_and_ritual.

16 Siegfried Mattl, *Die Strahlkraft der Stadt: Schriften zu Film und Geschichte*, ed. by Drehli Robnik (Vienna: Filmmuseum-SinemaPublikationen, 2016), 160.

17 Jonathan Crary, *Techniken des Betrachters: Sehen und Moderne im 19. Jahrhundert* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1996), 129.

18 A cabinet of curiosities described a room inside the homes of rulers, aristocrats or wealthy merchants dedicated to the collection of all sorts of objects and artifacts. Often they were intimate places reserved to the closest friends. Later their contents were pictured and published in books, either as a starting point for specific scientific speculations or to support the author's credibility.

19 Mattl, *Film versus Museum*, 158.

corpse turns into a discomforting figure: a haunting phantom of the past.²⁰ Stolen and isolated from its original context and sacrality, the arrangement of former kings and queens in series means a further degradation by depriving them of their distinctiveness. The grouping reduces them to trophies representing imperial plenty, power, and superiority.

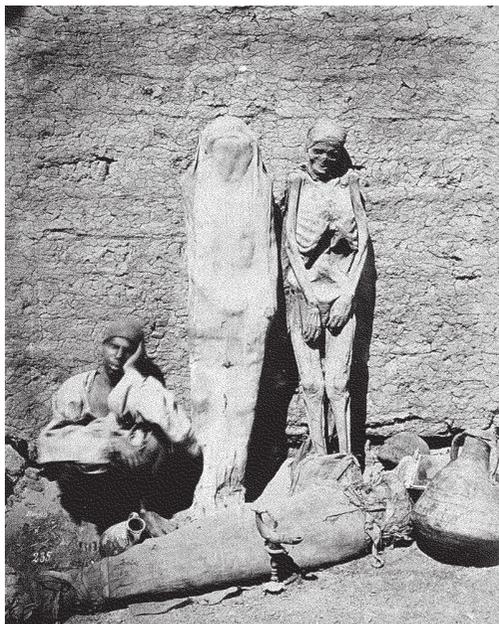


Fig. 48
Félix Bonfils, *Street vendor selling mummies in Egypt*, 1865

The embalming of the corpse, according to André Bazin, is central to the mode of representational art rooted in our preservative instinct. The “mummy complex” is the term he uses in *The Ontology of the Photographic Image* (1945) to describe man’s attempt “to save being through the appearance of being”—to conquer the reality of time and death. “To preserve, artificially [man’s] bodily appearance is to snatch it from the flow of time, to stow it away neatly, so to speak, in the hold of life.”²¹ This “pseudo-realism,” which, as Bazin says, is “content with the illusion of form,” represents an “entirely psychological need, inherently non-aesthetic.” According to Bazin, photographic media naturally responded to the basic needs of the mummy complex and relieved the other arts from their obsession with resemblance. Cinema satisfied the urge to preserve and “now, for the first time, the image of things [was] likewise the image of their duration, change mummified as it were.”²² Film is ideally predisposed to serve representational desires on an individual and national level—a function that it fulfilled throughout the twentieth century.

The Collection of Rubbish

When the time-based medium of film emerged, it challenged historiography as a novel mode of storytelling and a potential historical source. The cinematic narrative mode is profoundly accumulative in its principle of collecting images, sounds, and words and combining them into versatile collages of experience. Capable of shifting points of view and taking the subjective of both human and nonhuman participants, the accounts it interweaves may be contradictory. On the other hand, film incorporates the stories of other mnemonic media, memory places, and collections. An artifact to collect and conserve in its own right, film soon claimed its place in libraries, museums, and archives, upsetting existing orders and classification systems.

For all its representational and preserving qualities, in its early years the new medium of film faced considerable resistance when entering the realm of institutionalized collecting. In 1896 Robert Paul confounded the British Museum with an offer to hand them some of his “series of animated photographic records of current events,” depicting London street life, “hermetically sealed for future use.” He included different propositions for arrangements of how the films could be stored and treated.²³ After some delay and reluctance, the British Museum decided to accept the moving pictures as part of the print collection. The *Westminster Gazette* commented on this situation as follows: “The ordinary work of the print-room at the British Museum is quite disorganised by the collection of animated photographs that have been pouring in upon the bewildered officials. [...] Seriously, does not the collection of rubbish become a trifle absurd.”²⁴

Although the commentary suggests a mass of films preserved, the British Museum in effect only acquired one single film, *The Prince’s Derby* (1896).²⁵ However, the initiative and its course reveal the suspicion toward film on the part of collectors: apart from the danger of the flammable material, they were associated with shabby venues like fairgrounds or music halls and were unappreciated of many engaged in perpetuating and defining cultural heritage. In this sense, the utility and worth of early film recordings was deemed as ephemeral as the fugitive and mundane moments it held. Intended for single use, the films were usually discarded and even destroyed after their initial cinematic run.

²⁰ Ibid., 164.

²¹ André Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” trans., Hugh Gray, in *Film Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1960): 4–5.

²² Ibid., 8.

²³ Stephen Bottomore, “The Collection of Rubbish: Animatography, Archives and

Arguments: London 1896–97,” *Film History* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 293, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3815095>.

²⁴ *Westminster Gazette*, February 20, 1897, cited in *ibid.*, 294.

²⁵ Ibid., 295.

Not long after Paul's approach in London, another pioneer of film archiving, Polish cameraman Boleslav Matuszewski, envisioned the creation of a "depository of historical cinematography" in Paris. In *A New Source of History* (1898), he argues for film's archival impetus. While recognizing the potential to store political and official events for their "documentary interest," he also points out the camera's ability to "slip into" and record the marginal. He prefigures how this cinematic "anecdotal history" could come to challenge traditional historiography and its conception of what counts as a "fact."²⁶

While film, owing to its mnemonic power and precision, held great promise as a record for the future, the stories it held eschewed established criteria. When in 1910 Guillaume Apollinaire requested to consult the film-related documentation in the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris, he was denied access. The conserved films and the related material had not been categorized.²⁷ The format of film not only transcended categories of what was considered worth being stored and the ways archival spaces were organized, also the cinematic surplus of information proved difficult to grasp and to classify. Film resisted the archival and up to the present day, taxonomy of time-based media has remained a challenge.

Artifacts and Fictions

Not long after film as an artifact unsettled existing orders and classification systems in memory places, its novel mode of storytelling unfolded the potential to challenge historiography on an additional layer. The medium developed a self-consciousness of engaging in debates and voicing criticism. In the following examples, this critique is directed toward practices of accumulation and the mechanisms of memory places—the very institutions that had once depreciated it—by unveiling their underlying power relations. Accumulation is more often than not an expression of power, wealth, and status. This holds true for large institutionalized endeavors but also for some private collectors. The initial motivation aside, it is important to note that even more of cultural heritage would have perished were it not for their ventures. For the following reflections, we will leave aside the differentiation between so-called fiction and nonfiction films and narratives. Those criteria are subject to extensive debate and would hinder and limit our argument.

One fictional master accumulator and media mogul sprang from Orson Welles's imagination in *Citizen Kane* (1941). Yet, the film "was intended consciously as a sort of social document—as an attack on the acquisitive society and indeed on acquisition in general," as the auteur stated himself.²⁸ The film depicts the defining stages of Charles Foster Kane's life beginning with his death. With his last breath, he utters the enigmatic word "rosebud" while, as life leaves

him, losing grip on his most valued artifact—a snow globe that consequently tumbles down and shatters on the floor. The ensuing blackness is abruptly interrupted by a newsreel announcing Kane's death and describing the collections he had amassed and is now leaving behind: "Contents of Xanadu's palace: paintings, pictures, statues, the very stones of many another palace—a collection of everything so big it can never be catalogued or appraised; enough for ten museums; the loot of the world."²⁹ Apart from this private fortress Kane created an empire of newspapers and radio stations. The film illustrates the effects and perils of such media density. Kane owns reality, or at least a portion of it. "You provide the prose poems," he commands a journalist working for him and says, "I'll provide the war."³⁰ And since the news archives are consulted when writing history, he in fact controls an equal portion of historiography as well. Although the story is fictional, the real media mogul William Hearst read it as a critique of his persona and had Welles face considerable resistance upon the production and release of *Citizen Kane*.³¹

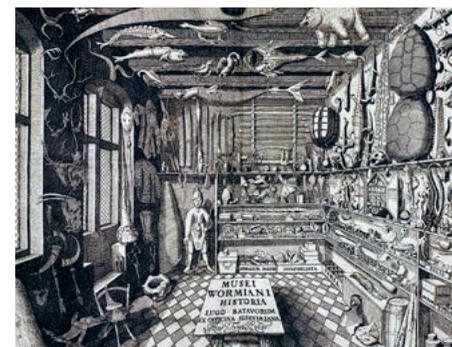


Fig. 49
Ole Worm, *Musei Wormiani Historia*, 1655

Eventually all men must die, even the biggest and richest of them all—Citizen Kane. For all his riches and possessions, he is still alone and afraid in this unsettling moment seeking out his inner safe place. The film only seemingly solves the riddle when it shows the word "rosebud" painted on the childhood

26 Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète* (New York: CUP, 2010), 3–4.

27 Ibid., 133. Amad refers to Apollinaire's text "Le Rabachis," in Guillaume Apollinaire, *Oeuvres complètes de Guillaume Apollinaire*, ed. Michel Décaudin (Paris: André Balland and Jacques Lecat, 1965), 485–89.

28 Orson Welles, "Orson Welles Talks About 'Citizen Kane'" in 11-Minute 1960

Interview," YouTube video, 10:49, posted by "Eyes on Cinema," April 3, 2015, <https://youtube/oQYazeJA-Oo>.

29 Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*. Film (1941). 30 Ibid.

31 "William Randolph Hearst Stops Citizen Kane Ads," *History*, January 8, 2009, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/william-randolph-hearst-stops-citizen-kane-ads>.

sleigh engulfed in flames. The artifact perishes for—without a story to place it in context—it is worthless. This is a story forever lost. “Rosebud is just a piece in a jigsaw puzzle. A missing piece.”³²

The twentieth-century avant-garde interest in entering and visualizing the usually inaccessible defined the work of filmmakers seeking to shed light on dark corners of institutions, rigid power regimes, and organizations.³³ In 1956 the Bibliothèque Nationale had another encounter with the cinematic entering and subtly undercutting the institutions’ formation when the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned *Toute la mémoire du monde* (1957), a film by Alain Resnais. A subtle fusion of the apparent mode of a documentary with other genres creates a sense of suspicion and tension that goes beyond the perspective of a neutral observer. Particularly, the film’s eerie score by composer Maurice Jarre, apt for a thriller or a mystery story, creates a certain discomfort in the observation of agencies accumulating and organizing information.³⁴

In the film’s opening—a tip of the hat to Welles’s *Citizen Kane*—the framing travels from the close-up of a movie camera to that of a microphone, exposing the tools of the cinematic production as the voice-over narration begins. While the blurred background is shifting into the focus of a cellar, a cave of sorts, with piles and boxes, shelves and rooms filled with amassed papers and materials, as a continuation of this human necessity to embalm, the comment states: “Because he has a short memory man amasses countless memory aids.”³⁵ Resnais takes up the thread, where Welles had dropped it (as in microphone), in the midst of an accumulated variety of artifacts awaiting their fate. “Faced with these bulging repositories, man fears to be engulfed by this mass of words. To safeguard his freedom, he builds fortresses,” where “words are imprisoned.”³⁶ Do these amassed objects and printed materials await future classification and preservation for their perceived value as national treasures? Do they resist categorization? Or will they share the fate of one certain childhood sleigh?

From this topos of the miscellaneous, the film cuts first to the glass dome of the fortress, travels to the rooftop as if it were a landscape, and then sinks deep into the belly of the beast (fig. 50–52). “To avoid bursting, the building constantly burrows deeper underground and reaches higher into the sky.”³⁷ Like any cathedral, it is an architecture that humbles men measured against this condensation of information, from “everything printed in France” to “writings of vanished civilizations.”³⁸ Resembling the modus operandi of an anthill, new arrivals are sorted through, classified, labeled, and arranged in rank and filed. In a coordinated choreography micro-practices are regulating their domain to compile and organize all this material. The cinematic mode itself appears like a cynical comment on the possibility of complete inclusiveness that the title

suggests. As a selective process in a dialectic of showing and not showing, film mirrors the delicate situation of a (state) agency with the mission to collect. “A hundred films wouldn’t do justice to all that merits attention,” the voice-over acknowledges, “for who can say what is finest, rarest or most precious here,”³⁹ or much more so, in undertone: Who dares to make a selection at all?

While Resnais’s camera penetrates the niches of the library’s architecture, the archival mode of operation as an epistemological figure eludes representation. By including fictional elements, such as comic-strip characters and references to cinema, the auteur subtly voices doubts about their proper positioning within the cultural memory generated by the Bibliothèque Nationale. One of the film’s coups de main is the fake volume of *Mars* from the travel-book series *Petite planète*, which the camera sees through different stages in the library. A glance at the table of contents of this mysterious book reveals cinematic allusions, among them are references to Welles and Agnès Varda,⁴⁰ and a cat’s mask points to Chris Marker.⁴¹ The book is categorized under astrophysics, before it is put in a cart pushed by Marker himself to be placed in the shelves.⁴²

Resnais’s portrayal of the Bibliothèque Nationale as a site of power and conflict is in line with the understanding of the archive Michel Foucault would formulate in the late 1960s, seizing its societal influence and role as figure of transformation. As a potent assembly of practices and processes, it decides on the surfacing or disappearance of utterances. They don’t reflect history, but produce and code it through procedures, systems of taxonomy, logics, and technologies. As an epistemic formation, the archive sets the rules of what exists within a culture to remain for the future. The institution writes itself, partly unconsciously, into the gathered documents, or much so into their gaps. From here stories emerge, shaping historiography, while other stories disappear.⁴³

32 Ibid.

33 Knut Ebeling and Stephan Günzel, *Archivologie: Theorien des Archivs in Philosophie, Medien und Künsten* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2009), 9.

34 Resnais himself, commenting on the film, said that he wanted to create a sense of mystery. For details and further discussion, see Suzanne Liandrat-Guignes and Jean-Louis Leutrat, *Alain Resnais: Liaisons secrètes, accords vagabonds* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2006), 284.

35 Alain Resnais, *Toute la mémoire du monde. Film* (1956).

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Other references are André Breton’s *Point du jour*, Jean-Marie Domenach, Alfred Hitchcock’s *The 39 Steps*. See Steven Ungar, “Scenes in a Library: Alain Resnais and *Toute la mémoire du monde*,” *SubStance* 128, vol. 41, no. 2 (2012), 58–77.

41 Chris Marker edited the *Petite planète* travel-book editions: Erwan Coutellier, *Petite Planète: Mars?!*, February 7, 2014, *Sürkrüt* (blog), <http://comgraph.hear.fr>.

42 Ibid.

43 Ebeling and Günzel, *Archivologie*, 18–21.

Similar to Welles, Resnais himself felt the impact of the very orders of the knowledge he aimed to lay bare. By the time he was working on *Toute la mémoire du monde*, he was struggling with institutional resistance and censorship. *Les statues meurent aussi* (1953), a film he had directed with Marker, had been rejected for its colonial criticism,⁴⁴ and its release in France would be circumvented until 1968.⁴⁵

To a contemporary audience, this severe treatment may elude comprehension. The thirty-minute filmic essay explores the death of statues. For one, *they die* because even a stone crumbles with age. But more importantly, the film develops the idea of *statues also dying* when deprived of their original contexts. Turned into museum objects, their significance and meaning is diminished—they have lost a piece of their story. “A religious fetish is transformed into a commodity fetish by Western civilization.”⁴⁶

“An object dies when the living glance trained upon it disappears. [...] And then they die, in their turn. Classified, labelled, conserved in the ice of showcases and collections, they enter into the history of art, paradise of the forms where the most mysterious relationships are established.”⁴⁷ Furthermore, why was African art exhibited at the ethnological Musée de l’Homme and not the Louvre? In place of a single narrative of one-dimensional history, the filmmakers call for plurality—a multi-layered collage of stories. “There would be nothing to prevent us from being, together, the inheritors of two pasts if that equality could be recovered in the present.”⁴⁸

Film’s ability to open novel perspectives on life, capable of expanding singular historiography by traveling further and faster, was recognized early on by visionary chronologist Albert Kahn. The slipping into the niches of everyday experience and its precision, convenience, and efficiency of mechanical reproduction meant an unprecedented mnemonic potential. In 1908 Kahn started his project *Les archives de la planète*, which aimed at facilitating solidaric understanding and cooperation among people and cultures by making the diversity of their daily lives visible and traceable. Eleven cameramen and photographers traveled to forty countries to create a visual record of manifold daily practices in all their plurality and to conserve them on celluloid. The private endeavor, the biggest contemporary ethnological project amassed about seventy-two thousand photographs and more than one hundred hours of 35 mm film, until 1930 when Kahn had to stop for financial reasons. The undertaking was at bottom a race with time and driven by nostalgia for a plurality of cultures and peoples, lifestyles, and customs, conceivably at the threshold of being assimilated by the global turnover of modern technological developments—upheavals ironically enough accelerated by the very same media that sought to hold and record time.⁴⁹

Kahn’s utopian record was less concerned about the past than about counteracting a Babylonian collapse cinematically, by ensuring the plurality and diversity of future memories. Only in exceptional cases were Khan’s films screened for a contemporary audience. His idea of film was that of a “time capsule” that unfolds meaning and its full value in the future.⁵⁰

The pursuit to keep what is on the edge of disappearance is at the very core of the wish to generate awareness for the value of things. The unnoticed or discarded are turned into collector’s items worth being gathered and preserved. In the Çukurcuma neighborhood of the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul—a busy inner-city area with narrow streets that is famous for its many old antique shops—a three-story family house was converted into a museum. Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk created the Museum of Innocence in tandem with the eponymous 2008 novel *Masumiyet Müzesi*.⁵¹ “I wanted to collect and exhibit the ‘real’ objects of a fictional story in a museum and to write a novel based on these objects.”⁵² According to the narrative, these everyday objects were collected and arranged by Kemal, the novel’s protagonist, as they remind him of Füsün, his lost love. The museum’s eighty-three chambers of display correspond directly to eighty-three chapters in the novel. The exhibited everyday objects span three decades of the city’s history, including items like factory workers’ passes as well as a set of 4,213 lipstick-tainted cigarette buds, each connected to a fictional memory. Pamuk became a very particular type of collector and editor of unnoticed common objects. He recontextualized the findings within the plot of a love story while admitting them a worthy place in the texture of the city, within the framework of a museum.

In a video interview, the author elaborates on his understanding of the common features of museums and novels by example of their “archival qualities.” He likens novels to “cathedrals made from small daily life observation units,” ephemeral intangible qualities like “the chemistry of the cities, our daily lives, the way we behave,” and preserving ephemeral intangible qualities like “the chemistry of the cities, our daily lives, the way we behave [...] along with the language.”⁵³

44 The film had been a request of *Présence Africaine*; was rejected by the state-run Centre National de la Cinématographie – National Center of Cinematography; Resnais and Marker refused to remove the film’s last ten minutes that were expressing criticism of France’s colonial impact.

45 Also, in 1956 Resnais’s film *Nuits et brouillards* was excluded from Cannes Film Festival because of possible political reactions from West Germany.

46 Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 57–60.

47 Alain Resnais, Chris Marker, and Ghislain

Cloquet, *Les statues meurent aussi*. Film (1953).

48 Ibid.

49 Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 6–7.

50 Ibid., 135.

51 Orhan Pamuk, *Masumiyet Müzesi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2008).

52 Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence: A Novel*, trans. Maureen Freely (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

53 “Conversations with History—Orhan Pamuk,” YouTube video, 41:47, posted by “UC Berkeley Events,” November 10, 2009, <https://youtube.com/zy62YqDeOc>.

In the museum's catalogue *The Innocence of Objects*, Pamuk lays out a manifesto calling for "smaller, more individualistic, and cheaper" museums, telling "ordinary, everyday stories of individuals" in the place of "historical narratives of a society [or] nation": "If objects are not uprooted from their environs and their streets, but are situated with care and ingenuity in their natural homes, they will already portray their own stories." A museum, he writes, should work in its capacity to "reveal the humanity of individuals." Pamuk's approach of calling attention to the overlooked resembles that of a poetic archivist of neglected objects. His novel and museum work together but also independently, because in the case of Museum of Innocence, the words and the artifacts serve the same purpose. Both, as a chronist and a collector, Pamuk is capable of reevaluating and preserving realities, either way converting them into notable concepts for his audience as well as for coming generations.

He reminds us of the nineteenth century *chiffonnier*, dimly echoed in the English ragpicker⁵⁴—an emergence of the modern city. This figure was engaged at the margins of consumerism, collecting and transforming the material debris of capitalist operations for reuse.⁵⁵ The *chiffonnier* was romanticized and heroicized by many artists and writers of his epoch, like Seurat, Raffaëlli, Manet or famously Baudelaire.



Figs. 50–52
Alain Resnais, stills from
Toute la Mémoire du Monde, 1956

One Man's Trash Is Another Woman's Treasure

"Here we have a man whose job it is to pick up the day's rubbish in the capital. He collects and catalogues everything that the great city has cast off, everything it has lost and discarded, and broken. He goes through the archives of debauchery, and the confused array of refuse. He makes a selection, and intelligent choice; like a miser hoarding treasure, he collects the garbage that will become objects of utility or pleasure when refurbished by Industrial magic."⁵⁶

In his description of the *chiffonnier*, Baudelaire attaches a philosophical aspect to his handling of the remains of excess, making use of a terminology that relates to the practice of an archivist. Selecting from the rejected rubbish, he brings order into the chaos of waste while activating the neglected and hidden niches of the city. In this sense, the opposite of plenty or density—scarcity—can equally be regarded as a node of collecting. Yet, this practice is not an invention of the city, but goes back to an older rural practice: there is a biblical reference to the figure of Ruth, who gleanes the fields.⁵⁷ The *gleaning* of remnants of agriculture after the harvest is an instrument of individual and communal survival. It is a type of collecting dedicated to secure nourishment for the less fortunate or less politically inclined.

In *Les glaneurs et la glaneuse* (2000), filmmaker Agnès Varda fathoms for contemporary versions of this figure. Inspired by nineteenth-century paintings of gleaners—women collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields—by Jules Breton and François Millet, and equipped with a small digital camera, she set out to film a road movie that is both a travelogue of her encounters and an autoportrait.⁵⁸ By her own account, this new technology allows her to get close to her subjects and subject matter, bridging the distance the film camera can introduce. When Varda paints herself a proud and upright cinematic glaneuse—dropping the ear of wheat for the camera's eye—it is a stance and not a pose. We have encountered her before named in the index of Marker's imagined travel guide to Mars. But also at the end of Resnais's *Mémoire*, we caught a glimpse of her immersed in a book as the camera traveled along the pults, sitting in the reading room of the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁵⁹ Unlike the mechanized processes in Resnais's *Mémoire*, in Varda's form of gathering and

54 A ragpicker is a person who scavenges rags and other refuse for a living.

55 Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 157.

56 Charles Baudelaire "Du vin et du haschisch" (1851), cited in Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2002), 349.

57 Ruth 2:1–23, ESV <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ruth+2&version=NRSV>.

58 Breton painted *Les glaneuses* in 1857; Millet painted *Des glaneuses* in 1854.

59 Her involvement in the production of the film stands out not only because the camera lingers on a close-up of her face, but also because in contrast to the many other visitors of the library we see, her name is mentioned in the film credits.

assembling, the tactile has an important role to play. Her film is in line with the modest gesture of stooping down extending a hand to things and people easily overlooked. She comments: “A hand, hands, my hands. We glean and pick with our hands. One extends a hand, one takes a hand, we shake hands and lend a hand. There are many hands in the film, including my own; one shoots, the other doesn’t, there is a hand that looks while the other is filming.”⁶⁰

While the practice is traditionally associated with agriculture, Varda’s journey takes us to various topoi of gleaning—amateurs and artists working with discarded materials and found objects—and ultimately concludes in the urban landscape. A group of young adults, urban gleaners of sorts, commonly known as *dumpster divers*, have gotten into trouble with the law for stealing trash locked up behind supermarket walls. The city has not adapted to the merciful customs and laws that for centuries have been part of rural culture and practice. Salvaging is acceptable for goods that are abandoned in the public space. At least there is no penalty for gleaning these objects following the principle of “no owner—no theft.”

Bringing us back to the city, this again reminds us of the figure of the chiffonnier, collecting and refurbishing at the margins of capitalism. According to Walter Benjamin, he is metaphorically Baudelaire’s ideal of a poet, who—like the chiffonnier—attaches importance to the abandoned. “La glaneuse,” Varda complies with this ideal by selecting the subjects, objects, and experiences that she combines into her story with a keen sense of their fate and value.⁶¹ “I have always loved the dualistic quality of filmmaking: seeing and thinking, to be moved and to rule, to shoot impromptu and to edit rigorously, to capture disorder and organize it. [...] To me, representation is something delectable.”⁶²

Particular to this type of representation—her and her subject’s—is that it is about saving things not by embalming them but, on the contrary, by recovering them. Varda finds her exemplary modern glaneur-chiffonnier in Alain, who consciously restricts his participation in the conventional economy and minimizes consumption of resources. “Freegan” is a term coined from “free” and “vegan” used to describe the application of anti-consumerist and anticapitalist ideology through a wide range of alternative living strategies; for example, by recovering wasted food and goods from marketplaces. Alain, in spite of his education, has left behind his governmental teaching assignment and earns his money selling newspapers at a metro station. He volunteers in the evenings to teach immigrants literacy classes in the banlieues of Paris—for knowledge and education increase in volume when being shared and gleaned.

Street art presents another urban mode of negotiating notions of public space and property rights. Criminalized in most scenarios, it can, as in the case of the anonymous Banksy, be incorporated into the market industry if expected profits warrant it. The writings on the walls of our urban landscape seem to

be among the most ephemeral examples of artistic expression, while in form and function they bare a resemblance to humanities’ oldest cave drawings. In *Agency Job*, which was part of his first museum exhibition in Bristol (2009), Banksy revisits the theme of gleaning on the basis of Millet’s 1857 painting *Des glaneuses* (fig. 53). Banksy’s work is a cynical comment on the harsh realities of the job marked for inner-city youths as well as for “illegal” migrant workers needed as cheap labor for field work and therefore for the nourishing of “western” civilizations. At the same time, it points to the fact that all art, or any human thought and creation, builds upon what was there before.

Allow us at this point to briefly look into the virtual domain, where the *sharing* of information is the subject of great controversy and concern of many legal disputes. Digital content adheres to a completely different logic of collecting and safekeeping than an artifact of the material world. Each usage of digital content is essentially the making of a copy—even reading something online or streaming content has to be cached on the user’s device thus creating a copy. This process is hidden from the user in the background. Nonetheless, this mode of operation indicates challenges for notions of copyright deriving from a material logic. Other issues of digital collecting include the exponential growth of the information at hand and the uncertain longevity or future readability of storage. For stone, paper, color pigments, and even film material there exists a certain knowledge and experience of the materials’ conservatory properties. Under the right conditions, they are ranging from thousands of years to at least a few hundred. Digital media has not been around long enough to make predictions for the long term. Furthermore, there is the added difficulty in decoding the information. This means that even with regular migration of data to newer digital storage media, the software and codices also need to be conserved to ensure continued readability of the information. Yet, the most severe and delicate issues are those of ownership and control of access.

“The world’s entire scientific and cultural heritage, published over centuries in books and journals, is increasingly being digitized and locked up by a handful of private corporations. [...] It’s called stealing or piracy, as if sharing

60 “La main, les mains, mes mains. On glane et on grappille avec les mains. On tend la main, on prend la main, on donne la main et un coup de main. Il y a beaucoup de mains dans le film, y compris les miennes l’une filme, l’autre pas, il y a une main qui regarde l’autre la filmer” (our translation). “Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse, le ciné-brocante d’Agnes Varda,” *les inRocks*, 2000, <http://www.lesinrocks.com/2000/07/04/cinema/actualite-cinema>

/les-glaneurs-et-la-glaneuse-le-cine-brocante-dagnes-varda-11219696/2/.

61 Benjamin, *Arcades Project*, 349.

62 “J’ai toujours aimé ce dédoublement propre au cinéaste: voir et réfléchir, être ému et mettre en règle, filmer impromptu et monter rigoureux, capter le désordre et l’ordonner. [...] Pour moi, la représentation est délectable. “Les Glaneurs et la glaneuse, le ciné-brocante d’Agnes Varda.”

a wealth of knowledge were the moral equivalent of plundering a ship and murdering its crew. But sharing isn't immoral—it's a moral imperative. [...] There is no justice in following unjust laws. It's time to come into the light and, in the grand tradition of civil disobedience, declare our opposition to this private theft of public culture."⁶³

This quote is part of the "Guerilla Open Access Manifesto" published online, in 2008. The writer of these lines, Aaron Swartz, could be considered a digital gleaner. Three years after publishing the manifesto, he was caught downloading academic papers to counteract publishers, who charged for publications that in fact were often funded by the public—by all of us. Facing trial on thirteen felonies and a sentence of up to fifty years in prison, he hanged himself at the age of twenty-seven, in 2013.⁶⁴ Not in stoned cathedrals and behind iron gates are digital texts imprisoned, but rather behind paywalls guarded by for-profit content providers. Once again "man fears to be engulfed by this mass of words" and "builds fortresses" to imprison them.⁶⁵ If it took until now for the *rural law* to penetrate *urban density*,⁶⁶ how long will it take for "common sense"⁶⁷ to catch up with the virtual space?

Men Perish because They Cannot Join the Beginning with the End⁶⁸

This allegory of the serpent biting its own tail preludes Michael Glawogger's film on the Russian National Library, marking the starting point of the exploration—Glawogger's as well as the viewer's. By the end of the film, we have traveled the meandering corridors and spacious reading halls of the Russian National Library for barely half an hour. Yet, if we measure travel through books and literary voices, we have spanned centuries. Through stories we are able to transcend our own lifetime as we relate to the past and imagine the future—and as we connect to the lives and tales of other people. "What, then, is time?" the film's last voice echoes: "If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know."⁶⁹

Once again we see a traveling shot of a reading room and a young woman before zooming into an e-book reader. Like the Ouroboros, the film closes where it had set off: after traversing a plethora of digital text we reemerge at the metro station. The crowds of people and harsh traffic noise on the streets contrast to the serenity of the interior space. Although the scenes are similar, this time we see them differently. Each of the wandering gazes grazing the camera lenses seems charged with a lifetime of fundamental questions, embedded in personal experiences and stories. Every individual, every life contains a library.

Collecting is at the basis of our preservative instinct to feed ourselves, but also to embalm and keep hold—the attempt to conquer time and death. By combining the mosaic of accumulated material into memories, we piece together an image of who we are as individuals, nations, or collectives. In so doing, we tell a story of our past through which we figure out the future. That is to say, how we envision the past shapes the way we see our future and vice versa.

Analogous to the way film had (once) challenged historiography and the established archival modalities and methodology, the even more accumulative digital age further complicates interrelations by potentizing dimensions of knowledge and numbers of records. In today's media landscape, the concentration of power in the hands of a few—as it was the subject of criticism in *Citizen Kane*—has increased. Just as in today's cityscapes, the largest buildings are no longer devoted to culture or shared values and ambitions but represent economic power.

The virtual domain holds great potential to get closer to the ideals of democracy. As a tool it allows for cooperation without coordination among communities large and complex. There are approaches of democratizing taxonomy that can produce classification systems based on interpretation. "Folksonomy" is the process of applying personal or social keywords—tagging information, basically meaning that instead of the categories of order being predefined and subject to a centralized system of application and control—it is up to every user to help build a system of categorization and order. But like film once did, the Web also accelerates the homogenization of the diversity it holds the power to preserve. Contemporary content is mostly curated for us by and to the profit of corporations—arguably, the most powerful figures and chronologists of our time. Consequently, our search results, news, advertisements, cultural rec-

63 Aaron Swartz, "Guerilla Open Access Manifesto," *Archive*, July 2008, https://archive.org/stream/GuerillaOpenAccessManifesto/Goamjuly2008_djvu.txt.

64 Glyn Moody, "Open Access: All Human Knowledge Is There—So Why Can't Everybody Access It?," *ars Technika*, June 17, 2016, <http://arstechnica.com/science/2016/06/what-is-open-access-free-sharing-of-all-human-knowledge/>.

65 Resnais, *Mémoire*.

66 In 2016 France became the first country in the world to ban supermarkets from throwing away or destroying unsold food, forcing them instead to donate it to charities and food banks. Angélique Chrisafis, "French Law Forbids Food Waste by Supermarkets," *Guardian*, February 4, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world>

/2016/feb/04/french-law-forbids-food-waste-by-supermarkets.

67 Lawrence Lessig, "Laws That Choke Creativity" (lecture, TED conference, Monterey, 2007), https://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity?utm_source=tedcomshare&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=tedspread.

68 Alcmaeon of Croton Τους ανθρώπους φησιν Αλκμαιων δια τουτο απολλυσθαι οτι ου δυνανται την αρχην τω τελει προσαψαι, quoted in Michael Glawogger, "The National Library of Russia," in Wim Wenders' *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014).

69 *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, bk. 11, ch. 14, quoted in Michael Glawogger, "The National Library of Russia," in Wim Wenders' *Cathedrals of Culture* (2014).

ommendations, and even potential friends and love affairs are presorted by algorithms. Fed with personalized packages of information, gaps between people(s) can be emphasized as we foster mutual confirmation of prefabricated viewpoints in walled communities—bubbles—the perfect environments for a radicalization of opinion.

Through the Web the world has shrunk once again. One could argue that we live in the global village of Babel.⁷⁰ The assimilation of the plurality of cultures and people(s) by the global turnover of modern technological developments is an ongoing process. But the diversity of tongues and stories, the “myriad voices of humanity,” are our “repertoire for dealing with the challenges that will confront us in the ensuing millennia.”⁷¹ We need humane curatorship and self-conscious storytelling—*handverlesen*—to ensure diversity and, through that, humanity altogether. Our pasts and futures compel varied and contradictory or opposing readings. They consist of fragments that can never reveal a uniform image but therefore an even richer multilayered collage of interpretations of human life. In her essay, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie warns of the danger of a single story: “Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.”⁷²

We are all storytellers. We are collectors and producers, potential senders as much as receivers. Kane or Kahn, chiffonnier or glaneuse, it is up to each of us to challenge the status quo. And to participate in the empathic writing and shaping of the future and the institutions that inform it through *our* individual and collective stories, artifacts, and our collections. There are about eight billion stories on this naked earth and these have been some of them.⁷³



Fig. 53
Banksy, *Agency Job*, appropriation of Millet's *Des glaneuses* (1857), 2009

70 For more on the “global village” contraction of the globe into a village by electric technology and the instantaneous movement of information, see Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964).

71 Wade Davis, “The Worldwide Web of Belief and Ritual (lecture, TED Conference, Monterey, 2008), https://www.ted.com/talks/wade_davis_on_the_worldwide_web_of_belief_and_ritual.

72 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single story” (lecture, TED Global Conference, Oxford, 2009), https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.

73 This sentence is based on the iconic line of the 1948 film noir *Naked City* (1948), by Jules Dassin: “There are eight million stories in the naked city. This has been one of them.”

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Arakawa Gardens**A Photographic Exploration of Tokyo****Agnes Prammer**

Figs. 1 (p. 21), 10 (p. 79), 23–24 (p. 135), 35, 40 (p. 191)

Agnes Prammer, *Arakawa Gardens*, Tokyo, 2016.

Series of photographs. Courtesy of the artist.

Planning for Dense Containers? Challenging Amsterdam's and Vienna's Strategic Urban Planning from a Relational Perspective

Johannes Suitner

Fig. 2

Johannes Suitner, *Collocation of terms strategic density discourses: Vienna and Amsterdam*, 2016. Illustration. Courtesy of the author.

Fig. 3

Johannes Suitner, relational density planning in the development plans of Amsterdam and Vienna, 2016. Table. Courtesy of the author.

Unframing Urban Density: The Somaesthetic Cartography of Intensities

Marc Boumeester

Fig. 4

Michela Mattioni, *Untitled*, 2012. (Totipotent Density). Graphic drawing. Courtesy of the artist.

Fig. 5

Martje Roks, *Untitled*, 2012. (Flow of time). Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Atlas of Invisible Spaces: Mapping the Interface between School and City Vienna's 15th District

Antje Lehn

Fig. 6

Antje Lehn, *Map of Multilingualism*, 2015. Map/collage by Antje Lehn and Johanna Reiner with students from the high school BRGORG Henriettenplatz. Photograph. Courtesy of the author.

Returning from the Future: OMA's Concept of Retroactivity

Angelika Schnell

Fig. 7

OMA/Rem Koolhaas, *Boompjes Study*, Rotterdam, 1980. Graphic arts. Courtesy of OMA/Rem Koolhaas/Bildrecht, Vienna, 2017.

Density of Sound, Sounds of Density An Experimental Approach

Jürgen Schöpf, Nicolas Remy

Fig. 8

Google Earth satellite view of the urban density of the district, 2016. The yellow pin marks the location of Kegelgasse 27 in Vienna.

Fig. 9

Jürgen Schöpf, *Average spectrum of the Grundstimmung at Kegelgasse 27, morning of August 12*, 2015. Illustration. Courtesy of the author.

Post-mass Housing: Revitalization of High-Density Residential Urban Areas—A Case Study in Valencia

Improvistos (María Tula García Méndez, Gonzalo Navarrete Mancebo, Alba Navarrete)

Fig. 11

Improvistos, *Shared spaces*, 2015. Hand drawing. Courtesy of the authors.

Fig. 12

Improvistos, *Cycle-dynamics*, 2014. Hand drawing. Courtesy of the authors.

Fig. 13

Improvistos, *Rehabitar*, 2014. Hand drawing and digital design. Courtesy of the authors.

Fig. 14

Improvistos, *Flexibility strategies*, 2015. Hand drawing. Courtesy of the authors.

Fig. 15

Improvistos, *Shared spaces*, 2015. Hand drawing. Courtesy of the authors.

Fig. 16

Improvistos, *Interventions*, 2014. Hand drawing. Courtesy of the authors.

Dilemmas around Urban Growth and Density A Focus on Vienna's Aspern Seestadt

Iván Tosics

Fig. 17

Peter W. C. Newman and Jeffrey R. Kenworthy, *The relationship between overall urban density and transport energy use*, 1989. Illustration. [Public domain], via Wikipedia Commons.

Fig. 18

Montpellier Agglomeration, the 1:2500 sector plan for Montpellier (urban core of the conurbation), 2004. Map. Courtesy of Montpellier Agglomeration. <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/client-guides/lusd-examples-design.pdf>.

Figs. 19–20

Iván Tosics, *Extreme cases of newly built urban areas: large housing estates vs sprawling suburbs. New residential areas in Budapest and Madrid*, 2007 and 2009. Photographs. Courtesy of the author.

Fig. 21

Vienna Municipality MA18 and Christian Fürthner, *Aspern Seestadt*, Vienna, 2016. Aerial photograph. Courtesy of the Vienna Municipality MA18 and Christian Fürthner.

Fig. 22
Iván Tosics, Aspern Seestadt, Vienna, 2017.
Photograph. Courtesy of the author.

Everyday Densities in Public Space: Lived Practices of the Spatial Present

Sabine Knierbein

Fig. 25
Sabine Knierbein, waterfront of Thessaloniki, Greece, 2016. Photograph. Courtesy of the author.

Density Caused by Shortage: The Role of Public Transportation in Vienna and Budapest in 1918

Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah, Katalin Teller

Fig. 26
Anonymous, "Das Verkehrsleben," *Der Morgen*, August 19, 1918, 9. Austrian National Library.

Cafés as Designed Settings for Social Performativity

Anamarija Batista, Ivana Volić

Fig. 27
Margherita Spiluttini, Volksgarten Restaurant Tanzcafé by Oswald Haerdtl, Vienna, 2003. Courtesy of Architekturzentrum Wien Collection. Figs. 28–29
Design Studio Bostajnić, Metalurg café garden, Zenica, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, 2006. Photographs. Courtesy of Design Studio Bostajnić. Figs. 30–31
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Anamarija Batista, *Vienna*, 2016. Photographs. Courtesy of the author.

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Fig. 38
Jessica Dolby, *Csepel Works*, 2015. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.
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Szilvia Kovács, *Playmobile*, 2015. Photograph. Courtesy of the author.

STREET CARPET, 2014/15

Anna Artaker, Meike S. Gleim

Figs. 41–43
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the artists. See detailed captions on: <https://arepository.akbild.ac.at/view/fd90dd3785971260d25a561ec247559f12691>.

Crowds, Cordons, and Computers: Rethinking Density through London's Grime Scene

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George Quann-Barnett, *Eskimo Dance Boiler Room*, 2015. Photograph. Courtesy of Wot Do U Call It. <http://wotdoyoucall.it/post/133361803461/jammz-rd-lyrical-strally-pk-eskimo-dance>.
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Marco Grey, *Hackney Shapes*, 2015. Photograph. Courtesy of Wot Do U Call It. <http://wotdoyoucall.it/post/127389749946/bonkaz-jammer-hackney-shapes-photo-by-marco>.

Le Chiffonnier, la Glaneuse, and the Rest of Us Collecting, Gleaning, and Filming Future Memories

Nicolai Gütermann, Carina Lesky

Fig. 46
Anonymous, *Le Chiffonnier, engraving from Mémoires de Monsieur Claude: Chef de la police de sûreté sous le Second Empire*, vol. 2 (Paris: J. Rouff & Cie, 1884).
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Fig. 48
Félix Bonfils, *Street vendor selling mummies in Egypt*, 1865. Photograph. [Public domain], via Wikipedia Commons.
Fig. 49
Ole Worm, title page from *Musei Wormiani Historia*, 1655. Engraving. [Public domain], via Wikipedia Commons.
Figs. 50–52
Alain Resnais, *Toute la Mémoire du Monde*, 1956. Film stills. Courtesy of Les Films de la Pléiade.
Fig. 53
Banksy, *Agency Job*, 2009. Appropriation of Millet's *Des glaneuses* (1857). Mixed media. From the exhibition "Banksy vs. Bristol Museum," Bristol Museum, 2009. Courtesy of Jon Rogers.

Anna Artaker studied philosophy and political science in Paris and Vienna and art at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She is an artist and is currently the Elise Richter Research Fellow at the Academy in Vienna where she is preparing her habilitation project "MEDIUMS OF HISTORY." Artaker's work has been exhibited internationally and she has been awarded the State Scholarship for Artistic Photography, among other distinctions. She was an artist in residence in Mexico City and at the Cité internationale des arts, in Paris, and she has lectured at the Merz Academy in Stuttgart and at the Zeppelin University in Friedrichshafen.

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Nicolai Gütermann has been an assistant at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for History and Society in Vienna since 2013. From 2011 to 2014, he was project leader for the Department for Film Digitization of Small Gauge Films and the Digital Archive for the Austrian Film Museum. He studied film and media studies at the University of Vienna and graduated from FIAF Film Restoration Summer School on analog and digital restoration practice, in Bologna in 2014. He was a co-organizer of the Home Movie Day in Vienna, and has given talks at the Austrian Film Museum, IFK Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften, and INEDITS Films Amateurs Mémoires d'Europe conference. He works as an independent curator of film programs and film talks and as an artist.

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Arbeit im Postfordismus (turia+kant, 2008). Since 2007 Heindl has been a lecturer at the Institute for Art and Architecture, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Previously she has lectured at TU Delft, as an assistant professor at TU Graz and guest lecturer and critic in several international universities. Since 2013 she has been the chairwoman of ÖGFA—Austrian Society for Architecture.

Improvistos is a studio that works on creative processes for urban transformation. It designs strategies to improve urban life on the basis of ecology and social justice in collaboration with actors from civil society, the public, and the private sector. The team includes three urban architects, a cultural manager, an urban-policy specialist, and an urban economist. Improvistos was awarded first prize at the Urban Revitalization of Mass Housing Competition held by the UN-Habitat. www.improvistos.org.

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Nicolas Remy has a diploma in advanced studies (DEA) in physics and holds a doctorate in sound quality in architectural design from the École Polytechnique de l’Université de Nantes. After working in Grenoble and Marseilles, he currently holds the position of lecturer at the Department of Architecture at the University of Thessaly in Volos, Greece. He is also a member of CRESSON (Centre for Research on Sonic Space & Urban Environment), in France, and is in charge of several research programs in which he explores the relationship between physics, perception theories, and architecture.

Nikolai Roskamm, based in Berlin, works as the professor of planning theory, urban-planning history, and urban design at the University of Applied Sciences, Erfurt. He earned his PhD at the Bauhaus-Universität Weimar in 2010. From 2012 to 2014, he conducted a DFG research project titled “The Unoccupied City,” and in 2015 he earned his habilitation in urban studies and philosophy of science at TU Berlin. In 2015/16, Roskamm was the city of Vienna visiting professor at the Vienna University of Technology, Interdisciplinary Center for Urban Culture, and Public Space SKuOR. Since 2012 he has been the editor of the German magazine *sub|urban*.

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Jürgen Schöpf studied musicology, linguistics, and anthropology at the Universität Göttingen. Working as a recording engineer, his doctoral thesis was on the technique of a bowed monochord of southern Africa. His recent fieldwork in northeast India explores the relationship between speech and music. Working for the Phonogram-marchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, he collaborated with Nicolas Remy in the EU-supported European Acoustic Heritage project. He is currently employed at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

Christabel Stirling is a PhD candidate in music at Wadham College, Oxford University. Her research focuses on evolving musical and sonic publics in London, and particularly on questions of affect, access, and sociopolitical transformation. She has had articles published in the *Journal of Sonic Studies* and *Contemporary Music Review*. She is also a member of the Lucky Cloud Sound System and an external affiliate of the collaborative research group *Recomposing the City* at Queen’s University Belfast.

Johannes Suitner works at the Vienna University of Technology and is a spatial-planner researching on discourse and materiality of planning, urban imaginaries, relational space, cultural political economy, art-led aestheticization, and cultural planning strategies. He recently researched Vienna’s urban-planning history, as well as the city’s discursive regulation of urban development projects and strategies. His latest book, *Imagineering Cultural Vienna* (transcript, 2015), critically questions the dominance of Vienna’s simplistic “culture city” narrative.

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Rethinking Density: Art, Culture, and Urban Practices considers new perspectives and discussions related to the category of density, which for a long time has been part of urban-planning discourses and is now regaining the attention of artists and practitioners from a number of different disciplines. In an interplay of models, coping strategies, and experimental approaches, this publication combines research from cultural studies, artistic research, sound studies as well as architectural and urban theory.

The issues discussed include the consideration of retroactive architectural design as a means to retrace the historical layers of a city, a proposal for space-sharing concepts as instruments for urban revitalization processes, and a case study on the potential for new sonic social spaces as subversive modes to undermine prevailing power structures.

With contributions by Anna Artaker, Anamarija Batista, Marc Boumeester, Meike S. Gleim, Nicolai Gütermann, Gabu Heindl, Improvistos (María Tula García Méndez, Gonzalo Navarrete Mancebo, Alba Navarrete Rodríguez), Sabine Knierbein, Szilvia Kovács, Elke Krasny, Brandon LaBelle, Antje Lehn, Carina Lesky, Agnes Prammer, Nicolas Remy, Nikolai Roskamm, Angelika Schnell, Jürgen Schöpf, Christabel Stirling, Johannes Suitner, Katalin Teller, Iván Tosics, Ivana Volić, Marie-Noëlle Yazdanpanah

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