

EDITED BY
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UNSETTLED URBAN SPACE

Routines, Temporalities
and Contestations



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While urban life can be characterized by endeavors to settle stable and safe environments, for many people, urban space is rarely stable or safe; it is uncertain, troubled, imbued with challenges and perpetually under pressure. As the concept of unsettled appears to define the contemporary urban experience, this multidisciplinary book investigates the conflicts and possibilities of settling and unsettling through open and speculative analysis.

The analytical prism of unsettled renders urban space an indeterminate ground unfolding through routines, temporalities and contestations in constant tension between settling and unsettling. Such contrasting experiences are contingent on how urban societies confront, undergo and overcome turbulence and difficulties in time and space. Contributions drawing on theoretical reflections and empirical accounts—from Argentina, Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, the UAE, the UK, the USA and Vietnam—give insights into plural occurrences of the unsettled, which might tie down or unleash transformative, liberatory and emancipatory potentials.

This book is for students, professionals and researchers interested in the uncertainties, foundations, disturbances, inconsistencies, residuals and blind fields, which constitute the urban both as lived space and as social, cultural and political ideal.

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>List of Contributors</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xix</i>
1 Urban Space Unsettled: The Unraveling of Routines, Temporalities and Contestations in Urban Studies <i>Tihomir Viderman, Sabine Knierbein, Elina Kränzle, Sybille Frank, Nikolai Roskamm and Ed Wall</i>	1
PART I	
Urban Routines	17
2 Urban Routines: An Introduction <i>Tihomir Viderman and Sybille Frank</i>	19
3 Vietnamese Hip Hop Don't Stop: Unsettling Normative Ideas of Gender around the Block <i>Sandra Kurfürst</i>	26
4 Unsettled 'Publicness' and the Embodied Appropriation of Iktinou Street in Thessaloniki <i>Evangelia Athanassiou</i>	40

vi Contents

5	Unsettling Planning Practices: From Accommodation to Dwelling in Hamburg <i>Dominique Peck, Anna Richter, Christopher Dell and Bernd Kniess</i>	52
6	(Un)Settling Remembrance in Public Space: The Performance of a Heroic National Narrative in the Austrian National Holiday Celebrations at Vienna's Heldenplatz <i>Elina Kränzle</i>	67
7	Berlin's Neighborhoods in the Tourist Trap? Local Routines Unsettled by New Urban Tourism <i>Stefan Brandt, Sybille Frank and Anna Laura Raschke</i>	78
8	Disrupted, Unsettled, Contested: Working Homelessness in Silicon Valley <i>Rafael Essl</i>	91
PART II		
Urban Temporalities		105
9	Urban Temporalities: An Introduction <i>Ed Wall and Sabine Knierbein</i>	107
10	(Un)Settling Home in Dubai <i>Racha Daher</i>	114
11	Aging in Cities: Everyday Unsettling, Planning and Design <i>Angelika Gabauer</i>	129
12	From Cleaning to Cleansing: Maintenance as an Urban Development Practice at Paddington Waterside, London <i>Ed Wall</i>	140
13	The Gentrification of Chicago's Cabrini Green and the Temporalities of Urban Change <i>Judit Bodnar</i>	153
14	'And the Straw Cottage to a Palace Turns': The Foundation of Birmingham Library as Civic Ground <i>Michael Dring</i>	166

15	Property as Practice: The Collective Landholding Patterns of Black Churches <i>Gabriel Cuéllar</i>	179
PART III		
	Urban Contestations	193
16	Urban Contestations: An Introduction <i>Elina Kränzle and Nikolai Roskamm</i>	195
17	‘Ni Una Menos’: Practices, Aims and Achievements of a Grassroots Women’s Movement against Femicide and Patriarchal Relations in Argentina <i>María de la Paz Toscani, Paula Rosa and Regina Vidosa</i>	202
18	Setting, <i>Setzung</i> , Sedimentation: Political Conflict and Radical Democracy in Urban Planning <i>Gabu Heindl</i>	214
19	(Un)Settling Urban Cultural Politics: New York’s <i>People’s Cultural Plan</i> and the Dislocation of Ghosts <i>Friederike Landau-Donnelly</i>	224
20	From Dispute, to Controversy, to Crisis: Conceptualizing Unsettling Dynamics in The Hague <i>Nanke Verloo</i>	236
21	Served but Unsettled: The Contentious Side of Services for the Homeless <i>Massimo Bricocoli and Simon Güntner</i>	248
22	The Challenges of Consensus, Conflict and Democratic Participation in Turbulent Waters <i>Sophie Watson</i>	261
	<i>Index</i>	271



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FIGURES

3.1	B-boy dancing in front of the statue of Lý Thái Tổ	31
3.2	B-girl performing power moves at Lý Thái Tổ Square	32
3.3	Colonnade at the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace	33
3.4	Hip hop graffiti along the outer walls of the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace	34
3.5	Map of Lenin Monument	35
3.6	Nguyệt's waacking class practicing at the Lenin Monument	36
4.1	Iktinou street's many cafés and restaurants occupying a large part of the street's width for outdoor sitting	44
4.2	Friday night in Iktinou	45
4.3	Iktinou street, before reconstruction: there were benches and ledges that were used by the young groups for sitting	49
4.4	Iktinou street, after reconstruction: no benches and no ledges that can be used for sitting	49
5.1	Aspects and relations of unsettling the planning process. The threefold threads of engagement represent Urban Design's understanding of Research, Teaching and Practice	53
5.2	Timeline of unsettling the planning process	54
5.3	Double pages from the brochure 'Enabling Encounters' showing a golf and country club in the direct vicinity of the accommodation with perspective dwelling at Poppenbütteler Berg, Hamburg	63
5.4	Spreads of the brochure <i>Gemeinschaftshaus Poppenbüttel</i> developed as part of the UD program's urban design practice	64

x Figures

6.1	Fair-like atmosphere and large visitor crowds during the military performance show at Heldenplatz, where riot vehicles and tanks are presented by policemen and soldiers in full gear	74
6.2	Banners of the Austrian military positioned around Heldenplatz and in front of Burgtheater at the celebrations of the Austrian National Day	75
7.1	Sticker campaign against tourists in Berlin	79
7.2	Graffito in Berlin-Neukölln protesting trolley suitcases	82
8.1	Map of the Bay Area	94
8.2	Homeless encampments in San Francisco	95
8.3	Campers and RVs lined up on a public street in Mountain View	96
8.4	RV with front yard in Berkeley	97
8.5	RV parking restrictions prohibit overnight parking in many Bay Area cities	100
10.1	Historical eras, incoming migration to Dubai and population growth	116
10.2	Dubai's urbanization in ten-year intervals	117
10.3	Dubai's typical habitation fabrics. Eight typical fabrics and typologies observed throughout the city	119
10.4	Two extremes in the housing fabric: Emirati housing and Labor Camps—400 × 400 m sample	120
10.5	Loop of residency-status renewal over the lifetime of the first natively born baby in the second and generation expatriate group	122
10.6	Housing stock and social group. Long-term expatriate families typically rented and moved as newer housing stock became available in newer parts of the city, freeing them up for lower income groups	124
10.7	Some questions and answers from personal interviews	125
12.1	The extent of development parcels, each with different management and maintenance structures and the BID (Business Improvement Area) at Paddington	142
12.2	Sparsely populated open spaces between the historic canal basin and new commercial buildings, with limited places for stopping and sitting	143
12.3	Cleaning equipment for emptying bins, sweeping the stone paved canal-side, wiping stainless steel handrails, cleaning glass balustrades, polishing door handles, picking up litter and removing graffiti	146
12.4	Signs across Paddington Waterside explain the multitude of rules that visitors must follow	148
13.1	Map of the Near North Side with the redevelopment area inside the boundary	156
13.2	Old Town Village East	160
13.3	Parkside with view of Sears Tower in the distance	160
13.4	The last Green Tower	161

13.5	Old Town Park under construction	162
14.1	Map of places of religious worship in 1751	169
14.2	William Westley's East Prospect of Birmingham, 1732	170
14.3	The first entries into the Birmingham Library 'Catalogue Duodecimo' 1779	173
14.4	Map of Birmingham Riots of 1791	175
14.5	Library as building, commemorative coin, 1797	177
15.1	Excerpts from Dew family landholdings map (top) showing Saint John (labeled as 'Negro Church School') and the oil boomtown masterplan (bottom) for the same area	183
15.2	Property as extraction: cotton fields and then recently built oil wells near Saint John church	184
15.3	Excerpts from Fort Bend County public deed records showing Reverter Clauses in numerous freedmen church deeds	187
15.4	Map of freedmen churches in the southwestern region of Houston, Texas	189
15.5	Celebrating the installation of a State of Texas historic marker honoring the value of the Saint John church grounds	190
17.1	'The revolution will be feminist or it will be nothing'	205
17.2	Performance representing a clandestine abortion	205
17.3	Teenagers marching: 'I wasn't born a woman to die for being one' and 'In a femicidal state, being alive is a rebellion'	209
17.4	Banner at a demonstration: 'They fear the power that emanates from my mouth' and 'Neither the church nor the state decides over my body'	210
17.5	Aims and achievements of the #NUM	211
19.1	GIF against CreateNYC	229
20.1	Map of The Hague	238
20.2	Timeline of unsettling dynamics	240
21.1	WEMI San Gottardo. Welfare services and mixed-use space	252
21.2	Containers as part of the <i>Winternotprogramm</i> Hamburg	253
21.3	Casa Jannacci: Incremental transformation of a large historical institution	256
21.4	Casa Jannacci: The entrance	256



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The foundations of this collaborative research endeavor were set at an international conference jointly organized by the editors in 2017, with the aim of outlining and discussing unsettled as a tool for conceptual speculation in urban studies. Under the title 'Unsettled – Urban Routines, Temporalities and Contestations', the conference was staged as a key event of the City of Vienna Visiting Professorship for Urban Culture and Public Space 2015–2017 (Funding Phase III). It offered a synthesis of three annual topics, 'Urban Peace and National

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Urban space and time appear to be troubled and full of challenges—manifestations of a politics of division sustained by the radical right populist sentiments, capitalist dominance of the economic and regulatory models that unsettle collective redistributive mechanisms in favor of an atomized and self-optimized individual, or concerns about the effects of climate change, to mention only a few. The unsettled has become more than just an abstract concept at the tip of urban experience. It is an accelerated urban condition with direct effects on daily lives, thus calling for alternative paths and forms of urban analysis. This multidisciplinary book was conceived as an open and speculative approach to the unsettled urban condition, a compilation of contributions from a variety of research fields and perspectives, including architecture, sociology, planning, design, urban policy, urban theory, landscape architecture, heritage, music, social sciences, ethnology, cultural geography and literature. Drawing on and including theoretical, empirical, critical, subversive, reflexive, interventionist, activist and visionary research practices, as well as innovative

and engaged propositions about the unsettled and unsettling practices and experiences, it offers a new analytical prism on pressing urban phenomena. However, the intention behind this book was not only to contribute merely a sober analytical perspective on the tendency of conflictual urbanization processes to unsettle but also to reflect on affective dimensions of the unsettled condition and insights into embodied practices of people across different geographies. This ethical aspect is central to our understanding of the unsettled. As the bombs recently hit housing estates and hospitals in Ukraine, we underline that there are circumstances in which the notions of unsettled cannot and should not be embraced or painted in favorable light. Acknowledging this ethical and conceptual dilemma, we employ the concept of 'unsettled' to productively engage with past and present uncertainties, antagonisms and ambivalences in a variety of urban forms, relations and expressions. We thank visible and invisible publics in different corners of the world for inspiring our confidence in uncertainties. Their daily struggles and resourcefulness to face and overcome unsettling circumstances as well as settled inequalities and injustices, and in so doing unleash transformative, liberatory and emancipatory potentials, affect us both professionally and privately.

1

URBAN SPACE UNSETTLED

The Unraveling of Routines, Temporalities and Contestations in Urban Studies

Tihomir Viderman, Sabine Knierbein, Elina Kränzle, Sybille Frank, Nikolai Roskamm and Ed Wall

Capturing the Experience of the Unsettled

Humans build urban space in a permanent effort to settle stable and safe environments. Yet, urban space continues to be experienced as uncertain, troubled, imbued with challenges and perpetually under pressure. It can be inspiring and motivating for some and suffocating and distressing for others. This contingent notion of urban space reveals its intrinsic tension, between settling and unsettling. There are moments when tendencies to settle prevail and urban space is perceived to be solid, permanent and safe, and there are times when urban space appears in turmoil, when routines are broken, time accelerates and changes are sudden and disruptive. The moments in which tendencies to unsettle prevail are tainted by painful experiences and threats of elimination or destruction. However, these are also moments of anticipation and struggle in which radical social transformations are likely to occur, for urban space is also imagined, claimed, appropriated and lived differently. Urban research seeks to grasp the profound changes such moments produce, reminding that diseases, violence, exploitation, social divides and polarization, fear, authoritarianism and poverty have always been entwined in urban experience, as have scientific advances, emancipation, dialogue, solidarity and care, protection, hard-won and fought-for opportunities.

In a broader perception, the past years appear to have inclined toward unsettling. The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and accompanying containment measures affected urban dwellers in very different ways and reminded us how fragile our (settled) lives are. Political upheavals have shaken the perception of shared political and cultural space and exposed fragmentations in societies along nationalist and other dividing lines. As of February 2022, the war in Ukraine involved powerful geopolitical interests and prospects of nuclear terror: the threat of total destruction has yet again become tangible. Wars, quests for domination, insecurity

and struggles for existence continue to force mass migration. During this time, wildfires, floods, droughts, water scarcity, heat-related deaths, occupation and depletion of natural resources, destruction of habitats and extinction of animals and plants formed a dramatic backdrop which indicated a broken human relationship with nature. In all these occurrences of unsettling, the actions, responses and means of coping with adversities mirrored deeply divided and increasingly polarized societies of persisting inequalities across social, economic, cultural and political differences.

In its plural occurrences, unsettling carries a strong spatial dimension. Both on practical and symbolic levels, it is associated with material, experienced or sensed ruptures in habitual ways of living, belonging and identification, all of which are bound to places. Indeed, even if some groups and parts of populations might not connect their lived experience of being settled (to claims) to a particular territory, and go about their lives by sticking to places only temporarily, in the grammar of urban space, to settle entails the appropriation of a space. Contests for territory are animated by the objectives of exploiting human labor, harnessing natural resources and fixing accumulated capital in space through urban expansion (Harvey 2001), as well as endeavors for instituting control, entitlements and privileges through the construction of distinctive social, cultural and symbolic spaces (see Wolfe 2006). Settling and unsettling are therefore not merely 'events', but 'structural' processes (re)producing disparities in the rights to the claimed territory (see *ibid.*). In view of the debates on settler colonialism (*ibid.*), the political ambiguities implicated in settling (and, by extension, unsettling) lie primarily in the organizing principles of the structures of power aimed at elimination or subordination. The institutions of society settle in a way to encode and reproduce the unequal relationships across plural categories of difference, while normalizing the exertion of power to the disadvantage of some populations. The feminist body of thought captures this perspective by underlining the relationship between many forms of necessity and political agency. From this perspective, spatialized structures of power not only constrain but may also motivate individual and collective political subjects (see Yuval-Davis 2011).

We reveal that unsettling is associated with hardship, violence and instability, but also that it is a precondition for (radical) transformation, as, for example, labor strikes, spaces of solidarity or struggles around cultural diversification. In this sense, the settled condition carries a danger of casting a veil of silence over daily struggles and potential paths of change. It is through the unsettling of the settled and normalized reality of difference that fixed boundaries are transgressed and overcome. In spite of insecurity and adverse impacts on bodies, a number of determined people have displayed astonishing confidence in uncertainties and the positive change lying therein: through cultural expression (Kurfürst, Chapter 3), appropriating collective space (Athassiou, Chapter 4), enacting activism and solidarity (Peck et al., Chapter 5), challenging hegemonic narratives (Kränzle, Chapter 6), opposing the commodification of everyday life (Brandt et al., Chapter 7), struggling with worker's homelessness (Essl, Chapter 8) or

migration (Daher, Chapter 10), problematizing the materialization of inequality in urban space (Gabauer, Chapter 11), raising a critique of encroachments of private interests in public spaces (Wall, Chapter 12), steering urban transformations (Bodnar, Chapter 13), emphasizing struggles around common ground (Dring, Chapter 14), having collective landholding (Cuéllar, Chapter 15), protesting against femicides and caring for the oppressed (Toscani et al., Chapter 17), following professional practice (Heindl, Chapter 18), engaging in cultural politics (Landau, Chapter 19), articulating concern about various forms of everyday violence (Verloo, Chapter 20), raising a critique of de-solidarization with grievances of homelessness (Bricocoli and Güntner, Chapter 21) or considering embodied negotiation of urban commons (Watson, Chapter 22).

The sense of confidence related to unsettling cannot be fully grasped through a focus on structural transformations alone. Moments of unsettling leave deep traces on ordinary lives and the mechanisms with which we protect our bodies. In return, changing modes of how lives are lived are key catalysts for social, cultural and political expressions and actions aiming for meaningful change (see Vogelpohl 2012). Unsettled, hence, does not only pertain to (an understanding of) the changing human condition, but also the capacity and means of experiencing, imagining, thinking and enacting alternatives to a given state of urban affairs. *Unsettled* is an ambiguous and multifaceted term which can quite accurately describe the general state in which the increasingly urbanized world finds itself. As uncertainties, risks and unease palpably affect ordinary lives at all scales and throughout all parts of the globe, the *unsettled* has become more than just an abstract concept at the tip of urban experience. *Unsettled* is a sentiment, a condition, a state of being. By exploring urban space through an analytical prism of unsettled, we aim to shed light on uncertain, unstable and continuously negotiated relations between social life and urban form, while outlining new paths for analysis and social action. The way we conceptualize unsettled urban space aims to embed both urban dwellers' relentless struggles to (un)settle the urban order and analytical insights into socio-spatial arrangements in an analysis in which political subjects have agency to 'speak', 'move' and 'produce' space in a shared effort, to negotiate their living environments between practices of settling and unsettling, and to produce alternative socio-spatial arrangements (Lugones 2003).

In this introduction, we take the urban scale to develop propositions for the conceptual tension between settling and unsettling and reflect on their socio-spatial limits and potentialities. We conceptualize *settling* as a *spatial practice* and *settled urban space* as *material sediment of practices of settling*. We first draw on this perspective by contextualizing diverse experiences of the changing modes of urban everyday life in relation to the systemic, physical and social features of past and present patterns of urban development. This perspective allows us to identify a disjuncture between the built and the social aspects of urban space which can be interpreted as a manifestation of both the practices of settling and of unsettling. What we argue is that there is a certain lack of scientific

engagement with such a disjuncture inherent in urban space, as opposed to an extensive body of work building on externalized factors such as urban crises to explain the pressures in everyday life. Second, understanding that urban space is marked by an inherently ambivalent coexistence of material sediments of unsettling and settling, we outline a conceptual tension between *unsettled* and *settled* as an analytical perspective for grasping the contingency and uncertain nature of urban space. We inform this conceptual framework by the method of conjectural speculation and considering both synchronic and diachronic analytical perspectives. Further, we draw on practices of intellectual bridging and interweaving to signal that the seemingly settled urban condition is and conceptually can be unsettled. We suggest a window of analysis that would rejoin social, cultural and political readings of urban everyday life. We then argue for such a window of analysis as a radical opening up of boundaries within urban studies, as well as a powerful framework to study nuances and ambivalences of the inner workings of the urban world. Finally, we expand on this framework to outline *seven* open dimensions of ‘unsettling’ for unlocking the analysis into overlooked dimensions to study urban life.

Past and Present Practices of Settling, and the Urban Condition

Cities are continuously made and remade, as dwellers repeatedly negotiate and contest where, when and how they may live together. This process, which is at once territorial, material, social and imagined, spans beyond urban form, shifts across time and space, engages heterogeneous rhythms and patterns of everyday life and manifests itself within continuities and interstices of the changing social, cultural and political landscapes. The making of urban places has unfolded through a mutually formative relationship between people’s aspirations for the settled mundanity of everyday life and anticipation of its unsettling. Urban dwellers experience this tension between settling and unsettling differently and at different intensities because the framing conditions do not provide equal opportunities for everyone. Some appear to possess greater agency to steer a course between the mundanity of the known and the thrill of the unknown, often largely owing to social networks and economic resources. For others, any moment of unsettling, rather than being exciting, entails risks or exacerbates social hardship. For the dynamics between settling and unsettling are inseparable from broader systemic forms of oppression, dominance and hegemony, which permeate urban space in various forms of marginalization, exclusion and segregation, with enduring effects on the opportunities and wellbeing of urban dwellers.

To settle means to fix, to put in order and to make a certain arrangement more permanent, as in binding one’s life and aspirations to a particular place. To settle suggests the tranquility of home, sheltered as well as guarded. Settling may nurture affective encounters, which, in turn, create bonds to a certain place. Settling thereby creates a permanent social context, a place to which people belong and from which they go about their lives. Yet, throughout the history such

endeavors have involved contestations over territories and competing orders. A city as a place produced by settling does not necessarily carry static connotations. The settling of urban places occurs at different intensities through time. It can be slowed and accelerated, controlled and contested, cyclical, episodic and linear. With the focus on belonging, as “always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity”, Nira Yuval-Davis (2011: 5) introduces the interactions between mutually constitutive categories of difference, such as gender, class, race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, forms of disabilities and impairments, not only as a means of constructing (material) borderlines but also a way for establishing relations and connections through alliances. By bringing together different people, languages and skills, cities settle as hotbeds of societal change, cultural advancements and political emancipation. However, struggle, conflict and agonism also shape places. Cities continue to dwell in an ambivalence between conviviality of political decisions supported by the many and insecurities of flourishing predatory entrepreneurship. While settling as an ubiquitous quality of urban development is implicitly acknowledged in urban studies, it remains largely undertheorized as the foundation of intrinsically unstable modes of urbanization.

This book approaches the settling of urban space as a fruitful field for theorizing, researching and acting on the interdependencies between collective modes of life and individual bodies. For this purpose, we interpret settling as a practice. Drawing on the concept of (social) practice (Reckwitz 2002), we conceive practices of settling as embodied, situated, interconnected and patterned sets of human actions that interweave individual and collective agency, their purposes and meaning-making with collectively negotiated social orders. The practice of settling is simultaneously “a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice”, and a set of “routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring” (ibid.: 250). In this view, the materiality of urban space can be interpreted as a composite of sediments of past ways of living, daily struggles, negotiations, insurgencies and desires, which define the “way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (ibid.). At the same time, the materiality of urban space is also a complex flow of history, relations and subjectivities in which people build and exercise their agency to negotiate and change contingent social orders and structural conditions. The materiality of urban space thus also occupies a prominent position in negotiations on the current urban condition as a lived experience, and channels society’s hopes, needs and desires. Urban space can thus be interpreted as sedimentation of practices of settling.

Contemporary urbanization is generally regarded as a catalyst for capitalism. Even those parts of the built fabric dating back to earlier periods have been structurally imbued with capitalist rationale and functionally integrated into capitalist urbanization, thus laying the ground for the conceptualization of capitalism as fundamentally shaping ‘the urban condition’ (Dear 2001; Brenner and Theodore 2005). The sedimentation of altering modes of capitalist accumulation (from early to Fordist to Post-Fordist) and accompanying regulatory regimes (from

extensive/nonorganized over intensive/organized to flexible/disorganized) does not only add new extensions but also modulates existing urban layers, in terms of both broader social development and how cities are governed and materially (re)built (Esser and Hirsch 1989). The sediments of organized capitalism, while differing in nuance across different geographies, display industrialized and standardized forms of building construction, dominated by certain regimes of materials (and related industries), which, in turn, speed up urbanization. Although this development secured prolonged periods of relative stability and prosperity in some parts of the world, such as mass housing schemes of the post-World War II welfare state, urban experience continues to be unsettled. Urban studies attribute the never settled nature of cities to capitalism's inherent tendency toward instability, expansion and competition (Amin 1994). By interlocking social, cultural and political institutions and structures in its expansion, capitalism inevitably and continuously delivers uneven urban development at different scales, from global to local. This renders urbanization an "inherently [...] conflictual process" (Dikeç 2001: 1788), and redistribution a rather limited approach in overcoming spatial and social inequalities (ibid.). However, by drawing on settling as a practice, the never settled nature of cities can be interpreted in a more direct relation to the material urban fabric. In capitalism, social settling practices have been decoupled from the agency to steer the material building process of the provision of urban dwellings. Already in the 19th century, Friedrich Engels (1848) diagnosed this decoupling in his descriptions of workers' dwellings in England, indicating that housing for the workers was provided in and according to the interest of the capitalists, and was not necessarily built according to the needs of the workers. This means that urban space in capitalism is produced as a bifurcated field in which social practices of making oneself a home are detached from material arrangements of building houses. In certain periods of capitalist urban development, this basic grammar of detachment might be disguised by prosperity of vigorous urban places, aesthetics of local(ized) architectural styles and materials, or lavish technical and social infrastructures, yet it continues to be sustained and materialized by regulatory regimes through various urban forms, regardless of the extent of regulation or (welfarist) redistribution. The construction of cities thus largely remains separated from the emancipatory idea of cities as places of sociability, difference and collective living. The resulting materiality of financialized and homogenized urban space tends to disrupt social lives and clashes with the temporalities and rhythms inherent in lived space.

The separation of material building processes from the praxis of urban living creates a *disjuncture* between the social, cultural and political domains of urban life. The routines of capitalist growth, the linear time steering that growth and governmental regimes of regulation mainly disregard the commonly shared ideas of urbanism as a way of life (Wirth 1938) in favor of the commodification and de-politicization of (curated) urban living (Zukin 1995; Hoskyns 2014). Coupled with manifold cuts at social affective relations, individualization, de-solidarization and the advance of a politics of fear (Ajanovic et al. 2015), these

processes have exacerbated dispossession, displacement and precarity in cities. In particular, vulnerable groups are affected, as they must compete over scarce resources in a 'race to the bottom' (Cohen 2015). As a consequence, a growing proportion of urban inhabitants find themselves on the losing end of the renegotiated relations between social and material aspects of settling, being compelled to resort to urban margins (Hall et al. 2014). Resistance in public space has drawn attention to negative spatial effects of such a development, claiming the right to difference and more equitable and politically inclusive forms of city-making (Dikeç 2001; Hou 2010). In particular, the affective connection between housing rights struggles and public space stands out in exhibiting and addressing the disjuncture that the bifurcated practices of settling produce in urban life.

As different subjects build and experience their agency to engage in the settling of urban space in different ways, their actions are at once collective and individual, expressed and tamed, enabled and prevented. They are dependent on inherited, earned or fought for privileges. They relate to, emerge from and are immanent to urban space saturated with power hierarchies. Therefore, we argue that the prevailing aspects of the settled as a material and discursive 'normality' associated with stability, regularity and growth are misleading against the backdrop of social pluralism and experienced difference in urban everyday life. The unsettled in contrast includes the status of those who are literally unsettled, either being of no fixed abode, or affected by various forms of uncared and violence, discrimination and neglect. While the unsettled through its disruptive, unstable and worrisome notions is often seen disapprovingly, it also carries a strong transformative potential of exposing the invisible injustices and struggles, delivering emancipatory change and producing alter politics. From this perspective, the current urban condition is not only never settled but also claimed through the changing relation between settling and unsettling. Beyond the consideration of the external factors of increased pressure on everyday lives through the prism of crises (Brand 2009), we open up the analysis to also include internal tensions in social, cultural and political domains of urban life. In this sense, the visible manifestations of the urban disjuncture, such as urban crises resulting from the authoritarian stipulation of growth (Weaver 2017), ruptures in social reproduction stemming from imperialist modes of living (Brand 2009) or broken affective bonds in urban life in light of exploitative and alienating tendencies (Hou 2010), depict the never settled urban condition. By grasping invisible and more silent internal tensions in the production of the urban disjuncture as a set of unsettled moments and practices, the urban condition can be explained as affective and transformative—as intertwined with (collective) bodies through routines, temporalities and contestations.

Unsettling the Urban Condition: From the Fields of Tension to Open Analytical Speculation

In recent years, the insurgent voices from public space have merged their often dispersed and separated claims concerning the adverse effects of decoupling social

practices from material arrangements of making home. An example of urban movements in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis shows how through the unification of struggles for the right to safe home and work, right to difference and political right to voice concerns and be heard, the movements have found a strong resonance in public space and gained access to the institutional framework (Hou 2018). In light of such developments, urban research, too, faces the challenge of engaging with interdependencies between social, cultural and political aspects of making cities beyond observable contextual aspects. For understanding the inner dynamics and features of *the unsettled urban condition*, previously separated strands of analysis, such as housing, labor rights, equity, education, right to difference, public space, mobility, everyday life or social infrastructure, need to be tied together in a combined and integrative reflection. Such an approach allows for scrutinizing an urban condition as both a product of past aspirations and struggles as well as the root cause for the plural forms of unsettling. For this reason, any urban experience can be interpreted as being shaped through a tension between settling and unsettling. This renders the current urban condition simultaneously the point of departure and the point of arrival for the settling or unsettling of urban routines, temporal regimes and politics.

To explore the relation between settling and unsettling, we take an approach inspired by *speculative thinking* (cf. Stäheli 2013; Roskamm 2017). Speculative thinking can be described as thinking without a firm hold, as reflecting in the awareness of contingency. This means building awareness that things can also be different. To speculate is an *act* of looking differently, of putting on a different pair of lenses to articulate a research perspective. But this is also the *art* of looking at and reflecting on urban phenomena from different angles—an endeavor that not only changes the urban world but also affects the praxis of world-making of researchers and their research communities. To see things differently entails the awareness that there is not only one true perspective, but different points for articulating research praxis. Such a positionality echoes the key principles of transduction, the methodological proceeding, which tests the real against the possible and reactivates locked potentials for imaginative thought (Vogelpohl 2012). Speculation does not necessarily strive for conclusive or finished knowledge in the form of an already empirically consolidated research outcome, but opens the field to plural considerations with open postulates based on first firm empirical results. Speculating is an unsettling attempt to throw any assertion of an ultimately valid truth about urban phenomena into deep analytical troubles. Speculating about an urban condition as unsettled is about formulating what might already be possible in thought, even though analytical repertoires and empirical evidence might still need to be enhanced. Albeit the tension field between settling and unsettling is theoretically, analytically and empirically still uncharted, we suggest its conceptualization and exploration as a productive means to move beyond crisis-centered conceptions of the urban.

To unravel the urban condition as an inherently ambivalent coexistence of lived practices and material sediments of unsettling and settling, we propose

the consideration of both its synchronic dimensions and diachronic perspectives. Our reflection on this distinction builds on the tradition of linguistic and psycho-analytical understandings of inner and outer workings of language (de Saussure 1983 [1916]; Lacan 1978). Synchronic dimensions, if made useful for the field of urban analysis, point to the context-specific aspects of urban development, its socially produced materialities, culturally expressive rhythms of everyday life and politically negotiated imprints at a certain *moment* in time. Synchronic analysis therefore has a strong embodied connotation of ‘together-time’. Diachronic perspectives help understand occurrences, modulations, cracks and disruptions in urban space over a historic course of time. Such perspectives encompass multiple expressions of time, velocities and sequences in the range from the past, over present to envisioned and anticipated future. Diachronic analysis conveys a socio-historic reading of time for situating the material world in relation to societal change over its duration. Therefore, it has a strong temporal connotation of a ‘through-time’.

In the synchronic understanding, the urban condition displays how relations among humans and their environments take on material form and come to settle. It also inspires negotiations and contingent arrangements on who is included and who is excluded, what is present and what is absent in a given context and moment of urban development. This understanding is rooted in debates that highlight that context-specific practices of settling became increasingly reduced to monotonous registers of behavioral routinization, while rhythmic, cyclical and ritualist everyday experience was streamlined into an everydayness characterized by tedium, monotony and boredom (Debord 2002 [1961]: 237). The dazzling and multifarious temporal regimes of everyday life were subjected to a hegemonic chronopolitical model of steering capitalist growth under which bodily experiences have been cast to routinized (self)optimization (Daradot and Laval 2014). From a diachronic perspective, the urban condition encompasses the ramifications of past and present social struggles and contestations, while also indicating what and how to wish and hope for the future. This perspective situates the body in relation to the patterns and rhythms of urban space not as a fixed structure, but rather as “a process and a horizon of meanings” (Shields 2013: 31). Grasping urban space in a rather chronological sequence as a socio-historic process, however, has often been an act of narrating hegemonic histories. Diachronic analysis is therefore not free from constraints of power relations, which is why it needs to include power analysis in the changing modes of urban governmentality and broader urban arrangements (Davoudi 2018).

A twofold temporal account of spatial analysis is central to our conceptualization of the unsettled urban condition as affective and transformative, because it allows for considering bodies as not merely being affected by external factors, but rather as interfaces between the private and public worlds, between the internal state of mind and external urban environments. Such bodies meld the moments in life with its historic duration. The everyday geography of internal and external conditions affects bodies as they transform passions into actions (Hardt 2007: x,

drawing reference to the work of Curley [1985] on Spinoza). Bodies, in return, produce the materialities of everyday geographies. The urban condition can therefore be understood as a socially negotiated counterbalance between practices of settling and unsettling. Such a conceptual framing centers the focus on the ways and means people and groups build agency to either participate in, cope with or challenge the unsettled urban condition. Their agency and practices develop in affective relation to broader systemic conditions and power relations embedded in everyday life. This book illustrates how the mundanity of individual and collective negotiations of the tension between unsettling and settling unfolds from utopia to pragmatism, takes on a variety of forms and expressions, and produces various degrees of impact.

Unsettling Urban Studies: New Retrospectives

The concept of settling may carry romantic connotations associated with aspirations for more settled lives. It may also include the normalization of social and spatial injustices and social inequalities. Conversely, the concept of unsettling applies to various manifestations of instability, disruption and dispossession in urban life, which may stretch or redefine the social order and community infrastructures toward either more just and equitable or to unjust and unequal patterns of urban development. Because of a perpetual instability of contingent social orders and infrastructures, urban space appears to be permanently unsettled. However, we introduce ‘unsettled’ not only to indicate a condition but also as a form of analysis aimed at understanding how urban space comes into being. In our analysis, we identify ‘unsettled’ as a manifestation, motivation, cause and goal of social change, which over time is consolidated, modulated and contested across multiple dimensions of urban life. With the reference to the feminist debates on the body (Ahmed 2008), we understand these practices as at once material, experiential and situated, thus conceptually loosely translating into social, cultural and political dimensions of urban life.

‘Unsettled’ as a form of analysis seeks to grasp the inner workings of the urban world and its multiplicity of emerging social phenomena in the present—world making or ‘worlding’ (Roy 2011). Central to our grasping of this complexity is the understanding of the material and social aspects of urban space as being in a mutually formative relationship, rather than in opposition to each other. As the relation between material and social aspects is often disputed across different approaches, we propose an urban analysis that draws on practices of bridging and interweaving (cf. Bargetz 2017) to identify continuities and interfaces between different positions on this disputed relation, so as to bridge the chasm between them and analytically interweave them together. We put a critical emphasis on the social as a matter of political struggle, which concerns and affects the involved people; everyday life as experienced and lived; expressions of power, exploitation and inequality; as well as social relations and associated processes

of social reproduction. The emphasis on the social allows for understanding how relationships are made by people, how these relationships are reproduced in space and time, and how they can be changed through people's decisions and actions (cf. *ibid.*).

By grasping the social across different positions and approaches, we open the possibility of engaging with transformative politics through criticism and theoretical unease. This proposition should not be seen as destructive, but rather as an endeavor to engage with phenomena of social relevance through confrontation—confrontation between different bodies of knowledge, between earlier works and contemporary approaches, between setting new foundations by clearing the ground and returning to what was before (*ibid.*; Ahmed 2008). Such confrontation may inspire new insights and learnings from which inventive thinking about alternatives may emerge (cf. Bargetz 2017). Theorizing, understood this way, is also a political practice aimed at social transformation, beyond its potential as a discursive pleasure. This renders critique a practical purpose, apt for carving out challenges and potentials as regards the detachments immanent in urban life. Grappling with contemporary power relations and hegemonies from such a perspective is of particular relevance in contemporary times, because it supports and actualizes the transformative potential of academic politics and philosophy of knowledge (cf. *ibid.*).

Through the focus on the body mediating between the passions emanating through the internal state of mind and actions within external fragile environments, our perspective of 'unsettled' extends beyond abstract spheres of theorizing the social relations. As we analytically relate the body to the manifold ways in which practices of settling and unsettling come to sediment, we dismantle the static reading of settling as unequivocally positive and of unsettling as rather disadvantageous. The nuances and ambivalences in the relationships among (collective) bodies, space and society expose plural contingencies of the present urban condition and the potentials for moments in history to turn out differently. Taking from the critique of everyday life and of lived space (Lefebvre 2014 [1946]), rather than assuming an evolutionary, universalist and linear change (of urbanization patterns) over time, our analytical perspective searches for the ephemeral in the continuous, and continuity in the ephemeral: To find a moment which breaks the historical duration while also discerning how historical duration challenges the ephemeral (as in the fading character of moments). Transformative potentials of our analysis therefore lie in taking interest not only in what is new but also in how the new shifts basic premises, values and categories of what is normalized as the social. In this view, the seemingly settled condition of the urban past permeates present struggles around social, cultural and political domains of urban life, rendering the present urban condition as unsettled. But rather than seeing this development as a transition from stable to unstable patterns of urban life, this book works with reverse interweaving: Urban life and lived space have always been shaped in tension between settling and unsettling.

The Structure of the Book

The proposition of this multidisciplinary book is that urban space and time are contingent on how urban societies face, undergo and overcome turbulences and difficulties. It both challenges and refines technocratic and development-based structural approaches by offering a social, cultural and political critique that integrates the human body understood as an interface between the interior disjuncture and exterior environment. Moving forward, a collection of case studies, methodological reflections and theoretical insights, combining macro, meso and micro levels of urban analysis, introduces ‘unsettled’ into urban studies as an open and speculative analytical prism. We loosely frame this approach as an undertaking in which *seven* dimensions have oriented our imagination toward the possible. Unsettled, in this sense, can be analytically employed as:

- addressing a *paradox*, where the city is understood as both a place of settlement of buildings and people, while also a site of unsettlement through trajectories of constant change;
- a rich *register* to study land and property relations, thereby revealing the ownership underlying infrastructures and omnipresent inequalities in claiming land;
- an exploration of socio-material practices of spatial *reordering*—such as where people are displaced from their homes through warfare or economic and urban restructuring, or through new aesthetics languages;
- a *limbo* that people navigate depending on their state as temporary or permanent residents of a city, resulting in uncertainties between embodied practices of settling down and the unsettling of these embodied experiences;
- a *prerequisite* for social change, where established social and political practices are challenged by incremental or more radical transitions;
- a *state of mind*, which results from practices of unsettling affecting individuals and groups internally in both constructive and destructive ways;
- an *opening* to challenge the orderings of space—a dislocational struggle making visible and overcoming inequities, actualizing equality and newly composing relations of power within urban strategies guided by alter politics.

The three parts of this book correspond with three intertwined thematic dimensions we suggest for analyzing the contingency and uncertain nature of urban space: *routines*, *temporalities* and *contestations*. These three dimensions are scrutinized drawing on empirical accounts from urban ‘realities’ and theoretical reflections to provide insights into social, cultural and political aspects of ever changing socio-material relations.

Part I, Urban Routines, primarily focuses on *social aspects* of urbanization. This part pictures routines as a set of repeated social practices that largely draw on tacit knowledge. Such routines lie at the heart of struggles around processes

of normalization on different scales, from the individual body to abstract theories on planetary urbanization. By emphasizing how routines may (help to) settle and sustain urban orders and power relations, this part showcases the massive irritations that attend the unsettling of routines through leveraging practices challenging their form or content. It further investigates how unsettling may be or become a routine in itself, thus making the unsettled a constant experience, threatening or encouraging.

Part II, *Urban Temporalities*, centers on *cultural aspects* of urbanization. This part refers to linear, episodic and cyclical rhythms of urban development and everyday life in urban space—on the one hand accelerated, disruptive and faltering, and, on the other, stabilizing, routinizing and socializing. By emphasizing different rhythms and chronopolitics that urban societies develop in relation or opposition to the linear time scales, partitions and accelerations of the capitalist urban development, this part explains settling and unsettling through the disruptive processes of change. It makes visible tensions between contrasting temporalities of urban spaces—paused and accelerated, controlled and contested, as well as difficulties people experience in finding presence in places.

Part III, *Urban Contestations*, revolves around *political aspects* of urbanization. This part casts light on both collective forces and individual desires to understand how resistance, antagonism and conflict open the field of the possible, while challenging hierarchies, centers of power and static forms of state bureaucracy. In the context of economic, social and political pressures and the ongoing displacement of people from the center, urban movements demand their right to the city, a say in urban development that goes far beyond routinized modes of citizen participation. By emphasizing the city as a site of an unceasing negotiation of social, cultural and political transformations, this part discusses the capacities of individual and collective bodies in a conflict to settle or unsettle the social order.

What can be learnt from the insights provided in this book? Our proposition to urban studies is to approach urban life as continuously unfolding on a contingent, imbalanced, unstable and, hence, unsettled terrain. This means that urban space is not only a sedimentation of routines, temporalities and contestations in a material form but also a site where social, cultural and political dimensions of urban space are formed through struggles and negotiations in a counterbalance between moments and historical duration. We have furthered the analytical prism of unsettled to shed light on the plural contingencies, antagonisms and ambivalences in the connecting tissue between social relations and material spatial forms, and, equally important, to articulate and unlock transformative potentials lying therein. Contributions to this book analyze how the social dynamics of the production of urban space are shaped through tensions between settling and unsettling. They illuminate how affective and transformative power is opened up or tied down through practices of settling and unsettling in relation to different urban living conditions, geographies and political contexts.

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PART I

Urban Routines



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2

URBAN ROUTINES

An Introduction

Tihomir Viderman and Sybille Frank

Routines and the unsettled might at first appear as incompatible fields of inquiry. Routines are associated with habitual patterns of everyday life, which are reproduced through tacit knowledge and unfolding in the form of repeated, unpremeditated practices and pre-reflective behaviors (Seamon 1980). Conversely, the manifestations of unsettling evoke disruption, instability and reflection. Yet, any experience of encountering an unknown routine—by coming to a new place or through the emergence of the new at the known place—is telling of the deep relation between routines and various degrees of unsettling. Depending on individual or collective agency, different routines can be reassuring or emancipatory for some and intimidating or discriminatory for others (see Butler 1990). Such experiences expose the rhythmic repetition of routines, as well as its possible disruptions, as being imbued with power structures (see Dikeç 2001). Therefore, routines settle and manifest in urban places and times “in a manner that is relatively difficult for a single individual to erase or for a small group to change in a short time without the investment of a great deal of effort” (Shields 2013: 32). However, it is also through the sedimentation of routines that subjects are enabled to act within or against their constitutive conditions, break through the routinized normality and unsettle the normalized subjects’ positions (see Butler 1990). A perspective that understands routines as recurring practices in urban places permeated by power relations situates routines in relation to the struggles around processes of normalization on different spatial scales: from the individual body to planetary processes of urbanization (Brenner and Schmid 2015).

Routines make visible contradictory processes of the urbanization of society, in which the materiality of social practices and lived experiences are produced in a tension between homogenized abstract space of capital circulation (and power) and concrete differential space of multiplicity of embedded social relations in everyday life, resulting from and contesting the alienating lived experience of such

an abstract space (ibid.). While routines embody the human endeavor to stabilize and maintain their living environments, they also stress ambivalences in social and spatial relations across a plurality of binary pairs, such as what is included and what is excluded, what is present and what is absent. These ambivalences inscribed in routines also inspire, motivate and empower individuals and collectives to build agency to either participate in or challenge the inter-related dynamics of socio-spatial relations. In this understanding, routines are structurally configured and conditioned by different modes of capital accumulation and related regulatory regimes; shaped through or against broader social configurations and structures of social reproduction between stability and change; and as embodied acts underpinned by (collective) habits, needs and aspirations. Routines are imagined, constituted, performed, celebrated, upheld, contested, dismissed and curbed in an infinite range of social and material occurrences, from the ordinariness of everyday life to political celebrations or shifts in social and economic paradigms. For this reason, the material expressions, social dimensions and emotional experiences of routines are ambivalent, ever-changing and troubled. They are, in other words, intrinsically unsettled, and hence embedded in the contingencies of urban space.

In his famous text *Practice Mind-ed Orders*, philosopher Theodore R. Schatzki (2000) defined routines as a set of iterative bodily doings and sayings within and across which social order is brought about and determined. These doings and sayings are actions that people perform bodily, without much thinking. Examples he mentions are hammering, handing over money or turning a steering wheel. According to Schatzki, these routinized actions constitute complex practices such as building a house, shopping or driving a car. In sociological and cultural theory, routines constitute the core of diverse theories of praxis that are characterized by a dualism of stability and change. While scholars such as Michel Foucault (1975), Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990) and Anthony Giddens (1984) sought to understand how habits, traditions, customs and dispositions contribute to reproducing the social order through routinized and embodied habitual practices, researchers like Harold Garfinkel (1967), Michel de Certeau (1984) and Judith Butler (1990) emphasized the dynamics of practice as individuals or collectives unfold innovative performative ways to keep up routines by adapting them to changing contexts and circumstances, thus modifying these routines and possibly also their social contexts (Thévenot 2000; Reckwitz 2002). Although being situated, routines may hence also develop their own dynamics. By emerging out of the two-directional relation of individuals internalizing the social order and their agency to challenge and transform that social order, routines can be conceptualized as (n)ever-changing (Birnholtz et al. 2007). Routines display iterative patterns, without ever being repeated identically (ibid.). In that sense, they create and balance tensions between settling and unsettling aspects of social life.

The implicit contradiction between settling the urban order through routines and unsettling routines through reflexive, affective and hope-filled action has permeated scientific debates since the early articulated concerns about the

alienating impacts of the modern metropolis on human bodies. At the beginning of the 20th century, Georg Simmel (1969 [1903]) prominently noted that urban routines both reproduce and mirror an intrinsic conflict of the modern urban society. According to Simmel, the modern metropolis puts the individual's relentless struggle for liberation from traditional social ties into dialectics with the individual's coping mechanisms for adapting to the unsettling experience of uprooting metropolitan space. Against this background, Simmel developed the concept of the blasé attitude. The blasé attitude is the ultimate urban routine that helps the modern city dweller to cope with the constant "*intensification of nervous stimulation* which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli" in the metropolitan setting (ibid.: 48, emphasis in original). Henri Lefebvre's (1971) treatment of routines in everyday life is equally dialectical. While banal and meaningless dimensions of routines render everyday-life trivial and alienating, the routines are simultaneously carriers of great potential which produces moments of possibility and continuously revises the boundaries of 'possible' and 'impossible'.

Sociologist Andreas Reckwitz links routines to embodied subjects, conceptualizing them "as carriers of routinized, over-subjective complexes of bodily movements, of forms of interpreting, knowing how and wanting and of the usage of things" (2002: 259). This perspective emphasizes that routines do not only encompass relations between subjects, or between subjects and things, but also relations to oneself, including the physical body and its motivations and emotions. For him, bodily and mental routines are thus habituated practices acquired through socialization, with the individual being a crossing point of those routines. Seen that way, routines may carry strong collective notions of continuity and social constraints. This also means that routines cut across, but are not restricted to, social differences such as age, gender, sex, class, wealth, family circumstances, (dis)ability or ethnicity. These notions often go unrecognized, but feminist, queer and cultural studies have critically extended the debates that had focused on rational dimensions to also encompass affects to problematize (indiscernible) patterns of power in social fabric. Through the prism of affects and drawing on Margaret Wetherell's work (2015), routines can be interpreted as (affective) recruitments and entanglements constituted by and among embodied individual and collective subjects, non-human bodies and collectively produced urban places. Such affective routines can be seen as loaded with class and gendered structures of oppression, exploitation and struggle (see Federici 2011). At the same time, routines may also channel a hope-filled action. As bodies and minds have agency to produce change, urban routines are also imbued with hope of emancipatory and liberatory possibilities that the capacity of the human body to improvise and invent can open against social constraints. Change made possible in a moment of unsettling can only gain ground, though, when reproduced as part of a daily urban routine.

The ways how individual bodies are affected by and get entangled with routines to shape collective embodied subjects is scrutinized in Asef Bayat's account on the agency of ordinary people to make change through their routinized daily

lives. He argues that individual(ized) bodies through “fragmented and inaudible” actions “inscribe their active presence in the configuration and governance of urban life” (Bayat 2013: 16). These (non-)collective actions “embody shared practices [...] of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations” (ibid.: 15). His scrutiny of the Muslim Middle East showed that daily routines, regardless how mundane they are, through bodily presence and dispositions, daily struggles and through ‘parallel practices of everyday encroachment’ discovering and creating new social spaces, continuously question and challenge the settled urban social order. This position reflects a growing awareness that knowledge on cities we are using and contributing to on a daily basis has predominantly been produced from the perspective of power. Such a perspective can be unearthed and addressed productively through a reflexive engagement with urban routines.

With the contributions to this book section on Urban Routines, we hope to offer stimulating investigations of how manifold urban routines are being produced, settled, reintroduced or invented anew in conditions of unsettled. Through an exploration of the manifold ways in which urban routines are related to the experience of ‘unsettled’ as past and present urban condition, the six chapters gathered in this section explore how different subjects build and experience differently their agency to engage in routinized dynamics of urban space, and illuminate how the making of routines unfolds in a tension between patterns of settling of the urban social order and the rupturing moments of its unsettling. Routines are approached as sets of doings and sayings through which individuals, collectives and institutions tacitly or purposefully engage with the fixed and shifting structures of the urban order. As such they figure as:

- subversive, intrusive or transformative practices exposing, contesting or revolutionizing settled orders, such as practices of subcultures (Kurfürst, Chapter 3),
- mundane practices of (collective) bodies appropriating urban spaces of everyday life and imbuing them with meaning (Athanassiou, Chapter 4),
- the ways in which emancipated, vociferous, but also disenfranchised, silent or invisible, political subjects respond to structural conditions and negotiate their relations with(in) social space, such as strategies and tactics of political or professional activism (Peck et al., Chapter 5),
- manifestations of ambivalent settled urban orders imbued with normalized power relations, which also may (help to) settle and sustain these orders and power relations, such as institutional practices by which, for example, a city is governed, policed or staged (Kränzle, Chapter 6),
- occurrences in place of previous routines through interruptions and discontinuation, thus causing massive irritations, such as tendencies of commodification of ultimately fragile practices of mundane everyday life (Brandt et al., Chapter 7),

- practices developed under deeply unsettled circumstances, which render unsettling a routine in itself, and make the unsettled a constant experience, threatening or encouraging, such as ‘working homelessness’ (Essl, Chapter 8).

Sandra Kurfürst’s chapter ‘Vietnamese Hip Hop Don’t Stop: Unsettling Normative Ideas of Gender around the Block’ (Chapter 3) emphasizes territorial dimension of routines. She traces how routines unlock emancipatory dynamics by physically positioning the collective body of hip-hop dancers at the center of the city. Performative dance acts, which have developed creatively and playfully into routines, reshape the appropriated central public space in terms of function, through adaptations to dancers’ needs, as well as in terms of symbolism, through challenging the dominant meaning of the symbolically charged urban terrains. Particularly in relation to young female dancers, often marginalized in Vietnamese society, these routines carry a strong, albeit unintended, political meaning. The linking and reinforcement of singular bodily affects into a collective body has not only unsettled the normalized spatial and social orders but also created spaces of hope and desire, which has unsettled longstanding ideas about women’s ‘appropriate’ conduct in public space.

Appropriation of central public space through the routines of (collective) bodies lies also in the focus of Evangelia Athanassiou’s chapter ‘Unsettled “Publicness” and the Embodied Appropriation of Iktinou Street in Thessaloniki’ (Chapter 4). Athanassiou’s chapter illustrates how new routines emerging from the unsettled urban condition, in turn, disturb the institutional routines of the powerful by which, for example, a city is governed and policed. As the increasingly precarious economic circumstances during the financial crisis diverted young people away from spaces of consumption into meeting in the streets and squares, their social gatherings caused irritations that exposed multiple claims on public space. While such claims are usually embedded in dominant paradigms of the routinized making of a city, and hence go under the radar of public scrutiny, the changing routines may unsettle them, thus imbuing with importance the (collective) negotiation between settling and unsettling.

Disruption is a catalyst and a goal for the changing routines in Chapter 5 ‘Unsettling Planning Practices: From Accommodation to Dwelling in Hamburg’ by Dominique Peck, Anna Richter, Christopher Dell and Bernd Kniess. A disruption in another geographic area has through refugees’ unsettled experience perturbed institutional routines in Hamburg. The city’s routinized institutional framework has largely proved unsuited to provide welfare in an inclusive way. However, the embodied pedagogical experience of building together with refugees, showcased in this chapter, has made that disruption a catalyst for radical rethinking of professional practice. Drawing on this experience and a critical reflection on the institutional routines of housing provision, this chapter suggests the unsettling of academic practice and political-administrative procedures to make the routines of imagining, planning and constructing the city more integrative and just.

Routines of state institutions are the main point of concern of Elina Kränzle's contribution '(Un)Settling Remembrance in Public Space: The Performance of a Heroic National Narrative in the Austrian National Holiday Celebrations at Vienna's Heldenplatz' (Chapter 6). Kränzle interprets the staging of performative acts of remembrance by political leaders and a show of Austrian armed and police forces as an ideological routine which has a twofold goal, inscribing the state's hegemonic heroic narrative in the social fabric and institutionalizing the state's power through urban materialities. Plural references to positions and work critical of such pursuits of hegemony point to an important role that scientific practices may have to prevent the fixing of homogenized routines in urban space, and simultaneously unlock symbolic space to heterogeneous publics.

In 'Berlin's Neighborhoods in the Tourist Trap? Local Routines Unsettled by New Urban Tourism' (Chapter 7), Stefan Brandt, Sybille Frank and Anna Laura Raschke investigate how local routines are unsettled by routines of tourism. A trend labeled as 'new urban tourism' is fostered by global digital platforms for renting local homes such as Airbnb, thus primarily targeting residential neighborhoods as 'authentic' hidden gems. The authors trace how residents' routines of working, resting, sleeping and socializing in two popular Berlin neighborhoods have become both commodified and contested by leisure-based practices of 'new locals' that both chase after and promote the 'cool' and lively atmosphere. Associated with considerable economic power, these practices have not only impacted the local trade and service infrastructure but also the social fabric of the sought-after neighborhoods. As routines oriented on consumption and leisure have gained momentum, the lived-in worlds of ordinary dwellers have been unsettled.

A tendency of capitalist urbanization to produce disruptions and thus continuously keep the social fabric in an unsettled state is showcased in Rafael Essl's Chapter 8 'Disrupted, Unsettled, Contested: Working Homelessness in Silicon Valley.' In a condition in which work no longer necessarily secures the stability of permanent dwelling, the phenomenon of 'working homelessness' inverts the routinized structuring of urban space. Against the background of deregulated tech-driven urbanism that continuously reshapes the relations between center and periphery and undermines the social contract—that work should pay—urban public space has become house and home. While these routines of unsettled dwelling stiffen material and experiential precarity as a permanent condition, unsettling becomes a routine in itself, thus making the unsettled a constant experience.

The chapters of this section introduce a range of different terrains on which routines make tangible or mobilize the moments of unsettling and the unsettled urban condition. The illustrated routines fix and unlock, disturb and are disturbed, invent and are invented anew. A shared insight is that routines are tied to, and performative of, power relations, thus rendering the continuously negotiated tension between (their) settling and unsettling deeply ambivalent. While we take these dialectics as our point of departure, the empirical approaches offered in the following chapters scrutinize how urban routines constitute urban materialities and narratives in multidimensional ways.

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3

VIETNAMESE HIP HOP DON'T STOP

Unsettling Normative Ideas of Gender around the Block

Sandra Kurfürst

The city is not a static entity but an expression of past and current power struggles, whose ongoing conflicts are frequently carried out in public spaces. The symbolism of public space is continuously negotiated as diverse individuals and groups ascribe different meanings to particular places. Lily Kong and Lisa Law (2002: 1505) define cities as “excellent examples of medium and outcome of power relations”. In order to capture the domination of one group over others in giving meaning to urban objects, Kong and Law introduce the concept of ‘ideological hegemony’, drawing on Gramsci’s (1973) definition of hegemony. Gramsci regards hegemony as the means through which domination and rule are achieved. In contrast to coercion, which implies clearly recognizable constraints in everyday life, hegemonic controls communicate ideas and values that the majority are persuaded to adopt as their own. If hegemonic control is successfully implemented, the people will desire the social order endorsed by ruling elites. In other words, the ruling group presents ideas and values that are perceived as ‘natural’ or ‘common sense’ by the rest of society. Landscapes express the power to institutionalize and thus sediment a given order in space (Kong and Law 2002). In the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the one-party state used to be dominant in defining the urban landscape, with public spaces serving as stages for rituals of the state. However, with the transition from a planned to a market economy initiated by the *Đổi Mới* economic reforms in 1986, the state’s control over the urban landscape has been challenged by multiple actors. National and international companies have entered the local real estate market, changing the built environment, while citizens encroach on public space to conduct their daily routines of exercise, meeting friends and private economic activities.

In this chapter, I focus on the performative acts shaping public space, with special attention on a gender analysis of different hip hop dance styles performed by young women in three central public spaces of Hanoi. The chapter

scrutinizes how these young women's routinized practices unsettle state hegemonies inscribed in urban space. The concept of unsettling is relevant here in two ways. First, unsettling refers to modes of urban planning that gave way to one another over time in Hanoi, such as the indigenous city, colonial urbanism and socialist urban planning. These modes of planning determined the function and formal symbolism of public space. Second, the notion of unsettling pervades the materiality of those spaces studied, as young people's struggles to appropriate space articulate hopes and desires that deviate from local and socialist norms. While the young women interviewed did not self-identify their dance routines as conscious political acts, this chapter interprets the dancers' spatial practices as expressing the 'micro-conflictuality of everyday life', arguing that the political is "*transimmanent* to the social" (Marchart 2018: 98). The spaces presented in the following were studied following the 'go-along' method over one year of fieldwork (2007–2008), and several short-time visits thereafter. Margarethe Kusenbach (2003: 463) defines the go-along as a method standing out from other ethnographic methods as it enables ethnographers "to observe their informants' spatial practices *in situ* while accessing their experiences and interpretations at the same time". In addition, I carried out interviews with both male and female dancers between 2015 and 2018, as well as archival research in the National Archive I (No. 2940; No. 005015).

Urban Planning and Urban Routines

In 1010, King Lý Thái Tổ founded Hanoi as a sacred and political center in the Red River Delta. Until the arrival of the French in the 20th century, the city's structure used to be defined by the tripolarity of the royal city, the commoners' city and the agglomeration of agricultural villages. A rectangular and walled compound marked the symbolic center of the royal city. While the commoners' city formed the hub of economic activity, the agricultural villages provided the royal city with food and herbal medicines. In this tripartite structure, those spaces aligning most closely with the Western concept of a 'public' space were the markets in the commoner's city as well as sacred spaces, such as the temple and communal house (Kurfürst 2012; Nguyen 2002).

When Vietnam became a part of French Indochina in the 20th century, colonial urbanism significantly transformed the indigenous urban landscape, shifting the city's centripetal focus away from the North-South toward an East-West axis. Moreover, the colonizers installed a French residential area south of the commoner's city with Hausmann-style, tree-lined boulevards, including parks and squares, that did not exist before then (Kurfürst 2012; Logan 2000). In 1945, President Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence from France in Hanoi. Hanoi was the first capital of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and since 1976 of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Under the one-party rule of the Communist Party, the capital evolved as a socialist icon. Consequently, the primary function of public space in socialist Hanoi was to demonstrate and

symbolize the state's power. Public spaces served above all for staging the masses. However, with private sector development and increasing urbanization since the 1990s, the state has become more tolerant of different uses of open spaces in the densely settled city. Citizens, in turn, appropriate former spaces of officialdom as they carry out everyday routines like walking, exercising, cooking, eating and drinking, nurturing children, as well as economic activities such as small trade (Drummond 2000; Kurfürst 2012; Thomas 2002). According to Michel De Certeau (1984), everyday practices are spatial practices that extend beyond the control of the state. As modes of resistance, they are able to evade discipline from the sphere within which it is exercised. Moreover, Peter G. Goheen (1998: 489) emphasizes the “unreadability” of everyday practices by the state, highlighting their subversive, unsettling potential. Counted among these routinized urban practices are the diverse hip hop dance styles performed by young people. These dances not only contest the official symbolism of public spaces, but they also contest gender ideologies pertinent to young women's conduct in public space.

The spatiality of hip hop offers interesting insights into dynamics of the city as they are closely related to territory. Jenny Mbaye (2014: 402) defines hip hop in cities of the Global South as “political action redefining the spatial structure and the social order of the city”. In other words, hip hop seeks to reclaim urban terrain, making it work in favor of populations that have been marginalized or dispossessed by substantial urban transformations (Osumare 2001; Rose 1994). Along these lines, this chapter shows how young women, who are often associated with the margins of Vietnamese society, physically position themselves at the center of the city and at the heart of the dance style they practice.

Gender and Urbanism in Vietnam

The literature on gender in Vietnam typically locates Vietnamese women in a position inferior to men. Women's subordinate position has been mainly explained by Confucian principles, such as the ‘Three Submissions’ [*tam tòng*] and the ‘Four Virtues’ [*tứ đức*], which define a woman's role in society in relation to a male. According to the ‘Three Submissions’, for example, women must obey their father until they are married, followed by the husband during marriage, and then the son after the husband's death. The ‘Four Virtues’, in turn, define the norms for ‘women's labour’ [*công*], ‘appearance’ [*dung*], ‘speech’ [*ngôn*] and ‘conduct’ [*hạnh*]. Women ought to be skilled at cooking and housekeeping (labor), physically attractive and pleasing to one's husband (appearance), using a humble and submissive communicative repertoire and voice (speech), and, finally, embody female integrity by presenting obedience to seniors and the husband (conduct) (Khuat et al. 2009; Ngo 2004). Recent studies, however, examine transforming gender relations (Drummond and Rydstrom 2004; Earl 2014; Leshkovich 2008; Nguyen 2019), and suggest that the notion of the ideal Vietnamese woman must be understood as a socio-historical product of power structures at a particular point in time, serving the interests of those in power

(Hakkarainen 2018). Consequently, it is not surprising that the socialist state reinvokes the four virtues, insofar as they serve the aims of the state. In her analysis of fitness club culture, for example, Ann Marie Leshkovich (2008) shows how the idea of a ‘woman’s appearance’ [*dung*] has been deployed in the state’s ‘happy family’ campaign, propagating the disciplined middle-class woman as caring mother and loving as well as attractive wife.

Like in many other cities around the world, however, women who used to be associated with the domestic sphere, and who were thus spatially confined to the private space of the house, increasingly move outwards as they pursue work or education in other places. Women have appropriated (semi-) public spaces, mostly for social and private economic activities, thereby negotiating and redefining the boundaries between private and public (Domosh 1998; Earl 2014; Kurfürst 2012; Nguyen 2019). For instance, women might open small food and drink stalls on sidewalks, engage in leisure activities like snacking on the streets, meeting friends for coffee and participating in outdoor aerobics classes, among other things. Liz Bondi (2005: 6) considers cities as “places where embodied meanings and experiences of gender are not necessarily reproduced according to dominant norms, but can be challenged, reworked and reshaped”. By dancing in public, young females unsettle normative ideas of women’s proper conduct in public space. Drawing on visual (hip hop apparel) and kinesthetic (dance) codes commonly associated with male adolescent bodies, they perform non-hegemonic femininities. In fact, the aesthetics of many hip hop dance styles, such as breaking or popping, are typically associated with male physicality and fitness. Performing in public late at night, while dressed in sneakers, baggy pants and extra-large t-shirts, female dancers create spaces of hope and desire that reshape (public) space, both in terms of its function and symbolism.

Performative Acts (Re)Shaping Public Spaces

The performative acts of hip hop dancing take place in symbolic official spaces, such as Lý Thái Tổ Square, the Lenin Monument or the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace. What these three places share in common is their central location in the city as well as their morphology, consisting of a wide, flat and smooth surface suitable for street dance. Symbolically, they are all icons of state power, naturalizing the current political order. Their history is rooted in colonial urbanism, but their function and symbolism altered with socialist urban planning that replaced the colonial planning regime. What is more, male statues oversee both Lý Thái Tổ Square and the Lenin Monument. The statues represent historical figures the party-state draws on in order to legitimize the current order.

Lý Thái Tổ Square

Lý Thái Tổ Square¹ is located at Hanoi’s historical center on the banks of Hoàn Kiếm Lake. Built by the French in the 19th century, the square was one of

the first Western public spaces introduced to a society formerly comprising exclusive spaces, access to which was granted on the basis of social rank and gender (Drummond 2000). On 4 July 1890, a statue of the recently deceased *Résident Général* Paul Bert was installed in a wide-open space bordering the lake, giving the space the name Paul Bert Square. The physical structure of Paul Bert Square linked the main institutions of colonial power, including the town hall, the treasury, the post office, as well as the *Résidence Supérieur* (Bourrin 1941; Service Géographique de l'Indochine 1902). After the country gained independence from France, the square was named Ghandi Park to honor what were good relations with India at that time. However, following a public debate about the square's name among Hanoians and intellectuals, the municipality changed the name and erected a statue of King Lý Thái Tổ, founder of Hanoi, at the site where the 19th-century statue of Paul Bert had once stood. Since then, the square has evolved as a public space, as it is used for state celebrations and diverse other urban activities, such as dancing, skateboarding, inline skating, football and economic activities (Kurfürst 2019). B-boys and b-girls would come to the square from all over the city to practice in front of the statue, starting from 8 p.m. until approximately 11 p.m., while carrying portable music players with them. Breaking is usually exercised in a cypher, a circle in which the dancers enter, taking turns so that everyone can participate. Yet, at Lý Thái Tổ Square, the dancers adapt their spatial practices to the place's rectangular outline, forming a horizontal line in front of the statue. Most of the b-boys and b-girls face the statue while practicing, whereas those taking a break sit opposite them with their backs toward the statue. The adaption of this body arrangement can be explained by taking a closer look at the place's infrastructure. After dark, two large spotlights are directed toward the statue. Facing the statue, and with the lights to their back, the dancers are not blinded by the spotlights, but are rather able to see their own shadows on the ground (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

Apart from the material infrastructure of the place, another reason for the dancers' orientation toward the statue might be that Lý Thái Tổ is a symbol shared by both the party-state and the public. As the first king of the centralized Vietnamese state following 1000 years of Chinese domination, Lý Thái Tổ represents the idea of the country's unity and sovereignty, desired both by the party-state and the Vietnamese public. Such overlap in meaning can be recognized in the way that other spatial practitioners engage with the statue. While the youth are dancing, others approach the statue to pray and make offerings to the king. This occurred the first time I met a young woman named Mai at the statue. At that time, Mai regularly met with a group of female dancers to practice. When I met her again ten years later, she had become a professional dancer and was renowned in the Vietnamese hip hop community for her mastery of diverse dance styles, such as breaking, hip hop and house dance. The b-boys in front of the statue were well aware of her status as a famous b-girl, as Mai is frequently invited to perform in shows abroad as well as to serve as a judge at local and international hip hop battles. What is more, Mai is Vietnam's first b-girl



FIGURE 3.1 B-boy dancing in front of the statue of Lý Thái Tổ.
 Source: Nils Kurfürst, 2018.

trained by b-boy LionT, who is considered a legend and founder of breaking in Vietnam. Mai considers herself a ‘b-boy-girl’ (personal interview, 8 October 2018). For her class and performances, she usually dresses in baggy pants, XL t-shirts and sneakers. Like many others, she started practicing at the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace.

Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace

The Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace is located at Trần Hưng Đạo Street 91, close to the central train station in Hanoi. The palace is situated on the former site of the colonial exhibition and market center [*Nha Đấu Xảo*], which subsequently became the Maurice Long museum of Indochina. The edifice was completely destroyed at the end of World War II. Construction of the Palace started in 1978, the same year the Socialist Republic of Vietnam signed the Treaty of Friendship



FIGURE 3.2 B-girl performing power moves at Lý Thái Tổ Square.

Source: Nils Kurfürst, 2018.

and Cooperation with the Soviet Union in order to guarantee bilateral economic cooperation. The edifice is located close to the office of the Central Party Committee of Hanoi and was a gift from the Central Council of the Soviet Trade Unions to Vietnam. The architecture of the palace followed the model of the Moscow Palace of Labour in the Modern Constructivist style, offering lecture halls, theaters and meeting rooms (Logan 2000). Large official celebrations occur here, such as on the occasion of the National Independence Day (2 September). However, by introducing new spatial practices to the site, the young dancers redefined the palace's intended iconic meaning and function. Dancers practiced alone or in groups alongside the palace's outer walls. The colonnades along the palace's outer walls offer a dry open space to practice during the monsoon season, while offering shade from the sun during the dry season. The flood lights on the corner of the building, and the lamps in the colonnade ceiling, offer enough light in a city where the sun regularly sets around 6 p.m., ideal for evening dances. This materiality, including the embodied practices of the dancers and their perceptual memories, creates a particular sense of place (Degen and Rose 2012). Hoàng Phương, a female hip hop dancer, explained that she liked to dance there because the place had a good 'spirit' (personal interview, 10 October 2018). The palace reminded her of the first dancers who practiced in this very space, creating a place for hip hop in Vietnam (see Figure 3.3).

Mai and Hoàng Phương both started dancing at the *cung* ['palace'], or *cung xô* ['Soviet palace'] as they colloquially refer to the palace. The palace is the site where they first came into contact with hip hop dance as they saw the first generation of male hip hop dancers exercise outside. Phương Silver Monkey, who is said to be the first hip hop dancer in Hanoi, used to practice outside the palace. Training in public, he made his actions "visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes", and thus accountable to others (Garfinkel 1967: vii). Phương



FIGURE 3.3 Colonnade at the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace.

Source: Nils Kurfürst, 2018.

Silver Monkey introduced a new bodily practice to the city, thereby unsettling existing repertoires of bodily movements within public space. Furthermore, he made his bodily practices reproducible to others and enabled them to engage in a mimetic process. Watching him perform, Hoàng Phương and her friends finally asked him to become their teacher. Together with other young men and women, she became a member of his crew. Having learned from him, Hoàng Phương today owns her own dance studio and is the leader of an all-female hip hop crew.

The friendship palace used to be a popular space for young people to mingle in the evening. As more dancers of different styles joined, it became very crowded and some groups did not clean the place after practice, leading the state to prohibit access to the space for dancing (personal interview, 10 October 2018). In the colonnades, a sign reads that all ‘activities of freedom’ [*hạnh động tự do*] are prohibited. The sign implies that all self-organized, rather than formally sanctioned, activities are banned from this space. The assemblage of young dancing



FIGURE 3.4 Hip hop graffiti along the outer walls of the Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace.

Source: Nils Kurfürst, 2018.

bodies in front of the socialist icon is apparently considered a threat to the urban order. Nonetheless, hip hop's past and present remain inscribed in the space through graffiti. Along the right outer wall, tags from different writers present quotes from hip hop vernacular, such as 'CYPHER', 'CREW' and 'HIPHOP DONT STOP'. 'CYPHER' refers to the spatial practice of convening in a circle, and taking turns dancing, or rapping, whereas the crew is a form of social organization among hip hop practitioners. By contrast, 'HIPHOP DONT STOP' is a typical line heard in rap lyrics, as well as the name of a CD compilation of hip hop classics published in 1997. Consequently, while ephemeral embodied practices have been banned from the palace, the tags invoke dancers' perceptual memories (see Figure 3.4).

Lenin Monument

The Lenin Monument is located at Điện Biên Phủ Street opposite the UNESCO heritage site at the royal citadel. The overall outline of the public space is triangular. The area comprises a wide-open space made from stone that houses a statue of Lenin as well as a wooden pavilion in the park behind the monument. Originally built in the colonial period as a memorial for those who had fought for France, the party-state chose to replace the memorial with a statue of Lenin, following the lead of many other socialist countries at that time (Logan 2000). In 1985, the Lenin Monument was erected in the park, consisting of a 5.2-meter-high effigy of the father of the Soviet Union that stood on a 2.7-meter-high stone pedestal (see Figure 3.5).

The place is frequented by practitioners of different street disciplines, such as skateboarders and *tracuers* (Geertman et al. 2016), and has become a collective practice space for diverse hip hop dance styles, such as waacking. Initially, waacking evolved in Latino or Black private social spaces, such as gay underground discos in Los Angeles in the 1970s. Waacking connects the muscular tensing of different body parts with brief flowing transitional movements that might be considered

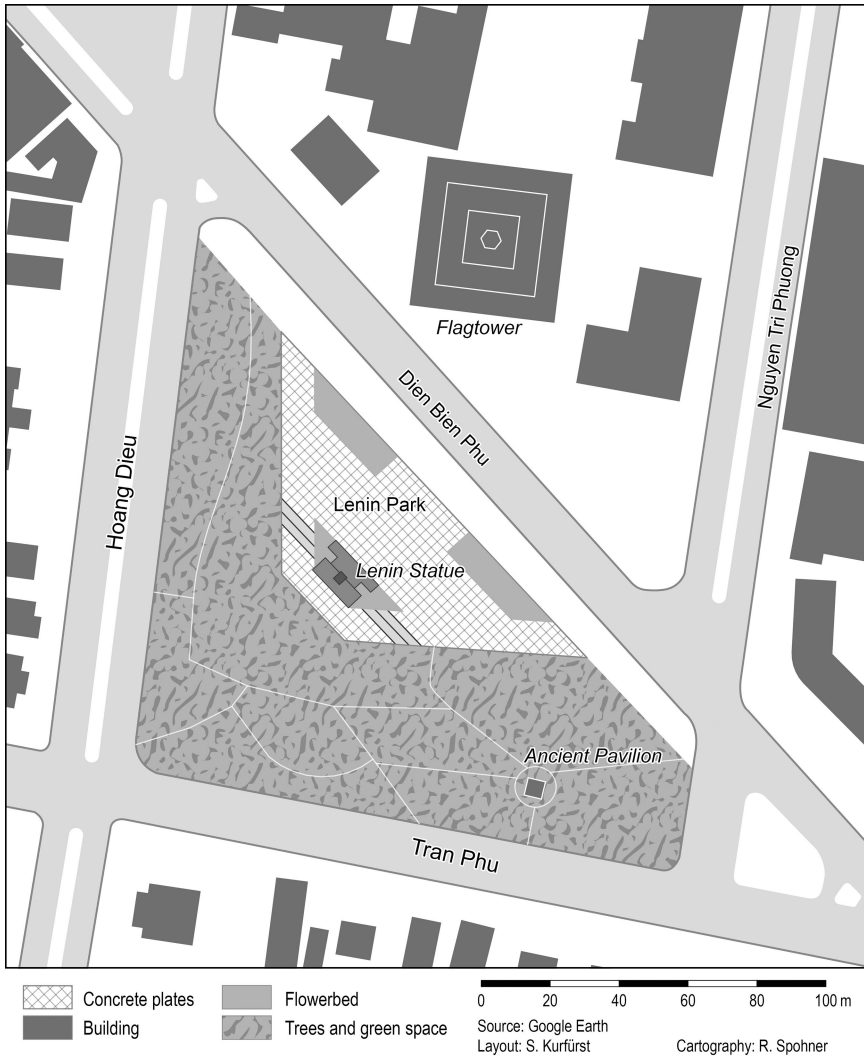


FIGURE 3.5 Map of Lenin Monument.

Source: Sandra Kurfürst and Regine Spohner, 2020.

feminine. Notwithstanding its queer history, waacking according to dance scholars has the potential to perform non-dominant femininities (Bragin 2014; DeFrantz 2016). Twenty-seven-years old, Nguyệt, joined her first waacking class at the Lenin Monument in 2013. At that time, C2Low, the first waacking dancer in Hanoi, taught waacking to friends, and was looking for crew members. Today, Nguyệt is the only waacking teacher in Hanoi apart from C2Low. She teaches her own class, consisting of six girls, twice a week. They meet at the studio on one evening, and at Lenin Monument on the other evening, as she wants her



FIGURE 3.6 Nguyệt’s waacking class practicing at the Lenin Monument.

Source: Nils Kurfürst, 2018.

students to engage with the sensory experience of public space. For her class, she explicitly chose ‘Le-nin’, as they call it, because she wants to maintain the place as a “traditional space of hip hop”, where everyone is welcome to join (Nguyệt, personal interview, 10 October 2018) (see Figure 3.6).

One rainy evening in October 2018, Nguyệt taught four of her students in front of the pavilion, where they put their belongings, food and drinks. English-language disco music was playing from Nguyệt’s mobile phone that was hooked into a portable amplifier. The four students formed a line facing the pavilion with their backs toward the main street. Nguyệt alternately stood in front of the group with her back toward them to demonstrate a particular move before retaking her position within the formation, indicating her self-understanding as a teacher. While she shared skills and knowledge with her students, she still considered herself part of the group (Nguyệt, personal interview 10 October 2018). Referencing Princess Lockeroo, an American female waacker, Nguyệt explains that waacking is about expressing emotions: “Waackers [are] the people who guide everyone into the feelings of the music [...] We express the feelings of the song” (ibid.). The performance of emotions in public spaces challenged ideas of appropriate (female) conduct in public.

Unsettling Normative Ideas of Gender

The three female dancers introduced in this chapter, Mai, Nguyệt and Hoàng Phương, all started out dancing in symbolic public spaces, learning from male teachers, who themselves were the first to practice their particular style in Vietnam. Today, the three women are professional and publicly admired dancers, all teaching their own classes, both indoors in the studio and outdoors in the public spaces where they once started out dancing themselves. They creatively

and playfully appropriate important public spaces, and move right to the center of the city. Through their performative acts of dancing, they unsettle meanings of the place's official symbolism, creating spaces of hope and desire. In other words, they contest the ideological hegemony of the urban landscape, making room for a multiplicity of meanings. Although the young dancers do not self-identify their dance as political, they nonetheless express the contingencies and conflictualities of everyday life. In his call to reconceptualize antagonism in research practice, Oliver Marchart (2018: 99) proposes an ontology of the political, "initiating a change in perception that reaches down to the micrological level of the social". He asks us to pay attention to "the secret conflictuality of daily life – the minor and barely visible tectonic shifts of social sediments" (ibid.: 101). Such minor tectonic shifts consist of the daily performances in front of statues and monuments, the bodily sensations of dancing and the resulting redefinition of the meanings of public space in Hanoi. Dancing as a performative and affective act is intimately linked to struggles that occur in everyday life among the sexes, classes, and citizens and the state. These struggles manifest themselves in a number of bodily affects. The linking and reinforcement of these singular bodily affects into a collective body has a strong transformative power.

Empowerment through voice, music, body and place are essential features of hip hop. The bodily practices of breaking, waacking and hip hop dancing render the individual and collective bodies of young women in the city visible. Under the unsettled conditions of rapid socioeconomic change and an ever-changing urban landscape, female hip hop dancers appropriate symbolic public spaces as "sources of pleasure and power" (Rose 1994: 22). They indulge in hip hop's spatial practices as a means of self-expression and personal freedom as well as to create new forms of sociality. By making their practices visible and accountable to others, they are able to identify peers, who share their passion for dancing in common. With their public demonstration of feelings and emotions (e.g. in waacking), they challenge longstanding ideas about a woman's appropriate conduct in public space. With their bodily contortions, baggy pants and sneakers (e.g. in b-girling and hip hop dance), young females perform non-hegemonic femininities, as well. Assembling and moving together with other young women and men, under the gaze of male statues and the state, they unsettle normative ideas of gender.

Note

- 1 The proper translation of the Vietnamese name *vườn Lý Thái Tổ* would be Lý Thái Tô Garden, but the term 'square' is chosen to emphasize the rectangular morphology of the architectonic object.

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4

UNSETTLED 'PUBLICNESS' AND THE EMBODIED APPROPRIATION OF IKTINOUS STREET IN THESSALONIKI

Evangelia Athanassiou

Introduction

During the 2010 financial crisis in Greece, Thessaloniki experienced deep transformations, which materialized in multiple ways in the city's public spaces—for example, in increased homelessness, drug use and visible urban poverty, lack of maintenance, as well as in moments of insurgence and initiatives of collective action and solidarity. The young were deeply impacted by the crisis, specifically through a dramatic rise in unemployment. In Thessaloniki's region of Macedonia–Thrace, unemployment in the general public was 23.1% in 2016, while it reached record numbers of 45.2% in ages 15–24 and 30.2% in ages 25–34 (ELSTAT 2017).

Research on the effects of austerity politics on the production of public space in Greek cities has documented a plethora of transformations. For instance, austerity politics has resulted in the increasing presence of urban poverty (Kaika 2012) and temporary spatialities of solidarity, resistance and insurgence (Arampatzi 2017; Kaika and Karaliotas 2014; Vaiou and Kalandides 2016). Concurrently, reduced state funding for local government has opened the private sector's opportunity for further penetration into the management and regeneration of public spaces (Athanassiou 2017; Athanassiou et al. 2018). In this context, the use of public space also changed, and a new contested and heterogeneous geography of youth culture was produced. Teenagers and young people started to hang out in squares and pedestrianized streets in the evening, instead of frequenting bars and cafés.

This chapter focuses on this new urban routine performed in public spaces by groups of young people in Thessaloniki, and the ways it has been confronted by formal municipal policies and other actors. In so doing, I seek to contribute to the discussion of the dialectics of settled urban routines and unsettling moments of disruption in two ways. First, I study spontaneous everyday practices of the

young and discuss them as an embodied appropriation of streets and squares, unsettling the dominant paradigm of public space. Second, the chapter presents multiple ways through which this dominant paradigm has been discursively and materially produced and reproduced locally, by multiple actors in dialectic encounter with global trends. Hence, austerity politics performed at different spatial levels during the crisis are understood as entangled with everyday embodied praxis and lived spaces.

The chapter engages briefly with theoretical discourses regarding the dominant paradigm of public space as produced within neoliberal urbanization processes. The discussion then highlights how young people are a prominent, yet often marginalized, user group of public space. The case study of Iktinou and Zefxidos streets in the city center is chosen as a controversial case of embodied appropriation of public space, which consolidated into formal policies of repression and, ultimately, spatial reconstruction. Data was collected using a combination of primary research methods:

- personal observation;
- eight semi-structured interviews of different involved groups (young users of Iktinou and Zefxidos streets, bar owners, one resident and one employee at a convenience store), which were conducted during March and April 2017 in cafés or outdoors on the two streets;
- research on the local press and official municipal documents.

Narrow 'Publicness'

Within the context of neoliberal urbanization processes, there is a dominant paradigm of public space, roughly defined by the virtues of liveliness, attractiveness and safety (Mitchell 2003; Zukin 1995). A vibrant street life is seen as not only promoting safety but also facilitating consumption, economic activity and urban competitiveness in the global market. In recent years, cappuccino drinking in pavement cafés has become the icon of an attractive urban environment (Zukin 1995) and the goal of urban regeneration schemes. Intensive use of public space is encouraged through attractive design and events programming which are often provided, managed, maintained or safeguarded by private companies or through various types of partnerships between local authorities, community associations and the corporate sector (Carmona et al. 2008; Zukin 1995). Recent research has focused on how this diversified involvement of different actors in public space production affects the public nature, i.e. 'publicness' of streets and squares (Langstraat and van Melik 2013; Nemeth and Schmidt 2011).

The dominant paradigm of 'clean and safe' public space encourages the presence of 'normal' users, while it restricts 'undesireable' uses and users (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006)—what Zukin (1995: 28) refers to as "pacification by cappuccino". Such 'undesirable' users and activities typically comprise the homeless,

drug users, unauthorized street vendors and activities like picketing, protesting or even busking and loitering (Mitchell 2003). They are seen as antagonistic to the dominant paradigm and are often regulated against, totally forbidden and even legally prosecuted. Moreover, a depoliticized paradigm is produced substituting safety for universal access and neoliberal participatory experiments for the right to use, inhabit and change the city. The concomitant exclusionary practices aim to safeguard the use of public space for consumption and leisure, often undermining its political role.

Within such narrowly understood ‘publicness’, the presence of young people, particularly those in adolescence and early twenties, is often seen as a threat and, in many countries, has been treated with curfews, ticketing, surveillance and policing (Travlou 2003). Young people are not of course a homogeneous group, but rather a “fragmented mass” (Bayat 2010: 119) and differ from each other, in terms of age, gender, class and ethnicity. However, they share a collective identity which is built through school and the media as well through “passive networks”, i.e. “by sensing their commonalities through such methods as recognizing similar hairstyles, blue jeans, hang-out places, food, fashions, and the pursuit of public fun” (ibid.: 19). Young people also share a minimal role in institutionalized participation processes of the production of urban space and, hence, their spatial needs and desires are marginalized in the formal design of public spaces.

Research on children’s and teenagers’ perceptions and use of public space (e.g. see: Hart 1979; Lynch 1977; Matthews et al. 1998; Ward 1978) documented that the young often defy urban design intentions and demarcations and establish new spontaneous ‘microgeographies’ in the city (Matthews et al. 1998). These unplanned ‘microgeographies’ are ingrained in the formal network of public spaces creating new epicenters of activity and vividness, enabling new encounters, practicing new routines and temporalities—often clashing with formally designated uses and dominant conceptions of public space. Young people’s activities and spontaneous use of public space are often portrayed by residents, shopkeepers and the local media as unruly, noisy, deviant or dangerous.

The *botellon* phenomenon in Spain is a telling example. Mature adolescents and young people in their early twenties hang out in squares and streets on Fridays and Saturdays drinking alcohol and playing music, instead of consuming in bars and cafés. Nearby residents complain about noise and the litter that revelers leave behind. In Spain, the *botellon* exploded in the 1990s and has its roots in anti-Francoist gatherings back in the 1970s. This loud, unruly and vibrant use of public space has caused a lot of controversies and public debate and has been treated with a number of restrictive measures such as intensive policing, restrictions in alcohol selling and finally a ban on drinking in public spaces, except for specially designated public spaces—the ‘botellondromes’—where it is permitted (see Pedrero-Garcia 2018; Rodriguez-Martos 2006).

Botellon, like skateboarding and loitering, has been routinely portrayed in the media as deviant while research has focused primarily on related adolescent alcohol drinking, and cannabis use (e.g. see: Pedrero-Garcia 2018;

Rodriguez-Martos 2006). While noisy and challenging in residential areas, *botellon* is also not producing revenue and antagonizes other, more traditional and sanctioned, hospitality and leisure uses. *Botellon* is incongruous to the dominant paradigm of public space involving experiences of urban life at cool pavement cafés, bars, busy pop-up food markets, restaurants and open-air festivals. The bodies that occupy the steps and ledges of Spanish squares, however, can be seen as constantly producing an alternative 'publicness'. A 'publicness' that questions the assumed order and brings about controversy and conflict, not through momentary acts of insurgence or dissent but through everyday acts of embodied appropriation. Although not organized as collectives or sharing common political ideologies, Asef Bayat (2010) argues, simply through their presence and their everyday routines, the young assert the 'youth habitus', i.e. "a series of dispositions, ways of being, feeling, and carrying oneself (e.g. a greater tendency for experimentation, adventurism, idealism, autonomy, mobility, and change) that are associated with the sociological fact of 'being young'" (2010: 118). Their actions, just like other subaltern groups' actions, are identified by Bayat as 'nonmovements', i.e. "collective actions of noncollective actors; they embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations" (ibid.: 14). Drawing on "a dialectic between 'the end of public space' and its beginning" (Mitchell 2003: 36) this chapter uses the example of outdoor partying by the young in Thessaloniki to discuss how everyday practices routinely performed by bodies, which are simultaneously individual and collective, may unsettle the dominant paradigm, bring about conflict and assert an alternative 'publicness'.

Unsettling 'Publicness'

Notwithstanding the financial crisis, the Municipality of Thessaloniki actively sought to increase the city's share of public spaces, to reclaim space for pedestrians back from car traffic and to intensify the use of public spaces through open-air events and participatory enterprises. Due to shrinking state funding, the Municipality initiated a multifaceted collaboration with the corporate sector as well as the city's different citizen groups, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and professional organizations, while discursively relating to the unequivocal quest for competitiveness in the global economy and the economic vitality of local businesses (Athanassiou 2017; Athanassiou et al. 2018). Private companies became involved in the management, refurbishment and maintenance of central public spaces. The first such case was *What's Up Park*, which was a municipal park transformed into an activity park by the leading mobile telephony company in Greece (Athanassiou 2017). Citizen groups, like the *Friends of the New Waterfront*, and associations like the local branch of the *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA) have also allied with the Municipality for maintenance, cleaning, tree-planting and organizing cultural events in public spaces. Finally, the Municipality has

been active in regulating central public spaces, banning, for example, political campaigns from Thessaloniki's central Aristotelous Square, which traditionally hosted all political campaigns. This ban aimed at safeguarding the unobstructed function of the city's central commercial area (ibid.). What kind of unsettling and transformative effects does the Greek version of the *botellon* have on the dominant paradigm of public space that the Municipality of Thessaloniki has sought to settle?

The use of public space for evening leisure by young people, mostly in their late adolescence and early twenties, has in recent years created a new urban routine. One of the spots where young crowds gather in the evening—to hang out, drink alcohol and often play music—are Iktinou and Zefxidos streets, two intersecting streets located at the heart of the historic center. The streets were pedestrianized in the early 1980s and have since attracted an increasing number of restaurants, cafés and bars. It is a densely built area with a permissible floor area ratio of 4.8 and designated for 'central uses'. The streets are characterized by a highly permeable frontage with successive shop windows and entrances to apartment buildings. Ground floor land uses comprise six cafés and bars, three restaurants, fast-food restaurants and bakeries, retail shops and services. There is also a school complex and a public building hosting the Engineers' Pension Fund. It is a remarkable mix of uses, given that Iktinou street stretches for just over 170 meters and Zefxidos for 70 meters. Upper floors host some offices and medical practices but mainly residences.

Cafés and restaurants occupy an increasing percentage of the streets' width with pavement sitting and shading devices (see Figure 4.1). This type of occupation of public space by private enterprises is regulated by the Municipality,



FIGURE 4.1 Iktinou street's many cafés and restaurants occupying a large part of the street's width for outdoor sitting.

Source: Evangelia Athanassiou, 2017.

which rents out specific areas for an annual fee. Securing both an income and an attractive image of vibrant street life, the Municipality has been notoriously lax in controlling the expansion of pavement cafés in public space, especially along Iktinou street. In 2009, residents complained the expansion of cafés was far exceeding the legally assigned areas and was also obtrusive to the function of the local school complex (Zouka 2009). Outdoor café facilities were also blocking the necessary emergency lane to ambulances and fire vehicles, as was often reported in the local press (*ibid.*). Residents and the school's parent association had repeatedly protested the expansion of the cafés, addressing the traffic police, the municipality and the Greek ombudsman.

According to an Iktinou street frequenter (female university student aged 22, personal interview, April 2017), the gathering of the young in Iktinou started with a group of around 30 people who moved from another pedestrianized street, Dimitriou Gounari, to avoid the violent incidents caused there by drug users. That first group shared a common leftist-anarchist ideology and, as the interviewee stated, moving to Iktinou was for them a conscious act of asserting their right to use public space. Soon many more young people joined, gradually assembling a more diversified and noisier crowd. Young people from around the city, especially from the city center, were sitting on the few available benches and stone ledges around the greenery and leaning against the fence of the schools' yard. They were mostly gathering at the intersection of the two streets in front of the school complex, a space free from outdoor seating for cafés (see Figure 4.2). People frequenting Iktinou street ranged from mid-teens to their early 20s, both Greek and migrants, from around the city (Iktinou street frequenter, female university student aged 20, personal interview, March 2017). They used to meet there drinking



FIGURE 4.2 Friday night in Iktinou.

Source: Antigone Avdi, 2017.

alcohol, listening to or playing music between 9 p.m. and 4 a.m. As the same frequenter commented, “often it was impossible to go through Iktinou street” (ibid.).

All four interviewed young frequenters said that, between spring and autumn, they preferred to spend their evenings in public space, rather than in bars and cafés. The reasons they mentioned were:

- a sense of freedom from a predefined space, use, style, music or rules of behavior,
- the chance of meeting up with more people, friends and acquaintances than in a bar,
- a conscious claim of their right to the use of public space,
- spending less money.

The latter had become a pressing necessity during the crisis. It was not, however, the first reason mentioned by any of the interviewees. Asked why they chose the particular streets, interviewees replied that they and their friends chose Iktinou and Zefxidos because of their central location as well as their friendly design that allowed the use of ledges for sitting. As one of the street frequenters suggested “it is very cozy here, it is like an open embrace” (female university student aged 22, personal interview, April 2017). Young Iktinou frequenters that were interviewed said they did not feel any danger or sense of insecurity (Iktinou street frequenters, female university student aged 20, female university student aged 22, male high-school student aged 17, personal interview, March–April 2017). They reported there was occasional cannabis smoking and no other drug use or dealing. Fights, they said, were very rare. They admitted that the levels of noise were high, due to people’s voices and sometimes music.

Shop owners, however, depicted a different picture during interviews. Owners of bars and cafés with outdoor sitting facilities were frustrated with people gathering. They did acknowledge the right of the people to use public space. However, they reported increasing incidents of delinquency, from drug use and dealing, underage alcohol use and fights, to graffiti, littering and urinating in public space and even in the schoolyard (bar owners, male, aged 43, 50, 53, personal interview, April 2017). They felt the Municipality had not responded to what they were experiencing as a problem (male bar owner aged 53, personal interview, April 2017). The Municipality had, however, intensified cleaning services, which happened very early in the morning. Owners of bars and cafés believed that their business had been degraded since this phenomenon started as it turned the street from a cool upmarket area catering to the middle class to an area addressing an audience of a lower societal ranking (bar owners, male, aged 43, 53, personal interview, March and April 2017). One of the bar owners (male aged 53, personal interview, April 2017) implied that people gathering in Iktinou, and the reluctance of the authorities to control them, was part of a plan to further reduce property values, so that the area could change hands and be redeveloped. He believed that regulation of outdoor sitting facilities was too restrictive and that the fee they had to pay was too high. All these combined with the crisis, reduced prices and

reduced consumption created a dire situation for their businesses. They believed that they should be actively supported by the local authorities, for instance, by allowing outdoor sitting to expand, toward the area where the revelers hang out. This would have reduced space available for the young crowd and gradually push them away, one of the interviewees suggested (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, businesses took advantage of the trend, selling takeaway drinks at lower prices. An employee at a convenience store (female aged 28, personal interview, April 2017) said their business was positively affected by the trend. She could understand, however, why residents were annoyed. In the evenings, she said, they always made sure there was a man serving at their store, as a woman would feel insecure to serve the revelers who often caused fights. She, personally, worked only in the morning shifts.

Residents often called the police and complained about the noise which would go on until early in the morning and comprised, apart from talking, fights and loud music by guitars or sound systems (male resident aged 50, personal interview, April 2017). Extensive graffiti and rubbish were also described during interviews as a problem. There had also been incidents, like throwing buckets of water and even eggs from a balcony against the young crowd, reported one of the street frequenters (female university student aged 22, personal interview, April 2017). Residents allied with shop owners and created a petition demanding action by the local authorities and the police to restrict the revelers. They also intervened at the municipal council.

Shop owners who were interviewed agreed that the police were not doing anything to stop the problem and they did not even respond promptly when called upon for an emergency (male bar owner aged 53, personal interview, April 2017). The police, however, as observed during fieldwork and reported by young interviewees, were regularly patrolling the area. Feelings regarding their presence were mixed among the interviewees. One was very frustrated about it saying it was unacceptable to have to carry an ID to use public space. She also implied that there was a level of discrimination on behalf of the police who tended to ask for ID mostly from migrants (Iktinou street frequenter, female university student aged 20, personal interview, March 2017). Another interviewee was not annoyed about the police presence saying that they would not actually do anything. They were just there (Iktinou street frequenter, male high-school student aged 20, personal interview, March 2017).

The local press first reported on Iktinou in 2009, regarding complaints by residents and the school parents' association against the expansion of outdoor sitting facilities of the cafés. Since 2015, their interest turned on the 'problem' of young people reveling. They portrayed the street ominously and described it as an "asylum" (Karavasili 2016:17) and a "ghetto" (Thefestival team 2015) to indicate the reluctance of the police and the municipality to intervene. Drug use and fights are foregrounded in their reports of the "wild nights of Iktinou" (Gerakaritou and Papanastasoulis 2015). The state of emergency projected by shop owners, residents and the local press stood in stark contrast with the image of fun, coziness and safety that was depicted by the young interviewees.

The police increased their presence in response to pressure from residents, shop owners and the local press. However, one of the bar owners (male, aged 50, personal interview, April 2017) remarked that they were also checking cafés' compliance to regulations regarding outdoor sitting. One evening in May 2015, after midnight, there was a big police operation involving squads of about 100 policemen. They surrounded the area and asked for ID documents from those hanging out. Around 40 of them, who were not able to present an ID, were taken to the police station for identification. None was detained. The General Police Directorate promised to position two to three squads during all weekends and perform regular patrols to ensure safety and order in the area.

The municipality originally responded by intensifying cleaning operations, and later street lighting. They also approved the extension of pavement sitting at the upper part of Iktinou. However, as the then deputy mayor for construction, environment and cleaning remarked, the problem “cannot be solved with small interventions” (Karavasili 2016:17). He announced that the “total reconstruction” of the two streets was the Municipality's first priority for 2017, in order to “repair the functional and aesthetic disharmonies” (Municipality of Thessaloniki 2017: 15). The scheme's priorities, as published, were purely technical and focused only on the visual and acoustic protection of the school complex, and on securing unobstructed access of emergency vehicles (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the deputy mayor later admitted that

it is a project, that was not part of the Municipality's immediate priorities but was imposed as there were many offenders in the area [...] They had turned the area around the schools to a beer bar. There were protests on a daily basis [...] So we are intervening in an area that was a refuge of delinquency.

(Gerakaritou 2018)

The design scheme was implemented during autumn 2018. Both streets were totally reconstructed. Ledges and benches were removed and were not replaced. The new design did not provide any urban furniture for sitting and released more space for cafés and restaurants to expand their outdoor facilities (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4). ‘Total reconstruction’ introduced defensive design measures as instruments of biopolitics to control bodies and re-impose social order (Gandy 2006) under the guise of technical requirements. More space was secured for ‘normal’ users of public space.

‘Publicness’ Reassembled

In Thessaloniki, a narrow conception of ‘publicness’ was produced, not exclusively by the municipality or by private managers of public space, but by multiple actors, imposing different forms of control and power and prioritizing a particular use of public space while actively restricting other uses. This narrow ‘publicness’ was tolerant to illegal private expansion of pavement cafés on public



FIGURE 4.3 Iktinou street, before reconstruction: there were benches and ledges that were used by the young groups for sitting.

Source: Evangelia Athanassiou, 2017.



FIGURE 4.4 Iktinou street, after reconstruction: no benches and no ledges that can be used for sitting.

Source: Evangelia Athanassiou, 2019.

space, showcasing the city as a tourist attraction with vibrant street life and coffee culture. It was, however, intolerant of the spontaneous expressions of the young and their 'youth habitus' that antagonized the function of the street cafés.

Iktinou used to be a settled space of consumption and leisure, an attractive image of 'cappuccino urbanism' (Zukin 1995). Since 2013, a mixture of local and migrant

young bodies followed an originally politicized group, appropriated the space left over by consumerism and claimed their right to use public space. Amid the fallout of the economic crisis, the youth appropriated the streets and collectively enacted an alternative, unplanned and non-commodified use of central public space. It was, however, noisy, dirty and unruly—and eventually attracted illegal activities—consequently incongruous with the dominant paradigm of ‘clean and safe’ public space. The press, shop owners, residents and the municipality depicted a dark image of delinquency and drug dealing, villifying the presence of the young and foregrounded hygiene, safety and order as pressing demands. The fences and ledges became a contested space in which different paradigms of public space clashed.

The appropriation of the two streets by young people was not related either to a collectivization of the users or to a common ideology, beyond the initial politicized group. The young, in ‘big numbers’, only through the ‘art of [their] presence’ (Bayat 2010) and not through organized political action, as a ‘nonmovement’, appropriated public space, visualized their youthfulness and performed alternative uses. Young bodies using public space questioned the dominant paradigm of depoliticized, ‘clean and safe’ public space, brought about conflict and unsettled the consensual, hegemonic conceptualization of ‘publicness’ that prioritizes consumption and leisure by excluding ‘undesirable’ users. Eventually, this ‘publicness’ was systematically reassembled in Iktinou by the concerted action of many agents acting in consensus. Increased lighting, policing and ID control were used as initial means to evict the ‘undesirable’. Finally, a new spatial arrangement, a defensive design, physically deterred young bodies from frequenting the street and unleashed more space for consumption and leisure.

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5

UNSETTLING PLANNING PRACTICES

From Accommodation to Dwelling in Hamburg

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Unsettling the Planning Routines

The project *Building a Proposition for Future Activities* at HafenCity Universität (HCU) Hamburg, Germany, started in the year 2015 with a first project sketch for possible engagement with refugees who were going to be accommodated in the north of Hamburg. The engagement strategy was conceived in a context of increasingly nationalist and racist attitudes in Germany, where the growing numbers of refugees were perceived by some as a threat. The project explicitly intended to critically address the settled routine in German planning authorities to formally distinguish between accommodation and dwelling, by combining the practice of urban design with research and teaching (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

The chapter first outlines the series of events that unfolded in Hamburg focusing on the contested nature of accommodating refugees into Hamburg's urban fabric. The definitions and sequence of events of refugee housing and cultural inclusion strategies in Hamburg are analyzed through Jacques Rancière in Mustafa Dikeç's work. After delineating the conflicts and negotiations, we move between Heidegger and McFarlane to argue that if dwelling has to be learned, what we today must ask is how the city can be learned. Grounded in actor-network and assemblage theories, *Building a Proposition for Future Activities* can be understood as a way to unsettle academic practice and political-administrative procedures.

What in Our View Happened

Hamburg's planning department together with *Fördern und Wohnen* [F&W, 'Support and Housing'], the city's public agency providing social services and accommodation, devised a program called *Unterkünfte mit Perspektive Wohnen* [UPW, 'Accommodation with the Perspective of Dwelling']. The program is a



FIGURE 5.1 Aspects and relations of unsettling the planning process. The three-fold threads of engagement represent Urban Design’s understanding of Research, Teaching and Practice.

Source: Research and teaching program Urban Design, HCU Hamburg, 2021.



FIGURE 5.2 Timeline of unsettling the planning process.

Source: Research and teaching program Urban Design, HCU Hamburg, 2021.

legal construct that grants those who produce the buildings under this program to fast-track the realization process by postponing time-consuming parts of the building inspection procedure, which greatly prioritizes developers. Construction may start without a proper permit. The permission process is postponed to after completion. Furthermore, the program is in many ways the spatial-political translation of the municipality's integration policies. It determines where and how refugees are accommodated and thus reaches far into their everyday life.

Summer 2016, Poppenbüttel: We walk across a plot of undeveloped farmland in Poppenbüttel, one of Hamburg's most northern reaches that is surrounded by single-family houses and a golf course. Hamburg's Senate has decided to build 21 three-to-five-story houses to accommodate 1500 refugees. The decision was reached through consultation with the district administration and was based on several parameters such as availability and size. The City of Hamburg's declared goal is to avoid having to accommodate refugees in shelters, mostly tents, over the winter. The city commissioned F&W with the development of a housing project within the UPW in Poppenbüttel. A group of professors from Hamburg's universities, together with Hamburg's Chamber of Architects, established an advisory board for the UPW project. However, the board was terminated after only two meetings because the advisory board's request for sufficient information was not provided by the municipality and the city in general was not actually interested in their advice.

At the same time, concerned citizens form an initiative opposing the planned UPW. Together with other interest groups, they create an umbrella organization named *Hamburg für gute Integration* ['Hamburg for Good Integration'] and negotiate the *Hamburger Bürgerverträge* ['Hamburg citizens' agreements'] with the Hamburg parliament. The citizens' agreements lead to the re-design of central aspects of the UPW program. Most critically, they reduce the refugees' occupancy rate of the planned buildings from the entire UPW program to only one-third of its total capacity. F&W will allocate another third to persons holding a residence entitlement certificate, and another non-subsidized third will be put on the market. *Hamburg für gute Integration* and its initiative ironically celebrate this as an essential step for Hamburg's path to good integration. In their eyes, this is a significant step to prevent the risk of emerging ghettos in their neighborhoods as a consequence of planning.

Another citizens' initiative named *Poppenbüttel hilft e.V.* ['Poppenbüttel helps'] is promoting a *Versammlungshaus* [meeting house] in the planned UPW and is sending a rough sketch to the president of the HCU Hamburg, who forwards it to our team of the Urban Design teaching and research program (UD). Following preliminary discussions, representatives of all the organizations involved (the head of the district administration, the head of F&W, a representative from the senate, representatives of both initiatives and the UD professor) hold a round table at the district office for the planning of the Poppenbüttel meeting house project. Initial promises and concessions are quickly made to the project. F&W will provide the plot to build on. Our team (UD) will run a seminar and produce a representation

of the future meeting house, as desired by the neighbors' initiative. Both district and initiative want to raise funds for the total production costs of the building. The meeting house is to be self-built by refugees and neighbors. Everyone at the round table agrees that the self-construction aspect could allow the project to serve as a precedent for collective action that does not rely purely on political-administrative modes of dealing with the refugee crisis, effectively unsettling hierarchical control. The project should not be built *for* refugees, but *with* them. All work done by the institutional actors should be about opening up the agency of refugees by including them as equal partners in project planning, implementation and future use. Members of the round table also concur that the building should not receive refugees as passive bodies that will merely be accommodated and welcomed, as the UPW concept implies (Bürgerschaft der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg 2015). At the threshold between project conception and project planning, our team document the project motif: *Building a Proposition for Future Activities*.

The Process of Finding Motives

The motif directly emerges from a contestation of official narratives regarding refugee resettlement programs in Hamburg, as a way to advance the integrity of pluralism as a viable technique to build communities *and* housing. If our reading of the production process is somewhat polemical, this is due to the fact that it has proven quite controversial at times and in places. How so? Here Mustafa Dikeç's reading of Jacques Rancière's conceptualization of politics brings further analysis into play. Dikeç (2012: 172) dissects ways in which space can be considered a mode of political thinking and outlines that "space does not become political just by virtue of being full of power, or by virtue of the contentious multiplicity of interests embedded in space". Instead,

following Rancière, space becomes political in that it becomes the polemical place where a wrong can be addressed and equality can be demonstrated. It becomes an integral element of the interruption of the 'natural' (or, better yet, naturalized) order of domination through the constitution of a place of encounter by those that have no part in that order. The political, in this account, is signaled by this encounter as a moment of interruption, and not by the mere presence of power relations and competing interests. (ibid.)

We move forward to follow the actants of the story provided so far: the municipality issues the UPW program, which is designed to produce thousands of housing units as a response to the refugee crisis and—if read generously—as a response to the housing crisis more generally. It seeks to fast-forward the production process so that accommodation can be provided. While a typical timeframe to produce housing units in multi-story residential buildings in Hamburg is somewhere

between three to five years, with half the time dedicated to finding and securing the land in a city where land prices have skyrocketed over the past years, the UPW program aimed to do it in less than two years. We argue that this urgency, on the one hand, leads to positioning those who are necessary for or are complying with the program (landowners, investors, political-administrative representatives, building companies, typical plans and designs) in a streamlined process and, on the other hand, designing out those who call into question the very standards and assumptions enabling the program and getting it up and running (academics, the Chamber of Architects, critical journalists, reports and studies researching how to live and how we actually live together). The situation is designed to allow for the acceleration of housing production through the already-existing means, methods and actors who currently manage housing and development. This approach assumes this is necessary when the scale and scope of the problem has radically changed: Hamburg's task is not simply to provide more housing for existing residents in Hamburg, but also housing for refugees and the facilitation of cultural inclusion in a time of increasing racial tension. The UPW program was the naturalized order of how to manage the refugee crisis or, as Dikeç (2005: 174, referring to Rancièrè 2001) may have described it, the UPW functions as a police unit to manage "an established social order of governance with everyone in their 'proper' place in the seemingly natural order of things".

Appearance of the Citizens

However, the will to get things done only held until the neighbors of the planned UPW project in Poppenbüttel started to worry about the value of their land, their life's work, and thus their security in old age. They met in the evenings and on weekends on their verandas and in living rooms, wrote a petition and went door to door to collect signatures. When they had collected the necessary 25,000 signatures for a referendum, they approached town hall and forced the political and administrative authorities into negotiations. The Parliament reacted with the *Hamburger Bürgerverträge*. This delayed the planned process of realizing the housing capacities in the UPW program—uncertainty regarding what to build and for which clients is unsettling for an industry relying on clear-cut building assignments in order to organize their capacities efficiently. The municipality's core strategy in the realization of the UPW program—designing out politics to fast-forward the production of accommodation capacities—backfired. Thousands of refugees now remained 'over-resident'¹ in central primary reception facilities as they could not be accommodated in UPW capacities after a maximum of six months as planned.

Again, we read Dikeç (2005: 177) citing Levitas (1996) in order to theorize the umbrella organization's political efforts and their effects: "Structural dynamics that produce and reproduce inequalities disappear from the policy agenda, and the name of the problem becomes 'exclusion'". The citizens felt excluded from the political negotiations over integration policy. "Hence not

only is the ‘problem’ separated from its structural dynamics, but also a certain idea of society is evoked, where the ‘included’ are doing just fine” (ibid.). With the citizen’s agreements, the questionable umbrella organization *Hamburg für gute Integration* was able to dictate pertinent spatial aspects of the UPW program, and reach far into the everyday lives of refugees to be accommodated there: The capacities for refugee accommodations were not distributed according to urban design parameters as in the initial plans but had to be realized as far away as possible from existing residential areas. Playgrounds or other meeting places were not planned at central locations in the existing neighborhoods and instead moved to the inward-facing areas of new housing estates. The facades were made of red brick typical of Hamburg. The capacities for refugee accommodations in the new UPW locations were not only reduced to the *Drittelmix* [‘one-third mix’ of refugees, people with eligibility permits for subsidized housing and freely available on the market], but the capacity allocated to refugees was to be reduced again after three years by several hundred places per project. All this added to the problematic aspects that were already inscribed in the program: for example, the fact that refugees in UPW projects do not receive a rental contract, which would give them the protections offered by Germany’s federal tenancy laws. Because they are accommodated, they formally are not dwelling, i.e. not leading their own household. This immediately and unequivocally limits how to make use of the accommodation and, conversely, makes it easier for the landlord to impose sanctions on the tenants who are not protected by landlord-tenant laws.

The process of writing up a petition, collecting signatures door to door, and eventually negotiating the citizen’s agreements “is not about assessing interests and entitlements between parties; it is, first of all, a conflict concerning ‘the existence of parties as parties and the existence of a relationship that constitutes them as such’” (Dikeç 2005: 178, referring to Rancière 1999: 26). At no time between the emergence of the migration movement at the end of 2014 and the Hamburg citizen’s agreements in the summer of 2016 had refugees had a seat at the table, let alone a voice in the discussion. Plain and simple, they remained refugees who had to be accommodated.

What Did We Make of This?

Our UD team had a seat at the UPW project’s roundtable as an institutional actor. So, all that remained for us was to interfere on the level of the project, with all its contingencies about whether or not the project could help enable refugees to do more than being accommodated. We kept critiquing and stating that being accommodated is, to say the least, a complicated matter. How would we proceed from there? In a debate on the relevance of Lucius Burckhardt’s work in terms of the politicization of planning, Monika Grubbauer (2017) and Michael Guggenheim (2017) pick up on the same sentence at the end of Burckhardt’s essay *Who plans planning?* calling for “a comprehensive consideration of the way in which

municipalities change their environment through planning” (Burckhardt 2017 [1974]: 114, own translation). Grubbauer (2017: 144, own translation) pleads for

making visible the interrelations between projects and infrastructures and the resources of the European ‘citizen city’ on the one hand, and the exploitation strategies and economic interests articulated elsewhere in the context of global regimes of regulation and resource exploitation on the other.

She places this investigation decidedly “beyond concrete projects, places and urban (or rural) institutional contexts” (ibid.). From an ANT perspective, Guggenheim (2017: 149–150, own translation) argues that the problem of the politicization of planning can be addressed through its multiplicity:

Planning does not take place in one but in different worlds, or in the terminology of actor network theory: in multiple ontologies. [...] The point now is that the various actors use each other to construct their world, or translate each other into different worlds.

While we agree with Grubbauer in her demand to relocate the research on how cities change their environment through planning beyond the concrete project, we nevertheless assume along with Guggenheim that we can meet this demand by engaging with the physical and social aspects of the project, both as active makers and academics. At a minimum, we are experimenting with design processes for different forms of inclusion, reassembling all pertinent aspects of its normalized order in its new occurrence. At its core is Dikeç (2005: 181, referring to Rancière 2001): “politics is made possible by a multiplicity of political subjects configuring, transforming, appropriating space for the manifestation of dissensus, for the coexistence of two worlds in one, becoming political subjects in and through space”. Regarding our position, this enables us to immerse ourselves in its present occurrence as an unsettled and unsettling terrain to study historical developments of this status quo and to draw out possible future trajectories, or build propositions for future activities.

Toward Learning the City

The relationship between accommodation and dwelling is at the core of our politicization of the UPW program anchored to our motif *Building a Proposition for Future Activities*. As we entered the project, we found the problematization of the form of housing in full swing—a polemical debate between civil society initiatives and the city’s administration, whose handling of the UPW program was rather contradictory. While adapting to the alienating Hamburg citizens’ agreements, it simultaneously funded an inclusive meeting house project. Colin McFarlane (2011) has put forward useful work to bring dwelling and assemblage

into dialogue, despite their distinct intellectual histories with the aim of thinking the city as a dwelling process and conceiving its spatiality as processual, relational, mobile and unequal. By drawing a reference to Jacobs and Smith (2008), he renders visible how we might be able to do away with the object (home)—practice (housing) debate by focusing “upon the dispersed logics, practices, meanings, and experiences that perform ‘home’ as an ‘assemblage of dwelling’” (McFarlane 2011: 657). Following this argument

[t]he acts of ‘housing’ and ‘dwelling’ [as well as accommodating] are a coproduction between those who are housed and the variant technologies that do the work of housing: ornaments and decorations, yes, architecture and bricks and mortar, sanitation and communication technologies, too, but also housing policies and practices, mortgage lending and insurance, credit scores, and all the other lively ‘things’ of finance.

(Jacobs and Smith 2008: 517, cited in McFarlane 2011: 657)

McFarlane (2011) continues with the conceptualization of dwelling by drawing on Heidegger’s (1971) description of dwelling as being

not just about engineering, architecture, or *techne* (in the Greek conception of ‘letting appear’), but the raising of locations and joining of their spaces through gathering, or assembly. What matters most about dwelling, as Heidegger suggests in this instance in relation to housing, is that people must *learn* to dwell.

(McFarlane 2011: 657, original emphasis)

This learning, however, McFarlane reminds, “is structured by stark geographies of inequality” (*ibid.*), in our case, the geographies of refugees and the ‘concerned’ citizens of Hamburg.

Yet, how do we learn dwelling? From accommodation, it is hard to learn, for all things to do with dwelling and active living are reduced to being taken care of. Yet clearly, refugees do more than being accommodated; in fact, they live the city, especially because being accommodated is not all they (have to) do. Accommodated people relocate individual dwelling functions to several places other than home and become experts in the urban fabric that serves as living room, dining table, drawing room and meeting space (Jesella 2017; Momic 2018).

UD students and staff engaged with the situation refugees face focused on the accommodation and housing discourse: refugee accommodations and accommodating structures, administration and management; we studied urban modes of dwelling-as-practice beyond the home and investigated the legal structure of refugee accommodation. Again, the notion of accommodation, as opposed to dwelling or housing, is highly problematic as it denies any active designing of one’s everyday life by reducing it to the container space where one sleeps, eats and stores his or her things. Our empirical observations of refugee shelters echo what the German

law (Bundesverwaltungsgericht 1996) prescribes: Accommodations, contrary to housing, are often temporary structures, have shared sanitary facilities, little living space, are often only a more durable ‘solution’ than tents due to shortages and, most importantly, prescribe a more or less inactive life. Being accommodated centrally denies the three aspects that define housing or dwelling that are equally legally defined as: (a) having a place to more or less permanently reside, (b) a voluntarily chosen place of residence and (c) leading independent household management.

The project’s motif culminated in the programmatic title in an attempt to enable *Building a Proposition for Future Activities*, thereby rejecting the closed-shop vision of designing and later building with (free) student and (free) refugee labor power a ‘community building’. Dikeç’s (2005) reading of Rancière provides grounds for further elaboration of the undertaking to problematize accommodation and dwelling with this motif. The ‘coexistence’ of both concepts (accommodation vs dwelling) and both practices (refugees wait vs citizens dwell), “this demonstration of two worlds in one that ‘holds equality and its absence together’ (Rancière 1999: 89), makes the handling of a wrong and the verification of equality possible, and is a crucial condition for politics to occur” (Dikeç 2005: 178–179).

Dwelling as Unsettling fACT

In order to clarify how we in UD organize our activities concerning a motif Bruno Latour’s concept of ‘matters of concern’ (2004) is particularly important. Estrid Sørensen (2012) explains that “with his concept for a scientific research approach that asks about the relationship between science and politics, Latour urges the development of an attention to the matters of concern that is able to replace the analysis of facts”. As opposed to matters of fact, matters of concern are “rich, complex, uncertain, surprising and artfully constructed” (Sørensen 2012: 210, own translation), in other words: they are unsettling, concerning and perhaps troubling. Our work therefore tries to address the concerns that matter most, such as representing the ways in which facts (e.g. the citizen’ agreements, accommodation programs) are made, as they are the results of actions and agencies and still bear traces of their original assembling.

We conceptualized our case as an attempt to think space politically through interpreting dwelling as a fACT, an accomplished act that becomes a fact, something that is done or practiced. One of the critical aspects when emphasizing dwelling as fACT is to show that socio-spatial ordering is not a given but is contingent (Wohnbund and HafenCity Universität 2016). The emphasis lies on the negation of any categorization of spatial order as natural or neutral. What makes insisting on this contingency political is what we call the work with an open form (Dell 2016). Such work links the political to the epistemological, and thus problematizes form. We comprehend politics as forms of aesthetic articulation of the societal forces and the production and questioning of meaning-making regimes of signification and semiotic codification. It is in this sense that we study the constitution of modes of experiencing, perceiving, representing, knowing

and interpreting spatial configurations of the city. Yet, we want to point out that the aesthetic antagonism over what is considered knowledge about the city exceeds the propositional. We are therefore concerned with representation and the question of how to represent the assemblage ‘dwelling’ or ‘housing’ vis-à-vis ‘accommodation’, if we are to enable a learning process.

We understand our modes of producing representations as epistemic, aesthetic and political endeavor. Since all modes of representation or acts of rendering visible operate within their societal context, every visualization is self-reflexive. This insinuates that every representation cannot but problematize in which ways and how far it co-articulates societal matters of concern. We call this mode of representation, which strategically engages with this problematization: diagrammatics. We understand it as a hybrid mode of representation that draws on, operates with and articulates contingency. Its aesthetics is far from being an isolated, autonomous realm of creativity. Instead, it is the realm of what is sensible and gives meaning; what articulates what is meaningful and how. Understood in this way, aesthetics is genuinely political as it is expanding beyond the polity. It constitutes regimes that frame and decide about what or who has access to meaning, is acknowledged as meaningful and therefore eligible to participate in negotiations of political decision-making. Consequently, any political debate argues, influences, instrumentalizes or operates through aesthetic regimes. Vice versa, political debates depend on the evidential power of knowledge regimes that are grounded in an aesthetics of showing and representing what is to negotiate and how this is to be done. One can define this field as an historical a priori, that seeks to determine which sensible experience is possible in a specific historical context.

Having gained a profound insight into the field through work and exchange with involved actors and publics (see Figure 5.3), we became able to engage with the production of an architectural representation of the meeting house to be realized (see Figure 5.4). The UD team gathered scattered knowledge about what it means to live today in terms of production and its potential in a sixteen-page brochure to explore and give space to the motif *Building a Proposition for Future Activities*: A double-page spread of recent media reports on the refugee crisis, maps and plans for the concrete location of the UPW program in Poppenbüttel, human and non-human actors essential for the realization of a meeting house in self-construction, a process diagram as a series of isometric representations of a possible building process, and a small selection of reference projects (see Figure 5.3). While the brochure engaged with diagrammatics as a mode of representation, it did not provide a visual rendering of the meeting house. However, it quickly became apparent that the adjacent neighbors who initiated this idea wanted an architectural drawing. The brochure once again functioned as a juxtaposition of two worlds: that of the closed process of realizing the UPW and that of the open, enabling process of the meeting house, as we envisioned it.

Using the brochure as a basis, we were able to raise the first funds for the planning, realization and documentation of a summer school with international students and future refugees and neighbors of the UPW. The summer school

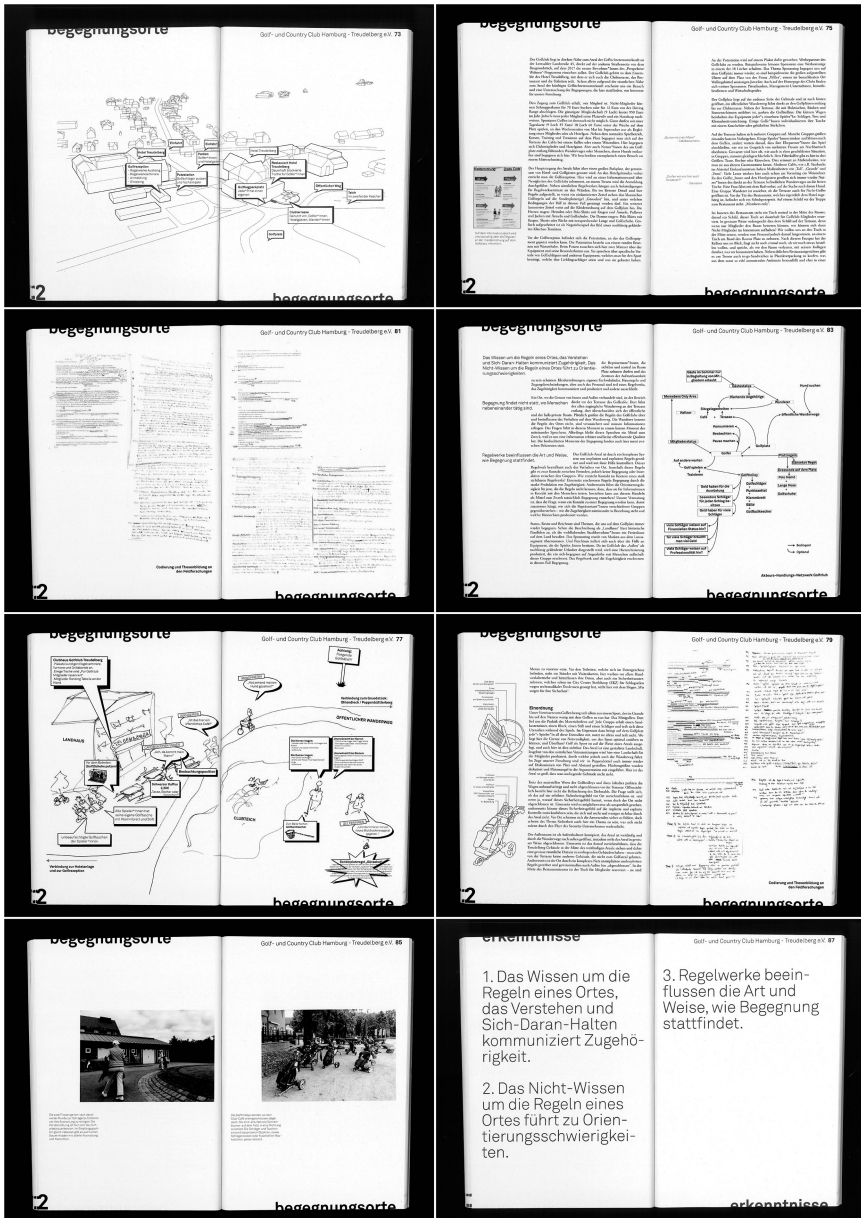


FIGURE 5.3 Double pages from the brochure ‘Enabling Encounters’ showing a golf and country club in the direct vicinity of the accommodation with perspective dwelling at Poppenbutteler Berg, Hamburg. The brochure was developed as part of the Urban Design course ‘Parapolis Upgrade | From the Refugee Crisis to the Housing Issue’.

Source: Rebecca Wall, Rosa Thoneick and Marius Topfer. Research and teaching program Urban Design, HCU Hamburg, 2017.



FIGURE 5.4 Spreads of the brochure *Gemeinschaftshaus Poppenbüttel* developed as part of the UD program’s urban design practice.

Source: Research and teaching program Urban Design, HCU Hamburg, 2016.

continued to work on the motif, leading to the project taking on the character of a model project, a cooperation between the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, in the form of F&W, the district of Hamburg Wandsbek and UD. The results allowed for raising €600,000 from the Hamburg parliament for the meeting house project. Through the brochure and the two summer schools, as three forms of representation of the dichotomy of accommodation vs dwelling, we were able to introduce dimensions of actual life and lived experience in the UPW and thus influence the (political) discourse by the diagrammatic thinking on the relation between accommodation and living through media reports, personal stories shared in actual encounters and academic work. The motif, the positions and procedures it enabled to deepen helped to finance the project, to maintain it in the long run, and to locate the possibilities of encounter in an active way.

Conclusion

Being concerned with a meta-dimension, we have intervened in the experiential to represent and represented the experiential in order to act. It is our intent to play back any findings into the UPW project Poppenbüttel, to enable the administration and other parties involved in the UPW program to learn and move beyond the continued practice of accommodating people. Yet, while the city celebrates the project as a model project—implying that learning from its findings is a priority—the city’s project managers and building companies perceive us as interruption and unnecessary complication of an already complicated matter.

Urban design is not a neutral container; it is a form of knowledge, both theoretically and practically. *Building a Proposition for Future Activities* exemplifies this through the ways the concept of dwelling itself can be regarded and analyzed as a form of knowledge. The production of representation as urban design’s key domain is always attached to ideological acts of determining the meaning of the built environment—past, present and future. Politics of urban design amounts to more than a gesture of translation, representation and dialogue for citizen participation; it is also about mobilizing learning through design practice. Along these lines, we propose an account of improvisation as an ethical imperative where lived experience—as McFarlane describes it when he brings assemblage and dwelling in dialogue—is not determined, but contingent and collective agency is not reduced to an unfettered collation of an inquirer’s mind.

Note

- 1 ‘Over-resident’ is a term for refugees who have been living in initial reception facilities for longer than the intended six months because there are no places available in the follow-up accommodation (Zentraler Koordinierungsstab Flüchtlinge 2018).

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6

(UN)SETTLING REMEMBRANCE IN PUBLIC SPACE

The Performance of a Heroic National Narrative in the Austrian National Holiday Celebrations at Vienna's Heldenplatz

Elina Kränzle

Introduction

This chapter sheds light on the contemporary role of public space for nation-building and cultural unification. A spatial focus is often neglected in nationalism studies (Yiftachel and Yacobi 2003), while the construction of nationalism is often overlooked in research on public space. By analyzing the Austrian national holiday celebrations taking place at Heldenplatz [Heroes' Square] in Vienna I demonstrate how routines of remembrance performed by political leaders, the military and the police settle the city center as the heart of an imagined *Kultur-nation*. The *Kultur-nation*, or cultural nation, is based on an ethnic nationalism assuming the exclusive identification of the people with the nation (Eley and Suny 1996: 31). To apprehend this settling of the *Kultur-nation*, I draw on Michael Billig's (2014) concept of *banal nationalism*, shifting the perception of nationalism as something extraordinary to an understanding of nationalism as an ideological routine of established nation-states. This conceptualization identifies how certain ideological means reproduce nation-states daily by the continual reminding of nationhood (Billig 2014: 6), which falls beyond accepted perceptions of nationalism as represented by separatists or extreme right-wing parties and groups at the periphery of the Western World (ibid.: 5). I argue that the national holiday celebrations as they have been performed since 1995 are such an ideological routine based on the reproduction of a heroic national narrative. The chapter begins with a historico-spatial description of the location of the national holiday celebrations at Heldenplatz in the city center of Vienna, a place more connected than any other with Austrian public memory [for a detailed account of Heldenplatz as place of memory see Hanisch (2001)]. This is followed by an analysis of the routines of national holiday celebrations taking place annually as a performance of remembrance by political leaders as well as a show of the Austrian Armed

Forces and Police Forces. The case study is based on ethnographic fieldwork between 2016 and 2019 and an analysis of news media, leaflets and reports. The findings are then discussed through the lens of nationalism studies.

Heldenplatz: Location and Medium of National Identity

This section illustrates when and how Vienna's Heldenplatz has been appropriated for the construction of a heroic national narrative. Moreover, it will demonstrate that Heldenplatz has been a prominent place for the negotiation of national identity (Nussbaumer 2018: 281). Heldenplatz has been developed as part of a more comprehensive design of the so-called *Kaiserforum* [Emperor's Forum] centered on the renovation and extension of the Hofburg palace, which served as a seat of the Habsburg sovereigns since the 13th century. It was completed only in parts shortly before the end of the Habsburg monarchy at the beginning of the 20th century. While Heldenplatz has been a symbol of political and administrative power—from the times of the monarchy until today (Stuhlpfarrer 2018: 134)—its scale and design have made it an important place of everyday life. It is popular with the skateboard scene and its big lawns attract people from spring to autumn, to meet, recreate, relax in the sun or watch the goings-on. Large groups of tourists walk by to visit the Hofburg, Vienna's inner city or one of the museums in the surrounding area. A dedicated dog zone is widely used by dogs and their owners. A bar and a night club at the edge of Heldenplatz make the large square even animated at night.

Heldenplatz first gained prominence as a political space in the beginning of the First Republic (1918–1923) and was then used by the Austro-fascist corporatist state (1934–1938) for mass rallies, state-organized events, as well as opposing protests—a function Heldenplatz has kept until today (Martz 2018: 349). In their rise to power, the German Nazi Party chose Heldenplatz for their mass rallies in the 1930s (*ibid.*) and in the preparation of political events culminating in Hitler's '*Anschlussrede*' in 1938 [speech on the annexation of Austria to the German Reich] (Holzschuh 2018: 118), the event that "obsessively" occupies Heldenplatz as a place of memory (Hanisch 2001: 105).

The appropriation of Heldenplatz by the totalitarian regime continued to evolve by swiftly encroaching on everyday life with several propaganda exhibitions. During the open space military exhibition '*Sieg im Westen*' ['Victory in the West'], inaugurated by Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring in autumn 1940, an exhibition pavilion presented a vision of a future redevelopment of Heldenplatz and thus through temporary architecture inscribed the national-socialist regime into the square as the rightful successor of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Holy Roman Empire (Holzschuh 2018: 120). The propaganda exhibition showcased German weapons and seized goods, air force innovations as well as a life-sized model of a submarine on Heldenplatz (Stuhlpfarrer 2018: 140). In 1944, another propaganda show '*Unser Heer*' ['Our Army'] opened, when the hopeless situation of the war was already known, presenting even more war weapons and a '*Kraft durch Freude*' ['Power through Joy', the NS leisure program] pavilion and including a cultural program with film and theatre performances (*ibid.*: 141f).

Even after Austria's liberation by the Allied Forces, Heldenplatz continued to be a main stage of national identity politics. The Hofburg's balcony overlooking Heldenplatz, where Hitler held his *Anschlussrede*, became the public setting for presenting the new state treaty in 1955, making Austria a free democratic state that consequently declared its neutrality after the last allied troops had left and the Stalin portraits the Soviet forces had installed on the Hofburg façade were taken off. This staging could be interpreted as an attempt to overwrite the dark history engraved into the scene of the Hofburg balcony, though

it is precisely this attempted argumentation, of course, that shows how overwhelmingly the memory of the 'Anschlussrede' weighed on the scene of the event back then—and still weighs today. In the political consciousness of Austrians, the term 'Heldenplatz' stands not only for the specific place of this name, but also for the political and moral surrender of Austrian society to National Socialism.

(Stachel 2018: 350f, own translation)

In the first years of the Second Republic, the heritage of the Hofburg palace and the adjacent Heldenplatz were dealt with rather critically in the light of imperial and dark history lying behind Austria (Nussbaumer 2018: 280). As the Second Republic aged, discourse studies see this critical attitude change. In her analysis of the media discourse emerging after a fire in a part of the Hofburg palace in 1992, Martina Nussbaumer (2018: 279f) finds that the Hofburg palace is declared an integral part of national history and identity, even stylized as symbol of 'the Austrian' per se.

While Heldenplatz is the stage for the construction and visualization of national identity politics, it is also a place to voice opposition against political hegemony. Since the 1990s, Heldenplatz has become an important site for protest movements against rightist governments and their anti-pluralist politics. In reaction to the so-called '*Österreich zuerst*' ['Austria first'] referendum by the far-right FPÖ (Freedom Party) in 1993 the nongovernmental organization (NGO) '*SOS Mitmensch*' ['SOS Fellow Human'] drew more than 200,000 people to the square to protest xenophobia and intolerance, to date the biggest protest in the history of the Second Republic. Since then, many more protests, such as the weekly organized '*Donnerstagsdemonstrationen*' ['Thursday Demonstrations'] against the coalition government of the conservative people's party ÖVP with the far-right FPÖ in 2000 and again in 2018, have appropriated Heldenplatz as a stage for their stance against ethnic nationalism and racism.

The Construction of Austrian National Identity between Civic and Ethnic Nationalism

Recent work of historians and linguists offers further insights into the role of imperial and dark heritage, spatially and symbolically represented in Heldenplatz, in the construction of national identity in the Second Republic. After the

liberation of Austria, the declaration of neutrality was used as an anchor for the identity of the new state, as it offered a positive new role and clear distinction from German Nationalism (Rathkolb 2015: 58). This identity metaphor adheres to the idea of a *Staatsnation* [state nation] and thus a civic nationalism framed around institutions and political principles. The concept of the *Staatsnation* “originates in the great constructive experience of the French revolution and is linked to notions of citizenship and popular sovereignty, where the nation signifies a political category of freely associating individuals” (Eley and Suny 1996: 4). But rather than effectively contributing to forming Austrian identity, the idea of the *Staatsnation* functioned more as a theoretical construct of a postwar democratic political elite (ibid.). For many social groups, the so-called victim myth as well as a relapse to a romanticized image of the original Austrian homeland became important anchors of Austrian identity in the Second Republic. This resonates with the idea of a *Kulturnation*, which “denies this implied contractual basis and insists instead on the inherited, historicist character of national identity” (ibid.: 4). It involves the exclusive identification of the people with the nation (ibid.: 31).

The ‘victim myth’ was based on the propagandist Moscow Declaration signed by the UK, the USSR and the USA in 1943, which declared Austria the first victim of the German Reich under Hitler while also somewhat contradictorily stating the country’s responsibility for fighting on the side of the German forces. After the war, Austrian political elites deliberately sustained the idea of having fallen victim first to Hitler, and then to the Allied Forces, as an internationally unrecognized and occupied state. This view of “the Nazi era as an ‘accident of history’ [...] coupled with a self-pitying attitude and collective denial of responsibility, became an essential element of the political culture of the Second Republic” (Wodak et al. 2009: 59). The crimes of Austrian National Socialists mostly remained unrecognized in the public discourse until the 1980s and “the construction of a broad, undifferentiated victim-majority of veterans of WWII and of the ‘Homefront’ generation (mostly women) buried various conflicts of the time between the wars” (Rathkolb 2015: 50, own translation). Recognized as the first victim of the Nazi Regime, Austrian post-war politics not only achieved a State Treaty and the full sovereignty of Austria in 1955 but also successfully denied compensation for the victims of Austro-fascism and was not legally bound to pay war ‘compensations’ (Wodak et al. 2009: 59f). After all, it was not until 1998 that a historical commission was appointed by the Austrian government to investigate the amount of expropriation during the National-Socialist rule and its restitution and compensation after the war. It found that Austrian governments between 1947 and 1952 “blocked the restitution of so called ‘Aryanized’ property and the compensation claims of Austrian Jews, as well as the return of Austrians who had been forced out of their homes or businesses by the Nazis” (ibid.: 59). In the following decades, Austrian governments only reluctantly passed new laws to enable compensation and restitution for the stated victims. In parallel, the governments adopted laws to compensate

‘*Entnazifizierungsbetroffene*’ [‘people affected by denazification’], victims of war and war losses, and members of the Wehrmacht [German armed forces], as if to balance out the compensation for victims of the National-Socialists (Jablonek et al. 2003: 402).

Until today, parts of the political elite maintain the victim narrative by acknowledging the previously marginalized Jewish, Sinti and Roma victims as representatives for Austria as a whole (Rathkolb 2015: 51). An example of such a stance was the opening symposium of the ‘*Gedankenjahr*’ [‘year of thoughts’], a year of remembrance events, held in the Austrian Parliament in 2005 to commemorate the year 1945, Liberation, 60 years of the Second Republic, 50 years of the State Treaty and Neutrality and 10 years of EU membership. The commemoration speeches continued to construct a “community of victims”, making use of the “naturalizing and heteronomising metaphor of the National Socialist catastrophe” (Wodak et al. 2009: 212).

Moreover, the postwar era brought Austrian identity back to its imagined state before 1933: the Austrian landscape, rural ways of life and notions of pristine nature played an important role in the imagination of a *Heimatkultur* [homeland culture]. The so-called *Hochkultur* [high culture] was promoted as central to the ethnically identified *Kultur-nation* of Austria, exemplified by the renovation of Burgtheater and the opera house as projects of national concern (Rathkolb 2015: 48). But the *Kultur-nation* represented a highly selective image: the golden age of the monarchy was incorporated into this confident self-image, while turning a blind eye to the diverse influences of the multi-ethnic Habsburg empire (ibid.).

In a discourse-historical approach, Ruth Wodak et al. (2009: 187) analyze “concrete, authentic, more or less spontaneous discursive ‘events’”, such as media reports, speeches and focus groups, to learn about the character of nations as imagined communities. They found that national identity was constructed through a common past, present and future, a shared territory, and a common culture. In (semi-)private contexts, this common culture was not only described as *Hochkultur* but included a “homogenous everyday culture, an assumed national mentality and a concept of naturalized descent” (ibid.: 189). In the construction of an Austrian identity, respondents referred to both state-based and culture-based elements, conflating the concepts of *Kultur-nation* und *Staats-nation*. In more informal discursive practices, conceptions based on mentality, character and certain behaviors of ‘Austrians’ prevailed. The multicultural composition of Austrians and of people living in Austria and the role of ethnic minorities was not recognized, “apart from the minorities themselves, hardly anyone took notice of them. [...] Multiculturalism was only important within the framework of a glorified past (‘the multicultural monarchy’, ‘melting pot’)” (ibid.: 191). Although the neutrality of the Austrian state provides the basis for national identification based on popular sovereignty and civic rights and duties, the idea of an ethnically identified *Kultur-nation* has predominated the construct of the *Staats-nation* of the Second Republic. The following case study analyses how *Staats-nation* and *Kultur-nation* are negotiated in the routines of the Austrian Holiday celebrations at Heldenplatz.

The National Holiday Celebrations—Performing the Heroic State

After Austria and the Allied occupying powers signed the Austrian State Treaty on 15 May 1955, that reestablished Austria as a free democratic state, the last allied troops left the country on 25 October of that year, which then was proclaimed the ‘day of the Austrian flag’. One year later, Flag Day was celebrated on 26 October, the date that Austria had constitutionally proclaimed its unceasing neutrality after the end of the occupation. Only in 1965, the national parliament formally declared this day the national holiday with the stated aim to contribute to foster peace in the world. Choosing this date clearly took on the shared political principles and institutions of civic nationalism for the state’s most important public holiday. Celebrating the country’s neutrality made it particularly easy to neutralize the country’s history, as historian Thomas Macho commented the silence on Austrians’ compliancy in the crimes of the German war (Dusini et al. 2005).

Every national holiday it is the same ritual: With their heads bowed the leaders of the state walk by lined up honor guards across Heldenplatz in Vienna, enter the crypt, lay down wreaths, smooth their ribbons. A moment of peace. The idea of heroism is served. Heldenplatz, the urban design torso in the heart of Vienna, is the main place of the national approach to history. It seems that in this place every ideology is granted hero status. Here, the memorials for the different heroes of Austria’s past are located.

(Pelinka 2012, own translation)

Historian Anton Pelinka describes the routine of representative remembering at Vienna’s Heldenplatz on Austria’s national holiday, dedicated both to the fallen soldiers who fought for Hitler’s Germany *and* to the resistance against the Nazi regime, all of them celebrated as heroes of the nation. The regulation of the square and the installment of new monuments during the Second Republic has never been concerned with a critical review of the conflicting interpretations of the past.

During the official celebrations, both president and chancellor, as well as other representatives of the federal government, escorted with military honors, walk toward the crypt in the triumphal arch called Äußeres Burgtor to lay a wreath before Heldendenkmal for the fallen soldiers and before the memorial for the victims of the Austrian resistance which is in an adjacent room. After a speech by the president and the chancellor, the swearing-in ceremony of the new recruits takes place on Heldenplatz, which marks the end of the formal remembrance ceremony. Against the background of the discursive construction of a guilt-free national identity discussed earlier, the simultaneous and undifferentiated remembering of these ‘Austrian heroes’ performatively enacts the victim myth. It is a performative *forgetting* of the uncomfortable complicity of Austrians as part of

the German Reich for the sake of a consistent, positive national narrative which brushes over the anti-Semitic, racist, chauvinist and anti-democratic nationalism the remembered fallen Austrian soldiers gave allegiance to. In Billig's (2014) *Banal Nationalism*, he articulates a dialectic of collective remembering and forgetting, both equally important for cultural unification in established nation-states. The banal reproduction of nationhood performed through forgetting primarily concerns the past, as a "crucial element in the creation of nations" (Renan 1990: 11), when the glorious moments are commemorated, but discomfiting events erased from the national narrative. As Ebru Bulut (2006: 129) says,

in order to understand the extension of nationalism as the social grammar, one has to consider mobilization not as an ensemble of specific actions but as a continuum which includes actions, sentiments, even silences (non-protestation). It is less a mobilization for action than a mobilization for consensus.

Celebrating the civic institutions of the Second Republic, visitors are invited to an open day at the state institutions located around Heldenplatz, such as the parliament building, the seat of the president in the Hofburg or the Chancellor's Office. This aspect of the festivities effectively celebrates the shared political principles of the Second Republic that the State Treaty of 1955 paved the way for, where the nation stands for the sovereign of freely associating individuals with democratic rights rather than an understanding of the nation as a community of fate, believed to be bound by shared heritage, culture or identity.

A few hundred thousand visitors are drawn to the outdoor program each year. In what is called '*Informations- und Leistungsschau*' [Informational and Performance Show], the Armed Forces display their most impressive military equipment in the heart of Vienna, from tanks stationed in front of Burgtheater, to helicopters and trucks at Heldenplatz. In an atmosphere akin to a festival (see Figure 6.1), the different divisions of the Austrian Armed Forces are presented in tents, and soldiers in full gear explain military weapons and strategies. Visitors, many of them families, can try to hold a gun, take photos together with soldiers or buy a tank-shaped balloon as a souvenir. In front of Vienna's city hall, the '*Wiener Sicherheitsfest*' [Vienna Festival of Security] takes place, which is set up by the so-called K-Kreis (*Katastrophenschutzorganisation*, civil protection organization), an association of 39 professional and voluntary associations and divisions of the municipal authorities concerned with issues of civic service, such as wastewater and sewage, electricity and gas, public transportation, police and military police, but also social services (Kränzle 2017: 5). The display of the military equipment and police gear are used to control demonstrations within the ambience of a fun fair trivializes and normalizes weapons of war in an urban environment and the state's monopoly on the use of force.

The messages on the army's banners and flyers underline its essential role for the safety of the country and promote outdated images of soldiers' heroism



FIGURE 6.1 Fair-like atmosphere and large visitor crowds during the military performance show at Heldenplatz, where riot vehicles and tanks are presented by policemen and soldiers in full gear, who are routinely posing for souvenir pictures, 26 October 2017.

Source: Elina Kränzle, 2017.

such as ‘Courage, bravery, loyalty’ (see Figure 6.2). The slogan ‘With security. Our army is what counts. Right now’ (see Figure 6.2) should be interpreted in the context of the previous year’s purported ‘refugee crisis’, when Austria’s army was deployed to support the police forces in the control of and care for the then large numbers of migrants coming across the borders in search of asylum. The *Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung* [Ministry of Defence] argues that such an exhibition helps to create transparency of the state’s military expenses, and that this presentation of the military on Heldenplatz specifically is of great significance, as it shows the armed forces of a democratic state ready to defend its democratic values with arms and thus “with their lives” (Bauer 2020). Through Billig’s lens though, the military performance show can rather be understood as “ideological habit[s] which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced”, and which are “not removed from everyday life, as some observers have supposed. Daily, the nation is indicated, or ‘flagged’, in the life of its citizenry. Nationalism, far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (Billig 2014: 6). He interprets the celebration of symbols and weapons of war during the national holiday as a way of priming national populations for the mobilization of armaments without much deliberation (ibid.). With the “Voice of Nature”, as Roland Barthes has called it (1977: 47) — the



FIGURE 6.2 Banners of the Austrian military positioned around Heldenplatz and in front of Burgtheater at the celebrations of the Austrian National Day, 26 October 2017.

Source: Elina Kränzle, 2017.

ideology of nationalism incorporates common beliefs and attitudes in a way that makes people believe their social world is the natural world, making them forget the ways this world was constructed. While the national holiday celebrations are not a daily but an annual routine, they are still ordinary, “permanent regularities of a culture seen as stable and fixed” (Highmore 2002: 9). As John Agnew (2013) has argued, nationalism has created real and material conditions which shape our lives continuously. This immersion into and affection by a national world makes it hard to study the issue and to overcome the assumptions about nationalism, which seem to be common sense. In contrast to the self-perception of the West as a modern and enlightened cosmopolitan community, nationalism is far from being overcome, and represents the highest order of economic and social relations and could even be interpreted as an order of our conscience (cf. Billig 2014: 7f; Mense 2016: 41).

Conclusion: the Role of Forgetting in Remembrance

For the past century, Heldenplatz has been constructed and appropriated by different regimes to manifest their legitimacy and rightful succession to the Habsburg empire and to overwrite older histories with new narratives of national identity. This chapter analyzed the routines of remembrance and the military

performance show during the National Holiday celebrations taking place on Heldenplatz in this historico-spatial context. The celebration of Austria's national holiday on the historic date the country declared its unceasing neutrality could present the opportunity to honor a national identity founded in a *Staatsnation* and the civic and human rights' principles of the Second Republic. This historic date could serve as a moment to commemorate Austria's complex and contradictory path, at times rattled by a violently radicalized ideology of ethnic nationalism, towards a stable democratic member of the European Union. Although the open day at the state institutions reflects some of these ideas and showcases national identification based on civil rights and institutions, a closer look at the routines of remembrance and the military and police performance as unquestioned parts of the national holiday festivities reveals the banal essentializing of belonging to Austria as a *Kulturnation*.

Both through instances of remembering and forgetting the national holiday celebrations reproduce a heroic national narrative. The routine of representative remembrance at the beginning of the celebrations is interpreted as a performance of the discursively constructed victim myth. Just like the ribbons of the wreaths laid down before the hero and victim memorials are smoothed, a complex and at times uncomfortable national history is smoothed to only acknowledge the heroism of the Austrian past (Pelinka 2012). The attending program in public space, in large part organized by the Austrian Armed Forces and the police, is a reminder of the state's monopoly on the use of force. The historical example of the propagandistic military exhibitions of the National Socialists at Heldenplatz in 1940 and 1944 cannot be disregarded in the analysis of today's exhibition though. It underlines the importance to question what is presented as ordinary or banal military shows, a common routine in most countries. Especially the slogans entitling the military program at Heldenplatz in the years during the 'refugee crisis' sent a subtle message of an external threat to Austria and its state territory, conveying an ethnic nationalism. Through this highly symbolic and routinized performance the state settles "the ideology by which the world of nations has come to seem the natural world—as if there not possibly could be a world without nations" (Billig 2014: 37) in urban space.

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7

BERLIN'S NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE TOURIST TRAP? LOCAL ROUTINES UNSETTLED BY NEW URBAN TOURISM

Stefan Brandt, Sybille Frank and Anna Laura Raschke

'Berlin doesn't love you' is the slogan of many stickers that can be found on streetlights and distribution boxes in Berlin, countering Berlin's official advertising pitch 'Berlin loves you' (see Figure 7.1). Some residents of Berlin's inner-city neighborhoods are incensed by the ever-present noise from tourists right at their doorstep, while others laud the revenue brought to the city by a growing tourism industry.

In this chapter, we tackle the impact of formal and informal tourist accommodation on the perceived quality of living conditions in selected Berlin neighborhoods. We aim to make a case for new perspectives on the phenomenon of 'New Urban Tourism' (Maitland 2007) by discussing how routines of settling, dwelling and cohabitation are unsettled by this recent trend in urban tourism that targets residential neighborhoods. To this end, we draw on data collected in the research project 'Neighborhoods in the tourist trap?' based at Technische Universität Berlin and Technical University of Darmstadt.¹ We primarily present findings based on six guided expert interviews conducted in 2018 with owners and managers of local accommodation facilities, as well as with representatives of regulatory bodies and neighborhood outreach programs established by local district administrations. They provide insights into recent changes in the tourism sector and the perceived impacts on local life in the neighborhoods. Quotes from the anonymized interviews are occasionally complemented with articles from local newspapers. We focus on two residential neighborhoods in Berlin: One locale for both ho(s)tel and private short-term guest lodgings rented out on the digital platform Airbnb, located in Berlin-Friedrichshain (LOR² Boxhagener Platz), and one neighborhood with a low number of hotels but a high number of short-term rentals on Airbnb in Berlin-Neukölln (LOR Reuterkiez).



FIGURE 7.1 Sticker campaign against tourists in Berlin.

Source: Verena Dauerer @antjeverena, 2011.

Changing Travels: New Urban Tourism and the Debate in Berlin

Urban tourism has brought at least two different types of tourists to the city: one is the organized sightseer, exhibiting the familiar touristic practices of visiting important historical or cultural sights, mostly staying in hotels and having an entire industry crafted around their needs (Fainstein and Judd 1999). As cities have profited economically from tourism, governance and marketing decisions have been continuously refined for and by the demands of the industry. To stay relevant and attractive to these tourists, cities have long established mechanisms to shape attractions for visual consumption via the tourist gaze (Urry 1990).

The other type of tourist, part of a relatively new and growing group, is what has been named ‘New Urban Tourists’ (Maitland 2007). These tourists aim to immerse themselves in their idea of the everyday lives of city dwellers. They look for socially and ethnically distinct neighborhoods with extended stocks of old buildings, public urban spaces and many small shops, bars, cafés and restaurants visited by local people. According to Maitland, “the everyday and mundane activities of city residents take on significance as markers of the real, and off the beaten track areas, not planned for tourism” (Maitland 2010: 176). New Urban Tourists usually avoid hotel accommodation. They prefer to book private flats, hostels or small B&Bs located in residential neighborhoods, which is why Henning Füller and Boris Michel (2014) speak of ‘embedded tourism’. This second type of tourism has more notable effects on the residents than the first. Not only have their local lifeworlds become a destination and have been put on display. They are now also competing with tourists for spots in cafés, restaurants, parks, and, quite literally,

beds in residential neighborhoods that are now offered to short-term visitors as well as long-term renters. Johannes Novy thus summarizes that “[o]ne particular characteristic of the [recent] tourism boom in Berlin is the observable spatial expansion and dispersion of tourism” (Novy 2013: 232).

The preferred method to find accommodations for New Urban Tourists is the digital platform Airbnb due to its vast network of locally owned private rooms, flats or B&B accommodations in residential neighborhoods for temporary stays. Airbnb is a commercial provider that emphasizes local, social and individual dimensions of traveling by evolving the narrative of ‘living like a local’ in their marketing campaigns. The steeply increased asking rents in Berlin from a median just under €5/m² in 2005 (empirica 2020) to a median €10.75/m² in 2022 (empirica 2022) with peaks of €14/m² in inner-city residential areas in 2021 (Investitionsbank Berlin 2021: 73) have made renting out rooms or flats for short periods attractive not only for homeowners but also for tenants to alleviate the pressure of rent payments. With an increase of tourism arrivals to Berlin from 3.18 million in 1992 to 13.96 million in 2019³ (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2022a) and the numbers of residents growing from 3.47 million to 3.67 million in the same period (Amt für Statistik Berlin-Brandenburg 2022b), accommodation for both is in high demand, which has caused increased tension between locals and tourists.

The two neighborhoods investigated in this chapter, Boxhagener Platz and Reuterkiez, have been internationally portrayed in the media as being hip, cool, with a certain bohemian allure and thus worth visiting (Rogers 2015). While the tourists were initially embraced by the city of Berlin as a new revenue source for the financially struggling city, the political and media debate has recently shifted from broad praise toward a more nuanced problematization of tourist-induced transformations of neighborhoods. As residents started to complain about noise, pollution and the ever-present odor of urine left behind by partying visitors (Abel 2016), tourists’ routines of using urban space have been accused of being incompatible with residents’ routines in the media (Dienig 2014; Pohlers 2016). Moreover, New Urban Tourists’ demand for residential urban space has been criticized for creating housing shortages and rising rents in the city (Bartels 2010; Beikler et al. 2011).

In Friedrichshain, in the former Eastern part of once-divided Berlin where Boxhagener Platz is located, the housing policy of the socialist German Democratic Republic (1949–1990) concentrated mostly on the construction of large modern housing estates. Modernizations of older buildings mostly relied on individual DIY projects, which is why at the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, parts of the housing stock were in a derelict state. During the 1990s and 2000s, Friedrichshain saw a period of major renovations. The district administration also actively started to try to attract tourists during that period. In this process, the area around Boxhagener Platz transformed rapidly into a place that is nowadays perceived as young and cosmopolitan (Frary 2018). It managed to keep an ‘authentic touch’ until the early 2010s but is now one of

Berlin's inner-city areas with the highest rents (Investitionsbank Berlin 2020: 68), following several waves of gentrification and touristification (Dirksmeier 2015; Helbrecht 2016; Holm 2010).

Reuterkiez in Neukölln has been identified with the working class since the times of backyard workshops in the early 1900s. At the beginning of the 1970s, many inhabitants left Neukölln (located in West Berlin) in search for more modern housing, while immigrant workers and their families, mainly from Turkey or the Arab region, moved into the then outdated and dilapidated Wilhelminian buildings. After the Berlin Wall came down, public program in Reuterkiez aimed to improve living conditions in response to segregation and poverty. In recent years, former backyard workshops were converted to lofts and abandoned apartment houses were renovated. Compared to Boxhagener Platz, gentrification is a relatively new challenge though, “driven by an enormous internationalization of in-movers” (Holm 2013: 175).

Local Routines Contested

New Urban Tourists' quest for gaining authentic experiences via 'living like a local' presumes there must be some knowledge of how locals actually live. Whether this knowledge is gained by communication (e.g., reading and talking) about local routines or by observing them, it is always the result of subjective perceptions and interpretations. In sociology, routines have been conceptualized as everyday performances that rely on tacit, pre-reflective and practical knowledge (Reckwitz 2002). Even though routines are performed unconsciously, and therefore seem to come naturally, they are structured habitually (Bourdieu 1987). Local routines can therefore be understood as a sum of socially formed and habitually incorporated schemes of perceiving, interpreting and judging that shape social and built space (Bourdieu 1991). These routines influence everyday life and cohabitation in neighborhoods in a twofold manner. First, they serve as performed practices by means of which locals establish place-related identities. Second, spatial routines are an expression of subjective perceptions and interpretations of spatial aspects of everyday life (Dörfler 2013). While local routines are unconsciously performed practices and the knowledge they are based on is not easily accessible for actors through reflection, routines tend to become accessible when certainties get contested, as that transforms tacit knowledge into tangible knowledge (Reckwitz 2002). These contestations are prevalent both in the media discourse on tourism and in our interview material.

New Urban Tourists consume residential neighborhoods as an eventful “spac[e] of difference, free from the bonds of home and work” to immerse themselves in (Edensor 2007: 199). This means that a new, at times transgressive, space is created alongside the “everyday lives and banal urban spaces” of residents (Edensor 2007: 201) that might clash with their mundane routines (Wittstock and Wurmdobler 2015). While New Urban Tourists visit Berlin to take part in leisure opportunities, local residents complain about the tourist-specific noise



FIGURE 7.2 Graffiti in Berlin-Neukölln protesting trolley suitcases.

Source: stoha, 2011.

of trolleys being dragged over cobblestoned sidewalks, or about loud and often drunken partying in hallways at night (see Figure 7.2) (Pohlers 2015; Weber-Klüver 2011). Residents' routines of using the neighborhood to work, rest and sleep thus seem to be challenged by a new group of temporary neighbors equipped with considerable economic power. One of our interviewees encapsulates this double-sidedness of New Urban Tourism as follows: "I complain about the tourists at times as well [...]. But Berlin doesn't make much [...]. We therefore simply need the tourists" (Tourist accommodation provider, Boxhagener Platz, personal interview, 24 October 2018).

Challenged Routines of Settling

Our interviews with representatives from district administrations and local lodging establishments revealed that the most frequently mentioned transformation of neighborhood life that these agents connect with New Urban Tourism is the displacement of both residents and local small business owners with limited financial resources due to drastic rent increases. These displacements are seen to have effected a marked change in both the social fabric and the economic landscape of the sought-after residential neighborhood.

Displacement of Residents

Our interviews mirror a fear of displacement in manifold ways. A representative of the district administration in Friedrichshain recounts that "Airbnb moved quickly into this attractive area [Boxhagener Platz]. First with one house, now there are several. Of course we see a great danger that the neighborhood [...] will

be pushed out by tourism” (personal interview, 1 November 2018). The same representative further reported that surveys among inhabitants of the Boxhagener Platz area had uncovered “that the rents are rising quickly, and those who still live in the flats, the former young ones, stay in their flats because they still have old contracts and they try to keep them as long as possible” (*ibid.*).

At Reuterkiez, the culprit identified by a tourist accommodation provider as responsible for the massive changes in the area is also Airbnb. “That is something that [...] ruins all prices” (tourist accommodation provider, personal interview, 4 December 2018). The interviewee further explains:

A lot of my friends had to move out. They have their second child now, had to look for a new place and move to Charlottenburg [a staid inner-city residential neighborhood]. That would have been a no-go twenty years ago [due to the high rents in Charlottenburg]. Because it is cheaper there [these days].

(*ibid.*)

Regarding rising rents, our respondents are also concerned with the fact “that the welfare institutions on the lower floors are being displaced, and when [...] someone moves out, prices are adjusted to the maximum to be rented out again” (Representative of the district administration, Reuterkiez, personal interview, 23 November 2018). A local journalist points to the paradoxical effects of advertising private residential apartments as holiday homes through Airbnb: “The platform thus destroys, at least indirectly, the very local scenes that it advertises to authentically discover” (Worthmann 2015).

Displacement of Small Local Businesses

Apart from competing for living space and the housing market on increasingly unequal terms, inhabitants and tourists also compete for businesses in their neighborhood. Wherever local residents’ and tourists’ demands differ, an adaptation of local businesses to tourist needs may lead to frictions in the provision of basic supplies. For example, residents need hardware stores, craft businesses, flower shops and hairdressers that are of small or no importance to tourists. Combined with rising rents for commercial units, local small businesses may be forced out in favor of restaurants, cafés, bars and clubs that cater to both residents and tourists. This may change the look of neighborhoods and make everyday life for residents more difficult as they must travel farther to satisfy resident-centric demands.

At Reuterkiez, the problem of a decreasing number of local shops for basic supplies has been identified only recently, so regulatory measures are not available yet. Nevertheless, a representative of the district administration for Reuterkiez has expressed their desire for a diversified retail landscape with more than gastronomic facilities “that can afford the fourfold rent” (personal interview, 23 November 2018). Accordingly, one of our respondents in Reuterkiez who runs a

small local business told us that it is likely that his/her enterprise will be affected by the rising rents soon:

I myself am facing the decision this year for my business to go on or not. And it is not up to me. And it is not because of my business numbers. [...] This is a healthy business [...], but should the landlord really ask for the double rent, I am gone. And then again, there is one business less in Neukölln. And that is the development I am talking about: give middle and small businesses a chance to remain here, because it really [...] adds to the diversity of the neighborhood.

(Tourist accommodation provider, Reuterkiez, personal interview, 4 December 2018)

In Boxhagener Platz, that had established itself as tourism hotspot earlier than Reuterkiez (Grube 2018), the district government identified the displacement of local businesses as a phenomenon to be combated as early as in the 2010s, but, according to a representative of the district administration, support for local small businesses is still needed as “[i]n the end, it has to do with the rent when businesses close down” (personal interview, 1 November 2018). The representative claimed that it is therefore now the district’s aim “that the structure of the neighborhood remains intact, that one likes to live here because everything is close by and one doesn’t have to travel to the outskirts of Berlin to run errands” (ibid.). From the perspective of local business owners, this means “that the [...] plumber does not necessarily have to drive two hours from Brandenburg, but that the one that is already here can stay” (ibid.). Local shop owners’ ability to stay in their existing locations is important for the residents as well since they “do need the bakery, and not just the kiosk with the heated-up rolls” (ibid.).

Our interviews consistently indicated that not only the tenants but also local shop owners are threatened by displacement through rising rents in the inner-city neighborhoods we studied. Hence, they feel that their routines of inhabiting or serving a residential neighborhood are challenged. What usually follows are, as a local journalist comments “big chains with fast food or corporate fashion, because nobody else can afford the high rents” (Keller 2017). This development is regarded to undermine the sought-after (by the tourists) and highly valued (by the residents) “good mix between gastronomy, small interesting shops that cannot be found everywhere, [and] young people” (Representative of the district administration, Boxhagener Platz, personal interview, 1 November 2018).

Contested Routines of Dwelling

The dissonance between New Urban Tourism and residents’ patterns of living, working and sleeping was an oft-referenced issue in our interviews. A representative of the district administration for Boxhagener Platz stresses “that where many people sojourn, one should be considerate of the residents” (personal

interview, 1 November 2018). What should be avoided are “such tendencies [...] as in Prenzlauer Berg [a popular inner-city district in the North-East of Berlin] where all restaurants had to close at 10 p.m. because of noise complaints, so that it has become a dormitory neighborhood” (ibid.). So higher noise levels led to restrictions imposed on a nightlife that many Berliners had also valued.

Similarly, according to a representative of the district administration, residents of the Reuterkiez area bemoan that “they cannot sleep or open the windows, because they feel disturbed by the noise. And that there are no limitations at night” (personal interview, 23 November 2018). This lament is, however, contested by a resident who praises the neighborhood for its vitality. In his/her point of view, people who live in or move to this neighborhood should not complain about its liveliness and popularity: “If I want to have silence, I have to move somewhere else”, s/he says (Tourist accommodation provider, Reuterkiez, personal interview, 4 December 2018). At the same time, s/he praises Reuterkiez, and Berlin’s neighborhood structure as such, for its village-like coziness:

People know me and my dog at my kiosk. I go in, the dog gets his treats right away, I can take my milk even if I don’t have any money on me and just pay the next day. [...] And that is what I am talking about, this makes this city, even if it is a big city and essentially anonymous, [...] you can choose a different way here, that you somewhat ally yourself with your neighbors.

(ibid.)

This mixture of anonymity and intimacy, of being a tourist hotspot, and a trusted local environment at the same time, is, at least for this resident, a major constituent of local routines that are, in his/her view, not so much challenged by tourists, but by new groups of residents moving in.

Another interviewee from Reuterkiez stresses the similarities between tourists and those particular groups of residents who may hold the pace of rising prices and the tourist-friendly remodeling of neighborhoods:

In the end it comes down to this picture: in the summer, you sit outside in a corner café, enjoy your coffee, watch the types of people go by and maybe look catty-corner, ah, I wanna go there. This would be the touristic perspective. If I see local atmosphere as a resident, I would probably also sit in these cafés and use it as well.

(Representative of the district administration, Reuterkiez, personal interview, 23 November 2018)

An interviewee from Boxhagener Platz also expresses the opinion that

they get along well, those young, or not so young anymore [laughs] old residents, that live in the neighborhood, and all the new Berliners. But because

they all love the same things, like sitting outside in the sun and drinking coffee [...] I think there is no problem here, more like: it grows together.

(Representative of the district administration, Boxhagener Platz, personal interview, 1 November 2018)

These statements illustrate a different outlook on the city where a divide does not run between tourists and permanent inhabitants. As a newspaper article aptly reports, “the issue is not about tourists versus residents per se. It is about certain tourists and residents—‘place’ consumers, so to speak—using the city differently than other residents, particularly those who sleep at night” (Braun 2010: 2).

Challenged Routines of Cohabitation

In order to further explore the new dividing lines *within* Boxhagener Platz and Reuterkiez as neighborhoods that are frequently visited by New Urban Tourists, it is instructive to look at how representatives of the district administration describe changes in the social fabric of their respective neighborhood. One interviewee from Boxhagener Platz emphasizes that “the neighborhood has always felt like a good mix of young and older people” (representative of district administration, personal interview, 1 November 2018). It is telling that the presence of all ages is accentuated here, while other characteristics such as a mix of social classes or ethnicities are not mentioned, given the extended period of gentrification the area has undergone.

In Reuterkiez, the situation is different. The neighborhood has only recently become popular with both Berliners and tourists for its desirable urban atmosphere. Here, age indeed is perceived as a dividing line. A representative of the district administration Reuterkiez explained:

The younger people are the ones that almost come automatically. But they are also pushed by social media, [...] It has taken on a little bit of a life of its own in this group and has spread a positive image of Neukölln as a place to be for young people.

(personal interview, 23 November 2018)

The reported influx of young people is just one aspect of a complex unsettling of local routines of cohabitation though. Another routine that has been firmly challenged in Reuterkiez is the everyday interaction between different social groups. A tourist accommodation provider in Reuterkiez explained:

I think especially around Reuterplatz [...] we have this melting pot of the most different people. The CDU [Christian Democrats] voter lives next to the punk, him in a partly squatted building [...] It has remained a little bit [but] it is changing a little bit now unfortunately, this entire structure.

(personal interview, 4 December 2018)

The interviewee continues to describe this new social structure as follows:

I see more and more buildings that are dark at night [...] during the week. During weekends [...], the lights are on [...]. I can conclude from that: ah, works somewhere else, comes home on the weekends. Has bought a flat or even rented one, if one can afford it.

(ibid.)

Even though these new locals are jobholders, they obviously do not move to Reuterkiez to make their living there, but because they can afford the rents and want to enjoy the famed local atmosphere in their leisure time.

The everyday interaction between different ethnic groups has also been unsettled. One interviewee recounts that Reuterkiez “was an insider tip nine years ago. It isn’t anymore” (Tourist accommodation provider, Reuterkiez, personal interview, 4 December 2018). S/he explicates that “indeed, many, many nationalities move here and it is still wonderfully mixing” (*ibid.*). But at the same time, there are many “definitely German families [...]. Probably also some singles, but also young couples that move here now. There is nothing wrong with that, it just makes it a little less lively” (*ibid.*). This viewpoint is expanded upon by a representative of the district administration (Reuterkiez) who speaks of a “new mix”, meaning that

the family can [live] next to the Arab family, the [...] autochthonous German next to the Arab family. You can already find that here, but there are also blocks with more condominiums and a certain clientele, that can afford them. I don’t even want to attribute that to ethnicity.

(personal interview, 23 November 2018)

While ethnic diversity still is noticeable, these statements indicate that neighborhood life is increasingly perceived as a mixing of urban dwellers of the same upper social class. Although the routinized practices of cohabitation of diverse groups of people have been challenged by the rising attention that New Urban Tourism and young groups of visitors have brought to these neighborhoods, remarkably enough their changing social and ethnic structure is not attributed to the tourists, but to specific groups of new locals moving in.

Conclusion

While “it has become increasingly popular [in Berlin] to look at tourists as some eleventh biblical plague [...] and make them single-handedly responsible for unwanted changes the city’s more centrally located neighborhoods are currently experiencing” (Novy 2013: 228), our interviewees regard New Urban Tourists as a specific type of new, temporary locals. They put tourists in a similar category as those second-home or permanent residents who recently moved

to Boxhagener Platz and Reuterkiez because of the neighborhoods' leisure-oriented consumption offers and enjoyable atmospheres. For our interviewees, these highly mobile groups do not only have in common that they are new to the neighborhood and therefore (temporary or permanent) 'new locals'; but more importantly, the practices of these 'new locals' (e.g. accepting higher price ranges for dwelling and daily supplies, eating and drinking out, partying) are a challenge to the mundane lifeworlds and routines of settling, dwelling and cohabitation of those 'old locals' who live ordinary lives in the neighborhood, shaped by the bonds of home and work (Edensor 2007). Many 'old locals' simply do not have the economic means to protect themselves, as well as their reportedly 'authentic' neighborhoods, from this leisure-centric new wave of consumption-based urban capitalist restructuring.

As Verena Pfeiffer and Sophia Döbbling (2006) pointed out, gentrification and touristification processes overlap in manifold ways, and changes in local trade and in the social structure of neighborhoods can be induced or enhanced by either of them (Gotham 2005). Under this premise, many Berliners view New Urban Tourists as drivers of neighborhood change. They are blamed for attracting people with similar leisure-based lifestyles and related businesses, and thus for rising rents and displacement. Commenting on tourism with smug disapproval is hence a continuation of longstanding conflicts in Berlin over accelerating gentrification, while the divide between those who belong, and those who do not, is widening.

Notes

- 1 'Neighbourhoods in the tourist trap? An examination on the changing residential quality through tourist accommodations in selected Berlin residential neighbourhoods', funded by the German Research Agency DFG (GZ: FR 2522/5-1 and WE 5894/2-1), partnering with Kristin Wellner, Claus Müller and Emily Kelling, TU Berlin, and Claudia Ba and Annika Zecher, TU Darmstadt, 2018–2022.
- 2 Berlin is divided into so-called 'Lebensweltlich orientierte Räume' (lifeworld-oriented spaces, LOR) by the federal state government. These are small-scale areas for which data are collected.
- 3 Particularly in 2020, but also in shorter periods of 2021 and 2022, visitor numbers fell drastically because of travel restrictions and lockdowns to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

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8

DISRUPTED, UNSETTLED, CONTESTED

Working Homelessness in Silicon Valley

Rafael Essl

Few metropolitan regions in the Global North seem to be as emblematic of disruptive urbanism as the San Francisco Bay Area. ‘Eviction epidemic’, ‘homelessness crisis’, ‘hypergentrification’: the discourse is lacking additional superlatives to illustrate the seemingly ever-increasing urban inequality. At the latest since the tech-bus blockades, which started in 2013, the tech industry of Silicon Valley is directly associated with much of this inequality (McElroy 2017). Its economic success made the Bay Area one of the most prosperous regions in the United States (US) and subsequently one of the most expensive, unequal and unsettled urban areas—strikingly represented through San Francisco’s Gini index of 0.523 that is on par with highly unequal countries (Maharawal 2017). The role of the tech sector as local urban disruptor is multidimensional. It is the primary driver for the escalating housing costs in both urban and suburban neighborhoods, due to the constant attraction of high-income tech employees (*ibid.*); it promotes privatization and dispossession of public commons (McElroy 2017); occupies more and more developable property, leading to the displacement of both small businesses and working-class communities (Schwaller 2019); and it undermines ethics of work through the precarization of labor, the gig-economy¹ and subcontracting (van Doorn 2017).

This chapter analyses the phenomenon of working homelessness, which represents an intersection of the above-stated dimensions of tech-driven urban disruption. A significant number of (mostly subcontracted, flexibilized) service, care, maintenance and security workers are forced to live in highly precarious forms of dwelling, ranging from garages, Airbnb apartments, hotels or formal trailer homes, to parked cars, residential vehicles (RVs) and street encampments (Shastry 2018). Vehicle dwellers have become especially representative for working homelessness, as they are (partly) visible in public. The increasing emergence of working homelessness hereby constitutes an epitome of unsettling

in three respects: Firstly, as an alarming symptom of the urban inequality in the Bay Area, which is presently mainly driven by the tech sector's promoted state of mind emphasizing the innovative potential of disruption. Secondly, as the disarranging of the basic social relationship between working and housing, the uncoupling of homelessness and unemployment (Jones et al. 2019). Thirdly, as the unsettling of the basic values of urbanity: The idea of cities as inclusive, diverse and heterogeneous *poleis* is undermined through the neglect and subsequent criminalization of vehicle homelessness by city municipalities. Aggregated, these unsettling constitutions pose an underlying potential for urban contestations—conflicts with municipalities, formal residents and corporations.

The empirical research for this chapter² is based on a qualitative content analysis of various media sources, such as online media articles, videos and documentaries. These sources are centered around individual fates, conflicts, everyday struggles and potential reasons relating to working and vehicle homelessness. The analysis is further validated through interviews with a professor of international politics whose research focus centers on the neoliberal crisis, and a homeless advocate in the Bay Area.

Disruptive Urbanism in the Bay Area

Silicon Valley's ongoing drive for innovation and renewal can be explained with the concept of 'creative destruction', which has become a crucial economic theory through Joseph Schumpeter's work: "Any single component of the economy—say a firm or even industry—could not withstand the deep-seated forces of competition and innovation which would eventually destroy any firm that grew to dominate its market" (Batty 2007: 3). On the one hand, creative destruction has been intensively used to glorify disruption through big tech companies (see Dowling and Hüsig 2007). On the other hand, it has been identified as the underlying foundation of disruptive urbanism by urban studies (see Batty 2007). The vast economic, societal and cultural shifts agitated by economic transformations directly affect built and social space, and they also expand through new forms of shaping urban form and urban life. Silicon Valley is certainly no homogenous infrastructure (Greene 2019), the single corporations affect the urban landscape of the Bay Area on multiple layers: Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Apple and various others have built huge office campuses in suburban places such as Mountain View, Palo Alto, Sunnyvale or Cupertino and thereby cause not only the obvious pressure on affordable housing in the whole region but also intense commuting and uneven distribution of tax money and common infrastructure (Professor of international politics, personal interview, 14 October 2020). Twitter's tax-free settling next to San Francisco's Mission district led to further gentrification (Schwaller 2019), Airbnb's well-known business practices further unsettled the housing sector (McElroy 2017), and Uber is at the forefront of disrupting the working conditions (van Doorn 2017). Despite these manifold effects, there is still a unique concept driving Silicon

Valley's disruptions: a culture, a state of mind, common values, work ethics and aesthetics (Greene 2019).

Michael Batty (2007: 3) argues that most urban change happens due to market-driven renewal and is rather a "chaotic process of destruction and rebuilding", than simply an outliving of functionality. He describes this disruptive nature of urbanism for the case of London, which has undergone vast transformations of commercially attractive development leading to the well-known extreme exclusivity of the inner city (*ibid.*). San Francisco has seen similar processes of financialization and housing speculation and yet currently faces enormous pressure on the housing market through the massive influx of tech workers—an estimated 450,000 white-collar tech employees work in the Bay Area, which has a total workforce of just 5 million people (Schwaller 2019). Some of the dimensions, which produce manifest tensions in urban everyday life resulting in a constantly unsettled urban reality in the Bay Area, are reaching far back to its contested history. Over the course of the past two centuries, the area has faced migration waves, industrial restructuring and financialization, accompanied by various processes of displacement and discrimination. Historic examples are the oppression of Chinese immigrants in the 19th century, the detention and expulsion of the Japanese community during the Second World War, and the systematic repression of Black residents in the 20th century (Solnit 2019).

Many of the neighborhoods where minorities resided, fell victim to cost-saving infrastructure developments or racist and classified urban renewal policies (*ibid.*). Postwar economic restructuring caused vast class discrimination within city-making in the Bay Area. With vanishing war factories and port facilities came the obvious shift from blue-collar working-class jobs to white-collar office ones (Walker and Schafran 2015). The emerging business and financial elite of the 1960s strongly influenced urban redevelopment in the Bay Area, particularly in San Francisco which has become the main financial center of the West Coast (*ibid.*). This affected the displacement of working-class communities in the city, but also the neglect of low-income communities in Oakland and Berkeley (Solnit 2019). The majority of these working-class neighborhoods were initially inhabited by Black, Asian and Latine residents. Today the neglected inner-city neighborhoods of these marginalized communities have become subjects of vast gentrification, as, for example, the predominantly Latine Mission District in San Francisco, which became infamous for the tech-driven hypergentrification starting in the 1990s (*ibid.*).

The Bay Area (see Figure 8.1), on the one hand, depicts urban realities, which have been vastly shaped by disruptive urbanism in its deepest sense: the destruction of public commons; the neglect of the idea of the city as a collective polis, as a political project; the destruction of communities, everyday life and urban qualities through market and corporate interests. On the other hand, this metropolitan region serves as a spatial manifestation of Silicon Valley's state of mind, which has continued to unsettle urban life in the Bay Area in particular since the commercialization of the internet in the 1990s (McElroy 2017). The immediate



FIGURE 8.1 Map of the Bay Area.

Source: Rafael Essl, 2021.

effects of related processes became evident in the course of the dot-com bubble, which contributed to the already-extensive gentrification and further increased pressure on the housing sector through rising numbers of evictions and foreclosures (Walker and Schafran 2015). After the succeeding global financial crisis of 2008, what is referred to as ‘Tech Boom 2.0’, led to both a building boom of market rate developments and an unprecedented eviction epidemic with a 54.7% increase of evictions in 2014 (Maharawal 2017). Research from the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project in 2013 indicates an evident connection to the tech sector: 69% of evictions in San Francisco occurred within four blocks of the tech bus stops, as these areas are particularly sought-after (McElroy 2017). These buses, which are used by several tech firms to transport their employees, became the stage for anti-gentrification protests since they have caused major demonstrations and blockades from 2013 onward (Maharawal 2017). The two tech booms hereby strongly contributed to the loss of big parts of the city’s populations of color—an

ongoing racial makeup aligning with the historic displacement processes. San Francisco's Mission district has, for example, experienced a 27% decrease in its Latine population from 2009 to 2013 (ibid.).

Working Homelessness in Silicon Valley

The Tech Boom 2.0 has not just aggravated the housing crisis via several tech-driven aspects (see McElroy 2017), but also vastly amplified the homelessness crisis and changed the perception and nature of homelessness (see Figure 8.2). Ranked as one of the five US-American cities with 'the meanest streets' by the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty in 1997, San Francisco has been well-known for its high numbers of homeless individuals since the 1980s (Mitchell 1997). During the dot-com bubble, an estimated 10,000 people were forced to live on the streets each night (Schwaller 2019). However, it is only since the Tech Boom 2.0 that this crisis became a large-scale regional phenomenon (ibid.). In the entire Bay Area, 28,200 individuals have officially been counted homeless in the last comprehensive report of 2017 (Bay Area Council and Economic Institute 2019). Nowadays, Santa Clara County, where most of the tech corporations (e.g. Google, Apple, HP, Intel) are situated, is the county with the highest number (9700) of people experiencing homelessness (ASR 2019a). Due to the fact that the affected populations are hidden and mobile, it must be assumed that the exact numbers are significantly higher, especially as some forms of homelessness are often excluded in these surveys (homeless advocate, personal interview, 19 November 2020).

Considering the growth of both high and low-income jobs, Manuel Castells (2010: 221) calls out "an increasingly polarized social structure, where the top and



FIGURE 8.2 Homeless encampments in San Francisco.

Source: Rafael Essl, 2020.

the bottom increase their share at the expense of the middle”. His analysis questions the common assumption that the success of Silicon Valley is solely built on the innovative potential of the seemingly ‘creative’ elite. This is clearly shown by the rising number of working homeless individuals in the Bay Area, but as well by the enduring dependence of the tech sector on migrant low-income workers with unclear citizenship status and weak citizen rights, which seldom occur in official statistics of the tech corporations as they are mostly subcontracted (Schwaller 2019). Nils van Doorn (2017: 907) highlights the dependence of Silicon Valley on unsettled labor and claims a systematic precariat behind the tech sector: “In the world of platform labor, inequality is a feature rather than a bug” (ibid.). The phenomenon of working homelessness falsifies the common perception that the path to overcome individual homelessness is through employment and calls for the provision of affordable housing for all citizens as top priority (see Jones et al. 2019). The disproportionately high ratio of migrants and ethnic minorities within the low-income workforce is reflected in the ethnic composition of the homeless population, where especially Black and Latine individuals are overrepresented (Bay Area Council and Economic Institute 2019)—dynamics continuing the racist processes of displacement and dispossession.

Neither working homelessness nor vehicle homelessness (see Figure 8.3) is a new phenomenon in the US, but both are increasing due to ongoing transformations in the working environment, such as gig-working and subcontracting (Shastry 2018). These shifts include the spatial and social alienation from companies: Firstly, an increasing proportion works outside of the workplace, either at home, on the move, or at the company where the tasks are subcontracted to. Secondly, the social contracts between employee and employer, the job security and working



FIGURE 8.3 Campers and RVs lined up on a public street in Mountain View.
Source: Sundry Photography, Courtesy of Shutterstock, 2019.

conditions are weakened (Castells 2010). An extreme example of the effects of economic transformations is the continuing precarization of gig-driving. Drivers who work for Uber, Lyft and other companies are oftentimes forced into working homelessness. Due to high self-carried operational costs, liabilities from car purchases or accidents, and lacking support from gig-companies because of the absent employee status, a significant percentage of drivers stay in their cars overnight (Said 2019). Other low-income occupations that are particularly under risk of working homelessness are part of the care, maintenance, security or cleaning sectors—even firefighters are often forced into vehicle homelessness (Shastry 2018; Invisible People 2019).

Working homeless individuals tend to have more possessions and financial assets compared to unemployed ones and they are dependent on their vehicles to sustain their living standard (McMahon 2019). As the Bay Area salaries are relatively high,³ even for low-income jobs, some of the vehicles are of high value (Ho 2019). This is eventually just another evidence of the region's extreme housing costs. Yet there are different levels of living quality depending not only on the model, condition or size, but particularly on infrastructure, legal status and position of the parking space (see Figure 8.4). Dwellers usually avoid parking in residential areas, but this is not always possible—especially due to the required proximity to crucial infrastructure and due to multiple close-by jobs (McMahon 2019). Vehicle dwellers sometimes form communities on private parking lots. They are tolerated just for the nighttime and have to clear the spaces during the day (Ho 2019). For the working homeless that means they are not only under constant threat of displacement but also underlie a very strict time management because they have to adjust their job hours to the access conditions (*ibid.*).



FIGURE 8.4 RV with front yard in Berkeley.

Source: Joelle Thomas, 2021.

Due to their growing presence, working and vehicle homelessness became part of the ongoing public debate on urban inequality and tech-led disruption—a discourse which is certainly polarizing: It centers around distinctive events that illustrate the ‘tech overtake’ of the Bay Area, individual fates of the evicted (Invisible People 2019), working conditions in particular companies (Said 2019), unjust municipal policies of particular cities (Ravani 2019), or, on the contrary, the seemingly vast philanthropic efforts of some tech corporations to tackle the housing crisis (Bloomberg 2019). This polarization is, for example, represented through intensive media debates about the mayor of Mountain View who claimed that vehicle dwellers live in their precarious dwelling forms ‘by choice and do have plentiful other options’ (Hobson 2019), Google neglecting any discussion on the existence of homeless employees (Bloomberg 2019), or formal Silicon Valley residents who reportedly demanded to “build a wall to keep the homeless out” (Bastone 2019). These villainizing media snippets also show that Santa Clara County has been at the center of the discourse on tech-led urban disruption in recent years. And indeed, compared to San Francisco, it has not just more tech headquarters, higher median gross rents and median household incomes (United States Census Bureau 2021a, 2021b) but also higher overall numbers of homeless individuals and a bigger share of vehicle dwellers (ASR 2019a, 2019b). Here it becomes evident that the disruptive mindset of Silicon Valley, the ongoing attraction of high-paid workforce and construction of more office parks intensifies the housing crisis in the Bay Area, as every new tech office subsequently leads to a new wave of evictions due to the lack of affordable housing (Schwaller 2019).

The Neglect of Homelessness by Law

There is a thin line between homelessness and precarious forms of dwelling, and this chapter is not providing a clear distinction in sociological terms. It rather emphasizes that the precariousness of various forms of low-income housing or dwelling cannot be easily divided into homeless and non-homeless segments. The vehicle dwellers have more privacy and safety compared to individuals living directly on the streets, but as they mostly do not control the land on which they are parking on, they experience similar neglect and threat of displacement (see McMahan 2019).

Over the course of the past 40 years, legal authorities have used biases to neglect the underlying housing inequalities, to justify punitive reactions and unjust urban policies, and to trivialize or normalize homelessness (O’Sullivan 2020). The cynicism of these claims becomes particularly evident in the Bay Area, as the region is economically successful and has a low unemployment rate and yet one of the largest homeless populations in the US (Bay Area Council and Economic Institute 2019). Working homelessness finally scrutinizes the common prejudices about homelessness to be mainly affecting single men, to be directly linked to unemployment or to be self-imposed (Mitchell 1997). Affected

populations, homeless aid groups and researchers demand the unsettling of common prejudices. This includes overcoming discriminatory biases, a changing discourse, as well as questioning the used terminology (O’Sullivan 2020).⁴

As discussed in the previous section, for the tech corporations, working and vehicle homelessness poses a threat of additional public attention toward their disruptive urban impact (see Bloomberg 2019). The criminalization and subsequent displacement of visible vehicle homelessness through city administrations is thereby an attempt to make “urban centers attractive to [...] footloose capital” (Mitchell 1997: 305). While vehicular dwelling, compared to street homelessness, is generally perceived as a ‘safer option’ by the affected individuals and homelessness advocates, and a more ‘pleasant option’ for city officials, dwellers are still under constant risk of losing their only form of shelter and all possessions through displacement, harassment and criminalization (Herring and Yarbrough 2015). Their presence in residential and commercial areas causes unrest among the formal residents, municipalities and corporations (McMahon 2019). This is mostly due to bad dwelling conditions: The vehicles often leak sewage, have no garbage disposal, are cramped with belongings, consume parking spots, or are in bad technical condition (Ho 2019). Due to the recent rise of vehicle dwelling, some cities, such as Mountain View, Palo Alto, San Jose, Oakland and Berkeley have increased their efforts to criminalize it through RV parking bans, the restraint of long-term parking or the prohibition of sleeping in vehicles (Ravani 2019). Under the pretense of decreasing municipal ‘quality of life’ (for the formal residents), these cities nowadays even offer complaint and citation hotlines or apps to log homeless individuals (Schwaller 2019).

Similar anti-homelessness tactics have been established after the homelessness numbers exploded in the 1980s as a consequence of neoliberalization (Mitchell 1997). Nowadays 74% of Californian cities restrict sleeping in vehicles compared to 33% of US cities (Herring and Yarbrough 2015). The current legal practices, which specifically tackle vehicle dwellers, thereby complement older laws, which ban begging, sleeping, loitering, lying down and other seemingly ‘unproductive’ activities from sidewalks and public spaces—the City of San Francisco has for example 24 of such laws (Schwaller 2019). Through all these measures homeless citizens, both those sleeping on the streets and in vehicles, are expelled from urban space (see Figure 8.5). As all the activities which they must do to sustain their living, such as washing, eating, cooking, sleeping or camping are prohibited in public space, “survival itself is criminalized” (Mitchell 1997: 307).

It is not surprising, yet particularly ruthless, how the ‘suppression of homelessness’ is attempted in the Bay Area. Homeless encampments are destroyed by bulldozers, RVs or cars are towed if they park on the same spot for too long (homeless advocate, personal interview, 19 November 2020), and municipal authorities issue wrong tickets or wake up vehicle dwellers at night for random controls (McMahon 2019). It is thereby crucial for survival that homeless individuals always protect their possessions and are constantly vigilant, something quite impossible if working in (often multiple) job occupations. Still, city



FIGURE 8.5 RV parking restrictions prohibit overnight parking in many Bay Area cities.

Source: Michael Vi, Courtesy of Shutterstock, n.d.

officials state that confiscating homeless people's belongings is crucial to clean the streets and secure public safety (Herring and Yarbrough 2015). For that reason, parking bans, time restrictions and other forms of criminalization pose an existential threat to vehicle dwellers.

Contested Urban Realities

Disruptive urbanism—the growing influence of corporate interests on living circumstances in contemporary city-making—can be encountered globally on different scales and dimensions. The influence of Silicon Valley's tech sector on the Bay Area's everyday urban life is certainly an extreme example considering its vast dimensions and long duration. Working homelessness hereby displays a polarization within the public discourse on tech-driven urban inequality, a paradigmatic disarranging of (precarious) working and housing, and a re-framing of the common notion that homelessness is directly connected to unemployment. The homelessness crisis in the Bay Area, as well as the eviction epidemic and hypergentrification, have become more dramatic within the past decade, as the Tech Boom 2.0 has put further pressure on the housing market and working environment (see McElroy 2017; van Doorn 2017). At the intersection of these dimensions, working homeless individuals are worn down by the friction between economic profits based on precarious labor; increasing exclusivity of urban space, which is purely in favor of well-paid elites; and historically grounded discrimination of ethnic and class minorities.

Because of the persisting and yet increasing pressure on the housing market, public space and vacant spaces (Schwaller 2019), as well as the anti-homelessness laws and the dependence on vehicles, the working homeless population is

particularly affected by displacement and exclusion. The cynicism about working homelessness in the Bay Area centers on the handling of homelessness in the US itself as “a highly exclusionary sense of modern citizenship”, that is casually denying access to and prohibiting the use of public space (Mitchell 1997: 306), while the working homeless citizens have become a cornerstone of Silicon Valley’s economic success, considering their growing numbers within sustaining occupations. In November 2020, *Proposition 22* (Prop 22), which enables the ongoing subcontracting of gig-workers and prevents regulation and subsequent improvement of working conditions, was on the ballot in California. Acknowledging the multiple dimensions of urban disruption, homelessness advocacies claimed: ‘Vote No on Prop 22’, because they knew that the urgent socio-political contestation of gig-driver working conditions is crucial to tackle the homelessness crisis in the Bay Area (Whittaker 2020). Eventually, their hope was in vain, as Prop 22 passed the vote, supported through a 205-million-dollar-campaign from several gig-economy corporations, such as Uber and Lyft. The tech campaign made it the most expensive ballot measure in California’s history, but it has cost the tech sector “a lot less than the long-term prospect of paying a living wage to workers” (ibid.).

The campaign for Prop 22 highlights the claim that the success of the platform economy is directly related to the depreciation of lower job occupations (van Doorn 2017). It furthermore drives the debate on the livability of the whole region, considering the common condition that even essential workers in care, security and maintenance cannot afford housing any more. Sixty-hour work weeks and high salaries do certainly not prevent homelessness as the cases of gig drivers, carers, security guards or firefighters illustrate—homelessness becomes detached from unemployment. Driven into precarious dwelling by unjust working conditions, mortgages, medical bills, etc., the affected people find themselves in a frustrating urban reality. Their ongoing displacement, from San Francisco to Oakland to Richmond and further into suburban business areas beyond the edges of the Bay Area, and their exclusion from public space not only is an expulsion of marginalized urban citizens but also renders urban life increasingly exclusive. As Jeremy Waldron already stated in 1991: “What we are dealing with here is not just ‘the problem of homelessness,’ but a million or more persons whose activity and dignity and freedom are at stake” (as cited in Mitchell 1997: 319). Usually, the socioeconomic effects of economic misery do not become directly visible in public space, but rather stay “behind the private curtain of shame and guilt” (Knierbein 2017: 114). The visible conflicts on vehicle homelessness and the struggles of the affected people might hence just be the tip of the iceberg of the actual effect of foreclosures, evictions, skyrocketing rents; of gentrification and, dispossession; and of unsettling, in its deepest literal sense. The significant demand for inclusive and just public space becomes especially clear as the situation of being temporarily in precarious forms of housing becomes more and more permanent in the Bay Area and informal dwellers have to deal with the lack of some of the most basic human needs on an everyday basis (see Mitchell 1997; Knierbein 2017).

Notes

- 1 Gig-workers are independent flexibilised subcontractors, who offer on-demand services for online platforms (van Doorn 2017).
- 2 This chapter is a summary derived from my diploma thesis (Essl 2021).
- 3 The Bay Area's median income is US\$100,000, compared to US\$61,000 in the US.
- 4 Recent debates focus on the terminology of homelessness. Alternative terms such as 'unhoused' or 'unsheltered' prevent the prejudice that only a house can be a home. Yet, these terms carry a certain fuzziness and ignore the self-identification of many affected individuals as 'homeless folks'. Thus, I hereby continue to use the term homeless, but just as an adjective, to prevent the dehumanization carried by the term 'the homeless'. For guidance check Orenstein (2020).

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PART II

Urban Temporalities



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9

URBAN TEMPORALITIES

An Introduction

Ed Wall and Sabine Knierbein

Settling and unsettling urban spaces can be understood through analyzing changes in everyday life with a focus on different temporalities, occurring through time, paused and accelerated, controlled and contested, cyclical and rhythmic. Time is made permanent through being located in space (Madanipour 2017: 11). In that way “temporary urbanism is based on events that seem to be random, outside the normal rhythm of things, disrupting the settled habits of society and disregarding the routines that regulate everyday life” (ibid.). This section grounds aspects of temporality within subjects, buildings, public spaces, urban developments, cities and states: it explores rights to citizenship in Dubai (Daher, Chapter 10), geographies of aging in Vienna (Gabauer, Chapter 11), relations between maintenance and development of public spaces in London (Wall, Chapter 12), gentrified neighborhoods in Chicago (Bodnar, Chapter 13), the contested evolution of public libraries in Birmingham (Dring, Chapter 14) and temporalities of property rights in Houston (Cuéllar, Chapter 15).

Simple concepts of linear time have been frequently embraced throughout modernist periods because they reduce the complexity of multiple and overlapping everyday rhythms and speeds of cyclical time and moments of rituals into an abstracted and narrow frame of past, present and future timelines. Such constructions of time have been key instruments in preparing the ground for processes of rationalization, optimization and compression of everyday time, erroneously suggesting that productive human activity could be expedited through a quantitative approach to measuring time. Yet everyday time is first and foremost a felt time, including sensations that mark affective and soulful encounters where relations unfold differently when characterized by joy or excitement, by sadness or trauma, or if viewed as mere moments of tedium and monotony. Reading unsettled conditions through an analysis of changing patterns of

everyday rhythms and temporalities invites scholars to explore their own conceptions of time and duration, while challenging cultural biases and disciplinary conditionings regarding concepts of temporality.

Temporalities are inseparably bound up with the lived spaces of contemporary cities. Social rhythms are inscribed in the floorplans of apartments, in the textures of streets and within the forms of neighborhoods, in a constant making and remaking of urban spaces. ‘Rhythm’ relates to regular patterns of social interaction, which manifest in the organization of time and space (Vogelpohl 2012: 73). Intersecting human journeys, constructions, movements and struggles constantly reconfigures urban spaces—conceived through planning, appropriated through use and structured through material interventions invested over time. Social time marks the intersection of linear, rhythmic and cyclical time-scales, and assigns the fact that linear capitalist timelines are always entangled with rhythmic everyday temporalities and the more cosmic planetary time related to the cycles of nature (Lefebvre 1972: 11, cited in Lindón Villoria 2004: 43).

Simultaneously, this ordinary time is to be understood within a certain historical duration, marked by *long durée* (Bergson 2014 [1922]) or articulated by the *theory of moments* (Lefebvre 1959, 2002). Whereas according to Henri Bergson, space can be homogeneously partitioned, time clearly cannot (cf. Delitz 2018: 347). Bergsonian *durée* is differentiated from space and cannot be adequately measured through spatial conventions (cf. *ibid.*: 349, referring to Bergson 2014 [1922]). As Robert Seyfert (2019: 105) explains, Bergson’s concept of *durée* cannot be reduced to lived experience, as *durée* is not an experiential category, rather it operates on a much more abstract level of theorizing time. *Durée* is a corrective concept of time operating against a dominant conception of time: time that can be sliced into pieces and moments. Andy Merrifield (2006) refers to Lefebvre’s Theory of Moments as acting as a “violent protest against [...] the formless psychological continuum advocated by Bergsonian philosophy” (Lefebvre 2014: 636; cf. Merrifield 2006: 27). He explains that for Bergson, creation is like the “flow of an arrow on a teleological trajectory” (cf. *ibid.*) and that life itself unfolds with similar temporality. Humans comprehend themselves in his unbroken, absolute time, not in space: “We perceive existence when we place ourselves in duration in order to go from that duration to moments, instead of starting from moments in order to bind them again and to construct duration” (*ibid.*). Merrifield shows that Lefebvre goes against such a conception of *durée*, and against such a broken relation between space and time when building a framework of historic duration from the standpoint of the moment.

Moments contain contingency and continuity, the drama and its dissolution, time and space, and dialectic negativity: The accomplishment of the moment is its loss (Roskamm 2017: 98, citing Lefebvre 1975 [1961]: 183). Thereby, the moment is demarcated as a multiple paradox, a unit in time which is explicitly spatial, or mediates between the temporal and the spatial. We could also say that the beginning of the moment means settling time in space, whereas its ending implies unsettling the relation between time and space again. Thinking about

moments ultimately binds together diachronic and synchronic ways to theorize urban temporalities while placing an initial emphasis on the synchronic temporal conceptions. The former diachronic temporal approaches, however, are equally necessary because to locate the everyday time in history permits the dignity everyday life (Lefebvre 1981: 8, cited in Lindón Villoria 2004: 44).

These multiple temporalities of urban spaces are constantly in flux, moving at different velocities and trajectories, separating, overlapping, looping and interrupting (Andres and Kraftl 2021). Lefebvre offers a threefold temporal analytical scheme to analyze this kaleidoscope of urban temporalities co-present in space: ‘Eurhythm’ refers to a condition in which different urban rhythms exist simultaneously, relating to each other in multiple ways, while not hindering but supporting one another; ‘isorhythm’ refers to a parallelism of distinguished rhythms; and ‘arrhythm’ marks a condition in which diverging rhythms mutually interfere (Vogelpohl 2012: 75). Understood that way, the city will never reach the point of having a final shape (cf. Madanipour 2010: 13), but is rather a vivid concert of eurhythmic, isorhythmic and arrhythmic temporalities. Societies and their urban spaces are therefore never linear, yet polyrhythmic (Vogelpohl 2012: 75). Analyzing the temporal demonstrates how everyday life is structured by and produces rhythms, highlighting the degree to which people actively take part in the social production of space (ibid.: 81).

This approach to time presupposes a simultaneous presence of past, present and future thought and practice, which merges time with space (cf. Lefebvre 1971: 8), for “the history of a single day includes the history of the world, and of civilization; time, its source unrevealed, is symbolized over and over again” (Lefebvre 1971: 4). Different ideas about temporalities and the passage of time can therefore be understood in their confluence and divergence through empirical spatial analysis. In a more philosophical sense Lefebvre also suggests that the world’s human condition can be traced back through an analysis of everyday time, just in a single day (ibid.). Urban analysis of everyday rhythms thus allows far wider insights than assumed when being confronted with bias about the banality of everyday routines.

As follows, we will first unpack three frames of urban temporalities present in this book. The chapters make visible tensions between contrasting temporalities of urban spaces, recognizing the difficulty for some people to find presence and ‘settle’ in places as disruptive processes of change unfold. Firstly, we recognize modern claims to time, from time as singular and linear to perceived dualisms between time and space. Modern conceptions of time have been challenged for many decades as the claim to neatly lay out past, present and future events in a consistent linear schedule have been discerned. A critical perspective is further required to claims of a ‘spatial-turn’ where concerns for space are privileged over time. While such critiques are well-rehearsed (Schmid 2005), we find in this section that grounding temporalities in specific contexts and reading places through their different rhythms makes explicit the interconnectedness of space and time with urban lives—and the futility of consistently privileging one over the other.

Secondly, the chapters of this section demonstrate unsettling through power over time, employed as a tool for disruption, displacement and dispossession, thereby overshadowing many everyday rhythms of urban lives and communities. Throughout strategic urban development under capitalism, power over time is used to efficiently progress with plans and maximize financial advantage. Controlling time, by accelerating planning processes or slowing down redevelopment to benefit from economic and real-estate cycles, increases uncertainty and unsettles people living and working across urban spaces. The power to slow down and expediate urban change frequently reflects the scales of change in which politicians, planners and landowners can influence it. In contrast, citizens, migrants, families and communities find the rhythm of their lives structured by decisions out of their control. Often, the first challenge is making visible timetables of planned urban change—such as renewal, regeneration and redevelopment—and schedules of time that are strategically concealed to unsettle through uncertainty and avoid interruption of the planned urban change by communities and city publics.

Reflecting on the *chronopolitics* of urban practices reveals how times, as well as spaces, are also controlled for many citizens. *Chronopolitics* means, more capaciously, the many relations that may unfold between time, politics and the political. Chronopolitical research endeavors start from the assumption that time is deeply interwoven with all aspects of politics, yet due to its omnipresence in politics its importance as being constitutive of politics is often overlooked (Becker 2019). Urban research with an interest in chronopolitics questions what kind of time is presupposed by urban politics (*ibid.*); how urban politics involve temporalities; to what extent the social construction of time is politically used as an instrument of power to affect decision-making in urban development; and how meaning and legitimation for particular political groups, agents and visions are produced by employing certain concepts of time or certain references to urban history (*cf.* Becker 2019). Urban temporalities, as addressed in this section, are therefore not innocent or neutral, but rather need to be analyzed as “socially and culturally constructed through political and scholarly practices” (*ibid.*), all of them materializing spatially throughout the rhythmic course of everyday life.

Thirdly, the mutual presence of multiple time-scales and rhythms in place reveals tensions between urban temporalities—as historic places are rewritten with ambitions for the future, as priorities for conservation ignore present needs and lived routines of neighborhoods, or as urban histories are rewritten to legitimize plans for future redevelopment. These contested temporalities demonstrate the capacity for settling and unsettling practices to hold different times in tension, a simultaneity of lives and places coexisting. Milton Santos, in this sense, pointed to ‘relict’ spaces settled in former times which act like inertias, or a sort of rough patina added to the surface of contemporary spaces (Lindón Villoria 2004: 55, referring to Santos 1990). Unsettling of settled routines can provide the opening up of spaces and times to lay the foundations for migrant narratives, departures, journeys and shared trajectories entwined with hopes for more stable

futures. Traditions practiced in the present can both provide a means to reinforce long-established cultural identities, but also support newcomers to settle in new places, thereby becoming local.

The layering of practices in places can establish rights to property and rights to remain, even in the face of significant legal and cultural pressure. Such layering can be read in repeating rhythms of settling and unsettling, whether through daily, weekly, annual or generational cycles, where uncertainties over change are present alongside opportunities to be involved. The coming together of different histories can reveal long-maintained imbalances of power in competition over urban space. In contrast, they can provide for innovative ideas, spaces and ways of life to emerge. The acceptance of multiple time-scales in one place can be employed to question existing power structures and nostalgic claims of urban order, territorial divisions and political hierarchies, where periods of unsettling are necessary to realize more equitable redistribution of urban resources. Static and ossified patterns of land ownership in many cities around the world highlight the power that certain individuals, families and corporations hold to produce urban land ownership structures ranging between ephemeral or eternal states of territorial resource (re)distribution. But these histories of landownership, for example, are marked by moments of disruptive policies to restructure or consolidate, enclose, appropriate and occupy, thereby often introducing new chronopolitical regimes of land regulation.

The contributions in this section explore different and multiple versions of time that settle and unsettle cycles of urban change and everyday life. They reveal critical concerns for and conditions of time that make sense of the empirical cases they investigate. While tensions between competing temporalities highlight urban contestations and practices of time point to the significance of urban routines, all chapters present unique accounts of temporalities that make sense of their respective urban places.

Racha Daher describes in '(Un)Settling Home in Dubai' (Chapter 10) a permanent temporariness as people are confined to living in places where they cannot attain citizenship. Not only does this inevitably produce short-, medium-, and long-term impacts on migrants' lives, but it also generates a series of intergenerational impacts on future generations' endeavors to become and remain local. Focused on struggles for citizenship by migrant workers in Dubai, the chapter explores spatial habitation patterns across the city as well as conditions of permanent temporariness experienced by expatriates, drawing conclusions to how these conditions impact shared senses of home and identity.

In 'Aging in Cities: Everyday Unsettling, Planning and Design' (Chapter 11), Angelika Gabauer explains how the design of cities may exclude and frequently render elderly citizens invisible while aiming to inform more 'age-sensitive' planning and design approaches. Going beyond chronological definitions of age, Gabauer focuses on process of aging and their temporal relations to urban space.

In 'From Cleaning to Cleansing: Maintenance as an Urban Development Practice at Paddington Waterside, London' (Chapter 12), Ed Wall investigates

the perceived permanence of new urban developments that contrasts with incremental and repetitive practices of maintenance. The transformation of canal-side industrial areas in the Paddington area of London reveals a public realm held in stasis through practices of cleaning, mending and securing within a context of development-led social cleansing.

Judit Bodnar outlines the acceleration and corporatization of urban renewal in a historical account of gentrification processes in ‘The Gentrification of Chicago’s Cabrini Green and the Temporalities of Urban Change’ (Chapter 13). Scrutinizing a case of state-led gentrification of Chicago’s Cabrini Green, she reveals the complex nature of time in the intersection of housing policy, architectural plans, urban competition and state housing provision, with cycles of capital investment.

In ‘“And the Straw Cottage to a Palace Turns”: The Foundation of Birmingham Library as Civic Ground’ (Chapter 14), Michael Dring contextualizes the changing built form and location of Birmingham Library, in England, with social and intellectual transformation throughout modernity. The author employs the library, from its historic founding through subsequent transformations as an institution, architectural landmark and public form, as a mediator of urban culture in the city and nationally.

In the final chapter of this section, ‘Property as Practice: The Collective Landholding Patterns of Black Churches’ (Chapter 15), Gabriel Cuéllar presents temporal practices of property employed by freedman congregations to make claims to a small land parcel near Houston, Texas. Cuéllar describes changes to historic property rights after the abolition of slavery and the need to challenge the perpetuation of unequal access to property through on-going practices.

The cases from Birmingham, Chicago, Dubai, Houston, London and Vienna illustrate unsettled temporalities as fields of diachronic tension between urban populations and states, between citizens and local governments, between local inhabitants and global markets, as well as between present urban societies and past urban infrastructure. Together they highlight critical concerns for what is lost or gained through practices of unsettling that work with different, sometimes colliding versions of speed, velocity, trajectory, acceleration, break, pause, periodization and time. In the contexts of constant urban change and cyclical rhythms of urbanization and everyday life in contemporary cities—accelerated, disruptive and faltering on one side, and stabilizing, routinizing and socializing on the other—the following chapters explore narratives, conceptions and visions of the ambiguities that urban temporalities entail. They offer a valuable analytical perspective for making sense of the temporalities of urban spaces through times of settling and unsettling. Analyzing different conceptions of time offers valuable insights into how urban “change is tamed and managed, and how [...] expression[s] of change may be a challenge to this settled pattern of thinking and managing time” (Madanipour 2017: 11)—including an intensification of change, an acceleration of temporalities and a departure from predictable routines (cf. *ibid.*: 12).

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10

(UN)SETTLING HOME IN DUBAI

Racha Daher

Introduction

The city is a palimpsest of complex-layered compositions of social and urban processes (re)written over the land throughout time (Corboz 1983). This layering includes tensions between practices of settling and unsettling inherent to how urban development and society are interlinked. Not unusually, these (un)settlements involve migrants to the city, who in their temporary process of settlement, confront disturbances that many times, play out permanently. Dubai is an interesting case to observe complex and layered intertwinement between this temporality and permanence, as its population is composed predominantly of non-citizen migrants.

This chapter first attempts to document spatial habitation patterns in the city and uncover spatial categorizations and their social allocations (who lives where) intrinsically known to the city's residents. Second, it highlights the permanently temporary condition of second- and third-generation expatriates, to capture an unsettled tension that has been normalized by the loop of legal residency-status routines, and then further attempts to understand how this temporality impacted their sense of home and identity.

In Dubaian society, clear distinctions exist between three major social groups: Emirati citizens,¹ expatriates² and labor workers. Further, clear contrasts exist in the built forms each of these social groups inhabit, and this phenomenon is quite known to residents. The social groupings mentioned shed light on a societal issue: only Emiratis are legal citizens and locally referred to as 'locals', expatriated groups are all jumbled regardless of birthplace or time of stay, and labor workers are set apart and perceived to be below other social groups. This chapter transcribes these societal differences into spatial and illustrative understandings and explores what this means for the permanently unsettled group that has made

Dubai home for three generations—second- and third-generation expatriates, as this group has attracted little attention in the literature on the region (Ali 2011; Akinci 2020). The concept of citizenship, in the sense of long-term settling practices and familiarity, yet lack of permanent legal status, ‘unsettles’ this group, who make up a significant portion³ of Dubai’s resident population. Natively born, long-term residents, without much link to their countries of legal citizenship, their notions of where ‘home’ is and their sense of identity is affected by this contradiction between their status of being home and being (legally) permanently temporary.

The intertwinement between spatial habitation, citizenship and legal routines, and home and identity creates a fruitful exploration of a unique Dubaian state of ‘unsettled’. The author’s socially situated position as a Dubai-born and bred, past resident of the city, initially motivated the research that led to writing this chapter; however, in addition to lived experience and long-term observation, the methodology is further composed of mapping and illustrative drawing, literature and statistical data review. Additionally, in order to spotlight the disquiet of second- and third-generation expatriates, comments on social media outlets including Twitter, Facebook and Medium were collected. Several informal conversations and seven structured interviews via Skype were also conducted. In the interviewed group, questions were asked relating to their home, citizenship, sense of identity, connection and belonging to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) versus their countries of legal citizenship, and whether they were perceived as local in both places. The studied demographic group consisted of those born and raised in Dubai, Sharjah or Abu Dhabi, and spent at least 20 years in the country. They were between 24 and 42 years old, either still live there or moved away, and are active on social media platforms and other technological applications. The group interviewed had lived and worked specifically in the city of Dubai, four of them now live abroad and three continue to live there.

Dubai’s Urbanization and Need for Migrants

A city-state, Dubai is the second-largest emirate in the UAE, hosting more than 3 million residents composed mostly of non-citizen migrants (Dubai Statistics Center 2018). Oil discovery in the 1960s drastically shifted the economic and urban prospects of this coastal-desert city: the world’s dependence on oil brought in large amounts of wealth, enabling the fast import of modern technologies, namely, the automobile and the air-conditioner, instrumental for migrants to settle comfortably in its harsh climate. Facilitating mobility and comfort, these technologies along with oil, became a triple miracle for the city, greatly accelerating its urbanization and capacity to import people and necessary skills to develop new industries and urban centers.

The history of Dubai could be broken down into three main eras: pre-oil, oil and post-oil (see Figure 10.1). Throughout each of these eras, Dubai has had a

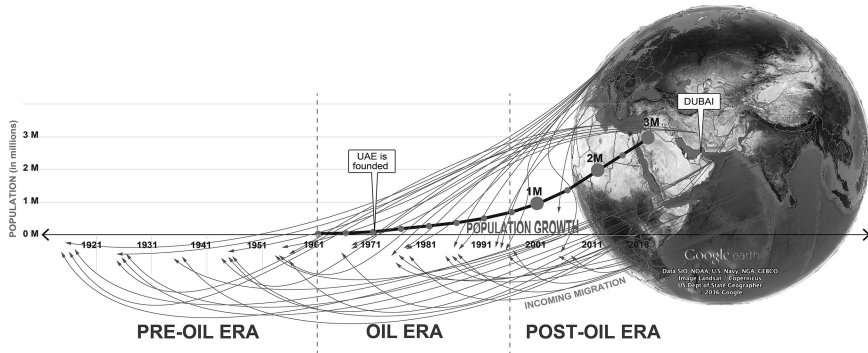


FIGURE 10.1 Historical eras, incoming migration to Dubai and population growth.
Source: Racha Daher, 2017.

history of continuous reception of international migrants, necessary for its development. As a British Trucial State, in the pre-oil era, it had a humble economy dependent on the coastline for trade, fishing and pearl-diving. In addition to Arab Bedouins and British settlers, it received merchants and migrants from the region—mainly Persia and India; many of these merchants and migrants became legal citizens when the country was founded. Oil discovery marked the beginning of the Oil Era; by 1971, the UAE became a country, which Dubai became a part of. Oil kick-started rapid economic growth and urbanization in the 1970s and 1980s, prompting the country’s “entry [...] into the modern age” (Elshehtawy 2016: 65). Skilled and educated migrants mostly from the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and the UK, as well as low-skill labor workers from South Asia were brought in to support the city’s development. As the oil reserves ran low, by the turn of the century, the post-oil era began and is characterized by the real-estate boom. At this point, an abundance of skilled expatriate workers flowed in from all over the Middle East, Asia, the UK, Europe and Africa, as well as from North America and even Australia; additionally, more labor workers flowed in from South Asia to support the construction boom.

Due to the city’s humble past, its new economies presented both opportunity and need for an educated high-skill workforce, as well as low-skill labor workers, in the form of different tiers of people. By 1979, eight years into the country’s founding, a mere 1.3% of the total population (including migrants) had college education (Crown Prince Court 2011), indicating a large need to bring in a high-skill educated workforce. Moreover, Dubai’s rapid economic and urban growth prompted the need for labor workers to support the construction industry. In addition, Dubai is located in the heart of a region that witnessed multiple wars since the middle of the last century, but consistently proved itself a safe haven from the turmoil of its regional neighbors. Consequently, it became a hotspot for people from the region in search of security and stability (Kapiszewski 2004). Finally, Dubai’s tax-free policies made it a very attractive

location for the settlement of international groups of people and corporations in search of economic opportunity.

Hence, five major conditions facilitated the settlement of migrants: initiation of economic development as a result of the oil economy; technology that lessened harshness of the climate; lack of locally available skilled workforce and lack of a critical demographic mass in general; waves of war in the region making it a place of refuge; and continuous economic growth associated with quality of life in the city. Dubai is a major contributor to making the UAE one of the world's largest receivers of migrants; according to the United Nations, in 2015, the UAE was the sixth-highest receiver at 8 million people (United Nations 2016); its total population is currently estimated at 9.4 million (The World Bank 2018).

Urbanization, Social Categorization and Spatial Allocation

In the past few decades, Dubai underwent constant and rapid physical change (see Figure 10.2). Urban growth moved south-westwards from what is known as *Old Dubai*—or the historical center with close proximity to the emirate of Sharjah—toward what is today known locally as *New Dubai*, closer in proximity to Abu Dhabi (the capital emirate of the UAE). Further developments sprawl eastward toward the desert, morphologically thickening the linearity of the city and filling in between its parallel highway systems.

Dubai's urbanization intertwines a complex social fabric in which over 90% of the population is composed of non-citizen migrant inhabitants (Dubai Statistics Center 2017). In published statistical data, this majority is classified as 'Non-Emirati' or 'Non-national'—the remaining <10% of the population holding Emirati citizenship are classified as 'Emiratis' or 'Nationals'. The social jumble

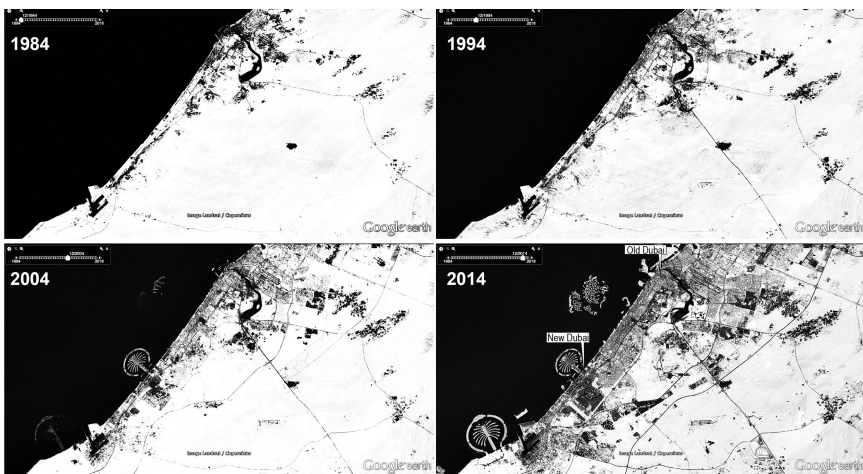


FIGURE 10.2 Dubai's urbanization in ten-year intervals.

Source: Google Earth, Landsat/Copernicus, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2014.

of Dubai's non-citizen inhabitants is rather complex, as people from all backgrounds, citizenships and walks of life reside (with varying times of stay) in the city, creating a diverse population. However, official statistical data does not break down non-citizens by ethnicity, place of birth or length of settlement in the city. Other sources attempt to unfold the overall ethnicity percentages of people in the country as a whole. According to a report done on the UAE by the Congressional Research Service prepared for issues for US policy, this composition is made up of 11% Emirati citizens; 50% from South Asia; 29% from the Arabic-speaking world and Iran; and 10% from Europe, North America and other Asian countries (Katzman 2018: 3).⁴ While useful, the data fails to leave any small percentage for the non-Arabic-speaking Africans and South Americans present. Additionally, it belies the fact that many inhabitants are natively born or are long-term residents without much link to their countries of citizenship; however, understanding nuances related with birthplace and length of stay proves a difficult task due to the lack of published or reliable data.

In an attempt to describe the intertwinement between the social and urban fabrics, the three aforementioned categorizations—Emirati citizens, expatriates and labor workers—commonly used in Dubai society and daily life, are retained however faulty, to refer to social groups in this chapter. These three larger groups developed in parallel to each other without profoundly intermixing with one another. The term 'expatriate' is used here to refer to non-citizens that are not labor workers, based on the legal right to family reunion. Because of their low income, labor workers are ineligible to be joined by family and typically live in what is referred to as 'labor camps'. They generally face distinction from other social groups and live a different version of the city, yet create a vibrant society of their own within it. 'Expatriate' is based on the literal meaning of the term as "someone who does not live in their own country" (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.), which to this day and age of international mobility is still tied to nation of citizenship. The term 'expatriate' is also used for two reasons: to debunk the inaccuracy of the prevailing stereotype that 'expatriates' are privileged white westerners, and also to highlight the continued consideration of a group of locally born, long-term settled, second- and third-generation residents as 'expatriated'—the children of migrants to the UAE since its founding. While labor workers would indeed be an expatriated group according to the presented definition, since the chapter focuses on second- and third-generation expatriates and labor workers cannot reproduce in Dubai or bring their families, for the purposes of clarity, they retain their own category.

The three categorized larger groups developed in the city without really socially intermixing with one another. While citizens and expatriates do mix to a certain degree, usually through professional or administrative practices, or even through friendships, the depth and breadth of their relationships are typically limited (Kantaria 2016), a phenomenon that Nasra M. Shah and Philippe Fargues (2011: 268) argue is the result of reproducing in isolation, because of "lack of naturalization and intermarriages". This isolation not only is evident in the day-to-day aspects

of society but also manifests itself in spatial habitation (residential) patterns. The urban residential morphology consists of several architectural typology clusters that can be found in different variations throughout the city, and in which occupation by different social groups (and income levels) can be deciphered.

Eight typical⁵ samples are extracted and illustrated in Figure 10.3. The tissues are: Emirati national housing, villa compound, gated community, high-rise development, new generation mid-rise fabric, old-generation mid-rise fabric,⁶ low-rise building fabric, and labor camps. Looking closely at housing in the built environment, the tissue can also indicate specific social status, whether Emirati citizen, high-income, middle-income or low-income expatriate, or (very low-income) labor worker. Six (of the eight) residential fabrics are neither occupied by Emirati citizens nor labor workers. The typologies within them vary in height and density and are developed to be inhabited by the spectrum of people with different levels of income within the expatriated group; and so neighborhood and typology become quite telling of the income levels of the expatriates living within them. Additionally, more variety in the housing stock can be observed

















TYPOLOGICAL CLUSTER	Emirati Housing	Villa Compounds	High-rise Buildings	Gated Communities
MORPHOLOGICAL URBAN TISSUE				
SATELLITE IMAGE SAMPLE				
SOCIAL GROUP	Emirati Citizens	High-income Expatriates	High-income Expatriates	Middle-High-income Expatriates
TYPOLOGICAL CLUSTER	New Generation Mid-rise Buildings	Old Generation Mid-rise Buildings	Low-rise Buildings	Labor Camps
MORPHOLOGICAL URBAN TISSUE				
SATELLITE IMAGE SAMPLE				
SOCIAL GROUP	Middle-income Expatriates	Low-income Expatriates	Low-income Expatriates	Labor Workers

FIGURE 10.3 Dubai's typical habitation fabrics. Eight typical fabrics and typologies observed throughout the city.

Source: Top: Racha Daher, 2017; Bottom: Google Earth, Maxar Technologies, 2018.

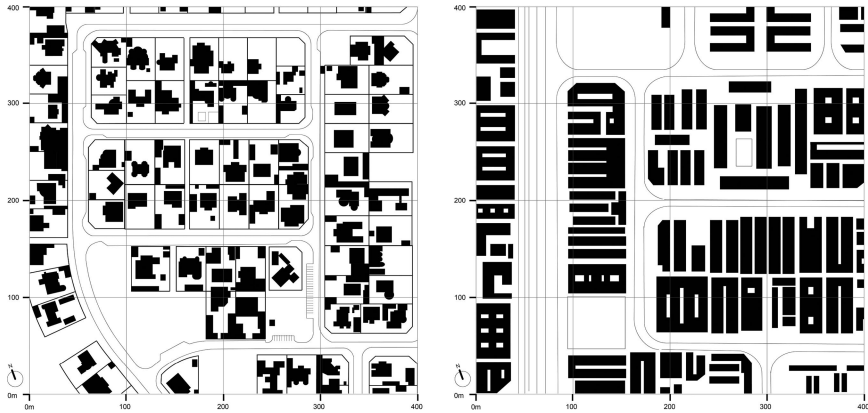


FIGURE 10.4 Two extremes in the housing fabric: Emirati housing and Labor Camps—400 × 400 m sample.

Source: Racha Daher, 2018.

to cater to this large group range. The remaining two tissues, Emirati housing or “national housing” (X-Architects 2010) and labor camps, present extreme and contrasting enclaved residential tissues: on one extreme, low-density enclaves in which Emirati citizens reside; on the other extreme, high-density labor camps in which labor workers reside (see Figure 10.4).

A State of Permanent Temporality

Expatriated migrants to Dubai have a tendency to stay there for long periods of time, with a weighted average of 8.7 years (Al Awad 2008: 6); furthermore, 60% of Asian migrants and 35% of those from Arabic-speaking countries had been living in the city for more than 25 years (*ibid.*: 9).⁷ This highlights that those who lived there for decades made the city a long-term home, made families or were joined by family, and will probably remain there for more decades to come. From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the ratio of inward migration to natural increase was about 2:1. From the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, the ratio doubled to about 4:1 (*ibid.*: 9). In 2005, Dubai’s total population was about 1.3 million, out of which about 1.2 million were non-citizens (GLMM 2014) and in 2015, the total population was about 2.4 million, 2.2 of which were non-citizens (Dubai Statistics Center 2017). This not only shows a doubling of population by decade but also that population growth is dependent on a majority of non-citizen migrants that continuously outnumber Emiratis.

The expatriate population settling in the city permanently and making it home are non-citizens and temporary from a legal point of view, as Emirati law restricts granting citizenship or permanent residency to long-term residents, and natively born babies of non-Emirati parents.⁸ While data is available about number of citizen to non-citizen babies born per year (Dubai Statistics Center 2016), no

published or available data exists on natively born non-citizens currently living in Dubai. What is known is that a group already in its third generation finds itself suspended between being non-local, non-citizen, non-permanent resident. Despite calling the city home, they continue to renew temporary residency visas routinely.

Although evidence that migrants made large contributions to the development of the city in multiple stages, as Philippe Fargues (2011: 274) states, in the transformation of “oil wealth into well-being”, and in laying “foundations for the post-oil economies”, citizens view migrants as “competitors in the labor market and as an obstacle to achieving cohesive societies with a shared identity”. Because citizen populations are drastically outnumbered by non-citizen groups, there is an emphasis on protecting the Emirati’s position in society and preserving Arabian-Emirati identity. This identity most clearly includes (but is not limited to) speaking Emirati-Arabic dialect, wearing traditional Emirati dress and following Muslim religious practices, which many long-term residents do achieve, but it also includes a non-achievable characteristic: holding Emirati citizenship. In the nationalist process to preserve local tradition and culture, Emirati citizenship became a tool for social and ethnic status, in line with the argument, Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, scholars in citizenship studies, make that “citizenship is more of a concept of status than identity” (ibid. 1999: 19).

On identity, American anthropologist Ahmed Kanna has written extensively about the Arab/Persian Gulf and Dubai in specific and has argued that

older Dubayyans often speak Arabic, Persian, and South Asian languages; local cuisine is largely Indian-derived; and local dress, at least in the pre-oil era was a mix of Indian Ocean and Persian influences rather than the Arabian it is today.

(Kanna 2011: 11)

In his view, the Arabian identity of Dubai that we see today “has been constructed largely in opposition to other identities increasingly categorized, officially, as non-Arab, a shift from the pre-oil period” (ibid.). Despite this emphasis on Emirati status and identity, the city has always adapted to the changing demographics and cultures they bring with them, creating a hybridized Dubaian identity. These adaptations can be seen socially, such as through the hybridized Arabic-Hindi-English-mixed dialect used between Emiratis, long-term expatriates and labor workers, or culturally, through food and drink options like ‘mandi’ and ‘chai karak’, or legally through policy-changes on alcohol and cohabitation, for example.

Second- and Third-Generation Expatriates: Forever Unsettled?

For a group of long-term settled and natively born second- and third-generation expatriates, who identify also as Dubaian by virtue of the city being the

only home they know, the emphasis on Emirati identity and not having any permanent form of residency limits their ability to find long-term stability, without being subject to feeling as ‘other’. Long-term residents live an unsettled and permanent state of temporality. Every three years⁹, expatriates must renew their temporary residency visas, regardless of their arrival time, period of residence or relationship to the country as ‘home’. This cyclic routine is illustrated in Figure 10.5.

Some have been living there since the 1960s (before the country’s founding) and must still routinely prove they are eligible to stay in the UAE. Eligibility is either tied to work, education or to a parent with work (in the case of unmarried girls and under-age boys). Residency visas typically require that a person is either sponsored by a company as an employee, an educational institution as a student, own a business, or since the turn of the century, own a house in a select number of exclusive developments. In 2012, 96.4% of all non-citizens were

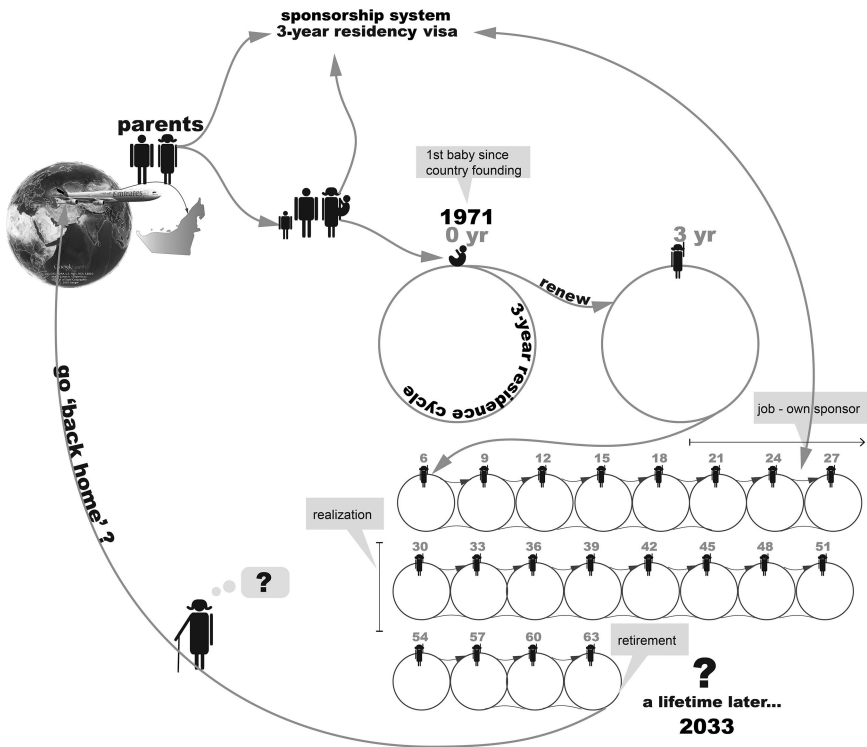


FIGURE 10.5 Loop of residency-status renewal over the lifetime of the first natively born baby in the second and generation expatriate group. Since birth, they continuously renew their temporary status. Assuming the person is able to maintain work throughout their lifetime, at the age of retirement, they will no longer be eligible to stay.

Source: Racha Daher, 2017.

salaried employees according to a labor survey carried out by Dubai Statistics Center (2013). Many long-term residents, who are employees, worry about losing their jobs and hence, their residency statuses, and are haunted by approaching retirement age, after which residency visas are non-renewable; at that point, they must go back to their ‘home’ countries—their countries of legal citizenship. As sociologist Syed Ali found in his ethnographic study specifically on second-generation migrants in Dubai, this is not a “palatable option occupationally or socially” (Ali 2011: 13). As the first expatriate generation approaches retirement age, the ghost of going back ‘home’ begins to emerge (Al Sabi 2010). Similarly, for long-term residents who are business owners, retirement is not an option, as their eligibility for a residency visa would disappear when their business does. Alia Al Sabi a writer who is part of the demographic studied states powerfully:

This routine exercise of proving one’s eligibility for residing in the UAE—even after a lifetime here—becomes emotionally strenuous. It creates that curious state of in between, of belonging but just barely, of feeling entitled yet not at all, of commitment and disappointment, of security and anxiety.
(ibid. 388)

Long-term second- and third-generation residents are bred with such unsettlement and with an underlying acceptance of (trans)national mobility (Gardner 2008; Ali 2011). Because of their life-long status as temporary, the idea that someday they may or will leave (by choice or force) is instilled in them. Their idea of home is not fixed nor permanent. One of the questions I asked the seven people from this group was, *Where is home to you?* Their responses echoed similar unsettlement, but one answer articulates well the changing sense of home. It came from a woman in her thirties who is a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian origin, born and bred in Dubai, and now living and working in New York. She said,

I have made peace with that home is not one place; it is not fixed. Sometimes it is Dubai, sometimes it is New York, sometimes it is Palestine. Sometimes it is family, sometimes it is experience, and sometimes it is roots.

This answer is in line with Ali’s finding that this group moves between multiple countries “with such mental ease” (Ali 2011: 9).

This lack of fixity is also tied to a policy that affected urban space. In terms of home ownership, non-citizens were not eligible to own homes until 2001, when for the first time, a 99-year leasehold for apartments and an unlimited freehold of villas became permitted, but only in designated developments run by large real-estate companies. This policy change instigated Dubai’s real-estate boom at the turn of the century. However, because of high property pricing, its purchasing is only available to people of high income and investors from abroad. Because the generations of expatriates living in Dubai in the decades before the 21st century were not entitled to purchase homes (till now some still cannot

afford property), families opted to rent (housing contracts are renewed annually), and moved as newer housing stock became available and their income levels improved. From a spatial point of view, this movement explains how the city's fabrics come to be occupied by specific income groups—as families moved to new parts of the city, lower-income groups occupied vacated housing stock in older neighborhoods. From a social point of view, all expatriate children born in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, did not have rootedness to a fixed home in their permanent city of residence, creating a dynamic social group, habituated to this unsettlement and lack of fixity (see Figure 10.6).

The limited stability this group of second- and third-generation expatriates has is embedded in the cycles of residency visa renewals, movement from home to home, classification as non-local to the city and a lifetime of uncertainty about the ability to stay. Furthermore, since expatriates are restricted from gaining citizenship, and limited permanent residency options¹⁰ exist for long-term residents or for those born and bred there, their legal status condition renders them forever unsettled. Some of the dialogue with the interviewed group is illustrated in Figure 10.7, echoing this unsettlement.

In analyzing results of this communication, several issues became evident: interviewees considered Dubai their home, but were not perceived as 'local' to the city, since they are not Emirati. In their countries of legal citizenship, some expressed not feeling local, or that they were identified as someone from abroad. In all of them, they struggled to identify themselves with a rooted identity, and

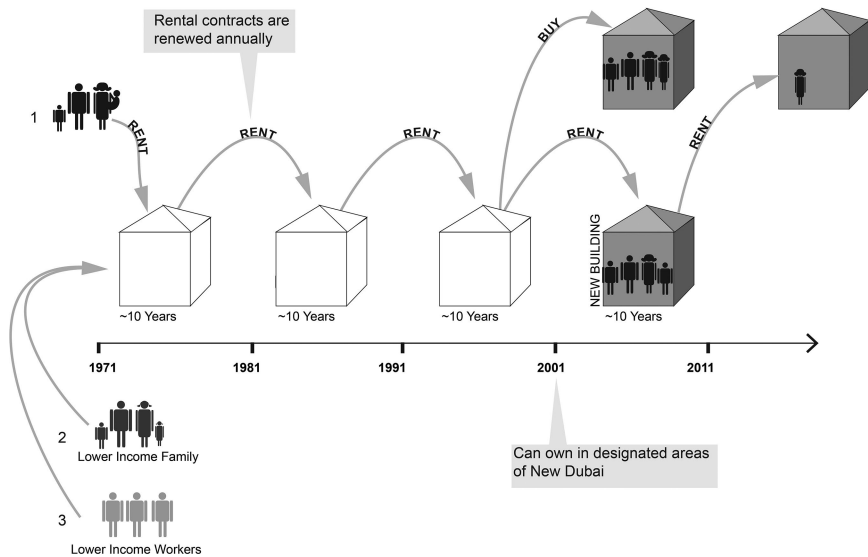


FIGURE 10.6 Housing stock and social group. Long-term expatriate families typically rented and moved as newer housing stock became available in newer parts of the city, freeing them up for lower income groups.

Source: Racha Daher, 2017.

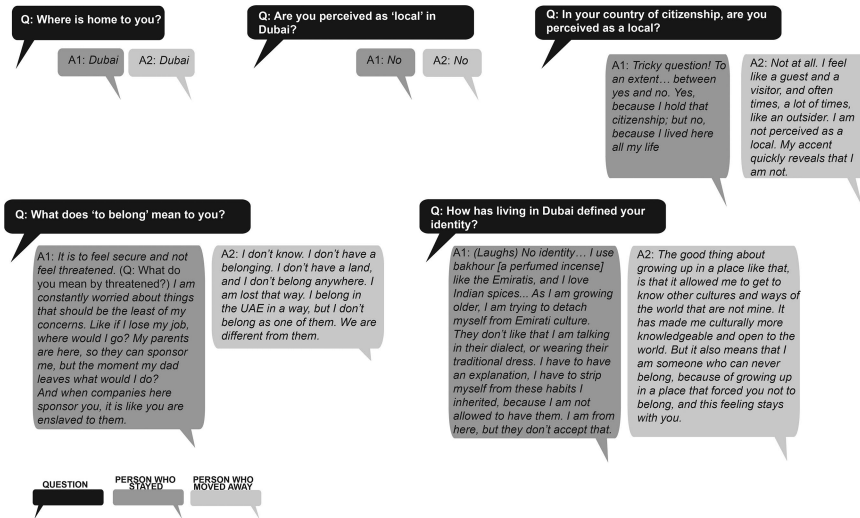


FIGURE 10.7 Some questions and answers from personal interviews.

Source: Racha Daher, 2016.

their legal citizenship was mostly just a passport or means of travel. They all longed to have permanent stability in their home city, and were wishful of some form of permanence without having to worry about renewing residency visas or applying for visit visas to go ‘home’ to Dubai in the case of individuals currently living outside Dubai. For them, “return migration is meaningless because they never migrated” (Fargues 2011: 287), their parents or grandparents did.

(Un)Settling Identity in Dubai

The morphological character of Dubai’s habitation patterns shows spatial development in which specific groups of people are allocated to housing offerings based on social status and income level. However, the city’s ability to adapt to changing demographics and cultures they bring with them creates a hybridized identity, resulting in adaptations that allow many groups to coexist within the city. Nonetheless, long-term expatriated groups are caught in a loop of status renewals without the option of permanent residency or legal citizenship. For second- and third-generation expatriates who call the city home but spend lifetimes in temporary status and continue to be legally transient, this lack of permanence creates an unsettled condition—*anxiety about the prospect of having to leave, or go back ‘home’ to their places of legal citizenship.* While born and bred in Dubai, they are neither Emirati citizens, nor have come there temporarily to capture economic opportunity, and were thus caught in the middle of two tensions: Emirati citizens’ desire to preserve Emirati national identity and incoming migrants’ desire to capture economic opportunity.

Importantly, the group of second- and third-generation expatriates represented in this chapter highlights how home, identity and citizenship are intertwined, continuously shaping each other, creating an unsettled condition. Dubai is home to them because they have lived in the city for decades, know no other city like they know it, and their families, experiences, memories, friendships and social networks are rooted in the city, despite their lack of legal rootedness. In that sense, in addition to their long-term residence, while they are excluded from being called ‘local’ since the term is reserved for Emirati citizens, they are local, even if they are not legal citizens. Ultimately, it is the paradox between their state of physical permanence in the city and a lack of legal permanence, that underlies their unsettlement. Some form of legitimacy of their permanent presence, acknowledgment of their Dubai identity, as well as stability in their home city without fear of being forced to leave an entire life’s worth of connectedness to start over in another country would settle their underlying temporality.

Notes

- 1 Nuances exist among Emirati groups by ethnic origin, family status and income levels.
- 2 In Arabic, a further distinction exists between Arabic-speaking and non-Arabic-speaking expatriates, referred to respectively as *Wajdeen* and *Ajaneb*.
- 3 No data is published on their numbers, but this group is present in cities of the Gulf Coastal Countries (GCC).
- 4 The report uses the term ‘Arab World’, which would include Arabic-speaking Africans.
- 5 Within each of these, several nuances exist that this chapter does not get into. For example, gated communities could be villas or mid-rise multi-family buildings; high-rise typologies could be found in the fabric as single stand-alone towers, a tower on a podium or high-rise developments that share podiums.
- 6 The mid-rise multi-story category is broken down into two (despite the fact that there are new and old generation architectural forms in the other categories), because of the difference in morphology in the urban tissue.
- 7 The document dates back to 2008—twenty-five years before that would have been in the early 1980s.
- 8 Different Emirati citizenship regulations exist based on whether a baby is born to an Emirati father or Emirati mother.
- 9 Residency visa validity was longer in the past but decreased in the past two decades.
- 10 Since writing this chapter, new regulations for the possibility of ten year-residency and nominated legal citizenship were introduced by the UAE for large investors, successful entrepreneurs, and other people with high achievement or extraordinary ability—still difficult for most people, but the possibility now exists under certain conditions.

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11

AGING IN CITIES

Everyday Unsettling, Planning and Design

Angelika Gabauer

Introduction

A growing number of policy and planning-oriented agendas for ‘age-friendly’ cities and communities encapsulate the significance of the spatial environment in the context of aging (see WHO 2007). Geographical research on aging has emphasized the relevance of the socio-spatial environment for ‘aging well’ (for an overview, see Wiles 2018). This constitutive relationship between space and aging has been recognized by city authorities, governments, urban development and health policy actors, who therefore use planning and design to address the challenges of aging populations in cities.

In this chapter, I examine how planning and urban design, which are predominantly based on streamlined approaches and homogenized perspectives on urban space, can address the nuanced needs of older urban populations across all their differences. I look at this issue through the prism of everyday life, and approach aging from the perspective of experiencing everyday changes related to the passing of time. Individual and social change are constitutive elements of the process of aging (Baars 2009). As this process is encountered in everyday life and often perceived as unsettling, I propose to depict age-related changes as ‘everyday unsettling’. I argue that a sensitivity toward everyday moments and conditions of unsettling that are part of and consequences of aging offers planning and urban design qualitative insights into the diverse everyday worlds of older people. The chapter hence explores how planning and urban design influence, or even shape, aging in cities and discusses how their endeavors could be made more responsive to (differently experienced) aging.

The chapter is conceptual in nature. It develops a theoretical argument drawing on examples but does not entail a detailed empirical study. I first conceptualize aging from a perspective of time and change, and situate it in the context of

planning and urban design. I then review prevailing age-related planning and urban design approaches that focus primarily on problem-based issues such as access and mobility, and discuss discrepancies that arise due to the need to address the plurality of experiences of aging. In what follows, urban space of everyday life of older people is introduced as both a productive field for gaining a deeper understanding of aging, and a conceptual framework for addressing the shortcomings of the prevalent planning and urban design approaches.

Approaching Aging in Relation to Space: Time, Change and the Powerful Ordering of Urban Temporalities

The idea of human aging as “process of living in time” (Baars 2009: 87) is fundamentally conditioned by change that consists of both experiences of unsettling and efforts for settling. Hence, aging means, roughly defined, “living in a changing bodily–social–personal world” (ibid.: 90).¹ ‘Age-related’ changes, therefore, are “specific changes [that] can be explained as part or as consequences of the processes of aging” (ibid.: 87f). This refers to varying degrees of bodily changes, involving changes in the physical and mental condition, both temporary and long-term, definite and ambiguous, associated with fluctuating levels of competence. It also entails changes in relation to one’s socioeconomic situation. Retirement, for instance, depending on respective state regulations and entitlements, is one of the key structural ‘age-markers’ and often represents an incisive event in a person’s life course. Age-related changes also encompass changes regarding the living environment, due to changes in the household, the loss of the partner, reduced financial resources or bodily abilities. It may involve the decision to move into a smaller flat, assisted living services, a nursing home, or to settle down closer to relatives or other significant others in response to increasing care needs. Re-settling to an age-appropriate living environment usually requires the need of reducing belongings, adjusting daily routines, establishing new social contacts and becoming familiar with a new neighborhood.

Aging is accompanied by manifold disruptive events and, as Stephen Katz (2018b: 126) points out, “contradictory cultural and moral orders”. Therefore, “people experience embodiments of ageing as a fractured process of resisting, accepting, denying and recreating ageing” (ibid.). Aging individuals respond to these ruptures and fluctuating vulnerabilities by adapting their engagements with the environment, the people and places within it (Hauderowicz and Serena 2020a). A purely chronological definition of age that homogenizes people based on their years of life, falls short of recognizing such differentiated dimensions of the process of aging. Critical social gerontology approaches therefore emphasize the relational character of aging (van Dyk 2015): Aging is perceived as a process in relation to one’s own life course as well as in relation to others—the sociopolitical and cultural context people age in. Furthermore, an intersectional perspective allows for grasping the conditions and processes of aging beyond a one-dimensional category of (linearly perceived) age, because what

aging specifically means for an individual can only be sufficiently understood in relation to other social categories and identity positions. Gender, sex, socio-economic background or migration biographies, for instance, play a fundamental role in how people experience aging.

My intention is not to reject the dimension of chronological time for researching aging. Rather, I argue for expanding conceptualizations of time in order to understand spatial experiences of aging and (possible) impacts of planning and urban design on people's aging in cities. Besides understanding time as chronology in the sense of a causal representation, I also acknowledge time as social construction that involves the perception of time as differently experienced (Besedovsky et al. 2019). More precisely, such understanding of time considers the context of the social, political, cultural and economic systems that define conceptions of time, thus implying that societies relate to and are organized along a plurality of temporalities (*ibid.*). For that reason, temporalities are a political matter, meaning they powerfully shape social life: "Understanding the ordering effects of temporalities requires considering both the power relations that shape the production of temporalities as well as the power effects produced through their ordering at different urban scales and in varying modalities" (*ibid.*: 582). State authorities govern temporalities through, e.g. durations of education, work life and retirement. Concepts like 'age-groups', 'age grading' or 'age norms' are expressions of such powerful forms of time organization and serve as crucial instruments for regulating entitlements and transitions (Baars 2009).

Planning and urban design also play a role in the ordering of urban temporalities. Practices creating spaces specifically for older persons, such as certain activity spaces in care homes, housing projects with assisted living dwelling units or neighborhood community centers, often unintentionally replicate and reinforce age prejudices in society. While such dedicated spaces, to some extent, serve as highly important places of social encounters for older persons in cities (Gabauer et al. 2022), these spaces do not always meet the differentiated needs of older people (van Melik and Pijpers 2017) and even can enforce age segregation and exclusion of older people from the mainstream of urban life (Thang 2020). The ways in which socio-spatial separation of age groups is structured and materialized across places of living, work, education and leisure influence when and where activities of age groups can or cannot co-occur (Hagestad and Uhlenberg 2005). Research (see *ibid.*) shows that age segregation and ageism are closely interconnected: Although age-segregated environments can have positive effects for older people, it is very likely that they reduce cross-age interactions. The lack of stable and lasting interactions among different age groups can promote the development of stereotypes and prejudices, which can, in turn, foster age-related discrimination (*ibid.*).

Planning and design provide important mechanisms for regulation, control and oppression, exercised on various scales and settings, and affecting a range of social relations in space (Lo Piccolo and Todaro 2022; Yiftachel 1998). The account of the powerful capacity of planning and design practices to order society

underlines that these fields are not neutral but rather a “political activity” (Hillier 2003: 46). Understanding ‘planning as oppression’ (Yiftachel 1998) underscores that power is immanent in planning and design practices. Oren Yiftachel (ibid.: 396) argues that theories of planning fail to properly account for regressive and oppressive functions of planning and design, and rather tend to uncritically frame “planning as part and parcel of the reform and improvement of society”. This does not mean that planning is inherently regressive, but rather that its well-documented progressive potential should also be understood as having a more sinister accompanying ‘dark side’ (Yiftachel 1998). The ‘dark side of planning’, however, is not only about conceiving planning as an instrument for oppression and control but also about understanding its discursive effect as an a-political and neutral apparatus (Lo Piccolo and Todaro 2022). In relation to age-friendliness of urban spaces, this means taking a closer look at what age stereotypes, narratives and images of aging might be inscribed in planning and design projects. And it means to critically reflect on how the production of space on various scales—ranging from the home, through the street and neighborhood, to the city and region—enables or disables aging. I raise the thesis: While there is indeed a growing recognition of the need to design and plan for aging populations, space is still primarily constructed according to the needs and wants of the average middle-aged, abled body.

Age-Related Planning and Urban Design: A Critical Reflection

Design can make space and place more amenable to people as they age, or less enabling (e.g. see: Peace et al. 2006). Inevitably, spatial accommodations for aging will also benefit other social groups such as children, carers of infants using strollers, people with disabilities or nonlocals who are not familiar with the area. Neglecting these accommodations can render spaces difficult, uncomfortable or even impossible for older people (and others) to use. This clearly highlights the need for planners and urban designers to be aware of aging. Yet, programmatic frameworks, policy programs and design solutions dealing with age-related topics rarely extend beyond predominantly streamlined problem-based concerns with housing, access and mobility (e.g. see: Hauderowicz and Serena 2020a; Hockey et al. 2013). The constraints of streamlined recommendations and approaches become even more visible when planning and design programs are not developed from or situated in a specific local context but are rather based on generic best practice models. General programmatic frameworks such as the guideline for *Measuring the Age-Friendliness of Cities* (WHO 2015) can certainly be helpful for city planners and architects for basic orientation, yet, implementations will only succeed when specific local contexts are adequately taken into consideration.

Another point of criticism relating to the application of models with fixed and discrete features and pre-defined criteria is that with this, the concept of age-friendliness may be simply understood “as a status that can be achieved by completing a number of specified tasks, rather than an on-going, strategic process”

(Liddle et al. 2014: 1625). A perspective of age-friendly cities that is based on static and pre-defined features ignores the relational character of aging and instead narrowly consolidates older people into a homogeneous group that is mainly defined by chronological age categories. As different scholarly work has shown, the fields of planning and urban design tend to subsume age-friendliness under the label of inclusive design, focusing primarily on physical access (see Hauderowicz and Serena 2020a; Hockey et al. 2013; Phillips 2018). Such perspectives are mainly grounded on deficit models of aging that perceive processes of aging merely as a problem to be solved by changes to the physical environment. They mainly see older people within a stereotypical care or medical model and concentrate on covering older people's issues based on narrow criteria of accessibility and mobility. Understanding aging from a biomedical perspective frames older people as a group eroding away from societal norms and expectations of those in mature adulthood, which—compared to the apparently ageless, independent and productive adulthood—is thereby associated with neediness and disability.

Accessibility and mobility are, of course, of critical importance. This includes, for instance, the flattening of curbs, implementing ramp access or installing elevators, as well as a series of measures such as flooring that is safe and walkable in all weather conditions, seating facilities at regular intervals, public toilets, clear signage, dense and long intervals of road crossing options. These criteria appear to be obvious and useful not only for older people; yet, surprisingly they are either not met to a full extent or result in confusing and cluttered environments of individually implemented measures for specific mobility types. I attribute this paradox to the deficit models prevailing in planning and urban design approaches. Aging is still primarily seen as 'decline', and age-friendliness of urban spaces merely as a necessary 'add-on' feature rather than an integrative element of settled urban space. For this reason, it is crucial to acknowledge and reflect on the political nature of planning and urban design activities. While influencing conditions of aging in cities, planning and urban design also shape sociocultural perceptions of aging and, accordingly, bear responsibility for the perpetuation of age-related discrimination. The morphology of urban spaces says a great deal about how older persons are perceived and treated in society. Design, construction, spatial formations and arrangements are not only a manifestation of social and cultural norms, but they also fundamentally re-produce them.

Conceiving age-friendliness as mere an add-on often results in shortcomings in design solutions. An example from empirical research I conducted with colleagues in 2019 illustrates this. In the context of a study on socio-spatial configurations of aging, interviews were collected with residents of housing projects with assisted living units in Vienna. The entrance doors of one such residential building were extremely heavy, and opening them requires a lot of physical effort. This leads, as interviewed older residents reported, to various scales of limitations in their course of daily life; even to the situation that wheelchair users are not able to open them by themselves and are forced to wait in front of the door until someone eventually passes by and helps them. Such a

fundamentally flawed design solution appears even more abstruse since this is a prominent ‘innovative’ housing project that pursues the residential strategy of ‘aging in place’. This case demonstrates the unreflective focus on a norm of users based on the ideal type of average, young and middle-aged, along with culturally desired body conditions and sporty lifestyles associated with them. It shows that introducing age-friendliness as an add-on cannot compensate for streamlined technical standards and norms, such as heavy doors for fire protection, and it illustrates how wheelchair users (and others) are disabled *by* spatial arrangements and design solutions. Hence, as disability scholars have long argued, a change of perspective is required that understands disability primarily as a social construct rather than an attribute of a person in terms of an individual ‘deficit’ or ‘defect’ (e.g. see: Bickenbach et al. 1999).

Another example concerns the concept of ‘superblocks’, which is also being discussed in Vienna. It refers to a model of urban transportation planning (with the most prominent origins in Barcelona) in which several housing blocks are combined into one territorial unit. One essential aim is—in the sense of ecologically sustainable urban development—to eliminate motorized individual transport within the perimeter of a superblock and promote pedestrian and bicycle traffic. However, a technocratic approach with a narrow focus on transportation without fully considering socioeconomic aspects could obscure the view of the realities of certain people’s lives. A person engaged in a neighborhood initiative, who has been involved in developing a superblock strategy at a district level, argues that an urban regeneration project strictly banning private vehicles and relying on car-sharing models as an alternative, overlooks everyday specific needs of many older persons and other people with bodily limitations dependent on vehicles. In addition, the increasing deployment of digital technologies, which extends beyond mobility to cover increasingly more aspects of daily life—such as grocery shopping, medical care, public services—may exacerbate the exclusion of aging people from urban life due to the lack of access, resources, knowledge or familiarity.

Learning from Urban Everyday Spaces of Aging

Aging is a process constituted by changes that relate to very different aspects of everyday life. In order to make planning and urban design more aging-friendly, approaches are required that take account for the full diversity of older people’s needs, ways of life, desired living and dwelling environments. I argue that the age-friendliness of urban spaces builds on an understanding of spaces of everyday life of older people at the intersection of the social and spatial dimensions of the urban environment. Considering aging through the prism of everyday life captures not only the discursive framings of what it means to age but also how people respond to the process of aging, adapt to the conditions of their everyday lives and reconcile with age-related changes in diverse and creative ways (see Katz 2018b). Everyday life

is not just ‘there’ as an obvious empirical and factual constant; rather it is the perpetually emergent social sphere of human existence. As we act, age and interact with each other, we constantly adapt the conditions of our everyday lives in subtle but often unconscious ways.

(ibid. 2018a: 4, original emphasis)

Research on everyday life and its extension to gerontology studies places emphasis on subjective experiences of aging individuals, their everyday activities, social interactions and negotiations with aging narratives and perceptions. What is crucial is that researching everyday life does not mean neglecting the sociohistorical context in which it is embedded. Rather, everyday life is precisely where subjective experiences and structural processes merge; and it is always spatialized. Everyday life as a research field enables to connect research into individual changing routines and experiences with perspectives on socioeconomic conditions, political structures and cultural norms. Placing emphasis on the socio-spatial dimensions of ordinary practices of older persons in cities then also means to not only conceive urban spaces as prisms through which the lives of aging individuals become visible, but rather as an actual part of the aging process in which practices of everyday life of older people and the urban environment are in a dynamic interrelation (see Buffel et al. 2012). Such a perspective highlights the role of older persons as (co)producers of spaces: “On the one hand, older individuals are shaped by exchanges with the environment. On the other hand, these exchanges affect the environment itself; older people co-influence the social environment of which they are part” (ibid.: 27).

Analytical focus on everyday life reveals several implications for age-friendly planning and urban design. The first concerns gaining a stronger sensitivity to learning from the often-overlooked spaces of everyday life that are already meaningful to older persons, in particular in regard to their inclusive aspects (e.g. see: van Melik and Pijpers 2017). For instance, Dominique Hauderowicz and Kristian L. Serena (2020b) highlight that many design and planning practices that deal with age-related issues are primarily efforts to develop new ‘age-related’ typologies. Beyond this prevalent focus, age-friendly approaches would equally engage with those urban spaces where everyday routines and manifold ordinary practices of older people unfold, owing to and ensuring sociability and accessibility of these spaces. This particularly applies to spaces in the immediate living environment at the intersection between private dwelling and public life: As people age, especially at later stages in life, the distances they travel in their daily activities becomes significantly shorter and neighborhood spaces become more important (Buffel et al. 2012). Considering policy strategies of ‘aging in place’ that aim to facilitate older persons remaining in their homes and communities for as long as possible, neighborhoods are becoming even more relevant as physical and social spaces for aging (Gardner 2011). Local pubs, restaurants and cafés that have become important social spaces, or transitory zones such as sidewalks, bus stops, subway platforms, seats in trams, staircases and house corridors,

have proven to serve as essential spaces for social encounters and multiple relationships of care in the lives of many older persons (Gabauer et al. 2022).

Reflecting on aging as an experience of manifold changes related to the passing of time, Hauderowicz and Serena (2020b) argue that age-friendly spaces have a certain ‘elasticity’, which refers to the ability of environments to enable individuals to adapt their engagements with other people and places in accordance to fluctuating personal competence. Such spatial arrangements demonstrate the ability to respond to frictions and changes in bodily capabilities and temporalities. The extent to which aging is perceived as unsettling has much to do with the arrangement and formation of spaces, and how they allow for (spontaneous and long-term) changes of daily practices of living in urban spaces. With increasing age, physical conditions can change quite instantly and the need for spontaneous adaptations of daily plans becomes a reality for many older persons. For example, this also applies to the mundane opportunity of being able to spontaneously use an alternative route to run daily errands.

Another implication to highlight concerns the tendency of framing older people as a homogenous group based on a narrow chronological definition, and attributed to certain needs and desired forms of living. However, ‘the elderly’ is an extremely heterogeneous group with a multiplicity of life stages and lifestyles. A biomedical approach to aging, which conceptualizes age as “the key single independent variable on which all other outcomes depend, rather than, for instance, location, social status, gender, ethnicity, wealth, family circumstances and a myriad of other attributes and characteristics that differentiate and heterogenized people one from other” (Cook and Powell 2007: 137), proves inadequate to fully respond to diverse spatial experiences and everyday practices of aging. While experiences of age-related changes are multifaceted, planning and urban design tend to reproduce stereotypical understandings of older people and prejudices about their needs and desires, thus (in)directly (re)producing discrimination and exclusion. Participatory planning processes, despite criticism (e.g. see: Hillier 2003; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000), still focus on or even solely deploy communicative instruments such as formal public hearings or dialogue workshops. Lacking interest in emotional and situated-spatial experiences and embodied practices of shaping places together (Mackrodt and Helbrecht 2013), such communicative approaches merely address the normative, the able-bodied, middle-aged, socially integrated person. While indeed there are older people who have the time, energy and capacity to engage in such processes on rather abstracted themes and objects, others are restricted from partaking as a high degree of social engagement and communicative ability is needed. Hence, older people are not generally ‘hard to reach’ for participating in planning and urban design processes, rather, *particular* groups of older people are excluded (Hockey et al. 2013). Consequently, age-friendly planning and urban design is about addressing forms of discrimination and exclusion that cut across age, gender, sexuality, class, race or disability.

A further implication of including spatial everyday experiences and needs into planning and urban design concerns knowledge creation and the hierarchies

inscribed in forms of knowledge: ‘Expert knowledge’ which is framed as ‘rational’, objective or serious stands in a higher order of knowledge than ‘everyday knowledge’ that is connoted with attributes like ‘emotional’ or subjective (Sauer 2007). Within the fields of planning and urban design, both at the level of practical realizations as well as analytical explorations, such hierarchies have impact on whose knowledge is seen as relevant for defining and developing age-friendly urban spaces, and whose knowledge tends to be excluded. Despite attempts to overcome the hierarchal positioning of ‘expert knowledge’ by involving different actors and affected groups—mostly along horizontally organized stakeholder participation—such so-called governance arrangements are nevertheless usually grounded on a powerful separation of forms of knowledge and thus display a high degree of democratic deficits (Swyngedouw 2005). Analytical focus on everyday life renders older people’s everyday knowledge of how the city can be used, navigated, inhabited or appropriated a valuable source of insights into plural forms of urban everyday realities that are often not considered in planning and urban design approaches. Reflecting on the processes of generating knowledge and power relations inscribed in them involves the challenge of critically questioning dominant methods, approaches and forms of implementation. It also encompasses a self-reflection of planning and design disciplines and acknowledging their inherently political nature.

Concluding Remarks

I built on work that conceptually combines everyday life research and aging studies to propose an analytic framework for understanding aging as everyday unsettling. Referring to aging as a set of lived experiences of specific changes that are related to the passing of time and that are part of and consequences of the process of growing older, I illustrated the powerful role planning and urban design have for the perception of older people in society. I further outlined implications that a relational understanding of aging could have for the planning and design of age-friendly cities. I argued that engaging with urban spaces of everyday life of older people could enable planning and urban design to be more responsive to the process of aging and create urban environments that broadly enhance the well-being of older persons living in cities.

Indeed, there is a significant body of scholarly work linking critical aging research with relational approaches to space, highlighting the importance of the socio-spatial environment for aging and providing empirical evidence to support this. Reflections on what this could mean for planning and urban design, however, are—with a few valuable exceptions—still rather rare, and predominantly encompass problem-based concerns focusing on issues around accessibility and mobility. I argued that planning and urban design approaches that are responsive to age-related changes mean stepping beyond a biomedical perspective on aging, and acknowledging the diversity of older people’s realities of life in cities. By no longer seeing aging through the lens of decline and deficiency,

they can transcend the emphasis on physical elements of urban morphologies to engage with cultural practices and social processes, which determine the relationships between older people and space. Age-friendly urban spaces can be defined by their capacity to adapt, be flexible and accommodate aging bodies and forms of constant unsettling of everyday life. Such urban spaces could well address the particularities and context-specific conditions of the everyday lives of older people in cities.

Note

- 1 In the sense of the processual character and in distinction to one-sided chronological definitions, the term 'aging' (and not age) is primarily used here.

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12

FROM CLEANING TO CLEANSING

Maintenance as an Urban Development Practice at Paddington Waterside, London

Ed Wall

Prologue

In 1969, the New York artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles wrote *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!*. The short text marked a break in her practice, away from making physical artworks that she describes as “stuffings” and “inflatable pieces” (Harakawa 2016), to focus instead on maintenance practices and their associated material flows. The manifesto provided a means to critique the term ‘development’ as it refers to the products of contemporary art and claim the potential of ‘maintenance’ as art. She writes that “Avant-garde art, which claims utter development, is infected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities and maintenance materials” (Ukeles 1969: 2). Ukeles questions art practices that deny the presence of maintenance and render invisible the workers associated with these tasks, asking: “After the revolution, who’s going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?” (ibid.: 1).

Introducing Maintenance

In this chapter, I use Ukeles’ manifesto as a point of departure, to discuss actions, practices and rhythms of maintenance associated with large-scale urban redevelopment. Development and maintenance offer a contrasting lens through which to examine the masterplanned transformation of an 80-acre former industrial canal-side in West London, named *Paddington Waterside*, a development process dependent on maintenance operations of cleaning, repairing, programming and securing. Based on a combination of interviews, observation, document surveys and visual analysis, my research in the years 2013–2018 investigated the roles, practices, rhythms and spaces of individuals and organizations transforming Paddington Waterside.¹ Semi-structured interviews—with developers,

managers, local authorities, landowners, designers and residents—and shorter conversations with security guards, cleaners, event managers, tourists, residents and others who used the space reveal contrasting accounts of clearing, building, sweeping, mending, securing, polishing, placing, replacing, wiping, patrolling, checking and cleaning. The chapter questions how maintenance is employed as urban development projects like Paddington Waterside unfold.

I draw reference to the first part of Ukeles' manifesto, in particular, the relationships that she establishes between processes and products of development and practices of maintenance. The development for Ukeles, as "pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing" (1969: 1), reflects the process of creating the landmark buildings and pristine landscapes of Paddington that are acclaimed in marketing brochures—a form of architectural development that is more akin to the 'stuffings' of Ukeles' earlier work. In contrast, the role of maintenance is to "keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight" (*ibid.*: 1). These are practices of cleaning and protecting that reflect the sustaining of the architectural objects. At Paddington Waterside, these practices are staged as an inseparable part of urban experience, exhibiting the extent to which maintenance is intertwined with contemporary design and associated with the single goal of delivering and preserving a glossy curated image of a masterplanned urban development.

Recognizing both affinities with and divergences from Ukeles' manifesto, I find that discussing urban development and maintenance in relation to each other provides an important perspective for reading masterplanned change in London. In the first section of this chapter, I unpack how 'development' and 'maintenance' manifest at Paddington. The second section highlights how urban redevelopment unsettles the lives of existing residents and businesses through a masterplan that is constantly rewritten across formerly industrial areas. The third section reveals an intensity of maintenance practices that uphold the architectural setting of the area, while the fourth and fifth sections recognize how design and maintenance practices intersect to exclude people and activities that are deemed out of place. The final section explains that despite the low-paid nature of maintenance work, the business of maintenance adds value to the developments and creates significant profits for management companies.

Maintenance of Development

'Development' at Paddington Waterside has involved decades-long masterplanning of formerly industrial wharves along the Paddington arm of the Grand Union Canal in West London, a process that has produced new buildings and landscapes for residential and business tenants (Paddington Waterside Partnership n.d.). Since the area was designated as Paddington Special Policy Area (PSPA) by the City of Westminster in 1988, it has been the subject of intense profit-driven developer-led

masterplanning processes. It has been divided into 14 development parcels (see Figure 12.1) and sold on long leases by British Waterways (now the Canal and River Trust) and the National Freight Corporation to commercial developers who have subsequently bought and sold to other developers. This process of masterplanning at Paddington reflects an approach to planning in central London that focuses on neighborhood scale redevelopment (see Shane 2011), led by or involving commercial developers, facilitated by local government, and frequently involving the demolition of existing buildings and infrastructures. These enclaves of redevelopment create dense clusters of buildings connected by networks of privately managed, maintained and secured pedestrian spaces (see Figure 12.2).

As the masterplan has been realized renowned architectural offices have proposed landmark structures—what Ukeles (1969:1) would term “pure individual creation”—with each building and phase competing with its neighbors

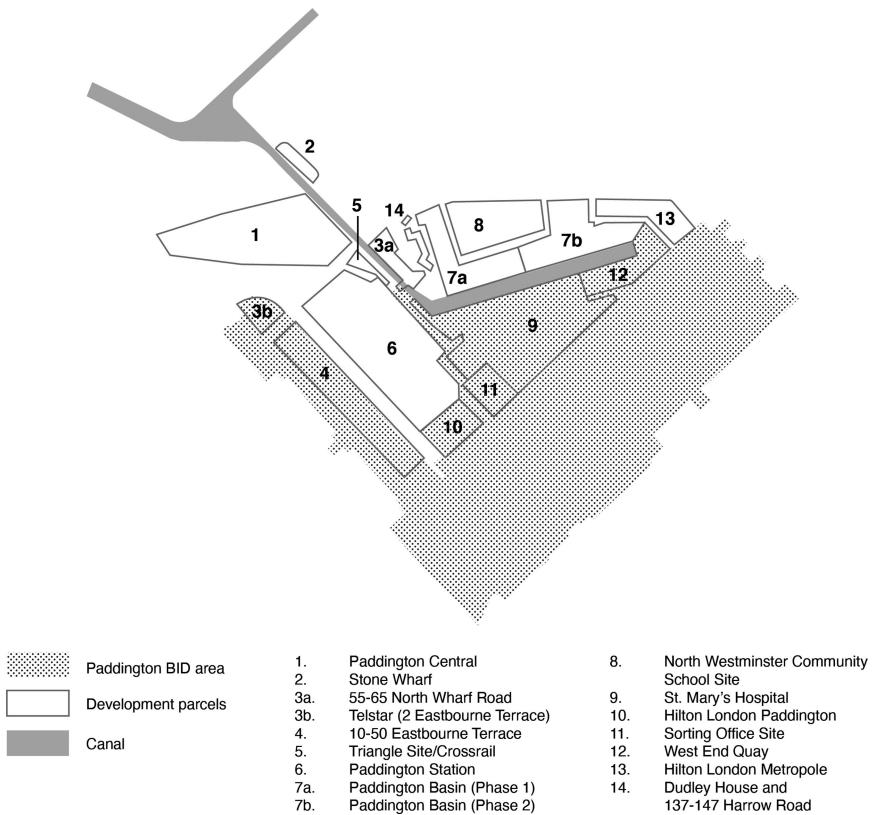


FIGURE 12.1 The extent of development parcels, each with different management and maintenance structures, and the BID (Business Improvement Area) which employs further maintenance and security teams reveals the scale of private control over the Paddington’s public realm.

Source: Ed Wall, 2021.



FIGURE 12.2 Sparsely populated open spaces between the historic canal basin and new commercial buildings, with limited places for stopping and sitting.
Source: Ed Wall, 2013.

for attention. The transformation of former rail yards and canal sides into corporate offices and apartments, with the designs for the latter buildings becoming taller and more luxurious with each subsequent phase of development, has created an enclave of intense development around an increasingly important transportation hub on the edge of central London (Imrie et al. 2009). The demolition and remaking of the masterplan area have been almost comprehensive, with no historic buildings, structures or businesses being retained in the main development parcels. Development can be understood in terms of the processes of clearing the development area and building anew, but it also represents the objects of development, from development parcels to buildings and from office space to residential apartments, that are relentlessly maintained.

When describing ‘maintenance’, I refer to all the activities of maintaining the physical development, including cleaning and repairing the buildings and open spaces, as well as security patrols that preserve order and events that contribute to the image of the development. Ukeles describes in an interview with Maya Harakawa (2016):

The thing about maintenance is that if you decide that something has value, then you want to maintain it. [...] Whether it’s a child, an institution, or a city, it’s all the same: if you want them to thrive, you have to do a lot of maintenance—a whole lot.

But while maintenance of Paddington involves many teams of workers who preserve and protect the ‘value’ of the development, such services are reliant on

low-paid jobs: “The culture confers lousy status on maintenance jobs = minimum wages” (Ukeles 1969: 2). Instead, the value of maintenance reflects the value of the development—there is commercial value for the companies that control and profit from maintaining the developments. Multiple, often competing, management teams vie to service both the masterplanned area and the area defined by the Business Improvement District (BID) (see Figure 12.1). Each development includes networks of publicly accessible open space, the management of which is highly profitable for private contractors, such as Broadgate Estates.² The maintenance of the adjacent public areas along the canal, that remain in full ownership of the Canal and River Trust, have also been handed to the developers. Outside the development area, the BID, which was initiated by the developer consortium and supported by the City of Westminster, extends a regime of cleaning, repairing, preserving and policing the surrounding neighborhoods—contributing to elevated property values and social controls around and within the development.

If one of the aims of the development has been to reimagine the area through new buildings, bridges, publicly accessible plazas, streets and canal towpaths, we can understand maintenance, as framed by Hilary Sample (2016: 7) in *Maintenance Architecture*, to be “dedicated to safeguarding the holistic image of the architectural work” that has been produced. For the developers and the BID “maintenance represents an investment in the persistence of architecture—both as an image and as an ideal” (ibid.). Because maintenance at Paddington includes acts of cleaning, repairing and securing, it becomes both an act of settling the architectural forms into a state of preservation while simultaneously ensuring that the presence and activities of teenagers and homeless people are restricted within the area. To borrow from Ukeles (1969: 1), maintenance “preserve[s] the new” through cleaning and repairing the open spaces and controlling activities within them.

Incremental Development

Despite the confidence of the developer’s statements during planning, the *Paddington Waterside* masterplan has been consistently changed by the developers. The spatial forms of the masterplan and the timeframes of its realization have been continually adapted to respond to financial circumstances and market demands. It has taken decades for the masterplan to be built and its buildings are very different than originally proposed. The masterplan, led by a 22-partner developer consortium, has moved forward sporadically. As the redevelopment has slowed or accelerated, the masterplan has been amended and sometimes entirely redrawn, in particular, designs for residential accommodation superseding plans for office space at Paddington Waterside as London’s housing market has surged. The masterplan provided the urban designers, developers and planners with useful tools to communicate total visions for redevelopments, while the accompanying documents, such as design guidelines, codes and drawings, reassured stakeholders and encouraged investors. The imposing top-down perspective and bold

architectural forms, as found in the masterplan drawings, follow a tradition of architectural representations that can offer assurances of order and clarity. In contrast to the comprehensive vision of the first masterplan, the development progressed intermittently, and the developers kept open the opportunity to adapt so that they could benefit from changing financial and market conditions.

The sporadic progress of development significantly benefited the developers who were able to renegotiate densities of development, land uses and development contributions, such as percentages of social housing. The prominence and size of the masterplan development meant that there was a lot to be gained from investing in the projects, both economically and politically, including banks funding private developers and the Canal and River Trust, the BID, planners and architects associating themselves with such a large project of city-making. The promise from developers for comprehensive transformations of Paddington initially involved closing down existing businesses, relocating a school and demolishing many buildings—synonymous with a clearing and cleansing of the area. The developers' commitments commanded the attention of the local authority and central government who responded by improving transport infrastructures, facilitating planning permissions, transferring formerly public assets into private hands, renegotiating planning obligations and the handing over of future control of this large area of London to private interests. While support for private development has been common in London since the 1980s (Imrie and Raco 2003; Imrie et al. 2009), the degree to which the City of Westminster facilitated the Paddington masterplan has raised questions over its interest in regulating development and its role representing existing business owners and residents (Raco and Henderson 2009).

Maintaining Settings

Well-maintained open spaces of squares, canal towpaths and an amphitheater have sustained scenic settings for this intensely commercial development. Maintaining what the development looked like in architectural and marketing images has been prioritized over the potential for diverse and more messy relations between people who live, work, use and pass through the area. Ukeles (1969) recognizes that the development of *avant-garde* art relies on maintenance to 'prolong the advance' and 'renew the excitement': in the development of Paddington, maintenance is tasked with sustaining, renewing and prolonging all forms of commercialized urban space. Daily teams of personnel employed in cleaning, mending and securing keep areas clean and move people on who seem out of place, denying incremental changes to the physical forms and limiting daily activities in the area (see Figure 12.3). These are public spaces presented as finished works, preserved as new and protected from what the BID and development teams deem to be inappropriate use.

The layout and security of the development make it difficult for some people to access and spend time in the area. Along with the physical transformation of



FIGURE 12.3 Cleaning equipment for emptying bins, sweeping the stone paved canal-side, wiping stainless steel handrails, cleaning glass balustrades, polishing door handles, picking up litter and removing graffiti.

Source: Ed Wall, 2013.

the area, new regulations that deny a range of social activities have been applied unevenly by the developers and the BID. The regulations are enforced in an attempt to control the life of the development and maintain its image. Maintenance operations of cleaning, security and events have prioritized the appearance of the open spaces further enforcing an architectural and marketing language of visual and social control. Visual images represent what Don Mitchell (1997: 323) describes as “a place of comfort, of relaxation perhaps, of leisurely consumption, unsullied by images of work, poverty, or social strife”—“keep the customer happy”, Ukeles (1969: 2) describes of maintenance—ensuring the continued long-term income on which the Canal and River Trust and their investors rely. These are development images that need to be maintained, resulting in the eviction of homeless encampments on the edge of the canal, Police being called to remove teenagers smoking behind the corporate headquarters, displacement of sex workers from the neighborhood, or students on field trips being told not to take photographs.

Maintaining Discomfort

The corporate nature of Paddington Waterside leaves many people uncomfortable walking through the area, with some concerned that they were trespassing. This discomfort is exacerbated by a language of exclusion created by both the architectural design and the visible presence of private security guards. When it first opened, and for over a decade, Paddington Waterside was quiet for much of

the day, particularly in the evenings and during weekends (see Figure 12.2). As observed during fieldwork in 2013, people tended to keep walking through the area with minimum engagement with each other or the development. One of the architects involved in the masterplan criticized the design as a “completely introspective piece of work” (personal interview, January 2013). Although he believed that this perception would improve as the development was completed, the location, arrangement and adjacent buildings continue to make it difficult to identify the front of the development, where people arrive and where they leave. The inward-looking arrangement of the development is compounded by a lack of permeability along some edges, blocked by buildings or dissected by the canal, in ways that one of the developers describes makes “you feel as if you shouldn’t be there” (*ibid.*). He explains: “It is not physically impossible [to go through our estate] if you know where you are going, and the security guards won’t stop you”, however, he believes that “the condition of the spaces makes people feel that they are trespassing”.

Individuals and groups are managed through the public realm—with few places to sit and regular patrols of security guards—as if they are being moved through an art gallery. Across the development, hourly routines of cleaning, maintaining and securing the open spaces remind visitors that this is a very different public realm, with uneven rights and access, to that which exists outside. Despite early developments having been completed almost two decades ago, the intense cleaning and repairs of the space have preserved the open spaces as new. Windows are cleaned, trees are pruned, handrails are polished, and the canal is dredged of algae. Throughout the day and night, the private developments and publicly accessible spaces around the canal are repeatedly maintained. As such Paddington Waterside contrasts with the streets and parks beyond the development masterplan, creating a new form of pristine public realm that excludes through discomfort and alienation. Such exclusion is reinforced by regular rhythms of security teams who are employed to remove people deemed out of place in this overtly commercial space. While old buildings have been demolished and former land uses extinguished, the management regimes of the development hold new designed landscapes in place and enforce what is acceptable to do within them.

Maintenance as Exclusion

Repeated daily and hourly maintenance of the development area provides an extension of private controls. Through the BID, the large developers have succeeded in expanding their role in directing the public realm to encompass neighborhoods and landmarks beyond Paddington Waterside. While Neil Smith (1996: 12) describes that “hostile landscapes are regenerated, cleansed, reinfused with middle-class sensibility”, this was not possible through redevelopment alone: neither the purchase of the land from British Waterways and the National Freight Corporation, its redevelopment nor the extended management of the

public canal towpaths, provided the development partnership with the means to completely control the spaces and image of Paddington. Therefore, the developers needed an additional tool to control the residential neighborhoods beyond the development boundary. They established the BID and funded its chief executive, thus extending the ‘frontier’ of the development into the adjacent Paddington neighborhoods. Without the BID, its chief executive describes, the image of the development could “fall off the edge of Paddington into a different Paddington” (personal interview, December 2012). The BID organizes programs for cleaning and waste collection, hires its own police and community support officers and attempts to coordinate the businesses in the area.

The language of exclusion established by the physical design is reinforced by polished stainless steel signs that remind visitors that they are on private property and that many activities are prohibited (see Figure 12.4). The extensive signage at Paddington Waterside, which proclaims that the ‘public spaces’ described at the planning stage are actually private property, reflects that of private shopping malls. Rules that restrict smoking, skateboarding, rollerblading, cycling, feeding pigeons, unauthorized parking, double-berth mooring, trespassing and even public access define this public realm. But in contrast to commercial malls, the many different sign-posted regulations across Paddington Waterside reflect the



FIGURE 12.4 Signs across Paddington Waterside explain the multitude of rules that visitors must follow.

Source: Ed Wall, 2013.

fragmented ownerships across the masterplanned area. Multiple teams of security guards, each employed by different landowners and enforcing different rules, find a common concern with taking photographs and the presence of individuals who may appear out of place. Furthermore, as not all regulations are listed on these signs, security guards are tasked with deciphering what is acceptable within the development areas.

Gains of Maintenance

Despite the financial value that maintenance practices created, in terms of property sales and rental income, the developers and their corporate tenants were not keen to pay the full cost. When the BID was established by the developers, its boundary did not align with either the Paddington Waterside development area, the PSPA or the subsequent Paddington Opportunity Area (defined by the Greater London Authority). Instead, it covered an area beyond the masterplan boundary, only slightly overlapping the development area (see Figure 12.1). The large office buildings in which the international corporations were tenants, namely Merchant Square and Paddington Central, were omitted from the BID area. Because the BID levy is based on the ratable value of the businesses (a UK tax on the occupation of non-residential properties), the larger and more valuable corporations that were attracted to the large floor plates of the new developments would have had to make significant contributions. The BID chief executive explained that there were significant management charges already for Merchant Square and Paddington Central: “whether they [the developers and tenants] pay on top of that to have something that they are already paying for” she said “is too big a risk to take” (personal interview, December 2012).

Financial benefits gained by the developers have been highly facilitated by the embrace of market-led regeneration by the City of Westminster and other public agencies. As the developers were supported, other individuals and businesses were intentionally unsettled: small industrial workshops were shut down, the presence of sex workers on Praed Street was eliminated and low-cost hotels that supported homeless people were closed. One of the residents who also sits on the board of the BID explained that the developer-led partnership facilitated the BID so that the area around Paddington and along Praed Street could be “regenerated to compliment the new development and improve the whole area” (personal interview, October 2012). In this way, the influence of the development and the BID in improving the environment, security, safety and marketing extended outside of the masterplan area, a process that researchers Mike Raco and Steven Henderson (2009: 309) found, “skewed the priorities of public service providers, particularly the police and WCC (Westminster City Council)”. During interviews, I heard how additional police officers were funded by the BID to patrol the area. Such resourcing by BIDs of enhanced policing exacerbates the contrast between BID areas and neighborhoods outside. Furthermore, the result of such increased security by private and public agencies contributes to, what one

of the planning managers at City of Westminster recognizes as, ‘social cleansing’ (personal interview, October 2012):

Because of the dynamics of central London policy, the degree of what some social commentators call social cleansing does go on. It is called how the market operates, so you might as well call it for what it is. It’s not an act of anyone’s policy.

Conclusion

While Ukeles’ manifesto explores relations between development and maintenance, she does not present them as a duality. She describes new development that is sustained by boring, repetitive maintenance tasks: “Maintenance is always circular and repetitive” (Ukeles in interview with Harakawa 2016). She argues that conceptual art claims “utter development” (Ukeles 1969: 2) in ways that I have identified developers and architects claiming their development to be comprehensive—both, however, rely on constant practices of maintenance.

I draw three conclusions from the discussion of Paddington Waterside read through relations between urban development and maintenance of cleaning, repairing and securing. First, I conclude that through obsessive cleaning and overbearing security, people have been removed and excluded from the area. By continuously cleaning, repairing and securing, the developers and the council have maintained specific groups of people and uses from the masterplan and BID areas that they feel are incompatible. While most people are able to visit and pass through Paddington Waterside with ease, the instances of security guards disrupting teenagers and the local authority evicting a homeless person point to practices of unsettling inherent in the development process. Furthermore, as the school, hostels and shelters have been closed to make way for and then maintain the development, teenagers and homeless people appear out of place in the transformed public realm of the gentrified neighborhood of the BID. What has resulted is a sanitized public realm, the ‘development’ of which saw the demolition of dilapidated wharf buildings and the closing of local businesses, while its subsequent ‘maintenance’ has preserved settings by keeping out undesirable people and activities while facilitating marketable images of an area.

The second conclusion is that the management and maintenance of the development and BID areas contribute to a relentless process of control and privatization that undermine claims of the developers and local authority of creating a public realm. The operations of cleaning, repair and security maintain a sense of discomfort and actively unsettle many public practices from taking place. The openness and permeability of the masterplan area give the illusion of a public realm consistent with other districts in London where the streets and squares are adopted into public ownership. The spatial forms, such as the amphitheater, also allude to democratic forms of public space and street signs mimic signage implemented by the City of Westminster public authority. But the private controls that are imposed across the open spaces deny terms of publicness that require more inclusive and

participatory actions. The developers have realized a circumscribed public realm where participation is limited, contrasting with the streets beyond the control of the masterplan and the BID where public lives are more evident. As Raco and Henderson (2009: 309) recognize at Paddington, “There is a growing sense of polarisation between the controlled and regulated spaces and those outside of it”.

Third, I conclude that the multiplicity of maintenance practices in Paddington Waterside creates contradictions and contestations over responsibilities to maintain and opportunities to profit. I have highlighted the legal contestations over responsibilities for maintenance at the West End Quay phase of the development. The liability of maintenance resonates with Ukeles’ concerns about her earlier “stuffings” artwork; she explains: “Basically the materiality became a burden: instead of a means of expression it became something I had to take care of” (Ukeles in interview with Harakawa 2016). But despite the costs of maintaining Paddington Waterside, there are also significant benefits to be gained through providing maintenance services to new urban developments, as the contracting of Broadgate Estates to manage the public realm highlights. Further contradictions are revealed as small businesses outside of the development area pay for the operations of the BID despite many benefits for the maintenance of the BID area being gained by corporate tenants of the masterplanned area who do not contribute to the costs. The continuous presence of security guards, builders and cleaners in the public realm also emphasizes that architectural development is never complete (see Sample 2016: 9; Wall 2017). Instead, as I have revealed in this chapter—and in contrast to the two systems that Ukeles describes in her manifesto—the masterplanned ‘development’ of clearing the site and building new becomes inseparable from the ‘maintenance’ practices of fixing, washing, polishing and policing.

To end, and returning to Ukeles (1969), we can understand that development and maintenance contribute to practices of urban transformation and control where development is “infected by strains of maintenance ideas, maintenance activities and maintenance materials” (ibid.: 2), a process of masterplanning that is expanded by and reliant on activities of management companies and the BID—even when the masterplan creates an illusion of comprehensive development.

Notes

- 1 This chapter develops further research published in Wall (2022).
- 2 Broadgate Estates is a property and estate management company that was founded in 1986, named after the management of redeveloped properties at Broadgate, London. Broadgate Estates is owned by British Land, a private development company whose properties it also manages.

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13

THE GENTRIFICATION OF CHICAGO'S CABRINI GREEN AND THE TEMPORALITIES OF URBAN CHANGE

Judit Bodnar

Gentrification¹ is the intensification of urban change, through which the physical and social character of a neighborhood visibly alters, it becomes inhabited by higher social classes, and prices go up. This process, however, is not linear or inevitable, and its timing and duration are crucial. Even though it follows the cyclical rhythms of capitalism and is partly determined by their dynamics, we cannot directly predict from this connection when, how or even where specific changes will take place, and whether a neighborhood's changes will be enduring or ephemeral. The new order, which ultimately unsettles and displaces old residents, emerges from contestations of political and architectural visions across various levels of the state, banks, investors, developers as well as residents. This chapter examines how the history of a large-scale redevelopment project intersects with the cyclical temporality of capitalism. On a more general level, it explores the role of time in what is arguably a paradigmatic case of state-led gentrification: the dramatic conversion of a once infamous area of social housing into a fashionable mixed-income neighborhood in Chicago.

The Cyclical and Eventful Temporalities of Capitalism

Building upon Karl Marx, David Harvey argues that the built environment constitutes a 'spatial fix' to the recurrent crises of overaccumulation by absorbing huge amounts of capital surplus (Harvey 2010: 85). Crises, of course, are not accidental events; they periodically punctuate the accumulation process, crisis cycles underlie the immanent rhythm of production and destruction in capitalism as a dynamic sociohistorical formation (Lefebvre 2004: 55; Marx 1978: 264; Schumpeter 1939: 138–173). In Harvey's (1978) analysis, the rapid and systematic shifts in the location of investment in the built environment correlate with the cyclical pattern of crises in the economy. Kuznets cycles of about twenty years

were revealed to correlate with waves of investment in the built environment in the US, and Gottlieb's (1976) investigation of building cycles in several countries showed a similar periodicity (Harvey 1978). On a very general level, capital is drawn to sectors and geographical areas that promise better returns and can act as spatial fixes temporarily. As Neil Smith (1996: 86) succinctly put it: "Gentrification in the residential sphere is [...] simultaneous with a sectoral switch in capital investments". The selectively allocated flows of capital investment define the urban scale of uneven development, of which gentrification is a key element, if not its 'leading edge' (ibid.).

Capital invested in the built environment goes through alternating cycles of valorization and devalorization, ultimately leading to the emergence of the rent gap, the disparity between the highest potential ground rent level and the actual ground rent capitalized under the present land use, as Smith (1996: 68) famously defined it:

Gentrification occurs when the gap is sufficiently wide that the developers can purchase structures cheaply, can pay the builder's costs and profit for rehabilitation, can pay interest on mortgage and construction loans, and can then sell the end product for a sale price that leaves a satisfactory return to the developer. The entire ground rent, or a large portion of it, is now capitalized; the neighborhood is thereby 'recycled' and begins a new cycle of use.

How this change happens at the neighborhood level, however, belongs to the eventful history of gentrification.

Even though uneven development is inherent to capitalism, its spatial fixes, timing and intensity are not objectively predetermined. Neither is gentrification simply the epiphenomenal manifestation of the deep-structural logic of uneven development in a mechanical manner. As William Sewell (2008) suggests, the temporal analysis of capitalism will have to reconcile the abstract logic of capital, characterized by cyclicity, objective necessity and causal uniformity, with its eventful temporality, which is irreversible, contingent and causally heterogeneous. While theory tells us that uneven development exhibits recurrent patterns, these must also be accounted for in the last instance as the contingent outcome of a sequence of events in time; stated baldly, they must be explained *historically*.

It is only through an attentive analytical reconstruction of the eventful temporality of urban change that one can demonstrate convincingly how change occurs in a dynamic sequence of events (Sewell 2005). This involves a turning point, which is not really a point; it has duration and extension, and can only be identified after a new trajectory is clearly established (Abbott 2001: 258–259). In a political-economic sense, as the turning point is approaching, potential and capitalized ground rent start to converge until the tipping point arrives and the 'neighborhood effect,' which operates through the ground rent structure, turns. In an anthropological sense, the turning point means that the neighborhood does

not feel like home to the old inhabitants any longer; its character changes, its aura disappears, or as Japonica Brown-Saracino (2009: 217) writes, “old timers... no longer feel comfortable in public space”. Their urban routines are gradually disrupted as public space is increasingly used by different people in novel ways (Bodnar 2015). Change in their lived space is deeply unsettling for the old timers but it can be enthusiastically embraced by the new residents. A temporal reconstruction of the chain of events in a structured narrative is necessary to elucidate how the tipping point comes about exactly, and how property prices and the character of the neighborhood change, and the area embarks on a new trajectory.

The fine details of the process are crucial precisely because even if it has started, it does not always culminate in the physical and social upgrading of the neighborhood, which is what constitutes successful gentrification. We usually learn only about complete, successful cases and retrospective theorization is more often than not uninterested in the contingencies of the process. ‘Success’, however, is not automatic and it tends to be a failure from the perspective of social justice, as ‘improvement’ leads to the displacement of the most vulnerable.² Economically, everything hinges on the dynamics of change, insofar as a project’s success lies in reaching the tipping point that is accompanied by appropriate returns on investment. The sooner it is reached the better; if it comes too late, investors may not be able to wait it out. The state, for example, often has to assume an active role in extending the timeframe of projects, providing the conditions for a longer turnover for investors. The temporal perspectives of developers, financiers, the state and the residents, however, can be difficult to reconcile, even if in the present era of neoliberal financialization, when more and more aspects of life are commoditized and transformed into the source of financial flows, the pursuit of ‘higher use’ has come to bear on the perceptions of more and more social actors including the local state, pulling public land into private residential development.³

In the following, I illustrate these diverse temporal frames and the complex ways in which the cyclical logic of urban uneven development intersects with eventful temporality on the ground in the transformation of Chicago’s Cabrini-Green area, and urban theory interacts with urban history.

Time for Change: The Two Temporalities of Cabrini-Green

The name Cabrini-Green has become synonymous with the failed idea of public housing in everyday parlance: it lies at the center of a strong semantic constellation that includes high-rises, delinquency and racial segregation. The high-rises are gone now, the area has been rebaptized into various configurations of Old Town with only the oldest section still sporting the name Cabrini, and it has become the most dynamic mixed-income redevelopment project in Chicago. The demolition of Cabrini-Green seems to have completed a long series of improvements in the Near North Side (see Figure 13.1), and after decades of being squeezed between wealth and poverty, boom and neglect, the area has jumped scales in land value and social status.

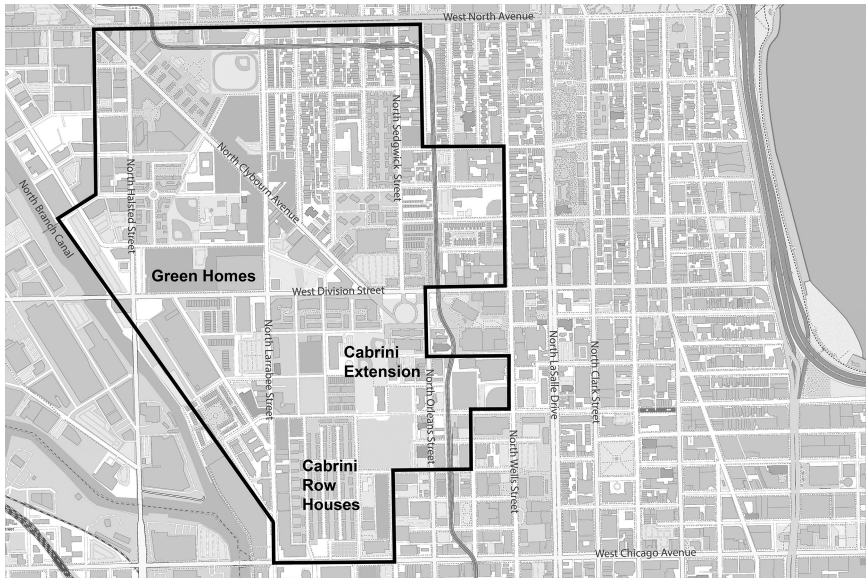


FIGURE 13.1 Map of the Near North Side with the redevelopment area inside the boundary.

Source: OpenStreetMap contributors, 2021 [boundary and labels are added by Judit Bodnar].

Public memory insists on linking high-rises and delinquency to Cabrini-Green, but the social housing project that came to be known by this name was a development spanning several decades, architectural styles and social groups. The initial Frances Cabrini Homes were two- and three-story walk-ups, the oldest section erected in 1942. Fifteen buildings, mostly seven- and nineteen-floor red brick structures, were added as Cabrini Extension North and South in 1958, followed by the eleven hundred units in the white high-rises of the William Green Homes across Division Street in 1962. The idea was born out of the countrywide ambition of urban renewal, and the form it took was inspired by the sociological and architectural spirit of the times, which by the 1960s was the modernism of the ‘tower in a park’. The project was slum clearance, the socio-spatial form of which became known as the ‘projects’ (Venkatesh 2000). This part of the Near North was indeed considered a ‘slum’ as the title of Harvey Zorbaugh’s classic Chicago School study from 1929 suggests: home to both the Gold Coast and Little Hell, the Near North Side embodied the starkest economic differences and diversity in Chicago at the time (Zorbaugh 1929).

By the time the first Frances Cabrini Homes were erected, the neighborhood’s predominantly Sicilian stock had started to give way to an increasing number of internal migrants from the US South, and the area was becoming predominantly African-American. Many argue that social housing was indeed seen positively by residents as an escape from the slums at the time, and it was

instrumental for upward mobility (Fuerst 2003; Hunt 2009). Residents trace the beginning of decline of Chicago social housing to the arrival of gangs in the late 1960s, followed by further deterioration due to drug trafficking (Venkatesh 2000). In Cabrini, public memory holds that the 1970 shooting of two police officers, which resulted in the escalation of violence and downscaled patrolling by the Chicago Police Department, was a significant event precipitating the deterioration of the area (Bennett and Reed 1999). The accidental shooting of a seven-year-old boy in 1992 marked the beginning of Cabrini's end, pushing politicians to rally around the idea of wholesale demolition (Vale 2013). Residents are also eager to point at less dramatic events in their stories of decline, such as the increasing negligence of the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), the management's laxity in enforcing its own rules, and the removal of the rent cap in 1982, which forced better earning families out leaving only very poor people in the area who had no other option (residents, personal interview, June 2006).

The overall rhetoric of decline hides a somewhat more complex history. Cabrini's decline has at least two main components: the absolute degradation of conditions and the relative position of social housing projects in the context of the changing cityscape. The worsening of conditions was a combined result of physical wear and tear and the shifting social composition of the buildings. The modernness of the 'towers in a park' quickly wore off and growing repair costs led to severe under-maintenance, while the social composition of public housing residents shifted from racially mixed working-class families to mostly poor female-headed African-American households by the 1970s, many of whom were welfare recipients (Hunt 2009). This image came to dominate both the general idea of social housing and Cabrini. Thus, the picture that sociologist Richard Sennett (2003), who spent his childhood in Cabrini in the late 1940s, presents in his autobiographical book complicates the understanding of social housing and looks unfamiliar to younger readers: the neighborhood may have been poor, and displayed racial tension but it was new, full of hope, non-segregated and housed mostly working families, who could move on later.

The project's waning reputation was exacerbated by the intensification of urban renewal in Lincoln Park to the north and the up-scaling of the Gold Coast to the east, making both residents and city politicians feel more and more the squeeze of rising land values and the pressure of the rent gap. As in a classic textbook case of an area ripe for redevelopment, the difference in rents between the current and potential use of the land became enormous. The principal promise of the area lay in its relative underutilization from a business perspective: 70 acres of publicly owned land with decaying housing surrounded by former manufacturing zones in close proximity to prime commercial and residential districts of the city, which as *The Economist* announced "has come through deindustrialization looking shiny and confident" (Grimond 2006: 1). The 'business solution' seemed so evident and yet took so long: it needed state actors at various scales to clear the institutional ground for, and extend the timeline of, the transformation.

On the federal level, a major shift took place in public housing policy, which gradually removed the relics of Keynesian welfare policies and constraints on the potential gentrification of social housing. In 1994, the Department of Housing and Urban Development revealed its new program *HUD Reinvention: From Blueprint to Action* (HUD 1995), which shifted responsibility for housing and community development from federal to state-level and local governments. Along with the increasing involvement of the private sector to produce and manage affordable housing, and the introduction of project- and tenant-based subsidies as Section 8 vouchers, the HUD program signaled the transformation of public housing by limiting the role of the state to mere financing instead of construction (Smith 2006).⁴

The HOPE VI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program, which was launched by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in 1992, created the conceptual and financial foundations for the transformed idea of housing, mixing neoliberal ideas and design principles inspired by New Urbanism (US GAO 1998). Embracing the tenets of neo-traditional design, the program advocated a shift from high-rises to town houses and conventional street layouts. Shifting moods both in design and federal legislation unexpectedly lent support to the city's plans to turn Cabrini around, and shaped its redevelopment accordingly. HOPE VI funds provided for the demolition and construction of social housing units, and Section 8 vouchers were widely used to move displaced tenants into private rental housing in other areas.⁵

The city revealed the Near North Redevelopment Initiative under the enthusiastic tutelage of Mayor Daley in 1996, marking a new scale for municipal involvement. "The city's basic plan was to offer Section 8 certificates to all residents... there was not really any permanent relocation plan" (planning official, personal interview, August 2005). The redevelopment plan called for the maximization of the market potential of the area and a partial replacement of subsidized units to be achieved in the form of a mixed-income community to be housed in low- and mid-rise buildings. The proposed mix was 50% market-rate, 20% affordable housing, and 30% social housing for an area that was all social housing. Attorney Richard Wheelock from the Legal Assistance Foundation recalls that "initially CHA was talking about 50% public housing" and also fewer apartments to pull down. "In early 1996, the city took over the whole planning process, and CHA and the city came up with an entirely new plan", shutting the residents out of the planning process altogether (Richard Wheelock, personal interview, September 2005). The residents organized themselves, and the Cabrini-Green Local Advisory Council (LAC) filed a lawsuit with the help of Wheelock. Tenant activism resulted in a consent decree in August 2000, which has been guiding the relationship of the city, CHA and the tenants ever since (Cabrini LAC v. CHA 96 C 6949). The decree determined a higher number of replacement units to be built in the planning area: at least 700 public housing units and 270 affordable ones, in the allocation of which Cabrini displaced residents should have priority. The income mix was confirmed on city- and CHA-owned land for the next

forty years, and applied to both rental and for sale housing. Since most of the new private construction would take place on city-owned land with ninety-nine-year ground leases—a not uncommon formation in Chicago—social housing would be included in the whole area. The decree stipulated that the LAC becomes a partner to housing development projects enjoying proportionate developers' fees and profits and participating in the selection of property managers and contractors. The market pressure was, however, formidable and the stakes high; a second lawsuit had to be filed in 2004 challenging the last phase of the relocation process. A further legal action in 2013 made sure to protect the remaining public housing in the area and raised its proportion to 33% from 30% in new construction. "The city would not have done it without the lawsuit", the planning official in charge of the area admitted frankly (personal interview, August 2005).

The first mixed-income residential complex in the area, Old Town Village East and West, opened in 2003 offering the prescribed housing mix. It took four years to sell the 225 market-rate units, recalled the agent in the sales office, attributing this slowness to the relatively high price in a neighborhood still considered risky at the time (sales agent, personal interview, September 2005). In 2005, there was still quite a visible difference between the two sections of the development: Old Town Village East north of Division Street was a consolidated neighborhood bounded by historic Old Town and the new commercial section around the former Dominick's supermarket, while Village West (south of Division) truly looked like the western frontier with huge vacant lots, demolition debris and a good view of both the Cabrini Row Houses to the south and the Green high-rises across the street—"where... things happen", as the agent suggested (*ibid.*). The exact same townhouse would go for US\$200,000 less in Village West than in Village East (see Figures 13.2 and 13.3).

In spite of the impressive line-up of forces, there were still doubts about the viability of the mixed-income developments at the time. The planning official, however, was quite relaxed: "when the economy is not too bad, it'll be easy to find 2,000 who do not mind mixed-income developments... In Chicago you have enough liberal, educated folks who will participate in the experiment" (planning official, personal interview, August 2005). True to the planner's vision, the renewed Cabrini area was in fact on the way to become a commercial success. Change seemed well beyond the turning point. Parkside of Old Town, as the former Cabrini Extension North is called now, was almost sold or under contract before the market crashed in 2008. With the onset of the crisis, not only did sales slow down and buyers step back but the fate of the mixed-income development started to look insecure. As Lawrence Vale quotes the nervous developer: "by October 2009, [they] had 'moved in all [...] returning residents, but only half the market people' had occupied their units [...] It's now perceived as a big, new public housing development" (Vale 2013: 297).⁶ In other words, the financial crisis disrupted the optimism of linear (re)development even after the turning point, conjuring the spectral memory of its less than glamorous local history: "It's [...] the projects all over again", as one new owner lamented (Spoerl 2011).



FIGURE 13.2 Old Town Village East.

Source: Judit Bodnar, 2010.



FIGURE 13.3 Parkside with view of Sears Tower in the distance.

Source: Judit Bodnar, 2010.

At this point, more time had to be bought for the project to succeed. The city released the remaining funds before the conditions were met, and J. P. Morgan Chase extended the construction loan it provided. The last tower of the William Green Homes was demolished in 2011—a significant visual change in the landscape (see Figure 13.4).

A year later, a new Target store opened on the site—a comprehensive discount store which is popular both among lower- and middle-class shoppers. It completed



FIGURE 13.4 The last Green Tower.

Source: Judit Bodnar, 2010.

the facelift of the neighborhood, making it difficult even to remember where exactly the Green towers stood. The only section that remained of the former Cabrini-Green is the oldest part of the housing project—low-rises and row-houses—in an area not immediately visible from the main transportation arteries. What is quite visible instead, though, is the new cutting-edge eighteen-story Xavier (as in Mother St. Frances Xavier Cabrini) building, which is three stories higher than the demolished Green Homes. Going against the very argument that was originally used to destroy Cabrini, the Xavier brings back the once-loathed high-rises to the neighborhood repackaged as hipster luxury and green design. Timing was crucial for this development—the plot was acquired in 2013 and the building completed in 2015. As a high-rise that eerily reminds locals of the stigmatized past, the Xavier could be built only in an area whose fortune had already turned and steadily embarked on a trajectory of rising property prices and popularity. Thinking beyond mid-rise construction was inconceivable earlier. Once the new structure went up, building height has accelerated in the fringe areas, and the recent thirty-two-story Old Town Park development not only drastically surpasses the former Cabrini high-rises but gives the impression that the new mixed-income community had jumped scales and suddenly wants to catch up with the towers of the neighboring Gold Coast (see Figure 13.5).

Change of Plan?

The transformation of Cabrini represents the complete re-branding of a neighborhood in a large-scale coordinated effort of state and private capital. It did not start, however, with the Near North Redevelopment Initiative in 1996



FIGURE 13.5 Old Town Park under construction.

Source: Judit Bodnar, 2017.

and neoliberal urbanism, or even with the accelerated decline of Cabrini-Green in the 1970s. The very construction of Cabrini-Green between the 1940s and the 1960s was a part of a long *durée* Near North redevelopment initiative even if it was called slum clearance at the time. It was a social housing project but it entailed both physical and social upgrading, and resulted in displacement. While it provided social housing, it did so to people who were less marginal than the former residents, the poorest groups of whom were displaced as a result (Hunt 2009; Vale 2013). The new construction halted the devalorization of the area for a while but Cabrini reached a new bottom of the disinvestment cycle in two generations, became ripe for redevelopment once again, then was caught in the neoliberal zeal of radical urban change in the new millennium. Neither the spectacular decline of Cabrini nor its demolition and replacement by mixed-income housing were inevitable though. The story of the neighborhood did not simply conform to the logic of uneven development by closing a long-standing rent gap. As the narrative of change shows, it was a long process, which required major efforts and was completed in several stages, complicated by many reversals, corrections and additions, putting the turning point at risk several times.

Time has worked in a complex manner. In the bureaucratic exercise of power, waiting implies submission (Bourdieu 2000: 228), and the ‘patients of the state’ (Auyero 2012), such as people in need of social housing in our case, are routinely made to wait by the authorities (Koppelman 2018). Being kept waiting in the case of simple relocation in the social housing system or following a neighborhood renewal decision increases residents’ vulnerability (Sakizlioglu 2014), but it can also give them an opportunity to organize, as it happened in Cabrini. The tenants’ organization managed to slow down the pace of demolition and contest the scale of replacement housing, which as planning officials admitted, would not have happened without tenant mobilization and the ensuing lawsuit. The transformation of the neighborhood entailed massive displacement nonetheless (Smith 2006; Vale 2013). Activism made a difference, altered the mix of the mixed-income development and made change less unsettling for the former tenants, but could not redraw the original business design completely. The original plan was about ‘improvement:’ improving the business potential of the area and housing for a select group of tenants while shifting the problem of social marginalization and inadequate housing elsewhere. The residents wanted a different kind of improvement, of their housing conditions and environment, but they did not care for property prices in the area, and did not imagine the improvement in the form of an upscale mixed-income development. They were not overtly concerned by what others saw as racial segregation either.

The business solution was conceived amid a major structural shift from the industrial to the corporate city, from managerial to entrepreneurial urban governance (Harvey 1989). This expanded the possibilities for a higher use of space and quickened the pace of change, culminating in the transformation of an area of social housing, which was theoretically possible but practically unimaginable earlier. Policy changes, growing economic opportunities and the shifting philosophy of urban governance created a powerful alliance of state and capital to close the rent gap, which, once closed, is bound to emerge elsewhere. The striking transformation of Cabrini can only be adequately understood through the multiple temporalities of gentrification, oscillating between the eventful and cyclical-teleological temporalities of capitalism. Such an approach reveals how housing policies, architectural imagination, the politics of urban competition and high-minded state involvement in improving housing for the poor intersect with the rhythm of neoliberal capitalism, which may create, in retrospect, the illusion of structural inevitability, but is, in fact, shot through with tensions and contingencies that require closer historical scrutiny.

Notes

- 1 The term was coined by Ruth Glass (1964) more than fifty years ago. For a comprehensive treatment of gentrification see, among others, Atkinson and Bridge (2005), Lees et al. (2008, 2016).
- 2 This explains why gentrification is by default an undesirable phenomenon in critical urban scholarship.

- 3 For an overview of debates on financialization, see Adorjan (2014: 306–311), on the financialization of housing, Aalbers (2012).
- 4 Created originally during the Great Depression as Section 8 of the Housing Act of 1937, Section 8 vouchers became widespread in the mid 1970s. Low income tenants (whose income does not reach 50% of the median income in their area, but typically is less than 30%) are given housing vouchers which they can apply towards private rental housing. It is a popular tool of desegregation, by making tenants move out of segregated public housing.
- 5 The most vocal popular critic of the HOPE VI endeavor has been singer PJ Harvey in her album *The Hope Six Demolition Project*.
- 6 The other side of the story is that in 2010 only 372 ex-Cabrini households lived in mixed-income developments (CHA 2011).

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14

'AND THE STRAW COTTAGE TO A PALACE TURNS'

The Foundation of Birmingham Library as Civic Ground

Michael Dring

Founded in 1779 “to promote a spirit of liberality and friendship among all classes of men without distinction” (Parish 1966: 13), Birmingham Library was one of the earliest proprietary libraries to be established outside of London. Starting life as a modest collection accessible by subscription, the library provided a focus for the early civic life of the town, its committee made up of Anglican clergymen, newly wealthy industrialists, and ‘radical’ voices in defense of freedom. The dialogue over book stock and the itinerant nature of the collection, only given a permanent home in 1797, are representative of the contested and fragile nature of this early institution. That it withstood the unsettled events of the town and country at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, and still exists as a collection today is testament to its often-overlooked role in the ethical foundations and progress of the early industrial city.

This chapter explores several interrelated topics associated with the foundation and subsequent life of Birmingham Library. First, that the foundation and constitution of the library confronted long-held differences in religious and political matters that date back to the English and European Reformations and the subsequent persecution of those associated with radical dissent. Second, that the dialogue within the committee over the book stock were related to wider questioning of state and church authority at a moment of profound change in Birmingham and elsewhere, and that the order of the city embodied that dialogue. Third, that the consequent bifurcation and later reunion of Old and New Libraries corresponded with national political reform that had originated in part in Birmingham, prefiguring the foundation of the municipal library and the widespread democratization of knowledge. Through these topics, I argue that the library was an important institution in attempting to settle differences in questions of freedom and progress, and that the library contributed to the ‘civic ground’ of the city at a moment of intense change.

As a large but ‘provincial’ second city, Birmingham must be viewed somewhat differently to London and other cities of a similar scale and status, where well-developed social classes and institutions historically offered a respectability and stability to ideas of knowledge (Toulmin 1992 [1990]: 119). Scholarly work on Birmingham has not typically been concerned with the long-term cultural references and continuities embodied in its built environment, obscured as they are by the often ‘novel’ reworking of the city during the 20th century. This chapter is therefore structured around archival material from the library itself and related collections, as well as territorial and temporal mappings of the city. Together, these readings contribute to a deeper understanding of the often unsettled ‘civic ground’ of the city, where civic can be described as “something which orientates architecture toward the shared conditions of urbanity” (Lynch 2017: 9), and ground as “a metaphor for the conditions by which freedom is meaningful” (Carl 2012: 67).

Radical Dissent, Invention and Industry

As the title of this chapter ‘And the Straw Cottage to a Palace Turns’ suggests, the period of the library’s founding was one of profound change. The line is from John Dyer’s poem ‘The Fleece’ (1757), a Virgilian georgic prose bearing witness to the transformation of Britain’s towns from the rustic to the industrial. Written in four books, the poem gives an insight into the major concerns of modernity in Britain during this unsettled period through the narrative of the wool trade. Dyer recounts how animal husbandry, land enclosure and ambitious canal building projects that connected inland sites of production to globally oriented ports all contributed to the “reddening fields” and “the increasing walls of busy Manchester, Sheffield, and Birmingham” (Dyer 1757: 64). Once agrarian communities found themselves at the center of new industries, in Birmingham concerned with metalwork in brass and steel following the earlier inventions in nearby Coalbrookdale where Abraham Darby first smelted iron ore using coke in 1709. That such a concentration of trades occurred in Birmingham has as much to do with natural resources and advances in communication and technology, as it longer held ideas on freedom and religious prejudices that arose before and during the English Reformation.

At the time of the English Reformation, Birmingham was a small settlement positioned at the confluence of much earlier trade routes. The crossing of the River Rea and favorable landscape conditions had led to the granting of a market charter in the 12th century, though the lord of the manor chose not to seek a borough charter on account of the expense involved. In the years 1535–1543 John Leland wrote as a record for Henry VIII that entering “a pretty Street or I ever entered [...] called *Dirtey* [Deritend]”, he encountered “many Smithes in the Towne that use to make Knives and all mannour of cuttinge Toolles, and many Loriners that make Bittes, and a great many Naylor’s” (Hearne 1769: 114). Coal and iron ore brought by road from the open cast mines of the Black

Country to the north provided the material to produce metal wares for livestock and agriculture. The more refined manufacture of arms gradually substituted the trade in agricultural products, so that by the English Civil War of 1642, the town's workshops supplied 15,000 swords in support of Parliamentary forces.

Britain, like many other nations of the 17th century, was in turmoil over how and by whom it should be governed. In the aftermath of the Restoration, religious dissent and radical politics had gained ground through itinerant ministry and prolific publishing. The troubled relationship between the Crown and representative Parliament, the dogmatic religious divisions in Britain and Europe, and the march of scientific progress all contributed to revisions of the form, order and culture of British cities. The perceived threat to national stability by religious dissent was limited by a number of acts with increasing severity. The Corporation Act (1661) intended to restrict membership of a municipal or chartered corporation (from which Birmingham was excluded as an unincorporated town) to communicant members of the Church of England. The Act of Uniformity (1662) re-established the Church of England, and required conformity of all those in holy orders, every minister, teacher, lecturer or university fellow to prescribed doctrine and the Book of Common Prayer. Refusal to do so risked the loss of their livelihoods. It also demanded that religious worship be conducted in licensed churches and chapels under men better disposed to the government (Dudley 1912: 70). The Five Mile Act (1665) prevented preachers and teachers from coming within five miles of an incorporated town or borough (again, from which Birmingham was excluded). The later Test Act (1673) excluded all non-Anglicans from any civil or military office under the crown.

These acts created divisions, between those of the Church of England and of dissenting belief, and between incorporated and unincorporated towns and cities, substantially altering the course of civil and religious life in Birmingham. Whilst the lack of incorporated borough status was increasingly seen as a hindrance to democratic representation, it meant that the rapidly growing town was an appealing place for displaced dissenters to settle. Many of those dissenters who lost their livelihoods turned to crafts and trades, including the production of much in demand metal wares in Birmingham. The Toleration Act (1689) under the reign of the Protestant William and Mary reinforced the dissenter's place in the town, allowing them to establish meeting houses and, controversially, schools, since the comparatively high levels of literacy in the dissenting population was viewed with suspicion by those in power. The incoming population brought with them new beliefs, ideas and skills that would change the orientation of the town from subsistence with the land, to growth, expansion and invention.

The modest Meeting Houses were built among the markets, houses and workshops of the lower and middle ground of the town, the more ostentatious Anglican Churches occupying more prominent positions (see Figure 14.1). Other than renderings included in various prospects and maps of the time, little is known of the earliest dissenter's Meeting Houses. By contrast, the 12th century St. Martin's Church and the early 18th century St. Philip's Church,

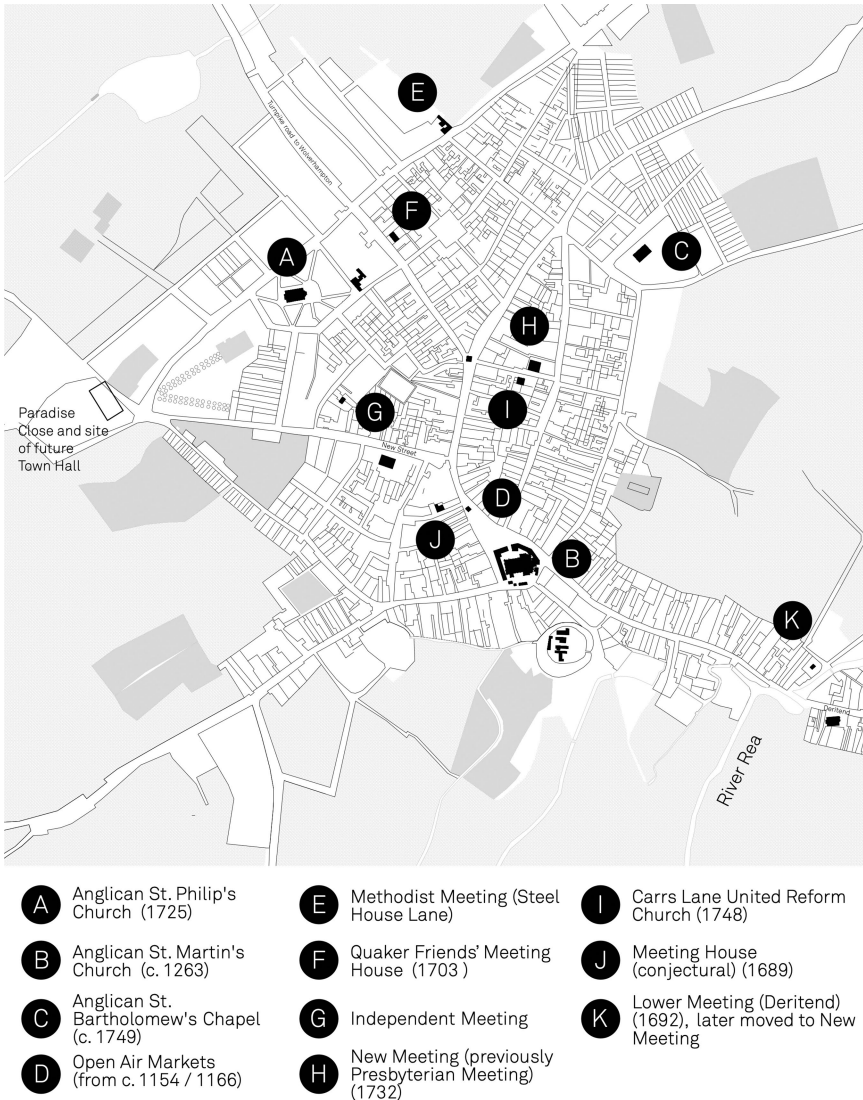


FIGURE 14.1 Map of places of religious worship in 1751.

Source: Michael Dring, 2021.

together with an increasing number of chapels, featured in numerous paintings and publications. Of particular note, St. Philip's was built for a new parish as a result of an Act of Parliament of 1708 to serve the still dominant Anglican congregation. The church was constructed on higher ground overlooking the town and prominent in many early drawn prospects (see Figure 14.2). Designed by the British architect Thomas Archer, it was influenced by Borromini, earning it a place in Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus* (2007 [1715]) as a record of the



FIGURE 14.2 William Westley's East Prospect of Birmingham, 1732.

Source: Birmingham Museums Trust, 2020.

'best of the Moderns'. The order of the city therefore came to represent differences in political and religious beliefs.

Progressive thought in religious dissent paralleled new ideas in modern philosophy and science, where, according to Stephen Toulmin (1992 [1990]: 113) even the most radical of protagonists presupposed that "the final source of activity in the world is God: the highest, most powerful, 'self-moving' Agent in Nature". The inertness of matter according to the Newtonian framework was to divide the dominant Anglican culture and 'lower order' of dissent. The dissenters argued that all men were equal in the sight of God, believing that

any proposal to deprive *physical* mass (i.e. Matter) of a spontaneous capacity for action or motion, as going hand in hand with proposals to deprive the *human* mass (i.e. the 'lower orders') of the population of an autonomous capacity for action, and so for social independence.

(*ibid.*: 121)

This was seen as an affront to liberty and democracy.

Unitarian preacher, intellectual and scientist Joseph Priestley, who settled in Birmingham in 1780, argued against Newton's scientific premise that matter is inert in his *Disquisitions* (1777). As one of the 'radicals' of the 18th century, Priestley had built upon John Locke's argument that "God had endowed men and women with certain natural rights to life, liberty, and property, and men and women had entered into civil society and created political institutions in order to preserve those rights" (Rivers and Wykes 2008: 116). The translation of natural rights (as an 'ideal' pre-political state of nature) into civil liberties required a civilian's positive engagement in political life, made manifest in political institutions. In

his *Essay on the First Principles of Government* (1768), Priestley called for the sovereign authority to remain with the people, that governments were limited in their power and freedom of action, and that civil society had the right to bring down, reform or amend a government (Dickinson 1979 [1977]: 198). These beliefs were later practiced through his ministry at New Meeting in Birmingham, one of the leading congregations in the country actively engaging in politics and reform (Rivers and Wykes 2008: 42). Priestley's writing would later influence Jeremy Bentham's phrase "the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers" (ibid.: 35), continuing a radical tradition from the Protestant Glorious Revolution of 1688 into the 18th and 19th centuries.

With limited government, Birmingham became an attractive place for business often led by dissenters. William Hutton, the self-declared 'first historian of the town' and founder of the first circulating library, remarked that "every man is free the moment he enters" (Hutton 1783: 212). Early governance was formed following the Improvement Act of 1769, which required the appointment of 50 Street Commissioners as the first formal body responsible for governing aspects of the town, a confluence of leaders in industry, political and natural science, and religion as a mark of modernity. Among the Commissioners were members of the Lunar Society, a group of businessmen from the newly industrialized towns of the Midlands who met monthly on the full moon at Matthew Boulton's Soho works to discuss the advancement of the natural sciences for the greater good, as well as productivity and profit. Many were also committee members of Birmingham Library. An increasingly literate society had created a climate of opinion and an active interest in civil liberties, encouraged in Birmingham by the concentration of dissenting practice. As H.T. Dickinson (1979 [1977]) noted, this would not lead to extensive reforms until the opening decades of the 19th century, but it would inform an increasingly unsettled context in the town that reflected wider debates. It was within this climate of intense dialogue and action that Birmingham Library was founded.

The Foundation and Committee of Birmingham Library

The creation of institutions including the Library represented the search for a common ethics of the city. Although earlier lending libraries and book clubs had existed, the foundation of Birmingham Library in 1779 was the first formally constituted proprietary collection in the town. The collection was initially without a permanent location, positioned first in the home of the merchant and button maker John Lee jr. at Snowhill and relocated to Swan Yard adjacent to Hutton's house and the market in 1782. It moved again to Upper Priory in 1790, by then sufficiently large to warrant the first purpose-built library, but the advertisement for suitable land coincided with increasing tensions both in the selection of the book stock, as well as local and national agitation by dissenters for the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts. As the institution sought stability and permanence, its constitution and collection remained unsettled.

From the outset, the 19 mainly dissenting founders wished to broaden the concern of the library “with a liberal anxiety to extend its usefulness” (Edwards, as cited in Parish 1966: 11), inviting the clergy of the town to join them, which was initially refused on suspicion of their radical beliefs. The library committee was formed through ballot, with each subscriber submitting up to 20 nominees. Early members included: industrialists Matthew Boulton, James Watt and John Taylor; physicians Dr. William Small and John Ash; bankers Sampson and Charles Lloyd; dissenting ministers Rev. John Edwards (Priestley’s successor at New Meeting) and Rev. Radcliffe Scholefield (Old Meeting) (*ibid.*: 89). This liberal intent led to the appointment of proprietors that would disrupt the course of the institution, in particular Dr. Joseph Priestley, by then minister of New Meeting, and Reverend Charles Curtis, Rector of Anglican St. Martin’s Church.

Soon after his arrival in Birmingham, Priestley had become a subscriber to the library alongside fellow Lunar Society members, making him eligible for appointment to the committee. He believed that the library was essential in “bring(ing) the reading and thinking parts of the town better acquainted with each other” (Priestley, as cited in Parish 1966: 12). His first act was to reorganize the collection on the same structure he had implemented at Leeds Library, providing “that stability and method without which no institution can prosper” (Schofield 2004: 243), revising its laws, policies and cataloging (the latter remaining in use today). Although the collection still filled no more than a bookcase by 1782, Priestley saw the physical growth of the town as synonymous with the expansion of knowledge and dialogue among its inhabitants, embodied in the library and the society of members, which included merchants, artisans, manufacturers, bankers, printers and scientists. Of particular interest was the ‘welfare’ and ‘growing interests’ of the collection, notably in the controversies surrounding liberty and morality, not least through his own work. Priestley initially believed that controversial works should only be considered for inclusion when the library could afford to buy works on both sides of an argument. Alongside Dyer’s poetic works introduced earlier, the collection included Rousseau’s *Social Contract* (1762), Voltaire’s *Letters on the English Nation* (published in English in 1778), and later, Franklin’s *Life and Essays* (1793), representative of the informed global view that the laws of the Library, if not the whole committee, sought. The categorization and division of knowledge embodied in the catalogue (see Figure 14.3), and the openness to free enquiry via the ethical agreement of the collection were both emblems of modernity, promoting dialogue and settling the library as a new institution.

Priestley’s measured attitude to free enquiry came under pressure as the collection grew and the membership became more diverse. By the mid-1780s, the collection numbered some 1600 volumes and a separate scientific section had been formed to satisfy demand. Representing the religious opposition, Curtis was the first clergyman to be elected to the committee in 1784, later gaining the presidency. The appointment of Curtis was representative of the dissenting

Duodecimo		Duodecimo	
1-7	Johnson's Biographical and Critical Lives of the English Poets	20	Vol 21 J. Phillips, Smith, & Perrett's Poems
1	Vol 1. containing Pope, Cowley, & Waller	21	Hughes's Poems
2	— 2 — — — — —	22	— 22 — — — — —
3	— 3 — — — — —	23	— 23 — — — — —
4	— 4 — — — — —	24	— 24 — — — — —
5	— 5 — — — — —	25	— 25 — — — — —
6	— 6 — — — — —	26	— 26 — — — — —
7	— 7 — — — — —	27	— 27 — — — — —
8-68	Johnson's Works of the English Poets, 50 vols	28	— 28 — — — — —
8-9	Vol 1. 2. Cowley's Poems. 2 vols	29	— 29 — — — — —
10-12	— 3. 4. 5. Milton's Poems. 3 vols	30	— 30 — — — — —
13	— 6. Waller's Poems	31	— 31 — — — — —
14	— 7. Dunbar's Poems, Sprat's Poems	32	— 32 — — — — —
15	— 8. Rowland's Poems, Rochester's Poems	33	— 33 — — — — —
16	— 9. Otway's Poems, Dukes's Poems, Lovell's Poems	34	— 34 — — — — —
17	— 10. Halper's Poems, & Waller's Poems	35	— 35 — — — — —
18	— 11. Dryden's Works 4 vols	36	— 36 — — — — —
19	— 12. — — — — —	37	— 37 — — — — —
20	— 13. — — — — —	38	— 38 — — — — —
21	— 14. — — — — —	39	— 39 — — — — —
22	— 15. — — — — —	40	— 40 — — — — —
23	— 16. — — — — —	41	— 41 — — — — —
24	— 17. — — — — —	42	— 42 — — — — —
25	— 18. — — — — —	43	— 43 — — — — —
26	— 19. — — — — —	44	— 44 — — — — —
27	— 20. — — — — —	45	— 45 — — — — —
		46	— 46 — — — — —
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		51	— 51 — — — — —
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		64	— 64 — — — — —
		65	— 65 — — — — —
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		68	— 68 — — — — —
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		89	— 89 — — — — —
		90	— 90 — — — — —
		91	— 91 — — — — —
		92	— 92 — — — — —
		93	— 93 — — — — —
		94	— 94 — — — — —
		95	— 95 — — — — —
		96	— 96 — — — — —
		97	— 97 — — — — —
		98	— 98 — — — — —
		99	— 99 — — — — —
		100	— 100 — — — — —

FIGURE 14.3 The first entries into the Birmingham Library 'Catalogue Duodecimo' 1779.

Source: The Birmingham Library at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, 2017.

members' belief, that pertinent and decent dialogue was a shared moral duty. Priestley's position and that belief was called into question when in 1786 a group of Anglican churchmen from nearby Deritend mischievously voted to buy Priestley's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* (1782) against the author's wishes with intent to unsettle the accord (Money 1977: 127). Dialogue turned to disagreement, followed by Anglican protests and emblematic resignations orchestrated by Curtis and his party who put forward a motion to exclude all controversial works for good.

Although the clergy later returned to the committee, the atmosphere of intellectual debate on matters of politics and religion in Britain was far from settled, none less so than in Birmingham. The American Declaration of Independence of 1776 and French *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* of 1789, which followed respective revolutions, had stressed civil liberties and free will, leaving the British establishment fearful of seditious acts at home and the radicals that promoted them. Similarly, the distrust between factions of the library committee persisted, with dissenting membership being gradually eroded, so much so that by 1790, Priestley had ended his active participation and by 1795 a New Library had been established to provide for dissenting subscribers. But it is the events of the intervening period that I want to examine further, for it is

through the Birmingham Riot of 1791 that the contested order of the town can be understood, embodied in the religious and domestic sites of destruction. The Riot can also be seen as a cautionary predecessor to largely peaceful but deficient reform in Britain during the following century.

Birmingham Riot and the Suspension of Dialogue

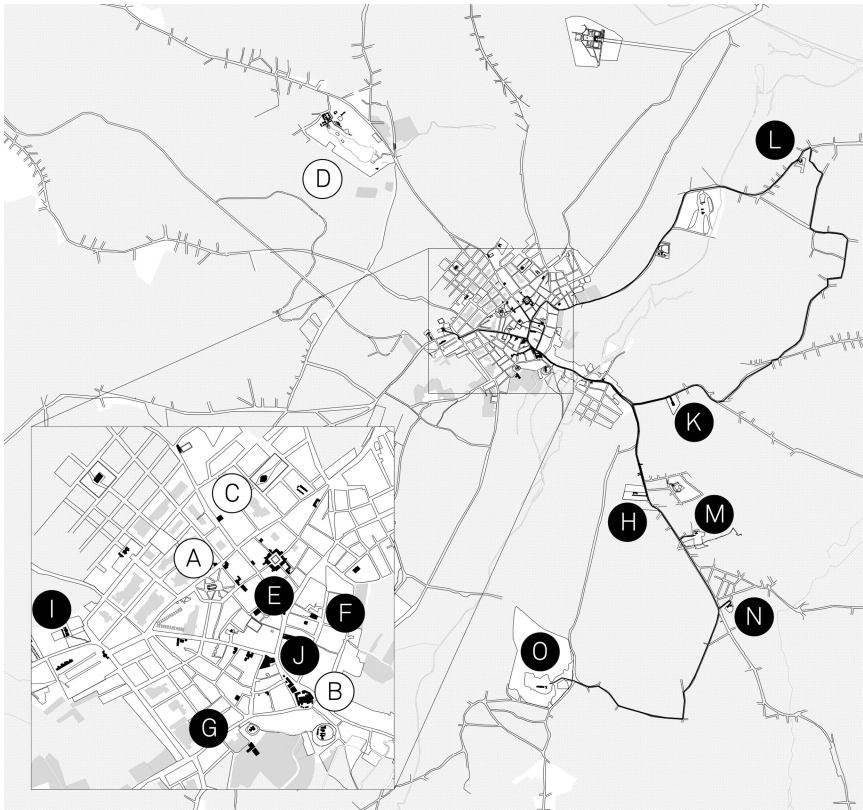
The culmination of tensions in Birmingham was marked by a dinner to celebrate the second anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. Held in a hotel adjoining St. Philip's square on 14th July 1791 to "commemorate the auspicious day which witnessed the Emancipation of Twenty-six millions of People from the yoke of despotism" (Langford 1868: 477), diners included "prominent local figures of every persuasion" (Money 1977: 219) including members of the Lunar Society. Priestley had been advised not to attend, after an anonymous leaflet was distributed falsely suggesting the revolutionary intentions of the diners. In the context of widespread misrepresentation of dissenting beliefs, the controversy surrounding the Library's book stock, Priestley's and others' agitation against the Test and Corporation Acts, as well as the Lunar Society's anti-slavery petitioning to Parliament, meant that the gathering quickly became the subject of public unrest. The horrors of the French Revolution remained current in the minds of those patriotic to King, Church and country, a second leaflet stating that

we are not so destitute of common sense as not to prefer the order, liberty, happiness, and wealth, which is diffused through every portion of the British Empire, to the anarchy, the licentiousness, the poverty, and the misery, which now overwhelm the degraded kingdom of France.

(Langford 1868: 479)

'Common sense' would also be used by the British radicals following Thomas Paine's book of the same name, which argued the case for political reform based on an inalienable commitment to natural rights, rather than the traditional liberties of the British, which prioritized propertied franchise over civil liberties (Dickinson 1979 [1977]: 240). The age of reason and the belief in progress as seen in institutions such as the library came to represent a potential unsettling of traditional values.

Over the three days that followed, protesters made up of local apprentices and laborers, transient looters, and a disciplined nucleus of rioters strategically attacked properties associated with dissent under orders from the high church gentry and magistrates (see Figure 14.4) (Schofield 2004: 286). Priestley's publisher Joseph Johnson of London documented selected outcomes of the riots in a book written in English and French (Johnson 1792), accompanied by romanticized etchings of ruined properties by William Ellis. First to succumb was the nearby New Meeting house where Priestley was minister, destroying the Vestry's own valuable collection of books while leaving the shell of the building intact.



(A) Anglican St. Philip's Church (1725)

(B) Anglican St. Martin's Church (c. 1263)

(C) Location of Birmingham Library book stock (conjectural)

(D) Soho House & Manufactory Matthew Boulton's house and location of Lunar Society meetings

Thursday 14th July 1791

(E) Bastille Dinner

(F) New Meeting House Priestley congregation

(G) Old Meeting House

(H) Fair Hill Joseph Priestley's house and laboratory

Friday 15th July 1791

(I) Easy Hill John Ryland's house

(J) High Street William Hutton's house

(K) Bordesley Hall, Mount Pleasant John Taylor's house

Saturday 16th July 1791

(L) Bennett's Hill Saltley William Hutton's house

(M) Spark Brook George Humphrys' house

(N) Showell Green William Russell's house

(O) Moseley Hall Lady Carhampton's house (owned by John Taylor)

FIGURE 14.4 Map of Birmingham Riots of 1791.

Source: Michael Dring, 2021.

Old Meeting was razed to the ground, followed soon after by Priestley's home and laboratory at *Fair Hill*. Johnson (1792: 3) noted that had Priestley been at home, he surely would have "been a victim to their rage", instead the rioters had to be content with destroying "an apparatus of philosophical instruments, and a collection of scientific preparations".

Over the following two days, 14 properties in total were ransacked and destroyed, leaving nothing but the walls standing. All of the properties were related to dissenting practice and many to Birmingham Library, including houses belonging to John Ryland, William Hutton, John Taylor, George Humphrys and William Russell. The industrialists worshipped at Meeting Houses in the center of the town alongside their workforce, and built substantial rural villas set in landscaped gardens on and beyond the boundaries of the town. The nascent library, though controversial, was deemed too important to be sacrificed in the riot by those who directed it. Although the participatory capacity of the Library lay dormant after the riot, the institution provided continuity in a period of intense intellectual and physical conflict.

The Library as Building

No Parliamentary enquiry into the riots ever took place, opposed and defeated by a government keen to avoid scrutiny of such suspect actions. The dissenters', in particular Priestley's, intent to promote active dialogue through the Library, the constitution and collection, successfully moderated opinion until the greater unsettling calls to reform the Test and Corporation Acts and for wider democratic representation became too great for the establishment to suffer. Referring to the riots as a "violent breach of the bonds of society" (Priestley 1791: 50), Priestley left Birmingham for good, first for Hackney, London then for a new life in Northumberland, Pennsylvania.

Despite his departure and the resignation of dissenting committee members, the Library remained part of the civic order of the town. The earlier plan for permanent premises were revisited with the first Library building opening on Union Street in 1797 where it remained for over 100 years (see Figure 14.5). However, the committee was far from stable, and Birmingham New Library was established by liberal dissenters dissatisfied with the evident bias in the membership in the omission of those texts dealing with 'disputed questions'. The New Library later opened on Temple Row West overlooking St. Philip's Church, the proximity of the two institutions implying a renewed dialogue between those of differing persuasions.

Urban life remained unsettled at a national level too. The colonial war over trade between the British and French spanned the turn of the century, and the later war with America had plunged the 'lower-orders' into destitution. In Birmingham, only the manufacture and trade of guns and swords thrived in otherwise depressed conditions. After the end of conflict in 1815, the hardships persisted, affecting a climate of patriotism as well as radicalism in Britain. A more tolerant society meant that though various religious groups might differ in their political rights, all could worship freely (Dickinson as cited in McCalman 2001 [1999]: 37). Greater numbers were engaged in politics, particularly through petitioning campaigns for parliamentary reform, led in Birmingham by the banker Thomas Attwood and the Birmingham Political Union where democratic representation remained absent.



FIGURE 14.5 Library as building, commemorative coin, 1797.
 Source: Birmingham Museums Trust, 2018.

Through the division of the Library into Old and New, the founding institutional purpose of moderating opinion through dialogue was lost, superseded in part by a more widespread movement for civil liberties with origins in institutions such as the library where the republican ideal of a virtuous and active citizenry was seen most clearly. Priestley's ministry, scientific enquiry and activities at Birmingham Library embodied the revival of the Lockean tradition of natural rights, informing the democratic arguments of Thomas Paine in *Rights of Man* (1791) which called for a renewal of the contractual agreement between the government and the governed, and Jeremy Bentham's philosophical radicalism that would follow. This would inspire wider reform in the Act of 1832 as well as visible signs of civic representation in Birmingham. The construction of Britain's first Town Hall in 1834, and the Free Reference Library in 1866 under the liberal nonconformist Mayor Joseph Chamberlain, together formed the civic ground of the city.

The Library as Framework for the Ethical Interpretation of the City

In its earliest form, Birmingham Library became a framework for the common-to-all ethical interpretation of the city related to natural and civil rights as well as ideas of progress. The nascent government of Birmingham and the lack of national political representation meant that the town was open to commerce and often contested ideas of what a city might stand for. As a new institution, the library initially embodied the emergent intellectual and commercial culture of Birmingham, where religious and political difference was tolerated, even encouraged. As

technical and philosophical emblems of modernity, the attempt to determine common values through the democratic election of a representative Library committee, the definition of laws and the categorization of the collection into different fields of knowledge, all superseded any notions of tradition which ultimately was too much to bear for the fragile constitution of the town. The subsequent unrest and public dispute, exemplified through the disagreement over the book stock, the Riot, and division of the Library into ‘New’ and ‘Old’, laid bare the unsettled nature of this burgeoning industrial center, reflecting wider-held concerns about the diminishing power of the established constitution of Crown, Parliament and Church of England, and the rise of radical belief in politics and religion.

As a cultural institution, Birmingham Library was embedded in the praxis of the town as a common ground of difference, remaining influential and evident in the subsequent ‘civic ground’ of the city throughout the unsettled state of its foundation, growth, bifurcation and reunion.

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15

PROPERTY AS PRACTICE

The Collective Landholding Patterns of Black Churches

Gabriel Cuéllar

In the wake of the Abolition of Slavery in 1865, *freedmen*, the formerly enslaved Afro-American people in the US South, confronted a society centered on land. Contending with an oppressive political climate, freedpeople tactfully defined their struggle for justice, in great part, in terms of land claims. Strategically pooling the social resources of their members, Black church congregations established landholdings through practice, rather than purchase, thereby diverging from settler-colonial norms. The case of Saint John Missionary Baptist Church, a freedmen's church near Houston, Texas, helps chart out key moments in the transition of Afro-Americans being claimed *as* property to making claims *to* property themselves. Collectively, the freedmen churches demonstrate that *land-power*—the ways that people make and navigate social relations mediated by land—is linked to how property is conceived. The stakes of this land-based struggle, which is relevant to contemporary spatial practice, are articulated by referencing archival legal documents, property maps and conversations the author held with freedmen congregations in the Houston area from 2012 through 2016.

The terms 'settle' and 'unsettle' have a particular meaning in the US settler-colonial context. Euro-American settlement fueled a racialized, extractive land market, which drove the *unsettlement* of Afro-Americans and Indigenous nations. These subjugated groups, however, also exercised power in ways that *unsettled* the dominant order. Accordingly, this chapter posits that property, although significantly shaped by ruling groups' interest in exchange-value, can also comprise other worldviews. Property also accommodates routines supportive of use-value and liberating forms of settlement.

Land Precarity

A generation after the Abolition of Slavery, communities of formerly enslaved people were eager to buy land of their own. Toiling on agricultural estates along the Brazos River in Texas, they were slowly amassing wages. At an opportune moment in the winter of 1900, the heiress of a Texas real estate magnate put a two-acre parcel on the market. While she engaged in many real estate transactions over her lifetime, this square-shaped plot in Fort Bend County was perhaps the most unique and enduring. The land in question was purchased by Jesse Brown, Johns Fields and Ellis Daugherty, trustees of the freedmen's congregation of Saint John Baptist Church in DeWalt, Texas, a former plantation headquarters in the hinterland of Houston (Fort Bend County 1900). This congregation, originally organized in 1869, makes a unique claim to the property to this day: unlike nearly every other plot in the city, the church's proprietorship is not based on the land tenure known as Fee Simple, the most assured interest in property. Saint John's tenure is defeasible, or conditional upon its use. Its title deed, penned by a member of the notorious planter class, contains a so-called Reverter Clause stipulating the forfeiture of the land if the church's worship activities ever cease (*ibid.*). The boilerplate deed closes as follows:

Said land to be used for church purposes and school purposes and it is understood and stipulated that in event said premise shall cease to be used for school and church purposes this said premises shall revert to the grantor or his heirs....

(ibid.)

This legal document is a witness to the period in US history during which Euro-American landholders and the federal government fiercely opposed formerly enslaved people gaining a territorial foothold on the unconsolidated frontier. They did so, in part, by devising precarious landholding conditions.

Despite systemic pressures and marginalization since that time, and although it lacked the Fee Simple right to dictate the use of the land or employ it as a financial device, Saint John has maintained its grip on the property. The congregation's routine, performed every Sunday when they gather in their crumbling white chapel, has enabled the members of Saint John to sustain and pass on their land claim, and in the process withstand the discriminatory reversion clause. In fact, the congregation's legal predicament is common across the US South, where hundreds, maybe thousands, of groups of freedpeople managed to buy land—but only for church purposes—in the decades after the Abolition of Slavery in 1865. Like Saint John, the tenure of many other freedmen churches did not entail ownership in the tradition of Euro-American society. Freedpeople purchased the *use* of the land; all other interests, such as the right to sell, were precluded by the Reverter Clause. In this way, racialized land deeds denied Afro-American congregations the ability to capitalize on their property as a financial

asset. Although by now many such freedmen congregations have obtained Fee Simple tenure, Saint John and others continue to exercise their land claims in terms of the value of its use, rather than its value for economic exchange.

Property is the basic means through which territory is configured and power is embedded in space. Maps of property depict not only legal boundaries but also a spatial order. The invisible and changing patterns of property lines ‘encode’ how a society distributes power, forms subjectivities and manages access to resources (Price 1995; Rose 1994). Within the institution of property in the US South, opposing political orientations play out in parallel: the legal status and cadastral disposition of the freedmen churches are the result, on one hand, of racial subjugation by hegemonic institutions and, on the other, routines of subversion and the struggle for equality. Since the freedmen churches were not able to rely on the outright purchase of the land to make their claim, they were required to routinize their use of the property or face forfeiting it. Freedpeople managed to institute this routine despite vandalism and economic marginalization throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Although the churches’ land interest was non-economic by design, their practices suggest that, for freedmen and their successors, property represented much more than a potential exchange-value—it was a means for spatializing fellowship, locally and regionally.

Subdivision and Circulation

The freedmen churches emerged in a capitalist society centered on land. While today the institution of real property is taken as a given, it consolidated incrementally over centuries, defining the terms of engagement of those brought into its orbit. The inauguration of a legal land structure, which legitimized and promoted individual land titles, provided an engine for growth in what was to become the State of Texas. Land infrastructure concerns not only geography and law; however, it depends on the creation of subjects who agree to respect each other’s claims (Rose 1998). Where real property emerges, therefore, so do subjects that reify—or counterpose—its conventions. As much as property lines configured the territory, they helped produce the figure of the landholder.

In 1824, the Mexican government granted Stephen Austin a swath of land in the northeastern reaches of New Spain. The efforts to settle this region were motivated by the idea that settlers would bring security to the frontier with the US and pacify Indigenous uprisings. Austin, who oversaw the settlement of 300 families there, strictly demanded that the colony and all its plots be precisely surveyed and recorded (Texas General Land Office 2018). Beginning in the 1833, Austin launched an ambitious mapping project with the goal of producing a cadastral survey for the entirety of the colony, covering over 40,000 square kilometers. With the huge tracts surveyed and charted before settlement occurred, his preemptive cadastral imprint superimposed a vast territorial order before settlers even set foot on the ground. This infrastructure facilitated a colonial land grab, which displaced and extinguished the area’s Karankawa,

Tonkawa, Coco, Bidai and Attacapa inhabitants, and prepared the territory for settlers whose role was defined by their occupation and possession of real property (Foster 2008).

The 19th-century planter, who owned not only vast areas of land but also enslaved people, was culmination of the American landholder. One of the most prominent planters and land dealers was Matthew Cartwright, whose peak landholdings encompassed nearly 1 million acres. One of Cartwright's most valuable assets was the large swath of fertile land along the Brazos River in Fort Bend County, the agricultural powerhouse where enslaved Afro-Americans made up more than two-thirds of the population. Indeed, Cartwright was the grandfather of the grantor of the Saint John parcel.

Abolition, however, shattered the planters' fiefdoms and the profitability of their estates plummeted (Dupont and Rosenbloom 2016). In the aftermath of the Civil War, former plantation owners had to surrender their enslaved chattel, who constituted the means of production, labor and much of planters' wealth. These new conditions drove planters to sell off most of their land, making real property accessible to many more people. The government pushed for freedpeople to establish themselves as peasant farmers, but most land was sold or granted to Euro-Americans. The plantation of which Saint John was a part was bought in the 1890s by the Dew family, who continued to exploit freedmen labor for cotton and sugarcane production.

In the following decades, landholders turned to alternative sources of value extraction. The introduction of Severance, a legal principle, which split the possession of a land's surface from its subsurface, was a key change in property dynamics. This allowed landholders greater flexibility in exchanging the value of land-based resources, typically in the form of mineral leases, which obtained by oil companies across the country. This articulation enabled a deeper commodification of the land, accelerating its circulation and divisibility. In a bid to attract investment to the area in the 1920s, the Dews drew up a speculative oil boomtown overlaid on the plantation town known as DeWalt (see Figure 15.1). Foreshadowing the pressure that real estate would put on Afro-American space, the Saint John church, which should appear along the edge of Dews' boomtown, is markedly absent from the masterplan. Like the cleansing of the region's Indigenous inhabitants during Austin's colonization, economic expansion depended on making Black spaces fungible. Investment flowed through DeWalt, but only in the channels of petroleum companies (see Figure 15.2), none of which were interested in settling in the town the Dews envisioned for them.

When the oil wells dried up in the 1970s, landholders and speculators looked to another source of real estate value. As scholars of American urbanization have shown, banks and the government supported the building of individual homes to develop a market for financial products (Easterling and Prelinger 1992; Martin 2014). In Fort Bend County, real estate developers converted vast swaths of rural land into an optimized landscape of subdivided property, echoing the territorial strategies of the Dews' boomtown masterplan and Austin's land grant cadaster. The size of each

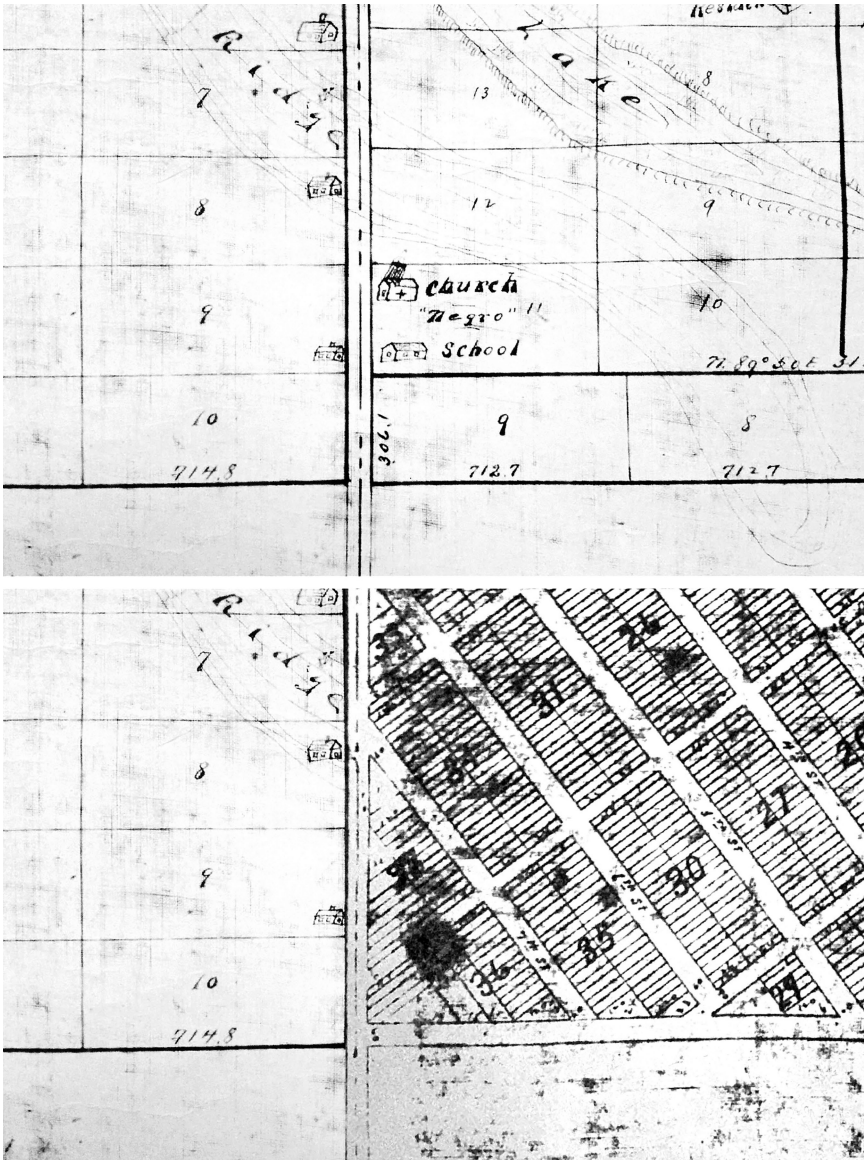


FIGURE 15.1 Excerpts from Dew family landholdings map (top) showing Saint John (labeled as ‘Negro Church School’) and the oil boomtown masterplan (bottom) for the same area. The map of the speculative plan omits Saint John.

Source: Fort Bend History Association, Richmond, Texas.



FIGURE 15.2 Property as extraction: cotton fields and then recently built oil wells near Saint John church.

Source: Frank J. Schlueter (Schlueter 1910).

lot, the relation to adjacent properties, zoning, taxation, mortgage terms, etc. were all calculated to privilege financial variables and constrain Afro-Americans. In the typical suburb, this was done through well-known configurations of mass-produced plots charged by racial covenants, predatory credit schemes and discriminatory federal policies (Fernández-Kelly 2016). This marked, again, an intensification of exchange-value and the privilege of the Euro-American landholder.

The case of Fort Bend County demonstrates how property relations produced a spatial order in which settlement coincided with an ever-increasing subdivision of land and marginalization of Afro-Americans to fuel its circulation. As part of this process, the property system facilitated the formation of unequal subjects and a territory formatted for exchange. Within such an environment, the social relations that Saint John embodies are virtually incommensurable, yet it is within those very conditions that the freedpeople's practice-based claims to property can be most appreciated.

Perpetuating Landlessness

Abolition eliminated slavery per se, but it also created the *freedman*, the emancipated Afro-American whose theoretical right to claim land threatened the arrangements established in the era of slavery. Since land was the instrument of power, the possibility of freedpeople controlling real property was seen as a risk to the planter class and the agricultural economy. The very presence of the freedman unleashed volatility into the politics and spatial infrastructure that defined the South. Over several decades following Abolition, landholders and the

federal government attempted to pacify this property crisis by assimilating freedmen into two reactive land-power frameworks: sharecropping and homesteading.

Within the planters' economic system, the only course to independence was land acquisition, yet this largely inaccessible to freedmen. Thus, in the immediate aftermath of the US Civil War, the nearly 4 million freedmen transitioned from enslavement in name, but not in status (United States Census 1864). Freedmen were quickly contracted as tenant farmhands, known as sharecroppers, by planters who divided former plantations into individual allotments. According to such agreements, often brokered by the government, sharecroppers would cultivate commodity crops and, at the end of the season, pay a share of crops to the planter as rent (Hayden et al. 2013). This state of affairs did not lead freedmen, in most cases, far from the estates where they had forcibly labored years prior. In Texas, where there was a concern of an uprising, the statewide Abolition announcement was accompanied by an appeal for freedmen to "remain quietly at their present homes and work for wages" (State of Texas cited in Acosta n.d.). Not having the resources to subsist or relocate for other employment, freedmen survived by entering the sharecropping system, conforming to the government's wishes. Sharecropping thus kept the machine of Southern agriculture in motion, but freedmen were dissatisfied with their gains and often quit their employers or appealed to federal agents to intervene. A freedman in Mississippi, M. Howard, wrote to federal authorities entreating,

Mr Commissioner I thought when a man was once free he was free indeed and entital to all the laws and rights of a free people...there is land enough and mony enough every body...So let the people get Settled all will be right.

(Hayden et al. 2013: 106)

While fairer contracts could be drawn up and individual cases of fraud could be resolved, the sharecropping system adapted plantation slavery such that the property relations were untouched: landholders controlled the soil and labor.

Freedmen and the Freedmen's Bureau, a federal agency charged with assisting freedmen, acted jointly in the development of an alternative scheme, homesteading, which sought to incorporate Afro-Americans as equal citizens through land reparations. Homesteads were plots of state land granted at no cost to a farmer and his family on the condition that they cultivate the land. After a period of successful harvest, the government would bestow tenure to the farmer. Homesteading allowed freedmen, in part, to exercise landholding—and to settle—on their own terms. In this arrangement, freedmen could participate directly in the land institution. They began to unsettle assumptions on the nature and beneficiaries of property by developing their kinship ties, rather than upholding the landscape of individual landholdings. Such claims, however, had to contend with the routinized protocols that the former planters and the government sought to establish.

As freedpeople settled on homesteads, the territories they cultivated did not align with the individual and contiguous property geometries that the Freedmen's Bureau proposed (Hayden et al. 2013). Many of the tracts the freedmen claimed

were collective and scattered and, according to Freedmen's Bureau agents, freedmen rarely delineated property boundaries (*ibid.*). One agent described how freedmen who claimed the right to a former plantation headquarters divided up the existing buildings. In another case, comparing the state of his estate in 1881 with a landholdings map from 1860, a former planter lamented how freedmen rearranged his panoptical estate to facilitate cooperative farming (Penningroth 2003). Upon their own initiative, freedmen created a complex matrix of land claims distinct from the boundaries of fences.

Although the state-sponsored reparations program had laudable intentions, in most cases, it made little more progress than sharecropping. Freedmen's homesteading practices rarely corresponded with the bureaucracy of land recording and Freedmen's Bureau agents disapproved land claims that did not have proper documentation and physical markings. General Beecher expressly ordered his agents to "ignore the claim & proceed as though it did not exist" (Hayden et al. 2013: 257) if adequate proof could not be furnished. Finally, after years of legislative deadlock and the Freedmen Bureau's resistance to the removal of freedmen, the US Congress disintegrated the homesteads in 1876. Even some freedmen who conformed to the bureaucratic standards were evicted; they were compensated but remained landless. In some areas, virtually all homestead land reverted to former planters. Like sharecropping, homesteading served as a pacification tactic that ultimately diffused the unsettling agency that freedmen, as potential landholders, initially wielded in the land-power system. Despite the differences between the two models, the political arena remained fixed on land and the perpetuation of unequal spatial appropriation.

Collectivity from the Margins

At stake in this turbulent period was the very conception of property. While planters and the government made a case for exchange-value, freedmen came from a different tradition. Historian David Penningroth's important study traces slaves' conception of property as a dense social network, which helped foster kinship ties during slavery. For enslaved people, he argues, property was not predicated on delineating terms of private use, but rich associations made through routines of collaboration and acknowledgment (Penningroth 2003). Penningroth's characterization of slaves' property as a form of "cooperative custody" (*ibid.*: 137) helps to understand why freedmen later extended these kinship ethics to collective landholding routines. Freedmen did not see property as a commodity obtained upon purchase, but rather as a medium for obligation and fellowship, "drenched... with social meaning" (*ibid.*: 99). Throughout the difficult but formative post-Civil War period, freedmen enacted a concept of property that was more social than economic. This period served as a testing ground for freedpeople's political imagination, which soon came to flourish on church lands.

Returning to the scene of this chapter's introduction, it is evident now that Saint John's property purchase in 1900 was no simple feat. Although pressured to

adopt the acquisitive individualism espoused by the Freedmen's Bureau, freedpeople established routines of fellowship that strengthened their collective social vitality. Although the prosperity of individual freedmen was severely hindered by the land-power system, when organized in the form of religious congregations, freedmen made collective claims with greater success. Indeed, across the South leasing and purchasing of land was within grasp of congregations who pooled the resources of their members. Nevertheless, such properties were often burdened by exorbitant prices, restrictive conditions or extreme remoteness, foreshadowing the "conditional, contingent and tiered" nature of Black landholding for years to come (Taylor 2019: 17). Saint John, too, bought its lot despite the conditional Reverter Clause embedded in its title deed. The motivation behind the clause seems simple enough; landholders were intent on maintaining the status quo of plantation society and conditional deeds were likely to extinguish over time. Yet, freedpeople had few other options in claiming land, and this may explain why so many Black churches emerged under these circumstances in the roughly three-decade span of 1890–1920 (see Figure 15.3). Freedmen congregations had purchased land, lawfully and through great collaborative effort, yet their titles were even more precarious than a basic leasehold, because their claims depended on their meeting the conditions of the deed.

In devising such deeds, however, landholders failed to recognize that freedpeople were well versed in the workings of property and that their communities were

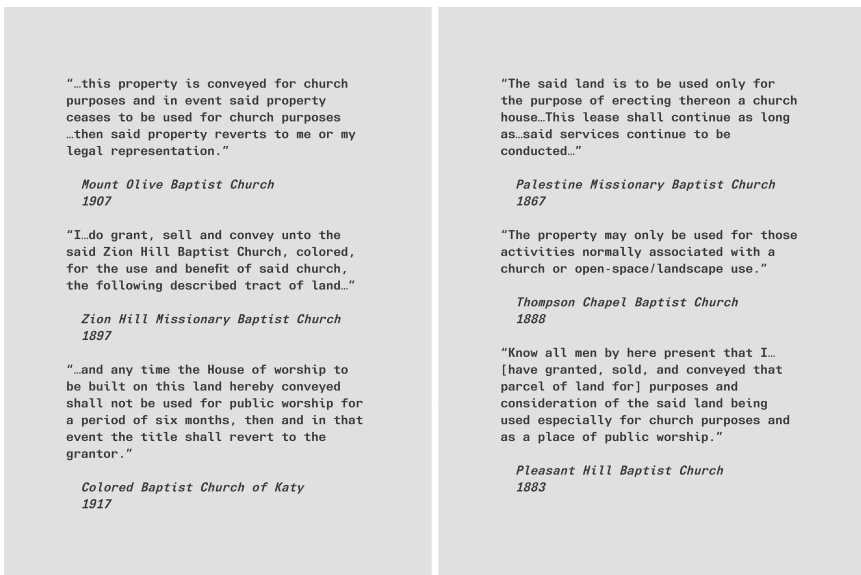


FIGURE 15.3 Excerpts from Fort Bend County public deed records showing Reverter Clauses in numerous freedmen church deeds.

Source: Gabriel Cuéllar, 2017, based on Fort Bend County (1900).

built on fellowship. Nancy Woods, a parishioner of Saint John since the 1930s, affirms that the congregation was always aware of the stipulations placed on the land (Nancy Woods, personal interview, 8 April 2013). Under these legal conditions, ownership was directly linked to the endurance of fellowship, this being the very basis of freedmen politics. As a result, such deeds unintentionally upheld a radical form of collective, use-based tenure to the freedmen congregation. The colonial notion that skin color justified discrimination finally backfired: reversionary deeds, meant to be a hindrance, actually endorsed freedmen's property practices.

As one of the foremost assertions of their political agency, freedpeople used churches for their advancement at local and regional scales. Wherever a church emerged, it acted as a node in the decentralized network of communities that freedmen cultivated. In acquiring property, freedmen congregations relocated from outlying forests and flood plains onto roads and town outskirts across the South (see Figure 15.4). This geographic shift brought Afro-American spatial claims to the public sphere, contesting urban spaces saturated with racial ideologies and market imperatives. The churches acted as hubs for migrating freedpeople, who often established congregations at their destinations. Serving as a welfare agency, the churches deployed resources to enrich the fortune of its members, assisting jobseekers and reuniting kin. Pastors were instrumental in the spread of the freedmen church politics. They migrated between congregations, transmitted news, and organized funding for construction and land purchases (Hayden et al. 2013). For both newcomers and those looking to move on, the church was a contagious spatial agent extended to wherever freedmen settled.

Just as early freedmen settlement patterns did not correlate with the conventions of real estate their churches unsettled the norms of settler-colonial land possession. While prevailing political conditions quashed Afro-American claims to space, the churches helped fulfill freedpeople's aspiration for self-determination. This is not only because private land was largely unavailable, but because the individual, private plot was inadequate in encompassing the political claims that Afro-Americans were contending to make: they fought to assert their independence, but also their *interdependence* (Penningroth 2003). The networks of freedmen churches therefore represent an important socio-spatial innovation: an off-the-market urban presence collectively maintained through use. Unlike property's exchange-value, which reaches its highest theoretical value when exploited by a single party, freedmen church property is, following the concept of 'inherently public property' (Rose 1994), most valuable in use, as a space that nurtures sociability.

Emerging from the plantations, freedmen deployed the space of the church for political, cultural, religious and spatial empowerment—all while remaining relatively docile in the eyes of the planter class and the intended limitations of the Reverter Clause. Within the margins that freedmen were able to claim for their religious institution, they established a social movement that came to embody Afro-American collective ambitions. Serving as "part church, part psychological refuge, part organizing point for occasional acts of outright rebellion" (Maffly-Kipp 2001) for multiple denominations and clubs, the thousands of freedmen

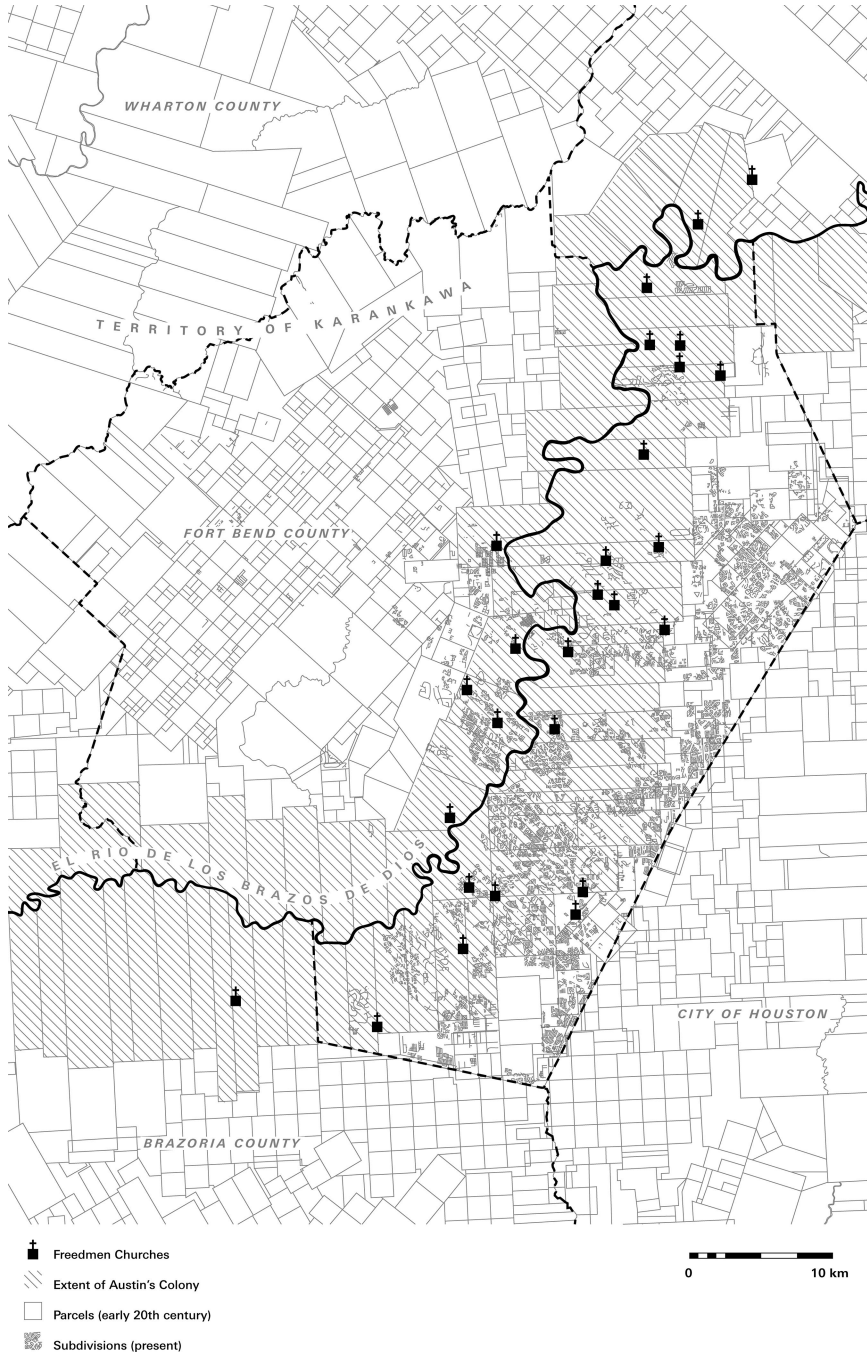


FIGURE 15.4 Map of freedmen churches in the southwestern region of Houston, Texas.

Source: Gabriel Cuéllar, 2018.



FIGURE 15.5 Celebrating the installation of a State of Texas historic marker honoring the value of the Saint John church grounds.

Source: Gabriel Cuéllar, 2017.

churches contributed to a re-formatting of the physical and political territory of the US. In the arduous effort to build their churches, freedmen confronted bureaucratic obstacles and racialized marginalization from the real estate market. In the process, they established an institution that vividly captures what George Lipsitz has referred to as a Black spatial imaginary that turns “segregation into congregation” (Lipsitz 2007: 14) (see Figure 15.5).

Ordering and Claiming Land in the Settler-State

Land politics are often described with terms such as ‘private property’ and ‘ownership’. The historical and present workings of land, however, require greater conceptual nuance, because property has always been tied to collective aspirations that transcend the individual capacity to ‘own’. The case of freedpeople in the US South demonstrates, too, that there is more than one way to understand and instrumentalize property. For these reasons, the entwinement of settling and unsettling is—perhaps more than the term ‘ownership’—a suitable framework to make sense of land-power. With ‘settlement’ comes the production of subjectivity, the spatial concept of territory, material infrastructures and processes of institutionalization. Seeing property through the lens of ‘settlement’ reveals its socio-spatial construction and the unequal privileges of land claiming. As an analytical framework for property, ‘settlement’ allows for a productive opening of the infrastructure behind the conventional narrative of ‘ownership’. And from this position, the freedmen’s church stands out as an inspiring reference point for making land claims beyond value extraction in the settler-colonial context.

In their struggle to settle, there is no reason to believe that freedpeople were disinterested in the financial utility and legal stability that Euro-American landholders benefited from. Freedpeople and their descendants considered land tenure a starting point for self-determination. Indeed, many individual freedmen obtained Fee Simple titles in Afro-American towns known as settlements, including nearby Arcola, Kendleton and Houston Freedmen's Town. Many freedmen congregations, too, secured Fee Simple title in later decades. These are important achievements in the Black land struggle, and the ways in which this kind of settlement differs, ethically and practically, from the settler-colonial norms deserves further consideration.

Importantly, however, the Black church is strong evidence of freedpeople's discontentment with the principles of exchangeability and individualism. The glimpses of freedmen collectivity observed in homesteading were quickly suppressed by the government, yet these counter-routines emerged yet again, and in greater force, on church grounds across the South. The Reverter Clause expressly limited the use of land to worship purposes and this tenuous form of settlement might explain the central role of the church in Afro-American culture. Still, the freedmen's church is an expression of Black spatial imaginary applicable to wider, secular uses, too. In the current context of the US, and elsewhere, white supremacist exchange-oriented property possession has enabled displacement and unsettlement, much more than emplacement and social investment. Individual landholders around Saint John have successively flipped their lots in response to exchange-value imperatives over the decades, yet the church remains steadfast in its position: land possession and community welfare are indistinguishable. Black land struggle offers a vanguard example of collective landholding that thrives in use-oriented sites, which offer little direct wealth but a significant source of belonging and refuge.

The history of Fort Bend County and the freedmen churches shows that critical spatial practice cannot afford to be concerned strictly with the design of buildings and their immediate surroundings. The evolution of property there, and in the US in general, shows that the qualification and design of the ground is a key political act. This history poses several questions to spatial practitioners: what power charges any given plot of land? How can spatial intervention contend with those politics? How might a spatial order based on use-value operate? What subjectivities can emerge in the wake of the landholder? For practitioners interested in unsettling the status quo, such questions are critical, even if they initially reveal the extent to which architects' current agency is circumscribed by routines of purchase and value extraction. A program of alternative politics must consider the land infrastructure through its various dimensions: deeds and laws, rights and obligations, exchange- and use-values, lot geometries, cultural values, earthly life, etc. Only through such stocktaking can spatial practitioners, in coordination with participants of the property institution, aim toward relations that uphold possession through use, such as those enacted by Afro-Americans over the past century and a half. The endurance of Black fellowship is a prompt to rearticulate the spatial orders of property and forge new routines of belonging.

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PART III

Urban Contestations



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16

URBAN CONTESTATIONS

An Introduction

Elina Kränzle and Nikolai Roskamm

Cities are concentrations of both material and social relationships. Their consolidation in urban densities also creates inequalities and contradictions and can bring conflicts to the surface. In critical urban research (Roy 2016; Brenner 2009), the city and the urban have always been defined as spaces of conflict and as places of resistant, unsettling and insurgent practices. The urban, as such an approach might suggest, is constituted in conflict. From this perspective, urban contestations are urban constitutions. They are the very stuff cities are made of and that are continuously made in the city.

Approaching the city through the concepts of conflict and contestation is primarily a legacy of Marxist thought. In the 19th century, the fields of city and contestation were brought together and interwoven in specific ways. In his early text on the *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), Friedrich Engels passionately and vividly describes the social conditions in working-class towns in England. He describes the economic and everyday hardships of the proletariat and analyses the realities of workers' lives using statistics, tables and even urban planning sketches. Engels is outraged by the social situation he witnesses in cities. Primarily concerned with the starting point for the social struggles of his time, he perceives the city as the place where social movements are formed. Engels explicates the revolutionary potential of the urban industrial reserve army and analyses the consequences of the permanent violence that manifests itself structurally in the cities. He does attribute a political quality to organized and targeted acts of resistance. For him, the spontaneous and oft-perceived aimlessness of urban forms of violence also has something subversive: the proletariat is being fought against by the bourgeoisie and fights back (1845: 88). The capitalist city of modernity is founded in this combat.

The specific urban conditions Engels argues within his text are focused on the English working-class cities, such as Liverpool or Manchester. In his analysis,

he mixes classical urbanist thinking, which is oriented toward urban conditions and conditionalities, with a theory of revolution that identifies such conditions as forms of structural violence. On the one hand, Engels clearly borrows from the contemporary narrative, especially in conservative circles, in which the city is biologically conceived as a body that can be healthy or sick. It is precisely this narrative which will serve as the basis for orthodox urban discourse's conception of urban pathologies in the 19th and 20th centuries (Foucault 2008). On the other hand, the idea of class struggle and the hope for the proletariat expand Engels' urban image and save it from deterministic and reductionist closure. For Engels, too, the city is seriously ill and needs to be cured. The cure he wants to give the cities, however, is not an urban planning or town planning cure, but a cure that takes place through confrontation, revolt and insurrection.

Engels sees the city as a place of revolution, a site of conflict, a haven for urban uprisings and deviant behavior. For him, urban conflicts are part of the solution and not part of the problem. Such a solution, however, only becomes possible through urbanity itself. Because of the proximity established by centralization, workers begin to feel as a class in their totality, they become aware that though weak individually, together they have power. This process arises *in* and *through* the city:

The great cities are the birthplaces of labour movements; in them the workers first began to reflect upon their own condition, and to struggle against it; in them the opposition between proletariat and bourgeoisie first made itself manifest; (...) Without the great cities and their forcing influence upon the popular intelligence, the working-class would be far less advanced than it is.

(Engels 1845: 120)

A turn to the city is also found in Karl Marx's work. The discussion of historical materialism and urban circumstances belong together for Marx, since the city is a material precondition of ideology and thus part of the basis underlying all history. Marx uses the city primarily as a category and result of his historical analysis of the division of labor and, like Engels, sees it as the place of origin of the urban proletariat. He draws a complex picture of the power structure forming in the pre- and early-capitalist city, which, guided by different interests, produces manifold inclusions and exclusions. Marx's diagnosis is that the 'urban rabble' was too powerless and on the other hand the journeymen and apprentices of the economy, which was still primarily organized as a craft, were too integrated into their "contented, slavish relationship" (Engels and Marx 1970 [1846]: 41). Only through industrialization and the accompanying progressive alienation of labor would the conditions have become so uncomfortable, the number of the 'rabble' so much greater and the supposedly harmonious structure so disturbed that a revolutionary proletariat could form in the cities. In this story, too, the decisive historical step comes in the form of urban contestations.

The connection between the city and contestation, which is often touched upon and often seen only implicit in Marx and Engels, is developed into a theoretical model in Henri Lefebvre's post-Marxist urban theory. Lefebvre develops his theory with a passage through the texts of Marx and Engels and with an exploration of the role that the city plays in them. In a sense, the lack of such an elaboration of the socialist founding fathers means that Lefebvre (2016 [1992]) must conceive the 'Marxist thought and the city'—the title of one of his books about the urban—himself. He evaluates and discusses a Marxian concept of the city in and with his explicit analysis and thereby brings it to light.

Lefebvre unfolds his approach by first placing the city in the context of Marx's perspective proper, that is, by thinking of it within the framework of the critique of political economy. Lefebvre (2016: 91) writes that "the bourgeoisie invented political economy; it is its condition, its means of action, its ideological and scientific milieu" and therefore it (the bourgeoisie) should be attacked precisely in this field. However, such an approach required "courage" and—"like every combat on enemy territory"—it also harbored specific dangers (*ibid.*). Lefebvre thus alludes critically to the two basic evils of Marxist dogmatism that he has repeatedly highlighted: empiricism and economism. The city, that is Lefebvre's actual thesis, could help prevent the critique of political economy from degenerating into economism and the view of the "conditions of existence that can be empirically determined" (*ibid.*: 27) from degenerating into empiricism. Lefebvre's thesis is that the city is not only the empirical or real core of Marxist thought, but above all that the city—as a theme, as a *problematique*—can save Marxian thought from stagnation and keep it alive by importing its own complexity and heterogeneity.

The concept of the city, which is found at the bottom of Marxian thought, finds in Lefebvre's version a rich offer of possibilities for further thinking, especially for urban research that is interested in the states and processes of the unsettled. This is concretely related to the city as a place or entity—the host of class struggle. Lefebvre (2016: 145) puts it this way in his summary:

For both authors [Marx and Engels] this incessant combat had its origin in production, its basis in economic reality, its motives in its demands, its active support in the working class. And yet, the class struggle occurs in the city.

The city is the site of struggle and contestation—Lefebvre, Marx and Engels can agree on this. This approach has become something like the common ground for the field of critical urban research.

In current contributions to critical urban studies, the themes of 'conflict' and 'struggle' continue to be central. Urban contestations themselves are at the center of many studies and research in this field. In the context of economic crisis and politics of austerity (Benach 2015), counter-movements and civic protests, such as Occupy (Hurwitz 2020) and Indignados (Ancelovici et al. 2016),

as well as right-to-the-city movements, loudly voiced their discontent with the current political and economic system and demanded radical democratic alternatives. Recent anthologies in critical urban studies (Ward et al. 2018; Hou and Knierbein 2017; Brenner et al. 2012) might create the impression that the field itself can be identified as a contestation; a contestation of more orthodox or mainstream analysis of urban development, that is grounded in a concern for social justice. This concern, in turn, is based on a critique of neoliberalism and its repercussions for urban politics and urban life, and may lead to envisioning a “radical [...] alternative to the dismal, destructive status quo of worldwide capitalist urbanization” (Brenner et al. 2012: 9).

Such thinking of urban contestation is complemented by approaches from political theory in which the themes of conflict, contingency and antagonism are foregrounded. For example, the debate on the post-political city (Swyngedouw 2007) draws on Ernesto Laclau’s (1990) theory of antagonism, among others. An extension of this thinking consists in the fact that the concept of ‘conflict’ takes on an ontological/hauntological role (Derrida 1994) in a post-foundational urban theory (Heindl 2020). Such social-theoretical foundations of the urban, however, are not firm and stable foundations, but precarious and contested matters of dispute (Landau et al. 2021). They form a shaky stage from which critical-reflexive thinking about the city can begin, for example: about the question of the materiality of the city (its materiality, its matter); about what it excludes and what emerges anew through this exclusion; about its thing-like and ghostly essence and set pieces; about current forms of spatialization and dislocation. Common ground of all these approaches is to describe the city as a condensation of conflicts, opposites and antagonisms.

The settlement of the city is the result of hegemonic efforts. In an approach in which urban conflicts are seen as defining elements, urban social movements, which have traditionally been of great importance for urban studies, are at the center. The right-to-the-city activists draw attention in their actions not least to the fact that the lines of conflict have become differentiated and multiplied (Hardt and Negri 2004). Multiple and small-scale urban lines of conflict have emerged from large-scale systemic struggles, from which the urban is composed, constructed and destroyed. The “social movements actualise antagonism” (Marchart 2013: 410) and they prefer to do so in the urban context. This is why movement research is important for understanding the city. The city can preferably be grasped through its lines of conflict, through an approach that is able to recognize and explicate the constitutive antagonistic element. Urban appropriation efforts—in the form of organized urban movements, but also in the form of everyday ‘desubjugation’ (Butler 2002) in the context of the city—move to the center of attention for an analysis of different forms of urban contestation.

This brings us to the six contributions we have gathered in the section. All of them are connected to the theme of urban contestations in one way or another. All of them bring together the complexity and heterogeneity of specific urban sites of contestations with larger questions of conditions, processes and outcomes of political and social struggle.

María de la Paz Toscani, Paula Rosa and Regina Vidosa write in their Chapter 17 “‘Ni Una Menos’: Practices, Aims and Achievements of a Grassroots Women’s Movement against Femicide and Patriarchal Relations in Argentina” about a collective in Argentina that resists femicides and patriarchal relations. The actions emerged in 2015 to raise the visibility of the femicide issue that was occurring in the country for decades, violence that most often occurs behind the veils of private spaces. The authors write that the activist collective succeeded in bundling and making visible the historical claims of the Argentine feminist movement through its actions and with its presence in public space. The chapter analyses the way in which the collective challenges traditional gender concepts and practices in Argentina’s society, and also presents how the actions carried out by the collective have been able to institutionalize many of the demands of the feminist movement.

In Chapter 18 ‘Setting, *Setzung*, Sedimentation: Political Conflict and Radical Democracy in Urban Planning’, Gabu Heindl concretizes the attempt to bring urban planning into conversation with a post-foundational theory. In this theory, the concept of contingency refers to the always precarious character of social order, yet also to the necessity of founding ever new acts of social order(s). This leads, not least, to the fact that these efforts get into new disputes. Heindl uses the German term *Setzung* for her conception which can mean different things: Positioning and placement, settlement and deposition, the submission of a planning proposal or even the solidification of an issue in a law. According to Heindl’s thesis, explicit positioning is currently particularly important in democratic struggles over public space.

Based on a post-foundational approach, in Chapter 19, ‘(Un)Settling Urban Cultural Politics: New York’s *People’s Cultural Plan* and the Dislocation of Ghosts’, Friederike Landau deals with recent contestations of urban cultural politics. She analyses how the strategic cultural plan by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, which aimed at fostering cultural production, was contested by self-organized cultural producers with their own *People’s Cultural Plan*. While the city’s plan can be understood as an attempt at settling urban cultural politics, the counter-plan openly unsettled and destabilized it, making visible the inequities affecting cultural production which were previously obscured by the generalizations of the official plan.

Nanke Verloo’s contribution ‘From Dispute, to Controversy, to Crisis: Conceptualizing Unsettling Dynamics in The Hague’ (Chapter 20) traces the escalation of an urban conflict about exclusion from public space. Conceptualizing the dynamics of the conflict as a dialectic of settling and unsettling at the street-level, the author shifts the focus of her analysis from the violent outbreak of youth riots and the police intervention itself to practices of everyday violence by the state, professionals and citizens alike in the aftermath of the closing of a community center. Verloo identifies the often-unattended everyday practices of exclusion and domination as the foundation of an open and physically violent conflict. Her analysis and further insights from research on youth riots offer a deeper understanding of violent urban contestations over the access to public space.

In ‘Served but Unsettled: The Contentious Side of Services for the Homeless’ (Chapter 21), Massimo Bricocoli and Simon Güntner shed light on welfare spaces in Europe by focusing on accommodation and support for the homeless in shelters in Hamburg and Milan. While shelters are crucial for day-to-day survival, these welfare spaces also represent ambiguous sites of stigmatization and exclusion. The authors address caring for the poor as contentious, where places designed as sanctuaries can easily be experienced as sites of bordering, ordering and othering due to the various constraints local care provision is confronted with.

Sophie Watson’s chapter on ‘The Challenges of Consensus, Conflict and Democratic Participation in Turbulent Waters’ (Chapter 22) deals with difference and diversity shaping cities and the contestations this leads to. These reflections are illustrated by the case of the Hampstead Ladies Pond in North London. In 2018, the dispute over the presence of transgender women at the ponds unsettled their previously harmonious shared use, with some women welcoming transgender women to the pools, others loudly objecting their access. The conflict and the way the conflict was resolved depict that belonging and inclusion are always contingent and subject to power relations, a dynamic of settling and unsettling of common spaces in changing contexts inevitable.

Overall, the section makes the city visible as a place of conflict and contestation, constantly entering unsettled relations with its institutional form, which, in turn, is the very breeding ground for unsettling. Contestations thus are not just an urban constitution, but a constitution of the unsettled.

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17

'NI UNA MENOS'

Practices, Aims and Achievements of a Grassroots Women's Movement against Femicide and Patriarchal Relations in Argentina

María de la Paz Toscani, Paula Rosa and Regina Vidosa

Introduction

This chapter explores the actions of *#NiUnaMenos* ['Not One (Woman) Less', hereinafter *#NUM*] a grassroots women's movement that emerged in 2015 in Argentina to raise awareness regarding femicide, an issue that has plagued the country for decades. The recent emergence of *#NUM* has reenergized Argentine feminism, by synthesizing and increasing the visibility of some of the movement's historic claims, specifically through tactics of mass mobilization. *#NUM* can be interpreted as a set of unsettling practices that question traditional conceptions of gender and existing power structures, allowing new spaces of struggle to emerge. Emphasis will be placed on these 'unsettling practices' of *#NUM* in order to give an account of the movement's aims and achievements in generating institutional changes that have the potential to foster women's rights and build a more egalitarian social order.

This chapter draws on a qualitative analysis of the vision and action of *#NUM*, based on the analysis of documents published by movement organizers, as well as observations of marches and demonstrations in Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. This is complemented by an analysis of newspaper articles and reports prepared by public and private institutions. A sociological perspective on femicide, the social context of patriarchal society and the culture of machismo is first presented, followed by an analysis of *#NUM*'s practices—forms of expression in the public sphere, on social media and on the streets—and its aims regarding the institutionalization of its claims.

Femicide: The Fatal Consequence of Systemic Violence against Women

The term 'femicide' was first used by Diana Russell at the International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Brussels in 1976. It refers to the misogynist killing

of women committed by men, motivated by hatred, contempt, pleasure or a sense of ownership over women (Radford and Russell 1992). This terminology replaces purportedly neutral terms such as homicide or murder, dismantling arguments that gender-based violence is a personal or private matter, and instead emphasizes the systemic nature of violence against women. Femicide is social and political in nature, intertwined with asymmetrical power relations, domination, privilege and essentially results from the men's prevailing sense of ownership over women (Fernández 2012).

According to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC 2018: 10), an upward trend in femicides can be observed worldwide. In 2017, of the 87,000 women who were murdered, 58% were killed by intimate partners or family members, while in 2012, this figure was estimated at 47%. In Argentina, rates of violence against women are similarly alarming. Fabiana Túnnez, founder of the *Observatorio de Femicidios Adriana Marisel Zambrano* ['Adriana Marisel Zambrano Observatory on Femicides'], points out that although Argentina has "good legislation" on the matter, it has the fifth-highest rates of femicide in Latin America (Túnnez 2015). Between 2008 and 2017, the Observatory registered 2679 women and girls that fell victim to femicide. In more than 62% of the cases, the victims were killed by their current or former partners, and more than 51% of the murders occurred in the victim's home (La Casa del Encuentro 2018, cited in Widgor and Udovicich 2018).

According to study published by the National Ministry of Health (Fernández et al. 2010), which analyzed brief statements made by confessed killers that had been published in newspapers, the reasons for committing femicide included alleged infidelity, fear that the women intended to leave them, that they felt humiliated by the women's contemptuous treatment or insults, that the women did not show them obedience, or that the women rejected them sexually or did not meet their needs adequately. The men understood their actions as a function of sexual ownership and masculine dominance (Radford and Russell 1992). Rita Segato (2013) recognizes gender-based violence—particularly rape and femicide—as acts committed in a social context, never individually, which intend to publicly demonstrate that women belong to men. Such violence works to reproduce the social order and power relations between genders, particularly when they appear even moderately threatened.

However, Ana Maria Fernández (2012) points out, the characteristics of femicide are also changing. Early studies on gender-based violence showed that women's death at the hands of their partners tended to be the fatal culmination of many years of violence. Although this form of femicide still exists, it is increasingly common for women to be killed by boyfriends, lovers or ex-partners with whom they had relationships of only a few years or months. Such violence is no longer confined to extensive relationships or to specific social classes, but becoming a more general phenomenon. Fernández (2012) suggests that the large number of murdered young women—women with personal aspirations and career goals of their own, and the potential to fulfill them—may be related to the

increasing participation of women in positions of power and the advancement of women's rights and attendant perceived threat to male supremacy.

The Origin of #NUM: 'One Expression, Millions of Reasons'

Ni una menos, vivas nos queremos ['Not one less, we want us alive'] is a slogan that gave its name to the grassroots Women's Movement #NUM. The slogan comes from the expression *Ni una menos, ni una muerta más* ['Not one woman less, not one more woman killed'], popularized by Susana Chávez Castillo, a Mexican poet and activist murdered in 2011 for reporting crimes against women. She coined this phrase in 1995 to take to the streets in protest, which became a symbol of the fight against systematic femicides in Ciudad Juárez in northern Mexico. In Argentina, #NUM emerged on 11 May 2015, with a tweet by a journalist commenting on a news story about the femicide of a 14-year-old pregnant teenager who had been stabbed, beaten and buried by her boyfriend. On her social media account, the journalist expressed: *Actresses, politicians, artists, businesswomen, social leaders... well, all of us women... Aren't we going to raise our voice? THEY ARE KILLING US*. Only a few minutes later, another journalist and television host answered: *I think it's time for women leaders to call for a mega-march. I don't know if it will help, but it would bring visibility*. Soon after, these journalists met with nine of their colleagues, and together with artists and activists, they put out a call to mobilize on social media. Their call to action spread rapidly and was supported by celebrities, sports figures, academics and politicians, who all began to post pictures holding signs that read #NiUnaMenos.

Organizers argued that the rapid spread of this message and the attention it received by society at large had to do with the staggering number of femicides that had occurred over such a short period of time and the increased gruesomeness of those deaths.¹ A few days later, on 3 June, massive mobilizations took place in 80 cities around Argentina, which came to be known as *Ni una menos* protests. More than 200,000 people participated—mainly women—with banners that read: 'They are killing us! Aren't we going to do anything?'; 'Not one less, we want us alive'; 'The revolution will be feminist or it will be nothing' (see Figure 17.1); 'The state is responsible'. Graffiti, street performances (see Figure 17.2), speeches and chants occurred at the protest, and many donned allegorical clothing and make-up representing violence suffered by women.

Consistent with Romina Accossatto and Mariana Sendra's (2018) analysis of the #NUM movement and its use of technology, it can be argued that the hashtag #NiUnaMenos is now collective property, given that it can be used by any person who identifies with this message to join the cause and speak out against gender violence. Therefore, it has taken shape as a truly open form of activism. In this sense, "the fact that people have come to the movement despite having no background in activism is one of its defining characteristics [...] it cuts across the lines between feminist organizations, women's movements, and political organizations" (Accossatto and Sendra 2018: 128, own translation). Thought of in this way, #NUM belongs to everyone and it belongs to no one. In the words of Cecilia Palmeiro, one of its organizers:



FIGURE 17.1 'The revolution will be feminist or it will be nothing'.

Source: Lucía De Armas Volpi, 2018.



FIGURE 17.2 Performance representing a clandestine abortion.

Source: Lucía De Armas Volpi, 2018.

Anyone can say what *NUM* is and what it's becoming; anyone, even if they haven't had any experience with it at all. It's something that you can really take ownership of, and that's the best thing about it. *NUMs* isn't just our organizing space, its open character is not dissimilar to Anonymous, a pseudonym used throughout the world by different groups and individuals for organizing actions or publishing collective or individual statements. These are the forms of direct action in the digital age.

(Diaz and Lopez 2016: 33 cited in Accossatto and Sendra 2018: 129, own translation)

The use of communication technologies, especially social media, have been a key aspect of the movement since its inception, as well as its internal structuring and coordination. This has allowed for a less rigid structure and more horizontal decision-making and communication processes, as the use of social networks has “made it possible to establish more fluid and short-term ties, based on looser and less structured organizational relationships” (Accossatto and Sendra 2018: 129, own translation).

Nonetheless, although social media have been crucial in popularizing #NUM in recent years, it is important to contextualize the genesis of this movement, as the current moment is the result of long processes of social struggle. As organizers have stated in their Charter (Ni Una Menos 2017), they are building on three decades of successive *Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres*² [ENM, ‘National Women’s Meetings’] and the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion. These two movements have had the effect of articulating and amplifying the demands of several diverse organizations, while simultaneously helping to insert their concerns into legislative and policy agendas (Gradin 2017: 3). Additionally, #NUM organizers see their struggles reflected in the

Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo, in the LGBTQI movement, in women who organized themselves in trade unions and in pickets, in migrant, indigenous, and Afro-descendant women, and in the long history of struggles for the expansion of rights.

(ibid.: 1, own translation)

They recognize a degree of cooperation with other women’s collectives with whom they share common objectives but retain their autonomy. So, they contend that they are “a movement that has developed at a distance from the state, political parties, companies, and powerful economic actors” (*ibid.*: 3, own translation). Additionally, due to its feminist orientation, the discourse of #NUM is built on a critique of patriarchal society and the traditional roles of men and women, both in the spheres of production and social reproduction, where the former is privileged over the latter. These critiques attempt to question the roles assigned to women in different spheres of society. In the workplace, for example, they call attention to the fact that senior positions are mostly held by men, and women usually get paid a lower salary for the same position. In the home, they question the role traditionally assigned to women as the primary caretaker of children and the person in charge of household chores and recognize that such tasks are unpaid labor. At the same time, they seek to transcend the male–female dichotomy by advocating for, including the issues affecting trans and nonbinary individuals in their claims for equality.

Women’s Voices: ‘A Collective Cry against Male Violence’³

The #NUM movement engages in ‘unsettling practices’ to destabilize the current social order that poses a threat to women’s lives, and it has achieved early

successes in strengthening women's rights. Following Chantal Mouffe (2009), it is possible to reflect on the practices of #NUM as 'agonistic practices' insofar as they challenge the predominant social order and scrutinize its patriarchal nature. In agonistic forms of dissent, adversaries recognize the legitimacy of their opponents, and conflict is channeled through institutions. It is, in short, a struggle for hegemony (Mouffe 2010).

Nonetheless, antagonisms form the basis of politics and actually produce the hard lines of conflict. According to Mouffe (2002: 615), this term is still relevant, as "it is enough to look around us in the real world to realize that, far from having disappeared, supposedly 'archaic' passions and antagonisms are more active than ever". A social order governed by a patriarchal logic creates inequalities and exclusions in society based on gender. However, gender inequality and violence against women create tensions in society that provide sufficient conditions for the activation of antagonisms and the emergence of collective actors and agonistic practices. In this context, #NUM deploys a set of 'agonistic practices' that disrupt the established order, combining a discursive framework that acts as a common binding identity, and with the occupation of public space as a driving force, calling attention to antagonisms surrounding gender inequalities. It is critical to construct discourses that represent these forms of exclusion and violence in order to give new meaning to situations, which had previously been naturalized. To that end, #NUM has attempted to shed light on an issue that until recently in Argentina had remained obscured by the privacy of the household. In other words, the private sphere of the family determined whether it should be addressed. From this new perspective, "femicide is not a private matter, but is the result of social and cultural violence that is legitimized by public and media discourses" (Ni Una Menos 2015, own translation).

In response, #NUM organizers and participants have built a repertoire of practices that have allowed them to bring visibility to their demands and put their issues on the national agenda and transcend familial compartmentalization of these issues. In answering the call to action represented by #NUM, women took to the streets and spoke out through diverse actions: mass demonstrations, street blockades, public debates, interviews and articles in mass media, campaigns on social media and so on. This not only opened discussions on the role of women in society but also demonstrated the political capacity of their demands and manifestations in the public sphere, whether in the streets or on social media.

All of these specific strategies and resources can be thought of in terms of what Charles Tilly (1978) defined as repertoires of collective action, which involve different expressions and modes of action in the public sphere: through demonstrations, graffiti and artistic expressions that impinge on the daily routines of urban public space. One of the most culturally relevant of these artistic representations was a public performance that drew inspiration from the phrase 'femicide is genocide'. The performance consisted of a staging in which many women took off their clothes and threw themselves to the ground one on top of the other. This sought to create a visually impactful representation of the number

of deaths that occur because of femicide. The staging also had the purpose of denaturalizing the word ‘femicide’, filling it with content and calling attention to what it really implies. Demonstrations like these take place on specific dates—such as the 8 March International Women’s Strikes and 25 November International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women—as well as others more specific to Argentina, which are related to concrete demands (e.g., those presented in Figure 17.4). The frequency of these demonstrations also depends on the political climate and on the perceived need to take to the streets in order to express a particular demand or to protest an injustice. These actions are buttressed through the use of social media, where hashtags like *#AbortoLegalYa* [‘Legal Abortion Now’] and *#ParoDeMujeres* [‘Women’s Strike’] are used to amplify messages, to call on the support of society at large and to mobilize people to mass protests and demonstrations. In this regard, Accossatto and Sendra (2018: 126) conclude that “acts of protest emerge and become truly massive on social media, but the greater goal is that of a classical protest repertoire: mass mobilization and demonstrations in public space”.

Manuel Castells has pointed out, that “the occupation of urban space is loaded with symbolism. Not just any space is occupied, but the squares that constitute the heart of the city” (2014: 62, own translation). This is true of *#NUM*, as demonstrations are held in central city squares across the country, and increasingly throughout Latin America as its agenda spreads throughout the region. In Buenos Aires, these mass mobilizations link two symbolically charged locations: the *Plaza del Congreso* and the *Plaza de Mayo*.⁴ The former is located opposite the National Congress, and the latter lies between the *Casa Rosada* (the presidential palace) and Buenos Aires City Hall, where the national and local executive branches are based. *#NUM* protests draw massive attendance, bringing a multigenerational group of women into the streets. Additionally, the infrequency of disturbances at these marches has enabled the observed presence of small children. These demonstrations completely transform urban space, altering the daily dynamics and temporalities of that space, along with its everyday rhythm and functionality.

These demonstrations act as “devices for embodying identities usually invisible in public life” (Delgado 2017: 10, own translation), allowing for the construction of a collective identity that transcends the potential of individual action (Rodríguez Saldaña 2010). For *#NUM*, mobilization means building safety nets for women. This implies “a robust political activism that assures women that they are not alone and that it is not their fault. So that cry proclaiming ‘ENOUGH’, which can finally be said aloud, is held through time” (Ni Una Menos 2015, own translation). The act of mobilizing also becomes a “fight for the right to speak, and the demonstration functions as a conquest of the spoken word” (Delgado 2017: 13, own translation). In this way, a part of the repertoire of action employed by *#NUM* in public demonstrations includes broadly audible experiences that bring the movement’s slogans to life. The content of these slogans and the way in which they are chanted construct an image that demonstrators wish to project and are intended to embody the objectives of the mobilization (Rodríguez Saldaña,

2010). The constant appeal to phrases like *No nos callamos más* ['We won't be silent anymore'] and *Levanta tu voz* ['Raise Your Voice'] on banners and even written on the bodies of protestors reveals the centrality given to the voice of this collective act in expressing certain issues that were previously silenced in the domestic realm and unspeakable in the public arena. Likewise, slogans such as *Ni soy histérica, ni estoy menstruando, grito porque nos están asesinando* ['I'm not hysterical and I'm not menstruating, I'm shouting because they are killing us'] and *Somos el grito de las que ya no tienen voz* ['We shout for those who no longer have a voice'] combat common sexist trivializations of protesters' anger and evoke the victims of femicide in public memory. Similarly, the following posters (see Figures 17.3 and 17.4) are representative of how demonstrators put into words the act of questioning social relations that reproduce gender inequalities.

It is clear that the public sphere is thus presented as a site of conflict and contestation, where 'unsettling practices' express the tension between the hegemonic and agonistic dimensions of discursive and spatial spheres and intend to disrupt the day-to-day dynamics and temporalities that reproduce the established order. Over the years, the #NUM movement has challenged the limitations imposed on women by the social order through concrete actions and has succeeded in institutionalizing their demands at the legislative and institutional level (see Figure 17.5).

NUM as Unsettling Practice

#NUM can be understood as a set of 'unsettling practices' in at least two regards. First, the movement sheds light on inequalities inherent in the status quo regarding the role of women in Argentine society. The demands and tactics



FIGURE 17.3 Teenagers marching: 'I wasn't born a woman to die for being one' and 'In a femicidal state, being alive is a rebellion'.

Source: Lucía De Armas Volpi, 2018.



FIGURE 17.4 Banner at a demonstration: ‘They fear the power that emanates from my mouth’ and ‘Neither the church nor the state decides over my body’.

Source: Lucía De Armas Volpi, 2018.

associated with the movement attempt to deconstruct hegemonic discourses that intend to control and regulate women’s bodies and subjectivities. From an antagonistic position, the movement deploys multiple repertoires of action that question the established order, both on social media—utilizing hashtags, circulating information pertaining to systemic injustices—and in the streets, by using audiovisual resources, reconfiguring the spaces and temporalities of representation in historic spaces that symbolize different struggles and social movements. Second, #NUM has opened a field of action that has succeeded in gradually modifying the current social order. In this regard, it should be noted that the use of audiovisual materials enabled the movement’s messages to reach mass media and have a greater impact in society. According to Pamela Oliver and Daniel Myers (1999), one of the main goals of public events is to draw the attention of mass media, which allow people to communicate beyond their immediate social circles.

Despite everything that organizers have achieved thus far, the movement still has a long way to go in attaining its goals. Femicides remain high in Argentina, where “a woman is murdered every 12 hours” (Infobae 2020). Several issues are still pending, such as the implementation of the Gender Identity Law, comprehensive legislation attending to the situation of trans people, the effective enforcement of the ‘Humanized Childbirth’ Law in every healthcare facility, the passage of the Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy Bill, and increased budget allocations to deal with the issue of violence against women, among others. Although these issues are related to specific claims of Argentine feminism, as summarized by a chant often heard at #NUM marches, this is just the beginning of the journey, and the appropriation of these claims by new generations of women allow these ‘unsettling practices’ to transcend further into larger sectors of society:

YEAR	AIM	DESCRIPTION
2015	INCREASE IN REPORTS TO VICTIM HELPLINE	Helpline 144, which receives calls from victims from all over the country, went from having 1000 queries per day to 13,700. In Buenos Aires, there was a 300% increase in calls to the helpline.
2015	CREATION OF UNIFIED REGISTRY OF OFFICIAL DATA ON FEMICIDE	The National Supreme Court of Justice launched an official unified registry of data on femicides.
2015	CREATION OF THE BODY OF LAWYERS FOR VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (LAW N° 27,210)	They have the role of providing free legal counsel for victims of gender-based violence, offering technical training and education, formulating legislative recommendations, etc.
2015	CREATION OF A SPECIAL PROSECUTORIAL UNIT ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	The City of Buenos Aires creates a specialized unit to process cases of violence against women and train public officials, employees of prosecutor's offices and police stations, on gender issues in crime and equip them with the tools to intervene.
2016	NATIONAL ACTION PLAN 2017-2019	The 'National Institute for Women' [<i>Instituto Nacional de la Mujer</i> , INAM] introduces the National Action Plan [<i>Plan Nacional de Acción</i> , PNA], which receives a specific budgetary allocation. The principal measure proposed is the creation of shelters for women who are victims of gender-based violence.
2016	CREATION OF THE OBSERVATORY ON FEMICIDES	Created by the National Ombudsman, it makes it possible to cross-reference information with the Undersecretariat of Criminal Statistics. It also enables the creation of an integrated database, making it possible to determine the total number of femicide victims in Argentina from 2017 onwards.
2017	APPROVAL OF LAW N. 5861	Creates a system of financial compensation for boys, girls and adolescents up to age 21 whose father—biological or adoptive—has been prosecuted or convicted as perpetrator, co-perpetrator, or accomplice for the femicide of their mother.
2017	APPROVAL OF LAW N. 27,412	Establishes gender parity in electoral lists for National Congress (deputies and senators) and Mercosur Parliament. Lists must alternate between men and women, from principals to substitutes.
2018	APPROVAL OF NATIONAL LAW N.º 27,499	Establishes mandatory training on gender and violence against women for all public employees in all branches of government.
2018	PRESENTATION OF THE BILL FOR THE RIGHT TO LEGAL, SAFE, AND FREE ABORTION	The bill drafted by the organizations that make up the National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion was presented for the first time in 2007 and underwent numerous modifications year after year without passing in Congress. In 2018, the bill reached the floor of Congress for the first time and was passed by the Chamber of Deputies, but not by the Senate.
2019/20	CREATION OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN, GENDER, AND DIVERSITY	The first national agency with ministerial rank dealing with issues of gender, whose primary aim is to work to put an end to inequalities and gender-based violence.

FIGURE 17.5 Aims and achievements of the #NUM.

Source: María de la Paz Toscani, Paula Rosa and Regina Vidosa, 2021.

We affirm our right to say NO to what we do not want: a partner, a pregnancy, a sexual encounter, a predetermined way of life. We affirm our right to say NO to the social mandates of submission and obedience. And because we say NO, we can say YES to our own decisions about our bodies, our emotional lives, our sexuality, our participation in society, at work, in politics, and everywhere.

(*Ni Una Menos 2015, own translation*)

Notes

- 1 The national total of gender-based homicides reached 286 on 2015 (Elizalde 2018).
- 2 Held once a year in Argentina, these meetings are described as federal, grassroots, self-financed and horizontally managed spaces. They do not belong to any specific political party, but are nourished by the involvement of women from different institutional backgrounds. From there, they provide a space to discuss issues and concerns, construct common objectives and outline courses of action to achieve them.
- 3 Carta Orgánica. *Ni Una Menos* (Ni Una Menos 2017, own translation).
- 4 This one is known as the site of the demonstrations held by the Grandmothers and Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who marched in order to demand the appearance of their children and grandchildren who were ‘disappeared’ during Argentina’s military dictatorship, demonstrations that continue to this day.

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18

SETTING, *SETZUNG*, SEDIMENTATION

Political Conflict and Radical Democracy in Urban Planning

Gabu Heindl

This chapter aims to unfold the concept of ‘setting-in-dispute’ within a post-foundational understanding of the practice and theory of planning. Explicit *settings* in democratic struggles over public space become especially important in times when hegemonic power is itself unsettling in the sense of the general loss of welfare-state securities and—closer to the field of planning—of liberalizing urban development for financialization. Rather than avoiding contestation, planning propositions as explicit *settings* remain open to conflict and to dispute and they can act as a means for articulating dissensus.

Among the several contemporary approaches to planning theory, the two predominant tendencies stand out as conceptually and politically opposed to each other. First, we are confronted with the current hegemony of the communicative and collaborative paradigm in planning, informed by Jürgen Habermas’ theory of deliberation and “grounded in interest-based negotiation and mediation” (Innes 2004: 5). The translation of this paradigm into a communicative planning agenda is—often in spite of its intentions—quite supportive of the neoliberal agenda of competition, growth, and, frequently, the privatization of public spaces and goods. As the logic of deliberation and participation rests on the shared aim of *consensus*, it logically gears toward reducing or incorporating dissensus, radical criticism or critique (Hillier 2003; Purcell 2009). Moreover, the hegemonic position of those who can take part in deliberation—those who have information, time and access to it or the respective position—is being reproduced: all too often, it is the position of white middle-classes in participatory processes and investing parties in cooperative planning processes (Arnstein 1969; Gabauer 2018). Secondly, the concept of agonistic pluralism, or ‘agonistic planning theory’ that is opposed to this paradigm, is based on Chantal Mouffe’s concept of agonism, which maintains that *conflict*, not exclusively physically violent, is to be accepted and to be enabled as something that can be acted out (within certain frameworks) rather

than being suppressed, in order to arrive at a shared public sphere (Mouffe 2013). Instead of being seen as the opposite of togetherness, conflict is what produces public spheres and, ultimately, societies.

By following the path of agonistic pluralism, this chapter focuses on agendas in planning public space that could be called ‘dissensus-friendly’. This involves a notion of planning as a somewhat paradoxical program: it involves planning as a contingent ‘setting’ [*Setzung*] in dispute. The German word *Setzung* is difficult to translate, generally meaning the context and disposition motivating one’s actions. *Setzung* is a practical and theoretical act of making valid or even bringing into existence. The word stems from the Latin word *ponere* for setting and placing, from which ‘position’ is also derived. What is essential for our purpose here is the position, which actors claim and mark in their *Setzung*, their setting, within planning politics. Any such claiming, any pointing toward a position, is always already undertaken *from* and *on* a certain position. With such a notion of positioning being always already there, not to be gotten rid of, we start to enter two tricky fields: the always stratified field, on which a confrontation of positions is carried out—and secondly the field of paradoxes that are put into play in post-foundational political theory.

Oliver Marchart’s (2010) conceptual cues regarding political and social theorizing look to the paradox of foundation or founding in post-foundational theory: We are never done with negotiating with foundations because there are no stable foundations in our society. Foundations—the actions as well as the objects produced by them—are seen as no secure guarantees from which anything would follow with necessity. Three notions about foundations follow from this bundle of theorems. One is the paradox according to which the impossibility of something entails its condition of possibility (Derrida 2006). If we unfold this deconstructive point with a political eye on society, this means: It is impossible to give societies an ultimate, stable, all-defining ground or basic order. If a society were once and forever totally founded, there would be no change in it, thus no history, no human collective life as we know it, thus ultimately no society. Society is impossible as something fully founded, and yet, there are societies, and there are always *some* basic orders and foundations, and as we know, they change in the course of time. This impossibility of a comprehensive foundation requires partial foundations—and also makes societies possible in the first place. Societies and social spaces are never entirely without order. The second notion concerns the fact that foundations are neither stable nor simply absent. Social foundations are *contingent*—and politics is the way of dealing with this very contingency. Contingency does not mean ‘accidental’ or ‘just any way we please’ or ‘doesn’t matter’. In conceptualizing society, and thus planning politics, we are far from saying that foundations are something that is there just by accident or that in social ordering and planning anything goes (or flows). Here is where we depart from any outright anti-fundamentalist approach, post-modernist playfulness or outright nihilism: It is not that in society everything is in total flux, or total dispersal; there is always some degree of stabilization and identification.

Foundations are contingent, which means: *They matter*. Social reality and its foundations could always be different because people or groups ‘do care’ and ‘do dispute’ and struggle and even fight about this. The third notion focuses on political understanding, where any foundation is ‘in dispute’. In German, I call it *strittig [im Streit]*. It is something arrived at in a *Setzung*, which is a *Durchsetzung*, a setting which is a ‘making-valid by pushing-through’ of a certain aim, of a certain form of order, against another form of order that has been advocated, struggled for by another group of society. Yet, these other voices, positioned propositions, *Setzungen* are not silenced forever, but there is always the possibility of a given ground, an existing order being disputed and contested again.

So, if it was stated that people are always already positioned, we can now complement this point with the following: A position is always in dispute, that is, is never done with the necessity of having to (re-)state a point. The act of positioning is open to contestation by others.

An architectural setting is positioned and propositional in that it embraces contingency—which is haunting it anyway: so architects and planners must confront it. Architectural *strittige Setzung* [setting-in-dispute] is not something that manifests, exerts, or presupposes any autonomy of the author or interiority of architecture. While it is clear that architects act as experts, not as anonymous beings in some existential ‘thrownness’, what is being aimed at here is understanding planning as *Setzung*: as contingent and in dispute. Far from being a reason to give up planning, this contingency and being-conditioned, its uncertainty and precariousness harbor chances. According to Jeremy Till (2009: 56), “[o]rder and certainty close down [as] contingency and uncertainty open up”. This is not a relativistic approach. What is necessary is, much rather, deliberately positioned, strong claims: “uncertainty demands to choose” (ibid.: 60). Instead of a playground of *anything goes*, we enter a field of productive tensions. “Because contingent choices are grounded in concrete reality, we are made to be aware of the effect of any decisions we come to” (ibid.: 60). This asks what decisions can be made at all—but also which decisions definitely *have to* be made. What can or cannot architecture determine, what shall and shall not architecture determine? Being contingency-conscious opens one’s eyes to the dependencies of architecture, but also for its powers and possibilities, however limited and compromised, and for the problematic terrain on which they are acted out in planning.

Much of the renewed opposition of politics as dissensus and post-political consensus has been owed to Jacques Rancière’s concept of radical democracy (see Dikeç 2005; Swyngedouw 2009). I want to take up only a few specific motifs and notions by Rancière specifically valuable to this chapter. One is the *sense* in dissensus, that is, the way in which political dispute emphasizes the sensory experience of social space, the issue of who can become perceptible in what role, whose voice is heard as a contribution and whose voice only counts as noise, what he labels the “distribution of the sensible” (Rancière 2004: 12). This also involves a question that is important to urban space: Whose space appears in what quality?—some people’s spaces of culturally rarified value and beauty,

while other people's spaces are seen as just gathering grounds for the many who are presumed to lack taste. Rancière also characterizes democracy as a negotiation of appearances: the "transgressive appearance of unauthorized speakers on the public stage" (ibid.: 18), of subjects, whose claims are unfounded within the present distribution of power.

Turning to Hannah Arendt who proposes to understand public space as a space of appearance: e.g., the Greek polis is a space where equality can be instituted (Arendt 2005: 30). This focus on institution, however, does not mean that with Arendt, we have to see society as resting merely on stability, on cemented fundamentals. Rather, public space for Arendt is contingent 'because it is constructed', and it is at the same time a 'space for contingency'. As a space, it opens up an in-between in which the political can take place and in which freedom is possible: Arendt sees freedom as presupposing 'laws' [*Gesetze*] (Arendt 2017: 611).¹ In order to emphasize her argument Arendt employs the spatial figure of the 'fence'. This fence may well be described as a setting in space and it places *Setzung* right next to 'instituting': Arendt's concept of instituting provides for the minimum measure of stability without which public space would disappear.² This is where we confront something close to another paradox: Public space requires forms of stability in order to remain open, in order to remain free, open space. For public space to become and remain a space for contingency (and for conflict), it takes *Setzung*, which is shared and put out for debate. This involves a number of questions: How to decide which setting, on what grounds? How to remain in-dispute, open to conflict? What is the role of city planning and architectural design in this field of problems? Nikolai Roskamm (2017) addresses this notion by calling for leaving the city unoccupied [*unbesetzt*]. He refers to the Lacanian concept of the lack, lack as enabling desire—which is at the core of the argument of the impossibility as the condition of possibility: "Were the city to be occupied and the experience of lack gone, then not only would planning and urbanism become superfluous, but also the city itself (as a site of lack and of desire)" (ibid.: 205, own translation).

The question is if every lack-suspending 'setting' is not just something temporal and transient. I maintain that public planning is an ever-recurring (and ever contested) setting-in-dispute for the cause of allowing the city to remain 'unoccupied'. Yet, on what grounds do we decide which settings should be made for public space to remain open and 'dissensus-friendly'? By orienting planning politics toward the concepts of radical democracy and spatial justice (in terms of a fairer distribution of space and agency), a question evolves if this is not only postponing the problem. For, what is *justice*? For democratic politics of planning, especially within a post-foundational framework, in the absence of foundations, a partial solution must do.³ That is, in the absence of a 'good ground', we may turn to a 'problematic historical constellation', one in which we do not arrive at a full-blown grasp of justice, but at a contestation of political cases of *injustice*.

Occupying is, of course, not precisely the same as setting, rather: Setting is a step before occupation. When it comes to public space, setting is the instituting

of publicness. That means that it still leaves the form and duration of occupation open. Setting prepares the set, the space of appearance. Setting provides with infrastructure, definition, design for public space—for the space to be able to be occupied temporarily by its users.

Within this outlined context, I propose to refer to a ‘tragedy of non-occupation’ (*Unbesetzung* as *Nicht-Setzung*), and with regard to setting, ‘tragedy of non-setting’. Why tragedy? In the urban tragedy, urban space is always occupied within the plays of political and economic forces in historical constellations. Non-occupation (as openness for undefined activity) is possible only as one that is firmly instituted, strongly set. This is again the paradox: If space is not occupied, it will be occupied. If there is no recognizable, ‘to-be-acknowledged’ institution of publicness as openness, then public space is ever so often diagnosed as a space with a lack. We know the cases of a deficiency being conjured up, a ‘discourse of uglification’, a constructed ‘emergency’ (be that rhetorically or by means of neglect) that calls upon neoliberal appropriation for ‘problem-solving’ or beautifying these places, and possibly pacifying (Zukin 1995; Springer 2016; Heindl 2020). And finally, cities today claim to be no longer capable of dealing with what is said to be the problem due to public scarcity. As a result, there is a surrender of public agendas into a dependency on private investors who themselves are in search of profitable terrains for capital-surplus production and absorption (Harvey 2007), especially in culturally rich urban centers.

In Vienna, the *Heumarkt project* is a much disputed and telling case for contextual analysis of such dynamics.⁴ The project plans to erect a high-rise building with exclusive luxury condominiums in Vienna’s historical heritage center. According to its opponents, this speculative investors’ project, should it be built, would mean a(nother) slippery slope for extensive speculative high-rise building activity within Vienna’s UNESCO world cultural heritage zone; it would also stand for on-demand city planning concessions, since the binding land-use and zoning plan would have to be changed for it. Right from the start of the planning process in 2013, the decades-old ice-skating rink on the site and especially that site’s summer-time usage as an urban beach under the name *Sand in the City* was labeled an eyesore by the investor, some city officials and politicians and this ‘deficiency’ was used as one of the arguments for the urgency of the planned development (Heindl 2020: 140). An accompanying official masterplanning document *Masterplan Glacis* from the year 2014—commissioned by the city of Vienna during the public debate around the project—labeled this very zone an ‘urban repair zone’, along with other areas along Vienna’s Ringstraße. This plan, which is paid for by public money, identifies inner city areas of lack—to which investors are invited ‘to come to the rescue’.

In such a context, planning is called upon—in cooperation with investors—to identify a lack in definition but also setting. According to Roskamm,

the lack ascertained—a lack in security, competitiveness or sustainability—legitimizes and necessitates planning. In this perspective, planning is

there to establish a lack and then to offer remedies. [...] ‘Planning’ is thus responsible for identifying the problem (thus for creating it) as well as for providing a solution.

(Roskamm 2017: 189, 199, own translation)

What serves to legitimize one kind of planning, the one motivated by private enterprise, contributes to reducing and de-legitimizing another kind: sovereign public planning, which is supposed to be acting upon a public mandate. In cities of interest for global capital, one can witness rhetorically induced devaluations as a means of increasing potential profit margins. A place is ‘talked down’ for devaluation in order to increase the (virtual) ‘rent gap’ (Smith 2008) as the difference of the value before and after the investment. The ‘worse’ and ‘uglier’ a place is before regeneration, the higher the rent gap. This strategy of occupation also addresses the public and planning authorities as their support of the investment is crucial: as they are to be convinced that ‘beautification’ or ‘sanitation’ is an urgent necessity. Or, more generally that *there is no alternative* to privatization through Public-Private Partnerships, Privately Owned Public Spaces or Business Improvement Districts.

Within this context of financialization of urban space, architectural agency could be conceptualized as an activity that secures public space by way of an ‘instituting-in-dispute’ rather than be complicit in the planning of its urban strategies: For without public setting, public spaces will disappear. Such a type of setting, far from stopping dissensus, aims at opening and maintaining terrain for *conflict* and *contingency*. Yet, in order to secure space against privatization and for the taking-part of marginalized social groups, we are to add to setting (*Setzung*) another related word, which is *Gesetz*, that is, the law or ‘act’ in the juridical sense in its relation to political positionings.

Any urban space is a space of laws—and that is also part of the space’s very contingent nature. Laws are parts of the social stratifications. Architecture and urban planning are activities guided by laws. Not anybody has the right to carry out the planning of cities or buildings, and of course not freely the way they want. The architectural space comprises legally binding prescriptions: zoning definitions, building laws, norms, etc. The building law, of course, regulates a number of planning aspects, for instance, the minimum height of rooms or the minimum size of a children’s playground. Up-zoning, re-zoning or the general capability to define what is allowed and possible on a private piece of land is an official act (which by principle must not be subject to buying or selling, yet unsurprisingly, is all too often subject to some interventions or bargaining with).

The terrain of laws is itself a highly disputed terrain of positions. This becomes especially clear in the context of post-political planning: The discourse that maintains that planning has to be non-ideological is, of course, itself a highly ideological and political act. If projects of urban development are articulated in purely technocratic and numerical planning parameters—often accompanied by the hollow statement that it should not be about ideologies—they often foreclose

the space for other planning goals, such as justice, equal opportunities and sharing communal wealth. While I neither want to collapse politics into legal matters nor am I a fetishist or unconditional supporter of laws, I argue a few key perspectives on entanglements of planning with legal matters should be further explored. In the present situation, neoliberal criticism places legally binding plans increasingly more in correspondence with ideology: something to do away with as a remnant of the high-modernist era seeking the perpetually usher in contemporary, creative buzzing economies. In this way, law becomes politicized *ex negativo*.⁵ There are building laws that delimit the maximization of profits—for instance, a minimum height for habitable rooms precludes profit-optimizing investors from squeezing ever more habitable floors into buildings.

In a time when laws are declared to be too abstract, too rigid, too complicated to handle for the exigencies of capital, which is why laws are to be replaced by flexibly adapting guidelines and tailor-made back-room agreements, laws as well as public legal plans have a political advantage. They are—ideally, but also in fact—‘settings’ that are clearly and publicly stated, in black and white print, transparent and therefore up for public dispute. In the form of official zoning plans, they are settings in the sense of *in die Welt gesetzt* [‘posted into the world’] instead of the relative privacy of planning deals. This implies that legal plans also function as a site for publicness, including the voicing of public dissensus.⁶ While they are always political, they are not always politicized. They are produced in the conceptual contact zone of legal matters non-congruent with capital’s demands, and the discourses and claims of bottom-up movements demanding the ‘Right to the City’ or the right to public space.

In fact, it was a popular agency that politicized a planning project from my own practice: the urban design and development guidelines *Donaukanal Partitur* (2014, in collaboration with Susan Kraupp). After winning a competition, we were commissioned to develop guidelines for the future development of the central riverbanks along Vienna’s Danube Channel—a public space of much interest to the people and to private investment. In order to make sure that the open space was left without gastronomy or urban beaches, we proposed a twofold strategy: to increase and improve public infrastructure and to secure as much of the not-yet-commercialized space as possible. For these goals, we developed a notational tool for public infrastructure and a detailed topographical plan, which we called *Nichtbebauungsplan* [‘non-building plan’] referring to the legal urban planning document of a *Bebauungsplan* [‘land-use plan’]. The plan clearly set red lines around all the zones and movement areas to be ‘hedged’ for the public and secured from further monopolization e.g. by private gastronomy. However, as the guidelines were not legally binding, it seemed feasible to an investor supported by a local politician to disrespect them and plan a large-scale restaurant on one of the last non-commercialized public meadows with great sunset view onto the water. In terms of devaluative rhetorics, the investor would go so far as to label the place as ‘dogshit meadows’. However, this time, capital was prevented from occupying the ground due to grassroots protest initiatives,

in fact by their occupation as sit-in on the site, and by referring to our guidelines that declared this site be kept free for public use in whatever form of appearance.

The ‘non-building plan’, a *Setzung* within an administrative planning tool, entered a political constellation and was charged with a political content through the movement protesting against a planning deal of commercialization for this specific public space at Vienna’s Danube Channel. In their occupation, *Besetzung*, of this piece of urban land up for grabs by capital, it was the people who gave our plan the necessary political edge.

Setzung, finally, also means ‘settling’ or ‘sedimentation’. The everyday reality of a city, even a city as a whole, is settled, or sedimented conflict. Contingency means that nothing ever exists in a pure state, so political conflict is not manifest all the time. Rather, urban spaces and institutions are most of the time ‘settled’, in sedimentation after a certain contingent, disputedly instituted ‘setting’ has been successful and met with acceptance. Post-foundational political theorist Ernesto Laclau describes the outright “forgetting of the origins” after the success of an instituting act: “The system of possible alternatives tends to vanish and the traces of the original contingency to fade. In this way, the instituted tends to assume the form of a mere objective presence” (Laclau 1990: 34). But not forever, of course. Politics involves sedimentation as well as the reactivation of settled conflicts. Rancière (1999), in *Disagreement* brings up the inscriptions of equality in public space, be it on the walls of courthouses and other public buildings—a good example of sedimented politics, settled in the everyday to the point of near-invisibility. But, as Rancière maintains, we should not *denounce* such inscriptions, such as ‘Everyone is equal before the law’, as just time-worn or being meaningless. Rather, they should be put to the test when constellated with present cases of dissensus and the appearance of unforeseen democratic subjects (as with the occupants in the lawn on Danube Channel). So, there is also this *Setzung*: a literal *mise-en-scene*, ‘Sich-in-Szene-Setzen’, of popular subjects that affects the unsettling of already or not yet or not entirely settled urban conflicts.

Notes

- 1 In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Arendt describes public space as a fragile space, which needs structuring and protection by laws:

The stability of laws corresponds to the constant motion of all human affairs, a motion which can never end as long as men are born and die. The laws hedge in each new beginning and at the same time assure its freedom of movement, the potentiality of something entirely new and unpredictable; the boundaries of positive laws are for the political existence of man what memory is for his historical existence; they guarantee the pre-existence of a common world, the reality of some continuity which transcends the individual life span of each generation, absorbs all new origins and is nourished by them. [...] To abolish the fences of laws between men – as tyranny does – means to take away man’s liberties and destroy freedom as a living political reality; for the space between men as it is hedged in by laws, is the living space of freedom.

(Arendt 2017: 611)

- 2 Arendt's more well-known spatial figure is the table, which, in her definition of the public as the world, "like every in-between, relates and separates men at the same time" (Arendt 1998: 52).
- 3 Heindl and Robnik (2021) propose to call such a partial, intrinsically disputable solution a "nonsolution", picking up that term from Siegfried Kracauer.
- 4 The site, including the Hotel Intercontinental and adjacent open-air ice rink, is located within the UNESCO designated area of Vienna. It was originally public, was sold in 2008 from the municipal funds to an international real estate development company, which got incorporated into a Morgan-Stanley-Portfolio, sold to a Lebanese investor, from which the Wertinvest Group acquired the site in 2012. Media, like *Die Presse* celebrated that the hotel was back again in the hands of an Austrian investor. The latter agreed to a cooperative planning process and initiated an international architectural competition with a winning project that proposed an extension to the hotel and generally vast expansion of the existing volume including a new luxury apartment tower, by speculating that the UNESCO heritage recommendations for the site could be overturned. The case became a matter of conflict engaging politics, citizens, protest groups and is at this moment not yet settled.
- 5 Laws probably have to be seen as contingent with respect to their content when it comes to issues of political justice. That is, one cannot say that laws per se contribute to a less unjust social reality.
- 6 They are something of a 'weak spot' for dissensus to enter, because in contrast to neoliberal guidelines optimally suited to the needs and the vitality of profit-economy, the law still maintains a connection to the political problem of justice. It has not yet bid farewell to justice in the way that the discourses and power techniques of optimization have. The law is still a half-good entry-point for questions of rights, and for the critique of forms of injustice that we encounter every day under conditions of racist, classist, sexist and other types of exclusion. At this point, we would have to delve more deeply, along the lines of Derrida, into a concept of justice as that which is impossible, always in coming, but always *useful* (why not put it so bluntly?) to call into question and dispute the injustices of existing legal forms of power and social order.

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19

(UN)SETTLING URBAN CULTURAL POLITICS

New York's *People's Cultural Plan* and the Dislocation of Ghosts

Friederike Landau-Donnelly

Introduction: Conceptualizing the (Un)Settling of Urban Cultural Politics

This chapter looks at the dissonance between New York City government's policy-driven vision of urban arts development, and artist-led, grassroots movements' counter-propositions to prioritize cultural equity, diversity and funding justice in the arts. I examine the *People's Cultural Plan* (PCP), an artist-led movement founded in 2017 to contest the introduction of *CreateNYC—A Cultural Plan for All New Yorkers* (CreateNYC).¹ CreateNYC was the first strategic cultural plan released by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA). The plan was released on 21 July 2017 to systematically approach the internationally renowned, ethnically heterogeneous and spatially dispersed forms of cultural production in New York City. While Mayor Bill de Blasio welcomed the plan, calling it a “roadmap to lifting up the arts and culture across the city” (CreateNYC 2017a: 3), the PCP voiced substantial concerns about the lack of both financial and political commitment for establishing cultural equity beyond CreateNYC's presumed cultural core of Manhattan.

The PCP was launched three days *before* CreateNYC to institute a counter-narrative and challenge the assumption that the official plan represented the arts community. Providing a manifesto-style proposal that calls to reduce cultural inequity, PCP's (2017a) claims revolve around equitable housing, land and development policies, as well as labor equity and public funding equity. Despite CreateNYC's subtitle, which suggests that the strategic agenda includes the voices and visions of *all* New Yorkers, PCP points to ongoing racial discrimination in the cultural sector. PCP worked to coalesce ethnically diverse cultural workers and local cultural organizations, many of which are led by people of color and minority groups. The PCP raised public awareness about continuing systemic

discrimination, cultural inequity, and lack of affordable housing and production space for artists, apparent in unfair wages, hiring policies and funding allocations to destabilize the overwhelming positive language of CreateNYC.

Via the analytical lens of (un)settling, I trace transitions and transmutations in the urban cultural political field that oscillate between ‘settling’ and ‘unsettling’ states of political communication, mobilization, decision-making and legitimacy. In addition, I deploy the notion of hauntology (Derrida 1994), which conjures ghosts as a motive for deconstruction or dislocation. In line with the framework of (un)settling, a consideration of ghosts in controversial policy documents helps to not only detect but also to problematize and conceptualize the contested and contingent nature of politics (Yanow 1996). Briefly, hauntology claims that there is no uncontroversial or pure (origin of) time—neither in the present nor the past—but considers temporality as ‘out of joint’. Accordingly, I suggest considering the ghostly aspects of policies, politics and the political at large to capture the disjunction or dislocation of past and present. In that sense, hauntology can complement the analytic of (un)settling with a temporal dimension. With help of the ghostly analytic, I show how lingering legacies of cultural and ethnicity-based marginalization that fuel and (re)appear in conflicts between the official narrative of New York’s cultural plan, and the unsolicited counter-response by PCP.

I understand conditions of settling as practices that lead toward the institutionalization, routinization, systematization or normalization of generally contingent social and political meanings and forms of action. Attempts to settle aim to fix or streamline values, meanings and power into one dominant version of politics, which structure and govern urban life in subtle ways. Settling sets out to reduce contingency and polyphony establish regularity or objectivity to maintain a specific, hegemonic position in politics. In contrast, unsettling is understood as process to challenge and subvert established political, normative or administrative orders and disrupt accepted normalcies. In contrast to settling, unsettling is tendentially less organized and more ambivalent, continuously pointing to the contingent and radically open nature of politics. In the following, I explore the introduction of CreateNYC as an attempt to settle urban cultural politics, and correspondingly, PCP’s mobilization as an effort to unsettle this policy project toward stabilization and unification.

Unsettling is not merely derivative of the assumed default option of things being settled, but a constitutive dimension of articulating and bringing moments of ‘the political’ to the fore. The brackets of my use of (un)settled, as indicated in the title refer to the structural interrelatedness of desires for regularity and revolution, i.e. states of being settled and unsettled. The (un)settled also points to the conceptual and empirical impossibility to achieve one or the other permanently. Instead, the theoretical proposition of (un)settling acts as a trope to disentangle the different facets of urban contestation in New York’s cultural scenes. Rather than conducting a systematic policy document analysis, my objective is to sketch the changing relations of actors in New York’s cultural political field by

using (un)settling as interpenetrating concept. Attempting to stabilize the power of their own institutions, I consider the local cultural administration (DCLA) and the CreateNYC cultural plan as settling actors, while PCP and the materialized version of the people's plan appear as unsettling agents, challenging the seemingly unequivocal meaning and goal of cultural equity in the urban cultural political sphere.

Spatial Implications of (Un)Settling

To better understand the spatial ramifications of (un)settling, I draw on hegemony-theoretical concepts of sedimentation and reactivation or dislocation (Laclau 1990, 2014; Marchart 2014). I position attempts of settling as processes of sedimentation, and processes of unsettling as aiming at dislocation. Without claiming that any of these terms are exactly synonymous or fully separate, I unpack practices of (un)settling as affecting and transforming physical and material, but also discursive and symbolical spaces.

Planning theorist Nikolai Roskamm (2017: 179–180) considers sedimentations as “discursive and/or material settlements, depositions, which emerge via repetition and routinization, sedimentations are (temporarily) successful fixations of meaning”—briefly, sedimentations point to assumed or manufactured objectivity. The generally contingent origins of *any* fixation of meaning and power point, again, to the always-transitory and thus contestable nature of settling. While sedimentations aim to produce stability, which comes at the cost of exclusion, and sometimes even forms of violence, dislocations reveal “our existential condition to be spatially dispersed” (Marchart 2014: 276). In that sense, we are not necessarily bound to be somewhere, or be from somewhere, but are necessarily and radically unsettled. Dislocation, or unsettling, thus foregrounds the antagonistic character of politics to displace, disjoint, delay settling attempts to spatialize or sediment power. Situated in a post-foundational framework, which assumes that political meaning, power and institutions are established from a general *absence* of final grounds such as objectivity, rationality or truth (Landau et al. 2021; Marchart 2013), dislocation appears as ongoing disruption in attempts at settling.

While sedimentation or settling have been described as geared toward the institutionalization of power via repetition, routinization, stabilization and spatialization, practices of unsettling, dislocation or reactivation challenge this seeming stability. Laclau (1990: 34–35) understands reactivation not as “returning to the original situation, but merely [of] rediscovering, through the emergence of new antagonisms, the contingent nature of so-called ‘objectivity’”. For the sake of conciseness, I subsume Laclau's development of reactivation as a form of dislocation. In other words, reactivations or dislocations displace the belief in power or sedimentation, which is supposedly settled, and thus reveal dislocations as inherently spatial. Briefly, “there is no place without dislocation” (Marchart 2014: 277). Besides mobilizing a critique of objectivity, dislocations

bring to the fore the ineradicably antagonistic and contingent character of *any* attempt to inscribe power. Reactivation or dislocation mark the impossibility of permanently fixating power or meaning; dislocation maintains conflicts as always somewhat unsettled. By pointing out that sedimentation or settling can never quite be ‘achieved’ or total, dislocation unleashes the generally unsettling dimension of politics and space. In this restless state of the (un)settled, the ghosts of complicated pasts enter the stage between attempts at sedimentations and concomitant dislocations.

In sum, the conflictual and constitutively contingent contours of (un)settling cannot be written off as pathological or abominable state of distress, lack of stability or reliability, even though the systemic vulnerability of (un)settling can cause such a/effects. In lieu of dismissing unsettling as abject, I assume (un)settling as both ontological and epistemological approach to advance radical urban theory and praxis. It guides theoretical reflection on the question what politics really *is*, and has epistemological implications with regard to *how* we approach the study of conflicts in urban politics. Settling or sedimentations can never be pure or fully finished; they always carry traces of dislocation and are contaminated by these dislocatory, unsettling disturbances. Vice versa, practices of unsettling or dislocation do not function fully independent from settling; they necessarily derive from the constitutive condition of (un)settling.

(Un)Settling New York’s Cultural Politics

A comprehensive cultural plan for the City of New York was requested and issued by members of New York City Council in the spring of 2015 as amendment §2506 to the *New York City Charter*. The request was passed by unanimous vote (A Common Project 2019). The result, a 180-page-plan with extensive policy recommendations, was developed with consideration of participatory methods and stakeholder engagement (e.g. playing ping pong with cultural policy-makers, focus groups, and open office hours), hosting over 400 events in all five boroughs between September 2016 and April 2017 (CreateNYC 2017a). In their report on the participatory co-creation of the plan, named *What We Heard*, eight so-called issue areas are identified (CreateNYC 2017b): equity; social and economic impact; affordability; citywide coordination; arts, culture and science education; health of the cultural sector; arts and culture in public space; and neighborhood character. While CreateNYC evokes the metaphor of ‘having heard’ what diverse communities and voices of the city’s cultural sector ‘have to say’ so to ensure legitimacy of their consultations, and subsequent policy work, PCP views the metaphor of listening with skepticism. They might have felt the ghosts of absent or unheard voices already approaching. In contrast to ‘having been heard’, PCP (2017a: 1) urges that current crises of cultural inequity need to be addressed “with more than lip service in support of ‘diversity’”. Hinting at what might *not* have been heard or said in course of the creation of CreateNYC, I proceed by discussing the underlying and explicit differences between the documents of

CreateNYC and PCP. I analyze crucial terms and resulting tensions along three analytical foci:

- 1 *underlying meanings* of basic goals and priorities of future cultural planning and policy action;
- 2 *operational specificity* of policy goals to be implemented;
- 3 *assumed 'we'* or addressee of CreateNYC.

The first discord regarding the goals of the respective plans become apparent in CreateNYC's (2017b: 5) working definitions of terms such as diversity, inclusion and (cultural) equity. The latter is described as geared to "promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources" (ibid.). In comparison, in PCP's (2017a: 1) 17-page-document, equity is identified as a priority, claiming "equity in power and in decision-making, and we will accept nothing less". While the normative prescriptions regarding equity appear semantically similar, meanings for the affected stakeholder communities differ significantly. CreateNYC's notion and goal of equity is presented as seemingly incontrovertible, a vision nobody could or should disagree with. Against the seemingly all-inclusive norm of ensuring equitable and fair treatment of all via legislative procedures, PCP does not subscribe to CreateNYC's claim. Queens-based artist Kenneth Pietrobono states (2017):

[T]hey see the intersection of culture and community differently (...)
CreateNYC is squarely positioned in the logic of incrementalism and negotiation, believing in the power of the legislative process to uphold culture and that culture is an effective way to serve communities. PCP is firmly positioned in the logic of radical equity and organizing, believing the city's cultural plan is a threat to communities and that culture is a distant second to the needs of community members, artists, and beyond.

With regard to the conceptual framework of (un)settling, CreateNYC might strive to *settle* on the general approval and meaning of political objectives such as equity. In contrast, PCP aims to *unsettle* the official proposition not only to contest the meaning of equity ('more than lip service') but also to radically request *more* and/or *other* substantial parameters within equity ('nothing less'). It rings of the ghostly other that is not already represented in CreateNYC by calling out institutional racism in cultural funding cycles, hiring and leadership practices in cultural institutions, PCP argues that CreateNYC's aspirational goal toward equity is *not enough*. In sum, PCP insists that the long-standing disenfranchisement and dispossession of many New York-based cultural producers have not been resolved by CreateNYC's definition of what equity is or should be. Whereas the official plan may have wanted to eliminate dissent after consulting with *some* New Yorkers, the counter-plan drives a wedge in the otherwise

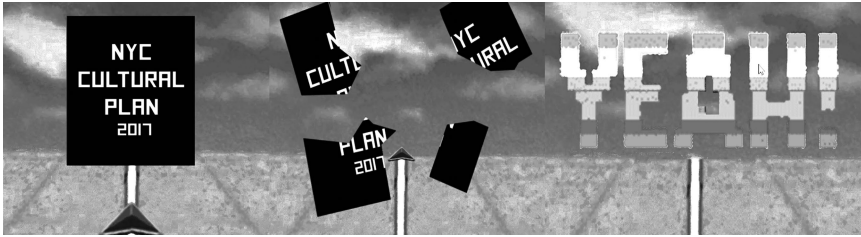


FIGURE 19.1 GIF against CreateNYC.

Source: Antonio Serna, A Common Project/Artists of Color Bloc, 2019.

smooth and all-encompassing definition of ‘equity’ and mobilizes discomfort and dissent about that very term (see Figure 19.1).

The second divergence relates to the concrete measures and resources available to address the ambitious goals of CreateNYC. The official plan names eight implementation actions to expand cultural access for people with disabilities, as well as measures for diversity, participation and inclusion (CreateNYC 2017a: 157–161). There is much rhetoric around the commitment to increase support and funding, but little concrete commitment to increase budgets and funds or supply staff resources to handle these goals in the initial plan. Cultural activists engaged in *Citizens’ Advisory Committee* (CAC) for CreateNYC described the plan as “simultaneously thorough and vague” (Pietrobono 2017). Since its introduction, PCP (2017c) has criticized the plan as “disappoint[ing], with its cosmetic and feel-good narrative [...] lack of concrete funding commitments, and the absence of adequate policies against spatial displacement [...] [w]ithout proposing funding sources, amounts, or a clear timeframe”. Instead of merely highlighting the insufficient or superficial implementation strategies, PCP names concrete measures to address funding-related crisis in the cultural sector: for example, to abandon the privatization of housing by expanding procurement of public housing or community-owned land trusts, to overturn legislation that privileges private investors, to establish legally binding minimum artist fees, to subsidize artist housing and studio space and to increase power and resources for citizen-led committees to advance racial, economic and social equity (PCP 2017a). These strategies aim to mitigate the influence of real estate developers in city-building, as PCP accused Major De Blasio of arguably making inequities worse (PCP 2019). In comparison, while CreateNYC (2017a: 94) recognizes “real estate market pressures”, the only strategy to address these is one program called *Affordable Real Estate for Artists*, geared to “preserve and develop long-term affordable work spaces for the cultural community” (ibid.: 100).

As follow-up to CreateNYC, in 2019, the *Action Plan* was published to illustrate the progress made on CreateNYC’s multiple recommendations and strategies (ranging from immediate goals within the next 12 months to long-term objectives to be addressed within the next ten years; CreateNYC 2019). Streamlining the original plan’s recommendations into five new objectives, aiming to increase

equitable funding and support for arts and culture “especially in historically underserved communities” (CreateNYC 2019: 4), as well as cultivating inclusive practices in the cultural sector, strengthening connections between the cultural sector and government, addressing the affordability crisis and providing high-quality arts education (ibid.: 1). With regard to the immediate goals formulated in CreateNYC in 2017, the *Action Plan* claims that the city has “achieved all of them and more” in 2019 (ibid.). The operationalization of five objectives into measurable actions and strategies shall indicate what has been achieved with regard to new funding and professionalization programs, including hiring of equity-sensitive and more diverse staff. In comparison, PCP (2019) criticizes the lack of accessibility of funding-related data, summarizing the progress report gloomily:

The requirement that CIGs (Cultural Institutions Group) adopt ‘Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion’ (DEI) plans, stemming from CreateNYC, has at least elevated the discourse in the city. However, beyond discourse, nothing is being done to address the structural causes of that lack of diversity.

In short, while efforts at institutionalizing diversity, equity and inclusion have been initialized—tangible, systemic change against discrimination is still underway.

Funding imbalances between the major cultural institutions mostly located in Manhattan, who receive more than half of DCLA’s total funding, and smaller cultural institutions outside of Manhattan persist. Officially, funding *should* be distributed equitably across all five boroughs (CreateNYC 2017a: 108), while most of New York’s estimated 50,000 artists live and work in Manhattan and Brooklyn (Guse 2017). In sum, perceptions about the progress of advancing goals such as cultural equity vary immensely between CreateNYC and PCP. Moreover, while CreateNYC seems to argue that the plan’s objectives have been met, suggesting that their policy goals could be fully settled, PCP continues to disagree with two things: first, how to approach contested goals, and second, which goals continue to be unresolved regarding rectifying historical dispossession and discrimination in the cultural sector. PCP’s ongoing critique demonstrates not only that proposed solutions have remained unachieved but also that they need to be approached differently than suggested by the *Action Plan*. In other words, PCP once again dislocates existing positions of power to push back against legacies of exclusion or lack of access to cultural activities and leadership roles, suspending CreateNYC’s settling attempt (see Figure 19.1). By insisting to not forget ongoing disparities between different ethnic, linguistic, able-bodied and geographically dispersed cultural communities, PCP reminds that these systemic problems are still unresolved, and remain unsettled.

Third, the positioning and assumption of the ‘we’ of CreateNYC reveals the most deep-seated rift between the official narrative and the counter-voice from ‘the people’, spearheaded by PCP. While CreateNYC’s official subtitle states to constitute *A Cultural Plan for All New Yorkers*, this all-inclusive assertion is

clearly contested in the sheer name of the PCP. Seemingly, the foundation of *another* people, initiative and plan was necessary because the original one, which sought to cater and appeal to ‘all’ New Yorkers, did *not* satisfactorily include ‘the people’. The authors of PCP (2017a: 1) define themselves as “we, the people, a multi-racial and multi-lingual coalition of artists, culture workers and tenants from the many neighborhoods of NYC”. While this definition certainly also cannot speak for the entirety of over eight million New Yorkers, PCP claims to represent a comparatively more diverse community with regards to ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic and spatial positions of involved cultural workers in comparison to those involved in the creation or consultations of CreateNYC. While CreateNYC prominently features migrant stories and faces, PCP positions itself more strongly to speak from *within* the community of New York’s diverse artistic scenes.

Moreover, as PCP (2017a: 2; emphasis original) puts it, “artists are tenants first”, problematizing the concern for rising rents, spatial displacement and increase of living expenses as relevant for “*ALL New Yorkers* (not just artists)”. Accordingly, the status of ‘artist’ is not of primary concern, but the identification as a New York citizen (see Lebuhn 2017 on the city’s innovative *New York Identification Card*, which requires local residence, but no legal residence permit or US citizenship). While CreateNYC (2017a: 172) agrees that “culture is for everyone”, both actors draw different consequences from this radically inclusive claim: PCP follows an intersectional approach driven by calling out social injustice and pressing for conversation about what prevents ‘all’ New Yorkers from actively participating in culture. Ironically, the quasi-universal claim of CreateNYC to address (and help?) ‘all’ New Yorkers not only forecloses opportunities to exclude oneself from this totality because some New Yorkers might not *want* to identify with the plan. More importantly, this universal ‘we’ prevents people from critiquing that plan, which was designed *for* ‘all’. While CreateNYC explicitly appeals to historically underrepresented or underserved communities, the discomfort of being subsumed in the community of ‘all’ New Yorkers is expressed in PCP’s (2017a: 1) quest to ensure “truly equitable inclusion (not tokenization) of artists and cultural workers of color”. At worst, inclusion *without* substantial procedural power to co-determine both the definitions and solutions to problems will remain an empty gesture. While PCP certainly cannot comprehensively represent ‘all’ New Yorkers either, it has gathered long-lingering experiences of frustration, exclusion, displacement, and lip-service promises for inclusion and diversity, thus raising a collectivized voice from those communities, some of which continue to experience systemic injustices. In line with a hauntological framework, PCP embraces a partial understanding of collectivity, which is permeated by absences and silences.

In sum, PCP critiques inequities of New York’s cultural sector that have well-existed prior to the city’s first cultural plan. In the face of CreateNYC’s attempt to map the highly heterogeneous landscape of cultural actors, PCP draws attention to what has *not* been shown in the official plan. Coming full circle

with the interlocked trope of the (un)settling, PCP mourns the (potentially consciously) omitted or inconvenient facts and “blind spots” in the plan as “nothing to celebrate” (PCP 2017c). Drawing explicit alliances in solidarity with other precarious social-activist groups, including, among others, *Decolonize this Place*, *Picture the Homeless* and *South Bronx Unite*, PCP positions their claims and criticisms in the midst of a city, in which marginalized communities are haunted by investor-led dispossession. By constantly insisting on inopportune information, barred access to data or political objectives not vetted with adequate resources to tackle them, PCP tries to keep the historically grown cultural injustice present in public consciousness. In hauntological terms, PCP invites ghosts to stay with, rather than smooth over a complex past of historically grown, varying ethnic and local specificities to arts and culture that need differentiated, needs-based policy responses. With this attunement to a complicated past, which continues to pose challenges and barriers for cultural institutions led by people of color, PCP refuses to accept CreateNYC as an easy-fix, one-size-fit-all-solution in the face of lingering injustices. Ultimately, PCP unremittingly contests the attempt to settle on meanings of equity, community or ‘everybody’ too hastily, and points out that these very terms will necessarily remain contested or (un)settled.

Outlook: Toward a Hauntological Analysis of Urban Cultural Politics

Following Derrida (1994), political concepts are always-already permeated, or inhabited by ghosts. Having incorporated this view of hauntology into urban cultural politics, and policy analysis, I want to propose that hauntology provides valuable opportunities to empirically study and thus ‘inhabit’ interstices between settling and unsettling states of urban politics. Geographer John Wylie (2007: 172) understands hauntology as “the unsettling of self, the haunting taking-place of place, the unhinging of past and present—[it] is an irreducible condition that demands new, themselves haunted ways of writing about place, memory and self”. If the notion of the unsettled, haunted self is expanded to collective subjects such as activist initiatives, the haunting and ‘unhinging of past and present’ are of critical concern to politics and policy too. While one might be skeptical that the convoluted trope of the (un)settling makes the study of ‘wicked problems’ in policy and planning even more complicated and messy, plainly speaking: we cannot reasonably hope to escape or excise the ambivalent nature of politics and power. Briefly, ghosts are irreducibly already (t)here in politics and policy—hence, we should find better ways to cope with them than shut them out.

With regard to the case study of New York’s urban cultural politics, hauntology has leveraged new ways to understand why and how different stakeholders disagree about seemingly uncontroversial issues such as cultural equity. It is because initiatives such as PCP points to longer-standing, not-yet-past instances of historical dispossession and discrimination that, within a one-time cultural strategic plan, these wrongs cannot be settled once and for all.

By attending to the ghostly dimensions in policy analysis, which includes historically sensitive analyses of the contexts from which new policies emerge, I offer a more encompassing temporal and spatial framework to understand conflicts in urban politics. In the wrestling between sedimentation/settling and dislocation/unsettling, ghosts with heavy-weighted pasts and alternative futures stay alert, whispering that *politics could always be different or otherwise, could always have been different*. In conclusion, haunting reveals itself as facet of (un)settling to assist in questioning categories such as agency, space, and power, and imbricating them as constitutively, yet conflictually intertwined.

Conclusion: Let the Ghosts In!

In this chapter, I sought to demonstrate how the concept of (un)settling lends itself to investigate tensions within efforts to hegemonically institute urban cultural policy and planning priorities (i.e., settling), and accordingly, to challenge these (i.e., unsettling). The schematic overview of PCP's and CreateNYC's positions illustrate the spectrum of attempts and opportunities to settle and unsettle cultural policy. By questioning seemingly uncontested values such as 'equity' and 'inclusion', PCP keeps the constitutive split of (un)settling—and the political at large—open and prevents prescribed norms from morphing into states of being settled, which might neglect or omit persistent disagreements.

Reading the two cultural plans through a lens of hauntology, the documents and initiatives reveal different modalities thereof: while CreateNYC might be characterized as a document full of unadmitted and unattended ghosts, which would rather orchestrate unity and the complete attainment of goals, PCP seems eager to address specters of the past and present to problematize ongoing cultural political exclusions. They dismantle preconceptions of who is included (or not) and contest that even well-intended cultural plans cannot ultimately settle long-standing inequity, appealing to keep the future open and negotiable. In addition, dislocatory actors such as PCP might unleash specters of the past (i.e., historical dispossession of marginalized communities) to intentionally unsettle otherwise 'forgetful' narratives of the past. Ultimately, dislocation, or "dislocatory struggles", as Oliver Marchart (2014: 180) claims, "are taking place constantly around the shaping and reshaping of the social". Beyond binaries of either pure dislocation or full sedimentation, (un)settling might stimulate critical intellectual capacity to face ghosts in political places, times and plans for anti-discriminatory and substantially diverse, equitable and participatory cultural political futures.

While the hauntological framework to study urban cultural politics is a somewhat speculative proposition, it is not to be misunderstood as a denial of urgent political realities. A hauntological perspective acknowledges that cultural production and diversity are at a critical moment in time, threatened by cultural revanchism, anti-Black sentiment, conservatism and decreasing arts funding on a national level. Hence, hauntology is not delusional or lofty philosophical play; instead, it opens possibilities for incorporating contingency, ambivalence

and conflict when studying urban cultural policies. Through hauntology, we can further explore underlying yet persistent assumptions about the rationality, opacity and situated agency of political actors. Future empirically grounded experiments with hauntology might advance comparative, cross-cultural and diachronic case studies of (un)settling terrains of urban cultural policy-making. Ultimately, the trope of (un)settling approaches ghosts as constitutive of radical politics, and embraces, rather than suppresses, the always-reversible status of politics. In line with my objective to transfer conceptual reflections on space and politics into radical empirical urban analysis, via (un)settling, I hope to create an opportunity to encounter ghosts of pasts filled with injustice, dissatisfaction or conflict. This line of thinking may open opportunities to work with the co-presence of ghosts toward shaping *other* urban futures, which are more equitable and radically diverse.

Note

- 1 While PCP's critique targets CreateNYC, criticisms against threats of displacement, eviction, poverty and racial inequality precede and exceed this cultural plan. Notably, PCP arose in a politicized local context of multi-racial cultural movements across the city, including, amongst others, activist movements such as the occupation of the Guggenheim by *Gulf Labor Artist Coalition* (2015), the *Brooklyn Community Forum on Anti-Gentrification and Displacement* (2016) and *Decolonize this Place* protest at the Brooklyn Museum (2018).

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20

FROM DISPUTE, TO CONTROVERSY, TO CRISIS

Conceptualizing Unsettling Dynamics in The Hague

Nanke Verloo

Introduction

On New Year's Eve 2006–2007, a group of local youth drove their scooters into the local shopping center of what was perceived to be a quiet, family-oriented suburb of The Hague, the Netherlands. With unclear motivation but clear frustration, the youth vandalized public spaces, circled citizens watching the fire-works, and generally disrupted the area. Their disruption did not last long. Local authorities immediately responded by sending militarized police units. Vehicles resembling tanks blocked the streets and youngsters were arrested. Neighbors described the scene as a 'warzone'. How did this quiet suburb turn into a place where police and youngsters stand in opposition on a public street? How were the events that night related to the ongoing conflict about the closing of a self-managed community center two years before? How can we understand the unfolding process of unsettling dynamics between citizens and local authorities?

Urban public spaces are increasingly contested by citizens, younger as well as older people, who sometimes use force to claim their 'right to the city' (Lefebvre 1996; Mitchell 1996, 2003; Springer 2011). Instances such as what the New Year's Eve event make distinguishing between senseless violence and genuine claims to "the right to the city" somewhat opaque. Governments claim a monopoly on violence and its definitions, and thereby legitimize their own violent response to residents contesting the state by self-validating any action as necessary to re-establish order. But this response turns a blind eye to the context of outbursts of violence and alternative meanings that violent acts of citizens might have in public space. I concede with Springer that violence is understood as "both an outcome of attempts to impose an 'ordered' view of public space originating 'from above', and [...] an act of resistance 'from below' by those seeking radical democratic spaces of 'unscripted' interaction" (Springer 2011: 526). This chapter seeks to critically

reflect on the preceding acts of everyday violence practiced by the state, welfare professionals and citizens during the urban conflict that may lead up to a riot. I propose three typologies of unsettling dynamics: dispute, controversy and crisis.

To reflect on the dialectics of (un)settling practiced simultaneously by various actors, we need to study how public spaces allow for embodied spatial practices of citizens contesting local rule and authority (Springer 2011; Thörn et al. 2016), but also how governments resort to closing public space or police it when citizens successfully claim public space (Low 2000). Riots take place in a particular spatial and temporal contexts and are embodied (Moore 2011). In this chapter, I therefore conceptualize unsettling dynamics, by analyzing how rhythms of action-reaction and definitions of public space affect the nature of power relations (Harré and Langehove 1999) between local government actors, citizens and professionals.

To analyse the dynamics of conflict, I make a distinction between strategies and tactics (De Certeau 1984). Strategies are long-term, well-organized practices of people in power who are established in politics, planning and governing (De Certeau 1984). Strategies establish relations between 'powerful' and the 'weak'. Tactics, by contrast, counteract the powerful sphere of strategies and occur in ways that do not fit conventions of political action. They must utilize opportunities to work against control and create surprises (*ibid.*). This distinction helps to grasp why specific tactics are so effective in defying strategic rules and regulations in public space.

A detailed analysis of urban conflict requires empirical data about people's performances and ideographic experiences during events. An ethnographic methodology is best equipped for such endeavor because it allows to get a deep understanding of the social relationships among case actors and situated events in urban conflict (Verloo 2020; Hammersley and Atkinson 1994; Geertz 1973). I conducted ethnographic fieldwork from 2009 to 2011. The structured participant observations in and around the community center allowed me to study the unfolding relationships after the New Year's Eve riots (see Verloo 2015). To gain in-depth understanding of the events that took place preceding the riots, I used narrative interviews (Georgakopoulou 2006; Mishler 1986; Verloo 2015) in which case actors narrated their ideographic experiences throughout the sequence of events. Case actors were interviewed several times to delineate the progression of their experiences and memories. The section of the case study that is relevant for this chapter is based on 15 narrative interviews and five focus group sessions (Morgan 1996) with residents from the neighborhood, local youth, policymakers, welfare workers and police officers. The combination of narrative interviews and participant observations in the period after the riots allowed me to validate and reflect on my interpretations of the observations and vice versa (Jerolmack and Khan 2014).

Introduction to the Case Study

The urban conflict I analyzed took place in Ypenburg, a new development in the city of The Hague (see Figure 20.1). Ypenburg was built in the late 1990s, as

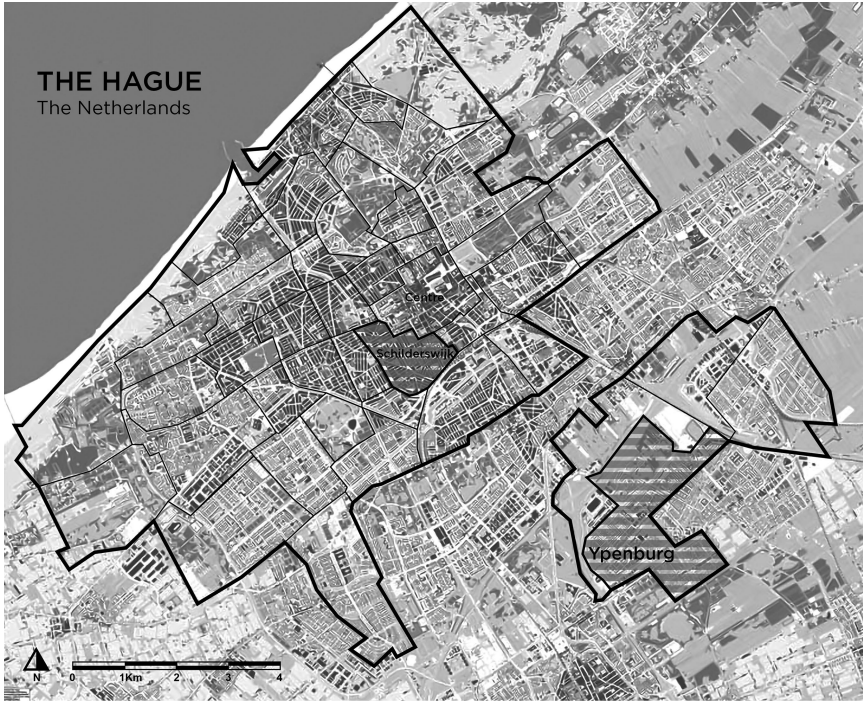


FIGURE 20.1 Map of The Hague.

Source: Santiago Sanchez Guzman, 2020.

part of a popular urban development policy. The policy addressed the growing demand for middle-class homes outside city centers by helping cities build neighborhoods outside established city districts. At the time, politicians in the Netherlands were preoccupied with the ambition to mix people from different socioeconomic backgrounds (Bolt et al. 2009).

The aim to construct a diverse neighborhood was primarily understood in socioeconomic terms. In 2004, 56% of the housing stock was owned, the rest was social rent (Gemeente Den Haag 2005a: 12). In 2015, occupant-owned housing increased to 66%, while social housing was 29%, and 4.5% was private rent (Gemeente Den Haag 2016: 6). The social housing stock declined because social housing associations sold homes or transferred them into the private rental market. Ethnic diversity was and is much lower than in The Hague as a whole. In 2004, 69% of the inhabitants of Ypenburg were of Dutch descent and 15.8% are of so-called Non-Western migration backgrounds, The Hague's average population with a Non-Western migration background was 30% in 2004, 33% in 2015, and 36% in 2019 (Gemeente Den Haag 2019). In the case study below, the ethnic composition was not the main trigger of the described conflict, which unfolded along the lines of neighborhood identity and socioeconomic differences.

The local government of The Hague had been a centralized administration with an elected council of aldermen. The civil servants active in the neighborhood worked primarily in the *Bestuursdienst*, the central body that is responsible for public policy, order and safety. Mayors are not elected in the Netherlands, they are appointed by the national government and the King. Mayors, together with the head of local police and public prosecutor are responsible for public order and safety. The mayor is thus very powerful in moments of crisis, and is the chairman of the council, but mayors are not primarily responsible for making local policies.

Dynamics of Unsettling

Settling

In 2001, the first families arrived to Ypenburg. The neighborhood was still under construction and activities for youth were not yet built. Ypenburg was still territorially under the mandate of the town Rijswijk. To prevent youth from playing in the construction site, a group of early residents were given a temporary hangar and a subsidy to start a community center from Rijswijk. They called it ‘the Cockpit’, after the airport that Ypenburg used to be.

The founders of the Cockpit were a community of approximately six families that knew each from Schilderswijk. Their shared history of community organizing allowed them to tactically set up children and community activities. Schilderswijk is a lower middle-class inner-city neighborhood in The Hague. In 2005, 72% of the housing stock was social rent (in comparison to 32% in The Hague as a whole), 52% of the inhabitants were lower educated (32% in The Hague), and 42% of the people lived on minimum wage (15% in The Hague) (Gemeente Den Haag 2005a). Currently, 91% of Schilderswijk’s inhabitants are of Non-Western backgrounds, but when the people in the case study refer to Schilderswijk, they remember a neighborhood that was primarily inhabited by Dutch lower working-class families. The neighborhood is also known for its long-standing community traditions. The community of families associates their identity as ‘Schilderswijkers’ with their strong community bonds and role as organizers.

The Cockpit (see Figure 20.2) allowed for a period of settling. The dynamics that constituted this process were noticeable in mundane practices of everyday life (De Certeau 1984). Youngsters from all over the neighborhood came to do activities and, in the evenings, other community members would come to play bingo, cards and have food together.

Everything went naturally. Not all children have the means to go on holiday. We had to entertain them. Everyone else was away, so in the morning I would fry eggs for the children. [...] And then he [points at Tall Harry] would blow up the jumping cushions.

(Manus, founder of the Cockpit, personal interview, 14 May 2009)

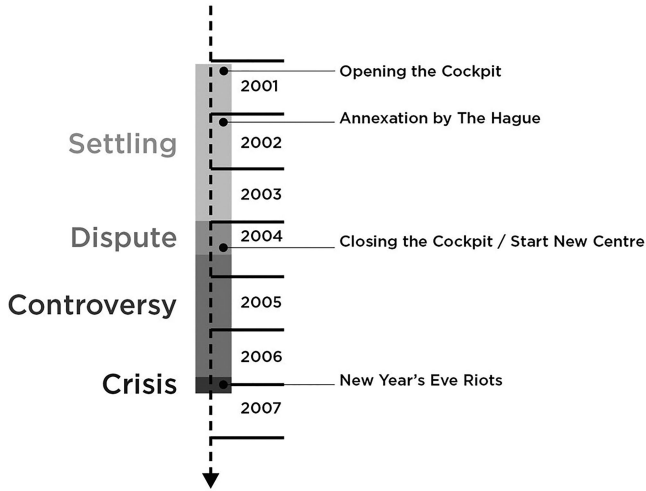


FIGURE 20.2 Timeline of unsettling dynamics.

Source: Santiago Sanchez Guzman, 2020.

The construction of the Cockpit tacitly served the development of a community through a parochial domain, constituting “commonality between neighbors who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located in communities” (Lofland 1998: 10).

A stable rhythm of communal activities allowed for certain predictability of community life and relationships of trust between residents and the local government that supported these activities, and, trust among new inhabitants of various socioeconomic backgrounds who also settled in Ypenburg. As more residents moved in—the population grew from 8,708 inhabitants in 2001 to 17,525 inhabitants in 2004 and 20,640 in 2016 (Gemeente Den Haag 2005b, 2016)—the community diversified socio-economically. Consequently, the Cockpit had to diversify its activities.

When the local government of The Hague annexed Ypenburg in 2002, the settled relationships did not change: citizens continued to self-manage the Cockpit. The initial founders became known as ‘the Cockpit Group’ and continued to manage and organize community activities.

Unsettling through Dispute

Settling dynamics are always conditionally contingent and fragile. In 2004 (see Figure 20.2), when the construction of the neighborhood was nearly complete, the settled relationships started to unsettle. The Cockpit became a focal point on the political agenda. According to The Hague’s administrative rules, community centers had to be managed by a professional welfare organization under the contract of the municipality. The Cockpit had to close.

In the period between the new center opening and Cockpit's closing, the local government started to strategically problematize the role of the Cockpit Group through a narrative that doubted the appropriateness of the existing situation; "that period of the Cockpit is understood as the time in which all the problems originated" (Hans, head of local police office, personal interview, 13 May 2009). The people who founded the Cockpit were blamed for problems; "it was a sort of domain of bandits that nobody had anything to do with and where the residents could do whatever they wanted and also their children" (Frank, local police officer, personal interview, 11 May 2010).

The institutional actors emphasized that the Cockpit Group originally came from Schilderswijk and focused on the neighborhood's majority of lower working-class people. The reference to the Schilderswijk stereotyped the Cockpit Group as lower working class and less educated. Frank, a local police officer (personal interview, 11 May 2010), described the Schilderswijk identity as:

What they took along is a lifestyle in which the social control is very high, but the living conditions very different. [From Schilderswijk] they bring along a history of social control, way of living, how your parents use to speak to you, and so on. And all of that gets replaced to an environment with front yards. At a certain point they hang on to old values, but other factors are changing.

As Ypenburg became a community primarily inhabited by residents from higher socioeconomic classes (Gemeente Den Haag 2016), the Schilderswijk and their socioeconomic status started to play a role in marginalizing their role as appropriate community organizers. Local police officers and civil servants started a process of 'othering' that disrupted the settled identity of the Cockpit Group as capable community organizers and reframed them as 'bandits' working only for their private interest. The narrative of the Cockpit as a 'domain of bandits' sowed doubt about the public meaning of the Cockpit as a 'parochial realm'. It delegitimized the Cockpit as a place for communal activities characterized by "ties of intimacy among primary group members who are located in households or personal networks" (Lofland 1998: 10).

Unsettling through Controversy

In 2004, the local government decided to close the Cockpit and open a professional community center in a new building. There was no space assigned for the Cockpit in the new center and the role of the Cockpit Group changed from 'founders' and 'organizers' to volunteers in activities organized by professionals. The lack of space and change of roles escalated tensions into a controversy.

The Cockpit Group expected that they would receive a space in the new center to continue their community activities and were discouraged to find there was no space for them. They also felt nobody listened to them despite many

conversations they had in advance: “First we were to have a space and later not anymore. But because we engaged in much talking and efforts, they could not just ignore us” (Sjaan, resident and member of Cockpit Group, personal interview, 14 May 2009).

The Hague’s council had the ambition to engage active residents in organizing community activities in the neighborhood (Gemeente Den Haag 2016). The kinds of community organizing they sought, however, were not those of the Cockpit Group. When the new center opened, the local government strategized how to disassociate the new center from the Cockpit. To them, the Cockpit stigmatized the new community center:

We wanted to get rid of the stigma of the Cockpit Group. We now had the new centre. We did not want it to be related to the Cockpit, because it had such a negative image in the neighbourhood. People said: ‘oh those are the old Cockpitters, we don’t want to have anything to do with them’. The new centre was much more positive, so we forgot about the Cockpit and called them the volunteers of the new centre.

(Brenda, local policy practitioner, personal interview, 19 April 2011)

The local government actively sought to excise the Cockpit’s history from the new center because they believed the ‘stigma’ of the Cockpit Group would make the center unattractive to other residents. Where the disagreement in disputes is contained to a single focus, disagreements during controversies broaden. The disagreement over a space for the Cockpit escalated into interlinked issues of disagreement: a physical space for the Cockpit, and the role of the Cockpit Group, their place in the community, and the institutional power of the welfare organization. A second characteristic of controversies is that new stakeholders are usually introduced, which generates an unpredictable sequence action and reaction. The local government introduced welfare professionals that were assigned to establish an inclusive community center but at the same time to “get rid of the memory of the Cockpit” (ibid.).

Professionals were thus challenged with rising tensions while they had to establish a power position and demonstrate their professionalism. They also had to engage with community members, including the unsatisfied members of the Cockpit Group who were now volunteers in the center. Professionals approached that dilemma by attempting to impose a hierarchy: “I think as a welfare worker working with youth, we have a pedagogical responsibility” (Stan, former manager of the center, personal interview, February 2009). Stan established his position as one being associated with ‘pedagogical responsibility’, a theme that relates to general ideas about Dutch community organizing. Another strategy was to differentiate the new center from the Cockpit by setting rules: “Rules have to be maintained here. We have the control so we also set the rules” (Dennis, youth worker, personal interview, 16 December 2009). A rule was immediately implemented barring volunteers’ activities organization without the presence of

a professional. The seemingly mundane change belied the professionals' attempt to establish power over the volunteers.

The Cockpit Group was not satisfied with their assigned position and wanted to continue their community activities independently. Their own sense of identity was closely related to this self-prescribed community responsibility. In organizing activities, they tacitly celebrated their Schilderswijk background: "I always say, 'I am proud of my background', and it is us who were able to organize a club here and that is what we are still fighting for" (Gonnie, resident and member of the Cockpit Group, personal interview, 14 May 2009). By taking up the role as community organizers, the group celebrated an important identity in the neighborhood, being reduced to volunteers would deny that identity and position.

In their efforts to keep a role in the center, the group resorted to a tactical approach and took up space (Moore 2011) by being physically present and by hanging their old Cockpit sign on the wall. These tactics helped to assert the memory of the Cockpit physically and symbolically. They negotiated that their sign would be allowed to stay, but that was merely symbolic as they were not allowed to independently organize activities. Tactics take place in the sphere of the 'other', they must play in the terrain that is imposed upon them (De Certeau 1984). In the new community center, the tactics of the Cockpit Group were not able to shift the formal hierarchy, nor to defy the top-down strategies of municipal actors to exclude the memory of the Cockpit from the new center.

At this point, the youth became a focal point in the controversy. The youth were pushed around in two simultaneous directions. They were tactically guided by the Cockpit Group in their acts of rebellion to contest the welfare professionals through minor misbehavior in and around the center, while also continuously being punished and criminalized for these incidents by the professionals.

The third characteristic of controversies is fast and unpredictable rhythm of actions and reaction. For a period of over two years (see Figure 20.2), the rhythm of controversy included small but weekly incidents. For example, the youth would lock themselves in the toilet around closing time, so that the professionals could not close the building and go home after their shift. "Another practice was to flush whole rolls of toilet paper so that the toilet would be clogged every week" (Omar, youth worker, personal interview, 20 June 2011). These tactical incidents started to produce ambivalence about the effective performance of the professionals. Dennis, a youth worker reflects on the tensions in this period:

At a certain moment you feel something like: hey, something is wrong here. And nine out of ten times you can't put your finger on what it is, but you know there is something in the atmosphere. There is a tension that you can almost touch.

(personal interview, 16 December 2009)

An important institutional strategy that professionals had at their disposal was expelling misbehaving youth from the community center. Expelling was meant

to re-establish order and maintain a needed power position to keep the center safe for other youth. In practice, however, it also spread the tensions from the center into other public spaces of the neighborhood. Because youth were forced to hang around in the street, new unsettling dynamics between the youth, the Cockpit Group, welfare professionals and other neighborhood residents emerged. “[It] becomes an issue of the police and the neighborhood. Because youth workers are in some sort of crisis in which they cannot keep control over that group” (Hans, head of local police department, personal interview, 13 May 2009).

Unsettling through Crisis

The extended period of controversy created a new form of settlement, continuous tensions became the norm. In line with the dominant narrative, local authorities assigned the Cockpit Group as the perpetrator of these dynamics: “violence increased each year. The breeding ground was that a part of this generation received support from their parents. Because they were in that group who had a key position in the neighbourhood that they had lost” (Hans, head of local police department, personal interview, 13 May 2009).

Unsettling dynamics became a settled state of affairs. The New Year’s Eve 2006–2007 riots described at the beginning of this chapter disrupted the fragile settled state and further escalated unsettling dynamics into what I call crisis:

Well, the same group lost control over themselves and over their youngsters. That’s why it became an uprooted disaster. That led to a situation where the police had to intervene harshly [...] we had to intervene harshly with the riot police.

(ibid.)

In moments of crisis, the rhythm of action and reaction accelerates: acts of affected citizens and local authorities or vice versa follow each other more quickly. As the state claims a monopoly on violence, they dismiss the act of violence, regain control over the public space and discipline the perpetrator. Often this response is equally or even more violent than the initial riot (Mitchell 2003; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999; Thörn et al. 2016). Like in many other moments of riot across the globe, local authorities in The Hague responded by sending militarized police and their tank-like vehicles, blocking the streets and arresting youth.

Conceptualizing Unsettling Dynamics

This chapter analyzed the dialectics of settling and unsettling dynamics at the street level. The escalating dynamics in the case study resulted in riots between youth and police. Authorities understand and approach riots by focusing on the necessity to police and contain them. I argue that if we truly want to understand

the meaning of riots, we must dig deeper into various forms of everyday violence that are performed simultaneously by the state, and preceding actions of professionals and citizens.

I proposed three typologies of urban conflict: dispute, controversy and crisis to understand the escalating process of settling and unsettling. These typologies emerged by analyzing the process of action and reaction among state actors, citizens and street-level professionals. The analytical triad of studying the rhythm of (re)action, the positioning of actors (Harré and Langehove, 1999) and the changing meaning of public space (Lofland 1998) was helpful to conceptualize the dialectic dynamics of (un)settling.

The case study revealed that unsettling dynamics start with seemingly small forms of exclusion. Not only in protracted conflicts but also in situations where relatively new tensions arise or where local governments have good intentions, like in The Hague. When studying the process of (un)settling, it is important to become attuned to the seemingly mundane everyday interactions and how they actively shape processes of exclusion and power relations, and lay the groundwork for future processes of (un)settling.

When disputes unsettled fragile settled relationships between the state and citizens, the rhythm of everyday life did not change; the Cockpit Group continued organizing for their club and residents visited the Cockpit. The meaning of the Cockpit and its founders, however, started to change via top-down strategies that produced uncertainty about the Cockpit as a parochial realm (Lofland 1998). The local government started to employ a stigmatizing narrative that reified the Cockpit Group's identity as 'Schilderswijkers' and the Cockpit as a 'terrain of bandits' challenging the Cockpit Group's identity as valid community organizers. The unsettling narrative disrupted the established agreement over ownership of public spaces and community activities. Disputes are often constrained to a single focal point, in this case, the appropriateness of the Cockpit in the neighborhood.

Controversy as a typology of unsettling dynamics is characterized by a broadening of topics over which parties disagree, by the introduction of new case actors, and an unpredictable rhythm of actions and reaction. The period of controversy broadened a dispute over participation in a community center to a controversy over social and spatial injustice. The strategies of local government and professionals deepened the stigmatization of the Cockpit Group and the youth connected to the Cockpit Group. The local government and welfare organization strategically sought to forget the memory of the Cockpit and the group lost their role as legitimate community organizers. At the same time, the youth started to be criminalized through everyday policing practices. In the very mundane interactions between professionals and the Cockpit Group, one type of citizenship was excluded from the public realm; the activities of lower educated residents that did not live up to the formal 'pedagogical' standards of the welfare state. Although the strategies of local authorities had the intention to organize community, their policy discursively and practically valued one form of citizenship over another (Holston and Appadurai 1999).

The narrative of the Cockpit Group reveals how they tactically operated: by claiming space, being present and stimulating disobedience of the youth in the center. These continuous claims of ownership through everyday forms of agency question and challenge the social order (Bayat 2013; Holston 2008). But they were unable to enforce a more equal hierarchy. As they were misunderstood and ignored, the interactions between residents of the Cockpit Group, youth and professionals simultaneously deepened uneven power dynamics.

To understand the moment of rioting that I characterize as crisis, we have to critically consider how the issues underlying the disagreement over the Cockpit became reified notions of identity and positioning that unsettled the dynamics further. As the organizers of the Cockpit became unwanted ‘others’ and inappropriate community organizers, a tangible process of exclusion unfolded. For the Cockpit Group and the youth, the disagreement was now no longer solely about the Cockpit, nor about their identity and position. The disagreement escalated to a conflict over the discrimination of lower working class and less educated citizens and their children in a community that was primarily inhabited by citizens who were better off and higher educated.

Crisis tends to emerge out of growing frustration and deepened experiences of exclusion. In Ypenburg (but also in other cases of youth riots, see for example Mitchell 2003; Schierup et al. 2014; Springer 2011; Wihtol de Wenden 2006), the exclusion of one voice was so persistent that youth saw no other means to voice their grievances and anger in the public sphere than to take over public space violently. “To demand inclusion in a space often means forcibly occupying the space of exclusion, reinforcing the idea that public space has never been guaranteed, and by its very definition must be contested” (Springer 2011: 542). The contingent process of unsettling closed the public space for the youth and left them with just one way to forcefully claim their right to the city.

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21

SERVED BUT UNSETTLED

The Contentious Side of Services for the Homeless

Massimo Bricocoli and Simon Güntner

Homeless Services and Their Spaces

Caring for the poor and providing services and benefits often implies keeping the recipients at distance from mainstream society (Simmel 1908; Paugam 1996). In the case of homeless people, the way in which accommodation and support are provided is particularly revealing of a contentious component of welfare policies. Shelters, for instance, can be crucial for survival, but for various reasons, they don't allow for settling. Access may be restricted to certain times (day or night), house rules and spatial arrangements may limit the possibilities to effectively find rest and peace. Hence, while homelessness is a dramatically unsettled condition, contentious situations arise related to the ways the services are provided and experienced, and there is an ambiguous relation between help, stigmatization and exclusion. In this chapter, we examine this relation conceptually and empirically. We draw on current studies on the '(re-)shelterization' of homeless services in the EU and on our own empirical research on shelters in Hamburg and Milan. Our observations are based on exploratory and ongoing interviews and site visits. In both cities, homelessness has changed drastically in the 21st century. Rising figures and an increasing diversity of persons and families who are crowded out of the ever denser housing markets pose complex challenges to the local welfare systems.

To understand the ambiguities around homeless services, an appreciation of the experience of being homeless is essential. It is one of the most vulnerable and precarious situations and most severe forms of poverty. In 2020, there were about four million people homeless in the EU, a figure that has increased by 70% within the last ten years (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre 2020). Homelessness does not have a universal meaning, and may include, but not be

limited by: sleeping rough, using night shelters, ‘couch surfing’ at the homes of acquaintances, or living in insecure or inadequate housing (FEANTSA 2005). This diversity is reflected in the range and complexity of services for the homeless. As stated in an overview report by the European Observatory on homelessness (EOH), an attempt to grasp the breadth of services in the field proves difficult:

[It] must encompass housing-led, choice orientated, comprehensive and flexible services that recognise housing as a human right, including housing-led, Housing First and CTI (Critical Time Intervention, MB/SG) services, alongside trauma informed approaches that use co-production. It must, realistically, also include emergency shelters that offer a bed, a meal and nothing else, or volunteers handing out soup and bread to people living on the street, because that is an important part of European responses to homelessness. (EOH 2018: 21)

EOH produced a useful classification of such services (2018: 8–10) and identified four categories:

- Emergency and temporary accommodation,
- Non-housing support: day centers and services such as food distribution, practical support, street work, medical treatment and advise, education and training,
- Housing-focused support: housing-led or ‘housing first’ services that aim at “securing and sustaining an independent home” (ibid.: 9),
- Prevention: services mediation that aim at preventing evictions, such as debt advice or mediation, or rapid rehousing.

While there is a trend toward housing-led and housing-first schemes in some countries, shelters and day centers are still a crucial feature of the service landscape. Even in advanced and well-structured systems, FEANTSA finds basic support to survive and get by appears to be necessary:

It is [...] the case that countries with the cutting edge of homelessness services and integrated strategies also have people handing out sleeping bags, bread and soup or providing spaces in churches or other buildings where people can sleep relatively safely, but which offer no real support. (ibid.: 2)

Some studies even suggest that in the context of austerity policies, the use of shelters has increased rather than declined. These places are characterized by the ambiguities and tensions that will be explored in the following sections of this chapter (for a historic account see Hopper 1990).

The Spatial Dimension of Local Welfare

Just as with all forms of agency, welfare interventions have a spatial dimension. Services are carried out in sites designed for a specific purpose, such as care homes or service centers, or, increasingly, in the everyday environments of users. Space can be regarded as a visible and material dimension of public action, of forms of government, and of organizations (Weick 1995). Interior and exterior design, the house rules, furniture and decoration, in use and interplay with staff, volunteers and users, create an atmosphere that impacts the practice and effect of servicing (Bifulco 2003; Güntner and Seukwa 2018).

The aesthetic and materiality of services is decisive to what we refer to here as ‘welfare spaces’. Welfare spaces are socially produced and reflect societal structures and conditions. They literally display the position of those in need of welfare services in society. In Western Europe, many welfare spaces that are in use today have a long history and were designed with particular ideas of welfare and social order that were paternalistic or progressive, religious or secular. Social change as well as welfare reforms had their effect on services but also on the places where they are carried out and led to diversification, de-institutionalization and de-standardization. Changing regulatory frameworks (e.g. state aid regulations) also often led to a diversification of public and private service providers and complex contractual and financial relations (Güntner and Maucher 2018).

Moreover, welfare spaces are also experienced and constructed by service users, staff and volunteers, by-passers and others who ascribe meaning to them (Diebäcker and Reutlinger 2018). By entering a place, and even before (e.g. when queuing outside), service users are assigned a particular role and position that is crucial to produce the respective service. The same holds for staff (e.g. managers, social workers and officers) and volunteers: they all play a particular role with a specific set of skills and decision-making power. These positions come with a particular reputation, expressed in the service itself, in working conditions, job security, wages, etc., and are mirrored in the way the space of the service is organized. The site where a service is delivered, however, has not necessarily been designed for that purpose. It might have been adapted to changing rationales of welfare policies—very visibly in current attempts to de-institutionalize care services and to replace ‘care homes’ by ‘caring communities’, increases or decreases in budgets, or external factors that may have nothing to do with the service (building regulations and other). Under certain circumstances, there might be a sense of improvisation and compromise, when a service and a place have to be adjusted to each.

Welfare Spaces and the Poor

In the early 20th century, Georg Simmel elaborated on the position of the poor in society. As much as welfare services helped the poor survive and find a place in society, he also found, the use of services distanced them

from mainstream society and reduced them into objects of administration (Simmel 1908). Simmel argued that historically, services and alms for the poor were less concerned about the subject's well-being but rather about keeping order and averting potential threats of vagrancy. Over centuries, this ambivalence has found manifold manifestations in space. Infamous examples are the workhouses that had first been introduced by the Poor Law Act in 1388 in England. When they were expanded in the 18th and 19th centuries, their disciplinary function was emphasized (Foucault 1975). After the Poor Law and the workhouses were abolished in 1948, some continued to be used as retirement homes or homeless shelters (Longmate 2003). Another example are food banks and soup kitchens (Glasser 2004). As essential as they can be for survival, they do not represent a structural solution to tackling poverty, and, while providing food and goods that are urgently needed, may even trigger shaming of the people they serve and the areas where they are served (Garthwaite 2016).

As they manifest difference and distance, the sites where the poor and needy are served function as 'heterotopias of deviation', where "individuals are placed whose behavior is deviant in relation to the mean or required norm" (Foucault 2008[1967]: 18). The relevance of spatial qualities in the organization of welfare services has been a major focus in some recent experimental policies and reform programs. A notable example is the project *WEMI-Welfare for all* that was promoted by the City of Milan in the years 2015–2017 as part of a wider reform of the local welfare system. A general objective of the project was to ease access to welfare services for a wide range of people, including those who may be well-off (and therefore not entitled to social assistance) but still bear difficulties and needs. Together with an online platform (wemi.milano.it), a set of 12 new front-office spaces was opened. The rationale of the project was that a new approach as well as better accessibility to welfare services would need symbolic and concrete artifacts if the relation between welfare services and people was to be improved (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli 2017). Assuming that socio-cultural and architectural features characterize a place and are intertwined in defining its identity as well as the people's experiences of a specific environment, the project developed an integrated strategy aiming at providing a distinguishable visual identity and comfortable and welcoming spaces (see Figure 21.1). Support in terms of communication design and of spatial configuration of the offices was provided by experts of the Department of Design and of the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano. The development of a visual identity for the *WeMi* spaces symbolized a marked difference as the existing sites of municipal social services typically lack signage at the point of access. Without providing a fixed or rigid model, for each WeMi Space, specific care was put in the definition of spatial and organizational features in terms of *context* (i.e. welfare services localization), *setting* (i.e. architectural and interior design arrangements) and *artifacts* (i.e. objects, lights and colors).



FIGURE 21.1 WEMI San Gottardo. Welfare services and mixed-use space.

Source: Giovanni Hänninen, 2019.

(Re-)Shelterization and Reconfiguration of Homeless Services in Times of Austerity Policies and Immigration

To emphasize the power of the environment to influence behavior, Grunberg and Eagle (1990: 522) used the term ‘shelterization’ and referred to a “process of acculturation endemic to shelter living”, expressed by phenomena such as “a decrease in interpersonal responsiveness, a neglect of personal hygiene, increasing passivity, and increasing dependency on others” (Matousek 2018: 99). This concept has stirred controversy and criticism, mainly in the US context (Marcus 2003). A more structural use of the concept emphasizes the conditions in shelters rather than individual behavior (Gounis 1992; Glumbikova and Nedelnikova 2017). In their study on homelessness in Athens, Arapoglou et al. (2015) propose a version that goes beyond the shelters as such and involves wider policy considerations. They also apply the concept not to the relation between a person and a shelter but elevate it to a systemic level: “shelterisation is a principal component of an ‘emergency model’ of managing the social consequences of the financial crisis” (ibid.: 152). They argue that three factors lead to a gradual favoring of shelters compared to alternative approaches to social support (ibid.: 141). These are:

- an emergency-oriented system of limited, inadequate and/or inappropriate resources that homeless have to compete for,
- a ‘homeless industry’, that either “endlessly prepares people for re-integration [...] or [...] stores them away”, and
- an “emergency-minded orientation of institutional responses” (ibid.: 140–141).

A version of this trend has shaped the homeless service landscape in many European cities and contributed to inconsistent and contradictory structures (EOH 2018).

In Hamburg, for instance, the system of homeless services appears to be ambivalent and split. On the one hand, the city has, since 2005, developed an approach to prevent evictions and homelessness through improved coordination between various services, individual support in dealing with rent arrears and counseling, and more recently strengthened support services to help people experiencing homelessness find, rent and maintain a dwelling. On the other hand, and related to the limited capacities of this approach, a key part of its response to homelessness are accommodations under public law and the *Winternotprogramm*, an emergency shelter system, which is open from November to March, to prevent people from freezing. Similar emergency programs have been installed in other German cities, which often appear as improvised through the use of shipping containers (see Figure 21.2), opening underground stations at night or tolerating temporary tent camps (Haak and Strauß 2019; Strauß 2019).

According to a recent count, the number of people living on the street in Hamburg nearly doubled during the past ten years to a current estimate of 1910 persons and the city expanded the service from 100 beds in 2007 (when it was launched) to 804 beds in winter 2018/2019 and, due to increased demand caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to 1020 beds in 2020/2021 (Wagner 2016; FHH 2020). It consists of two large structures with 400 and 250 beds (with a reserve of 100 beds), which are run by a public agency. Further beds are provided in smaller, decentralized arrangements by welfare organizations and the University of Applied Sciences, mainly in shipping containers. The facilities are open from



FIGURE 21.2 Containers as part of the *Winternotprogramm* Hamburg.

Source: Simon Güntner, 2018.

5 p.m. in the evening to 9.30 a.m. in the morning. During the day, there are some centers that homeless can visit to warm up; one of which is a temporarily transformed concert hall that is not used due to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides space for 200 persons.

To manage and limit the demand, Hamburg introduced an eligibility system that allows access to a bed only to those who cannot help themselves otherwise. Those “who could end their homelessness in Hamburg with a return home” are not eligible (Sozialbehörde Hamburg 2020). This effectively and purposefully crowds out immigrants who make up an increasing proportion of the homeless. For these, so-called *Wärmestuben* [‘warm parlours’] are provided, where they can get tea and a seat, but no bed (Füllner 2017). To fill gaps and help those who can’t find or don’t seek shelter, volunteer initiatives such as a *Kältebus* [‘Chillness Bus’] have been started, which distributes sleeping bags, gloves, chocolate or tissues (Bosch 2019; Deckner 2019). Campaigns and demonstrations, such as a ‘Wintermove’ called for an extension of the emergency program to be open throughout the day and throughout the year, which is refused by the local authority. Despite their well-meant intentions, however, some of the spontaneous private initiatives to provide food, clothes, and in some instances also medication, were seen as ambiguous and problematic by established service providers for their lack of professional knowledge and standards.

An assessment of the 2018/2019 program proved controversial. The Senator for Social Affairs presented that not all places had actually been used every night and declared this as a success (Sozialbehörde Hamburg 2019). Opposition parties and welfare organizations interpreted the data differently. They read the decline in numbers in relation to the increasingly restricted access and saw it as a sign of exclusion and discrimination against most needy groups, such as eastern European immigrants and deferred asylum seekers (Deckner 2019; Trautwein 2019). Indeed, there are frequent reports in local and national media of rough sleepers who try to avoid the shelters (Kempkens 2019). Those who avoid shelters commonly included the following as their reasoning: overcrowding, strict rules to leave early in the morning, but also violence.

These reasons for avoiding services resemble the findings of a study on emotional geographies of homeless people in Copenhagen (Fahnoe 2018). Emphasizing the “interplay between emotions and the spatial dynamics of places” (ibid.: 28), it finds that because of fear and disgust, some homeless do not make use of shelters and services. Fahnoe argues that avoidance should not be read as “self-exclusion”, but rather “be understood as driven by the spatial dynamics of certain places which prompt negative emotions” (ibid.: 29). It shows that the very design of a place, purposefully or not, can effectively exclude people from its use: “spatial dynamics shape policies” whilst “the spatial dynamics related to materiality, symbolic dimensions and practices are shaped by policies” (ibid.: 28). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically tightened and worsened the situation in homeless shelters, with large structures such as those used in the Hamburg emergency services turning into hot-spots for infections.

When people avoid or don't have access to services and places such as shelters, they turn to public space. Hence, public space is a crucial infrastructure of the 'homeless city' and homeless people's strategies and tactics to survive and get by (Cloke et al. 2010: 63ff). Public spaces, however, are rarely welcoming and comforting, but often rather, and increasingly, designed and controlled to push homeless persons away. A personal account of a person experiencing homelessness in Hamburg is telling: "You can only choose between being displaced and entering a conflict" (Kempkens 2019).

De-institutionalization and De-standardization: Ambitious and Ambiguous Approaches to Service Innovation

Across Europe, large and specialized institutions are important and visible pillars of welfare policies. This also holds for homeless services, which have, throughout the 20th century, been linked to large-scale facilities that function as emergency shelters or temporary accommodation. However, criticism against negative effects of institutionalization in the context of wider social change has led to paradigmatic shifts in many (Western) European countries since the mid-1970s (Eurich et al. 2019). For homelessness services, the most radical and pronounced model to emerge from this criticism is 'housing first', which was first developed in the US and has become the benchmark in the EU as well: the provision of direct access to independent and permanent housing, as an alternative to a sequence of supported and assisted forms of provisional accommodation (Pleace 2016). Whilst this model has inspired much conceptual development in homeless services across the EU, large-scale shelters are still in use and still present a key component of the service landscape. Adapting and redesigning these buildings poses a challenge for providers, as their very design often reflects an exclusionary and paternalistic version of welfare and that is at odds with progressive and emancipatory concepts and policies.

A place that illustrates this well is *Casa Jannacci*, a large historical institution for the homeless in Milano (Breckner and Bricocoli 2012; Fabbri 2019). The institution was opened in 1956, consisting of six large pavilions which would serve as dormitories for 1,000 people, plus one main administrative building and a canteen. Homeless people would be admitted only for the night and kept out during the day. In 2014, the institution was renamed after Enzo Jannacci, a popular singer, to mark a programmatic reconfiguration (see Figures 21.3 and 21.4).

The organization was partly turned into a network of services providing access to different forms of accommodation: mobile units around the city were set up while underused parts of the building were transformed to host some social housing dwellings. Other programs aim at more effectively enhancing capabilities by way of fostering processes of job insertion and secured housing provision. Services were incrementally de-standardized; answers and solutions have been more tailored to the needs and capabilities of individuals. Within the pavilions, a differentiated set of arrangements was offered (short- and



FIGURE 21.3 Casa Jannacci: Incremental transformation of a large historical institution.
Source: Massimo Bricocoli, 2019.



FIGURE 21.4 Casa Jannacci: The entrance.
Source: Massimo Bricocoli, 2019.

medium-term up to one year—for a total of 484 beds). While the general rule of the Casa Jannacci allows access to the services either to Italian citizens or holders of regular permits of stay, over the years much has been done to lower the threshold for access. Several services and activities were developed that can be accessed also by people who are not overnight guests (Fabri 2019). These changes respond to an increasing diversification of Milan's homeless population. In 2018, 79% of the guests were men and 21% women; 51% of the guests were

North Africans (a vast majority of which are single men) and less than a quarter were of Italian nationality (24%).

The process of de-standardizing spaces and social service approaches with reference to the variety of individual profiles and needs entails the unsettling of a very consolidated and homogeneous approach to homelessness. It requires a lot of energy and the creation of partnerships with a number of third-party actors that may provide integrative environment and possibilities (i.e. social enterprises supporting job insertion). In the face of scant public funding, the transformation of the old complex is still very much incremental and minimal because it represents a series of minor reconfigurations to adapt to longitudinal (e.g. housing costs) and emerging (e.g. COVID-19) emergency issues. A more radical approach to confronting the scale of scope of homelessness would require that such a large complex undergo an overall spatial reconfiguration and become a terrain for experimenting on the frontline of welfare services and architectural design. The process of de-institutionalization and the overcoming of the dormitory as a 'specialized container' makes explicit the need to address the manifold dimensions that impact the life of the homeless. Consequently, the respective services and providers have to be transformed and aligned to pave the way from mobile social work to permanent housing (Tosi 2018). In the case of the *Casa Jannacci*, the incremental evolution of welfare services demonstrated the capacity to adapt to a rapid change of social needs and handle a very dynamic situation and to provide more adequate and differentiated services, supporting homeless through enhancing a cooperation between public sector and third-party actors—despite an overall increasingly hostile and adverse environment. Yet, the Milanese case remains also a very emblematic example of how broader housing policies are currently failing to enable welfare policies to respond to the most severe housing needs, while the provision of housing is increasingly commodified and financialized.

Unsettling Services

The (re-)emerging 'emergency model' of homeless services in the context of a rise of homelessness is a complex and ambivalent manifestation of urban contestation. Paradoxically, it appears at a time when the traditional service landscape is criticized for and challenged by new paradigms such as 'housing first'. But a dramatic rise in demand for basic survival support such as soup kitchens and shelters across Europe indicates their limits and the dramatic effects of the underlying housing crisis. For users, but also for staff members, these services—positioned between control and care (Whiteford 2010; Watts et al. 2018)—are unsettling. Denying or deferring access to services to some groups, particularly those who are not citizens or native-born, presents not only as disrespectful and even life-threatening to those who are denied these services, but also as demanding and overwhelming for those who exert that denial. It can effectively turn a place that was designed as a sanctuary into sites of 'bordering, ordering and othering' (van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002; see also Güntner et al. 2016). The spatial dimension of it is

obvious when a door is closed to some people despite them demonstrating an existential need, but it can also be more subtle, such as when people turn away from assistance or support they are entitled to.

In the winter emergency services in Hamburg, providers have responded in different ways to the order that denies access for non-eligible persons. Some have followed the order meticulously whilst others tried to use their discretion in support of non-eligible persons and/or organized public protest. For a profession that regards “principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities” (IFSW and IASSW 2014) as central, protest against these conditions appears as a reasonable strategy, but also subversion and resistance at the point of service, or the search for alternative forms of help that can evade municipal and state regulations. Clearly, for a social worker, balancing professional mandates and ethics with counter instructions by their organization and a subjective assessment of the respective situation, is challenging. But even more and for all parties involved, it appears that situations like this test and unsettle their belief in the purpose of public welfare and, more generally, in public institutions. Evidently, conflicts around shelters and ‘shelterization’ are just one site in a wider landscape of urban contestations, reflecting underlying dynamics of societal transformation that go far beyond welfare services, yet do find a particularly nuanced expression in them. This broader context is addressed by recent urban movements and protest against bordering and exclusion in many cities, often also relating to refugees and housing struggles (Agustin and Jorgensen 2019). The practices and expressions of solidarity that emerge out of these movements not only make public the adverse and precarious living conditions of many, but generate new, post-national and post-traditional imaginaries of community and belonging, questioning and unsettling hegemonic ideas of social order.

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22

THE CHALLENGES OF CONSENSUS, CONFLICT AND DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION IN TURBULENT WATERS

Sophie Watson

Entanglements of Unsettled Currents

We are living in increasingly unsettled and turbulent times, where the imperative to find new ways of thinking about cities, and contributing to them as activists, planners, architects and policymakers is ever more urgent. In this context, democratic participation and debate in cities are highly relevant. This is all the more important in many parts of the world where neoliberal economic thinking is dominant and where we see the state withdrawing from public involvement and expenditure. In these countries, it is even more urgent for marginalized populations to be able to voice their dissent. One key arena where public life is enacted are the urban commons and community spaces, which are negotiated by all and free to those using them. Such spaces, which are central to the argument developed here, underpin the inclusiveness of cities, which have the potential to be just and responsive to local needs. What I want to suggest in this chapter is that in the context of cities as spaces of differences juxtaposed in complex configurations with one another, often at density, living together necessarily involves contestation, conflict, resolution and compromise. Therefore, no place is settled forever. New needs are articulated, and new practices—from political action to government interventions—are enacted that will unsettle the settled. Flux and change are inevitable processes of urban life.

Let me turn to how can these turbulent and unsettled currents in cities be understood in several ways. First, over the past decade, there have been growing social and economic inequalities within cities, regions and countries in access to, and the distribution of, resources. These inequalities are inflected by, and constituted in, differences across race, ethnicity, sex, gender and age specifically, which derive from unequal relations of power. Rising house prices and the lack of affordable housing for people on low and middle incomes renders large numbers

of people dependent on high rent levels or forced to live in far flung suburbs or rural locations at some distance from their place of employment or resorting to living in cars or other forms of temporary solutions, as the blue-collar workers of Silicon Valley (Chapter 8, this volume). At the extreme end, growing numbers of homeless people are consigned to temporary shelter on city streets and underpasses, or temporary settlements, dependent on diminishing services or the kindness of strangers. Secondly, there is a growing number of people displaced from their place of origin, due to political or religious conflict, persecution or lack of resources. Many of these refugees find themselves without accommodation and employment and vulnerable to exploitation in their place of arrival. There is evidence that climate change and environmental degradation—lack of water, pollution and desertification—is contributing further to the movement of populations, a trend that is likely to continue and deteriorate over the coming years. Third, we see increasing disaffection with traditional democratic governments and institutions, often expressed in hostility toward the metropolitan elites and experts, which is manifest in the rise of populist movements from the US to countries across Europe. Such a disaffection, I suggest, potentially has serious consequences for the future of democracy. To date liberal democratic societies have been ill prepared to confront the present challenge, often unable to grasp its nature. As a result, we see the growth of right-wing populism, nationalism and racism, and a lack of tolerance toward those who are different. Fourth, societies are becoming increasingly complex, interconnected, unpredictable and uncertain, not least because of the increasing visibility of differences of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, households, age and bodies, in city life.

Such complexity and uncertainty present serious challenges for city planners and urban policymakers. In this context, the urban commons (Kornberger and Borch 2015) and community and public spaces (Madanipour, Knierbein and Degros 2014; Watson 2006) become ever more important, the former conceived as an alternative to the battle between public and private, and as land or services that are commonly and collectively owned and managed, the latter to spaces that are open to all regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or other socio-economic factors. These spaces are important for the opportunities they provide for low-income people to find recreation and relief from the intensity of city life, not only for different people to encounter one another, or for the people whose accommodation offers them no outside space, but also for people to create new ways of living and interacting, among many other reasons. Ensuring that public space and the urban commons remain open to the multiple publics that live in cities is a challenge, since every public space is embedded in relations of power, which serve to include one group at the same time as marginalizing another. When these processes become fixed, and firm hard borders are established, groups that are ‘othered’ in the process may have difficulty finding a way in. This, then, is the context for thinking about democratic participation in cities, where much of the discussion of its importance in planning and politics overlooks both the reality of conflict and its contradictory effects, which can be negative, when

voices are silenced, and positive when negotiation and debate lead to outcomes that take account of different voices and views. However, there is a normative assumption that agreement and compromise can always be reached, even though such agreement has the potential to overlook, marginalize and ignore differences and tension. Assumptions of consensus typically underpin the often-valued notions of participatory democracy.

Instead, I suggest, what is needed is a better understanding of conflict and collaboration as mutually reinforcing elements of an ongoing political process, where conflict is not only unavoidable but also a necessary aspect of participation and engagement. Compromises may have to be reached, but they are reached often at the expense of marginalized groups and implicated in relations of power. Chantal Mouffe's (1999, 2013) writing is a helpful starting point. Mouffe suggests that 'deliberative democracy' is a commendable aspiration, which confronts the problems of an interest-based conception of democracy, which is inspired by economics, and which is skeptical about the virtues of political participation. Theorists who are interested in developing notions of deliberative democracy, according to Mouffe (1999: 745–746), aim to introduce questions of morality and justice into thinking about politics. This involves looking for new meanings of traditional democratic ideals such as autonomy, sovereignty and equality. However, as Mouffe (*ibid.*) argues, "their aim is to reformulate the classical idea of the public sphere, giving it a central place in the democratic project". What matters in this conception of democracy is reason and rational argument rather than interests or an attempt to respond politically to majority preferences. Jürgen Habermas (1962) emphasizes the importance of rational debate, typically in the public sphere of the coffee house, where deliberative democracy is based on social practices of communication—according to classical principles of democratic theory, in particular, the concept of popular sovereignty, which he understands as the unconstrained political sovereignty or government by the people or their elected representatives, which presupposes that people are free and equal (Schumacher 2018). Seyla Benhabib (1996: 70) similarly argues for a democratic theory, which attempts to bring together rationality with legitimacy seeking a 'common good' that is compatible with the sovereignty of the people. Such a formulation is based on the assumption that common interests can be agreed upon through the processes of rational collective deliberation between free and equal individuals, who all have the chance to initiate debate and question the assigned topics of the conversation, and all have the right to challenge the very rules of the engagement and procedures (*ibid.*). Such challenges are nevertheless also embedded in the inequalities that derive from differences in power. Nancy Fraser (1990) develops these arguments in her call for spaces for 'subaltern counter publics'—where minorities, such as women, gays, Black people and others, can articulate their claims through counter discourses to those that are dominant.

Mouffe (2013), in contrast, takes seriously the dimension of power and extends this to consider its ineradicable relation to antagonism. She suggests that the possibility of a public sphere that is devoid of power and antagonism within

which a rational consensus is imagined as the outcome involves the denials of some conflict as inevitable in the formation and performance of collective identities. For this reason, the traditional model of democratic politics is inadequate since it fails to recognize this. So too the idea that planning can intervene to organize consensus becomes problematic. Rather, the question of power, Mouffe argues, is central to the conduct of political debate, and in my view central to living with differences in the city, which are crucial to the production and reproduction of public spaces, which are ultimately spaces of politics and power, which act to include some social groups while excluding others. Public space can never be a neutral space where all people have equal access at all times; it is bound to be a space of contestation and conflict, even if these conflicts are sometimes resolved. But any resolution is bound to be temporary and impermanent, or maintained through constant attention to the differences of power that are constituted and played out in the public realm. Identities are necessarily formed and constituted in the spaces of the city, themselves vulnerable and precarious and shifting.

This approach that I am advocating involves a displacement of the traditional relations between democracy and power, which, following Mouffe (2013), accepts that power relations are constitutive of the social. Acceptance of this proposition opens up the question not of how to eradicate power, but rather to think about, and work with, forms of power that are compatible with democratic values rather than destructive. This is to acknowledge that power relations are always present and need to be transformed in the interests of what Mouffe refers to as the project of ‘radical and plural democracy’. In this conception of politics, others who are different from ourselves are not conceived as some kind of enemy that needs to be destroyed, but rather as an ‘adversary’, whose ideas we listen to and possibly struggle against, in occasional relations of antagonism. But for Mouffe, this conflict between adversaries who may disagree involves mutual respect and the recognition of one another’s right to exist. Mouffe called this kind of respectful conflict ‘agonistic pluralism’. In this way of thinking, the objective of democratic politics is not to eliminate passions or differences through rational debate, rather, it is to mobilize these passions and differences toward new forms of democracy through ‘agonism’.

I find myself attracted to Mouffe’s notion of agonism, in its more ‘friendly’ and open sense of engagement with differences rather than their erasure through consensus seeking. But as Nikolai Roskamm (2015) cogently argues, however, there are other ways of thinking through the conflicts—antagonisms that inevitably are constituted in the spaces of the city without arguing for agonist pluralism. As he points out, Mouffe’s thinking developed from the writing of Carl Schmitt (2007 [1932]) which sees the ideals of pluralist democracy as “a contradictory combination of irreconcilable principles: on the one hand, deliberative consensus (the aim of democratic politics), on the other, antagonistic forces (the essence of the political), which leads him to argue that liberal government is not ultimately viable” (Roskamm 2015: 390). Mouffe sees conflicting differences—antagonism—as

constituting democracy, through proposing agonism as ‘taming’ the antagonistic engagement with the other into an agonistic encounter where differences constituted in relations of power are explicitly debated without necessarily being resolved. Roskamm (2015) reminds us of the other influence on Mouffe’s thought—Ernesto Laclau (1990) with whom she collaborated. For Laclau, identities—constituted in relations of power—are not fixed but contingent—which is to say—they are constituted in specific contexts, partial and thus open to change. As Roskamm (2015: 398) suggests, reflecting on the work of Schmitt, Laclau and Mouffe shows that

both antagonism and the constitutive outside are not the enemies, and that antagonism is not a personal feature but a structural principle. Accepting the possibility of an outside without thinking in friend/enemy distinctions constitutes a starting point for a fresh rendezvous of agon/antagonism and planning theory.

Finally, on the question of differences between groups, psychoanalytic theory with its focus on affect can offer some insight into the context of urban politics. I suggest that antagonistic differences to those that are different from oneself or one’s group often occur as a result of fear of others who we don’t understand, or whose culture is not familiar—the fear of the stranger (Kristeva 1991). This can lead urban dwellers to cut themselves off from others in gated communities, or behind walls, and refuse to engage with others who they see as threatening. One of the challenges of living together in cities is thus to break down these visible and invisible boundaries that are erected between one group and another, creating soft rather than hard borders between places to open up spaces of engagement. It also involves acknowledging that relations of power produce a sense of powerlessness that many people feel, particularly in the context of a lack of education, employment or income. It also means addressing the question of representation in the political and public spaces of the city, noticing who gets to speak and who gets to represent who. So often it is only the powerful voices that are heard.

In many cities, there is a long history of the importance of the urban commons and public space. With the growth of environmental movements over the past two decades, there has been a renewed interest in creating urban gardens and making use of liminal and marginal spaces of the city which have been neglected—alongside railway lines, under bridges, adjacent to derelict buildings and so on. Places that were previously not valorized—such as open water swimming spaces—are increasingly important to city life (Watson 2019a). New public spaces are emerging, and new forms of community and social organizing are taking place. These forms of collaboration provide hope for the city as a space of self-organization and a radical democratic politics that engages the diverse populations that now inhabit many cities of the world. Yet it remains important to think about the questions posed earlier in this chapter. How to create these spaces

without excluding some groups? How can urban citizenship be constructed to be open to those that are different from those engaged in their construction? How can different groups have their interests met, and also be represented? Questions of how to engage in democratic debate that does not shut down some voices or force consensus where none exists need to be addressed. How to build political capacity among marginal urban actors? In this, it is important to recognize the heterogeneity of urban populations rather than impose some imagined homogeneity. It is important also to recognize the complex socio-cultural and political histories of place, recognizing the specificity of each unique locality and taking this into account when constructing and imagining different futures. Urban commons and community spaces in cities are here to stay. What matters is to ensure that they are open and inclusive to all the diverse actors that participate and inhabit city spaces. As we see in our story that follows, this may be a laudable aim but not always one that can be achieved.

Turbulent Waters

Let me turn now to a story of storms over calm waters, or less metaphorically, the unsettling of a settled place where a politics of belonging, consensus and heterogeneity was disturbed by disputes as to whose space this was. This brief vignette raises interesting questions and debates. Hampstead Ladies Pond, in Hampstead Heath in North London, has existed since the late 19th century as a bathing pond for women's exclusive use. Originally established to protect women's modesty and privacy in the late Victorian period, over the past century or more, it has increasingly been celebrated as a site for women to share, away from the male gaze, and enjoyed by women of all ages, different sexualities, different ethnicities, and different bodies. So popular has it become that on summer days, the queues extend for some 100 meters away from the pond and admittance has to be restricted.

This pond is passionately defended and loved by the women who swim there, many of whom have been swimming there for decades, sometimes throughout the entire year. When the City of London Corporation who manage the Heath, and the ponds within it, attempted to introduce charges—the ponds until recently have been free—or curtail winter swimming on the grounds of the health risks, these incursions have been fiercely resisted (Watson 2019a). Women who swim in the pond talk of how swimming in the ponds is sublime, exhilarating, spiritual, soothes troubled souls and so on. Poems, books and artworks have all been inspired by these calm green waters hidden from view by the surrounding bushes. For lesbians, it represents a place of safety where women can be together without harassment, for certain minorities such as Orthodox Jewish women, or Muslim women, it is the only public place where they can reveal their bodies and swim.

This peaceful co-existence at the ponds was disturbed in 2018 when transgenderism fractured this long-established harmony. Though the number of transgender women swimming in the pond, or being present there was almost

negligible, some women at the ponds objected vociferously to the presence of transgender women at the pond, and particularly in the shower area, leading to extensive public discussion and media coverage. The views expressed by those opposed to transgender women at the pond drew on several arguments, interestingly on some of the same features of the pond for which it had often been praised—its significance for minority ethnic women, its imagined safety for girls and women away from men. Comments like these were published in the press:

One Muslim woman said she would no longer be able to use a woman only pool or changing room. She said: ‘I will no longer be able to use women only pool and changing area if men are allowed in’.

(Gordon 2019)

My nieces are not allowed to be uncovered around men and will not be able to learn to swim.

(Gordon 2019)

Muslim girls are put at risk and discriminated against by this change.

(Gordon 2019)

A survey was launched by the Hampstead Heath management to explore women’s views with objections drawing on discourses of biological sex—that access should be restricted to women born in a female body, on the need to prioritize the dignity of women and girls, and a concern that any transgender woman who self-identified as a woman, where her bodily characteristics remained those typically recognized as male could enter the ponds. One long-term swimmer described seeing a young man using the pond wearing a bikini and declaring he was transitioning to a woman. This was seen to lay women and girls open to the threat of violence and to threaten the sense of safety that the women’s pond offered:

Feminist writer Julie Bindel is also a regular visitor to the pond and lambasted the decision to welcome transgender women as ‘totally unacceptable’. The last thing [young girls] want is to look behind them and see a male-bodied person pretending to be a woman in order to gawp at them.

(Petter 2018)

Some women entered the men’s pond nearby donned in beards as an attempted counterpoint. Though the figures from the survey were disputed, a majority of women were supportive of transgender women, with some women referring to the women who objected to trans-women swimming in the pond as TERFS—trans-exclusionary feminists, while others, though not drawing on this discourse, supported the equal rights of transgender women as laid down in the Equality Act of 2010, and the political position of Stonewall’s campaign and organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights: the supporters of the scheme to

open up the pond to all women identifying as women argued that it was essential that trans-women had a safe place to go. One said:

I am happy to share services for women with those not born into female bodies [...] I think their safety would be more compromised in male spaces than mine would be by having trans women in a female space with me.

(Duggan 2019)

In the end, the dispute was resolved at the political level with the City of London Corporation adopting a new gender identity policy, which meant that anyone could have access to female facilities if they identified as a woman. In their statement, the Corporation declared (cited in Duggan 2019):

All communities should be fully respected, and equality and basic human rights upheld. [...] We aspire to be a leader in diversity, equality and inclusion. [...] We are committed to building and supporting a strong, sustainable and cohesive society in the capital and beyond, and this policy will take us one step further towards realising this vision.

As one woman said: “I have been swimming there for years, as many London women trans and cis. It is a tiny piece of heaven that just got better” (Petter 2018). For the women who opposed this view, their right to have sole access to what they defined as safe women only spaces, of which there are few, were denied. However, the decision put the debate to rest.

This story illustrates the instability of the apparently settled nature of urban spaces and accepted everyday practices, and how quickly they can become unsettled. It also illustrates the challenge of finding solutions where spatial justice is not an easily attainable goal (Watson 2019b), since as Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2014) suggests no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time. In the end, the two opposing views could not both be recognized in policy terms, unless, for example, practical solutions were proposed, which offered different groups of women particular time slots. But such a solution was unpopular and also problematic, since at the legal level, excluding transgender women at one time of day would have been contrary to the Equality Act and the spirit of the Corporation’s policy on gender identity. But clearly, debates had to be possible even if the eventual outcome did not satisfy some of the protagonists.

In Mouffe’s terms, what we saw here was agonism in practice where the conflict between adversaries was not shut down, each was vociferous about their views and debate was possible among adversaries. Yet in the end, the conflict was resolved through enacting legal decisions agreed for wider public policy issues beyond this specific site. Not everyone was satisfied with the decision. The majority voice and view held sway, since this decision was underpinned by the law, putting an end to the continuing practice of ‘agonistic pluralism’ as enacted in this space. This dispute thus followed a pattern for past political

struggles, where the outcomes, seen by some as a success, for others a failure, were institutionalized in policy and regulations. Shutting down the dispute in the way that took place put an end to agonism at specific moment in time, illustrating the difficulty of an ongoing and vibrant culture of political debate and struggle, which does not necessarily have to be resolved. On the other hand, this case study gives a picture of how agonism in practice works beyond immediate political wins. Perhaps the main achievement of such struggles in the city lies in raising awareness about different practices, about the importance of sensitivity toward others who are different, or the emancipation of certain groups to engage as politically active subjects, which they otherwise would not do.

There are not always easy answers to contestations of space in the city. Returning to Laclau's emphasis on the more contingent constitution of identities and differences, it follows that no space is ever settled forever and these—or other—differences at the pond may erupt again in a different form depending on the context. Where power relations are in play, there is an inevitable contestation of spaces as this example illustrates. In practical terms, the easiest way to solve such conflicts is recourse to the law, as occurred here, where such law exists. But the resolution was only partial, in that one group's demands were not met. The different views of adversaries nevertheless need to be acknowledged even if consensus cannot easily be found. Differences between groups, different interests, unequal relations of power always exist in some form in cities, though for much of the time, they may not be visible and lie dormant, while inevitably leading to a constant dynamic of settled/unsettled/settled/unsettled. These differences make cities the vibrant and dynamic spaces we know and love.

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INDEX

Note: *Italic* page numbers refer to figures and page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.

- abolition of slavery 112, 179, 180, 182, 184–185
- accommodation: formal and informal
tourist 78; forms of 255; for New Urban Tourists 80; notion of 60; refugee 58, 60; relationship between dwelling and 59
- Accossatto, Romina 204, 208
- Act of Parliament (1708) 169
- Act of Uniformity (1662) 168
- Afro-Americans: land and marginalization of 184; towns of 191
- age-friendly cities 129, 133, 137
- age-friendly urban spaces 137, 138
- age-related changes 129, 130, 134, 136, 137
- age-related planning 132–135
- aging: geographical research on 129; learning from urban everyday spaces of 134–137; in relation to space 130–132; sociocultural perceptions of 133
- ‘aging in place’ 134, 135
- Agnew, John 75
- agonism 207, 263–265, 268, 269
- agonistic planning theory 214, 215
- agonistic pluralism 264, 268
- Airbnb 80, 83, 92
- Ali, Syed 123
- Al Sabi, Alia 123
- antagonism 13, 37, 42, 62, 198, 207, 210, 226, 227, 263–265
- Anti-Eviction Mapping Project 94
- Arabian-Emirati identity 121
- Arapoglou, Vassilis 252
- Archer, Thomas 169
- architectural setting 141, 216
- architectural space 219
- Arendt, Hannah 217, 222n2; *The Origins of Totalitarianism* 221n1
- Argentina: #NiUnaMenos (*see* #NiUnaMenos); rates of violence against women 203
- Ash, John 172
- Athanassiou, Evangelia 23
- Attwood, Thomas 176
- austerity politics 40, 41
- Austin, Stephen 181
- Austrian Armed Forces 67–68, 73, 76
- Austrian national identity, construction of 69–71
- Austrian State Treaty 70–73
- Banal Nationalism* (Billig) 67, 73
- Barthes, Roland 74
- Batty, Michael 93
- Bayat, Asef 21, 43
- b-boy 30–31, 31
- Benhabib, Seyla 263
- Bergson, Henri 108
- Berlin 87–88; challenged routines of cohabitation 86–87; challenged routines of settling 82–84; contested routines

- of dwelling 84–86; 'Lebensweltlich orientierte Räume' 88n2; local routines contested 81–82, 82; New Urban Tourism and debate in 79–81; residential neighborhoods in 78; sticker campaign against tourists in 79
- b-girl 30, 32
- BID *see* Business Improvement District (BID)
- Billig, Michael 74; *Banal Nationalism* 67, 73
- Birmingham Library 166; as building 176–177, 177; foundation and committee of 171–174, 173; as framework for ethical interpretation of city 177–178; radical dissent, invention and industry 167–171
- Birmingham Riot 174–176, 175
- Black church 187, 191; congregations 179
- Blasio, Bill de 224, 229
- Bodnar, Judit 112
- Bondi, Liz 29
- botellon* phenomenon 42–44
- Boulton, Matthew 171, 172
- Bourdieu, Pierre 20
- Boxhagener Platz 80–81, 83–88
- Brandt, Stefan 24
- Bricocoli, Massimo 200
- British Trucial State 116
- British Waterways 142, 147
- Broadgate Estates 144, 151, 151n2, 163n2
- brochure 62, 63, 64, 65
- Brown, Jesse 180
- Brown-Saracino, Japonica 155
- Building a Proposition for Future Activities* project 52, 56, 59, 61, 62, 65
- Bulut, Ebru 73
- Burckhardt, Lucius: *Who plans planning?* 58–59
- Business Improvement District (BID) 144–146, 148–151
- Butler, Judith 20
- Cabrini-Green: demolition of 155; redevelopment area 155, 156; temporalities of 155–161; transformation of 161–163
- Campbell, Colen: *Vitruvius Britannicus* 169
- Canal and River Trust 144–146
- capitalism 5, 6; cyclical and eventful temporalities of 153–155; cyclical rhythms of 153; cyclical-teleological temporalities of 163; urban development under 6, 13, 110
- capitalist urbanization 5, 24, 198
- Cartwright, Matthew 182
- Casa Jannacci 255–257, 256
- Castells, Manuel 95, 208
- Castillo, Susana Chávez 204
- Certeau, Michel de 20
- Chamberlain, Joseph 177
- Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) 157, 158
- Church of England 168, 178
- Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) 229
- city/cities 5, 12, 13, 26; aging in 129–138; construction of 6; and contestation 197; democratic participation in 261, 262; of Global South 28; materiality of 198; microgeographies in 42; settlement of 198; turbulent and unsettled currents in 261
- civic nationalism, Austrian national identity construction 69–71
- 'clean and safe' public space 41
- Cockpit Group 241–245, construction of 240; founders of 239; narrative of 246; organizers of 246; physical space for 242; uncertainty about 245
- colonial urbanism 27, 29; colonial land possession 182, 188, 191
- communication technologies 60; use of 206
- comprehensive foundation 215
- Condition of the Working Class in England* (Engels) 195–196
- conditions: geography of internal and external 9–10; urban unsettling 7–10; *see also* urban condition
- conflict 197–200, 214, 219; between adversaries 264; and collaboration 263; dynamics of 237; political 221; on vehicle homelessness 101; *see also* urban conflict
- Confucian principles 28
- contemporary urbanization 5
- contestations: city/cities and 197; urban 195–200
- contingency 215–217, 219, 221; space for 4, 11, 12, 20, 108, 200, 217, 219, 221, 246
- controversy, unsettling through 241–245
- cooperative planning processes 214, 222n4
- Copenhagen, homeless people in 254
- Corporation Act (1661) 168
- Covid-19 pandemic 1, 253, 254
- CreateNYC 224–228, 231–233, 234n1; notion and goal of equity 228, 229, 229; positioning and assumption of 'we' 230–231
- crisis 246; unsettling through 244, 245
- Cuéllar, Gabriel 112

- cultural activism 229, 232, 234n1
 cultural equity 224, 226, 230, 232
 cultural plan 199, 224–228, 231, 233, 234n1
 cultural politics: transitions and
 transmutations in 225; unsettling, New
 York 227–232, 229; *see also* urban
 cultural politics
 Curtis, Charles 172, 173
 cyclical temporalities, of capitalism 153–155
- Daher, Racha 111
 Daley, Mayor 158
 Darby, Abraham 167
 Daugherty, Ellis 180
 De Certeau, Michel 28
 de-institutionalization 255–257, 256
 deliberative democracy 263
 Dell, Christopher 23
 democracy: conception of 263; deliberative
 263; interest-based conception of
 263; participatory 263; pluralist 264;
 relations between power and 264, radical
 democracy 198, 199, 216, 217, 236, 265
 Derrida, Jacques 232
 de-standardization 255–257, 256
 diachronic analysis 9
 Dickinson, H.T. 171
 difference(s) (categories of) 2, 5, 6, 21, 261,
 262, 264, 265; right to 7, 8
 Dikeç, Mustafa 52, 56, 57, 59, 61
Disagreement (Rancière) 221
 displacement: of residents 82–83; of small
 local businesses 83–84
 dispute: City of London Corporation 268;
 unsettling through 240–241, 245
Disquisitions (Priestley) 170
 disruption 23, 24
 disruptive urbanism 100; in Bay Area
 91–95, 94
 Döbbeling, Sophia 88
Đôi Mối economic reforms 26
 Doorn, Nils van 96
 Dring, Michael 112
 Dubai 114–115; economic and urban
 growth 116; habitation fabrics 119, 119;
 history of 115–116, 116; housing fabric
 120, 120; need for migrants 115–117;
 second- and third-generation expatriates
 121–125; social categorization 117–120;
 spatial allocation 117–120; unsettling
 identity in 125–126; urbanization
 115–117, 117, 117–120
 dwelling: Berlin, contested routines of
 84–86; defined as 61; description of 60;
 at Poppenbutte Berg, Hamburg 63;
 relationship between accommodation
 and 59; as Unsettling fACT order 61
 Dyer, John 172; ‘The Fleece’ 167
- Eagle, Paula 252
 Edwards, John 172
 Ellis, William 174
 emancipation 1, 5, 269
 embodied (practice/ praxis, appropriation,
 experience) 12, 23, 32, 34, 41, 43, 136
 Engels, Friedrich 6, 197; *Condition of the
 Working Class in England* 195–196
 Engineers’ Pension Fund 44
 English Civil War 168
 English Reformation 167
 Equality Act 267, 268
Essay on the First Principles of Government
 (Priestley) 171
 Essl, Rafael 24
 ethnic diversity 87, 238
 ethnic nationalism, Austrian national
 identity construction 69–71
 eurhythmy 109
 Euro-American: landholders 191;
 settlement 179; society 180
 European Observatory on homelessness
 (EOH) 249
 eventful temporalities, of capitalism
 153–155
 everyday life 130, 134, 135, 137, 138
 expatriates 118, 120; second- and third-
 generation 121–125
 experience: of aging 130, 131, 135–137;
 ideographic 237; lived 19–20, 65, 108,
 115; of unsettled/unsettling 1–4, 22, 23,
 130; of urban life 43
 expert knowledge 137
 explicit settings 214
- Fahnoe, Kristian 254
 Fargues, Philippe 118, 121
 Fee Simple 180, 181, 191
 femicide 202–204, 207–208, 210
 Fernández, Ana Maria 203
 Fields, Johns 180
 financial crisis 8, 23, 40, 43, 159
 Five Mile Act (1665) 168
 Flag Day 72
 ‘The Fleece’ (Dyer) 167
Fördern und Wohnen (F&W) 52, 55
 Fort Bend County 180, 182, 184, 187, 191
 Foucault, Michel 20, 196, 251
 foundations 215–216

- 'Four Virtues' 28
 Frances Cabrini Homes 156
 Frank, Sybille 24
 Fraser, Nancy 263
 freedmen 179, 180, 185; congregations 179, 181, 187, 188, 191; homesteading practices 186; settlement patterns 188
 freedmen churches 179, 181, 191; networks of 188; Reverter Clauses in 187, 187; in southwestern region of Houston 189
 Freedmen's Bureau 185–186
 freedpeople 179–181, 184–188, 190, 191
 Friedrichshain 80, 82
 Füller, Henning 79
 funding: for construction and land purchases 188; equitable 230; imbalances between the major cultural institutions 230; public 257; state 40, 43
- Gabauer, Angelika 111
 Garfinkel, Harold 20
Gemeinschaftshaus Poppenbüttel 64
 gender: unsettling normative ideas of 36–37; in Vietnam 28–29
 gender-based homicides 212n1
 gender-based violence 203
 Gender Identity Law 210
 gentrification 81, 88, 153, 154, 158
 German Nazi Party 68
 Ghandi Park 30
 Giddens, Anthony 20
 gig-workers 101, 102n1
 global: capital 219; digital platforms 24; economy 43; financial crisis 94; to local 6; market 41, 112
 go-along method 27
 Goheen, Peter G. 28
 Göring, Hermann 68
 Gottlieb, Manuel 154
 graffiti: in Berlin-Neukölln protesting trolley suitcases 82, 82; hip hop 34, 34
 Gramsci, Antonio 26
 Grubbauer, Monika 58, 59
 Grunberg, Jeffrey 252
 Guggenheim, Michael 58, 59
 Güntner, Simon 200
- Habermas, Jürgen 263
 HafenCity Universität (HCU) 52
 The Hague: development in city of 237–238, 238; family-oriented suburb of 236; unsettling dynamics (*see* unsettling dynamics, The Hague)
- Hamburg: eligibility system 254; emergency services in 258; homelessness in 253–254; planning department 52; refugee resettlement programs in 56; UPW program (*see* *Unterkünfte mit Perspektive Wohnen* (UPW) program)
Hamburger Bürgerverträge 55, 57
Hamburg für gute Integration 55, 58
 Hampstead Ladies Pond 266–269
 Hanoi 27–28
 Harakawa, Maya 143
 Harvey, David 153
 Hauderowicz, Dominique 135, 136
 hauntology 225, 234; analysis of urban cultural politics 232–233
 hegemonic controls 26
 Heidegger, Martin 52, 60
Heimatkultur 71
 Heindl, Gabu 199, 222n3
 Heldenplatz: location and medium of national identity 68–69; national holiday celebrations 72–75, 74, 75; role of forgetting in remembrance 75–76; totalitarian regime 68
 Henderson, Steven 149, 151
 Heumarkt project 218
 hip hop 28–29; graffiti 34, 34
 History of the Corruptions of Christianity (Priestley) 173
 Hitler, Adolf 68–70, 72
 Ho Chi Minh 27
Hochkultur 71
 homelessness 102n4, 253; in Athens 252; in Copenhagen 254; neglect by law 98–100, 100
 homeless services 248–249; (re-)emerging 'emergency model' of 257; (re-)shelterization and reconfiguration of 252–255, 253
 HOPEVI (Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere) program 158
 housing speculation 93
 Howard, M. 185
 HUD program 158
 Humanized Childbirth Law 210
 Humphrys, George 176
 Hutton, William 171, 176
- identity: Arabian-Emirati 121; construction of Austrian national identity 69–71; Emirati 122; Schilderswijk 241
 ideological hegemony 26, 37
 Iktinou street 44, 44, 45, 45, 47, 48, 49
 Improvement Act (1769) 171

- inclusion 52, 57, 59, 172, 196, 200, 228, 229–231, 233, 246
- Isin, Engin F. 121
- isorhythmy 109
- Jacobs, Jane M. 60
- Johnson, Joseph 175
- Kaiserforum* 68
- Kanna, Ahmed 121
- Katz, Stephen 130
- Kniess, Bernd 23
- Kong, Lily 26
- Kracauer, Siegfried 222n3
- Kränzle, Elina 24
- Kulturnation* (cultural nation) 67, 70, 71, 76
- Kurfürst, Sandra 23
- Kusenbach, Margarethe 27
- Laclau, Ernesto 198, 221, 226, 265, 269
- Landau-Donnelly, Friederike 199
- land infrastructure 181, 191
- land politics 190–191
- land precarity 180–181
- Latour, Bruno 61
- Law, Lisa 26
- laws 222n5; becomes politicized *ex negativo* 220; stability of 221n1; terrain of 219–220
- Lefebvre, Henri 21, 197; critique of everyday life 11; Theory of Moments 108–109
- Leland, John 167
- Lenin Monument 34–36, 35, 36
- Leshkovich, Ann Marie 29
- Levitas, Ruth 57
- Lipsitz, George 190
- lived space 6, 11, 41, 108, 155
- Lloyd, Charles 172
- Lloyd, Sampson 172
- local welfare systems 248; spatial dimension of 250
- Locke, John 170
- Lunar Society 171, 172, 174
- Lý Thái Tổ (King) 27, 30
- Lý Thái Tổ Square 29–31, 31, 32
- Macho, Thomas 72
- maintenance 140–141, 150–151; of development 141–144, 142, 143; discomfort 146–147; as exclusion 147–148, 148; gains of 148–150; incremental development 144–145; liability of 151; settings of 145–146, 146
- Maintenance Architecture* (Sample) 144
- Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!* (Ukeles) 140
- Marchart, Oliver 37, 215, 233
- Marx, Karl 153, 196, 197
- material/materialities: of city 198; embodied practices of dancers and perceptual memories 32; of financialized and homogenized urban space 6; of services 250; of urban space 5
- ‘matters of concern’ concept 61
- Maurice Long museum 31
- Mbaye, Jenny 28
- McFarlane, Colin 52, 59–60, 65
- Measuring the Age-Friendliness of Cities* 132
- Merrifield, Andy 108
- Michel, Boris 79
- microgeographies 42
- migrants: Greek and 45; low-income workers 96; need for 115–117; non-citizen 114, 115, 117, 120; workers in Dubai 111
- military exhibition 68, 76
- Mitchell, Don 146
- mixed-income developments 159, 163
- mixed-use space 251, 252
- modern metropolis 21
- moments 9, 108, 166; of unsettling 4, 21
- Moscow Declaration 70
- Mouffe, Chantal 207, 214, 215, 263, 264
- Myers, Daniel 210
- National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe and Free Abortion 206
- National Freight Corporation 142, 147
- national holiday celebrations (Austria) 72–75, 74, 75
- nationalism: civic and ethnic 69–71; construction of 67
- National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (1997) 95
- Near North Redevelopment Initiative 161–162
- neighbourhoods 88n1; local trade and in the social structure of 88; residential 78–81, 85; rising prices and tourist-friendly remodeling of 85
- neoliberalism 198
- neoliberal urbanization processes 41
- New Urban Tourism 78, 87; and debate in Berlin 79–81; double-sidedness of 82; and residents’ patterns of living 84
- New Urban Tourists 79, 81, 87, 88;

- New Year's Eve riots (The Hague) 236, 237, 244
- New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) 224, 226
- #NiUnaMenos 202; aims and achievements of 209, 211; demonstrations of 206–209, 209, 210; origin of 204–206, 205; as unsettling practice 209–211
- non-citizen migrants 114, 115, 117, 120
- nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) 43, 69
- non-occupation 218
- Non-Western migration backgrounds 238, 239
- Novy, Johannes 80
- objectivity 225–227
- Observatorio de Femicidios Adriana Marisel Zambrano* 203
- occupant-owned housing 238
- Oliver, Pamela 210
- The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Arendt) 221n1
- 'Österreich zuerst' 69
- over-resident 57, 65n1
- Paddington Special Policy Area (PSPA) 141, 149
- Paddington Waterside, maintenance 140–141; of development 141–144, 142, 143; discomfort 146–147; as exclusion 147–148, 148; gains of 148–150; incremental development 144–145; settings of 145–146, 146
- Paine, Thomas 174; *Rights of Man* 177
- Palmeiro, Cecilia 204
- participatory planning processes 136
- Paul Bert Square 30
- Peck, Dominique 23
- Pelinka, Anton 72
- Penningroth, David 186
- People's Cultural Plan (PCP) 224, 226, 228–230, 232, 233, 234n1; critiques inequities of New York's cultural sector 231
- Performative: acts 29, 37; *forgetting* 72; Lenin Monument 34–36, 35, 36; Lý Thái Tổ Square 29–31, 31, 32; Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace 31–34, 33, 34
- Pfeiffer, Verena 88
- Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos, Andreas 268
- Phuong Silver Monkey 32–33
- Pietrobono, Kenneth 228
- place 4, 34, 132, 219; aging in 134, 135; features of hip hop 37; multiple time-scales and rhythms in 110; of revolution 196
- planning: age-related 130, 131, 133, 135; dark side of 132; masterplanning 141, 142, 151; participatory 136; planning theory 214; politicization of 8, 58, 59; politics of 215–217
- Plaza del Congreso 208
- Plaza de Mayo 208, 212n4
- pluralist democracy 264
- the political (concept) 37, 56, 61, 110, 217, 225, 233, 264
- political conflict 221
- politicization of planning 8, 58, 59
- politics: as dissensus and post-political consensus 216; spaces of 264
- Poor Law Act (1388) 251
- Poppenbüttel hilft e.V.* 55
- post-foundational (concept) 199, 215, 217, 226
- post-Marxist urban theory 197
- post-political planning 219
- poverty 40, 81, 248, 251
- power: dimension of 263; German Nazi Party 68; patterns in social fabric 21; question of 264; relations between democracy and 264; relations of 261–263, 265, 269; socio-historical product of 28; spaces of 264
- Practice Mind-ed Orders* (Schatzki) 20
- Priestley, Joseph 172, 174–176; *Disquisitions* 170; *Essay on the First Principles of Government* 171; *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* 173
- property 181; collectivity from margins 186–188, 187, 189, 190, 190; as extraction 184; subdivision and circulation 181–184
- Proposition 22 (Prop 22) 101
- psychoanalytic theory 265
- public housing policy 158
- publicness 41–50, 44, 45, 49
- public planning 217
- public space 7–8, 264; children's and teenagers' perceptions of 42; clean and safe 41; importance of 265; intensive use of 41; production in Greek cities 40; resistance in 7; (un)settling remembrance in 67–76; symbolism of 26; and urban commons 262
- Raco, Mike 149, 151
- radical democracy 216, 217
- Rancière, Jacques 52, 56, 61, 216, 217; *Disagreement* 221

- Raschke, Anna Laura 24
 Reckwitz, Andreas 21
 relations of power 261–263, 265, 269
 religious worship 168, 169
 representation 168, 176, 265; of dichotomy
 of accommodation vs dwelling 65;
 modes of 62; production of 65
 residency-status renewal 122, 122
 residents, displacement of 82–83
 Reuterkiez 80, 81, 83–88
 Reverter Clauses 180, 187, 188
 rhythms 107; of communal activities 240;
 of controversy 243; social 108; urban
 analysis of 109
 Richter, Anna 23
Rights of Man (Paine) 177
 Robnik, Drehli 222n3
 Rosa, Paula 199
 Roskamm, Nikolai 217–219, 226, 264, 265
 routine: local routines 81–82, 82; planning
 routines 52; routines of cohabitation
 86–87; routines of dwelling 84–86;
 routines of settling 82–84; urban routines
 19–24, 27–28
 Russell, Diana 202
 Russell, William 176
 Ryland, John 176
- Saint John Missionary Baptist Church 179,
 181–182, 183, 190; property purchase
 186–187
 Sample, Hilary: *Maintenance Architecture* 144
 San Francisco Bay Area: disruptive urbanism
 in 91–95, 94; homeless encampments in
 95, 95; homelessness crisis in 100–101;
 urban inequality in 92
 Santos, Milton 110
 Schatzki, Theodore R.: *Practice Mind-ed
 Orders* 20
 Schilderswijkers 239, 241, 243, 245
 Schmitt, Carl 264
 Scholefield, Radcliffe 172
 Schumpeter, Joseph 92
 Second Republic (Austria) 69–73, 76
 sedimentation 221; 226
 Segato, Rita 203
 Sendra, Mariana 204, 208
 Sennett, Richard 157
 Serena, Kristian L. 135, 136
 services 250, 255–257, 256; aesthetic and
 materiality of 250; unsettling 257–258;
 welfare 251
 setting-in-dispute 214, 217
 settled/settling 239–240, 240; dynamics
 between unsettling and 1, 2, 4, 108,
 110; past and present practices of 4–7;
 routines of 82–84; of urban space 5, 7
 settler-colonial norms 179, 188; ordering
 and claiming land in 190–191
Setzung 215–217; non-building plan 221
 Sewell, William 154
 Seyfert, Robert 108
 Shah, Nasra M. 118
 sharecroppers 185
 Silicon Valley 92; blue-collar workers
 of 262; contested urban realities
 100–101; tech industry of 91; working
 homelessness in 95–97, 95–98
 Simmel, Georg 21, 250–251
 slum clearance project 156, 162
 small local businesses, displacement of
 83–84
 Small, William 172
 Smith, Neil 147, 154
 Smith, Susan J. 60
 social categorization, Dubai 117–120
 social change 10, 12, 22, 43, 129, 250, 255
 social cleansing 112, 120
 social foundations 215
 social groups 114; housing stock and 124,
 124; victim myth 70
 social housing 145, 153, 156–159, 162, 163,
 238, 255
 Socialist Republic of Vietnam 26; gender
 and urbanism in 28–29; performative
 acts (re)shaping public spaces 29–36;
 unsettling normative ideas of gender
 36–37; urban planning and urban
 routines 27–28
 social media 206–208
 social order 20, 22, 23
 social practice 5–6, 12, 19, 64, 263
 social reality 216, 222n5
 social rhythms 108
 society 215; urbanization of 19; welfare
 services in 250
 socio-spatial relations 20
 Sørensen, Estrid 61
 Soviet Union 32, 34
 Soviet Vietnamese Friendship Palace 31–34,
 33, 34
 Spain, *botellon* phenomenon in 42–44
 spatial allocation, Dubai 117–120
 spatial analysis 9, 109
 speculation (analytical) 4, 7–10
 speculative thinking 8
Staatsnation 70, 71, 76
 state of permanent temporality 120–121
 struggle 197; class 196, 197; democratic 199;
 political 198; social 195, 198

- superblocks 134
synchronic 4, 9, 109
- Taylor, John 172, 176
Tech Boom 2.0 95
- temporalities 107–112; of Cabrini–Green 155–161; cyclical and eventful 153–155; cyclical–teleological 163; of urban change 154; of urban space 109; *see also* urban temporalities
- tension: to open analytical speculation 7–10; between settling and unsettling 4, 8, 10, 24
- Test Act (1673) 168
- Test and Corporation Acts 171, 174, 176
- Thessaloniki 40–41; narrow ‘publicness’ 41–43; ‘publicness’ reassembled 48–50; unsettling ‘publicness’ 43–48, 44, 45, 49
- ‘Three Submissions’ 28
- Till, Jeremy 216
- Tilly, Charles 207
- Toleration Act (1689) 168
- Toscani, Maria de la Paz 199
- ‘total reconstruction’ 48
- Toulmin, Stephen 170
- ‘tragedy of non-occupation’ 218
- Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation 31–32
- Túñez, Fabiana 203
- turbulent waters 266–269
- Ukeles, Mierle Laderman 141–146, 150, 151; *Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969!* 140
- uncertainty 2, 3, 12, 57, 110, 111, 124, 216, 245, 262
- United Arab Emirates (UAE) 115
- unsettled currents, entanglements of 261–266
- unsettled/unsettling: (concept) 10–12; dialectics of 237; dynamics between settling and 1, 2, 4, 108, 110; experience of 1–4; home in Dubai (*see* Dubai); New York’s cultural politics 227–232, 229; normative ideas of gender 36–37; planning routines 52; practices of #NUM 202; publicness 43–48, 44, 45, 49; sense of confidence related to 3; spatial implications of 226–227; through controversy 241–245; through crisis 244, 245; through dispute 240–241, 245; urban condition 7–10; of urban cultural politics 224–226
- unsettling dynamics, The Hague: conceptualizing 244–246; settling 239–240, 240; timeline of 239, 240
- unsettling identity, in Dubai 125–126
- unsettling planning practices: aspects and relations of 52, 53; timeline of 52, 54
- unsettling services 257–258
- unsettling urban studies, retrospectives 10–11
- Unterkünfte mit Perspektive Wohnen* (UPW) program 52, 55, 65; pertinent spatial aspects of 58; politicization of 59; process of finding motives 56–57; realization of 57
- urban change 93, 111, 112; intensification of 153; planned 110; temporality of 154
- urban commons 3, 261, 262, 265, 266
- urban condition 11, 22, 196; past and present practices of settling and 4–7; unsettled 23, 24; unsettling 7–10
- urban conflict 237; typologies of 245; *see also* conflict
- urban contestations 195–200
- urban cultural politics: hauntological analysis of 232–233; unsettling of 224–226
- urban design 55, 60, 131; age-friendly 135; age-related 132–134; practice with research and teaching 52, 53, 54
- urban development 5, 198, 219
- urban disjuncture 6, 7
- urban dwellers 1, 3, 4, 87, 265
- urban inequality 92, 98
- urbanism 6; colonial 27, 29; disruptive 91–95, 94, 100; neoliberal 162; in Vietnam 28–29
- urbanization 5–6; contemporary 5; Dubai 115–117, 117, 117–120; of society 19
- urban life 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 43, 92, 93, 100, 101, 131, 134, 176, 198, 225, 261
- urban movements 8, 13, 198, 258
- urban order 20; fixed and shifting structures of 22–23
- urban planning 27; of Vietnam 27–28
- urban poverty 40
- urban practices: chronopolitics of 110; layering of 111
- urban public spaces 24, 207, 236
- urban research 1, 8, 110, 195, 197
- urban routines 19–24; of Vietnam 27–28
- urban space 1, 218; age-friendliness of 132; financialization of 219; multiple temporalities of 109; settling of 5, 7

- urban temporalities 107–112; time, change
and powerful ordering of 130–132
- urban tourism 78, 79
- urban transportation planning 134
- US Civil War 185

- Vale, Lawrence 159
- vehicle dwellers 91, 97–100
- vehicle homelessness 92, 96–99, 101
- Verloo, Nanke 199
- victim myth 70, 72, 76
- Vidosa, Regina 199
- Vienna: Danube Channel 220, 221;
Heldenplatz (*see* Heldenplatz); Heumarkt
project 218; superblocs in 134
- violence against women: fatal consequence
of 202–204; rates of 203
- visual identity, development of 251
- Vitruvius Britannicus* (Campbell) 169
- Voluntary Termination of Pregnancy Bill
210
- ‘Vote No on Prop 22’ 101
- vulnerable groups 7

- waackers 36
- Waldron, Jeremy 101

- Wall, Ed 111, 151n1, 163n1
- Watson, Sophie 200
- Watt, James 172
- welfare services 251, 257; and mixed-use
space 251, 252
- welfare spaces 250; and poor 250–251, 252
- WeMi Space 251, 252
- Westley, William 170
- Wheelock, Richard 158
- Who plans planning?* (Burckhardt) 58–59
- William Green Homes 156, 160
- Winternotprogramm* 253, 253
- Wodak, Ruth 71
- Wood, Patricia K. 121
- working homelessness, in Silicon Valley
95–97, 95–98
- Wylie, John 232

- Yiftachel, Oren 132
- young people 45; influx of 86; publicness
42; use of public space 44
- youth habitus 43, 49
- Yuval-Davis, Nira 5

- Zefxidos streets 41, 44, 46
- Zukin, Sharon 41



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