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# Re-appropriating the City of Crisis: Activism and Participation in the Governance of Public Space in Madrid and Berlin

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Urban societies were greatly affected by the economic crisis in Europe and the politics of austerity that were imposed on them. Urban austerity regimes also turned public space, a common good, into a commodity. In the face of these developments citizen initiatives have produced public spaces alternative to hegemonic urban planning, alternative in their development process, their programme and values. This paper has the aim to analyse the material effects of the crisis on cities and the transformations the governance of public space has undergone. Case studies from Madrid and Berlin give insights into the paradigms of hegemonic urban development and the counter models of public spaces produced by citizen initiatives bottom-up. Theory on invited and irruptive participation and changing government attitudes as an analytic framework serve to break up the complexity of collaboration and counteraction between authorities and citizens in the governance of public spaces and shows the capacity of these spaces to re-politicise urban development models.

**Keywords:** public space, austerity, privatisation, participation, governance, commons

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**Please cite as:** Kränzle, E. (2017) Re-appropriating the City of Crisis: Activism and Participation in the Governance of Public Space in Madrid and Berlin. *plaNext – next generation planning*. 5: 47-60. DOI: 10.24306/plnxt.2017.05.004.

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### Introduction

The economic crisis in Europe and the austerity politics implemented thereafter had severe effects on urban societies. While the hegemonic discourse on austerity policies is held on a level of abstract terms, dealing with budget deficits, state restructuring, and default risk, such policies affect people very materially, through foreclosures, cuts in welfare and pensions etc. (Benach, 2015). As a reaction to these material effects of crisis regimes and austerity politics civic protests have localized spatially, in Europe's cities, in their public spaces. Public spaces have become the place where citizens have loudly expressed their discontent with the political and economic system and demanded democratic governance and accountability, their right to the city (Walliser, 2013). This paper aims to address the implications of crisis regimes on the urban level. It investigates the governance of public spaces in the years following activists' protests in the street, and reflects on the effects of the crisis and austerity politics on urban development and its contestations through the re-appropriation of public spaces by citizens. While the academic discourse has focused on public spaces as sites of protests, this research shows that urban societies have reacted in various ways to participate in an urban development challenging neoliberal and austerity policies. With the crisis deepening, we witness the emergence of squares, empty lots and green spaces as places of a creative process of making public space, commonly. New forms of urban activists have interfered in the production of the city, in the "making, producing, participating, moving, sharing, spreading, enhancing, inventing and rekindling" (Tonkiss, 2013, p.233) of public space.

The main aim of this research is to reflect about the relation between the economic and political crisis in Europe, its manifestation in the governance and development of the city and the appearance of counter discourses and practices dealing with urban public space. Comparing a capital of Southern Europe, Madrid, with the city of Berlin in Germany is based on both cities' strive to become a global city and related neoliberal urban development projects affecting public spaces in similar ways. In both cities we have seen activist and active citizenship challenging urban governance characterized by austerity measures. In Madrid new urban activists have taken participatory action from the grass-roots, in a context where formal participation mechanisms don't have a high priority. In Berlin, public authorities have been formally integrating various methods of citizen participation, top-down, in urban governance processes of public space. Nevertheless, many projects' legitimacy is questioned and Berlin's citizens produce their right to the city outside the channels they have been invited to. The following questions guided the research:

1. What effects do austerity and the global city model have on the hegemonic production of public spaces, both in their governance as well as in spatial terms?
2. In this context, how do citizens transform the production of public space bottom-up and which values, discourses, and participation practices do they apply?

In a first step, this paper outlines concepts, which have been used to describe the recent trajectories of urban development. It then sketches how urban development in a context of austerity has materialized in the cities of Madrid and Berlin. The paper is based on field work conducted in 2015. For the analysis of citizen initiatives' practices and discourses in the two cities secondary data from newspapers, initiatives' statutes, or pamphlets served as important sources. Furthermore this research is based on empirical data acquired through semi-structured interviews with citizen initiatives and participatory observance. Mapping the development process and the discourses and participatory practices applied throughout this

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process we can apply and extend the categories on government attitudes towards citizen initiatives by Tonkiss (2013) as well as the forms of invited and irruptive citizen participation described by Bonet I Martí (2012).

### **Urban Development in the City of Crisis**

#### ***Austerity, the Global City model and governance***

Albeit the consequences might manifest in very different forms, both capital cities, Madrid and Berlin, experience a phase of austerity while simultaneously trying to establish themselves as global cities. In the wake of the financial and economic crisis since 2007, the concept of austerity has been used incessantly in public debate, especially to justify the further re-structuring of the welfare state. The discursive production of scarcity and austerity plays a significant role in the continuation of the politics of neoliberalization guided by the belief in the free market, suspending social conscience (Klein and Rumpfhuber, 2014). The restriction of workers' rights, ever lower wages, and the restructuring of health care, social security and education systems are some of the consequences of this new phase of politics. These adjustments have been implemented with the argument that the welfare state was a wasteful and unsustainable system. The fact that the rising indebtedness of certain countries cannot be explained with welfare spending, which was adapted to economic growth, is not debated. Neither is debated how investment and lending and risky derivate trading and speculation brought about the crisis (Klein and Rumpfhuber, 2014). But how do scarcity and austerity manifest in cities? Peck (2012) describes austerity as the downscaling of saving measures and spending restraints to the lower spatial and political level, that is the municipal level. This downscaling of the effects of the crisis also takes place on the social level. As these political levels and social classes of society only have disproportionate means to cover for that new responsibility, "cities are therefore, where austerity bites" (Ibid. p. 629). In face of unquestioned spending on the military and the incremental tax reduction for the highest incomes, Marcuse (2011) exposes the politics of public austerity as a 'scam' (p. 1). This interpretation underlines that austerity has been used as a discursive means to accelerate neoliberal policies and planning.

The transformation of processes of handling public interest from government to governance, a more horizontal understanding of decision-making processes, that often incorporates an amalgam of stakeholders and citizen participation schemes, has generally been associated with more democratic planning and development. Keil (2006) recaps governance as a form of control that "contains more communicative and cooperative elements, is structured less hierarchically and is characterized by the informal activities increasingly becoming more important for actors and the exchange between governmental and non-governmental actors, public and non-public institutions in the setting-up, negotiation and implementation of public policy" (p. 337). The shift to intensive participatory practices introduced by urban development authorities as well as the emergence of grass-roots citizen initiatives is generally associated with a more democratic governance outcome. Jouve (2005) describes the shift from government to governance though being characterized by "the dilution of authority and accountability, and an increase in the number of actors of different statuses with the capacity to aggregate their local interests and to defend them collectively against other levels of government, particularly in a context characterised by globalisation" (p. 280). Swyngedouw (2011) criticises governance for in-transparent and unfair decision making processes and a lack of accountability, in short for its 'democratic deficit'. The character of dominant urban governance is described as a techno-managerial process of decision-making with the aim of consensus where any form of open conflict is not intended. An inherent

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political debate and its public space have more and more ceased to exist and “politics is reduced to institutionalized social management, whereby all problems are dealt with through administrative-organizational technical means and questioning things as such disappears” (Nancy in Swyngedouw, 2011, p. 373). According to the authors, the integration and formalization of citizen participation has de facto not led to a more democratic capacity of these governance frameworks but, on the contrary, is enforcing the old hierarchies of the political system (Jouve, 2005). With the institutionalisation of citizen participation citizens and activists get trapped in the rules of the game of the hegemonic political system and can only participate as long as in line. Furthermore, the place of expertise and technocracy excludes questioning values and power structures in these consultations, ‘as the “genetic code” of these participatory institutions and procedures prevents all expressions of conflict’ (Ibid., p. 292).

### ***Hegemonic austerity urbanism in Madrid and Berlin***

Urban development in Madrid is embodied by an immediate past full of excesses (Fernandez-Güell, 2015). The crisis was also affected by the burst of the real estate bubble and extensive public investment in facilities and infrastructure, partly and unsuccessfully for the Olympics qualification, leading to millions in government debt. Since the 1980s politicians of all factions pushed the idea of developing a competitive metropolitan region and making Madrid a global city (Díaz Orueta, 2007). The strategic plan developed for this goal aimed at transforming Madrid into a hub for global advanced services and finances, with a high-capacity airport; it aimed at putting Madrid back in the centre of Spain with a high-speed railway system; and lastly it aimed at establishing Spain’s capital as a hub for science and technology, culture and tourism (Fernandez-Güell, 2015). For some years the global city strategy seemed successful with high rankings and rising economic activity in the capital. In this optimistic economic climate with many investing in construction, Spain’s real estate sector formed an enormous part of the country’s gross national product and the huge amount of newly built housing led to an explosion of real estate prices and rent. When the housing bubble burst, the collapse of the real estate sector in 2007, with its profits and employment, dragged down Spain’s economy and financial sector as a whole (Klein and Rumpfhuber, 2014) leading to skyrocketing unemployment rates, declining incomes, and fiscal debts rising from 1,033 Million Euros in 2001 to 7,074 Million Euros in 2013 (Fernandez-Güell, 2015).

How have these development paths been translated into actual urban spaces? The mural at one of the case studies of this research, ‘Esta es una plaza’ (EEUP) in Madrid, can be interpreted as a global critique of urban development in the city. The artist manipulated Madrid’s coat of the arms in which a bear leans against a strawberry tree. In the new version of the city symbol two construction workers cut the tree and carry building materials to the site. The work of art is a perfect illustration of the recent renovation of two squares in Madrid’s city centre, following a rationale of control and commercialisation. Plaza de la Luna in the neighbourhood Universidad has been a recent target of an urban renewal strategy and a process of commercial gentrification. A newly founded commercial association realized its vision for the renovation of the plaza in collaboration with the authorities with a “*connecting space in the central zone, constituting an authentic scenery for urban living, a free zone, undetermined and manifold in its use*”, as described by the renowned architects (Urquiaga, 2014, p. 7). At first, the local population supported the renovation of the square as they also wanted to get rid of the homeless and street sex workers who had ‘stigmatized’ the area and the square. It seems as though the locals who feared to be unheard in the renovation of the square at the same time themselves practiced exclusion of those lower in the social hierarchy, legitimized by the stigma and immorality of homelessness and sex work. Due to

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the temporary occupation of the square for festivals, upscale markets or sports events, the square is no longer accessible for everyone equally but excludes all those who are no target of these events. Children playing in the streets and sex workers are excluded from the square likewise. 'Anti-Plaza' (EEUP 2) or 'Plaza Alquilada' (Urquiaga, 2014) refers to Callao, one of the most central squares of Madrid. It is located at the crossing of the city's main shopping streets Gran Vía and Preciados Street and used to be a highly frequented traffic node. The main objective of the renovation in 2009 was to make it a pedestrian zone, eliminating heavy car and bus traffic. In the end, instead of planting 48 new trees as was promised, the authorities turned Callao into a huge concrete surface, where not a single bench is provided and shade can only be found under the few café terraces on the edge of the square. Instead of providing for the least functions of a public space in a Southern European country, it is designed as a privately rentable parcel which is profitable for the municipality. The Madrid examples show the transformation of public space into an object of and for consumption, while it should be a place for locals (ibid.). The increased CCTV surveillance that has been implemented in addition to the physical renovation of these squares furthermore fosters "circulation and commercial appropriation and prevents people from appropriating open spaces by implementing municipal ordinances that hamper everyday use" (Sequera & Janoschka 2015, p. 386), and act to produce citizen obedience, rather than to control crime (ibid.).

In Berlin, austerity has been a regional condition for the past twenty years. Despite the important strategic location and its role as the capital of one of the world's strongest economies, the city itself has been suffering from a constant economic crisis. As a consequence of the reunification, East Berlin's industrial base was either closed down or privatized and the whole government apparatus of the GDR dissolved, as well as subsidies to West Berlin industries cut. Today, Berlin still is "not only the German city with the highest unemployment but (...) also on a European scale the only capital whose GDP lies below the national average" (Bernt, Grell & Holm, 2013, p. 16). Apart from the effects of the reunification Berlin's debt grew when a public bank which speculated with public finances went bankrupt. Saving this bank created an 'extreme budgetary emergency' of around 60 billion Euros in 2013. Privatisations of both the public housing stock, as well as of public services and infrastructure, such as gas, electricity and water followed (ibid.). The public investments in the reinvention of Berlin as global metropolis, as well as the recent cost explosion of the region's new airport BER stand for the paradigm of the global city model in Berlin's urban development. Following this argumentation, Berlin didn't have to wait for the global economic and financial crisis to implement austerity urban development.

Potsdamer Platz is one of the city's most emblematic examples of the privatisation of public property and its transformation into a commercialised space implemented in the 1990s. The square used to be at the centre of Berlin's cultural scene, but World War II and its location on the new border turned it into a no-man's-land without any buildings left. Already one year after the Fall of the Wall, the former borderland in the very centre of reunited Berlin was sold to the global giants Daimler, Sony and A&T to be developed into a new business city quarter. The sell-out of public land to private investors allowed the city to implement a prestigious project despite financial constraints. 'Sony Center' was built between 1996 and 2000, characterized by its idiomatic main square called 'Forum' which is surrounded by high-rise buildings made of glass and steel and covered by a tent-like roof. The property, including its squares and streets, is owned by a private company and is subject to the rules of conduct developed by a property management firm, forbidding e.g. begging, sitting on stairs or consuming alcohol other than in the centre's restaurants. Thus, the space is only accessible for consuming visitors while unwanted groups are excluded (Glasze, 2001). Still today, Sony

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Center is very popular among tourists, who look at this city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as it was imagined in the 1990s, with awe. Functionally, 50.000sqm of office space are empty and looking for new users (Jürgens, 2014). Apart from the *constant economic crisis*, the conflict of re-uniting the formerly two cities shaped by contrary ideologies also affected the ways in which socialist heritage was handled. The destruction of the GDR Palace of the Republic and the reconstruction of the Prussian Stadtschloss devalued the socialist past of the city (Bernt, Grell & Holm, 2013) and many of the “voids of Berlin” have become either places of a symbolic urbanism of the capital of a reunited Germany, or sites of privatisation (Huysen, 1997, p7). A prominent new project in the city centre of Berlin is the reconstruction of the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century city castle, which was destroyed in WWII and completely demolished by the GDR government as a symbol of Prussian monarchy and the German ‘Machtpolitik’. In its place a composite of a people’s palace and a state palace was constructed, the ‘Palace of the Republic’, featuring the seat of legislature but also spaces for culture and recreation (Flier & Marcuse, 2010, p. 272). After the reunification the national parliament decided about the demolition of the GDR palace and reconstruction of the baroque city castle, trying to “replace, especially in the city’s historic centre, the image of the most recent past with the image of a past that is long gone, to replace the image of the GDR’s Palace of the Republic with the image of a Hohenzollern castle from the era of Prussia and the German empire” (Ibid., p. 273). The transformations of two central spaces of Berlin introduced here illustrate the “image ecstasies” (Huysen, 1997, p.68) in the government’s pursuit of a global city and the invention of a German capital with buildings of a selective national symbolism.



**Figure 1.** Protest poster in the city centre of Berlin. We are the crisis: Crisis-migrants, the precarious and useless at the demonstration ‘Make. Europe. different’. (©2015, Elina Kränzle)

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### The Re-appropriation of Public Spaces

The democratic capacity of urban governance processes is debatable. Despite the implementation of intensive participatory processes in urban development, projects fail to attain sufficient support from the public and are criticized for their lack of legitimacy. Is citizen participation planned top-down still a sufficient instrument to guarantee adequate decision-making, or is citizen engagement being exploited as symbolic politics to justify and legitimize projects that already have been decided upon, as Zimmermann claims (2012)? As theoretical framework for the analysis of citizens' re-appropriations of public spaces serve Bonet I Martí's (2012) concept of invited and irruptive participation, as well as changing government attitudes towards bottom-up action in the context of austerity described by Tonkiss (2013). Through these concepts we can unravel governance processes of public space analytically and understand shifts and outcomes of urban governance shaped by participation.

#### *Invited and irruptive participation and changing government attitudes*

As Jouve (2005) and Swyngedouw (2011) underline, formal participation methods are no longer a guarantee for more democratic urban governance processes. According to Zimmermann (2014) this critique though cannot be associated with inherent problems of the instruments but is a result of a misconception of their application and the different expectations of actors. Participation appears in two main forms, either as a deliberative, consensus-oriented process (based on Habermas), or as a basic democratic majority decision. Deliberative participation aims at a consensus and a decision in accordance with 'the common good'. As participation processes are designed to bring personal or group interests to the table though, it makes dissent a possible outcome, one that is usually not recognized as a positive outcome. In his study of participatory processes in Madrid and Barcelona Bonet I Martí (2012) reviews different participation approaches. Following the author, citizen participation is defined as 'the incorporation of the population (as individual citizens or as associations) as actors in decision-making processes in the development of public policies in one or more of its phases (diagnosis, design, implementation and evaluation)' (translated by author, *ibid.*, p. 22). Participation can furthermore be divided into invited participation (*participación por invitación*) and irruptive participation (*participación por irrupción*). Invited participation covers all processes initiated by the political authorities, structured according to set norms and rules and generally built upon the notion of a general interest as opposed to individual interest. From a perspective of politics it is set up to complement representative democracy and is based on a deliberative democratic understanding. Irruptive participation on the other hand are those processes initiated by citizens, where existing channels of participation are challenged, or informal channels and means are used to influence urban development. Here, notions of common and individual interests are not considered counter positions but problematized as interrelated (Bonet I Martí, 2012, p. 23). In the research four typologies of participation occurred:

- **Institutionalisation** of a formerly irruptive participation process
- **Staging** of invited participation to show the accordance of formerly oppositional irruptive participation processes
- **Subversion** of a formal participation process by citizens disturbing the formal order and the aim of the process formulating their proper aims and ideas
- **Dis-Activation** of citizen opposition from the beginning by setting up a participation framework top-down to integrate citizens *in line* from the very start

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These categories describe participation as a dynamic process and the relation of bottom-up initiatives and top-down planning as interdependent. Looking at the case studies from Madrid and Berlin through this concept allows us to trace complex governance processes of public space and the actions and reactions of different actors. The concept also allows us to trace the appearance of invited and irruptive citizen participation and to analyse how they are interrelated in the Madrid and Berlin case studies. Rather than evaluating those categories, the first part of this analysis is about the complexity of the governance process of public space and the actions and reactions of different actors. Do they fit into the categories found by Bonet I Martí (2012), or do we see other combinations and how can we explain those?

Against the backdrop of commercialised public space grass-roots initiatives have appeared in both cities. They are reclaiming and shaping public space, which has been neglected by the city, mostly in the form of urban gardening and the occupation of squares with non-commercial uses. Therefore cities are the places where the 'there is no alternative'-politics of austerity is questioned and held against possible alternatives. Looking at citizen initiatives taking charge of creating their own modes of participation in urban development, how are these bottom-up processes received by the authorities? Tonkiss (2013) points out the ways in which urban planning deals with bottom-up interventions under an austerity regime characterised by 'disinvestment, disuse and decline' (p. 312):

- A **positive model** of policy and planning creates the legal and political conditions for informal interventions;
- A **permissive model** allows for self-organization and improvised spatial solutions to a certain extent, but does not facilitate them;
- An **abandoning model** leaves the urban entirely to the agency of citizens and organisations and cedes to provide any services;
- A **proscriptive model** is characterised by over-planning through the authorities, leaving little space for negotiation and alternatives (Tonkiss, 2013, pp. 313-314).

The discussion of different aspects of participation provides an important framework to analyse the development processes of the case studies. Who initiated the participatory process and how was it transformed from either the authorities or the citizens in the course of the process? What were the authorities' attitudes towards citizen initiatives' participation in the governance of public space? Does the framework described by the authors suffice or do we see other ways in which invited and irruptive participation occur and how government attitudes towards citizen initiatives evolve?

### ***Madrid – creating new common space in face of prohibitive authorities***

The first case study, Esta es una plaza! (EEUP) is located in the neighbourhood of Lavapiés, characterized by its dense building structure, a general lack of green spaces, and a diverse population with a high percentage of foreigners (Madrid Estadística, 2014). Public investments in central squares of the area have been identified as a state-led gentrification of the area (Díaz-Orueta, 2007; Sequera & Janoschka, 2015). The history of EEUP begins with the intervention of the cultural actor La Casa Encendida located just a few blocks away, which organized a workshop on the production of public space. They received an official permit to install temporary constructions for two weeks in a lot, which had been empty for more than 30 years. During the workshop, participants had the idea to extend the use of the space as a new public park. But after the two week permit ended, the authorities destroyed the workshop's creations and closed off the plot once again. This dismissal was perceived as

## Open Access Journal

a violation of the neighbours' right to the site, as it has been reserved to benefit the area's social infrastructural needs, a promise that has not been realized in the past 30 years. In a process of irruptive participation the activists protested in front of the closed off land and with growing neighbourhood support they were granted a temporary permit to stay. Since then a neighbourhood association was founded to manage and maintain the space. Every year the association has to apply for a new permit to stay.

The second case study, Espacio Vecinal Arganzuela (EVA), is a citizen initiative still in its beginnings. The neighbourhood association is made up of more than 30 collectives and initiatives, who started a bottom-up planning process for the re-use of the Legazpi market halls with a building programme that would satisfy the local population's need for common spaces for its clubs and organisations. The area of Arganzuela is a former working class district, where the closure of old industries was an opportunity for the city to use the huge empty spaces for a strategy of urban renewal, highlighted by the implementation of two emblematic projects to improve the image of Madrid: Madrid Rio and Matadero Madrid. As a reaction to the violent eviction of the social centre La Traba, EVA formed as an irruptive participation process. Facing a lack of communal spaces in general, but also a lack of public services for the growing population of Arganzuela, EVA drafted a plan for the re-use of the market, building on the professional knowledge of the many architects and urban planners involved in the project. At first the municipality showed a sympathetic attitude towards EVA's plans. Only after the association had drafted a detailed plan of a self-managed space for the area, the financial department rejected the project and a viability study of the conversion of the Legazpi buildings into a gourmet market was revealed. The intervention of the financial department shows of the city authorities' inner hierarchies, where urban planning has to conform to an idea of maximising profits in the management of urban development, while the city's responsibility to cater for public services is of lesser importance. While EVA tried to collaborate with the authorities, representing a very 'tame', by the rules organization, the authorities had no interest in working with them. The process represents a case where irruptive participation attempts to get formalized but is faced with a prohibitive governance network excluding them from their planning process and rejecting their proposal.

While the government didn't implement an invited participation process in Lavapiés and Arganzuela, citizens organized a participation process bottom-up, in both cases fighting for access to a publicly owned space and implementing their project idea. In the case of EEUP, a workshop organized by an independent cultural organization firstly brought up the idea to make use of the empty lot. Thus, the intervention of an intermediate organization activated the neighbourhood. Moments of government aggression towards citizen initiatives, the destruction of workshop constructions at EEUP and the eviction of La Traba in the case of EVA, have triggered civic engagement. EEUP, which started already eight years ago, was able to get their irruptive participation process formalized, if temporary. The initiative EVA has successfully fought against the city's development plans for Legazpi market, but still has not gained permanent access to develop the space on its own. Both groups were faced with a prohibitive government. After mobilizing more supporters the lot in Lavapiés was legally transferred to EEUP, suggesting a more permissive attitude of the authorities. In the case of the market space in Arganzuela, the government pursued their own interests for its development to financially profit from the space. Their prohibitive attitude towards EVA has not changed throughout the past year, only the change in government gives hope for a more successful project development in the future. These findings lead to the addition of a fifth category of government's attitudes developed by Tonkiss (2013): A **prohibitive attitude**, inhibiting citizen initiatives and criminalizing or illegalizing bottom-up initiatives or squatting. In the absence of invited participation possibilities, both EEUP and EVA understood their way

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of producing public spaces as democratic, as they held assemblies open for everyone to join, where they applied basic democratic, deliberative decision-making processes aimed at consensus. With little formal participation mechanisms Madrid citizens created their participation platforms bottom-up to then ask the authorities to be accepted, formalized, 'legalized' with their ideas. Therefore, despite pursuing ideas and values which counter hegemonic urban development, both cases from Madrid tried to influence the governance process by establishing deliberative democratic participation channels bottom-up and asking for legal recognition by the authorities. The representation of mostly middle-class, academic, European citizens in the neighbourhood initiatives, lacking members of different ethnic backgrounds and generations can be considered a handicap in these participation processes developed bottom-up. EEUP and EVA might be criticized for collaborating with the neoliberal government, but did so in order to get on with their venture. As Tonkiss (2013) points out, "co-optation, in settings such as these, is not simply a danger spotted by sharp-eyed and disabused social critics; it is a condition of the work these practitioners do if they want to make space" (p. 323). The case of EVA though showed that co-optation not always leads to success in face of a prohibitive government attitude towards irruptive participation.



**Figure 2.** Impressions of EEUP: Families spending time at the untamed garden. (©2015, Elina Kränzle)

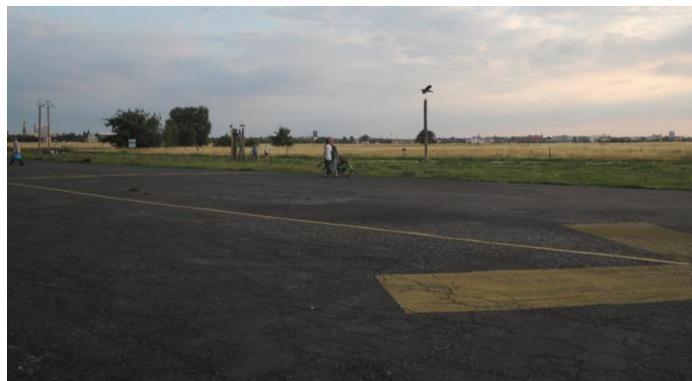
### ***Berlin – Defending public land by bypassing the formal participation process***

The site of Tempelhofer Feld (THF) has become a well-known public space and since the end of its function as an airport has seen many artists, architects, and planners as well as investors and politicians imagine its future in the brightest colours. The surprising success of the citizen initiative 100% THF in keeping the former airfield free from any development made it an interesting case study. Located at about 6km from the city centre, THF covers 4.000.000 square meters, the largest inner urban 'green' space in the world (Roskamm, 2014). After the end of THF as a functioning airport, the huge area was still fenced in and closed off. In 2009 leftist activists called the public to 'squat Tempelhof', to occupy the airfield. The protesters found themselves facing national police forces, which were lined up to defend the empty space. Shortly after this event, THF was opened to the public as a park in 2010. In 2011 the Tempelhof Projekt GmbH was founded by the state of Berlin to manage

## Open Access Journal

and develop the airport building and create ideas for a new city quarter on the site. With respect to the many bottom-up projects on empty lots in Berlin, the planning authorities aimed at integrating citizen initiatives in the development of the site from the very beginning. A second participatory process was implemented by the authorities but criticised by participants as influenced strongly by the planning professionals mediating the process. Meanwhile the initiative 100%THF was founded with the aim to organize a referendum in Berlin to let the citizens vote about the future of the airfield. In opposition to the city's master plan for the airfield, which provided for the development of a new, vibrant city quarter, they proposed to keep THF empty and to suspend all permanent development. The initiative mobilized 64,3% of Berlin's population to vote for the law they suggested, which would forbid any development on the former airfield but keep it 100% public (John, 2014).

In Berlin, invited and irruptive participation processes emerged simultaneously, opposing each other throughout the governance process. Because of the relevance of THF as the biggest empty space in the city, many actors had an interest in developing the former airfield, leading to a complex governance process receiving a lot of media attention. A moment of unrest, the announcement to squat the field, was repelled but led to the opening of the space to the public. Invited participation by the planning authorities featuring 'pioneer projects' seemed to be an innovative participation framework to integrate alternative ideas. Later on though, citizen participation was criticized for being guided by the interests of the planning authorities. The government's formerly positively received attitude towards bottom-up initiatives turned into a proscriptive typology. Berlin has adopted an 'activating state paradigm', 'poking citizens' to get involved in urban development, somewhere between a positive, a permissive and a proscriptive attitude towards citizen initiatives. The irruptive participation process started by the initiative 100% THF both campaigned for an alternative to the master plan for the space as well as it practiced a different way of citizen participation: A radical, basic democratic decision on the future of the space by all citizens of Berlin in face of the deliberative, consensus-oriented participation process which the government had invited to. Existent participation channels were declined and a new channel was opened, countering the government's model of deliberative participation. This channel was not aimed at collaboration, but used the formal means of a referendum to disarm the master plan and to integrate the population of the whole city in the decision-making on the future of the space. With these findings we can add a fifth typology to Bonet I Marti's (2012) participation processes: The **bypassing of an invited participation process** by citizens organizing new formal channels of influencing the governance of a project.



**Figure 3.** The vast empty airfield Tempelhofer Feld looking west.  
(©2015, Elina Kränzle)

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**Figure 4.** Newspaper for 100% THF’s campaign, designed in the style of a popular newspaper (BILD). Topics discussed include a discussion of the masterplan and who will benefit from it (only few), the housing scam, the costs of the development as opposed to the ‘city for all’ which is represented by the empty, undeveloped field (©2015, Elina Kränzle)

**Conclusion**

The analysis of hegemonic urban development in Madrid and Berlin has shown the severe effects of an austerity urbanism on central public spaces. With the argument of budgetary constraints and in pursuit of the global city model both cities have turned public space, a public good, into a commodity and into a means of broadcasting a specific image to the global economy. In Madrid, commercialisation and control were the guiding principles in the paradigmatic renovation of two central public spaces. The sell-out of publicly owned land right after the Fall of the Wall and its development into a space meant to represent the new global future of re-united Germany as well as the reconstruction of the Prussian city castle exemplify the ‘image ecstasies’ of hegemonic urban development in Berlin.

In the face of an urban development catering to the global rather than to the local, the cases have shown that citizens are taking initiative to produce public spaces, which represent alternative interests and values. While in Tempelhof, the aspiration lied in preserving the void, the huge emptiness of the former airfield, the bottom-up production of public spaces in Madrid can be understood as “anti-utopian projects, given their commitments to making actual places in the void spaces of grand designs” (Tonkiss, 2013, p. 321). The bottom-up initiatives have shown how engaged citizens counter the hegemonic “there is no alternative - discourse and unmask the common sense that naturalises all kind of decisions as unavoidable and undermines all possibilities of resistance” (Benach, 2015, p.74).

Bonet I Martí’s (2012) analysis of invited and irruptive participation models as well as Tonkiss’ (2013) outline of different government’s attitudes to grass-roots initiatives have structured the comparative analysis of citizens’ re-appropriation of public spaces in the “cities

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of crisis”, Madrid and Berlin. The case studies suggest that we should expand both frameworks to reflect the experiences made in Madrid and Berlin. The development of Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin adds a fifth typology to Bonet I Martí’s framework:

**Bypassing** an invited participation process by citizens organizing new formal channels of influencing the governance of a project

The Madrid cases of EEUP and EVA have displayed the challenges of a municipal government trying to restrict grass-roots action, adding a fifth model to Tonkiss’ outline of authorities’ attitudes towards bottom-up initiatives:

A **prohibitive model** inhibits citizen initiatives and criminalizes or illegalizes bottom-up initiatives or squatting

The sustainable influence of these bottom-up practices on the hegemonic logic of urban development remains to be seen. In Madrid, the success of the Municipalistas in the municipal elections in 2015 gives hope for a more permissive or even positive attitude of the new government towards citizen initiatives. After the rejection of years of planning in the referendum on THF, Berlin’s government started yet another invited participation process from the very beginning of the planning of the central public space of Berlin Mitte. If the city government has learned from the critique citizens raised about the participation process of THF being proscriptive cannot be assessed yet. Still, urban public spaces, which have been created or preserved by the resistance of engaged citizens, represent materializations of the citizens’ right to the city. While their actions take place on a local level their aspiration is founded on values of self-organization, cooperation, and equality and thus the city is not just where capitalism takes place but also where imaginations of a different society are lived.

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