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Editorial: Negotiating Urban Space: Initiatives and Innovations in Spatial Governance

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What is so special about the pair of words 'spatial planning'? Is there any difference when we just say 'planning', without adding the word spatial? After all, planning in its essence is spatially bounded. Planning thought and action are depended upon space, namely: cities, regions, metropolitan areas, neighborhoods, shanty-towns, streets, highways, roads, forests, nature reserves, and even the sea shores. Planning as a discipline and as a profession was developed as an integral part of modernity, which has created functional systems, such as planning, that operate according to technocratic principles, i.e., efficiency, bureaucracy, hierarchal chain of authority, which is a-personal and legitimate by the laws of the states (Bauman, 2002). For many decades, planning was motivated by efficiency and actions based on factual knowledge (Friedmann & Hudson, 1974). However, reality proves that scientific and allegedly 'objective' knowledge is incapable to ensure the desired outcomes, especially when social relations are involved (Davidoff, 1965; Morris, 1996).

The evolution of the 'cultural turn', back in the 1990s, directed planners' attention towards cultural aspects (Soja, 1999), adding new and more relevant definitions, such as identity, diversity and difference (Fincher & Jacobs, 1998). More specifically, the technocratic modus operandi of planning had slowly changed. Planning researchers and theorists were interested in exploring social phenomena, which were created and driven against the background of race, social, religious, gender or political affiliation, and the ways in which they raise questions regarding identities, meaning, power-relations and every-day life practices (Huxley, 2002; Qadeer, 1997; Watson, 2002). Therefore, planning's vocation had transformed; the emphasis was directed upon the importance of the local community's needs and preferences, and the necessity to explore space within its local context (Sandercock, 2003; 2004b; Watson, 2006). This shift has marked one of the most eminent gaps between planning theory and planning practice, which exists nowadays.

Critical thinking has stimulated the debate about which knowledge is relevant for planning (Bertolini, 2009), whose knowledge? By whom and for what purpose? (Fenster & Yacobi, 2005; Sandercock, 2004a). This debate has also focused on the ways in which planning produces knowledge about society (Ethington, 2007), and outlined the characteristics and qualities of different kinds of knowledge, such as, scientific, intuitive, professional, ethical, technical, emotional, tactic, objective, etc. (Boelens, 2010). The understanding that planners should learn about the different aspects of places (Healey, 1999), and the different uses and

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meanings people bestow to their daily routines (Healey, 1998), allowed to evaluate and re-examine the traditional planning's mission of creating change (Anhorn, 2006).

The institutional spatial planning that operates in the name of experts and for the population required a switch in perception, towards planning that operates with those who will implement it in practice, turning the spotlight to people rather than just to places (Upton, 2005). The recognition that the planning activity occurs within the interface of knowledge and action has contributed to spatial planning, in that greater emphasis is paid upon the process not merely on the outcome (Campbell, 2012). Rather than being rigid and technical, spatial planning, according to Nyseth, Ploger & Holm (2010), is temporary and fluid. Hillier (2008) provides an interesting view of contemporary planning and professional tasks: "I regard planning and planners as experiments or speculations entangled in a series of contingent, networked relationships in circumstances which are both rigid (e.g. legally constrained) and flexible, where outcomes are violated, where problems are not 'solved' once and for all, but which, over the 'lifetime' of a strategic plan, are constantly recast by changing actors, situations and preferences, to be reformulated in new perspective" (p.26).

This special issue includes a section of articles that poses fundamental questions regarding how spatial planning is operated today. Four out of five articles present detail account of 'bottom-up' initiatives from different geographical locations and different social, cultural, economic and political contexts across the world, i.e., Germany, Africa, Egypt, and Spain. These case studies and practice experiences stress the power of the 'public', which are citizens and ordinary people in shaping space; they themselves plan and implement their ideas and initiatives. Another paper draws upon the current conditions of the housing market, and the housing policy in Serbia, a post-communist country, indicating on the evidences of socio-spatial inequalities, demonstrated by housing shortage, gentrification, and residential segregation.

Spatial Governance: Debating the Theory-Practice Gap

The 10th AESOP Young Academic conference was held in Ghent, a city with a long tradition in spatial planning, both in theory and practice. Ghent is known as a city that frequently explores and implements innovative planning ideas: from mobility circulation programs and pedestrian areas in the city center, to more recent waterfront renewal plans, port city relations, bicycle circulation plans, promotion of environmental health issue, touristic programs, urban heat adaptation and flood protection.

The conference theme, "Spatial Governance: Bridging Theory and Practice", reflects the main research and educational focus on planning theory and governance in daily practice, adhering to the planning paradigm of 'undefined becoming' through co-evolutionary planning tactics, which have already been applied in climate change, energy transition, urban revitalization and network economy through urban living labs and research. This topic, a subject of discussion for many years, is increasingly important as planning intrinsically deals with uncertainty, environmental change, declining power of governments, financial limits, citizen empowerment and questions of social justice, responsibility and legitimacy. The consequent transitions towards adaptive planning, the integration of resilience thinking and the increasing interest in self-organization and bottom-up planning, all ask for a new definition of the role of academia, which is considered to the be the major contributing force of societal transitions. We had the opportunity to direct the attention towards new types of governance and ways of knowledge development in spatial planning contributing to innovations, in planning thought and in practice as well. In particular, the conference tracks

plaNext

NEXT GENERATION PLANNING

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were interested in exploring how new research approaches move beyond the classical gap between theory and practice, by using mixed-methods, dealing with real-life problems and situations, working with diversified stakeholders in the urban sphere and the complex urban arena.

The call for abstracts invoked unprecedented interest among young academics; 83 abstracts were submitted, and 34 applicants were selected after a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process. We have had the honour and the unique opportunity to learn from four leading and internationally known scholars: Prof. Karsten Zimmermann, Prof. Yvonne Rydin, Prof. Wilem Salet and Prof. Haim Yacobi. The conference was opened with a public debate, from both academia and planning policy practitioners. Each of the keynotes have enriched the conference participants, as they had given lectures from their own specific expertise, namely, Prof. Karsten Zimmermann talked about governance and spatial planning, debating whether it is a fruitful or rather irreconcilable combination; Prof. Rydin presented a multi-case study research from a relational perspective, through an exploration which uses analysis of urban energy initiatives; Prof. Wilem Salet provoked the very basic notion of spatial planning, wondering about the possibilities to add spatial quality to the engines of society; Prof. Haim Yacobi shared his research experience from Jerusalem and opened up a discussion about planning, protest and the making of a neo-apartheid city.

The papers were divided into four thematic groups, in accordance to four specific tracks: (1) Metropolitan governance, regional planning and planning cultures, led by Prof. Karsten Zimmermann; (2) Strategic planning by public and private actors, urban and regional development, led by Prof. Wilem Salet; (3) Environmental governance, energy and resilience, led by Prof. Yvonne Rydin; (4) Social and political justice, power relations, and urban conflicts, led by Prof. Haim Yacobi.

Moving Beyond the Classical Gap: Contents of the Special Volume

This special issue, the 5th volume of *plaNext*, presents a selection of articles that outline the 'power from below', in different contexts and from different geographic scales, discussing and analyzing new planning practices and the adaptive dimension of spatial governance. Prof. Yvonne Rydin acted as a Senior Guest Editor. Her professional experience, methodological rigor and careful guidance throughout the review process are highly appreciated.

The paper of Anais De-Keisjer presents an analysis of water services in Bujumbura, Burundi's capital, through a Just-City lens. Anais presents mapping of different actors, such as, the local government, public utilities, civil society, private sector and NGO's, focusing on their role in water system governance, and analyzing justice issues in urban development processes. Her paper addresses marginalized societies, asking who wins and who loses in a multi-actor system, and what can urban practitioners and professionals do, in order to lessen the disadvantages of the disadvantaged. Drawing upon the work of Watson (2002), Anais uses a post-colonial critique on Fainstein's (2010) concept of the Just City, addressing local realities of a southern city, and debating how informality in a southern context challenges notions and conceptions of universality and western-knowledge. The strength of her work is derived from an in-depth analysis of a single case study, which uses different research inquiry tools, such as, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and field research; highlighting informality and its effect on different urban scales like the household level, the neighborhood level, and the city level. By approaching varied challenging issues, such as citizenship, the right to the city, power relations, environmental degradation, and public health, the paper critically reflects on the performances, strategy and attempts of the citizens

plaNext
NEXT GENERATION PLANNING

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to fill the voids created by the formal water system governance. Her critical stance delicately observes daily life, adding images that illustrate how everyday politics involved in the provision of water vary at different level of society. The article summarizes several suggestions and some action-oriented recommendations in relation to household water supply in Bujumbura.

The article authored by Antonic Branislav discusses housing governance in Serbia, which is a post-communist country. It provides a broad historical overview of housing policies and politics in Serbia, highlighting the creative role of housing agencies. Branislav tackles the pressing issue of affordable housing in Serbia by outlining the underused and substandard housing in rural areas, the devastated multifamily housing in towns and small cities, the noticeable pressure on housing in major cities, and the illegal housing in Serbia's suburbs. The article highlights the lack of a coherent housing policy in Serbia, of which local housing agencies are still rare organized independently and without regulations by local authorities. Under such hostile conditions, this paper compares post-socialist and socialist models regarding the Serbian housing governance, and offers a basic model for housing institutions that is more appropriate to the current conditions in modern Serbia. The new type of model connects between housing governance and territorial planning. The focused reflection on Serbia's housing conditions while following the changes that had occurred over the years, is germane to other post-socialist European countries, and reflects a rise of socio-spatial inequalities in terms of housing shortage, gentrification, and residential segregation.

Elina Kranzle's article draws upon the economic crisis that characterize European cities and how it has led to austerity policies such as foreclosures, welfare and pensions cuts, and regarding urban development: commodification of public spaces. The emergence of squares, and the privatization of empty parking lots and green spaces are evidence of the hegemonic urban development regime that transforms public spaces into a commodity. The central argument of her paper is that urban austerity regimes have turned public spaces, a common good, into a commodity. Nevertheless, bottom-up initiatives in public spaces express discontent of citizens to the economic and political systems, allow reactions, which emphasize the role of public spaces not just at the geographic dimension, but as having a societal role as well. Civic initiatives represent the contestations over the right of the citizens to participate and determine how and by whom public spaces are appropriated. In addition, these bottom-up initiatives also represent the demand to the right to the city. Case-studies from Berlin and Madrid exemplify two European cities that aspire to become global. The renovations of two squares in Madrid's city centre illustrate the rationale of control and commercialization, namely by excluding the local population, reducing the functionality of public spaces, while maximizing the municipality's profitability. In Berlin, the Potsdamer Platz is used as an example that shows how public space transforms into a new business quarter, occupied and owned by global economic giants: Sony, Daimler and A&T. The analysis of the case studies from both Madrid and Berlin, reveal how citizens re-appropriate public spaces that in turn pose an alternative to the hegemonic urban development rationale. As Kranzle summarizes: "while their (the citizens) actions take place on the local level, their aspiration is founded on values of self-organization, cooperation and equality, and thus the city is not just where capitalism take place, but also where imaginations of a different society are lived". Besides the illuminating description and analysis of each case-study, Kranzle contributes to the theoretical debate on participation. By using the models of Tonkiss (2013) and Bonet I Marti (2012), the paper outlines how the production of space occurs from below and the power of 'irruptive participation' that effects governments' reactions and spatial patterns as well.

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The article "Urban Trojan" authored by Mohamed Elazzazy and Ahmed Zaazaa, reports on and analyses four different interventions in deprived areas within Egypt, following the revolution of the 25th of January 2011. These initiatives represent 4 case-studies, which are labeled as "urban social innovations". They differ in scale, agenda and structure, and cover a wide spectrum of stakeholders starting from individual initiators, community-based leaders, to NGOs. The authors are interested to understand how to execute urban social innovations, while evaluating the barriers and possibilities of working with and without public authorities. Drawing upon Jessy Marsh work (2015), the selected case-studies are categorized into 3 action-based models. The first model, "working in shadow", addresses a situation of which the initiator of urban social innovation seeks to execute a project without including public authorities. The analysis of the Mozza project, a street art work led by a local female artist, shows how a wall painting of a group of women sitting in a traditional café', next to a café' in historic Cairo, raised the awareness to a gender issue, while provoking the café' as a male dominant space. Another example of this model is the Highway road in El Me'temdeya, where the local community raised funds to create an access to and from an informal neighborhood that was confined because of the transportation works of the ring-road during 1990s. The second model, "depending on a hero", identifies a situation, when an initiator cooperates with a mayor or a key person from the Egyptian institutional system, to support and promote the project's execution. The Maspero area upgrading project, is an example of a collaboration between researchers, local community and a key person from the local government. This deprived area is inhabited by 3500 low-income families living in substandard housing conditions. The residents of Maspero area are threatened by government aspirations to transform the area into a Central Business District that would force them to relocate elsewhere. The third model: "infiltrating the cracks", emphasizes a situation of collaboration between local initiators, public authorities and the local community. The Al Athar Lina project, which focuses on the upgrading of El Khalifa neighborhood in old Cairo, represents the collaboration of various stakeholders in a heritage conservation project, allowing the local community to appreciate the monuments as a resource rather than a burden. Besides the fascinating examples that the authors have chosen to report on, their central contribution lies in the ways of analyzing the case studies. Focusing on two key aspects: (a) the effectiveness of the initiatives and the attempts to dissolve the boundaries between the initiators, the local community and the public authorities, and (b) the sustainability of the initiatives and their potential for future initiatives to take place.

The article by Ingrid Sabatier and Stephan Schwarz, "Self-organized urban space without profit", subscribes this special issue from a practitioners' perspective. The paper explores the interdependency between urban crisis and the subsequent self-organized urban reactions. Four case-studies of self-organized projects in Berlin are described in detail. The paper follows the circumstances which have allowed the creation of urban reactions in a self-organized manner, the characterization of their processes and their outcomes, highlighting the impact of self-organized initiatives on formal local planning structures. The bottom-up reactions of citizens display an individual solution and form the effect on local planning structures, while addressing societal questions. Each of the reported case-studies, exemplifies different type of self-organized initiative: protest movement against private investor operate as part of urban development project; temporary occupation and use in inner city areas as pillars for contest over and attempts to preserve the non-commercial character of urban space; spatial appropriation of vacant buildings; and spatial entrepreneurs that produce experimental form of a new type of production of urban space. The analysis of the case studies outlines the ways in which planning authorities reacts and adjust to such self-organized initiatives: in somewhat slow and vacillatory manner. Nonetheless, the four case studies stress the potential of co-production approaches to urban space. The articles

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demonstrate that bottom-up urbanism, which is seemingly referred in academic writing as 'Do It Yourself urbanism' (DIY), is a successful alternative to top-down urban development approach. However, Sabatier and Schwarz, as practitioners of planning, claim that while DIY urbanism, and more specifically, self-organized initiatives are broadly and thoroughly discussed in theoretical terms, are less obvious and clear, involving and facing complicated challenged in practical implementation.

The 'infill' between Theory and Practice in Spatial Planning

In this special issue we have gathered together a range of articles from different geographical, cultural and political contexts that provide insights to the intentions, processes, outcomes and education of governing urban and regional space. The case-studies and examples presented in the issue stress that it is not enough to identify the gaps between theory and practice in spatial planning, but rather, it is essential to critically reflect on both theoretical conceptualizations and practical solutions that have been adopted in attempting to fill these gaps. The articles also stress the emergence of 'soft-spaces with fuzzy boundaries' that have led to new and varied spaces of conflict and resistance (Allmendiger & Haughton, 2010). Such spaces are characterized by new spatial imagination promoting new informal planning spaces located outside the formal planning system and new networked forms of governance seeking to work outside rigidities of statutory planning (Olesen, 2012).

Spatial governance has different definitions and a variety of types, which all emphasize the way that rules, norms and cultures are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. However, contemporary spatial governance implies on redefinition of patterns of legitimacy and effectiveness of public action, redefinition of scales of public action, and co-evolution of the institutional context for public action (Gualini, 2006). The articles do not seek to fill the gaps between theory and practice; rather, their contribution is modest, yet significant. They stress the increasingly fragmented arena of spatial governance and its complexity, where 'no single actor or scale has the power or capacity to shape spatial structures of society on their own' (Olesen, 2012, p.912). Mostly, they attempt to bridge the gaps between theory and practice; their analysis and following critical reflections on the case studies fill in the identified gaps, and they explore new types of knowledge to overcome lacunae in formal knowledge (Bianchini & Ghilardi, 1997; Sandercock & Attilli, 2010; Shevah & Kallus, 2015). The radical alternatives of bottom-up initiatives and innovations entail strategic goals to improve the quality of life and enhance the provision of public services. The exploration of, and the burgeoning critical reflection on how and in what ways urban space and places are being negotiated through spatial governance, are the endowments of the new generation of young academics and practitioners in revealing the interplay and the bridging the gap between theory and practice.

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