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TIMES OF SCARCITY

RECLAIMING THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE CITY

EDITED BY DELJANA IOSSIFOVA



SCIBE

SCARCITY AND CREATIVITY
IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



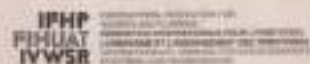
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TIMES OF SCARCITY:
RECLAIMING THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE CITY

Edited by Dejana Iosifova

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The Third European Urban Summer School (EUSS) – *Times of Scarcity: reclaiming the possibility of making* – was hosted in London by the University of Westminster, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, in collaboration with the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP), the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU) and the International Society for City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). Assembly generously provided working space at Sugarhouse Studios for the duration of the Summer School.

EUSS 2012 Joint Committee:
Dejana Iosifova – Head of EUSS 2012
Jeremy Till (Central Saint Martins)
and
Matti Finko (AESOP)
Dominique Lacourras (ECTP-CEU)
Pier Lorenz (ISOCARP)
Derek Martin (IFHP)
Izabela Mirnaucica (AESOP)

The main partner in facilitating the EUSS was the team behind the project *Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment (SCIBE)* at the University of Westminster. SCIBE explores the relationship between scarcity and creativity in the context of the built environment by investigating how conditions of scarcity might affect the creativity of the different actors involved in the production of architecture and urban design, and how design-led actions might improve the built environment in the future. Research is based on the analysis of processes in four European cities: London, Oslo, Reykjavik, and Vienna.

For more information, see www.scibe.eu and www.scarcity.is

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PARTICIPANTS

Alexandro Iacoli, Alex Baz, Alexandros Gazperatos, Antti Brechtlin, Anu Baskin, Aino Häblönd, Annelise Lodgion, Assemblé Studio, Barbara Elisabeth Acher, Rjain Black, Balkeerat Chatterpadhyay, Carlos Murros, Christie Oluwole, Claire Harper, Claudia Plickef, Cees Kesteren, David Knight, Dejana Iosifova, Derek Martin, Dominika Dadek, Duncan Bouix, Eoghán-Ceas O'Shea, Eric Cheung, Fermeç Fekici Mehbuden, Fotis Gremmetikopoulos, Gary Grant, Giulia Maci, Henrik van der Kamp, Haan-Ding Li, Isis Nanez Ferrero, Izabela Mirnaucica, James Worme, Jeremy Till, Joel Akerman Idage, Jon Goodben, Judith Ryser, Kathryn Firth, Kasia Pismenou, Lauri Lihmaa, Marina Sapanova, Mat Proctor, Matheus Lira de Matto Machado, Matteo Basco, Michael Casey, Michael Klitt, Mike Whithurst, Nazim Choudhury, Nick Wolff, Nikolaj Zaleskiy, Nozia Flood, Peter B. Meyer, Pier Lorenz, Ramon Marrades, Robert Tensen, Rany Habek, Rai Santos, Sebastian Seyfarth, Setpe de Bias, Serme Makel, Silvio Caputo, Stefan Webb, Stello Okochiolen, Steve Tamlinson, Stevan Chabrianiky, Teresa Franchini, Tuba Daga, Tuba Kokat, Ulçuşer Sengupta, Victoria Ferra, Vincent Goadstedt

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INSURGENCE!

RECLAIMING THE POSSIBILITY OF MAKING THE CITY

Deljana Iosifova

In September 2012, almost 100 young planning professionals, post-graduate students, established academics and experienced practitioners came together in London to develop new approaches to issues around scarcity in architecture, planning and design. The Third European Urban Summer School (EUSS) – *Times of Scarcity: reclaiming the possibility of making* – was hosted in London by the University of Westminster, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, in collaboration with the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP), the International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP), the European Council of Spatial Planners (ECTP-CEU) and the International Society for City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP). The main partner in facilitating the EUSS was the London team behind the research project *Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment* (SCIBE). To coincide with the third EUSS, the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment announced the International Award for Young Planning Professionals to encourage ideas with innovation potential on the topic of ‘Adapting Cities to Scarcity: new ideas for action’. Two of the award-winning entries are included in this publication.

Following the first Summer School in collaboration with UHabitat in Wrocław, Poland (2010), and the second in Lisbon, Portugal (2011), we developed the third EUSS as an invitation – a call to arms – for young design and planning professionals to find new ways of thinking about and new tools in response to emerging questions around scarcity. This seemed a particularly timely task in a London marked by the legacy of the Olympic Games and recent austerity measures, just beginning to show their impact on the ground, most explicitly, on the Olympic Fringes. Applications from prospective EUSS participants and tutors were invited in the form of proposed physical or process-based interventions in response to previously identified specific scarcities in the built environment. Selected participants came together in east London to explore a charged territory located in-between central London, the Canary Wharf Estate and the Olympic site and surrounded by highways and railway lines: Brixley-by-Bow.

Six teams were formed and challenged to identify one mode of scarcity in this particular context through on-site explorations and fieldwork exercises; and to propose how to address this creatively through a physical intervention or through a change in the way in which things are done.

To supplement work on their group projects, participants were exposed to a large number of lectures and workshops delivered by devoted speakers and tutors throughout the duration of the EUSS. Every day of the Summer School had its own theme: a thorough introduction to planning in London and the concept and context of scarcity; sensitisation to the subtle nuances and facets of certain notions; awakening creative imagination; considering aspects of innovation; approaches to adaptation; methods of propagation; pathways to the popularisation of planning; possibilities for outreach and the articulation of new ideas; and finally the dissemination of projects developed by participants. In the spirit of the Summer School’s theme (*Times of Scarcity*), participants had to adapt to very different working environments, ranging from the splendid surroundings of central London over University premises undergoing refurbishment to the cold- and wetness of Sugarhouse Studios, an old factory building on site which is currently used as an architecture studio, local cinema and pizzeria.

The questions we set out to explore together focused on approaches to architecture, planning and design under conditions of both operational and contextual scarcity. Operational, in that we, as design and

planning professionals, increasingly see ourselves forced to work with less, with limited or depleting resources of all sorts: financial, social, natural. Contextual, in that the conditions within which we are asked to intervene are increasingly marked by resource scarcities that seem to encompass all domains of urban life.

It is difficult to produce a valid definition of a notion as multi-faceted as scarcity. Of course, scarcity is when demand outstrips supply. Natural scarcity could be defined as the scarcity of resources which are rare – rare earth, for instance, or precious metals. However, natural scarcity only becomes real through human interaction with a natural condition. All natural phenomena experienced by human beings are directed or at least influenced by human activity. Thus, scarcity is socio-material. It is always relational and reveals how resources within society are handled. Scarcity is artificial when it is the result of mis-distribution: when the supply of a resource could be large enough to respond to demand – but when demand and supply are tweaked by decisions based on vested interest. Scarcity is engineered when it serves an interest: increased demand for a resource in limited supply will lead to a higher price and thus more profit; the hoarding of a resource for the in-group will lead to scarcity for the out-group, etc. ... It is a systemic condition. Scarcity in one place, time or scale can trigger scarcity in another place, time or scale through human – non-human relations and feedback mechanisms. The process of becoming aware of scarcity is the process of social construction. Regardless of the factors that trigger scarcity, it is always perceived and experienced as a real condition. When used on the grounds of political or economic motivation, the idea (and fear) of scarcity may result in real actions with real consequences.

The ‘final projects’ delivered by the teams were impressive: many went through a lot of effort to discover on the ground what local residents wanted for their neighbourhood; others developed a ‘scarcity toolkit’, hoping to address the complexity around scarcity in planning; others again proposed new ways of looking at available resources in the area and how to re-use them without adding more infrastructure, money or material. In retrospect, however, what seems worth noting is the very particular process of transformation that participants (and tutors) seemed to undergo during and after the EUSS. Challenged to scrutinise the relevance and value of established design and planning approaches, initially, many participants began to see their possibilities (their ‘toolkit’) shrink in view of complicated sociopolitical and economic systems that seemed beyond their control; they felt left with just one option, to play along, to become complicit in the further spread and establishment of what they began to view as social, environmental and economic injustice. What are we, as planning and design professionals, to do? After this initial feeling of help- and powerlessness, however, a shared experience of new-found purpose began to emerge, the re-discovery of creativity and the possibility of doing otherwise. So what if scarcities are about more than simple resource depletion? So what if they are embedded in political, social and ecological systems? What are we going to do about it?

Some initial answers to these questions, I hope, will shine through in the material presented on the following pages. They relate clearly to issues of personal and professional integrity; to our ability to exercise our freedom and choose our role within – or outside – the system. They build on our willingness to redefine our profession and to reclaim the possibility of making within and beyond the limits of the city. Most of all, they all require a brave and decisive move: away from complexity and towards insurgence.

SPATIAL ASSEMBLAGES

THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE(S) BEYOND THE IMPERATIVE OF GROWTH

Rai Santos (International Young Planning Professionals Award 2012, Special Prize)

What sort of spatial practices may respond, in a systematic way, to the challenges of post-growth economies? Though stressing social and environmental concerns, politically committed spatial practices and their theoretical counterparts emerging since the 1960's have not aimed at responding directly to such challenges.¹ In the light of the present, and of successive, financial and economic crisis, this may be, however, a relevant question for spatial disciplines, particularly for architecture and planning practices which have been lately involved in the production of 'global commodities'. As debates on 'shrinking cities', growth imperatives and socio-environmental externalities of economic development gain public recognition, a radical revision of processes concerning the production of space(s) is being called upon to accommodate claims from ecological economics and political ecology. It could be argued, therefore, that spatial disciplines are ill-prepared for future challenges and that a new set of spatial practices must be conceived and debated. But, in order to do so, one must previously clarify 1) what is meant by post-growth economies, 2) what are their founding assumptions and 3) how can they be translated into a set of urban policies consistent enough to inform spatial practices. Only then can we try to understand what sort of practices may be conceived, what concepts can act as mediators between them and possible framing discourses, and finally argue on their expectable impacts.

WHAT DOES 'POST-GROWTH ECONOMIES' MEAN?

Post-growth economic models comprise a series of different discourses and scenarios. A clear-cut separation must be made, firstly, between unintended shrinkage and planned degrowth. In the words of Herman Daly:

A condition of nongrowth can come about in two ways: as a failure of a growth economy, or as the success of a steady-state economy. These two cases are as different as night and day. No one denies that a failure of a growth economy to grow brings unemployment and suffering. It is precisely to avoid the suffering of a failed growth economy (we know growth cannot continue) that we advocate Steady State Economy (Daly 1982, 180).

Claims such as this have a long history in the discipline of economics. Adam Smith, John Stuart-Mill and Keynes have all predicted a time when economic growth would become unsustainable and even unprofitable, thus giving way to deeper concerns with overall prosperity and well-being in a zero-growth economic environment (Martinez-Alier, et al. 2010). However, it was in 1972 that this concept earned scientific and political legitimacy with the publication of 'Limits of Growth' report (Meadows et al. 1972) which presented to the United Nations assembly the irreversible effects of human activity on finite natural resources, asking whether or not we could continue expanding our economies within a limited world. Approximately at the same time, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, a former student of Schumpeter, came to question the idea of economic development by applying the second law of thermodynamics - the Law of Entropy -, to economic theory. Considering the irreversible losses of energy implied in every act of ordering, Georgescu-Roegen predicted that in the nearby future economic growth would surpass the earth system's carrying capacity: the continuous depletion of finite water, land and mineral resources would cause an inescapable economic

recession despite all attempts to dematerialise economics by means of continuous technological advances. Confronted with his own findings, Georgescu-Roegen concluded that a planned downsizing of economy would be as inevitable as advisable, a process he coined as 'degrowth' (Georgescu-Roegen 1971).

Since then, the concept of degrowth has followed different and diversified paths. In the words of Martinez-Alier, 'it is not simple to capture the meaning of sustainable de-growth in a nutshell. Such explicit opposition to the motto of sustained growth does not imply an exact opposition to economic growth. It advocates instead a fundamental change of key references such as: the collective imagination (*changement d'imaginaire*) and the array of analysis, propositions and principles guiding the economy' (Martinez-Alier, et al. 2010, 1742). Serge Latouche, the main Francophone intellectual of degrowth, claims that 'the motto of de-growth aims primarily at pointing the insane objective of growth for growth' sake (Latouche, *Le Pari de la Décroissance* 2006, 6). Thus, in his own words, degrowth is a 'political slogan with theoretical implications' (Idem).

More recently, degrowth and steady-state economic models seem to have been enjoying wider public recognition in developed countries: Tim Jackson's 'Prosperity without Growth' (Jackson, 2007) has been widely read and accepted, the First International Degrowth Conference was held in Paris, in 2008, and the Club of Rome presented a new report on economic degrowth to the European Commission in 2009. This legitimisation of steady-state or degrowth economics may, however, be apparent and reflect a concern, above all others, with the on-going financial crisis and the consequences of globalization, urbanisation and (re)industrialisation in the developed world. It is well known, many cities and regions in the 'Global North' are facing processes of demographic shrinkage and economic recession due to these combined factors and despite major public efforts to encourage private investment. Given, then, the viability and proximity of this problem in developed countries, it is more likely that 'shrinkage' caught the attention of northern governing institutions and audiences instead and ahead of degrowth with its far removed concerns with, to use an example, the uneven distribution of development benefits throughout the globe. Also, one should probably argue, it would be very surprising (and, perhaps, contradictory) if dominant discourses and institutions would fully accept - obsessed as they are with sovereign debt sustainability and economic recovery - such an explicit antagonism and radical critique to existing power structures and modes of production as the one advanced by studies on degrowth.

'POST-GROWTH' POLITICS?

As the Italian sociologist Onofrio Romano argues, degrowth ultimately stands as a pretext and figurehead argument for radical democracy proposals. What is being discussed in degrowth, says Romano, are some founding political values by means of an scientifically legitimised argument that, conveniently, speaks the same language of modernity's hegemonic discourse: the (suspicious) language of economy. In a tone of admission, he remarks that:

If the project is about radical democracy, degrowth cannot be a foundation for the same reason as degrowth advocates do not believe that 'growth' should be a foundation. Both 'proposals' are bound to merge in the melting pot of the thousand options that cross the democratic regime. Growth and degrowth, in this scene, rest in the same paradigm of the

anonymous subject: their validity is the function of historical constraints and neither of them can aspire to the throne of constitutional dogma (Romano 2008, 245).

Confirming Romano's remarks, the website of *Le Parti pour la Décroissance* declares the objectives of degrowth to be 'emancipation, wellbeing and fulfilment through voluntary simplicity' (*Quelle stratégie politique pour la Décroissance?* n.d.) and 'the building of other worlds, environmentally and socially responsible, humanly decent and democratic' (idem). These overall objectives comprise a whole strategy of '(re)localism' for housing, transportation, production and distribution to be implemented by measures such as: 1) the adoption of LETS, 2) the emancipation from forced (paid) labour, 3) the establishment of minimum and maximum incomes, 4) free public services, 5) a sustainable usage of natural resources, 6) the implementation of an 'energy descent' plan, 7) renouncing the cult of technology, 8) the emancipation of educational and cultural institutions from competitive towards cooperative behaviour, and finally, 9) the deepening of democracy to prevent people from being caught by power. Similarly, the programme defended by The Green Party of the United States – which stands for: 1) grassroots democracy, 2) social justice and equal opportunity, 3) ecological wisdom, 4) nowildness, 5) decentralization, 6) community-based economics, 7) feminism and gender equality, 8) diversity, 9) personal and global responsibility and, last but not least, 10) future focus and sustainability (The Ten Key Values of The Green Party s.d.) – points out to this intertwining of radical democracy and political degrowth agendas.

WHAT SORT OF 'POST-GROWTH' CITIES?

Not surprisingly, the same correlation between political degrowth and a '(re)localised radical democracy can be observed in terms of urban policies. In the II Conference on Economic Degrowth for Ecological Sustainability and Social Equity that took place in 2010, in Barcelona, a set of working groups has been assigned to discuss the relation between degrowth and the various dimensions of urban lifestyles and public policies, addressing topics of infrastructure, housing, cities, consumption, education, etc. The group working on cities presented a 'work-in-progress' vision for a 'degrowth city', a vision resembling a 'transition town' with, maybe, deeper undertones of 'criticality' (gives its on-going debating of 'squating', 'cohousing', liberation from paid work, etc.). Regrettably, and despite the much emphasised provisionality of this vision, this 'degrowth city' has reflected no more than a meagre and instant assemblage of the 'compact city' model, 'cradle to cradle' production processes and a set of explicitly translated 'right to the city' claims. 'Degrowth city', for instance, concerns 1) urban renewal instead of urban sprawl and the building of 'edge cities', 2) the deepening of democracy through participatory planning and co-design strategies, 3) the divestment in mega-projects and infrastructures, including those of transportation, 4) food sovereignty, 5) the extension, collective management and governance of common resources, etc. Disregarding the multiple and persistent critiques to 'localist' and 'progressive/leftist ideals' (Fairstein 2006, 3) of cities that underline the 'practical difficulties of implementation, and [its] inequitable outcomes' (idem),³ growth objectors attribute these shortcomings to the capitalist system in which space is being forcefully produced. In their viewing, it is capitalism that prevents the translation of urban ecology and human rights into a coherent set of urban policies: sustainable urban development, as it is being promoted worldwide by all kinds of governing institutions, remains indifferent to the accounting of most socio-environmental externalities despite on-going studies on ecosystem services. Yet, not only capitalism, but also disciplinary boundaries of sciences so dear

to degrowth partisans as urban ecology, make it difficult to translate further ecological concerns into a set of consistent post-growth urban policies. Focusing solely on the environmental consequences of urban nature's metabolism, urban ecology perpetuates (maybe unintendedly) the artificial nature-society divide by ignoring the fact that 'the social appropriation and transformation of nature produces historically specific social and physical natures that are infused by social power relationships'. (Heynen, Kalka and Swyngedouw 2006, 7); and in doing so, urban ecology excludes the concerns for socio-environmental justice that, though uncomfortable for 'green capitalism', cannot be disregarded in the light of an increasingly uneven process of global urbanisation.

Contrarily to the previous, research on 'shrinking cities' (Oswalt 2005) has extended the debate on post-growth beyond the separate discussions on 'civil rights' and 'ecology' by looking closely at the intertwining of political, economic, cultural, social and environmental implications of actual city-wide (unintended) shrinkage. It has taken shrinkages not as a taboo or a problem to be reversed by 'green development' or 'instant utopias' but, inevitably, as a starting point for a profound and transformative cultural change that cannot be thought without a correlative transformation of epistemological and ontological frames steering the construction of knowledge.⁴ Consequently, it departs from the studying of actual cities' survival strategies – in their succeeding or failing capacity to transform institutions and institutionalised behaviours (idem) – to, only then, launch itself into inconclusive debates on property regimes, economic models, work policies and cultural actions that, altogether, accommodate interdisciplinary critiques to current modes of production of the built environment. Indeed, if there's one conclusion to be taken from these studies, it is that shrinkage remains a widely unknown territory for 'planners of growth', thus revealing the inadequacy of standard spatial planning approaches and tools to embrace it as a potential instrument for transformation. In this light, it can be argued, research on 'shrinking cities' offers a cautionary argument, based on existing examples, to premature 'assemblages' on what post-growth cities should be composed of and how, by taking 'the production of space' as a primary matter-of-concern (Latoré 2005).

Concerns with 'the production of space' are far from being novel; they have long entered the social sciences debate with the contributions of Burgess, Park and McKenzie on the 'mosaic city' – 'The City: suggestions for the study of human behaviour', published in 1925; Lefebvre's reflections on 'the (social) production of space' – 'The Production of Space', published in 1974; Foucault's rendering of the spatialisation of discipline and punishment – 'Discipline and Punish', published in 1975; and, De Certeau's argument for deviational tactics in the making of everyday life against institutionalized and technocratic strategies – 'The Practice of Everyday Life', published in 1980. Later becoming a central theme for *Urban Anthropology* (Low, 1999; 2003), the production of space also influenced theories of collaborative planning (Healey, 1997), strategic design (Manzini & Jégou, 2003) and collaborative (urban) governance (Koussan, 2004). In regards to the architecture discipline, the production of space also influenced numerous collaborative practices throughout the world and has been debated in texts such as Giancarlo Di Carlo's 'Architectural's Public', published in 1965; Colin Ward's 'Housing: an anarchist approach', in 1976; John Habraken's 'Supports: An Alternative to Mass Housing', in 1972 and John Turner's 'Freedom to Build: Dweller Control of the Housing Process', published in 1972. With the economy and financial market's globalization in the 80's and 90's, however, pushing architecture to produce 'global commodities' within a 'starstructure' system (Benzer, 2010), the production of space as a process by which the

collective is composed (Latour, 2005) lost its primacy as a crucial matter-of-concern for architecture. Nevertheless, and considering the current economic crisis and the questioning of 'business-as-usual' or status quo - modes of production of the built environment, it may well claim back its centrality, particularly if backed up by politically and socially relevant spatial practices.

'POST-GROWTH' SPATIAL PRACTICES: SPATIAL ASSEMBLAGES?

Having reached this point, time to ask again: what sort of spatial practices may respond to challenges of shrinkage or degrowth? In order to try an answer, we may now have to look for 'spatial assemblages', or, local and creative processes of collective and interdisciplinary composition of space(s) aiming at transformative social change (Schmitt and Hersh 2000). The term 'spatial assemblages' is here advanced to cluster both Lefebvrian notions of 'differential space(s)' and urban studies' readings of assemblage theory. Ignacio Farias, in its introductory chapter to the book 'Urban Assemblages' (2010), describes how the concept of assemblage allowed urban studies to look at cities, for the first time, as hugely complex sociomaterial and sociotechnical landscapes; an assemblage of assemblages being composed of relational - and diagrammatic - sets of human and non-human actors ever actualising as precarious (and heterogeneous) agencements. Embracing, on the one hand, Deleuze and De Landa's stances on 'assemblage' and, on the other, Science and Technology Studies research on Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005), Farias follows to suggest that 'urban assemblages' bear the emergent capacity of enabling agency (Farias, 2010, p. 15) in their continuous movement between (re)territorialization (formation of habits) and deterritorialization (breaking of habits) (Dovey, 2012) processes. Thus, the borrowing of the term 'assemblage' and, on the other, Science and Technology Studies research on Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005), Farias follows to suggest that 'urban assemblages' bear the emergent capacity of enabling agency (Farias, 2010, p. 15) in their continuous movement between (re)territorialization (formation of habits) and deterritorialization (breaking of habits) (Dovey, 2012) processes. Thus, the borrowing of the term 'assemblage' and, on the other, Science and Technology Studies research on Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005), Farias follows to suggest that 'urban assemblages' bear the emergent capacity of enabling agency (Farias, 2010, p. 15) in their continuous movement between (re)territorialization (formation of habits) and deterritorialization (breaking of habits) (Dovey, 2012) processes. Thus, the borrowing of the term 'assemblage' and, on the other, Science and Technology Studies research on Actor-Network Theory (Latour 2005), Farias follows to suggest that 'urban assemblages' bear the emergent capacity of enabling agency (Farias, 2010, p. 15) in their continuous movement between (re)territorialization (formation of habits) and deterritorialization (breaking of habits) (Dovey, 2012) processes.

'Spatial assemblages' include CBO-driven planning processes, initiatives of artistic activism, actual buildings or even critical readings on cities and the production of space. Some of these transformative spatial practices have already been categorized and described by various authors over the last decades, resulting in publications such as 'Action Planning for Cities' (Goedert and Hamdi 1997), 'Architecture and Participation' (Blundell Jones, Petrescu and Till 2005), 'Architecture of Consequence' (Bouman 2009) and, more recently, 'Microplanning' (Rosa 2011), 'Collective Architectures' (Benitez 2010), 'The Nightmare of Participation' (Miesem 2010) and 'Spatial Agency' (Awan, Schneider and Till 2011). In 'The nightmare of participation' - part three of a 'participation' trilogy -, Markus Miesem (2010) argues for unsolicited interdisciplinary 'Spatial Practices' that, within Chantal Mouffe's agnostic approach to democracy, use conflicting interests and topics to prepare the ground for potential (social) change. Awan et al (2011) present 'Spatial Agency' as motivating spatial (transformative) praxis - buildings, installations, exhibitions, maps, networks, sets of instructions - that, being able to engage transformatively with organizational and social structure(s) present a new paradigm on how to operate in architecture. Benitez (2010) presents Santiago Cirugeda's 'Urban Prescriptions' as collectively produced and politically committed projects that, working in contexts of 'social emergency', aim at the creation of a 'Manual for Open Code Architecture' that fuse technical and legal questions such as assembly instructions, legal supports, safety conditions. Finally, Rosa (2011) documents 'Microplanning' initiatives in São Paulo, Brazil, as bottom-up 'urban creative practices' capable of creating common spaces for people living in destitute neighbourhoods by consolidating intra- and inter-neighbourhoods social connections.

Given the divergent theoretical renderings of all these practices, their grouping as 'spatial assemblages' might seem problematic and, indeed, raises crucial and still pending questions: do all these practices aim at being 'situated micro-utopias' (Benitez 2010) or participate in the construction of an 'emancipatory common-sense' (Samos 1993)? Do they all relate in the same way to democracy, 'spatial justice' (Soja 2010) or political ecology? Are (all) these practices interchangeable? These questions wait for a thorough and proper answer. However, and regardless all their possibly describable differences, one can still assert that 'spatial assemblages' share two major matters-of-concern. Firstly, they push for transformative social change and, secondly, they all consider the 'production of space', even if unwittingly, as a shared/collective, impermanent/dynamic and political enterprise. Whatever their specific objectives and outcomes, therefore, all 'spatial assemblages' aim at transforming a current 'state of affairs' in trying to irreversibly change its most obstructive components: the behaviour of intervening actors, constraining regulations, bureaucratic planning procedures, etc. Secondly, 'spatial assemblages' address the production of space(s) beyond its physical or abstract dimension in order to compose (a) 'differential space(s)' of, and for the intrusion of 'otherness'; in other words, 'spatial assemblages' take space as a matter-of-concern and not as a matter-of-fact (Latour 2005).

WHAT, THEN, MIGHT 'SPATIAL ASSEMBLAGES' EXPECTABLE IMPACTS BE?

It may be argued that 'spatial assemblages', as concerned with the production of differential spaces contribute to the spatial sustainability debate beyond 'eco-friendly' or 'green' concerns (Daly and Farley 2004, Jackson 2007, Latouche 2007). 'Spatial assemblages' provide a counterpoint to the current economic crisis debate and, in their concern with transformative change, create intensities of other possibilities beyond those attached to the so-called 'irreducible' need for economic growth. Indeed, and as the mentioned debates on 'Shrinking Cities' and post-growth economic models - and its political translations - gain public recognition, these heterodox practices may be important field experiments for urban sustainable living in the light of recent redefinitions of 'prosperity without growth' (Jackson, 2007).

Additionally, 'spatial assemblages' may also contribute to the questioning of architecture's production processes, boundaries and political responsibility. Firstly, they dangerously invite architecture to draw its attention from 'objects' to 'processes', that is, to analyse its recent production processes and products; now, as most contemporary architectures became 'global commodities', to accept this suggestion eventually means to scrutinize these commodities as 'black boxes' (Latour 2005), enquiring their eventual externalities or (lacking) transformative potential (Benitez 2010). Secondly, 'spatial assemblages' press architecture to work on an expanded and interdisciplinary field, intersecting the boundaries of planning, art and political activism. As once the acknowledging of objects as being socially constructed allowed sculpture to expand its field towards architecture and landscape (Krauss 1999), a similar process might now occur to architecture by hand of 'spatial assemblages'.

Finally, 'spatial assemblages' may imply a critical assessment to the 'immutable mobiles' (Latour 2005) or, the institutional and regulatory 'frames' in which spatial (organization) disciplines operate. Though the topics of 'informality' and 'governance' have long invaded the urban discourses and policies (Healey, 1997; Koolman, 2000; Roy, 2005), most countries are still recalcitrant when it comes down to implement de facto non-statutory instruments based on negotiation and shared decision-making. It is expected that 'spatial

assemblages', if well-equipped and constructed, significantly reverse this tendency and push forward framing institutions and regulations.

WHAT ACTORS, THEN, MUST BE IN PLACE >> FOR 'SPATIAL ASSEMBLAGES' TO SUCCEED?

Beyond contributions for the widening of sustainability debates and architecture's disciplinary corpus, it has been mentioned that these practices aim at pushing political and regulatory institutions towards a new paradigm that acknowledges space as a collective and political enterprise. For 'spatial assemblages' to fulfil their potential, then, many more actors – and their networks – must be allowed to participate in the production and governing of space. This is not a new claim, but one needs to stress it continuously due to the tendency of experts and governing institutions to avoid devolving their power beyond tokenism.

Unfortunately, the mental frame of most planners, architects, engineers, politicians, development practitioners, is still that of 'opris moi, le déluge' – a frame consistent with linear modernity. This modernity, however, has been long and thoroughly criticized and does not fit our currently globalized – and liquid – world. Change is becoming a growing necessity more than a choice; this change however, in Marina Silva's opinion – a Brazilian politician and activist – does not aim at adaptation but rather at a slow and creative insadaptation process. The predicted 'revenge' of a silent Gaia may urge us to collectively engage into a new ecology of practices.

'Spatial assemblages', though operating in a 'local' scale, provide the right strategies and tools to embrace this collective endeavour. In their urge to invent 'differential space(s)', these practices are privileged actors in the (re)activation of political subjects and communities. This, however, is not enough to affect structural changes: the empowerment of political assemblies requests consistent and continuous efforts and attachments to solid networks, whether rhizomatic or hierarchically organised. But if collective insadaptation is as inescapable as shrinkage or degrowth, one should not be concerned: all institutions may be eventually summoned to participate in the making of unsolicited 'spatial assemblages'.

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SHRINKAGE IS SEXY

A NEW STRATEGY TO MAKE A SHRINKING URBAN AREA THE MOST VITAL PART OF TOWN

Cleon Kustermans (International Young Planning Professionals Award 2012)

Shrinkage is globally considered as a negative phenomenon, and shrinking cities are seen as the opposite of growing, successful cities. Psychologically, there's strong coherence between this consideration and the development of our human body and mind. In our lives, shrinkage is the precursor of dying. But when city quarters dealing with a gradually declining population and an emptying housing stock are declared as Free States, these urban areas could become the most vital part of the body, *err town*. Within Free States, unused space could be exploited for the fulfillment of individual and collective living desires. *Create whatever you want!*

Because of declaring free States and striking out several regulations, (local) governments and collective house-owners can focus their gained time and money on small scaled actions. Strict and rigorous interventions are sometimes necessary, especially when too many houses lack occupancy. Overall quality can be increased by effective, inexpensive and fast actions. The tristesse of the former over-regulated shrinking area can slowly disappear, and possibilities for a happy life will attract young people who tend to start their career as independents. In order to shape a socially sustainable space, the idea of all generations living together is implemented in a new concept of state-offered services. To achieve such a thing, keywords are trust, community, solidarity and action.

By showing the example of the post-socialist city of Chemnitz in Eastern Germany, I try to filter general principles that can be applied in other shrinking urban areas in Europe. Chemnitz, once an important industrial centre and the socialist model city Karl-Marx-Stadt, has been struggling with population decline and urban decay since the 1980s. Especially the 'Plattenbausiedlungen', or tower block areas, are in need of alternative answers. The potentials of the empty DDR blocks and the public space are huge.

HOW TO READ THIS PLEA:

This article is meant to be a pleading story that should be read (chronologically). Therefore, I first introduce you to the city of Chemnitz. Secondly, I zoom in on Fritz Heckert, a tower block area with interesting spatial and social potentials. Then you will find a description of my suggestion and its motivation. After demonstrating you the innovative character of the proposed interventions, I will show you the applicability of the idea in other European contexts. A conclusion is terminus station. If you lose track, you can always return to this paragraph.

CHEMNITZ: A POEM

Chemnitz is a poem that could have been written by W.H. Auden or Dylan Thomas. Melancholic, tragic, but with sunny, hopeful straits, changing its character in such unforgiving and relentless way that one can hardly identify its new image or remember its old image.

Other German cities alike, Chemnitz had its economic and demographic peaks in the 1930s. The city had become an important manufacturing centre in the 19th century as a concentration of textile industry. Chemnitz was known as 'Manchester of Saxony'. Later, when nationalism arose and war was inevitable, heavy machinery, locomotives, automobiles and other vehicles were produced in Chemnitz.

After the important stronghold of Panzer tank production had been bombed by allied air forces at the end of the second world war,

95% (!) of the city was demolished. Although the new era inspired many to recover the ancient inner city and surroundings, Chemnitz became part of the newly found Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR). Being renamed Karl-Marx-Stadt in 1953, the city was a laboratory; a test case for modernist architects and planners. Inspired by functionalist ideas and following the 'principles of planning and designing socialist city centres'¹ the inner city was filled with high-rise apartment blocks. Street patterns were modern and functional, streets were wide and windy. Moreover, the city expanded by building the peripheral Fritz Heckert Area: a new city district with 31.000 model apartments for 90.000 inhabitants. The city was reordered to grow. Because when cities grow and develop, ideologies are justified.

But the heydays of socialism didn't last. When the 'two-Germans' reunited in 1990, a lot of (young) people moved to the west of Germany in search of jobs and a free or better life. However, Chemnitz had already been shrinking demographically since 1982. Today, Chemnitz has fewer inhabitants than in 1945 and the city is still shrinking, while neighbouring cities Leipzig and Dresden are growing steadily.² Shrinkage is not just spread out over the city: some parts of the city are desolated places while other parts are inhabited and doing well. Former socialist 'Plattenbau' suburbs are specific desolated places nowadays. In these uncool urb, average income and education are low, while average age and unemployment are high. Chemnitz is now known as the 'oldest city' in Germany - not for respectably being the first settlement, but for being the city with the highest average age.³

Nevertheless, there are bright sides as well. The former image of city of industry has disappeared. Chemnitz has a well-known university of technology, which attracts talent and technology (two important T's, besides tolerance⁴). Moreover, the university is an important employer. Many German students register at Eastern German universities because of their good reputation and affordable housing and living costs. Young couples move to specific parts of the city, because it is affordable compared to Leipzig or Dresden. Especially the areas built before 1918 are popular (Jugendstil and Gründerzeit architecture era) among youngsters with starters' income. These individual houses of several floors high are neatly designed and built in blocks, and there are communal gardens where kids can play safely. Except the houses, the attractiveness of the surroundings is considered too. The popular area has bars, restaurants and cultural places, and the inner city is within walking distance.⁵ Besides, the municipality is successfully funding the redevelopment of the inner city and the station area. There will be a direct connection between the main railway station and the university, which underlines the importance of the university.

Because of these attractive areas, the number of households in Chemnitz still remains quite steady. The steadiness of Chemnitz' households could mean that the city is not shrinking physically yet. In fact, the number of houses does not have to change. But as stated before, some areas in Chemnitz are popular and some not, which means that demands in the housing market shift geographically. Not the amount, but the location of the demanded houses has changed.

FRITZ HECKERT: A NOT SO OLD MAN WITH HIS INCONVENIENCES

In 1973 the Central Comity of the leading party SED declared a housing programme to satisfy demands and to maintain social harmony

in the DDR. In order to offer housing and amenities rapidly, industrial technologies were applied. The ideology of standardized, prefab apartment blocks was used in socialist (and also capitalist) countries worldwide. In Chemnitz, socialist planners built the residential area Heckert five to nine kilometres southwest of the inner city. Why there? Because there was space! Comprising 31,000 units, Heckert became the second largest high-rise area in the DDR, after Berlin Marzahn-Hellersdorf.¹⁶

The standardized model apartments, including the luxury of a bathroom and a private toilet, were designed for standardized model citizens (modern, progressive, collective). Under socialism, people were not just a consuming part of a consuming collective. You didn't own a garden, but there were parks and collective gardens nearby. Housing blocks were located in low-traffic streets. The peripheral location of the residential zones was no problem, because people could go to work via an extensive network of public transport.

The reunion of the 'two Germanys' led to high vacancy levels in houses in Eastern German cities in general and areas like Heckert in particular. From 1998, the city of Chemnitz and collective house-owners have torn down buildings and parts of buildings in the city, especially in Heckert. Apartment blocks were demolished and either replaced by one-family houses and shopping centres or by nothing at all. Other blocks were 'decapitated', brought down to four stories.¹⁷ Some redevelopments (from apartments into one-family houses) took place too, from 31,000 units, 11,000 (or 35%) were gone in 2005. Housing vacancy is still 20 to 30%.¹⁸ Statistics in 2005 show that Heckert has 58% less inhabitants than in 1992. Birth rate is very low and mortality rate is high. The average age is 51, while Chemnitz is the oldest city in Germany with an average age of with 47. Unemployment is 12 to over 20%.¹⁹

The tower blocks were produced fast, en masse and monotonously. In the 1970s grown-up baby boomers started to form families and settled down in the tower blocks collectively. Within the DDR, people didn't change their place of residence as often as today. Forty years later (today) the tower blocks still accommodate a large group of 'early residents'.

Furthermore, the image of model citizenship has changed. The ideology of the model apartment is diminished to the factual four walls and a roof. Heckert has become a place with a high concentration of socially fragile people. One could call it an internal clash between three main groups: a large group of old natives who have lived there ever since, a small minority of immigrants in search of cheap housing²⁰ and lower educated youngsters. In places such as Heckert crime, political extremes and social instability aren't rare. Moreover, the peripheral location has turned into a problem. Because of not being an integral part of the city, Heckert can turn into a ghetto if not dealt with properly.²¹

A vast majority of housing units is managed by collective land- and house-owning companies such as the Grundstücks- und Gebäudewirtschafts-Gesellschaft (or GGG)²². GGG, a fully owned subsidiary of the city of Chemnitz, has a quite simple concept: tenants rent apartments that are maintained by GGG. The formal owner is the city of Chemnitz. Apartments cannot be bought by private individuals or families. GGG only rents its housing stock.²³

Regarding services and shops, Heckert is quite standard. There are kindergartens, primary schools, city services, clinics, sport grounds and chain supermarkets. As birth rate and children numbers are low, many schools have disappeared since 1990.

HOW HECKERT AND CHEMNITZ CAN BECOME ALIVE AND KICKING AGAIN

It should not be the city's ambition to become like Dresden or Leipzig.

These cities are popular because of their cultural values. Dresden is beautifully restored and there are a lot of activities, and Leipzig is a cool, modern city with interesting historical artefacts. Chemnitz is not beautiful. Chemnitz is not classic or charming. Therefore, today's city's slogan 'City of Moderns' is right. It is modern, and it is different than anyone else.

Heckert and Chemnitz have certain potentials. Within its own region, the city can become popular again. Instead of trying to achieve the demographic peak from 1990, the ambition should be to offer a comfortable life quality with development possibilities in a safe environment. The university is an important starting point, because it annually attracts new talented youngsters.²⁴ In addition, the oldest city in Germany can become a centre of old people's homes, social care, healthcare and other amenities. Chemnitz can become or stay a medium-sized, lively city, relatively cheap in its region, attractive for all generations. And more specifically, Heckert is just 40 years old... much too young to die.

A few interventions are needed though. My idea is built on a few suggestions: declaration of Free States, action-oriented government and collective house-owners, new ownership strategy and generation building.

DECLARATION OF FREE STATES

People or suburbs like Heckert were standardized from the moment they were born. Raised in a regulated society, there were procedures, rules, regulations, exemptions in specific cases within strict limiting conditions, etcetera for almost everything. You cannot paint your house red if all the houses next door are yellow. Your hedge can only be maximum 80 centimetres high and in some cases maximum 100 centimetres if transparent and if not thicker than 15 centimetres. Your roof may not be higher than 12 metres. You may not break down walk.²⁵ These regulations demotivate (prospective) inhabitants. And this makes Heckert uncompetitive to other areas in Chemnitz or eastern Germany that are organized in a traditional Germanic way.²⁶

So let's forget about regulations! Let's break out, declare a Free State and make room for initiatives of the inhabitants, the real users of the houses and public space. Free states will attract liveliness. Regulations were made in a psychological context of fear. We need to trust people. We need to trust in people's capability and wish to build up a community.

Within Free States, that can be re-demarcated anytime, unused space could be used for the fulfilment of individual living desires. Except a few agreements on zones that must stay unbuilt, building and zoning regulations are lacking. You can remodel your tower block apartment, including the empty apartments next-door horizontally and vertically. The creative potential of the prefab apartments is huge: tear down walls, build stairways between floors, make an indoor garden... Do you want to open a shop? Please, go ahead. Make it a lively place. Build whatever you want, meet your neighbours and transform the public space inside and outside the way you want to.²⁷ I hereby would like to note that these so-called Free States merely consist of building and reusing creativity. These Free States are not party islands.²⁸

By introducing Free States, the tragic Plattenbauten become alive and attractive for people in search of a house in an urban and alternative environment. It is not the outlying ghetto anymore where you live when you don't have any other possibilities. Furthermore, the positive effect of ownership and taking care of the apartment and public space is introduced - instead of having standardized space without any (financial and emotional) ownership or responsibility. Especially this element is a huge potential within suburbs like Heckert.

The first Free State will be declared in one of the high-rise



Shrinkage is Sexy. Source: Clem Kostermaas

apartment blocks with many empty units, including the unused public space around it. This place will become a laboratory; a test case like the city was in the socialist era. If successful, the concept can be applied in other blocks too.

ACTION-ORIENTED GOVERNMENT AND COLLECTIVE HOUSE-OWNERS

Most cities today, Chemnitz included, tend to have overall policy coverage of their territory in order to keep order. On the other hand, all legislatures have focus areas. Currently, Chemnitz is successfully funding the redevelopment of the inner city by adding shopping malls in buildings designed by modernist architects Hans Kollhoff and Helmut Jahn²⁵, recovery of historical buildings, public transport, new public space etcetera. Moreover, the station area is redeveloped in order to make a straight connection to the university and to invite ICE-trains (high-speed trains connecting main cities²⁶). It can be an understandable choice to focus on inner cities and stations instead of outlying suburbs. But my proposal would then be to skip the regulations in the outlying suburbs and to forget about overall policy coverage! Uniformity is in my eyes a misinterpretation of constitutional equality.

Striking out building and zoning regulations seems to be an easy thing to do, but it is not. Most probably, the city will receive complaints of upset neighbours or pleads to financially compensate ownership rights. So, the city installs a contact person in the Free State. He/she will gain a lot of bottom-up experience and an extended social network within his/her working area. The contact person will try to find compromises within reasonable terms. The Free State lacks building regulations, but there are still common values agreed on by the residents. To build up a community, certain agreements will have to be made. But anchoring these agreements in regulations is highly unnecessary. It is about freedom and not limiting someone else's freedom. This plea has undoubtedly been done before, but in this era of scarcity, negativism and dogmatism it really might be the right thing to do.

Furthermore, the city can cooperate with the university, city-run

housing associations and private companies to create a job and building programme to stimulate students to work and live in Chemnitz after their studies. The University of Chemnitz is known for its mechanical engineering, mathematics and computer science, as well as philosophy and social science. Linking study programmes and work together can make sure that talented graduates do not leave Chemnitz right away after their studies.

The campus is located south of the city centre. The city or university can buy units in Heckert to hire them to students. It is cheap, students have a lot of freedom in Heckert (compared to standardized model apartments somewhere else) and it is not far from the campus. During and as part of their studies, students can start rebuilding their apartment in the Free State into something of personal value.

An encouragement to set up local shops and services can be done too. For example, many independent merchants and entrepreneurs spend a lot of time and money on permit and tax regulations. The city can stimulate small business people by taking away administrative discomforts.

The city's main focus will be to encourage private developments. On the other hand, gained time and money can be used by the city and house-owners to redevelop parts of Heckert. If it turns out to be necessary to tear down (parts of) apartment blocks, the quality of space and the future function should be considered. It is a matter of balance: if there are too many buildings, the quality of the public space is endangered. If there are too few buildings, the place can become desolate, unattractive and unsafe. The local government and collective house-owners can react by punctual interventions: swift actions on a small scale in order to eliminate problems. Temporal use of space is possible if it does not obstruct future redevelopment.

GENERATION BUILDING

Heckert has demographic and spatial potentials to become 'senior city': a residential area for elderly people with their minds on stability and quietness. But this would not form a socially sustainable choice, because this would lead to isolation of individuals. Furthermore,

a homogenous society does not exist and therefore it should not be aspired. In my eyes, social sustainability is driven by integration of generations, income classes, languages, races and nationalities. A melting pot, indeed. Therefore, a social and generational mix is intended. By implementing building freedom and taking the tristesse of the former over-regulated shrinking area away, young people who tend to start their career as independents can be attracted (students, young couples with or without kids). But trying to create a young trendy quarter is not a socially sustainable solution either. Many examples have shown that 'gentrification'²⁷ has many negative sides that overshadow positive effects on the longer term. So: how to overcome a generation gap?

A simple answer would be to separate generations: Block A, Free State, is for youngsters, while B, still under building regulations, is for elderly. However, in order to shape a socially sustainable space, the idea of all people living together is implemented in a new concept of trust, community and solidarity.²⁸ A Free State is a house of generations. Several generations living together is a positive condition for all inhabitants, because on the one hand people grow up fast and worldly while on the other hand people stay young longer. No isolation, but involvement and integration. Within a local economy of a Free State, senior care will be an important economic pillar in the near future. The Free States are small worlds in which a community can be formed. There are many non-disturbing activities such as shops, bars, restaurants and services. People know each other and there are common values. The anonymous life in the high-rise blocks can change into new social contacts on a human scale. And there's a lot of freedom to build or create what individuals or collectives want, elderly people included. This also means that people are free to refuse to use this freedom. But limiting someone else's creativity or desire is considered negative, and it therefore should not be possible. We live together on this planet, so let's live together!

It is like a dance floor. Space is limited, but people are free to dance. You can be timid and some basic steps, but you can also swing round boldly. The floor is made for people to communicate and play together, not to court someone else. It is a collective individual happening in search of some happiness. The spatial planner is a background musician, bringing the beat and defining the pace.

OWNERSHIP

Besides planning principles for a new strategy for shrinking urban zones, bringing together different kinds of ownership is an important question that should be answered to really realize ideas. Today the housing companies are shared corporations, and that seems to be a good start. The corporation/cooperation can keep housing affordable, because it can get relatively favourable mortgages. However, apartments are not sold to individuals yet. This leads to the classic gap between corporation (owner) and tenant (user). The lack of financial and emotional association with the apartment or public space leads to general disinterest by tenants. Public space is for everybody - and nobody. Therefore it would be an improvement if tenants can also buy shares or parts of houses and public space.

Indeed, if housing association/city sell apartments to individuals or collectives, it will be more difficult to break down a tower block if vacancy is too high. Private/collective development in Free States and strong government action form a combination of overlapping interventions. Both are possible at the same time and in the same space. As housing companies are subsidiaries of the city, it can be comprehensively involved in interventions by the local government. A small and effective intervention team can be formed to take away obstacles. Housing units can be used for other non-disturbing daytime and evening purposes too. If hope is really given up, a tower block can

only be dismantled if housing company/city buy back the units or offer the owners an alternative unit. On the other hand, building and zoning freedom will lead to interconnected units, larger units, collective units, new purposes of units and less vacancy of units. Temporary student housing or other activities are possible too. If housing company/city are unsure about future occupancy, they can first try to sell parts of apartment blocks to people's collectives as they form a steeper base than individuals. If housing company/city persists on not selling apartments, more and more units will have to be broken down - and this would lead to a fatal decrease of finances as well.

INNOVATION AS KEY ANSWER TO OLD QUESTIONS

I believe that a concept of Free States, punctual government action, generation building and collective ownership is an innovative proposal, especially in former DDR Plattenbau areas. This statement is based on the following motivation.

- Total building liberalism in Free States is special and innovative within regulated Germany in general and overregulated Eastern Germany in particular. If more space is offered, Chemnitz can really make a difference and attract young people who tend to start their 'living career' in an alternative, urban environment.
- An active and light instead of a reactive and heavy city administration is new too. To solve problems and to maintain order, no overall policy coverage is needed. The local government can allow a lot more than today without getting complications. Instead of heavily regulating every square metre of its territory, the city can invest in punctual actions within a certain framework. After all, pure liberalism will not lead to an improvement of space.
- Community and generation building is an alternative to narrow individualism. After becoming part of the western, capitalist society, Eastern Germany quickly transformed and tried to catch up on the developments in the west. The new ideal was to own a detached house and a garden and to buy your goods in shopping centres and huge D.I.Y. markets. By doing this, the society followed mainstream - which is reasonable, but it does not distinguish itself from the grey mass. By building a community of different generations, classes and nationalities (combining old and young, foreign and native, poor and rich) it can become a special place.
- The positive elements of (partial) ownership aren't really implemented yet. In order to stimulate people's responsibility and financial and emotional bond with a certain space, people can be shares of houses (grow plan) and public, collective space. This too is innovative in Chemnitz, where the model apartments cannot be bought yet and where public space does not belong to anyone.

Of course, this is why the proposal is innovative within its context. But the ideas itself are innovative too, in my eyes. I propose two extremes: on the one hand a far-going liberalism within unregulated Free States and on the other hand strong government intervention when the government announces it is required - if necessary also in Free States. I believe in a combination of these two extremes, instead of covering everything with the same, single coloured sauce. Too often we try to smooth innovative and rough (sides of) ideas until there is an agreement, or consensus. The pureness of ideas gets clouded when certain key brains need to be convinced. But to really enforce potentials of a certain space, the pureness needs to be kept.

IS THIS IDEA APPLICABLE TO OTHER EUROPEAN CITIES?

By showing the example of Chemnitz, my proposal might only seem applicable in relatively dense urban areas where ownership is limited to a few collectives. Shrinkage in for example rural France, Spain or Finland and towns in England or peripheral regions is the

Netherlands and Belgium seems to be another story, because it is not city-like and there are many owners.

But on the other hand, collectives of ownership can be formed anywhere to buy vacant houses and land. The positive part of collectives is that they can get a mortgage cheaper and that people can buy shares and feel responsible for and proud of something. Free states can be declared on all scales (from regional level to a single house) and generation building can be done within all contexts (rural, townish, urban, metropolitan). If there is no initiative on the short term, the local government can start to use its network and motivate people by creating and communicating a lack of, for example, building regulations, and by stimulating private and collective initiatives.

TERMINUS

The tower block areas in the 1970s and 1980s were made to accommodate citizens in a growing city in a society characterized by mass production and employment programmes. Today's reality is that these specific areas are subject to demographic shrinkage. While on-going consumption is questioned by more and more people, alternatives are being sought. In times of financial scarcity political extremes can repress people's minds. Populist politicians

conceptualise totalitarian states with strong government influence. Another extreme reaction is total liberalism: to lower government costs, people are responsible for their own well-being. In my proposal I combine the positive elements of both extremes: on the one hand strong government intervention and on the other hand zoning and building liberalism. When we build communities and collectives, we can find an alternative to narrow (and expensive) individualism. Local governments use their local knowledge and networks to take up a more lean and stimulating role. Private and collective development is stimulated to realize 'healthy growth' - without quantitative goals. Especially within the context of Chernitz collective Free States and collective action can lead to improvement. Individual action can support reaching collective aims. The world is plural, multicultural, colourful and beautiful. Not uniform, grey and dull.

If we, *hominis sapientes*, do not multiply as much as our grandparents did, it could become a survival of the fittest among cities and countries in the end. A war for every living soul could be inevitable! But in that case, the most modern and innovative cities and countries, inhabited by the most modern and innovative people and run by the most modern and innovative officials, are then prepared and know what to do.

STRATEGIC PLANNING IN LONDON IN AN AGE OF SCARCITY

Duncan Bowie

As one of the leading 'world cities', the governance and planning of London generates considerable international interest. London's hosting of the 2012 Olympics focused significant attention on the city, but it is important to study the development of London as a whole as well as the delivery of a single mega-event.

In the last decade, London has changed dramatically, the most visible change being the London skyline, with a new host of high-rise buildings – with the recently completed Shard building being, at least for the time being, the highest building in Western Europe. But it is important to look beyond the most visible change and to understand both the successes and failures of London's governance and spatial planning regimes; to understand the interaction of the recession, representing scarcity of public and private resources, and the scarcity of land imposed by historic but intentionally created spatial planning policies. In 2000, London chose its first directly elected Mayor. For the previous 14 years, London did not have its own directly elected administration and with the abolition of the Greater London Council in 1986, was directly managed by Central Government. The 32 lower tier authorities – the 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London continued to provide local services, but were not in practice strategic authorities. Central Government was responsible for strategic planning guidance and ran some investment programmes directly (for example the Housing Investment Programme through its agency, the Housing Corporation) or allocated capital and revenue resources to the boroughs. The borough-controlled London Planning Advisory Committee could advise the Government but had no statutory basis to publish plans. The establishment of the Mayoralty in 2000 created a new regional executive authority, together with an elected London assembly to act as scrutiny body. The Mayor became the strategic planning authority for London and was also given powers to intervene in specific new developments. The Mayor was also given control of London's bus and underground network, though not of its surface rail network, and part control of the London Development Agency, the Government's regional regeneration organisation.

London's history of strategic planning is not a narrative of continuous progression. The Abercrombie plans of 1943 and 1944 (the County of London Plan and the Greater London Plan) are rightly famous. The London Plan produced by the Mayor in 2004 was only the third region-wide plan for London. The County of London 1968 review was limited to inner London. The Greater London Development plan was not adopted until 1976 and the amendments proposed by the Labour controlled Greater London Council in 1986 fell with the abolition of the GLC. The London Plan drew on the European tradition of spatial planning and its focus on economic, environment and social sustainability reflected the approach set out in the European Spatial Development Perspective. This was later to be reflected in the relatively short lived provisions on regional planning in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

London planning has faced a number of challenges in the last decade. The first challenge has been the impact of globalisation, with the growth of the financial services sector and London's increasingly critical role within world financial markets and its pre-eminent role in relation to other financial centres such as New York and Tokyo.

The second has been a significant growth in population, an increased diversity of population and significant levels of both in-migration and out-migration, with an increasingly mobile labour market, but also with a growing reputation as a relatively safe haven, both for business in terms of its attractive labour market and tax regime and for those fleeing from other countries in terms of a relative high level of security and tolerance. London has become the most ethnically and linguistically diverse city in the world – a true world metropolis, and a city which largely tolerates and even welcomes its diversity, though this does not mean that the city is completely free of racism and ethnic discrimination. London has its attractions and opportunities for young skilled professionals from across the world.

The third challenge was the change of governance arrangements which impacted on spatial planning and its implementation. The 1999 Greater London Authority Act, piloted through parliament by the

Minister for London, Nick Raynsford, intentionally established the Mayor as a small executive authority without direct service delivery functions. In the 2007 Greater London Act, as a result of effective lobbying by the first Mayor, Ken Livingstone, the Mayor's powers were extended to include responsibility for the London housing strategy, and then in 2012 direct control of the Government housing investment budget. The 2007 Act also strengthened the Mayor's planning powers. These changes reflected on the growing success of Livingstone and his successor Boris Johnson, who were seen as strong advocates for London. While both mayors at times challenged central government – Livingstone for example over the issue of the private financing agreement for improvements to the underground railway network and Johnson over airport strategy, both Labour and Coalition governments were prepared to devolve further powers to the Mayor. The onset of the localism agenda under the post zero Government shifted the balance of power more in favour of the Mayor, without strengthening the ability of the London boroughs, or for that matter, the elected London Assembly, to challenge the Mayor.

The fourth challenge was the recession of 2008, with the weakening of both the financial services sector on which London's economy largely depended and the stagnation of the housing market, not just in terms of transactions in the second hand homes market, but in terms of the slowing down of the new development programme. London however recovered relatively quickly from the recession. By mid-2012 housing prices had reached and in some cases significantly exceeded pre-recession levels. While some major development schemes were on hold, the prime central London property market, with significant investment in new residential and commercial development. Money flowed to London from the Middle East and the Gulf States, South and East Asia, while the Eurozone crisis led to investment from some European countries moving to London. With new tax regimes being introduced in some European countries, most recently France, London is seen as wealth friendly and tax light. Within the UK, there has been an increasing differentiation between the economic strength of London and the stagnant or even declining economies of provincial centres. The focus on London as an island of prosperity has not only revived the historic North/South debate but also diverted attention on the increasing inequities within London.

The spatial planning model that was adopted by Ken Livingstone as Mayor was that of the 'compact city', influenced by both urban designers and architects such as Richard Rogers, who led an the study 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' for the central government, and under pressure from both environmentalists and city business interests, Livingstone adopted the view that London should seek to contain both its population and employment growth within the existing London boundary. With a rigid policy on the protection of the Green Belt and other open space, this meant building at much higher densities – upwards rather than outwards. This alliance of economic and environmentalist pressures did however lead to the falling off of the social planning agenda, as new homes became smaller and more expensive, involving vertical social segregation.

The decade saw a significant reduction not just in the supply of existing social housing for lower income groups, but a falling off of the proportion of social rented family sized homes in the new development programme. Significant reductions in government investment in new homes was a critical factor, and by 2012 the Government had stopped all funding for social rented homes, preferring instead to focus on the provision of sub market rented homes by the private and housing association sectors, with low income households being supported through increased welfare payments including housing benefit. London has seen further social polarisation, which is increasingly taking a spatial form as central London becomes dominated by the very wealthy

from around the world, while low income Londoners get pushed to the periphery and beyond. Yet despite these trends and a population growth nearly twice the previous rate, the belief in the compact city is largely unchallenged – and the Johnson 2015 London Plan only includes relatively minor changes from the Livingstone 2004 and 2008 versions, though under the Johnson regime, following the lead of the national Coalition government of David Cameron, there has been a further move away from the provision of genuinely affordable social rented housing.

There has not been any fundamental rethink, nor has there been sufficient analysis by academics or practitioners of the outcomes of spatial planning in London – of the failures as well as the successes. The focus on the 2012 Olympics has perhaps diverted attention away from the study of wider issues and it is only in recent months that there has been a public recognition of the extent of London's housing crisis. The compact city/spawl debate also needs to be revisited and a proper debate held as to the most sustainable form of development to meet London's future needs.

It is important to recognise that in the context of analysing spatial planning and housing policies, **scarcity results from choices and is not an inevitable paradigm.** Scarcity of public resources is the consequence of a decision by Government not to introduce a more progressive taxation policy which would have generated significant additional receipts for government reinvestment. Scarcity of private resources in the post-recession period was a temporary consequence of the mismanagement of financial and housing markets, as the availability of private finance for both development and home purchase through mortgages was constrained, without sufficient counterbalancing public sector intervention to fill the financing gap. However, it only had a relatively short term impact and today international investment is generating a new property boom in London which has significant negative as well as positive effects as homes are developed for the needs of the international investment market rather than for the needs of Londoners.

Perceived scarcity of land partly reflects a Government decision at both national and Mayoral level not to develop on undeveloped land. As referred to above this policy has had a significant negative impact in terms of social planning objectives. The use of the terms 'scarcity' and 'austerity' in the UK context are of course relative. Scarcity can be a consequence of Government policy as well as the limitations on natural resources such as the availability of land. Austerity can also be a consequence of Government decisions – a Government decision to raise tax leads to limitations on the availability of public funding for investment. Compared with many other countries, investment resources, land, and development capacity in London and the UK are plentiful. We do not have any excuses for not meeting the housing and wider quality of life aspirations of all the population of our capital city and our country. The position we are in reflects explicit political choices as well as external economic factors and we should not forget that economic factors are to a large extent a consequence of political decisions and ideologies.

The planning system in England remains highly centralised in terms of governance but remains market driven in practice. The current rhetoric on localism and neighbourhood planning has not as yet had significant impact on that position. While local authorities may have slightly greater powers than previously, the financial constraints remain tight with local authorities having little financial autonomy. For the position to be improved, local authorities and, in London, the Mayor as the regional authority, need powers and resources if a fundamental shift in development outputs is to be delivered. Ownership of land and the power to acquire land is a central issue. Without this fundamental shift in powers, resources and land ownership, even the most progressive plan making authority can only react to the market rather than actually take the leadership in determining that its plans come into effect.

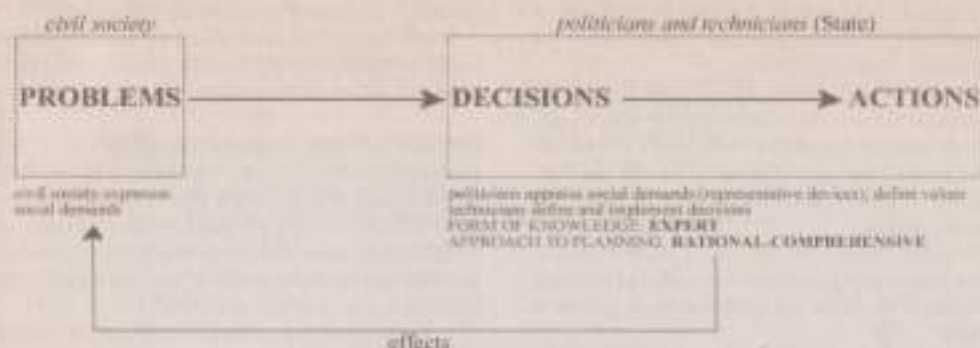


Figure 6v. An ideal problem-solving decision-making perspective. Source: Matteo Bazzani

SCARCITY THINKING AND PLANNING THEORIES

Matteo Bazzani

We are now living in overall conditions of scarcity and uncertainty that permeate any intervention on the built environment. These circumstances are therefore bringing to light a general criticism of the established approaches to planning²⁵; in particular, these are implying – I would through these notes briefly argue – a significant redefinition of the role and position of planners within the planning processes. In fact, since cities are characterized by dynamics and social demands raised by many different populations (which are then transferred into different land-use patterns), urban policies²⁶ must pursue at the same time different conflicting goals. Firstly, – which is the set of goals more easily recognizable in the built environment – they produce physical outcomes in terms of new buildings and infrastructures construction, buildings refurbishment and public spaces amelioration. Secondly, they deal with social justice issues, as for instance the provision of affordable housing, public services and local initiatives aimed at taking care of specific vulnerable social groups. Finally, they have to achieve local development objectives as well as the preservation of the overall environmental qualities.

As it is obvious, these goals are not automatically shared due to a floating condition of mismatch between values, point of views, interests, ideas and expectations recognizable in planning policies (Campbell 1996). Therefore, since trade-offs are not easily reducible, an interactive and conflicting dimension characterizes the whole urban policy-making process (Banfield and Wilson 1963) which in the end requires a shift of the role and the perspective of planners from that of “solutions design” to that of “problems investigation”. The full comprehension of the socio-economic dynamics affecting contemporary cities and territories is therefore absolutely relevant in order to improve both the theory and the practice of urban and regional planning. As planners we must in fact be aware – from an epistemological point of view – of the origin, the nature, the limitations and validity of different kinds of human knowledge, in order to design better policies and to cope with multiple publics (Lindblom and Cohen 1979).

FROM PROBLEM-SOLVING TO PROBLEM-SETTING

Conditions of scarcity, uncertainty and complexity require therefore that planners work more deeply on the comprehension of problems rather than on solutions definition. To this end the plurality of actors in policy arenas represents an undoubtedly concrete and strategic resource in order to improve the knowledge of problems. According to

fact to Schön (1978), “[...] the essential difficulties in social policy have more to do with problem setting than with problem solving, more to do with ways in which we frame the purposes to be achieved than with the selection of optimal means for achieving them” (p. 255); hence, “[...] it has become clear that we ought no longer to avoid the problem of setting the problem” (p. 262).

Since scarcity is a social construct and does not represent a given and objective situation, experts are requested to abandon the presumption of knowing in advance the whole range of its dimensions thanks to their supposed expertise. Planners must first of all understand the different representations of what is really missing, what is wrong and what ought to be done in specific contexts through a process of continuous inquiry into the stories and the cognitive frames of the many actors who actually live and use that environment²⁷. A process of social involvement, hence, where technicians and politicians work with and within local communities instead of for, in order to make sense of the reality and better set the problems. This operation has obviously become absolutely relevant in our contemporary cities, where “we need to acknowledge the many ways of knowing that exist in culturally diverse populations, and to discern which are most useful and in what circumstances” (Sandercock 1998, p. 5). I tried to represent this change of perspective through two different schemes²⁸, in order to explain more clearly the concept.

Scheme A (see Figure 6v) represents the linear problem-solving perspective, where the separation and the boundaries – in terms of competencies and responsibilities – between the sphere of society and that of the State (performed by politicians and technicians) are easily identifiable, with a consequent unidirectional and top-down dialogue between the two²⁹. Civil society appears therefore as a passive subject who expresses social demands and dissatisfactions with an existing situation (such as scarcity of public services, interventions or conflicts regulator) and is then served and regulated by the government. On the other hand, the State acts both as a provider of services and a regulator of social practices through an interactive process between politicians and technicians in the definition of which problems at stake are to be solved³⁰. In particular, politicians are supposed to be able to understand and appraise the troublesome situations and to define a priority of values through the traditional devices of representative democracy. Technicians are then requested to formulate, assess and implement technical and rational responses in accordance with the political direction and thanks to scientific techniques such

as Multi-Criteria Analysis or Cost-Benefit Analysis (technical rationality). The civil society is eventually the recipient – both in a positive and in a negative way – of this specific process.

In this model of policy choice, planners search therefore for desired solutions to given social problems, which are generally considered to be completely knowable and static. The planners position within the process is hence one of separation from the rest of the society due to the greater expert knowledge that as technicians they are believed to possess.

On the contrary, scheme 2 (see Figure 02) is a graphic representation of the problem-setting perspective which offers an immediate comprehension of the circular and intertwined process inherent in such a model.

Since problems and scarcity circumstances are not given but are constructed by human beings, a cooperation between civil society, politicians and technicians appears as the essential instrument in order to get a more realistic and pluralistic interpretation of the ambiguous and complex situations. A multiplicity of point of views about what is really missing makes it indeed [...] dramatically apparent that we are dealing not with "reality" but with various ways of making sense of a reality' (Schön 1978, p. 267). Hence, [...] the design process is a social process: problem setting represents the outcome of the interaction between the actors, with their alternative, multiple and unstable definition' (Fareri 2009, p. 212 – the translation is mine).

Then, the absence of a clear separation between the sphere of society and that of the State – and the participatory devices introduced in order to reduce the distances between them – allows the different actors to explore both the problems and the choice of the decision, as well as its implementation. In an interactive and multidirectional cycle, the whole policy process aims therefore at better and continuously (re)defining the problems at stake, with feedbacks, improvisation, collective reflection, learning-by-doing and reframing processes gained through the practice (Schön 1983; Schön and Rein 1994). The stage of problems definition is hence re-launched during the whole process and a strict separation between formulation and implementation is definitely overcome. As indeed Crosta (1998) accurately asserts, there is no separation between knowledge and project, since [...] the relation between decision and action is not much an antecedence/consequentiality relation (= first decide, then act, but a coming-and-going relation, between decisions and actions. The "stage" of decision and the "stage" of action continually interpenetrate, are intertwined' (p. 28 – the translation is mine).

Furthermore, the State acts here more as an enabler than a provider: it creates the opportunities to involve and improve the capacities of communities to act in order to solve problems rather than simply offering them its own solutions (that is giving people the opportunity to become policy-makers as well). Planners are hence requested to be able to get this involvement started and are expected to gain more experience in fields such as mediation, negotiation, collaboration, social interaction management and participatory processes design²⁵. In general terms, planners turn out to be a sort of social researchers – together with other practitioners belonging to different disciplinary orientations – committed at first in observing social contexts, listening to different voices and point of views and interacting with inhabitants. In particular, "the reflective planner participates in these societal conversations; and in doing so, he or she helps to construct the problem to be solved" (Sandercock 1998, p. 64). According in fact to Gelli (2002), "this requires that the researcher continually and personally reconsider himself, above all in his consolidated role of "expert", by accepting a condition of cognitive uncertainty open to surprises and contradictions and especially to the contribution of other forms of knowledge which are not purely "technical",

"scientific", "professional" (p. 3 – the translation is mine).

Monitoring and assessment devices are eventually useful to identify the manifestation of unintended consequences and events – which are perceived as problems as well – and to correct the decisions.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF USABLE KNOWLEDGE

Compared to the first one, scheme 2 introduces a clear specification and combination of three different types of knowledge all equally usable in the solution of social problems (Lindblom and Cohen 1979), as "knowledge of various kinds, treated in different ways, are used in the formulation and implementation of urban and regional policies" (Crosta 1998, p. 15 – the translation is mine).

In a problem-setting perspective, in fact, beyond the knowledge explicitly possessed by experts – derived from professional training and practice –, the one which arises from civil society assumes a central role in exploring both the situations which public policies are intended to change and the local potentialities that should be to this specific end enhanced.

Ordinary knowledge – as discussed above – is the form of knowledge which planners can discover and activate through participatory processes and qualitative techniques such as everyday practices observation, listening and talking, as well as intuition and imagination²⁶. It is a grounded knowledge which characterizes and differentiates specific contexts and results from local common sense, know-how, culture, practical wisdom and settled social capital, defined as *savoirs citoyens* by Yves Sintomer (quoted in Cellamare 2011, p. 205). It represents hence a fundamental resource for planning under conditions of scarcity and uncertainty, since it offers the opportunity to understand which local resources can be better used in the definition of more sustainable solutions to social demands.

There is finally another important form of knowledge that can enrich the whole policy-making process. It is called "interactive" since it rises from the interaction between many actors (both experts and ordinary) during the concrete policy implementation: according again to Crosta (1998), "[...] the most useful form of knowledge for the action is created during the action, by the same actors who are involved (not, hence, by "external" operators). I call this form of knowledge "interactive": since it is produced by interacting actors, but above all since it is produced during the same course of action (and hence produced at the very moment in which it is used)" (p. 15 – the translation is mine).

At this point, it is worth noting that citizen involvement does not represent a pure democratic ideal. In fact, it assumes a concrete "usable" orientation each time it allows local authorities to trust local communities (for instance associations) and empower them in the process of maintenance and reproduction of common goods such as public spaces and services. In my opinion, this interactive knowledge is therefore the most important in conditions of scarcity, as it permits – through a process of "trial and error" and of social interaction – the creative and collective exploration of innovative alternative ways of reaching the goals that local authorities cannot easily achieve²⁷. According in fact again to Schön (1978), working on problem-setting "[...] has to do with generativity. It is nothing less than the question of how we come to see things in new ways" (p. 255). This – I would suggest – means exactly the capacity of setting problems and solutions in a more creative way, since "the social production of "citizens knowledge" [...] is already a process and a creative and design action in itself" (Cellamare 2011, p. 214 – the translation is mine).

To conclude, the new role of planners as "process designers" [...] is hence appropriate for the mobilization, during the decisional process, of a field of knowledge as broad as possible – scientific, ordinary, interactive' (Fareri 2009, p. 223 – the translation is mine).

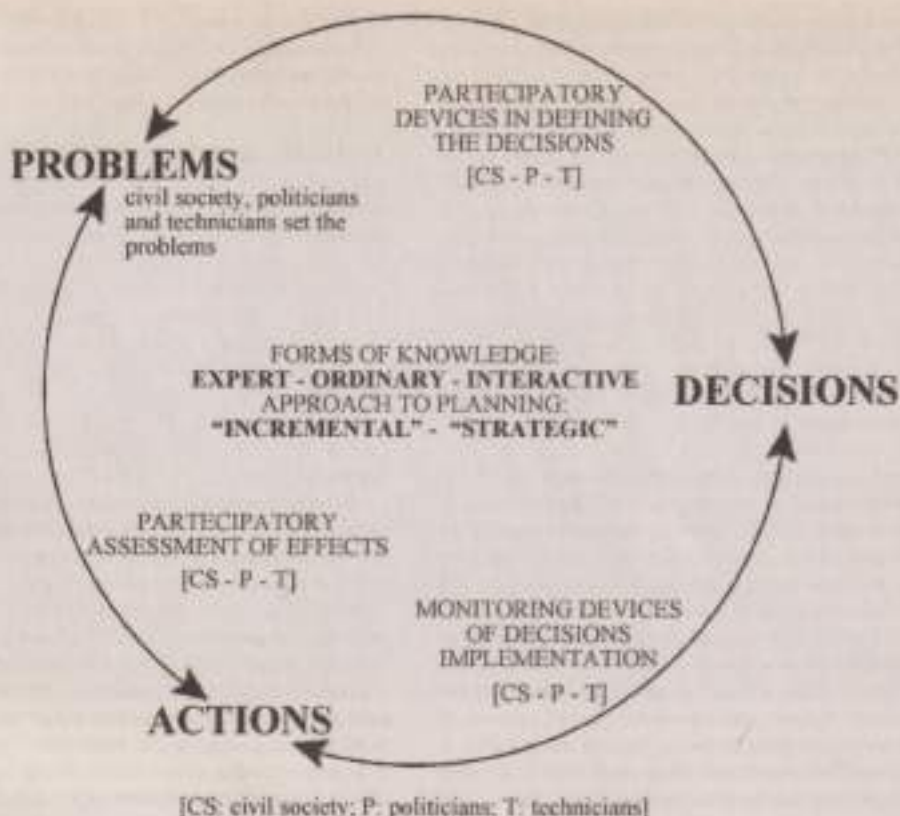


Figure 22: A possible problem-setting decision-making perspective. Source: Matteo Bosso

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of these short notes was to suggest a possible reflection regarding role, competence and position of planners within planning processes that seek to cope with conditions of scarcity and uncertainty.

It has been argued, for instance, that planners are requested to abandon the conventional role of "solutions designer" for one that could be described as "problems investigator". New skills are hence expected, such as the capacity of designing and supervising participatory processes, the ability of facilitating and listening to different point of views, as well of negotiating and observing local contexts in depth. As technicians, planners shift therefore from the situation of pure neutrality (with respect to politics) and separation (with respect to the society), which makes them external actors in a problem-solving perspective, to that of full immersion in the contexts where certain situations are perceived – from many different actors – as being problematic. The consequence of such an approach is then reflected on their specific position: planners are in the situation they propose to solve, are within the communities and collaborate hence both with politicians and ordinary people in processes which are designed to shorten the distances and to be multidirectional. This of course does not mean that planners completely lose their role and relevance as experts. On the contrary, it is expected that they gain more experience in the translation of different languages (the technical one and the language "possessed" by citizens) in order to give a real and concrete project orientation to the different forms of knowledge above discussed²⁸.

Coping with scarcity means yet revising forms and contents of traditional planning instruments, since piecemeal, symbolic and

incremental approaches – against a so-called "mega-projects" tradition – are often preferred in order to explore and test the local resources that can be activated in addressing social problems (as suggested in scheme 2)²⁹. Obviously, this is not to say that planning is today completely useless but that planning practices must shift from the ordinary elaboration of land-use plans and zoning ordinances to the definition of long term flexible visions, aimed at coordinating and managing different projects, evaluating the interrelations of their outcomes, introducing feedbacks and goals reframing (this is what I call "trial and error" processes).

To conclude, new approaches require an overall change in the technical culture which characterizes planning practices, especially in the procedure of elaboration and implementation of plans within local authorities. Such practices must recognize and valorise the potentiality of local know-how and transfer it into ordinary plans or projects. According to Healey (2010), this is needed in order to give a concrete "planning orientation" to the creative practices put spontaneously in place by different people to address the problems of our cities.

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THE CONTEXT OF SCARCITY

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO BROMLEY-BY-BOW

Dejana Tosićova

Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment (SCIBE) is a 3-year collaborative research project with teams in London, Vienna, Reykjavik and Oslo. In London, the project is based at the University of Westminster and looks at the potential of creativity to intervene in the processes that trigger, maintain and reproduce scarcity with a special focus on Bromley-by-Bow, east London, one of the UK's most 'deprived' communities. Instead of inventing or appropriating pre-defined issues around scarcity, we designed our research to bring out what kinds of scarcities are experienced by people in 'deprived' areas, where, we assumed, scarcities of all sorts should certainly be present. Our aim was to develop a non-instrumental 'design brief' which should serve as the basis for work with selected designers (architects) and other creative design and planning professionals. In the hope to understand what scarcity means in the context of a 'deprived' east London ward, we photographed and observed, asked 105 residents to take part in a survey and more than 30 to contribute their own photographs and to tell the stories behind them.

UNCERTAIN FUTURES

When we first began our investigation, Bromley-by-Bow offered reason for hope and for concern. For concern, in that the ward's population was expected to double within the current decade, further impoverished by the Government's recent funding cuts and newly introduced policy reforms. For hope, in that an astonishing amount of cosmetic work was underway or had recently been completed; however, the on-going aggressive commodification of former Council housing in the area was blatantly apparent. When speaking to residents and business owners in the area, we encountered a ubiquitous fear of the future, especially in view of changing planning regulations and public policies: 'What happens when our lease runs out, now that the housing association has taken over? Can we afford the new lease? What will happen to our livelihoods?' These were the questions raised by local shop keepers and business operators; seeing the 'middle class' march in, not one of them seemed confident.

About one third of our participants were college or university graduates, whilst more than ten per cent had only attended primary school. Many were unemployed, but two fifths of our respondents were employed, whilst another fifth consisted of students and pensioners. We found that 45% of our respondents lived on less than £10,000 a year. Three quarters of the people we interviewed lived in flats, followed by those who lived in terraced houses (21.2%). More than eighty-five per cent rented their homes – mostly from the Council or a Housing Association. Less than 15% owned or leased

their homes. Seventy-three per cent of homeowners felt that they had to restrict their energy use because they were afraid they would not be able to afford it. In total, however, 'only' less than half of all of our respondents were worried about their energy bills. About 40% of all respondents received housing benefits.

'Only' 10.6% stated that they lived under overcrowded conditions. Our interviews revealed low housing standards and occupation rates mean little in a context of constant and continuous 'overcrowding' and when public policy, Council and Housing Associations alike fail to deliver to actual need and instead cater to the wants of another, parallel middle-class. Council attempts to tackle overcrowding and the scarcity of large family homes by offering incentives to move to those under-occupying are met with disdain and resentment: many of these under-occupiers are senior citizens, they have lived their lives in these flats and have watched their children grow, they are attached to these flats and wish to hold on to their memories.

'Volunteering was taken away from us. We were not allowed to do it anymore; we were only allowed to do things for which we were paid' – amongst the White, those who remember Thatcher, there was a sense of loss of agency. There were the mixed feelings and perceptions of having to wait for the council to provide services, on the one hand; and of being entitled to these services, on the other. Living in council flats, it seemed, discourages agency: alterations are not allowed; thus prohibiting the appropriation of space; thus prohibiting the identification with space; thus prohibiting attachment to space; thus prohibiting agency. Once strong, the sense of community – built on the experience of shared facilities in walking distance: corner shops, dental office, and related facilities were once available in walking distance and neighbours made use of them, thus meeting and bonding with others – has been transformed into a sense of loss as developers moved in to replace the familiar with centralised facilities further away.

There was a shared sense of being invaded as former neighbours were displaced and unknown individuals or developers began to invest in refurbished and new-built flats that then sit empty for years in the face of acute shortage of homes for real people. The show flats, we heard, are routinely bigger than the ones that people end up buying; many were on interest only mortgages, getting nowhere close to their dream of ownership, the promise of profit.

THE NOTION OF COMMUNITY

Only about one quarter of our interviewees were born in the UK; almost two thirds were born in Bangladesh, the majority of them in Sylhet, to be precise. The majority were married and had children.



Bromley-by-Bow: administrative ward boundaries. Source: Google Maps and SCIEE.

Our in-depth interviews began to reveal complex histories of engineered and inherited scarcities: tracing the triggers of migration leads on to scarcities within entirely different time periods and geographical contexts; histories of occupation and intentional impoverishment as practiced by the British Empire; of exclusion and marginalisation based on place of origin in the men country; of hope and sacrifice upon arrival in Britain; of struggles to survive and struggles to adapt; of dreams and hopes for better futures back 'home'; of the impact of foreign remittances on the conditions of food and water scarcity in the home country, where building and construction activities contribute to the fast decline of the environment; of value systems transformed by the impact of the 'dominant group' in the UK and lost to the logics of the prevailing market systems; of family relations becoming difficult as individuals try to make space for themselves; of journeys back and forth, between Britain and Bangladesh; of feeling torn between the feeling of responsibility for the members of their family and the desire to do better for themselves; of negotiated existences and of real need – not only of the material means to survive, but also of instructions: how does one navigate the system?

'I am better off in Bangladesh' – a frequently encountered statement, revealing the constant awareness, and sometimes regret, that there is an alternative, another place waiting to become home, again; the continuous knowledge that being in the UK was and is a choice: 'You know how it is... You don't know what happens next in Bangladesh'.

On average, people in our sample had lived 8.5 years in their current accommodation. They had moved to Bromley-by-Bow because the Council had given them a flat in the area; whoever had come 'voluntarily' had done so because of the good transportation links or the established Bengali community and the advantages this brings in terms of proximity to relatives, friends and mosques. Despite these motivations, more than half of our informants stated that they never took part in community events. An astonishing 25% of the people we spoke with did not know of a community centre nearby, despite the proximity of

the famous Bromley-by-Bow Centre. The fact that a large proportion of residents in the area are of Bangladeshi origin seemed to contribute to the invisibility of any potentially existing communal self-help network (i.e., 'community', as we understand it, is both gendered and hidden; it does not happen in 'public' space).

In fact, we encountered not one, but many communities in Bromley-by-Bow, all intertwined. Each of the existing faith-, ethnicity- or class-based communities worked in their respective own interest, claiming their own space and protecting the assets available to them. The competition for available community spaces between the remaining 'white' population in the area and the Bangladeshi newcomers is large, contributing to moments of hostility between groups as well as individual members.

REGARDING PLANNING AND DESIGN

The architects we spoke with complained about the difficulty of achieving the promises that Councils and Housing Associations have made: decanting decrepit housing blocks is complex, making sure families are moved directly into their new long-term homes, avoiding temporary accommodation, designing for maximum flat number, maximum profit, minimum space... Repeated accounts on the struggle to meet the developer's needs, on the expense of the needs of future residents. Can we assume that commodification of a 'natural' talent or skill, such as creativity, places it on the market – in this case, in the form of 'design'? Does the commodification of creativity have potentially dangerous consequences? If creativity is triggered in response to external challenges to the system – such as, of course, the emergence of scarcities – is design, as commodified creativity, the appropriate skill to assure a resilient response? Creativity may respond to needs. Design responds to wants. Would creativity elsewhere, outside of a capitalist context, serve the evolutionary goals of adaptation and survival – within the capitalist context, as design, it serves first and foremost the accumulation of capital. What, then, are we, as designers, to do under conditions of scarcity?

SOFTWARE UPDATE FOR BROMLEY-BY-BOW

Björn Bracke, Dzinika Dušek, Matteo Bassa, Rui Santos (Team 6)

Tutor: Fotis Grammatikopoulos

BUILD RESILIENT COMMUNITIES!

- Complete dependence on external capital carries the threat of disequilibrium: revenue "flows out" of the region
- Community based development is likely to give rise to a self-sustained system with revenue staying in the region
- Governmental incitation/regulations should be cautious of business models which allow to transfer the revenue outside of districts
- Local leaders should press for profit re-investment in the region
- Policies should support the establishment of small scale cooperative housing with appropriate financing and regulatory mechanisms

FOR INSTANCE...GAMIFICATION

Collective 'green' action provides benefits for neighbourhoods:

- More natural and pleasant living environment
- Common goals (to become sustainable!) empower people

- Possibility to generate savings (generating own energy, etc...)

The main challenge in raising public awareness of environmental issues is to restore the understanding of how the use of space and resources is related to environmental and social consequences. Therefore we have to connect technical and behavioural aspects to social and ecological value chains. By using technological developments in the built environment we could provoke a shift towards ecological perception. In order to encourage people to adopt technological devices (e.g., 'ecometers') in an urban context, technological devices could be implemented through the concept of gamification.

Gamification is the use of game mechanics and game design techniques in non-game contexts. Technological devices in combination with smartphone apps and social networks to connect citizens to institutions and (public) services result in hyper-connected environments that harness the network effects and increase the involvement and understanding of citizens.



THE GINGER BREAD PATH (CALORIE-BASED URBAN DESIGN)

Anita Brechtliht, Joel Abumere Idaye, Nikolay Zaleskiy, Serena Maioli (Team 4)

Tutors: Nuala Flood, Eaghan-Cunor O'Shea



In order to realize these actions you don't need more infrastructure, money or material, just YOUR IMAGINATION. Photographs: Team 4

SCARCITY IN PRACTICE

ASSEMBLE AND SUGARHOUSE STUDIOS

Maria Lisogorskaya (Assemble)

If scarcity is the disjunction between wants/ambitions and the resources at hand, our work has been a process of prioritizing things, or the process of finding alternative means to fulfil ambitions. It is worth saying that what brought us together to work independently and in an undefined/consciously evolving way (as Assemble, a design and architecture collective), was our previous experience

working in offices. The scarcity could be described as the lack of integrated design, or an understanding of how a task relates to the overall project ambition; how a CAD drawing relates to the act of casting concrete.

As our practice grows, more 'scarcities' creep up, such as financial resources in relation to growing ambition, our experience in relation



From top to bottom: (1) The Cineroleum. A derelict petrol station on Clerkenwell Road (London) was transformed into a hand-built cinema celebrating the extravagance and ceremony of the picture palace. (2) Sugarhouse Studios, before and after. All images © Assemble

to a desire to maintain a democratic management, etc... Sometimes the realization of the 'scarcity' is a project, or in a situation, is what frames subsequent problem solving. Ignoring the 'scarcity', i.e. not taking a step back, has always had a detrimental effect on the work – for example not working out the budget/sustainability of a thing; relying too much on the power of on-site instinct; or vice versa. Similarly allowing the scarcity to lead the design has produced unexpected results. For Cineroleum for example, the desire to recreate the luxury of the picture palace combined with the need to find the cheapest, most durable materials. Similarly much consideration was invested into the details of the foyer, as well as the programming of the films – from popcorn holders to staff uniforms, car noise friendly films, everything was important. Not to mention the importance of making profit on the bar, as a way of covering our overheads.

SUGARHOUSE STUDIOS

Sugarhouse Studios is a project which gradually developed in collaboration with the LDC. It all began with our scarcity of storage space for all the Cineroleum materials which we have inherited after completion of the project (mainly chairs and curtains). Calling up our local councils to find an abandoned room for all our stuff led us to Unit A2 on 107 High Street in Stratford – a light industrial building, owned in 2011 by the LDA property, then the LDC and now LandProp Holding. We initially agreed to retrofit the property, to accommodate and programme a forthrightly community film club in return for rent and a place to work. Prior to this Assemble existed in each other's living rooms and pubs or via lengthy email threads. This building was in a state of disrepair, full of previous tenants' things; it has been squatted for a few years since the Griffin Signs business went bankrupt.

Now the whole Sugarhouse Lane area is earmarked for

development – the 13 acre residential mixed use development Strand East. The certainty of our building's demolition and the initial short term lease (our first agreement was only for one year) had a direct impact on construction of the space. Gradually the project grew, a pizza oven was installed, local organisations got involved in our public programme, our office gradually set up in the back of the building, forming more of a residency. With the public events programme, we tried to focus on issues related to development of east London, got people involved in making things as well as just having fun in this big light industrial building. Casting concrete with school children via Groundwork; celebrating the new Young Mayor with Newham Youth Council; running across the A11 with Run Dem Crew; or watching Utopia London followed by Q&A with the director.

Although Sugarhouse Studios has worked as a destination, or venue for conferences and special events such as the Summer School, general footfall has proven difficult on daily basis. However, it was the recognition of our place in the Sugarhouse Yard and the wider Stratford High Street business community, which became a significant part of our residency. Making the connections to our neighbours, such as the two music schools and building equipment suppliers, or the residents across the road, is gradually shaping our ambitions for the space. Gaining popularity with students as a place to buy food and play ping pong, we secured a contract with Access to Music to become their official canteen. Similarly, the popularity of events and the benefit of 'creative' enterprise in what could otherwise be a semi-demolition site have helped us gain a lease extension with LandProp as the new landlord of the site. With at least another two years ahead, potentially longer (depending on the speed of Strand East), we hope to take part in the rapid and particular development of this part of Stratford High Street.

WHOSE SCARCITY? WHOSE ABUNDANCE?

ISSUES IN MOTIVATING (RE-)MAKING THE CITY

Peter B. Meyer

This essay, a reworking of the presentation made at the Third European Urban Summer School in September, 2012, addresses the policy and planning pitfalls associated with imposing externally-derived standards of scarcity (in the case of this example, scarcity of space). Whatever the recorded conditions of 'objective' scarcity exist in Bromley-upon-Bow or any other neighbourhood, it is necessary to address the issues associated with applying society-wide standards on a neighbourhood or community. The problems in such attribution of nominally objective standards arise on several levels, including:

- The 'need' to address scarcity in meeting minimum physical standards for well-being, possibly most importantly with respect to conditions contributing to health conditions.
- The dangers in terms of exploitation of 'scarce' urban land of imposing external standards to define blight and thus provide entry for nonlocal investors to gentrify an area and displace its residents. (Another US case is illustrative here: the 'scarcity' – actually absence – of closet space in an Italian-American neighbourhood in Boston once created the legal basis for razing the homes, though the residents were all using large wardrobes, many imported by their families, for their clothing, rather than the closets required under more modern building codes.)
- The economic imperatives associated with the minimum qualifications requirements for some employment outside the neighbourhood and the implications the scarcity of such qualifications for local economic well-being.
- The barriers to cooperation and collaboration with community residents in making a more supportive neighbourhood that are raised by outsiders' articulation of standards of scarcity that they do not share. (A highly likely scenario in Bromley-upon-Bow given Bangladeshis' view of their needs for space and the UK standards for overcrowded housing.)

My objective here is two-fold: (a) to sensitize readers to the difference between planning with a community and planning for residents, and (b) to highlight the risks that any forms of planning 'for' may result in an excess emphasis on planning for places rather than people. To achieve these ends, this essay addresses the question of the bases for judgment used by analysts – and in turn policy-makers – in defining urban problems and thus responses. The argument proceeds through four steps, comprising my major sections:

- Personal Context – Sources of Bias
- Standards – Good or Bad Bases for Planning?
- Looking at Some Examples
- Concluding Remarks on Method and Process

There are no firm conclusions, simply recommended methodological and logical processes intended to assist outsiders in understanding the perceived and experienced problems and proposed solutions of communities of which they are not members. The objective of the exercise here is to assist policy-makers in their efforts to work with, rather than for or as members of communities experiencing urban ills. In a subsequent essay, I turn to some issues of method, mostly focusing on the processes and pitfalls of data collection and interpretation in 'alien' environments.

PERSONAL CONTEXT – SOURCES OF BIAS

Bias is inevitable. There is no such thing as an objective analysis. While some comparisons and measurements may be recorded and the numbers used for decision-making, the fact that there is reliance on such

measures does not produce objectivity since the process of deciding what to measure and how to do so is itself biased.

Most bias emerges first from the characteristics and perspectives of the analyst. For illustrative purposes, let us look at me as an example of a bundle of sources of bias. I am:

Male – No matter how hard I try, I am not capable of fully reflecting – or perhaps even absorbing and reflecting, a woman's view of problems, scarcities or other issues.

American – My cultural background includes a set of values and an analytical perspective that leads me to both a set of expectations about social processes and a tendency to value different phenomena and outcomes in ways that are consistent with my nation's societal norms.

'Elderly' – I am over 65. Depending on their cultural backgrounds, residents of neighbourhoods in which I attempt to work may want to please me and thus give answers that they think I expect, or they may dismiss me as irrelevant and not bother to provide me with data that require some thought or effort to generate. Either way, my understanding of others' perceived needs and concerns would be distorted.

Economist – My disciplinary training induces me to adopt a methodology that leads to measuring certain phenomena and not bothering with others. That is certainly a biasing tendency, especially when combined with the socio-cultural biases of my nationality.

Multi-Disciplinary – To the extent that I spent my academic career among faculty from different academic disciplines, this source of bias has been weakened. This broadening of perspective has come not merely from exposure to other disciplines, but from participation in interdisciplinary research. (For a different personality, however, the reaction to challenges to one's methods from other disciplines could take the form of a hardening one's posture as an economist.)

Experienced in diverse cultures – I am a rarity among Americans in this regard. Europeans by and large are more broadly exposed to other cultures than citizens of the United States since they live with much narrower national boundaries. But 'other cultures' does not necessarily reflect experience in cultures steeped in different religious and social traditions, such as those of Latin America, Africa or Asia. I have spent time in depth in all three areas.

Relatively affluent – Globally, this label applies to all residents of the 'developed world' – including those perceived as 'poor'. More important to an outsider's ability to work with a neighbourhood in his/her own country is the prospect that the individual is of a higher socio-economic status than local residents. This difference produces barriers, raised on both sides, to acquisition of an understanding of the locals' actual conditions and their attitudes towards them.

Politically left of centre – Labels on such perspectives do not work well, with the majority of Democrats, the left side of the national political array in the US, arguably to the right of the Conservatives in the UK and other EU member states on social issues. Personally, I am so are to the left relative to US political norms that I find much of the Labour posture in the UK to be conservative. I am biased toward pursuit of community and minority empowerment and poverty alleviation.

Religious or moral perspective of a non-practicing Jew – Religious beliefs may form the basis for a perspective on the world, the importance of different 'social problems' and the role of different institutions in addressing those issues. The stronger the adherence to a religion-based moral perspective, the more that grounding may overcome any

political leanings. My political outlook reflects my morality. But that is because I have no strong religious beliefs.

'Recovering economic' – Obviously, this is not a common source of bias. It is a label my wife, a PhD in Sociology, applied to me. I reference it her to highlight the final point to be made in considering bias: the potential errors made in measuring and labelling the sources of biases themselves.

In effect, this is a warning akin to the old adage that 'you can't tell a book by its cover.' The 'obvious biases' of an observer of – or participant in – a community or social process may not, in fact, be operational in reality. We should not attribute all differences in observations to the apparent differences in the perspectives of the observers.

STANDARDS - GOOD OR BAD BASES FOR PLANNING?

Arguably, the real issue is not whether reliance on standards is good or bad. There is no potential for planning without some objectives and intents, and these ends can only be expressed in terms of some sort of standards. The important question, then, is the quality of the bases for planning, that is, the nature of the standards themselves, not the reliance on them. We thus need to consider the typical origins of standards and then some issues associated with any reliance on them.

SOME ORIGINS OF STANDARDS

Cultural Norms – Standards almost inevitably emerge in part from social norms and a culture's perceptions of reality and what is valued in life. Cultures can be extremely local, as evidenced by language dialects and accents, so standards emerging from such norms can vary from city to city – or neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

Economic Myth – The myth of the marketplace as the 'accurate' measure of what anything that can be bought or sold is worth underlies many standards. In the case of property development, there is often reference to 'highest and best uses' as a desirable standard for the appropriate use of land, meaning the use that would bring the highest price. But what produces the highest use for a private landowner may not be the appropriate standard to guide decisions on the uses of publicly owned or controlled land.

Political Systems – The role of politics in setting standards is, perhaps, most obvious in the determination of what the standard should be for public participation in a planning process, with democracies valuing high participation and authoritarian regimes rejecting such a process. On a finer scale, however, democracies can differ drastically on their degrees of political centralization, which affects the standards for local control of – or even participation in – planning processes and decisions.

Economic Realities – This term is used most frequently to refer to the constraints under which planning decisions must be made. The standard imposed by constraints is, of course, that they should not be violated. However, not all perceived constraints are real, and those that are may be subject to modification if effort is expended, so standards based on assumptions that current limits on alternatives remain in place may be misguided.

SOME ISSUES WITH STANDARDS

Extent of Acceptance – However rational and appropriate a standard may be for a planning decision, the finding on the course of action to take will be suspect if the standard is not widely accepted as appropriate. Planners who assume that the communities on which they act will share their acceptance of guiding standards for action may be in for a rude shock in the real world of divergent cultures, political perspectives and economic constraints, all of which can undermine acceptance of some standards.

Costs of Compliance – Lip-service to a standard may not constitute

adherence to it, if the costs of complying with a set of constraints are too high. Those costs need not be monetary in order to significantly constrain compliance. Standards that challenge local cultural norms can result in community-wide cooperation in noncompliance as an assertion of cultural identity. The failure of nonlocal planners to understand local norms thus can distort the impacts of any plans.

Malleability / Rigidity – The ability of national planning standards to adapt to local norms and perceived economic realities may be the key factor in their effectiveness on the ground. Thus the rigidity of a standard may be a negative, despite the risk that malleability leaves standards subject to the political influence of powerful interest groups. Within a local community, especially one with cultural norms and political traditions that differ from those of a nation, state/region or city imposing externally-driven standards, the most powerful interests may be those of the distinct society. This issue may be especially salient in areas with a single dominant immigrant or other distinctive population.

Potential for Change by Affected Parties – Potential for change is obviously associated with malleability. The issue here is the ability of those at the local level to modify inappropriate standards through their own interventions. A distinct population group may be the most powerful local interest, but it may still not have sufficient influence to be able to act on non-local decision-makers that have been influenced by economic power blocks that have shaped a malleable standard in their self-interest. A standard may stand in the way of responsive planning if, for example, a local low income immigrant group may not be able to modify the standard to preserve preferred uses of space while a national property development association has that power and acts in its own self-interest.

ASIDE ON AN ECONOMIST'S LANGUAGE

Demand – This has very special meaning in economics. It is not synonymous to 'need' or 'want' but refers to the monetary expression of perceived needs and wants in a marketplace. Thus a need experienced by a population with little money may never arise as a demand in a market economy, even if the need is for a resource such as food that may be required for survival.

Deprivation – This term refers to the scarcity of access to some resource by a population. That scarcity might be considered relative to the access available to others in a society or relative to some minimum. For our purposes here we shall use the term to refer to 'absolute' deprivation – access at a level below some accepted standard.

Poverty – This is the term we shall use for relative scarcity, to distinguish access to resources at levels below societal norms but above accepted minimum standards.

Grutch – This means what one would expect – and expansion is size or quantity.

Development – By contrast to growth, which can happen in local property values or a community economy, many use this term to refer to those forms of change, sometimes including growth, that increase the power of a community, neighbourhood, or other social unit to influence events and shape a desired future.

Cost and Benefit – These terms, used in policy-makers' cost benefit analyses may include a range of factors beyond those readily measured or exchanged and thus reducible to a monetary measure.

LOOKING AT SOME EXAMPLES OF STANDARDS AND PLANNING

Four examples serve to make my point here, two from the United States and two from London itself. Before offering US examples, it is necessary to provide some perspective on the legal bases – and limits – for action in the country, since public planning has a very different

status in the US than elsewhere.

'Urban Renewal' in the US is the process of clearing land and/or buildings in order to, in principle, permit regeneration. Under the laws of most of the US states, this process permits compulsory taking of property for independently determined prices (labelled as 'exercise of eminent domain'). Exercise of this power, however, requires a finding of 'blight' in the designated setting in order to permit action. The standard may have the effect of promoting displacement and gentrification (and may be intended to do so). Ambiguity and uncertainty – and conflict – arise from the definition of what constitutes a blighted condition.

Blight, arguably, involves the failure to meet some societal standard. But that standard could be: (a) aesthetic ('it is ugly'), (b) economic ('they are impoverished' or 'the site is underutilized'), (c) 'cultural' ('they don't conform to our norms'), or (d) some combination of these and other subjective judgments. Not surprisingly, where norms differ, poor planning outcomes may result.

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

Boston's old 'South End' is now a major financial centre of high rise office buildings. But it was once a thriving Italian-American working class neighbourhood. The city has garnered increased property values (and thus revenues from taxation of that property) and, arguably, attracted more financial sector jobs as the result of displacing the residents who once lived in the South End. Whether the social costs imposed are worth the economic gain was certainly an issue when the planning decision to acquire and raze the neighbourhood was made.

The process was a perfect example of the undemocratic application of a rigid societal standard. The South End was not impoverished: as working class it had below median incomes on average, but that does not mean 'poor.' It was not immigrant: it was ethnically almost completely Italian-American, but most of the residents were second or third generation native-born. It was only marginally 'crowded' by then current standards of appropriate area per person in dwelling units, reflecting the somewhat lower than average household incomes. The area became visibly dirty, but only after Boston reduced its frequency of waste collection in the neighbourhood. The dirt could not hide the fact that the buildings themselves were structurally sound and well maintained, with owner occupied or used for apartment rental.

So the city was hard pressed to find any sort of 'blight.' It turned to the letter of the current standards for residential occupancy. Those requirements, mandatory for new construction but rarely applied to existing occupied buildings, specified the number and size of closets relative to bedrooms and intended occupants.

The South End had old buildings and a paucity of closets. The residents used the huge wardrobes that their immigrant families had brought over with them from Italy and were not inconvenienced by that 'flaw' in their housing provision.

Violation of the closet standard, however, was sufficient to produce a finding of blight and resulted in the forced destruction of a fully functional urban neighbourhood. Did that rigid standard contribute to good planning?

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, USA

Louisville, home to the Kentucky Derby and the largest city in its region, once built itself an airport just outside of the city limits. The city surrounded the airport as it expanded spatially. Later, United Parcel Service (UPS) began overnight delivery using air transportation – and chose Louisville as its US national air hub. By the 1990s, the airport needed to expand. The three surrounding neighbourhoods had income levels slightly above, but educational attainment slightly below the local medians. They were, unusually for the city, racially

integrated, and had dwelling units built in the 1950s that were small, only 65 per cent of the then current norm. They suffered from severe environmental problems, with noise level double that of city median and air quality significantly lower than that of the city (which itself was below US Environmental Protection Agency standards).

Since the time the homes in the area had been built, they had become hedged in on all sides by noisy, polluting transportation systems: rail along one side, the airport on another, and along all other boundaries wide thoroughfares and motorways carrying diesel truck as well as automobile traffic. The city claimed the area was blighted by its environmental factors and took it by eminent domain.

However, market economic measures of blight were absent. Home owner-occupancy rates in the area exceeded those city-wide. Property generally sold by word of mouth, if homes were not passed down in families. Over a 20-year period leading up to the declaration of blight, local property values in the three neighbourhoods, as measured by sale prices rose significantly more than those in the city as a whole. Obviously, the residents viewed their community and homes by standards that differed from those applied by the city.

In a society that measures value by market prices, how could the neighbourhoods be considered blighted? In fact, the top court of appeals in the State of Kentucky ruled that the finding of blight was unjustified and required the city to pay additional compensation to the residents that they had displaced. That ruling, however, took place after the fact and failed to preserve the neighbourhoods. The reliance on a standard to justify an intended planning action clearly can lead to both distorted application of the standard and to bad planning decisions.

BROMLEY-BY-BOW, LONDON, UK

Turning from the US to the UK, we can look at the contrasting assessments of Bromley-by-Bow reflected in official statistics and residents' responses to questions. The local data collection by the Scarcity and Creativity in the Built Environment (SCIBE) project team underscores the differences in perceptions and reflects vastly different standards applied to the quality of the physical environment by British and London public assessments on the one hand and the residents of the neighbourhood on the other.

By National Standards, Bromley-by-Bow is acutely overcrowded, with five times the residential population density than the level prescribed by national housing standards. The residents are predominantly low income. Not surprisingly, given their incomes, they are far more state-dependent for the resources needed to survive than most communities in Britain. Culturally, they are overwhelmingly immigrant, with household heads, if not children, born in Bangladesh; they are perceived as ghettoized, especially those that speak little or no English. (Their language barrier reflects the low educational attainment of the immigrants, since English is the language of higher secondary and all tertiary education in Bangladesh; the lack of schooling also implies minimal exposure to the modern economy prior to arrival in the UK.) The area is also seen as a 'food desert' with no large food stores in the community, though access is available just outside the neighbourhood. Green space is not seen as a major issue, given proximity of a major park and small green areas scattered in the neighbourhood.

By the Community, however, life in Bromley-by-Bow is seen very differently. Housing density is actually far lower than the Bangladeshi norm. The housing provision is faulted not on unit size, but on the number of bedrooms for families that are far larger than the UK median. The residents feel they have economic security that was unattainable in their home country, where there was no state provision for the needy. That said, they feel they lack opportunity for economic

advancement, which to them often involves the ability to form their own businesses, not to seek employment by others (which would be the expectation of most of the poor in England). They find their setting physically secure (which is not outsiders' perception), but alien and they miss access to more outdoor space despite the parks.

Given these different perceptions of the conditions in Bromley-by-Bow, there is little likelihood that planning decisions based on national and/or London-wide standards will be seen as appropriate by members of the community. The contrasting perspectives virtually assure that what would be 'good' planning from the perspective of even the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, the governing local authority which tends to accept the national standards, would be seen as inappropriate by a large fraction of the community residents in Bromley-by-Bow. Planning based on national standards for a setting in which they are not appropriate may well do more local harm than good.

Applying national standards and ignoring local insights can, moreover, result in planning outcomes that may be 'poor' even by national standards. One excellent example of such an outcome exists in another London neighbourhood close to Bromley-by-Bow on which the full force of national planning and economic powers has already acted: the London Docklands.

LONDON DOCKLANDS, UK

The Conservative Government of Mgrs. Thatcher created the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), with a board appointed by the Government and responsible only to Parliament for its decisions and actions. The LDDC was given full planning powers, including exceptional rights of compulsory purchase, along with substantial budgetary resources.

The remit to the LDDC was the economic revitalization and regeneration of the derelict and abandoned enclosed East London docks and the surrounding neighbourhoods. While the docks were no longer international transport centres and many buildings adjacent to them were deteriorating, the area as a whole was not abandoned. Myriad small business enterprises used pockets of space along the docks. They were surrounded by residents living in mostly council housing estates to whom they provided employment and who constituted the customers for their retail marketing.

The rationale for the LDDC, however, was the attainment of the 'highest and best use' of the docklands property. They were expected to apply a national standard predicated on economic mythology – the accuracy of market valuations as measures of the social benefit to be gained from use of land. With the financial centre of London ('The City') adjacent, it was appropriate under this standard for the LDDC to look market its land assets to financial firms rather than the current users and occupants simply because the former could pay more.

This turn to non-local demand to shape decisions on new land uses, however, had the effect of muting the voices of the local community. The loss of input from the locals, in turn, led to decisions about retention and demolition of buildings that ignored many of their current or future potentials. This was especially glaring in the case of large open structures associated with the docks that could have served as recreational centres. Despite the objections of, and detailed documented plans offered by, the London Docklands Consultative Body (LDCB), those structures were demolished ... and later new recreational facilities were built to serve both new residents in riverfront housing and the workers in the new high-rises of the Canary Wharf.

The LDCB was grounded in the docklands communities and had local expertise and knowledge. It offered information from a source that the LDDC, because of its structure and remit, could not tap efficiently: local people and organizations. In ignoring the information available from the LDCB because its interest in neighbourhood preservation,

however, the LDDC failed to accurately measure many of the impacts of its actions.

Using national standards for the number of employees per unit area in different businesses, the LDDC underestimated the number of jobs it would affect by displacing local businesses since Dockland employers used more workers in smaller spaces. Applying national data on the number of firm closures associated with relocations, the LDDC failed to recognize the impact of displacement on the very tenuous and fragile Docklands-located firms: the vast majority closed their doors when they lost their premises. Similar errors were made with respect to employability of local residents in the new businesses attracted to the area and with regard to residents' willingness to relocate or to commute to work when the previously walked to their jobs.

The result was very expensive regeneration with massive displacement and all the social and economic costs that entailed. New premises for the City might, alternatively, have been provided at lower overall costs on some of the underutilized docklands while retaining and refurbishing existing buildings rather than building new and while still providing for revitalization that served people already in the locality.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

We first must confront the planning methods and objectives to be brought to bear on a neighbourhood. Is the objective broad strategic or is it narrow community-focused planning? That may determine the appropriate consultative or participatory processes to be employed.

Planners and the planning process brought to bear on a community need to be examined for their ability to address locally-specific factors in any case. That capacity will vary with:

- > Sources of standards (and the dialectics of their creation and modification), including those for (a) Physical elements or (b) Socio-Economic elements of the plans.
- > Sources of the planning body's power to act – and sources of local organizations' potentially countervailing powers, which may be derived from (a) Legal, (b) Economic, or (c) Political / Moral / Cultural foundations, or some combination of them.
- > The extent to which the powers to act can be exercised by both external and internal institutions. That is, the extent to which the powers are, or may become, complementary or competing.

Even if community enhancement is the defined objective of the planning process, the organizational context of the planning body involved remains crucial. In the US, there has been a great emphasis on planning through, with or by so-called 'community-based organizations' but the label of 'CBO' has been found to be a misnomer.

An organization may be located in, that is placed, in a community, but not based in it. Local residents, businesses and property owners (not absentee landlords) may have apparent power in terms of their participation, but that is insufficient. Do the planning staff and those with power to make decisions see their roles as 'doing for' neighbourhood stakeholders rather than 'working with' them? If so, they are not really community-based. Even if planners see themselves as collaborators, not providers, they may still fail to serve specific sub-communities within a larger neighbourhood, such as the ultra-religious, the disabled or other group with special needs or interests.

Immigrants may, as in the case of Bromley-by-bow, constitute such a special group. They may have extensive self-help organizations, but may be reliant on external funding since immigrants typically have limited resources. That dependency, however, may constrain their ability to fully reflect idiosyncratic interests out of fear of alienating their funders. The organizations' capacity to represent the special constituency as a whole may further depend on their inclusivity.

Thus reliance on planning participation by even specialized

interest organizations may fail to reflect all relevant interest. The US 'War on Poverty' of the 1960s and 1970s pursued 'maximum feasible participation' of those being served in the management and administration of public programs. A similar logic might be appropriately applied to individual residents' participation in planning processes and decision-making.

Such an approach is not particularly revolutionary for planning practice. The increasing reliance on open-access charrettes in US planning reflects an effort to provide individuals with an opportunity to participate in both problem definition and development of responsive plans. The charrette process is not new, but borrowed from long-standing practice in architecture. It can, of course, provide only limited participation access and may be structured to only make plans to address pre-defined issues. The process can, however, be made open and be employed to define as well as respond to planning problems.

But even an open access problem-defining charrette has to either start from or begin by defining some set of standards participants can agree are appropriate for decision-making. Those structuring and

participating in the process need to determine the degree to which planning decisions that have long term consequences for the physical environment can be based on idiosyncratic factors and considerations.

This need then leads inexorably to a requirement that locally-specific judgments about the applicability of nominally objective standards to the problem at hand. Even the UN's Millennium Development Goals, crafted with an eye to global cultural and economic diversity, may be too narrow and prescriptive for individual countries, let alone communities. Private business standards such as those developed by the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) similarly need to have malleability to fit individual enterprises.

Planning to respond to a particular community's scarcities need not distinguish between the 'real' and the 'perceived' since such a judgment imposes a rigid external standard. It does, however, need to derive its own internally consistent definitions of the problem(s) to be addressed and the bases for assessing the costs and benefits associated with alternative responses to the identified problem issue(s). Global standards are not inherently bad, but the absence of conscious adaptation of those criteria to local issues cannot be good.

THE RULES OF THE GAME

SCARCITY, REGULATORY REGIMES AND OPEN SPACE IN BROMLEY-BY-BOW

Naznin Chowdhury, Carlos Manss, Alison Killing, Nick Wolff (Community Collabor-8)

In a plan of Swan Housing Association's recent development at Rainhill Way, external areas are shaded in three colours. The light green, spread around the refurbished and new build housing blocks, denotes 'Green Space'. A few darker green areas are 'Formal Playspace'. Somewhere in between the two is a swathe of orange marking 'Incidental Playspace'.

These coloured lines on maps tell a lot. Within five minutes' walk of Rainhill Way are numerous open spaces managed by other housing associations, private developers and Tower Hamlets Homes (the council housing management organisation), each with their own terms of classification and regulation. If we zoom out to the Bromley-by-Bow ward borders and plot all the nine areas recognised as open space by Tower Hamlets council, we find none of the open space at Rainhill Way on the map we produce. Mapping everything the council calls a park produces an even smaller cluster - just five spaces within the ward.

These simple maps take us directly to significant questions about how urban space is being produced, classified, measured and regulated in Bromley-by-Bow - and how this relates to its use, interpretation and meaning by those who live there. The curiously precise delineation and classification of open space in a new housing development suggests considerable thought went into its provision. But what thought, by whom, under what influences? And what does it mean to someone living at Rainhill Way or the surrounding areas in Bromley-by-Bow as they unwittingly chase a football across Incidental Play Space and into Green Space?

REGULATORY REGIMES

At one level, it is helpful to consider these questions in terms of institutions and how they work together in different circumstances to take and implement decisions. We can call the dynamic and complex interactions between powerful institutions that get exercised through governance structures and codified in policy and regulations 'regulatory regimes'. If we use the concept of regulatory regimes as a loose framework, it is helpful also to acknowledge regime theory, which places our context in the neo-liberal philosophy that has so shaped London's planning and

regeneration policies since the early 1980s.

The collapse of municipal approaches to development over this period, the growth in public private partnerships, fragmentation of council housing and expansion of housing associations are reflected in the range of institutional actors involved in producing urban space in Bromley-by-Bow. Poplar HARCA, Swan, Barratt and Circle Anglia are all currently developing land or buildings, which will provide new or re-shaped public open space. Development finance brings its own heavy influence to bear on what gets built and to what standards. A mixture of private financial institutions and the post-crisis remnants of Greater London Authority and local authority regeneration budgets are currently supporting various developments to a point of precarious 'viability' (with amenity and non-market elements such as playspace the first to give way in the face of any balance-sheet squeeze). As the state has reduced its role as a direct producer of urban space through building or finance, in favour of a regulatory and influencing role on the market, so the regulatory agencies have come to the forefront as the main lever of publically accountable control over urban transformation. London's complex planning and design guidance operates at a minimum three levels simultaneously, national, city-wide and local authority, with the London Legacy Development Corporation also holding planning and land assembly powers in part of Bromley-by-Bow and exerting its influence from the east. Wider government agencies, such as the police, contribute their own influence, as do bodies such as RTP1 and RIBA in shaping professional practice and philosophy.

We find that in Bromley-by-Bow the regulatory regimes concerning the production and regulation of the built environment are as fragmented and complex as the space they produce. Yet the picture becomes complicated further by internal tensions in the multiple functions of institutions, not least the local authority, as the main regulator of day-to-day use of open space in the area.

The management of Council owned trees is currently shared between several departments (66% Parks and Highways, 10% Housing, 2% other municipal areas). (Tower Hamlets Council, 2006)



Figure 1a (left): 'Formal Playspace' - Rainhill Way. Figure 1a (right): New rules of the game? Community art, Bromley-by-Bow. Source and copyright: © Carlos Maass

The Tower Hamlets open space strategy lists nine areas in the ward which are classified as open space. These are areas that benefit from some planning protection and local authority interest in their preservation and good use. They are not all under council ownership and management, yet the council has laudably produced a document (London Borough of Tower Hamlets, 2012) to assist groups or organisations that wish to hold an event on any of these spaces. Tellingly the advisory note runs to 22 pages, lists 19 parts to an event plan, 11 suggested further readings, no fewer than 11 'key contacts' and 20 health and safety considerations. This is not to imply a criticism of those who produced the document but it illustrates the complexities generated by large organisations' external obligations and internal diversity of function, ironically highlighted when trying to simplify the public's free and creative use of open space in the borough.

The recently reviewed by-laws for Tower Hamlets parks are another case in point. Acknowledging the difficulties in coming up with an all-encompassing set of regulations through a democratic local body, and which need to retain their relevance decades into the future, the outcomes are, perhaps inevitably, curious. (The banning of a range of highly-specific activities can be productively seen in its inverse: if I cannot practise javelin, discuss, hammer or shot, could I pole vault and handle? What else can I do here?). However, it is perhaps more telling to look once again at where these regulations apply. They apply only in the parks. Or rather, the designated Parks of which there are just five locally. In this fraction of all the open space in Bromley-by-Bow, legalised regulations have been put in place that apply neither across other council recognised open space nor the extensive green and open spaces that surround the estates, be they marked on a map as Formal Playspace, Incidental Playspace, Green Space or simply unnamed and underused 'amenity space' looked after by one of the several housing providers in the ward.

This cuts to the core of the challenge of understanding how influence and decision making over public space in Bromley-by-Bow has been corralled within institutional standards, that have been made impenetrable by the fragmented and complex inter- and intra-institutional structures, influences, interests roles and functions that shape them. The implications are significant at the institutional level - in terms of how space is planned and provided; how space is classified and measured (as adequate or inadequate) and how it is protected and regulated.

But it is at the lived level, the social and the street, where we need to reflect on how scarcities are constructed by this complexity of regulation. The institutional map is illegible on the ground, it only makes itself known when the boundaries of regulation are accidentally transgressed or challenged. How do people assign

value and meaning to their open space and take ownership over it in this context? And how can they find strategies to engage with this institutional complexity of regulation to make it more meaningful or even change it?

ACCESS TO ALL - USEFUL TO ALL?

Sharon Zukin says that the essential characteristics of public space in urban environments are 'proximity, diversity and accessibility' (Zukin, 1995: 162). These features are important particularly as we are looking at public space in a diverse, densely populated area of east London. Moreover, we need to establish a definition of public space which goes beyond 'access to all', and looks to draw in principles which make public space enabling and useful to those who access it.

The characteristics outlined by Zukin are important in our analysis of public space provision in Bromley-by-Bow for two reasons: firstly, to consider whether the provision of public space meets the needs of the community living in the area, and secondly to conceptualise scarcity in how regulatory regimes affect both the provision and the use of public space. One of our main areas of interest has been whether a sense of ownership and belonging could be fostered without a person or the community owning or having the private right to access space. Public space exists to be shaped by those who use it; people have a right to the space and should have a sense of belonging but equally a level of ownership of the space.

'OPEN' SPACE?

Research conducted by Tower Hamlets Council suggests there is a significant deficit in open space. The statistic which is applied to this assertion is 0.4ha of public open space is available per 1000 residents in the area, compared to a 2.45ha standard set by the Mayor of London. This deficit in open space is reported in 2005 and again in the 2012 area Master Plan. But how this deficiency presents itself is as important as the deficiency itself; the vagaries in the way that open space is institutionally labelled, and hence measured, present an apparent physical lack of free public space that is not necessarily recognisable when walking through the area. But we also wanted to pay attention to the apparent limitations of the space that is available. We wanted to identify the missing elements that lead to public space not maximising its potential as meaningful and dynamic space.

The importance of open space/public space should not be overlooked. Numerous studies (Green Alliance/Demos) have concluded that those living in disadvantaged and deprived urban environments like Bromley-by-Bow, are negatively impacted by the lack of access to natural and open space. However, in assessing how public space could maximise its potential we looked beyond just a lack in terms

of provision sufficient to the population, to how well space is being utilised by local people and whether it truly empowers them. Through the project we identified large amounts of open public space scattered throughout Bramley-by-Bow. This was 'un-designated' space, spaces of potential which were un-used, un-discovered and ignored in assessments of 'designated' open space by the council.

In order to gain a good understanding of the Bramley-by-Bow area within the context of the research we carried out interviews with youth and community workers groups as well as making general observations when we visited the area. We identified the following as a series of circumstances around social regulation of open space produced in the community, by people, irrespective of the instructions in guidelines and regulations:

- Surveillance: promoting a sense of safety through connection, such as parents sharing the tasks of keeping an eye on young children when they went outside to play.
- Spatial ranges: determining where young people interacted and agreeing safe distances with their parents on how far they could travel to play, how this influenced the places where children chose to congregate and how what was allowed by one parent might influence an overall group.
- Sacred places: discovering places through exploration; the young people discovered their 'own' special place which they visited regularly to play and look for foxes and named this place 'Bamboo'. They associated 'Bamboo' with a certain level of possibility and danger which made it more attractive to them. This idea of discovering sacred places resonates in Anna Minton's (2005) book *Ground Control* where she writes about a lack of open space for young people to discover.
- Negotiation: the potential of negotiation to forge creativity and shared interest; this was illustrated by an example given in Bob's Park where a woman with a young child negotiated sharing space with a group of young boys who were playing football. There is an assumption that this very rarely occurs - due in part to the expectation that institutionalised authority will step into disputes - however if encouraged it could happen more frequently helping those using public spaces to interrelate.
- Territoriality: claiming spaces and appropriating ownership; young people had many stories of being chased out of areas or told off by adults for activities such as drawing on pavements with chalk, suggesting regular small tussles over ownership and meaning of spaces that hint towards potential for a more dynamic view of meaning in public space.

These features, we suggest, are co-created by the community but under-utilised through a lack of encouragement and opportunity. Strategy and governance documents currently underestimate the worth of these circumstances of social interactions. They allow people to explore the sphere of possibility and engage with others to negotiate the use of space in a way that lets it be defined by them, and not for them. How can we get to Lefebvre's idealisation of social space as a 'means of human reappropriation through the development of counter space forged through artistic expression and social resistance' (Lefebvre in Butler, 2009: 11)? How public space is viewed and the understanding of social space needs to be adjusted or redressed to mould it in such a way that it allows for space to represent a creation/ensemble of interaction and social relations by users and those who provide public space. We can argue that the use of space in this way is utilised and produced more effectively and frequently by those with wealth or access to provision and resources. For those living in deprived areas where there is an obvious lack of resources there are barriers to this realisation, and the empowerment to act can take longer. Naturally this is more complicated than simply those

who have wealth and those who do not but what is being emphasised here is that public space is always under construction by its users, therefore re-appropriation of space for those who may not have a strong sense of ownership needs to be assisted through a grassroots or community led strategy.

The purpose then of an open space or play space strategy should be to go beyond a set of guidelines and regulations that define and portion the amount of space available to local people. It needs to list a set of apparatus that allows social action to be envisioned or realised. This is an approach to thinking about the provision and arrangement of space as enabling, and as a socially dynamic concept as well as a physical construction. Making the important distinction between use of public space as currently measured and highlighting why it is crucial to define or redefine uses. Communities are diverse, consisting of a collection of identities expressing and co-existing together, therefore it is logical that public space will need to be negotiated. Although commonality and establishing common features is useful, it can be more useful to explore the differences that need negotiation and encourage a more relational perception of open space, making a case for strategies for a public space always under construction and reconstruction by its users, open to possibilities, diversity of meaning and shifting moments of ownership.

STRATEGIES WITHIN INSTITUTIONAL STANDARDS AND WITHIN SPACE

When it comes to possible strategies it might be necessary to take a double approach: as observer and as practitioner, allowing as much reflection on the discoveries as action on the ground. The importance of strategies - besides the shape - includes the capacity of a middleman to integrate purposes and resources, to allow the co-existence of a diversity of visions and to navigate in the politics of the intra-institutional structures as well as the spatial and social of lived space.

'THIS IS YOUR PLAY AREA'. MEANING AND VALUE OF OPEN SPACES

In Bramley-by-Bow, under the private-public institutional mechanisms of 'public space' provision which are set under pre-existing scarcities - financial and land constraints among others - resources are maximised and redistributed as an institutional provision of 'benefit', within a financially sound solution-making approach from developers. This structured institutional provision transforms the perceived value of common areas of space and finds its legitimacy on a label where space use and function is determined beforehand. Spatial outcomes in the shape of community assets are then value-modified through these forces.

Written boards on pitches and playground will put emphasis on phrases such as 'this is yours', insisting on the 'right to use' typological use will promote mono-activity and lack of variability, as well as fragmentation of space and territorial adaptation¹⁰ especially from younger groups.

Kids will inherently challenge boundaries and concepts, especially those that have been imposed on them. A fence that has been removed, or a space that finds another use will challenge the regulatory regime, but not at the policy level of control apparatus which retrofits - in a vicious cycle - the imposition of institutional regulation in design and regulates behaviour in space through estates regulation and guidelines.

These dynamics rarely promote a sense of belonging in changing a sense of private ownership. From early design phases processes have not been properly set in place that can allow others' interpretations on what and how these provisions can be, nor allow instances of future adaptation. Under the existing regulatory regime design has

little room for other possibilities since design practices are exercised under constraints that reinforce structured institutional mechanisms of regulation which promote ownership, functionality and object-based outcomes.

RULES OF THE GAME. DEFINING STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR OPEN SPACES IN BROMLEY-BY-BOW

A strategy could draw possibilities of working mainly at spatial and regulatory level, drawing on Brian Massumi's (1992) idea that an 'emergence of codes of rules follows the emergence of an informalized proto-sport'. This understands the game as a constant process of emergence and evolution, where 'circumstances arise that force modification of the rules' (Ibid). This process allows a wide range of variation of events, uses, activities and actions to appear which are endemic to a game.

For Massumi, regulation 'has all the reality of a formation of power' and 'will then capture and contain the variation'. We see this formation of power and further containment of variation as a potentially inclusive and open process. A further codification is a framing derivative that a regulatory code can arrogate to itself the 'role of foundation', setting only precedence for further game play. In the context of Bromley-by-Bow a strategy could have as its main objectives:

- Redefine value of open space;
- Unlock common areas and public space for other uses and other interpretations;
- Promote challenging regulatory regimes by enabling groups to establish their 'rules of the game'; and
- Build sense of belonging, allowing flexible and inclusive processes and common-sense.
- Give access to open space and facilitate spatial resources as common assets for a more comprehensive approach to the area. This might be achieved by:
 - Allowing more variability of possible activities that can take place. Variability can allow space for experimentation; for negotiated design processes where pre-conceived rules can be superseded by grassroots regulation and common sense;
 - Enabling future residents as well as architects and planners, associations and other actors to access decision making and to participate in the role of foundation of any code or regulation;

- Participation and evolving negotiations: these can open up other meanings of space provision, meaning and values. It can bring a possibility of less dependency on institutional determinacy in favour of more socially driven regulatory scopes with their potential for an enhanced range of meaning and value for spaces.
- These opportunities for participation and evolving negotiations must stay open to circumstances where community surveillance, spatial ranges, discovery of new places, negotiations and territoriality among other circumstances can happen.

Some initial exploration with grassroots groups reveal many that are already encouraging young people to exercise different activities that are in an indirect way challenging the standard use of spaces. Others are seeking to implement new community-led activities in restricted open areas. Working strategically at the grassroots level offers the observer and practitioner opportunity to explore with users the impact of a top-down provision and regulation of public open space on such aspirations. This role can then evolve to assisting in identifying entry-points to interventions that can both reveal existing regulatory structures to scrutiny and open up the possibility of change.

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URBAN FUTURES

SCENARIO-BASED TECHNIQUES

Silvio Caputo

In his recently published book 'Design Futuring', Tony Fry (2009) outlines a design methodology that includes the use of scenarios as a way to encompass within the design scope considerations (and concerns) about the future. Society is on course for an environmental meltdown and cities are largely responsible for this threat. If the future must be secured, we must learn to design with the future in mind and redirect design practice accordingly. The idea of a change of direction implies that to date designers have predominantly acted in response to the here-and-now, ignoring the future consequences of their decisions. In a way, this pattern of behaviour can be regarded as entrenched in contemporary (and maybe past) culture. Fry maintains that 'while the inability to project our action in time seems to be a structural limitation of our mode of being, overcoming this condition and acquiring much

greater futuring capability will become an increasingly vital factor for securing our on-going being... Unless this is done, later events can make earlier decisions redundant, or expose them as inappropriate'.

It would seem that today the human species possesses an excessive tendency to restrict the time scope of actions and focus predominantly on the preoccupations of the moment. Yet, such a tendency seems not to conflict with its opposite. History is scattered with utopian visions of the future, ambitious paradigm shifts whose physical and theoretical marks (or scars) are still with us, and to which we still knowingly or unknowingly reference. Ebenezer Howard's garden city model, for example, (2009 [1902]) is still influencing the urban design debate and is the urban form that some associate with eco-cities. Peter Kropotkin's dream of a delocalised and diffused pattern of urbanisation integrating

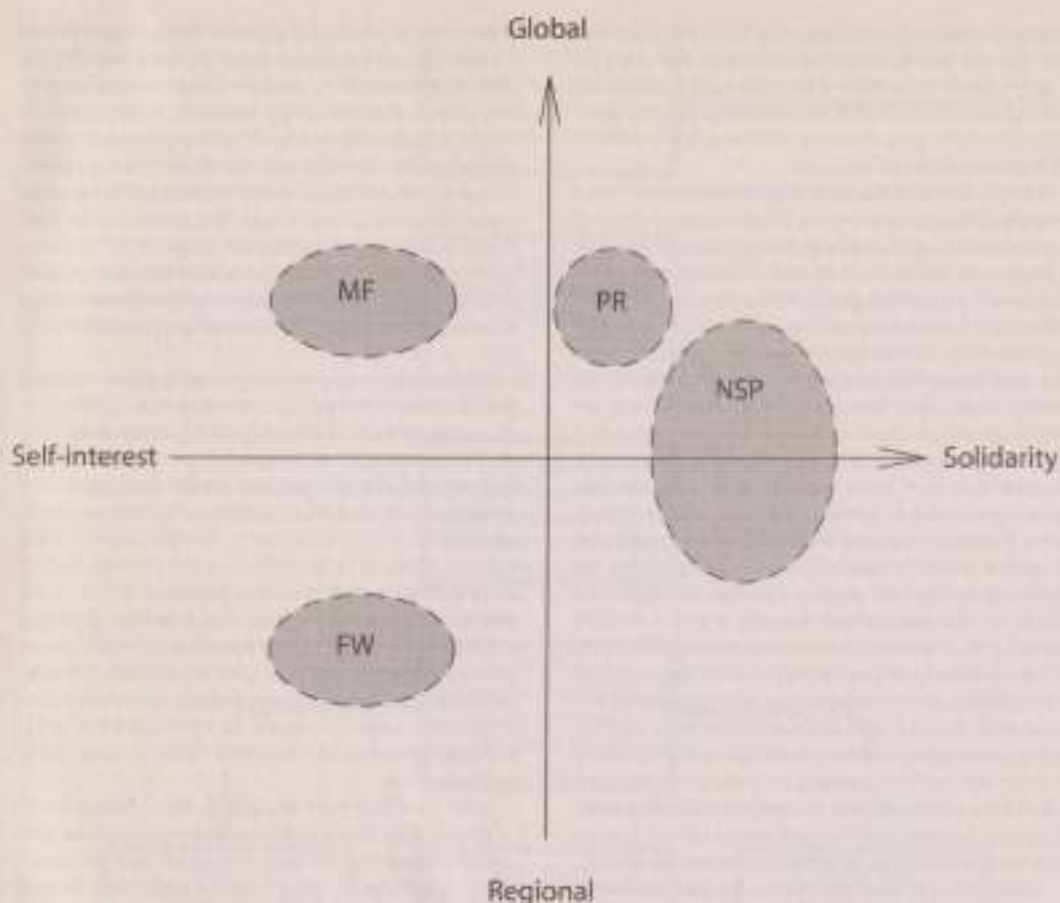


Figure 1. The four scenarios deployed on a diagram with axes Global/Regional and Self-interest/Solidarity. Key for the four scenarios: NSP = New Sustainability Paradigm; PR = Policy Reform; MF = Market Forces; FW = Fertile World (modified from Hunt et al. 2011)

work, live and play, and nature (1954 [1912]) resonates in, say, much of the transition towns' philosophy. It can therefore be assumed that in the face of the capacity to imagine, outline, and appreciate options that could lead to a better future, the present has the power to obliterate our long-term dreams and dictate a more pragmatic, often short-sighted line of action. These two impulses can coexist in society and still be decoupled: while there is an aspiration to change for the greater good, personal conditions and value systems lock in day-to-day decisions and professional choices, gearing them up to the often unsustainable necessities (either induced or real) of the present.

History provides sufficient evidence that contingencies can push towards very unsustainable directions. In his seminal study on the collapse of societies, Diamond (2005) cogently reconstructs the dynamics that brought mighty civilisations to extinction. In spite of their sophisticated cultural and social architecture (in itself a visionary project in constant evolution: a cultural construct regulating social aspirations and relationships), their relentlessly increasing daily needs and wants proved irreconcilable with their long-term ambitions. That is why, as Fry asserts, today design practice must be redirected. It is not sufficient to envision our future. In order to substantiate it we must change our design methodology abandoning a schizoid attitude of envisioning bold shifts of society and still operating professionally with a business-as-usual approach. A new methodological approach can remind us of the impact our current choices will have on the future, thus reconciling the

future with the present.

The process of designing in itself can be defined as 'the planning and patterning of any act towards a desirable, foreseeable end' (Papanik 1980). Thus implicit within the concept of designing or planning is the idea of the future (Corey 2006). Still, what motivates designers in taking their decisions? As students, architects and urban designers are encouraged to nurture and express their particular views, using space to mould places. At a higher level, they are taught to think of these spaces as vessels for cultural values. The resulting process is one that morphs aesthetics and function, appearance and performance. Nevertheless it is undeniable that the fascination with form comes with the risk of an undue reliance on its potential for conveying and transmitting contents that can divert the design focus away from that of the building programme and its effective performance. Over the last three decades there has been much formal experimentation. Nevertheless form for the sake of form can produce consumable objects. In a sort of 'the media is the message' logic, formal experimentation can become self-referential: 'architecture talking about architecture' (Hagan 2006). Much experimentation, however, has focused also on the building and city programmes, namely the conditions and the modalities with which buildings and spaces can perform. This new fertile ground of design investigation inevitably takes the time factor to centre stage, since it deals with the multiplicity of uses the built environment will support over its lifetime. This is important since as professionals we tend to crystallize

buildings at a point in time, expressions of a cultural milieu and collective aspirations. Be it the Garden City utopia or the modernist's 'City of towers' dream, the paradigm of the moment always dictates how buildings and cities are designed. But how do we ensure that current visions of a brighter future will succeed? And even so, how do we ensure the future we dream is a positive future?

It is a fact, however, that we are experiencing the beginning of an age of scarcity, although scarcity should be defined. Is it induced or is it real (see Goodson et al. 2012)? Does it stem from an excessive concentration of resources for the few, or is it the result of overexploitation? There is no univocal answer, although that which is known through science evidences the finite nature of resources and the critical deterioration of ecosystems. It demonstrates that excessive consumption entails high environmental bills. Designing in an age of scarcity becomes therefore the opportunity for a paradigm shift in design thinking, with political and methodological implications. Implications are political because designing for scarcity is concerned with the disadvantaged. The social landscape is rapidly mutating. Low-income groups today are swiftly increasing in number, including the educated young as well as professionals. Skills and education are no longer a guarantee of economic success and opportunities are increasingly limited. It is for this majority with scarce economic possibilities that designers will probably be called more and more frequently to work in the future, developing new architectural approaches and exploring innovation (so far predominantly focused on the wealthy) within tight constraints. The implications are also methodological: tight resource constraints impose thrift, ingenuity, and a particular attention to the long-term, so as to ensure resources are well allocated, and the built environment we design adapts to future aspirations and needs, thus lasting longer. Since this is not a conventional professional and/or didactic approach, students and professionals will inevitably need to go through a learning curve (see Fisher 2008), possibly facilitated by new methods and tools.

Concerns about the future, the scarcity of resources, and about the sustainability of present lifestyle are a call to arms for designers. Still the question remains of methodological approaches fit for purpose. The last decade has witnessed designers engaging in participative experiments, co-design, and more. Fisher (2008) defines this practice 'public-interest architecture' as opposed to one that concentrates its efforts for those who have ample means. It is also in this context that the research developed by the Urban Futures team can find a useful application within design practice. The research has produced a method to analyse the long-term efficacy of that which is designed today using an explorative form of scenario analysis.

Scenarios have been and are used to explore the challenges and risks that lie ahead. They were first utilised in war games during the first years of cold war, with Herman Kahn and his colleagues being some of the main experts in this field (for an account on scenarios techniques see Ruskin 2005). Only in the 70s was this approach developed into a stream of future studies, which were particularly appropriate to explore consequences of environmental degradation and excessive resource exploitation, at a point in time in which they were coming to public attention. 'Limits to Growth' for example (Meadows et al. 1975; Meadows et al. 2004), is one of the most famous studies utilising scenarios developed with mathematical models. In parallel to quantitative approaches, scenario techniques were developed using qualitative ones. For example, Royal Dutch/Shell used them as a strategic management technique to explore the probable evolution of markets and the consequent impact on their business. This type of analysis implies projecting a plan of action (any plan of action) considered for implementation against the backdrop of a set of conditions that may happen in the mid/long-term. In so doing, the plan of action can be modified to be valid under all possible future conditions considered. Modern scenario techniques

tend to merge quantitative and qualitative models. The development of a storyline, a narrative that can convey the several nested levels in which the future unravels, is a precious tool for discussions at a strategic level. Datasets generated through mathematic models provide the evidence base supporting the reasoning developed through the exercise of scenario analysis. Scenarios are extensively used at a macro scale to probe the long-term efficacy of national and global systems (e.g. energy systems, food systems, climate change etc.). The merit of the Urban Futures methodology is to provide a tool that can be used to assess a smaller scale of intervention (i.e. urban development), which can enable professionals operating within the built environment domain to utilise a scenario-based techniques without possessing any particular futuring skills.

Scenario analysis can be normative if the exploration of one or more desirable futures is functional to gain an understanding of pathways for the accomplishment of a desired end point (e.g. an aspirational vision of urban development); it can be exploratory (or descriptive) if diverse future scenarios are used to interrogate plausible developments of the present in order to understand the significance of potential impacts (IEA 2005). It is from this second approach that the Urban Futures^U method originates. Eschewing the temptation to outline a desirable future of the world, designers can focus on the performance of the built environment and on its intended programme. Thus, to an extent, the method is neutral, in that it does not interfere with design aspirations and objectives although by questioning a field of possibilities, it identifies vulnerabilities that may undermine performance, so inevitably impinging on design choices. More importantly, the method can be used as a strategic approach to direct the attention within the design process towards the future.

In the Urban Futures method, scenarios that are used to test the resilience of design options portray four diverging but plausible urban conditions in 2050. They are based on the work of the Global Scenario Group (see Gallopín et al. 1997) although the original scenarios developed by that group were enriched by the Urban Futures research team so as to better capture the conditions of the urban context. Scenarios are determined by the different evolution of the world's drivers of change. These include: society, technology, economy, environment and policy. Internally consistent variations of the drivers influence the unravelling of the present towards different directions. Deploying the scenarios on the imaginary axes of social equity (i.e. self-interest/holdarity) and political structure (i.e. global/national), it is possible to visualise scenarios covering a wide range of alternatives. The analysis is therefore developed by comparing design options against sufficient amplitude of plausible evolutions of the present so as to identify all possible adverse factors to the good performance of the option considered. As a result risks will be elicited that need to be addressed to ensure the functioning of the design option whatever the future holds.

This multiple evaluation has similarities with the concept of different 'trajectories or visions of the longer term future' introduced by Hillier (2011) as opposed to a future envisioned in continuity with the present, or as a path-dependent repetition of the past, which tends to form the (unreliable) basis for traditional urban design and planning. Arguably the future is uncertain, and design and planning methods based on a linear evolution of the present are inevitably predicated on flawed assumptions. Hillier argues for a 'cartographic method' to develop planning, in which potentialities are traced, and maps of the forces' interplay are drawn up. The resulting map can be a valuable instrument for taking decisions informed by future risks and challenges. Likewise, rather than relying on a determined design strategy to attain the desired aim, the map of possibilities resulting from the Urban Futures method of analysis can represent a rich tool of exploration, in which possible design pathways can be compared, considered, or even

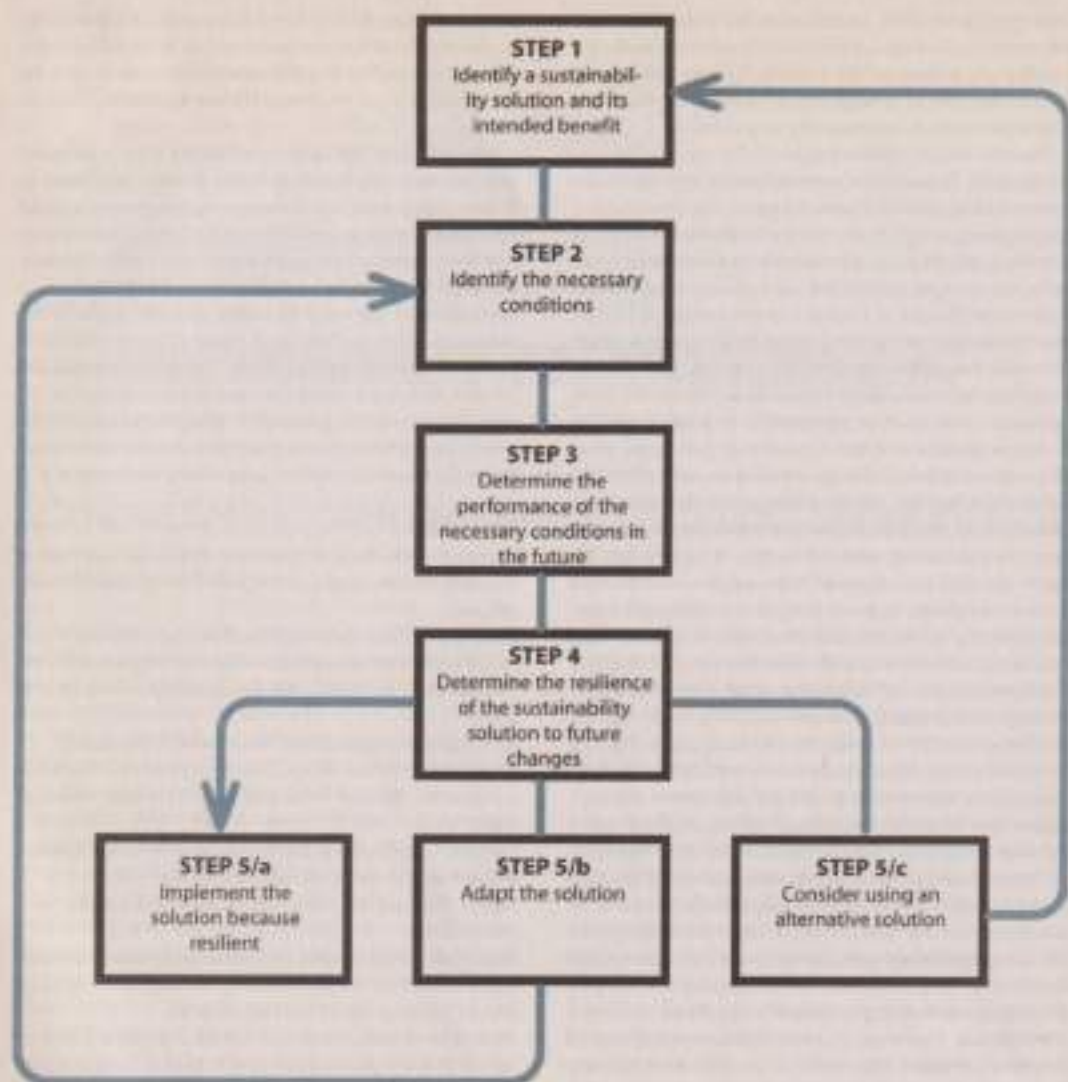


Figure 3: The five-step sequence of the UF method (modified from Lombardi et al. 2012)

merged in a non-linear process.

An exhaustive presentation of scenarios, characteristics, and the methodology can be found in the BRE publication 'Designing resilient cities' (Lombardi et al. 2012). The method has been also formatted into a free web-based tool (see www.urban-futures.org). What follows is a brief description of the scenarios:

New Sustainability Paradigm – Society moves towards an ethos of 'one planet living' and embraces equity and sustainability values.

New socio-economic arrangements change the character of urban industrial civilization, rather than its replacement;

Policy Reform – Policy attempts to regulate the market so as to mitigate its impact on economic imbalances, social equity and environmental degradation, although the public domain resists change. Tensions between continuity of dominant values and greater equity for addressing key sustainability goals ensue.

Market Forces – Free market doctrine dominates, with individualism and materialism as core society values. The 21st century global system evolves without major surprise, in the belief that incremental market

adjustments are able to cope with social, economic and environmental problems as they arise;

Fairness World – The world is divided, with the rich minority living in interconnected, protected enclaves and an impoverished majority outside. Armed forces impose order and prevent collapse.

The method can be used in many ways. A comprehensive list of urban characteristics (i.e. indicators of urban sustainability such as domestic energy use, water quality, dwelling density, etc.) supports a rigorous and detailed evaluation that can be both quantitative and qualitative. In addition to this type of analysis, a 'light touch' version that is more appropriate for short workshops or brainstorming sessions can be utilised. In this format, it is sufficient to grasp the dynamics behind scenario narratives (i.e. how the drivers of change behave) and discuss the consequences of these dynamics on the design options examined. It is an evaluation that lends itself to be developed discursively and that can be easily performed within small design teams or in isolation, thus facilitating its use even for small scale design projects. It was trialled, for example, in the course of a short workshop within the European Urban

Summer School 2012 (EUSS), in which a brief description of the method was presented to an audience of postgraduate architects, urban designers, and young professionals with diverse backgrounds. Subsequently, teams that were developing design projects for the summer school were asked to quickly trial the method on their design schemes.

The Urban Futures method is structured in five steps (see Figure 2). The sequence is designed to be circular and iterative rather than linear. It allows the analysis of single particular aspects (e.g. materials, technologies, strategies, policies, etc.) of urban development. Findings can be used to modify the initial design and make it more resilient to future events, thus closing the loop. The first step consists in the identification of the intended purpose of a 'solution for sustainability'. It prompts answering questions such as: is this solution fit for the purpose stated? Has it really the potential to attain it? This is an important step, since it brings the focus to the design programme and the benefits this is supposed to deliver, thus taking the finality of the project rather than the solution examined or its form to centre stage. For example, one of the groups testing their initial design scheme in the course of the EUSS workshop described their plan of installing an over-sized billboard on the wall of an existing building as a means to encourage interaction of passers-by and therefore community building. Bromley-by-Bow, the area for this project, is a degraded London neighbourhood inhabited by low-income groups. Expressing thoughts on the billboard and possibly exchanging opinions with those standing by the billboard could constitute an occasion to facilitate interaction and a much needed community cohesion. The identification of the intended benefit of the design concept leads to some questions such as: Is the billboard an effective media and its position ideal for luring people to express themselves? Will the billboard be vandalised thus failing its objective? Such questions help scrutinize the actual effectiveness of the design concept. Their formulation leads to the second step, aimed at detecting the 'necessary conditions' for delivering the initially stated benefit, not only now but, more importantly, over the potential lifetime of the design scheme. For example, owners of the buildings must allow the use of the external wall for a sufficiently long period to attain the intended results (i.e. community building). This poses an issue of ownership. Passers-by must be willing to use the wall for communicating their thoughts, which poses an issue of communicating effectively to them the purpose of the billboard. It also poses an issue of community engagement of each individual. The third step consists of assessing these 'necessary conditions' against the four scenarios. This can be done consulting characteristics and performance of relevant indicators or, in the light version, deducing some risks implicit in the nature of each scenario. For example, in a Market Forces world the external wall of the building may be reclaimed by the owners that have little interest in community issues. Can we think of a way to protect the billboard? In a New Sustainability Paradigm world, a community is likely to be well established even in currently disadvantaged areas. Can we think of a way the billboard can be adapted so as to be utilised in this scenario too? In the fourth step, findings are aggregated to determine the degree of resilience of the solution. Finally, in the last step a decision informed by the analysis results can be taken. If conditions are supported in all futures, the 'solution for sustainability' is robust. Conversely, causes of adversity must be identified so as to address them, or another solution must be selected.

In the workshop the analysis was not entirely completed, and the last steps were not developed. Nevertheless, the initial and brief evaluation indicated a few factors that can help reinforce the initial conceptual design. First, the scheme must encompass factors such as community and building owners' involvement. Second, the solution must be adaptable enough to be used also under social circumstances different from today. This can imply many things: an effective integration with the building envelope that can enhance the formal qualities of the building

(thus circumventing the owner's reluctance to make the wall available); the planning of a series of community events as an integral part of the design scheme; and the design of a multifunctional surface that can be used, say, as a local notice board in a New Sustainability Paradigm scenario.

Inevitably, large scale projects will require more sophisticated appraisals when using the Urban Futures method. Nevertheless, in its simplicity the example presented here captures well the potential of the method to change conventional design processes and integrate a particular attention to long-term factors within them. Ultimately the method is meant to be a tool to facilitate a change of attitude. It clearly represents only one of the possible structured approaches for such a purpose. Still its novelty lies in the use of scenarios as a way to capture the several dimensions of the city. Their narratives encapsulate the social, the economic, and the environmental showing how these interact. This way, users are prompted to an integrated appraisal of their projects. It is hoped that this structured approach can facilitate change. It certainly changed the attitude to design of those who developed it.

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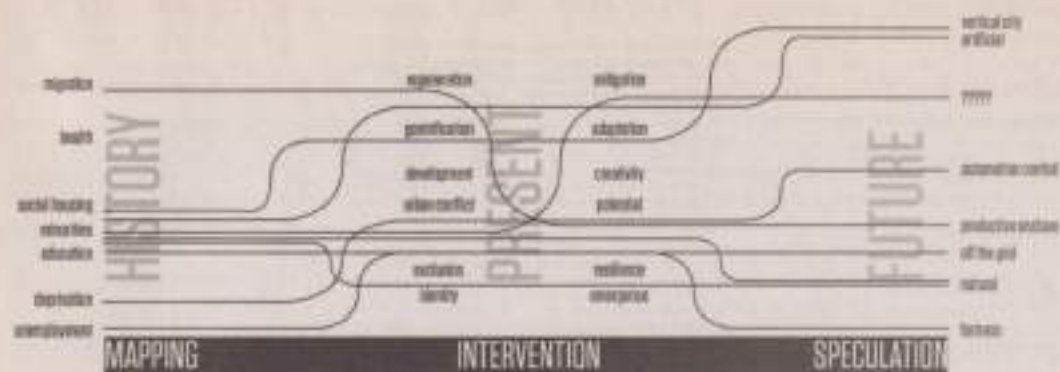


Figure 01: This figure illustrates the idea of considering multiple urban futures as part of change over time. Source: Ulysses Sengupta

ACKNOWLEDGING COMPLEXITY AND CONTINUOUS URBAN CHANGE

Ulysses Sengupta and Eric Cheung

Current practices of urban planning and spatial design have shown an inability to cope adequately with, and successfully intervene in the complex spatio-temporal nature of our cities. With current trends of urbanisation indicating increasing speed of change, the European Urban Summer School event was an opportunity to engage young planners with complex systems and digital tool based approaches aimed at the growing necessity to address temporal and morphological urban systems. Non-deterministic computational modelling techniques simulating complex urban territories in states of rapid change provide the potential to observe, comprehend and test the relative possibilities of spatial and policy based interventions while working with unknown futures and trans-scalar influences (Sengupta, U. 2011). In order to situate spatial design methodologies within current discourses in planning theory, the wide existing gap between theory and practice in urban planning, i.e. between rationale spatial implementation and communicative theoretical intention, must be addressed (De Roo et al. 2012). We believe the potential for bringing spatial and social issues back together, and thus addressing the space of action, lies in the ability to understand the forward projected impact of political, spatial and regulatory interventions on the identifiable trajectories and trends of existing socio-spatial evolutionary conditions.

MULTIPLE FUTURES AND DIAGRAMMING COMPLEX RELATIONSHIPS

The conceptual framework for urban change over time if based on evolutionary theory (Weinstock 2010), requires that one accepts the idea of a singular, fixed or predictable future as a fallacy. If things are constantly changing, and this includes emergent complex behaviours, and the possibility of new or external influences, then it follows that new futures based on tangents to existing directions of change are potentially created at every moment. The idea of working with multiplicity, complexity and change over time can be illustrated in a simple diagram (Figure 01), where the point of intervention on the timeline, and the type of intervention are subject to change and testing based on projections into the future. The diagram below was originally produced as a teaching aid for architecture students at the University of Nottingham, and subsequently reused for the EUSS young planners hosted by the University of Westminster in London.

The principle of working with multiple trajectories and identified social, spatial, economic, political and environmental issues remained important to the tutor group of young planning students with whom we worked directly for the remainder of the summer school. Instead of prioritising a preferred or singular future vision and aiming to take actions towards this singular goal, or helplessly ignoring the larger issues in favour of small scale interventions with limited transcalar effects, the idea of multiplicity and complex overlapping relationships was further explored through a new diagramming exercise which the students developed in conjunction with us. They called this network graph diagram the SAG (ScarcityActionGoal) tool, and used it to illustrate the networked and looped nature of scarcities, actions and goals (an expansion of SAG), including the impossibility of predicting pure causal relationships by transversing the network both forwards and backwards from scarcities through actions to goals and vice versa (See Figures 02, 03, 04, 05).

The 'scarcity-action-goals' diagram tool created by students for the 2012 European Urban Summer School demonstrates the potential of a network graph diagram where the key issues identified by students are classified in terms of the situation (scarcity) of Brinsley-By-Bow, possible actions, and intended outcome. When these are drawn up in a diagrammatic form, we can start to understand and revisit each of the issues and find its relationships within the network by transversing the connections. The main advantage of using such a diagram is to allow one to identify and communicate the key components and possible process of a system that can be readjusted by discussion and negotiation between stakeholders, thus adjusting the diagram and network to incorporate new information and lose out of date aspects, both before and during the actual processes of implementation.

COMMUNICATING SPACE TIME DEPENDENCY: PLAY SIMICITY

The initial condition that must be acknowledged for any planning implementation to take effect is change. However, it is essential to consider change as an on-going process over time with or without the intervention of planners, designers or governance. Too often, planners and spatial designers tend to work from the position of someone who believes it is their job to initiate urban change, and we would like to deconstruct this notion, by introducing the idea that urban change



Figure e9: Network graph of identified scarcities/risks, potential actions and ideal goals. Source: Ulysses Sengupta, Eric Cheong



Figure e9: Transversing the risk of gentrification through mediating actions to ideal goals. Source: Ulysses Sengupta, Eric Cheong



Figure e9: Transversing the goal of new pedestrian and cycling connections backwards through possible related actions and affected risks/scarcities. Source: Ulysses Sengupta, Eric Cheong



Figure 15: Transversing the action of introducing a new speakers corner through the potential scarcities effected and goals contributed to. Source: Ulysses Sengupta, Eric Cheung

is both inevitable and continuous. Here continuous does not refer to any continuity of speed or constancy, but rather to the idea that 'change' itself is on-going. Hence, the idea of intervening within a stable system or situation must be rethought to engage with the possibilities of working with constant spatial change and multiple tipping points leading to new systems (Holling 1996).

In order to communicate the idea of spatiality as a morphological phenomenon to a generation of young planners educated on a diet of transactive, advocacy, bargaining and communicative planning methods, focused on socio-economic aspects rather than socio-spatial relationships, we thought it useful to run a five exercise in which the computer and console video game *SimCity 4* would be used to design, sustain and grow a small city. *SimCity* is an open ended game in which the player is asked to take the role of the mayor or master-planner whose responsibility it is to initiate, grow and maintain a visually represented city. The first version of the game was published in 1989 and designed by Will Wright. The game works on the basis of controlled top-down interventions by the player, such as housing, factories, schools, roads and services, becoming part of a complex causal network within the virtual city environment, where demands for meeting the requirements of the residents of the city evolve over time based on phenomena such as industrial pollution creating lower living conditions, lack of higher education resulting in a lower skills labour market etc. As the mayor of the city, it is the player's responsibility to keep residents happy, to generate income through taxation and to use this income to intervene with new and additional functions and services, attracting more people, and hence growing the population of the city and the space of the city itself over time.

During gameplay, which took place on screen with audience participation from the EUSS students, in the form of suggestions for interventions, the discussed controllable aspects of the game were the possibility to add housing, schools, power generation, road networks, sewage networks etc. to the city that had grown. However, what was emphasised was the ability to influence these and other specific parameters through particular actions without having any direct control over other changing aspects such as population demographics, industrial pollution, migration, happiness of residents and/or any control over the whole situation/system. Another aspect that was clearly identified was the fact that

the various changeable, influenceable and uncontrollable aspects of the game actually worked on the basis of a complex network of interdependencies (as seen with the SAG network graph developed by the students subsequently), which created a non-linear experience. Without these interdependencies, the game would have been linear with a set of right and wrong decisions at every stage.

DEVELOPING NEW TOOLS FOR BROMLEY-BY-BOW

In order to demonstrate the possibility of direct spatial engagement with Bromley-by-Bow, following the conceptual discussions above, a simplified digital tool, called the BBB Generator, which was developed specifically for the EUSS, was unveiled. This tool allows the translation and exploration of limited (see control layers below) policy and governance decisions regarding density, height, mix of uses etc. into a virtual 3D environment. The base map or starting point of the BBB Generator tool reflects the existing networks and urban topography in Bromley-by-Bow, creating a starting point where the primary structural elements such as roads and railway lines provide a basic grounded pattern from which to work. The logic behind this is that these elements are less likely to change quickly in this context than the buildings and urban spaces. This tool is simpler than *SimCity* in terms of the interdependencies defined and number of elements available. It allows a greater degree of spatial relation to the actual site conditions as it is not based on a regular underlying grid like *SimCity*, but instead on a closer representation of the existing urban parcellation of Bromley-by-Bow, with buildings and spaces defined to work with these realistic constraints. While there are some overlapping parameters such as the height, plot ratio and plot size, uncontrolled change was not built into the model. Hence, the functionality of the model is aimed at the idea of working with intuitive decisions that affect spatiality, through visual understanding of projected future scenarios. Additional examples shown to the students such as previous work with Cellular Automata, agent based systems and complex adaptive systems, were used to demonstrate and emphasise how more complex relationships and systems would function as models, following multi-scalar studies of specific urban topographies (but these remain outside the scope of this article). The functionality, parameters, controllable elements and underlying logic of the BBB Generator are discussed below.



Figure 06: Underlying control maps allowing manipulation of spatial policy decisions. Source Eric Cheung

TYPES AS PARAMETERS

Existing common and likely building typologies are defined through a study of the existing urban topography and recent changes, resulting in the tool being based around four primary 'types' of urban object, where a type is a basic genetic form which can adapt or react to the environmental conditions it is placed in, making it more flexible than the more strictly defined typologies:

- » Houses (terraces, semi-detached or detached)
- » Courtyard/perimeter blocks
- » Low-rise/industrial/warehouse blocks
- » Tower/slab blocks

USER CONTROL

The user controls provided consist of four basic colour and value maps which can be changed easily using common software such as Photoshop, reflecting the possibility of changing control parameters and constraints on development in a similar manner to changing planning policies. The resultant change from all the overlapping maps is displayed in a 3D visual output model. The four maps allow the user to control the aspects listed below. (See Figure 06)

- » Function (residential vs. commercial vs. open green/space)
- » Plot Area (relative size of plots)

- » Height limit (number of storeys)
- » Plot Ratio (height to footprint)

TOOL DEVELOPMENT FOR BROMLEY-BY-BOW

The process of using the BBB Generator to visualise projected futures (25 years?) of Bromley-by-Bow can be described as a series of algorithmic design stages, including the choice and data taken into the model, and the process applied to this data. The final output of the tool is both visual and statistical, providing a read out of the actual available floor areas etc. once the model based on intuitive decisions is generated.

- » Base Map: Bromley-by-Bow was studied using maps, aerial and street level photographs in order to create a base layer which is split into urban blocks by inputting all observable major boundaries such as roads or railways, with defined widths.
- » Plot Divisions: For each block a similar plot division operation to the Erisi City Engine's (Parish & Müller 2001) procedural generation of parcels by recursive oriented bounding box method¹¹ is used. The main difference is that instead of using bounding boxes, the closest point in the polygonal boundary (parcels) is used and is re-evaluated at a defined step distance, iterated until it splits the bounding polygon. This is yet to be validated but the aim is

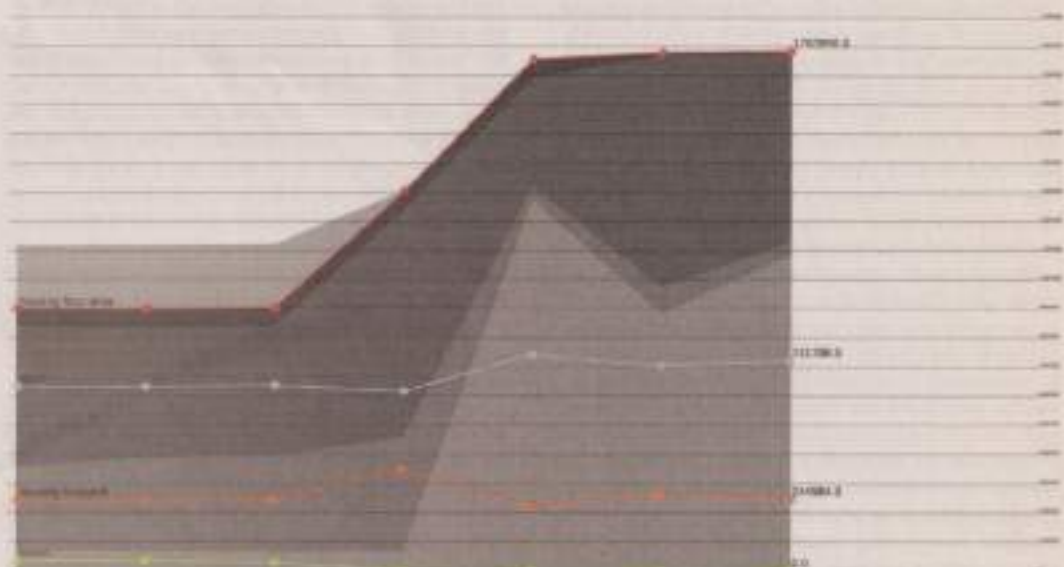


Figure 07: Stack graph demonstrating a comparison between 7 experiments. Source Eric Cheung



Figure 17: Visual representation of Bromley-by-Bow using the BBB Generator. Source: Eric Cheung

to allow more control and adaptation to *n*-sided irregular parcels found in London. This is a recursive process, it repeats until it reaches a threshold controlled by the user inputs acquired from the plot sizes/areas maps.

- **Building Types and Heights:** The plots are then assigned a building type based on the control map for function. The image map colour red, green, blue translates to residential, green and non-residential respectively. A simple weighted random choice is implemented for gradients interpolated between the 3 base colours. A suitable building type is then placed as footprints into the plot by checks on available space. The control layer for height limit and plot ratio is used to determine the number of storeys of the building in relation to the building footprint. At this stage, a visual representation of the situation becomes possible (See Figure 17)
- **Report Generation:** At the end of each generation, a report quantifying the total floor area produced and the total footprint area occupied by different functions and types can be generated as stack graphs with correlated aerial images and the control image maps for each execution. This provides feedback in the form of ratios of green area, open area, building footprints area and building areas for housing etc. allowing a comparison between multiple projections/experiments (See Figure 18).

LIMITATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

In its current state, the BBB Generator is not a simulative urban model based on evolutionary behaviour and its functionality is limited to visualising the effect of specific changing parameters within a given context. We suggest it would be possible to make use of this functionality to roughly understand the potential impacts of policy decisions before they are made, if the definable policy/value layers correlate directly to decision categories of actual policy makers, enabling a direct visualisation of the spatial effect of policy decisions in the foreseeable future. However, it should not be mistaken for a

design tool incorporating emergent or evolutionary behaviours.

CONCLUSION

Our ambitious attempt was to create common ground between current planning theory and planning practice, including spatial implementation. This task was undertaken through communication of how overlapping and trans-scalar issues might be approached in an open ended non-deterministic system, through an acknowledgement of the potentials embodied in existing urban situations and constant urban change. While the students had neither the time to learn, customise or use the presented simulative systems or the BBB Generator directly within the limited length of the summer school, we believe the development and use of the SAG tool by students is a positive indicator that the aim of communicating the need to work with change and with multi-polar and trans-scalar issues was achieved, as was the incidental idea that planners can create and work with custom made tools to work with different situations. We hope that this initial exposure to complex systems, new digital planning tools/methodologies and morphological processes will continue to reverberate within the future practice of our young EUSS planners.

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FROM SCARCITY TO OPPORTUNITY

Anna Socian, Claudia Piscitelli, Lauri Lihtmaa, Ramon Marrades, Tuba Kolat (Team 1)
Tutors: Ulysses Sengupta and Eric Cheung

PREMISES

- Maintaining social fabric
- Creating new job opportunities for local residents
- Maintaining housing character
- Taking advantage of potentialities
- Rethinking industrial area
- Attracting activities that are complementary to existing uses and suitable to social environment
- Improving micro-connectivity. Connecting public space within the neighborhood (inside) and Bromley-by-Bow to other areas (outside), finding creative ways to avoid the highway barrier
- Platform to foster civil engagement (see agents)

AGENTS

- Tower Hamlets Council
- Housing association
- Limehouse Arts Foundation
- The Bromley-by-Bow Centre: voluntary organization led by local community to regenerate the area
- The Bromley-by-Bow Community Organization: 'empower' local residents of Bromley-by-Bow by sports and other activities
- Food Cycle Community Cafe

HOW?

- The SAG Tool: Scarcity - Action - Goals

LET THE PEOPLE TALK!

Anna Háblóvá, Katia Pimenova, Mateus Lira da Matta Machado, Romy Hobeika, Tuba Dogu (Team 3)
Tutor: Peter B. Meyer



Above: What do people want to have in their neighborhood? What do people want to do in their neighborhood? How can people change their neighborhood? Can we design a platform for people to discuss and express their needs? An approach that uses available or potential conditions to give residents a voice. Source: Team 3

PILOTS, PLOTS, PLOYS & PLANS FOR AN ALTERNATE EAST ENDERS

Alessandra Luoldi, Christine Okwole, Huangqing Li, Marina Sapunwa, Sebastian Seyfarth (Team 5)

Tutor: Steven Chodorowski

An exploration through film.



URBAN ACUPUNCTURE

Annalisa Lodigiani, Clemm Kustermans, Farinaz Falaki, Seppie de Blaauw (Team 2)

Tutors: Teresa Franchini and Judith Ryser



Learn it



Sell it



Test it



DISCOVERING SCARCITY

URBAN STORYTELLING OF TEN DAYS OF INVENTIONS, DOUBTS, ENCOUNTERS, FALLACIES AND WORKING TOOLS

Serena Maioli

[1] SCARCITY THE SNAKE (PREMISES)

Tool one: ask yourself why

The First day I heard about scarcity, I was primarily curious about its meaning. In ten days, I discovered that no univocal explanation is possible. We can start debunking a myth: scarcity is not just a condition that exists in the poorest countries in the world. The urban experience of scarcity is ambiguous as a snake which sneaks around us changing its shape. Scarcity, suddenly, appears as the other face of richness, the dark edge of crystal skyscrapers: in the age of endless desire related to possession, whenever we discover inequalities, we see the fail of redistribution represented by a widespread condition of scarcity.

I begin to look for a different angle, partially dark and partially shining, which allows me not to determine if I am seeing scarcity, but to understand the reason why the urban environment can be seen as scarce (just) by certain people. Now I am ready to discover when the snake changes its skin, and why.

[2] SCARCITY AND EXPECTATIONS (IN SITU)

Tool two: mental mapping

Bromley-by-Bow is a question mark between Canary Wharf and the Olympic Games site: how many Londoners would be able to draw the proper limits of this wide portion of land inhabited by a 60% of Bangladeshis and few bored British?

Sugarhouse Studio is far from the metro station, especially because I have taken the wrong exit. Walking down the High Street I feel I am getting lost, drunk of the smell of motor oil melted with fast food. Not far I see the Bow Roundabout. On the opposite side of the High street, crossing the monumental traffic island where a skinny church is standing, there is a white bicycle left as a memorial, teaching me that traffic is the boss in here.

Rain and cold weather cover my first impression of Bromley-by-Bow, but would it be different if it was sunny? Walking through Bow means to go up and down, crossing infrastructures and rivers, orienting through new and old landmarks. I expected an urban

decay I don't see, the evidence of abandonment that I cannot proof basing on the vital industrial area, dirty and disconnected, but fascinating and populated. Before visiting Bromley-by-Bow I read the statistics and masterplan of the area and I was, let's say, well-learned on the topic. But the topics in the field were different.

One day, Peter said that it's all about expectations: the prejudice influences our impressions, our feelings, our critiques. Sometimes, it's better not to be prepared, to be a virgin, for a spontaneous first impression.

[3] SCARCITY TALKS (PEOPLE)

Tool three: constants

Trying to get the information you want from the people you interview, never works; during ten days of talking in Bromley-by-Bow I learned three important things:

- Forget to be an architect: don't use terms like urban environment, accessibility and cityscape.
- Be transparent but not rude: never ask directly what you want to know.
- Try to find what people love and talk about it, using this argument to better understand how they live and if they are happy. Start to belong to their world.

In the industrial area close to the river Lea, Jane helps me to analyse Bromley-by-Bow in depth: she tells me she likes the neighbourhood but she doesn't remember any place which she feels attached to, except Victoria Park and Canary Wharf's restaurants, all located outside the limits of Bromley-by-Bow. She reminds me of my grand-aunt and thus I feel like I can have a more relaxed conversation with her. I come back to her workplace twice. During these talks I learn of some problems in Bow: first of all, community disconnection. Everyone I talk to seems really busy in their own everyday lives, suspended in a private microcosm. Trying to learn more about their attitudes and desires gets tougher.

Talking is never just talking: it's more like searching for a contact point. Jane becomes my constant, my personal way to go deeper.



Above (from left to right and top to bottom): Six tools for the discovery of scarcity: (1) ask yourself why; (2) mental mapping; (3) contacts; (4) self-analysis; (5) purpose glasses; (6) Polyanna way thinking. All illustrations: Serena Maekel.

[4] SCARCITY CREATES A NEW LANDSCAPE (AT NIGHT)

Tool four: self-analysis

The common feeling that there is not enough space for all, that in order to improve the quality of life in our cities it is compulsory to provide them with new facilities, is a consequence of the global trend to consume rather than use. At the base of this phenomenon we find one prejudice exceptionally damaging: the idea that New is best. New is more beautiful; faster; easier to use. The truth is that cities don't need new functions and objects all the time.

The problem then moves from a lack of resources to their wrong placement. Cities are already full of stuff, but people are prevented from accessing these resources. In order to survive in times of crisis, to use differently (instead of to use less) seems important. How many territories can be used more, better, than today? Will the hyper-planning that London has in mind for Bromley-by-Bow consider the potential of spaces in-between, or will it super-impose flat-pack facilities and places?

The new landscapes created by scarcity could be an opportunity for institutional planners to involve communities in something that is different from the abused cliché of participation.

[5] GO BACK TO SCARCITY (A PROJECT)

Tool five: purpose-glasses

Which level of intervention is still possible? The scarcity landscape forces us to reconsider the role of planning. Indeed, bottom-up planning does not just mean to ask people what they want to do with existing and future spaces; the aim of planners is not just to define rules for the production of new spaces and functions. The goal is to discover the possibility of making in the public realm with nothing but imagination.

Luckily, space is always a new discovery. Thus, when I come back to the streets and squares of Bromley-by-Bow, thinking of stimulating

people's reactions I discover how surprisingly dynamic the common space becomes when you look at it with a specific purpose.

Usually we experience the urban space with a short range of uses and most of them are predetermined by an official function, because centuries of zoning prevent us to think about the multi-functionality of each space. On the contrary, we should say to ourselves: 'Find a place, give new rules'. The Gieger Bread Path (below) invented by my team goes in this direction: it is a tool which helps people in recognizing the flexibility of urban space and aims to improve the observation skills of citizens and their ability to create new coloured tones in their grey neighbourhood.

[6] SCARCITY IS HAPPINESS (THE END)

Tool six: Polyanna way thinking

Walking through Bromley-by-Bow I ask myself if the missing link might be just a sparkle of happiness in the interaction between people and spaces: neither the production of new spaces nor their rearrangement can really improve the city scene if we miss urban life.

As a rational architect, it is hard for me to define happiness as a possible tool for planning. Still this emotion, associated with memories and future perspectives, is the (most subjective and partial) marker we have to understand community satisfaction; the identity, the pride to belong to a piece of land instead of another one. We cannot quantify it, but in times of crisis it could probably be an advantage.

Under condition of scarcity, planners have to recognize the potentialities of existing built space, its capacity of generating joy, fun and intense experiences. The guys from Assemble were able to transform a petrol station into a theatre and the underpass of a highway into a playful meeting point: if scarcity is the mother of invention, happiness can be the one condition we need to deal with in order to transform contemporary urban spaces into generators of individual and social experiences.

EMBRACE ME WHEN I'M WALKING

SOME PERSONAL NOTES IN NON-JARGON

Cinna Kustermans

After being in school benches for a couple of days and listening to a dozen people saying that Bromley-by-Bow is the most deprived area in the UK, I went out for a walk in Bromley-by-Bow. Because I couldn't confirm or deny what was said. Because I wanted to see it myself. Because I have always been attracted to deprived areas. To swap jeans in a butcher shop downtown joburg. To walk and eat in Beaubourg, Marseille, Paris or New Orleans. Real-life scarcities, daily scarcities. I had great expectations.

And Bromley-by-Bow showed its sad side that rainy day. Sad houses, sad shops, sad people walking by, sad cars on wet streets. A sad breakfast with beans swimming down Stroudley Walk. Poor whites gambling their bits of money at Ladbrokes. Women with burkas and tender but discrete eyes walking out the beauty salon. A post office with an ATM, a vegetable shop, some women wearing plastic bags with whatever. No real British English but English as a mix of many tongues. Something beautiful. And it actually wasn't too bad at all, despite the rain Bromley-by-Bow actually looked alright that rainy afternoon. No beggars, no hustlers, no streetwalkers, no kids scraping for food. People with families and houses and yes, possibly poor and with hard lives in bad working and housing circumstances, but it didn't seem to be too bad...

Met Henry in a pub. He wore a jacket of the Belgian army and he had a four day beard. He wasn't Belgian and he wasn't very well-mannered but he was alright. A bit of a disappointed socialist. Unemployed, divorced twice, accumulation of things. Henry told me some things about Bromley-by-Bow, a place where he has lived since twenty years. You know, pub talk, not too personal and not too subtle. About East London, that it is poor, that it has always been poor and that it will always be poor. It's a matter of geography. East London was boggy and thus unused and thus cheap land outside the city walls, where the industry was placed when the factories became bigger and unhealthier. Moreover, East London was downstream and the prevailing wind direction in the UK is southwest so the rich in the city wouldn't have the stink of the industry in their gardens. But the working-class was placed close to the factories too. And although the industry is disappearing in London, the social structure has been laid and that won't change. A few pints later I thanked Henry for his interesting evaluation and evolution of a place over time. Time to hit the road.

I walked on, caught a bus that took ages to Central London. Hopped off, walked through the rain-rainier-rainst and saw the speculative side of London, cold modern buildings and unappealing Victorian buildings (was Victoria a relative of Dracula?) and I crossed the Thames and the undefined colour reminded me of the Scheldt back home and I walked on and London wasn't very nice to me and I begged her to embrace me because I have longed for her (London is female to me, but a cold one) but she didn't and finally she wouldn't and stinking tube corridors and two tubes brought me to my hotel where I dried up.

A few days later I walked through Bromley-by-Bow again. The sun shone and the neighbourhood wasn't bad at all, in fact, it looked alright, I mean, it was a nice place to be. Shops with market stalls in front, locals knowing each other and chatting and flirting, gentle double-deckers stylishly dancing down Bow Road. Et cetera. I met John who ran a coffee shop in an alley north of Bow Road (his name probably isn't really John, but he looked like a John to me in such convincing way that it could have been his own nickname too).

"You're not from around, are you?" he asked me when I studied a map. Some words later I explained him I'm an urban planner attending a summer school with scarcity as its theme. John didn't really understand. I told him I was interested in how Bromley-by-Bow could be improved. Spatially, socially et cetera. "Ah yeah, I see", he replied. He then told me he had just started his coffee shop a few weeks ago. Why here? Because it is 'affordable in London terms'. John also told me about the London climate of so-called gentrification developments that jumped up like mushrooms all over the city. "You know, those private developments for the wealthy few who want to engage in relationships to afford their overpriced homes". Gated blocks, anonymous apartments that could be anywhere. I stirred my coffee. "I saw gentrification as a more or less spontaneous development", I told him, "creative minds settling in poor neighbourhoods and attracting shops, bars and so forth, as in Berlin for example". John said there were areas like that in London too - and actually he is one of the pioneers in Bromley-by-Bow himself, you know, with his fancy coffee and all that. Some more words later John said there might be a lack of shops and bars in the neighbourhood. He referred to Hackney as a place where the creative minds had gentrified the area. "But behind the lively main streets in Hackney there are blocks of social housing too". As I went out I saw Bromley-by-Bow differently. Does it have potential to become a liveable place?

Scarcity. I looked at that word in July 2012 when I tried to write an article. What did it mean, a lack? Less supply than demand? Or scarcity as in a city with scars? Eureka! I started to write about a city I had visited a few times, a city with scars of a certain period in its lifetime, a city where money is scarce and where people are getting scarcer, a city that had riveted me from the first time I saw it: Oertritz in East Germany. A shrinking city where creative thinking might create liveable space. Fast forward to October 2012. London isn't shrinking. But London does have areas where creative thinking is also needed to create liveable space. Especially in times of scarcity. Although I still can't define scarcity. But I do know that scarcity means more than lack and that it means more than just a supply and demand thing. I am working on it.

So, Bromley-by-Bow.

Generally spoken people leave if there is no work. But in cities it is different. There are always places where people will live if they do not have any other possibilities. The cheapest places close to factories and motorways. Where parks are scarce and ugly et cetera. To commute every day. Long days. To get depressed, drunk and divorced. Bromley-by-Bow apparently is one of those places (although I still can't confirm or deny it). I walked around a bit, sat in bars and I spoke to some people.

Now there are a lot of things to do around Bromley-by-Bow and there is nothing to do within Bromley-by-Bow. Is that bad? Might be. Around Bromley-by-Bow you can shop, eat and drink, meet people, spend time, spend money. Bow Road in the north has big and small shops, bus and tube stations, religious facilities, administrative amenities, monuments, office spaces to let and so on. There's a park and playground down the coffee shop alley as well. In the east, beyond the motorway A12 and in the Lea River valley there's Tosco and there are businesses and parks and housing developments. Further east there's the Olympic park, although I still cannot believe this would contribute to the regeneration of Bromley-by-Bow specifically or East London generally. South of Bromley-by-Bow there's a



Bromley-by-Bow. All images: Chris Kustererans

quasi-industrial zone with wholesalers, mosques, a concrete mixing company with many trucks, an artist colony, a sandwich bar with a friendly lady and a pub with a man in a Belgian army jacket. In the west there's something beautiful too: small car handovers' shops have settled in the brick arches underneath the DLR railway track - you wouldn't dare to make a picture and economically it's very marginal but very entrepreneurial. Very fascinating, indeed.

But within Bromley-by-Bow there's hardly anything to do. And therefore it could be a nice place to live, to stroll with your kids, to enjoy a quiet atmosphere. But it isn't. It's a place where nobody wants to live (apparently). Stroudley Walk is a local centre like there are many in Europe: a handful small shops run by struggling locals, a health centre where you do not want to be brought to if you may choose, a lot of unused space (you can't call it a square) and an overall depressing atmosphere. And although you can't really see it, Stroudley Walk is only a stone's throw from Bow Road.

So here's the deal: add things that attract people to Stroudley Walk. Because then the area becomes lively, safer, shops can flourish, people are happier. Build units that can be used to run a business.

Create a mix of smaller and large-scaled enterprises (beside John's coffee bar it would be good to have one or two bigger attractors like a supermarket or a chain shop). Just to get some locals in the streets permanently. Urban designers can think about the improvement of the spatial/physical connection to Bow Road so that people walk in and out almost automatically. And if the London condition of so-called free market is of that sort that large-scaled gentrification projects are being built, then let that be. You can't fight that, and you don't have to. Look at the bright side: there are more people living in the area, that's good for safety and local enterprises. But I still believe that a city can ask something in return for real estate development. The development company can invest in local amenities too, in public space, in big things that actually cost little money for those who have a lot of money but that are of great use for those who have little money.

I do not have a concluding sentence because my work in Bromley-by-Bow is not finished yet. I must talk a bit more to Henry, who will still live there for another twenty years, and to John, who might stay there a bit longer, too.

CHANGING CONDITIONS – CHANGING OUR ROLE

Giulia Maci, Seppe de Bluijs, Clem Kastermans

After briefly discussing the changing context of urban planning, the article focusses on our experiences in Bromley-by-Bow. During the summer school we had an in-depth visit to this East London neighbourhood. Our colourful experiences are then put in a manifesto, which can help young urban planners understand their jobs. To arms!

TODAY'S CONTEXT FOR YOUNG URBAN PLANNERS

Times are changing fast. The economic crisis points out the risks and the limits of our current planning system. In times of scarcity it becomes inadequate for, let's say, three reasons.

First, traditional planning is characterized by a strong hierarchical structure, with a promoter that coordinates the actions of different urban players. This model needs a high availability of scarce public resources (financial, human resources and knowledge) and lacks the needed transparency and democracy in today's multi-actor society.

Second, traditional zoning as a tool to regulate land use is not able to manage the emerging dynamics of the transformation of the territory. Its "catch 22" between the necessary flexibility for new win-win situations on the one hand and the stringent framework to guarantee spatial quality on the other hand leads to stagnation.

Third, the complexity of society is growing. A growing diversity and social inequality puts society under pressure. Space and spatial planning interact in this process by putting socio-spatial incongruence in focus and by making social structures spatially permanent.

EXPERIENCING BROMLEY-BY-BOW

What does this changing context mean for towns, cities and neighbourhoods? Can we actually see the changes? How does it affect people?

The summer school lead us to Bromley-by-Bow in East London. Within the wondrous world of statistics, Bromley-by-Bow is known as the most deprived area in the UK. It is primarily known for its ethnic diversity (although the Bangladeshi majority does not really imply diversity), low incomes and high unemployment rate. Within the dwellings, which are mainly 'social', living standards are low. And this makes Bromley-by-Bow a perfect place for young planning professionals who want to change the world positively.

The changing context affects this neighbourhood too. Being a focal point of social housing, the quality of life is driven by a few influential companies: the housing company Poplar HARCA, the municipality and a few private investors. To improve quality of life, these actors mainly refurbish or build new homes. Strengthening the local economy is not perceived as key policy. Result of this focus is that Bromley-by-Bow becomes a dull residential area. And that isn't necessarily a bad thing, but we believe Bromley-by-Bow has more potential.

The Olympic Park (and its planned legacy) is just a stone's throw away. Within the London context of speculative private investments, Bromley-by-Bow also undergoes gentrification. Instead of spontaneous gentrification (in which alternative lifestyles attract investments), there seems to be rather a kind of intended gentrification (planning gated middle-class apartments on strategic spots). These developments make social inequality more visible.

We were surprised that Bromley-by-Bow is the most deprived area in the UK. While walking around, we could hardly find any confirmation of that statement. I mean, it was not that bad! True,

the grey buildings and the shops were depressing, but there was energy in the streets where people meet. There must be worse neighbourhoods in this country known for the gap between the rich and the poor. This brought us in an awkward situation: we couldn't confirm or deny its problematic status and therefore it was hard to find solutions.

Confronted with this lack, Bromley-by-Bow made us think differently. Instead of finding physical interventions, the problem identification behind the so-called 'problematic' status of the neighbourhood took our first attention. What are the mechanisms behind the actual community in Bromley-by-Bow? Through observation and participation we started looking at valid and possible carriers for new urban solutions. Our main focus was on new forms of decision-making, social networks, alternative production methods and new concepts of scale and progressive urban development.

We understood that, while creating spatial synergies, our task as (future) urban planners is to actively intervene in community-building. Such new ways of planning and design demand reformulating our role as urban planners. If we want to reclaim the possibility of making we have to define our role in the given socio-spatial context. Our role is to do acupuncture interventions that catalyse other interventions within the framework of the existing community, qualities and possibilities. Instead of focussing on spatial dynamics on a bigger scale (e.g. East London, Olympic legacy, gentrification), our primary goal is to strengthen existing social networks and spatial opportunities in Bromley-by-Bow. To make this role clearer we started to write a Manifesto.

MANIFESTO FOR YOUNG URBAN PLANNERS

There I am, sitting in a bar with two friends and fellow urban planners. They are discussing their jobs, their projects and their doubts. While I roll a cigarette they unveil the issue of 'the role of the young urban planner today'. While silently sipping at another beer I think there is no other job that is more questioned by its practitioners than the urban planners' job. If you are a plumber, your task is understandable. The same goes for a postman, a poet, a psychologist, a prisoner, a pet nurse. But the planners' task remains discussed. Why?

Our world has been manufactured and all we got to do is reinvent it. Our forefathers have brought us wealth, yes, but a lot of shit as well. Look at the cities we are living in! Money is scarce, new ideas are lacking, social issues are still unresolved, cities are evolving rapidly and worse, projects must be sustainable but in fact they are not, sustainability is hollow or dead. Moreover we, planners, are expected to solve global economic, social, ecological, spatial, political, philosophical problems. We ought to answer every issue, we are asked to be ambiguous but we don't have a clue where to start. Tell me, baby, why you've been gone so long. Can't you see the signs that we are heading towards new Middle Ages?

Our cities are getting dark, introvert, goalless, pointless, stupid. Ethics dissolve, barricades are being built, there is intellectual famine and philosophical incest. Today cities are not progressing or forwarding, but declining and rewinding. And indeed, we are running in circles. We must redo things. In eras of doubt, people tend to write manifestos in order to structure their thoughts and to mobilize others.

So, for what it is worth...

A MANIFESTO

Giulia Mari, Seppo de Blasi, Clem Rütermaas

WE MUST RE-EVALUATE TRADITIONAL CONCEPTS OF PLANNING

As planners and human beings we are used to growth. Growth seems (or seemed) to be natural, because there is coherence with our own lives: you are here, you grow, you sustain, you shrink, you die. But in urban terms today de-growth or shrinking does not necessarily mean decline or dying. We need to accept the fact that cities cannot and will not grow like they used to do. Moreover, in times of scarcity and shrinkage we can (at last!) focus on the parts that already exist.

WE MUST RE-ACHIEVE RAPID URBAN TRANSFORMATION

It seems necessary to go beyond theories and try practical actions to address concrete urban issues. It is time to get out our laid-back offices and to leave our desks, digital aerial maps and other tools. Monitoring and evaluating real daily life are fundamental in our job to learn from the experiences and to readjust theories and strategies. An urban planner experiences local struggles personally. In East Germany, for example, a vast amount of cities is shrinking. Instead of trying to find ideas for new growth in the East, there is rather a need to fulfil local needs. And instead of building new suburban neighbourhoods (market-based thinking) and breaking down high-rise areas, planners must focus on reshaping the high-rise areas into positive and well-used places by new concepts. Enter the area, experience it methodically and do something with it.

WE MUST RELOCATE URBAN FUNCTIONS AND REORGANIZE THE METROPOLITAN AREA AS A NETWORK OF AUTONOMOUS CENTRES

We cannot stick to our grandfathers' ideas of mono-centred cities. Many cities have grown from a core city to a core city with dead and depressing suburbs. Local centres become more important if people are working long days in another place or at home. It is time to focus on outlying neighbourhoods where most people live nowadays. For example, Berlin, London and Rotterdam are not just cities, but accumulations of different social worlds. To react to people's needs and to act democratically, a city must accept its polycentric form and attitude.

WE MUST RE-USE AND REVITALIZE TRADITIONAL CITY PLACES ADAPTING THE SPACES TO OLD AND NEW NEEDS, USES AND MEANINGS

In this process it is important to identify and include all the different identities that constitute the city. What we do is not for ourselves, planners, but primarily about the other people sharing the city: planners, postmen, poets et cetera. This also means that old-fashioned state tax systems should rather be reorganised, instead of forcing cities and towns into growth-based income, a new concept can be introduced. As an alternative to growing and with more demographic, political and financial power, cities can be financed by other aspects (for example by stimulating projects that take away social struggles). In Belfast and Berlin, for example, or in today's policy of building new health settlements, there is an urgent need

to answer local calls. Instead of continuing separate growth, many cities could focus on social integration of the people who already live there and not just in political or military strategies.

WE MUST REDEFINE PLANNING PRIORITIES AND A NEW ETHIC FOR OUR PROFESSION AND RE-DISTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CITY DEVELOPMENT AMONG DIFFERENT ACTORS

The role of planner has to be redefined as a mediator who is able to listen to people's needs and expectations and translate them into right answers. This seems to be an old-fashioned phrase, and actually it is, but nevertheless it is still current. It must be understood that we can't manage a city by ourselves. It is like a dance floor. Space is limited, but people are free to dance. You can be small and soon leave, steps, but we can also swing round loudly. The floor is made for people to communicate and dance or play together, not to control someone else. It is a collective/individual happening in search of more happiness. The spatial planner is a background musician, bringing the beat and defining the pace, just a face is a music-making crowd. Mediating such a process needs communication and ethics that do not judge the opinion or acts of the participants, but give space to their interests to become part of a bigger picture.

WE MUST REDUCE AND RE-DISTRIBUTE THE ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT OF CITIES, PLAN COMPACT CITIES, IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF WASTE MANAGEMENT, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY AND ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND TO BRING SOCIAL JUSTICE TO CITIES

One of the main qualities of the future city is climate resilience. Of course, today we can deny it, but well-known examples of sustainable cities or neighbourhoods are un-dated. They are already in need of restoration. Moreover, sustainability nowadays is worn out by the bad examples representing it. Focusing on ending urban areas instead of growth brings a whole new dimension to sustainability. Especially in times of scarcity, social sustainability is a key issue. In Antwerp, for example, there is a huge need for improvement of social and material factors. Participatory and transport have boosted the city since its early stages, but are now left unimportant.

WE MUST RE-IMAGINE, TOO

If we want to take care responsibilities serious – solve digital economic, social, ecological, spatial, political, philosophical problems – and accept that we can't do it alone, if we want to combine the ever-present anxiety with concrete urban problems, if we want to give space to collaboration and not get caught by ambiguity – then we will need to start a non-contested position, the neutrality of the expert. Few people know what an urban planner is, let us change that! Yes, the planner's expertise to re-imagine space, it's our first task to make this clear, communicate it, brand it and make it uncontested.

AND, DUE TO RAPIDLY CHANGING CONDITIONS, WE MUST REWRITE THIS MANIFESTO EVERY YEAR