Summary of lectures delivered on the 2014 annual theme of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Vienna University of Technology
With this booklet the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space of Vienna University of Technology has sought to summarize teaching contents provided on its 2014 annual theme, which under the title “Urban culture, public space and ways of life – Everyday life and insight” discussed the social production of lived space, with the particular emphasis on entanglements between (meaningful) experiences in everyday life and scientific insights. The teaching contents were delivered as lectures within the courses offered by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space as part of the curriculum of Department of Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Vienna University of Technology. These courses include Module 11 “Urban Culture and Public Space”, which was offered two times in 2014, in the summer term under the title “New spaces of public concern”, and in the winter term under the title “Counter planning from the grassroots”, as well as PhD/Master’s Seminar “Urban Studies Revisited. Perspectives from planning, design and the arts”, which was offered in the winter term 2014 as a cooperation between the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space and the Centre for Local Planning, both at Faculty of Architecture and Planning of Vienna University of Technology, and the Institute for Education in the Arts of Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. In light of the 2014 annual theme “Urban culture, public space and ways of life – Everyday life and insight”, these courses were conceived as an open-end space for both theoretical discussions on and practice-based explorations of multiple understandings of public space in urban research and praxis.

Urban-cultural observations of emerging cultural practices might serve as a challenge for urban policy and an inspiration for urban economics in places where everyday city life unfolds colorfully: the public spaces of cities. With a view to civil unrest in various cities around Europe it becomes clear that there are many opportunities for research on public space as a seismograph for new directions in architecture and as a vehicle for the transformation of established planning cultures. The courses offered at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space have hence enticed participants to cross disciplinary boundaries, and employ a diversity of approaches and wide range of possible methods to explore the manifestation of societal complexity in public space at the micro level. In regard to this public space as a research subject has not been understood as an epistemological minefield – due to its complex nature and the way it cuts across disciplines – but rather as an epistemological opportunity (post-disciplinarity). Radically differing phenomena of urban development can be seen here in their mutual entanglement. For researchers, this means a systematic turn to everyday urban life with its paradoxes and dilemmas, with the opportunities and possibilities of social emancipation in the everyday. Therefore the courses offered at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space critically question constructs and expert knowledge on urban culture and public space, with the intention to hone questions asked according to their societal relevance and develop methods based on themes from urban ways of life, as a means of producing scientific insights about changes in social practice, lived space, and the social production of space that are manifested in cities.

The booklet comprises essays prepared by the involved teaching staff as summaries of their more comprehensive lectures. The included contributors are Prof. Rob Shields and Prof. Elke Krasny, both guest professors appointed to City of Vienna Visiting Professorship for Urban Culture and Public Space 2014, guest lecturer Eva Schwab, affiliated with the Institute of Landscape Architecture at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna, Emanuela Semlitsch, from the Centre for Local Planning of Vienna University of Technology, as well as the staff of Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, Ass.Prof. Sabine Knierbein and Tihomir Viderman.

We thank the dedicated students of the Module 11 in the summer and the winter term 2014, which were realized respectively under the title “Urban culture and public space: New spaces of public concern” and “Urban culture and public space: Counter planning from the grassroots”, as well as the participants in the PhD/Master’s Seminar “Urban Studies Revisited. Perspectives from planning, design and the arts”. We also warmly thank the visiting professors and guest lecturers, who enthusiastically responded to our request to prepare essays for this volume. We extend the acknowledgements to all the local actors who kindly
provided us with invaluable insights into Vienna’s diverse places, and thus supported us in our endeavours to explore public space and emerging urban cultures in a dialectical manner. Department of Spatial Planning, Faculty of Architecture and Planning, Vienna University of Technology is warmly acknowledged for its continuous support of explorative and open-end teaching formats. The City of Vienna has offered material support for the City of Vienna Visiting Professorship Programme 2014. In regard to this we would like to thank the staff of the Administrative Group for Urban Development, Traffic, Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Public Participation (Vice Mayor Mrs. Maria Vassilakou) and the Group Planning (Planning Director Thomas Madreiter). We would also like to thank the Administrative Group for Cultural Affairs and Science, especially Prof. Dr. Hubert Christian Ehalt for facilitating this continuous support.

Impressions from classes of Module 11 taking place in Vienna’s streets and parks.
### MODULE URBAN CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE: New spaces of public concern

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INTRODUCTION

The Master’s teaching module in the summer term 2014 was developed by Prof. Rob Shields and Ass.Prof. Sabine Knierbein on the 2014 annual theme of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space, “Urban culture, public space and ways of life – Everyday life and insight”. It considered the role of public spaces in social encounters, with a particular focus on new technologies and scientific advances that change our relationship to the world and that also change the nature of the spatiality of public space. The module explored four facets of public space: the ways new insights and knowledges are not only creating new materials for city infrastructure (e.g. LED lighting) and new virtual spaces that offer forms of public display (e.g. Facebook, Instagram) and interaction (e.g. Twitter, blog comments), but are changing the ways we think of space and material and are introducing new issues of public concern. Three scales were considered: the nanoscale, the human body and public places in cities and megacities.

Can the urban public square still be considered as the site of collectively lived experience, of the public sphere and of matters of concern? Although we witness a repolitisation of public squares and streets in the last two decades, a completely new field of bio- and material science production processes and products challenges the ways public spaces are thought, built and lived. In this context, contemporary key ethical and legal concerns need to focus at the cellular and nano-scaled spaces of bio- and materials-science. It is the hypothesis of this years’ urban culture and public spaces module that we can grasp these new spaces of concern in urban everyday life of public space, acknowledging once again its changing and contested nature. These technologies depend on advances in computer-aided 3D visualization that present us miniature but manipulable ‘worlds’ using the visual conventions of everyday space and things. However, the nano-scale introduces new ‘spaces of concern’ and issues that challenge the conventions of everyday 3D spatiality and materiality and embodied participation in and production of collective public spaces.

The module consisted of the lecture series, seminars and a hands-on research project. In the lecture series titled Strategies and intervention of the production of space 12 lectures were provided. The lecture series offered both specific insights and introductory insights into international public space research as one facet in critical urban studies. While specific insights tackle public spaces as seen as arenas where scientific nanotechnology advances come into play, where new spaces of public concern challenge the ethical aesthetics and theories of scaling and where collective interventions can help to frame new public spaces of concern; introductory insights into international public space research considered public space as framed as place of public life and encounter, as embodied space and as realm of interventionist learning. The course started with the legacy of theories of the city as a socially produced space and moving over recent changes in understandings, practices and imaginations of space, time and urbanism, to consider the advent of new or changed ethical, aesthetic and political spaces of concern, and related practices.

Course Objectives

- Explore concepts of public space, spatiality, materiality and technological change vis-a-vis conventional and normative modes of design and planning, focusing on the agency of communities, professions, public and private actors in the making of urban places.
- Examine the implications of technological change for the design professions, urban place-making and for cultural understandings of space and time.
- Use nanoscience as a lens to explore the opening up of new scales, matters of concern and spaces of concern.
- Explore how municipalities and cities along with partner institutions such as universities engage with new technologies and nano and micro-scaled science.
- Explore key sites: Research parks, universities, quarantines, new infrastructure technologies, planning tools and integration of new materials in construction and in public projects.
Explore how new technologies are shaping planning and design practices.

**Intended learning outcomes**

- Understanding the relationships between technological and professional change, everyday life and the relevance of changes in science for planning for public space and urban cultures.
- Developing a critical perspective on the making of contemporary cities, particularly how identities and interests are shaped, expressed, and negotiated in relation to technological, material and spatial change. Examine and address the issues through a selected study site or project.
- Developing an understanding of available tools and mechanisms available to planning and design disciplines and that serve as building blocks for further development of new methods and tools.

**Gained skills and abilities**

- Understanding of primary concepts of public space, spatialisation, placemaking and city-making.
- Understanding of available planning and institutional tools.
- Cross-disciplinary interviewing and research tools for information gathering.
- Synthesis of implications of new scientific insights for planning, design and collective social inquiry and action.
- Mixed-methods ethnographic, visual, object- and practice-based research methods.
- Using and developing action-based research, planning and design tools and interventions.
- Rethinking public spaces in social and cultural relations.

**Considered research questions**

These lectures enabled students to debate questions such as: Can understandings, practices and notions of the stewardship of public space, property and materiality be extended from the city as a commons to the nano-scale? What is the role of the design professions in innovation and in the face of new scales, materials, approaches to production and assembly? What role and tools do planners have as societies negotiate the presence of new materials, technologies and lifeforms making up cities and landscapes? What are the spatial and professional implications of new scales for architecture and urban design -- as well as new disciplines? How is this changing ways of governing, maintaining and living in cities and in urban public space, from peri-urban research parks to city-centre public spaces and institutions – including universities as agents and sites for urban knowledge and understanding?
The lecture series offers both (a) specific insights and (b) introductory insights into international public space research as one facet in critical urban studies. Ad a) Here public spaces are seen as arenas where scientific nanotechnology advances come into play, where new spaces of public concern challenge the ethical aesthetics and theories of scaling and where collective interventions can help to frame new public spaces of concern; ad b) Here, public space is framed as place of public life and encounter, as embodied space and as realm of interventionist learning.

The lecture series offers an introduction to understanding public spaces and urban cultures as a field in urban studies and consists of the following units: Module and Lecture Kick Off (unit 1) | Introduction to the production of space (unit 2) | New Spaces of Concern: Nanotechnology, Design Professions and the City (unit 3) | The Public Dis/Appearance of Bodies (unit 4) | Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space on its 40th Anniversary (unit 5) | Framing public space (unit 6) | Places of Public life (unit 7) | Ethical Aesthetics: the Production of Scale, Space and the Virtual (unit 8) | Embodied space (unit 9) | Urban forms of knowledge and performative planning (unit 10) | Interventions in Public Spaces of Concern (unit 11) | Beyond Lefebvre. A transdisciplinary challenge (unit 12).
In many space related disciplines, Lefebvre’s most prominent book “The production of space” has only in the last decade received wider attention. The book was first published in French as La Production de l’espace (1974), and then translated into Italian, German and Spanish before it was received in the anglosaxonian debate. In planning, this is partly related to the “social turn” and Lefebvre’s book is referred to as it offers a new account to understand the social production of space. Lefebvre’s book, however, is cited on numerous occasions without necessarily establishing the immanent connections between the topics he stresses and the dialectic movement of thought he proposes. This lecture unit seeks to look beyond the well-known triangle between lived space, perceived space and conceived space in order to allow a deeper understanding of the historical and political context in which Lefebvre was producing this book, the manifold spatial dimensions he established, the way his new type of analysis reflects a critique of the then-capitalist territorial modes of development, and further aspects.

Every participant will be asked to both read 40 pages of introduction to the book and 10-20 selected pages and will offer a rapport to the group about the latter, so that within this lecture unit we get a broad overview on the line of argumentation of the overall book. This also helps to frame questions of understanding and collectively discuss them and link them to questions of fellow colleagues regarding their rapport piece.

In terms of theory of space, ‘The Production of Space’ can be understood as the first step towards more recent contributions that understand space as made up of social relations (relational space). At the same time, this book serves to understand how the French philosopher and social scientist transferred and transgressed Marx’ thoughts on the society to space, so his contribution makes links to the materiality of space, and can thus be understood in the history of historical materialism, and thus, in Marxist tradition. Lefebvre’s contribution encompasses everyday life and the contemporary meanings and implications of the ever expanding reach of the urban in the western world throughout the 20th century, and revisits thinking about the city through the lense of global urbanization processes. At the same time, he widens our notion of (two-dimensional or absolute) space to more complex spatial constructions and establishes relations between everyday practices (le perçu), representations of space (le conçu) and the spatial imaginary of the time (le vécu).

Where Marxists would understand any (im)material product as production process, Lefebvre shifted the focus from space as product (e.g. of capitalist production) to space as (e.g. capitalist) production process. That way, he humanized the perspective on the struggles and oppressions of the labor force, i.e. people, within that same production process. He explains the relations between use value and exchange value of space, and thereby points to the political nature of this production process. He was highly critical of economic structuralism and argued that the social production of space is one the one hand fundamental to societal reproduction, on the other hand it is commanded by a hegemonic class as a means to reproduce its dominance.

Bibliography
Spaces of Concern translates traditional notions of public space to the displaced fora and milieux where controversies are encountered, debated, evaluated and decided upon by collectives. Spaces of concern require neither place nor publics but do require several elements including groups (sets), controversy, including uncertainty, foreignness and novel objects to produce a space, public and thus polis. Examples such as nanoscience and other fields will be used to explore the hypothesis that a new space of concern has formed at the nanoscale accessible by scanning electron microscopes with implications for not only 'matters of concern' but public spaces of concern at the urban scale. What are the implications for traditional theories which derive public space from the polis and city? In this approach, what roles and tools do planners and design professions have as societies negotiate the presence of new materials, technologies and lifeforms making up cities and landscapes? What are the spatial and professional implications of space of concern at new scales for architecture and urban design - as well as for new disciplines that challenge these old professions? What are the implications for knowledge institutions, power relations, maintaining and everyday life in urban public space?

The urban public square was once the site of collectively lived experience, the public sphere and of matters of concern. However, significant problems of climate and ecological are being posed with increasing urgency. These rely not on first-person observation but statistical regularities and trends, and projections of computer models of climate systems, whose effects are only known post-hoc. At the other extreme from these weather and climate-scaled issues of temperature and wind-patterns, lies another set of issues that are similarly difficult to grasp until they become material problems or actual dangers: nanoparticles and molecular-scaled new materials that the OECD classifies by their form, such as nanofilms and so on.

Such nanomaterials and objects suffer from not only being 'black boxed' as a scale that has traditionally been too small to matter, but are technically invisible and difficult to make 'present' even when they are brought to peoples' attention. A measure only adopted in the 1970s, Nano-designates a scale at a billionth of a metre (10^-9m), and particles typically up to several hundred nanometres in size, thus covering very small particulates such as the soot from diesel. These are tracked in international regulatory standards of pollution levels such as PM 2.5 that can now be found online in real-time for various cities. To get a sense of the size, one could contrast a 1.2nm gold nanoparticle to a 12cm grapefruit. This difference of scale to the power of 9 is similar to contrasting the same grapefruit to the size of the Earth. The paradox is that at such tiny scales, individual particles are smaller than the wavelength of visible light, making them technically invisible (the light spectrum ranging from red at 750nm down to 380 nm visible as violet).

Key ethical and legal concerns regarding health, environmental quality, corporeal identity and political agency now focus at either the global or the cellular and nano-scaled spaces of bio- and materials-science. Matters of concern bring people together in elemental public spaces that I call spaces of concern. Objects, places, apperception, and collective knowledge-making are imbricated in each other. This is perhaps the most radical and sophisticated position on public space and the importance of planning: it challenges us to enrich our thinking beyond legalistic focus on planners legislated mandates.

Can the design disciplines extend their understandings, practices and notions of the stewardship of public space from the city as a commons to assist the nanosciences? Can we understand space at the nanoscale and in other scientific contexts as a commons and as a context where objects, forces, ambitions and values are all at play in a 'space of concern'? What resources for perception and judgement are at hand beyond 3D visualization borrowed from CAD software and high definition rendering? How does a city - as municipality and as a complex community of publics, professionals and neighbourhoods - respond to and draw on such new insights? Comparing across cities positioning to be global cultural capitals that draw on technology, such as Xian China, cities that incubate 'science clusters' on the basis of technology-intensive industries, such as Edmonton, what are the economic, infrastructure and community options for historic European capitals of culture and knowledge such as Vienna?
Examples: I would like to begin these lectures with two recent urban events which featured in the media in France and Canada (March 2014): widespread freezing of underground water supply and sewage pipes in Winnipeg Canada, and Paris's restrictions on driving cars based on odd- and even-numbered license plates due to high levels of diesel particulates and NO2 pollution. Both of these experiences impacted everyday life and political debate but both entail more than the scales of the body or the city.

Vignette 1: Frozen Municipal Water Pipes in Winnipeg Canada

The Winnipeg Free Press and the CBC both reported on the almost 2500 properties in Winnipeg Canada, whose water supply pipes froze during a particularly cold period during the winter from late February to late April. Although the cold set records, the frozen waterlines were 'not without precedent -- about 3,000 were reported in 1979, and the patterns are about the same' (Ken Gigliotti, Winnipeg Free Press files cited in Santin 2014).

When infrastructure freezes in a Northern city, it suggests a historic mistake in the construction of the city and the sort of settlement that has been struck with and in the local environment. Municipal piping is buried at a depth below frost based on research enshrined in building codes, so freezing suggests either a change in soil or the penetration of frost to unprecedented depths during a long winter. Weather patterns outside of historical norms -- often counter-intuitive changes such as colder rather than warmer seasons as well as patterns of greater extremes -- are part of the predictions of climate change models with implications for construction and urban planning. The difficulties of understanding, debating and accounting climate change becomes an issue of urban politics and policy when cities 'get it wrong'.

Vignette 2: Restrictions on Driving due to Pollution in Paris France

Around the same time, Paris France suffered a thermal inversion trapping pollution in the air, mostly diesel particulates. By March 17 2014, just before a municipal election, due to high diesel particulates, the municipal government of Paris banned large trucks and half of personal vehicles based on a system of odd and even license plate numbers and made public transit free to all (Duffer 2014). Although it was rescinded after only one day, the restriction highlighted the fact that Paris may have a pattern of more high pollution days annually than other European capitals (OECD 2008 data cited by Callus 2014; Reuters 2014).
The term “appearance” is owed to Hannah Arendt. In her 1958 book The Human Condition she developed the concept of “space of appearance”. Wherever and whenever people come together politically, this space of appearance is enacted. This space then accordingly disappears when people disband. The space of appearance is dependent upon its being enacted and therefore in need of this action to be enacted over and over again. The space of appearance is located in/with/through the action and therefore lies in “wherever men are together in the manner of speech and action” (Arendt 1958: 198-199). The space of appearance is therefore at once temporary and vulnerable and can never be understood as a given or be taken for granted. “The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be” (Arendt 1958: 198). Hannah Arendt’s concept is derived from an albeit idealised notion of the Greek polis constructed as a powerful narrative of almost mythical proportion. The de facto exclusion of women and slaves who did not have access to the space of appearance and could therefore not come together politically is not taken into account by Arendt’s political philosophy of the space of appearance. “Unlike the spaces which are the work of our hands, it does not survive the actuality of the movement which brought it into being, but disappears not only with the dispersal of men — as in the case of great catastrophes when the body politic of a people is destroyed — but with the disappearance or arrest of the activities themselves” (Arendt 1958: 199).

What is of interest here is that Arendt coins the term space of appearance yet solely conceives of the space as that which lies between people in their gathering. Space, following Arendt, appears as that which is at once dependent upon and emerging out of the activities of people gathering together politically. So, we can conclude, it is not material space through which the appearance can take place, but the appearance through which space happens. The material space that is, as one has I want to argue, needed in order for this gathering to take place remains strangely silent. Yet, of course one has to concede that the physical, material space is very much part of this gathering in fact enabling and supporting it. And that the very existence of such space where such a space of appearance can take place (!) is in and of itself also a political question. What I just drew out is owed largely to an argument that Judith Butler elaborated in her 2011 text “Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street.” Judith Butler’s essay is part of a comprehensive edited volume of essays titled Sensible Politics. The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism. I will now draw out how Butler moves with and against Hannah Arendt’s concept of the space of appearance and what that means to understand space critically and politically. I will then return to the above mentioned volume’s title. Butler argues the dual nature of the space of appearance, the alliance between the people and the space needed to in fact enable and support the very appearance spatially, physically, bodily. Butler writes: “Space and location are created through plural action. And yet, in her view (Hannah Arendt’s view), in its freedom and its power, has the exclusive capacity to create location. Such a view forgets or refuses that action is always supported and that it is invariably bodily (…). The material supports for action are not only part of action, but they are also what is being fought about, especially in those cases when the political struggle is about food, employment, mobility, and access to institutions” (Butler 2012: 119). And, public space we might want to add. Space, therefore, is needed as a support structure, as an enabler, as what makes gathering politically an action that bodies can carry out. Public space, is also, what is fought about.

I will now return to the title in which Judith Butler’s essay is included: Sensible Politics. The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism.

What is in fact needed, and what the examples chosen for and discussed in the lecture clearly demonstrate is, that there is equally need to discuss the spatial culture of nongovernmental, civil society, and/or artistic activism.

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“Human action depends upon all sorts of supports – it is always supported action.”

Judith Butler, 2011

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37 mm
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1995

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Exit
45 mm
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2008

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1911
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Rollschuh fahrende Frauen
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Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven
The dadaist Baroness
1876–1927

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Women’s Prid and the Third Sex
1897–1941

Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo
In Front of the Casa Rosada at the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires
1978

The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo


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Lecture slides
URBAN CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE: New spaces of public concern

La internacional Emisorita
México, Argentina, Brasil, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Venezuela, México, Francia, Italia, España, Alemania, Austria, Suiza, Corea, Hungría, Croacia, Estados Unidos y Taiwán
Buenos Aires, 2000

www.volkstanz.net
2003

Botschaft besorgte BürgerInnen
Heldenplatz, Wien
2000

Giuseppina Pasqualino di Marneo
Pippa Bacca
Brides on Tour
1996-2008

Queering Yerevan
2011

R’Evolution Art
Kiev
2011-2012

Nuno Popović (The MAGNET group)
Belgrad
1990-1997

Erdem Gunduz: Standing Man
Istanbul, 2013

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OhNedgO2jLk&list=UULk8W52Aqz1rnp&ut3JukD3A

Lecture slides
HENRI LEFEBVRE, THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY
Rob Shields

Now 40 years on from its publication in 1974, La Production de l'espace is an iconic text of cultural marxism by the most prolific commentator on twentieth century culture. Attention must be paid to the conditions of its production as a synthesis of preceding texts and ongoing projects and campaigns around the French suburb, institutionalised bureaucratic modernity in France and the alienated quality of technocratic planning. It was an oral text, constructed around a numbered outline of questions, a type of cottage production by Lefebvre and his typist that moves from philosophy to sociology, similar to his career move from Strasbourg to Nanterre. It is anarchically repetitive, a kind of pamphlet of pragmatic concerns. Production of Space attempts to open the city as a space of concern.

Lefebvre (1974, 402) argues that space must not be thought of as an abstraction but an intangible, filled with concrete contents. Lefebvre takes a substantialist position (see Shields 2013): “Space qualifies as a 'thing/not thing,' for it is neither a substantial reality nor a mental reality, it cannot be resolved into abstractions... it has an actuality other than that of the abstract sign and real things which it includes” (Also see Rogers 2000; Aarseth 1998; Shields 2013). In his earlier text, which could be read as a political warm up for the later and much longer text on the Production of Space, Lefebvre places the urban on the same analytical level as space. He directly states, and, in my opinion, accurately identifies the urban as an intangible but real virtuality.

In his later masterpiece, Production of Space Lefebvre notes that for Marx, the “virtual” may guide our knowledge of the real allowing us to push thought to its limits, not through an extrapolation of surface trends but by a consideration of the underlying history of its necessary preconditions. It points us to the history of accumulation in cities as opposed to commodities or technologies and that "Production, at the limit, today, is no longer a matter of producing this or that, things or works [œuvres] but of producing space.” (Lefebvre 1974, 253 author’s translation). This space is not a simple container but a complex spatialisation that, contains virtualities [virtualités], of the work [œuvre] and of re-appropriation under the banner of art and above all according to the demands of the body ‘deported’ outside itself, which by being resistant inaugurates the project of a different space (whether a counter-cultural space, a counter-space, or above all a utopian alternative to actually existing ‘real’ space (Lefebvre 1974, 403 author’s translation added italics; compare Lefebvre 1991, 349).

One key element of our time is the increased importance of questions of scale as opposed to questions of urban and rural or core and periphery. Brenner notes the privileged role of the national scale-level as an organizational and geographical interface between subnational and supranational social processes. However, contemporary glocal urbanization patterns have unsettled these entrenched, nationally organized scalar fixes without crystallizing around a new privileged geographical scale for the regulation and reproduction of capital (Brenner, 1999). However, the sensory corporeal body remains key to spatial production. Although Lefebvre is clear that this sensory production of space can be usurped by powerful conceptions and representations of space, this leads him to talk of the ‘spatial body’ as a sits in which practices and representations of space implicate one another and shape experience.

Lefebvre doesn’t really nail down this set of scalar recursive processes in this book. Which is understandable. He does though provide a means for thinking of the body. We need to rethink space as the support for social interactions alongside a rhythm analysis of the appropriation of space in terms of the body.

Bibliography
Since the 1970s public space has been promoted to be one of the central fields of action of urban and open space planning and of designing actors coming from landscape architecture, urban design and architecture. In many cities in Europe and beyond, public space has also been reconsidered as a cross-cutting policy field: some cities are eager to redevelop their public spaces in order to strengthen a strong plea for environmentalism (e.g. Antwerp), others use public spaces as a means of promoting their competitiveness (e.g. Barcelona) or to supply a new meaning to a city centre in a regional context (e.g. Lyon). Other cities use the redesign of central public spaces as a means to shape new national spaces of representation (e.g. Berlin), while others try to promote a regional culture and local values via investments in (re)designing public spaces (e.g. Glasgow). Some cities try to provoke vibrant and lively images by changing the public regulatory frameworks for public spaces (e.g. Copenhagen). Others focus on the democratic role of public spaces while trying to brand themselves (e.g., Oslo as the ‘Capital of Peace’). Elsewhere, public spaces are thought to provide the ground for an educational mission (Cologne). These cases illustrate that many European cities have scented the advent of a new paradigmatic shift in public urban development. Sometimes, this new emphasis on public spaces is used as a model for other cities, for example in the cases of Barcelona and New York, where a certain politics of public space is shaped and then promoted as a model for application in other cities (e.g. in Buenos Aires, Lima or Rio de Janeiro (Barcelona case) or in Mexico City (New York case)).

It is the aim of this lecture unit to acquaint students with the diversity of approaches to understand public space and to sensitize their conceptual repertoire regarding a contemporary object of planning, a policy field demanded in a manifold way and a challenging design task. A general reflection of our spatial understanding shall be stimulated by linking the Lefebvrian account to the social production of space to a deeper understanding of public spaces in the city, and of their social production processes.

In other disciplines mainly agitating in the fields of social science such as urban sociology, ethnology or law public space is dealt with as self-confidently as in planning practice and in urban politics. But one discrepancy is manifest: All these actors talk about very different public spaces. Consensus on the particular meaning of public space is reached only occasionally. Some understand public spaces as built places, as urban morphologies whereas others deny any material expression of public spaces. But how can we imagine social spaces and built, sometimes even highly-designed spaces as two sides of the same coin? The existing diversity of theoretical approaches from different disciplinary backgrounds shows that there are basic disquietudes regarding theories on space, the role of institutions, their mechanisms and resources as well as regarding the players involved to be found behind the meta-concept of public spaces. To put it in a more palpable and concrete way: This lecture unit assesses public spaces from a perspective that considers them as societal processes which day-to-day sediment as constructed and designed space. Who thus influences these ongoing production of public space and in which ways? Where do planners, where do designers locate themselves as part of societal processes? Which strategies are they familiar with and what kind of interests on behalf of other social players are planners and designers nowadays confronted with?

Bibliography
LECTURE 7
PLACES OF PUBLIC LIFE *
Sabine Knierbein

This lecture unit serves to introduce public spaces as places where public life unfolds in its social, political and material dimensions. Students starting to deal with public space in architecture and planning often start reading literature on the public sphere (Habermas, Arendt, etc.) which increases the level of abstraction and does not directly offer possibilities of transfer to the field of public space. To put it short, the main distinction is that debates on the public sphere basically tackle public opinion and public reason in the city, whereas debates on public space basically deal with public life. Setha Low (2005), an American anthropologist, has therefore pointed to the disjunctures between socio-philosophical approaches to the public sphere and urban morphologies considered as being public spaces in the spatial arts disciplines. As a solution, she proposes to consider public space as the geography of the public sphere, thus linking theoretical abstraction again with empirical research. It is exactly at this interface that international public space research emerges which concentrates on an analysis, interpretation and further development of those places in the city where public life might eventually gain momentum: Public space is where public life unfolds.

In terms of production and consumption processes in the city, these have long been influencing patterns of everyday life in the city, and the dilemmas of changing macro-modes of regional and global production circuits become palpable on the micro-scale of those places where people “rub along” with particular rhythms and repetitions (Watson 2006, Lefebvre 1974). Through this everyday social interaction and the encounter of individuals and groups forming very different types of social relations, meaning is produced and changes the focus from abstract spaces of building regulations and architectural conceptions towards the lived places of everyday culture in the cities. How can these everyday materialities be interpreted by taking public space as a special analytical and epistemic frame in urban studies?

The lecture unit thus seeks to explore how changing modes of production and consumption can be critically acknowledged and constructively dealt with in a transdisciplinary manner, by expanding the often exclusive notions of expert design and planning towards a transdisciplinary concept of collective planning and public design and the undisciplining of the disciplines that deal with public spaces (cf. Tonkiss 2014), or even beyond in terms of civic planning: As Leonie Sandercock (1998, 85ff, 129) puts it for radical/counter planning – “the planner jumps onto ‘another wagon’, that of a community or ethnic minority group, for example, and uses her knowledge and ability to make alliances from a completely different societal position than that of the classical expert”. This approach implies a change in the positionality of a planner, architect or designer who ideally enables ‘thousand tiny empowerments’ (ibid.).

Public space therefore is a space for potential empowerment and emancipation, however the core message that this lecture conveys to all students is that this must not result another type of advocacy planning (the planner taking the position of an advocate of civic demands), where the expert ‘empowers’ or ‘emancipates’ others. First and foremost, she or he needs to find her/his own empowerment through a widening of planning and design perspectives and a critical revision of the own positionality. Only by starting from the inner reflection on the proper comfort zone and by the ethically and methodologically sustained attempt to overcome own biases and preconceptions, will he/she be able to emancipate herself as an expert who takes local knowledge and local people seriously and treats them with respect.

Bibliography

* Lecture was also delivered as part of the Module URBAN CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE: COUNTER PLANNING FROM THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL as Lecture 2, under the same title.
In her 1966 classic the great British anthropologist Mary Douglas defined pollution, as 'matter out of place'. She links up pollution to cultural categories of purity and danger, inventing both the cultural analysis of risk and risk perception, as well as locating the reigning modern understanding of pollution as a problem of material order: dirt is nothing other than matter out of place. Pollution, defined as 'matter out of place' is fundamentally an issue of space and relationality of scales. The politics of scale (temporal and spatial) and relations between scales confronts globalised societies, changing the scales and sites at which matter comes to be understood and counted as 'things' and at which bodies come to be understood and accorded respect as bodies. A radical empiricist approach to public space is generated as a 'bottom-up' ethical aesthetics of things and relations alone what scale and in what context do things matter?

Classical public space was often not only political but ethical and divine, a moral space where male citizens encountered divinities and ancestors defined by top-down rules. Ethical Aesthetics can be contrasted as a bottom-up approach to such spaces which emphasizes the performative ethos created by multiple bodies seeking to organize themselves in a responsively harmonious and thus dynamic manner:

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**Ethical Aesthetics vs. Moral Politics**

- **Ethos** (affect, ambiance) → situation ethics (negotiated)
  - vs.
  - **customs** (tradition, habitus) → **mores** (rules)

- **Aesthesis** (shared experiences, common sensuality) → habitus
  - vs.
  - **polis** (political unit) → civic order

Market square as not only legal and economic but ethical space: achieved but vulnerable status of individuals, micro-adjustments and accommodation renewed and revised on an everyday basis versus a formal garden as moral space: beauty according to ascribed, universal rules (temporally eternal, spatial perspective, golden mean, correctness, truth).

Modern Public space through Arendt has meant the space of moral politics, particular forms of speech (parrhesia, rational talk cf Habermas). Latour asks how to include "things" and the natural environment and non-humans in politics to make a "Dingpolitik"? But this still depends on a fixed circle of insiders (orderly citizens), bounded in time/space.

How can new subjects extend the relationality and adaptability of ethical aesthetics to accommodate Others who may be at scales than are not common to the modern body's (common) senses (nano, planetary, virtual)? What new public spaces of concern will accommodate these interactions and these subjects / things?
This lecture links the previous units on public space and public life to theories that include the body as an integral part of spatial analysis. The particular focus is set on the creation of place through spatial orientation, movement and language, and in particular, through non-discursive spatial practices (e.g. gestures). Setha Low, an urban anthropologist based at the City University of New York, USA, states that “many researchers need theoretical formulations that provide an everyday, material grounding and an experiential, cognitive, and/or emotional understanding of the intersection (...) of body, space, and culture” (ibid, 2003, p. 10). She seeks to position anthropological theories in a space and place discourse often dominated by geographical and sociological contributions and thus points to the need “to theorize and imagine the body as a moving, speaking cultural space in and of itself” (2014, p.41).

A second aspect of this unit is the introduction of Pierre Bourdieu’s and Ervin Goffman’s earlier studies on “body gloss” and “Habitus”, which are essential for an understanding of social spaces and public spaces. In this respect, Bridge and Watson (2011, p. 377ff) have dedicated a whole section on city affect relating as well to city publics and cultures in their recent compendium on “the city”. Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1984) uses the term ‘habitus’ to characterize the way the body, mind, and emotions are simultaneously trained, and thereby offers a perspective to understand how social status and class position become embodied in everyday life. Goffman uses the term “body gloss” to describe the ways that individuals use their bodies to make otherwise unavailable things visible to others, and he identifies various subtypes of this body idioms. One such subtype is “orientation gloss,” designating the behaviours that signal to others that we are engaged in normal and harmless everyday actions (Goffman, 1971, pp. 128–129, cited by Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2015, 78).

The term “body” refers to its biological and social characteristics and “embodied” space is the location where human experience and consciousness takes on material and spatial form (cf. Low 2014, p. 20). Ali Madanipour (2013:378) and Gary Bridge have been pointing to the relevance of “embodied knowledge” (Bridge, 2014: 1646) generated through everyday (non-discursive) interactions. Feminists take this further by exploring the epistemological implications of knowledge as embodied, engendered and embedded in place (Duncan, 1996). Haraway (1991) for example offers an emphasis on location, “a position in a web of social connections that eliminates passivity of the female (and human) body and replaces it with a site of action and agency”. Yet “it is not biology/psychology that produces gendered body spaces and their representations but the inscription of sociopolitical and cultural relations on the body” (Low 2003, 11f).

It is the aim of this lecture unit to understand that the concept of embodied space is a crucial interstice between public space, planning and design and action-based theories of space, and a valuable analytical and interpretative link to reconnect urban theory and urban practice in the field. Embodied space offers a valuable connecting frame between critical (feminist, queer) theory, human geography, history of the arts, arts and activism, cultural studies and relational planning.

Bibliography

This lecture unit is dedicated to understanding the links between public space, forms of urban knowledge and performative planning through action-based formats and bodily encounters. An introduction will be given through a critique of social and relational determinism: “The architect, the planner, the sociologist, the economist, the philosopher or the politician cannot out of nothingness create new forms and relations. More precisely, the architect is no more a miracle-worker than the sociologist. Neither can create social relations...” (Lefebvre 1996 [1968]: 151, cited in Tonkiss 2014, 1). Freire (1973) has proposed to combine action and reflection in order to come to an education of enabling and emancipatory character. In this sense, it is important to realize that there is 1. active knowledge in public space and 2. reflexive knowledge, and that it is because of this richness of different knowledge types we can access in public space that bridges between separated knowledge fields can be made and planning can be reconnected to everyday life realities of people through the combination of action-based and discourse based forms of knowing.

### ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
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<td>local professional knowledge</td>
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| produced through bodily encounters in space, e.g. through acts of peaceful occupation, sit-ins, etc. | knowledge about the urban development history, project and plans for the area, methodological knowledge about tools of participa-
|                                                                            | tion, planning and inclusion, can also leave the realm of planning and urban development and can be produced in other professional fields relating to public spaces |
| gendered knowledge                                                         | knowledge about the local context                                         |
| achieved through perceiving oneself in gender specific situation, the preconditions for this have been set e.g. through family or social group values and thus through socially constructed gender categories | all knowledge contributions that people (with or without professional education) can make and the history, the specific traditions and cultural patters (e.g. solidarity) of a place |
| embedded knowledge                                                         | practical knowledge                                                      |
| knowledge that is generated in a local context, in exchange with local dwellers, NGOs, organizations, firms, etc., and that is circulated back into this local context | forms of urban knowledge that is generated through (spatial) practice, through practical wisdom and experience |
| relational knowledge                                                       | cultural knowledge                                                       |
| this is active knowledge on how to approach/not to approach other people, keeping a ‘healthy’ distance (Simmel) and establishing new social relations | knowledge on one’s own social position and cultural values in comparison to other ways of living that get visible in public space (e.g. ethnic knowledge, religious knowledge, knowledge about your own and other social milieus) |

### REFLEXIVE KNOWLEDGE

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### Action based

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### Combination of action based and discourse based forms of knowing

This huge potential is currently not seen or it is underestimated in planning. The turn towards relational and performative planning, however, suggests, that there is a growing academic, extra-academic and everyday interest in this type of intersections between ways of living and ways of knowing. Which ways of learning can we foster in public space and how is this learning related to the situated qualities of urban neighbourhoods and different social niches? How does this relate to the changing global learning landscapes (Banerjee 2015)? In order to explore these questions, the lecture offers a systematic overview regarding the two knowledge categories at first hand and connects these to current forms of planning in a second step. As with all forms of categorizing knowledge, the following scheme does not provide an intent to separate forms of creating insights and knowing but rather points to the fact that many of these categories are mutually interlinked.
In classic, positivist accounts to the spatial arts and during times of prevailing urban modernity, emphasis was given on reflexive knowledge. In the course of the postmodern turn and in post-positivist accounts to planning, design and urban research, a new emphasis is put on active knowledge. Performative planning approaches combine both modes of generating knowledge with a strong focus on public space. Performative planning approaches (Huning/Altrock 2014), performative urbanity (Helbrecht/Dirksmeier 2008) can be understood as examples for the performative, social or relational turn in urban research, planning and design (Tornaghi/Knierbein 2015).

Bibliography


The nanoscale is a space of expanded possibilities for materials and materiality, we might understand it as involving both ideal and actual elements: abstractions and probabilities, respectively. Building on the tetrology presented in The Virtual we could understand the Possible in relation to the Real and its categories of virtual and material.

We find public spaces in many forms that restrict its possibilities: commercialized, privatized, mobility-oriented, consumption-, enclosed and weaponized spaces can be easily listed. Of these Suburbia as a gendered enclave of women excluded from public space is a striking North American example of a thwarted space of concern.

The return of bodies, such as in planning initiatives around Times Square, New York, seems an important step for planners. Attention to the relation between bodies things and others, present and absent is crucial for planning spaces of possibility that allow the performative creation of spaces of concern through ethical aesthetics. Making present is an important process that is also mediatized, tying social media to spaces of concern. Examples include mediatized interventions such as by Greenpeace, or Unsworn Industries Malmo Parascope public viewing binoculars that show the surroundings as they may be in the future are good examples.

Publics are called into being: they are performative and expansive, indirect and inclusive. There is always a struggle to define membership in the face of diversity. They involve relations between bodies. Public Space is a Mosaic which may be summarized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Space</th>
<th>Restricted</th>
<th>Spaces of Possibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumption spaces</td>
<td>Shopping malls, Resorts</td>
<td>vs. Market places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional spaces</td>
<td>Research parks</td>
<td>vs. Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial spaces</td>
<td>Monuments</td>
<td>vs. Everyday routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaponized spaces</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>vs. Times Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility spaces</td>
<td>Highways</td>
<td>vs. Green people-centres streets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediated spaces</td>
<td>Surveillance</td>
<td>vs. Flash mobs, Graffiti</td>
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</tbody>
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Spaces of Concern are sites of controversy, judgement and decision by publics on matters of concern. They face Challenges of: the exclusion of publics through forms of privatization, of making present global and nano scales, and of representation, making present via the body and collectives of bodies.

Examples
Arakawa+Gins Landscape Art and Architecture: Reversible Destiny. Gins and Arakawa propose an orthodox and idiosyncratic architecture of the possible as a way of “waking up” bodies with the resolution that constantly stimulated “we have resolved not to die.” They deliberately examine the category of the possible through architecture and landscape. This is more pragmatically realized in Malitskaya and Malitskiy “Space Generator” flexible terrain proposal which received a Red Dot Design Award (2012) and is also illustrated in 2013 Red Dot Design Award to Zhejiang University for a nanotechnology-based flooring material that reveals warning notices for those areas that are wet. By contrast, we can see in the management of many urban squares, such as Maidan, the deliberate restrictions of possibilities of assembly.
A public event hosted by the 2014 teaching team of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space took place in cooperation with Kulturnetz Hernals/Verein KUNST-MACHT on Tuesday, 24 June 2014, at 19.00 at Kunstkammer 17, Jögerstraße 54, 1170 Wien. The 2014 teaching team engaged in a dialogue with Christoph Göbel (Professor investigator, Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana Azcapotzalco Mexico-City, Visiting Scientist at TU München), Roman Lechner (KUNST-MACHT, Association for Art and Communication of Art, Kulturnetz Hernals), Martin Pell (Psychologist, Co-founder and inhabitant of the Wiener Wagenplätze, Right to the City Network) and Ruth Ranacher (Theatre-, Film- and Media sciences, Institut für Alltagsforschung Vienna).

Invited speakers from the fields of urban research, practice and action discussed direct and indirect influences of Lefebvre's theory on urban activism, artistic actions and cultural practices. The main premise of the discussion was that the intellectual oeuvre of Henri Lefebvre has not only inspired theorists during the last decades, but has received increasing attention in activist and practice-oriented approaches to the city. The discussion raised the question of the extent to which Lefebvre's work can be transferred from the sociohistorical context of its creation to the present time. What practical and activism-oriented fields have attempted to translate his analyses into spatial practice at different scales, from the body to urban planning to geopolitics and globalization? What are the limits and pitfalls of working with approaches produced in the societal context of France in contemporary urban activism? What are the potentials and opportunities for developing present steps and future paths for alternative approaches to actively claiming space in contemporary cities?

Christof Göbel introduced the public square in Mexico City as a place for social learning (from the perspective of the appropriation theory). He discussed the challenges of current spatial and social transformations of a segregated and fragmented megalopolis and their impacts on a traditional role of a public square in Mexico City as a place for social learning and common actions, a meeting place and a place for the citizenship (“ciudadanía” as a polyvalent concept, referring to a political movement, actor or demand. Reference to the institutions of civil rights). He reflected on the tools and instruments available to planners in creating so-called "possibility spaces" which would offer opportunities for appropriation and learning (about civic skills). He conceptualized appropriation as a specific learning process (cf. De Certeau 1988): meeting place and the place for the "ciudadanía" as place for social learning: learning from the place, learning from another, learning with the other(s). Example FARO - Fábrica de Artes y Oficios.

Roman Lechner discussed the cultural network Kulturnetz Hernals as a platform for sustainable cultural development of Hernals, through detecting and exposing district’s hidden potentials. It primarily targets projects and interventions concerned with historical and cultural identity of the district. A series of projects, festivals, installations and cultural events have been staged through various artistic collaborations with the goal of attracting visitors and residents alike, as well as discovering and reinterpreting multiple historical and contemporary layers of Hernals. Kunstkammer 17 is the most recent temporary project set up in collaboration with the district’s urban renewal office (Gebietsbetreuung). It appropriates a vacant retail space in a “soft” way, in coordination with the owner. Although interim use is not a radical occupation (of space), it nonetheless can produce space for learning practices and meeting people.

Martin Pell introduced the issue of living as the public issue (and not private). His activist practices included house squatting actions in Vienna, such as Lobmeyrhof, Eppizentrum Squat, Augarten, Audimax, as well as staging a series of protests, such as May Day protests, migrants’ protests, protests against infamous Akademikerball (a right-wing fraternities’ ball). As a co-founder of Vienna’s first Wagenplatz (2006), an intentional community whose people appropriated land to live in wheeled dwellings, he provided a more detailed insight into impacts of this community living concept on activism and public debates in Vienna. Wagenplatz has built on the tradition of practices of occupation of space in Vienna, such as Arena, WUK, EKH. It did not only produce a new form of appropriation of space for living, but also staged many engaged and involved practices (parades, demonstrations, concerts, parties and jours fixes [Bar/Beisl]). It is a dynamic minimalist structure with a somewhat chaotic dynamics,
embedded in the squatting and protest tradition, based on self-organisation and do-it-yourself culture, which provides community infrastructure to its members (livingrooms, a tractor, a generator, a kitchen, a stage wagon, a bar-wagon etc.). It has resonated powerfully with Vienna’s public and has gained particular attention from other alternative projects, whose actors visited and supported this initiative (Bike Kitchen, Food not Bombs, EKH, Punkahyttn, Kaleidoskop, etc.), as well as from students, artists, photographers, music bands and the press. The community often cooperates with other political projects, such as Migrant-Strike, Euro Mayday, Anti-WEF, Solila. In 2009 Wagenplatz split into two: Treibstoff and Hafenstrasse; in 2012 they split into three Wagenplätze. However, the Wagenplatz community differs from the majority of other movements, because it neither fights for essential needs of others (homeless people or migrants) nor inessential belongings (guerrilla gardening). Its members fight for their own essential needs and belongings. The third Wagenplatz, Günieblümchen (Daisy Flower) next to Aspern Seestadt, the city’s flagship development project, is a model example of this permanent struggle for finding a place where the community can stay, which unites several fields of action: self-organised and minimalistic structures directed at providing for the community’s essential living needs, public communication and pressure.

Ruth Ranacher talked about her work at the Institut für Alltagsforschung (based in Vienna and Frankfurt/Main), a platform for artistic research and urban interventions, which through various artistic collaborations aims at developing artistic and involved practices in public space. “Must See! - New sights for Rudolfsheim-Fünfhaus” is one of such projects. The Institut für Alltagsforschung launched a call to the inhabitants of Vienna’s 15th district to suggest their favourite places, sites and stories. From more than 30 proposals, 10 were selected and have been implemented in temporary audio stations in 8 different languages.
Seminar Concepts and critique of the production of space
SE 280.261 (2 SWS, 4 ECTS) Shields, R., Knierbein, S., Krasny, E.

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THE PUBLIC DIS/APPEARANCE OF BODIES

HENRI LEFEBVRE, THE PRODUCTION OF SPACE ON ITS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

PLACES OF PUBLIC LIFE: Everyday Materialities, Transdisciplinary Design and Public Space

ETHICAL AESTHETICS: THE PRODUCTION OF SCALE, SPACE AND THE VIRTUAL
EMBODIED SPACE

FORMS OF URBAN KNOWLEDGE AND PERFORMATIVE PLANNING: Interventionist learning: Action research, performative planning and emancipatory design

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BEYOND LEFEBVRE. A TRANSDISCIPLINARY CHALLENGE
INTRODUCTION

The 2014 annual theme “Urban culture, public space and ways of living – Everyday life and scientific insights” stretches from palpable or hidden empirical insights into public life in contemporary cities towards theoretical abstraction and the generation of new insights. While the Master’s teaching module in the summer term focused on nanotechnology, social innovation and the role of human bodies in public space, the Master’s teaching module in the winter term 2014 explored public spaces through the lenses of planning theory by emphasizing the concept of counter planning. The module was concerned with evident, subtle and embryonic entanglements between abstract theories and lived spatial practices, aiming to explore how trajectories of scientific production and everyday life shape the spatiality of (lived) public space. It put focus on practices of the social production of lived space in the range from meaningful experiences in everyday life to scientific insights, with a specific interest in strategies and tactics of counter-planning from the grassroots level. How can critically engaged spatial practices, action-based involved research, artistic tactics and strategies, and scientific insights enhance participatory and explorative learning about making of a city's spaces? How can meaningful research in public space help us develop a critical understanding of the historical, legal, political and social conditions that have shaped space?

The module consisted of three courses, which in combination covered theoretical approaches to studying public life in the city, methodologies for practice-oriented researching of public space and locally-embedded learning: lecture series, excursion seminar and locally embedded research project. As a whole, it paved the way for both a broad understanding of and a conscious engagement in multiple urban publics of the city.

The participants of the module developed informed perspectives on the city’s counter-publics which cultivate insurgent tactics and strategies of self-instituted public space of conviviality and the coexistence of difference. As part of the project “Paths and tools of the production of space” the participants developed research projects based on hands-on, artistic, action-based and involved practices, which aimed to inquire into, critically reflect on and thoughtfully engage in heterogeneous, or even concealed publics and counter-publics in Vienna’s central public space of Volksgarten and Heldenplatz. The projects explored multiple histories of these places, specific politics of space (ownership, management, use rights, involved and affected actors), political and civic practices, and the ways of living (the relationships between cultures, individuals and collective groups and processes and practices through which their identities and interests are shaped, expressed and negotiated). The participants critically engaged in issues of the representations of counter-publics and emerging practices in Vienna’s public spaces and explore how planners actions and urban practices can strengthen public spaces as democratic and convivial social spaces, and thus contribute to social engagement and inclusion. The exploration of the relations between counter planning and grassroots movements in public space in Vienna, an affluent city, was extended to the city affected by economic crisis, Madrid. Under the working title “Growing the seeds of change” the excursion focused on self-instituted public spaces, on feminist ethics of care in architecture, and on issues of the production and reproduction of public space, with the aim to understand how new alliances between humans and non-humans have begun to reshape and reinvent the city in times of crisis. A summary of this part of the module is provided as a separate publication titled “Concepts and critique of the production of space: Urbanismo Afecitivo” (ISBN 978-3-902707-18-5).

The lecture series “Strategies and intervention of the production of space” provided insights into a selected range of core theories and methodological approaches to public space, spanning a diversity of perspectives from different disciplinary backgrounds. The lectures discussed public space as a ubiquitous planning subject-matter, a frequently claimed political field of action, place of everyday lives of plural urban publics, as well as a challenging design task. Public space was considered a societal...
process which daily sediments as both designed and lived space. In regard to this the lectures have critically reflected on the role of actors and institutions involved in these processes, their mechanisms and resources as well as a position of professionals from design, planning and research disciplines in the societal processes of the production of public space. While deepening an understanding of public space as space where multiple dimensions of everyday life and scientific insights stand in relation to one another, the lectures tackled upon a series of questions related to the (educational) role of experts in the societal production of public space. How does the production of knowledge about the city’s places and cultures contribute to the coexistence of difference in public space, allowing for meaningful social inclusion of both visible and invisible groups and their practices? How do politically engaged tactics and strategies (of counter-publics) strengthen public spaces as democratic and convivial social spaces? What are the potentials and limits of hands-on, action-based and involved practices of experts from various disciplinary backgrounds in cultivating change in lived space (in the range from place-making to emancipation)?

This lecture series has acquainted students from the fields of planning and architecture as well as from other disciplines with a selected range of core approaches to public space. It aimed at enriching students’ conceptual repertoire regarding a contemporary object of planning, a policy field demanded in manifold ways and a challenging design task. In this sense, the dialog bridging various disciplines was one of the main basic features of this course. By choosing an interactive lecture format the lecturers intended to impart knowledge regarding both the professional handling of public spaces as sociohistoric processes in the European City and the logic of action brought in by those actors and institutions which constitute public spaces. Our spatial understanding was reflected on by linking approaches to understanding publics, publicness and publicité to theories of space.

Bibliography
Since the 1970s public space has been promoted as one of the central fields of action of urban and open space planning disciplines as well as of designing actors coming from landscape architecture, urban design, spatial planning and architecture, both in European cities and on a global scale. In other disciplines mainly agitating in the fields of social science such as urban sociology, ethnology or political science public space is dealt with as self-confidently as in planning practice and urban politics. But one discrepancy is apparent: These actors talk about very different public spaces. Consensus on the shared meaning of public space is reached only occasionally. Some understand public spaces as built places, as urban morphologies, whereas others deny any material expression to public spaces. But how can we imagine social spaces and built places, sometimes even well-designed spaces, as two sides of the same coin? The existing diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches from different disciplinary backgrounds shows dissonance among various disciplinary theories on space in regard to involved players, the role of institutions, their mechanisms and resources in the production of public space. This lecture series aimed at spanning a range of core theories and methodological approaches to public space, and produce an informed perspective on public spaces that considers public space as societal processes which day-to-day sediment as constructed and designed space. Who does influence these continuous processes and practices of the production of public space and in which way? Where do planners, where do designers position themselves as part of these societal processes?

Which strategies are they familiar with? Whose interests do they stand (up) for, and whose interests are they confronted with?

The lecture series offered an introduction to understanding public spaces and urban cultures as a field in urban studies and consisted of the following units: Module and Lecture Kick Off (unit 1) | Places of Public life (unit 2) | Participatory action research: locally-embedded learning aiming towards meaningful change (unit 3) | Towards the Just City with Public Space? (unit 4) | Embodied space (unit 5) | Public Space and the Challenges of Urban Transformation in Europe (unit 6) | Public Space and urban transformation in Vienna (unit 7) | The neoliberal city (unit 8) | Urban Studies Revisited - Taking public space epistemology seriously (unit 9) | Who designs the just city? (unit 10) | Vienna’s cityscape: a fusion of reinvented traditional planning approaches and radical thinking about urban environment (unit 11) | Forms of urban knowledge and performative planning (unit 12) | Urban Gardening in Vienna between Utopia and Political Strategy (unit 13).

NOTE!
Lectures Places of Public life (unit 2), Embodied space (unit 5), Forms of urban knowledge and performative planning (unit 12) have previously been delivered as part of the Module URBAN CULTURE AND PUBLIC SPACE: NEW SPACES OF PUBLIC CONCERN, under the same titles, as unit 7, unit 9 and unit 10 respectively. In order to avoid repetition, in this booklet their summaries are provided only once, in the first section, as Lecture 7 (page 16), Lecture 9 (page 18) and Lecture 10 (page 19).
LECTURE 3

PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: LOCALLY-EMBEDDED LEARNING AIMING TOWARDS MEANINGFUL CHANGE

Tihomir Viderman

A critical insight into the political, economic and social practices of both institutional and non-institutional actors uncovers their tendency towards producing the ‘other’. This lecture reflected on a growing number of strategies, actions and tactics that aim at offsetting this sturdy tendency by building on the achievements of past emancipatory struggles. It introduced participatory action research (PAR) as a radically new dimension to conventional disciplines involved in planning a city’s space. PAR has thus far only to a limited extent been applied in the planning and design related disciplines. Seeing how it draws its roots from emancipatory education and critical pedagogy formulated by Freire (1996 [1970]), its potentials for planning and design primarily lie in re-defining the position of these disciplines in the politics of space. It allows for creating change by empowering marginalized social groups and multiple publics to undertake actions which are embedded in the local context and are attentive to lived cultural differences.

It seems that professionals’ toolkits are often rigidly demarcated by and restricted to their professional cultures. As a consequence, their actions, too, tend to stick with attempts at interpreting old tools, rather than taking on the challenge to build on embodied experience and creating meaningful visible change with limited resources and time. Such an approach would be both sensitive to different realities and capable of building bridges between them. In our professional practice this would mean creating an approach that would cross the boundaries between expert knowledge and knowledge from everyday life of various social groups.

PAR is a practice which involves researchers (academics, professionals or practitioners) and participants (social groups, communities or the grassroots) in a concerted effort which dialectically combines three aspects of work: participation, action and research – directed at discovering, recognizing and empowering a variety of practices in a certain place, and putting them to public scrutiny and debate, with the goal of producing knowledge, tactics and strategies which would have capacity to encourage civic action and meaningful social change (cf. Kesby et al. 2007). But how can design and planning professionals, fresh graduates and students overcome a perpetual replication of discursively and materially constructed boundaries of their professional actions, and reinvent own positioning in regard to the city as a mosaic of difference? How can they enhance genuinely meaningful participation of emancipated individuals and groups, in light of a growing popularity of participatory practices in planning processes? In Vienna for example participation is mostly conceived as a set of discursive practices where the hierarchies and power relations are preserved and carefully maintained. Residents are invited to take part in staged events in German, that largely neglect a variety of educational, cultural, social and political backgrounds.

PAR encourages a more sound consideration of researchers’, planners’ and designers’ means of learning about the local context. As opposed to merely observing and studying social space (extracting knowledge from the community which participates in the process and leaving after obtaining the results, often after a community’s expectations in the process have been raised), PAR calls for a collaborative work which benefits the community. It is essential to reiterate that PAR as an emancipatory practice assumes that involved participants take part as ‘subjects’ in both the production of knowledge enabling a multifaceted perception of reality and the action calling for the social change. This also means that a researcher must continuously reflect on own relationship with the researched subject, including the motivation to engage with the issue. Many urban phenomena and practices that have long been invisible, are encroached on by urban research and praxis, which are in a continuous search for new topics. A researcher must be particularly reflexive about the meaning and consequences of him/her drawing one of these phenomena or practices to a broader attention. Think of what the definition of a “problematic” urban neighbourhood or social group means, or what publishing on hidden places of worship of a minority religion community may mean to its stigmatization or discrimination.

Bibliography


This lecture starts with a presentation of theories which have been formative in the development of an expressly spatial understanding of social justice. Since space is both formed by but also formative to human practice and experience, we can use space as an analytical perspective for investigations into dimensions of social (in)justice and so foster the creation of an advanced social justice by enabling “new sources of insight and innovative practical and theoretical applications” (Soja 2010: 3f).

It highlights that the city takes a central role in the most notions of spatial justice, since it is perceived as a place of social and economic advantage, and therefore comes to be a potent battleground for struggles over just and democratic access to its advantages. This understanding of the city and its advantages has fostered a distributional focus of spatial justice. On the other hand, also questions of procedural justice figure prominently in debates about justice planning.

In addition to these common understandings of spatial justice, this lecture shows how human agency is foundational to understand justice as a practice, because people possess agency in shaping their environment through their role in the production and reproduction of space. Human action, thus, has the potential to work towards more justice, be it through reciprocity, self-management, solidarity, or other multi-scalar revolutionary practices, as proposed for instance by Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey.

Linking the spatial justice discourse and SKuOR’s annual theme “Urban culture, public space and ways of living – Everyday life and scientific insights” the lecture continues to focus on the production of public space and the ways designers and planners are challenged when it comes to achieving more just cities. Public space figures prominently in the Spatial Justice discourse. Given public space’s broad meaning both as a material site and as a political sphere, issues of its production and use can be tied to procedural as well as substantive aspects of justice. In its materiality, public space is conceived both as a space where the struggle toward greater spatial justice takes place as well as a space that is an urban resource that should be available to inhabitants. When it comes to considering public space’s representational quality as the site of struggle for more justice, we see that even though space has been connoted as a means of control and domination, it is also perceived as a space with emancipatory potential. To realise this potential, though, designers and planners need to engage ways of working which appreciate local knowledge and multiple ways of knowing, including local experiential and intuitive knowledge (Sandercock 2004) and engage in collaborative creativity, thus part with a position of sole creative and scientific authority. These ways of working not only enable new forms of collaboration and integration of knowledge, they also foster alternative vision and imageries of aesthetics as a “poly-sensually” experience that changes “over time, through and with the body” and leads to the discovery of „new forms of beauty“ which link „the activities of everyday life and the unique events of a particular city to the experience of the (…) environment“ (Meyer 2008: 8).

Bibliography
European cities are changing rapidly in part due to the process of de-industrialization, European integration and economic globalization. Within those cities public spaces are the meeting place of politics and culture, social and individual territories, instrumental and expressive concerns. This lecture unit investigates how European city authorities understand and deal with their public spaces, how this interacts with market forces, social norms and cultural expectations, whether and how this relates to the needs and experiences of their citizens, exploring new strategies and innovative practices for strengthening public spaces and urban culture. These questions are explored by looking at 3 case studies from across Europe, written by active scholars in the area of public space and organized in three parts:

In Part One (Strategies, Plans and Policies, Case Study Vienna), the questions are: How do public authorities address the growing pressures on public spaces? What are the issues, strategies, and tactics of dealing with public spaces, and what do they aim to achieve? Who are the state and non-state actors involved in setting the conditions for public spaces? How are they organized and what are the relationships between different actors? How are policies initiated, formulated, implemented, reflected and finally, how do people perceive and react to such policies? How do planning professionals contribute with their projects to the changing conditions of public spaces? How can innovative practices contribute to redefining the approaches to public spaces? Public space is where public life unfolds: art works are displayed, commercial messages transmitted, political power is displayed and social norms affirmed or challenged.

In Part Two (Multiple Roles of Public Space, Case Study Warsaw), the questions are: How do these different processes take place? How do public spaces accommodate these multiple roles? How are the conflicts of interest addressed? What new phenomena of social transformation do emerge in public spaces? How do contemporary design and planning interventions renegotiate the boundaries of public space? What is the (changing) position of arts within public space between politics and people? Public space is the realm of sociability.

In Part Three (Everyday Life and Sharing the City, Case Study Paris), the questions are: How do public spaces address people’s everyday needs and expectations? How are the boundaries between public and private spheres set, and how does this affect people’s daily life? How are cultural differences and social inequalities addressed in public spaces? How is local everyday knowledge taken into account by professional disciplines of planning, developing and designing public spaces? What latent social needs get visible in public spaces? How can a fair sharing of public spaces be arranged? How do designers deal with the involvement of people in the process of producing public space? How do city representatives handle the ‘voices of people’?

Bibliography
In many cities in Europe and beyond (see lecture unit 6), public space has been reconsidered as a cross-cutting policy field: Some cities are eager to redevelop their public spaces in order to fulfil multiple objectives at the same time. Vienna has only recently joined this canon with an explicit political agenda for public spaces. Apparently, the Vienna City Administration follows a particular type of politics of public space in order to accommodate structural changes more smoothly and to pursue a political balance between quite differing political goals (e.g. ‘social cohesion’, ‘economic competitiveness’, ‘ecological sustainability’, etc.). Slowness and reluctance in reacting to current international trends is considered as one of the inherent features of Vienna, a conservative capital city that has been ruled by a social-democratic regime for decades, and has had a social-democratic/green city government coalition since 2010.

Public spaces can be interpreted as places where micro-, meso- and macrolevels of ‘jumping scales’ (Swyngedouw, 2000) of global urbanisation processes and of local tendencies become manifest, both in terms of space and politics. Processes of scaling become palpable here which is why they serve both as an analytical entry field and as a sphere for action (Knierbein, 2010). While political interaction in public spaces is inseparably related to civic unrest and to the creation of counter publics, public spaces are increasingly used (again) as spheres for promoting political ideas by public authorities, too. In a transforming urban Europe, public spaces offer a vast sphere for political discourse and for political action where city administrations try to balance different political motives because it seems that they can be met here at the same time. Yet in practice they often result in being hardly compatible with each other.

Due to high rates of inward migration, urban growth in a consolidated and dense city like Vienna is likely to happen at the urban fringes or at the infrastructural conversion sites at the interfaces between centre and periphery. Central sites have come under great transformative pressure and are subject to redesign interventions in order to meet new challenges, too. That is why the lecture focuses on three projects set in three different parts of the city: the Aspern Lakeside Project (ALP; a new town in the periphery of Donaustadt), the Schwedenplatz-Morzinplatz Project (SMP; a square at the borders of the Erster Bezirk), and the Main Station Project (MSP; a huge urban development project at the Gürtel on the edge of the city centre).

The empirical enquiry that this lecture summarizes is rooted in a qualitative analysis of selected programmes and pamphlets tackling public spaces and an investigation of public space’s relevance in strategic urban planning projects. This twofold analysis is based on the hypothesis that both convergences and divergences can be detected between political discourse and planning practice:

- What is the role and meaning of public spaces on the urban political agenda?
- Which administrative sectors are particularly interested and promoting public spaces?
- Which processes of (re)shaping public spaces are foreseen in selected strategic urban planning projects?
- Are the proceedings and expected results of these processes consistent with the (re)framed policies?
- Are there any (assumed) special benefits or disadvantages for the local population?

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LECTURE 8
THE NEOLIBERAL CITY
Tihomir Viderman

Neoliberalism seems to have become an omnipresent term in science, politics, media and urban activism, a celebrated opportunity for some, condemned reality for others. It stands for a free market utopia, a vision of deregulated markets and lowered state influence on the economy that gives space to individual initiative to thrive and generate prosperity and growth. Critical urban actors have meanwhile applied this label to cities as material evidence that puts on display severe societal costs of the (spatial) materialization of this economic paradigm. Left-leaning scholars and urban actors use the neoliberal city as a pejorative term to criticize accelerated market-oriented urbanization, which converts urban and rural environments into a commodified terrain for speculation. According to their claims, governing elites and governance structures re-regulate planning processes and practices having in mind interests of those actors that have power and capital, thus directly or indirectly restricting access to collective urban resources to a growing segment of society (cf. Harvey 2008).

This lecture employed political economy to interpret cities as places of both capital accumulation and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. It discussed the effects of capitalism’s intrinsic tendency to cyclically enter into crises and reinvent itself on urban landscapes, in regard to both social and physical space. The two key concepts of the regulation approach, Fordism and postFordism, explain urban transformations over the last few decades, rendering a critical perspective on the current decision-making processes in cities, as well as a growing number of flamboyant places for living, work and consumption (cf. Painter 2002). While some of archetypal illustrations of Fordism in urban development are the culture of a social contract, large public housing estates and extensive recreation areas such as Donauinsel in Vienna, postFordism is linked to such materialities as those of public-private partnerships, subsidized or affordable housing schemes and “localized” neighbourhood aesthetics with (uniquely designed) pocket gardens. This transformation of urban landscapes reflects a shift of power in urban politics from the state and city institutional actors toward private sector (investors).

Over the last few decades, as the economy has become increasingly globalized and the financial sector has been elevated to the key economic activity of Western cities, city governments have intentionally and unintentionally given up (a part of) their power in deciding on urban futures and transferred it to market actors, giving them a great deal of freedom. Instead of pursuing public visions of urban development, urban governments increasingly conceive their role as the one of managing and coordinating patchy development interests. Planning practice seems to have caught up with the new requirements of such a neoliberal urbanization, as it has reinvented itself in a series of approaches with ambiguous spatial effects such as place-making, smart city, tactical urbanism, cooperative urbanism or cultural urbanism. These practices make it evident to what extent planning has become concerned with management of place images (city branding). While delivering benefits to a segment of city publics, such approaches also endorse city space as lucrative sites of capital accumulation. Critical scholars, activists and radical urban actors stand up in opposition of these approaches, for such approaches are aimed at enhancing an exchange value of space in contrast to the social production of lived space through the meaningful experiences and performed actions (cf. Merrifield 1993). They employ a variety of actions, initiatives and hands-on approaches to denounce the neoliberal city as the one that is almost exclusively made for affluent residents (or rather consumers?). They claim that such a city is produced through a series of market-led upgrading and regeneration strategies that favour so-called creative classes and activities, at the expense of less “desirable” uses and groups that are being displaced and marginalized.

This resistance to the commodification of common urban space, however, can embody ambiguous implications. While it often arises as collective action out of urgency (self-organisation of labour or provision for the basic needs) it can also embody neoliberal ideology of self-reliance. City residents act as autonomous self-sustainable subjects who on their own take the initiative to improve their situation, rather than expecting from the state to “take care of them”.

Bibliography
Traditional approaches to understand space tend to view public space mainly as a shell or container, focussing on its morphological structures and functional uses. That way, its ever-changing meanings, contested or challenged uses have been largely ignored, as well as the contextual and on-going dynamics between social actors, their cultures, and struggles. The key role of space in enabling spatial opportunities for social action, the fluidity of its social meaning and the changing degree of “publicness” of a space remain unexplored fields of academic inquiry and professional practice.

This lecture offers a different understanding of public spaces in the city. Its aim is to (re)introduce the lived experiences in public life into the teaching curricula of those academic disciplines which deal with public space and the built environment, such as architecture, planning and urban design, as well as the social sciences. Here, public space is not just considered as a theme, but a key analytical window to grasp the complex and multidisciplinary nature of contemporary urban studies.

This lecture will qualify the relational epistemology of public space based on a reading of various parts of the oeuvre of Henri Lefebvre and its diverse interpretations. Four epistemological key foci will be identified when qualifying the epistemology of relational public space as counter space.

1. First, time and meaning refer to the non-linear rhythms of lived time, which urban professionals need to understand to investigate the production of meaning related to lived spaces in the present city. Appreciating the history of place and its changing use values is of key importance in dealing with present challenges in order to shape future public space. Meaningful places can hardly be produced artificially, but will grow both in the course of continuous everyday practices and of temporary political acts.

2. Secondly, complexity and context are closely entangled with intervention and ethics; a complexity approach points to the manifold impacts of interventions on various levels of interests and of scaling. Context relates to the differing social needs and desires that might be affected by the intervention, thus an introduction to research ethics is considered necessary before deciding if an intervention is useful at all.

3. Thirdly, ideally concrete and abstract thinking can be practiced between individual action and group formation, between personal and collective experiences. In public space, the personal and individual experience transforms into a collective and interpersonal experience, and thereby renders the concrete as inherent in any abstraction. In particular, spatial practices in public space offer a field for concrete abstraction. Difference is publicly displayed here and is also present in theoretical abstraction, as it transverses all spatial relations, and thus critical enquiry into them.

4. Fourthly, a relational approach to public space is strongly connected to a consideration of practice and politics, which are connected to contact and attention. The focus on material arrangements of public space and spatial practices is tied to the experience of social contact in public space. As meanings and uses of public space are transformed through practice during social movements, the symbolic dimension of public space is decoded and reloaded, thus providing a fertile ground for redirecting (political, medial) attention to silent claims and emerging needs.

To unravel the theory building potentials of relational public space based on spatial practice as a key driver, an epistemological bridge is established between abstract relational space theory and concrete approaches in urban education, and four learning fields will be further identified as transversal educational pillars in teaching public space matters. By promoting and qualifying a relational epistemology of public space as a core field in urban studies, the aim has been to reconnect academic education in architecture and planning to a people-centred understanding of public space.

Teaching about public space in planning and architecture resembles a reformist pedagogical approach in educational studies, as it is action-oriented; it focuses on the self-organizing and empowering aspects of learning about space, and considers each student’s individual capacities in a collectively organized learning group as an important resource.
Bibliography
This lecture ties in with the previous input on the Just City and specifically addresses participatory tools, institutional strategies and insurgent tactics in the planning and design of public spaces.

It starts with a critical review of mainstream participatory practices as present and prescribed in most formal planning and design processes, which have been accused of being “staged” and “irrelevant in face of social and political forces” (Hou/Rios 2003), because they show limited possibilities to define a range of interventions or to define the problem. Instead they focus on a “product” and a fixed timeline, often to give input to the actual design work of a professional designer. These formal participatory processes often include techniques such as focus groups, public meetings and vision workshops. The critique on them raises questions of who defines the problem (or decides there is one), whose interests are at stake, who invites action and for what reason – in short, it challenges the power relations present in these processes and examines if the power/knowledge complex can be reconstituted through them or if hegemonic power relations are reproduced. As Arnstein (1969) stresses, “[t]here is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process”.

We can thus understand that a major challenge in participatory design processes has to do with what is being designed - a “thing” (i.e. an object or service) or a “Thing” (i.e. a socio-material assembly that deals with “matters of concern”), as Ehn differentiates (Ehn 2013). In the latter case, definition and design regard the scope of action, i.e. the “infrastructure of participation”, as Ehn (2013) calls it. He argues that through the possibility to define the frame of action citizens should be encouraged to actively engage in the “design” of their environment, which is understood as material and social. Following such a notion of participation implies that the focus necessarily changes from products and clear goals to creating settings of openness with regard to the decisions being taken and to abandoning the idea of a scheduled result. It implies the design of possibilities and the acceptance of multiplicity in contrast to a determination of uses and meanings. This necessarily influences the role of the designer/planner in the process. S/he can initiate, foster, organise lasting social structures through and with the aim to address social needs, which results in a waning influence of the planner and designer both on the process and on the outcomes of participation. The lecture introduces ludic tools which can be employed in open collaborative design processes and shows alternative design practices which engage with socially important questions and meanings of public space. To incorporate questions of planning, the lecture ends with a discussion of Susan Fainstein’s theory of the Just City and her understanding of how planners can foster democracy, equity and diversity.

Bibliography


Vienna’s long-lasting social democratic regime has been acclaimed both locally and internationally for its comprehensive provision of welfare. However, during the last few decades, and in particular after the fall of the iron curtain, the city’s social democratic regime has complemented its carefully promoted narrative centred on the heritage of Red Vienna and a somewhat paternalistic provision of welfare to the city’s residents with the growth mantra aiming to reinvent the city’s identity within the circuits of accelerated flows of people (rather talent), capital, goods and services.

City’s ‘smart’ growth (according to the city’s framework strategy plan STEP 25) combines approaches in the social-democratic tradition (social housing and welfare, public infrastructure and residents’ participation) and growth-oriented policies (supporting locally-based corporations, promoting creativity and knowledge based competitive economies), with the goal of improving Vienna’s position in international city networks and rankings. In the 1990s this growth was largely directed at enhancing urban economies through the financialization of land (Donauplatte, Wienerberg) and large-scale development schemes centred on post-Fordist economies (MQ and Altes AKH), as a means of providing a stimulus to the locally-based companies in their expansion to the “East” and aiding the city to capitalize on the sweeping geopolitical changes, that propelled Vienna to the centre of the politically united Europe. At last, economic benefits of the expansion to (south-) eastern Europe did not live up to the expectations of the business and governing elites, and growing right-wing opposition demanding increasingly restrictive immigration policies have put an end to the city’s aspirations to re-position itself in the global competition. At this point, however, the city’s economy has already to a significant extent been tied to the finance and real-estate sectors, which have greatly been influencing the direction of urban development, both as part of urban governance and through the acquisition of urban land (international pension funds buying undeveloped land, in particular in the city’s green belt, planning to capitalize on the city’s future extensions). Consequences of the city’s competing for resources in the private capital market have had direct consequences on the public sector, which is now expected to operate by market rules. City-owned companies might provide so-called public goods, but are also required to deliver positive financial figures. Welfare regime increasingly relies on private-public partnerships in almost all urban matters, including a provision of affordable housing, public transport and urban renewal. As property development has become a lucrative industry which engages all spheres of society (developers, city administration, bankers, residents, civil society), urban governance actors have delivered new strategies for redistribution of urban resources: Think of programmes for temporary/ interim uses of vacant spaces/plots!

A stronger presence of the market-driven rationale in urban politics had major effects on the transformation of urban land. The city’s government has designated large brownfield plots in public ownership to absorb most of the assumed growth and develop into places for promotion of the city’s post-Fordist growth vision. This vision meets with affective resistance by the local populations wanting to preserve their neighbourhoods’ aesthetics and living patterns, as well as critical urban actors raising their critique of the city planning policy. This has put pressure on the city’s administration to reinvent its planning process. Modernist technocratic principles of growth-oriented spatial development have gradually made way to approaches that develop on an understanding of a city’s space as a complex process of social production filled with meaningful experiences (city’s “Masterplan Participation”). Participation as a heavily promoted ingredient of the so-called cooperative planning process not only reflects the changing governance structure (Social Democratic Party entered a coalition with the Green Party), but has been elevated into an issue of a broader political debate. Although planning has seemingly taken on the contours of a more responsive and reciprocal practice, employing various participatory formats, open discussions and much of deliberation to address diverse city’s spaces and cultures, its political, economic and social institutional setting has nonetheless been challenged by a growing number of critical urban actors calling for empowerment of emancipatory social practices related to everyday life and implementation of truly alternative urban visions.

**Bibliography**


This lecture starts with an overview of the conceptions of landscape which have been influential in the creation of traditional urban green spaces, such as parks, and which form the backdrop to understand contemporary urban gardening practices. It shows how the capitalist commodification of spaces has also been formative in the production of landscape understandings which are functionalist, and consider landscapes in terms of what they can do for people (Nassauer 1995). These understandings, however, are not able to account for the actual diversity of landscapes which shape contemporary urban areas. The ideas of Terrain Vague (Solà-Morales 1996) or of Landscape Urbanism (Waldheim 2006, Corner 1999), on the contrary, engage with landscapes which have been neglected by traditional urban development and planning.

The lecture then contemplates the drivers for contemporary urban gardening practices, such as political discontent, changes in occupational dynamics, relational/ social considerations and scarcity of urban land and establishes urban gardening as a symptom of crisis. The interplay between local initiatives and global discourses, as to be observed in urban gardening, has been interpreted as a renewal for forms of contestation to challenge corporate urban development, express claims for social and environmental justice, as well as for anti-globalization (Mayer/Boudreau 2012).

After a short overview of the history of planning politics in Vienna the lecture explores the role of green spaces in the current coalition government agreement (Häupler/Vassilakou 2010, 58f), which addresses the local level and socioeconomic uses of public green space as a testing ground for alternative lifestyles and city models. Thus, green space is evidently perceived as medium to develop urban utopia on a small scale.

In the next part, the lecture turns to an exploration of urban gardening practices in Vienna. It looks at the current urban gardening movement in Vienna, with its civil society and governmental actors which form a specific Viennese dynamics between social movements and administrative institutionalism, and enquires into its utopian desire and content. It is argued that because public green space is charged with a wide range of meanings and interpretations, political and social utopias in the course of history up until today have addressed and still address it. These utopias manifest through the articulation of needs and demands, which have the potential to renew the idea of public space, to come into conflict with existing utilisation and management practices and thereby enrich the urban society. Eight examples of urban gardening in Vienna are portrayed in their spatial and social particularities:

The surge of urban gardening can be interpreted as sign of dissatisfaction with use norms and administration of green and public space, and a creative engagement with spaces which show difficulties in their design and layout. It can be stated that a main achievement of urban gardening practices in Vienna has been a conceptual and discursive expansion of the notion of urban green space by production aspects. This expansion values left over spaces and uses them to establish urban green beyond the traditional spaces of passive recreation and representation. This practice is not only highly contemporary in its landscape understanding, but also an inexpensive way for the municipality to have left over spaces valorized and make a contribution to the image of the city.

Bibliography


A thesis seminar cooperation between TU Wien (Interdisciplinary Centre for Urban Culture and Public Space (SKuOR) and Centre for Local Planning (IFOER), Faculty of Architecture and Planning) and the Academy of Fine Arts Austria (Institute for Education in the Arts). 11 TU Wien students and 8 Academy of Fine Arts, among them 13 female and 5 male, jointly took part in the thesis seminar, each assigned a slot of 30 minutes to present and discuss the state of the art of their master or PhD thesis projects. The project cooperation has been an outcome of Elke Krasny’s double involvement as City of Vienna Visiting Professor 2014 (winter term) and as Professor for Arts and Communication at the Academy of Fine Arts, and respective agreements between the TU Wien and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

**Aim of the course**

This interdisciplinary team to doctoral students and advanced master students in urban studies ("Stadtforschung") and related disciplines, with the overall aim of providing an opportunity for the participants to discuss their thesis projects as additional support in the development of their research theories and methods. The course is organized through informal group discussions of the students’ research projects. In particular, the seminar aims to help the students critically review, clarify, and receive constructive feedback on their own research projects, their aims, objectives, concepts and methods; learn about a range of theories and methods in urban research; develop the capacity for and engage in critical assessment of similar research projects; develop a friendly and supportive group of researchers who can benefit from knowing about each other’s work during the seminars and even afterwards.

Contemporary urban theory has developed space over the last decade to consider the complex urban processes and issues that have risen as a result of globalisation, diversification of the economy, socio-demographic shifts, neoliberal political agendas, migration and growing concerns around the environment amongst many other salient issues. Urban studies now concerns itself also with new theoretical agendas which focus on questions of theorizing everyday life and discussing emerging epistemologies of collective acts of appropriation of (public) urban space.

Further, there is a growing interest in cities of the Global South, which has led to new ways of analysing the cities of the Global North which have been more significant in urban analysis to date. The seminar will have a particular emphasis on urban culture and public space, but contributions on other subjects are eligible. Master and doctoral students at any stage of their work from architecture, spatial planning, and more widely from social sciences and humanities, who are researching into urban issues are welcome to attend.

**Contents of the course**

The seminars will be interactive, delivered through several concentrated blocks in the winter semester. After a general introduction and depending on the number of attending students, each participant will be allocated a 30 minutes slot, in which his/her work is discussed in the group by the seminar tutors and other students. The students will prepare a text of 4-6 pages about their research and upload it on the course website at least one week in advance, so that the tutors and fellow students can read it in preparation for the session. In their allocated slot, the students first present their work (maximum 10 minutes), describing the subject of their research, their aims and objectives, their theoretical framework, their research methodology, and the results of their work so far. Students will be expected also to relate their research to contemporary urban theory through selected readings from the designated course text. The tutors and fellow students will then engage in a discussion about these points with the students, helping to clarify and develop the concepts and methods of the research project. The nature of the seminars is developmental, designed to help the students with constructive feedback. Furthermore, the students will benefit from the range of issues that are covered and discussed. The development of a friendly group atmosphere is an essential part of the course, and so it is important that all participants attend all the sessions and engage in supportive discussion of one another’s work.
UNIT 1
INTRODUCTION TO THESIS SEMINAR

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION
Sabine Knierbein and Emanuela Semlitsch

The thesis seminar is based on the individual (and/or collective) master and PhD thesis projects of students based at two Viennese universities situated around Karlsplatz, with an interest in questions of urban life, urban theory, and the city. The course will take place during 5 comprehensive days during the winter term 2014/5 at TU Wien and will facilitate disciplinary crossovers and new approaches at the interface of urban studies, arts and activism and performative planning.

A threefold approach will be developed by the teaching team:

- Arts and communication meets urban studies (Elke Krasny)
- Urban culture and public space meets urban studies (Sabine Knierbein)
- Planning and performativity meets urban studies (Emanuela Semlitsch)

In this first unit, the students are asked to present themselves and their projects along the following lines of questions: Who are you? What is your field of interest? What would you like to learn in the course of the seminar? Afterwards, course proceedings and the marking criteria will be explained to the students. The course outline comprises the following teaching units of which the teaching inputs will be subject of this reader: Unit 1. Introduction to the thesis seminar (1.1. General Introduction/1.2. Introduction to Urban Studies) | Unit 2. Creating Knowledge by writing a master thesis (2.1. Creating Knowledge/2.2. Writing a master or PhD thesis) | Unit 3. On Urban Curating, urban studies and performative urbanism (3.1. On Urban Curating. Critical Spatial Practice+ Urban Knowledge Production/3.2.Different strands in urban studies/3.3. Performative Urbanism) | Unit 4. Students Presentations | Unit 5. Students Presentations | Unit 6. On Research | Unit 7. Students Presentations | Unit 8. Students Presentations | Unit 9. On feminist practice | Unit 10. Students Presentations | Unit 11. Students Presentations | Unit 12. Students Presentations | Unit 13. Seminar Closing (Open discussion and feedback).

1.2 INTRODUCTION TO URBAN STUDIES
Sabine Knierbein

The lecture unit starts from Lefebvre’s (2003: 53ff) analysis and critique of the phenomenon of interdisciplinarity: “This complexity makes interdisciplinary cooperation essential. The urban phenomenon, taken as a whole, cannot be grasped by any specialized science [...] How many of us are unaware of the disappointments and setbacks of so called multi- or interdisciplinary efforts? The illusions of such studies, and the myths surrounding them, have been abundantly criticized. [...] While it is true that the urban phenomenon, as a global reality, is in urgent need of people who can pool fragmentary bits of knowledge, the achievement of such a goal is difficult or impossible.”

This citation illustrates a core message of the lecture unit: That urban research is organised around analysis and interpretation of a sociohistoric phenomenon that is very complex and can’t be grasped in a ‘holistic’ way by any specialised science, as it is constantly changing and requires a combination of depth of knowledge (specialised in disciplines) and width of knowledge (crossdisciplinary knowledge). By nature urban studies is therefore not a discipline, but a science oriented at its concrete object of investigation (Forschungsgegenstand): The city understood as spatial process of global urbanization. In order to approach this complex phenomenon, a short introduction into multidisciplinary ways of working is offered: A nuanced differentiation between interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and postdisciplinary research in urban studies (Knierbein 2011) is first introduced. Secondly, some of the disciplines that currently contribute to the field of critical urban studies are presented: Planning Theory, Critical Geography, Urban Ethnography, Urban Sociology, Urban Politics (within Political Science), Radical Anthropology, and others.

Diversity and different perspectives are as well inherent in the field of urban studies, which brings it close to cultural studies and methodological approaches therein that focus on difference as an epistemological principle. The depth of knowledge in one (sub)discipline is complemented by width of knowledge about the relations between different fields of expertise and knowledge. In addition,
unconventionality (Robert Ezra Park) and non-dogmatism (Henri Lefebvre) are helpful as they might foster conceptual openness. Finally, a neo-Marxian approach to urban studies would combine studies on the political economy of the city with insights into new forms of collective urban organization (city cultures, emerging urban publics, etc.) and city life. In the spatial practices linked to these forms of (emerging) collective action in the city lies a core feature for theory building as concepts emerge out of social practice!

The modernist work division in the (social, spatial) sciences has led to a disentanglement of scholars from lifeworldly meaning of their research (alienation of scientific labour). Particularly in architecture and planning, this might get visible, as these disciplines are often

a) detached from spatial scientific enquiry; or are
b) sliced into fragmented pieces by positivist accounts to scientifically deal with space (space considered as a shell or container).

Such a critique detects these disciplines as professional facilitators of capitalist growth, and points to the discrepancy regarding their ideal-type/utopian role as agents of social change. The debate in itself is ambivalent, as there might be a certain unnecessary dogmatism/determinism prevalent in considering architects and planners as ideal agents that are able to stir social change. Critical studies deconstructs this myths and repositions the role of different actors in a sociopolitical context.

Out of this critique unfolds a strong call for the overcoming of such types of dualisms and fragmentations in the space-related disciplines, one of them being the outdated „theory versus practice“ divide. In urban studies, theory is inseparably connected with praxis, and vice versa. A way to overcome the critique of the fragmentation of the sciences is to foster humanist accounts to everyday life in (public) urban space and to be more (self)critical and self(reflexive) regarding one’s own professional role (as planners/architects/social scientists) in current urban development processes. Thus a critique can be issued that unravels the aporiae and pitfalls of (capitalist) mainstream approaches/hegemonic discourse and discriminating practices. ‘Bottom-up’ urbanism / ‘grassroots’ planning / ‘alternative’ urban design/ ‘everyday’ architecture / ‘people-centred’ urban studies / ‘counter’ planning and public design all offer different entry perspectives that integrate the ambivalences of everyday urban life into the conception of professions. They ask not just for human scale cities, but for spatial practice by, with and for people!
UNIT 2
CREATING KNOWLEDGE BY WRITING A MASTER THESIS

2.1 CREATING KNOWLEDGE
Emanuela Semlitsch

Space and knowledge can be seen as two components of reality. René Descartes for example distinguishes between an internal and an external world, between material things and ideas, between res extensa and res cogitans. Centuries later Merleau-Ponty writes about the phenomenology of perception and describes our perception of the world as a moment where we already interpret and classify our perceptions and add meanings to them. Pierre Bourdieu defines the habitus as system of dispositions and behaviour patterns, which are developed in everyday life within a certain social field. Habitus is a cultural knowledge, which influences our perception, thought and action. Martina Löw talks about institutionalized spaces. We perceive and identify these spaces as what they are meant to be. Because of our previous knowledge we act corresponding to these spaces, which is called standardized behaviour.

Production of space and creating knowledge can be seen as mutually dependent processes. In the processes of perceiving space, acting in space and producing space we use our existing cultural knowledge and at the same time we produce knowledge about these spaces. In the field of urban studies and urban planning we are confronted with at least three types of knowledge: everyday knowledge, design as working knowledge and knowledge through action research.

Everyday knowledge is investigated in the sociology of knowledge which deals with the social construction of knowledge, deals with what people in a society know, independent of if this knowledge has objective validity or not. Everyday knowledge is what influences and determines people’s action and perception in their everyday reality. But reality is also an intersubjective world, which means that people share their world with others and constantly have to communicate and to negotiate with others about this reality. The HERE and NOW of each individual is not exactly the same, but there is common knowledge and common space, which is reflected in self-evident everyday routines. Everyday knowledge serves for coping with everyday life. It is somehow the formula for everyday problems, and is valid as long as it works in everyday life. If disruptions and irritations in these routines appear we have to reflect on our perception on reality and to enhance our knowledge about this reality. Urban knowledge is a specific form of everyday knowledge. It is gained in informal learning processes in the context of the city. The city here is seen as an accumulation of cultural knowledge, which can be activated in everyday life.

Design as working knowledge: Research-led practice or practice-based knowledge is currently discussed a lot in planning and architecture disciplines, but also in different arts disciplines. The process of designing can be described as a series of iterative stages. Knowledge acquisition and information phases are layered with design ideas and syntheses. Analysis and interpretation of the task, mostly at the beginning of the design process, but also evaluation, revision, and re-starts over the course of the process, constitute reflexive considerations in repeated sequences within the network of explicit and implicit knowledge.

Implicit knowledge plays an important role in many processes, such as architectural and spatial design. Implicit knowledge (tacit knowledge) cannot be fully and adequately described in rational terms by the cognitive and analytical approaches of the natural sciences or traditional engineering. It always contains more information than any description can express. It is integrated in courses of action informally. Those involved in this perceive themselves as intuitive. But all rational decisions are also intuitive decisions, as they are based on subconscious thought processes. The specific quality of the activity of design lies in the conscious combination of analytical, intuitive and emotional faculties in order to grasp complex relationships and consequently to formulate possible solutions.

Knowledge through action research: Action research is a form of research that enables practitioners to investigate, evaluate and modify their work. It is a form of professional learning. The research question is practice-based, and the aim of the research is to get insights about this practice to extend the repertoire of action alternatives. Action Research is a continuous interplay between theory and practice, between action and reflection. You reflect your own practice in various stages of analysis. The gained insights are the basis for future action alternatives, which are going to be tested again in practice. Action research can give you some ideas how to reflect on your own work as planner, architect or researcher or…
2.2 WRITING A MASTER OR PhD THESIS
Sabine Knierbein

“We’re learning to write no less than writing to learn.”
*John Forrester, AESOP Summer School Paestum 2007*

This unit consists of both creative writing exercises and a reflection on the social, political, cultural, economic, spatial and time situation of the students who are getting engaged in thesis writing projects. A transfer is offered from their own circumstances, reflections and constraints to the aspects that help to structure their projects in terms of defining the contents, limiting the scientific discourses involved, developing a research design and settling the research in a broader context of philosophy of science. The following table offers valuable entry questions to reflect on the own situation and come up with a realistic assessment on the working schedule for the thesis project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment of own life situation while writing a thesis</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Social situation**
Family mother or father? 25 or 35 or 45? Who cares for the parents? Health conditions? Which other competing life projects do I have in this moment? ...

**Master/PhD thesis – Political situation**
Is there a census of media in the place where you work, a prevalent pressure by funding organizations or a latent, indirect influence on contents and direction of research by PhD supervisors? ...

**Cultural situation**
Am I migrant or native inhabitant in the city where I do research? How does my own cultural perspective contribute to stigmas and underlying assumptions in my local research (e.g. a Bavarian researcher coming to Prussia to understand the influences of French Huguenots settling in Berlin)? How do visits abroad and exchange with people from other local contexts affect my work? How can I evaluate and interpret a local context as a foreigner? How can I overcome local stigmata as a local researcher?...

**Economic situation**
Do I have a job at university? Do I live from state subsidies? Is there someone offering me a scholarship? Do I have to feed my children and family? Can I go on working part-time in the private office I used to? ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student’s own situation</th>
<th>Research design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Master Thesis (Spatial situation)**
Do I write in the same place I eat and sleep? Do I share a privately organized studio with friends that work on other projects? Do I have the possibility to use a collective PhD working room? Do I basically read and write while commuting from one city to the next? Or is the library the place where my train of thoughts is stimulated? Does my boss sit next door to hand in some extra work to be realized until tomorrow on his/her project? Is my PhD supervisor seeing me that regularly that I would not ask him/her for an extra consultation? ...

**Master/PhD thesis – Time situation**
3-4 years full time research? 4 to 6 years scientific assistant weekend research? 6 to 8 years parents’ intellectual challenge? What about my private life: who needs my attention besides my computer? How will I manage to reserve free time for myself and my fellow people? ...

**Thesis content - Space**
Shall I choose a place/site/project and analyse it? micro-, meso- or macro analysis?
Conceived, perceived or lived space?
...

**Thesis content – Time**
Shall I rather concentrate on processes, phenomena and transitions?
Actors, institutions, structures?
Networks and governance?
Intentions, interventions and impacts?
Resources, strategies and power?
Discourse, imaginaries and symbolic places?

**Repetition. How to ’survive’ a master or PhD thesis?**
No recipes! Be patient with yourself! Share your concerns with others!
Try to organize subunits and intermediary deadlines! Reward yourself = visualize your own progress!
Do get up again after harsh critiques! Do not take serious critiques personal, but professional = revise crucial points!
Do take into account the fun factor!
In the 1960s, the curator-as-author in the context of contemporary art practice. Swiss curator Harald Szeemann or US American curator Lucy Lippard are often named as pioneering figures of what is today understood as the practice of curating. Szeemann curated his landmark exhibition “When Attitude Becomes Form” at Kunsthalle Bern in 1969. Lippard curated her landmark “Number Shows” exhibition series between 1969 and 1974. In historical terms, the position of the independent curator emerged at the same time as the beginnings of critique regards the institution of the museum. The complex power relations of empire and coloniality, the class-based and gender-based exclusions of museum spaces as public spaces both regards to their collection strategies and their exhibitionary strategies were widely discussed throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It is against this backdrop of independent curating and museological critique, that I want to speak about urban curating.

Urban curators, be they artists, urban planners, architects, or sociologists by training, operate in/with/around urban space and public space. They address issues of inclusion/exclusion, participation, politics, history, and aesthetics. And they bring the knowledge that has been established via critical curating and museological critique, that I want to speak about urban curating.

Urban Curating, a term first coined in the 1990s, brings together socially engaged or activist art practices and new forms of urban knowledge production. It exemplifies a post-disciplinary strategy of involved research and critical spatial practices. From the mid-1990s onwards a number of artists and architects actively working with public space both in Japan and in Europe referred to their emerging practice as urban curating. Together with the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, the architect Raoul Bunschoten and CHORA developed a new profile for the professional architect as urban curator, in which it would be a requirement that architects actively seek the engagement in the praxis of participation and public debate. In 2001, Raoul Bunschoten and CHORA authored a retrospective of this new practice of urban curating and its cultural and political ambitions, entitled Urban Flotsam: Stirring the City. The form of the retrospective was used both as a claim and a proposition. In 2007, Meike Schalk, a practitioner of architecture and art in the public space working in critical studies and urban theory, published her seminal essay "Urban curating: A critical practice towards greater connectedness", in the volume Altering Practices. Feminist Politics and Poetics of Space, edited by Doina Petrescu. My essay "Ma(r)king a difference: Strategies of urban curating", which also included a "Preliminary A-Z of Urban Curating" was part of the 2010 volume Optrek in Transvaal.

On the Role of Public Art in Urban Development. Interventions and Research, edited by Veronica Hekking, Sabrina Lindemann and Annechien Meier. At the same time, the idea of urban curating was also introduced by the Japanese architectural studio bow-wow for their investigative urban research into spaces in Tokyo's dense fabric unplanned by architects, in which various and often apparently diametrically opposite uses – for example a noodle shop and a baseball pitch – were a hybrid combined in a single building. Their research was published in the city guide Made in Tokyo. In retrospect, these different practices are distinguished by privileging the urban as a space of participation entailing the potentials of unexpected and unplanned encounters. The political dimension of participation, conventionally understood as the role of the community in decision-making, is joined with an understanding of spaces and people radically participating in each other's formation, without ever having been invited to do so. Participation began to go far beyond invitation.

The lecture focuses on examples of Urban Curating that bring together socially engaged or activist art practices and new forms of urban knowledge production. The contemporary urban condition intersects complex issues of agency, austerity, expulsions, financialization, globalization, immigration, and precarity.


3.2 DIFFERENT STRANDS IN URBAN STUDIES

Sabine Knierbein

In their “Blackwell Companion to the City” Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (2011) (re)frame the debates on urban questions for urban studies. On 784 pages, they compile 65 essays of authors all well-known for their different expertise within the post-disciplinary field of urban studies in six parts:

1. City Materialities
2. City Mobilities
3. City Affect
4. City Publics and Cultures
5. City Divisions and Differences
6. City Politics and Planning

While acknowledging that all these strands and particularly their combination are equally relevant within urban studies, this lecture input will offer an insight into part 4 “City Publics and Cultures” and points to the epistemological qualities of both knowledge fields. Some findings from this introduction will be outlined (cf. Bridge and Watson, 2011, pp. 379-389):

- Publics and cultures, deeply entwined as they are (...) have complex, sometimes conflictual relationships that define the politics of the urban;
- The notion of the public realm in the city, as one that transcends culture into forms of political will, now exceeds the static space of ‘properly’ constituted debate. Affect and emotion in public discourse require to pay attention to bodies as well as minds in the constitution of publics;
- Public spaces portray a “mosaic of little worlds” (Parks, Chicago School of Ethnography); ideas on the public and rationality; urban publics as well as communities could be represented by the mosaic. Building a wider public beyond these communities could be seen as a major challenge given the social distance and social segregation of one from another;
- Public spaces can be understood as the geography of contemporary publics which cities encapsulate through their diversity and concentrations of difference (scaling up);
- Publics (visible or invisible) are vital in producing cultures;
- The experience of being in public amongst strangers in the city perpetuated urban division through forms of blasé behaviour and indifference: => Simmel (1950 (1903)): mutual indifference between urban dwellers in public to protect themselves from the unbearable nature of emotional contact and overstimulation in the city;
- Political philosophy: Idea of public as a capacity to stand apart from one’s own interests and assumptions:
  => Arendt (1958), later Habermas (1984): idea of rationality to transcend interests and partial perspectives from community through rational discourse;
  => Sennett (1974): alternative approach to urban publics emphasizing that the importance of the public in the city is performative rather than rational;
- Idea that differences in public can be overcome in public discussion through style of public address and bodily behaviour that cut across or disrupt social and cultural divisions;
- Attempt to bridge divisions between rational and performative approaches (Bridge 2005)
  => idea of the subject in process links to Sennett’s idea of the public in process; form of qualified impartiality;
- Cities are concentrations of the possibilities of new publics and new spaces of the public (Farias and Bender 2009).
3.3 PERFORMATIVE URBANISM
Emanuela Semlitsch

“Performative” refers to a situation in which a new reality is created. Acting is not only the expression of something, but that something (new) arises in the action (Austin 2002, De Certeau 1988, Fischer-Lichte 2004). Performances create spaces. “Situations, uses, processes, actors and co-actors are the keys to a performative understanding of urban spaces [...] We cannot be merely an observer from a distance, because our bodies are part of the architectural space that we are experiencing and of the space that we are creating. We always find ourselves part of a complex architectural situation, in which we experience architecture and do not merely observe it” (Wolfrum 2014: 144ff).

Performative elements of culture are part of everyday situations and activities such as festivals, rituals, games, contests, dances, clothes, producing and manufacturing, swapping and transforming. These are repetitive actions and events, through which culture is constituted and the own cultural self-conception is represented and reproduced. These acts are performative insofar as they do not primarily mean something, but produce meanings (research approach of cultural performance in the 1960/70’s: Milton Singer, Victor Turner, Richard Schechner). In the repetition of gestures, movements and actions identity or gender identity in particular is created (Butler 2002).

Important in this process of constitution is that performative utterances and actions are always embedded in interpersonal relationships and the society as a whole, its power is drawn from past events and past settings of meanings and finally addresses the community again. "Performances [are] cultural practices that are understandable only in the context of the social field in which they take place." (Klein/Sting 2005: 9). By communicating and acting in performative ways we learn cultural vocabulary, cultural grammar.

Interventions in urban spaces as planner, architects, artists can be seen as performative itself – a practice transforming reality, but always are embedded in existing spatial relationships. Everyday performances will transform shapes and meanings of those interventions. It is our challenge to integrate this knowledge in planning and design processes, as well as in processes of research and knowledge production. Thinking, writing, discussing can be understood as expression of ideas, but also as a tool to create and define new realities, spaces, culture.
Research has become a buzzword, not only in academia and scientific writing, but equally in artistic practice, architecture, urban studies, or urban planning. Many of these contemporary practices are commonly referred to as research-based practices. But what exactly does that entail? How will research impact on “findings”, “analysis”, and “conclusions”? How will research ultimately lead to the much desired and equally required results?

Artistic practice and scientific writing are both based on research. In the different contexts of the arts, curating, the humanities, or urban planning research uses different approaches and different tools.

More than a guide to research or a straightforward method as to how-to-research in the context of architecture, urban studies, and urban planning, this lecture seeks to line out some of the complexities and challenges regarding the politics of research.

Firstly, I want to trouble both the term research and the relations between “researchers-as-subjects” and their “research subjects.” Subjects is activated here in the dual sense of the word as subjecthood and subjectmatter. Researchers engage with the subjectmatter. The process they carry out is called research. Yet, what is being researched is anything but inert matter. It comes with its own logics, powers, contents. The subjectmatter that is researched therefore also has to be understood as research subject in the dual sense of the word as introduced above. Research-subjects then become - even more - complicated, powerful, contradictory. Secondly, I want to trouble that research can in fact be planned. Of course, a research plan is necessary. Of course, one needs to understand the course of research one wants to take. Yet, the research subjects can take on a life of their own, they can force researchers to change preconceived notions or understandings. Therefore, it is important to understand the complex balance between research subjects’ life of their own and the researchers’ intents regards to knowledge production and findings. In short, how does the research question predefine the course of the research by closing its open course too early? Thirdly, I want to trouble the impact of the researchers’ interests and intents onto the course of their research and the (desired) outcomes. How does the research intent shape the outcome without taking into account the surprises and contradictions afforded by the process of research? How can these politics of research be accounted for in the results and conclusions? Thirdly, how are the researchers’ the situated knowledge (Donna Haraway) and the partial perspective (Donna Haraway) addressed, spoken to, and evidenced in the so-called objective facts? How does a research motivation or a research bias skew the resulting research? Fourthly I want to trouble research in the words of Linda Tuhiway Smith (1999: 1): “From the vantage point of the colonized (...) the term research is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary.” Lastly, I want to emphasize that research is part of national, international, or global research agendas, be they governmental or corporate. Research is part of the oil that greases the capitalist machine.

All this, does by no means imply that one should not do research. On the contrary. Research, critically motivated, politically astute, and, above all, beyond google, is very much needed. Yet, one should be aware of the legacies and implications when entering the contested territory of research. Feminist, queer feminist practice, antISEXist, antiracist, post-colonial, and decolonial theory and practice has not only effectively troubled and transformed research but equally developed new and innovative approaches and methods to research.
Cities are marked by difference. A feminist approach to urban studies, artistic practice, or urban curating is fundamentally intersectional taking into account social differences such as gender, race, class, age, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, religion, or colonial legacies. Current urban developments of rising inequalities, neocolonialism and new forms of expulsion suggest new questions for feminist analysis and epistemology. In the past, feminist theories and methods impacted on urban studies and on critical art practice. Changing current conditions require new feminist tools. The lecture brings together historic examples of feminist urban research practice and open up current questions for future feminist orientations.

There are two main recurring tropes we encounter in current historicization of feminist thought. In many introductions to feminist thought or theory we will find introductory passages stating that feminism has come of age. In many essays and articles by contemporary feminists we will encounter a sober analysis of the agony of feminism or the need for renewal or rejuvenation of the political project of feminism. Both are of importance. The first one is historiographical in nature and points to the institutional establishment of women studies, feminist studies, and gender studies from the late 1960s onwards. The second one emphasises that feminist theory is linked to a transformative social and political project and therefore, as I would like to argue, always in need of its own redefinition.

The first credited Women’s Studies Course was held in 1969 at Cornell University. Work by art historians, architectural historians, as well as urban historians during the 1970s, but also later on, focused on women as historical subjects and sought to search and reclaim women’s historical agency. At the time this was referred to as compensatory history. In 1971 art historian Linda Nochlin published her now famous essay “Why have there been no great women artists?” She put forward an analysis of the power relations and institutional and educational frameworks that produced great artists (with an unmarked male gender), yet no great women artists. The same question could have been asked with regard to architects: Why have there been no great women architects? Canonical teaching of architectural history and theory is still very often marked by a male-centric as well as a Western-centric approach effectively at the expense of women architects or architects of colour.

Another strand of feminist analysis focused on power relations and on the conditions of economic and political inequality. Speaking in very general terms here, feminist analysis has illuminated the gendered division of labour and the gendered division of space which is of particular importance to the fields of architecture and urban planning and to the disciplines of architectural history and theory as well as urban history and theory. Here, the focus is on how architectural design and urban planning both produces and maintains existing power relations. Even though a lot of attention has been paid here to the domestic sphere and reproductive labour, this is of equal importance with regard to access to public space and partaking in public urban life. Feminist critique has expanded toward more differentiated and nuanced approaches of working out urban inequality and urban injustice by incorporating intersectional and post-colonial methods of critique and analysis.

Feminists have thoroughly criticised Western forms feminism for its white middle-class bias. Issues of race, ethnicity, indigeneity were addressed and theorised by black feminists, Chicana feminists, Third World feminists as well as indigenous feminists. Identity politics have created great rifts within feminism. Both post-colonial theory and queer theory have created productive expansions and transgressions of feminist thought.

Today, contemporary urban life marked by profound structural transformations owed to neoliberalism, globalisation, and globalised flows of migration. These result in a new and unprecedent scale of urban injustice. On one hand the twentyfirst century witnesses the growing feminisation and precarization of much of today’s labour. On the other hand we can diagnose a politics of control, fear, surveillance, and commodification with regard to public urban space. Taken together, robust feminist theory to both analyse theoretically and counter-act these developments practically is very much needed at this point in time.
LITERATURE (incl. references unit 1-9)


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