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Learning the City
Cultural Approaches to Civic Learning in Urban Spaces

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Cultural Approaches to Civic Learning in Urban Spaces

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Chapter 1
A Cultural Perspective on the City

Hari Sacré and Sven De Visscher

Abstract This chapter introduces a cultural perspective on civic learning in urban as spaces as the general framework of this publication. Western societies tend to think of urban public spaces as key sites for civic and political formation. Based on socio-spatial frameworks that picture civic learning as a positive outcome of the free mingling of strangers in streets and other material structures, urban planning too often reduces urban spaces to people and bricks. From a cultural perspective such binary images of the city are questioned. Referring to culture as an ongoing communicative process between subjects and objects producing (symbolic) meanings, the production of space appears as an ongoing interaction among subjects, symbolic frameworks and dynamic infrastructures. A spatial grammar of urban learning is introduced. Learning the city results from the relations between people, materials and environment. The papers in this publication contribute to an understanding of civic learning as an everyday practice in which subjects, symbolic frameworks and dynamic infrastructures are interconnected. In other words, we are interested in learning as an everyday practice that alludes to a sense of co-ownership, rather than an act of social conformation. To understand civic learning in urban spaces as a cultural process, the different contributions in this publication will focus on the multiple relationships between learning and the city. They will explore different understandings of civic learning in, through and as a result of urban spaces.

Keywords Urban education · Civic learning · Citizenship · Cultural semiotics

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1.1 Introduction

In this publication we will elaborate a cultural perspective on the city and explore how it might improve our understanding of civic learning as an essential component of the city. Traditionally, civic learning is understood as a social process among citizens to conform to communal requirements (Biesta 2005, 2012). From a political view, civic learning concerns the influencing of decision-making processes (Biesta and Lawy 2006; Holston 2009; Marquand 2004; Staeheli et al. 2013). A cultural understanding of civic learning, central in this publication, will focus on citizens' assemblage of the social, the material and the symbolic, as a kind of wayfinding in society.

It sometimes seems as if urban planning is an exclusively spatial discipline and architects alone are entitled to imagine, model and (re)design cities. The city is conceptualised as a socio-spatial system of people and buildings, and the urban challenge is perceived as a never-ending process of spatially designing and structuring people (Gehl 2010; Loopmans et al. 2011; Whyte et al. 1988). The city as a spatial constellation of people and bricks seems to be a recurrent image in urban studies. Recent concepts as 'the soft versus the hard city' (Reinders 2013), 'the subjective versus material dimension of the city' (Spatscheck 2012) and 'the everyday versus the concept city' (De Certeau 2011; Soenen 2006) seem to articulate this essentialist dichotomy. Urbanists have long held the view that the physical and social dynamics of public space play a central role in the formations of publics and public culture (Amin 2008). Hence civic learning is often conceptualised as a positive outcome of the free mingling of strangers in urban structures (buildings, streets, squares, areas…) (Amin and Thrift 2002).

Issues of civic learning in urban spaces are closely related to urban education. As a field of study, urban education has been dominated by a social problems

orientation (Pink and Noblit 2008). The urban environment is often approached as a problematic area for learning and development, and educational provisions in the city—such as schools—are studied as arenas for inequality, exclusion and segregation. At the same time critics argue that public policies do not manage to produce compelling strategies to support disadvantaged groups to apply learning as an instrument to claim and redefine their positions in society. As a mode of intervention, urban education is concerned with all forms of learning in the urban context, and intends to redistribute sources of power and (social, cultural, economic…) capital, through educational interventions such as schooling, youth work, adult and community education. Urban educational interventions are often rooted in a framing of the lifeworld of particular social groups in certain areas as problematic. Yet charges are predominantly levelled at the victims and not at the perpetrators (Pink and Noblit 2008). The question is who created an economy that leaves so many impoverished? Who is in charge of residential segregation? Who set up educational systems that cannot meet the needs of people who must rely on them? In Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), Freire elaborates on the powerful relationship between culture, education and society. He states that education is always a form of cultural action in society. Cultural action should be understood as a form of action that operates upon the social structure, either with the objective of preserving that structure or of transforming it. Cultural action either serves domination (consciously or unconsciously) or it serves the liberation of oppressed groups. This tension between domination and liberation is also visible in many current educational and social work interventions. Community development, for instance, tends to break down areas into local communities and alienate people, without the study of these communities both as totalities in themselves and as parts of other totalities (area, region, nation, continent) (Amin 2008). The more people are oppressed and alienated from each other, the less collective actions they will undertake to change their social positions (Freire 1970). Freire advocates the idea that pedagogy should reclaim its political quest in society. Pedagogues should understand that they are not neutral agents in the conflicts between the oppressed and oppressors. He states that being neutral means to choose the side of the oppressors. If education acknowledges itself as a form of cultural action and supports the position of the oppressed masses, Freire believes it could be a source for establishing more equality, solidarity and freedom. Inspired by Freire's work, we don't theorise urban education as an instrument to adapt the people to the existing city, but as a means to (re)read the city and to make it susceptible to change. According to Henry A. Giroux this more bottom up approach of education that supports the cultural action of the people, would benefit from a collaboration between cultural studies theorists and educators. If pedagogues and cultural workers explore the contexts in which they intervene, they are able to apply education in the interests of the people and reclaim pedagogy as a central category of cultural politics (Giroux 2004).

Cultural studies, a field of study developed by thinkers such as Raymond Williams (*Culture is ordinary*, 1958), Richard Hoggart (*La culture du pauvre*, 1970) and Stuart Hall (*Questions of cultural identity*, 1996), opens up our understanding of culture, from a privilege of the high class to a multi-layered practice that

unfolds through everyday life (Hall and Gay 1996; Hoggart and Passeron 1970; Williams 1981). Cultural studies produces knowledge about the everyday culture of ordinary people and the ways their cultural production is structurally being neglected, denied and jostled by the dominant classes in society. Cultural studies is rooted in an ongoing struggle for democracy and therefore concerned with the deconstruction of cultural politics in many social areas. Therefore cultural studies theorists derive theories and methodologies from multiple disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, pedagogy, philosophy and linguistics, and promotes itself as an interdisciplinary field of study (Baetens and Verstraete 2009). Approaching culture as a way of life, a sphere that all citizens produce and possess, and a collective framework that stores people's common matters, shared solidarities and public engagements, it generates opportunities for a more democratic understanding of urban education that supports the position of (excluded) groups. In this line of thinking we believe it becomes necessary to look beyond the traditional educational interventions by the powerful to school or socialize the powerless. As such, we are interested in the many ways citizens produce own learning mechanisms to experiment with citizenship. Therefore we will scrutinize citizenship as a cultural practice that guides citizens through the thicks and thins of life. We advocate a bottom up approach of civic learning, that acknowledges citizens as productive subjects who are able to transform positions in society through the practice of learning (Lefebvre 1991). From this point of view public policies should support that what is already there, namely a myriad of self-invented learning processes through which citizens find their way in society and co-produce the city. In this publication we approach civic learning as an engaged practice and a process of transformation (Biesta et al. 2014). We subscribe Biesta's arguments on citizen's engagement in the practice of civic learning to be rooted in the desire to restore the democratic values of equality, freedom and solidarity (Biesta 2010). In this regard, the mission of public policies is to preserve and support those places and spaces where the experiment of civic learning can (still) be experienced.

Scrutinizing the city as a cultural context for education, this publication will advocate the city to be a learning experience, a text that invites citizens' multiple readings and (re)writings, and ultimately to become a curriculum in itself. Acknowledging the city as a curriculum for education, the city is not only the context for education but becomes educationally relevant in itself (Leach 1997). These assumptions about the relationships between cities, culture and learning require a new urbanism, one that rethinks the urban and goes beyond the city as a socio-spatial system of people and buildings. In this regard critical observations in the field of urban geography have caught our attention as they address a more bottom up approach to urbanism, that pictures cities as complex assemblages of the proximate and the distanced, the displaced and the placed and a mixture of the transhuman and the human (Amin and Thrift 2002). Within this new urbanism, learning is explored as a transhuman activity, read as a displaced process and conceptualised as being a distanced constellation of multiple spatialities and temporalities (McFarlane 2011). Urban geography aims to analyse the materiality of the urban life that captures the ever-changing element of human experience

(Chattopadhyay 2012). As the distinction between the near and the far is no longer clear, geographies of responsibility, solidarity and equity, stretch across spaces, highlight connections that are otherwise easily avoided (McCann and Ward 2011). This stream of knowledge no longer pictures the city as a bound socio-spatial system, but instead explores the urban as a fluid assemblage that develops through everyday learning practices of its citizens (McFarlane 2011).

A cultural approach to the city provides a strong framework for educational researchers to picture civic learning as an essential component of the city. To further explore this cultural approach to civic learning in urban spaces, the following part of this introductory chapter will document on the shift from a socio-spatial towards a cultural understanding of the urban and argue that it opens up our understanding of civic learning from a mere social towards a more political and a cultural practice. We will discuss civic learning being a cultural practice that co-produces the city, thus addressing civic learning as a way of dwelling with the city, through which citizens find their way in a constantly evolving society. We will unfold intricacies about the contested position of citizens as producers of the city. In doing so, we will explore three questions addressing the relation between culture, learning and the city.

1. How does civic learning *appear* in urban spaces?
2. How does civic learning *take place* through urban spaces?
3. How are urban spaces created *as a result of* civic learning?

1.2 From a Socio-Spatial Towards a Cultural Understanding of the City

Studying the city has mainly been approached as being a socio-spatial question, yet emerging literature documents a cultural turn in urbanism. The city is questioned as a socio-spatial structure indicating the territory of the urban community, and explored as a relational assemblage produced by citizens both inside and outside the city. The socio-spatial approach in urban studies is based on influential literature in urban sociology, whereas the cultural perspective is described in literature from the fields of urban and human geography, and cultural studies. In what follows, we will briefly expose the shift from a socio-spatial towards a cultural understanding of the city, documenting the cultural turn in urban studies.

Urban sociology is the study of life and human interaction in metropolitan and urban areas, or the study of cities and their role in the development of society. It is an established subfield in sociology that studies the structures, processes, changes and problems of urban areas (Zukin 1980). As an academic discipline, urban sociology is rooted in the work of Max Weber and Georg Simmel. In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, they studied the accelerating processes of urbanisation and their effects on feelings of social alienation and anonymity. From the 1920s onwards, urban

sociology has been mainly developed by American scholars. A major body of works emerged from the Chicago school, around which key scholars in sociology such as George H. Mead and Louis Wirth contributed to an understanding of the interrelation of metropolitan structures and micro-interactions in cities. Building on the notions of the Chicago school, the American journalist and activist Jane Jacobs contributed one of the most influential books on urban planning and cities. In *The death and life of great American cities,* Jacobs critiques urban renewal policies of the 1950s, which, she claims, created isolated and alienated urban spaces and destroyed communities. As an activist, Jacobs developed a critical framework for urban planning and advocated the qualities of dense, mixed use neighbourhoods with a vibrant urban community (life) (Jacobs 1992; Martin 2009).

Since the second half of the 20th century, a shift took place. From academic, institutionally-led research, urban planners translated and adapted this urban sociological knowledge into city-driven projects with impact on public realm strategies and urban design interventions. American urbanist William Whyte combined environmental theories with ethnographic fieldwork to analyse the successes and failures of urban spaces. Observing the natural order of spaces and the ways people move between them, Whyte provided principles and strategies to improve those spaces. The Danish architect Jan Gehl translates these somewhat metropolitan analyses and insights into the context of European cities. Based in Copenhagen, Gehl promotes urban planning on a human scale, taking citizens' needs as the starting point for urban planning and design (Gehl 2010, 2011; Gehl and Svarre 2013).

Trying to understand the relationship between the built environment and social life, William Whyte created 'the street life project'. Focusing on the dynamics of urban spaces, this research group applied anthropological observations to understand urban spaces, which was remarkable for that time. Such an anthropological approach had been applied to the study of exotic cultures abroad but not to the most immediate urban environment. Observing plazas, parks and various informal recreational spaces in the city, Whyte and his team wished to discover why some city spaces work while others do not, and what the practical implications of increasing the liveability of these urban spaces might be. During their observations, Whyte and his team investigated the ideal amount of sitting space on a plaza and the intricate interplay of sun, wind, trees and water. Furthermore, the impact of steps, public art and performance, urban parks, squares, outcasts (drunk people, drug dealers…) and music in urban spaces were studied in relation to social life. Whyte drew conclusions from those quantitative observations, but also valued the qualitative human interactions that inhabit them, and the often surprising ways in which they unfold (Whyte et al. 1988). Whereas Whyte pursued an academic tradition on the analysis of urban spaces, Gehl's work details tools for planning and design of urban spaces. In understanding how urban spaces work, Gehl emphasises the essential interplay between social life and the built environment. In *Cities for people* (2014), Gehl explains how urban structures and planning influence human behaviour and the ways in which cities operate. On the one hand his work contains a descriptive part in which he explains the relationship between social life and the built environment, and on the other hand a prescriptive part to promote cities on a

human scale. According to Gehl, city planning is a question of invitation, which explains the domination of cars and parkings in cities as a logical consequence of urban policies in the 20th century, filling all available city space with moving and parked vehicles. In comparing policies of different cities, Gehl underlines the hypothesis that more roads would attract more cars. Building on this hypothesis, he also provides empirical data to show how less roads resulted in less traffic. This fundamental way of thinking is applied to the relationship between the built environment and social life. Accordingly, Gehl linked better spatial conditions for urban life to *more* urban life and introduced the city of Copenhagen as a shining example (Gehl 2010, 2011; Gehl and Svarre 2013).

From an urban sociological perspective, citizens are primarily, albeit not exclusively, perceived as social agents in the city. The mobility and social life of citizens is studied as a background to the built environment, and conclusions are translated into design strategies. Accordingly, urban planners and policy makers are regarded as experts of the city, who base their ideas on sociological research. Citizens, then, are perceived as passive subjects whose social life is the object of urban planning (Gehl and Svarre 2013). This socio-spatial perspective stems from the idea that the built environment and physical structures serve as background to which social life engenders. This implicates the belief that redesigning the built environment and its urban structures will redefine social life. Obviously, there is no doubt that interruptions in the built environment will affect social life in one way or another, although the question remains if this could be regarded as a causal relationship. To put it differently, one could wonder whether the city is constituted by a mere social and material dimension, or there is a third—more symbolic—dimension that is overlooked.

1.3 The City as a Cultural Assemblage of Symbolic Frameworks

Recently, German urbanists have given rise to the movement of 'Performative Urbanism' (Wolfrum and Brandis 2015). According to this movement, the traditional patterns of the city are outdated. As societal evolutions produce new patterns of urban landscapes, Performative Urbanism insists on a cultural understanding of urbanism (Dirksmeier and Helbrecht 2008). It suggests a semiotic definition of architecture, and describes 'architecture as the art to articulate space' (Eco 1976; Wolfrum 2013). This definition includes the recognition that the production of space does not only belong to the field of architecture and urbanism and therefore links with Ash Amin's notion of animated spaces (Amin 2015). Considering the progressive displacement of public spaces, the built environment and social life are not the sole dimensions for deliberation and socialisation. There are, for instance, the jostle of markets, states, parliaments, bureaucracies, books, telephones, television, film, internet worlds, ideas, ideals, personal experience and much more things

referring to collective cultures. Hence, the street can be read as a microcosm of multiple happenings and meanings that resonance multiple spatialities and temporalities, as a medium for ebb and flow, an assemblage of humans and objects. Observing public space in Bombay, Amin describes private life lived on the street, commercial activity of all sorts, the jostle of humans, animals and vehicles; multiple activities such as praying, wandering, lingering, passing, shopping, watching and listening; uses, smells and sounds; rules and norms set by callers, clocks, intermediaries, transport and commercial timetables, and official or unofficial guardians of that space. And in the course of the day, all of this changes many times. Amin argues this is not only the case in the cities of informality, overflow and excess in the South, but also in the cities of the North, be it however more regulated and sanitised. The jostle may be quieter, the competition less fierce, the disorder more regulated and the entities less diverse in the public spaces, but their compositional character as assemblies of multiplicity would exactly be the same (Amin 2015).

Amin points out that traditional notions of Western urban planning are littered with ambitious expectations of the social and political opportunities of urban public spaces (Amin 2015). The free mingling of strangers in the streets, squares, parks and other shared spaces is perceived as encouraging a culture of civic learning. In this line of thinking, a city that promotes public spaces open to all, is supposed to be a city of democratic citizenship. Critical remarks are raised to these notions of urban public spaces as they are far from universally accepted (Amin et al. 2000). Since immaterial social space becomes a layered social text through the production of space, space is not something external to the individual but a medium, an extension of the human body, an embodied interpretation of the world. To store knowledge about the world, people create symbols, codes and indexes which is applied during everyday activities in the form symbolic frameworks. Everyone produces symbolic frameworks and everyone carries symbolic frameworks (Williams 1981), which makes the city a space where a myriad of symbolic frameworks interact (Leach 1997). Amin (2008) argues that people not only produce symbolic frameworks in urban spaces, but also derive meanings from symbolic frameworks communicated by multiple formative spaces like urban planning, policies, internet, journals and advertising.

Shifting to a more cultural approach of the city, the urban appears as a fluid assemblage with multiple meanings produced by the symbolic frameworks by all urban actors. Symbolic frameworks originate from the communication between the individual and the environment as a way to learn, value and store acquired knowledge and they can be individual or shared, but are rarely collective or universal (Nöth 1995). Even if a specific symbolic framework is formalised by law, this does not imply that every citizen will endorse it while participating in the city. Nevertheless, shared symbolic frameworks could be applied by specific groups to participate, question and redefine their position in the city (Biesta and Lawy 2006, p. 66).

Studying symbolic frameworks in the city, is a topic that relates to the field of cultural semiotics. This field has been constituted through the work of three key thinkers in Europe during the 20th century, mentioned below. Firstly, the French

sociologist Henri Lefebvre theorised the production of space as a practice that is not exclusive to the profession of policymakers or urban planners, but peculiar to every citizen. By emphasising the political and constructed nature of space and therefore profoundly idealogical nature of space, he raised the question 'who has the right to the city?' (Lefebvre 1991; Simonsen 2005). Secondly, subscribing to a semiotic approach to the city, Umberto Eco read the city as a communicative entity. In his article 'Function and Sign: Semiotics of Architecture' Eco applied semiotic thinking to urban architecture. Whereas urban architecture is traditionally approached as being mainly functional, he argued architecture to be primarily communicative. In his view, architecture is a form of mass communication and therefore he drew the distinction between architecture as a functional object and architecture as a symbolic object (Eco 1976; Podlaszewski 2012; Wolfrum and Brandis 2015). Thirdly, the symbolic dimension of urban space is a key element in the work of Michel De Certeau (Ahearne 1995; De Certeau 2011). Drawing on a linguistic approach to meaning-making, he conceptualises the city as a discourse that speaks to its citizens and structures the urban experiences. According to De Certeau, citizens are not totally controlled by the physical structures of the city, but instead produce resistance by interpreting or poaching the city differently. In De Certeau's work, urban space appears as an arena between urban planners and citizens for obtaining the right to the city. Urban planners tend to structure and control citizens by designing urban strategies, while citizens would redefine and protest against those strategies by applying urban tactics. De Certeau also broadened the debate from a merely conceptual level towards an understanding of the city as a commonly embodied experience (De Certeau 2011; McFarlane 2011).

Due to this cultural turn in urban studies, a city is viewed as an assemblage of multiple spatial forms, actor networks and logics of development whose intersections shape urban spaces, rather than imagined as a bounded territorial entity ruled by singular logics on development (Amin and Thrift 2002; Simone 2011; Taylor 2013). Urban spaces appear as 'complex adaptive assemblages' (Dovey 2010) gathering points of multiple meanings and forms, multitemporal, multispatial, regulated and unplanned. This includes that all places, including the everyday spaces such as the street, park, bus or mall, are seen as spaces of 'throwntogetherness' (Amin 2015). Those spaces emerge as a dynamic and layered assemblage of bodies, objects and matter; of divergent patterns of use, occupancy and demand; and of many time-space conjunctions.

It is clear that a cultural understanding of the city stems from the idea that meaning in the city is not fixed but perceived and produced by all urban actors (both citizens and formative spaces). Not only do citizens participate in urban space according to predetermined procedures reflected in the symbolic frameworks of policy makers and planners, they also participate on behalf of their own symbolic frameworks. Whereas the former idea of participation relates to urban research as a way of gaining interest in how predetermined procedures shape citizens' participation, the latter idea focuses on the investigation of symbolic frameworks as such. Understanding the city starts with exposing symbolic frameworks and analysing the way in which these symbolic frameworks interact and shape the city. As a result,

citizens will be no longer perceived as passive recipients of the urban form, but appear as producers of symbolic frameworks and co-producers of the city.

1.4 Spatial Grammar of Urban Learning

Much as the city is considered an assemblage produced by all urban actors through everyday activities, urban learning is now in need of a new paradigm. Aiming to develop an urbanism that is progressive, McFarlane (2011) conceptualised urban learning as an important domain through which the city is assembled, lived and contested. He describes learning as a process, practice and interaction through which knowledge is created, contested and transformed. Learning appears to be an assemblage distributed among people, materials and space that is often neither formal nor simply individual. Hence learning is constituted through relations between people, materials and environment. McFarlane (2011) uses the concept of assemblage as a spatial grammar of urban learning. He refers to assemblage as a concept to emphasise the activity through which knowledge, materials and histories are assembled and contested. Assemblage could technically be understood as a context for describing unity across differences, a concept that relates to urban perception, interaction and creation. Assemblage could also be understood as an orientation on how the social, political, economic and cultural intertwine with one another. Therefore, assemblage is important first and foremost as a political framework, a depiction of the ways in which cities might be learnt differently, i.e. imagining urban learning as a continual negotiation between the actual and the possible (van der Burgt and Gustafson 2013).

Assemblage as a spatial grammar of learning is interesting in relation to symbolic frameworks, as it could be understood as their cause. Through the act of assembling, citizens learn, value and store urban knowledge as symbolic frameworks. The relation between symbolic frameworks and assemblage is mediated by the processes of translation, coordination and dwelling (McFarlane 2011). In our fieldwork conducted in Ghent, Belgium between 2013 and 2016 on children's production of space, those three processes were very obvious. The first, *translation,* was experienced during an urban renewal workshop, focusing on what children think their neighbourhood needs. When a Turkish-Belgian boy, aged 13, talked about their visit to his relatives in Turkey and the excursion they made to shelters for homeless children, he was moved by the idea of helping poor children and this concept became symbolic to him. He argued that his neighbourhood in Ghent also needed a shelter for homeless families as he heard that an increasing number of families face poverty. It is clear how he *translated* this symbolic framework into the reality and specificity of his Belgian neighbourhood. Secondly, *coordination*, also appeared in this urban renewal workshop during a conversation with a 12-year-old Bulgarian-Belgian girl. She described which parks in the neighbourhood she liked to go to. A centrally located park was missing in her stories. She had learned that this park was mainly for Turkish-Belgian children and knew she would be in

trouble if she went there. The meaning of certain parks being accessible to Turkish-Belgian children exclusively became symbolic to her, and coordinated and structured her everyday activities. Thirdly, *dwelling* was experienced during a city workshop with six teenagers in another neighbourhood. We were interested in their perception of the urban environment and asked them to guide us along symbolic places. Those teenagers lived in the city and walking was their primary mode of transportation. For them, walking in the city was an everyday practice with its own logics. We did not go straight from one urban spot to another, but instead went into shops owned by relatives, took a detour to recollect personal memories, rested on broken benches, heard unique stories and got acquainted with their religious communities and settlements. While dwelling with the city, their symbolic frameworks interacted and revealed elements that would guide us through their city. Every visual, digital, spatial or embodied sign, every single such sign, became a potential element to approve, discuss or rethink our tour (Sacré and De Visscher 2014).

1.5 Cultural Approaches to Civic Learning in Urban Spaces

In urban planning, citizenship and civic learning are often regarded as a circumstantial phenomenon or as a positive outcome of the free mingling of strangers in urban structures at most. Concerning the abovementioned socio-spatial understanding of the city, any discussion on civic learning would face the difficulty of imagining civic learning as an essential component of the city. Approaching the city from a cultural perspective, mainly developed through emerging literature in urban geography and cultural semiotics, urban learning is addressed as an assembling activity that co-produces the city (McFarlane 2011). As civic learning is not synonymous to urban learning, influential theories on citizenship and civic learning will be situated below.

International literature comprises many interpretations of the concept of citizenship, of which three particular frameworks have caught our attention. First, citizenship defined as a status indicating who does and who does not belong to the nation or community. Citizenship as a status addresses those who are legal members of a community and implies that whoever possesses this status is equal with respect to the rights and duties that come with this status (Biesta and Lawy 2006, p. 66; Holston 2009; Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014). Second, citizenship could also be understood as a set of rights and duties. This republican interpretation relates in particular to national communities and their expectations towards citizens to fulfill civic duties. Third, citizenship could also be viewed as a practice according to which citizenship is not an acquired status but a continuous practice of people finding their way in society (De Certeau 2011; Lefebvre 1991). As such, civic

learning entails as a process in which (private) issues can be made public and become subject of dialogue and negotiation.

Regarding processes of civic learning in urban spaces, Biesta and Lawy (2006) distinguish between a social and a political understanding of citizenship. A social understanding of citizenship emphasises the idea of being allowed to take part in urban spaces, whereas a political understanding of citizenship concerns the influence one could exercise on decision-making in urban spaces (Biesta and Lawy 2006). A political understanding of citizenship is not equal to politics. *The political* correlates with the French word *le politique* and should be distinguished from *politics* or *policy-making* which relates to the French word *la politique* (Rancière 2003; Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014). While politics refers to managerial procedures for dealing with the interplay of social, political and other power relations shaping everyday policies, the political denotes the procedure that disrupts any given socio-spatial order by staging equality and exposing a wrong (Swyngedouw 2014).

In the production of space, Lefebvre conceptualises the spatial production of citizens as a kind of wayfinding, positioning and learning with the city. He distinguishes different modes of spatial production that is perceived space, conceived space and lived space (Lefebvre 1991). Perceived space refers to the spatial practices articulating the institutionalized meanings in the city. Conceived space involves the representation of space, referring to the dominant code of spatial constellations that are developed by policy makers and spatial planners. Lived space denotes the act of ascribing new meanings to urban spaces. In the production of 'lived' space, citizens leave behind the putative passive consumerism and become perceivers and producers of space (Simonsen 2005). The relation between perceiving, conceiving and producing space, and the civic learning experiences it entails, is neither social, nor merely political, but cultural in particular. Civic learning as a social practice focuses on issues of participation within the social organisation of the city, while the idea of civic learning as a political practice is concerned with citizens' power to influence decision-making processes in the city. A cultural view on civic learning applies to civic learning as a kind of wayfinding or spatial production by emending perceived and conceived space rather than participation and influence in the social organization of the city. This cultural insight into civic learning redefines the position of citizens and also affects our understanding of the city as such. Understanding the city is no longer a matter of merely reading the social and the material dimension, but requires knowledge about the symbolic dimension as well. The city is a dynamic assemblage of the social, material and symbolic (Leach 1997; Reinders 2013; Sandercock 1998).

This shift from a socio-spatial towards a cultural understanding of the city might suggest useful avenues for capturing the dialectic relation between social activity, material infrastructures and symbolic frameworks. To understand civic learning as a cultural practice is to understand civic learning as a type of wayfinding that interrupts the relationship between the individual and the society by assembling the social, the material and the symbolic.

1.6 Central Questions

Urban planning too often reduces urban spaces to people and bricks, based on the socio-spatial conceptualization of civic learning as a positive outcome of the free mingling of strangers in streets and other material structures (Gehl 2010; Loopmans et al. 2011; Whyte et al. 1988). Relatively new concepts such as 'the soft vs the hard city' (Reinders 2013), 'the subjective vs material dimension of the city (Spatscheck 2012)' and 'the everyday vs the concept city' (De Certeau 2011; Jacobs 1992) seem to articulate this essential dichotomy. According to Amin, civic learning cannot be reduced to the practice of connecting citizens in formative landscapes. In fact, in order to foster a culture of civic learning it is required to understand and support citizens' ways of dwelling with the city. Dwelling is not only a phenomenological, but also a skillful practice of negotiating and appropriating space in meaningful ways. These skills are tacit and learned through the translation and adaptation of symbolic frameworks, structuring the subjective knowledge of the city (Noë 2012).

Civic learning in urban spaces is a social practice as far as it concerns citizens being allowed to meet and take part in urban spaces. When the urban environment merely serves as a background for the learning process, citizenship is acquired through the interaction with other citizens. Understanding civic learning as a political practice draws the attention to the possibilities of citizens as active producers of urban learning experiences. People do not only participate in, but also initiate civic learning experiences. Therefore, the concept of citizenship is broadened from status to practice (Biesta and Lawy 2006). Civic learning is a cultural practice when citizenship is perceived as a communication process through which citizens negotiate and acquire their position in the urban society. Hence, civic learning appears as a kind of becoming, experimenting, poaching, wayfaring or dwelling with the city (Lefebvre 1991; De Certeau 2011; Ingold 2000; McFarlane 2011).

To understand civic learning in urban spaces as a cultural practice means to approach citizenship as a communication process that interrupts the relationship between the individual and society, through which citizens negotiate and acquire their position in urban society. This book will further elaborate and relate this concept to current research conducted in Europe, raise three interrelated questions, and gain in-depth understanding of the relationship between civic learning, culture and the city.

1. 'How does civic learning appear in urban spaces?' endeavours to understand the city as a context for learning.
2. 'How does civic learning take place through urban spaces?' attempts to frame the specific learning opportunities enabled by urban processes.
3. 'How do urban spaces engender as a result of civic learning?' involves theories on the role of citizens in the production of urban space.

1.7 Introducing the Chapters

In the following chapters, each author will discuss specific urban educational contexts from a cultural perspective and therefore explore the relationship between the social, the material and the symbolic dimension in the city. Every chapter will detail distinct social groups and specific educational contexts. In doing so, different approaches will be applied such as a life world approach, a policy approach, or a combination of both. Whereas the concept of culture might be easily connected with lived space produced by citizens, the policy approaches draw attention on culture as a productive force in the city that structures and influences the learning opportunities of its citizens. We will structure the chapters on their approach to civic learning in urban spaces, and therefore start with two chapters that subscribe a lifeworld approach, moving on with the chapter that combines both a life world and policy approach, and end with two chapters that describe a policy approach to civic learning in urban spaces.

Chapter 2: Geographies of Hanging out: Playing, dwelling and thinking with the city.

In this chapter Noora Pyyry—educational geographer at the university of Helsinki in Finland—describes young people's learning experiences in the city by hanging out, based on a post human acknowledgement of the capacity of the material world to produce effects in human bodies. She applies a life world approach to document young people's hanging out knowing, and focuses on the everyday outdoor spaces in the city as educational contexts for civic learning. She will present vignettes from a study on young people's hanging out in San Francisco and draw attention to the importance of young people having the time and space to be with their peers without strict plans and schedules.

Chapter 3: Storytelling in Urban spaces: Exploring storytelling as a social work intervention in processes of urbanization.

In this chapter a team of researchers and lecturers—in the fields of social work, social pedagogy and cultural studies—from University College Ghent in Belgium, report on a teaching experiment with students from the professional bachelor program of social work. In the educational course *creative welfare work*, students explored storytelling as a social work intervention in the city. Applying a bottom up approach to read and interrupt urban spaces, and using the art of storytelling, these students scrutinized a more cultural approach to social work that envisions civic learning as a process of way finding in society that takes place in everyday urban environments.

Chapter 4: The inner city skater facility—playground or control mechanism? On urban youth, civic learning and pedagogical dilemmas.

In this chapter Peter H. Frostholm and David T. Gravesen—educational sociologists at the VIA University College in Denmark—describe policies and everyday meanings of a skater facility in a Danish town. They focus on young skaters' civic learning opportunities that appear as negotiations between the own youth culture and the cultural frameworks communicated by presence of the SSP-workers

(social Service of School and Police unit). The skater facility is studied as an urban educational context both from the perspective of the skaters and the SSP workers.

Chapter 5: Space is more than place: The urban context as contested terrain of inclusive learning settings for adults and arena of political subjectivation.

In this chapter Silke Schreiber-Barsch—professor in adult education at the university of Hamburg in Germany—studies the topography of learning in the field of lifelong learning in Germany. She looks into the cultural frameworks of inclusion and exclusion that are produced by policies in the field of adult education. Empirical findings will be discussed to gain insight into how access to a place of learning is interpreted and organized by adult education institutions, and to reflect on processes of political subjectivation.

Chapter 6: (Re)-Learning the city for intergenerational exchange.

In this chapter Helen Manchester and Keri Facer—researcher and professor in educational and social futures at the university of Bristol in United Kingdom—compare two international policies that are currently working to realign the social, material and representational elements of the city in ways that are helpful for both children and older adults, the Age friendly city (AFC) and the child friendly city (CFC). In order to understand better how the city might (re) learn to become intergenerational they explore different intergenerational assemblages in the AFC and CFC policies in Bristol.

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Chapter 2
Geographies of Hanging Out: Playing, Dwelling and Thinking with the City

Noora Pyyry

Abstract In this paper, I approach thinking as something that takes place in playful encounters with the city: it is then always connected to doing. New reflection emerges in everyday action with everything that comes together in a given event. This understanding is based on a posthuman acknowledgement of the capacity of the material world to produce effects in human bodies: urban spaces take part in the event of hanging out, that is, they can make things happen. I focus my discussion on the possibilities for experimentation that hanging out in the city opens up. Because hanging out is wonderfully aimless, time and space is cleared for dwelling with the city, and then *re-cognizing* the world. To deliver my argument, I illustrate vignettes from a study on young people's hanging out in San Francisco. By presenting the concept of *hanging-out-knowing*, I draw attention to the importance of young people having the time and space to be with their peers without strict plans and schedules.

Keywords Dwelling · Enchantment · Hanging out · Hanging-out-knowing · Learning · Thinking · Rights · Urban space · Young people

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2.1 Introduction

As part of my research project on young people's hanging out, teenage participants photographed urban spaces that were special to them in some way.[1] The aim was to encourage the participants to think about their everyday spaces and geographical practices, and to better understand young people's ways of dwelling in the city. 'Geographies of hanging out' refers to research on young people's free time practices in public spaces (Pyyry and Tani 2016). To approach these geographies from within practice, and to experiment with everyday spaces and things, both the participants and I conducted *photo-walks* (Pyyry 2015b) in the city. In the walks, photography was connected to walking without a clear destination, and the city thus took part in the research process by guiding the practice: in a way, the city posed questions and pushed the photographer to think. By linking action and

[1]In San Francisco, ten girls (12–13 years) took part in the research. The participatory study was conducted through school with the help of their art teacher, but separately from school work. The project started with introduction and a mind mapping session, after which the girls launched for their photo-walks. I then discussed hanging out and urban dwelling with the girls in photo-talks (Pyyry 2015b). De-briefing happened by mental mapping and the girls also put together an inspiring photo-exhibition at school.

Fig. 2.1 A street in San Francisco. Photo by a participant, 13 years

understanding, the photo-walks fostered creative multisensory reflection about the city, with the city. The next photograph (Fig. 2.1) was taken by a girl in San Francisco on her photo-walk.

The girl later reflected on why that particular spot matters to her:

> We always used to just hang out there and, just like, run around and play tag and stuff. We also used to just sit there and hang out and talk. […] We still do it.

Looking at the photograph, very little could be said about hanging out or that location in the city. It looks like an ordinary street. Reading the photograph with the girl's words makes it possible to see teenagers on the street, running around, touching the tree, giggling and having fun. Whether or not our imagination matches what actually has been going on there, the girl's words suggest that for her, the street was a place of playfulness, friendship, laughter, movement and spatial engagement. This feeling of involvement is central to my story, since through meaningful practical engagement with one's everyday surroundings new reflection can arise. This becomes possible when things matter, even if just for a moment.

It is obviously impossible to say if, and what kind of, new reflection or learning indeed took place there and then on that street. Much of the learning that I tackle with

in this chapter goes on unnoticed, and most importantly, unverbalized. But, learning does not have to be verbal to count as important, it does not need to be a represented process of 'rationally' thinking about something (Thrift et al. 2010). Instead it can be an unspecific fleeting moment of looking at familiar spaces and things differently. Sometimes it is just a moment of joy and engagement that has the potential to open up something unforeseen. Most importantly this is a moment that is *felt*: something happens that attunes us to the world differently, makes us think in a new direction (Diprose 2002). It is an event of being caught up in a moment, a force that can be sensed even if not pinpointed. Bennett (2001) talks about *enchantment* when she refers to this sudden and surprising experience of wonder-at-the-world that entails a potential for change. It is an event of joy, astonishment and puzzlement—even fear. It is then not always a pleasurable experience, but it somehow challenges what is known. It is a moment of being 'swept up by the world' (Massumi 2011, p. 3). This *re-cognizing* (Thrift 2011) the world is not a linear process, nor does it then have a goal, as is often the case with learning within the context of formal education. It happens in being, through practical involvement with the world. Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) talk about the *refrain* (orig. *la ritournelle*) to explain how change takes place in repetition: if the same song is played repeatedly, there is always space for difference in the expression. Change (as in 'development'), per se, is not a goal, but through different rhythms and repetition, also hanging out and engaging with the same space over and over again ('We still do it.') can create new worlds through re-cognition (on repetition, see also Bennett 2001). This change requires time and space, and openness to new encounters and surprise.

In this chapter, I explore young people's hanging out and the possibilities for *spatial-embodied learning* that this, often carefree and non-instrumental, way of being-in-the-world entails. When hanging out, young people usually do not have fixed plans for activities that can be labelled as 'productive'. They are therefore open to the new and unpredictable, they are open to change. I will start my discussion by conceptualizing hanging out as creative play with one's surroundings that fosters 'dwelling with' the city. I will show that this meaningful engagement with the world opens up space for enchantment and inspires new associations, and hereby connect the geographies of hanging out to the discussion that is going on within posthuman educational theorization. Finally, I make an argument for the value of *hanging-out-knowing* midst the contemporary hype of individual student assessment within formal education. The argument also relates to the tightened notions of safety and restrictions in young people's independent mobility in Western cities. In the current atmosphere, there is often very little time and space for hanging out. I will hence conclude the paper by reflecting on the implications that approaching learning as a more-than-human event that comes together in everyday practice has for educational policy and urban planning.

2.2 Hanging Out Is 'Dwelling With': Playful Appropriation of Urban Space

Whether playing tag on the street, skateboarding on a wall (Fig. 2.2) or trying on colorful make-up at a shopping mall just for a laugh, young people *dwell with* the city in playful and creative ways while hanging out (Pyyry 2016b). By dwelling with, I refer to meaningful practical engagement with spaces and things (see Ingold 2000). This engagement can include (1) intentional acts or just (2) habitual involvement with the city. Either way, young people temporarily break away from the seriousness of the goal-oriented adult life and claim the city as *theirs* by improvisation and experiment (Pyyry 2016b). They enter a world of playfulness, or rather, they *invent* this world. Dwelling with means opening oneself to the world. This experience of opening does not need to be a feeling of 'belonging', rather it is about being receptive to what is going on (see Wylie 2009). This is important, since young people's days are often organized and scheduled to a high degree, and chances for experimenting with the world, and how to live in/with it, are getting slim. Playfulness critiques the dominant view of always having to be productive, it disturbs the dynamics of everyday life and therefore clears space for dwelling (see Lefebvre 1947/2014). More than a form of behavior, playfulness is a 'mode', a way of being-in-the-world and imagining new worlds: play makes it possible to *re-cognize* what is right in front you (Thrift 2000). It is an attitude of improvisation and creativity. Instead of being a means to an end, play is an end in itself, valuable as such (Bauman 1993; Rautio and Winston 2015). Understanding play this way places emphasis on the importance of being caught up in the moment. In this mode, young people are open to changes of direction, and engagement with spaces and things.

From a posthuman view, referred to above, play always takes place in the mingling of things. As in the skateboarding vignette (Fig. 2.2), the material world has an active role in hanging out, it is hence not only a background for human activity. This means acknowledging the agency of the spaces and things that are involved in hanging out and urban life more broadly. Human intentionality is only one form of power in the world, the capacities of a human body emerge from entanglements of

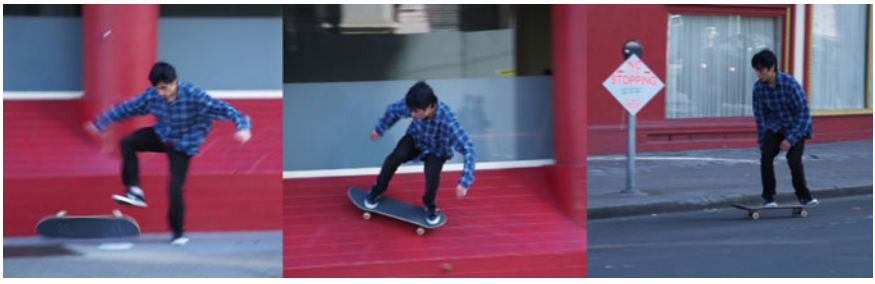

Fig. 2.2 Appropriation of urban space by movement and sound. Photographs by author

human and the non-human in a *rhizomatic* way (Deleuze and Guattari 1980/1987). The skateboarder does not just 'decide' to jump against the building, rather the wall invites him to do so. Bennett (2010) talks about 'thing power' to address the liveliness that is internal to materiality, and the capacity of things to affect human bodies. But not only does the wall actively call the skateboarder; together they become something else, something more. In the event pictured in the photographs, the young man, the skateboard, the wall, the street, sunshine, human intentionality, ideas, memories and much more mingle without clear boundaries. They take part in *intra-active* (Barad 2003) play from which new spaces and bodies are created. In this play, agency emerges relationally, from the mingling of things. Massumi (2011) clarifies this posthuman standing point when he explains the distinction between looking at the world through subject-object relations and thinking it through events. So, instead of understanding objects as being in the world, and percepts that register them being in the sensing subject, the object and subject are joined in a unity of movement. This performance is an event.

It may seem trivial to think of these passing events as politically or educationally significant, but one must remember that revolutions are rare—more often change takes place through small momentary acts, in repetition. Appropriation of urban space in hanging out is usually spontaneous, irrational, non-instrumental—and it is often unanticipated by designers and planners, managers and other city dwellers. Still, quite an amount of energy is put to keeping young people from public space. This 'bubble-wrap generation' (Malone 2007), especially middle-class children and young people, spends much of its time in adult controlled environments: schools, sports and youth clubs, as well as shopping malls are all under the adult gaze. Many Western cities and towns have even implemented curfews for young people, and functional urban planning appoints them to certain confined areas (skateparks, playgrounds etc.). Spaces signal who is welcome: power speaks through them. Prohibition signs ('no loitering', 'no skating'), surveillance cameras, curved benches, skateboarding blockers (Fig. 2.3), the *Mosquito* device,[2] condescending treatment and much more take part in evicting young people from the public sphere. These practices create *tight spaces* (Franck and Stevens 2007) that are often well-suited for the planned use and appreciated by their users, also by young people. But, when the risks of random encounters and surprises are reduced, also chances for enchantment become scarce. Free, multifunctional public spaces where young people, among others, can *be* differently and find alternative means of expression seem to be disappearing from our highly organized and predictable cities.

However, even though young people often lack the power to challenge adult decision making, hanging out implicitly critiques functional urban planning. Young people challenge the urban order by using momentary *tactics* (de Certeau 1984) and

[2]The *Mosquito* is an electronic device used to prevent young people from spending time at shopping malls or transport hubs by emitting a high frequency sound that is detectable only by young ears. The sound is highly irritable and forces young people to leave the place.

Fig. 2.3 Tight/loose space: A welcoming area with unwelcoming skateboarding blockers on the benches. Hayes Valley, San Francisco. Photograph by author

expand the boundaries of everyday life often with their mere presence, by 'actively doing nothing' (Pyyry 2016a). This goes against the norm of having to be purposive all the time. To avoid being evicted from adult monitored spaces, young people playfully question taken-for-granted rules and the strategies through which the society functions. They play cat-and-mouse games with security guards at shopping malls and make *back stages* (Lieberg 1995; also Matthews et al. 2000) by gathering at staircases, in abandoned houses, garages and other places hidden from the adult gaze. Sometimes back stages can be created just momentarily when hanging out under monitoring: one girl mentioned that noise at a food court in a shopping mall that may be bothersome to others, makes her feel like she can talk to her friends in peace (Pyyry 2015b). The back stage is located on stage, within the established order. Sometimes, just by drifting at the mall, not consuming, young people appropriate places as their own. New spaces are created with play, but also just by habitual involvement. Spending time is thus making space. So, even in a tight space, there is always potential for change and the building of 'hangout homes' (Pyyry 2015a). Obviously, in the normative environment of a shopping mall, this potential is highly limited. Still, when tight spaces are encountered in a mode of playfulness with time for experimentation, routines are disturbed and normative ways of using the space are challenged—even if just temporarily. Here lies the creative strength of hanging out: because it is pleasantly purposeless and carefree, even boring, there is time and space to be differently with familiar environments. Meaningful engagement with the environment fosters dwelling with, and clears space for the stimulating experience of enchantment. Involved activity deepens the geographical relationship, so it is worthwhile to consider the potential that hanging

out entails for creative spatial thinking and seeing familiar urban environments anew. Playfulness can be regarded as openness toward the world, and while hanging out, young people are generally moving with the event: they are 'thinking with'.

To sum up the above, hanging out makes space for politics (in the form of momentary tactics) and re-creating the city in habitual engagement (Pyyry 2016b). Together with probing the limits of their rights to urban space in everyday situations, young people participate in making the city more open for diverse use and people. A city that welcomes hanging out has the potential to make all people a little more playful. Young people enrich urban life by hanging out in the city, by being visible and audible, and by disturbing the taken-for-granted routines of everyday life. This participation is important, since too often, young people are left with a feeling that the city is not really theirs. To a certain extent, they are left 'homeless'. As one girl put it, when she talked about participation in urban planning projects:

> I have been involved in projects where it's, like, this will make a really, really big difference, and then next year, everything's the same. You know the next day it's like, wow, I made a really big difference, so how come I don't see it.

It is unfortunately common that young people feel that their participation does not make a real impact. In the worst scenario, this will make them uninterested to take part in any later projects. This is why it is crucial to open public spaces for small-scale creative projects that transform the city there and then, for a moment, and make it more welcoming to different ways of being. Just as important it is for adults to value the ways in which young people *already* participate and dwell with their cities. This relates to what Lawy and Biesta (2006) mean by 'citizenship as practice'. In contrast to citizenship a set of rights and duties, citizenship is also a practice through which people learn about their positions in the world. This notion that resonates with de Certeau's (1984) ideas of how the 'weak' create spheres for themselves in the city through action is crucially relevant today, since through practice and engagement, people also develop a sense of care for their city. The right of access and care for one's environment thus go together (cf. nature conservation). By the practices of hanging out, young people deepen their relationship with the city and re-imagine their positions in the world through repetition, improvisation, friendship and play. In doing so, they carve space for re-cognizing the world, i.e. for inventing future ones.

2.3 Learning Is More Than an Individual, Human or Cultural Business

To invent a new world, however temporary, is to find an alternative path in life. The shift can be modest, yet it is always a small earthquake (perhaps a fitting analogy in San Francisco). With a posthuman frame of thinking, I approach learning here as an inspiring event: as a coming-together of things in a unity of movement. Learning, then, is not something that an individual human subject does. Rather, it is a sudden

event of *re-cognizing* ordinary everyday environments with those environments. Ingold (2000) talks about 'enskilment' when he discusses knowing by *dwelling*, by being practically involved with one's surroundings. Skills are developed in being, in involved activities and while relating to everyday situations. Theories of learning that are based on the idea of acquisition of knowledge suggest a clear subject-object division: a body of context-free knowledge that exists 'out there' and can be instilled to an individual learner by teaching. Practice-oriented posthuman educational theories think the world differently. Learning is a relational event in which the'subject' and the'object' join, and thinking happens in encounters through practical engagement (e.g. Aberton 2012; Fenwick et al. 2011; Fors et al. 2013; Taylor et al. 2013). This is in line with non-representational geographers' (i.e. Non-representational theory, NRT) conceptualization of the world as fluid, ongoing and always in excess (e.g. Thrift 2000, 2008, 2011; Anderson and Harrison 2010). Learning is an open process and new capacities come out the rhizomatic mingling of human and the non-human. As explained earlier, this means that a human body is always linked with numerous other bodies and never exists outside of these links. Matter and sense are intertwined: there is no thought outside of the world. Being human is a thoroughly material affair and, therefore, also what we mean by the 'cultural' needs to be reconsidered. When agency in the world is understood as distributed between numerous different bodies, and the borders of these bodies are blurred, clear distinctions such as man/woman, nature/culture, citizen/city cannot be thought. These categories become impossible. What we often think of as culture, is in fact, a complex coming-together of things (matter, action, relations) that is continuously recreated in practice. The citizen does not learn when he/she passes through the city, rather, together they take part in mutual co-constitution. The citizen does not only take part in producing the city, but the city produces her/him, and most importantly, they exist in a shared dynamic of becoming.

With this understanding, I want to open up the concept of spatial-embodied learning and connect the geographies of hanging out with posthuman educational theorization. Valuing young people's everyday spaces in the city as environments for thinking and learning connects this paper to place-based education (PBE), in which different informal spaces outside of school are used for teaching and community collaboration (see a special issue of Children, Youth and Environments 2011). When formal learning is usually teacher lead, verbal and individualistic, and it has clear measurable objectives, informal learning is a shared process that often happens without fixed plans (Cartwright 2012). Pressures of accountability and productivity create a danger that informal learning projects are left out of the educational agenda, when students are prepared for tests such as the PISA.[3] This leaves a great deal of learning potential untapped, since open-ended experimentation can create unexpected *pedagogical spaces of enchantment* (Pyyry 2016a).

[3]PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) is an international OECD test for skills in reading, mathematics and science.

Spatial-embodied learning refers to posthuman and non-representational understanding of thinking as something that always takes place with the world, with everything that comes together in the learning event. Learning is a multi-sensory event of re-cognizing the world and probing the limits of everyday life. This effective event emerges relationally. Learning is then not only a collaborative human project, but reflection in the world always takes place with spaces, things and the non-human. This understanding grants more agency to the material world than is generally the case with PBE accounts that view learning as an individual endeavor, albeit collaborative. Learning comes together in rhizomes within the complexity of everyday life: it emerges in flows of energy and matter, action and ideas. Many elements affect the event: a tree that invites one to climb, sunny weather, good friends to be playful with, a book that one may have just read, the street or new sneakers that make it fun to run—and most importantly, the relations that connect all these and more. By moving the focus away from the human as an individual learner, the complex, non-linear and rich ways in which learning emerges in different life situations can be identified. I will now turn to outline what I have conceptualized as hanging-out-knowing in order to argue for the importance of wandering and wondering.

2.4 Hanging-Out-Knowing

Earlier in this paper, I have conceptualized hanging out as a playful mode of being-in-the-world that fosters dwelling with. While hanging out, young people are usually 'going with the flow' and therefore open to the complexity of life and the many possible directions that may come into view. The world of hanging out is not fixed. Boredom and aimlessness in hanging out open up space for change through repetition. Joyous feelings of friendship (with humans or the city and more) foster imagination and creative engagement with the environment. For once, young people are free to play with urban space, or at least they attempt to do so within the limitations described earlier. Often young people's days are organized by the minute—so much so that the participants in San Francisco were, quite paradoxically, having a hard time scheduling their photo-walks on hanging out, and many of our talks were supervised by their parents (Pyyry 2015b). Scheduled after-school activities and homework take most of their time, so they hang out with friends in *liminal spaces* (e.g. Wood 2012), when in transition from one organized activity to another. The girl, who talked about playing tag on the street with her friends, told me that those free moments of play often came up when she was on her way to a band practice with the others. Looking at her photograph (Fig. 2.1), she went on explaining:

> It's relaxing, you know. It's, like, we're outside and we're not with parents, but we're also close enough to our parents to be comfortable [close to a friend's house]. It's kind of like a perfect balance of […] It's just a place to run around, and there are not many places to run around in San Francisco,'cause, you know, it's all urban.

So, even within the tight schedules and the functional urban order, young people do make space for playfulness, fun and friendship. It is obvious that with the mentioned limitations, openings for enchantment are somewhat unlikely. The girl's words suggest that this chance to be with friends is rare and that she is not very used to being in the city on her own. Still, just being and talking with friends, even if just for a moment, is important. In this relaxed mode, human bodies are susceptible to the forces of other bodies. Care for friends can cultivate care for others, it can foster sensitivity to the world (Pyyry 2015a). Then, a shift is possible: new spaces are created through a change in the *affective atmosphere* (see Anderson 2009; Pyyry 2016b). A joyous atmosphere of friendship envelops the girls while hanging out on that street. This fosters dwelling with. Hence, hanging out is a creative encounter with the city, one that is emergent and always ongoing. Things and spaces are encountered playfully, often in the company of friends. If there is time and space to engage with the city, young people can build hangout homes for themselves and participate in urban life, sometimes by disturbing routines and questioning the accepted ways of using urban space. In the case of the skateboarder on the wall, this questioning is easily noticeable. At other times, it may remain unnoticed, but it matters nonetheless.

When hanging out, young people navigate the city with intuitive knowledge piled up in their bodies. They are skilled and confident because of practical everyday involvement, given they have had opportunities to engage with the city. They can read the city, listen to its cues and suggestions. They are gradually attuned to the city. When something surprising happens, they generally know how to respond. Intuition is judgment based on experience, it is a highly affective 'gut feeling' that brings confidence in a complex situation (e.g. Groves and Vance 2014). This know-how cannot be transferred to the learner out of the context of use, since it is about being responsive to one's environment. It is an education of attention that takes place in everyday spatial negotiations (see Ingold 2000). Knowing how to navigate in the city can then not be learned by looking at maps, although it may be helpful at the beginning. The city is learned by foot—or by skateboarding. Learning is sparked by encounters, it is an open process of reflecting on one's place in the world. People, things, spaces, ideas and possibilities all take part in the process: reflection is something that hits us, rather than something we 'do' (Thrift 2011). But, in addition to cultivating 'street wise' behavior in the city, hanging out carries with it a power to question routine ways of being and to generate new ideas, as noted before. A creative relationship with the city enables one to both (1) re-cognize the world, and (2) be differently in it (Pyyry 2015a).

Dwelling with the city in meaningful ways clears space for the powerfully affective experience of enchantment. It is an experience of re-examining the world, a moment during which familiar routine things appear strange, even dreamlike. Enchantment is an exhilarating, short-lived moment of being moved by something. Even if this fleeting moment is difficult to prove to have happened, enchantment deepens one's engagement with the world—with people, places and things. It is thus key to ethical being-in-the-world, since when you are in love with something, you tend to care for it (Bennett 2001). Enchantment makes one look at the world

anew. The experience can be life-altering, but more often questioning happens gradually in repetition and is thus easily left unnoticed. This spatial-embodied thinking that I here call *hanging-out-knowing* is non-instrumental: it emerges in joyful or otherwise strongly affectual encounters with friends, spaces and things. It is always a force that can be felt and sensed—even if not represented. It is an event of multisensory reflection about the world. It happens while meaningfully dwelling with the world. New understandings are generated in a self-feeding cycle of 'dwelling with—enchantment—reflection' (Pyyry 2015a). Dwelling with the city thus opens up space for enchantment and reflection, which again, deepen the spatial relationship and foster care for the urban environment.

Conceptualizing learning this way makes it much more than a personal project that can be assessed by tests, and it should thus have consequences on what we value in education. The conceptualization is political and relates to a more far-reaching discussion on the instrumentalization and commodification of education (e.g. Irwin 2003; Rautio and Winston 2015). It is also relevant to the discussion on diversity and people's rights to the city (e.g. Mitchell 2003). Hanging-out-knowing gives value to the excess of life, to things unfolding surprisingly, and makes it possible for a person to take pleasure in not-knowing. Hanging out is about being open to the unforeseen. This makes space for thinking the unthinkable. Of course, it is difficult to think of learning as something that cannot even be put to words. But, perhaps we just do not have the language yet. In a fixed order of established practices (and language) that aim for measurable outcomes, there is very little space for anything radically new to emerge. Action is harnessed for the re-production of the same. Hanging out produces alternative modes of engagement with urban space, creates openings for enchantment, and has the potential to make the city more 'loose', in other words, open to difference.

2.5 Reflections

Hanging out is young people's time: it is a back stage that provides an escape from the pressures of productivity so prevalent today. It is a rare chance for young people to just be without plans, to play with who and how they are. My desire is therefore not to incorporate that world into the educational system in any instrumental way. Instead, I would hope for teachers and urban planners to value hanging out as a playful mode of being-in-the-world that perhaps adults could even learn from. Giving value to the playfulness in hanging out is especially important at a time when young people's lives are often highly organized. The geographies of hanging out could be reflected upon also at school in various projects, as part of geography, art education or creative writing, just to name a few possibilities. Linking young people's free time worlds to the realm of school, and first and foremost, equipping students with creative means of re-thinking these worlds, can bring enskilment to their everyday urban practices (see Pyyry 2016a). This would support inclusion of

different learners, reduce the fear of failure and build bridges between spatial-embodied knowledges and more discursive learning. At the end of the research project in San Francisco, the participants produced an art exhibition of their photographs at school. The exhibition included mental maps the girls were drawing together during the project. Although the research project itself was not connected to formal schoolwork, the exhibition gave the participants an opportunity to show their worlds and everyday geographies in this normative, adult dominated context.

As this photo-exhibition showed, young people take part in urban life in many ways—even with the restrictions of their structured everyday lives. They make momentary hangout homes for themselves at shopping malls or on the street: they invent new worlds. They carve space for difference. Still, space for spontaneity and improvisation is limited, and functional urban planning places many (young) people as outsiders. It defines who is welcome and where. Opportunities for youth leisure are also getting heavily privatized, and free, 'loose spaces' where young people, among others, can be differently and find alternative ways of expression seem to be diminishing from our cities. Due to privatization, the risks of unplanned encounters and surprises are further reduced. Young people hanging out in urban space test the boundaries of public and private with their presence, action and inaction: they dwell with the city. This non-instrumental relationship fosters care for the world. This engagement can be illustrated by comparing meaningful human relationships to career networking: in the first case the person is important as such, in the second, as a useful means to an end (even if not only this).

As follows, it is crucial that young people have time and space to do nothing, to be with their friends and form a meaningful, non-instrumental relationship with their city. This is important as such, but as a playful mode of engagement, hanging out also creates openings for moments of enchantment and re-cognizing the world. Hanging out makes space for other alternative ways of involvement with the city. And this is the basis for creative urban life: the city is always multiple! As one of the participants noted: 'In the city, you see such diversity. […] The city is more open. I have more friends in the city, because it's not like one type of person.' This is what needs to be protected and fought for: the right to the city needs to cover all people, so that we do not just design homey communities for a selected few, while risking the very fundamentals of accessible, democratic public spaces. Acknowledging young people's ways of participating and learning in the city is a step towards building a diverse, more playful society.

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Chapter 3
Storytelling in Urban Spaces: Exploring Storytelling as a Social Work Intervention in Processes of Urbanisation

Hari Sacré, Luc de Droogh, Ann De Wilde and Sven De Visscher

Abstract This contribution will report on the student project 'Storytelling in urban spaces' from University college Ghent. Combining theories of cultural studies and public pedagogy the project explored the semiotic framework 'readers and writers of the city'. In the optional course 'creative welfare work', third year students from the professional bachelor of social work applied this semiotic framework by reading and interrupting urban areas in the center of Ghent. Applying the art of storytelling in processes of urbanization, students scrutinized a more cultural approach to social work that envisions civic learning as a process of wayfinding in society. To explore the values of this cultural approach, this contribution will focus on the link between the general semiotic framework and three student projects. In the concluding remarks, the issues of learning, the city and culture will be discussed to the background of this semiotic framework.

Keywords Social work · Cultural studies · Cultural semiotics · Public pedagogy · Storytelling · Civic learning

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3.1 Introduction

In this chapter we report on the teaching experiment 'storytelling in urban spaces', by students from the professional bachelor of social work program at University College Ghent. The students explored the role of social workers in processes of urbanisation in the city of Ghent (Flanders, Belgium). Social work intends to strengthen the position of citizens and communities by intervening in processes of urbanisation. Two central questions underlying this intention is how the city as a context for social work interventions could be conceptualised, and how a cultural reading of the city can inspire social workers' interventions in processes of urbanisation.

Globalisation processes and ongoing improvements in communication technologies affect our traditional understandings of what exactly constitutes the context of the city (Chattopadhyay 2012; McCann and Ward 2011). Globalisation results in new opportunities for cities (e.g. tourism), but also new challenges (e.g. dealing with migration). Communication technologies rapidly reshape the old patterns of social interaction in the city. Social encounters have become more diversified than the traditional face-to-face contacts with family, peers or strangers, and nowadays increasingly unfold in digital space (Graham and Aurigi 1997; Wark 1994). These visualised encounters in the digital cloud expose a shattered network of social interactions. As a result, the concept of urban space is not restricted to its physical boundaries, but requires knowledge of the relational production of space. In other words, the city can no longer be approached as a concept produced by local actors

only, but appears as a 'translocal assemblage' of producers from inside and outside the city (McCann and Ward 2011). The challenge for social workers is not necessarily to become an expert in analysing the urban context as such, but to become aware of the relationship between spatial claims and translocal assemblages.

In processes of urbanisation, the role of the social worker is to engage with citizens and communities to promote their citizenship and eventually support their position in the city. This is inevitably related to the public sphere, a space that allows citizens to become public. Public space—as a physical location—is often used as a synonym for the public sphere, but there is considerable debate in the field of urban studies about the precise meanings of public space (Banerjee 2001; Mitchell 1996, 2003; Staeheli et al. 2013; Van der Wouden 2002). Processes of commercialisation and privatisation in West European cities have affected the conditions of physical public spaces. The traditional view on public space as a space of politics is being contested. Public space as an accessible site for civic learning is no longer the prevailing idea among urban scholars (Amin 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to explore what becoming public might look like in highly privatised and commercialised spaces. In other words, if there is no such thing as a physical public space open to all citizens, then how should social work support processes of civic learning?

We will explore the meaning of storytelling in urban spaces as a social work intervention that supports or creates new forms of civic learning. In doing so, we will first reflect on the role of the social worker in processes of urbanisation. Secondly, we will introduce 'readers and writers of urban spaces' as a theoretical framework, combining perspectives from cultural studies and public pedagogy, that might broaden our understanding of social work interventions in processes of urbanisation. Thirdly, we will reflect on three student projects that survey this theoretical framework's qualities and the practice of storytelling as a tool for social workers to produce resistance in urbanising contexts, as well as enable dialogue on citizenship and the public sphere. Lastly, we will draw conclusions on the link between civic learning, culture and the city.

3.2 Storytelling in Urban Spaces as a Social Work Intervention

The development of social work is often linked to social, political and economic questions in society (Bouverne-De Bie et al. 2014). Social work in Flanders should be understood in relation to recent developments in Flemish society, that includes influences from the local, national and international agendas. Social work and education used to be outstanding instruments to socialise the individual into the citizen and to teach these citizens dedication to the law (Lorenz 2004). Therefore the educational dimension is essential to social work. Social work is about understanding and intervening the relationship between the individual and society. Social work interventions always have a certain performative dimension. Social work, perhaps more than any other social science, involves causing effect with

words, to perform a certain kind of action (Austin 1975: 5). Social work is about reading a context and communicating the right message. It is not so much interested in the truth value of utterances as in causing effect in the world, mostly giving priority to excluded groups in society. Regarding social work interventions in urbanising context, this communicative aspect of social work could benefit from a cultural understanding of the city.

Cities are nowadays characterised by accelerating processes of urbanisation such as commercialisation, globalisation and superdiversity (Vertovec 2007). As a result, the democratic values of equality, solidarity and freedom are being strained, which leaves the cultural production of the city as a contested process in which ordinary citizens are often subordinated by powerful actors. Cultural scholars problematise the cultural production of the city, wherein the powerful minority is able to decide what kind of cultural products turn into public culture, leaving behind the everyday ordinary cultural production as a private matter, things that will not appear on the agenda of public discussions (Giroux 2004; Jenkins 2012). The marginalised cultural production of ordinary citizens are not acknowledged as being public cultural products we can read, discuss and (re)think. Moreover, they do not become part of what Habermas has named 'the public sphere' (Habermas 1991). In a similar line of thought, Corijn (2009) points out how every person produces culture and therefore engages with culture, and how only a number of powerful citizens are documented and symbolised. The themes and tensions of the dominant classes often form the starting point for public supervision on the culture of ordinary people. Even when their lives, themes, tensions, etc. are documented in participation processes or documentaries, they are often the object of hegemonic reflection. Therefore, in order to focalise the perspective of ordinary citizens producing everyday culture, social work needs to foster a bottom-up framework through which to read and write the city.

The necessity to explore social work interventions in the city that are able to confront utterances of low cultures with those of high cultures, regarding equality, freedom and solidarity, inspired the student project 'story telling in urban spaces'. This project was organised in 2014, as part of the optional course 'creative social work' in the professional bachelor of social work program at University College Ghent. Each year, this course connects with a current topic in society and offers students the opportunity to explore creative methodologies in social work. Because public debates highlighted the multiple challenges in cities, that year's central topic was 'cities in transition'. We will introduce the key framework 'readers and writers' of the city, on which the student course was based.

3.3 Readers and Writers of the City

The idea of reading the city is not new (Elliot 2011; Gehl and Svarre 2013; Wark 2011). Most theoretical frameworks for reading urban spaces make a fundamental distinction between the built environment and people or social interactions. In this

line of thinking, the act of reading the city is basically seen as the challenge to combine information about the built environment with information about social interactions, and to derive patterns or logics from it. Neil Leach (2012) suggested an alternative model for this socio-spatial approach and introduced cultural semiotics as a framework to read the city. His semiotic approach focuses on meaning-making, which includes that the city is always open to a variety of interpretations (Eco 1976). This implies that meaning is never fixed, always plural, contested, and eventually results in dissensus (Chap. 1).

Roland Barthes (1997) highlights the multiplicity of meaning-making. Whereas traditional notions of meaning and the urban form, mainly derived from architectural theories, suggest a one-on-one relationship between form and meaning, Barthes describes meaning-making as an infinite chain of signification. The multiplicity of meaning-making should not be translated into multiplying *objective* approaches to the city, but instead value *subjective* readings of the city. Even though some planners noticed the difference between the functionalism of urban spaces and their semantic contents, urban planning lacks theoretical frameworks on signification (i.e. the production of meaning). According to de Certeau (2011), understanding the meaning of the city is a matter of *focalization.* He states that urban planners are acknowledged as writers of the city, while citizens are mainly seen as readers of the city. Urban planners tend to look down at the city as a map and represent geographical space, whereas urban practitioners live 'down there' and are merely able to walk and produce lived space. In his work, De Certeau refers to urban space as urban text. This urban text is written by urban planners who implement urban functions, strategies and spatial structures. Not only is meaning produced by urban planners, it also appears in the performative act of reading urban spaces accomplished by all urban actors. By continually multiplying the number of possible interpretations, the urban text becomes a layered fabric of conflicting meanings. The production of meaning in the city does not exclusively happen through physical activities such as building material structures or moving between them, but also occurs through cultural processes being representation, socialisation or communication. This implies that the meaning of the urban text will be diversified and broadend through every act of reading and appear as essentially plural, contested and conflictual. A myriad of interpretations can claim authorial meaning, permanently trying to redefine the urban virtue, which turns the urban text into an arena for the right to the city. From a semiotic perspective, the cultural production by architects and urban planners can be interpreted as a production of signs, as an activity of writing, while the daily practices of people are generally seen as an activity of reading, giving meaning to what has been written by others (De Certeau 2011; Makeham 2005).

3.4 Spatial Stories

Even though the city is closely connected with politics and discourse, De Certeau believes it is no longer the programmed and regulated operations that write the city. Beneath the discourses that ideologise the city, collective meanings of citizens that have no readable identity produce resistance. De Certeau points at the return of the practices, in particular the spatial practices that appear in the area where apparatuses manipulate and produce a disciplinary space (Sharma and Gupta 2009). He describes two types of spatial practices that are able to produce resistance. First, he refers to the practice of walking, a basic skill most citizens possess. While reading the city, people write the city by walking in it. Weaving together places, pedestrian movements form a real system that shapes the city. Urban planners often tend to translate this idea by transcribing situated observations of people's movement, routes or trajectories on city maps. But these curves only refer to the absence of what has passed by. Observing routes of people misses out on what actually was there, the act of reading itself, of passing by. The trace left behind is substituted for the actual practice. In other words, the geographical system focuses on transforming action into legibility. In doing so it is oriented to cause a way of being in the world to be forgotten. Instead De Certeau emphasises the symbolic dimension of walking and dwelling in the city. The reason why people take certain routes, avoid some neighbourhoods, enjoy particular urban spots is not only a matter of legibility but a cause of symbolism as well. It is through this act of intentionally weaving together places, according to multiple individual and shared symbolic frameworks, that citizens produce space and co-write the city. This kind of spatial production is the result of distinct logics and particular meanings that are not reducible to the science of legibility.

Second, De Certeau emphasises the importance of spatial stories as a way to produce resistance in processes of urbanisation, including physical stories produced by the act of walking and oral stories produced by the acts of narrating and telling. Whereas stories are often private and restricted to the segregated places in neighbourhoods or families, rumors propagated by popular media cover everything and picture a general image that substitutes the diversity of stories. Stories diversify the meaning of a place, while rumors totalise or overshadow multiple meanings of a place. The production of spatial stories is connected to the production of memories in the city. Memories are not localisable but do tie us to certain places. They are often personal, seemingly uninteresting to anyone else, yet essential for the identity of urban places. Stories and memories, although being undervalued, have the status and potential to be a spatial grammar. Because in stories, readers link different places by travelling between them, propelled by personal and collective meanings.

To understand spatial stories as producers of resistance, an important distinction should be made between space and place (De Certeau 2011). A place is constituted by the order of elements that are distributed in a specific coexistence. The law of the measurable rules in the place, because elements can be counted and positioned. A place is thus a measurable configuration of positions, and thereby implies an

indication of stability. Space, instead, is composed of intersections of mobile elements. Space occurs as the effect of operations that situate, temporalise and activate. In short, space is a practiced place. Thus, the geometrical configuration defined by urban planners is transformed into a space by actions or stories of citizens. Hence, there are as many spaces as there are spatial practices. The opposition between place and space will result in two elements in stories. On the one hand, there are objects that are ultimately reducible to being present and correspond to the law of the measurable. On the other hand, there are elements that refer to human operations which, when they are attributed to the material elements of the built environment, produce spaces. Accordingly, stories continually transform and organise relationships between places and spaces.

To conclude, we can add that urban stories are valuable instruments for understanding urban spaces. Not only do stories communicate pre-existing meanings in the city, they produce meanings, expressions and other ways of looking at society, community and the role of citizens as well. Spatial stories position certain people as actors while others are merely followers; some play a leading role while others are supporting actors. Stories are always told and focalised through certain perspectives that clearly communicate whose story produces authorial meaning. Telling a story is therefore always a political activity, oriented at discussing some elements over others. Whereas stories of individual citizens are often too weak, too situated, too marginal or too ordinary to compete with the persuasive totalitarian stories of formative spaces such as urban planning, the question is how social work can strengthen the social and cultural position of citizens by promoting the meaning-making processes that citizens enact in their daily routines and practices. A third and last aspect of our framework are therefore practices that interrupt the hegemony of acknowledged stories.

3.5 Interrupting the City

Critics argue that economic and social barriers restrict the acces of certain groups in society to cultural production (De Certeau 2011; Harvey 2008; Mitchell 2003). One could argue that citizens can never be prohibited from producing stories, but the unequal access to cultural production relates to the issue of who has the power to determine which stories have a legitimised meaning and which will remain oppressed in the margins. Those who do not possess any strategy to promote their story over others are described as ‘textual poachers’ by De Certeau (2011) and Jenkins (2012). Far from having the status of an acknowledged writer of the urban story, these urban poachers travel, they move across places they do not own, like nomads poaching their way across urban texts they did not write.

De Certeau’s term, poaching, forcefully reminds us of the conflicting interests of urban planners and citizens, or alternatively of acknowledged writers and marginalised readers. Throgmorton (2003) argues that urban planning is a strong persuasive and constitutive art of storytelling about the future of cities. Even though Throgmorton highlights the normativity of urban planning as storytelling, other

urban planners focus on the collaborative opportunities that the idea of storytelling enables (Hajer et al. 2010). The gap between urban planning as persuasive storytelling and as collective storytelling refers to the discussion on which party holds the power to co-write or exclude other groups from writing the urban text. Policymakers explore participative approaches to urban planning, as a way to regulate and redefine the inequalities between the powerful and the powerless. Because social work operates between the system (produced by powerful actors) and the social environment of marginalised or oppressed groups, it is often involved in moderating those participatory processes. In doing so, social work subscribes notions of interrupting urban spaces from the field of public pedagogy. Public pedagogy is concerned with various aspects of citizenship and the public sphere in society. The concept of public sphere refers primarily to the relational quality of human togetherness rather than to a physical location (Hajer 1991; Marquand 2004; Mitchell 1996, 2003).

Jacques Rancière's notions on the political are popular in public pedagogical literature focusing on citizenship and the public sphere in urbanising contexts (Biesta 2012; Holston 2009; Swyngedouw 2014). Rancière believes that every social order is profoundly unequal, and can only be democratic if it is permanently redefined by political processes. Thus politicising the city relates to the act of changing the social order by picturing the unseen and voicing the unvoiced. Hence the political deals with interrupting the dominant social order, exposing the dominant meanings and proposing alternatives. Social work as a cultural practice that mediates between the public and the private or as a practice that operates between the system and the social environment of marginalised or oppressed groups, requires awareness of the cultural politics produced by processes of urbanisation. Quite often social workers accept dominant meanings about the necessity to activate poor citizens, good and bad neighbourhoods, and focus on the will to intervene without paying sufficient attention to processes of commodification, structuring or restricting the possibilities for citizens to participate. A cultural perspective on social work draws our attention at the crucial role of narratives in (re)producing inequality and identifies how dominant meanings subsist.

Through intervening in processes of urbanisation using a cultural perspective, social work can perform its political role by deconstructing hegemonic meanings in the city and staging citizens' stories. On their quest for politicising the city, social workers can support the position of citizens, using the political as a practice that intervenes in social representations and relations, for the sake of equality, solidarity and freedom (Biesta 2012; Rancière 2003). The abovementioned ideas were explored by social work students during the course 'creative welfare work'. After having discussed the theoretical framework of 'readers and writers of the city', small groups of 4 or 5 students were dropped at different tram stations on the route of tram 1 in Ghent. They were given the assignment to read the social, material and symbolic dimension of the area around the tram stop. The students decided which specific methods were to be applied to explore the urban area, such as walking, photographing places and people, interviewing people, reading histories or meeting policymakers. Having collected a plethora of meanings and stories, the students were then challenged to organise a political intervention that focused on citizenship

and the public sphere using the art of storytelling. We will now explore three student projects and focus on the meaning of the theoretical framework in the interventions in the city: 'Revealing symbolic frameworks in the Rabot neighbourhood', 'Defamiliarising Saint Veerle Square' and 'Negotiating social positions at the Kouter'.

3.6 Revealing Symbolic Frameworks in the Rabot Neighbourhood

One student group worked in the area around the tram station 'Rabot'. The name refers to the former gallows of the city, situated near the border of the historical centre of Ghent. Nowadays 'Rabot' is better known as the area behind the gallows, a vivid, highly disadvantaged and multicultural neighbourhood. The students were not familiar with this neighbourhood, so instead of reading the area from a semiotic perspective, they decided to first experience the area by walking, wandering and dwelling the streets.

'Walking this neighbourhood is like tasting many cultures. We heard many languages, we saw many people! A constant stream of traffic makes this a very busy place. Houses were in a poor shape, so were the streets with a lot of garbage. We went back to the tram station and took a breath in the park (background picture), because there was a lot to process…' (De Brauwer et al. 2014).

Clearly, walking urban spaces is not as passive as merely looking around. As those students experienced, walking urban spaces is all about engaging with the city, its smells, structures, traffic,… and its people (Amin 2015; De Certeau 2011). While reading urban spaces, one has to let go of control, adapt and blend in with the rhythm of the city itself. Considering the rhythm of the Rabot streets, the students

were overwhelmed by the overall vivacity. The students compared their phenomenological reading with other texts on the Rabot area. Traditional and new media mainly describe a dangerous and dirty neighbourhood, without mentioning the vivacity and cultural diversity these students experienced and valued the most. Confused by those conflicting meanings, the students decided to collect more meanings on the Rabot area by interviewing residents. The resulting conversations addressed favorite places (material), social life (social) and meaning-making (symbolic). While wandering around with white helium balloons, the students randomly interviewed 30 passengers. Due to the multicultural reality in the area, they needed to speak Dutch, French, English and, if no other language was available, sign language. White balloons were covered with personal and collective meanings and even though the message was soon floating in the air, the interviews politicised the urban area in a very modest way. Because the dominant representations symbolise and even totalise this neighbourhood as being dangerous and dirty, the act of interviewing citizens in a very accessible way and revealing their symbolic frameworks on this area produces resistance because it was oriented at diversifying the meaning of the Rabot area (De Certeau 2011). The experiment also politicised the area because the people who are usually excluded from formulating their opinion were acknowledged as being experts and involved quite easily (Biesta 2012). Even though giving voice to the residents was valuable and politicising as such, the students also documented their experiment in a 5-minute video and screened it for policy makers, social organisations and fellow students.

3.7 Defamiliarising Saint Veerle Square

Saint Veerle square, a touristic hot spot next to the medieval *Gravensteen* (Castle of the Counts) in the historical centre of Ghent, is the location of the second student project. In order to understand the meanings of this square, the students decoded signs referring to pubs, restaurants, night shops and touristic attractions. Reading signs in the built environment, talking to random passengers and catching up with a local guide revealed a layered reciprocity of tourism and heritage. Yet, cultural politics consistently reframe the meaning of this square as being an aesthetic attraction for tourists. The students found that passers-by did have rather different, personal meanings about this square, but the processes of commercialisation have privatised the urban story. They noticed for instance that all facilities for sitting required some form of consumption. The social sphere was mainly private, most of the buildings had an economic function and historical information was only offered through commercially guided tours. Hence in order to enjoy the aesthetics of the location, one had to consume.

The local guide inspired the students to dig deeper into the history of this place. Through identifying the meaning of both the medieval Castle of the Counts and Saint Veerle, the students discovered an interesting contradiction. The square was named after a local merciful nun representing the *good*, while the castle was used as a courtyard and prison, dealing with the *bad* in the city. From the medieval era to the 21st century, the Castle of the Counts and Saint Veerle square swapped roles as good and bad many times and even today this contradiction still is important. Nowadays the castle, in its role of museum, frames the historical function of trialling bad people while an artwork on the square in front, a street light that shines for every child that is born in one of the hospitals in Ghent, represents the good. Unfortunately, the ethical paradox of this place, in which life is always linked with death, is overruled and marginalised by the economic potential of the medieval aesthetics. Therefore, this group of students decided to expose the ethical paradox during a ritual of the good and the bad in every human being. They lit firepits at the centre of the square and asked passengers to throw in good and bad memories, which resulted in a rather alienating practice (Picture). People were encouraged by this strange idea on this beautiful place, and while throwing their memories and stories into the fire, this aesthetic place, for a moment, took on a different meaning. Because people were asked to share memories and connect with the historical paradox of the place, the ritual evoked human togetherness, a moment in which people were invited to become public with private issues (Biesta 2012). Compared to the daily activities at this touristic hotspot, the ritual discretely defamiliarised its dominant code.

3.8 Renegotiating Social Positions at the Kouter

Located in the city centre of Ghent, the Kouter is a square surrounded by shopping streets, busy tram routes and cultural, educational and financial organisations. As a result, it serves as a transitional zone between different activities. According to the students there was not that much activity on the square, but a lot of social life could be read at the borders, where benches under a row of trees serve as meeting points. Stationed at the benches, the students engaged with visitors and residents of the Kouter and asked them to talk about the symbolic dimension of the square. They were surprised by discovering that their meanings and stories were not linked to any of the square's material elements but mostly related to social contacts with family or peers, and the atmosphere in Ghent. While wandering across the city, people mostly visit this square (intentionally or accidentally) because of its atmosphere. The interviews revealed the numerous benches to be the reason why people mainly undertake private and parochial activities (reading, having lunch with colleagues, chatting with friends, …).

At the centre of the Kouter, a kiosk treasures a 19th-century tradition by which an orchestra performed for the bourgeoisie and ordinary citizens. In fact, the kiosk used to have a public function, yet this was not reflected in any of the stories and meanings the students collected. Inspired by the Facebook project 'Humans of New York', they decided to expose the stories by the 50 citizens they interviewed, at the kiosk. The exposition would attempt to invite passengers to read and discuss these stories and thus create a public sphere where people could connect with one another. Not knowing whether a permission from the city administration was needed for a mainly social event that required only a few materials (paper and pictures), the students informed the city administration, believing in the importance

of a good relationship with the city council. Apparently their idea sounded commercial and private, and therefore required a signed application form. Three weeks and five visits to civil servants at different departments later, the students still had not received permission. Being students, unaffiliated to any social organisation in Gent, it was impossible to receive the permit. The students were discouraged from organising a public event by a complex web of rules, and certainly other groups before them as well. In a final attempt, they contacted the mayor of Ghent—known to be a very accessible mayor using social media to directly interact with citizens—and they received an authorisation subsequently. Ironically, practicalities needed to be arranged with the civil servants who had formerly declined their application. During the event itself, other policymakers were invited and astonished to hear of the difficulties experienced during the preparations, and promptly invited the students to repeat the public intervention in other squares in Ghent. The invitation was meant to be merely symbolic, but the success of this project was tangible as passengers joined the discussion and asked questions about the project's purpose. Reading other people's stories clearly was an accessible way for passengers to rethink and discuss their own symbolic frameworks and positions in the city.

3.9 Conclusions

The semiotic framework of readers and writers of the city turned out to be a fruitful framework for social workers to approach processes of urbanisation such as privatisation, commercialisation, segregation, diversity,…. Through this semiotic perspective on culture, students discover that culture is ordinary, a way of life that everyone possesses and produces (Williams 1981). By viewing the city as a cultural fabric, the students faced the inequality between acknowledged writers and everyday readers. While everyday readers produce individual and collective meanings about the urbanising context, acknowledged writers are often the driving force behind urban strategies, seldomly taking into account the readers' perspectives.

By making interventions that support the position of citizens, social work can clearly relate to the semiotic framework as it reflects the complex field it is used to operate in. Engagement with readers, their position and experiences of the city, promptly reveals processes of urbanisation, including its different writers and their impact on citizenship and civic learning opportunities. By reading the urban areas, the students revealed processes of commercialisation that dominate Saint Veerle square, processes of diversity and inequality that affect the representation of the Rabot area and processes of privatisation and anonymity that write the Kouter's story. Even though processes of urbanisation co-write the city in general, each specific urban context has its own writers. While concepts such as 'the system' or 'discourses in the city' appear to be rather vague and abstract, the semiotic concept of 'writers of the city' made it easier for social workers to understand the impact of urbanisation on the city as a context for civic learning.

The city as a context for civic learning provides a myriad of meanings and stories. Sequential storytelling as a social work intervention was an obvious, albeit not an evident choice. Storytelling in the city is easily linked with the persuasive stories produced by formative spaces (urban planning, advertising, media representations,…), but little explored as a political intervention to support processes of civic learning. Storytelling has proved to be a valuable instrument for interrupting dominant urban stories and staging the perspective of ordinary citizens holding no power or authority over urban discussions. To intervene outside the classroom in the 'real city' was challenging for both the students and the lecturers involved in this project. We would not dare to claim that this project proved storytelling to be a perfect tool for social workers to intervene in processes of urbanisation, but at least it broadened interesting learning experiences of citizenship and public sphere, which definitely encourages more research.

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Chapter 4
The Inner City Skater Facility—Playground or Control Mechanism? On Urban Youth, Civic Learning and Pedagogical Dilemmas

Peter Hornbæk Frostholm and David Thore Gravesen

Abstract This article is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted on a skater facility in a medium-sized Danish town. From a cultural perspective, the analysis illustrates how different youth groupings use the facility and how they interpret and negotiate its functionalities. The article discusses the official intentions with offering the skater facility to the public, and depicts pedagogical dilemmas related to this 'gift'. SSP-workers (SSP: a special Social Services, School and Police unit) mingling at the site seek to ensure a specific behaviour based on civilized virtues. In the concluding remarks, the article discusses these as expressions of bio-political strategies, while emphasizing both everyday practises and societal objectives as important elements in the analysis.

Keywords Urban youth · Socialization · Culture · Civilization · Discipline · Self-government · Civic learning · Pedagogical dilemmas · Ethnographic fieldwork

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4.1 Introduction

A city is a structure of streets, buildings, institutions and organizations. Some institutions provide education and encourage learning: day care centres, primary schools, colleges and universities. This does not mean, however, that people do not learn from other urban contexts and experiences. We learn skills at our jobs, we learn important lessons in our families, and the cultural and civic life in the city promotes new ideas and events that inspire us and push us in new directions. In that sense, learning experiences are not confined to formal training processes—learning takes place in multifaceted cultural settings. In this article, we will depict empirical examples of such learning processes among some groups of young people in a medium-sized Danish town.

Our approach and interest in the research upon which the following analysis is based has been an urge to look into young people's socialization processes in urban environments—socialization processes that come off unstructured. In Denmark, the majority of children and young people socialize in the institutional triangle between home, school and leisure-time activities (Rasmussen 2004). Roughly, their time and space are structured in the company of adults who provide comfort, support and organization, be they parents, teachers, pedagogues, volunteers in sports clubs, etc. Hereto, many young people have part-time jobs after school, with carefully structured organization of time and space. For a relatively large amount of children and young people, however, this is seldom the case. They meet up and spend their leisure time at the streets and urban squares of the city—and most of this time is spent without adult supervision and company.

In the article we understand civic learning as a complex assemblage of urban youth culture, subtle pedagogical interventions and societal objectives. Equally, this assemblage expresses forms of freedom and regulation, and in the analysis we strive

to illustrate how this duality forms pedagogical dilemmas that require careful consideration.

4.2 Methodology, Aim and Theoretical Framework

In 2014, we conducted an ethnographic fieldwork (Spradley 1980; Kristiansen and Krogstrup 1999; Hastrup 2003, 2010) at the inner-city zones of Lomby.[1] Armed with field diaries we settled around a popular skater facility at a central square, made observations, talked to the youth gathered there and spent the days just 'hanging out'. In doing so, we gained an inspiring insight into the behavioural codes and positioning strategies of the young people at the site. During the fieldwork, we also met representatives of the SSP (a special Social Services, School and Police unit) who intervene and socialize at the public urban sites on a now-and-again basis. Through informal talks with members of the SSP during the fieldwork and a follow-up interview (Spradley 1979; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), we registered core pedagogical dilemmas between the official agenda of the municipality and the agenda of the SSP workers. In 2013, the municipality established the skater facility as a gift to the inhabitants of the city, as an invitation to activity, fellowship, and exercise across all age groups and street styles.[2] The municipality's emphasis on the city's cultural life as part of a branding strategy contradicts the agenda implicitly carried out by the SSP representatives. When mingling at the site and over time getting to know the individuals and the groupings present there, the SSP's main objective is to pull (disadvantaged) young people off the street and convince them to enrol in educational leisure clubs, part-time jobs or youth education instead. In that sense, one can argue that 'the gift' and the related material, social and cultural resources are primarily directed towards the more privileged groups in society. This notion gives rise to the following important questions:

How do different groups of young people react to these opposing messages?
What learning experiences do the different groupings accumulate whilst using the facility, and what normative expectations must they cope with if they want to explore inner city life?

The aim of this article is to look deeper into these questions. Spurred by this task, we introduce a theoretical framework inspired by the concepts of culture (Geertz 1973; Hall 1997), civilization (Elias 1994, 2000; Gilliam and Gulløv 2012), discipline (Foucault 1977; Nilsson 2008) and the notion of the enterprising self (Rose 1992). The framework provides the tools to scrutinize the cultural behaviour of the distinct groupings and the way the pedagogical dilemma exceeds a micro level, with its obvious societal implications.

[1]Out of ethical consideration, the city name and all informants' names have been anonymized.

[2]These objectives are formulated on the municipality's website under the section *Culture and Nature* (a presentation of the city's services and assets for visitors and inhabitants).

First, let us focus on the concept of culture and introduce some of the groupings that we encountered at the site, and see how they confront, interpret and utilize the facility and each other in their everyday cultural lives.

4.3 Culture—Shared Meanings and Negotiations

In immediate continuation of this book's fundamental understanding of cultural processes as co-producers of a city (see introductory chapter), the following will elaborate on the perception of culture underlying this chapter. Following a constructivist approach, culture can be defined as complex systems of meaning that people construct around themselves (Geertz 1973). On a similar note, Hall argues that culture is about 'shared meanings'. Social actors 'make sense' of things through mediums like language. In this sense, language represents the ideas, thoughts and negotiated 'meanings' of a culture. Hall argues that a medium like language is a representational system, made up by signs and symbols, all of which communicate and process cultural meaning (Hall 1997: 1; Marselis 2003: 28). Following Hall, a modern understanding of culture refers to whatever is 'the everyday way of life' of certain communities or social groupings. Hall elaborates further on this seemingly 'anthropological' definition of culture, and emphasizes that culture in fact also refers to a set of shared beliefs or values of a group (Hall 1997: 2). In addition, the works of Bourdieu on the theory of practice define the everyday practices as something that defines a sense of cultural coherence in social groupings (Bourdieu 2004 [1979]). What is said and done (practice) is what creates, maintains and defines a sense of belonging within a culture. Bourdieu's analysis on fields, being social spaces defined by certain logics and demands, serves the purpose of defining culture as something other than a coherent system of social imperatives, at all times applicable in a pursuit of maintaining a social and cultural order and stability (see Hasse 2011). Instead, he emphasizes that continuous battles and negotiations of meaning in respective fields are crucial in constructing and reconstructing cultural meaning (Jensen 2014).

Following Bourdieu in moving away from a somewhat rigid and structural functionalist interpretation of culture, ideas of homogeneous cultures or one specific group of people belonging to one specific place seem a bit 'outdated' in the light of this present analysis. Much like Wright (1997), we advocate an approach to understanding culture that embraces the idea that culture is constructed by mutual repertoires of understanding, doing and belonging subjected to an unpredictable, yet constant threat of being redefined or restructured within the boundaries of the cultural group itself (Wright 1997). Following the consistent notions through the theoretical outlines mentioned above, culture is seen as something continuously constructed and reconstructed, exchanged, negotiated and challenged. We argue that the meaning of a specific culture is in fact never given, but repeatedly done through practice (Wright 1997; Baarts 2004; Hasse 2011; Jensen 2014).

Given the main topic of this book and the emphasis on understanding urban environments as sites of cultures, as elaborated upon in the introductory chapter, we argue that the young people represented in this present study are in fact co-producing the cultural meaning of the urban skating facility, just by spending their leisure time at the site. Through their everyday use and 'hanging out', they ascribe cultural value and meaning to the place. This does not mean that the cultural environment at the site should be considered a 'happy-land' of homogeneity and harmony, by any means. The skating facility frames a cultural melting pot, made up by a mishmash of interweaving perspectives, negotiations and constructions. Different groupings, all with different imperatives and agendas, occupy the site and battle each other in order to define the meaning of the urban space. A complicated and seemingly confused mess of complex moral structures and codes of conduct emerge as we spend time among the different youth groupings present there. These different spatial cultural interpretations equally serve to maintain a mutual understanding of cultural relatedness and define social segmentary divisions among the young people 'hanging out' there. Hanging out seems to involve a certain negotiation of the use and purpose of the psychical site along with a negotiation of social positions between and within the groupings. Some public authorities and various private actors question and query some of the young people's uses and cultural interpretations of the site, and regard them as 'against regulations' or against what was officially and initially intended when building and offering the site to the public. These conflicting imperatives cause tension and create disagreements among all of the interested parties claiming a certain way of defining the cultural purpose of the site. Urban-political and pedagogical dilemmas emerge from these conflicting interests and seem difficult to deal with.

As an introduction to the cultural groupings occupying the urban site, the following will feature a concise portrayal of the youth groupings and their various interpretations of the site. In former work (Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a, b) we analysed how the groupings on the site occupy and negotiate youth cultural dynamics at the facility. The following will draw on these former depictions, but we will broaden the perspective by showing exactly where some of the groups' cultural interpretations and day-to-day exploitations of the site differ from the ways of use that the municipality initially intended and currently approves of.

4.4 Thugz—Strict Codes and Uniform Values

The self-named pseudo-gang Thugz[3] is an example of a group with distinctive boundaries, simple but somewhat strict codes of conduct and uniform values. Learning, understanding, and acting within the lines of these strict codes of conduct

[3]Our analytical construction *pseudo-gang* stems from the fact that the boys never during the fieldwork refer to their group as a gang. However, their general behaviour and use of language

is crucial in order to make it as a Thug (for a further elaboration on this, see Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a).

The group consists of roughly 20 members, all of them of an ethnic minority heritage, and practices a general conflictual behavioural attitude towards other groups, the social services, and the police. It seems natural for the young boys in Thugz to internalize a so-called black, expressive form of masculinity (Hviid 2007), and play on related cultural discourses and performativity. In that sense they add ideas and phenomena from the African-American youth culture to their own cultural identity. For example, the group takes its name Thugz from the support group of a famous African-American rap artist. In a provincial town in Denmark, a lot of the cultural affiliations and references that the Thugz are drawing on seem to echo from afar. Playing out the roles of pronounced masculine behaviour, the Thugz-members evidently attract attention from other groupings and young people more loosely affiliated around the skater facility. When confronted with the question of what they do as a group, the answer is; "We smoke cigarettes, eat, and hang out" (Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a). Along with these relatively innocent everyday practices, we learn about a much more violent and up-front conflictual attitude toward other youths, through stories and narratives from key figures within the group, but also from talks with representatives of the SSP. In a focus group interview Bezim explains how he and a number of Thugz-members and supporters beat up a boy in a fenced ball cage, situated next to the skater facility, converting the friendly sports arena into an urban battleground (for details and further discussion, see Gravesen and Frostholm 2015b). This empirical example is one among many that illustrate the groupings' negotiations and interpretations of the urban space through their daily cultural routines. Obviously, such behaviour is unsought for by the public authorities.

4.5 The Western Town Kids—Vulnerable Boys and Girls

As a counter-equivalent to Thugz, there is a more informal and less well-defined group of individuals often present at the site. For the most part, this group consists of a fairly confused mass of impoverished and vulnerable boys and girls who all, with a few exceptions, originate from the western part of town. Using the word group about this gathering of individuals, indicates a more united and outlined assembly than what reality on the site might actually always express. No well-defined cultural code of practice seems to bind the group together, but for many of its members a challenging home base and school difficulties are common. But more than anything, it seems that what ties these individuals together is their

(Footnote 3 continued)

resemble gang-like behaviour (Bengtsson 2012; Jensen and Pedersen 2012; Rasmussen 2012). Using a group name is a clear example of that.

mutual geographical origin—the western part of town—traditionally (and to a certain extent currently) a working class area inhabited by less privileged families. When entering the inner city centre, tension seems to be ever-present. In general, conflicts between Thugz and the western-town kids seem to exist more on a narrative note than on an actual confrontational one. We experienced a lot of talk about a turf war—an apparently narratively constructed dispute between the groups belonging to different neighbourhoods. If they were ever rooted in reality, at least they seem to be something belonging to the past (Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a). Often the underdogs of most of the ongoing negotiations of cultural power struggles, social and territorial markings, and generic youthful banter unfolding among and within the groupings at the site, the western-town kids do not in fact attract much attention. They mostly keep to themselves operating on the outer edge of the facility. However, as is the case with Thugz, these young individuals also confront the official ideas with the space and interpret its functionalities. Steeling cans of power drink in nearby stores, gathering at the facility and playing a bloody game, smashing their hands with the empty cans (for more on this, see Gravesen and Frostholm 2015b), are other examples of behaviour that challenges the official intentions of the site formulated by the municipality.

4.6 The Skaters—Having Fun and Living in the Moment

Equipped with expensive skater-outfits, cigarettes, skateboards and often alcoholic beverages, the skaters enjoy each other's company whilst practicing and showing off at the site. Seemingly, the group embodies a "loose" type of lifestyle, where living in the moment, performing on the board and having fun are simple, but crucial values. They share different linguistic and behavioural codes from the other groupings at the site, using many words and phrases related only to the skating milieu, hence coming off as a rather organized and homogeneous group, excluding those not familiar with their discursive exchanges. The boundaries between this group and others are rather stable, with age constituting a significant difference. The skaters are mostly older than members of the other groupings, some of them actually adults in their twenties. The Skaters find especially the Thugz somehow immature and generally disruptive or destructive of the place. Because the Skaters' cultural practices actually align with the municipality's intended purpose of the site, seemingly the Skaters do not have to fear the authorities and the police chasing them off the site. However, the Thugz complicate and threaten the Skaters' happy haven. According to the Skaters, the Thugz jeopardize the goodwill that the Skaters earn from ordinary citizens and the Municipality, when living out their up-front conflictual behaviour at the urban space. With the Thugz' cultural actions compromising the Skaters' (and the facility's) reputation and recognition in the city, concerns about their future opportunities to practice their skating and loose lifestyle on legitimate sites in the city increase (Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a). Nevertheless, the Skaters' behaviour does not always adhere to official ideas of

what the facility is meant for. When they smoke marijuana, one of the skaters explains, they hide behind trees in the nearby park, so that younger children using the facility, and citizens in general, will not see what they are doing.

As hinted to in the unfolding of the empirical findings at the site, it becomes clear that the analytical framework making up these cultural constructions plays on the social synergies and socialization processes taking place around the facility. In this sense, the urban skating facility frames an informal stage for acting out battles of cultural meanings (Geertz 1973; Hall 1997) and negotiating social identities (Jenkins 2003) among as well as within the groups present at the site. In this light, the city becomes a cultural learning arena of symbolic exchanges between a confused mess of social actors.

4.7 Civic Learning and Pedagogical Dilemmas

To take the analysis a bit further, on the following pages we intend to look deeper into the question of civic learning and pedagogical dilemmas related to the cultural assemblage manifested at the urban site.

In The Civilizing Process Norbert Elias (1994, 2000) examines the core characteristics of civilized behaviour in a western, historical perspective, stressing that "the "trend" of the movement of civilization, is everywhere the same" (Elias 1994, 2000: 380). According to Elias, in order to act civilized, the individual must impose a steady and strict self-control, subordinate short-term impulses to the commands of an ingrained long-term view, and generally rely on a complex, but secure agency. Historically, the western individual has experienced a shift from external or "alien" constraints to "self"-restraints, and Elias argues that the behaviour of less privileged groups "is forced increasingly in a direction originally confined to the upper strata" (ibid.: 381). In fewer words, Elias' notion pinpoints that individuals, independently and through self-control, must adhere to the moral and civic rules of society in order to gain appreciation and respect. "Individuals are compelled to regulate their conduct in an increasingly differentiated, more even and more stable manner" (ibid.: 367), Elias argues when clarifying that the more refined the processes of civilization become, the more demands and requirements emerge, resulting in a prolonged and more complex transformation process from childhood to adulthood (see also Gulløv and Gilliam 2012: 40). "The effort required to behave "correctly" (…) becomes so great" (Elias 1994, 2000: 367–368), and obviously the crucial years of youth are important—and of specific interest—not least for the state and its officials. In Denmark, the so-called 95 %-objective is an example of this. It relates to the official idea that "Denmark must be prepared to seize the opportunities of the global economy",[4] consequently ensuring that 95 % of each youth cohort achieve at least

[4]Read about the *95 %-objective* at the **Danish Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality website (in Danish)**: http://uvm.dk/Aktuelt/I-fokus/95-procent-maalsaetning.

upper secondary education.[5] Related to Elias, one could argue that correct youth behaviour in a Danish context is synonymous with the behaviour of those who undergo upper secondary education—those who suppress immediate or short-term satisfaction at the cost of long-term strategies. Obviously, educational progress has become a core imperative of the Danish state, but paradoxically, after the years of obligatory primary and lower secondary school, secondary school is not based on formal and compulsory regulations, but indeed informal and moral ones.

The majority of adolescents in Denmark conform to the national imperative, but not quite as many as the 95 %-objetive dictates. Approximately 85 % of a Danish youth cohort can expect to achieve their upper secondary exam (Pihl 2015), whereas the remaining 15 % are left in (or will choose to be in) the so-called residual group, without a ticket to further educational advancement or professional labour.

As illustrated earlier in the article, three distinct groupings stood out, as we began collecting and categorizing our empirical data. For all of these three, it applies that members are attracted to the unstructured nature of the cultural life at the skater facility. With no adults regularly present, the urban space is exploitable and open for interpretations—unlike places and rooms in structured learning environments and pedagogical settings such as schools, leisure clubs and part-time workplaces. For a great deal of these young individuals, it might actually be tricky and challenging to conform to such structured spaces, due to the often related social demands and academic requirements. When gathering at the public urban site, the three groupings, in each their manner, challenge civic codes of behaviour and question the municipality's intentions with the facility. The Thugz' confrontational attitude and petty crime patterns of behaviour, the Western Town Kids' economic and social vulnerability, and the Skaters' loosened lifestyle with a focus on living in the moment, drinking and smoking marijuana, all seem to work against the idea of civilization and regulated conduct, and potentially compromise the overall imperative of the 95 %-objective with its related emphasis on long-term strategies. Despite their behavioural differences and cultural dissimilarities, the groups share the urban spot and convert it into an alternative cultural learning arena, which accordingly provides alternative learning outcomes.

Owing to the fact that the young people confront the state and municipal logics by exceeding the official understandings of the place, the SSP representatives are launched in an attempt to locate and over time neutralize the flighty and most opposing characters. The SSP serves as friendly and bonding adult characters that come off different from other authorities present in the young people's lives, such as the police, teachers, pedagogues or parents. Whereas such traditional adult roles have each their fairly predictable pedagogical strategy, be it punitive, educational or

[5]In Danish called *ungdomsuddannelse*. After primary (grade 1–6) and lower secondary school (grade 7–9/10) covered by the comprehensive *Folkeskole*, students advance to upper secondary education.

comforting, the role of the SSP is a bit more tacit and subtle—and far less institutional.

Like Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault also looked into vital historical developments of western societies. With an emphasis on the concept of power, Foucault demonstrated how control and punishment moved from torture and spectacular displays of power carried out by traditional authorities such as the king and his soldiers to discipline and training in institutional settings, in the vein of humanity and related ideas of civility (Foucault 1977). Schools, leisure clubs and workplaces are examples of such institutional settings based on disciplinary methods such as specific distributions of individuals, control of activities, time structuring, surveillance, sanctioning and in schools also examining (ibid.). All such techniques work well in institutional spaces and architecturally confined rooms. "Discipline sometimes requires enclosure" (ibid.: 141), Foucault notes, when disciplinary monotony unfolds. Although these insights were elaborated on forty years ago, the disciplinary techniques pinpointed by Foucault are still vibrant in institutional settings today (Rose 1992; Nilsson 2008). But what about open, urban places like the skater facility? With the lack of walls, doors and roofs, no strict timetable and no formal entry requirements, how are the cultural imperatives of the state and the municipality protected? Seemingly, the SSP are an essential part of the answer.

4.8 Playground or Control Mechanism?

Obviously, the SSP mingle at the site for a reason, and obviously their friendly attitude is constructed to gain access to the kind of youth groupings that normally distance themselves from adults and adult authority. After all, the groupings use the public space to avoid too much interference in their daily cultural lives, owing to their reluctance to conform to majority codes of conduct. Often members of the groupings flee when the SSP arrive, although this is not always the case. Depending on the personality and behaviour of the SSP representative, the group members' tolerance varies.

Laureen has been engaged in various kinds of social work in the city for more than a decade. She has known some of the key figures in the youth groupings since their kindergarten years, and owing to this, she earned their confidence. Now, working as a SSP representative, Laureen builds her relations to the groupings around a caring, humorous, friendly, yet authoritative approach that allows her to empathize with and understand the youngsters' perspectives and motives, and for the same reason speak frankly about her assessments of their actions and cultural interpretations of the site. They listen, and her comments make an impression. But then again, due to the permeability, fluidity and no formal membership vibe of the public space, they can leave whenever they desire to—and sometimes they do. Our field notes contain more than a few examples of that. This does not change the fact, however, that in many respects Laureen represents the opposite of a traditional authority. Think of a strict teacher or parent that sets the rules and enforces them

through harsh sanctions. Laureen is everything but that. With that said, and her sociable style aside, one should not mistake her agenda. In a follow-up interview months after the field observations, she explains that her and her colleagues' primary objective is to get the vulnerable and confrontational members of the youth groupings off the streets and encourage them to enrol in educational activities, leisure clubs or part time jobs instead. In that sense, Laureen works in straight continuation of, or perhaps as a direct extension of, the State objectives clarified earlier in the article. Through the gaining of trust, she tries to propagate and install a critical self-awareness in the young individuals and to ground behavioural changes on internal reflection and self-control. Although the SSP-workers' pedagogical efforts and civilizing interventions are not designed and formed in (indoor) institutional settings, characterized by all the traditional external disciplinary techniques that Foucault so lively described, through the eyes of the SSP, the skater facility serves as an analytical space, which operates for the same disciplinary reasons as any other pedagogical or civilizing unit;

> One must eliminate the effects of imprecise distributions, the uncontrolled disappearance of individuals, their diffuse circulation, their unusable and dangerous coagulation; it was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct, of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space. (Foucault 1977: 143)

When compared to Laureen's outspoken statement about wanting to get the vulnerable and challenging youth groupings away from the urban public space, Foucault's phrasing feels relevant and vibrant. Laureen and her colleagues, through their mingling and social relatedness with the young, provide the knowledge and analysis that over time, subtly, are transformed into interventions, through talking and caring, that serve the higher purpose of making the young individuals more concerned with long-term strategies and less habitually administrated by the thirst for instant, impulse-driven satisfaction. And the effort is based on the intention to succeed this task through the shaping of self-constraints in the young people and their successive feeling of aligning with internal objectives, as opposed to external, "alien" ones. As touched upon earlier, the notion of self-constraints was essential for Elias' thinking, but also Foucault focused on similar thoughts on self-control and technologies of the self late in his career (Nilsson 2008). Rose (1992) further elaborated on this when introducing the concept of the enterprising self, meaning a self that takes responsibility for its own life, a self that is free and autonomous, and a self that manages this freedom within the framework of socially acceptable norms. This modern variant of power thus focuses on subjectivity propagating that individual decisions, through various pedagogical endeavours, align with political strategies. In a liberated state, individuals must be governed to self-government. "The enterprising self will make a venture of its life, project itself a future and seek to shape itself (…). The enterprising self is thus a calculating self" (Rose 1992: 146), Rose states, and essentially he finds that pedagogical technologies are

constructed to form responsible citizens and to "bind the inhabitants of a territory into a single polity, a space of regulated freedom" (ibid.: 158). We argue that the SSP are aiming at just that. Following Rose, the subtle pedagogical approach practiced by Laureen and her colleagues is an example of the municipality converting a seemingly free urban space into a space of regulation, strategy and learning. The enterprising self is self-striving for fulfilment, excellence and achievement (ibid.: 146), and most commonly this striving is pursued and fabricated in structured learning arenas in the institutional triangle, as mentioned in the introduction. Nonetheless, as the analysis has illustrated, the objective is also pursued and crafted out in the open.

4.9 Concluding Remarks, Summing Up the Dilemmas

In the article, we focused on the subtle interventions from the SSP. However, alongside these, more traditional authoritarian forms of regulation are carried out at—and around—the downtown facility. Of course, the police keep an eye on delinquent behaviour among specific individuals, and the youth groupings, especially the Thugz, are very aware of the Danish minimum age for criminal responsibility (15 years). Regularly, during the fieldwork, members of Thugz speak of interrogations at the police station, and older, more experienced members, share knowhow and advice with the younger ones. In a focus group interview, two key informants from Thugz, Bezim and Roman, speak about episodes of police brutality towards adolescents in the city, showing us YouTube-videos as proof (for details and thorough interpretation, see Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a). Though the methods and attitude of the SSP and the police differ, fundamentally their objective is the same. Moreover, because the SSP unit is a collaboration between the Social Services, Schools and the Police (which explains the acronym) of course they collaborate—in fact, the youth groupings are very aware of just that. In the focus group interview, the discussion also revolves around the informants' experiences with and understanding of the SSP:

Interviewer: What do you actually think about the SSP?
Bezim: SSP is just police …
Interviewer: Well, Laureen is also in the SSP
Bezim: Yes, but Laureen is also a snitch… You should never tell her anything! … But she can help you a lot. What Laureen does… is right. Really, it's right… she should go to the police… But we don't want her to. We are young … We don't think too much about what we're doing…
Interviewer: So you won't tell her everything?
Bezim: No…
Interviewer: But you do like her help, don't you? Or would it be better if she wasn't around?

Roman: It's her job to help us… She should be there … It's her job to help us, but it's also her job to be a snitch…
Interviewer: But would it be a better city if she wasn't around?
Bezim: No, but it would be a better city if she didn't go to the police!

In this conversation, it becomes clear that Laureen is in fact a dear and important character in Bezim's and Roman's lives, and this is also our impression from a multitude of other talks and occasions throughout our studies. But regardless of that, the limit of trust between the young people and the SSP creates a dilemma itself. This dilemma increases the distance between the cultural behaviour, understandings and interpretations of the young individuals from those of the SSP and the adult world in general. This leaves an impression of counter-productivity, since the civilizing efforts and overall objective are quite the opposite.

Hereto, the groupings, primarily the Thugz and the Western Town Kids are pressured to move away from the skater facility, in order to satisfy and appease anxious citizens and maintain a friendly, non-confrontational atmosphere and sense of kinship and edifying exercise across all age groups in the inner city. When interviewing Laureen, she explains that lately the SSP and the police intensively increased their presence at the skater facility to execute this endeavour. The paradoxical outcome of this official strategy is that the vulnerable and exposed members of the mentioned groupings are bound to leave the scene in favour of more sinister areas of the city, often occupied and influenced by groups with shadier agendas than just hanging out (Gravesen and Frostholm 2015a). During our field work we visited an old skater park in the western part of the city called SV, and witnessed the cultural intertwining of groupings that according to the SSP are engaged in crime and drug pushing. The blatant mixing of joints in the backseats of cars, loud music blasting, reticence towards us as adults and a higher average age also gave us the impression of a tougher environment than we experienced at the skater facility in the inner city. Informal talks with members of the Western Town Kids addressed this, for example, when a girl explains that she no longer dares to enter the SV. "There are a lot of police up there, and I don't want to get involved with any of that!" A boy from the skater group declares that up there at SV "it's all about weed, weed, weed", which weakens his desire to go there.

In a pedagogical perspective, it can be argued that the pressure on challenging groupings and the potential consequent move to even more challenging and potentially dangerous urban spaces is in fact counter-productive, because it jeopardizes the integrity and safety of vulnerable young individuals. On the other hand, if the objective strictly concerns protecting and shielding the inner city from conflictual and culturally opposing behaviour that interprets the skater facility in different directions than those intended by the municipality, the strategy can be categorized as productive.

Civic learning is founded in various settings and dimensions, and the discussions on urban youth culture, pedagogical interventions, and societal objectives carried out in this article only frame and touch upon a sparse selection of these. We hope, however, that our analysis highlighted the importance of further and continuing

dialogue on the challenging questions of youth culture, the way urban spaces shape learning processes, and to what extent officially promoted ideas and interventions create fellowship among inhabitants across all age groups and street styles, cf. the official wording mentioned early in the article.

As much as the skater facility liberates human energy and emancipates youth cultural expressions, interpretations and practices, it also advocates and enforces a specific behavioural ethic based on societal norms and structural constraints. Accordingly, when the urban young 'hang out' at the facility, they learn important cultural lessons about themselves and each other when negotiating social positions between and within the groupings. Hereto, their learning experiences are shaped by subtle pedagogical interventions and societal objectives based on certain forms of civic behaviour. We question whether the skater facility is in fact a gift for all citizens of Lomby, or perhaps is mostly designed and directed towards groups that adhere to the overall codes of conduct promoted by the municipality and the state. Our empirical data seems to indicate the latter.

We strived to illustrate that urban spaces are places of freedom and regulation at the same time, and perhaps one could argue that civic learning in urban places is a cultural assemblage of actions, interpretations and meanings expressing just that duality. In other words, the urban site is a bio-political learning arena. Through the SSP-workers, micro-processual encounters with the young individuals and urban groupings, bio-politics (Foucault 1977, 2009; Nilsson 2008) are implemented in order to keep the movement of civilization on track (Elias 1994, 2000). The task is managed through disciplinary methods based on surveillance, sanctioning and external control, but equally through modern forms of governing focused on the enterprising self that strives and reflects autonomously. A self that is reached through trust and relational bonding—a self that is regulated through its emancipation.

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Chapter 5
Space Is More Than Place: The Urban Context as Contested Terrain of Inclusive Learning Settings for Adults and Arena of Political Subjectivation

Silke Schreiber-Barsch

Abstract The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) has placed the issue of lifelong learning opportunities and dis/ability at the top of national policy agendas. A re-order/ing of the topography of learning is taking place, yet an important question remains: are barriers being removed, merely shifted, or even re-produced under a different guise and in the name of equal access to participation? This paper examines societal systems of inclusion/exclusion through the lens of spatial theory (Löw in Raumsoziologie. Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 2001), using the example of the German lifelong learning arena. It opens up an understanding of who gains access to public adult education institutions and, imperatively, why access is not merely a pedagogical issue, but in essence a negotiation of citizenship and politics—a negotiation that cuts right to the core of democratic societies. Empirical findings of a pilot study with a qualitative research design (Grounded Theory) allow insights into how access to a place of learning is interpreted and organized by adult education institutions. This leads to a discussion of Rancière's (Disagreement: politics and philosophy. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1999) work on *disagreement* and to questions on whether now all adults interested in learning would like to *and* have to participate in what is on offer and whether this might foster processes of political subjectivation in the contested terrain of urban learning settings.

Keywords Space · Inclusion · Ableism · Disability · Adult learners · Rancière · Löw · Political subjectivation

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5.1 Introduction: Adult Education and Social Inclusion—Who's in and Who's Out?

Everything for everybody

'Education for all—and especially for some' has been a leading leitmotif across the history of adult education, referring to its mandate to foster the social inclusion of marginalized or vulnerable groups in society. However, apart from this consistency, societal systems of inclusion/exclusion do not follow steady, quasi-natural logics, but represent socially (re)produced entities that are permanently under negotiation. Objects of negotiation are socially, culturally and politically defined terms of membership, recognition and participation in society. Accordingly, Schnapper (1996) and Castel (1995) have clarified that inclusion/exclusion are not dichotomous, but dialectical processes that, furthermore, do not represent well-defined static groups or a stable societal condition. Referring to inclusion/exclusion is hence of no use without a contextual reference, as Wilson (2000) has pointed out. Pursuing this argument, the paper provides the understanding that the term inclusion stands for a normative framework of a desired societal condition (i.e. an 'inclusive society') and, at the same time, describes one part of ongoing social processes of including *and* excluding across the whole range of social features (be that gender, class, employment status or other). Exclusion thus becomes abnormal in the sense of problematic only if to be excluded entails a solidified loss of opportunities to participate in society in a way that the individual views as a disadvantage and a loss of an appropriate living standard (Bartelheimer 2007).

Correspondingly, the normative framework of justification for social inclusion in its modern welfare state version is closely linked to ideas of equality, human rights and democracy (Young 2002; Wilson 2000) and, therefore, also to the right to education (United Nations 1948, art. 26).

Significant for this paper is the paradigm shift towards realizing the normative discourse which has been substantially promoted in Germany (as elsewhere) since the ratification of the United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009. The government's commitment to ensuring '*an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning*' (United Nations 2006, art. 24) claims to finally fully ensure the existing right to education. This political agenda-setting of social inclusion in its focus on dis/ability shakes the very foundations of who's in and who's out in society's lifelong learning system, especially in countries like Germany with a traditionally highly segregated system (Poore 2009; Richardson and Powell 2011). For centuries, segregation was based on a deficit-oriented categorization of learners into 'normal' and 'special' learning institutions along the *able/not-able divide* (Campbell 2009) (see Sect. 5.2.2). This has resulted in the on-going status quo that, in Germany, learning opportunities for adults with impairments or learning difficulties continue to be provided almost exclusively in sheltered workshops or in care institutions without any primary adult education mandate—hence not in public spaces like public adult education centers (Lindmeier 2003; Heimlich and Behr 2009) (see Sect. 5.2.1).

For adult education, two crucial points emerge. Firstly, in accordance with the UN Convention, it is indispensable to recognize adults with impairments or learning difficulties as regular clients of and prospective participants in adult education and to stop shifting responsibility to Special Needs Education. One of adult education's core principles is identifying target groups that are seen both as capable of *and* vitally in need of learning and that are thus addressed using specific target group-oriented measures (von Hippel and Tippelt 2009); however, historically this status has not been granted to adults with impairments or learning difficulties (see above). Secondly, in acknowledging such a status, research and practice must move beyond the ideology of inclusion and dis/ability. The common platitudes of this ideology argue purely normatively: inclusive education or an inclusive society are per se positive and therefore to be realized; or they argue on a one-sided economical basis according to which an inclusive system of lifelong learning is expensive, but exclusion is for free, ignoring the *price of exclusion* (Buckup 2009) and the empirically proven *disability-poverty cycle* (Banks and Polack 2014).

In contrast, this paper takes up Fraser's (1995) concept of recognition in the way that recognition as a regular client and prospective participant of adult education is grounded in terms of *individual status* (as a holder of human rights), not in being member of an in some way marginalized, disadvantaged or minority group. The latter is particularly relevant in light of the fact that membership in this case is awarded according to a supposed deficit. Yet, dis/ability is not an ontological category, but needs to be contextualized according to the *interrelatedness* of being

in whatever sense individually impaired as well as living in disabling societal conditions (Rocco and Delgado 2011). It needs to be deconstructed from a homogenous minority group approach or from referring to a unilateral body of research and discourse, oscillating between the medical *or* the social model of dis/ability, towards a multi-factorial account of dis/ability in its interrelatedness with biological, social, cultural *and* psychological aspects, attitudes and norms (Shakespeare 2013). Thus, in acknowledging individual status as an equal citizen of society, an inclusive system of lifelong learning would mean establishing a parity of esteem of *all* adults interested in learning in being able to decide whether to participate in learning opportunities or not. It renders possible the ability to decide and to act in the most self-determined manner in accordance with personal interests and desires—whether this is *not* to participate or to participate and whether this is 'merely' taking part in courses or actively contributing to re-setting and negotiating the potential space of participation in the lifelong learning system. Therefore, a glance at Germany's regime of dis/ability and of positioning people according to the existing order as citizen or *not-yet-being-a-citizen* (Biesta and Lawy 2006), a '*lesser citizen*' (Kabeer 2005), explains why a public adult education center is more than a territory shared by learners, professionals and pedagogical material. A spatial approach reveals the inherent symbolic dimensions of expected 'normality' and of the distribution of power and dominion determining who is to what extent able, powerful and considered to redefine, reorder and, finally, ensure the given ideas about learning and '*know-your-place*' *rules* (Holston 2009).

5.2 Space Is More Than Place: Public Adult Education Centers and Access to Learning

Taking a closer look at adult education as an institutional learning setting allows us to understand how the handling of the dis/ability issue is negotiated in the interplay between the macro-political level (UN Convention), the meso-political (public adult education centers as professional institutions with an adult learning mandate) and the micro-political level of individuals' everyday practices with regard to such centers. German public adult education centers represent a public learning space legitimized by their general accessibility and their public and professional mandate, meaning normatively: education for all and especially for some; financially: substantial public subsidies; organizationally: these subsidies allowing for reduced/no participation fees where necessary, thus in principle providing offers for all those who are interested in learning; pedagogically: ensuring a wide range of adult education and learning opportunities beyond neo-liberal constrictions and for the sake of learning itself; and spatially: representing—especially in urban landscapes—a historically rooted, widely recognized and well-known key stakeholder of adult learning.

5.2.1 Public Adult Education Centers as Key Stakeholders in the Urban Terrain

In Germany, the historical roots of public adult education centers, the so-called *Volkshochschulen*, reach back to the end of the 19th century and were influenced by Europe-wide developments such as the British university extension movement, the Scandinavian model of folk high schools in the tradition of its Danish founding father N.F.S. Grundtvig, modern society's endeavors to popularize knowledge via public lectures and the establishment of workers' institutes and craftsmen's schools in first and foremost urban areas and in the light of industrialization (Süssmuth and Sprink 2009). Today, 917 public adult education centers exist throughout Germany, operating as independent legal entities, but working under the auspices of the state, the respective federal states and the local authorities (Huntemann and Reichart 2014). They offer further education, in-house training, vocational certificates as well as literacy or citizenship courses and the whole range of liberal adult education learning offers. About 40 % of their financial resources stems from public subsidies, with revenues from participation fees amounting also to 40 % (as for 2013; ibid.). Their traditionally close ties to the public sector and their historical leitmotif of providing adult education for all and especially for some, beyond any particular political convictions, age cohorts, financial situations or learning objectives, explains why their work is entitled *adult education in public responsibility*.

Nevertheless, adults with impairments or learning difficulties have never been recognized as regular clientele. The sociopolitical climate of the 1970s and its call for equal opportunities identified this clientele, amongst others, as a relevant target group; yet, the opportunities remained sporadic, far off from any structural endeavors (Lindmeier 2003; Heimlich and Behr 2009). Nearly 40 years after the end of the National Socialist dictatorship and its inhuman euthanasia program (called 'T4') with the systematic killing of more than 70,000 people with all kinds of disabilities, a first structural impetus to look in a more differentiated manner at the situation of adult learners and dis/ability was initiated by supranational agenda-setting: the launch of the United Nation's *International Year of Disabled Persons* in 1981 and the following *International Decade of Disabled Persons* (1983–1993). Policy measures and reforms aiming at more systematic improvement of equality in chances and participation were implemented (Schuchardt 1987), yet, the traditional segregation order of providing learning opportunities first and foremost in sheltered workshops or in care institutions remained intact. Rare cases of participation in regular public adult education courses occurred, but by pure chance and not as causal outcome of target group approaches (ibid.).

Around 30 years later, political agenda-setting has now again been set in action, this time by the UN Convention. The latter explicitly emphasizes the risks of facing barriers due to dis/abilities or impairments that may hinder '*full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others*' (United Nations 2006, art. 1). Correspondingly to the logic of barriers, the concept offered is that of *access* or *accessibility*; accessibility should enable all individuals to '*fully enjoy all human*

rights and fundamental freedoms' (United Nations 2006, preamble). This means the question is no longer *if* but from now on *how* lifelong learning opportunities for all are assured in the name of easy access and equal participation in society. In consequence, the re-visited policy statement of the national association of public adult education centers declares in 2011 for the first time their openness also for '*people with and without disabilities*' (DVV 2011). However, data on public adult education centers still manifest the traditional segregation order. The share of target-group oriented courses amongst the total number of all courses is 17 %; of these, 2 % are explicitly labelled as for '*people with disabilities*' (Huntemann and Reichart 2014). In another current survey (Koscheck et al. 2013), all adult education providers were asked for the first time to estimate (because quantitative data rarely exists and is complicated, if not unethical, to gain) the number of participants with disabilities/impairments in their regular course portfolio; the findings revealed a percentage of less than 5 %. Whether or not it is possible to calculate an 'adequate' participation rate—bearing in mind that only half (49 %) of all 18–64-year-olds in Germany participated in organized learning activities in 2014 (Reichart 2014)—there is no denying that the proportion of adults with impairments or learning difficulties is low.

What becomes apparent is the cultural and political dimension of the issue, as this low participation rate cannot be explained solely by a lack of wheelchair ramps or insufficient formal rights—certainly, no public adult education center has a mission statement saying they are *not* open to or *not* responsible for this clientele. Rather, Young's (2002) differentiation into external and internal forms of exclusion appears applicable: External exclusion refers to the a priori exclusion of individuals from the *demos* and deliberative democracy due to formal rights. But what is decisive is internal exclusion, happening a posteriori: '*Though formally included in a forum or process, people may find that their claims are not taken seriously and may believe that they are not treated with equal respect. The dominant mood may find their ideas or modes of expression silly or simple, and not worthy of consideration*' (ibid., p. 55). Thus, even though formal access to deliberative democracy is provided, voices are not acknowledged and recognition is granted only pro forma. Young therefore argues for more inclusive political practice and participatory forms of democratic communication as a premise of political subjectivation. This blind spot in the current discourse on adult education and dis/ability regarding how the internal negotiation of access to lifelong learning opportunities unfolds is analyzed in this paper using a multi-factorial account of dis/ability (Shakespeare 2013) and, furthermore, by adopting the perspective of spatial theory (Löw 2001) in order to shed light on the topography of adult education and dis/ability.

5.2.2 Space Is More Than Place

Using relational spatial theory (Löw 2001) enables the analysis of the interrelatedness of material, social, *and* symbolic dimensions of space and opens up an

understanding of the spatial order of who gains access to public adult education institutions and, imperatively, why this is not merely a pedagogical issue, but in essence a negotiation of citizenship and politics—a negotiation that cuts right to the core of democratic societies. This interrelatedness becomes apparent in, inter alia, the social expectancy towards a 'normal' topography of learning settings that follows the *able/not-able divide* (Campbell 2009). It manifests the symbolic framework that public adult education centers are meant for abled adults and sheltered workshops or similar institutions are meant for not-abled adults. This is what Holston (2009) calls the '*know-your-place*' *rule*, re-produced by most of society's members and by explicit facts and internalized attitudes and norms, an interactive *doing disability* (Waldschmidt 2008). Therefore, re-negotiating this topography of public space (Amin 2015) represents what Amin and also Cele (2013) have pointed out. Through providing places where everyday practices can be exercised, public spaces are in essence political arenas and sites for learning, performing and communicating political subjectivities (see also Sect. 5.3).

The so-called *spatial turn* in social science and humanities has brought the phenomena of space and place into the foreground since the beginnings of the 1990s. However, Crang and Thrift (2000) correctly remark that '*different disciplines do space differently*', referring to the by now diverse field of theories and approaches. This paper draws on the work of Löw (2001, 2008), who with her concept of space provided one of the most influential German language sociological works in recent years. Löw's aim is, in reference to the work of Giddens (1984), to overcome theoretical dichotomies and understand space as a *duality* of structural order/ing and action (Löw 2001, 2008). Significant for this paper is Löw's relational understanding of space, defining space as a '*relational ordering of social goods and living beings at places*' (Löw 2001); this order/ing is re-produced by what she calls processes of *synthesis* and *placing* of these elements (see below). This allows an analytical differentiation between space and place, as place refers to a concrete, territorial locus, whereas at one locus many social spaces may be produced, re-arranged and negotiated (ibid.): the same territorial public adult education center may represent an everyday learning space for some but a distant world for others. Thus, social spaces are settings of human activities and appropriation processes, meaning that given spaces are appropriated as well as new ones created (Deinet 2010). Yet, a learning space only emerges at the moment when subjective appropriation processes are happening at a specific learning place by executing learning activities (Kraus 2015). The importance of including the aspect of *action* is based upon its function as a *mediating category*, as Löw states, which '*makes it possible to link bodily positioning, perception, and the constructional performances of subjects with material artefacts and institutional frameworks*' (Löw 2008, p. 31).

Institutionalized order/ings like the aforementioned '*know-your-place*' *rule* are defined by Löw as *spatial structures*. Löw elaborates that spatial structures enable *and* constrain action and that they are deeply anchored in institutions. Thus, '*institutions are enduring regularities in social actions*' (Löw 2008, p. 39), through re-producing rules, selectively allocating resources, executing negative sanctions in

case of rule violations and so on. An exemplary look at the German history of adult education and dis/abilities illustrates the mechanisms and powerful consequences of such spatial structures, in this case of the traditional spatial structure of *segregated spaces for adult learners with dis/abilities* (Schreiber-Barsch 2015). Historical foundations are the introduction of compulsory education and, thus, public recognition that children classified as non-abled in the common sense of normality both require education and have the ability to learn. This went hand in hand with the establishment of spatially segregated learning institutions, like special schools for the deaf from the middle of the 18th century. It established the basic pattern of segregated learning institutions along the *able/not-able divide* (Campbell 2009), which spread to adults in the 19th century by means of institutions that did not merely house non-abled adults, but started to educate them and engage them in activities (e.g. the *Evangelische Stiftung Alsterdorf*/Protestant Foundation Alsterdorf (2016) in Hamburg). However, the core principle of this spatial structure is a *segregating logic of protection* (Schreiber-Barsch 2015) with a twofold mechanism: Firstly, the welfare state's argument for segregation is the re-establishment of normality, aiming at making spaces in society as homogenous as possible and thus legitimizing resources and strategies to adjust normality (Löw et al. 2008; Kessl and Reutlinger 2010). Accordingly, the segregation of a target group seemed pedagogically justified as it claimed to serve the protection of non-abled learners *and* of the public good. Pedagogical experts, the newly founded special needs professionals, established their own discipline, publication organs and spheres of activity and elaborated through these means why segregation and specialization served the protection not only of public spaces like schools but also of non-abled learners: the former from the restrictions and hindrances caused by non-abled learners, and the latter from being, so to speak, unfairly treated as 'normal', but paternalistically recognized as 'sick' (Pfahl 2011; Theunissen and Hoffmann 2003). Secondly, this normative justification of segregation was linked with a physical segregation, preferably hosting the target group in large, often locked institutions in the outer periphery of cities or far off in rural areas.

It is against the background of this traditional spatial structure that the policy agenda on inclusion set changes in action. It provided a crucial external steering impetus that gave rise to a wide-ranging social negotiating process about the future spatial structure, namely *inclusive learning settings for adults*. However, its actual implementation—be it minimal or thorough—in learning places for adults illustrates the ambivalent struggle to re-arrange institutionalized social order/ings and to redistribute lines of power among the parties concerned. So far, German adult education practice and research has often narrowed down the task of implementing the policy agenda on inclusion to the aim of *meeting-needs* (Armstrong 1982). This means identifying the methodical-didactical needs of this target group and responding with, again, 'special' strategies: special training courses for teachers, specially labelled course offers ('*inclusive courses*'), providing assistive technology, using special (simple) language and so on (see e.g. Burtscher et al. 2013). Thus, are barriers being removed, merely shifted, or even re-produced under a different guise in the name of equal access?

5.2.3 Negotiating Access to a Place of Learning

Focusing the institutional perspective through the lens of spatial theory brings to the fore the two-sided logic of *barriers* to and *access* to/*accessibility* of learning opportunities (see Sect. 5.2.1). The crucial point about the excluding impact of dis/abilities are not the impairments, difficulties or whatever kinds of handicaps themselves, but their commonality in being labelled, perceived and internalized as barriers to participation (Franz and Beck 2007). Thus, barriers are highly context-related and, not least, subject to individual judgement. They may represent reasonable physical hindrances (railroad gates), but also socially excluding ones (missing wheelchair ramp), however, they limit possible actions and the idea of a potential range of possibilities (Bielefeld and Rohrmann 2012). In a spatial sense, barriers are both process and (intermediate) results of social practices (Reutlinger and Lingg 2011). They display the different power relations of the players involved in their enforcement of their respective ideas of who shall gain access, to which kind of learning opportunity and under which membership category: as citizen and holder of human rights or as a *not-yet-being-a-citizen* (Biesta and Lawy 2006) through a restricted recognition of human rights and of 'proper' forms of communication and participation (Young 2002; see Sect. 5.2.1). In this sense, a public adult education institution provides a public space for learning, performing and communicating political subjectivities and, at the same moment, influences the way political subjectivities are formed through its specific material, social, and symbolic order/ing (see Sect. 5.2.2). Under negotiation is the very foundation of citizenship, which is understood, following Biesta and Lawy (2006), as a '*practice of identification with public issues*' (ibid., p. 72); it represents transformative processes of how '*people relate to, understand and express their place and role in society*' (ibid., p. 73). Pursuing this argument, civic learning has to be seen as a cultural process and, by being performed through gaining access to and occupying public spaces, a *wayfinding into society* (see introductory chapter).

A closer look at German public adult education institutions' everyday practices of negotiating access to their places of learning as part of reordering the spatial structure of adult learning illustrates the complexity and the power-driven forces inherent to these processes. Access serves as a hinge between adult education providers and adults interested in learning, even before actual participation occurs, and, thus, functions as an intermediary between institutional target group concepts and individual responses to this in the form of non-/participation. A regular material outcome of the negotiation of access is documented inter alia in program booklets of public adult education centers. Beyond its materiality as a collection of advertising texts, a program booklet represents '*a historically materialized expression of society's interpretation of education. It is influenced by the educational policy framework, by participants and their demand, and is filtered through professionals. The program's function is to make clear what the institution stands for*' (Gieseke and Opelt 2003, p. 46; author's translation; see also Käpplinger 2008). Under negotiation is the relational social order/ing between the public, the learning

institution, the pedagogical premises and the adult learner; the program booklet provides a snapshot of the outcome. Löw (2001) differentiates this order/ing into two driving forces (see Sect. 5.2.2): *spacing* as activities of positioning and re-arranging of social goods and living beings, and *synthesizing*, meaning the active performance of individuals via perception, imagining or remembering to merge the positioned and re-arranged elements to spaces. Hence, program booklets illustrate the outcome of such spacing on the institutional level and open up the question of whether synthesizing processes of adults merge this outcome to learning spaces that are perceived as supportive or disabling for their prospective participation. As there is not yet much known about *synthesizing*—which reveals a critical gap in research as the supply-side of adult education is still prioritized over ascertaining the demands of the clientele concerned—the focus in this paper with its institutional perspective is on the first part (*spacing*).

Findings of an explorative pilot study provide further insights into the material, social, and symbolic order/ing that takes place in the name of easy access. The research project, implemented in 2014–2015 (Silke Schreiber-Barsch and Emma Fawcett; University of Hamburg), adopted a qualitative research design (Grounded Theory methodology; Strauss and Corbin 1996) using semi-guided expert interviews (of approximately 90 min) with pedagogical professionals from the field under scrutiny: seven academic/institutional stakeholders working in or with institutionalized learning settings for adults (meaning, mostly, public adult education centers or publicly accessible disabled care providers). The research question asked how inclusion, in the sense of the UN Convention, is operationalized in institutional learning settings of adults. The data were analyzed using selective coding following Strauss and Corbin (1996), which is based on the identification of one (or more) core categories that concern and explain the primary phenomenon (here, the operationalization of inclusion).

The analytical process elicited public learning places as battle grounds of the two spatial structures which materialize in different pedagogical arrangements. Such pedagogical arrangements embody a respective material, social and symbolic statement on the envisaged learning and teaching activities that are to take place inside (Kraus 2015). The institutional *architecture of access* emerged as core category to explain the phenomenon as it sets the rules and limits for learning and participation. These rules and limits are communicated to the prospective participant and the public via three aspects. First, by the overarching institutional leitmotif of an 'appropriate' operationalization of inclusion which varies between the two dimensions 'work-to-rule' and 'welcoming culture': between fulfilling minimum requirements (physical accessible premises are sufficient) and a holistic inclusion-mainstreaming as a strategic organizational re-ordering of the whole institution by assuring that all players are on board, identifying access-related needs and requirements and understanding inclusion as a constant process. Second, this operational leitmotif finds its logical continuation in its translation to the program level. Programs express the overcoming or, in contrast, the reinforcement of segregation on a continuum that runs between 'inclusion panic', 'exclusion of inclusion' to 'inclusion as standard'. Inclusion panic is driven by irrational fears that

anticipate huge difficulties and, thus, try to ward off an operationalization, whereas exclusion of inclusion means introducing inclusive courses into the institution's regular program, but outsourcing registration and implementation to a disabled care provider, its place of learning and teaching staff. Inclusion as standard in the sense of 'normality' defines its operationalization as standard procedure and a regular task. Third, the intended learner's participation at the institution is channeled through the range of learning objectives that the adult education professionals consider achievable. This refers to the crucial point of how far the ability of adults with dis/abilities to learn is acknowledged, varying between 'directed by others' (anticipated is, for example, a course registration not by the learner his/herself but by carers; foreseen are courses with more practical rather than intellectual or academic learning objectives like cooking or playing drums), 'internally differentiated' (providing inclusive courses, but assigning static learner roles according to skills levels) to 'autonomous' (acknowledging autonomous decisions according to learning interests, manifested e.g. through providing inclusive courses also in foreign languages and other complex topics if interest in these is expressed).

5.3 Re-Order/ing the Topography of Learning and Political Subjectivation

In merging the issues raised in this paper, two provocative questions arise: Why should it be valid to regard adults with dis/abilities as regular clientele of the lifelong learning system with a legitimate claim to participate? And second, would they want to participate?

The answer to the first question may seem simple with reference to the UN human rights framework (United Nations 1948) and the UN Convention, stating that the right to education is a human right, regardless of any kinds of social differences. However, the arguments and empirical findings presented in the paper convincingly show that the policy agenda on inclusion is one thing, but that the everyday practices in adult education tell a different kind of story. Accordingly, the re-order/ing of the 'normal' topography of learning settings in adult education shifts the basic coordinates of the underlying inclusion/exclusion system: anchoring recognition as an adult education client to individual status (Fraser 1995) and not to membership of a minority group paternalistically labelled as abnormal, sick or deserving pity, this establishes a parity of esteem of all adults interested in learning in being able to decide whether to participate or not and whether to declare the need for assistive support or not. It is not about ironing out differences, claiming a simple *everything for everyone* (*Alles für alle!* see introductory photograph) or ignoring needs and shifting them to individual responsibility, but about removing automatisms of deficit-oriented logics and practices—and about the right to exercise existing rights. Therefore, the negotiation of access to learning opportunities is not merely a pedagogical issue, but in essence a negotiation of citizenship and politics in democratic societies. Formal rights may ensure pro forma inclusion (Young

2002), but participation, like inclusion, is not context-free (Masschelein and Quaghebeur 2005). The current regimes of power set the framework of what *quality* of participation is aimed for and in what ways access is granted to political arenas as sites for learning, performing and communicating *political subjectivities* (Amin 2015; Cele 2013). Rancière (1999), in his work on *disagreement*, identified such mechanisms as rules set by the current regime of power in a deliberative democracy (called *police*), which '*is an order of the visible and the sayable that sees that a particular activity is visible and another is not, that this speech is understood as discourse and another as noise*' (ibid.). This police order is a regime of *consensus*. In contrast, Rancière suggests that *politics* or *democracy* be understood as a process of political subjectivation which begins at the moment of disagreement, when what he calls '*the part of those who have no part*' (ibid.) in the given police order seeks to disrupt it. Thus, whereas Young (2002) focuses on widening political practice and participatory forms of democratic communication as premises for political subjectivation, Rancière emphasizes the objective of such processes of subjectivation: not a (better) inclusion in the current regimes of power, but a revision of the regime itself by those who were previously not granted the right to be seen and to be heard.

This leads to the second question. Rule and Modipa's (2012) research on attitudes and experiences of adult learners with dis/abilities in South Africa derived the transformative force of being acknowledged in public space and of virtually occupying places (in Löw's sense of subjective appropriation processes) that were not meant for them before: '*This movement is a physical movement from the isolation of the home to a public space in which people with disabilities engage in public activities*' (ibid., p. 154). This virtual change of place, also applicable to a public adult education center as part of public space, is not to be underestimated, due to the fact that traditional places in the domain of disabled care are known rather for infantilizing procedures and restricted possibilities for autonomous decision-making regarding if, where and how to participate (see e.g. Ackermann and Amelung 2009). Acknowledging adult learners with dis/abilities as regular clientele does, very visibly, re-order the terrain, the procedures and the pedagogical settings of a public adult education center for adult learners of all kinds, its teaching and administrative personell and its physical premises, and, through this, the current order of public space. However, realizing such a *counterculture of living together* (Amin 2015) crucially depends on persons actually participating and making use of access to such public space. Yet, it should not establish at the very same moment a new regime of participation, one expecting that every adult with dis/abilities desires to take part in what is potentially on offer for him or her. Subjective appropriation processes include the option to reject offers as well.

Summing up, re-ordering access to public adult education centers in the name of inclusion opens up enormous potential in recognizing adults with dis/abilities and interested in learning as regular occupants and respected citizens of public space and learning opportunities. However, in addition to non-negotiable responsibilities on the policy level and on institutional levels to acknowledge their right to exercise existing rights, this paper further argues for recognizing a parity of esteem of all

adults interested in learning to decide whether to participate in what is on offer or not, and whether to take part in the current regime of power or to call for a revision of the regime itself.

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Chapter 6
(Re)-Learning the City for Intergenerational Exchange

Helen Manchester and Keri Facer

Abstract Two major international agendas are currently working to realign social, material and representational elements of the city in ways that are helpful for both children and older adults. The Age Friendly City movement (AFC) (led by the World Health Organisation) and the Child Friendly Cities (CFC) movement (led by UNICEF) aim to ensure that planners, policy makers and developers design cities that take account of the interests of age groups who are too often marginalised in current policy and design processes. These movements are valuable and important in themselves, however they also have significant implications for the future of a learning city in which intergenerational exchange is valued. In this chapter, in order to understand better how the city might (re) learn to become intergenerational, we explore different intergenerational assemblages, looking at what is being aligned, and connected in the AFC and CFC movements. We then describe a performative, experimental project that sought to enable different alignments between these movements. A key element of this involved building new imaginative ideas about what might be possible in order to realign these generational assemblages for intergenerational, civic learning. Finally we explore what worked and didn't work, what resisted enrolment, what was easily aligned and what routines were disrupted.

Keywords Intergenerational · Civic learning · All-age friendly city · Child friendly · Age friendly

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6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the question of how cities might (re)-learn to be intergenerational. As in the introductory chapter cities are here seen as socio-material assemblages that produce different ways of living through routines, and through the articulating together of diverse elements including representations, social, human and material elements (McFarlane 2011). This chapter explores the social, material and symbolic forces at work that shape and often currently militate against opportunities for intergenerational living and learning in the city.

Why does this matter? Stories that circulate through global media channels and into popular discourse are characterized by alarmist claims of conflict between generations. This is not simply a feature of wider economic and demographic change, but also a consequence of the way lives are organized and lived in cities today, of the design of public spaces and the work of our social institutions and services (Vanderbeck and Worth 2015). In our growing cities we are increasingly seeing the planning decisions, policies and commercial drivers towards age segregated spaces, even 'gated' communities for those of different generations (Atkinson and Flint 2004). For instance, increasingly tall fences 'protect' children in schools and play areas and children's lives, at least in the global North, are increasingly regulated and controlled by adults (Bragg and Manchester 2011).

Older people meanwhile are offered the 'safety' of retirement communities for over 55s where they are able to live, shop, exercise and learn without going beyond the 'communities' gates (Biggs et al. 2001). In one such community in our own city, situated in the South West of the UK, older people can choose from a range of different housing offers—from an independent apartment to a care home for those with dementia—all situated within a gated complex with it's own café and pub built around a quintessentially English cricket pitch. Intergenerational contact here comes largely through the staff employed to care for the older people.

The material construction of age segregated spaces and places combined with all pervasive symbolic frameworks of generational clash create intergenerational anxieties and fears of 'the other' (Hopkins and Pain 2005). There are real risks here in these oppositional discourses. At a time when increased solidarity is urgently needed to address environmental, social and technological challenges, the city is increasingly being aligned around generational divides. This may have profound effects on the future well-being of all.

Today, there are two major international agendas working to realign social, material and representational elements of the city to reconstitute the city in ways that are helpful for both children and older adults. The Age Friendly City movement (AFC) (led by the World Health Organisation) and the Child Friendly Cities (CFC) movement (led by UNICEF) aim to ensure that planners, policy makers and developers design cities that take account of the interests of age groups who are too often marginalised in current policy and design processes. These movements are valuable and important in themselves, however they also risk segregating adults and children. This has significant implications for the future of a learning city in which intergenerational exchange is valued. In advocating for children and older adults separately they ignore the fact that these groups often live alongside each other, occupy the same public spaces, and have interests and needs in common (Facer et al. 2014).

Like others in this volume we understand the city to be dynamic and continually evolving. Cities are assemblages that produce different ways of living through routines that articulate together diverse human, symbolic, material, technological elements in ways that are both provisional and reproduced over time. Such articulatory practices are dependent on cultural, material, political, economic elements that align over time to assemble and disassemble particular forms of practice and symbolic framings (McFarlane 2011).

Urban policies such as the 'Age Friendly Cities' and 'Child Friendly Cities' agendas we discuss here, are enacted through everyday materialities in council offices, through circulated documents and images and in relationships between people and between people and objects. A policy, therefore, is constantly being understood, contested and disrupted in new ways through multiple practices that are shaped by existing sedimented patterns of social relations—many of which are deeply unequal. Explicitly making visible these social and material practices of creation and recreation of particular assemblages may allow for a critical and creative space to open up in re-learning the city for intergenerational exchange.

In this chapter, in order to understand better how the city might (re) learn to become intergenerational, we explore how different generational assemblages are being aligned, and connected in the AFC and CFC movements, interrogating how different social, material and representational elements are being aligned, and how these movements act as coordinating devices for generational exchange in the city. We then describe a performative, experimental project that sought to enable different alignments between these movements. A key element of this involved building new imaginative ideas about what might be possible and designing new coordinating devices, with others in the city. Finally we explore what worked and didn't work, what resisted enrolment (Callon 1986), what was easily aligned and what routines were disrupted.

6.2 Context

Our work took place in Bristol, UK. Bristol is a port city with a population of around 500,000 people situated in the South West of England. In 2015 Bristol was European Green Capital and the city draws on certain types of policy discourses of urban development having developed a strong narrative characterised by a focus on green issues alongside creative industries, particularly digital creativity and innovation.

As academics working at the University of Bristol we have been involved in a variety of research projects in which we engaged directly with practitioners working with children, young people and older adults. Manchester has worked extensively with young people across the city, exploring their take on cultural value (Manchester and Pett 2015) as well as with older adults living in care homes (Bennett et al. 2015). Facer has collaborated with schools across the city for the last decade, and more recently developed a project with informal learning and cultural organisations in the city, based on her previous Area Based Curriculum work (Facer and Thomas 2012), to foreground the diversity of informal learning experiences available in the city. Through working with younger and older people, and with those who work with them in the city, we came to notice how separately different generations live and work in the city and how both groups are often ignored when it comes to city planning and having a voice in city decision making. We began to wonder about the possible benefits that might come about in bringing these two groups together.

At the time our collaboration with city partners began, existing groups in the city were already working on the age and child friendly city agendas but were not connected. The AFC group hold particular economic and political power since winning a large grant from the National Lottery[1] to develop programmes across the city to tackle issues of social isolation and loneliness in older populations. The core

[1]The Big Lottery company in the UK fund various charitable activities.

team is led by a national charity 'Age UK', civil servants working for Bristol City Council are also involved and over 140 organisations across the city are signed up to their mailing list. The CFC group is currently made up of three small organisations in the city: the Architecture Centre, who champion 'better buildings and places for everyone'; Playing Out, a charity that organises resident led street closures to enable children to play out in their local neighbourhoods; and Room 13 Hareclive, an arts studio set in the grounds of a primary school that is democratically run by the young people that use it.

The problem identified involved working to overcome unhelpful binaries between generations and encouraging pluralisation of accounts of the city. Through bringing people together, partnering with them and providing space for possibility we aimed to make visible the coordinating devices that bring generational binaries into being and to encourage all of us to generate possibilities for new ideas to emerge and new things to happen around intergenerational encounter and learning the city (Gibson Graham 2008).

6.3 Methodologies and Methods

Adopting a performative ontology our methods began with a process of 'ontological reframing' where we took what is seen as a symbolic/structural given, in this case generational divides, and reframed this in order to provide room for manoeuvre (Gibson Graham 2008). Conducting an analysis of the texts circulating around the CFC and AFC movements was therefore an important first step in our methodological approach. This focused on examining how the AFC and CFC 'texts' act as 'co-ordinating devices' that have bought into being particular sorts of relations, elements and alignments that help to teach the city how to be 'child' or 'age' friendly, and not 'all-age' friendly.

Next we engaged in 'excavating the possible' through making visible and offering alternatives to hegemonic experience (de Sousa Santos 2001). We therefore worked 'on the ground' with those involved in the AFC and CFC movements in our city to make visible the symbolic frameworks in the AFC and CFC texts that work to construct particular ideas about age and childhood in the city. Our intentions here were to weaken fixed generational assemblages and to try to build connections across generations to allow for more flexible assemblages and allegiances that might serve both groups well (McFarlane 2011). Workshops were held to bring together representatives of different interest groups (approx 50 people) to develop a set of future city scenarios. In order to encourage more imaginative approaches to generate 'actual possibilities' we used hands on methods to (literally) design and build future city scenarios (with models, flipchart paper and post-its) and then to develop an outline manifesto identifying shared interests and concerns, across the CFC and AFC communities.

Our intention here was to engage in a hopeful experiment, to bring new ideas into being, and to build new symbolic frameworks and new designs for civic learning in the city with intergenerational exchange at it's heart.

6.3.1 Ontological Reframing

The CFC and AFC movements act as coordinating devices to configure relationships between heterogeneous elements in the city. But they are, themselves, articulated with complex global networks made up of representations, legal structures, international bodies and material interests.

The Child Friendly City movement,[2] for example, is led by UNICEF and is intimately connected with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such the CFC agenda is both global and takes a rights based approach with advocacy for and on behalf of children encouraged. This includes in-built mechanisms to monitor progress against children's rights as defined by the UN convention. The approach therefore stresses children and young people's participation in decision making, a child-friendly legal framework and rights strategy, a children's budget and a need for strong advocacy on behalf of children and young people by others. The movement seeks to configure new relationships, therefore, between children and the instruments and structures by which wealth, public decision-making and advocacy are produced. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly City guidance[3] meanwhile comes from a perspective that stresses active ageing and health orientated outcomes, particularly in response to anxieties around the collapse of the welfare state and the additional pressures that increasingly ageing populations might place on city infrastructures and healthcare systems. As such the AFC framework stresses practical solutions and issues related to health in making the city a better place for older people. Here, the aim is often to articulate together the health industry, public space and transport. The two movements, therefore, are addressed to different social actors, but both bring the coordinating power of the international community to bear as a resource for mobilising and enrolling actors at a local level.

Given current global concerns around rapidly ageing populations the AFC movement is currently taking hold around the world and is often aligned with an 'all-age' friendly argument. The argument goes that if we design for older adults we also design well for anyone. In reality, however, as ageing societies remain central to the movement, any designs forthcoming tend to focus on older adults, whilst few allegiances have been built with those working on child friendly initiatives (Biggs and Carr 2015).

[2]See http://childfriendlycities.org/.

[3]See http://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/.

Thinking about both the AFC and the CFC movements as seeking to enroll actors to reconfigure the city around particular ideas about childhood and older age and particular constructions of the city as a site for maturation we aimed to read the texts in order to foreground how social and material elements of the city are being aligned in these agendas to create new assemblages to reshape the city. Figure 6.1 presents our summaries of (1) the CFC Bristol 'take' on the UNICEF rights based

Child Friendly City (UNICEF/Bristol)	Age Friendly City (WHO)
Children's participation in decision making: Influence decisions about their city 'that affect them', actively engaged in discussions about their city	'Civic Participation': influencing decisions about the city and services for older people. 'Regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services'
Participation in family, community and social life	Social Participation: activities and events in the community are designed to actively reach out to and involve older adults
Children feel safe in the streets and public spaces in which they live.	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: the city spaces and buildings are adapted to the vulnerabilities and capabilities of older adults
Meet friends and play	Social Participation but doesn't mention the idea of 'friends' or play
Have green spaces for plants and animals	'Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe'
Participate in cultural and social events: children have access to the city centre and the arts/cultural life of the city	Social Participation: activities and events in the community are designed to actively reach out to and involve older adults
Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability	Community and Health: older adults vulnerabilities and capacities are a primary consideration in the design and delivery of public services
Mobility – children have the freedom (relative to their age) to move about the city independently	Transport: the city is accessible by older adults through independent and public forms of travel
	Employment: the city does not discriminate against and recognizes talents of older adults in the workplace
	Recognition and Understanding: Representation, understanding and recognition of older adults in the city

Fig. 6.1 Analysis of the CFC and AFC 'texts'

'big ideas' and (2) the WHO guidance that the AFC movement in Bristol use to inform their work.

In looking at the two lists together it becomes clear that the two movements are working to reconfigure the city and to enrol different actors into the assemblages that are 'old age' and 'youth'. In so doing they construct specific ideas of childhood and adulthood. Above we foreground some of the elements that are enrolled and excluded from these processes.

Housing is a primary concern for the AFC agenda but entirely missing from the discussions on CFCs. This assumes that children's rights related to housing and homes are already met through families and parents which, as we know, may not necessarily be the case. In the UK alone it is estimated that in 2015 there were almost 100,000 children without a permanent home.[4] This surfaces a set of assumptions about how childhood and housing are articulated and aligned.

Reciprocally while the CFC movement is globally founded on a rights based agenda new approaches to recognizing and representing children differently are missing from this local agenda. This suggests that symbolic and representational elements of the city are not seen as being important in aligning the city activities towards a child friendly city. This is despite the fact that dominant understandings and representations of children and young people often make assumptions about their lack of competence and capacity to engage with the city.

Any consideration of children as workers is missing from the CFC metrics aligning children as economically inactive in relation to the city, despite the high numbers of children in work globally, currently standing at around **168 million children**.[5] Whereas in the Australian CFC movement a drift towards aligning children as future workers rather than citizens has been noted (Biggs and Carr 2015) in the Bristol CFC movement this is not the case. This demonstrates the local variations in how these coordinating devices are taken up.

In an AFC, the heterogeneity of the population is not explicitly recognized and issues related to differences between social groups are missing. For instance, there is no mention of equality of opportunity in reference to access to services regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability. This suggests that in aligning the city towards an AFC only certain kinds of older people are imagined. For instance, what of the older adults living in the UK over the age of 65 years old, half of whom say that they face problems getting outdoors, and people living in care homes who are three times less likely than the rest of the population to get outdoors for more than five hours a week (Handler 2014)?

In the AFC agenda 'participation' focuses on public events and activities outside the home, particularly highlighting the 'risk' of social isolation rather than the rights to family life. This highlights the urban setting as 'unsafe' and 'unwelcoming' for older adults. This is echoed in the CFC text where children's lack of safety in streets and public spaces is highlighted.

[4] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34346908.

[5] ILO-IPEC, 2013, see http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang–en/index.htm.

There is a focus on play and friends in the CFC agenda whereas these are not mentioned in the AFC approach reflecting alignments between play and playfulness and children, rather than seeing play as a lifelong pleasure.

These texts clearly circulate certain ideas about how the CFC and AFC agendas might be taken up in cities globally and locally. However, both movements stress the need to develop local agendas that make sense and work within existing practices and beliefs. Working with people already involved in the city of Bristol was therefore an important next step to make visible the way that these agendas coordinated particular assemblages, creating alignments between particular material and social elements in the city. In doing so we hoped to overcome some of the unhelpful binaries identified above, building opportunities for new alignments of children, older adults and their socio-material networks.

6.3.2 Excavating Possibilities

Interest groups, including leaders of civil society organisations, key players in digital technology development, civil servants and community and charity workers, from across the city, working on the CFC and AFC agendas, were invited to several workshops to work with and explore ideas about the future city, focusing on intergenerational encounter and civic learning in the city. We started by introducing our analysis of the CFC and AFC texts in order to make visible the similarities and differences between the movements.

The workshop participants were then asked to map the city, making visible activities and spaces that they felt were particularly child or older adult 'friendly' as well as spaces where they felt intergenerational activity flourished. The intention here was to disrupt the particular alignments foregrounded in the texts in order to highlight alternative intergenerational, or at least more fluid generational assemblages. Participants were also asked to consider 'ageing' and 'youth' as subject to radical change in different historical and cultural contexts; that digital, medical and transport technologies as well as economic and environmental drivers may bring significant changes in the next fifty years; and that there are a number of features that might be needed to create child and age friendly cities in these contexts. The focus on imagining future cities was intended to surface the fact that the constructions of childhood and age-related assemblages in the city are contingent upon changing socio-material factors, and as these factors change, so new possibilities for what it might mean to be 'young' and 'old' emerge.

6.3.3 Using Creativity to Generate Possibilities

Different approaches were taken in two workshops held with two different but equally diverse interest groups. In the first workshop, participants started from

long-term trends and explored the role of contingency and radical novelty in shaping future trajectories for intergenerational relationships in an imaginary future Bristol of 2070. This generated two scenarios that disrupted contemporary assumptions about employment and the organisation of time, space and resources. In the second workshop, participants worked from a map of age-related patterns and practices in the city today that they constructed together building on their shared knowledge, to create a new city map that reflected the desired practices and values of a future AFC, harnessing technological and social drivers. This generated two scenarios that built strongly on contemporary concerns and issues. While elements of all these scenarios, as purely imaginative constructs, could be extended to other cities, it is worth noting that they draw upon Bristol's strong 'green and digital' culture and reflect the features of the landscape of that city.

As participants worked together moments of translation and knowledge sharing occurred through these encounters. Many workshop participants expressed concern around the city centre as a focus given the lack of physical and social mobility of many of the older and younger people they worked with in the city. As they engaged together in building a new map of the city new coordinating devices were imagined and designed, such as the construction of a series of connected, neighbourhood hubs, designed to re-map the city to enable increased mobility and intergenerational exchange.

6.4 Analysis

In our analysis of the workshops it is possible to identify what worked and what didn't seem to work in designing more fluid generational assemblages for the city. The next section of the chapter explores how our participants worked with two core concerns in creatively imagining the designs necessary for an all-age friendly city. These two concerns were:

(a) Designing to build trust between different age groups by creating opportunities for social and spontaneous encounters; and (b) Designing for the shared mobility and living needs of children, young people and older adults, in particular, by developing new approaches to public transport and housing. These issues of trust, of facilitating spontaneous encounters, of creating safe ways of moving around cities and of developing flexible ways of living that are capable of adapting to multi-generational living, came up again and again in discussions and in the scenarios. In the creative spaces we designed we explored what new routines were imagined for childhood and age, what new configurations of socio-material elements were envisaged and what new co-ordinating devices were imagined as potentially useful in facilitating these new configurations towards a city that could (re)-learn to be intergenerational.

6.4.1 Designs for Trust and Intergenerational Exchange

As participants engaged in knowledge sharing, drawing on their own material and social knowledge and experiences of the city, trust between generations became a key concern. The lack of trust between generations was seen as causal in the increasing drive to segregate and as exacerbated by the routines of exclusion and separation between generations in the social and material fabric of the city. Take the concerns expressed by older people in our workshops of how 'out of place' and uncomfortable they often felt in parks, which provide ample space for children to play, but where they worried about perceptions of the safety of younger people if they stopped to sit and watch the children playing.

Participants were keen to explore new co-ordinating devices that could facilitate intergenerational trust and to consider how a city's routines, infrastructure, services and technologies might be imagined differently in order to build trust between generations. The production of trust is something that also emerges through routines of encounter, through ties and networks. In tackling the issue of intergenerational trust then it is important to consider how the totality of interactions might lead to greater desire for and opportunity for social encounter which was seen as being at the root of the lack of trust and therefore intergenerational activity in the city. Walkerdine and Studdart (2015) suggest that if 'community' is produced through repeated acts of micro-sociality then arts based disruptions of everyday rituals might help in rethinking urban planning solutions. This thinking fed into our research design.

Our workshop participants engaged in discussion and built alternative cities together, making visible and also re-imagining the multiple locations and timescales of and for public, intergenerational encounter (Amin 2015). Participants understood city spaces as complex and dependent on various interactions which became clear in their future city designs. In particular, building opportunities for trustful encounters through connecting digital and material spaces featured strongly in ideas that might help to foster an AAFC. One group, for example, imagined a digital system that enabled sharing of data and stories, making visible connections between people rather than highlighting differences. Imagine a digital daemon (an external companion/representation of the self inspired by the Philip Pullman novels) that would share peoples shared interests and concerns, mediating 'in the moment' between people in their everyday interactions. Such a daemon might play the role of the friendly 'sprites' imagined in Thrift's conception of a sentient city (Thrift 2014). Another idea imagined public interfaces that would disrupt current presentations of social statistics that tend to encourage fear and anxiety. These new creative and playful public interfaces could collect and visualise data to actively build trust concerning, for example, how many people in the park had talked to strangers and began positive conversations in the last week.

The material world and in particular public spaces in the city were discussed particularly in relation to mobility across the city and the routines of inclusion and exclusion of particular older and younger groups from these spaces. Our participants

discussed how poor transport links, parks and town squares being aligned as sites of tension between generations, combined with lack of social experience of the city centre, fear and therefore a lack of experience of 'dwelling' in these spaces for some, inhibited many older and younger people from inhabiting these largely city centre located spaces. Participants felt that there was a need to redesign public spaces for all-age use to facilitate new intergenerational encounters. This focus on the role of urban planning in altering the materiality of the city in order to encourage healthy ageing and childhoods has been much discussed (Buffel et al. 2014; Holloway 2014). However, it was clear in our workshop discussions that any new instrumentation of such spaces, in Bristol at least, would need to account for the multiple social and material actants influencing intergenerational encounters in these spaces and to consider playful, artful ways of disrupting current everyday routines. Participants were keen to imagine, for instance, how sociomaterial space might be altered through dropping new mediating structures into these spaces—possibly through reclaiming/shutting streets to cars or through introducing shared objects such as table tennis tables or street pianos. They also acknowledged that there was a need to rethink 'less glamorous' spaces, for example, focusing on the design of pavements, the availability of toilets, and to think about and map the effects of topography on different groups. These material interventions in the city were identified as essential in re-shaping current generational routines. Other projects have highlighted how the provision of safe, accessible toilets can have a much wider impact on social and spatial freedom in the city[6] and the democratic value of benches.[7]

6.4.2 Designs for Mobility and Housing

Participants were also clear that new routines in relation to mobility around the city were needed for both generations. Good, desirable public transport systems are vital in ensuring mobility of older and younger people as both groups are more likely to rely on public transport. Mobility is also a social justice issue as it raises questions around access to the city's cultural, political and social opportunities, as well as economic ones. This was seen as particularly relevant to younger and older people who lived on the urban fringes and those who were less mobile and more reliant on public transport (Manchester and Pett 2015). Our participants felt that a new mapping of public transport in the city was necessary to include these geographically excluded communities in any future transport designs of the city.

However, new routines were also called for in relation to mobility around the city, in particular to create a walkable or 'liveable' city. Our participants felt this must involve redesigning the urban environment to make it more appealing to walk through creative, digital interventions in the city such as the Hello Lampost project

[6] https://aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com/.

[7] http://the-bench-project.weebly.com/.

Bristol,[8] part of the wider Playable Cities initiative, where lampposts became part of a city wide platform for play in the city. They also suggested that re-imagining public transport systems as sites for collective encounter, for instance, redesigning buses as collective public spaces and pleasurable places to be (rather than just about getting from A to B) might encourage different (intergenerational) routines in relation to mobility in the city. Here the city as a whole is appropriated for playful encounter across all generations. The intention being to develop new everyday routines around mobility in the city.

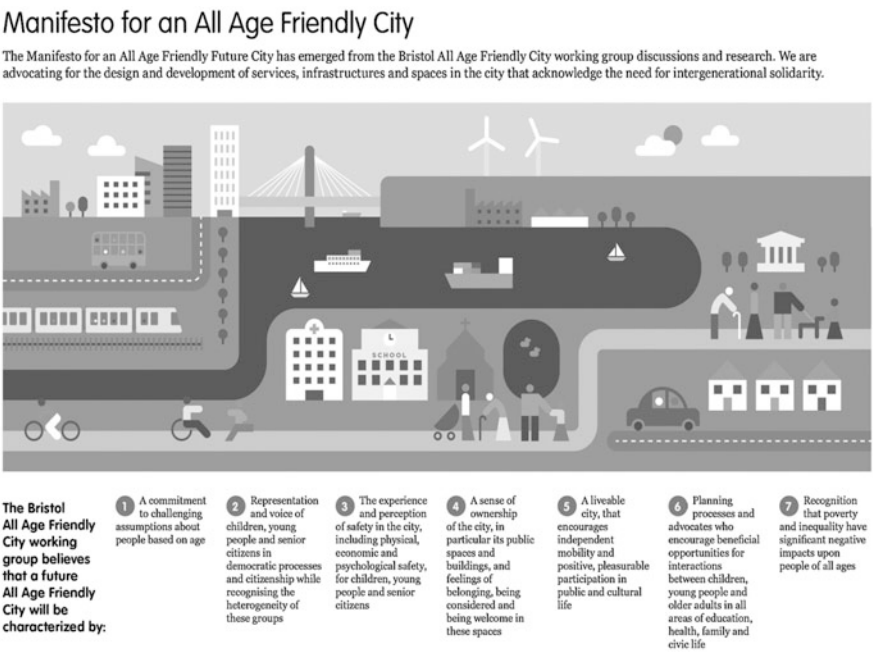
Our group's concern around opportunities for intergenerational encounter in the city partly stems from the increasing physical segregation of older and younger people through the infrastructures and institutions of the city as described at the start of this chapter. New housing developments are often constructed to enable certain generational groups to feel 'in' or 'out of' place through construction company branding of particular developments in the city, and housing policies that place families and older people in different parts of a city. These devices align to construct non porous places which work together with other aspects in the city to discourage intergenerational encounter. Our participants were keen to explore and consider new material configurations to encourage more flexible ways of living and housing that could be adapted to intergenerational living. Two ideas in particular emerged from discussions. Firstly, creative ways to rethink existing housing stock to take account of changing demographics and secondly the design and building of new flexible housing solutions that could adapt to changing lifestyle and occupancy needs. Modular housing that could adapt over the lifecourse, rooms added and taken away as needed and the creation of vertical communities, formed of shipping container like spaces, as well as re-purposing current housing for shared living, were discussed. Our participants acknowledged that changing material structures alone might not change current routines around intergenerational relationships and that there would be potential for tensions to arise in these living arrangements. New, radical legal arrangements and governance structures around shared housing would be necessary in addition to changing cultural practices. Current global north traditions of 'privacy' for instance, would require careful consideration. However, through designing new opportunities for dwelling with the city in these new arrangements it was acknowledged that shifts of perception were more likely to happen, both socially and politically.

6.5 Towards an All-Age Friendly City Manifesto

Following our initial workshops we brought together our participants for a final time to consider how we might work together across the AFC and CFC movements to create a new coordinating device as a basis for civic intergenerational learning.

[8]See http://www.hellolamppost.co.uk/.

Together we designed a manifesto of our own, to be taken up by people in the city as a basis for (re)-learning the city as intergenerational. The following manifesto was designed to address the complex of representational devices, material resources, practices and routines of mobility that construct age-related divisions in the city.



6.6 Conclusion

We want to conclude by reflecting on where our work has been challenging and how it is and might develop. In doing so we hope to illuminate the way that strong assemblages can align to influence how a city is constructed in relation to different generational groups/childhood and age and the work of symbolic frameworks, such as the CFC and AFC movements, in structuring the possibilities for citizens. We want to come back to the understanding of civic learning expressed in Chap. 1 of this volume as a kind of 'wayfinding', that interrupts the relationship between the individual and the society, through the process of assembling the social, the material and the symbolic.' We have designed our manifesto as a new coordinating device around generational exchange. In doing so we have attempted to interrupt or

redesign the symbolic frameworks used to construct children and older people in the city and sought to encourage more thinking about generations together.

Our work has not always gone smoothly and it has become clear that a myriad of different symbolic frameworks interact in the city to keep generations apart. In trying to align different interests in the city we have come across some opposition. Proponents of both movements have expressed worry about the 'dilution' of their message if expanded beyond a particular group, partly based on the social and material configurations of how generational groups are catered for politically in the city around for instance, 'adult' social care services and 'children's services'. However, we have found that civil servants in the City Council are particularly strong allies for an AAFC as they recognize the opportunities created through this new coordinating device for the city to bring groups together to tackle difficult problems appreciating the focus on interdependency rather than difference.

Different priorities at a local level have also made alignment between the two movements difficult. The AFC movement in Bristol is co-ordinated by Bristol Ageing Better who are funded by the National Lottery to design and measure high profile, city wide interventions to reduce social isolation and loneliness in the city. The CFC movement meanwhile is led by three small cultural organisations in the city and is committed to bottom up approaches to play, citizenship and voice for younger people in the city. The AFC focus on social isolation and loneliness does also not sit well with the agendas of the CFC which are focused on the material environment, a rights based agenda and play.

We now need to consider practical next steps working closely with our partners in the city to begin to experiment with some of our design ideas and consider how our manifesto might interact with existing symbolic frameworks and ways of knowing and being in the city. Bringing older and younger people together to re-map the city public transport systems and re-design the routines around these systems might be a good place to start. This would involve bringing a wide range of stakeholders into collaborative groups, fostering relationships between civil servants and urban planners in the city, with intergenerational citizen groups from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, representing a good geographical spread across the city, with academics interested in mapping transport systems and designing new systems and with bus companies and other commercial outfits such as technologists and designers able to bring our ideas into fruition. These practices would involve working as co-learners and citizens of the city to re-learn the city and building new generational practices together.

This is not going to be easy but our work has illuminated the risk in age-focussed approaches and the possible benefits of developing new intergenerational routines, new configurations of social and material elements of the city and new coordinating devices to support the city to (re)learn to foster intergenerational exchange. This appears especially pertinent given our rapidly changing cities—materially in ever more complex digital infrastructure projects, and socially in the increasing diversity of our cities. We believe that much is at stake here for a future city that enables the well being of all.

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