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What Is an Urban Imaginary? The Role of Urban Imaginaries for Urban Studies and Creative Interventions in Urban Spaces

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Abstract

From medieval city views to contemporary urban imaginaries, imagination has always played a major role for outlining human understandings of urban life. Just recently, urban studies, urban planning, and artistic research have re-discovered imaginary approaches to urban lifeworlds as viable stimuli for urban transformation and social critique. In order to find pathways for sustainable development, creative strategies and imaginations of collective utopia have become a vital source of inspiration for urban planning and architecture. Interdisciplinary, inclusive approaches to create urban utopia have become central to thinking and writing about the urban as a shared imaginary matrix for collective sensemaking. This article provides a selective overview of the role of urban imaginaries from the Middle Ages, to the 20th century, and on to contemporary perspectives on urban spaces. In this brief tour d'horizon the potentials of images, imaginations, and utopian perspectives on urban life are sketched out for exploring and ultimately designing places of urban cohabitation. As an introduction to this journal issue on the role of urban imaginaries for creating liminal spaces for social change and critique, this article also aims to describe the use of creative strategies and urban imaginaries for urban studies, urban transformation projects, and artistic interventions in urban spaces. The articles in this issue demonstrate the multifaceted nature of urban imaginaries in contexts as diverse as exhibition design, visual anthropology, urban studies, and virtual/augmented reality. Adopting different imaginary perspectives ultimately paves the way for understanding urbanization as a utopian project, a collective struggle, and a manifestation of collective will, which continuously produces tangible and intangible outcomes. Processes of planetary urbanization, therefore, also inspire us to reflect on social, economic, and cultural co-evolution and participation on a global scale. This way, urban imaginaries become blueprints for social change, critique, and societal innovation.

Keywords

urban imaginaries; city views; arts-based research; urban creativity; planetary urbanization.

1. Introduction

In recent years, in areas such as urban planning (Borén and Young, 2015; Vivant et al., 2015), placemaking (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010a), and conceptual discussions about space (Brenner and Schmid, 2015; Jessop, 2018), the possibilities of urban imaginaries appear as almost ubiquitous features of contemporary approaches to urban studies and the transformation of urban spaces. Adopting different imaginary viewpoints, is widely understood as a method to think and write about space, establishing new perspectives

to analyze or structure spatial environments (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). In this context, urban imaginaries have been used to research and conceptualize urban spaces from fresh angles and with unexpected outcomes (Barone and Eisner, 2012). Consequently, by adopting different imaginary perspectives, it becomes possible to derive a multitude of spatial concepts, reflected in spatial theories and human approaches to their lifeworlds (Van Manen, 1990).

In the context of urban studies, Brenner and Schmid (2021) have demonstrated, how perspectives on urbanization can

be de-centered, if we imagine urban spaces differently. Based on the works of Henri Lefebvre (1991, 1996), they frame urbanization as a process of societal co-development and co-creation tied to economic, social, and cultural practices emanating from different forms of human co-habitation, with every person holding the 'right to the city' (Lefebvre, 1996, p. 147). In this sense, urbanization becomes a way to re-imagine human evolution from a point of social, economic, and cultural becoming based on intensified social interaction in structures of lived urbanization. As a method for social critique, imaginary perspectives lend themselves to scrutinize the status quo and create pathways towards a different world (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). This way, urbanization also means to create collective utopia for a dignified life as an urban citizen with equal access to collective goods. While equal rights and access to collective goods are increasingly under threat globally, advancing urbanization also offers development perspectives to countless people, while creating innovations to solve social, economic, or ecological problems. Questions surrounding the worldwide progress of urbanization, hence, are not trivial, in the light of collective challenges ahead (Keil, 2018).

If we expect the challenges of sustainable co-habitation in urbanized, densely populated areas to be intricately linked with the development of the world in the Anthropocene, and if ways to resolve questions of sustainability involve the collective problem-solving skills of all its citizens, should we not put a collective effort into imagining a livable future for all? Is it, hence, not time to include collective imaginations in shaping a collective future and to continue the process of urbanization as a form of societal co-development? And finally, would it not be wise to employ creative strategies from the worlds of art, design, literature, or film for shaping collective imaginaries and influencing the future of societies worldwide?

After a wealth of texts, including methodological and theoretical meditations, have been published on imaginary approaches to space, particularly urban spaces, this journal issue sets out to describe different projects from the fields of architecture, design, contemporary and digital art, visual anthropology, and urban studies, which discuss or contest

the spatial order of the urban status quo, open up spaces for reflection and critique, and intervene in systems of socio-political order. In this issue, we want to highlight the potentials of different imaginary approaches to urban spaces for creating new lifeworlds, for altering perceptions and conceptualizations of space, for reframing or redefining social issues, or for subverting established systems of power. The contributions to this issue show, how we can think differently about urban spaces and how we can decenter entrenched implications of contemporary urbanization by intervening in imaginative ways.

2. A Short History of Images and Imaginations of 'the Urban'

Citing the famous example of several historical wall paintings in her book 'A Distant City', Chiara Frugoni (1991) describes, how the 'Government of the Nine' in medieval Siena used depictions of government principles, city life, and the town's residents for demonstrating the effects of good and bad governance (fig. 1-3). The paintings visualized the consequences of just rule, on the one hand, and the dangers of bad governance, on the other, while emphasizing the role of the rulers and their principles of judgment. The fate of the city was seen as intertwined with the qualities of its government, depicted in the form of imaginations of what city life would look like in a best- or worst-case scenario.

According to De Certeau (1988), cities were facts of everyday life, on the one hand, but emerged as concepts of principled governance during the Middle Ages, on the other, turning them into places to be studied, planned, and built according to the vision of their rulers and decision-makers. The city as a concept follows a certain ratio, a mode of thinking that renders the urban assemblage conceptually conceivable. "Linking the city to the concept never makes them identical, but it plays on their progressive symbiosis: to plan a city is both to think the very plurality [emphasis in original] of the real and to make that way of thinking the plural effective [emphasis in original]; it is to know how to articulate it and be able to do it." (De Certeau, 1988, p. 94) The city as a space to be governed was, hence, always intertwined with practical, strategic, or political considerations as well as with ethics of reasoning that were expected to



Figure 1. Ambrogio Lorenzetti - Allegoria del Buon Governo (1338-1339). Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23689438>.



Figure 2. Ambrogio Lorenzetti - Effetti del Buon Governo in città (1338-1339). Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=23689357>.



Figure 3. Ambrogio Lorenzetti - Allegoria del Cattivo Governo (1338-1339). Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7f/Lorenzetti_ambrogio_bad_govern_det.jpg.

make cohabitation possible, while at the same time serving the ruling classes.

Referencing the work of historian Ferdinand Opl (2017), the imagination of the city, as a space to be governed and to be represented in different contexts of (public) reception, was always also tied to its image, e.g., in historic city views. The first city views of urban agglomerations in the Middle Ages created a sense of place (of being there) as well as a representation of space (a system of spatial references) (De Certeau, 1988). Accurate depiction was, at first, not the main focus, but the graphic description of a structured environment, a territory of influence, of historical events, or cultural identification, and its representation to the ruling classes and their citizens (Opl, 2017). With the advent of different reproduction techniques, the urban masses could increasingly gain access to views of different cities from multiple perspectives and buy them for decorative or educational purposes. The perspectives shown were often inaccessible to common citizens—or anybody at all—so that the graphic depictions literally created a fresh view of the city and held the potential to

imagine habitual places anew. Hence, the path from image to imagination created new possibilities for thinking about urban life, originating in the pictorial transformation of space in the eye of the beholder.

In a historical analysis of the origins of visual techniques in geography, Cosgrove (2008) shows how, from cosmography to chorography and finally geography, the techniques of envisioning different aspects of socially shared spaces created imaginary horizons of collective existence, documented its environments, and made these insights communicable. Historical paintings of cities and landscapes opened spaces of shared vision for all, who took part in the exercise of seeing and imagining spatial environments. Consequently, collective imaginations of what life could be or where it would lead, also entailed exercises in shared vision, which were closely linked to techniques of (graphic) representation.

Around the year 1500, e.g., Jacopo de' Barbari depicted Venice from a perspective, which was physically inaccessible (floating out above the Adriatic Sea), but visually imaginable



Figure 4. Jacopo de' Barbari – City View of Venice. Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacopo_de%27_Barbari - View of Venice - Google Art Project.jpg?uselang=de](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacopo_de%27_Barbari_-_View_of_Venice_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg?uselang=de).

(fig. 4). By reproducing this aerial city view from ground perspectives, he created one of the best-known historic representations of Venice, full of symbols referencing the city's rich history and vibrant sea trade. The work famously exemplifies, how new views of urban spaces can be created from imaginary points of view, altering the perception of everyday life in the city.

Writing about the image of the city and the emergence of the perspective plan in the 16th century, Lucia Nuti (1994) even speaks of the invention of a representational language that was of practical, aesthetic, but also strategic interest, e.g., in the case of war. It was of vital interest to many rulers of this time to have truthful and relatable representations of cities and regions at their disposal to deduce practical decisions for strategic action or city planning. Hence, the emergence of images and imaginations of the city as a point of reference for urban planning and governance always also had practical implications.

With the advent of ever more truthful representations, spaces could be mapped to perfection and with it the principles of governance, as the law and its representatives reached into the last corners of empires or, thereafter, nation states (Foucault, 1995). The spatialization of human environments, over time, also became a matter of exerting institutional power attached to them via the legal system. Territorializations of space under various principles of government, over time, led to the multi-level systems of governance we know today (Bache and Flinders, 2004). Changing perspectives of vision or the mechanics of relating vision to social action can, however, transform common understandings of governed spaces and contest the social status quo, just like the emergence of the first city views altered perspectives on habitual spaces of urban cohabitation.

3. The Image of the City in Urban Studies

The role of shared imaginations of the urban was also recognized in publications in the field of urban studies as a nascent

research field in the late 20th century. In his seminal work 'The Image of the City' Kevin Lynch (1960) traced shared imaginary structures of urban spaces, to research how individuals and collectives conceived mental images of their neighborhoods. By taking the viewpoint of users of urban spaces, these imaginary maps could then form the basis for processes of urban development and renewal. With a similar goal in mind, William H. Whyte (1980) investigated 'The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces' to determine their meanings for urbanites and to re-imagine the priorities of urban planning processes. A simple change in perspective proved effective for shifting the boundaries of thinking about urban spaces and their use. In 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' Jane Jacobs (1992) focused on everyday urban places and their role for weaving the social fabric of life in the city. In a countermovement to top-down planning processes that were the norm at the time, she put places of everyday life first, and created new angles for imagining city life from the ground up.

From a planning perspective, Venturi et al. (1988) demonstrated in 'Learning from Las Vegas' how graphic methods can be employed to re-conceptualize urban agglomerations and trace their development. Graphic analysis of city views and urban structures served as tools to create new perspectives, re-thinking urban development strategies and the uses of urban space. A few decades later, Atelier Bow-Wow (2000) created graphic representations of Tokyo buildings for an analysis of the multifaceted architectural approaches to construction in tight urban spaces. The images showed a great diversity of use cases and sparked new imaginations about the malleability of space as an urban development tool.

These examples highlight, how practical uses of space, their representation, and imagination influence each other in a recurring cycle of planning, living, and practice, described by famous sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991). Likewise, urban spaces are not only used, lived in, or built with functional aspects in mind. Space and its meanings are also always socially produced and, therefore, heavily invested with personal or social imaginaries that make spatial surroundings understood and open them to interpretation and appropriation. Consequently, space reflects the shared life stories

and personal histories of its users that make up the totality of potential spatial perspectives or the lived "simultaneity of stories so far" (Massey, 2005, p. 9). Examples from the world of literature identify urban spaces as matters of fiction, with multiple layers of meaning, re-framing the facts and facets of urban life (Döblin, 1965; Dos Passos, 2000). Fact and fiction, thus, complement each other in lived chronotopoi or collective narratives, which lead from the past to the future (Bachtin, 2014; Holloway and Kneale, 2000). The chronotopoi of shared urban spaces are, therefore, always narrated, practiced, planned, and projected at the same time, for shared narratives on space allow its users to author meaningful pathways through space and time as socially shared contexts of co-existence.

Hence, the image of the city—narrated, visualized, or imagined—guides human approaches to urban lifeworlds in never-ending cycles of collective co-production, which ultimately manifest in physical environments, but emerge from a constant process of (re-)imagining, (re-)enacting, and (re-)dimensioning of collective mappings, images, and imaginations as markers for social life, mirrored in representations of shared environments.

4. Some Contemporary Perspectives on the Role of Urban Imaginaries

After Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid (2015) have supposedly done away with all spatial limitations for thinking about 'the urban' and coined the term 'planetary urbanization', one can wonder, what this term involves and how it makes urban space as a conceptual matrix accessible. They describe urbanization as a "problematique" (Brenner and Schmid, 2015, p. 168) to frame processes of social, economic, and cultural transformation, based on Lefebvre's (1996) notion of the 'right to the city', which grants every citizen the right to participate in processes of social co-development, enhanced by, but not limited to, co-habitation in densely populated areas. Every place on earth bears some relation to 'the urban' and, hence, cannot be excluded from planetary processes of urbanization, which, consequently, should not be understood as the result of societal progress, but as a concept that ties different places around the world together in continuous processes of co-evolution. The authors use the term 'the ur-

ban', as compared to 'the city', to highlight its boundarylessness and to free spatial thinking of traditional urban/rural divides. In other words, they introduce a conceptual perspective, which de-centers urban imaginaries towards an integrative view of space, subject to ongoing processes of planetary urbanization.

From another point of view, and in a sharp critique of scholars of planetary urbanization, Ruddick (2017) points out that urban imaginaries have been created manifold and in different forms – in such great numbers that imagining the urban anew has almost become a banal, everyday practice. On the other hand, she grants Lefebvre's (1996) concept of the 'right to the city' the power to re-think urbanization from a perspective of active participation, describing a collective process of co-production of urban spaces. From this perspective, 'the urban' can be interpreted as a manifestation of collective will, guiding society on shared paths along different dimensions of progress. On an everyday basis, shared imaginaries need to be created and communicated in areas as diverse as public health, arts, science, commerce, or politics, informing each other to spark new ways for collectively thinking about urban life and its consequences.

Theorizing meta-theoretic approaches to space, Bob Jessop (2019) has argued that spatial actors need spatial imaginaries to make sense of their surroundings, spatial practices, past experiences, and ultimately their lives, going forward, to reduce complexity, on the one hand, and to find themselves in structured life-worlds, on the other. "All spatial imaginaries are selective, however. Those adopting a given imaginary cannot see what it cannot see without requisite sensitivity and self-reflection on the implications of adopting one or another spatial imaginary." (Jessop, 2019, p. 48) Spatial imaginaries, therefore, enable persons to meaningfully exist in the world and, at the same time, limit their vision to predefined, albeit adaptable spatial schemata. They appear as prerequisites for structuring and interpreting human life-worlds, defining collective strategies and tying spatial practices to tangible outcomes. Without spatial imaginaries, the socio-spatial production of space would run into the void and people could hardly make sense of existing socio-material assemblages and their transformations in time. Specific spatial

rituals, shared spatialized knowledge, and common spatial formats ensure the tempo-spatial patterning of space as a result of shared socio-spatial understandings. Likewise, shared imaginaries orient collective action and guide spatial strategies, while providing access for studying collective approaches to space and their inherent meanings in their respective historic or cultural context.

To take inherent multiplicities of potential spatial imaginaries into account is, following Lefebvre (1996) and Brenner and Schmid (2015), key to providing participatory rights to everyone taking part in processes of urbanization. In other words, collective visions of 'the urban' need to be established, so they can be practiced and lived. Addressing multiple urban imaginaries in urban planning and development can ensure that processes of urban co-creation involve large parts of the population in the collective negotiation of shared approaches to urban space (Borén and Young, 2015; Vivant et al., 2015). This, in turn, can prove effective for using urbanization as a tool for revolutionizing socio-spatial systems of power, starting from the urban sphere (Hardt and Negri, 2000). The totality of urban imaginaries will therefore reflect the multiplicity of potential meanings inherent to urban spaces, which can be addressed in urban studies, politics, arts, or architecture, in order to think about the possibilities of 'the urban' as a process of co-creation, including its tangible outcomes.

Brenner (2018) stated that new maps, mappings, images, and imaginations of 'the urban' would be needed to address its various forms and formations as well as to understand the accelerating interconnectedness of different spaces. He cites Harvey (1996, p. 403), pointing to the need for sketching out "possible urban worlds" and their implications, or, in his own words, "alter-urbanizations" (Brenner 2018, p. 15), inherent to the urban status quo, but often excluded or suppressed by current forms of socio-spatial organization. From first human settlements to complex concepts of space, Jessop (2018) infers that socially shared spatial imaginaries provide collective principles of spatial knowledge, enabling individuals and collectives to access their lifeworlds in meaningful ways. In turn, spatial imaginaries obtain a vital role in creating, communicating, and transforming these principles as well as their

socio-material implications, forming an important part of the continuous process of the production of space.

Collectively shared imaginaries mapped to spatial surroundings enable common understandings of social lifeworlds, collective sensemaking, and continuity of socio-spatial assemblages, while providing the basis for social change and critique. Shared spatial imaginaries necessarily also include imaginations of 'the urban' as a matrix for collective thought and action by a multitude of constituents living in or referring to urbanized areas (Schnell and Spiegelfeld, 2020). From this perspective, 'the urban' serves as a framework for collectively producing a multiplicity of shared perspectives inherent to the totality of imaginations attributed to the urban sphere as a collective imaginary matrix. In other words, 'the urban' or 'the city' (formerly separated from its hinterland by city walls) comprise an infinite multiplicity of collective imaginations of what socially produced spaces can imply, how they can be structured, or how they may function. The social production of space is, therefore, carried on by the continuous (re-)narration, (re-)creation and (re-)enactment by its constituents (citizens who take part in the collective endeavor of urbanization as a process of co-creation). From a perspective of shared imaginaries, 'the urban' can be understood as a continuous social process, aiming at the utopian development of a space of co-habitation and co-evolution, emanating from densely populated human agglomerations and reaching into the farthest corners of the world (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). Urbanization describes the process of this development from a perspective of social participation as well as economic, cultural, and political co-evolution. Its impact on the planetary sphere, therefore, implies continuous socio-spatial becoming.

Urban agglomerations as compacted spaces of human co-habitation, continuously creating imaginary matrices for socio-spatial sensemaking and co-evolution, then, lend themselves as interactive laboratories for exploring the development of socio-spatial assemblages over time, referring to different contexts of shared meaning and imagination (Schnell and Spiegelfeld, 2020). In this sense, urbanization as a collective concept for co-evolution, exhibits the potential to derive specific imaginary assemblages from the fleeting

multiplicities of meaning and imagination reflected in urban spaces to address social complexities as well as salient issues and problems. Of course, these potentials and processes are not limited to the urban sphere, but compact spaces of inherently shared meanings, coinciding with centers of social, political, and economic power, seem to provide rich ground for (re-)defining and (re-)thinking past, present and future in their relations to space from a perspective of societal (co-) development.

Spatial imaginaries tied to urban spaces, finally, hold inherent transformative potential, in a sense that they consistently and repeatedly overcome traditional capitalist-functional paradigmata, and constitute a persistent force for analyzing, (re-)contextualizing, and actualizing inherent potentials of urban spaces with the aim of creating new experiences, connections, social relations or experiments for the ongoing project of socio-spatial transformation that is urbanization (Brenner and Schmid, 2015). In a radical re-imagination of what 'the urban' implies, traditional structures of sensemaking can be de-centered and urbanization can become a motor for spatial transformation and social empowerment (Schmid, 2018).

5. Arts-based Strategies for Researching or Transforming Urban Utopias

Henri Lefebvre (1996) already demonstrated the potential of processes of urbanization for creating collective utopia, an idea that Brenner and Schmid (2015, 2021) extended to the entire planet. As a multi-level, multi-scale concept, urbanization radically integrates social means of production, social relations, and social spheres, especially in densely populated areas, while putting the notion of shared urbanity—the realization of collective utopia—at the center. At this point it also seems evident that the role of artists, designers, architects, or other creatives is not limited to commenting or enhancing existing views on social realities, but to incite, invent, and search for new utopias to be realized. Consequently, artistic strategies play an active role in unearthing possible meanings and potentials of contemporary urbanity and in describing how they can be translated into spatial environments and new forms of co-habitation (Barone and Eisner, 2012; Bobadilla et al., 2019).

Arts-based approaches to city planning highlight the potential of creative strategies for informing traditional processes of urban development (Vivant, 2018; Vivant et al. 2015). The integration of artists and creative workers in urban transformation projects can point out alternative uses of space and create pathways for sustainable spatial transformation (Kullmann, 2015; Kullmann and Bouhaddou, 2017). Collaborative placemaking projects can spark collective will for urban renewal and ensure citizen participation (Courage, 2021). The integration of artists and creatives in re-thinking and renewing urban spaces can be seen as a vital source for creating cultural capital as well as social and economic stimulus (Markusen and Gadwa, 2010a, 2010b). Finally, works of art can comment on, critique, or expand upon the status quo of shared urban worlds, as the abovementioned works of literature have shown (Döblin, 1965; Dos Passos, 2000). Baudelaire's (1868/2001) 'Les Fleurs du Mal', e.g., commented the (albeit largely negative) effects of urbanization, while comics in the early 20th century were a vivid source of inspiration for urban planning, accompanying the transformation of American metropolises (Davies, 2019). GeoGraphic narratives, in our days, have fused the mapping of spatial environments with their re-narration in comics so that the map becomes an active medium for communicating a sense of place (Peterle, 2021).

Gandy (2005), in his meditations on Cyborg Urbanization, points out how fictional works, especially from the 1980s, have shaped common notions of urbanity, including their possible forms and effects. Keil (2018) explains, how the idea of 'the planetary' has become an empty shell, used to pursue the spread of capitalist structures of production, while artistic imaginations and urban imaginaries populate the in-between spaces of ever-growing urban assemblages. Tuan (1991) investigated how language serves to create, communicate, and potentially transform the character of places in everyday language as well as in academic discourse. Creative perspectives on urban spaces have, therefore, always played a crucial role for reflections on the condition of urban dwellers, while opening pathways for creating and altering collective utopia.

As a motor for socio-spatial transformation and critique, arts-based strategies have proven effective for commenting on the urban status quo and tackling salient issues or problems, reflected in the urban sphere. Adopting imaginary viewpoints, combined with arts-based approaches, in urban research can de-center traditional notions of urbanity and open liminal spaces for social critique and spatial transformation (Lindner and Meissner, 2019). Gandy (2019), e.g., explores, how ecological imaginaries, reflected in different forms of art, defined conceptualizations of urban nature and their role in urban development since the advent of industrialization. Zubiaurre (2019) describes how chewing gum on the streets of Mexico City forms part of an art project, while at the same time providing data for researching urban social practices. Lin (2019) demonstrates how urban imaginaries can be transformed through artistic strategies, inspiring reflection, and critique of the urban status quo. In a similar approach, Simpson (2019, p. 234) analyzed how the materiality of Macau's newly paved streets in the style of a traditional "calçada Portuguesa" plays into the production of an urban space for consumption and tourism. Employing ecological, technological, or economic imaginaries of 'the urban' in creative or artistic research strategies, in turn, holds great potential for analyzing and critically reflecting on the inherent meanings of urban spaces and their transformations in time. Hence, creative approaches to urbanization can point towards new perspectives for growth, serve as tools for criticizing the status quo, or highlight areas of concern, which formerly went unnoticed. They may identify possibilities for change and create liminal perspectives for transforming urban spaces into places for social integration and co-evolution.

In this sense, we want to present several articles in this issue, which demonstrate how creative approaches to urban spaces, collective projects in community building and the arts, artistic interventions in virtual/augmented reality, as well as projects in the fields of design, architecture, and urban planning can promote the creation of spaces for social critique, societal change, and new imaginations of the urban as a collective endeavor.

Acknowledging different sides to and different strategies towards altering public perceptions, transforming urban spaces, or creating new urban imaginaries, we want to follow Brenner and Schmid's (2015, p. 178) notion that:

The urban is a collective project—it is produced through collective action, negotiation, imagination, experimentation, and struggle. The urban society is thus never an achieved condition but offers an open horizon in relation to which concrete struggles over the urban are waged. It is through such struggles, ultimately, that any viable new urban epistemology will be forged.

We understand the contributions to this issue as an active involvement in collective processes of urban transformation as the creation of liminal spaces for social change and critique, to potentially inform future processes of urban planning, artistic interventions, and conceptualizations of urban spaces. Especially, we want to emphasize the role of different creative and artistic strategies for creating liminal spaces for political involvement and social inclusion, while infiltrating spatialized structures of power. In this sense, we present a spectrum of possibilities in this issue, to understand space not only as an imaginary matrix for collective sensemaking, but as a medium for change and intervention in existing socio-spatial assemblages.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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