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(Un-)predictable? cultural policy actions for the arts in urban change

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1. Introduction

"Public space is the celebration of diversity" (Hall & Thrift, 2019).

The impetus for this paper was the project Shared Spaces by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the European project UrbCultural Planning and its conference "Urban Transformation through Arts and Culture". At this conference the public space was often described, ideally, as the place where democracy and society are experienced, learnt and lived. Public spaces – physical, digital and/or imagined – should be the spaces in which everyone has access to public goods, and where culture, history and belonging are represented, lived and (re)negotiated. The public space was envisioned as a shared space, where people get together, and where integration and participation are practised. Furthermore, the public space was portrayed as a contentious place, where belongings and memories are disputed. However, in reality, public spaces are shrinking, have access barriers, are often unused, and seem to lose their crucial role and key functions for society (Sennett, 2002).

This paper aims to examine the multiple roles of arts, culture and creative interventions play in the public space. They can enable reflexivity, and they serve as spaces of physical and mental experimentation to engage and activate citizens. Further, this paper highlights the fact that cultural policies need to be addressed as a transversal strategy and hopes to provide some points of inquiry that can provide a basis for further discussion. The paper argues that the cultural dimension of (un)sustainability forms the core of the global crisis and the erosion of public space, revealing both the underlying structures of unsustainable development and possible alternatives. Cultural policies have the potential to enable the challenging of rigid modes of thinking – including the silos and hierarchies of both structures and thought – and to foster an understanding of complex systems. Therefore, cultural policies need to foster diversity in public spaces, acknowledging "that sustainability offers an inspiring research field for artists and other cultural actors, and that the arts and other cultural sectors constitute experimental, reflexive and transformative fields for the advancement of sustainability" (Kagan, 2008, p. 14).

The potential of arts and culture for the development of the public and the conditions of cultural policies serving as an impetus for sustainable development are still underexplored, although there have been several discussions about whether "arts act as gatekeeper for sustainability" (Bachmann, 2008, p. 8).[2] This paper will provide an introductory overview of current thinking and discourses about the topic that can serve as an impetus for local contexts. We will untangle the misconceptions

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[2] "The concept (sustainability) speaks to the reconciliation of social justice, ecological integrity, and the wellbeing of all living systems on the planet. The goal is to create an ecologically and socially just world within the means of nature without compromising future generations. Sustainability also refers to the process or strategy of moving toward a sustainable future" Moore (2005, p. 78).

about what public spaces really are (Smets & Watt, 2013) and will highlight the potential of "cultural planning" as an approach to place (Murray, 2001).

2. The functions of public space in a changing world

Global tectonic shifts in an intensely networked world (Castells, 2010) are having profound effects on all spheres: cultural, social, political, financial and technological. We are living in a situation where we have reached, and even exceeded, planetary boundaries (Rockström et al., 2009), and where climate change, migration, nationalism, social fragmentation, digitalisation, economisation and financial speculation are taking their toll on our daily lives. Undoubtedly, the world is changing fast and dramatically; the coronavirus pandemic is perhaps the latest and currently most striking event, whose effects are still unpredictable. Societal agility and resilience are needed to cope with these changes, and we need to reinvigorate public space as immanent public value in itself, and not only as a place in which public value is created. According to Benington (2011, p. 31) the two dimensions of public value tackle the questions: What does the public most value? What adds value to the public sphere?

To gain a better understanding of the societal functions of the public space, it is useful to consider the ideal historical image and narrative of the public space: the Agora was a central public space in ancient Greek city-states. It accommodated the social and political order of the polis and was the centre of public life. The Agora was the arena in which current themes were disputed and negotiated. It included the administrative building, the yard, the library and the place of worship. This was the place where business and politics were discussed and negotiated, and where deals were made (Camp & Mauzy, 2009).

This idealised sketch of the Agora is only one part of the reality of those days, and deviates substantially from real life for metics, women and slaves, who were completely dissociated from public life in the Agora. However, this sketch envisions the coming into being of an ideal public space, at least in European cities. A relevant and functioning public space is central for the democratisation of cities and for citizens' trust in society. This immaculate image cannot be sustained in a post-industrial society (Orum & Neal, 2009, p. 5). But what happens to societies where neither public space nor an adequate substitute fills that vacuum?

The fundamental questions that can be linked to the public space are: How do we want to live? What is a good life? What are the values, societal narratives, frames and structures that we want to use to guide our lives? These questions have recently moved to the centre of discourse in many cities worldwide, and are being discussed by citizens, artists, city-planners and administrators, and politicians. However, these discussions are often siloed within different citizen groups, departments or parties.

Therefore, the questions that follow are: Who should decide on the public values to pursue – the local politicians, the city administrators, the citizens, specific lobby groups, or the zeitgeist? Who has the vision? Is it a common one, and in what context is it being developed? Obviously, there are no easy answers to these questions; rather, there are many answers based on individual needs, ideas and ideologies.

A continual dialogue while having the possible futures in mind is thus essential to pre-empting social conflicts and societal fragmentation. This dialogue must be an inclusive process, based on mutual respect, and upheld by the citizens and the people living in the affected areas. The legitimation required is not only that the development of the vision is participatory, but also questions who will implement the vision and how this will be done.

The discussion about the value, purpose and functionalities of the public space as public value in itself explains why the public space is a jigsaw piece in the discussion about (sustainable) urban transformation: not only in a utopian understanding of the public space. Despite, or rather because of, its antagonism and tensions, the public space is the space required to enable dialogues and negotiations of differences and the identification of agreements and public values.

Only a vivid, diverse public space, commonly shared by its citizens, can create the trust in society that is needed to enhance social cohesion, which is imperative to counter social fragmentation, revitalise urban life, and increase the ability to act. This process can be described as a reinforcing dynamic feedback loop.

Public spaces are regarded as a prerequisite for urban life, creating space for encounters with the unknown and for societal diversity. To a much greater extent than private spaces, public spaces are places of social inclusion, which are accessible, if not always participatory, thus allowing for conspicuousness.

This social inclusivity is increasingly under pressure. Urban spaces are being commercialised and privatised, in order to make money, but this has resulted in social exclusion. This is manifested in the increasing number of what appear to be public spaces, at first glance, but are in fact subject to underlying private user rights. An example is commercial shopping zones. What also needs to be examined is the number of buildings that are privately owned, but that are being left unused due to speculative financial interests.

A great number of urban theorists have highlighted the fact that when cities are "re-made", this happens in the public rather than the private sphere (Jacobs, 1985; Massey, 2015; Mumford, 1961). As Harvey has stated, "[t]he freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights" (Harvey, 1979, p. 315).

Part of the problem with privately owned public spaces is that the rights of citizens using them are severely constrained. The consequences of multiplying and expanding privately owned public spaces have major effects: not only on where we sit and eat our lunch, but also on our ability to protest. At this point questions therefore arise about the conflict of interests between the public value of public space and its internalisation through private ownership: how can the public re-negotiate and re-consider those spaces?

Together with displacement mechanisms, digitalisation is having an increasing effect on (user) behaviour in public spaces, and even more so during the coronavirus crisis. Attention is becoming more and more fragmented, as analogous behaviour is imposed by digital communication and the use of digital systems.

Already in the 1990s, Richard Sennett (2002) proclaimed the end of public life. If one looks at urban spaces in particular, it becomes obvious that this immanent crisis is worsening. The above-mentioned economisation of public space is driven by consumption and speculation, which is taking place in cities all over the world. The effect is also individual withdrawal from public space, further alienating citizens from public space (Sennett, 2002).

In view of this, the current lack of public life poses a challenge. The associated lack of communication is leading to conflicts and social fragmentation. While certain societal themes were previously discussed by a wider audience, today this is primarily happening among peers. This observation is even more striking when it relates to the virtual space, where digital fora and chats often reiterate the discourse of a single group, instead of reflecting a heterogeneous discussion. The call for more debate, and the quest for courageous conversations, can also be seen in the context of the increasing climate protests in 2018, and their call for citizens' participation and fora.

Manuel Delgado (2015) stresses that the public "space is not the organized, administered, rational, planed space – it is the spontaneous, uncalculated, even fluid space in which there is a continuous movement, which is being characterized by the unimaginable." He emphasises that a city should be planned, but that the "urban" remains unplannable (Delgado, 2017). Although this is a paradox at first glance, it can be resolved by taking a new stance in urban planning, by planning "culturally" (Landry, 2019).

3. The role of arts and culture for the development of the public space

"Aesthetics is the sum of all our perceptions for understanding complex systems. It is not an exclusive realm of art, but should be (re)claimed by each and every one of us!" (Goehler, 2012, p. 8)

The crisis of the public has led to a counter movement, in which civil society actors are trying to revitalise the public space. Culture is playing a key role as an impetus for reflection, motivation and activation: arts and the aesthetic approach are providing unique mechanisms, to introduce a discourse, to identify potential solutions and to connect with people so that they become engaged in the creation of public value. The transformative approach of arts and culture is increasingly being discussed and tested in urban contexts, one of which is the INTERREG project of Cultural Planning as a Method for Urban Social Innovation.[3]

This follows a functional definition of arts, which involves artists taking an active role in the formation of society. Hence, the cultural actors within civil society are taking on a special role: Art is often seen as a form of communication that has a utopian perspective which seems extremely valuable within the context of rethinking the public space. Further, it can create the space for experiencing, what Rosa (2016) calls resonance.

Alongside the social, the economic and the ecological, the cultural is the fourth dimension relating to the emergence of cultures of sustainability. Further relevance is given to the approach in the context

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[3] https://www.cultural-planning-kiel.de/en/home.

of international cultural policies, namely, the Agenda 21 for Culture,[4] the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,[5] and the Agenda 2030 and its affiliated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[6] All these international conventions can and should be integrated into local city planning.

The Agenda 21 for Culture was founded in 2004 by the international network United Cities and Local Governments. It operates alongside the Agenda 21, as an implementation of, and link between, the global and the local aspects of different cities and municipalities. The starting point is the will to exchange knowledge, with the focus on human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and the creation of framework conditions that secure peace in the long term.

The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, ratified in 2007, aims to support sustainable systems of governance in the cultural sector, to achieve a balanced exchange of cultural goods and services and increase the mobility of artists and cultural workers, to integrate culture into frameworks for sustainable development, and to explicitly promote human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The 17 SDGs for socially, ecologically and economically sustainable development of the United Nations Agenda 2030, which were adopted in 2015, serve as a guideline for all countries worldwide. Even if no special emphasis is placed on culture in the broader sense and artistic creativity in the narrower sense, culture can be understood as a link between the goals mentioned above and the goal of ensuring a good life in the future. This becomes particularly clear in SDG 11, which calls for cities to be inclusive, safe, resilient and thus sustainable. The Agenda 2030 serves as an objective for all public organisational units worldwide to be vehicles for individual implementation concepts.

4. Urban society, cultural civil society and sustainability in public space

Civil society can be understood as those non-governmental and non-economic associations that are voluntary, and that are distinct from government and business, which anchor their communication components in the public and in the "World of Living" of citizens (Hall & Thrift, 2019). Hence civil society self-organises outside the official structures in the city.

However, the term must be understood as a communicative, and not as an organisational form. For the purpose of diversity of cultural expression, however, cultural civil society means non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, professionals in the culture sector and associated sectors, groups that support the work of artists, and cultural communities (UNESCO, 2009).

Many actors and initiatives are tackling the crisis of public space, battling for its revitalisation. Several projects show that cultural civil society is approaching the (re-)creation of public space using a bottom-up approach: "The Day of the Good Life" was initiated by Davide Brocchi,[7] primarily in the city of Cologne (Germany). In this project, the locus of the "great societal transformation" is the neighbourhoods of cities, supported by unconventional alliances and the citizens themselves. A key

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[4] http://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/agenda-21-for-culture.

[5] https://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention.

[6] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/.

[7] https://davidebrocchi.eu/tag-des-guten-lebens/.

aspect is also the conversion of private spaces into public space, the core of which is the creation of public value. "What would our cities look like if they were designed and governed bottom-up, by the citizens themselves, as commons?" The dramatic reduction in communicative diversity in cities, which has led to increasing anonymity in neighbourhoods, is also an area of concern. Communication can be a key resource for identifying potential local solutions to societal problems (in the context of and related to the local communities). Arts and culture play a crucial role in the creation of the public space. The impact of cultural actors on urban development is also becoming visible in the model project "Haus der Statistik" in Berlin (Germany).[8] This constitutes an antithesis to the commercial imprinting of the Alexanderplatz and the city centre, trying to integrate the participation of citizens.

The local aesthetics in many cities were developed in the 1970s through art artefacts. However, since the start of the 21st century, an increasing number of diverse approaches have been used in city-making. Urban interventions, place making, critical masses, urban gardening and guerrilla knitting are only some of the tactics being used in the context of approaching and intervening in the public space.

Artistic artefacts and creative processes are debating the role of the public space and are enabling and/or forcing people to change perspectives, which can serve as triggers for innovation and participation. Artists are becoming activists who are questioning the public space and forcing the discourse about what public values are and how to reconquer the public space (Saaby, 2019).

In this context it is also important to highlight artistic interventions that aim to provoke controversies. Examples of this protest culture and interventionist approach are the activities of the Centre for Political Beauty, such as its "Holocaust-Mahnmal Bornhagen / Holocaust Memorial Bornhagen"[9] or the "Erste Europäische Mauerfall / First European Fall of the Wall".[10] In addition, the protests at Tahrir Square in Cairo in 2011, the Maidan in Kiev, Taksim Square in Istanbul, and the Occupy movement and Fridays for Future movement around the world are clear examples of temporarily re-gaining public space by means of culture. The aim of these movements is to re-construct the public space as an arena for the demands of social movements. The core of this approach is the understanding that creativity and artistic interventions can trigger and activate social change (Harris, 2015).

Alongside physical space, digitalisation plays a key role in developing such strategies. New means of communication have revolutionised artistic approaches, but also society as such, allowing for a completely new way of civil integration and participation. Approaches such as "Mapping", for example, the "Hannover Voids",[11] or tools like Vacancy-Meters,[12] which identify vacant spaces, can enable participation in the physical space. There are also overlaps between approaches that can create synergies. "Free Riga" (in Latvia), for example, has emerged as an intermediary between owners of the empty spaces and prospective users of vacancies, aiming to establish recognition and the much-needed credibility for temporary use as a new, still unknown instrument to deal with vacancies.

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[8] https://hausderstatistik.org/.
[9] https://politicalbeauty.de/mahnmal.html.
[10] https://politicalbeauty.de/mauerfall.html.
[11] https://hannover-voids.de/.
[12] https://www.leerstandsmelder.de/.

Other digital approaches, such as Wikis, are developed through new modes of collaboration and creating new knowledge. Digitalisation has also been a means of creating new shared experiences during the coronavirus pandemic. This allows access to a wider range of people; where this will take us remains to be seen.

A key aspect in the debate is that the re-claiming of public space is not about having cultural civil society at its centre. As proclaimed by Adrienne Goehler, it is not an exclusive realm of art, but should be (re)claimed by each and every one of us (Goehler, 2012). Additionally, if the shared spaces are to be sustainable spaces, then their concept, which has been overused in policymaking and scholarship, needs to be charged with new power. This can be achieved only by proactively linking aesthetics and sustainability. In this context, aesthetics is not about the nature of beauty and taste, but rather about the sum of all our perceptions for understanding complex systems.

5. Cultural policy as a policy of public space

The idea of focusing on the cultural dimension to move towards an aesthetic practice of sustainability is based on the ideas of "productive action" (Arendt, 2009, p. 225). The goal is to find and invent new overlapping strategies that will lead to other – sustainable – models of life and work. In the following, "aesthetics" means the consciousness of the sense (Zur Lippe, 1987), hence the participation of all senses in feeling, perceiving and fashioning the world.

The approach of a cultural engagement not only recurs for the rather limited group for whom culture is essential, but is rather culture as a matrix for creativity, which it understands as a general human ability. Arts and the artistic play a crucial role, since they are role models as avant-garde and anti-experts of "fluid modernism", in which there are no longer any certainties; instead, positions should be revisited over and over (Goehler, 2012). The crucial aspect in this context is that artists are not left with or given the responsibility of documenting the state of the world; it is their freedom of choice. They can only highlight the potential of arts and culture in the context of sustainability.

In this context, cultural policy is often overlooked. In practice, cultural policy is often reduced to questions of cultural administration and promotion and is often of little interest in the political debate. However, a growing number of theoretical approaches, as well as a few practical approaches, do not see cultural policy as the mere administration of the arts, but rather as a crucial factor for social coexistence. According to Jim McGuigan (1996), the negotiation process between ideas, institutional conflicts and divergent power relations in the production and dissemination of symbolic meanings forms the core of this policy field. Therefore, cultural policy is about the permanent social negotiation process between often competing value systems. Such an understanding places public debate – and thus especially the public space as its venue – at the centre of cultural policy thinking.

Based on this theoretical assumption, the connection between cultural policy and public space seems obvious. In this context, cultural policy must develop a vision and subsequently create an institutional framework to turn this vision into reality (Maltzahn, 2017). The noticeable increase of public cultural strategies, especially in the municipalities, shows that visions of cultural policy are becoming increasingly important.

In practice, however, cultural–political ideas hardly affect the debates on public space. Instead, other perspectives shape the planning of public spaces. Therefore, the socio-communicative and cultural impact of public space is often overlooked and receives very little attention in practice. Considering the far-reaching changes triggered by digitalisation, this one-sided view seems almost anachronistic.

How can cultural policy instruments support forms of participatory urban development? How can public administration and political structures promote cultural projects in order to revitalise the public space? How can cultural factors be integrated into urban development planning, for example, within the framework of a cultural impact assessment? How can we reconcile the resulting contrasts, for example, between business development and the promotion of art and culture?

State actors have the task, on the one hand, and the ability and power to shape public spaces, on the other. Traditionally, they act according to a top-down approach. In recent decades, however, more and more processes of urban and cultural policy have become participatory under the dogma of governance.

This is where the concept of cultural planning, which has been increasingly used in recent years, comes into play. Cultural planning is not necessarily a matter of comprehensive control along a pre-drafted dramaturgy of action, but rather a matter of deliberately not planning in parts and rather reacting to the approaches of the various actors involved. This can also be supplemented by questions about the extent to which new approaches are needed in order to make better decisions by "planning culturally", i.e. by finding other solutions to existing problems based on the needs and potential of arts and culture (Landry, 2019). Examples from many applications of cultural planning underline the value of this bottom-up approach. By following a mapping process and an analysis of the potential of individually available cultural and wider resources with the aim of achieving a more suitable result, planning is created through the interaction of a variety of actors (Saaby, 2019).

Over the past two decades, cultural planning has offered alternatives to the mainstream public authority approach to urban planning, which is often led by infrastructural investment, top-down and long-term planning, and is primarily concerned with a spatial approach. This integrated approach, which has citizen–citizen and citizen–city authorities' cooperation at its core, strives to increase inclusion, and the sustainable development of small and medium-sized communities and neighbourhoods, with special attention being paid to artistic and cultural interventions. Such an approach strengthens culture as a driver for urban social innovations.
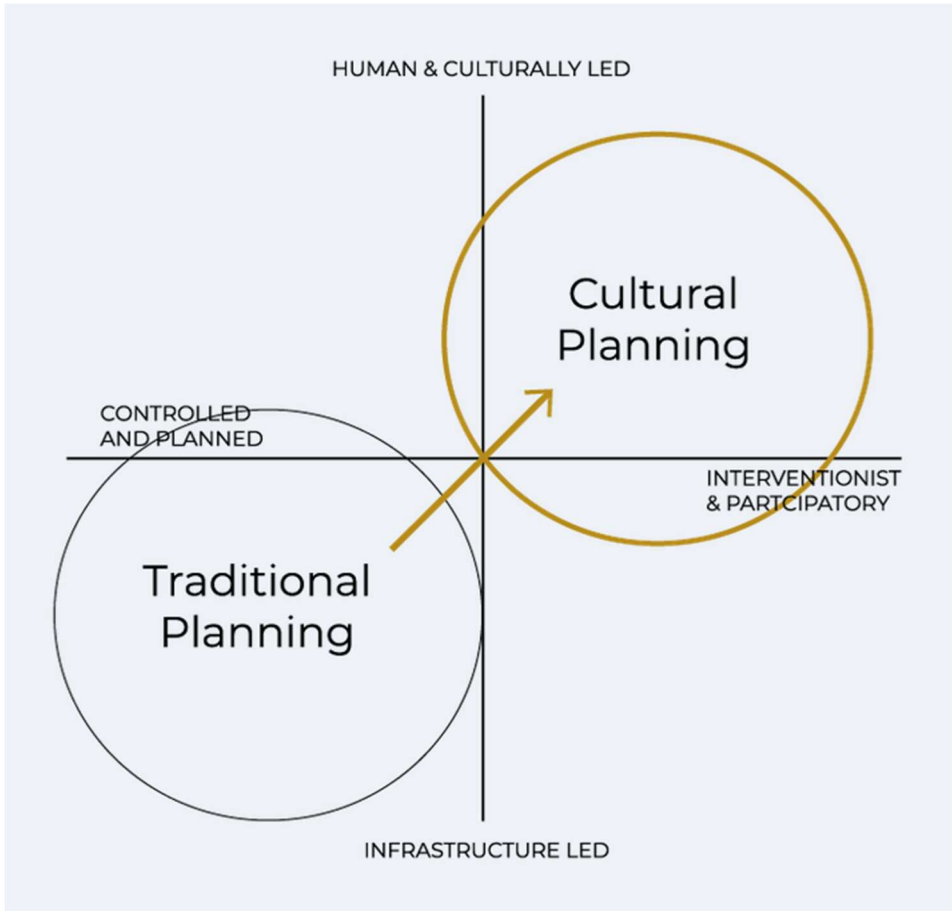
Figure 1: Cultural planning in relation to traditional planning

Public spaces are complex and interconnected. They have physical, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic and social dimensions, to name but a few. However, policies that deal with the physical development of spaces and those that deal, for example, with social or economic policy are too often not intertwined because of the pronounced division of responsibilities, but also because of separate discourses and traditions. Furthermore, networking with and the participation of civil society and private sector actors are still new ideas. This is where the idea of cultural planning comes into play. In following the governance approach, equal cooperation between the state, the market and civil society is indispensable for successfully shaping public spaces. However, this cooperation goes beyond a participatory process that involves civil society only at a certain point in the process (Čopič & Srakar, 2012). Rather, it is about a fundamentally new perspective on cultural policy as social co-production. The state can act as an activator and as an intermediary authority that mediates between the various actors in a moderating capacity. Furthermore, a policy of public space must offer true possibilities for designing public space. The latter is a basic prerequisite for participation and can be the initial spark for an active cultural civil society. So far, civil society has often not been included as an equal partner but rather understood as a contractor (Sievers, 2014).

As shown in the previous section, culture has great potential to revitalise public space. The mere existence of this potential gives cultural policy makers the task of promoting culture. This promotion of culture also needs critical examination. Therefore, a rethinking on the part of political and administrative actors is necessary. Funding schemes that include fixed target definitions, operate in

terms of sectoral boundaries and follow a reputation-oriented approach have little effect in promoting innovation. With regard to the further development of the public space, cultural policy must continue to take the courageous path of supporting experimental projects at an early stage and not condemning or even sanctioning occasional failure, but allowing it to happen as part of the artistic process. This seems even more challenging since cultural policy – like all other policy fields – is increasingly measured by the criteria of efficiency and effectiveness. Non-linear processes, experimentation and failure elude these criteria, but are decisive factors for innovation in the long run. In addition, there is an ongoing need for cultural policy approaches that can understand and integrate the functional qualities of processual art. In this context, support certainly means financial support, but it also means enabling and appreciating communication processes and incorporating them into the shaping of public commons.

6. Linking cultural policy and public space

Arts and culture have transformative potential. They can develop solutions for current and future social challenges. However, while shaping the future, one should understand how to tackle the new in a flexible way and to think about, try out and experience the unusual or previously unthought about. The latter requires interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral action and the cooperation of many actors. Hence cultural policies need to be addressed as a transversal strategy. As outlined before, culture can promote citizens' participation in public spaces, but it also has its limits. Exclusion is an elementary component of art; inevitably, not all artistic and aesthetic formats attract every audience. Hence, to counter the danger of reverting to culture for the few it is necessary that strategies for community engagement are thought of in parallel, and in terms of "what is being expected from the artist". According to Saaby (2019), there has been an uneasy coexistence of policy rationales from different historical periods from "[a]rt for art's sake: the intrinsic and civilizing value of access to culture (1940s-1950s), over the transformative potential of 'cultural democracy' and active participation (1970s), culture as a tool for economic development and place marketing (1980s-1990s) and cultural actions as ways to change the behaviours of individuals and communities (late 1990s-2000s)" (Binachini, 2016, p. 35). Increasingly, the notion of thinking culturally (and artistically) about urban policy has grown. In this sense cultural planning can be regarded as "the strategic and integral planning and use of cultural resources in urban and community development" (Mercer, 2010, p. 18).

Hence, artistic as well as cultural interventions have immensely valuable potential: the confrontation with different perspectives can lead to re-thinking and can initiate processes of change. Furthermore, culture can strengthen the quality of experiencing public space and the interpersonal communication that develops around it (Charzyńska, 2019).

It becomes evident that cultural policy has an underrated influence on society in public spaces. It has the potential to foster the debate about (urban) sustainability, providing an integrative framework that can encourage holistic and creative thinking (Landry, 2009). However, the challenge for cultural policies is to strike a balance between planning-led interventions with an emphasis on order and coherence and a culturally led approach that emphasises the unplanned, interventionist and participatory approach. Hence, in an overall strategy, cultural policies need to acknowledge the question of what is predictable and thus plannable and what – certainly with considerable courage – must be viewed as unpredictable.

While acknowledging cultural planning as a transversal strategy, we would like to highlight some key debates on public space and its link with cultural policy.

1   Urban identity and togetherness: cultures as part of urban society

The crisis of public spaces can be tackled by democratising public spaces and cultures as common goods. Also, the issues addressed could be global or local, but an understanding of sustainability implies a linkage of local and global realities, i.e. what is sometimes labelled "glocal" (Kagan, 2008, p. 18). This also involves paying attention to intercultural understanding. However, participating in shaping common goods requires various identity-seeking stages. Large sections of society are currently not involved in participatory urban developments, and some are not interested. In this respect, the engagement of cultural civil society can create new access points (Miles, 2014, p. 107). However, this requires participation that does not serve to legitimise, but is a free space in which impact can be achieved and change is possible. In order not to stop at "particitainment", citizens need real opportunities to exert their influence. This requires political openness. Citizens' assemblies are an approach that is increasingly being tested worldwide. How such an approach can work is exemplified by Gdańsk in Poland (Gerwin, 2018).

2   Framing urban life: opening up public space

An existing and constantly changing urban landscape is the framework in which transformation takes place. Thus, one should always consider this when discussing the transformative potential of culture in the planning process. In this regard, the first approaches of a cultural impact assessment were developed. While accounting for art, urban society and artistic activities, these approaches try to assess whether a project, planning or use contributes to the promotion of culture or whether it is regarded as a productive facet of restructuring. The mere fact that the property is owned means that private space and public space are clearly demarcated. But especially deliberate private vacancies in places with a special public interest raise questions as to where the public space extends into the private space, along with a public interest. Hence, who can use and transform the space? A concrete approach has been adopted in Riga (Latvia), where "Free Riga", as an activist approach, has emerged as an intermediary between owners of the empty spaces and prospective users of vacancies aiming to open up private spaces, also establishing the credibility for temporary use as an instrument to deal with vacancies.

3   Component, accompaniment, disturbance of everyday life: art objects, activities, actions in public spaces

Art is allowed to be beautiful. This too is a relevant facet of art that is to be integrated into processes of urban transformation. However, the benefit of art for society is more about unleashing it – whether beautiful or not – and thereby creating access to an audience through suitable formats of mediation. This opens up an opportunity for something new. Public space is often limited to traffic areas or sales zones. What else can be done to increase the quality of the visit and thus the length of time spent? How important is it that citizens do not have to define themselves solely as traffic participants or customers, but that free, self-chosen reasons for using a part of the public space are valued? How important is it that cultural policy actors and funding structures approach artistic design with the basic confidence to act freely? We are in search of a sensuous society to explore the world differently and to experience reality through our senses rather than through an intellectual process.

Sisters Hope, for example, creates experiments in the intersection of performance art, educational development, activism and research. "The sensuous will promote a more sustainable future." Their most recent work is Sensuous City, a 24-hour performance in Copenhagen, starting at the City Hall and immersing the audience in a sensorial walk through different sites of the city. The performance was part of METROPOLIS 2019, a festival for art and performance in the public space.[13]

4 Zones of encounters and shared moments with diverse audiences: cultural events in public spaces

Urban transformation processes also need connecting elements. As in other areas, such as religion and sports, large events in particular exemplify the ability to address a wide audience in a relatively simple and low-threshold manner. Large events can ultimately create a connection between urban identity, spatial framing and the examination of artistic positions. Events enable temporary conversions as part of the state of emergency. But a key question is how small and diverse components of this can be transferred into the everyday use of public space as a common good. This can be approached at various levels – at city level or as a neighbourhood approach – and also from different angles: top-down and bottom-up. As an example of the former, the initiative of the European Commission, the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC),[14] can be highlighted. Since 1984 the event has been a testing ground for an approach to the city as a creative cultural phenomenon. The event opens up the way cities are planned from a cultural starting point. A bottom-approach approach is "The Day of the Good Life", which started in a neighbourhood in Cologne (Germany), but has been adopted by a number of German cities. It tries to foster unconventional alliances and the conversion of private spaces into public spaces with the trigger question: "What would our cities look like if they were designed and governed bottom-up, by the citizens themselves, as commons?"[15] Another example is the more fluid approach adopted by the Danish Institute for (X),[16] which is a cultural, business and education platform founded in 2009. The association developed from citizen initiatives, and is a dynamic organisation and a laboratory for urban experiments, where initiatives grow organically.

5 Arts and culture as complementary resources for finding alternative solutions

Urban change demands the continual challenge of identifying and applying solutions to existing and upcoming social and environmental issues. It has a crucial role in the debate about sustainability. The possibilities of creative methods and the communication skills of the arts seem to be far from being used in many conventional approaches. The desire for cooperation and co-creation is often identified as an essential starting point. The ability to look at things from another perspective and to focus attention on the facets and needs of people describes the potential of the arts as well as the potential of culture.

The strategy of the city of Copenhagen called "Co-Create Copenhagen" shows that the focus on a few strategic goals – a liveable city, a city with edge, a responsible city, and deriving all other policies, including the architecture policy, from those strategic goals – has been a key factor in Copenhagen

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[13] http://sistershope.dk/.

[14] https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.

[15] https://www.tagdesgutenlebens.org/.

[16] https://institutforx.dk/about/.

becoming one of the world's most liveable cities (Saaby, 2019). Hence, all city policies are aligned around an overall general vision, which is framed by three main strategic goals, and upheld by citizens' support for the vision.

In dealing with the future in city planning there is a tension between two imaginaries of sustainability: planning versus emergence and uncertainty (Kagan, 2019). Hence looking into possible futures is key for planning. Using exploratory scenarios is also an approach that will empower individuals to become more socially innovative (Cederquist & Golüke, 2016).

The concept of creative bureaucracy aims to facilitate and accelerate the finding of solutions with the involvement of actors from cultural civil society, other fields of expertise and citizens, and thus to strive for a culture of enabling (Landry & Caust, 2017).The pre-conditions for establishing a creative city have been highlighted by Landry (2009): the main pre-condition for synthesising creativity is to bring together unexpected elements. Hence, the strength of a creative city, especially when tackling complex problems, is in bringing together diverse actors – artists and cultural workers, administrators, politicians and citizens – with different cultural backgrounds and of different ages, in new constellations: to celebrate diversity in the public space.

7. Recommendations for cultural policy actions

To foster a sustainable and liveable city, we think that a cultured, collaborative, critical innovation-oriented approach is needed, which cannot be tackled by cultural policy actions alone. Hence, the approach needs to be thought of as a transversal strategy, which in many cases will not be any easy task. However, to tackle the complex urban challenges, we need to acknowledge that although the formal administrative system versus the informal citizen-driven systems are difficult to manage together, they do complement each other. The key factor is for the systems to be inspired and to learn from each other. For example, can the urban handbook by Institute for (X)[17] serve to inspire architects, citizens, urban planners, politicians, cultural platforms and organisations to think "bottom-up" instead of "top-down"? However, institutional innovations and (cultural) policies will leverage the system. The recommendations that can be extracted from this paper are by no means complete. As already mentioned, culture is transversal, so if the recommendations are sorted into specific debate areas, they overlap. The main aim of the recommendations is to serve as an impetus for further discussions.

Urban identity and togetherness: cultures as part of urban society

- The design of public spaces is not a purely governmental task, but rather takes place within the framework of governance as a joint project between public, private and civil society actors who are on an equal footing. Therefore, citizens must have real opportunities to influence the design of public spaces. Participation does not serve to legitimise but must represent a free space in which impact can be achieved, and change made possible.
- An urban society is diverse in many respects. Democratisation also means breaking down barriers that hinder participation. To achieve this in the local, spatial, linguistic, cultural and identity context is also the task of politics. Participation must include the possibility of having a say and being involved (co-creation).

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[17] https://institutforx.dk/uploads/2019/10/This-is-X.pdf.

Framing urban life: opening up public space

- Spaces as common goods represent a key function of social interaction, which policy needs to acknowledge. In planning processes, it must also be acknowledged that "in-between" spaces, which are not thoroughly planned, are needed.
- Public institutions have access to numerous unused spaces that should remain in public hands. These spaces must be recognised and made available for use by cultural and civil society actors. This can quickly create added value for a vibrant urban society and allow for new dynamics on site. Temporary change of use as a state of emergency must also be promoted.

Component, accompaniment, disturbance of everyday life: art objects, activities, actions in public space

- Artistic, aesthetic and socio-cultural actions have the potential to make new perspectives visible and to create unconventional ideas. This is invaluable for the transformation of public space. Numerous examples show that culture is the driving factor for newly defined public spaces. Cultural policy must recognise and support this potential.
- Shared spaces are dynamic spaces. Cultural resources through cultural action and exchange are crucial for its re-territorialisation. Activism and nuisance can be progressive forms in these spaces.
- So far, few funding schemes explicitly address culture as a transformation factor for the public space. There is a need for action here, as specific funding measures can trigger numerous ideas and release creative processes.

Zones of encounters and shared moments with diverse audiences: (cultural) events in public spaces

- Policy needs to allow experimentation and enable zones of encounters and shared moments with diverse audiences, on different levels of scale.
- Creating local events and re-engaging neighbourhoods have become an increasing locus of attention in tackling urban (un)sustainability and in re-gaining shared spaces.

Arts and culture as complementary resources for finding alternative solutions

- Arts and culture and the role of public space have a crucial role in the debate about sustainability. Hence, they need to be acknowledged as transversal aspects in the debate about sustainable city planning and making.
- Public space is not a purely cultural policy issue and has so far been mainly negotiated in other departments. Close and intensive cooperation between the departments involved is necessary to transform public spaces.
- Cultural policy needs planning, but not "over-planning". For this purpose, it is not enough to administer existing things; visions need to be developed. These visions need to be shared visions that can be reduced to a few overall goals, which are then adopted by all city policies. These visions need to have a mandate – from both politicians and administrators, but especially through the involvement of civil society actors.

- Visions can become reality only if appropriate conditions are created. On the one hand, funding must be secured; on the other hand, the bureaucratic hurdles must be removed.
- The artistic process eludes the rational and streamlining logic of modern administrations in terms of ordering and success. Experimental and innovative projects in particular can fail. In order to promote projects that can transform public spaces, the failure of projects must be accepted and not sanctioned. This is part of a new understanding of funding infrastructure.
- A fund that encourages artistic interventions in the field of sustainability for extended social good is needed: A Fund for Aesthetics and Sustainability would ideally be supported by several foundations and its board and decision-makers would be interdisciplinary.

8. Final remarks for practical use

This paper outlines general insights into the role of cultural civil society in the transformation of urban public spaces and presents some of the cultural-political conditions that can successfully promote this process.It is a process of "creative" struggles, in the sense that it has many contradictions to tackle, but these contradictions constitute the public space and make it vibrant. The tensions are manifold, but the planning needs to be flexible and agile to allow for different perspectives. There is a need for thinking through the processes together, while allowing space for the "new" and unexpected, and for creating a vision for a sustainable, liveable city or place that aligns people. Although making sense of something new and unusual requires reflection on what has been previously experienced (Weick, 1995).We also need to manoeuvre between the various institutions and interests to jointly implement the vision, and to create the link between the global and the local that is being lived in the neighbourhoods. All these challenges need to be tackled, and this is where cultural planning needs to be seen as a transversal strategy, and where arts and culture play a key role in reinvigorating the public space.

Of course, such strategies must be context-specific, and are particularly productive when they are integrated into a locally specified co-created strategy process. Because of the national and regional specifics of culture and cultural policy, the stated recommendations are only food for thought, to trigger new ideas. Furthermore, the recommendations for action should clarify the scope of cultural policy and administration in shaping the public sphere in particular. Local actors at city level, compared to actors at federal and state level, are particularly good at dealing with major social issues at the regional and local level and have the ability to bring a city and its urban society closer together, to deal with complex issues productively.

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