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Clustering Architectures: The Role of Materialities for Emerging Collectives in the Public Domain

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Clustering Architectures
The Role of Materialities for Emerging Collectives in the Public Domain

Jesper Magnusson

How can material design facilitate humans' co-existence in shared urban space?

This thesis is a study of public social life, addressing issues about how and by what means people meet and cluster in urban domains. The overarching concern is how materialities may contribute to a more inclusive and multifarious public life.

A series of empirical investigations were completed as field studies of a selection of public spaces, primarily in London, Amsterdam and Paris. Based on the empirical findings, a number of concepts are developed and determined effective as tools for the analysis of public life, as well as for providing operative approaches to urban design practices. As tools for inquiry and analysis, the concepts all aim towards an understanding of spatial production as the effects of heterogeneous clusterings. These conceptual tools suggest a particular attention to artefacts and architecture as significant social mediators, potentially facilitating encounters and exchanges between strangers. The concepts introduced in this book are intended to contribute to a relational and processual exploration of how the material may co-produce social life, and how materialities can possibly be seen as supporting the stabilisation of emergent collectives.

In this thesis, I have striven to show that the design and distribution of certain materialities have major strategic implications for questions concerning co-existence, communality and collaboration in public domains.

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Jesper Magnusson

Clustering Architectures
The Role of Materialities for Emerging Collectives in the Public Domain

The Department of Architecture and Built Environment - Lund University

CLUSTERING ARCHITECTURES

THE ROLE OF MATERIALITIES
FOR EMERGING COLLECTIVES IN
THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Jesper Magnusson

2016

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1   2

INTRODUCTION

In Search of the Urban Coffee Machines

Five men stand gathered around a litter bin in Paris, playing cards[1]. On top of the litter bin there is a piece of cardboard, apparently custom-made to fit conveniently over the bin when the lid is opened and thus create a horizontal surface, well adapted for a game of cards. The cardboard table-top can be transported and used in different locations. The material set-up assembled for this activity is rather sophisticated, yet utterly mundane. The small card-playing collective is located close to a boules court, a place that is prepared with fine gravel and framed with a low stone edge. A group of boules players have gathered to play there. The two different collectives share the space with random citizens who are taking a rest on adjacent benches and stone edges, watching the two collective activities. Both activities require rather specific material conditions to emerge and to be performed side by side without mutual disturbance. The setting can be said to include at least three (temporal) categories of citizens sharing a limited urban space. Generally speaking, they have no explicit relation to each other, but due to the spatial proximity they all interact socially in different ways. This complex situation illustrates how social exchanges between friends and strangers are thoroughly dependent on the design and distribution

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1   This example constitutes a lateral finding, registered during a visit to Paris during the completion of a pilot study where a number of places were examined to choose a site for further investigations. The situation was observed on the 12th of September 2014, at the crossing of Boulevard Jules Ferry and Avenue de la République.

of multiple artefacts and very particular material qualities. The situation further demonstrates how materialities seem to guide the use of space and play a part in the clustering of citizens together with certain artefacts or in certain locations, in a public domain.

Certain artefacts in urban space seem to attract multiple citizens repeatedly, just as an office coffee machine gathers employees in various and sometimes unexpected constellations. The phenomenon is well known in workplaces and sometimes intentionally exploited to create encounters among the staff. Urban artefacts with this clustering capacity sometimes require personal belongings with which one can engage, like the mug into which coffee from the coffee machine will be poured. One scope for this thesis – in a broad sense – is to locate the 'coffee machines' of the urban public domain. Another quest is to search for, and examine, personal artefacts that appear to be important for interacting with other citizens and materialities in urban space.

In this thesis, I suggest that artefacts and other nonhuman elements are key actors in the production and stabilisation of clusters involving humans as well as nonhumans, because of their strategic role as mediators in social encounters and exchanges. Furthermore, I will argue that certain materialities (and sometimes certain spatial typologies) act as ' cluster-machines' and therefore also play a particularly significant role as triggers of exchange. Cluster-machines are often flexible and enact exchange in different ways depending on specific local conditions.

Approaches I:
Architecture, Urban Design and Public Life

This thesis is a study of social life, addressing issues concerning how and by what means people meet in urban public space. The overarching concern is how materialities may contribute to a more inclusive and multifarious public life. In the next chapter I will define how 'urban' and 'public' as well as 'domain' are to be conceived here. Since my point of departure is within the fields of architecture and urban design, material and spatial aspects will be foregrounded. Architecture should be seen here as a relational and performative perspective, as something intimately intertwined with everyday social life and actions. I consider the social and the material to be mutually formative, and space as continuously produced, as effects of related humans and nonhumans. Consequently, in the context of this thesis, the key aspect of architecture is what it can do; i.e. what actions and uses it may serve. This approach also signifies that from an analytical point of view, architecture is intrinsically situated in and constitutes part of a local culture. Architecture is seen as intentionally produced and as functional space, but

it also inherently forms part of particular contexts – a view on architecture similar to what Habraken (2005:181-182) includes in his account of an "architecture of the field". Habraken suggests a view on architectural practice that is characterised by continuity and a profound humility before what is, as well as that which is to come. He uses the concept of field to:

> […] denote the context as well as purpose of the architectural enterprise: the urban, suburban and rural environments in which and for which we act when we design and build. Fields are autonomous entities. Their complex dynamics extend beyond any single discipline or area of study. (Habraken 2005:31)

Habraken advocates a processual and inclusive approach to architecture, where multiple and diverse actors participate in the production of space. I see the role of the architect as a (co-) facilitator of action potentialities rather than a maker of completed objects; or as Jeremy Till elegantly puts it, "The key ethical responsibility of the architect lies not in the refinement of the object as static visual product, but as contributor to the creation of empowering spatial, and hence social, relationships in the name of others" (Till 2009:178). From a solely material perspective, architecture here implies all man-made constructions that organise built environments, including everything from lampposts and bollards to skyscrapers and urban squares.

The study of public life in urban settings is traditionally – and logically – a transdisciplinary endeavour. Scholars and practitioners from a wide range of fields are investigating urbanity through a number of perspectives, such as ecological, social, political, cultural, economic, etc. The approach embraced here, focusing specifically on socio-material aspects of everyday life in public space, is fairly recent in architectural research, and the conceptual repertoire is thus rather meagre and often insufficient to successfully address complex issues of urban life. Therefore, a key ambition of this thesis is to expand the terminology and contribute with a number of operative concepts, useful in architecture and urban design discourses. Questions concerning how citizens meet and exchange[2] publicly have indeed been present in urban design and architecture for a long time, but the detailed academic study of these aspects has a fairly short history[3]. Here I

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2   The term *exchange* is here used to signify a wide span of human-to-human or human-to-nonhuman relations. The meaning of the word should not be confused with the exchange concept used in Marxist terminology, where it is used to describe, for example, the *exchange value* of a particular commodity compared to other objects on a market.

3   For further texts addressing research about the relation of architecture or urban design on one hand and social life on the other, see for example Yaneva 2012, pp.25-46, or Gehl & Svarre 2014.

will briefly comment on a few contributions that discuss issues of urban design and public life that have directly or indirectly influenced this thesis.

For a long time, mainstream theoretical studies on urban space were subjugated to an expert point of view. Some significant urbanists seem to understand the city as something that could be planned and designed on the basis of theoretical presumptions and expert reflection. Influential urban theorists such as Camilo Sitte (1889), Ebenezer Howard (1898), Le Corbusier (1925; 1935) and Gordon Cullen (1961) can all be assigned to this category. They looked at the city predominantly from its morphological, aesthetic and structural aspects, producing concepts characterised by spatio-functional organisation, often subjected to a visual hegemony. Utopians like Ebenezer Howard and Le Corbusier were actually emphasising political, cultural and social aspects, but their blueprints and manifests predominantly focus on spatial and functional organisation, indicating a universal formality and rather instrumental relations between form, materiality and use. Their conceptual contributions were clearly created from an authoritarian and elitist position.

Among others, Kevin Lynch (1960) and Jane Jacobs (1961) proposed alternative approaches to the urban discourse, valuing the experiences of the citizens – the people actually using the space – as critical for successful design of the urban environment. This trajectory was also adapted by urban design theorists and practitioners such as Donald Appleyard, Christopher Alexander and Herman Hertzberger. Following a more empirical trail that strongly emphasised the importance of studying urban life itself, Jan Gehl and William H. Whyte presented investigative studies of public life based on careful observation, recording actual behaviour in particular urban sites. Jan Gehl has argued for the importance of spatio-material planning and design for social life in cities since publishing his first book *Livet mellem husene/Life Between Buildings* (2011 [1971]; 1987 in English). Starting in the mid 1960s, Jan Gehl and his wife, psychologist Ingrid Gehl, completed studies in which they registered what people do in public urban spaces, and where and how they do it. The method came to be known as 'behavioural mapping'. The investigations were primarily based on counting and mapping people's movements and durations of stay in urban spaces. They focused on basic human activities such as sitting, standing and walking. The results were analysed in relation to the architecture of the urban spaces in which the research took place. Jan Gehl's ideas about urban planning and the design of public spaces frame important issues concerning social public life, and they have managed to reach a large global audience (and market). Some years later, William H. Whyte carried out similar systematic investigations and mappings of human behaviour in

public spaces in New York City. Whyte's observational studies started in 1969 and were conducted over several decades, and they were very comprehensive. The results, which were published in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) and in *City: Rediscovering the Center* (1988), disclose many important aspects and notions about the dynamics of public life and have had substantial impact on later research in the field – theoretically and methodologically as well as in urban design practice. In my opinion, this research has contributed significantly to the research on urban public life. The more ethnographic and activity-oriented approach naturally includes aspects of time and rhythm as well as a multiplicity of related spaces and materialities – in contrast to research paradigms focused on individual features such as form, structure or density. However, the analysis – and most significantly, the conclusions – resulting from Gehl's and Whyte's research have had a tendency to be turned into prescriptive and recipe-like concepts that to some extent stand in the way of deeper analysis and a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of urban social life. It is tempting to generalise outcomes from situated studies, and the normative effects can be unfortunate – not least if the practice of the concluded notions is guided by presumptuous ideas regarding what constitutes a 'good' space or a 'successful' public life.[4]

From the field of practice, architect Herman Hertzberger has held a certain position as a source of inspiration for my studies on how architecture and other materialities affect social public life. Hertzberger primarily focuses on what architecture can do, in terms of forming part of social exchange, of multiple activities and uses. Hertzberger, like his mentor and precursor Aldo van Eyck, has used his own practice to investigate, exemplify and theorise on relations between the built environment, human behaviour and social interaction. Through decades of architectural production, Hertzberger has shown the importance of careful material design and a well elaborated architectural morphology, sensitive to scale, material affordances and geometry, to support everyday spatial conditions for a multifaceted social life. Hertzberger highlights the importance of providing equal opportunities for social interaction as a primary function of built space. On the role of the architect as a designer of space, he argues:

> Whatever an architect does or deliberately leaves undone – the way he concerns himself [sic] with enclosing or opening – he [sic] always influences, intentionally or not, the most elementary forms of social relations. And even if social relations depend only to a limited extent on environmental factors, that is still sufficient

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4   Cf. Marshall 2012 for an interesting discussion (with Kevin Lynch, Gordon Cullen, Christopher Alexander and Jane Jacobs as cases) about the tradition of normativity and pseudo-science that seems to have saturated urban design as a discourse.

reason to aim consciously at an organization of space that enables everyone to confront the other on an equal footing. (Hertzberger 1991:214)

During the 1960s and 70s the social dimension gained ground, parallel with a growing interest in everyday life issues and political appeals for public participation in the planning and design process. Sociologist Erwin Goffman and anthropologist Edward T. Hall published their works on social behaviour and interaction in urban space. Books such as for example Goffman's *Behaviour in Public Places* (1963), *Relations in Public* (1971 [2010]) and Hall's *The Hidden Dimension* (1990 [1966]) recognise the importance of material conditions for human interaction and thoroughly investigate various aspects of social life in relation to different spatio-material settings. Their focus on social encounters and exchange in public space highly influenced ethnographic research on urban social life. Richard Sennett (1977, 1990) and Lyn Lofland (1973, 1998) approached the urban question from similar perspectives and further stressed the connection between the social aspects of public life and urban material conditions. Sennett's *The Fall of the Public Man* (1977), Lofland's *A World of Strangers: Order and Action in Urban Public Space* (1973) and *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory* (1998) deepened the understanding of the public domain as an important ground for social multiplicity, coherence and negotiation.

Finally, the approach that has been most relevant for this thesis is characterised by a relational, processual and socio-material perspective on the relation between architecture and urban public life. This approach is mainly inspired by the works of researchers such as Hajer & Reijndorp (2001), Kärrholm (2004, 2012), Massey (2005), Till (2009), Nilsson (2010), Awan, Schneider and Till (2011), Latour and Yaneva (2008), and others. Key features in the work of these scholars are the acknowledgment of materiality, temporality and situatedness as crucial factors for the production of urban social life. The relational perspective on agency that permeates this theoretical field signifies a recognition of networks and assemblages as conditional for action. The socio-material approach opens up for multiple and diverse human and nonhuman actors, active in the formation of public life. It is within this research domain my thesis is meant to be positioned, and to which it should ultimately contribute.

There is no universal agreement on or definition of what public space is. According to Don Mitchell and Lynn Staeheli (2007) however, the three most common perceptions of public space in academic texts[5] are the *physical setting*, *sites for negotiation, contest, or protest*, and sites with a

5   Books and articles in the field of geography, 1945-1998.

social meeting function. An additional important public space criterion is *accessibility*, an aspect repeatedly examined and commented on, for example by Sharon Zukin (1995), Lyn Lofland (1998) and Hajer & Reijndorp (2001). Andrea Brighenti elaborates on *openness and visibility* as a key feature of public domain, referring to Jürgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, Jeff Weintraub, Nancy Fraser and others (Brighenti 2010a:7). Openness and accessibility in itself is, however, no guarantee for publicness in practice. For a space to attract a wide variety of different citizens, it must offer an array of uses and potential activities (Kärrholm 2004, 2007); "A place that is officially open to all kinds of people but nevertheless only accessible to a certain category of users (such as cars, bikes, or shoppers) would, of course, also (indirectly) imply restrictions on which people are allowed to be at that place" (Kärrholm 2007:446). Another frequently stated characteristic of public space is the *copresence of strangers* (Goffman 1963, 1971; Sennett 1977, 1991; Amin 2012; Madanipour 2003, 2010). As a hypothesis of this thesis, I would like to add another aspect that should be taken into account: the co-presence of material elements that are open for public use and that have the capacity to mediate social exchange.

Architecture and artefacts constitute the material, spatial and structural conditions for urban public life. Kurt Iveson (2007) suggests two complementary approaches to frame public space: a *topographical* and a *procedural*. The *topographical* approach makes it possible to denote particular kinds of places in the urban landscape, "such that one could colour public spaces on a map" (p.3). A *procedural* approach can be "used to refer to any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate" (p.3). The procedural approach captures an important notion of 'public' as something produced by actions and interactions; a spatial quality that resides within the making, not something static and independent of social exchange. Publicness is, according to Iveson (2007:8), not a singular mode but several: "publicness as a *context for action*", "publicness as a *kind of action*" and "publicness as a collective actor". Iveson's action-based distinctions clearly signify the complexity of the public space discourse.

Architecture forms the material settings in, on and through which individuals and groups practice their publicness, show themselves, see each other, express political or cultural ideas, interact socially, etc. Architecture is, however, never a neutral backdrop for public life; it always represents particular interests: political, commercial, cultural, and even the agendas of specific individuals or groups (Yaneva 2012). I would also argue that architecture and other material elements that constitute urban space are never merely a 'context for action' (Iveson 2007:8); on the contrary, they are always intrinsically co-produced by humans, cultures, conventions,

regulations, etc., and deeply intertwined with any social action performed in urban space.

The majority of public spaces are planned, designed and equipped more or less the same way as they were a hundred years ago, in spite of new societal conditions (and social objectives) concerning displacement, estrangement, segregation, etc. Given that life in urban spaces has changed noticeably, one could imagine more diversified spatio-material responses to contemporary social challenges. Most public spaces are still designed to serve the needs and desires of stereotypical middle class citizens, as functional infrastructures for consumption, transportation and leisure activities. Homelessness, social exclusion, begging, residential ghettoization as well as new, culturally conditioned preferences, and mundane behaviours such as increased playing, working, eating and drinking in public space, are not genuinely addressed in the design of urban space – with the ironic exception of public furniture that is designed not to accommodate lying down or be used for skating tricks. Urban sports and spontaneous play are neglected as integrated dimensions of most urban design and treated instead as deviating activities – sometimes even considered 'anti-social behaviour' (Carmona 2010a:130; Minton 2006). Consequently, these expressions of urban life are isolated and assigned to, for example, parkour facilities, skate parks and residual urban areas. The formation of various collectives that cluster in public space, such as skaters, traceurs, people having picnics or listening to music, playing football, etc. are widely counteracted and neutralised by municipal actions. Material efforts are being made to hinder certain activities, and instructive signs declare what is acceptable (or permissible) behaviour and what is not.

Parallel to – or maybe in opposition to – this approach to public space are other tendencies that shape the nature and understanding of urban issues. A support for public life *per se*, as an objective in itself, can be noted in many cities. The 'liveable cities' trend has prompted efforts to support walkability, tree planting and public transport initiatives. More formal urban squares and plazas have already been made mundane, accessible and easy to appropriate; for example iconic places such as New York's Times Square and Paris' Place de la République have had recent makeovers that have resulted in restrictions on motorised traffic, mobile public chairs and tables, organised public events, etc. There is an apparent increase of spaces for entertainment and specialised leisure activities, such as facilities for urban farming, games of boules, fitness, dog agility, skating, playing, etc. An additional tendency is the emergence of relatively provisional urban interventions, completed to fulfil temporal requests or simply to encourage a more vivid public life. The urban design theorist Quentin Stevens suggests

leisure and play as important aspects of urban public life. Stevens' works, *The Ludic City: Exploring the Potentials of Public Spaces* (2007a) and *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life* (Stevens 2007b), introduce significant perspectives on these issues, which have had an obvious influence on the empirical investigations in this thesis.

On a larger scale, cities are redefined and reorganised through the urbanisation of waterfronts and former brownfield areas in attractive locations. There is however still the question of who is invited (or even allowed) to occupy these new sites for public life; not all citizens feel addressed and welcome. Recently, much urban design has been tied to cities' investments in their own identities, deliberately produced and conveyed as a competitive relation to other cities. Regions, cities and local boroughs openly compete to attract tourists, events, business, retail and (taxpaying) residents. In this quest, a vibrant and interesting public life is regarded as a valuable resource. The pull factor of an attractive public space is widely acknowledged. *Place marketing* (Kotler 1993) and *city branding* (Dinnie 2011) are two well-established concepts that try to capture this trend. Most city municipalities lack the financial capacity to compete with global rivals and feel obliged to invite private actors in order to maintain the pursuit of recognition and attraction. The mediated production of site-specific urban lifestyles has inspired authorities to replace thorough and comprehensive urban planning with 'strategies' for making cities attractive, including grand scale events, festivalisation and "mega-projects for sports and entertainment" (Brenner, Marcuse, Mayer 2011:68).

Approaches II:
Theory and Methodology

This thesis focuses on everyday behaviours and practices in the urban public domain and is therefore most attentive to phenomena that concern brief, often unplanned, exchanges between humans. The work was carried out using ethnographic field studies, and by the application and further development of concepts and methods mainly taken from *territorology* (Brighenti 2010b; Kärrholm 2012) and *actor-network theory* (ANT) (Latour 2005). *Affordance theory* (Gibson 1979) constitutes an additional theoretical approach that is included in this thesis, albeit to a less significant extent. Key questions related to this aim and theoretical framework are for example: What kind of competences, regarding territorial production and social exchange, can be associated with material artefacts and to spatial configurations? Who and what constitutes actions and events that facilitate human co-existence in urban domains; i.e. how is urban public life produced?

The role of nonhuman agency is particularly targeted in the thesis' empirical investigations. The term 'nonhuman' here often implies material actors (such as objects, bodies, animals, plants) but can also include norms, conventions, regulations, ideas, etc. Following ANT, agency here is considered as an effect of relations and not inherently bound to individual objects or humans; however, specific constellations of humans and nonhumans may allow for a certain agency to be realised. For example, the card-playing cluster mentioned above comprises an assemblage of five men, a plastic litterbin, a deck of cards and a piece of cardboard which together constitute a situated event in urban space. The cluster is shaded by large trees and protected from moving vehicles and humans by vegetation, fences and stone fixtures. Material stuff is imbued with social meaning, memories and power. Artefacts mediate human exchanges and thus enact agency, which in turn shapes the nature of socio-material exchanges (c.f. human and nonhuman assemblages (Latour 2005; Farías & Bender 2010; DeLanda 2006))[6]. Social exchange is situated in time as well as in space, and all actors entangled in a social event are specific to the situation. Hence, any attempt to search for universal causalities (regarding socio-material effects) would be in vain. The territorial actor-network approach provides a conceptual framework that enables discussions and the analysis of the production of borders through the relationship between material design and social interaction in urban public settings.

An important basis for this thesis is the conception of public life as an agglomeration of multiple, coexisting clusters of humans and nonhumans; i.e. 'collectifs' (Callon & Law 1995, 1997). Michel Callon and John Law refer to 'hybrid collectifs' as heterogeneous human and nonhuman relations that 'carry action', exerting and modifying it (Callon & Law 1997:179). Here, collectif in this sense is equivalent to *cluster*, which will be used in this thesis to describe the agglomeration of humans and nonhumans in a certain time and space. The term 'collective' is used here in its everyday sense, which implies a subjective agenda shared by the actors included in the collective. *Collective* suggests an attention to the production and re-production of social exchanges, but nonhumans also always have more or less explicit roles to play. Although collectives can – and at some point often do – take the form of a cluster, clusters are not always collectives, since clusters, unlike collectives, can emerge unintentionally and even unwillingly. These more spontaneous clusters can, however, sometimes become

6   The conception of heterogeneous clusters and collectives resembles some approaches to urban space conveyed in *assemblage theory*, as it is outlined by Manuel DeLanda (2006), Ignacio Farías & Thomas Bender (2010) and Colin McFarlane (2011a, 2011b). Assemblage theory originates from the term *agencement*, which was framed by Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980).

proto-collectives; i.e. an important pre-stage of collectives. Clustered actors can conglomerate more or less by chance (for example in crowds or queues) and may dissolve easily, most often without effort or social costs, since they are not always inherently aimed towards any specific goal or orientation. A collective, on the other hand, is to be considered here as a group; i.e. the members of the group are unified by an activity or an interest, and they recognise themselves as sharing a common objective. Collectives are defined by cooperation: the collective members make an effort to maintain the integrity of the group. When a collective dissolves, its members take notice and social relations are affected. Examples of groups could be the boules players and card players above, recurrently gathering (clustering) at specific sites to practice their games. Another example of collective formation is political activists regularly assembling in seminars and protest meetings.

A collective that appropriates a particular site may produce a *collective space*; i.e. a public space that temporarily frames and helps sustain social exchange, while also acknowledging individual (human and nonhuman) contributions. Collective spaces can thus be seen as temporal territorialisations, produced for instance by civic or private administration, by tactics, or by the result of corporeal appropriation. The hybridity of heterogeneous clusters (and collective spaces) is the result of entangled human bodies, artefacts, practices and immaterial nonhuman elements.

Aims and Scopes

The main aim of this thesis is to investigate how certain artefacts and architectural features support the formation and temporal stabilisation of heterogeneous clusters and collectives in order to develop conceptual tools that can contribute to a more refined description and analysis of the role of architecture and artefacts for urban public life. The development of such concepts and notions is intended to be operational in the context of planning and urban design processes. Hence, I will investigate which particular architectural topographies and spatio-material strategies may instigate, maintain and differentiate social exchange – i.e. public life – in urban space, and how they do so. How do different human and nonhuman actors agglomerate and affect each other? Are there certain relations between humans and nonhumans that recur more often than others in these kinds of processes? And finally, how can these recurrent roles, played by certain artefacts and architectural topographies, be conceptualised?

A key focus in this thesis is thus the tracing of artefacts and material qualities that appear to be particularly important in the making of clusters, and thus also in the making of public space relevant for many citizens via a wide variety of potential usages. I consider the dynamics of life in urban space as

effects of adding and subtracting parts of clusters – the territorialising and de-territorialising of space – through production and reproduction of associations between human and nonhuman entities. The notion of heterogeneous clusters, collectives and collective spaces provides tools for examining the kinds of socio-material exchanges that affect various sorts of public life. Throughout the analysis, all actors that constitute a cluster are initially regarded as equally important. The quest is to search for, and define, particular (primarily material) actors that seemingly have the capacity to repeatedly collect and compose clusters and collectives.

Through a close examination of various ongoing socio-material interactions and clusterings , primarily in three public domains, I have identified a set of concepts that are helpful in the understanding of how artefacts can take on different roles in the mediation of social exchange and how they contribute to the formation of temporary clusters, collectives and collective spaces. The empirical investigations of the thesis are based in *visual ethnography* (Pink 2013 [2001]), and consist of three main site studies, located in three different urban domains: open-air markets in London, playgrounds in Amsterdam and a riverfront leisure space in Paris. An additional number of sites have been investigated as micro-studies and used to supplement the empirical research material. All milieus studied offer rich settings for socio-material exchange and interactions. The role of the settings as vibrant meeting places makes them particularly interesting as spaces where collectives may be composed. The empirically derived concepts are analytically employed to describe and explore how human interactions in these urban spaces are dependent on networks that include artefacts (material agency), time, local policies and situated public cultures and practices. Particular attention has however been given to fixed artefacts here, such as urban furniture, bollards, edges, fences, walls, etc., but mobile artefacts such as portable electronic communication devices, bags, bicycles, takeaways, prams, etc. are also included.

Through a relational and ethnographic approach, I develop new and pertinent notions on how architecture and artefacts affect social exchange in public space; i.e. conceptual takes on the interdependency between humans and nonhumans in urban social life. Although the thesis touches upon a number of academic fields, for example architecture, human geography, urban planning, anthropology, environmental psychology, sociology, etc., its contributions are intended to be most evident and relevant in the research field more closely linked to architecture and urban design. There is a need to expand and sharpen the professional language in these fields to be able to genuinely address and discuss the complex conditions and potentials of given spatial settings where urban and architectural design are currently underway.

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter One, theoretical approaches that are relevant for the aims and objectives of the thesis are outlined and discussed. The chapter is divided into four sections: *Actor-Network Theory*, *Territorology, Affordance Theory* and *Heterogeneous Collectives in Public Domains*. The first three sections constitute the ontological foundation of this thesis and provide theoretical tools for the empirical investigations presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. A number of key ANT, Territorology and Affordance concepts, significant for the matters examined in this thesis, are described and commented. The fourth section frames the spatial setting for the thesis; i.e. the public domain where the empirical investigations are made and on which the thesis' outcomes will ultimately be projected. The section is arranged in two parts, the first of which addresses some socio-economic and political aspects on urban space, including various perspectives on social and socio-material exchange in public domains. The second part of the fourth section discusses heterogeneous clustering processes and how collective spaces are composed and sometimes stabilised.

Chapter Two contains brief studies of a few selected urban spaces, focussing on how architecture and other material features afford certain uses and activities that clearly affect the clustering of humans and artefacts. The first part includes four situated reflections on urban settings that – via mobilisation of activities and everyday practices – attract visitors and support exchanges between strangers. The chapter concludes with two micro-studies of themed, managed and materially more stabilised collectives – here conceptualised as 'collective spaces'. The first micro-study introduces a boules court in Gràcia (Barcelona) and the second (and the most elaborated example) an urban farming collective in Colombes (Paris).

In Chapter Three, the methodological approach – *reflective visual ethnography* – is described and discussed. The chapter also includes comments on observational techniques for public domains and the use of photography as a research tool. The latter sections of the chapter contain reflections on the selection of field study sites as well as brief comments on fieldwork strategies.

Chapter Four accounts for experiences from the first field study session, examining open air markets in London. The investigations aim to explore aspects of public life performed in urban spaces that are mainly dedicated to consumption. The chapter includes preliminary notions and conceptualisations of how certain architectural features and artefacts seem to cluster humans and support the composition of heterogeneous collectives. The majority of these notions are derived from Borough Market, which constitutes the main site of investigation in this study. However, ethnograph-

ic observations from several other markets substantiate the conclusions drawn from this fieldwork. The key conceptualisations resulting from the open-air market studies are: *polyvalent clustering artefacts*, *artefacts and mobility*, and *appropriation careers*.

In Chapter Five, the second field study, which was carried out in Amsterdam, a number of playgrounds are examined, described and analysed. The playground studies are projected to explore public life in spaces characterised by leisure and play. *Van Beuningenplein playground*, which is a multi-functional playground sized as a city block, was chosen as the key study site. The major conceptualised findings from the playgrounds are discussed as *anchors*, *base camps* and *personal and shared artefacts*.

Chapter Six includes the final field study, executed in central Paris and focused on a leisure riverfront space called *Les Berges de Seine*. The analysis of observed phenomena at the site leads up to a discussion on public space management, curation and material programming. Apart from investigating the relevance of concepts and notions derived from the earlier field studies at Les Berges de Seine, new perceptions are made and conceptualised: *monocore and multicore space, tickets and rides,* and *linear and field artefacts*.

Chapter Seven sums up notions and phenomena collected through the field studies. The conceptual findings, which are introduced and tentatively explored in the empirical chapters, are here more thoroughly defined. Consequently, the concluding concepts are presented as the key outcomes of this thesis. The final section of the chapter includes aspects and remarks on how these concepts may have an effect on the analysis of public life and urban architecture, and also how they can contribute to professional urban design practices.

1

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, which is an investigation of urbanity that to a great extent focuses on material aspects of public life, I primarily make use of concepts and notions that originate mainly from actor-network theory (ANT) and territorology. ANT provides the theoretical backbone, offering an ontological stance that supports a relational, integrative and processual approach to how public life is performed and urban space is produced. Territorology provides a number of operative concepts for describing and analysing public life as a landscape of different spatio-temporal claims and regularities.

In urban studies literature, architecture and public space are often standardised into rather abstract, and sometimes fixed, typologies, such as streets, buildings, parks and squares. Urban spaces are regularly depicted as fixed and unresponsive sites where events *take place* for social, cultural and political reasons. Furthermore, events in urban space and everyday public life are commonly recognised as purely social productions, exclusively instigated by humans. As a consequence of a point of view such as

this, buildings and urban artefacts are often reduced to an almost passive context, deprived of agency. This signifies a reductive perspective Bruno Latour refers to as the 'sociology of the social' (Latour 2005:9). Latour finds it irrational and somewhat provocative to use the social to explain the social; as if there has been confusion about what the model is supposed to explain and the explanation itself. Latour suggests that the social is an effect of human and nonhuman associations, while in the hands of the 'sociologists of social', the social become a means when it should be an end. A similar reductive and simplifying macro-approach to space can be traced in the professional design and planning practices performed by architects and urban planners. Consistent with the approach of this thesis, urban spaces are not seen as static vessels for civic, cultural and political formation, but instead as temporal, changing and profoundly unique so-cio-material landscapes that play an important role in the production of public life. I concur wholly with Doreen Massey's (2005:9) conceptions of space when she claims that space is "always in the process of being made" and "as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny". The starting point of this thesis is that an investiga-tion of public life must clearly include both social and material aspects of urbanity, and that these must be investigated on the same terms.

The scene for architects' and planners' professional attention has tradi-tionally been regarded as something *out-there* (Law 2004), and the design work has largely been of a representative and symbolic nature. The gen-eral conviction has been that it is possible to anticipate the social effects of implemented material design interventions – an approach widely em-braced by, for example modernist architects, but also by some later re-search paradigms within architectural research such as space syntax and evidence-based design. This can be considered a somewhat arrogant and fragile way to manage the delicate task of designing the material compo-nents of public life. Considering the production of contemporary urban spaces, some professional planning- and architecture communities seem to underestimate the complexity caused by the co- and cross-operating agency of humans and nonhumans. An inclusion of all actors, and thus of all agency exercised through human and nonhuman entanglement, could be called an *in-here* perspective (Law 2004). The social outcomes of urban planning and architectural designs are, I would claim, volatile and highly unpredictable. However, nonhuman elements hugely affect the social, al-beit not in a strictly causal way.

Even if theoretical approaches and design practices that embrace an out-there perspective have given rise to numerous remarkable and inter-esting notions on public life and urban space, they have frequently treated

the material dimension of space in discursive abstraction. There is also a shortage of situated, relational and detailed empirical studies of how urban public space is materially organised and how human and nonhuman agency interrelate and jointly generate events and routinized behaviour, produce identities and constitute power relations, etc. By including nonhuman actors, actor-network theory opens up for more agnostic investigations of what is really going on in urban public domains. ANT provides tools to investigate the clustering enactment of objects, humans, ideas, organisations, machines, etc. that are needed to shape the relations that make up the social world; i.e. the *socio-material* world. Individual entities are endowed with their characteristics and meaning through the association with other actors, thus becoming accountable, or *present*, in a social sense. ANT "opens up the possibility of seeing, hearing, sensing and then analysing the social life of *things* – and thus of caring about, rather than neglecting them [emphasis added]." (Mol 2010:255). It is never possible to associate an effect with a single actor (Latour 2005; Mol 2010); all effects can be traced back to networks of human and nonhuman actors.

In this thesis, nonhumans are considered worthy members of clusters and collectives (Latour 2004a) with the same potential of acting and enacting as humans – at least prior to investigation. They can form alliances, associate and create bonds with humans as well as with other nonhumans. To avoid an essentialist perspective of society – that is, as a divided entity with humans in one corner and the rest in the other – one needs to include artefacts, writings, natural objects, laws, policies, etc. as equally valid actors in the production of agency. The *apartheid* (Latour 2004a) that claims that nonhumans lack agency, voice, will or capacity to induce actions, also implies that humans are inherently equipped with a free and sovereign will (and a power to execute that will), and can act without being influenced by the very same nonhumans that are shaping us (Latour 2005; Law 1992). Thus, according to Latour, the world must be seen as made up of actors that can affiliate with anyone or anything. All actors can be associated to each other in various ways, forming infinite constellations – initiated by any part of the networks of which they form part. Thus, no latent actor is to be ruled out before thorough investigation.

In urban planning and design, it is common to organise decisions in different scales, related to functional categories. Land use, building densities, bus routes, consumption districts, public services, etc. are normally planned in one scale, while the design and fitting of streets, parks, walkways, squares and buildings are made in other scales – and typically by other people. By applying an actor-network perspective, these prevalent circumstances can be questioned and the relational approach can possibly

point at a more complex and intertwined way of practice, a practice that follows actors across scales and thus allows for the interlacing of otherwise separate domains. Agency-based theories like ANT provide a set of concepts and methods that enable an analysis of socio-spatial effects, with the objective of understanding how heterogeneous collectives of human and material entities come together and are sometimes stabilised.

The connections between the 'components' forming a heterogeneous cluster are contingent and temporal; they resist an 'organismic' approach, meaning that the parts are not fixed in their relative positions and "do not interact atomistically but as co-constituting relations that define one another" (McFarlane 2011:655). Consequently, the behaviour and effects of particular clusters are difficult, and sometimes impossible, to predict. However, through careful empirical studies, effects can be traced back to particular clusters because of certain aspects of their constitutions. Sometimes specific sorts of clusters, or elements of clusters, can be noted as important for certain effects.

Besides ANT, there are other relational and network-oriented approaches, such as *Assemblage theory*[1] and *relational geography*[2]. Although both are clearly associated with ANT and thus related to the theoretical scope of this thesis, I will not describe them in detail here. Assemblage theory is linked to ontological and conceptual perspectives that primarily constitute a critical revision of philosophical and political aspects of society, showing less of the practice-oriented interest focused in this thesis. Relational geography typically – and more fruitfully – operates on larger-scale situations than the more local and body-oriented relations in which this thesis takes particular interest.

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1   Assemblage theory originated from the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the 1980s and 1990s. Manuel DeLanda developed an ontological approach of assemblage thinking into a consistent theoretical framework in his *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (2006). Further elaborations of the theory, with particular attention to urban issues, were conducted by Ignacio Farías and Thomas Bender (2010) in *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*.

2   Relational geography emerged in the mid-to-late 1990s and early 2000s and advocated a relational approach to spatial geographies; i.e. how socio-material associations constitute space and place. Among the key proponents for relational geography are Sarah Whatmore (1999, 2002), Doreen Massey (2005) and Jonathan Murdoch (2006).

ACTOR-NETWORK THEORY

> […] nothing ever 'is' alone. To be is to be related. (Mol 2002:54)

Actor-network theory is a relational, non-reductive (or *irreductive*, as Latour would have it) and exploratory approach that replaces external (structural) explanations with minute descriptions and symmetrical inquiries (Latour 2005; Law 1992; Mol 2010; Farías 2011). ANT constitutes a relational ontology where generalities, truisms and objectivity – often attributed to architecture and urban space – are replaced with specificity, situatedness and subjectivity. One of the most significant qualities of ANT is the recognition of nonhumans as dynamic components in the production of agency. Agency is always distributed between different actors (human and nonhuman). The *flat ontology* (Latour 2005) that places nonhuman actors on equal footing with human actors reflects a horizontal and thus less hierarchical and predetermined perspective on how events and actions produce, and are produced in, urban space. Hierarchies are always temporal, situated and produced, and they need to be explained; they are never given *a priori*. The notion of *flat ontology* is a key entry concept for the empirical and analytical approach in this thesis. By putting all actors on the same analytical level, a reading of public life is opened that keeps the attention trained on any actors that might be relevant for the actions and events that are produced, rather than searching for expected, or even predicted, initiators with specific intentions as a primary quest.

The first mention of what would eventually become known as actor-network theory was in an article written by the French sociology professor Michel Callon in the early 1980s. In the article, Callon uses the term 'acteur-reseau' (Mol 2010:253), a term that was later translated to English as 'actor-network' (Callon 1986). Bruno Latour has been developing ANT since the late 1970s,[3] albeit without naming it 'ANT'. In *Laboratory Life* (1979), co-authored by Steve Woolgar, Latour examined the sociology of how scientific knowledge is produced. The book contains no explicit mentioning of ANT but the approach is clearly set in motion. Latour describes ANT as "half Garfinkel and half Greimas" (Latour 2005, p.54); thus a marriage between ethnomethodology and semiotics. Gilles Deleuze and Michel Serres were other important sources of inspiration for ANT's emergence and initial development. ANT was originally attributed to the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS) and was outlined over the

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3   See Tresch 2013 for further details.

coming years, most significantly by the work of Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, John Law, Annemarie Mol and others[4].

It has been questioned whether ANT is a theory at all. Bruno Latour himself has been one of its foremost proponents as well as one of its foremost critics; besides his major contributions to ANT's development, he has vexingly also undermined its status as a theory (Latour 1999b:15; Latour 2005; Mol 2010:254). In *Reassembling the Social* (Latour 2005), Latour embraced the concept of ANT once more after years of hesitation. At the same time as it has been carefully outlined through numerous empirical examples and clarifying conceptualisations, ANT has also always been brutally dissected and criticised from within. Annemarie Mol, another key advocate of ANT, eloquently comments on Latour's doubts by declaring that "[ANT's] point is not to finally, once and for all, catch reality as it really is. Instead, it is to make specific, surprising, so far unspoken events and situations visible, audible, sensible" (Mol 2010:255). Mol claims further that even Michel Callon had asserted that "ANT is not a theory" (Mol 2010:261), continuing "There is no attempt to draw the findings of various studies together into an overarching explanatory framework. There is no attempt to hunt for causes: the aim is rather to trace effects" (Mol 2010:261). Latour states that he would have no problem changing Actor-Network Theory into 'Actant-Rhizome Ontology' (borrowing the term *Rhizome* from Deleuze and Guattari and replacing theory with ontology) – thus designating it more as a philosophical stance than as a result-oriented application – "[had] it only sounded better…" (Latour 1999b). More than a clean-cut theory, ANT is a conceptual toolbox, providing eye-opening tactics and sensitising notions that prompt "ways of asking questions and techniques for turning issues inside out or upside down. […] It helps to train researchers' perceptions and perceptiveness, senses and sensitivity" (Mol 2010:261-262). ANT is frequently described as a method for increasing "sensibility to the messy practices of relationality and materiality of the world" (Law, 2009:142). The descriptive nature of ANT investigations requires a conceptual approach which enables turning empirical observations into notions that are operative in analysis as well as in practice. Accordingly, ANT seems particularly effective for 'exploring urban life', since an "actor-network is generative: it makes things happen" (Bender in Farías & Bender 2010:304).

ANT has been practiced within a number scientific disciplines since its dawning, perhaps most significantly in Science and Technology Studies (STS). In the fields of architecture and urbanism, ANT has been applied and made operational by scholars such as Albena Yaneva (2012), Doina

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4   For a brief history and outline of ANT see Mol 2010 and Law 2009.

Petrescu (2007; 2012), Ignacio Farías & Thomas Bender (2010), Yvonne Rydin (2012) and Yvonne Rydin & Laura Tate (2016). In a Swedish context, ANT has been practiced in these fields by Emma Paulsson (2016), Jonathan Metzger (2011; 2014), Joakim Forsemalm (2007), Mattias Kärrholm (2004; 2007; 2012), Emma Nilsson (2010), Ebba Högström (2012) and others.

What Does It Do?

> [M]y argument is founded not on architecture as object, in which the visual presence often overwhelms critical thought, but rather on architecture as agency. (Till 2009:146-147)

While natural sciences, embracing an essentialist and totalising ontology, traditionally pose questions such as 'What is it?' and 'Is it true or false?', social sciences usually ask 'Why?'. ANT, however, takes an interest in performativity and accordingly asks, 'What does it do?' and 'How does it work?' (Latour 2004a:8; Law 2009:148). Actor-network oriented investigators focus on how various actors associate with other actors and on the effects of those associations. ANT is thus a study of events, which then are traced as networks of associated actors. Actions are however inherently always interactions, since all actions are the (successive) result of multiple associated actors (Sayes 2013:140; Latour 1996b:237-239).

The questions 'What does it do?' and 'How does it work?' point at a significant difference to most other theoretical approaches: ANT suggests a continuous production of actions and events as effects of entangled humans and nonhumans. ANT does not accept the primacy of any pre-existing structure, context or hierarchy – prior to investigation. Instead, actor-network investigations trace networks of associated actors when trying to describe and understand the nature of an event. To stabilise a network, the relations between entangled actors have to be repeatedly performed, otherwise the network will disperse. The stabilisation of networks is a multifaceted issue. Normally one could assume that networks that are 'embodied in and performed by' multiple durable material actors are stable (Law 1992:387), but that isn't a fact. Since durability is a relational effect, networks have to be co-produced by practices, behaviours, actions, etc. in order to retain their shape. To maintain a car as a stable – black-boxed or punctualised (Law 1992:384f.; Latour 1999) – network, however materially sophisticated it might be, requires someone that refills petrol and oil; occasionally a service technician must exchange certain parts before they wear out. ANT conveys serious scepticism towards preconceived and fixed structures and contexts (ff. Latour 1988b; Latour 2005) in which 'social

forces' (powers) and 'cultures' act and have effects (Latour 1996b:237; Latour 2005). The analysis of socio-material networks, tracing actors via network effects, may however subsequently (after trials and close examination) provide knowledge on hierarchies, power relations and structural conditions. In a manner of speaking, ANT proponents suggest an open inquiry into the plot of the play before setting the stage.

By including nonhuman actors in the formation of networks, ANT offers a mind-set, an anthropological focus, that potentially includes all observable empirical data. When examining a phenomenon or a particular network, ANT maintains that all differences, changes and events are the effects of interacting human and nonhuman actors. In *Politics of Nature* (2004a), Latour thoroughly examines the unprejudiced gathering of actors into collectives, freed from traditional analytical models that a priori separate Society from Nature and Subjects from Objects. Latour suggests that this approach will let us see how

The collective signifies 'everything but not two separated.' By taking an interest in the collective, we are going back to square one in considering how to recruit an assembly, without continuing to worry about the ancient titles that sent some to sit in nature's ranks and others on society's benches… (Latour 2004a:60)

With ANT, Latour and his allies question and challenge the hegemony of Western Science, founded as it is on a postulated objectivity and clear-cut boundaries between nature and society as well as between object and subject. ANT rejects these dichotomies and the anticipated human sovereignty to act and to make a difference.

Actors and Actants

> *A better definition in relation to spatial agency is that the agent is one who effects change through the empowerment of others, allowing them to engage in their spatial environments in ways previously unknown or unavailable to them, opening up new freedoms and potentials as a result of reconfigured social space.* (Awan, Schneider and Till 2011:32)

The basic characterisation of actors is that they add something and "*make others do things*" (emphasis original) (Latour 2005:107). Annemarie Mol clarifies that actors cannot act alone and they "never form a starting point" (Mol 2010:255). In *Politics of Nature* (2004a), Latour offers a fairly condensed definition of what he means with an actor: "an actor is any entity that modifies another entity in a trial; of actors it can only be said that they act; their competence is deduced from their performances; the action,

in turn, is always recorded in the course of a trial and by an experimental protocol, elementary or not" (p.237). An actor takes its shape and is given its temporary properties in a particular situation – a situated network – by virtue of its associations to other actors in the network (Latour 2005). In the context of this thesis, I will especially follow actors in the urban public domain with capacities to engage in the formation of shared situations and clusters, such as: humans, architectures, mobile artefacts, conventions, regulations, etc.[5]

To be able to discover an actor and make a statement about it, one must be able to detect its effects and trace its network. Latour turns to the semiotics of A.J. Greimas (1976) for a somewhat more thorough definition of an action, and thus also indirectly of actors: "Let us suppose now that someone comes to find you with an association of humans and nonhumans, an association whose exact composition is not yet known to anyone, but about which a series of trials makes it possible to say that its members act, that is, quite simply, that *they modify other actors through a series of trials that can be listed thanks to some experimental protocol*. This is the minimal, secular, nonpolemical definition of an actor" (Latour 2004a:75).

An *actant* (another concept that Latour borrows from Greimas) is a principal and recurrent actor-type, more abstract than an actor, or as described by Latour: "*any thing* that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference is an actor – or, if it has no figuration yet, an actant" (Latour 2005:71). For example, a ball, seen as a general part of different ball-games, can thus be an actant, while an air-filled, lightweight, foot-sized leather ball in a specific game (of football) is a decisive actor in what happens in that particular game. Urban artefacts, such as benches, bollards or walls, repeatedly used for sitting, leaning or lying on, are actants that can appear in different architectural contexts and guises, taking on various actor-roles in each situation. The term originates from semiotics and encompasses both humans and nonhumans (Latour 2004a:237).

In this study, actants denote certain sorts of actors. An actor is concrete and specific to a situation; it has a figuration (Latour 2005). Recurrent or similar actors however might end up being associated to a similar sort,

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5   Actor-network studies typically focus on following or determining significant actors in various networks, which is also the main concern in this thesis. Organisation theorist Barbara Czarniawska, however, takes an alternative perspective and makes use of the ANT toolbox to centre how events and effects are related, rather than the actors themself. Czarniawska's notion of 'action nets' (Czarniawska 2004) constitutes an interesting shift of attention that makes way for a more apparent concern with actions and how actions produce actors (and effects), instead of *who* or *what* is initiating the actions; Czarniawska suggests "[s]tudying action nets means answering the dual question: what is being done?" (2004:8). I find Czarniawska's approach relevant and potentially very useful, but in this thesis my interest is primarily directed towards actors that are relevant for how networks are produced.

and even to a specific type of actor: an actant. In a more Greimasian actor/ actant analysis, such as the one conducted by Manar Hammad in *The Privatisation of Space* (2002[1990]), actants are used in a more structuralist sense, as actor-types that recur in different situations of study (Hammad 2002; Sandin 2014). In this thesis, the use of 'non-human actants' bears certain similarities with those in Hammad's study, but it should be made clear that here actants are seen as not predicted beforehand. In the study at hand, the noting of different artefacts that may recurrently take on similar actor roles is always considered situated findings. These findings offer comparison and discussion, but not easy transportation to other places (without paying any transformative costs).

Nonhuman Actors

ANT represents an alternative path for sociology, a path that rejects traditional anthropocentric conceptions of how relations are produced, distributed among humans and nonhumans, and what directions they have. ANT does not exclude any-thing from being able to interact and thus to prompt, change or differentiate the composing of heterogeneous clusters. ANT rather invites nonhumans as vital actors in the making and shaping of society (Latour 2004a). In his urge to rethink sociology and break free from "figurative sociology" (Latour 2005:54), Latour liberates humans from being the sole entities with the capacity to initiate actions and produce networks. When we trace the history of an action or an event in the making of a cluster, it is irrelevant if the actors are human or nonhuman (Latour 1987:232). Latour introduces us to formerly neglected materialities of our mundane environs and seems to be saying '*Let us be friends, or not. Let us live together, or not – but let us leave indifference to each other behind!*'

Nonhuman is an umbrella term within ANT, encompassing a wide range of actors. Edwin Sayes (2013:136) lists entities that have been included by key proponents such as Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law in the concept throughout ANT history: *things, objects, beasts, microbes, scallops, rocks, and ships, reefs, tools and technical artefacts, sewerage networks, transportation devices, texts, economic goods* – so, just about everything that is not human can be denoted as nonhuman.

Nonhumans can mediate and modify relations between human actors and are consequently also actors themselves (Latour 1999a, Latour 1996c:240). Nonhumans that are entangled with human collectives are bestowed with particular competencies, attained by the actor-network and concurrently changing the collective by virtue of their very entanglement.

Nonhuman actors "act and, as a result, demand new modes of action from other actors" (Sayes 2013:138).

ANT rejects an anthropocentric social constructivism (where only animated beings initiate intentional changes) and offers alternative perspectives: "If action is limited a priori to what 'intentional', 'meaningful' humans do, it is hard to see how a hammer, a basket, a door closer, a cat, a rug, a mug, a list, or a tag could act" (Latour 2005:71). Latour suggests that the traditional attempt by sociologists' ('sociologists of the social') to explain the social with the social is tautological, asserting that inanimate entities obviously must be considered as agentic. Jane Bennet concurs with Latour and argues that "nonhuman things are figured less as social constructions and more as actors". Bennet continues the argument in a clearly ANT fashion by positioning humans and other actors as equal: "humans themselves are assessed not as autonoms but as vital materialities" (Bennet 2010:21). This is not to say that material objects themselves are intentional; i.e. that they have "the power to formulate and enact aims" (Bennet 2010:29) in a traditional human sense. It simply signifies that we are affected by matter, that the affect goes both ways, and that nothing acts on its own. John Law (1992) argues that multiple material objects participate in constructing the social and "they *shape* it", because "almost all of our interactions with other people are *mediated through* objects of one kind or another" (Law 1992:381-382).

Latour rejects the anthropocentric stance that excludes nonhumans from the political debate: "By defending the rights of the human subject to speak and to be the sole speaker, one does not establish democracy; one makes it increasingly more impracticable every day" (Latour 2004a:69). Careful listening to nonhumans is crucial when we aspire to understand humans and human intentions and agencies. If we accept that humans, as well as all other actors, are defined by their relations, it is difficult to imagine politics without positioning the material in the equation. John Law argues that a social network is not composed of humans interacting with other humans: "It is because they interact with human beings and endless other materials too" (Law 1992:382). Latour takes it to a political level: "One can refuse to raise the question of who is speaking, but then one should not expect the collective to come together democratically" (Latour 2004a:69).

The widely embraced perception that humans have the exclusive competence of speaking becomes somewhat baffling considering that "no beings, not even humans, speak on their own, but always *through something or someone else*" (Latour 2004a:68). While Habermas (1996:324) maintains humans' sole authority, Latour advocates an opposing stance, posi-

tioning nonhumans clearly in the centre of the debate: "Habermas, while believing that human beings had to be liberated, forgot those beings that *made* them human: nonhumans, the great losers in his moral philosophy" (Latour 2004a:263). Contrary to Habermas, Latour asserts that humans, as well as nonhumans, are defined by their associations and thus by the nonhumans that Habermas denies agency. Latour, in fact, goes so far as to say that nonhumans are fundamental for making humans human (Latour 2004a). In Latour's critique of Habermas's position, he equates humans and nonhumans, at least as legitimate spokespersons for heterogeneous networks. Latour argues that "[t]he whole problem of Habermas's work lies here, for what he says about humans would make an excellent definition of nonhumans!" (Latour 2004a:263).

The Voice of Matter -
Speaking objects and the choir of public spaces

Agency can be exercised in numerous ways. For humans, articulated sound, such as speaking and singing, is perhaps the most immediate way of expressing agency. Latour suggests that nonhuman entities speak as well: "speech is no longer a specifically human property, or at least humans are no longer its sole masters" (Latour 2004a:65). Through the idiom *speech impedimenta*, Latour drew attention to objects' difficulties in making themselves heard, but he also suggests that they are able to communicate – if we care to listen.

Actors collected into clusters mediate their voices through *spokespersons* – representatives for groups that speak on behalf of the collected actors. The spokespersons, Latour hints, are not always representing those for whom they claim to speak. The ability to speak is key to the initial gathering of a cluster or a collective, since "the only way to recognize the 'citizenry' within the collective that may be relevant for public life is to define the collective as an assembly of beings *capable of speaking*" (Latour 2004a:62). Gabriel Tarde implied that in the emergence of social groups "there is always one member who represents and personifies the whole group, or else a small number of them … who, each in a different respect, individualize it no less entirely in themselves" (Tarde in Metzger and Schmitt 2012:268).

Fostered in anthropocentric ontologies, most of us are trained to listen for human voices only, as they are considered to be the sole righteous speakers, however loud nonhumans may cry for attention. If we accept material agency and Latour's proposition that nonhumans actually speak, the next challenge is to find ways to hear what they have to say. That, I would claim, is a key feature in ANT ontology, not least from a methodological perspective. There are good reasons to develop sensibility, skills and techniques to

apprehend and make sense of nonhuman voices (agency). Annemarie Mol (2010) captures this notion when she states that "researchers involved in ANT are amateurs of reality. Their theoretical repertoires allow them to attune themselves to the world, to learn to be affected by it" (p.261).

Drawing on Latour's notion of speaking nonhumans, associations in public space can be pictured as a choir of assembled voices. In a social situation the exchanges involved can be imagined as voices; the more voices join, the more articulated the choir-cluster becomes. The effect of individual voices varies with their relations to other voices; each voice is shaped by the cluster in a responsive and reciprocal relationship. The materiality of a space has a certain quality (resonance) that signifies the sound when forming part of the cluster. Spaces can be more or less responsive for the gathering of voices: a space that materially provides highly differentiated possibilities to act, be heard, and exchange will more likely be able to assemble multiple clusters (choirs) and a diversity of voices. In a space that is specifically designed for a single use or activity, or dedicated to one type of actor, the sound may grow very strong, but also monotone. A more complex space allows for a broader spectrum of voices and the sound can thus display a wider range of tones, rhythms and beats. Singing in such a complex and multifaceted space can, of course, also result in a chaotic noise – a cacophony.

Distributed Agency

> By definition, action is *dislocated*. (Latour 2005:46)

> A theory of distributive agency, in contrast, does not posit a subject as the root cause of an effect. There are instead always a swarm of vitalities at play. (Bennet 2010:31-32)

If we accept the notion that the social is a heterogenic clustering of human and nonhuman entities, the material is not passive from an agency point of view; instead, all elements "participate in social ordering" (Callon and Law 1997:168). An actor that has the ability to make "some difference to [a] state of affairs" (Latour 2005:52); i.e. to make a difference in other actors' actions, does so by exercising agency. Agency is neither coupled with intentionality nor with free will. Agency is not causal (by nature), but actors "might authorize, allow, afford, encourage, permit, suggest, influence, block, render possible, forbid and so on" other actors to act (Latour 2004b:226; Latour 2005:72). Hence agency can never be essential to an actor itself (Latour 1996a:86) or a fixed property of an entity. Agency is always distributed, temporal and fluid, and it is produced when

actors come together. Action is consequently always a result of associations between actors. Since all actors (animate and inanimate) are defined by their networks, their affordances depend on how they are related and configured. Annemarie Mol uses the term *enactment* to frame this process, and she makes the phenomenon reciprocal: "Actors are enacted, enabled, and adapted by their associates while in their turn enacting, enabling and adapting these" (Mol 2010:260). An ontological stance that denies singular actors any inherent capacity for action or agency coherently predestines a fully relational approach to reality, since without networks of entangled actors there would simply be no action, no events. Annemarie Mol makes this irrefutably clear when she states: "Nothing ever 'is' alone. *To be is to be related*" (Mol 2002:54). The argument can be traced back to Latour's elaboration on the theme in *The Pasteurization of France* (1988) and later in *Aramis, or the Love of Technology* (1996a). This notion of a fundamentally relational approach also challenges the idea of any subjective *integrity*; rather, it suggests subjective and situational *integration* and *hybridization*; i.e. the subject is integrated into other subjects and objects and together they form a temporal heterogeneous figure with its own agency and affordance.

One way to express this is also to say that agency is always distributed. This can be illustrated by an example: In *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), the American anthropologist Edward T. Hall described two interesting experiments that can illuminate the importance of matter as mediatory for human social exchange. In this case, the importance of artefacts includes their specific form and spatial arrangement. The physician Humphry Osmond was put in charge of a health and research centre in Saskatchewan, Canada. He had previously noticed that some spaces, such as railway waiting rooms, seemed to keep people apart while others, like French sidewalk cafés, appeared to bring people together. He labelled the first spaces *sociofugal spaces* and the latter *sociopetal*. He found that the hospital spaces were predominantly sociofugal and noted that the staff seemed to prefer them like that because they were easier to maintain. After visiting hours, chairs were found in small circles, clustered to facilitate close encounters and conversations, but the chairs "would soon be lined up neatly in a military fashion, in rows along the walls" (Hall 1966:108). One specific example that Osmond reported concerned the newly opened female geriatrics ward, where the contact between patients seemed to decrease the longer they stayed there. A count of conversations was made. After several experiments, Osmond and a young psychologist called Robert Sommer initiated a change in the ward's furniture. They had noticed that the distances between the patients were too far to encourage social interaction.

Additionally, the patients had no place for personal belongings, such as books and magazines. "The only territorial features associated with the patients were the bed and a chair" (Hall 1966:109). This arrangement resulted in patients' reading materials ending up on the floor, which in turn prompted swift removal by staff members. Osmond and Sommer involved the staff in an experiment, intending to turn the space in a more sociopetal direction by introducing small, square tables to the wards and arranging the formerly "private" chairs in groups around them. The square shape of the tables was intended to help structure the social relations between the patients and thus facilitate conversations. After patients' initial resistance to losing their private chairs, the new order was established and a new count of conversations was made. The number of conversations had doubled and, surprisingly, patients' time spent reading had tripled. A similar rearrangement of the furniture was carried out in the dayroom, and the increase in verbal interaction mirrored that in the ward.

The conclusions drawn from this experiment are not scientifically conclusive or universally applicable, but they distinctively "[demonstrate] that the structuring of semifixed-features can have a profound effect on behaviour and that this effect is measurable" (Hall 1966:110). As Hall points out, the effect of moveable artefacts (semifixed-features) on social behaviour differs culturally, which suggests that studies such as these have to be carefully adjusted to in situ conditions.

We can see Hall's study as an example of distributed agency. Certain effects depend on the association of heterogeneous actors. We can easily also find other examples of this phenomenon in everyday urban space, in markets, cafés, playgrounds, etc.; mobile furniture and other artefacts are used to create convivial situations, arranged to connect people (as we will see later in this text). When people have the authority to interfere with the ordering of space, for example through moveable artefacts, they usually do. The result can be traced to an individual need to position oneself in relation to others, to optimise the conditions for social exchange or to avoid it (Whyte 1980). The example above clearly indicates the agency of artefacts and their capacity to facilitate exchange.

Mediation & Translation

> This theory [ANT] – also known as the sociology of translation –
> is concerned with the *mechanics of power*. (Law 1992:380)

Some aspects of ANT can be perceived as a critique of traditional sociology's treatment of most *mediators* as *intermediaries* (Latour 2005:133). In sociology and other social sciences, a great many entities are considered mediating (or transporting) forces without transformation – hence as intermediaries – without making any difference. The distinction between mediators and intermediaries is central to ANT. Mediators "transform, translate, distort, and modify" other actors, and thus also themselves (Latour 2005:39). Since exchange cannot occur without transformation, all mediation (transport of meaning or power) is facilitated by mediators, and all mediation includes translation (Latour 1997:175). Intermediaries, on the other hand, transport "meaning or force without transformation" (Latour, 2005:39). Hence, if one knows what is inserted into a situation, one also knows what will come of it. If intermediaries exist, they only do so temporarily and they are always the effect of previous hard work. This work needs to be accounted for.

As mentioned above, things are generally not mute; they speak through intermediaries and mediators, just as humans do (Latour 2004a). Neither things nor facts speak for themselves in a literal sense. The notion that objects as well as facts speak through intermediaries or mediators defies any idea of pure objectivity and puts the mediator in a central and delicate position as a translator. Translations go both ways, between humans as well as between humans and nonhumans, and form the base of communication.

To explain the distribution of an order, a claim or an artefact, Latour suggests that we must consider it a continuous transition, a process where the actors involved affect the order, claim or artefact. Most often, the order, claim or artefact transforms along the chain of actors active in its circulation in accordance with the actors' individual agendas. In ANT terminology, this phenomenon is referred to as *translation* (Latour 1986:266f.). Translation is a concept used in actor-network inquiries to describe the *process* of composing a network. When multiple humans and nonhumans are translated into networks, translation describes how actors affect and transform each other in the process. Thus, translation conceptually includes power relations.

Power, however, is an ambiguous concept. For 'sociologists of the social' (Latour 1986; Latour 2005), power is something that can be acquired, owned and kept – an explanatory tool to describe power as an effect of a pre-existing source of power. Latour firmly argues that this trail of social

science has mistaken the effect for the cause (Latour 1986:264ff.). The exercise of power, according to Latour, cannot be traced to a predefined source of power; i.e. something that can be linked to certain powerful actors – power is rather the effect of actions. This approach to power, as a consequence of actions, produced by multiple actors-in-relation, focuses the process of translation and hence the 'methods of association'.

The Surprise of Action

> Nonhumans are not simply resources or constraints. […] nonhumans intervene actively to push action in unexpected directions. (Callon and Law 1997:178)

The recognition of agency as distributed to nonhuman entities cogently comprises the fact that humans are affected by nonhuman entities, enrolled with them in various networks and sometimes even ruled by them. The distinction between human and nonhuman actors can be observed as effects of, but not as intrinsic to an action itself. Actions are always effects of related entities, and it is rarely possible to foresee them as expected outcomes: "action cannot [be] explained, in a reductionist manner, as a firm consequence of any particular previous action" (Callon and Law 1997:179).

Ash Amin (2008:11) argues that "ethical practices in public space are formed precognitively and reflexively rather than rationally or consciously, guided by routines of neurological response and material practice, rather than by acts of human will. The vitality of the space, its functional and symbolic interpretation, its material arrangements, the swirl of the crowd, the many happenings form a compulsive field of action and orientation." The relevance of Amin's notion is probably obvious to anyone who has ever developed a specialised relation to a tool or an instrument on a somewhat expert level. The object responds to the expert user and becomes an extension of her/his body (Warnier 2001; Schilder 1950 [1935]). This goes for children manipulating the swings at the playground, fly fishers casting their rods, kitchen chefs wielding their Japanese knives, etc.

Most architects can relate to this. In the process of sketching with pencils on paper, architects can be equally surprised by what appears before them, when suddenly – after hours, days or weeks of sketching – spatial organisation, logistics, form, light and structure coincide without the architect being fully aware of how it actually happened. Sometimes the figures, lines and symbols on the paper surprise the architect with answers to questions that haven't even been asked – or more frequently, questions whose

formulation wasn't obvious. Latour describes this phenomenon thus: "to act is to be perpetually overtaken by what one does.[6]

This force of all actors can easily be transferred to everyday life in urban space and translated to different levels of everyday engagements between humans and nonhumans. As we take active part in the material world, we are constantly affected by objects and other bodies, and vice versa. Jane Bennet (2010:31) argues that this 'intricate dance' between humans and nonhumans is an intrinsic aspect of human agency: "There was never a time when human agency was anything other than an interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity" (Bennet 2010:31).

The various enactments produced through *relational agency* can lead to unintended and surprising consequences. Clusterings of human and nonhuman actors can evolve into a state of unified composite-bodies. The human intentionalities are subsequently manipulated, and sometimes taken over, by nonhuman (or other human) actors, and we find ourselves acting in ways we didn't expect or couldn't foresee. Latour illustrates this notion by using the experiences of puppeteers' relation to their puppets:

> It is a tired old joke against sociologists to pretend that their actors are like puppets in the hands of 'social forces.' This is a very good example, but it proves the exact contrary of what is generally supposed. If you talk with a puppeteer, then you will find that he is perpetually surprised by his puppets. He makes the puppet do things that cannot be reduced to his action, and which he does not have the skill to do, even potentially. Is this fetishism? No, it is simply a recognition of the fact that we are *exceeded* by what we create. To act is to mediate another's action. (Latour 1996b:237)

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6   Various musicians claim that they are occasionally surprised by what comes out of their instruments, especially when they are improvising or composing music. The intimate relation to the musical instrument and the precognitive bodily responses produced while playing make unexpected music emerge. The effect may be even more apparent when performing music as an ensemble (collective). The closely associated humans and artefacts (instruments) collectively produce effects that exceed the sum of the individual members' skills and expectations. This notion sometimes profoundly surprises those performing the act. The discrete artefacts (such as musical instruments) become intimately personal and are not easily replaced without affecting the intimate human-instrument assemblage and its outcome. (On the other hand, instruments actually are replaceable, at least as long as the substitute instrument belongs to the same category as the missing one, although the effect (performance) may differ in quality).

Critique of ANT

> Urban democratic publics in the plural do not continuously exist in an expecting position. They are rather constituted around specific urban situations, controversies and matters-of-concern.
> (Farías 2011:371)

The critique against ANT emanates predominantly from scholars who support the idea of pre-established social categories and power structures. Major criticism has been directed towards the levelling of human and nonhuman actors within ANT – the so-called 'general symmetry' or 'flat ontology'. Many see the dethroning of the exclusive human capacity for intention and agency as a provocation. Even the ANT proponent Thomas Bender (2010:305) has expressed doubts regarding the flat ontology and expressed concerns about the moral implications of such stands. Diluting human agency and intentionality in networks of multiple actors; i.e. considering all actions as network effects, may be perceived as undercutting human accountability and responsibility. John Law (1992:383) firmly argues that flat ontology is simply a diagnostic and methical position taken to centre actor-relations and agency instead of preconceived power structures. Law, and other ANT proponents, "den[y] that people are *necessarily* special" and argue the importance of including all actors, and of considering them on equal footing 'prior to investigation'. Law continues his argument by stressing the importance of distinguishing between ethics and social investigations: "To say that there is no fundamental difference between people and objects is an analytical stance, not an ethical position" (Law 1992:383).

Mattias Kärrholm (2007:444) points at another line of critique, regarding ANT as "viewing power from the point of view of the person responsible for the program". This is, however, "not inherent to or obligatory in an ANT description". Instead, Kärrholm suggests that ANT constitutes a performative stance, emphasising different forms of network stabilisations and thus a "way of viewing the world from a perspective of becoming". This endeavour does not presuppose interest in any particular power position, but rather opens up for an agnostic trial of a situation. Like John Law, Kärrholm maintains that the symmetrical approach is valid only 'prior to investigation'. When the network is thoroughly described and analysed, particular power relations can be established and different types of responsibilities can be distributed to each of the actors involved. I also share this approach to flat ontology. All actors are indeed implicated in the production of actions and effects in a specific event, and they are all flattened during trials, but this does not mean that they are all equal after

trials. In fact, a major objective of ANT investigations is to determine and define the different actor roles in networks. Hence, ANT can be used to clarify power relations and to distribute individual positions and responsibilities within a complex network.

In the specific context of urban studies, ANT and the closely associated theories of assemblage thinking have been criticised by Marxist scholars and critical urban theorists such as Neil Brenner (Brenner 2009; Brenner et al. 2011). Brenner argues that assemblage urbanism is charged with 'naïve objectivism' (Brenner et al. 2011) and accuses actor-network inquiries for merely "affirming the current conditions of cities" (Brenner 2009:198) and "justifying all sorts of inequalities and injustices" (Farías 2011:366). The accusations are rather interesting considering from where they originate. ANT is not entrenched in moral judgement, nor does it assume any given political stance; it is a method to try to see what is, rather than unveil an anticipated setting of pre-confirmed structural conditions. ANT inquiries insist on seeing the world without framing it from a preconceived understanding of hidden forces and structures just waiting to be revealed. In that sense, ANT could be regarded as naïve – but one could also say *proudly* naïve. Instead, ANT investigators assume an empiricist position that "avoids the formalism of pre-established social categories of social action so common in the social science literature" (Bender 2010:305).

Actor-network oriented investigators look for actors *within* the actions and events actually producing civic life; they do not try to uncover any predetermined 'hidden forces' (Farías 2011:366). The ANT approach is based on inquiry and the elaborating of concepts, not critique. To Ignacio Farías, assemblages "are self-contained processes of heterogeneous associations calling for a positive description of their becoming, not external explanations" (Farías 2011:369). The quote concisely captures the features of the exploratory model, as opposed to the explanatory. An inquiry-based approach such as ANT "is not at odds with critique, but only with a version of critique that is committed to theory rather than to the empirical" (Farías 2011:367). Manuel DeLanda notes that "Marxism tends to favour a form of macroreductionism", which can be seen as in direct opposition to an ANT or assemblage approach that is instead oriented towards an ethnography of microcosms. DeLanda rejects this macro perspective, arguing that "there is no such thing as 'society as a whole'" (DeLanda in Farías 2011:367).

Farías suggests that urban space is only contingent for critical urban studies' interest and discussion on cities; "What is ultimately at stake in those discussions is the organization of contemporary capitalism" (Farías 2011:367). I do not consider this to be the problem. The critical investi-

gation of urbanity through "the organization of contemporary capitalism" is often interesting and highly relevant. The problem, to me, appears when capitalism is believed to be the sole aspect of urbanity due for examination and analysis. The strong political stance is not considered problematic in any way, even if critical scholars themselves harshly and widely attack liberal or conservative approaches, and even politically neutral ANT proponents. If we intend to study urbanity and the conditions for life in cities, there are multiple other aspects to consider – all of them originating in complex relations. ANT and assemblage thinking constitute tools to do so, with the intention of being non-reductive and including aspects beyond economy and ideology. Farías stresses that critical urbanists claim to deal with urbanity and life in cities while their primary interest is actually limited to capitalism. He admits that "[u]rban life is obviously tightly entangled with different economic processes, but at stake in this approach is a different question: what is the city, what is urban life made of, how do cities organize collective life?" (Farías 2011:367).

This is not to say that ANT couldn't be normative or political. Jonathan Metzger (2011:290) argues that "issues of normativity and democratic legitimacy" have not only been introduced to the field but also "come to *dominate*" it. Metzger further refers to "(normative) philosophers such as Michel Serres, Isabelle Stengers and Peter Sloterdijk", and also to multiple works by Latour himself that clearly deal with normative and political issues.

The proponents for assemblage thinking strive for real participation in political matters, including human citizens, objects and other nonhuman entities. Democracy is not the result of a top-down structure, but rather a flat and fluid process (Callon et al. 2009; Dewey 1988[1927]). Urban democracy and public participation are unlikely to emerge through critique of capitalism, but rather by inviting all parties to the political table; recognising the agency of nonhumans and their key role in the production of clusters and collectives. In that way, the politics of the urban can become truly democratic and inclusive. Human interests alone cannot constitute democracy, taking only human perspectives into account. Practicing democratic life inevitably includes nonhuman 'matters of concern' (Latour 2004c). Politics is a collective endeavour that is shaped and executed in shared space, not in mindsets or critical theory. A premature and abstract division into dichotomist categories – such as subject/object, nature/culture, social/material – undermines real participation and thus democracy. To conclude the controversy with the critical approach to urban politics, I turn once again to Ignacio Farías, who states that

> [E]mpirical inquiry, not theoretical critique, is necessary for the
> constitution and strengthening of urban democratic publics. Sec-
> ondly, actual urban situations define the space of intervention for
> an urban democratic public, not capitalism at large. And, finally,
> urban democratic participation is based on a sense that cities are
> assembled, not structured. (Farías 2011:372)

TERRITOROLOGY

Taking Place – Making Space

> First, a territory is not an object and should not be confused with
> the space where it takes place. (Brighenti 2010b:56)

In this thesis, territorial notions and concepts are used to describe and
analyse socio-material exchanges and the composition of collectives. The
territorial discourse in the fields of architecture and urban planning is
somewhat limited, but issues of spatial productions due to appropriations
and asymmetrical power relations in urban space have been widely inves-
tigated and commented (Olsson 2008a; Korosec-Serfaty 1976). There are,
however, obvious benefits made (and to be made) from the exploration of
territoriality in relation to planning, architecture and urban design. The
concepts and notions produced in the research field are particularly inter-
esting for public life investigations, since they link social and material is-
sues and relate them to lived space – a relational and performative perspec-
tive, to spatial use and urban activities; i.e. what takes place makes space.

In everyday language, territory normally refers to a horizontal, Euclid-
ian conception of space, connected to power and ownership. Territory
is typically considered a fixed geographical and bounded phenomenon,
where royal, religious, military or political powers impose order and mean-
ing through explicit application of restraints in bureaucracy, law, policing
or cultural practices and sometimes through more inherited policies on
behaviour that have been adopted without scrutiny. The definition of terri-
tory in this thesis, however, originates from Mattias Kärrholm,[7] who takes
a relational, Latourian approach to territorology, and from Andrea Mubi
Brighenti, who applies a more Deleuzian perspective.

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7   For a thorough history of Kärrholm's take on territoriality see Kärrholm (2004, 2007,
     2012). Similar approaches to territoriality can be found in Brighenti (2010a) and
     Barbara Brown (1987). See also David Delaney (2005).

Andrea Mubi Brighenti (2010b) proposed the word *territorology* as a more adequate term to denote the academic field of territorial research. Brighenti and Kärrholm characterise territoriality as associated with action and practice more than physical space as such – thus a "relational, processual and 'evental' perspective" (Brighenti 2010b:53). Brighenti focuses on the impact of social relations in territorialisations, whereas Kärrholm consistently includes material actors in all territorial productions. According to Kärrholm, a territorial perspective "enables a discussion of territorial production as a collective effort of human and nonhuman actants" (2007:449). Different entities within the collectives associate with particular urban materialities to stabilise territorialisations in specific geographical sites.

In relation to the public space discourse, territoriality offers an alternative approach that includes aspects on emergence and stabilisations of socio-material formations; i.e. clusterings and situated heterogeneous clusters. Brighenti (2010b) frames the interactional nature of territorial production by stating that a territory "is not defined by space, rather it defines spaces through patterns of relations" (Brighenti 2010b:57).

Territoriality, as it is here defined, aligns very well with an actor-network perspective on public life in urban space, since it initially accounts for all actors (human and nonhuman) and provides a processual and performative approach. The various forms of territorial production describe the nature of collective space as an ongoing process, where aspects of power and power relations are evident and become apparent. The study of socio-material exchanges need aspects that address territorial claims, because exchanges always take place *somewhere* and affect surrounding spaces when clusters and collectives are made. Territorology thus provides conceptual tools that add to the toolbox necessary for describing and analysing the complex process of spatial production.

The territorial productions studied in this thesis can be transitory, periodic or fixed in time and space. Technologies used to compose clusters – such as social interaction, routine practices, commercial activities, sports and play, etc. – also produce territories; territories are produced through processes of encounters between humans and between humans and nonhumans; they "are the effect of the material inscription of social relationships" (Brighenti 2010b:57).

Territorial Boundaries

Although territorial productions always involve actors not present in a metric sense, territories are always situated somewhere. Since all individual territories comprise particular sets of humans and nonhumans, they are

defined and delimited by these. Accordingly, territories are in some sense bounded, however apparent this may be in a material sense.

In an everyday understanding of territory, boundaries are widely ac-knowledged as constituting devices, defining the geographical extension. Brighenti (2010b:60) asserts that "territory and boundaries" should be re-garded "as two aspects of the same phenomenon". The drawing of boundar-ies "is the constitutive process of territorialisation." Territorial boundaries, then, are in this view variable and not static; they are continuously pro-duced and thus in a constant flux. Sometimes, though, they are manifested and appear very precise and physically static – certain sports facilities and commercial locales, for example, are strictly defined at all times. Depend-ing on the individual territory, the boundaries have different compositions (sometimes invisible) and are typically related to the nature of the social and socio-material relations produced within the territory. The geograph-ical territory can, for example, be produced from a centre point within, perhaps by a street performer, a social event or a material arrangement of some kind. A third kind of territorial signifier can be intrinsically materi-al, where the territory is situated and generated because of the particular and inherent material responsivity (Asplund 1987) that encourages certain uses and activities, e.g. the water in a swimming pool or in an ice-skating rink, the sand in a sandpit, etc.

In a territorialisation produced by a particular cluster, the boundary is where the cluster enrols and loses actors; i.e. where actors can enter or leave the territory. If the territories are produced at the same time in the same space, different territorial productions overlap and may exchange actors, usually at the borders. That in and of itself is a good reason to study the boundaries, their constitution and their role as sites for public life.

Territorial Production

In his work, Kärrholm suggests four principal forms of territorial produc-tion (Kärrholm 2004, 2007): *territorial associations*; *appropriation*, *tactics* and *strategies*. Kärrholm has thoroughly examined and co- and cross-re-lated these and other territorial concepts (2004, 2007, 2012, etc.), and they can be used as effective tools in a multifaceted analysis of public life in urban space. In this thesis, the productions forms are used in relation to territorialisations, but they are also applied as general concepts regard-ing heterogeneous clustering in urban space. Territories produced through tactics and strategies are planned and intentional and hence dependent on policies, rules and/or regulations. In most situations, these are mediated by materialities and thus the control is often delegated to various artefacts.

Territorial appropriation and association are derived from uses and practices (Kärrholm 2004, 2010, 2014; Brighenti 2010a); for example a group of friends meeting for coffee at a particular public spot every other day. They tactically appropriate the territory with their bodies, coffee cups and by the very activity of drinking coffee. In this action, the friends and the enrolled materialities (coffee cups, seating facilities, table facilities, views of the surrounding space, etc.) assemble in a collective that supports the territorial production. Other nonhuman entities, such as local behavioural rules, traditions of bringing takeaway into public space, etc., are part of the territorialisation as well.

A territorial production can be based on association. For example, we know a playground when we see one because we associate it with playgrounds that we have seen before. Territorialisation by association can also be more indirect, for example mediated by abstract signs, light conditions, colours or smells; e.g. we sometimes smell a pizzeria long before we actually see it. The white lines indicating an area for parked cars signify a parking space even when there are no cars present.

Territories can be maintained and reproduced at such a frequency and regularity that they may become institutionalised. An example inspired by Kärrholm (2004:76) describes a process of territorial production and gradual institutionalisation: A meadow repeatedly used for spontaneous football (soccer) games can eventually become an institutionalised football field. First by spontaneous games – as unplanned tactic behaviour – that develop into regular appropriation. Soon the meadow will be recognised (by association) as a place where football is played, and then material (strategic) means are used to stabilise the activity, such as proper goals and white lines, maybe some benches for players on the sidelines and seats for the occasional audience. The material set-up may also be complemented with signs displaying the name of the place, and the institutionalisation is complete.

Territorial tactics and appropriation are personal, whilst territorial strategies and associations are impersonal. The concepts of tactic and strategy originated in military vocabulary, but the connotations in this framework, where emphasis is on the schematic features of strategy and the liberated, or idiosyncratic, features of tactics, are above all ascribed to Kärrholm and Brighenti here. Territorial strategies are intentional and can be linked to authorities or other actors outside of oneself, controlling the use of certain spaces. A tactical territorialisation, however, implies an intentional production and utilisation linked to individual or group activities. For example, a parking lot is strategically planned and designed for the parking of cars, but children (tactically) may use and mark the space to play land hockey.

Authorities normally use strategic territorialisations to discipline citizens to behave in certain ways. Citizens sometimes disobey or counteract various regulations and norms of conduct stipulated by authorities, using different tactics to redefine and transform suggested behaviours (Kärrholm 2004:83ff; de Certeau [1980] 1988:XV). An illustration of this would be when planning authorities organise and construct pedestrian and bicycle routes that local citizens occasionally disregard. Instead, people choose to make their own paths, often shortcuts across meadows and groves that make more sense to them.

Territorial Stabilisation

Territories can be materially stabilised in different ways. Kärrholm (2012) elaborates on four forms of stabilisations: *territorial sorts*, *frameworks*, *networks* and *bodies* (bodies include human as well as nonhuman bodies and are also referred to as *material figures*). The outline of a fifth form, *radiance*, is introduced in relation to building typology studies (Kärrholm 2013:1121). The stabilisation forms are inspired by and primarily related to four spatial topologies, conceptualised by John Law and Annemarie Mol (2001, 2002). In close relation to ANT and ANT-and-after, Law and Mol claim: "The social doesn't exist as a single spatial type" (Law and Mol, 1994:643). A further elaboration of topologies is needed to understand and differentiate various socio-material constellations in urban space. Law and Mol suggest that three topological variations be considered: *regions* (Euclidian) (Law and Singleton 2005), *networks* and *fluids*. The fourth, *fire*, was added later (Law and Mol 2001; Law and Singleton 2005).

A regional topology indicates a bounded (Euclidian) area where objects are clustered together in a metric proximity. A network topology implies a space that is shaped and stabilised by well-defined relations; i.e. the same 'obligatory' actors are repeating the territorial production. Both regional and network topologies are traditionally well known in social theory. In fluid topologies, the boundaries fluctuate and "the objects generated inside them – that generate them – aren't well defined. […] A fluid world is a world of *mixtures*" (Law and Mol, 1994:659-660). A fluid space is robust, because it does not depend on material boundaries or particular actors to maintain definite relations. It does not collapse easily when conditions shift or actors come and go – any single component 'can be missed'. Being characterised as a fluid topology implies that a space is produced by actors with a family resemblance. It can be hard to "distinguish inside from outside" (Law and Mol 1994:660). A fluid object "is something that *both changes and stays the same*" (Law and Singleton 2005:338). Applied on the field study-sites in this thesis, one could argue that most of them can be

considered fluid; i.e. it is not important that the different actors constituting the sites over time are the same: "Sometimes, we suggest, neither boundaries [regions] nor relations [networks] mark the difference between one place and another. […] Sometimes, then, social space behaves like a fluid" (Law and Mol, 1994:643).

In the analysis of the empirical investigations in this thesis, I make use of three stabilisation forms, primarily inspired by Kärrholm's classifications: *territorial sort (fluid)*, *network*, and *material (Euclidian) figure*. They signify three 'analytical positions' that can help describe and discuss relevant actants in (situated) heterogeneous clusterings in urban space. The forms of stabilisation are not mutually exclusive, but rather co-exist and sometimes overlap (Kärrholm 2012:52). Most stable urban situations can be described in terms of territorial networks; i.e. assemblages of human and nonhuman actants/actors. Network stabilisation implies multiple actants – such as artefacts, material qualities, usage regulations, conventions, etc. – that work together in networks to produce certain predictabilities and uniformity in terms of use, behaviour and exercised agency.

A situated territory repeatedly associated with particular usages, actions and behaviour can be characterised as a territorial sort. Territorial sorts are always materially manifested (Kärrholm 2007:445). In architecture, territorial sorts are typically used to organise or analyse space according to function and expected ways of performing; for example building types – such as churches, shopping malls, nightclubs and airports. In residential architecture, spaces such as kitchens, living rooms and bathrooms signify typical territorial sorts. In the urban public domain, the main square, the street market and the playground indicate territorial sorts associated with particular behaviours, actions and ways of relating to other actors that form part of the same territory.

Material figures are best described via Euclidian qualities, such as shape, size, height, angle, texture, etc. (Kärrholm 2012:139). Some figures appear to mediate the same or similar effects in different networks or situations, and can thus be treated as actants. Bollards, for example, signify a territorial sort with a stabilising capacity and the ability to enact certain specific territorial effects, such as separating different kinds of movements and vehicles. However, as singular artefacts they also constitute material figures. As a figure, a bollard can be part of different kinds of networks, depending on the (Euclidian) qualities of its material design. Together with additional actors, bollards may realise agency that stabilises networks and thus situates clusters of humans and nonhumans.

Kärrholm's notions provide important entries to the examination of how different urban territorialisations are stabilised and how these ter-

ritories can be differentiated. Each form of stabilisation can be further scrutinised for detailed analysis of, for example, how material qualities and form influence territorial production and stabilisation in urban space.

In this thesis, I advocate the importance of how the precise material design affects the affordance of a particular territorial sort. My primary aim is to clarify the significance of the material figuration of the sorts – how territorial sorts are actually produced and stabilised by individual figures and thus are brimming with varying and unique potential agency. A territorial sort generally affords more than what corresponds to the specifications to fulfil its expected role. I suggest that the analysis of particular and detailed design – the precise Euclidian qualities of material figuration – is important when trying to understand territorialisations, regarding opportunities for appropriation, exchanges, clusterings or (individual and collective) privatisations of space.

I will use these notions on territorial stabilisations in the analysis of clustering agency, incorporating urban furniture and fixtures such as platforms, bollards, electric utility boxes, etc. in the coming chapters.

Territoriality and Power

Territorology opens up for the inclusion of political and social power relations and citizen rights. For example, Saskia Sassen (2006) sees territory as a process-based framework that can be examined and explained as a heterogeneous arrangement "including legal, political and economic dimensions" (Brighenti 2010b:53). Henri Lefebvre coined the renowned phrase the *right to the city* in the late 1960s as a reaction to the modernist urban planning that radically changed the traditional French city. Lifestyles were becoming homogenised and daily life was being colonised (Schmid 2012). The slogan has since been rephrased by scholars such as David Harvey (2003), Don Mitchel (2003) and Peter Marcuse (2009). David Harvey argues that "[t]he right to the city implies far more than the individual liberty to access urban resources: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city." (Harvey 2008:23) Peter Marcuse (2009) claims that the phrase refers to a future urbanity that has to be produced collectively. The different comments on *the right to the city* suggest not only accessibility to shared space, but also to urban resources, as well as the right to participate in the collective shaping of society. Access to urban realities is not guaranteed by policy, economics or politics. It is also suffused with material agency. Architecture and artefacts, as well as active means of urban management and curating, affect the potentials for a democratic participation. These aspects, often treated by critical theorists as given contextual conditions,

may be included, or appear in new constellations in territorial actor-network approaches to urbanity.

Since territorialisation is the result of socio-material relations, the question of power is ubiquitous, both as a condition and as an outcome. Territorial investigations are accordingly also a study of "*how* power relations are stabilized and can be described." (Kärrholm 2007:459). Heterogeneous clusters producing territories execute and distribute power as an effect. Sometimes power itself is the initial objective in composing a cluster with territorial claims.

> Territorology must investigate the concept of territory, not simply as a specific historical and political construct, but more radically, as a general analytical tool to describe the social sphere and, ultimately, as a social process in itself. (Brighenti 2010b:54-55)

An Actant Perspective on Territoriality

> Starting out with such a genealogical focus on becoming (the actant perspective), rather than being, it seems possible to leave behind a lot of fixations and schisms in territoriality research. (Kärrholm 2007:450)

An 'actant perspective' is attuned to territory as a socio-material production and draws attention to any things and forces that constitute a spatial situation. Similarly to ANT, this approach to territoriality rejects presupposed structural powers. The actant perspective further encourages a search beyond the imaginary structures, to locate the actors that actually matter for a territorial production. According to Kärrholm, the "actant perspective is a fruitful one because it turns the question of what caused a certain territorial effect into an empirical one" (Kärrholm 2007:440). Kärrholm further advocates the importance of material actors for territorial productions, stating that a territory is "not just constituted by the person setting and managing the rules of the territory, but by the boundaries and material characteristics of that territory" (Kärrholm 2007:440). This approach to territoriality opens for careful descriptions and analysis of public life in the making.

To study everyday-life territoriality from a power perspective we need to focus on empirical, in situ investigations, rather than territorial strategies and intentions (Kärrholm 2007:440). Municipal intentions, mediated by planning documents, spatial regulations, tactical devices, etc. do not control the (f)actual outcome – the mundane practice of space. The continuous production and reproduction of territories dynamically affect and

change existing power relations, temporally and sometimes rhythmically. The actant perspective suggests territorial power as an effect of the cluster (network) that produces the territory, and that certain actants – be they material, human or nonhuman – can have varying significance in terms of power and control.

Territorology and ANT share a performative approach to life in urban space, rejecting the idea of a pre-existing materiality in which social life is enacted as well as an absolute division between object/subject and nature/culture, a dichotomised view that Latour (2004a) refers to as 'the old constitution'. Bringing territorology and ANT together (Kärrholm 2004, 2007) reinforces the notion of the social and the material (human-nonhuman) as ontologically intertwined – as being of the same world.

Territorial Complexity and Distributed Agency

A successful maintenance of a territorial production is dependent on an effective distribution of agency. Robust territorialisations are often characterised by a delegation of power to multiple nonhuman actors. The maintenance of, for example, a popular boule area is reliant on the material quality and preparation of the court, game rules, various and specific game artefacts, scheduled times for games, the history of repeated boule activity at the place, etc. This heterogeneous territory can serve as a model for other and much more complex territorialisations.

A territory can be visually and materially bounded, even if the actors (or most of them) that produce it are able to transgress the boundaries. Walls and fences that protect geographical territories do not guard the territories by themselves. The fence built to 'protect' Hungary from incoming refugees in 2015 was patrolled by military forces and also upheld by media reports, propaganda, visual surveillance and various political efforts. Due to complex controversies on site, in social media and via external political pressure, the fence was occasionally compromised. This is true for most material boundaries intended to maintain territorial division. Territorial boundaries become evident and tangible through conflicts and controversies. The struggling parties of territorial conflicts are characterised by distributed agency operating inside and outside the actual boundary.

Kärrholm suggests that publicness is closely related to the capacity of a space to embrace multiple and overlapping territorial productions in a non-hierarchic relationship, a notion he labels as *territorial complexity* (Kärrholm 2004, 2007, 2012). Material artefacts, use, social formation, urban space policies, etc. produce numerous territories in public space. These territories may counteract, support or overlap each other, forming landscapes of territorial production with different degrees of territorial

complexity (Kärrholm 2007). Accordingly, a territorially complex space has the potential to sustain a diverse public life. Spaces providing good conditions for overlapping territorial productions regularly must be functionally multi-suggestive. A space that opens up for an extensive choice of possible actions and uses potentially also attracts a varied public and consequently enables multiple territorial productions – complexity – as well as social (and socio-material) exchanges. Kärrholm argues that the opposite approach – providing open space that is low on material and nonhuman affordance and incentives for action – creates space that is more difficult to appropriate and that the result thus often turns out to be less complex in terms of territorial productions: "Spatial rules and conventions are necessary if we are to be able to act (and co-act) at all. We can recall Foucault at this point: Power is productive (Foucault, 1982)" (Kärrholm 2007:447). Kärrholm further claims that a "certain degree of territorial differentiation and superpositioning could very well bring about a much greater degree of accessibility" (Kärrholm 2007:447).

An example of this could be Tompkins Square Park in New York City. The square, situated on Manhattan's Lower East Side, is subdivided into several distinct territories, marked by material boundaries. Hajer and Reijndorp (2001:117) refer to it as a place where several groups (collectives) can co-exist due to strategic fencing and segmentation, permitting simultaneous appropriation by multiple collectives with different objectives and behaviours. The demarcation of separate areas within the whole space (to some perhaps counter-intuitively) increases the accessibility and encourages the fluidity and the complex use of the space. Hajer and Reijndorp introduce *compressing* as a strategy in the making of public domains. Compressing signifies the gathering of multiple elements "meaningful for different groups into close proximity" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:117). The term compressing can obviously be related to territorial complexity and thus to the production of public life.

A diversity of actions and uses can partly be associated with material and spatial affordances, which also significantly affect the territorial structure. In order to understand how different material actors affect the territorial production, and thereby also the possibility for actions and exchanges between people (and between people and various materialities), we need to determine which artefacts are particularly incentive, and their individual roles in the programming of spaces for their particular prospects of use. Material features, such as urban furniture, walls and vegetation – materialities that make a difference and generate specificity – may in fact support multiplicity. Material figures, with the capacity to be mobilised in various networks, contribute to a territorial complexity (Kärrholm 2004:277).

There is a preconceived notion that the most publicly accessible spaces are those that are least materially bound and functionally specified; i.e. the open, underdesigned and anonymous spaces should be the most diversified in terms of use and visitors. However, Kärrholm claims the opposite:

> It seems that making accessible (and, in this respect, making public) cannot be equated with the erasing of boundaries. In fact, the opposite seems more likely: The access to space has to be subdivided (in time or space) to accommodate different uses and to make room for as many different categories of users as possible. (Kärrholm 2007:447)

However, the opposite situation is also true; an architecture with highly specified and restrictive design (figuration) may support territorial fixation and homogenisation, effectively counteracting multiple uses and hence the opportunity for complexity (Kärrholm 2004:278-279). The notion of territorial complexity will be used to analyse and describe the multifaceted relations between material aspects of architecture and the nature of public life at the sites studied in this thesis.

AFFORDANCE THEORY

> What We Touch, Touches Us
> (Fisher 2004:20)

Action Potentials and Mutual Dependencies

The following section on Affordance Theory is included because of its significance for the relational aspects of agency and actorship in ANT. The affordance concept is relevant for the themes explored in this thesis, both as an operational concept in itself and with regard to its general theoretical incentives. This brief presentation signifies the theory's approach to the reciprocal dependency between human bodies and various materialities. Although the concept of affordance is not scrutinised in depth, it is nonetheless important to explore how it should be understood in the context of this thesis; i.e. how various materialities perform in social exchanges.

Perceptual psychologist James J. Gibson (1977; 1979; 1986) coined the word *affordance* (Theory of Affordances) to describe the "complementarity of the animal and the environment" (1979:127), suggesting the offering capacity of the environment; i.e. "what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill" (1979:127). Affordance can be understood as action possibilities offered

to an actor by objects in the environment, or as a relational property defined by the association between an actor and the world. The term *affordance* was derived from the concepts *valence*, *invitation* and *demand*, originating in Kurt Koffka's *Gestalt Psychology* (1935). The terms *invitation character* (J.F. Brown 1929, in Gibson 1979:138) and *valence* (D.K. Adams 1931, in Gibson 1979) are both translations of Kurt Lewin's term *Aufforderungscharakter*. Kurt Lewin's description of the term *Aufforderungscharakter* (English: demand character, invitation character or valence) implies that affordance appears in the object when we need it – a postbox attains its meaning, or functional utility, when we are to post a letter. Koffka also asserted that this demand character depended on the perceivers' need; i.e. the value of an object changes as the perceiver's need changes (Gibson 1979:138). The phenomenon of valence was furthermore intended to be phenomenal and not tied directly to material objects. Gibson built his affordance concept partly on this, but with the crucial difference that his concept does not change with the need of the perceiver (Gibson 1979:138-139).

Gibson (1979:139) posits that the postbox constitutes a phenomenon and an artefact that is present, as an 'invitation', in the minds of nearby citizens even when they have no letters to post, as 'part of the environment'. In Gibson's definition, affordances exist independently of individual perception, and they are also independent of the situational needs of the perceiving actor. The following illustration to accompany Gibson's postbox example aims to explain the relevance of affordance as part of an ontological perspective on how to perceive urban artefacts regarding their potential role as mediators of socio-material exchanges. In the postal service system (network), the pillar box has an obvious (phenomenal *and* physical) affordance to hold letters for later pick-up and distribution, but this affordance holds no meaning for the perceiver using it as a table for a takeaway coffee or merely an artefact to lean on. It then forms part of other networks, exposing additional (hidden) affordances other than those in the postal service network. Although we have the capacity to be aware of these different affordances, it makes little sense to argue that they exist without being realised. What makes sense is that affordances are tied to actors-in-relation; i.e. expected as well as unexpected affordances appear as effects of situated relations.[8]

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8   Jakob von Uexküll (1980 [1920]) discussed the affordance concept as 'Ton' (in English: *tone*) or 'funktionale Tönung' (in English: *functional tinting or colouring*), suggesting that affordances are not inherent to an object (which Gibson argues). Instead he proposes a fully relational view, arguing that use is what gives meaning to the world (Ingold 2011:79). Accordingly, Uexküll further argues that an object's affordances ('tone') appear in relation to the perceiver for whom it holds meaning. Affordances appear in relation to the actor's activities. Whilst Gibson argues that a stone has the affordance to be thrown, Uexküll asserts that this affordance arises only when an actor actually throws it.

My understanding of the concept is related to an empirical action- or use perspective. From a planning perspective, however, the primary intended affordance of a pillar box is relevant even when it is not in use. But the same is true of all of its other potential affordances. In this respect, all latent material affordances are significant – otherwise, planning and urban design would be pointless. In an empirically examined situation, affordances are only interesting as performed actions, e.g. when they are realised by interactions.

While applying affordance within an ANT approach, the question of how affordances are expressed is not a matter concerning just the artefact and the perceiver; rather, it is a network-matter: affordances appear and are realised as a result of complex relations between artefacts and humans, culture, conventions, perceptive abilities, etc. When studying social life in public space this is very evident. From an ANT perspective, the Gibsonian notion of affordance as independent of situated actions and related actors' perceptions is questionable. No action can occur unless related actors' affordances are realised in interactions. In this respect, affordance can be related to agency, since agency has to be exercised to reveal affordance. Accordingly, I posit that affordances are not intrinsic to objects per se; instead, they are subordinate to networks of related actors exercising agency.

Aligning myself with an ANT approach, I would further claim that the possible uses or relations of a space or an artefact can never be exhausted; thus spaces and artefacts are better understood as having the capacity for infinite affordances (although not *any* affordances) than having a limited set of *properties*. This take on affordance theory avoids an instrumental and causal perspective on how various artefacts (with predefined and fixed properties) affect each other's use potentials.

An affordance approach can be of use in the analysis of urban life as well as in the design of urban space. Affordance theory suggests that artefacts, and the spaces of which they form a part, do not have a limited and fixed set of functions, meanings and properties. Spaces, as well as artefacts, can produce different effects and meanings because of how they interact with and relate to humans, as well as to other spaces and artefacts. The affordance perspective obviously challenges a traditional view on artefacts and spaces as having absolute and definable properties. From an ANT perspective, affordance is central to the initial associations between networked actors in a cluster, but also in an intentional sense – what are the reasons for the cluster to assemble? A cluster has affordances that exceed the affordances of its individual parts, since affordances will change with regard to the nature of associations between entangled actors. Individual affordances can also be completely suppressed by the cluster's objectives. Accordingly, there is no causal relationship

between individual actors' affordances and the affordances of the clustered body.

Affordance is a useful concept in the investigation of actions and events in urban public space. Clusters of humans and nonhumans develop affordances that fill gaps, not in relation to a given context but in relation to the affordances of singular objects, humans and nonhuman features. When a cluster unfolds, it has usually been initiated by someone's actions, driven by intentions or needs, but clusters also emerge due to immanent material affordances – meaning that nonhuman actors can be critical to the formation of specific clusters through strong affordances; for example a sunny, south-facing wall can become a place for rest and sun-bathing; a smooth ground surface attracts skaters; the elaborate façades of Cambridge's Gothic buildings become sites for 'night climbers' (Whipplesnaith 2007 [1937]; Nilsson 2010:185-186); a particularly busy street corner is a popular site for beggars or for charity organisations collecting money. Material, spatial or social particularities allow certain activities to evolve and take place. When an activity has emerged and a cluster is assembled new affordances appear that can induce activities and events not inherent to the separate affordances connected to the individual actors entering the cluster.

In this thesis, I use affordance as an analytical tool to investigate artefacts, nested artefacts and spaces as networks of human and nonhumans to understand which different actors are significant for certain actions or sequences of actions, and in what way, Through this analysis, one can distinguish particular material actors that are important for specific actions, events or activities. I would also suggest that affordance could be exercised in two ways, passive and active: affordance as an invitation, a potential offering – meaning a passive suggestion – and as an encouraging or urging (active) action potential.

The principle modernistic phrase "Form follows function" and its counter-variation "Function follows form" are explicitly and implicitly rooted in an essentialist tradition, and the connotations are noticeably deterministic. An affordance approach allows for a relational and less instrumental understanding of how actions, changes, opportunities, events, etc. are produced or made possible. When studying an urban public situation, the modernist approach easily restrains the possibilities to a set of preconceived ideas and expectations, derived from the properties of the materialities and non-materialities available at the site, obscuring unexpected effects and surprises of what new, unknown, constellations might bring about. The sense of illusory control is evident in this approach and prompts a deceptive sense of being able to foresee events, actions and consequences of complex associations of known and unknown (f)actors. Using the affordance perspective opens up for infinite possibilities, emerging from

swarms of relationships, articulations and associations between humans and nonhumans. Although he is using a more modernistic vocabulary (Forty 2000), Herman Hertzberger (1991:150) touches on aspects of affordance when he comments on the reciprocity between humans and the built environment. For instance, Hertzberger argues that the central issue "is the interaction between form and users, what they do to each other, and how they appropriate each other" and continuously making the social and material relation even more explicit, in a context of practice, using the term *form* instead of material and *competence* as alternative to affordance: "The accommodating capacity of the form, shall we say its 'competence', which allows it to be filled with associations and thus brings about a mutual dependence with the users" (Hertzberger 1991:150).

Nested and Sequential Affordances

Affordances are sometimes perceived and mutually related in intricate ways. William Gaver (1991:82) has described two ways that affordances might be arranged in relation to an actor and to each other – *sequential* and *nested*. He defines sequential affordances as when "acting on a perceptible affordance leads to information indicating new affordances"; i.e. affordances that are revealed through entanglement over time. Gaver describes *nested affordances* as "affordances that are grouped in space" (1991:82). Nested affordances imply that a particular affordance (or action) can only be revealed through the realisation of several affordances combined.

   Urban public spaces usually hold a great many affordances, some of them inherently integrated and some connected to each other by certain users or by means of special situations. Most affordances, I would claim, are sequential and nested, and thus not immediately observable. To reveal affordance capacities of a particular space, one has to enter the space with some intention, hidden or apparent – for example, bringing a personal artefact that might trigger agency in the environment and start a chain of veiled nested affordances, because, as Gaver states, "[a]ffordances are not passively perceived, but explored" (1991:82). Exploration of afforded actions leads to information about what one can do in a particular public domain and how. The learned experiences can be transferred to and tested at other sites, and the conditions can be investigated to see if they are similar or different. Artefacts and spaces may have different affordances in diverse networks or settings; to determine this, the situated conditions must be tested.

   Gaver suggests that culture, experience, intentions and social setting affect the affordances that are revealed by an individual perceiver (Gaver 1991:81). This rather obvious remark can have quite serious consequences

for people moving between different urban settings. Since affordances are relational effects, affordances that are obvious to some may be concealed or even disguised for others. Arriving from a different urban culture can affect one's ability to make use of obtainable affordances and thus complicate the accessibility of certain publics or collectives. As I will show below, sometimes certain artefacts are requested to realise affordances that are nested in a space – a kind of sequential affordances that can be revealed through particular materialities. For example, by bringing toys to a sandpit, children investigate, reveal and realise different affordances related to sand; people with skateboards explore topographical affordances connected to various urban materialities, through their wheeled artefacts.

HETEROGENEOUS COLLECTIVES IN PUBLIC DOMAINS

Contested Public Space – Polarisation, Homogenisation and Segregation

> […] any city, however small, is in fact divided into two, one the city of the poor, the other of the rich: these are at war with one another, and in either there are many smaller divisions, and you would be altogether beside the mark if you treated them all as a single State. (Plato 1991:245)

In this section I will briefly introduce some panoramic aspects regarding current social life in urban domains and some problems that I consider related to these aspects; problems that inevitably address certain political issues regarding public space. This section should primarily be considered a backdrop for my choice of focus on socio-material exchange and clustering in urban space, and not as a promise to explore public space as a matter of political debate or a political science subject. The perspectives and notions included here rather point out a set of social concerns for which the key findings concluded in this thesis are intended to be relevant.

Cities are recurrently contested by social and economic fragmentation and polarisation, and the present time is no exception (Mitchell 2003; Graham & Marvin 2001; Madanipour 2003). General segregation due to the unjust distribution of wealth is coupled with social segregation by choice. Lifestyle living and housing is rapidly increasing: 55+ housing estates; residential areas for the so-called creative class; business districts; gated communities; sustainable neighbourhoods; etc. Some of these are

defined by material means, such as walls, gates, surveillance systems, etc., and others are also maintained by residential contracts where citizens avow to live according to certain policies and regulations. This trend points at the risk of turning cities into archipelagos of discrete enclaves, segmented by class and/or socio-economic status. David Harvey (2008) argues that the effects of segmentation is

> […] indelibly etched into the spatial forms of our cities, which increasingly become cities of fortified fragments, of gated communities and privatized public spaces kept under constant surveillance. (Harvey 2008:9)

David Harvey continues his argument, referring to Marcello Balbo, who predicted a frightening scenario where cities are subdivided into autonomous and around-the-clock policed 'microstates' in which the extremely wealthy are rigorously protected from those from poor and illegal districts (Harvey 2008:9).

These circumstances seriously challenge a conception of urban space as something commonly shared and universally understood. This is not a new situation, rather a continuous process of gradual adaptation to a changing society and changing public premises. In recent times, such change has followed the radical and swift demounting of government interests in favour of New Public Management. Today, there are many divergent conceptions of what forces, or what governmentalities, are in control of shared urban spaces and how citizens are supposed to behave and interact in it. In recent years the discourse on public space has to some extent been focused on the difficulty of managing these emergent landscapes of growing differences (Fainstein 2010; Amin 2012). Many cities are defied by political, cultural, social, ethnic and religious antagonism, not at least the cities where my field studies were carried out: London, Amsterdam and Paris. Traditional planning- and design strategies are challenged by new conditions that have appeared due to globalisation, increased mobility and migration. Privatisation of public space and neoliberal, entrepreneur-driven urban development strongly augment these challenges (Tasan Kok & Baeten 2012). One of the many challenges in the wake of this development is how to design and equip urban spaces so that they may facilitate human encounters and interaction; i.e. become public spaces that support social exchange and provide encouraging conditions for different categories of citizens to meet. Most planners, architects and urban researchers still consider urban public space to be an important site for the negotiation and reconciliation of differences. A shared challenge, however, is that we still have a limited

knowledge of how to establish and design these spaces so they can become sites for inclusion and social integration.

Public space is constantly challenged by citizens with diverging ideas on what, and whose interests, specific spaces are supposed to facilitate. For example, the boundaries between public and private space are increasingly blurred (Crawford 2008; Sorkin 1992). Powerful private interests govern public spaces openly or indirectly, while private spaces can concurrently act as, or be transformed into, temporal publics. Traditional public space is increasingly privatised and/or commercialised, by individuals as well as by corporate business. Corporately-maintained open spaces, grand scale advertising, privately sponsored public spaces, etc. together with less restricted surveillance policies and increased policing (Davis 2006 [1990]; Fyfe & Bannister 1998; Mitchell 2003) turn the definition of the public space concept into an increasingly delicate matter.

The present state of planning, managing and securing public spaces affects our established notions on how to behave, relate to each other and act politically in public spaces. Entrepreneur-driven planning of urban, sometimes public, space undermines a politically motivated – democratic – development of cities (Tasan-Kok & Baeten 2012). In today's planning and spatial design, the focus is to a large extent on marketing values, consumption patterns and the branding of cities and neighbourhoods (Dinnie 2011). The café-latte publics, or the spatial 'domestication by cappuccino' (Zukin 1995:xiv), such as corporate plazas, Internet cafés, cineplexes and shopping malls, are all signs of a neoliberal idea of a restricted and commercialised pseudo-publicness. Democratic procedures are put aside together with collectively stipulated basic values and moral standards. These neoliberal policies preclude an impartial public life, based on equal rights to the city (Harvey 2008; Brenner, Marcuse & Mayer 2011).

A gradual homogenisation and concentration of use-specific districts is evident in most major cities in the Western world (Carmona, 2010a and 2010b; Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001); the universities congregate to university campuses, shopping is districtified (Kärrholm 2012), restaurants and bars are clustering, as are entertainment and retail businesses. A variety of different knowledge-based industry-hubs are also clustering in specific locations: media-hubs, incubator-hubs for emerging businesses, medical-/pharmaceutical-hubs, sports-hubs, etc., in a modern version of zoning that is structured by 'free' choice instead of by planning. Planning plays a part in this tendency, reinforcing it through adapted land use regulations. Together with separated residential enclaves, this neo-modernist planning concept counteracts the idea of the functionally mixed city-space, which is commonly considered to vouch for a diverse and complex urbanity.

Another sign of homogenisation is the ongoing process of gentrification and filtering, polarising residential neighbourhoods, which intrinsically affects the perception and use of the shared urban space. The filtered neighbourhoods in the neglected outskirts of our cities grow increasingly poorer and more deprived, whilst a similar, related process segregates upper and middle class neighbourhoods by gentrification and 'super-gentrification' (Clark 2012). Because of the significant socio-economic polarisation of modern societies, the conditions for public life are important to study. Due to the geographical segregation of people and activities, the urge to discuss an equal, accessible and diverse *public space* is apparent. Even more important is *how* and *with what approach* the discussion is staged.

The expansion of regional shopping malls and the general homogenisation of consumption activities (Kärrholm 2012) contribute to the change of traditional public meeting places from being open, accessible and socially diverse to becoming more exclusive and specialised. Cultural, social and political expressions and manifestations neither reach nor originate from a societal cross section – as was intended by post-war civic politics. The consumption milieu has its own agenda and cultivates its own form of publicness, monitored by a surveillance apparatus that restricts cultural and political expressions. The spatial organisation and the material design seem to be guided by commercial parameters and not by the altruistic idea of a free and open public domain. The implications of this "new" regime are difficult to anticipate; the phenomenon is not a novel one per se, but the scale and quantity of these new commercial spaces are unprecedented.

Mass culture and the global market for architecture and planning concepts, as well as property developers acting on a multi-national scene, produce urban spaces across the globe that are surprisingly and worryingly alike. Local contextual parameters are reduced to those related to consumption and entertainment. As Madanipour (2003:215-216) points out, this can result in a growing disconnect between developers and the local citizens. There is a clash of interests, or even worse, a lack of understanding of local public interest as such – the developer doesn't see the need to listen to the people who actually use the spaces for which they are planning. Space becomes a mere profitable commodity. The commodification of urban space runs the risk of mainstreaming shared space to a point where it becomes obsolete, trivial and irrelevant for local citizens. That might seriously affect the conditions for a thriving and meaningful public life; meaningful in the sense of citizens' opportunity to identify with the culture of local space and to build an identity in association with situated artefacts. This signifies a kind of *spatial immutability*, a conceptual arrangement of artefacts and spatial programming that is unaffected by local climate, cul-

ture, history and traditions. Of course the same setting in radically different environs will not exhibit the same actions, effects, or even afford the same uses, but the problem lies in the probable failure of the space as an arena for public life attuned to local desires, aspirations and needs.

The Public-Private Distinction and some Relational Perspectives

> Public space becomes a synonym for collective privatism and social antagonism rather than social agonism and civic formation.
> (Amin 2008:23)

Public space is often seen as something planned and built, rigid and rooted in an essentialist tradition, and deprived of the processual dimensions related to human presence and cultural multiplicity. Traditionally, public space is generally regarded as static, permanently manifested by spatial order, typology and material form. But, as Ash Amin (2008:9) puts it, "There is no archetypal public space, only variegated space-times of aggregation." Most public space is highly volatile and sensitive to changes in social use, governance, reputation, etc., as well as material equipment and spatial form. A space stipulated as public, is not guaranteed socially open and accessible. The perspective taken here is that public space is constantly produced by human and nonhuman associations, an effect of "situated spatial practice" (Amin, 2008:9). Accordingly, public space in this thesis is a framing concept, implying a shared, open and physically accessible setting for multiple actions and uses.

The categorisation and attribution of parts of the built environment into public, private and semi-private/public spaces have arisen frequently in urban research and architectural education since the mid 20th century (Chermayeff and Alexander 1965; Weintraub 1997). This typological view of the public/private distinction manifesting a presumed division of an essentially Euclidian-Cartesian architectural space is in many ways obsolete; it is a remnant from a modernistic functional zoning perspective. As a spatial planning tool it still has its virtues when used firmly to protect and safeguard shared ground from blatant privatisation in renewal or exploitation processes. Even this merit is however highly contested today, due to the neo-liberal condition where public spaces – traditionally seen as democratically controlled – are revealed upon closer scrutiny to be the property of private ownership or public-private ventures, causing other, sometimes fuzzy lines of division as regards access, use, and appropriation. The traditional public/private space dichotomy therefore winds up ambig-

uous rather than accurate as a concept offered to understand operational meanings of social life in urban space. The level of publicness, exposure, intimacy and publicness of particular locales within a limited urban area, such as in the cases selected for study in this dissertation, vary significantly regarding the temporal situation of particular use and presence, time of the day/week/year, activities, weather, etc. Already in the initial evaluation of a place, publicness appears as a fluid and situated phenomenon, dependent on individual experiences, local culture and temporal-social desires. The set of site observations chosen for this thesis – where shared space emerges and disappears for reasons correlated to the activities that are possible in connection with the given material limitations – show a diversity that makes it obvious that our perceptions of urban space are far too complex to be referred to simply in terms of public or private.

Many Western societies suffer from welfare state cutbacks and a reorientation towards individual responsibility, in terms of 'self-care', and private initiatives regarding the support of social formation in contested neighbourhoods and the empowering of marginalised citizens and groups (Harvey 2006; Lemke 2001). The state's decreased concern for public space is evident, particularly in urban outskirts and suburban areas. The remaining resources are sometimes focused on high profile metropolitan areas, buildings and major public spaces with the capacity to brand the city, while the local, peripheral publics are left in a state of decay and non-government. All together this opens up for private initiatives and commercial powers to control the development and the maintenance of urban public spaces (Zukin 1995). The increasing privatisation of public domains is a threat to the spatial embodiment of democracy. The withdrawal of state governance destabilises a profound notion of spatial equality and the general opportunity to perform democratic practices in urban publics. This threat does not affect the already powerful (at least not directly), but it more often strikes poor and neglected citizens.

An apparent predicament in affluent Western societies is that citizens are becoming increasingly private. Private life and the focus on family and intimate friends can be seen as an effect of capitalism and secularism (Sennet 1977; Sloterdijk & Fabricius 2007). Richard Sennet suggests that these two potent forces of modern society are the reason for an "eroded public life" (Sennet 1977:334). Citizens have gained individual independence through an increased financial capacity and the liberation from the church community. Economic surplus has been invested in improved living conditions, products and services that have made humans less dependent on each other on a day-to-day, face-to-face basis. The economic growth has been used to privatise our daily needs and activities: gated homes and

neighbourhoods, private surveillance systems, internet shopping, internet banking, internet reading, television and other screens (for private film watching), individual HiFi-devices (for private music consumption), individual mobile telephones, etc. All these artefacts have made us gradually more independent from each other and increased our possibilities to choose our encounters with strangers. This benefit (if it is to be considered as such) is of course not equally distributed, but rather directly related to socio-economic status. The result, however, is that mundane encounters with strangers whom we don't want to meet decreases – in real life as well as on the Internet and via social media.

The privatisation of urban public space is sometimes motivated by security reasons, aiming at protecting the wealthy and powerful from the less fortunate citizens, and to safeguard the middle class way of life (Davis 1990:224). The quest for privacy has alienated us to an extent where many citizens have difficulties genuinely envisioning the basic circumstances for other citizens outside their individual circle of friends, relatives and colleagues. Certain groups' (elderly, teenagers and young women) avoidance of some public domains can partly be explained by fear of crime and of groups or individuals that are deemed threatening. In under-managed and under-programmed spaces, the risk/chance is higher for appropriation by groups using the space for very private activities, activities that may affect the possibilities for others to share the same space.

Most urban space is privatised and individualised to some degree. An increasing number of restaurants and cafés expand their territories with outdoor facilities. Private commercial events occasionally occupy public urban squares, and commercial advertisements are allowed to heavily influence the visual appearance of squares, streets and other public spaces. Graffiti tagging and street art manifest individual territories. The private pimping of public spaces and public transport, however beautiful and interesting, challenges the public control over public space. Mobile phone conversations affect the soundscape of public transport (trains, buses, terminals, waiting facilities) and minor urban spaces. In private spheres we are connected to various 'virtual publics' at virtually all times through networks such as television, radio, telephones and the Internet. In public space, we are, at will, intimately connected with friends, family or other closely related people by telephone or Internet (Cameron 2000; Wikström 2009).The increasing corporate ownership, and thus control over, public space is a sort of privatisation that has a major influence on the life in urban space on a more profound and permanent level. The concept Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)[9] appeared in the US in the 1960s and has

9   In New York (and the UK) the phenomenon is denoted POPS and in San Francisco and Seattle POPOS (Privately Owned Public Open Spaces).

now spread to most Western countries. POPS include spaces such as urban squares, gardens, parks, streets, playgrounds, railway stations etc. that are normally owned and managed by private developers, corporate businesses or other commercial actors. The phenomenon was highlighted by the journalist Bradley L. Garrett in the Guardian,[10] where he claims that the "privatising of cities' public spaces is escalating" and that it affects "everything from personal psyche to our ability to protest" (Garrett in The Guardian, 4 August 2015).[11] Garrett, who is originally from Los Angeles, refers to an occasion when he was back home and asked a friend where he could find public space in the city. His friend replied "What, to buy?". This could be taken as a joke, but in the context of L.A. it makes sense; the city even sells out slivers of pavement.[12]

A related phenomenon, distinguishable in the USA and UK since at least fifteen years, are Business Improvement Districts (BID); public areas that are privately managed by businesses "paying an extra levy in order to create an attractive external consumer environment." (Carmona 2010a:136). These 'private-public' spaces are "characterized by a uniformed private security presence and the banning of anti-social behaviours, from skateboarding to begging" (Minton 2006:17 in Carmona 2010a:136). This tendency to privatise public domains undermines the possibilities for many citizens to influence urban space development and to guard the interests that they value.

Ash Amin claims that the traditional urban public spaces are no longer the obvious centres for civic and political formation (Amin 2008). Amin argues that the traditional publics are arenas for "practices of negotiating the urban environment, and social response to anonymous others" (Amin 2008:6), and that the shaping of civic and political ideas are distributed to assorted media, social movements, workplaces, local communities, etc. I am not convinced that such a sharp division can be made; civic and political formation can hardly emerge in the absence of everyday exchange with other citizens. Public space is not a parliament and should not be judged as such; it is foremost an open arena for human/nonhuman entanglement, where politics, or the reason for political formation, certainly can take place. The incentive for political awareness and the motivation for political action can start with the first-hand recognition of inequalities, injustice and discrimination that sustain unhealthy asymmetric power relations.

However, the linking of public space and democracy is ambiguous; in repressed societies or non-democracies, political struggles and civic forma-

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10   August 4 (modified August 7) 2015.

11   (www.theguardian.com)

12   Article by Roger Vincent in Los Angeles Times, July 18, 2015. (www.latimes.com)

tions frequently take place in private domains such as homes, social media, workplaces, cafés, etc., where the state municipalities have no (or fewer) ears or eyes. But it is in shared, open space change that is finally realised and verified – from political revolutions in the streets and squares to mundane encounters with stranger-citizens. An encounter with a demonstration, a revolution or an outcast stranger through a media filter is not the same as a face-to-face confrontation.

Public Domain

> The public is not only what is open to sight, but also what is touched by many. (Brighenti 2010a:35)

The term 'public space' is recognised among planners and architects as primarily indicating Euclidian spaces that form part of a public infrastructure that is accessible (at least physically) by all citizens. Madanipour (2003) refers to public space and public places as "the physical environment which is associated with public meanings functions" (p.4), while 'public sphere' and 'public realm' have been used in broader terms, encompassing political and social dimensions. The publicness of public space has been studied and analysed with a number of approaches, as briefly mentioned in the introduction above. Jürgen Habermas (1989 [1962]) introduces the concept 'public sphere' to capture the sites where (bourgeois) socio-political public life is articulated and negotiated.[13] Habermas' concept focuses mainly on the political and discursive aspects of publicity – the public sphere as an arena for consensus-oriented deliberation on the 'common good'. Nancy Fraser (1990) strongly opposes Habermas' approach and criticises its assumptions on several grounds, accusing it of excluding gender and class perspectives and of preferring one "comprehensive public sphere" instead of multiple, competing publics and 'private interests' (Fraser 1990:62-63). Fraser also questions the assumption that a "functioning democratic public sphere requires a sharp separation between civil society and the state" (Fraser 1990:63). Instead, Fraser suggests an approach to public sphere as a multiplicity of publics, including the interest of all citizens (safeguarding social equality), even the so-called 'private interests' (Fraser 1990:77).

In 1998, Lyn Lofland proposed the term 'public realm', defined as "*those areas of urban settlement in which individuals in copresence tend to*

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13   Habermas describes the public sphere as a space (coffee house, urban square, media, etc.) where private citizens meet and discuss matters of public interest, aspiring to strengthen democracy, and as a counterweight to government authorities. The citizens constituting Habermas' public sphere were in fact a masculine bourgeois elite, asserting to discuss general concerns of all citizens – a public whom they assumed to represent.

be personally unknown or only categorically known to one another" (Lofland [1998] 2009:9). Lofland's public realm is conceptually open and vastly inclusive, rather closely related to 'public domain', a concept I primarily use in this text (cf. Sennett 1977b; Chermayeff & Alexander 1963). I will, however, still use the term public space, to signify a more general under-standing of a publicly shared physical space.

In this thesis, I primarily use the term public domain, following Hajer and Reijndorp. Public domains are here referred to as sites where pub-lic life is recurrently produced, hence sometimes even private spaces. As traditional publics are privatised to some extent, and even corporatised, private spaces sometimes become public through use. As the architect and urbanist Manuel de Solà-Morales has pointed out, professional planners, urbanists and architects should not disregard private spaces used as sites for public or collective life. Instead, these spaces could be included in the public concept and urbanised as such (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:48). In relation to Solà-Morales' notions, Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp argue: "The simple fact that something is not completely public is no rea-son to dismiss the location as public domain" (2001:48). This argument is important, since it defies the modernist view of urban spaces as classifiable into fixed categories, regarding functions and uses. In *The Publicness of Public Space. On Public Domain* (2010a), the Italian sociologist Andrea Mubi Brighenti explore publicness from political, interactionist and ur-ban study perspectives, ending up with a notion of 'public domain' as an 'integral regime', encompassing social, material and governance aspects. Brighenti describes the term *public domain* as

> […] the point of convergence and in the zone of indistinction between material and immaterial processes, whereby an imma-terial meaning is created through acts of material inscription and projection. (Brighenti 2010a:8)

> […] bodies, subjects and events enter this domain according to certain rhythms and producing certain effects. The public domain thus offers a productive notion of publicness, in which the public is not understood merely through the 'grand dichotomy' – the opposition of the public to the private – rather it is observed as a self-consistent regime of social life. (Brighenti 2010a:40)

A top-down stipulated publicness is perhaps neither an appropriate meth-od for producing nor designating public space today. People apply public meaning to spaces of their own choice, independently of how spaces are labelled on the city map or in urban planning documents; people invent

and define publicness and public space through everyday practice and individual desires (Crawford 1995). To survive over time, though, public spaces have to be agreed upon by those using the spaces, or they must be acknowledged as such by the municipalities. Stable public space doesn't come into existence or maintain itself automatically. Public space, which is not governed and maintained publicly, will most likely gradually become private (at least informally). In their book *In Search of New Public Domain* (2001), Hajer and Reijndorp distinguish between the concepts *public space* and *public domain*, stating:

> We define 'Public domain' as those places where an exchange between social groups is possible and also actually occurs. […] Public space is in essence a space that is freely accessible for everyone… (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:11)

These cited connotations of public domain indicate a relational and action-oriented understanding of the concept. Since public domains are produced through use and activity, they are detached from predetermined public space typologies. By linking all kinds of actors, such as objects, subjects, time and social practices, to a spatial situation, complex and situated networks of human and nonhuman relations can be discerned (Latour 2005). The actors tumble in site-specific rhythms, producing places and territories, meanings, events and other effects. To be in a public domain thus implies not only relating to other humans, but also the entanglement with the space itself and its materiality, its light conditions, smells and sounds, its microclimate, etc. Even the history and the repute of the space is at play, as well as how the space is related to a wider infrastructural and spatial context.

As the production of public life is essentially action-based and temporal, there are no permanently fixed public domains; i.e. bounded public spaces, established by, for instance, the means of specific functions of planning. The spaces we traditionally label as 'public' on a city map, such as streets, squares, plazas and parks, are merely conceptually framed as such, since they are not made to contain – or conceal – privately controlled habitation or work. They could more accurately be denoted as *intended* or *planned* public spaces – spatial promises for public life.

Public life can appear wherever it is possible for space to be appropriated by different individuals and groups for varying uses and actions. This means that public life can emerge even in privately controlled space, at least temporarily or fragmentarily. The reversed situation can also occur; a public space can be privatised for hours, days or weeks. For example, when a circus occupies a park or a funfair is set up in an urban square, those

spaces are temporarily privatised. A street performer is privatising a pub-
lic space through a temporal commercialisation. I wouldn't say that this
is in any way contradictory; the possibility of temporal privatisation can
even be seen as a characteristic for a public domain. The opportunity for
individuals and groups to temporarily claim/occupy a fragment of public
domain is one of its most significant qualities – a key feature of public life
production. In his 'trial by space' notion, Lefebvre argues that it is crucial
for any group to manage their own material space to survive over time,
stating that

> [...] groups, classes and fractions of classes cannot constitute
> themselves, or recognize one another, as 'subjects' unless they gen-
> erate (or produce) a space. (Lefebvre 1991:416)

The urban planner and theorist Lina Olsson (2008a; 2008b) combines
Lefebvre's notions of spatial production with his concept of participation.
She stresses the importance of spatial appropriation as an important aspect
of 'civic participation':

> True civic participation in society, according to Lefebvre, is a mat-
> ter of participating in society's continuous 'production of space'. A
> change in the city's social reality must therefore include a change
> of space. Lefebvre, then, takes the view that the city's residents
> should have a 'right to the city', meaning that they are given the
> possibility of appropriating the city's spaces, i.e. claiming and us-
> ing them as their own. (Olsson 2008b:67)

Reducing social exchange in urban space to a question of human-human
interaction reduces the matter to a triviality. The social cannot be pro-
duced in a vacuum; human interaction is always mediated and framed by
nonhuman actors (Latour 2005).

    Public domain is produced by coexisting strangers sharing material and
spatial resources to perform various social practices. The serendipity of
casual and unexpected encounters separates the public domain from the
private. As I will show below, the nature of these encounters and social ex-
changes is affected by how the material world is organised and how various
artefacts are designed and distributed. Clustering and collective formations
require durable encounters and/or repetitive exchanges to emerge. Some
sort of communal recognition of how the social is stabilised or formalised
is necessary, by means of social strategies, behaviour, and how the material
is supposed to be entangled – i.e. a profound and shared understanding of
spatio-material affordances. The rules of social behaviour are often medi-
ated by or distributed to the material. As a member of a cluster, or a more

stable collective, one practices the code of behaviour that is agreed upon, negotiated or informally acknowledged. This social contract is normally distributed to various artefacts and architectures that are intertwined in the heterogeneous clusters and hence support their stabilisation.

Exchange on Common Grounds

I would like to proceed by departing from Latour's question *Can we live together*? and be even more specific, by asking *where* and *how* can we live together, and *by what means do we meet at all*?

In most Western societies there is an urgent need to find ways for citizens to share space on equal terms, including citizens who differ culturally, ethnically and religiously from the majority (Sennett 2012). Public domain is traditionally recognised as a place for strangers to meet, an arena for mediation and negotiation of differences. Gill Valentine (2008), however, argues that there has been too much faith and too many expectations associated with brief and casual encounters between strangers (characterising most social exchange in public domain), regarding negotiating diversity in urban public space:

> Some of the writing about cosmopolitanism and new urban citizenship appears to be laced with a worrying romantisization (sic) of urban encounter and to implicitly reproduce a potentially naïve assumption that contact with 'others' necessarily translates into respect for difference. (Valentine 2008:325)

The co-presence of multiple humans is not a guarantee for social exchange between strangers, but it is certainly a prerequisite. All space is potentially space for encounters and exchange, but it is in the public domain that we are most likely encounter strangers. Physical proximity doesn't automatically mean interaction that prompts mutual respect; everyday social interactions are where we negotiate identities and challenge prejudices, and sometimes bridge cultural differences (Amin 2002:959). Ann Legeby (2013) suggests that co-presence can be seen as "prior to social interaction, it is likely that it has significant influence on how different types of solidarities may emerge, develop and reproduce" (p.17). Urban social courtesy is, however, not enough to resolve social tensions or controversies (Valentine 2008:328). Gill Valentine asserts that "we should be careful about mistaking such taken-for-granted civilities as respect for difference" (Valentine 2008:328). The superficial contacts provided by brief encounters in urban space maybe enable tolerance but, Valentine claims,

> […] tolerance is a dangerous concept. It is often defined as a positive attitude, yet it is not the same thing as mutual respect. Rather, tolerance conceals an implicit set of power relations. It is a courtesy that a dominant or privileged group has the power to extend to, or withhold from, others (Valentine 2008:329). To tolerate someone is an act of power, to be tolerated is an acceptance of weakness (Waltzer in Valentine 2008:329).

The tendency of self-segregation in shared spaces underpins the fact that everyday encounters shouldn't be overrated with regard to bridging between different social groups. Valentine (2008) proposes the alternative term 'meaningful contact', signifying "contact that actually changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into a more general positive respect for – rather than merely tolerance of – others" (Valentine 2008:325). Meaningful contact may be linked to more durable exchanges and interactions taking place in situations that afford deeper relations. According to Gordon W. Allport (Pettigrew & Tropp 2005), there are four conditions that facilitate deeper contact between groups, namely 'equivalence', 'common goals', 'cooperation' and 'support from authority, law, or custom'. These conditions can be found in public as well as private domains; the performance of group activities in a park, such as boules or football, may well include all four of them.

Goffman (1963) introduces two categories of social interaction: *focused interaction* and *unfocused interaction*. 'Unfocused interaction' (Goffman 1963:24) can be described as 'sheer and mere copresence' while 'focused interaction' implies face-to-face contact, some kind of shared focus and sometimes cooperation. Obtaining an increased focused interaction requires conditions that make people engage more closely and cooperate, or at least share time doing things aimed towards a common objective or to a mutual benefit. Some examples of situations characterised by focused interaction could be: skate park and playground activities, communal urban gardening, fitness and health activities, organised and curated events in the public domain. Ash Amin (2012:59) presents a similar notion when he suggests 'purposeful contact' as a deepened alternative to 'co-presence'. In relation to Goffman's 'focused interaction' Amin suggest the term 'cultural destabilisation' (Amin 2002; cf. Valentine 2014), indicating a condition of potential social reorientation.

It is widely argued that prejudices about 'the other' are reconsidered only when deeper relations are established. This is an evident reason to study heterogeneous collectives that repeatedly cluster, sharing space and activities; these collectives are characterised by co-operation rather than co-existence. Collectives can signify sites for negotiation and they can ap-

pear in public as well as in private domains, for example in restaurants, at music festivals, in cafés, pubs, markets, etc. Amin describes spaces that constitute arenas for meaningful and 'culturally destabilising' encounters as 'micropublics', characterised by "micropolitics of everyday social contact and encounter" (Amin 2002:959). 'Micropublics' may also include music clubs, sports facilities, theatre groups, communal gardens, etc. Amin refers to these places as 'unsteady social spaces' (Amin 2002:970), due to their destabilising effects. People of different backgrounds and geographical origins gather around a mutual interest (with destabilising effects) and the situation provides opportunities for repeated exchange with unknown others (cf. Sandercock 2003; Valentine 2014: 85-91). Shared practices and interests may constitute a foundation for community, togetherness, security, trust, etc., and despite great diversity in ages, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status, the collective assembles and produces social ties that may increase mutual understanding between collective members (cf. Amin 2008:10-11; Amin 2012; Massey 2005).

Amin claims that "urban public spaces are often territorialised by particular groups (and therefore steeped in surveillance) […]. The urban public spaces are not natural servants of multicultural engagement" (Amin 2002:967). However, Amin's notion can be reversed; the territorialisations 'by particular groups' can implicate the formation of collectives, where 'multicultural engagement' may be exactly what is being performed. Heterogeneous clustering and the production of collectives has perhaps always been a primary task for public domains, from a social perspective. In collectives and particularly stable or continuously reproduced collectives, the social relations are more durable and regularly repeated, which implies that the opportunities for negotiating differences – and hence for deeper social (ex-)changes – are greater. Collective norms can be established and shared by members with widely different backgrounds.

I argue that brief encounters in the public domain are important for the general awareness of societal multiplicity and for social cohesion, but as a means, and not as an end. When moving in urban space, we are constantly faced with social encounters. As individuals we constantly scan others in search of recognition, potential danger or maybe a friend or a romance, or perhaps we just look to see others. Interaction with strangers can take place in many different ways: sharing a glance, inadvertent physical contact, a courteous remark, a short conversation about an event, etc.; "urban proximity offers for a 'shift' of perspective: through the experience of otherness one's casual view of reality gets some competition from other views and lifestyles" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:89). I think it is too harsh to deny brief encounters any significant value, but what is more important

is that the public domain offers the possibility for clustering and collective formations where deeper social relations can grow.

I suggest an inclusive approach, where co-existence and cooperation also comprise nonhuman actors. Material programming and active management of activities offer enhanced conditions for socio-material exchange and repeated clusterings. As argued above, humans do not interact in a vacuum; instead they depend heavily on spatio-material means to cluster and sometimes form collectives. The key concern here is exploring the role of materiality in human encounters and how the material affects the composition of collectives. It is, as it were, an interest in the 'physical' of physical planning – although my study does not concern planning per se, but rather the effects that 'physical' objects have in their relation to human interaction and the building of collectives.

The material is an active part in the mediation of social exchange in the public domain. It is unlikely, though, that design efforts alone can make strangers cluster and interact in durable and transformative ways. Architects and designers of urban space cannot control the depth of social interactions, but they can possibly provide opportunities for exchange. The arrangement of space and artefacts can offer conditions for territorial complexity and social multiplicity, establishing settings for plurality regarding public social life.

Heterogeneous Clusters and Collectives

> Any time an interaction has temporal and spatial extension, it is because one has shared it with nonhumans… (Latour 1996b:239)

Individual citizens can appropriate space, although it may be difficult for most people without particular or exceptional resources. It is easier – and far more common – for individuals to form clusters or collectives and produce territories together with other humans and various materialities. Hybrid association can empower individuals to appropriate space, produce events and make a difference – through the mobilisation of collective agency. In correlation with this notion, I suggest that *cluster*, *collective* and *collective space* might be more appropriate and productive concepts than network when investigating urban public life. Collectives and collective spaces are networks made operational locally in urban space contexts, specifically emphasising the heterogeneity of different kinds of relations (here denoted as *exchanges*) – indicating the gathering of different categories of actors. In the following sections, *clusters*, *collectives* and *collective spaces* are examined as aspects of public space and public life.

The approach implies a view of urban space as being produced by multiple and intersecting collectives and collective spaces. Urban collectives operate on different scales, with different temporal durations and with varying internal relations between the clustered actors. Urban collectives are continuously produced through use, social practices, rules, policies and regulations. Collectives are internally unified by activities and/or specific interests or objectives.[14] They may appear anywhere and are not necessarily associated with specific geographical sites. However, they are dependent on a certain degree of 'synchorisation' or 'synchronisation' (Kärrholm 2009). Nor do they always need to be defined by an interpersonal relationship; i.e. individuals of a collective might not always know each other personally. Individual citizens are part of numerous collectives (sometimes concurrently) and navigate easily between them.

Latour proposes the term 'collective' since it clearly signifies the importance of "convoking the collective that will be charged from now on, as its name indicates, with 'collecting' the multiplicity of associations of humans and nonhumans" (Latour 2004a:55). Latour perceives the term collective as a challenge to the prevalent dichotomy society (culture) vs. nature (Latour 2013:296); collective introduces a new approach to how we associate, and sometimes manage to stay together. Heterogeneity is one of the major keys to his view on how collectives come together:

> Now, in the word 'collective,' it is precisely the work of collecting into a whole that I want to stress. […] The more we associate materialities, institutions, technologies, skills, procedures, and slowdowns with the word 'collective,' the better its use will be: the hard labor necessary for the progressive and public composition of the future unity will be all the more visible. (Latour 2004a:59)

The segregation of humans and nonhumans signifies a deliberate avoidance of the exploration of the complex relations that make up the (social) world. *In Politics of Nature* (2004a), Latour criticises the 'subject-object opposition' in Western science; because of its "goal of prohibiting any exchange of properties, the human-nonhuman pairing makes such an exchange not only desirable but necessary. This pairing is what will make it possible to fill up the collective with beings endowed with will, freedom, speech, and real existence" (p.61). Contrarily, Latour argues further that "humans and nonhumans, […] can *exchange properties*, in order to compose in common the raw material of the collective" (Latour 2004a:61).

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14 The collectives I sketch here have similarities to Solà-Morales' 'urban tribes' (de Solà-Morales 2008:189; 1992). Urban tribes indicate gatherings of people sharing the same interests.

The social is always socio-material, or heterogeneous if you like, in the same sense as "all entities are networks of heterogeneous elements" (Callon and Law 1997:165). Latour claims that social ties that rely solely on the social are ephemeral, because "no tie can be said to be durable and made of social stuff. […] [A] power relationship that mobilizes nothing but social skills would be limited to very short-lived, transient interactions" (Latour 2005:66). To stabilise the social, to make it durable and resilient, requires distributed agency; i.e. an ontology that acknowledges nonhumans as vital actors in networks that are traditionally characterised as social. ANT networks are always heterogenic clusters of human and nonhuman actors. Difference is key to their collectiveness – not sameness or uniformity. Collective stability is made possible by the distribution of agency to nonhuman actors that are more durable than social ties and thus a condition for the formation of a society (Callon and Latour 1981; Latour 1986; Latour 1993:111; Latour 1996b:238). The stability of a collective relies on various tactics and strategies and is vitally dependent on the ability to collect different sorts of human and nonhuman actors. The level of distributed agency hence depends on the collective's heterogeneity. Latour postulates that 'collective action' is "an action that collects different types of forces woven together because they are different" (Latour 2005:74-75).

Latour introduces the notion of collectives in *We Have Never Been Modern* (1993) in order "to describe the association of humans and nonhumans and 'society' to designate one part only of our collectives, the divide invented by the social sciences" (Latour 1993:4). In *Pandora's Hope*, Latour describes some further aspects of collective formation, including how they are composed and gradually transformed into displacement, to be rearranged again. The focus is on the hybridisation of humans and nonhumans and how the collective gains unexpected resources from mobilised nonhuman actors (Latour 1999). Latour frames the reciprocity between humans and artefacts within 'modern collective' formations by suggesting their concurrent becoming and their profound intimacy, caused by multiple transactions and mediations. He argues: "Objects and subjects are made simultaneously, and an increased number of subjects is directly related to the number of objects stirred-brewed-into the collective" (Latour 1999:196). In *Politics of Nature* (2004a) Latour sums up his notions on collectives and proposes collective to be used as an alternative to *society* (2004a:8). The term society should be "kept only for the assembly of already gathered entities that sociologists of the social believe have been made in social stuff" (Latour 2005:75).

Since human bodies and objects are defined by their associations, so are the spaces that they produce. The assembled and structured materialities

that we call 'spaces' and the various collectives clustering in and with them are mutually responsive. Each body and item entangled in an urban collective is defined by and defines the network as a whole; thus all bodies and items have infinite modes or appearances, dependent on time, connections and the spatial situation. No collectives are homogeneous in the sense that they appear the same, regardless of the perspective. They appear differently depending on the point from which they are observed. Accordingly, it is difficult to plan for public life without including all entangled and affected actors. One could argue that this inherent demand for multiple viewpoints also justifies and calls for a more democratic (participatory) design process. Instead of anticipating general or average users of space, or singling out discrete spaces themselves for analysis, relationality and interdependency could be the principal guiding concepts in planning and design processes. This performative and relational approach to the study of public life reveals how associations between multiple actors produce unexpected and situated actions and events. Latour implies this performativity on a societal level, when he declares that "society is not what holds us together, it is what is held together" (Latour 1986:276). More traditional planning approaches – rooted in convictions that predefined entities act according to predetermined cultures, behavioural patterns or causal effects in fixed material structures – might miss some very important actors. I argue that we should be more sensitive to socio-material exchanges and interaction processes to successfully be able to examine the formation of multiple co-existing and fluid collectives.

Callon and Law argue that a "stable social arrangement is simultaneously a point (an individual) and a network (a collective)" (Callon and Law 1997:165). An analysis of the social, in urban public life, is thus a study of 'hybrid configurations' (Callon and Law 1997:165), and a quest to overcome the divide between individual/collective, agent/structure, subject/object, culture/nature and social/material. From an ANT and STS perspective it is not individuals who per se gather collectives, make up rules and traditions or forming cultures – it is equally the reverse; artefacts, natures, animals, cultures and various heterogeneous collectives correspondingly constitute individual identities. This – the intimate entanglements between these former dichotomised concepts – could rather be understood as a mutual process of *becoming* human and society.

From an analytical perspective, the divide between individual and collective is simply not very fruitful; it is rather always a question of scale. Collectives are made up of actors, but all incorporated actors are also networks in and of themselves. A city can be apprehended as a collective even if we know it is an effect of myriads of entangled actors. A neighbourhood,

a football team and a family are collectives as well, whilst also forming parts of the greater city-collective. Handling each collective scale as a heterogenic congregation perhaps lets us see more clearly how they are composed, and how they form parts of each other.

The durability or repetition of collectives often rely on durable material constitutions, for example sites that are specifically designed and equipped for various sports, events or civic urban activities. The more stable and attuned the material conditions are for a particular collective, the easier the collective can be assembled. The more the collective depends on volatile and unreliable material conditions, the more uncertain the probability for the collective to assemble becomes. Collectives can, however, also be repeated (or durable) due to schedules or rhythm – like people gathering at a particular hour in a park, at a playground or at a café for one reason or another. John Law (1992) captures the process of collecting and stabilising networks as being heavily entrenched with material qualities:

> The first has to do with the fact that some materials are more *durable* than others and so maintain their relational patterns for longer. […] Thoughts are cheap but they don't last long, and speech lasts very little longer. But when we start to *perform* relations – and in particular when we *embody* them in inanimate materials such as texts and buildings – they may last longer. Thus a good ordering strategy is to embody a set of relations in durable materials. Consequently, a relatively stable network is one embodied in and performed by a range of durable materials. (Law 1992:387)

To maintain a collective unity, the collective's members have to reproduce their relations and recruit new actors as others leave. Sara Ahmed (2000) frames an emerging collective beautifully by describing the means to assemble as an end in itself, asserting that "collectivities are formed through the *very work that we need to do* in order to get closer to others" (p.180). The activities shaping the collective, coupled with adding and losing parts, are crucial events in urban public life.

One important objective of this thesis is to investigate what and how artefacts mediate human exchanges and hence prompt individual and collective agency. Collectives exercise agency, agency that affects individuals and other collectives in multiple ways. The individual agency remains pertinent within a collective, even though it might change character. In a football team every player exercises individual agency, and the team (the collective) does the same – as a unit. The team is reliant on individual players' agencies to perform collectively, but within certain boundaries – the collective objective must come first. The ball is passed between the individual players of a team and repeatedly affirms the ties that make up the

collective. The mediation of " 'nonhuman' agents are vital to this conception of a network's collective capacity to act because they attach us to one another, because they circulate in our hands and define our social bond by their very circulation" (Whatmore 1999:28). Agency is produced in every second of a football game and the networks (collectives) are reproducing themselves by circulating the ball or by trying to take it from each other.

Jane Bennett (2010) discusses distribution of agency and the relation between individual and group agency, using concepts introduced by Spinoza (*conative* and *affective bodies*) and Deleuze/Guattari (*assemblage*). According to Bennett, Spinoza's conative and affective bodies are "*associative* or (one could even say) *social* bodies, in the sense that each is, by its very nature as a body, continuously affecting and being affected by other bodies" (2010:21). Bennett argues further that the affective bodies (actors) "form alliances and enter assemblages" (2010:22). The assemblages as well as their individual bodies are both conative and affective; i.e. individual actors persist in their own beings and strive simultaneously as they associate with other actors. Deleuze reaches similar notions through his concept *assemblage*, which Bennett defines as "a gathering of elements in a way that both forms a coalition and yet preserves something of the agential impetus of each element" (Bennett 2010:35). Collective spaces are temporal gatherings of human and nonhuman actors, all bringing individual agency to the collective. The collective develops agency of its own, without erasing the agencies of its individual members (actors). As a collective space, a marketplace has exclusive agencies. The individual market stalls, being subordinated clusters, have their own specific agencies, as do the visiting citizens (collective members and proto-members). Bennett phrases it thus:

> Each member and proto-member of the assemblage has a certain vital force, but there is also an effectivity proper to the grouping as such: an agency of the assemblage. […] an assemblage is never a stolid block but an open-ended collective, a 'non-totalizable sum.'
>
> (Jane Bennett 2010:24)

Emerging Collectives and the Formation of Collective Space

> The factors gathered in the past under the label of a 'social domain' are simply some of the elements to be assembled in the future in what I will call not a society but a collective. (Latour 2005:14)

We Live in Collectives, Not in Societies… (Latour 1999a:193)

We are collective animals. We spend a lot of time and energy determining who our friends, our groups, and the collectives we hope to be part of are. Most of us need to belong, to form alliances or simply connect with others to reach a common goal. We search for spaces in which we can meet people with whom we share interests and engage with artefacts. The collective is our natural habitat. We also need interfaces to other collectives, collectives of which we are a part and those we are not. We even have to trace the collectives that we fear.

In *Theory of the Quasi Object* (2007), Michel Serres examines the transgression from an 'I' to a 'We' and from 'being' to 'relation' when gathering or grouping; i.e. forming collectives. Serres focuses on the emergence of the assemblage, the transformation of individual subjects and objects into relational networks that reconstitute multiple 'I's into a 'We': "It is rigorously the transsubstantiation of being into relation. Being is abolished for the relation. Collective ecstasy is the abandon of the 'I's on the tissue of relations" (Serres 2007:228). Serres' perspective gives reasons to study how networks transform the actors and what makes them enter certain collectives. A human actor is driven into the collective for various reasons and by various forces. In the collective, the actor forms (and is caught by) numerous tight and vibrant relations with other human and nonhuman actors in the collective.

This black category of collective, group, class, caste, whatever, is it
a being in turn, or a cluster of relations? (Serres 2007:225)

A *collective space* can be depicted as a geographically situated, durable or regularly repeated collective. Collective space, as opposed to public space, is a temporal appropriation by a group with specific intentions. Accordingly, a collective that routinely practices certain behaviour or a certain activity in a particular place produces a collective space. It is a shared space, but not necessarily a public one. Collective spaces can be produced in private domains. The activity is essential for how the space is conceived, since its materiality is usually the condition for the action itself. The activity is more or less provoked by the material constitution of the place; skaters, shoppers, takeaway picnickers and playing children need different material conditions to cluster. Shared practices that result in collective space may generate a sense of community and togetherness, and also security, comfort and trust, but of course also the opposite: insecurity, discomfort and distrust. Sometimes the form of territorial production, the behavioural policies and the nature of the internal relations are defined and condi-

tioned by the collective itself: for instance, teenage scooter girls gathering at their favourite scooting site, local boule-players meeting at a shady spot in the park or families in a neighbourhood gathering for a street party. Sometimes collectives are assembled by more formal instigators; for example an activists leading a mass protest, a coach gathering her team, market traders opening their stands or collectives gathered as effects of cultural traditions, policies or regulations.

Employing the concepts *collectives* and *collective space* is an attempt to examine public space as a production of human and nonhuman networks that offer perspectives on urban life beyond the public/private dichotomy. The term collective denotes a network of which the individual always forms a part, as a productive actor, together with other human and nonhuman actors. The concept implies specific relations between the members that do not exist with actors outside the collective, and thus the collective provides increased opportunities for exchange and the negotiation of differences. Collectives with human members arriving from different social and cultural backgrounds can initiate multiple and durable exchanges that offer potentials for mutual engagement, understanding and cooperation. Ash Amin argues that a civic culture "of tolerated multiplicity and shared commons" (2008:9) can emerge through situated spatial practices. This socio-spatial situation "cannot be reduced to the nature of inter-personal interaction between strangers" (Amin 2008:9). Architectural features, atmosphere, artefacts, reputation, etc. are intimately entwined with human bodies and affected by the local public culture.

The Force of Weak Ties

The actors composing collectives are kept together by more or less robust connections. The nature of a collective is determined by the type of connections that characterise the included actors – as categorical types, friends, relatives, etc. Mark Granovetter (1973) introduces a discussion on how social networks are affected – internally as well as externally – by the strength of ties connecting related actors. Granovetter's notions on 'the strength of weak ties' (1973, 1983) imply an alternative conceptual entrance to Amin's and Valentine's discourses on the social value of brief encounters. Granovetter (1973) intuitively classifies the strength of interpersonal relations into three types: strong ties, weak ties and absent ties (p.1361). The nature of ties that evolve between individuals vary with a combination of four different features: time, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocal services. Accordingly, strong ties characterise close friendships and tight social circles, while weak ties signify brief contacts and casual encounters. Granovetter suggests that

> […] weak ties, often denounced as generative of alienation (Wirth 1938) are here seen as indispensable to individuals' opportunities and to their integration into communities; strong ties, breeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation. Paradoxes are a welcome antidote to theories which explain everything all too neatly. (Granovetter 1973:1378)

Granovetter implies, rather counterintuitively, that weak ties are in fact critical for a well-functioning public domain, regarding strangers' opportunities to be enrolled in new social frameworks. The sociologist Peter Blau supports Granovetter's argument, claiming that groups characterised by strong social bonds may complicate the integration of strangers:

> […] intimate relations tend to be confined to small and closed social circles . . . they fragment society into small groups. The integration of these groups in the society depends on people's weak ties, not their strong ones, because weak social ties extend beyond intimate circles (Granovetter 1973) and establish the intergroup connections on which macrosocial integration rests […] (Blau in Granovetter 1983:220)

Weak ties – for instance social connections between actors inside a collective and actors outside the collective – are key for political change or resistance. Granovetter argues that community organisation as such can be blocked because of a lack of weak ties to actors outside the community, however strong the internal ties might be (1973:1373; cf. Gans 1962:229-304). This argument indicates the importance of weak ties between 'strong-tie' collectives and outsiders, since weak ties "are more likely to link members of different small groups than are strong ones, which tend to be concentrated within particular groups" (Granovetter 1973:1376). Granovetter further asserts that "people rarely act on mass-media information unless it is transmitted through personal ties (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955; Rogers 1962)" (Granovetter 1973:1374), which constitutes an example of the need for strong ties to disseminate and anchor information.

Mobilisation of resistance and organised negotiations for civic change require 'bridges' between groups. Tight and stable groups are socially upheld by strong ties and need weak ties to outside individuals and groups to multiply exterior contacts. Accordingly, there is a crucial need for common grounds that allow for weak ties to operate – spaces where individuals and groups are exposed to each other.

When adding material elements to this account, ties are affected in new ways. A distinct cluster of human and material actors within a collective can develop strong ties, affecting the larger collective in various

ways. Ties cannot be reserved for humans only; they appear in all relations, including ties to cats, flowers, food and to artefacts of all kinds. On a micro, intra-personal, level, as well as on a macro-level, artefacts or other nonhuman entities can be what actually determines the relation (tie), or at least increases its strength, for example: a tandem bicycle, old cameras, fashionable clothing, a musical trend, a political programme, religious beliefs, etc. In the public domain, certain material formations and artefacts are intimately integrated in most collectives, clearly affecting the nature of the ties that emerge through human/material inter-actions. Sometimes these influential nonhuman elements are the very reason for certain actors to gather in particular spaces, such as skate parks, cafés, playgrounds, street markets, sport fields, music venues, etc.

The notion of strong and weak ties may be compared with Sartre's concept of serial and group formations (Sartre 1976). Seriality can be described as a passive agglomeration of actors, a plurality of individuals joined by circumstantial practises, habits or routine behaviours – weak ties – for example, the guests in a café, passengers on a bus or people queuing to buy theatre tickets. Groups are constituted by more intimate connections – strong ties – and the included actors recognise themselves as being in relation to each other and as sharing a common objective. Series can, however, develop into groups. For example, students randomly gathered in a university course may develop closer relations and start study groups; regulars at a café may become better acquainted with each other and the environment, and initiate regular meetings to play chess or card games there.

Weaker and Stronger Collectives

A collective typically gathers around a shared activity or interest. Even if the individual members of the collective are motivated by a collective activity, they don't necessarily acknowledge the collective as such. Unintentional clusterings – such as an incidental crowd watching a street performer, or guests in a café – can be regarded as *weak collectives*. Member actors come and go without much friction, since they don't actively recognise the notion of belonging to a collective. Weaker collectives can be characterised by 'categorical recognition' (Brighenti 2010a:24, 2010c:53); i.e. recognition based on typification. Categorical recognition should be understood as complementary to 'individual recognition' (Brighenti 2010c:54), which signifies social relations normally produced in private domains or within *strong collectives*. Within this terminology, a strong collective is to be considered a group; i.e. the members are unified by an activity or an interest, and they recognise themselves as sharing a common objective. The weak

collectives can be defined as heterogeneous clusters, assembled, for example, due to specific spatial or material affordances (parents and children in a playground; sunbathers on a bench), or as effects of policies and strategies related to civic or private intentions (people in a taxi queue, shoppers in a marketplace). People who are part of a weak collective do not have to relate to each other directly to perform the common activity; they are simply performing the same activity in spatial proximity to each other. Most weaker collectives are constituted serially (Sartre 1976).

Weaker collectives designate fluid public spaces where groups gather and dissolve. Weaker collectives rely on clusterings, so spatial and temporal proximity become more important here. On the other hand, stronger collectives are more durable and defined by repetitive gatherings, discrete discontinuous clusterings. *Stronger collectives* denotes what are normally understood as more sustainable and identity-oriented collectives, and include enough room for new clusters to emerge. To put it bluntly: Weaker collectives are often produced by clusters, while stronger collectives produce clusters.

Social ties are obviously not binary, but gradual – a seamless scale of gradual attachment and affection amongst related actors. Accordingly, I would suggest, ties are rather weak*er* and strong*er*, as are their effects, when for example collectives are created. Examples of stronger collectives are a reading society, a neighbourhood boules club, a community organisation looking after local interests, etc.; i.e. a stronger collective is a collective with a common project. One could say that some sort of formal or informal membership is required to be part of a stronger collective. The members intentionally assemble the stronger collective and continually make an effort to maintain its integrity – to hold it together. As a non-member, one must be recognised and invited by the members of the collective to be admitted to the group. When a stronger collective dissolves, the included members take notice and social relations are affected. The conditions for membership are important; one needs to have social ties to a member of the collective and/or an understanding of the rules of behaviour that organise the collective. Sometimes the ability to perform the same activity as the collective is sufficient for acceptance as a member. In collective spaces – whether they are associated to stronger or weaker collectives – the activity is essential for how the space is conceived, since its materiality is usually the condition for the action itself. Multiple material actors are regularly and intensely entangled in the clustering process and vital for the collective's stabilisation.

The difference between the stronger and the weaker collectives is not absolute; it is clearly fluctuating and temporal. Collectives may evolve and

transform over time, going from being weaker to becoming stronger and the vice versa. Weaker collectives are normally constituted as horizontal networks with rather symmetrical power relations. Oftentimes there are no given power-positions within the collective; however, power can be positioned outside the collective and exert influence over it. In a marketplace, the traders (the traders' collective) can influence the behaviour of the customers, and the municipality representatives can in turn exercise control over the traders. In a railway station, guards or railway employees can control some aspects of travellers' behaviour. Asymmetric power relations can, however, also be produced in spite of any pre-existing power positions. The public skate park constitutes an example of a *situated* weaker collective; it is a space normally characterised by a horizontal power structure, but one in which informal power asymmetries can occur due to certain, influential individuals claiming power or gaining control through certain specific skills or through strategic activities such as tournaments or other supervised events. In urban space, stronger collectives can be organised as both vertical and horizontal network structures, and thus have both asymmetrical and symmetrical power relations. An organiser or leader who initiates or manages a collective space governs it mostly by association, via an administrative protocol, a tradition or culture. The one in power can also rule through controlling a central strategic item such as a key or a contract, or with access to electricity, etc. The leader/manager then has the capacity to welcome or refuse strangers (potential new members). The weaker collectives typically admit access at any point, while the stronger collectives have restricted access; one may enrol, for example, through a certain skill, via a particular person (a gatekeeper) or a controlling mechanism, such as a gate.

Weaker collectives emerge and are stabilised primarily by *external forces*, affecting unrelated member-actors to cluster and become recognisable as collectives. Stronger collectives, on the other hand, emerge and stabilise mainly due to *internal forces*, acting between the members and keeping the collective assembled. The level of individual integrity is higher in weaker collectives than in stronger collectives, which often means that the level of traditional publicness is higher as well. In strong collectives, members sacrifice some integrity to keep the collective together; i.e. a transition of individual to collective integrity.

Some collective spaces have a pre-public quality and can be understood as urban incubators (Nylund 2007) from which people emerge as public citizens. In stronger collective spaces in particular people with different backgrounds, possibilities, assets, etc. can gather and through collective agency be empowered to act in civil matters. Multiplicity can arise from

a multitude of collectives rather than from multiple individuals. Consequently, collective spaces can be regarded as test beds (or training facilities) for public life, where one can prepare for major public participation and contribution. Because of the shared interest within the strong collective – as well as the sometimes restricted membership – the social interaction and the sharing of information is likely to be more intimate and have a more profound impact on civic issues and social formation.

The community of a stronger collective can break down social barriers and sometimes bridge differences of culture, ethnicity, gender and politics. This is a vital step towards a positive change of social prejudices. A very stable and strong collective can, however, also develop standards and regulations that make it harder for outsiders – strangers – to be included and accepted in the collective community. The normative behaviour in collective spaces may be subject to locally established social and political policies that do not fully correlate with those of the urban publics in general. A stronger collective can be a very secluded alliance and a cradle of prejudices, and occasionally even a site for extreme anti-social values.

Collectives can also be explored in terms of how articulated they are. Latour introduces the concept *articulation* as a way to describe how the actors in a collective are configured and how well connected they are. The level of articulation may also show how collectives vary in stability, accessibility and heterogeneity. Another significant aspect of articulation is as an indication of how different interests and actors are forming alliances and shaping the collective. Regarding the nature of a well-articulated collective, Latour states

> […] that it 'speaks' more, that it is subtler and more astute, that it includes more articles, discrete units, or concerned parties, that it mixes them together with greater degrees of freedom, that it deploys longer lists of actions. We shall say, in contrast, that another collective is more silent, that it has fewer concerned parties, fewer degrees of freedom, and fewer independent articles, that it is more rigid. (Latour 2004a:86)

The level and type of articulation originates from the work that is invested in the maintenance of a collective. The work can be expressed – articulated – in different ways and include various sorts of actors. A well-articulated collective is produced by a wide variety of human and nonhuman actors. Agency is highly distributed between the enrolled actors, and due to its heterogeneity, the well-articulated collective is likely to be robust. A street market can constitute an example of a well-articulated collective which can hold many different actors in various ways, suggesting a diversity of

actions. Multiple 'discrete units' act together and propose alliances with many more actors and interests not yet enrolled in the collective.

A less articulated (more silent) collective is typically more homogeneous than a well-articulated collective, and composed of more similar actors. The distribution of agency is less diverse. Regarding uses and activities, a less articulated collective is usually characterised by rigidity and may easily dissolve due to a uniformity that makes them sensitive to occasional changes, such as for example the loss of essential parts or a change in exterior conditions. In many respects, well-articulated collectives are similar to the fluid networks introduced by Law and Mol (1994:659-660).

Let's conclude this chapter with the examination of an example[15] of how a weaker collective may take shape and transmute into a stronger collective through a process of gradual territorial stabilisation. A group of parents and children spontaneously play football in a meadow close to a playground. They use some articles of clothing on tree branches as goal posts – an unplanned tactic behaviour. The random artefacts become territorial markers that help stabilise the appropriated territory. After the improvised game, they decide to meet the following Thursday evening at seven o'clock to play again, and they then ask a couple of friends to join in. The tactical use of artefacts is supplemented by administrative measures and the territorialisation becomes more strategically stabilised; soon the meadow will be recognised (by association) as a-place-where-soccer-is-played. The Thursday night football games develop over time to a routinised event and the collective grows increasingly more stable. Week after week, more or less the same actors (human individuals and artefacts) are enrolled. At a certain point, material (strategic) means are used to stabilise the activity, such as proper goals and white lines, maybe even some benches for players not currently active in the game and seats for any occasional audience. A territory is demarcated and upheld by manufactured and arranged artefacts with specific agencies. Now, the weak collective gradually has transformed into a rather strong one, stabilised by a structured time (Thursdays at seven), artefacts (goals, white lines, benches, etc.), routinised behaviour (rules and etiquette of the sport) and repeated social exchanges between the members. It is now not unlikely that the collective members become more closely knit, bound by ever stronger ties (and maybe also hierarchised), perhaps gradually making it harder for outsiders to join the game and thereby also the collective. A fluid space has gradually transformed into a bounded territory stabilised through networks and material figuration. The material set-up may also be completed with signs displaying the name of the place, and the institutionalisation is completed. The

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15   Inspired by a similar example in Kärrholm 2004:76.

football field might perhaps still be quite well articulated, but due to a stable set of institutionalised actors, this articulation is no longer needed for sustaining the place as a football field. Jackets and branches marking the goals and the corners of the pitch, clothes on the grass together with bottles and backpacks, balls and players – all the different things (and their rhythmical appearance) that were initially used to produce the territorial association of the football field are now delegated to a few non-human actors: the football goals and the white lines.

2

THE FORCE OF MATTER

INTRODUCTORY MICRO-STUDIES

Before presenting my methods and main field studies, in this chapter I will present a series of micro-case examples, illustrating a few aspects on how materiality and spatial qualities may afford and prompt certain – sometimes unforeseen – behaviours and actions. The examples are spread out in time and space, assembled here to make an argument of spatio-material potentials; exploring how the affordances of certain material set-ups and particular spatial qualities can trigger actions, clustering and social exchange.

Four Urban Situations in Paris and Venice

As a young roller-skater in the late 1970's, it was my perpetual quest to find fresh tarmac or other flat surfaces optimal for sports on rubber wheels. Locations specifically suitable for performing roller-skating attracted other people in the neighbourhood, both on and off wheels. The most popular skating sites earned nicknames and not only facilitated the physical activity itself, but also rapidly became social hot spots. In Paris a few years later, I encountered the same phenomenon at Place Trocadero (photograph 4). The smooth limestone surface there apparently called out for roller-skating. The situation clearly illustrates how material responsivity[1] (Asplund 1987) induces unexpected actions that in turn attract an audience. In this case, a group of roller skaters gathered to do free tricks and a kind of high jumping over a bar between posts. A *performing collective* emerges and triggers a *watching collective*. William H. Whyte (1980:94) denotes this phe-

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nomenon as *triangulation*, describing it as a situation in which an 'external stimulus', such as an object, a view or an event, initiates social exchange between two or more strangers. The strangers meet as a direct effect of the event. The level of exchange is highly erratic with regard to the intensity of contact. The roller-skaters form a fairly strong collective, in which the members obviously share a common project and are aware of being part of the collective. In contrast, the watching collective is weaker; internally the actors are connected primarily by weak ties.

Some years ago in Paris, I observed a game of football being played in a boulevard pedestrian space (photograph 3). Multiple material conditions cooperated to provide an opportunity for the football activity to emerge at the site: the size of the open space, protected and shaded by trees and free

1   Johan Asplund derives his notions of *responsivity* from the Latin *respondere*, meaning to answer. He uses a kite-flying metaphor to explains the concept, drawing on how the kite responds to the movements of the person controlling the string – like a social conversation between a human and material elements; "Draken blir till ett levande väsen, när den stiger till väders. Den rycker i linan. Den svarar. Därav lusten" (1987:38). ["The kite becomes a living being as it rises up in the air. It pulls the string. It responds. Thus the pleasure." English translation by the author.]

from urban furniture and fixtures, the material ground conditions and the location in the city. The activity has a rather thorough material support, but it is still not a permanent set-up. The borders framing the ball game are easily removed and put aside to allow for customary esplanade functions. When the big boys have ended their game, a group of younger children and their guardians occupies the space. The event also demonstrates triangulation. People gather along the edges, watching the game or just hanging about. The urban situation is more complex and the supporting material equipment more comprehensive than in the Trocadero example above. The space allows for several territorial productions, and they may change radically over time. The effect on public life and the territorial productions show how public life in urban space can be supplemented by fairly trivial means. The production of collectives and collective space is apparent. The football collective is produced and maintained as a weak, temporal cluster of humans, a few basic rules, a space and some key material artefacts.

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The market-stall structure in Boulevard Richard Lenoir (Paris) demonstrates different uses over time. I registered three different ways of making use of the metal construction as I passed the site on four occasions over two days. The structure is mounted every week for a couple of days in a row. On market days it is swarming with people shopping for vegetables, fish and other foodstuff. On days when there is no market, the construction stands bare and becomes available for other uses. One afternoon I observed kids using it for chasing each other, skating and ball games. In the evening of that same day, I noted that the site was appropriated by a soup kitchen and an organisation distributing used clothes. Even when the food market was not active, the structure facilitated many other uses and spontaneous activities, mediating exchanges between people (photograph 5-7).

This little market square at Burano, a small island in the Venice lagoon (photograph 8-11), is permanently furnished with a number of marble tables, supplemented by a couple of metal posts between which canopies can be mounted for protection against the elements. The furniture's primary function is as a display table for fish and other seafood on market days.

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The site is equipped with an effective underground drainage system and a centrally-placed water tap provides fresh water for cleaning the tables and the ground when the market is closed for the day. Outside of market days, the tables afford multiple other uses: children use them as play artefacts and people place various things on them; sometimes the tables and posts are used for drying textiles and fishing nets. The material set-up prompts multiple territorial productions, sorted by time as a series of events. A daily and weekly rhythm, and probably a seasonal one, organises the use of the space. The fish market collectives depend on the particular (yet universal) artefacts, including the hidden technostructures, such as the underground water piping and sewage systems.

These examples demonstrate in various ways how material and spatial conditions can facilitate different and rather unexpected uses. The design of space normally presumes particular effects, but as shown above, oftentimes multiple surprising behaviours and activities are afforded. When people cluster in certain locations they produce collectives, intentionally or unintentionally. The material figurations encourage and support certain behaviours and activities while excluding others. The weaker and stronger collectives produced in the four examples above vary over time, but sometimes they appear synchronously, causally dependent on each other or simply accidentally emerging in the same space. Urban spaces are to varying degrees planned, designed and equipped to produce and maintain particular collectives. This is, however, not always due to strategic territorialisations mediated by planning documents from planners, architects or urban designers. Collectives may emerge in spaces proposed for quite other reasons and intentions. Even though collective spaces are not

regularly the result of urban planning, they can certainly be stabilised by planning, and by use-policies, building regulations and various permits. Skate parks, playgrounds, street markets and other strongly themed spaces constitute examples of planned spaces that facilitate distinctive collectives. Most collectives, whether or not they were intended through planning, are significantly dependent on spatial and material conditions to emerge and to be stabilised.

I will conclude this chapter with two more elaborated micro-studies that illustrate typical examples of how stronger collective spaces can be enacted in urban domains. The examples were completed as preliminary site-studies and can be seen as a background to the following chapters, as an attempt to set the stage for my empirical studies, which will focus on weaker and emerging collectives rather than full-blown strong collectives or collective spaces.

A Boules Court in Gràcia

This boules court is situated on a demolition site between two apartment buildings in Gràcia, a residential area in Barcelona (photograph 12-16). The space is used and governed by a group of elderly people from the vicinity, united by the game of boules (in Spanish: *petanca*). Visitors not participating in the ongoing matches watch the game closely and offer the active players their advice. The two persons sitting behind the table are administrating the space, taking care of clothes, handbags and other personal belongings. Fences toward the streets make it impossible to pass through the site although it is visually open. As a stranger to the boules collective and their space, one is invited to watch but not to take part in the game. The site offers good opportunities for social exchange within the collective and occasionally also with (and between) strangers passing by. Some of the people who appear to live in the neighbourhood regularly stop at the site to watch, ask questions or just throw a few words at the players.

The municipality supports the activity and helps maintain the site. All members pay 13 euros per year. Local tournaments take place each Monday and Wednesday, and on Thursdays there are matches played against clubs from other barrios (city districts). Each player pays 3 Euros per game for local tournaments, to finance a prize (a few bottles of wine) for the winner. There are about five other clubs in the barrio and numerous others all over the city. The other clubs are located in similar conditions or in parks.[2]

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2   This information was gathered from an interview carried out April 30, 2014 (11-11.30am) with a Swiss woman who has been living in Barcelona for ten years and is an active member of the boules collective.

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This is an example of a strong collective that is producing a collective space. The space is stabilised by networked human and nonhuman actors and by multiple material figures. The space is thoroughly regulated and it is not open for sudden change or appropriation by others, and it is apparently monopolised by the boules collective. Access is not unconditional, and it is certainly not granted at all times. A key, a membership or an invitation is required to enter the site, which clearly indicates that it is not a public space by traditional standards. The boundaries to the streets are demarcated with fences with a single entrance gate, which effectively controls the accessibility.

Vast material and other nonhuman resources are mobilised to produce, maintain and stabilise the space and to support the specific collective activity. The ground is levelled, filled with gravel and carefully structured into rectangular fields by wooden girders to meet the prerequisites of the game. Further nonhuman means to keep up the collective are: benches, tables, racks (with coat pegs) to hang clothing and bags; game-related artefacts to pick up the balls and for counting points; a board for displaying game results; the game rules; membership in the collective; keys to enter the gate; etc. Agency is obviously highly distributed to a multiplicity of nonhuman

actors to stabilise the space, even when the collective is not assembled and no game is on (Law 2009:148).

The boules collective is active three or four days a week; the rest of the time the space is empty and inaccessible. The singular use and sporadic occupation of the space is not a very effective use of the attractive piece of ground. Still, the collective activates a (temporarily) residual space and offers great pleasure for a group of people with a lot of spare time and that is not necessarily wealthy – "Petanca is the golf for the poor", my Swiss lady informant joked. From a territorial point of view, the bounded space has a low complexity. The territorial productions are few, overlapping neither spatially nor temporally, and there is no room for appropriations by any other group than the members of the boules collective. Consequently, the territorial complexity is low with regard to the site itself, but when the

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space is considered in a wider geographical context, the site clearly contributes to the local public domain in terms of diversity in use and activities. There are multiple local public spaces in close proximity, offering a variety of additional public social practices.

There is no opportunity for non-members to appropriate the space, or even to take part in the collective activity without serious trials. The boundaries are guarded by humans and nonhuman actors, reducing the accessibility to the site and preventing it from being taken over by other individuals or collectives. The threshold is high compared to many other urban spaces, such as public buildings, squares and parks, playgrounds and markets. In terms of use, the boules court is a collective space – not entirely private and clearly not public. So, even if it can be considered an exclusive and non-public space, the boules collective adds to the overall variety of urban life. Perhaps publicly supported collective arrangements like this are required to ensure a diversity of certain social activities over time and add to the multiplicity of local urban life? Socially, the boules collective organises a rather intimate group of citizens, assembled by an activity and a space that situates them. The boules court constitutes a space similar to what Amin (2002:959-60, 969, 976) calls a 'micropublic'; i.e. a site

where close relations (strong ties) can develop and prejudices may be reconsidered. These sites of frequent and sometimes close exchange between a collective's members may change individual's opinions of each other and provide opportunities to discuss matters of concern with citizens who are neither close friends nor relatives.

The next and final micro-study is a pilot study of a community garden in Paris – Agrocité – a place I would describe as a less articulated, stronger collective space. Socially, the collective is primarily defined by strong ties amongst its members. I assessed Agrocité as more private than public, and thus rejected it as one of my main study sites. However, it showed interesting aspects on collective life and organisation, qualifying its inclusion in this thesis.

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AGROCITÉ: URBAN FARMING IN COLOMBES

R-Urban is an umbrella project initiated in 2008, currently encompassing three local projects aimed at investigating ecological and social sustainability in real urban settings. R-Urban was founded and is supervised by a research-oriented architectural practice called *atelier d'architecture a togérée* (aaa)[3]. The R-Urban projects address and challenge many aspects of political, economic and ecological character that fall outside the main concerns of this thesis. The focus here is kept on the material resources

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3   Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou initiate and explore collaborative projects through their practice *Atelier d'architecture autogérée* (aaa), which was founded in 2001. aaa produces social collective space through tactical urbanism, often realised through organised social activities in disused urban spaces, where their tactics "are unfolded in spatial objects and infrastructural devices which increase connectedness, […] encouraging collectives of inhabitants to appropriate space" (Petrescu 2012:137).

that support social interaction and the formation of collectives. Additional nonhuman actors are, however, noted and accounted for as embodying important aspects of social formation processes such as collectivisation and commoning.

The projects are located in Colombes, a suburban town northwest of Paris with about 84 000 inhabitants (2011). The town suffers from a fairly high unemployment rate (17% in 2012) but is also characterised by an active civic life and the housing of numerous local organisations (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:258-259). The R-Urban project comprises three 'pilot facilities' in Colombes: *Agrocité*, *Recyclab* and *Ecohab*.. Together the three facilities form parts of an envisioned (closed circuit) system of ecological urbanism that includes the re-use of products, local organic food production, social enterprises, the recycling of waste, etc. aaa describe the R-Urban project as "Strategies and tactics for participative utopias and resilient practices" (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:258), a project aiming for ecological sustainability parallel with increased social cohesion and inclusion. The projects can thus be depicted as an example of hands-on research – concurrently trying to develop, analyse and assess socio-ecological strategies for a more resilient urban life.

The pilot facility Agrocité was launched in 2011 and is situated on a residual piece of land and is intended for participative urban farming, or 'civic gardening' as it is also termed by aaa (Petcou & Petrescu 2014). The project organises local residents for its long-term development as well as for its daily maintenance. All members are offered a small allotment – a 'parcelle' – to farm according to their individual needs and desires. All other resources at the site are shared collectively. However, everyday management of the project was recently delegated to a couple of funded supervisors from outside of Colombes; according to Doina Petrescu, this was a model that did not work out very well. She explained the failure with the supervisors' lack of motivation due to shortage of local attachment (Petrescu, Doina. Personal conversation. Agrocité, 13 September 2014).

Due to political shifts in Colombes' central administration, the project is under the threat of being closed down to make space for mixed retail and

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housing developments (Querrien, Anne. Personal conversation. Agrocité, 13 September 2014). The former mayor, Philippe Sarre, had supported the project and was an important proponent of the initial establishment of the R-Urban projects. The new political leadership has declared less interest in the R-Urban projects and the ideals it represents (Querrien, Anne. Personal conversation, 2014).

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Urban Farming as Collectivisation

Agrocité works as an association of local inhabitants with varying ambitions, interests and affections regarding the site and the project. Some members are deeply involved in the central management and the planning of common activities, while others just attend to their individual 'parcelles'. Since the site is not publicly accessible it can be considered a collectively-run community space. The space comprises different material elements and practice-oriented activities related to urban ecological agriculture. Doina Petrescu refers to Agrocité as a complex mixture of "an experimental micro-farm, community gardens, pedagogical and cultural spaces, and a series of experimental devices for compost heating, rainwater collection, solar energy production, aquaponic gardening, and phyto-remediation" (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:259). Additionally, the project includes social enterprises, such as market days, lectures, a café and various workshops.

Accessibility and Territorialisations

The site is enclosed by the walls of adjacent buildings and where there are no walls a metal fence creates the borders. The space can be entered in two ways: through the community building and through gates in the fence (Photographs 28, 29) . All entrances face the street (rue Jules Michelet) and all of them require keys to open. A limited number of keys are distributed among the members. According to the initiators and members, the reason for not making the space entirely public (i.e. restricting accessibility) is the fear of drug abuse and vandalism on the premises. Hence the

space is visually present in the neighbourhood, but accessible only to those engaged in the association.

The Agrocité association forms a strong collective that is produced and upheld by local residents and various materialities, such as the gardens, the community building and other supporting facilities at the site. Further, and less apparent materialities, such as registers, protocols and other clerical details also help stabilise the collective. The socio-material ties are multiplied and reinforced through non-material actants such as everyday practices and organised social events. A smaller group of people constitutes a central cluster that organises and administers the space. Various temporal collectives are produced through daily activities that are linked to maintenance and farming or related to events like meetings, lectures, lunches and dinners, market days, workshops, etc.

Agrocité is subject to territorial controversies; the association currently appropriating the land is struggling against political opponents who are attempting to shut down the facility for ideological, political and financial reasons. As mentioned above, the area can be used for profit through housing and retail developments. Territorial claims are expressed in different ways; the politicians claim the space through rhetoric and politics while the Agrocité association expresses its claims mainly through everyday practices and the maintenance of its boundaries – composing a collective that is socially, materially and spatially defined. The tending of gardens and the administration of activities are forms of situated territorial productions, which together maintain the Agrocité association as a heterogeneous collective.

The space is to a large extent programmed in detail for various activities and uses. The territorial productions are tightly linked to material figures and sustained through the distribution of agency. The water basins, parcelles, wooden walkways, the greenhouse tent, etc. are all dedicated to stipulated functions. Other materialities, such as the steps in front of the building, the garden porch and the spaces inside the building, are more open for varied activities and uses. Due to the relative privacy of the space, territorial intersections tend to occur inside the space rather than at the

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boundaries, where the territorial complexity is low. This state of territorial complexity might be different on market days or on other occasions when Agrocité is open for public access.

Parcelle-Care: Gardening as a Social Mediator

Families or individual citizens at Agrocité tend to a parcelle, a rectangular allotment of about 2-3m^2, where they grow flowers, herbs, berries, vegetables, etc. The tending of parcelles and of the common gardens is the predominant everyday activity at the site. The farming generates opportunities for social exchange, largely mediated by the material objects needed to care for the fragile plants and also, of course, by the very outcomes of the farming. Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu refer to this as 'gardening agency' (Petrescu 2013:265). Gardening, according to Petrescu, "started as a simple leisure activity and became a complex agency, involving other activities and networks: a 'gardening agency'." (Petrescu 2013:265).

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Besides cultivating in their own parcelle, members of the community help each other to water and remove weeds when someone is away or temporarily unable to care for their allotment for some reason. The members I met at the site reported that they had made many new friends through the project and that they had gotten to know people they had never met before. They share their individual knowledge about plants and methods on how to grow them. Social interactions and the successive formation of friendships seem to be facilitated by gardening and the activities connected to it. Social exchange is mediated by physical proximity, the sharing of knowledge, helping hands and by the sharing of flowers, herbs, berries and vegetables harvested in the gardens. These practices confirm a socio-material network

that acknowledges all enrolled human actors as interdependent subjects of a collective.

A porch-like construction is situated centrally on the premises. According to observations, furnishing and traces of use, the platform frequently situates meetings, social exchange and spontaneous gatherings. The wooden structure divides the garden space and separates different uses and activities. It also adds a supplementary spatial type to the site, thus including additional practices and increasing the potential for territorial complexity.

An invited expert runs a workshop in how to manage effective composting (Photographs 34, 35). Most of the Agrocité members that are present at the time follow the workshop with great interest. A film crew is in place to make a report for a French TV show. A freelance journalist is also present on this day, gathering material for a book on urban gardening and urban agriculture. This signifies an important mission for Agrocité and the R-Urban projects – to create a network that stretches beyond the local neighbourhood.

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Collective Space and Community

The community building (Photographs 36-39) occupies the northern end of the site and separates the garden from the street (rue Jules Michelet). The building contains spaces that support various aspects of the farming and other community practices, such as meeting spaces, a kitchen, an exhibition room and walls displaying internal information. The spaces are used for everyday activities and various events such as lectures, lunches, a café, local political meetings, workshops, etc. The Agrocité building is also a symbolic artefact, forming a representative backdrop to the garden space and contributing an emblematic ambiance. Spatially and materially the building signals a raw, organic architecture – temporal and resilient at the same time. Some members of the collective say that they perceive the

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building as signifying key notions of ecology, openness and community (Personal conversations with Agrocité members at the site, 13 September 2014).

Agrocité is a collective space that is constantly negotiated amongst its members, initiators and by political representatives (and probably by citizens from the local community). The negotiations also involve various materialities which mediate exchanges and act as unifying strongholds for individuals or groups. The Agrocité space offers multiple materialities that afford the gathering of humans and composition of collectives, such as the individual parcelles, the community building, the greenhouse, the shared gardens, the porch and all the tools required to care for the plants and animals (bees and chickens).

'Common' – or *collective* space as I would label it, – indicates a shared resource as well as a shared responsibility, which separates it from clear-cut public space. These kinds of collectives are thus based more on *use* than on *ownership*. aaa regards Agrocité as a *common* in the sense that it is a "common pool of resources […] that no one [can] own but everyone [can] use" (Petrescu 2013:272). But using my terminology, I would prefer to label Agrocité a 'collective space'; although it is a shared pool of resources, it is also owned by the municipality, governed by aaa (and the community association), and it is not open for everyone to use on the same terms. The stability of stronger collectives such as Agrocité is also dependent on local political decisions as well as the endurance of the organising cluster of initiators and members. Since the municipality owns the property in this case, the Agrocité association has no legal right to stay if the politicians decide in favour of other uses for the real estate. Accordingly, the survival of the Agrocité project is ultimately reliant on political decisions and municipal policies.

Agrocité (as well as the boules space in Barcelona) signifies the latent instability of strong collectives characterised by 'network stabilisation' (Law 2002); the composition of key actors and activities is typically sensitive to changes. Agency is distributed among a few and specific actors (relative to weaker collectives) that are organised in rather fixed relations. The dominance of strong ties between the member actors who constitute the collective allows for comprehensive social exchange and internal negotiations – qualities that Amin (2002:959) indicates as characteristic for 'micropublics' and 'cultural destabilization'. However, the need for a stable set of actors, activities and material arrangements makes the collective sensitive to modifications. If key actors (or activities) disappear or break, the whole collective formation risks disintegration and, ultimately, decomposition. Since the two strong collectives (Agrocité and Barcelona boules) are closed for alternative uses and non-member visitors, they are less open for territorial complexity than more fluid spaces, such as Place Trocadero and the market spaces in Paris and Venice's Burano, depicted above. The potentials for more effective interpersonal relations could be said to come with a price – less possibilities for strangers to meet, interact and possibly engage in temporary clusterings on common grounds. Agrocité and other strong collectives, such as the boules collective in Barcelona, can become socially preserving and effectively a hindrance for public social exchange and the empowerment of citizens, particularly in local situations. Members of strong collectives may become protective and focused on internal matters while citizens outside are kept outside, with no admittance to the

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collective space. Hence, there are obvious risks for controversies and conflicts between public and collective concerns.

A worrying aspect of seemingly non-hierarchical and self-governed collective projects like Agrocité (and the boules court in Barcelona) is the risk of gradual colonisation and that influential individuals or groups 'hijack' the project. Theoretically, Agrocité is imagined and planned as a collectively-managed project (Petcou & Petrescu 2014) and is open for changes initiated by the collective members. The project site is closed off from the adjacent public space, and accessibility is restricted. Access is reserved for members with keys. Even if the intention was to establish a democratic space with a collective leadership, the outcome is rather ambiguous regarding this aspect. The project site is supervised by individuals or selected groups, some of them recruited from outside of Colombes. In the case of Agrocité, this policy didn't work out very well. According to Doina Petrescu, this unsuccessful leadership was due to a lack of emotional connection to the area (conversation with Doina Petrescu at the site). The challenge of establishing a self-managed organisation that evolves organically and is based on solidarities and collective decision-making (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:267) seems to be a complicated mission.

Petcou and Petrescu argue that "R-Urban proposes new collective practices" aimed at "reinventing proximity relationships based on solidarities" (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:267). It is an ideal and partly utopian project that challenges general notions of privacy and individuality. The radical ideological note may sift out a selection of people, who are driven by specific political objectives, such as the "right to *produce* sustainability" (Petcou & Petrescu 2014:269) and exclude those who don't fit that template. The initiators argue that Agrocité defies a community of sameness. They see the R-Urban projects as sites where multiplicity is welcomed and created anew with each event. There are, however, reasons to question this statement because of the intrinsic ideological bias affecting the recruitment of members mentioned above. The question of management can also be problematised since the absence of democratic institutions leaves no guarantee for an uncompromised leadership and no given chain of responsibility.

Hills, Gates, Keys and Guards

Inspired by experiences and notions from Agrocité and the other micro-studies, the following section aims to conceptualise observed phenomena from a power perspective. I will use four features that could be labelled actants in their principal capacity to represent different place-related forces and affect the nature of social and socio-material power relations in a defined spatial setting. These for features are *hills*, *gates*, *keys* and *guards*.

A *hill* is a strategic territorial actant and a metaphor for a place, an activity or an object from which control can be exercised and power over the collective space can be executed. The saying 'to take a hill' can mean capturing an important actant, for example with regard to practices that are permitted in a defined space (or in a collective). Spaces with a singular hill are particularly sensitive to being occupied or territorially controlled by an individual or a group. Spaces with several hills are open for multiple territorial productions and thus, theoretically, more dynamic with regard to territorial complexity. A typical example can be a public space that offers only one artefact for sitting; such a space easily becomes dominated by an individual or a group that takes control over this artefact. The hill becomes active in the power discussion when it is taken or when there is controversy concerning who rules the hill. The hill is nothing exceptional in itself; un-taken, it is simply a hill like any other: a bench, a sound system, a flight of steps, a platform, etc.

A *gate* denotes a material or virtual entrance to a space. Control of the gate may entail the power to select human (and sometimes material) actors to be included in, or excluded from, the collective. The gate can be seen as a territorial borderland, a filter through which some actors pass and some don't. Some collectives even have a *gatekeeper*, a human or a technology that controls who enters and leaves the collective space.

A *key* can clearly be an item that opens or locks a gate, but it may also may depict a symbolic device, a *virtual key* that *unlocks* the collective space in other ways; a personal artefact or feature necessary for becoming a fully accepted member of the collective and user of the space. An example of such a key could be a certain piece of sporting equipment, like a skateboard or kick-bike that is needed to enter a skate facility. The key can also be signified by a skill, a behaviour, a dress code, an ethnicity, etc.

The individual or group that controls a collective space can distribute regulatory power to *guards* that protect the space and prevent trespassing, keep out unwanted visitors, etc. Guarding activities can also be delegated to nonhumans and passive forms of surveillance, such as (surveillance) cameras, signs, public eyes, neighbouring windows, fences and walls, rules and regulations, etc. Guarding activity can also be delegated to architectural (material) design that excludes specific citizens and uses through form. Everyday examples of excluding design can be benches designed to make laying down impossible, different manipulations of urban artefacts that prevent skateboarding, fragments of glass and metal pins on copings and ledgers to prevent climbing or sitting, etc.; i.e. a form of design for negative affordances. Additional measures are taken to prevent non-consumers from loitering in urban commercial districts, such as a shortage of places

to rest except for at cafés and restaurants, where sitting down requires payment.

These four actants are tentative and directly related to an analysis of the collective spaces in the micro-studies above. Although I don't make any further use of these actants, I have chosen to include this section as a preface to the concepts framed later in the thesis. The conceptualisations developed from the main field study sites in the thesis will focus predominantly on the composition of clusters and weaker collectives in public domains

3

METHODOLOGIES

REFLECTIVE VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

> He taught all of us, more than anything, to look, to look hard, with a clean, clear mind, and then to look again – and believe what you see. (Paul Goldberger on William H. Whyte, in LaFarge 2000:ix)

Observing Public Life

The empirical base for this thesis originates from ethnographic investigations in a variety of public urban settings in London, Amsterdam and Paris. Additional references are made to sites in other cities, where less structured studies of public life have been conducted. Public life may emerge in numerous settings; however urban environs are where it really thrives and shows the most diversity. This thesis rests upon a partial and qualitative methodological approach, heavily entrenched in empirical data. Since it has no ambition to formulate a general understanding of public life as

such, the notions presented here should be understood as situated and tied to the actual sites that have been investigated empirically. The field study techniques employed in this thesis are mainly inspired by 'visual ethnography' as itww is outlined by Sarah Pink (2013 [2001]) and Collier and Collier (1986 [1967]), paired with the public life studies executed by William H. Whyte (1980, 1988) and Jan Gehl (1971, 2004, 2013). The ethnographic investigations pursued here are not as comprehensive – with regard to time span and anthropological scopes – as the in-depth ethnographies (conceived over months, and sometimes years, of fieldwork) that characterises, for example, excellent studies such as *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture* by Setha M. Low (2000) and *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Transforming Place in a Unified Germany* by Gisa Weszkalnys (2010). In this thesis, the fieldwork approach is rather characterised by brief, if sometimes repeated, studies of multiple sites that are spread over many cities. However, all investigations are focused on the same category of phenomena. In total, the fieldwork thus adds up to more than a month of active on-site research and many months of analysing the visual records (photographic documentation).

The ANT scholar Jonathan Metzger frames a relational approach to studies of places, drawing on Callon (1986). He argues that "we can only ever gain an understanding of places by empirically studying how human and nonhuman elements interact and mutually affect each other in the world". Metzger further points out the importance of situated studies, carried out "agnostically: without prejudice concerning how the mechanics of mutual affectation between those elements we often categorize as 'material' and those that we categorize as 'social', 'symbolic' or discursive' will play out" (Metzger 2014:92-93). Although I had committed to an ANT approach, I approached the fieldwork with some pre-defined intentions to study certain actions and exchanges. Key ANT notions were nonetheless applied as guiding tools in all field studies, as well as in the subsequent analysis of empirical data.

Due to my background as a practising architect and teacher of architecture and urban design, the choice of a situated urban ethnography as my empirical approach came naturally. The ethnographic approach resembles many aspects of the traditional surveying of a building site intended for an architectural project – in practice as well as in academic teaching.

I have completed three main field studies that represent three different sets of urbanities subjected to a variety of activities. My ethnographic approach is predominantly based on participant observation. Empirical data was collected using photography, video recording and field notes. To support and supplement the observations, I conducted several semi-struc-

tured interviews with persons in managing and design positions as well as spontaneous interviews with people at the sites. Another valuable source of information was listening in on random people who were using the spaces. Overhearing conversations and intimate comments reveals information about the relationships between people in an exchange – whether they are strangers to one another, acquaintances or friends, regular visitors, tourists, locals, etc. It may also reveal situated opinions about the site, its merits and shortcomings. Maps, architectural drawings and other graphical representations were analysed to understand the sites' geographical settings and scales. The methodology also included studies of municipal, journalistic and commercial information, in books, pamphlets and on websites. I have actively avoided speculations and presumptions throughout the process and striven consistently to be aware of the fact that I will always be biased as well as presumptuous. Truth be told, however, speculations were in fact unavoidable and a valuable tool in the process of systematic analysis of recorded photographs, trying to identify typical or repeated behaviour related to socio-material exchanges.

The ethnographic approach is about capturing complex and sometimes very brief moments; registering actions and traces of actions in a space that is produced every minute, every second. How does one record observations in a way that makes sense of it all? How does one choose what to register? How does one minimise the risk of being biased through prejudices and presumptions? I cannot offer any clear or complete answers to those questions. To seize the complexity and the transience of mundane urban life is most certainly a challenge.

Conducting thematic urban ethnography is an exciting experience in many aspects. Wandering around alone, I constantly found myself reflecting on various impressions and frequently fell into discussions with myself. Being alone obliged me to divide myself into a documenting/registering persona and a reflective/analysing one. It is interesting to note that conflict sometimes arises between these personas; the registering character wants to continue to observe, take photographs and jot down notes, while the reflective character yearns for a quiet café and a moment to analyse the already gathered observations. I was struck by how close one can get to what is happening in a space when one's attention is not divided between travel companions and the space under observation. Close observation of a space is like watching a theatre play or a film; it's like following a script one doesn't know anything about, continuously trying to understand the relations between the actors, what the scenography means, what will happen, what really did happen, etc. It is also tempting to try to speculate on the different backgrounds and life stories of the 'actors'; however, I actively

tried to avoid doing so: in the context of this thesis, I am studying events taking place in a here-and-now, not speculating on things I cannot record or notice with my senses.

Moving between the preliminary sites in each city, generally on foot, gave me an understanding of how the sites I studied were located within the general urban tissue, and in relation to infrastructural elements and adjacent urban spaces. This knowledge is relevant since many actors outside the site are part of the local (inside) networks. For example, commuters sometimes move across the site – an incongruous fact if one is unaware of train stations or bus stops located nearby. Attractive spaces in the neighbourhood may compete with the study-site regarding certain activities or uses, and thus noticeably affect the life at the study-site.

Since I have a longstanding interest in journalistic methods and experience from working as a reporter for a Swedish architecture magazine,[1] I intuitively associated my field observations with a journalistic approach. The observation of a case study-site resembles a journalistic documentary in many ways; in both, I am looking for stories and events that might reveal the (temporal) nature of the space I am studying. There is a distinct difference between my ethnographic studies and a journalistic approach, however; while journalists normally focus on a single story that can make a good illustration of a place or an event, hopefully dramatic and not necessarily mundane; in an ethnographic study I am registering all the events I can see, all exchanges and every social gathering. I am looking for the patterns, the everyday actions, routine as well as unique events, to slowly uncover interesting notions about what is going on. In the process, I am also mapping seemingly redundant material – observations that I don't know what to make of at the time.

Most architects use the camera as a tool to register milieus and buildings of interest for their professional situation. As students, teachers and as practicing professionals, architects usually go on study trips to see and experience what are considered interesting ('good') environments and buildings. Photographs are used as an equivalent to written notes or handmade sketches. In some respects, photography is even superior to notes and sketches, since the camera never fails to record observations in perfect detail; its "machinery allows us to see without fatigue; the last exposure is just as detailed as the first" (Collier and Collier [1967] 1986:9). Some architects, myself included, also collect images in archives, sorted into a variety of themes and features – as a reference library – for future use in building projects, lectures, books, seminars, etc. In a design process, the camera is frequently used to document a projected building site, as

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1   *Arkitekten*, a paper distributed to all members of the Swedish architect's association.

memory notes and as backdrops for digital visualisations of the design project-to-be. Cameras and images are frequently used by architects and not always reflected upon as means that *per se* widely affect the analysis of settings as well as the outcome of a design process. On the contrary, I would argue that the practice of photography has an enormous influence on how architecture and urban space are analysed and designed (cf. Zimmerman 2014:6ff.). The image culture in the architecture field is suffused with implicit notions of 'best practise', 'good space' and 'good public life' – forming a hidden but self-evident normativity. This embedded normativity is in turn highly affected by internalised professional traditions and culture, resting on the mainstream aesthetics of architecture magazines, documentaries and books, where focus is placed on form, light, colour and materiality at the expense of humans, everyday life activities and their traces. There is, of course, a countermovement, in which deteriorated environments, trashy and run-down urban spaces are romanticised and exploited, but that kind of photography is merely a variation on the same theme and rarely attends to any aspects of social life. To be able to capture the photographs I was aspiring to, I had to be aware of these biased approaches to photography, urban space and architecture, and try to avoid letting them direct my observations and imagery documentation of mundane public life.

The preconceived standard conception of a 'good public life' – a swirling diversity of citizens amicably sharing an urban space where multiple different activities go on side by side, day and night – might obscure the view of what is actually going on in public space, as well as what we aspire for it to be about. During observational studies this internalised perspective also might obscure notions of behaviours and exchanges that do not fit the template and thus risk to be ignored by the observer. I am aware of this bias and try to avoid getting ensnared in it. Despite my efforts, I am aware that I am affected and to some extent captured by it. To reiterate: the conceptualisations presented as final results of this thesis are not intended as instruments to achieve a particular category of public life, but rather to provide tools for a more comprehensive discussion and for the exploration of possibilities to foresee various effects of material design and planning of urban space.

Inspirations and Guiding Forerunners

I can trace the inspiration to make a study of urban space driven by photographic images back to the structured visual investigations by William H. Whyte (1980, 1988) and to works by Quentin Stevens (2007) and Herman Hertzberger (1991, 2000). The latter two use photographs main-

ly to situate architectural narratives and notions in particular local situations. An early, and more informal, source of inspiration was urban street photography from the 1950s and 1960s. Photographers such as Helen Levitt (Am.1913-2009), Louis Faurer (Am.1916-2001), Robert Doisneau (Fr.1912-1994) and Willy Ronis (Fr.1910-2009) visually explored and artistically conveyed the drama and potential intensity of urban social life in a quintessential way. Their photographs often highlight the multiplicity of relations articulated in urban space as well as the role of materiality in social exchanges. For me, these photographers' work opened new perspectives on the wide span of lives performed in urban space. Seemingly minor actions and interactions are portrayed as profoundly important for how urban public life is produced. Street photography – as opposed to most traditional architectural photography[2] – shows interesting methodological qualities when used to investigate the built environment, both as a technique for visual documentation and illustration and as a tool for ethnographic research of public life.

I retrieved the initial inspiration from within the field of ANT primarily from the complex and thought-provoking project *Paris: Invisible City* (2009 [1998]), by Bruno Latour (text) and Emilie Hermant (photography). It is an interesting example of how a city can be explored through photographic images and text, mutually and symbiotically informing each other. The project constitutes an exploration of Paris in the form of intricately ordered image/text essays, originally presented on the internet. The reader is intended to navigate the photographs and maps in a web browser while reading texts linked to particular sites marked on a section of a map of Paris. The project shows how an actor-network study can be carried out and it concurrently also explores some reasons why the city – or any artefact of some complexity for that matter – cannot be captured at a glance. The project clearly communicates the invisibility of cities, how little one might grasp by any methodological study of them, and how conditional knowledge is – even empirical knowledge. How and where one looks will determine what one will see and subsequently what are considered facts about what has been studied.[3]

The field studies carried out in this thesis are more target-oriented and spatially more concentrated than the explorations in *Paris: Invisible City*. The primary inspiration drawn from the Latour-Hermant project is the close interrelation between photography and text and the reflective approach to the methodology of investigation.

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2   The aestheticizing kind, where architecture is equated with material form, light and colour – freed from everyday life and traces of human activities.

3   For further aspects on Latour's *Paris: Invisible City*, see also Alberto Toscano & Jeff Kinkle (2015) *Cartographies of the Absolute*, p.84 ff.

Making Sense of Observations

The fieldwork was conducted in more or less the same way at each study-site. All field studies were prepared through studies of maps, books, brochures, websites and newspaper articles. The field observation techniques included photography, video recordings, field notes and spontaneous interviews. In the Amsterdam and Paris studies, planned and semi-structured interviews were carried out.

The collection of photographs and film clips proved an important resource when trying to understand how the spaces were used and how the observed clusters were composed. The special gaze that comes from observing the world through a camera lens – the excision of time-space fragments from a complex, moving and ever changing reality – leads to certain unexpected, or lateral, observations; observations emerging through the process of repeated examination of the photographic material (Collier and Collier 1986 [1967]).

Photography[4] is central to all inquiries conducted in this thesis. The camera and the photographic images are present in all methodological steps: observation, registration and documentation of data, as well as in analytical and discursive segments. The first round of photographs taken at a case site are just like field notes – random and tentative. Of course, I am not completely agnostic; I have an outlined mission to search for certain exchanges, interactions and behaviours. At this stage, all sorts of social and socio-material exchanges were documented. The primary analytical objective was to search for temporal territorial productions and reoccurring nonhuman actors instigating social interactions. Through an initial analysis of this growing stock of photographs, certain behavioural phenomena, exchanges, social events and clusterings were identified. I realised that some particular artefacts and spaces seemed to afford networking more than others. The analysis was primarily directed by observations and field notes, but the close and repeated readings of photographs revealed phenomena that weren't identified when performing the in-situ observations. Subsequent site visits were directed towards more selective observations, guided by the first analysis. To support a richer analysis of potentially reproduced socio-material exchanges and emerging clusterings, further photographic documentation was gathered. The multiple examples showing variations on a phenomenon has also proved helpful for illustrating and communicating the findings. In summary, the method entails a loop strategy where an initial, tentative round of observation, registra-

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4   For a short history of photography in ethnographic research, see Sarah Pink 2013:73. See also Pink 2013:15-32 for an outline of the history and use of visual ethnography 'across disciplines'.

tion and data analysis is followed by further rounds that aim to capture, confirm or dismiss perceived phenomena registered in previous rounds. The methodology developed throughout the fieldwork, specifically with regard to the technique implicating the repeated photographic analysis. The looping strategy emerged in the first field study (London), but was made instrumental and fully deliberate in the second study (Amsterdam).

The combination of photography and text, used parallel in descriptive and analytical modes, could be referred to as reflective visual ethnography.[5] In this context, 'reflective' signifies an integrative methodology that aspires to put observations, visual documentation and writing on the same footing – a symmetrical arrangement that allows for any of the techniques to be temporarily centred as descriptive, documentative or analytical. The reflective part aims at the different techniques as being reflected into and onto each other, an approach to ethnography that intends to be non-linear and inherently situated.

After approximately a week of site observations, the thousands of photographs and some videos were assembled and categorised by exploratory themes to see how frequent various socio-material exchanges and clusterings occurred in the collected material. I also further analysed the nature of clusters' composition and de-composition. Occasionally, I recognise a reoccurring event or action that is related to my research interest. When such a phenomenon has been identified the next step is to conceptualise it and try to tag it with an adequate and descriptive term. The naming of a phenomenon is a tricky process, but also an important one, because it brings to attention the precise connotations of the emerging concept. The words signifying the concepts produced in this thesis are to be considered provisional. They have changed several times throughout the exploratory process of gradual definition; as new aspects are presented and further insights are made there might be reasons to readjust them. A concept under development must furthermore prove productive, not just as a discursive and/or analytical tool, but also as part of a conceptual toolbox. Concepts simply become more relevant if they, together with related concepts, have the capacity to describe or explain certain phenomena in new ways.

Clearly, using the camera as a primary tool for ethnographic observation and registration poses certain risks. The limited scope of a camera lens and the photographers' choice of time-space fragments filter the complex (ever-changing) reality, possibly excluding important actors and activities outside the frame. There is an immanent risk of capturing fragmented moments that may convey false evidence, simply because they have been removed from their adjacent time-space contexts. This can, however, be

5   Partly inspired by Sarah Pink's (2013:36-38) writings on "visual ethnography as a reflexive praxis".

equally true for written field notes. All observations made by a singular observer are by nature selective and partial. Whilst being aware of these risks helps to avoid drawing the wrong conclusions from analysing photographs, it certainly does not eliminate them. To minimise the risks, I draw only on phenomena that can be verified through repeated observations and photographs. If I have only a single or a few indications on a potential phenomenon, it is rejected, or at least questioned.

Photography does in fact offer an advantage over observations registered only by the eyes and then recorded in writing or audio; when we see the world, the image in our mind is affected by individual experiences, mind-sets, references and objectives – we see what we want to see or what we perceive as important. The photographer is, of course, affected by the same limitations when taking a photograph[6], but it is the material photograph that is the real benefit. Everything within the scope of the lens is preserved and can be re-examined by the photographer as well as by other people and research colleagues. A further difference in favour of photographic ethnography is that photographs allow the communication of empirical data to others who might understand them differently. The photographic images constitute a sort of evidence that explanatory writings normally do not provide; however, it always takes interpretation to make sense of data, since data never delivers any analysis by itself. Photographs cannot offer a theoretical or critical analysis or a clear academic argument better than written text. Photographs, on the other hand, have the capacity to situate and contextualise an event, expose lateral information that might enrich, expand and diversify the experience for the reader. Photographs and written text that are used complementarily can add dynamic benefits to empirical investigations – photographs constitute precise and stable representations, but remain open for further interpretations. The text might support this twofold quality. It is a challenge, though, to achieve this complementary effect.

The Process of Choice

The photographs presented in the thesis are the result of several stages of selection. The first selection is made when planning a field study – when forming a mind-set. I have an idea about the kind of events I expect to encounter, which surely influences my gaze towards this particular kind

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6   It is possible to reduce the impact of individual preconceptions through approaches where the documenting process is firmly guided by a systematic framework that determines when and what to capture with the camera. An alternative is to let a number of people – for example everyday visitors to the space being examined – take the photographs – 'participatory and collaborative photography' (Pink 2013:86 ff.). The biased individual researcher can thus be less important for what is registered.

of events. At the site, my specific interests in certain behaviours, uses and socio-material exchanges doubtlessly affect what I choose to photograph. The third stage of selection occurs during analysis, where the photographs are grouped according to phenomena and sometimes in relation to geographically situated micro locations within the study-site. A fourth selection is made when working on the text as a whole, adjusting the choice of photographs concerning the importance of different phenomena in relation to the thesis as a research outcome. The fifth and final selection is related to the final manuscript. This last step involves narrative concerns and issues of lay-out and format. The guiding rules for making the final selection of photographs have been to show how my concepts have developed from the empirical observations, and to illustrate the study-sites in different scales and level of detail. In conclusion, the key ambition with the choice of photographs has been to give a relational and situated understanding of how the concepts are produced. Hopefully, readers will be able to find additional or alternative perspectives on my concluding remarks and conceptional tools.

Observer and Observed

As a participant observer, my approach has been to minimise the effect of my bodily presence and try to avoid being perceived as anything more than just another person visiting a public space. In the field I normally wear a camera on a leash around my neck, as a typical tourist or a street photographer might. To those who actually take specific notice of me I probably appear to be a tourist or perhaps a local resident with an interest for photography. Sometimes I choose not to expose the camera on the first visit to a field study-site, especially if cameras can be perceived as an odd feature in the particular space. If the site is intimate and populated by people that appear to be socially familiar with each other, there is a sense that I need to earn the trust and the right to shoot photographs.[7]

In field studies, I normally use two cameras and occasionally my mobile phone. Most photographs are taken with a mid-range, wide-angle built-in lens camera (f=23mm, equivalent to 35mm on a 35mm camera). The second camera is a smaller compact camera, also with a wide-angle built-in lens, but with zooming capacity (f=28-105mm, translated to a 35mm camera). I hardly ever use the zoom function; however, a fair part of the photographs displayed in the thesis have been cropped using digital image software. Both cameras can be handled manually and as semi-automatic.

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7   For example, at Agrocité gardening community in Colombes (Paris), the fenced boule ground in Barcelona and at some smaller playgrounds in Amsterdam.

To maximise the technical control over the photographic result, I normally apply semi-automatic settings and occasionally manual.

The impact of my presence on the field study-sites varies from almost none to rather obvious. My middleclass, white European appearance goes largely unnoticed in central London, Amsterdam and Paris, but draws more attention in peripheral areas with mixed populations of non-European immigrants. Especially the cameras, and sometimes my clothing, distinguish me as an odd animal, making some people suspicious of my intentions. In Brixton, for example, a man raising a market stand became upset that I photographed him without asking for his consent, and I had to erase photographs I had taken. Understandably, I had to reveal the nature of my undertaking for some people at playgrounds in Amsterdam, as observing and photographing at playgrounds can be interpreted as provocative for any parent or guardian. However, the most striking notion in this respect was the apparently low impact that my cameras and I generally seemed to have at the study-sites. At street markets and centrally located public spaces, I seem to pass for a tourist, though perhaps with a slightly excessive interest for street photography; the same was true of the playgrounds and other intimate collective spaces, such as boule and skate spaces. As long as I didn't initiate any personal contact with the subjects present at the study-sites, I rarely experienced any indications that my presence was affecting the activities or behaviours at the sites, or that I raised any specific interest from the people I observed and photographed. On a few occasions I was spontaneously invited to collective spaces appropriated by specific groups, and hence recognised as an outside observer with research interests, for example at the fenced boule ground in Barcelona and at R-Urban (Agrocité) in Colombes. On these occasions, I became an apparent intervener that affected how people related to each other, and I also became a part of the collectives operating at the site (cf. Law 2004:5).

Ethics of Covert Photography

A security manager supervising some of the construction work at the Les Berges de Seine (see chapter six) approached me and asked what I was doing. He had observed me taking pictures and notes for a few days and he was curious about my intentions. He pointed out that it would have been nice if I had asked permission before I took any pictures that included people at the site. Although I did not agree with him, our discussion was friendly. In any case, I was reminded to look into the legal and ethical aspects of the issue when I got home.

From an ethical point of view, it is normally argued that subjects appearing in academic research should be informed about their role in the

project and be made aware of the research objectives. This means that identifiable individuals in the photographic data material should preferably have had the opportunity to give their consent and agree to the terms of how the data are to be used and communicated. In this case, however, the importance of exposing the photographic material is crucial, since it constitutes a key part of the methodological approach. Sharing the data also offers credibility to the analytical reasoning and provides an opportunity for counter-examinations by other researchers. Furthermore, there is no practical possibility to ask thousands of people for consent when working in public space. From a legal point of view there are no restrictions for taking (and publishing) photographs in public spaces, including those of recognisable people, provided the images are not obviously compromising. In some countries, however, certain professional categories are excepted from this rule for security reasons – for example photographs of uniformed police and military personnel must not be published. I have made an effort to exclude photographs that could be perceived as compromising from an individual perspective. I have made a particular effort to exclude photographs that reveal the identities of underprivileged and vulnerable people, such as homeless people, addicts and beggars, and I also have been specifically conscientious regarding images of children.

In exceptionally intimate or challenging situations I have explained my work and occasionally asked for permission to take photographs. Most evidently this was the case at the Van Beuningenplein playground in Amsterdam (see chapter five), for the aforementioned reasons.

FIELD WORK

Where, Why and How?

The case sites have been selected mainly for their potential richness and diversity of the socio-material exchanges I set out to study. They have not been chosen primarily for comparative reasons. The chosen sites are also interesting from clustering and collectivising perspectives, since they constitute intense gatherings of people, doing things together and individually in close proximity to relative strangers. I have chosen case sites outside of my own regional and national context (Sweden) to avoid biased and preconceived opinions on the actions and events I was to observe. Although I am unsure of how this affected my ethnographic integrity in reality, it seemed important while planning the studies. I prefer to be detached and fairly new to a case site, although a cultural familiarity to the place may be an advantage. I consider the urban cultures and concepts of public space in

the UK, the Netherlands and France as rather similar to the Scandinavian and therefore possible to understand.

Another important reason for choosing the sites I did was to study spaces about which I am truly curious and that I find exciting; it helps to motivate long hours at the sites – sometimes in miserable weather – observing repetitive everyday life, without losing attention or genuine concern.

When planning the field studies, I decided to choose urban settings that represent various types of public spaces, characterised by different activities and with multiple and varied driving forces. The open-air markets in London represent consumption spaces in, or in close proximity to, major public spaces. When I decided to put the first case in a consumption context I had not yet determined the contexts of the other two. The playgrounds in Amsterdam signify public spaces for play and leisure. The third case, Les Berges de Seine in Paris, represents an emerging public space that is heavily managed and explicitly materially programmed. Les Berges is primarily a leisure space, an urban riverfront exploited for new public uses. It could also be labelled as an event space, where *event* refers to multi-scalar managed and curated activities.

The data collection process commenced in each city with a preliminary mapping and a tour gathering brief observations at different predefined locations, with the aim of selecting primary sites for closer inquiries. In the London and Amsterdam cases, these exploratory studies led to an understanding of different spatial typologies regarding the chosen themes of activities; i.e. spaces for consumption, leisure and play. The typological classification can be regarded as a lateral finding, which is accounted for but neither elaborated nor commented on in any depth, nor included in the final discussion. In the Paris case, the exploratory tour encompassed spaces of different kinds, regarding themes related to use and activities; hence the completion of any theme-based typological sorting was impossible.

Since the three main sites differ from each other in several aspects, such as location, scale, primary function, etc., the field studies could not be carried out in precisely the same way, nor is their presentation in the thesis strictly symmetrical. The lack of symmetry between the field study chapters can also be attributed to a successive progression in the methodological approach.

In addition to the major field studies, I have completed a number of minor studies at incidentally encountered sites. These lateral sites are not described or analysed in any depth, but some notions and phenomena observed in these minor site studies are included in the thesis to signify additional examples of observations made at the main sites. The fieldwork

strategy was to be an active and passive observer alternately, focusing partly on strict observation and partly on observation by participating in activities and utilising the space as a regular visitor.

Field study design: Open-air Markets in London

The choice of a consumption space as such is motivated by its historic as well as contemporary significance as an urban public domain (Habermas 1989 [1962]; Madanipour 2003). Open-air markets can be found in many cities; London was chosen since the city offers a great variety of market types in different social-, material- and geographic settings. I had previous, brief experiences of these markets and therefore an easy access to the milieus, but my experience was not so comprehensive that it would risk I would presume anything about their detailed workings.

The main studies at the London market sites were carried out during five days in March and April 2012. Additional visits to Borough Market, Portobello Road Market and Petticoat Lane Market took place in October 2012 and in October 2013. In total about 50 hours were spent in field observations and 1900 photographs were taken, of which about 700 were at Borough Market. The second and third visits were brief and carried out as short stays at each market; during these, further observations were made that were included in the empirical data collection. During the first and main visit to London, I studied seven open-air markets, some of which I was somewhat familiar with, whilst others were completely new to me. The ambition was to include markets with distinctive spatial and architectural prerequisites, situated in varied urban contexts. After a first reconnaissance I planned to concentrate my studies on a few markets, preferably just one. After conducting a survey of the seven markets, I decided to focus on four of them (figure 41, p.132 – in Chapter 4). The markets chosen for extended examination and more intense analyses were selected for their typological diversity and since they appeared to constitute interesting examples for each market type. Each day, several hours were spent at the different market sites; a predetermined schedule was followed to ensure that all four markets were observed on different weekdays and at various times of day. A more thorough micro-study was carried out at a part of Borough market; consequently, more hours were spent there.

Field study design: Playgrounds in Amsterdam

When I decided to study spaces for play and leisure as socio-material urban cultures, I chose Amsterdam because of the city's historic concern with playgrounds and the tradition of using playgrounds as neighbourhood meeting places (Lefaivre 2007). Aldo van Eyck's famous playgrounds from the 1950s,

'60s and '70s, as well as a number of contemporary themed playgrounds, illustrate the importance of the playground typology for the city of Amsterdam. Some of the modern playgrounds in Amsterdam still are planned to fulfil aspects of neighbourhood community and act as public centres for social interaction (Lefaivre 2007; Blitz, Elger. Personal interview. Amsterdam, 2 April 2013).

Spaces for play and leisure frame an important spatial typology, not least because it includes, or rather focuses on, children's and teenagers' presence in the public domain. An additional motive for choosing playgrounds as study sites was their explicit dependency on material agency to make sense as an urban spatial category.

The playground study was carried out in early April 2013. The primary site, van Beuningenplein playground, was visited a total of seven times, spread out over six days. Each daytime visit lasted between two and four hours, and evening visits about 20-30 minutes. Slightly more than 55 hours were spent in field observations, distributed among the different playgrounds, and one thousand photographs were taken, of which about 450 were in van Beuningenplein. The design of the study followed the same basic outline as the study of open-air markets in London. I set out to visit three contemporary playgrounds, designed between 2008 and 2011, and five of the Aldo van Eyck playgrounds, established in the 1940s, '50s and '60s. My objective was to eventually focus on one major location in which to complete a main site-study. Consequently, I made a basic survey of the eleven (figure 125, p.168 – in Chapter 5) playgrounds I had chosen to examine. After a brief analysis of each setting, I chose to focus on van Beuningenplein as my primary site and to use the others as reference spaces. The choice was motivated by its size and spatial variation, which implied the possibility of a complex internal public life and an anticipated territorial complexity. As a result of extensive walks through the city, I came across a number of additional playgrounds, of which three are included in my list of reference site studies. Although most of my time was spent at van Beuningenplein playground, I visited all reference playgrounds on least at three occasions during the field studies, on different days and at different times of the day.

I also conducted spontaneous, unstructured interviews with professionals connected to van Beuningenplein playground, such as the owner of the bistro and one of the employees there, random visitors to the playground and two women working at the youth centre located in the playground area. I completed two planned interviews with Elger Blitz, the co-owner and chief designer at CARVE.[8]

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8   *CARVE ontwerp en ingenieursbureau* in Amsterdam. The engineers and designers in the design office are specialised in playgrounds and play artefacts, skateboard facilities and similar public leisure spaces.

Field study design: A Leisure Riverfront in Paris

The studies in Paris were initially more tentative and not predetermined regarding a particular spatial theme. In a pilot study executed in September 2014, I set out to examine two sites that could be labelled as participatory neighbourhood commons: *Agrocité*[9] and *Passage 56*[10] in central Paris, both initiated and managed by aaa (atelier d'architecture autogérée). Both projects aim to explore models for socio-ecological sustainability in local urban contexts. Anne Querrien, a former co-worker at aaa who is well informed about the projects, graciously and thoroughly presented the sites to me. At Agrocité I met Doina Petrescu and Constantin Petcou, the founders and directors of aaa. I also got the opportunity to meet and talk to people tending to their garden 'parcelles' at the site.

As an alternative site, I included a newly established public space, Les Berges de Seine, which is characterised by an extensive management of activities and a custom-made urban design that includes furnishings that encourage social gathering and interaction. I concluded that Les Berges de Seine constituted the most interesting setting for a primary case, considering the objectives for my research approach; i.e. to study socio-material exchanges and heterogeneous clustering in public domains. Les Berges also offered a setting, and a complexity, congruent with my two other cases, and perhaps most importantly, it is publicly accessible. Agrocité and Passage 56 showed interesting aspects with regard to my objectives, but the spatial and social settings appeared to me as too secluded and well established for my intentions of studying emerging clusterings in urban public contexts. I decided, however, to make use of Agrocité as a reference case because of some interesting notions on the role of materialities in social exchanges and their stabilisations. Other aspects of particular interest are the managing of the Agrocité and the curating of events, actively consolidating the heterogeneous collective. This will be further discussed in the concluding section of this thesis.

The site observations at Les Berges de Seine were made during two days in September 2014 and seven days in May 2015. In total, 75 hours were spent in field observations; of these, almost 50 of them were at Les Berges de Seine. At the Paris sites 3350 photographs were taken, the vast majority of these were at Les Berges de Seine.

In September 2014, the Les Berges site was in full use and the material set-up was configured according to the original project design. On the

9   Agrocité is a pilot 'civic gardening' facility that forms part of the R-Urban project in Colombes, initiated and supervised by aaa. See also Chapter Five.

10   Passage 56 is a local eco-garden and community space located in an interstice site in St. Blaise area in the Eastern part of central Paris. It was initiated in 2006 and has now transformed into a collectively self-managed space.

second visit in May 2015, the material conditions were changed as preparations of the site for the summer season were underway, and consequently not all artefacts were in place yet. Though the site is open throughout the winter months, most artefacts are piled up for storage and secured in fenced areas on the site as a precaution in the event of flooding. During the field study week in May 2015, almost all of the artefacts were gradually put in position according to the design blueprints; a special system of wooden logs for seating (Mikados) was arranged, ground paintings were repainted, planting boxes were reconfigured and containers for various uses opened. The management staff was starting up the information centre, as well as kicking off various curated activities.

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4

OPEN-AIR MARKETS IN LONDON

INTRODUCTION

Field studies of four consumption domains in London form the empirical base for this chapter. The spaces in focus are characterised by the co-existence of temporal market activities and more permanent conventional shopping facilities situated in or in close proximity to urban public spaces. The overarching aim of the site studies in this chapter is to explore what and how material topographies of urban consumption space mediate social exchange, and how they play a role for emerging collectives. In short, this is tantamount to a search for materialities that may be important for heterogeneous clustering and the production (and stabilisation) of collectives. Furthermore, it is also an exploration of how territorial productions co-vary with socio-material exchange. Urban consumption domains attract social venues such as cafés, pubs and restaurants, constituting complex milieus as far as material diversity and social practices are concerned.

The study of public life in consumption spaces is thus equally a study of private domains.

Architectural designs and other material strategies that constitute urban public space are of great importance not only for the development of an accessible, equal, and inspiring public domain, but also as a political space, where conflicts and differences can be recognised and negotiated. If the most imperative societal dimension of the public domain is its capacity to bring together people from diverse social and cultural contexts and negotiate differences, it seems motivated to further investigate how material, spatial and territorial qualities support social exchange. Hence, a key objective for this study is to deepen the understanding of how material actors and actor-clusters facilitate social practices in public consumption space by exploring how they produce, code, and differentiate temporal networks of human and nonhuman relations.

The architecture of buildings often constitutes the interface between private (commercial) and public domains. Architecture and artefacts have the capacity to bridge different shades of publicness and privateness. Spatial order and material form are capable of differentiating social accessibility as well as territorial and cultural production. Mobile artefacts can mediate between humans and nonhumans and thus support the formation of relational networks in public as well as in consumption space.

The field study was prepared through studies of maps, internet sites, brochures and books, focusing the contemporary status of open-air markets in London and their genealogy. In cities like London, open-air markets have been a spatial trading concept for centuries and even millennia. Some of the field study sites in this chapter have been part of the consumption rhythm for many decades and in some cases centuries. For example, Borough Market has been in its present location since the 13th century and Portobello Road Market was established in the 19th century. However, the markets have changed over time with regard to the merchandise offered and target groups, as has their role as spatial types within a larger urban context. Borough Market, for example, has transformed over the recent decades from a local, rustic and almost obscure market that primarily attracted local citizens, to becoming (at least in part) a cosmopolitan and rather posh inner-city meeting place, offering semi-exclusive dining, eco-shopping and sophisticated market products, such as truffles and high-end cheeses, meats and seafood. Today the market attracts people from all over London as well as tourists. Some inner city road markets seem to be developing the same way whilst others remain fairly local and mundane, as far as wares and visiting citizens are concerned.

Consumption Space as Public Domain

Cities have transformed from centres for production to centres for specialised consumption (Glaeser and Gottleib 2006). Spaces of consumption are considered public by most people, even though they are indeed privately owned. Various social activities that usually took place in traditional public spaces such as squares, plazas, parks and major streets, and in public buildings, can now be observed in shopping malls and in corporate buildings – so called *pseudo-public spaces* (Sorkin 1992). Additionally, very few urban spaces are free from any form of private (commercial or corporate) interests. Today we find commercial activity in spaces we formerly regarded as non-commercial, such as for example churches, museums, libraries and workplaces (Kärrholm 2012). We can also notice a rapidly increasing selection of food- and retail consumption in railway stations, airports, bus depots and other communication nodes.

As stated elsewhere in this thesis, 'public space' is a dubious, multi-layered concept and the common perception of the concept is confused. A conventional notion of public space as being the opposite of private space becomes irrelevant from some perspectives when the borderlines between public and private are vague and frequently overlapping (Crawford 2008; Sorkin 1992). Public space is not a fixed state of circumstances; it denotes a multitude of different sets of values, interests and powers (Madanipour 2010). Private consumption space has public dimensions, as the Internet also has. Social media is a private/public stage for political discussion, social debate and cultural manifestations, etc. Many traditional public spaces are privatised and/or to a great extent policed and monitored (Wacquant 2009; Harvey 2008). This conceptual confusion calls for the development of new, or additional, perspectives on how we can understand the disputed features of *publicness* and *public domain,* as well as the practice of being a public citizen.

The accessibility to traditional open public spaces; i.e. spaces that are usually linked to significant municipal buildings, monuments or churches, can be questioned from a social diversity point of view. These spaces are theoretically accessible to all people at all times, but for some individuals and groups they can be experienced as alienating, unwelcoming or simply unattractive. Thus, public space is rather a subjective and time-space specific situation than a preconceived and fixed Euclidian space. Less significant (pseudo-) public spaces, such as shopping malls, open-air markets and public transport nodes, seem to attract a more diverse public and may thus may be considered more public from a socio-economic and cultural diversity point of view (Kärrholm 2012; Bergman 2003). In this perspective, open-air markets are important as spaces where a great variety of people

meet. If consumption space is becoming one of the most important and culturally diverse public domains, there are reasons to protect (and develop) the public dimensions of those domains. The material constitution of consumption space is a key aspect to focus on if we, as a society, want to safeguard public features such as accessibility and opportunities for social interaction with friends as well as with strangers.

The interdependency between public life and consumption space is not a new phenomenon. Historically, public space is deeply intertwined with commercial activities. The Greek agora was bounded by small stores, and in medieval times the marketplace represented the major public meeting place. The most vibrant public life of early modern Paris and London took place in the (private) coffeehouses there (Habermas 1989 [1962]); Madanipour 2010). These spaces were not public in an orthodox sense of the concept though; they were open to certain, privileged groups only. Today, a major part of socially mixed public life can be found in shopping malls, street-markets, cinema complexes, commercial sport events, cultural festivals, etc.

Temporary material interventions such as open-air markets can produce, stabilise or destabilise the territorial structure of urban space, with major implications for accessibility and the nature of social interaction. In urban spaces of consumption, one can observe that complex combinations of social relations and use can exist and overlap in space as well as in time. Spaces of consumption may often be the most socially mixed spaces in modern cities. This calls for profound analysis of how these spaces are designed and what influence material design and spatial form may have on everyday public life, territorial production and territorial complexity in public domains.

MARKETS INCLUDED IN THE FIELD STUDY

Primary site: Borough Market (focus: Stoney Street/Park Street junction)

Secondary sites: Portobello Road Market
Petticoat Lane Market
Brixton Market

Reference sites: Church Street Market - Bell Street Market
Leather Lane Market
Whitecross Market

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Preliminary Notions:
Mapping London's Open-air Markets

A major part of the fieldwork in London was carried out in March and April 2012. The main field study sites were revisited on two occasions, in October 2012 and in October 2013. The first days were spent making a preliminary survey of pre-selected markets to find one or several to study in detail. I travelled between the markets according to a pre-established plan, allotting a one-hour visit at each potential site. After two days I decided to focus on four markets: one primary site (Borough Market) and three secondary sites (Portobello Road Market, Petticoat Lane Market and Brixton Market). Observations that had been made at the other markets were kept as reference material. In the days that followed, I divided my time between the four selected sites. The choice of Borough Market as my primary study site was rather intuitive but quite easy to rationalise in retrospect. The complex topography and the rich composition of visitors with varying objectives and backgrounds promised an interesting environment for the study of socio-material exchanges and clusterings.

A regular day started with an early morning visit to Borough Market to observe how people working in the market and in the neighbouring shops, cafés and restaurants prepare for the dawning day. The ambience is characterised by routinized activities, and it is obvious that all those involved know exactly what to do and in what order. It is also evident that the people active at the site at this early hour are rather well acquainted; they interact, make jokes and toss comments back and forth whilst going about their practical endeavours almost automatically. Commuters start passing through the site quite early in the mornings, on their way to and from workplaces or public transport nodes. They make up a specific category at the site, with its own pace and agenda. Market-workers and commuters almost seem to exist in parallel worlds and without any apparent relation. Sometimes, though, the stream of commuters interrupts people with carts and other transportation vehicles, causing minor conflicts; of course, from their perspective, the commuters occasionally experience the situation as being the reversed. After surveying the different parts of the market I stopped at the Monmouth Café and ordered a coffee-to-go, and found a place to sit down and make notes about the morning's observations.

After about two hours at Borough Market, I usually travelled with the underground to one of the secondary markets for further observations and documentation. After visiting a secondary market, I either returned to Borough Market or continued to another secondary market site. I spent about one hour each at two of the secondary markets every day, and at least three hours daily at Borough Market. The visits were planned in order

to guarantee observations at different hours and on different days of the week at all four markets. On most days the temperature was well above ten degrees and the weather conditions were almost perfect for outdoor studies of public life, although I occasionally had to seek cover from rain. A lot of people were active and using the study sites according to typical, everyday practices.

During the investigation of the four open-air markets it became obvious that the territorial complexity is typically higher at the outskirts of the market spaces, where the market functions collide with adjacent urban spaces. Additionally, the territorial complexity increases further when material irregularities that offer alternative uses are present; for example, elevated platforms, such as traffic islands; clusters of urban fittings, such as bollards, posts and pavement signs; or steps that are suitable for sitting. Territorial productions, behavioural patterns and social rules and policies are more ambiguous at the boundary areas than within the actual market space. The market space is normally well structured, with effectively organised stalls and communication routes. The rhythms of the markets are extremely regulated by hour, day and season. The uses are specific and rather singular. Material actors, such as geometrically arranged paving stones, painted squares on the ground, bollards, fences, walls, kerbstones, roof structures, etc. stabilises the consumption territories and thereby also the communication routes. At the boundary areas however, the market rules and territorialisations meet the rules and territorialisations of the surrounding urban spaces – public as well as private – and a potential for higher territorial complexity emerges. Different territorial productions meet and overlap, and a wider variety of actors become entangled. The rhythms and activities of the markets intermingle with those of the surrounding public spaces, streets and stores. The accessibility is higher and the possibilities for spatial appropriations seem to be easier in these boundary spaces.

Since most of the markets studied are located adjacent to public transport nodes (underground stations, railway stations and bus stops) there are flows of people passing by or through the market grounds, mainly during commuting hours. The rhythms of the commuters interact with the rhythms of the markets and with those of regular urban life. The different rhythms induce overlapping territorial productions and consequently increase the level of territorial complexity.

The movements of market visitors generate currents as well as congestions, while commuters and people just passing through establish a "highway" through the market, particularly in the early mornings and late afternoons. The flows of people produce territories of movement that flank and overlap more static spaces, where visitors are clustering to eat, drink

and rest. Because of the streets and lanes that transverse and surround the market space, there are cars, bicycles, carts and trucks passing through or stopping to deliver goods to the vendors and to adjacent permanent commercial establishments. These vehicles produce, or rather stabilise, additional territories of movements, such as streets, lanes and parking spaces. The territorial complexity adds dynamics that sometimes result in conflicts, for example between strong pedestrian currents, delivery vehicles and informal territorial appropriations produced by people eating takeaway and drinking beer.

In the study, the open-air markets were preliminarily sorted into three spatial categories based on their territorial and spatial structure: *conglomerate* order, *composite* order and *linear* order. Borough Market represents the conglomerate order; Brixton Market represents the composite order; Portobello Road Market and Petticoat Lane represent the *linear* order. Petticoat Lane could also be referred to as a *grid structure* – a variation on the linear order. These four markets were chosen since they signify different sets of spatial, material and geometrical prerequisites. The conglomerate order is a complex, undirected and amorphous space in which different market types are nested. The composite order is a mixture of different market types, added to one another but clearly discrete as separate and coherent units. The market space with a *linear* order is a geometrically distinct and evidently directed space, primarily designed for movement. The three orders provide opportunities to compare how various artefacts affect and become enrolled in the production of actions, social exchange and the formation of collectives in public space and in different urban landscapes.

The level of territorial complexity is partly dependent on the market type. Comparing the different market categories, there appears to be a higher territorial complexity in markets with a conglomerate and composite order than in markets with a linear order. At Borough Market and Brixton Market, the material actors (in these cases referring to permanent structures such as walls, platforms, roof-structures, etc.) are more varied and the spatial differentiation is higher. This suggests that those markets are open for more diverse actions and uses. There are exceptions however; in some parts of Portobello Road and Petticoat Lane the spatial and material variety is higher, thus providing an increased potential for territorial complexity. The exceptions are normally related to material interventions or particularities that challenge the linear structure, such as traffic-related artefacts and open spaces that are directly linked to the street spaces.

The Borough Market site (figure 42, p.136) contains a vast array of spatial situations that vary in size, geometry, topography, social intensity, etc. The general pace is slow compared to the pace of a linearly ordered

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

THE 'ARCADE'

MONMOUTH CAFÉ

MARKET SPACE
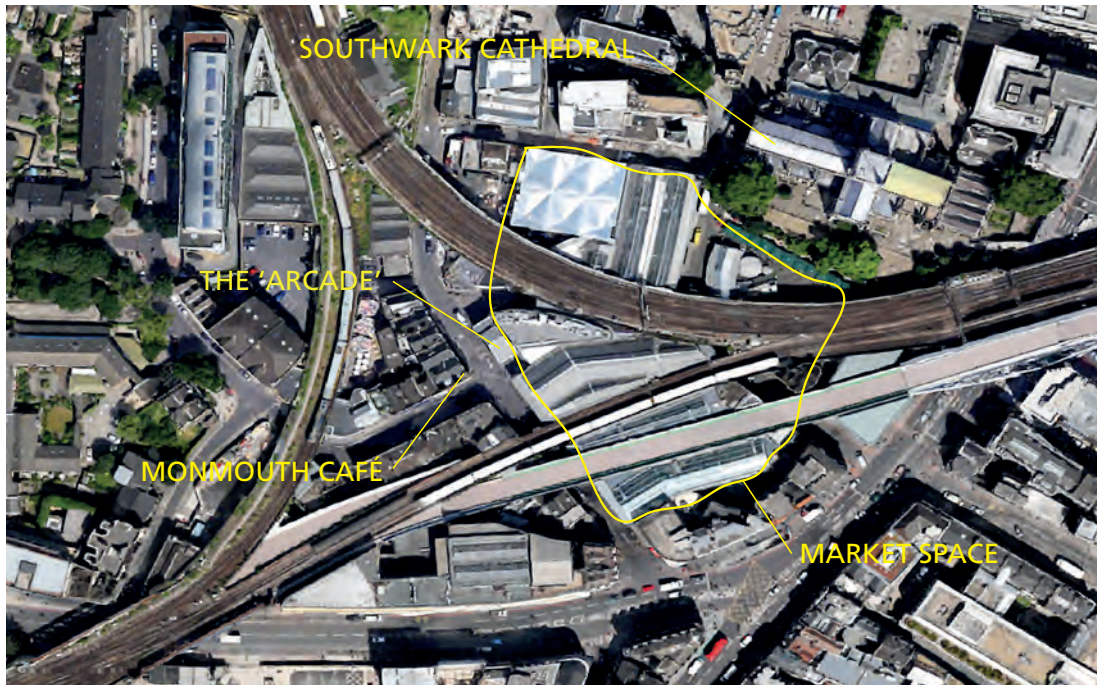
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street market. The Borough Market (see aerial view above [42]) offers many places to stop, rest, gather, eat or drink in outdoor public situations. A diversity of mobile and fixed urban- and market related artefacts make up these places: benches, low walls, building socles, roofed arcades, market stalls, litterbins, lamp posts, utility boxes, etc. The territorial productions are varied and the territories overlap spatially as well as temporally; consequently, the territorial complexity is often high.

At Brixton Market, a mix of street markets and indoor markets revolve around the elevated railroad and the Brixton tube station. The different market types are well connected but not overlapping; thus the assemblage of markets can be categorised as an example of the composite order. From a territorial and spatial point of view, Brixton Market is a varied and differentiated area, but the complexity is generally not as high as in the Borough Market. Each Brixton market type has its own informal rules and policies. Since their atmosphere and the merchandise that they offer differ significantly, they most probably attract partly different visitors. The overall impression is that they are highly dependent on their local contexts, regarding their individual capacities to trigger social exchange between strangers and to produce territorial complexity.

In consistency with the logic of the street as a canal for transportation, Portobello Road Market and Petticoat Lane Market are clearly directed

spaces, and accordingly, people often move at a higher pace. The single ordered street market type is territorially more homogeneous and offers fewer places to stop, gather or consume takeaway items in outdoor situations. At Portobello Road in particular, one is compelled to use the more permanent, commercial venues such as cafés, pubs or restaurants for these activities. The material figures and spatial differentiation is not as elaborated and diversified as in the Borough Market or as complex as in Brixton Market; consequently, the spatial variety and territorial complexity is not as high.

Selected Artefact Observations

In the following, I will present a series of material figures and describe how they affect the social life in the open-air markets. The selection of artefacts included here are those that stood out as particularly vibrant during the field studies. They are introduced here to provide a kind of panorama of the different ways in which material artefacts seem to influence social exchanges in the market sites. This panorama of observed – and apparently incentive – artefacts will then be followed by a few, more elaborated, micro-studies from the southern edge of the Borough Market.

Market Platforms

Here, platforms imply horizontal artefacts that are slightly raised from the surrounding ground. They can be accessed normally and thus become entangled in human/material networks. The change of level detaches the platform and protects the space from potentially disturbing nearby activities. A platform can take on different actor roles in various networks, affording opportunities for sitting, playing and performing, for example. When takeaway is involved, they easily become places for eating and drinking. They can also act as refuges in congested spaces and legitimise people's lingering, for example in a market space, without consuming anything. Platforms can produce fairly stable and specialised territories in the midst of other territorial productions that typically relate to market functions and/or to a general traffic situation. Due to the public sharing of activities and events that are performed on and near platforms, they constitute potential triggers for social exchange. This recurrently implies superimpositions of different activities and hence the production of territorial complexity. Platforms often represent local spatial exceptions, where the regular social culture is temporarily destabilised – islands of normative exceptions, if you like (cf. Amin 2002).

A traffic island in Petticoat Lane Market (photographs 43, 44) attracts visitors for a short rest or to consume takeaway food. The traffic island is

43   44

positioned in the middle of the busy market street and offers people a sort
of protection from behind, a place from which they can peacefully observe
the intense commercial life. On one occasion I observed an elderly man
resting on the traffic island while two women associated with him com-
pleted their shopping along the street. The women repeatedly returned to
the man, leaving the things they had bought with him for safekeeping be-
fore continuing their shopping. At the same time, a family with three chil-
dren stopped for a rest and to eat ice cream. The youngest kids sat safely
in the middle of the platform, naturally protected from the busy street by
the people sitting along the edges, as if by an organic fence. After finishing
their ice cream, the children played on the platform while their parents
took a rest on the edge. During the same observation, people came and
went from the platform, some for short rests and others to stay for some
time. The form, the size and height of the traffic island strongly affect the
use of it. The height affords sitting and the precise shape of the edge makes
it possible even for small children to climb up on it. The convex form al-
lows for sitting visually directed towards the anonymous public activities
and thus makes the platform socially easy to access, since one is not con-
nected to the other people using it by eye contact. The depth of the artefact
allows children to play fairly safely in its centre and it can protect things
that one wants to put away safely. This is possible without disturbing the
functionality of the island as a refuge for short rests at its edges. The utterly
mundane artefact offers a great variety of uses and encourages prolonged
stops at the site and thus an increased potential for social exchange, yet
without requiring it. The architecture of the traffic island offers alternative
choices regarding social interaction.

Another traffic island, in a crossing at Portobello Road Market (pho-
tographs 45, 46), is appropriated by a man playing steel pan while leaning

45   46

on a bollard, by an iron fence. He is protected from cars and other vehicles by the slightly elevated ground and by the iron fence. The steel pan player is perfectly positioned in the middle of the flow of market visitors, without disturbing the market stalls or obstructing the flow of people. His activity produces a sound territory, overlapping with the sound territories of the market and the motorised traffic. The steel pan musician obstructs people with his visual presence and by his production of sound, causing exchange with people and between people who are passing by. On another occasion, the same spot was occupied by a bass player intensely performing emphatic rockabilly songs. His presence affirms a repetitive and specific use of the place; a use that I suggest is evidently related to its form and materiality.

Right outside a store in the southern part of the Portobello Road Market, a section of the pavement is raised like a platform (photographs 47, 48). People stop, step up on the platform and get an overview of the often-crowded space. One day, some people on the platform take notice of two street performers on the other side of the street and use the pavement platform as a stand for watching the performances. They overhear each other's comments on the artists' skill (or lack of), they exchange and share an urban activity

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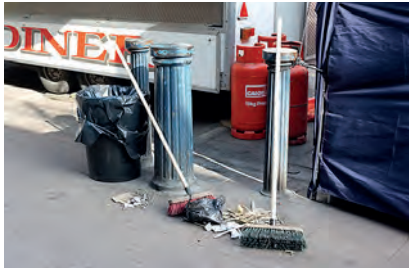
51   52   53

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with others. The particularity of the place reinforces the feeling of temporal community with others who are using the platform the same way. It is unlikely that the street performers' position is accidental; rather, I would argue that they are prompted by the architecture of the place and its affordances.

Bollards

Bollards' main purpose is to separate different activities in urban spaces, typically motorised traffic from pedestrians. The bollards are the material realisation of a subtle, permeable border that allows overlapping and multiple uses. As artefacts, however, they inspire to multiple activities in themselves, such as sitting (photographs 50, 52, 61) and leaning (photographs 51, 53), supporting a bag or a plate with food (photograph 49). Sometimes a bollard can be used as a supporting leg for a market table (photograph 57). As urban furniture they prompt people to gather (photograph 60), and together with takeaway foods they may become places for eating and drinking. People also tend to use them as spatial markers, or anchors, for clustering or for organising garbage, bicycles and other objects (photographs 54-56, 58, 59, 80). All of these affordances reveal bollards' role as active mediators of social exchange – frequently linking humans and nonhumans in different sorts of networks.

At Brixton Station Road street market, some bollards are organised three by three in a triangular arrangement, attracting other artefacts, such as litterbins, pavement signs, café tables and chairs; consequently the extended bollard-clusters attract humans. According to these observations and others made in the field studies, bollards appear to constitute multifunctional urban fixtures that afford much more than they were originally intended to; they prompt certain behaviours and encourage entanglement with humans as well as between humans.

62   63

Socles and Low Walls

The footpath between the Southwark Cathedral and one of the market spaces at Borough Market is demarcated by a wall/fence on one side and an edge of slightly raised kerbstones on the other (photographs 67, 68). During lunchtime and in the afternoons, both sides of the path are used for sitting and leaning, predominantly by people eating or drinking take-away from the market. At lunchtime the sunken space southwest of the cathedral fills up with hungry people and their takeaway lunches (photographs 62, 63). Mobile furniture is arranged, composing different clusters of visitors, sometimes in groups around a table and sometimes in direct relation to people using the stone retaining walls, which also provide sitting and leaning opportunities. On several occasions I observed school classes having lunch here, seemingly as part of excursions including a visit to the cathedral. Occasionally, people also use the socles of the Jubilee Market structure (a part of Borough Market) as seats (photographs 64, 66).

Building socles and low walls are similar to platforms – like the traffic islands described above – and thus form part of the urban public landscape. Building socles and other architectural features, potentially due for public use, are often primarily considered parts of (private) buildings.

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On the other hand, buildings can be seen as spatial boundaries that frame a public domain and hence belong to that space, as far as usability is concerned. As parts of buildings, these versatile architectural features, which may encourage various public uses, bridge the boundary between private structures and public space, making it possible to exploit the affordances of the wall itself as well as its dividing capacity. An architecture that actively supports different uses and provides material conditions that encourage people to stay longer in a shared space is likely to facilitate encounters. When a lot of strangers share the same socle, edge or low wall – to sit on or to put things on – social exchange, optional or not, will most likely occur in some form.

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Mobile Furniture

Portable chairs and stools are abundant in open-air markets. Many stall- and storekeepers sit on chairs or stools in the street, close to their premises, so that they are partly in the way of potential customers and thereby produce encounters. The obstruction of the flows of people generates direct or indirect social exchange. The chairs and stools make it possible for stall- and storekeepers to remain in the public zone without being regarded as suspicious. Their roles as keepers are sometimes distributed to the sitting devices; when they walk away for a minute or two the chairs may act as deputy storekeepers, passively guarding the store or market stall. Sometimes two or three storekeepers sit together, in clusters, while overlooking their merchandise and scanning the street for potential customers.

The furniture manipulates the space through territorial claim, and the mobile chair/stool contributes to temporal territorial complexities by territorial overlappings. The effect is valid even if the keeper is somewhere else. The piece of furniture maintains its territory by itself. It announces the nearby presence of a stall- or storekeeper by association and consequently the territorial production persists.

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Takeaway Food and Drinks

Takeaway food and drinks mediate exchange with materialities as well as with humans and thus help to produce heterogeneous clusters. Takeaway encourages people to linger in an urban space that is suitable for eating and drinking; it urges them to actively explore the space in their search for horizontal table-artefacts or places to sit, lean or at least to find a spot protected from the flows of people or vehicles. Portable food and drinks trigger the entanglement with urban space and with specific artefacts. Some public spaces are filled up completely with people consuming their takeaway at lunchtime. The same spaces seem to be attractive for people drinking takeaway coffee, tea or beer in the afternoon. The culture of eating and drinking in public domains is in itself community-making (Bell 2007:19), and gives reasons for interaction and exchange, directly or indirectly, between friends as well as strangers. Takeaway constitutes a major actor-type (actant), which entangles people, together with material artefacts and architectural features, in various relations, to form networks and to produce territories.

BOROUGH MARKET

Stoney Street/Park Street Junction

On the second day of my fieldwork in London I recognised an interesting complexity in the space surrounding Monmouth Café; the space was characterised by a noticeable multiplicity, regarding types of visitors, activities and events. Besides the café, the space – which is situated in a T-junction between two roads (Stoney Street/Park Street) – includes one of the main entrances to the market, which is connected to the southern end of 'the Middle Road' (a pedestrian axis that runs diagonally through the market); an arcade (that offers seating and protection from sun and rain); a pub (*The Market Porter*), and a number of restaurants and small stores. The territorial productions are multiple and partly subjected to the different rhythms of the market, the delivery schedules, the commuters and the opening hours of the café, stores, restaurants, and pubs. The extensive mixture of functions attracts a broad variety of people to the place. The material constitution, the spatial order and the figuration of artefacts allow people to stay, meet and gather in varying constellations. This observation led to the choice of this particular space for a more detailed micro-study.

In a marketplace, the material features that guide consumption behaviour are normally weaker than in 'regular' shopping facilities. 'Regular' here implies shops and stores situated in buildings, typically organised according to well-known shopping behaviours, such as for example entrance facilities that clarify the territorial boundaries, guiding personnel, a number of display elements, a cashier counter, etc. The architecture of the open-air markets investigated here seems to influence the way regular stores in the nearby neighbourhoods are arranged, materially and spatially. Particularly the entrance situations seem to be affected by the market culture. When entering most adjacent stores one crosses over several material boundaries, such as thresholds, sometimes a few stairs, a door – possibly with a doorbell that additionally marks one's entrance – and once inside the store, one is in a space that is obviously someone else's private territory. Several stores bordering the investigated markets imitate the market situation by having gradual and easy access. Some stores have no stairs, no thresholds and no doors directly to the street. Instead, they may have an outdoor area for the display of merchandise, or they may open up their façades as much as possible; some have open-air entrance foyers or simply no regular doors at all. Some stores even trade their merchandises from counters or tables directly on the streets or pavements (photographs 95, 97). This spatial adaptation to the market situation is more common around Borough Market and Brixton Market than at Portobello Road and

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Petticoat Lane. The treatment of the entrance situation opens up for territorial superimpositions and enables different material actors to become enrolled in multiple networks, connecting the public space and the private (consumption) space. The territorial complexity as well as the possibilities for exchanges between strangers thereby increase. My observations of this phenomenon concur with Quentin Stevens', who argues that

> The social liminality of thresholds can arise from a softening of distinctions between inside and outside which is made possible by wide, transparent and open frontages, floor surfaces continuous with the footpath. (Quentin Stevens 2007a:175)

The Monmouth Café opens early and the rolling shutter to Stoney Street opens up (photographs 88, 90). The counter virtually sits on the pavement, and the threshold between the public and private space almost disappears. A queue to the counter forms immediately and persists practically all day long (photographs 89, 92). The queue facilitates territorial productions as well as social exchange among the queuing people, with the café guests and with people just passing by.

Some customers use the two benches that are fixed to the façade outside the entrance to have their coffee (photographs 83, 91, 93). When the benches are occupied, people stand on the pavement or move across the street to sit on the foundations of the arcade-columns.

At lunchtime the arcade fills up with people eating takeaway, usually from the market. At this time of day even the pavements are used for sitting. The pub is open and its customers initially stay on the pavement along the façade, using the window ledges to put their drinks (photographs 121, 122). When the pavement is crowded, people move to a place at the opposite side of the street, where a group of artefacts (a lamp post, two bollards, pavement signs and an electrical utility box) form a protected area (photographs 88, 90). Those who can't find a place to sit start colonising the street, clustering in groups. Passing cars and delivery vans seem to accept the crowding in the street and slow down, seemingly without frustration. Around midday there are about 150-200 people gathered in the space (photograph 111).

Clusters of interrelated actors – human and nonhuman – encourage people to stay in the space and thus trigger exchange, passively or actively. Most people prefer to sit when they are eating or drinking, or at least to have somewhere to put their food or drink. The people standing up are searching for areas with artefacts that can protect them from flows of moving people or vehicles – such artefacts are fences, columns, bollards, posts and signs.

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Material and spatial variation give room for a range of diverse uses in close proximity. People from different collectives and citizen categories visit the arcade, such as: people eating or drinking, tourists, market workers, pub visitors, shoppers, fl**â**neurs, etc. The mixture of mundane materialities, rough surfaces, 'back stage' and 'front stage' activities (Goffman 1959), incentive architectural features, high-profile market merchandise, etc. attracts a large variety of people and allows for social diversity. Hence, the physical accessibility of the Stoney Street/Park Street space is obviously high, but from a social or class perspective, the accessibility can be experienced as more restricted. As a whole, although the people visiting may not reflect a complete selection of citizens, the mix is rather extensive.

FOUR MICRO-STUDIES

The Arcade

The arcade is a *threshold space* (Stevens 2007a; Stevens 2007b), a transitional space where it is possible to calibrate one's level of exposure and thus one's desire to take part in public social life. The space resembles what Goffman calls a 'back region' (Goffman 1959:112); a space where one can prepare oneself for the exposure in the 'front region' – the more intense public scene. Threshold spaces are also referred to as liminal spaces (Stevens 2007a:73ff.; Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:128ff.); i.e. spaces where "boundaries may become blurred" and "social roles, rules and status relations are temporarily suspended or inverted (Stevens 2007a:74). Hajer and Reijndorp (2001:128) suggest that the 'marketplace' per se is a "classical example of such a 'liminal space'"; I would argue that the postulation is too comprehensive. I posit that liminality is relational and highly dependent on local conditions regarding spatio-material setup and types of activities that characterise the space. In this case, the arcade can be considered to be a threshold, or a liminal space, partly because of its location, connecting a variety of different commercial and public activities, and partly since its architecture signifies a hallway or foyer. The in-between character of the semi-open space admits visual protection and multiple choices of positioning in relation to the surrounding spaces.

The sitting opportunities in the arcade are used by Monmouth customers, people eating takeaway food from the market, people just passing by, and people who work at the market or in the surrounding restaurants and stores. Local workers taking a break and people desiring a piece of 'public privacy' mainly use the column foundations that face the inside of the arcade or the lateral sides (photographs 101, 104, 106, 107, 108), while general visitors prefer to use the side that faces the street. Even though the

110   111

arcade faces a rather busy street, visitors seem to perceive the setting as both tolerant and safe; there are mothers breastfeeding their children and young lovers occasionally exchanging signs of affection.

The presence of porcelain cups and real glasses that people bring across the street from Monmouth Café – especially the sound of metal spoons against china – domesticate the soundscape of the arcade space and create an ambience of intimacy (photograph 99). For some, this ambience probably can be perceived as unpleasant, or even as a threat to the public anonymity of the site; for others, though, it can be seen as a sign of privacy in a public domain that signifies the complex sensation of being a private individual in a public situation, and bridging the duality between one's private and public personalities.

One might assume that the sun is an actant with a major effect on the usage of the arcade's southwest-facing column foundations, but visiting the place on cloudy days showed that sunshine is not crucial for the attractiveness of the place. Earlier and later visits in autumn and mid-winter confirm the same.

The Monmouth Café and Façade Benches

People use the Monmouth façade benches for a quick rest or to drink their coffee; occasionally interacting with the people queuing outside the café. A small utility box between the benches acts as a sideboard for cups, glasses, cakes, etc. (photographs 83, 89, 91, 113). In the afternoon, pub customers cross the street to use the benches when there is a seat free. Even people with takeaway food from the market sometimes make use of the benches. The benches are apparently considered public and not reserved for the Monmouth guests. When the café owners first put up the benches several years ago, they were accompanied by small tables, fixed to the ground.

112   113

According to a long-time café employee, the tables were swiftly banned by the local council and taken away. The tables were experienced as obstructing passage on the pavement. Obviously there is a limit to the extent to which a private enterprise is allowed to colonise a particular public space through fixed artefacts. In this example, the tables seem to exceed that limit, whilst the benches are accepted.

The geometry and positioning of the benches is important. They are convexly arranged over the rounded corner, which increases their individual availability and thus their accessibility as public seating. The little gap between the benches where the utility box/table is located reinforces this condition. People using the two benches are naturally aiming their visual attention in different directions and the level of intimacy with potential bench neighbours thus probably becomes more tolerable. The fact that benches are fixed to the façade gives them a certain status in relation to other seating nearby. Observations suggested a priority for café guests. Given the multiple categories of users, however, the benches can be regarded as public, albeit in a broad sense of the term.

The utility box/table acts as a divider between the benches, but it also constitutes a mediating artefact. Since it is rather small, different users have to negotiate how to use it in collaboration. Hence, the shared artefact prompts a mutual responsibility for the use of it and frequently results in verbal exchange.

The space between the Monmouth façade and the street is a territorially complex boundary area. Different material conditions allow for various territorial productions to take place simultaneously and partly overlap. For example, the absence of entrance doors makes a spatial intersection between indoor coffee shop culture and the outdoor public pavement culture possible. The counter, which is placed very close to the pavement, contrib-

114   115

utes to this phenomenon (photograph 90). The different floor levels in the indoor space and the high-mounted windows produce several territories within the coffee shop space itself (photographs 114, 115); customers sitting on the higher level overlook the market and the arcade, while those sitting on the lower level mainly relate to each other and the indoor space. Customers on both levels connect visually and acoustically with each other and the working staff behind the counters. Through territorial association, the aromas of coffee and baked goods produce a scent territory that overlaps all of these spaces, including the pavement and the street.

All of these territorial productions take place in a relatively small geographical area and are made possible through an elaborated architectural form and distribution of artefacts that allow for a complex use: the Monmouth façade (with high-mounted windows), the differentiated floor levels, the openness to the street, the benches with the utility box/ table, the design and position of the counter, the height of the indoor space, etc.; all of these material conditions and spatial configurations must be taken into account to fully explain how the complexity of this space is accomplished.

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119   120

The urban fixtures Corner

A corner by the southern entrance to the market is crowded with ar-
tefacts, mobile as well as fixed (photographs 116-120). A lamp post and
some pavement signs share the space with a utility box and a few bollards.
The place is occupied for most of the day by different people and for dif-
ferent reasons. The assembly of space-making artefacts seem to render the
spot unexpectedly attractive. People use the protected area for a peaceful
moment – making a phone call, eating a sandwich or just having a short
rest. During my observation, some tourists stopped there to unfold a map,
perhaps to figure out their position or to discuss their further itinerary.
An elderly man appropriated the place for a fairly lengthy time to make
watercolour sketches (photograph 120). When the number of pub guests
peaks in the afternoon, this little refuge is very popular; the small utility
box is repeatedly used for gathering empty beer glasses (photograph 117).
This space is not consciously planned or designed to be a gathering place;
it is merely a strategically-positioned place that is coincidentally defined
and protected by mundane artefacts.

The Window Ledges at the Market Porter

Since smoking was banned in all enclosed workplaces in the UK on the 1st
of July in 2007, the gathering of guests outside pubs, bars and restaurants is
a frequently encountered phenomenon. Consequently, smokers and their
loyal friends need somewhere to put their glasses. All horizontal fittings
and details on the façades have acquired a new and specialised function,
and innovative material arrangements have been designed to meet the de-
mand for outdoor horizontals to hold beer and wine glasses (photographs
121-122). The window ledges at the Market Porter are wide enough to
hold glasses and the guests regularly occupy the pavement around the pub

121   122

façades. Two empty wooden barrels have been placed in the street outside the pub entrance, where they function as tables or surfaces for stacking glasses in the afternoons, when the space outside the pub is crowded. The guests seem to prefer the window ledges, which are colonised first. When the ledges are filled and the pavement is crowded, people seek other locations, such as the pavement outside the Monmouth Café, the façade benches, the arcade and the 'urban fixtures corner'.

The congested pavements and the quest for horizontal surfaces generate a dynamic social situation with its own set of informal rules and behaviour. The number of people in the human clusters and the material qualities that they request determine how they use the space, where they locate themselves and how they move within the space. Two individuals can easily find a spot by the windows, and they usually position themselves parallel to the façade. Other clusters, containing more than two people, usually stand in free groups and use the ledges or other horizontals to place their glasses temporarily, when they have to use both hands, for example to light a cigarette. On one occasion I noticed a man and a woman standing by the façade and using the window ledge for their drinks who were repeatedly interrupted by a cluster of men standing next to them on the pavement every time they put their glasses on the ledge between the couple by the façade. The situation resulted in some stern glances and an exchange of words between the members of the two clusters. The horizontal surfaces frequently mediate different kinds of social exchange between individuals as well as between clusters; from acknowledging glances, affirming the use of an already-taken spot on a ledge, to short conversations and negotiations on the positioning in the space.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The collectives observed in the open-air markets were typically fluid and bound by weak ties. Since most clusterings include multiple and varied actors, human and nonhuman, and agency is highly distributed, the territorial productions are often resilient, although the individual human actors vary over time. Common and well-known market conventions, phenomena and behavioural practices (opening hours, queuing, street performers, takeaway spots, etc.) support a rhythmic repetition of collective formations. People gather regularly, for example around street performers, by the market stalls or by various artefacts, to rest or to consume takeaway, forming clusters for waiting, resting, observing, eating and shopping. Visitors normally cluster due to shared activities and most commonly simply because they are co-existing in the same space. The exchanges between members of these collectives are generally brief and without the intention to stabilise the interaction or extend the relations into stronger ties, although there are exceptions. Collectives seem to assemble in relation to particular material or spatial features and due to practices associated with these. In the following, I will describe the architectures and artefacts with the capacity to repeatedly collect humans as *polyvalent clustering artefacts*. Besides these weaker collectives, I registered two examples of stronger collectives as well; these are well-acquainted people working at the markets, and groups of friends or colleagues meeting at the market or arriving there together.

Polyvalent Clustering Artefacts

In the London study, it became apparent that some material elements have a significant capacity to both take on different actor roles in various networks, and to attract and collect humans. Utility boxes, lamp posts, litterbins, bollards, window ledges, etc. attract people due to their affordances for sitting, putting things on or serving as protection from vehicles or other humans on the move. Apart from acting as clustering-machines, these artefacts can be described as polyvalent. Herman Hertzberger introduces the term 'polyvalence' to signify "a form that can be put to different uses without having to undergo changes itself" (Hertzberger 1991:147). Polyvalent artefacts or spaces can thus take on different roles, depending on the network of which they momentarily form a part.

The recurring clustering at the Monmouth Café corner is the result of a complex network stabilisation that is negotiated over time and requires multiple and different actors to be realised. The situation is dependent on material features such as the façade benches and the utility box, but also

on habitual or social routines like the practice of bringing coffee into the public domain. This fluid territorial stabilisation would not be the same with just *any* benches or *any* box – if it existed at all. The precise location, measures, angles, form and distances affect the opportunity to realise this situation and to make it stable. However, the benches and the cabinet are key artefacts in the clustering process that repeatedly takes place at the corner, enabling exchange between strangers.

Platforms give people the opportunity to cluster who, for example, need a rest, want to sit down to eat or drink takeaway, or need a place to put their bags and items they may have bought at the market. Platforms also attract street performers and sometimes mobile (unofficial) market traders. They often allow visitors to be part of multiple and concurrent territorial productions. Hence, they are also sites for exchanges between friends as well as strangers.

Bollards typically comprise permeable boundaries, separating pedestrians from various vehicles in urban domains. Additionally – and more interestingly for this study – they cluster humans and artefacts in many different ways; for example, they are used as seats, as load-bearing support for various other artefacts and as tables for bags or takeaway items. Occasionally they form part of children's play. They can obviously be applied to a number of requested uses and activities. Some of these affordances can also be associated with building socles, steps/edges, and low walls.

Artefacts and Mobility

With regard to mobility, a preliminary categorisation of artefacts can be made into *non-mobile*, *semi-mobile* and *mobile* artefacts (cf. Hall 1966; Rapoport 1990:87 ff).[1] These categories should be regarded as temporary and elastic – as tools to organise and disclose some affordances associated with specific artefacts, and how these artefacts' individual competence and significance transform in relation to different clusters and in shifting spatial situations. The categorisation is based on the artefact's presumed material stability and hence its inherent ability to be transformed, for example by planning and/or design initiatives.

Non-mobile artefacts, such as walls, fences, building socles, platforms, columns, bollards, utility boxes, kerbstones, fixed signs, lamp posts, etc., affect how people move and position themselves in urban space. These kinds of artefacts afford sitting and leaning, which encourages people to

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1   Thus, in principle the study confirms the categorisation made by Hall (and followed by Rapoport) into fixed-feature, semi-fixed-feature and non-fixed feature elements. I have, however, chosen to emphasise the aspect of mobility rather than fixity in this categorisation (in accordance with the dictum that it is fixity, rather than mobility, that is the special case and requires explanation).

linger in a space and thus, passively or actively, interact with other people in the space. Walls have the capacity to effectively separate activities, and thus allow for simultaneous complex uses, which renders greater and more diverse occupancy and exchange, especially when visitors enter or leave a cluster. Non-mobile artefacts that offer horizontal surfaces on which to place things (such as mobile artefacts) increase the diversity of potential actions and uses. Non-mobile artefacts thus afford the clustering of people as well as the clustering of mobile artefacts, such as garbage, vehicles, market stalls, furniture, etc.

Semi-mobile artefacts, such as benches, litterbins, parked vehicles (cars, bicycles, carts, etc.), temporary signs and posts, market stalls, garden umbrellas, etc., produce territories for specific uses and activities and thereby attract different sorts of people. Artefacts from this category are usually connected to non-mobile artefacts and often dependent on these for their existence and location. Semi-mobile artefacts often stabilise everyday behaviour or activities, such as the disposal of litter, vending in the market, parking the car, finding the way, etc. A food cart can, for instance, sometimes provide a couple of tables to eat while standing or a few benches and a litterbin, together stabilising a chain of *buying food - eating it - throwing away the rubbish*. This neat composition of practical artefacts – mediated by a set of material actants – makes extensive social exchange possible.

Mobile artefacts, such as takeaway food and drinks, prams, bicycles, mobile communication- and media devices, stools and other lightweight furniture, etc., may prompt people to actively explore an urban space to optimise the material conditions for eating, text messaging, drinking coffee, etc.; e.g. searching for horizontal surfaces on which to place things, a shady spot where one can see the mobile screen better, or just looking for a place to sit or something vertical to lean against. Takeaway food and drinks may act as transitional devices, mediating encounters and social exchanges with other people, sometimes via semi-mobile or fixed artefacts. The act of sharing the same activity, such as eating and drinking, also brings people closer together and triggers a sense of community (Bell 2007:19); a temporary collective emerges through an utterly mundane practice. Occasionally such parallel activity may provoke verbal exchange: Where did you buy that sandwich? That soup smells good! Do you know where there is a rubbish bin? The material stabilisation of temporal territorial productions can destabilise social norms and cultures and thus enhance unplanned encounters and exchanges between strangers (cf. Amin 2002:970; cf. Valentine 2008:330-331). Drinking a coffee or eating a sandwich can also be a reason for hanging around in a public space for a while. This 'hanging around' facilitates extended opportunities for exchange (visual

contacts, overhearing conversations, spontaneous encounters, etc.) with others – friends as well as strangers. Mobile chairs and stools allow people to appropriate space in the public domain and thus bring additional actions and exchanges to the place. Chairs and stools in a marketplace can be positioned to obstruct the flow of visitors and thereby cause exchange. Some stall- and storekeepers use this actant to interact with potential customers in various marketplaces.

Appropriation Careers

In some spaces, visitors apparently change positions, according to individual or temporal preferences. The phenomenon was first – and most clearly – observed in the Stoney Street/Park Street junction space. A selection of architectural features and artefacts provide potential sites for sitting or leaning or offer horizontal surfaces on which to put things. These spots seem to hold different levels of attraction for different people visiting the site. Outside the Market Porter pub, for example, customers move between the pavement outside the pub, the Monmouth façade benches, the barrels by the entrance and the 'urban fixtures corner'. When these places are filled up, people start mixing with those using the arcade foundations or just mingle in the middle of the street. Most of the café guests initially colonise the façade benches and the arcade foundations before using the pavement or spaces further away. Some people stay in the area long enough to change position when a preferable place becomes vacant. I consider these gradual movements a kind of local spatial positioning careers – *appropriation careers* – that take place within a given bounded topography. Careers of this kind may be of interest, since they indicate multiplicity and provide dynamic opportunities for different citizens to use the space according to individual and/or temporal desires or needs. For instance, some prefer sun and others shade; some favour exposure while others choose seclusion, and the requests may be different depending on whether one arrives to the space alone or as part of a group. Without a doubt, different visitors may value the same artefact differently, according to individual intentions and projected actions. The artefacts and architectural features also act as potential sites for negotiation, sometimes even controversies, and thus they enable direct or indirect exchange between visiting people.

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AMSTERDAM PLAYGROUNDS

INTRODUCTION

> In play there is something 'at play' which transcends the imme-
> diate needs of life and imparts meaning to the action. All play
> means something. If we call the active principle that makes up the
> essence of play, 'instinct', we explain nothing; if we call it 'mind'
> or 'will' we say too much. However we may regard it, the very fact
> that play has a meaning implies a non-materialistic quality in the
> nature of the thing itself. (Huizinga [1944] 1949:1)

The theme of this field study is play in the urban domain. More specif-
ically, it is a study of playgrounds as settings for materially mediated so-
cial exchange and the formation of collectives. Playgrounds constitute
high-density clusterings of humans and nonhumans, entangled in com-
plex interactions. Thus, playgrounds are very distinct places of encounter
and they are likely to display numerous examples of socio-material ex-
change and mediation. An important aspect of playgrounds, from a social
exchange perspective, is that they are target-spaces where most visitors stay

for some time, and thus the opportunity for encounters between strangers are higher than in many other public domains.

Playgrounds usually contain multiple artefacts that invite and encourage participation. Some playground equipment even requests active exchange to make sense, for example: swings, seesaws, ballgames and merry-go-rounds; they have what Johan Asplund (1987) calls *responsivitet* (in English: *responsivity*, see also Chapter 2: p.94). Children themselves are effective mediators of exchange between guardians[1] through ballgames, skating, scooting, etc. Many actions performed by children in playgrounds generate connections among guardians and other children watching the activities – a phenomenon William H. Whyte refers to as *triangulation*; i.e. where an 'external stimulus', such as an object, a view or an event, initiates social exchange between two or more strangers (Whyte 1980:94; cf. Gehl [1971] 2011; Gehl & Svarre 2013).

The target group for playgrounds is usually children of different ages, from toddlers up to teenagers. Another target group, of course, comprises parents and other guardians, whose presence is a given in children's public activities. The location, complexity and morphology of modern playgrounds are plural and diverse. In this study I have chosen to explore a collection of playgrounds in urban settings in central Amsterdam.

Various categories of play equipment are gathered in limited and often demarcated spaces in playgrounds. Each item, play field or space has its own program and agency, and together they produce a setting with complex qualities and affordances. From a planners' perspective, lateral effects – such as a general production of social exchange – sometimes constitute the prime motives for the design, especially if the primary objective is to design a space for encounters and exchange, like a neighbourhood common or community space (cf. Lefaivre 2007).

The objective of this chapter is not to analyse children's play per se, nor the urban playgrounds as architectural designs as such. Rather, the aim is to explore the spatio-material topographies of urban playgrounds and their collection of play artefacts as grounds for social formation and exchange. I am searching for important material actors that are active in these processes. Two further questions I strive to answer are: *How do playground materialities support repetitive territorial appropriation and thus the stabilisation of collectives and collective spaces?* and *How does material design effect the production of territorial complexity, diversity of uses and the attraction of varied categories of citizens?*

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1   Since I cannot be sure of the relationships between the people in my observations, I have chosen to label the adults that escort children 'guardians' and the children connected to specific guardians 'protégés' or simply children or teenagers.

Playgrounds can display numerous and obvious examples of collective life. Groups of playing children constitute obvious examples, and guardians gathering at the perimeter of a sandpit are another example. Groups of teenagers with skateboards, scooters and trick-bikes gather at playgrounds to perform tricks and improve their skills. These groups form temporary collectives with shared interests, even though the members might be of different ages and backgrounds. Children and guardians sometimes form teams (collectives) to perform various ball games. One focus in this study is how humans, spaces and artefacts produce collective spaces together. The playground can be perceived as an amalgamation of stronger and weaker temporal collectives. Individual humans move between these collectives during their visits to the playground. It is almost impossible not to belong to a collective of some kind in some sense.Aside from explicit play-artefacts, playgrounds regularly offer various materialities that support parents and other guardians in mundane activities such as sitting, resting, picnicking, etc., and as shelters from wind, rain or sun during playground visits. The study specifically investigates how certain (playground) materialities support recurrent territorial appropriations and tactics and thus affect the instigation and stabilisation of human/nonhuman collectives.

The choice of Amsterdam as my second study site was motivated by the city's history as an epicentre for urban playgrounds in the second half of the 20th century. In 1947 it introduced a major initiative for establishing playgrounds all over the urban landscape. Over a thousand playgrounds were built in just over thirty years (Lefaivre 2007). Aldo van Eyck, Cornelis van Eesteren and Jacoba Mulder planned and designed more than 700 of them. These playgrounds became widely reputed in Europe as well as overseas. Since the 1970s, a vast majority of the playgrounds have disappeared, partly due to the construction of new buildings on the infill plots where a number of the playgrounds were located. Today playground architecture is having a renaissance in several Dutch cities, not at least in Amsterdam. Ambitious new playgrounds have been constructed over the past ten years, many of them heavily themed and multifunctional. When planning this field study, I chose to focus on playgrounds designed by "CARVE ontwerp en ingenieursbureau"; some of these playgrounds were designed in collaboration with other firms. I also included a number of playgrounds by Aldo van Eyck in my preliminary case study plan.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds can be understood as condensed and abstracted fragments of nature. Playground premises and equipment are inspired by natural topographies, such as sandy beaches, rocks, woods and plains. Most play equip-

ment is inspired by things found in natural habitats. Sometimes they are displayed naturally, but they generally come in various stages of abstraction. Play equipment is normally gathered in a defined space and supplemented with seating opportunities (usually benches), primarily intended for escorting guardians (parents, grandparents, relatives, etc.). Playground designs can be based on a number of different materials and features: the ground, the play equipment, additional supportive infrastructures such as benches, tables, artificial lighting, covered spaces, litterbins, etc., and all these artefacts may vary in form, colour and material.

The intentions with playgrounds and the reasons for their existence are multifarious, but one major ambition is to encourage children's physical practice, the training of their motoric and social abilities. More abstract and less apparent are the notions and knowledge about basic physics, such as fugal forces, friction, kinetics, gravity, geometry, etc. Playing with playground equipment is an investigation of the bodily and sensory experiences of space (Lefaivre 2007). Playgrounds are designed to evoke bodily reactions and provoke engagement with different material forms, such as playing with the responsivity of sand in the sandpit; using the body to explore gravity and fugal forces; experiencing the sensation of a stomach filled with butterflies when using the swings, or feeling the thrill of climbing a wooden tower and the speed of going down a slide (experiencing the laws of friction). Through play, we train the coordination of our senses and our bodies, muscle control and balance. At the same time, we can learn the basics of physics and our physical relation to the material world.

Unfortunately, many material effects and tactile dimensions are neglected in modern playgrounds due to the use of artificial materials and sometimes comprehensive (however well-intended) safety regulations. Popular soft ground materials and the bright-coloured rubber coating that covers most playground equipment limit the range of material diversity and thus the variety of sensations one can experience in a playground. The entanglement with icy cold metal bars or swing-chains in early spring, wet and slippery tree-logs on a rainy day in October, or the smell of warm rubber from the car-tyre swings a hot summer day constitute experiences that guide a very basic understanding of the material world. The smell, taste and tactile sensations of different fractions of sand in the sandpit stay in most people's childhood memories for life. We know with a touch of sand what its level of moisture is and what we can manage to build with it. Today, playground equipment is usually heavily plastic-coated or painted with thick layers of weather-resistant paint that takes away most of the materials' intrinsic tactile properties. Tom Fisher (2004) argues that the cognitive strategies one needs to realise material affordances are shaped in childhood. He states

that from a "Gibsonian perspective, this sort of physical exploration early in life furnishes us with our repertoire for understanding the physical qualities of objects and their materials" (Fisher 2004:25). The physiological aspects of playground play have a clearly subordinated significance in my study, but these facts might be important as a backdrop for the social aspects that are my prime objective. Playgrounds are spaces where children train their social abilities in the interaction with other children and adults. The social activities and exchanges between humans of all ages are related to the entanglement with various materialities, which justifies a close study of the urban playground typology and its topographies.

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Preliminary Notions:
Mapping Amsterdam's Playgrounds

On a regular field-study day, I took a tour on foot, passing four to six playgrounds with a major stop at the Van Beuningenplein. At the playgrounds, I moved about in different speeds, observing what was going on, using my camera to record different situations and events where interesting human/material as well as human/human exchange occurred. I positioned myself in the centre of the sites as well as on the periphery, sitting or standing for longer periods of time. At Van Beuningenplein I had coffee and lunch as often as I could, partly because a bistro on the premises made it possible, and partly because it gave me opportunities to participate in the everyday actions at the site. Having finished my daily tours, I spent a couple of

PLAYGROUNDS INCLUDED IN THE STUDY

Primary site: 1. Van Beuningenplein (CARVE 2011)

Reference sites: 2. Potgieterstraat (CARVE 2010)
                     3. Columbusplein (CARVE 2008)
                     4. Herenmarkt (Aldo van Eyck)
                     5. Bertelmanplein (Aldo van Eyck 1947)
                     6. Jacob Obrechtplein (Aldo van Eyck)
                     7. Jonas Daniël Meyerplein (Aldo van Eyck)
                     8. Frederik Henrikplantsoen (Aldo van Eyck)
                     9. Marnixplantsoen
                     10. Palmgracht
                     11. Nieuwe Batavier Straat

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hours in various cafés and bars reflecting over my observations, organising my notes and planning the next day's route.

Most of the playgrounds that I covered on my walks all over the western part of the city were empty or only had a few visitors. From what it seemed, Van Beuningenplein is always populated and used, at least after ten o'clock in the mornings. It seems as though the size of a playground like Van Beuningenplein may imply a critical mass effect; i.e. people are attracted to the space because they know that there probably are others there already. After two days, I concluded that Van Beuningenplein was to become my primary study site. Not only was Van Beuningenplein playground by far the most frequented playground, it also offered the most varied palette of activities and uses – two major motives to choose it for more extensive observations and a deeper analysis.

Because of an unusually late spring, the temperatures were low and not as many people were out playing as I had wished for when I was planning the field study trip. In addition to the low temperatures, the winds were strong, not inspiring people to be outdoors at all. In spite of these circumstances there were sufficient observations to make sense of the site-study spaces from my research perspectives. The weather the 2nd and 3rd of April was sunny but cold and windy. The temperature at 11am was about 3-5 degrees Celsius; in the afternoons it rose to about 7-8 degrees. The playground was relatively crowded on the afternoon of the 3rd of April, probably due to the fact that the schools in Amsterdam are regularly closed on Wednesday afternoons. The 4th and 5th of April were still windy and

cold, about 4-5 degrees, with skies varying between sunny and cloudy, but a bright spring light covered the city. The 6th of April was sunny and warmer than the preceding days: the temperature was about 10 degrees at noon, and the wind had almost completely died down. Consequently, the playground was more crowded than on the other days, with about twenty guardians outside and ten in the café. About 50-60 children of different ages between 0-10 years old were playing in the area close to the café pavilion; there were few teenagers, however. The café was very busy during brunch and lunch. Although an ethnic mix was evident, the Dutch language was clearly dominant. Many of the guardians were taking part in different games or monitoring the play in the different zones of the playground. Visitors without protégés were sitting on platforms and edges in the transitional space, on the periphery or in the green boundary zone.

All in all, the site-study's design was rewarding. However, it would have been interesting to visit the Van Beuningenplein playgrounds in other seasons; in summertime, when there are more visitors and the frequently-mentioned water play is in use, and in the winter, when one of the sports fields is turned into an ice-skating rink.

The initial mapping of the playgrounds that are included in this study led to a preliminaryary categorisation regarding layout, location and equipment. The playgrounds can be organised according to four spatial typologies: *stamp playgrounds*, *infill playgrounds*, *district playgrounds* and *linear playgrounds*. The typologies vary to such an extent that typologisation is mainly academic. However, some remarks should be made in relation to this playground typology. Analysing the types and their differences led me to deepen the study of district playgrounds, as they appeared to attract a more diverse selection of visitors and seemed to act on both a bigger, urban, scale as well as on a local, neighbourhood, level. District playgrounds also appeared to offer a richer variety of social interactions, and they furthermore displayed a more complex selection of collectives than the other playground types. Additional and different typologisations can obviously be made using other criteria, such as for example user profiles, functional or social programming.

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Stamp playgrounds consist of just a few play artefacts, tightly assembled and typically located as a discrete part of a larger space that is characterised by a different function or spatio-material order. The modernised and supplemented Aldo van Eyck playground above, called Jonas Daniël Meyerplein (photographs 126-128), is situated in a big open space, framed by a row of buildings, a canal and a busy road. A few playground artefacts are gathered in an ensemble, seemingly incidentally located on the vast gravel plain. Playgrounds associated with this type vary significantly in size, the selection of equipment and the way in which way they are materially demarcated. Stamp playgrounds also include spaces dedicated to specific games and sports, such as boules courts, skate parks or premises for kick bikes or BMX's (Marnixplantsoen, photograph 129). Playgrounds situated in parks, such as the one in Frederik Henrikplantsoen below (photograph 131), can be part of this typology. Another example of this category which is not included here is the shopping mall playground – normally a limited set of play artefacts gathered in a small area connected to the mall's communication system.

In-fill playgrounds (Herenmark [130, 132, 133], Bertelmanplein [134], Jacob Obrechtplein) are framed by building façades on two, three or four sides. They are clearly territorialised and demarcated as whole spaces by the

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general city fabric. The variety of play equipment is restricted and the overall size is small compared to the *district playgrounds* (see below). The basic play artefacts include a sandpit, swings and something to climb. The target group for these playgrounds is clearly the neighbourhood children. Local neighbourhood (infill-)playgrounds are usually situated close to residential areas and sometimes near schools or day-care facilities. In urban areas built in the 19th and early 20th century, the playgrounds are usually located in leftover, residual spaces and on demolition sites, while in later planning traditions they can be planned together with the buildings as an integrated spatial sort (cf. Lefaivre 2007).

District playgrounds (Van Beuningenplein, Columbusplein) are the size of the city blocks in the immediate context and normally framed by building façades on all four sides. The nature of the streets enclosing the playgrounds may vary; some are pedestrian and others are open to cars and other motorised vehicles. The size allows for a wider selection of play equipment and open spaces that are intended for sports and free activities. The district playground appears to attract visitors from the neighbourhood, but also from other parts of the city.

Linear playgrounds (Potgieterstraat, Palmgracht [136], Nieuwe Batavier Straat [135]) are characterised by play equipment arranged in a linear order along a façade or as a pedestrianized space in the middle of a street, like a "rambla". In my study, the examples were local and small-scale but probably attracted visitors from a wider context; I noted several children playing spontaneously while they passed by with their families, on their way somewhere else. The fact that the playground artefacts are distributed in a very public situation, and the space is thus a mix of multiple other activities and practices, allows for numerous overlapping territorial productions and hence a potentially high territorial complexity.

The serial order prompts children (and adults) to play in a given direction – not haphazardly among a conglomerate of play equipment, as in a more traditional playground setting. The open linear layout and the fact that the visitors move along the artefacts as they go may lower the emotional threshold for engaging with an artefact and play. Entering a clearly defined

134 135 136

playground space, as an alternative, may have implications for some people, since one then has to make a conscious decision to enter a demarcated space. The linear playground can thus be described as a highly public domain.

Besides the above-mentioned typologies there are others not included in this study, such as: playgrounds connected to schools and pre-schools, which are normally fenced in and secluded from the general public space; playgrounds associated to retail (outdoor and indoor); and commercial playgrounds with entrance fees (outdoor and indoor). Commercial indoor playgrounds, referred to as "play-lands", also offer additional activities such as birthday parties. In recent decades a new kind of playground has emerged on the urban scene: the themed playground. These are also denoted 'signature playgrounds' and are characterised by special features such as ecology, circus, jungle, mobility, sports, etc. These playgrounds are intended to attract visitors from a wider geographical region – from distant residential areas and sometimes even from outside the city.

VAN BEUNINGENPLEIN PLAYGROUND

Introduction

Van Beuningenplein is located at Van Hallstraat in western Amsterdam and was designed by CARVE (play equipment), Dijk&Co (landscape architecture), and Concrete Architectural Associates (architecture). It was designed in 2007 as a participative design process, governed by the municipalities and involving the neighbourhood citizens. The construction was realised in 2011. The playground premises are owned and managed by the municipalities of *Amsterdam West*.

The neighbourhood is a residential area with just a few small-scale commercial activities. The square is framed by brick buildings, constructed around 1910-1920 as part of an early council housing program, *Woningwet* (Dutch Housing Act), which was introduced in 1901 (Lawson 2006). Government subsidies guaranteed improved housing conditions to workers with limited education and low income. All buildings are about four storeys high and share a somewhat monumental architectonic expression. The existing playground is situated on the site of a previous one that was considerably smaller and shared the space with a car park. The city of Amsterdam decided to build a two-layered underground parking facility and leave the whole site for playground activities and a community centre. Furthermore, the streets surrounding the playground were made car-free on three sides, connecting the façades of the buildings directly to the 'square'. The space between the façades and the actual playground is strategical-

ly designed as a green boundary space with hedges, perennials, trees and small clearings and with benches framing the central space.
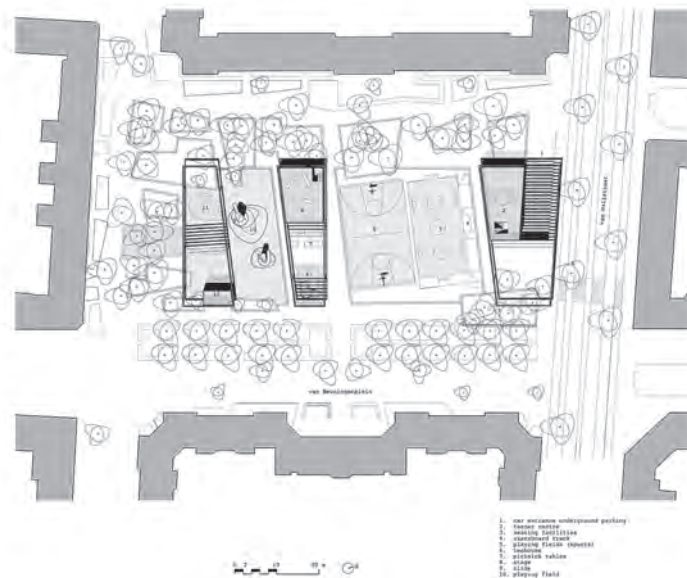
Van Beuningenplein is a multi-functional area with a vast variety of play equipment and sports facilities.[2] The playground site is divided into zones that differ in materiality, size and functional programming. Each zone is designed and equipped to facilitate specific activities and/or age groups. The differently programmed spaces are either recessed into the ground or slightly elevated. The two sports fields provide possibilities for different ball games. The ground is carefully undulated and the edges of the sports fields provide steps, low walls and ramps that afford sitting, skating and trick cycling as well as general play. All edges are fitted with steel to withstand grinding, sliding, etc. In the summer there is a sprinkler system in one of the play areas in the southernmost zone for water play, and in wintertime ice-skating is possible in one of the sports fields.

Three of the playground zones are framed by steel beams elevated 4 metres above the ground and connected to one pavilion in each zone. The steel frames help define the playground's spatial organisation. The steel frames are equipped with coloured LED lighting that illuminates the structure when evening falls. The colours are programmed a year in advance and reflect the seasons and specific days; for example, the square is coloured red on Valentine's Day and orange on Queen's Day. Apart from the coloured LED-lighting, the playground is poorly lit at night. The women who work

2   Map of Van Beuningenplein: *Concrete Architectural Associates*, The Netherlands.

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at the community youth centre think that it is a conscious move from the municipalities, to make the teenagers go home when it is dark.

The northern end of the site is planned as the entrance zone, pre-supposing that the major part of the visitors arrives from this side – an assumption that is probably based on the proximity to the passing Van Hallstraat, a major road that connects the area with other parts of the city. This design decision conveys that the playground is supposed to attract visitors from outside the local context. A steel construction frames the en-trance space as well as a bus stop and the car entrance to the underground parking (photographs 139, 141). Three pavilions (designed by Concrete A.A.) add further functions to the site and attract additional categories of visitors to the premises. The north pavilion (photographs 138, 152) hous-es a community centre with facilities dedicated to social activities, such as organised meetings, community information and youth activities. The second pavilion (photographs 143, 151) is situated in the central part of the grounds and contains a bistro (labelled a 'tea-house' in the design phase of the project), which serves food and drinks, cakes, freshly pressed juices, etc. The bistro provides space for children to perform indoor activities, such as drawing and pottery. A generous roof terrace covers the top of the

140   141   142

143   144

building. It belongs to the bistro and cannot be reached from outside of the building.

The bistro pavilion also provides an office for the playground manager; generally, there is a playground manager associated with each district playground whose task is to monitor the playground, assist the children in their play and organise the lending of mobile play tools such as bicycles, balls, pedal cars, etc. The playground managers usually have access to an office space and a storeroom for play equipment. At Columbusplein (another district playground included in my survey) I met a playground manager who was part of a team of managers that supervises a handful of playgrounds in the western part of Amsterdam. Van Beuningenplein has its own playground manager who focuses exclusively on that playground. The playground manager at Van Beuningenplein controls the summertime water play and the ice rink in the winter. She also controls the key to the public toilet that is located in the bistro pavilion.

Large glass panes cover the façades of the two larger pavilions. Steel mesh protects the glass from balls and other flying objects. The blinding metal mesh gives the pavilion a panopticon quality, passively controlling the surrounding spaces and perhaps disciplining the behaviour in the playground. The children and youngsters on the playground are aware of the women working in the pavilion and understand that they can be observed, or even monitored. The playground manager probably has the same effect. The plan is for the mesh to be covered with ivy over time, making the pavilions blend in with the vegetation in the square. When the weather allows for it, full height (3.6 metres) glass pane doors can be opened and the borders between the outdoor playground and the interior of the pavilions get blurred.

In the southernmost zone, the frame is connected to a smaller pavilion, which provides an additional passenger entrance from the car parking garage. This framed playground space is designed and furnished by the design agency CARVE. The blue, wavy landscape is filled with various play artefacts, a sandpit and climbing structures. Swings hang from the pergola beams and the steel frame contains a rain curtain.

Ten Close-up Observations

The Green Boundary Zone

There are no fences closing off the playground from adjacent urban spaces. The playground area is bounded by a green belt made of trees, shrubbery and perennials. The boundary zone is divided into fragments by the numerous openings that connect the streets with the actual playground. The boundary zone is gradual and soft. It is probably planned as a protection for the children, hindering them from entering the surrounding streets. It also creates an obvious inside and outside. A dividing element that is a space in

145   146   147

itself, it is more than just a separating barrier; it is a boundary space with a culture of its own, a spatial category that creates a place for free, sometimes domestic, activities that are not necessarily related to the playground. According to Elger Blitz (owner and chief designer at CARVE), this was a way to avoid a fence enclosing the area. The design team agreed that fences were not good territorial markers for the playground. Elger Blitz argues that the boundary zone is a shared space, quite the opposite of a fence: "I don't like fences, they don't contribute; they only mark that this is mine and that is yours. Better if the boundary can be put to work" (Blitz, Elger. Personal interview. Amsterdam, 2 April, 2013).

One day I observed an elderly guardian using a table in the green boundary zone to assemble a new scooter for an impatient protégé, (photograph 145). On another occasion, another elderly man was repairing a bicycle in a small open area in the boundary space, protected from the

people and vehicles moving along the adjacent street and not interfering with the children playing in the playground.

Public activities in direct proximity to the entrances of the residential buildings creates an intimacy and a domesticity that differs from the streets and urban spaces in the greater neighbourhood. The zone is characterised by a variety of territorial productions, due to people passing by, skating youth, playground visitors and people living in the area who use the boundary space for resting, repairing bicycles, having picnics, etc.

Edges and Transitional Zones

The zones in between and around the programmed playground areas can be seen as the infrastructure for movements within the playground. These transitional spaces separate activities and allow visitors to move around without interfering with the play going on in the dedicated areas. The carefully articulated concrete boundaries, for example the edges enclosing the sports fields, are used for play and as seats for the guardians watching the children play. Toddlers frequently use the transitional zones between

148 149 150

the sports fields, as well as the green boundary zone, to develop their ball skills together with their guardians. The toddlers do not enter the more advanced games being played in the sports fields, but they watch the older kids closely and follow their efforts to master the balls.

A couple of female guardians establish a base camp[3] on the stepped edge by the northern sports field; they have brought a blanket, hot drinks and some food. A single male guardian is sitting close to the women for about an hour, while his protégé is playing in the field. His has produced his own base camp, reinforced by some extra clothing and a few toys belonging to his protégée.

Transitional zones like these can be found in regular urban space as well, where they fill the same function. Residuals, hallways, passageways, arcades, etc.; a kind of antechambers, or proto-publics, sited in between private spaces, consumption facilities and major public domains.

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3   See this chapter's Concluding Remarks for a more thorough explanation of the term.

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The Community Centre

Officially, the name of the community centre is *Jongerencentrum Van Beun-ingenplein*, but some of the children and teenagers call it *the Garage*, a nickname it attained since it is located right next to the car entrance to the subterranean car parking area. The centre was planned as a youth cen-tre but considering the activities it provides, it operates as a community centre. The community centre has been operating since January 2012 and is also a facility for groups of women and men (separately) who meet and discuss issues of interest to them. The neighbourhood is ethnically mixed and people originating from Morocco are dominant in the groups gather-ing at the community centre, although the groups are open to everybody. The female groups are more mixed while the male groups tend to be more ethnically homogenous. The centre's employees don't know why this is but they think that the ethnical identity of one group may exclude others.

The youth can use the building and the roof terrace for organised events, but they are not allowed to just hang around in the building. In the Garage, teenagers are encouraged to organise activities, supervised by the people from the municipalities who work there. Usually they initiate activities such as pool or football tournaments, movie-nights, cooking or baking, researching things on the Internet, etc. There are two women, employed as "Locatiecoördinators", to facilitate these activities. The coor-dinators work at the centre four days a week, forming a team together with the playground manager. The community centre is open all weekdays but is closed at weekends. A hangout and 'panna'[4] field are situated on the roof.

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4   Panna is a kind of street football (soccer) played 1-on-1 in a small, 8-sided court
      surrounded by low walls. The rules vary, but one of the most common is to play until
      one player reaches three goals. The battle is won immediately, however –regardless of
      the score – if you make a controlled 'Panna' on the opponent. Panna is an expression
      for a nutmeg (tunnel) in street football.

The Bistro

The *Paviljoen van Beuningen* opened in May 2011 and serves lunch, sandwiches, drinks and cakes. The indoor space provides seating for about 25 guests. In front of the bistro there are four permanent concrete tables and benches, labelled the 'picnic tables'. The picnic tables can be used by anyone; they are not reserved for the bistro guests. This is a community regulation that those running the bistro have to follow. The bistro serves a few Arabic dishes mixed with a traditional bistro/café menu, including cakes, sandwiches, coffee and juices. There is a price list on which so-called 'clip cards' (Strippenkaart) are offered for six lemonades, coffees or teas, indicating that at least some visitors return repeatedly.

In the late morning of the 3rd of April, two mothers with their toddlers start a conversation in the bistro. They appear to have met before but they don't seem to know each other as friends. After a few minutes of small talk they decide to share a table. Their kids tentatively start playing with each other on the floor, taking their plastic cars and furry animals on exciting treks under the tables and chairs. The mothers have a long talk, interrupted by the toddlers who occasionally need their attention for various reasons.

Besides myself, the two mothers with toddlers, and a young man reading magazines, there are five constellations of guardians with protégés in the bistro at 11am. At 11.30am, two more female guardians join the two women sharing a table. They have coffee and the conversation is lively, while the children play or drink juice. At about 1pm more people come for lunch, including people without children.

The bistro can be seen as a weak collective space, but at the same time a well articulated one. It is characterised by weak social ties, although it allows for strong ties as well. The members of the collective may come and go without affecting the stability of the collective formation. The visitors are related in space and by activity, but they are not necessarily mutually exchanging. Some visitors exchange glances, comments on the children and maybe help each other with practical things concerning their protégés. The robustness of the architecture (that can withstand prams, dirty boots and toys), the lightness and mobility of the furniture[5] and the staff's accommodating policies towards the children are important actants to facilitate exchange and a seemingly continual feeling of community.

The bistro has a toilet for its guests but also a public one, used mainly by the kids. The playground manager is responsible for the public toilet, but when she is not working the employees at the bistro take care of it. Some kids try to use the toilet in the community centre instead, but it is normal-

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5   The light chairs and modular tables facilitate easy rearrangement of the furniture into different constellations, supporting various spontaneous social clusterings.

153   154

ly not permitted. Those working the bistro there are visibly annoyed when they are disturbed in their work by kids asking to use the toilet.

One morning I met two young women on the roof terrace (photograph 157). The obvious reason for choosing to sit on the roof terrace is that it is a secluded place where you can be private in this public setting, at least at this time of the year. Judging from the cigarette butts in the flower-pots, some visitors choose the roof terrace because smoking is permitted there. The two young women do not fit the prime target group for the playground, but they have found a reason to go there anyway. Spatial and material variation is clearly important to attract a diversity of citizens.

The Incongruous Mobile Furniture

A group of incongruous mobile chairs, stools and sideboards are provided by the bistro. They are used regularly, in different configurations, and frequently moved around. According to my observations, the mobile furniture is kept together as an ensemble at all times, even though the guardians using it do not know each other as friends. They appear to cluster partly because of the furniture. The odd mobile chairs and stools are also employed to establish base camps on a daily basis (photographs 154, 159). The furniture has the advantage of being light and easy to move, as the camp moves, for example, according to changing weather conditions. An interesting aspect of this particular place is that it often gathers a collective of strangers and thus a series of base camps. This collective camp arrangement increases the possibility that there always is a series of human and nonhuman actors guarding the camp.

The Podium

Outside the bistro pavilion, in front of the picnic tables, a platform for public use is situated (photographs 149, 155, 156). According to Micon the manager at the bistro, the platform was denoted the 'Stage' by the project designers, but people at the site usually refer to it as the 'Podium'. The podium is a stepped wooden platform, framed by a steel structure and covered with wooden pergola-beams, which further defines the space. The podium offers the possibility to give performances and install a movie screen. Two recessed circular seating areas and two trees (asymmetrically placed) break up the formality of the podium.

Observations show that this object is routinely used for play as well as for picnics and informal sitting. The wooden platform is partly used by groups of guardians or families eating or drinking, and sometimes by young people just hanging around. The space constituted by the platform can be denoted a *threshold space* (Stevens 2007a; Stevens 2007b); a transitional space, casually and temporarily appropriated by guardians while they monitor the children playing in the nearby grounds. The podium represents an in-between space where the children can rest from 'functional playing', a transitional area between the various, more or less programmed
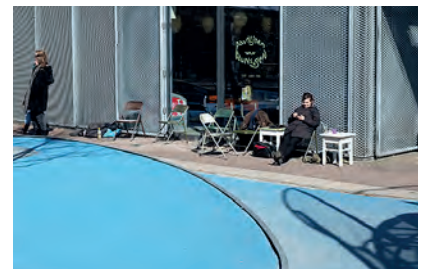
157 158 159

160   161

play-zones. Spontaneous play, like chasing or hide-and-seek, occurs rather frequently on and around the podium.

Two female guardians and later a man camp at the podium as their children play nearby. They move around the platform as the sun moves. Occasionally one of them leaves to help the children while the others wait and guard their base camp. They stay for a long time, more than two hours, and have brought their own food and drinks. They use the bistro for the toilet and once to buy something to drink. A single female guardian has established a base camp at the podium while her protégées play at different locations in the playground. While waiting, the woman enjoys the spring sun with her eyes closed. Occasionally, the children return to her for short moments of rest and to have something to eat or drink.

At the Swings

At 10am on Wednesday the 3rd of April, two female guardians and one male guardian, with one or two children each, sit in the bistro. People are dropping in at more or less at the same rate as others are leaving. The playground slowly gets populated. At 11am, four children are using the seesaw and two are being pushed in the swings by their guardians. The children are laughing and trying to synchronise their oscillating movements, asking their guardians to help them in this operation. The guardians exchange smiles and comply with the request. After pushing for some time the guardians start talking to each other. The verbal exchange lasts just for a minute, until their protégées decide to leave the swings for new adventures.

The swings represent an artefact that can mediate exchanges between children as well as guardians. Since small children require someone to set the swing in motion, there are opportunities for interaction. On other

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occasions I observed guardians helping push each other's children or assisting children when they had fallen off a swing. Usually two or more swings are mounted parallel to each other, which makes social exchange easier to evolve than if they were mounted individually. A friend related a pertinent story when I explained why I was doing a study at a playground: a musician who was living in Stockholm's Södermalm district at the time, he frequently visited playgrounds with his son. Pushing his son on the swings at different playgrounds in the neighbourhood occasionally resulted in gigs/performances and other music projects: "You know, everyone living in 'Söder' works in the media business or with something related to the cultural industry; standing there at the swings you start chitchatting with the parent next to you and suddenly you have a request to compose music for a film or for a children series on television…" This story nicely captures an aspect on playgrounds as sites for exchanges between strangers.

Three Single Guardians by the Picnic Tables

The public concrete tables outside the bistro are repeatedly used as base camps for visitors (photographs 161-164). The furniture acts as a material support, or a kind of anchor-artefact, for prams, bicycles, bags, toys, litterbins, etc., and is often covered with personal belongings; this happens

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168   169

for practical reasons, but clearly also to manifest the place as being occupied. Three single guardians put their bags, clothes and other utensils on the tables and benches, establishing temporal camps, from which they and their protégées can explore the playground space. The furniture obviously also constitutes material mediators for social exchange as the guardians chitchat and help each other guard their respective artefacts when one of them needs to leave the camp to buy something, visit the toilet or to check on a child.

High Life in the Wavy Blue

The southernmost play zone is dedicated to the smallest children. It contains numerous play artefacts, such as swings, a seesaw, a climbing tower, a sandpit, etc. All artefacts are situated in a blue, wavy landscape, dressed with a soft rubber coating. A lot of different games and play are going on here, often simultaneously. On one occasion, I observed a young boy kicking a football up and down the hills, interfering and interacting with two other children and a guardian at the swings. At the same time, a complicated game involving several kids was taking place by and in the climbing tower. Two guardians sat on a platform next to the climbing tower observing the game and continuously communicating with the children and

170   171   172

173   174

with each other, trying to keep all participants safe and sound. A woman sat on an edge in the area. The children's jackets were at her side, serving to guard the site when she left the edge to help her protégées at the swings, to climb the slide or to interact with other playground attractions. A girl with a scooter circled round and round the climbing tower in a perpetual movement, trying to avoid the kids running up and sliding down the tower. By the bistro, in the odd and mobile furniture, some other guardians were sitting and watching the complex and overlapping activities, seemingly relaxed.

Situated in the middle of everything and guarded by its elevated position, the platform constitutes a key artefact, suitable for sitting or lying on, but also for watching or participating in the play. The platform is furthermore a place for encounters and exchange between guardians as well as children. The figuration can be recognised as similar to the platforms studied in the London markets, affording more or less the same uses and producing similar effects.

The soft rubber coating seems to encourage the children to be more daring in their play. The wavy topography is highly responsive to movements; the feeling of resistance when you go upwards and the extra kick downwards seems to be thrilling. Some children use scooters or bikes to make it even more daring and interesting – an exciting but rather safe way to test one's potentials and skills riding a vehicle. In doing so, exchanges occur with other children who also want to try. 'Triangulation' can be observed as younger kids are amazed by what they see the older children doing. They turn to each other and their guardians to comment on the attractions. The same goes for the matrix of seats; who dares to climb up to the highest one? Games are created between kids (and grown-ups) to swing and climb in different ways.

A male guardian is sitting with his protégé in a matrix of seats in different heights and directions. Two additional children enter the matrix and all four start climbing between the seats. They have visual contact all the time, because they need to, so as not to risk pushing each other or causing any accidents. They also talk to each other, trying to agree on how to move to get to new positions in the matrix. Other guardians, who are sitting nearby on the wooden edges below the matrix, follow the action. The exchange is obvious. On one of my evening visits a group of teenagers had occupied the matrix. The design of some play artefacts seems to attract users of different ages, depending on time of the day. Even the swings and the sculptured concrete edges change user groups according to the hour.

Skating and Scooting by the 'Garage'

A concrete plinth indicates a starting point for a popular skating and scooting trail along the sculptured edge of the northern field of the grounds. The plinth is repeatedly colonised by teenaged skaters and scooters. On one occasion a group of teenage boys with skateboards, scooters and BMX-bikes gathered there and performed tricks on the sculptured edges, ramps and low walls that border the field. To mark their presence and stabilise their territorial claim, they left their rucksacks to guard the plinth and thus established a temporal camp. The boys explored the possibilities to skate, bicycle or run the scooters over the concrete topography in various ways, challenging their skills and bodily abilities. Other children watched intensively, commenting, laughing and making remarks. Sometimes guardians had to interfere to save their protégées from serious injuries. Later, when the boys left the scene, a group of girls, at about 10 years old, tested the ramps with borrowed playground scooters, seemingly seizing the opportunity when the teenage boys are not there.

The plinth-artefact is located in the northeastern corner of the playground square, by the formal entrance from Van Hallstraat, the major street that passes by. The entrance zone is very clearly a threshold space (Stevens 2007b) (photographs 168, 169, 173). The space is materially defined by the bus stop, the community centre pavilion, the steel frame and some trees and benches. The name of the playground is inscribed in capital letters on one of the steel beams, marking the northern entrance to the site (photograph 139). This is an intermediate space where the oldest children hang around, apparently because of the proximity to the sculptured concrete edge dedicated to skating and scooting that makes up the northern perimeter of the sports field. The youngsters seem to be attracted to this transitional zone, situated on the edge between the playground and the adjacent urban public space. The threshold quality of the space gives them an opportunity to take

part in two worlds simultaneously. They are visually exposed to the world outside – the general public space – and can easily take a step out into it, but still they are close to the safety of the playground collective, including the playground manager, their guardians, other children, etc. Another effect of the location is that young people there can safely and naturally interact with all the people who enter the playground at this point. For example, they were clearly checking me out when I arrived the first couple of times. They accepted that I took some photographs of them while they were skating and scooting. It seemed that they even were a bit excited about an outsider being interested in their doings, and about having the opportunity to show off their skills.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As in the London site study, where I noted the specific role for emerging collectives played by polyvalent artefacts, mobile artefacts, and appropriation careers, I also noted some recurrent roles played by different material figures in the study of Van Beuningenplein. The conceptualised phenomena observed in London could of course be found in the Amsterdam study as well, but here I would like to introduce four new conceptual features, as outcomes of the playground investigations: *anchors*, *base camps*, *personal and shared artefacts*.

Exchange at Van Beuningenplein

Altogether, Van Beuningenplein playground is designed to attract various categories of citizens and people of different ages. According to Elger Blitz and the employees at the community centre, the space plays an important role from a social cohesion perspective in the socially and ethnically mixed neighbourhood. My observations acknowledge this to some extent, but it could not be confirmed in any absolute terms using the methodological approach that I do. I recognised an obvious mix of ages and varied ethnic appearances among visiting citizens, but I did not conduct surveying interviews or do any explicit counting. Additionally, the study was not extensive enough to claim any conclusive knowledge on these matters. The idea to use playgrounds as a community meeting place with commoning potentials aligns with the ambitions of Aldo van Eyck and his colleagues when designing playgrounds in post-war Amsterdam. From talking to visiting guardians (and through extensive eavesdropping), I know that most visitors are local citizens, but also that some of the visitors' originate relatively far from the playground. They bike or drive with their protégées to Van Beuningenplein instead of visiting playgrounds in their own neighbourhood.

Examining the role of playgrounds for local cohesion and the bridging of differences could be an interesting topic for further research. According to my observations, playgrounds are typically rich in artefacts and other material features that encourage social exchange between local citizens as well as with visitors from outside the neighbourhood. Particularly playgrounds of the size and complexity of Van Beuningenplein; i.e. district playgrounds, may have the capacity to recurrently mobilise heterogeneous clusterings as well as initiate and stabilise different collective formations through multiple incentive materialities and activities.

Territorial Productions

Van Beuningenplein is spatially and functionally separated, presumably to maintain an order that allows many different activities and territorial productions to take place concurrently. The territorial strategies at Van Beuningenplein playground are evident and effective. Most spaces are clearly programmed and dedicated to specific activities and uses. Even though many spaces are used in creative and improvised ways, and their intended uses are continuously contested, most play is performed in accordance with the programmed intentions. The territorial productions are multiple and diverse but mostly spatially separated. Territorial complexity occurs primarily in the playground border areas, such as in the transitional spaces that separate the materially demarcated spaces for sports and play. Because of the mediating boundary zone that encircles the playground fields, there are few territorial overlappings, creating territorial complexity between the surrounding regular urban spaces and the specialised playground space. The territorial complexity that actually exists does so mainly within the playground area itself. The playing children overlap the functionally stipulated territories when running around, chasing stray balls or other toys. Another example is the bicycling, skating and scooting children that suddenly enter different zones that are intended for other activities. Various games that involve several participants frequently overlap and (tres)pass into each other's territories.

Socio-Material Competence and Emerging Collectives

To use an artefact as a social mediator, one must know its affordances, consciously or sub-consciously (internalised). Of course, an artefact can mediate social exchange even if one is not familiar with its affordances, but in most cases an artefacts' ability for mediation increases if the human actor (in this case the playground visitor) is aware of its different affordances. If one doesn't know, for example, that it is permitted to use a public artefact in a certain space (like having a picnic on the podium in front of the van

Beuningen bistro), the artefact cannot mediate connections between people – at least not in the way it is intended, or designed, to do. This kind of socio-material competence could be expressed as an ability to utilise *nested affordances* (Gaver 1991:82); i.e. affordances hidden in various artefacts and clusters of artefacts. Street-smart urban citizens use a lot more (or simply *other*) artefacts and spatial components as social mediators because they have more developed socio-material competence for public domains. Children in playgrounds (and of course elsewhere) develop this competence over time through play, and gradually they become aware of how to interact with all of the playground artefacts and with other children. Socio-material competence paired with urban confidence increases one's possibilities to make use of the material world as a mediator of social exchange. This implies that humans who are not familiar with a particular urban domain or spatial sort may have difficulties decoding and triggering affordances that are important for mediating social exchange. People who are strangers to a country, a city or even just a local neighbourhood must learn new cultural customs and social codes of behaviour to various degrees, as well as the affordances of local materialities.

Collectives are regularly composed at playgrounds by the help of various artefacts and other material features, such as furniture, platforms, edges, takeaways and, of course, playground equipment. These materialities, with or without explicit intentions, are responsive to human desires and behavioural practices and constitute suggestive attributes for exchanges; hence they commonly encourage clusterings of humans and nonhumans.

The most obvious collectives in Van Beuningenplein are those instigated by the play activities. Fixed playground equipment, artefacts and architectural features, as well as toys, vehicles and sports items, also incite numerous collectives to form and make more or less articulated territorial claims. Some of these collectives are frequently repeated, but not necessarily by the same human and nonhuman actors. They could thus be regarded as weaker collectives, which are fairly open and easy to join, and of course, to leave. One example is the guardians using the incongruous mobile furniture outside the bistro. Other collectives are based on friendship and sometimes by a common interest in and/or skill at performing a particular game or sport. These collectives seem to be more stable with regard to individual members as well as territorial stability; i.e. they form stronger collectives that sometimes even territorialise specific spaces. Examples of this category are: skaters and scooters at the concrete plinth (at the northeastern entrance to Van Beuningenplein), groups of children repeatedly gathering to play basketball and youth playing panna on the community pavilion's roof terrace.

Van Beuningenplein appears to have the capacity to hold multiple collectives of varying sorts, enacting different kinds of territorial claims. The territorial complexity is rather high in some places, even though the spatio-material arrangements are aimed at functional separation by zoning different activities. However, the unpredictability of mobile toys and playing children frequently cross over material boundaries and facilitate interaction between different collectives. The space is characterised by weaker collectives and a rather high level of publicness, which seems to attract visitors of mixed origins and with varied intentions.

Anchors and Base Camps

Most play involves artefacts and is strongly affected by spatial conditions. The most obvious setting for play is playgrounds; that is my main reason for studying them. Playgrounds also offer dense and varied milieus in which to study social exchange mediated by artefacts. Polyvalent artefacts are likely to be found in great numbers in playgrounds. The equipment for playing varies from heavily programmed and suggestive artefacts to more abstract ones, open for different uses. Additional, mundane urban artefacts, such as benches, tables, bollards and fences, etc., can take on different, sometimes surprising, roles in various play situations.

All categories of playground artefacts have the capacity to mediate social exchange. Swings are programmed to be used in a certain way but afford uses in many more; for example, some children twist the chains and turn a swing into a one-person carousel. Balls, sandpits and climbing towers can be used in a number of ways and be part of countless games. Some of these artefacts are frequently enrolled in the mediation of human bodies, sometimes resulting in social encounters. People using artefacts in a playful manner also mediate exchange among others who are watching them play, perhaps cheering them on, or commenting on their skills or the lack thereof. As mentioned above, this phenomenon is referred to as 'triangulation' (Whyte 1980:94; cf. Gehl [1971] 2011; Gehl & Svarre 2013). Elevated horizontal surfaces may be the most commonly used objects, because we need them to sit or put our belongings on. This does not mean that they inherently determine social exchange, but they have extensive and evident affordances to do so.

Guardians regularly share responsibility for children in playgrounds and form alliances to manage the monitoring of several children simultaneously. Guardians often take active part in the play, meeting and socially interaction with other children and guardians. The most obvious is of course that the children themselves interact extensively in different ways. Some are just watching each other, playing parallel to one another, while others play

together, make up games or form spontaneous groups to perform specific sports or games of make believe. All of these games include artefacts and make use of specific spatial affordances in the playgrounds.

An *anchor* is used here to denote an artefact that repeatedly attracts and gathers humans, and consequently also other artefacts. Anchors are materialities that can support and situate (anchor) specific practices or uses, such as sports activities, games, play or other everyday activities. An anchor provides certain usabilities and affordances, and meets temporal needs to sit or place things. Anchors may also provide shelter from wind, rain or sun, and sometimes offer protection from cars or other moving artefacts or humans. Anchors are thus polyvalent objects – a kind of clustering machines – that tend to form alliances with different sorts of actors and clusters of actors. Accordingly, they also constitute sites for controversies and they sometimes situate exposed struggles for space. In spaces with multiple anchors, *careers* can be observed; i.e. people and groups moving between different anchors in pursuit of individual or collective benefits (– or dependent on individual or collective preferences). Anchors are thus important means for territorial production and stabilisation in public domains. In fact, desirable anchors (such as the only sunny spot on a square) could even be transformed from being a means to a specific, desired activity (sun-bathing) to be an end in itself.

The anchors at Van Beuningenplein come in various shapes. For example, the stepped edges around the sports field are popular sites for guardians watching over children's activities or to anchor for longer picnics. They also collect children for short rests, play or to observe other children play. The sandpits also constitute anchors, attracting children as well as guardians and showing recurrent examples of interactions. In this case, the responsive quality of the sand itself plays an important role for establishing the anchor effect.Looking at artefacts mobilised as anchors on Van Beuningenplein, a specific sort of clustering quality became apparent; beside human bodies, anchors seemed to collect various personal artefacts. I came to think of these colonised anchors as *base camps.* Hence, the notion of base camps is used here to denote anchors that are repeatedly accessed and appropriated via personal belongings. These base camps might be produced through a personal and mobile artefact, such as a pram (photographs xx), but most often they connect to shared and non-mobile anchors at the site. On a regular day, there are base camps scattered all over Van Beuningenplein. Guardians often arrive at the playground with prams, bags, toys and other things required when taking children on an outdoor excursion. They need places to put their belongings and those places usually become their base camps for the time they spend at the site. Sometimes guardians move their

base, following the children's play or due to shifting weather conditions, or for other reasons. Sometimes they gather with other guardians and cluster in bigger, collective, base camps. The camps are most commonly entangled with anchor artefacts that offer horizontal surfaces, suitable for sitting and/ or putting things on. The base camp forms the foundation of a more stable territorial appropriation of somewhat longer duration – an appropriation that at some point often also involves territorial tactics, and a territorial marking through personal belongings. The territorial tactic allows for shorter excursions in the close surroundings without the risk of losing the appropriated territory to someone else.

The podium is a platform-artefact that most evidently can be seen as an *anchor*. It frequently situates numerous variations of base camp constellations, enrolling multiple humans and artefacts. Some of the podium base camps are of brief duration, while others are stable over a longer time. The size and shape of this anchor permit multiple base camps to be produced concurrently, which allows for exchanges to emerge among members of different base camps.

The platform can be seen as a stabilising territorial figure that can be found in many different urban settings. Most platforms offer the same set of affordances, such as seating or a place to put things that one would rather not put on the ground, and protection from moving humans and vehicles. These utilities and affordances are linked to the platform-sort, but they differ individually between different platforms in terms of *how* they are performed. Platforms typically have the general capacity to attract multiple users (and artefacts) at the same time, not necessarily connected to each other beforehand. In the specific local situation however, the precise material figuration matters for what agency is exercised and what kind of actions and behaviours a platform might stabilise. The exact form, size, and material quality determine if a platform is good for sitting, leaning, lying on, placing belongings on/near, displaying goods for sale, supporting a street performer, picnicking, executing skating tricks on, etc. Still, how all these utilities and affordances are enacted in relation to a specific platform obviously depends on particular spatial and temporal conditions.

The concrete plinth at the northern entrance is a natural meeting point, an anchor that gathers children and youngsters on wheels. Appropriations by bodies and personal belongings occasionally lead to minor controversies. Sometimes the production of anchors and base camps seems to end in potential conflict rather than 'positive' social exchange. There is, for example, an obvious hierarchy in relation to the plinth (and in other parts of the playground) that has to do with age and size of the kids, as well as their level

of skill; younger and less experienced skaters and scooters are often directed to other, less exciting, routes or spaces.

Personal and Shared Artefacts

Multiple collectives form at Van Beuningenplein playground, transitory as well as more durable ones. Since most visitors stay for a while at playgrounds, the opportunities for social exchanges increase, and thus so do the conditions for clustering. Most visitors with children arrive carrying a lot of personal belongings (*personal artefacts*) and need to settle somewhere during their stay. This appropriation process requests visitors to entangle with certain situated *shared artefacts* to set up base camps where they can place their belongings. The most suitable or popular material anchors (*shared artefacts*) attract many base camps to cluster and sometimes to compose collectives.

Personal belongings *give or allow access* to certain anchors or milieus, such as balls to a sports field, skateboards to a skating area or various toys to a sandpit. Other personal artefacts may *initiate a search* for particular objects or environments, such as takeaways or computers motivate a search for (dry) horizontal surfaces on which to sit or put things, in order to free one's hands. Personal belongings accordingly guide our movements and objectives when navigating in urban space. One key conceptual account discussed in this thesis is how *personal* and *mobile artefacts*, such as mobile phones, handbags, takeaways, skateboards, prams, etc. (artefacts over which we have direct and individual control) inspire and guide the use of *shared artefacts*, such as the Internet, urban furniture, architectures, sports grounds, etc. The relation can of course also be the reverse; shared artefacts may encourage or direct the choice and use of personal artefacts brought into public domains. The agency of networked items encourages humans to cluster, produce events and thus to perform urbanity – urbanity as performative territorial productions. Shared artefacts that afford multiple and varied uses and concurrent users prompt collectivisations and hence the opportunity for an increased territorial complexity. Consequently, the degree of territorial complexity seems to correlate with the amount and diversity of associations between personal and shared artefacts.

Personal artefacts are sometimes provided, for free or to let/rent, to access situated shared artefacts or spaces. In Van Beuningenplein this can be exemplified by the scooters, balls and other play items that can be borrowed from the playground manager at the bistro pavilion. I suggest denoting these items *pseudo-personal artefacts*.

6

A LEISURE RIVERFRONT IN PARIS

INTRODUCTION

This third, main field study was carried out at Les Berges de Seine in Paris in September 2014 and in May 2015.[1] It is an investigation of a public domain that is primarily dedicated to leisure, fitness and the sheer pleasure of social interaction. It is a temporal urban arrangement with a high level of management associated to it, where a comprehensive machinery of architectural features and specialised artefacts strategically support a rich selection of events and supervised (and non-supervised) activities.

Les Berges de Seine – 'the Banks of the Seine' – is a public pedestrian space located on the Left Bank of the Seine, extending from the Musée d'Orsay (the Emmarchement stairs) and Pont de l'Alma in the west. The area was reclaimed from motorised traffic in 2012 to become a major public space. Bertrand Delanoë, who was mayor of Paris at the time, declared

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1   See Chapter 3 for further information on 'field study design' details.

that he was "committed to transform the road along the riverbank into a place of life, beauty and culture".[2] The Berges embankment area covers a stretch of about 2.3 km, and its width varies from roughly between 20-40 meters. The two-lane riverbank road (Georges-Pompidou Riverside Expressway) that formerly occupied the space was built between 1961-1967 and was one of the city's busiest thoroughfares – with about 2 200 vehicles passing every hour – until the project's launch in 2012. When the Berges project was completed in June 2013, general project coordinator Annette Poehlmann stated that "The idea behind Les Berges was to re-appropriate the riverbank and to create a little island of peace, pleasure and leisure in the heart of Paris".[3]

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The bureaucracy and coordination of all activities at Les Berges de Seine is conducted by a specialised management organisation – *Artevia*. The design of artefacts, such as seating facilities and multipurpose containers, is done by *Franklin Azzi architecture*. *Bureau Bas Smets* is responsible for the landscaping, and the signage is designed by *Change is Good*. Sport and recreation facilities are managed by *Carat Sport*. The former director of *lille3000*,[4] Fusillier Didier, is in charge of the event design.

The initial investment for planning and construction work was somewhere between 26.6 million euros[5] and 40 million euros,[6] and the annual budget is about 5 million euros.[7] The general project coordinator Annette Poehlmann[8] claims that the figure is 35 million euros, including "the in-

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2   Bertrand Delanoë cited in NY Times 7 Aug, 2012.

3   (www.nytimes.com) 29 July 2014.

4   *lille3000* is an institution that has been organising extensive cultural projects in the city of Lille since 2006. The institution is a legacy from 2004, when Lille was the European Capital of Culture (alongside Genoa in Italy).

5   New York Times, July 2014

6   The Guardian, August 2012

7   New York Times, July 2014

8   Annette Poehlmann is the general project coordinator at Les Berges, employed by Artevia, which manages the Les Berges de Seine project. I interviewed Annette Poehlmann at the site on 19 May 2015 (2pm-3:30pm). Further conversations were had via mail correspondence.

vestment of the works done by the City of Paris on the Left and Right riverbanks in 2012 (7M€) plus 5M€/year (2012-2015) for Artevia (including the investment for our facilities and programme)" (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015). The project was politically debated and the conservative opposition forcefully argued to keep the expressway. As a transformation sanctioned in the socialist mayor's office, it is highly sensitive to shifting political winds. The contract guaranteeing the temporary use of the bank space runs until 2016, but due to a precarious financial situation, the current plan is to terminate the project in December 2015. The future use of the space after 2015 is unclear.

s a predecessor to the Les Berges project, Bertrand Delanoë[9] introduced the *Paris Plages* project in 2002. Artificial sandy beaches were installed on the lower banks of the river for four or five weeks every summer. Potted palm trees, beach chairs and tonnes of sand offer a Mediterranean experience in the centre of Paris. The beaches add a new temporary spatial category and social event to urban public life. The Paris Plages project was very well received by Parisians and has been mimicked by other cities all over the world,[10] offering city dwellers a coastal holiday, or at least an urban beach experience, close to home and free of charge.

Les Berges de Seine is situated at the lower quay area and is accessed by just a few stairs and ramps, which are located rather far apart. The several metres-high retaining wall that supports the upper quay separates the lower area and detaches it from adjacent tourist attractions, such as the Musée D'Orsay, the Eiffel Tower and the Champ du Mars. The retaining wall simultaneously visually connects the space to the river and to the view of the Right Bank. The protected and fairly secluded setting gives les Berges an extraordinary character as a tranquil public haven – a fragment of rather serene urbanity – despite its very central location in the city.

Les Berges de Seine organisation invests heavily in material agency to encourage and inspire public life. The site is highly programmed and most of the intended activities are supported by a multitude of artefacts – material devices intended to initiate a vast selection of play and leisure activities, entertainment and sports. The design of the space can be perceived as a rather desperate or opportunistic way to establish a public domain, filled to the brim as it were with various inviting (or pleading) features. The place can be reminiscent of an amusement park in its anxious desire to please citizens and tourists by offering something for everyone.

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9   Bertrand Delanoë, the former socialist mayor of Paris, promoted many public space projects during his tenure between 2001-2014. His strong support for bicycling as a mode of transportation resulted in improved bicycling infrastructure and the *Vélib* bike-sharing scheme, which was implemented in Paris in 2007.

10   John Lichfield in The Independent, 15 April 2010.

Because of the scarcity of access points and its secluded location, Les Berges represent a target space, relatively detached from the typically congested and crowded Parisian urban life. Most visitors seem to come here to stay for a while, not just to pass through. The common pace is slow, and people stop regularly to enjoy the views, look at objects or sit down to read, have a picnic or just people-watch. It is clearly not an obvious shortcut to certain hot spots, although the stretch could certainly be chosen as an alternate route. The linear orientation of most artefacts in the Berges space allow for uninterrupted movement along the river. The linearity supports the idea of a continuous strolling space whilst also facilitating jogging, skating and bicycling. Stretches of urban flâneur space echo a Parisian tradition, recalling the boulevards of the 19th century and the bourgeoisie practice of walking for pleasure (Benjamin 1999).

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Urban Space Typology

Les Berges is situated in close proximity to grand landmarks such as the Seine, the Eiffel Tower, the great museums (Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, etc.), the Tuileries Garden and the National Assembly. Although Les Berges forms part of the large-scale infrastructure by means of architecture and culture as well as politics, the space has a mundane atmosphere and is characterised by rather low-key artefacts. The space is materially programmed to support multiple activities that are not obviously associated with traditional public domains. Les Berges can be described as a seamless hybrid of multiple urban types. The central, yet secluded location renders the space undetermined regarding use, and its position within traditional urban typologies is ambiguous. From some aspects it can be regarded as a transitional or 'liminal space' (Stevens 2007a:73ff.; Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:128ff.; Zukin 1991; Sennet 1990), but it can also be seen as a major public domain – a target space at which to arrive and a site for great events. Given its very central location in Paris, a traditional planning approach would suggest a fairly neutral and representative design, open for unplanned citizen appropriations, like comparable bank spaces along the Seine. Les Berges is a rather odd creature though; it is as much a

playground and a park as a training facility and a recreational retreat. This highly programmed and functionally diversified space can be associated with urban parks and seafront esplanades as well as with contemporary urban spaces, such as themed playgrounds, farmers' markets and centres for mixed urban sports such as parkour parks, climbing walls, skating and bmx facilities.

Les Berges de Seine belongs to an emergent urban type that is intended for leisure, entertainment and play, more than lending itself to traditional commercial activities, civic manifestations and political protests. These new urban publics are designed to meet the desires of metropolitan citizens and tourists with diversified and sophisticated requests regarding ambience, food/drinks, activities for children, comfort level and a variety of events. The challenge seems to be the low-key design, a fine-tuned level of programming fused with originality, amusement and safety, a concept that may fit and attract a wide contemporary urban audience.

A Themed Urban Riverfront

Les Berges can to some extent be regarded as an example of a global trend of cities competing with each other through commodified urban architectures, interesting experiences and high-end public spaces (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:49ff.; Sorkin 1992; Zukin 1995; Boyer 1994). Curated leisure and play have become the guiding themes and the main features for some key contemporary urban spaces in many prominent cities. Michael Sorkin (1992) as well as Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp (2001) have commented on this as an effect of the growing 'experience market', signifying how cities compete via theme park experiences. Additionally, and somewhat contradictorily, in some cases this tendency can be interpreted as a general critique of the current commercialisation and privatisation of urban public domains.

Striking urban renewal projects, usually spinning various travelling design concepts, are carried out to attract local citizens, tourists, retail and international business; all aimed at a growing and dynamic labour market, producing wealth for the city via increased taxation. Normally these projects are swarming with consumption opportunities and essentially they signify an ambition to primarily collect people who are able to consume. The large investments that are made in these urban renewal projects rarely target financially weak groups of citizens. In this sense, Les Berges deviates from the norm and offers a setting where everything is free, except food and drinks. Les Berges de Seine can, however, still be perceived as an effort to brand the city as dynamic and progressive, but also as safe and well managed.

The Berges project alludes to urban developments in other European cities, such as London's South Bank development[11] and the restoration of public spaces in Bordeaux, on the Left Bank of the river Garonne.[12] Similar developments take place in most parts of world. Further examples are the HafenCity development in Hamburg (Germany) and the Western Harbour and Dockan developments in Malmö (Sweden). Quentin Stevens (2006) brings two Australian examples to the forefront: the 'Southbanks' in Melbourne and Brisbane, two public riverfront spaces dominated by culture and leisure activities (cf. Dovey 2005). Above all, the projects represent efforts to reclaim urban waterfronts from industrial use and reprogramme them into public domains. The projects further imply a desire to bring public life closer to urban rivers, the sea or other powerful landscape features – to exploit natural values that by contemporary measures are considered to embody highly valued conditions for public life, and of course, for private and commercial investments. One of the first regeneration projects of this kind was the major refurbishment of Baltimore's Inner Harbor in the 1970s and 1980s, which has "spawned copycat leisure spaces across the globe" (Yang in Carmona 2010a:139).[13]

Control, Maintenance and Surveillance

The range of activities that take place at the site are supervised and controlled by Artevia. Any organisation wishing to stage happenings and events at the site have to apply to Artevia, which makes a pre-selection of requests and submits their choices to the City of Paris for a final validation. There are thus two checkpoints that must approve any organisation wishing to arrange something at the site.

There is, however, surprisingly little evidence of graffiti, littering or vandalism at the site. According to Annette Poehlmann, this was a surprise for the managing organisation as well (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015). Poehlmann further reports that they have

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11   Huge investments have been made in London's public infrastructure in the past twenty years, such as the Millennium Bridge and the reorganised and furnished pedestrian routes along the Thames. A number of semi-public institutions have been built or reconstructed, like the City Hall (headquarters of the Greater London Authority/ GLA), Royal Festival Hall, Tate Modern, the London Eye, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, etc. Finally, a large number of private high-end residential estates have been developed along the river.

12   A number of projects to make the Garonne riverbanks more accessible for citizens were initiated in the late 1990s and carried out mainly between 2002-2009. Pedestrian routes, tramlines (2005) and new bridges were implemented. 'A policy giving priority to pedestrian mobility over vehicular traffic in the city's historic centre' led to car parks on the outskirts of the city and the freeing of land closer to the river and the dock area, which could be opened for public use and new tram routes.

13   The quote in Carmona 2010a is referred to: Yang, D. (2006): *Waterfronts: Spatial composition and cultural use*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University College London.

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a strategy to keep the area clean and to remove graffiti away as soon as it appears, following the principle that waste attracts more waste and graffiti attracts more graffiti (cf. Coleman 1985; Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Organised and authorised decorating and 'pimping' of Les Berges' artefacts is on the other hand rather common (photographs 185-187). The staff that maintains the space is easily recognisable and probably affects the behaviour of visitors. A janitor drives back and forth along the site in a special vehicle, picking up waste, sweeping and emptying litterbins. Since the space is so visibly managed it may lose some of its publicness, but at the same time the presence of managing staff (guides, mediators, janitors) renders a feeling of security; a sense that the site is controlled and supervised – like an amusement park.

The space doesn't receive any special attention from the police. State police patrol the area as they do any other public space in the city (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015). One day, I observe a police boat with three policemen that approaches the quay and stays for about two hours. They are not policing the area for any situated crimes, they claim that they are securing against terrorists, as they are doing in all of Paris. These are the only police officers I see during my field studies at the site.

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The floating gardens, called the *Archipelago*, are located in the west end of the area and are managed by the city of Paris, not by the Berges organization (Artevia). The opening hours and rules of conduct are prominently displayed, and the islands are closely guarded by personnel located in a container on the quay (photographs 190-192). The guards sitting in the container that overlooks the islands announce closing hours and other information via loudspeakers on high posts positioned on the quay. The guarding staff regularly patrols the space as well. The strict policies regarding accessibility and activities differ widely from the rest of the Berges site. For example, drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes are strictly prohibited throughout the Archipelago, according to multiple signs. In the evenings, visitors seem to consider these restrictions recommendations; I observe groups of young adults hanging around, drinking wine and smoking cigarettes. The guard does not react to this, at least not while I am present.

On one occasion, a guard reprimanded a women for violating the no-smoking rule: *"Madame, il est interdit de fumer sur les bateaux!"* The woman turns to the nearest speaker-post (from which the voice is coming) and loudly announces that she is not smoking. I can see that she isn't. The issue seems to be settled.

I noticed a few homeless people and other seemingly underprivileged citizens using the space during my visits, and I was surprised that Les Berges wasn't more attractive for these marginalised groups. There is no particular surveillance or policing of the area to explain it. A partly covered residual space close to the Pont Alexandre III Bridge offers a clean and rather protected area (photographs 188-189). Warm air from the ventilation system from a restaurant ('Faust') exits here, which probably makes the nights less cold. Two seemingly homeless people regularly establish a base camp at the place and reside there during nights. They ask for cigarettes every morning when I arrive at the site. During the day they stack some sheets of cardboard to mark the space, or perhaps they are just hoping that the cardboard will be there when they return in the late evening. A fence protects the space, as if it is forbidden to enter. Nonetheless, I saw no one trying to expel the two men from their nightly quarters.

LES BERGES DE SEINE

Themed Observations

The investigation of Les Berges de Seine led to a number of observations that were grouped into five themes through analysis, reflecting different situational effects or phenomena. Each phenomenon is demonstrated via examples related to material features and spatial arrangements from the entire Berges space. The site study was carried out to be consistent with the methodological loop described in Chapter 3. Accordingly, the investigation was initiated with an overall, non-specific observational study; this aimed to capture social events and behaviours related to various architectures and artefacts at the site. The themes ultimately derived from the inquiries are: '*Hanging around: linear and field artefacts*'; '*Temporal privatisation of public space*'; '*Incentive artefacts and triangulation*'; '*Fitness in public – fitness as public*' and '*Managing, curating and programming*'. The lattermost will be discussed in this chapter's Concluding Remarks.

193   Les Berges de Seine (www.google.se/maps)

A selection of major features of Les Berges area:

- The Emmarchement stairs are situated in front of Musée d'Orsay, connecting the upper and lower quays.
- The Teepees by the pedestrian bridge Passerelle de L.S. Senghor can be booked free of charge for children's birthday parties and related festivities.
- An outdoor temporary exhibition comprising large screens with photographs.
- Le We is a semi-tubular tent structure that is used for markets, exhibitions, workshops and various music and art events. The tent can be used privately for PR events, cocktail parties, etc. The tent was not at the site during my site observations and is thus not included in this study.
- The Centipede Terrace denotes a café space (80 seats) with gaming tables designed for chess, checkers, backgammon, ludo and Chinese chequers. Game pieces can be borrowed free of charge at the information centre, which is supervised by people employed by the Berges organisation.
- The Great Terrace offers 240 seats for picnics or food from Mozza & Co, a mobile trattoria serving Italian dishes and drinks. The Great Terrace is also furnished with game tables.
- Games painted on the ground: mazes, hopscotch, chess, etc.
- A section of the retaining wall close to the Port de Solférino is covered with huge chalkboards, which are free for everybody to write, scribble or draw anything they like. The Berges organisation calls the object Slate Wall.
- Four slate-grey maritime shipping containers, called "Zzz's", can be booked for slots of 90 minutes by individuals or private groups. The containers are furnished with tables and various sitting devices.
- The Sound Shower is located under an arch of the Pont de la Concorde. The space comprises mirrored walls and a sound system that can be used for spontaneous and arranged festivities.
- The Fitness Trail runs along the whole space and includes 9 fitness stations.
- A playground is placed next to the bridge Pont des Invalides. Various fittings turn the retaining wall into a climbing wall, used by children of all ages.
- The Orchard consists of 120 boxes with plants, ordered in a rectilinear arrangement. The Orchard provides secluded spaces to sit and frames a wooden platform (the Zen platform) intended for yoga and other physical and meditative group activities. The space is designed in collaboration with a botanical garden and the city gardener Stéphane Place. The Orchard forms part of Paris' Biodiversity Plan.
- The Archipelago, named Niki de Saint Phalle, comprises five floating garden-islands with plants, sitting facilities and an educational greenhouse.
- A vast number of timber logs, called Mikados, are arranged in various formations to provide sitting opportunities along the whole space.
- A selection of restaurants, bars and cafés are scattered along the bank space and on boats by the quay between Pont de la Concorde and Pont Alexandre III.
- The Berges administration organises or facilitates a wide selection of seasonal events, such as outdoor cinema, concerts, Zumba, dance shows, gymnastics, food markets, exhibitions, winter activities (such as ski training), etc.

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Hanging Around Artefacts

The quay edge along the whole site is an attractive place to sit for many reasons; it is free of charge and offers nice views as well as thrilling proximity to the water. The linear set-up prompts single or twosome sitting arrangements. It is more unusual to see groups of three or more, probably because of the difficulty of seeing each other's faces and gestures (cf. Hall 1982 [1966]); i.e. effective social interaction is problematic. Linear seating arrangements signify a non-frontal relation where communication is affected by the shared frontal view, which clearly becomes an important actor in the communicative situation; the verbal exchange is a direct relation, while the visual connection is partly mediated by the view. Twosome linear sitting could thus be described as a three party set-up in which the shared view signifies a third party – passive, yet deeply affecting the nature of the social exchange.

A well-known example of linear seating are the sidewalk cafés typical of France and other Mediterranean countries, where people sit two-by-two in rows with small round tables in front, facing a street or a square. To form a group of three or more one must break the basic order and rearrange the chairs and tables.

Counter-positioned linear seating represents an alternative that opens up for frontal exchange between two or more people. At Les Berges, people who are acquainted tend to use parallel seat-artefacts when possible, as an opportunity for face-to-face contact (photographs 202-204).

Another alternative to fixed linear benches are mobile chairs or stools, which encourage free seating arrangements. The Tuileries and Luxembourg Gardens in Paris have long been furnished with free and mobile chairs.[14] Today, public mobile sitting equipment can be noticed in many urban spaces over the world. The most recent, extensive, and perhaps most renowned example may be the redeveloped Times Square[15] in New York City, which includes hundreds of mobile chairs and tables.

A variety of timber log formations called *Mikados* are positioned along the entire length of Les Berges and provide opportunities to rest, picnic

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14   Mobile chairs could be used for a small fee in Paris' Tuileries Garden already in the late 18th century and until 1970; they are now free of charge. In the Luxembourg Gardens, chairs were available for a fee from 1920 onwards, but since 1974 use of the chairs has been free.

15   The redevelopment of Times Square from a congested traffic solution to a pedestrianised urban plaza started in 2008 with a pilot study by Gehl Architects, and the final designs by the Norwegian architects Snøhetta are due to be realised in 2016.

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and linger in various constellations.[16] The Mikados constitute the main seating device throughout the space, and because of their strong visual impact and the sheer quantity of them they can be perceived as emblematic for the whole space. Mikado is the French name for the game 'pick-up sticks', but the designers at Franklin Azzi Architecture, who designed the Mikado system, claim to have in fact been inspired by KAPLA,[17] so why the seating system was named Mikado remains a mystery.

The concept of sitting in urban space is to a great extent influenced by the public bench, an archetypal (linear) item in urban planning. The public bench is functionally suitable for single or two-person sitting, but social exchange becomes challenging when the bench is shared by three or more persons. The bench and its inherent ability to order movements and direct visual perspectives significantly affect the design and use of public spaces. At Les Berges, the hegemony of the public bench is challenged and generally replaced by the Mikado formations and other sitting devices. Sometimes a bench mediates exchange between strangers, but most commonly people search for an empty bench to use by themselves or choose to sit as far away as possible from a person already using the bench. Other equipment for sitting could be suggested when designing a public domain (or a common artefact) whose key objective is to support social exchange and interaction. Devices with non-linear geometries, like the Mikado stacks and platforms at Les Berges, afford more complex choices of individual and group configurations. I denote this type of multi-directional seating device *field artefacts* – as an alternative to *linear artefacts*.

The Mikado log is the basic unit on which many of the site's constructions rely. The logs constitute for example the Mikado stage, the Zen platform (in the Orchard) and the foundations for the Zzz-containers (see below for further details on these artefacts). The modules and the different geometrical combinations afford multiple uses, activities and social events. The Mikado formations accommodate a combination of *linear* and *field* seating. The complex geometries allow for different ways of sitting and positioning; hence, several individuals and group constellations can use the same Mikado formation simultaneously.

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16   The oak logs measure about 295mm by 145mm in cross section. The formations are screwed together with aluminium plates and they rest on about 45mm wooden strips, for good stability and ventilation (this allows them to dry more quickly after rain). The heights for sitting thus are about 200mm, 350mm, 500mm, etc. The logs come in six different lengths, varying from half a metre to 5 metres, and these lengths are combined in 11 typical formations along the Berges walk.

17   KAPLA is a toy construction kit, primarily intended for children but probably used by people of all ages. The kit consists of many wooden blocks (pine), measuring 11,7 x 2,34 x 0,78 cm. The Dutchman Tom van der Bruggen invented the building system/toy in 1987.

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The Mikados are attractive play devices, mainly – but not only – in the eyes of children. Most formations are also well suited for different activities related to physical training. Apart from sitting and reclining, the most common use of the Mikados is picnicking. Sometimes a larger group appropriates a whole log formation, territorialising it with the help of various picnic artefacts.

The Mikados anchor multiple activities and repeatedly situate base camps. For example, one of my observations included a man in a wheelchair and a younger man – a relative, friend or perhaps a helper – who spend an hour or two close to Pont de la Concorde every day (photographs 227, 228). On some days one or two other young men join the group. On days when the weather is good they anchor at Mikados under the open sky, and when it rains they arrange their base camp at Mikados under the bridge, protected from the rain. They choose an end of a Mikado formation that allows for putting the wheelchair close to a log that can be used as a table. The man drinks a sparkling white wine, and they usually have some snacks to eat. Every day this scene repeats. Perhaps their routine is year-round, or perhaps it is unique to this week.

The Mikado stage (ca.6m x ca.8m) constitutes a fixed platform, like an island, in the stream of joggers, flâneurs, skaters, bikes and prams (photographs 229-235). The platform situates various events such as musical, theatre and dance performances, acrobatics, spontaneous play and other activities. It also recurrently anchors various individuals and groups for short rests and offers a place where base camps can be established for lengthier stays. Children use the platform for playing, without disturbing the flow of joggers and bikers passing by. The platform also provides a sufficiently flat and clean surface to put things on, such as cups, bottles, food, handbags, etc.
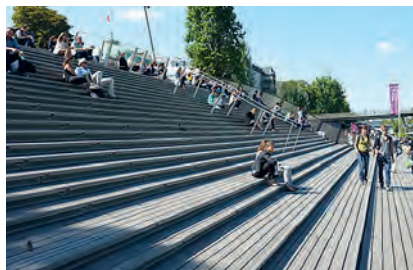
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The architecture of the platform allows a differentiated relationship to local surrounding spaces. The entire artefact clearly acts as an anchor, or in fact, it offers multiple anchor locations with slightly varying conditions. The central part of the platform is clearly a space of its own, and it can be socially distinguished from the fringes through appropriation. The fringes, on the other hand, are more directly related to their immediate adjacent spaces. Humans and multiple personal artefacts can connect to the logs in different ways and turn specific parts of the fringe into discrete base camps. The complexity in size and shape further allow for different groups and individuals to use the platform simultaneously, particularly at the edges, without necessarily interfering with each other or overstepping personal boundaries or social territories. As we have seen in the two previous field studies – the open-air markets in London and the playgrounds in Amsterdam – the platform is a complex artefact regarding social use and exchange potentials. It allows many different social constellations to form in close proximity and to overlap in time and space. The complexity of local territorial productions generates a multi-relational capacity. The platform can clearly be categorised more as a field artefact than a linear one. The distinction implies differences in *how* the artefacts support humans in fixing their positions in space, how the artefacts encourage (or at least enable) exchange and thus how collectives may assemble and stabilise in close proximity.

The Mikado formations, like the Archipelago furniture, are frequently used for lying down, which constitutes a rather rare and almost exceptional behaviour in public space. Lying down, especially with closed eyes, is normally considered a vulnerable position, and it is thus generally avoided in public domains. A horizontal position is usually reserved for private spaces where one can control who has access to the space. The Berges space seems to offer some extraordinary characteristics that make visitors feel safe enough to lie down and occasionally even sleep (photographs 240-250). An explanation for this behaviour might be its secluded, yet public situation, which produces a park-like atmosphere in which many public eyes create a feeling of security. The surprisingly domestic feeling at Les Berges might emanate from the multiple opportunities to privatise or collectivise minor parts of the urban space. The sense of familiarity can be experienced as an inviting gesture to integrate and take up space, a sense that might explain the lying down behaviour in part. This sensation is certainly not applicable to all visitors; it is rather reserved for people equipped with a social confidence and/or a genuine familiarity with public domains in general. Still the phenomenon strikes me as fascinating.

240   241
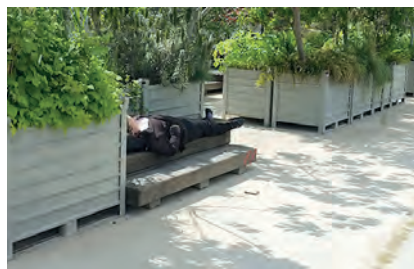
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A limited number of sun chairs can be found in the Solférino area, by the Mikado stage and around the bistro container Mozza & Co. In the mornings the chairs are usually free, but at lunchtime and in the afternoon they are most often occupied. People use them mainly for short rests, but occasionally also for longer breaks and picnics. Since the chairs are mobile, they are frequently used together with fixed seating artefacts, probably to enable face-to-face settings. Most of the mobile sun chairs come in pairs, affixed to each other with plastic strings. Other than this somewhat surprising detail they can be moved and combined in any way.

The sun chairs are evidently part of an *appropriation career* (see Chapter 4 for an introduction of the phenomenon). They are clearly the most popular seats in this part of the Berges site and the first to be taken. The regular café furniture (the 'centipede furniture') is the second choice; the Mikado logs and the Mikado platform are chosen third, and if all of these seats are too crowded the quay edge is an alternative. The career signifies a gradual change of seats; as those occupying of the most well liked seats leave the café space, other people are there right away to grab the chairs. This general notion does not of course apply to all people. Some individuals' preferences deviate from the typical, and consequently they choose a seat that suits those preferences. Since the space allows for varied seating opportunities, open for different personal and temporal needs or desires, the setting supports a plurality of visitors and thus certain social dynamics.

The Emmarchement stairs is an access point to Les Berges area at Port de Solférino, just in front of the Musée d'Orsay (photographs 237, 238). The stairs are a popular hangout, facing the river and offering a grand view over the river and the Tuileries Garden. The stairs constitute a linear seating element, but the size and the amount of steps, together with the small gradient, allow for multiple sitting arrangements and diverse opportunities for visual and verbal exchange between people using the stairs as seats.

The five artificial floating gardens, also known as the *Archipelago* or the *Niki de Saint Phalle[18] Gardens,* are located close to Pont de l'Alma, in the western end of the Berges stretch. The material design, equipment and the vegetation of the five islands differs, but the overall concept is that the vegetation should be reminiscent of the ancient riverbank biotopes, as they appeared before the construction of the concrete quays. The five interconnected floating gardens are furnished with different artefacts for sitting and lying down that visitors use for resting, social gatherings, picnicking and working.

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18   Niki de Saint Phalle (born Catherine-Marie-Agnès Fal de Saint Phalle, 1930-2002), was a French sculptor, painter, and filmmaker. For those familiar with the Swedish art scene she is perhaps most famous for the large-scale sculpture "hon-en-katedral" ("she-a-cathedral" in English), made for Moderna Museet in 1966 in collaboration with Jean Tinguely and Per Olof Ultvedt.

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259   260   261

The *giant hammocks* (photographs 244, 259) constitute field artefacts, affording complex seating arrangements that allow multiple relations among the users. The sizes and the layout give opportunities for clustering of friends and also encourage close proximity between strangers. Frequent exchange can be observed, especially during lunch hours and in the evenings.

The plethora of alternatives for sitting and lying down meet a wide variety of uses, which also prompts a struggle for space (seats) – another example of an appropriation (or seating*)* career. The giant hammocks (horizontal nets for reclining completely), wooden deck chairs for semi-reclining, round wooden platforms and the stepped concrete formation facing the river: all of these attract diverse types of visitors depending on their intended activities, individual and temporal preferences, different group sizes, etc. The career seems dependent on the activities that the visitors plan to perform at the site. Most people are keen on the wooden deck chairs, at least in the morning when they are exposed to the sun. The concrete formations on the central island are crowded during lunch hours, when people come here to consume takeaway or food brought from home. The design affords sitting in different constellations and there are smooth horizontal surfaces on which to safely place food and drinks. The topography also allows for good visual contact among the visitors and striking views over the river. The island with the round wooden platforms and shade-giving trees are attractive for people performing any kind of computer work; perhaps the Wi-Fi is strongest in that area.

Some visitors clearly target a specific seating, artefact, and if it's occupied they simply wait until it is free. These seat-hunters have different strategies for reaching their target artefacts. Some stroll slowly in close circles, lurking around their favourite seat, while others choose the next best alternative, ready to move to their favourite seat when it becomes vacant.

The wide selection of alternatives for lingering in the space clearly meet different uses, making the space attractive for a variety of activities and thus for visitors with different intentions. The variation also offers opportunities to experience the space in different ways, also with regard to the relations to the surrounding landscape and to other people. The career potential supports multiple experiences of the space and increases the chance of encounters with other people.

Tourist cruises pass by regularly on the Seine, and there are several sightseeing enterprises stationed along the quay at the Les Berges site (photographs 260, 261). The water-based sightseeing industry has an impact on the life at the site, which in turn affects the travelling sightseers. The sensation of being watched by tourists while being a tourist yourself is an

odd and rather awkward experience. A lot of waving occurs between people on the boats and people on land. One can hear the voices of the cruise guides when the boats are close to the bank or when the direction of the wind is right. It's like a well-arranged drama where we all play our parts – tourists spotting tourists, confirming our mutual positions and status as temporary visitors in a scenic location. The phenomenon clearly affects the local citizens as well, but perhaps not in the same way; for a Parisian, the presence of tourists and guided tours on the Seine is most probably deeply internalised.

Temporal Privatisation of Public Space

Public space is continually privatised by the citizens using it. The possibility for citizens to temporarily privatise minute parts of urban public domains is a prerequisite for successful (stable) territorial productions. Material conditions strongly affect the potential for temporal appropriations. At Les Berges de Seine, several strategic means are provided to support opportunities for territorial appropriation. Personal and shared tactic devices are used to stabilise territorialisations and to compose collectives. The Zzz containers represent a shared spatial feature with apparent privatising potentials. One could say that their very nature is about providing private space in a public domain.

The Zzz project comprises four custom-built, furnished shipping containers (photographs 261-283). There are large windowpanes on their long sides, which face the Seine and the retaining wall respectively. Anyone can book the Zzz's, on the Internet or at the site, for slots of 90 minutes. They are open for reservation on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from late May to October. On Tuesdays and Thursdays they can be accessed without prior booking from noon to 7:30pm. The row of containers rests on a foundation of Mikado logs along the retaining wall, upstream of Pont de la Concorde (in the Port de Solférino area). Each entrance is fitted with a wooden porch, big enough for a table and some chairs. Large trees visually connect the riverbank with the upper quay level and the canopies provide a green roof over the Zzz's. The green scenery is completed with plants, weeds and flowers that make up the gardens embracing the containers. Each container has a garden resembling a specific type of French biotope.

Most people using the Zzz's are having picnics of some sort, especially during lunch hours. Some just stay inside, having a rest or a nap while others have meetings, knitting sessions, play various games, etc. It is an unfamiliar and surprisingly peculiar feeling to observe various private parties appropriating the Zzz units, which are sanctioned by local policies stabi-

lised by various regulations and materialities. From outside, the temporary occupiers are seemingly unaffected by (and indifferent to) the extraordinariness of the atypical public/private situation.

The Zzz containers facilitate individual and group privatisations of public space through an architectural intervention – a temporary domestication of urban space. The adjacent Birthday Teepees represent a variation on the same theme. The production of a private territory in the highly public domain is stabilised by various material actors such as the containers, gardens and Mikado porches, but also through other nonhumans such as the Berges organisation that manages the Internet booking and in situ supervision; the 'mediators' that help people make reservations and settle in the containers; and finally, the cleaning staff that maintains the site and cleans the containers at least once daily.

Some Observations at the Zzz's

At two of the Zzz's, preparations for an evening event were underway all day in anticipation of a celebration of an initiative concerning the future development of Les Berges de Seine there (photographs 265). At the evening opening, there are many guests swarming outside the containers, causing massive congestion that people running or bicycling along the quay find annoying. The chaos is disruptive to the linearity of the site.

What seems to be a family of three is having a quiet afternoon in the sun, playing Chinese checkers on a game table on the porch (photograph 267, 272). They are all deeply absorbed in the game and don't pay the slightest attention to anything or anyone passing by.

Three women are having a relaxed evening picnic (photograph 263). They are sitting and chatting in beanbags outside the container, while three children play on the porch and inside the Zzz. A table is set with various drinks and snacks.

Three males are drinking beer and playing a game of chess (photograph 268). They have sketched the chessboard themselves with crayons on the porch.

I arrive to Les Berges de Seine at 10am on a cloudy Saturday morning. It is about 13 degrees and the mild wind occasionally brings some drizzling rain. At 10:30am I book a Zzz without prior reservation, assisted by a 'mediator'. It is a relief to get inside the fairly comfortable container and escape the damp weather for 90 minutes. After eating a takeaway lunch in 'Zzz 1', I spend the time in the container observing how people outside behave in relation to me inside the container (photographs 273-283).

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267   268   269

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It is a radical change of perspective. I sink into a beanbag, which gives me a rather low position and a lower eye level than most of the people passing by; this position certainly affects how I experience the people looking in at me. Between 10 or 15 people pass by the big windowpane per minute, about 2 to 4 meters away. Most people passing by turn their heads and look straight into the container; some stop and stare, sometimes commenting on the scene to a companion. I have no previous experiences or preconceptions of this particular sort of public/private situation. There is no given set of manners or protocol on which to rely. The confusion is mutual. From outside and in, there is uncertainty regarding whether and to what extent it is acceptable to look or stare into the container and thus to trespass on the relative privacy of the temporally privatised space. It is also unclear whether it is suitable to initiate any form of communication or social interaction. The power relations are ambiguous, and the behavioural practices are unclear.

I take photographs of passersby for one hour, between 11pm and 12pm. The photoshoot follows my methodological approach to capture the situation for subsequent analysis. I repeat the shooting in a second container, Zzz 3, later the same afternoon (4pm - 5pm).[19] During the photography sessions, my notions about the relation to the people passing by shifts again. Using the camera as a filter and a gaze that falls on the watchers outside turns them into objects of my study. Some of them show obvious frustration and seem almost provoked by the reversed roles of who is watching whom. It is indeed a delicate situation. The boundaries between what and whom is to be considered object/subject and public/private shift dramatically due to the agency of various filters and mediating artefacts, such as furniture, greenery, camera, eye level, the distance created by the Mikado foundation, the weather, etc. All of these seemingly trivial material means affect the shifting power relations and thus influence the conditions for social exchange. The social situation, the constellation of temporal visitors and the nature of performed activities inside and outside the container, together with the stipulated regulations linked to the temporal privatising of the Zzz containers, also clearly affect the power relations.

A janitor arrives at the time of my stay in the Zzz 3 to empty the litterbin, clean the table and the benches. He also sweeps part of the floor and the porch. The event emphasises the ambiguous private/public situation. As he defends the public interest and maintains the status of the site, I feel that he is violating my conception of privacy in the space.

19   It is raining when I enter the Zzz 3, at 3:40pm (16 May 2015). I booked this 90-minute slot over the Internet two weeks prior to the field study. The front garden of the Zzz 3 is different kind than Zzz 1, one that suggests a forest with spruce firs and ferns. It feels like entering a forest glade.

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The confinement of the massive steel container is emotionally inverted by the fact that the space is visually completely open; the exposure from inside the Zzz is total. I experience contradictory feelings of concurrently being a privileged appropriator of an exclusive space – a privatiser of a prime position – and an exhibited object or a caged animal at a zoo. I go from being a subject, a private citizen, to becoming a public object, a visual attraction for the amusement of strangers. The scant greenery outside the window has a somewhat sheltering effect and plays an important role in making the experience endurable. The Mikado logs that form the porch and the front garden act as a filter between the contained space and the public walkway. People passing by can access the porch and the narrow front garden (which they sometimes do). From outside, the entire set-up – the Zzz, the Mikado porch and the garden – is experienced as belonging to the public domain as long as the occupiers of the Zzz are not using the outdoor premises. From inside, however, the Zzz and the adjacent outdoor space are conceived as an obvious part of one's private domain. The Zzz concept explores and profoundly challenges the idea of privacy in a public domain. It does not signify a clear-cut privatisation; it rather demonstrates a regulated and well-defined temporal appropriation. A protocol allows us to privatise this space for a short time. The protocol is upheld by regulations displayed on the Internet[20] and on small signs at the site, as well as by the staff supervisors – the so-called 'mediators' – who provide information about practical details and help people settle in.

The Zzz's suggest a new and different way of being in public and of performing public life. The controlled and supervised territorial appropriation is clearly supported by material agency, use-policies and protocols. Together they facilitate temporal collective privatisations of space. The Zzz's collectives, as well as the Birthday Teepee collectives, indicate that people arrive in groups (alternatively, groups are composed at the site) and stabilise their heterogeneous collectives at pre-determined anchors. In this case, the anchors are custom-made to support collective formations. The struggle for space is distributed to the online booking service and to management staff at the site, both of which are supervised by the Berges central administration.

The *sound shower* is located under an arch of the Pont de la Concorde (photographs 286-288). A sound system allows wannabe DJ's (or anyone else) to broadcast their playlists via Bluetooth from their smartphones or other Bluetooth compatible music media. The scene is completed with

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20   www.lesberges.paris.fr (accessed on 16 May 2015)

284   285

286 287 288

mirrored walls[21] and a mirrored disco ball. Two radio stations deliver the music when there is no private playlist active. During the day there are usually a few young people hanging around, playing their favourite music. The mirror wall results in some spontaneous performances and actions by people passing by. The music invites strangers to ephemeral exchange through occasional dance moves and/or sing-alongs. At night, the space can be used for spontaneous and arranged festivities, sometimes involving a lot of people.

I noticed a number of groups of young people stopping at the Bluetooth information sign and reading about how the set-up works. On one occasion, two boys, after a moment of fumbling with their smartphones, burst into smiles and laughter when their music echoed under the Concorde Bridge, flooding the public domain. The empowering dimension of the Bluetooth sound system should not be overestimated. However, the authority inherent in controlling the soundscape; i.e. to enact an audio-terrain of one's own, probably results in a sense of spatial attachment.

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21   The wooden installation, including the mirrored walls, had been disassembled during my second visit in May 2015. The Bluetooth-controlled audio system was however still operative.

This form of privatising a part of public space is comparable to the corporal appropriation of the Zzz's containers and the teepees.

The Teepees are usually located next to the pedestrian bridge Passerelle de L.S. Senghor. No observations of active use were made during my visits, even though some of the Teepees were marked 'occupied'.

The Teepees can be booked online for 90-minute slots on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, and they can be used for celebrating birthdays or other events related to children between 5 and 12 years old. Use of the teepees is free of charge. In the first two seasons – in 2013 and 2014 – about 2500 children participated in birthday celebrations in the Teepees (Artevia 2015). The Teepee and Zzz concepts encourage the composition of stable and situated collectives, but they also segregate visitors into categories. Citizens can change their role and status through the booking of a Teepee or a Zzz. The possibility of privatising minute public spaces may empower visitors and change power relations in the space. How this phenomenon affects the ambience, accessibility, social exchange and clustering among citizens at the site can certainly be a subject for further study.

Scheduled yoga, Pilates and tai chi sessions take place on a 142m^2 wooden terrace located in the Orchard, just by the quay (photographs 289-299). The Les Berges project organisation calls the terrace the *Mikado Zen Platform*. The space is quiet and peaceful, sheltered from the stream of passing people by wooden boxes with plants, trees and flowers. The programmed sessions normally draw between 15-30 participants.

The tranquil and partly obscured setting is well suited to meditative activities like yoga and tai chi. The scheduled collectives are assembled via Les Berges Internet site and materially stabilised by the wooden terrace and the plant boxes. The activity and the participants are also affected by the view and the smell of the water, as well as sounds from the boats that pass by frequently. Outside of the scheduled session hours, the space is used for picnics, private training sessions, reading or relaxing. The slightly elevated wooden terrace makes the space more attractive to use for sitting and reclining than the surrounding ground, which is covered by stone, gravel or tarmac.

The orchard offers visually protected and partly secluded pockets of space, due to the geometrical arrangement of the plant boxes and the semi-opacity of the greenery. The secluded and semi-enclosed spaces (furnished with Mikado seats) afford temporal privatisation by individuals as well as by small collectives. Since the spaces are so diminutive, the mere presence of a person indicates immediate territorialisation of that space. As a 'second visitor' it can be difficult to appropriate space without trespassing on already established individualised territories. Small and visually seclud-

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ed spaces become exceedingly intimate when they are appropriated, and it is thus difficult for strangers to share them. But considering the public setting, if one dares to challenge the norms of social proximity a rare kind of intimacy may appear. The level of intimacy in the public domain is gradual and temporal. Besides its dependence on the sheer spatial dimensions, intimacy is highly dependent on a multitude of nonhuman actors, such as weather, soundscape, visibility, seclusion, personal artefacts, etc.

At midday on Thursday 21 May (2015), I notice an elderly woman in the Orchard, sitting in a niche and watching the river go by, seemingly enjoying a moment of peaceful rest. Several metres away, in another niche, a young couple is having a clearly emotional conversation, with tears streaking down their cheeks. In yet another secluded corner of the orchard maze, another young couple is engaged in a vibrant romantic exchange. A man sitting alone in an adjacent niche is aware of what is going on close by, and smiles for himself, but neither reveals his presence nor looks directly at the young couple. A young woman lies down in a corner niche, shadowed by the vegetation at the very edge of the orchard, facing the Seine. She is wearing headphones, connected to her mobile phone, probably listening to something. Her eyes are closed. It strikes me how safe she must feel. Five people are gathered in different constellations on the yoga platform; two couples and one single woman. The two couples are conversing and the single woman seems to be resting and watching the river. People pass by and through the garden in a constant flow, occasionally stopping to smell flowers or commenting on the plants.

In the Orchard, one has the opportunity to temporarily privatise a *space* due to strategic and administrative territorial programming; i.e. the geometrical arrangements of boxes, vegetation and seating formations with Mikado logs allow for complex appropriations and temporary privatisation. The ability to privatise already demarcated space in otherwise public settings affects all practices regarding territorial productions in the domain. In most public spaces, individuals can generally only privatise minor areas or artefacts like a bench, a chair or a part of an edge. A group can appropriate space in all public settings, but at Les Berges a group (or an individual) is offered material elements and boundaries that further define an emergent private space, making it easier to both territorialise and to defend the space.

In parks, at beaches and in other commons, territorial appropriation (and spatial privatisation) is vastly dependent on personal artefacts that are brought to the site. Individual territorialisations are clearly demarcated through tactical use and corporeal presence, but the artefacts (blankets, picnic equipment, radios, toys, etc.) stabilise the privatised camp for an

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extended stay. The task of guarding and defending a territory is partly delegated to the material stuff that also makes it possible for humans to leave the camp without losing the territory. In the spaces at Les Berges mentioned above, this demarcation is already strategically programmed in the material set-up, making it easy for individuals to make use of the spaces, even bringing only a minimum of personal artefacts to the site.

The Capsule Hotel[22] consists of two capsules (*Brucker Survival Capsule*[23]) placed close to the Orchard that serve as secluded retreats that can be booked by anyone for 90-minute sessions, like the Zzz's and the Teepees (photographs 306-308). In one of the capsules is a miniature library and the other performs as an electronic hub. The Capsule Hotel signifies an additional example of temporal piecemeal privatisations of a public domain.

Incentive Artefacts and Triangulation

The giant chalkboard wall measuring ca.20 metres by ca.2.5 metres invites visitors to write or draw (almost) whatever they might wish to communicate to the world (photographs 301-305). The slate is fitted to the bank retaining wall just below the Musée d'Orsay, in the eastern end of the Les Berges space. People leave verbal and pictorial commentaries on everyday matters, leave messages of love (and occasionally hate) to persons or ideas, as well as sharing their personal opinions on various current issues. The Berges staff from the info-point keep an eye on the chalkboard to make sure there are no politically, culturally or religiously offensive messages (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015). There don't seem to be any formalised or apparent regulations in this regard, but according to Annette Poehlmann, there are limits to what may be written or sketched on the chalkboard. The Slate Wall is surprisingly popular and by evening, it has been filled to its edges with scribblings, which are cleaned off nightly for a new day of public communication. Some days it is even cleaned once or twice before the final cleaning. It seems to attract all kinds of people, seemingly with the exception of the elderly, a group which I never saw using the chalkboard. Interestingly, it seems that only groups (including pairs and families) dare to use the chalk; I did not observe any single person writing or drawing anything on the board.

People interact socially by the chalkboard, following each other's efforts with curiosity and sometimes commenting on each other's writings and

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22 A project by the Dutch artist Denis Oudendijk. The rescue boats originate from a cargo ship and have been used by the artist in various locations and for different purposes since 2004.

23 The Brucker Survival Capsule is a fiberglass lifeboat used on oilrigs and large ships. The craft was developed in 1968 and can hold up to 28 people (www.pinterest.com/michaelbrucker/brucker-survival-capsule/).

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sketches. Some visitors just stop by the board and have a quick look, with-out contributing to the production of messages. The artefact obviously mediates exchange between visitors using the wall or simply watching the activities related to it.

When I arrived at the site for my second field study visit (May 2015) the chalkboard was covered with pre-decorated panels, with only a narrow strip of board to scribble on. The board was cleared and open for the sum-mer season on Monday, 18 May. According to Annette Poehlmann, the Slate Wall is covered during the winter months due to lack of maintenance capacity (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015); i.e. the reduced on-site staff is unable to monitor what is communicated or perform the daily cleaning.

An outdoor photo exhibition is located at the eastern end of the Berges stretch, between the Passerelle de L.S. Senghor and the Emmarchement stairs (photographs 317-319). The exhibition area is frequently visited throughout the entire day. Spatially, it works like a maze where people sur-prisingly (or purposefully) meet around corners of the huge sight-blocking screens, or even bump into each other, when passing through the exhibi-tion. People overhear each other's remarks on the displayed images. The geometrical order and the shape of the display screens obviously impact on how visitors move and relate to each other in the exhibition space; the par-tially obscured view adds interest and arouses curiosity about persons whose feet one sees and whose voices can be heard on the other side of a screen. It seems as if people are almost as interested in other visitors as they are in the photographs on display.

Exhibitions regularly prompt people to form opinions about the pre-sented items, and it is socially acceptable to comment on and discuss arte-facts on display – perhaps even more so in an outdoor, public space. It is also within the realm of normal to stand close to strangers for an extended period of time at an exhibition, and also to reveal personal notions and opinions, even to engage in short conversations, because the attention is fo-cused on a common object – a third party. This phenomenon can be seen as another example of triangulation (Whyte 1980:94; cf. Gehl [1971] 2011; Gehl & Svarre 2013). As we saw in the London and Amsterdam cases, this effect also can be noted in relation to for example street performers, market stands, children involved in ball games or doing skating tricks, etc.

Quentin Stevens (2007:115ff) connects triangulation to de Jonge's 'edge effect' (1967) and argues the important role of boundaries as zones for exchange. Based on observations in Dutch recreational areas (de Jonge 1967-1968), De Jonge asserts that people tend to fill up the fringes before colonising more central or open parts of a space. The same phenomenon

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can be observed in urban settings; most people seem to prefer exploring the edges before using the more central parts of for example a square or an open field in a park. The same phenomenon has been commented in the same manner by Gehl ([1971] 2011) and Edward T. Hall ([1966] 1982). One explanation can be the desire of visual control, to overlook the open space; another reason could be a fear of being observed by strangers, without the possibility to hide.

Strangers who meet via an artefact or an event in a public situation are not formally obliged to take responsibility for any extended or deeper social relation. Accepted close proximity to strangers is thus clearly affected by a common interest or a shared objective that can be manifested, for example, by an artefact, a performance or a waiting situation (Sandin & Kärrholm 2011). Examples of this phenomenon could be a queue for buying coffee or at a taxi rank, a clustering around a street performer or a gathering by a fountain in a plaza. In Les Berges de Seine, this phenomenon appears for example at educational urban gardening boxes[24], public boxing training, gym sessions, performances, exhibitions, etc.

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Les Berges also situates a number of normative events – a category of activities clearly characterised by an educational ambition. At a residual area of the site, there is a temporary exhibition concerning various reuses of old picnic tables. Further examples of temporal events with obvious educational intentions are: a food market advocating locally grown vegetables, fruit and other foodstuff; urban farming in boxes and an exhibition concerned with energy-saving technologies and various environmental issues. Almost all material interventions and planned activities are pedagogically described on signs and in leaflets and displayed on the Berges' website. Signs in bright colours, on trivets, explain the intentions behind specifically designed artefacts and spaces, sometimes also providing information on

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24   The boxes become linking objects that mediate the exchange between strangers. For example, two women meet in conversation by a display about growing vegetables and flowers in boxes (photograph 323, 324).

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the activities they afford).[25] This is an unexpected and somewhat surprising phenomenon in a public space, more strongly resembling something one expects to encounter in museums or other spaces where one goes with the intention of experiencing and learning about specific topics. Most of these normative interventions address urban issues from various 'green' perspectives; issues include the reuse of material objects, homelessness, compact living, urban farming, biodiversity, etc.

There are 120 screen-printed game tables[26] (and 240 benches) distributed along the site (photographs 309-316). At the times of my field studies, most of them were located between the Passerelle de L.S. Senghor and Pont de la Concorde. The tables are mainly used for placing food and drinks on, as any café tables, but the printed games are played surprisingly often. A printed catalogue on the Berges project states that one can just simply sit down at a game table and "the mediators will bring you the pieces" (Artevia 2015). The 'mediators' referred to in the catalogue are young Artevia employees, who work at the info-point and form part of the curating idea that imbues the whole project.

The game tables offer a collective activity that is free of charge. The material setting provides face-to-face encounters and allows for more than two people to exchange socially. The artefacts and the gaming activity mediate visual and verbal connections, sometimes involving unknown others. Public gaming has the capacity to get strangers to meet, since engaging socially with strangers via a game of chess or backgammon seems to be a socially accepted practice. The gaming activity materialises a triangulating event, providing possibilities for more people to engage in social exchange more easily. Field studies showed numerous examples of twosome- or group gaming, where strangers engaged visually and/or verbally in the gaming of others. The focus on something outside the mere relation between friends seems to open up for engagement from strangers. The third part – be it a game, a sport, a performance, an exhibition or a view – clearly seems to ease the penetration of social barriers.

Different figures and patterns are painted on the ground, predominantly in the Solférino area – the eastern part of the Berges site. The graphics comprise for example mazes, animals, hopscotch, chess and running tracks. Children, teenagers and even some playful grown-ups realise the agency of these markings for different games and free play, not necessarily performing the intended games.

The painted markings are obviously suggestive, prompting certain activities. All objects can be said to have this incentive quality, but the mark-

25   There are also signs communicating regulations and restrictions regarding safety issues and general conduct.

26   Chess, checkers, backgammon, Ludo and Chinese chequers.

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ings afford nothing else than merely suggesting, and what they suggest is often rather freely interpreted. Two-dimensional and purely visual materialities require an effort and some imaginative skills from the humans executing the proposed activities. The markings' open and diversified affordances require a lot of communication among the perceivers to establish a set of rules, or guidelines, to co-act and stabilise a collective performance that includes the graphics. The material ambiguity may tie a collective closer together through the obvious need for negotiations and continuous adjustments of the rules that are required to uphold the collective. All of those engaged in a game that includes the ground graphics must agree on the meaning of the markings.

Since the space is swarming with people running and exercising their bodies in various ways, the public water taps are frequently used. Occasionally there are several people gathered at them at the same time. People come to drink but also to fill their personal water bottles. Dogs and their owners are also attracted to the taps. The tap with sparkling water usually surprises people, making them eager to communicate this discovery to others. Even birds use the fountains to drink and sometimes to wash their feathers. (However, they do not seem to show any particular excitement about the sparkling water.)

Fitness in Public - Fitness as Public

From the perspective of someone doing physical exercise, the entirety of the Berges space can be conceived as a fitness trail – a 2.3 km long running track. The linear configuration of the space inspires to physical activities such as jogging, biking, roller-skating and power walking. The health aspect is further supported by nine fitness stations and prearranged group trainings, such as coached running and workout sessions. Many of these groups are scheduled and form part of Les Berges' activity program, which is available on the Berges' website. Joggers and bicyclists dominate the space in the mornings and particularly at weekends. Some joggers use the fitness stations and the Mikado formations to do step-ups, push-ups and other manoeuvres.

Around midday minor controversies can be observed between joggers and the visitors who have begun arriving to have lunch or to walk along the river. The controversies increase in number on sunny afternoons when families with prams and children (who move in nonlinear, unpredictable ways) arrive. The number of joggers and exercisers is noticeably reduced in the afternoon and evening, as tourists, families and flâneurs become more numerous. The linear ordering of artefacts and the intentional openness for straightforward movement makes the space vulnerable to these kinds of territorial conflicts. There

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are no material indications that separate different movements or speeds along the space. From a social exchange perspective, these circumstances could be regarded as positive, since they clearly encourage communication and spatial negotiation.

School classes use the western part of the space for sports and play activities. I observed several school groups jogging, playing and doing interval training. They use the Mikado logs for additional exercises. This western section of the bank is generally less crowded and more sparsely furnished.

Nine outdoor fitness stations are strategically positioned along the whole Berges stretch. People gather at the fitness stations and perform various corporal manoeuvres. They regularly help each other, exchanging training advice and sometimes even coaching one another. Typically, however, they just perform their individual training programs in close proximity to one another. These fitness collectives are elusive and temporal. Some joggers, though, arrive at Les Berges as training clusters, with the apparent intention of exercising collectively. A few training collectives bring their own music; small loudspeakers are put up to define a specific fitness station as a particular place, territorialised by sound and physically appropriated by a certain group. This act probably shuts out other potential users.

Some training sessions are prearranged, led by professional instructors who coach one or two people at a time. The coaches give instructions and show how to execute certain moves correctly; occasionally they shout out encouraging comments and sometimes they use stopwatches to register the time of specific exercises. The fitness coaches can be booked for free via the Berges organisation. Children regularly engage with the fitness equipment and compose play collectives, which sometimes leads to conflicts with adult exercisers. The gym equipment occasionally tempts everyday strollers (typically middle-aged men or fathers with children) to do a few push-ups, chin-ups, or just swing on a bar for fun.

On Thursday 21 May 2015, at about 1:30pm, I observe many people jogging and using the fitness stations; there are a surprising number of people there for the hour on a weekday. At the fitness station by d'Orsay there are twelve people training, all of whom are men in their 20s and 30s with the exception of one, who is a young woman. Some of them seem to know each other as friends and almost all exchange socially with each other at some point. A group of people stands by the balustrade on the higher quay, looking down at the people exercising and occasionally communicating with them (photographs 360-361). People walking along the Berges stop and watch the training scene as well. There is a lot of visual and verbal exchange going on, supported by the topography and the arrangement of various artefacts (training equipment, Mikado formations, drinking foun-

tains, etc.). The fitness stations can be perceived as a kind of public event, attracting informal audiences.

The Berges space is open for activities and events arranged by external clubs and organisations. Les Berges' activity/event-program, which is updated weekly, offers a number of pre-arranged activities, happenings and events. Some of these activities are simply transported from elsewhere into the public domain of Les Berges, not always for the sake of active participation of random visitors, but to display activities that are otherwise rarely seen in places like this one. Transporting unexpected activities into the site challenges the preconceived affordances of the public domain. Events displayed in this way also bring people closer, and make citizens from very different urban (and social) backgorunds sharing the same space and the same experience.

A white painted circle temporarily defines the boxers' territory (photograph 364, 365). People assemble there at pre-scheduled hours with their boxing gloves and soft helmets to train boxing and receive coaching from a professional instructor. The event attracts an audience of passersby. The circular white marking delimits the movements of the participating boxers and keeps others outside. The audience gathers randomly around the circle or sits at the nearby café (Mozza & Co), on the Mikado platform and on adjacent Mikado log formations. When there is no boxing going on, the circle seems to order other things, for example some mobile sun chairs (photograph 234), the positions of which may be a trace from a previous event that has taken place within the circle.

The activity is arranged at the place via planning and administration; it is not connected to any specific situated affordance inherent to the site itself. However, the boxing activity affects the social situation, attracts boxers and curious visitors, and explains the white circle painted on the ground.

The Gym Suédoise – 'the Swedish gym' – starts at 10am one Saturday morning. The event is announced on Les Berges' website as well as on information signs at the site. Families with children work out rhythmically to the sound of Abba (photograph 368, 369). People passing by stop and watch the event and exchange smiles before continuing on their morning promenades. This residual space by the retaining wall is used for different kinds of temporal events, most of which are somehow connected to physical activity.

These activities and events constitute examples of how managing, curating and material programming come together to support social exchange and the formation of collectives in a public domain.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This concluding part of this chapter contains two sections. In the first section, I will discuss how the management, curation and programming of Les Berges de Seine affect public life, clustering processes and the emergence of collectives. In the second section, a number of phenomena observed in the field study will be scrutinised and conceptualised. As an introduction to this concluding part, I will provide a short summary of use-rhythms and types of visitors.

Rhythms of Use and Visitors

The mix of free and commercial activities, together with a rich assortment of diverse and distinctive local milieus, attracts visitors of all ages. Slightly more women than men appear to visit the place, at least in the daytime hours.[27] The socio-economic and ethnic mix, however, is not easy to determine; the space attracts many different young people, getting together over food and drinks that they bring to the site, preferably in late afternoons and evenings. It is my strong impression, though, that middle class citizens with metropolitan lifestyles dominate the space. Even so, judging from visual appearances, the total group of visitors is heterogeneous regarding ethnicity and class. Further research with additional methods would be necessary to reach any scientifically sound conclusions on this matter.

Activities and types of visitors vary rhythmically by the hour, the day of the week and with the seasons. Time strongly affects the dynamics of social use, opportunities to meet others and exchange with strangers. Hence, the possibilities to form collectives vastly depend on temporal aspects. Time obviously can be considered as an important actant in itself.

Since my field observations comprise only nine full days, my perception of temporal uses and rhythms is preliminary and somewhat rough. It is nonetheless possible to discern a logic of temporal use; an obvious rhythm of activities, and thus a rotation of visitors who are attracted at different times of the day and on different days the week. In the mornings, the restaurant and café employees wash the ground and clean the tables, arrange furniture and start the kitchen operations. The artificial scents of cleaning products mingle with the freshwater smell of the Seine. The traffic from the adjacent upper riverbank traffic can be heard as a distant roar – a constant backdrop of low-level noise. Joggers struggle back and forth along the river. On weekday mornings the whole site is clearly dominated by people exercising, privately as well as in organised groups. The fitness

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27   This rather inconclusive notion is reached by counting people in photographs. I have insufficient photographs of night-time situations to hazard any guesses regarding gender distribution at night.

stations are rather well exploited. Maintenance staff is preparing the more complex artefacts, like the Teepees and the Zzz's, for a new day of use.

At noon, the number of people exercising diminishes and people begin arriving to eat their takeaway or to lunch in the restaurants. The tourists usually start showing up late in the mornings or at lunchtime. In the afternoons some families visit the site and the number of joggers increases again. On weekday evenings, some people have dinner at the restaurants or enjoy outdoor picnics. On Friday afternoons the place becomes busier; the amount of visitors doubles or triples in comparison with any other weekday. People are out exercising, strolling, having coffee and meeting in larger groups. Late Friday and Saturday afternoons and evenings are dedicated to picnics and after-work drinks. As night falls, people gather around picnic food, snacks and bottles of rosé all along the quay. The restaurants are busy. Most of the tourists, children and joggers seem to have been replaced by local citizens (Parisians). Many of the present visitors speak French and some appear to be regulars, nodding to each other and greeting the staff working in the restaurants. This is a natural shift of audience, since it is a weekend night. The space is swarming with people until late. The pace is slow and the atmosphere is relaxed compared to other public spaces in central Paris.

Social life at Les Berges peaks during the weekends with regard to the number of visitors, activities and larger events. A lot of pre-scheduled activities run parallel at weekends; in the mornings the space draws thousands of people doing sports or practising yoga, Pilates, or engaging in coached running sessions and other physical activities. Many families are strolling along the quay and children play with kick-boards, bicycles and roller-skates. When the weather is fine, the site is very busy from lunchtime and throughout the day and night. The restaurants are almost full and people hang out in various constellations, having picnics, resting or simply enjoying the company of others.

The temporal uses vary in different parts of the site. The use-rhythms of for example the Orchard, the Centipede Terrace (the café with gaming tables) and the Archipelago (the garden islands) differ significantly. Each specific setting has its own logic regarding use-rhythm and the flow of visitors.

Managing, Curating and Material Programming

Based on observations from Les Berges de Seine and additional urban spaces in Paris, London, and other cities, I would claim that attractive public domains are subjected to an increased level of *management* and *curation,* paired with more extensive and formative *material programming*. Consid-

ering a growing commercial interest in and access to public domains and a diversified set of private actors involved in their creation, it is not always clear who is in control of the means for planning (curating), maintenance (managing), and design (material programming). Hence, it is sometimes difficult to know who should be held responsible when shared spaces are segregated or certain groups are denied access, openly or indirectly. It is therefore important to discuss the impact of management, curation and programming as key aspects of the conditions for urban public life.

As a new public domain reclaimed from the motorised infrastructure, Les Berges is a space with no predetermined typology or given audience; it can be made open for all kinds of citizens depending on how it is designed, equipped and managed. Despite being located in central Paris and forming part of a high-end cultural domain, it is still a liminal space (Stevens 2007a:73ff.; Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:128ff.; Zukin 1991; Sennet 1990) that can be organised to support activities and uses that attract citizens normally not associated with the area of the city in which it is located. Efforts to promote this have been made in suburban Paris by means of collaborations with organised groups within theatre, dance, and sports. The outcomes of these efforts are difficult to measure and three years (the proposed lifetime for the Berges project) is also a short time span in which to change the selection of visiting citizens. The focus of my investigation, however, is how the visitors – whoever they may be – exchange, cluster, and form collectives. In Les Berges de Seine, the material means seem to be important, but perhaps the management and curative aspects have an even more profound impact on how humans interact and cluster at the site.

Public life in urban space is affected by many circumstances. In the empirical studies of public life at Les Berges, three strategic approaches became evident: management, curation and material programming. To clarify how these words are employed in the context of this thesis, I would like to briefly outline several notions. The term *managing* refers to taking care of and maintaining a space, to keep it open and suitable for intended uses. In a managed space or event, the manager is typically present at the site, managing the actions. *Curating*[28] normally denotes the professional selection and organisation of artefacts (typically works of art); here, curating is used to imply the ordering and management of material elements *as well as* processes and social activities connected to these artefacts. Understood thus, curating constitutes a highly regulative (top-down) approach to life in urban space, aiming for a detailed administration of where, what, and how certain events take place. On the other hand, curating may sometimes

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28   See also Meike Schalk *Urban Curating: A critical practice towards greater 'connectedness'* (in Petrescu 2007) and Lisbet Harboe (2012) for further aspects on the concept of 'curating' in urban settings.

be conceived as a situated and participative practice that safeguards all citizens' rights to explore urban space. Whatever the situation, curating implies a comprehensive involvement in material as well as processual aspects of how urban space is to be enacted and embodied. Curating thus indicates a high level of control over how a space is intended to be territorialised, which however does not mean that it is actually territorialised accordingly. The two concepts – managing and curating – are close, but differ in the context of this thesis with regard to at least one aspect: curating can imply the ordering of artefacts and space (and thus the processes linked to them) from a distance, meaning that the curator may control a set-up without being present.

In this thesis, *material programming* suggests that artefacts (and sometimes spaces) are programmed to affect behaviour and actions in specific ways. One could say that the artefacts are inscribed with particular intentions, aiming at certain activities. Material programming aspires to put particular affordances into play that are intended to allow, support or encourage certain uses and actions. Les Berges de Seine is a heavily programmed space; the material set-up is almost reminiscent of a stage design where public life easily can be depicted as an emerging theatrical play. Most urban spaces are planned with the intention to support certain aspects of mundane public life, but the intense mixture of incentive artefacts at Les Berges can be experienced as *urging* rather than *affording* particular actions.

Artevia, who manages artefacts, activities and events at Les Berges, has an outspoken intention to integrate diverse categories of citizens and interests at the site (Poehlmann, Annette. Personal interview. Paris, 19 May 2015) by introducing activities such as kick-boxing, urban farming, film screenings, yoga, educational exhibitions, children's birthday parties, etc. – activities not normally associated with public domains and which may contribute to unexpected encounters and exchanges with unknown others. Artevia exercises a form of control over the space through the management of prescheduled events, including decisions on where and how different activities are performed. Since the prescheduled activities have priority in the space, the administrative management constitutes a significant actor that shapes the prerequisites for public life, clustering, and thus the emergence of collectives. The collectives composed at Les Berges are partly inaugurated by the heavy curation, programmed artefacts and managed activities. The large and well-organised staff contributes to the variation of collective formations through, for example, their support providing information and the service of lending artefacts for various games. The possibility for different organisations, clubs and associations to use the space

for temporal activities opens the site for groups that might otherwise never have found it or considered it accessible for them. On the other hand, extensive curating and material programming also may effectively exclude individuals or groups that are not interested in, or even actively dislike, the offered activities.

Urban public domains are normally materially programmed to meet rather specific needs and desires. Strategic material programming is managed mainly through architecture and urban fittings, such as lighting, signage, furniture, fences, vegetation, etc. Immaterial programming, for example policy regulations, traditions, local social practices, culturally conditioned behaviours, etc., is frequently delegated to various materialities, such as policy documents, brochures, websites, signage systems, etc. Traditionally, the design of urban space follows regional typologies that guide spatial aspects such as scale, materiality, aesthetics and the kind of artefacts and fittings to use. These typologies usually support a traditional public life, aspiring to secure civic co-existence, transportation and consumption activities. Today, however, there is a tendency to enable and encourage a wider variety of planned activities in public domains; for example, open-air markets are not merely about consumption; they are also hang-outs, places to perform music, to work, to eat, drink and socialise; playgrounds may accommodate sport facilities, food and drink venues, amenities for the lending of games and toys, community services, etc.; open public spaces can be designed to facilitate events (such as music and theatre performances, film shows, festivals and exhibitions), fitness-related activities, temporal or permanent consumption, etc. There seems to be a trend towards curated multi-functional publics, planned according to a shopping mall formula[29] and organised through daily managing. Evolved and expanded expectations regarding what an urban space should be able to facilitate place new demands on planning and design professionals, as well as on politicians and civil servants. One key issue is who will be appointed to programme and curate public domains, with what mandate and what accountability. The democratic authorisation of these practices is unclear.

Strategic material programming, active management and curating may be effective when new publics are established – to increase the possibilities for strangers to meet and thus to intensify the opportunities for territorial appropriations and for clustering, at least by those who share the same ideas or objectives. But intense programming that allows for multiple parallel activities and increases the spatial affordances may simultaneously

29   Except for the fact that shopping malls are never public domains. I refer to the shopping mall as a territorial and geographical agglomeration of different activities, facilities and spatial sorts.

stifle spontaneous appropriations and debar groups that need free and less programmed space to conquer for their territorial recognition (Kärrholm & Sandin 2011).

Parts of the Les Berges area are recurrently privatised, most significantly by activities associated with the Zzz's, the Teepees and the Capsule Hotel. This strategic phenomenon affects the production of public life at the site. The organised and materially supported territorialisations compete with spontaneous (tactical) uses and unplanned clusterings, which occasionally results in controversies regarding accessibility to certain spaces and materialities. Concurrently, however, prearranged activities prompt new collectivisations by the unforeseen enrolling of visitors coincidentally passing by, or by visitors taking part in other activities than those originally intended.

From observations made on-site, it is evident that people frequently arrive to Les Berges in groups or plan in advance to gather in the space, as *preconfigured collectives*. This can indeed be true of any public space, but it is probably most apparent in spaces with a high level of diversified public life. The collectives are tied together by friendship, common objectives and/or shared activities. Collectives are also composed and stabilised via material mediators such as fitness stations, gardens, game tables, farming boxes, etc. Les Berges de Seine offers such a rich selection of activities and a variety of material devices prompting different uses that the likelihood that people who share similar interests will meet, or at least see each other, is rather high. Accordingly, it is probable that some collectives at the site enrol new and unexpected actors, which may further stabilise collectives through augmented social exchange.

The managed activities and events are strong actants that extensively affect the use of the space. The agenda of Les Berges management organisation (Artevia) can be experienced as a kind of controlling mechanism that restricts other, spontaneous, uses of the site, and in a future perspective might pacify citizens in their approach to the space.

Over-Managed and Under-Managed Space

Matthew Carmona (2010a:123) maintains that public space is generally criticised from two perspectives, accused either of being over-managed or under-managed. The former focuses the 'commodification and homogenization' of 'formal' and 'high profiled' spaces, 'more or less exclusionary'. This critique includes scholars such as Michael Sorkin (1992) and Sharon Zukin (1995). The latter critique, concerning under-managed spaces, points at 'poorly designed', 'rubbish-strewn' and 'insecure' public domains, according to Carmona (2010a:123). The latter approach can

also be found in the writings of Camillo Sitte (1889), Jane Jacobs (1961), Oscar Newman (1973).

According to Carmona (2010a), arguments have cited under-managed space as neglected, invaded by cars, exclusionary and segregated. Over-managed space, in turn, has been argued to undermine publicness through extensive privatisation, consumption and commodification. Over-managed space is further considered to foster "placeless formulae-driven entertainment" and 'scary space', where crime, or fear thereof, is "allowed to dominate the perception of place, and where crime prevention strategies […] impact on the freedom with which space is used and enjoyed" (Carmona 2010a:144).

In the spatial ecology of individual cities, under-managed and over-managed spaces are entangled and often mutually contingent. Carmona (2010a) argues that a poorly designed and/or under-managed space does not attract commercial attention (investments) and is likely to be abandoned by local citizens and avoided by outside strangers, while the opposite is true of a well-managed space. People leave the under-managed, often publicly owned, spaces for the well-managed spaces, which are often privately owned. The consequence is a situation where publicly owned spaces must be upgraded in order to compete with their private 'pseudo-public' counterparts. They are thus, "each the cause and the consequence of the other", a scenario that Carmona argues is leading to a general homogenisation of the public built environment (Carmona 2010a:145; cf. Carmona 2010b). In Carmona's analysis the privatisation of public space appears closely linked to over-management. As a general notion, this is questionable; privately owned spaces can indeed be under-managed, and publicly owned spaces can certainly be over-managed, at least in terms of maintenance, management, and surveillance. However, the connection between the privatising of public space and national or multinational corporate interests is apparent, as is the increasing selection of privately owned and managed new urban spaces. As Madanipour (2003:215-216) points out, this can result in a growing distance between developers and local citizens. There is a clash of interests, or even worse, a lack of understanding of local public concerns as such; the developer does not always recognise the need to listen to those who are actually affected by the spaces for which they are planning. Sometimes, space becomes a mere profitable commodity.

For many citizens, over-managed spaces, including surveillance and crime prevention policing, can be most off-putting, and the desire for safety may jeopardise key public values such as openness, anonymity and accessibility. Even without aspects of crime prevention, over-management can be perceived as unattractive to citizens who mistrust governing author-

ities. Madanipour (2003:217) draws attention to the risk that over-management of urban space may be "undermining its public dimension". I agree with Madanipour's concerns and I would further argue that this matter is more effectively discussed in a situated micro perspective than on a macro level. Presumably, both management practices are necessary; it is not an either/or question, and it should thus be carefully calibrated to provide public spaces to all different categories of citizens, with their diverse and sometimes conflicting desires.

Under-managed public domains can be regarded as open and free for all to use, but they also run the risk of becoming brutally appropriated by small groups, through open or implicit violence. Over-managed space might be safe, comfortable and well maintained, but extensive surveillance and supervision may be perceived as repellent and drive many citizens away. For some, the mere notion of a privately owned and managed public space may be seen as an affront.

Incentive Artefacts, Anchors and Base Camps

Most furniture on the Les Berges site is custom-made; i.e. it does not represent a selection of standard urban artefacts that can be chosen from product catalogues. The Mikado logs, the game tables, the formalised garden milieus, the fitness stations and the Zzz's are all designed and manufactured specifically for the Berges area. The artefacts are organised to afford many different uses that are seemingly less functionally deterministic than traditional urban furniture. However, the outcome can still be perceived as rather predictable as far as the activities being practiced and their location are concerned. But on closer inspection of the artefacts' actual use, the prerequisites for social life at Les Berges appear to be more dynamic and diverse than in most other comparable public spaces. The Mikados afford concurrent usage by multiple people in different constellations and thus offer closer proximity between strangers than regular benches. The game tables allow for people to become involved in each other's play, and the temporal spatial privatisation offered by the Zzz's provides opportunities for a change of perspective and new ways of relating to others in the public domain.

The shared artefacts can assume different actor-roles in different collectivisations. The Mikados for instance can act as seats, tables, training facilities, play-artefacts, objects for artistic decoration, etc., depending on current conditions. The yoga platform in the Orchard serves as a meeting place, a site for picnics, an area for play and resting/sleeping as well as a space for yoga, Pilates and tai chi.

The generous array of seating devices and other artefacts near which one can anchor can strengthen the opportunities to linger in the space and plan for social actions, wait for friends to turn up, or to approach strangers with similar interests as oneself. The anchors are incentive artefacts with clustering capacities that afford collection of multiple visitors with varying intentions. Many base camps take the form of picnics in the daytime and revolve around various drinks at nights. Some base camps are simply places where guardians and parents rest, keep their clothing and other personal artefacts as they wait and their children play with ground games, play-ground equipment or other items at the site. The base camps appear most commonly in relation to anchors such as the Mikado stacks and platforms, but also on the garden islands and along the quay edges. In the evenings, some base camps develop into bigger festivities as further actors enrol, ap-parently by invitation or joining through spontaneous exchange. Because of their configurations, the Mikado seating arrangements permit a choice of distance and direction in relation to strangers. The authoritative materi-al solidity facilitates a possibility to be closer to strangers, and visitors often cross what Edward T. Hall terms the limit for *social distance*, sometimes even *personal distance* (Hall [1966] 1982:113ff)[30]. Parts of the Orchard and sometimes even the game table arrangements exhibit the same effect. Altogether, the material means seem to significantly contribute to hetero-geneous clustering and the composition of collectives.

Frequent and recurrent examples of temporary base camps established by typical anchors were noticed at the playground located by the eastern abutment of Pont des Invalides. Since the playground is popular among children and families, there is a need for places to keep various personal be-longings like bicycles, bags, prams, extra clothes, toys, etc. These artefacts are frequently attached to nearby anchors, such as a Mikado formation un-der the bridge, a stone bollard, the kerbstone and railing, and at the bridge foundations (photographs xx). Some of these appropriated anchors turn into base camps where guardians gather while waiting for their protégées. Some of the Les Berges visitors passing by regularly stop for short rests while watching the children play. Hence, the playground occasionally be-comes a kind of public attraction at the site.

Monocore and Multicore Spaces

Compared to most urban spaces, Les Berges de Seine offers a vast selec-tion of public activities, events and attractions. Most of these activities are

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30   Edward T. Hall ([1966] 1982) set up a series of distances that we unconsciously maintain in different settings, depending on spatial publicness or intimacy: Intimate distance: 0 to 6-18 inches; Personal distance: 1,5-4 feet; Social distance: 4-12 feet; Public distance: 12-25 feet.

located at specific places along the site, connected to heavily programmed artefacts and/or initiated and maintained through active management. Purposely designed materialities situate particular actions and happenings such as for example yoga, tai chi, gaming, exhibitions, sports, markets, cultural performances, etc. Altogether, the site is characterised by a multiplicity of diverse and publicly accessible activities, events and artefacts – *cores* – which attract and gather a wide variety of visitors. The human/nonhuman clustering leads to the production of many concurrent collectives, which in turn constitute potential for territorial complexity.

The opposite situation can be illustrated with spaces that provide only one or very few activities, such as most traditional urban plazas, skate parks, neighbourhood playgrounds or soccer/football fields – mono-functional spaces, situating one or just a few territorial productions. Here, these single purpose public domains are referred to as *monocore spaces*.

A core signifies a place with a kind of magnet effect, established through an activity or a particular use. Cores, unlike anchors, can receive their meaning (and be specifically situated) by way of other means than material form ('figuration') or further material characteristics; i.e. a core attracts humans (and artefacts) through activity rather than specific material conditions attuned to the activity performed. The space must, of course, have the basic prerequisites for allowing the actual use, but the material conditions are not its main attraction. While an anchor attracts humans and artefacts mainly by virtue of its material configuration, the core might be just a space that affords the arrangement of different activities. If, for instance, someone (an organisation or an individual) initiates a dance session at Les Berges de Seine, it will be announced on the website and on signs displayed at the site. The session can then take place in whatever part of the space the presumed participants are told to meet. Normally, the only material condition required is that the ground is sufficiently horizontal for dancing, and the fact that people are dancing there, rather than the horizontal ground as such, is what attracts other people to join in.

For most spaces, coriality is a temporal phenomenon; a mono-functional space can rapidly change from *monocore* to *multicore*, for instance when an open meadow in a park turns into a festival- or a market space and suddenly offers multiple activities. A multicore space such as Les Berges may lose all or most of its cores, for example due to terrible weather conditions or an administrative breakdown. However, from an urban design perspective, the basic material conditions for the emergence of a monocore or multicore space can be suggested by means of planning and design.

The notion of coriality is essentially related to scale. For example, a mono-functional space such as a particular skate park may appear to be

monocore, and on closer examination it can reveal embedded microcores, such as supportive spaces for resting, toilets, various amenities for eating and drinking, etc.; i.e. cores that signify additional activities and functions, thus indicating a multicore space.

Personal and Shared Artefacts

Les Berges de Seine study shows many additional examples of the relation between *personal and shared artefacts*, a conceptual pair that was introduced in the van Beuningenplein study (see Chapter 5). In Les Berges, the most common personal and shared artefacts are related to eating and drinking, but also to fitness, movement and gaming. To make use of the long, straight and horizontal stretch, visitors of all ages bring personal artefacts such as bicycles, roller skates, scooters and skateboards – for transportation, exercise and joy. Visitors using rented segways typically arrive in organised groups and pass through the site as a part of a route.

Most anchor artefacts described and analysed above, such as the Mikado formations, platforms, game tables and the furniture in the floating gardens are frequently appropriated as sites for picnics throughout the entire day and on some evenings. Certain evening collectives are composed of young people, gathering to party or just to socialise. To enter these collectives, most people bring drinks or snacks to share. Different collectives sharing the same individual Mikado formation sometimes exchange socially and occasionally merge into bigger collectives.

The appropriation of a Zzz container is not conditioned by any personal artefacts, but the stay seems to make more sense if the visitors bring things to eat and drink, games to play or work to do. According to my own experiences and observations, these personal artefacts also make it easier to cope with the awkward situation of privatising a piece of a very public domain.

The fitness stations (shared artefacts) often situate base camps and exchanges between the people clustering by them. Some exercisers bring certain training devices, such as rubber cables and ankle straps that can be attached to artefacts at the fitness stations, and sometimes exchange is mediated by these personal artefacts.

As in van Beuningenplein, Les Berges offers certain artefacts for lending. These so-called *pseudo-personal artefacts* (see Chapter 5, p.193) include for example pieces and markers for the game tables and items intended for various ball sports, such as table tennis rackets.

Linear and Field Artefacts

The notion of *linear and field artefacts* was conceived through analysis of how people use the quay edge at Les Berges de Seine, compared with the Mikado formations, for sitting, resting and meeting. Multiple observations showed discernible differences in use regarding spatial proximity and cross-exchange between strangers. People using the quay edge usually sit in a linear order, typically two-by-two, following the logic of the (linear) architectural form, while the Mikado formations showed many examples of people sitting, leaning and reclining completely in different and more complex positions, near known others as well as adjacent to strangers. Some Mikado formations (typically the bigger and more complex ones) seem to allow for closer proximity between unacquainted users as well as more varied group sizes. A Mikado formation allows concurrent users to collect in many different constellations and with varying intentions – qualities that I associate with *field artefacts*.

The cafés and bars along the Berges space normally display a kind of linear seating; i.e. chairs placed side by side in rows, facing the promenade and the Seine. The game table furniture, on the other hand, is designed as a modular system and spatially organised in many different set-ups. Sometimes they are ordered in geometries reminiscent of a communal table – the large sort occasionally found in cafés, bakeries, bars and other establishments that is intended for simultaneous use by strangers – and accordingly offer field quality seating.

Both linear and field artefacts make sense in public domains, but if the intention of a particular place is to encourage brief encounters and exchange between strangers, I would argue that the field artefact is more effective.

7

CLUSTERING ARCHITECTURES:

THE ROLE OF MATERIALITIES FOR EMERGING COLLECTIVES IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

As stated in Chapter 1 of this thesis, many cities suffer from socio-economic segregation and polarisation that cause substantial societal strains. In recent decades, governments and city municipalities have sought to create spaces that can help connect citizens and bridge social differences. The support of an inclusive, accessible and connective public domain, aiming to establish spatio-material conditions that may facilitate the harmonious co-existence of strangers, can be seen as one of the strategic keys to achieving such spaces. The concepts that I have developed throughout this thesis intend to contribute to a discussion on how to organise urban space, and how to design material environments that afford social multiplicity at the level of specific urban places. Discourses concerned with urban space and issues related to public life are often dominated by macro approaches

that focus on typologies and categories in general terms and are aimed at large-scale management and policy-making. Most contributions to the discussion – such as Carmona's under-managed and over-managed space, for example – constitute rather coarse tools that are primarily relevant for urban administration and certain large-scale levels of analysis and master planning. I argue that there is a need for supplementary and more finely tuned instruments to deal with the complex issues of co-existence and social exchange in urban space. The development of such instruments starts in detailed studies of the local, the situated micro-spaces in public domains. Here, this approach indicates a relational and action-centred approach in which actors affective in various scales are included without selection, prior to examination.

The scope of this thesis has been to map and examine incentive materialities in urban public domains – artefacts and architectures with clustering capacities – in order to capture notions about how and by what means humans and nonhumans exchange and sometimes become associated in collectives. I have chosen to examine a selection of urban sites through visual ethnography. The field investigations resulted in a number of concepts that I consider relevant for social exchanges in public life, and particularly concerned with relational, performative and socio-material aspects of how such exchanges produce clusters in public space. In this concluding chapter, I intend to clarify the concepts and notions derived from analysis of the empirical data; notions concerned with socio-material agency and exchanges that are potentially important for various territorial productions and for the emergence of heterogeneous collectives. I will also make several projective remarks on how these concepts may contribute to wider analytical and practice-oriented discourses with regard to the design of public domains.

The field studies offered a wide selection of examples that illustrate nonhuman mediations of social exchanges. The analysis of registered observations exposed numerous and recurrent behaviours and practices that emerged in relation to certain material figures and set-ups of different form, quality and distribution. Through a close examination of various socio-material exchanges in a number of public domains, I developed a set of concepts to describe actants that are useful in the exploration of how material elements may contribute to the formation of temporary collectives and collective spaces. The investigations have shown how artefacts and architectures can take on different roles in the mediation of social exchange and in the stabilisation of heterogeneous clusters, but also how different situated (and figured) artefacts seem to play similar actor roles on different occasions and at different locations. Different kinds of artefacts

thus seem to repeatedly evoke similar usage and cause similar effects; they take on principal and recurrent actor roles in different networks – i.e. they can be described as actants (Latour 2005).

The field observations showed how certain actant roles tended to be associated with clustering and with the interaction and exchange between humans and nonhumans. The actants that are described and analysed in this chapter as concluding findings of this thesis are: Anchors; Base Camps; Multicore and Monocore Spaces; Tickets and Rides; Punctiform, Linear and Field Seating; and Ladders. These particular actants can be considered empirical findings, but I also believe them to be tangible and effective as tools for the analysis of public life, as well as for providing operative approaches to urban design practices. As tools for inquiry and analysis, the actants all aim towards an understanding of spatial production as the effects of heterogeneous clusterings. The concepts are intended to contribute to a nuanced exploration of how the material may co-produce social life in urban domain, and how materialities can possibly be seen as supporting the stabilisation of emergent collectives.

CONCEPTUALISATIONS

Anchors

The term anchor implies artefacts, or clusters of artefacts, that repeatedly seem to attract and gather humans and additional artefacts. Anchors are actants inscribed with social affordances and exchange capacities. Typical examples of (potential) anchors in urban spaces are bollards, edges, steps, platforms, trees, furniture and utility boxes. Anchors are polyvalent artefacts that can form alliances with different sorts of actors and clusters of actors. An anchor affords certain usabilities that meet temporal needs; for example a place to sit, a surface on which to place things or a shelter from wind, rain, sun, moving vehicles, etc. Anchors mediate social exchange and they may stabilise collectives, because they are durable and "*last longer than the interactions that formed them*" (italics in original) (Callon &

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Latour 1981:283). Anchors are thus important means for instigating and supporting territorial productions in public domains. Since anchors are attractive to engage with and to appropriate, they also constitute sites for everyday controversies; occasionally they situate exposed conflicts and struggles for space.

Most anchors are polyvalent clustering machines that collect other artefacts and humans. Non-mobile urban artefacts such as fixed urban furniture, pillar boxes, lampposts, signs, traffic lights, stationary litterbins, etc. are regularly found in groups in urban public space. When they are placed together in clustered figurations, their agency and affordances change compared to when they appear individually. The precise organisation of the elements clearly affects how they support various human activities. There are probably many reasons why artefacts are clustered in urban space, but it is improbable that urban designers or planners arrange them according to their possible effects on social life; the motivations are presumably rather of a practical or technical nature. These mundane artefacts are rarely designed to perform the lateral affordances they may encourage. A bollard affords sitting on, but the top may be very uncomfortable. It also affords acting as a table, if the top isn't too curved. The precise design and material quality of an anchor may have a significant effect on its affordances.

Utility boxes, like those mentioned in the Borough Market field study, are not optimised to perform their function as urban sideboards, and yet they do perform this function. The corner space at the Borough Market entrance – with a lamppost, bollards and a utility box – constitutes a clear example of this clustering effect. Here, the artefacts repeatedly entangle humans for various reasons, and socio-material collectives are frequently produced. The phenomenon of artefacts attracting artefacts can be found everywhere in the public domain, and it has interesting consequences for human behaviour. One could perhaps even consider some of these artefact clusters as proto-collectives; the concentration of affordances seems to attract multiple actors to enrol and exploit the offered opportunities. Some artefacts are even temporarily quite literally locked to each other – for example, bicycles and other vehicles are regularly locked to lampposts and fences, which causes other kinds of effects.

Appropriation ladders can be observed in spaces with multiple anchors; i.e. people and groups moving between different anchors in pursuit of individual or collective benefits (such as securing a better spot to sit). These benefits are neither absolute nor universal, but rather fulfil temporal individual or collective preferences. Appropriating space and composing base camps in a public domain without anchors is difficult. A space with several anchors, however, provides opportunities for diversified appropriations

and numerous base camp formations, and thus an increased potential for social exchanges. A space offering multiple anchors or anchors with extensive and diverse capacities to harbour multiple individuals or collectives accordingly affords several parallel and/or overlapping territorial productions, and thus a more extensive territorial complexity. This phenomenon could also be discussed in terms of multicore and monocore spaces. A space with just one given anchor runs the risk of being dominated by a single individual or one group of people, while a space with multiple anchors has the capacity to hold many groups or individuals at the same time.

According to Jan Gehl ([1987] 2011:150-151), activities in most public domains "grow from the edge toward the middle" (cf. Stevens 2007a). This phenomenon is similar to de Jonge's 'edge effect' (de Jonge 1967). The notion of edges as sites of enhanced activity seems to hold true in most open urban spaces – according to my own field observations as well – except when anchors are positioned in 'the middle'. The location of activities at an urban site, and thus also of movement patterns, can be regulated and to some extent controlled through the ordering of artefacts that serve as anchors. A multiple-anchor layout admits complex, overlapping appropriations and movements, hence a variety of potential exchanges between strangers visiting the space. The amount of anchors, their specific affordances, distribution and clustering capacities might profoundly affect how a space is used and what kind of social life it may support, but there is of course no general or predefined causal relation between anchors and social effects.

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Spots that are protected from sun, wind or rain can be assigned to a special category of anchors. They are all effects of material elements, but strictly speaking they are produced by the absence of a temporarily undesirable natural phenomenon such as sunlight, wind or rain. These kinds of anchors can indeed be very successful in terms of clustering humans and artefacts. Sometimes both the artefact producing the shadow (or wind/rain protection) and the effect (the shadow itself) are active as anchors, producing base camps or other temporal heterogeneous clusterings.

Prior to enrolment in a base camp figuration, an anchor has some likeness to what Michel Serres calls a blank figure (Serres 1991); i.e. richly embedded with associative potentials. A blank figure may appear as an object without any obvious exchange capacities, but in fact it is packed with agency and in the process of multiple figurations. When entangled with other bodies an anchor can be a vital actant. Anchors are detected via their entanglement in recurrent heterogeneous collectives, human/nonhuman assemblages that are closely related to a local set of practices and everyday activities.

Base Camps

Base camps are heterogeneous clusters that territorialise particular places. Base camps are actants, typically established in close proximity to relatively stable artefacts such as steps, edges, walls, platforms, trees, bollards, urban furniture, etc. – material elements that are identified here as anchors. Consequently, base camps are anchors that are repeatedly accessed and appropriated by humans, often via personal belongings. A base camp is an anchor used over time, forming a territorial appropriation that involves a territorial tactic, and a territorial marking through artefacts. The territorial tactic, embodied by personal artefacts, allows for repeatedly leaving and returning to the territory without the risk of losing it to someone else. The territorial appropriations and tactics of base camps are co-produced by objects, such as blankets, bags, picnic baskets, toys, clothes, prams, etc., and can sometime involve complex collective alliances between acquaintances as well as strangers. The stability of a base camp seems to be partly dependent on the nature of the links between the personal artefacts and the anchor, their number, distribution, permanence, etc. A picnic-base camp is rather ephemeral compared to a protest-camp (for example with the aim to protect an endangered forest) or a politically motivated sit-down demonstration. The latter base camps are normally stabilised by more durable infrastructures, constituted by material elements such as tents, furniture, food, signs and banderoles and sometimes even chains and locks, etc., but also supported by coordinated social practices, strategic administration and services.

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Mobile anchors such as prams, cargo bikes and cars can constitute a certain type of mobile base camps. They are able to maintain their base camp quality even as they move. A particular feature connected to mobile base camps is that they easily form bigger, compound, base camps as they come together.

Multiple base camps were registered in all field studies. The most significant site for base camps in Borough Market was recorded at the arcade foundations at the Stoney Street/Park Street junction. At the arcade, humans themselves were the camps' primary stabilisers, but the territorial tactics also included prams, takeaway food and drinks, clothing, coffee cups, bicycles, etc. When visitors arrived in groups of two or more people, there was always at least one individual guarding the camp when the other(s) left to go buy something, dispose of rubbish, meet someone, etc. The courtyard between Southwark Cathedral and the market showed further examples of people clustering in base camps, especially during lunch hours. The varied topography has resulted in sitting-friendly retaining walls and different parts of elevated grounds to occupy. Mobile furniture, benches in different positions and the various ground materials add to the spatial complexity and enable visitors to cluster in different ways. The traffic island in Petticoat Lane Market and the bollards at Portobello Road constitute further examples of artefacts mobilising base camps in the London field studies.

In van Beuningenplein playground, guardians often arrive to the playground with prams, bags, toys and other things required when taking children on outdoor excursions. They need places to put their belongings, and those places become their base camps for the time they spend at the site. Sometimes guardians move their camps, following the children's play, due to shifting weather conditions, or for other reasons. Sometimes they gather with other guardians and cluster in bigger base camps. The camps are most commonly entangled with artefacts that provide horizontal surfaces, suitable for sitting and/or placing things on.

The incongruous mobile chairs and stools outside the bistro (Paviljoen van Beuningen) in van Beuningenplein are also employed to establish base camps on a daily basis (see p.180 and photographs 154, 158, 159). According to my observations, the mobile furniture is kept together at all times, as an ensemble, although the guardians using it do not know each other as friends, and neither come nor leave together.[1] The furniture has the advantage of being light and portable – it can be easily moved as the camp moves,

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1   This information was gathered from spontaneous interviews. I took the opportunity to ask visitors about their interpersonal relations, how often they visited the playground, and where they lived in relation to the site. They informed me that they were not friends, but some of them were acquainted after having met at the playground on other occasions. A couple of the guardians lived quite far from van Beuningenplein, but visited the playground at least once a week.

for example in response to changing weather conditions. An interesting aspect of this particular place is that it often gathers a collective of strangers and thus hosts a series of base camps. This collective camp arrangement increases the possibility that there is always a series of human and nonhuman actors guarding the camp. Other areas in van Beuningenplein where base camps are frequently established are: inside the bistro, by the concrete picnic tables scattered over the grounds, at the wooden podium and along the edges delimiting the sport fields.

The majority of the base camps composed at Les Berges de Seine are related to eating and drinking. The quay edge and the Mikado log formations constitute sites for numerous picnics from lunchtime and throughout the day and evening. More temporary base camps are established in relation to the playground and the fitness stations, where visitors need to anchor their belongings during shorter stays. Very particular spaces, such as the Archipelago, the Orchard and the Emmarchement staircase, provide further opportunities for multiple base camps to be produced. The Zzz containers and the Teepees encourage the privatisation of demarcated spaces where base camps are regularly organised by visitors arriving to the site with the clear intentions to 'camp', often for a scheduled period of time. The wide selection of anchors to colonise produces a multiplicity of base camp formations, supporting a culture of lingering in the space and consequently offering vast potentials for exchange and interaction between individuals, as wells as groups, not previously acquainted with one another.

At the different sites examined in this thesis, repeated studies made it possible to account for certain artefacts being used in similar ways. Different artefacts were repeatedly observed to form a part of the production of anchors and base camps – two related, yet distinct and distinguishable actants. Anchors were seen as actants that repeatedly supported associations between humans and nonhumans, affording opportunities for complex exchange between entangled actors. A space where such anchors seem easy to produce and mobilise also provides opportunities for numerous base camp formations, and thus also demonstrates good potential for social exchanges and negotiations (both alignments and controversies).

Multicore and Monocore Spaces

A core is a situated activity, usually instigated by strategic artefacts and sometimes with the support of human administration. The management of activities in public domains is often delegated to nonhuman entities, such as propositions mediated by signs, pamphlets, Internet sites, etc., or encoded through material programming. A core requires a geographical position, a material form and one or more explicit usability features.

Cores, like anchors, attract humans and other objects, but unlike anchors, cores are also by definition sites for rather specific affordances; they are often pre-programmed for specific uses, and thus they often come with a (sometimes very) clear territorial association. An anchor can be an artefact merely collecting humans and other artefacts, without becoming a centre for any particular and planned activity.

At Les Berges de Seine, multiple cores afford specific activities and uses. For example, the boxing ring at Les Berges is just a white circle painted on the ground. While it does not constitute an anchor, it is clearly a core. On scheduled occasions, the ring is filled with people performing boxing activities. In fact, it becomes an anchor when the boxing is on, albeit a fairly weak anchor. Through triangulation (Whyte 1980:94; Stevens 2007a) the activity and the subtle materiality of the painted circle constitutes a clustering anchor, also gathering an audience of strangers. If visitors put down bags and park bicycles and prams along the ring, it can become a base camp. Observations showed however that the adjacent Mikado formations and the Mikado platform constituted stronger anchors, as they regularly attracted visitors and their artefacts to form base camps. Their positions offered good views over the boxing ring, a place to sit, and surfaces on which to put belongings.

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A site that offers a variety of programmed materialities and multiple points of curated activities generates a landscape of potentially complex collective territorialisations – a terrain of collectives-in-relation. This description of multicore space obviously fits van Beuningenplein playground and Les Berges de Seine. I would however characterise Agrocité (the urban farming collective in Colombes), the Boules space in Gràcia (Barcelona) and some of the London street markets more as monocore spaces, implying environs with limited diversity regarding activities and incentive materialities. Skate parks normally qualify as monocore spaces. Some advanced skate parks, though, transform during competitions from being typical monocore spaces into multicore spaces where several new cores are established, such as temporary cafés, shops, stands and other managed and

curated activities. Stronger and more private collective spaces are mono-core by definition, and hence the material setting is neither supportive of additional territorial productions nor of any further collective composi-tions (cf. Boules space in Gràcia).

Multicore and monocore spaces are of course not a binary conceptual pair, but rather suggest a seamless continuum. Most spaces can be charac-terised as being somewhere in between the extreme ends, most significant-ly regarding temporal aspects. A public domain normally varies core-wise; the number and arrangement of cores change according to time of the day, by the week or seasonally. In some cases the change follows a rhythm. The concept also signifies a phenomenon without scale, and thus it must be ap-plied with scale in mind. Borough Market, for example, can be described as a multicore market space as a whole, but also when studied piecemeal and in detail. The area adjacent to the Stoney Street/Park Street junction shows multiple cores, related to anchors as well as to various activities linked to the space.

Monocore spaces are typically dominated by one or very few activi-ties and thus offer more predictable and uniform territorial productions. Monocore spaces usually attract particular visitor types with certain skills and characteristics, and hence situate opportunities for stronger collectives to assemble, characterised by more durable social exchanges. As an effect, the collectives in monocore spaces will most likely shut out individuals who do not fit the member-template. Sometimes these types of strong collectives are signified by a more or less fixed set of members – as a club. Monocore spaces are therefore more likely to situate negotiations of dif-ferences and tighter connections between strangers. This notion can be connected to Amin's discussion on 'micropublics' and the social effects of 'cultural destabilisation' (Amin 2002; cf. Valentine 2014; Sandercock 2003). For example, a site dedicated to basketball, and basketball only, attracts citizens with a common interest, who then spend time together. Furthermore, they are likely to return to the site and their mutual ties will probably grow stronger, increasing the potential for negotiating social or cultural differences. In multicore settings, the potential to attract a broader selection of citizens is higher, and the multicoriality also provides oppor-tunities for more territorial productions to take place. The increased prob-ability for territorial complexity vouches for a potentially more varied and inclusive public life, promising more frequent brief encounters between strangers, but not necessarily more durable social exchanges.

Van Beuningenplein playground is a multicore space, but simultane-ously rather mono-functional. Smaller neighbourhood playgrounds often constitute monocore spaces – arrangements of artefacts within the same

family, offering similar physical activities and consequently attracting a rather homogenous group of visitors. At van Beuningenplein many different activities can be performed simultaneously, but since most of them belong to the same category (leisure and play), the site attracts only a small number of different categories of citizens. Still, the space offers a wide selection of anchors and there is thus potential for multiple territorial appropriations and numerous collectives to emerge.

Les Berges de Seine, on the other hand, constitutes a typical multi-functional and multicore space. Due to the mix of uses and a multiplicity of heavily programmed artefacts, Les Berges has a compound composition of visitor categories and a fairly varied public life. A high level of curation and management provides an extensive range of pre-arranged events and activities, contributing to the territorial complexity of the site. The many cores form nodes of potential clusterings that occasionally transform into collectives. There is an apparent mixture of weaker and stronger collectives assembled and distributed over the whole space. Visitors can (and do) move between them, seemingly without particular friction. Scheduled activities are often linked to specific anchors at the site, instigating base camp formations that help stabilise the emerging collectives.

If the aim is to design spaces for encounters between strangers that may develop into more durable relations; i.e. spaces that have destabilising effects and in which differences can be negotiated, one could suggest a mixture of monocore and multicore spaces in geographical proximity to one another.

Tickets and Rides

Particular urban materialities and spaces seem to attract humans regularly. This attraction is often mediated via personal belongings. Sometimes the access to an urban artefact or a space is even conditioned by a personal artefact. This phenomenon, signifying certain actors (tickets) that give access to others (rides) were observed repeatedly at the field study sites and can be described as the actantial pair of tickets and rides. This notion should be understood metaphorically as a stabilised association between two actors where one actor (the ticket) tends to afford another (the ride), and vice versa.

Artefacts and material networks (electricity, Internet, radio waves, plumbing, etc.) largely determine how we – urban citizens – can move, act and co-act. When entering an urban space, the things we wear and bring with us regulate accessibilities to various spaces, artefacts and activities, and also affect the affordances we might trigger. The human-artefact hybrid prompts different agency in relation with humans and nonhumans

present in (or related to) the space. Social actions and exchanges depend heavily on how different individual materialities tap in to each other and how they relate to shared artefacts. The phenomenon of 'ticket and ride' appears in all of the field studies completed in this thesis, and it can be described through the relation between personal and shared artefacts. Here, personal refers to tactical artefacts or belongings that may connect us with, and give access to, other artefacts or spaces. Shared artefacts imply objects that are communal and theoretically possible for anyone to engage with – they are a common resource, but one associated with a specific and more personally controlled artefact.

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This notion enables an analysis of direct and indirect relations between humans and multiple artefacts. Tickets might include objects such as cell phones, handbags, takeaway food, sports equipment, clothing, prams, coffee cups, etc. – objects that we usually carry around and over which we have direct control. We can use these artefacts to get in contact with, access, manage or in other ways entangle with some kind of shared good – a ride. 'Ride' is used here to signify the accessed entity, which might be an urban artefact (furniture, lamp post, utility box, bollard, etc.), a specific place, a built structure, or a specific infrastructure (Internet, electricity, a telephone network etc.). Rides are thus usually shared artefacts from the public domain. They are usually stable and most often situated, not carried around. Tickets are thus specific kinds of personal artefacts that give, or allow, access to particular shared artefacts or environs. An illustration of the concept can be a key or a key-card that lets us open the doors of an office, a car or a safe deposit box. A certain dress code might give access to a space that is dominated by a particular group. Money is an obvious example; it is a personal resource needed to access and engage with commercial parts of the public domain – milieus that would otherwise be closed to us. If one can offer an artefact that is attractive for others in a collective space or a collective activity, the artefact could be the key that makes one's enrolment in the collective possible. A young boy in the schoolyard who provides a new football may perhaps enter the game by virtue of the key

artefact he has brought into the collective, and not necessarily because of his socio-motoric skills (Warnier 2001). The boules court in Gràcia, Barcelona, demonstrates a most typical example of the ticket and ride logic: the boules are personal items, confirming one's status as a member of the boules collective, and they are required to make use of the situated affordances.

Personal artefacts of the 'ticket' kind can sometimes inspire, or motivate, a search for a specific 'ride'; takeaway food, for example, may inspire a search for horizontal surfaces in order to sit or put down one's food and hence free one's hands to enable eating. Urban sports like bmx cycling, skating or scooting, to a high degree inspire a search for landscapes offering the most exciting cruises and the most action. Overall, the notion is bi-directional; it goes both ways. On finding a nice place to sit in the sun, one might look for a takeaway coffee; on discovering an interesting site to skate, a skater will probably yearn for a skateboard.

The clustering of humans and nonhumans, sometimes into heterogeneous collectives, through personal 'tickets' and shared 'rides' can be further investigated with Gaver's nested and sequential affordances (Gaver 1991) (see also Chapter 1). Field observations occasionally revealed a certain order, or sequence, regarding agentic relations – not a mere whirlwind of accidental dependencies. These chains of dependencies were not causal; i.e. an artefact rarely determined a specific other artefact to be enrolled in the sequence. An artefact, however, sometimes suggested an orientation towards something – to another artefact, a human, or a space. In many situations, affordances seemed to be grouped (nested) and realised sequentially. The Mikado log formations at Les Berges de Seine, for example, proved to offer clustering affordances that sometimes resulted in temporal collective compositions. Initially the Mikados appeared to simply provide seating and elevated surfaces on which to put things. Eventually they also showed anchoring qualities, suitable for establishing base camps, as sites for family picnics and festivities involving larger groups of people. These clusterings were initiated through personal artefacts brought to the site, and coupled with a shared artefact, by visitors searching for certain materialities near which they could anchor. On some occasions, the Mikados acted as stands for audiences watching a nearby event. It seems that people are sometimes guided towards one another by artefacts, and by actions heavily associated with material and other nonhuman agency; these are aspects of architecture not always considered in the design process.

The most common examples of a ticket and ride relation in Les Berges were related to picnics. The food and drinks brought to the site were employed to appropriate the Mikado formations, the platforms, the quay edg-

es, the Zzz containers and other anchor devices. Skateboards, rollerblades, kick scooters and bicycles were brought to the site to explore the long bank space, which was free from motorised traffic and thus exceptionally suitable for these vehicles. Fishing gear was also observed at the site, obviously brought there for fishing in the river. Individual humans can change their individual agency and put new affordances into play by engaging with one or multiple artefacts. The compound, or hybrid, figuration might afford entering new spaces and collectives, whilst simultaneously disqualifying from others (cf. Nilsson 2010).

Shared artefacts that afford connections to multiple and varied kinds of tickets prompt the composition of collectives and thus, potentially, increased territorial productions. Inquiries into ticket and ride relations can thus be one way to investigate how territorial complexity may correlate with the amount and diversity of associations between personal and shared artefacts.

Some personal artefacts are suggestive and may instigate a search of certain shared artefacts or spaces, and sometimes give access to them; i.e. they become tickets. They can also act as markers – signs of appropriation – indicating places of belonging, or temporal privatisations. Attentiveness to how personal artefacts affect and guide our exchange with shared artefacts and humans in urban space may extend and nuance the understanding of how public life is produced. Even if the relations implied here are neither casual nor fully predictable, the phenomenon conveys notions that could be beneficial to the design of urban domains that are open for complex exchanges and diversified territorial productions.

At the arcade in Borough Market, personal artefacts, such as coffee, beer and takeaway food are triggers and excuses for appropriations of the stone foundations (shared artefacts). Heterogeneous collectives are repeatedly composed in this appropriation process; they are fairly weak collectives that sometimes lead to extensive interpersonal exchanges between strangers.

A guardian arrives at van Beuningenplein with two children, a stroller, a handbag, a skateboard and a football. The artefacts are placed on and by a picnic table outside the bistro that becomes a base camp from which the children make excursions into different parts of the playground. The guardian borrows a kick scooter at the bistro pavilion and one of the children (a girl of about 10) takes it to another part of the playground, where she meets other girls with similar scooters. Together, the girls explore the edges and ramps by the northern sports field, close to the community pavilion. The younger child, a boy of about 5 or 6, stays by the base camp for a while and eventually plays alone with the ball, kicking it against a

low concrete wall. All activities illustrate the relation between personal and shared artefacts and how the relation associates humans with other humans and with different materialities. Further observations include groups of visitors colonising various edges, benches and the podium in similar ways, using personal belongings to appropriate and access different shared artefacts – generally through the formation of base camps.

The guardian borrowing a kick scooter illustrates a variation on the ticket and ride theme, where the scooter could be perceived as a 'pseudo-personal artefact'. Other toys and sport items could also be borrowed at van Beuningenplein. The Columbusplein playground, also located in western Amsterdam, offered the same services. At Les Berges de Seine, markers for the game tables, table tennis items, etc. could be borrowed at the info point. At Paris' Place de la République, one can borrow games, toys and furniture to explore different ways of spending time in the square. Similar arrangements can be found in some parks, where one can borrow or rent boules, or at urban ice rinks, where skates can be hired for ice-skating.

Personal artefacts that indicate identity and group affiliation – which make it easier to find 'friends' (proto-friends) among strangers – can also act as a kind of tickets. Together, humans and their personal artefacts compose temporal identities, as relational effects. According to observations at the sites, children using the same kind of toys at playgrounds, like the girls on scooters and the boys with skateboards at van Beuningenplein, commonly seem to team up and form temporal collectives. Other examples of this phenomenon are the people doing fitness exercises in Les Berges de Seine, parents and guardians with prams at all sites, and businesspeople with drinks at the Stoney Street/Park Street junction at Borough Market.

The conceptual notion of tickets and rides is an attempt to capture and describe how humans and various materialities interdependently explore and territorialise the urban landscape. Artefacts guide our use of space, how we cluster and sometimes even (often unconsciously) determine our actions in urban public domains. Personal artefacts allow, compel or inspire us to search for shared artefacts or spaces and thus sometimes to form heterogeneous collectives. The relations between personal and shared artefacts thus make us cluster at certain locations – a phenomenon that increases the opportunities for further social and socio-material exchange.

'Tickets and rides' illustrates how these exchanges and mediations are produced and sometimes stabilised. Material design and the configuration of objects in space normally aim at creating topographies of action possibilities, where humans find reasons to act and interact. Since tickets as well as rides can be considered important triggers for connectivity, territorial

diversity and for exchange with other humans, the concepts should have implications for urban design and architecture.

Ladders

During the field observations it became apparent that different locations within the individual field study sites held varying value and status for different visitors. Some locations, though, seemed to be attractive to most people. The appropriation ladder – or for the sake of convenience, simply the ladder – is used here to describe a personal hierarchy of places in which to position oneself, forming a spatial arrangement of graded sitting and/ or standing alternatives. The hierarchy might thus be highly individual, depending on personal tastes, situations, other actors, etc., but in practice these preferences also often intersect and even form patterns – for example, there might be a certain competition for specific places in a situation due to its position in the sun, the view it affords or some other quality. This leads to a continuous clustering of humans and artefacts (sometimes as base camps), near and on certain material actors that are attractive to appropriate. There is also a temporal aspect associated with appropriation ladders; the visitors' choice of location seems to be significantly affected by the synchronisation between particular and situated spatio-material qualities and visitors' temporal needs or desires. The field observations revealed patterns of gradual movements within the sites. Visitors progressively relocated from less desirable locations to more desirable ones as opportunities to change position arose. These movements can be seen as spatial careers along trails of micro-locations. A place of many ladders implies that there are positions of different qualities, which of course also might be experienced differently; its popularity among visitors may fluctuate. A varied supply of artefacts and spatial arrangements thus mediate a process of spatial colonisation and a support of social and socio-material clusterings in public domains.

For most of the guests of the Monmouth Café near Borough Market, the façade-benches outside the café were the prime location for sitting. The column foundations in the arcade, on the opposite side of the street, were

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the secondary choice for appropriation, followed by the pavement outside the café and finally the street itself. The micro-location near the corner, established by urban fixtures such as bollards, a lamppost, some signs and a utility box, was occupied for various other activities most of the time, and hence did not form part of a career related to the café guests.

Another career was observed in the same area, this one concerning the pub customers. The search for horizontal surfaces (tall tables, barrels, window ledges, utility boxes, etc.) on which to temporarily place drinks or to leave empty glasses, led the pub guests to colonise particular spaces in a certain sequence, or they chose to position themselves simply according to individual preferences. Another reason for changing location seemed to be the quest to occupy spaces in some way protected from moving vehicles or people in motion. Finding opportunities to sit was also an apparent motive for moving within the space and sporadically changing positions, which also resulted in further encounters and brief exchanges with strangers.

In van Beuningenplein, a typical ladder sequence could start at the podium in front of the bistro and move to the public picnic tables, to ultimately end by the mobile, incongruous furniture. Additional micro-locations for visitors to choose from, or move between, are the green boundary zone, the picnic tables scattered over the grounds, the rooftop terraces and the stepped edges of the sports fields. The appropriation careers also demonstrate a gradual change of publicness and offer visiting citizens opportunities to calibrate the level of exposure, anonymity, control and intimacy. Individuals and groups choose where to situate themselves in the playground domain: in highly exposed and central positions, tucked away in secrecy on the roof terraces or in the secluded periphery of the green boundary zone. Most visitors only use a few alternative locations, obviously dependent on individual preferences, the size of the groups and temporal desires. Appropriation is not a one-way route; it is rather a mutually transformative process where the micro-location itself affects the appropriator and may change how a career progresses.

A heavily populated public domain with a wide selection of uses and activities also needs a spatial and material diversity; in part to attract individuals and groups with varying desires and in part to admit temporal relocations within the space. The mobility within an individual urban site and the diversity of attractive micro-locations and artefacts suitable for appropriation increase the opportunities for citizens to cluster and occasionally form collectives.

An appropriation ladder includes an array of particular and distinctive micro-locations, characterised by different affordances, such as sitting, eating, resting, playing, watching others, hiding from others, etc. The possi-

ble length of the ladders (as career trails) in a particular space can perhaps be regarded as a possible indication of publicness; a more varied supply of micro-locations implies a higher probability for different people to be attracted to the space. A space that offers an extensive selection of micro-locations provides a potentially higher level of territorial complexity, since more visitors and collectives can find desirable locations to territorialise. Spaces that are highly homogenised, with a lower level of spatial variation and hence often more limited appropriation ladders, allow for fewer positions regarding publicness, exposure, anonymity, intimacy and personal control. (See Chapter 6 for examples from the Berges de Seine field study.)

Punctiform, Linear and Field Seating

Sitting devices are key features in urban public domains. 'Seat' is a broad category that includes numerous urban artefacts, such as: benches, bollards, building socles, edges, steps, kerbstones, utility boxes, etc. The design and distribution of seats widely affect how people use urban spaces. Opportunities to sit, lean or recline greatly influence how long one might stay in a particular place, and thus impact the potential for exchange with other citizens in that space. The bench offers itself as a place for sitting (and sometimes lying down), primarily for singles and twosomes. Sometimes a bench can mediate exchange between strangers, but most commonly people search for an empty bench or they choose to sit as far away as possible from a person already using a bench.[2] To design a public space (or a public artefact) whose main objective is to support social exchange and clustering, further means for sitting could be considered. When planning for urban space with the intention of attracting citizens with diverse social needs and desires, it might be suggested to offer a variety of sitting devices, designed to afford varying degrees of potential contact between stranger citizens.

Since the artefacts discussed here are repeatedly associated to a similar use and thus an actor type, they can be regarded as actants. In Chapter 6 (Les Berges de Seine), the phenomenon is discussed as 'linear and field artefacts'. Here I would like to add a third category, *punctiform artefacts*, or more accurately *punctiform actants* (which are sometimes also mobile). In the present context, the term punctiform signifies singular seats; i.e. seating artefacts intended to be used by one individual at a time. Some urban domains provide mobile stools and chairs, which normally facilitate dynamic seating arrangements, including infinite variations of individual and group configurations. The mobile one-seat sitting device can also be

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2   A notion based on my field observations and previous experiences from northern European public domains. Bench sitting behaviours might, however, differ in relation to different cultural and local contexts.

seen as a sign of a contemporary trend to individualise the use of public domains, increasing a sense of personal control. Fixed urban furniture can be used by planners and designers to control directions, visual perspectives on space and how people perceive space, while mobile furniture challenges traditional thinking on urban space design, setting loose unpredictable uses and conflicts. Providing individual and mobile furniture is also a simple way to empower citizens to control how they use and set up a particular space.

Devices with non-linear geometries that offer field seating, like the Mikado log formations and platforms at Les Berges de Seine, afford wider choices for individual and group arrangements. Field seating actants facilitate base camps and numerous ways of positioning in close proximity of unknown others without challenging the social integrity of strangers occupying the same artefact.

In the Tuileries Garden (Paris), a combination of stationary benches (used predominantly as tables) and mobile chairs (punctiform artefacts) provide conditions for a dynamic use of seats, which results in multiple configurations (photograph 387-389). In the early mornings, the constellations of chairs disclose the size of the collectives that were composed in various locations the previous evening.

A plain wooden platform at Place de la République in Paris constitutes a field actant that collects youth and children, primarily just hang-

387 388 389

ing around or taking a break from skating activities in the square. The platforms in the Petticoat Lane street market (see Chapter 4) constitute a further example of a field actant, collecting market visitors consuming takeaway or just resting from shopping. Further artefacts with platform affordances are, for example, the Mikado platforms at Les Berges de Seine and the 'podium' in Van Beuningenplein playground.

The red mobile furniture at Place de la République is provided by the city and can be arranged freely in the south-eastern part of the square (photograph 391). Different constellations of furniture show a variety of uses by individuals, pairs, families and groups. Occasionally, the punctiform

390   391   392

chairs are used in relation to fixed benches, steps and edges to form larger clusters of actors. This use was observed, for example, at the Southwark Cathedral by Borough Market (photograph 392 and see p.142, 143 in Chapter 4), where mobile chairs (punctiform artefacts) and seating-friendly retaining walls (linear artefacts) are used to arrange face-to-face sitting, which makes it possible for larger groups to have eye contact.

The Place Georges Pompidou in Paris constitutes an ambitious example of field seating, where the sloping ground provides opportunities for a variety of clusterings and public activities (photograph 393-395). A sloping ground, with a steeper gradient, would suggest linear seating, because it is uncomfortable to lean forward when sitting with one's back downhill. In this case, however, the incline is not particularly steep, and visitors arrange themselves in many different constellations. Street performers exploit the slope as a stand for sitting or standing audiences. The example of Place George Pompidou suggests a simple, but yet sophisticated, way to use architecture to encourage clustering and collective formation in public space. The location in the very centre of Paris, facing an iconic building for arts and culture, of course has a significant impact on the site's attractiveness. However, the multiplicity of appropriations and activities at the site can to a great degree be attributed to the architecture itself; i.e. the material design of the urban space.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The empirical studies of this thesis have been based primarily on reflective visual ethnography. This has been a rewarding methodology for the investigation of incentive materialities and social life in the public domain, but of course, the approach has left some stones unturned. The method reveals what is visually recognisable and the actions that take place, but it does not reveal underlying strategies, long-term effects, political incentives or other invisible inducements. I have tried to compensate for this by performing a limited quantity of interviews and situated conversations with citizens. These are not enough, though, to form a reliable background for

commenting strategic issues (or un-observable motives) in a scientific con-
text; however, that has obviously not been my primary aim in this study.
My intention has been to examine immediate situations and scrutinise
human/nonhuman relations in clusterings with a focus on observable ma-
terial attributes. One could of course proceed to further contextualise and
extend these studies and, for example, study interior human actors (asso-
ciations, affects, etc.) or longer durations and time spans in order to map
the production of more stable collectives; that, however, extends beyond
the scope of this thesis.

   According to the observations recorded in this thesis, spaces that of-
fer varied options of exposure, intimacy, anonymity and a multiplicity
of potential uses typically have a high level of material multiplicity and
spatial complexity. Such spaces seem to attract a diversified public who
use the space serially or concurrently, producing territorial complexity. At
the other end of the spectrum, homogenous and uniform spaces with less
spatial variation and a low material multiplicity appear more difficult to
occupy and thus also fail to afford territorial complexity. This seemingly
causal relationship between material order and social use is of course not
absolute; it should rather be seen as indicative. The potentiality for urban
space to facilitate generous opportunities for strangers to exchange and
possibly to compose collectives seems to be associated with spatio-material
diversity in general. I am now able to formulate this with greater precision,
as the observed diversity and quantity of exchanges in my studies seem
to be associated with the presence of specific actants, such as for example
anchors, base camps and ladders, enabling heterogeneous exchanges and
clusterings.

   The findings presented in this thesis are intended primarily as a con-
tribution to the field of urban design – in the academic as well as in the
practical realm. However, the results may also be significant – on a theo-
retical level – for a development of techniques and ways of describing the
material aspects championed in ANT and Territorology. The conceptual-
ised notions and phenomena can be used to further increase and deepen
the understanding of the role of materiality in urban social life and refine

the theoretical framework in which it is explored. Perhaps the conceptualisation can be of special importance in territorology, where the material aspects of territorial production have been discussed extensively, but where a more refined differentiation of, for example various kinds of material figures or actants still seems to be lacking.

The six actant categories, constituting the major outcomes of this thesis, can be seen as parts of a conceptual toolbox for investigating socio-material exchange and clustering in public domains. The actants are intended to supplement the terminology with which we discuss and deconstruct issues of social life in urban space. The actants are also intended to contribute more directly to planning and urban design practices, as operative tools, framing a relational, performative and processual approach to urban public domains. Although the findings originate from visual ethnography and analysis of situated observations, they can be said to convey some degree of generality, and they also have the potential to be implemented beyond the spatial situations in which they were originally explored. It is of course important, however, to carefully situate them in the contexts in which they are to be further employed. Local settings may offer specific political, cultural and social conditions that significantly deviate from those characterising the field study sites in this thesis.

Actor-network approaches are not inherently political in the sense that they indicate any predefined politicised positions, but the subjective choice of actors-of-concern – in particular networks – certainly have political effects. The general inclusion of and care for nonhuman actors, and the attention paid to certain material actors (personal belongings) that form hybrid assemblages together with humans can be understood as a political act, or perhaps more accurately as an expression of democratic concerns. Examples of included hybrid citizens can be: youth with toy vehicles or play items, guardians with prams, homeless people with belongings and elderly people with walkers – all citizens with rather weak positions in the public domain.

The actants I introduce here may also be put in action to criticise delegated planning tactics as well as privately managed planning initiatives – both of which are tendencies in contemporary planning that suffer from ambiguous democratic authorisation and accountability. I maintain that the conceptual tools suggested here are sensitive to actors not usually perceived as powerful and apparent in the planning process. The actantial roles are imagined to include and impart meaning to humans and nonhumans not traditionally considered strong actors on the urban scene. The proposed conceptual tools address everyday matters, tangible and important for anyone who uses public domains. Hence, they can hopefully frame

and encourage a more collective and participative planning and urban design practice.

An additional outcome, embedded in the concluding actants, is a view on socio-spatial phenomena as gradual and temporal. Instead of structuring analysis in terms of dichotomies, such as private/public, nature/culture, social/material, etc., most of the actants suggest gradual shifts and transitions between various modes. Collectives are repeatedly composed and de-composed, stabilised and de-stabilised; they continuously change between a weaker and stronger constitution. Personal and shared artefacts are supplemented with the notion of pseudo-personal artefacts as an attempt to include another mode of ownership.

A study of public life is inevitably situated and always dependent on a profound and detailed understanding of local circumstances. Unique and place-bound socio-material conditions strongly affect behaviours and actions in public domains. Consequently, matters regarding exchange and clustering among strangers need to be explored through a multi-scalar approach, including locally situated as well as distant actors and aspects relevant for the situation.

The conceptual tools offered here suggest a particular attention to artefacts and architecture as significant social mediators, potentially facilitating encounters and exchanges between strangers. In this thesis, I have tried to show that the design and distribution of particular materialities in public domains have major strategic implications for questions concerning co-existence, communality and collaboration. The proposed actants thus also represent an attempt to approach the challenges of segregation and polarisation through planning and urban design; not in an instrumental respect, or as recipes for a particular design concept, but as analytical keys that may support a more comprehensive understanding of actors and forces that profoundly affect social life in the public domain.

[Populärvetenskaplig sammanfattning]

MEDIERANDE ARKITEKTUR:

DET MATERIELLAS ROLL I FORMANDET AV HETEROGENA GRUPPER I OFFENTLIGA RUM

Vi lever i en tid och en kultur som ofta beskrivs som individcentrerad och präglad av hög social integritet. I likhet med flera andra länder har vi påtagliga problem med att integrera människor som betraktas som främlingar (oavsett ursprung), vilket bidrar till geografisk och social segregation och polarisering. Det är därför viktigt att förstå de olika mekanismer som påverkar hur vi möter okända andra och i vilka sammanhang dessa möten kan äga rum. I en tid som kännetecknas av påtvingad eller frivillig migration och global rörlighet utgör frågor kring social interaktion mellan främlingar en allt viktigare kunskap. För de som planerar och formger samhällets fysiska rum är det därför angeläget att ha tillgång till begreppsliga redskap som bättre kan precisera hur arkitektur och planering kan stödja ett nyanserat och varierat offentligt liv, som medger socialt samspel mellan främlingar.

Stadens gemensamma rum, som till exempel gator, torg och parker, är platser där vi kan träffa på och skapa relationer till människor vi inte känner. Betydelsen av att skapa offentliga rum som inspirerar till möten mellan människor, särskilt mellan främlingar, har påpekats i decennier. Diskussionen om hur vi formger, organiserar och utrustar dessa platser, är dock fortfarande inte särskilt väl utvecklad. Kunskapen om hur olika individer och grupper tar offentliga platser i anspråk, med avseende på interaktion mellan främlingar, är otillräcklig.

En målsättning för avhandlingen har varit att undersöka hur stadens arkitektur och föremål på olika sätt påverkar hur vi möter och samspelar med människor, kända och okända, i det offentliga rummet. I projektet undersöktes hur olika sorters platser skiljer sig åt i detta avseende och om skillnaderna kan knytas till deras övergripande gestaltning och/eller till hur de är möblerade och i övrigt materiellt utrustade. Ytterligare en ambition med avhandlingen var att definiera begrepp som beskriver hur arkitektur och fysiska föremål direkt och indirekt kan ha betydelse för interaktionen mellan människor. För att undersöka dessa frågor studerades ett antal offentliga platser i tre europeiska städer: London, Amsterdam och Paris. För att få ett brett urval av erfarenheter valdes platser som utgör exempel på olika kategorier av stadens rum, i det här fallet platser för konsumtion,

lek/fritid och platser planerade för specifika aktiviteter. Undersökningarna genomfördes huvudsakligen som etnografiska observationsstudier ('visual ethnography', Pink (2013 [2001]) and Collier and Collier (1986 [1967]) och med hjälp av fotografi- och videodokumentation, studier av kartor, ritningar och litteratur.

Teoretiska begrepp och metoder är huvudsakligen hämtade från aktörnätverskteori (ANT) (Latour 2005) och territorologi (Brighenti 2010; Kärrholm 2012), eftersom dessa teoretiska fält erkänner materiella aktörers betydelse för sociala relationer och erbjuder ett processuellt synsätt på hur socio-materiella händelser äger rum.

Mot bakgrund av de empiriska studierna har ett antal viktiga fenomen identifierats, belysts och givits begrepp som kan vara viktiga både för hur vi analyserar och gestaltar rum för offentligt liv och därmed för möten mellan främlingar. Undersökningen visar alltså på hur arkitektonisk form och hur olika objekt i staden används och bidrar till att stimulera eller motverka mellanmänskligt samspel. Avhandlingen beskriver och ger exempel på hur objekt och platsers utformning inverkar på var och hur vi inrättar oss själva i det offentliga rummet, t.ex. genom att upprätta läger (*base camps*) för att äta, dricka, umgås, vila, jobba med mera, och hur vi samverkar genom spel, lek, fysisk träning, lärande och mycket annat. De kollektiv (*heterogeneous collectives*) som uppstår genom att vi etablerar oss i rummet, med stöd av olika samlande objekt (*anchors)* erbjuder tillfällen för sociala utbyten av ytlig och ibland mer fördjupande karaktär. Ofta vägleds våra handlingar och aktiviteter i stadsrummet också av hur personliga tillhörigheter relaterar till mer stabila, platsbundna, objekt i stadsrummet, som till exempel hur vi söker efter särskilda objekt eller rumsliga kvaliteter för att till exempel arbeta, ringa i mobiltelefon, motionera, leka eller äta hämtmat – fenomen som beskriver hur vissa objekt kan ge tillgång till, eller motivera ett sökande efter, andra objekt eller platser (*tickets and rides*). Fenomenet låter oss undersöka hur människor och objekt fördelar sig i det offentliga rummet, var de möts och ibland varaktigt samlas.

Ytterligare företeelser som behandlas i avhandlingen är hur sittandets arkitektur potentiellt inverkar på social interaktion, beskrivet genom *punctiform, linear and field seating*; hur den geografiska koncentrationen av olika aktiviteter påverkar möjligheterna för människor med varierande intressen och motiv att dela samma offentliga rum, och därmed exponerar sig för varandra – vilket kan beskrivas genom relationen mellan *monocore* och *multicore spaces*; och slutligen hur ett varierat utbud av objekt, möbler och arkitektoniska element, som lämpar sig att ta i besittning (sitta på, hänga vid och ställa saker på), kan bidra till att attrahera en mångfald av besökare och stimulera en dynamik inom en given plats genom etableran-

det av stegvisa kedjor (*ladders*) av ställen och objekt med varierande och tillfälliga dragningskrafter på olika individer eller grupper.

Dessa fenomen och begrepp som tagits fram i avhandlingen är tänkta att bidra till mer nyanserade analyser av hur offentligt liv uppstår och levs i stadens rum. Begreppen är också avsedda att kunna användas operativt, som konkreta verktyg vid planering och gestaltning av offentliga miljöer i våra städer. Begreppen utgår ifrån ett relationellt och processuellt perspektiv och syftar till att tillämpas platsspecifikt, det vill säga att en avgörande utgångspunkt är att interaktion mellan människor tydligt och genomgripande påverkas av den lokala materiella omgivningen och rådande vardagliga handlingar och beteenden.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of social life, addressing issues concerning how and by what means people meet in urban public space. The main aim of this thesis is to investigate how certain artefacts and architectural features support the formation and temporal stabilisation of heterogeneous clusters and collectives, and thus to the development of conceptual tools that can contribute to a more refined description and analysis of the role of architecture and artefacts for urban public life. An important basis for this thesis is the conception of public life as an agglomeration of multiple, coexisting clusters of humans and nonhumans. Thus, urban public life can be seen here as an effect of adding and losing parts of collectives through the production and re-production of associations between human and nonhuman entities.

The work has been carried out by the application and further development of concepts and methods mainly taken from *territorology* (Brighenti 2010; Kärrholm 2012) and *actor-network theory* (ANT) (Latour 2005). *Affordance theory* (Gibson 1979) constitutes an additional theoretical approach included in this thesis, albeit to a less significant extent. Key questions related to the main objectives and the theoretical framework are for example: What kind of competences, regarding territorial production and social exchange, can be associated with material artefacts and to spatial configurations? Who and what constitutes actions and events that facilitate human co-existence in urban domains; i.e. how is urban public life produced?

The empirical investigations consist of field studies of consumption spaces (open-air markets in London), leisure and play (playgrounds in Amsterdam) and spaces characterised by managed and curated activities (leisure spaces in Paris). The study sites were primarily selected because of their potential richness and diversity of socio-material exchanges. They also constitute intense gatherings of people, doing things together and individually, in close proximity to fairly unknown others. The field study techniques employed in this thesis – guided by participant observation and photographic documentation – are mainly inspired by 'visual ethnography' as it is outlined by Sarah Pink (2013 [2001]) and, Collier and Collier (1986 [1967]), paired with public life studies executed by for example William H. Whyte (1980, 1988) and Jan Gehl (1971, 2004, 2013).

The studies explore how human interactions in urban spaces are dependent on networks that include artefacts, time, local policies and situated public cultures and practices. The main empirical findings are successively conceptualised, tried in the empirical analysis and developed into a framework. The main themes – or actant categories – where materialities were found to be important for social interactions are: *Anchors, Base Camps,*

Tickets and Rides; Monocore and Multicore Spaces; Punctiform, Linear and Field Seating; and *Ladders*.

These six actant categories, constituting the major outcomes of this thesis, can be seen as parts of a conceptual toolbox for investigating socio-material exchange and clustering in public domains. The conceptual tools suggest a particular attention to artefacts and architecture as significant social mediators, potentially facilitating encounters and exchanges between strangers. The actants are intended to supplement the terminology with which issues of social life in urban space are discussed and deconstructed. The actants are also intended to contribute more directly to planning and urban design practices, as operative tools, framing a relational, performative and processual approach to urban public domains.

In this thesis, I have tried to show that the particular design and distribution of materialities in public domains have major strategic implications for questions concerning co-existence, communality and collaboration. The proposed actants thus also represent an attempt to approach the challenges of segregation and polarisation through planning and urban design; not in an instrumental respect, or as recipes for a particular design concept, but as analytical keys that may support a more comprehensive understanding of actors and forces that profoundly affect social life in the public domain.

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